



## December 2013

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### MARK YOUR CALENDAR—EVENTS

December 7 - [December TB Exchange](#) - Fairbanks  
December 8 - [Techno Time](#) - Fairbanks  
December 13 - [Ninth Annual Geofest](#) - Anchorage  
December 15 - [Geo Cashing Alaskan Style HOLIDAY BASH](#)  
- Fairbanks

### RECENT EVENT HAPPENINGS

[Geocaching in Space Celebration](#), Homer, November 6  
["Geocaching in Space"](#), Fairbanks, November 6  
[To Infinity and Beyond!](#), Anchorage, November 6

### President's Corner

*By Wes Skinner/NorthWes*



Elsewhere in this newsletter you'll find an announcement of the results of voting for the 2014 Board of Directors. Please take time to look at that list of names. Chances are good that you know some or all of those listed. Take time in the next week or so to reach out to the board and let them know where you, as a member, would like to serve during 2014. Opportunities are many, from the Events or Education Committees through the Advocacy and Fundraising Committees. The board needs your help and input to be a success at carrying out our three defining purposes: to Educate, to Advocate, and to Congregate.

Events are where we congregate, and often are used to provide educational activities too. I enjoy our range of activities – from CITO cleanup events to the simple flash mobs held to celebrate a time or place in our caching lives – they're all about the joy of geocaching alongside people who share our interest. Advocacy is a key element of our organization, as it's how we secure permission to play on the lands where our caches are located. Our fundraising committee has a string of successes under its belt which have built up our bank balance in order to make possible the educational, advocacy, and event activities of GeocacheAlaska! Inc. In all cases they're committees where you can help, and where you can provide input on how you'd like your organization to enhance geocaching here in Alaska. Get involved and help continue our successes!

### Reviewer's Corner

*By Michael Malvick/Greatland Reviewer*

#### Cache Reaping and Cache Page Content



During the weekend of November 3, 2013, I performed "cache reaping" for more than 5500 Alaskan caches. "Reaping" refers to the Reviewer's task of checking on the health of all caches in the state by reviewing those caches that have been "Temporarily Disabled" for an extended period or appear to be troubled due to a growing string of "Did Not Find" (DNF) logs. Caches that do not have a Note from the Cache Owner outlining a maintenance plan receive a Reviewer Note asking the Cache Owner to provide the plan or, if all is actually well with the cache, to communicate that fact via a Note to the cache page. I generally will not take further action the first time I review an apparently troubled cache.

However, if I check a cache page and find a Reviewer Note from the previous reaping cycle and there has not been a Cache Owner response to that Note, I then delve deeper by looking in detail at the past few logs on the cache page and checking the Cache Owner's profile to see if the Cache Owner has recently been online. If problems have persisted with the cache and/or the Cache Owner has not been active, then I will Archive the cache to open the location for a cache that will (hopefully) be better maintained. The Archival Note always states that the Cache Owner may contact me as soon as possible to have the cache Unarchived, with the caveat that unarchiving the cache requires it to be reviewed against the current guidelines. I have archived more than 600 caches during the past three years of reviewing and have received requests to unarchive an archived cache less than 8% of the time. I archived about ninety caches in November including Events that were more than two weeks old and received only two requests for unarchival as of press time more than two weeks later.

I will not archive a cache only because the "Needs Maintenance" attribute appears on the cache page. I will use the period of time a cache has needed maintenance if there are other problems with the cache such as a growing string of DNF logs and/or a log or note from a prior finder confirming the cache is missing in the case of an absent Cache Owner. Caches with the "Needs Maintenance" attribute will receive a Reviewer Note requesting the Cache Owner to check on the cache and if all is well, provides instructions on how to remove the attribute from the cache page.

Ultimately, whether a cache is archived or not depends on the Cache Owner's communication with the caching community and the Reviewer. If there is good communication, a cache

with issues can live on until it is maintained. On the other hand, if a cache appears to be abandoned and/or the Cache Owner is no longer active in the game, it becomes a candidate for archival.

I have again been recently been asked by several cachers why I won't administratively remove a "Needs Maintenance" attribute from a cache page when all is well with a cache. It is Groundspeak's policy that the 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) or if the content of the cache page or the cache logs violates Groundspeak's Terms of Use. Except for the most egregious cases of the latter when very swift action is required, I will contact the Cache Owner and request them to make the content change. If the Cache Owner does not act or does not respond, then, and only then, will I edit the cache page or the cache logs as necessary.

Cachers are reminded that if they ever wish to appeal a decision by a local Reviewer or if they believe their local Reviewer is otherwise acting improperly, they may contact Groundspeak via the Groundspeak Help Center at <http://support.groundspeak.com/index.php?pg=request> and selection option "08. Appeals" from the "How would you categorize this request?" pull-down menu.

## Geofest Is Coming...

By Roberta Bromlow/Polgera

Did you hear the rumors? GeoFest not happening - are you kidding?!?



The 9th Annual GeoFest will be at the BP Energy Center again this year. It is being held on December 13th.

Once again there will be a dessert contest and prizes. Pizza, salad, and soda will be served and then we get to eat the desserts from the contest, yum! Pricing for the pizza is \$5 for Sourdough members and \$5 for their first guest, \$10 for Cheechako members and non-members. Additionally, the store will be open for the purchase of bling including the 2013 pathtags and coins. You may avoid the line at the door by prepaying for your meal, 2014 Sourdough membership and bling purchases at [www.geocachealaska.org/coinsales/indexfest.htm](http://www.geocachealaska.org/coinsales/indexfest.htm).

Don't listen to rumors, come enjoy the festivities and mingle with your fellow cachers.

## 2013 Geocoins Almost Gone!



The 2013 GeocacheAlaska! Orca Geocoin is almost sold out! Only a handful of shiny nickel finish are left. The cost is \$9 for GeocacheAlaska! Sourdough members and \$10 for all other cachers. [Click here](#) to order yours now!

## National Public Lands Day

GeocacheAlaska! Inc. was recognized for the National Public Lands Day program. The following is an excerpt from the letter of recognition from Jeff Brune, Manager of BLM Campbell Creek Science Center.

Dear Wes,

*On behalf of the Bureau of Land Management, thank you for coming out and helping with our National Public Lands Day Open House event on September 28, 2013.*

*An estimated 350 people came to the BLM Campbell Creek Science Center that sunny Saturday for our Open House on the 20th anniversary of the event. Those visitors were encouraged to visit a variety of outdoor activity stations with the "Let's Move Outside" theme. Those activity stations included five stations run by outside partner groups like yours: archer and hunter education, disc golf, slacklining, geocaching, and winter biking. There were also two stations - STRETCH and disc golf - made possibly by materials provided by a partner organization.*

*Thank you for sharing your expertise to help people learn more about fun outdoor activities. We had so many positive comments about each of the stations and the fields and woods were filled with smiles and laughter all afternoon.*

*We recognized you organization or agency on a large easel that was displayed throughout the day - at volunteer check-in for the morning work projects, at the volunteer luncheon, and in the lobby by the check-in table for the Open House. We also recognized you in our National Public Lands Day Program.*

*Thank you, again, for running an activity station. Your gift of time helped encourage healthy outdoor fun and fostered a sense of stewardship for the special legacy that all Americans share - our public lands.*

Sincerely,

Jeff Brune

Manager of BLM Campbell Creek Science Center



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION

Presented to

Geocache Alaska

for your generosity in supporting National Public Lands Day at the BLM Campbell Creek Science Center. The event offered families and friends the chance to "give back" by working on service projects to benefit the land and an afternoon to learn more about ways to have fun in the outdoors. National Public Lands Day depends on partners in the community to provide the expertise, door prizes, and refreshments that make it all possible. Thanks for helping make this event a great success!

10-28-2013

DATE

*Jeff Brune*  
Jeff Brune, Manager  
BLM Campbell Creek Science Center

# Introducing the GeocacheAlaska! 2014 Board of Directors

Congratulations to all who ran for office. Many thanks to the The GeocacheAlaska! 2014 Nominating Committee of Michael Malvick/Ladybug Kids (chair), Victoria Noble/Blazingpathways, Tony Roof/firemanak, and Cameron Gilchrist/AlaskaCariboozer for all their work encouraging good candidates to step up. Thank you to everyone who took the time to review the candidates and place your votes!

**President, Wes Skinner/NorthWes**



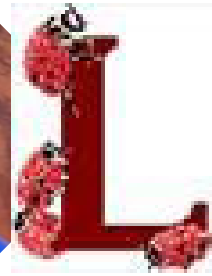
**Vice-President, Cameron Gilchrist/AlaskaCariboozer**



**Treasurer, Roberta Bromlow/Polgera**



**Secretary, Michael Malvick/Ladybug Kids**



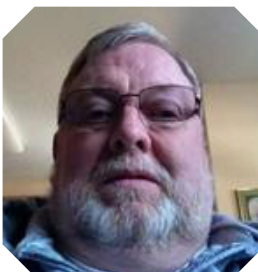
**Webmaster, Scott Aleckson/SSO JOAT**



**Member at Large, Dana Rosso/DR-AK**



**Member at Large, John Scoblic/Scobey**



**Member at Large, Joel Vos/NeverSummer**



**Member at Large, Anthony Roof/firemanak**





## A Frightful Halloween (Weather!) Day in Fairbanks

By Hal Meyer/Liquidearth

Pretty sure it was the weather and not the ghouls and goblins that reduced our Fall Cooperative Extension Service Week class “Fun with Geocaching” from 13 to 4 students. Liquidearth (Hal and Carol Meyer) and FiremanAK (Tony Roof) got together for a scary good time with those four participants!

The scary part was just getting to class as the weather made its freezing rain and cold weather debut for the year. Reminded us of the Paul Simon song “...slip, sliiiidding away, slip sliiiidding aawwaaayyy”, as cars were everywhere except the roadway. The four that braved the elements and made it out on Halloween Day were “treated” to a great hour of basic Geocaching instruction. The “tricks” of the trade (caches, travel bugs, hitchhikers, etc.) which we brought along created a great “play time” for folks to handle and get an idea of what Geocaching is all about.

We met *Frozen Mist*, a couple who just started Geocaching in mid-July of this year and already have 200+ finds and more than a dozen “trackables logged” to their credit! Way to go *Frozen Mist*! The other participants were interested in how Geocaching could be introduced to their homeschooling curriculums which got them and us very excited. We found out this sector of our population were eager to learn geocaching and would love to have us teach Geocaching to their group(s)!

We’d like to thank the Alaska Cooperative Extension Service for including us in their “Fall Extension Week Classes” which included everything from bread-making, radon testing, tree-health care, fermenting foods, savvy consumers AND “Fun with Geocaching” courses, to name just a few! Happy Halloween everybody from “Those Who Cache In The Banks!”

### Editor’s Note

By Cathy Wilmeth/The\_Firefly

At a recent Open Mic Eduvent there was overwhelming support for the continued production of a monthly GeocacheAlaska newsletter. This is wonderful, but it does mean that we need your continued support - with articles, photos, and ideas. ALL members are encouraged to contribute! You do not have to be a Board member or be ‘officially’ requested to write an article. If you have a photo or story you want to share, send it in!

I’m intending to make some changes - hopefully upgrades, if you will - to this newsletter over the next few months. If you have any suggestions for features you’d like to see (or not see), please let me know.

Send your articles, thoughts, photos, requests, and suggestions to [newsletter@geocachealaska.org](mailto:newsletter@geocachealaska.org).

## “We Want To Learn Geocaching!”

By Tony Roof/firemanak & Hal Meyer/liquidearth

Firemanak (Tony Roof) and liquidearth (Hal Meyer) answered the call of the Fairbanks Area Hiking Club (FAHC) and taught them a mini-geocaching course on Saturday, October 26, at the Fairbanks Tanana District office of the Cooperative Extension Service.

Most attendees had some form of GPSr experience from their hiking background so it was easy to assimilate these folks right into the game. After an hour or so of GPSr “refreshment” and an introduction to geocaching, the 9 eager newbies forged through hundreds of people at Pioneer Park (where a huge Halloween Party was thrown for the community) and the Carlson Center (where the Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN) Convention is being held).

The first cache we found was on one of the newer pedestrian bridges in town. All of us jockeyed for position on the narrow bridge searching back and forth, back and forth, until we suddenly heard the war cry “Hucklebuck”. What an icebreaker that was and everyone had a great laugh as they all got their first find.

Because of the short time left we only had a chance to get “just one more”. Everyone agreed to meet sooner than later to take advantage of the fantastic weather we have been experiencing to grab more caches. If you are from Fairbanks you know how rare it is to have 45° ABOVE zero and no snow fall at this late date!! Hopefully the kids will be out trick-or-treating this year in costumes they don’t have to cover up by mounds of snow gear?

We had at least one person (so far!) join Geocaching on the spot and are going to attend the “[Geocaching in Space Event](#)” on November 6th. The late fall weather has been a boon to Geocaching here in the north! When they saw how many caches line their favorite hiking trails folks got almost giddy with excitement and can’t wait to go out and combine their love for hiking with geocaching. They already plan to set out a “FAHC” geocache in the near future. WooWho!

Happy Trails and Happy Geocaching Fairbanks Area Hiking Club!!!



# ColoReido Drops An Ammo Can

By Frank Moore/AKERDoc

The story of my finding [ColoReido Drops an Ammo Can](#)



On June 24th, I received notification of a cache being published on the mountain behind my house. I was hoping that no one would get to it before I had a chance to go after it the next day. I found several caches near Blacktail Rocks last summer; so, I knew that it would be quite a hike. On top of that, ColoReido placed it; so, it was with some trepidation that I set out to find this cache. I decided that I would hike up the trail from our house and then climb up the mountain from the Meadow Creek side.



The morning of June 25th was cool and overcast, but the clouds burned off, and it turned out to be a beautiful warm June day. The hike up the trail was beautiful. I decided to leave the trail near a place we call Blueberry Creek. All was fine until I got to the base of Blacktail Rocks. My GPS said that I only had 0.5 mile to go, but I was on a 45-degree scree slope. I was afraid with almost every step that I would lose my balance and go rolling down the mountain. I have MS, and my right side is a little unstable (at least that is the excuse that I use when I fall.) Maybe I should have waited to do this with a friend. With only 0.5 mile to go, and after climbing about 2,000 feet, I couldn't possibly think about turning around now could I? No I couldn't! I had to keep going. After what seemed like an eternity, I finally made it near GZ. I don't know

what was wrong with my GPS, but that was the longest half-mile I have ever hiked. I HAD TO FIND THE CACHE. I couldn't come all this way and DNF this cache. I looked and looked, but I couldn't find it. I was going to stay all night to make the find if I had to (not really). Finally I found the well hidden and very bruised up outer cache container. ColoReido had not been nice to the container. It looked like it had been through a war. Yay, a FTF on a ColoReido cache!

I went down the mountain the way I should have come up. On the way down, I did a couple of somersaults. Fortunately all of my rolls were in the soft tundra and willows, and not on the hard rocks or scree so I didn't hurt myself. During one of my rolls, my water bottle fell out of its holder on my backpack. I didn't realize I lost it until I went to get a drink at the bottom of the hill. There was no way I was going back up the mountain to look for it. I was way too worn out.

The weather was beautiful when I found the cache, and I was able to get some great pictures of the scenery. It was hard to believe that I had been skiing up this valley only 1 month earlier, when there was still 3 feet of snow.

It can't be that I am getting older. It must be that the mountains are getting steeper and higher. I have been to the top of Blacktail a couple of times (Geocaching of course), but I had never been as tired after finding a cache before. I probably need to stop doing this type of cache alone, but it's hard to resist the chance to be FTF on an ET cache, or turn around when you have already climbed most of the way up the mountain.







I wondered if I would ever see my water bottle again. Finally on September 15 the opportunity arose to look for my lost water bottle. After church, my family and I went for a hike up the valley to look for some blueberries. Since we were fairly close, I decided to take a look. I followed the reverse of my GPS track of June 25. AKSvetty and I headed up the mountain the way I had come down on my previous adventure. About 1/3 of the way up the mountain, she found my poor lonely water bottle lying on a clump of grass patiently waiting for my return.

ColoReido, thank you so much for this terrific cache! I highly recommend this cache to those who are looking for an adventure in the beautiful Chugach Mountains.

## Caribbean Cruise Caching

*By Wes Skinner/NorthWes*

Vacation travel offers some of the most exciting opportunities to indulge in our geocaching passion. Combining a multi-faceted cruise vacation with geocaching has become a favorite annual activity for my family. When you cruise, you unpack once, never have to worry about what's for dinner, surround yourself with a wide variety of entertainment options, and usually wake up in a new port every day. With the exception of extras like alcohol or special excursions, your fee (typically about \$100 to \$120 a day for us) covers everything. Our usual two-week vacation sees us cruising the first week, then traveling by rental car to a new destination or series of destination in the USA during the following week, caching all the way.

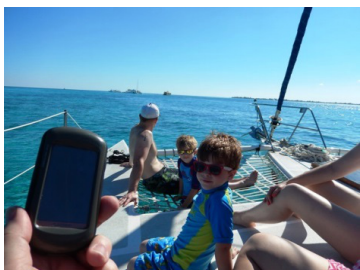
This year found us boarding ship in Port Canaveral, the seaport lying just north of Cocoa Beach on Florida's east coast. Our itinerary featured four ports of call and two full days at sea (note – there are no caches aboard the ship, so an at-sea day will break up a caching 'streak' – plan accordingly if that's important to you). The family group consisted of my wife and I, plus my oldest daughter and her husband, and their five and six year old sons. As do most cruise lines, our Royal Caribbean ship "Freedom of the Seas" had a complete day-long free activity program for the youngsters with events occurring well into the night, which both fully entertained the grandsons and gave their mom and dad a welcome respite from parenting while enjoying other cruise activities. We had a balcony stateroom (186 square feet) right across the hall from our kids' Promenade-view Family Stateroom (a very affordable 323 square-foot palatial abode with two bedrooms separated by a living room – very nice when traveling with active boys). After settling in to our staterooms, we spent the first afternoon and evening aboard exploring the ship, snacking, swimming, dining, visiting entertainment venues and making sure we found every location aboard ship which dispensed ice cream (after all, we Alaskans were facing temperatures in the nineties on this trip!) Our first full day aboard was a day spent at sea, traveling towards our first port of call. It was a welcome opportunity to slow down and get into vacation mode.

We awoke on our second day to find the ship pulling into Labadee, on Haiti's northern shoreline. This is a small peninsula leased by the cruise line from the government, and it has been turned into an exclusive 'port resort' featuring every possible water sport activity, beautiful beaches, the world's longest over-water zipline, and a wealth of other activities. We had paid a bit extra to rent a private cabana here located right on the beach, which gave us a 'base of operations' for explorations, rest, and supervising the boys' waterborne activities. In between refining the grandsons' snorkeling skills (in preparation for a special excursion later in the week) and lunchtime, we cachers headed off to find [GC8D0 Cruise Cache – Labadee Beach](#), a venerable cache placed in May of 2001. Despite the intense heat and humidity my grandsons practically skipped up the trail heading to the hide, pausing to watch folks training for the zipline ride, and then pressing on along the path into the jungle. It was a quick find for the boys, who are experienced at looking for an unusual pile of rocks or sticks. Once the log was signed we headed back to the beach for a fabulous barbecue lunch and more snorkeling!



*Captain Americache & Commander CacheAK with [GC8D0 Cruise Cache – Labadee Beach](#)*

Day three found us docked in Falmouth, Jamaica. This was our only caching disappointment of the vacation. We had already decided to split up for the day, with the grandparents and grandkids sticking close to the ship while the others struck off inland on an excursion to see some of Jamaica's interior. I had planned to grab a cab for us to the nearest cache, located at the entrance to a beach resort just three miles distant. That plan fell to pieces when the cab dispatcher at the port couldn't find a cabbie who would honor the \$35 total posted price for that ride. Instead, a shouting match erupted amongst the cabbies that found the price bid up to \$60 – each! Needless to say, we drifted back to the ship and its activities rather than run the risk of being held up for even higher prices once we'd traveled to the cache site. In retrospect, I should've just scheduled a flash mob event at the port. We'd have met the other cachers aboard the



*Often the journey to the cache is memorable too... [GC6CE7 Stingray City – Grand Cayman Islands](#)*

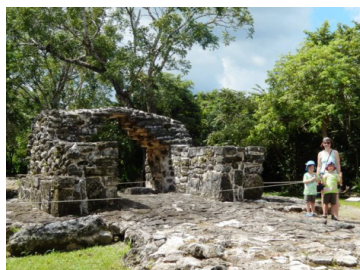
ship that way, and saved ourselves the unnecessary angst of trying to travel in Jamaica.

On our fourth day we anchored off of Grand Cayman, where a tender was used to bring us ashore. I'd booked an independent excursion with a local guide to take us snorkeling and to visit to 'Stingray City,' at a price of about 60% of what the cruise line wanted for the same trip aboard a more crowded boat. Our group of 18 persons headed off aboard a lovely trimaran to the reef along Grand Cayman's northern coast, where the variety and volume of fish seen was spectacular. We moved a bit further east and anchored on a sand bar where local fishermen used to clean their catch, and the local stingrays would gather to scavenge the leavings. Today it's a protected national park (as are all the reefs around Grand Cayman), and the result is nothing short of spectacular. With all gear supplied, our guides eased us into the waist-deep water and im-



Getting up close and personal at [GC6CE7 Stingray City – Grand Cayman Islands](#)

mediately introduced us to the stingrays – up close and personal while hand-feeding them, stroking them carefully, and learning about their life-cycle. The guides took special care to make sure my grandsons were able to participate fully. This was one of the highlight experiences of our cruise, encountering marine wildlife in a natural setting without boundaries. Adding to the fun, it's also a geocache – [GC6CE7 Stingray City – Grand Cayman Islands](#). This excursion used up most of the time available during the port visit, so we weren't able to travel to some of the islands' other exciting caches, but we made some finds right in the vicinity of the port itself.



*Mrs NW and the boys at [GCG-KVC Ixchel's Altar](#)*

The fifth day of our cruise saw the ship dock on the west coast of Cozumel, an island off Mexico's eastern coast. Here we rented a minivan, and drove off to explore the Mayan ruins found in the interior of the island at San Gervasio. We found the ruins and their history fascinating, with pathways carved through the jungle taking us from site to site. A wide variety of birds were flitting around us, and it seemed the boys found big lizards at every turn. There's a virtual cache here – [GCGKVC Ixchel's Altar](#) – which made a great photo opportunity for our visit. Moving on, we drove out to the gorgeous east coast, and stopped to explore at [GC2V7B3 Cozumel's Stone Arches Earthcache](#). The fossilized coral here intrigued us (especially the grandsons, who grasped immediately that these were stone versions of what we'd snorkeled over the day before at Grand Cayman). A bit further down the road we found a beach and played in the water until it was time to get back aboard.

Day six was spent cruising at sea, making the long run back to Florida's east coast. We sailed past Miami's skyline just after dark, giving us a unique perspective of that city. Dawn on the seventh day saw us disembarking to find a rental car, and we roared off to visit the Kennedy Space Center (whose launch facilities dominate Port Canaveral's northern horizon). The after-effects of the government shutdown kept us from visiting this site's one geocache honoring the crew of the Shuttle Columbia, but we found ourselves enjoying the delights of Disney World within an hour after leaving the Space Center. The next week was spent wandering from Animal Kingdom to Epcot to the Magic Kingdom, indulging ourselves in the rides and finding the handful of virtual caches scattered across Walt Disney World's expanse.

Geocaching while cruising isn't about racking up a large number of finds (except in Bermuda, where the Bermuda Islands Geocaching organization has set up a geotour, and made sure there's caches near every possible spot to visit). The time spent in port should be shared across all opportunities, and the caches chosen should be researched extensively to ensure the best possible outcome for the search or experience. Here's one time when it's imperative to carry cache repair items such as spare logsheets and pencils. If you read ahead of time that a cache could use a new container, bring one best-suited to the hide. I've replaced containers three times while cruising, much to the cache owner's approval and delight. I can't emphasize enough how you need to research your cache targets – looking at photos, and studying out how you'll access the cache itself. You must be very, very aware of your surroundings while caching on a cruise, as you're in foreign territory with unusual hazards you may never have encountered before. Above all, do not be late in returning aboard the cruise ship. The captain has a schedule to keep, and he waits for no one. No cache is worth being left behind! All that being said, a cruise caching vacation is one of the easiest and most enjoyable ways to add new countries and caching experiences to your personal portfolio. If you're interested, you can book by yourself, or sign up to join one of the popular 'geocaching cruises' available. I highly recommend it, for cachers of all ages!



*Mrs NW and the boys at [GC2V7B3 Cozumel's Stone Arches Earthcache](#)*



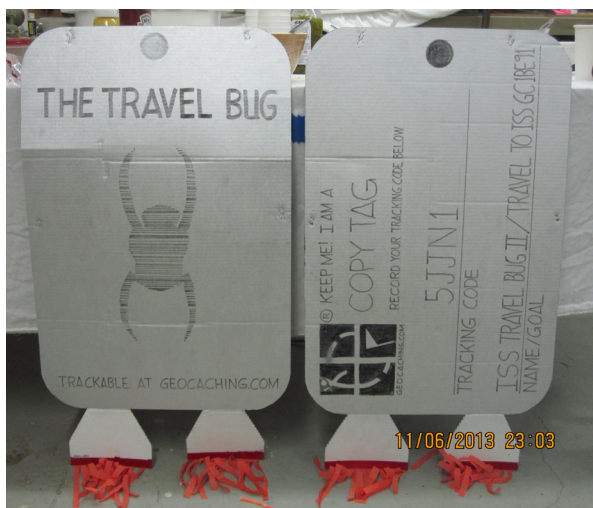
## Geocaching in Space: [The Geocaching Blog](#)

Alaska features three “event pins” on Groundspeak’s [interactive map](#) featuring more than 1,100 Geocaching in Space Event Caches will dot the globe on November 6 and 7. One in Fairbanks, one in Homer, and one in Anchorage. Each event commemorates the launch of a Geocaching Travel Bug® as it journeys to the International Space Station. Astronaut Rick Mastracchio will use the Travel Bug as a tool to teach students back on Earth about geography and science. He is scheduled to launch from Kazakhstan in the early morning of November 7, which will be November 6 in much of the rest of the world.

### [Geocaching in Space - Fairbanks!](#)

By Michael McGhie /AKTrekster & Hal Meyer/liquidearth

There were 1,100+ Geocaching in Space events going on November 7, 2013, or November 6th dependant on time zone, commemorating the launch of a Geocaching Travel Bug to the International Space Station (IIS). [Expedition 38](#) to the IIS took off was scheduled for November 7, 2013 from Kazakhstan Russia. Events were to be scheduled at launch time at their specific time zone. For the great state of Alaska it was at a 7:08pm, November 6, 2013.



The [Geocaching in Space](#) event in Fairbanks, Alaska went off without a hitch. Thanks to Liquidearth (Hal and Carol Meyers) who sponsored the event at their lovely home in Ester, Alaska, we all celebrated a great day when a Travel Bug went to the IIS geocache. The event was to commemorate the [International Space Station Travel Bug II TB5JJN1](#) and was activated by the 5th Grade Class of Chase Elementary School in Waterbury, Connecticut. Its goal was to go to [International Space Station Geocache](#) and then to return back to Waterbury, Connecticut. [TB5JJN1](#) was being carried by [Astronaut Rick Mastracchio](#) and the mission was to educate children about geography and science. So you know, the travel bug went on without a hitch. It will be returning very soon and we’re looking forward to hearing about its adventure.

I could go on with how much fun I had at this event - like the “GeoFactoids” game that Liquidearth put together. Or the great conversation and the great most awesome costumes that graced this fantastic event, but I don’t think I can top the happiness captured by Liquidearth about the success of this great evening. Liquidearth shares...

*Will Robinson and the Robot from the series “Lost in Space” were proud of “Those Who Cache In The Banks” as a bunch of out of this world “Space Creatures” got together to celebrate the “Geocaching in Space” Event on November 6th. A party is only as good as its participants and the folks who attended were...well...AWESOME! With a cast of characters like we had you couldn’t have had a better time! Folks went “way out” of their way (to infinity and beyond in fact!) to make great, creative costumes that were....well....AWESOME! Sorry, am I repeating myself?? Guess I can’t help it because we had so much fun from: watching the launch on NASA television provided by the expertise of firemanak, Pathfinder01 and AKTrekster; enjoying the space shuttle vittles supplied by all the “creatures” and GeocacheAlaska!, Inc.; AKTrekster handing out patches to all the attendees (Thanks AKTrekster!!); the “Geofactoids” game with trivia questions about everything Geocaching with winners awarded prizes such as geocaches, balsa wood “space shuttle” gliders, flashing aliens and whoopee cushions (an “astronaut” practical*





joke “they” told us!?!); the fireworks show with mortar “blast-offs” dedicated to: (1) each of our “out of this atmosphere” astronauts - American Rick Mastracchio, Japanese Koichi Wakata and Russian Cosmonaut Mikhail Tyurin (you go guys!), (2) our state organization GeocacheAlaska!, Inc. and, (3) “Those (Rebels) Who Cache In The Banks” (how’s that for a run-on sentence!?!). Mother Nature wouldn’t let us out do her so she provided a great Northern Lights “launch” of her own which did the “ribbon dance” across the sky for several minutes right after the fireworks show. A nice, raging bonfire turned into a soothing bed of coals to make some hobo pies provided by Alaskache. Some great conversations ensued with some long-time and some not-so longtime geocachers which eased us off into the night. As the robot “walked” away he was seen rotating left then right, flailing his arms, “warning” everyone “AWESOME (PARTY), Will Robinson, AWESOME”!! He was right folks, you were....well.....AWESOME!



Groundspeak let us know that our event here in Fairbanks was the 2nd most northern “Geocaching in Space Event” in the world – only to be beat out by some folks in Norway. However, we were the most northern event held in North America!! Way to go, Fairbanks!!

Again, it was a great time. There was fun by all and the whole evening was full of laughter and stories of caching adventures and then the grand finale, the northern lights, everything. It was an amazing night for all.

## Geocaching in Space Homer Celebration November 6, 2013

By Joel Vos /NeverSummer

It all started with a dream...and somehow we made it a reality! Another Homer event came and went, and it was a grand time as usual. I (NeverSummer) had a bright idea to get model rockets and have a BLAST!

I had to find rockets somewhere, and ended up driving up to Soldotna to grab a set for the event. (And a few caches up there while I was shopping, of course!) Ended up with 2 ready-to-fly rockets, as I figured that we'd lose at least one of them due to flying after dark.



The\_Firefly provided some delicious snacks during the first rounds of rocket launching. We launched the first with a B motor, and it ended up on a rooftop down the block. The next launch trajectory was changed, and that made for a launch and recovery 100ft from the launch pad. With The Firefly's helpful recovery squad, we prepared for another launch with a C motor.

Well...that launch went...up in the air. Dark was setting in, and we lost view after the stage completed its boost. A sudden "poof" of fire, and I saw the motor zing toward the ground, and the parachute didn't deploy. So long, dear rocket!

With some help from The Firefly's other half, the red rocket was retrieved from the rooftop, and we prepared for another launch and recovery scenario. We waited for some interested parties to arrive, and set the rocket up with another attempt under power from a C motor. We wrote my phone number on the rocket and parachute, attached some glow sticks to the nose cone, and hoped for a more visible recovery effort. The kids all had their flashlights and glow bracelets on, and we got ready to hit the launch button.

The rocket red glared, and we watched a successful ejection stage pop the top. The Firefly saw the green glow slowly floating on a light, steady, westerly breeze...right until its path took it behind the glare of a street lamp. Aww, fooye. Another rocket gone missing.

We took the party indoors for pizza and pre-launch NASA TV. Hot Tang was on hand to warm up the kiddos, and cold beer awaited the adults. The kids were enjoying their pizza, and the adults entertained themselves with talk about the game of geocaching, and solved the world's problems. That is, every problem but internet connectivity. (More on that later...) The International Space Station Space Quiz was administered, and our top 3 winners were announced. Third place went to The Firefly's hubby, and he received a Geocaching.com lapel pin. Second place went to little Liam, and he went home with the Geocaching In Space patch. First place, with 8 of 10 correct went to new convert (we hope) Daniel, and he received a Free 30-day Premium Membership to Geocaching.com!

Meanwhile, I had set an alarm for t-60 so that we wouldn't miss the launch.



We fixed our eyes on the laptop screen, and noticed that the cloud of smoke around the launchpad wasn't moving. Odd. So I reloaded the page, and we found ourselves t+45 seconds. Oops.

So, we enjoyed the coverage of the launch, I captured a screenshot, and took some other photos of the group. Check out the Geocache-Alaska facebook group page for the photo album, and I'll upload some more here later on.

It was a fun night, and we had a BLAST! Next time we'll hopefully have some more local cachers in attendance!



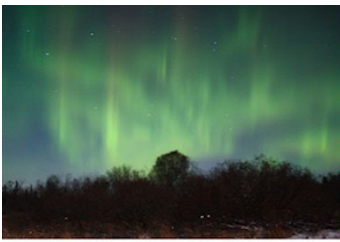
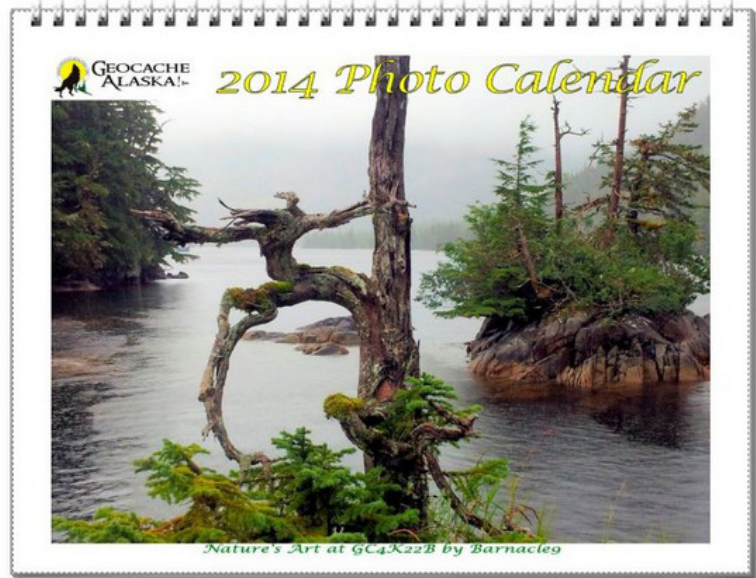
# 2014 Calendar Photo Contest

By Scott Aleckson/SSO JOAT

The votes are in and we have the 2014 Calendar in production! A total of 140 photos were submitted by the members. All entries are posted on our website in the [Photo Gallery](#). Last week, members were given the chance to vote for their favorites by category. The winning photos have been posted in our forums in [this thread](#). To fill in the white space and back cover of the calendar, an additional 10 photos from runner-up vote levels were used.

GeocacheAlaska! has purchased 50 of the calendars which will be available through our store sales during December. The calendars have arrived and will be available online and at the Geofest in Anchorage and at the Holiday Bash in Fairbanks. Folks may also order calendars directly from the printer at Zazzle, with a portion of the proceeds coming back to GeocacheAlaska!

Thank you to everyone who submitted photos and thank you to everyone who took the time to vote.



Northern Lights at GC1250F by AXLoisandClark



'X' Marks the Spot at GC13RDX by Ladybug Kids



Autumn Color Riot at GC13RDZ by Ladybug Kids



Hiking up Anaktuvuk River at GC4N06 by MTBoy



A Bike, a Cache, and a View at GCPT52 by Barnacles



BabyNanook checks out the SWAG at GC11JZG by MamaNanook



Sunset on Anaktuvuk River at GC4N616 by MTBoy



Xineaid Park Moose at GC0A1D by SND84



The 3000th 3000 CTOer at GC4A0-M by The\_Torrey



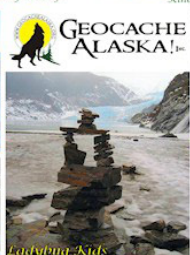
BabyNanook checks the Cache at GC1R78 by MamaNanook



Geocaching at the Berry Person Memorial at GC1R78 by MamaNanook



SNOWS at GC4N06 by MTBoy



Geocaching at the Berry Person Memorial at GC1R78 by MamaNanook



Geocaching at the Berry Person Memorial at GC1R78 by MamaNanook



Never Forget at GC2HCBJ by Xarmal



The Wildflowers of Summer at GC4P6Z2 by Xarmal



Geocaching at the Berry Person Memorial at GC1R78 by MamaNanook



Team russifor at GC4N06 by MTBoy



Geocaching at the Berry Person Memorial at GC1R78 by MamaNanook



## JOIN US ON FACEBOOK!

Join GeocacheAlaska! Inc. on [Facebook!](#) Stay in touch and share your activities with fellow members of the geocaching community by visiting our Group and clicking 'Join'. This is where GeocacheAlaska! members can plan caching adventures, post photos, and pass messages within the membership ranks. This Facebook Group is designed to be yet another member benefit for Sourdoughs and Cheechakos alike.

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

## 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, 2013.
3. Navigate to the [GeocacheAlaska! webpage](#) to download a membership form you can print and mail with your payment.
4. Attend one of the upcoming GeocacheAlaska! events and speak to any Board Member.

Find us online at:

1. GeocacheAlaska! Website: <http://www.geocachealaska.org>
2. GeocacheAlaska! Forums: <http://geocachealaska.proboards.com/index.cgi>
3. GeocacheAlaska! on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/geocachealaska/>
4. E-mail to [contact@geocachealaska.org](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 2013 permit number for the Chugach State Park is 13-KA-1289 and it must be on the cache container and the cache page. The 2013 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 [newsletter@geocachealaska.org](mailto:newsletter@geocachealaska.org)  
Subject: Around the State.