



AUGUST 2012 NEWSLETTER

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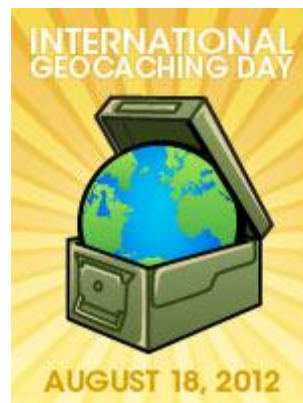
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International Geocaching Day - August 18th

reprinted from Groundspeak's 18-25 July Weekly Update



Geocachers unite on August 18th to celebrate International Geocaching Day. It's a day devoted enjoying what you love - geocaching. There's even a digital prize. Geocachers who log an "Attended" at an Event Cache or a "Found it" for another cache type on International Geocaching Day earn a souvenir for their Geocaching.com profile page.

International Geocaching Day is the perfect occasion to hike with family and friends, enjoy the outdoors, and log one, two, or a dozen smileys.

Thousands of adventurers will attend one of more than 100 International Geocaching Day events around the globe. The events range from Event Caches to CITO Events and include Mega-Events in Germany, Hungary, and the United States.

The Mega-Event in the U.S. is the 2012 [Geocaching Block Party](#) hosted at Groundspeak HQ in Seattle, Washington. Watch this [video](#) to see your invitation from some of Geocaching.com's most famous (furry) employees.

Check out the calendar on the front page of this newsletter or the [Geocaching.com Event Calendar](#) to find an International Geocaching Day event near you. Don't forget to share pictures and stories from your International Geocaching Day event on the official Geocaching.com [Facebook page](#).

LBK Featured in Cache-A-Maniacs Podcast

[Ladybug Kids](#) (known locally as LBK) was recently interviewed for a [Cache-A-Maniacs podcast](#). He tells stories from some of his many caching trips around the world during his 8 years as a cacher, and shares some great tips for meeting local cachers while travelling.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR--EVENTS

[While the Cat's Away: Puzzle Solving FUNDamentals.](#)

Thursday, August 16. A puzzle solving workshop in Anchorage. There is no dial-in or WebEx for this event.

[International Geocaching Day FlashMob in Soldotna.](#)

Saturday, August 18. Hosted by SSO JOAT with prizes provided by GeocacheAlaska!

[Fairbanks International geocaching day event.](#)

Saturday, August 18, Fairbanks, Alaska. Hosted by firemanak with prizes provided by GeocacheAlaska!

[Share International Geocaching Day With A Bear.](#)

Saturday, August 18, Hyder, Alaska.

[Windy City Welcome at the New York Café.](#)

Sunday, August 19, Ketchikan. Hosted by some cruisin' cachers who want to meet the locals.

[OWimseycal Meet and Greet.](#)

Sunday, August 26, Anchorage. Dutch treat event at the Snow Goose Restaurant, to greet visiting cachers wimseyguy and ODragon. Don't forget your Sourdough nametags!

Third Adopt-a-Highway CITO, Sunday, September 16, Girdwood. Details TBD.

Indian Summer Annual Picnic, Sunday, September 16, Anchorage. Details TBD.

8th Annual Geofest, Friday, December 14, Anchorage.

Hosted by GeocacheAlaska! Big finale for the year with a gift exchange, slide show, dinner and much more!

Calendar Contest Deadline Approaching

by Tom Noble, aka Tomanoble

The September due date for photo contest entries is quickly approaching. As a reminder, this year's categories are:

People Places/Locations

Containers Flora

Wildlife/Fauna Adventure/Extreme

Whimsy/Fun Caching Children

Winter

You may enter up to three photographs in each category. To be eligible for inclusion in the Calendar Contest the photographs must be taken in Alaska. Thirteen photos will be displayed full-size on the calendar with at least one picture chosen from each category. The photo garnering the most overall votes will be placed on the cover. Entries will be accepted through September 30, 2012; the voting will take place in October 15-31, 2012.

Photographs may be submitted by emailing a high resolution copy to PhotoContest@GeocacheAlaska.org. Please use the tag **[PHOTO CONTEST]** as the Subject Line of your message.

In the body of the message, please state which category the photo is being submitted to, the names and/or geonickname of any people appearing in the photo as well as the geocache the photo is associated with. Please provide the GC number and the cache name, or link directly to the cache page using the url format <http://coord.info/GCXXXXX>. Include the photographer's real name and their geonickname. Please include a title or caption for the image if you have one.



Reviewer's Corner - Cache Permits

Generally speaking, Alaskan geocachers enjoy relatively unfettered access to public lands for geocaching activities. No municipalities have implemented a geocaching permit policy and only two Alaska State Parks jurisdictions require a permit to place a geocache. Chugach State Park and State Parks falling under the jurisdiction of the Mat-Su District (which spans from Denali State Park to Copper Center) require the annual blanket permit number to be placed on the cache container and on the cache page. These permits are renewed on the behalf of all Alaska geocachers by GeocacheAlaska! annually, so you should check the GeocacheAlaska! [Land Manager webpage](#) for the current permit numbers and stipulations when you plan to place a cache in areas falling under these State Parks jurisdictions. Several geocachers have commented that this seems bureaucratic, but Alaskans have it easy compared to other states where annual *individual* permits, some with a fee, and a requirement to remove the cache within two years must be obtained.

Geocaches are banned from National Parks, National Monuments, and National Wildlife Refuges without written permission from the Land Manager. Some jurisdictions have opened their lands to EarthCaching on a limited basis (such as Denali National Park) and conversations have just begun with Land Managers of National Wildlife Refuges in Alaska. Be sure to check with the local Land Manager before placing a cache of any kind in these excluded areas and obtain contact information if permission is granted to share with your local reviewer.

Write a Log to Remember, Reprinted from the Groundspeak Weekly update for 1-8 August 2012.

Great logs inform other geocachers of what they might expect on their caching adventure. They also reward cache owners, who enjoy reading about the experiences of those seeking their caches.

Share your experience beyond a TFTC (Thanks for the Cache) or TNLN (Took Nothing Left Nothing) log by following these 5 tips:

- 1) **See it and Say it** - Describe what you saw and experienced on your way to the cache. Did you see a rare bird, a hidden waterfall, or George Clooney? Tell folks about it.
- 2) **Be a Superhero** - If there are new conditions in the area, like a fallen tree, warn other cachers.
- 3) **Talk about Trades** - Tell people what is in the cache container along with what you took and what you left.
- 4) **Shout Out for the Cache Owner** - Thank the cache owner for placing the cache.
- 5) **Learn from Others** - As part of the [Lost and Found promotion](#) in 2010, Groundspeak asked people to nominate great geocaching logs. Read the nominations [here](#).

Let's Make a Deal CITO

by Fuzzybelly, photos from karma123

The morning of Sunday, July 15, started out wet, windy, and cold. Fortunately, for the cachers hoping to take part in a CITO event near Girdwood (the second of three 2012 Adopt-a-Highway events) and be a contestant on the game show "Let's Make a Deal," the rain stopped, the winds calmed, and the temperatures, well.....stayed the same.

Coffee and cocoa awaited the arrival of attendees (numbering 17) and the others that showed up to help. By noon, georigs had filled every parking space available, leaving room for no more.

Funny side note: One hour before the start of the event, your host was spotted 1/2 mile away, parked, and waiting for cachers to arrive. Luckily, ColoReido recognized the geoRV and asked when he might head to GZ. "OMG", was the reply, followed by frantic packing, and an RV racing down the road to the true GZ. OOOPPS!!!

Before the start of the clean up, NorthWes arrived carrying a box of precious TBs. The GeocacheAlaska Sourdough member travel bugs had arrived. The OOHHS, and AAHHS spread through the attendees as cachers inspected and discovered their new travel bug tags, while Cheechako members hoped for the day they got one of their own.

Afterwards, fuzzybelly once again bestowed greetings upon HIS people. Vests, and bags where handed out, safety instructions were



given, and the cleanup crew headed to the highway to rid our section of road of every scrap of debris they could find.



As usual, cachers found items they didn't want to CITO. Blazingpathways bounty was, believe it or not, an unopened roll of....drum roll please.....Bounty paper towels. Luckily for Coloreido, Tundra Tim found a shiny hook. A perfect TOTT. And - Jojo found a pile of railroad spikes.

Sandwiches, chips and drink awaited the CITO crew's return. They ate, drank, and swapped lies while they waited for the game show to begin.

Soon fizzlybelly, playing the part of game show host, Monte Hall, addressed the studio audience, and introduced his lovely assistant VannaPathways, who was dressed in a wonderful green hippie outfit. The game was underway.



Meljo was the first contestant. With fear in her eyes, she reached for a gift from Monte's pocket. It was a full used logsheet. Hoping to make a deal to trade, she picked from what was behind treasure chest #1. VannaPathways revealed her prize. It's a bison, but not the kind you think. She had won a picture of a buffalo from the conservation center down the road, and she was tasked with cleaning up after it. Then came JOJO's turn. He won, what we all thought was an ammo can, but was only a picture of Jonathan Ammo's can, an outhouse in the Talkeetna area. What a bummer. Needless to say, he dealt for a chance behind a treasure chest. A real ammo can was revealed. All cheered. Next was freeweez, who started off with a ball of tin foil, then decided to make a deal. The audience yelled "take number one, take number two", hoping to help her get something good. She excitedly chose door number two, and Vanna revealed a shiny new bison container.

Dmzlstone and Cavyguy got the chance to cop a feel and play the game, thankful all the while fizzly wasn't playing the part of Richard Dawson, smoochy, smoochy, big boys.

Prizes awarded included pathtags, and cache buddies. VannaPathways decided to keep for herself, the Cavy Clue Coupon (hey, she's a host, she can do what she wants). and the FTF CITO coin went to, who else, wolfmaster1.



As the last prize was awarded to the last contestant, the rain started to fall, the wind started to blow, and the temperature, well.....stayed the same.

Caching on The Kenai - 4th Annual Picnic

stories and photo by Fuzzybelly



Cachers rolled in to the park as steady as the tide below for the dipnetters, to the Caching on the Kenai- 4th annual picnic event. Before long attendees and their families totaled more than 50. The mingling had begun. Kids ran about playing with one another, hiding behind rocks and dashing through the forest at top speed, while others sat and enjoyed a good book. The adults wandered around meeting new cachers and exchanging caching tales taller than any fish tale being told below.

TASTY FOOD AND GEO BLING

Side dishes of all sort started gathering on the picnic tables. Potatoes, broccoli, and coleslaw too. Desserts and fruits found their way as well.

People shopped the wares of the GeocacheAlaska! store. TBs , bison of all sizes, and other geobling flew off the tables. The doors were open all day and LadybugKids and Northwes helped each and every customer happily with their purchases.



Soon the smell of BBQ filled the air. Ladle after ladle dug into each and every dish. and peopled lined up for a perfectly prepared burger or dog, each and every one cooked by their host and master chef SSO JOAT.

LET'S GO CITO

After the feast the kids all gathered together to do CITO on the park. They ran from one side of the park to the other, like little scrubbing bubbles working the whole area. They soon returned with full bags which were traded for candy and bubble makers.

THE GPS TOSS

Then came the game, The GPS Toss. Many cachers who've cached for some time where more experienced at this one. Apparently they've practiced it a few times for real out in the field. An ammo can covered with foam and holding two reflective poles was set a distance away from the tossers. The first GPS went sailing through the air. Then another, and another. Before long there was a line of cachers snaking through the park waiting for their turn to make the toss. In the end only one lucky youngster could hit the mark. Not even Darth Vader with perfect form could muster enough of the force to get an extra ticket for the drawings at the end of the event.



LET THE MAIN EVENT BEGIN

SSO JOAT assembled the crowd. He handed out maps and clues, gave instructions for the game, and lit the torch to let the games begin. Teams started planning their attack and running around the park, searching for over 30 caches that had been hidden specially



for this event. At each cache a point value would be awarded for the team who found the cache. The sooner a team found it, the higher the point total would be, with additional points being awarded to FTF teams.

At times more than one team would arrive at a GZ together. The issuing chaos from kids and adults alike all trying to be the First To Find, was priceless to watch. They would all run from hidey spot to hidey spot hoping to spy the container first.

One cache contained a puzzle to solve. Each team tried their smarts at the bat puzzle. Wrap the line around the bat to reveal the hidden clue. A number of times the kids would figure it out first only to be quieted by a curious adult. If only they listened :) Finally they all figured it out, got the clue, and dashed off to the next cache. Then another team would arrive.



Everyone knew there would be a muggle cache in the field - A cache that was meant to be mugged by the first team to find it. The trick was for the next teams to realize when to give up, because it had been mugged, and not continue searching.

Mayhem was taking place throughout the park. There were people sticking their arms in stumps clear up to their shoulders. People were on their bellies crawling under trees and benches, searching like crazy. And adults were chasing one another about the woods with fake machine guns blaring at one another, Ratatat! Ratat! Ratatat! Any muggles witnessing this silliness would have thought us all crazy, but surely wished they could join in the fun.

MANY CACHERS PLAYED THE GAME

There were new cachers who had a blast playing, but thought, "WOW, this is Way Outta Control Man". There were experienced cachers who thought, "This one's in the bag". And there were wiley veterans who knew what was up, and knew the tricks to win the game.

THE WINNERS ARE

Soon the clock was running down and the teams came running back to the finish line. The scores were totaled, corrections made, and the winners announced.....KLM, Karma123, Li1gray, and Meljo, the Wiley veterans.



"Congratulations," "next year I'm gunna's", and "woulda coulda shoulda's", could be heard as the teams mingled and chatted about the fun they had had.

Prizes were awarded for the event, and thank yous sent to the host SSO JOAT. Great job!

Then, slowly, ever so slowly, just as the tide would do for the dip netters below, cachers started rolling out of the park, bound for destination and caches unknown, with hopes and dreams for the 5TH Annual Caching on the Kenai- Picnic event.

NOTE: A second story about the event and geocaching published in the Redoubt Reporter on August 8. The story may be viewed online by clicking [here](#).



Reed Lakes/Bomber Cache (Almost)

Story and photos by Ladybug Kids

Skifast, akgh519 and I along with geohounds Victor and Mesa took this hike on June 25, 2012, but I opted to publish it in the August newsletter because August until the termination dust appears below 5000' in late-August/early-September is most likely the best time of year to take this hike due to late-lingering snow. The hike features up to five caches, depending on how far one chooses to go. In order, the caches are [Balancing Act II](#), [Infinity Falls](#), [Land of Gnomes](#), [All Trails Lead To Heaven](#), and [Bomber Cache](#) (a sixth cache, [Campout In The Clouds](#), appears to be missing). A side trip would also allow one to find [Raw Almonds III](#). The distance from the parking area to Bomber Pass is 5.2 miles with about 3000' of elevation gain. The crashed bomber, which we did not reach, is another 0.6 mile and 600' below the pass.

This hike is an Alaskan classic that in my opinion, cachers should put on their bucket list. It begins with an alpine hike just below treeline, passes by a gold mine that was active into the 1960s, parallels a cascading creek with a most impressive hydraulic jump, takes one on a scramble over boulders, passes crystal clear mountain stream pools and turquoise colored alpine lakes, routes by an "infinity pool" water fall just below Upper Reed Lake, and meanders under a Mayan style pyramid and several huge balancing rocks. The Talkeetna Mountains don't get their due as a most impressive Alaskan mountain range, but they definitely deserve many, many visits.

We began the trip in sunshine while the mountain peaks were still covered by clouds. The verdant green of Arch Angel Valley was deceptive because Reed Lakes and the pass above were still in winter's grip. The bridges across the creeks made for easy angst-free creek crossings during the early part of the trip.



After exploring the mining camp ruins, we climbed up a few easy switchbacks and entered a boulder field that provides access to the Reed Lakes valley. Most of the boulder hopping was straightforward, though it did get tricky in a couple of spots because rotting snow still bridged some of the gaps between the rocks. However, even the dogs handled the obstacles without problem and we soon reached the first of the Reed Lakes.



As we climbed above Lower Reed Lake we caught our first glimpse of a waterfall cascading pouring over a granite lip above us. The lip is distinct enough that when viewed from behind and above, the pools supplying the falls have the appearance of “infinity” swimming pools featured at upscale resorts.



Once we passed the falls, our route was almost exclusively on snow, which was sometimes red due to the presence of a species of algae. A little web research turned up information about [“watermelon” snow](#) which explained the phenomenon. We found the “Land of the Gnomes” cache easily, spend some time looking for “Campout in the Clouds” before settling for a DNF, and then started climbing above Upper Reed Lake to Bomber Pass.

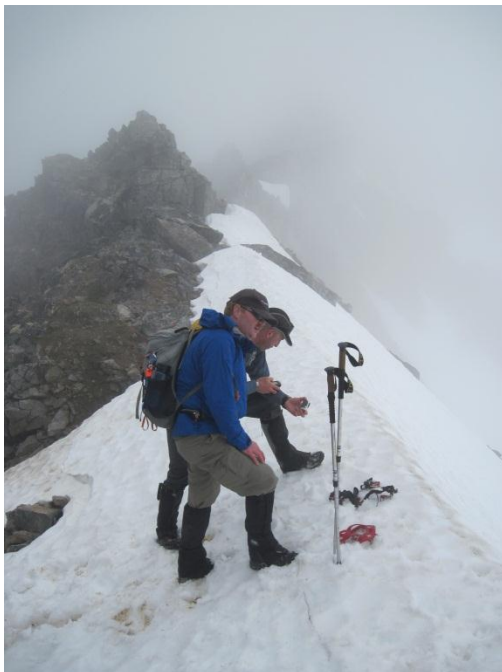


The pass itself was below the cloud layer and without the “All Trails Lead to Heaven” cache, it would have been a real challenge to select the correct snow chute to climb to the narrow notch in the steep ridge. We had to be cautious because even though there were still several feet of snow in most places, one could suddenly drop to their waist into a gap between boulders. We paused for a while at an exposed part of an old moraine, looked at the topo maps in our GPSs, looked at where our compasses were pointing, and headed toward the clouds. Eventually, the slope got steep enough we donned our light crampons for extra security and continued up the hill. Skifast did the yeoman's work, kicking the first steps and charging up the hill. I followed, doing the best I could to make the steps

larger for akgh519, who was wearing the lightest grippers of the group. Meanwhile, geohounds Victor and Mesa handled the terrain just fine with their four-paw drive. We reached a rock band near the top and skifast removed his crampons and took off for what appeared to be the top on a milder slope, while Ray and I gingerly crossed the the rocks with our metal footwear. Sure enough, we were past the crux of this side of the pass and climbed into the pass that was mostly devoid of snow...until we approached the other side, crossed a five foot band of snow, and peered over the headwall that led to Bomber Glacier below. At first, the visibility through the fog was poor enough, we didn't know how far the terrain dropped away, but over time, the fog thinned and we could see to the glacier's terminus, but could not see the bomber. Skifast tossed a rock over the edge and it came to rest some fifty meters below on a mild run out, so the terrain wasn't as extreme as it looked. I contemplated tying my 50m rope to the fixed rope left by previous adventurers to aid the initial descent, but in the end, the consensus of the group was to turn back and return later in the season when finding the bomber and the cache would have a higher chance of success.



Once the decision not to continue was made, we took some photos, admired the blooming purple mountain saxifrage clinging to the walls of the pass, and then set about looking for the cache. Skifast made a relatively quick find even though due to snow conditions, the container wasn't exactly where the hint led one to believe where the cache would be. Adjusting for seasonal variations, the hint works as a good aid in this mostly vertical world. After signing the log, we dropped back to Upper Reed Lake relatively easily on the snowpack (which was much easier going than the boulder band to the right while facing downhill) and had an enjoyable hike out, dropping a couple of caches along the way at other notable features in the area. The wonderful day was finished off with an Italian dinner in Wasilla.



GEOCACHE ALASKA! INC.

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200 W. 34th Avenue, PMB 314, Anchorage, AK 99503

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Follow GeocacheAlaska! Inc. on [Facebook](#)! Stay in touch and share your activities with fellow members of the geocaching community by visiting our [page](#) and clicking 'Like'. Stay tuned for more Facebook fun as our webmaster develops a new Facebook Group page 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.

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, 2012.
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.

STATE PARKS PERMITS

Remember, if you want to hide a cache in a State Park, you may need a permit number for your cache page and the geocache. The 2012 permit number for the Chugach State Park is **12-044** and it must be on the cache container and the cache page. The 2012 permit number for the Mat-Su State Parks is **S12-010** and it must be on the cache container and the cache page. Downloadable copies of the permits can be obtained from the GeocacheAlaska! [Land Manager webpage](#) or the GeocacheAlaska! [Land Use Forums](#).

ONLINE ARCHIVES

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](#).

The editors of 'Around the State' welcome your articles and photos. We'd love to publish your favorite trails in your own back yard! Send your articles, photographs and ideas to ladybugs@geocachealaska.org, attention "Around the State."