



NASJA

NORTH AMERICAN
SNOWSPORTS JOURNALISTS
ASSOCIATION

May 13, 2020

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

The New Normal

What will skiing, riding and XC look like in 2020-21? Will gondolas be fully loaded? Six-seat chairlifts loaded with a maximum of only two or three people? Restroom waiting lines instituted to prevent overcrowding? Limited ticket sales and online reservations only? What about the use of parking lot shuttle buses?

In a May 7 story in the *Denver Post*, Colorado Governor Jared Polis, wearing a Broncos face mask, said in November or December, "people will almost certainly be able to ski, although it might not look like prior ski seasons."

Vail, which is facing a class-action lawsuit from disgruntled pass holders, said it would offer credits to 2019/20 pass holders who purchase a 2020/21 Epic Pass. Vail CEO Rob Katz is quoted, "We fully expect that we will all be enjoying a great ski and ride season," but the company will likely have to find ways to run its business in a safe, socially distant manner, while providing peace of mind for next season.

It's anyone's guess what skiing will look like, but one thing is sure, the role of NASJA members in explaining this New Normal to millions will be as important as ever. Through newspaper and magazine stories, podcasts, blogs, broadcast TV and cable weather reports, skiers, riders and XC enthusiasts will turn to us for accurate and timely information and advice.

We hope you'll keep that in mind when the time comes this summer to renew your membership.



Jeff Blumenfeld
President
c 203 326 1200, jeff@blumenfeldpr.com
nasja.org



Dave Kelly

DAVE KELLY OF MAGIC CARPET SKI LIFTS WINS CARSON WHITE AWARD

Congratulations to the makers of the Magic Carpet Ski Lifts. "Flying under the radar" from an unassuming industrial park in 1990 in Denver, Dave Kelly revolutionized the ski industry and ski areas and made life a lot easier and less terrifying for beginning skiers. Dave had been involved in the industrial conveyor systems business since the early 1970's and in 1982 started the Rocky Mountain Conveyor and Equipment Company, helping companies move goods and components.

His wife Jennifer describes him as a marketing major with a mechanical brain. In 1990 he was approached by the Kinderhut day care center in Breckenridge to see if he could adapt his conveyor system to transport young skiers up a small hill. As a skier, Dave watched beginning skiers toil by walking uphill on unfamiliar leg accessories (skis) or crashing and burning trying to grab hold of a moving rope tow.

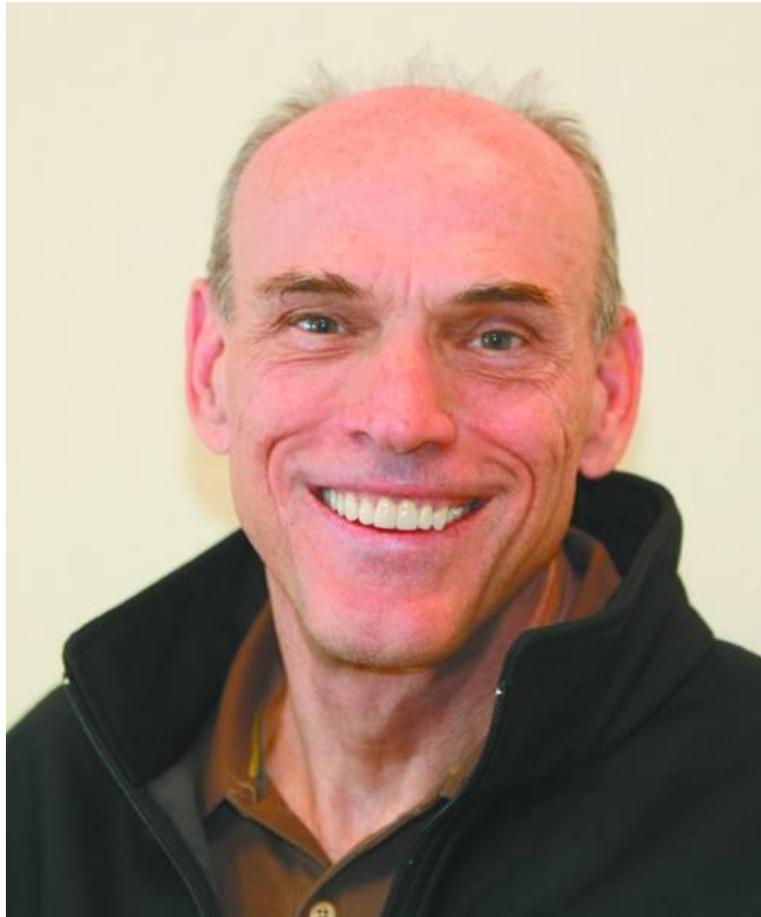
He was inspired to design and patent a conveyor system that would eliminate their angst and transport them effortlessly uphill. Thus, the Magic Carpet ski lift was born. Apparently Dave didn't quite know what he had in his invention, whimsically named after the magical conveyance in Disney's *Aladdin*. It was two years later that Vail Resorts asked him to build three units for their ski area when he realized that he might be able to sell a few of these.

"We were probably the worst marketers around," Dave said laughing. By 1996, with a redesigned, lighter, less expensive modular unit, Magic Carpet Ski Lifts spun off from the parent company and became an international sensation with 600 to 1,000 lifts (they've lost count) installed in 10 countries; a list which is a veritable who's-who of ski resorts. Other uses of their lift, half-pipe and tubing hill transportation to name a few, soon followed.

In later years, dropping "Ski" from their name, the company adapted their technology to transporting visitors on rides at amusement parks, moving kayaks and boats for water sports applications and even controlling whitewater rafting courses. These days you can see their conveyor principle applied by other manufacturers. The next time you're loading a certain high-speed quad and are effortlessly deposited onto the chair from a belt, you can probably

thank Dave for that. Dave and Jennifer live in Denver and still sample skiing the Rockies. (MagicCarpetLifts.com and rmce.com)

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 was selected by online vote of Active Press, Retired Press and Corporate members.



John Wagnon

GILLEN AWARD GOES TO JOHN WAGNON

NASJA also recognizes the work of a pioneer in snowsports corporate communications. For 46 years, John Wagnon was a force for innovation and change in the way ski resorts deal with media relations and how these resorts and regions market themselves to the local and worldwide snowsports communities. In 1970, John started his mountain career at Bear Valley Ski Area in the central Sierra Nevada as an assistant and then director of the ski school. Moving to Kirkwood's ski school as director, he met and married his wife Debbie and thoughtfully learned the ropes of the nuances of a ski resort.

In 1982, he got his big break at Kirkwood, elevating to the heady title of VP-Marketing/Communications/Sales/Guest Services. In 1991, John moved to Heavenly in the same position he had at Kirkwood, relocated and implemented his Winter Wake-Up Call in South Lake Tahoe and set in motion Operation Sierra Storm, a conference attracting national and regional meteorologists to discuss weather, climate change and to broadcast live via satellite to their news outlets, enhancing the profile of California skiing.

When Vail Resorts purchased Heavenly in 2011, John became Senior Director of Regional Marketing of their three Tahoe resorts and helped shape iconic brands and strategies still in use today. He retired in 2016, lives in Glenbrook, Nevada, with Debbie, and enjoys snow and water-skiing, golf and rowing.

Read his complete biography here:

<https://tinyurl.com/GillenWagon>

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. John Wagon was selected by online vote of Active and Retired Press members.

PAUL ROBBINS OUTSTANDING COMPETITOR OF THE YEAR AWARD – VOTE BY MAY 15

Here's another reminder to cast your ballot by May 15 for the NASJA Paul Robbins Outstanding Competitor of the Year award. The nominees are:

Aaron Blunck- Freeski
Gus Schumacher - Cross Country
Maggie Voisin - Freeski

The Paul Robbins Outstanding Competitor Award recognizes North American snowsports participants who have distinguished themselves in amateur or professional competition during the current season. The winner will be selected by online vote of Active Press, Retired Press and Corporate members.

Vote here by May 15:

<https://nasja.org/explore-nasja/awards/competitor-of-the-year/>

CREDENTIALS REVIEW DUE MAY 17

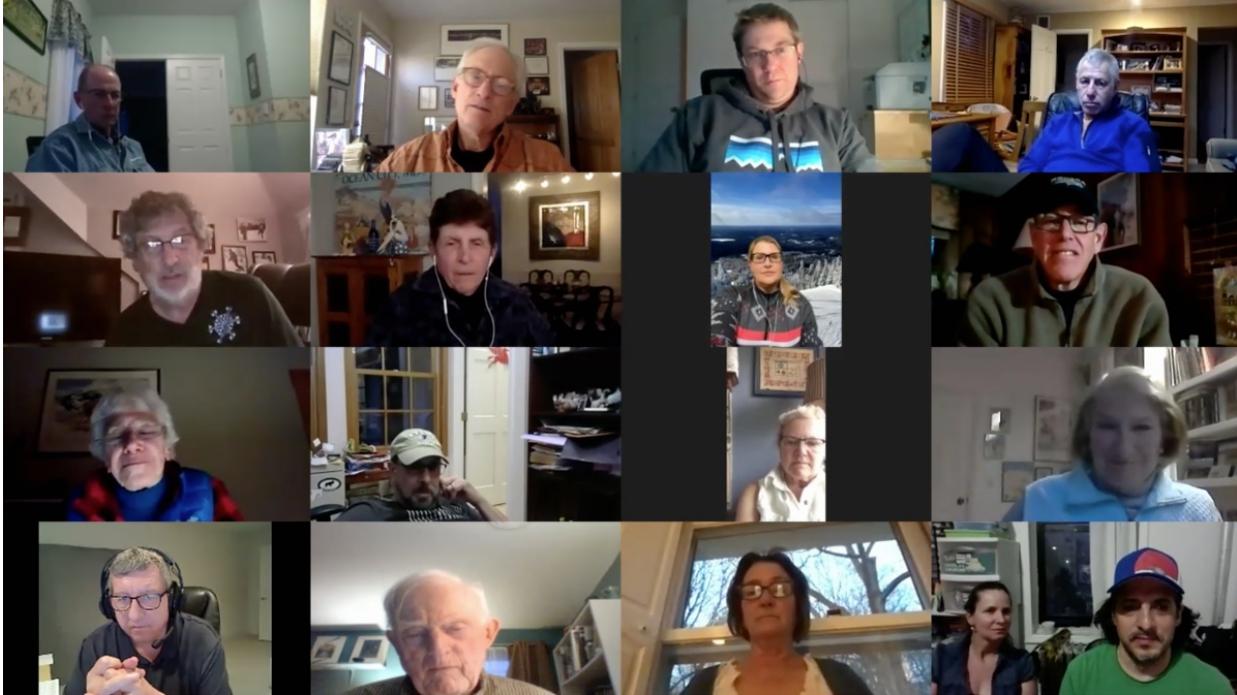
If you received an email about the annual credentials review, you're due. In fact, emails were sent to 79 members who are up for review this year.

A guiding principle of this professional organization, dating back almost 60 years, is the maintenance of its Active Press membership. Each Active Press Member's work shall be reviewed every other year. To be verified as Active Press, members must prove employment by accredited journalistic properties or work as freelancers for a variety of media. They must also have published and/or sold one to three by-lined articles, photographs, videos or illustration on snowsports related subjects in a season in any type of media. Authors of snowsports books also qualify.

There are other criteria which you can review on page 70 in the By-Laws printed in the 2019-20 NASJA directory.

NASJA is the collective communication force within the snowsports industry and we are committed to maintaining the highest ethical and communications standards in snowsports journalism. Annual credentials reviews helps us achieve that goal.

If your credentials are up for review this year, please email your submissions to credentials@NASJA.org by May 17, 2020.



MEMBERS MAKE ROOM FOR ZOOM

In lieu of in-person meetings, the NASJA board organized a Zoom-based update on April 29, 2020, involving 17 NASJA members. The meeting featured a PowerPoint review of membership activities in 2019-2020, the budget for next year, and tentative plans for next season.

The list of organization benefits was reviewed (networking and communications, events and activities, savings on products and services, exposure and recognition, etc.) and members were asked to consider ideas for other benefits that NASJA can consider exploring.

The schedule for 10 tentatively scheduled events and activities for the coming year, which you can see below, were also reviewed, highlighting the proposed Pennsylvania media trip supported by SkiPA and the Pocono Mountains Visitor Bureau, and a new invitation by Ragged Mountain Resort in New Hampshire.

An enhanced presence on social media and the new Member Showcase on the NASJA website, currently under development, was also discussed.

You can view a recording of the entire 53-minute April 29, 2020 update here:

<https://tinyurl.com/NASJAUpdateApril292020>

Watch for news about another Zoom update this summer, and again in the fall. *—Roger Lohr*



Steve Cohen puts his money where his mouth is.

MEMBER BENEFIT

Masterfit Offers Discounted Masks

Snowsports insole maker Masterfit has added protective face masks to its product line during the pandemic. NASJA member and Masterfit CEO Steve Cohen is extending a 10% discount on the company's surgical style protective face masks at the Masterfit COVID-19 webstore. Use the coupon code FOMCOVID1910 when checking out. Members may purchase up to 100 surgical style masks using your discount and 20 KN95s (at regular price). Stay safe!

To order: <https://masterfitinc.com/personal-protection-equipment/>



Christin Cooper sculpture in Sun Valley by acclaimed Idaho artist Benjamin Victor.

ISHA Seeks Help Documenting Affect of COVID-19 on Ski Industry

These are historic times for the ski industry and the world at large. During the most serious health crisis in our lifetimes, ski/snowboard gear and apparel companies, as well as resorts, are stepping up to join the battle against COVID-19. Companies are pivoting to create or source hundreds of thousands of surgical masks, resorts have donated unused food to furloughed employees, and a non-profit called Goggles for Docs has provided over 40,000 donated goggles to front line health workers (gogglesfordocs.com).

The 30-year-old International Skiing History Association (ISHA), which has tracked the history of the sport dating back to 10,000-12,000 BCE, seeks to document the industry's historic efforts to stem the catastrophic effects of the coronavirus.

Digital material is being collected by ISHA business and events manager Kathe Dillmann and should be sent to kathe@skiinghistory.org. In a future issue, *Skiing History* plans to report on the impact of COVID on the sport.

Read the complete announcement here: <https://tinyurl.com/ISHACoronavirus>



Vail Shares Rise as Investors Cheer Its Ski Pass Plan for Next Year

Vail Resorts ([NYSE:MTN](#)) had plenty of bad news to share with investors in April, but tailwinds from the market recovery and a plan to credit pass holders next year helped lift the stock. Shares finished April 16% higher, according to data from [S&P Global Market Intelligence](#)

Toward the end of the month, Vail said it would credit season pass holders for 20% to 80% of the cost of the season pass for the 2020-2021 season, eating into the company's revenue stream for next ski season, but rewarding customer loyalty.

Read about it in the May 5, 2020, *Motley Fool*:

<https://www.fool.com/investing/2020/05/05/why-vail-resorts-climbed-15-in-april.aspx>

When in Lockdown, Brits Buy Skis

That's the promising news coming out of the UK these days. According to retailer [Ellis Brigham](#), their on-line ski sales have soared by nearly 40% during the lockdown period, a 20% rise on the same period last year.

Steve Wells, Equipment Buyer for Ellis Brigham sheds some light, "I think the Brits are an optimistic bunch and with many ski holidays cancelled or curtailed this season, ski lovers are looking ahead to life after coronavirus", according to [InTheSnow.com](#) (May 4, 2020):

<https://www.inthesnow.com/when-in-lockdown-brits-buy-skis/>



THE COLORADO SUN

Wastewater Workers in Aspen and Vail Faced a Pile of Problems

What happens when the poop doesn't hit the fan?

The science of keeping the flora in a sewage treatment system balanced was knocked out of kilter when coronavirus shut skiing down and water use dropped 50% in two of Colorado's most popular ski communities, according to a story by Jason Blevins in *The Colorado Sun* (May 4, 2020).

On March 15, the day after ski resorts in Colorado were ordered to close, water treatment workers in Vail and Aspen scrambled to deal with a drastic drop in wastewater flowing into plants.

"Turning off a water treatment plant is no pull-a-plug-and-walk-away affair. They are basically ecosystems, where armies of microscopic organisms clean wastewater coming into the plant – influent – so it can be discharged into the local watershed as effluent. So staff in

the water treatment plants in Aspen and Vail had to adjust biological processes that involve billions of microorganisms — bacteria, protozoa, metazoa and others — that do all the dirty work removing the organic stuff in wastewater,” Blevins writes.

Fascinating reading at:

<https://coloradosun.com/2020/05/04/aspen-vail-wastewater-coronavirus-shutdown/>



BraveSkiMom: “We Didn’t Mean to Become Villains”

In her April 5 story, NASJA member Kristen Lummis, founder of the popular site *BraveSkiMom*, says, “There are plenty of coronavirus villains to go around right now. At the top of the list is the nasty virus itself, whether you call it COVID-19 or coronavirus.” She continues, “Interestingly however, it appears that skiers and snowboarders played a significant role in the spread of the virus worldwide.

“And while it’s hard to imagine skiers – stereotypically hale, hearty, healthy and covered head-to-toe in insulating gear, including face masks – as villains in this global drama, we unwittingly were.

“And while we didn’t mean to become villains, we did. We are sorry. Like so many, we simply didn’t know better.”

Read her full story here:

<https://braveskimom.com/covid-19-how-skiers-became-villains>

HOLD THESE DATES

Here are some dates and tentative time periods to start thinking about, all subject to possible delay due to the current health crisis.

- **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.
 - **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**
 - **Ragged Mountain – TBD**
 - **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 GREATLY APPRECIATES 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 • DeerValley 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