



November 11, 2020

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## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

### SAR in the Backcountry

The stay-at-home orders of the past eight months created a huge pent-up demand for outdoor recreation for golf, cycling, camping and hiking. Now it's skiing's turn. While news about the pending Covid-19 vaccine is promising, the need for advance reservations, and limited parking, uphill and based lodge capacity, will make backcountry skiing even more popular throughout North America.

Here in Colorado there's lots of positive buzz about Bluebird Backcountry, a new backcountry-only ski area without lifts located on the Continental Divide about 30 minutes from Steamboat Springs. The ski area will welcome a maximum of 200 guests a day on the mountain, spread across 1,200 acres of in-bounds terrain, which is nearly the acreage of Arapahoe Basin.

"Modern technology – equipment and clothing – gives people more of a sense of safety ... Clothing is fabulous nowadays at warding off the elements. Telecommunications give people instant access to help (as long as they have a signal and battery power)," writes Christopher Van Tilburg, MD, in *Search and Rescue: A Wilderness Doctor's Life-and-Death Tales of Risk and Reward* (Falcon Guides, 2017).

"And we have a proliferation of modern communications like blogs, chat rooms, social networking apps, and websites – this means hiking partners, route information, and weather data are readily accessible."

Van Tilburg continues, "Add this all up, and we have more rescues."

Join us Nov. 18 when NASJA and the Bryce and Ronnie Athlete Snow Safety Foundation (BRASS) conduct a free webinar for the general public about backcountry safety.

The backcountry is there to enjoy so long as you pursue it safely.



- Jeff Blumenfeld  
NASJA President

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## JOIN *DANGER IN THE BACKCOUNTRY* WEBINAR

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NASJA Presents Educational Seminar on Backcountry Safety  
November 18, 2020, 8 p.m. ET/5 p.m. PT on Zoom

### Explosive growth in backcountry interest leads to educational challenge

The untouched pillows of snow are a magnet for skiers and snowboarders. Across the continent, skiers and riders are finding their way into the backcountry in skyrocketing numbers. In the past three years, sales of backcountry skis, boards, bindings and boots have boomed 137%. And that was before the pandemic.

The BRASS Avalanche Safety Foundation and NASJA are teaming up to bring you a free webinar on backcountry safety and some of the dangers that are looming in the season ahead.

Unlike sports like SCUBA diving that require certification, anyone can head into the backcountry. Each year, around two-dozen skiers and snowboarders are killed by avalanches across the USA and Canada - in the backcountry and even inbounds. With the burgeoning numbers, how does the educational message reach them?

The hour-long panel will explore both the joys and dangers of the backcountry. How can your travel in the backcountry mitigate the avalanche danger? What equipment is essential? How do you keep from getting lost? What steps do you take in case of a backcountry injury? How can the message of safety reach skiers who aren't buying lift tickets?

The four panelists represent a great cross section of information and hands-on experience from equipment sales to avalanche education to backcountry safety.

### Panelists:

**Steve Berlack, BRASS Avalanche Safety Foundation** – A long time ski racing coach, Steve and his wife Cindy lost their son Ronnie, a rising young star on the U.S. Ski Team, to an avalanche in 2015. Today, Steve chairs the [Bryce and Ronnie Snow Safety Foundation](#) (BRASS Avalanche) which advocates for avalanche safety education.

**Mark Staples, U.S. Forest Service** – A U.S. Forest Service avalanche forecaster, Mark works

with the [Utah Avalanche Center](#), which founded the highly-acclaimed educational program [Know Before You Go \(KBYG\)](#). He'll speak to the value of education and the role programs like KBYG play to support backcountry safety.

**Nick Sargent, Snowsports Industries America** – A highly-respected voice in the global equipment industry, Nick is president and CEO of [Snowsports Industries America](#) (SIA), the winter outdoor industry's non-profit, member-owned trade association representing winter outdoor suppliers, retailers, sales reps and resorts. He'll dive into the statistics which predict a backcountry boom.

**Matthew Smith, Backcountry Training Expert/Flight Paramedic** -Matt Smith of Squamish, B.C., has spent most of his life in the backcountry, on skis, bikes, rafts and doing rescues as a critical care flight paramedic. Through his companies [Pacific Alpine Institute](#) and [Canadian Outdoor Medical Consulting](#), he provides outdoor safety training for outdoor professionals and recreationalists.

**Moderator:**

**Tom Kelly** – A well known figure in the sport for his career-long role as spokesperson for the U.S. Ski Team, Tom is a noted public speaker and panel moderator. He will use his expertise to guide the panel through a wealth of topics outlining the issue, its urgency and potential solutions.

Sign up and learn more here:

[https://zoom.us/webinar/register/9816043568991/WN\\_MkkEuYC-QyzTrYwwIiJ7w](https://zoom.us/webinar/register/9816043568991/WN_MkkEuYC-QyzTrYwwIiJ7w)

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## The 2021 Harold S. Hirsch Awards



## Images • Words • Books

### ENTER THE 2021 HAROLD S. HIRSCH AWARDS

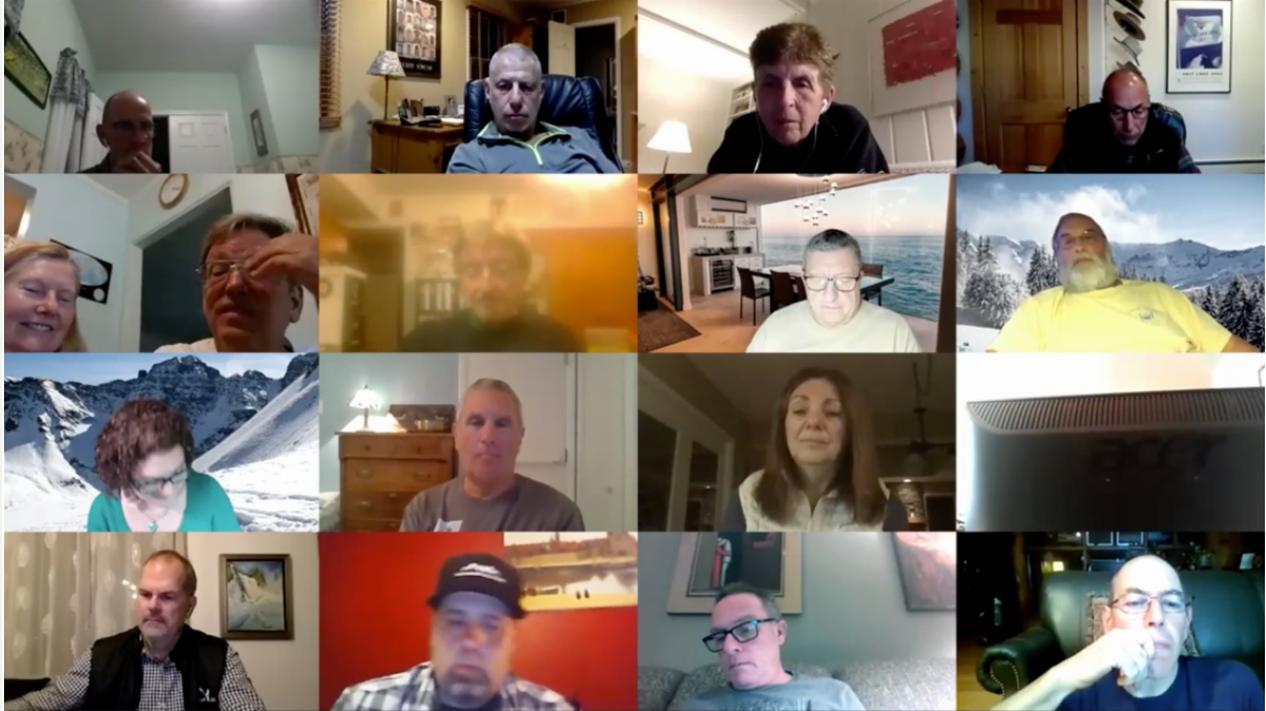
Call for entries: NASJA is now accepting submissions for these distinguished 2021 annual awards. Enter your work in one or more of these three categories: WORDS, IMAGES and BOOKS.

Expand your professional network. This contest is open to all snowsports journalists, not just NASJA members. The \$35 entry fee for non-members includes a year's membership to NASJA. Learn more and enter at:

<https://nasja.org/2021-harold-s-hirsch-awards-call-for-entries/>

**Deadline for entries is December 15, 2020**

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*Screen grab from Oct. 22 pre-season media briefing.*

## **SKI AREA EXECUTIVES BRIEF NASJA ABOUT WINTER 2020-21**

If the summer is any indication of demand for outdoor recreation, ski areas will be very busy this upcoming season. That's the general consensus of ski area executives who participated in an Oct. 22 Zoom media briefing hosted by NASJA.

The virtual briefing was well attended by snowsports journalists, resort association officials, and multi-resort operators. The 90-minute Zoom session included six-minute updates from each of the speakers. All urged NASJA press members to inform the public about new protocols and to steer the public to resort websites for updated Covid information.

Industry leaders who participated were Shannon Dunfey-Ball of Ski Hampshire; Adam White of Vermont Ski Areas Association; Paul Pinchbeck, President of the Canadian Ski Council; Yves Juneau, President of the Quebec Ski Areas Association; Vernon Greco, President/CEO of Pacific Group Resorts; Reese Brown, Executive Director of Cross Country Ski Areas Association; Anelise Bergin of Ski Utah; and Jody Church, VP and General Manager of Keystone, Colo., representing Vail Resorts.

Questions from participants were asked by a two-person media panel: *Boston Herald* journalist Moira McCarthy and Canadian freelancer Marie-Piere Belisle-Kennedy, vice-president of NASJA.

For more details, watch a recording of the Oct. 22, 2020 Zoom session here:

<https://tinyurl.com/NASJAPreSeasonOct222020>

Read the wrap-up press release here:

<https://conta.cc/2TxVGKC>

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**MEMBER NEWS**

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*Mark Kristofic*

## **Welcome New Member Mark Kristofic**

"My career in sports, media and management extends over 20 years, though admittedly saying that out loud does make me feel old," laughs one of NASJA's newest members, Canadian Mark Kristofic.

After 13 years working in the private sector as well as for skiing's national and provincial sports organizations, Mark developed the entrepreneurial itch. In 2008, along with a business partner, he launched Canada's first ski racing magazine called *Ski Racing Canada (SRC)*. In 2010, *SRC* merged with *World of Skiing Television* to form S-Media, at the time Canada's only fully integrated multimedia print, network television and digital ski travel media company. *Ski Television*, S-Media's flagship property, is now in its 41st season broadcast nationally in English on Rogers *Sportsnet* and episodes are available on the website [www.skitelevision.com](http://www.skitelevision.com).

In 2019, *Ski Television* entered the Chinese market through a partnership with China's state news agency and expanded through a new partnership with Tencent, China's digital and social media behemoth. With new content in hand, *Ski Television's* Chinese version is also broadcast in Canada on *OMNI Television*. These new distribution channels are aimed to capitalize on China's role in the global growth of skiing and winter sport, both domestically and abroad, in preparation for the 2022 Winter Olympic Games in Beijing.

Mark, an Ottawa native, has five children and is currently based in Collingwood, Ontario. A

self described "guitar hack," he also enjoys mountain biking, hiking and tennis.

In the non-ski world, he is proudest to have produced and directed a sport documentary on Chris Neil and his 1,000 games as an NHL enforcer/fighter.

You can reach him at: [mark@s-media.ca](mailto:mark@s-media.ca)



*John Fry photo courtesy of Kathleen James, ISHA*

## **Former Member John Fry Memorialized in New Documentary**

Long-time NASJA member, the late John Fry, founder of NASTAR and editor of *Snow Country* and *Ski Magazine*, is memorialized in a film created by Rick Moulton of ISHA. John, a beloved member of the ski industry, won the Carson White Golden Quill Award (1994), NASJA's Lifetime Achievement Award (2005), Harold S. Hirsch Award (2009). He passed away in January 2020 at age 90. Read his obituary in the February 2020 NASJA newsletter.

See the documentary here:

<https://www.skiinghistory.org/resources/video/john-fry-1930-2020-memorial-tribute>

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## CORPORATE MEMBER NEWS

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### SIA Debuts Snowboundfest.com Website

In celebration of the upcoming winter season, Snowbound Festival debuts its new website, [Snowboundfest.com](https://snowboundfest.com) – the gateway to the winter lifestyle. The new online platform highlights fresh, new content featuring intriguing winter athlete and industry executive interviews, informational how-to articles, exclusive product previews, discounts, and much more.

In addition, plans are already in the works for the newly reinvented regional Snowbound Festivals in New England and the Rockies, which are set to roll out in November 2021 and will showcase a highly premium and immersive experience that welcomes all lovers of winter.

The Rockies festival will take place in Denver on November 5-7, 2021 while the New England festival will be located in Boston on November 18-21, 2021.

Do you have a story idea for [SnowboundFest.com](https://snowboundfest.com), a subject that hasn't appeared anywhere else? SIA is seeking freelancers. Pitch your story to:

Brian Stephenson  
Director of Snowbound Festival  
203 829 2438; [bstephenson@snowboundfest.com](mailto:bstephenson@snowboundfest.com)

**Learn more here:**

<https://snowsports.org/sias-snowbound-festival-debuts-new-website-and-announces-dates-for-upcoming-2021-winter-events-in-new-england-and-the-rockies/>


**MASTERFIT**

# BUYER'S GUIDE

 POWERED BY  **BOOTFITTERS.COM** AND  **realskiers.com**

**GEARING UP IN  
THE TIME OF  
COVID**



**WE TRIED IT!  
HERE'S WHAT  
YOU NEED**

**SKIS • BOOTS • BINDINGS • POLES • INSOLES • KID'S GEAR • PPE & MORE!**

## Winter 2021 Masterfit Buyer's Guide Now Available Free Online

The Winter 2021 edition of the *Masterfit Buyer's Guide* provides unvarnished reviews and analysis of the upcoming season's new gear. Masterfit is one of the newest Corporate members of NASJA.

The *Masterfit Buyer's Guide* is produced by an experienced group of snow sports equipment professionals including: **Steve Cohen** (publisher), co-founder of Masterfit University and former editor of *SKI* magazine; **Jackson Hogen** (ski test program director) creator of realskiers.com and a former product manager at major ski equipment brands; **Mark Elling** (boot test program director), education director of the Masterfit University Bootfitter Training Centers and a master bootfitter in Bend, OR; former NASJA president and current board member **Iseult Devlin** (editor), former editor at *Skiing Magazine* and PSIA level 2 Alpine instructor.; **Sue Yarworth** (art director), graphic designer and PSIA level 2 Alpine instructor.

The ski testing team includes 24 individuals – six men and 18 women – with a combined 600 years of experience. The boot testing team totals 39 skiers – 27 men and 12 women – with a combined 975 years of experience. "There has never been a more important time to own or upgrade your gear," said Cohen. "With resorts struggling on how to handle rentals and demos, this is not the year to be sharing boots, helmets and other gear or to be waiting in lines."

A \$10 value, the Buyer's Guide is available as a free download at [masterfitmedia.com](http://masterfitmedia.com).



# SKICAN

## Skican Identifies Canadian Booking Trends in Covid-19 Era

□Skican is a 51-year-old Canadian ski tour operator based in Ontario, Canada. This past summer and fall its clients explored their backyards' literally and stayed close to home due to travel restrictions and safety in general – not too difficult in Canada where the “backyard” is both varied and stunning. And when it comes to skiing, Canadians, for the time being during the Covid-19 era, have some of the best skiing in the world within its borders all to themselves.

Based upon a series of webinars called Docksides Chats and polls with its clients, Skican learned that flexibility in booking, safety in the air and on resort grounds, and value are the most important factors for skiers this season. “They have a lot of questions, we have some of the answers, and the booking process is more complicated and lengthy,” says Jennifer Kyles, director of marketing.



*Karen Nasmith, Skican president, and Jennifer Kyles, director of marketing. Photo taken prior to the implementation of social distancing.*

“Everything is less turnkey and more specialized, and we have grown to know our customers more closely during the pandemic. We believe this year will provide incredible value for Canadian skiers – we are only selling domestically at the current time.

“In fact, Kyles continues, “Sunday through Thursday when the weekend traffic leaves resorts, is the time to consider.

"Health and well-being is our #1 priority this fiscal year and if it means that customers do not feel comfortable traveling to a mountain destination this year, we will be ready for them next year," Kyles says.

You can reach Jennifer Kyles at [jkyles@skican.com](mailto:jkyles@skican.com). For additional information, see [www.skican.com](http://www.skican.com)

# SKICANADA.ORG

HOME OF THE CANADIAN SKI AND SNOWBOARD INDUSTRY



## Canadian Ski Council Joins

Welcome to the Canadian Ski Council, Canada's one central body responsible for growing participation in recreational snowboarding, alpine and cross-country skiing on behalf of the country's 236 ski areas. The goal of the Canadian Ski Council is to generate one million additional trials of snowsports by Canadians by 2025 with a focus on increasing the gender and racial diversity of our ski areas.

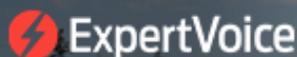
Contact is Paul Pinchbeck, president and CEO, who participated in NASJA's pre-season media briefing on Oct. 22 (see related story and video recording). He can be reached at: [ppinchbeck@skicanada.org](mailto:ppinchbeck@skicanada.org)

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## MEMBER BENEFITS

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**Unlock your  
expert benefits.**  
Discounts on 100s of brands.



## ExpertVoice Offers Members Huge Discounts

You have insider knowledge. You have passion. When a friend isn't sure what to try or buy, you're who they turn to for advice and recommendation. You have purpose. You're what we call an Expert.

As you may know, NASJA has partnered with ExpertVoice to connect you with exclusive perks of up to 70% off your favorite products and brands and a community of gear junkies, just like you. One member saved 40% off a pair of Zeal Optic sunglasses, far below the price it was offered anywhere on the web or at retail.

EV is another benefit of NASJA membership. To join ExpertVoice:

1. New users, sign up via [www.expertvoice.com/signup](http://www.expertvoice.com/signup) and search NASJA to join the team
2. Existing users, add EV to your affiliations via the drop down menu under your profile photo
3. Complete the application by following the sign up flow

## NEWS YOU CAN USE

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### Submit Stories to the Revamped OnTheSnow.com

A new kind of “newsroom” is being planned for [OnTheSnow.com](https://OnTheSnow.com) following acquisition of *Mountain News* by two ski online pioneers, Chad Dyer and Jon Brelig, from Vail Resorts.

“There’s really only one major story this season as individuals and families make plans for winter weekends and vacations,” said Craig Altschul, a past NASJA president and editorial development consultant to *Mountain News*, “and that is navigating through the often conflicting and seemingly ever-changing policies caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. Skiers are focused almost solely on how to prepare and what to expect enroute and at the resorts.”

Altschul said *OnTheSnow* plans to be the “go-to” site to get that up-to-date information for each ski region of the country. *Mountain News* is in the final stages of retaining a freelance team of writers that will keep the information current all season.

Mountain News’ website brands *OnTheSnow.com* (North America) and [SkiInfo.com](https://SkiInfo.com) (Europe) reached more than 38 million skiers and snowboarders across the globe last season alone. If you’re a freelancer, contact Craig for information on the pay rate and how you can submit stories. [caltschul@icloud.com](mailto:caltschul@icloud.com), Craig Altschul + Associates 505 210 0514.



## **New Documentary Profiles Oldest Ski Shop in America**

A smart and creative short documentary set in New Hampshire has been making the rounds, and winning honors, at winter film festivals since last year and is now available for all to see.

In just over 21 minutes, "North Country" weaves an interesting and compelling tale.

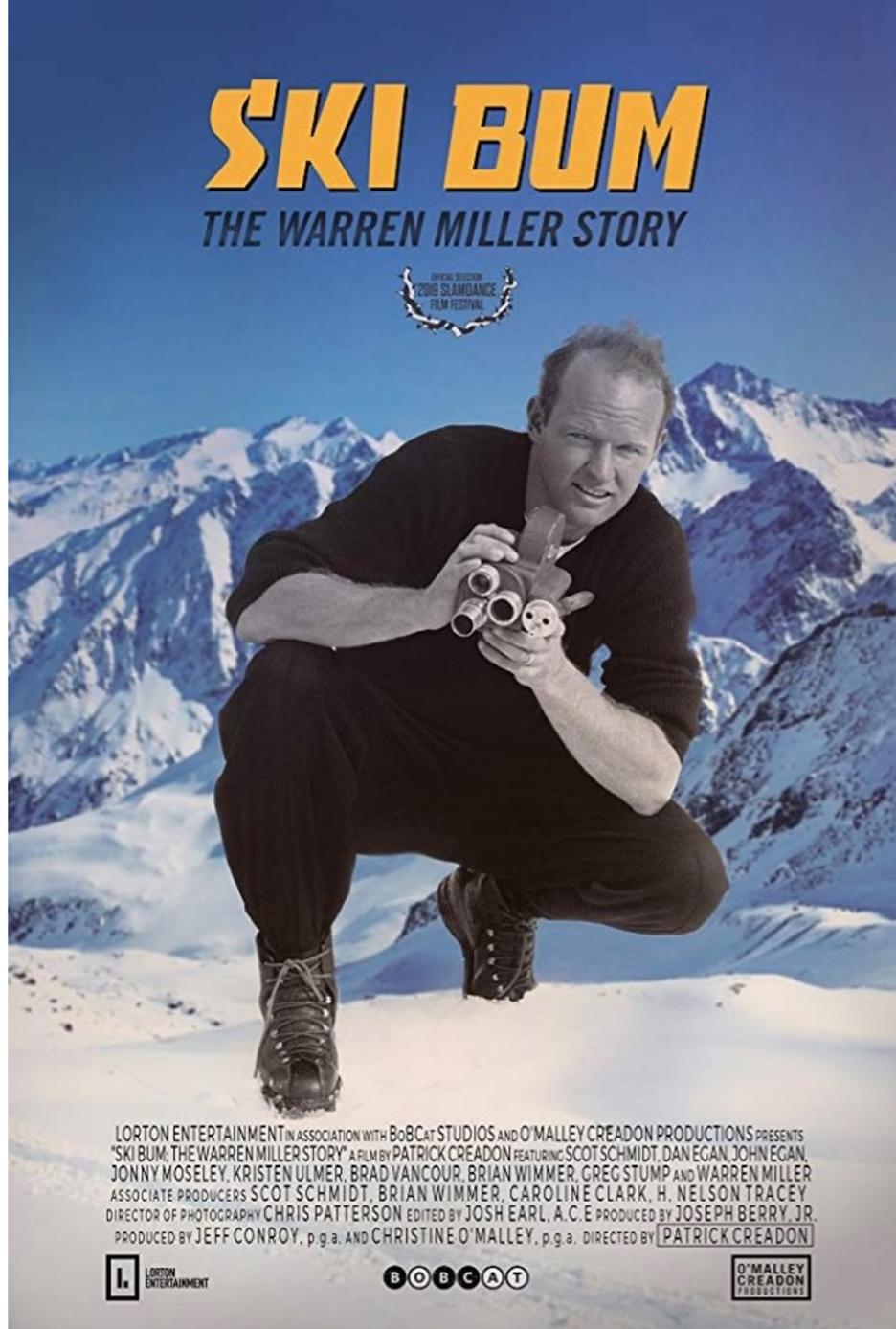
It is a fascinating profile of Joe Lahout Sr., who added a ski shop to the family store in Littleton, N.H., that now bills itself as "the oldest ski shop in America." Lahout Sr., who passed away in 2017 at 94, was an avid skier whose descendants continue to operate the original store and its other locations.

It is a story of generations, because it was both produced and narrated by his grandson, Anthony R. Lahout, whose special connection with Lahout Sr. compelled him to leave corporate life and the travails of a ski bum to return to the place his family calls home.

The documentary was released on Teton Gravity Research's TGR TV streaming platform in early October.

Watch it here:

<https://tinyurl.com/oldestskishop>



## "Ski Bum: The Warren Miller Story" – Now Showing on Amazon Prime

This 90-minute documentary, produced by Patrick Creadon and Christine O'Malley, is based largely on archival footage provided by Warren Miller Entertainment. It follows Miller's dramatic life story from the beginning, starting with a childhood spent escaping from a dysfunctional family by surfing and skiing.

The story is told through interviews with Warren himself, recorded a year before his death, and interviews with his children and close friends. More interviews and plenty of action footage feature skiers Scot Schmidt, Jonny Moseley, Colby James, the Egan brothers, Kristen Ulmer, Greg Stump and many more.

Amazon Prime members can see the film for free; nonmembers can rent it online.

Warren and his Warren Miller Productions won NASJA's Carson White Golden Quill Award in 1985.

See the trailer for the latest Warren Miller film, *Future Retro* on Vimeo. It streams virtually this month. <https://vimeo.com/465917191>

Read about other ski films this fall, including productions from TGR and Matchstick, at:

<https://theknow.denverpost.com/2020/10/14/ski-film-season-arrives-warren-miller-film-online-only/246906/>



### Watch NASJA Paul Robbins Award Winner Maggie Voisin on Nov. 19, 7 p.m. ET

You're invited to an exciting night in with U.S. Ski & Snowboard on Thursday, November 19 at 5 p.m. MT / 7 p.m. ET. Shake up your favorite cocktail, glam up in your best event-from-home attire, grab your computer and join Olympic Freestyle Champion Jonny Moseley and X Games Gold Medalist and NASJA Paul Robbins Outstanding Competitor awardee Maggie Voisin for a live, 30 minute show. U.S. Ski & Snowboard presents the New York Gold Medal Gala Reimagined: A Night at the USANA Center of Excellence

There is no fee to watch the ceremony, but donations are encouraged.

More details here:

<https://usskiandsnowboard.org/news/youre-invited-night-usana-center-excellence>

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### HOLD THESE DATES

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- **NASJA + BRASS Avalanche Backcountry Safety Webinar** – Nov. 18, 2020, via Zoom. Open to the general public. 8 p.m. ET / 5 p.m. PT
- **Western Winter Summit in Utah – January 31 – February 4, 2021.** Travel to Ogden, Snowbasin and Powder Mountain. Capped at 20 Active members. Held in conjunction with VisitOgden.com. Cost: \$300/double occupancy per person - \$570/single (limited availability) Registration fee includes 4 nights lodging including parking, 3 days lift tickets, equipment, breakfasts and lunches, Welcome Reception, additional meals will be specified in January. Utah Transit Authority bus between the Hampton Inn and ski resorts. Not included are ground transportation between the SLC Airport and Hampton Inn, Ogden, or gratuities such as shuttle drivers or housekeeping. For more details: <https://nasja.org/explore-nasja/events/nasja-2021-western-winter-summit-registration/>
- **Snowmass, April 7-11, 2021** – Co-located with ISHA and US Ski & Snowboard Hall of Fame
- **Big SNOW America, Spring** – NASJA's media day at this new indoor ski resort in the New Jersey Meadowlands, with discounted accommodations at the Hilton Hotel

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Jeff Blumenfeld – President  
Marie-Piere Belisle-Kennedy, Kevin Gasior – Vice Presidents  
Megan Collins – Corporate Liaison  
Iseult Devlin – Immediate Past President

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