



The Seward Sitzmark

The quarterly newsletter of the Seward Nordic Ski Club
2009-2010 Winter First Edition

Announcements

HOLIDAY LUMINARY SKI – Saturday, December 26

Join us for an evening of outdoor holiday cheer with illuminated skiing and snowshoeing! The easy loops (warm-up loop and Sitzmark) will be lighted with ice and paper candle luminarias. We'll have a bonfire in the parking lot with hot chocolate and holiday drinks. Bring ski or snowshoe gear, headlamps if you have them, and your holiday spirit. Optional items to bring include holiday desserts, hot drinks, egg nog, etc. to share. This event is family friendly and open to the public. If you would like to help with luminaria setup, please arrive right at 7pm and bring a lighter!

PROGRESSIVE BLUE MOON SKI PARTY – Saturday, January 2

This much-anticipated "hut-to hut" ski event will begin at 6pm in Questa Woods and finish at Bear Lake. Skiers will meet at Ray and Julie Robinson's and eventually end at Bear Lake (final destination residence TBA). There will be tasty food and drink along the way. No charge, although donations are welcome. This event is for Ski Club members only and space is limited to the first 30 people who RSVP. Please reserve your spot with Jennifer Bell at jjrun@hotmail.com. Shuttle rides back to the start point will be provided. Details are still being finalized, so watch your email or check the website for the latest information. Join us for this first progressive ski, an event that is destined to become a popular tradition!

Calendar

December 26	<i>Luminary Ski, Divide Ski Area</i>
January 2	<i>Progressive Ski: Questa Woods to Bear Lake</i>
January 31	<i>AMH Anchorage Cup Pia's Classic 5K/10K/15K, Anchorage</i>
February 7	<i>Alaska Ski for Women, Kincaid Park, Anchorage</i>
February 21	<i>AMH Anchorage Cup Sven Johansen Freestyle 10K/30K, Anchorage</i>
February 21	<i>Iditarod Skijor Race, Bear Lake</i>
February 27	<i>Anchorage Ski 4 Kids Day</i>
March 7	<i>Tour of Anchorage 25K/40K/50K, Anchorage</i>
March 15	<i>Kachemak Ski Marathon, 25K/42K, Homer</i>
March 28	<i>Sea to Ski Marathon, 5K Run/7K Bike/5K Ski, Homer</i>

News

GROOMING UPDATE

The Divide Ski Area grooming tour de force of Duane Chase, Tom Gillespie, Dan Walker, and Herb Wottlin are back at it again this year. Andy Wilder has also joined the crew and has been a great addition to their efforts. The Divide Ski Area is in fantastic condition, especially for this early in the year! All of the loops are groomed, including Madelyn's Meadow. Up in Moose Pass, Jason Aigeldinger continues to provide excellent skate and classic track grooming of the Trail River Campground Area. Here in Seward,

John Shank has volunteered to groom Exit Glacier Road, and many have already enjoyed the fruits of that labor. Tom Gillespie and Dennis Perry have also groomed Bear Lake, and Dennis plans to have groomer-set classic tracks in place this winter whenever possible. We are all so thankful to these dedicated volunteer groomers!

NEW SNOWMACHINES

A huge thanks to Tom Tougas for donating a Tundra snowmachine to the Club! The Club had already invested in another Scandic snowmachine, as well, so with these two snowmachine additions to the fleet we anticipate more flexibility with grooming the Divide Ski Area, Bear Lake, and the High School.

Unfortunately, the Pisten Bully, our grooming workhorse, continues to be a challenge, and has not yet been functional this year. Replacement of that machine will cost upwards of \$50,000, and hopefully this can be funded with grants in the future. Thanks again Tom for your huge contribution!

DIVIDE SKI AREA IMPROVEMENTS

If you've skied up at the Divide Ski Area this year, no doubt you've noticed the artistic and helpful new signage. When combined with Mark Luttrell's map, which is posted at the new kiosk at the parking lot, the Divide Ski Area has become a much easier area to navigate for skiers of all abilities. You may have also noticed a big change to the layout at Divide: the reversal of the Paradise Loop. Some trail work this fall straightened out one of the sharper curves, making this reversal a welcome change. Experienced skiers have commented that this reversal makes the entire loop easier to ski, and the reversal also improves safety where many of the trails converge. Visit our website to view a copy of the Divide Ski Area map. Thanks to Alan Heavirland for crafting our signs!

SKI CLINICS

SNSC is working toward the goal of providing ski clinics for both classic and skate ski technique at the beginner and intermediate levels. Most of these clinics will be announced after the holidays. However, MaryLynn Barnwell will be leading a classic technique clinic for intermediate skiers over the holiday break. If you are an experienced classic skier but would like to refine your technique, MaryLynn's class is for you! Email her at mlbarnwell@gmail.com for details. If you are interested in volunteering your skills for a class, we'd love to hear from you!

LEARN TO X-C SKI CLASS SET FOR JANUARY 9

Ski Club member and physical therapist Natalie Sook will broaden the ranks of Seward area cross-country skiers by offering a "Learn to X-C Ski" class on Saturday, January 9 at 10:30am. Location is to be announced. This class will be open to all interested adults and kids over age 10. The course will cost \$10 for ski club members and \$15 for the public. Spread the word, lend your gear, and prompt your non-skiing friends to attend this clinic!

JUNIOR NORDIC INSTRUCTOR NEEDED!

Would you be interested in leading elementary-aged kids in skiing? We are fortunate to have members teaching toddlers, junior and high-school aged kids, and adults, but would love to have someone pitch in with the younger kids in Junior Nordic instruction. We could connect you with ski instructors in Anchorage for ski instruction tips and ideas if needed. Let us know if this is an area of interest for you!

TRAIL UPDATES

Do you want to hear the latest on trail conditions? Tired of driving to a trail only to discover the conditions aren't what you expected? Then join the Trail Forum! The forum has really taken off this year, and we already have over 70 members signed up and posting current condition reports. There are typically 1-3 emails posted per day when conditions are changing. Members have the option to receive each email as they are posted, or receive a batched email once daily. We understand the importance of email privacy, and email addresses are protected from spam. To join this members-only forum, or to change your preference in how your emails are received, just contact us at sewardnordicski@gmail.com.

PEE WEE SKI HAS BEGUN!

Ski club members Michelle Hensel and Julie Robinson are now leading ski activities for little ones ages 2-5. Julie's sessions meet on Thursday or Fridays from 10:30 – 11:30am. Michelle's group will begin after the holidays, and will meet Wednesdays from 1 – 2pm. Parents are required to attend with their tots and to provide skis. Get those little ones ready for a lifetime of skiing! Send an email to julieprigge@gmail.com to get your name on the Pee Wee Ski email list.

SKIJOR CLINIC

For those skiers who are more adventurous with their canine friends, Jason Aigeldinger has come to the instructional rescue. He has volunteered to lead a Skijor clinic this winter, which will be held out at the Trail River Campground area. Class size will be limited, so be sure to watch for upcoming announcements so you can reserve your spot!

IDITAROD SKIJOR RACE SET FOR FEBRUARY 21

Madelyn Walker is coordinating another Skijor race on Sunday, February 21, in conjunction with Iditarod Days. The last race held in 2007 was a huge hit, bringing in many competitors from other parts of the state. We expect another big turnout of local and non-locals alike, and it should be a great event for both competitors and spectators. Watch the website for details!

GREAT TURNOUT FOR WEEKEND AVALANCHE COURSE

Our first full-weekend avalanche course had a great attendance and received good reviews from participants. Forest Ranger, Avalanche Forecaster, and Ski Club member Alex McLain passed on his knowledge with a professional day of slide shows and basic beacon practice. Thank you to AVTEC and Dano Michaud for the auditorium use. Alex's wife, Cristan McLain, shared her rescue training and great logistical skills through her organization of a fantastic field day at the Summit Lake area. Participants dug snow pits to analyze the avalanche risk, searched for buried beacons, and responded to several staged rescue scenarios. The event was supported by Jason Aigeldinger, Dano Michaud, Darin and Jennifer Bell, and Ray Robinson. We are proud to have offered this free service to the community, and thank Alex and Cristan for their hard work in designing the course.

FUNDRAISING SUCCESSES

We've had a record number of both personal and business memberships this year. That is exciting news for the Club and we are very appreciative of all the support. Please make note of all our business sponsors listed on the last page of this newsletter. In addition, the Club recently received two donations from other non-profit organizations: a generous \$1000 donation from Y South Health Association, and also \$500 from the Sons of American Legion. Thank you!

SEWARD SEAHAWKS NEWS

Bob Barnwell has taken on the Head Coach role for the year, and MaryLynn Barnwell is assisting him. Pat Perry and Erin Knotek have been a big boost to the team with their fundraising efforts. Pat realized the desperate need of the Seward Seahawks' Ski Team for new uniforms and warm-ups, so came up with a new fundraising idea: creating unique Seward T-shirts to sell at the Christmas Holiday Craft Fair. Jacob Ernst of Moose Pass donated his skills as the designer of a well-received T-shirt, available in both short and long sleeves. Erin Knotek worked hard at overseeing the actual sale of the T-shirts. Along with the shirts, money is being raised through a Quilt Raffle. The quilt is a Frayed Flannel Lap Quilt donated by Sew'n Bee Cozy, and is on display there. It was designed by Karla Oates and made by Christine Olson. The colors are red, dark green, and the pattern is a cozy winter ski scene. Tickets are \$1 and the quilt will be raffled off Feb.4th at Seward High School. You need not be present to win! To buy raffle tickets or T-shirts, contact Erin Knotek at 362-3674 or at ekmk@arctic.net.

SKI RAFFLE

This year we also had a raffle for a pair of waxless touring skis, donated by Barney's Sport Chalet. Many tickets were sold at all of our events, with the winner announced at the final showing of the Warren Miller movie. Richard Hocking, of Seward, was the lucky winner of the skis. Congratulations Richard!

ANNUAL FALL SOCIAL A GREAT SUCCESS

Thanks to the warm and generous hospitality of Mike and Raylene O'Connor, our fall social this year on Nov. 7 at their Resurrect Art Coffeehouse and Gallery was a wonderful success. Ski club members created some hearty homemade soups and breads for the event, and Midnight Sun Brewery donated tasty beer. Members gathered in the cozy environment of RezArt and sipped on their beverages in new pint glasses with our ski club logo. A silent auction was held and was a great fundraiser for the Club. We would like to thank all of the generous donors that contributed to the auction: Alaska Mountaineering and Hiking (AMH), Alaska Wildland Adventures, Dyan Ferren, Exit Glacier Guides, Irvin Pottery, Jeannie Shirk, Michelle Keagle and Resurrection Bodyworks.

BIG TURNOUT FOR ANNUAL SKI SWAP

This year's Outdoor Gear and Ski Swap had a huge turnout. Twice the amount of consignment gear was sold as last year, thanks to the many local folks who cleaned out their closets and garages and contributed some great items. Barney's Sports Chalet was once again present for the event, selling new gear and supporting our club with a generous 7% cut of the profits. The rental ski program rented more ski packages than ever before, thanks in part to all the new, high quality gear which was purchased last year. Carlyn Nichols has devoted lots of energy to bolstering our growing rental program. Cathy Weiford organized another successful chili and baked good sale, and Storm Chasers Marine Services had a table as the new Arctic Cat Snowmachine Dealer. Thanks to all the community volunteers who shared their knowledge, time, chili and baked goods to make this event such a successful tradition!

Member Spotlight: Jason Aigeldinger



This month we highlight Jason Aigeldinger, who has been our Trail River groomer extraordinaire. Jason works as a Forestry Technician for the Forest Service, and in the winter works part-time assisting district snow rangers. He grew up in Northeastern Pennsylvania and says he “started skiing local golf courses and coal banks on hand-me-downs from my kindergarten teacher. I stuffed the toes of the old three pin boots with cardboard. It worked well for several seasons until my feet grew.”

He and his wife, Laura, have lived in the Seward area for 10 years now, with their first winter spent as volunteer Kenai Fjords winter rangers living at the Exit Glacier Alder Cabin. They were hooked. They now live adjacent to the Trail River Campground, where Jason enjoys both skate and classic skiing, skijoring, grooming, canoeing, snow and skateboarding, cutting firewood, and playing the bucket in America's most dangerous jug band. We are excited to announce that he will instruct a Skijor Clinic this winter. Thanks for all your hard work, Jason!

Favorite trail: Resurrection Pass. He especially enjoys skiing off that main trail down the Bean Creek winter trail. He also loves Johnson North Trail from the trailhead out to the steel bridge on the non-motorized trail, Carter lake out to the Crescent saddle cabin and back, Grant Lake via the middle portage south and east of Moose Pass, and Little Paradise Valley east of Exit Glacier. ***Favorite trail snack:*** Wheat Thins

Favorite Post ski beverage: Red Rose tea and beer (we assume not mixed together)!

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Mission Statement

The Seward Nordic Ski Club is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting and supporting Nordic and backcountry skiing for all ages, developing and maintaining a network of groomed trails, and sponsoring community ski activities and educational opportunities.

Thank you to our business sponsors '09-'10



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