

# MADNORSKI News

News for members of the Madison Nordic Ski Club

Jan 2010 Vol. 29 No. 4

## Lessons Are The Gift That Keeps On Giving



**Rob Lucas and Bill Coady**

As I write this over the holiday break, gifts come to mind quickly. One of MadNorSki's most important gifts to the community is the free lessons program run by President Emeritus, Jimmy Vanden Brook. Jimmy does a fantastic job teaching and organizing and many club members have been generous with their time and talent. Word of our lessons is getting around, throw in a couple good snow years and you get a lot of interest in lessons, with 35-50 students turning out each time we offer lessons. If you're reading this, you could

probably teach, so I am asking you to consider volunteering.

I have truly enjoyed the times I taught lessons. Few things are as rewarding as when your students "get it" and you can see them improve noticeably in minutes. But I also believe teaching helps the teacher to ski better. No matter how well you ski, you need to reinforce good fundamentals. You can't teach those fundamentals to others without giving your own technique a refresher in the process. I find the students to be friendly and appreciative and the hour flies by too quickly.

Some of you will think: "I don't ski well enough to teach" or "I wouldn't know where to begin". The fact is you don't need to be a perfect technical skier to teach beginners, you just need sound fundamentals. Teaching is its own skill, but it is not difficult. Brock Woods, who

is heavily involved with the Professional Ski Instructors of America, will be setting up a clinic for instructors soon, but in the meantime you can come out to watch an experienced teacher to get ideas if you haven't taught previously.

This is obviously a great deal for the students, but it is also good for the instructors, good for our club, and good for the community. Lessons create new skiers and new club members, but the fact that we offer them for free creates goodwill and helps people understand what MadNorSki is all about. Unlike sports like Tennis or Golf, most of us didn't learn from professionals, we learned from a community of skiers. That is something great about our sport and Jimmy's lesson program is an ideal way to pay a little of it back and have some fun on the snow at the same time. Please give it a try.

## A Nice Long Ski

**Bill Coady**

If you are up for a nice long ski and you will have some time on your hands this March, you might like the Rajalta Rajalle-hiihto, or Finland border-to-border ski. The event takes 4 groups of approximately 100 skiers on a 7 day, 440km guided tour across Finland from the Russian border near Kuusamo to the Swedish border at Tornio.

Last year, four Madnorskis made the trip: Brock Woods, Dick Steinle, Bill Rattunde and I. The rest of our group consisted of 5 other Americans, 3 Canadians, 1 English, 1 Russian, with small groups from Denmark, Norway,

France, Austria, the Basque region, and large groups from Germany and Finland. One of the best aspects of the event is the camaraderie that forms with this group during the week. We dine together, wax together, sauna together, and share the trails. Lodgings take on the feel of a mini-olympic village for the more mature set.

The trail was well marked and groomed for classic only. Quality of grooming varied widely from absolute perfection to icy gravel roads covered with reindeer poop, but most of it was good to excellent. Weather was ideal, with temps in the 20's and blue wax nearly every day. However the final day got above freezing and we were glad we

each brought a pair of waxless skis. The Europeans look down on waxless but I know they were all secretly jealous of our kick on that day.

Tour logistics are easy. Two busses haul all the luggage and act as sag wagons if needed. The tour provides lodging each night in whatever is available. Everything from deluxe new condo at a ski resort to a 100 year old schoolhouse without electricity or running water. The old schoolhouse was actually my favorite. After bathing in the wood fired sauna, sleeping on mats on the floor and using an ice cold out house, were a small price to pay for the authentic Finnish country experience. Food is

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## February

- 7 Board Meeting
- 8 Club Meeting- Waxing for Racing and Recreation; 7:15 p.m. Social at 6:30 p.m. Lussier Family Heritage Center
- 19-21 Madison Winter Festival; Capitol Square
- 27 American Birkebeiner; Cable

## March

- 4 Board Meeting
- 8 Club Meeting- Season Wrap-Up, Pot Luck; 7:15 p.m. Social at 6:30 p.m. Lussier Family Heritage Center

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brock.woods@wisconsin.gov

### Dane County Parks Trails Liaison

Mark Plane: mwplane@wisc.edu

### Madison Parks Trails Liaison

Pete Anderson: pjander@wisc.edu

### Middleton Parks Trails Liaison

Jim Coors: jgcoors@wisc.edu

### Elver Park Programs/Snowmaking

Yuriy Gusev: yuriy@rsss.usa.com



## 2009-10 Board

### Co-Presidents

Rob Lukas: rluca@netzero.net  
Bill Cody: bill.coady1@gmail.com

### Vice-president

Tom Woody: woodyt@charter.net

### Treasurer

Pam Schneider:  
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### Membership

Reg Bruskewitz:  
bruske@surgery.wisc.edu Margie Sprecher:  
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### Race Director

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Tom Gallagher;  
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### Adult Instruction

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### Youth Instruction

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### Youth Instruction

Chris Lawn: chrislawn@tds.net

### Trips

Paul and Karen Matteoni:  
paul\_matteoni@hotmail.com

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included and is generally good and always plentiful. In an event like this, if you are not skiing, waxing, or sleeping, then you are eating. Eating gets to be a bit of a burden, even for a glutton like me you reach a point where you don't feel hungry but you know you need to keep fueling up.

Each day had about 5 aid stations including lunch. The non-lunch stops had water, some red juice, raisins, and pickles. Always with the damn pickles. Occasionally, we would get bulk chocolate squares, or random cookies and once we got big sausages to roast on a campfire, but for certain we could count on getting raisins, red juice, and pickles.

Getting to Kuusamo and back from Tornio is no easy feat. For us, it was about 30 hours to drive to O'Hare, fly to Frankfurt, fly to Helsinki, Train to Oulu, Bus to Kuusamo. Kuusamo has miles and miles of groomed trails running through

and around town so we were able to warm up the legs after the long trip.

The skiing is actually pretty good. Terrain can be quite hilly in spots, but there are long flat stretches. Distances are notoriously inaccurate, on the second day we passed the 15K to go sign twice, about 7K apart. Most days we'd get a couple different estimates of distance but usually within a couple kilometers. The longest day was 87K but mostly flat so it didn't feel so long. We took it easy at first and were surprised by how quickly it went, so Rattunde decided to sprint the final 5K. Be careful how you choose your traveling companions.

Language is not much of an issue for English speakers on the trip. All the announcements are made in Finnish and English and most skiers speak at least a little English. Still, there is a natural tendency for skiers to bond with those who speak the same language and we tended to eat with other Americans, the Canadians, and the kid

from Great Britain.

We have too many stories from the trip to tell here. Like the army guy from North Carolina who showed up on back country gear having never skied on groomed trails and somehow managed to gut through the entire trip, coming in a little earlier each day. Or the Finnish grandmothers who plodded along at what seemed like a snails pace, yet would go gliding past us every time we stopped to take a picture or get a drink. Now I look back at the waxing disasters and breeches of sauna etiquette with nostalgia and I want to ski the event again.

If you are interested in the Border to Border, email me at [president@madnorski.org](mailto:president@madnorski.org) and I can give you more information. Whatever event you are considering, someone in the club has done it and can give you the information to do it well so start planning that big ski trip, then tell us all about it.

## Ski With Friends In 2010!

**Rob Lucas**

It is traditional to provide a "state of the club" review in January. Also with over fifty new members I think it's important to provide an overview of what is going on and whom to contact.

Kids Ski is underway with our co-op program at Blackhawk Ski Club. With forty+ of our youngest members, it is the beginning step in skier development. Chris and Sarah Lawn have really got a group of dedicated parents and instructors. Chris even shows up early to run the groomer prior to the start of the session. There is also a great turnout for the Middle School and High School teams, coached by Louise Jones and Bill Rattunde, who start racing in January. If you want to feel the excitement come on out to Elver for the Youth races. I had the opportunity to be around when the team opened up their uniform order and it was an electric

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Friends from page 1

event. For the more mature crowd we also eagerly await the arrival of the club apparel in Early February. This is the first time in three years we have been able to place an order, this year with a new vendor. Thanks to Dirk Mason for handling this project and for Ben Neff for doing the design tweaks necessary to make the logo fit the apparel. The devil is in the details and it is never easy or simple to change vendors.

Tuesday Night club races begin at Elver this January under the guidance of Dave Bell, Renee Calloway, and Tommy Gallagher. They rent the facility, set the course, tabulate the results and post them to the website. The racing season gives opportunities to visit friends as we challenge ourselves physically. Tuesday nights is also lesson night at Elver, where Chief Instructor Jimmy Vandebrook manages the crew of volunteers and answers a million

questions of those being introduced to the sport. They had around forty new skiers show-up for lessons!

Our ambassador Walt Meanwell recently helped set up a fund with Madison Community Foundation to help Gov. Nelson State Park (which reportedly has hired a groomer). Walt is everywhere- he sits on boards, meets with groomers and park officials, and generally represents Nordic skiing in our area. Because of Walt, MadNorSki is known and a voice to area politicians and recreation

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**FINN SISU**

Web Site: [www.finnsisu.com](http://www.finnsisu.com)

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**RIVERBROOK BIKE & SKI**

Web Site: [www.riverbrookbike.com](http://www.riverbrookbike.com)

Dates: January 15-17, 2009

Photography Credit: Andy Canniff - Swix USA

**MATT LIEBSCH** CXC Team Vertical Limit member

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officials. If you were at the December meeting you heard Mark Torresani report on the City of Middleton's plans to add ski trails. On the eastside; Pam Schneider has been working with the Friends of McCarthy Park to organize a winter fun day January 23 and with the Dane County Parks and Recreation to expand skiing options closer to Sun Prairie. Brock Woods has been working with the city of Madison on the Door Creek Trail. He also works with the city parks department and area groomers and hopes to run yet another groomers clinic this year. City trials liason has lit up the phone lines to address the lack of signs protecting ski trails from walkers. Father south, Willi Van Haren and Karl Heil have great plans for a shelter at Blue Mounds State Park-wouldn't that be a great asset to the skiers that enjoy the wonderful trails!

"Mr. Winter", Yuri Gusev, has been our liaison with the City of Madison and his efforts have helped with commitments from the city to promote skiing at Elver

and Winterfest. Look for more about the expanded Winterfest week coming up in February. If you were at the December meeting you got a chance to see the sit-ski project for disabled skiers-a project Don Becker has taken beyond expectations. The guy who never gives up- Paul Mattoli is organizing a club trip to the Birkie Tour. Check it out on the website- It is not a race, but, a great chance to see what Hayward and the Birkie trail is all about in a more relaxed social manner. Ben Neff and Craig Heilman are leading the way in our evolution from newsletter to blog. This would use the website to allow more frequent and timely communication of club happenings, events, and opportunities.

That's a quick overview, Bill and I also try to manage the meetings, answer e-mail and act as ambassadors of the Madison Nordic Ski Club. We're looking for a few good folks to fill some of the forthcoming board position vacancies. If you'd like to spend some time working

to promote cross country skiing or just hang out with a group of great people—please call or e-mail.



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(former Junior MadNorSki coach)



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Daryl Ketterhagen and Jim Stevens enjoy a beautiful day on the skis, from Cottage Grove to the Lake Mills trailhead on 01-19-10.