



## National Ski Council Federation Newsbeat - February 2016

**Chairlift Speed Dating Is Now a Thing.** At least since stretch pants went out of vogue, a ski resort isn't necessarily the first place you'd think of when it comes to picking someone up—what with everyone wearing facemasks. Nevertheless, LuvByrd—an online dating website for Colorado outdoor enthusiasts—is trying to change that. Mike Keshian, the founder of the site launched in 2014, is a self-proclaimed ski bum turned cupid. He saw a market for a website that could help coordinate love among fellow mountain-minded folk and went about making it happen (for those not in the state, expansion plans are in the works). You sign up by uploading a photo, noting your name, age, and location, and ticking off boxes, like the resorts you ski/snowboard at, your ability level, and a myriad of other outdoor activities you enjoy. *Mountain Magazine*

**No More Rossignol Bindings.** Beginning next winter, all of Groupe Rossignol's ski bindings will be labeled with the Look brand. For years, the company often sold the same ski binding under both the Rossignol and Look brands. Look manufactures its DIN-compatible alpine ski bindings at a factory in Nevers, in the Bourgogne region of central France. *First Tracks!!*

**Helmet usage increases across US ski resorts.** According to the National Ski Areas Association, helmet usage has increased for the 13th straight year, from 25 percent of skiers and snowboarders using helmets in 2002 to 78 percent this past season. NSAA states that 97 percent of skiers and snowboarders ages 9 and younger wore helmets this past season. *Vail Daily via Google Alerts*



**Plattekill (NY) Moose Gets Fat Boy Skis.** The wooden moose mounted over the stairway leading to the base lodge bar at Plattekill Mountain in New York's Catskill region has been fitted with a pair of Atomic Fat Boy skis. Plattekill is a true mom 'n pop operation, and Laszlo, who runs the 38-trail, 1,100-vertical foot ski mountain with his wife Danielle and two sons, traveled south last season to rescue the four legged Bullwinkle cousin from a New Jersey style landfill-bound afterlife. *First Tracks!!*

**Organizers Estimate 6,000 Took Ski and Snowboard Lessons in Record Attempt.** Preliminary numbers are in and about 6,000 students participated in the January attempt to set a world record for coordinated participation in a Learn to Ski or Snowboard lesson. The official Guinness participation numbers are expected to be announced at the National Ski Area's Association National Tradeshow and Convention taking place May 18-21 in Nashville, Tenn. At this point in time there is no official Guinness record for

the greatest number of people attending and participating in a snowboarding lesson at multiple locations set up by the same organization, so one might conclude that any number would do the trick. Mary Jo Tarallo, spokesperson for the National Learn to Ski and Snowboard Month, stated that they have a shot at the multiple-venue record if Guinness recognizes it. *First Tracks!! Ed. Note: Mary Jo Tarallo spoke to us at our Annual Meeting in Lake Placid last September.*

**Vail Buys Suburban Chicago's Wilmot Ski Area.** Vail Resorts announced today that it has acquired Wilmot Mountain in Wisconsin near the Illinois state line, expanding its collection of urban ski areas in the Midwest. Terms of the acquisition were not disclosed. Vail Resorts plans to transform both the on-mountain and base area experience at Wilmot Mountain. *First Tracks!!*

**Women's Ski Jumping USA Expands Relationship with the U.S. Ski and Snowboard Association.** Women's Ski Jumping USA (WSJ-USA) has announced an expanded relationship with the U.S. Ski and Snowboard Association (USSA). Beginning on October 1, 2015, USSA assumed responsibility for coaching and other operations affecting the women's ski jumping program. USSA will be taking responsibility for the national women's ski jumping program including the employment and contracting of the two national team coaches, and the partnership with Utah Olympic Park for development coach, Lindsey Van. WSJ-USA will focus our organizational efforts on cultivating and supporting development programs and athletes - with an emphasis on the successful Fly Girls development program. *Cross Country Skier via Google Alerts*

**Steamboat's Howelsen Hill Sliding Downhill Endangering Historic Ski Jump.** Persistent slumping on the slopes of Howelsen Hill in Steamboat Springs have ski jumpers, youth racers, town officials and history buffs worried that a piece of American skiing's past may be slip-slidin' away. Over the past several years, spring runoff and rains have caused small landslides all over America's oldest continuously operating ski hill overlooking the city of Steamboat Springs. Damage to the 120- and 90-meter jumps - one of three sets of world class-sized ski jumps in the United States - has forced city officials to come to grips with repairing a historic but underused city-owned facility. Built 102 years ago by Norwegian Carl Howelsen, the ski jump complex includes seven jumps of different sizes that take advantage of the steep hill for the landing and outrun areas. Over the years, some 79 Nordic Olympians have come out of the Steamboat Springs Winter Sports Club program, including six members of the National Ski Hall of Fame. *SnoCountry*

**New Jersey Ski Area Transforms into Non-Profit for Kids.** The National Winter Sports Education Foundation (NWSEF) announced the rebirth of New Jersey's former Hidden Valley ski area in Vernon into the National Winter Activity Center (NWAC), which they say is the nation's first private 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated winter sport facility for kids. Children will learn to ski and snowboard during the seven-session program in a 1-to-8 instructor ratio with PSIA and United States Ski and Snowboard Association (USSA) trained coaches. The children are fully equipped with gear. *First Tracks!!*

**Squaw, Alpine Stop Bottled Water Sales; Tap Refill Stations Instead.** Squaw Valley-Alpine Meadows has removed water in plastic bottles from its shelves and replaced them with refillable bottles and filling stations. The move, believed to be the first by a winter resort in the United States, is promoted as a campaign not only to reduce waste in landfills used by the resort and surrounding communities, but also a way to urge its customers to change behavior and other resorts to follow suit. Reusable water bottles will go on sale at resort retail outlet for the same price as a single-use bottle, officials said. As part of the program, Squaw-Alpine has set up some 20 refill stations around the resort at no cost to the consumer. *SnoCountry*

**Squaw Nixes Coal-produced Electricity.** When Squaw Valley installed electric vehicle charging stations back in 2013, the resort ran into an immediate problem: The electricity it received from its provider, Liberty Utilities, was dirty, generated in part by the burning of Rocky Mountain coal. Chris Steinkamp, executive director of Protect Our Winters, reached out to Squaw CEO Andy Wirth. POW and the Squaw executive team approached Liberty Utilities with a simple, yet powerful argument: We are some of your largest customers—running ski lifts and resort operations, after all, takes a good chunk of power—but coal and climate change are killing our industry. Can you find a cleaner source of energy to use instead?

Liberty Utilities was surprisingly open to the conversation. Nudged along by the ski industry partners as well as the Sierra Club of California and Nevada, Liberty announced in April 2015 that it was ending its contract with the coal burning generation plant. What's more, Liberty proposed to build two solar plants to boost its renewable portfolio. By simply applying pressure, the Tahoe ski industry helped convince a utility company that it was in their best interests to stop using coal and to build a solar energy plant. *Outside Magazine*