

Spokane Nordic News

Snow Ball a fun time for everyone

Jack Benedetto

On Jan. 15th, about 40+ hungry skiers met up at the Selkirk Lodge to eat, drink and be merry.

There was live music, candlelight (thanks for lighting them all, Liam -- I thought you'd like playing with matches), a smorgasbord and lots of tempting desserts.

Present were folks from Nordic Kids, the club at large, and some skiers from the **Spokane Nordic Club's Meet-up Group**. This group plans group ski tours for like-minded people of all abilities. If you are interested, check out www.meetup.com/Nordic-Ski-Trek/.



Peter Larson, Art Bookstrom and Paul Fawcett make music.

During dinner, we had quite the little band going. Some children were playing the spoons and rubber bands, while **Art Bookstrom** on his accordion, **Peter Larson** on his fiddle, and **Paul Fawcett** on his guitar played happy music that some even started singing along with. Thanks, guys! Your playing really added to the evening!

Many skiers had been on the mountain the entire

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A message from the president...

Nordic trail system update

I watched the Junior Race Team skiing off of Linder Ridge Road down into the woods last weekend, and they were having an incredibly good time doing it. These 9 and 10 year-olds were skiing powder on a steep slope on their skate skis, and I was blown away with how well they were doing.

Having that one new stretch of trail has made a tremendous difference in the experience we all have on Mt Spokane. Between the opportunity to skate on the outer trails, the ease of

accessing the views on Mica and Quartz, and less congestion on the inner trails, it has made for some great skiing this year.

The Spokane Nordic board has been discussing a variety of other additions to the trail system that could improve the experience for everyone. One of these is a new warming hut somewhere past the Nova Hut. While this has been talked about at a con-

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**SNSEF:
Spokane Nordic
Ski Education
Foundation**

Volume 6, Issue 3

February 4, 2011

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**

What has Spokane Nordic done for YOU?

Nordic skiers on Mt. Spokane are blessed with a fabulous trail system to enjoy throughout the winter.

What many don't realize, however, is how this came to be. Over the years, the Spokane Nordic board and many, many volunteers have tirelessly worked behind the scenes to make Mt. Spokane State Park a destination cross-country ski area.

Becoming a member of Spokane Nordic is easy: use the form on the back page of this newsletter or join or renew your membership online.

Here are some examples of what Spokane Nordic has been doing - and continues to do - for Spokane's Nordic community:

- expansion of the groomed trail system on Mt. Spokane
- volunteers have made and placed the trail map signs at junctions 1-7
- establishment of the Nordic Kids program, fostering the love of skiing in the kids and giving families the opportunity to volunteer and ski together
- establishment of the Junior and Racing team programs
- the Racing Team gives instructional

lessons to the public during the winter holiday school break. They instruct in both classic and skating techniques, teaching to all skiers from the novice beginner to the advanced, all ages

- Spokane Nordic's Racing Team member Annie Pokorny was the 2010 Junior Olympic J1 Women's 10K Classic Champion
- purchased a van to shuttle ski team members to races, which also positively promotes Spokane Nordic at races and other events
- puts on a two-day series of Junior Olympic tryout races every two years
- participates in the Washington State Winter Recreation Advisory Committee (WRAC) meetings, which represents the views and wishes of Spokane Nordic membership
- has a Nordic Ski representative on the Mt. Spokane State Park Advisory committee
- has successfully applied for grants for equipment (Spokane Nordic snowmobile, Yellowstone groomer, black roller)
- funded purchase of Ginzu groomer through member donations
- successfully worked with the WRAC to get the funding for a new groomer

for the 2011-2012 season

- has made incremental improvements to Selkirk Lodge (pegs, storage shelves, work benches with ski vises, electrical outlets for ski waxing on the porch of the lodge, brushes for clearing the benches)
- organizes annual trail maintenance which includes supplying split firewood for Selkirk Lodge and Nova Hut
- installed a new woodstove at Nova Hut
- established social media groups such as Meetup groups so folks interested in Nordic skiing can meet like-minded individuals and ski together
- raises funds during Banff Film Festival through cookie sales and refreshments at intermission and promotes awareness of Spokane Nordic
- produces an informative web site and newsletter to keep members up-to-date on the latest Nordic-related news
- organizes and hosts club-related special events like the Snow Ball and Moonlight Ski Tour.



Snow Ball Continued from Page 1

day and stayed long enough to enjoy the food, music and camaraderie before leaving for their warm beds. However, despite a somewhat foggy, cold evening, 24 men, women and children donning headlamps skied together down Linder Ridge Road to the bridge on a somewhat moonlit ski tour.

The Barnwell and Sunderman children and several other kids (young and old) really seemed to enjoy themselves. It was a wonderful experience gliding along. The tracks were fast and the weather was what it was, cold and foggy. But no one cared - they were just glad to be there seizing the moment.

Thanks to all who came.

Sunnyside Pursuit, Bend OR, Jan. 8-9, 2011

George Bryant

The Mt Spokane Nordic Racing Team traveled with 12 skiers to race in the shadow of Mt Bachelor. The first JOQ race of the season gave the skiers a chance to apply their hard work towards a goal. Saturday was pleasant with some blue sky, but Sunday brought some more cold temps along with wind and snow. Waxing conditions were good, with fresh snow each day: Toko red glide with blue kick.

Our J3 racers showed a strong young team, 5 of 6 placing in the top ten on both classic and skate races. **Andrew Potyk** won the skate and placed 3rd in the classic. **Brett Ford**, **Joel Potyk**, **Liam Schaaf** and **Kade Eckert** were the other racers. **Grace Ford** took 3rd in the girl's classic, 4th in the skate.

Our J2 boys, **Colin McCarthy**, **Ian McCarthy** and **Eamonn McCarron**, were placing in the middle of the pack in both races, while our lone J2 girl racer, **Corinn Bryant**, had a disastrous skate after being stripped of a pole during the race. She showed her strength in the classic, racing to 6th. Our older contingent, **Dylan Driscoll**, J1, and **Scott Strong**, OJ, continue to race against strong fields. Dylan, completed his first 15K race and is already looking forward to his next one. Next JOQ, Race of the Methow, Feb 5-6, where the entire 16-member racing team, as well as 3-5 members of the JR team, will see 1k skate sprint action and a classic distance race. Also look for the team at Langlauf.

Spokane Nordic thanks Mt. Spokane State Park and Inland Empire Paper Company for their support of Nordic skiing

*(Editor's note: The following letter was sent recently to **Paul Buckland**, Forest Resource Manager for Inland Empire Paper Company, and **Steve Christensen**, Mt. Spokane State Park Manager.)*

Dear Paul and Steve,

We are writing to you to express our appreciation of the gift that you have given the local Nordic community -- allowing us to use your land for the ski trails. It is a tremendous benefit to local skiers. Many of us have skied in numerous areas in the region and it is a well-recognized fact that the trail system at Mt. Spokane is amongst the best in the state. This is clearly in part because of the generosity of Inland Empire Paper Co. and Spokane Parks in allowing us to use this land. Over the years, there have been thousands of individuals and families in the Spokane area who have benefitted because you chose to share your resources with the community.

The value of this trail system to the health of this community is very significant. The opportunity to engage in winter activities that challenge us physically while at the same time providing us with a sense of the

magnificence of the outdoors is truly priceless. As we fight battles against obesity, diabetes, and increasingly sedentary lifestyles, the trail system allows for a creative, healthy outlet for a growing number of adults and children alike. The Nordic kids program has brought together 140 children in this year, a record! With them come families, friends, and transitions to healthier lifestyles. As you are fully aware, Nordic skiing is a lifetime sport and we have children still in car seats and pulks (tow-behind devices) as well as octogenarians who are enjoying the outdoors and physical activity.

We hope to continue to provide wonderful experiences for the full range of skiers -- first-time skiers, kids, athletes, social groups and teams. We very strongly appreciate that it is your resources that allow us to do this and we are truly thankful. Please let us know if we, as a ski organization or as individuals, can help or assist you in any way as we realize that we are in a position to use our resources (primarily people) to work with you in a tangible way.

Finally, the addition of the Linder Ridge road to skiing has been really fabulous, particularly as it has cre-

ated an easy, long trail for some of the more novice skiers and families. It provides the only long, wide open, "beautifully vista-ed" spot for a number of our skiers. We have shied away from the multi-use nature of this trail in the past but skiers have found the more pristine platform that has been present this year to be a wonderful addition.

Sincerely,
The Spokane Nordic Ski Education
Foundation Board

- Tom Schaaf, SNSEF President
- John McCarthy, Vice President
- Lisa Sunderman, Treasurer
- George Momany, Past President
- Jack Benedetto
- Art Bookstrom
- Jud Ford
- Matt Halloran
- Trond Liaboe
- Susan Mulvihill
- Darryl Potyk
- Dhruvi Shukla.

A message from the president...

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ceptual level for years, we have some folks with new energy to make it happen. The details remain to be worked out (including precisely where to put it) but it seems like the opportunity is here.

The other interesting idea is a terrain park. We have built jumps for the Nordic Kids Games every year, and the kids really love using them. Some of us have skied the terrain park up at Blackjack in Rossland, BC, and it was great fun. The park had a mix of jumps and slalom, and the kids and the crazier adults had a blast. Again the details need to be worked out, but this would be a real draw to the kids (and adults) who want to explore Nordic skiing in new ways.

The board has added some new members, and they have added to the enthusiasm and energy that we need to accomplish these new projects and new goals. I want to welcome Darryl Potyk, Matt Halloran, and Dhruvi Shukla to the board, and thank Russell Hill for his years of service to SNSEF as he steps off the board.

Thanks to all of you! I also want to thank our members for their support. We need to hear from you about the ideas mentioned above. Where would you like to see a new warming hut? What would be the best spot for some bumps and jumps? What else would you like to see on the mountain that we haven't thought about yet?

New grooming days

Starting Monday, Feb. 7, trail grooming will take place each Thursday through Monday.

This will allow for trail repair after heavy use on Sunday afternoons and provide a quality surface on Monday mornings.

There generally won't be grooming on Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

-- George Momany

Nordic Kids 2011 Update

We've had a great season of Nordic Kids so far this year. There are 140 students from ages 4 to 13 registered and **many** new families!

As we watch the progress of the littlest ones that have never been on skis go from "Bambi on powder" to the perfect little pizza slicers, it's equally as exciting to see the parents that have either never been on skis or who haven't been on skis in 15 years start to pick it up again.

We want to extend thanks to **Caroline Tareski** for providing a free classic Nordic lesson to Nordic Kids parents on Saturday, January 29. This was very beneficial and we hope to see many new Nordic families together on the trails this winter.

Also a big thanks to all the volunteers who tirelessly give their time teaching

week after week, helping the instructors or helping make things run smoothly in the lodge.

If you have any suggestions, we gladly welcome them and you are welcome to contact us at the phone numbers or email addresses below.

Lastly, we want people to start thinking about how they can participate in the **Nordic Kids Olympics** which takes place on February 26th. There are a number of volunteer opportunities available – please stop by the sign-in table or email us to let us know what you would like to do.

Thank you and happy skiing!

Trond and Alison Liaboe
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 Alison phone: 509.868.6257
 Alison email: aliaboe@q.com



Night skiing brings perfect balance

Colin McCarthy, age 15

(Editor's note: Members of the Racing Team were asked why they like night skiing. Here is one member's answer.)

The love of skiing is exemplified by Friday skis: a perfect day to end with the perfect activity.

To describe the perfect ski, I need to describe the day in question. A Friday — the day we get to throw off the chains of oppression that bind us to a too-small desk for 6 hours and end the day by staying in the robotics room. A brief time in the robotics room, with Mr. Edmonds giving me a hard time for once again ditching out to go skiing. I climb into the van, wondering why so few people once again choose to go up today. I smile as I sit down, starting up small conversations as I settle in with the team — laughing, smiling, just enjoying the company of my team skiers.

Night skiing is the most beautiful thing in my life. It doesn't matter where you are along the trail, it doesn't matter how fast anyone else is

going. It's just you and the sound of your heart. I ski along the trail, gliding effortlessly with every step, climb the hills, speed down the other side, never feeling tired. There is a particular spot, the highest one can get on the trails, where no matter what, it's beautiful. We hit the top, a short flat where around you, there is just the valleys, the lights of the chairlifts, and the stars shining.

I stand, completely alone for the time being, as I catch my breath. I look up, as I am able to fully look around at the world around me tonight. The stars are out, shining brighter than ever seen from the city, overhead, illuminating the valleys and forests covered in snow around me. The wind, whistling around me, plays over each branch, each branch changing the pitch, each new tone creating the effect of the forest alive. From where I stand, I hear thousands of conversations, thousands of whispers back and forth, as the wind whips up the valleys. The clouds that I passed through now barely reach my feet, swirling around

me. Over the valley, the same effect is replicated in the cloud cover, holes in the clouds let the moonlight shine through, striking and reflecting off the snow. It reminds me of a snake, slithering along as parts of the scales glimmer as they enter the sunlight.

I stand on this ridge, the snow rippling around me, in perfect balance. My breathing is controlled, my internal temperature perfect, I am completely calm. The winds blow up from both sides of me, keeping me at perfect balance.

That's what I take from skiing. It allows me to gain that balance within myself, and at that moment, as the winds converge around me, I am at pure balance to the universe. And I smile, because I know, every time I go up skiing, I'm getting small parts of this pure perfection, and on those lucky Fridays, I gain it all.

It's the story of my life, the swells of the breeze, the balance of the world. That is why I love to ski: it achieves the happiness in one of its purest form, and all you have to do is spend a Friday on the mountain.

The Recreational Skier**“Good morning, Skiers!!”**

When you call the Snow Line and hear that exuberant greeting, do you ever wonder who's recording those messages?

One person those words belong to is Mt. Spokane State Park (MSSP) **Ranger Jerry Johnson**. I can't tell you how many times I've called the Snow Line (509-238-4025) to find out the conditions and ended up smiling and chuckling while listening to his enthusiastic early-morning report.

Johnson has been a ranger for 26 years, with six of those being at MSSP, and he's a great guy. You'll see him in Selkirk Lodge, or walking through the parking lot to check for Sno-Park permits, or perhaps skiing on the trails - always with a smile on his face.

He grew up in the small town of Rochester, Wash. (population: 1,829) which is near Centralia. He didn't necessarily know from the start that he wanted to be a ranger but "I always knew I wanted to be outside and doing something interesting every day," he says.

Johnson is a family man who is "married to a wonderful wife" and has six children and one grandchild.

What's his favorite thing about being a ranger? "I love how every day there's something new and I get to meet new people all the time," Johnson says.

At Mt. Spokane State Park, his favorite things are "the seasons and the people - both who I work with and the visitors. I love my job." He enjoys Nordic skiing - both classic and skating - but says his skate technique is still a little rough.

When asked what he'd like me to relay to the recreational users of the park, Johnson said this: "Enjoy the mountain year-round. And stay close to us during these times of budget cuts; we may need your help keeping things together."

**Remember to enter Langlauf 2011**

At 11 a.m. on Sunday, Feb. 13, the 33rd Annual Langlauf 10 km Classic ski race will begin at Mt Spokane Nordic area. Online registration is available at www.spokanelanglauf.org through Feb. 9th, for \$25 per skier. Registration on the day of the race will be open until 10:30 AM for \$35 per skier. Join the fun of this Bloomsday-on-skis. Every Langlauf skier gets a Langlauf pin, and prizes are awarded for the top five in each of 11 age groups for males and females. Fitness Fanatics also sponsors a drawing for about \$1,700 worth of skiing-related prizes to be distributed after the race. Don't miss it! It's the highlight of each cross-country ski season at Mount Spokane.

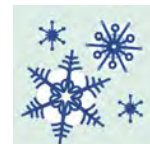
Payette Lakes Ski Marathon

Feb. 19, 2011
McCall, Idaho

Race distances: 15 and 30 km Skate, 15 km Classic, Junior Races 1, 2, and 5k Freestyle.

This event is a fundraiser for The Payette Lakes Ski Club (Little Ski Hill) which is a non-profit organization to get kids on skis.

It is a fun, professionally-run event with a long history of success. Includes memorabilia, great food, music and prizes. Go to www.littleskihill.org/ski_marathon to register.



The other person who also records upbeat Snow Line messages is **Park Manager Steve Christensen**.

He has been a ranger for 27 years and grew up in the town of Rochester, Wash. (population: 2,096), which is located 20 miles southwest of Olympia. Christensen has been at Mt. Spokane State Park for 10 years and originally wanted to be a marine biologist.

He is married and has three daughters, six grandkids and has had 27 foster kids over the years.

He says his favorite thing about being a ranger is "where I work." What he loves most about being at MSSP is "the quality of the natural environment, the recreation, and the people who use the park."

In addition to being passionate about Nordic skiing (he skates and classic-skis but skates about 70 percent of the time), his hobbies include building fishing rods, scuba diving, sailing, canoeing, kayaking, hiking and fishing.

When Christensen was asked what he'd like park users to know, his response was similar to Johnson's: "If you are watching the news, you are hearing that park funding is in jeopardy. To keep some quality of recreation at Mt. Spokane, volunteers are going to be needed more and more to fill in the gaps."

Susan Mulvihill is a member of the Spokane Nordic board and can be reached at inthegarden@live.com.



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, have opportunities for ski lessons, meet-up groups, and more! Annual minimum: \$25 for 2010-2011 \$ _____
- New Trails & Grooming Fund:** Help fund trail maintenance and upkeep of the snowmobile used for grooming. Trail expansion in the works! \$ _____
- 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. \$ _____
- Susie McDonald Fund Student Scholarship:** Help provide ski lessons and equipment for families who need a little financial assistance. \$ _____

Date: _____ 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 99210

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