

# Spokane Nordic News

*A message from the president...*

## *Commitment, consistency builds ski community*

**Tom Schaaf**

Fellow skiers: It's not the blue-wax winter we dream of, but it's hard to complain.

Having my kids on the Junior Ski Team has given me plenty of excuses to go skiing, and my new waxless skis simplify life when it's 35 degrees at the lodge. (I have to admit I feel like a piker when **Jud Ford** is up to his elbows in klister, but it's like Indiana Jones and that sword-wielding assassin: There is a time to choose simple and direct).

Getting back to the point, I had the opportunity to drive the Junior Team to a race last week in the new van. Looking at the bunch of them in



*The view from the rearview mirror: The Junior Ski Team riding the new van to a race in early January.*

the rear-view mirror, I realized that almost all of them had started years ago in Nordic Kids, and at one time or another they had been in my group.

It was kind of fun to think about the episodes of whining, freezing, snow-eating resistance balanced with moments of

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**SNSEF:  
Spokane Nordic  
Ski Education  
Foundation**

**Volume 5, Issue 3**

**January 21, 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.

**On the web:  
[www.spokanenordic.org](http://www.spokanenordic.org)**

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## *Less than normal snowpack presents grooming challenges*

**George Momany**

Each year seems to have its own challenges when it comes to grooming at Mount Spokane State Park. For the last two years, we have had record snowfall to contend with in addition to training a new groomer operator. This year, we have yet another new operator who has learned rapidly and we feel is doing a good job.

The conditions have again been challenging, with a snowpack that is only 50 percent of normal at this point. Numerous days and nights of rain, mixed with freezing conditions have given us a stable, but thin base. There is a thin line between running the tiller deep enough to chop up the frozen snow for good tracks, and grinding up dirt that then gets mixed in

with the snow.

In an effort to better groom all the trails, you may notice that more trails are tracked on only one side. This is done to allow more time to groom most of the trails instead of double tracking and grooming just a few of the trails. This also allows for skaters to have a bit more room. You may have also noted that earlier, the track was brought in from the edge compared to last year. This was done to have a firmer base to plant your outside pole when classic skiing.

It also improved safety on Hemlock and Mica Road. Now that the deck is firm, we will be trying to move the track back out towards the edge as snow conditions permit. We are still trying to double track Alpine, Lodgepole, and Mica Road for skating.

## “Souper” Bowl brings women together, helps those in need

**Karen Momany**

This is the fifth year that women will gather to frolic in the snow and raise money for a very worthy cause. The “Souper” Bowl X-Country Ski and Snowshoe Sunday happens on February 7 at Mount Spokane’s Selkirk Lodge and is open to women of all levels of experience in cross-country skiing and snowshoeing.

All proceeds from this event benefit the Women and Children’s Free Restaurant, a local non-profit that builds a supportive community for women and children in need by serving them nutritious meals in a safe environment.

Participants can expect fresh, warm cinnamon rolls at the 8:30 a.m. check-in. The morning’s activities include a timed, women’s only 10-kilometer skate and classic Nordic ski race starting at 10 a.m., guided snowshoe tours, or self guided ski and snowshoe experiences.

Back by popular demand are the chocolate truffles at the Nova Hut. The “souper” lunch, served from 10:30 a.m. to 12:45 p.m., includes three gourmet, homemade soups created, cooked, and served by members of the WCFR board. At least one soup will be vegetarian. Don’t miss the homemade rolls, honey butter, and the to-die-for brownies!

Snowshoes will be available on site free of charge. Mountain Gear and Fitness Fanatics will be offering dis-

### The fifth annual women’s “SOUPER” BOWL

**WHAT:** A cross-country ski and snowshoe event that benefits the Women’s and Children’s Free Restaurant

**WHEN:** Sunday, February 7,  
10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

**WHERE:** Mount Spokane Nordic  
Ski Area

**COST:** Minimum suggested  
donation is \$25

#### ON THE WEB:

[www.souperbowlspokane.org](http://www.souperbowlspokane.org)

counted ski rentals in town, so remember to reserve early. Drawings for wine, massages, and gift certificates will be posted. The day will conclude with grand prize drawings for prizes from our major sponsors at 12:30 p.m.. Check [www.souperbowlspokane.org](http://www.souperbowlspokane.org) to see the updated list of prizes from our generous sponsors.

Save gas, help lower your carbon footprint, and make parking easy by taking the chartered “Souper” Bowl bus.

The bus will leave at 8 a.m. from the Mountain Gear parking lot at 2002 N. Division and make a stop at Mt. Spokane High School at 8:30 a.m. to pick up north side participants. After a fun

day in the snow, lunch, and prize drawings, the bus will leave at 1 p.m. Ride down the hill with old and new friends. Bus fare is \$15. Reservations for the bus will be on a first-come, first-reserved basis, so get your registrations in early.

The first 100 participants to register will receive a free cloth shopping bag from REI. All who pre-register will have two tickets entered into the drawing for prizes.

Registration forms are available online at [www.souperbowlspokane.org](http://www.souperbowlspokane.org). This new website was made possible by the web design class at **Spokane Valley High School** and teacher **Eric Jurasin**. The art for the homepage was created by **Chelsea Momany**.

Last year’s participants said they couldn’t wait for this year. Here is some of their feedback: “This is a true community event, great food, great people, and great setting.” “It was even more fun this year than last year. More people and lots of energy.” “I like the flexibility to choose to do a tour or snowshoe on your own. This is an excellent experience.”

Join in the fun, meet other adventurous spirits, spend a day in the snow, and give generously in support of the Women’s and Children’s Free Restaurant. Minimum suggested donation is \$25, with all proceeds benefiting the Women’s and Children’s Free Restaurant.

## A message from the president...

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sheer fun over the last few years -- all of it culminating in a bunch of kids who like to ski, who enjoy hanging out with each other and who ski really well.

In the end, it isn’t complicated to get to that moment. There is a little bit of luck involved, but no magic. It’s partly planning and investment with a long term view of payoff: the Bill Koch program developing into Nordic Kids, SNSEF investing in the trails, and the organization nurturing relationships with the State Parks Department and Inland Empire Paper Company. But most of what leads to

a vanload of ski-racing kids is family, friends and neighbors who get up on a cold, wet morning and show up. It’s about teaching Nordic Kids when you aren’t that confident in your own skiing; cutting brush with **Art Bookstrom** on a July weekend instead of going to the lake; making the small choices that accumulate over time.

I can remember the first Nordic Kids season. On a rainy, nasty morning, I called **Mark Bitz** and asked what kind of weather would be grounds to cancel the class. He laughed and said, “Not this --see you there.”

So here we are with more than 100 skiers in Nordic Kids, a growing ski team, new trails and a great winter ahead. Keep showing up, and keep skiing.

Thanks for all you do for SNSEF.



E-mail SNSEF  
President Tom  
Schaaf at  
[tpschaaf@comcast.net](mailto:tpschaaf@comcast.net).

## Junior Racers compete, volunteer, have fun

**Jud Ford**

It has been an outstanding year so far for our youngest Nordic racers. The Junior Racers are 13 members strong this season. The skiers range in age from 9 to 13.

We have been meeting for practices on Saturday and Sunday mornings. Our practices have been comprised of drills and skunk ball. The Junior Racers have agreed to act as mentors for the Nordic Kids program, taking responsibility for placing the class signs, helping kids (and parents) with ski gear, helping to keep the hill in front of the lodge safe, and helping to instruct the groups. Some of the team members have also been excellent sherpas, carrying the skate skis for the younger skiers to and from junction one.

Occasionally we will miss practice for a race. On our first race at 49 Degrees North we filled the ski team van, which we borrowed from the Racing Team. We had fun on a chal-

lenging course, and we managed to bring home some ribbons and cleaned up on the door prizes! We also discovered the joys of building jumps, throwing snowballs, and skiing backwards on new terrain.

Plans for the rest of the season include racing in Langlauf, competing in the Mt. Spokane JOQ, and, perhaps, a race at Schweitzer. We also would like to travel to Canada for a fun weekend of skiing at Black Jack and Nancy Greene, with some swimming at the Trail Aquatic Center. We have two volunteers that have agreed to teach us avalanche safety.

We would also like to extend an invitation to other young skiers possibly interested in racing to join us for a practice or two this season. If you have questions, would like more information, or would like to come check out a practice, email to Jud Ford at [Judson\\_ford@yahoo.com](mailto:Judson_ford@yahoo.com).

## Nordic Kids: A rewarding experience

**Dawn Schaaf**

Nordic Kids met last Saturday for the second time this season and I'm already willing to declare 2010 a huge success. More than 100 students were on the snow, playing games, racing and hunting for treasure. While they appeared to be having a great time, they were really learning balance, gliding and other skiing techniques. But don't tell them, it could spoil the fun!

I love Nordic Kids! They have so much energy for a sport that they can enjoy into adulthood. Speaking of adults, we couldn't have this great program without all the fabulous parent volunteers that teach the kids and provide support in the lodge. I want to thank them all for great work.

**Tom** and I have been coordinating Nordic Kids for six seasons along with **Jud Ford** and **Lael Hinds**, and this year, **Trond Liaboe**. Trond is doing a great job coordinating the instructors' schedule and providing guidance with lessons.

I have met so many great people in the Nordic skiing community while working with Nordic kids. It's really satisfying to watch skiers grow up and improve as the seasons pass. I wouldn't want to deprive someone else of the opportunity. This is my official request for a replacement as the Nordic Kids coordinator. I would be very happy to mentor the next coordinator during the rest of the season, please let me know if you are interested. In the meantime, see you on Saturday.

## Langlauf: A classic event for everyone, age group winners get cow bells

**Art Bookstrom**

The 32<sup>nd</sup> annual Langlauf citizen's 10-kilometer classic cross-country ski race and ski tour will be held on Sunday, Feb. 14 at the Mount Spokane Nordic ski area. It's the largest and longest-running cross-country ski event in the Northwest. Last year, 220 people from all over the region took part in the fun and several hundred are expected again this year.

Pay only \$20 – a \$5 savings – by registering online by Wed., Feb. 10. Alternatively, you can mail your completed entry blank with a check for \$25 to the Langlauf Association, P.O. Box 593, Spokane, WA 99210, or deliver it to Fitness Fanatics, at 12425 E. Trent. Entries post-marked or delivered after Feb. 6 will cost \$30, and race day entry



Langlauf mascot Murphy and his mate, Minnie, represent this year's theme: "Our love of the sport."

at Mount Spokane will cost \$35.

On the day before Langlauf, Fitness Fanatics will offer free demos of their latest skis and snowshoes at the Selkirk Lodge from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Late

registration and early bib pickup for Langlauf will run from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. on Saturday at Fitness Fanatics, with a free Langlauf waxing clinic from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m.

On the morning of Langlauf, registration and the Fitness Fanatics wax tent open at 8:30 a.m. at the Selkirk Lodge. Langlauf starts at 11 a.m. and the finish line closes at 1 p.m.

After the race, participants can have some hot and tasty soup from Europa, check out the results and hang around with friends for the presentation of awards and the drawing for prizes from Fitness Fanatics and other Langlauf sponsors. This year, age-class winners will be awarded Norwegian cow bells.

**For more information, check out [www.spokanelanglauf.org](http://www.spokanelanglauf.org)**

## Racing Team members place in Methow SuperTour

**George Bryant**

With raincoats and klister in hand, the Spokane Nordic Racing Team headed to central Washington for the Methow SuperTour/ Junior Olympic Qualifying races.

The limited snow coverage, above freezing temperatures and a significant amount of liquid precipitation did not bode well for the race. Due to the conditions, we had to ski the community trail as a Friday ski.

It was a little soft with spotty patches but not as wet as feared. Saturday morning arrived with clear blue skies and below freezing temperatures! So with a hardened track and sunshine, we looked forward to a great day of racing.

**Corinn Bryant** started off with silver in the J3 mass start sprint followed by gold from **Ian McCarthy** in the J3 boys race.

The J2 time trial to set the heats advanced **Dylan Driscoll**, **Colin McCarthy** and **Eamonn McCarron** to the quarterfinals but they were unable to advance further.

The J1/OJ Girls time trial set **Kiersten Utsey** (J1) up to advance through the heats to 2<sup>nd</sup> in the "B" final where she placed eighth overall.

The J1/OJ Boys time trial again advanced Spokane Nordic skiers **Derek Alcorn** (OJ), **Arrol Bryant** (J1) and **Scott Strong** (J1), to the quarterfinals where the strength of the field didn't allow them to advance beyond.

Sunday's classic individual start distance race venue was changed to the Loup Loup Ski area above the Methow Valley due to the lack of snow on the 5-kilometer course behind Liberty Bell High School. A change of venue also precipitated a change in weather – 3 to 6 inches of wet snow at close to freezing made for a tough wax day as well as a sloppy course.

While the early races went off with a predictable kick, the later races degenerated into survival mode for a number of the racers. "Zero" skis seemed to be the best ride for the conditions, but even that was not a sure thing.

Ian McCarthy, Corinn Bryant and Kiersten Utsey continued their consistent performances with Ian taking home silver, Corinn winning bronze and Kiersten moving up in the field to take fifth. Derek Alcorn skied to sixth place in the OJ Boys while Arrol placed ninth and Scott 12<sup>th</sup> in the J1 division.

Two junior racers (under 10 years old), **Adam and Andrew Sonneland**, jumped in the J3 race and finished within a respectable time of the winners.

**Dylan Driscoll** demonstrated the most marked improvement from last year, climbing into the middle of the pack.

Overall, a good showing by your local Nordic race team. Results can be found at [www.mvsta.com/winter/supertour.html](http://www.mvsta.com/winter/supertour.html)

### UP CLOSE: Profiles of Spokane Nordic Racing Team members

*Liorah Wichser*

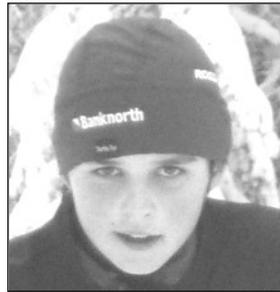


**Grace H. Ford**

Age: 12

Birth Place: Spokane

"I became a Nordic skier mostly because skiing is fun, and I want to improve my skills and be able to race on a higher level."



**Ian McCarthy**

Age: 12

Birth Place: Tonasket, WA

"I had started skiing when I was still in diapers and joined the Spokane Ski Team when I was 10. I decided to stay with it because it was good exercise and it gave me a sense of freedom and fun."



**Kiersten Utsey**

Age: 17

Birth Place: Spokane

"I've been skiing practically since I could walk, and I love the sport. Thus, it is only natural that I am a Nordic ski racer."

## The Recreational Skier

# “It’s never too late to work on technique”

**Susan Mulvihill**

It has been said that if you can walk, you can cross-country ski.

While there is some truth to that statement, walking through the snow on skis really isn’t that much fun. Whether you are a beginner or have been skiing a long time, it’s important to take a good look at your technique to make each skiing experience a good one.

I’m currently teaching a friend how to ski which reminds me of how scared I was when I started skiing about 30 years ago. I fell down so many times the first day, it’s a wonder I stayed with it. There isn’t room in this article to cover all of the concepts to learn but let’s take a look at some of the most important ones.

### SKI-TO-SKI BALANCE

Working on your balance is huge. You can do this anytime, anywhere. Stand on one leg for as long as you can, then switch to the other leg. Do this as often as possible. Like strengthening muscles, our balance gets better the more we work on it. This will make it easier for you to shift your weight from one ski to the other while you’re out on the trails.

### POLING

Look at your pole positions while you’re skiing. Something most beginners do is hold the poles straight out from their sides in a vertical position. That’s because they’re trying to increase their base of support and feel more secure on their skis. Hey, we’ve all been there, done that! But it’s not efficient because as you take a stride, those vertical poles aren’t going to help propel you forward.

Each pole should be planted on an angle of about 60 degrees. For example, when you take a stride forward with your right ski, your left arm should swing forward and be almost straight while you plant the base of the left pole even with the middle of your right boot. With the pole in that angled position, you can use your left arm to push yourself forward by using the pole as a lever. Make sense?

While you’re skiing, each arm should go through a full swing that mirrors the position of the opposite leg. Try not to have a “death grip” on the pole handles. When I

was new, I remember developing small blisters on my thumbs from my killer grip. Skiing without poles is a great way to work on your weight shifts and be less dependent on your poles.

### RELAXATION, FLEXION AND EXTENSION

Another natural tendency new skiers have is to stand very stiffly on straight legs. While that might feel like a more secure position, it’s actually more difficult for your body to smoothly adjust to changes in the surface and direction of the trail. Instead, keep your knees slightly flexed and you will be able to react more efficiently.

Also, look ahead down the trail rather than looking down at your skis. Your feet are still down there, honest. If you look at the trail ahead, you will be aware of what’s coming and can more easily adjust your stride as needed. Besides, looking down at the ground all the time is hard on your neck.

### ENJOY!

The bottom line is that skiing should be a fun activity. You’re strapping on those skis because you want to stay active during the winter, enjoy the scenery and burn some calories.

If skiing isn’t fun for you yet, consider taking some lessons. My favorite instructor is **Caroline Holley**, who can be contacted at Fitness Fanatics (12425 E. Sprague Ave., 922-6080). Several years ago, I could tell I’d gotten back into shuffling along the trails on my skis and wanted to get more out of it. I took some private lessons from Caroline and my technique improved in leaps and bounds.

The City of Spokane’s Parks Department also offers ski lessons during the season. Check out their schedule by going to [spokaneparks.org](http://spokaneparks.org) and clicking on “go cross country skiing” under their activity finder.

See you out on the trails!



*Susan Mulvihill serves on Spokane Nordic Ski Education Foundation's board of directors and can be reached via e-mail: [inthegarden@live.com](mailto:inthegarden@live.com).*

## New van creates camaraderie among team

**John McCarthy**

The Spokane Nordic Ski Education Foundation has purchased a van and it has been a huge hit.

The Racing Team has used it to get to skiing venues and the only complaint thus far is that the music played on digital devices is not always Bach or Beethoven. It has helped to create the sense of team camaraderie that develops when a team travels together. The Junior Team has been able to use it as well with the same sense of spirit developing among its members.

The purchase of the vehicle – a used Ford 350 passenger-van -- was something that the SNSEF board deliberated over the last couple of years. It also was tried out before the actual purchase was made. Having a team van has created a “value added” component to the development of young skiers. Because it is in its early utilization, we continue to find uses that will create advantages for our organization.

We would like to thank **Group Health** for providing us with the initial funds for this purchase.

We are looking forward to adding a ski rack. The van will also display decals from sponsors who agree that Nordic skiing is a healthy way to greet the winter and keep our community fit.

Look for the white and soon to be “decaled” van at the ski hill, and thank the sponsors as well as kids and coaches that are setting healthy examples for all of us.



**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: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_ Additional Info? \_\_\_\_\_

**Yes!** I want to support Spokane Nordic Ski Education Foundation 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!** Please 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](http://www.spokanenordic.org)  
 E-mail questions about membership and contributions to: [members\\_dev@snsef.org](mailto:members_dev@snsef.org)