

MADISON NORDIC ski club Newsletter



Cross
country
skiing for
everyone

NOVEMBER 1997

Vol. 17, No. 1

Monday, Nov. 10, 7 PM
Shorewood Community Center
901 Swarthmore Ct.

November meeting to feature Swix wax clinic

BY DAVE CALHOON

The program for our November meeting will be a wax clinic presented by John Theis, Midwest Regional Representative for Swix. John plans to cover the gamut from basic through advanced, including classical, so bring your questions. And please don't feel intimidated because you think you don't know anything about waxing. We all have to start somewhere, and John wants to help the novice as well as the expert. So whether you've never waxed or you've made a large collection of candles from the shavings on your basement floor, there should be something for you at this clinic. If part of the clinic doesn't apply to you, you may want to spend that time on the other side of the divider talking to the representatives from local ski shops who will be on hand for the Cross-Country Bazaar.

Sprawl threatens skiing

Sprawl is threatening our parks, clogging our highways with traffic, and driving up our taxes. Now you can do something about this in Dane County by support a stronger land use plan. To learn more attend the public meeting at the Dane County Expo Center, on Nov. 3 from 6:30-9:00 pm. The topic is the Vision 2020 plan which will chart the future of growth in Dane County until 2020. For more information, call Brett Hulsey at 257-4994 (work) or call the county board offices at 266-5758.

MadNorSki donates to Blue Mound State Park

BY DAVE CALHOON

Many people who have skied out at Blue Mound State Park in the last few years have noticed the excellent grooming done by Karl Heil. (Leave it to the state to call it Blue Mound when everybody else calls it Blue Mounds.)

Last spring, after our last regular board meeting of the season, we received a request from park superintendent Norb Karr for some funding to buy additional grooming equipment. They had borrowed some equipment from Lapham Peak and found that it enabled them to do an even better job of grooming. Their local support organization, the Friends of Blue Mound State Park, agreed to a 50-50 matching grant arrangement, and Superintendent Karr asked us for the other 50%.

The MNSC board met in a special session in June and voted to award them the grant of \$1,072.50. Our gift will be acknowledged by a plaque on the sign at the trailhead.

In case you haven't heard, Blue Mound, which is nearly 900 feet higher than Madison, is in its own little microclimate and often has snow when Madison doesn't. In addition, most of the trails are on the north side of the slope. These factors, combined with great grooming, mean you can often ski at Blue Mound even when conditions outside your window are downright depressing. We can feel proud of making a contribution that will benefit many skiers from the Madison area and beyond.

MADISON NORDIC SKI CLUB HOTLINE

for the latest info on snow conditions & upcoming events
and to leave messages for the club:

233-MADK (233-6235)

Meet your president

BY DAVE CALHOON

As I begin my first term as president, it seems appropriate that I take a moment to introduce myself and share with you the story of how an unlikely candidate such as myself wound up as your President. As I look back on the path that led me here, I realize that it's a curious one, full of unexpected twists and turns. I hope that sharing my story here will give you an idea of what an adventure skiing can be, and of how it can expand your horizons.

I grew up in Madison and started out, like most skiers around here of my vintage, as a downhiller. My older brother skied, and I thought skiing looked like just about the coolest thing around. On Christmas Day, 1968, when I was in fifth grade, those long-awaited alpine packages finally arrived for my little brother and me. I can well remember the thrill of strapping on those cable bindings and tackling the headwall on the eighth hole at Glenway.

I continued to ski in Wisconsin well into high school and loved it, until the brief thrills afforded by schussing down our short slopes started to be outweighed by the boredom and frustration of waiting in lift lines. Just as all that standing around and waiting was starting to get really old, I had my brand-new pair of Olin Mark I's, which I had skied on twice, stolen from me out at Wintergreen (you remember—near The Springs). That was it. I had had it with downhill skiing!

Besides, I had developed other interests by then, including an interest in pursuing a career as a musician. (I am a French horn player.) You may not know this, but pursuing a musical career takes up just about all your time, energy, and money, what with the endless practicing, rehearsing, studying, concert going, and performing, not to mention working, which is followed by more practicing and rehearsing. As a result, I didn't ski much in college, but I did get started.

I had heard of a different kind of skiing, cross-country skiing, in which you skied *across the country*. Instead of standing around in lift lines for hours to spend a few minutes zipping down the same slopes over and over, you could actually go *somewhere* on skis. Far out!

When I was a junior in college, I bought my first pair of cross-country skis: Bonna T-2000's, great for untracked snow (which was a lot more common back then), deep snow, and clearing brush. I had a great time skiing around on local golf courses and in the Arboretum, and usually saw nary a soul while I was doing it.

For several years after college, I skied only a little, due either to lack of time, lack of money, living where there was no snow, or some combination of these. But by 1992, my wife and I had both finished grad school, our daughter was six, and I had a lot of lost time to make up for, and a

powerful, pent-up urge to ski to unleash. A lot had happened in the ski world while I had been preoccupied with other things, like the invention of skating, an enormous surge in the popularity of the sport, and the lycra revolution. It was clear I had a lot of catching up to do. I bought myself a combi outfit (Peltonen Quasars) and started teaching myself to skate. Fortunately for me, the winter of '92-'93 was a good snow year.

During my years on the periphery of skiing, I viewed it primarily as a way to get outdoors and enjoy nature in the winter. It never crossed my mind to enter a race. In fact, I even held a negative view of racing. Why, I wondered, would anyone want to take such a beautiful experience and ruin it by turning it into a race? But I had heard of the Birkie, and I thought that sounded like fun, so I set for myself the goal of completing my first Birkie in 1993.

I really had no idea what I was getting myself into. I remember having the naive thought that, while I would probably never win the Birkie, it would be nice to at least win my age class some day. (Yeah, right! Maybe if I'm still skiing it when I'm in the 90+ group!) My training was going well, but as the race approached, I started to worry. I had never kept track of the number of kilometers I was skiing, and wasn't at all sure I could last 52 kilometers. Then, somehow, I learned of the 27-kilometer Pre-Birkie, and decided that doing it would be a great way to prepare for the Main Event. I wasn't even sure I could last 27 kilometers.

I went, I finished, I had a great time, and I met some friendly skiers on the bus from OO back to Hayward. Two weeks later, I went back to Hayward and was blessed, as

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many of you will recall, with perfect snow conditions for my first Birkie. Since I had done the Pre-Birkie, I was able to start in the third wave, and finished in a respectable 3:31. After just two races, a number of things were clear to me: 1. I will never win the Birkie, unless everyone else in the field falls through the ice on Lake Hayward or something. 2. I had a lot to learn about skiing, because far too many people were going faster than me. 3. Ski racing is a lot of fun.

I was hooked, and I've been racing ever since. Along the way, I have learned a lot about technique, training, waxing, and equipment. I have had a lot of fun and made a lot of good friends, most of them people I've met through the Club. And while I still see getting out to enjoy the scenery as my primary reason to ski, I know that I've learned a lot more about skiing, skied a lot more, and gotten into better condition through racing than I would have had I just been touring.

Being a racer and Club member has broadened my horizons in other ways, too. For example, at one of my early Birkies, I decided to go check out this Bamebirkie (Children's Birkie) thing I had heard about. I was so impressed by the sight of all those kids having so much good, clean fun that I decided to join the sponsoring organization, the Sons of Norway. My interest in skiing has been a big factor in my renewed exploration of the Norwegian part of my heritage. After all, the ski-crazed Norskies have given us the likes of Vegard Ulvang and Bjørn Dæhlie, the Lillehammer Olympics, even the sport itself.

As another example, early on in my involvement with the Club, Mike Ivey and some of the other Board members noticed that I took an interest in Club activities. As a result, it wasn't long before I was invited to serve on the Board, and the rest, as they say, is history. Being an active participant in the Club has allowed me to get to know even

more Club members and to have many great experiences. Through the Kidski program, I have gotten to know some of our youngest members and to learn a little about teaching skiing. In 1995, I joined several other ski bums on a trip to watch the Nordic World Championships in Thunder Bay. After watching a presentation on backcountry skiing given by Brock Woods at a Club meeting, I decided I had to try it, and last year I took an absolutely fantastic trip to Colorado to go backcountry skiing. Also last year, on a Club family trip to Iowa, I even got to try ski jumping for the first time!

Skiing has become a much bigger part of my life over the past few years (my family might even say it has taken over my life), and it has led me to have many wonderful experiences I would never have imagined just a few years ago. I've gone from alpine to cross-country to racing to teaching to backcountry to jumping to ski club president. What's next, aeriels? I tell you all this not because I think my life is so fascinating, but to illustrate that you never know where your involvement in skiing may lead. There's a great big snow-covered world out there to play in, and the Club needs all the volunteers it can get. Won't you join me in the adventure?

Allan Bard Dies

BY DAVE CALHOON

Readers of *Cross Country Skier* magazine were saddened to learn in the October issue that backcountry editor Allan Bard died last summer in a guiding accident on the Grand Teton. If you have any interest in backcountry skiing, I highly recommend his columns to you. The great Bardini was not only very knowledgeable and experienced, he loved the mountains and wrote with a fine wit. As *Cross Country Skier* put it, "The skiing world mourns its poet laureate."

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Looking for a fun X-country ski getaway? Look no further, for we have trips, trips and more trips!

BY PAMALA ZILL

Greetings everyone! This year Errol and I put the MNSC trip schedule together with the same variety of trips offered in the 1996-97 season. In addition, there are even more trip options available to MNSC members. Each trip is designed so that everyone in the cross-country ski community is represented and has something special to enjoy.

Thanks to all the wonderful club members who serve as trip leaders, most all trips which happened last season will again be offered this year. In particular, MNSC trips that are confirmed at this time include the Seely Hills Classic Race with trip leaders Dave and Margaret Peterson (271-6931). Lodging is confirmed at the Valhalla townhouses in Cable for January 8-12. MNSC members can again look forward to traveling to Black's Cliff resort with Liz McBride (233-1294) on January 29-31. By the way, this trip is not on SuperBowl weekend this year. Badger State Game participants can look to Sue and Mike Capp (238-2480) to lead an energized and comfortable trip on Feb. 6-8 to The Everest Inn located in Wausau. Our very own MNSC president Dave Calhoon (831-9039) will lead a fun-filled cross-country ski excursion on President's Day weekend to Stiemke's in St. Germain, from Feb. 13-16. The Iola Winter Carnival for kids is set for Feb. 28, and good-natured ski enthusiast Pete Anderson (222-1928) of the Kidski program leads this popular trip. Trip participants will stay at the kid-friendly Norseman Haus in Iola on Feb. 27-28. The River City Ski Fest will be held Jan. 3-4, with classical and skate races and workshops. This is a great opportunity to have the club lead a day trip to Wisconsin Rapids. Look for Dale Niggeman at the meeting for more information about this event.

Thanks to Don Fariss (437-8076), demo days, and Cindy Kruse (233-9900), the women's trip, Nancy Wiegand (233-2938), Clear Lake campground, and Pete Anderson along with Leslie Taylor (family oriented Christmas to New Years), four new unique cross-country ski trips are in the works.

We do have confirmed lodging reservation for the pre-Birkie at the Valhalla townhouses in Cable. Gordy is not sure if he can lead the trip this year, so stay tuned for further updates. Winter camping/XC enthusiast Nancy Weigand is organizing a Christmas to New Year's trip to Clear Lake campground in Minocqua (car-camping/restaurants). Peter Berbee is organizing a day trip set for January 11 to Devil's Head resort. This day trip is for

experienced XC skiers who would like to improve their downhill technique. Call Peter at 233-8721.

If you have an idea for a trip, whether it be a natural-naturalist multi-faceted-holistic-poetry-and-hot-chocolate trip to trips focused on teaching lessons and training, let us know. If you can dream it up, we can help make it happen.

MNSC trip leaders plan to be on hand at the Nov. 10 meeting to answer any questions you may have and give a description of their trips. All MNSC trips, except the one-day Demo Days bus trip and the trip to Clear Lake campground, require a \$50 deposit to guarantee your place on a trip. Please remember your checkbook, and look for the trip sign-up table at the meeting. Happy trails!

Badger State Games

On Badger State Games weekend the club will be staying at an unusual BB set in Old Wausau, just 10 minutes drive from Nine Mile. It is a large 1900's house with five bedrooms and a self-contained suite. It has a large basement with a pool table and TV, and plenty of room to wax. A buffet breakfast is provided but we also have free run of the kitchen, so we could do our own pasta feed Saturday night. The number of places will depend on the sleeping arrangements, as will the prices. Dates-February 6-7. For more information contact Mike or Sue Capp, 238-2480.

New Year's trip to Lutsen

Since last year's family trip to Iola was so much fun, this year we're branching out: the North Shore of Lake Superior, with deep snow and big terrain, and, of course, The Lake. Though details aren't worked out yet, we'll spend about a week, from about Dec. 27 through about Jan. 3. We'll also have downhill skiing for the gravity dependent and for those needing a break from the nordic fun. More details from Leslie Taylor (277-1066) or Pete Anderson (222-1928).

Call the

MADISON NORDIC SKI CLUB

HOTLINE

for the latest info on snow conditions & upcoming events and to leave messages for the club:

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Iola Winter Carnival

And great fun was had by all last year. The Iola Winter Sports Club really knows how to treat its guests well. They have real races for the kids, with 2-year age groups and trophies, a great warming house, wonderful trails, and even introduced our kids to jumping. Date is still uncertain yet, but we're on. Pete Anderson (222-1928) can fill you in.

Barnebirkie

The plan here is to get lodging together for a bunch of families and do the whole Barnebirkie - Birkie thing. Stay tuned for forthcoming details. See Pete Anderson (222-1928). On all these family trips, the idea is to build a strong skiing community for the kids and for the adults to take turns minding them so that we all get out to ski. You can have it all: a family vacation, and your own snowtime. Great for single parents.

Seeley Hills Classic Trip: January 8-11 or 12

Repeating last year's very successful trip, Dave and Margaret Peterson are again leading a trip to Cable from January 8 through 11 or 12. This trip coincides with the Seeley Hills Classic Race, a classic style only race on the Birkebeiner Trail, starting and ending at OO. The race, on Saturday, January 10, has two options: 22K or 42K. Who can forget last year's race? With temperatures hovering around 0°F, nobody had any trouble with their kick wax. Madison Nordic Ski Club was well represented. For those who don't care to race, and on the other days of the weekend, there is beautiful classic skiing at Rock Lake in the Chequamegon National Forest or skate and classic skiing on the Telemark trail system or on the Birke trail itself.

We have reserved two, four-bedroom townhouses at Telemark. The lodging cost will be about \$26 per person per night for three nights. But there is a bonus: because we have reserved for three nights, a fourth night is free for anyone who can stay over Sunday night. As in the past, we'll share meal expenses and preparation.

There is only space for 14 people plus the trip leaders. So the first 14 to put their deposits down are in. The leaders will try to coordinate car pooling for those wishing a ride, or wanting riders to share expenses. For more information, speak to Margaret or Dave at the November meeting, or call 271-6931.

Minocqua one-day bus trip

Picture this: It's December, busy holiday time and you're aching to get on good snow because El Nino has struck Madison with a drought, but you can't spare a whole weekend for a road trip.

The answer is simple: Bring your checkbook to the November club meeting and reserve yourself a seat on the club's first ever one day bus trip to Minocqua's Winter

Park on the best trails in the Midwest. We'll leave UW's parking Lot 60 on Saturday, December 13th at 7:00 a.m., arrive at 10:30 a.m., ski their immaculate 50 km of trails, play, eat and warm up in their spacious chalet. We depart at 3:00 p.m. and arrive in Madison before 7:00 p.m.

You'll get to try out the newest skis & boots for free because Dec. 13 & 14 are Demo Days at Winter Park. We will also try to schedule a group ski lesson with MWP's talented certified instructors for those who are interested. In addition, we'll be able to show ski videos (or whatever) on the bus ride. Possibly the trip's best feature will be the amount of socializing you can do on the bus with other club members.

The bus will cost \$960. Splitting that among 30 participants (the minimum to run this trip) will cost everyone \$32.00. However, if we fill the 46 passenger bus, the shared cost could be as low as \$22.00. Please note there is also a trail fee at MWP.

We must know if you intend to go we need to know at the November meeting, so don't forget your checkbook. Look for Don Fariss at the trips table at the November meeting.

The Blue Mounds 803' challenge

First, this is not a race. It's a friendly, no-fee get-together to take on a personal challenge. It is: Pick your own mode of transportation (run, walk, bike, roller ski, roller blade or whatever) and travel at your own pace from the intersection of Ryan and Moyer Roads to the top of Blue Mounds State Park. In those 4 miles you'll climb 830 feet in elevation. Can you do it? Come find out.

We'll provide water at the top and shuttle rides back down. We'll start at 1:00 p.m. on Sunday, November 16th at Ryan/Moyer. If you're unsure how to get there, head toward the entrance to the State Park and watch for the signs at the park entrance. Questions? Call Don Fariss at 437-8076.

Ski club trip to Norway

Here is a chance to take the ski trip of a lifetime with a group of fun people. The Madison Nordic Ski Club and Nordic Tours are putting together a 10-day trip to the Telemark region of central Norway. This area is popular with the native Norwegians and is known for its exceptional number and variety of trails, as well as excellent snow.

The trip is scheduled for Thursday, Feb. 26 to Sunday, March 8, a perfect time for some scenic ski touring in the mountains of Norway after the Birkie. Total price for the trip is \$1,795. That includes round-trip air, all hotels and meals as well as bus transportation once we're in Norway.

The folks at Nordic Tours have scheduled two days in

(continued on back page)

El-Niño and winter predictability

BY BOB RABIN

NATIONAL SEVERE STORMS LABORATORY

The term "El-Niño" has become quite familiar to most of us recently. A media-blitz of sorts has implanted a vision of unusual and extreme weather events about to explode. Well, how will all this effect winter and skiing in the Midwest? The purpose of this note is to present some background on El-Niño and its interrelation to weather patterns.

For many years, meteorologists have recognized the impact of surface water temperature on storm tracks and air temperature over large distances. This information has been used for years in seasonal weather outlooks. El-Niño, originally known for its catastrophic effect on the fishery industry along the west coast of South America, is an eastward shift of warmest Pacific surface water near the equator. Normally, the warmest waters are in the western equatorial Pacific. The most abundant thunderstorm activity, fueled by the warmest waters, follows these surface temperature patterns. This activity releases heat to the atmosphere and in turn alters pressure and wind patterns many miles away. The wind patterns also influence the water temperature distribution, so the El-Niño is part of a natural cycle influenced by the balancing of forces within the ocean and atmosphere.

The effects of El-Niño on weather patterns is included in the seasonal outlooks issued by the Climate Prediction Center (CMC) of the National Weather Service. These outlooks are based on statistics of observed patterns over the past 40-50 years. If you have access to the Web, they are available at:

"<http://nic.fb4.noaa.gov:80/products/predictions>".

The latest outlook for this winter issued in mid October is greatly influenced by the current very high water temperatures in the eastern Pacific. Maps showing probabilities of above, below, or "normal" precipitation and temperature in December-February are included from CMC Web page.

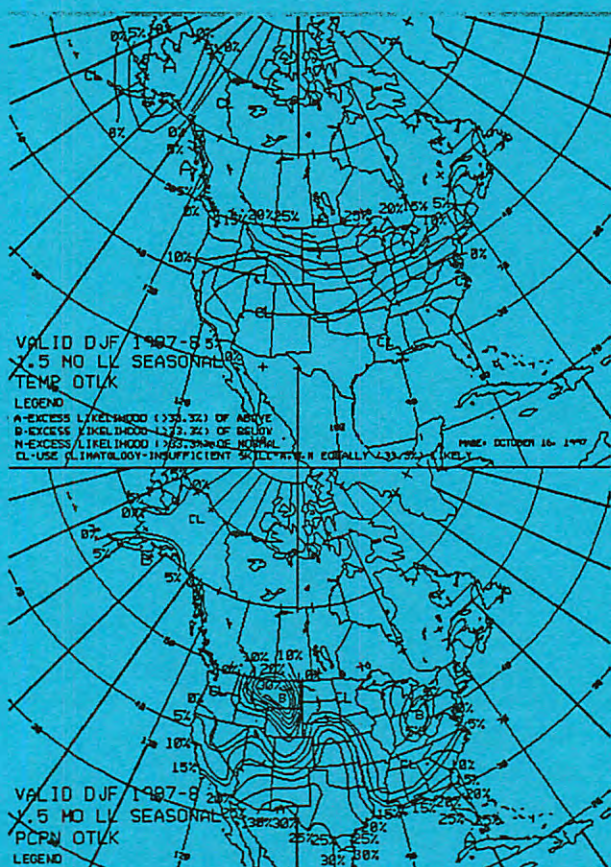
Under El-Niño conditions, above normal precipitation often occurs from the Southwestern states eastward through the southern Plains and near the Gulf coast (highest probability is in Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, and Oklahoma). There is no strong correlation between precipitation in most of the Upper Midwest/Greatlakes

region and the El-Niño sea surface temperature pattern. Note in the map that there is insufficient skill to make a meaningful prediction concerning precipitation in our region during the early winter.

The greatest effect on temperature is an unusually mild winter in the northern Plains and northern Great Lakes (maximum in north Dakota and southern Manitoba/Saskatchewan). The northern half our region would be most greatly affected. It's likely then that strong arctic blasts and lake effect snows (near Superior) will not be as frequent or severe as in some winters. On the positive side, there would be an abundance of pleasantly mild skiing days in the northwoods. However, conditions could be a bit thin at the Birkie come February.

In conclusion, there is no evidence that this year's strong

El-Niño will bring a total demise to skiing conditions in the Midwest. The outlook may not foretell a banner year for cold and snow, but it could also be much worse. The CMC outlook makes no solid judgement concerning precipitation in our area this winter. Forecasting on these time scales is still limited given the many sources for atmospheric variability besides El-Niño. (The probability of these outlooks verifying is generally less than %65). So as usual, we will just have to wait and see what the weather brings!



Tuesday race series at Elver

BY BRIAN WATZKE, RACE DIRECTOR

Plans are underway for the annual Tuesday night race series at Elver Park. We will begin on January 6 and run every Tuesday evening through February 17 for a total of seven races. The race fees will again be: \$5 for adults, \$3 for juniors, or \$20 adult series, \$12 junior series.

Racers will be expected to volunteer for one race of the series. Those volunteering for registration will still be able to race that evening. Those racers volunteering as course marshals will either receive a free race in the future or a partial refund if paid for the series. Sponsors are needed to provide door prizes and/or awards. All X-C related businesses are invited to be a part of the series by donating prizes. I'm also looking for a bull horn to use at the starting line. If anyone has any leads please call me at 849-7187 or 849-9035.

This is my third and final year as race director. I am eager to work with my future replacement this season. Please consider volunteering for this position and keep the tradition of club races alive. I could help out in future years by arriving early to set up the course markers. See you at the first meeting.

Kidski is back

BY PETE ANDERSON

The Madison Nordic Kidski returns for its fourth year of fun, safety, and learning in the winter outdoors. Kids and skis are a natural combination. We'll meet weekly in January and February to play games, go on tours, run some relay races, and generally have fun on skis. We have offerings for all ability levels, and for ages 4- 15.

We'll meet at Odana Golf Course on Thursdays from 4-5 p.m. Jan. 8 through Feb. 12. Inexpensive equipment

rentals are available there. In the event of no snow, we get creative – ice skating at Vilas, hikes in the Arboretum, getting snow where we find it. And for the competitively inclined, we hope to offer an optional racing program this year, meeting an extra day some weeks.

So, if you're interested in keeping your kids off the couch this winter, come join us. Cost is \$25 per kid, and we require club membership. Advance registration is also required.

If you really want to get involved, we always need coaches. This involves a commitment of coming to most Kidski Thursdays, and gets you one kid in free. You don't have to be much of a skier to do it, and the ability to work with kids goes far. For more information, call Pete Anderson at 222-1928.

MADNORSKI juniors

BY IAN DUNCAN

We plan to continue the group as of last year, with a few significant changes. The group consists of 7th-12th graders who are active in racing or who wish to get involved.

We meet once a week at Elver Park for training/coaching session. Some group outings to races may be organized and it is planned to go as a group to Minocqua for the Howard Young races in early March.

This year we will have two full time coaches, Carrie Jones and Randy Gibbs, both transplanted Minnesotans and experienced racers. Carrie won the Korteloppet a few year's ago and Randy has been a high school ski coach.

It is hoped that those of you who participated last year and newcomers will come to the first meeting of the club in November to discuss the plans. If you cannot be there and if you are a new recruit please call me at 233-0962 in the evening.

FOR SALE or WANTED

For sale, Saloman 911 skating boots, great shape, size 11, \$100. Peltonen Infra striding skis, 210 cm, very fast for 150-170 pounders, with Profil bindings, asking \$160. Call Brett at 238-5711 or check them out at the next meeting.

Wanted: Skating skis, boots, poles, 175-185 cm, women's size 7-1/2 boot. Call 244-9493.

Ski club trip to Norway

(continued from page 5)

meals as well as bus transportation once we're in Norway.

The folks at Nordic Tours have scheduled two days in Oslo at the end of the trip for sightseeing, etc. For those who haven't had enough skiing, there is also an optional side trip to Lillehammer, where we'll have a chance to ski on the trails used in the last winter Olympics.

The key to the whole thing is getting at least 20 people signed up. That's the only way the club can get the group rate on the hotels and tour bus. If you want more information call Mike Ivey at 233-8014 or Nordic Tours at 288-8070. Let's see if we can get a group together and pull this thing off.

MNSC board members

Contact us if you have questions or info to share...

| | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| President | Dave Calhoon |
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Contribute to the newsletter

The Madison Nordic Ski Club Newsletter is published monthly from November to March.

Submit articles on 3.5-inch diskette (Macintosh or IBM, please also send a paper copy) or send e-mail to marler@globaldialog.com. Mail submissions to: Melody Marler, 1403 Middleton Street, Middleton, WI 53562, fax 827-8701, phone 831-5229.

Deadline: 25th of the month preceding the issue.

MADISON NORDIC

