

MADNORSKI News

News for the members of the Madison Nordic Ski Club Vol. 23 No. 4

- A WORD FROM JIMMY -

Numbskis Score Top-Ten Finish at 24-T

By JIMMY VANDENBROOK



The Numbskis left to right: Tom Gasner; Reggie Bruskewitz; Ron White; First Lady Judy VandenBrook, Jimmy VandenBrook; Lee Rooker; and Andy Schultz.

The pride of the Madison Nordic Ski Club, the Numbskis (pictured above), were covered in glory during the 24 Hours of Telemark Ski Race held on January 10th and 11th on the Telemark trails near Cable, WI. We placed 6th out of 9 teams. The Numbskis have skied all four years of the event and are accustomed to placing 6th in the Big Team category (6 skiers) regardless of the competition, trail conditions, or various disasters. This is well out of podium contention so the allure of this event to a Numbski is obviously not the limelight of the awards ceremony. As their team captain, I've pondered what motivates a Numbski to ski a 24-hour relay.

The novelty of skiing for 24 straight hours got our group together initially, along with some unrealistic expectations about our competitiveness. Our biggest worry the first year was a name for our team. With a 12 P.M. start time it seemed appropriate to be named a "Noon-to-Noon" something. Sitting at Metro's Ski Inn having our pre-race meal of 22-oz T-bones, Tom Gasner's suggestion of using the old pejorative "numb-nuts" was a leading contender and it included the required alliteration. But Judy thought that term

was a little crass, so the "Noon-to-Noon Numbskis" were born. The first year went well enough despite several night sorties done with failed headlamps. Numbski pride was high and we looked forward to the next year's event.

Year two showed the real mettle and comradeship of the Numbskis that saw the team through its darkest hour. On my first nighttime lap, I fell and tore my knee open. I was able to ski in and soon my teammates were gathered around. Reggie, team member and team physician, took me to the Hayward Hospital and ultimately all the way back to Madison in the middle of the night. What a Numbski! The remaining four team members coolly assessed the best way to honor their fallen captain. They all went to bed and didn't resume skiing until dawn, thus preserving the team for another year. Numbskis know when discretion gets the better part of valor.

Year three was the year of substitute Numbskis. Three original members scratched in the 11th hour, all for good reason, although scheduling a proctoscopy just 3 days before the event was questionable planning on the part of one. While the veteran nature of the Numbskis (over 100 combined Birkies) has its benefits, their aging engine rooms require a lot of maintenance. Fortunately, Willi VanHaren, Kim Thornton, and Bill Delaney filled the gaps and the Numbskis soldiered on through a very cold event. The race made such an impression on a stand-in Numbski that Kim penned the now classic poem "Ode to the Numbskis" (see last year's February issue).

This year saw a Numbski reunion, with all the original members returning. Performances were as solid as ever with no one missing their turn. So what if we placed 6th, nobody got hurt. But I did find it

(SEE NUMBSKIS, CONTINUED ON PAGE 14)

OUR NEXT MEETING

Monday, Feb. 9, 2004
Lussier Family
Heritage Center

Agenda

6-7:15: Juniors Chili Dinner
Fundraiser

7:15: Business meeting
7:45: Snowmaking success
at Blackhawk

8:00: Nutrition for skiers
8:30-9:00: Socializing

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- WE AIN'T BUYING IT SCOTT! -

Why is Snow So Difficult to Forecast?

By SCOTT BACHMEIER

As a meteorologist, I'm prone to be a little defensive these days given the current pathetic state of snow cover across southern Wisconsin. El Niño and global warming issues aside, there are certain aspects of the weather that are still rather elusive when it comes to accurate prediction - and snowfall is one parameter in particular. Many of you probably wonder "Why can't they do a good job of forecasting snowfall amounts?" Well, there are two factors that make forecasting snowfall amounts difficult. One is highly variable nature of the "snowfall density", or snow-to-liquid ratio. The old forecasting rule of thumb is "10 inches of snow from every inch of liquid equivalent" (10:1 ratio). All those sophisticated computer forecasting models out there tend to spit out liquid equivalents, leaving the poor beleaguered meteorologist to figure out what the prevail-

ing snow-to-liquid ratio might be for any given location. And it can vary quite a bit, from a 6:1 ratio for the really wet, heavy snow that we sometimes get in the Fall or Spring seasons, to 30:1 for really fluffy snow that falls when brutally cold arctic air masses occupy the region. So if a computer model forecasts 0.5 inches of liquid water equivalent over Madison from the next storm, that could be either 3 inches of wet slop, or 15 inches of fluff. It's not as easy as figuring out the temperature range of the clouds where the snowflakes are forming either the moisture content and temperature profile of the air that the flakes have to fall through can also be a factor. Strong winds can also play a role, causing snowflakes to fracture and lose their lacy structure (leading to a lower snow:liquid ratio). Some studies have found the highest snow: liquid ratios tend to occur

...CUT YOUR WEATHER DUDE SOME SLACK...

under conditions of light winds and temperatures near +15 F. The snow sweet spot, if you will. The other factor that makes meteorologists crazy is the "streakiness" of the resulting snowfall distribution. Snow doesn't fall in a nice, continuous blanket that covers an entire state with a nice, even 12 inches (yeah, don't we wish) - no, it instead chooses to organize itself into really weird, long streaks that give one side of Madison 10 inches while the opposite side of the city sees only 5. A good example of this streakiness can be seen on a satellite image of snow cover: http://cimss.ssec.wisc.edu/goes/misc/030211/030212_MODIS_CH01.GIF

Now maybe by the time you read this we'll be up to our ears in snow cover in Madison, making this a moot discussion. Or, maybe you'll cut your friendly neighborhood weather dude some slack next time he or she misses the snowfall amount forecast by, oh 10 inches. *

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XC Ski at Tyrol Basin

By PAT CONWAY

When cross country ski conditions in Dane County are at their worst there still is an alternative that offers snow and hills – Tyrol Basin ski area outside of Mt. Horeb.

We first noticed the white stuff at Tyrol when roller skiing by the ski area a week before Thanksgiving. Then while at a New Years Eve party we decided to pass on a long drive up north and give Tyrol Basin a try. What a pleasant surprise!

Don and Sue McKay, Managers of Tyrol Basin, welcome cross-country skiers on their hills. As Don says, "We are about sliding on snow". To date, there are no set trails or tracks but stay tuned.

XC skiers are welcome to cruise along the bottom and incorporate hills on either end. The trail we created started at the far right (as you are looking up hill) on top of "Gentle Ben", along the bottom, next to the pond, and then up "Nisse Sti" (Elf Pass...fitting isn't it) to the west. As the hills became more active we climbed Nisse Sti to the top and skied

back and forth. What a view! And what a fun non-metal edged decent.

Even though XC skiers are welcome at Tyrol any time of the day, Don strongly encourages us to come out when the hills are least busy; usually this means right at opening time: M-F 10:00 am (9:00 am on holidays), and Sat/Sun 9:00 am.

At first we thought twice about the \$10 + tax "Beginner Area Ticket" fee but then realized the next closest skatable snow was a three hour, one-way car ride away.

To get to Tyrol from Madison, go to Mt. Horeb, go north 2 miles out of the village on Hwy 78 (the road to

Black Earth), take a left (west) on County Road J, go 3 miles, take a left on Bohn Road and go 1 mile.

For more information call Tyrol and talk directly to Don or Sue, 608-437-4135, or email them at tyrol@tyrol-basin.com. *

For a skiing buddy or information from a fellow club member email pconway@imiweb.org.



MadNorSki club members Pat Conway and Rob Lucas hit the snow at Tyrol Basin.



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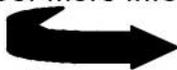
It's BIRKIE Month

Talk wax with a Fast Wax representative at these retail locations the Hayward area on February 19 and 20:

Outdoor Ventures Main Street in Hayward, or at the Birkie Expo in Telemark Lodge;

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- WHAT'S UP WITH KIDSKI -
It's Not Too Late...

BY MARK WEBBER



It's Not Too Late to Sign-Up to Ski & Have Fun With KidSki!

Who: Ages 4 & up

Where: Elver Park – Main Shelter

When: Wednesday Evenings in January and February from 6:00-7:00 P.M.

Cost: \$15 per individual / \$25 for 2 or more (family)

Equipment: No need to buy; option to rent from Shelter for night

Apres-Ski: Hot Chocolate & Snacks available in Shelter, or bring your own

Lots of cross-country skiing fun & games; some instruction and short tours. Every child gets a really cool ski hat, if they do not have one already.

Several "theme" nights including "Costume" Ski, "Treasure Hunt," etc. We are also considering a one-day trip north.

End-of-Season Pizza Celebration Party in late-February, or early March.

Parents can participate with youngest children. Try to meet on non-snow nights for other activities like Pole Hikes, "Illuminated" and Ice-Skating.

Come Join Us for Some Winter Fun! Register by calling Mark Webber at 245-7019 (weekdays), or email webber@chorus.net. *



Several well-known Madnorski's were seen posing as models for a famous company (who happens to be an advertiser in this issue). Can you find the ad?

Toko HelX – The New Generation of Liquid Waxes

BY ERIC MITTELSTEADT, TOKO TECH TEAM, MIDWEST RACING SERVICE

A lot can be said about Toko's new addition to the world of ski wax. One word that comes to mind is "FAST". Known for their drive to innovate, Toko has developed a liquid wax like no other. The product: Toko HelX (pronounced "hee-licks").

HelX is Toko's best overall glide wax. It is available in two formulations: HelX Warm and HelX Cold. The Warm formulation is Toko's fastest wax when the snow is wet. It is especially effective when there is a glaze or the presence of water in the superficial layer of snow. This is most commonly found in wet new snow or very wet corn snow. HelX's resistance to dirt is still being evaluated. It is certainly not bad, but in extremely dirty conditions involving longer races, one should definitely consider Jet-stream Old Snow Powder ironed on as the best choice.

The HelX Cold formulation is for colder conditions (less moisture in the snow) than HelX Warm but is not for really cold conditions. HelX Cold is for conditions that do not have quite enough moisture for HelX Warm to perform in, but there is still some moisture. One can find these conditions in air temperatures from freezing (32 degrees F) to about 15 degrees F depending on location and whether the waxing is being done for skating or classic. The Midwest region, for example, is humid enough that HelX Cold can be used in some relatively cold conditions (but not COLD!).

APPLICATION OF HELX

Method 1: (Best used at room temperature with ample time to allow HelX application to dry completely)

1. Apply the base and HF (High Fluoro) "wax layers of the day", scraping and brushing between each layer.
2. Using the Dual Pad (provided with HelX), scrub the ski base with the yellow side of the pad which cleans the base on a microscopic level for the HelX application.
3. Liberally spray HelX on the ski base making sure that the entire base is completely wet.
4. Let the ski sit until the base is completely dry. This could take from 20-40 minutes depending on the room conditions. For the HelX application to be

most effective, it is critical that it needs to dry completely. Absolute best results will be found if HelX is applied inside (room temp.) and is allowed to dry completely. After drying, there should be white powder on the ski base.



5. Polish the ski base well with the white side of the Dual Pad

Method 2: (Best used when outside or in a hurry. This method requires more skill and is not recommended for the novice waxer)

1. Apply the base and HF (High Fluoro) "wax layers of the day", scraping and brushing between each layer.
2. Using the Dual Pad (provided with HelX), scrub the ski base with the yellow side of the pad which cleans the base on a microscopic level for the HelX application.
3. Liberally spray HelX on the ski base making sure that the entire base is completely wet.
4. Using a roto cork at full rpms and corking "into" the ski base, cork the HelX until it is dry (and there is a waxy residue on the ski base).
5. Using a Nylon Polishing Brush, brush the HelX out of the base structure.
6. Polish the HelX well with the white side of the Dual Pad.

When done properly, either of these methods will yield the same result. The issue is how much time the waxer has and under what conditions the wax is being applied. If there is not enough time to allow the HelX to dry completely or if outdoors, then the best application method is using the roto cork.

One 50ml bottle of HelX yields approximately 12-15 applications (pairs of cross country skis).

To find out more about Toko HelX, including the Technical Description, go to www.tokous.com/Manuals/HelX%20Manual.pdf. Happy Skiing. *

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REI Invests in the Club's Youth

By WALTER MEANWELL

Last month REI Co-op provided the club with a check for \$2,500 for our Junior's program. This grant was the result of a coordinated team effort by many club members, all of whom receive our deepest gratitude. REI Madison store manager Steve Voltz said, "This money comes from our employee grant fund. We are very happy to support our areas youth". Junior's coach Don Fariss, President Jimmy Vandenbrook, publicity chair Ruth Bachmeier, Greg Jones, Youth Skiing Chair and I were on hand to receive the grant.

We again utilized our valuable con-

nection to the Wisconsin Nordic Sports Foundation. They received the donation on our behalf because companies need to contribute to 501c3 non-profit organizations of which we are not. Coach Fariss will then submit a grant request to the Foundation for the money. That is how it works. Why should you care? This is relevant to you because it means that you can invest in your club's future and enjoy the benefits of a tax deduction.

Many businesses support our club in various ways. Please keep this in mind when you are shopping. *



From left to right: Walter Meanwell, REI Madison store manager Steve Voltz, Don Fariss and Greg Jones. Ruth Bachmeier was also present... since she is publicity chair, she took the photo!

Outstanding Performance in X-C Ski Racing

By YURIY GUSEV

On December 27th, Russian Style Ski School elite athlete and MadNorSki member Lorie Wesolek earned a second place in one of the most prestigious sprint races in North America. The race took place in Fort Kent, Maine at the Maine Nordic Training Center, which will host the Biathlon World Cup races in February. This race was part of the Super Tour (formerly called the Nor/Am Continental Cup) and attracted the best sprinters from the U.S. and Canada. On the first day, Lorie placed a respectable tenth place out of 70 skiers in a 10km classic. On the second day, she qualified 10th in the preliminary round, despite some technical wax problems, which was good enough to move on to the heats. In the quarter-finals and semifinals Lorie led confidently and earned a spot in the finals. After the gun went off, it was Lorie who held the lead for half of the race before being passed by the fastest skier in the U.S., Rebecca Dessault. After the finishing sprint, Lorie maintained the second position.

For the last year Lorie had been training using Black Hawk Ski Club facilities including cross-country ski trails with artificial snow. Thank you to everyone for all your tremendous work on snowmaking and make these results happen. *

ALL OF OUR MEETINGS THIS YEAR ARE AT THE LUSSIER FAMILY HERITAGE CENTER, LOCATED AT 3101 LAKE FARM ROAD, 608-224-3604

2003-04 MadNorSki Meeting Schedule

Board Meeting	Club Meeting	Meeting Theme	Meeting Agenda	Club Meeting Location	Newsletter/ Ad Deadline
Tuesday Jan. 27 TBA	Monday Feb. 9 6:30 pm	Birkie war stories/ Birkie alternatives	Juniors Fund Raiser Chili feed	Lussier Family Heritage Center	Friday January 16
Tuesday Feb. 24 TBA	Monday Mar. 8, 6:30 pm	Racing wrap up POT LUCK	Election of Officers	Lussier Family Heritage Center	Friday February 13

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As a MadNorSki club member receive a 10% discount on a Trek Travel Vacation if you book a trip before June, 2004. Not valid with any other offers or with any of Trek Travel's Tour de France trips.



- IT'S MORE FUN THAN YOU THINK! - 24 Hours of Telemark — A Photo Essay

BY KAY LUM



Margaret Riley (2nd place) and Stacey Meanwell (1st place) each skied 45.9k in the 3 hour solo women's category...but Stacey did it 11 minutes faster. Way to kick butt Stacey!

Below: A flawless tagoff for team Bloody Lungs, as Chris Halvorson tags off to Tom Kaufman.



Photo by Kelly Randolph

What a sight! This skier was so fast, that only their headlight was captured!



Judy Archibald proudly holds up the second place metal she earned as part of her 4 person "older than dirt" team, The Avengers! She doesn't look THAT old!



Photo by Sarah Bahin

Chris Halvorson stays warm inside the clear tent and contemplates the meaning of Red Bull while waiting for his teammate.



Photo by Kelly Randolph



Photo by Kelly Randolph

Tom Woody (above) anxiously awaits his turn in the tent, while (at left) his fellow Bloody Lungs teammates, Dirk Mason and Tom Kaufman discuss their strategy. Later that same day, (at far left), Tom Kaufman is blinded by some insensitive photographer just seconds after he finishes a nighttime lap.



Three-time Solo Freak champion Chris Ransom broke his arm just one week before the race. But it didn't stop him. He "only" skied 122 k... (with one pole) and he found time to sleep too.



Photo by Sarah Bahin

Apparently, Shamane Mills plans to be out there awhile — as she checks to make sure her headlight actually works.



Photo by Kelly Randolph



A few necessities of the race.

Carolyn Senty was ready to capture her teammates on film near the end of the race.



Photo by Kelly Randolph

Race director Dennis Kruse tells jokes while the skiers ski their brains out.



Dave Robb and Kay Lum happily head out to take their turns on the course in the wee hours of the morning.



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Ice Age Challenge: Snowless But Successful

By NED ZUELSDORFF

A snowless, renewed MadNorSki Ice Age Challenge was held on January 4. The planned 15K and 5K ski race became an 8.2K and 5.4K fun run on the bare ground at Madison's Elver Park. Fifty-seven energetic participants and twenty plus hard-working volunteers resulted in a successful event based on the large number of smiles that were observed. The fun approach everyone took to the event became obvious when people didn't jostle for position on the start line. When the starting pistol misfired,



Race director Ned Zuelsdorff was awake the entire night before the race, hoping upon hope for snow... but the race was a go, even without snow!



Ned lines them up... Ready... Set...

nobody moved, until the second trigger pull and the official starting shot. When have you seen that at a race?

The race was truly a "challenge" with runners having to complete the "Mammoth's Climb" and top the "Terminal Moraine" as well as negotiate the sometimes difficult (at least on skis) "Esker've". Awards were presented to top finishers, everyone received a stylish "Ice Age" T-shirt, and most people walked away with a door prize provided by **Fontana Sports**.



Competitors ranged in age from 13 to 73. Complete results are posted on the

Race committee member Dirk Mason keeps track of bibs.

MadNorSki website. Thanks are due to the many folks that made the race possible. Madison's **Don Miller Subaru** is the primary sponsor of the Ice Age Challenge as well as the MadNorSki Tuesday Night (Want-To) Race Series. Generous funding provided by **Don Miller Subaru** allowed race fees to be reasonable for competitors. Gordy Bartholomew provided post race food and beverages. Harry Lum arranged for door prizes. John Miller and Ben Neff provided graphic arts expertise including design of the Ice Age Challenge logo. Joe King provided website support including the option for online registration, and was the chief timer for the race. Ruth Bachmeier was the race photographer. Her photos are posted on the MadNorSki website. Many other volunteers stepped up to help with registration, timing, on-course direction, food, and clean-up. These efforts and the assistance provided by the Madison Parks Department to let us hold the event are appreciated.



... Go!

Finally, the race would not have happened without the efforts of the race organizing committee who began work on this project last August. The committee included

Frank Farwell, Greg Jones, Dirk Mason, Tom Kaufman, Rob Lucas, Walt Meanwell and Madeline Uranek. Although the committee's goal was a ski race, we knew an alternate plan was needed. Judging from the looks on everyone's faces (after they recovered) the effort to hold an event was worth it. We will likely give the snow gods another chance to show up next year. *



Prez. Jimmy musters up the energy to ring a cow bell.

Greg Marr Will be Missed by Many

By IAN DUNCAN

Greg Marr died while skiing at Iola on December 19, 2003. Greg was the founding editor of *Silent Sports* in Waupaca, Wisconsin, a magazine dedicated to the pursuit and advancement of silent sports throughout the Midwest. Originally the magazine was called *Wisconsin Silent Sports* until it was realized that it had a much broader appeal throughout the region.



Greg loved the outdoors and was an active cross-country skier, cyclist, and rower. He developed an extensive network of friends and associates involved in all of these sports through his active participation. *Silent Sports* was truly Greg Marr from the editorial through articles he penned. The magazine charted its own course, not beholden to any major equipment maker or company and always bearing his stamp. His editorials were well-written, thought-provoking, and frequently funny. He talked at the Club a number of years ago about his early days in cross-country skiing and dressed as he had done on his first day out. In farmer's coveralls and multiple layers underneath he gradually removed them all to reveal a more svelte figure clad in Lycra. It was most amusing, although some were not sure when he would stop!

On a personal level he was a kind, modest, self-effacing man with a quiet sense of humor, warm chuckle, and a great smile. His personal qualities were evidenced by the large turnout at his funeral and the many eulogies that referred to his kindness, generosity, and friendship. His untimely death at 52 leaves a major vacuum in the cross-country ski world in the Midwest and I hope that we all strive in whatever way we can to ensure the continuity of *Silent Sports*, his most cherished professional accomplishment. We are all reminded of human frailty, especially when one gets older. "There but the grace of God go I" passed through my mind on news of his death, and while passing away on the ski trail might be a choice of many of us, it would not be at such a young age with so much more to accomplish. *



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Porkies Skips a Year

BY MADELINE URANEK

Skiers who trekked to Lake Superior for three years of the Porcupine Mountains Ski Marathon will be disappointed to learn that the event has been postponed a year. "Maybe we'll do it every other year," said one of the volunteers. "It was a lot of work, and frankly, we were disappointed at the low turnout last year. We were one of the only places in the Midwest with snow; events everywhere were cancelling, and still we didn't get a particularly big group."

MadNorSkis were there in abundance in 2003, however, and truly enjoyed the gorgeous trails, with hardy souls entering both the 21 K and 42 K classic-style race on February 1, 2003. The course followed the outer perimeter of the park's Nordic trail system.

Like public services across the US, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources has been hit with budget cuts, and the DNR has had to pass the cuts along to the Porcupine Mountain Wilderness State Park, truly one of the jewels of the upper Midwest. Skiers with a love for the park, its trails, cabins, and future ski events would do well to join:

WE WERE ONE OF THE ONLY PLACES IN THE MIDWEST WITH SNOW... AND STILL WE DIDN'T GET A PARTICULARLY BIG GROUP."

Friends of the Porkies
PO Box 694
White Pine MI 49971.
E-mail:
pfriend@jamadots.com

The current president is Jim Bradley, (906) 884-4274, who lives in

Ontonagon, Michigan Excerpts from The Quill, the occasional newsletter of Friends of the Porkies, can be found at www.porcupinemountains.com *

Chili Dinner!

BY DON FARISS

Come a tad early to the February club meeting, get yourself a fine chili dinner and help support our Junior skiers. The Juniors will be serving up healthy portions of both meat & meatless versions along with raw vegetables and assorted breads for just \$7.50.

You've got to eat before the meeting, right? And without some sustenance, who can possibly suffer through Jimmy's endless prattling on and on and on. (Tee hee hee, just kidding, Jimmy.) But hey! Doesn't this sound like an excellent complement to your normal club meeting beer consumption? And at the same time you can be helping out our high-flying Juniors.

So, plan on arriving between 6:00 and 7:00 P.M. for some great food for a great cause. All proceeds will be set aside for travel expenses for any MadNorSki Junior who wins a regional berth to Junior Nationals this year or next. And although \$7.50 is the set price, additional contributions will be gratefully accepted. *

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ALL for a HAT

By MADELINE URANEK

What will we be skiing for next? Wood axes? Wood stoves? Snow blowers?

The Northwoods folk certainly had their finger on the pulse of the ski crowd when they invented the **Stormy Kromer Pursuit** – a two-day classic-then-skate event near Hurley, Wisconsin – where each participant was rewarded with a Stormy Kromer hat.

A what, I asked? Something about flaps over the ears. Well, let me tell you, when the event was finished, and the skiers and locals all met for pasties in the Mercer Community Center, it was just one big Paul Bunyan convention. The locals had Stormy Kromer hats – they've been wearing them since 1903 – and Sorrel boots and fat jackets. The skiers had Stormy Kromer hats, though they still looked a bit dorky, with pointy yellow boots and skin tight lycra leotards. Still, it was an improvement.

My take on it was that some Northwoods skier thought that urban, mineral water; vegan types just needed better Wisconsin apparel to make them "fit in." Less embarrassing when they hail you in the bar.

The race was a first annual. It was sponsored by the Iron County Development Zone, folks who envision more bikers, canoeists, hikers, campers, kayakers, and cabin buyers in their neck of the woods. As word has gotten around about MadNorSki's Mike Ivey and Willi Van Haren's "Snow Palace" just down the road, the Development folks are on to a good idea. Along with the Zone people, Penokee Rangers, Hurley Lions Club and MECCA Ski Club, Stormy Kromer headed the sponsor list, with employees working overtime during the race, emblazoning race logo on made-to-your-head-size requirements of late registrees. Caps were still warm from the sewing machines.

Saturday's event was all classic – 10 K that had been cut down to 7 K due to recent rain storms, but beautifully



Proudly donning their newly earned hats, from left to right are: Jim Martyn, Gail Moede, Mike Ivey, Madeline Uraneck, Willi VanHaren.

groomed and up and down, around corners and along Ye Old Grade (railroad bed) at Montreal Ski Area. Sunday's 15 K, two-loop skate at MECCA Trails north of Mercer was challenging and ever-turning, taking skaters through lowland swamps and the Turtle River Flowage. The event favored the all-round skier, and attracted lots of area folks, plus a slender handful from Madison, Milwaukee, and the Twin Cities. Organizers had hoped for 50 to 100 participants for the first year, and hit it right in the midriff, capturing 72 entries, with 56 actually completing both events.

MadNorSki Gail Moede took first place in her age group, and got quoted in the Ironwood Daily Globe. Homeowners Ivey and Van Haren battled it out for who would have to pay the month's mortgage (Ivey will pay, by a mere 16 seconds on the combined course). Jim Martyn skated a decent race, and Madeline Uraneck raced several small children and plump housewives to the finish line to uphold the honor of the Capital City.

Do we recommend this event for YOU for next year? Sure, save January 8 and 9, 2005, head for Hurley / Ironwood / Montreal / Mercer and start lookin' like you belong to the North Country. *

(NUMBSKIS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

touching how many folks wondered about my own personal safety, including one of the organizers. They must consider me the litmus test for course safety. You would think I crashed in every event. Skiing ability aside, I doubt any other 24T competitors had a post-race feast to equal ours. Our race focus is on fun and if it ever gets too serious then something

is seriously wrong. Being in the game is adequate Numbski motivation. Clearly, to be a Numbski is to be persistent; to have "sisu" as the Finns would say. Lastly, from all the team members, a big thank you to our first lady, Judy, for critical logistical (last minute run for head lamps), nutritional, and moral support. We'll be back again next year just to hear that stirring exhortation: "Go Numbskis"! *

- SECOND ANNUAL! -

Fun Day at the Lussier Family Heritage Center

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 29, 2004
FROM 1-6 P.M.

The Madison Nordic Ski Club will host a "Farewell to Winter" party featuring orienteering and skiing (if possible) for all ages at the Lussier Family Heritage Center on February 29, 2004. We will have the entire facility open for club members free of charge. Please bring the whole family. Hot chocolate and chili will be provided. After dinner we'll have a bonfire and a candle-light ski or hike depending on conditions.

So, mark your calendars now for a low-key, fun event, that everybody can enjoy. Since we seem to get all our snow in March in recent years, we think this could be the best skiing of the season! And if the snow deserts us, we'll still have fun. *

Wails of December

By WILLI VANHAREN

I checked in recently with a certain "Out of Favor" weatherman and got some interesting data. Think the last few Decembers have been low on snow? It's not your imagination, check it out: 2003 - 3.6", 2002 - 1.6", 2001 - 4.3", 2000 - 35.0", 1999 - 3.2", 1998 - 2.2", 1997 - 14.3". Hey, that's an average of 9 inches per year, not far from the 12.6" average, but 5 of 7 very bad years. December snow is special, it sticks around because of the low sun angle and we are willing to ski it in any condition. I miss it! Even snowmaking at Blackhawk has been limited due to lack of solid cold weather. No wonder we filled up the Minocqua bus! Skiers are like farmers, always griping about the weather, yet eternally optimistic at the beginning of every season. Keep the sunny (but cold) side up. See you out there. *

Other Stuff...



Krista and Dirk Rettig tried to register their son Pavil for the Innaugural Ice Age Classic, but he was disqualified because he did not wear his bib properly. Maybe next year, Pavil.



For the first time in history (ok, perhaps the last 5 years or so) Demo Days actually happened! There was snow in Minocqua and the bus was full to the brim with happy skiers!



(Below) Mike Ivey gets ready to ski the Stormy Kromer race, wearing yet another unique hat that he probably earned doing another ski race somewhere!



The Bloody Lungs made it to the podium in the 24 hours of Telemark in one of the most competitive categories: the Big Team. They were just 5k short of 2nd place, and beat the 4th place team by 10k. From left to right: Mark Torresani, Tom Woody, Tom Kaufman, Aaron Tarnow, Dirk Mason and Chris Halvorson.

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