

Spring/Summer 2019



Newsletter

It has been quite a winter; many would say it has been a poor winter for outdoor activities, snow followed by bitter cold, followed by warm temperatures and rain. It is true that it has been an exhibition of the extremes in weather expected with climate change. If you were willing to deal with the elements of sometimes cold, sometimes windy, we lucked out. The continual cycles gradually built up a durable base. It meant for more grooming than normal but allowed for better overall conditions than we have had in a long time. The snow level built up to a point where the trails could be widened to allow for both freestyle and classic technique on many of the woods trails. This was opportune timing due to the bathroom construction that made the camp loops unavailable. In spite of the limitations on the camp loops, most of the road itself remained available due to Continental Construction doing what they could to minimize their impact. In fact, the only time they encroached on the road was late in the season, when on water covered ice, a freshly unloaded material handler went for an unanticipated slide, spinning it around onto the skier side



For the fun of it, by comparison Titus Mountain skied 101 days with snowmaking. Using our most loyal skier as reference HFSP skied over 110 days and so did he!

Doug Welch marking 100 days

The Competitors Among Us

Regardless of the time of day you ski, you have undoubtedly seen skiers sporting SLU or Clarkson attire. Most of you know that the President of the Friends group is Ethan Townsend, SLU's coach, and you may or may not realize that one of the two regular grooming sleds and drags belongs to SLU. You may have seen Bob Washo or Kyle Curry from SLU out on the trails grooming. You may also realize that many of these skiers disappear each weekend for races in their respective divisions. What you might not realize is that, as in other college sports there are National Championships in these divisions. This year's championships were at Trapp Ski Touring Center in Stowe for the SLU skiers who ski in the NCAA Championships. SLU's skiers performed well in this elite division of college racing. Clarkson University's team competes in the USCSA (United States Collegiate Ski and Snowboard Association), more like a Division 3 school as compared with a Division 1. Their championship this year was held in Jackson Hole Wyoming. It seemed unlikely that the Clarkson Team, always strong performers under Coach Jim Allott would be able to prevail over western teams at the unaccustomed altitude of Jackson Hole. However, in spite of the altitude the Clarkson women won the National Women's Team title while the men finished second in their category. Both teams won their final event, a relay, which was the perfect end to a great week.

In addition to the accolades garnered by these two teams, one of our homegrown skiers was there competing for Cornell University. Mom & Dad passed on that when son Scott was announced, HFSP was listed as his home area! Scott Bollt, son of Eric and Liz Bollt began skiing here several years ago in the "Ermines", a Bill Koch ski league Eric and Liz initiated to introduce young skiers to having fun together on the trails and also to learning basic skills and for those interested in trying racing. The group eventually faded out as the skiers got older. There is a whole new, and much larger crop of youngsters skiing frequently at the Park now. Perhaps some parents may want to reinvent the Ermines, putting together some times when youngsters can get together to ski as a group.

Many years ago, when the Higley Hustle first began, Empire State Games held qualifying races for the games. ESG no longer have qualifiers but the Hustle was one of those races. A perennial competitor in those races was Maddie Phaneuf of Old Forge. Maddie is now a member of the U.S. Olympic Biathlon Team.

The adults got in on the competitive action too. Several members of the Friends participated in the annual Rod Thomas Memorial Higley Hustle Ski Race. It seems that each year the weather is a challenge in one way or another. This year we had enough snow-and we also had below zero temps at race time. The hardy souls who came out all survived! In addition some of our skiers participated in the Tug Hill Tourathon, Gatineau Loppet and Lake Placid Loppet.

In March, our dedicated Master's lesson series organizer, who together with her husband were also instructors for the program, headed east-way east— to Norway for the Nordic Master's World Cup and the Birken, a 54K race in which 8,000 plus skiers participate while carrying an 8 pound baby (rock). Danielle Jerry and Bob Platte made the trip and found the conditions superb.



Danielle Jerry, on the trails in Norway.



Jim Allott

If you have seen the human personification of the Energizer Bunny doing jumping jacks on a brisk afternoon by the edge of the Lodge parking lot while waiting for a wave of collegiate area skiers to assemble, then you have seen, if not met, Jim Allott. This marks the 31st year that Jim has been a public high school science teacher; at the college level, the 19th as a Nordic Coach and the 14th as a Cross-Country Coach. He is retiring from teaching and coaching at the end of this school year, moving "south" to the Saratoga area. What a loss for all of us who have enjoyed knowing him and watching him coach! He is the rare exceptional athlete who enjoys sharing his love of endurance sports with others. In spite of all the hours he spends teaching and coaching Jim has still found time to be a marathoner, ultra-marathoner, tri-athlete, Ironman. He brings to coaching a very positive and empowering attitude that promotes confidence and a good work ethic in his racers. He builds good citizens as well as good athletes.

Jim isn't one to regale you with his accomplishments so you wouldn't know that: In 2014 he was recognized as a NYS Master Teacher. In his years as a Clarkson Coach his Nordic Team has attained 6 USCSA National Titles; in Cross Country, 3 athletes from his teams have gone to NCAA Nationals. As an athlete, he and his wife have done the Adirondack Canoe Classic (the 90 miler) 3 times. He has run over a dozen marathons including Boston, NYC, and Philly. He has run several ultra-marathons including the JFK 50 miler. As a Nordic skier he has completed 15 ski marathons including the Canadian Ski Marathon twice. For many years he was the top Master in his NYSSRA age group. As a cyclist he competed at the Cat 3 level including a 7 day stage race in Russia. He has also competed in 24 hour mountain bike races. As a tri-athlete he has competed in Lake Placid and the Hawaii World Championships. He aims for an Ironman every decade, one at 40, 50 and next year another. He is an Adirondack 46er, a Saranac Lake 6er winter one day ascender, and has summited Grand Teton and Mt. Rainier.

"Retiring" is not the correct term for his change in focus, repurposing would be a better description. Figuratively and literally, there is never a mountain too high. His next climbing goal is for state High Points. His other plans include travelling with his wife wherever in the U.S.A. their interests take them. Even so we won't be surprised after some well deserved time to enjoy the sports he loves to see his name pop up as coach of another lucky team.

Jim says he will miss Higley Flow State Park, running in Stone Valley and all the friends he has made. We will miss Jim, wish him well and hope he comes back to visit Higley from time to time.

Higley Nordic Ski Masters

Lots of snow made for a great ski year at Higley Flow State Park despite the too frequent rain-on-snow events and the limited skate skiing because of construction in the camp loops. We had 30 some people who joined the Higley Nordic Masters Ski program for at least one session. That said, after the third year of running the Sunday training sessions, I realize that the model of volunteer coaching isn't working as well as I would like and that next year I need to change the program.

Although we had a few skiers that were committed to the Sunday sessions as a way to learn or improve their skiing, we had quite a few more who came for one or two sessions and then dropped out. There is nothing wrong with this from an individual perspective, but for a coach there is little group continuity and every week, I have to teach the basics to the brand new skiers. In January when we had the most skiers, Bob Platte and I were the only coaches and most skiers joined as beginners. In February and March, we had more help because Jenny Townsend recruited

two St. Lawrence University students through the Community Based Learning program. But by then there was significant attrition of skiers who had come in January and for whatever reason did not continue throughout the season. For the few who came, we had a good time and several skiers became noticeably more proficient. That was rewarding for them and for us as coaches.

Nonetheless, there simply weren't enough skiers to justify our commitment for about 10 Sundays—most of the winter minus our trip to Norway. Because Bob and I both love cross-country skiing, enjoy skiing with others, and like helping others improve their skills, we are trying to design a new model for a Nordic Masters program that isn't quite as demanding on us as coaches. If anyone has some suggestions, please contact me at Nordicmasters@higleyfriends.org.

Thanks, Danielle Jerry.

Fiends Add Another Piece of Grooming Equipment

In addition to covering the cost of maintaining the Friends grooming equipment, paying for the fuel that was consumed and purchasing a few items for the rental equipment, your memberships and donations purchased a roller this winter to add to the grooming fleet. This addition will allow better grooming at the beginning of the season when snow levels are low, and when we have a major storm it will make packing the snow possible without multiple passes with only the sled. The advantage to a roller is that it packs the snow without pushing it out to the side the way a normal groomer does. This ensures we get the full benefit of a minimal or a substantial snowfall. It is a tool in the grooming process when used in deep snow, a first step that conserves snow. When used in minimal coverage, it is an option that allows grooming earlier. In addition to rolling the snow, the groomer has a urethane flap on the back that creates a corduroy surface in soft snow. We have used SLU's roller from time to time, but is inconvenient for SLU and for the Friends because it has to be brought over from the Canton campus, which then leaves SLU without it for campus grooming. The new groomer will allow us to be more timely in our response without disrupting SLU's campus grooming schedule.



Earth Day 2019

Earth Day was April 23rd. As it happened, Friends VP Joan Trivilino and Judy Fuhr were at the Park for a meeting with Henry and Taylor regarding promoting school visits to the Park. Business finished, we began discussing Earth Day. We decided it was an appropriate time to act on a suggestion Board member Joann Ferris made some time ago. Henry is purchasing additional mugs for the lodge. No one really LIKED the foam cups. They were inexpensive and convenient. Once the remaining foam cups are gone we are asking hot beverage drinkers to help themselves to a mug. The dish rack will be kept out by the sink. Dish soap will be available. After using the mug we are asking that you wash it out and put it on the rack. We will have paper cups for cold beverages. It is a small thing, but why not be part of the solution, rather than part of the problem!

NYS Park Programs

NYS Parks offer several different options for Park users. Here is one of the programs for seniors, excerpted from their website:

New York State Golden Park Program

If you are a New York State resident 62 or older, on any weekday (except holidays), you can obtain free vehicle access to most* state parks, boat launch sites and arboretums and fee reduction to state historic sites and state-operated golf courses.

Simply present your currently valid New York State Driver License or New York State Non-Driver Identification Card** at the park entrance. **No application is required as your NY State Driver's License/Non-Driver ID Card serves as your pass.** For locations with pay stations, please contact the facility directly for information.

News from the Park

The Park is enjoying upgrades. The replacement of all seven bathrooms was begun in January with a goal of having functioning bathrooms by the start of the camping season. The bathrooms will be unisex with four individual bathrooms in each building. Despite challenging weather conditions, Continental Construction has pushed forward. At the pre-construction meeting we were asked how long snow persisted at the Park. We explained that some winters we are done skiing by the end of Feb., other seasons stretch even to the beginning of April. Given the elements they were dealing with we feel they went out of their way to cooperate with us, plowing only when absolutely necessary and leaving a ribbon of snow at the crossovers. Construction is on track to have A,B, and C loops functionally operational by opening day. The project has impacted spring preparations for the beginning of the season. Getting the water system up and running, plus being tested is always a spring challenge, this year even more so as the loops have to be shut off from the system then brought online and tested as they become available. As of April 11th there was nearly a foot of hard packed ice on the skiers' side of the roads. After the construction is completed on each loop there will be a lot of clean up and pick up to restore the area to preconstruction conditions.



Under construction:

The exterior will have stone facing part way up, with siding above.

Blocks are faced on one side with a ceramic finish, simplifying maintenance.



Shower buildings were built a few years ago, the bathrooms finish this portion of Park infrastructure.



The lodge has an exciting new addition this year as well. A Wentzscope Macro microscope with the capability of showing images on a monitor is being added to the Nature Center. This will give the opportunity for viewing slides collected from the waters and areas around the Park. The variety of projects it can be used for is limited only by imagination.

There are two more projects coming soon to the Park: handicap accessible docks for the boat launching area and a playground, possibly utilizing some natural elements, to be located in the wooded area opposite the far end of E loop.

Park Photography Contest

HFSP is a particularly beautiful Park with a myriad of photo opportunities. We are trying something new this year, a photography contest for pictures taken in the Park and its surrounding water ways. Pictures may be submitted in the following categories: Spring/Summer-black and white or color-landscape, wildlife, people; Fall/Winter, same categories. Pictures should be submitted digitally to judy.fuhr@higleyfriends.org with your name, contact information and a caption for your photo(s) by Sept. 15th. Winners will be selected, announced at the annual fall meeting and notified following the meeting. Winning photos will be printed and displayed at the lodge until the following year's contest. We would like your permission to use the photos in various Friends projects and for Park publicity. If you do not want your photo(s) used in this manner please so state when you submit your entry.

Dedication of the Great Room



We were surprised and touched at the HFSP Board and Thousand Island Park's decision to name the Lodge great room for us. We love the Park, appreciate its place in the community and always hoped for opportunities for low investment winter recreation for anyone. As the years have passed, through the efforts of many volunteers and Park employees the trail system has expanded to its present size. Initially, users were primarily adults, when a family with children came to visit they did not stay long. As usage increased it became obvious that some form of building was needed so trail users could take a break. The Park was also in need of an improved Nature Center. Thanks to a grant written by Mary Jane Watson and

generous contributions by Friends members, the Friends were able to supply the materials for the lodge while Thousand Islands Park's maintenance staff provided the labor to construct the lodge. The result has been increased all season trail usage and many more families with children using the trails. When we groom the trails it is gratifying to see so many happy smiles, frequent hello's and expressions of appreciation. We meet many people on the trails, whose names we don't know, who feel they know us through grooming. The satisfaction is difficult to describe.

We don't want to miss anyone but we want to express our gratitude to Lorraine Gowing, the driving force behind the dedication, Ethan Townsend, our President, for his role, Ron Gotham who lent his considerable wood working talents to create the sign, all the members of the Board who played a part, Henry Sieg, Park Supervisor for advocating for it, Peyton Taylor of Thousand Islands for allowing it, and all of you who came out to make the afternoon very special. Thank you.



Three generations of the Trithart family on the trail: Dad Willie, Grandmother Rose with prospective skiers in tow



Tim & Jill Savage, first day ever on the trails



Maya & Jenny Townsend celebrating the Lollipop Race, part of the Higley Hustle

Something New for Next Year

Some skiers make it once a year to the Park, some are there almost every day. We are working on a fun way for those interested to keep track of the number of times you have skied. We first considered keeping track of distance skied but that proved to be too labor intensive for participants. This is just in the formative stages but look for more on it in the fall newsletter.

Upcoming Events:

May 4th-I Love My Parks Day, 9:00A.M, meet at the maintenance building to help get the Park and trails ready for the summer. Tee shirts for participants and light refreshments

Sept. 7th-Higley Hundred Bike Tour, 100K and 50K rides, sag wagon supported, tee shirts available, Big Spoon providing a buffet meal after the ride. Go to bikereg.com website, Higley Hundred to register

School Outreach Program

Joan Trivilino and Judy Fuhr are working with Taylor Grant at the Park to come up with more formalized outreach to local schools to make them aware of what is available to them at the Park. There is much available in the spring, fall and winter seasons. We are looking at showcasing those opportunities to encourage optimum use of this valuable resource. Our immediate focus is on the winter opportunities with the snowshoes and cross country equipment that is available. We are working on a brochure that could be distributed to the schools as an initial contact. We also realize that we should not ignore the spring and fall with their variety of opportunities for trail usage and science projects. A brochure will be developed, possibly with the assistance of Community Service students from SLU. There may also be a PowerPoint presentation that we hope to present to a monthly meeting of public school superintendents or athletic directors at BOCES.

Thank you, Henry

It takes a lot of volunteers to create the winter experiences at the Park. We come with all different personalities, outlooks, strengths and weaknesses. Most Parks are quiet in the winter. It gives Park staff a little down time, but not Higley. Henry deals with all of it, and all of us. He has a global view of what "his" Park should be and he guides us to complement that view.

Winters are not easy for Henry: It snows heavily and Henry is out there very early in the morning plowing the road and Parking lot. He and Taylor embrace the school groups (and the chaos that comes with them) who come to experience a new sport on lovely trails.

After all the work he has put into it, we now see Henry out on the trails after work or on Friends sponsored night skiing. We are thrilled to see him getting a little pleasure from all that work.

Your membership grooms the trails! by Joan Trivilino

It's April 2019 and there is still snow on the ground. I am ready for hiking and kayaking but first I would like to reflect on our winter season at Higley Flow State Park. Our membership has increased and I am so grateful to see so much enthusiasm on the trails, in the lodge, at our events and on our new Friends of Higley Flow State Park Facebook page. We now have about 180 members! It was a long and bountiful snow season. I saw skiers and snow shoe trekkers of all ages and in all conditions. The enjoyment is a reflection of all the hard work by many you have read about in this newsletter. Thank you for joining, and encouraging others to join. We are already looking toward 2020-2021 ski season and encourage you to participate by attending meetings (our next is 8/20/19 at 7PM), volunteering, visiting our FB page to contribute a photo or comment and of course by enjoying our beautiful park in all seasons.

Don't forget  "I LOVE MY PARKS DAY" May 4th!