



CITY OF LAKES

Nordic Ski FOUNDATION

YOUTH . EVENTS . TRAILS

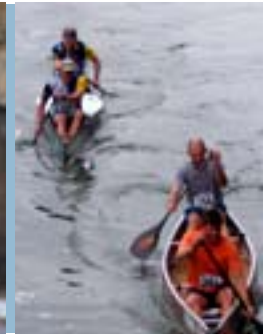


PILLSBURY AND BRYN MAWR PROGRAMS GET A DOSE OF GOOD TASTE...

This year the Pillsbury and Bryn Mawr youth programs are receiving an exciting new twist. UCare has stepped up with grant funding to support the programs. “We’re excited to play a larger role in these programs this year, said UCare Vice-President Ghita Worcester. “These programs get kids excited about fitness and lifelong activity. In an age of movies, television and video games, outdoor activity is more and more important to the health of our kids.”

UCare brings a new focus to the nutritional aspects of the programs. The idea is to teach kids about nutritional concepts in the context of something the kids are excited about: skiing. Recognizing that changes in eating

Ucare continued on page 2,



Trail-Loppet Course Crew – Gene Kay, Craig Rudd, Brad Erickson and Larry Meyers - Photo Richard Spielberg

NEWLY RE-NAMED AND EXPANDED LOPPET CHALLENGE FITNESS CLUB

With the Nordic Ski Foundation concentrating on three events ‘round-the-year rather than just the Loppet, the Foundation decided to expand the Citizen Skier Pro-

Challenge Fitness Club continued on page 4,

NOTES FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

By John Munger

2007 was a transformative year for the organization. The only new event was the Re-Loppet, but 2007 saw the organization stabilize and maximize benefits from its current slate of events. Programming expanded from a single program with 80 students learning to ski each year to four



Director Notes continued on page 6,



Andersen students at the Sons of Norway Minne-Loppet – with scarves

LOPPET 2008 PREVIEW

Loppet 2008 organizers are hoping for boring... No shortages of snow, no extreme warm or cold – just reasonable temperatures and a nice blanket of white...

That said, Loppet organizers are planning for the many contingencies that seem to make the event interesting and dramatic every year. In a low-snow situation shovelers will be out in full force. With extreme cold, the medical team will have mole skin and good advice available.

Weather aside, there are no major changes planned for this year’s events. The Mall finish and the big tent on the library parking lot worked well last year, the line-up of Saturday events will be largely unchanged, and Sunday’s events remain the same. The biggest changes are in the course, which has been adjusted to avoid some of the steeper ups and downs (see Course article for more information).

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

OFFICE & TRAIL INFORMATION

City of Lakes Nordic Ski Foundation
John Munger, Executive Director
612 604-5331 (direct)

1301 Theodore Wirth Parkway
Minneapolis, MN 55422
Phone: 612 604-5330
Email: info@cityoflakesloppet.com
Website: www.loppet.org

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

President Kate Ellis
Vice President Corey Brinkema
Treasurer Scott Gislason

OTHER DIRECTORS:

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AWARDS COORDINATOR

Jane Kay

OPERATIONS DIRECTOR

Gene Kay

REGISTRATION DIRECTOR

Rick Budde

VOLUNTEER COORDINATORS

Peg Galvin (Loppet)
Carrie Sirianni (Tri-Loppet)
Connie Baillie (Trail Loppet)

DESIGNER

Ben Kremer/Kremer Design LLC
ben@kremerdesign.com

PHOTOS

Steve Kotvis
Richard Spielberg
Ben Kremer
Bruce Adelman

Ucare continued from front,

habits are difficult without the involvement of parents, the programs have built-in opportunities for parental involvement.

Each week students will receive a recipe for a recommended “Skier’s Dinner,” “Skier’s Lunch” and “Skier’s Snack.” The idea is to introduce nutritional concepts in a non-intimidating and non-condescending manner.

Each week’s class starts with a short discussion of fitness and nutrition concepts – with a different theme each week:

- Heart – recipe using heart-healthy oils
- Lungs – Trail mix type recipe
- Blood – recipe incorporating foods with high-iron content
- Brain – emphasis on eating a nutritious breakfast with whole grains
- Bones – recommend eating yogurt or items with low-fat dairy
- Muscles – recipe using lean protein source or carbohydrates like fruits and vegetables

The approach is how to be a better skier rather than staid “this is good for you” commentary – thus: “Skier’s Snack,” “Skier’s Dinner,” and “Skier’s Lunch” recommendations.

The programs wind up with an evening banquet in the weeks after the Minne-Loppet. The Foundation will treat the students to a slide show of photographs showing their progress over the year, a presentation of graduation certificates, and UCare will provide a nutritious dinner.

“We’re hoping that by offering a first-rate banquet we will get more parents involved – which is critical to any program trying to change the eating habits of kids,” says Executive Director John Munger. “This will also be an opportunity to honor the coaches and teachers involved and to give the parents an opportunity to better understand what the program is about.”

TAKE THE HOIGAARD’S CHALLENGE

by Jerritt Johnstone

The City of Lakes Loppet and Hoigaard’s are excited to introduce the Hoigaard’s Challenge. This unique series will help you stay fit all year and take you to parts of Wirth Park and surrounding areas that you’ve never seen before.

Hoigaard’s General Manager Todd Brewer sees the partnership with the City of Lakes Loppet as a perfect opportunity. “We think the City of Lakes is a great organization and that their focus is parallel to our focus so it just seems like a natural for us to get involved.”

“The City of Lakes events are a perfect fit for us and our charge as a company in getting more people enjoying the outdoors, and for us to encourage, support and create new enthusiasts in all the outdoor sporting things we represent,” said Brewer.

Competitors who participate in all three of the City of Lakes events—The Freestyle or Hoigaard’s Classic at the Loppet, the Tri-Loppet and the Trail Loppet half-marathon—will earn a participation pin and a chance to win a one week trip for two to Bearskin Lodge—the premier resort on the Gunflint Trail.

“This is an excellent opportunity to experience the beauty and challenge of the Minneapolis area in general and Wirth Park in particular, throughout the year,” said Foundation Executive Director John Munger.

Each event offers a unique challenge and in their two years of existence the Tri-Loppet

and Trail Loppet have become popular with Loppet skiers and non-skiers alike. For year-round competitive athletes, these events are a great chance



Coach Marc Beitz demonstrating the finer points of ski technique – photo by Steve Kotvis

“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.”



Start of the Hoigaards Classic Race - Photo Steve Kotvis

to test fitness at different times of the year. For recreational athletes, the races give them an opportunity to challenge themselves and stretch their boundaries.

Stephen Bullard, who along with his wife Kari completed all of the events in 2007—plus the Pre-Loppet and Post-Loppet Tour—said he looks forward to completing the events again. “Kari and I love to do different sports. The City of Lakes events give us a chance to do that in our own backyard. One of the reasons we moved so close to Wirth is the accessibility to all the activities we love.”

To qualify for the Challenge pin competitors can sign up for the individual events or purchase the Loppet Passport which gives individuals a discount entry into all three events.

While most people are familiar with the Loppet Festival in winter, some may not be so familiar with the other two events.

TRI-LOPPET

Going into its third year the Tri-Loppet (www.tri-loppet.com) has become a must-do race for multi-sport athletes. It includes an 8k paddle, 5k trail run and 11k mountain bike, beginning with a furious paddle on Lake Calhoun.

“I have done a lot of triathlons, but this was unique and a whole lot of fun,” said Ian Harding a local orienteer, adventure racer and triathlete who completed the course last summer in the solo division.



Start of the Tri-Loppet - Photo Steve Kotvis

“The mass canoe/kayak start was great with almost 200 boats in the start area, all racing across Lake Calhoun through the canal to Lake of the Isles in one big armada. It was a blast! There was lots of jovial banter back and forth – with an occasional minor collision,” laughed Harding.

The 2008 race is set for June 28th. Competitors can race in a variety of categories: solo, relay team (one or two team members paddle, one member runs and one member bikes) or doubles (paddle together, then continue on own).

The course makes use of much of the same terrain as the ski race, so racers get to see what things look like when the ice is melted and the trees are green. It is a very different experience than gliding across the frozen lakes on skis.

TRAIL LOppet

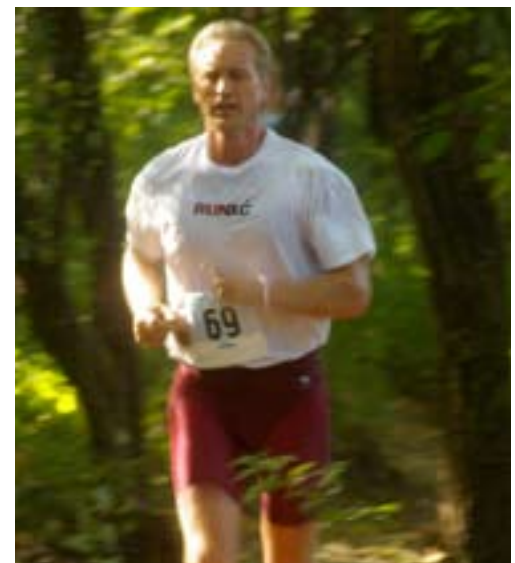
Making use of the challenging trails of Wirth Park and surrounding areas, this trail half-marathon is an event not to be missed. Scheduled for September 20th, 2008 this is the final event in the challenge. Reach the finish line and know that you’ve earned your pin. (Note – for people interested in the participation pin, there is no need to run. The Trail Loppet course is perfect for a leisurely stroll through the park...).

The course begins and ends near Wirth Beach. (Editor’s note: Next year the race will start and finish on the picnic pavilion side of the road – making for a better course and allowing for more cohesive pre-and

post-race festivities.) Participants are challenged by hills and single track running and are treated to areas of the park many people never venture to.

According to Bullard, who competes in a variety of sports, he does this race for pure enjoyment. “The course is varied and different. I know the park pretty well, and the course designers found trails I didn’t even know were there. We did it more for fun than for time. It was great.”

For people not wanting to go 13.1 miles there is a 5 k option as well. Last year, participants who found their way to the start without bringing a car were treated to a free brat and soda.



Trail-Loppet racer - Photo Steve Kotvis

SO SIGN UP

What are you waiting for? Register now for the Loppet Passport, or sign up for each race individually.

Mayor R.T. Rybak, a great supporter of the Loppet has already committed to all three events. “I’m planning on completing the Challenge next year. These are great events that highlight the best parts about Minneapolis and the Twin Cities area. What a great way to stay in shape all through the year...”

Challenge Fitness Club continued from page 1, gram as well. The new Loppet Challenge Fitness Club – or CFC, for short – is a year-round fitness group that concentrates in three areas:

- Cross country skiing and the Loppet in the winter;
- Paddling triathlons and the Tri-Loppet in the spring;
- Running and the Trail Loppet in the summer/fall.

The idea behind the Citizen Skier Program was to give newer skiers an opportunity to learn how to ski in a non-intimidating environment. Once the organization decided to make the Tri-Loppet and Trail Loppet permanent annual events, the idea of expanding the Citizen Skier Program followed.

Like cross country skiing, triathlon can be a bit intimidating to start – and that is especially true with paddling and mountain biking. Similarly, a surprising number of people expressed hesitation about running on trails. Making these activities available for everyone meant having some type of learning/training group. At the same time, Foundation members were asking for an opportunity to train together throughout the year. A year-round training/learning group seemed to be the obvious answer.

The only barrier was coaches. Fortunately, the ski and running communities are very giving of time and expertise. Andy Turnbull of Hoigaard's, an expert paddler and fitness guru as well as a skiing expert, agreed to lead the Tri-Loppet training group – CFC-Tri. Robin Brandt of the Running Room, a veteran coach and all around nice person, agreed to lead the running group – CFC-Run.

"I'm really excited to lead the running group," says Brandt. "Running on trails is something I don't have an opportunity to do with my normal training groups – and the Loppet folks are a different crowd than I am used to so it should be something new."

In fact, Brandt has enrolled in CFC-Ski and hopes to participate in the Loppet this winter. For his part, Andy Turnbull skis the Hoigaard's Classic each year, is the director

of the paddle portion of the Tri-Loppet and is an avid runner and biker as well.

Tom Anderson is back again leading the ski group – now CFC-Ski. "I love helping new skiers learn the joy of our sport," says Anderson. "The group seems to get better and better each year – and we have great facilitators that make the class easy to teach..."

To give the CFC program more of a team feeling, each CFC participant will now receive a special CFC identifier for each event. For the Loppet, that means a special CFC bib – designed and provided by Podium Wear. For the Tri-Loppet and Trail Loppet, watch for CFC race t-shirts – again designed and provided by Podium Wear.

Podium Wear founder Reid Lutter is excited with the opportunity to provide the race bibs and t-shirts. "We like being involved in the community and really support the Nordic Ski Foundation's efforts to get more folks involved in outdoor activities. The race bibs and t-shirts will really help the CFC participants feel like a team on race day – we provide uniforms like this to teams frequently and it really makes a difference. Participants and spectators alike really like knowing who is who out on the course and it really encourages cheering!"

"As president of the Ski Foundation I really hope that this idea takes off," commented Kate Ellis. "The idea is to build a stronger ski community – our vision is to have people join partially for the fitness and partially for the camaraderie and motivation..."

NEW OFFICE SPACE

The Foundation and the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board have entered into an agreement calling for the Foundation to help coordinate and promote the Park Board's cross country skiing. In exchange for the Foundation's work, the Park Board is providing the Foundation with space in the Theodore Wirth Chalet. The space was originally a manager's apartment. Last used in the late-1970's, the space was in rough shape when turned over to the Foundation. With a little "mudding," some painting, and the sanding and refinishing of the maple hardwood floors (new sponsor Haakenson Hardwood Flooring did the sanding and refinishing), the space should be in good shape soon. (As of the time of printing of this newsletter, the organization planned to move into the space at the start of December.)



"Before" photos of Wirth offices - Photos Ben Kremer



TRAIL DAY REPORT

by Bill Dossett

When the October monsoons ended, more than 75 folks showed up to lend a hand on a spectacular 2007 Trail Day. The biggest crew finished off the new trails between the Bryn Mawr School and the Eloise Butler flower garden section of the park. Other crews smoothed moguls and graded off-camber spots in the Back-40, Jar Hill, Anwatin Woods, and Cedar Lake Park. After five years of trail building, we are excited to “focus on the details”--making a great trail system even better! A special thanks to REI for sponsoring Trails Day again and to Jeff Richards for his time and expertise.



Bill Dossett

2008 TRAILS REPORT

The Nordic Ski Foundation continues to improve the City of Lakes Loppet course.

The Course crew is planning changes and improvements throughout the course this year. Overall the changes should make for a little gentler course – with fewer steep ups and downs and more steady grades. Specific changes include:

- Snowmaking Loop (2 – 4 kilometers in the Loppet course): About 1 kilometer of new trail will be added and existing trails will be re-routed. The resulting new trail will have fewer steep ups and downs but will still have some significant – but more gradual – grades. The most notable resulting change is the elimination of “Widowmaker” Hill (a very steep grade), which has been replaced by a longer, more gradual climb. In addition to the fact that the new grade is more “skiable,” it eliminates the worst bottleneck on the Loppet course. Widowmaker was steep and narrow – the new grade is more gradual and wider.
- Glenwood Crossing (about 16 kilometers into the Loppet course): The

Loppet course will cross Glenwood to the east of the picnic pavilion rather than at the parking lot – meaning that the steep and off-camber up-hill and down-hill surrounding the picnic pavilion will be eliminated.



Skiers negotiating a downhill during the Pre-Loppet. Photo by Steve Kotvis

- Down-hill heading toward Bryn Mawr Elementary and Anwatin school grounds (about 17 kilometers into Loppet course): This has always been one of the most challenging down-hills in the Loppet course – with two left-hand turns happening while skiers still held their speed from the previous down-hill. The trail has now been adjusted so that the first left-hand turn comes only after skiers slow down by going up a small hill. This change should make this section of trail less “exhilarating.”
- Elimination of gulch when leaving school grounds (about 17.5 kilometers into Loppet course): At the request of Anita Chavez, physical education instructor at Bryn Mawr Elementary, the trail was re-routed to avoid a v-shaped gulch. While the gulch was not usually a problem for adults, the students at Bryn Mawr and Anwatin had a difficult time negotiating a short steep hill upon returning to the school grounds.
- Steep and narrow trail after leaving school grounds (about 18 kilometers into Loppet course): This steep and narrow up-hill has been eliminated and replaced with a more rolling trail that runs parallel to the existing trail. The other benefit to this change is that the steep and narrow trail is also a walking trail. The new trail segment will allow for separate walking and ski trails. (Note that this change came as part of the recent Trail Overlay Process).

FOUNDATION STARTS YOUTH PROGRAM AT PILLSBURY COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Thanks to the efforts of Mark Trumper and a grant from UCare Minnesota, this year the Foundation is starting a youth program at Pillsbury Community School. Pillsbury lies in Northeast Minneapolis – right on Windom Park. The program at Pillsbury marks the fourth school that the Foundation has a program in.

The idea for the program came from Mark Trumper – a Loppet skier, Foundation member, former Minnesota Youth Ski League coach, and English-as-a-second-language teacher at Pillsbury. Mark saw that the Foundation was running programs at other Minneapolis Public Schools and thought that Pillsbury would make a great venue for a program as well. “Windom Park is right here, we have great kids and physical education is suffering from cuts – so I thought we would be a perfect site for a program,” said Trumper. “I sent an email to the Foundation and that started the ball rolling...”



Andersen School skiers learning the basics

The next step was funding; that is where UCare came in. UCare had provided funding for the Foundation’s Bryn Mawr Program in the past. This year, when the Foundation approached UCare with the idea of supporting the Pillsbury program, UCare stepped up with open arms. “Making nutrition and fitness fun for Minneapolis children fits well with our mission of being innovative health care partners,” said Ghita Worcester, UCare’s Senior Vice President for Public Affairs and Marketing. “And since Pillsbury Elementary is virtually in UCare’s backyard, this partnership has an added energy among our employees.”

Director Notes continued from front page,

programs (with the possibility of a fifth) with over 300 students learning the benefits of fitness and nutrition each year. And the organization completed its fund drive for snowmaking – which hopefully means a guaranteed 2+ kilometers of skiing this winter and into the future.

Events - The emergence of the Tri- and Trail Loppet – The big lesson from five years of organizing the Loppet is that winter is not reliable – and it is probably becoming less reliable with each passing year. But with our fantastic crew of motivated and talented volunteers, we can counter the reliability problem to an extent:

- We can comb the trails in the fall so that we can ski on only a few inches of snow.
- We can shovel snow onto the trail (as we have done for each of the past four years).
- We can distribute mole-skin and change the course, as necessary, to accommodate extreme cold.
- We can make snow for the Uptown finish portion of the trail and, if necessary, we can move the entire course onto the Chain of Lakes.

But in the end the organization cannot completely counteract the effects of unreliable winter weather. Reliable winter weather would likely mean much bigger numbers for the Loppet. Consider our registration numbers (for consistency sake, comparing freestyle, classic and tour registrations only) over the years:

- Year 1 (on the lakes) – 850 registrations (we had to close registration because of the unexpected demand)
- Year 2 (full course – but minus 4 degrees) – 1,550 registrations
- Year 3 (Sunday events moved to Chain



Carey Sirianni and her dog Mia after the Skijoring Loppet - photo Steve Kotvis



Bill Dossett, Criag Rudd and another volunteer making the 2007 Loppet happen - photo Steve Kotvis

of Lakes and then cancelled due to warm weather) – 1,600 registrations

- Year 4 (shoveled a course, but icy conditions) – 1,200 registrations
- Year 5 (no snow until mid-January, shoveled in a course, minus 11 degrees) – 1,300 registrations

These numbers can be interpreted in multiple ways, but the big story is this: there is or was a real demand for a major Twin Cities cross country ski event, but once folks learn the lesson that the event is not reliable, they become much more cautious about registering.

Which begs the question – how can our organization survive without reliable winters? The answer may lie in our summers and our falls. One of the lessons that cross country skiers have to offer the broader community is that there are outdoor opportunities available throughout the year – and something other than just running around Lake Harriet...

The Tri- and Trail Loppet help teach that lesson. They also provide reliable (read: no shoveling required) events that happen every year. For the organization this means more predictable registration and an ability to sell sponsorships year-round. The organization has begun to see some dividends from its investment in these events. The events themselves – especially the Tri-Loppet – are now cash-positive, at least when administrative costs (salaries, insurance, office space, etc.) are not factored in.

If it was strictly cash from registration, the events would probably not be worthwhile to do. But the events have at least three other benefits:

- They help recruit new skiers by intro-

ducing active people to our organization;

- The events help even out the organization's cash flow; and, maybe most important,
- The events appear to be good for sponsorship.

These benefits are intertwined. Take the new Hoigaard's Challenge. The original idea with the Challenge was to encourage people who were strictly runners, strictly paddlers, or strictly interested in the Tri-Loppet to consider skiing the Loppet. From this idea two additional positives arose. First, Hoigaard's stepped up to be the title sponsor of the Challenge. (See Jerritt Johnstone's article on the Challenge). Other sponsors – including Caribou Coffee and Podium Wear – have upgraded to sponsor the Challenge as well, while new sponsors like Whole Foods and Bearskin Lodge were initially attracted to the Challenge idea. Second, the Challenge idea spawned an expansion of the Citizen Skier Program that the Foundation has been running for the past few years. (See Programming section, below, for details).

PROGRAMMING.

Like our events, the Foundation's youth and adult programming expanded considerably this year. One year ago the Foundation was just starting its second program – the Anwatin Ski Team. But late in the fall of last year Allina Hospitals and Clinics provided a grant to start a new program at Andersen Elementary School.

This year, UCare Minnesota has provided a grant to start a new program at Pillsbury Community School and to expand the current program at Bryn Mawr Elementary. (See article on Bryn Mawr and Pillsbury Programs). The Medica Foundation, a long-time Loppet sponsor, is also considering the possi-



Andersen School skiers learning the basics

bility of providing a grant that would expand the Foundation's youth programming into a year-round venture. Students would ski in the winter and then do the Minne-Loppet or Junior Loppet, paddle, mountain bike and trail run in the spring and then do the Tri-Loppet, and run and/or play ultimate Frisbee in the summer in preparation for the 5 kilometer run at the Trail Loppet. In this way, the students would not only learn how to ski – they would learn the lifestyle that goes along with skiing: a lifetime of year-round activity, always looking forward to the next season.

Similar to the expanded youth programming, the Citizen Skier Program is expanding into a year-round venture. The new program – named the Loppet Challenge Fitness Club, or CFC, for short – will have three distinct sections: CFC-Ski, CFC-Tri and CFC-Run. The plan is to teach skiers how to paddle and mountain bike, bikers how to ski, tri-athletes how to run trails, etc.

TRAILS.

The organization has been working on trail development from its beginning. Initially, the idea was to eliminate a few off-camber sections and encourage consistent grooming. As the years have gone by, the organization's ambitions have grown. Now the organization works with the Park Board to maintain a 25 kilometer trail system in Theodore Wirth Park, which connects with an additional 7 kilometers on the Chain of Lakes and in Cedar Lake Park.

After the first year of the Loppet, it was obvious that snowmaking had to happen at Wirth as well. This past year has seen several accomplishments on that front. First, last winter saw snowmaking for cross country skiing at Wirth for the first time. Second, we raised over \$120,000 toward snowmaking and, together with the Park Board's matching funds, were able to upgrade the system to 2+ kilometers with buried water pipes, upgraded electricity, two high-pressure booster pumps and four snow-guns (the infrastructure for these improvements was going in when this newsletter went to press).

There is still a long ways to go in order to reach a first-class snowmaking system like Three Rivers Park District has in place at Elm Creek Reserve. Fortunately, the Foundation has convinced the Park Board to make capi-



Sons of Norway Minne-Loppet skiers line up at the start

tal funding for the Wirth Winter Recreation Area into a priority when approaching the legislature. With any luck – and some lobbying – Theodore Wirth Park should be in line for a more extensive system of snowmaking over the next several years.

OVERALL HEALTH OF THE FOUNDATION.

The organization's perseverance appears to be paying off. Most of the 2007 sponsors are back, several new sponsors have signed on (Subaru, Whole Foods, and American Family Insurance are chief among them) and the organization's youth programming is helping kids and attracting grant interest from healthcare organizations around the State. Because the past few Loppet ski events have seen fewer registrations, the funding associated with these new sponsorships and grants is critical to allowing the organization to catch up on past obligations.

But to actually get ahead for the first time, the organization needs to see a good year of registration. The key to that is snow. All of the other elements are in place – Fallon and Mike Gibbs put together excellent posters, the brochures went out early, and the organization has tried to maintain good relations with past skiers. If it would only snow early and stick around we could see the registrations we need to build a financial cushion for the first time; without early and consistent snow we will likely see only the minimal "hard core skiers" registration of the past few years.

So, the big picture for the organization is a good one. With a little snow this year, the organization could be on track for real stability. Without snow, we will likely be scraping by yet again. But either way, we will continue in our efforts to reach out to

Minneapolis kids, to encourage both kids and adults to lead an active lifestyle, to work with the Park Board on better ski trails, and to hone our events.

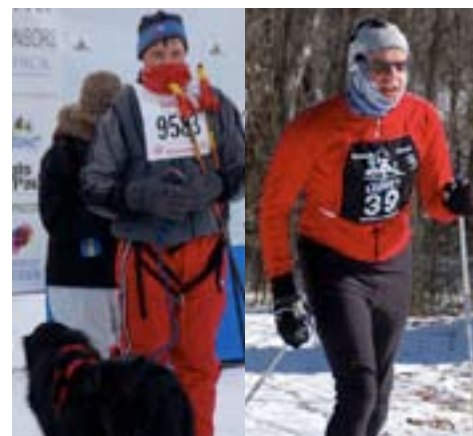
LOPPET PHOTOS

Looking for photos from the 2007 City of Lakes Tri- or Trail Loppet? Steve Kotvis (Official Foundation photographer) captured most skiers (see the Loppet's websites – www.tri-loppet.com, www.trail-loppet.com or www.cityoflakesloppet.com – for links to those pictures). High resolution versions of Steve's pictures are free to Foundation members (one picture for basic members, three for Premium members).

FOUNDATION BOARD WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS

Long-time Loppet skiers and supporters Jim Van Iwaarden and Mark Raderstorf joined the Foundation's Board of Directors this fall. Jim and Mark are both successful entrepreneurs. Jim runs Van Iwaarden Associates – an actuarial consulting firm. Mark is founder and president of Behavioral Medical Interventions, a national disability management and human resources consulting firm.

"We are really pleased to have Jim and Mark on the board," says President Kate Ellis. "They really care about the organization, their businesses have sponsored the organization in the past, and they have both provided very helpful counsel over the years – Jim in the accounting area and Mark with sponsorship and fundraising."



Mark Raderstorf and dog after the 2007 Skijoring Loppet - Photo Steve Kotvis

Jim Van Iwaarden skiing the 2007 Hoigaard's Classic - Photo Steve Kotvis

TRI-LOPPET II A SUCCESS

Nearly 200 boats and approximately 350 participants took part in the second annual City of Lakes Tri-Loppet. Athletes ranged from eight-year-old Renae Anderson to sixty-five-year-old Darby Nelson. Both Renae and Darby won giant chocolate bars for their efforts. A near-perfect day greeted the competitors – overcast and seventy degrees during the race and then sunny and warmer as the day went on.



Darby Nelson skiing the 2007 Loppet Freestyle event Loppet - Photo Steve Kotvis

For the second year in a row Foundation Vice-President Corey Brinkema was the overall winner – overtaking Solo athlete Brett Arenz during the run and the Gear West Girls in the mountain bike sections of the course. Like last year, Brinkema used a balanced effort to gain his victory; Brinkema and his partner, Loppet Operations Director Gene Kay, had the fifth boat out of the water, and Corey had the third-fastest running split, and fifth-fastest biking split.



Corey Brinkema and Gene Kay on the water - Photo Steve Kotvis

“The course flowed well and was a lot of fun,” said Brinkema. “Kate [Ellis – Foundation President and Gear West Girls’ team member] was tough to catch on the bike. She used a cyclocross bike so she was fast on the paved sections – but I was probably a bit faster on the off-road sections.”

Like last year, the Gear West Girls had an amazing day; they were the third fastest boat, had the 18th-fastest split in the run (1st among women) and 11th-fastest split in the bike (again, first among women). The only woman that beat the Girls in any portion of the event was 55 year old Bonnie Peterson of the Killer Ps, who combined with her husband Steve on the second-fastest paddling time overall.

Arenz ended up third, with the fourth-fastest paddle, seventeenth-fastest run and ninth-fastest bike.

Nearly all the race categories saw dramatic finishes as well...



The Killer Ps - Photo Steve Kotvis

FAMILY RELAY

The grand-prize Maplelag trip went to The Killer Ps – Bonnie, Steve, Emily and Ryan Peterson. While the whole family was strong, the Ps were led by their older generation. 55-year-old Bonnie and 58-year-old Steve had a paddling time of 39:12 – good for first family relay team and second overall in the paddling leg of the race. While youngsters Emily and Ryan ran and biked strong, the second-place family team, Two-and-a-Half-Athletes – actually made up a little over a minute on them during the run and bike. But the ten minute lead that Mom and Dad provided was more than enough to hold onto first for the Ps.

The battle for third place in the Family category was a close one – with Team Novacheck establishing an early 3-minute lead in the paddle and then holding off a hard run and bike by the Jones/Shefflebline team to finish 43 seconds in front of the St. Paulites.

GENERAL RELAY

Men’s Division: The Water Dogs held off Team Woof, thanks mostly to strider Ben Janke who, with a time of 21:26, had the second-fastest running split of the day overall – 4 seconds behind the talented Owen Hanley.

Mixed Division: Byrne It Up beat out a team led by Christina Cowman after Stephanie Bayr’s strong team (they were well-ahead after the run) failed to complete the bike.

Women’s Division: The Gear West Girls beat In Search of Crab Cakes to take the women’s division for the second year in a row.

DOUBLES

This is the event’s biggest category. While it sounds like a team category, participants compete individually. However, to do well participants must work together with their partner on the paddle.

WOMEN’S DIVISION:

Balance was the most critical element of doing well in this category. Molly Moilanen (who along with her partner volunteered after the event) took the crown with a fourth place paddle, third place run and fourth place bike. Maria Schilling finished second, edging out St. Paul’s Tracy Sides by 44 seconds, despite Sides’ furious bike ride (Sides’ finished with the fastest female Doubles split time and the second-fastest female bike split overall). Remarkably, Sides came from 13th after the paddle, more than 7 minutes behind 16-year-old Hannah Sanborn, to claim third place – making up all of the ground in the bike.

MEN’S DIVISION:

With his overall victory, Corey Brinkema easily took the Doubles crown. The battle for second place was more interesting. Paddling partners and Loppet Course Chiefs Craig Rudd and Bill Dossett stayed together the entire race. Their goal was to beat Brinkema, but they knew they would need to beat him soundly in the paddle to do so because Corey is an extremely tough runner. “We want to come out of the water at least one minute in front of [Brinkema and Kay],” said Rudd before the race.

Crossing Lake Calhoun they were in excellent position, but as they entered the channel between Calhoun and Isles their boat over-turned and, in an instant, they had fallen



Bill Dosset and Craig Rudd - Photo Steve Kotvis

behind. With a time of 42:39 they were 1:16 behind Brinkema and Kay coming out of the water. They lost another 1:40 on Kay in the run and entered the bike almost 3 minutes back (Brinkema was now forgotten – Kay was their new target).

Rudd and Dossett gradually made up ground on Kay – who was biking by himself. After crossing the railroad tracks on the last long stretch of asphalt Rudd spotted Kay up ahead. “We’ve got to catch him before we get to the single track,” he told Dossett (knowing the trail well ended up serving Dossett and Rudd well). Working together, Dossett and Rudd caught and passed Kay before crossing under Highway 55.

“They came past me like a freight train,” Kay lamented. “I managed to latch on, but there was no more opportunity to pass after that...”

In the end, Dossett and Rudd crossed together, with Dossett officially in second (his foot must have been a little in front of Rudd’s) and Kay just a second behind.

SOLO WOMEN’S DIVISION

This was a battle of younger against older and wiser – with older and wiser holding off younger in the end. 57-year-old Georgia Nothdurft of Eyota, Minnesota used a balance attack, finishing second, third and second in the paddle, run and bike, respectively. 23-year-old Samantha Dwinnell of Faribault was first in both the run and the bike, but ended up 23 seconds behind Nothdurft, who was almost five minutes faster than Dwinnell in the paddle. Third place went to Lisa Ralston of Minneapolis, who finished with a third, fifth and third in the paddle, run and bike.

SOLO MEN’S DIVISION

Some of the area’s best paddlers competed in the men’s solo division. Like last year, Todd Ellison had the first boat out of the water – finishing the paddle with a blistering time of 37:56. Despite Ellison’s fast paddle, Brett Arenz used a consistent pace to outlast him for the overall men’s division crown.

But the real race came for third place. Foundation member and snowmaking contributor Ken Valley started out slow in the paddle – finishing in ninth place, almost twelve minutes behind Ellison and five minutes behind eventual fourth-place finisher Yuyudhan Hoppe. But 50-year-old Valley used a blistering 23:38 run and 28:52 mountain bike to overtake Hoppe at the end. Valley’s final time of 1:42:09 was one second faster than Hoppe’s 1:42:10.

CORPORATE TEAM

This is a category with room for growth. Loppet sponsor Unity Business Networks used a first place finish across the board (paddle, run and bike) to take the crown... “We were ready for all comers,” said team Captain Chris Hannah afterwards.

TRAIL LOPPET II A SUCCESS

Over 160 runners gathered for the second annual City of Lakes Trail Day. It was a beautiful fall day in Theodore Wirth Park and, despite a storm that had taken numerous large trees down on the Thursday before the event, the run went off without any big hitches.

“It was great,” said Loppet volunteer Mike Moulsoff, the fourth place male finisher in the Half-Marathon. “Parts of the course felt like the Superior Hiking Trail... I really enjoyed it.”

Hilary Patzer and Loppet volunteer Zach Handler won the overall crowns in the 5K event. “With the hills, this was a great way to get in running shape,” said Patzer, who was planning to run the Twin Cities Marathon 10 Miler two weeks later.

For Handler, the run was a welcome change of pace from his busy residency schedule.

Handler lives just a few hundred meters from the course, in the Willard Hay neighborhood of Minneapolis. Handler took an early lead but missed a turn at one point, allowing his college ski teammate Owen Hanley to catch up. In the end, though, Handler was able to pull away again, and ended up winning in a time of 21:51, 13 seconds in front of Hanley.

In the half-marathon, Tony Koconda won in 1:24:02, while on the women’s side new Pillsbury Skis coach Kim Rudd edged Eva Taylor by 41 seconds – 1:37:16 to 1:37:57. Rudd commented that it was a great course and “one of the most fun events that [she] had ever done.”



Kim Rudd and Diana Munger were first and second in the 35-39 age division - Photo Steve Kotvis

“About half-way through people started to tell me that there was a woman close behind – so I had to keep moving and in the end I was able to hold her off.”

For her part, Taylor thought she might be the first woman until about half way through the race. “People started telling me I was in second place, and then I saw Kim a ways ahead. But she was running strong and I could not quite catch her.”

The Trail Loppet also served as the introduction for the new City of Lakes Challenge – the Loppet, the Tri-Loppet and the Trail Loppet. Participate in all three in one year and receive a commemorative pin and a chance to win a one-week trip to Bearskin Lodge on the Gunflint Trail. The Challenge officially kicks off in 2008 – but to raise awareness of the Challenge, Bearskin gave a free one week stay to a randomly selected person who had done all three events. This year’s winner was Tom Peterson of Maplewood. Peterson is excited about the opportunity to travel to Bearskin – and he is proud of his accomplishment: completing all three Loppet events in one year.



Mike Erickson - Photo Steve Kotvis

MIKE ERICKSON: GOING LONG BEFORE START

by Jerritt Johnstone

It has been said hundreds of times: The City of Lakes Loppet could not happen without the effort of the volunteers." It's said so often because it's true, and Mike Erickson is one of the many people who give more than is expected to make the City of Lakes Loppet such an extraordinary event.

While his title is Finish Line Coordinator, that doesn't begin to scratch the surface of the work this real estate agent and mortgage broker does for all of the COLL events. In addition to his official role, Mike is handed all of those other duties no one else seems to want to do.

He stores COLL equipment in his basement in St. Louis Park. Because he owns a truck he is asked to make numerous trips to the home of another volunteer in St. Bonifacious, where much of the race equipment is stored between events. And when it's time to shovel, you can bet Mike will be there.

When something unexpected comes up in the weeks leading up to the event, his is often the first number dialed by Race Director John Munger. "I know that no matter what I ask, Mike will say, 'yes' and then follow through with the task. I can move on to the next concern," said Munger.

His is the on-call truck on the weekend of the event, hauling everything from skis and race course equipment to hot water for the brave volunteers out on Lake of the Isles. If there is work being done along the course before, during or after the event Mike's truck will likely be close by.

When asked why he volunteers for the events

he said, "Because the people who help at the event and participate are great people. I like seeing people happy and when we are able to pull off the event in a tough snow year, I see the happiness in their faces."

He also enjoys the camaraderie and the access volunteering provides. "I get to drive my truck and snowmobiles in the park while we are working, and that's a lot of fun."

Like many of the COLL participants and volunteers, Mike's involvement doesn't end after the race in February. He got a call on the morning of the Tri-Loppet that the rental boats needed to be hauled to the start area. Even though he planned to race in the event, he hopped in his truck and got the boats to the start area in time for all of the participants who were renting a boat.

For Mike and his wife Heidi, the COLL has become a family affair. "Heidi volunteers at the Loppet and the Tri-Loppet, and she ran in the Trail Loppet this year while I grilled brats."

This year Mike is stepping up financially to support the Loppet as well. His company, Cornerstone Real Estate Sales and Home Loans will sponsor the upcoming race. "I just thought it was time to up the ante by supporting the race with cash as well as time." (Editor's Note: List or buy a home through Mike Erickson and he will donate \$1000 to the Nordic ski foundation, finance through him and he will donate \$300. Call Mike at 612 701-2508 for more information.)

So as the race draws near this year, it is a safe bet that Mike will have his truck ready and his cell-phone handy. But as for shoveling duties this year he has this to say, "We will make the race happen no matter what the conditions. But I really think we are going to have good snow this year. We're due."



2007 Loppet at Theodore Wirth

FOUNDATION NEEDS

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

- Desktop computers for word processing and email;
- A couch for a sitting room in the new office space;
- Awards Co-Chair. To make the Loppet events as rich as possible for the participants, creative awards people are necessary. Join the Awards Team. If interested, call Jane Kay at 763 473-5416.
- Storage space. Currently the organization stores most of its equipment and "stuff" in St. Bonifacious. The space works well except that it is too far away. A single stall in a garage would probably suffice.
- Study. We are convinced that teaching youth to cross country ski is strongly associated with better academic performance as well as better fitness, nutrition and a greater appreciation for the outdoors. But we have nothing but anecdotal evidence to support these assertions. We are seeking a student to lead a study of the kids who have learned to ski through our programs versus the kids who did not learn to ski (kids were chosen at random for the ski program). Know a student who might be interested? Have them call or email John Munger at 612 604-5331 or director@cityoflakesloppet.com.
- Cellular Phone and Communications. The organization spends considerable money each year on cell phone use and is expecting increased costs for information services. This would be a good opportunity for a communications provider to procure marketing through sponsorship of the Loppet.
- Painting. Over the next few months the organization will have need for painters to spruce up our office space. Time to help? Please call the Loppet Hotline: 612 604-5330 or send an email to info@cityoflakesloppet.com.

IMPROVING RELATIONS WITH BRYN MAWR NEIGHBORHOOD...

Thanks to the helpful suggestions of Carrie Sirianni – and a lot of hard work and follow-through – the Foundation has finally started down the road to reconciliation with the folks in Bryn Mawr.

Carrie first became involved with the Loppet last winter when she and her dog participated in the Skijoring Loppet. She enjoyed the event and subsequently volunteered to help with the Tri-Loppet. But she did not just volunteer – she requested a position of responsibility and ultimately took the position of Volunteer Coordinator, arguably the most important role for any event. (She did a fantastic job – but that is another story).

Being outspoken, Carrie's first thought related to the organization's tensions with the neighborhood. Carrie lives in Bryn Mawr and serves on the Board of the Neighborhood Association. "I think you should come to the neighborhood association meeting," she told John Munger. "The problem is mostly that people in the neighborhood do not feel like they are in the loop..."

Carrie's advice spawned a summer of activity for John. First, he attended the neighborhood association meeting. He told them all about the work of the recently completed Trail Overlay Committee. The Neighborhood Association had two representatives on the Committee, but, as it turned out, the Association still felt out of the loop. "They really seemed to appreciate receiving good information," said Munger. "So much so that we organized a trail hike so that folks would have an opportunity to see things for themselves."

Not surprisingly, only a few individuals showed up for the hike. But the neighborhood folks appreciated the opportunity – and the nay-sayers could no longer complain that they were out of the loop. After returning to the neighborhood association, one last hike was organized. There were no takers...

While some might say that these hikes and information-dispensing should fall to the Park Board, the Foundation is just happy to have the controversy behind it for now. "The trouble started when we relied upon the Park Board to disseminate information in the first place," said Munger. "It's not that



2007 REI Tour skiers -
Photo Hubert Bonnet

the Park Board did a bad job informing folks, but some of the Bryn Mawr neighbors feel a special bond with that part of the park. Mostly, they just want to feel like someone cares about their point of view. And in the end, the neighbors have had some very good ideas – improvements for both the ski trails and the neighborhood... Regardless of what the Park Board does notice-wise, the Foundation will always make a special effort to provide feedback in the future."

FOUNDATION MEMBERSHIPS

Your membership in the Foundation helps keep skiing thriving in the Twin Cities. The Foundation has ambitious goals: year-round events that highlight the outdoor opportunities available in the area, a 2.2 kilometer snowmaking loop with lights at Theodore Wirth Park, expanded youth programming (the Foundation now runs programs at four Minneapolis schools: Bryn Mawr, Anwatin, Andersen Open School and Pillsbury Community School), and improved Loppet trails for better daily skiing and, of course, for the Loppet itself. Like last year, members are entitled to special benefits, including discounts at local ski shops, voting rights at the Foundation's annual meeting, and periodic newsletters like this one.

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP REGISTRATION JUNE 1, 2007 – MAY 30, 2008

Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____
State: _____ Zip code: _____
Phone: _____
Email: _____
Club/affiliation: _____
Birthdate: _____

MEMBERSHIP FEE

Basic Level (Voting rights at annual meeting, 5% discount at Finn Sisu, 10% discount at Gear West)

Individual \$25 \$ _____
Family \$40 \$ _____

Premium Level (Voting rights at annual meeting, 5% discount at Finn Sisu, 10% discount at Gear West, stone grind and thermo-bag treatment at Hoigaard's (\$70 value for only \$19.95))

Individual \$50 \$ _____
Family \$70 \$ _____
Business \$100 \$ _____

DONATE TO THE LOPPET FOUNDATION

Trail Development \$ _____
(snowmaking at Wirth Park)

Youth Programming \$ _____

General \$ _____

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.



City of Lakes Nordic Ski Foundation
1301 Theodore Wirth Parkway
Minneapolis, MN 55422
612 604-5330
612 604-5338 (fax)
www.loppet.org
info@cityoflakesloppet.com



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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

- February 2-3, 2008 – City of Lakes Loppet Event Weekend
- April 7, 2008 – CFC-Tri program starts
- May 30, 2008 – Foundation membership year ends
- June 28, 2008 – Tri-Loppet
- July 7, 2008 – CFC-Run program starts
- September 20, 2008 – Trail Loppet Half-Marathon and 5K

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