



# The Ancient Skier

P.O. Box 331, Kirkland, Wa 98803

Winter 2016

## WE'LL REMEMBER NELSON BENNETT IN MANY WAYS

Nelson Bennett, an iconic figure in the ski world, passed away January 29 at his home in Yakima at the age of 101. Nelson, an active member of the Ancient Skiers, was well known not only for being the long-time manager of White Pass Ski Resort but also for his pioneering leadership in the Sun Valley and National Ski Patrols and 10th Mountain Division and for his enduring service to ski sport organizations, including the PNSA, NSA, U.S. Olympic alpine teams, and Olympic committees.

Nelson was born in Lancaster, New Hampshire, where he learned to ski as a boy, getting his first pair of skis when he was 13 years old. During high school in the 1930s, he worked his first ski job as a waiter and dishwasher at Peckett's on Sugar Hill, site of the first ski school in America and the resort Otto Lang first taught at upon his arrival in the United States in late 1935. In college at the University of New Hampshire, Nelson studied forestry and raced for the university ski team. After graduating in 1940, he came west to visit Sun Valley, where his racing friend Dick Durrance helped him get a job with the ski patrol, where he soon was promoted to supervisor.

During World War II, he served with the famed 10th Mountain Division, being one of the first men assigned to the 86th Mountain Infantry, where he quickly became a squad leader, taught skiing, and led troops in Italy until he was evacuated because of a medical condition.

Nelson returned to Sun Valley after the war and became the superintendent of recreation facilities, a job that included leading the ski patrol, directing ski trail maintenance, and race course supervision. During this period, Nelson and his brother Edmund were trail grooming pioneers, using a tractor (weasel) equipped with blades and rollers to groom the cat tracks leading to the Roundhouse. Significantly, he also led the development of a versatile ski rescue toboggan that was adopted by the National Ski Patrol and used around the country for decades.



Nelson served as a member of U.S. Alpine team selection committees in 1948 and 1952, and, in 1956, he served as manager of the U.S. Alpine team in Cortina, Italy. On a broader scale in 1960, Nelson was assistant director of the Olympic ski events at Squaw Valley.

In summer 1960, Nelson left Sun Valley to become general manager for the fledgling White Pass ski area, leading him into a 25-year career helping transform the area to a resort drawing more than 100,000 skiers a year. When Bennett hired Dave Mahre as mountain manager, he thought that having Mahre's large family living on the slopes would help keep his manager in place for many years and avoid the rapid turnover the resort had experienced in previous years. It worked, and during his tenure at White Pass, Nelson helped mentor Dave Mahre's sons, Phil and Steve, two of the most successful male ski racers the U.S. has ever produced.

In January 2015, nearly 200 people attended his 100th birthday party at the White Pass base lodge, including his three children, several grandchildren, and longtime companion Madi Springer-Miller Kraus. On the day after his death, the flag flew at half-mast at the Sun Valley ski patrol headquarters.

Nelson Bennett was inducted into the U.S. Ski and Snowboard Hall of Fame in 1986 and into the Northwest Ski Hall of Fame in 1992. He also received the prestigious Julius Blegen Award from the U.S. Ski and Snowboard Association.

- **SAVE OCT. 16, 2016** - Our Biennial Banquet at the Nile Country Club.
- **HALL OF FAME NOMINATIONS** - See Page 3 for how to proceed.

## ANCIENT SKIERS FIND GREAT SNOW AND FUN AT OUR 33rd ANNUAL REUNION

Ancient Skiers experienced Sun Valley at its best during the Reunion week of January 18th. New snow



*Happy skiers, Right to Left: Jolene Boice, Ty Anderson, Rick Stocks, Wendy Wyman, Nanette Stocks, Sharon Rosenlund, Lee Rosenlund, Nita Burks*

on Wednesday with blue skies and beautifully groomed conditions made for some fine times on the slopes.

The week began with the Saturday registration event providing a gathering of Ancients who mingled and planned their week ahead. The ski week was filled with good ski days, mostly with small groups often gathering at Seattle Ridge Lodge for hot chocolate and coffee by mid-morning. Every bit of Baldy Mountain's skiable terrain was open and in super shape, providing wonderful top-to-bottom ski runs.

On Wednesday some enjoyed a history tour offered by Sun Valley. Thursday brought out the competitive spirit as many joined in on the popular NASTAR races on the lower Warm Springs slopes. It was great to see 90-year-old Kristen Berg running the course, as our first racer, with confidence and speed.



*Friday night dinner fun: Left to Right: Sidne Lamb, Judy Sweeney, Lou and Ingrid Whittaker*

The Monday night banquet hosted by Sharon and John Wellsandt, offered a fun time, with dancing to the sounds of the WR High School Swing Band.

A super week ended with the Friday night dinner in the Sun Valley Inn's Limelight Room, with more than 275 seasoned skiers on hand. Our hosts were Glenda and Ross McLaughlin, Sandy and Jerry Mailman, and Peter and Anne Marie Wick. Bill Price emceed the event, with presentations for the NASTAR races and other accomplishments given by Marlys Gerber. A special tribute was paid to Jack and Lila Corrock and Ross McLaughlin as each received a Sun Valley Sun award.

Thanks to all the hard work of the committee members for another wonderful ski week!

*~ Kirby Gilbert*



*Recipients of Sun Valley Sun awards. Left to Right: Ross McLaughlin and Lila and Jack Corrock*

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

### WHAT ABOUT YOUR SCARY SKI MOMENT?

Many of us have a scary ski story and we want to keep sharing those. If you, in all your years of skiing, have had such a moment, please submit it by email to: [tinarieman@tumwater.net](mailto:tinarieman@tumwater.net) and look for it in a future newsletter.



## NOMINATIONS SOUGHT FOR NORTHWEST SKI HALL OF FAME

At our upcoming Biennial Banquet October 16, 2016, members of the Pacific Northwest ski community will be inducted into the Northwest Ski Hall of Fame. The inductees will be selected from nominations submitted in writing, summarizing his or her experience, accomplishments, and contributions to the sport.

The purpose of the Northwest Ski Hall of Fame is to honor and perpetuate the names and accomplishments of individuals who have had a positive impact on our sport and its future in the region. Selection of inductees is based on several criteria, including:

- Uncommon energy, enthusiasm, and excitement as a leading force in the sport.
- Individuals who have made major contributions to the sport over a considerable period of years.
- Individuals who have helped increase awareness and appreciation of the sport by the public.
- Those who have brought lasting fame to snowsports in the Northwest.

Nominations may be made for anyone, posthumously as well as for living persons. Endorsements or statements by others supporting nominations are encouraged. Send written nominations to Leland Rosenlund, 19675 S.E. 24th Way, Sammamish, WA 98075 or by email to [lelandr@sports-unlmted.com](mailto:lelandr@sports-unlmted.com). **Nominations must be received on or before March 15, 2016.**

## MUSEUMS NOW OPEN ~ PLAN A VISIT

The Washington State Ski and Snowboard Museum opened its doors in September 2015 and celebrated a grand opening October 10th. The museum, located at Snoqualmie Pass, will generally be open Wednesdays through Sundays, following the same hours as the adjoining restaurant. Established as a non-profit organization, the “story-telling” museum uses interactive monitors and videos, combined with a wide assortment of historical artifacts, to help showcase the rich history of skiing and snowboarding in Washington state. For more information and schedule details, go to <http://www.wsssm.org> or call 425-434-0827.

Based in Leavenworth, the Northwest Ski Hall of Fame display, downstairs at the Enzian Hotel, is worth a visit. The Leavenworth Ski Hill Foundation continues its mission as a not-for-profit organization established to develop, sustain and expand the community’s ski heritage. This includes support of youth and lifelong skiing; outdoor education programs; and programs that enhance Leavenworth as a recreational destination. Current projects include the development of a Pacific NW Ski Museum and an ice skating rink and multi-use pavilion. For more information, go to <http://www.leavenworthskiheritage.org>.

Also of note is the International Ski History Association (ISHA), of which many Ancient Skiers are members. This non-profit corporation’s mission is to preserve and advance the knowledge of ski history and increase public awareness of the sport’s heritage. Members receive a bimonthly magazine, *Skiing History*, and the organization sponsors ski history projects



*Washington Olympians at WSSSM Grand Opening October 10th, Left to Right: Phil Mahre, Susie Corrock, Jim Martinson, Debbie Armstrong, Libby Ludlow, Mark Bathum, Scott Macartney, Shannon Bloedel, Steve Mahre, Judy Nagel, Randy Garretson, Angeli Vanlaanen, Pat Deneen.*

and an annual Ski History Week at different ski resorts each year. For more information, go to <http://www.skiinghistory.org>.



*Nordic and alpine skiing exhibits at the new Snoqualmie Pass museum*

## Wolf Bauer 1912 – 2016

One of the early ski pioneers and legends in mountaineering in Washington state passed away January 23 at his home on San Juan Island, a month shy of his 104th birthday. Wolf Bauer was born February 24, 1912, in Munich, Germany. He came with his family to Seattle as a teenager in 1925. Wolf attended Lincoln and Roosevelt High Schools and, in 1929, was one of 13 Boy Scouts selected to receive a free membership in The Mountaineers club.



Wolf could ski, and ski he did, winning the first West Coast slalom races held by The Mountaineers in March 1930 at the Meany Hut on Stampede Pass. Fellow German ski pioneer Hans Grage took first in the downhill, with Wolf taking first in the newly introduced slalom event. He repeated the win in February 1933 and skied in the first Silver Skis races on Mt. Rainier in 1934, coming in with the fifth best time, but he was disqualified for missing one of the few gates on the harrowing course.

In 1935, when Wolf was 23, he and Jack Hossack were the first to climb the Ptarmigan Ridge route on the north side of Mt. Rainier to its summit. Climbing and outdoor sports were becoming his passion, but skiing was a mainstay, and, in 1936, his team of Chet Higman and Bill Miller set a team record on the 18-mile Mountaineers Patrol ski race from Snoqualmie Pass to Stampede Pass in a time of four and a half hours.

That summer of 1936, shortly after his graduation from the University of Washington, Wolf and four of his school mates were the first to scale Mount Goode, a 9,200-foot peak in the North Cascades that had stymied some of the region's best climbers.

While on a three-month engineering tour in post-war Europe, Wolf learned about Bergwacht, a volunteer rescue group in Bavaria. In 1948, he persuaded The Mountaineers, the Washington Alpine Club, and the National Ski Patrol to sponsor a similar organization to provide year-round wilderness search and rescue. Originally called the Mountain Rescue and Safety Council, the group's name eventually was shortened to the Mountain Rescue Council. It was the first organization of its kind in the United States. Wolf designed its logo, organized its first two annual conferences, and served as chairman for six years.

Wolf also was active in popularizing river paddling, and, in the 1960s, he became active in the growing conservation movement when he drafted early portions of what became the State of Washington's Shoreline Management Act. Wolf Bauer was inducted into the Northwest Ski Hall of Fame in 1994. Wolf's brother Hugh, also a well-known skiing pioneer in the Seattle area, passed away in August 1990.

## PLEASE HELP FIND NEW MEMBERS

Whether you are reading this by email or a mailed edition, your help is needed in bringing in new members. It's easy, and members enjoy the great lift and lodging prices at our annual week in Sun Valley. We also highlight our unique Pacific Northwest skiing history in our quarterly newsletters; and the biennial Northwest Ski Hall of Fame banquet is a great place to find old friends, meet new ones, share skiing memories, and help us enjoy our skiing legacy together.

Prospects include long-time ski instructors, racers and race organizers, ski patrolers, ski retailers, ski area employees, and/or seasoned recreational skiers.

Ancient Skiers involvement is open to anyone over age 55, and membership is by referral by current members. Some of the best candidate members are those who, like many of us, have skied in the Pacific Northwest since we were kids. Please send your skier friends and families to our website: <http://www.ancientskiers.com>. From there, the Ancient Skiers application can be accessed, printed, and emailed. We also have a Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/AncientSkiers>.

Thanks for helping keep the Ancient Skiers a great group of friends.

### Ancient Skiers Board of Directors

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