The Loss of a Great Friend to Snowmobiling

Inside:
- MSA/American Income Life Scholarship
- Plan to Attend: 2015 MSA Ride In

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### MSA News You Can Use

**E-Mail Addresses Needed:**
- We are looking to update and enlarge our e-mail database. Please contact the MSA office and give us your e-mail address. Also, help us save on postage. You can receive your Michigan Snowmobile News online. For more information, call (616) 361-2285. The MSA does not sell or provide your e-mail address or other confidential information to outside sources. MSA only uses e-mail addresses for important news blasts, calls to action or distribution of your Michigan Snowmobile News.

**Buy Your Trail Permit From MSA’s Office Directly:**
- For every trail permit MSA sells, $1.43 goes directly to MSA. One dollar goes to MSA as the trail permit seller, and $.43 goes to MSA as the trail permit distributor.

When MSA sells 30,000 trail permits through the office or our Web site, those funds allow staff and the officers to attend important meetings and monitor the issues. Meetings that affect our trails and access go on weekly in the state. If we are not there, we are forgotten. We have to be represented at these meetings and protect our right to ride.

**Photo Contest:**
- Don’t forget to submit last year’s ride photos to the Michigan Snowmobile News photo contest. Your photo could be on the cover of next month’s magazine. E-mail your submission to mmgrogitsky@hotmail.com.

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**On the Cover:** Saying Good Bye to Al Green.
One Special Volunteer

I must start this column by paying tribute to one very special volunteer -- our MSA vice president Al Green. Al passed away in November 2013. Al was involved in just about all aspects of organized snowmobiling. He was involved in everything from serving as an elected official to serving as a committee chair and volunteering to help. He also served in organizations that either directly or indirectly involve our sport.

Al enjoyed grooming as much as he did snowmobiling, and he did it with a passion for perfection. Less than a week before Al’s passing, he worked tirelessly for three days at the Novi Snowmobile Show. While there, Al did what he did well -- he promoted MSA and the importance of MSA to snowmobiling. There is another article on Al Green in this magazine. Look to the article for more details on his achievements and dedication to snowmobiling. Al will be missed!

Volunteers Make our Events Successful

Dedicated volunteers, along with our office staff, help make our MSA events successful. Bill Manson and Karen Middendorp spend hours planning most of our events; many times taking work home during the week and working events on the weekends. In my way of thinking, Bill and Karen are also dedicated volunteers.

The Novi Snowmobile Show is the biggest indoor snowmobile show in the U.S. This show is a three-day event and requires volunteers to be on their feet almost all the time. Volunteers promote MSA, sell trail permits, sell new memberships, and renew current MSA memberships. At this year’s Novi Snowmobile Show, 200 MSA memberships were sold. Half of those sold were first-time MSA members.

For the past four years our MSA Snow Show was held in an outdoor venue in Martin, Mich. Because of the time of year (mid- to late- September) volunteers endured rain, sleet, and cold weather promoting our organization and working the show. MSA volunteers donate their time and pay their own expenses. Of all of the organizations I’ve been a part of, MSA has the most dedicated and loyal members.

Become a Active Member

Take a moment and think about what snowmobiling means to you. In my case it’s not just about the trips or the sport, but the long-lasting friendships developed over the years. Most of these friendships are not just in the season, but year around, life-long friendships, which include our families becoming friends.

MSA is looking for individuals who could move into leadership roles. Don’t just set on the sidelines, become involved. Remember if each of us brings in a new member, our organization would double in size. Numbers do matter.

Ride safe, track side down! ❄️

For Their Continued Generosity MSA Thanks You!

The following businesses and clubs have donated to the financial future of MSA.

- Cadillac Winter Warriors
- Iron Range Snow Club
- Chippewa Sno Cats

Make MSA Your Charity of Choice! The Future of Snowmobiling in Michigan Depends on it!
Jan. 16-26: International Snowmobile Safety Week. Many local clubs and snowmobile associations take this time to teach snowmobilers about safe riding. Many dealerships help by putting on seminars, teaching customers how to maintain their sleds, and keep them running in top condition. Visit www.snowmobile.org and download a Safety Week Campaign Action Manual with ideas on how to promote safety week and ideas for putting on safety week events.

Jan. 17: The Sixth Annual Blessing of the Sleds will be held starting at 11 a.m. at the Hillman, Michigan Fire Station. A Fun Run will follow with all proceeds going to the Hillman E.M.S. equipment fund. For more information, please call Ken (989) 657-4168.

Jan. 17: MSA Executive Committee (EC) meeting. For more information, call the MSA office at (616) 361-2285. Meetings will be held at the Alpine Lodge in Gaylord, 833 W. Main St. (989) 732-2431. The meeting will start at 9 a.m.

Jan. 17: The 4th Annual Coyote Cup kids’ snow-cross race will be held. The practice run and registration will be held from 9 a.m. to noon. Racing starts at 1 p.m. The registration fee is $15. This event is for kids only 12 & under, and only for 120cc size machines. There will be an 8 and under, 10 and under, and 12 and under classes for Stock, Super Stock, and Modified divisions. This year’s race will be run by the Cadillac Winter Warriors Snowmobile Club. Please have insurance information ready at registration! For more information, contact James Thomas at (231) 779-5925. Location of race -- Coyote Crossing Resort, 8593 S. 13 Rd., Cadillac, Mich.

Feb. 4-5: The 18th Annual Arrowhead Groomer Show will be held at Walker Equipment, 6351 Hwy 70E in St. Germain, Wis. It will run from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Feb. 4, and from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Feb. 5. For more information, visit http://www.arrowheadgroomers.com/show.htm.

Feb. 6-7: I-500 Snowmobile Race in Sault Ste. Marie. For more information, visit www.i-500.com/c/.

Feb. 6-16: The 7th annual TAKE A FRIEND SNOWMOBILING WEEK. Consider partnering with local clubs and other local businesses to encourage non-snowmobiling friends or those who haven’t been snowmobiling for a while to join us for a time of fun. Many have tried snowmobiling for the first time with the experience resulting in the purchase of a snowmobile and joining a club and association – all because somebody asked them to come along. For more information and ideas on sponsoring a TAKE A FRIEND SNOWMOBILING event, visit www.gosnowmobiling.org.

Feb. 13-16: MSA Ride In, Kewadin Casino, Sault Ste Marie. For more information, see page 7.

Feb. 20-21: The Top of the Lake Snowmobile Show & Ride will be held in Naubinway. The featured Sled is Skiroule. Friday events: 7:30-9:30 a.m. - breakfast at the Naubinway Pavilion. 10 a.m. - ride to Cranberry Lodge, 13 miles one way. All snowmobiles welcome, no registration required. 4-8 p.m. - get-together at the Snowmobile Museum, Saturday events: 8-10 a.m. - lineup for show, downtown Naubinway. Register at the museum. 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. - snowmobiles on display. 4-6 p.m. – banquet at the Engadine/Garfield Town Hall. 6-8 p.m. - merchant drawings, 50/50, museum raffle drawing. Museum auction – donated items accepted, proceeds go to the Museum Building Fund.


March 2-7: Clean Snowmobile Challenge at the Keweenaw Research Center in Houghton.

March 6-7: MSA Groomer Work Shop at the Kewadin Casino in Sault Ste Marie. For more information, call (616) 361-2285.

March 14: Veterans Snowmobile Ride in Seney. For more information on the ride, contact Don or Diane Reed at (906) 499-3332.

March 21: MSA Board of Directors (BOD) meeting. For more information, call the MSA office at (616) 361-2285. Meetings will be held at the Alpine Lodge in Gaylord, 833 W. Main St. (989) 732-2431. The meeting will start at 9 a.m.

March 31: Snowmobile trails in Michigan officially close.

May 16: MSA Executive Committee (EC) meeting. For more information, call the MSA office at (616) 361-2285. Meetings will be held at the Alpine Lodge in Gaylord, 833 W. Main St. (989) 732-2431. The meeting will start at 9 a.m.

June 9-13: The International Snowmobile Congress will be held in Niagara Falls, New York at the Sheraton. For more information, please visit www.isc2015.com.


July 18: MSA Board of Directors* (BOD) meeting. For more information, call the MSA office at (616) 361-2285. Meetings will be held at the Alpine Lodge in Gaylord, 833 W. Main St. (989) 732-2431. The meeting will start at 9 a.m.

Sept. 19: MSA Executive Committee (EC) meeting. It will be held at the Quality Inn in St. Ignace. For more information, call the MSA office at (616) 361-2285. Meetings will be held at the Alpine Lodge in Gaylord, 833 W. Main St. (989) 732-2431. The meeting will start at 9 a.m.


Attention MSA Clubs and Members:
Get your event announcement in the pages of the Michigan Snowmobile News. For publication, send information to mmgrogitsky@hotmail.com.
Legislature Approves Laws Regarding Snowmobiling; Some Changes Planned for 2015

Just when we thought snowmobiling made it through that silly time of year, the “Lame Duck” session of the Michigan legislature; our elected officials passed some legislation that affects our recreation.

There were two pieces of legislation that did pass before the end of the 2014. However, if you partake of Zero Tolerance while riding, the first will not affect you.

For the last four years, our state legislature has introduced bills to make the recreation community -- ORVs, boats, and snowmobiles, adhere to the same blood alcohol level (BAC) as the motor vehicle law for cars in this state. That level is .08.

For some reason when the BAC was lowered for roadways the level stayed at .1 for all other motorized off highway uses. With the passage of the legislation, the levels for all motorized vehicles are now .08. So if you still drink and ride, take note! Drunk driving is drunk driving, and now all BAC levels are the same.

A Change on How to Dispose of Wrecked Sleds

One of the other provisions passed into law during the Lame Duck session had to do with how a wrecked or totaled snowmobile is disposed of. There are now rules in place for how to dispose of the different parts of the sled. This was done so that certain parts of the sled don’t harm the environment and pollute the ground or air.

More MSA News...

The MSA Snow Show will be moving out of the rain. After four straight years of rain at the Martin US 131 Motorplex, we have given into Mother Nature. We will be moving the show into the dry atmosphere of the DeltaPlex Arena and Expo Center in Grand Rapids. Not only did the location of the show move, but the dates for the show have changed! The MSA Snow Show will be held Oct. 16-17, 2015. More information will go out to our vendors and attendees during the coming months. Look to future editions of the Michigan Snowmobile News for more information.

MSA officials are also very excited about our 2015 MSA Convention and General Membership meeting. The event will be held at a great venue. We are traveling to Mackinaw Island and the Mission Point Resort. Dates for the Convention have also changed. The dates will be Oct. 9-11, 2015. I’m mentioning this now because MSA was able to secure a great rate of $89 per night. You will never get a better rate than that on the Island, especially during the peak color season. Plan on attending and seeing the beautiful Mackinaw Island in the fall. Get your friends to come with you, and then draw straws on who goes to the meeting and who sight sees around the Island!

Saying Good-Bye

On Nov. 13, MSA lost a great person and friend with the passing of our vice president, Al Green. I would like to take a little space here to tell you about Al.

I cannot put into words how I feel about this loss. Al was involved in so many things, helping make snowmobiling better for all of us. I met Al because of his involvement with his club and the grooming effort in Cadillac. The more he got involved, the more he gave -- helping to make all of the trails in Michigan look and ride the same. What I mean by this is that Al worked hard with MSA, and the Snowmobile Advisory Workgroup (SAW) to make sure that all of the Department of Natural Resources’ (DNR) personnel were looking at the big picture; the same for signing, brushing, and grooming.

As vice president of MSA, Al worked hard to make sure that all MSA members worked just as hard as he did to make things better for you the snowmobiler. Al and I had many conversations about all of the issues affecting snowmobiling, but he also made sure that it was still fun to ride. He planned rides, going out with MSA friends, his family, or riding buddies. We will never be able to fill Al Green’s shoes, but we will move on, and continue our work on behalf of snowmobiling. He would want that. We all need to try and model ourselves after Al’s passion for the sport, his diligence to the cause, and his humor and antics on the trail. Keep it Track Side down Al, and may God speed your journey!

At the December MSA Board of Directors meeting MSA past president, Rick Brown was appointed to fill the vice president vacancy left by the death of Al Green.

Brown will serve as vice president until the 2015 MSA General Membership meeting, Oct. 9-11. At that time an election will be held to fill the vacancy.
Mark Your Calendar

The MSA Camp Out will be at Indian River Campground Resort on June 19-21, 2015. There is a sponsor for the fish dinner on Friday night. We are looking for sponsors for Saturday night and the officer’s breakfast. Gogebic Area Grooming Inc. will be sponsoring the ice cream floats. If your club or council would be willing to sponsor one of the events, please contact Don Wing at (231) 775-3901 or email him at wingjudy@msn.com.

Registration for both meals and room will begin after Jan. 31, 2015. To book your hotel, first call the MSA office at (616) 361-2285 to get the control number for the special MSA discount rate.

by Don and Judy Wing

The 2015 Michigan Snowmobile Association (MSA) Ride In is scheduled for Feb. 13 –16, 2015. The event will be held at Kewadin Casino in Sault Ste. Marie. We listened to your suggestions at last year’s Ride In and have implemented some changes. Instead of a two-day event, we have expanded the fun to three days.

Of course there will be scheduled rides throughout the weekend. Different groups cater to various riding styles. Pick one that closely matches your own in order to maximize your riding enjoyment.

In addition to fun on the trails, there is the opportunity to meet new people who enjoy the sport, renew acquaintances, and enjoy great food.

Rich and Amy Rottier have volunteered to assist the MSA Recreation Committee and have jumped in with both feet to help. They are working hard to improve your Ride In experience, and are a valuable addition to this committee. The Rottier’s have entertainment planned for both Friday and Saturday evening.

Karyn Hautamaki has promised a great Silent Auction! She has indicated there is something for everyone. Make sure to check it out. Some of the items include: two snowsuits, a car jack, and many other items.

Sault Ste. Marie -- Great Snow, Great Trails

Play in the snow and discover your inner child in Sault Ste Marie, where an average of 120 inches of snow falls annually, laying the foundation for the adrenaline rush that awaits you on the hundreds of miles of groomed snowmobile trails in and around Sault Ste. Marie.

The cost of Ride-In is the same as last year: $75 per night for single or double occupancy, $85 per night for triple occupancy and $95 per night for quad occupancy.

Food for the three-day event is $90. This includes Friday night, Saturday morning and evening, Sunday morning and evening, and Monday morning. If you cannot participate in the three-day event, the food cost for two days is $70 a person. Each participant will receive a voucher for $10 a day to play at the casino. Stu Voelkers will be leading a ride to Drummond Island on Feb. 15, 2015. This excursion will leave immediately following breakfast. The extra day meal package should not be purchased if you are going to ride to the island. The ferry schedules make it impossible to return in time for dinner at Kewadin. You will be on your own for meals on Sunday evening and Monday morning.

Registration for both meals and room will begin after Jan. 31, 2015. To book your hotel, first call the MSA office at (616) 361-2285 to get the control number for the special MSA discount rate. Again, this is critical so we know who will be attending and also be able to ensure there is sufficient food.

We look forward to seeing all of you there, and don’t forget to bring a friend.

Mark Your Calendar

The MSA Camp Out will be at Indian River Campground Resort on June 19-21, 2015. There is a sponsor for the fish dinner on Friday night. We are looking for sponsors for Saturday night and the officer’s breakfast. Gogebic Area Grooming Inc. will be sponsoring the ice cream floats. If your club or council would be willing to sponsor one of the events, please contact Don Wing at (231) 775-3901 or email him at wingjudy@msn.com.
ACSA is the only national association committed to your issues – snowmobile issues across the U.S. ACSA serves as a national watchdog organization that monitors and acts on snowmobile issues across the Snow Belt.

**What ACSA Does for Snowmobilers**

ACSA works to provide an information platform to members and snowmobilers. ACSA emphasizes the importance of coming together annual in Washington, D.C. for the Fly-In (this spring will be the 16th year of this event). At this event snowmobilers work to inform and educate decision-makers. Snowmobilers also gather annually at the International Snowmobile Congress (this year will be the 47th annual) to discuss common issues.

ACSA serves as a fact-finding entity, gathering and disseminating information on creating, keeping, and expanding trails and riding areas. ACSA works to educate and influence politicians and land managers on riding opportunities and challenges.

ACSA provides continuing educational information that aids local clubs and associations in their decision-making process.

ACSA establishes relationships with other user groups with similar concerns and challenges.

ACSA recently partnered with the Utah Snowmobile Association and Utah Avalanche Center to develop new avalanche education materials that are now available.

This spring the updated Snowmobiling *Facts and Myths* books were circulated. Other projects included the assessment of OHV use on groomed snowmobile trails and the snowmobile friendly communities. The *Groomer Training Manual* is in the process of being updated.

**Forest Service Snowmobile Rule**

This is the result of the lawsuit filed by the cross country ski group, Winter Wildlands Alliance (WWA) which alleged that snowmobiles were not being managed by the U.S. Forest Service. The draft rule was released this summer, and the final rule is expected by Jan. 31, 2015. ACSA, the International Snowmobile Manufacturers Association (ISMA) and the Idaho State Snowmobile Association continue to be involved in the pending appeal. Since April 2013, when the decision was handed down, the three groups have paid in excess of $120,000 to defend snowmobilers' access.

We are optimistic that the final rule will be one the snowmobile community can comply with -- and that it satisfies the WWA's concern over snowmobile management.

Yellowstone National Park will be open to snowmobilers this winter -- including for the first time in over a decade -- snowmobilers in non-commercially guided groups! These opportunities are very limited, so if you are interested, you should apply now. The application process is online at www.recreation.gov.

ACSA once again has partnered with SnowTrails TV on a Discover ACSA video that will be included with the series. This video is also available for snow shows, meetings, etc. The SnowTrails TV show airs on the Destination TV network on Saturday mornings.

Educational Webinars will continue to be offered to interested snowmobilers. Upcoming topics will include the Importance of Website Content, Help – Our Website Stinks, Benefits Available to Non-Profits, and How to Get Your Articles Printed in Local Newspapers.

The 2015 CASH Calendars are now available. This is a fundraiser for both our member state associations and ACSA! The cost is only $20 -- with 365 chances to win!

We are hopeful we will be able to host some Enlightenment Rides this winter -- where we can get decision-makers out on snowmobiles so that they can see firsthand our successes and challenges.

ACSA has had the opportunity to attend and display at many snow shows and state conventions/annual meetings across the country this fall. Thank you for allowing us these opportunities. The exposure and awareness at these events has been awesome!

The 2015 International Snowmobile Congress will be held in Niagara Falls June 2015.
The Michigan Snowmobile Association (MSA) will once again help with fundraising for the Michigan Snowmobile Education & Advancement Fund (MSEAF).

It's a unique way at a chance to win every day of the year, while also helping fund snowmobiling safety and awareness campaigns.

Because of an issue with the lottery commission, the Daily Four numbers will not be used. Instead, one ticket will be drawn for every day of the year from a raffle barrel.

Tickets for the following month’s winners will be drawn on Feb. 2, March 2, April 1, May 1, June 1, July 1, Aug. 3, Sept.1, Oct. 1, Nov. 2, Dec. 1, and Jan. 5.

Checks will be mailed out to all winners within five days of the last day of the preceding month. All of the proceeds will go to help MSEAF with safety and education programs.

Make checks payable to MSEAF – Send your entries to 4543 Division Ave. Wyoming, MI 49548

There will be a $100 winner every day during 2015.
After each draw, the stub will be returned to the drawing. Your number is good for the entire year and eligible to win every day!
Buy one for you and one for your wife, significant other, or friend.

$25 a ticket
Volunteers Make It Happen!

By its very definition, a volunteer is someone who gives of themselves willingly without asking for anything in return. Throughout the years, it has taken hundreds of these giving individuals to create and maintain organized snowmobiling in Michigan.

These volunteers are just like you, they can’t wait for the snow, so that they can hit the trail and ride. They are snowmobilers who love their sport. It’s that passion that has led them to seek out their local club or state organization, and get involved.

They attend meetings, volunteer at snow shows, and drive the groomer. These are the people who serve as officers of local clubs, spend hours brushing and signing the trails you ride, and give of themselves to make snowmobiling better – asking for nothing in return.

The Michigan Snowmobile Association (MSA) wishes to salute those who have, are, and continue to volunteer their service to snowmobiling.

In Her Own Words: Laurie Appel

Laurie Appel

By its very definition, a volunteer is someone who gives of themselves willingly without asking for anything in return. Throughout the years, it has taken hundreds of these giving individuals to create and maintain organized snowmobiling in Michigan.

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The Michigan Snowmobile Association (MSA) wishes to salute those who have, are, and continue to volunteer their service to snowmobiling.

I was involved in organized snowmobiling very heavily for 10 years, and a member of Driftskippers in Coloma. I was president of Driftskippers for a short time. I was also secretary of the Southwest Michigan Snowmobile Council for nearly seven years.

I put in trails for Driftskippers for 10 years, and a member of Driftskippers for a short time. I was actually known how to run the groomer. Now because of circumstances out of my control, I no longer am able to do any of these things.

Get Involved!

I do think it is of utmost importance that those involved with snowmobiling get involved with their local club, council, and MSA. If they don’t, we won’t have trails to ride. I am a lifetime member of MSA. That is how much I believe in what they do for our sport. They go to Congress and fight for our programs, which allow us to have trails. MSA members spend many hours doing research, talking to people about our sport, and informing the public about safety on a snowmobile. It takes many hours to organize these events.

MSA also takes our Congressmen on rides, so that they can see the beauty they are missing.

Sometimes it can be breathtaking after a fresh snow with the snow glistening on the trees. If you look closely, and it is cold enough, you can even see individual snowflakes on your sled or the sleeves of your jacket. To me, this is amazing part of snowmobiling -- slowing down and noticing the beauty.

I do still ride my 2008 Arctic Cat F6. I mostly ride now with the love of my life, Mike. We ride in Allegan and Baldwin. I am blessed to have found someone who shares the love of this sport and is patient enough to allow me to stop and take photos of the beauty. I used to ride a lot in the Grand Marais, Sault Ste. Marie and Coloma areas. One thing everyone should do once is ride over to Mackinac Island. It is so different over there in the winter. I only got to do it once, but it was breathtaking and beautiful.

Editor’s Note: Appel’s hands-on activity with organized snowmobiling has slowed, but she still supports MSA through membership. Her hope is that more snowmobilers become MSA members and more MSA members activity volunteer their time and effort to the organization that keeps snowmobiling alive and well in Michigan.
2015 Trailer Raffle
MSEAF Helping Snowmobile Clubs Raise Money

The Michigan Snowmobile Education and Advancement Fund (MSEAF), is offering member MSA snowmobile clubs a chance to make some money with a 2015 Trailer Raffle.

MSEAF has purchased a **Legend Thunder 7 feet x 17 feet with an Action Wrap**. A lottery license has been secured and tickets have been printed.

**Tickets – Get Your Tickets!**

We need clubs to tell MSEAF how many tickets that they would like, so that we can send them out. The tickets are now available.

Participating clubs will have until Feb. 1 to sell tickets. All money and stubs must be returned to the office by Feb. 5.

**Disclaimer:** The trailer being raffled off is in Pewter and includes an action wrap.

**The drawing will be held on Tuesday, Feb. 10, 2015.**

MSEAF will tally all of the tickets sold and return half of what the clubs sold back to each individual club.

We realize that although this is a great fundraiser for the clubs, not all the clubs have participated in the past. We also realize that many MSA members are not members of clubs, but would like to purchase tickets. So MSA will send out tickets, one per single and two per family, to our membership in January. We are asking members to turn in the tickets to a member club or directly to MSA. This will ensure that we will have sold enough tickets to cover the cost of the trailer.

For more information, call (616) 361-2285.

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Don’t put your life on our line.

This winter, prevent a senseless tragedy by steering clear of train tracks. Not only is riding a snowmobile on a railroad’s right of way illegal, you may be too focused on having a good time to hear a train coming.
Remembering
One of Snowmobiling’s Greatest Champions
Saying Good-by to MSA Vice President Al Green
On Nov. 13, 2014, Michigan’s snowmobile community lost a dear friend. Allan “Al” Green passed away suddenly from a heart attack.

Al was the vice president and a Life Member of the Michigan Snowmobile Association (MSA), an active groomer and Trail Coordinator for Cadillac Winter Promotions, and a Life Member of the Cadillac Winter Warriors Snowmobile Club. It goes without saying that snowmobiling was his passion.

Al Green – Friend, Father, an Outdoorsman

Al grew up in Jackson, Mich., on a farm. He was an avid outdoorsman even as a kid. He hunted deer using both bow and shotgun as a young man. At 38, Al had his first heart attack and had quadruple by-pass surgery. That ended his bow hunting days, but he still enjoyed hunting. That was until he spent time living at a cabin in the woods for the better part of a year. He got to feeding the deer and naming them, and that ended his deer hunting days. He would still come to a dead stop in the middle of the road to watch deer in the fields. Each time he saw one, it was like the first time he saw one as a kid. It never got old.

In 1976, Al went to work for Conrail and began his lifelong fondness for railroading. In 1989, he got the chance to go to work for the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) Rail, and worked as both a Construction Inspector and a Rail Safety Inspector over the next 25 years. He filed his paperwork to retire from the state on Monday, four days before his death. Even though he was eager to experience retirement, he was sad to leave his railroading family and friends.

Two Great Loves

In 1977, Al found two loves of his life. He married Jen, and he bought his first snowmobile. Al and Jen were married for 37 years, and have two daughters, Katherine and Leslie. Al passed the love of snowmobiling and the outdoors to both of his girls.

After moving to Cadillac for the state in 1989, Al was introduced to snowmobile trail grooming. He grew up on tractors, and being able to use tractors to groom snowmobile trails was what he thought of as “giving back” to a sport he loved so much. He got a kick when grooming and snowmobilers would stop him to thank him for making their experience so smooth, or even when they just gave him a “thumb’s up.”

Many members of the organizations Al was involved with attended either his memorial service in Cadillac, or his funeral in Jackson. The resounding comments of all of those attending was “it will take a lot of people to fill Al Green’s shoes” as he did so many things for his sport.

He was a good friend to those in and out of snowmobiling, a good husband and father. He will be missed. Memorial contributions, in Al’s name, can be made to the Michigan Snowmobile Association, or the American Heart Association.

Continued on page 15
MSA Web Site Gets a New Look

Visit www.msasnow.org

Your Michigan Snowmobile Association (MSA) web site has a new look, offering an inexpensive, digital advertising opportunity!

The new web site went live in September, and our Trail Reports pages were unveiled shortly before the snowmobile season started.

The web site includes some of the same valuable information it always has as well as new expanded details. The web site offers Trail Reports pages, a list of MSA member benefits, the MSA Store, and many other features for you to enjoy. There is also information about MSA, a calendar of events, and reports from your MSA officers.

If you’re looking to join a club or rent a sled, that information can be found on the MSA web site. A list of places where trail permits can be purchased is located prominently at the top of the page.

Completely New Trail Reports Pages

MSA did not own the old Trail Reports pages, so that area of the web site had to be completely revamped. We are pleased with the new Trail Reports, and encourage you to visit the area you plan to ride for the latest, most up-to-date report on trail conditions.

A map of Michigan features pins that mark the 68 different grant sponsor areas. Red, green, and black pin colors denote whether the trails in that area have been groomed less than three days ago, more than three days, or 28 days ago; respectively.

By clicking on the pin, visitors can see a quick look on the condition of trails in that area and the date of the last trail report. Those wanting further information can click on a Groomer Report.

The Groomer Report is completed by the grant sponsors (groomers) in that particular area. These are the people who are actually out on the more than 6,500 miles of trail—creating the safe smooth trails you have come to love in Michigan.

The individual Trail Reports page still includes a description of trail conditions in that area, the date and time the trail report was taken, the base on the trails, the snowfall in the last 24 hours, and the date the trails were last groom.

A map of the trails in that area is located on the page, which can also be downloaded as a PDF. The page is rounded out by a five-day weather forecast for the area.

A Great Chance to Advertise Your Business

These Trail Reports pages also offer a unique, inexpensive digital advertising opportunity, benefiting your business and the MSA.

Each of the 68 trail report pages offers space for 10 advertisements. Revenue generated by the sale of these ads will benefit your MSA and organized snowmobiling in Michigan.

A 3” x 2” ad can be purchased for $150. The ad can include a link to your business’s web site. Multiple ads on different Trail Reports pages can be purchased for $100. The ads will remain on the page for one full year. Don’t miss this great chance to advertise your business while supporting your MSA!

For more information, call the MSA office at (616) 361-2285.
Groomer Operator
by Gayle Butterfield

My wife says
I’m the best looking Groomer Driver
She’s ever seen
As I look around tonight
I see exactly what she means

What is a Grooming Driver
You might ask
Well I sat down at my PC
And took that to task

In the winter time
I groom Snowmobile Trails
Make ‘em smooth as a spanked baby’s butt
In spring, summer, and fall
I work on those trails
Doing things to try and keep ‘em up

I fill in holes and do a little gradin’
Cut brush and trees
And I ain’t never gonna forget
The DNR wanted us to cut
Them dad burn pungees

Just before the snowmobile season starts
A bunch of us volunteers
Some of us are getting on in years
We get together for a workday fun
We do a lot of laugh’n
But we get the work done
I’ve put tracks on the Tucker
And duels and tires and chains on the John Deere
I didn’t know I’d have to do that
When I said I’d volunteer

You might ask why I do it
Well I do it for the fun
For the friendly wave and the turned up thumb
Underneath that helmet is a smile from ear to ear
That’s enough reward for this volunteer

I don’t want to forget the most important thing I do
To help make these trails safe
For me and you
I put up all of those signs that warn of hills and curves
Tell you when to go straight and when to swerve
Signs that tell you where you’re at
So you don’t get lost
You tell me
Is it worth the cost?

Continued from page 13

Remembering Al Green

Al Green (fourth from the left) with your 2014 MSA officers. Al was elected to serve his second term as vice president in October.

Al Green (sitting far right) with a group have MSA members who have been named the MSA Snowmobiler of the Year. Al took home the prestigious award in ???.

Michigan Snowmobile Education & Advancement Fund

Honorarium & Memorial

Honor, Remember Friends, Family, or Events Through a Donation to Support Snowmobile Safety and Education Programs

In Appreciation …

All memorials and tributes will be acknowledged by the MSEAF through a thank you letter to you, the donor. A special card will also be mailed letting the recipient or their family know that someone special has honored them with this MSEAF Honorarium and Memorial. Memorials and tributes will also be recognized in the pages of the Michigan Snowmobile News.

The following donations were made in memory of MSA vice president Al Green:

The Michigan Snowmobile Association
Don & Judy Wing
Cadillac Winter Warriors
Cadillac Winter Promotions
Craig & Pat Jamison
John Drury
Rod & Bonnie Altman
Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) Office of Rail
Craig Delaney

Ken & Gail Scott
Anonymous
Michael & Linda Barrett
Dewey & Karen Cole
Randall Troman
John & Jeri Griffin
Bill & Deb Manson
Robert & Kathleen Kirchner
Anonymous
Rec Boat Holdings
Your Winter Playground
No matter how hard Old Man Winter tries to spoil things, there’s always some fun to be had in the cold. From snowmobiling on freshly groomed trails, to snowshoeing and skiing on beautiful terrain, a winter experience in Kewadin Country is one to remember.

Heat up the Night
If you’re in the U.P., you’re in Kewadin Country. And that means five casinos with hot slots, thrilling table games, delicious eats and so much more. Nothing will warm you up like an evening at Kewadin!

Relax
Put your feet up and unwind at one of our well-appointed on site hotels in Sault Ste. Marie and St. Ignace or our newly renovated Hessel Cabin. You deserve it! After all, you’re in Kewadin Country.
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**It’s the Law!**

**Person Shall Not Operate a Snowmobile:**

On the frozen surface of public waters within 100 feet of a person, including a skater, not in or upon a snowmobile or within 100 feet of a fishing shanty or shelter except at the minimum speed required to maintain forward movement of the snowmobile, or on an area that has been cleared for ice skating, unless the area is necessary for gaining access to the public water.

Upon the land of another without consent of the owner or their agent, as required by the recreational trespass act. On or across a cemetery or burial ground, airport, railroad or a railroad right-of-way, or within 100 feet of a sledding, skiing or skating area.

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**Did You Know ...**

that there is an international snowmobile event called the “International Snowmobile Congress” (ISC). The ISC includes snowmobilers representing all of the snowmobile states in the U.S., and Canadian provinces. In recent years, riders from Russia, Sweden, and Finland have attended this event, making it truly an international exchange. The business of organized snowmobiling is discussed at this event. This event takes place every year at a different location. In 2015 it will be held in Niagara Falls, N.Y. June 9-13.

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**Call us today!** 952.888.7372  |  www.trackinc.com
The Patricia K. Jernberg Nursing Scholarship is being offered to MSA members and their families, by the family of Patricia K. Jernberg, who died suddenly. The family is working to honor a beloved wife, mother and nurse who loved to ride.

Patricia was both a dedicated nurse and avid snowmobiler. She was a critical care nurse at Spectrum Health-Butterworth Hospital in Grand Rapids for 30 years. According to her husband Paul, along with her family and her faith, nursing and snowmobiling were her great loves. She and her husband were riders, MSA members and loved attending the MSA Ride In.

Paul explained that he and their sons Scott and Wayne wanted to do something to honor their wife and mother; the scholarship was something that evolved from that. The scholarship will be offered by the Jernberg family through MSA on a yearly basis.

Patricia K. Jernberg Nursing Scholarship Criteria
• Those applying must be a MSA member or the son or daughter of a MSA member in good standing.
• They must be accepted into an accredited nursing program in Michigan. They can be working toward their associate’s, bachelor’s or master’s degree within the nursing field.
• Applicants are asked to write a short essay (500 words or less) on “How does my community benefit from nursing?”

The deadline for all applications is June 6, 2015. Please mail the completed scholarship application with the essay to: Patricia K. Jernberg Nursing Scholarship, 4543 S. Division Ave., Wyoming, MI 49548.
Increased trail permit sales are necessary to continue our grooming program as it stands today. Everyone needs to work hard to spread the word that trail permits are the way trail grooming is funded and sales are required to keep smooth trails.

GROOMER DRIVER WORKSHOP

by Bill Lucas

At the March 2014 Snowmobile Advisory Workgroup (SAW) meeting there was a discussion about the amount of money spent on maintenance during the 2014 season. There was a suggestion that a groomer driver workshop for groomers should be held. SAW member Bill Lucas volunteered to contact the Northwest Michigan Recreation Snowmobile Council to see if they would be willing to host such an event. A date and location was set for Oct. 18 at the Benzie Snowbirds Clubhouse in Keleva.

The Groomer Workshop Event

In the clubhouse the general theme of the meeting was to reduce the high maintenance costs in the program. The procedure of the day would be a discussion of the items for maintenance and then move to the equipment for a hands-on discussion.

Bill Voelker was introduced, and talk turned to the many items that would help reduce those costs. He introduced Shawn Marcus and Mark Ingersoll as leaders in the groomer equipment industry, who had lots of knowledge on how preventative maintenance could and should be performed. There was a lengthy discussion about fluid levels, paying attention to computer codes in the vehicle display, being sure not to miss any grease points, and how important tools like a camera to watch the drag are. If everyone pays attention, these items can and will reduce maintenance costs on the equipment.

The group then moved to the tractor bay where a 2015 John Deere tractor was looked at and discussed as the clean air changes were very apparent. High heat in the exhaust tube to burn off bad particles was a topic. That tube should not be turned toward the cab, to prevent damage from trees, as it would MELT the plastic cab.

Greasing the necessary fittings at the best time for the grease to do the correct job was a topic that ran the gamut. Warm grease and bearings are best for the unit. For units stored outside, carrying the gun in the cab to warm the grease and using it upon return works best. Using the blade or bucket to lift the weight off the front axle will allow the grease to flow where it needs to go. Checking hoses and cylinders for leaks and bad spots before you start your groom can save you from having a breakdown out in the middle of nowhere at 2 am.

The theme then became “fix it before it breaks saves time and money.” A proposal was then made to establish a check list for each driver to go over as he or she completes the start process on each groom. It would be stored in a notebook in the Grant Sponsors file and will insure the program that the breakdown is the fault of the equipment and not the fault of the driver. These records will only be reviewed if needed, and are for the protection of the grant sponsor.

Pre-Trip Inspection:
The Cadillac Winter Promotions (CWP) groomer inspection form that was created includes a pre- and post- trip inspection list. Groomers must report on the following items both before and after they hit the trails: fuel, oil, hydraulic oil, hydraulic lines, tracks, lights, blade, lug nuts, drag lights, drag blades, drag hoses, drag bars, drag tires, chainsaw, hitch, and tire chains.

The form also includes an area where the groomer must report on each section of trail including the number of passes made on that section and remarks on that particular area of trail. When grooming is complete the groomer must call and report completion to their local Department of Natural Resources (DNR) office.

Voelkers John Deere in Lake City generously donated a new Stihl chain saw that was awarded to Bill Roush of the Benzie Snowbirds.

A Look at Some Snowmobile Program Facts

The $1.1 million dollars spent last year for maintenance would be enough to purchase an additional three to four new groomers. That does not count the many dollars spent by Grant Sponsors on their own.

The snowmobile program is short on money because of the lack of trail permit sales. We have 6,500 miles of trail in Michigan, 3,406 miles in the U.P. and 3,410 miles in the Lower Peninsula. There are 68 Grant Sponsors that groom these trails. These sponsors have 180 grooming units to keep in running condition.

Current income from trail permits, allow the purchase of only six to 10 groomer units per year. That means equipment needs to last 15 to 20 years before it can be replaced.

The current permit fee was set to provide funding of 200,000 permits sold each season.

Consider this: $43.47 of every permit sold goes into the snowmobile trail improvement fund. If 200,000 trail permits were sold, $8.7 million to run the program would be generated. In reality in 2012 only 124,287 permits were sold. At $43.47, this amounts to $5.4 million.

In the 2013 only 136,033 permits were sold. At $43.47 per permit, $5.9 million was raised to fund the snowmobile program.

In 2014 only 145,958 permits were sold. At $43.47 per permit, $6.3 million was raised for the snowmobile program.
Our 2012 and 2013 seasons were short seasons, and the snowmobile program survived.

Our 2014 season was a really good snowmobile season, and more grooming was done. All of the snowmobile program income was spent. This season the program budget is set at expenditures (costs) of $12 million. Proposed revenue (income) from trail permit sales stands at $8 million, so $4 million must be carried over to balance the program budget.

The new equipment purchased this year was provided from that $4 million -- $2.2 million for new equipment and $1.8 million carried over for next year.

Brushing and signing costs are nearly $1 million, so no extra bridge repair or trail maintenance dollars will be available. If we have a long, hard winter like we had in 2014, there will be no money for equipment next year -- unless more revenue is obtained.

Increased trail permit sales are necessary to continue our grooming program as it stands today. Everyone needs to work hard to spread the word that trail permits are the way trail grooming is funded and sales are required to keep smooth trails. ☀️

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