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SNOWSPORTS JOURNALISTS
ASSOCIATION**SNOW****SCOOPS**The well-groomed source
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February 9, 2021

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Covid's Legacy

Twenty-twenty was awful and turning the calendar page to 2021 has yet to yield much relief. For skiers it's been a matter of doing our best to cope, with the state of the sport certainly better in North America than overseas.

As of early February the northern Italian town of Cortina d'Ampezzo had received one of the most prolific snowfalls in years, a cruel joke of nature while the Covid-19 pandemic silences Italy's winter resorts. French resorts are likely to remain closed through February. Germany is no better: according to skiresort.info, of the country's 696 ski lifts, only six were open.

If there's a silver lining to an otherwise disastrous pandemic, Covid's legacy is likely to bring a number of improvements to the sport of skiing. There are more Port-o-Johns available to us in parking lots. A new machine from Demacenko automatically disinfects gondola cabins. Resorts such as Wachusett (see below) are installing heated benches called Dragon Seats in their base areas with warming decks to dry boots, gloves and helmets. One wag says they're like "sitting in a hot tub without getting wet."

Getting individually ticket-checked by those annoying Phaser-like ticket scanners are likely on the wane; the ski experience is going to be more touchless in the future. Squaw Valley has instituted digital instructor check-out, according to *Ski Area Management (SAM)* magazine. At Boreal Mountain, Pick-Up Box kiosks use RFID to provide direct-to-lift access. At Mount Hood Meadows, nearly all transactions will be on-line, even if by phone from the parking lot, writes Skip King in *SAM* (January 2021).

At Hickory and Tweed in Armonk, New York, sales are by appointment only, with customers sitting in plastic bubbles for health reasons, each named after a ski resort. Owner Skip Beitzel tells me, "Appointments are my future."

He continues, "The pent-up demand for winter sports next year will be explosive. We've really spoiled customers with the level of service they'll come to expect in the future."

Are this season's Covid-related procedures just a one-off? Maybe, but I'm guessing many of the most positive changes are here to stay. When am I ever going to stop using hand sanitizer? Probably never.

Join Us on Twitter – NASJA has another toehold online. Our new handle is @NASJASnowScoops. Our previous handle @NASJAsnowmedia is no longer valid on the platform. Keep us posted on all your activities. Thanks to board member Marie-Piere Belisle-Kennedy for initiating this change.

One More Skiing Hack – Now that many of us are booting up in our cars, here's another skiing hack: save time and consider driving up wearing your left ski boot. This works unless you happen to drive a stick shift to the mountains (otherwise known as a Millennial Anti-Theft Device).



- Jeff Blumenfeld
NASJA President

WELCOME TO ***SNOW SCOOPS***

Over 74 newsletter suggestions were received, so it was a tough choice. The board met recently over gluhwein (younger members: Google it) to select the winner. Congratulation to NASJA press member Larry Turner who suggested the new name for this publication. Larry entered "Scoops," which we turned into *Snow Scoops* – "The Well-Groomed Source for All Things Snowsports."

Larry's photos have appeared in *National Geographic Traveler*, *Travel and Leisure*, *Atlantic Monthly*, *Gourmet*, *Sunset*, *American Heritage*, *Smithsonian*, *National Wildlife*, *Browntrout* and *Avalanche Publishers'* calendars/books. A resident of Malin, Oregon, he is co-owner of HighonAdventure.com.

JOIN "PITCHING THE MEDIA," FEB. 23, 7 P.M. ET/4 P.M. PT

Last month in our Professional Development series, we suggested how to take better images with your smartphone. (see below for a link to a recording of that session). This month we turn to noted editors in snowsports journalism for advice on how to pitch irresistible story ideas.

Join us as we ask panelists:

- What stories best resonate with your readers?
- What's the best way to pitch you?
- What do you look for in a great pitch?
- How important is it to see previous writing samples?
- What pitches do you remember best that resulted in great stories for your magazine?
- How long is the ideal query?
- Tips for getting through to you. Spam filters an issue? Should writers call to follow-up?
- What's the most common error you see from freelancers?

Confirmed editors to date are:

Greg DiTrinco, *Skiing History*
Heather Fried, *NSAA Journal*
Todd Lawson, *Mountain Life Media*
Iain MacMillan, *Ski Canada Magazine*
Mike Rogge, *Mountain Gazette*
Sierra Shafer, *Ski Magazine*
Pat Wells, *Vie En Montagne*

Get the most out of your NASJA membership by joining us for an avalanche of pitch tips.

This is a members-only event. Here's the link:

Topic: NASJA Pitching the Media

Time: Feb 23, 2021 7 p.m. Eastern Time / 4 p.m. Pacific

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87603574109pwd=Q1ppTjhLc3FoK1NIdGNPMjEzQjZpUT09>

Meeting ID: 876 0357 4109

Passcode: pitch



NASJA members were masked up and ready for a few days of skiing hosted in part by [VisitOgden.com](https://www.visitogden.com) (Photo courtesy Curtis Fong)

Western Winter Summit Skis Utah

The first and, one hopes, last Covid edition of NASJA's annual Western Winter Summit took place in Ogden, Utah, from Jan. 31 through Feb. 3, and by all accounts it was an entertaining and educational gathering.

Seven NASJA members — Tony Crocker, Curtis Fong, Dan Giesin, Mario Montero, Peter Schroeder, Greg Snow and Risa Wyatt, who took great pains to follow pandemic protocols — partook of the festivities, which kicked off Sunday night with a tour of Weber State's brand, spanking new, and not to mention impressive, Outdoor Activity and Welcome Center.

On Monday, the gang, under the guidance of Megan Collins, checked out the terrain at Snowbasin, followed by a grand tour on Tuesday of Powder Mountain, led by JP Goulet. Tuesday night featured a walking tour of Ogden's historic downtown, which served as an appetizer for a lavish hosted meal at the Hearth on 25th restaurant.

On Wednesday, after the group again frolicked on the slopes of Snowbasin, there was the requisite apres gathering at the Shooting Star Saloon followed by perhaps the high point of this year's WWS: stargazing at the astronomical observatory that is part of the Compass Rose boutique hotel in Huntsville.

None of this would have been possible, of course, without the help of Visit Ogden. So here's a big shout-out to Caren Werner, Colt Jarvis and Lindsey Ketchum, who made sure that this year's Western Winter Summit would be a success. — *Dan Giesin*



NASJA REWIND

Were you too busy waxing your skis last Jan. 19 during our last Professional Development session? Former AP photographer Mark Phillips explained how to get the most out of your smartphone. Here's your chance to view it again:

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/7ndxu35gg52ahfx/NASJA%20%20PhillipsJan192021talk.mp4?dl=0>



Carson White, first president of NASJA's predecessor organization, the U.S. Ski Writers Association

CALL FOR NASJA AWARD NOMINATIONS

It's that time of the year again when we put on our thinking caps and uncover worthy candidates for our annual NASJA Awards. Our highest honor, the Carson White Snowsports Achievement Award, recognizes a person or persons who have made significant contributions to North American snowsports. This can be a lifetime achievement award or to honor one significant accomplishment that changed the snowsports world forever.

Think: resort pioneers, inventors, innovators, contributors, writers and journalists, outside-the-box, you get the picture.



Bob Gillen photo by Dino Vournas

For the Bob Gillen Award, we are looking for any corporate member of NASJA that has gone above and beyond, exhibiting high-level professional efforts in the field of media relations and communications.



Mitch Kaplan photo by Dino Vournas

And last but not least, with our Mitch Kaplan Award we are looking to recognize a print or video journalist, NASJA member or not, whose work, either as a single entry or multiple examples, best captures the spirit, enthusiasm and dedication that exemplifies our late friend's devotion to his high standards. Mitch also had a special commitment to children's ski programs.

Details about the awards are available in the NASJA Directory. Please consider the nominations and send the candidate's name and any supporting information to Dino Vournas, dino.v@sbcglobal.net by February 20, 2021.



Jessie Diggins (Photo courtesy of U.S. Ski and Snowboard)

XC COMPETITION UPDATE

Will Jessie Diggins Win the World Cup Overall Crystal Globe This Year?

By Peggy Shinn, winner, multiple NASJA Harold Hirsch awards

Cross-country skier Jessie Diggins is certainly carrying the torch this season – the 2018 Olympic gold medalist won the eight-stage Tour de Ski this year. It's XC skiing's version of the Tour de France and no American had ever won it before. Jessie dominated, winning two of the eight races and finishing on the podium in three others.

Then at the end of the Tour, Jessie took over the overall World Cup lead. It was a fairy-tale Tour ending for the 29-year-old, who recently became engaged.

Some naysayers may poo-poo Jessie's accomplishment, reminding us that the Norwegians skipped the Tour de Ski this year due to Covid-19 concerns (Norwegian skiers have won the Tour for the past four years). But all the other teams were there, including Russia, Sweden, and Finland, and Diggins still dominated—while racing under pandemic restrictions (regular testing, outdoor meetings, different training protocols, little mixing with teammates, no visitors from home, etc.).

Further proof of Jessie's strength: when the Norwegians returned to the World Cup tour this past weekend, Jessie beat the "unbeatable" Therese Johaug in a 10-kilometer freestyle race by 2.1 seconds. Johaug is a ten-time world champion and the defending overall World Cup winner.

Right behind Diggins is Rosie Brennan, who won back-to-back World Cup races in December and held the overall World Cup lead until passing the yellow bib to Jessie at the end of the Tour de Ski. A poster child for perseverance, 32-year-old Rosie finished second in two Tour de Ski stages and came in sixth overall in the Tour. She's currently third overall in the World Cup standings.

With the return of Sadie Maubet-Bjornsen, 31, to the World Cup tour recently, look for the U.S. women to have another historic world championship later this month (Feb 22-March 7). In her first race back, Sadie finished tenth in the 10k freestyle on Jan. 26. Sadie is a 2017 world championship bronze medalist in the team sprint.

Other U.S. women who have had podium finishes this season: Sadie Caldwell-Hamilton, 30, and Hailey Swirbul, 22, who was third in a 10k freestyle in December. A two-time world junior medalist, Hailey is competing in her first full year on the World Cup tour.

And in XC skiing, it's no longer the U.S. women who are the big story. Young Gus Schumacher has a bright future. The 20-year-old from Anchorage is a three-time world junior champion and in his first full year on the World Cup, has finished top ten in two races so far. Look for him to score more top 10s at world championships, especially in the distance races. So can Jessie add to her collection of four world championship medals this year? And then win the overall World Cup crystal globe at the end of the season? Smart money says yes. Jessie is a medal contender in every race she enters and is a strong favorite to win the 10k freestyle (March 2).

For the World Cup crystal globe: With 1,174 points at this time, Jessie is 270 points ahead of #2 Yulia Stupak from Russia and 563 ahead of Johaug (eighth right now). Brennan sits third overall, 295 points behind her teammate (but only 25 behind Stupak). With only three World Cup weekends and six races left on the schedule (World Cup Finals at the Beijing 2022 Olympic venue were canceled), Diggins is strong in all of them. Furthermore, four of the six races are sprints, and Johaug typically does not compete in sprints.

If Diggins does end the 2020/2021 season in the World Cup lead, she will become the first American to bring home the overall crystal globe in 39 years. Bill Koch won it in 1982. She also has a good chance of winning the distance title as well.

For a full background on the U.S. women's cross-country ski team, read Shinn's book, *World Class: The Making of the U.S. Women's Cross-Country Ski Team* (2018).

<https://www.amazon.com/World-Class-Making-Womens-Cross-Country/dp/1512600652>

To request more information about the U.S. cross-country ski team, visit www.usскиandsnowboard.org. Or contact: Tom Horrocks tom.horrocks@usскиandsnowboard.org or Reese Brown (Cross Country Ski Areas Association): reese@xcски.org

To watch what has to be one of the few music videos ever made based upon cross country skiing, log onto NASJA member Roger Lohr's site and view the White Grass Ski Touring Center video: <https://www.xскиresorts.com/>

MEMBER NEWS



Meet Bevin Wallace

After a stint working in book publishing in New York, new Press member Bevin Wallace realized she preferred the mountains of her home state of Colorado to the big city. She started her career in the ski biz doing PR for Technica boots and Völkl skis before becoming an editor at *Skiing* Magazine. For her job at *Skiing*, she skied in Switzerland, Austria, Utah, Idaho, Canada, and Japan—for research. Additionally, she was in charge of the magazine's skiwear and soft goods coverage as well as editing columns by Steve Casimiro and Kristin Ullmer among others.

She quit working full-time at *Skiing* when her kids were little and became editor-in-chief of Warren Miller's *SnoWorld*, where she edited coverage of behind-the-scene stories and shenanigans from the annual film.

As a freelance writer and editor, Bevin has worked for the *Snow Show Daily*, *Vail-Beaver Creek* magazine, *Elevation Outdoors*, *32 Degrees*, and *Jackson Hole* magazine. For the last year, she has served as managing editor of *Outdoor Retailer* magazine, which, in addition to its quarterly print issues, has pivoted from a trade show daily to a weekly in order to report on industry news and provide inspiration during the pandemic.

Bevin is married and has two kids—a son who's a freshman at her alma mater, CU Boulder (although he's mostly skiing this year) and a teenage daughter. They live in Denver with an old black lab and a new puppy. If you're looking for Bevin and she's not at her desk in her home office, just check the trails around Denver or Vail, where she will be trying to wear out the puppy. (Reach Bevin here: bevinwallace@comcast.net)

CORPORATE MEMBER NEWS



A Memorable Season at Wachusett Mountain

Like ski areas across the country, the 2020-21 season will go on record as one of the most memorable at Wachusett Mountain for so many reasons. As the central Massachusetts ski area prepared for the winter of Covid, it rolled out numerous changes and improvements to prepare for operating in as safe a manner possible.

As the winter was getting underway, Wachusett was greeted by the news from *SKI Magazine* that it had been voted among the top 10 ski areas in Eastern North America – a first for the southern New England mountain – in the 2021 Reader Service Poll. Wachusett was rated #9 (up from #19 in 2020), as *SKI* noted that it was a "landmark of Massachusetts, and one of the great training mountains of the East Coast." Wachusett's ratings included #2 in Grooming; #3 in Snow; #1 in Travel Ease and Accessibility; #2 in Lifts; and #1 in On-Mountain Food.

Already known for its snowmaking, grooming, beginner and children's programs, Wachusett focused on improving its outdoor services this winter like many resorts with limited lodge capacity due to the pandemic. Improvements included new wind screens on the base lodge patio; an outdoor staging area for rentals, more outdoor seating and gear storage; more outdoor heaters including a pair of heated "Dragon Benches"; more outdoor food service with an increased menu at its signature O'Brien's Deck Bar, and new food truck. The mountain's popular Bullock Lodge even launched a "ski-up" window to serve its famous hot cider donuts.

To help balance the increased demand from loyal local Massachusetts skiers who were not skiing out of state this winter, Wachusett converting to all online ticket sales and launched a new shorter "session" format selling tickets for the morning, afternoon, early evening and late evening. For an update on all of Wachusett's other changes or Covid protocols, visit www.wachusett.com.

NEWS YOU CAN USE



Thunderhead chair, Steamboat Resort, Feb. 6, 2021

#liftmageddon

The internet lost its mind recently with images of massive liftlines across the country. [Alex Silgalis](#) writing for *Local Freshies* theorizes it's because of scarcity of fresh snow, the increased popularity of drive markets over fly markets, and the idea that ski areas are considered safer in a pandemic. One might also add lifts running a less than capacity.

Read the story here:

<https://localfreshies.com/long-ski-lift-lines/>



Who needs lifts when you have this gizmo behind you?

Who Needs Lifts Anyway?

The Skizee Woodsrunner is having a moment. The so-called Leader in Power Skiing features a lawn-mower type device that propels skiers across frozen lakes and woods. The new invention out of St. John's, Newfoundland, has a four-litre tank and a "gritty dark base with eye-catching colors." Cost is about \$5,000 Canadian. See it in action here:

<https://skizee.ca/>



Canyon congestion is every Utah skier's nightmare.

Will a Cog Unclog Utah's Ski Canyon Congestion?

The public has had its opportunity to weigh in and there are now two new options for easing the vehicle congestion up Utah's Little Cottonwood Canyon for skiers/riders and outdoor enthusiasts heading to Snowbird and Alta ski areas. It's a subject that's been part of the Wasatch conversation for many years, according to a story by former NASJA president Craig Altschul writing in *OntheSnow.com* (Dec. 1, 2020).

The newest options just announced by the Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT) include a cog railway (think Colorado's Pike's Peak and New Hampshire's Mt. Washington chuggers) or a long gondola, beginning about three-quarters of a mile west of the canyon mouth.

The gondola would cost an estimated \$576 million. The cog railway would run an estimated \$1.05 billion. There is no current plan on how to pay for either option at this point. Read the story here:

<https://www.onthesnow.com/news/a/637651/will-a-cog-unclog-utah-s-ski-canyon-congestion>

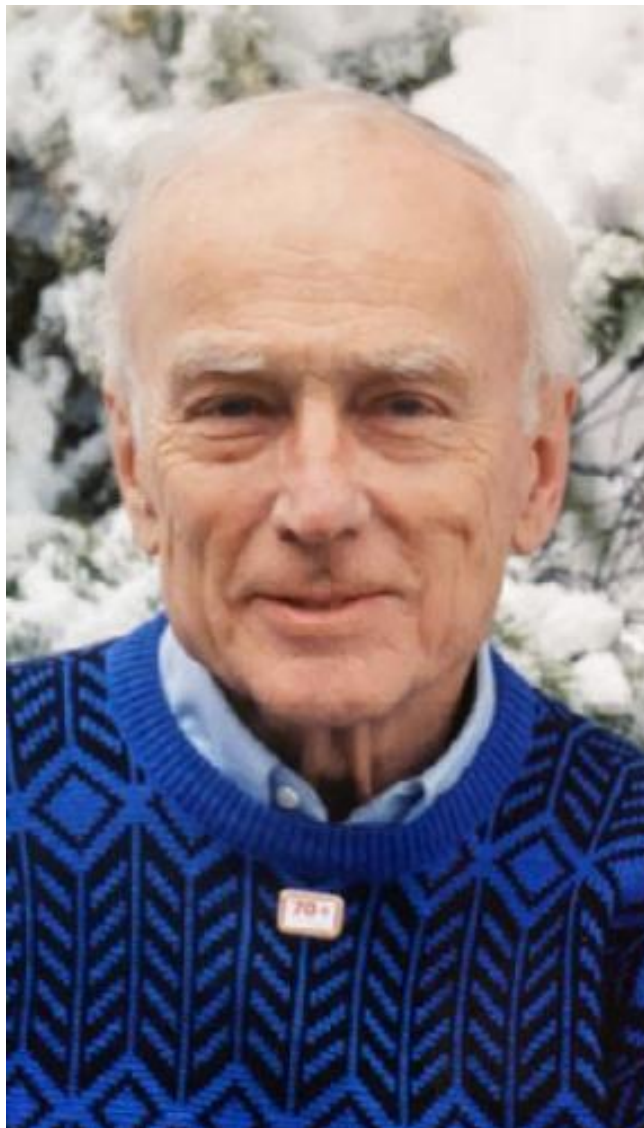


Sketch by Mike Roth

Don't Forget the 15-ft. Radius

We all know about the importance of staying six feet away from people during a pandemic, but skiers need to stay even further – 15 feet according to NASJA member Mike Roth's *The Ski Blog* in the *Albany Times Union*. He reminds his readers to stay at least 15 feet from other skiers, warning that being taken out by a passing skier is in many cases more dangerous than Covid. Read his Jan. 22 post here:

<https://blog.timesunion.com/ski/770-2/770/?fbclid=IwAR2PIoSkbU4VxjHNvZm5WhQxZx-58oZ33ibHZRfytQa71r5z-SIkrdNteYg>



REMEMBERING SID BROWN

Longtime NASJA /ESWA member Sid Brown died Jan. 29 at his home in Hoosick Falls, New York at age 93.

Sid began his career in photojournalism in 1948, landing a job as a Schenectady *Daily Gazette* staff photographer. He was promoted to chief photographer in 1960, a position he held until his retirement in 1991.

In addition to his talents with a camera, Brown was an aviator, skier, roller skater, gardener, golfer, tennis player, patron of the arts and business developer.

Sid and his wife Doris were regulars at Eastern Ski Writers Association meetings. (ESWA was a region of NASJA before NASJA consolidated into one organization.)

"ESWA regularly held a race during its meetings and Sid was usually at the top of standings when it was over," says former NASJA president Phil Johnson.

"Sid kept in touch with many of his former ESWA colleagues as a principal in Brown's Brewing Company and pub on the Hudson River in Troy, New York, a convenient stop for many of us on trips to and from ski areas. Sid, a jack of all trades, was directly involved in the development of much of the facility. Sid's Brown Ale has long been a favorite on the menu there," Johnson says.

Adds Ken Goldfarb, former ski reporter for the Middletown, New York, *Times-Herald Record*, "He just seemed to be an all around great guy, with a wealth of extracurricular interests. He'll be missed by many."

Family members will celebrate Sid's life later this year.

Read his obituary here:

<https://dailygazette.com/2021/01/31/sid-brown-whose-photographs-illustrated-the-pages-of-the-daily-gazette-for-more-than-40-years-has-died-at-93/>

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