

Around The State

April 2015

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MARK YOUR CALENDAR

[Phone Apps & GPS FUNdamentals - Anchorage](#), April 16, 6:50pm,
Anchorage

[Phone Apps & GPS FUNdamentals - Ketchikan](#), April 16, 6:50pm,
Ketchikan

[A Day at the Museum...](#), April 18, 10am-4pm, Anchorage

[3rd Annual Almost-Earth Day CITO](#), April 25, 10am, Juneau

[GeocacheAlaska! 2015 Adopt-A-Highway Spring CITO](#), April 25,
9:45am, Girdwood

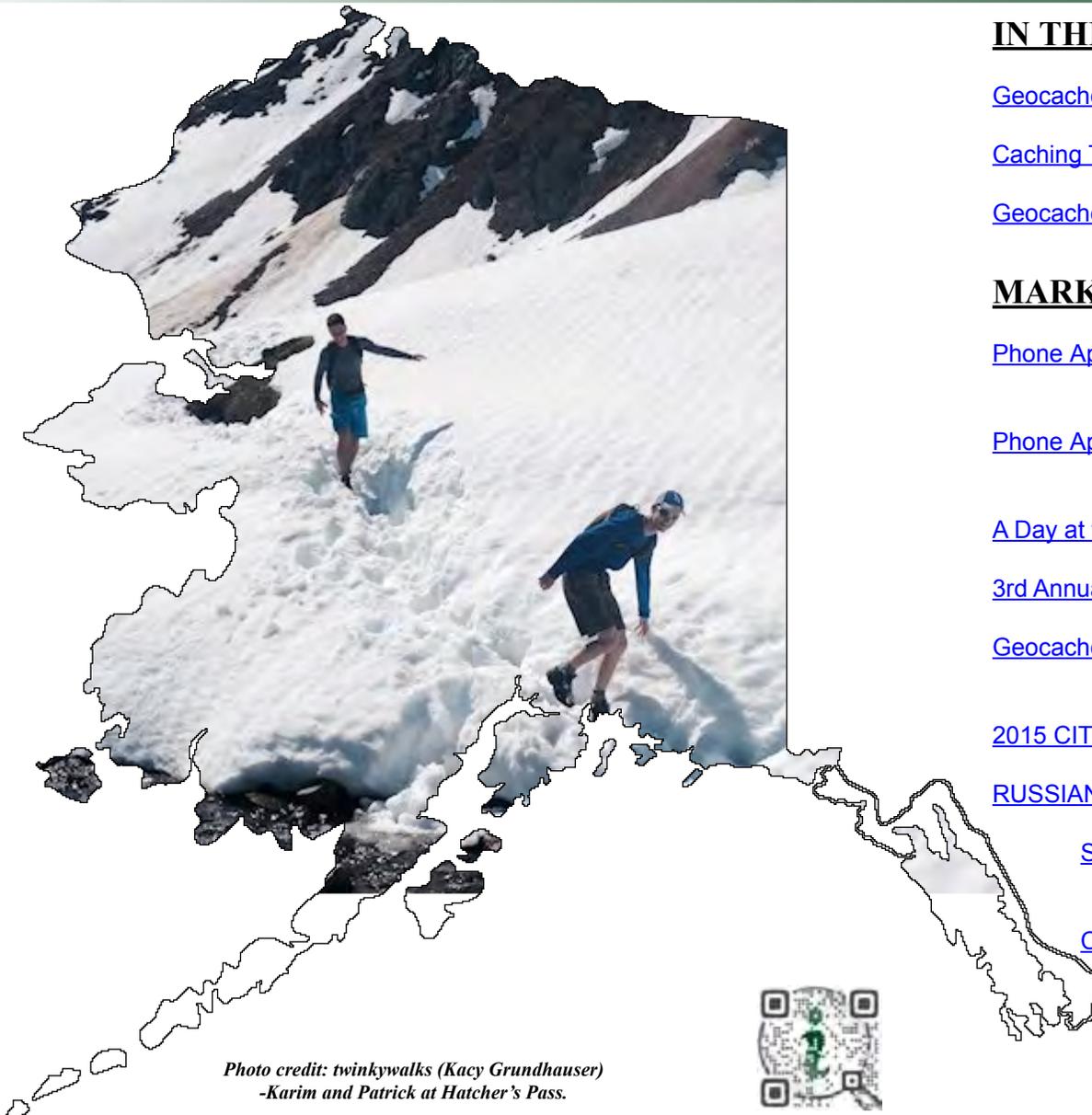
[2015 CITO](#), April 25, Ketchikan

[RUSSIAN JACK CITO ROUND 2](#), April 25, 2pm, Anchorage

[Stammtisch - Kick Off To 15 Years Of Geocaching](#), May 2, 6am,
Anchorage

[Celebrating 15 Years of Geocaching!](#), May 3, 4pm, Anchorage

[May the Fourth Be With You! Monday 5/4/15](#), May 4,
6pm, Anchorage



*Photo credit: twinkywalks (Kacy Grundhauser)
-Karim and Patrick at Hatcher's Pass.*

GeocacheAlaska! Updates

President's Corner

By Wes Skinner / NorthWes



All across Alaska weather records have been broken again this winter. Except – unlike much of the contiguous United States - we've been bathed in warmth and low snow levels, which has produced some of the best opportunities for getting out on the caching trail over winter in the last decade. At a recent Stammtisch breakfast event, one of the Hockey Chicks confided to me just how much fun they've been having in taking advantage of firmly frozen ground with little to no snow as they've continued to build their find count around Southcentral Alaska. With the advent of mosquito season looming on the horizon, take advantage of frozen ground and lots of daylight to get out and make an early start on your caching season (and get in early maintenance on your cache hides, too!)

Elsewhere in this newsletter you'll find an article about the recent "Event EduVent" where GeocacheAlaska! Inc taught basic Event-hosting skills. I challenge you to join the ranks of Event Hosts, earning credit on your statistics page for carrying out one of the best missions any geocacher can accomplish – helping to build up the social network which makes individual cachers more successful in sticking with the game, refining cache hunting and placing skill-sets, and just having a lot more fun with folks of similar interests. GeocacheAlaska! Inc's own CACHE Committee recognizes the value of Event Hosts as part of its Golden Ammocan Award series, giving special recognition to those persons who've stepped up in a special way to give back to their geocaching community by serving as a host and trainer at EduVents. You are the agent for positive growth in this game when you personally host an Event of the Social or CITO kind, and GeocacheAlaska! Inc is ready to provide you support for stepping up to meet the Event Host Challenge. Read on in this newsletter to find out more. Who knows – the President may just pop in to some future events with special recognitions, too!

By the way – there's already some local events on the horizon you should be planning to attend. The first of our three annual Seward Hwy CITO Events near Girdwood occurs on April 25th giving you the opportunity to earn a special Groundspeak Souvenir on your stats page for the annual Worldwide CITO weekend. Saturday May 2nd begins with a "Stammtisch - Kick Off To 15 Years Of Geocaching" breakfast event. Note that May 2nd and 3rd feature opportunities

to earn a special souvenir by either finding a cache or attending an event in celebration of Geocaching's 15th Anniversary (stay tuned for a special event listing publishing soon!) Star Wars fans (and all other folks who just want to have a good time too) won't want to miss May 4th's special 'May the Fourth Be With You' event – with a slew of special prizes in store! (I'll be at that last event in costume – you'll have to attend just to see who I'm dressing up like, won't you?) Events are fun – don't miss out on attending and HOSTING an event soon!

Top Tens: Alaskan Cacher's Caching Achievements

By Scott Aleckson / SSO JOAT

This month's Top Ten list of Alaskan Cacher's Caching Achievements is a revisit of 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 Enviaible Comfort and Joy](#) = 74.1% [20]
- #2 [Jimmy and Debbies TB/GC Hotel](#) = 64.0% [32]
- #3 [ZOMBIES, WALKERS, & THE UNDEAD](#) = 60.7% [17]
- #4 [Incarcerated](#) = 58.3% [42]
- #5 [On the Ninth Day Of Christmas](#) = 56.9% [33]
- #6 [Eagle Hill – Birch of Doom](#) = 55.0% [22]
- #7 [Wood you like to cache?](#) = 52.4% [22]
- #8 [Centurion Guards](#) = 52.4% [11]
- #9 [Whatchamacallit](#) = 44.4% [20]
- #10 [The Hillbilly Safe # 13-KA-1289](#) = 43.2% [16]

Other than the #1 position, this list is quite a bit different from the version we ran one year ago this month. Ida Lake still holds the top position. If you haven't been out to the Sutton/Chickaloon area on the Glenn Highway lately, this cache and the multitude of Power Trails that have been put in over the last couple years make for a great day of caching.

GeocacheAlaska! Updates

GeocacheAlaska! Sourdough Nametag Program

By Scott Aleckson / SSO JOAT

Questions have come up several times in our social media outlets recently about our trackable Sourdough Nametags. Here is a synopsis of the program and how it works. You can view all of our Sourdough Member's nametags through the [GeocacheAlaska!](#) profile.



The first year that a member purchases a Sourdough membership with GeocacheAlaska!, they will receive a customized trackable nametag. These tags have a magnetic back fastener and they are customized by placing the member's geocaching.com nickname on a yellow label that is applied across the front of the tag. The tag is already activated under the GeocacheAlaska! profile on geocaching.com and the tracking number ownership remains with the organization. These tags are not available for purchase for private ownership. They are a special perk that is intended only for active Sourdough members of GeocacheAlaska! When a tag is created and activated, it is then logged into the first event that GeocacheAlaska! hosted back in March 2009. The actual tag is mailed to the member. When they receive the tag, they retrieve it from the event cache just like you would pick up any other trackable item from a geocache.

Once the nametag has been moved to your personal geocaching profile, you may travel with it to events and out geocaching where you may "visit" caches and show off your nametag to other cachers, who can then "discover" your tag with the tracking number. This is a great way to show off your membership at social events, where you are likely to see other members wearing their nametags and people going around gathering tracking numbers so they can "discover" the other cachers.

While you are out geocaching, you may log your nametag as "visited" in every cache you find. This is done while you are writing your online cache logs. After filling in the log, scroll down the screen and you can mark your nametag as visiting the cache. The cache visit becomes part of the nametag's travel record and mileage from cache to cache is calculated so you can see how far your nametag has traveled. Just remember that the nametag is intended to stay with the member. It should never be released into a geocache to travel on its own,

as you would do with other trackable items.

If a cacher should cease to be a member of GeocacheAlaska!, the former Sourdough member is not required to return the nametag. However, the tracking number will remain under the ownership of GeocacheAlaska! and the club will "grab" the tracking number from you and move it into the trackable Collection under the GeocacheAlaska! profile on geocaching.com. A trackable that is in a collection may still be discovered, however it cannot be retrieved or logged into any caches. But don't worry. If you are just late in making your annual dues payment, we are not going to grab your trackable the next day. We will make every effort to contact you and remind you to pay your membership with a reasonable grace period. If you have a hardship and need a little time, just let our Treasurer know and keep the lines of communication open. We are a social club, not the phone company. If we have placed your nametag in our collection and you renew your membership, we will immediately move it out of the collection so that you may grab it and continue with your travels. At no point will we "archive" or delete anything from your nametag.

We encourage our Sourdough members to bring their nametags to every event and wear them proudly. Take them caching and take pictures with your nametag. Just remember to cover up the tracking number (the thumb works great when doing the "nametag selfie") so that it is not visible in any images you post online. Consider getting the Instagram app for your smartphone and using that to post geocaching photos with your nametag in the photo. Tag those photos with #geocachealaska and feel free to mention @geocachealaska in your photos. This will tie your photos to our official Instagram account where all of our followers can see them. Don't forget to look us up @geocachealaska and add us to your follow list on Instagram.

We announced the conclusion of a couple nametag contests last month. We are still pouring through nametag logs and compiling data to figure out the winners of a couple contests based on discovery logs and cache visits. The winners will be announced soon, as will details on the running of the next nametag based contest!



Recent Events

March Birthday Flash Mob

By Louise Kempker / Freeweez

March 14, 2015 was very windy and sunny- but that did not deter many cachers from making the trip from Anchorage to Seward! One big surprise was the 'muggle' who actually turned out to be none other than our friend: Coloreido! He and his new wife were visiting from CA.



Went to the fbx pi day event, got stuffed!
Lots of great pies.

- Jamie Barber

IV + I = Mo'Pie! GC5MBY3

By Tom Noble / tomanoble

The 5th edition of the GeocacheAlaska Pi Day event went off without a weather hitch this year. Last year the weather was nice until about 15 minutes before the event began and ended up dumping inches of snow on us. This year the weather was bright and clear and definitely on the cool side. Still, I had a great crowd turn out and as usual the extra pies made it to the next Edeuent. The official event photo has @35 people and more showed up after the photo was taken and eating began. The Fur Rondy float and Ammo Can made an appearance. Rumor has it that this will be placed in the wild at some undisclosed date and location.



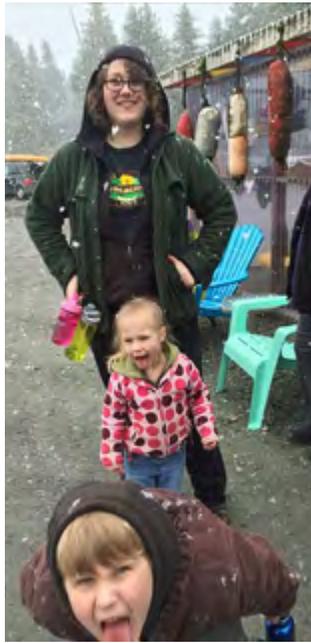
Recent Events

Let's have a slice of Pie on Pi Day!

By *Erica Rud / AKRUD*

Pi Day Event Souvenir - [GC5NGVX](#)
Ketchikan, AK

If you used to travel down Southeast Alaska via plane in the 80's and 90's you will have at least heard about Sitka's Pie's. Growing up when the plane would land in Sitka, the whole plane would get off and buy a pie to take home from the little restaurant in the airport, my favorite being the peanut butter pie. Since then the owner has moved to Ketchikan and now makes those pies at a small burger shack by Knutson Cove Marina. When thinking to myself, how can we celebrate Pi Day? A big slab of Peanut Butter Pie from Dockside Galley was sure to hit the spot! And it did! We had 7 cachers with their families for a total of 14 people attending the event. It was a fun filled hour of eating burgers, pie and sharing stories.



Wild Child AK and AkMotherBear



Student Camper with GeocacheAlaska! nametag!



Wild Child AK and SCARLY<3Rellimer13 with their kids



alaskantman with his friend

Pi Day Mystery Cache Souvenir

Luckily for Ketchikan we have some very talented puzzle cache makers. Ketchikan has several Mystery Caches but we had two new special caches hidden to help us celebrate! GC5PBTQ Knotty created and hidden by Wild Child AK and GC5PBVG Mystery divided by ? = ? created and hidden by SCARLY<3Rellimer13 were kind enough to create and hide 2 new and very different but extremely fun puzzle caches to help us earn the Cache Pi Day Souvenir.



KetchGirl and Student Camper

Recent Events

Host an Event!

By Wes Skinner / NorthWes

Have you ever considered hosting a Geocaching Event of the social or CITO kind? Years ago when I realized I would earn credit for hosting an event with a special icon on my caching records, I was motivated to get busy and set up my first event. It was a CITO at Kincaid Park in April 2005, where I for the first time met face to face many of the cachers whose names I'd only seen on logsheets and cache pages. It was the beginning of what became a great relationship with some of the folks at the Anchorage Municipality's Parks Department too. Ten years and nearly thirty personally-hosted events later, I'm firmly convinced that the Event (or CITO event) is one of geocaching's best activities you could ever find yourself involved with.

GeocacheAlaska! Inc's most recent EduVent explained the Event cache from start to finish, providing tips on how to successfully plan and execute a social gathering of geocachers. First thing you need to know is that geocachers like to hang out together, and they're happy for any excuse to sidle up alongside fellow cachers and swap stories/seek clues/show off trackables. Success for an event is a given thanks to that enthusiasm, as long as the event host follows a few steps to success along the way. Here's some easy points shared during the Event EduVent which help the Host have a successful activity...

When planning the Listing – answer the 5 Ws: What / When / Where / Why / Who – and don't forget the "how" aspect, either!

1. What is the Event Purpose? (examples: simple social gathering, Flash Mob, training session, Meet'n'Greet at local restaurant, commemorative, etc). Tip – review prior events for concepts & event purposes.

2. When is the Event Date? (generally cannot be posted less than two weeks away or more than 3 months in advance of listing date) Tip – choose a date and time to enhance maximum opportunity to participate, if possible. All events must post a start time, and an ending time at least 30 minutes after start. CITO Events are to be a minimum of 60 minutes in length.



3. Where is the Event Location? (also known as 'venue') Use both a physical description and the coordinates in Event Listings. Factors to consider when selecting a location include: a. Is the venue large enough to support projected attendance? b. Does the venue have adequate parking? c. Is a permit required to use this location for this gathering? d. Will the location's physical environment be adversely impacted by this event? e. Measured across the duration of the event, does the venue provide adequate public facilities such as bathrooms? f. Is the venue accessible to all potential attendees? (including cachers with mobility issues?)

4. Why are you holding the event? This is similar to the 'What' segment, with the added idea that you may have further twists to the event purpose you want to share on the listing page, such as earning a souvenir for attendance, or access to special training opportunities for attendees.

5. Who is the event targeting? New cachers? Veteran cachers? Families? Folks at the beginning or end of a typical work day? Park users? People who need exposure to new skills? Tip – review prior events to see what's been successful in reaching out to the caching community, and build your event to meet a perceived need!

6. How are you going to carry off this event? As host, you're responsible for everything from start to finish, which at first glance can be daunting. Tip – seek assistance from your geocaching club – GeocacheAlaska Inc. was founded in part to help geocachers enjoy social aspects of the game including support for events. Go to our website at geocachealaska.org and click on the 'contact us' link on the front page's column on the right; on the lower portion of the page in the 'Events' section you'll see a link to download the 'Event Form.' Fill out that form in detail and submit it to one of the board members listed on the same 'contact us' page to get help with hosting your event. All we ask is to have our logo-link shown on your event listing, so others can learn about GeocacheAlaska! Inc. Other helps include reaching out to prior event hosts and asking for tips, and asking fellow cacher-attendees to help with any activities going on during the event. Finally, hosting an event is just like planning a gathering for friends – you don't have to be 'over the top' to be successful – just be yourself, and make sure you've provided for the Five W's as you plan how to carry off your gathering of friends!

Recent Events

Hosting an event puts you in the driver's seat for one of geocaching's most enjoyable activities – keeping the social aspect of the game in full play. It can be very simple, such as hosting a 'Stammtisch' type social moment at a local restaurant, or as complicated as the annual Kenai Picnic event with its BBQ, event cache games, and special bling. Start small and work into the fun of earning a reputation as an Event Master – your fellow cachers will appreciate your efforts tremendously! And don't overlook the help available from GeocacheAlaska! Inc to make your personally-hosted event a huge success...

Stammtisch Breakfast

By Mike Malvick / Ladybug Kids

I arrived early at NorthWes' bidding to get some business done and one of the hockey chicks was already there, soon to be followed by many other cachers. Somehow during the event, NorthWes, akgh519 and I got done what we needed to do and then had time to socialize and answer questions. AKfishgoddess snagged a chair at the head of the table for what I think is her first event and one of the ETs proved maybe he really isn't evil by helping her with her chair. Onespirit555 and Mr Peabody once again where the "most traveled." They must be racking up more miles to attend event then cavyguy is accumulating to rack up FTFs. Jackcat14 did a two-fer this morning, splitting his time between the Boy Scouts and geocachers. Fuzzybelly arrived, lit up the room, ate, and left much more relaxed. DadVan showed up looking better than everyone else as usual and biggriz was both bugless and beardless (did he give up trying to look like fuzzy and cavyguy?). Farmergang Sr wandered in later and left early between his more pressing work and family duties, and Li1gray was unusually quiet, yet may have accepted the challenge to host the April Stammtish at a time and location that best works for him. Alaskan Bev took breakfast to go after chatting with some folks and passing out hugs to take on her first day back at work after burning some sick leave.

Stammtisch Breakfast – March 27, 2015 – hosted by NorthWes and attended by more than a dozen cachers hungry for food and fellowship! Step up to the challenge and host a 'Stammtisch'-style breakfast, lunch or dinner gathering at your favorite local eatery! Photo by Wes Skinner / NorthWes.



Caching Tricks, Tips, and Tools

Reviewer's Corner

By Michael Malvick / Greatland Reviewer



I began "Spring cleaning" caches for the territories I have been assigned (Alaska, Hawaii, Greece, and a number of small countries located mostly along the Pacific Rim) about two weeks ago so the local caching scene is ready for the influx of Easter and subsequently Summer travelers. The process I use to identify caches with issues involves the following:

1. Download all caches for an area and import them into Geocaching Swiss Army Knife (GSAK).
2. Filter for caches that have picked up the "Needs Maintenance" attribute since my last review. For these caches, I simply post a Reviewer Note with guidance for what to do about it. Groundspeak recently eliminated the ability for cachers to "toggle" the attribute off by editing the cache page attributes, so the only way a Cache Owner can now clear the attribute is to write an "Owner Maintenance" log for the cache page. I will not take further action on caches that have only the "Needs Maintenance" attribute because the "Needs Maintenance" log that turns on the attribute is intended to be a communication tool between cachers and the Cache Owner.
3. Filter for caches that have been "Temporarily Disabled" for more than thirty days. For these caches, I post a Reviewer Note requesting the Cache Owner to fix up the cache and "reenable the cache," OR write a Note to the Cache Page letting the Caching Community and the Local Reviewer know what is the maintenance plan. Sometimes "life happens" and a Cache Owner needs more time to manage cache issues and as long as I know the Cache Owner is still engaged I won't subsequently archive the cache.
4. Filter for caches that have a growing string of "Didn't Find It" (DNF) logs. For these caches, I post a Reviewer Note asking the Cache Owner to verify the cache is all right or to replace the cache and post a Note on the cache page to let the Caching Community know all is all right with the cache.

Under no circumstances will I archive a cache page the first time I look at it unless there is an especially egregious Guideline violation. Cache Owners have at least 14-30 days to respond to a Reviewer Note before I return to a cache page. If I see a Note on the cache page stating travel, hurricane, fire, locusts, lava, or life in general are delaying maintenance, I'll add a note to my database and check back again in the future. Caches with problems that appear to be abandoned because there is not a reply to a Reviewer Note ultimately get archived.

I was recently asked by a Cache Owner why one of their caches received a recent Reviewer Note while another cache they hunted had a growing string of DNFs. This can happen if cachers use a "Needs Maintenance" log rather than a "Didn't Find It" log to break up a string of DNFs. This "confuses" the GSAK filter. Cachers are reminded NOT to write a "Needs Maintenance" log unless they actually found the cache and *know* that the needs maintenance. If the cache is not found, the correct log type is the "Didn't Find It" log. Chance can have a part in the process, too. I oftentimes have to look at nearby caches before I publish a new cache and I'll write a Reviewer Note if I see a (developing) issue.

Local cachers can help their Local Reviewer by posting "Needs Archived" logs on caches with a history of problems or by sending an e-mail to the Reviewer via his/her profile. The "Needs Archived" log does not always result in a cache getting archived. Think, instead, of it as actually being a "Needs Reviewer Attention" log.



Newsletter Contest

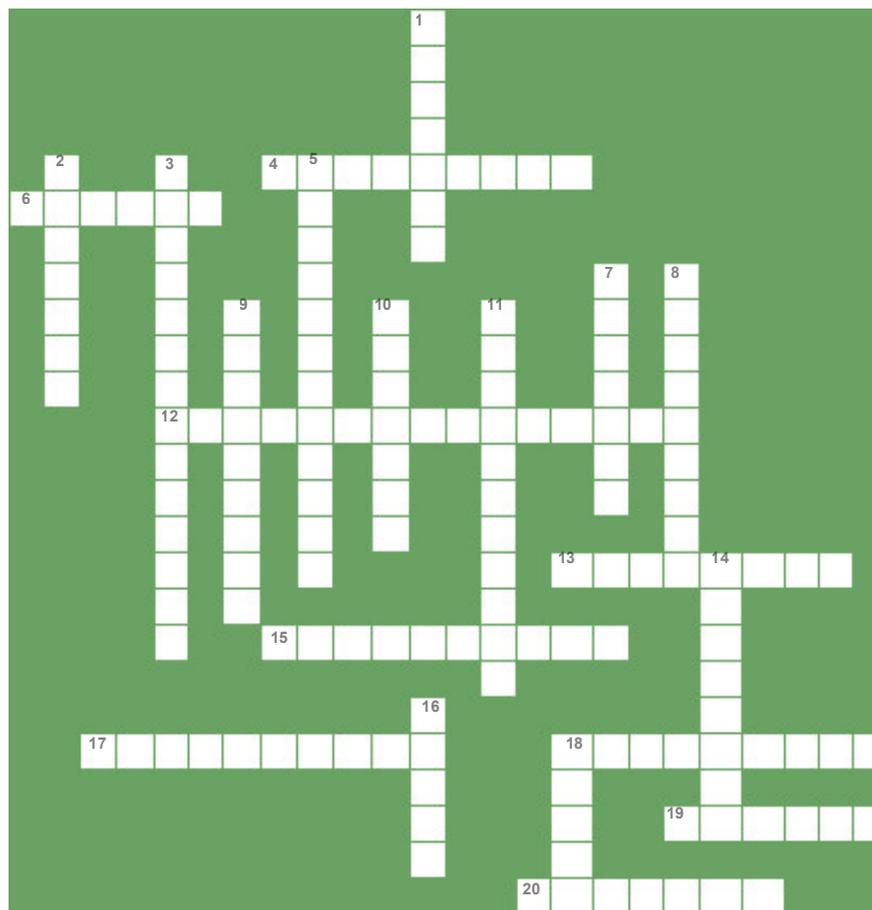
Sourdough nametag statistics

By Victoria Noble / Blazingpathways

If you look up GeocacheAlaska! as a user on the geocaching.com website, you will find that GeocacheAlaska! currently has 270 Sourdough Nametags visible in the trackables area. While many of us have worn or seen those nametags at events, some of us may not know that 150 of those Sourdough nametags have also been logged as trackables into caches across the world. This crossword shines a light on the nametags that have traveled 50,000 miles or more. Work the crossword and email your answers to contest@geocachealaska.org by April 25th. All correct entries will be entered into a drawing for a GeocacheAlaska! prize. This contest is open to all GeocacheAlaska! Cheechako and Sourdough members.

Across	Clue
4	100,000+ MILES
6	70,000+ MILES
12	60,000+ MILES
13	70,000+ MILES
15	60,000+ MILES
17	50,000+ MILES
18	50,000+ MILES
19	60,000+ MILES
20	70,000+ MILES

Down	Clue
1	60,000+ MILES
2	100,000+ MILES
3	100,000+ MILES
5	100,000+ MILES
7	300,000+ MILES
8	70,000+ MILES
9	70,000+ MILES
10	100,000+ MILES
11	70,000+ MILES
14	60,000+ MILES
16	200,000+ MILES
18	50,000+ MILES



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.
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. Facebook Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/geocachealaska/>
4. GeocacheAlaska! Facebook Page: [GeocacheAlaska! Page](#)
5. E-mail to contact@geocachealaska.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

Caches may be published within Alaska State Parks! All caches must have the permit number on the inside of the cache along with the cache owner's contact information. On the outside of the cache, you must write "Alaska State Parks Permit #15-KA-1994 Geocache AK" in permanent marking. The cache listing must state "Cache placed under GeocacheAlaska! Park Use Permit #15-KA-1994" within the description section. Before submitting a cache listing within one of the parks, please thoroughly read the complete list of stipulations in the permit, which may be [downloaded](#) from the GeocacheAlaska! website.

NEWSLETTER INFORMATION

The editors of *Around the State* would like to hear from you. Submit articles or suggestions to editor@geocachealaska.org Previous editions of *Around the State* are now on our website. If you have missed previous newsletters, check out the series [here](#).

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