

## Sahalie Historical Note #17: Ski Racing and the PNSA from the 1930s to the '50s

Sahalie Ski Club has a long history of its members competing in races near and far, as well as sponsoring or hosting events at Snoqualmie Pass. Commonwealth and Sahalie names are associated with the Pacific Northwest Ski Association going all the way back to its origins in the early 1930s. In this **first installment**, I focus on the early racers affiliated with the club as the sport took off in the 1930s and the '40s before the war, as well as our limited post-war involvement through the 1950s.

Skiing originated in Europe, primarily Scandinavia, Finland, Germany and Switzerland. The Federation Internationale de Ski ("F.I.S.," the official international governing organization for ski racing, to this day) was formed in 1924 at the first winter Olympics held in Chamonix.<sup>1</sup>

The **National Ski Association**, later known as the **U.S. Ski Association** ("USSA") and now as the **U.S. Ski and Snowboard Association** (still "USSA"), was formed in **1905** at Ishpeming, Michigan, where ski competitions had been hosted since the 1880s. Ishpeming, MI, is the site today of the U.S. Ski and Snowboard Hall of Fame.

The **Pacific Northwest Ski Association** [often referred to in early articles as the Pacific Northwestern Ski Association] dates from early 1930, when ski clubs, including the Seattle Ski Club at Snoqualmie Pass, decided to band together to sponsor regional jumping and cross-country competitions, to coordinate calendars and to keep competitions high quality.<sup>2</sup> It's mission was to promote skiing and ski competitions in the Northwest:

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*Seattle Daily Times, February 8, 1932, p. 7.*

for “each club ...to assist each other – to the very vital end that skiing be encouraged for the youth of the Northwest, and that it be developed as part of the winter sports program designed to bring folk here from all the world.”<sup>3</sup> The PNSA became the official regional organization for the NSA, to promote sanctioned ski competitions in the Northwest according to NSA and FIS rules.

Ski competitions in the early 1930s consisted of jumping and cross-country races. Slalom and downhill had not yet been invented, at least not to the extent that local ski clubs would promote. That would quickly change.

The organization’s first regional championships were held in 1931 at Mt. Hood, with cross-country races and ski jumping competitions. As early as February, 1932, it was noted that: “Some entrants have been refused. The class of the Pacific Northwest championships cannot be permitted to suffer. Only those deemed sufficiently able have been allowed to register. The association has no mind to clutter its jumps or its cross-country grind with those not yet inured to it, incapable of a rated performance.”<sup>4</sup>

At the jumping and cross-country ski tournament in Cle Elum in February, 1932 (the second PNSA championships – see ad), **Hans Otto Geise** entered the Class A cross-country race and **Hans Grage** and **Ben Thompson** entered the Class B cross-country race. The rest of the entrants sounded like a phone directory from somewhere in Norway, with competitors from Vancouver, B.C., to Portland, OR, almost all of the Scandinavian persuasion.<sup>5</sup>

The first reference to Sahalie skiers participating in racing events comes in March 1932, when cross-country “runners” from Commonwealth Ski Club were to compete against skiers from Seattle Ski Club, the Mountaineers and others at Mt. Rainier. “...**Hans Otto Giese**, [and] **Hans Grage**... were but a few of those intending to race” in the “experienced” events.<sup>6</sup>

The Seattle Ski Club petitioned the new PNSA to include slalom racing in its sanctioned competitions in the fall of 1932. The accompanying newspaper article described this new skiing concept thus: “The race is entirely a downhill affair, between staggered sets of flags. A skier, hurtling down at speeds as great as fifty miles an hour, is compelled to pass between the narrow rows of flags, make right-angle turns at full speed, whip and swivel his way down the twisting trail to the bottom. Spills are frequent. Matchless grace is necessary.”<sup>7</sup> PNSA officials voted to incorporate slalom a year later, in November, 1933,<sup>8</sup> with the first sanctioned race awarded to Seattle Ski Club in early 1934.

In January, 1933, the PNSA set out its purpose: “Our interest centers on competitive skiing.... Recreational skiing is something else. We encourage it, but competitive skiing is the reason for the existence of the association. With that in mind we wish to encourage among those rapidly

developing in recreational ranks, the desire for competitive events. Only with such encouragement can tournament skiing be maintained and developed.”<sup>9</sup>

The **Seattle Ski Council** was formed in December, 1933, to coordinate among various ski clubs and other skiing interests; **Carl Fehnken** [probably a typo for **Mahnken**] of Commonwealth Ski Club was one of the inaugural committee chairs. **Hans Otto Giese** was the founding chairman.<sup>10</sup>

The first Commonwealth Ski Club competition noticed by the newspapers was held on January 28, 1934, with an “informal slalom race for club members and anyone else who wants to compete.” The course was set up on the Guye Peak rock slide by **Hans Grage**.<sup>11</sup> **Ed Loners**, a Commonwealth as well as Washington Alpine member, came in second. The Seattle Ski Club’s newly cleared slalom slope adjacent to its ski jump at Beaver Lake (present day Summit West) was “baptized” the same day. **Hans Grage** won the event (skiing for Seattle and Penguin clubs), while **Ed Loners** of Commonwealth came in second and **Walt Paige** of Commonwealth came in fourth.<sup>12</sup>

The Seattle Ski Club tournament at Snoqualmie Pass on **February 4, 1934**, was **the first officially-recognized slalom race of the Pacific Northwest Ski Association**.<sup>13 14</sup> Forty-three skiers (7 from Commonwealth, almost 20% of the inaugural event) entered, 20 qualified for the two-race finals, and only nine completed their final two runs. It was noted that the winner used laminated skis with steel edges, the latest technology! Racing for Commonwealth Ski Club were **Hans Grage, Harry Loners, Walt Paige, Howard Stephens, Herb Winn, Lloyd MacRae** and **S.** [presumably **Scott**] **Osborn**.<sup>15</sup> Hans Grage came in seventh, the only Commonwealth contestant to finish both final races; Harry Loners and S. Osborn made it to the finals, but both disqualified on their second runs; Hans Otto Giese also DSQed in the finals, skiing for Seattle SC.<sup>16</sup>

Two weeks later, **Hans Grage**, racing for Commonwealth, came in second among 53 entrants at the Paradise Valley slalom race on Mt. Rainier on February 18, 1934.<sup>17</sup> **Hans Grage** went on to well represent Commonwealth Ski Club by winning the McClure Rock-to-Paradise downhill race on April 8, 1934.<sup>18</sup>

The PNSA endorsed the first Silver Skis downhill race on Mt. Rainier, held in April, 1934, which was promoted by the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*.<sup>19</sup> As noted in my earlier historical article (#11) about this memorable race and its subsequent series, **Otto Sanford** of Commonwealth Ski Club was the race official who shot the starting gun to launch the infamous *geschmozzel* (mass) start; **Hans Grage, Harry Loners** and **Ed Loners** all competed for Commonwealth Ski Club; **Hans Otto Giese** and **Don Fraser**, who were associated with Commonwealth at that time, also competed, but were racing that day for other clubs.

The Washington Ski Club was formed on September 7, 1934, to focus on “serious” or “competitive” ski racing. It drew members from other local ski clubs, including its founding president, **Otto Sanford**, and its membership chair, **Carl Mahnken**, from Commonwealth. The WSC petitioned right away for membership in PNSA.<sup>20</sup>

A lament was posted in the September 20, 1934, *Seattle Daily Times* about the potential of the new slalom and downhill racing to nudge out ski jumping over time. “It has become increasingly apparent with the development of slalom and downhill racing that jumping – a fine and daring ski sport, safe only for the most adept – would inevitably decline unless a program were sharply defined to build it up. The bulk of Class A jumping rests with those Norwegian youths comparatively fresh from the old country. Class B has seen casual development among the American born, but not enough.”<sup>21</sup>

In October, 1934, **Otto Sanford**, president of the new Washington Ski Club and formerly associated with Commonwealth, proposed a wildly-optimistic idea: that the PNSA sponsor the first-ever national downhill and slalom championships, as well as the 1936 Olympic trials, at Mt. Rainier in April of 1935.<sup>22</sup> Why not? Locals had the belief that the skiing at Paradise was the best in the country, especially in the spring, so why not be audacious and ask to sponsor the first-ever national races? **Hans Otto Geise** is quoted as championing this proposal: “There is admittedly no locality better suited for such [Olympic] tryouts than our region and in particular Paradise Valley, Mount Rainier. We have the best terrain and snow conditions for such events in the whole United States. We have the most experienced officials. But most of all, we have the best slalom and downhill skiers of the United States among our members, and most of them are American citizens.”<sup>23</sup> (That “American citizen” thing was a big deal at the time, since many of the best jumpers and racers were recent immigrants – primarily from Norway but including the whole spread of northern European countries – and many were not eligible yet for championships or for Olympic team positions.)

At the same momentous meeting in late October, 1934, PNSA declared that, “Slalom and downhill racing are entitled to equal recognition with jumping and cross-country, and this organization cannot be caught lagging.”<sup>24</sup> This was an early, watershed moment in Northwest skiing. One can only imagine the tension between the old-country, Norwegian traditionalists and the new, younger, “alpine” crowd, as illustrated by the jumping lament noted above and the cross-country lament noted below. I wish we had a recording of that pivotal meeting.

PNSA didn’t lose any momentum; in fact it seemed to gain it. PNSA’s select skiers to race in the national downhill and slalom championships on Mt. Rainier included **Don Fraser**, **Hans Grage** and **John Woodward**, all with previous Commonwealth/ Sahalie connections.<sup>25</sup> The races were held on April 14-15, 1935, with much national attention. Hannes Schroll, an Austrian skier teaching at Yosemite at the time, won the event; his technique, the likes of which

had not been seen in these parts, was considered “astounding.”<sup>26</sup> He won both the downhill and slalom, and thus the combined title; the national “best,” including the likes of Dick Durrance from Dartmouth and Robert Livermore from Harvard, were left behind. John Woodward finished seventh in slalom, 11<sup>th</sup> in the downhill, for a combined 6<sup>th</sup> place. Hans Grage finished sixth in slalom, 18<sup>th</sup> in the downhill, for a combined finish of 10<sup>th</sup> in the nationals. Don Fraser had been injured and didn’t compete. Downhill race conditions above Paradise were described thus: “Every hazard of downmountain racing was encountered. Pea soup fog blanketed the beginning at high Sugar Loaf, elevation 8,500 feet, pressed as heavily upon competitors that from the start control flags 100 yards away were virtually invisible. The chill iced the snow. It was icy from Sugar Loaf to half-way down the slope of Panorama, the heart-clutching spot where courage in the highest was demanded. Then it swung swiftly to heavy snow that caught skis of even the most powerful and hurled them headlong.” The downhill course was 2.3 miles long, with a vertical drop of 2,750 feet. Schroll ran it in 2:35.4 – “...virtually a mile a minute in fog, over benches that cause the average skier to shy away in a long traverse....”<sup>27</sup> And remember what the skis, bindings and boots were like in 1935 – it is quite impressive to consider what these guys accomplished given the conditions of the times. Schroll won the downhill by more than a minute! The next day, Schroll bested the national field again in the slalom, winning by a margin of more than 12 seconds! Both represent astounding time differentials when one considers today’s victories measured in tenths or even hundredths of seconds. Northwest skiers wondered aloud what they had to do to be competitive with the Europeans. Fortunately for the locals, women showed the way: Ellis-Ayr Smith from Tacoma won the women’s national downhill title, and her younger sister Ethelynne (“Skit”) Smith won the slalom title.<sup>28</sup>

After the heady experience of hosting a successful national competition, the PNSA in September 1935 voted to pursue hosting the Olympic trials in early 1940 to choose the ski team for the 1940 games, which were planned for Japan at that time. Later events shelved these plans, as Japan got further embroiled in war activities in Asia, and the 1940 games were eventually cancelled altogether.

But in the meantime, influenced by the successful competitions held at Mt. Rainier as well as other factors, five Washington skiers were named to the U.S. Olympic ski team to compete at Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany, in the 1936 Winter Olympics: Don Fraser, Darroch Crookes, and Grace Carter (all from Seattle), and the two Smith sisters, Ellis Ayr and Ethelynne (“Skit”) from Tacoma.<sup>29</sup> They traveled by ship from Portland through the Panama Canal to get to the games.

In advance of the February, 1936, PNSA ski jumping and cross-country championships held at Snoqualmie Pass, Peter Hostmark, PNSA president, lamented the decline in “langlaufers”: “We

need more cross-country men,' he said. 'They are becoming extinct. Too many skiers think cross-country unnecessary. They're so badly mistaken I hate to think what will happen if the breed dies out. I'd like to see 50 men in that Saturday cross-country race. I'll guarantee, they'll realize its value in the years to come. And by 50 men, I don't mean the old dependable, who are always eager to race because they understand its value. I mean the young ones, coming up.'"<sup>30</sup>

**Carl Neu**, Sahalie member just 17 years old at the time, raced in the 1936 PNSA-sanctioned Silver Skis downhill on Mt. Rainier.

In January, 1937, PNSA issued its first official classifications assigned to individual skiers for the four main events: slalom, downhill, jumping and cross-country; only 2 men (Hjalmar Hvam and Corey Gustafsson, both from Portland) earned all four "As". No Sahalie racers were noted directly; **Hans Grage**, **John Woodward** and **Scott Osborn**, all with previous Sahalie connections, were rated AACB for downhill/slalom/jumping/cross-country; **Carl Neu**, from Sahalie but young and relatively untested, rated CC--B; **Don Fraser** was rated AACA.<sup>31</sup>

## HVAM AND GUSTAFSSON, ONLY 'FOUR A' MEN IN WHOLE AREA

For the first time in Pacific Northwestern Ski Association history a classification committee appointed by President Peter Hostmark has attempted the sorting of the Northwest's leading competitive skiers into divisions of merit—and while changes necessarily will be made once the tournament is duly under way, the list was ready for publication today.

Only two men in the entire association are rated as straight "A" through the four divisions of competition—jumping, cross-country, downhill and slalom.

They are Hjalmar Hvam and Corey Gustafsson of the Cascade Ski Club, Portland. The classification committee was made up of Allan Granstrom, chairman, and Ken Binns. The classifications:

Name, Club	Downhill	Slalom	Jumping	Cross-country	Name, Club	Downhill	Slalom	Jumping	Cross-country
Hjalmar Hvam, Cascade	A	A	A	A	Ralph Follestad, Jr., Seattle	C	C	C	B
Hans Grage, W. S. C.	A	A	C	B	J. Garretson, Cascade	C	C	C	B
Paul Seva, Jr., W. S. C.	A	A	C	B	Otto Rosand, Spokane	C	C	C	B
John Woodward, U. of W.	A	A	C	B	John Kjosness, Seattle	C	C	C	B
Don Amick, W. S. C.	A	A	C	B	Don Adams, Penguin	C	C	C	B
Ed Newell, W. S. C.	A	A	C	B	Dan Kjosness, Leavenworth	C	C	C	B
Roy Tangen, Cascade	B	B	C	B	Ed Martinson, unattached	C	C	C	B
Kjell Ovale, Seattle	B	B	C	B	John Magnuson, Seattle	C	C	C	B
Grant McConnell, Mazamas	B	B	C	B	Jesse Baird, Leavenworth	C	C	C	B
Bob Higman, Mtrs.	B	B	C	B	Joe Bradbury, Cascade	C	C	C	B
Boyd French, Jr., Cascade	A	A	C	B	D. Bradshaw, Cascade	C	C	C	B
Bill Miller, Mtrs.	B	B	C	B	R. Ofstad, Spokane	C	C	C	B
Scott Osborn, Mtrs.	A	A	C	B	Bill Brown, Cascade	C	C	C	B
Wolf Bauer, Mtrs.	A	A	C	B	Olaf Lundby, Cascade	C	C	C	B
Hollis Lyman, Cascade	B	B	C	B	Olaf Loken, unattached	C	C	C	B
Tom Hill, Mtrs.	B	B	C	B	Victor Larsen, Seattle	C	C	C	B
Corey Gustafsson, Cascade	A	A	C	B	Martin Moe, Jr., Seattle	C	C	C	B
Lin Bowman, Cascade	B	B	C	B	Arthur Corbett, Cascade	C	C	C	B
Jack Hillyer, W. S. C.	A	A	C	B	Chet Higman, U. of W.	B	B	C	B
Cleve Knight, Cascade	B	B	C	B	Harry McAllister, Cascade	B	B	C	B
Bruce Behr, W. S. C.	A	A	C	B	Ragnar Gustafsson, Cascade	B	B	C	B
Karl Hostetter, W. S. C.	B	B	C	B	Ole Tverdal, Seattle	B	B	C	B
Bob Donaldson, Mazamas	B	B	C	B	Martin Tverdal, Seattle	C	C	C	B
Vincent Bronze, Seattle	B	B	C	B	Ringer Eian, Seattle	C	C	C	B
Joe Halvax, Penguin	B	B	C	B	Hermud Bakke, Leavenworth	C	C	C	B
Lon Robinson, U. of W.	B	B	C	B	Helge Sather, Leavenworth	C	C	C	B
Arnt Ofstad, Spokane	C	C	A	B	John Ring, Spokane	C	C	C	B
Jim Gillespie, W. S. C.	B	B	C	B	Palmer Torgerson, Seattle	C	C	C	B
Paul Gilbreath, W. S. C.	A	A	C	B	Howard Dalsbo, Seattle	C	C	C	B
W. L. Williams, Spokane	C	C	C	B	Ray Nerland, Seattle	C	C	C	B
Hans-Otto Giese, W. S. C.	C	C	C	B	Einar Hermanson, Cascade	C	C	C	B
Art Wilson, Mtrs.	C	C	C	B	Ole Hagen, Cascade	C	C	C	B
Dick Walter, W. S. C.	C	C	C	B	Eric Bolstad, Seattle	C	C	C	B
Harley Lyman, Cascade	C	C	C	B	Don Fraser, W. S. C.	A	A	C	B
DeFay Chenoweth, Spokane	C	C	C	A	Darroch Crookes, W. S. C.	A	A	C	B
Olaf Skjersaa, Bend	C	C	C	A	Carleton Wiegand, W. S. C.	A	A	C	B
Bill Thompson, Mtrs.	C	C	C	A	Boward Richmond, W. S. C.	B	B	C	B
Fred Carier, Mazamas	C	C	C	A	Volney Richmond, W. S. C.	B	B	C	B
John Carey, W. S. C.	B	B	C	B	Orville Bergersen, W. S. C.	B	B	C	B
K. Whiting, Wallace, Idaho	B	B	C	B	Stan Bergersen, W. S. C.	C	C	C	B
Carl Neu, Mtrs.	C	C	C	B	LeRoy Caverley, W. S. C.	A	A	C	B
Matt Brere, Seattle	B	B	C	B	Emil Cahen, Seattle	A	A	C	B
Bud Brady, Mtrs.	C	C	C	B	Bob Lamson, U. of W.	B	B	C	B
John Anderson, Cascade	C	C	C	B	Alf Mørstad, W. S. C.	B	B	C	B
R. McIndy, Cascade	B	B	C	B	Fred Thieme, U. of W.	B	B	C	B
W. Kelleher, Spokane	C	C	C	B	Jack Docter, U. of W.	C	C	C	B
P. Gillingham, Spokane	C	C	C	B	Joe Dunford, Bulldog	C	C	C	B
E. Darr, Spokane	C	C	C	B	Virgil Galvin, Spokane	C	C	C	B
Al Bogue, Spokane	C	C	C	B	Max Rrom, U. of W.	C	C	C	B
Don Books, Penguin	C	C	C	B	T. A. Berglund, Cascade	C	C	C	B





## STEEPLECHASER DOES HIS DAILY HURDLE



Ed Newell, chairman of the national race committee of the Washington Ski Club, which will conduct the Northwest championships and sectional Olympic trials in downhill and slalom racing tomorrow and Sunday in Rainier National Park, demonstrates the newer method of avoiding obstacles—even human—with the aid of that vocally formidable but actually serviceable gelandesprung. George Nickell, Washington Ski Club member, assists.



**Randall Zimmer**, representing Sahalie at age 19, came in fifth in the McClure Rock to Paradise downhill race in March, 1937.<sup>32</sup> **Don Fraser**, with previous Commonwealth/Sahalie connections, won the race. Randall Zimmer signed up for the 1937 Silver Skis race representing Sahalie, but the race was cancelled that year due to poor weather conditions.

Sahalie Ski Club was voted in as an active, voting member of the PNSA on October 2, 1937.<sup>33</sup>

**Ed Link** and **Jim Patchell** represented Sahalie in PNSA-sanctioned slalom and downhill championship races at Mount Spokane in February, 1938; Ed finished 17<sup>th</sup> in the downhill, Jim finished 26<sup>th</sup> in the slalom. **Don Fraser**, associated with Sahalie but skiing for Washington Ski Club at the time, won the combined event and went on to the nationals. The Spokane race also included such top skiers of the day as Don Amick, **John Woodward**, **Hans Grage** and **Scott Osborn**; **Carl Neu**, formerly of Sahalie and a student at U.W. at the time, skied for the Penguin SC in the event.<sup>34</sup>

The PNSA hosted the national amateur and national open championships for slalom and downhill at Sun Valley March, 1938.

**Ed** and **Bob Link**, as well as **David Wood** and **Lyle Campbell**, raced for Sahalie in the 1938 Silver Skis downhill event on Mt. Rainier, held on May 1<sup>st</sup> that year after various postponements.

In October, 1938, a number of well-known skiers petitioned the PNSA demanding greater “professionalism” in the races in the region. The skiers wanted races to start on time and have officials with enough authority to make clear decisions if, for example, they had to cancel a race due to bad weather. Key competitors involved in the petition included Don Amick, Sigurd Hall and Scott Osborn.<sup>35</sup>

In early 1939, PNSA helped to organize the first ski patrols in the Northwest.<sup>36</sup>

**Bill Redlin**, **Ed Link**, **Bill Elfendahl** and **Bobbie Frye** represented Sahalie in a PNSA sanctioned competition in Yakima on January 22, 1939. Bill Redlin came in fifth in the slalom, a race that **Don Fraser** won.<sup>37</sup> **Ed Link**, **Bill Redlin**, **Harry James**, **Bobbie Frye** and **Vi Campbell** submitted entries for the PNSA championships at Mount Baker in March 1939, but only Ed and Bill were accepted to race. **Bill Redlin** came in eighth in the downhill and 14<sup>th</sup> in the slalom; **Ed Link** finished well down the list in both races.<sup>38</sup>

No Sahalie registrants were noted in the April, 1939, Silver Skis downhill race on Mt. Rainier, but **Carl Neu**, **Don Fraser**, **Hans Grage** and **Dick Luce** (then 17), all with Sahalie connections, competed.



In late 1939 and again in 1940, PNSA-sanctioned indoor jumping tournaments were held at the Ice Arena in Seattle. Some of the best ski jumpers in the region, such as Olav Ulland, Friedl Pfeiffer and Alf Engen, participated.<sup>39</sup>

At the PNSA championship races in Yakima on February 11, 1940, **Jim Patchell**, **Ed Link**, **Dick Luce**, **Bob Link** and **Frank Buhler** raced for Sahalie men; **Marjorie Burke** and **Elsie Nelson** raced for Sahalie women.<sup>40</sup> Frank Buhler, racing for Sahalie, was fourteenth in combined. **Bill Redlin**, a Sahalie member but racing for Washington Ski Club that day, won the downhill race and was the combined champion. **Carl Neu**, who also raced for Sahalie in years past, was runner up; **Hans Grage** (also with past Commonwealth/Sahalie connections) was fifth. Gretchen

Kunigk Fraser (married to Don Fraser, formerly of Commonwealth Ski Club, and now racing for Sun Valley Ski Club) won the women's combined; **Marjorie Burke** finished thirteenth in the women's downhill; **Margaret Schuehle**, formerly with Sahalie, came in fifth in women's slalom and thirteenth in women's combined.<sup>41 42</sup>

At the third annual Deer Park races on the Olympic Peninsula in February, 1940 (a PNSA-sanctioned event), **Dick Luce**, **Ed Link**, **Bob Link**, **Harry James**, **Jim Patchell**, **Bobbie Fry**, **Marjorie Burke** and **Elsie Nelson** raced for Sahalie Ski Club; **Bill Redlin** and **Randall Zimmer**, also from Sahalie, raced for other clubs that day.<sup>43</sup>

**Ed Link**, racing for Sahalie, came in fourteenth in a PNSA downhill competition at Mount Baker on March 13, 1940.<sup>44</sup>

**Paul Gilbreath**, who had been a member of Commonwealth SC back in 1934, a friend of the Loners brothers, won the 1940 Silver Skis downhill race on Mt. Rainier.

PNSA began certifying ski instructors in April, 1940. The first exams were offered at Timberline Lodge on Mt. Hood. Ski instructors were quizzed on "skiing ability,



ability to instruct, mountain skiing, general knowledge of ski organization and conduct of tournaments, and first aid.”<sup>45</sup> In late 1940, PNSA voted to require all member clubs to use only certified instructors.<sup>46</sup> Twenty-two Northwesterners were so certified by late 1940.<sup>47</sup>

**Otto Sanford**, formerly of Commonwealth Ski Club, who had been a PNSA stalwart throughout the 1930s, was given an outstanding service award and was elected president of PNSA in October 1940.<sup>48</sup>

**Herb Lonseth** was Sahalie’s official representative in the PNSA organization beginning in 1940 and continuing through the war years.<sup>49</sup> He was part of the PNSA committee that investigated the death of Sigurd Hall in the 1940 Silver Skis race.<sup>50</sup> Herb served as secretary of PNSA for many years, beginning in late 1940, and represented the regional organization at National Ski Association meetings.<sup>51</sup>

PNSA voted to divide its sanctioned races across Washington, Oregon and Idaho into seven **zones** in late 1940. Zone 1, which included Sahalie Ski Club, encompassed the west side of the Cascades from the Canadian border to Mt. Rainier.<sup>52</sup>

In late 1940 PNSA cooperated with the National Ski Association in developing a national defense unit called the Winter Defense Committee in consultation with the War Department. This was the precursor to the Army’s ski troops and the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division in WWII.<sup>53</sup>

Sahalie Ski Club hosted the official PNSA Zone 1 and Regional cross-country championships at Snoqualmie Pass in January, 1941.<sup>54 55</sup> **C.A. “Mike” Petherick** of Sahalie was the chairman of Sahalie’s host committee; **Lars Nerland** was the chief of course, setting a ten-mile figure-eight that ran from the Sahalie lodge up to Source Lake (past today’s Alpental) and back, then to Hyak and back, to finish at Sahalie.<sup>56</sup> **Howard Berglund**, **Ed Link** and **Bill Ellis** ran in the Class B race for Sahalie. In the “tough” ten mile race, **Bob Woodward**, who had “served as ski instructor for Sahalie Ski Club before joining the Army Ski Patrol,” came in third in the A competition; Ed Link came in 11<sup>th</sup> and Howard Berglund 12<sup>th</sup> in the B competition.<sup>57</sup>

A PNSA race-officiating class in early 1941 included **Jim Patchell** and **Mike Petherick** from Sahalie Ski Club, as well as **Hans Grage**, formerly of Commonwealth/Sahalie, then with the Penguins.<sup>58</sup>

In March, 1941, **Bill Redlin**, formerly of Sahalie and racing for the U.W. ski team, won the national amateur downhill and slalom championships at Aspen, Colorado.<sup>59</sup>

The PNSA sanctioned, national ski jumping championships were hosted at the Snoqualmie Ski Bowl (at Hyak, later referred to as the Milwaukie Road Ski Bowl) in March, 1941, on the

Olympian Hill ski jump. **Herb Lonseth** of Sahalie served on the organizing committee; **Jim Patchell** was one of the official measurers.<sup>60</sup>

**Stan DeBruler** was the only Sahalie representative in the 1941 Silver Skis downhill race on Mt. Rainier.

During the war, some competitions went on for those who were still at home. **Herb Lonseth** of Sahalie served as PNSA secretary through these years, helping to recruit skiers to the Mountain Troops and to organize official competitions throughout the region amidst loss of significant Class A competitors to the war effort plus issues of closed ski areas (such as at Paradise, Mt. Baker and Sun Valley), as well as gas rationing and tire (rubber) scarcity. **Elsie Nelson** from Sahalie (and also skiing for Penguin SC) won combined honors at the PNSA Zone 1 championships in early January, 1942, and represented Washington in the Jeffers Cup Western States Ski Tournament at Sun Valley later that month.<sup>61</sup>

## Army Calling Skiers For Mountain Troops

**Hey, Skier!**

What's your draft status? If you're due to be inducted into the Army within the next few weeks, or if you come under the 18-20 age group, you may qualify for the Mountain Troops.

The National Ski Association of America again has been asked by the Army to submit names of skiers who wish to apply for the Mountain Troops. The selection of personnel for service, suspended on July 8, has been resumed.

Men who have lived and worked in the mountains, such as rock climbers, trappers, packers, guides, prospectors and timber cruisers are preferred. If they ski, so much the better. Applications of new men who can show evidence of exceptional fitness will be considered, even though applicants have had no broad mountain experience. The emphasis is on toughness and the ability to take it.

Information concerning enlistment in the Mountain Troops can be obtained from Herb Lonseth, secretary of the Pacific Northwestern Ski Association. Lonseth's telephone number is Elliott 1712.

*Seattle Daily Times, October 22, 1942, p. 30.*

**Bill Redlin**, also formerly of Sahalie and skiing for the U.W. in his final event before moving on to help instruct skiers for the U.S. Army, won the combined honors for the men in the same PNSA Zone 1 championships in January, 1942.<sup>62</sup> The ski jumping competitions at the Hyak hill in late January, 1942, proceeds from which were to support the Red Cross War Fund, were assisted by measurers, **Jim Patchell** and **Lars Nerland**, and distance recorder, **Herb Lonseth**.<sup>63</sup>

The 4-Club Snoqualmie Pass meet was held on February 15, 1942; Sahalie came in third overall.<sup>64</sup> Class B PNSA championships were hosted by **Hans Grage** of Penguin Ski Club at Stevens Pass in March, 1942; Sahalie sent racers **Earl Horngren**, **Dick Greenway**, **Bill Turner**, **Tennys Bellamy**, and **Margie** and **Virginia Burke**.<sup>65 66</sup> Margie Burke came in fifth in the women's slalom.<sup>67</sup>

During the war, PNSA provided a ski repair shop and related service for the Army mountain troops who were based at Fort Lewis until they moved to Colorado in 1943.<sup>68</sup>

**Herb Lonseth** and **Otto Sanford** helped to organize the April, 1942, Silver Skis downhill race on Mt. Rainier. **Stan DeBrulier** and **Hans Grage** were the only entrants with previous Sahalie connections. Ski troops predominated: 13 of the top 20 finishers were listed as “U.S. Army.”

Sahalie took the lead in hosting service men who were posted in the Seattle area, to take a few days off in the snow. Known as the “service skiers program,” the Sahalie program was quite popular and taken up by the PNSA to encourage other clubs to do the same. Many of the service men had never been on skis before, noted Herb Lonseth, and many had never even seen snow before!<sup>69</sup>

Sahalie and Seattle Ski Clubs teamed up to host one of the official war-time Pacific Northwest Ski Association events in March, 1943. The event included both ski jumping at Seattle SC’s jumps at Beaver Lake (now Summit West) and women’s and juniors’ alpine races hosted by Sahalie. Bob [perhaps **Don?**] and **Bruce McDonald** and **Bob Winder**, all teenagers at the time, competed for Sahalie. The event was put on “for the benefit of the U.S. Army Recreational Camp at Jefferson Park in Seattle, with all servicemen being special guests and all proceeds going to the Athletic Fund of the Camp.”<sup>70 71 72</sup>

**Don McDonald**, racing for Sahalie, came in second in the Class B giant slalom on March 11, 1945. The PNSA-sanctioned event was hosted by the Penguin Ski Club at Stevens Pass.<sup>73</sup>

After the war, PNSA secured three of the four Olympic trials for 1948 teams: the jumping events at Milwaukee Ski Bowl at Snoqualmie Pass, and alpine events at Sun Valley, held in March, 1947.

**Bruce McDonald** (formerly of Sahalie) appeared in various PNSA-sponsored ski races in 1948 (racing for Sun Valley).<sup>74</sup>

Publicity about any Sahalie racers is nil in the 1950s – either the Leave-It-to-Beaver days were mellow and races were only local “friendlies,” or the records have been lost. Or Sahalie members were more focused on rebuilding the lodge and the club during this post-war decade. More digging is needed here.

Stay tuned for **Installment II** where we pick up with young Sahalie racers in the 1960s through the 1980s, including our two stars who went on to regional and national fame: Bobby Gue and Tommy Atwood.

■ Dave Galvin  
March 9, 2012

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- <sup>3</sup> Ken Binns, 1931, "Six Major Ski Meets Booked in N.W.: Seattle Given Final Show of Snow Program," *Seattle Daily Times*, November 10, 1931, p. 18.
- <sup>4</sup> Ken Binns, 1932, "Cle Elum Ski Tourney Draws Brilliant Stars: Sixty of Northwest's Best Men o' Slippery Runners Will Battle for Honors on Hill and Field Sunday," *Seattle Daily Times*, February 12, 1932, p. 14.
- <sup>5</sup> Ken Binns, 1932.
- <sup>6</sup> "Cross-Country Runners Ready: They'll Compete Next Sunday in Mount Rainier Spring Snow Sports Carnival; So Will University," *Seattle Daily Times*, March 27, 1932, p. 21.
- <sup>7</sup> "Slalom Racing Incorporated in Ski Program," *Seattle Daily Times*, September 20, 1932, p. 16.
- <sup>8</sup> "Slalom Racing Accepted by Northwest Ski Association: Tourney Dates Set; Snow Now Only Requisite," *Seattle Daily Times*, November 1, 1933, p. 15.
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- <sup>10</sup> "New Ski Group Formed; Giese Made Chairman," *Seattle Daily Times*, December 15, 1933, p. 27.
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- <sup>12</sup> "Vancouver Skier Best;... Grage Also Wins," *Seattle Daily Times*, January 29, 1934, p. 14.
- <sup>13</sup> "Slalom Racing Accepted...";
- <sup>14</sup> "Molbraaten Skiing Champion: Sotvedt Takes Jumping Crown at Club Meet," *Seattle Daily Times*, February 5, 1934, p. 12.
- <sup>15</sup> "Luncheon for Ski Party to Get Much Help," *Seattle Daily Times*, February 1, 1934, p. 16; "Cross-Country Opens Ski Meet," *Seattle Daily Times*, February 2, 1934, p. 23.
- <sup>16</sup> "Molbraaten ..."
- <sup>17</sup> "Wiegel Victor in Slalom Race," *Seattle Daily Times*, February 19, 1934, p. 12.
- <sup>18</sup> "Ski Year's End; Its Steady Growth Recalled," *Seattle Sunday Times*, December 30, 1934, p. 27.
- <sup>19</sup> "Post-Intelligencer Ski Race Endorsed," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, February 18, 1934.
- <sup>20</sup> "Brand New Ski Club is Formed," *Seattle Sunday Times*, September 9, 1934, p. 27.
- <sup>21</sup> "Seattle Clubs De Ski Start Looking Around," *Seattle Daily Times*, September 20, 1934, p. 20.
- <sup>22</sup> "N.W. Bids for Games Ski Trials; Championships in Slalom and Downhill Asked," *Seattle Daily Times*, October 29, 1934, p. 15.
- <sup>23</sup> "N.W. Bids..."
- <sup>24</sup> "N.W. Bids..."
- <sup>25</sup> "Northwest Pick 8 For Seeding in Ski Meet; Fraser Defeats Hvam on Baker," *Seattle Daily Times*, April 1, 1934, p. 14.
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- <sup>28</sup> "Schroll Dominates Ski Meet; Yanks Must Get Revised Style," *Seattle Daily Times*, April 15, 1935, p. 15.
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