



# The Ancient Skier

P. O. Box 331 Kirkland, WA 98083

Fall 2013

**NEW BOOK BY AWARD-WINNING SKI CARTOONIST BOB CRAM  
FOCUSES ON THE FUNNY SIDE OF LIFE ON AMERICA'S SLOPES**

**Ski cartoonist Bob Cram**, who won an ISHA Lifetime Achievement Award in 2012, is retired but not resting. He recently published a new book, *That's Ski Life*, an entertaining collection of his favorite illustrations, interspersed with background commentary on the drawings and his successful 60-year career. He calls the book "a history of skiing as I have viewed it through cartoons over the last half-century or so," from the first illustration (shown below) to more recent drawings that depict the trials - and triumphs - of "ancient skiers."

*A version of this article appears in the May/June 2013 issue of Skiing History, (previously titled, Skiing Heritage), the bi-monthly journal of the International Skiing History Association (www.skiinghistory.org). Please consider joining ISHA and supporting its work "to preserve skiing history and increase awareness of the sports heritage."*

## THAT'S SKI LIFE

*Bob has three pages in the May/June 2013 issue of Skiing History devoted to his new book. Essentially, it's his autobiography in cartoon form. "That's Ski Life" is a natural for every Ancient Skier's library, just as it is for members' children and grandchildren. Our own skiing pasts are reflected in many of Bob's experiences shown by cartoons and comments. To order call 206-922-2709, snail mail to 900 University St., #18FG, Seattle, WA 98101, or e-mail Bob at:*

*mcbe52@comcast.net*

*Cost is \$13.95 plus shipping.*



The first cartoon Cram ever published appeared in 1949 in the University of Washington's magazine, *Columns*, where two of his friends - avid skiers Ralph Holmsted and Bob Quickstad - were student editors. At the time Cram was pursuing a career in commercial art at the Burnley School of Professional Art in Seattle on the GI Bill.

## SEATTLE'S MUNICIPAL SKI PARK 1934-1940

By *John W. Lundin & Steve Lundin*

*The first part of this article appeared in the Summer 2013 issue of the Ancient Skiers Newsletter. Thanks to the Lundins for their research and permission to have the conclusion appear in this Newsletter.*

In December 1936, the Union Pacific Railroad opened Sun Valley Resort near Ketchum, Idaho at a cost of \$1,250,000, transforming skiing in this country. "Sun Valley was born - a fashionable ski resort costing Harriman and the Union Pacific something more than \$1,000,000 - offering a luxurious, ultra-modern hotel with accommodations for some 200 guests; sun-bathing in roofless ice igloos; mid-winter swimming in outdoor swimming pools fed by natural hot springs; ski-tows to raise skiers 1,470 feet in elevation on a 6,500-foot-long

*Continued on page 2*

## SEATTLE'S MUNICIPAL SKI PARK 1934 - 1940 *Continued from page 1*

hoist; which gives the skier 650 feet of elevation above the valley level," the Seattle Times reported. Sun Valley was the country's first destination ski resort, where the chair lift was invented, changing skiing forever.

### Sun Valley chair lift a sensation

The installation of the chair lift at Sun Valley caused a sensation in the Northwest. Skiers no longer had to climb hills with skins on their skis, but could ride up to the top again and again, making more runs than they ever dreamed were possible. Rope tows installed at Woodstock, Vermont and Williamstown, Massachusetts also got publicity. Skiers in the Seattle area took notice and discussions began about installing tows in local areas.

In 1937, 20,000 skiers used the Summit area, with the largest single day consisting of 2,800 enthusiasts. In the summer of 1937, Jim Parker and Chauncey Griggs got permission to install a rope tow at the Snoqualmie Ski Park, through their company, Ski Lifts, Inc., which would be the means of "developing this area to its greatest possibilities as a popular ski center."

### 1938 an important year



1938 was an important year for Northwest skiing. Ski Lifts, Inc. installed rope tows at Snoqualmie Summit, Mt. Baker and Mt. Rainier, providing an alternative to walking up the hills. The Municipal Ski Park's tow was 1,000 feet long, lifted skiers up 450 feet, and served the pie-shaped wedge clearing west of the Seattle Ski Club, rates 50 cents, 75 cents, and \$1.00. "Skiers could get downhill training without the long uphill climbs and sudden, weary-legged returns," according to the Times. The tow should be the solution to the area's "weekly traffic jam," as it keeps up-hill skiers on the right side with the downhill-bound skiers on the other side." The tows meant "the Northwest will have made the first step toward catching up with Europe in the matter of ski equipment."

### Webb Moffett assists building rope tows

Webb Moffett assisted Parker and Griggs in designing and building the rope tows, and was hired to operate the rope tow on weekends for Ski Lifts, Inc. at the Ski Park, earning \$10 per weekend plus 10% of the gross. He

earned \$74.75 for his first month of work. Money was so tight that Moffett and his wife, Virginia, slept in the equipment room their first year of operation.

Also in 1938, the Milwaukee Railroad opened the Snoqualmie Ski Bowl (later renamed Milwaukee Ski Bowl) at its Hyak stop on the east end of its tunnel under Snoqualmie Pass, offering access by train from downtown Seattle in two hours. The Ski Bowl, which had the first J bar ski lift in the Northwest and lighted slopes for night skiing, dramatically changed Seattle's ski scene, and became the area's most popular ski destination. *Editors note: Subsequent research suggests the J bar lift was a modified platter pull tow.* The country's first night ski train took skiers to the Ski Bowl for night skiing, with an orchestra providing music for dancing. Dancing and socializing on the ski train became one of the main attractions of the Ski Bowl.

### Year ends successfully

On April 27, 1938, James Parker, President of Ski-Lifts, Inc. wrote the Seattle Park Board summarizing the past year's operations at the Ski Park, which he said had contributed to the pleasure of skiing and the further development of the sport:

"Although the ski lift was a new idea in this vicinity this year, it did not take skiers long to appreciate its benefits. When we first started operation in January the lift (Old Betsie) was patronized by only about 15% of the skiers on the hill. The acceptance of the lift increased throughout the season until at the close of the season approximately 75% of the skiers were accustomed to taking advantage of the lift.

"We started operating the tow on January 1st and continued each Saturday and Sunday until the closing date April 17th.



### 3000 skiers park and ride

"During this time almost 3000 people took rides. Some of these customers would average between 50 and 70 rides per day so that approximately 100,000 rides were given in all. Since the machinery and equipment in connection with the lift was expensive to install, we are satisfied in netting a sufficient profit during the season to pay for approximately

*Continued on page 3*

## SEATTLE'S MUNICIPAL SKI PARK *Continue from pg. 2*

one-third of the original investment. We believe, because of location and accessibility, that the Snoqualmie area is an ideal district for Seattle skiers. Further development of this playground would prove an immeasurable benefit to Seattle."

The Seattle Times of July 24, 1938, said that over the previous decade, skiing had become Seattle's favorite winter-time sport, featuring areas on two mountain ranges, with the manufacture and selling of ski equipment becoming a \$3 million industry. "Within a comfortable four hours distance of a half-dozen



*Old Betsie*

a substantial jump in the number of skiers in 1938, after the rope tow was installed, but a drop in participants in 1939, perhaps reflecting the increased popularity of the Milwaukee Ski Bowl. In 1937, 19,865 people went to the park; 26,025 went in 1938; and 22,698 went in 1939.

### **Milwaukee Ski Bowl too much competition**

In spring of 1940, the Seattle Park Department got out of the ski business after Seattle residents concluded that Snoqualmie Pass was too far away for a city park. The difficulty in getting funds and labor to improve the Municipal Ski Park, and the criticism of the condition of the facilities by the Forest Service in 1937, likely contributed to the decision to get out of the ski business. Competition from the Milwaukee Road's Ski Bowl took away some of the appeal from the Municipal Ski Park, and the Ski Bowl became the new focus of Seattle area skiing.

The Ski Park was taken over by Ski Lifts, Inc., which undoubtedly obtained its own permit from the Forest Service, enabling it to continue the operations of the ski area, as it previously operated under Seattle's permit. In 1942, Ski Lifts, Inc. was sold for \$3,500 to Webb Moffett. Lights were installed after WW II for night skiing, and the Thunderbird chair lift was installed in 1954. Ski Lifts, Inc. eventually took over all the ski operations on Snoqualmie Pass, including Alpentel, Ski Acres and Hyak. The company operated the area until 1998, when it sold its operations to Booth Creek Ski Holdings, Inc.

*Editor's note: The four ski operations at Snoqualmie Pass were subsequently acquired by CNL Lifestyle Properties, Inc., with nearly 200 properties in North America, and are operated by Boyne Resorts, also the owner and operator of Crystal Mountain resort in Washington.*

of the outstanding ski terrains in the entire nation, Seattle has become the hub of intense activity through the winter months. Every week-end finds 20,000 or more skiers turning to the glistening snowfields of the Cascades, Olympics, to Mount Rainier and Mount Baker. In the Cascades east of Seattle, skifans find opportunity at Snoqualmie Pass, Naches Pass, and a half-dozen other points. Newest of the areas is the Snoqualmie Ski Bowl, accessible by ski trains from Seattle and Tacoma."

The Municipal Ski Park Report for 1936 - 1939, gave week by week attendance figures, together with the snow conditions and injuries at the area. The figures show

### **31st ANNUAL SUN VALLEY REUNION SCHEDULED FOR JANUARY 18 - 25, 2014**

The form for the reunion events will be sent with the Winter 2013 Newsletter about the first of November. The deadline for registration is Nov. 27, 2013. If you will be out of town during the first weeks of November, please find someone to send your registration. Questions? Call Chairman Bill Price, 425-392-3927.

### **WELCOME NEW ANCIENT SKIERS**

Judy Anderson  
 Hugh & Dollie Armstrong  
 Margaret A. (Peggy) Boyle  
 John Brookes & Elaine Koehn  
 Michael & Sobie Fortman  
 Jerry & Diane Cohn  
 Fred & Alice Dowdy  
 Thomas & June Frey  
 Dave & Mary Sue Galvin  
 Kirby & Wendy Gilbert  
 Gary & Leane Griswold  
 Don Hanson  
 George & Kim Howe  
 Fred Kaseburg  
 Russ & Sidne Lamb  
 Mark & Yoshimi Lorbiecki  
 John & Jane Lundin  
 Margaret Marshall  
 Gordon & Sara Mitchell  
 Pat Nuckols  
 Kenneth & Kay Paton  
 Dale & Nancy Peinecke  
 Jim Plomasen & Robin Hagenau  
 Bill Schliiter,  
 Gloria Kimball Schliiter  
 Lowell Skoog & Stephanie Subak  
 Rick & Nanette Stocks  
 Jim & Renee Strang  
 Doug & Susie Stuhr  
 Steve & Lila Wagner  
 Bill & Betty Weida  
 Gordon & Judy West  
 Carollynn Zimmers & Arthur Hahn  
 Gary & Joann Olson

*E-mail, mailing addresses and telephone numbers of these new members may be obtained from Membership Chairman Leland Rosenlund, 425-890-5090, or at his email: lelandr@sports-unlmt.com*

**KUDOS TO NEWSLETTER MAILING TEAMS**

The Sun Valley Team: *Bob and Lynne Nicholson, Sandy Bowman and Nick Parish.*

The Park Shores Retirement Home Team: *Barbara Faires, Paul Ratliffe, Lois Simonson, Solveig Thomson, and Harold Stack (from next door in Washington Towers).*

**ANCIENT SKIER EMERITUS HONOREES**

Recently, Bill Black and John Peterson reached the exalted age of 90 and became eligible to be known as “Ancient Skiers Emeritus.” They will receive certificates duly setting forth this honor. If there are other members who have turned 90 in the past six months, please let John Hansen know (206-726-0674) so they may be recognized.

**WHEN WAR SURPLUS OFTEN WAS HIGH-STYLE**

The odds are good if you’re a long-time Ancient Skiers member that you have strong recollections of World War II surplus materials playing an important part in your skiing wardrobe and gear selection in early post-war years. Here’s a sampling:

- 10th Mountain Division skis, all-white, and just the way the Army used them at, generally, 7’ 3” length
- Skis from the Army with one sort of modification or another often done by Seattle’s Wally Burr, Jannette’s dad
- 10th Mtn. Div. bear trap cable bindings with over-the-toe leather straps
- White ski poles with big baskets, as used by the Army - some made with split bamboo and some made of steel
- Ski boots - 10th Mtn. Div. ankle-high, leather, box toe, and curved sole for easier walking
- Ski waxes in small tin cylinders, with Blue for cold snow, Red for medium snow, and Orange for corn snow – with some made by Sohm
- 10th Mtn. Div. parkas - Very long, with fur ruff around the hood and reversible, with white for camouflage and olive drab (OD) on other side
- Ski pants -10th Mtn. Div. officers’ wool, tapered gabardine with zipper pockets (issued in OD color, but sometimes surplus pants were home-dyed to black) and enlisted men’s (EMs) heavy-duty OD poplin with baggy pockets
- Long johns right off the war surplus shelves
- Goggles, N-2 All Purpose, Stock No. 37-G-3050, that fogged readily
- Goggle anti-dim cloth in an OD-colored tin cylinder to help keep goggles from fogging
- Glacier sun glasses set in fabric with plush rims to fit face
- Polaroid Eyetogs - a goggle-shaped green plastic shield which rested on nose and cheeks and was held away from the forehead by a bar that gave a curve to the plastic
- Climbing skins made of mohair, white
- Back packs with tubular metal frames and an OD sack for EMs
- Back packs with wire frames with an OD sack for officers
- Blankets (Army OD) for those long, cold car rides
- Double mummy bags (40% down, 60% chicken feathers) for those cold overnight stays at the pass
- Gas mask bags for carrying small, loose gear
- Jerry cans for gas for the rope tows or extra fuel for the car

~ Mike Dederer, John Hansen & friends

**REMEMBERING**

**SUZANNE PETERSON 1924 - 2013**

Sue started skiing while at St. Nicholas School in Seattle. She was a member of the University of Washington Ski Team. During the war, she was featured on the cover of the overseas issue of Life Magazine, water skiing on Lake Washington in March as part of a photo shoot about the athletic activities around Seattle. After WW II, Sue married John and honeymooned at Sun Valley in 1949 and skied Sun Valley regularly with friends who also had honeymoons there and with Ancient Skiers members at reunions. As a sailor, she was a member of the Seattle Yacht Club. She loved gardening and was involved in the Arboretum Foundation. Sue is survived by her husband, John, sons Martin and Dean, their wives, six grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren.

**SORRIE MCKIERNAN  
DICK HILL 5/13/2013  
MAX GELLERT**



**TRUDY STACK 5/19/13  
KAY MOST  
JAMES CHILTON**

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