



CITY OF LAKES

Nordic Ski FOUNDATION

YOUTH . EVENTS . TRAILS

UCARE GRANT ALLOWS FOUNDATION TO FORMALIZE NUTRITION CURRICULUM

Ever since the Foundation started youth programming activities at Bryn Mawr Elementary School (some five years ago now), the Foundation has incorporated fitness and nutrition concepts into the programming curriculum.



*Bryn Mawr Participants in the 2009 Minne-Loppet
Photo: Steve Kotvis, f/go Photography*

For the first several years, Dr. Mark Bixby, of North Memorial Hospital and the University of Minnesota Residency Program, led the charge. Dr. Bixby assigned medical residents to attend the skiing sessions and to talk to the kids about various aspects of fitness and nutrition: the heart, the lungs,

Ucare Grant continued on page 10



Start of the 2009 Minne-Loppet Photo: Steve Kotvis, f/go Photography

FOUNDATION TO EMBARK ON NEW FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN

Sometimes it seems that the more you do, the more there is to do... That has certainly been true with trail development. There are outstanding projects throughout the system. Projects include:

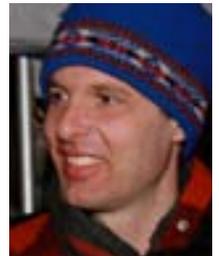
- Creating a dedicated cross country “stadium” in the area behind the Chalet (which would allow us to bring the Junior Olympics and other “big” events here);
- Adding a permanent timing/storage building in the stadium area (which would enhance the stadium and create a permanent place for high school racing);

Fundraising Projects continued on page 2,

NOTES FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

By John Munger

It has been a busy year, to say the least. Our events have grown significantly – both in participation and in complexity. We have continued to work on perfecting our trail system. And our programming has seen considerable growth;



we now serve more than 400 Minneapolis students and 100 adults each year through ten different programs. We successfully bid for the 2011 Junior Olympics and hope to build on that experience to bring other high-caliber events to the Twin Cities over the years to come. On top of all that, the City of Minneapolis asked the Foundation to take the lead in bringing bicycle sharing to Minneapolis. On a more mundane front, the Foundation has grown to more than 300 members and our accounting functions have begun to catch up with the rest of the organization.

In short, it has been a busy but very good year for the Foundation.

Director Notes continued on page 5,



Start of the 2009 Minne-Loppet and REI Tour Photos: Steve Kotvis, f/go Photography

Publication of the City of Lakes Nordic Ski Foundation - Distributed to Foundation members and friends

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Carrie Sirianni (Tri-Loppet)

Connie Baillie (Trail Loppet)

WEB TEAM

Molly Hillstrom

Mitch Vars

Willy Lee

2 Jon Swenson Tellekson

Fundraising Projects continued from front page,

- Adding about half kilometer to the permanent snowmaking loop (electricity is largely in place but we would need to run a water main to service the area);
- Fixing a few areas in the snowmaking loop to make for a better ski experience for all;
- Removing a few trees in the snowmaking loop to facilitate snowmaking and to accommodate larger events like the Junior Olympics and, hopefully, senior nationals;
- Purchasing an additional, smaller snow gun (better suited to narrower cross country trails) to allow for faster and more efficient snowmaking;
- Purchasing a Pisten Bully Panna snowcat, specifically designed for cross country applications;
- Adding a bridge over Wirth Parkway from the Erickson/Eloise Butler Trails to the Quaking Bog/Norm Oakvik Trails.
- Fixing the abrupt uphill in Cedar Lake Park;

And in the long term, we would like to upgrade the snowmaking abilities at Wirth Park by adding a pond that would allow the water to cool before it is used for snowmaking (with cooler water we can make better snow and can make the snow when air temperatures are higher).

Of course, doing this much work will be costly. Prioritizing the work for this year, we are hoping to raise \$50,000 for the following projects: stadium with timing building, additional half-kilometer of snowmaking, perfection of snowmaking loop and fixing of the hill in Cedar Lake Park. While the work will cost considerably more than this in the aggregate, we are hoping to leverage our events to match the funds raised in the community. For example, we will work to find a business sponsor or sponsors that can help with the design and material costs associated with the timing building.

There is both a short-term and long-term need here. We need to complete significant portions of this work before the snow flies this fall in order to secure the Junior Olympics bid from the United States Ski & Snowboard Association. To do that, we need to raise \$50,000 by September. In the longer term, we need to raise funds for some of the larger capital projects: the Panna and the bridge are two prime examples.

So how can you help? Obviously, we need contributions. But we also need to form a fundraising committee to orchestrate our fundraising campaign. If this is something you can help with please call Bruce Abbett at 612 374-4762.



Snow Making for the Loppet Photo: Steve Kotvis, f/go Photography

“The mission of the City of Lakes Nordic Ski Foundation is to promote and support cross country skiing in the Minneapolis area, especially among youth.”

JUNIOR OLYMPICS CREW

Kate Ellis – Co-Event Director

Reid Lutter – Chief of Competition

John O’Connell – Assistant Chief

Piotr Bednarski – Chief of Course

Tony Mommsen and Ben Kremer - Communications

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ben@kremerdesign.com

PHOTOS

Steve Kotvis, f/go Photography

Ben Kremer



2009 Rossignol Junior Loppet
Photo: Steve Kotvis, f/go Photography

JUNIOR OLYMPICS UPDATE

Last summer the Foundation put in a bid to host the 2011 Junior Olympics. First, what is the Junior Olympics? It is 450 competitors from across the country coming to Minneapolis for about ten days in March. It is another 500 plus coaches and parents coming along to help and to watch. It is four races over a six-day period. It is opening and closing ceremonies and numerous social events.

At this point the United States Ski & Snowboard Association (USSA) has given the Foundation a provisional bid – provisional because the course is not yet ready. To make the bid certain we must complete requisite work on the course by this fall. Required work includes building a “stadium” area that meets USSA’s standards and widening the trails in some locations.

The stadium is the bigger question mark. A cross country stadium is not necessarily as grandiose as it sounds. It is basically the area where the races start and finish. There is no need for bleachers or hot dog stands. However there are certain criteria that must be met in order to meet USSA requirements. For instance, the start area has to be relatively level and must be able to accommodate a “Chevron” start (up to 100 people starting together in a formation similar to several flocks of geese flying in “v” formation – one flock behind the next). The finish needs to be on a slight up-hill grade and should be wide enough to accommodate multiple skiers finishing at one time.

Initially, the thought was to use the Loppet’s start area (the Tenth Fairway) as the stadium. This would have required some earth mov-

ing to create level areas wide enough and long enough for the start and finish. But there are some obvious problems with this stadium configuration. First, virtually all of the races would start with a significant uphill (like the Loppet). Second, there were concerns that the finish would basically amount to a race to the top of the hill – with little chance to pass again after descending the Tenth Fairway hill into the Chalet/stadium area. The thought was that spectators would be deprived of an opportunity to see exciting sprint finishes. Third, and probably most important, with the Tenth Fairway increasingly used for tubing, running a cross country event would require closing the tubing operation and taking down the tow rope – not ideal by any means.

Eventually, the Junior Olympics Trail Crew (Piotr Bednarski, Matt Laue, Reid Lutter and Craig Rudd) turned their attention to other potential stadium areas. They looked at the Par-3 area (too far away from parking, buildings and the hills course that big events require), the 17th Fairway (also too far away and with the added problem of water pooling into its bowl-like area), the 18th Fairway (would have required very significant earth-moving and even then would not have been ideal without re-configuring the golf course entirely), and the 11th Fair-



2009 Rossignol Junior Loppet
Photo: Steve Kotvis, f/go Photography

way (no road access, no utilities, too far away from parking and buildings).

Finally, they settled on an area near the top of the snowboarding hill behind the Chalet. This area is accessible by road, it is not far from the Chalet, and it starts out relatively flat. But one of its primary advantages is the fact that its only current use is as a storage area (there are a few semi-trailers and some equipment stacked up in the area). Once that equipment is removed the area can be dedicated to cross country skiing. This will allow high school races to take place on the Junior Olympic course without having to shut down tubing or snowboarding. There is the potential for a truly inspiring stadium area, complete with flags waving, a timing building, storage for cones and other race para-



2009 Toko / Finn Sisu High School Sprints
Photo: Steve Kotvis, f/go Photography

phernalia, a practice area, a permanent start and finish line – in other words, a home for high school, citizen and high-level ski racing in the Metro Area.

Making the area work will require the removal of a few mature oak trees and some fairly significant grading. It will also require the elimination of the button-hook turnaround behind the Chalet (a loss that some will undoubtedly celebrate). But in the Foundation’s eyes the potential gain in having a dedicated stadium outweighs the costs. In any event, all of the various stadium configurations would have come with some significant costs...

To make this new stadium happen the Foundation will need to raise funds this summer so that work can be completed by the fall, in time to meet the USSA requirements. See the article on the fundraising campaign for more information.

NEW TRAINING GROUPS

Over the past year the Foundation has expanded from one training group – the Loppet’s Citizen Skier Group – to three, with a fourth set to start this fall. The Citizen Skier Group has morphed into the Loppet Ski Club – with a record 40+ members involved last winter. Last summer the Foundation started the Loppet Run Club – with the idea being to focus on trail running in order to prepare for the Trail Loppet. That Club was well-received with 25 members participating in the first year. This spring the Loppet Tri Club gets off the ground for the first time – with Kim Rudd and Andy Turnbull of Hoigaard’s leading the effort.

This fall the Foundation is planning to start a second ski group – this one designed more for all ability levels than the Ski Club, which is focused more on beginning to intermediate level skiers. This second group is as yet unnamed. But the thought is to meet a demand for a more Minneapolis-based training group (the group would meet at Wirth Park) that would allow skiing enthusiasts to see each other, train together and learn technique on at least a weekly basis. The initial idea would be to meet one weekday night for technique and drills, with an additional long workout day each weekend.

While the Foundation’s training group was in the works before the new Sisu organization in St. Paul started up, Sisu’s vision of starting a European style ski club in St. Paul has been a new inspiration. The idea is to have one club that sees skiers through from their youth to their older days. Working with the Youth Ski League, our existing youth programming, high school coaches and the great base of skiers in the area, the Foundation hopes to build a similar club atmosphere on the Minneapolis side of town. The Foundation and Sisu have already discussed developing a healthy and friendly competition.

Interested in joining this new group? Call Kim Rudd at (763) 229-9628 or look for information on loppet.org.



Loppet Ski Club Leader Tom Anderson skiing the Loppet
Photo: Peter Thorpe

FOUNDATION PLAYS ROLE IN BRINGING BIKE SHARING TO MINNEAPOLIS

Last summer Minneapolis Mayor R.T. Rybak had an idea: Minneapolis could be the first U.S. city to have bicycle sharing. It was a brilliant idea. The hard part was figuring out how to make the idea into reality. There was no ready-made organization equipped to take on the task. But after thinking a



Bikers take the Nice Ride system for a test ride.
Photo: Steve Kotvis, f/go Photography

while, R.T. realized that the Nordic Ski Foundation might be a good fit to get bike share going. The Foundation is Minneapolis-focused, it understands active sports, and it is concerned with global warming.

After an initial discussion with R.T., Bob Lind of the Minneapolis Department of Community Planning & Economic Development (CPED) called to set up a meeting. After that initial meeting, CPED hired the Foundation to come up with a plan for a non-profit business model for bicycle sharing and to work toward implementing that plan. The Foundation, in turn, hired Bill Dossett to lead the charge. Bill has, of course, been a long-time Loppet volunteer, he was a partner at Dorsey & Whitney Law Firm and he has a dual de-



gree in urban planning and law from the University of North Carolina – so he was the perfect person to do the work.

Bill engaged the community in analyzing potential bicycle sharing systems and put together a business plan for a non-profit bicycle sharing

model. The Foundation tapped some of its best resources to help: Mitch Vars and Molly Hillstrom built a website (www.niceridemn.com).



Concept Sketch of the Nice Ride System

com), Duffy & Partners did the branding work, and two Ski Foundation board members – Dr. Mark Bixby and Jim Van Iwaarden – sit on the board of the new organization, Nice Ride Minnesota.

At this point, Nice Ride is pushing for a May 2010 launch date – with 1,000 bikes and 75 stations cruising the streets and making Minneapolis a better place to live. For more information on the new organization or on bicycle sharing generally, visit www.niceridemn.com.



HOIGAARD'S CHALLENGE PICKS UP STEAM

Two years ago – as the Loppet’s non-skiing events began to mature – the Foundation came up with the idea to connect its three main events in a series. Hoigaard’s and Bearskin Lodge stepped up to sponsor the series and the Hoigaard’s Challenge was born. Ski the Loppet, do the Tri-Loppet and run the Trail Loppet all in the same year and receive a commemorative pin, age class recognition, or a chance to win a one-week stay at Bearskin Lodge on the Gunflint Trail.



2008 Tri-Loppet
Photo: Steve Kotvis, f/go Photography

Not many people understood the concept that year – but 2008 saw quite a breakthrough in interest in the Series. Participation numbers were way up, with 3,300 people skiing in the Loppet, 470 competing in the Tri-Loppet and 400 running the Trail Loppet. In the end, Plymouth’s Kim Rudd won for the women, Medicine Lake’s Dave Nelson won for the men and Damon Struyk won the random drawing of the people who did all three events. With record numbers participating in the 2009 Loppet, this year looks to be even better.



2009 Luminary Loppet
Photo: Steve Kotvis, f/go Photography

For more information on the Challenge, visit www.loppet.org.

Director Notes continued from front page,

EVENTS:

Any discussion of Loppet events has to start with the Loppet itself... This year’s Loppet was arguably the best ever. The numbers probably tell the story best. One year ago the Loppet had seen 50% growth over the previous year and stood at 3,300 participants. This year the Loppet saw 82% growth – with 6,000 total participants – or 275% growth over two years ago. While much of this growth can be attributed to the Luminary Loppet, the “other” Loppet events have grown as well – up almost 50% over two years ago. Each individual Loppet event had record numbers, with the notable exception of the Freestyle event – which nearly equaled its previous high of 930 – set in 2004, the second year of the Loppet.

It would be easy to write the Luminary Loppet off too easily. It is non-competitive, it is relatively inexpensive (as low as \$12 for an individual or \$30 for a family of four) and the skiing itself is flat. But the Luminary Loppet should not be taken for granted. Of all of the Loppet events, the Luminary Loppet does the best job of accomplishing the Foundation’s goals: introducing new people to skiing and to physical activity generally, giving Minnesotans a great reason to go outside in the middle of the winter, and just generally introducing the Loppet and the Foundation to more people: young and old, families, skiers, snow shoers, etc.

But with the Luminary Loppet’s growth we have seen new challenges. No longer can we throw a few hot cocoa stands out onto the lake and expect that everyone will be happy. Serving over 3,000 people on a frozen lake is no easy task. We have had to step up our planning and our precision. And while two years ago – with 400

registrants and far fewer participants (it was bitter cold that year) there were no particular safety concerns, lost skiers are now common. Fortunately, we have a great and highly organized medical director in Dr. Mark Bixby and a dedicated and talented rescue crew in the North Country Ski Patrol.

Beyond the Luminary Loppet, Loppet Saturday has grown into a huge day in its own right. The Sons of Norway Minne-Loppet now has well over 500 kids, the Rossignol Junior Loppet and Chuck & Don’s Skijoring Loppet have well over 100 participants each (both events had about 40 two years ago) and the Toko/Finn Sisu Sprints took significant strides this year with its new spectator- and skier-friendly course. Add in the Penn Ice-Cycle Loppet and the Loppet Snow sculpture Contest, along with registration for all 6,000 people, and Saturday was huge.

Most gratifying for many of us were the spectator numbers. Literally thousands of people watched the various Saturday events, with the Skijoring race and the Ice-Cycle Loppet starting the day on a high note in that regard. Of course, many of the spectators can be ascribed to the warm weather (it was 46 degrees on Loppet Saturday). But that misses the broader point: these people were not watching our events by accident. In other words, our marketing has been successful – maybe all we needed was a warm day. Hopefully the fun people had on a warm day this year will establish a tradition for the future...

It was not just Loppet weekend that saw significant growth. The Tri-Loppet and Trail Loppet became significant events in their own right, with the Tri-Loppet growing from 300 to 470 and the Trail Loppet growing from 160 to 400 participants. While largely the same events, the greater numbers mean more work, more planning and higher expectations. An example is the bike racks used for the Tri-Loppet. With 200, or even 300 people it is possible to have participants set their bikes down on the grass. With 470 that became impossible – there just is not enough room. But setting up bike racks for all of the bikes is no easy task. In itself the bike racks were not that big of a deal – but this is the type of thing that adds significantly to the planning and implementation workload for the organization and our volunteers... 5

TRAILS

2008 was another good year for the Loppet trails. After significant planning and preparation, Loppet Trails Day saw a record number of volunteers do a record amount of work. The highlights:

- Snowmaking Loop** – Bill Dossett led a crew from the Volunteers for America. They leveled ground, raked out sticks and debris, moved old farm implements, took out old fencing and generally perfected the 2.2 kilometer loop.
- New two-way trail up to Quaking Bog parking lot** – Gene Kay led a crew that removed debris and raked out a new “trail” that was originally made by the Park Board’s Forestry Crew as they removed dead and diseased trees from the corridor. With this new ascent, the old two-way trail has become a descent only – meaning a safer and better trail system.
- New Tour Cut-Off near Quaking Bog parking lot** – The Tour had always followed a rather labored course through the Bog – with a downhill turn that was too hard for many participants. This year the trail crew added a short connector from the parking lot to the Tour Cut-Off Trail. The new trail flowed well for the Loppet and made for an excellent a return trail for everyday skiing.
- Hill Bypass/Reroutes in the Quaking Bog** – Despite our best grooming efforts, there were two descents that still needed work to make the Loppet trails safe for mid-level and later wave skiers. Craig Rudd led a crew that closed the old trails and re-routed past the dangers. In the first instance, the new descent is now straight, with no turn in the middle. In the second instance (toward the end of the loop), the new trail bypasses the crown of the hill – thus scrubbing speed and eliminating the necessity to turn at speed on the way down.

Individually, these changes are not that significant. Together, they make for a safe and safe-feeling Loppet experience for all skiers – and particularly for those traversing the course in the later waves of the Loppet – when snowplowing has a tendency to create chutes and icier conditions.

2008 saw significant strides in the mapping area as well. Dave Bitner has long helped with Loppet mapping, but this year Peter



Bell from Summit Environmental stepped up as well. Together they have mapped and re-mapped the Loppet trails and we now have top-notch global positioning system maps with accurate distances and topographic features.

Perhaps the most significant element in the trails area has come in the 2.1 kilometer snowmaking loop. All of the infrastructure for the loop was (finally) completed and – after some learning experiences – the Park Board crew made snow on the entire loop for the first time. This experience was gratifying, but time- and frustration-intensive. Much of November and December were occupied with this project. Much was learned on all sides. At this point, we are going through an evaluation process to determine how best to move forward in the future.

One other thing to keep in mind on trails... The Luce Line Trail will make its way through the Back-40 area of Wirth Park this spring and summer. This will mean a wider, flatter and less wooded-feeling Back-40. However, it will not be a complete di-



2009 Loppet Start
Photo: Steve Kotvis, f/go Photography

saster. The Luce Line will not be plowed – meaning that for the Loppet we will have a significantly wider trail near the start of the

2009 Hoigaards Classic
Photo: Steve Kotvis, f/go Photography
course, not an entirely bad thing. Also, the new trail looks to be great for rollerskiing, which should be helpful for summer and fall ski training. And hopefully a new trail will mean more bicycle commuting from Golden Valley and Plymouth to downtown Minneapolis...

PROGRAMMING

Here again we have seen significant growth over the past year. One year ago, we were running four youth programs serving 300 Minneapolis students (ski programs at Bryn Mawr, Andersen, Pillsbury and Anwatin) and one adult program (the Loppet Citizen Skier Group) serving about 25 newer skiers. In the past year we have added four new youth programs (Andersen TRIs, Stewart Park TRIs, Farview Park RUNs and the Anwatin Race Team) serving about 80 students, we added an adult program (the Loppet Run Club) serving an additional 25 local runners and we have expanded the re-named Loppet Ski Club. All told, more than 470 Minneapolis area residents have learned the benefits of leading an active outdoor lifestyle through our programming over the past year.

It is not only quantity that we have improved upon, the quality of the programs has improved as well. Thanks to a grant from the Medica Foundation we added spring and summer programs at south Minneapolis’ Andersen Open School, at Stewart Park, which is immediately adjacent to Andersen, and at north Minneapolis’ Farview Park. The Andersen and Stewart Park programs were designed to prepare students for the Tri-Loppet.

Working together with the United States Biathlon Association, and with a grant from the United States Olympic Committee, we

started a new program at Anwatin Middle School: the Anwatin Race Team. This program was designed to take middle school students at Anwatin – some of whom had previously skied at Bryn Mawr and on the Anwatin Ski Team – and bring them to the next level.

JUNIOR OLYMPICS

The Foundation has not always been a perfect fit for high-end competition – with its emphasis on elite athletes and challenging trails. Instead, we have focused on developing opportunities for citizen skiers and on reaching out to newer populations of younger and older skiers alike. But when the Junior Olympics opportunity came along we decided that the marriage of youth and elite level skiing was a good combination. While Americans are generally unaware of elite level cross country skiers, the youth element at least piques their interest.



2009 High School Toko/FinnSisu Sprints Participant
Photo: Steve Kotvis, f/go Photography

As it has turned out, there is frequently a tension between the needs of elite level/USSA and citizen skiing. USSA tends to covet every hill – with no hill too steep and no challenge too much. On the citizen side we have learned the hard way that courses must be somewhat forgiving. Herringbone hills and down-hills with turns are not conducive to good citizen racing – especially when there are thousands of people involved (while the down-hills may be perfect for the first 100 “good” skiers they tend to deteriorate for the last 500 beginner- to intermediate-level skiers – exactly the skiers who do not have the skills to negotiate difficult down-hillsto begin with).

Fortunately, for the most part we have managed to come to a consensus with the USSA folks. They will get a challenging course, but

the challenge will generally be in the difficulty of the up-hills, not in overly technical down-hills that could not be negotiated during the Loppet.

Putting the course tensions aside, the Junior Olympics has helped the Foundation see the world through a different prism. For example, it took the Junior Olympics to convince us to look for a new dedicated “stadium” location (where the races start and finish). Now, we are very excited by the prospect of a dedicated stadium. Dedicated stadiums are something seen at Giant’s Ridge or Lake Placid – but not in the Twin Cities area. With a dedicated stadium, high level high school, junior, citizen and even senior national events are possible. Done right, spectating will be better and there will no longer be conflicts with tubing and snowboarding.

Making the Junior Olympics happen will take quite an organizing committee. But that is another area that is a positive. The Junior Olympics will help bring new blood into the Foundation. Already, parents and former parents of Junior Olympic athletes and former Junior Olympic athletes themselves have materialized to help with the effort. Still, there is plenty of room for more help and imagination. If interested in helping to show off the Twin Cities to skiers and families from across the country, please call Event Co-Chair Kate Ellis at 612 382-0489.

FINANCES

No discussion of the health of a non-profit would be complete without an analysis of its financial situation.

The Foundation’s financial health is like A Tale of Two Cities: it is the best of times, it is the worst of times. On the one hand, the Foundation’s current situation is very good. Obviously, the 2009 Loppet was the best ever – and for the most part that success translated into positive finances. For the first time ever there were enough participants and sponsors to get into the “profit” range for an event – where the big tickets items are paid for and each new participant brings an incremental “profit” to the Foundation.

Also positive is the general outlook for the Loppet. We have now successfully pulled off

four straight Loppets – with the last two being very well-received events. At some point, the memory of our cancellation begins to fade from people’s memories – and when the registration form comes in the mail the first thought is not a calculus of risk: “Should I register now and risk losing my money? The Loppet is uncertain to happen – I think I’ll save my money...”



2009 Loppet Finish Area Crowds
Photo: Steve Kotvis, f/go Photography

Are we at that point now? Hard to say. Maybe because it is a Minneapolis event we will always have to contend with that doubt. At a minimum, though, that doubt should be at its lowest point in years. Accordingly, it is probably fair to assume that pre-registration should be better than it has been since at least 2004 (the year before we cancelled). So with regard to having a reserve and a reserve of good will, it is the best of times...

Unfortunately, the Loppet exists in the same economy as the rest of the world. The big unknowns are registration and sponsorship. Even with a reserve of good will, registration may be down just because people do not have jobs or they are worried about the economy generally. Similarly, while our sponsors have had good experiences with our events, inevitably many of them will not have the same branding or advertising budgets they had even a year ago.

Thus, while many factors are positive, the overall outlook of the Foundation remains cautious. A bad weather year, or a combination of bad weather and reduced registration and sponsorship, and the Foundation could be in very tough straights indeed. For now, we are proceeding ahead optimistically, but we are hedging our bets as best we can so that we can emerge from next year as strong as ever...

FOUNDATION EXPANDS PROGRAMMING

Over the past year the Foundation has moved from four youth ski programs – three at elementary schools and one at Anwatin Middle School – to eight youth programs: three ski programs at elementary schools, two ski programs at Anwatin Middle School, two spring triathlon-based programs culminating in the Tri-Loppet and a middle school running program culminating in the Trail Loppet. A brief update on each program follows (find more information on the programs at loppet.org).

Bryn Mawr Skis (Bryn Mawr Elementary is located in the Bryn Mawr neighborhood and serves students from both north and south Minneapolis. Students ski on the Loppet trails, which wind through the school grounds.) – The Foundation’s Program Director, Margaret Adelsman, led this program again this year with Janet Prussman assisting. A record 130 Bryn Mawr students learned to ski this winter. More than 50 students attended the Minne-Loppet. The biggest challenge this year was the absence of Physical Education Instructor Anita Chavez. Ms. Chavez was out most of the year because of complications from shoulder surgery.



2009 Minne-Loppet Participant
Photo: Steve Kotvis, f/go Photography

Andersen Skis (Andersen Open School is located in south Minneapolis near the Midtown Greenway. Students ski in Stewart Park, immediately adjacent to the school.) – Veteran Coach Marc Beitz led the Andersen program again this year. About 70 Andersen kids learned to ski, with about 25 attending the Minne-Loppet.

Pillsbury Elementary School (Pillsbury Community School is located in northeast Minneapolis with kids skiing at adjacent Windom Park.) – About 100 Pillsbury



Pillsbury Team starting the 2009 Minne-Loppet
Photo: Steve Kotvis, f/go Photography

students learned to ski through the program this year, with 35 students attending the Minne-Loppet. With Kim Rudd coaching again, the program really came into its own. Students had a great time, skiing progressed significantly, and the teachers and administration at the school really started to embrace the program. “The students really loved the program this year,” said Mark Trumper, an English-as-a-second-language teacher at Pillsbury. “It took a year for the parents and teachers to understand what the program was all about – but now that they do they really embrace it.”

Anwatin Ski Team (Anwatin Middle School is immediately adjacent to Bryn Mawr Elementary and draws students from across the city.) About 20 Anwatin students joined the ski team this year. Led by Julie Warneke and Dan Luoma, the ski team met on Tuesdays and Thursdays throughout December, January and February – with many students competing in the Rossignol Junior Loppet.

Anwatin Race Team - See separate article on the Anwatin Race Team on page 10.

Andersen TRIs – Thanks to a 2008 grant from the Medica Foundation, the Nordic Ski Foundation started a triathlon training program last year.

Andersen middle school students learned to mountain bike (thanks to Quality Bike Products’ Trips for Kids), paddle (thanks to Hoigaard’s for providing boats), and trail run (thanks to True North Adventures for “fooling” the kids into running while on their orienteering missions). At the end of the

program they competed in the Tri-Loppet – with 13-year-old Eddie Morales completing the whole event while accompanied by volunteer John Abbett.

This year Andersen TRIs is led by U.S. Olympic Team hopeful and 2009 Loppet champion Caitlin Compton. Caitlin is in the “In the Arena” program – which provides funding for athletes like Caitlin in exchange for their community service teaching kids about the sports they love. Look for the Andersen kids to compete again this year at the Tri-Loppet. (If interested in doing some active volunteering (accompanying a student in the Tri-Loppet or on a paddling day), call Margaret Adelsman at 612 604-5332).

Anwatin TRIs – Similar to Andersen TRIs, the Anwatin Triathlon Team is meant as a follow-up to the Anwatin Biathlon Team. The hope is that students will adopt the skiing lifestyle: stay active throughout the year with multiple activities. This program is also led by Caitlin Compton.

Farview Park Runs – Again thanks to the Medica Foundation grant, the Nordic Ski Foundation was able to expose North Minneapolis youth to an active outdoor lifestyle. Brandan Ostroot and Jojo Winters led this program in conjunction with staff from Farview Park. Like the TRIs program, the kids mountain biked, paddled, did adventure runs and, at the end of the program, ran the Trail Loppet 5K. 16 year-old Vonte Copeiann even won the 19 and under division in his first race ever!

For more information on the Foundation’s youth programs or to volunteer, visit www.loppet.org or call Program Director Margaret Adelsman at 612 604-5332.



Anwatin Ski Team Racing at Theodore Wirth (Red Hats)
Photo: Ben Kremer



Margaret Adelsman leading the Bemidjithon

MEET MARGARET ADELSMAN

As of last August the Foundation has been fortunate to have Margaret Adelsman on board. Like all Foundation employees Margaret does a bit of everything. She keeps the books, she coordinates registration for the events, and she organizes and directs all of the various Foundation programming.

Since she joined us, the Foundation has had tremendous success. The Trail Loppet went from 160 to 400 participants. The Loppet went from 3,300 to 6,000 participants. Our programming has been better organized and more successful. And our books are in better order than ever before. The explanation: Margaret Adelsman... Of course, that is to be expected when someone with Margaret's qualifications (Margaret has a PhD. In molecular biology) joins the team.

But here are a few facts you may not have known about Margaret...

- Margaret finished in the top 5 in the Minnesota State Meet – before the days of skating.
- She skied at Bemidji State University (BSU), where she went to nationals every year, finishing in the top 10 on more than one occasion.
- She was an All-American three of her four years at BSU.
- She won the Minnesota Finlandia's Bemidjithon on more than one occasion.
- She finished as high as second place in the Mora Vasaloppet 35K.
- She has run the Twin Cities Marathon half a dozen times.

Margaret is also a mother of two – 14-year-old Bjorn and 11-year-old Owen. Bjorn was in eighth grade this year and skied on the Irondale Ski Team. Margaret is still working on Owen...

NEW EVENTS HELP THE LOPPET TRANSFORM FROM A RACE TO A FESTIVAL

Seven years ago the Loppet idea started as a ski race with a few bells and whistles. There was a freestyle race, a classic race (same course – just different styles) and a Tour (same course – but fewer laps) – with 750 people altogether. And then there was a sprints race and a kids event – the first Minne-Loppet – on the Friday night before the big races. That first sprints race and the Minne-Loppet had probably 35 participants total.

Today, the race-day events look largely the same: a Freestyle race, the Hoigaard's Classic and the REI Tour. Together, those events have grown considerably – with about 1,800 participating in the races and the tour this year.



2009 MYSL SuperCarnival
Photo: Peter Thorpe

But it is the Saturday events that have gone through the roof. Building on that base of 35 skiers, the Saturday events have grown into a 4,200 person affair (a 12,000% increase)... and that does not even count the spectators. This year the only Saturday event with fewer than 35 participants was the snow sculpture contest – with about 30 sculptors. Add to that the Skijoring Loppet – with 107 master-dog teams, over 100 racers in the Junior Loppet, the Ice Loppet, the Luminary Loppet – with 3,300 people, and even the Post-Luminary Party, with an estimated 1,000 people attending. And don't forget the Minne-Loppet itself – with some 550+ participants.

The great thing about this transformation from ski race to festival is that a festival is much better at helping us to accomplish our goals. A ski race is pretty much con-



2009 Post-Luminary Party
Photo: Jan Kihm

finied to ski racers... A festival says: "Come join us."

With the festival concept we get casual skiers, bikers, snow-shoers, snow lovers generally, dog people, skijorers, sculptors, artists and music lovers. And in each instance we get an opportunity to entice them to join us in skiing and in loving outdoor activity generally.

So who do we have to thank for this transformation:

- Kevin Murphy the skijoring man – who called years ago and has been leading the charge ever since.
- Bruce Cochran of the Uptown Neighborhood News – who sent an email suggesting the idea, and Pat Dowling, who made it happen.
- Rick Budde – who thought up the idea of the Luminary Loppet years ago, and Hal Galvin, A.D., and Charlie Henke who first made "luminary environments" and have led a great community of luminary-makers over the years.
- Bill Dossett – who thought up our snow sculpture contest and willed it to happen – with a little help from Mike Erickson.
- Jan Kihm – who took the Post-Luminary Party idea and made it into a reality.

The list could go on and on... But the point is, from the Foundation's perspective the best thing that ever happened to ski racing in the Twin Cities is a bunch of people with mediocre skiing credentials. Give them a shovel, or a dog, or a bike, or some water and a candle, or a heated tent – and they give you an opportunity to introduce the world to skiing. So move over Bill Koch – when they talk about the great skier revolution years from now, they'll be talking about the Loppet's gang of ice dreamers, dog lovers and ice bike racers – all of them dancing around in ski boots in a big tent on a library parking lot...



Anwatin Nordic Race Team - Photo Ben Kremer

NEW ANWATIN RACE TEAM ENJOYS SUCCESSFUL FIRST YEAR

For the past several years the City of Lakes Nordic Ski Foundation has worked together with the Anwatin Community Education Department to provide coaches and skis for the Anwatin Ski Team. This year, the Foundation received a grant from the United States Olympic Committee (USOC) to expand the Anwatin Ski Team to include dryland training and even a taste of biathlon. The Foundation partnered with Minnesota Biathlon and hired coaches Brandan Ostroot and Ben Kremer and the Anwatin Race Team was born...

Athletes roller-skied (thanks to Rollerskishop.com for their contribution of rollerskis), they skied on new ski equipment from Salomon, Atomic and One Way, and they donned new Race Team jackets provided by the Foundation. They even went to ski camp at Maplelag Resort over Christmas Break – with Maplelag providing the food, lodging and excellent trails. The skiers were exposed to biathlon at a shooting range in Elk River, with Minnesota Biathlon volunteers helping to outfit the kids with equipment and teaching them the basics of safety and shooting.

After Christmas Break the team skied in three races: a Minnesota High School League junior varsity race, a Minnesota Youth Ski League Dual Meet and the City of Lakes Junior Loppet. All of the kids saw significant improvement over their times from last year. And all of them had fun.

“The kids really loved this program,” said parent Brian Meeker, who was himself a great gymnast in his younger days. “Their participation has already made a profound impact on their lives – they are skiers now!”

This summer the Foundation is hoping to continue the Race Team – with Loppet Champion and Olympic hopeful Caitlin Compton as the coach.

Ucare Grant continued from page 1, blood, muscles, etc.

The problem was that the lessons were somewhat ad hoc and were not easily repeatable in other locations – at least not without having a physician on hand to conduct the lessons. But last year that all changed. UCare Minnesota and Normandale Community College combined on a grant that allowed the Foundation to hire nutritionist Linda Armstrong and curriculum developer Karen Brown to formalize the nutrition and fitness aspects of the ski program curriculum. Now the curriculum contains specific lesson plans, with a formal pre- and post-test to help assess the effects of the program on the students involved.

“Having the curriculum in place and the lesson plans to draw on was a big benefit,” commented Program Director Margaret Adelsman. “At Bryn Mawr we are lucky to have medical residents attending much of the time. But at our other schools the coaches need to do the nutrition lessons. Having formalized lessons was invaluable for them.”



Junior Varsity Ski Race at Theodore Wirth Photo Ben Kremer

This summer, Margaret and Marc Beitz, the long-time coach with the Foundation’s Andersen Open School program, are



Andersen TRIs program participant trying out Rollerskis - Photo Caitlin Compton

working to formalize the ski curriculum as well. This idea is a joint venture between the Foundation and the Minnesota Youth Ski League – with the idea being to put together a formal curriculum – or bag of tricks, really – that other organizations can use for their school programs. There are several elements:

- How to start the kids – identifying, sizing and learning how to put equipment on;
- Ensuring that the kids have the correct clothing;
- Teaching basic ski skills to a large group;
- What to do on days with no snow or extreme cold.

On an intuitive level, teaching ski skills may seem to be the most important element. However, over time we have found that it is the other elements that contribute most to the success or failure of our programs. Without adequate thought and preparation,

getting 30 kids outfitted with boots, bindings and poles can take up all of the class time – rendering any ski-specific lesson plan useless. Similarly, if the kids are wearing the wrong clothes – or lack a good hat and mittens – they will have a hard time concentrating on the skiing. Finally, there are always some days where skiing is just not an option.

Finding ways to “entertain” the students while still teach-

ing them some skiing skills makes coaching much more pleasant.

The plan is to complete this ski curriculum by the end of summer.

FOUNDATION NEEDS

As a growing non-profit, the Foundation continues to have unmet needs. Some of the needs include:

- **Desktop or laptop computers** for word processing and email;
- **Trailer** for storing and moving skis;
- **Video Camera** for use in teaching skiing.

Call the Loppet hotline at 612 604-5330 or send an email to info@cityoflakesloppet.com.

FOUNDATION MEMBERSHIPS

Membership runs from June 1 to May 30. To avoid a lapse in membership, please re-new your membership now. Note that all contributions to the City of Lakes Nordic Ski Foundation are tax deductible to the fullest extent allowable by law.

THANKS TO THE MEMBERS OF THE CITY OF LAKES NORDIC SKI FOUNDATION. MEMBERS INCLUDE:

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Basic Level (Voting rights at Annual Meeting, 5% discount at Finn Sisu, 10% discount on clothing at Gear West, rights to a high resolution photo file)

Individual \$25 \$ _____
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Individual \$50 \$ _____
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Trail Development \$ _____
(snowmaking at Wirth Park)
Youth Programming \$ _____
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Total Payment \$ _____

Note that donations to the Loppet Foundation are tax deductible to the fullest extent provided by law. Please make checks payable to the City of Lakes Nordic Ski Foundation. (Tax ID # is 41 175 3882)

Please return this form to:
City of Lakes Nordic Ski Foundation
P.O. Box 50304
Minneapolis, MN 55405
Call 612 604-5330 for more information.



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Have an idea for an article? Want to place an advertisement in this publication? Contact Ben Kremer (612 387-2002) or John Munger (612 604-5331).

CITY OF LAKES NORDIC SKI FOUNDATION CALENDAR

- April 27, 2009 – Loppet Tri Club started
- May 30, 2009 – Foundation membership year ends
- June 27, 2009 – Tri-Loppet
- July 6, 2009 – Loppet Run Club starts
- September 26, 2009 – Trail Loppet Half-Marathon and 5K
- October 13, 2009 – Annual Meeting
- October 24, 2009 – Loppet Trails Day
- February 6-7, 2010 – City of Lakes Loppet Event Weekend

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