



# NASJA

NORTH AMERICAN  
SNOWSPORTS JOURNALISTS  
ASSOCIATION

September 11, 2020

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## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

### Bring It On

I have this winter all figured out. My ski buddy Mark has been helping me prepare for upcoming COVID restrictions at ski resorts and Nordic centers this season. Plan #1: We carpool - when he drives I offer to buy gas and lunch. We have Epic and Ikon passes to avoid ticket windows. We change in the car to avoid crowded lodges. When nature calls we use the woods.

Lunch will be an especially good deal for me at 50 cents a day for Mark's two cups of hot water—one for the instant coffee and one for the oatmeal packet he brings in a backpack along with dried fruit and nuts.

Oh, and we always ski midweek thanks to jobs that allow us to time shift.

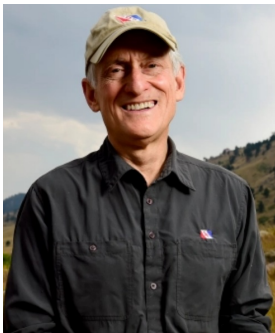
When Vail CEO Rob Katz says skiers need to wear face coverings, stay physically distant and reserve in advance, I say bring it on.

(<http://news.vailresorts.com/corporate/vailresorts/winter-operating-plan-2020-letter.htm>)

This isn't the first time skiers have faced a winter crisis. Skiers figured out a way to pursue their runs during the 1973 gas crisis. Let's not forget those historically low snow years, for example, 2017-18 in the West and 2015-16 in the East, not to mention the disastrous 1976-77 season when snowmaking wasn't as advanced as it is today.

Snowsports enthusiasts will demonstrate great resourcefulness and resilience again this coming winter. Of that I am sure. Whether skiing or riding one day or 20, we'll all be happy to get back out again.

As the debate over masks and lockdowns continue in some quarters, you want to talk freedom? Go skiing or riding.



- Jeff Blumenfeld  
NASJA President

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*Dave Kelly of Magic Carpet Lifts (right) is recipient of the 2020 Carson White Award. NASJA president Jeff Blumenfeld presented his award in person last month in Denver. They are standing in front of intermediate sections of the Magic Carpet conveyor.*

## **JOIN THE NASJA AWARDS CEREMONY** **Tuesday, Sept. 22, 8 p.m. ET/5 p.m. PT**

As a follow-up to our success media briefing and happy hour meetings on Zoom, NASJA will formally recognize recipients of our 2020 awards. Pending their availability, please join us as we congratulate these winners:

### **Harold S. Hirsch Award**

Eric Smith (Words)  
Dino Vournas (Images)  
Alba Adventures (Images)

### **Paul Robbins Outstanding Competitor Award**

Maggie Voisin

### **Bob Gillen Memorial Award**

John Wagnon

### **Mitch Kaplan Award**

Greg Sweetser

### **Carson White Snowsports Achievement Award**

Dave Kelly, Magic Carpet Lifts

We'll also use the opportunity to provide an update on various NASJA programs, including our plans for an October media briefing with resort association executives.

Watch your email for the Zoom link a few days in advance.



*Marie-Piere Belisle-Kennedy*

## **MARIE-PIERE BELISLE- KENNEDY REPLACES ROGER LOHR ON BOARD Lohr Continues as Recorder**

The NASJA Board regrets the decision by Roger Lohr to resign from the Board after his hiatus over the summer. The Board is thankful that he will remain to record minutes for the monthly Board meetings, as he has been recording minutes professionally for various boards in the Upper Valley of New England since 2001 and before that at SIA for more than a decade. He will also continue work on development of the NASJA Member Showcase.

In a related move, appointed to the Board for the duration of Roger's term is Marie-Piere Belisle-Kennedy who, with corporate liaison Megan Collins, has diligently maintained our vibrant presence on social media.

Marie-Piere is a freelance ski and mountain lifestyle writer based in Chelsea, Quebec. She began her multimedia career in the 1990s as a French and English radio and TV reporter for Montreal-based stations while attending Concordia University and hosting events at Laurentians ski resorts. She has been writing various ski travel columns for Canadian newspapers and magazines and launched 5 Star Communications in 2002, a translation, content creation and editing agency serving various tourism and international sports brands.

M-P is a regular contributor to a series of national publications such as *Ski Canada* magazine



since 2006. Other bylines include *Mountain Life*, *SkiPresse*, *Colorado YogaLife*, *Top Ski News*, *SkiOnline*, *Sun Media*, *Tremblant Express*, *Compass* and *Aspen RealLife*, and her blog *Après-Ski Country* to name a few.

"As a longtime freelance ski journalist and media professional based in Canada, I am enthusiastic to be appointed to join NASJA's Board in order to contribute to its synergy with initiatives including a stronger focus on social media and news platforms to help our members," she said.

"I am also happy to tap into my past resort marketing, ski event and non-profit director experiences to help grow NASJA and our overall snowsports industry."

You can reach M-P here: [mp@5starcom.ca](mailto:mp@5starcom.ca)

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*Vicki Andersen, new Honorary Member*

## VICKI ANDERSEN NAMED HONORARY MEMBER

The Board is pleased to bestow Honorary Membership on Vicki Andersen who has served the organization in various capacities for 34 years.

Vicki, a native Oregonian residing in Portland, admits to first strapping on skis at age 2. By high school graduation she had been a regional correspondent for *SKI Magazine's Ski 20 Below* section and written a weekly newspaper ski column. Vicki is a contributing editor to *HighonAdventure* online magazine, still produces work for other winter sports-related outlets, and is an active member of SATW (Society of American Travel Writers).

In addition to producing countless snowsports articles for various publications, Vicki has been ski editor-*Northwest Sports Report*, contributing editor-*Ski Snowboard America & Canada* guidebook and *Texas Skis* magazine, regional editor-*Pacific Skier*, associate editor-*Northwest Skiing*, and staff writer-*Ski Oregon* magazine. Vicki joined USSWA, NASJA's predecessor, in 1984, and became the Pacific Northwest Region's secretary-treasurer in 1986. When the five western regions merged in 1995, she became their executive secretary/treasurer until the demise of regions in 2017. In 2010, Vicki undertook the same job for NASJA until 2017, when she continued with the financial duties for two more years.

During 26 years as a part-time ski instructor (PSIA-Certified Level III), Vicki developed the Northwest's first freestyle teaching progression and teaching manual (1973), and taught aspiring instructors how to handle a class and pass along the skills of the sport. She eventually ditched teaching to allow more time to explore other mountains and snowsports. Now she is giving up most deadlines to start enjoying the next phase of her life. "Vicki's contributions to the sport and the association are immeasurable. Honorary Membership is just one small way to show our appreciation for her incredible dedication," says NASJA president Jeff Blumenfeld.

All Past Presidents of NASJA and its predecessor, USSWA, are automatically Honorary Members of NASJA, as are the following who were elected by the Board:

- I. William Berry (dec. 1992)
- Harold S. Hirsch (dec. 1984)
- John Hoefling (dec. 2005)
- Mitch Kaplan (dec. 2010)

John E. Hoefling is Vicki's father. He was a volunteer patrolman; ski instructor certification examiner; co-founder of Oregon Snowsports Industries Association; ski shop co-owner; and TV personality and host of "Oregon Skiing" on Oregon Public Broadcasting.

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## MEMBER NEWS

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After a lifetime of adventure, award-winning writer Bob Cox tells his own thrilling life story. Travel with him from Santa Monica, to rural Idaho, to a stretch in Japan with the U.S. Navy during the Vietnam War, before he settles in Southern California. Enjoy with him a passion for skiing and the joys of writing about the winter sport, mostly in the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Experience with him the challenges of teaching elementary and middle school classes, as well as his transition to school administration, capped by a year as Interim Superintendent for a small school district. Share his joy of playing and coaching sports, and raising three kids. Fight the challenges of addiction and cancer with him in this first-person story.



BOB COX has written thousands of columns and stories but this is his first book. He shares his love for journalism and sports, as well as teaching. From the Navy, to newspapers and the classroom, he tells of his triumphs and travails.

LIFE IS NOT A SPECTATOR SPORT

BOB COX

# LIFE IS NOT A SPECTATOR SPORT

**iUniverse**  
www.iuniverse.com



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BOB COX

## Bob Cox, former NASJA president, writes *Life is Not a Spectator Sport*

After a lifetime of adventure, award-winning writer Bob Cox tells his own thrilling life story covering travel from Santa Monica, to rural Idaho, to a stretch in Japan with the U.S. Navy during the Vietnam War, before he settles in Southern California. He writes about his passion for skiing and the joys of writing about the winter sport, mostly in the Sierra Nevada Mountains. The book explains the challenges of teaching elementary and middle school classes, as well as his transition to school administration, capped by a year as Interim Superintendent for a small school district. He also shares his joy of playing and coaching sports, raising three kids, and the challenges of addiction and cancer.

Bob served the organization as president in 2007-11. He has won seven Harold S. Hirsch Awards.

Order it online here: <https://tinyurl.com/BobCoxbook>



*Jules and Effin Older are ready for travel.*

## **New Zealand's Newest Kiwis**

Long-time NASJA member Jules Older, winner of the Mitch Kaplan (2013) and five Harold S. Hirsch Awards, and his wife Effin, have relocated from San Francisco to New Zealand where they have a daughter and grandson.

Their journey is recounted in a terrific video diary that documents their quarantine a.k.a. "managed isolation" behind barbed wire. Apparently, New Zealand takes COVID-19 very, very seriously. "This is how a country serious about its people's safety operates," he writes.

See the three-minute video here:

<https://tinyurl.com/OldersTakeFlight>

You can reach Jules and Effin here: [www.julesolder.com](http://www.julesolder.com), [jules@julesolder.com](mailto:jules@julesolder.com)

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## **MEMBER BENEFITS OF THE MONTH**

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## The Mountain Collective Discount for Active Press Members

Active Press members can purchase a Mountain Collective pass for \$299 (same as last year) versus the regular \$489 price, a savings of \$190. It offers two days at 23 Mountain Collective destinations for a total of 46 days, then 50% off all additional days at the Collective destinations.

There are no blackout dates. Also available are selected Mountain Collective lodging deals. New destinations for 2020-21 are Chamonix, Grand Targhee, Panorama, Sugarloaf and Sun Peaks.

We have enough promo codes for every member, but you need to indicate your interest starting September 15. The deadline for response is October 15, 2020. If interested, email NASJA'S Peter Hines, executive secretary at [peter.hines@nasja.org](mailto:peter.hines@nasja.org). Then once you receive the promo code, log onto [www.mountaincollective.com](http://www.mountaincollective.com) and enter the code at check out to receive the discount.



## Indy Pass Comp Pass for Active Press Members

Indy Pass, the multi-resort ski pass now on sale for the 2020-21 season, will provide one free pass to any Active Press member who contacts them directly at [info@indyskipass.com](mailto:info@indyskipass.com). To kick off its second season, the Indy Pass announced that 11 new resorts are joining the alliance along with dozens of independent lodging properties for the 2020-21 season.

The pass provides working snowsports journalists with two lift tickets each – 110 total days – at 55 (at last count) independently owned resorts. There are 20 member resorts in the West, 17 in the Midwest, and 18 in the East. Fifty-one resorts have NO blackouts. The four resorts with holiday and peak-weekend blackouts are: Mission Ridge, Silver Mountain, Lutsen



Mountains and Granite Peak.

"We are very happy to support NASJA members as we spread the word about the joys of skiing at small-to-midsized independent resorts," Fish says. "Thanks again for your support and I hope you have a great, safe season."

See [indyskipass.com](http://indyskipass.com) for details. Contact: Doug Fish, 503 709 0111, [doug@indyskipass.com](mailto:doug@indyskipass.com)



### Masterfit Enterprises Offers Discount on Insoles and Accessories

Ready to give your boots a little DIY fit tuning? Masterfit Enterprises is extending to NASJA members a 40% discount on all EZ Fit cut-to-fit upgrade insoles (including ones that work in sneakers and other athletic shoes), Eliminators, Booster Straps and Ski Skootys at the Masterfit on-line store. And if you are working on a story about ski/snowboard or outdoor footwear fitting, give the experts at Masterfit a call. They also operate Masterfit University, the industry's training centers for bootfitting.

MasterFit has also arranged for NASJA members to qualify for discounts at IPA Connect, a site for outdoor and snowsports professionals to purchase products. Their discounts range from 25-50% depending on the brand. The average is 40%.

To order: <https://masterfitinc.com/?coupon-code=nasja40>



### ExpertVoice Discounts Continue for 2020-21

Returning to support Active Press this year is ExpertVoice.com which offers well over 500 manufacturers that want you to learn about their product (many times they will require you to answer simple questions to access their site).

Discounts range from 30% off retail to sometimes 60% off retail. That's why top brands are giving experts like NASJA members access to the best products at substantial discounts – so you have firsthand experience to share recommendations that people can trust.

To join the ExpertVoice team go to the website and follow the instructions. Long-time NASJA member Mike Roth will confirm your NASJA membership, then send you a notice through the ExpertVoice website that your application is approved. It will be good for one year (if you signed up last year, watch for an email requesting that you renew for this year).

To start, go to [ExpertVoice.com](http://ExpertVoice.com) and set up an account, or renew a previous account.

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NEWS YOU CAN USE

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*Big SNOW memorialized the COVID-19 tragedy by sending up an empty chair*

## **Big SNOW American Dream is Back on Track**

Big SNOW American Dream, North America's first indoor, real-snow ski and snowboard center resumed operations on September 1 with updated COVID-19 precautions.

"Skiing and snowboarding are great naturally socially distant recreation activities ...Our team has been working very hard these past few months to reinvent what the Big SNOW experience will look like in today's COVID world," said Hugh Reynolds, vice president of marketing and sales, SNOW Operating.

Big SNOW is a 180,000 square foot, 16 story, climate-controlled ski slope. It boasts four acres of snow-covered slopes, a 160-foot vertical drop, a graduated degree of pitch ranging from 0% at the base to 26% at its steepest point and 1,000 feet of length for skiers of all ages and skill levels to take advantage of all serviced by four surface and aerial lifts.

Read the entire announcement here:

<https://www.bigsnowamericandream.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Big-SNOW-Reopening-Press-Release-8.26.20.pdf>

NASJA is hopeful that a Media Day at Big SNOW, originally scheduled for October 2020, can be safely held in spring 2021.



*Warm, but little defense against viruses (Photo: Gearjunkie.com)*

## **Neck Gaiters May be Worse, Researchers Find**

Well, there goes that idea.

Of the 14 masks and other coverings tested, a Duke University study found that some easily accessible cotton cloth masks are about as effective as standard surgical masks, while neck gaiters may be worse than not wearing a mask at all. A breathable neck gaiter – think Buffs – well-liked by skiers and runners for its lightweight fabric, ranked worse than the no-mask control group. The gaiter tested by the researchers was described in the study as a “neck fleece” made out of a polyester spandex material.

Read more in The *Washington Post* (Aug. 11):

<https://apple.news/AzNrQfdYhR3-0z1r5yzi-hQ>





## Squaw Valley Plans Name Change

California's popular Squaw Valley Ski Resort will change its name because the word "squaw" is a derogatory term for Native American women, officials announced late last month. The resort was the scene of the 1960 Winter Olympics.

The decision was reached after consulting with local Native American groups and extensive research into the etymology and history of the term "squaw," said Ron Cohen, president and COO of Squaw Valley Alpine Meadows.

Read the AP story here: <https://tinyurl.com/squawname>



## White Out

This three-minute animated short by artist Jeff Scher celebrates winter and is composed of approximately 2,250 watercolor paintings on paper. It's a visual paean to the magic of snow, with music by Shay Lynch, and illustrates much of what we love about snowsports. It's the perfect anecdote to lockdown.

View it here: <https://vimeo.com/121473419>

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## HOLD THESE DATES

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While it's hard to predict where the current COVID-19 crisis is headed, here is a list of



upcoming 2020-21 events we're optimistic about.

- **NASJA Award Ceremony** – September 22, 2020, 8 p.m. ET, via Zoom
- **NASJA Media Briefing** – October 2020, via Zoom
- **Outdoor Retailer Snow Show Networking Event** – January 28, 2021, Denver
- **Western Winter Summit in Utah** – January 31 – February 4, 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.

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## NASJA MAILBAG

Dear NASJA:

It was delightful to see your President's letter, especially since I just renewed NASJA membership and (I hope) have a bunch of assignments in prospect.

There's going to be so much potential XC coverage this fall and winter for NASJA members if they can be persuaded to pursue the idea... Among other things, this angle could provide an antidote to the "doom-and-gloom" articles appearing so frequently.

Jonathan Wiesel  
Nordic consultant/journalist  
President, Nordic Group International  
[www.nordicgroupinternational.com](http://www.nordicgroupinternational.com)  
Bozeman MT USA

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Jeff Blumenfeld – President  
Marie-Piere Belisle-Kennedy, Kevin Gasior – Vice Presidents  
Megan Collins – Corporate Liaison  
Iseult Devlin – Immediate Past President

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## NASJA THANKS THESE CORPORATE MEMBERS

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