



CITY OF LAKES

# Nordic Ski FOUNDATION

YOUTH . EVENTS . TRAILS

## MEDICA FOUNDATION GRANT GIVES ANDERSEN STUDENTS AN OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN LIFETIME ACTIVITIES

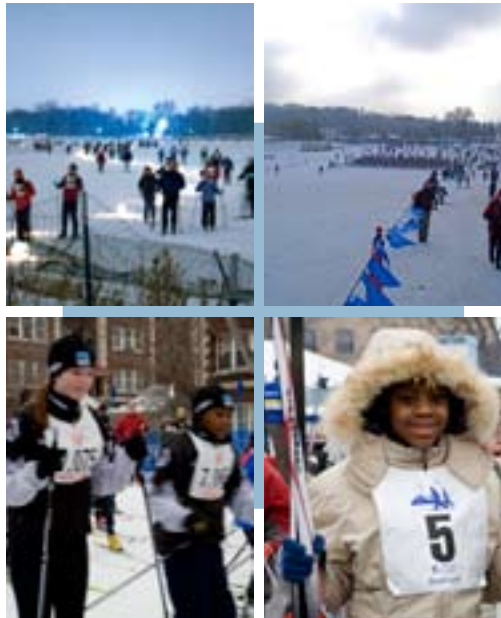
Between the success of the Foundation's youth programs and its emerging off-season events, the Foundation decided the time was right to embark on a new road. This spring the Foundation teamed with the Medica Foundation to start new programs: Andersen TRIs, Stewart Park TRIs, Andersen Runs and Stewart Park Runs.

The idea was to emulate the Foundation's youth ski programs: teach the kids the skills necessary to try new activities and then culminate their learning with a Foundation event. In this case, the Andersen and Stewart Park TRIs programs focus on paddling, trail running and mountain biking, with the students having an opportunity to com-

*Medica Foundation continued on page 10*



*Andersen TRIs program participant mountain biking at Theodore Wirth Park - Photo Caitlin Compton*



## ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PROGRAMS EXPAND AND IMPROVE

2007-2008 saw the Foundation's youth programming expand and improve. The Foundation added a program at Pillsbury Elementary in Northeast Minneapolis and improved all of its programming in various ways.

Much of this expansion and improvement can be attributed to UCare Minnesota. UCare has partnered with the Foundation on its youth programming for the past few years – but this year UCare stepped up its

*School Programs continued on page 2,*

## NOTES FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

*By John Munger*

On a number of fronts our organization is in much better shape now than it was just one year ago. Our events have matured and, with our first "normal" winter, we had our best Loppet ever. Our youth programs have grown in numbers and in breadth, and our finances are in their best shape ever.

### THE LOPPET

One year ago the Loppet was coming off another rough year – bitterly cold temperatures made for a make-the-best-of-it event.



This year, we celebrated what was arguably the best Loppet ever. We had 3,300 registrations in the various events. While we always have areas where we can improve, our participants were happy and, with events like the Caribou Coffee Luminary Loppet, we made important contributions to the community.

### FINANCES

One year ago the organization's finances were in disarray and our accounting system was in a shambles as we were moving from one system to another. We had no money

*Director Notes continued on page 5,*

## POST-EVENT SURVEYS PROVIDE IMPORTANT INFORMATION, REINFORCEMENT...

Over the past year the Foundation has begun to use participant surveys as a method of information gathering. We started with the Trail Loppet and then, this spring, did a more elaborate survey after the Loppet itself.

Both of the surveys were useful. With the Trail Loppet, we dis-

covered that our participants loved the idea of the event and really enjoyed most of the trails. But the participants also had some good constructive criticism, which has led to the fine-tuning of the Trail Loppet course. For instance, the course has been altered to avoid any running along Highway 55 and the start and finish areas will both be on the picnic pavilion side of Glenwood in the Wirth Beach area.

The Loppet survey was even more useful. We used the advanced

*Surveys continued on page 7*

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*School Programs continued from front page,*  
support – both financially and through a developing partnership with the Foundation. UCare fully sponsored two programs this year – one at Bryn Mawr Elementary and one at Pillsbury. Equally important, UCare brought its expertise on health and nutrition to the programs. The Foundation has always tried to emphasize overall health, but UCare brought a real focus on nutrition – not just for the students but for their entire families.

The idea of focusing on nutrition was great – but the execution was truly inspired. Rather than preaching to the students and their families, the programs took a different approach: present the nutrition choices in a context that the students really cared about – skiing. Thus, the coaches provided the students with UCare-made recipe cards with items like:

- Skier’s Breakfast
- Skiers’ Lunch
- Skier’s Snack
- Skier’s Salad

With this program, instead of telling students to eat whole grains or fruit and vegetables (a general proposition without a specific example) in order to improve their health (an intangible benefit) students were provided with specific recipes that would provide a recognizable benefit – they could become a better skier. The recipe cards were a hit. Numerous students came to class enthusiastically saying that they had tried the recipes.

“I was really surprised at the kids that came in excited after making the recipes,” said Anita Chavez, the physical education in-



*Anita Chavez at the Bryn Mawr Skis banquet - Photo by Eric O’Link*

structor at Bryn Mawr.

At the end of the program, UCare sponsored a banquet at each school. Both the students and their families were invited. Loppet sponsor Divine Swine Catering provided a nutritious meal that was low in fat and included both fruits and vegetables. After the meal, Ghita Worcester and Dan Ness of UCare presented each student with a certificate of completion and a UCare scarf to commemorate their efforts.

“These programs were a big positive for our students and their families,” commented Mark Trumper, an English-as-a-Second Language (ESL) teacher at Pillsbury. “From the skiing, to the coaches (Kim Rudd and Jenni O’Link) to the recipes, to the Sons of Norway Minne-Loppet and the banquet, our kids really got a lot out of this program. We look forward to working with the Foundation and with UCare again next year...”

Next year promises to be even better – with plans in place for a pre- and post-test to better understand how much the kids have learned. (As always, volunteers are wanted. Volunteers help make the programs better by allowing the coaches to give more individual attention to all of the students. To find out more about volunteering, send an email to [info@cityoflakesloppet.com](mailto:info@cityoflakesloppet.com) or call the Loppet Hotline at 612 604-5330.)

**ANWATIN SKI TEAM TAKES BIG STEPS FORWARD**

In its second year, the Anwatin Ski Team grew in numbers, skills and fun. In fact, the program was so popular this year that it was necessary to limit the number of kids participating.

“There was a lot of excitement for the ski team this year – we probably could have had 30 to 35 kids this year,” said Coach Jenni O’Link, “but we decided that we could only do a good job with twenty –so we ended up taking the first 20 kids that signed up.”

The skiers really improved as the year went on. By the time the students skied in the Rossignol Junior Loppet they were skiing well – with several placing high in the event.





*UCare's Ghita Worcester presenting a certificate of graduation to a Pillsbury Skis student*

Anwatin results included:

- Calvin Lietch-Lodge (3rd place, 8th grade division) (son of Loppet Charles Lodge, owner of Loppet sponsor Chiang Mai Thai);
- Sylvia Reilly (6th place, 7th grade division) (Sylvia skied at Bryn Mawr Elementary as well);
- Matt Vilalta (5th place, 6th grade division);
- Frank Rypa (4th place, 8th grade division);
- Harrison Deever (5th place, 8th grade division);
- Sam Shaheen (6th place, 6th grade division);
- Nash Meeker (7th place, 6th grade division); and
- Woody Varberg (7th place, 7th grade division).

And some of the Anwatin kids and their parents even volunteered at the Bryn Mawr aid station, just before the Loppet race course crosses Interstate 394 to go onto Brownie Lake.

The Ski Team promises to have another good year in 2008-9. However, with coaches Jenni O'Link and Kineta Lyde moving on to full time jobs (Jenni with Wilderness Inquiry and Kineta as a health and physical education teacher), the Foundation is looking for new coaches. Have a little time on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons from late-November through early-February? Send an email to [info@cityoflakesloppet.com](mailto:info@cityoflakesloppet.com) or call the Loppet Hotline at 612 604-5330.



*Start of the Minne-Loppet - Photo by Norbert Marklin*

## FOUNDATION LOOKING TO HOST 2011 JUNIOR NATIONALS

The Junior Nationals (formerly Junior Olympics or J.O.s) cross country ski event comes back to the Midwest in 2011. The Junior Nationals is a one-week-long ski festival for some of the best young (ages 19 and under) skiers in the country. Junior Nationals is a big deal. 500 skiers and their families descend upon the chosen venue for eight to ten days, with skiers competing in up to four races during their stay.

Bids for the event are due by September 1. The Foundation is hoping to put together a strong bid for the event, with the idea being to run the events primarily on the snow-making loop at Theodore Wirth Park. The United States Ski and Snowboard Association (USSA) is the sanctioning body for the event. They will want to see that we have enough vertical (difficult hills) and enough snowmaking to make Theodore Wirth practical for a March event date. The hope is that the Foundation will have a plan in place for additional snowmaking capability by the end of the summer...

USSA will also want to see that we have an organization capable of putting on a high-quality event. For that, we will need volunteers... Interested in helping to make the Junior Nationals a reality? Send an email to [info@cityoflakesloppet.com](mailto:info@cityoflakesloppet.com) or call the Loppet Hotline at 612 604-5330.

## A BRIDGE OVER WIRTH PARKWAY?

For several years the Foundation has talked about erecting a bridge over Theodore Wirth Parkway between the Eloise Butler Trails and the Norm Oakvik/Quaking Bog Trails. A few years ago Marc Beitz and Bill Dossett even met with a bridge building contractor to obtain a cost estimate for such a bridge. The idea is much closer to reality now. The Foundation has identified a federal trails grant administered through the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. The grant matches non-federal funds. In other words, we are half-way there...



*Bridge over Parkway near the Loppet Start*

So why is this bridge necessary? The bridge would connect the Norm Oakvik/Quaking Bog Trails with the Eloise Butler Trails – making for continuous skiing from Uptown all the way to the Wirth Beach parking lot on Glenwood – some 17 kilometers of skiing... The bridge would eliminate a potentially dangerous road crossing and a bridge would eliminate the need for the Park Board groomers to cross Wirth Parkway on the road, which is bad on their equipment. And don't forget summer... Walkers, hikers and runners would have a safe and pleasant method of crossing the parkway. Park Board staff even likes the idea, as a bridge would help deter heavier traffic from the parkway.

The deadline to apply for the federal grant comes next March. So there is plenty of time to obtain matching funding – if work starts soon. Interested in helping make this bridge a reality? Send an email to [info@cityoflakesloppet.com](mailto:info@cityoflakesloppet.com) or call the Loppet hotline at 612 604-5330.

## 2008 LOPPET AN AWARD-WINNING EVENT

This year's Loppet was a two-time Skiers' Choice award recipient at the April 5, 2008 Minnesota Nordic Ski Association (MNSA)/Minnesota Skinnyski Series (MiSSeries) Awards Banquet. The MiSSeries Skiers' Choice awards include Best Overall Event, Best Grooming and Most Heroic Effort. The award-winners are chosen by skiers in the MiSSeries 158K Club. These are people who skied in all of the MiSSeries events - and thus, have adequate grounds to judge the best events. (See [www.minnesotaskinnyskieries.com](http://www.minnesotaskinnyskieries.com) for more information.)

The Loppet won the Most Heroic Effort award in both 2006 and 2007 - after pulling off the Loppet despite extreme warm weather (2006) and extreme cold weather (2007). Despite the cold in 2007 the Loppet also won the Best Overall Event award when it was able to put on a high-quality event with a good course in a very marginal winter. This year, the Loppet shares the Best Overall Event award with the Minnesota Finlandia - after the 158K Club members gave the events equal ratings in that category.

Equally exciting for the Loppet event organizers, this year the Loppet won the Best Grooming award for the first time. "Winning the Best Grooming award is quite an honor," commented Chief Groomer Dave Bergstrom of the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board. "This was a tough year - we had basically no snow in January, then it was 45 degrees with rain and then we had sub-zero temperatures the whole week before the race. Fortunately, we have a dedicated crew, excellent equipment and great volunteers to shovel in the bad spots."

"We are really excited about winning this award," agreed Course Chiefs Bill Dossett and Craig Rudd. "We have been working together with the Park Board on this course for six years now and we feel like we have most of the kinks worked out now."

"I'm just happy we did not win the Most Heroic Effort award again this year," said Foundation President Kate Ellis. "Our volunteers put in a tremendous effort every year - and this year was no different - but we plan



*City of Lakes Loppet received the MiSSeries 2008 Best Grooming Award  
Photo Credit Wade Webber*

this event all year and it was nice to be able to run the event as planned..."

## LOPPET TO ADD NEW EVENT – THE ICE LOPPET

An oval of ice. And lots of bikes – with studded tires. That's the concept behind the City of Lakes Loppet's newest event – the Ice Loppet.

There are several reasons to add this event:

- Encourage winter bike riding;
- Bring a new crowd of spectators;
- Attract sponsors from the bicycle world;
- Fun!

While the Ice Loppet is in its initial planning phases, the idea behind the event is to set up an oval of ice in the protected Lagoon area between Lake of the Isles and Lake Calhoun. The exact format has not been determined, but it may include several heats with the top riders advancing to the finals – which would take place shortly before the start of the Skijoring Loppet – hopefully meaning more spectators for both events. Penn Cycle has stepped up to sponsor the event – thus, the Penn Cycle Ice Loppet or the Penn Ice-Cycle Loppet. As part of its sponsorship, Penn will offer a seminar on winter riding and the Foundation will set up a bike corral to encourage people to ride to all of the Loppet's events.

Interested in working on the Ice Loppet? As an event in its infancy, the Ice Loppet needs someone interested in helping to mold it into a mainstay of a Minnesota winter. To help with this event, call or email John Munger at 612 604-5331 or at [director@cityoflakesloppet.com](mailto:director@cityoflakesloppet.com).

## BRYN MAWR SKIS 2008

*by Margaret Adelsman*

The City of Lakes Nordic Ski Foundation once again partnered with Bryn Mawr Elementary, North Memorial Medical Center, and the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board to bring a youth nordic ski program to the school's physical education classes ("Bryn Mawr Skis"). A special addition this year was the support of UCare, who provided specially designed skier menu cards that were handed out to the students each week. In addition, UCare sponsored the first post-season banquet for students and their families in the school cafeteria. This was well-attended and a real highlight for families, helping them appreciate how much their children had enjoyed the skiing experience.

The Bryn Mawr Skis program typically kicks off in the last week of November with introduction to the sport of nordic skiing, equipment, and technique. As soon as the snow flies, students are brought outdoors to the adjacent Theodore Wirth trails, groomed by Minneapolis Park and Recreation employees. The older students have now been in the program for a year or two and are ready to take off on the hills. The nearby loops also provide an excellent introductory area for new and younger skiers, just getting the feel for being on skis.

Coaches Margaret Adelsman and Jenni O'Link met with students one day per week, under the guidance of teacher Anita Chavez. Students began each class period with information from North Memorial family practice physicians, who covered various physiology topics, illustrating how exercise relates to many aspects of an individual's health. Dr. Mark Bixby delivered the highlight topic of skijoring, demonstrating this fun activity with his own dog and even letting the kids go for a spin.



*Bryn Mawr Skiers at the 2008 Minne-Loppet*



The second portion of class time focused on learning and implementing the basics of cross country skiing. Students practiced basic technique and balance in the available open area but always wanted to head right for the woods and hills as soon as possible. The transformation of student ability from the first class to the last was quite impressive, and it was difficult to get everyone back inside for their next class after they were having so much fun. Ms. Chavez as well as class instructors, North Memorial physicians, and local volunteer skiers would provide wonderful assistance when the kids were outside, making sure that students at all ability levels had adult support when needed.

The program wound up with the opportunity for all of the students to ski in the Sons of Norway Minne-Loppet Kids Event on February 2, 2008 in Uptown. Thanks in large part to the heroic efforts of Ms. Chavez [who recently won a teacher-of-the-year award herself], a record contingent of Bryn Mawr students - over 70- turned out for the kids' race. The weather offered comfortable conditions for the many parent chaperones, and kids were also able to enjoy the fun activities of the nearby SuperCarnival prior to their race. It was a proud moment to watch the students, all sporting bright yellow neck warmers, standing at the front of the starting line with faces of determination.

The Bryn Mawr Skis program is a unique opportunity to positively influence young people about health and fitness. Specifically, the program is designed to encourage fitness and combat America's obesity epidemic by introducing Bryn Mawr Elementary students to cross country skiing, a life-long sport, as well as to introduce them to wise nutritional choices through the efforts of UCare. The program received tremendous support from Bryn Mawr families and from Bryn Mawr faculty, a critical component to making the program a success. The Foundation looks forward to years of bringing smiles to Bryn Mawr students on skis.



*Foundation Board Member and volunteer Dr. Mark Bixby showing the Bryn Mawr kids how to skijor*

*Director Notes continued from front page,* anyway and we were unable to pay all of our employees until the end of the year. Now, under the leadership of Scott Gislason ("Giz") we are just completing the long and arduous process of moving to a new accounting system and, for the first time ever, have a good idea of where we are really at. And, I am happy to report, we are actually able to pay the bills and, for probably the first time, we are in a position to make meaningful budget choices.

#### WEBSITES

One year ago, the face of the organization on the web was mediocre, at best. Our various websites were not well connected, did not match in look and feel and were generally in a sad shape. Today, thanks to the talented and hard-working trio of Molly Hillstrom, Mitch Vars and Willy Lee, we are working toward a unified web interface, with superior graphics, user-friendly organization, and meaningful links between our various sites (cityoflakesloppet.com and tri-loppet.com are complete, trail-loppet.com will be revamped soon and loppet.org should be ready to go by this fall).



*The new face of www.cityoflakesloppet.com*

#### YEAR-ROUND EVENTS

One year ago the organization had one main event - the Loppet - and a few other somewhat half-formed events - the Tri- and Trail Loppet. That appears to be changing. The Tri-Loppet had some 350 participants last year and, after two years of trying to mark a half-marathon course

that has some 200+ intersections, we have begun to figure out how to make the Trail

Loppet into a great event as well. Putting the three events together, we now have a unique and interesting race series with sponsor support: the Hoigaard's Challenge. Complete all three events in the same year and receive a commemorative pin. Do well in all three and compete for age class recognition or a trip to Bearskin Lodge. With three bigger events and smaller events like the Roller Rally and Trails Day, the Foundation now has some balance. Not all of our eggs are in one basket and sponsors are able to reach their audience throughout the year, rather than only on Loppet weekend.

#### YOUTH PROGRAMS

One year ago our youth programs were strong but not as financially stable or as good. We served about 180 children. Now our youth programs serve some 350 Minneapolis students. We teach kids how to ski, mountain bike, trail run and paddle.

We teach them about fitness and nutrition and we expose them to our various events as motivators and rewards. (See article on new programs). And with grants from organizations like UCare and Medica, the youth programs are not as financially dependent on our events as they have been in years past.

#### SPONSORS

Over the past year our pool of sponsors has grown deeper and more diverse. With the wise leadership and counsel of people like Mark Raderstorf, we have added sponsors like Subaru, American Family Insurance, Whole Foods Markets and Lennox, we have retained almost all of our past sponsors, and we have grown our relationships with sponsors like Hoigaard's (sponsoring the Hoigaard's Challenge in addition to the Hoigaard's Classic), Medica (sponsoring our summer youth programs in addition to remaining a major sponsor of the Loppet) and Caribou Coffee (sponsoring the Challenge events as well as the Caribou Coffee Luminary Loppet).

#### OFFICE SPACE

In past years the Foundation has officed in imperfect settings. For its first few years, the Foundation had no real office - and essentially borrowed space and equipment from Smith Parker, the law firm where I

worked. Then the Foundation moved into a windowless hallway in Uptown. Work was possible, but it was hardly cheery or practical for an organization with a growing amount of stuff... In November of 2007 the organization entered into an agreement with the Park Board: the Foundation would help manage the Wirth Winter Recreation Area and, in exchange, would have an opportunity to office out of the old manager's apartment in the Theodore Wirth Chalet. While there continues to be substantial work involved with fixing the apartment, the location has been ideal for our events, for helping to manage the Winter Recreation Area and the snowmaking project, and even for our youth programming.

### SNOWMAKING

While the snowmaking venture has not gone exactly as planned timing-wise, the electrical system has been upgraded, there are now eight water hydrant/electrical hook-up locations, two high-pressure booster pumps, four snowguns and a two+ kilometer trail ready for snowmaking. Four of the electric hook-up locations still need to be connected, but the electrical wire has been run in conduit and the hook-ups should be complete soon after the ground dries out this spring.

### TRAILS

The differences here are less dramatic than in other areas – but probably equally as important. One year ago the ski trail system still had numerous tough downhill sections and a few too many uphill “walls” (steep uphill where it is generally not possible to stride up the hill). With some creative re-routing and another great effort on Trails Day, two of the uphill walls and three of the tough downhills were either eliminated or significantly improved. At this point, only two tough downhills (i.e., downhills with turns in the middle of them) remain – and both of them are slated to be fixed this off-season. But there is more than subtraction coming for next year. If all goes as planned, the trail system will expand by about 2.5 kilometers (1.5K added once snowmaking loop is complete and another kilometer added through creative use of peninsulas surrounding Cedar Lake). By next winter, the Freestyle course should measure about 34 kilometers, with about 24 kilometers coming in Wirth Park – be-



*Sons of Norway Minne-Loppet skiers line up at the start - Photo Norbert Marklin*

fore skiers hit Brownie Lake.

### COMMUNITY SUPPORT

With more than 225 members, 700 volunteers and 5,000 annual participants, the Foundation has a significant level of community support. Two things have changed in the past year. First, the controversies with a few Bryn Mawr individuals have largely subsided. We have spent significant time and effort reaching out to that community. Now, rather than rancor, many neighbors are big supporters of our efforts. Second, the Caribou Coffee Luminary Loppet has brought the Loppet to the community in a way that we were never able to achieve before. People who are not typical skiers are now supporters and friends and our recognition in the community is greater than ever before.

So how did all of this happen? Mostly through lots of hard work from dedicated volunteers.

Some of the hard work has taken the form of great leadership. People like Bill Dosssett and Craig Rudd have inspired other volunteers to shovel year after year. Peggy Galvin has been the warm and smiling face of the organization – someone people want to work with even if it means braving sub-zero temperatures... Peggy's husband Hal, and the other half of the dynamic duo of ice – David Bryan – have engineered incredible beauty out of a little bit of swamp water and some candles.

But most of the hard work has come from people who work behind the scenes. People like Rick Budde, who manages a 7,000-person database, assigns waves and bib num-

bers, tracks registration and performs numerous other tasks that are largely thankless (when was the last time you said to yourself: “Those Loppet people do a great job handling registration, everyone is always in the correct wave...”); Gene Kay – who manages all of logistics for the Loppet – from portable toilets to energy drink at aid stations; Mike Erickson, who manages the finish line area and is one of the most agreeable folks ever to walk the earth; Mike's wife Heidi, who orders and keeps track of Loppet underwear and all kinds of Loppet merchandise; Kate Ellis, our president, who, among many other things, maintains a uniform look on all things Loppet; Dan Killian, who keeps the buses running on time and to the right places; Sheryl Golin and John Schmitt – the Voices of the Loppet; John Schmidt, Brad Erickson, Larry Myers, Andy Turnbull and Marc Beitz, who keep participants on track during our summer events; Dave Bitner and Aaron Albertson, who brave the cold every year to manage Loppet race bags and the ski corral (and Dave makes those cool on-line maps); Bob O'Hara, who is the most experienced and knowledgeable race-setter-upper and race-runner in the state, and keeps us in line; Tom Anderson, who organizes and runs our adult program; Jeff Richards and Paul (the Snow-Maker) Stewart, who make 80,000 cubic feet of snow for us each year; and Steve Kotvis, who photographs, makes advertisements and advises on public relations.

The list goes on... The point is the City of Lakes Nordic Ski Foundation is nothing if not an incredibly talented group of dedicated people who will go to any length to make our community a better place... And we have made our community a better place in many ways: Our events celebrate some of the best parts about living in Minnesota and the Twin Cities and encourage others to explore opportunities for adventure right outside the back door. Our youth programming helps inner-city students enjoy the outdoors, learn lifetime activities, develop self-esteem and good eating habits and just plain have fun. And our trail improvements connect different parts of Minneapolis, extend the ski season and encourage more and happier skiing and activity through the year.

With most aspects of the organization in



better shape now than ever before, the Foundation looks to perfect its events, serve more youth, and continue to work with the Park Board on snowmaking and on the refining of the trail system for years to come. Thanks to your support, we hope the Foundation can continue to thrive for years to come.

## FOUNDATION SETTLES INTO NEW OFFICES

After struggling through years of cramped office spaces, with no windows or with windows facing brick walls, the Foundation has a new home. A few months before this year's Loppet the Foundation reached an agreement with the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board for a diamond-in-the-very-rough: the old manager's apartment in the Theodore Wirth Chalet.

The apartment had not been used in years – something like 26 years to be exact. It had fallen into serious disrepair. Holes in the walls, standing water in the tub, incredible amounts of peeling paint, gummed up old hardwood floors, and old junk throughout... But the place had some virtues: three old bedrooms that make perfect offices, closets and storage space and, most important, immediate proximity to the ski trails, the snowmaking and the maintenance staff.

The idea is this: the Foundation fixes the apartment up and helps manage and promote the cross country skiing program, and in exchange receives use of the apartment and a percentage of the increase in cross country related revenues. So far things have worked well. Much of the repair work has been completed and proximity has helped with management of the snowmaking project and the (encouragement of) grooming of the trails through the year.

Projects still to be completed include the finishing touches on the snowmaking project, some painting in the office space and the addition of a webcam (Rick Budde's idea). The Foundation could use help with the painting and the webcam. Have some technical expertise? Wireless is already in place. Interested in helping? Call the Loppet Hotline at 612 604-5330 or send an email to [info@cityof-flakesloppet.com](mailto:info@cityof-flakesloppet.com).

*Survey continued from front page,*

features of SurveyMonkey (an internet-based survey service) to compile the results of more than 540 participant surveys. Some of the results:

### REGISTRATION:

91% of the 502 people who answered our registration question thought the process went smoothly or exceeded their expectations.

The most frequent registration comments involved the lines for bib pick-up. Pre-registered people felt that they were penalized



*Start of the 2008 Loppet  
- Photo Ben Kremer*

by having to wait in two lines. They suggested breaking up registration into smaller chunks of the alphabet and then having only one line rather than two... A few people were confused as to which line to stand in and thought that there should be more/better signage. (One of the ideas already discussed is to have volunteer concierges helping registrants find the correct line).

### TRANSPORTATION AND PARKING:

99.3% of the participants thought the transportation was good to excellent – with 57% rating it excellent and 21% rating it very good. Only one person (.7%) rated the transportation as less than good (2/5).

Our parking question was qualitative – so we had mixed responses. But most people reported no problems. These are typical responses to the question: “How was parking in Uptown?”

- Tight.
- Good.
- We did not park in Uptown. We rode the bus.
- I live in Uptown, so no problem.
- OK.

- Not easy, but nothing unexpected.
- Tough, but it's Uptown.
- Fine, parked in the Calhoun Square ramp on Saturday and took the shuttle on Sunday.
- Fine. It's a city, after all! Allow plenty of time.
- I did not drive. I rode my bike.
- Not as bad as I thought it would be.

In general, it seems like the fear of parking problems was worse than the parking problems themselves. We will work to allay these fears by providing more information on parking ramps and by encouraging mass transit or other alternative forms of transportation (for instance, we are planning to have a bike corral at next year's event).

### COURSE:

**Overall** – 74.1% of the people who participated in the various events thought that the course was “just right.” (like Goldilocks). The numbers who thought it was too easy roughly correlated with the number who thought it was too difficult.

**Freestyle** – 70% thought the course was just right. 5% thought it was a little too easy (2/5) and only one person thought it just plain “too easy.” 19% thought it was a 4/5 of in difficulty (so maybe a tad too difficult) and 6.3% thought it was 5/5 – too difficult.

**Classical** – 76.6% of the participants thought the course was just right. 10% thought it was a little too hard (4/5), no one rated it just plain too difficult (5/5). Two people (or about 2%) thought it was just plain too easy (1/5) and 10% thought it was a little too easy (2/5).

**Tour** – 79% thought the course was just right. 12% thought it was a bit too difficult (4/5) but no one thought it just plain too difficult (5/5). About 10% thought it was on the easier side.



*REI Tour start 2008*

**Luminary Loppet** – 83% had a Goldilocks experience (that is, “just right”). 14% thought it was a bit easy and just a trifling thought it was too hard (6 of the 191 responses). **7**

## FINISH LINE AREA:

This was a qualitative question, but the bird's eye view was this: 75% thought the finish line was good to excellent – with many very positive comments. The most frequent suggestions:

- The changing tents needed to be bigger, warmer and should have more chairs (especially the men's);
- The ski racks fell down;
- The post-Luminary festivities could use more life;
- On a related note the beer and brats need to be open longer and concentrate on not running out...

Best comment – “[The finish area] was a little like the State Fair on skis...” It bears noting that some people liked the Hennepin finish more than the Mall finish.

## REGISTRATION / VENDOR VILLAGE TENT:

Most people seemed to enjoy it – but there were a few comments about it being too crowded. The folks who did the Luminary Loppet would have liked to have had the tent open later on Saturday evening. A few people missed out on beer and brats during the time that we ran out on Sunday. It seems like for those who enjoy beer and brats, not having them available is a bummer.

## OVERALL EVENT EXPERIENCE:

99% of the people who filled out the survey thought that overall the event was good to extremely enjoyable (18% rated it 3/5 (good); 29% rated it 4/5; and 52% rated it 5/5 (extremely enjoyable)).

## BY EVENT:

- **Junior Loppet:** 73% 5/5; 18% 4/5 and 9% 3/5 (comments related to registration (not enough timing chips due to much-higher-than expected race-day registrations) and lack of post-event water or energy drink)
- **Luminary Loppet:** 60% rated event 5/5; 28% rated it 4/5; 11% rated event 3/5 and 1% rated event 2/5 (negative comments related to problems with hot cocoa and general lack of preparation by vendors)
- **Minne-Loppet:** 58% 5/5; 31% 4/5 and 11% 3/5 (comments related to congestion and course marking for long versus short course)
- **Tour:** 58% 5/5; 29% 4/5; and 13% 3/5 (comments related to having Classic skiers



2008 Luminary Loppet

catching and passing Tour skiers (mostly they felt bad about slowing the “faster” skiers down))

- **Sprints:** 57% 5/5; 29% 4/5 and 14% 3/5 (comments related to the back-to-back heats for semi-finals and finals (next year we will run a preliminary heat for the next category before the finals in order to give skiers a breather...))

- **Freestyle:** 52% 5/5; 30% 4/4; 17% 3/5 and 1% 2/5

Range of comments:

- **Scariness:** Later wave skiers are still having a bit of a hard time. The combination of deteriorating course (snowplowers scraping snow from course), lesser skills (they are in the later waves for a reason) and a few more hills to fix results in some scary moments for these folks.
- **Waves:** We need to do a better job explaining to people how we assign them to waves. A big part of the problem is that we have a higher percentage of “good” skiers than the Birkie has – meaning that a wave 1 Birkie skier might be a wave 2 or 3 Loppet skier (something the average skier does not understand).
- **Congestion:** Many folks felt like they could not pass. The best suggestions related to grooming (much) wider on the golf course and grooming as wide as possible at least in areas (to allow passing) in the rest of the course. The Bog was mentioned specifically with regard to crowding.
- **Skijoring:** 48% 5/5; 35% 4/5 and 17% 3/5 (not many substantive comments. One person thought there should be a distinction between one- and two-dog teams...)

- **Hoigaard's Classic:** 42% 5/5; 29% 4/5; 28% 3/5 and 1% (one person) 2/5.

Many comments about running into the Tour (We are planning to start the Tour at 9:15 rather than 9:25 – in order to give the Tour folks a little more time to get through the Bog before the Classic folks catch them. It will also help to add a little distance to the beginning of the Hoigaard's Classic by adding the portion of the snowmaking loop that was not used this year.)

- A few folks thought we should double-track. (We will look at doing that on the golf course where possible and just let the freestyle folks wipe out those tracks later.)
- Most of the actual course comments were positive about the number of hills versus distance, though a few folks would like the Classic and the Freestyle to run the same course.



Start of Hoigaards Classic - Photo Steve Kotvis

The most important aspects of this forest of information probably relate to the Bog area and the Luminary Loppet. The congestion and scariness caused by the Bog section continue to be a deterrent to retaining later wave skiers. (This is evidenced by the higher percentage of good to elite level skiers that ski our race relative to events like the Birkie). Better skiers can pass easier – even on narrow trails – and the better skiers ski the Bog when it is in better condition (that is, before multiple waves of snowplowers arrive).

We have accomplished much over the past few years in removing challenging downhill sections – but two challenging downhills in the Bog remain. Fortunately, the course folks have a plan to fix those sections without dumbing the course down – meaning that we should end up with a course that is free of unnecessarily scary moments. Hopefully that will lead to more beginner- to intermediate-level skiers coming back in the future.



Similarly, congestion in the Bog continues to be a problem where the trails are, as a rule, a bit narrower. For political reasons we cannot change this situation immediately. However, a combination of approaches may help. For instance, there are spots where we can have the trails groomed wider for short distances. This will allow at least occasional passing zones. Over time, as diseased trees are removed the trail will naturally become a bit wider. Finally, we will continue to identify the few trees that cause the most problems and may try to have those removed (there are probably not more than two or three trees like this).

As for the Luminary Loppet, the responses were overwhelmingly positive, but there was certainly room for improvement. We were not prepared for the numbers we received at this year's Luminary Loppet (almost 10-times the number of participants from 2007) and, more important, the sponsor vendors were really not prepared. They ran out of hot cocoa, did not set up early enough and were generally overwhelmed with the success of the event. We will work to make certain that this does not happen again...



2008 Skijor Loppet - Photo Norbert Marklin

The other big Luminary suggestion related to the post-Luminary festivities – there were none. As organizers we thought people would be ready to go home once the Luminary Loppet was over. What we did not anticipate is that the Luminary Loppet participants would want to chat about their experience in a festive place after the event. In other words, the Luminary Loppet is no different from the other Loppet events. We will work on this for next year as well...

Other ideas or suggestions? Send an email to [info@cityoflakesloppet.com](mailto:info@cityoflakesloppet.com).

## FOCUS ON NEW CHIEF GROOMER DAVE BERGSTROM

by Jerritt Johnstone

Just a week before the 2008 City of Lakes Loppet, skiers and race officials were once again nervous about the race course. Little recent snowfall [from Christmas to race-day it snowed a total of about 1" – the fourth least snowiest January on record in the Twin Cities], above freezing temperatures and even some rain had turned portions of the course into glazed ice.

Luckily, going against conventional wisdom, lead groomer Dave Bergstrom decided to try a new weapon. He started up the Piston Bully and hit the course. A number of people, including long time groomers, thought it would destroy the little snow that remained, but Bergstrom turned out to be right.

"We tried things that some people didn't think would work," said Bergstrom. "My question was, 'Why do we have this piece of equipment, if we are not going to use it?'"

The ice turned to skiable corduroy and the City of Lakes Loppet took place with arguably the best conditions in the race's history. [See Skinnyski Series Awards article – the Loppet won the Best Grooming Award for the first time]. Much of the credit goes to Bergstrom and his crew of groomers.

Dave Bergstrom took over the head grooming responsibilities after long time groomer John Gronquist retired. Bergstrom, 44, has worked for the Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board for about 12 years. His new, official title is Maintenance Foreman Special Services, which means Bergstrom truly is a jack of all trades.

Along with his grooming duties for Wirth and the Loppet, Bergstrom is now responsible for the maintenance at Neiman Sports Complex, Parade Stadium, Fort Snelling Golf Course, all pay lots, the city's two ice arenas, the refectories, three water parks and the Minneapolis Bike Tour. He does all of this with an unbelievably small crew of permanent and seasonal employees.

So after a long summer of work in the parks

will Bergstrom take a vacation to lounge around and watch endless amounts of television before the snow flies and the grooming begins? Probably not. Every year for the last nine he has gone up to northwestern Minnesota to work during the sugar beet harvest. A guy who takes vacation to work?

"I don't look at it as work. It is so different from what I do day to day," said Bergstrom. "My cell phone isn't ringing all day. I'm not dealing with problems and nobody really bothers me. I find it pretty relaxing."

So is the new groomer a skier? Not really. The Roosevelt high school graduate tried skiing as a teenager, but really hasn't done much recently. "I skied some at Hiawatha Golf Course, which was right by where I grew up, and I downhill skied some, but not much anymore," said Bergstrom.

Bergstrom does share the skiers' enjoyment of the outdoors though. "I love to be outdoors. I hunt and fish a lot and I really like to work on houses and landscape." This may explain why he, along with so many skiers, believe the Loppet course is among the best in the country.

"We have a wilderness course, in the city," said Bergstrom. "We get to see a lot of wildlife smack dab in the city. It's what I love and



2008 Rossignol Junior Loppet - Photo Steve Kotvis

I get to be there as part of my job. It's great."

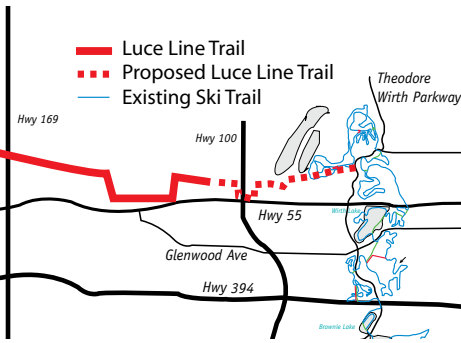
So this year, when the snow comes—and it will—know that Dave Bergstrom and his skilled crew of groomers will be out there working to insure that those of us who ski have a great experience. Take a second to say "hi" and thank them for their work.

# CONSTRUCTION NEARING ON LUCE LINE TRAIL

The Luce Line Trail – stretching from Cosmos, Minnesota to downtown, Minneapolis is slated for construction through Theodore Wirth Park. Construction may begin as early as this fall.

Why does this matter to the Nordic Ski Foundation? It matters because Three Rivers Park District, the organization pushing the trail, is considering a trail alignment that impacts cross country skiing, hiking, trail running and mountain biking in the “Back-40” area of the park. Coming from the west, the trail follows the Chicago & Northwestern Railroad corridor until reaching the Twin Lake area, in the southwest corner of the Back-40 area. From there, the trail winds its way up a steep embankment before following the ski trail toward Wirth Parkway.

The problem? Several-fold. First, in paralleling the ski trail it creates a corridor of some 40’ – 50’ wide – with no trees or cover, hardly the stuff of inspiring skiing... More important, the mature oaks that must be removed to create the Luce Line corridor all stand to the south of the ski trail. Removing these trees will eliminate important protection from the sun – meaning a corridor that will not hold snow as well. And then there is the mountain bike trail – freshly constructed by the Minneapolis Off-Road Cyclists Association (MOCA). Probably a mile of the mountain bike trails will be significantly impacted by the new trail corridor.



So what is the solution? The Nordic Ski Foundation believes that the Luce Line trail corridor should follow the Chicago & Northwestern Railroad corridor all the way through the area. The Luce Line is a commuter corridor. Straight stretches of trail are preferred and the hills that make the Back-40 good for skiing and mountain biking are actually liabilities for commuter trails.

Before the Three Rivers Park District planners can put the trail through the Back-40 they need final approval from the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board. As this publication goes to press, the Foundation is setting up initial meetings with Park Board commissioners who are likely to be concerned with this project. Depending upon the reaction of the commissioners, we may be asking for help in mounting a campaign against this plan. Stay tuned – and/or send an email to [course@cityoflakeloppet.com](mailto:course@cityoflakeloppet.com) or call Bill Dossett at

612 747-4659.

*Medica Foundation continued from page 1,*

pete in the Tri-Loppet. Similarly, the Andersen and Stewart Park Runs programs will focus on running and aerobic conditioning – with the students having an opportunity to compete in the Trail Loppet.



*Andersen TRIs program participant mountain biking at Theodore Wirth Park - Photo Caitlin Compton*

The Andersen TRIs program is run through the Andersen Community Education Department and the Stewart Park TRIs program through adjacent Stewart Park. Each Thursday after school, Andersen students gather at 2 p.m. at Andersen and then at 5 p.m. at Stewart Park. Some days the students stick around the school grounds – either going for a run or playing games like soccer, ultimate Frisbee or speed ball. Other days, participants take a bus to paddle on the Chain of Lakes or Wirth Lake. On those days, Hoigaard’s brings its trailer full of canoes, paddles and life vests. Volunteers meet the kids and pair up with them in order to teach them the basics of paddling.

Finally, the students spend quite a bit of time biking. This is made possible through two great partnerships: one with Quality Bike Products’ Trips for



*Hitting the Trails - Photo Caitlin Compton*

Kids and another with the Midtown Greenway Coalition and Freewheel Bikes and their new bike station on the Greenway. Trips for Kids and the Greenway Coalition/Freewheel provide the bikes, helmets and know-

how. With the Greenway Coalition the students bike on the Greenway Corridor and other area bike paths. With the Trips for Kids program, the students are bused to Wirth Park, where they have an opportunity to bike on the Tri-Loppet trails and the single-track constructed by the Minneapolis Off-road Cyclists

Association (MOCA).

As June 28 approaches, our coaches will be encouraging students to participate in the Tri-Loppet. Each par-



*Brandan Ostroot helping out - Photo Caitlin Compton*

participating student will be assigned to an adult volunteer partner, who will paddle with the student and, hopefully, accompany and encourage the student through the entire Tri-Loppet. Interested in volunteering? Contact Program Coaches Brandan Ostroot (612 385-3335) or Johanna Winters (651 398-8520).

Look for information on the Andersen Runs and Stewart Park Runs programs starting in July...



# FOUNDATION NEEDS

Between the Foundation's new office, youth programming and events, there are many areas where the Foundation could use some help:

- Webcam – Have some technical skills? The Foundation is looking to install a webcam and on-line weather station that would operate out of its new office space. The webcam – aimed at the race start area – and weather station would provide important (or at least interesting) information for the Loppet website.
- Video Equipment – The Foundation needs some basic video equipment in order to conduct video review for the Challenge Fitness Club (formerly the Citizen Skier Program). Have an old video camera and/or a VCR? Receive a tax deduction by donating the equipment to the Nordic Ski Foundation. (Thanks to the Sage-Martinsons for donating a television earlier this year).
- Painting – The Foundation's new office space is nearly complete – but there is a bit more painting to do. Have a little skill with a brush? We would love to have your help...
- Volunteer Paddling – The Foundation's new youth program prepares Minneapolis youth for the Tri-Loppet. The Foundation needs paddlers to pair with students on the paddling portion of the Tri-Loppet. Not necessary to be an expert paddler – just an

ability to keep the boat afloat and a desire to work with our youth...

Send an email to [info@cityoflakesloppet.com](mailto:info@cityoflakesloppet.com) or call the Loppet Hotline at 612 604-5330 for more information or to volunteer.

## 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, 2008 – MAY 31, 2009

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

#### MEMBERSHIP FEE

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

Individual \$25 \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Family \$40 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Premium Level** (Voting rights, discounts at Finn Sisu and Gear West, stone grind and thermo-bag treatment at Hoigaard's (\$70 value for only \$19.95) and rights to high resolution photo files)

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

#### DONATE TO THE LOPPET FOUNDATION

Trail Development \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
(snowmaking at Wirth Park)  
Youth Programming \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
General \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Total Payment \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

*Thanks to the members of the City of Lakes Nordic Ski Foundation. Members include:*

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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

- May 31, 2008 – Foundation membership year ends
- June 28, 2008 – Tri-Loppet
- July 7, 2008 – CFC-Run program starts
- September 20, 2008 – Trail Loppet Half-Marathon and 5K
- October 14, 2008 – Annual Meeting
- October 25, 2008 – Trails Day
- November 3, 2008 – CFC-Ski program starts
- Jan 31 – Feb 1, 2009 – City of Lakes Loppet Event Weekend



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