



CITY OF LAKES

Nordic Ski FOUNDATION

YOUTH . EVENTS . TRAILS

FOUNDATION KIDSKI PROGRAMS EXPAND TO CITYVIEW AND HALL ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

By Margaret Adelsman

The Nordic Ski Foundation approaches the 2010-11 ski season with two new elementary ski programs. Spurred by the desire of the Pohlad Family Foundation to broaden its support for North Minneapolis, early this fall the Nordic Ski Foundation connected with staff at Cityview Performing Arts Magnet School and Elizabeth Hall International Elementary to initiate ski programs at each site. In addition to Nellie

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Nellie Stone Johnson Community School students skiing

Photo: Margaret Adelsman



Cityview student on the trail
Photo: Margaret Adelsman

2011 JUNIOR OLYMPICS UPDATE

By Mike Bono

Plans for the 2011 Nordic Junior Olympics or Junior Nationals, to be held at Wirth Park during the week of March 6 – 12, 2011, are well underway. The weeklong events will include skate sprints, a mass start classic race, an individual start skate race, and classic relay races. Major changes have been made in the stadium and trail systems. The stadium area has been expanded, which will allow for a safer mass start and provide for a separate lap lane to eliminate skier congestion in the start area. To bring the trails into compliance with the U.S. Ski Association (USSA) standards for a national championship, a brand new section has been added to the 5 kilometer course. The new Creek loop addition features two relatively steep ascents, with more skiing through the woods. A few other sections of the Hap & Judy Competition Loop have been widened to comply with USSA requirements.

NOTES FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

By John Munger



These days it is difficult to imagine a world without the Nordic Ski Foundation. Eight short years ago the organization did not exist. Today, it feels like the Foundation is going in a million different directions and yet every day there are new needs, new ideas and new challenges.

So more than ever this year, it has been difficult to take a step back in order to reflect on where we are and where we are going. With our programming we have constructed a grand vision – which we have entitled the “Loppet Adventure Program.” Our trails committee has put together “A Vision for Wirth Park” that encapsulates all that we

JOHN SCHMITT FUND

Most of you know John Schmitt – or at least his voice. Together with Sheryl Golin, John Schmitt is the Voice of the Loppet! Last year was a difficult one for John. He had been developing a foot drop over the past few years and this past summer was diagnosed with ALS – or Lou Gehrig’s Disease.

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Cristy Leaf



Canoeing at Adventure Camp
Photo: John Swain



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*“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.”*

WEB TEAM

Molly Hillstrom
Mitch Vars
Willy Lee

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JO Update continued from front page,

This will be a challenging course for the skiers. “We are really excited with these changes,” says Junior Olympics Chief of Course Piotr Bednarski. “We feel like we have a fun and challenging course that people from across the country will enjoy.”

This year’s event will feature two exciting additions to the national championships: night skate sprints and an adaptive skiing category. The skate sprints, which are typically held during the day, will begin in the afternoon with the preliminary heats and the quarter-finals and will resume in the evening with the semifinals and finals. This is sure to be an exciting race for both the athletes and fans as we watch the athletes compete in the evening under the lights in the newly expanded stadium at Wirth Park. The adaptive skiing category is making its Junior Olympic debut in Minneapolis, and will incorporate standing adaptive athletes in several races and sit-skiers in the Friday individual start race. The sit ski athletes will have an opportunity to compete in a separate 2.5km. race in the stadium area. The stand up adaptive skiers will be integrated into the able bodied events and will participate in the sprint, mass start classic, and individual start freestyle events.

In addition to the changes in the venue and the inclusion of an adaptive skiing category, the event will include exciting activities for the athletes, parents, and fans. The theme of the event is “Make a Difference. Make Some Noise.” emphasizing social responsibility and volunteerism. We are fortunate to have Minnesota Supreme Court Justice Alan Page speak at the Opening Ceremonies, providing us insight as to how a Minnesota Vikings “Purple People Eater” became motivated to study law, to become a Supreme Court Justice, and to develop a foundation that mentors children of color to launch them to college. We will hear Olympians share their stories of projects they are passionate about when they are not skiing or training. Along with the noise and the message, there will be a number of social activities for the athletes and parents at the athlete village in the Marriott City Center Hotel. The grand finale will be the Awards and Closing Ceremony on Saturday evening.



Junior Olympics 2011 - Logo: Duffy & Partners

NORDIC SKI FOUNDATION PLANNING TO WORK TOGETHER WITH COURAGE CENTER

By Nels Dyste

For those not familiar with the Courage Center, it is a Minnesota-based rehabilitation center for children and adults with disabilities. While the Courage Center has several branches, the original and biggest branch overlooks the cross country ski trails at Theodore Wirth – literally less than a stone’s throw away. The Courage Center has long run alpine ski programs for adaptive athletes. In general, though, the Courage Center has not run formal programs related to cross country skiing. That may change over the next few years.

Courage Center is working under a grant from the Operation Liberty Military Sports & Recreation program. It has been working with the Three Rivers Park District on some limited adaptive cross country skiing opportunities. For instance, the Courage Center is running an instructor training day and sit ski open houses at Elm Creek Park Reserve.

In addition, the Nordic Ski Foundation and the Courage Center are planning to lay the groundwork for more extensive adaptive programming by working collaboratively with existing Foundation events. For example, there will be an adaptive class at the Mayor’s Challenge and, for the first time ever, at the Junior Olympics. Equally exciting, the Courage Center, the Nordic Ski Foundation and Central Cross Country Skiing (CXC) are planning to invite adaptive skiers to enjoy the Luminary Loppet this year.

The hope is that in future years the Courage Center will be able to run more formal programs for cross country skiing. As a start in that direction, the Nordic Ski Foundation is planning to put a bid in for a 2012 Paralympics World Cup.

If you or someone you know is interested in sit skiing or being a volunteer instructor/guide, please contact Nels Dyste at nels.dyste@couragecenter.org, or Michael Gottschalk at MGottschalk@threeriversparkdistrict.org.

If you or someone you know is a veteran with a physical disability and are looking for other opportunities to engage in your community through recreation please contact Courage Center’s US Paralympic Coordinator JR Mamea at jr.mamea@courage.org or 763-520-0558.

CROSS COUNTRY SIT-SKIING OPPORTUNITIES THIS WINTER INCLUDE:

- January 9 – Sit Ski Open House at Elm Creek: 4:30 – 6:30 p.m.
- January 23 – Sit Ski Open House at Elm Creek: 4:30 – 6:30 p.m.
- February 5 – Luminary Loppet: 6 – 9 p.m.
- February 20 – Sit Ski Open House at Elm Creek 4:30-6:30 p.m.
- March 7 – Junior Olympic Sprint – adaptive standing category
- March 9 – Junior Olympic Classic Mass Start – adaptive standing category
- March 11 – Junior Olympics Individual Start – adaptive standing and 2.5 Kilometer Race for sit skiers

Nels Dyste skied at St. Louis Park High School and at St. Olaf College in Northfield. He coached cross country skiing at St. Louis Park High School last year and he is now the Coordinator for the Courage Center’s Sports & Recreation Department.

ANWATIN SKI TEAM ENJOYS A NEW BEGINNING

By John Swain

On October 19 the ski season began for the Foundation's Anwatin Ski Team. While dozens of students attended the first few practices, in the end the team will be pared down to a more manageable number.

To understand the paring down, it is necessary to look back to last year. The 2009-2010 Anwatin Ski Team was set up with the idea that no one would be turned away; that in order to produce a few dedicated skiers, it would be necessary to retain a large pool of students. All the kids were encouraged to come to ski races and attend practice, but there was no penalty for absence and racing was not required.

This approach was not entirely successful. Although there were thirty six kids on the roster last year, many times only twenty students would show up to a given practice, and not necessarily the same twenty skiers each time. And while there were many kids on the team from less privileged backgrounds, most of those kids did not participate in races or develop an interest in skiing beyond a superficial level. In the end, accommodating these various levels of participation and having optional races resulted in the opposite of the intended effect. Instead of providing a good ski experience for the entire team, the strategy resulted in too much structure for unmotivated kids and not enough structure for kids with a real interest in skiing. Moreover, because of the volume of students the coaches were not able to devote more time and energy to retaining kids from diverse backgrounds, resulting in a more homogenous group of skiers.

In order to address these problems, the team was restructured for the 2010 -2011 season. The biggest change this year was to restrict the team size to about 16 kids and to hold tryouts at the beginning of the season. The goal of the tryout period was not to select the fastest skiers or the most athletic kids, but instead to select the students who showed up to practice every day, tried their hardest and had the best attitudes. By

including only the kids who really want to be at practice, the coaches are able to coach instead of spending their time dealing with students who are not there to learn in the first place. With the smaller team and selective format, there are higher expectations for Anwatin Ski Team members this year. Skiers will be expected to attend practice regularly and compete in races.

So far, the coaches report that the new format is working well. There is already much better attendance and the quality of practice has improved dramatically. Activities have included hill bounding, strength exercises, running, roller skiing, and occasional games of Ultimate Frisbee and capture-the-flag. The team is looking quite promising and will compete in a full schedule of races throughout the season, including a number of high school junior varsity races, the City of Lakes Junior Loppet, the Mayor's Challenge, and Midwest Junior Championships, which will be held directly after the Junior Olympics this March at Theodore Wirth Park.

TRIPS FOR KIDS AND FARVIEW SKI TEAM

By John Swain

It is almost winter, which marks the end of a successful first season for the Foundation's new program, City of Lakes - Trips for Kids and the birth of a related program, the Farview Ski Team. City of Lakes - Trips for Kids is the Minneapolis chapter of the nationwide non-profit organization Trips for Kids, which is dedicated to providing mountain bike experiences to underprivileged youth. The City of Lakes program officially started in May of 2010 (having succeeded the Quality Bike Parts-driven Trips for Kids - Twin Cities branch) with the goal of using mountain biking as a method to introduce inner city kids to lifetime outdoor sports.

The main group that participated in Trips for Kids rides was a group of boys ages nine to fifteen from the neighborhood surrounding Farview Park in North Minneapolis. The Foundation worked with the Minneapolis Park Board at Farview recreation center to run the program. Farview Park recreation center provides

John Swain leading the Anwatin Ski team in training - Photo Margaret Adelman



extensive programming and activities for the youth from the surrounding neighborhood, many of whom spend a large amount of the time when they are not in school at the park. The Park Board's established relationship with the community made it possible to consistently recruit kids. Using a Park Board van, Farview youth coach Louis Oatis drove kids from Farview to Theodore Wirth and helped lead the bike trips. Trips for Kids provided mountain bikes, helmets, water bottles, coaches and Cliff bars. Starting in May, kids began biking twice a week.

The group rode on the single track trails maintained by the Minneapolis Off-Road Cycling Advocates (MOCA), which are built specifically for mountain biking. The trails are narrow paths – in some places only a little wider than the handlebars of a bicycle, built on the rolling hills of the park and include log and rock obstacles for riders to bike over.

At the start of the program kids were instructed in the basics of mountain biking, including trail etiquette, and how to brake safely, shift gears and ride over obstacles. As the kids became more accomplished riders, coaches began taking them on longer rides and then introduced speed workouts and time trials to give them a taste of racing.

With regular practice, many of the kids became avid and skilled mountain bikers. Mr. Oatis, the Farview Park youth coach, said “[we] started out with a group of kids who had never done off road biking. The first time the kids had a ball and took to it right away. It’s something that’s not only a great sport but challenging for them and I fell in love with it as much as they did. Now they are about to tear our arms off every time we are going biking.”

On August 8, a group of the Farview kids headed to the Bontrager Border Battle, in River Falls Wisconsin and competed in a five mile long mountain bike race. The kids had the opportunity to meet and bike with Jack Hinkens, a young biking (and high school skiing) star from Eden Prairie and Hopkins High School who recently raced for the United States at the World Mountain Biking Championships in Mt. St. Anne, Quebec. Hinkens helped the team get registered and pin on their numbers for their race, and then hung out with the team afterwards. The kids sat on the tailgate of his pickup truck while he answered questions about international mountain bike racing and showed them a few bike tricks, including hopping his entire bike in the air from a wheelie. Then Hinkens set up a set of stationary rollers and let the kids try riding in place while he helped them balance. The team had a great time racing and meeting Hinkens.

Oatis said “It was a big thing for the kids to be in an organized race and meet a professional so that they could see that there was prestige in biking.”



Louis Oatis and the Farview Team - Photo: John Swain

The Farview kids also participated in two of the Foundation's Loppet Adventure Camps; weeklong outdoor sports day camps for kids ages 9-13. The kids received scholarships to attend the camps out of a grant the Foundation received from the Finish Line Youth Foundation. At the camps, the kids mountain biked every day as well as roller-skied, played ultimate Frisbee and capture the flag, orienteered, ran and swam.

The Farview kids went into the camps as mountain bikers, but came out experienced roller-skiers, runners, and paddlers. Some of the kids had so much fun that they participated in both the July and August camps. This winter, the Foundation will build on the kids' summer enthusiasm with the new Farview Ski Team.

Using the Trips for Kid's model, the Park Board will help recruit kids and transport them to Wirth Park for practice twice a week. The Foundation will provide ski equipment and coaching for the team. As the team will be able to practice at Wirth, the skiers will be able to take advantage of the lighted snowmaking loop for early season training. Once the kids have some on-snow time, Farview will be able to race with the nearby Anawatin Ski Team as preparation for the main events of the year: the City of Lakes Junior Loppet, the Mayor's Challenge and the Midwest Junior Championships.

The coaches expect many of the kids who participated in the Trips for Kids program and Adventure Camps to join the ski team, which would be a significant benchmark for Foundation programming. If the Farview Ski team becomes a success, it would complete year-round outdoor sports programming for a group of inner-city youth. Hopefully, the Farview bike and ski teams will give the kids the skills, confidence and passion to enjoy a lifetime of outdoor sports. Louis Oatis, who will again be a liaison and coach for the program, is optimistic: “I didn't know that these city kids would take to mountain biking as well as they did, and I hope that it can lead into winter activities like cross country skiing for them as well. I will be looking forward to it.”

Director Notes continued from front page,

want to see happen in Theodore Wirth Park over the years to come. And with events, the Foundation has adopted a long-term plan calling for continued high-level events like the Loppet, Tri-Loppet and Trail Loppet, the possible addition of a large mountain bike event, and more national and international events like the Junior Olympics. Organizationally, we have started our metamorphosis from a small one- or two-person operation in a tiny office space to a more robust Foundation with staff taking up more of the slack than in years past.

PROGRAMMING

Over the past year, the Foundation has seen significant change in both its current programming and its long-term goals.

Both the Foundation's youth and its adult programming have grown, expanded and changed. This first year of the Trips for Kids program was a great success. Our suspicion that mountain biking is an excellent method of attracting young people to lifetime sports was confirmed. The kids that mountain biked loved it. They came back again and again. The lure of mountain biking attracted the kids to Adventure Camp, where they, by all accounts, enjoyed all of the various activities. And they really enjoyed mountain bike racing. (See Trips for Kids article).

The Adventure Camps themselves were also successful. We were able to mix middle class and disadvantaged youth to great effect. We established a new model of youth camp – based in the city and based on lifetime sports and an appreciation for nature in the city – and we taught the skills and the passion for lifetime sports that will, hopefully, cause many of these children to engage in these activities for years to come.

We revamped our Anwatin Ski Team and started a similar team out of Farview Park. The revamped Anwatin program starts with the premise that more is not always better. We can – and do - introduce hundreds of

young people to skiing and mountain biking each year. But to change the longer-term habits of disadvantaged youth, it is frequently necessary to help the truly interested with things like transportation, perseverance and reliability. In other words, like the parent of any adolescent, we need to drag the kids out of bed on occasion. To do that effectively, we opted to work with fewer kids, but the kids we do work with we work with more intensively.

Building on the lessons of Trips for Kids, Loppet Adventure Camps and the Anwatin team, the Foundation has put together a vision for the youth programming that we would like to be doing – the Loppet Adventure Program. The idea is to change the life trajectory of kids by introducing them to lifetime activities, helping them to continue pursuing lifetime activities over time and, in the end, making them passionate about lifetime activities so that by the end of the program they continue the lifetime activities without outside prompting. To do this we would establish more ski and mountain bike teams in the community, help the kids overcome barriers like transportation and lack of parental understanding (and prompting), and, importantly, try to change the culture in the community so that there would be a stronger appreciation for lifetime sports and activities generally. We are working with potential funders to try to make this Program a reality on a larger scale.

On the adult side, Foundation programming has also grown. The Loppet Run Club was bigger than ever this past summer. Both Loppet Ski Clubs are at peak numbers – with more than 50 participants in each. And, thanks to Tony and Kathy Mommsen, we are even adding a Thursday night classic ski for Foundation members. The larger goal here is to establish a culture of skiing and a community of like-minded people. Thanks to the yeoman work of coaches like Marc Beitz, Gene Kay, Tom Anderson, Mike Bash, John Swain and many more, we are well on our way there.

I would be remiss not to mention Margaret Adelman here. Margaret continues to be the steady guiding light for our programming, the person who always does the little things that make such a big difference. She hires and trains the various coaches for the six elementary schools that we work in. She makes sure that every child has equipment that fits (which is no small feat when there are 600 feet to size). And she works tirelessly with the schools to accommodate for the needs and wants of the individual schools. We are lucky to have staff like Margaret that set out organization apart and make our programming special!

TRAILS

This is an exciting time for the Foundation and for Wirth Park. Thanks to the generosity of hundreds of

*Adventure Camper Oshay Cole competes at the Border Battle
Photo: John Swain*



individuals, families and businesses, the Hap & Judy Competition Loop is in the best shape ever. Between the mountains of snow that have fallen from the sky and the maturation of our snowmaking and lighted loops, Wirth is as close to a winter wonderland as it has ever been. The one sore spot is the continued trouble with grooming. Yes, it is mostly good. But mostly good is really not what we are looking for. We will of course continue to work with the Park Board in the years to come but we still look forward to the day when the responsibility for grooming might rest on our shoulders.

Thinking more long-term, the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board recently started a citizen's advisory committee process to examine Theodore Wirth Park as a whole. The Foundation has been heavily involved in that process. The Park Board has set up three "study groups" that will construct plans for individual portions of the park – one group for the golf course/winter recreation area, one group for the Twin Lake area, and one for South Wirth. Because there are ski trails in all three of these areas, the Nordic Ski Foundation will have a representative on all three study groups.

The Foundation's goals through this process include eliminating the dilapidated features of the park (of which there are many), avoiding the destruction of the natural character of the park by avoiding rampant development throughout, and adding a silent sports center in the golf course/winter recreation portion of Wirth Park. By reconfiguring the 18-hole golf course and possibly re-purposing the land currently used for the Par-3 course, the Park Board can improve the golf operation while simultaneously creating a node for silent sports activities.

This node would include improved snowmaking and lights on a world class cross country trail system, a new, more accessible stadium area with a view on Theodore Wirth Parkway, expanded mountain bike trails, potentially a BMX course and/or a pump track, a permanent cyclocross course, disc golf and a silent sports welcome center with a great room space, a bike shop or station, maybe a coffee shop or restaurant, and office space for non-profit entities with a mission of reaching out to North Minneapolis youth in order to engage them in silent sport type activities.

These concepts are described in greater detail in "A Vision for Wirth," a document that provides a roadmap into the future for the Nordic Ski Foundation and for Wirth Park generally. Find this document on the web at cityoflakesloppet.com or at loppet.org. And please call or email with questions or thoughts. Now is the time to make our voices heard.

EVENTS

It has been another good year for Loppet events. (Please knock on wood now so as not to jinx ourselves). The



2010 Loppet was arguably the best ever, with nearly 7,000 participants and tens of thousands of spectators and fans – truly a Minneapolis festival of winter. The Tri-Loppet was a bit soggy (had to abbreviate the bike course because of flooding), but people had a wonderful time nonetheless. The Trail Loppet grew to nearly 600 participants and the new Nordic Walking event was generally well-received. With 30" of snow on the ground in December, Loppet registrations are way up and we are expecting record registration – with several events filling completely. In other words, we are waiting for the other shoe (ski) to drop. Hopefully it will not happen this year...

In addition to our regularly scheduled events, the Foundation is well on its way to regularly scheduled special events. With all of the natural snow and a great year of snowmaking, we are feeling very good about the Junior Olympics. We have a fantastic volunteer crew led by Mike Bono and Kate Ellis, but we could use even more volunteer help. Please contact our Volunteer Coordinator Mary Luoma (763-772-5017 or luomamc@yahoo.com) if you want to be part of the festivities.

We are also looking forward to hosting a Paralympics World Cup in 2012. Joe Walsh and Julie O'Neill of the U.S. Olympic Committee were recently in town to review the venue and start putting a plan together. This may lead to a partnership with the Courage Center, whose central office overlooks the Judy Lutter Loop. This will be our first foray into an international event and we are thoroughly looking forward to it.

FOUNDATION

With growth in so many directions, we have had to become a new organization. Up until the recent past we

*Bryn Mawr students smiling on skis.
Photo: Margaret Adelsman*

were essentially in start-up mode. We did whatever was necessary to help the volunteers do their creative work. Volunteers dreamed up events like the Luminary Loppet, snow sculpture contests, skijoring races, the Tri-Loppet and on and on... The dreaming up is fun, and implementing is even fun the first time or two. But routines are not quite as fun. And routines in an environment of chaos (read start-up mode) are even less fun.

That realization, combined with the additional resources available after a few good snow years in a row, hundreds of members and donors, grantors like UCare, the Pohlad Foundation and Medica and a dedicated cadre of sponsors, has led us to attempt a swift change in course. Our volunteers still lead our efforts. They manage volunteers, plan the events, create new aspects to our events and set a high bar generally. But we are trying to move away from 75-hour-volunteer work weeks for our leaders (oftentimes in addition to their “real” jobs). To do that, we have hired new staff like Mike Erickson, Mary Sellke and Keith Jones (see article on new employees - page 13), with the idea that their organizational skills can hopefully take some of the pressure off of the leadership team so that our talented volunteer leaders stay with us in the years to come.

The challenge will be to stay creative and fresh even while creating systems for some of our routine elements. But we feel pretty good about that. We are adding a national championships element to our skijoring event. We have tweaked the Rossignol Junior Loppet and the Finn Sisu Sprints and we are hoping to add an element or two to the Luminary Loppet. With expanded programming and the re-development of Wirth Park, we expect the Foundation to continue evolving over the years to come.

We hope you are along for the ride – or the ski. We expect it to be a good one.

LOPPET SKI CAMP

By Margaret Adelsman and John Swain

After the success of the past summer’s Loppet Adventure Camps, the Foundation is extending the youth adventure camp format to its first Loppet Ski Camp. The ski camp will be held over winter break at Theodore Wirth Park as a day camp for kids ages 7-13, offering a fun and active outlet on the days away from school as well as a convenient option for busy parents. The ski camp will serve as a useful tool for getting kids excited about skiing as well as improving their skills.

Like the summer adventure camps, the plan for recruiting kids is to draw from traditional skiing families as well as inner city youth from lower income families who may not be as familiar with skiing. In addition to reaching out to families who may have already participated in previous Loppet events, skiers will be recruited from the Foundation’s six elementary ski programs, the Anwatin Ski Team and from Farview Recreation Center in North Minneapolis. The hope is to bring together a well-rounded and diverse group of skiers, both in ability and in background, for a great week of skiing. For the newer skiers in particular, the camp may serve as a conduit for information on extended skiing opportunities for them above and beyond the local school grounds or neighborhood park. Once the possibilities are realized, skiers can be encouraged to consider the wide array of youth training opportunities available to them in Minneapolis, including the Minnesota Youth Ski League and various youth ski training groups. The Foundation hopes to serve as a connecting point for these newer skiers to the exciting racing and life-long skiing opportunities that exist.

The youth ski camp will take place from December 27 to December 30 at Theodore Wirth Park. The Foundation is expecting up to 60 youth ski participants. In the event there is no natural snow, the snowmaking loop will provide excellent skiing and challenging terrain for the camp. Kids will be split into small groups based on skiing experience and age and will rotate through stations throughout the day. Each station will be an activity or game designed to teach a skiing skill and develop enthusiasm for the sport. As breaks from the exertion of skiing and the cold, kids will have a chance to watch ski technique videos and warm up at bonfires with warm refreshments. They may also learn to wax skis and take a break on the sledding hill. Advanced skiers will learn how to perfect their skate technique, take longer “adventure” skis and participate in time trials.

Far beyond the standard “go out and ski a 1km loop,” ski camp director John Swain has pulled together a unique array of fun activities for skiers throughout the week, including downhill slalom skiing, playing on the ski-ter totter, ski ball, relay races, time trials, ski orienteering and long adventure skis on the extensive Theodore Wirth Park trail system, as snow conditions allow. Youth of all levels of ability will have a chance to improve on their own skill sets through the small group settings and fun atmosphere. As a special extension of the ski camp, the Minnesota Youth Ski League will sponsor a parallel “Keep up with the kids” adult camp from 9-12 each day. This mini-camp will teach coaching fundamentals to parents of younger skiers so that they can become integral parts of the ski learning experience.



Farview Ski team member Wauneen summer training at Adventure Camp - Photo: John Swain

As the Foundation approaches its first winter youth ski camp, the picture of broader youth program goals begins to emerge. Moving beyond ski programs that interact with area youth for a few months out of the year, the Foundation is now poised to offer a more continuous framework of youth adventure camps and athletic opportunities year round. From summer adventure camps to mountain bike adventures with Trips for Kids to Minne-Loppet youth programs and Winter Ski Camps, the Foundation can begin to work with area youth in a diverse and ongoing way. Not only can kids be excited and engaged about an experience they just had, they can be encouraged to continue that activity and become better at it through ongoing Foundation programs.

FOUNDATION NEEDS

As the Foundation grows, the Foundation's needs continue to grow. Some of the Foundation's specific needs include:

- Storage space in the Minneapolis/Golden Valley area;
- Take on a leadership role or just volunteer to help with the Junior Olympics – March 6 – 12.
- Help with the Tri-Loppet, Trail Loppet and Loppet (jobs big and small)
- Committee chairs or committee work for various committees, including:
 - Race Director for the Trail Loppet in September
 - Race Director for the Midwest Junior Championships in March
- Database management
 - Sponsors
 - Members
 - Contributors
 - Event participants
- Join the sponsorship committee
- Join the marketing committee
- Chair or volunteer with website committee (we have many websites):
 - Cityoflakesloppet.com
 - Tri-loppet.com
 - Trail-loppet.com
 - Jo2011.com
 - Mayorsxcchallenge.com
 - Midwestjuniorchampionships.com
 - Loppet.org
- Volunteer with Foundation youth programming
 - Elementary programs during the winter
 - Trips for Kids mountain bike rides during the summer

Interested in helping? Send an email to info@cityoflakesloppet.com or call Margaret Adelsman at 612 604-5332 or John Munger at 612 604-5331.



Campers and counselors with their medals - Photo: John Swain

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, 2010 – MAY 31, 2011

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The City of Lakes Nordic Ski Foundation is a 501(c)3 non-profit. Join the Foundation in order to support youth programming and trail development in Minneapolis.

Basic Level - Member entitled to newsletters, attend and vote at Annual Meeting, free high-resolution photo file, 5% discount at Finn Sisu and 10% discount on clothing at Gear West.

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Total Amount of Payment: \$ _____

(make checks payable to COLNSF)

Please return this form to:

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 1301 Theodore Wirth Parkway
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Call 612 604-5330 or email info@cityoflakesloppet.com for more information or to volunteer.

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U.S.S.A. HOMOLOGATION

The U.S. Ski & Snowboard Association (USSA) held a “homologation” seminar in the Twin Cities on the weekend of November 19-21. “Homologation” is the fancy word for certification for ski trails. To use a trail for national or international competition, a trail needs to be homologated. Generally, homologation standards are not set in stone, but are, instead, a series of guidelines on how wide a trail needs to be, how big the stadium needs to be, how many hills a course needs, how much total climb, etc. At the suggestion of Foundation volunteer Matt Laue, who serves on the USSA homologation committee, the Twin Cities homologation seminar was focused on the Hap & Judy competition loop at Wirth Park. Seminar participants were to homologate the course as an exercise as part of the seminar. Unfortunately for the participants, about ten inches of wet snow fell on the day of the exercise, ironically making it very difficult to ascertain the measurements necessary to homologate.

In the end, full homologation based on the seminar will probably not be possible. In general, feedback was mixed. The Norwegian homologation expert who led the seminar loved the sprint course and all agreed that the trails flowed well and were generally challenging enough. But the stadium was still deemed to be too small for large mass start races and there is not one single climb of at least 30 meters – the minimum necessary for an “A” climb. The result is that the course will probably be homologated for sprint races, lower level individual start events (in other words, not a World Cup type event) and lower level mass start classical races.

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 David Melcher
 Shanti Mittra
 Randy Mork
 Marnie Myhre
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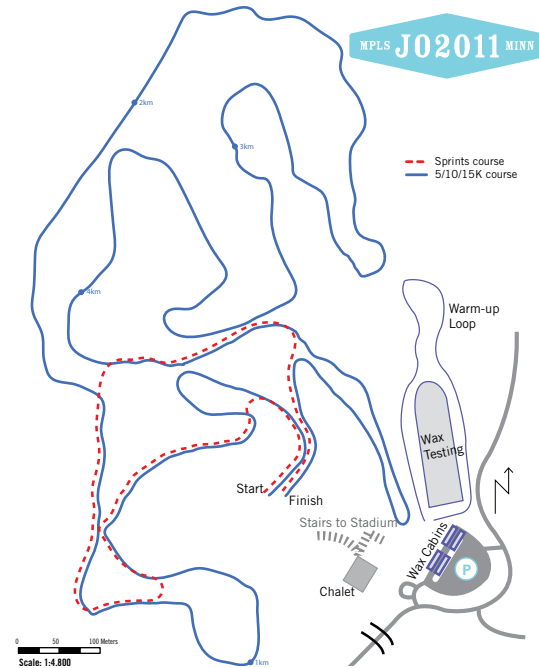
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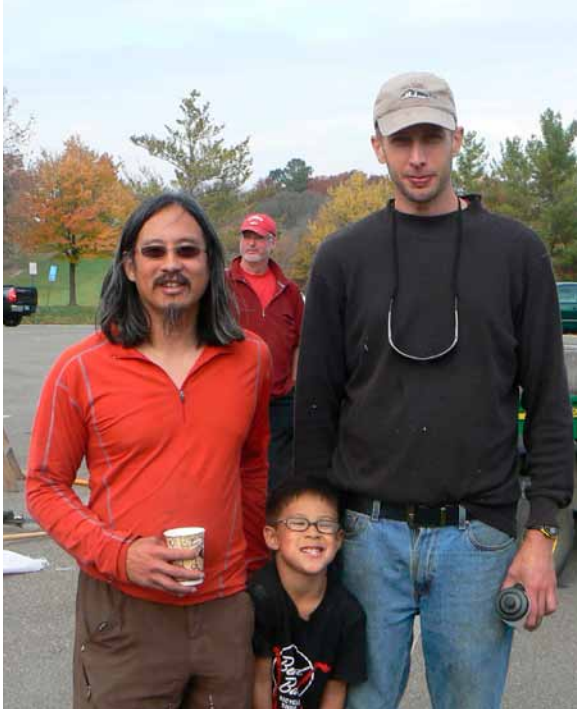


Junior Olympic Courses

To become fully homologated for any international type event, it may be necessary to move the stadium to a new location and add about three meters to the climb coming into the current stadium. This sounds daunting but may not be so bad in the end. There is a readily apparent new stadium site just outside of the Par-3 building that might work better for everyone. This stadium site would be accessible from the road, bigger, more flexible (could use the flatter Par-3/Back-40 trails or the Hap & Judy Trails), better for skiers with adaptive needs, and closer to a building and parking. And while it is a complex topic involving many moving pieces (see Vision for Wirth on www.loppet.org), it may be possible to add a hill or a bridge in the current stadium area that would make the current stadium-hill-climb into an A climb. With those changes, the course would be fully homologatable (how is that for a big word?).

2010 TRAIL WORK

2010 was another busy year for Foundation trails. Most of this year's work was done in preparation for the upcoming Junior Olympics. Perhaps the easiest way to describe the various improvements is to walk (or ski) through them in order.



2010 Trails Day Volunteers Kuan and Garrett Teoh and Damon Struyk (tall)

Starting at the Chalet itself, the Park Board and the Nordic Ski Foundation worked with Tree Trust to complete the stairway up to the stadium. Tree Trust extended the stairs at both the top and the bottom – and they now run from the employee parking lot adjacent to the Chalet all the way to the access road just below the stadium. This will make it much easier to get from the Chalet to the stadium for the Loppet, for the Junior Olympics (where coaches and athletes will need to quickly get from the waxing area in front of the Chalet to the stadium), for high school

races, snowboarding and for everyday use.

Once on the access road, you will see a small new parking lot. This lot is designed to provide easier access for coaches setting up races, for emergency vehicles, and for adaptive skiers who cannot climb 100+ stairs.

Next stop, the stadium itself. Another couple thousands yards of dirt later, the stadium is bigger and better than before. The stadium has been rotated counter-clockwise so that the near-90 degree corner as skiers exit the stadium is now a gentle curve. The bottle-neck at that curve has also been eliminated, leaving a stadium that should work well for the Junior Olympics.

Not visible yet is a new timing building, hard fencing and v-board. The Park Board is working with local architects (and Loppet sponsors) LHB Corporation on the design of the tiny new building, which will sit along the finish line, on the southern edge of the stadium. That building should be going in in mid-January, just in time for the Mayor's Challenge. Similarly, Foundation volunteers Jeff Richards, Piotr Bednarski, Mike and John Kosowski, and Brandan Ostroot constructed new fencing and the Foundation purchased new "Loppet blue" v-board. Once up, the stadium should be very pretty...

Now skiing, on the left as one exits the stadium is a

new cut-off for the Junior Olympics sprints courses. With the cut-off skiers will skip roughly the first 250 meters of the course as it winds through the relatively flat woods to the north of the stadium.

Skiing forward into those woods, the swooping left-hand turn into the woods is now wider with less of a bottleneck.

The course is unchanged for the next kilometer plus, until reaching the catwalk coming back from the Par-3. The catwalk was widened in order to accommodate the nine-meters required by FIS for hosting national and international events (up-hill sections need to be nine meters wide). Similarly, the last climb – from the tenth fairway into the stadium – was also widened to accommodate FIS requirements and to make snowmaking a less arduous process.

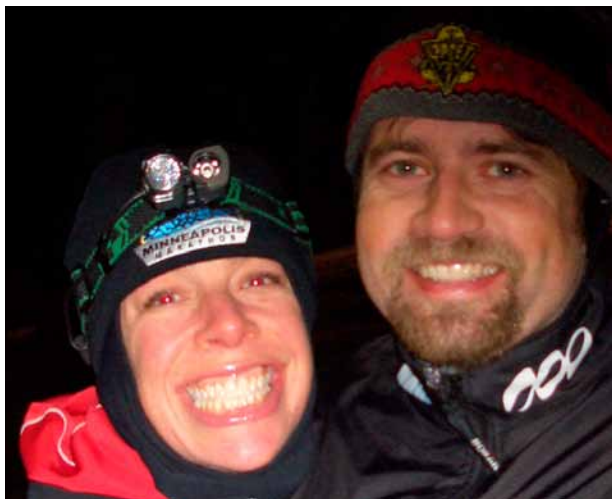
Skipping to the Judy Loop (the trail section extending toward Courage Center and Golden Valley Road that forms the second half of the Junior Olympics competition loop)... Last spring the Foundation discovered that the Hap & Judy competition loop was about 500 meters short of a five kilometer loop. This summer the Foundation added three trail segments: the first extended the trail along Bassett's Creek so that it now comes out of the woods between the 11th green and a small foot-bridge over Bassett Creek. The second proceeds up a large hill on the east side of the 11th fairway and passes through the woods overlooking the creek. The last segment takes skiers through another section of woods, this time on the west side of the 11th fairway. Together, these changes make for a better, more challenging and less golf-course-like experience.



Craig Rudd - Course Chief - Competing in the 2010 Loppet Sprints - Photo: Steve Kotvis, f/go Photography

TRAILS DAY 2010

Another very successful trails day this fall. More than 120 volunteers worked more than 400 hours to improve the trails. Volunteers trimmed brush, raked and leveled dirt, picked rocks, planted grass seed, placed erosion control mats, and generally buffed the trails out in preparation for winter. Course Chief Craig Rudd led the operations. "We accomplished a lot. I'm always surprised how many people show up to help out. I guess it really shows that people care about the trails."



Mary Sellke and Mike Erickson at the Fall/Winter Loppet Ski Club
Photo: Mike Erickson

WELCOME NEW STAFF

This year the Foundation added three new part-time staff members: the very talented Mike Erickson, Mary Sellke and Keith Jones.

Mike has been working with the Foundation for years. He has been the Loppet's Finish Line Coordinator for the past several years and, in addition, has coordinated sponsor benefits for the past two years. This year Mike expanded his role; he is now Chief of Operations. He manages all the Foundation's various equipment and "stuff." Examples include the Trips for Kids bicycles, trailer and shed, the Foundation's snowmobile, 1,200+ buckets for making luminaries, the "water cow," 1,000 feet of fencing for the Junior Olympics... this list goes on and on...

"I'm in charge of all the Foundation's back-end stuff – all the things that you would never think of but that are critical to making the Loppet, the other events and the programming happen," says Erickson. "I like the title G.L.B.S. – General Loppet B___ S___," Mike adds, with his dry sense of humor.

Mary is the new Sponsorship Coordinator. Her job is to work with the sponsors to make sure that they have a good experience. Mary comes with the cachet of being the event organizer for Surly Beer. She organizes Surlyfest and Darkness Day.

New to skiing, Mary is enrolled in the Fall/Winter group of the Loppet Ski Club. "I've been doing marathons and triathlons the last few years – this whole skiing thing is definitely something new – but I've dedicated myself to taking down the Loppet this year," she says with a laugh. Mary recently completed an ironman triathlon in just twelve hours – so Caitlin Compton – beware!

So far Mary has been trying to decipher Sales Force – the Foundation's attempt to organize its sponsorship

information all in one "easily accessible" place. "We are not quite there yet with Sales Force, but we're trying," adds Mary.

Keith Jones is trying to tackle Foundation communications. With the growing amount of activities, kids' programs and advocacy that the Foundation is engaged in, and the growing number of outlets to disperse information (web sites, social media, newsletters, emails and print media...) keeping up on information dissemination is a big job.

Keith has been volunteering with the Foundation literally since day one. "Keith helped shovel snow for the very first Loppet course – when we were stuck on the Chain of Lakes," recalls Director John Munger. Over the past several years Keith has coordinated all of the Foundation's print media, literally saving thousands of dollars on brochures and mailings.

Mike, Mary and Keith are looking forward to a great year and we are excited to have them as part of the Loppet community.

BRIAN ANDERSON PASSED AWAY THIS YEAR

The Loppet community lost a strong supporter and friend this past summer. Brian skied every Loppet until he contracted Leukemia and was forced to sit out the 2010 event. Not only did he ski every Loppet, through his work as editor-in-chief of Mpls-St. Paul Magazine Brian was the first sponsor of the Loppet – way back before the Loppet was anything but a wild idea. Through the years "Brian advised and counseled us at every turn," commented Foundation executive director John Munger. "He even invited me to attend events at the Swedish Institute, in hopes that the Loppet could find additional sponsors among the Scandinavians. Unfortunately, I wasn't Swedish enough for that crowd."

And even after passing away, Brian has continued to help the Foundation. Brian had designated that \$25,000 of his estate pass to the Nordic Ski Foundation. While the Board has not yet determined how to allocate those funds, rest assured that Brian's spirit lives on every time we take to the snow...

*John Schmitt continued
from front page,*

Because John has been so special to the Foundation for so many years we organized a little surprise for him. Kate Ellis and John Harrer hosted a party at their home. Our intern Bridget Adelman put together a slide show and people gathered for the big moment. We were all in for a happy surprise though... It turned out that John's doctors were wrong. He does not have ALS. They determined, instead, that he has had Lyme's disease for the past fifteen years. He is now on a six-month course of antibiotics, he is feeling good and is planning to do the announcing in full force once again this year!

John's many friends and family contributed over \$10,000 toward the John Schmitt Fund, which helped with the completion of the Hap & Judy Lutter Competition Trails for the Junior Olympics. To commemorate John's great work, a plaque honoring John Schmitt will be placed on the new timing and announcing building going in for the Junior Olympics this winter. John's friend John Lavelle playfully calls this the "Schmitt House!"

Stone Johnson Community School, Loring Community School and Bryn Mawr Elementary, Cityview and Elizabeth Hall will complete a circle of North Minneapolis schools connecting families and students with cross country skiing.

Principal Mardella Milton at Cityview and Physical education teachers Jacki Wincek and Mark Schuck have showed great enthusiasm for bringing the ski program to their location. "Our students are not offered this type of unique opportunity very often," commented Ms. Wincek. "We are very excited to work with the ski program and get our kids outside in the winter."



*Nellie Stone Johnson
kids enjoying early
season snow
Photo: Margaret
Adelsman*

Cityview offers a large athletic field for students to get the feel of skiing and will also take advantage of Perkins Hill Park immediately to the north of the school. Foundation groomers Marty Wandzel and John Gronquist will provide mobile grooming to many of the elementary programs this year, including Cityview and Elizabeth Hall. As a result, students won't have to make their own tracks but can experience Nordic skiing on groomed trails at each location.

Elizabeth Hall Elementary sits just a few miles south of Cityview, also in the Highway 94 corridor. Physical Education teacher Bill Bryand and Principal Bennice Young have also supported the Foundation's efforts to bring to the ski program to their elementary students. At the urging of the Pohlad Foundation's Terry Egge, who also volunteers her time at many of these schools, Principal Young sought out information about the ski program. A few phone calls later, Foundation staff began to roll equipment carts into the school in preparation for the fast-approaching first day of the program. Students at Hall will ski right on the school property, taking advantage of a small but tree-lined stretch right outside the school door.

The addition of Cityview and Elizabeth Hall to returning school Nellie Stone Johnson brings to three the number of elementary ski programs supported by the Pohlad Foundation. This support allows the Founda-

tion to focus its efforts on a total of six schools that lie in relatively close proximity to its "Home Base" at Theodore Wirth Park. The combined elementary efforts will also include UCare-sponsored programs at Pillsbury and Bryn Mawr as well as a 2nd year program at Loring Elementary. All schools will receive ski coaching instruction for students from a select number of 2nd through 5th grade classes. They will additionally receive a UCare inspired curriculum of short nutrition lessons previously used with success by the Foundation to encourage healthy eating as well as an active lifestyle. As in past years, students will be encouraged throughout the programs to set their sights on the Minne-Loppet youth event on February 5, 2011.

With recent discussions surrounding North Minneapolis schools and the potential restructuring process of elementary schools as well as high schools, the significance of bringing cross country ski programs to schools such as Cityview and Elizabeth Hall has taken on a new light. For students and families, discussions of school closures and shifting boundaries can bring feelings of divisiveness and uncertainty. The Foundation's Minne-Loppet ski program offers an avenue for positive inroads in these school communities, emphasizing our concern for students' well-being and long-term health outcomes. Each student can find a level of accomplishment that is theirs alone. They can experience something entirely new to them or build on skills that they may already have. Coaches can share with these new skiers their own love of the sport and understanding of the challenges associated with trying something new. And ultimately, we can all celebrate the successes of these children, large and small as they experience the wonders of a Minnesota winter through cross country skiing.

LOPPET ADVENTURE CAMPS

This past summer the Foundation tried something new: Adventure Camps for kids ages 9-13 years old. Mountain biking, roller-skiing, orienteering, paddling, ski waxing, hill-bounding, capture-the-flag, gardening, nature hikes, swimming and even Ultimate Frisbee – the camps had it all. One-week day camps, the idea was to introduce youngsters to a variety of lifetime sports – all in Theodore Wirth Park.

Thanks to a late start on advertising, the camps started slow, with only seven kids attending the first camp. The second camp had 15 kids and by the third camp we were turning kids away.

"The kids really loved these camps," commented Program Director Margaret Adelsman. "Whether boys or girls, there was something for everyone. Some kids excelled at mountain biking, other at orienteering – but everyone was good at something."

Margaret was the key to the success of the camps this summer. She procured a \$5,000 grant from the Finish Line Youth Foundation for scholarships. This allowed the Nordic Ski Foundation to recruit kids from all walks of life. Thanks to Louis Oatis at Farview Park, the Foundation was able to recruit a number of youth from North Minneapolis. Louis picked the kids up at Farview each morning and dropped them off again at the end of the day. While the kids were initially attracted to the program by the promise of mountain biking, they ended up loving all of the activities. By the end of the week, they knew the ABC's of lifetime sports and were ready to go on to bigger and better things.

"I can't say enough about how excited these kids were with the whole thing," said Louis. "I love what the Nordic Ski Foundation is doing, and look forward to the next Loppet experience." [Louis has volunteered to drive the Farview van for the new Farview Ski Team as well.]

The mix of kids was great for everyone. The campers were split up into groups of six to eight kids with a counselor assigned to each group. The various groups really bonded together. Games like capture-the-flag and going through the various adventures together helped with team building, so the kids who started together really got to know each other by the end of camp.

In the long term, the hope is that the Adventure Camps will continue to grow. "We see the Adventure Camps as a great way to bring new people into the silent sports world," commented Adventure Camp Director John Swain. "Whether lower-income or in an ethnic minority group, boy or girl, there were a number of kids who had never been exposed to these activities before. Hopefully they will be joining ski teams, going mountain biking, or becoming an active person for life after participating in these camps."

For the last camp this year the Foundation worked with Jamie McBride and MaryLynn Pulscher of the Park Board. Jamie provided canoes and paddling instructors and a naturalist to talk to the kids about their outdoors experiences. They even helped the kids make fresh snacks from the JD Rivers Garden Project. For instance, one group of kids made home-made salsa from the garden that everyone had an opportunity to enjoy. The Foundation looks forward to working with MaryLynn and Jamie again this next summer.

The plan is to run four camps next summer. Visit www.loppet.org for more details or to sign up your child for one of the camps.

LOPPET SKI CLUBS GROW AND EXPAND...

A few short years ago the Foundation had one ski club – with just over 20 hardy members. Now, after three good snow years with snowmaking to guarantee skiing, there are about 50 members in the Introductory group and another 50 in the Fall/Winter program. It helps to have quality coaches and facilitators like Tom Anderson, Marc Beitz, Gene Kay and Mike Bash, among many other generous souls that have volunteered their time to help others learn our sport.

This year the Mommsens – Kathy and Tony – decided that they wanted to have a night when they could bring people out classical skiing. "We mostly just want an opportunity to ski with a great group of people, maybe with a little instruction now and again," says the ever positive Tony.

The Foundation set this up as a benefit of membership; become a member and join the classic ski group. The classic ski group meets Thursday evenings. Now there are opportunities to ski with a Loppet group most days: Monday evenings with the Introductory group, Tuesdays with the Fall/Winter group, Thursdays with the Mommsens' classic group and Saturday and Sunday long skis with the Ski Club groups.

FOUNDATION GOES FACEBOOK...

The Nordic Ski Foundation has three Facebook pages – one for the Foundation generally (www.facebook.com/loppet) one for the upcoming 2011 Junior Olympics (search for 2011 Junior Olympics) and one for the City of Lakes chapter of Trips for Kids (www.facebook.com/tripsforkidscityoflakes). To keep up on all the latest and to impress your friends with your internet savvy, become a facebook fan of one, two or all three pages. Invite friends to become fans, post pictures or stories.



Kathy and Tony Mommsen



John Swain teaching technique to the Fall/Winter Loppet Ski Club group

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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).



Orienteering at Adventure Camp
Photo: John Swain

CITY OF LAKES NORDIC SKI FOUNDATION CALENDAR

- January 22-23, 2011 - Mayor's Challenge
- February 5-6, 2011 - City of Lakes Loppet Festival Weekend
- March 6 - 12, 2011 - Junior Olympics
- June 25, 2011 - Tri-Loppet
- September 10, 2011 - Trail Loppet



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