

Spokane Nordic News

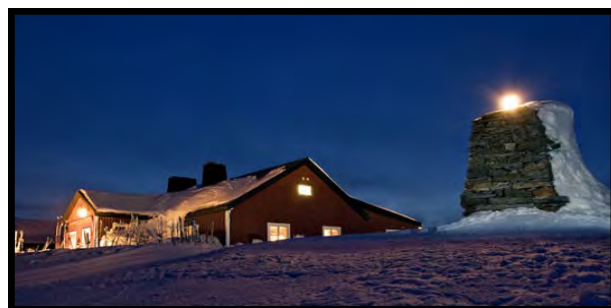
The joys of spring skiing

Jack Benedetto

When the first hint of spring hits, many of us cross country skiers trade our skis for a bike, or maybe a rake and shovel, not fully realizing the treasure trove spring skiing rewards.

Yes, spring *is* the time for planting and cycling, yet for me it is also the time for some of the best, most rewarding skiing of the year. It is a time for contemplation, relaxation and consciously meditating upon the transition of winter into spring. It is a time when I slow down from my workout-on-skis mode and my "Can I still go as fast as I could when I was 25" mode (I can't), to my awe and wonderment mode (I always can do that).

Hard-packed icy



The Blue Hammer Mountain Station in Northern Sweden.

morning snow progressively softens and the season of the mush begins; yet I care not. For these sunny warm spring days are about warmth, renewal, rebirth and looking for the signs of spring, like the wet glistening alder buds poking through, and the moose tracks we saw March 26th on Valley View. Yes, by the grace of the spring sun's warmer rays, our precious snow is transforming and percolating ever downward, renewing the valley once again. And it was the valley where most skiers' cars were parked that wonderful bask-and-baste day. Selkirk Lodge parking lot had maybe 15 vehicles when we arrived midday Saturday. When we ended our day at 6 o'clock, there was ours and only one other.

Oh the joy of long spring days. Start late, end late, get a tan, and soak up

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A message from the president...

Spokane Nordic works hard for you year-round

It's 70 degrees on my front porch, my bike and I have renewed our friendship, and my skis are patiently awaiting summer wax down in the basement. It's looking pretty springlike here on 24th avenue, but SNSEF still has a lot of work to do to prepare for next season. The summer trail days are being planned, new trails are being negotiated and laid out and a new groomer is overdue. All of these things will require time and money, and either directly or indirectly your help.

Over the last several years SNSEF has provided the Mt Spokane skiers with advocacy for new trails and grooming improvements as well as a variety of services and events. We have seen steady growth and evolution of Nordic Kids, the ski team and the new transition team, and a really exciting collaboration between the groups! It was really fun this year watching the young kids get excited about racing, and

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**SNSEF:
Spokane Nordic
Ski Education
Foundation**

Volume 5, Issue 5

April 18, 2010

The Spokane Nordic Ski Education Foundation is your very own non-profit group that works with the Mt. Spokane State Park on trail grooming, sponsors Spokane Nordic Kids and the Mt. Spokane Nordic Racing Team, makes facilities improvements and keeps an eye on the future of the Mount Spokane Nordic Area.

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**On the web:
www.spokanenordic.org**

Spokane Nordic volunteer opportunities

Trail Days Coordinator:

Art Bookstrom

Partly because the trails were in good shape, we had good skiing in December despite relatively thin snow. This year's trail-maintenance work days are scheduled for the following dates: April 18 (Sun.), July 17 (Sat.), Aug 15 (Sun.), Sept. 11 (Sat.), Sept. 26 (Sun.), Oct. 9 (Sat.) and Oct. 24 (Sun.).

SNSEF (Spokane Nordic Ski Education Foundation) trail-maintenance work involves clearing trees that fall across the trails during windstorms, cutting bushes and small trees that grow into the trails, and gathering firewood for the Selkirk Lodge and the Nova Hut.

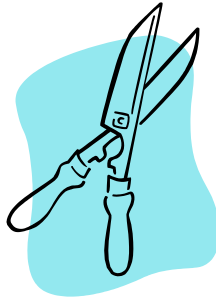
If George Momany is able to gain use of the Linder Road for Nordic skiing, we may need to build an alternative trail for snowmobilers to access a lower road. We also are discussing some possible improvements to the Selkirk Lodge that may require extra volunteer work.

For the past several years, I have organized the work crews

with help from Sam Schlieder, George Bryant and Tom Frost, who have filled in for me when I was out of town. This summer, I may be working and traveling out of the country for as much as two months.

If you are interested in filling in for me this summer or would like to replace me in this job as well as take my place on the Spokane Nordic board, please call me at (509) 624-9667 (home) or (509) 368-3119 (work).

I have the SNSEF saws, brush cutters, loppers and safety equipment. I'll show you how to use all the equipment, and I'll help whenever I'm around, but I think it's time for me to step aside and let someone else take on this job.



Grant Writer:

Do you have grant-writing experience? The Spokane Nordic board is looking for a volunteer to help with writing a few grants each year.

Examples of the type of grants needed include requests for trail maintenance and expansion, trail grooming equipment, possible future expansion of Selkirk Lodge and the addition of another warming hut.

If you would like to help us out, please contact SNSEF president Tom Schaaf via e-mail at tpschaaf@comcast.net to learn more about our needs. Thank you!



Spring skiing

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the rays. Bring an insulated pad, use far less cold weather clothes, sit in the snow, have a picnic, make ice cream with sugar, cream, vanilla extract and snow for your kids while celebrating the low-cost Nordic world of warm spring solitude.

In Bozeman, Montana, spring skiing is celebrated with what Bozoneian Nordic nuts refer to as "*Crust Cruising*." Crust cruising is a must-do experience. The crust is formed by the warming and cooling of the snow. At night the surface refreezes from its afternoon semi-mush to a strong, human weight-bearing surface, allowing one to skate effortlessly across the expanses found south of Bozeman in the direction of Yellowstone.

There, large undulating tracts of treeless snow-covered terrain await. The trick is to arrive early, before the crust is too weak to support your weight. According to Jerry Coffey of the Bridger-

Ski Foundation Nordic, the ideal time to ski is about from 8-11 a.m. A hard crust has formed overnight thanks to sub-freezing temperatures, yet the early morning's rays have softened the surface snow a wee bit allowing your skis' edges a secure bite. From then on it is a skier's paradise, skating where ever you want to heart's desire. No trails or set tracks needed!

In Scandinavia, where I lived for six years, the Nordic ski season's busiest time is the long Easter holiday break in the spring because of longer daylight hours. Scandinavian families have ample time to really enjoy themselves. And being the actual and original Nordic skiers, born with xc skis upon their feet, the Knuts, Svends, Leifs and Lars's, along with their Annikas, Astrids, Inges, and Birgits, head to the likes of Blåhammaren fjällstation (The Blue Hammer Mountain Station) in Northern Sweden to ski along the bor-

der between Norway and Sweden.

The lodges are about 18-20 km apart, offering fit and hardy skiers an exhilarating Nordic challenge. If you have the means, inclination, and proper preparation, it is a spring cross country skiing experience I promise you will never forget!

Now if you can't quite get to Scandinavia, remember spring skiing on Mount Spokane is a world you might well like the next time you pick up a rake or shovel with a groan, or change a flat tire with a curse. So head to the hills, forget the weeding (it'll still be there when you get back) for the joy of spring skiing is fleeting.

To watch a video on crust-cruising, go to nordicskisourceblog.com/?p=34

Meet your Spokane Nordic organization

Officers:



President
Tom Schaaf



Vice President
John McCarthy



Past President
George Momany



Treasurer
Lisa Sunderman



Secretary
Russell Hill

Board:



Jack Benedetto



Art Bookstrom



Jud Ford



Susan Mulvihill



Membership Coordinator
Liorah Wichser

Nordic Kids season ends with Nordic Olympic Games

Trond Liaboe

Another Nordic Kids season came to a colorful end on February 27th with the annual Nordic Olympic Games. Around 100 kids with parents divided into ten teams participated in what has become a great tradition on Mt. Spokane. Each team was named after some of the most known winter sports countries such as USA, Canada, Finland and Switzerland to name a few. Jamaica was added for multicolored diversity with uniforms of hand-dyed shirts and Rastafarian wigs!

Each team followed a course that took them through a variety of ski events just like those at the real Olympics: Biathlon, Slalom, Ski Jumping and a Nordic Relay race together with other fun games along the way. At each event the teams are scored for skill plus general cheerful attitude and sportsmanship.

The event was expertly organized from beginning to end with each “nation” parading through the starting area and also with an awards ceremony complete with national anthems, flags and signs for each country. The organizers and volunteers deserve a BIG thanks for making this without a doubt the most fun of all our Nordic Kids Saturdays.

The event was followed by a tasteful potluck lunch in the Selkirk Lodge. The Nordic Games are very special for both kids and parents. It gives everyone a chance to connect with kids of other ages and skills while the parents get to know other parents than the ones we usually see during the season. Again, thanks to everyone for participating and especially to all the volunteers for making this a special day. Trond Liaboe is Nordic Kids instruction coordinator.

A message from the president...

Continued from Page 1

the racers taking responsibility for teaching and leading the younger kids.

We also purchased a van for ski team and other SNSEF use, hired a membership coordinator to help raise awareness in the community, improved our internet presence with Facebook and Twitter, and instituted a web-based sign-up process.

Along the way, we had another successful SnowBall and a great experience at the Banff Mountain Film Festival. Ongoing efforts include maintaining trails in the off-season, auxiliary grooming of the trails and work with the WRAC ((Winter Recreation Advisory Committee) and the State Parks to either replace our current groomer or to at least replace the tiller mechanism that keeps breaking down.

There are other projects in the works as well, like closing in the waxing porch and building more cubbies at the Selkirk Lodge in the short run, and enlarging the lodge and the parking area in the long run.

The point of this list? One point is to make yourself a reminder to renew your membership next fall, and to remind your skiing friends to do so as well. Let your non-skiing friends know about what a great sport skiing is, and invite them up.

The more folks we have skiing, the more clout we have with the legislature and the WRAC as well as more parking permit money in the coffers for grooming and equipment. Mark the dates for trail days, and “friend” Spo-

kane Nordic on Facebook and Twitter for updates. Enjoy your summer!

— **Tom Schaaf and the SNSEF board of directors.**



Trail update

George Momany

April 10, 2010 - Our season is winding down, although a few consistent skiers are still using the trails. The park has officially discontinued grooming of the trails due to running out of funds budgeted for this season. Selkirk Lodge is now open for weekends only.

Unfortunately, our big groomer had a breakdown at the end of February, rendering it useless for the remaining days. First one, then the second tiller motor burned out as a result of trying to till the trails that had turned to ice, thanks to the warm days and freezing nights. By the time the problem was diagnosed, it was too late to get new motors installed before the end of the season.

The park is currently debating replacing just the tiller motors, versus replacing the entire tiller assembly. The current assembly has a poor reliability record - in contrast to the Bombardier machine itself - which is only half-

way through its expected lifespan.

We are still in line to be the next snow park to receive a new grooming machine. The cost of a new machine is more than \$200,000. Only half of that is currently in reserve and we had lower than expected snow park permit sales this season. I am still hopeful, and will do my best as your WRAC (Winter Recreation Advisory Committee) representative, but would be surprised if we get a new groomer by this autumn.

Next year for the Women's Souperbowl 2011 event, we will allow limited snowshoeing on three trails that Sunday morning. Valley View, Larch and Silver will be signed and flagged so people may hike out to the Nova Hut as a destination and refreshment stop. Entry forms, signage, and guides will emphasize that these are Nordic skiing trails but will be used for snowshoeing this one special day.

George Momany is Past President of the Spokane Nordic Ski Education Foundation.

Black Jack Loppet offers fun for Spokane Nordic skiers

Lisa Sunderman

March is a terrific time to plan a ski trip to British Columbia and the Black Jack Ski Club's Loppet is a great excuse to go. On Friday March 5, the Sundermans met three other Spokane families at the "lovely" Ray Lynn Motel. Although austere, the accommodation is perfectly located for a weekend of fun and Grace and Evan easily hacked the wireless access. The friends were all glad to kick off an annual trip.

Saturday began with a meet-up for coffee in Rossland. We caravanned to the National Forest Recreation Area just west of the junction of Highway 3 and 3B at Nancy Greene Lake to the Paulson XC Ski Trails. In the Paulson system, the huts are maintained and 45K of trails are snowmobile-groomed under agreement with the Castlegar Ski Club. We checked into the Viking Shelter to pay \$20 per family, applied klister, adjusted clothing, and were ready to head out. We played tag on our 3K ski out to the Ben Shaw Shelter, then our big group turned a corner and headed uphill and about 5K farther out to the newly-built Alpine shelter.

The Alpine Shelter replaced a hut built by the Sons of Norway that had served the club well for many years. Built in 2009, the shelter is a simple and practical A-frame structure with a wood-burning stove and benches. It could be a model for a remote hut on our own trails. Although we admired the construction, we opted to bring the benches outdoors so that we could enjoy the sunshine with our chocolate and other lunch. After an icy and perilous downhill ski back on narrow trails, we divided into teams and played skunk ball with a gallon-sized bag of peanuts on a very frozen and snow-covered lake.

After skiing, there's not much better than the hot

tub and good meal. Trail has an excellent community aquatic center and the ski shop in Rossland has bargain suits from the previous summer if you forget yours. We enjoyed the hot tub, steam room, water slide (where Nancy Staub holds the record for the fastest descent), high and low dives, and foam rafts. Another unique feature is a buoy is attached to a rope that feeds through a pulley on the center's ceiling. One person in the pool can hold the rope where it attaches to the buoy and eight others on the deck can pull on the other end of the rope to hoist the person to the height of the tall ceiling before the person lets go of the rope and drops back into the pool. Of course we had to eat at the Colander in Trail for a big Italian all-you-can-eat meal.

Everyone slept well and Sunday March 6th, after meeting up for coffee, we caravanned to the Black Jack Ski Club, which is across the highway from Red Mountain Ski Area. Black Jack XC trails are considered to be the best maintained trails in the region. At registration, we received smiles and our bibs. Those acting as the much appreciated cheering section paid \$10 each for their trail pass. The day was warmer and the elevation lower at Black Jack than up at the pass at Paulson Center so pre- and post-race discussion was on warm waxes, base structuring, and what to do with extra clothing items.

Spokane Nordic had a good showing (*see results on page 5*).

We left Canada with a touch of sunburn, an appreciation of - and ideas for - our home ski trails, and memories made with our Spokane Nordic friends. We've already penciled in the date for next year's Loppet and I also made a note to remember my swimsuit.

Lisa Sunderman is Treasurer for the Spokane Nordic Ski Education Foundation.

The Recreational Skier

What's in your wallet, er, fanny pack?

Susan Mulvihill

I am embarrassed to admit this but I own six fanny packs. While I primarily use them for Nordic skiing, they also pull double duty in the summertime during day hikes.

Yet with as many as I own, I'm still in search of the perfect fanny pack. For some reason, I haven't been able to locate one that holds just the right amount of stuff but isn't too bulky or cumbersome.

Despite my ongoing quest, what goes *into* my fanny packs is much more important. My decision on which pack to grab is based on whether I'm using my waxable or no-wax classic skis that day. If it's the waxable classics, I toss in a waxing cork, a scraper (just in case I was way off in my choice of the wax for the day), a snow thermometer, and a handful of kickwaxes that have the potential to work for the day's conditions.

If I'm going with waxless skis, however, that eliminates all of the above items but don't forget this one: a small packet or tube of paste wax just in case snow conditions cause my skis to ice up really badly. This doesn't happen very often but, believe me, you will be glad you took the time to bring it along the one time you do need it. While you're at it, toss in a paper towel or rag to spread the paste.

The next item to go in is a snack just in case I get carried away and ski out so far that I don't have the energy to make it back to my car. Yes, this has occasionally happened on those days when I just can't get enough of the trails. I usually prefer granola bars although those Caribou Coffee

bars are darned tasty.

Unless the weather conditions are particularly warm, I always take along a windbreaker jacket. So tell me if you have the same problem I do: when I get up to the Nordic parking lot, there's usually a light wind blowing. Having just driven 45 minutes in a toasty warm car, I completely chicken out as soon as I get out of the car and put on a jacket... knowing full well that I will be shedding that very same jacket as soon as I reach the first junction. Do you do that, too?

But seriously, the weather conditions on the mountain can vary quite a bit, depending on how far out you ski. It's smart to have an extra layer to throw on so you stay warm and comfy. Above all, be prepared for the weather conditions.

If you have cell phone service up on the mountain and are skiing solo, you might as well drop that into your pack while you're at it.

One of the most important things I carry along on my ski outings actually goes around my neck, rather than in my fanny pack. That is a lanyard holding my car key and Thule box key. Some friends of ours taught us to do this after they somehow lost their car keys while out in the woods. That's not a good scenario no matter how you look at it, so I always hang those keys around my neck. I'm not taking any chances and neither should you!

The last item I can think of that is fun to bring along is a digital camera for those amazing, picture-perfect days when you really want to bring back photographic proof of why you love to ski so much.

Last grooming report of the season always bittersweet

Trond Liaboe

Friday April 9th, 2010 —

“Good morning skiers, this is the end of the season report. This is Friday. We will not be grooming. The budget is done. There is no money for grooming, so we are done grooming for the season. If you come up, you will be skiing on trails that are not groomed. And that's life. Have a good summer. Go out and do things. Keep active and we will see you next year. Thanks a lot – bye.”

Thanks, Jerry Johnson (and the other rangers), for keeping us all informed about conditions on the mountain this season and for excellent grooming in spite of difficult conditions. (The number for the grooming report is (509) 238-4025).



The Spokane Nordic Board meets once a month during ski season and periodically during off-season. Meetings are open to the public. Contact president Tom Schaaf via e-mail at tpschaaf@comcast.net for meeting dates and location.

Black Jack Loppet results for Spokane Nordic (continued from p. 4)

Name	Distance	Age Group	Place	Time
Linnea Sunderman	1K		1 st	8:19.6
Evan Sunderman	3K		2 nd	11:59.2
Brett Ford	5K		2 nd	18:21.8
Grace Ford	5K		1 st	17:37.1
Kate Hawkins	5K		2 ND	21:01.5
Eleanor Weisblat	5K		3 rd	23:45.3
Lisa Sunderman	30K		1 st	2:27:54
Nancy Staub	10K		9 th	1:03:04.4
Jud Ford	30K		4 th	1:48:59.9
Carl Sunderman	30K		5 th	2:06:45.6



SNSEF
P.O.Box 501
Spokane, WA 99210

Spokane Nordic
 Ski Education Foundation

Spokane Nordic Ski Education Foundation teaches the public how to Nordic ski, does volunteer trail work on state and private land in cooperation with Mt. Spokane State Park and other agencies, and hosts ski competitions to develop the skills of amateur athletes.

_____	_____	_____
Name	Phone	Cell
_____	_____	_____
Mailing address	City, State	ZIP
_____	_____	_____
E-mail	Additional info?	

Yes! I want to support Spokane Nordic Ski Education Foundation (SNSEF).

Choose one or more of the funds listed below:

- Spokane Nordic Annual Membership:** SNSEF members receive informative newsletters, are invited to special events, and receive discounts at local businesses. Annual membership minimum: \$20 for 2009-2010 season \$ _____
- New Trails & Grooming Fund:** Help fund trail maintenance and upkeep of the snowmobile used for grooming. Trail expansion in the works for 2010! \$ _____
- Nordic Kids:** Support the program that gives children and their parents the opportunity to learn, develop and enjoy cross-country skiing skills together. Parents and other adult volunteers lead groups of kids in fun activities designed to teach the fundamentals of technique. \$ _____
- Racing Team:** Support the Nordic racing team at Mt. Spokane. SNSEF hosts Junior Olympic trials for aspiring racers throughout the region. Currently seeking sponsors for the "racing" van. \$ _____
- McDonald Fund Student Scholarship:** Help provide ski lessons and equipment for families who need a little financial assistance. \$ _____

Total SNSEF Contribution: \$ _____

Thank you for your support!

Mail your tax-deductible donation to:
 Spokane Nordic Ski Education Foundation
 P.O. Box 501
 Spokane, WA 99201

Find more information about our programs online at: www.spokanenordic.org
 E-mail questions about membership and contributions to: members_dev@snsef.org