

**FAR WEST SKI ASSOCIATION Features Olympians - Past and Aspiring, Equipment Experts, National Ski Patrol and Snowsports Museum & Library Founders at 91<sup>st</sup> Annual Convention**



RENO, NV: Some of the biggest stars in snowsports in the western US were shining brightly earlier this month. From a pioneer in hot dog skiing to an Olympian, to notable ski patrollers, to snowsports journalists, to hosts of the largest snowsports shows in America, they all convened at “Altitude with Attitude,” as the Far West Ski Association conducted its 91<sup>st</sup> Annual Convention and Business Meeting, June 6-9, 2024 at the Atlantis Casino Resort Spa in Reno, Nevada.

The convention featured networking with leaders in organized snowsports, tours to local attractions in Reno, entertainment, educational workshops, and various awards recognizing leaders making an impact in snowsports and beyond. In addition, the 38th Annual Silent Auction and Trade Show on Friday evening raised \$17,000 to support FWSA programs. The highest bidders won deals for snowsports and adventure travel. A portion of the proceeds benefited the Achieve Tahoe adaptive outdoor sports program.

Saturday’s program featured Snowsports Leadership Academy training sessions: “Ski Talk,” presented by Phil & Tricia Pugliese, ski equipment experts and product testers; and “Chat with the Pros,” featuring world champion athletes and Olympians, Travis Ganong, Marie-Michele Gagnon, Lila Lapanja, Curtis Fong, and Wayne Wong. The Public Affairs Panels featured: “National Ski Patrol – Bringing Calm to Chaos,” a newly developed wellness program presented by NSP leaders, Tony Margulies CHT, Barbara Razo and Wayne Wong; and “Preserving Our Heritage – Western Snowsports Museums & Libraries,” with renowned museum and library founders, historians and authors, Bill Clark, Alan K. Engen, John W. Lundin, and Ingrid P. Wicken.

A live auction of two ski packages donated by Grouse Mountain Lodge and Whitefish Mountain Resort, was conducted at the luncheon, resulting in \$2,500 for the Far West Ski Association’s Athletic Scholarship program. The Far West Ski Foundation presented grants to four museum and library founders participating in the Public Affairs Panel, for their snowsports legacy programs. A grant was also given to the High Fives Foundation, an adaptive and rehabilitative sports program.

Following the luncheon, Keynote Speaker Eric LeMarque, renowned for his book and inspiring feature film *“6 Below - Miracle on the Mountain,”* mesmerized the audience with his story of being lost in the wilderness at Mammoth Mountain for eight days, surviving and triumphantly returning to the slopes and snowboarding, despite losing both his lower legs due to severe frostbite. His story was an extraordinary tale of survival, with resilience and unwavering determination. Eric is a certified National Ski Patrol Outdoor Emergency Care Technician and working to be the first Bilateral Amputee as a patroller at his local San Bernardino Mountain Resorts in the coming winter season.

Annual recognition awards were presented to members of the ski industry, media, volunteers, racing leagues, councils, and ski clubs. Billy Kidd, Olympian and Steamboat Ski Resort Director of Skiing for over 50 years, and James Foster & Judy Gray, owners of the Ski Dazzle® Ski Show, were the recipients of the Snowsports Builder Award, given to individuals who have made positive and indelible contributions to snowsports. Industry Awards were presented: the Tommi Tyndall Award for outstanding ski industry contribution, to Steamboat Ski & Resort Corporation; and the Bill Mackey Award for outstanding ski industry employee, to Sara Clemons, Sports America Tours. The Jimmie Heuga Award for outstanding humanitarian, went to Roy Tuscany, High Fives Foundation. Media awards included: the Bill Berry Award – Featured Article presented to Eric LeMarque for his book, *“6 Below: Miracle on the Mountain”*; the Bill Berry Award – Hard News to Bianca Dumas, Freelance Writer; and the Warren Miller Modern Media Award to Realization Films, *“Weak Layers.”*

Todd Hood (San Diego, CA) received the Hans Georg Award for long-term service to organized skiing. Other volunteers receiving recognition awards included: the Elizabeth "Schatzi" Wood Award for a decisive contribution to skiing to Jean McCCasey, (San Diego, CA); J. Stanley Mullin Award for a decisive contribution to skiing to Dale Parshall (Fairview, OR); Richard Lubin Safety Person of the Year for promoting snowsports safety to Doug Barr (Reno, NV); Environment Award for activities in protecting our environment and preserving its resources to Dave Tragethon (Happy Valley, OR); and the Terry Smith Award for greatly contributing to the advancement of recreational ski racing to Nan Carnal (Truckee, CA). The Councils' Volunteer of the Year program, sponsored by Big White Ski Resort, recognized Linda Johnston of the Arizona Ski Council. The President's Award for advancing the immediate goals of Far West snowsports for the past year, was presented to Jo Simpson (Reno, NV) and AJ Hurt, US Ski Team.

The Western Ski Heritage Award, sponsored by Steamboat Ski & Resort Corporation, was presented to Alan K. Engen (Park City, UT), for over a half-century of work to preserve Utah snowsports history. The Club & Council History Recognition Award was given to Santa Rosa Ski Club for recording its club history and conducting a special commemorative train ride on its 85<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Historic Ski Clubs, Councils, Ski Schools & Ski Patrols were recognized: Alf Engen Ski School - Founded 1948; Auburn Ski Club - Founded 1928; Beach Cities Ski Club - Founded 1961; Bogus Basin Ski Patrol - Founded 1967; and Santa Rosa Ski Club - Founded 1938.

The Sierra League & Council had a highly successful racing season, winning League Champion at the Far West Racing Association's Mammoth Championships, and the Roma McCoy Trophy for most points per racer. At Far West Ski Week at Steamboat Resort, Sierra League & Council won the Lake Louise Trophy for the council with the most points for the GS and the Sierra Direct Members won the Joe Ross Trophy, for the club with the most points for the GS.

The Dave Tollakson Outstanding Ski Club had many entries this year, and the overall winner was Phoenix Ski Club. Wentworth Outstanding Club Publications were: Masters – Editor Gordon Cardona, The Unrecables; Advanced – Editor Dave Garcez, Modesto Ski Club; and Novice – Editor Carol Peterson, Bogus Basin Ski Club. Outstanding Club Websites were: Masters – Webmaster Emilio Trampuz, Mountain High Snowsport Club; and Novice – Webmaster Robert Newbury, Reno Ski & Recreation Club. The Outstanding Council Website was presented to Webmaster Linda McGavin, Northwest Ski Club Council, and Outstanding Council Publication was Editor Dennie Warren, Bay Area Snow Sports Council. The Club & Council Social Media Award was presented to SLO Skiers, Central Council of California. The Charities & Our Community Program recognized 12 clubs and councils for their participation and achievements.

Elections were held at Sunday's General Session. FWSA Officers for 2024 – 2025 are: President, Linda Westlund (Scottsdale, AZ); Secretary, Betty Donellan (Conroe, TX); Treasurer, Randy Lew (Battle Ground, WA); Chairperson Board of Trustees, Sheri Parshall (Fairview, OR); VP Communications, Joe Harvis (Mine Hill, NJ); VP Council Services, Todd Hood (San Diego, CA); VP Marketing & Sponsorship, Sandra Kaufman (Portland, OR); VP Membership, Craig Caples (Las Vegas, NV), VP Public Affairs, Steve Coxen (Ridgefield, WA); VP North American Travel, Nancy Ellis (Verdi, NV); VP International Travel, Gloria Raminha (Bakersfield, CA); VP Racing, Bob Ellis (Verdi, NV); and Trustees, Fran Long (Paso Robles, CA), Chris Gill (San Diego, CA), and Bob Ellis (Verdi, NV). Bylaws amendments were passed to allow meetings to be held face-to-face or electronically through internet technology, to change VP of Marketing to VP of Marketing & Sponsorship, and to shorten the timeframe in which Bylaws amendments can be proposed.

The Far West Ski Association is appreciative of the many sponsors who are a big part of the success of the FWSA Annual Convention. This year's sponsors were: Aspen Snowmass, Big White Ski Resort, Crystal Inn Hotels & Suites, The Crestwood, Timberline Condominiums, Grouse Mountain Lodge, Holiday Ski Tours, Karbon (Schure Sports Inc.), Mammoth Mountain Ski Area, Powder Mountain Ski Resort, Snowmass Tourism, Sports America Tours, Steamboat Ski & Resort Corporation, Vail Resorts, and Whitefish Mountain Resort.

Founded in 1930, the Far West Ski Association is a volunteer, non-profit organization representing 150 affiliated ski clubs located throughout nine regional councils located in the states of Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming. The Association conducts active programs in public affairs, skier safety, ski heritage, athletics, racing, communications, travel, council development, ski industry and community outreach. This year's convention was hosted by the Bay Area Snow Sports Council and Sierra League & Council. The 92nd Annual Far West Ski Association Convention is scheduled for June 12-15, 2025 at the Margaritaville Resort in Palm Springs, California, hosted by the Orange Council of Ski Clubs. For additional information regarding the Far West Ski Association, send an E-Mail to [publicity@fwsa.org](mailto:publicity@fwsa.org), or link into [www.fwsa.org](http://www.fwsa.org).

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Pictures available upon request.