



NASJA

NORTH AMERICAN
SNOWSPORTS JOURNALISTS
ASSOCIATION

January 9, 2020

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Talking Tech

My HEAD Rev80 Pro skis are 170 cm long and 80 underfoot. That I understand. But if you ask me what a radius of 13.7 or dim. 129.80.111 means, be prepared for me to tell you to Google it.

Technology is all around us in snowsports. GPS-aided SNOWsat is being used in snowgrooming to measure the depth underneath PistenBully groomers; there are non-Newtonian ski polymers offering Hyper Damping Technology (HDT) from Renoun; apparel ingredients like The North Face FutureLight waterproof/breathable membrane; Giro helmets with Polartec's Power Grid and MIPS technology; and Dahu Ecorce 01 with cushy snowboot-like liners supported by a rigid, plastic exterior casing.

Now comes word from Denver's *5280* magazine that Alpine Media Technology is testing constantly updated live information screens for gondolas and chairlifts. After its pilot test last year at Winter Park, look for it at 10 more locales this season.

It behooves us all to stay on top of these advancements so we can communicate their benefits to our audience, whether in print or electronic media.

"With growing attention on global warming, there's talk that snowfall will shrink, and that skiing and riding will shrink along with it. Not so! Advances in snowmaking and grooming technology are increasing the availability of skiing and riding. They lengthen the season and make it more dependable, especially at the start of the season," said NASJA member Rick Kahl, editor of *Ski Area Management*, and recipient of the 2019 Carson White Snowsports Achievement Award.

The Masterfit Professional Development session at Windham next week is the latest effort to get all members up to speed on the current technology. Now if I could just get my Brother printer to work wirelessly, I'd be thrilled.



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Write On!

The North American Snowsports Journalists Association is celebrating 50 years.

BY PHIL JOHNSON



The annual assembly of the U.S. Ski Writers Association, the predecessor of NASJA, at Aspen Highlands in 1973. Left to right: John Hamilton, Barbara (Mrs. Hal) Roberts, John Hoeffling, Hal Roberts, Bob Cartmell and Burt Sims.

When the North American Snowsports Journalists Association (NASJA) gathers for its annual meeting in April 2013 at Mammoth Mountain, California, it will mark the 50th anniversary of the only coast-to-coast media organization dedicated to covering skiing and snowboarding.

The U.S. Ski Writers Association—now NASJA—was founded in 1963. The first meeting was held at the Jack Tar Hotel in San Francisco, and Carson White of the *San Francisco Examiner* was elected president. From that handful of journalists who gathered around an L-shaped table five decades ago came today's

NASJA, with 200 members from 31 states and two Canadian provinces.

In the beginning, almost every member was a newspaper writer, with early radio and television reporters, like Reno's Snodhu Thompson, an exception. Today the membership is diverse: It includes traditional newspaper reporters and columnists, but also plenty of photojournalists, broadcasters, authors, editors and Internet bloggers. As the definition of media has expanded in 50 years, so have the boundaries of ski coverage and NASJA membership. But the idea remains the same. Organizations for ski writers had been operating in California and the Midwest since the 1950s, and in the fall of 1962, a group of writ-

ers met at the Eastern Slope Inn in North Conway, New Hampshire, to organize the Eastern Ski Writers Association. Europe had formed a ski writers' association the previous year. So for groups across the United States with similar purpose, it made sense to consolidate into one—presumably greater, presumably grander—national organization.

Sounds simple, right? But as outlined in *From Lifeline to Byline*, an informative history published by the Eastern Ski Writers Association in 2003, there were issues between the regions right from the start. For example: Who could join this organization? What were the standards of membership? And what about regional autonomy?

The East wanted a strong, formal set of standards, while a letter sent in March 1963 by a member from the Far West suggested something different in his realm. "We are a very informal organization with no rules, regulations, incorporation, constitution, or bylaws to hinder or help us," he wrote. "Rather than be bound to strict conformity, we find that we operate best as we meet each situation and let policy be our guide."

Compare that to the view expressed by newspaper writer Jay Hanlon of the Manchester, New Hampshire, *Union Leader*: "We tried to establish a group of professional ski reporters, weeding out the fringe writers. And in so far as national [goes], we tried to lift their standards to meet Eastern's. We were a bunch of hard-nosed ski writers, not given to industry puff or presentation." Forming a national organiza-

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SKIING HERITAGE

WRITE ON! A LOOK BACK AT THE HISTORY OF NASJA

In 2013, to mark the association's 50th anniversary, two-term former NASJA president Phil Johnson penned a profile of the association for *Skiing Heritage* magazine, the International Skiing History Association magazine since renamed *Skiing History*. Thanks to ISHA's new membership, the group has provided us with a direct link to Phil's story.

In the piece, he explains that the name U.S. Ski Writers Association was changed in 1989 to the North American Ski Journalists Association, and that two years later it was changed again. Some members were concerned that keeping "ski" in the name would send the wrong message to younger writers who worked with snowboarders. So the current North American Snowsports Journalists Association was born and the acronym NASJA, created two years earlier, did not have to be changed.

Phil tells us, "While I was not there at the beginning, I do have first hand memories of the organization over many years and so do others like Vicki Andersen, John Naye, Roy Rodrigues, and Ed Blumstein who helped frame the narrative.



"With the then unimaginable evolution in how people deliver and receive information, our organization has changed significantly in recent years. There will be a new generation of leadership whose focus will be to build on the efforts of others like Mike Strauss, Don Metivier, Ben Rinaldo, Craig Altschul, Bob Enzel, John Hamilton and Bob Cox to keep NASJA alive as the only organization there is for snowsports communicators," Phil said in an email.

You can read the story here:
<https://skiinghistory.org/news/write-on>

NEWS YOU CAN USE



Body Slamming

An article titled "Blind Sided and Body Slammed" was number one for the past year on *SeniorsSkiing.com*. The popular skiing site has examined a significant issue regarding safety on the slopes, and NASJA members have also voiced concerns on the topic. Learn more about this pressing issue in Roger Lohr's by-lined story:

<https://www.seniorsskiing.com/blind-sided-and-body-slammed/>



WaPo: The Future of American Skiing May be Inside a New Jersey Mall

The *Washington Post* writes on Jan. 7, "... why sink \$110 million into Jersey mall skiing? Because it may revolutionize the sport, expanding and diversifying its base."

The story continues, "'There are two barriers to getting people skiing and snowboarding,' says (Joe) Hession, Big Snow's president and CEO. 'The first is getting there. The second barrier is price.' Big Snow hopes to eliminate both. It's located in the country's most densely populated state. Two-hour packages with all necessary gear (including pants and a jacket) are \$69.99, and a block of six lift-only passes comes out to \$16.66 a visit. To avoid interminable lift lines, only 500 patrons are permitted at a time on the trails."

Read the story here:

https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/style/the-future-of-american-skiing-may-be-inside-a-new-jersey-mall/2020/01/06/ddb22850-227a-11ea-a153-dce4b94e4249_story.html

SAVE THESE DATES

Jan. 12-14, 2020 – Windham Mountain Press Trip to Include Professional Development – Registration is now closed. Advance thanks to corporate member Masterfit for agreeing to present a fascinating talk about boot fitting which experienced skiers and snowboarders know are the most critical component of their equipment set-up. Presenters will be: Jeff Rich, co-founder of Masterfit University/Masterfit Enterprises, owner of NYC's US Orthotic Center, and Marc Stewart, Masterfit University Senior Instructor and head bootfitter at Windham Mountain Sports.

Thanks also to our host Becky Pine, Windham's Sr. Manager of Communications & Marketing. At press time, at least 15 members were signed up to attend. Watch for photos from this Catskills event in next month's newsletter.

Jan. 26-31, 2020 – NASJA Western Winter Summit – Registration is now closed. Watch our February issue for scenes from this year's trip to New Mexico.

Jan. 31, 2020 – NASJA Meet & Greet During Outdoor Retailer Snow Show – Active, Retired and Corporate members are invited to attend a NASJA Meet & Greet at the Denver Press Club, Jan. 31, 2020, at the end of Day 3 of the OR Snow Show. Join us from 6 to 8 p.m. at 1330 Glenarm Place, a short three block walk from the Colorado Convention Center and home of the Snow Show. RSVP to Jeff Blumenfeld, jeff@blumenfeldpr.com, by Jan. 27, 2020.

Feb. 11-12, 2020 – Ski Vermont Ski Day – The NASJA Media Day at Trapp Family Lodge, which was scheduled for February 3, has been rolled into the Ski Vermont Ski Day event scheduled for the following week, February 11 and 12. There are planned visits and activities at Bolton Valley and Trapp Family Lodge. This will be a more wide scale program that will be open to NASJA Press members hosted by the Vermont Ski Areas Association, so keep an eye out for more details. Meanwhile, learn more by contacting Adam White, Director of Communications, 802 223 2439, adamwhite@skivermont.com.

Mar. 21-24, 2020 – NASJA Annual Meeting Pre-Trip – Tamarack Ski Resort offers skiing, snowboarding, dining, lodging and winter vacations and is located just 100 miles north of Boise, Idaho. Using Tamarack as our base of operation, the annual meeting pre-trip will provide you with the option of checking in on Mar. 21 or 22. We'll ski Tamarack on the 22nd, then Ski Brundage on the 23rd. Departure for Sun Valley will be Mar. 24. Hotel rooms will range in price from \$85 to \$145. Watch for an email with full details. Until then, contact board member Kevin Gasior for more details, 514 756 3486, kevin@skipros.ca

Mar. 24-29, 2020 – NASJA/ISHA/U.S. Ski and Snowboard Hall of Fame meeting in Sun Valley. Includes NASJA annual meeting, professional development, and X-C day trip and luncheon at Galena Lodge. Ski rentals will be provided courtesy of Ski Butlers.

To register: watch your email for the link which will be sent to all members once it's completed.

Tentative Annual Meeting schedule:

Tuesday, March 24 – Check into Sun Valley Lodging

- 6-8 p.m.: Welcome Reception at Bowling Alley and Game Room in the Sun Valley Lodge
- Dinner on your own

Wednesday, March 25

Breakfast at Legends (included in registration price)

- 9:00 a.m.: Meet at River Run Plaza for mountain tour with Kelli and her team.
- 12:00 p.m.: Lunch with Kelli Lusk and her team (location TBD)
- 4:30 p.m. NASJA annual meeting, Professional Development session
- 6:30-7:30 p.m. Reception at Limelight, Ketchum, Hosted by Limelight Ketchum, Visit Sun Valley
- Dinner in Ketchum (on your own)

Thursday, March 26 – Ski Day at Sun Valley

- 9:00 a.m.: Meet at River Run Plaza
- Noon: Lunch on your own.
- 4-5:30 p.m.: Reception: Hall of Fame at Harriman Cottage (no charge)
- ISHA dinner (optional)

Friday, March 27 – X-C Ski Day at Galena Lodge

- Cross-country skiing and lunch.
- 4:00 p.m.: Ski Hall of Fame Vintage Fashion Show

Saturday, March 28 – Ski Day at Sun Valley or Dollar Mountain

- 7 p.m.: Ski Hall of Fame Induction dinner

Sunday, March 29 – Depart

LAST RUN



Remembering Barry Zevan

NASJA regrets the passing of member Barry ZeVan. The Minnesota forecasting and

broadcasting star worked at KSTP and KARE in the 1970s and '80s. ZeVan, who was 82, lived in Golden Valley, Minn. The cause of his death has not been made public, though he had been treated for chronic lymphocytic leukemia last year.

"He had an infectious, vivacious spirit filled with imagination. Everything he did, he did with panache – usually wearing his signature white pants," says granddaughter Maritsa Georgiou-Hamilton.

He was a former NASJA First Vice President; three-term NASJA Midwest President; and 1985 Harold S. Hirsch Award winner (TV). He also authored *Barry ZeVan: My Life Among The Giants, A Memoir* (4 Square Books, 2016).

In an email to Jeff Blumenfeld last October, Barry proudly wrote about his former TV Show, *Ski Scene*: "I hosted 500 *Ski Scene* shows on KSTP-TV here in the Twin Cities from 1971 through 1974. Chet Huntley was one of my guests, three times, promoting Big Sky, the last time a month before he passed away, sadly just three days prior to Big Sky's opening".

He also emailed, "I was the very first person to utter the word NASJA (one-million percent true) when we changed the name under the aegis of former president John Hamilton. At that time, I was serving my third term as president of Midwest."

Our sincere condolences to his family and friends.

Read his obituary here:

<https://tinyurl.com/barryzevanobit>

Jeff Blumenfeld – President
Roger Lohr, Kevin Gasior – Vice Presidents
Megan Collins – Corporate Liaison
Iseult Devlin – Immediate Past President



NASJA WISHES TO THANK THESE CORPORATE MEMBERS

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