

MADNORSKI News

News for the members of the Madison Nordic Ski Club

Vol. 20

No. 5

- A Word From JIMMY -

I Beg Your Pardon

BY JIMMY VANDEN BROOK, PRESIDENT



As my second term draws to a close, it's time to issue a few presidential pardons. You might ask: who in the nordic world would have done any-

thing so egregious as to require a pardon? Unfortunately, skiers are all too human. Some will question my motives for granting these pardons but remember, it is always better to forgive, and if some people show a little gratitude, well, how can you refuse?

Before I go any further, let me say that my wife's brother did not lobby me directly and certainly made less than \$400,000 to represent some of his clients listed below. He also looks a lot better than Hugh Rodham in tennis shorts. And, there are a few notable folks that I refused to pardon. Marc Rich, while being a skier, declined the opportunity to provide 800 hours of community trail grooming service, so was not pardoned by this president. SWIX is not pardoned for getting me to buy XF classic wax at obscene prices and then dumping the entire line the next year. And, the vendor at the Birkie ski EXPO who was telling folks that his ski pole/grip combination would take 25 minutes off your Birkie time will be forever condemned to a lower level of Dantes' inferno. But, enough of that, on to the pardons.

First, a few blanket pardons. To all those club members (innumerable)

who insisted on skiing faster than the club president, I extend my forgiveness. To the generic guy, it's always a guy, who has, and will, step on my poles at least 5 times in rapid succession going up the power lines at the birkie, you are pardoned. To the chronic whiners in Silent Sports who have forgotten that skiing is fun, absolution is yours, provided you lighten up.

Second, a small number of individual pardons. Ned Zuelsdorff, Elver race director, is pardoned for accusing the President of disturbing his slumber, by snoring, on a number of ski outings. Ned does a fair impression of a Stihl chainsaw himself (pardon pending). Since the by-laws say nothing about the President not being able to pardon him/herself, I pardon myself for the following crimes: earlier this year, at Nine-mile

in Wausau, I took off for home with a ski bag that looked like mine but really belonged to Ben Neff. Ben got his skis back the next day... bad Jimmy. Long ago, in a birkie far, far away I "helped" my buddy Rich Hayes wax his wooden skis for the big race. Big expert that I was, I ironed in a lot of kick wax over the whole ski. Probably used half a tin. Rich could climb trees with those skis, but he could comfortably descend a tree with them as well, provided he double-poled with vigor... really bad Jimmy. So, now I'm off the hook, thanks to me.

Lastly, I am issuing a pardon which will make the Marc Rich affair seem

(SEE PARDON, CONTINUED ON PAGE 2)

**"WHO IN THE
NORDIC WORLD
WOULD HAVE
DONE ANYTHING
SO EGREGIOUS AS
TO REQUIRE A
PARDON?"**

OUR NEXT MEETING

March 12th, 7:00 pm
Shorewood
Community Center

Agenda

- 7:00: Socialize, POTLUCK!
- 7:40: Announcements
- 8:00: Spring skiing options and awards! And, more fabulous door prizes.

MNSC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jimmy Vanden Brook

President
(608) 437-4192
jpvanden@mhtc.net

Willi VanHaren

Vice President
(608) 437-3782
psh@itis.com

Brett Larson

Treasurer
(608) 232-9675
office@pheasantbranch.org

Nancy Hoene

Publicity
(608) 226-0730
nhoene@chorus.net

Jim Coors

Membership
(608) 231-3593
jgcoors@facstaff.wisc.edu

Margaret Rankin Riley

Trips Chair
(608) 836-6695
rankin@surgey.wisc.edu

Ned Zuelsdorff

Race Chair
(608) 231-1876
nedz@itis.com

Harry Lum

Advertising/Promotions
(608) 273-2821
convenience@mailbag.com

Kay Lum

Newsletter
(608) 273-2821

Pete Anderson

KidSki Chair
222-1928
pjander2@facstaff.wisc.edu

John Taylor

Social Director
232-4565
jtaylor826@excite.com

(**PARDON**, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

trivial, and the Nixon pardon a minor footnote in pardon history. This clemency is for two individuals whose crime is so heinous that I fear doing injustice to their guilt through an inadequate description. Their transgression brought dishonor upon the nordic world, shame upon their houses, and yet they show no remorse, no contrition for the dastardly deed committed some 8 years ago. In fact, they have justified their scandalous ways to themselves and revel in their misdeed. Truly shocking.

This sports tragedy ranks with the scandals of the Chicago "Black Sox" or Olympic impostor Rosie Ruiz. Of course, the scandal to which I refer is the "stolen start" of the 1993 Pre-Birkie where our offenders left the start line some 7 minutes before the starting gun, and raced to an illicit finish. The race was stolen from the "silent majority" of law abiding, upstanding, and righteous skiers who waited for the gun. Yes, it was "Black Saturday", the day that lives in nordic infamy.

To protect their families, I shall refer to these miscreants by their first names only. Ron, son of Birkie skiing legend and current age class champ, Grace White, should have known better. About Mike, former Madison Nordic Ski Club president, what can I say? Forgiveness is the better part of virtue and presidents have pardoned former presidents before. Therefore I extend my pardon to these wayward lads. But, don't be too hard on the boys. After all, in future when they finish a race, the question will always be asked, "When did you start?"

Dear readers, you should know that these pardons have benefited me more spiritually than financially. And when I eventually leave the oval ski shelter, I'll be honored to take home the many fine pairs of skis you've given me over the years. And believe me, I'll think about you everyday I drive to Elver in that beautiful Subaru Outback you bestowed upon me during my reign. Pardon me, but, I believe it's time to sign off. Thank you. Thanks. Thank you very much. *

EDITORS NOTE: we'd like to remind Jimmy that, unlike the U.S. President, MadNorSki Presidents can reign for more than 2 terms.

Help Improve Ski Trails in Madison — Make a Donation

More frequent grooming of Madison ski trails is needed. The Madison Nordic Ski Club is initiating a **FUND-RAISING DRIVE** to acquire a new \$7,500 grooming machine for use by the City of Madison. **OUR GOAL IS TO RAISE \$3,750 BY THE END OF MARCH. EVERY DOLLAR WE RAISE WILL BE MATCHED BY ONE DOLLAR FROM THE CITY OF MADISON.** Jim Morgan, City of Madison Parks Superintendent has committed to improved grooming of the ski trails in 2002 if we can help them get the new machine. Currently the city is grooming the six ski trails in town (see Grooming article) with two machines. A third machine would eliminate a lot of wasted time spent hauling machines to and fro. Additionally, the city has three people available during the winter to perform grooming chores, so the machine would be put to direct use.

PLEASE SEND DONATIONS TO Madison Nordic Ski Club, PO Box 55281, Madison, WI 53705. Make your check payable to Madison Nordic Ski Club, X-C Groomer on the memo line. Your donation will go directly to purchase the new groomer because our volunteer organization has no operating expenses. Your help is greatly appreciated. If you have questions about the groomer or other aspects of this fund-raiser, please contact Jim Vanden Brook at 608-437-4192 or jpvanden@mhtc.net *

A Letter of Thanks

YOU ARE WELCOME!

DEAR MADISON NORDIC SKI CLUB,
Scott Wilson recently notified me about whom to thank for my grant for Junior Olympics. It is nice to finally know who helped me so that I could thank you. So, THANK YOU!

Junior Olympics was a great experience and I am thankful to you for helping me get there. I had a great time, the midwest team got to stay in these big condos. I shared two story house with Andre Watt and Kirk Nordgren. I met many skiers and made many friends. We had plenty of good food to eat, maybe more than we needed! These were possibly the best traveling arrangements I ever had. The midwest organizers did a great job,

Skiing in New Hampshire was pretty good also. We raced on this 5K loop where we climbed a hill and came down it. The race course was close to the condos and there was a groomed trail that connected the condos and a race course. We often skied back and forth. I was not very successful in the races, but had a great experience and I wish that I was still a junior so that I could go again.

I hope that I will meet you so that I can thank you in person.

Sincerely,

Nikolai Anikin

We Take Bikes As Seriously As We Do Skis!

We're your road bike specialists!

Custom fits on
all bikes! Complete
custom bikes built
to your body for
under \$2,000.00!



**Over 100
Road Bikes
in Stock!**

And of course,
we have a
great
selection of
mountain
bikes,
tandems and
recumbents...

**Thank you
Madison skiers
for your
support... it
allows us to
give you a
better
selection!**



BICYCLE DOCTOR
NORDIC SKI SHOP

Give us a call or stop in for
special deals on End-of-
Season ski Gear...

WHITMAN PARK SHOPPING CENTER
(Hwy. 67 — 1 mile north of I-94)
Oconomowoc, WI • (262) 567-6656

Badger State Games — A Different Perspective

By KATHY RICE, INTRODUCTION BY GINA INTERRANTE

KATHY RICE (A VISUALLY IMPAIRED SKIER) TOOK THE BRONZE (3RD PLACE) AT BADGER STATE GAMES IN THE NOVICE CATEGORY! SHE PROUDLY STOOD ON THE PLATFORM AS HER FANS APPLAUDED HER EFFORTS AND SHE WAS AWARDED HER MEDAL! SHE WAS ABSOLUTELY THRILLED WITH HER VICTORY! HER FANS CHEERED HER ON AS SHE APPROACHED THE FINISH LINE! TEARS OF JOY FELL FROM HER EYES AS SHE HUGGED HER GUIDE. THIS WAS HER VERY FIRST SKI RACE!

AS KATHY'S GUIDE, I WAS IMPRESSED WITH HER FLEXIBILITY, STRENGTH AND SELF-DETERMINATION! HER ABILITY TO SKI DOWNHILL WITH ONE FOOT IN THE TRACK AND THE OTHER IN SNOWPLOW POSITION WORKED WELL FOR HER. SHE CUT HER TIME FROM 2:10 (DURING A TRIAL SKI 10K THE WEEK BEFORE) AT WAUSAU TO 1:38:28 AT THE GAMES!

KATHY BEGAN CROSS COUNTRY SKIING IN GREEN BAY A FEW YEARS AGO AND ATTENDED SKI-FOR-LIGHT IN 2000 & 2001. (SKI-FOR-LIGHT IS A WEEKEND SKI-CAMP HELD EACH YEAR IN ROSHOLT, WI. FOR VISUALLY & MOBILITY IMPAIRED SKIERS AND IS SPONSORED BY THE LIONS CAMP & SONS OF NORWAY.)

WE ARE ALL PROUD OF HER MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENT! WHAT WILL KATHY TAKE ON NEXT YEAR? MAYBE THE 20K? OR MAYBE THE KORTELOPET? YOU BETTER BELIEVE IT, WHATEVER KATHY PUTS HER HEART AND SOUL INTO - SHE WILL COME OUT A WINNER IN MY BOOK! SHE IS A GREAT INSPIRATION TO US ALL!

CONGRATULATIONS!

FOLLOWING IS KATHY'S EXPERIENCE IN HER OWN WORDS.

It is difficult to put into words my feeling from my first ski race. I was noticeably nervous as we checked in, one of the gals asked me why I looked so scared. I then tried to put my mind at ease and concentrate on race prep (mentally). We did some interviews with a Wausau newspaper and a TV station which helped to change my focus.

Our trial run of 1K revealed my basket had fallen off of my pole, I had one of my poles and one of my husband's poles, and the rental area at Nine Mile was closed. Once again, Gina (my guide) to the rescue. She used my poles of different length and offered me her poles.

It is race time, the boots are



Kathy Rice stands on the podium proudly holding her 3rd place bronze medal in the 10k novice race.

locked into the skis, the poles in place, and the whistle blows. "is it really time to go?" I ask Gina. For the first 4 K, I seemed to have kept up pretty well to a few skiers. The newly waxed skis seemed to have given me some speed on the down hills because I sure did fly. I took some pretty good falls on the somewhat icy snow! One fall was right in front of a support person. Gina could not stop in time and landed under me! It was great! Skis, poles, and limbs all over the trail! Guess what Gina asked - "anyone have a camera?" The poor support person just muttered "Oh" when the whole thing happened. He was at a complete loss for words and actions!

When we approached the rest area, I was quite thankful for a short break. With about 1K to go, the Junior 4K racers were on the same trail as we were on. It was great fun watching and listening to their efforts as they skied very hard.

"Here you go, ski your hardest, you are at the finish line. Go ahead of me, I'm right behind you" is what I hear from Gina. Then I hear the crowd. Most clearly, I hear Brian "Come on Kathy". It was so totally awesome!

My thoughts as I cross — thanks for the friends who support me; I am pretty sure we

made better time than last Saturday; and what incentive to do better and go further next time. I hope to offer incentive for others with special needs

FEELINGS UPON OUR FINISH:

I was a bit shaky when I had to remove my skis. It was so totally awesome that so many people came up to us to congratulate us for doing the race. Per Brian, we had completed the 10K in about 1 hour 38 minutes. This was quite a surprise since it took me 2 hours and 10 minutes the previous Saturday.

The hot chocolate was not yet quite ready but Brian was waiting for it patiently. I was too "high" to even think about food or drink. I was not cold just in complete awe.

Brian then reported I took 3rd in the Women's Novice Group. Once again almost complete disbelief on my part. OK there probably weren't that many participants. It still felt neat to have a medal.

The presentation of the awards was running a bit behind. Dave Robb also a ski guide and a member of the Madison Nordic Ski Club had won a Silver and was waiting for his award as his next race was about to begin. The



Gina Interrante and Kathy Rice pause for a "Kodak" moment before the big race.



Kathy pushes towards the finish line with Gina's urging as the crowd cheers!

Madison skiers had all assembled near the award presentation area. It was terribly cold out there! They all stayed to offer congratulations — the Women's Novice was the last group presentation. What a hearty bunch.

It was pretty neat to receive the award. While up on the podium, I heard Gina say "turn around". I thought she wanted to get the "Blind Skier" sign Brian had made up for me. I don't think she meant for me to turn completely around, but in keeping with my mind set of listening and performing what she says, I did turn all the way around! As a visually impaired skier, you learn to listen well and to perform exactly what your guide instructs. One wrong move could mean a tree hugging incident!

Before I stepped down from the podium, the gal who finished after me, came up to me to offer congratulations. She said I was pretty fast. Well I wouldn't go that far, but it was sure nice she stayed for the awards and came up to me afterwards. There is so much support that it really gives one the drive to improve.

Thanks to all of you who are guides or who are thinking of being a guide. You should know how much of a difference you make in our lives.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF MY VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

I was born with Leber's congenital Amaurosis. Many people born with this disorder are completely blind from birth. I am quite fortunate in that up until about 5 years ago, my vision while bad has re-

**"AS A VISUALLY
IMPAIRED SKIER, YOU
LEARN TO LISTEN WELL
AND TO PERFORM
EXACTLY WHAT YOUR
GUIDE INSTRUCTS. ONE
WRONG MOVE COULD
MEAN A TREE HUGGING
INCIDENT!"**

mained quite stable. It is progressively getting worse which was predicted by doctors as normal people do notice some vision loss with age. With contact corrections, I am able to read the large letter on a chart with my left eye and 2 lines with my right eye. This is considered legally blind.

My parents always encouraged me to live without limitations - "the sky is the limit" was what I was told. This is how I try to meet new challenges.

SKIING HISTORY:

In 1985, I was living in Green Bay. I contacted a rehab center to see if there were any groups who participated in cross country skiing or tandem biking. Mike Graper who had answered my call of-

fered to take me out cross country skiing. He has an excellent teaching technique. We went out several times that winter. Mike then moved to Schofield and after that I did not ski much until I met my husband Tim in 1995. Tim is not a real fan of winter but he will ski occasionally because he knows I like to get out. We bought a used set of skis to try out the sport. In January of 2000, I attended the WI Ski for Light. This was quite overwhelming for me as I had never attended a camp type setting without knowing anyone who was going to be there. We took a bus from Madison to Rosholt. Upon getting off of the bus, I heard a man introduce himself as Mike Graper. big smile on my face! I walked over to where I heard his voice coming from and explained that I was Kathy who he took out skiing in Green Bay in the early 1980's. Mike helped me locate my luggage and to get to know some others. I was paired with Gina Interrante as my sighted guide. What a great pair. She is totally outgoing and loads of fun. This was Gina's first time as a guide. she did great. We skied what I thought was a lot! Little did I know how far the Madison Ski Club members ski! Gina and I kept in touch. We went on a couple of bike rides together. You see, Tim and I tandem bike. Now that is a sport he can get into! The weather is warm! Gina asked if I would like to do Badger State Games and in December I received the e-mail from her stating entry forms are now available. That is where it all began. Next year, she has already suggested I try the 20K race. Hmmm! Gonna have to do a whole lot more skiing to prepare for that. Thanks to all who take part in Ski for Light. It is great fun to meet so many interesting people. It is great that so many give of their weekend to spend time skiing with a visually impaired skier, serving at the camp, and many of hours of organizing the event. Each year the visually impaired skier is paired with a different guide. This year, with Lori Veit's assistance, I gained confidence with snow plowing and holding my poles properly. In Lori's words "You control the snow". This is what I try to remember when the down hills seem pretty fast and then the turns come up! *

A Sweep at the Noquemanon!

By SCOTT BACHMEIER

This is a tale of how one not-so-well-trained citizen classical skier conquered the mighty 53 km Noquemanon Ski Marathon on a cold but sunny day in January 2001. The trail possessed stunning beauty, and the kick wax was just right — what could possibly go wrong to spoil such a wonderful skiing venue? After all, I had worked my way up to the Big Leagues now ... I've got a Birkie under my belt, and I even ski the Tuesday night Elver races. I am so there!

Knowing that hydration would make or break my performance, I went to great lengths to ensure an adequate supply of sports drink for my Noquemanon adventure. My backpack contained not one, but two CamelBak Zoid reservoirs, complete with high-tech neoprene sleeves on the hoses and insulated bite valves to prevent freezing. Imagine my reaction when both of my CamelBak tubes froze by about 15 minutes into the race (I think it was about +8° F at the 9 a.m. start). Nothing worked to thaw the useless appendages — not even trying to tuck them under my fleece vest. OK, no need to panic ... I'll just ease off on my pace a bit and rely on fluids at the aid stations.

I made it to Aid Station #1 (at the 7 km mark) just fine. Drank 3 cups of Energy drink. OK, this isn't so bad after all. Onward! Unfortunately, at half a kilometer past Aid Station #1, my right pole sank deep into the soft snow beside the soft tracks, and I heard the unmistakable "snap" of what could only be a twig breaking under the snow. Nope — it was my 20% carbon fiber pole. Suddenly the frozen CamelBak tubes seemed trivial. Faced with the decision of skiing another 6.5 km with one pole or going that ½ km back to Aid Station #1, I chose the latter option. I began to ski back, going against what was thankfully very light traffic, knowing full well that a thundering herd of skaters was sure to be headed this way very soon (they started 50 minutes after the classical skiers). I made it back to Aid #1 just in time to marvel at their speed and technique as they roared past. Some friendly Yoopers helped me select a nice, heavy, metal touring pole



Scott and his wife, Ruth at the finish line of the 2000 Noquemanon race. If you read the article, you will understand why Scott didn't get a photo this year!

with a nice, big, heavy basket, and they even helped me transfer the Exel Evolution wrist strap from my broken pole to the loaner. OK, problem number 2 solved — let's ski this race! As the terrain became tougher and the K's added up, I began to appreciate the benefits of carbon/fiberglass pole technology. Man, that metal pole was heavy! But wait — my wife was planning to go to Aid Station #2 to watch the race, and I could grab her new racing poles which were in the cargo box on top of our car! "See, this isn't going to be so bad after all", I said to nobody in particular. A comment I had to rescind once I arrived at Aid #2 to find that she had already left (she assumed that I must have already passed, but in truth, I was behind my predicted pace due to the aforementioned pole issue). In fact, she left about 5 minutes before I arrived, I learned after asking if anyone had seen a woman with a baby in a blue baby jogger. Oh well, racing poles are over-rated, let's hydrate, and get back to skiing!

As the trail profile map will tell you, there are some pretty long and challenging climbs in the middle section of the race. It was here that I began to run out of steam, and really wish I had more fluids and a lighter right pole.

There were about 20 times when I resigned myself to stop at the start of the half marathon (the cutoff point) and just call it a day. I was tired, getting cold, and the tracks were not the greatest. Maybe I should have done the Half Marathon again this year. Visions of a warm ride back to the Superior Dome began dancing in my head, along with visions of steamy bratwurst and frosty mugs of beer at the Landmark Hotel pub. Yes, I had Bonked.

I got to the cutoff point at the 30km mark, and I was 5 minutes past the "cutoff time". The race official decided to let me continue, since I suddenly claimed that I felt pretty good at that point (not sure if I was trying to convince them, or myself). Seems that I had somehow forgotten about that little "stop and the cutoff point" idea I had conjured up during the previous few long climbs. I did know (from skiing the Half Marathon twice before) that the final half of the course was not so bad, and even mostly downhill, so the decision to finish the race seemed like a safe one.

From about the 30km point on, I was treated to the sounds of snowmobiles following not far behind me. Yep, I was the very last one, and the Trail Sweep team was on my tail. They must have been bored with either my pace or my technique, because once in a while they would zoom around me and flog their sleds a bit in an attempt to perhaps coax me into picking things up a bit. The novelty of all the noise slowly wore off, and I made up my stubborn Norwegian mind right then and there that I would finish the race, if only to force them to have to follow.

Slow Skier Bib Number 109 the rest of the way, no matter how long it took.

At about 44km, I executed a wonderfully animated face-plant on a steep curving downhill, and broke the high-tech Exel Evolution wrist strap that I had so painstakingly transferred from my broken pole to the loaner pole. "Fine, I'll just hold the bloody pole with a death grip the rest of the way", I muttered (again, to no one in particular). "Hey, maybe he'll quit now", I'm sure the Trail

Sweep guys were thinking.

Much to my surprise, I passed a skier at the 49km point ... I was no longer in last place! And I no longer had to listen to those pesky snowmobiles 100 feet behind me. I was suddenly liberated, and the euphoria brought renewed energy to my tired body. Suddenly, I was skiing with something resembling a pace, and I was even executing a few double-pole-kick maneuvers. I was Bjorn Daehlie, in the final K of a World Cup race!

Finally, that gigantic Superior Dome looming in the horizon became close enough to reveal the finish line banner. I must say, it was refreshing to ski to the finish line without all those annoying, cheering spectators lining the course. No traffic jam at the exit chute. Just me. Then, it hit me — I, out-of-shape office boy, had actually finished the full 54 km Noquemanon! (remember, I skied that extra kilometer back there to get a replacement pole). My time, you ask? Eight Hours and Fifteen minutes. Not enough to move me up to Wave 5 in the Birkie. A lady stepped out of a large van at the

**“SOME FRIENDLY
YOOPERS HELPED ME
SELECT A NICE, HEAVY,
METAL TOURING POLE
WITH A NICE, BIG,
HEAVY BASKET”**

finish line and apparently felt sorry for me — she offered me a Subaru cowbell. I may not have an official time for the Noquemanon (they stopped timing 45 minutes before I arrived) ... but I have a cowbell!

So, will I ever return to more respectfully conquer that mighty Noquemanon course? Probably. It really is a spectacular course. In spite of what you read above, I did actually have fun during much of the race. And if I, an office boy lacking world-class athletic prowess, can finish this race, so can you! *

- JUNIORS ARE ON THE MOVE! -

Big Junior News

By DON FARISS

Due to a severe weather day, the two day Wisconsin High School Championships Pursuit event was compressed into a one day, two race event held February 10th on the trails at Minocqua's Winter Park. This was a difficult test for all entrants. The Junior MadNorSki contingent proved up to the challenge and turned in many "above expectation" performances. The boys team pulled off a 3rd overall team placing behind Hayward and Iola. Junior Ben Cline was the 3rd individual in the classical and pursuit races. Sophomore Amanda Durkin also captured top ten medals by placing 10th and 8th. Way to go Juniors! *



new moon
Hayward, WI • Home of the Birkie
ski-shop

**CONGRATULATIONS MADNORSKI SKIERS ON
COMPLETING THE TOUGHEST BIRKIE EVER!**

It was a character-building experience!

END OF SKI SEASON SALE!

Skis, Boots & Poles 25% off.

Clothing 10-50% off

V2 AERO ROLLERSKIS IN STOCK!

Steve says it's the best skate ski you can buy. He's right.

PHONE 1-800-754-8685

For orders, trail conditions, information, the "up north" report.

or E-mail newmoon@cheqnet.net

Seen Through My Eyes — I Wish You Could

By W. E. BLUESTOCKING

Do me a favor right now, close your eyes. Continue on with what you were doing. Go ahead give it a try. Can't read this can you? Now try this: close your eyes, stand up, and lift one foot. Raise it up so that your knee is almost touching your chest. Next to impossible, or at least, very difficult, right? Imagine if you can the magnitude of being "blind." OK, now let's add a pair of cross-country skis to that picture. How many of you would even consider attempting that feat? Helen Keller said, "sight is a terrible thing to waste without vision."

Spending a weekend as a guide for the blind was, pardon the pun, an eye opener! I'll be totally honest with you, prior to this weekend I had very little exposure to the sightless. Yet, they deal with our world every day of their lives. Oh sure, I have a friend who's loosing his sight, he has night blindness now. But, he lives in Thunder Bay, Ontario and I don't see him that often. Oh, and there was Mr. Rainey a customer of the bank where I use to work. Funny, I could always tell what he ate that day. We use to laugh about that; somehow that doesn't seem too funny anymore.

I volunteered to be a ski instructor/guide for the visually impaired at the Lion's club in Rosholt, Wisconsin the weekend of January 19th and 20th. This annual event is called "Ski for Light." Upon Friday's arrival basic instructions were given on living in the world of the blind. Some of the simplest were: the unsighted hold your elbow, and your steering allows them to follow easily. They typically evaluate things by assigning numbers. Say for instance, levels of difficulty are from one through five, five being the most difficult. There are different levels of the blind. Congenitally blind, blind after birth, partial, bright light affected, night blindness, shadowed, etc. It is fine to ask them what level they are. It is acceptable to use the words "look" and "see" in their presence. They use the clock to determine where to feel. Their face is always noon. So, at a dinner table it is appropriate to state, "your glass is at 2:00 filled with orange juice." Orange? Do you think that matters?



Skiing wasn't the only activity that weekend. Volunteer Cindy Easley joins the group for a tubing adventure.

Below, volunteers Gail Van Haren, Martha (from Marshfield) and Karen Wesley goof off before being guides a snowshoeing excursion.



Certainly. They associate that taste with that word.

We were informed that the "unsighted" would be meeting us Saturday morning during breakfast. After breakfast we would be given actual instructions on the snow. We would be blindfolded and instructed to fall. Thus, learning the basics of recovery from a sightless perspective. I was apprehensive about it all. I just didn't want to hurt anyone. Michael Graper the gentleman responsible for organizing this yearly event informed us which visually impaired person we would be partnered with. My partner's name was Jodi she was 14 years old and congenitally blind (which means blind from birth.) Think about that for one minute. No concept of color, no concept of shapes unless she had felt them with her hands. Try to explain a ribbon of gently rolling hills to a person who hasn't seen a hill, nor a ribbon. We were advised there were 41 visually impaired people. Ranging in ages from 12 to 49, with the majority between 12 and 18.

After the instructional portion, the guides and some of the sightless congregated in the lodge area. I immediately spotted the table laced with hundreds of assorted cookies, and a variety of beverages. A polite grandmotherly lady asked me what flavor of cookie and beverage I would like. I thought how sweet it was to have this greeter, but realized quickly that she served a more valuable purpose. She became the eyes of the sightless. Imagine. They cannot even experience that simple

task of choosing what cookie they want! They don't know without tasting or feeling everything. In looking around further I noticed the flickering fire in a huge ceiling to floor fireplace. Then it struck me; here amongst us were those who couldn't. Guilt.

I looked around and felt uncomfortable. There were many with canes using them as radar. Gently moving them from left to right in the immediately proximity of their front. Made sense. In looking further, I noticed many bowed heads, a typical stance of comfort for the blind. I felt twinges of discomfort staring at sightless eyes. Eyes that didn't look back, some filmed over in a milky white hue; some distorted as if plucked by some vile cruelty. Button eyed kids clothed in less than fashionable attire, shirts begging to be tucked in and some desperately begging to find a more suitable mate. Most hairdos sported disarray, certainly unfamiliar to comb or brush. I was wondering if I did the right thing by volunteering. Oh please forgive my shallowness. Hey look, here comes more guilt headed my way!

Kicking myself in the proverbial

behind I forced myself to overlook the “looking.” That does make sense if you think about it. In doing so, I was drawn to what all of them possessed. It was a smile. Actually more like a “shit-eating grin,” but heck, they don’t know. Their mirrors don’t speak. I was starting to realize the sighted have many disadvantages. These sightless people didn’t have to deal with the thin waist, the pretty eyes, and the competition that evokes inadequacies; low self-esteem birthed by visual appearance. I needed to know more. Curiosity.

It was late, so we retired to our cabin. Ten women sequestered in a cold dorm style room. Scarce of anything but the beds, which by the way were hermetically sealed in rubber and plastic. A thought creeps in ... is it possible to have ten bed wetters in one room? God forbid the blind would be inflicted with yet another adversity.

Saturday morning arrived, breakfast was served. I sought out Jodi. A table filled with the sightless was my destination. I asked if there was an Jodi at the table. Many chimed in “yes” and pointed in the direction of a girl who was rocking with head tucked. I gently place my hand on her right shoulder and introduced myself, at which point she started screaming and flailing her arms about! I’m sure my heart was sucked out of my chest at that point. She bellowed in a possessed voice “let’s get something straight, don’t ever touch me.” The entire chattered chaos in the cafeteria stopped. You could of heard a pin drop! I meekly apologized and told her I would see her after my lesson. Poor Jodi, such an angry child. Empathy.

After my hour lesson in minus five below, I was frozen solid. Since my eyes were closed most of the time I realized eyelids freeze too! Advice: pay attention to their needs, ask of they are warm enough, check their clothing, and make sure it’s adequate. The blind can learn in several ways. One is to sculpt them into the form or position you want. That was definitely out in Jodi’s case, since I wasn’t allowed to touch her. The other being, I could let her touch me with my permission. That would be my technique. The biggest challenge I would have would be descrip-

tive words to a person who has been blind since birth.

I picked her up at her cabin. I watched her put on her adequately warm (but less than fashionable) clothes with little trouble. Stocking cap pulled entirely over her head and face; strange but not to her. I asked which elbow she would wish to hold. She said it didn’t matter. I led her out the door and to the ski

**“TRY TO EXPLAIN A
RIBBON OF GENTLY
ROLLING HILLS TO A
PERSON WHO HASN’T
SEEN A HILL, NOR A
RIBBON.”**

hut for finding skis. She’s my height, so that was easy. She knew her boot size, so that was a plus. OK, it was out to the tracks. I explained the concept of a trail being about 24 feet wide. In this trail were two sets of tracks. The left one was my set of tracks and the right one was her set. I let her feel them, so she knew approximate distance. I let her feel the skis, tips, tails and bindings. I explained I was going to bend down, kneel and pick up her right foot to insert it into the binding, and then her left. We struggled for quite some time until I gave her permission to place her hand on my back for stabilization. Houston we had ignition! Explanation was required at all times of track condition; track is set straight, 30 feet 180 degree turn left. There will be a wash out on right foot in 15 feet, hang with left. I promised her I would be at her left side at all times calling out any less than comfortable conditions. When she slipped out of tracks, the command was step right, step right, or step left, step left, tips left, or tips right if she was twisting in the opposite direction. Confidence was gained.

We skied two days. She was relentless, refusing defeat, acknowledging my recommendations and commands. She fell more than I care to admit, but was never hurt. Many five level hills were accomplished without spills. There was an insurmount-

able amount of energy depleted. She tired quickly. A one-mile ski was a three-hour grueling ordeal. There was no fluid technique, just sheer grit. In this short amount of time I realized Jodi had a vision. Her vision was to preserve. Maybe her anger fueled her interest? As much as I talked and tried to pull information, she was unwavering in her short retorts. She had tried running, she had ridden a horse, and she had no siblings, and went to the school for the blind in Janesville. Determination. Shear guts. A vision.

I met many blind people that weekend. All with a vision. Their talents were incredible. Kevin played Mozart, as if he was Mozart. Ping sang like a chipmunk to a Simon and Garfunkel song while she twinkled the ivories. Gracie belted out a “Broken Vow” by Laura Fabian. I cried. Then there was Joe. Joe had a 49th birthday that Saturday and insisted he wanted kisses planted on his cheek. Quick thinking made me resort to untruths, of which I told him I was a nun, married to the church. He was a stitch the whole weekend, begging for kisses. I now know even if a wolf loses its teeth and eyes, the desire never leaves! But, I also found out this guy skis in the “Tommy Bartlett Water show.” He’s the guy who skis completely around the boat! That’s a 360 folks! I asked many questions of those who seemed more content with their blindness. Mike the disk jockey, was so pleased by my askings. He said I asked the most interesting question, one that no one had ever asked him in his 25 years. He too was blind from birth. My question to him was, “do you dream, and if you do, what do you dream if you haven’t seen colors or shapes? He smiled that shit-eating grin and simply said it was all sound and smell. Waterfalls, ocean waves, great music, flowers, and a girl’s sweet voice, followed by a sweet perfume. His vision.

So, the next time you look in the mirror and complain about the hips or belly being too big, the face too pudgy, the lips or hair too thin. Do me a favor, overlook the looking. Volunteer your time. Try being a guide for the blind, you know, the ones with a vision. *

Hodag Ski Chase 2001

By G. RAE VAN SLUYS



Need a new destination for an early January ski race? Pelican Rapids is nestled in the "Heart of the Northwoods" at the junction of the Wisconsin and Pelican Rivers. A mere four hour drive from Madison, this little logging town established in 1880 lost its scenic name to railroad tycoon F.W. Rhinelander of New York. Could the lumberjacks of that era ever have imagined that, a century later, Boom Lake would teem with over 150 brightly-lycra'd skiers chasing a mythical beast called the "Hodag"?

To shorten a long tall tale of 1896, a hairy, horny muscular monster with razor-sharp claws feasted on white bulldogs in the forests of Rhinelander. The impressively overactive imagination of a pioneer named Gene Shepard created the hoax from wood, ox hides, bull horns, and steel rods, then heroically captured it in a cave.

This year's 2nd annual **HODAG SKI CHASE** held on January 13th at-

tracted over 150 skate skiers, including our own club Treasurer, Brett Larson, who placed in his age group (ask Brett to fill you in). Last year's 33K distance was shortened to 30K this year, skating only, run in the opposite di-

**"...THE FEW MOGULS
AND OCCASIONAL DIVOTS
ADDED TO THE
CHALLENGE..."**

rection (south to north). This changed the difficulty of terrain and eliminated a hair-raising pin turn, decreasing the risk of flusterclucks (consult author for interpretation).

Both years the few moguls and occasional divots added to the challenge of the remarkably well-groomed trail rolling through beautiful hemlock stands and

mossy marshland, crossing lakes and cascading down steep hills. A few technical areas ranks this race for moderate to expert skiers. Four feed stations along the course were adequate, sans gu.

All the amenities from clothing sacks to completion medallions for everyone who finished, plus bus transport for spectators and skiers, and last minute trail condition updates, polished the event to professional standards. It seems that the racers were especially fast this year — or my energy was compromised — but friend Trudi and I jubilantly achieved our goal of feeling good at the finish line, albeit last! Other than being annoyed by snowmobilers following us for the last 7K from the end, the race was thoroughly enjoyable.

Would I do this race again? Probably. We'll see what next year brings! Get additional details at (715) 845-2195, or emailing scout exec@samosetcouncil.org. *



Trusted Gear. Expert Advice. Since 1938.



**What will you do
til next ski season?**

Come visit our bike department and check out our line of *Novara* and *Schwinn* bikes. Also, visit our full-service bike shop for all your bike-tune needs.

7483 West Towne Way
Madison, WI 53719
(located behind West Towne Mall)
608-833-6680



COME VISIT DECORAH!

IOWA IS NOT FLAT



COME CHECK

OUT THE AREA OF

20 KM OF SKI TRAILS

AND ENDLESS

BIKE TRAILS.



**TALK WITH WARD ABOUT
YOUR EQUIPMENT NEEDS.**

Decorah Bicycles
THE SILENT SPORTS HEADQUARTERS.

101 COLLEGE DRIVE • DECORAH, IOWA 52101
PHONE: 319-382-8209 • FAX: 319-382-9126
WEB: www.decorahbicycles.com

Silver Skiers

BY GREG JONES

All of the hard work that the silver skiers put in has paid off. We started meeting in the fall with some dry land training. There were 16 skiers that came on a regular basis after the first snow fall. We awarded pins to skiers for the amount of skiing they did over the course of the season. A gold pin was awarded to skiers logging more than 30 hours, a silver pin for more than 20 hours, and a bronze pin for more than 10 hours. A maximum of only 5 hours was allowed for the month of December. The rest of the hours were earned between January 4th and February 15th. **ANSEL SCHIMPF** had the most at 53 hours!

Kudos to those enthusiastic Silver Skiers who might not have raced much, or at all, this year but who had fun learning new techniques, skiing with friends, and gaining confidence on their skis. None of these kids get much support from their friends at school for their efforts, so when you see them on the trail, give them some encouragement. That goes for the High School kids and the Elementary School kids as well. They are all hardy individuals with a commitment to a wonderful sport. For those of us who love snow it's been a winter dream come true.

We had a handful of Silver Skiers win medals in races around the state this winter. I would like to recognize them here:

JUNIOR OLYMPIC RACE IN

MARQUETTE MICHIGAN:

Rachel Fanney — 2nd skate,
2nd classic

WAUKESHA CTY. PARKS:

Ansel Schimpff — 1st

CITIZEN RACE IN NASHOTAH:

Birken Schimpff — 1st

SNEKKEVICK RACE IN WAUSAU:

Corrina Jones — 1st
Rachel Fanney — 1st
Hannah Fanney — 3rd
Birken Schimpff — 3rd

STANDING ROCKS:

Birken Schimpff — 1st

IOLA NORSEMAN:

Noah Kenoyer — 1st
Corrina Jones — 1st
Ansel Schimpff — 3rd
Birken Schimpff — 3rd

HIGH SCHOOL CHAMPIONSHIPS

(MIDDLE SCHOOL DIVISION) :

Noah Kenoyer — 8th classic
Rachel Fanney — 8th classic

Boys team — 3rd overall

(*Ansel Schimpff*, *Noah Kenoyer*, *Tim Cline*)

BADGER STATE GAMES:

Corrina Jones — 2nd skate
& 3rd classic
Rachel Fanney — 1st skate

PARTICIPATION AT ELVER:

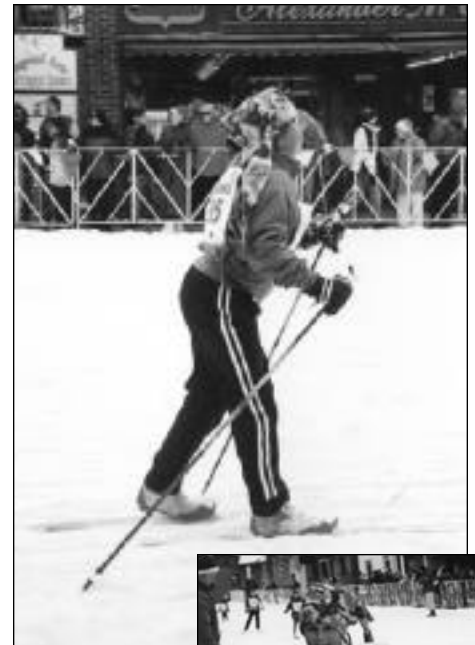
Emily Ricker, *Corrina Jones*,
Rachel Fanney,
Ansel Schimpff, (in at least one
race) *Birken Schimpff*, *Noah Kenoyer*, *Neal Smith*



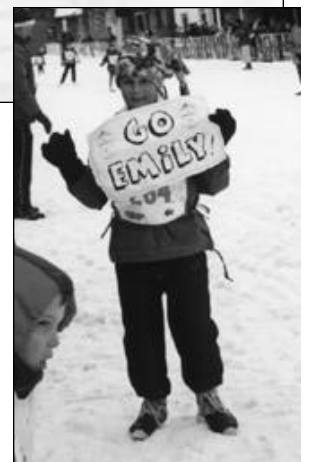
SCENES FROM THE BARNEBIRKIE



Ok, so its 8:00 p.m. on Feb 28th. The newsletter is due, and I have space to fill. It needs to be done tonite. I look around my office and see these cute pictures of my niece and nephew. Emily and Zach Proeber, from Muskego, (or they would for sure be members of KidSki), show off the medals they earned doing the 2.5K Barnebirkie race.



Emily Races to the finish line while Zach cheers her on! (Who wouldn't want a little brother like that?)



Are You Over 40 and Fit?

A book is being put together called "Fit Past 40: Healthy Bodies, Minds, Spirits in Midlife and Beyond". The author is seeking inspirational personal stories and poems celebrating physically active older lives for new book that demonstrates it's never too late!

Deadline: May 30, 2001

E-mail or write (with sase) Fit40book@aol.com

K. Evans, 849 Alamar Ave., Ste. C, PMB 486, Santa Cruz, CA 95060

<http://pages.about.com/fitpast40/index.html> *

- WHAT'S UP WITH KIDSKI -

Lots of Snow Brings Lots of Kids!

By PETE ANDERSON

Kidski had its grand finale—a good day of skiing, followed by food. After a cancellation because of ice, we finished on a layer of powder and polished the pizza at Rocky's afterward, where we watched ski videos and handed out awards. These achievement pins—gold, silver, and bronze—are much sought after by the kids. So's the pizza.

We had a good year, thanks to abundant snow, and a good batch of kids. We had about 25 younger kids at Odana, and about 15 regulars in the Silver Skis at Elver. They learned everything from how to get back up to how to do a V-2. And we had fun teaching them, too.



Big thanks should go to Odana coaches Peter Berbee, Derek Popp, Dave Robb, Kris Long, Jeff Palmer, Mark Plane, Pete Anderson, and all the parents who helped out.

Some got special awards from the kids—Valentines. As Dave Robb said, that was better than a salary.

Silver Skis coordinator Greg Jones put a lot of work into a successful new program, and Galen Kenoyer, Dale Fanney, and Jeff Schimpf coached as well.

Special thanks to all the kids for being a fun group to play with. All in all, a good year. See you next year! *

"Hej Hej!" Skiers Greeting

By MADELINE URANECK

Pronounced like "HEY!"

If someone yells "Hej! Hej!"

at you as you ski by, they're not mad at you, wanting you to get off the track, or hoping you'll stop to say "Hi". It's just a friendly Norwegian/Swedish -style skiers' greeting, similar in intended meaning to "Go! Go!" or "Go get-tum!" or "Joy! Joy! Ain't we all glad there's still snow on the ground!"

Skiing developed in Scandinavian countries and the shouts of exultation have been exported with the knitted caps, sleek skis, and ringing cow and goat bells. Sorry for any one I've startled on the trail: I lived a year in Sweden and have traveled to Norway 12 times. "Hej! Hej!" just comes out naturally by now. Har det bra! *

"Hej Hej!"

A NEW PLANET HAS ENTERED YOUR SOLAR SYSTEM



ENDURO ROLLER SKI CLINIC WITH VIDEO ANALYSIS

April 22 at Pinnacle Health
5973 Executive Dr. Fitchburg, WI
10:00-12:00 XC Skating Technique
12:30-2:00 Video Analysis

Taught by Dale Niggeman

Bring your helmet, safety gear & poles
Rollerskis will be provided

Call to register

PLANET XC NORDIC SKI CATALOG
120 Shorewood Terrace, Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54494
800-380-8412 • <http://www.planetxc.com>

FINAL MARK DOWNS WINTER MERCHANDISE

Up to 50% Off
Good through March 14

Downhill • Cross Country Skis
Snowboards • Winter Outer Wear

Top Brands

Tecnica
Patagonia
Marker
Volkl
Mt. Hardware



Madison 53703
Phone: 608-257-5043
www.fontanasports.com

Monday & Thursday 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.
Tues., Weds., Fri., Sat. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Sunday 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Time to Level the Playing Field

BY IAN D. DUNCAN

In the last newsletter, the success of the women's ski clinic at Elver was reported. For the second year in a row, the club has organized and sponsored a successful clinic and they are to be congratulated. However, without meaning to sound too much like Scrooge, isn't it time for the men to get a shot? While a men-only clinic might sound a bit too chauvinistic, next year a mixed clinic would be a compromise. Certainly a women's only clinic without a similar opportunity for male skiers in 2002 would be unreasonable. Perhaps those of either gender who want to ski together and feel inhibited by the other sex could ski in a separate class/es. Believe it or not, some men and women are quite happy taking lessons together; in fact some actually want to! The club used to organize clinics for all in the past, and having attended them it's fair to say that they also were a great success. So next year, let's see, some equal opportunity and give everyone a day out with Cindy et al at Elver (almost poetic!). *

A Special Thank You

Thanks to all the sponsors who donated door prizes and to the lucky winners.

BICYCLE DOCTORS

ATOMIC ARC SKIS

Linda Zelewski

FOOTWARMERS

Pete Anderson

SWIX RACING GLOVES

Kevin Jones

DECORAH BICYCLES

TREK WIND VEST

Carol Gosenheimer
Brock Woods, Sashia
Taylor, Tom Dosch

TREK 3 WAY HAT AND

FAST WAX HAT

James Mills

FAST WAX

APRON AND

ASSORTED WAXES

Bob Rabin,
Gina Interrante

FONTANA

FRM SOCKS, TOKO PAD,
FIBERTEX, SANDPAPER
Kalyn Stiles, Mark
Saunders, Jeff Larsen,
Don Fariss

SWIX RACE WAX VIDEO

Gail Van Sluys

WHITE PASSION

GRAPHITE

Dave Peterson,
JoEllen Torresani,
John Miller,
Birken Shiff

START HiTEC

GRAPHITE ADDITIVES

Stan Koenig, Mike
Kapp, Nancy
Wiegand,
Hans Herweijer

KAY LUM

FUNNY HATS

Kevin Leroy, Mark
Harms, Tim
Wadlington

JAMES MILLS

(REP FOR CARBOOM,
ULTIMATE DIRECTION,
SIERRA DESIGNS)

CARBOOM GELS

Susan Miller,
Susan Gallagher
Willi Van Haren
Ian Duncan

ULTIMATE DIRECTION HYDRATION SYSTEMS

Linda McCallum
Clare Seguin,
Carolyn Senty

SIERRA DESIGN

WIND VEST

Dirk Retting, John
Miller, Andy Ellis

MINOCQUA

WINTER PARK

2 DAILY ADULT PASSES

Denise Smith, Paul
Matteoni, Stacy
Meanwell

NEW MOON

SWIX WORLD CUP

LARGE DUFFLE

Ray Cox, Neil Smith

PLANET XC

GERMINA SKATE SX901

Ansel Schimpff

NATIVE EYEWEAR

Tom Gallagher

REI

DAY BACKPACK

Jeff Larsen

SIBLEY SKI TOUR

FREE RACE ENTRY

John Gillich

STEVE SWENSON

(REP FOR GU, EXCEL,
PELTONEN)

ONE CASE OF GU

Brock Woods, Mark
Plane, Don Fariss,
Bret Larson, Tom
Kaufman, Matt Muir

TELEMARK LODGE

FAMILY SEASON PASS

Ian Duncan

DAVE CALHOON

WI STATE PARK

STICKER

Bob Jeanne



- READY, SET, GO! -

7 of 7

BY NED ZUELSDOORFF

More than 400 skiers from age 10 to 60+ participated in this year's Tues. night Elver Park race series. For the first time in several years, great conditions allowed all seven scheduled races to be held. Our largest race involved 87 skiers, and 55 racers signed up for the entire series.

Both classic and freestyle races were held each night and skiers had the choice of roughly 5 and 10K distances on the parks lighted trails. Based on conditions and to keep things interesting, a variety of different courses were used during the series including the now infamous "Hans (Stege) Bypass" at the final race. While we normally used a mass start, an interval start was used at one race where skiers started individually at 10-second intervals. Racers predicted their finish time at another of the races. Dale Fanney and Pete Anderson had the closest time to their prediction (2.5 and 16 seconds, respectively) and were each awarded one of the highly prized, hand crafted MadNorSki clocks for their effort. Results from all races are posted on the club's web site, thanks to Joe King.

Thanks are also in order to the skiers who participated, didn't complain much, and made running the races a lot of fun. Major thanks go to the many volunteers who helped out, especially Tom Rebholz who helped with timing, and Tom and Sue Gallagher who were always out on the course, and to Russ Hefty and his grooming crew. Thanks to Don Fariss and the MadNorSki Juniors Team, and to the UW Ski Team for running two of the races and allowing a night off for President Jimmy and I.

I hope to be back next year to again organize the race series. I would appreciate any suggestions you might have on improving the races (231-1876 or nedz@itis.com). If you've never raced, think about giving it a try. *



Marathon Canadien de Ski — Sneaking into the Ranks of Canada's Veteran Skiers

BY MADELINE URANECK

THE ICE STORM COMETH

When I arrived in Ottawa to downed power lines, blackened out suburbs and the worst ice storm in years, I was thankful no one had accepted my numerous pleading invitations to join me to try the Canadian Ski Marathon.

Ice was so thick on sidewalks it was dangerous to walk. Snow glazed into a thick transparent crust, catching reflections of the sun, setting the ground on fire. Trees crippled right before my eyes with the weight of accumulating ice.

As I journeyed by busses across Ottawa to make my connections to tiny Papineauville, Québec, I and my fellow 2,085 marathoners hadn't yet any inkling that one day of the two-day event was about to be cancelled.

I checked into the dorm, along with 500 others. Skis were everywhere. Old friends (as in 70-year-old friends) greeted one another in French and English. Dozens of high school kids in outdoor education classes arrived to ski the Marathon on assignment. Families walked in with small children. A cross-section of Canada in polypropylene and long johns bedded down on the gym floor with a cacaphony of yawns, snorts, farts, and nocturnal moans. The forecast promised snow all night. The consensus among all had been to wait to wax skis till the next morning.

OUTSIDE, RAIN CONTINUED TO POUR.

At 4:45 am the next morning, I awoke to a "click" as the school's power went. "There goes breakfast," I mumbled mournfully. Breakfast was hardly anyone else's worry. Crews had been out all night, lugging trees off roads, sandbagging flooding rivers, and trying to shore up a disintegrating marathon trail. No snow had fallen.

WAXING BY FLASHLIGHT

Still unsuspecting of a cancellation, a sleepy-eyed ski army trooped into the waxing area. Have you ever seen skiers waxing by flashlight? No irons, no hair dryers, no electric brushes. This



was primitive. Worse, the day's wax recipe called for klister. When the sun rose, and we waited to dash to the school buses to take us to the start area, I winced. Blue globs of klister dripped down the sides of my skis. Nice wax job.

The news of the cancellation was doled out airlines-fashion. First an hour delay. Then another. Then a third. Word came that the Courier de Bois (Runners of the Forest) —veterans determined to ski the full 155 kilometers, who'd departed by bus at 5 am to get their well-deserved two hour head start — were still sitting in buses at the start line. Everyone groaned, "C'est mauvais." (Bad news)

Announcements were made in French. This was Québec, after all. Following the announcement, a murmur worked forward from the back of the room, it was translated and passed on. My comprehension was as foggy as the weather — half-truths, half-dread. At 10:am, the final word, "annulé" — cancelled. It was a tough way to learn new vocabulary.

Two thousand people quickly Made Plans. Good numbers indignantly departed for good, saying something about "Great snow in Montréal, why ski on ice here?" Others, all with cars, took off for day trips — sledding, tubing,

snowboarding, or ice skating on Ottawa's nine miles of canals.

TOUGH DECISION

Ski organizers hardly cast a glance our way. They'd made the tough decision to sacrifice a day of the Marathon in order to put full forces on grooming the remaining 73 kilometers of trail - tomorrow's one-half.

It was no mean job. Troops of Boy Scouts and National Guard, provincial foresters and volunteers built snow bridges over flooding rivers and creeks. Snow plows moved snow on top of lakes that were covered by 12 inches of slush to form raised ski paths for crossing. Downed trees and power lines were dragged off the trail. Some trail sections were completely rerouted.

THE WILD IDEA

Sunday. The race was on! Alarms at the school dorm started going off at 3:00 am, as volunteers left to survey whether repairs had held through the night. At 4:00 am, two men nearest me woke and started pulling on their lycra. These were the "wannabe" Courier de Bois - the guys who hadn't yet skied the full course, but who intended to go to the "bronze". They were to eat breakfast at 4:00 am, get on the bus at 5:00 am, and be skiing, head lanterns flickering, by 6:00 am, aiming to complete 73 K in a day.

A wild idea landed in my brain. Why not? I breathed. I thought of the money I'd forked out for airline ticket, Marathon entry, hotel reservations. I had come here to ski, darn it all! Blue klister was coursing in my veins. I rushed about, trying to get ready.

The idea of skiing all the full distance in one day was a stretch, given my training, but the adventure was irresistible. It was pitch dark as we boarded the buses. No one noticed one "Courier de Bois" didn't have the right bib color.

"How do we follow the trail, in the dark?" I asked timidly, as the bus bounced down a deserted road.

"Don't worry," said the

Québécois next to me. "Just follow the light of the guys ahead of you."

ALONE IN THE FOREST

Yeah, right, I thought. Sure enough, bang! the gun (or in this case, a popped paper bag) went off, 400 head lamps disappeared into the blackness, and there I was, all by myself, in the middle of a Laurentian forest. The moon shone on the snow. I felt, rather than saw the tracks.

400 head lamps disappeared into the blackness, and there I was, all by myself, in the middle of a Laurentian forest. Temperature: 18 F. Wind chill: minus 55! The chill woke my brain to the reality of my folly. 1 K down; 72 to go. Blackness turned to dark blue, then a lighter shade of night.

An hour later, the sun and I both crested over a hill at the identical moment. There, before me, was the first of but a few houses on the trail. A Swedish-style log cabin, log barn, log sauna. A man at a lamp-lit window smiled and waved.

Ecstasy hit me. Joy and glory! I braked, threw off my mittens, and tugged my camera out of my day-pack. How to capture the moment: I tried snapping photos in all directions: sun, cold, pristine farm, but how to record my pounding heart? I knew I'd made the right decision. I knew I'd finish.

NOTHING HAD PREPARED ME FOR THE BEAUTY OF THE MARATHON.

Québec is vast; open farm valleys, tiny villages. The spaciousness contrasted with Wisconsin's retirement home-studded forest-lake country and concentric ski areas. The Marathon's 155 K of trails go through such a variety of landscapes that a first-time skier hardly notices numbed fingers or aching legs. River valleys, forests, Laurentian hills, lakes, ponds, wetlands. Up, down. Climb, glide.

I skied steadily, trying to find a pace I could hold a whole day.

NOT LIKE THE BIRKIE

The trail is divided into 10 sections (only 5 today), each of varying lengths and degrees of difficulty. A sign at the beginning of each, e.g., "Section 2. Intermediate. 16.2 K" let me know what to expect. Arriving at the checkpoint at the end of each section was like entering a new country, getting my passport (bib) stamped to indicate I'd completed the section before. Unlike Birkie food stations, where skiers grab a bite and fly on, here all skiers, fast and slow alike, took off their skis, commiserated about the wind, greeted old friends, re-waxed skis, drank hot soup. The mood was merry, exultant.

A false Courier de Bois, however, I had to keep an eye on the clock. I kept moving on. The wind was fierce and biting, against me all day long.

By the end of the day, I'd skied 11½ hours, from 6 am to 5:30 pm, including soup breaks, photo sessions, stops to put on and take off layers and to pry bark and twigs from the night's storm off the hungry klister on my skis.

I'D NEVER SKIED A FULL DAY BEFORE, SUN UP TO SUN DOWN.

It was a rich experience, to watch in detail what we too rarely observe, the sun's passing across a winter sky.

Overall, the trail was not too difficult. I took a few spills on ice, but there were no Birkebeiner Powerlines or Noquemanon muscle-achers. The Marathon is in the tradition of Canadian woodsmen and guides, who could spend days on skis, covering long distances, completely self-sufficient. It was created in recognition of Canadians' love of the outdoors in winter. That it is not a race, but an endurance event,

takes it deeper within you. You go as far as you can go.

Over ¾ of the participants were there like me, "tourers", just intending to ski a portion of the trail, not the whole thing. Little kids earn a "Mighty Mite" award for com-

pleting a single section. Companies and ski clubs enter team categories to win awards for the most sections skied. Well organized, tired skiers find a warm school bus at the end of each section, waiting to take them back to the dorms and parking lots. The real Courier de Bois, however, must ski the full 155 K in two days. The "bronze" ski the full distance; the "silver" ski the distance with a 15 kilogram pack; the "gold" ski both days with a pack, and camp out the night in between in the snow, under the stars, fixing their own dinner and breakfast over camp fires.

COURIER DE BOIS - GOLD

This particular year, no one had skied the first day, but the Courier de Bois Gold had nonetheless gathered around fires at their usual snow camp and spent the night outside. "It's the best night of sleep I get all year," one quipped later.

The Courier de Bois Gold were mostly guys — gray hair, lean bodies. "Once you do it, said guide Bill Pollock, who completed his 73 K in a leisurely seven hours, you have to keep doing it."

"Why?" asked a new Courier de Bois Bronze beside him.

"Because if you don't, you'll get out of shape." He laughed.

Whether a tourer, a real Courier de Bois, or a fake Courier like me, I don't think I know any skier who wouldn't enjoy this event, revel in the spectacular beauty and variety of the trail, welcome the chance to meet English- and French-speaking Canadians and to find out, just how long you can ski in a day.

The final check point deadline, open only to Courier de Bois and one lone faker, was 3:15 pm. I crossed it with a minute to spare. 58 K behind me, 15 K to the finish. The last hills, covered with rubble from the storm, spread out into magical finish - a sea of pink ice reflected the sunset. Later I found out it was a golf course.

"Congratulations," said the shivering volunteer, lips blue, punching my bib with its 5th and last hole. "You've completed the Canadian Ski Marathon!" *

*Marathon Canadien de Ski
C. P. 1031, Succ B, Hull
Québec, Canada J8X 3X5
(819) 770-7428*



Ready, Set, Go!

6 a.m. — Courier du Bois (Runners of the forest) Bronze start — headlamps blazing!

- JUNIORS ARE ON THE MOVE! -

My first Half-Marathon—the Noquemanon

By KRISTIN GALLAGHER

KRISTIN GALLAGHER IS A SOPHOMORE AT MADISON MEMORIAL AND IN HER SECOND YEAR WITH THE MADNORSKI JUNIORS PROGRAM. UPON FINISHING THE NOQUEMANON SHE WAS LITERALLY GLOWING AND VOLUNTEERED TO SHARE HER EUPHORIA WITH YOU READERS.

I decided I wanted to do the 23K Noquemanon race when some of my team mates went up to do the Kortelopet last year. I wanted to prove to myself that I *Can* do a race like that. I signed up for the race last November and continued training by adding longer workouts into my schedule. About 2 weeks prior to the race, I was beginning to doubt myself: “Can I really do this?” “Why did I sign up for this race? I can’t ski that far.” I decided that these thoughts weren’t going to help me at all, so I tried really hard to only think about the positives. Of course, a person can’t *always* be positive about everything, but I definitely improved my thoughts to be less negative.

On the Tuesday before the race, I chose to do the 10K at Elver just to practice doing a slightly longer race than the 5K I’m used to. After that race, I couldn’t imagine doing 11.8K and another 11K all in one single race. On the night before the race, I couldn’t sleep. I was so nervous that all I could think about was every possible thing that could happen in the race (good and bad). I woke up the day of the race and for a moment, forgot what I was about to do that day. I suddenly remembered I was going to race 23K and became ex-

tremely nervous just as I had been the night before. As we drove to the sports dome in Marquette, all I could think about was the race and what it could have in store for me. About an hour later, my team mates and I (Hans Stege, Matt Nicolai and Zak Kaufman) boarded the bus to the start of the 23K race. The entire ride there, all I could think about was the race and how I would do. I was nervous that I wouldn’t be

**“WHY DID I SIGN UP
FOR THIS RACE?
I CAN’T SKI THAT FAR.”**

able to finish the race or I would have a really slow time. As we got off the bus, some of the 53K skiers were passing by the start point of our race and for some reason, it just put me at ease. I think it was because I knew I was only doing half of what they were doing and if they could do it, so could I.

Before I knew, it was time for the 2nd wave of the 23K to start. I got my skis and poles on and headed up to the start line. I had

no idea where to put myself, so I stood in the 3rd row back from the start line. (I think I was up a little too far, because I didn’t see any of the people around me throughout the rest of the race.) As they clock counted down to the start, I was feeling optimistic and confident. The gun went off and we all started skiing. Everyone was going really slow, trying not to get in the way of other skiers or break a pole. I continued skiing along and I still felt really great. As I approached the first aid station, I wasn’t too thirsty, but I drank anyway because I was going to need that water later in the race! After skiing for a while, I was thinking to myself: “Wow, I must be close to finishing, I’ve been skiing for a pretty long time, I wonder how many kilometers are left?” Not too long after that, there was a sign posted saying there was 14K left! I freaked out for a minute, but then I realized I was having so much fun, just skiing along on the beautiful course and going down lots of fun hills that I’ve never skied before. A little while later, there was a short, steep hill that turned to the right at the bottom. Everyone in front of me was going really slow down it and I was afraid I would hit them if I went down after them in a faster speed. I decided to take off my skis, run down the hill and put them back on at the bottom. It felt weird to do that during a race, but I got away from that hill faster than some of the people skiing down it! Before I knew it, I only had 1K left to go, so I gave everything I had left and pushed it hard into the finish with a time of 1 hour and 48 minutes. I was overjoyed with emotion after having finished my first half marathon, and I would have to say it was a very fun and enjoyable experience! I’m looking forward to skiing the Kortelopet and starting in the 5th wave with my dad (whose doing the 53K)! (Kristen finished the Kortelopet in 2:29:26!) *



Kristen Gallagher skis her first half-marathon in her second year as a MadNorSki Junior! Congratulations!



Is Your Bike Ready For The "Off-Season"?

By Brock Woods

We all know that a training base of lots of kilometers of aerobic exercise during spring, summer and fall is necessary to race at your best in winter. What method will you use for your 'madness' this warm season? Trail running or roller skiing, boating or biking—they are all good. And probably better in combination with each other to keep you eager to get out the door.

For those of you who bike, you should be sure your trusty old steed is tuned up and ready to go. Or perhaps it's time to retire the old nag and decide which hot, new replacement will again let you ride like the wind. Maybe that old 'hoss' can still kick with the best of them, but just needs to fit you a bit better. Whatever your bike needs, whether it's a tune-up, new bike or adjustments, we may have just the answer for you at just the right time.

Tim Gattenby, a lecturer in the UW-Madison Kinesiology Department, avid triathlon athlete and member of the local 'tri' club is interested in working with our club members to help them deal with any or all of these issues. He approached the club this winter about swapping ski lessons for some of the 'tri' folks in exchange for their expertise in bike fitting, etc. I accommodated him with the skiing and now we need to know what YOUR bike needs may be to get ready for spring so they

can reciprocate. This could include training on how to tune your machine, how to be sure a new bike fits you (a complete 'bike-fit' often costs \$100 or more) or even testing it on a wind-trainer to be sure your bike fits you correctly and what to change if it doesn't. A session to do some/all of these things would likely be set up at the natatorium on the UW campus. A good time might be the same hours as our regular club meeting, but in April—the second Monday, 7-10 p.m.

What I need to know from you is: are you interested in such a session and what do you need out of it? Please think about what you might find most useful and communicate this to me soon, either electronically via email at be-woods@facstaff.wisc.edu or phone at 831-5601, or in person at the next club meeting in March. Once I hear what club members need, I'll arrange it with Tim.

I myself am in need of and working on a new touring bike since my 25-year-old Sekai 'just ain't what she used to be'... NOW might be a good time for you, too, to take 'stock' of your riding situation and either get your 'old paint' ready or be sure of which new mount to corral without having to pony up any more dough than necessary. This way, when the snow-sadly—disappears from the range, you'll be ready to ride... *

SCENES FROM THE BIRKIE



Andy Ellis and Glenda Hodge are all smiles after finishing the Birkie. Congratulations to Glenda on completing her first Birkie! Way to go!



A group of unidentified MadNorSki skiers rehydrate after the race and help the economy of Hayward at the same time!

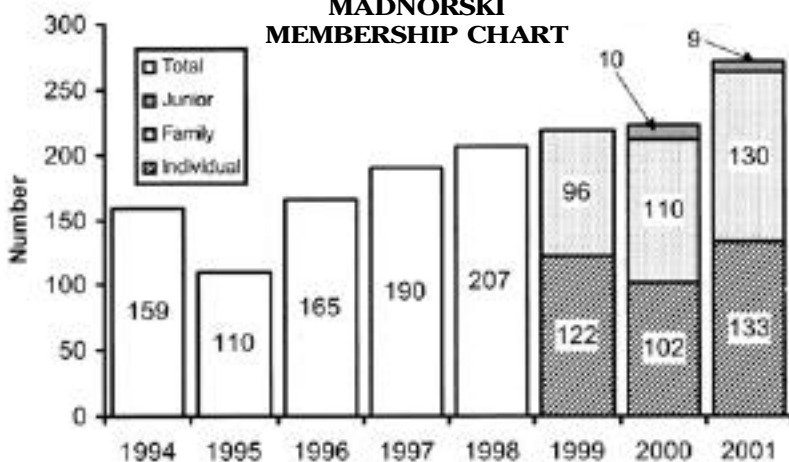


Kay Lum (your editor) talks race strategy with 2001 Birkie 1st place winner Gianantonio Zanatel from Italy.

Need I Say More?

By Jim Coors

MADNORSKI MEMBERSHIP CHART



WOULD YOU TRUST THIS MAN TO WAX YOUR SKIS?



Kay and Harry Lum did! Joe Gollinger, National Sales Manager for Germina (above), and Mike Mandli, Cerax Racing Polymer Tech (below), were at the Seeley Bike and Ski shop Birkie weekend waxing skis for free (to the first 50 people) using the new liquid Cerax waxes. We got the tip from someone in the know (Brian Watzke) and took advantage of their service! I personally had great glide! Thanks Guys!



Joe puts the final shine on the skis! They are ready to plow through 6" of fresh snow!

Grooming for Success

By JIMMY VANDEN BROOK

This article is not about the latest in stylish lycra. It's about the efforts that go into grooming the ski trails in the Madison Parks system. There are six trail systems that are maintained by the city. They include: Elver Park; Odana Golf Course; Monona Golf Course; Olin-Turville, South Unit of Cherokee Marsh, and Owen Park. Russ Hefty, Madison Parks Conservation Resource Supervisor is responsible for keeping up with the demands of skiers and 14 Madison Conservation Parks. I talked to Russ recently about the challenges of providing a good skiing experience.

For many years the Madison Parks Department used a 1978 Bombardier Snow Cat to groom the Madison Parks ski trails. With the advent of skating, a wider trail to accommodate both striders and skaters was required. What once took one or two passes to set a track now requires six or more depending on snow conditions. The number of grooming kilometers mushroomed dramatically. The little Bombi couldn't be relied on to get the larger job done. This venerable machine is on the auction block due to its antiquity, penchant for breakdown, and scarcity of parts. The city purchased a brand new Track Truck groomer (like the machines used at Nine-mile in Wausau) two years ago. This machine, which cost \$55,000, can actually complete a circuit at Elver without breaking down, and does a much better job of preparing the snow surface. The city also

has a 6 year-old Polaris snow-mobile to assist in grooming.

Staff time to complete grooming at the six parks after a significant snowfall now amounts to about 30 hours. Both staff and capital costs have to be absorbed into either flat or decreasing city budgets (\$300,000 decrease this year). The \$15 trail pass for Odana and Elver provides the funds to help pay for a portion of the cross-country ski program. But the \$15 fee is quite small when compared to the annual fees charged by ski centers like ABR (\$175) and Minocqua Winter Park (\$210). To offset some costs, the Madison Nordic Ski Club has provided lots of trail maintenance labor and raised significant dollars for trail projects including the lighting system at Elver. This cooperative arrangement between citizen groups and Madison Parks goes back to the beginnings of the Madison Parks system.

In its very earliest days, Madison parks and scenic drives were privately held. It was the foresight, effort, and funding from private sources that created the parks system near the turn of the century. Not until 1933 did the city of Madison take over care of these parks. Today, the Madison Parks System relies on the energy and support of its users to maintain and improve these recreational assets. Think about all the effort of the city and its skiers next time you take a spin at the Madison Parks. *

Be Part of the Discussion!

Over 40 Madnorski's are part of a new e-mail discussion group. Subscribe and you'll get daily insights on trail conditions, opinions, and ideas for developing Madison's ski community. Currently there's a spirited discussion about developing East side ski sites.

Here's how you "subscribe": In an e-mail message on your computer, put in the "TO" box: majordomo@danenet.org, Put in the "MESSAGE" box:

**subscribe xc
end**
(on 2 separate lines as shown)

Leave everything else blank, don't add any additional information in the message, and press "send". You'll get back a confirmation message that you're now part of the discussion group. If you want to send anything to the group at large, send e-mail to "xc@danenet.org" Thanks to Joe King for getting Madnorski skeee-wired! *

Wish list

The Madison Nordic Ski Club is in need (want) of a few things. If anyone has these items they would like to donate to the club, it would be greatly appreciated!

- any used cross-country ski equipment for KidSki or Juniors, even stuff that you may think is worthless, can be used for parts.
- trail maintenance tools, like rakes, shovels, loppers, leaf blowers.
- another winter like this, with just a bit more snow-but NOT on Birkie day!

CLASSIFIEDS

FOR SALE

Enduro Ski Rollerskis. Mens size 9 Riedell boots. No need to use your ski boots. Selling for \$250.

Contact Steve
608-967-2149

FOR SALE

99 Enduro roller skis with brake and size 41 Riedell boots, \$300 firm.

Contact Gina
849-7187

Got Something to advertise?

If you are a member of the Madison Nordic Ski Club, we will run your ad for free! Submit Classified ads to Jimmy at jpvanden@mhtc.net.



Des Mikusicak competed her very first Kortelopet, after making the last minute decision to sign up the day before. That is an expensive medal!



Ad sales/raffle prize gatherer, Harry Lum, and our Prez, Jimmy V. put their heads together with Telemark Lodge VP of marketing and PR, Phil Van Valkenberg to come up with MORE ideas to bring people away from "Survivor" and outside to enjoy the snow and great skiing at Telemark.



Jimmy's birthday cake that magically appeared on the eve of his birthday (which is January 29th — mark your calendar). He turned 49, this year. He already has a "5" candle for next year, all he needs is a "0" and it's a new age group for Jimmy!



Brian Watzke confirms his time with the officials at the finish line of the Seeley Hills Classic.



Some of the MadNorSki members that joined other clubs at the Telemark Rendezvous Trip in January pose proudly inside the Telemark Lodge. From left: Karen Matteoni, Liz McBride, Marie Roethlisberger, Kay Lum, Harry Lum, Ned Zuelsdorf, Paul Matteoni and Prez. Jimmy Vanden Brook.



Phil Van Valkenberg and Jimmy Vanden Brook hit their VO2 max and are forced to stop V-2-ing for a moment on the birkie trail during the Telemark club rendezvous weekend. Very Interesting.

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Sign up now for the 2000-2001 cross-country ski season!

(you can also sign up on-line at <http://danenet.wicip.org/madnord/club.html>)

Is this a ☐ **renewal** or a ☐ **new** membership?

What type of membership?

☐ Individual \$15

☐ Family \$20

☐ Junior \$10 (18 or under)

☐ Kidski \$25 plus club membership

Additional donation \$ ____ to support local ski groups, trails, and promote XC activities

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home phone: _____ Work phone: _____

Email address: _____

*Membership information is for club members only and is not supplied to commercial vendors.
If you do not want your email to appear in the membership list, please check here ____*

BRING TO NEXT MEETING OR SEND TO:

Madison Nordic Ski Club • PO Box 55281 • Madison, WI 53711

Madison Nordic Ski Club

P.O. Box 55281 • Madison, WI 53705

THE STAMP
GOES RIGHT
ABOUT HERE.

CALL THE
**MAD
NOR
SKI**

HotLine:
233-MADK
(233-6235)

FOR SNOW
CONDITIONS,
MEETING DATES,
AND SKIING INFO!

.....
Check out the
MadNorSki
website —
the world's
oldest cross
country skiing
activity website:
WWW.DANENET.ORG/MADNORD

stick it here.