



## June 2013

### IN THIS ISSUE:

[President's Corner](#)  
[13<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Event](#)  
[WWFM X Fairbanks](#)  
[WWFM X Mat-Su](#)  
[WWFM X Barrow](#)  
[World Migratory Bird Day](#)  
[Tips for Better Cache Logs](#)  
[Online Archives](#)  
[GeocacheAlaska! Membership](#)

[Reviewer's Corner](#)  
[2014 Photo Contest](#)  
['Caching in der Schweitz](#)  
[HOBO CITO's](#)  
[Nat'l Hanging Out Day](#)  
[International CITO Day-FAI](#)

[Permits](#)

[HOBO CITO #4 - Girdwood Adopt-A-Highway](#), May 19  
[100 Events and counting](#), Anchorage, May 20  
[Come say good bye](#), Fairbanks, May 25



### President's Corner

by Wes Skinner/NorthWes

We're on the cusp of summer – when family and friends come to sample Alaska's great outdoors and sample a bit of why we like to live here. Geocachers are no exception to this cycle, as we're going to have a visit from more than seventy geocachers aboard one single cruise ship alone! The crew arrives in Seward on July 5th, disembarking to begin a day's bus journey up the Kenai Peninsula to their hotels in Anchorage following stops in the Seward area and at the Portage Glacier Begich-Boggs Visitor Center. I'm hosting a GeocacheAlaska! Inc. Meet n Greet event for about forty of the cruiser-cachers at the Sourdough BBQ restaurant on the evening of July 5th, which will be followed with a little caching around some of the cruisers' targeted Anchorage Caches. On Saturday, July 6th those cruiser cachers who haven't flown home will be visiting more caches of interest in the Anchorage area. Watch for events to publish in the near future as we nail down final details with the cruise tour planners. You're invited to meet our guests and show off what makes Alaska such an interesting place to geocache!

In other board news, two board members resigned from their service with your board of directors for personal reasons. Lisa Echard has recently relocated her home coordinates out to the Mat-Su valley, which when coupled with her work schedule has made it impossible for her to attend board meetings for the near future. She's opted to give someone else a chance to serve while she settles into her new routine. Glenn Fish has likewise found himself in a place where work obligations have claimed so much of his time in the near future that he felt another GeocacheAlaska! Inc member would be in a better position to serve in his absence. I extend my heartfelt thanks to both Lisa and Glenn, and while I'm going to miss them at board meetings I know I'll be seeing them at our events and on the caching trails! Your board is following procedures in place to appoint new members to serve out these two terms. Victoria Noble has agreed to serve as Secretary and hope to have the new Member at Large seated prior to the June 13 Board meeting.

### MARK YOUR CALENDAR—EVENTS

[Memorial Luau BBQ](#), Anchorage, May 26  
[National Trails Day Flash Mob](#), Fairbanks, June 1  
[Geocaching Day at the Downtown Association Market](#), Fairbanks, June 17  
[Meet N Greet Our Fairbanks Visitors](#), Fairbanks, June 18  
[H.E.L.P. Celebrate SOLSTICE Friday BBO and Campout](#), Eklutna Lake, June 21  
[H.E.L.P. Celebrate SOLSTICE Saturday CAMPOUT](#), Eklutna Lake, June 22  
[H.E.L.P. Celebrate SOLSTICE Sunday Meet N' Greet](#), Eklutna Lake, June 23  
[Meet N Greet in Denali National Park](#), Denali, June 23  
[Flashing in Juneau- capitol fun](#), Juneau, July 2  
[Caching on The Kenai - 5th Annual Picnic](#), Soldotna, July 13  
[FAIRBANKS CACHAPPLOOSA 2013](#), Fairbanks, Sept. 7

### RECENT EVENT HAPPENINGS

[National Hanging Out Day Flash Mob](#), Fairbanks, April 19  
[International CITO Weekend Fairbanks Edition](#), April 20  
[Down Town Juneau Cache-Clean-up!](#), April 20  
[International CITO Weekend-Kincaid Park Cleanup](#), April 20  
[Almost-Earth Day CITO](#), Juneau, April 21  
[Geocaching's Anniversary Meet'n'Mingle](#), May 3, Anchorage  
[WWFM X - MatSu Valley](#), May 4  
[WWFM X - Anchorage - Town Square Flash Mob 4](#), May 4  
[WWFM X-Fairbanks Airport Road Corner Flash Mob](#), May 4  
[WWFM X - Top of the World - Ice Planet Hoth](#), May 4  
[World Migratory Bird Day Flash Mob](#), May 11  
[GeoWoodstock XI or Bust !!!](#), May 15  
[Cache Hunting FUNDamentals – Anchorage](#), May 16  
[Cache Hunting FUNDamentals – Fairbanks](#), May 16  
[HOBO CITO Kick-Off Flash Mob – Homer](#), May 17  
[HOBO CITO Campout - Hornaday Park](#), Homer, May 17  
[HOBO CITO #1 - Hornaday Park Cleanup](#), Homer, May 18  
[HOBO CITO #2 - Soldotna Creek Park Cleanup](#), May 18  
[HOBO CITO Campout - Hidden Lake Campground](#), May 18  
[HOBO CITO #3 - Hidden Lake Campground Cleanup](#), May 19

On a final note, please strive to represent GeocacheAlaska! Inc. through your actions as ethical players who seek to build up the game and fellow geocachers. Adhering to "Leave No Trace" actions, practicing CITO efforts, encouraging new and veteran cachers alike with positive cache logs which thank cache owners for their hides, and participating in GeocacheAlaska! Inc. social events all contribute to the positive reputation the game of geocaching enjoys here in Alaska.



## Reviewer's Corner – Cache Page Content & Hints

by Michael Malvick/Greatland Reviewer

From time to time, I get a question about why I published a cache page with spelling mistakes or why I won't administratively remove a "Needs Maintenance" attribute from a cache page when all is well with a cache.

It's Groundspeak's policy that cache page content belongs to the Cache Owner, so Reviewers are instructed not to edit cache pages unless directed by the Cache Owner (e.g. change coordinates more than 0.1 mile/528 feet). That's why cache pages with the "Needs Maintenance" attribute set despite the cache being all right, html problems, and spelling mistakes live on with their issues.

On another topic, whether the Cache Owner adds a hint to their cache page is their choice. However, if a hint is added, it should be useful, not a poke in the eye of the cacher who decodes the hint for a nudge on how to find the cache. Hints such as "nope," "none needed," "too easy for a hint," "not today," "e-mail me after you logged your DNF," should be avoided since they aren't helpful at all and a cacher wouldn't be looking at the hint if they didn't need help. If a Cache Owner doesn't want to provide a useful hint, it is better to leave the hint field blank.

## Geocaching's Anniversary Meet'n'Mingle - [GC4A6TN](#) by Wes Skinner/NorthWes

Geocaching's first cache was hidden by Dave Ulmer outside of Portland Oregon on May 3, 2000, and we gathered at Sourdough BBQ to celebrate the 13<sup>th</sup> anniversary of that first cache listing! This placement marked the beginning of the Geocaching era - using a multi-billion-dollar satellite system to chase tupperware (and bison) in the woods. The game has come a long way in the last thirteen years, hasn't it? Today's caches span a wide variety of interests, and the GPS units we use are generations ahead of the simple units available at the beginning of this century.

GeocacheAlaska! Inc. has held many events in this back room over the past eight years – and we expect to be hosting get-togethers here for many more years to come. Visit the [cache page](#) and have a look at the twenty photographs uploaded by attendees, get a sense of the fun we had, and make sure you don't miss the next event we're planning for this location.

Here's a snapshot view of a few of the crowd gathered for the Anniversary Celebration...



## WWFM X-Fairbanks Flash Mob - [GC48XJ5](#) by Danelle Roof/AKDragonflyD

The world wide flash mob brought out the wind, the chill and the core crew of cachers with new friends and a rejuvenated caching spirit. Braving the elements, as all true catchers do, 'Those who cache in the 'Banks' gathered on the corner of a major intersection waving flags and signs; letting Fairbanks know geocachers do exist. Our newest member, AKTrekster, won the geocoin donated by GeocacheAlaska! Thank you for helping us get the "new guy" hooked on our awesome game. The event wrapped with the mob venturing to a local diner to plan our attack on the devious force of the hidden caches of Fairbanks. "May the 4th be with you" on your next adventure!



## 2014 GeocacheAlaska! Calendar Photo Contest by Scott Aleckson/SSO JOAT

Once again, you have the chance to be the envy of geocachers all over Alaska and have your favorite photograph grace our 2014 GeocacheAlaska! Calendar. Calendars will be published in November and should be available to purchase by early December. Entry into the contest is limited to Sourdough and Cheechako members of GeocacheAlaska! ([joining](#) as a Cheechako member is free).

### The Photo Contest categories are:

- **Adventure (extreme)**
- **Children**
- **Containers**
- **Flora**
- **People**
- **Places**
- **Whimsy (fun)**
- **Wildlife**
- **Winter**



You may enter up to FOUR 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, 2013, the voting will take place in October. New this year, a committee will evaluate all submissions and vote on finalists in each category that will be placed before the general membership vote. The number of finalists in each category will depend on the number of entries received.

By submitting your photo to this contest you grant GeocacheAlaska! Inc. the right to use and reprint the image in the Calendar, the Newsletter and on the GeocacheAlaska! website. Photo credit will be given to the photographer. There is no compensation awarded to the contest winners. Winners get the honor of having their picture grace a monthly page or the cover of the calendar and the knowledge and happiness in knowing that their photograph was chosen to receive this honor.

Photographs may be submitted by e-mailing a high resolution copy to [PhotoContest@GeocacheAlaska.org](mailto: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 recognizable 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 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.

All photos submitted to the Calendar Photo Contest will be posted on the GeocacheAlaska! website and will appear in the GeoFest Slide Show in December. Some photos may be selected and published in the GeocacheAlaska! Newsletter.

All photo submissions must be sent to the official photo contest email account.

If you have geocaching photos from your vacation or from outside of Alaska, these may also be submitted for inclusion in the GeoFest slide show by sending them to the same [e-mail account](#) as above, but using the tag [SLIDE SHOW] in the subject line of your e-mail. We still need to have all the info listed above, excluding the category. There is no limit to the number of photos you may enter into the slide show pool, so any and all geocaching-related photos are welcome.

If you have any questions, post them here or send an email to the [photocontest e-mail account](#).

Thank you for participating!

**Have some spare time?** Try playing [Geoguesser](#), an online game that uses GoogleEarth's street view to drop you onto random places on the planet and the closer your guess to the actual location, the more points you earn.



## Geocaching in der Schweiz by Michael Malvick/Ladybug Kids

After geocaching Germany, Denmark, and France during a January 2013 business trip (see articles in the [archives](#)), I headed to Malers, Switzerland, home of geocacher [Worlddiver, s'Rechnerli](#) (Cornelea) and their two daughters, Chantal and Céline. Switzerland is known as “der Seewitz” in German and also as the “Confoederatio Helvetica,” which is why the country sticker many display on the back of their car reads “CH.” Malers is near Lucerne, which serves as the capital of the Canton of Lucerne, and sits in the shadow of Mount Pilatus, elevation 6980 feet. After a trip that involved the Paris Metro, a French train to the airport, and Air France flight to Vienna, Austria, and an Austrian Air flight to Zurich, was nice to see Lucas’ familiar face at the airport and know that I was going to soon be settling in at his home for a couple of days.

But first, we had to work up an appetite for dinner by finding some geocaches. We started out with two traveler friendly geocaches at the Zurich Airport, [TB Hotel Airport ZHR \(Remake\)](#) (interestingly, I’d found the original nearly two years earlier) and [Greetings from far away / Grüße aus der Ferne](#). The first cache was in a parking garage with a stall number as the hint and the second was a bird house placed near a walking path outside airport parking. Being winter, we had to be careful about ice on the path, but we made it safely back to the car. Next, Lucas took me to the first cache logged in Switzerland, [GC516](#), which was placed by an Australian. We then made our way toward Malers, passing through many tunnels that Swiss highway engineers bored through hills and mountain ridges to keep traffic flowing quickly. After eating dinner at a Chinese restaurant (it’s tough to find authentic Swiss food in Switzerland!), Lucas took me to his home to meet his family and settle in for the evening.

The next morning, Lucas took me on a driving tour of Malers, using caches including his “Malers” series as local waypoints which featured scenic views, treks along bike and forest trails, with a good dash of local history on each cache page. A cacher would collect information in each cache to calculate the final coordinates of a [bonus cache](#) located on a high point featuring a 360° view of the area. The bonus cache ended up being my final European cache of the trip and we arrived at sunset to make the special location even nicer.



After spending the morning in the countryside, Lucas drove me to Lucerne to team up with the rest of his family to work on the solution for the [SWISS-MONOPOLY #15: Luzern – Weggisgasse](#) puzzle cache, which is constructed similarly to [Little Pictures](#) in Anchorage. We had a great time walking the historic street looking for all the clues, with each person on the team finding at least one. We did have to go up and down the street twice before we found all the information needed and then we retired to a cafe for warm drinks while we worked on the math. Three adults worked on the math and could not get the geocheker to work. Then, I noticed the numbers we had for a couple of the answers did not look quite right. Correcting them changed one answer, but not the other. However, that was enough to ring up success in the geocheker and we were then off to the final after a long search for a waitress so we could pay our bill. (Things are different in Europe...one can order a cup of coffee and occupy a table for as long as one wishes without the waitress asking if you want anything else or would like the check). After warming up, we completed the [Schmotzige Donnschtig](#) multi-cache, which took us on a walking tour of the old part of Lucerne and pointed out architectural features I would have otherwise never noticed. Once we had the solution worked out, we went to ground zero and found a couple occupying



the space we needed to search. We tried to wait them out, but they were more interested in each other than in going somewhere warm, so we wandered over another cache to kill some time. When we returned, the final area was unoccupied so we could search without fear of muggles. At some point we got hungry and found some good basic wurzst and pomme frites (sausage and french fries) to refuel the internal furnace and help ward off the outdoor chill.







arriving at a quintessential Swiss chalet nestled at the base of a massive alp, packed with hikers and skiers, all refueling with hot drinks and a merengue speciality that was very much like baked Alaska filled with ice cream and fresh fruit. Another notable feature of the restaurant is that the menus were decouped onto slabs of spruce cut from the local forest.

Once we finished dessert (life is short, have it as the first course), the younger girls ran over to a nearby barn to say hello to the horses, cows, and sheep and Cornelia guided me to [Am Rümli 1](#). I had to really work for this find, needing to break loose some river rocks that had frozen into place before I could access the container.

Energized by the decadent repast and facing downhill, we made good time down the snowy trail to the georig and drove back to Malters, arriving just as the



local carnival was revving up. One feature of carnival are the Guggemuusige, (masked bands) that dress in costume and play well-known tunes on their brass and percussion instruments, We listened to several bands play their repertoire before walking up the street to the house where the fondue fixings were awaiting us.

I never would have imagined the five of us could devour the large fondue pot of melted cheese and wine and a full loaf of bread along with several apples, but we did, and very quickly at that!



Morning came way too quickly with an 0500 wake-up alarm to catch a 0740 flight home, but we all made it out the door on time with a promise to Chantal and Céline that they would spend part of the day at an indoor water park. I routed home through Paris to Minneapolis where I'd scheduled an eight-hour layover so I could rent a car and drive down to Iowa to find my first caches in that state.



I landed at MSP on time, picked up my rental, and drove into freezing rain. Traffic was reduced to a crawl as vehicles were sliding off the superelevated curves on the highway, but conditions improved the further south I drove and soon I was making good time. I kept the radio tuned to a news station for a continuous feed of weather information, lest I get surprised by a highway closure behind me and miss my flight home, but conditions improved as the afternoon wore on. Shortly after crossing the Minnesota/Iowa border near

Northwood, I exited I-35 to stop at the Top of Iowa visitor center and find a traditional cache and an EarthCache there. Once parked, I had to carefully scoot across the side walk to the ice-encrusted grass because freezing rain had been falling most of the day, but I succeeded in finding both the [Top of Iowa Cache](#) and [Top of Iowa EarthCache](#) plus one more for an Iowa trifecta before heading back to the Twin Cities. I made good time back to Minneapolis, so I hunted park and grabs around the Mall of America before returning the rental car and heading for home.



## Hobos come together to Clean up the Kenai by Scott Aleckson/SSO JOAT

It all started back on March 6, 2013 on the [GeocacheAlaska! ProBoard Forums](#) when Homer cacher [NeverSummer](#) started a [thread](#) to talk about CITO events for the coming Earthday. Soldotna cacher [SSO JOAT](#) and Anchorage cacher [Ladybug Kids](#) got involved in the discussion and inside of about 24 hours a conceptual idea was formed around taking CITO on a road trip. Thus, the concept of the “Hobo CITO” was born. Soon, [The Firefly](#) (also of Homer) and [Fuzzybelly](#) were involved and a plan was crafted for a long weekend of camping and cleaning from Homer to Girdwood.

On the evening of May 17, the plan turned to reality on the back patio of Starvin Marvin’s Pizza at the base of the Spit in Homer with a Kick-Off Flash Mob at 6:15pm. As SSO JOAT, NeverSummer, and The\_Firefly with hubby and kids withstood the chilling winds coming off Kachemak Bay, a helicopter flew overhead with a cargo net full of boxes hanging below as it was apparently heading out to the drilling platform a few miles up Cook Inlet. Just as it passed over, a box fell off and we watched it plummet back to earth, landing with a smack out in the middle of Mud Bay right in front of the restaurant. The helicopter continued west and headed out over Cook Inlet where a second box was seen bailing out and dropping down into the ocean before the helicopter turned north and disappeared out of sight.

There was a brief discussion about starting our CITO early, but no one wanted to brave the slop of Mud Bay to get to the smashed box. So, while NeverSummer had to run back to work for a little bit, the rest of us went inside to have dinner. Before dinner was done, we were joined by Anchorage cachers [wolfmaster1](#) and [dmzlstone](#) who got off work early and dashed down to join us as soon as they could. In the midst of it all, a guy walked in asking if anyone had seen anything fall off the helicopter, so we shared our witnessed account with him. Shortly thereafter, a guy decked out in waders made his way out and retrieved the box.

Following dinner, we all headed up the hill to the Karen Hornaday campground to set up camp for the night and have a campout social event around the campfire. Upon finding the park entrance, we were unexpectedly met with a locked gate. A number of ideas were tossed about as to how to defeat the lock, since we were told by Homer officials that the campground would be open for us, but in the end we just parked outside the gate and walked in to the first level and relatively dry campsite. NeverSummer had returned and brought along a gaggle of bird biologists from work to join us. We soon learned that they were from various other parts of the country and would be heading out to remote Aleutian Island locations in the morning. After allowing one of the gals to check the wood pile for snakes, we eventually got some of the damp wood to start burning to try and take a bit of the chill off and allow for the proper burning of marshmallows to begin.

Within a matter of minutes, hours had passed and we were staring down midnight. The locals departed to retreat back to their cozy abodes before their georigs reverted to pumpkins, while those of us from out of town set about camp making; with SSO JOAT taunting the forecast for snow by setting up a tent, while our Anchorage pair made their way back to sleep it off in their car. I hear that a local police officer found that sleeping in a car was suspicious enough to check them out at two a.m. with a knock on the window. After the quick explanation, I can just about hear the officer drawling back with, “So you drove down here from Anchorage to sleep in your car so you can get up in the morning to pick up all the trash in the campground? (Sure, buddy)”. I’m pretty sure that encounter allows you to fill in a certain box on the GeoBingo card, so all was not lost.



Photo by the [Homer Tribune](#).

It snowed at about 4am or so, but not too much; Just a light dusting over the Homer area. Everyone scattered to find breakfast and coffee in the early morning hour, but returned to the park at nine a.m. to begin the first of the Hobo CITO events. The same crew from the night before (minus the biologists) went through the campground and picked up every scrap of litter we could find. In a mere 45 minutes we had the campground spotless. So, we continued into the adjacent playground and softball fields and picked those up as well. Here we met the Homer Parks Director who was duly impressed with our efforts. After a photo op, we once again scattered to the wind with our sights set on Soldotna. Those of us from out of town made a quick stop at Islands and Oceans to run through the [Letterbox Hybrid](#) cache located inside. It certainly is a do-not-miss on your next trip to Homer.



A quick trip up the highway left the snow behind and sunshine ahead as we arrived in Soldotna. We were joined by Anchorage cacher [Ladybug Kids](#) as well as Kenai cachers [bogie7679](#) at two p.m. in the Soldotna Creek Park. Once again the cleanup process commenced, and even though the park was full of people, our little group managed to blend into the background and pickup quite a bit of litter. At one point, we had five cachers end up super cleaning one small area of the park that our collective GPS devices told us was the home of a fairly new geocache. After we all came up empty, someone noticed that another cacher who was with us today had logged a find on this cache, so they were summoned to the site and promptly discovered that the cache was missing. Shortly after this, the CO was hit by five DNFs and one NM log. So, we finished up the park without getting our twofer, but turned over several bags of trash to the City Maintenance worker who stopped by to collect our winnings. Again, we scattered to the wind to grab a few caches and some last minute supplies before continuing north. I retreated to my local residence to gather up some dogs for the trip to Hidden Lake, now that the weather was looking much less wet.



Shortly after arriving at my house, my phone rings with Ladybug Kids on the other end. In a slightly excited tone, he quickly explains where his vehicle is parked and which cache he was after before explaining that he just had a close encounter with a rather large brown bear. Wanting to make sure someone knew where to start looking if the bear came back before he reached his truck, he relayed a rather amazing story that you all should go read about on the [Kanakanak](#) puzzle. After a follow up call to let me know he made it out alive, I returned to prepping for the trip north. The dogs were eventually fed and loaded and we made our way out of town with a gas stop on the way.

Upon arriving at the Hidden Lake Campground off of Skilak Loop Road near Cooper Landing, I found that more Anchorage cachers had joined us with [akgh519](#), [coloReido](#), and [Malcore](#) already having staked out some prime campsites. NeverSummer, dmzlstone, wolfmaster1, and The\_Firefly crew were already in place and Ladybug Kids arrived just a few minutes later after having spent some extra time in Soldotna trying to find [Hogwarts](#).

We settled on a campsite to be the social host and built a campfire. Snacks and beverages came out and once again the next few hours passed in a flash. Maggie, the black lab, managed to find the lake and go for a swim. So much for avoiding wet dogs. Shortly after she finally dried out, she slipped her collar and went for another swim. Malcore brought out a new toy helicopter to fly around, not realizing that the little red light hovering around in the air was enough to fully engage the hunting instincts of the two retrievers sitting by the fire. As the “bird” landed in the tree line, two dogs bolted with the Golden in the lead. Only the luck of the leash being a couple feet short of the landing zone saved the helicopter from an untimely death. As the night wore on, cachers gradually peeled off and made their way back to their sleeping quarters with the last dispersals happening well after midnight. And then things got interesting.



After a quick walk around the campground, the dogs and I settled into the tent. The lab immediately trying to claim the sleeping bag as hers, but the golden pretty much falling asleep in the first spot he touched. Eventually, I managed to get settled in and the lab fell asleep hard. All was going well, especially since the lab has very little tent time. At 2am, everything changed. A car alarm went off a couple sites down. Now who would figure on hearing a car alarm in the middle of the wilderness? Well, the lab didn't care too much for that and it took a while to get her settled back down (the golden went right back to sleep, of course). She was restless and let me know it every chance she could for the next couple hours. As the sky started to lighten up in the early morning hours, the birds started in with their songs. Starting about 4am, there were larger birds such as ravens, flying over. You could clearly hear the beat of their wings and the whoosh of air over their large



bodies. That was it for the lab. She looked up at the roof of the tent every time one flew over and then looked back at me with those huge black eyes. Another half hour of trying to console her got nowhere, so we rolled out of the sack and put on our shoes to go for a walk.

After a lap around the campground and everyone doing their “business”, we returned to the tent and tried to settle in for a couple more hours. But that just wasn’t going to happen. The Golden slept, but the lab was up and ready to go. Hence, so was I. A fire was built. Coffee brewed and breakfast cooked. It was a long time before anyone else stirred and the dogs went for a couple more walks to explore more of the campground before our camp social site was back in business. And next thing you know, it was time to break camp as the hour of our CITO was fast approaching. I knew we were late when most of the camp was still in place and a motorhome rolled in carrying Anchorage cacher Fuzzybelly. The commotion of his entrance brought the last couple snoozing campers back to life and we all got about finishing the breakdown of our camping equipment.



About a quarter-hour late in starting, a tailgate meeting formulated a quick game plan on how to take on the rather large job of



cleaning all of last year’s ash and trash out of all the fire rings in the campground. Fortunately, we started out our adventure with over 100 trash bags. I think we used up at least fifty of those at Hidden Lake. It took us right at two hours to work through the entire campground and prepare all the fire rings for the oncoming summer campers. Best I can figure, we moved about ¼ ton of debris. I’m



just glad the upper campground loop road was open for vehicle access, or we would never have moved all those bags back to the collection point. Heck of a job guys and gals!

Again we dispersed and drove north to Girdwood, though we lost NeverSummer who had to get back to Homer for work that evening. The rest made it to Girdwood and met up with a fresh wave of Anchorage cachers where safety vests were distributed and bright yellow DOT trash bags were filled with a winter’s worth of carelessly discarded trash. When considering the \$1000 fine for littering, the state is sure missing out on a lot of money over those 2 miles of the Seward Highway. But our large group made a noteworthy dent in a quick two hours of cleanup. When the clean-up was complete, prizes were doled out and cavyguy, lilgray, and Tundra Tim were recognized as Alaska’s trio of 10,000+ find cachers. Cavyguy even lined up his finds to make this his 10,000<sup>th</sup> cache and distributed commemorative pathtags. Mrs. Fuzzy Belly again outdid herself in the kitchen, providing plenty of gender-specific banana bread (you just have to be there).





All in all, this was an excellent kick-off for the summer caching season and a great way to get a few spots cleaned up prior to next weekend's official start of camping season in Alaska. There is already muttering about doing a similar CITO Camping series in the Fall, and again next Spring. So jump on the GeocacheAlaska! forums and join in the discussion. All crazy camping CITO ideas are encouraged!!!

**WWFM X – Mat-Su Valley -- [GC3JYAT](#) by Bev Kirk/Alaskan Bev**

My fingers don't work any better in the middle of one night than they do another... (...maybe even more tired now than last night...sigh...) Could you believe the snow?! But it takes more than that to dampen the spirits of tough Alaskan cachers! Cavyguy, you ROCK! Giving us each such a special momento, too! I'm glad I sneaked away from drill long enough to join the adventuresome gang! ("Early lunch," I called it, and worked straight through while everyone else stormed off in search of calories!) And I can't believe cavyguy's favorite entree - and I'd quaked in terror for years that he might find out what ours is! (What - you don't know? Then don't miss his upcoming events - there are great things to be learned!) All around good time.





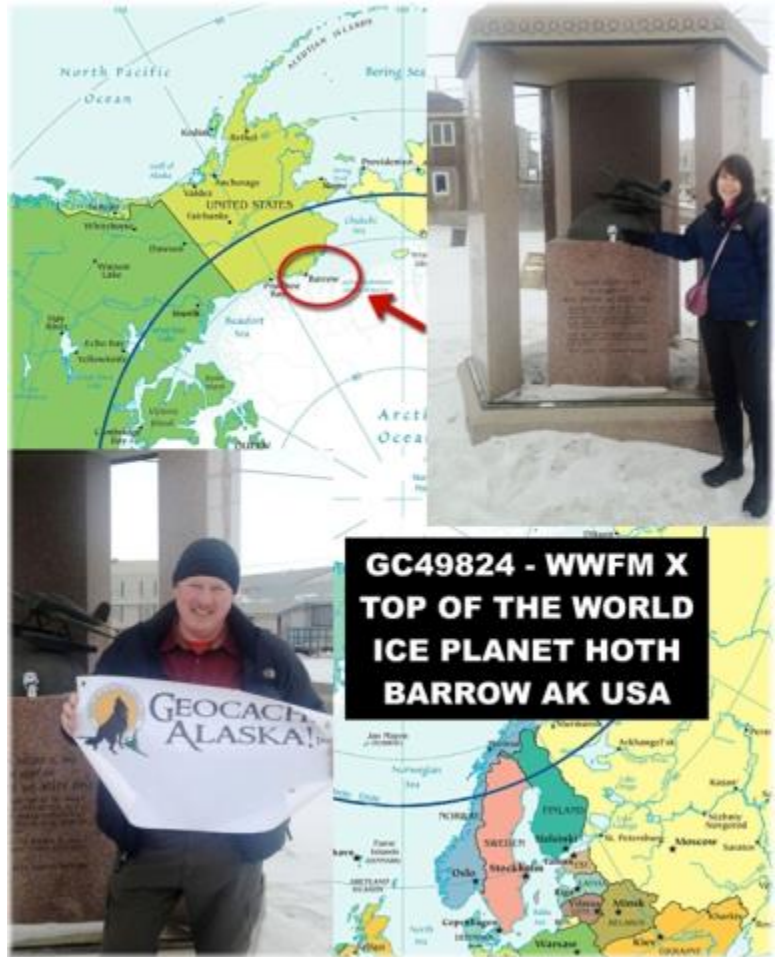
## WWFM X - Top of the World - Ice Planet Hoth – [GC49824](#) by Wes Skinner/NorthWes

This year's World Wide Flash Mob marked the tenth anniversary of PodCacher's efforts to coordinate an annual event where geocachers across the planet gather at reasonably similar times to quickly celebrate a social meet-up moment (also known as a flash mob). This year's theme focused on Star Wars (for those die-hard Flash Mobbers who just can't spend 15 minutes of their life without a theme to celebrate!) When business intervened and put local cacher NorthWes and Mrs. NW in Barrow, on May 4, it just seemed natural to plan a WWFM X event for America's farthest-north community. And since summer doesn't start in Barrow until May 11 (when the midnight sun phenomenon rules Barrow's skies) it just seemed natural to name the Top of the World's first-ever WWFM event after Star Wars' Ice Planet Hoth! Here follows an account of a winter day spent caching in Barrow.

Taking advantage of an Alaska Airlines special fare (\$198 for a round trip usually costing over three times as much!), we boarded a 737 combi-freighter for the 4-hour journey northbound. Leaving Anchorage at 6:30am, the jet flew first to Fairbanks to take on additional passengers and freight, then hopped across the Brooks Range and the Arctic Plain to land in Deadhorse, where cargo containers and roughnecks were offloaded for the Prudhoe Bay oilfields. After a few homeward bound workers found their seats, we flew a westbound route along Alaska's north coast to Barrow. Early May is definitely still winter at these latitudes, with the ground covered in a uniform bright white layer of snow. On our final approach to Barrow the pack ice was seen breaking up offshore enough to show the bright green waters of the shallow Arctic Ocean.

Landing at 10:30 a.m., we disembarked the jetliner on outside stairs and walked quickly into the warm terminal. Barrow's airport facility features clean bathroom, free wifi service, and cell phone connectivity, as well as typically friendly and informative Alaska Airlines ground crew. We got our bearings during a conversation with a ticket agent and headed off to collect our half-day SUV rental (one rental business in town – with rates running nearly \$200 daily!). After a three block stroll down the street in a typical winter breeze off the ocean we were appreciating our good winter gear. Our little Ford Escape was ready for our day's adventures, and we were off to our event location at the Wiley Post/Will Rogers Memorial. All the local cachers we'd contacted with email invitations were either out of town on business, or had moved out onto the ice to their bowhead whale hunting camps. We got pictures of our Storm Trooper travel bug with the GeocacheAlaska! Inc event banner, then packed up to continue our day's business. The Memorial was a two-fer smiley for us, as it's also a virtual cache. Just a half-mile down the street to the west, right on the waterfront, we found a USGS benchmark - UW5292 UTKIAVIE – located on the beachfront atop an ancient mound where the original inhabitants of this community lived in pre-contact times. I took photographs and submitted this 'benchmark recovery' to the USGS, making it the northernmost mark recovered and reported by a geocacher. As we drove back into Barrow's downtown district we also stopped to log a find on UW5298 Barrow Presbyterian Church Cross (located atop the steeple), then took a break for a leisurely two-hour lunch at the well-known Pepe's North of the Border Mexican restaurant (receiving complimentary 'Arctic Circle' commemorative certificates for our journey to this restaurant).

After lunch we drove north into Browerville to find one of Alaska's oldest caches, placed in November 2002, at Iñisaġvik College. GCB266, "Bowhead" is Barrow's largest cache – a pvc pipe placed in the heart of a Bowhead Whale exhibit – ideal for travel bugs and the easiest traditional cache to find here. Just a bit further up Stevens Road we stopped to take our pictures at GC1DYFV, Top of the World cache, where Mrs. NW's sharp eyes found the nano cache in her first eye-sweep of the location. Good thing, as while the temperature had risen to 18 degrees we found the wind had picked up as well! We ended our cache hunting at the far north end of Stevens Road, 330 miles above the Arctic Circle, at GC1YYCZ, "Beyond Top of the World." This cache is found between the Arctic Ocean and the Chukchi Sea near Point Barrow, above the 71<sup>st</sup> parallel. Several caches are found at points further north in Canada, but this is arguably the northernmost cache in North America accessible via regularly scheduled jet airline flights (and a little bit of road



travel). We could see several hunting camps set up far offshore to the west. Hunters were waiting for an east wind to make leads in the pancake ice that would let them access the open ocean, where the bowhead whales had already been spotted.



Our Arctic odyssey drew to a close as we put three gallons of \$6.60 gas in the Ford Escape before returning it to the rental office. We boarded our 6:15 p.m. direct flight to Anchorage satisfied with our visit to Alaska's (and America's) northernmost community, where the winter caching experience was a delight and the residents were a real pleasure to meet during our travels.

### **World Migratory Bird Day Flash Mob - [GC47842](#) by Laura McDonald/MamaNanook**

On May 11, 2013, Fairbanks area cachers flew to Creamers Field to watch the migratory birds, at a favorite stop over, during their annual migration to their summer breeding grounds. Birds spotted were Sandhill Cranes, Snow Geese, Canada Geese, white Fronted Geese and other assorted birds.

Participants included: kecyup, noble10, liquidearth, pathfinder01, Emeindl, and MamaNanook.





## National Hanging Out Day Flash Mob - [GC477ZA](#)

by Laura McDonald/MamaNanook

This evening cachers in the Fairbanks area gathered to celebrate the little known holiday of National Hanging Out Day. Okay, we didn't hang out our laundry like day suggested but we came dressed in our spring geocaching clothes.

In attendance were PilsburyDoughBoy, LabShepherd, TeamAKButterflies, AKDragonflyD, Emily1486, Poodle Chic, NanookBoy, MamaNanook, and BabyNanook. Four cachers in this group participated in their first flash mob (PilsburyDoughBoy, LabShepherd, Emily1486, and BabyNanook). Poodle Chic won a brand new cache container to place!



## International CITO Weekend Fairbanks Edition

[GC48XF0](#) by Laura McDonald/MamaNanook

On April 20, 2013, Fairbanks area cachers descended upon Pioneer Park to get a head start on trash pick up. Cachers received bags and gloves and picked their area. Since we still had many inches of snow on the ground, not a lot of trash was picked up. We received many honks of appreciation (or were they get out of my way honks).

After trash pick up we had a weenie roast. Participants included Firemanak, AKDragonflyD, TeamAKButterflies, poodle chic, teamjws, kecupup, PilsburyDoughBoy, and mama nanook.

## Geocaching Coaching Tips for Better Logs, from Geocaching Weekly Update of 14-21 May 2013

Here are five quick ways to inspire your fellow geocachers with your next log entry. It's easy to share too. Just forward this email to your fellow geocachers and watch the geocache-logging knowledge spread.

- 1) Tell Your Story – The geocache log you write is like the preview to a movie. You're telling geocachers about an adventure they could experience. Maybe your journey involved seeing the first leaves of spring, looking out from a mountain top or meeting other geocachers on the trail. Your logs help other geocachers decide if the geocache looks fun and exciting enough for them to find.
- 2) Add a Picture – A picture of a geocacher's crooked smile after a find says a lot about a geocache. It's easy to upload pictures on-the-fly with the Geocaching mobile app. If you're wondering about the power of a picture in a log, check out the 1000 most recent log images. It's an ever-changing visual gallery of geocaching pictures from around the globe.
- 3) Name Some Names – Geocaching is all about community. Share the geocaching usernames of those who joined you out in the field. It's a quick way to help build the local geocaching community and it makes meeting people at Geocaching Mega-Events or Event Caches easier.
- 4) Add a Favorite Point – Favorite Points let you compliment the geocache creator and nudge other geocachers to check out this geocache. Only Geocaching Premium Members can earn and award Favorite Points, but everyone can see them. Learn how to use Favorite Points here: [Geocaching.com Presents: "Favorites"](#)
- 5) Say Thanks – It's easy. Watch this, "Thank you for reading this Geocaching Weekly Newsletter." It feels good. When you log a geocache and say "thank you" it means so much to the geocacher who hid and maintains the geocache. And don't forget, if the geocache needs maintenance, leave a "Needs Maintenance" log.

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## FOLLOW 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) 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.

## Find us online at:

1. GeocacheAlaska! Website: <http://www.geocachealaska.org>
2. GeocacheAlaska! Forums: <http://geocachealaska.proboards.com/index.cgi>
3. GeocacheAlaska! on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/GeocacheAlaska-Inc/180089884756>
4. E-mail to [contact@geocachealaska.org](mailto:contact@geocachealaska.org)
5. Interior Alaska Geocachers: <http://alaskageocachers.org/>

## 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 **13-KA-1289** and it must be on the cache container and the cache page. The 2012 permit number for the Mat-Su State Parks is **S12-061** and it must be on the cache container. 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" would like to hear from you. Submit articles or suggestions to [scobey@geocachealaska.org](mailto:scobey@geocachealaska.org)  
Subject: Around the State.*