

SPOKANE NORDIC NEWS

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... and other questions about the future

by Tom Schaaf

I've been struck by the contrasts between various perspectives on Mt. Spokane that I've heard the last few weeks. On one hand, a long-time ski equipment rep with nation-wide experience expressed surprise that Mt. Spokane isn't a destination trail system. On the other hand, I've had numerous conversations with people who are frustrated about having to fork out \$80 for the trail pass/parking permit.

Part of what got me connecting these conversations was a trip with the Spokane Nordic ski team to West Yellowstone, where I gladly (well, maybe not gladly exactly, but I didn't pitch a fit) coughed up \$100 for the four of us to ski for three days. While there, I noted signs in businesses saying that they contributed to the trail grooming fund. It occurred to me that we in Spokane have grown comfortable with underfunding a tremendously valuable service. "It's in a State

Park, which our taxes pay for, right? Why should we have to contribute to it?"

Now part of this viewpoint may be over-familiarity. After all, cross-country ski destinations like Winthrop, West Yellowstone and Bend are exotic

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The parking lot at the Mt. Spokane Cross-Country Ski Park is frequently full on a week-end afternoon.

The Big Push

by Matt Halloran

Sometimes getting off the couch is the hardest part of skiing

Before we even think about technique and training, we have to get to the mountain first. Waking up on a Saturday morning and imagining all the things I have to do before I get to ski can be daunting: make breakfast and coffee, check the weather on the mountain, change into ski clothes, load the skis into the car, drive up the mountain, apply kick wax ... and finally I am skiing.

It is pretty safe to say that I am not alone in finding that the list can be tiresome and time-consuming. So how do we get motivated to go up

and ski on a regular basis? I won't claim to definitively answer these questions, but I can offer some tricks that have helped me over the years. Let's go through the list and identify some ways around a few of the bigger hurdles.

Making the Decision: The thing that has helped the most with making it to the mountain is making the decision to go skiing far in advance. For me this means putting "skiing on Mt. Spokane" on the calendar starting in late November

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Breathing

By George Momany

An injury prompted George to write this reflection in late 2010.

Breathing. Many of us take this simple act for granted. Unless we have asthma or some other lung disease, we notice it only when exercising, or maybe holding our breath underwater.

So it came as a rude surprise when in mid November I found myself lying on a grassy curb. At first I was in shock, my brain overwhelmed with painful input. But as the seconds passed, the shock was replaced by my inability to breathe. Soon I was feeling my chest wall for a puncture or crush wound; my windpipe seemed normal. As the tendrils of panic entered, I wondered if I could get help before I passed out. But to my relief, my throat began to relax and air started squeaking back into my chest. It was a full minute before I could wrap my mind around what had happened.

It was a clear, dry morning when I cycled to work. I was riding over some leaves tossed out by homeowners as I stood to crest the last hill. My last memory was of seeing some sticks covered by leaves. In a split second, my helmet

was hitting the pavement with the entire force of my body right behind it. No time to put out a hand, no time to roll with the fall. My only thought was to move off the road to avoid the touch of a car's tire.

Once again breathing, I gingerly put my bike upright and painfully leaned on it for support. No cars, no people, just dark houses in the early dawn. You could blame my lack of judgment on a mild concussion, but first I walked, and then rode the final half-mile to the hospital. X-rays would show I had fractured three neck and back bones, and two ribs. In the ER, the doctor and nurse asked me if I needed pain medicine. I said I didn't care; at least now I could breathe.

Off work for a month, pain meds for a few weeks, no skiing for most of the season—bad luck. No nerve damage, no paraplegia—good luck. Still, I miss my friends on the mountain and time on the trail. So do me a favor next time you go up to the Nordic area. After your skis are on and you're heading out from the lodge, stop for a second, inhale the cold fresh air, and appreciate breathing...

- George is Past President of the SNSEF Board



George in a neck brace, 2010

Banff Film Festival a Success!

The third annual Banff Film Festival intermission bake sale was a HUGE success. We had never made over \$1000 in one night and this year we did it two nights in a row. We grossed \$3018.93 and after expenses we raised \$2743.21 for the SNSEF general fund. That is fantastic! We only had two bins of cookies left over, which were taken to the Women's and Children's Free Restaurant again this year. They were very grateful for these sweet additions to their shopping.

First, we want to thank all of our Banff Bakers (aka Spokane Nordic volunteers) for the beautifully prepared and very delicious cookies and bars. They say that presentation is everything and the cookie trays looked amazing! The addition of Bumble Bards and organic apples from Cole's Orchard gave a nice variety. Each night, a wonderful cadre of Spokane Nordic volunteers helped set up, sell and clean up. We also want to thank Katy and Kevin

Farrington for helping again this year by purchasing ALL the drinks, paper products and ice for the event, plus helping set up and clean up.



We are also fortunate to have this opportunity to partner with Mountain Gear and Paul Fish. Paul is very supportive of Spokane Nordic and our mission statement. Each night of the Banff Film Festival, he talked about our work with kids and the trail system. The visits to our Spokane Nordic website spiked during

the Banff weekend and as a result donations at the festival were generous.

Happily,
Karen and George Momany

Spokane Nordic Calendar 2011-12

**unless noted, all events are at the Mt. Spokane Cross-Country Ski Park*

Dec 17	Great Scott Ski Race, Schweitzer Mtn. Resort
Dec 18	Lessons (by Ski Team) for all ages
Dec 31	Lessons (by Ski Team) for all ages
Jan 1	Lessons (by Ski Team) for all ages
Jan 7	Nordic Kids ski lessons
Jan 8	<i>Gals Get Going</i> beginning women's ski team
Jan 14	Nordic Kids ski lessons Adult ski lessons
Jan 15	<i>Gals Get Going</i> women's beginning ski team
Jan 21	Nordic Kids ski lessons Cougar Gulch Ski Race, Schweitzer Mtn. Resort
Jan 22	<i>Gals Get Going</i> women's beginning ski team
Jan 28	Nordic Kids ski lessons Adult ski lessons
Jan 29	<i>Gals Get Going</i> women's beginning ski team
Feb 4	Nordic Kids ski lessons Adult ski lessons
Feb 5	Souper Bowl snowshoe and ski event
Feb 11	*no Nordic Kids ski lessons
Feb 12	Langlauf 10k Ski Race
Feb 18	*no Nordic Kids ski lessons Group Health Pursuit (JNQ) race preparation
Feb 19	Group Health Pursuit (JNQ) race
Mar 3	Nordic Kids potluck and games

Directions to Mt. Spokane Nordic Ski Trails

Mt. Spokane State Park has one main entrance at the end of State Road 206, otherwise known as Mt. Spokane Park Drive, about 15 miles east of U.S. Hwy 2. The Park office is just inside the boundary on the left. This Nordic area is a little over 3 1/4 miles up the paved road from the main entrance. Follow the main road to the top where the summit road goes left (often gated and unrecognizable in winter) and the road to the alpine ski area goes straight and downhill. The road leading up to the Selkirk Lodge and Nordic Ski area is on the right, running through the snowmobile/hiker parking lot.



Spokane Nordic
Ski Education Foundation

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.

Nordic Kids Ski Lessons

Nordic Kids ski lessons start January 7. Sign up your kid, tell a friend, and come volunteer! For more info and to sign up, visit spokanenordic.org or contact tliaboe@hotmail.com.

All-Ages Ski Lessons

The Spokane Nordic Ski Team will offer lessons on Dec. 18, Dec. 31 and Jan. 1. Lessons are available for all ages and skill levels, in both skate and classic technique. A \$25 donation to the ski team is recommended. To arrange times, contact George Bryant at selkirkxc@yahoo.com.

Adult Ski Lessons

New to cross-country, or looking to tweak those techniques? Adults ski lessons are available for SNSEF members at the Mt. Spokane ski area January 14, 28 and 4th. Times and costs will be available soon!

Sno-Park pass

A Sno-Park pass is required to use the parking lot at the Mt. Spokane Cross-Country Ski Park. The price is \$20 per day, or \$80 for the season (\$40 pass and \$40 special grooming permit). The passes are good for one vehicle only; you cannot transfer the pass between vehicles. The Sno-Park pass pays for parking lot snow removal and trail grooming. State funds pay for Selkirk Lodge maintenance, rest rooms, etc.

SPOKANE NORDIC SKI EDUCATION FOUNDATION

Membership and Donation Form

Spokane Nordic Ski Education Foundation **teaches** all ages how to Nordic (cross-country) ski, **develops and maintains** the Mt. Spokane Cross-Country Ski Park (in cooperation with Mt. Spokane State Park and other agencies), **hosts** ski competitions, and **informs** the community about cross-country ski developments.

SNSEF is member-funded. Your involvement promotes the Foundation's efforts and brings you into a vibrant community that celebrates health, fitness, family and the great outdoors. SNSEF members receive informative newsletters, are invited to special events, have opportunities for ski lessons, meet-up groups, and more!

Become a Member

Yes! I want to become a member of the Spokane Nordic Ski Education Foundation.

** Membership runs October - September*

___ 2011-12 membership: \$30 (include payment as directed below)

Name: _____	Additional family members: _____	Age (children) _____
Address: _____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
Phone: _____	_____	_____
Email: _____	_____	_____

Become a Donor

Yes! I want to support Spokane Nordic Ski Education Foundation (SNSEF) through:

___ New Trails and Grooming Fund: Help fund trail maintenance and upkeep of the grooming machine. Trail expansion is in the works!	\$ _____
___ Nordic Kids: Your support gives children and their parents the opportunity to learn, develop and enjoy cross-country skiing skill together. Parents and other adult volunteers lead groups of kids in fun activities designed to teach the fundamentals of skiing.	\$ _____
___ Racing Team: Support the Nordic racing team at Mt. Spokane. SNSEF hosts Junior Nationals trials for aspiring racers throughout the region.	\$ _____
___ Susie McDonald Fund Student Scholarship: Help provide ski lessons and equipment for families who need a little financial assistance.	\$ _____

Date: _____ Total SNSEF Contribution \$ _____

In signing and submitting this form, I recognize that cross-country skiing involves strenuous activities, is potentially hazardous, and involves inherent risk. I knowingly and voluntarily assume all responsibility and risk for my actions and my family's actions while cross-country skiing, during travel related to Spokane Nordic Ski Education Foundation (SNSEF) activities or during use of SNSEF facilities and equipment. This includes, but is not limited to, falls collisions, effects of weather, conditions of equipment and trails and other areas while skiing or participating in SNSEF activities. I hereby for myself, my heir, administrators, or anyone else who may bring claims on my or my family members' behalf, covenant not to sue, release and discharge the SNSEF, its Board and Committee members, and all related organizations or individuals, for any and all claims of liability for death, personal injury, or property damage arising from my or my family members' participation in SNSEF activities.

Member/ Donor Signature

Date Signed

Make check(s) out to SNSEF and mail your tax-deductible membership/donation with this form to:

SNSEF, PO Box 501, Spokane, WA, 99210.

*SNSEF is a non-profit, 501(C)(3) organization

Learn more about our programs online at www.spokaneNordic.org

Email questions about membership and contributions to info@spokaneNordic.org

On the Hill

Spokane Nordic Hats are Here!

Spokane Nordic has designed our very own merino wool hats, machine knit and sewn in an eco-friendly factory in Hailey, Idaho. They have a flat weave and thin fleece lining in the band. Get a storm blue hat with a classic Nordic pattern and "Spokane Nordic" lettering for \$25. If you want to give these for Christmas, look for a sign-up sheet or Board Member in the Selkirk Lodge Saturday and Sunday mornings or send an email to finance@spokanenordic.com.

Beginning Ski Team

Beginning January 8, the *Gals Get Going* ski team will help women who are beginning to intermediate skiers to gain confidence, fitness, and friendships. Cost is \$100.

Members will get a team hat and a 7-day/6-week training plan that will compliment the on-hill instruction days, Sundays January 8, 15, 22, 29 from 9:30

to 11:30 a.m. at the Mt. Spokane Cross-Country Ski Park.

Learn more or sign up at www.galsgetgoing.com or call Lisa at 509-995-8526.

Save the Date...

For the 7th Annual Souper Bowl Snowshoe and Cross Country Ski event on Sunday February 5th. Go to www.souperbowlspokane.org to learn more.

Get off the couch (continued from page 1)

and ending in mid-March. If you wait to make the decision until the day-of, the ugly beasts that are excuses get even more persuasive. Don't give them any extra power! The important thing to remember is that these dates have to be "non-negotiable" (i.e. small things like wind or a broken zipper don't make you stay home). Pretend that the mountain is a close friend and will be extremely disappointed if you don't show up. Better yet, get a real friend to add some of the same dates to their calendar.

The Weather: The simple fact is, we participate in a winter sport and sometimes the weather is ugly. This can be a major hurdle for a lot of people. Some of the best days of skiing that I have had on Mt. Spokane happened on days I almost didn't go up because of weather. As far as Mt. Spokane is concerned, the worst weather is always in the parking lot. So once you have arrived at the lodge it only gets better from there. A relatively stormy day can be very nice and peaceful once you are in the trees of the cross-country ski trails. Additionally, crummy weather in town doesn't always mean crummy weather on the mountain. Mt. Spokane experiences inversions every year and they are amazing to see from the cross-country ski trails, particularly Shadow Mountain and Valley View. But these are things that you have to make the trek up the mountain to find out: you won't know if you don't go! (Caveat: some-

times the weather just stinks, but hey, at least you will have got in a workout.)

Putting on Ski Clothes: This will be brief, but I have heard this excuse (and maybe thought it once): "I don't want to have to put on ski clothes." I don't have any recommendations to get around this other than perhaps a snarky response to the tune of "Well, you could wear a swim suit but people might look at your frostbite funny." Clothes are required most places you go, so there isn't much to debate here.

The Drive: I have been traveling up to Mt. Spokane, first with my parents and now as a coach, since 1986. I couldn't count how many hours I have spent on that drive. The road is long, steep, curvy and sometimes slippery. So here are some ideas. If your family skis, get them to come along and make it a family time, or offer to drive a friend up with you. Then you get the added benefit of someone to ski with. If you are driving alone (or with introverted people), music is always nice, but podcasts or books on tape make the drive go even faster.

Whatever excuse you need to work past, make it a point to get up and enjoy the wonderful trails we have here in Spokane!

- Matt coaches the Spokane Nordic Racing Team



Spokane Nordic
Ski Education Foundation

S.N.S.E.F.
P.O.Box 501
Spokane, WA 99210

The \$80 Parking Lot *(continued from page 1)*

locales, and fifty bucks for a three-day pass is still cheaper than a half-day pass to Schweitzer. A lot of local skiers would never travel to one of these 'destination' ski trails, so they don't have that price to compare to—"Skiing at Mt. Spokane has always been free, so why should it cost now?" Add to that the fact that our groomer breaks down, and the lodge is crowded on certain Saturday afternoons...

We have trouble connecting parking with the magic that happens five dark nights each week.

machine can't handle routine Mt. Spokane conditions, and we won't have a new groomer until next year because of how the state funds the whole snopark system via the Sno-Park passes. And the harsh reality is that our taxes are paying for less and less of the State Park system, as the State pulls funding.

Part of our disconnect may be that the \$80 Sno-Park pass appears to be a parking permit. Again, we have trouble connecting parking with the magic that happens five dark

But think about this: there is a direct connection between the funding of that groomer and what we pay for the service. We didn't groom last Saturday because our current grooming

nights each week, when the State Park staff head out with the groomer. But that's what the pass goes toward: a groomer, staff, cleared parking lots ... and one of the best ski trail systems around, one that should be—and hopefully will be, someday—a ski destination we can all be glad to pay for.

In the long run, we need to ask what we want in terms of facilities at Mt. Spokane, how reliable we want the grooming, and how we would pay for that. Considering the rates at other areas, what is an appropriate cost to ski at Mt. Spokane, and how could we balance the price of admission with the need to be an ongoing resource to the community?

I don't have answers to these questions, but Spokane Nordic will need your thoughtful consideration of these questions as we work with the State Park and with Inland Paper to shape the future for our trail systems.

- Tom is President of the SNSEF Board



Tom Schaaf