

Around The State



December 2014

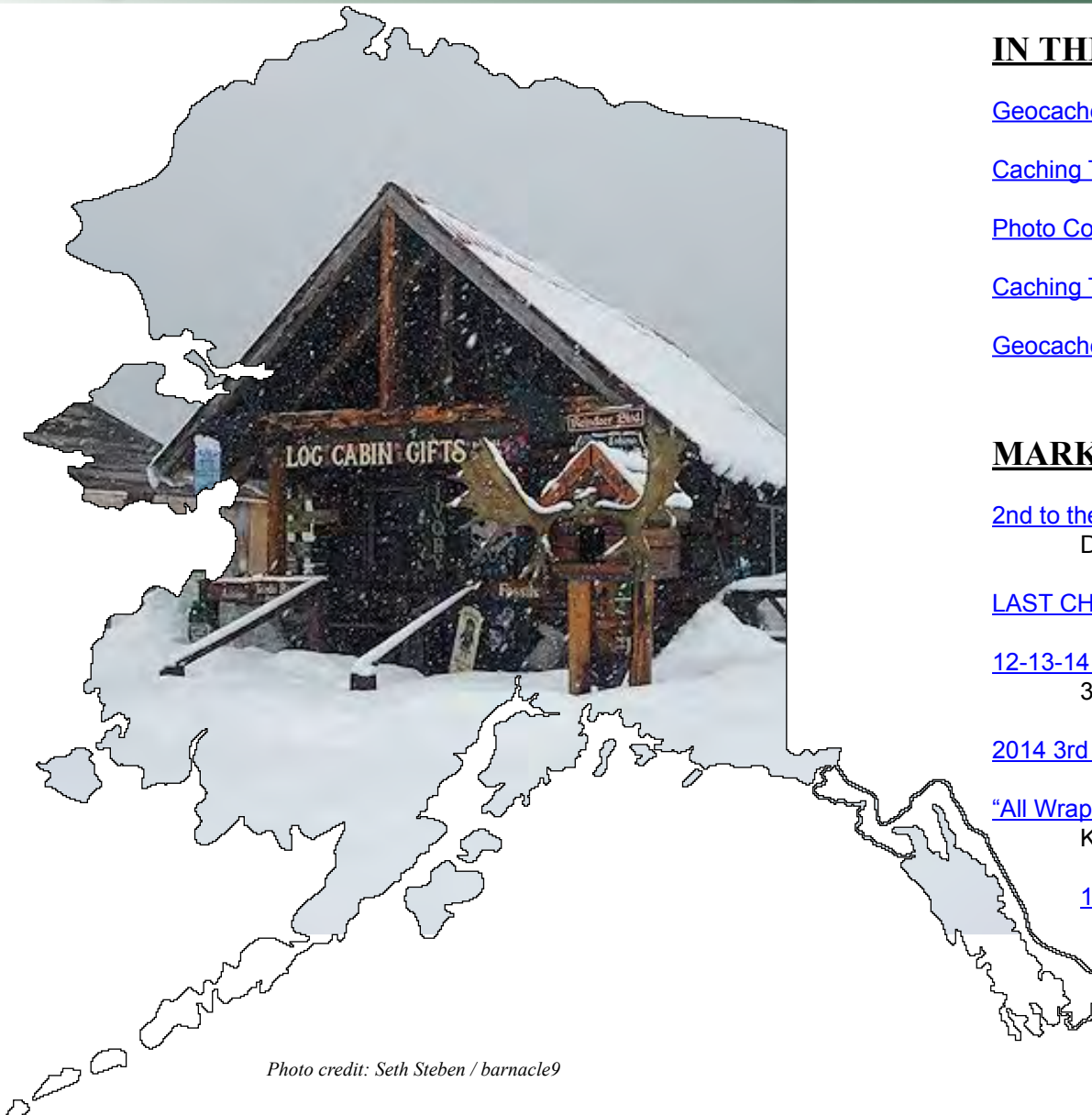


Photo credit: Seth Steben / barnacle9

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MARK YOUR CALENDAR

[2nd to the LAST CHANCE of the CENTURY: 12/13/14](#),
December 13, 10:11am, Anchorage

[LAST CHANCE OF THE CENTURY](#), December 13, 10:11pm, Anchorage

[12-13-14 @ 15:16 for 17 mintues and 18 seconds](#), December 13,
3:16pm, Anchorage

[2014 3rd Annual HOLIDAY BASH](#), December 14, 2pm, Fairbanks

["All Wrapped Up" Holiday Party & Gift Exchange](#), December 16, 6:30pm,
Ketchikan

[10th Annual Geofest](#), December 19, 5:30pm, Anchorage

[Happy New Year 2015](#), January 1, 2015, 10am, Palmer

GeocacheAlaska! Updates

GeocacheAlaska! 2015 Board Member Election Results

By Cameron Gilchrist / Alaskacariboozer

As Vice-President, one of my focal roles is building a ballot of candidates for the Board of Directors. This year, we had 4 seats come up for the vote: Vice-President, Treasurer, and two Member-at-Large positions. My goal and hope is to provide the membership more than one person to choose from for each position on the ballot. This can be challenging, and this year was no exception.

I want to say thank you to each individual that considered the opportunity to serve on the board. Many of you I had a chance to speak with or email back and forth, and I appreciate the thoughtfulness you put into your candidacy, whether you accepted it or not. I hope you might consider placing your name on the ballot for next year, because the Board needs you. In fact, as a result of the election this year, the secretary position, filled by Mike Malvick (Ladybug Kids), will be vacated come January 1, as he was voted in as Treasurer, following in the footsteps of Roberta Bromlow (Polgera), our outgoing Treasurer. (SHAMELESS PLUG: If you are interested in filling the secretary position, please email Wes Skinner at president@geocachealaska.org.)

Congratulations to the individuals who accepted their positions as a result of your vote. They will serve on the board for two years, 2015 and 2016.



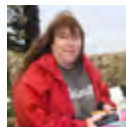
Dana Rosso (DR-AK) - Vice President



Mike Malvick (Ladybug Kids) - Treasurer



Sean Gaither (FTL-AK) – Member-at-Large



Trish Fredieu (AKLoisandClark) – Member-at-Large

The remainder of the board has one more year to serve (2015) and then next fall these seats will be up for election.

Wes Skinner (Northwes) – President
Scott Aleckson (SSO JOAT) - Webmaster
Ericka Rud (AKRUD) – Member-at-Large
Robert Burton (Burtonsinak) – Member-at-Large

OPEN - Secretary

President's Corner

By Wes Skinner / NorthWes



As 2014 draws to a close, thanks are due to those members of your Board of Directors who are stepping down from service. Cameron Gilchrist in his role as Vice-President has just completed overseeing one of our best-ever election cycles, after helping revise our terms of service in 2013 to set up two-year terms for electees. This far-sighted revision will help provide continuity of effort on the board so that only half of its members up for election every year. Roberta Bromlow has ended one of the longest terms of service yet seen on the Board as she ends her time as Treasurer. I've also appreciated her work with the Geofest, now in its tenth year. Sean McErlane's efforts with his term as a Member-at-Large has included inaugural efforts to combine our Eduvents with youtube technology, to help make our education efforts more lively on our website for future perusal by interested parties. As each of these members step away from the Board to pursue more time with families and their work requirements, please take time to thank them for their service when you meet them on the geocaching trail or other places around the state. I'm grateful for their contributions to education, advocacy and event efforts which have helped build up the geocaching game here in Alaska!

“Thanks are due to those members of your Board of Directors who are stepping down from service.”

Member Survey Results Brief

By Scott Aleckson / SSO JOAT

Thank you to the 100 people who logged in to take our member survey last week. This included 86 Sourdough members, 11 Cheechako members, and then we also had 3 non-members who were disqualified, leaving us with 97 valuable sets of responses to help us steer this organization in the right directions for

2015. There were hundreds of additional comments entered with the survey, bringing the survey summary report to over 60 pages. After clearing the report of any potential personal identifiers, it was provided to the Board of Directors, including our two new members elect. They will be pouring over the responses for the next couple months as plans are formulated to focus GeocacheAlaska's priorities on the areas that our members find most valuable.

As promised, we also held a drawing from the members who left their GC name at the end of the survey. That drawing awarded a set of 2014 pathtags to Barnacle9, and a set of 2013 pathtags to biggriz, Long Hunter, and *skadi*. Congratulations! We will have your prizes in the mail shortly.

Again, we thank everyone who participated in the survey. The Board of Directors will be publishing summary results of the survey along with formal Board responses in coming editions of the Newsletter.

Top Tens: Alaskan Cacher's Caching Achievements

By Scott Aleckson / SSO JOAT

This month's Top Ten list of Alaskan Cacher's Caching Achievements goes to the Alaskan Geocaches that are the Top Favorites as calculated by the "[Lower bound of Wilson score](#)". Basically, these are the caches with the most favorite points and many logs. It only counts Premium Member logs, since only Premium Members can award Favorite Points.

- #1 [Halloween Night Cache--Bad to the Bone!](#) = 59.6%
- #2 [Battleship \(CGS #1\)](#) = 57.8%
- #3 [Ida Lake & the Bench of Envable Comfort and Joy](#) = 55.3%
- #4 [Looking For Booty?](#) = 52.9%
- #5 [Jimmy and Debbie's TB/GC Hotel](#) = 51.3%
- #6 [Confess You Like Buttermilk](#) = 46.9%
- #7 [Inner Sanctum](#) = 46.0%
- #8 [Radio Days](#) = 45.5%
- #9 [Alohomora or AK Hillbilly Combination Lock](#) = 45.4%
- #10 [Survivor: Anchorage](#) = 45.3%

Look for another Top Ten list next month.

How to Enjoy a Hurricane...

By Wes Skinner / Northwes

Mrs NW and I were looking forward to our third visit to Bermuda, via a cruise from Cape Liberty, NJ. We'd been planning for almost a year, and had set up a plan which would allow us to complete the incredible 20-cache Bermuda GeoTour (and earn a coveted Bermuda geocoin too) with help from Bermuda geo-friends. Our second week of vacation following the cruise would be spent visiting (and caching) New England to see the fall colors. And then along came Hurricane Gonzalo...

We'd been watching the storm pound across the eastern Caribbean, and were horrified when we saw it turn north and track towards Bermuda. Within hours of its 90 degree turn, forecasters were citing the certainty of a hit on the Bermuda at near 100% - two days before we were to arrive. As the hurricane bore down on Bermuda the cruise line announced by email the evening before departure the only option available to our ship in the time available - we were going to the Canadian Maritimes! While the people of Bermuda braced themselves for what would bring devastation to the trees and parks of the islands and a complete power outage, we prayed for their safety and started a last-minute survey of what the cruise to Halifax, Nova Scotia and Saint John, New Brunswick would bring us.

A short 5-day cruise to the Canadian Maritimes in late October meant fall foliage rather than green cedars, rocky shorelines rather than pink sand beaches, and temperatures at least 40 degrees cooler than what we'd planned. It also meant the chance to add two new Canadian provinces to our caching statistics together with a half-normal-price cruise visit to the wild beauty of Canada's east coast.



NorthWes & Mrs NW at Saint John NB's Reversing Rapids, during slack tide - when there's no 'raging rapids' to be seen!

Caching Travelogues

Halifax is dominated by a stone citadel dating back to the time of the earliest European settlers in the area. While the architecture of the Citadel is certainly fascinating, it's also built atop a glacial drumlin, which was the subject of an earthcache established by Parks Canada. Following our hike up to the Citadel and completion of the earthcache, we toured the historic port zone on foot and visited several museums. One of my English uncles came here routinely during WWII aboard the cruiser HMS Arethusa as part of convoy escort duty on the Murmansk run. The maritime museum and several well-signed overlooks around the harbor paid tribute to Halifax' role during the two world wars of the last century, as this was the westernmost base in North America for convoys sailing the Atlantic.

Saint John (New Brunswick) is astride the meeting point of the Saint John River and the Bay of Fundy. This is the only other place in North America to experience bore tides of any similarity to those found on Alaska's Turnagain Arm. An excellent 'Harbor Walk' takes hikers from the docks all the way out to the 'Reversing Rapids' where the effects of the tidal bore are most evident. We chose our hiking route to include all five of the earthcaches scattered around



Our hike across Boston on the Freedom Trail was made easy with a return trip aboard the city's excellent public transit, including a scenic trans-harbor ride on the ferry. Boston is a great city for fans of America's Revolutionary History.

the city, and I celebrated my #3,000 find at one of the earthcaches focused on the Reversing Rapids site. It was neat to reach a milestone at a cache similar to my own 'Turnagain Arm Tidal Bore' earthcache!

Upon return to Cape Liberty ,NJ, we changed our plans to spend the second week in New England on a leisurely color tour. We instead picked up at least two cache finds in all the New England states on a long but scenic day of driving, spent a sunny day hiking the Freedom Trail in Boston (including the Wherigo of the

same name) and then flew down to Virginia Beach for a few days of warm sunny beaches. Our 'reset' of the second week let us visit both Jamestown and Yorktown (units of the Colonial Historic National Park), as well as explore the north end of the Outer Banks. We wrapped up our journey with a short stop at Mount Vernon and a day spent walking the National Mall in Washington DC. On our day of departure, we spent several hours at Arlington National Cemetery before boarding our flight home from Reagan International Airport. These last few days were in areas awash with virtual caches, which meant we had to know how to complete the cache requirements as we arrived on-site!

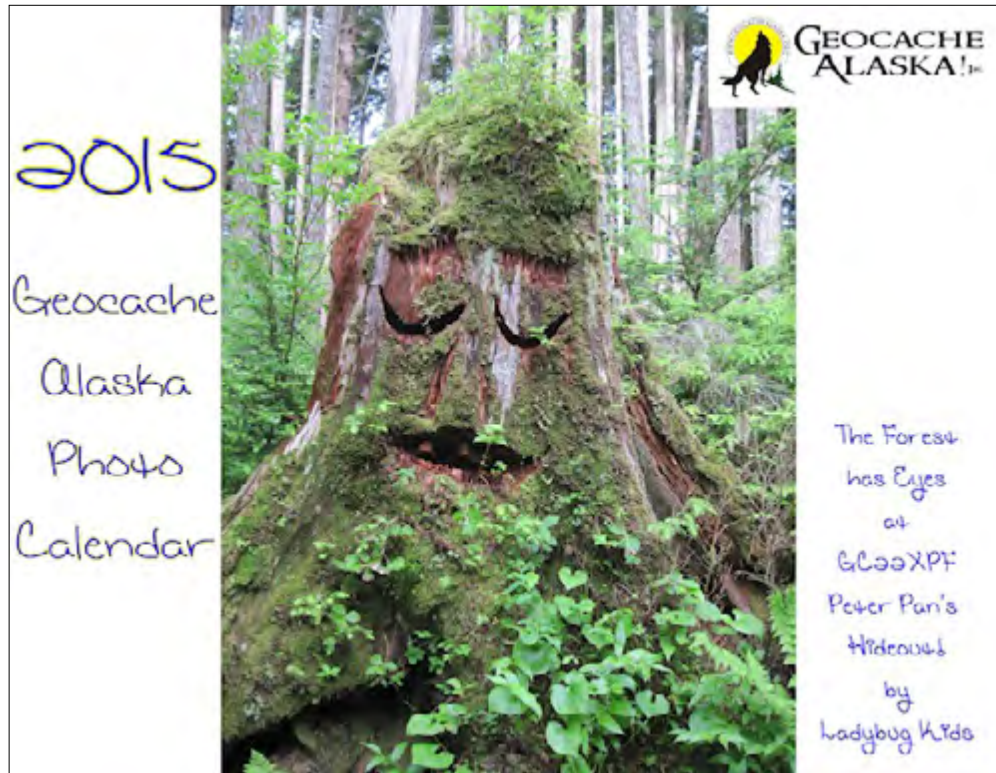


Mrs NW and I love lighthouses. We'd just climbed the Currituck Light here on the north end of the Outer Banks, and found ourselves drawn to walk the surrounding port area thanks to the virtual cache celebrating the area's history.

Keys to being able to quickly 'reset' our vacation plan included a positive mental attitude (we were on vacation, away from all responsibilities!), a shared desire to see historical locations and geocache at the same time, a good understanding of how to use the Geocaching.com website coupled with Geocaching Swiss Army Knife (GSAK) to set up caches of interest, and the Microsoft Streets and Trips program to help plan our daily routes when driving. GeocacheAlaska! Inc. has hosted several Eduvents focusing on how to use GSAK to set up route plans and select caches of interest along those routes – good information to learn if you're a cacher with travel plans in the future! In the balance, we feel we came out ahead of our original plan, as we got to see many more new places than we'd expected while still finding caches in all of New England. Flexibility coupled with an understanding of how to use available tools saved our vacation from devolving into a confused mess!

Photo Contest Results

The overall winner of the photo contest and the cover photo for the 2015 calendar was Ladybug Kids with "The Forest Has Eyes". Congratulations to all of the winners! Thank you to everyone who entered the photo contest.



Smootheater #1 - Jack's Geocache, after 10 years near Valdez at GC4KLSA by Barnacles



Castaway Sunset at GC4BZWS by RCWard



Racing the Sun Down Veranda at GC546W by Ladybug Kids

Photo Contest Results

April



Look Up at GLOWAR by Berryachers

May



Cutest Ever! Ladybug Seen Near GLOWAR by Ladybug Kids



GLOWAR by The... [unclear]



GLOWAR by Ladybug Kids

June



Hey Dude! at GLOWAR by AhRod

July



Having the Lovely Exit Glacier Trail at GLOWAR by Twinningashe

August



Tern Lake - 2014 Fall HOBO CITO Series at GLOWAR by Bernselen

September



HoHo CITO Sunset on Kona Lake at GLOWAR by 550 80AT

Photo Contest Results



October

Moose in Denali at GCIFMGO by PenTrek



November

Standing Bear at GCIW949 by PenTrek



December

Old Pit Towns 3rd Anniversary at GCIW949 by walkingstick



Caching Tricks, Tips, and Tools

Reviewer's Corner

By Michael Malvick / Greatland Reviewer



December Dealings

As the number of “**coordinate check**” cache page submissions increase, I’m asking Alaskan cachers’ cooperation in treating each other fairly. When one of these cache pages is submitted, I will review the location for proximity issues, and then disable the cache page to remove it from the Review Queue with a note about whether or not the location is available. Ideally, cache pages submitted for locations that are all right will be returned to the Review Queue ready to publish within a day or two. In some cases where “special assembly” is required, two weeks may be a reasonable timeframe.

This process is being provided as a courtesy to save cachers time and effort “battle shipping” a cache saturated area to find an open space to place cache and it works well most of the time. However, there are times when a second cacher then places a cache too close to the as yet to be published first cache. The second cacher has no plausible way of knowing the first cache is in the works because the planning tool won’t show it and there aren’t tell-tale puzzle or multicache initial stages indicating the first cache’s potential presence. Now, the second cacher has to wait while I ping the first cacher to ask whether they intend to publish their cache in the near future because there is an already placed cache ready to go live.

So, let’s work together on this as Anchorage especially becomes more saturated with caches. I’ll save cachers time by verifying whether a location is open before the cache is actually placed. In exchange, cachers will place the new container and resubmit the cache page quickly for publishing so other cachers don’t waste their time placing a cache too close to a previously reserved spot. I think that in general, cachers would rather be placing and searching for new caches rather than poking around a growing number of reserved ground zeros.

Some time back, the **Event Guidelines** were revised to eliminate the requirement for a log book. [Guideline III.2.4](#) currently states “*Event Cache owners can request that cachers sign a logbook, but this is optional and cannot be a requirement for logging an Event Cache.*” This means Event log books/log sheets may be used to collect contact information or for door prize drawings, but they may

not be audited to remove a cacher’s “Attended” log from the Event page.

Cachers are reminded that **The Alaska Railroad** has a legal 100’ Right of Way (ROW) on both sides of the centerline of the tracks. Geocaches should not be placed inside this ROW for safety reasons with the following exceptions (per Jim Adams, Alaska Railroad Security Agent):

1. Land on the opposite side of the bicycle trail from the tracks where the bicycle trail falls within the 100’ ROW.
2. Land within the vehicle transportation corridor including pull outs that falls within the 100’ ROW. These areas are usually delineated by a fence or guardrail.

People are discouraged from crossing or walking along the tracks for safety reasons.

Note: Groundspeak imposes a 150’ buffer between caches and tracks unless specific exemptions are identified such as those above.

Additional Alaska Land Manager information may be found on the GeocacheAlaska! website at <http://www.geocachealaska.org/landmanagers.htm>.

Editor's Notes

By Cathy Wilmeth / *The_Firefly*

Thank you for your support this year as we worked together to update *Around The State*. Thank you to all contributors and readers! I have enjoyed taking your articles and ‘making them pretty’, and I am looking forward to where we can go together in 2015.

The submission deadline for the January issue of *Around The State* is **December 22, 2014**. Don’t be shy - I encourage everyone to submit a photo, an article, an idea, or a request! What do you want to see in your newsletter? I’m happy to help with any questions or concerns you may have about submitting! Send to editor@geocachealaska.org.

Around The State

GEOCACHEALASKA! MEMBERSHIP

There are two membership levels at GeocacheAlaska! Inc.

Sourdough Membership (formerly known as Premium Membership) affords you discounts in the GeocacheAlaska! online and traveling stores and events that have an entrance fee (Geofest, etc.), voting rights in Board of Directors elections and a warm fuzzy feeling for helping underwrite the organization's operating expenses that include web hosting, printing, banners, post office box fees, event prizes and lots of other things that are required to make things happen. Because GeocacheAlaska! is an incorporated 501(c)(3) tax exempt organization, your membership dues are tax deductible.

If you cannot join as a Sourdough at this time, you may support GeocacheAlaska! by joining as a Cheechako (formerly known as Associate) Member. This will allow you to receive the monthly newsletter and e-mail announcements. More members at any level gives GeocacheAlaska!'s more clout and credibility during land manager conversations, so sign up today!

There are four ways you can join GeocacheAlaska! at the Sourdough level for \$20/year.

1. Navigate to the [GeocacheAlaska! webpage](#) and click on the "Subscribe" button to set up an automatic subscription which will renew annually. Please enter your caching name in the provided box.
2. Navigate to the [GeocacheAlaska! webpage](#) and click on "Add to Cart" to purchase an annual membership.
3. Navigate to the [GeocacheAlaska! webpage](#) to download a membership form you can print and mail with your payment.
4. Attend one of the upcoming GeocacheAlaska! events and speak to any Board Member.

Find us online at:

1. GeocacheAlaska! Website: <http://www.geocachealaska.org>
2. GeocacheAlaska! Forums: <http://geocachealaska.proboards.com/index.cgi>
3. Facebook Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/geocachealaska/>
4. GeocacheAlaska! Facebook Page: [GeocacheAlaska! Page](#)
5. E-mail to contact@geocachealaska.org

JOIN US ON FACEBOOK & Twitter!

Like our official [GeocacheAlaska! Page](#) on Facebook to keep up to date on things happening with GeocacheAlaska!

Also, join the official [GeocacheAlaska! Group](#) on Facebook to stay in touch and share your activities with fellow members of the geocaching community. This is where GeocacheAlaska! members can plan caching adventures, post photos, and pass messages within the membership ranks. This Facebook Group is designed to be yet another member benefit for Sourdoughs and Cheechakos alike. Visit our Group and request to Join so you can start viewing and participating with GeocacheAlaska! and your fellow geocachers.

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

STATE PARKS PERMITS

Caches may be published within Alaska State Parks in Southcentral Alaska! The permit number is **14-KA-973**. The permit number must appear on the cache container and the cache page. Before submitting a cache listing within one of the parks, please thoroughly read the complete list of stipulations in the permit, which may be [downloaded](#) from the GeocacheAlaska! website.

NEWSLETTER INFORMATION

The editors of *Around the State* would like to hear from you. Submit articles or suggestions to editor@geocachealaska.org Subject: Around the State. 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](#).

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