



The Ancient Skier

Fall 2016

BANQUET HONORS FOUR NEW HALL OF FAMERS



Honorees Shannon Bloedel, Judy Nagel Johnson, Nobi Kano's daughter Barbara Chase, Lenore Lyle

October's biennial Seattle banquet drew well over 150 Ancient Skiers and friends to the Nile Shrine Center to induct Shannon Bloedel, Judy Nagel Johnson, Lenore Lyle and Nobi Kano into the Northwest Ski Hall of Fame.

From the get-go, attendees seemed really energized and considerable socializing was undertaken throughout the evening. The program started with a lively participant-run fashion show and the showing of an intriguing short video covering 100 years of ski fashions.

The line for drinks was long, and the speakers could not easily be heard by all, but the food was very good and camaraderie ever-present. Ancient Skier President Bill Price emceed the event, reminding everyone of the upcoming Sun Valley reunion and the need to help us recruit more members who share our Northwest skiing heritage.

After a break for dinner service, the new inductees to the Northwest Ski Hall of Fame were introduced and given certificates honoring their selection, with each presenting short acceptance speeches, often filled with appealing emotion as they discussed their accomplishments.

Shannon highlights the freedom skiing has given her

Shannon outlined how she got into skiing, being the youngest of 10 children growing up in the Gig Harbor area in a family which leaned toward waterskiing rather than snow skiing. After an accident in 1970 that left her without the use of her legs, she began to enjoy the exhilaration that sliding on snow provided her, beginning in a sled pulled by her brothers. She emphasized how skiing provided her great freedom by allowing her to get out of a wheelchair and experience speed in an outdoor mountain environment. Shannon praised those who had continually worked to improve the mono ski and SKIFORALL, the organization now called Outdoors for All, giving special thanks to Dollie Armstrong, an early leader of that group, who was in the attendance at the banquet.

Judy's reminiscences include the Yellow Jackets

Judy provided a wonderful account of her skiing family, including her late father Jack Nagel, and noted sister Cathy's prominence in skiing, exemplified by her being on the cover of Sports Illustrated. Judy reflected on her early training experiences at Stevens Pass, where her father helped form a group of young ski racers that became known as the Yellow Jackets. When Crystal Mountain opened, the family and Yellow Jackets migrated to Crystal and became the genesis of the Crystal Mountain Athletic Club (CMAC). She went through memories of her father

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heading the ski school and her mother helping run the ski shop over many years. Judy remembered being dazzled by the huge early IBM electronic scoreboards at major races and explained the challenges of being a teenager and traveling without her family to world-class ski events at far-away ski resorts in Europe and Chile, plus in Aspen and Canada.

Nobi's daughter honors late father's accomplishments

Barbara Chase, Nobi Kano's daughter, spoke on behalf of her late father. Barbara was truly moved by all the remembrances and information she and her family uncovered to support the Ancient Skiers' nomination process. Barbara outlined Nobi's skiing past, noting he was born in Kent but did not ski until he went to Japan for schooling in the mid-1930s. After returning from Japan, Nobi got very involved in skiing at Paradise and Snoqualmie, helping start the Rokka Ski Club and later joining the 10th Mountain Division ski troops during World War II. She spoke of his keen interest and career in photography at Tall's Cameras as well as some of his artistic talents and went on to describe Nobi's many teaching competencies and how he invented

water skis for beginners that allowed the skis to be remain fixed in a parallel position.

Lenore recalls teaching and fun Ski Market Weeks

Lenore spoke about all of the changes we have seen in skiing over the years and asked the audience how many remembered the canvas covers one could use riding the Sun Valley lifts to the top of Baldy. She described how she first experienced ski instruction from a student's and observer's perspective and found it so enticing she expressed her considerable interest to Wilma Weckwerth, who then invited her to join the Ski Masters Ski School as a teacher. Lenore then spoke of fun times and fundamental changes in her perspective about skiing she experienced while working for Sportscenter at the annual Ski Market Weeks. Lenore expressed her feelings of being blessed by the chance to ski with family and friends, and, later in life, to ski and lead ski trips to Europe. She made the point that running a ski school was not all about skiing on the slopes; it involved year-round efforts from many, and she often considered the ski instructing community to be her second family.

~ Kirby Gilbert



Fun at the Banquet (from top clockwise):
~ Emeritus Ancient Skiers: **Chuck Howe, Chuck Welsh, Bill Black, unidentified, John Hansen, Marlys Waller, Kristian Berg, Bob Cram** and, standing behind, **Bill Price**.
~ The Nagel girls, **Cathy and Judy**, with spouses **Eddie Arraut and Bob Johnson**.
~ **Vivian Audett** with daughter **Karen** and son **Art**.
~ **Jannette Burr Johnson, John Hansen, Lou Whittaker, Wini Jones and Yosh Nakagawa**.



SUN VALLEY CHAIRLIFT LORE

Ancient Skiers continue to enjoy all Sun Valley has to offer year after year. Our Sun Valley experience typically comes with some sunshine, but no matter what weather conditions prevail we always get to enjoy the top notch grooming and amazing ski lift service. Sun Valley's lift system is truly remarkable – nine high-speed quad lifts and a gondola whisk skiers up Baldy and Dollar so fast that most can get enough runs in to be worn out by noon. The Challenger lift at Warm Springs takes a skier up an impressive 3,142 vertical feet in just 10 minutes.

It is generally common knowledge to serious skiers that Sun Valley had the world's first chairlifts for skiing. Many locals and frequent visitors are familiar with the largely intact but defunct Ruud Mountain chairlift, standing off of Fairway Road just east of the Lodge. When talking to locals in town, many point to the remnant ski lift as being one of the first chairlifts in the world, and it was.

The Ruud chairlift we see today was the resort's third chairlift. Beginning with the inaugural season in the winter of 1936-37, Sun Valley provided bus service to its first chairlifts on Dollar and Proctor Mountains. While the Dollar chairlift was relatively close to Sun Valley Lodge, the Proctor chairlift (photo on right) was quite distant and a J-bar tow was installed to provide skiers easier access to the lift from the bus drop-off area.

For the second season, Union Pacific resort managers were convinced by renowned ski jumpers Alf Engen and Sigmund Ruud that a ski jump was needed at the resort. Also at the same time, the bus service road was extended to the base of Proctor Mountain, bypassing the J-bar used the first season.

With Engen's assistance, a 40-meter ski jump was built on a nearby mountain situated between Dollar and Proctor that was then named for Ruud by Sun Valley officials. To serve the new jumping hill (and new slalom slopes), Union Pacific Railroad relocated and reconfigured the Proctor J-bar to make it into the single chairlift we can still see today on Ruud Mountain. The Ruud single operated through 1967, and many of you out there probably still can recall the lift when it was still functioning.

During early years at Sun Valley, more experienced skiers would venture out to ski on all the snow-covered hill-sides surrounding the Lodge, not just those with lifts. The first ski trail maps show a system of trails leading out to runs on Elkhorn Ridge, Corral Creek, Boulder Mountain and "Old Baldy Mountain" for the hardier skiers. In the early years, Sun Valley offered snow cat service to these hills

using a U.S. Forest Service snow tractor that had been invented on the slopes of Mt. Hood. The chairlifts, however, were a revolutionary improvement and skiers around the world took notice.

Australian skier and politician Thomas W. Mitchell visited Sun Valley in its second season and was enthralled by the novel chairlifts. He reported his findings to his fellow Down Under skiers:

"You sit on a small seat with your ski clear of the snow. The chairs hardly ever stop and you stand at the bottom trying to line up your seat with the approaching chair. You speculate what will happen if you sit down at the wrong time. At the top you let your ski run for a second on a specially prepared bank of snow and then, catching hold of a rope hanging down from the cable in front, straighten up and gently skijor away from your chair."

After three ski seasons of success, Union Pacific broke ground on Baldy Mountain, erecting a three-chairlift system that created the backbone arrangement of the lift system we use today. As new lifts and trails were added to cater to increasing numbers of skiers with better skills, the lower elevation hills around the Lodge fell out of favor, except for Dollar Mountain, which continued to cater to those taking lessons.

After the war the old Proctor lift was rarely used and in 1951 Union Pacific engineers relocated it to Baldy, placing it close to the Christmas Ridge lift to access the increasingly popular

runs stemming from the top.

One year after purchasing the resort from Union Pacific, Bill Janss greatly expanded access to skiing terrain in 1965 by erecting two Riblet double chairlifts on the Warm Springs side of Baldy. In the Union Pacific days skiers had to bus out of Warm Springs after coming down ski runs that were also used in Harriman Cup and other races. That opened up a whole new base area that attracted residential development that many Seattle-area skiers helped build out.

Janss continued his momentum in making major improvements by adding the Seattle Ridge lift and its ski runs in 1976. Ancient Skier and Olympian Gretchen Fraser christened the new Seattle Ridge lift that opened for skiing in early 1977.

Today, the Cold Springs double chairlift, installed in 1970 to replace an earlier single, is the oldest ski lift operating in the fleet. Sun Valley's 80 years of ski lift development is a legacy we can all appreciate each time we ski there.

~ Kirby Gilbert



YOU'RE AN ANCIENT SKIER (WITH EXTRA SUN VALLEY SAVVY) IF YOU REMEMBER ...

... waiting in line for an hour on a 0 degree morning to ride the River Run single chair. (“Please pass me one of those heavy capes.”)

... holding your poles especially carefully as your chair passes over the Big Wood River.

... moving up Baldy and riding a chair over Ridge Run while movie producer Darryl Zanuck skis below during a private lesson with Otto Lang -- and noticing, too, that the packing crew has sidestepped the South Slope.

... finishing your three-chair trip to the top and rushing into the ski patrol hut to find a foot-warming spot by the wood stove. Off go the leather boots.

... taking your warm-up run down College (before there was a Lower College) and encountering a cat trail back to the Round House, the first such trail you’ve ever seen because, normally, you are a Cascades’ rope tow skier.

... making big turns down Ridge before you decide on one of the two choices available at the bottom: the steeps of Rock Garden or the left turn and easy traverse to the gentle cat trail from College.

... heading down Canyon, when it really seemed like a Canyon, but, nearing the bottom, turning to the right on a short trail through the trees that takes you to the bottom section of Exhibition, so you can say you skied that slope, too.

... reaching the summit on a clear, cold morning after a big snow dump the night before, knowing the bowls just opened, and taking the long traverse over to Lookout Bowl to get all the powder you can all the way down to the Cold Springs single chair.

... keeping your slope memory in tune for such matters as the Narrows into Lower River; the sudden, partial dip between the bottom of Rock Garden and the track to the Round House Slope; and the serious rolls at right angle to the fall line near the bottom of Olympic.

... making the most of the Round House’s pleasures and sights, including free make-it-yourself “tomato soup” and oyster crackers, delicious chocolate rolls, SV Manager Pat Rogers behind the counter helping serve the cafeteria line, and Hollywood star Burt Lancaster coming in out of the cold wearing his socks outside his ski pants.

... figuring that very flat light, but very good new powder, might mean a very good no-people run down Warm Springs all the way to the narrow wooden bridge across Warm Springs Creek – realizing that you might have to ride one bus to the Valley and catch a second bus back to the bottom of River Run, where your car is parked.

... trying to retain your composure on another day when you’re bouncing and jiggling up Baldy on the transplanted Proctor Mountain lift that is serving as a second chair on Baldy’s top third – with gorgeous weather and skiing and your own giant shadow on the snow making the ride worthwhile.

~ Mike Dederer story and photo

34th ANNUAL SUN VALLEY REUNION SET FOR JANUARY 21-28, 2017

Get yourself ready for some fun skiing and mingling during the Ancient Skiers’ 34th reunion at the Idaho resort. Our Sun Valley week will start with registration from 3 to 6 p.m., Saturday, Jan. 21, in the Sun Valley Inn Continental Room. You will get your packet with name tags, reunion event schedule, and information about ticket exchange privileges. There also will be a no-host bar for all to enjoy while visiting with other Ancients, and sign-up sheets will be available for the week’s various activities.

Highlights will include the Monday Western dinner night, so be sure to bring your Western wear. Friday’s wind-up banquet will be a dinner-dance, so bring your dancing shoes, too.

With this Newsletter are two forms: “**REGISTRATION FORM**” and “**RETAIN THIS COPY FOR YOUR RECORDS.**” Fill out the registration form, total the event charges, and mail the completed form with your check made out to and mailed to ANCIENT SKIERS, P.O. Box 1295, Sun Valley, ID 83353, postmarked no later than Dec. 7, 2016. Please: no email responses. Copy the information from the Registration Form onto the Retain This Copy for Your Records form and bring it to the Saturday registration in case any discrepancies arise. You’ll also find copies of the forms at the Ancients’ new website: <http://www.ancientskiers.com/> (Click on “EVENTS” at the top of the screen and then select “Sun Valley trip.”)

You may purchase discounted lift tickets at the inside ticket counter at River Run Lodge. If you have questions please call:

Marlys Gerber at (206) 271-1575 or Robin Hagenau at (208) 720-7707.



Membership Applications & Roster Chair

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