

# MADNORSKI News

News for members of the Madison Nordic Ski Club

Mar 2010 Vol. 29 No. 5

## March is the Season for Transitions



**Rob Lucas and Bill Coady**

As the end of the ski season approaches, we would like to take the time to thank some of our departing board members. After eight years of running the club's Tuesday night Elver park race series, Dave Bell is turning the race director reins over to Greg

Jones. Dave is looking forward to teaching some lessons (sign him up Jimmy). Dave along with partner Renee Calloway undoubtedly will continue to run more than just a few cyclocross races. I hope many club members and racers take the time to e-mail Dave thank-you for all that he's done for the club and the racing scene over the past eight years.

Club treasurer Pam Schneider is also leaving, moving on to working with our trails committee, with Dane Co Parks, and the friends of McCarthy Park to promote east-side skiing. She leaves with the club financially solvent and

in good shape. We wish her well and anticipate great things happening on the east-side skiing scene. This year, at the January 23 McCarthy Park celebration over 150 skiers showed up! This more than exceeded county staff and the friends of McCarthy Park's greatest expectations of turnout for the event! Kudos to Pam and Tom Woody for shaping this event.

Which leads to the open board position of treasurer; if you're interested in stepping forward and helping out the club, send an e-mail to Bill or Rob.

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## A Grand Day Out at the East-Side's McCarthy Park

### **Pam Schneider**

Ten years ago when Russell & Ella McCarthy passed away, they left nearly 400 acres to Dane County Parks. What a wonderful gift they gave us. McCarthy Park sits right off of HWY N and I-94. I wonder if they ever thought they'd see skiers roaming their fields and woods.

McCarthy Park has the gates closed for the winter, but that hasn't stopped some of us from skiing in. There is something very special knowing you're probably the only one striding through the park on a sunny day or starry night. That is a feeling of solitude that very few of us know.

That solitude came to an end the weekend of January 23rd when McCarthy Park held the first Winter Fun Day. The snow conditions had deteriorated due to the January thaw and the temperature, just above

freezing created an eerie light fog. The anticipation for the winter debut was somewhat dampened, but the Madnorski's showed up with skis and instructors. Than the horses, snowshoes, sleds, smores, hot chocolate, brats, hot dogs, and people arrived. They were ready to play.

Madnorski members Dick Stienle, Tom Woody, Daryl Ketterhagan, Jim Coors, and Paul Roltgen gave lessons from 10:00am to 2:00pm without a break. We had families waiting for skis and coming back for more. They couldn't get enough.

The Huston's came with 4 large Belgium Horses and 2 sleighs. What a sight to see. I'd take a minute from sorting skis or fitting boots to just stand and watch. A scene right out of Doctor Zhivago if not for the skiers passing by.

The day ended with some tired and wet

Madnorski's. I hope they all left with a great feeling of a successful day at the tracks.

The future of McCarthy Park hangs in limbo. Dane County has limited resources for grooming. We will continue to work with them to put McCarthy Park on their regular grooming schedule. What can you do to help? Write or e-mail Dane County encouraging them to groom the park. You can join "The Friends of McCarthy Park" and you can help with future events at the park.

I will gladly give up my solitude of skiing alone in McCarthy Park to have friends and families enjoying it with me. Help us make McCarthy's gift a vital part of the Dane County Park system.

Friends of McCarthy Park: [http://www.mccarthypark.us/Home\\_Page.html](http://www.mccarthypark.us/Home_Page.html)

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Late-February early-March are my favorite times to ski. Things are a little warmer, cardinals are singing, skies typically are blue, and the cycle of warm days and cool nights leads one to anticipate crust skiing. Sorta like having desert after a long season. Speaking of snow, we have had some great seasons with abundant snow for the last few years. Some attribute all this snow to Bill Coady's leadership as Madnorski co-president. In fact, I hear that there

is a groundswell when it would make Bill.... President for life! As a devotee of abundant snow, I would not stand in the way of such a movement, and I would happily step aside and let Bill continue with his successful snow-making magic. Club elections are coming up as our two year terms expire so be sure to let Bill know of your appreciation of his great abilities to deliver such high-quality ski seasons to the Madison area. Ski often, ski with friends and family! Enjoy the rest of the season.

## My Year of Skiing Classically

### Rob Lucas

After skate skiing the last 14 years. I decided I devoted this year to classic skiing. I'm not quite sure what prompted this decision other than, I decided to try something new. I had heard that skiing classically would help my skate skiing, or, maybe, I just had rocks in my head. The big difference (besides the technique) between skate skiing and classic skiing is in the kick-wax. This seemingly minor difference turns out to be a really big deal. Both forms of skiing require glide, and classic requires kick. This is provided by the contact between sticky wax and snow. Ideally not so sticky that it prevents glide. Therein lies a source of great angst. Years ago, when I started out skiing on classic skis, they were no-wax

skis with three-pin bindings and kick didn't seem to be a great problem.

When you kick wax you can have three outcomes: (from the XC-World website)

- A. Good kick and glide
  - B. Too slick of a ski
  - C. A ski that sticks or develops ice and snow clumps on the bottom
- Option "A" is what you want!

To make matters worse, a ski that is slick ("B") is often the result of tiny ice crystals forming in the wax (icing) because the wax was a bit too warm—the same problem that results in "C". Yikes!

Here's a few general rules to follow to avoid "B" and "C"...

Never assume conditions will be the

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## Trail Leadership

### Trails and Grooming Chair

Brock Woods:

brock.woods@wisconsin.gov

### Dane County Parks Trails Liaison

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### 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

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Bill Coady: bill.coady1@gmail.com

### Vice-president

Tom Woody: woodyt@charter.net

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### Youth Instruction

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### Trips

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# A Different Perspective

**Scott Bachmeier**

During the night of the Elver Park Ski Race on February 10th, I finally got a chance to try out a pair of sit-skis for the first time. Don Becker and Don Fariss were kind enough to meet me out at the Elver shelter and join me for my maiden voyage—and I have to say that I was very impressed at the quality, adjustability, and overall comfort of the sit-ski design. Needless to say, it was an absolute thrill for me to finally be out on snow again (even though I couldn't seem to get a good double pole with kick going).

I was very anxious to get back out again and give the sit-skis another try—especially to continue to work on some of the more of the challenging aspects, like learning how to turn—so the following weekend my wife Ruth and daughter Heidi joined me for another hour of sit-skiing at Elver. I'm still perplexed how it is that my 10-year-old daughter was able to master the



Don Becker and Don Fariss flank Scott Bachmeier at the Tuesday night race at Elver Park where Scott tried out the sit-ski and developed a case of Birkie Fever. [Scott sit-skied up Main Street in Hayward—Ed.] Photo Heidi Bachmeier

use of the sit-skis faster than I was. Nevertheless, after those two relatively brief sessions, I had developed a mild case of Birkie fever that led me to get in touch with Ned Zuelsdorff and get myself signed up to for the short

300-meter sit-ski event that finishes on Main Street in Hayward. The way I see it, if I can beat at least one of the Italians across the finish line, I'll consider it a major victory for both myself and for the Madison Nordic Ski Club!

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Scott Bachmeier gives his ab's a workout at the Tuesday night race at Elver Park. Photo Heidi Bachmeier

Classic From page 2

same everywhere in the ski location of the day. Always carry waxes with you for above and below your temperature choice so that you can change wax while skiing.

When in doubt, go with the colder wax. It is easier to put on a layer of warmer wax over colder wax than vice versa... and you also avoid the icing problem.

Remember that kick waxing is always going to be hardest when temperature ranges change dramatically or when snow crystals are in their most volatile state—ust around freezing. *If you get frustrated easily* you may want to skate or use waxless skis in these conditions. (italics by me)

Avoid putting on too much wax and be sure to smooth the wax into the base after application. Even the «right» wax for the day can stick or slip if too much is applied».

I played around w/classic skiing- once even skiing a 10K race at Badger State Games because my buddies thought I should. Due to previous bad experience when I had put yellow Klister along the

entire bottom of the ski... I took the path of least resistance and let Dirk put Klister on my ski's. (yeah-yeah for some reason Klister is always capitalized- if this was a movie this is where the ominous music would play). They were a pair of old Rossi Klister skis I had picked up from the closeout bin a number of years before. It turned out that this was one of those classic Kiister days, and, low and behold my skis ran better that 99% of those in the race- I passed folks who I generally would never even see in a race-in that I had both kick and glide- something no one else had that day. From that experience, I only remembered the feeling of "it working" and that of passing others (something all too often rare, in my book).

Flash forward to 2009 and now I have classic skis that require kick wax. Judging from my buddies wax boxes I needed to add a few more waxes to the blue, red, and yellow that I had my box. When it came time to sign-up for the Birkie, I signed up for the 54K classic race, reasoning if you're going to change, Change Big! Now that I had a little pressure to drive the

learning curve, I began the process of learning the details of wax zones and the thought process needed to pick the wax of the day. From what I could ascertain, it takes the wisdom of Merlin to appropriately decipher the snow conditions throughout the race course—and that apparently the Eskimo's are not the only ones to have 35 names for different types of snow. Yeesh! Not only that you have 500 or so combinations of waxes to choose from, some with descriptions like "for warm wet new snow, not too wet or icy"! More often than not I would be slipping like I had strapped a couple of eels to my skis as I attempted to climb up the hill. Or, conversely, have two foot-long clumps of snow on the bottom of my ski's turning them into skinny snowshoes. After a frustrating race at Elver when the Powergrip on the bottom of my skis turned out to be accurate, I decide to give-up and switch to skating the Birkie (see general rule about easily frustrated above). Oops—found out that they had already closed waves 3, 4 and 5 and I would have to

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# Top 10 Reasons the Juniors are Awesomely Awesome

## Bill Rattunde

10. The costumes and tights are fabulous (we're the most graphically disturbing team on the trail)
9. Need to convert a kitchen, conference room, old job trailer or hallway into a wax room? We've got you covered.
8. No number 8—writer out skiing.
7. Early bedtimes on a Friday night? Yes please! Especially if it's followed by a 6:00am breakfast and a 9:00 am start time.
6. We all know all the words to every Disney song ever. And we can sing in unison while doing push-ups, wall-sits or riding in the car.
5. When the rest of the city is complaining about the roads not being plowed we're skiing through the middle of the street to our friends' houses.
4. We know the best recovery from long

racers is swing-dancing in the cabins.

3. Countless hours of practicing at night mean we can pick out our friends by the way they ski even if we can't see their face.

2. Sibling rivalry has been taken to a new level...actually, we all stick up for each other as family.

1. We are leading the way to the future...follow our tracks!

The Madison Nordic Ski Team ("juniors") had a fantastic season from early December racing to a great showing at the Lakeland Loppet in March. It is a long haul for the High School racers who finish soccer and X/C running seasons only to start up 4 day/week practice the next week in November. This year the High School and Middle School teams again jointly practiced 2 to 3 days per week, which adds to the quality of training and development of the next wave of HS skiers and the

difficulty of coaching. We were almost evenly matched in HS and MS numbers with no HS seniors. This means we are well positioned to field a very competitive team next year. Many of our skiers are flexing their muscles at the longer distance events outside of HS/MS competitions. This is the next generation our sport needs. Next year we plan to run distinct groups based on racing objectives and dedication. We'll resume as a team this summer; with a rich schedule of ski specific and general cross training activities for fun and fitness. We will be in need of help instructing and coaching this fall. If you would be willing to volunteer one night per week to work with a group of wonderful kids, I feel certain you will leave feeling lucky for the opportunity. If you would like to participate in the fun, contact Louise Jones (843-8451) or Bill Rattunde (347-4708). Let the games continue!

Classic From page 4

start in the way-back.

So here I was starting the Birkie on classic skis—never mind the anxiety of not knowing what my skis would be like given it WAS MUCH WARMER THAN THE WEATHERMAN HAD PREDICTED! Fortunately, I had discovered my own waxing Yoda. You know, the spiritual advisor who seems to show up just when you need them the most. Mine had magically appeared at New Moon as I was in the midst of kick-wax-angst and he simply said "Chris has been up for the last couple of days and is going with green base binder-straight". I relaxed and remembered the days of blissful ignorance when I had let someone else pick the wax.

I stood at the start and decided to just enjoy the fact I was able to ski a classic-marathon and not get too caught up in the notion that I had to have it nailed. When I remembered that I could always pull aside and re-wax, or just "tour-with-a-bib" it really helped. As always the excitement of being at the start pumped me up and I found a couple of buddies to talk to as we lined up. As it turned out the classic Birkie course flows wonderfully, you start off going into the woods and it almost gets lonely. It turned out I had bomber kick and glide and it was a wonderful day!

From all this I learned—don't worry; ski happy!

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# Skiers Can Report Invasive Wetland Plants

## Brock Woods

When frozen winter makes the backdrop to everything white with snow it's a great time to spot two exotic, invasive plants that may be invading wet areas, and that you'll want to report to WDNR. Both species replace native plants and reduce native animals that depend on them, in addition to making recreational use of wet areas difficult.

Japanese knotweed (*Polygonum cuspidatum*) is an upright, semi-woody, shrub-like herb that resembles bamboo and can grow to over 10 feet tall. In winter the many bright rusty brown, bamboo-like stems make them easy to spot, even by a moving skier! Most other times of year it's hard to see until its patches get too big to easily control.

Japanese knotweed has been planted in many towns and cities for its pretty leaves and flowers. Unfortunately, small patches of the plant are beginning to show up along wetlands and streams where they promise to cause problems as their patches expand to enormous sizes. A large, impenetrable clone can

make it difficult to access wet areas that have been used for years for fishing, boating, and even XC skiing! For more details, see [http://dnr.wi.gov/invasives/publications/pdfs/japanese\\_knotweed\\_brochure.pdf](http://dnr.wi.gov/invasives/publications/pdfs/japanese_knotweed_brochure.pdf).

Non-native common (or giant) reed grass was introduced from Europe and now out-competes its shorter native cousin (both *Phragmites australis*), especially on shores and in wetlands near the Great Lakes. It also spreads along highway ditches and into adjacent wetlands. It reduces both the use and aesthetics of water edges. Winter helps make the 12+ foot tall, thickly growing stems and dark, fluffy tops of the introduced grass contrast easily with the short (6 foot), thinly spread stems and thin flowers of the native variety. Also, the introduced plants retain their leaves through winter, and both their leaves and stems are heavily ridged, while the leaves of native phragmites fall in autumn, revealing their hard and smooth stems. Run a fingernail across a few stems to be sure if it is the native or not. (For a more positive ID, see [http://](http://www.invasiveplants.net/phragmites/morphology.htm)

[www.invasiveplants.net/phragmites/morphology.htm](http://www.invasiveplants.net/phragmites/morphology.htm).)

Knowing where these plants are likely to cause problems will help WDNR devise statewide control strategies. You can help by reporting Japanese knotweed where it is spreading into wetlands or on the shores of lakes or streams. Phragmites is already abundant close to Lake Michigan, however, in inland counties, report any populations in or near wetlands or on shores.

Report populations of these invasive species by emailing [Invasive.Species@wi.gov](mailto:Invasive.Species@wi.gov), calling 608-267-5066, or sending in a voucher specimen. More details on reporting can be found at: <http://dnr.wi.gov/invasives/futureplants/reporting.htm>. Please provide as exact a location as possible.

Skiers driving to events and keeping a sharp eye out while gliding past shores and wetlands in winter can help curb these invasive plants just by reporting them. Hope you can help!

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**Don Fariss**  
(former Junior MadNorSki coach)



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