



CITY OF LAKES

Nordic Ski FOUNDATION

YOUTH . EVENTS . TRAILS

PARK BOARD BONDING REQUEST COULD MEAN BIG THINGS FOR WIRTH PARK

The Minnesota State Legislature goes through its bonding process in even years. Because 2010 is an even year, the State legislature will go through its bonding process this winter. Earlier this year the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board prioritized a request for \$3 million to fund infrastructure improvements for the Theodore Wirth Winter Recreation Area.

The Park Board's request would fund significant improvements, including:

- A pond for cooling water (the current system draws warm (about 59 degrees) water directly from a well – meaning that snow cannot be made unless the temperature is below 20 degrees or so);
- Additional hydrants and electrical stations;
- Permanent high pressure submersible pumps (the current system operates with two mobile booster pumps);
- An updated lighting system;
- A new building – the Wirth Winter Recreation Center – which would sit on top of the hill behind the Chalet.

While there is certainly no guarantee of success, the Foundation and its supporters have made it much more likely that the legislature will look favorably on this project. The legislature likes to see its funding leverage non-legislative dollars. In this case, private individuals together with the Foundation have contributed some \$300,000 in cash, the City of Minneapolis contributed \$200,000 (with significant encouragement



State Senate Bonding Committee visits
Theodore Wirth – Dec. 2, 2009

Photo: Steve Kotvis, f/go Photography



Hap & Judy Lutter at the official ribbon cutting for the Hap & Judy Trails

HAP & JUDY LUTTER TRAILS

The City of Lakes Nordic Ski Foundation is excited to announce the opening of the new Hap & Judy Lutter Trails – the trails that will be used for the 2011 Junior Olympics.

The Hap and Judy Lutter Trails make up the main competition loop at Theodore Wirth Park. The Hap Trail includes the new dedicated cross country staging area and the now-2.5 kilometer snowmaking and lighted loop. The Judy Loop is made up of the advanced trails on the north side of the park (adjacent to the Courage Center and to Golden Valley Road). (See page 7 for a map

NOTES FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

By John Munger

2009 was a good year for the Foundation. We have continued to grow as an organization. We have expanded and diversified our programming – with five elementary programs (as opposed to three last year), a new Trips for Kids program, a new adult training group (Loppet Ski Club – Fall/Winter), and a new fund for aspiring young skiers (the City of Lakes Athlete Development Fund). All of the Foundation's events have grown this year, the Foundation has officially secured the bid for the 2011 Junior Olympics, and the organization is now setting its sights on other big events – like Senior Nationals, the World Masters Championships and the State Meet – in the years to come. As for trails, Theodore Wirth Park now boasts one of the only true cross country skiing stadiums in the state, the newly named Hap & Judy Lutter Trails are national class, and,



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Lutter Trails continued from front page, that shows the trails).

How did the trails become the Hap & Judy Trails? Hap and Judy Lutter have been long-time proponents of active sports in the Twin Cities area. Both were marathon runners. Hap was an orthopedic surgeon who had a special focus on young people with brittle bone disease. Judy founded

and ran the Melpomene Institute, which advocates for girls and women to lead active, healthy lifestyles. Both Hap and Judy turned 70 years old this year.

At the behest of Hap and Judy's friends and family, and to honor Hap and Judy's lifetime of achievement in active living, the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board re-named the trails in honor of Hap and Judy on Friday, October 2, 2009. It was a moving ceremony. The occasion was a surprise for Hap and Judy. Hap has been battling cancer and had grown significantly sicker in the week before the event. In a show of great courage he mustered his energy for the event and showed up with a big smile.

For his part, Mayor R.T. Rybak proclaimed it "Hap and Judy Lutter Day" in the City of Minneapolis.

Two days later, on Marathon Sunday, Hap Lutter passed away in his home, surrounded by his family. The Foundation feels honored to have played a role in the life of this great man.

With the support of Hap and Judy's friends and family, the Foundation has been able to make great advances in the trail system. The Foundation has:

- built a dedicated "stadium" area for cross country skiing;
- added an extra half-kilometer to the trail system;
- upgraded the trails on the snowmaking loop to meet international standards;
- purchased a new "Kitty Cat" snow gun – specially



Hap & Judy Lutter tour the Hap & Judy Trails with Reid Lutter driving

designed for making snow on narrow trails instead of wide, open areas;

- built a new staircase from the Chalet up to the new stadium area.

In an ongoing process, the Foundation has been working to raise the funds necessary to fully pay for the new electrical/water station that was added this fall. This new station will allow the Park Board to make snow on the last half-kilometer of the Hap Loop: making for a 2.5 kilometer loop with full snowmaking capability. (See the list of Hap & Judy Trail supporters towards the back of this newsletter.) Interested in helping with the Hap and Judy project? Send a check or make a donation on-line at loppet.org.

"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."

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Anwatin Skiers trying out Rollerskiing
Photo: Margaret Adelsman

MAKING CONNECTIONS WITH ELEMENTARY STUDENTS – EVALUATING FOUNDATION PROGRAMS

By Margaret Adelsman

Over the years the Foundation has developed a (seemingly) successful formula for motivating students on the benefits of fitness and nutrition: get the students excited about skiing and then use that excitement as motivation for them to learn about fitness and nutrition. Two years ago the Foundation started using recipe cards provided by UCare. These recipe cards had titles like “Skier’s Lunch,” “Skier’s Snack,” “Skier’s Dinner,” etc. The idea was to leverage the students’ excitement for skiing. Each week there is another theme – one week will be the heart, another lungs, another week bones, etc. By way of example, in the heart week, the coach leads a short discussion on the importance of the heart for skiing. The students might be asked to take their pulse while resting and again after exercising. Then the coach talks about foods that are good for the heart and follows that up by distributing the week’s recipe cards – which might include a low-fat dinner.

Coaches of the various elementary programs have provided numerous examples of success stories at their schools, but these measurements have previously been in rather basic terms and fairly subjective. For example, it is easy to note the increase in ability level and in overall enthusiasm for skiing by a given student. It is also clear that gaining ability in skiing is directly correlated to self-esteem and pride in personal accomplishment. However, it is much more challenging to measure the actual change in knowledge and perceptions over the course of a ski season. Even more challenging is understanding the overall effect an experience such as this may have on a young person as they move forward into teenage years and adulthood.

In order to start measuring these effects, last year’s Bryn Mawr and Pillsbury ski students were assessed for factual knowledge with a brief pre-test and post-test as part of the pilot curriculum program. Student knowledge increased by approximately 20% as assessed by this simple test. The students also completed a brief survey at the end of the season, providing feedback on how they felt about skiing, exercise, and nutrition. Some of the students’ responses were striking – and included strategies for succeeding in the future:

- Eating more fruits and vegetables
 - Eating less sugar
 - Eating less fat
- And comments like:
- “Now I look at the labels of packaged food to see what’s in it” or
 - “Me and my mom ski all the time now.”

Carrying out the pilot testing analysis illustrated several potential pitfalls – or areas where the data could be inaccurate. For example, the way a given test is administered can be confusing to some students and result in their test data being excluded from the results. For the 2009-10 season, we are excited to be collaborating with an experienced evaluator, Maree Hampton. This year, Maree will assist with implementing an updated pre- and post-test at Bryn Mawr and Loring Elementary. While the revised pre- and post-test will also be used in the other school programs, Maree will expand the assessment at Bryn Mawr and Loring, assessing student knowledge and perceptions of the ski program through a number of observational and interactive methods. As a result, the Foundation should be able to capture a more complete picture of the program’s impact at the schools in which Maree will be working.



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



Maree Hampton paddling in the Tri-Loppet
Photo: Steve Kotvis, f/go Photography

Foundation Programs
continued on page 12,



2009 Trail Loppet
Photo: Ben Kremer

TRI- AND TRAIL LOPPETS CONTINUE TO GROW

Just two short years ago the Nordic Ski Foundation had almost all of its eggs in one very precarious basket. The 2007 Loppet featured arctic temperatures (as an example, it was minus-11 at the start of the Hoigaard's Classic) and the Foundation's summer events included the 300-person Tri-Loppet and 160-person Trail Loppet.

Since then, all three events have grown considerably. It is easy to dwell on the Loppet, as its growth is the most dramatic (1,800 – 3,300 – 6,000+ over the past three years). But the Tri- and Trail Loppet events have grown substantially as well. The Tri-Loppet is now a 500+ person event and the Trail Loppet is up around 470 registrations.



Carl Schaffer paddling in
the Tri-Loppet
Photo: Steve Kotvis,
f/go Photography

While the numbers for these events will probably never rival the Loppet itself, they provide some stability and predictability for the organization. A lightning storm could cause a delay (that has happened before with the Tri-Loppet), but it is difficult to imagine a circumstance that would cause a complete cancellation. On the other hand, the Loppet itself is (knock on wood) likely to cancel one of these years. When that happens, the Tri- and Trail Loppets will provide a bit of a safety valve. Sponsors can get

some solace out of recognition at these other events. And these other events will provide some opportunity to make up for lost registration revenue.

So how did the Tri- and Trail Loppets become so popular? First, they occupy a unique niche in the crowded event marketplace: they involve dirt in the city. It is difficult to find any other city events that take place on dirt. It takes a little longer to acquaint the world with dirt-based events, but once they have an opportunity to compare a dirt-based to an asphalt-based event, many people are hooked. And that leads to the second element – perseverance. “Weird” events like these do not hit their stride the first or even second or third time they are run – but after a few years friends tell friends and the word spreads.

This analysis squares with the survey results. Take the Tri-Loppet. People love the event (70% of survey participants rated the event a 5 out of 5) once they do it – but a significant plurality (35%) learned about the event through a friend – not a brochure or other more typical advertising. This comment from one of the participants is telling:

“I’ve done a lot of your typical triathlons over the years so I was looking for something different and this was certainly it. This was a great race and the fact that I could smile through all the pain of biking and running those hills proves it’s a very well run [event]. My friends couldn’t do it this year, but I’ll make sure they do this race next year.”

The hope is that people like this, once they try the Tri-Loppet, will become hooked on our events. And that provides another primary reason to spend time on the Tri- and Trail Loppet. Those events give us an opportunity to introduce the Loppet and skiing to people who previously thought of themselves as runners, mountain bikers or paddlers...

Finally, at least in theory our trilogy of events is a good recruiting tool for volunteers. Enthusiasts who are primarily skiers – and can’t or won’t volunteer for the Loppet because they are themselves busy skiing – can volunteer with the Tri-Loppet or Trail Loppet – thus helping the cause in their own way. Larry Myers and Brad Erickson are a good example. They help at the Loppet, but they are busy skiing and coaching Wayzata High School’s 100+ person ski team during the winter, so they concentrate their volunteer efforts on the Trail Loppet. For the past several years they have taken on the very difficult challenge of setting the Trail Loppet course (both are regular volunteers through the year as well). “Everyone needs to do their part,” says Myers. “I don’t understand why there aren’t thousands of members...”

Carl Schaffer provides another example like this. Carl is a huge paddler and president of the Minnesota Canoe Association. He sees the Tri-Loppet as a great event for paddling – recruiting hundreds of otherwise runners and bikers into the paddling fold. After the Tri-Loppet

he called with this message: “The Tri-Loppet is great for paddling – put me to work however you want for the Trail Loppet.” (Carl may have lived to regret those words: he was also a primary course marker for the Trail Loppet and is now part of the Loppet Finish Line organizing team).

HOIGAARD’S CHALLENGE SEES FIGHT TO THE FINISH

The Hoigaard’s Challenge is the Nordic Ski Foundation’s trilogy of major events – people who participate in the Loppet, Tri-Loppet and Trail Loppet in the same year receive a participation pin, age class recognition, and a chance to win a trip to Bearskin Lodge on the Gunflint Trail. 2009 marked the second full year of the Challenge. With 50% more people completing the long events version (freestyle or classic at the Loppet, full Tri-Loppet and half-marathon at the Trail Loppet) of the Challenge in 2009 (23 people) than 2008 (14), the Challenge seems to be growing in popularity.

This year’s event saw fierce competition for the women’s overall championship – with 2008 champion Kim Rudd battling Duluth’s Elaine Nelson for the crown. Demonstrating that athletes must be well-rounded to win the Challenge crown, Rudd and Nelson did not really emerge as contenders until after the Tri-Loppet. After the Loppet, Kim stood in eighth place – 12 minutes behind super-star Caitlin Compton, with Elaine another 4 minutes back, in 15th place.

But the Tri-Loppet was different. Both Kim and Elaine partnered with their husbands for the paddling. The Rudds (who are, essentially, Loppet royalty – with Craig leading the Course crew and Kim one of the Head Coaches of the new Loppet Ski Club) finished as one of the top canoes in a time of 43:26. The Nelsons were just 45 seconds back in 44:11. Heading into the Tri-Loppet run, Kim’s Challenge lead (a combination of the Loppet and the first leg of the Tri-Loppet) was almost 5 minutes. But Elaine was not finished – and managed to put on over 2 minutes on Kim in the run – finishing in a blistering time of 23:48.

Going into the biking section, Kim still held the Over-



all Challenge lead but her cushion had shrunk to less than 3 minutes, and she stood nearly 2 minutes behind Elaine in the Tri-Loppet. Fortunately for Kim she is a fearless mountain biker. She pedaled hard early on and began to reel in the less experienced Elaine (Elaine was an elite runner at the University of Minnesota before starting to train seriously for biking, skiing, and paddling after meeting her husband Grant only a few years ago).

Sure enough, biking with husband Craig – who managed to catch up to Kim after a slower run – Kim passed Elaine and finished the bike in 30:51 – the fastest time for any woman, nearly 3 minutes ahead of her closest competition! With Elaine finishing in a respectable 34:00 flat, Rudd’s lead in the overall Challenge standings now stood at almost 6 minutes.

But the last leg was the Trail Loppet – where Elaine’s years as a serious runner were bound to make a difference. Still, Kim was the defending champion in the Trail Loppet. She knew the course and is strong in the hills. When the big day finally arrived, both Elaine and Kim were ready for the race. In the end, Elaine drove hard and finished second overall – 5 minutes behind Nichole Porath of Finn Sisu – and more than 7 minutes ahead of Kim, who finished 5th overall. So after more than five hours of competition through the year, Elaine ended up just over one minute in front of Kim.



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



2009 Trail Loppet
Photo: Ben Kremer

Showing the balance necessary to win the Challenge, Elaine did not win any of the individual events – but her overall speed was enough to beat out Kim in the end.

There was less drama on the men’s side this year. While there was a packed field after the Loppet, the Tri-Loppet quickly whittled the numbers down. Of the first 22 skiers in the Challenge standings post-Loppet, only three of them survived to compete in the Tri-Loppet. Evan Pengelly took his second-place finish in the Hoigaard’s Classic (which translated

thanks to many generous contributions, we were able to expand the snowmaking loop (now the Hap Loop) to 2.5 kilometers with generally continuous lights. Moreover, we are working to secure bonding funds from the state legislature so that: (1) Wirth's snowmaking infrastructure will be world class as well, and (2) we can add a building – a Winter Recreation Center.

Organizationally, the Foundation is in its best shape ever. We recently hired John Swain as a Head Coach and Event Coordinator. With Margaret Adelsman and Scott Gislason leading the way, our accounting system has grown more sophisticated, and we are continuing to try to build a cushion against our next snowless year (perish the thought...). In short, the Foundation seems to be on a significant upward trajectory. Keep in mind, however, that one bad (snowless and/or warm) winter could throw the Foundation back to square one...

PROGRAMMING.

This is probably the most amorphous but, arguably, also the most important area for the Foundation. Why amorphous? Because the programming label applies to so many different things:

- Elementary programs designed to teach young people the basics of skiing – with a healthy dose of general fitness and nutrition as well;
- Middle school ski programs (see the Anwatin Ski Team);
- Middle school summer programs (see Anwatin Tris, Anwatin Trail Running, Andersen Tris, and Folwell Runs program);

Anwatin Skiers
Photo: Margaret Adelsman



- Adult summer programs (see Loppet Tri Club and Loppet Run Club);
- Adult lease program (whereby Foundation leases ski equipment to first time skiers to eliminate the equipment barrier to entry);
- Adult ski programs (see Loppet Ski Club – Introductory and Loppet Ski Club – Fall/Winter);
- Elite skier development funding (see the new City of Lakes Athlete Development Fund);
- Summer camp idea (ran a pilot day this past summer – idea being to expose 9 – 13 year old kids to skiing culture in a one week camp structure);
- Trips for Kids (new program whereby middle school and high school age youth will have an opportunity to mountain bike on area trails)

So what unites these various programs? Behind all of them is a single idea: spread the culture of cross country skiing in the Minneapolis area. Yes, it is true – many of these programs do not directly involve cross country skiing. But it is not so much cross country skiing itself that is important – it is the culture of skiing and skiers that the Foundation is trying to spread. The culture of skiing includes a whole variety of non-skiing activities and concepts. At their most basic, these concepts are encapsulated by a few theorems:

1. Skiers are undaunted by the weather – there is always some activity to do outside;
2. Those who venture outdoors each day are generally happier than those who do not;
3. The more one can experience woods and trees and dirt, the better the outdoor experience;
4. To fully enjoy outdoor activities it is important to eat right and stay active throughout the year;

With these theorems in mind, the Foundation's programming makes more sense. Whether skiing, ski training, mountain biking or trail running, the Foundation's programming efforts are designed to reinforce the basic theorems espoused by skiers, encapsulated as: no matter the weather, enjoy outdoor activity throughout the year.

For whatever reason, these concepts seem to have some appeal beyond the core ski community and, I believe, answer a basic need in the larger community. With computers and televisions and a little paranoia about the dangers of the outdoors, people just do not get outside enough anymore.

Our supporters seem to recognize this. UCare, Medica and the Pohlada Family Foundation are all sponsoring youth programs at the elementary level. With this support we were able to expand from three to five programs and, for the first time, all of our elementary level programs have funding from outside the organization. Thanks to some great coaches, the Loppet Ski Club has expanded from 40+ members last year to more than 90 this year.

We are also expecting great things from our new Trips for Kids program as well as our new summer camp concept. Our brief experiences with both was positive this past summer – with glowing reports back from the Trips for Kids participants (“This is awesome” was the general refrain) and, with regard to the camp concept, both the participants (“can’t wait to do the full camp next year”) and the parents (“I was shocked to find that after taking the camp for a day my son actually wanted to go rollerskiing this fall...” or “My daughter is really interested in learning how to wax her skis now.”).

Over the years, some of our supporters have lobbied for building a “European style ski club.” I am still not certain what exactly this means – but my sense is that, thanks to people like Marc Beitz, Kim Rudd and Tom Anderson (the head coaches of our Loppet Ski Club), we are moving in that direction. The hope is that over the years to come, as we continue to expand our programming, we bring young skiers up through the “club” and support them as they compete nationally and internationally. And maybe, if we are really good, one of those young skiers will help change the complexion of the sport – expanding skiing to populations and cultures that have heretofore never experienced skiing.

EVENTS.

As noted in the separate article about the Tri-Loppet and Trail Loppet, the core Loppet events are growing and prospering. The bigger news as far as events go concerns the Junior Olympics. When the Foundation started down the road with the Junior Olympics (JOs) there was probably some trepidation. Unlike the Foundation’s normal, more participatory events, the JOs are exclusive and elite-level in nature. The fear was that the JOs would somehow overwhelm the organization, infecting it with a penchant for more and more elitism.

As it has turned out, the JOs does not seem to take away from the rest of the organization. Instead, it adds another dimension and, most important, it has generated a whole new group of talented and dedicated volunteers. Examples of new blood for the organization include Mindy Benton, who now chairs the non-race (social) events committee for the JOs, Mike Bono and John O’Connell, who will be running the new Mayor’s Challenge event, Reid Lutter, the Chief of Competition for the JOs and a font of knowledge on the inner-workings of the United States Ski Association (USSA), and Jake Priester, the Race Secretary for the JOs, among many others.



Mindy Benton and her daughter at the 2009 Loppet
Photo: Peter Thorpe

The JOs has also played a significant role in our request for bonding funds from the legislature. First, the Junior Olympics bid helped the Park Board realize that the trails at Wirth Park are now first rate – and this led them to prioritize the bonding request in the first place. Second, bringing 1,000 people to town for 10 days will have a significant impact on the local economy – almost \$3 million according to our in-house analysis. Figures like that can garner the attention of the legislators – helping to convince them that this project has a state-wide impact (a requirement for bonding funds).

The hope is that the JOs will be the first, but not the last, of the national and international events that the Foundation hosts in the years to come. The Foundation has already had discussions with USSA about the possibility of hosting Senior Nationals, and with the American Cross Country Association (AXC) about the possibility of hosting World Masters. While it would not due to have the organization’s mission swallowed up by these more elite level events, we have realized that these events can, themselves, help promote and support skiing in the Minneapolis area because they help in recruiting talented volunteers and they will generate significant media attention for cross country skiing in the area.

TRAILS.

Not since the Loppet trails first connected North Minneapolis with the Chain of Lakes have the trails in Wirth Park advanced so dramatically in one year. Improvements include:

- A new stadium area;
- New staircase from Wirth Chalet to new stadium



Junior Olympic
Trail System

- area;
- Widened and graded trails in the major competition area (the Hap & Judy Lutter Trails);
- Continuous lights on the Hap (snowmaking) Loop;
- Expansion of the snow-making loop to 2.5 kilometers in length;
- New signage on the competition loop;
- Addition of a new and better uphill section in the

Director Notes continue
on next page,

Back-40 area (where the ski trail diverges from the new Luce Line Trail);

- Grading of the last big downhill in the Quaking Bog Area;
- Fixing (added dirt and re-grading) of the abrupt uphill in the Cedar Lake Park section.

These improvements will have dramatic effects on skiing at Wirth Park.

First, races at Wirth will no longer have to compete with sledding, tubing, walking or other random uses. Cross country skiing will have its own dedicated area – meaning a better start and finish, easier timing, less congestion and a higher quality experience. This is no small thing. Arguably, there is really no other ski area in the Twin Cities area that has a true dedicated stadium area that is adequately wide, flat and not shared with other activities. While the jury is out until the snow flies, it is likely that the Loppet will start in the new stadium area as well. This will be a significant improvement in several ways:

- The Start Team will be able to set up days in advance – without having to compete with the increasingly problematic tubing operation on the tenth fairway (where the Loppet has always started in the past).
- There is no heart-wrenching hill to bunch up skiers right off of the start.
- Skiers will not pass in front of the Chalet – but instead will ski behind the Chalet in order to go over the Wirth Parkway bridge. This re-routing helps avoid the side hills, bare spots, narrow trails and asphalt in front of the Chalet. It also helps reduce problems with people walking on the trails.
- Spectators will be able to see the Loppet skiers at least four times without moving more than a few hundred meters.

Second, every day skiing on the Hap Loop (formerly the snowmaking loop) will significantly im-



New “stadium” area and potential Loppet start area - looking west - Photo: Ben Kremer



New “stadium” area and potential Loppet start area - looking north - Photo: Margaret Adelsman

prove. 2.5 kilometers is, of course, just plain better than 2 kilometers. In addition, the Park Board and the Foundation have worked together to add multiple lights and to put most of those lights on timers – meaning that the Hap Loop should be a pleasant and reliable ski in the evenings. The Hap Loop should also feel a bit less technically challenging for newer skiers. While still difficult and fun, the trail is wider and the worst turn from last year has been re-routed. Three alternate routes are available for serious competitions and should provide for very challenging skiing for those interested. Finally, with the trail now passing directly behind the maintenance building, the idea is that the Pisten Bully never has to leave the snow – meaning less dirt on the trails...

Third, the dedicated stadium will form one of the best learning areas in the Twin Cities. The stadium is wide and flat and lighted. There are no competing activities

– it should be all skiing all the time. The hope is that the already-big Minnesota Youth Ski League (MYSL) club at Wirth will thrive even more.

Fourth, the Loppet should be a better experience all around. The first 8 kilometers of trails (the Hap and Judy Trails together with the Par-3 and Back-40 trails) are generally wider and better designed, which should mean less congestion and more enjoyable skiing right from the start

of the race. Two notable problem areas further on in the course – especially the formerly steep and unwieldy Cedar Lake Park hill – have been fixed and should now be genuinely pleasant skiing experiences.

How did the Foundation manage to accomplish all this in one year? There are three primary answers: trust, money, and Matt Laue. Over the years, each little change that the Foundation wanted to make was a negotiation. “Take that sapling out for the trail? Hmm. Have to think about that... I don’t know...” This year, whether we wore them down or because the Park Board realized that we were working with them and could be trusted not to do crazy things, or maybe through a combination of both, we finally received a green light to do what needed to be done – especially in the golf course areas.

Of course, it is one thing to have a green light, it is quite another to have the resources to accomplish anything. That is where the Hap & Judy Trail Fund came in. The generous contributions of more than \$40,000 by the friends and family of Hap & Judy were the primary reason that all of this work was accomplished. (See separate article on Hap & Judy Trails). Pair that with individual contributions from some of our most dedicated supporters and a little bit of ingenuity (e.g., the Foundation was able to bring in more than 3,000 yards of free dirt by asking for fill at construction sites around town), and the Foundation was able to accomplish most of what it wanted to accomplish this year.

The last leg here is Matt Laue. Matt has been a technical delegate for the Loppet in the past, he is a former world class skier (Nordic Combined), he knows the design of ski trails inside and out, and, fortuitously, Matt is himself a contractor (his business is named Landscape Plus). When finally freed to go to work, Matt took his bulldozer and made the trails beautiful. Beautiful banking, graded perfectly, seeded, and prepped for the season. In short, Matt made the trails world class and we all owe him a debt of gratitude!

(Note: The trail work has been substantial and most of it has been paid for. But the mandate for perfect trails has not yet been fully funded. In other words, the Foundation is still accepting contributions to the trail fund.)

A word of caution is necessary before too much enthusiasm seeps into this discussion. The one problem that continues to plague the Foundation is a lack of control. We can build all the beautiful trails in the world and make the snowmaking loop perfect, but unless the Park Board and the Park Board maintenance crew turn the lights on, make the snow and groom the trails, the final product is not necessarily what we want. Fortunately, at this point the Park Board is telling us that cross country is the first priority for snowmaking and, over the past few years the crew has become better and better at grooming. Still, one of our long-term goals is to run the winter recreation area as a concession for the Park Board. Until the Foundation reaches that goal, there is always going to be a fair amount of uncertainty...

FOUNDATION GENERALLY.

As an organization, the Foundation is in a much different place than it has ever been before. Four years ago the Foundation was a virtual organization. We had a web presence, we had great volunteers, some sponsors, and some supporters, but there was no office, virtually no money in the bank, there was a part-time employee or two, and, really, one big focus: the Loppet. Today, the Foundation has two full time employees and one $\frac{3}{4}$ time employee, along with numerous seasonal coaches and workers. We have office space, three storage locations, three major events and other special events on the horizon, a little financial cushion that could probably get us through at least one bad winter, we teach hundreds of Minneapolis kids and adults about skiing and ski culture, we have a growing database of supporters, and a record of positive accomplishments. Yet it feels like as an organization we are just scratching the surface...

Over time it has been difficult to see ahead. Building a ski community in a major metropolitan area here in the United States is somewhat uncharted territory. For the first time, though, it feels like it is possible to see forward to what maturity might look like... It might look like this: a Foundation that acts as the central nervous system for a vibrant ski club. The club will, of course, continue to host big events. It will teach young

people how to ski. But over time it may operate out of a building that would act as a training center and a home for skiing and ski culture. (See article on the bonding request). It will connect the young ski enthusiast with the older master and it will support talented skiers as they emerge onto the national scene. It will run the cross country operations so that those operations equate with our idea of how a cross country operation should be run.

Thank you for helping us arrive at this point on our journey. I look forward to working with you in the years ahead to bring us the rest of the way there... As always, please call or email with thoughts, questions, or suggestions (612 604-5331 or director@cityoflakesloppet.com).



2009 Loppet Start

Photo: Steve Kotvis, f/go Photography

SKI-BOUNDING IN THEODORE WIRTH PARK

by Stephen Wilbers

www.wilbers.com

November 14, 2009

(Ski-bounding, a cardiovascular exercise done with poles and without skis, is a training technique that mimics the movements of Nordic skiing.)

The smell of close-cropped grass,
still green in November and wet
now from the drizzling rain,
reminds me of those early
Saturday mornings, a bagful
of glazed donuts for our snack,
dark crisscrosses left on wet grass
by our two-wheeled carts, including
my dad's, which I pulled
for three dollars,
the sun barely risen, my feet soaked with dew,
cold for the moment but soon warmed and
dried by the swelling sun –
my dad and his buddies . . . and me,
except now I'm with friends,
it's dark, a light rain is falling, he no longer
plays, and I never took up the game.
We go up and down the steepest hill we can find,
up down up without stopping, then a slow-walking
descent, then up down up without stopping
we go again again and again,
the mist in our faces, hearts pounding, lungs
aching, legs burning, we plant our ski poles
in the soft sod, not running –
bounding, imaging ourselves
ascending steep snowy slopes,
eager, expectant,
as the years spin by
like falling leaves before
they touch the ground.

Editor's Note: Stephen Wilbers is a long-time Loppet skier. He is currently enrolled in the Loppet Ski Club – Fall/Winter. The poem was inspired by a Ski Club workout.

TRIPS FOR KIDS

The City of Lakes Nordic Ski Foundation is proud to announce a new partnership with Trips for Kids, a national nonprofit whose mission is to provide underprivileged kids with an opportunity to enjoy mountain biking. Trips for Kids is based in Marin County, north of San Francisco. The national organization provides start-up kits, including a few mountain bikes and lots of great ideas, to new chapters throughout the country. Trips for Kids came to the Twin Cities a few years ago when Quality Bike Products (QBP) sponsored the first Minnesota chapter: Trips for Kids – Twin Cities.



*Andersen School Tri-Loppet
Program mountain biking
with Trips for Kids
Photos: Caitlin Compton*



The Foundation was first introduced to Trips for Kids by Frank Lundeen, who runs Q-active, the ski and running equipment distribution branch of QBP. Initially, the Foundation saw Trips for Kids as an excellent way to provide mountain biking experiences for local Anwatin Middle School, Anderson Open School and Farview Park students participating in the Tri-Loppet youth training programs. Starting in May 2008, Trips for Kids – Twin Cities provided bikes for these students as they prepared for the Tri-Loppet.

The mountain biking was an immediate hit with the students. Unlike running or roller-skiing, kids saw the fun in mountain biking pretty much immediately. The Foundation recognized that, if the goal was to encourage kids to become interested in aerobic sports, mountain biking was an excellent entre.

This summer the Foundation continued to work with

the Twin Cities chapter of Trips for Kids – and, indeed, requested more and more ride opportunities because the Foundation youth enjoyed the rides so much. It soon became clear that, as organized through QBP, Trips for Kids did not have the capacity to do so many rides. Each time the kids went riding QBP's Gary Sjoquist had to trailer the bikes from QBP to Theodore Wirth Park and other QBP employees had to be available to ride with the kids. Because the QBP employees had their own, non-Trips for Kids duties, they simply did not have time to coordinate as many rides as the Foundation wanted.

Gary mentioned that QBP never meant to run the Trips for Kids chapter long-term. Instead, from the beginning they hoped to find another non-profit organization that would run the chapter into the future. This idea quickly crystallized with the Foundation; the solution was obvious – the Nordic Ski Foundation needed to take over operations of the Trips for Kids chapter. The goals and philosophy of Trips for Kids fit in perfectly with those of the Foundation. A fundamental part of the Foundation's mission to promote skiing with inner city youth is encouraging kids to embrace the cross-country skiing lifestyle; engaging in a variety of year-round outdoor athletic activities. Skiing can make the biggest impact in kids lives when they habitually participate in outdoor recreation and when outdoor sports becomes a normal part of their daily life instead of a special occasion. Mountain biking is a particularly good fit with these goals because, like skiing, it is immediately exciting, fun and challenging and it builds fitness. The Foundation plans to get kids excited about mountain biking and then in the winter transfer that enthusiasm to skiing.

After negotiating with the national organization and looking into questions like insurance and storage, the Foundation is now running the Minneapolis chapter of Trips for Kids. The general idea remains the same: give inner-city youth an opportunity to go mountain biking. The focus will change a bit. Rather than the Twin Cities chapter, the name changes to Trips for Kids – City of Lakes. Rather than taking kids mountain biking anywhere in the region, the Foundation will focus on trips at Theodore Wirth Park. Trips at Wirth Park will be free to inner-city kids, trips to other, more distant, parks will come with a fee.

Starting in the spring of 2010, TFK – COL will be offering mountain bike trips in Theodore Wirth Park to small groups of kids from schools and programs in the Minneapolis area. Some of these groups will be independent of the Foundation – for example, the Foundation expects to work closely with North Minneapolis parks like Farview. Many of the rides will be through existing Foundation programs like the Anwatin Tri Program. TFK –COL will provide mountain

bikes, helmets, water bottles, Clif bars and ride leaders free of charge. Coach John Swain will instruct kids on mountain biking fundamentals and then the kids will have an opportunity to explore Theodore Wirth's excellent mountain bike trail network, which is maintained by the Minnesota Off-Road Cyclist's Association (MOCA).

The Foundation hopes to start a weekly youth time trial series. The thought is that with weekly time trials and occasional bigger races the kids will develop a longer-term interest in the sport.

The Foundation will need a roster of volunteers willing to help lead rides. Interested in helping? Call or email John Swain at 612 604-5333 or send an email to swain@cityoflakesloppet.com.



2008-2009 Anwatin Race Team competing at Wirth Park
Photo: Ben Kremer

ANWATIN SKI TEAM CONTINUES TO GROW

By John Swain

On October 20, the Anwatin Middle School Ski Team kicked off its fourth season. The team has grown from about 25 kids in its inaugural year to 36 kids this year. Building on past success, the Anwatin Team continues to evolve and this year it is promising to be an even stronger means for developing young skiers right in the city. There were a few changes to the program this year. Returning coach Dan Luoma is joined by Johanna (JoJo) Winters, John Swain and Iman Mefleh. The Foundation is particularly excited about Iman. She is an experienced skier who went to State in high school. More important, Iman is a new teacher at Anwatin. This is the first time that the program has had an in-house cheerleader for the program outside of Debbie Peterson, the Community Education Coordinator. The hope is that with Iman involved the Foundation can really begin to build Anwatin into a great program.

Other changes include beginning practice in October,

and consolidating the Anwatin Race Team and Anwatin Ski Team into one program. The team has expanded to include a variety of ethnicities, a mix of ages (sixth through eighth graders), a good mix of boys and girls and a variety of skill levels. Many of the skiers have progressed through other Foundation programs, such as Bryn Mawr Skis, and the Tri-Loppet and Trail Loppet training programs, while others are



Coach Winters helps lace up ski boots.
Photo: Margaret Adelsman

new to the sport.

The good turnout is largely attributable to a full-press recruiting effort led by program director Margaret Adelsman. Margaret, along with several of the coaches, went to lunch periods at Anwatin and set up in the cafeteria with skis, a computer with ski video footage, and a sign-up sheet. This allowed the team to recruit more kids and reach kids whose parents either

do not read the school newsletters or who do not directly suggest to their kids that they should consider joining the ski team.

Coach Swain commented that, "some of the kids come from families who recently immigrated to the United States, so their parents may speak a different language, and many people have never heard of cross-country skiing. But, most kids think skiing is really cool if you can meet them in person, and you get way more kids out for the team that way."

By combining the Race and Ski teams, the Foundation hopes to give all of the kids equal opportunities to race. The Foundation will offer at least four "off-campus" racing opportunities through the winter in addition to some on campus time trials.

Currently, the team is preparing for snow by roller skiing, bounding, and playing a variety of games that build fitness and coordination such as ultimate frisbee, soccer, one-footed freeze tag, and the kid's favorite, capture the flag. Despite the popularity of ultimate frisbee and capture the flag, the kids eagerly wait for the first snow fall and if their energy and enthusiasm are any indication, the team is going to have a wonderful season.

This data should help the Foundation to refine the ski program strategies where needed and to brainstorm methods for evaluation over the longer term. For example, how does one assess “change” in a 4th grade student after 10 weeks of skiing one day per week? What changes do you look for and which are the most significant? Is the larger question aimed at the continued set of choices that current 4th grader will make as a 5th, 6th, 12th grader and young adult? If so, how can we provide some significant “building blocks” of exercise and nutrition knowledge for that student to lay the foundation for choices they will need to make in the future? It is not yet clear what the specific answers may be to these philosophical questions, but through our initial analyses, we hope to add to the evaluation framework already in place and continue to refine the quality of our youth programs.

MEDICA GRANT ALLOWS PROGRAMMING TO EXPAND TO LORING SCHOOL

By Margaret Adelsman

The generous financial support of the Medica Foundation has provided a unique opportunity to expand the Nordic Ski Foundation’s youth programming into a new elementary school serving the northwest corner of Minneapolis. Nordic Ski Foundation coaches will be rolling brand new ski carts and ski equipment into the Victory Neighborhood’s Loring Elementary School in late November. As with most of the other Foundation elementary programs, Rossignol supplied the skis, boots, and poles. Like the programs at Bryn Mawr and Pillsbury, coaches will teach basic ski techniques and nutrition to classes of 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade students one day per week. However, Loring is unique in the presence of an established health and nutrition program that features an on-site community garden and kids’ cooking curriculum – “Kids Cook.”

Kids Cook provides instruction on healthy eating, cooking, and care of the

earth through its highly acclaimed gardening classes during the spring, summer, and fall. With an extensive garden area on the south edge of the school, kids learn how to raise fruits and vegetables as well as how to harvest and prepare the



Running with poles training during the Summer Ski Camp
Photo: Margaret Adelsman

fruits and vegetables for fabulous meals. During the winter months, while the garden area is “asleep,” the Foundation will turn the focus to cross country skiing as an active health component and collaborate with Kids Cook to emphasize the nutritional concepts. Students will ski on the gentle hills and flats adjacent to the school beginning in late November and extending through the February 6th Minne-Loppet. Foundation groomers (Marty Wandzell joins Jeff Richards this year) will help provide tracks for the students to use during ski classes.

The Foundation is excited to support the efforts of Kids Cook staff, Robin and Starla Krause, as well as Loring Elementary’s physical education instructor Nancy Duwenhoeffer, in this collaborative effort. Additional collaborative components will include a Family Ski and Dinner Night for each ski classroom in January, and publication of a bi-weekly newsletter containing informative articles from Kids Cook, Loring School, and the Foundation. The newsletter will reinforce concepts covered in ski class, provide helpful active tips and news updates, and illustrate some of the many wonderful Kids Cook meals that can be assembled for a healthy family dinner. We will celebrate the end of the ski season with a special banquet hosted by Kids Cook and student chefs right at Loring School. Thanks to Medica’s generous financial support, the Foundation will be able to connect with area families on a variety of levels: exercise and wellness, healthy eating, basic family-oriented food preparation, and a growing sense of community. Most importantly, we will have an opportunity to shape the Minneapolis youth of today into the healthy adults they may someday become.



Loring School student trying on skis
Photo: Margaret Adelsman

UCARE CONTINUES TO FUND BRYN MAWR AND PILLSBURY PROGRAMS

By Margaret Adelsman

The Bryn Mawr and Pillsbury Elementary youth programs are once again set to take off by the end of November. Through the ongoing support of UCare, Foundation coaches will be instructing 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade students in basic ski techniques as well as healthy nutrition concepts during physical education classes. A ski and nutrition curriculum developed for a trial run in 2008-2009 will once again be used as a framework for week to week lesson activities. Specifically, Normandale College's Linda Armstrong and curriculum expert Karen Brown collaborated to create a flexible curriculum that incorporates basic health concepts at the start of each weekly ski session. Weekly topics focus on general areas such as lungs, muscles, bones, and the heart, and then incorporate information on foods that can keep them strong. Coaches are able to use the written document in combination with a handy box of supplies or a "toolkit" to prepare them for class lessons each week. Included in the kit are basic coaching tips for working with the elementary programs and ideas for extra activities to use in the event of poor weather conditions.

At Bryn Mawr, Dr. Mark Bixby has provided many hours of his expertise, helping to personally lead the nutrition portion of the Bryn Mawr ski lessons, or lining up medical residents who are able to help out for a class or two. Having a designed curriculum in place now creates an easy format for the visiting physicians to use as well as coaches who can deliver the material through the props and written information that is provided. It also provides an opportunity to assess the general ski and nutrition knowledge of the students at the beginning and end of the program.



Ghtia Worcester presenting completion certificate to a Pillsbury Skis graduate

*Rollerskiing during the Summer Ski Camp
Photo: Margaret Adelsman*

Ski equipment is stored right at the schools on handy carts where kids can ski from the door onto adjacent trails – either in the Wirth Park trail system (Bryn Mawr) or the green space adjacent to the school (Pillsbury). Volunteer and Park Board groomers contribute their energy to keeping the trails packed for use by the students. Over the course of 8 or 9 weeks, students have a chance to transition from just figuring

out how to stand up on skis to actually cruising down the trail. One of the greatest thrills for coaches is to see the smile on a student's face after he or she has made it down a hill for the first time. As in past years, students from Bryn Mawr and Pillsbury will have an opportunity to show their skills during the Minne-Loppet event on Saturday, February 6. With ever-increasing numbers of student participants, there could

be tight competition between the two schools to see which will have the highest student turnout on Minne-Loppet day.

UCare support also allows Pillsbury and Bryn Mawr ski students and their families to celebrate their experiences at a post-season banquet. Bringing families together in this way is an important opportunity to reinforce the concepts of life-long healthy and fun activities such as cross country skiing and wise nutritional choices. Making the personal connection with the students and their families is a powerful way to deliver that message and one that, hopefully, begins to shape the longer-term healthy individual.

FOUNDATION GOES FACEBOOK...

The Nordic Ski Foundation has a Facebook page, with 99 Facebook fans – and growing. Become a fan (search for "City of Lakes Nordic Ski Foundation"), invite friends to become fans, post pictures or stories. Have an idea for a Loppet-based application? (Our understanding is that with an application of some kind, our fans can have a Loppet logo with the application on the sidebar of their profile). Call the Loppet Hotline at 612 604-5330 or send an email to info@cityoflakesloppet.com.

POHLAD FOUNDATION EXPANDS COVERAGE OF FOUNDATION YOUTH SKI PROGRAMS

By Margaret Adelsman

The Carl and Eloise Pohlada Family Foundation recently approved grant funds for the City of Lakes Nordic Ski Foundation's work at two Minneapolis Elementary Schools. The elementary youth ski program at Andersen Community School in South Minneapolis will now enjoy financial support for coaching staff, supplies, and Minne-Loppet transportation. While Andersen has had outside financial support in the past, it has more recently been financed directly Nordic Ski Foundation funds. The support of the Pohlada Foundation removes some of this financial pressure from the Foundation and allows the program at Andersen to continue uninterrupted.

In North Minneapolis, the Nellie Stone Johnson Community School will also benefit from the Pohlada Foundation support. Like Loring Elementary, the program at Nellie Stone will be brand new this year, and the Foundation staff is busy acquiring the necessary equipment and staff support to roll this program out in the first week of December. With the assistance of Foundation coaches and the school's physical education instructor, Julie Ellingson, 2nd, 3rd and 4th grade students at Nellie Stone will learn to ski on the large athletic field next to the school and will also have the opportunity to use the tremendous green space and varied topography (read: hills) at Farview Park, just one block away (the Foundation has a continuing relationship with Farview Park as the Foundation has run summer youth programs in partnership with Farview the park the past few years). Like the other elementary programs, the Foundation will introduce the students to nutrition concepts at each weekly session, providing a broader element of overall wellness encouraged through cross country skiing.

With the addition of Nellie Stone and Loring, the Foundation's cross country ski lessons will extend to more than 500 Minneapolis students this year. Since the Foundation encourages all of the programs to participate in the February 6 Minne-Loppet, we anticipate record numbers at the Minne-Loppet once again. This level of exposure to cross country skiing and participation in a truly unique event such as the Minne-Loppet would not be possible without the generous support of organizations such as the Carl and Eloise Pohlada Family Foundation.

Just one more reason to support the Twins!

MEET JOHN SWAIN

REI Tour champion before it was the REI Tour! Reigning Hoigaard's Classic champion. Runner-up to future Olympian Matt Liesch in the 2009 Trail Loppet.



*John Swain skiing in West
Yellowstone, 2009
Photo: Ben Kremer*

John Swain is obviously a talented athlete. He is also the Nordic Ski Foundation's newest employee. Youth program head coach and event coordinator, the Foundation is thrilled to have John on board.

While originally hailing from St. Paul (which makes him highly suspect), John started skiing at age four at Marcy Park – in Minneapolis.

He went on to participate in the Minnesota Youth Ski League at Como Park, before starting to race as a 9th grader at St. Paul Highland Park High School. By his senior year John was the St. Paul City Conference Champion and he qualified for the State Meet.

John went on to ski at Colby College in Maine – but only after a Loppet-related influence piqued his interest in the school. While debating college choices, John met Southwest High School alum Aaron Blazar who was attending Colby at the time. Aaron is the son of new Foundation board member Bill Blazar. He told John about Colby and it was that conversation that motivated John to head east.

John had a successful career at Colby – running cross country and skiing on the Division I team. He finished as high as 11th place in the Carnivals out east (by way of comparison – Piotr Bednarski and John Munger never finished higher than 24th when they skied at Cornell). After college John coached at Mounds View High School and then with the Sisu Junior Program, before starting with the Foundation in August.

As a coach, John's goals include: showing kids that "serious" training can be fun, engaging kids in lots of ski games, and developing technique fundamentals. You will find John coaching this winter at Anawatin Middle School (where he coaches with Johanna Winters, Dan Luoma and Iman Meflah, a new Anawatin teacher who is helping with the program), Loring Elementary in North Minneapolis, and Andersen Open School in South Minneapolis. John is also helping the Loppet Ski Club group – where his coaching has received high marks as a quiet but effective instructor.

One may also find John competing in local races this winter. As his Trail Loppet result demonstrated, John is in great shape and expects to have an excellent ski season.

FOUNDATION STARTS ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT FUND

With the Olympics quickly approaching most of the ski community is excited about the prospects for our local heroes: 2009 Loppet Champion Caitlin Compton, 2009 Trail Loppet Champion Matt Liebsch, 2008 Loppet Champion Carolyn Bramante, and Golden Valley's Garrott Kuzzy (son of long-time Foundation members Jim and Beth Kuzzy), among others. With the pushing and prodding of Kuan Teoh, among others, the Foundation has turned that excitement into the City of Lakes Athlete Development Fund.

The idea behind the Fund is to help local athletes achieve their hopes and dreams as ski racers. Skiers may include Olympic hopefuls like Caitlin, Matt, Carolyn and Garrott, or young athletes who want an opportunity to travel to the Junior Olympics or the State Meet. The common link is a love of, and dedication to, cross country skiing and a connection to the Minneapolis area.

The hope is that over time this Fund can help athletes not only in Olympic years, but can help form a bridge from high school or college racing to higher level skiing. In the longer term, with a growing base of support, the vision is to provide an even stronger support structure for these athletes. For instance, with a strong enough Fund, we could purchase housing near Theodore Wirth Park (to make that happen the Foundation will be examining the options and seeking longer term commitments to help pay a mortgage) and provide high-level coaching as well. Couple the housing and coaching with part-time work opportunities with the Nordic Ski Foundation (coaching youth and adults, coordinating events or just helping around the office) and Minneapolis area skiers could have a bright future.

To kick things off, Kate Ellis and John Harrer hosted a get-together with Caitlin as the star attraction. The idea of the kick-off was to generate short-term funds for Caitlin and athletes like her. To facilitate their Olympic years, the application deadline for grants was in early November.

At this point, the Foundation is looking for people willing to make a longer term commitment to the Fund. If interested in helping, please contact Fund Chair Piotr Bednarski at 952 237-0765 or mnbiathlon@aol.com.

In the short run, your contribution will help Minneapolis area athletes make a serious run at the Olympics this year. Between Caitlin, Matt, Garrott and Carolyn, we should have much to cheer about this winter. With a strong long-term Fund we will hopefully have even more to cheer about in the years to come.

*Hoigaard's Challenge
continued from page 5,*



Caitlin Compton speaking at a fundraising event

DONORS TO THE ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT FUND

\$1000+

John and Nancy Howard

\$250 - \$500

Angela Robinson and James Kurkowski

John and Diana Munger

\$100 - \$249

Jeffrey and Nancy Arndt
Karen and Joseph Bebchuk
Michael Bono and Katherine Constantine

C. Rowan and Christina Debold
Mary Ellen Moench and Michael Gotsche

Leisha and Johnny Ingdal

Bob O'Hara

Reid Howe

Scott Ree

Martin and Dorothy Richmond

Alfred Sedgwick

UP TO \$100

Margaret and Bruce Adelsman
Katherine Himes and Mark Lescher

James and Mary Luoma

Jamie and Philip Misner

Leon Oman

Molly Hillstrom and Mitch Vars

Johanna Winters

into a seventh-place finish in the Challenge standings post-Loppet) into the Tri-Loppet, with Grant Nelson (Elaine's husband – 17th post-Loppet) and Zach Handler (22nd post-Loppet) more than five minutes behind.

Pengelly was set on making a run for the Challenge title – but he knew his weakness was paddling. So he recruited Brandan Ostroot (long-time Loppet volunteer and jack of all trades), a strong paddler, to help him stay competitive on that leg. Looking around at the start of the Tri-Loppet, Pengelly quickly recognized that Zach would be his most significant competition. Sure enough, Zach was not only good competition, he was the second fastest boat out of the water overall.

"I used to do some kayak racing," the modest Handler commented before the race.

As they paddled, Pengelly felt good about his position, and half-way across Cedar Lake he was telling Ostroot that he thought he would still be in good position to stay ahead in the Challenge: "I think we are close enough to [Handler]..."

Ostroot, paddling in the stern, responded: "Just shut up and paddle, Evan!"

By the time they reached Brownie, Zach had gained almost 4 minutes and 30 seconds on Pengelly – but Pengelly's strength is running... and he put a minute on Handler during the 5K run. With their bike times relatively even, Pengelly finished about 2 minutes in front of Handler (who went on to the solo and an overall championship in the Tri-Loppet) in the Challenge standings. He had lost three minutes in the Tri-Loppet, but his five minute lead in the Loppet was hard to overcome.

It looked like these two were going to be headed toward a showdown at the Trail Loppet. While Pengelly is a strong runner, the hills of the half-marathon tend to favor the stronger athlete overall – and Handler was the defending champion in the event. Unfortunately, Zach injured himself the week after the Tri-Loppet – running down hills so hard at the Afton Trail Run that he ended up with a stress fracture in his knee (self-diagnosed – Zach is a physician in his spare time). While he recovered in time to do the sweeper duties at the Trail Loppet, he was not in racing condition and ceded the Challenge to Pengelly, who held off Craig Cardinal and Jey Carlson by 9 and 17 minutes, respectively (Cardinal was the fastest runner of the group but needs to work on his paddling in particular).

The Pengellys, Nelsons and long-time enthusiast Genevieve Johnson of Bryn Mawr – who won the random drawing among Challenge participants – will be enjoying a week at Bearskin this fall... **15**

*Park Board continued
from page 1,*

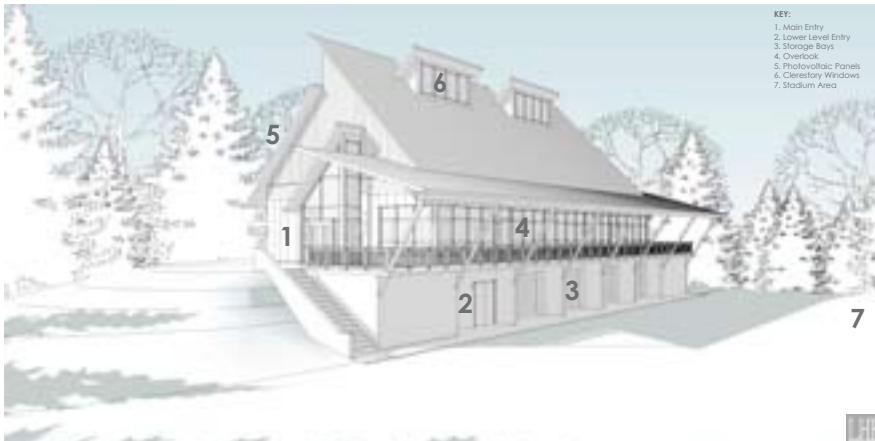
from skiers), the Park Board has put in about \$250,000 to date, and has another \$500,000 in the budget for 2010. In addition to this \$1.25 million in cash contributions, Foundation volunteers have worked more than 2,500 hours to improve the trails at Wirth Park over the past several years.

To receive bonding money, each project must show that it has regional significance – that is, the projects must be important to and serve more than just a local population. The Loppet and the Foundation's youth programming both help on this score. The Loppet helps attract skiers from across the State, and the youth programming is important to combating obesity and promoting activity in an underserved population.

Finally, the legislature likes to see positive economic impact from its projects. The Foundation's events provide a good argument on this score. With snowmaking, the Loppet becomes a better guarantee for out-of-state travelers, making it more likely to attract more of them. The Junior Olympics is even better. Without snowmaking the Foundation would not have a chance to land the bid for this type of event. The economic impact of the Junior Olympics alone is almost \$3 million. Potential future events like the Senior Nationals and World Masters would have even bigger impacts.

WIRTH WINTER RECREATION CENTER

Concept Design



*Drawing by LHB Architects
Bruce Cornwall
and Rick Carter*

Perhaps the capstone on the bonding bid is the plans for the new building, which give the legislature something "solid" to see when they consider this project. LHB Architects Rick Carter and Bruce Cornwall put those plans together on a sponsorship basis. The Foundation is lucky to have such talented and motivated supporters.

As the session heats up this winter and spring it is likely that the Foundation will need help convincing individual legislators of the importance of this project. If you have a relationship with your state legislator or senator and/or you would like to help by writing a letter, sending an email or making a phone call, please let us know by sending a note to John Munger at director@cityof-flakesloppet.com or calling him at 612 604-5331.



Loppet Ski Club – Fall/Winter - Photo Carolyn Bramante

LOPPET SKI CLUB GROWS!

For the past several years the organization has run an introductory ski training group: the Loppet Ski Club. Led by Tom Anderson – with help from Mike Bono, Steve Casey, Janet Jerve, Dave Pedersen, Michael Bash, Sarah Rohwedder and Jeff Richards, this group saw record numbers in 2008 – with over 40 people enrolled.

One of the keys to the bigger numbers was the Foundation's lease program. The idea was to help eliminate the equipment-barrier for entry into the sport. For many people the idea of spending \$400, \$500 or even \$600 on equipment for an activity that they were unsure about was too much of a barrier. Fortunately, the Foundation has accumulated a wealth of equipment over the years by leveraging Loppet sponsorship with companies like Atomic. To encourage people to try skiing, the Foundation now offers to lease ski equipment to first-time Ski Club members for \$40/year. Last year, some ten people leased equipment and gained an opportunity to ski.

This year the lease program is going strong again. But the big change is a new training group – the Loppet Ski Club – Fall/Winter. This is an intermediate to advanced group that can also accommodate beginners. Training is a bit more serious, starts earlier in the year, and the group is led by Marc Beitz and Kim Rudd, who are essentially professional ski coaches. The Fall/Winter version of the Ski Club has been growing since day one, and now has about 50 members.

There was some worry when this group started that the Introductory version of the Ski Club would suffer. But that has not been the case. In fact, the numbers for the Intro class this year are about the same as last year. All told there about 90 people involved in one the Loppet Ski Clubs this year.

(Look for Ski Club jackets on the trails this year. Designed by Joseph Duffy and sponsored by Hoigaard's and Podium Wear, Ski Club members have the option to purchase jackets as part of their membership.).

SUMMER SKI CAMP?

Tennis camp. Football camp. Knitting camp. Horseback riding camp. There is a camp for every purpose – but no ski camp. Recognizing this omission, the Foundation decided to try to fill the void. This past summer Program Director Margaret Adelsman and the Foundation interns organized a one-day practice camp – complete with rotating stations including: roller-skiing, adventure racing, mountain biking, ski waxing, hill bounding, and video and technique clinics. Six lucky kids (age 9 – 13 years old) were paired with Camp Counselor/Coach John Abbett.

The idea is not so much to wear the kids out so much as to immerse the kids in various skiing-related activities – to get them hooked on the sport at an early age. At this time, the idea is to create two to three one week camps with about 35 kids at each camp. Camp would run roughly 9 a.m. 4 p.m. with a base at the picnic pavilion at Wirth Beach. The hope is that the camps would contain a mix of kids – some who have gone to the Minnesota Youth Ski League and whose parents ski, and some who would be fresh to the sport. Camp counselors would come from local high school ski teams. The Foundation will be seeking grant funding so that lower-income kids have an opportunity as well.

Have some ideas on the camp idea? Want to help out? Call or email John Swain at 612 604-5333 or swain@cityoflakesloppet.com.

FOUNDATION TRIES TO MAKE ITS INITIATIVES ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY

While commerce/life is generally bad for the environment, the Nordic Ski Foundation has tried to do its part to reduce amount of carbon emissions it creates. Environmental efforts include:

- **Olympic Village at the Junior Olympics.** At all previous Junior Olympics, all ten teams have arranged for their own lodging and transportation. As a result, each team rented 4-6 13-passenger vans and had staff devoted solely to driving kids back and forth from lodging (often 20-30 miles away) to the venue. The Foundation decided that because of our proximity to downtown Minneapolis, we had an opportunity to do something different. We worked hard to arrange a deal with the Marriott City Center so that all ten teams and their coaches will (hopefully) stay in one “Olympic Village” location. Each team can take the light rail directly from the airport to the hotel. Hoigaard’s volunteered to park its truck at the airport to receive the ski equipment and bring it to the Chalet. The Foundation will run a shuttle bus service from the hotel to Wirth through the week.

Because of these centralized arrangements, each team will not need to rent its own vans and the amount of fuel consumed going back and forth to the venue will be significantly reduced.

- **Composting and Recycling.** Last year the Foundation entered into a partnership with Minnesota Waste Wise, a non-profit devoted to reducing waste among Minnesota companies. The first events that we worked on together were the Tri- and Trail Loppet. With a little sweat and a lot of education, we were able to compost or recycle most of our waste. Our Loppet aid station coordinators, Dom Furfaro and Ed Swain, have committed to zero waste for the Loppet. Interested in helping out? Send an email to info@cityoflakesloppet.com.
- **Commuter Incentive Program.** This summer the Foundation partnered with Civia Cycles to offer incentives for people to commute by bicycle to their places of work. The idea is to give a small pat on the back to people who bike to work on a regular basis. Prizes include free Luminary Loppet entries, free entries to the Penn Ice-Cycle Loppet for those who commute in the winter months, and free entries to the corporate team category of the Tri-Loppet for people who form commuting teams with their co-workers.
- **Employee Bicycle Incentive Program.** This past summer the Foundation instituted a new policy: \$3/day/employee for biking to work. Results varied – but at least one of our employees – John Abbett, bicycled to work nearly every day this summer.
- **Trail Loppet Bike, Bus or Carpool Incentive.** Take alternative transportation to the Trail Loppet and receive a free brat. According to our survey results some 31% of our participants rode their bikes to the event.
- **Better Bag System.** The Foundation received Midwest Mountaineering grant funding aimed at reducing waste. Loppet organizers are considering the best approach. One idea is to encourage participants to use their own duffle bags in combination with recyclable bags for those who forget.

Have an idea for making the Foundation and/or its events more environmentally friendly? Send an email to info@cityoflakesloppet.com.



Learning how to wax skis during the Summer Ski Camp
Photo: Margaret Adelsman

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FOUNDATION MEMBERSHIPS

Membership runs from June 1 to May 30. To avoid a lapse in membership, please renew 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.

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP REGISTRATION JUNE 1, 2009 – MAY 31, 2010

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

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Individual	\$50	\$ _____
Family	\$70	\$ _____
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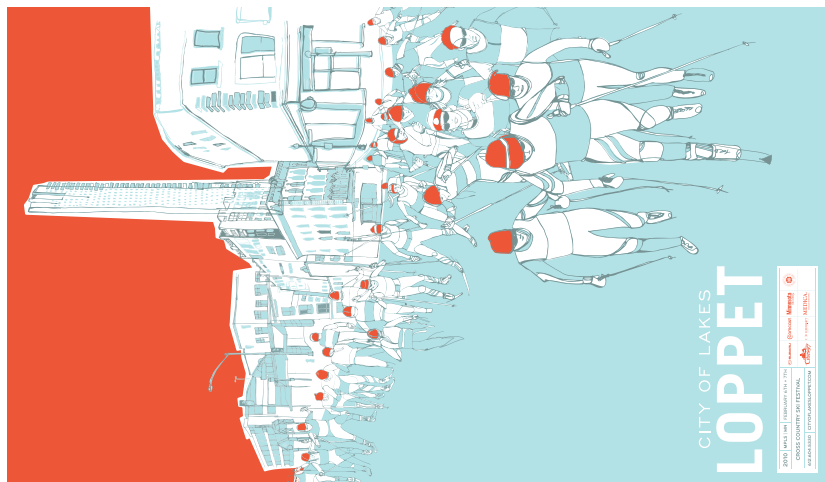
Hap & Judy Trail Dedication Ceremony – in the great room at the Chalet



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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

January 9, 2010 - Pre-Loppet
January 23-24, 2010 - Mayor's Challenge:
Open Division/Junior Olympics
Qualifier/SuperTour/College Races
February 6-7, 2010 - City of Lakes
Loppet Event Weekend
June 26, 2010 - Tri-Loppet
Sept. 18, 2010 - Trail Loppet
Oct. 12, 2010 - Annual Meeting

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