

Alan Warren Fletcher was born on October 31st, 1931 to Paul and Mildred Fletcher.

He grew up in Littleton, Massachusetts and started skiing at age 4. Alan was a self-taught skier who learned to ski down the hill through the apple orchard in his backyard. By the time he was ten, Alan and his friends would pack down the hill by themselves and practice for hours. Alan loved the thrill of being on the edge and skiing gave him that release.

By the time he was 12 he was starting to teach the other kids and even some adults, how to ski. He found great joy in teaching new skiers and introducing them to the sport he was so passionate about. "The Northland Ski Manual" by Hannes Schneider was Alan's Bible. He would read it cover to cover, over and over again.

By the time Alan was 16, he was skiing at many of the ski resorts in NH, his favorites being Sunapee, Gunstock, Cranmore, and Wildcat. He was a "real skier" and knew how to follow the sun to find the best snow on every mountain.

As a teenager, Alan used to hunt, fish and camp in the summer on the hill which is now Nashoba Valley Ski Area. Getting water from the Nashoba Brook, that ran through the base of the property, and hiking back up to his campsite at the top of the slopes at Nashoba Hill, Alan always thought that the property would make a "great ski area".

Alan was challenged with dyslexia and was enrolled in the Fenn School in Concord, MA... "To get himself straightened out" as he would say. After graduating from High School, Alan attended Wentworth Institute from 1952-1954, for Electrical Engineering.

Alan went into the Navy at 22. He was trained as an electronic technician and stationed on a ship called the USS Howard W. Gilmore, a submarine tender stationed in Key West, Florida. They trained sub sailors for the Poseidon Class submarines that were being built in 1954-1956. During his three years in the Navy, he had plenty of time to think about what he would like to do when he got out. One thing was certain, Alan decided he wanted to build a local ski area near his hometown of Littleton, Massachusetts. When he came back home from the Navy, he tried to buy the land he camped on, which was owned by a local farmer. The farmer wouldn't sell.

After the Navy, Alan met his first wife Nancy while he was working at Lincoln Lab in Lexington, as an engineer from 1956-1957. It wasn't long before Alan got Nancy into skiing and they soon pursued Alan's passion on many of the slopes throughout New England. All the while, his passion for the sport grew with every turn. During that time, Alan bought a little ski hill in Ayer called Pingrey Hill. Unfortunately, the owner of the flat portion of adjacent land wouldn't sell... Alan said, "Well that's a hell of a note!" Frustrated with the obvious need for a base area and parking, he sold Pingrey Hill and decided to go to Boston University and graduated in 1960 with a degree in Engineering and Business Management.

Alan held a number of jobs in the electronics industry; TMI, Ampex Systems, Computer Control, Honeywell. While at Honeywell, in 1963, Alan was asked by the farmer if he still wanted to buy the Nashoba Hill land he used to camp on. Alan said "Stay right there! I'll be right over!" Pursuing his dream, Fletcher bought the land on Nashoba Hill, where he had camped as a child. "I bought the first piece, only 39 acres. I didn't have 10 cents to rub together... but I bought it on a dime," said Fletcher.

After the transaction, Alan went over to take a look at his new property and there on a rock was this man sharpening a chainsaw. Alan asked "What are you doing here?" The man said, "I used to work for the farmer ... Are You building a Ski Area?" Alan said yes. And the man said, "Well I'm cutting the trees!"

Alan hired him on the spot. Mederick Zaher was Alan's first employee and worked at Nashoba for over 50 years. Alan used to say that Midge came with the property.

In 1964, Alan hired David McPhee. David had purchased a lift ticket. Alan handed him a gas can, gave him his money back and asked David to bring it to the top of the lift. McPhee worked at Nashoba as a Mechanic and Snow Groomer until he passed in 2016.

It was a family affair from the beginning and Alan and his cousin Louis Caldwell, with whom he partnered to buy the land, opened Nashoba Valley Ski Area in 1964. Louis ran the business the first year. Alan's wife Nancy taught skiing and helped with many of the behind-the-scenes operations at Nashoba. They had 4 rope tows, a handful of ski instructors, a small base lodge with no running water, a gravel floor and outhouses for restrooms. The original base lodge was built by Peter Whitcomb. In 1966, Alan hired Peter to run the ski area and let Peter start and operate the ski rental portion of the business. At first the trails were packed by shovels. Later, Midge groomed them with a dual track skidoo, with a guy named Stanley on the back, for added weight. In the early days, they had some snow making equipment but they were not sure how to use it. Expecting the slopes to be covered in white overnight, there was a 30x20 patch of snow after the first go. With no money to buy a lot of fancy snow grooming equipment or snow making guns, they experimented, making many of their own snow grooming tools, and snow making equipment. The first year the ski area was open only 14 days, but Alan never gave up!

In 1967, lights were put up to help the snowmakers and the hill was lit up well enough for night skiing. That summer, the Wardance slope was cleared. Between 1967-1971, Alan's vision continued evolve. Buying more pieces of land from the surrounding farmers, he expanded the skiable terrain, the base lodge and much to everyone's relief, put in running water. The Outhouses were finally retired in 1971.

Nashoba Valley Ski Area started as a hobby for Alan and he stayed employed in the computer industry until 1972. Alan went to work at Nashoba Valley Ski Area "for only four months"... The rest, as they say, is history.

Alan was always trying to make the "ski experience" better for the customer and every penny went back into the business. Nothing meant more to him than seeing the smiles on skiers faces when they were learning how to ski. He always said, "I built this place for selfish reasons: I love to ski!"

In 1972, Alan bought the very first power tiller in New England and brought it to The Boston Ski Show that Fall. It was new, revolutionary technology that changed the way ski areas prepared the snow surface and everyone came by the booth to check it out. He put in more rope tows, added a T-Bar, and purchased more property. In 1975 he put in a double chair and expanded and improved the slope lighting, for night skiing. He had about 80 instructors.

As snowmaking technology became more advanced and more readily available, Alan jumped in with both feet and Nashoba Valley Ski Area was able to provide skiers with some of the best snow in New England. Even when it was not falling down into our backyards, there was snow on the slopes at Nashoba.

In early 70's, Nashoba started local schools "learn to ski programs" and introduced the six week learn to ski package program with the surrounding towns. Alan realized the value of getting them "hooked on the fun of skiing". Students needed to be in the same class, at the same time on the same day, for 6 weeks with the same instructor. After 6 weeks, they were hooked. The following year they would get a more advanced package. Alan referred to Nashoba as a "Skier Farm ". They raised skiers to progress onto much more challenging ski areas in the Northeast and throughout the United States. Alan's idea of a "Skier Farm" proved a prescient vision for the network of feeder areas and produced a large volume of new

skiers and snowboarders, each season. Over the years, thousands of skiers and snowboarders learned their skills at Nashoba Valley Ski Area and in 2012, they taught their 2 millionth lesson. As Alan would say, "Not Bad ... Pretty Good!"

During the 70's, Alan went up to Waterville Valley Ski Area to watch a Freestyle Competition and met Freestyle Legend, Wayne Wong, in the bar after the events. Wayne and Alan hit it off and became great friends. Freestyle exhibitions and Clinics with Wayne Wong became annual events at Nashoba Valley Ski Area. Wayne has an enormous following and is like the "Pied Piper of Skiing". Wayne and Alan shared a special bond until the end!

In the 80's Nashoba Valley Ski Area was one of the first in the country to allow snowboarding and has welcomed snowboarders of all ages and skill levels. They built one of the first half-pipes in New England. Over the years, different terrain parks and features were added attracting new talent and regional competitions. Offering a variety of hits for different skill levels and maintaining a gradual progression for the new skiers and riders, was important. Alan loved watching the snowboarders hit the jump in front of the base lodge. He used to call them "Charlie Browns" because of the crazy outfits they wore.

In the 70's and 80's, the men's and women's World Pro Ski Tour races, attracted many of the world's top ski racers. The Pro racers liked racing at Nashoba. The Pros could wait in the bar and restaurant and watch the competitions, until they were scheduled to race. They liked the steepness of the race course. Although Nashoba Valley Ski Area is only 246 vertical feet, it was the perfect pitch for a dual slalom race and became an annual stop on the Tour. Mostly, Alan got a kick out of the Pros and was always very generous with them, treating them to fun dinners and parties after the racing events. Phil and Steve Mahre, Gustavo Thoerni, Otto Schutti, Hank Kashua always looked forward to the "Lobster Downhill" that Alan created, where they would race their supper down a snow-covered plywood track, before putting them in the pot. According to Alan, "Those Pro Races really put Nashoba on the map. The crowds were huge, lining all the way up both sides of the course."

Ski racing was a staple at Nashoba Valley Ski Area from the very beginning. Fletcher encouraged ski racing. His three children all competed in alpine skiing and his daughter Pam Fletcher was on the US Ski Team and the 1988 Olympic Team. The Rover's USSA Program, the Buddy Werner League race team, Masters, College Teams, and High School Race Leagues (with over 500 kids) and the Adult Team Racing Program (with over 600 competitors) all trained and raced at Nashoba. Including Nashoba's training programs, Nashoba Valley Ski Area is home base to over 1,500 ski racers each season.

Alan's Birthday was on Halloween and being the prankster that he was, Halloween was always filled with Tricks and Treats. He loved to take the intercom system from Nashoba, place speakers in the bushes along the walk way to the house, and address the neighborhood kids, with a "Who Goes There" or a Turn Back... It's Not Too Late".... The delivery was always just on the edge of scary. When Haunted attractions and Hayrides started to emerge across the state, Alan drove all over to check out the different operations and in the Fall of 2000, Witch's Woods, a haunted Halloween Screampark with New England's longest Haunted Hayride, was opened. Today, Witch's Woods takes in on average over 38,000 visitors during the month of October.

In 2001, after traveling many miles for research, Fletcher added a snow-tubing park to Nashoba Valley Ski Area, which is now the largest in New England. Starting with just 6 lanes, the snow tubing park now has 100% snow making, specialized grooming machines, and offers up to 18 tubing lanes. Snow-tubing is a wildly popular winter activity for families and groups of all ages.

Over the years, Alan Fletcher and Nashoba Valley Ski Area stretched their market into the summer months. They started a weekly summer day camp for boys and girls, age 4-14 and a competitive beach

volleyball league with over 850 players who played in a weekly summer league at night, for 8 consecutive weeks. The Sunset Tiki Bar and Grill was opened in 2009 and has grown into one of the most unique outdoor venues of its kind, offering live entertainment on the beach, tropical drinks, an “Island Style” menu, beach games and corporate outings.

Freestyle pioneer Wayne Wong captured the regard in which Fletcher is held in the ski business when he described accompanying Fletcher through a recent industry trade show: “I couldn’t help but feel that I was in the company of the most highly respected ski area operator on the East coast. It was clear that everyone loved the guy and recognized the successes of Nashoba Valley Ski Area.”

Over the years, Alan Fletcher worked on numerous boards and received several awards for his contributions to the ski industry. David Ingemie, former president of SIA, admired Fletcher’s philosophy. “Alan firmly believed in valued collaborating with his competition to grow the sport of skiing and was very instrumental in helping me create the Massachusetts Ski Area’s Association.”

He was, say ski industry leaders, their leader in many ways. “Alan made us see you can make a huge mountain out of a little hill”, industry leader Michael Berry said. “He was a fearless innovator; willing to not just try but also embrace the new. It’s not just about vision; it’s about implementation.”

Fletcher was awarded the Sherman Adams Award from the National Ski Area’s Association, in honor of his substantial contributions to the sport of skiing. Humble as he was and not much for speeches, Alan replied, “Thanks, It’s been Fun!”

Alan Fletcher retired in the fall of 2011 and his Son, Al Fletcher took over the operation. In 48 years, from 1964-2012, Nashoba Valley Ski Area had over 5 ½ million visits and taught over 2 million lessons.

In 2015, Alan was awarded the “Lifetime Achievement Award” from the North American Ski Journalists’ Association for his contributions to the ski industry. He was extremely proud of this recognition as he loved how supportive the ski writers were of the sport Alan was so passionate about.

In 2018, Alan Fletcher was awarded “The Spirit of Skiing Award” from The New England Ski Museum”, by Bo Adams. The outpouring of respect and admiration from ski industry icons, friends and family for this visionary and passionate pioneer made for a very special evening. The award is presented each Fall to a ski figure who personifies the famous saying from Otto Schneibs – “Skiing is not just a sport, it’s a way of life.” Bo Adams, who presented Alan with the award, said, “If you look up the word “fun” in the dictionary, there should be a picture of Alan Fletcher!”

Alan’s passion, determination and vision brought so many people together over the years. Aside from all of the businesses Fletcher created within Nashoba Valley Ski Area, the “Nashoba Family” he built was probably his most cherished accomplishment. Countless lifelong friendships, relationships and fun memories were made at Nashoba, often times with Alan Fletcher having fun right along with them.

Alan’s second wife Dee always said that they laughed and joked together right up until the end. “Fun was Fletcher’s middle name and Alan lived his life to the fullest!”

Alan Fletcher is survived by his wife Dee Fletcher, his former wife Nancy Fletcher, Alan’s sisters Ann Simonds and Susan Beane, his three children; Pam Fletcher, Paul Fletcher and Al Fletcher, and many nieces and nephews.

For those wishing to make a memorial contribution in Alan Fletcher’s memory, please consider The New England Ski Museum, the Local Chapter’s of the The Alzheimer’s Association, and The Jimmy Fund.

www.newenglandskimuseum.org, www.dana-farmer.org/give, www.alz.org

You can also honor Fletcher's Legacy by getting out on snow or spending time with friends joking around and raising some hell.

Arrangements for a Celebration of Life will be made at a future date.

In lieu of flowers, please send gifts in memory of Alan Fletcher to:

The New England Ski Museum 135 Tramway Drive, Franconia, NH. 03580 (603)-823-7177

Dana-Farber Cancer Institute & the Jimmy Fund, P.O. Box 849168 Boston, MA. 02284 (617)-632-6099

Alzheimer's Association 309 Waverley Oaks Road, Waltham, MA. 02452 (617)-868-6718