

RACE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

2017 Chama Chile Ski Classic & Winter Fiesta

Martin Luther King Jr. Weekend, January 14-16, 2017

The 44th Annual Chama Chile Ski Classic and Winter Fiesta was overshadowed by dire winter storm warnings but the weather never really produced the snow that everyone expected. Instead racers enjoyed a range of conditions including sunny, cloudy and snowy.

While these predictions deterred some from attending, racers who did come to the Ski Classic finished approximately 170 races over the weekend, down from 214 races finished in 2016. There were 10 different competitions including Freestyle XC Skiing, Snow Biking, Classic XC Skiing, Snowshoeing, and Combined Skiing/Snowshoeing events.

A couple of racers who dominated the weekend were Molly Hummel from Farmington and newcomer Karl Walczak from Albuquerque. Molly completed all four of the Ski Classic's most difficult events AND was the top woman racer in each race! Karl smoked the competition in both the 18K Freestyle and the 12K Classic races, and came in over 6 and 11 minutes ahead of the competition.

The racecourse had the most snow that it has had in years, and it felt like the old days with snow depths of 5 to 6 feet. Snow conditions were fast for the Freestyle races, but a little soft for the Snow Bike races on Saturday. On Sunday, warmer temperatures caused the snow conditions for the Classic Ski, Snow Shoe and Combined events to be sticky, slowing down race times and causing some skiers problems with snow caking on the bottom of their skis.

In addition to the races, there were many other events over the weekend that drew people from the region. For the second year, the Backcountry Film Festival, put on by the Winter Wildlands Alliance and the Chama Valley Outdoor Club, was shown at The Brew House, featuring backcountry skiing and snowboarding adventures in locations ranging from the Antarctic to China. This year, the Brew House also showed Warren Miller films, famed for skiing thrills and skill, throughout the weekend.

Racers and non-racers also enjoyed live music, and beer and wine tasting at the High Country Restaurant. In addition there was a snowshoe tour at the Sargents Wildlife area, and at the racecourse there were beginner to advanced ski clinics, and demo snow bikes.

The Chama Chile Ski Classic & Winter Fiesta is an event of the Rotary Club of Chama Valley in Chama, NM, a non-profit organization, with proceeds going to community and youth projects, and the Chama Chile Ski Classic event.

Freestyle Nordic Races:

Freestyle (Skate) skiers started the weekend, competing in both an 18 kilometer race and a 6 kilometer race. A total of 28 racers finished in the Freestyle races. The top winner of the 18K race crossed the finished line over ten minutes ahead of his closest contender. Karl Walczak from Albuquerque, NM (time 55:37) came in first with Clay Moseley (46 yrs) from

Los Alamos, NM, coming in second with a time of 1:07:00. Molly Hummel (age 32) from Farmington was the top female finisher with a time of 1:07:00, followed by second place finisher Elizabeth Quinley (age 29) from Albuquerque NM with a time of (1:17:36).

Steve Ilg (Age 54) from Durango, CO with a time of 24:33 and Mark Seaton (age 62) from Mosca, CO with a time of 29:22, placed first and second overall in the 6K Freestyle races. First and second female winners, were Siobhan Niklasson (age 37) from Los Alamos (time 29:40) and Amy Glaser-Carpenter, age 38, from Alamosa, CO (time 32:20).

Fat Tire Snow Bike Race:

The third annual Fat Tire Snow Bike race drew more people to the Ski Classic to try out this increasingly popular and fun way to enjoy winter! Fifteen snow bikers participated in the races and even more people tried out the demo bikes provided by Pagosa Mountain Sports from Pagosa Springs, and Gearing Up Bikes from Taos.

Racers in the 18K race found the course to be challenging with softer snow conditions. First place male Mathew Wolford (age 33), from Pagosa Springs, CO, finished with a time of 1:01:10, beating out his time from last year's race by 53 seconds. Second place overall finisher and first female finisher, Molly Hummel won with a time of 1:08:01.

Second place female and third place overall, Lauren Wolford (age 26) finished with a time of 1:13:39 and second place male, Shawn West (age 34) finished with a time of 1:20:18.

6K Snow Bike finishers, Steve Ilg, from Durango, CO, placed first with a time of 23:07 while Wyatt Watson (Age 15) from Los Alamos, NM placed second with a time of 25:31. First and second place female finishers, were Martha Iverson (Age 67) from Durango, CO with a time of 29:04 and Annie Sewell (Age 41) from Pagosa Springs, CO with a time of 34:42.

Classic Nordic Races:

Al Unser, of Indy 500 racing fame and one of Chama's local celebrities, started both the Classic Races and the Snowshoe Race with a checkered flag.

The Classic skiing races brought in 33 skiers to the finish line in the 12K Classic race and 43 skiers to the finish line in the 6K Classic race.

The top finisher in the 12K race, and winner of his second race for the weekend, was Karl Walczak with an amazing time of 44:37. No one came close to his time! Trailing far behind him was Clay Moseley with a time of 51:22, followed by Logan Ott (age 28) by just 25 seconds.

Top female finishers, both from New Mexico, were Molly Hummel from Farmington with a time of 53:36 and Elizabeth Quinley (age 29) from Albuquerque, NM placing second with a time of 55:40.

Steve Ilg placed first in the 6K Classic Race with a time of 27:28 and Wyatt Watson (age 15) from Los Alamos, NM placed second overall with a time of 32:56. Robi Mulford (age 58)

placed third overall and first female winner with her time of 38:13. Gayle Jones, from Tierra Amarilla held her second place title in the 6K Classic race with a time of 41:52.

Wooden Ski Category: It is possible to buy wooden skis new, but the majority of the wooden skis out there are from back in the day. Skiers using wooden skis are carrying on an old Nordic tradition. Some prefer wooden skis over modern skis.

Peter May from Crestone, Colorado placed first in the Wooden Ski Category with a time of 42:21 and took home his annual Chile Ristra prize. David Espinosa, (age 59) placed second with a time of 50:30.

Snowshoe and Combined Races:

First and second places in both the male and female snowshoe races were less than a minute apart. G. Anthony Kunkel (age 24) from Durango, CO placed first overall in the snowshoe race with a time of 32:56 and Logan Ott (age 28) from Los Alamos, NM placed second with a time of 33:21.

Molly Hummel, with her final first place win for the weekend, came in with a time of 44:50 and Lauren Patton (age 31) from Albuquerque placed second with a time of 45:35.

There were 6 combined racers, who raced in both the 12K classic ski race and the 6K snowshoe race. Earning the title of **Queen and King of the Mountain**, Molly Hummel won with her combined time of 1:25:08 while Logan Ott won with his time of 1:25:08.

The title of **Prince and Princess of the Mountain** went to Steve Ilg and Tammy Tiong for their winning times in the 6K Ski/6K Snowshoe Combined race. Steve's combined time was 1:21:30 and Tammy's time was 1:41:37. Congratulations to these super powered athletes for taking on the challenge of the combined races!

Rookie Race: "If you had fun, you won!"

Approximately 20 to 25 adults and kids participated in the Rookie Races with all receiving participant ribbons. Racers chose to do a 1K, 2K or 3K distance race.

Costume Contest:

This year's costume theme was "Summer Fun in the Winter Sun". There were three categories for the contest: Best Adult, Best Youth and Best Group costumes.

The best Youth Awards went to Anna and Alexandra Simakov for their great costumes, and David Espinosa from Albuquerque won Best Adult for his "Grandmother in the Winter Sun" costume. The Group award went to three young ladies, "Las Bambitas", representing the wild side of summer. Honorable mentions went to "Summer Frosties in Hawaii" better known as Conlan and Gayle Jones from Tierra Amarilla; Elaine Reagan, "The Windsurfer", Bruce McIntosh, Chama; and Sisily Fraley, Chama for her Summer Umbrella.

Special Awards:

Mary Ruth Middleton Award: These awards go to the oldest male and female snowshoe finisher, in memory of Mary Ruth Middleton, who was the oldest snowshoe finisher in the races for a couple of years. She was an inspiration to her friends and family. The awards went to Martha Iverson (age 67) from Durango, and Chuck Renk (age 66) from Farmington.

Clif Palmer Average Jane and Average Joe Awards: These awards are in honor of Clif Palmer, one of the original organizers of the Chama Chile Ski Classic back in the 1970's, who died in April 2014. He always had a joke for everyone! The award is given to the male and female racer in the 6K Classic Ski race that is in the "middle of the pack" (statistically not the "average")

The Average Jane Award went to Jean Dewart from Los Alamos with her time of 54:30 and the Average Joe Award went to Howard Watson from Los Alamos, NM with his time of 46:00.

Congratulations Jean and Howard, because being average is pretty awesome too!

Unofficial, but worth it! Racers Complete Grand Slam!

Molly Hummel from Farmington, NM dominated all races over the weekend, placing first female in the 18K Freestyle, 18K Snow Bike, 12K Classic and the 6K Snowshoe. As our Queen of the Mountain, she deserves our respect and admiration for winning in all of our most difficult races!

Steve Ilg with Wholistic Fitness, from Durango, Colorado, and the Ski Classic's Prince of the Mountain, raced in all events over the weekend. He completed the 6K Freestyle race and the 6K Snow Bike race on Saturday, and the 6K Classic/6K Snowshoe combined on Sunday. He placed first male in the 6K Freestyle, 6K Snow Bike and 6K Classic races.

Congratulations to ALL the racers in the Chama Chile Ski Classic. We'll see you again next year but this time I plan to be racing with you, instead of being your race director!

Mary Ann DeBoer, Race Director
Rotary Club of Chama Valley

Sponsors, Donors and Partners

Our list of sponsors, donors and partners continues to grow each year. We want to thank everyone who supports us financially and helps make the Chama Chile Ski Classic possible. Most of the funds from the sponsors go towards the Chama Chile Ski Classic.

We ask all race participants and Ski Classic supporters to please support our sponsors, donors and partners throughout the year. A list of our sponsors, donors and partners are on the SkiChama.com website.

Any proceeds from the Ski Classic are used by the Rotary Club to support community and youth projects in the Chama Valley area. We want to thank all of our sponsors for their

generous support of the Chama Chile Ski Classic & Winter Fiesta. In the last couple of years, the Rotary has used the Ski Classic funds to provide computers and materials for the local library, freezers and support for the Food Bank program, a computer for the Chama Fire Department, medical equipment for La Clinica del Pueblo de Rio Arriba, sports equipment for students, and more.

Without the community support, the Chama Chile Ski Classic could not happen. THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU!!!!!!!

Organizations and Individuals involved with CCSC:

We also couldn't do the races without the support of several organizations and individuals, and all our volunteers! We want to thank Clay Moseley, Dave Wykoff and the **Southwest Nordic Club** from Los Alamos, NM for their work on grooming the course and promoting the races. They are one of our most important partners in putting on the race.

We want to thank the following groups and individuals:

Jolene Jessie (SportsArtist.com) – for her wonderful Tshirt designs!

San Juan Nordic Club from the San Luis Valley in Colorado, and Mark Seaton –for help grooming the course and promoting the CCSC

Santa Fe Striders, Jim Owens, Kate and Jennifer – for timing our races. They keep our race times honest and professional.

Jon Dellios, Sophrosyne.com, Albuquerque – for organizing our ski clinics and teaching the Beginner Classic Ski class

Chama Valley Outdoor Club, Cathy Baer & Nanc Shibley – for leading our tours in the Sargent's and Spruce Hole areas.

Sanna Sevanto, Los Alamos – for teaching our Advanced Classic Skiing Techniques Clinic

Patrick Hogan – for being our photographer, year after year, and taking some of the most amazing photographs of the races, skiers, volunteers and the beautiful course.

Pagosa Mountain Sports and Gearing Up Bikes – for coming to the Ski Classic and providing bike, snowshoe and ski rentals, and Snow Bike demos.

Rob Gonzales – for hosting the BackCountry Film Festival at the Brew House, and for being one of our sponsors. **George Koinis** for being the Film Festival's "MC" and host.

Fosters Hotel, Restaurant and Saloon – for providing space for our Ski Waxing Clinic

Steve Ilg, Durango – for teaching our "Yoga for Racers" session and calling in our freestyle racers as they came down the course and through the finish line.

Peter May, Crestone – for teaching our ski wax clinic.

Conejos County Hospital Emergency Services

La Clinica del Pueblo de Rio Arriba Emergency Services

Colorado Department of Transportation

Rio Grande National Forest

Chama Valley Chamber of Commerce

John Beaver, Justin (and his kids) & Ramon Vigil, and Esteban Rendon for grooming the course

Choice Wireless: for providing WiFi during our registration at the High Country Restaurant

Michelle Giles and the High Country Restaurant & Saloon: for providing space for registration and for our awards ceremony, and for being one of our biggest sponsors. We

also thank all the staff for their hospitality and service to the Ski Classic racers, volunteers and visitors.

Jean Dewart, Los Alamos: for becoming the Ski Classic's official meteorologist and providing us with on the spot weather forecasting that calmed our fears.

Village of Chama & Rio Arriba County Lodgers' for providing us with funds to promote the Village of Chama, the Rio Chama Valley area and the Ski Classic.

Finally.....a big hug and thank you to ALL our volunteers involved with the Ski Classic. There are so many people who work behind the scenes in everything from marketing, events planning, registration, racecourse monitoring, timing, safety and emergency services, race site set-up and more. We couldn't do the Ski Classic without you!!