



Madison Nordic Ski Club  
3202 Lake Mendota Dr. Madison, WI  
53705-1467

Indicia



*Birken Schimpf (6th overall) and Stina Seaberg (79th) compete in the 6 km high school championship classic race on February 9 at Mincoqua Winter Park. Photos: Theresa Stabo*

# MADNORSKI News

News for members of the Madison Nordic Ski Club

March 2008 Vol. 27 No. 5

## Vibrant Ski Club Seeks Members for Board Positions



**Dirk Mason and Walt Meanwell**

We are often so busy planning and doing, that we neglect to pause and reflect on our many blessings and accomplishments. This is true of MadNorSki as well. We thought that it might be helpful to spend a moment and review this past year, and discuss what we see coming up for next season.

This past season was in many ways our best. Record snowfall provided

consistently excellent skiing From December 1st onward. Capitalizing on this, the newly launched trails and grooming committee accomplished many wonderful things. The lines of communication between the XC ski community and the various Parks' Departments and governing bodies in the area have never been better. Regular grooming reports to the list serve and postings on the trails page of the website have been an excellent service. Area grooming has improved a lot and the grooming clinic that the club hosted was attended by over 25 area groomers from as far away as Governor Dodge and Mirror Lake. Several areas of improvement were identified for us to work on to make your skiing experience locally even better. We are off to an excellent start, we have terrific people on this committee, and

all things related to trails and grooming will continue to improve. In addition, two new parks are going in, one on the far West side in the town of Middleton and one on the far East side. We will be working to include Nordic ski trails in these units. Let us know if you would like to help with this.

As you know, this winter is an aberration. Recognizing that, we have embarked on an effort to support snow making at Elver Park. This committee is spearheaded by Yuriy Gusev and Walt Meanwell. We also have a very talented group of "senior" members of the club on this committee whose help will no doubt prove invaluable. For more on this please refer to the article in this issue. This will be a huge project and we look forward to everyone's help as it goes forward.

*Continued on page 5*

## Hello, Are You With Ski for Light?

**Jim Cunningham and Kathy Ducat**

*International Ski for Light takes place in February each year*

Ski for Light matches sighted guides with visually or mobility impaired people.

It is so easy to have fun at SFL. Walking through the Seattle airport, we met Joe and Katrina along with Pastoral a yellow lab guide dog. On our run to catch the flight to Bend, OR, we ask over our shoulder "Hello are you with Ski for Light?" "Yes", they say as we shrink into the distance. "But we have to relieve the dog". They are

from Toronto. There are people from Israel, England, France and of course, Norway. Upon arrival at the Redmond Airport, there are SFL ambassadors to greet us – "hello are you with ski for light? Come on. The bus is right outside." What a great welcome.

We are shuttled to our hotel, eat dinner, and attend the first guide training meeting.

On Sunday following dinner, the 175 special needs skiers are introduced to their guides for the week. Monday is "get to know you on the snow day". Guides and skiers work out trail talk, work on technique, and share histories

and herstories.

Daily Schedule: We set the alarm in our spacious room for yoga in the morning before break fast. We board the bus to Mt. Bachelor where we find 56 K of groomed XC trails. The weather is warm. Melting snow falls from the trees in 100 lb bombs. We ski.

We eat lunch – outdoor picnic style. We ski more. When we skied enough the many buses bring us back to our hotel. We eat. We have recovery drinks – scotch and gin.

There are special interest sessions,

*Continued on page 5*

# Elver Park Programming and Snow Making

## Walt Meanwell

You might have heard that the City of Madison, Madison Parks, and the Madison Community Foundation have teamed up to explore the possibility of offering snow making at Elver Park. We are assisting them in this effort. MadNorSki has a great deal to gain, and potentially a great deal to lose from this project as we discussed in the last newsletter. To date no commitments have been made, nothing promised, and the club is only out the value of our time, particularly Yuriy's and my time. This project has already proven to be a moderately contentious issue within the club and a very contentious issue within the board. As such, we will be providing you with regular and consistent communication and updates to you via the meetings, the list serve, the website, and this newsletter. At the February meeting the body politic felt that the opportunity was too good to pass up without us at

least giving it our best effort and the Board agrees.

Here's where we stand:

- At the organizational meeting at the Mayors office the Madison Community Foundation indicated that they would participate at the \$150,000 level to start with. The City is in for another \$50,000. These monies would go toward infrastructure, primarily to snow the sledding hill. The primary driver here is for programming for the neighborhood youth in the winter months.
- Walt and Yuriy met with area groups at the Wisconsin Youth Company to see if there is a need for and acceptance of a Youth XC ski program. Everyone there agreed that there was and that they would really like to see it made available. This of course would require snow to ski on near the shelter.

- Yuriy met with Ray Shane and others from Madison Parks to look into equipment purchases for Phase I of the project. This would include a P.B. 100, 2 snow fans, another Tidd Tech etc. One of the Board's fears is that this alone will burn up a majority of the available cash.
- The board wrestled with this issue at the February board meeting, and it was also discussed at the February Club meeting. It was agreed that a proposed budget/ wish list would be put forth to the City and Madison Parks detailing what the XC ski community would like to see evolve from this effort. No monies or volunteer time would be pledged without some assurance that Nordic skiing would be covered.
- This will be a club vote issue and it is a big one. Your input is important. Let Yuriy or I know what you think.

Thank you

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## March

- 6 Board Meeting 6:45 p.m.  
10 Club Meeting; 7:15 p.m. Social begins  
at 6:30 p.m. Lussier Center

Board Meeting	Club Meeting	Meeting Theme	Meeting Agenda
Thursday, March 6	Monday, March 10	Racing wrap-up Pot Luck	Election of officers

## Trails Committee Reports Better Skiing This Year at Area Trails

### Mark Plane

I admit that the Norwegian Snow God Ullr had something to do with the great skiing in our area, but it is also clear that City and County Parks have really stepped up their grooming in this fantastic winter of snow. About a year ago Brock Woods, Pete Anderson, Jim Coors, Dick Steinle, Nancy Wiegand, Tom Schirz, Clare Sequin, Dave Robb, and I met to discuss how we might improve trails and grooming in Dane County. Since then the committee has established very positive working relationships with people involved with trail maintenance and grooming throughout Dane County.

After conducting a survey of skiers' experiences at trails in our area, we had meetings with park staff members of Madison, Middleton, and Dane County. The most important thing we learned from these meetings was that Park staff involved in grooming are enthusiastic and committed to providing quality ski trails to the public, and that they are constrained by shrinking budgets. This means in some cases that not enough personnel are assigned to grooming, and in others that old equipment often breaks down resulting in grooming delays.

Regular and positive communication  
*Continued on page 6*



## 2007–08 Board

### Presidents

Dirk Mason: ddmason@charter.net  
Walter Meanwell: waltmeanwell@tds.net

### Vice-president

Tom Kaufman: runski@charter.net

### Treasurer

Duncan Bathe: bathe@sbcglobal.net

### Membership

Reg Breskewitz: bruske@surgery.wisc.edu  
Margie Sprecher: margies@tds.net

### Race Directors

David Bell; davepbell@sbcglobal.net  
Tom Galliger;  
tom.gallagher@dwd.state.wi.us

### Publicity

Gail Moede; gail@moederogall.com

### Advertising/Promotions

Dick Steinle; dicksteinle@yahoo.com

### Newsletter

Ben Neff: ben.neff@tds.net

### Director of Instruction

Jimmy Vandenbrook: jpvanden@mhtc.net

### Youth Ski Chair

Louse Jones:  
louisejones87@gmail.com

### KidSki Chair

Mark Webber: webber@chorus.net

### Social Director

Gordy Barthowome:  
gbartholomew@fmserv.com

### Webmaster

Craig Heilman: craigh@bugsoft.com

### WNSF

Walter Meanwell: waltmeanwell@tds.net

### FunSki

Walter Meanwell: waltmeanwell@tds.net

# Paul A. Walker

**Harry W. Read and others**

Posted February 12, 2008

Paul A. Walker, 61, died peacefully at the home he loved on Monday, February 11, 2008. He spent his last days reminiscing adventures and life experiences with many close friends and family. Paul was born April 16, 1946, in Waushara County. He graduated from Wautoma High School in 1964, from the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh in 1972 and served in the United States Navy from 1965 until 1969. Paul worked for Mercury Marine Outboard Engineering then Waushara County, retiring in 2004. He married in 1985 and together with his wife and stepdaughters built their fieldstone home. Paul was a loving husband, a caring Dad and a true friend. He was an accomplished bicyclist, cross country skier and outdoor enthusiast.

For those of you who didn't know Paul Walker, he was a generous spirit who gave a lot to the cross country skiing community. He owned and operated the Goat Farm near Wautoma (links are on Skinnyski.com), where he established and maintained skiing trails on his land, and by negotiation, on his neighbors' land. I haven't been up there in years, but back in the early 90s, you could pay what you could afford, and the trail system totalled 30K and connected to the Ice Age Trail. Often, this was the closest skiable snow, for awhile was a regular destination for us. I heard that stingy skiers and less cooperative neighbors led Paul in more recent years to pare that back and even close it for awhile, but it has been open for the past few years with about 10K of trails.

Paul was a fixture at the Birkie and his wife and daughters are the ones who appear in costume on Bitch Hill.

I didn't know Paul very well—I only spoke to him a few times—but I always appreciated what he brought to the community and will miss him.

He is survived by his wife, Florence Berg Walker, Wautoma; his step-Mother, Margaret (Bruchs) Walker, Wautoma; two stepdaughters: Heather (Tims) Petersons, Milwaukee, Jessie (Scott) Grasse, Hortonville; two brothers, John (Beverly) Walker, Wautoma, Robert Walker, New Richmond; two grandchildren, Lanre Olaniyan, Milwaukee, Paul Grasse, Hortonville; two step-grandchildren: Cassandra and Tanya Petersons, Milwaukee. He was preceded in death by: his mother, Elizabeth (Wandrey) Walker; his father, Phinneas Walker; aunts, uncles, in-laws and several dear friends.



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*Ski for Light from page 1*

guide dog and equipment demos, a silent auction, a sales room with donated merchandise, more recovery drinks, and a talent show.

Now we are at dinner. It is a large room with almost 400 people. We are eating crab and shrimp stuffed chicken, roast vegetables, herbed rice, and layered chocolate and vinela moose. From one corner a group, the Norwegians, sing a drinking toast.

It is after 10 PM now, time to fall into sleep because there is a full day ahead. Saturday is the 10K race or 5K rally.

*Presidents' letter from page 1*

These are two of the newest and largest projects that were begun this past year. The 4th running of the Madison Winter Festival/C.S.S. was a big success as well. For next year we are planning on a different volunteer strategy so fewer people are working longer hours to make this the quality weekend that it is. Please keep this in mind and volunteer early next year!

Looking forward to next year we anticipate a lot of exciting challenges. The board continues to try to improve on the many things that we

are currently engaged in. The biggest projects are those listed above; not to mention the Youth Programs, the SWAP, lessons, racing and the many other things that we do and offer that are too numerous to mention. There are a few slots open on the board, and several on its various committees. Please consider sharing some of your particular talents and energy with the cross country ski community.

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between members of the trails committee and park staff appears to be yielding very positive grooming results. Elver was groomed about four times weekly this year, and an additional two groomers were trained by the city early in the year. Olin-Turville has been groomed several times this year, as has a number of County Parks trails. Groomers showed their enthusiasm for their work by showing up for the club's first annual grooming clinic held at Blackhawk Ski Club on February 1st. Seventeen groomers representing Governor Dodge S.P., Governor Nelson S.P., Blue Mounds S.P., City of Madison, City of Middleton, Blackhawk, Seeley Hills (our own Harry Spehar), and Capital Springs S.P. attended. This was a great opportunity not only to learn more about grooming techniques, but for groomers to meet each other and discuss the peculiarities of their grooming experiences and equipment.

We ask you to do your part in protecting our ski trails. You can do

this by not skiing on newly groomed trails before they have time to set up (freeze or harden), since they can be soft and easily mauled. Also part of the problem with the Elver and Odana trails (in normal winters!) is that we overuse them, so please try to ski at other area parks when possible. We hope to make this easy to do by making up-to-date trail and grooming reports available to skiers through madnorski website's trail reports section, the listserv, park websites and telephone hotlines (see below). We urge you to use these resources to find out the conditions of trails so that you can make an informed choice about where to ski. And remember that when you see a groomer, give him or her a hug, or at least a compliment or a thanks.

In addition to making information on grooming and trail conditions available to area skiers, we want to constructively convey skiers compliments, praises gripes, complaints, tirades, and hissy fits to the parks departments. The improved grooming that we have all seen this year makes it obvious that regular

positive interaction with park staff is a more effective way to get better skiing conditions than sporadically complaining when we arrive at our favorite ski trail and it is in poor condition. Park staff have told us that yes, they do get the occasional irate skier complaining about grooming, but that overall they see skiers in a very positive light. So to maintain and improve on the good will between skiers and Ullr's grooming elves, we urge all of you to send both positive and negative feedback to the Park liaisons (see below). Any positive feedback can also go directly to the parks.

City of Madison Parks Liaison,  
Pete Anderson, [pjander2@wisc.edu](mailto:pjander2@wisc.edu)

Middleton Parks Liaison, Jim Coors,  
[jgcoors@wisc.edu](mailto:jgcoors@wisc.edu)

Dane County Parks Liaison,  
Mark Plane, [mwplane@wisc.edu](mailto:mwplane@wisc.edu)

Dane County Trail Reports: [www.countyofdane.com/lwr/parks/](http://www.countyofdane.com/lwr/parks/)

Dane County Trail Hotline:  
(608) 242-4576.



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# The Record-Breaking Winter of 2007/2008

**Scott Bachmeier**

No doubt that many a MadNorSki will look back on the Winter of 2007/2008 with fond memories - memories about a winter season when it finally remembered how to snow again in southern Wisconsin! Given that Madison had recently endured an agonizing decade-long drought of low-snow winters, this season was certainly much appreciated. As of mid-February 2008, Madison had accumulated 80.2 inches of snowfall, which handily eclipsed the old winter season snowfall record of 76.1 inches (which was set way back in 1978/1979). December 2007 gave us 33.5 inches of snow, which was just 1.5 inches shy of equalling the record for the snowiest

December ever (which was actually set recently in 2000). In early February, Madison received 13.3 inches of snowfall in a 24 hour period, which was the second-snowiest 24 hour period in history. Your truly even broke down and finally bought a gas-powered snow thrower this year (my low carbon footprint will just have to get over that fact).

Equally impressive has been the staying power of the snow cover -- the snow pack this winter was even able to survive a pair of January Thaws, such that as of February 16th, we are on Day 76 with 1 inch or more of snow cover. That statistic actually pales in comparison to the longest stretch of days with more than 1 inch on the ground (118 days, from November 23, 1978 to March 20, 1979), and while the snow cover has been fairly deep by recent standards (as deep as 14 inches at the airport so far), that number is also small compared to the maximum

snow depth ever in Madison (32 inches, back in January 1979). However, since we appear to be in the mood to erase the record books, what say you all that we just go for those two particular records as well?

So what (or who) is to blame (or to credit) for the big snows of this winter? While some meteorologists (myself included) might be tempted to point to the moderate-intensity La Nina event currently underway as a major contributing factor, there have also been some rumors on the Internets about some 11th hour secret deals made by the MadNorSki Board members with Mother Nature. We're not entirely sure just what the Board members had to do (or sacrifice) to arrange for such a bountiful snow year, but we as Nordic skiers are perfectly willing to look the other way and just enjoy this winter out on the trails!



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