



# NASJA

NORTH AMERICAN  
SNOWSPORTS JOURNALISTS  
ASSOCIATION

April 9, 2020

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## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

### Ski Industry Pivots During Crisis

During this, the most disruptive event of most of our lifetimes, it's gratifying to see how the ski industry, including many NASJA members, are pivoting, stepping up to do their part in helping the world cope with this health crisis. Some efforts that impress me most include:

- NASJA member **Steve Cohen**, CEO of **Masterfit**, is importing large quantities of both Type 2 and KN95 masks to sell at close to cost to health care workers and first responders.
- In late March, corporate member **Cross Country Ski Areas Association** ([ccsaa.org](https://ccsaa.org)) promoted 17 cross-country ski centers nationwide that were providing free access to their groomed trails. In early April, 14 were still open thanks to courtesy grooming. See the list here: <https://xcski.org/2020/03/some-ski-areas-remain-open/>
- Rob Katz, CEO of **Vail Resorts**, and his wife, Elana Amsterdam, have announced a donation of more than \$2.5 million to provide immediate support for both Vail Resorts employees and the mountain towns where the company operates, including [Whistler](#) [Blackcomb](#) in Canada and Park City in Utah.
- **Snowbird** assisted its staff and guests in safely returning home as it wound down critical on-mountain operations. It also donated 10,000 pounds of food to its staff while helping personnel transition to work from home. Also donating food: **Jay Peak**, **Killington**, **Windham Mountain**, **Greek Peak**, **Sunday River**, and many more.
- **Ski New Hampshire** has compiled a comprehensive list of helpful business and health resources related to COVID-19 that it thinks might be helpful to members, partners, and customers. First on the list are resources for CARES Coronavirus Aid, Relief & Economic Security Act Resources, followed by New Hampshire specific resources including the Bartender Emergency Assistance program, among others.
- In partnership with New Hampshire's Waterville Valley Foundation, **Waterville Valley**, N.H., set up an Employee Kitchen where it offered a free hot breakfast and reheatable meal weekdays to any employee of any Waterville Valley business from the past season.
- NASJA corporate member **SIA** is asking to skiers/riders to flatten the curve, writing, "Together we can lead a global movement to recreate responsibly and beat this virus, but only if everyone does it." They established a #curbyourturns challenge, inviting anyone to show how they're curbing their turns by posting a photo or video clip, tagged to #CurbYourTurns, @siasnowsports. SIA has also created a new snowsports industry closed Facebook Group specifically around COVID-19. You can request to join the group here: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1239825876213274/>
- Doing the right thing: Corporate member **Indy Pass** announced that any pass holder who did not redeem a lift ticket during the 2019-20 season will be offered a 30% discount towards a 2020-21 pass. Those who purchased after February 17th at the late-season price of \$139 and were not able to redeem, can apply 100% of their purchase price to a pass for next season if purchased prior to December 1.



**Goggles For Docs** is an effort to get used or new ski goggles into the hands of healthcare workers who currently have no eye protection as they treat COVID-19 patients. By April 2, more than 6,000 goggles had been shipped, fulfilling over 90% of published hospital requests. **Berkshire East, Jay Peak, Magic Mountain, SANY,** and New York's **Pedigree Sports** are all involved.

Finally, a warm shout-out to NASJA Awards committee member **Dino Vournas** who is recovering from the affects of COVID-19. He writes, "Do all you can to avoid getting this nasty bug, priority Number One. Although the vast majority of folks have milder symptoms and recover, we don't know who will get the dangerous version."

Happily, he is feeling much better these days. You can wish him well at:  
[dino.v@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dino.v@sbcglobal.net)

Staying positive and continuing to plan for the future during this public health crisis means we can come roaring back when life returns to some semblance of normalcy.

I wish you all great health as we work together to get on the other side of this. For now, I think I'll go wash my hands again.



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## A LOOK BACK: NASJA ACCOMPLISHMENTS DURING THE SHORTENED 2019-2020 SEASON

Despite the abrupt end of the ski season in many parts of the U.S., NASJA is pleased to report a successful winter with activities spread across the country. Altogether, there were seven meetings including a well-attended Boston Ski Show business meeting and awards presentation, and a networking event at the Denver Media Press Club during the Outdoor Retailer Snow Show 2020. NASJA continues its role with a strong presence in the snowsports community.

NASJA partnered with Ski Maine's New England Summit Conference last September producing the very successful Communicator's Camp which was well attended by resort marketing/PR personnel. In addition, NASJA worked with Wachusett Mountain to produce the Northeast Winter Weather Summit.



*NASJA members enjoy XC during the Ski Vermont media trip*

There were times on the snow, too. NASJA worked with Ski Vermont to open its winter media event up to all NASJA members. The two-day trip at Bolton Valley and Trapp Family Lodge attracted NASJA members who enjoyed fresh powder and lots of uphill skiing followed by bratwurst and beer. We also spent time at Windham Mountain in New York, and at New Mexico ski resorts.

We close the ski season in a strong position with 138 Active and 62 Corporate members. During the current crisis, members of NASJA will be challenged to continue to provide relevant news and information to their audiences. The NASJA Board is soliciting feedback from all members for the coming season. To that end, we've scheduled an online membership update for April 29 (see below). We look forward to your input regarding events, partnerships or programs.

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## **JOIN NASJA'S FIRST ONLINE MEMBERSHIP UPDATE, APRIL 29**

Uncertain times require us to pivot slightly. With so many businesses and organizations using Zoom, it became apparent that online meeting technology presented itself as an opportunity for the NASJA membership to hold an informative virtual get-together. As the world shelters in place, we will hold the organization's first membership-wide update meeting on Wednesday, April 29 at 7 p.m. ET/4 p.m. PT.



We'll use the opportunity to solicit your feedback on programs you'd like the board to develop for 2020-21. How are you maintaining your snowsports-related activities during the COVID crisis? What about NASJA benefits? Are you aware of them? Do you use them? What other activities, programs, or support could NASJA develop for membership?

A Zoom meeting invitation will be issued shortly before the meeting. Not planning to be on a

## VOTE FOR BOB GILLEN AND CARSON WHITE AWARDS

Deadline to vote for these two prestigious NASJA awards is May 1, 2020.

The **Carson White Snowsports Achievement Award** goes to an individual or individuals who have made a significant contribution to the advancement of snowsports in North America, either achieved with a single defining accomplishment or through a lifetime of snowsports endeavors. The winner will be selected by online vote of **Active Press, Retired Press and Corporate members**.

The two nominees are:

- Dave Kelly – Magic Carpet Ski Lift
- Bo Adams – New England Ski Museum and MountainGuard

Vote here by May 1, 2020:

<https://nasja.org/online-voting-2020-carson-white-snowsports-achievement-award/>

The **Bob Gillen Memorial Award** honors an individual corporate member for contributions to the advancement of snowsports, and exemplifies the highest standards of professionalism in public relations and communications. The individual also understands the working relationship between the information specialist and the journalist. The individual may be chosen for a particularly significant action or campaign, or for a career of such deeds. The winner will be selected by online vote of **Active and Retired Press members**.

The two nominees are:

- John Wagnon, Vail Resorts
- John Brice, SnowsportsPR.com

Vote here by May 1, 2020:

<https://nasja.org/2020-the-bob-gillen-memorial-award-voting/>

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## **ROGER LOHR AND KEVIN GASIOR RE-ELECTED TO BOARD; MEGAN COLLINS RETURNS AS CORPORATE LIAISON**

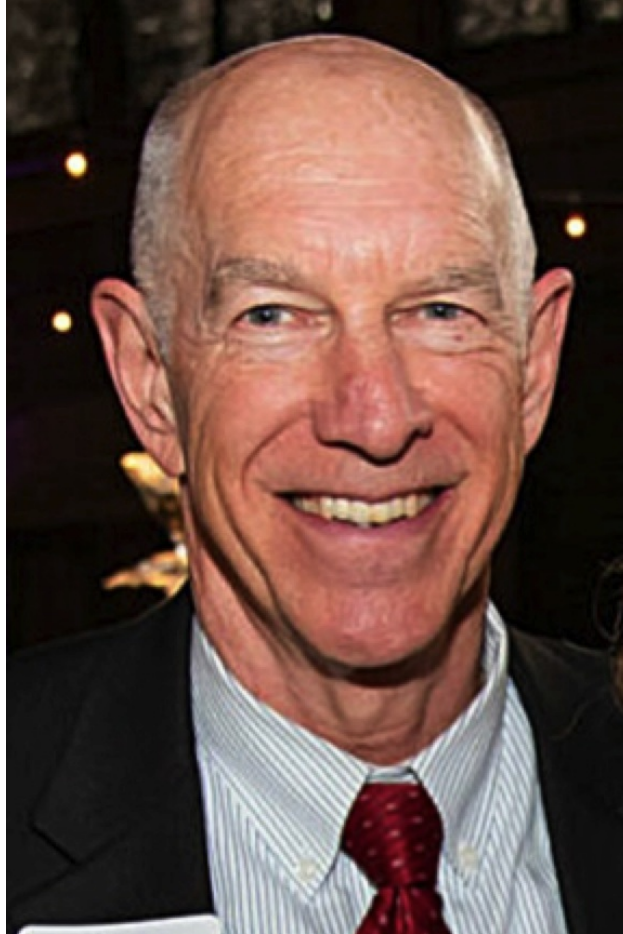
Congratulations to board vice presidents **Roger Lohr** and **Kevin Gasior** who were re-elected to another term. We value their continued service to the organization. Both will be fully engaged as we plan ahead for 2020-21.



*Megan Collins*

**Megan Collins**, Communications & Events Specialist from Snowbasin Resort, Huntsville, Utah, returns as Corporate Liaison. Prior to her current role, she worked at Crested Butte Mountain Resort in Marketing and PR. These days she has been settling into her new place and enjoying time with her two boxers outside, while working from home.

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*Greg Sweetser*

## **GREG SWEETSER RECEIVES MITCH KAPLAN AWARD**

In a unanimous decision, the NASJA board in early April has awarded the Mitch Kaplan Award to Greg Sweetser, former director of the Ski Maine Association where he served for 24 years. Mitch Kaplan and Greg Sweetser shared a mutual love and commitment as board members to the WinterKids program ([winterkids.org](http://winterkids.org)). Greg was nominated by former NASJA president Phil Johnson.

Based in Maine, WinterKids promotes children's on-skis activities and winter outdoor fun programs throughout the state and elsewhere. This is one of many ski-related endeavors that Greg has shepherded through and not much, if anything, related to skiing in Maine over the past 40 years has taken place without Greg's involvement at some level.

A native of the state and a graduate of the University of Maine, he first worked the ski hills, elevated to the position of marketing director at Saddleback Ski Resort and since 1996, had been the director of the Ski Maine Association, retiring recently. He is also a founding member of the Ski Museum of Maine and was a 2016 inductee into the Maine Ski Hall of Fame.

This award is presented to the journalist whose work and spirit best captures the enthusiasm and dedication of the late Mitch Kaplan, former NASJA Secretary-Treasurer and multiple Harold S. Hirsch Award-winner, and his contributions to NASJA and to the coverage of snowsports.

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## **MEMBER NEWS**

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*Rich Stoner likes to party hearty.*

### **Rich Stoner: "I am All About Après and Sometimes I Even Ski"**

Rich Stoner is the creator of All About Après, a blog that features the best food, beer, gear, and more to help make people's après experience epic.

"I have always enjoyed bringing people together and socially connecting with them over food and drink. As a long-time skier, I feel there is no better example of this than après ski where there are no skill levels, just good people and good cheer. In today's world where so many of us are connected to our devices, the notion of human interaction can be lost."



*It's all downhill from here.*

What is his favorite spot? Tough question, but Stoner was recently at Le Chamois, Squaw Valley's "holy grail" of après ski. "It's fantastic," he says.

Social distancing has been a challenge. "I'm trying to provide positive information for my readers by covering some self improvement, gear, how to help some of my favorite breweries in ski towns, and more. And, just because there is no après ski, that doesn't mean we still

can't celebrate all that is good with our day. We après everything around here.”

Stoner lives with his wife and three daughters in the powder-laden paradise of New Jersey where he is a full-time teacher, long-time owner and operator of Elite Basketball Training, and freelance journalist for a variety of publications. - *Tamsin Venn*

You can reach Rich here:

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[www.allaboutapres.com](http://www.allaboutapres.com)

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## NEWS YOU CAN USE

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### Ski Resorts Need Our Support More Than Ever

Lucy Aspden writes in the UK *Telegraph* (April 1) that ski resorts deserve no blame for coronavirus and they need our support more than ever.

Last month saw the launch of a class action lawsuit against the authorities in the Austrian resort of Ischgl, where a number of people, including the UK's patient zero, are thought to have contracted the virus from an apres-ski bar.



*The resort of Ischgl is at the center of an investigation. Credit: AFP/JAKOB GRUBER*

Aspden writes, “We must remember many of these are small Alpine communities, with histories as farming villages, who rely almost entirely on the six months of winter to survive but are now dealing with high-altitude isolation, months without any business and no clear end in sight. In a pre-COVID world they would have been gearing up for one of the busiest times of the season, the Easter holidays, and while that's a huge blow for them resorts are keen to welcome guests as soon as possible.

“If we all want to carry on skiing or snowboarding, after COVID-19 has freed its grip, then be kind, be patient and rest assured the mountains will welcome you back with open arms,” Aspden says.

Access the story here (free subscription required):



## HOLD THESE DATES

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Now with the shortened 2019-20 season behind us, the board's focus turns to next season. Here are some dates and tentative time periods to start thinking about, all subject to possible delay due to the current health crisis. Your input is welcome during our April 29 update call.

- **Online Membership Update, Wednesday, April 29, 2020, 7 p.m. ET.** Watch your email for the Zoom link.
  - **Big Snow America, October** – NASJA's media day at this new indoor ski resort in the New Jersey Meadowlands, with discounted accommodations at the Hilton Hotel Meadowlands, has been postponed from late June to the fall.
  - **Denver Meet & Greet, Nov. 6** – Held during SIA Snowbound Expo consumer ski show
  - **Boston Meeting, Nov. 20** – Held in conjunction with SIA Snowbound Expo consumer ski show
  - **Sun Valley/Galena Lodge, Dec 9-13** – Co-located with ISHA and U.S. Ski & Snowboard Hall of Fame induction
  - **Pennsylvania Ski Areas Association (PSAA) Media Trip – January 2021**
  - **Outdoor Retailer Snow Show Networking Event, January 28, 2021, Denver**
  - **Western Winter Summit – January - February, 2021**
  - **Quebec Media Trip – February, 2021**
  - **Snowmass, April 7-11, 2021** – Co-located with ISHA and US Ski & Snowboard Hall of Fame
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Jeff Blumenfeld – President  
Roger Lohr, Kevin Gasior – Vice Presidents  
Megan Collins – Corporate Liaison  
Iseult Devlin – Immediate Past President



## NASJA WISHES TO THANK THESE CORPORATE MEMBERS

AirFlare • Alta Ski Area • BEWI Productions, Inc. • Blumenfeld and Associates PR • Boyne Highlands & Boyne Mountain • Bromley Mountain Resort • Brundage Mountain • Cranmore Mountain Resort • Cross Country Ski Areas Association • Deer Valley Resort • Eaglecrest Ski Area • Giants Ridge • Granite Peak Ski Area • IndySkiPass • International Skiing History Association • Jackson Hole • JC Communications • Jiminy Peak Mountain Resort • KADI Communications • King Pine Ski Area • Loon Mountain Resort • Lutsen Mountains • Mammoth Lakes Tourism • Mammoth Mountain Ski Area • Mont SUTTON • Mount Snow, LTD • National Ski Areas Association • New York State Olympic Regional Development Authority • Omni Mount Washington Resort • Pacific Group Resorts Inc. • Pacific Northeast Ski Areas Association • Pats Peak • Pennsylvania Ski Areas Association • Pocono Mountains Visitors Bureau • Quebec City Tourism • Quebec Ski Areas Association • Resorts of the Canadian

Rockies • Rossignol Group • SAM Magazine / Ski Area Management • Schweitzer Mountain Resort • Seven Springs Mountain Resort • Sierra at Tahoe Resorts • Ski Area of New York • Ski Butlers • Ski City/Visit Salt Lake • Ski Maine Association • Ski New Hampshire • Ski Utah • Ski Vermont-Vermont Ski Areas Association • Smugglers Mountain Resort • Snow Sports PR • Snowbasin Resort Company • SIA Snow Sports Industries America • Station Mont Tremblant • Steamboat Ski & Resort • Sunday River • Sugarbush Resort • Sun Valley Resort • Tourism Eastern Townships • U.S. Ski & Snowboard Hall of Fame • Vermont Adaptive Ski and Sports • Wachusett Mountain Ski Area