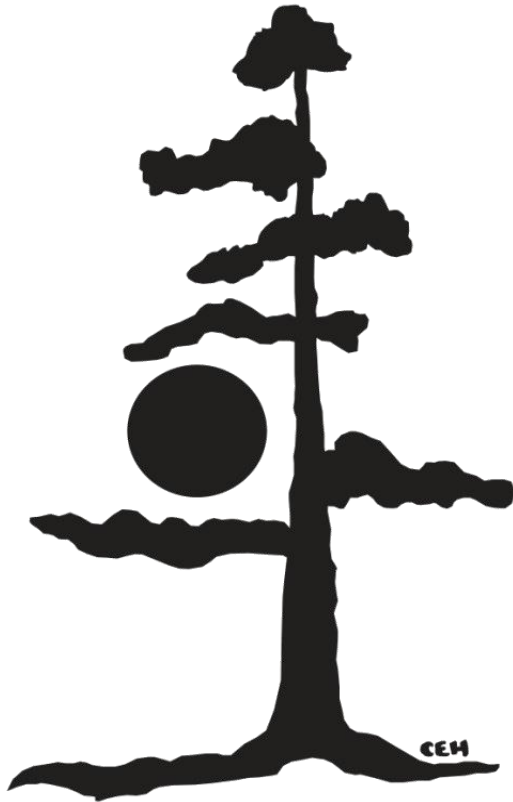


Soo Finnish Nordic Ski Club  
Annual Awards Banquet



Sunday, April 7, 2019

Grand Gardens North, Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario



# Soo Finnish Nordic Ski Club Awards Banquet Program 2019

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- 4 PM Doors Open & Youth Package Pick Up
- 5 PM Silent Auction, Presentations & Dinner  
Cash bar available throughout the evening.

## Presentations:

1. Welcome *Cassandra Nielsen*
2. Grace *Kate de Beer & Seth Bishop*
3. Nordiq Canada *Amy Wheeler Reich*
4. Coach Acknowledgement *Diane Charron-Bishop*
5. Youth 'Joie de Ski' Awards *Coaches from each class*
6. Graduating Bunnyrabbit Awards *Sr. Bunnyrabbit Coaches & Kinsmen Representatives*
7. Kinsmen Trophies *Level Four Coaches & Kinsmen Representatives*
8. Track Attack Medals *Don Hall, Marjorie Hall, Rob MacDougall  
Evan Baldwin, & Holly Zayachkowski*
9. Racing Rabbits Trophies *John Santana & Bob Karklins*
10. Ski Team Awards *Connor Psiuk & Ian Sinclair*
11. Club Distance Awards *Maureen Kershaw*
12. Jim Patterson Memorial Award & 'Joie de Ski' Pin *Dee Patterson*
13. Kevin Allan Riutta Award *Amy Wheeler Reich*
14. Janet Rodger-Anderson Award *Joanna MacDougall*
15. President's Award *Peter Burtch*
16. Closing Remarks – See you next season

*The Soo Finnish Nordic Ski Club has a long history of community service with respect to cross-country skiing in Sault Ste. Marie. As the club's name suggests, our roots stem directly from the many Finnish immigrants who settled in the Sault Ste. Marie area in the mid-1900s. These members of the Finnish immigrant community wanted to recreate a sense of community in their new home – and they succeeded! The Canadian Finnish Club, as it was initially named, was founded in 1953 and the Soo Finnish Ski Club was incorporated in March 1991.*

*We are Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario's premier cross country ski club with programs, lessons, events, and races that cater to all ages and abilities; located in the beautiful Hiawatha Highlands. Our club's volunteers and staff are active in building and maintaining the 35-kilometer trail system at Hiawatha Highlands. We are outdoor enthusiasts who promote the sport of cross country skiing, a sport for life, at the local, provincial, and national levels, competitively and recreationally. We are volunteers who appreciate the importance of giving back to our community. We are family and friends.*

## Message from the Board

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We have had another fantastic season with wonderful people and excellent snow conditions and ski trails. Our snow dances worked this year; we saw snow by mid-November and our trails are still in good shape as of early April. Thank you to the Hiawatha Highlands staff and trail volunteers for the daily maintenance of our second home. A special note of appreciation goes to Gil Edwards who will be retiring from the business this year. Gil has been our Hiawatha Highlands Outdoor Manager for several years. He has provided us with perfectly groomed ski trails, great leadership, and excellent guidance. Gil has been integral to our success - thank you, Gil.

The Board of Directors had a productive year: we facilitated positive change for our club and operations in addition to keeping up with our traditional volunteer roles. We have respectfully and effectively worked with our land owners and thank them deeply for allowing us to lease, use, and care for their land. Building improvements were made to the blue clubhouse and we implemented new trail signage on our partners' property. Another development was the installation of the terrain park; a multi-use training area. Thank you, Kinsmen Club, for supporting this dream we have had for many years.

Soo Finnish Nordic Ski Club, with nearly 400 members, holds membership in the Northern Ontario Division of Cross Country Ski Ontario and Cross Country Ski Canada (CCC), which is part of the Fédération Internationale de Ski (FIS), the world's highest governing body for international winter sports. We continue to develop collaborative relationships and host a rich and diverse event schedule that attracts the public and club members. Partnerships with organizations such as the 49th Field Regiment, Algoma District School Board, Bon Soo, Cadet groups, Clean North, Lake Superior Watershed Conservancy, Sault Area Hospital Foundation, Sault Cycling Club, Special Olympics, and the Voyageur Trail Association help us to promote cross country skiing, physical fitness, environmental stewardship, trails, safety, and community. Appreciation goes out to the numerous volunteers and local businesses who make all this possible.

Our youth programs continue to flourish as a result of the strength and commitment in our volunteer base. One can't help feeling proud and excited

when reading the following pages in this program. Our success is being noted nationally; in June 2018, we were awarded a second place banner for Growth in Athlete Participation for a medium sized club as part of CCC's Club Podium awards. We were also seen on the international stage with our Hiawatha Snowfest, celebrating World Snow Day, which was a FIS sanctioned event. And we can't forget seeing our club listed on the FIS start lists: Jack Carlyle raced at three World Cup races this year in Norway, Sweden, and Quebec City. Way to go, Jack!

Whether participating in an event, or helping to coach Jackrabbits, baking some cookies, or joining in on the trail clean up; there are many ways to help continue our club's success. Members may also provide input, ideas, and recommendations to be discussed during the club portion of the SFN Board meetings each month. As well, all members are invited to our Annual General Meeting at the Civic Centre on Wednesday, June 5, 2019 at 6:30pm. There are currently vacancies on the Board of Directors and anyone interested in learning more is encouraged to email us at [contactus@sooffinnishnordic.com](mailto:contactus@sooffinnishnordic.com).

Let's celebrate the 2018-2019 season. On behalf of the Board, thank you for being a Soo Finnish Nordic Ski Club member. Enjoy the evening.

Board of Directors

President: Joanna MacDougall

President Elect: Vacant

VP Operations: Vacant

Co-VP Programs: Amy Wheeler Reich

Co-VP Programs: Cassandra Nielsen

Treasurer: Wes Hill

Secretary: Don Nixon

Linda Hadley-Piscopo

Jennifer McFarling

Jim Mihell

Dee Patterson

Vacancy - General Member

## Bunnyrabbit and Jackrabbit Season Highlights

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Our program focuses on physical literacy, skill development, and FUN! We had 135 children aged four to 12 years old participate in the Bunnyrabbit and Jackrabbit programs, and this could not have been achieved without our team of over 50 volunteer coaches in all of our youth programs. A BIG thank you goes out to these wonderful and enthusiastic people who share their time and passion for the sport with our community.

We had snow to kick-off of the season on December 15: athletes met their coaches and teammates, skied, and enjoyed a classic Jackrabbit hot dog BBQ with cookies, hot chocolate, and hot grape. We skied throughout the holidays, but unfortunately, the temperature dropped below our cut-off for two weeks in January, and we had to cancel lessons for both days.

Many of our athletes in Levels Three and Four participated weekly in our informal Thursday night skate ski drop-in program. Having the extra hours on skis and with friends was fun for the youth (and volunteers).

Our mass-start by class, free technique, time trial on February 16 provided an opportunity for our athletes to get a taste of ski racing. The sun was out, we had music pumping on the speakers, and the warm drinks and treats on the tennis court were enjoyed by everyone. Racers were greeted at the finish line with a cookie medal.

Our Family and Friends Day was a relaxed season finale where many Jackrabbits skied on the Pinder in reverse direction. A campfire, hot dog BBQ, and warm drinks in the vintage silver containers were set up by the Mockingbird extension.

All of our children have pushed themselves to learn and do more on skis, showed great sportsmanship, and experienced winter at Hiawatha Highlands. We have enjoyed spending time with your families and creating wonderful memories. Please email [jackrabbits@soofinnishnordic.com](mailto:jackrabbits@soofinnishnordic.com) if you or someone you know can help organize the program or coach next year.

- Cassandra Nielsen, Diane Charron-Bishop, & Sarah Butler

## Graduating Bunnyrabbit Awards

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Presented to the most promising male and female skiers who are graduating from the Bunnyrabbit Program.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
2018	Nolan Parks	Aurora Aho
2017	Luca Capisciolto	Lily Parniak
2016	Max Allison	Brooke Wylie
2015	Jadon Pino	Claire Hill
2014	Kai Foster	Kate de Beer
2013	Aedan Smyth	Jenna Caple
2012	Eamonn Rushon Martineau	Dargus Burzese
2011	Cole Barbeau	Lauren Bowden

## The Kinsmen Trophies

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Presented to the most promising male and female skiers who are graduating from the Jackrabbit Program.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
2018	Seth Bishop	Kate de Beer
2017	Anirudh Gupta	Akela Sand
2016	Zarek Sand	Anna Towle
2015	Cole Barbeau	Ava Nixon-Holmes
2014	-	Malia Kirk
2013	Keon Shafiee	Julie Delorme
	Caleb Barynin	Courtney Gingras
2012	Declan MacDougall	Shilo Rousseau
2011	Terry Bariciak	Temeara Barrett
2010	Sebastien Gingras	Emma Karklins
2009	Matteo Reich	-
2008	William Stewart	Erika Mihell
2007	-	Maggie Kirkwood
2006	Jordan Reinke	Frances Mallinger
2005	Adam Hopfgartner	Catherine Mallinger
	Liam Ortiz	
2004	Ian Graham	Erin Mallinger
2003	Andrew Barbeau	Tessa Kasch
2002	Ben Gitner	Mandy Perkio
2001	Mathew Cuddy	Laura Mears



## Track Attack Season Highlights

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Track Attack is an adventure and fun recreational alternative for skiers aged 10 and up. We are not as competitive, but informal competitions do arise from time to time... “Who can knock the most snow off a branch and down a coach’s neck” is a perennial favourite.

Clare Baldwin  
Matthew Barnett

Ryker Gregory  
Anirudh Gupta  
Trysten Kahtava

Sydney Kitchen  
Noah Mittleholtz  
Gus Morin-Strom

Brennan Murray  
Ava Phillips

Several Track Attackers, and even a few parents, tackled the St. Joseph Island Maple Syrup Stampede. There was plenty of snow, and the new trails and experiences were wonderful. For a backcountry adventure, Anirudh did the 6 km Mabel Lake Tour. It was so much fun that next year he is determined to ski all the way to the lake – a 14 km round trip, which includes some challenging terrain.

Closer to home, Coach Rob has winter campfires down to a science. We had a great campfire and hot-dog roast on the Inner Loop Extension, and also joined a group of Jackrabbits for a fun campfire get-together at the legendary Pinder Lookout. In addition, we are working on the *2019 Great Track Attack Music Video*. Talented photographers and videographers have been at work all season long; a song has been chosen, and now Noah is working his production magic to put it all together in time for a premier showing at the annual banquet.

Our three old-time coaches were delighted to welcome some energetic young newcomers: Holly and Evan have come up through the system and are now a welcome part of the Track Attack coaching team. We also want to send out a special thanks to the parents who frequently skied with us; they were a great help and made the whole experience all the more fun.

Above all, many thanks to our 10 Track Attack skiers. They are fine young people who love skiing and have a real thirst for adventure.

- Rob MacDougall, Marjorie Hall, Evan Baldwin,  
Holly Zayachkowski, and Don Hall

## Racing Rabbits Season Highlights

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The Racing Rabbits program is designed for skiers who have graduated from the Jackrabbit program or participated in Track Attack, and are looking to spend more time on both classic and skate skis. The focus continues on skill development and fun, with an introduction to different race formats.

Rhiannon Barbeau	Kate de Beer	Helena Schoahs
Seth Bishop	Kai Foster	Simon Trombello
	Kavi Giroux	

Racing Rabbits practiced Thursday evenings and Saturday mornings on snow. Many of these athletes participated in weekly dryland training in the summer and fall, the Trail Trot in September, and extra practices with the Junior Ski Team. They also took part in a training camp in July at Hiawatha Highlands with Victor Wiltmann, the Program Lead at Cross Country Ski Ontario. The team raced at a few local events: the club time trial, the Maple Syrup Stampede, the Mabel Lake Ski Tour, and four Makin' Traks relay events.

Racing Rabbits travelled with the Junior Ski Team and a few PeeWee-aged Jackrabbits to the Ontario Youth Championships in North Bay. This was a major provincial skiing event with nearly 200 athletes who were representing 17 different clubs. Soo Finnish had one of the largest contingents with 18 skiers competing: Seth Bishop, Eli Clowater, Ahnika Davey, Kate & Jenna de Beer, Kai & Quin Foster, Kavi Giroux, Camren McClenny, Ava Meadows Delbel, Samuel Phaneuf, Helena Schoahs, Aly & Katie Sharabura, Jasper Tchir, Anna & Tom Towle, and Simon Trombello. Events included races in both classic and freestyle techniques, as well as a fun relay that joined skiers of similar ages from other clubs. Many of these athletes held strong top ten showings, and Tom and Jasper brought home some medals. Our youth had a positive experience racing at this level, and they also learned more about ski waxing, race etiquette, and being part of a team and a bigger community.

The Racing Rabbits and their parents would like to thank Bob and John for their coaching and support. It's a privilege to ski with this duo; not only do they challenge and inspire these kids to do their best, they make them laugh until they cry with all the fun training exercises, like teapot races, and spooky stories on the dark trails. Thanks for helping to develop some fantastic people.

## Junior Ski Team Season Highlights

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The Junior Ski Team trained on-snow every Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday, and many of the members participated in dryland training from June to November. The team uses the skills learned in Jackrabbits to develop more efficient ski technique, speed, and endurance while having as much fun as possible. They take part in many technique-oriented drills, practice relay and sprint races, and long distance ski outings.

Dargus Burzese

Ava Nixon-Holmes

Ahnika Davey

Camren McClenny

Ava Meadows Delbel

Anna Towle

It was an exciting year: skiers had the opportunity to participate individually, and as part of a supportive team, in many events including, the Trail Trot, Maple Syrup Stampede, the ADSB elementary meet, our club's time trial, Ontario Youth Championships in North Bay, and four Makin' Traks events where the skiers enjoyed random team selections and different race formats. Unfortunately, the Ontario Cup race at Walden was cancelled due to cold temperatures, but members still enjoyed the comradery and skied the host's trails.

Ava Meadows Delbel swept the podium at the Maple Syrup Stampede in the girls 7 km classic event with Ahnika second, Anna third, and Helena, Ava N-H, and Dargus not far behind. Camren McClenny won the boys 7 km classic event with Tom Towle finishing second. Seth and Kavi took first and second in the boys 2 km classic, and Kate won the girls 2 km classic race. At the Algoma District School Board race, all team members had top results for their age and distance categories. Dargus had the fastest time completing two laps of the 2 km course in classic technique in 18:33 minutes while being chased by Farmer Bob's dog. Camren had the best time at the Feb 16 time trial doing two laps of the 2 km in freestyle technique in 17:20 minutes.

The juniors competed in their blue and green race suits at the Ontario Youth Championships. Ahnika, Ava, Anna, and Camren skied a 4.7 km freestyle and 3.0 km classic race in rain, hail, sleet, and snow – a great learning experience.

The juniors also volunteer and participate in fun club events, like at bake sales, the ski swap, lantern skis, and do more social team-building events like the Mabel Lake Tour (where they skied 19 km together and enjoyed many cookies).

Great job representing the team everyone! The coaches are looking forward to next year.

# Jim Patterson Memorial Award

## 'Joie de Ski' Pin

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	<b>2018</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2016</b>
<b>Jr Bunnyrabbit</b>	Miia Tanninen Kobe Bodnar	Nolan Parks Benjamin Campbell Maria Marone	Arabella MacLachlan Katie Sharabura Aly Sharabura
<b>Sr Bunnyrabbit</b>	Xiaokang Cui Ty Capisciolto	Lucy Curran James Elgie	Jenna deBeer Eden Bishop
<b>Level One</b>	Lyra Baldock Lily Parniak Kiera Francis Eli Clowater	Jasper Tchir Allie Kitchen David Marone III	Nairn MacWilliam Valerie Hallet Ethan Mittleholtz
<b>Level Two</b>	Alexander Bravener Claire Parks	Liam Robertson-Ip Jadon Pino	Fraser Moody Vitaliy Kubin
<b>Level Three</b>	Maggie Lawson Emilia Parco	Ava Meadows-DelBel Seth Bishop	Isaac Smyth
<b>Level Four</b>	Ava Phillips Gus Morin-Strom Kavi Giroux	Rhiannon Barbeau Victoria Grasley	Dargus Burzese
<b>Racing Rabbit</b>	Anna Towle	Eamonn Rushon Martineau	Shail Giroux
<b>Track Attack</b>	Trysten Kahtava Celeste Schoahs	Waylon Rushon Martineau	Néomie Graham

Presented to a child in each group  
who loves to ski and have fun, and  
works hard to become a better skier.

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## 2015

Tom Towle  
Aubrey Coletti

Sophie Barbeau  
Madeline Coulman

Noah Mittleholtz  
Rowan Baldock  
Ashlyn Baars

Graham Kirk

Kyle Pino

Waylon Rushon Martineau

Martin MacDougall

Esther Yule

## 2014

Kiera Francis  
Temilade Adebowale  
Valerie Hallett

Kavi Giroux

Chelsea Tyrrel  
Kohen LaBlance

Anirudh Gupta

Ava Nixon-Holmes  
Brennan Murray

Laura Caple

Julie Delorme  
Jak Cameron

Mitchell Swinn  
Lauren Stenta  
Sarah Krysa  
Charlotte Reich

## 2013

Seth Bishop  
Mathew Guido-Schoepfner

Clare Baldwin  
Mya Moody

Riley Reid  
Anna Towle

Avery Hemsworth  
Abigail Peake

Paige Bowes

Téa Lane  
Emily Williams

Raili Kary

Christopher Zayachkowski

## 2012

Jenna Caple  
Zoe Foltz

Anirudh Gupta

Ava Nixon-Holmes  
Owen Duncan  
Hunter Banks

Malia Kirk

Julie Delorme  
Emily McNamara

Michael Shepherd  
Caleb Barynin

L5 - Callum Nixon-Holmes  
L5 - Annika Lane

Michaela Barbeau

## Senior Ski Team Season Highlights

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The Senior Ski Team are very dedicated cross country ski racers who train year round to prepare for the ski season. This very talented group of athletes do a combination of dryland training activities including running, roller skiing, cycling and strength work in the off season with some doing as much as 21 hours of exercise per week. Once the snow arrives, the athletes work on ski technique and speed to be prepared for the long race season. In addition to meeting for team practices, members train on their own during the rest of the week.

Both provincially and nationally the level of competition at this age is ferocious. Recognition must be given to the skiers who have simply committed to the competitions, let alone those who do well in the rankings. Our racers consistently pushed; congratulations on your hard work and outstanding performances!

Declan MacDougall    Gavan Barrett    Owen Duncan    Martin MacDougall

Declan and Gavan, who also belong to the Northern Ontario District Junior Lakers Team and the Ontario Ski Team, competed at Ontario Cups in Cantley, Thunder Bay, and Duntroon. Gavan also raced at Nationals at Nakkertok in March. Martin and Owen competed at the OCup in North Bay, and participated in many of our local events.

Our seniors are supported at OCups and training camps by the Northern Ontario Division (NOD) coach Toivo Koivukoski and wax tech Ray Gingras. The team also recognizes and appreciates the support received from parents both in town and also when travelling to the out-of-town races.

We bid farewell to Declan, who will be pursuing university (skiing). Great job representing the team, everyone! The coaches are looking forward to next year.

## Post-Secondary Cross Country Skiing

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Soo Finnish Nordic is proud to have skiers who compete under our club name, but away from home:

Jack Carlyle, Alberta World Cup Academy, Canmore, Alberta

Sebastien Gingras, Nipissing University, North Bay

Erika Mihell, Lakehead University, Thunder Bay

Matteo Reich, Laurentian University, Sudbury

## Golden Ski Award

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Presented to the skier who has shown a high level of talent, success, and sportsmanship during the past year.

2018	Zarek Sand, Junior	2013	Erika Mihell
2018	Gavan Barrett, Senior	2012	Wendy Mihell
2017	Jak Cameron, Junior	2011	Jack Carlyle
2017	Martin MacDougall, Junior	2010	Jack Carlyle
2017	Declan MacDougall, Senior	2009	Jack Carlyle
2016	Declan MacDougall	2008	Andrew Barbeau
2015	Shilo Rousseau	2007	Hilary Mallinger
2014	Matteo Reich	2006	Adam Kates

## Coach's Award

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Presented to the skier who has shown the most improvement in his or her performance over the previous year's results.

2018	Micah Byman, Junior	2008	Jack Carlyle
2018	Gareth Bellinger, Senior	2007	Adam Hopfgartner
2017	Micah Peake, Junior	2007	Catherine Mallinger
2017	Eamon MacDougall, Senior	2006	Ben Vanbiesbrouck
2016	Temeara Barrett	2005	Alexander Steele
2015	Declan MacDougall	2004	Neil Greenwood
2014	Josiah Reinke	2003	Laura Mears
2013	Matteo Reich	2003	Heather Gordon
2013	Sebastien Gingras	2002	Sarah Cuddy
2012	James Isaacs	2001	Paul Mears
2011	Wendy Mihell	2000	Mathew McCron
2010	Liam Ortiz	1999	Emily Hayman
2009	Jack Carlyle	1998	Emily Hayman

# Kevin Allan Riutta Award

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Given annually to the person, who through example, endeavour, and leadership, promotes and fosters cross country skiing among the youth of Sault Ste. Marie.

2018	Raymond Gingras	2002	Dennis Paradine
2017	David Baldwin	2001	Dee Patterson
2016	John Santana	2000	Sharon Cuddy
2015	Diane Charron-Bishop	2000	Lynn Rosso
2015	Cassandra Nielsen	1999	Mary Ann Hayman
2015	Matthew Towle	1998	Rich & Sue Greenwood
2014	Hiawatha Highlands Staff	1997	Ted Sutton
2013	Maxine Orr	1996	Bonnie & Rick Yurich
2012	Colin Templeton	1995	Virve Manniste-Squire
2011	Joanna MacDougall	1995	Jan Duggan
2011	Amy Wheeler Reich	1994	Helen Lindfors
2010	Larry Tomie	1993	Matt Kommusaar
2009	Carl Rosso	1992	Allan Spurr
2008	Kevin Grant	1991	Wayne Westman
2007	J. J. Hilsinger	1990	Jim & Dee Patterson
2006	Chris Kitzman	1989	Paul Neimi
2006	Wendy Steele	1988	Melba Kinnunen
2005	Peter Uhlig	1987	Kitty Dustin
2004	Jim Maxwell	1986	J. J. Hilsinger
2003	Michael Keating	1985	Heikki Kinnunen





## Jim Patterson Memorial Award & 'Joie de Ski' Pin

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Jim Patterson's Memorial Award celebrates the participation and accomplishment of those ski club members who share enthusiasm, love of skiing, and sense of fun.

- 2018 Peter Uhlig & Monique Wester, Tchir Family, Duncan Family, Mark Crofts
- 2017 Jamie Curran, Phil Dopp, Sand Family,  
Teen coaches: Julie & Michelle Delorme, Charlotte Reich, Catherine Quon,  
Ella Santana, Courtney Gingras, Michael Shepherd, Nathan Hallett, Raili  
Kary, Derek Rouleau, Christopher Zayachkowski
- 2016 Raymond Bone, Ian Sinclair, Peake Family, Stewart-deBeer Family,  
Murray Family
- 2015 Moody Family, Shannon Ramsay, Andrea Howland, Erin Mallinger,  
Lawrence Foster, Greg Prodan, Colin Edwards, Emily Hayman
- 2014 Diane Charron-Bishop, Towle Family, Taylor Family, Hertz Family,  
Baldwin Family, McGuffin Family, Sam Nicoletta, Dunlop Family
- 2013 Ortiz Family, Robert and Vera McCron, Betty Noland, Gloria Mears
- 2012 Barrett Family, Karklins Family, Jessica Chiarello
- 2011 Mike Keating, Eric Piscopo, Larry Tomie, Hall Family
- 2010 Jennifer McFarling, Irvine Family, Santana Family, Carlyle Family
- 2009 Linqvist Family, Gingras Family, MacDougall Family
- 2008 Tomie Family, Reich Family, Buckner Family
- 2007 Nearing-van Kerkhof Family, Hopfgartner-Kitzman Family
- 2006 Steele Family, Mihell Family, Adam Kates, Brady Dunne
- 2005 Boucher Family, Larry Tomie
- 2004 Bellinger Family, Gordon Family, Julia Wytsma, Cody Noland
- 2003 Mario Festival, Barbeau Family
- 2002 Bob Fadock, Dennis Paradine, Hogan Family
- 2001 Elaine Windus, Paul Barbeau, Paul Pothier, John Kasch, Scott Capell,  
Mallinger Family

## Janet Rodger-Anderson Award

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This award was presented in 2003 to commemorate a dear friend to SFNSC and many of its members, Janet Rodger-Anderson. The award is given annually to the master skier who through example, endeavour, and friendship, promotes and fosters cross country skiing among the people of Sault Ste. Marie.

2018	Wayne Westman	2011	Larry Tomie
2017	Betty van Kerkhof	2010	Grahame Gordon
2016	Snowfest Team	2009	Jennifer McFarling
2015	Mary Ann & Darren Linquist	2008	Robert Mears
2014	Dave Lomas & Scott McCron	2007	Dee Patterson
2013	Margaret Barbeau	2006	Marg Meincke
2012	Carla & Mike Buckner	2005	Paul Barbeau

## President's Award

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Awarded annually to a person who has made a significant contribution over many years towards club activities and cross country skiing in Sault Ste. Marie.

2018	Matt Towle, Cassandra Nielsen	2008	Jim Mihell
2017	Scott Capell	2008	Betty van Kerkhof
2016	Joanna MacDougall	2008	Adriana Tomie
2015	Amy Wheeler Reich	2007	Paul Barbeau
2014	Doug Cuddy	2006	Melba & Heikki Kinnunen
2013	Rachelle Barbeau	2005	Sue Greenwood
2012	Lora Kinnunen	2004	Gloria & Robert Mears
2011	Laurie Carlyle	2003	Betty & Tom Noland
2010	Kevin Hogan	2002	Vera & Robert McCron
2009	Kinsmen Club	2001	Bob Fadock

## The Mabel Lake Trail: An Early History by Peter Burtch

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There has been a lot of water passing through the Crystal Creek system since the early establishment of the Mabel Lake Trail.

In the late-70's early 80's, community interest in cross country skiing in the Soo and area was on the rise. The Kinsmen were active grooming the trails at Hiawatha and Stokely Creek Lodge was building trails. Mike and Carolyn O'Connor were the managers at Stokely Creek at that time.

To help address the increasing interest in cross country skiing and to increase the sports profile and availability to school children, several local individuals established a steering committee called Cross Country Algoma. Members included Jim Hillsinger, Kitty and Stan Dustin, Al Riutta, Ralph Yanni, Mike O'Connor, Brian Brooks, Colin Malcom, Peter Burtch, and a representative of the Kinsman Club (there may be more and if I omitted someone I do apologize). The goals of the group were to improve the quality of cross-country skiing in Algoma, create and manage an educational program, and establish a tourism marketing strategy to show the world our great cross-country skiing product and increase tourism in the city.

Under education, the group secured a van, built racks inside it and filled them with skis, poles, boots and a wax kit. Kitty Dustin was the main person in the educational "Ski Van" program. She was responsible for introducing the sport of cross-country skiing to countless primary school children in the city and surrounding area. This could be considered the start of today's Jackrabbbit program.

The expansion of the trail network was also a priority. The concept of physically connecting the Hiawatha Highlands with Stokely Creek was accepted as a significant goal. The group called this trail the "Link Trail". Hours and hours were spent going over maps and air photos searching for a route. We searched for existing trails and/or abandoned logging roads then worked to connect the obvious. Many hours were spent in snow free times searching out the routes on the ground. Obviously, there were sections of this conceptual dream that we would need to build from scratch. Luckily, due to an existing network of Stokely's trails, abandoned logging roads and lakes we were able to create a trail from Stokely Creek to the north side of Mabel Lake. South from the Bellevue Trestle we used numerous logging roads and lakes in Jarvis and Duncan Townships to get to Mabel Lake. Lakes such as Legge Lake, Lake One, Alexander Lake and Gordon Lake were connected by the many logging roads and skid trails. The challenge was from Hiawatha to Mabel Lake.

In the fall and winter of 1984, a volunteer crew composed of Brian Brooks, Gary Rollins, Colin Malcom, Peter Burtch, and Mike Murry would get together as time and conditions

allowed. With chain saws in hand and snowshoes on their feet they set to cut the original alignment of what is now the Mabel Lake Trail. I recall the fun we had cutting down thin but very tall black spruce in the swamp along Crystal Creek. The tall, thin trees wouldn't fall down and had to be pulled backwards until they finally hit the ground. The original trail alignment is very close to what is used today. Once we got to the creek narrows at the north end of the swamp, where the new bridge is today, we cut a new trail that connected to an old logging road and eventually the trail to Mabel Lake was complete. The "S" hill before the lake was cut out by the group as the best route down that long hill. We also thought it would be a fun downhill to ski. The completion of this section connected, for the first time, Stokely Creek Lodge with the Hiawatha Highlands.

Now that we had the Link Trail it would need grooming and of course we had to have a loppet. In March of 1985 (just a guess) the first "Eat, Drink and Ski Merry Loppet" occurred. Sponsored by Cross Country Algoma and Canadian Tire, two school buses loaded with skiers, with the support from the Canadian Ski Patrol, left Hiawatha Lodge on a crisp March morning and travelled to the Bellevue trestle, on the Searchmont highway, to ski the 32-kilometer route back to the lodge. Mike O'Connor drove the Stokely alpine and set track on this narrow classic-only trail from Stokely to Hiawatha. Once at Crystal Creek, skiers had the option to use the bush trail or the open swamp, as is the case today. The event ended at Hiawatha Lodge where the "Eat and Drink" part was made up of chili, bread, salad, desert and a cash bar was provided upstairs in the lodge. The "Eat Drink and Ski Merry" loppet ran for a number of years, it could be considered the pre-event to today's Mabel Lake loppet.

One event that still bears the visible scars along the trail was when the staff of the Conservation Authority clear cut two blocks of black spruce between Connor Road and the Crystal Creek swamp destroying the Link Trail in those locations. Feelings were hurt and the trail eventually was re-established. The issue showed the need for better communications and supported the need for approvals.

Unfortunately, the concept of a full functioning "Link Trail" ground to a halt when the need for a permanent bridge crossing of the Goulais River was found to be well out of anyone's budget.

Today we use the same trail that was originally cut in the mid-80's by a volunteer group from Cross Country Algoma to Mabel Lake. Whenever I'm on the Mabel Lake Trail many happy memories return, all with a feeling of great personal satisfaction remembering the beginnings and looking into the future. The Mabel Lake trail truly makes the Hiawatha Highlands a very special place.

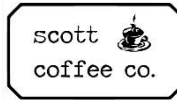
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