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## February 2015 Newsletter

**Sandpoint Nordic Club NEWSLETTER**

**Volume 1 Issue 5: Feb 1, 2015**

Keep  
on skiing! Here's what's happening:

### **Schweitzer**

**Nordic Ski Clinics 2/6-2/8.** Article below. <http://www.schweitzer.com/events-activities/nordic-ski-clinics-2015/>

## **Priest**

**Lake Cross Country Skiers Picnic** Saturday, 2/7, 12:30pm. Article below.

## **Mt.**

**Spokane Langlauf** Sunday, 2/8. <http://spokanelanglauf.org/>

Article below.

## **Monthly**

**Member Meeting** Tuesday, 2/10, 6:30, Idaho Pour Authority. Article below.

## **Explore**

**Schweitzer** 2/22. Article below. <http://www.schweitzer.com/events-activities/explore-schweitzer-2015/>

## **Skiing at University of Idaho Extension Property**

We may be closing the chapter at U of I due to the warm temps day and overnight, but it's been sweet skiing while it lasted. Club volunteers have been grooming there for a month now and it's been a treat for our club members and the Sandpoint community, with estimates of 30-40 skiers on any given day, close to 70 when the Youth Ski League meets on Wednesdays. Thanks to groomers – Jared France, Dave Reseska, Ross Longhini and Conrad Young for not only keeping the trail groomed daily, but also for fixing the deep post holes from the foot traffic. Grooming takes 2-3hrs daily so we

owe these gentlemen a huge thank you!! –

*Vicki Longhini*

## **Schweitzer Nordic Ski Clinics**

If you want some instruction from a fresh source, Schweitzer is offering skating clinics Feb. 6-8 with coach Kevin Van Bueren from the Methow Valley. He's a Level 3 certified PSIA Nordic ski instructor, who provides everything from the fundamental basics to the intricacies of the various poling techniques, V1, V2, V2A.

Kevin's prior students have raved about his easy-to-follow drills that made them feel more comfortable and gave them the tools and confidence to quickly improve their skiing. There is a full complement of skate skiing lessons Friday, Saturday and Sunday, Feb 6-8.

Contact Schweitzer's Ski & Ride Center at 255-3070, or check the following web link for more information:  
<http://www.schweitzer.com/events-activities/nordic-ski-clinics-2015/>.

– *Debbie May*

## **Priest Lake Cross Country Skiers Picnic**

## 6th Annual Cross Country Skiers Winter

Picnic sponsored by the Priest Lake Nordic Club. You and your friends are invited to attend a ski-in (or snow shoe, walk-in, or snow machine) picnic.

When: Saturday February 7th 12:30pm to 2:30 pm.

Where: Reynolds Creek group shelter/ old CCC camp located along the Hill's Resort-Hanna Flats snowmobile trail, about one-half mile south of Kalispell Bay Road. Access is also by cross-country trails from Priest Lake Marina or Island View Lane, or along the snowmobile trail by skiing south from Kalispell Bay Road, or west from Priest Lake Marina.

What to bring: Your picnic lunch, beverage & trash bags- this is a "Pack In- Pack Out" facility.

What's provided: Covered fireplace and picnic tables, BBQ grill, and vault toilet. We will have a charcoal grill for cooking and s'mores. The grill will be ready for cooking at 1:00pm.

Why: Another great opportunity to enjoy Priest Lake in the winter, meet other skiers and share experiences at Priest Lake. Come even if you can't stay long !

Please share this invitation with your cross-country skiing friends and co-workers.

Last year's picnic was great!

Questions or for more info. Contact me at [plk.catherose@yahoo.com](mailto:plk.catherose@yahoo.com)

–

*Catherine Rosenberg*

## **Mt. Spokane Langlauf**

The 37th annual Langlauf cross country ski race and tour is scheduled for February 8, 2015. The event follows a traditional 10 km course around the Nordic ski trails at Mt. Spokane State Park, <http://www.parks.wa.gov/130/Winter-Recreation>

This classic technique only event draws more skiers than any other ski event in the Pacific Northwest. Participants range from highly competitive racers to families touring with their kids. Skiers and volunteers have equal opportunities at the numerous randomly drawn door prizes. A separate category exists for people sporting wooden skis and woolly attire. The Langlauf is a mass start where skiers “seed” themselves based on their expected completion times. A computer chip timing system is implemented. The course includes gradual climbs and rolling terrain, making a U turn on the Shadow Mountain trail and finishing back at the main Nordic Lodge near the start area. The 10 km loop has approximately 640’ of elevation gain. Food and refreshments are available after the race. The Mount Spokane trails are impeccably maintained and the grooming for this event is generally exquisite. Free kick waxing is available thanks to Fitness Fanatics and Swix/Toko. A Sno-Park permit is required and one day permits are available. On-line registration is also available. – *JF*

## Monthly Member Meeting

At Idaho Pour Authority, 203 Cedar St., Sandpoint, on Tuesday, 2/10, 6:30. This is an open member meeting at which President Vicki will report on Club doings and you will have a chance to meet and converse with other Club members. See you there!

## Explore Schweitzer

Explore

Schweitzer, Feb. 22, is a fun event/adventure where you have an allotted time to travel the distance you choose. Stop at stations along the way and receive raffle tickets—tickets good for a chance at some sweet prizes from Rossignol, Toko, Hammer Nutrition etc. You choose the route you want to go in order to collect tickets before time expires. Make it a sprint or an adventure. It's bound to be fun! <http://www.schweitzer.com/events-activities/explore-schweitzer-2015/>

– *Debbie May*

## Learn to Ski Day

Thank you to all the Club members, Club supporters and Schweitzer staff members whose combined efforts made this possible and made it a success! As the Schweitzer press release said:

January

10, 2015 saw a strong turn-out for Schweitzer Mountain Resort's Winter Trail Days. On that day, the Schweitzer offered free access to the entire Nordic trail system for cross-country skiers, snowbikers, and snowshoe enthusiasts. In conjunction with the resort's promotion, the Sandpoint Nordic Club offered free cross-country lessons and rentals as well.

"One of the most exciting things about this event is that most of the folks attending are first time cross-country skiers," said Vicki Longhini of the Sandpoint Nordic Club. "They are all so excited to learn this great sport and are so appreciative of both Schweitzer and the Sandpoint Nordic Club for creating this opportunity."

The club estimated 130 new skiers took advantage of the free rentals, but that number could fail to include the dozens just out enjoying the trails on their own, according to Rick Price of the Sandpoint Nordic Club. "We had people showing up with their own gear and rentals from the Alpine Shop and Outdoor Experience in town as well," said Price.

"We were thrilled with the outcome of this year's event," said Tom Chasse, CEO of Schweitzer Mountain Resort. "It's great to see people learning about other ways to enjoy Schweitzer during the winter. Our 32-kilometer trail system is an important part of our resort operation and

we're very happy to work with the Sandpoint Nordic Club to promote our trails and the sport."

The Sandpoint Nordic Club's mission is to introduce the sport of cross-country skiing to more adults and children in the community. "This event goes a long way in fulfilling that mission," said Longhini. "It's truly an important event for us."

## **Western Winter Roundup**

The Western Winter Roundup was full speed ahead on Saturday morning, January 24th, attracting local Nordic skiers as well as skiers from CdA and Spokane. Despite receiving moderate rain over night, the trail held up well and the racers enjoyed a competitive ski race. The Sandpoint Nordic Club began prepping the course at Western Pleasure Guest Ranch several days earlier and laid out a 2.5K loop for classic and skate skiing in the north Meadow Loop. Skiers skied either a 5K or a 10K.

Over half of the participants were under 18yrs. Running concurrent with the ski race was a snow shoe 5K &

10K race that looped through the rolling, wooded trails of Western Pleasure.

Smiles were seen all around!! Special

thanks to Western Pleasure for hosting, Ross Longhini for grooming the course and Jennifer MacDonald for organizing the race. Other volunteers included Vicki

Longhini, Sue Dietz, Nancy Dooley, Susan Drumheller and Meredith Lynch. – *Vicki Longhini*

There

are pictures from the event at <https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?>



## **Wednesday Ski Group**

The number of skiers participating in the Wednesday group has increased each week. We had a total of 13 happy skiers on January 21st. 8 classic skiers and 5 skaters enjoyed good snow, occasional sunshine, and lots of laughs. We were on the snow for several hours however we did lose several skiers due to personal time constraints. We expect an ever larger group each week as prior participants are starting to bring their friends. Come join us, make some new friends and have some fun. We meet at the clock tower at 9:10 on Wednesday mornings. – *Bill Tregoning*

## **Join a Ski Group?**

The Club is offering a variety of opportunities for you to get to know and ski with other members on a regular basis. This follows the lead of and expands upon the successful Wednesday Ski Group which, for several years has been organized and facilitated by Michele and Bill Tregoning.

The Wednesday Ski Group continues to meet at 9:10 AM Wednesday at the Schweitzer clock tower. Many skiers ride the 8:30

bus and get more acquainted with others in the group. It may be skate or classic depending upon snow conditions. For more information contact Bill at [btrego2811@msn.com](mailto:btrego2811@msn.com)

The Saturday Ski Group meets at 8:40, Saturday morning, at the Schweitzer clock tower. You can use the 8:00 bus and get ahead of the downhillers. This is an informal group, there will be no leader or organizer, just a chance to meet and ski with other Club members.

If you can't make those sessions or would like more group skiing the Club will try to match you up with other members to form groups that meet your needs. The idea is that skiers would be matched with others of similar abilities and interests for regularly scheduled outings. If needed the Club will try to provide an experienced skier to act as guide. If you're interested, send an email telling what you would like in a group to [sandpointnordic@gmail.com](mailto:sandpointnordic@gmail.com) – *Bob Love*

## **The 3LAs: NNN, SNS & NIS**

What the heck is up with all the 3 Letter Acronyms, 3LAs, for Nordic binding systems? In fact, these 3LAs only cover skating and classic cross-country skiing and leave out back-country, telemarking and jumping. We will only discuss current binding systems for cross-country skiing. Several years ago, Salomon came out with a new binding system. Being so innovative, they called it the Salomon Nordic System. You may have guessed that this is known as the SNS binding. You may also have guessed that the binding system would have to be matched to the right boot. Yes,

Salomon also happens to make boots. For quite a few years, Salomon dominated the Nordic ski boot market. You may also notice that Atomic uses the SNS system. That is because Salomon and Atomic are both owned by Amer Sports. Rottefella came out with a ski binding systems in 1927. It doesn't seem like that did much for most of the 20th century. However, they have recently had success with their new system. Again, being a standout innovator (at least in the naming department) they called it the New Nordic Norm. Yes, you guessed right, NNN. So Rottefella doesn't make boots. So what did they do? They licensed their technology to many ski boot manufacturers. Today, you will find ski boots that are compatible with NNN bindings from: Alpina, Fischer, Madshus and Rossignol. At the point in time when NNN came out, both the SNS bindings and the NNN bindings were attached to the skis using screws and glue. By the way, never use screws that are too long. Ha. In 2005, Rossignol, Madshus and Rottefella announced a truly innovative system to attach bindings to skis. They call it the Nordic Integrated System – NIS. This is a plate bonded to the ski that you can attach your binding to in the comforts of your living room. No screws. No glue. No drilling holes into your \$700 skis. Furthermore, you can adjust the location of the binding on the ski, adjust the binding for different size boots and remove the binding with ease. The NIS plate technology is tied to the NNN binding/boot system, so only NNN bindings attach without screws and glue to skis with an NIS plate. To further confuse the system, you can purchase NNN bindings that are either NIS compatible or not. The NNN bindings that are not compatible with NIS are simply glued & screwed to the ski just like an SNS system.

So is one system better than the other? If you put an NNN binding on a ski with an NIS plate, will you be a World Cup skier? Unfortunately, that's likely not the case. Ultimately, you're best off buying a boot that is really comfortable and then getting whatever binding system matches the boot. Personally, I like NNN system on the NIS plate. However, I don't use them because I have had great luck with my Salomon boots

and they are only compatible with SNS bindings which in turn are not compatible with NIS plates. – *Ross Longhini*

## **Adjust your body position for greater efficiency and balance**

Have you ever been skiing along when a minor terrain change has you flailing your arms and fighting for control? An adjustment to your body position can likely be the cure to your problem by increasing balance and reducing fatigue. The PSIA uses a pyramid of movements which are all important to the sport. The base of this pyramid is body position, without which everything else on the pyramid becomes less useful. You can be incredibly fit but if you have poor body position over your skis you will be working harder than necessary and skiing with less stability.

If you think of a tennis player, he must be able to quickly move left or right to return a serve. To do so, his weight must be forward with slightly more weight on the balls of his feet. The appropriate body position for more efficient skiing is similar, ankles and knees flexed forward with your hips over the balls of your feet.

A

full length mirror is a great tool to view and adjust your stance. Start by standing tall. Slowly make yourself shorter by flexing your ankles and knees forward. Bring your hips forward over your feet. You may feel your heels start to lift as your hips move forward. Stop just prior to your heels becoming unweighted. That is where you want to

be. If you stand sideways to a full length mirror you should see an imaginary line from the shoulders to the balls of your feet running through the hips, knees, and ankles. In this “stacked” position your body’s bone structure more efficiently supports its own weight.

Once

you have this position dialed in at the mirror, commit the feel of it to memory and take it with you to the snow.

Body

position is the most important piece of the puzzle to more efficient Nordic skiing.

A good

body position helps improve a skiers balance and stability. It can also promote longer glide and help lower your heart rate. Take it out and give it a try. – *Bill Tregoning*

## **Meeting Thomas Wassberg**

Thomas Wassberg is a cross-country ski legend. He is to Sweden what Michael Jordan is to the United States, an icon. Between 1980 and 1988 Wassberg won four Olympic gold medals plus an additional four gold medals in the Nordic World Championships. He took gold in what was one of the greatest cross-country ski races ever run, the 15 km event in the 1980 Lake Placid Winter Olympics, the very same Olympics as “The Miracle on Ice”. The race was a 15 km classic

interval start. Finnish giant Juha Mieto had crossed the finish line with the fastest time by a hefty margin. Wassberg had started behind Mieto and was tearing up the hilly Mt. Van Hovenberg trails. Mieto stood watching the race clock as his rival entered the stadium, it was going to be close! Wassberg crossed the line 1/100 second ahead of Mieto. The equivalent of the length of his nose, all this after skiing 9.6 MILES! Mieto could do nothing but drift silently into the gray woods and weep. After that race the FIS Nordic Ski Federation decided to time cross-country ski races to the nearest 1/10 second. Legend has it that after the Olympics Wassberg and Mieto cut their gold and silver medals in half, exchanged halves and welded them together.

In 1998 my kids attended a PNSA dry land ski camp at Nat Brown's ranch in Princeton, BC. Nat was a national team wax technician and had made numerous friends during his time on the World Cup circuit. The 1998 camp had a special guest named Thomas Wassberg. When my wife and I arrived on the final weekend to pick up the kids, the athletes were resting. The first person we saw was Wassberg hauling and spitting large chunks of firewood. An avid outdoorsman, Thomas had brought his twelve year old son Bjorn to the remote camp. I will never forget watching an 8 mm film of the 1982 world championship 50 km in Nat's rustic barn with the young PNSA skiers, Wassberg, and his son Bjorn. Towards the end of the race the film was focusing on Wassberg and Norwegian great Odvar Braa as they dueled for gold. Suddenly Bjorn shouted out "Papa did you win, Papa did you win"? Bjorn had no idea his father was an Olympic and world champion and yes Papa did win. Wassberg is typical of most Nordic ski top level racers. They tend to be hardworking, humble, and dedicated to their sport. They're not in it for fame, glory, or money. They simply love what they do and the lifestyle that goes with it and sharing that love of the sport.

Today Wassberg enjoys working as a

professional cross-country ski trail designer and assisting with World Cup events. His favorite days are spending time with his family and working on his private tree farm in Sweden. – *JF*

## **Nordic Skiing in Austria**

Typically we think of the nordic ski disciplines as classic cross country and skate skiing, most usually on a prepared/groomed track. Here I'll broaden the classification by including ski touring, sometimes called ski mountaineering or backcountry skiing. Ski touring on gentler terrain might use classic nordic cross country gear, but as the terrain steepens, the beefier Telemark or AT (randonee) gear, including climbing skins, becomes prevalent – as well as avalanche transceivers, shovels, etc. This activity requires neither ski lifts nor machine-prepared skiing surfaces, although a ski lift may be used to get initial access to the backcountry.

The Scandinavian countries have a long history of ski touring; so to include it as a type of nordic skiing is appropriate. For example, it was a common mode of backcountry travel by the tough and heroic Norwegian resistance fighters in WWII. In passing, let me recommend a book: *Skis Against the Atom* by Knut Haukelid.

Oops, I digress – I am to discuss Austria's nordic skiing. Austria is, of course, famous for its alpine skiing with monster resorts such as that near Kitzbühel offering nearly 100 ski lifts. Surprising to us is the concept that neither the ski resort nor the state owns

the land; the farmers do. In the warm months, the alps are grazing land, mostly for dairy cattle. In preparation for winter, the cattle are paraded into their barns in the valleys. And indeed it is a traffic-halting parade, with the animals all decked out with flower wreaths and ornate bells. The farmers who rent their land to the ski resorts then take down their fences and often operate mountain inns through the winter, where one can get food, drink, and, in some instances, lodging.

However, among local Austrians, ski touring with AT gear is very popular in those areas not served by ski lifts. Some of them marvel that people pay to ski. Farmers in the alps freely allow hikers, bikers, and skiers on their land – quite unlike the private property fixation we have here in the states. A group of Tiroleans, I came to know, permanently rents a hut below the Gams Hag peak near Kitzbühel, in terrain outside the ski area. In winter, access is via ski touring, perhaps a 3 hour trip. They have ‘modernized’ the hut making it more comfortable and functional e.g. an actual wood burning stove and extra beds. It still has the large fireplace and huge cheese-making kettle. The renters use the latter as a hot tub. There is also a good sized root cellar for storing wine and food. When I first met these folks, they would access their hut year round as a party house. More sedate now, they take their children there for short vacations – summer or winter.

Such huts are not unusual. Some years ago, before roads and vehicles were the norm, the cattle would be taken up into the mountains in spring by herders who would then live in the huts until fall, when the huts would again lie vacant. Nowadays, the herders can get to the cattle on a daily basis by automobile so the huts are no longer used as before. However, the attached barns are still employed to provide refuge for the animals in foul summer weather. Note that Austrian ski touring doesn’t require a hut. There are plenty of trail heads which provide parking for accessing high alpine terrain.



There are also access points from ski lifts here and there.

I've emphasized ski touring because its popularity among the Austrians is high and well integrated into their mountain culture. But what about classic cross country and skate skiing? Just the Tirolean portion of Austria offers about 4000 (not 40, not 400) kilometers of well maintained nordic trails! These may be community based or full-on nordic style resorts. Keep in mind that Austria is roughly a third the size of Idaho, but with five times the population.

Although I've done some ski touring in the Kitzbühel area, I've done no classic or skate skiing there. However, I've biked all over that terrain in the warmer months with mostly gentle terrain in the valleys. In the immediate vicinity of Kitzbühel, there are 120 km. of maintained trails, with connectors to the Brixental and Pinzgau trail systems, bringing the total up to 500 km. Most of this lies on valley floors (~2500' altitude), but some as high as 4000' altitude. The Kitzbühel trails are cost free and one small 7 km system up valley slightly from Kitzbühel even has snow making.

Finally, note that the elevations in the Kitzbühel area are quite similar to here, but they seem to get more dependable snow on the valley floors. The snow season also seems to arrive a bit later than here. There are higher elevations west of Tirol as you travel toward Switzerland e.g. in Austria's Arlberg. –

*Richard Sevenich*

## Need

advice? Ask the Ski Curmudgeon!

Dear

Ski Curmudgeon,

I was cross-country skiing at Schweitzer and saw a person riding up the ski trail on a snow bike with skate skis attached to their back. What's up with that? – *Perplexed*

Dear

Perplexed,

That person was “skiing with insurance”. If the bike got thrashed by a skier or received a flat tire, they could ski out. If their skis were stolen or they broke a ski, they could ride out. Makes sense to me. – SC

Dear

Ski Curmudgeon,

I saw multiple people get attacked by what looked like a mad blue grouse on Cloud Walker. Should I be worried? – *Alfred H.*

Dear  
Alfred,

I don't think so, another skier was observed with the "fool hen" riding harmlessly on her back while she was in a tuck. The bird is probably frustrated from a failed mating attempt or has been recruited by Schweitzer to check trail passes. If you have a pass, you should be fine.....– SC

Dear  
Ski Curmudgeon,

Nordic trails on forest roads often have side hill sections in early season, before there is enough snow to groom them flat. What is the best way to ski these sections for a V1 skier? For example, if the trail slopes to my right, am I better off with V1 left or V1 right ... and why? – *I. Lean*

Dear  
Leaner,

I believe it is beneficial to a skier to become efficient poling on both sides. It's fine to have a strong side for poling, but if you use the V-1 technique extensively, you can develop your muscles more on one side. In the case of a sloped trail, I think poling on the

up-hill side is less of a strain against gravity. Gravity is our friend going downhill, but the less you can fight it going up-hill, the better. Learning to pole on both sides is also helpful in climbing around corners. The main thing to remember is to try and maintain an equal push with both legs regardless of the terrain or what poling technique you are using (V-1, V-2, V2A). It's easy to develop a habit of pulling yourself up a hill and relying more on your arms and less on your legs. Unless you're the Incredible Hulk, your legs have larger muscles. – SC

Send your question for the Ski Curmudgeon to [sandpointnordic@gmail.com](mailto:sandpointnordic@gmail.com) The views expressed by the Ski Curmudgeon are his own and hardly ever reflect the views of the SNC.

Comments and suggestions for the newsletter may be sent to [sandpointnordic@gmail.com](mailto:sandpointnordic@gmail.com) Previous editions are available on the Club website, [www.SandpointNordic.com](http://www.SandpointNordic.com) And we are on Facebook at “Sandpoint Nordic Club”.

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