

Around The State

April 2014

IN THIS ISSUE

[GeocacheAlaska! Updates](#)

[Caching Tricks, Tips, and Tools](#)

[Events](#)

[GecacheAlaska! General Information](#)

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

- April 2 [Maker Madness - Alaska Style!](#)
- April 6 [“CAVYGUY”..... A MAKER MADNESS EVENT](#)
- April 11 [Celebrate Alaskan Caching Hallmark Experiences](#)
- April 12 [IOVC's 10th: A Geocaching Celebration](#)
- April 26 [Geocaching for Fun EduVent](#)
- April 26-27 [Girdwood CITO \(tentative date\)](#)
- May 1 **14 Years of Geocaching**
- June 7 [WWFM XI - Anchorage AK - Town Square Flash Mob!](#)



GeocacheAlaska! Updates

President's Corner

By Wes Skinner / NorthWes



Spring! While overnight temperatures are still plunging well below freezing, by month's end we should see most of the snow gone at low altitude this year. Barring any surprise snowfalls, this sets us up nicely for the April 26 – 27 International CITO (Cache In Trash Out) Weekend. GeocacheAlaska! Inc. has adopted a three-mile stretch of the Seward Highway just north of Girdwood, and we expect our first of three summer cleanups to occur during the April 26 – 27 weekend. You'll also see your chance to earn an interesting new souvenir from Groundspeak as local cachers host special "Maker" events in the next several weeks. Don't miss out on the fun times that happen when cachers get together for an event! Our Event Committee announced at the recent board meeting an exciting weekend – long summer outing at a whistle-stop on the Alaska Railroad, the details of which will be published very soon. Final details are being completed by GeocacheAlaska! Inc. volunteers for all these events. Watch the upcoming event listing on geocaching.com's website and in its weekly newsletter emails, and for notices on the GeocacheAlaska! Inc. Facebook page. Speaking of Facebook, we encourage you to upload posts and photographs to the GeocacheAlaska! Inc. Facebook group. Share your outdoor adventures and inspire others to follow in your footsteps. Often the photos are all the encouragement another cacher needs to push a little farther into the wild to create their own Alaska geocaching adventure.

As mentioned in last month's newsletter, we're very close to finalizing our State Parks caching permit. We're waiting on final paperwork back from the Alaska State Park admin team, and will celebrate the receipt of that permit by sharing the good news with our membership immediately via all our regular communication channels. This is your president's number one priority for action and closure right now.

The Communication Committee, a new working team at GeocacheAlaska! Inc. this year, is using a variety of methods to reach out to membership with news of interest and notice of upcoming events. You may encounter ways to participate with GeocacheAlaska! Inc. by email, Facebook, Instagram and twitter. Prior surveys show most members like to get their news by email, but we don't want to miss communication opportunities which keep you up to date on geocaching in Alaska.

More than two dozen cachers gathered at Guido's Pizza on March 12, 2014 at a low-key event to celebrate the fifth anniversary of GeocacheAlaska! Inc's incorporation as a nonprofit corporation. With five full years of nonprofit status behind us, we strive for continuous improvement in our principal areas of emphasis: advocacy with land managers, education of geocachers and the public about geocaching and enhanced geocaching skills, and sponsorship of social activities such as events where geocachers gather to meet and greet persons of like interests. As we grow, our single biggest need continues to be members willing to serve the geocaching community in advocacy, education, and social event support by working on various standing committees. Visit our website at geocachealaska.org, link to the forums, and see where you can join the active geocachers supporting the game in Alaska.



Top Tens: Alaskan Cacher's Caching Achievements

By Scott Aleckson / SSO JOAT

This month's Top Ten list of Alaskan Cacher's Caching Achievements goes to our Great Land's Greatest Caches. These are the Alaskan Traditional caches with the highest percentage of Favorite Points to date. That means we are only counting the Favorite Points as a percentage of only the Premium member logs, but to be fair to all Alaskan Cachers, we are not including any Premium Member Only caches on the list. The actual number of Favorite Points follows in brackets and the caches had to have at least 10 Favorite Points to be considered for the list.

- #1 [Ida Lake & the Bench of Enviably Comfort and Joy](#) = 75.0% [15]
- #2 [Wood you like to cache?](#) = 68.8% [22]
- #3 [Incarcerated](#) = 63.5% [40]
- #4 [Eagle Hill – Birch of Doom](#) = 63.2% [12]
- #5 [On the Ninth Day Of Christmas](#) = 59.1% [13]
- #6 [The Hillbilly Safe # 13-KA-1289](#) = 53.3% [16]
- #7 [Whatchamacallit](#) = 47.2% [17]
- #8 [Centurion Guards](#) = 45.5% [10]
- #9 [Old No. 5](#) = 44.6% [37]
- #10 [Flirting with Fun Guys](#) = 40.7% [11]

Look for another Top Ten list next month.

GeocacheAlaska! Updates

Sandbox Snippets

By Joel Vos / NeverSummer

2014 Pathtags are submitted, and we're getting going on the selection process. Stay tuned for the news about those fun annual items. Talk has also begun for a 2014 Geocoin, and a plan is in the works for a special 2015 coin. If you'd like to get involved, check in with the Fundraising Committee. Also, the GeocacheAlaska! forums have some resources about past contests and designs.

The Advocacy Committee is working on the Alaska State Parks permit. If you'd like to help out with some advocacy work, please be sure to get in touch with someone on the committee. Remember: It's our efforts that help keep areas open for our use, and can open doors to new lands to play our game. Come and support one of the partnerships between GeocacheAlaska! and the USFWS at the "IOVC's 10th: A Geocaching Celebration" ([GC4ZAER](#)). IslandsandOcean (me, NeverSummer) is looking for help to show new cachers how to use their GPSr and find caches all around the grounds of the Islands and Ocean Visitor Center in Homer.

The Education Committee is working out the details about scheduling EduVents. If you would like support from the Education Committee for your educational events, let me, NeverSummer, know. I will love to help out with answering questions about creating your presentations, handouts or other ideas for a "How To" or "Geocaching 101" event in your area. Stay tuned to the upcoming newsletters, the forums, and our Facebook Group for more information as it comes out. Next up will be SSO JOAT's Eduvent in Soldotna: [GC4ZAER](#) Have an idea for an Educational event? Get in touch! We'd love to help our members learn more about everything from Earthcaches to Benchmarking!

On to the Events Committee: From the Hobo CITO events, to SSO JOAT's annual Kenai Picnic, to a GeocacheAlaska! Summer Campout, the planning is underway. Stay tuned in the forums to learn more about the big plans for the year, and also to share what you'd like to host around your area. GeocacheAlaska! is here to support members like you and me, and the committee will be happy to talk about how they can help. Next up on the horizon will be a handful of Maker Madness events, and some other fun coming in April. You can always find the coming events listed on the forums, as well as posted to our Facebook Page and Group. The big news coming is a plan to host a July campout at the Spencer Glacier campground! Get ready to mark your calendars!

The CACHE Committee is all about recognition, and is ready to get going on recognition events for 2014. Fuzzybelly is chairing the committee, and will be heading up the first of this year's CACHE events with "Celebrate Alaskan Caching Hallmark Experiences" (C.A.C.H.E), [GC4ZPYV](#). The committee will also be recognizing all kinds of milestone congratulations and other celebrations of cachers in Alaska. Want to get involved? [Get in touch with fuzzybelly!](#)

That's the update from the Sandbox. Keep coming back to see what's going on in your GeocacheAlaska! organization!

Editor's Note

By Cathy Wilmeth / The_Firefly

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this April issue of Around The State! This issue is full of GeocacheAlaska! updates, Reviewer 'Needs Archived' information, and event reports. I hope you enjoy reading the articles as much as I enjoy getting to share them with you!

I will be out of state during production time for the May newsletter, but GeocacheAlaska! President Wes / NorthWes has volunteered to put together a fantastic issue full of good articles and photos for you to enjoy. Then I'll be back in May to put together our June issue. Maybe I'll even have a Travel Caching story to tell!

Send your submissions to editor@geocachealaska.org by April 22nd, 2014. As always, everyone is also encouraged to send photos, caching tips, travel reports, newsletter suggestions, etc. This is your newsletter, let's hear what you have to share!

GeocacheAlaska! Updates

GeocacheAlaska! C.A.C.H.E. Committee Update

By Scott Sagraves / Fuzzybelly

Gracious, glorious, glimmering greetings go out to all Alaskan cachers around the state, from the GeocacheAlaska! C.A.C.H.E committee (Celebrating Alaskan Cacher Hallmark Experiences)

We've got a lot going on right now in this committee with tracking down all those Hallmark experiences and milestones you all have been racking up. There's been a lot of achievements through the winter, and the regular season of geocaching (Summer) is just around the corner. We've already got the first Event of the year planned, so look for the listing once it publishes. We'll be handing out awards to some lucky cachers. Golden Ammo Cans with the cacher's name on them will be handed to a few deserving Alaskan Cachers, Badges of different achievements will be awarded to some cachers who have already been awarded a Golden Ammo Can, and will be applied to their trophies, and recognitions will go out to still other cachers who have meet caching milestones. Oh, this night will be a blast. I wonder who will be awarded next?



Also, if you were to peruse the GeocacheAlaska! forum pages you'll find, under the KUDOS thread, a special recognition section from the C.A.C.H.E committee. There you will find all sorts of cachers being mentioned for different milestones that they have reached. Don't hesitate to give a shout out and congratulations to a cacher you see there. Check in often because we'll be making announcements there when you least expect it.

So, from the CACHE committee to Alaskan cachers, let's go have a fun summer caching and creating Hallmarks experiences and reach milestones that all of us would be happy to hear about.

Finally, here's a sampling of the first round of the forum pages Kudos Thread.

Lunchlady495 cruised right past the 1500 smiley mark this month, and I'm sure she had awayd, by her side, they host the WACO event each year.

Questing and lil'Questing hit quite a smiley count. This month they hit 3500 and it wasn't on a FTF. What's the odds of that?

readem and weep hit a major milestone, and a big KUDOS go out to this cacher. Drum role please.....1000. Way to go, weep, no tears here :)

Po1ar hit another big milestone just recently, "set off the fireworks" 500 smileys, WAHOO!

Not A Lost Sister Made 1000 caches "not lost" too, back in January.

Farmergang cleared the field to 400 this year too. Congratulations Gang. And be careful tossing the midgets:) loved that post.

RCward is on the verge of 700, only 2 more away, wonder who will find it R or C. They sit at 698.

ftl-ak is back and pilling up those smileys. This Charlie Brown fan just passed 2200 and looking for more.

akstumped wasn't stumped when finding #500 and won't be stumped on the next 100.

AND FINALLY,

Big and I mean BIG kudos go out to; tomanoble and blazzingpathways on the caching accomplishments they've achieved. 7999 and 7900 respectively. Now thats a lot of smileys.

Happy caching to everyone, now lets go out there and turn some frowns upside down :)

C.A.C.H.E Committee

Caching Tricks, Tips, and Tools

Reviewer's Corner

By Michael Malvick / Greatland Reviewer



“Needs Archived” (and other) Logs

Geocaching is a self-policing game and local quality is highly dependent on the reporting mechanisms used by cache seekers. The “Found It” log is self-explanatory and the most often used log. If the cache container needs repair, the log sheet is full, or there are other issues with the cache requiring Cache Owner attention, a “Needs Maintenance” log should also be written in conjunction with the “found it” log. The “Needs Maintenance” log places a special attribute on the cache page and alerts the Cache Owner there is a problem with their cache. Local Reviewers are not required to act on these log types, but as a community service, I’ll periodically write a Reviewer Note to the cache page sporting the Needs Maintenance attribute, suggesting that the Cache Owner check their cache. I also provide instructions on how to post an “Owner Maintenance” log to clear the attribute. The “Needs Maintenance” log should never be used if the cache cannot be found. After all, a cacher doesn’t know if the cache needs maintenance if the cacher didn’t actually find what could simply be a very well hidden cache.

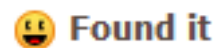


The appropriate log if a cacher cannot find a cache is the “Didn’t Find It” log. This log type is not the “badge of shame” that many cachers seem to think it is. Rather, it is a simple statement of fact that the cache couldn’t be found and is oftentimes the first and only indication for the Cache Owner that the cache may be missing. A string of “Didn’t Find It” logs on a cache that has a long history of “Found It” logs is a clear sign that something has changed and Cache Owner attention is warranted. I periodically run a Geocaching Swiss Army Knife (GSAK) filter to find caches with growing “Didn’t Find It” histories and write a Reviewer Note to the cache page requesting a maintenance check. If the “Didn’t Find It” history continues to grow and the Cache Owner doesn’t check on the cache, I will archive the cache.

The “Needs Archived” log should be used to bring a cache to the Local Reviewer’s attention. This log type may be used in addition to a “Found It” and other issues such as placement on private property, proximity to railroad tracks, drug or alcohol paraphernalia, or other non-guideline compliant problems are noted. It may also be used in conjunction with a “Didn’t Find It” log if there has been a string of prior “Didn’t Find It” logs and/or other non-guideline compliant issues are noted. Caches with “Needs Archived” logs go to a special queue for Local Reviewer attention. Unless the guideline issue is especially egregious and immediate archival is appropriate, I will give the Cache Owner time to respond to the log on his/her own. If the Cache Owner does not respond within a reasonable amount of time, I will write a Reviewer Note to the cache page requesting action. If there is still no response, I will archive the cache page with instructions on how to get the cache reinstated. Reinstatement rarely happens because active cachers usually respond to the initial “Needs Archived” or “Reviewer Note” logs.



One of the things I look at when considering whether or not to archive a cache is if the Cache Owner has been online recently. This used to be as straightforward as looking at the Cache Owner’s profile page and checking the “Last Visit” field. However, with the increasing popularity of caching with a smart phone, one now has to look at the last time the Cache Owner logged a geocache because smart phone logs don’t update the “Last Visit” field on the profile page. This issue has been raised with Groundspeak, but has not yet been rectified. In the meantime, if you do primarily find and log caches using your smart phone and a geocaching application, it is a good idea to periodically log on to the geocaching.com website so the “Last Visit” field resets.



As a reminder of my opening paragraph in last month’s Reviewer’s Corner, please plan to perform a Spring check-up for your caches. Once the snow melts from the lower elevations and the big, slow mosquitoes hatch, I will perform a “sweep” of caches that have had long-standing issues.

Events

2nd Annual Seward March Birthday Flash Mob

By Louise Kempler / Freeweez & Lisa Williams / WOCM

The weather in Anchorage was for snow, snow and more snow! But for the determined Geocachers who took the highway south to Seward---they were all rewarded with a smiley for attending the 2nd Annual March Birthday Flashmob on Saturday, March 15th in Sunny Seward, Alaska!



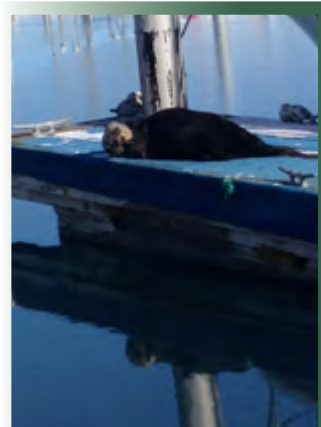
Thumbs up for the birthday folks.

Dmzlstone won honors for FTF; and li1gray, glenn.fish, cavy-guy, akgh519, akjoey, kimkat, and akhillbillies, were treated to a very bright and sunny Seward afternoon! The event was even more fun for the Seward Geocachers who attended: Ridgeseeker and Suzaru, alaskanangel99577, cristancanoe, and naptym! All were treated to birthday cupcakes and sweets and the Geocachers who had a birthday in March received a

present! A rousing rendition of The Birthday Song was sung, the official log signed, a special birthday gift from WOCM was drawn - with 'naptyme' winning with homemade pouch with lots of geogoodies stuffed inside! This Flashmob lingered a bit longer, as many caching stories were told and shared, and some interested cachers (were they muggles?) heard many caching stories!

Were there some secrets shared by Ridgeseeker? Or alaskanangel99577? We're not telling!

Many cachers walked to the harbor to gain a memorable photo of the Birthday otter! He showed up just on time!!



Birthday Otter!

WOCM and Freeweez hope to put this event together again next year..... so keep March 1015 open on your calendars!! Happy Birthday to March-birthday geocachers---and Cache On!!



Birthday Flash Mob!

'64 Great Alaska Earthquake - 50 Years After (GC507TP)

By Wes Skinner / NorthWes

More than two dozen persons turned out for this March 27th event held on the 50th anniversary of Alaska's 9.2 magnitude 1964 earthquake. Attendees strolled over a mile through Anchorage's Earthquake Park during the course of the evening, first skirting the westernmost edge of the Turnagain Heights slide zone along the crown of the scarp to the Park's memorial overlook.

Continued on Page 8



"NorthWes teaching at a great event"
- Photo by DR-AK

Events

50 Years After

Continued from Page 7

Information panels at the overlook supplied geocachers a portion of the answers needed to complete the newly-published "1964 Great Alaska Earthquake: Earthquake Park" EarthCache ([GC51DA](#)). The group walked back to the Tony Knowles Coastal Trail for a descent down through the horst and graben zone to reach water's edge, completing measurements along the way to finish up requirements for the EarthCache. Throughout the walk, NorthWes gave a running commentary regarding how the '64 earthquake impacted this area. Clear sunny skies and no breeze allowed the temperature to hover near 40°F during the visit, and attendees were even graced with the presence of a moose on a mission trotting past the group. It was a beautiful spring evening for our remembrance of the 50th anniversary of the 1964 Great Alaska Earthquake.



"Great turnout for the Earthquake 50 year event!"
- Photo by Ladybug Kids

GeocacheAlaska! Inc. Turns Five Years Old!

By Wes Skinner / NorthWes



March 11, 2014 marked the five-year anniversary of GeocacheAlaska! Inc.'s incorporation as an Alaskan nonprofit organization. To celebrate, geocachers returned to their roots at Guido's Pizza for an evening of conversation and reminiscence about the past five years. In the organization's formative times, many a meeting happened between the 'community room' at Kaladi Brothers and the back tables of Guido's Pizza as dedicated individuals developed the framework of GeocacheAlaska. Between writing out the bylaws, filling out the seemingly-endless piles of government paperwork, and making sure the purpose of the organization was clearly defined, there were hours and hours of work performed by the founding volunteers to bring GeocacheAlaska! Inc. from an idea into reality.

Past president Paul Miller was fortuitously back in Anchorage briefly (flying in from his latest construction work in Australia) and was able to join the group. We purposely left out any organized games, giveaways and other revelry, giving everyone a chance to chat and catch up (and plan ahead) during the course of the evening. It's believed one cacher may have established an age-group-specific record number of visits to the salad bar across the span of the event, leaving behind the wreckage of six visits to the salad bar in her wake.



As her mom and a stunned Capra Hircus look on, KR-AK lays claim to six salad bar runs this evening!

Photo by NorthWes

Events

MO' PIE TURNS IV

By Tom Noble / tomanoble

March 14 is also known as PI Day because when written in computerese it comes out as 3.14, the shortened value of PI, a famous mathematical value. In its four year history the GeocacheAlaska PI celebration has started at 6:28 pm because that 6.28 equals 2PI. It has also always been held at the same location so one can see how the weather has been for each of the PI Day events. What set this year's event apart was the SNOW!

As mentioned earlier, the event started at 6:28 pm, but the snow started at 6:15 pm. And did it ever come! By the time we were cleaning up and putting away the event tables there was about 3 inches of snow on the tables and some of the pies had gone uneaten because they were buried in the snow. By counting people in the group photograph and the people taking photographs there were at least 35 people who braved the snow and were still there for the group photo.

I thank everyone who showed up for the event and contributed to its success. Kudos to all who brought pie to share and as usual we had many extra pies at the end. The PIE POPS by Alaskan Rainbow and Trailcachen were crowd favorites. They all went to deserving homes and were enjoyed all the more because of the snowy topping they received during the event. A special THANK YOU to HYKNAK for donating the special medallions she made and were given out as prizes.



MO' PIE Group Photo by blazingpathways.



MO PIE photo by DMZLSTONE



Jazzy cacher with a snowy pie!
- Photo by tomanoble



Li1gray enjoys a Pie POP
- Photo by tomanoble

Around The State

GEOCACHEALASKA! MEMBERSHIP

There are two membership levels at GeocacheAlaska! Inc.

Sourdough Membership (formerly known as Premium Membership) affords you discounts in the GeocacheAlaska! online and traveling stores and events that have an entrance fee (Geofest, etc.), voting rights in Board of Directors elections and a warm fuzzy feeling for helping underwrite the organization's operating expenses that include web hosting, printing, banners, post office box fees, event prizes and lots of other things that are required to make things happen. Because GeocacheAlaska! is an incorporated 501(c)(3) tax exempt organization, your membership dues are tax deductible.

If you cannot join as a Sourdough at this time, you may support GeocacheAlaska! by joining as a Cheechako (formerly known as Associate) Member. This will allow you to receive the monthly newsletter and e-mail announcements. More members at any level gives GeocacheAlaska!'s more clout and credibility during land manager conversations, so sign up today!

There are four ways you can join GeocacheAlaska! at the Sourdough level for \$20/year.

1. Navigate to the [GeocacheAlaska! webpage](#) and click on the "Subscribe" button to set up an automatic subscription which will renew annually. Please enter your caching name in the provided box.
2. Navigate to the [GeocacheAlaska! webpage](#) and click on "Add to Cart" to purchase an annual membership that will run through December 31, 2014.
3. Navigate to the [GeocacheAlaska! webpage](#) to download a membership form you can print and mail with your payment.
4. Attend one of the upcoming GeocacheAlaska! events and speak to any Board Member.

Find us online at:

1. GeocacheAlaska! Website: <http://www.geocachealaska.org>
2. GeocacheAlaska! Forums: <http://geocachealaska.proboards.com/index.cgi>
3. GeocacheAlaska! on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/geocachealaska/>
4. E-mail to contact@geocachealaska.org
5. Interior Alaska Geocachers: <http://alaskageocachers.org/>

JOIN US ON FACEBOOK & Twitter!

Like our official [GeocacheAlaska! Page](#) on Facebook to keep up to date on things happening with GeocacheAlaska!

Also, join the official [GeocacheAlaska! Group](#) on Facebook to stay in touch and share your activities with fellow members of the geocaching community. This is where GeocacheAlaska! members can plan caching adventures, post photos, and pass messages within the membership ranks. This Facebook Group is designed to be yet another member benefit for Sourdoughs and Cheechakos alike. Visit our Group and request to Join so you can start viewing and participating with GeocacheAlaska! and your fellow geocachers.

 [@GeocacheAlaska](#) Follow GeocacheAlaska! Inc. on Twitter!

STATE PARKS PERMITS

2014 State Parks permits are pending. Stay tuned for updated information.

NEWSLETTER INFORMATION

The editors of *Around the State* would like to hear from you. Submit articles or suggestions to editor@geocachealaska.org Subject: Around the State.

Previous editions of *Around the State* are now on our website. If you have missed previous newsletters, check out the series (including previous Trail Reports) [here](#).