



Dear Fellow Alaskans:

I was born in Gilman, Colorado, a small mining community nestled on the side of Battle Mountain – elevation 9000 feet, population 300. I grew up and went to school in the nearby community of Red Cliff, where miners and lumber mill workers and their families lived. Our climate was similar to Alaska. We had an abundance of snow, mountains to hike and climb, lakes, rivers and streams to fish and swim in.

Growing up, I had many choices that could have led to a very different lifestyle. In Gilman and Red Cliff, smoking and drinking seemed to be a way of life for most adult males. In fact, when my father paid the monthly grocery bill in full and on time, he was rewarded with a carton of cigarettes. Now I know that by making the right choice about not using tobacco and alcohol I had a healthy lifestyle, which allowed me to compete in championship ski races all

over the world.

Our school, Red Cliff Union High School, housed grades one through 12. Our 1953 graduating class included a total five students. My parents and Mr. Alan Albert – my history teacher, band director, basketball and track and field coach – encouraged me to attend instead of following the family tradition of working in the mine. I took their advice and enrolled in Western State College (WSC). I fully intended to try out for the basketball team. However, before basketball season started, I noticed a group playing soccer. It was the WSC ski team. Soccer was one of many activities the team included during their pre season training program.

Sven, one of the most outstanding ski coaches in the nation, encouraged me to join the ski team and that was the beginning of a very healthy lifetime activity that I continue to enjoy today.

After graduating from college, I worked for the Forest Service for a short time before joining the Army. Fortunately, I was stationed at Fort Richardson in Anchorage. Due to my success in cross-country skiing, I was assigned to the Special Service Branch that included the newly formed Biathlon Unit. As a member of the Biathlon team, I traveled to Europe and competed in several races including the first and second World Biathlon Championships in 1958 and 1959. In 1960 I was a member of the U S Olympic Biathlon Team that competed in Squaw Valley, California.

During my years of competition, from grade school through college and Olympic races, I found that making healthy choices for both competition and everyday living are

extremely important. Proper nutrition is essential if you want your body to perform to its optimal level. Junk food doesn't supply the right nutrients or energy necessary for healthy living. Calories taken in should equal the calories spent, otherwise a weight gain or loss will occur and your energy level will begin to deteriorate. No diets, just appropriate choices of healthy foods that you will enjoy for a lifetime.

Drugs, alcohol, and tobacco, will take you down a path that can only lead to disappointment and failure to achieve what you are capable of accomplishing in life.

Make certain that you set time aside every day to enjoy some form of cardiovascular exercise. Choose activities or sports that are fun and enjoyable. It's easier to exercise if you are on a team, in a group, or committed to exercising with a partner(s). Cross-country skiing, hiking, mountain and road biking are activities that Ann, my wife, and I thoroughly enjoy together. At the end of your activity, incorporate stretching to increase or maintain range of motion, reduce injuries and increase the efficiency of the muscles. You may want to keep a log so you can look back at your progress periodically. Some form of general strength training should also be included two to three times a week. You can start with the exercises that are easily done at home, for example, push ups, crunches, and squats, or more sport specific strength work.

Nutrition and fitness are the keys to leading a longer, healthier, and more productive and enjoyable life. Make daily activity a part of your healthy lifestyle. **See you on the trails!**

Dick Mize

Olympic biathlete and Anchorage Nordic ski and biathlon pioneer.