

# SPOKANE NORDIC NEWS

April 2015

## Short but Sweet

- by Lisa Sunderman

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Thank-You  
to sponsors,  
partners and  
volunteers

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- JNQ
- Loppet

... and more!

All good things come to an end but this season started later and came to an end sooner than most of us would like. Thanks to our strong community spirit and the amazing work by the State Park grooming staff, Spokane area skiers experienced excellent events and many great days of skiing this season.

We had a LONG fall to prepare to be on snow this year. We continued to bike and run and roller-ski after our skis were waxed and ready for snow. Many of us traveled to seek out early snow then traveled again to get December skiing.

Then the magic happened and we got snow for Christmas! Holiday skiing was excellent and we continued to receive modest amounts of snow each week. Rain here and there happened as well but Steve Christensen and Park Staff strategically groomed about 30 days, holding off on grooming on some days to preserve our snow. We enjoyed a Winterfest with excellent cold snow, a snowy Souper Bowl, a sunny Langlauf, and a watery Junior National Qualifier race in late February. Nordic Kids and adult lessons had five weeks of skiing. We celebrated with the very fun Lemonade Loppet, finally admitting that our ski season had come to an end.

Being a finance person, I immediately began calculating whether I got my money's worth. Compared to the 60+ ski days my family enjoyed last season, my Spokane Nordic membership and snow park permit went relatively unused. Then I made another

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trail maintenance  
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due to the low snow  
coverage

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comparison: For one three-day weekend at Mt. Bachelor, the four of us paid triple the amount of our Washington State Parks snow park permit!!

Ok, since we definitely enjoyed our Mt. Spokane trails more than one weekend, I moved on to think about Spokane Nordic's

programs: trail maintenance proved to be essential due to the low snow coverage; the web cam and report were well-visited given unpredictable weather; we introduced new skiers and celebrated our sport with Winterfest; over 60 adults took lessons from a certified PSIA instructor; the Nordic Kids got a

lot of fun days on-snow and the memories of the 2015 NK Olympics held on a sunny day in Manito Park; and our racing team got quality training, with five of them earning Spokane Nordic scholarships for Junior Nationals. We put

our membership money to work even with a compressed season!

While it's easy to find other ways to stay fit, I will miss my ski friends! Keep a lookout for news on Mt. Spokane improvements and summer and fall events Spokane Nordic has in the works. We need trail maintenance and there are rumors of introduction to roller-skiing sessions and a summer event at the mountain. I hope that the

off-season is equally as short but sweet this year and that I see you all soon!



Photo: Jayne McLaughlin

# Send Your Appreciation!

A big thank you to Inland Empire Paper and Idaho lands for allowing us to cross-country ski on their property again this season. Some of our favorite trails (like Linder Ridge, Mica Road, Buck Land, the Wall, Paper Trail, Upper and Lower Tripps, Tamarama, Upper & Lower Outer Limits, etc.) are on private land adjacent to the State Park where skiers get benefit from a special use lease.

We need Spokane Nordic members to **tell them that skiers would like to keep using these wonderful trails.** Send your thank you notes, letters, and drawings to:

1. Inland Empire Paper Company, Attn: Paul Buckland  
3320 N Argonne  
Millwood, WA 99212

2. Idaho Dept. of Lands, Attn: Brett Turner  
3258 W. Industrial Loop  
Coeur d'Alene ID 83815



## Sponsors made it all possible

This past season the financial support of 15 community partners was crucial in making our collective ski experience possible. Together, they helped ensure we had successful events, healthy and growing ski teams, strong lesson programs for adults and Nordic Kids, and funds to maintain and improve the Mt. Spokane Cross-Country Ski Park. If you have a chance, thank them for their generous support!

### SEASON SPONSORS



### WINTERFEST SPONSORS



### CHALLENGE (LEMONADE) LOPPET SPONSORS



### POCKET MAP SPONSORS



KAREN E. NELSON  
Certified Public Accountant



Your business or employer can join their ranks in 2015-16! To learn more about sponsorship, email [info@spokanenordic.org](mailto:info@spokanenordic.org), call Brad at (509) 869-3042 or visit [spokanenordic.org/support](http://spokanenordic.org/support).

# YOU made the difference!

As always, volunteers were the driving force behind most of the year's events and programs, from the Snowball potluck to Nordic Kids, Winterfest, the JNQ race, and the Lemonade Loppet. Volunteers also gave of their expertise for projects like installing and trouble-shooting the live conditions webcam and Selkirk Lodge wi-fi, setting up the Perimeter Challenge, helping plan the website re-vamp, and innumerable other contributions. Over the coming months, dozens will slap on gloves and help cut wood and weeds so that we have clean ski-able trails next season.

So many of you give so much to make the Mt. Spokane Cross-Country Ski Park and the ski community so strong and unique. Thank you!

Photo: Alex Renner



Spokane Nordic Board President Lisa Sunderman (l) presents the Gary Silver award to Tom and Dawn Schaaf at the post-Langlauf ceremony

Photo: Brad Thiessen



Robin DeRuwe, Yvonne Baker and Brenda Roberts made sure registration and timing ran smoothly for the Lemonade Loppet

## Off-Trail socializing

Forty people from the local cross-country skiing community gathered on a Wednesday evening in late February at Twigs on Spokane's South Hill. They shared appealing to an informative presentation from Mike Lauffer of B & B Physical Therapy. Board President Lisa Sunderman discussed initial steps for the proposed Mountain Education and Recreation Center. Best of all was the warm hum of conversation and a lot of laughter.

More social evenings are in the works for Fall, along with new ways for skiers to connect for ride sharing, ski buddying and off-hill activities. If you have ideas, email them to [info@spokanenordic.org](mailto:info@spokanenordic.org).

## Tom and Dawn Schaaf recognized with Gary Silver award

Every year, the Gary Silver award recognizes an individual or couple that has made a significant lasting contribution to the Nordic skiing community in the Spokane region. This year, the award was given to Tom and Dawn Schaaf for their commitment, which has lasted over fifteen years.

Among their key contributions are leading Nordic Kids for six years and serving on the leadership team for numerous youth ski races, with Dawn serving as Race Coordinator. In addition, Tom has served on the Board, including as President, through a decade of transition as an organization; and was the key player in installing internet in the Selkirk Lodge as well as the trail webcam this past season. And they aren't done yet!

Spokane Nordic board member John McCarthy says, "When I think of the giants that have made skiing possible for our community, Tom and Dawn's names are at the top of my list. I believe that ten years from now, they will still be recalled as instrumental in creating a better skiing experience for our community."

Photo: Brad Thiessen



The Nordic Minstrels provided dinner music for the long-delayed season-opening SnowBall potluck on December 28.

# Something for Everyone

by Brad Thiessen

The second annual Winterfest on January 11 was a litmus test—would it be as popular as the inaugural version a year earlier? Particularly given the late start to the ski season, plus the event being held a week earlier than the MLK week-end as in 2014, there seemed a good chance that attendance would be lower.

The second year was also an opportunity to evaluate the goals for Winterfest. Who was it serving? Who should it serve?

Looking back at the first year, we knew that the free meal at Nova Hut was a way for people to experience community in a special way; the Donut Dash sprint relay race was a fun way for skiers of all ages and abilities to have fun together; the skijoring clinic filled a need; and the free lessons (upgraded to \$5 this year) were introducing new people to the joys of skinny skiing.

Then, we looked at a few key elements that were not met the first time around. For general skier enrichment, the regional SWIX representative came in to give a waxing clinic. For more advanced skiers, Madshus was invited to demo their high-end skis. For the kids, Ted Barnwell stepped forward with the idea of a scavenger hunt. When the Altai company requested a date to demo their Hoks (a back-country ski / snowshoe hybrid), Winterfest seemed like the perfect venue for trying out a new way to experience the snow.

The day proved to be a success. About 50% more people filled their plates with Nora's (now-famous) baked potatoes in the Nova Hut; the Donut Dash remained popular; the number of ski lessons was only slightly lower than in 2014; the skijoring clinic was over-enrolled; and the new activities were all quite popular, including about twenty people at the waxing clinic.

Going forward, Winterfest looks to be a sustainable and meaningful way to connect as a ski community and kick off the ski season for every level and age of skier.

*- Brad is Spokane Nordic's membership and marketing director*



Photo: Brad Thiessen



Photo: Jayne McLaughlin



Spokane Nordic is committed to creating, developing and delivering programs and facilities to foster cross-country skiing within the greater Spokane community.

This year was a tough one for skiing on the west coast and most notably in Washington. As the ski team was preparing for their season and the varieties of snow they might face, they had an awareness of the possibility of warm wet skiing as Snoqualmie was going to hold a race this year at Cabin Creek. Generally, klistar is the grip of choice there.

Photo: Darryl Potyk



Spokane Nordic Race Team member Grace Ford gets ready to race. Ski Team parents Joe Jud (l) and Brian Hawkins helped get racers prepared at the start line.

Unfortunately, while we had a tough snow year, Snoqualmie had an abysmal snow year. Twenty days before they were to hold their sanctioned race, they asked if Mt Spokane Ski Team could take it over. This was the second year in a row this happened and set our planning back a bit. Spokane Nordic has a number of events we try to fit in to welcome people to the mountain, some competitive, some low key and fun, some community oriented. We try to do all these and make sure our local users are getting what they need out of the trails as we build local and regional interest.

With this backdrop in mind, we were able to put on a race which was the culminating race for the region and pushed five of our skiers into the hunt for nationals. Our racers were thankful that we were able to accommodate this locally on the backs of Tom and Dawn Schaaf (our winners of the Gary Silver award), a large cadre of volunteers, truly too numerous to identify here, and a spectacular job by our

groomer Nathan who transformed a perpetually unfrozen sloppy ski trail into a slow but passable classic course for day one of the weekend. With the help of Mother Nature, and finally a night where the temperature dipped below freezing, he transformed the course into a wickedly fast skate skiing course for day two of the race.

The bottom line, the skiers from Montana, Oregon, Idaho and Washington were happy! They had an excellent, well-groomed, well-supported course with snow that was transformed into the best in our region. The goal of hosting these races is to support the entire Nordic program. We want to advance exposure for all of our community and have successfully continued to advance Nordic skiing in our region.

We appreciate the support of all who helped to make this happen. In the 2016-17 year, we look

forward to a full-fledged race for our community to engage in. Thanks to all of you who helped make this race happen on short notice and in a tough skiing environ-

Photo: Darryl Potyk



Spokane Nordic Race Team member Joel Potyk skates on Day 2.

ment. Our hope is that it will continue to build future invested skiers.

- John is a Spokane Nordic Board member

# DOWN TO THE WIRE

Spokane Nordic sprints to another JNQ

Photo: Darryl Potyk



# Moving Into Transition Team

by Phil Sandifur

This season my kids Chase (age 12) and Madison (age 9) joined the Transition Team, moving out of two seasons of Nordic kids with the desire to learn how to ski better and faster.

Our season started in October with an information evening at Coach Judd Ford's home. I was happy to see lots of familiar faces of parents and kids that grew up in the Nordic Kids program or whom I'd seen at the lodge on the



Photo: Phil Sandifur

At the starting line of a race at Sandpoint, ID

weekends. I left with a shopping list for each child, with enough equipment to quickly fill the ski box on top my SUV. Over the next few weeks we met at Judd's house to learn how to properly wax our new classic and skate skis while trying to not burn ourselves or drip wax over our clothes. The kids had so much fun waxing skis that more equipment, like an iron, tuning vices and wax, was soon added to my growing list.

During the holidays the team met for some fun runs along the High Drive bluff, and got lots of funny looks running with out ski poles! On Tuesdays the kids attended conditioning classes at U-District Physical Therapy for an hour of box jumps, medicine ball smashes and general sweatfests. Some of us parents even did our own class and enjoyed being sore as a family!

Once the first snow came after Christmas we spent as much of the holiday as possible getting used to our new skis. We joined a few other T-Team families for a New Year's Eve night trek with headlamps to Nova Hut. The parents packed food and drinks and the kids made forts and jumps in the snow until 2015. The sky was so clear and with a full moon we didn't need any lights on the way back.

January brought practices on Saturdays and Sundays. The kids always seemed raring to go at their 7:00 a.m. waking time. The first thirty minutes on the hill were always frantic

Photo: Jayne McLaughlin



Transition Team kids at a Saturday-morning practice

with the kids figuring out what kind of wax they needed and getting their skis waxed properly while the coaches and volunteer leaders huddled in the corner discussing the lesson plan for the day.

In mid-January the T-Team had its first opportunity to race in Methow, WA. We had never been to a Nordic race or the Methow, so it was a treat. The kids did well, competing both days on classic and skate races with teams from Bend, Portland, Seattle, Leavenworth and Sandpoint. The weather, course, venue and hospitality felt like a World Cup event.

In late January the team made a much shorter trek to Sandpoint, ID for a skate race at a super-cute horse ranch.

After traveling to the two out-of-town races, the kids were excited to race locally at the Langlauf 10K. We had record sun and warm temperatures so they learned how to Klistar wax their ski for the slushy snow. Sadly, our snow fall for the season didn't hold out so we turned lemons into lemonade by taking part in the Lemonade Loppet 10K trail run.

Overall, my kids had a blast this season learning how to ski better and faster, take part in a few races, and meet new friends. We really enjoyed skiing as a family and are excited for next season. We will plan to do our snow dance this Fall so we can have the same amount of fun, just with more snow!

## Ski Teams 2014-15

Racing Team members - 19  
Transition Team members - 22

Racing Team Coaches:

George Bryant  
Drew Schlieder  
Aaron Scott

Transition Team Coaches:

Jud Ford  
Jamie Redman

... plus parent helpers  
Caroline Tareski, Chris  
Sharman and Paul Fawcett

# Going National

## Spokane teens race to the top

by Darryl Potyk

After rigorous training all year and competing in races this winter, five Spokane skiers qualified for Junior Nationals which were held in Truckee, CA this past week. Our racers competed against the best skiers in the country and held their own against amazing competition.

Representing Spokane in the U-16 category was Lauren Potyk while in the U-18 category were Daniel Korus, Brett Ford, Ian McCarthy and Andrew Potyk. They were joined by other skiers from the Northwest who collectively represented the Pacific Northwest Ski Association.

It was odd seeing our racers in the PNSA blue and white “waves” rather than the familiar blue, yellow and white uniforms. The athletes did their best to acclimate to racing at 7000 feet. They were challenged by snow that varied from icy to slushy and by bright blue skies to blowing snow and sleet.

The host venue did a great job of saving snow, though only a hilly 2.5 km loop had enough snow to race on; meaning 4 laps for the 10 km races, something that our skiers are not used to given Spokane’s lengthy trail system.

The Spokane athletes showed a remarkable amount of team spirit and camaraderie amongst themselves as well as with their PNSA teammates – this was manifest in many ways, from cheering each other on, to heartfelt hugs, words of support all the while sporting new hairstyles!

The racers were in Truckee for ten days, which included preview days, race days and rest days. There was a skate sprint and then two longer races, one each skating and classic, followed by team relays. Many of the teams there had long great snow this year, and some of the competition is so dedicated that they attend high schools that specifically

focus on skiing. Spokane Nordic racers had good races and while not in the front of the pack, they each gave it their all and can be proud to have gotten there and raced against the best!

What’s next? Coach George Bryant has recommended that everyone take off a number of weeks to recover after a grueling training schedule. The racers will be involved in a variety of pursuits this spring ranging from running track, riding mountain bikes, rock climbing and just having fun before organized workouts resume early in the summer.

Many thanks go out to Coach George Bryant and congratulations to Lauren, Daniel, Ian, Brett and Andrew!

- Darryl is a Spokane Nordic Board member



Photo: Darryl Potyk

Daniel Korus pushes for a strong finish

### In their own words

“I had a great time in Truckee and learned a lot about myself and about racing in general by competing against the best skiers in the country. My hope is to compete on a higher level (next year) and represent Spokane Nordic higher up in the standings. Additionally, I look forward to working with the younger skiers this upcoming season to

encourage them to get more excited about racing and work towards their goals.”

- Andrew Potyk

“I learned so much about myself, skiing, and racing as a whole in Truckee this year... I would be nowhere near where I am if it were not for Spokane Nordic . I will give back to the community by coming out to help with the trail service... I will help with Nordic Kids (and) the Transition Team, ... share my experiences and knowledge of skiing and racing with them, and remind them to always have fun and continue doing it.”

- Lauren Potyk



Photo: Darryl Potyk

Lauren Potyk nears the finish line.

# Sweet from Sour

Lemonade Loppet makes the most of the melt

by Brad Thiessen

“Will it happen? Won’t it?”

In 2014, after ten year as event organizer, John Hatcher handed over organization of the Selkirk Challenge to Spokane Nordic leadership, and it was re-christened the Spokane Nordic Challenge Loppet. I was blown away when 150 skiers joined in a very snowy day to ski 20, 30 or 50km. The event clearly resonated with skiers.

With that memory still strong, my hopes coming into 2014-15 season were for a repeat of that success, with hopefully some more folks from out of town joining us to experience the incredible Mt. Spokane trail system. And in mid-February, there was still hope for skiable conditions. The planning committee had said from the beginning that we would adapt to conditions as necessary and hold a meaningful event even if it couldn’t be the full distance on the planned route.

Two weeks before the March 1 event, the news came down—the snow gods had apparently taken advantage of thawed relations with Cuba and headed to Havana for an extended vacation. The snow base was too low to be groomed, probably for the rest of the season.

So on the Monday after the slushy Junior National Qualifier, I went up to check on trail conditions, not sure whether to expect ice or bare patches (or both). To my surprise, the trails were beautiful—maybe not ski-

able, but hard-packed and pure. I just couldn’t stay bummed on a sunny day among those pine trees.

Given our commitment to holding a Loppet no matter the conditions, the only option was to make the best of what Mother Nature had given us. If we couldn’t ski it, we would snowshoe. Or run. Or trudge. There was no way to know if event day would yield hard-packed snow, or slush, or sludgy mud. Only time would tell. The event was re-christened the Lemonade Loppet, because when the snow gods give us lemons, Nordic skiers make lemonade.

On that sunny Sunday morning, 100 skiers and not-yet-skiers, ages 1 to 71 (yes, the snow was good enough for a baby carriage) showed up for a season-

ending celebration on a blue-sky day. Despite the frustration and disappointment of an early end to the season, people had a great time and sent the season out with, if not a cheer, then at least a smile.

Plan ahead for next year and a return to a snowy Challenge Loppet—lemonade not included.

- Brad is Spokane Nordic’s membership and marketing director

Photo: Phil Sandifur



Photo: Berne Jackson



Photo: Berne Jackson



# Short season, strong participation

## Nordic Kids tests a new 2-session model

Photo: Shauna Fowler



Nordic Kids had solid enrollment this season, with 130 kids, which was about the same as last season. The program tested the option of morning sessions as an alternative option to the traditional afternoon session. The two time slots allowed the program to spread out participants and minimize facility crowding, and will allow the program to reach more kids in the future. Weather and snow conditions shortened the season by several sessions, but the Nordic Kids Olympics at Manito Park on February 28 provided a festive and energetic conclusion to the season.

Many thanks to the volunteer leadership team of Natasha Sharman, Sheryl Wight, Laura Zulliger and Allen Dykes.

Photo: Gretchen Rose Wolf



# Youth Rangers has bright future

The Youth Rangers program followed up on a successful pilot year in 2014-15. Over the course of six Saturdays, coordinator Ryan Schulte brought in expert resources to lead the kids, aged 10-15, through topics like orienteering, survival shelters, firebuilding and search and rescue while also teaching them skiing skills. Ryan is looking at expanding the program next year with a level II program to help kids build on their previous year's experiences.

Photo: Brad Thiessen



Photo: Ryan Schulte



Photo: Ryan Schulte



Youth Rangers learning (l-r) fire-building, first aid, and avalanche rescue



Spokane Nordic  
P.O.Box 501  
Spokane, WA 99210

Photo: Jayne McLaughlin

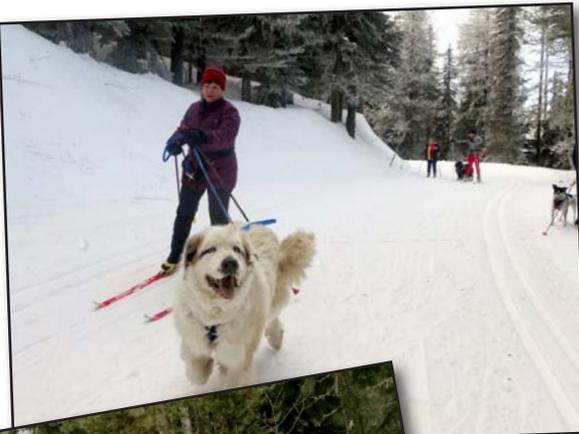


Photo: Gretchen Rose Wolf



Photo: Jayne McLaughlin

