



NASJA

NORTH AMERICAN
SNOWSPORTS JOURNALISTS
ASSOCIATION

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER

New Protocols

"No one wears a GoPro while golfing," writes former Steamboat and Mount Snow president Chris Diamond in his book, *Ski Inc. 2020*.

How true. Skiing/riding is more than a sport, it's a lifestyle. Since the late 1950s, it's been a part of my life as much as walking. I often thank my father, age 93, for taking me, lace-up boots on my feet, to that first lesson at Belleayre Mountain.

One thing is clear from NASJA's late June media briefing with the leaders of NSAA, SIA and *Ski Area Management*: the sport will be back this season. It will be cold. It will snow. And enthusiasts will continue to flock to ski areas and resorts as they have since well before railway entrepreneur Averell Harriman built the world's first chairlift in Sun Valley in 1936.

The only question is what new protocols will be required.

Media briefing presenter Rick Kahl, editor of *SAM*, believes, "We're all becoming comfortable with new ways of shopping at the grocery store and Home Depot. We are ordering tons more stuff online. Resorts will simply adopt some of these same strategies and apply them to resort operations. By November, it will all seem less strange.

"It will be different than it was in the past. And the first time we experience a familiar venue with new rules in place, it will be a little strange. Resorts will need help in explaining all that to guests, and NASJA members can help skiers and riders familiarize themselves with the changes," Kahl says.

The NASJA media briefing provided early thinking on the matter. We'll hold another one in the fall to help members communicate more definitive guidelines to their various audiences, whether in print, on the airwaves or online.

As renewal invoices go out this month, remember that snowsports retailers, touring centers and resorts, services and manufacturers, are meeting new challenges during the COVID-19 era, and with your continued support, so will NASJA.

Sincerely,



- Jeff Blumenfeld
NASJA President



NASJA MEDIA BRIEFING LOOKS AT 2020-21 SEASON

Vail Resorts, NSAA, SIA and *Ski Area Management* Stress Need for Advance Planning

There will be a 2020-21 ski season. Temperatures will drop. Snow will fall and enthusiasts will return to the slopes. However, it's likely new protocols will be in place.

That's the general consensus of snowsports industry executives who joined NASJA for a June 26 Zoom-based media briefing about how the COVID-19 pandemic will impact the 2020-2021 ski season.

The conference featured leaders from the ski industry: Patricia A. Campbell, president, Vail Resorts Mountain Division; Kelly Pawlak, president/CEO of the National Ski Areas Association (NSAA); Nick Sargent, president, Snowsports Industries America (SIA); and Rick Kahl, editor, *Ski Area Management* (SAM).

Topics ranged from the status of resorts now open in the southern hemisphere, to whether consumer/industry expos will be held this fall.

The hour-long session included 10-minute updates from each of the speakers. All urged NASJA press members to inform the public about pertinent developments plus the need to plan ahead for winter 2021.

"Everyone is so hungry for information and firm answers," commented Vail's Campbell, who added that they plan to be fully open and are working on ways to make guests feel safe while providing a compelling experience. "We want people to get out and do what they love," she said, while adding that people need to be flexible as the situation will be constantly changing.

Kahl said there is a need for NASJA members to educate the public on what will be happening, especially come November. "It's important for people to know what the preconditions are," he added, such as whether there will be temperature checks before entering a resort. He said resorts are looking at different plans depending on restriction

requirements.

"They are now taking steps figuring things out like how to decrease crowding in restrooms with markers on floors, adapters on door handles and other things to reduce touch points," he said. Contactless transactions, shuttle bus capacity limits, lift line management and restaurant expansions were also discussed.

NSAA's Kelly Pawlak said, "It's also important to share the benefits ski areas have to offer – there's space to spread out." Another COVID-19 era message she urged snowsports journalists to convey: the majority of time is spent outside and snowsports are great for one's mental health.

"Face coverings are part of our culture," she added.

NSAA is looking at what the ski industry can learn from hotels, restaurants and sports facilities facing similar challenges in other parts of the world.

Nick Sargent said SIA is focusing on issues affecting the industry day by day. "We are monitoring situations in big cities for large events like Boston and Denver," he said noting that the Oktoberfest in Munich this October was cancelled for the first time since WWII.

Sargent pointed out one inherent advantage to snowsports: "Being outside is a safe place for our community."

For more details, watch the recording of the Zoom session here:

<https://tinyurl.com/NASJABriefingJune2020>

TIME TO RENEW

Renewal notices have been emailed to all Active and Corporate members. Please watch for them to arrive in your inbox. These are important times for ensuring the role NASJA members will play in the coming season, a season promising unprecedented new protocols.

Future plans call for another Media Briefing in the fall to ensure NASJA members are prepared to communicate changes to the ski/riding experience in 2020-21, of which there will be many.

MEMBER NEWS

Meet New Member Jay Flemma

A practicing attorney in New York City for 15 years, Jay started a golf blog in 2004. Seven months later, he was invited to cover the U.S. Open at Pinehurst, his first of 15 consecutive competitions thus far, along with 14 other major championships. After expanding into covering hockey, football, and other sports for major networks and magazines as a staff writer, Jay finally moved back upstate to New Hartford, New York, bought a new pair of iRallys, and rekindled his love of skiing. He's now excited to cover live skiing events and travel for sites across the Internet. Jay is partial to his beloved Whiteface, where his family has skied for generations.

Learn more about our newest member and read some of his work here:



<https://thegolfnewsnet.com/author/jayflemma/>

CORPORATE MEMBER NEWS



Welcome Canadian Ski Instructors' Alliance

The Canadian Ski Instructors' Alliance provides excellence in education for the profession of ski teaching, contributing to the growth and enjoyment of skiing.

In its mission statement, the organization writes, "We value our sport and its environment, our Members, our Partners and the Skiing Public. As the leader in the profession of ski instruction and a most valued and respected contributor to the sport of skiing, we develop a safe and positive guest experience, a progressive approach and set national standards in ski teaching.

Learn more at: <https://www.snowpro.com/en/>

MEMBER BENEFIT

THE SNOW INDUSTRY LETTER

Subscribe to The Snow Industry Letter

Secure up-to-date information about the ski industry from the leading trade publication in the business. The cost for a year subscription is \$40 for individuals affiliated with NASJA – the lowest price ever offered for access to its valuable content. There are going to be major challenges next season and keeping expectations low and realistic will be really important. Reading TSIL can help you stay on top of the news. It's edited and published by fellow NASJA member and Hirsch Award recipient Mary McKhann. To subscribe:

<https://snowindustryletter.com/>

NEWS YOU CAN USE



USPS Great Outdoors Stamp Celebrates Cross Country Skiing

The U.S. Postal Service is celebrating Great Outdoors Month by releasing a set of stamps depicting various outdoor activities.

The Forever stamps include images of cross country skiing, hiking, canoeing, biking, and building a sandcastle. The designs were hand-sketched and painted by Gregory Manchess. Art director Derry Noyes designed the stamps.

The USPS release stated, "Being outdoors reminds us to slow down and appreciate the natural beauty that surrounds us. It's also good for us. Spending time in nature can provide many health benefits, which include lowering blood pressure, reducing stress and increasing energy levels. Overall, a connection to the great outdoors improves our well-being –

physically and mentally.” We Agree!

Our thanks to Roger Lohr of [XCSkiResorts.com](https://www.xcskiresorts.com) for this story.



Boston and Denver Ski & Snowboard Expos Become the Snowbound Festivals

Boston and Denver Ski & Snowboard Expos will now become the Snowbound Festivals, according to an announcement by NASJA corporate member SIA. The inaugural Snowbound Festivals will be immersive experiences that showcase all aspects of the winter outdoor lifestyle and culture.

Consumers will have the opportunity to purchase the latest exclusive products, interact with some of the biggest winter sports brands, meet legendary athletes, check out your favorite resorts, learn new skills and enjoy music, art, food and local vendors that embody everything you love about winter.

Most importantly, the Snowbound Festival is a shared experience that is focused on inclusivity, community, and positivity.

The statement continues, “All are welcome here as our number one goal is to get you hyped for being outdoors and to share our passion and love of winter with *everyone*, regardless of what your ability or experience level is.”

Learn more here:

<https://www.facebook.com/SnowboundFest/>



Gordon Precious: Skiers passionate about the sport live longer (Photo courtesy CMH)

Guinness Recognizes 95-Year-Old as World's Oldest Heliskier

What began as Gordon Precious of Hamilton, Ontario, celebrating his 95th birthday on his own terms, snowballed into the trip of a lifetime with his wife and grandson and a recently-awarded official Guinness World Record.

It was a bluebird day in March 2019 when an almost 95-year-old Gordon Precious stepped out of a helicopter to set a very high bar for skiers and snowboarders around the globe. As an avid powder hound, Gordon has traveled across continents in his almost century-long pursuit for the perfect turns.

While having visited CMH Heli-Skiing & Summer Adventures many times before on his heli-ski adventures every five years, this trip was undoubtedly the most significant. For it was on a run called "Nectar" in the Cariboo Mountains in British Columbia, that he skied his way into the record books.

"It was a great way to start the week," Gordon recalls of his Guinness World Record setting run. "When we first arrived at CMH Cariboos, I was just delighted with the reception. The manager came to the helicopter and hugged me, which we couldn't do today!"

Beating the previous record holder at 91 years old, by over three years, Gordon may be his own competition in the future. "I'm looking forward to my 100th year heli-skiing", he says. In the words of lifetime CMH Guide Roko Koell who lead Gordon's age-defying charge down the mountain, "Age is merely a stage, not a cage."

Precious hopes to prove that age is no boundary when it comes to living your life to the fullest.

Watch as Gordon makes his record-breaking run at CMH Cariboos

<https://tinyurl.com/oldestheliskier>

See the record here:

<https://www.guinnessworldrecords.com/world-records/oldest-heliskiier>



REMEMBERING CONNIE KNIGHT Former NASJA Treasurer

Connie Knight, past NASJA member and freelance writer, died suddenly of natural causes on May 7 in Ft. Lauderdale. Connie served as treasurer of NASJA Rocky Mountain Chapter in the 90s.

Born in Detroit to Thomas Francis and Margaret Kearney Bracken, Connie graduated from Lauderdale High School. She attended Florida State University and Marymount College. An eventual move to Vail in 1968 in the midst of the fledgling ski town proved to be a brilliant investment, as well as the perfect permanent home base.

For decades, Connie's stories were printed in Colorado and Florida newspapers and magazines, along with other major metropolitan publications. The pinnacle of her career was being published in the *New York Times*.

Connie served as a managing editor of *Vail Magazine*, editorial consultant of *Vail Valley Magazine*, a columnist and as staff writer for the *Miami Herald*, *Ft. Lauderdale News/Sun Sentinel* and *Tallahassee Democrat*. She taught creative writing at Colorado Mountain College and was president of Creative Concepts Public Relations firm. She is listed in many Who's Who.

As a volunteer, Connie served on the Town of Vail Licensing Board and Planning and Environmental Commission and was a former member of the Junior League of Ft. Lauderdale, where she served as treasurer and public relations director.

An avid tennis player, hiker, skier, traveler and a fine arts aficionado, Connie loved hosting parties. Her Vail condo balcony provided the ideal venue for watching fireworks, parades and concerts with friends. Connie was easy to spot in the village with her perfectly coifed auburn hair, and she always attracted people into conversation. Picnics on the mountain – both winter and summer – were also a favorite pastime.

Connie's daughter, Lynne Campbell, remembers how much her mother loved to meet new people. "I teased her that she was always interviewing," Campbell said. "Throughout her life, she met and retained friendships from around the world. 'Life is short,' she'd say. One of her favorite sayings was 'You can sleep when you're dead'." Sleep well Connie.

She was predeceased by her parents; son Jim Knight; sisters Jeanne Bracken Fitzgerald and Mary Bracken Beil and nephew Brad Beil. She is survived by daughter Lynne Knight Campbell of Vail, son Keith Knight of Ft. Lauderdale and granddaughter Taylor Campbell Jernigan (Brandon) of Gig Harbor, Washington, and dozens of nieces and nephews

A Catholic mass and celebration of Life will be at a later date. In lieu of flowers donations may be made in memory of Connie Knight to the Ann Storck Center <https://www.annstorckcenter.org/> or humane society of your choice.

– Claudia Carbone



REMEMBERING CARL ETTLINGER

A ski safety crusader was recognized for his advancements in snowsports; recipient of Carson White Award

On June 19, 2020, Carl F. Ettlinger II (1943-2020) passed away peacefully at his home in Underhill Center, Vermont, from Parkinson's disease attributable to his service as a Combat Engineer Officer in the 25th Infantry in Vietnam. Carl's principles, knowledge, grit, and courage never wavered. His outsized personality and fierce dedication to the cause of skier safety left a lasting imprint on everyone he met. Over the course of his lifetime Carl became a distinguished researcher, discovering methods to reduce ski injuries which led to the production of testing devices, training workshops, and videos to make skiing a safer sport.

His collaborative research and resulting innovations have saved the skiing public from tibial fractures costing conservatively by an estimated \$600 million dollars *annually*. He is recipient of NASJA's Carson White Golden Quill Award for Outstanding Contributions to the Advancement of Snowsports (2006).

Carl's frontline experiences during his tour in Vietnam cast a long shadow across the rest of his professional and personal life. Carl's obsession with avoiding unnecessary injuries carried over from combat to civilian life, fueling his drive to cull the cruelty of debilitating injury from a sport he loved, appropriately, down to his bones. His wartime service put Carl in harm's way, planting the insidious seeds of disease that would eventually claim his life.

His thesis work determined fractures were attributed to failures of the ski/boot/binding system due to boot-ski friction, incompatible boot-binding combinations, and inappropriate calibration of the release system. This resulted in development of the first commercially successful anti-friction device (AFD). It was also during this time that Carl established Vermont Ski Safety Equipment (VSSE) in the process creating the world's leading laboratory

for testing, designing, and analyzing snowsports equipment at his shop in Underhill.

Read his complete obit here:

<https://tinyurl.com/ettlingerobit>

HOLD THESE DATES

Here are some dates and tentative time periods to start thinking about, all subject to possible delay due to the current health crisis.

- **Denver Meet & Greet, Nov. 6** – Held during SIA Snowbound Festival
 - **Boston Meeting, Nov. 20** – Held in conjunction with SIA Snowbound Festival
 - **Sun Valley/Galena Lodge, Dec 9-13** – Co-located with ISHA and U.S. Ski & Snowboard Hall of Fame induction
 - **Pennsylvania Ski Areas Association (PSAA) Media Trip** – January 12-13, 2021
 - **Outdoor Retailer Snow Show Networking Event, January 28, 2021, Denver**
 - **Western Winter Summit** – January - February, 2021
 - **Quebec Media Trip** – February, 2021
 - **Snowmass, April 7-11, 2021** – Co-located with ISHA and US Ski & Snowboard Hall of Fame
 - **Big Snow America, spring 2021** – NASJA's media day at this new indoor ski resort in the New Jersey Meadowlands, with discounted accommodations at the Hilton Hotel Meadowlands (postponed from fall 2020).
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Jeff Blumenfeld – President
Roger Lohr, Kevin Gasior – Vice Presidents
Megan Collins – Corporate Liaison
Iseult Devlin – Immediate Past President

CORPORATE MEMBERS SUPPORTING NASJA

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