



February 2013 NEWSLETTER

IN THIS ISSUE:

[Upcoming Events](#)

[President's Corner](#)

[Fairbanks Pathtags](#)

[Forum Facelift](#)

[Cruise Caching](#)

[Join GeocacheAlaska!](#)

[Geocaching Permits](#)

[Recent Event Reports](#)

[Reviewer's Corner](#)

[Add Attributes to your GPS](#)

[Meet the 2013 Board](#)

[Destination: Sitka](#)

[GeocacheAlaska! Online](#)

[Newsletter Archives](#)

MARK YOUR CALENDAR—EVENTS

[TB Exchange and Drop off](#), February 9, 11: a.m., Fairbanks. Bring your travel bugs and geocoins for pathfinder01 to move to California.

[Juneau Constituent Meet and Greet](#), February 13, 6:30 p.m., Juneau. Meet and greet at one of Juneau's best pizza joints.

[GPS and Navigation Learning Lab](#), March 2, 1:00 p.m., Homer. Hosted by the great USFWS folks at Islands and Oceans Visitor Center.

[MO' PIE III](#), π (3/14) at 2π (6:28) p.m., Anchorage. Bring a pie and your ice skates for food, fun and fellowship at Cuddy Park.

[1st Annual March Birthday Flash Mob](#), March 16, 1:00 p.m., Seward. Celebrate March birthdays!



President's Corner, by Wes Skinner/NorthWes

We experienced tremendous membership growth in 2012, and will continue seeking new members as well as renewals. Additional attention is being given to finding members in areas of the state such as Southeast and Southwest, to help local cachers work with local land managers in expanding areas where geocaching can be played. Sourdough Membership benefits such as voting for the Board of Directors, discounts on geocaching gear from the GeocacheAlaska! Inc. store, and opportunities to purchase Alaska geo-bling before it's available to the nonmember geopublic are solid reasons to sign up for recurring annual membership. There are exciting new pathtag and geocoin projects being worked out by our Bling committee, and you don't want to find yourself unable to buy in before they're sold out. Besides, the fun and fellowship at our events are not to be missed!

Following on 2012's partnership with the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to establish a series of caches highlighting Alaska's National Wildlife Refuges (named the Blue Goose Geotour), we'll be intensifying outreach to land managers for creative ways to integrate geocaching into land use plans. Vice President Mike Malvick (Ladybug Kids) will be spearheading this effort as well as following up on his work with the USFWS folks. A [GPS and Navigation Learning Lab](#) caching event is being hosted at the Alaska Islands and Ocean Visitor Center in Homer on March 2nd, sponsored by a USFWS employee who's also a member of GeocacheAlaska! Inc., and cachers from all around the state are invited to attend. The USFWS has land use rules which generally preclude placement of caches on lands they manage, but they're exploring ways to use geocaching as a tool to draw visitors. We're ideally placed to help them with that mission!

I strongly encourage our members to approach board members with ideas for events. Whether for CITO (Cache In – Trash Out), creative and fun moments, educational sessions, social meet 'n' greets – these are our best venues for member recruiting, and they're genuinely good times too. We ask you plan 4-6 weeks ahead at a minimum, and we have a support request form to help you get the event worked out with some GeocacheAlaska! support.

Those Who Cache in the Banks Pathtag

by Tony Roof/Firemanak

Fairbanksans are a special breed of people. We like to be individualized, being known for ways of doing things, kind of being a rebel. LOL With that said, we created our own pathtag to help with events and Items that aren't GeocacheAlaska! related.



This Tag laid against a golden background means to us:

The Golden Heart – We are known as the “Golden Heart City of Alaska”

The Ammo can - for the love of Geocaching.

The Moose which is something most cachers have seen or run into.

We are selling this tag for \$3.50 each. The money made from their sales, first goes back to the club for other pathtags that are Alaska, Fairbanks themed. Other monies will go towards purchasing t-shirts and other things for the group up here. We gave back to GeocacheAlaska.org, the bank has their info on the bank, and \$.05 cents per tag went to them, since they help us with donations, be it bling or money.

We have sold through the first order of 50 tags, and have another order of 100 in production, so if you are interested, please let us know one of three ways:

Email = akgeocacher@gmail.com

Facebook = www.facebook.com/fairbanksgeocachers

On the Web = <http://troofl.wix.com/fairbanksgeocacher>

Happy Geocaching!

Renew Your Sourdough Membership!!!

Please renew your Sourdough Membership for 2013! Renewed or new GeocacheAlaska! Sourdough Memberships that are paid after October 1, 2012, are good through December 31, 2013. You may renew online or download a membership form to mail in by clicking [here](#). Sourdoughs receive a trackable Sourdough nametag, choose the Board of Directors, and receive discounts on bling and events.

CALENDARS

The 2013 Calendars are available through the GeocacheAlaska! [online store](#) while supplies last. The cost is \$19.95 for Sourdough Members and \$21.95 for Cheechako Members.



Reviewer's Corner – Who Owns the Land Where I Want to Cache?, by Greatland Reviewer

Sometimes, the boundary between public and private land cannot be easily delineated when in the field. Some wonderful resources for determining land ownership are government geographical information systems (GIS). A little online research can often yield GIS information for land ownership via tax records, special use areas, parklands, and many other land designations. Some links for Alaskan GIS databases are:

[Anchorage Borough](#)

[Fairbanks North Star Borough](#)

[Juneau Borough](#)

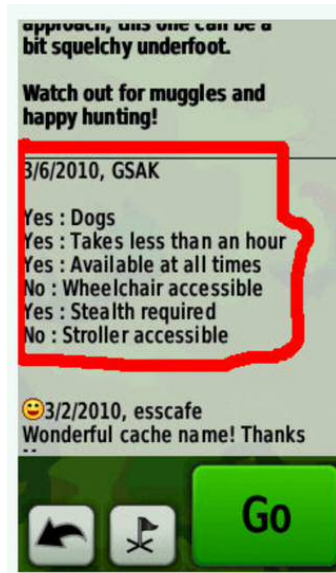
[Kenai Peninsula Borough](#)

[MatSu Borough](#)

Community Story for This Newsletter

Ladybug Kids began a story in the GeocacheAlaska! forums with the intent of other cachers building the story one line at a time. Just add one line to whatever has gone before, and keep the continuity of storyline and relevance. Once the story reaches a natural conclusion, it will be published in this newsletter. If the story takes on a life of its own, it's possible it could become a serial in the newsletter, with installments published monthly. Click [this link](#) to find the thread in the GeocacheAlaska! Discussion [Forums](#).

Adding Cache Attributes to GPX Files



Ever wanted to check a cache's attributes while in the field, but were stymied by a poor cell phone connection? Now, with the help of Geocaching Swiss Army Knife (GSAK), you can export the cache attributes in text format to certain GPSs.

GSAK's [Colorado/Oregon Export macro](#) (scroll down to the last post in that thread to get the latest and greatest version) can be used to insert the cache attributes into a new dummy first log for each cache.

GeocacheAlaska! Forums Get a Face Lift!

By SSO JOAT



Over the last weekend, your webmaster was up late working feverishly on implementing a number of significant changes to our discussion forum website. The software package that powers our forum was upgraded to a newly released major revision and a ton of formatting and settings had to be made for a smooth transfer of our old forum into this new package. And then it started snowing... on the forum home page! Yes, there are features and widgets galore that can really spruce up the site and I'll be working on a lengthy list of fine-tuning items in the coming weeks. For those who haven't logged into our forums in a while, it is time to pay us a visit and join in the conversation at <http://geocachealaska.proboards.com/>.

A few key forum site revisions that you should know about include mouse-over drop-down menus with a complete forum tree at the top of the page. There is a participated button at the top right that will show you a list of all threads you've posted to. If any of them have new posts, a little "FTF" icon will appear in front of them and clicking on it will take you right to the first post in the thread that you haven't read yet. There are links at the bottom of the page for a list of the newest threads or the newest posts.

Facebook users will note the addition of a "like" button on all posts. You're free to click the thumbs up sign for any post that someone makes that you really like. They'll get a little notification in their profile plus that little warm and fuzzy feeling inside.

A brand new feature appears at the bottom of the forum called a "Shoutbox". This is a live chat window that spans across every page on the forum. So you can chat with anyone who is online while you browse any other part of the forum. Give it a try and say "hi" next time you're online.

Next month, we'll have a detailed review of many more forum features and how they work.

In Case You Missed the Geocaching.com Newsletter...



We hear it all the time, "Geocachers are the nicest people!" It's a wonderful compliment that good-hearted geocachers have earned for over a decade. [Cache In Trash Out \(CITO\) weekend](#) is just another example of geocachers giving back. Since 2002, tens of thousands of geocachers have cleaned up parks, trails and other geocaching-friendly destinations. Geocachers plan CITO events year round, but one weekend each year the global geocaching community unites to cleanup tons of trash together.

The 11th Annual CITO weekend is scheduled for April 20 and 21, 2013. There will be hundreds of events to attend in dozens of countries, but if there's not one in your area, it's time to gather your friends and [create your own CITO Event](#). Be sure to check the [CITO Event calendar](#) for gatherings near you.

Those attending CITO Events on April 20 or April 21 (or both!) will earn a 2013 CITO Souvenir for their Geocaching profile. Thanks for keeping the geocaching a community one of the nicest groups of people out there!

Meet Your Board of Directors

by glenn.fish

A new GeocacheAlaska! Board of Directors was seated on January 1, 2013, using the results of the November 2012 Election and a selection of Secretary following the procedure specified in the [by-laws](#). This year's Board is more regionally diverse than ever with members from Anchorage, Wasilla, Soldotna, and, for the first time, Fairbanks. There are LOTS of opportunities for non-Board members to get involved through becoming a member of the Fundraising (bling), Advocacy, Education, and Event Committees.

If you have ideas about what you would like to see GeocacheAlaska! do during the upcoming year, please contact any one of the members of the Board via the contact information provided on the GeocacheAlaska! [Contact Us webpage](#). Short geo-bios of your Board of provided below to help you get to know them a little bit better.



Real Name/Caching Name/Ground Zero: Wes Skinner/NorthWes/Anchorage

Board Position/Committee Chair: President

Years Caching: Over eight years, since September 2004

Years on Board/Positions held on Board: Going into fourth year on board; served as Member at Large, Secretary, and President

Proudest caching accomplishment: Completing much of the Blue Goose Geotour series of caches with my 4 and 6 year old grandsons. We had a blast hunting them down!

Most embarrassing caching moment: Read the FTF log on "[The Geocaching Challenge](#)" – a simple little puzzle cache behind Anchorage's mid-town WalMart store. What started out simple turned in to a flash mob of cachers waiting for me to bring the cache back to its hiding place – I drove off with it after signing the logsheet. What an absent-minded guy...

Personal GeocacheAlaska! 2013 Goal: Finalize the Knowledge Book series of procedures for board operations, increase contacts with Alaska Land Managers to ensure space to play our game, and help the creative folks on the board make GeocacheAlaska! Inc.'s geocoins and pathtags some of the most sought-after bling worldwide.

Personal geocaching 2013 Goal: Develop and place two more EarthCaches, finish off my 366 days of caching calendar (just a few more days in early winter to go), work on my Jasmer Challenge, and see if I can add any new states to my 'find all 50' goal.



Real Name/Caching Name/Ground Zero: Michael Malvick/Ladybug Kids/Anchorage

Board Position/Committee Chair: Vice President/Fundraising Committee Chair

Years Caching: Since September 3, 2004

Years on Board/Positions held on Board: Five years on Board of Directors (Webmaster, Secretary, Vice President). Member of steering committee which wrote the original by-laws and laid the foundation for formation of GeocacheAlaska!

Proudest caching accomplishment: Being nominated by Erik88l-r and ultimately being selected by Groundspeak to serve as the Volunteer Reviewer for Alaska in 2010.

Most embarrassing caching moment: Tucking a cache log and its baggie into my caching bag in Thompson Pass so it wouldn't blow away, trading out swag, and driving all the way to Valdez before realizing I still had the log sheet with me. I had to drive back up Thompson Pass the next evening to return the log sheet. At least both evenings were great times to be in the Chugach alpine!

Personal GeocacheAlaska! 2013 Goal: My focus for 2013 is to foster GeocacheAlaska! relationships with Land Managers, expand GeocacheAlaska!'s presence across the state, and produce more quality GeocacheAlaska! geobling. My work with USFWS in 2012 yielded the Blue Goose Tour and cache placement on Refuge Land in Homer. I believe this is just the tip of the iceberg of positive Land Manager relationships in addition to creating positive geocaching policies. I am hosting a Meet and Greet in Juneau on February 13 to introduce GeocacheAlaska! to the local cachers and hope to visit other Alaskan communities during the year as well. Finally, Scott Aleckson/SSO JOAT and I are working diligently on producing the 2013 pathtags and geocoins and a state license plate trackable tag is already in production.

Personal geocaching 2013 Goal: Primary goal is to complete the Jasmer Challenge (find a cache placed in each month since geocaching began). A secondary goal is to complete the Fizzy Challenge (find at least one cache of each of the 81 Terrain/Difficulty combinations). Also, I want to keep chipping away at finding a cache in each of the 50 states. I have ten states to go. Road trip, anyone?



Real Name/Caching Name/Ground Zero: Glenn Fish/glenn.fish (I know not very original)/Anchorage

Board Position/Committee Chair: Secretary

Years Caching: Although I got my first taste of geocaching in 2005 as part of training for deployment (fish.family) it wasn't until 2010 that I actually started for real.

Years on Board/Positions held on Board: This will be my first year, and was smooth talked into the Secretary position following my defeat in the At-Large race. I look forward to serving in this capacity for the next year.

Proudest caching accomplishment: Getting my children involved in the sport of geocaching and being able to enjoy the great outdoors with them. I have had the pleasure of being pushed and pushing my son, fyshstyx on some rather long hikes all for an FTF (26+ mile trip to [Eklutna Glacier "Ice" Cube](#) (GC3J4TT)).

Most embarrassing caching moment: While in Georgia TDY I was on my way over to see my mother and had planned a couple of stops along the way (FTF opportunities). The first I thought a little odd as it was on the only light controlled intersection in town and the front of a drug store. Not to be discouraged at 1 am I proceeded to GZ and started the search by flashlight occasionally dimming the light as traffic neared and resuming after it rolled by. As I was deep in search mode and worried about being spotted by passing motorists I became fully illuminated from across the street (kitty corner). I then had the privilege of explaining to the local Sheriff about my evening escapades. In the end I moved along without the find. The other was in the sticks and found at 3 am without incident.

Personal GeocacheAlaska! 2013 Goal: I would like to further the goals and objectives of this great organization as well as aid in its continued growth.

Personal geocaching 2013 Goal: I would like to, at some time in my life, complete the Cache Across America Series and possibly the Arches and Bridges of Central Park multi-cache.



Real Name/Caching Name/Ground Zero: Roberta Bromlow/Polgera/Anchorage

Board Position/Committee Chair: Treasurer/Events Committee Chair

Years Caching: Four years.

Years on Board/Positions held on Board: 3 ½ years; Treasurer

Proudest caching accomplishment: Placement of first puzzle cache and creation of page

Most embarrassing caching moment: Can't think of any.

Personal GeocacheAlaska! 2013 Goal: Creation of report to better report to all members rather than just board

Personal geocaching 2013 Goal: Caching with grandkids in Hawaii, and 3000 cache finds



Real Name/Caching Name/Ground Zero: Scott Aleckson/SSO JOAT/Soldotna

Board Position/Committee Chair: Webmaster/Education Event Committee Chair

Years Caching: Almost 5 years (since 2008)

Years on Board/Positions held on Board: Two years – one as Member at Large and one as Webmaster

Proudest caching accomplishment: Co-Creation of the Puzzle Capital of Alaska

Most embarrassing caching moment: Losing FTF on a KK Puzzle because I couldn't figure out how to extract the cache from the hide

Personal GeocacheAlaska! 2013 Goal: Finish Website and Forums overhaul plus continued work on Bling and Education

Personal geocaching 2013 Goal: Put out more Puzzles <insert evil laughter here>



Real Name/Caching Name/Ground Zero: Scott Sagraves/fuzzybelly/Anchorage

aka; fuzzy / fuz / fuzman

aat; (also answers to); hey you / ding bat / a dinner bell

Board Position/Committee Chair: Member at Large

Years Caching: I started caching in 2008. I knew I would be good at it. I was always losing my mind and having to search for it. I would Always find it, only to lose it again and have to resume the search:)

Years on Board/Positions held on Board: This will be my first full year serving as a Member at Large for GeocacheAlaska! Last year I filled a vacant position for only part of the year, and I enjoyed myself immensely.

Proudest caching accomplishment: a. Climbing Mt. POW-MIA with Li1gray, Cavyguy , Coloreido, and Mntdeal on Memorial Day; b. My 1000th find. Found while out with the Coloreido (the CO and a good friend) along a beautiful trail during the fall with a mirrored lake laid out before us; c. When I learned how to use geotrails and found the perfect cacher to work behind. Glenn.fish :)

Most embarrassing caching moment: a. One time on a group caching adventure, Tomanoble, Blazingpathways, Both parts

of Burtonsinak and myself came across a giant snow covered log. In my exuberance to get to the cache before the others, I grabbed Burton's shovel from him and started digging like a fuzzy possessed. While the others found the cache uncovered, on the other end of the log, I continued digging and digging, until I heard, "over here" fuzzy. :) ;b. When I pushed Karma123 down trying to get to a FTF :). She still beat me to it.

Personal GeocacheAlaska! 2013 Goal: I'd like to help make sure those caching or attending events in Alaska have as fun of a time as possible.

Personal geocaching 2013 Goal: a. I'm hoping to reach 2000 finds by the end of the year. That would mean 500 smileys; b. I like to attends more events outside the Anchorage area, maybe even host one elsewhere.



Real Name/Caching Name/Ground Zero: Randy Cler/cavyguy/Wasilla

Board Position/Committee Chair: Member at Large/Advocacy Committee Chair

Years Caching: 3 ½ Years

Years on Board/Positions held on Board: 2 years starting my 3rd Member at Large/Chairman of the Advocacy Committee

Proudest caching accomplishment: Proudest Moment is a hard one as there have been many great moments. It has been great to meet geocachers from around the world.

Personal GeocacheAlaska! 2013 Goal: To keep the Park Permits in place and hopefully get an additional one for the Kenai Area.

Personal geocaching 2013 Goal: Personal geocaching 2013 Goal: Have a healthy year and add more states to my caching experience. Have fun and meet new people.



Real Name/Caching Name/Ground Zero: Lisa Echard/FlightRiskAK/Anchorage

Board Position/Committee Chair: Member at Large

Years Caching: Three

Years on Board/Positions held on Board: Two years – one as Vice President and one as Member at Large

Proudest caching accomplishment: Finding my first cache

Most embarrassing caching moment: Getting "interviewed" by police as I walked out of the woods

Personal GeocacheAlaska! 2013 Goal: Further the work of the organization

Personal geocaching 2013 Goal: Keep on caching!



Real Name/Caching Name/Ground Zero: Tony Roof/Firemanak/Fairbanks. As a volunteer firefighter for over 15 years, I took on this handle on the web, and carried it over to my love of Geocaching and my pathtags.

Board Position/Committee Chair: Member at Large

Years Caching: Close to 2 years – Two years ago, a couple things great happened to me, learning geocaching, and meeting my wife Danelle aka AkDragonFlyD, still addicted to both.

Years on Board/Positions held on Board: Months, since last election, I was the one to contact Ladybugkids and asked how to get events going here in Fairbanks, somehow I have stayed the Jedi of Fairbanks, not sure why but people come to me about everything. We have a great group started, and it's growing.

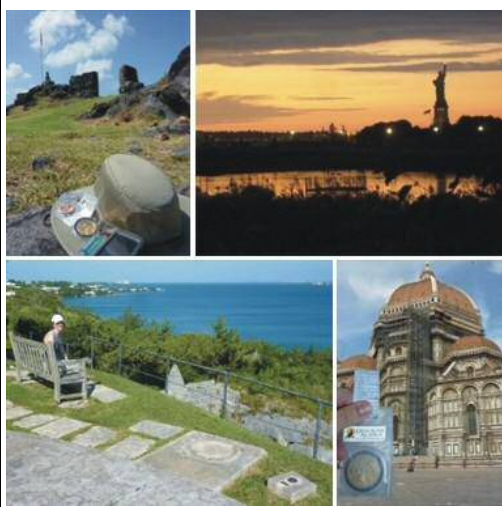
Proudest caching accomplishment: When I hit 200 with a good friend, I thought that was my major milestone, but now I am looking at 500, and even 600 finds, but I have exhausted Fairbanks, give or take 100.

Most embarrassing caching moment: Trying to find one in Soldotna on a street corner, acting all silly for my wife taking photos so I could find the cache. You are saying, been there, done that...My wife was snapping the camera!

Personal GeocacheAlaska! 2013 Goal: Bringing more people into Caching and into GCAK. We have a great start on our group here in Fairbanks, but I know there are many more, we need to reach out for and get them to events. I love geocaching, and pathtags, and I tell everyone about them. I want to see a strong group of cachers here in Fairbanks, With GCAK as the back bone. So much knowledge, experience, ideas are available in this Organization.

Personal geocaching 2013 Goal: Hitting 600 and hiding 50 caches +, we need more Caches up here, so I want to work on placing as many as possible, with other cachers. I am only like 94 away from 500 on my finds, so I need to start working on 600. This is where a strong group will help me and others reach their goals.

Caching via Cruise Ship (First of a two-part story about geocaching and cruising by NorthWes)



Clockwise from top left: St Martin, New Jersey, Florence Italy, and Mrs NW on Bermuda's Fort Scaur.

We Alaskans tend to be adventurers on vacation. We either traipse around our state, hiking / fishing / hunting / caching, or we fly Outside to some exotic destination such as Hawaii, Southern California, Florida, Thailand, France, or Newark NJ. Yes – Newark – home to Liberty International Airport, served by Alaska Airlines and just a short cab ride to Cape Liberty Cruise Terminal. I recently went to Newark so I could sail from Cape Liberty out to Bermuda aboard Royal Caribbean Cruise Line's *Explorer of the Seas*. We departed port in the afternoon on International Earthcache Day last October during the hurricane season. I found 15 caches and three benchmarks that morning, including 11 earthcaches in Liberty State Park. Two weeks later Superstorm Sandy smashed the state park, but we'd missed all the fuss and had warm sunny weather.

More than a decade ago my wife talked me into taking a cruise to Mexico's west coast. She had to work hard to overcome my reluctance to be 'trapped' aboard a ship with a bunch of folks I didn't know, with little to do and all day to do it. With seven cruises under my belt now, including five since I've started geocaching, I'm thankful I tried cruising as a way to spend my precious vacation days. I've been asked

why I like cruising so much, so let me share some basic 'Why Cruise?' answers from my perspective, then talk about why geocaching and cruising is so much fun.

On a day by day comparison, we've found the cost of cruising to be at least a third lower than the cost of an 'on the road' vacation day, and many times even half the cost. Rates per person per day vary based on inside/outside cabin, regular vs suite, and popularity of the destination. Cruise lines vary in cost as well, with some running leaner on luxuries while others pile on the glitz. My wife and I like balcony rooms so we pay almost double what an inside cabin costs, but part of what I enjoy about cruising is having private outdoor space as part of my cabin. Because of our work schedules, mid-October is our best time to travel by cruise ship. This coincides with the end of the hurricane season and gap between back to school time and the holiday season, so rates are pretty low. Cruise ship captains reset their course as necessary to miss storms (damage to passengers, crew and the ship are avoided at all cost!) but there's always the opportunity for a rain shower or two – weather is beyond anyone's control. Not included in the basic price is alcohol or gambling, but neither of those items interest me in the least so that keeps our daily out of pocket shipboard costs (beyond our ticket) very very low.

Beyond the value lies the variety aboard ship. You've paid to be on a traveling free buffet, with an incredible selection of food available around the clock to tempt you into over-indulgence. Some high-end venues may have an additional cover charge, but the 'average' dinner is a multi-coursed dining extravaganza of incredible taste and selection orchestrated by top quality chefs and brought to you by an attentive wait staff that learns your preferences (and often your names) before the first day's dinner is over. My biggest temptation is the dessert line – where at least four varieties of fresh-baked cookies are always available, all day long! For folks who don't like group dining there's buffet options which serve pretty much the same items available off the dining room menu.

Variety permeates the ship's daily entertainment schedule as well. Each day has its own list of activities, provided by newsletter to your cabin the night before. From classics like bingo and nightclubs to Broadway shows, comedians and even shows on ice (aboard the big Royal Caribbean liners), there's all kinds of action. Moving to the physical, every ship has a spa and very large workout gym (gotta work off all those meals) to pamper and toughen your body. Some ships have multi-story open-air rock-climbing walls, and 'Flowrider' surfing simulators (I'm pretty good on the boogie board there), and there is always a wide selection of pools and hot tubs to help you soak your day away. Each cruise line takes a different 'signature' approach to how they entertain aboard ship, and it's fun to research the choices. For families, each cruise line has its own version of "Kid's Nautical Camp" which can range from a few hours of activity daily to a full-blown all-waking-hours program. Targeted to the participant's ages, these are one of the most-raved-about experiences families have aboard ship.

Where I once cringed at the thought of meeting the masses aboard ship, I've found the experience of meeting new persons during a shared formal dining experience to be a real delight. People are fascinating, and once you say "I'm from Alaska..." the questions start to flow. ("Yes, I've met Sarah Palin. No, it's not dark all winter long" – and lots of other really good questions too.) It's surprisingly easy to find spots aboard the ship to be alone without having to stay in your cabin as well. Ranging from deck chairs away from the popular pool areas to tables and sitting areas scattered about nooks and crannies of the ship, you can find plenty of room to kick back and read that book without interruption (or just nap your way to a wicked sunburn too).



Overlooking Bermuda's Warwick Long Bay beach, home to the [Bermuda Pink Sands Earthcache](#)

My wife's commented that she liked cruising because she unpacks once, but wakes up every day in a new place. While you're enjoying dinner and then dancing the night away, the ship's crew is navigating to a new port of call, or finding that perfect place to spend the next day at sea (one of our most memorable was offshore of San Diego in the midst of a US Navy training exercise – with the ship getting buzzed by F-18s as they broke off training dogfights, only to climb straight up and away from the ship to do it all over again – two straight hours of one of the best "airshows" I'd ever enjoyed.) Cruise ship cabins are masterpieces of space utilization, and once you've settled in the cabin stewards straighten up two to three times a day – spoiling you pretty thoroughly. Sometimes they'll turn down your covers at night, leaving you a mint on the pillow and a towel animal to make you chuckle at day's end.

Cruises sail to all corners of the earth, from the Arctic to Antarctica, down the world's biggest rivers and across the big oceans. Some of the most popular cruise destinations are the Mediterranean and the Caribbean. Traveling across the Mediterranean means long air travel for Alaskans, but it's a great way to see the region's highlights while letting someone else do the driving (and you only unpack once!) The Caribbean is closer, with ships sailing there from Baltimore MD, New York City, Charleston SC, Port Canaveral FL, Ft Lauderdale FL, New Orleans LA and Galveston TX. Popular year-round, but especially during winter months, the Caribbean offers different itineraries and routes which fit any schedule.

Bermuda is a popular destination from East Coast ports as it's just a full day's sail over to a beautiful island assemblage situated in the midst of the year-round warm waters of the Gulf Stream. The beaches are incredible, the residents are friendly and laid-back, the caching is fantastic, and yes – the sand is pink (Bermuda's my favorite cruise destination thus far). Hawaii is a popular niche cruise market with sailings from the Northwest, and of course we're well-aware of the popularity of cruising Alaska's Inside Passage north to Whittier or Seward.

Caching by cruise ship is not about numbers. It's perhaps the quintessential hunt for excellence in location, as you've only got perhaps ten hours ashore in a particular port of call to look around. Here's where good planning comes in, combining time looking at cache logs and photos with pocket queries and searches for downloadable GPS maps for some of the more out of way locations. I really enjoy this aspect of the cruise, as it heightens my expectations and gives me something to look forward to.

My wife and I don't generally take cruise-sponsored shore excursions, preferring in most cases to make our own arrangements and travel like the locals do (it's more fun and far far less expensive). Cases where the ship's travel arrangements are best is where there's a possibility the tour may run the risk of missing the ship – the captain always waits for his own tours to return – or where your safety is enhanced by sticking with the ship's tour. During a Mediterranean cruise, we got off the ship in port, took a bus to the train station and hopped aboard for the ride into Florence, where we got off the train just a block from the



Physical cache at Rome's [Trevi Fountain](#)

Florence Cathedral and the beginning of our self-guided tour of the principal attractions. Our per-person cost for the day (including our meal and countless gelatos) was \$25 each; the ship's tour cost \$145, without meals, and dropped participants for the beginning of their self-guided tour ten blocks from the Cathedral. We spent an hour each way traveling with a variety of departure times available, while the ship's excursion via tour bus took nearly two hours each way and only allowed four hours' time in Florence. However, on the same cruise we booked a ship's excursion for the visit to Vesuvius and Pompeii, because I just didn't like how the travel arrangements looked traveling from the port (Naples) to the attractions (less safe, and susceptible to strikes and breakdowns if done on our own). I found caches on each of these two journeys, but the Florence caches were frankly more interesting as I had total freedom to arrange the itinerary. Likewise, our day in Rome was self-guided with travel on local trains, and it was pretty cool to find physical caches and earthcaches in the very heart of that city's principal attractions.

Our recent cruise to Bermuda was unique in that our ship docked at King's Wharf on the northwest tip of the islands and stayed there for three port days. We had lots of time to explore, traveling by their excellent and inexpensive bus and ferry system. On our first day we actually hiked down the northwest end of Bermuda's Rail Trail, which took us from beaches to inland areas to the highest point on the west end of the chain while caching the 'power trail' of caches growing in number on this excellent hike. I did an



Explorer of the Seas at King's Wharf, Bermuda – "Parked between the Big Ones" cache

earthcache and several regular caches while enjoying the beach complex on Bermuda's south shore (including well-known Horseshoe Bay as well as the next-door virtually deserted Jobson's Cove). We rounded out our visit on the final day with a special treat – Darlene Fortin, president of Bermuda Island Geocachers (BIG) picked us up for lunch and to visit some of her special 'favorite' caches we hadn't reached on the island (Darlene has a car – which are only available to residents!). We visited some stunning caches that earned 'favorite' status from me, and had a great time talking cruises and caching over lunch at the Pompano Beach Club.

Oddly enough, just a week before leaving for Bermuda we'd received an email from Darlene asking if GeocacheAlaska! Inc. would be interested in hosting an event to meet geocachers traveling as a group aboard ship to Alaska in July of 2013. It seemed natural to set up a face to face meeting considering I'd be on Bermuda in ten days, and I'm glad I did. As part of BIG's participation in Bermuda-sponsored tourism initiatives, the island's geocachers have helped set up a geocaching cruise to Bermuda in 2013. The tour planner has also arranged geocaching group cruises to the Caribbean and to Alaska, giving geocachers three opportunities to sign up to be part of a sort of traveling geocache hunting party. At least one GeocacheAlaska! Inc. Sourdough Member has signed up for the Bermuda cruise. Stay tuned for details coming soon about July activities here in Alaska to welcome the geocaching cruisers. In the meantime, I'm hoping to learn more about working with government-sponsored tourism initiatives as Darlene keeps me posted about her experiences working with the Bermuda Island Tourism Authority to promote Bermuda as a prime geocaching destination.

Next month's newsletter will bring you photos and tips from other Sourdough members who've recently cruised and cached in beautiful locales. As well, we'll have an update on this summer's visitors to Alaska coming via the geocaching cruise. Below are some links (not associated with GeocacheAlaska! Inc.) where you can find out more information.

CruiseCritic.com – perhaps the premier cruise experience site, where nearly all the reviews and photos are posted by cruise participants themselves. A treasure trove of information is available on their searchable free forum, answering every where/when/how/what/why question I've had from a position of 'been there – done that' experience. And it's all free to use, too. The reviews are well worth reading to help you plan just what trip would be right for your interests, budget and time available.

CruisePlanners – advertising Bermuda and Alaska cruises on the geocaching.com website, this is the most-experienced geocaching cruise planner available. As part of their tour group arrangements, while aboard ship geocachers will be able to access education and social activities, and special activities targeting caches of interest are planned for port visits.

Geocaching Destinations: Sitka, Alaska

by ColoReido

As the plane descended towards the Sitka Airport, the identification of a volcanic crater was unmistakable even when covered in snow. As I would learn later, the dormant Mount Edgecumbe would be the site of one of the world's greatest pranks. Like many of Alaska's cities, Sitka can only be reached by air or ocean, but the wealth of history and friendliness of her 9,000 residents make the trip well worthwhile.

Signs in the airport announce Sitka as the first city of Alaska. Coincidentally, Sitka is also the home to Alaska's two oldest caches Centurion Guards (GC68) and Kids Geocache (GC6E) placed 29 Sep 2000 and 30 Sep 2000, respectively.

A large Tlingit settlement, dating back 10,000 years, was already in place when the Russians arrived in the late 1700s. In their first conflict, the Tlingits had successfully defeated the Russians, who returned later in 1804 with greater numbers and armaments. The Russian victory at the ensuing Battle of Sitka resulted in the establishment of New Archangel, the capital of Russia America. The battle's history is covered in depth at the Sitka National Historic Park, and Russian architecture is still present throughout the park and at various sites throughout the city, to include the tower near the Saint Yakov Netsvetov Mounment (GC2B0W2).



Castle Hill, the site of the Russian fortification after the Battle of Sitka, is also where the transfer of Alaska from Russia to the United States was made. Every year on Alaska Day, the event is reenacted at Castle Hill. A somewhat comedic event occurred during the original event in 1867 and I would recommend that visitors take the time to read the placards on site to learn what happened as the Russian flag was lowered.

Once I had the keys for my rental car, I headed straight for Alaska's oldest geocache, Centurion Guards (GC68), making it my 2200th find! While in the area, I decided to hike the trails to Beaver Lake. The trail is well-built and maintained, and trail work project participants will have an appreciation for the labor that went into building this trail. Some of the steps and boardwalks are similar to those that I've seen for backyard porches.

Just short of reaching Beaver Lake, I located the appropriately titled Bridges and Stairs! (GC32FCD). I continued on to Beaver Lake and once there, felt drawn to complete the hike around the lake, soaking in the serene environment while by-passing the sign for the Herring Cove Trail. I almost completed my hike around Beaver Lake when I fortunately ran into local resident Bill who was also on the trail that day. He was emphatic about the Herring Cove Trail as a 'must-do' in Sitka.

Even if you're a hiker with no trail work experience, you will be impressed with the Herring Cove Trail. Also known as the Rock and Waterfalls Trail, this section of the trail is an engineering marvel. The trail parallels a stream with cascading waterfalls and features stone steps and a boulder 'doorway'. One of the log bridges was carefully planned by cutting a tree, and moss was artfully transplanted to remove the man-made appearance of the resulting stump!

Bill shared his knowledge of the local area, including telling me about how the Herring Cove Trail was constructed. Although there is a diesel generator for backup, Sitka's electricity is provided solely by hydropower! On April Fool's Day in 1974, a local resident had set fire to a pile of old tires on Mount Edgecumbe, causing locals to think it was erupting! An avid outdoor enthusiast, he is no stranger to geocaching, and had even found some caches with his grandkids. He didn't realize that Sitka was home to Alaska's oldest cache, to which I paid a second visit so he could find it, too. Sitka is a relatively small community with a population of 9,000. Bill knew each person we ran into on the trails, and even the cache owner of GC68!

With 22 caches, Sitka offers a variety for everyone in its geocache locations. Some are located within town or close to roads. Others require some mountain hiking and offer excellent views. One cache, Concrete Ghosts of the War (GCA78B), is Sitka's only Terrain 5

cache and requires a kayak to reach. Military bunker ruins are still present on the small island chain. One of my favorites is Peter Pan's Hideout (GC22XPF). Located on an island, it would be best to pay attention to the tide tables and walk the 300 feet to this cache at low tide. The site of this cache really reminded me of the Disney movie, although the Lost Boys were nowhere to be found during my visit.

Besides geocaching, Sitka National Historic Park and the Fortress of the Bear (a large enclosure where orphaned brown bear cubs are housed) are a couple of visitor attractions. Sitka also has a 3G cellular network making laptops less necessary for researching caches and logging finds. In short, Alaska's first city is an excellent destination which offers stunning views and quality geocaches in a visitor-friendly environment.

NOTE: Although Centurion Guards (GC68) is located within 0.3 miles of the nearest parking area, the road to access Alaska's first cache is closed until sometime in 2015. The out-and-back hike will be significantly longer but can still be accessed by starting at the Herring Cove Trailhead at N 57° 02.709, W 135° 12.101.

RECENT EVENT HAPPENINGS

[12-12-12 Fairbanks Flash Mob](#), by Laura McDonald

On 12-12-12, a few of the Fairbanks area geocachers gathered for a Flash Mob. We met at the Fairbanks Fire Station on 12th and Cushman. While we were expecting a good size crowd, road conditions kept a few people away. In attendance were pathfinder01, kecypup, emeindl, poodle chic, foxtrot7, NanookBoy, and MamaNanook. Stories were shared, TBs discovered and prizes given out. A local firefighter did come to see if all was well. After the event MamaNanook, with the help of a tall person, hid a cache in honor of the event.



8th Annual Geofest, by Roberta Bromlow/Polgera

Another fun event sponsored by Geocache Alaska!

Our very own fuzzybelly was the Master of Ceremonies this year. As always, fuzzybelly was dapperly dressed and primed to amuse. About 85 people attended this year. If numbers keep increasing we will have to order more pizza and salad and find another venue.

As always, this was a family fun event with prizes, a dessert contest and this year, a special visitor. In conjunction with the Blue Goose Geo-tour (BGGT; see November 2012 Newsletter) we invited US Fish and Wildlife representatives Tessa and Kristin to join us. They had prizes for those completing the Tour and a surprise; they brought the Blue Goose with them to help hand out pathtags and congratulate winners. Congratulations from the Blue Goose to winners were interesting as evidenced by the photos. What is the Blue Goose? Check out http://www.bluegoosealliance.org/q-and-a/index_html#1 for more information.



Cachers of all ages wandered around looking for people to sign their Cacher Bingo squares, the first to finish was one of the mini-Vans (AlaskaVans). Other cachers spent time looking at younger pictures of some of our resident cachers, trying to Name the Cacher for another prize. No one got all of the pictures correct but AKBeauty came out ahead by guessing eight of the fifteen correctly.

A big thanks to all that participated in the dessert contest. The desserts were varied and tasty with AW-AK winning people's choice with her travel bug cake.



Additionally, make sure to thank the volunteers! It takes a lot of people to put on this kind of event, thanks to Blazingpathways, Cavyguy, and Wolfmaster for covering the table at the front; thanks to Karma123 and Zakthemaster for their help at the bling table and BurtonsInAlaska for help in keeping things straight. As always, thanks to the GeocacheAlaska! board and its members for organizing and planning.

We have already started making plans for the 9th Annual GeoFest so if have any ideas regarding improvement or games and activities, just let us know by contacting a board member.

Bubbles Away, by Scott Sagraves/Fuzzybelly



One Friday evening with over 2000 screaming aces fans attending a game. Only blocks away, no less than 30 catchers filled a small room that had floating bubbles flying around from a bubble machine, to wish well to a friendly local catcher who was moving to Minnesota.

Akbubbles was the catcher making the transfer and burtonsinAk was the host who brought the most, including the bubble machine and arranging with the owners of the restaurant, so many could celebrate with one another, and wish Akbubbles happy caching along the way.

There were catchers from Fairbanks who were in the area caching about. They had been told of the gathering of cashers by Ladybug Kids, who had helped them find a nice skiing and caching adventure, which they enjoyed along with others hides in the city.

Trdball and his boy, mattmahn84, who's in the military (thank you) also made it from Nevada. Trdball had awesome pathtags that showed a new grandbaby and a proud grandpa with him that he passed out to his new friends.

FINALLY, I arrived to find Burtons saving me a parking spot, and rushing me in so the fun he'd planned could get started. Thank you so much for waiting for me, I think.



The bubble machine was switched on, bubbles started floating and Burtonsinak started by making a crack about if all his hair was in place, or at least better than mine was :). That would be yes :) An iPad was passed from catcher to catcher while the fun was being had.

Pictures were snapped by different attendees as it went around, all showing everyone having a wonderful time. Bubble phrases were handed out, bubble phrases of all sorts, so many bubble phrases that we didn't know what they all meant. But they all had a real meaning, and both halves of burtonsinak let us in on them all, as we talked about bubbles with our friend AKbubbles.

The event was enjoyed by; Akbubbles and burtonsinak of course. Tomanoble, Blazingpathways, and AkLoisandClark. Talonlar and Alaskan Bev, where joined by their hubbies, and we were graced by the presence of Cavyguy's wife. The AlaskanVans crew was without the crew. Trdball, and TeamAKButterflies, traveled from afar to attend, and Mattmahn84 just keeps winning prizes. Karma123 kept ColoReido and akgh519 separated. Dmzlstone and greenM&M scrubbed under the bubble machine. Weeziemi was there to tell Akbubbles stories. Glenn.fish and AkJoey enjoyed themselves. Ladybug Kids was there and Northwes made a quick appearance, after stealing the skis off LBK's georig. And I was there too.

The Burtoninak team hosted an event that everyone enjoyed to the fullest, and so did their bellies. By the end of the evening all the catchers were a bubbly bunch and had, had a bubblerific good time. And they all got to wish Bubbles well.



[2013 First Geocaching event of the year!](#), by Tony Roof/firemanak

The start of a brand new year brought Fairbanks geocachers together for a meet and greet at Food Factory.

We met to talk about the future of 2013 and what it holds for Fairbanks cachers. 18 people attended to eat, chat and play a challenging round of bingo. This bingo was more challenging because Firemanak was mean when he created it. He had done some homework and asked questions that most cachers had difficulty answering. GeocacheAlaska generously donated prizes for this challenge.

Poodle Chic talked about path tags and collector card, design and collecting. We introduced a new local group path tag which is being sold so we can afford to have t-shirts made in the future.

If you are interested in purchasing one, please contact Firemanak at Firemanak@gmail.com

We also talked about group t-shirts and patches, as well as the need of carrying a camera so we can have more entries in the slide shows, calendars and caching contest.

AKDragonflyD was busy selling down the store to attendees. We look forward to the new bling being sent from Anchorage to restock the store.

Fairbanks cachers had a great get together which spawned ideas for other classes, meet-n-greets and events. This was an amazing way to kick off the New Year with a good Geocaching start!

[Welcome to 2013](#), by Fuzzybelly/Scott Sagraves

2013 was welcomed in at Finger Lake, or at least atop the icy hill above the lake, by a couple of cachers from Texas, a bunch from around the state, and a muggle birder. Oh ya and then the Hillbillies showed up. Or where they first? That one's still up in the air. All this with the warm wind blowing, a light rain falling, and the light just coming over the mountains.

Our host Cavyguy had checked out the area the night before but conditions through the night had made the trek down the hill much to treacherous for any flash mob, even those in Alaska. All that was proven by his attempt down the hill, it had him bouncing from side to side on the dangerous road to the lake.

LiIgray showed up, then Sugar and I, followed by SoutheastAlaska,wife, and Kenzie-bear. We were all stopped by Cavyguy at the top of the hill and informed, "this is where we'll hold the event, it's way to dangerous to go down to the lake". Did I mention the Hillbillies? Then Southeast had a good one when cavy said he was trying to find a less windy location than the last two years, SEA replied, "then why you having it in Wasilla?" :)



Not much longer, while Sugar was saying hi and sniffing around, Lunchlady and ayayD, arrived. GeologyBarbie, hubby, and the muggle birder showed up all the way from Texas, and the Carolinas, respectively. How'd they beat all the others after traveling so far? We know how they beat the Hillbillies.

Soon thereafter arrived the Wasillians fresh back from Seattle. The wonderful Alaskan Bev showed up with a smiley on her face and started greeting folks. Then I turned and who should I see towering over me DR-AK and AW-AK. I was happy to shake hands with DMZLstone, then felt terrible about leaving wolfmaster hanging, sorry Wolfy. And still the Hillbillies where nowhere to be seen.

Questing showed up without Lil, and all 8/8 of burtonsinak where there complete with smiles and well placed one liners. The best of the day was at the group photo. 3/8 yelled "all the tall catchers in front sitting". Glenn.fish and akjoey braved the winds, they rarely miss an event. Nor do the Hillbillies, where are they?

I was busy waving the one point capture the flag, flag when hallowannaPathways showed up with her hula grass skirt. Then comeIwannalayaTomanoble showed up with her and they started wiggling with hands upon their hips. Polgera played chaperone for the two ETs and it sounds like she was successful the entire day. Nice job, not easy, and we all thank you. Has anyone seen the Hillbillies?

ColoReido tried to mess up my count by running from place to place. A little monkey ran around looking cute. And finally the Hillbillies arrived. Yep they HAD made it to the lake and where waiting for us all to show up, but finally gave up and found us at the top of the hill, making my count 31 plus one muggle birder.

Alaskastafford took home the FTF prize, and I missed the other drawings. People munched on breakfast bars, pop tarts and pretzels. Cachers made plans with one another for caching adventures for the rest of the day and some headed their own ways in search of smileys just the same.

We all had fun and started our new year of right. Thanks Cavyguy, we'll see you here again next year.

[Flash mob for dog safety](#), by RiaRoebuck/Ducklover7

As I walked up the steps to GZ there was some very strange "woofing" coming from above. My suspicions tell me it was Fuzzybelly and his doggie ears but I'm not sure. I'm sure '519 can make a good woof too. The chatter of fellow cachers grew as more and more and as always there were many smiles and lots of laughter. Discussions of some good hides, what caches are going to be tried next and what trackables have been discovered recently filled the air. The oh, so famous flags even came up in conversation! Where will they be found next?? Soon our motley crew headed downstairs for a lesson on traps. A quick introduction was given and then we got down to business, watching a video presentation prepared by the Alaska Trappers Association to educate others on how to co-exist with trappers on Alaska trails. One point we were asked to keep in mind is that there will always be irresponsible trappers and irresponsible pet owners. There may at times be traps set in areas where they really shouldn't be and that a responsible trapper would not put a trap were it is obvious that a dog will get into it. When this happens it always reflects badly on the responsible trappers. This same thing is seen in the caching community as well. We all know the frustration that comes when a cacher does not put a cache back properly only to have it disappear shortly after they found it. I even remember reading an article (when in the lower 48) about the bomb squad being called out because of a poorly placed cache. That for sure left a bad taste in many people's mouths when it came to geocachers. Just an example of what the trappers must feel when someone is not using their heads and hurting the reputation of the Alaskan Trappers when placing a trap.

We then learned how to recognize if you may be on a trap line. A trap line is a trail of traps set by one trapper; they do not set only one trap but many traps on a known fur bearer route. So if you see one trap there will be more in the area. There are many signs that may tell you that you are on a trap line. If you see any of the following it may be time to leash up your dog!!

- The wing of a bird hanging from a tree will have a trap buried in the ground under it.
- If you come upon a large animal carcass it may have traps set up around it to catch scavengers.
- Flags or survey tape tied to a branch may be marking a trap.
- If you are walking down a trail and notice many side trails leading off the main trail this is a good indicator that a trapper has set traps just off the main trail.
- If you see a trapped animal guess what?! You're on a trap line. (It is unlawful to touch any animal you may find caught in a trap.)
- A catch circle is a circle made by an animal that has been trapped for a period of time, the snow will be packed and will form a circle from where the trap is anchored.
- A trap can also be set just outside a small hole in the snow with a piece of bait inside the hole that is dug to look like a burrow from a small animal.
- A urine trap set is a trap hidden under a lump of grass or small tree which has been sprayed with a sent lure.
- A bucket hanging from a tree.

- The blind set or trail set is a trap set on the trail itself and buried with snow. This is not a preferred method used by the responsible trappers as it is much more likely that they will trap something that is not supposed to be in a trap (like a dog, or a BlazingPathways) but they brought this one up to let us know they do exist.

Next came the types of traps. Most of us think of the claw when we think of a trap but the claw trap is not a proffered tool and trappers very rarely use them. Other types are the long spring, the coil spring, the under spring, the conibear, and the snare. All of the traps will have one or two springs or clamps that need to be tightened to release the trap once it has been sprung. A lot of these can be done by hand, but some you may need to use a large stick to help with the leverage. The snares are very simple to release, made from cable you would need cable cutters to cut through them but that is not necessary. Simply loosen the snare by pulling the slider away from the animal while holding a lever on the side. There are many videos on YouTube showing how to set a trap. If you can set a trap you can release a trap. If you have a pooch it would be good to take a look at some of these to be prepared if your dog catches itself in a trap.

IF YOUR DOG GETS INTO A TRAP the first thing you should do is subdue the dog. Even the most gentle and loving dog can have behavior that you never thought possible when it is dealing with trauma. Place your coat over the dog's head; this will help calm the dog. Then muzzle the dog with whatever you can (yes your loving furry friend may bite you when this stressed!) a belt, shoestrings whatever you have on hand. A strip of Velcro works great for this if you have one on you. Then tie his/her feet together; you do not want your distressed dog to run off after you have released him/her from a trap! Now it's time to release the trap; have a firm base such as a snowshoe or sled to do this. ColoReido was a great help at this point. Sometimes it is said that you may want to leave the trap on your dog and take all of it to the vet. Being a vet himself he advised that the best thing to do is release the trap and have your dog walk on the injured foot if possible. Whatever way you choose, it is best to get your dog to a vet as soon as possible.

After the presentation was a Questions and Answer part where BlazingPathways was relieved to learn that traps are too small to hurt her if she steps in one. She can now cache with the peace of mind that she won't get stuck in the woods!!

After questions and answers was play time!! There were four tables set up with traps and snares each with a volunteer from the Alaska Trappers Association to teach everyone how to release a snare once it is sprung. There were snaps going off all over the room with a few squeals every now and then added in from surprised guests when the traps went off. I am happy to report no fingers were caught and Fuzzybelly's ears stayed a safe distance away and escaped injury.

This was a great seminar and beneficial to all whom attended. I would encourage anyone with a geodog to attend one of the presentations or request to view the video (free of charge, info below).

Some resources:

You can borrow the DVD shown at the presentation for free by calling 907-457-1174 or emailing info@alaskatrappers.org.

ADFG has information on trapping at <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index/cfm?adfg=trapping.main>

Maps of areas closed to trapping can be found at <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=huntingmaps.closedtrapping>

[National Tin Can Day Flash Mob](#), by Laura McDonald/MamaNanook

I, MamaNanook, decided to take on a challenge of my own this year. I would host a flash mob every month in honor of a little known holiday. January's flash mob was held on January 19, in honor of National Tin Can Day. Did you know that in 1810 Peter Durand patented the tin can. Tin Can Day celebrates his contribution to the storage of perishable food. I wanted to make a difference with this flash mob so it was spread around the community by fellow geocachers that we wanted to collect food for the food bank. Those who geocache in the banks collected 100+ cans of food and other assorted dry food. MamaNanook and Emily1486 took the food to the food bank the following Tuesday.

Sadler's parking lot played host to our Tin Can Day Flash Mob. In attendance were firemanak, poodle chic, teamakbutterflies, pathfinder01, mudpaw97, emeindl, n'oresters, mikefairbanks, helo-nurseAK, NanookBoy, and MamaNanook. After the initial gathering we started the tin can roll. The idea was to see who could roll a can the furthest. Everyone decided a practice roll was not needed so the rolling began. Mike (mikefairbanks) blew the competition away with his can of Grillin Beans. Second place was Ryan of teamakbutterflies and third was Tony (firemanak). Only two children decided to roll their cans NanookBoy gave it his all to win the children's roll with Dakota of teamakbutterflies a close second. Sean of teamakbutterflies decided he didn't want to show everyone up with his roll and decided to not take part.



After the tin can roll, MamaNanook gave everyone a CITO kit complete with bag and glove and prizes were awarded. Plans were made by a few cachers to meet at a local eatery to warm up and discuss upcoming events.



The next Fairbanks flash mob will be held near the end of February. The day and holiday are still a closely guarded secret. I will say this, it's sure to make a splash in this polar region. Did you figure it out???

Thank you to Sabrina Macauley (helo-nurseak) for taking pictures during the event and also to Tony (firemanak) for his pictures of the results of our can roll.

GEOCACHE ALASKA! INC.

Exploring the Last Frontier • www.geocachealaska.org



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

Find us online at:

1. GeocacheAlaska! Website: <http://www.geocachealaska.org>
2. GeocacheAlaska! Forums: <http://geocachealaska.proboards.com/>
3. GeocacheAlaska! on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/GeocacheAlaska-Inc/180089884756>
4. E-mail to contact@geocachealaska.org



LIKE US ON FACEBOOK!

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) charitable and educational non-profit 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."