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the ALASKA nordic skier

DECEMBER 2023, VOL.25, NO.3

PHOTO BY **SARA MILLER**

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Anchorage Nordic Skier
Newsletter Of The Nordic Skiing Association Of Anchorage, Inc.

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AROUND THE BOWL

Anchorage Winterstart SuperTour arrives Dec. 12-17 at Kincaid Park

The U.S. Ski and Snowboard SuperTour, presented by the National Nordic Foundation, is recognized by FIS as the Continental Cup for the United States – the highest level of competition in the country. Top skiers race head-to-head 17 times in a variety of disciplines at six different venues over the course of the season, with World Cup start spots and funding on the line. The first four races of the series will be held at Kincaid Park Dec. 12-17.

Preparations for this fantastic race series are in full swing. If you are interested in volunteering, there is a volunteering link on the series homepage. Or just come help put on a high caliber race series and watch some elite level racing!

ANCHORAGE WINTERSTART SUPERTOUR

All races at Kincaid Park
Dec 12, 2023 — Freestyle Sprint
Dec 13, 2023 — Classic Individual Start 10km
Dec 16, 2023 — Classic Sprint
Dec. 17, 2023 — Freestyle Mass Start 10km

Learn more at **anchoragenordicski.com/races/anchorage-winterstart-super-tour/**.

Time for some AMH Cup action

The first race of the AMH Anchorage Cup series is on Sunday, Dec. 10. It is the 2x2x2 relay race. Our registration is live and an overview of all 5 races is on the AMH Anchorage Cup page: **anchoragenordicski.com/races/amh-anchorage-cup/**. Sign up for this great community series, we have something for all ski abilities and ages. Enjoy a great ski on some fantastic trails and stay around for the after party hosted by our sponsors of the day.

The rest of the series includes:
Jan. 7 — AMH Anchorage Cup #2, Hickok Skiathlon & Classic;
Jan. 21 — AMH Anchorage Cup #3, Kincaid Classic & Wooden Ski
Feb. 11 — AMH Anchorage Cup #4, Freestyle Criterium
Feb. 18 —AMH Anchorage Cup #5, Sven Johansson Memorial Race.

NSAA, community kick-off season with a snowy celebration

Thank you to everyone who joined NSAA staff and volunteers to kick off the Nordic ski season with fun festivities at the recent Annual Celebration. What a community and what a party! We had over 425 people come out to celebrate with us and with the recent snowfall, everyone was feeling the excitement of the ski season! It was great to see our community of all ages come together to catch up, talk skiing, renew memberships, eat, dance, win prizes, show off their cool NSAA branded gear, and learn more about NSAA and other organizations encouraging healthy outdoor recreation. Special thanks to Ravens Ring Brewing Company for supplying the tasty beverages. We are so fortunate to have such a supportive, energetic,

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PHOTOS BY **JOSH NIVA**

Annual Meeting

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ALASKA SKI FOR WOMEN
Molly Mylius

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Kalysta Schmidt

HIGH SCHOOL RACING
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JUNIOR NORDIC
Kalysta Schmidt, Art Harmon

MIDDLE SCHOOL RACING
Julie and Mike Truskowski

SCHOLARSHIPS
Diane Moxness

SKI 4 KIDS
Elly Maurer

SKI JUMPING
Zak Hammill

SKI TRAIN
Travis Taylor

SOLSTICE TREE TOUR
Sara Miller, Elly Maurer

SUPER TOUR/BESH CUP
Ida Gullett

TOUR OF ANCHORAGE
TBD

NSAA OFFICE HOURS
10 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday through Friday

BOARD MEETINGS
Fourth Thursday of the month
6:30 p.m. at NSAA Office
Open to all

BOWL

Continued from Page 2

and generous community that truly loves its trails and its Nordic skiing organization. NSAA raised over $15,000 during this event which goes towards maintaining Anchorage's great trails. We appreciate you all and look forward to seeing you on the trails.

All aboard Ski Train!!!

Save the date: Ski Train arrives on Saturday, March 16, but tickets are on sale now! Contact the NSAA office at (907) 276-7609 and visit **anchoragenordicski.com/events/ski-train/** for more details as the event gets closer.

NSAA presents: Targeting Biathlon: The Past, Present, and Future of U.S. Biathlon

As part of NSAA's 60th year celebration, join us for an evening presentation of Targeting Biathlon, from 5:30-8 p.m. Monday, Dec. 4, at the Kincaid Park chalet. A slide show will highlight past and present Biathlon in the U.S. and in Alaska. A guest panel – including Jack Gierhart President and CEO of U.S. Biathlon, John Farra Director of Sport Development for U.S. Biathlon, and Olympic Biathletes Rachel Steer, John Morton, and Ken Alligood – will entertain us with memories of the earliest days of U.S. Biathlon, the U.S. Biathlon team stationed at Ft. Richardson from 1958-1973, Olympic experiences, and US Biathlon Association's plans moving forward. Potluck from 5:30-6:30; program from 6:30-8. For more information and to RSVP, visit **anchoragenordicski.com/events/60th-anniversary-events/**.

Save the dates for NSAA 2023-24 season events, programs and deadlines:

Dec. 4 — 60th Anniversary: Biathlon History Presentation
Dec. 10 — AMH Anchorage Cup #1
Dec. 17 — Solstice Tree Tour
January 7 — AMH Anchorage Cup #2
January 14 — 60th Anniversary Party
January 21 — AMH Anchorage Cup #3
Feb 3 — Ski for Women (Virtual)
Feb. 4 — Ski for Women (In Person)
Feb. 5 — 60th Anniversary – Ski Jumping History Presentation
Feb. 11 — AMH Anchorage Cup #4
Feb. 18 — AMH Anchorage Cup #5
March 3 — Tour of Anchorage
March 4 — 60th Anniversary – Touring History Presentation
March 16 — Ski Train

Santa needs some help? Grab some NSAA gear!

Gear up for NSAA's 60th anniversary season and show off your love for local skiing and trails with the new lineup of club swag. New pom pom beanies, headbands and limited edition 60th anniversary logo wear is in! Get yours now! And NSAA Photo Contest Calendar, the perfect stocking stuffer, is on sale, too! Purchase now at NSAA's online store https://nordic-skiing-association-of-anchorage.square.site/s/shop or by contacting the NSAA team at events@anchoragenordicski.com and (907) 992-0110.

the ALASKA nordic skier

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On the cover: Around 81 athletes showed up from APU, UAA and Alaska Winter Stars for some preseason time trials – and foggy, fun and fast skiing – recently at Kincaid Park. NSAA provided the grooming while the collective group of coaches on-hand helped skiers smooth out the early-season kinks and get ready to rock the busy racing season ahead. Photo by Sara Miller.

NSAA Junior Nordic season begins long before the kids hit the trails

BY ART HARMON
NSAA Junior Nordic Sport Director

NSAA Junior Nordic has been busily preparing for another season and we are overjoyed that our order for copious amounts of snow got answered a little early! In the preseason, we've been working hard to improve how we train our coaches, starting with a special event for head coaches and site directors at APU on Nov. 4. It was a great opportunity for the leadership of Junior Nordic to connect and work from a shared vision. Thanks to the APU Nordic Center for graciously hosting us. The next phase was to host "Coach Week" at each site through the week of Nov. 13. In the past, JN has had one large coach orientation meeting. Site Directors had been asking for more time to connect and collaborate with their staff, so in the spring we decided to try out having site-based coach orientations. The early reviews are overwhelmingly positive, despite the many curveballs Mother Nature threw at us with wild weather and road conditions.

I've already spoken about the amazing skis we've been able to add to our rental fleet, but we've also been investing in our games equipment for practices and upgrading our first aid packs that head coaches carry. Play is central to our vision of how children learn best, so the new games equipment is very welcome. Our first aid kits were in sore need of updating so that we could properly respond to emergencies on the trail. This has been possible thanks to a contribution from the Mike Martin Youth and Sports Endowment Fund and we are grateful for the support. Thanks also to Bernie's Pharmacy, a huge help sourcing first aid supplies for us and gave us an awesome discount.

Lastly, this season our coaches are getting new jackets. Unfortunately, the jackets weren't ready for the start of the season, but they will be a welcome and warm addition when they are ready in December. Our old jackets are beautiful, but they were too similar to the ones for the children. The new ones are also warmer, which our Polar Cubs and Otters coaches will especially like!

There are so many other things to be grateful for as we start the season. We are continuing our collaboration with Skiku at the Russian Jack Tues/Thur 4:30 p.m. site, which has allowed us to work with children in Anchorage who might otherwise not have the opportunity to ski in our program. Thanks to Great Harvest Bread Company's continued support, we were again able to do our Cookie Tours the first week of practice. The Cookie Tour is a short ski with a delicious cookie at the end that we use to do the preliminary sort of our groups. As you might imagine, it is incredibly popular with our skiers!

We're doing a single 15-week session again this year, taking time off along with the Anchorage School District for winter and spring breaks. Be sure to wave if you see us out on the trails! Learn more about NSAA Junior Nordic at **anchoragenordicski.com/programs/junior-nordic/**.

NSAA 2023 Solstice Tree Tour

Kincaid Park 12.17 4- 8pm

- Free parking and shuttles from Kulis and Kincaid Elementary parking lots 4-7:15 pm.
- Parking $10 CASH at Kincaid Park (space limited). Parking free at Kincaid after 7 pm.
- Free hot chocolate and s'mores along the 2.5 K loop.
- Beer garden with live music. $10 fills up your silipint with cheer!
- Ski or Bike from a different parking lot to avoid traffic.
- Remember to vote for the best tree/area on your way out! Over 30 trees will be LIT up!

Join us for the 28th annual Alaska Ski for Women

BY MOLLY MYLIUS
Director, Alaska Ski for Women

The Alaska Ski for Women is fun event that raises funds for NSAA and Alaska nonprofits working to end the cycle of domestic violence in our community. The 2024 event will take place on Feb. 3 and 4, and each day offers something special.

Saturday, Feb. 3: Friends and Family Ski: The course at Kincaid will be decorated and open to anyone who would prefer to avoid the crowds and ski independently. Skiers of any gender are invited to ski the course - bring the whole family!

Sunday, Feb. 4: Main Event: Our timed events, costume contest, and party wave are back this year. Timed events are for girls and women only; all youth under age 12 are welcome to register and participate in the party wave. Anyone not racing is encouraged to volunteer and/or cheer!

Registration details

• Registration opens January 1, 2024

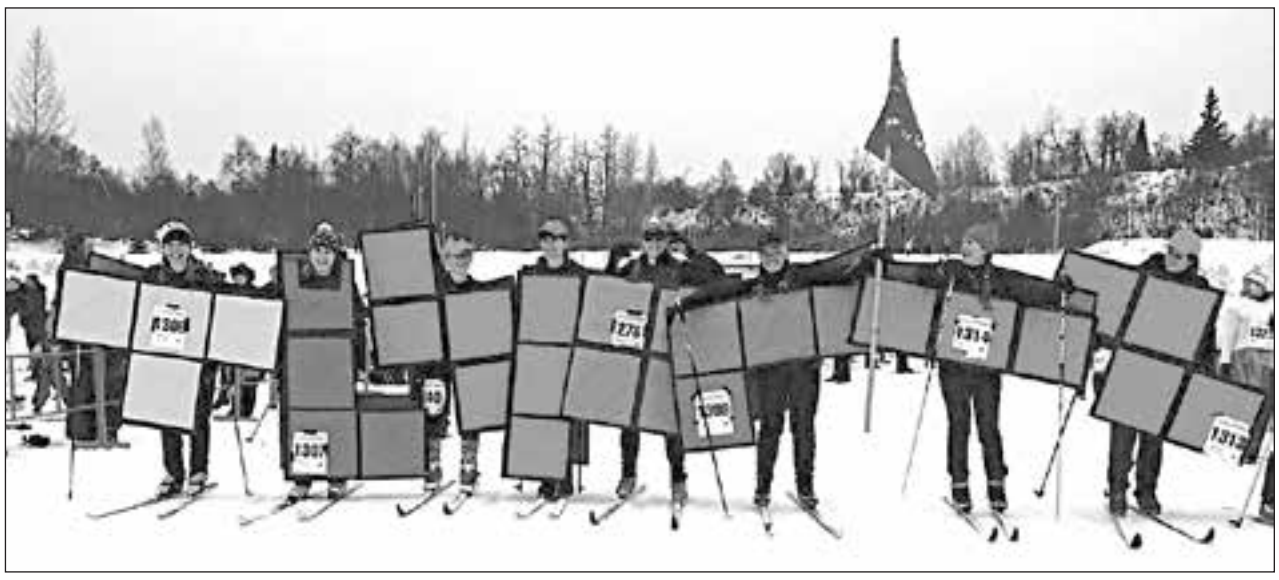
• Minimum Donation: $35 Adults 13+, $15 Youth 0-12

• The first 100 who register and donate $75 will receive a limited edition Alaska Ski for Women merchandise item

Event options

• Timed events include a 4 km skate race and 4 km classic race. Prizes will be awarded to the top three skiers in each timed event.

• The party wave will follow the timed event and costume parade. The party wave is an untimed fun ski along the 4 km course.



Fun event features

• Costume Contest: The costume contest will happen on Sunday, February 4th, so start planning your costumes! Categories include: Incredible Individual (1 person); Dynamic Duo (2 people); and Terrific Team (3+ people).

• Silent Auction: This year the silent auction will be conducted virtually, with items on display at bib pick up and at the chalet on Sunday. Bid on your favorite items and help us raise funds for the cause! Have a prize you'd like to donate? Contact silent auction lead Julie at bladeljulie@gmail.com.

• Merchandise: Colorful Alaska Ski for Women merchandise can be pre-ordered via the NSAA website, or purchased at bib pickup or the event on Sunday.

• Triple Patch: The Ski for Women event is the first in a series of four events for women to earn their patch in Alaska's Triple Patch program. The Triple Patch program provides a distinctive patch awarded to women and girls who complete three of the four designated sporting events in one calendar year: Ski for Women, Bike for Women, Run for Women, and the Gold Nugget Triathlon. Did you earn a patch in 2023? You should have received your patch in November. Questions or want to learn more? Visit http://triplefinish.com/.

• Chalet activities: Warm up and enjoy the festivities inside the Kincaid chalet on Sunday. We will have vendor booths, giveaways, merchandise, and a mimosa reception. The silent auction items will also be on display.

Learn more at **anchoragenordicski.com/events/alaska-ski-for-women/**.

NSAA to host 2024 Ski Jumping and Nordic Combined Junior Nationals

Nation's best young athletes will fly high Feb. 27-March 2

BY ZAK HAMMILL
Coach/Director, NSAA Jumping Program

This winter, we are hosting 2024 Ski Jumping and Nordic Combined Junior Nationals! Each year this event rotates through the five divisions, and this year it is Alaska's turn. This event kicks off with opening ceremonies on Tuesday, February 27, at Kincaid Park and wraps up on Saturday, March 2. We are expecting over 50 of the best junior athletes in the country!

Hosting this event means countless hours of planning. We are well underway in this process, but we could also use some help during the event. One role we are looking for help with is hill marking. This volunteer job puts you as close to the ski jumping action as possible! Hill markers stand next to the side boards on the landing hill and mark how far each jumper goes. No experience is necessary, but in an effort to have high quality marking, we are going to do hill mark training during two of our club ski jumping competitions leading up to Junior Nationals.

If this sounds interesting to you please reach out to Zak Hammill at akskijump@gmail.com. Or you can attend one of the two club competitions on January 7 and 28 starting at 10 a.m. Just ask for Zak or JR when you arrive at the ski jumps and they will get you squared away.

All the ski jumping and Nordic combined competitions will be open to the public, so even if you are not interested in volunteering we encourage the community to come out and enjoy the events.

Learn more about the Ski Jumping and Nordic Combined Junior Nationals at **anchoragenordicski.com/events/jumping-nationals/**.

Proud to Support NSAA and Anchorage skiers!
Offering a large menu of salads, appetizers, baskets, 35+ great sandwiches, Beyond Burgers, dairy & non-dairy ice cream treats and more!
Call 248-3068 for orders to go or visit www.tfalaska.com
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Tree-mendous workload to make our trails a dream

BY NSAA OPERATIONS

Yahoo! We're off to a great start this season. Skiers were on the trails, skiing in tracks by mid-November. Thank you, Mother Nature!

The early wet snow made a solid base after it froze and additional snow, like we encountered, required patience and a procedure. It was important to let it set and dry and not pack or groom too early to avoid creating a dense icy base. Once it dried out a bit, we first track packed the trails with snow machines, then added the compaction wing attachments to smooth the snow out. The strength and bonding of the base is directly related to its temperature. If the base is sufficient and the temperature drops, we will bring the snowcats out.

A benefit of the early snow is not having to start up the snowmaking equipment. If we don't get a meltdown, the only real reason for making snow would be to fill tunnels or to fortify the SML, should it need it. It's a costly and labor-intensive process so we're happy to have nature's provision.

The biggest obstacle to the wet snow has been the large number of trees and brush that came down across and into the trails. We spend a lot of time in the summer addressing the main offenders but it's hard to get them all. It took weeks to clear them off the trails enough to get the grooming equipment through and we'd like to thank all the volunteers who donated their time, energy, blood, sweat and tears. You guys rock and we sure appreciate you!

We're in the process of overhauling the Hillside Operations facility and happy to announce it is now insulated! Still hankering for heat and an insulated garage door, but those will have to wait for now. In the meantime, we're hoping the rest of the season continues on the same trajectory with good snow and favorable temperatures. We'll do our best to make it a skier's paradise out there.

Bill and his chainsaw

Insulating the Hillside facility.

Sisson after snow.

Downed tree at Kincaid Park.

The tale of the Tour trail

BY P.J. HILL

The Tony Knowles Coastal Trail was completed in 1988. Upon its completion members of the cross country skiing community in Anchorage started talking about and planning a long ski race across Anchorage, utilizing the new trail. For several years there had been a 50 km race out in Kincaid Park that consisted of skiing a number of loops within the park to total 50 kilometers, referred to at the time as the Anchorage Loppet (long race). Turnout for these events was fairly meager---20 or so. But once the coastal trail was finished a long "point to point' race certainly seemed possible. That winter Tom Peacock, the primary employee of the nordic ski club---a much smaller operation those days--- who was in charge of setting trails, organized the first race that would eventually become later known as the Tour of Anchorage.

The 50 km distance started at Service, and after skiing the Spencer Loop and getting back down to Service, the race wound its way through several trails in Far North Bicentennial, mainly going on trails that were used most of the winter by the ASDRA (the Alaskan Sled Dog Racing Association). By cobbling together parts of the mushing trails and other open areas they figured a way through Campbell Tract and Far North Bicentennial Park---but crossing Tudor road was problematic, as the pedestrian bridge at Tudor and Elmore had yet to be built. The racers either had to take off skis and run across or they skied over on carpet (which was done in subsequent years, until the bridge was built in the mid 90's).

For the first few years the race used part of dog trails and other open spaces, but there was no dedicated trail between Service High and university trails (around APU and UAA). Even a lot of the trails around the university were single tracks, as skate skiing and wider trails had only been developed a few years earlier, and it took a few years to get those trails widened. The Tour trail to Tudor Road did not exist. There was a ski track from Service to the university for only a few days—the day of the race and a few days after. Setting through the Campbell Tract was limited to only when the Tour was scheduled.

We started spending time during the next couple of summers running and hiking through the Campbell Tract, exploring and route finding. Richard Bishop and Guy Thibideaux and I spent a lot of time out there exploring. There were parts of the "Old Rondy Trail" that were overgrown, there were old roads and powerline easements that were probably made by the military during and after the war that were visible, but needed a lot of work. Then there were areas where there had never been any trail. We spent a couple summers exploring and eventually put out flagging marking all of these segments until we had the route laid out. In the fall of1990 we contacted everyone we could think of (in the ski community) to meet near Tudor road on a Saturday morning and bring their chain saw. We roughed out the trail from Tudor Road through Campbell Tract. There were four creek crossings with no bridges, but we had a rough trail.

In 1991 Anchorage hosted the World Masters Cross Country Skiing Championships at Kincaid Park. The 50 km race from Service to Kincaid was the culmination of the competition. There were no bridges over any of the creeks in the Campbell Tract, but with everything frozen. There were a couple of logs over the Middle Fork of Cambell Creek that helped, but the crossings were a bit sketchy. All in all the 50 km race came off successfully.

The year following the World Masters competition we started working on building bridges. Jim Burkholder contacted Kim Berg (the owner of a construction company), who had worked with the ski club on several projects. Berg Construction had a number of steel beams that we could use. In the fall of 1992, with some helicopter time donated by ERA Aviation we placed two 30 foot I-beams across the North Fork of Campbell Creek. The Middle Fork of Campbell

See **TRAIL,** Page 7

PHOTO BY **SARA MILLER**

Around 81 athletes showed up from APU, UAA and Alaska Winter Stars for some preseason time trials – and foggy, fun and fast skiing – recently at Kincaid Park. NSAA provided the grooming while the collective group of coaches on-hand helped skiers smooth out the early-season kinks and get ready to rock the busy racing season ahead.

TRAIL

Continued from Page 6

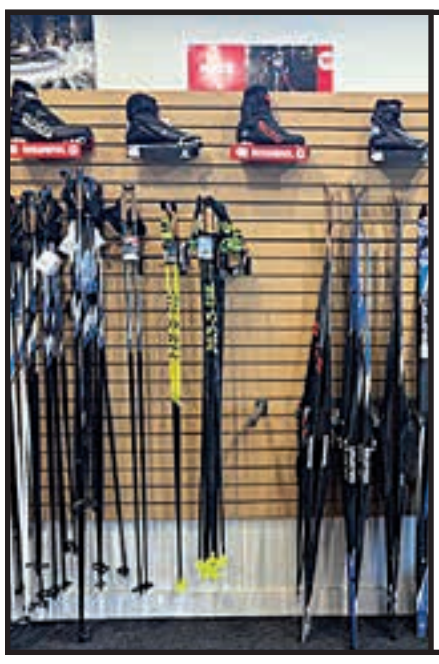
creek was more problematic, because we needed longer beams. Jim and Kim Berg found some longer beams at another construction company and with some "horse trading" were able to secure them for the middle fork bridge. The beams were hauled into a highway department facility just off Tudor r near the Campbell Tract. The 16" i- beams were 50 foot long and weighed 3500 pounds each. ERA's helicopter was too small to lift the larger beams, but we were able to get Evergreen Helicopters (with a moderate cash payment) to use their larger helicopter to help with beam placement over the middle fork of Campbell Creek. Eric Menck spent a great deal of time in the laydown yard drilling holes in each beams top surfaces so planks could be attached to the beams, which would allow a wooden deck to be nailed to the beams.

Additionally, we found a 12 ft long plastic culvert (in the yard of a construction company located out on Lake Otis). They were able to donate this plastic 24" culvert went in the small water crossing just (about 100 yards) south of the large middle fork bridge. At the time there was a small trickle of water which came upstream from the middle fork bridge. Over the past couple of years that small trickle has expanded to carry at least half the water that was originally in the middle fork. That small culvert was eventually replaced by the BLM with a wooden bridge, which was subsequently replaced by the third bridge of the new triple bridge project that was just finished.

When the first race from Service to Kincaid was started a shorter race (25 km race was started at Russian Jack which also ended at Kincaid. Both races were initially free style races. In the mid 90's the start of the 25 km race was moved to APU, and a classical 25 km race was added. A couple years later a 40 km free style race was added, starting at Service High, and going directly out to Kincaid, bypassing the Spencer Loop all together, so now the current format is 4 races, and there is the whole Fat Tire Bike part of the race. All using the dedicated Tour Trail.

An Alaska classic returns:
Oosik Classic on March 9, 2024

The Oosik Classic Ski Race will be held March 9, 2024, starting at high noon. Keep an eye on **denalinordicskiclub.org/oosik-ski-race/** for more details in the weeks ahead.



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Swing on in!

Juneau Nordic Ski Club

Juneau, Alaska

P.O. Box 21262
Juneau, AK 99802
jnski.org
info@jnski.org

Mission: To enhance, develop, and promote Nordic skiing in Juneau.

Goal: Great Nordic trails for all skiers!

AROUND THE CAPITAL CITY

Snow on the ground, skiing in the air

The snow is here, the first tracks have been set, and we are skiing! Like every fall, we've been busy getting things in order so you could ski the moment the snow flies. And it's an equally busy December, so read on for the juicy bits and sweet details…

Eight reasons to show up on Dec. 6

Join us from 5:30-7:30 p.m. at the Alaskan Brew Co. tasting room (on the way to Costco) as we celebrate the start of another ski season! If that's not enough to get you out on a Wednesday night, here are seven more reasons to join in on the fun: 2. Win a door prize! 3. Be the first to get your hands on the newest club swag. 4. Find out who won the photo contest. 5. Buy/Sell/Swap the ski gear you need (to get rid of) this winter. 6. Enjoy a fine brew (gluten-free or -full) from your fav local brewery. 7. Renew your membership! 8. Taste what your neighbors made for dinner, and bring your own best dish to share in return!

Adult League 2.0

Join us for the second season of the JNSC Adult League. We offer a winter of building community, technique refinement, and workouts designed by a crew of seasoned coaches! Sessions will be held every Thursday from 5:15-6:45 p.m. beginning Jan. 4 and ending March 14. Other perks of this program include two wax clinics held in December and February, training plans sent out weekly, and league swag. Registration is now open at jnski.org.

All is go for Adult League 2.0.

This group is open to a wide-range of ski abilities, however it is not considered a "learn to ski group" (Eaglecrest has great lessons for that!). Skiers should consider themselves comfortable on skis on a variety of terrain. It's not about how fast you can ski but a desire to have fun, improve your conditioning, and get out with others looking to do the same. (I mean, come on, look how much fun we're having!)

MMS Intertie

The JNSC Trails Subcommittee has been hard at work getting plans in place to build Juneau's newest ski trail! Thanks to collaborations with the City and Borough of Juneau, the US Forest Service, Trail Mix, and many other partners, work is underway to develop a skiable trail connecting Skater's Cabin to the Montana Creek road near the Hank Harmon Rifle Range. A key part of the JNSC's MMS (Mendenhall - Montana - Spaulding) Intertie, this trail will be a giant leap forward towards our vision of skiing 50 kilometers without ever skiing the same trail twice nor having to kick off your skis. Special thanks to Roman Motyka, Mike Hekkers, Joel Nudelman, and Alan Steffert for their hard work getting this dream of a trail off the ground!

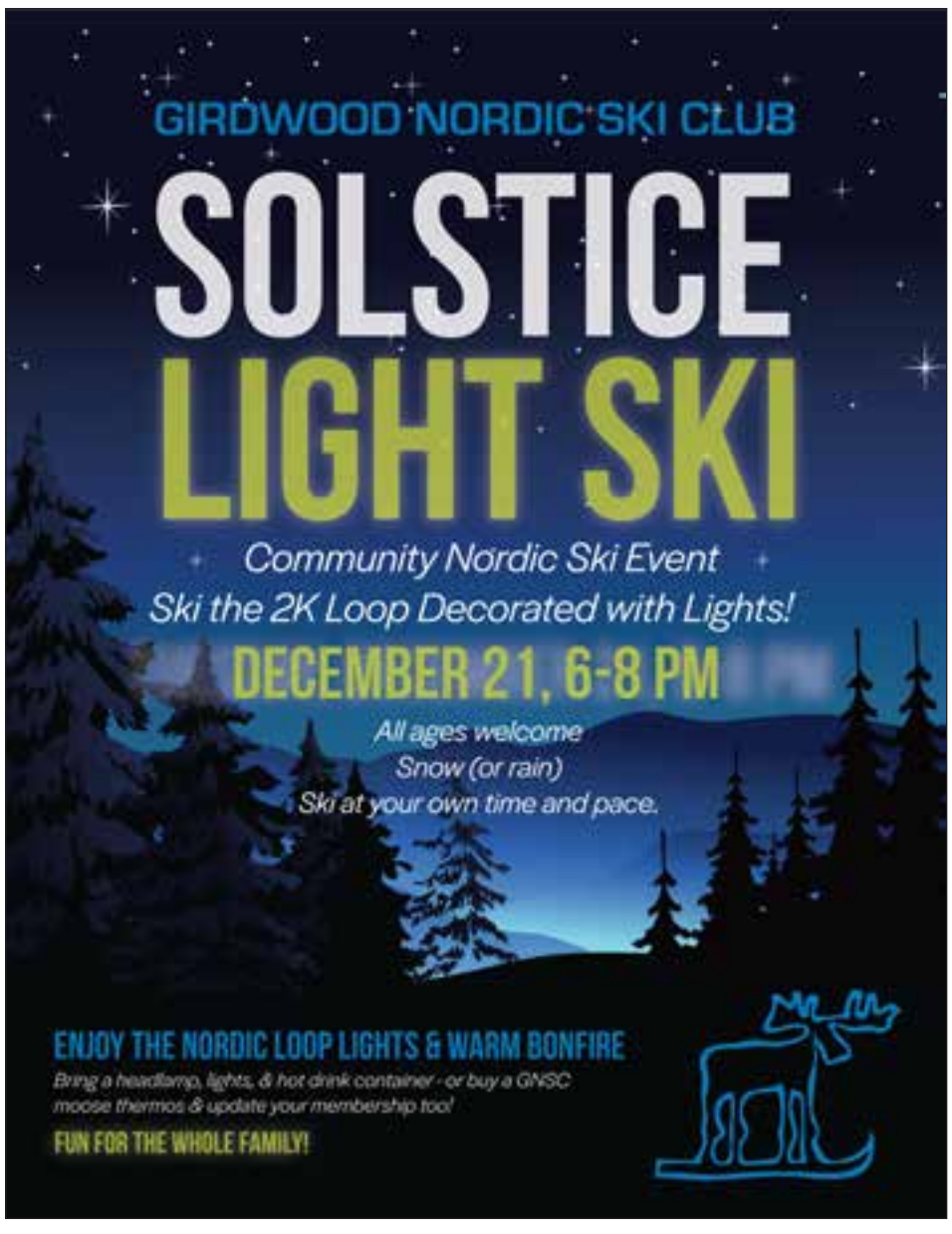
People's Choice Award

Thanks to everyone for their spectacular photo submissions this year. We had so many (too many?) great shots to pick from, so we're doing something we've never done before. We're asking for your help – and it won't cost you a dime! Visit www.jnski.org to peruse this year's submissions, cast your vote for best-in-class, and then join us Dec. 6 to find out who won!

Super Volunteers!

When we say our club runs on volunteers, we mean it! Just check out what super volunteers Odin Brudie, Jack Kreinheder, Wayne Carnes, and Tim Hall accomplished in late October up Montana Creek. They were able to shore up washouts and clean up landslides so our grooming equip-

See **JUNEAU,** Page 13



Girdwood Nordic Ski Club

Girdwood, Alaska

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skigirdwood.org

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AROUND GIRDWOOD

Community steps up to get trails cleared, skiing started

BY DEB ESSEX
President, Girdwood Nordic Skiing Club

Last season we groomed over 400 hours from November 12-May 7. Definitely our longest season and the most hours on snow machines and snow-dogs. We don't even count the hours of shoveling out the conexes, helping to get fuel once a week, maintaining the equipment, shoveling low spots and river crossings, or felling trees that block the trails. Truthfully, that would probably almost double our winter volunteer hours. I bet our little 12 kilometer trail system has the most volunteer hours per kilometer in Alaska. But groomers are a humble bunch and hard to track. When a new sign is made, it just magically appears. When a machine needs repair, a garage opens and it's back in action. When we get back-to-back-to-back winter storms bringing four feet of snow, we are dead in the frozen water without these humble volunteers.

We start each season looking for experienced riders that can navigate deep snow and set the route on the wetlands. This year, we were lucky enough to get a call from Justin Siemens, owner of Glacier City Snowmobile Tours. He realized we were staring at the wall of light fluffy snow, and stuck without machines that can compact it. So he and his guides volunteered to set the Moose Meadow route, and give the 5K Loop a few laps. That's when he reported about the large hemlocks across the trail. About 12 of them. Not only blocking the trails, but buried in snow.

So I want to start this season by thanking all of the volunteers that have been shoveling snow, and sawing trees. Thank you to all the locals that have been snowshoeing and tandem skiing to compact trails. Thank you Justin and Glacier City Guides for helping us get to the trees that need clearing. Thank you to Matt Moscoso, owner of Tree-B-Gone for aiding with the large hemlock trees. Thank you to groomers Jim, Luke, Tim, Nels, Ben (with Jill helping, of course), John, Ethen, Eben, Kyle, and Shannon for the back-to-back-to-back long shoveling days to get our trails open while wading in three feet of snow. Tomorrow, November 17, will be the first time we can connect the trail system. We are grateful to the amazing volunteers in this town, and the community coming together to help get us rolling.

We hope to see you on the trails, and at Girdwood's festival Holiday Bazaar (hint – we have new hats, ski ties, and socks!) and the Annual Solstice Event.

Luke Peroni wading in snow and clearing brush.

Volunteers were busy clearing trees from our trails.

Mia Stiassny barely broke her stride while skiing over a large stack of hemlocks.

Kachemak Nordic Ski Club

Homer, Alaska

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kachemaknordicskiclub@gmail.com

AROUND THE BAY

It's skiing time thanks to our volunteers, members

Kachemak Nordic Ski Club's 2023-2024 season is off and gliding smoothly along thanks to our amazing members and volunteers. A lot of work goes into a smooth ski trail that we don't always see. There are monthly meetings of KNSC's board creating budgets and making sure equipment is purchased and ready to go; there are trail volunteers hacking back the ever-encroaching alders; there are bridges to rebuild, outhouses to build, and machines to be serviced. And when the snow flies, as it finally has, miraculously all that work leads to our beautiful trails. With more work that is! Homer's variable marine climate loves to put KNSC's volunteer groomers to the test and they always show us how awesome they are! A lot of thought and discussion goes on behind the scenes on which machines are best to use at certain times, when it's appropriate to roll the snow, when it needs to be dragged, and when it's ready for the ginzu groomers. And sometimes when it needs to just be left alone. As always, our volunteers are doing a fantastic job so make sure to thank them!

And, of course, none of this would be possible without your support. Thanks to all the members that have renewed, or newly joined this year! We're on a great pace to keep growing the club which helps KNSC keep our membership fee levels from increasing. If you haven't already, join today!

Annual meeting packed with fun, club activity

While snow on the ground is probably the most important starting point of the season, the annual meeting, which happened Nov. 11 is another momentous and fun kick-off to the many ski get-togethers to come. After many years of virtual events, and a small turnout last year as we returned in-person, it was fantastic to see so many of our members show up this year! KNSC really packed the Bidarka Inn's Glacierview room with great people, a great potluck dinner, and great fun. It's really great to see so many skiers, young and old, getting together and celebrating the season to come and what skiing means to them all. There were fantastic door prizes and silent auction items donated by our amazing local businesses, and outgoing KNSC Mike Gracz drummed up some fantastic bidding for many desirable big-ticket items in some live auction action, featuring

this year's Member's Pin artwork by local artist and skier Kim Schuster.

On top of the fun and fundraising the annual meeting brings, there was also some business that was taken care of. We had presentations from Mike on the state of the club (great!), some of the latest projects and expenditures (new machines and an outhouse at McNeil among others), and KNCS treasurer Peter laid out the financial situation (see other article for more details, but looking good). The Homer High School Mariner's Ski team also presented with an ask for some financial support from the club for the purchase of ski equipment for their athletes. The support was passed unanimously by the members demonstrating that the membership supports the clubs efforts to lower the entry barriers for Homer skiers, especially the youth. As part of that, the members also heard about the expanded Ski KIds Equipment Rental program (SKIER). SKIER is the new name for the old Jr. Nordic Rentals as it has expanded to get skis to youngsters age 3-13. KNSC has already rented skis to over 200 kids and expect to keep adding plenty more. We look forward to seeing them put to good use!

Some of those skis might get used on KNSC's new program: Biathlon! Biathlon is a very popular winter sport that combines cross country skiing and rifle shooting and KNSC is excited that some volunteers have brought it back to the bay! McNeil Canyon Biathlon installed an 8 Point Electronic Rifle range which is on the groomed KNSC ski trails by McNeil Canyon Elementary School. The range is fully electronic and the rifles used are equipped with an infrared camera connected to the target. The electronic targets are installed in the stadium at McNeil Elementary School which allows easy access for training and use for user groups of all ages and McNeil El. has adopted Biathlon into their after-school programs. The Biathlon team is looking forward to opening up the range to the KNSC community with planned range times and a Biathlon camp over the Winter Holiday break.

KNSC also recognized outgoing board members Mike Gracz, Derek Bynagle, Melissa Cloud, and Cameale Johnson. Elected to replace them are new board members Anna Lewald, Anna McCarthy, Katie Martin, and Andrew Rothenberger. We're excited for all the energy and organizational experience they're bringing to the club!!

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Alaska Nordic Skier / Newsletter
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School Races Coordinator
Jan Spurkland

Winter Backcountry Film Festival
Dan Del Missier

Winter Gear & Ski Swap
Mike Illg (Homer Community Recreation)

Friday Night Lights
Melissa Cloud

Besh Cup Races
Jan Spurkland

Kachemak Bay Ski for Women
(Benefit for Haven House)
Kris Holderied / Shelly Laukitis

Wine & Cheese and Wooden Ski Tour
Mike Gracz

Kachemak Bay Ski Marathon
TBD

Marathon Connector Trail
TBD

Sea to Ski Triathlon
Derek Bynagle

Basic expenses last season were $62 per KNSC member

BY MIKE GRACZ

The members of Kachemak Nordic Ski Club deserve to know how their membership dollars are used to keep our great trails groomed and for tons of fun skiing. KNSC purchased a new Scandic 900 snowmachine, a new Polaris ATV, and about 120 new sets of Junior Nordic skis and boots last season! We have a similar number on order for this season.

As usual, the largest slice of the revenue pie this year came from your Membership. Last season set another record! When I began on the Board of Directors in 2014, KNSC struggled to top $20,000 in membership; this coming season we may top $60,000! Thank you! It is your membership that really keeps this club running financially.

The next largest revenue slice is from Contributions, which includes money from the CAP – the State of Alaska Community Assistance Program – and our generous local businesses, such as Homer Saw and Cycle, Uncle Herb's, The Grog Shop, Bear Creek Winery, Moore and Moore Services, Alaska EcoForestry and Quick Tow, and from The City of Homer, and The Homer Foundation. A few individuals also contribute substantially such as Cameale Johnson and Sara Jackinsky, who both donated more than $5,000.

Events and programs bring in revenue, and last season some events made a few thousand dollars, especially the Annual Meeting, the Wine and Cheese and Wooden Ski Tour, and the Marathon. In the non-profit world, events are put on for fun and not so much to earn money, but it's nice when they do.

Program revenue increased last year primarily due to the expanded Jr. Nordic Gear Rental Program, (now named SKIER- Ski KIds Equipment Rental) and the continued popularity of the Junior Nordic program, which now takes place at three separate locations.

Comparing the pie for revenue to the one for expenses, you can see that program expenses exceeded their revenues by quite a lot, but events more than paid for themselves; generating a surplus to help meet the expense of keeping the trails groomed for the programs and events. The reason for the large program expense was almost entirely due to the purchase of more SKIER skis and boots. That program will continue to run a large deficit this year compared to revenues because KNSC continues to have the goal of providing skis and boots at low cost for every skier aged 3-middle school who wants to try skiing. Demand is incredible!

For ski gear, KNSC continued to be supported by a generous bequest ($45,000) from Ingeborg Rathke. Current years' SKIER expense will additionally be offset by a gift of $9,300 from the 100 Men Who Care in memory of Gary Thomas. Currently the SKIER program provides skis and boot at an average cost of around $220 per skier. Little kids' classic skis and boots are very popular and are also inexpensive, which helps offset the much higher cost of Middle School skate gear. The average cost of gear should be sustainable with the rental fee of $25 per skier if KNSC replaces gear every nine years. In reality, gear may need replacement sooner, and the expansion of the program may drive average costs higher, but there appears to be tremendous community support for the expansion of this low-barrier program!

This past season, the "trails and facilities" slice of the expense pie was about the same as equipment maintenance, which has historically been the biggest expense. KNSC has needed to upgrade the road access at the McNeil trails because dogs are no longer allowed on school property. Moreover, plowing was expensive last season due to all the great snow, and a greater than normal amount was put toward brushing and smoothing trails. This additional work extends the ski season because smooth trails can be groomed with less snow cover. Former KNSC board member Cameale Johnson was especially active with trail maintenance at Eveline State Recreation Site, and with getting the Wolf Ridge trails on CIRI land mowed. Be sure to thank her when you notice how nice the skiing is on those trails now!

Depreciation comprises the next largest slice of the expense pie. This year, KNSC spent about $16,000 on a snow machine and $18,000 on a new ATV. KNSC now seems to be able to replace two machines each year from just membership contributions. In the not-so-distant past, KNSC typically needed help to purchase just one. Your membership response and contributions have been terrific! KNSC board members and volunteers are enjoying this gratitude from the ski community! We really are a community that comes together to provide great skiing for everyone!

In the 2022-23 season, the basic operating costs of insurance, keeping the fuel tanks filled and the lights on, the parking areas plowed, maintaining our equipment and trail systems, and covering the depreciation of equipment, but not including events and programs, or capital expenses, fell to around $62 for each individual member ($248 for a family with four members). That is about $25 per member lower than last year mainly due to increased membership, and higher than normal costs last year.

Thank you for your continued support and enjoy the fine trails! Ski you out there!

Mat-Su Ski Club
Palmer, Alaska

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AROUND THE VALLEY

Season launch a great success!

Reflecting on the incredible success of our recently concluded Season Launch and Autumn Gathering – what a whirlwind it was! We are immensely grateful for the overwhelming turnout of supporters that made this event truly memorable. Our chalet event broke attendance records, and the atmosphere was filled with the warmth of shared potluck feasts, delightful pizza, and countless smiles. The connections made with both familiar faces and new friends added an extra layer of joy to the gathering.

A special appreciation goes to Ben Arians, our local Start wax representative, for the fantastic kick wax demo that garnered much enthusiasm. The generosity of our sponsors, including Alaska Railroad, Salomon, Backcountry Bike and Ski, and local artisan ski racks, contributed to the excitement with a treasure trove of new merchandise and raffle prizes.

The event featured insightful reports on the Club's treasury and activities, providing a glimpse into the thriving community spirit we've cultivated together. We extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who participated, making this gathering a resounding success. The support from each and every one of you is truly appreciated. Curious about the full details? Dive into the complete annual report on our website. And, of course, find out who emerged as the fortunate winner of our epic membership drive prizes!

Exciting news: A new PistenBully100!

Get ready to be awestruck by the incredible generosity of the Mat-Su Health Foundation and the Mat-Su Trails and Parks Foundation. Thanks to their support, we're thrilled to announce the acquisition of our brand new PB 100 without the need for a loan.

The decision to invest in this PistenBully nearly a year ago was with a specific goal in mind – supporting the upcoming 2024 Mat-Su Arctic Winter Games. With this addition to our grooming fleet, we're ensuring top-notch grooming for the Nordic events, weather permitting. The presence of a second PB will not only elevate our capabilities for Arctic Winter Games but also enable us to provide world-class grooming simultaneously at GPRA, Independence Mine, and Archangel Road throughout the entire winter season.

PistenBullys are the ultimate solution for handling heavy snowfalls and tackling freeze-thaw cycles. Their ability to chew up ice and plow away hard-packed drifts from wind storms surpasses the capabilities of our snow machines and tracked ATV's pulling drags. This marks a significant enhancement in our grooming capabilities, setting the stage for an outstanding winter season.

GPRA stadium expansion: Overcoming summer setbacks

Despite facing challenges during the wet summer months, the GPRA stadium expansion and flattening project persevered and achieved completion during the crisp and dry weeks of October. While the excavation of the new parking lot yielded less fill than anticipated, resulting in the stadium being slightly less flat than initially planned, the overall area has still seen a significant enlargement.

In addition to the expansion, we've introduced a new snowmobile parking/storage structure in the form of a conex, providing enhanced facilities for winter storage. Several light poles have been relocated to optimize the layout, contributing to a more functional and spacious environment. As an added feature, a timing pod is currently under construction, with plans for a crane to carefully place it atop the snowmobile garage upon completion.

This ambitious storage and timing building project has been made possible through generous grants from the Mat-Su Borough and the Rasmuson Foundation, showcasing the community's commitment to advancing and improving our facilities. Despite the initial setbacks, the completed project promises to enhance the overall experience at GPRA for all winter enthusiasts.

The Buchanan Family: Outdoor enthusiasts and dedicated volunteers!

Rebecca Buchanan and her family are the embodiment of a love for the outdoors, quality family time, and a commitment to community service. Their journey with the Mat-Su Ski Club began at the inception of the Junior Nordics program at Shaw Elementary, where Rhett took on the role of a volunteer coach for the kids. Witnessing the program's rapid growth, Rebecca stepped up to volunteer on the committee, contributing to the development and coaching aspects.

Reflecting on the positive changes over the years, Rebecca has seen the Junior Nordics program expand from 30 kids to an impressive 450-plus. This growth has brought about numerous improvements, fostering a thriving Nordic ski culture in the valley that embraces participants of all ages and abilities.

When asked about the future of the club, Rebecca expresses a hope to continue organizing activities that unite the community, especially during the extended winter season. She emphasizes the importance of providing opportunities that encourage people to spend more time outdoors.

On a personal note, Rebecca and Rhett's involvement in Junior Nordics started as a way to offer their children unique opportunities. As their kids age out of the program as participants, it's heartening to see them return as volunteers and coaches, passing on their knowledge to the next generation. The Buchanan family understands the value of volunteering and its positive impact on the community.

A heartfelt thank you to Rebecca and her family for their enduring contributions to the Mat-Su Ski Club and the community at large. Your dedication and passion are truly appreciated!

Upcoming Mat-Su Ski Club events:

SKI101 clinic — 6:30 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 7, on snow at GPRA. A follow-up to our in-store SKI101 clinic: Are you an absolute beginner skier and looking for some basic Nordic skiing instruction? Then look no further! Ski101 on snow is happening at GPRA. This free clinic offers a demonstration on how to put your skis on snow for the first time, how to make those first glides, and get started tips on falling and balance. If you have any questions or need gear for the clinic, feel free to contact info@matsuski.org.

Holiday Tour of Lighted Trees — Friday, Dec. 22, at GPRA. The holidays are a time for lights, fun, and skiing ! Come and go between 4-7pm and tour the lighted trees on the Pioneer Loop at Government Peak Recreation Area. The Pioneer Loop is a just over one mile, multi-use loop suitable for all levels of skiers, walkers and bikers. This is a free community event and all are welcome! Tree sponsorships are available. Please email info@matsuski.org if interested.

Icicle Double Community Ski Race — Dec. 30-31, at GPRA. Join the winter fun at the 2023 Icicle Double Ski Event on Dec. 30 (Classic) and Dec. 31 (Freestyle)! Whether you're a pro or a first-timer, our revamped event offers exciting distances for everyone — 5k, 7.5k, or the ultimate 15k. Plus, score a stylish headband! After conquering the slopes, stick around for the legendary after-party with hot food. Secure your spot with early bird discounts until Dec. 28. Prices go up from Dec. 29, but the fun doesn't stop! Students (24 and under) get special pricing. Choose your adventure, spread the word, and let's make the Icicle Double a winter celebration to remember! Keep an eye on our wesbsite for registration link.

JUNEAU

Continued from Page 9

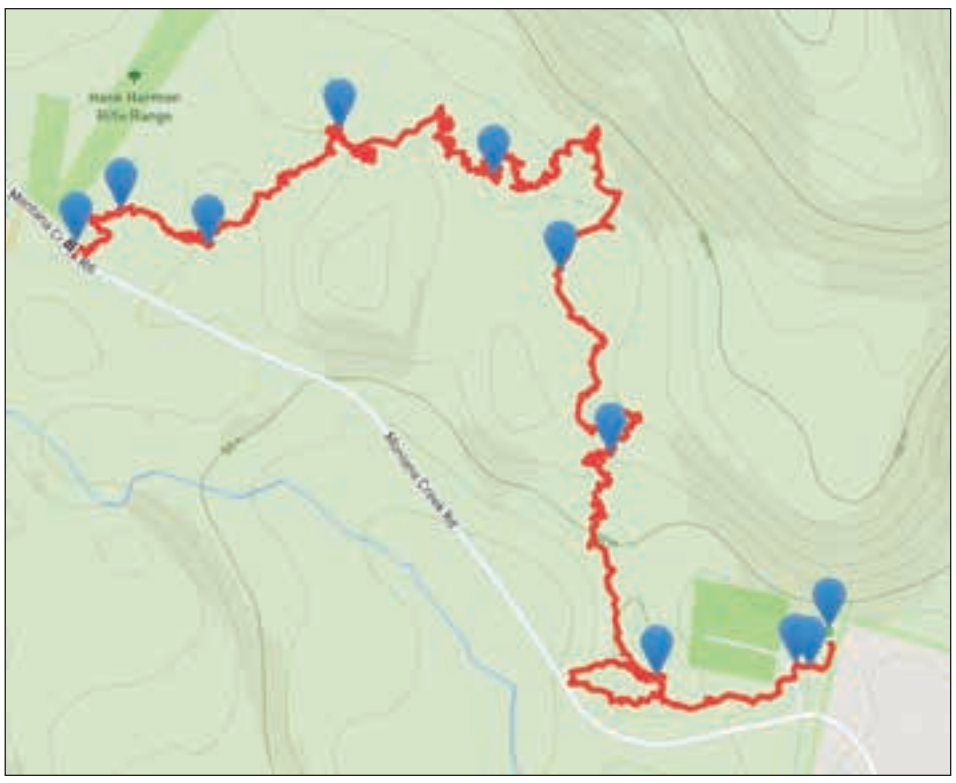
ment can safely lay the corduroy you so desperately pine for this winter. Special thanks to Lindy Jones, Trail Mix, and the CBJ Parks & Rec Department for lending some key pieces of equipment to get the job done. Nicely done, gents!

Trail Mix shout out

It's pretty amazing the thousands upon thousands of kilometers, over dozens of winters, our all-volunteer crew has managed to groom since our club's inception in 1995. Like we said above - we run on volunteers! Yet, as we continue to grow the number of trails we groom, the time has come to bring in some additional resources to ensure Alaska's Capital City continues to get the kind of winter trail maintenance we deserve. Which is why we are excited to announce a new partnership with Trail Mix to help coordinate our trail grooming efforts!

So, what does this mean for the average trail user like yourself? It means we can expand the number of groomed ski trails throughout our borough without sacrificing the timeliness or quality of our grooming. We are grateful for Trail Mix's collaborative ethos and look forward to building on this new relationship.

P.S. We still need people like you – volunteers looking to help groom our trails. If you are interested or would like to learn more, send us an email at info@jnski.org. Ski on!



MMS Intertie

The AARP Angle

Contributed by Linda Kruger – Greetings! For those who may not know me, I'm the Juneau coordinator for the AARP Alaska Juneau Community Action Team (CAT). I'm excited to have this opportunity and will try to communicate information of interest and benefit to skiers of all ages. My background includes outdoor recreation and research. I will be sharing bits of both.

This month, I'm focused on Thanksgiving and the benefits of expressing gratitude. Recent research has identified many positive mental and physical benefits of expressing gratitude including reduced stress, improved sleep, mood and immunity, increased overall well-being and mental health and the benefits ripple out from us to influence others, and on and on. Gratitude can decrease depression, anxiety, difficulties with chronic pain and risk of disease. If a pill could do this, everyone would be taking it!

Like other outdoor activities, skiing encompasses many opportunities to express gratitude. Take a moment to be grateful for the amazing trails and great ski opportunities we have. Appreciate our amazing natural environment, the trails, the trail groomers, and the others out sharing the experience of the Juneau outdoors with us. As the snow makes its way down the mountains appreciate the changing season that will bring snow for winter fun and enjoyment.

Budding Biathlon program

Contributed by Jordan Tanguay – An exciting addition to this season's middle and high school ski teams is an official biathlon program! Like to ski, and want to try out your marksmanship skills too? Get this: biathletes combine skiing and shooting, competing under the pressure of the clock, balancing speed on the race course with accuracy on the range. It's fun with a side of finesse! Biathlon specific practices will be 6-7:30 p.m. Thursday at the indoor rifle range and 2:30-4:30 p.m. Sunday at the outdoor range. (These are in addition to the requirement skiers participate in the normal Nordic ski teams.)

Like all our programs, it is volunteers that keep us shooting straight. We need: Range Safety Officers to supervise while on the shooting line; Setup crews for Sundays at the outdoor biathlon range; Steering committee members interested in helping the team grow.

If you are interested in more information and/or would like to help out this winter, contact Jordan (jordan.tanguay22@gmail.com) or Steve (907-500-4488).

STATEWIDE

Besh Cup registration is open, races arrive Dec. 16-17

BY LAURI BASSETT
CCAK

Registration is open for the ConocoPhillips Besh Cup race series! The December 16 and 17 opening races are part of the Nordic Skiing Association of Anchorage's Winterstart SuperTour, which is the opening event of the U.S. Ski & Snowboard SuperTour. Elite athletes from Alaska and Outside will compete on the world class trails of Kincaid Park.

The deadline to enter for the first weekend of racing is midnight Wednesday, Dec. 13. Race day registration is not available for Besh Cup races; and all participants need to secure either a General or Competitive license from U.S. Ski & Snowboard. Visit **crosscountryalaska.org** for more information about the license you should have; and visit the US Ski & Snowboard website for specific questions you have about getting the license.

Besh Cup series T-shirts

Skiers who register for all six races receive a Besh Cup series T-shirt designed by Rebecca Rorabaugh. All U12 and younger skiers who register for any number of races receive a Besh Cup series T-shirt designed by Becca Rorabaugh.

Team Alaska qualification

When the 2024 ConocoPhillips Besh Cup racing season begins, athletes will be looking to fill 74 positions across the two teams representing Alaska at post-season competition. The Arctic Winter Games will be held in the Mat-Su Valley in early March, and 24 skiers (4 male and 4 female skiers per age group) will qualify to make this team in the U14, the U16 and the U18 age groups.

The U.S. Junior Nationals Championships are scheduled for the same timeframe in Lake Placid, NY. This team is comprised of 50 skiers in the U16, the U18, and the U20 age groups. The U16 age group will take 8 male and 8 female skiers and the combined U18/U20 age group will take 17 male and 17 female skiers. The U20 age group qualification standards are that the first year U20 athletes must place in the top 14 of the Team Alaska points list, and the second year U20 athletes must place in the top 10 of the Team Alaska points list. U18 athletes, regardless of birth year are eligible to make the team.

Please visit **crosscountryalaska.org** to view the Team Alaska Selection Criteria document for the specifics about team selection as they were updated by the Cross Country Alaska Competition Committee.

Other routes to Team Alaska Junior Nationals

Athletes who attend U.S. Senior Nationals in January and finish in the top 30 of the final World Junior Championships (WJC) list will be highlighted on the Team Alaska points list as qualifying for Team Alaska.

- The criteria set by U.S. Ski & Snowboard states that athletes who are ranked between 1 and 20 on the final WJC do not count toward the team size quota (prequalifiers). The team size is expanded by the athletes who prequalify.
- The criteria set by Cross Country Alaska criteria states that skiers who are ranked between 21 and 30 on the final WJC do count toward the team size quota. (autoqualifiers)
- The criteria set by U.S. Ski & Snowboard states skiers who are named and attend the U18 Nations' Cup or the World Junior teams are prequalifiers.
- The criteria set by U.S. Ski & Snowboard states that biathlon or Nordic combined skiers who are named and attend the World Junior teams are prequalifiers for Junior Nationals.

Other ConocoPhillips Besh Cup races

Jan. 20-21 — Lookout Trails, Homer (Register by January 17)
Feb. 3-4 — Birch Hill, Fairbanks (Register by January 31)

Tuesday Night Ski Races

At press time, these dates are being finalized for the CCAK/UAA Tuesday Night Ski Race series. These monthly races are hosted by the UAA Ski Team (Nordic and Alpine!) as a fundraiser and community builder. Thanks to a generous donation by ConocoPhillips Alaska kids under 18 ski free! Visit **crosscountryalaska.org** for dates and registration information.

Eagle River Nordic Ski Club

Eagle River, Alaska

P.O. Box 770117, Eagle River, Alaska 99577
Club hotline — 689-7660
Junior nordic hotline — 689-7661
cernsc.org

AROUND EAGLE RIVER

ER JN kicks off season with big group of young skiers, coaches

The Chugiak Eagle River Nordic Ski Club's Junior Nordic program will officially kick off its season Dec. 11 at Beach Lake Trails in Chugiak. For the second season in a row, the Junior Nordic program rapidly reached its capacity of 300 skiers between the ages of 4 to 14, filling groups from beginning Polar Cubs to more advanced skaters in the Comp group. The season will run until March 7, 2024.

As with past seasons, the Junior Nordic program is driven by more than 40 volunteer coaches, board members and support personnel who dedicate at least two nights a week under the lights of Beach Lake Trails.

New leadership guides club into exciting season

This is the first season for the new leadership team, led by Board President Kristi Brown, who was elected last spring, taking the reigns from Jason Dennis who held the position since 2014. Aurora Agee has assumed the role as Junior Nordic Director, taking over for longtime CERNSC volunteer Ted Stille. Other new board members this year include: Alan Brown, Lucy Galloway, Jess Hutching, Brian Slater, Mike Wright.

Complementing the club's Junior Nordic efforts, Andy Hall will lead a renewed Master's Program on Tuesday and Thursday evenings. Club members will also host multiple ski tours through multiple scenic areas throughout the Chugiak/Eagle River area. Tours are open CERNSC member of all ski levels.

For more information on the Junior Nordic program, the Masters program or ski tours, please visit CERNSC.org or email the Board at Cernordicskiclub@gmail.com.

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RUNNERS' EDGE ALASKA
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Winter Warrior Workouts take your skiing, and whole body, to new heights

We are super excited to partner with NSAA for the next 6 weeks! Come join us for Winter Warrior Workouts classes at our clinic: Runners' Edge Alaska, 11124 Old Seward Hwy, Ste 200 (right next to South Restaurant). The classes are led by a sports physical therapist and will take you through a whole body workout that is specific to cross-country skiing! There will be elements of strength, mobility, endurance, and balance. We will adjust the work out to your abilities, so there is no need to worry about working too hard or not hard enough! And the best part – they are open to our community for a donation, and all proceeds go to NSAA as a THANK YOU for being such an amazing cross-country ski community organization!
Give us a call 907-929-9009 if you want to grab a spot! Space is limited and registration is not required but recommended.
Disclaimer: Since we don't know you and we can't perform a detailed examination, responses are general tips only and not medical or physical therapy advice. If you need detailed answers to your questions, please contact us directly.

WE EMPOWER ACTIVE ALASKANS OF ALL AGES TO RETURN TO WHAT THEY LOVE SAFELY AND EFFICIENTLY... FOR LIFE!

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Come see us in clinic, mobile, or telehealth – we are there for you wherever you need us!
***** we are in our new location, right by South Restaurant, come say Hello!!*****

Ski waxing party for JN rentals a success!

BY JIM SINGLETON

If there is any silver lining to the lack of early season snow, we have discovered it. The snow on top of the mountains around Eagle River holds the promise of more to come but there was much to do in the interim: 100 pairs of Junior Nordic rental skis needed waxing, sorting, and storing. So last weekend 14 volunteers set up waxing benches outside and got to work.

This season, because of better data gathering, we knew which skis would be rented by which skier and which technique they would begin the year with. Because of this, we could provide technique specific waxing for each pair of skis.

Anyone with waxing experience knows that sometimes the most difficult skis to wax are the smallest ones. They don't fit onto a conventional gig, or they flex in an unconventional manner. This year, one of our most creative members made a gig

PHOTOS BY **MIKE BEIERGROHSLEIN**

A large cadre of ski club volunteers waxing skis by the connex. Thanks for everyone's help!

with movable tip and tail supports that would easily accommodate and support small format skis.

Many of our volunteers had never waxed skis before but still were eager to learn. Even some of the Junior Nordic kids came out to learn how to wax! After the skis were all waxed and brushed, they were sorted by length and hung in the conex

Skis all waxed and ready to rent for the season!

to await the day of distribution. Now we are ready: bring on the snow!

STATEWIDE

Alaskan biathletes focused on busy season

The Kincaid Biathlon Range will host several biathlon races this season, including the 2024 Arctic Winter Game's biathlon competitions. The season kicks off with a December 3 race, followed by races on January 6-7, February 18, and March 1-2. These races are open to all biathletes and are hosted by Anchorage Biathlon Club. Race registration and information can be found on Zone4 or by contacting the Anchorage Biathlon Club. As always, volunteers are welcome and appreciated!

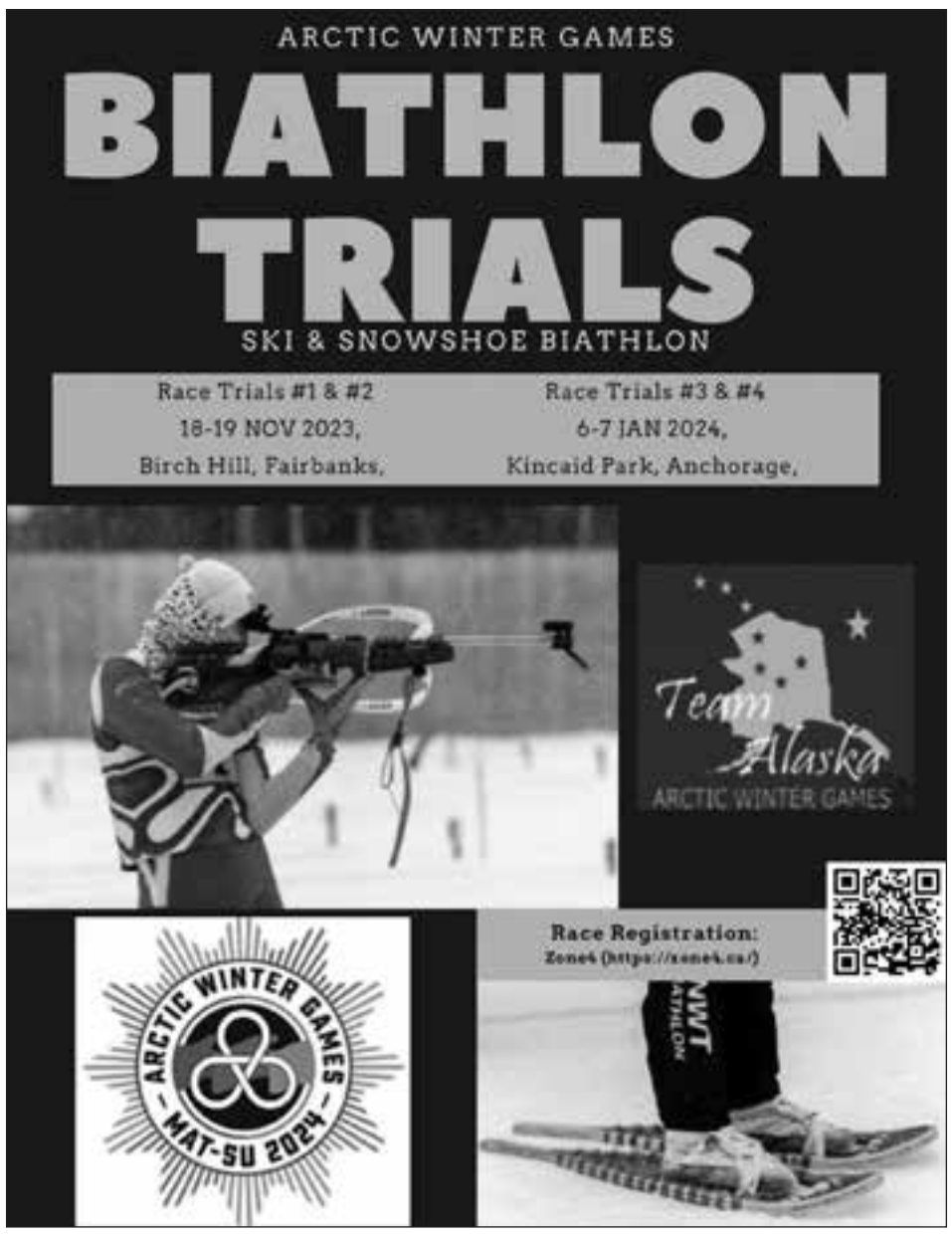
The 2024 Arctic Winter Games Biathlon competitions will be March 10-16 at the Kincaid Range. Come and cheer for these top biathletes from Arctic countries/provinces of Northwest Territories, Yukon, Nunavut, Greenland, Nunavik-Quebec, Northern Alberta, Kalaallit Nanaat, Sapmi from northern Norway, Sweden, and Finland, as well as Team Alaska! Interested volunteers can sign up at awg2024.gems.pro.

Be sure to mark your calendars to hear the history of Biathlon in Alaska on Dec. 4. As part of NSAA's 60th anniversary, Biathlon will be highlighted as a sport with deep roots in Alaska and NSAA's history. The president of the National Biathlon Association, Jack Gierhart, will be on-hand to share the story of biathlon and explore the untapped potential in Alaska. See the Anchorage section of the Nordic Skier for more information.

Coach Jean Paquet helping a very focused biathlete, Breck.

PHOTOS BY **ANCHORAGE BIATHLON CLUB**

Anchorage Biathlon Club's Vanessa Wing and Lance Smith volunteer to help future biathletes at the NSAA Season Kick-Off.



Nordic Ski Club of Fairbanks

Fairbanks, Alaska

SKIING UNDER THE NORTHERN LIGHTS

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Competition Office — 907-474-4242
Competition Fax — 907-474-2073
Racing Hotline — 907-457-4434
nscfairbanks.org

AROUND THE INTERIOR

Rorabaugh named as Trail to Gold Fellow

Former Fairbanksan Eliza Rorabaugh was one of eight female coaches named as Trail to Gold Fellows for the upcoming World Cup season. The Trail to Gold Coaching Grant is a hands-on professional development program designed to have coaches take part in all aspects of World Cup coaching, including waxing, logistics, and race preparation with US Ski Team athletes. **tinyurl.com/392fpv6u**

New trail funding source

Do you have a ski trail project that could use some funding? The Interior Alaska Trails and Parks Foundation is now offering grants up to $10,000 for trail and/or park projects in Interior Alaska! Deadline is March 30. Find out more here: **iatpfoundation.org/project-grants**

Midnight Sun Ski Trails not open this winter

Unfortunately, the Midnight Sun Golf Course will not have skiing trails for the public this winter. If you have liked these trails and would like to see them open again, brainstorm some ideas, and present them to the owners. See the following post from the Midnight Sun Golf Course Facebook page: "After careful consideration, the Midnight Sun Golf Course has decided not to open public ski trails for the 2023-2024 winter season. We deeply care about the Fairbanks community, and our mission is to serve people who experience disabilities and disadvantaged youth. Additionally, Midnight Sun Golf Course is dedicated to providing jobs for people of all abilities. In order to do this well, we will focus our efforts on sustainable operations in the winter, which include Fairbanks Snowmobile Tours, Virtual Golf, and Midnight Sun BBQ & Pizza. Our experience has been that the ski trails have not provided the support to further our mission, and so we will be taking a break from opening trails to the general public this winter."

Bankstown Bike and Ski in new place

Bankstown Bike and Ski has moved. Find them at their new place at Chena Pump Plaza, 360 Old Chena Pump Road, Suite C. **bankstownbikeandski.com**

GVEA right-of-way clearing affects Goldstream Trails

Goldstream Valley skiers and other trail users should read the post below about a project that will affect several Goldstream Valley trails. GVEA expects that the work will continue through January 2024.

Post from GVEA, Nov. 2: ATTENTION WINTER TRAIL USERS: GVEA is performing right-of-way clearing in areas that include extensive winter trail traffic in the Goldstream Valley. Winter trail use will be temporarily affected by crews using equipment in these areas. Please pay close attention to any posted signage and follow instructions to keep yourself, your furry companions and our crews safe.

Crews will work north from Gold Hill Road toward Sheep Creek Road, beginning along Lullabelle Lane. They will continue north of Sheep Creek Road along Hay Way Road. Crews will go north of Hay Way Road until they reach Lawlor Road. After working along Lawlor Road, they will begin working north along Miller Hill Road, turning east along Railroad Drive and working in a northeast direction until they reach Ballaine Road. Among other trails, the Tanana Valley Railroad Trail (west) and Goldstream Winter Cycling Trail will be covered in this clearing section. If you have any questions about right of way clearing, please call the Operations department at (907) 452-1151 ext. 5870.

Who's Who in the Nordic Ski Club of Fairbanks

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Moose Mountain Solstice Ski Tour offered for Solstice weekend

BY ERIC TROYER

Put this on your calendar! "Bad Bob" and Sharon Baker are again offering their Moose Mountain Solstice Ski Tour in December. The tour has become the flagship event of the NSCF touring season, drawing many skiers to come view the sunrise in the hills above Fairbanks on a trailed groomed by Bad Bob.

The Moose Mountain tour offers cross-country skiers a hilly course on which to greet the winter sun. This tour follows an out-and-back course that goes to the top of Moose Mountain and beyond (but only if you want to go that far). Details are below and can also be found on the NSCF Facebook Events or on the NSCF Touring news page: **nscfairbanks.org/programs/touring/news/**.

If you would like to show off a favorite ski trail by leading a ski tour contact Tour Coordinator Eric Troyer (fbxskierparent@gmail.com).

PHOTO BY **BAD BOB BAKER**

Participants from 2022 view the sunrise from high atop Moose Mountain.

Fifth annual Moose Mountain Sunrise Tour

When: Saturday, December 23. Start time and place: Tour begins at 10 a.m. sharp! Be waxed, dressed, and ready to ski! Meet at the Bakers' home at 3020 Moose Mountain Rd. There will be a large sign at the driveway. It's 2.2 miles up Moose Mtn. Rd. from Spinach Creek Rd. on the left side. (Google Maps link: **goo.gl/maps/1JyEJLwtpAE3yrEH8**). Parking: You're welcome to arrive early. Parking could be tight depending on number of participants. Don't be late or you'll mess up the parking system. Try to carpool if you can. Estimated tour time: 2-4 hours, 2-10 miles. Leaders: Bob and Sharon Baker, 907 455-6689.

The tour is an out-and-back affair, beginning from the Baker home. The goal is to arrive at the ridgeline by sunrise at 11 a.m. and to ski along the top, enjoying the view of the sunrise and the Alaska Range with the vast Tanana Valley in the foreground. Then return back to the Baker home. This tour is not for beginners. The first two kilometers of the tour is all uphill, then it's large rolling up and downs with plenty of room for snowplowing. Steepest part is the first quarter mile. If it's clear out, the ridge offers wonderful views of the valleys and Fairbanks as well as the Alaska Range.

The trail is wide enough to skate if you choose, but classic is much less effort, though there are no classic tracks. After you hit the top of Moose Mtn., the trail follows the ridge with long ups and downs. The course will be freshly groomed and combed that morning. Tour participants can follow the trail until they feel the need to

See **MOOSE MOUNTAIN,** Page 17

Come out during the holidays to the Interior Women's Health Ski Your Age in Kilometers!

BY ERIC TROYER

Plan to ski off some of those holiday calories on Saturday, Dec. 30, at the Interior Women's Health Ski Your Age in Kilometers! The 20th edition of this annual event will be held at Birch Hill Recreation Area, on the Saturday after Christmas Day.

Ski Your Age is a good excuse to go cross-country skiing, visit with other great people, and burn off some of those calories you've been stowing away. The event runs officially from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. It has no entry fee, though donations are accepted, and organizers ask that people bring potluck food. Registration and food will be in the borough's spacious Birch Hill Cross Country Ski Center.

The emphasis of Ski Your Age is on fun, socializing and good exercise. Despite its name, people can ski whatever distance they please. Some uber-athletes will be out there hammering the trails, trying to crank out the most kilometers regardless of their age, while other participants will ski just a portion of their age before heading inside to eat and socialize. Typically, kids as young as 1 or 2 join the fun along with those into their 70s or beyond. It's all good!

If you would like to participate, please bring food to share. Popular items include soups, stews, and chili in crockpots since they are a great way to warm up after an invigorating ski. Sweets are also popular, especially with those crazy geezer-jocks over 50 who ski their age or nearly die trying.

Accomplishments on many levels are recognized. While Ski Your Age in Kilometers has no entry fee, it is a fundraiser that benefits FXC, the junior race program of the Nordic Ski Club of Fairbanks. People will be able to make donations a variety of ways. Membership forms for the NSCF will also be available.

Keep an eye out for more announcements about the event from NSCF emails or on the NSCF Facebook page. And thank you to title sponsor Interior Women's Health! For questions or if you would like to volunteer, please contact Christina Turman (stinaturman@gmail.com).

PHOTO BY **ERIC TROYER**

Skiers young and old enjoy the trails during Ski Your Age in Kilometers.

MOOSE MOUNTAIN

Continued from Page 16

turn around and head back down. The plan is to turn around and be back to the start by 1:00 p.m., where there will be hot drinks and treats inside the Baker home. All are encouraged to bring a TREAT, which can be in any form: desserts, soups, breads etc.

There is no cut-off temperature, and often the temperatures up on Moose Mountain can be 30 degrees warmer than in Fairbanks. Bring a shell in case of windy conditions. Please RSVP with Bob and Sharon as parking is limited. You can call again the morning of the tour to check on the temperature if you'd like to know. If you decide not to participate after you've signed up, please call and cancel. Dogs are welcome, as long as they are controllable.

Club needs leaders to guide adult and family tours around Fairbanks

BY ERIC TROYER

PHOTO BY **JOEL YOUNG**

Tour members enjoy an outing on the Skarland Trail in March 2019.

Do you have a favorite trail that you would like to share with other cross-country skiers? Do you have kids and want to ski with other families? If so, the NSCF Touring Program wants your help. Touring program organizer Eric Troyer is looking for other club members to lead a tour or two. You need no special training to lead a ski tour, though knowing where you're going is a plus! The only requirements are a love of cross-country skiing and a desire to share that love with others.

In the past, our tours have mainly been aimed at adult skiers, but a member recently suggested that we encourage family tours, too. What a great idea! So, please consider leading a tour aimed at kids and their parents. You'll need to let Eric know what age-group you are shooting for. There's a big difference between 4-year-olds and 14-year-olds.

If you are interested in leading a tour, please contact Eric (touring@nscfairbanks.org). It would be great to see a range of different tours offered in terms of location, length and difficulty. Whether you like long, challenging skis, or prefer shorter, less challenging outings, rest assured that other club members probably want to join you.

As the touring schedule develops, some tours will be planned far enough in advance to be listed in the Alaska Nordic Skier, while others will be organized with a little less lead time. All tours will be posted to the touring page on the Nordic Ski Club of Fairbanks website (see Touring dropdown menu) and announced through the club's Facebook page and emails. Make sure you check the website for updates and that your membership is up to date with your current email address.

Help needed to keep Two Rivers Ski Trails Club active

BY ERIC TROYER

The Two Rivers Ski Trails Club needs your help. The all-volunteer club grooms and maintains the Two Rivers Trails, a set of trails adjacent to the Two Rivers Elementary School. Being all-volunteer and small, the club appreciates any offered help. The trails, which are a little over 20 miles east of Fairbanks and north of North Pole, are groomed for classic and skate skiing. Dogs are allowed. Family ski nights are held every Friday. As of press time they hadn't started yet, so for updates check the Facebook page (see link below).

How can you help?

Donate: Keeping the grooming equipment repaired and fueled up takes money. Any donations to help defray these costs will be appreciated. If the equipment is broken or the gas tank is empty, the trails can't be groomed. To help please send a check to Two Rivers Ski Club. 331 Breeze Rd., Fairbanks, AK, 99712.

Groom: The club needs volunteers willing to groom and otherwise maintain the trails. The job involves lifting heavy equipment and being able to stay outside and warm for three to four hours. But you get the joy of looking back on fresh corduroy and know that some skiers will soon be happily gliding along it. (Maybe you, if you have enough energy left after grooming!)

Help people ski: You can offer lessons or, if you know the trails, you offer to lead a tour. If you live in Fairbanks or North Pole, just come out to ski in a new place. Bring some friends. You can make it a day by visiting the Pleasant Valley Store or the Wagner Pizza Bus just down the road. Or stop by Larae's Breads, Pies, and Espresso on the way back home.

To see how you can help the Two Rivers Ski Trails Club contact Kay Kindt (kay.kindt@gmail.com). If you'd like to lead a tour, make sure to let NSCF Tour Coordinator Eric Troyer know so that he can get the word out. Send him an email at: touring@nscfairbanks.org.

For more on the Two Rivers Trails, see trails map: **nscfairbanks.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/2RIVERS-BW_A.pdf**; and Facebook page: **facebook.com/groups/1261892910503551/**.

PHOTO BY KAY KINDT

Sarka Paragi prepares to ski at the Two Rivers Ski Trails.

PHOTO BY **ERIC TROYER**

A skier heads past the sign at the start of the Two Rivers Ski Trails.

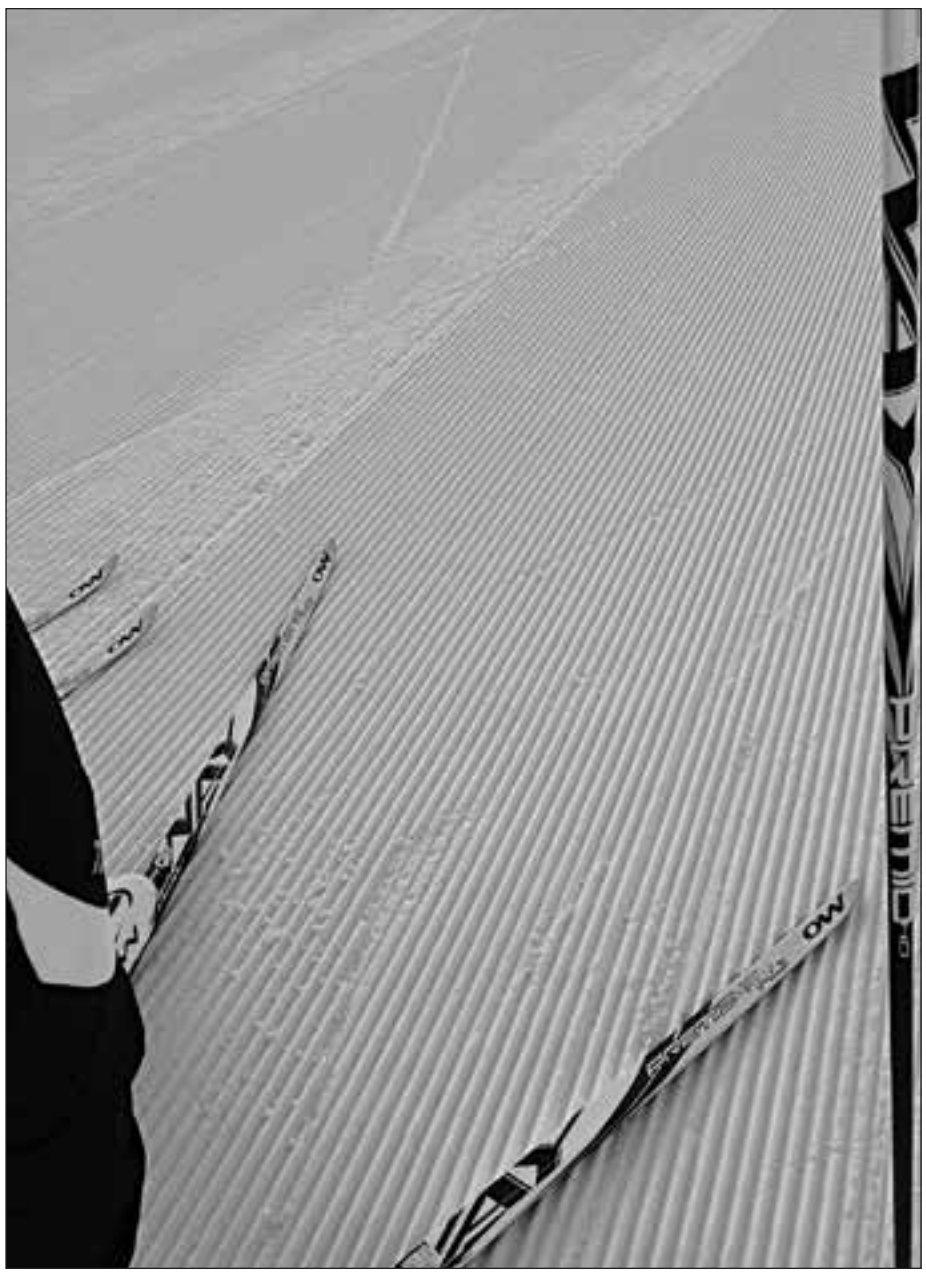

PHOTO COURTESY **TOM HELMERS**

Nicely groomed trails like this don't happen by accident. Please donate to the Birch Hill Trail Fund.

Birch Hill grooming relies on your support

BY ERIC TROYER

People can ski for free at Birch Hill Recreation Area, but taking care of the trails isn't free. The trails rely on your generosity. The NSCF grooms the trails at Birch Hill, not the Fairbanks Borough. All trail grooming is paid for by the NSCF, and our grooming program relies mostly on donations. Our grooming crew is one of the best in the nation, but they need our help. When you sign up for NSCF membership, please remember to donate to the Trail Fund.

If you have already signed up and forgot to make a donation, it's not too late. Go to nscfairbanks.org and click on "Support NSCF" dropdown menu. You can make a one-time donation or make it sustaining by choosing one of the recurring options. You can also feed the Iron Ranger, the large iron pole at the base of the stairs that lead to the stadium. Just put in cash or checks. If you pay with a check, make it out to "NSCFairbanks – Trail Fund."

And thank you! Without your support we couldn't groom the trails at Birch Hill.

Make tracks straight to a skier's door

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