



CITY OF LAKES

Nordic Ski FOUNDATION

YOUTH . EVENTS . TRAILS



\$200K FOR 2K IN 2007 CAMPAIGN A SUCCESS

Through a combination of pledges and contributions ranging from \$25 to \$20,000, the Foundation has raised some \$130,000 toward snowmaking at Wirth Park. (See list of contributors contained in this Newsletter). Because the organization entered an agreement calling for Park Board matching, this translates into some \$235,000 in infrastructure and improvements in the snowmaking loop at Wirth.

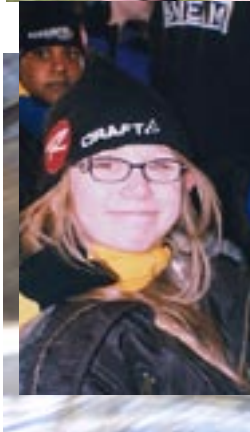
So what will this buy? That question has yet to be answered. The goal was to have \$300,000 in funds available at this point and the initial budget was geared toward having \$300,000 available. It will take a few days to re-calibrate



Jon Swenson Tellekson, Susan Knutson and Linnea Swenson Tellekson at the \$200K for 2K in 2007 fundraiser.

and decide on priorities for this year, given the \$235,000 currently available. However, the organization's fundraising and trail crews our optimistic that a two-kilometer artificial snow loop is still possible.

"We learned a lot about the snowmaking this Campaign continued on page 4,



ANWATIN SKI TEAM ENJOYS SUCCESSFUL FIRST YEAR

This year the Foundation started a program at Anwatin Middle School: the Anwatin Ski Team. The idea was to build on the success of neighboring Bryn Mawr Elementary. Kids who learned to ski over the past few years at Bryn Mawr would be given an opportunity to ski in a bit more focused environment – a voluntary after school program, with the Rossignol Junior Loppet at the end of the year.

Anwatin continued on page 2,



Coach Sarah Rohwedder working with members of the Anwatin Ski Team

NOTES FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

By John Munger

We are now in the fifth year of this experiment called the City of Lakes Nordic Ski Foundation. We have accomplished much in our three concentration areas: programming, trails and events. However, we continue to struggle financially as costs continue to increase while revenues have been stagnant.

Director Notes continued on page 6,

CITY OF LAKES NORDIC SKI FOUNDATION CALENDAR

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| May 30, 2007 | – Membership year ends
renewals due by this date |
| June 23, 2007 | – Tri-Loppet |
| Sept 16, 2007 | – Roller Rally |
| Sept 22, 2007 | – Trail Loppet Half-Marathon
and 5K |
| Oct 9, 2007 | – Nordic Ski Foundation
Annual Meeting |
| Oct 27, 2007 | – Trails Day |
| Febr 2-3, 2007 | – City of Lakes Loppet Event
Weekend |

Publication of the City of Lakes Nordic Ski Foundation

Distributed to Foundation members and friends

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"The mission of the City of Lakes Nordic Ski Foundation is to promote and support cross country skiing in the Minneapolis area, especially among youth."

Anwatin continued from front,

The Foundation hired coaches, obtained ski equipment and official Anwatin Ski Team jackets from Rossignol and PodiumWear by Borah, respectively. More than 25 kids participated in the program, which met on Tuesdays and Thursdays after school.

Coaches Sarah Rohwedder and Marie Jordan worked together with community volunteers to help the kids learn the basics of skiing. "Working with middle school students is a different type of challenge," said Coach



Anwatin Ski Team members at the Rossignol Junior Loppet - with their jackets

Rohwedder (who also coaches at Washburn High School), "but this was a very rewarding experience and I would expect the program to grow over time."

To find out more about the Anwatin Ski Team Program or to volunteer, call Sarah Rohwedder at 612 872-7771 or Marie Jordan at 651 402-8370.

ANDERSEN BRAVES THE COLD...

Despite the lack of snow and a few equipment glitches, the Andersen Skis Program enjoyed a successful first year.

Over 150 kids learned to ski through the Program – with Coaches Marc Beitz and Nate



Coach Marc Beitz demonstrating the finer points of ski technique – photo by Steve Kotvis

Bash leading the way. The Program represents an excellent community effort:

- Allina Hospitals and Clinics provided a grant to start the Program.

- Rossignol USA provided the ski equipment (the Minnesota Youth Ski League helped bridge the gap until all of the Rossignol equipment arrived).
- Andersen Physical Education Instructors Cyndy Wodbury and Dr. Joe Rosenfield (Dr. J) kept the kids organized and on-task.
- Other Andersen teachers helped the kids on the snow.
- Andersen Vice-Principal Diane Schmitz ordered scarves in Andersen colors (yellow and black) for all of the kids to wear.
- The Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board provided the space in the park.
- Foundation Volunteer Jeff Richards groomed the trails each week once the snow fell.
- Foundation Volunteers like John Strand translated permission slip letters into Spanish and helped with the Minne-Loppet day.
- Foundation Volunteers Steve Kotvis and Celia Davis took photographs of the students at Andersen and at the Minne-Loppet.

But the real story was the Minne-Loppet. With temperatures plummeting and forecasters warning against outdoor activity, the easy decision would have been to cancel the Minne-Loppet for the Andersen kids. But Vice-Principal Schmitz was not so easily deterred: "We're tough at Andersen – it takes more than a little cold to keep us inside," she said.



Andersen student at the Sons of Norway Minne-Loppet – with scarf

Sure enough, on Minne-Loppet day Andersen students showed up to participate. The plan was to stay in the tent and give the students the option of skiing if they wanted to. The tent was a hit. The students loved the freebies. But the skiing was remarkable. After skiing, instead of complaining about the cold (the HIGH temperature was minus-2 that day) the Andersen students were asking to go again. Their smiling faces told the whole story – the Andersen Skis Program enjoyed a great first year...

BRYN MAWR SKIS WEATHERS ANOTHER YEAR

by Margaret Adelsman

Beginning in November, COLNSF Youth Coaches Margaret Adelsman and Amy Wyman met with students in Bryn Mawr Elementary physical education classes once per week, under the guidance of teacher Anita Chavez. Students typically began each lesson with instruction in general fitness and health from North Memorial family practice physicians, who covered topics such as Benefits of Exercise, Exercise and the Heart, Lungs, and Muscles, Importance of Nutrition, Life-Long Exercise, and even Training for the Race. Dr. Mark Bixby lined up a fabulous panel of young physicians as speakers, and it was a great opportunity for the kids to hear and often see specific examples of how exercise relates to many aspects of an individual's health.

The second portion of class time focused on learning and implementing the basics of cross country skiing. Early sessions incorporated some "dryland" training with the kids by hiking with poles on the nearby trails. We even had the teachers and support staff striding up the big hills, much to the delight of the students. Given the late appearance of snow, the students were given the chance to test out their equipment by "skiing" on the grass field and playing games of tag. After the Christmas Holiday break, students were finally able to strap on their skis and glide right from the gymnasium doors of the school to the adjacent trails in the beautiful South Woods of Theodore Wirth Park.

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board packed and groomed the trails when snow was adequate. The trails are also part of the City of Lakes Loppet trail system, and the kids were excited every day that they got to leave the field and head into the woods. "Do we get to go on the hills today?" was a phrase that was frequently heard, and it was often hard to fit all of the skiing that they wanted to do into the time allowed. Ms. Chavez as well as class

instructors, North Memorial physicians, and local volunteer skiers would provide wonderful assistance when the kids were outside, making sure that students at all ability levels had adult support when needed. Those one-on-one efforts made an enormous difference for the improvement of students new to skiing and allowed ones with greater experience to really excel.

Students typically skied once per week, weather permitting, throughout December, January and early February. With the exception of a very cold morning, they skied even when conditions were marginal, but were always anxious to get to the trails and ski. Some literally refused to give up on challenging, slippery climbs, insisting that they reach the top with their skis on. Their positive attitudes and continued improvement in spite of another marginal snow year were truly inspiring. Students received certificates of completion and Loppet ski caps on the last day of class, making for a very proud group.



The program wound up with the opportunity for all of the students to ski in the Sons of Norway Minne-Loppet Kids Event on February 3, 2007 in Uptown. Given the extreme cold predicted for that day, our typical large contingent of students was not able to attend, but several still participated in the out-and-back course before cheering spectators. Once we recognized them beneath all of their layers, the smiles and pride were evident. It was a proud moment to watch those great kids approach the finish line with faces of determination.

The Bryn Mawr Skis program is a unique opportunity to positively influence young people about health and fitness. It is also a fantastic way to introduce them to the wealth of natural resources that exist right in their own neighborhoods. The program was very well received once again, and it has had outstanding support from Bryn Mawr faculty, a critical component to making the program a success. The COLNSF looks forward to future years of bringing smiles to Bryn Mawr kids on skis.



PILLSBURY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL LOOKING TO ADD A SKI PROGRAM

Northeast Minneapolis' Pillsbury Elementary School is immediately adjacent to Windom Park. As such, it is well-situated for a Foundation youth program. Pillsbury English-as-a-Second-Language teacher Mark Trumper (an avid skier and coach) recognized this and recently contacted the Foundation. After a meeting with the Pillsbury administration and staff, along with Anthony Papa from Windom Park, it appears that the only barrier to a youth program at Windom is ski equipment and funding.

Similar to the Foundation's other youth programs, a program at Pillsbury would primarily serve Somali and Hispanic children in 4th and 5th grade. However, in addition to working with the students through their physical education classes, Mr. Trumper is eager to work with the children through Pillsbury's after school programs (the after school programs are three hours in length and currently focus entirely on academics). Further, Mr. Papa would like to see skiing introduced to the community through Windom Park.

The Foundation is excited about the opportunity to expand into Pillsbury as well. "This would really round out our program," says Foundation President Kate Ellis. "We have not had a program in northeast Minneapolis before – this would give us programs that service kids in south Minneapolis (Andersen), north Minneapolis (Bryn Mawr and Anwatin) and southwest Minneapolis (Anwatin)."

The Foundation is actively looking for grant opportunities for this program (northeast Minneapolis-specific grants?) and/or volunteers to help with the program. Please send an email to info@cityoflakesloppet.com with ideas or to volunteer.



Campaign continued from front page, past year,” says long-time snowmaking proponent Tony Mommsen. “We will be re-routing some of the trails a bit and, more important, we believe we have some ideas for how to add more kilometers with less expense.” The main idea is to add kilometers near the base of the snowboarding hill. Because there is already a water hydrant and electrical there, this means less water pipe infrastructure and more bang for our buck... Anyone interested in helping with trail design should contact Tony Mommsen at tony@tonymommsen.com.



The bigger story here is the tremendous hard work of many people over the past few years. Four years ago – after the first of our string of dismal winters – a group of individuals congregated to discuss solutions. Everyone acknowledged that there would be no easy fix – this would be a long-term project. Four years later that group – with some new folks who have joined along the way – is still hard at work.

Accomplishments of this group include:

- Persuading the Park Board to hire an engineering firm and to adopt the Wirth Winter Recreation Area as part of its Master Plan for Theodore Wirth Park (the basic concept of this Master Plan is intact but the details have changed considerably).
- Persuading the City of Minneapolis to contribute \$200,000 toward the Winter Recreation Area.
- Starting a fundraising campaign and raising funds toward the first phase of construction (snowmaking capability) in 2005.
- Guiding the Park Board in the implementation of the first phase of construction, including the bidding and purchasing process.
- Purchasing a booster pump that allows the Park Board to make artificial snow.
- Designing a plan for a low-budget two-kilometer snowmaking loop.
- Persuading the Park Board to agree to match funds toward the second phase of construction, to hire professional management and to prioritize cross country skiing at the start of the year.
- Starting the \$200K for 2K in 2007 Campaign, holding multiple fundraising events and soliciting hundreds of contributions

and pledges.

- Managing the Park Board’s grooming crew and (re)convincing the Park Board to place priority on the cross country area rather than snowboarding (which is perceived to be a bigger money-maker).

These tasks have taken perseverance and they are not always fun. But the group has kept working and now faces the prospect of some success. Among others, the group includes:

- Tony Mommsen (Tony manages the web site. His energy and vision have never abated.)
- Rick Budde (Rick manages the database, keeps track of Active.com contributions and advises on mailings and engineering matters.)
- Bill Dossett (Bill has been critical to the specific design of the ski trails and has been the chief of sweat equity – grading and leveling the trails himself on many occasion.)
- Kate Ellis (Kate has led the fundraising events, hosting an event at her house and helping to prepare all of the food for this spring’s event. She has done much more behind the scenes as well.)
- Al Sedgwick (Al has been the Campaign’s chief advisor and has helped cultivate contributions from a wide variety of people.)
- Bruce Abbett (Bruce has led the charge to involve the Foundation Board in the fundraising process.)
- Marc Beitz (Marc has helped design the trails, has worked multiple fundraising events, and – with the help of his wife Amy Cichanowski – formulated the free-lifetime-pass idea that has been a cornerstone of the campaign this spring.)
- Piotr Bednarski (Piotr helped design the trails, lent his considerable expertise to the project, organized several Run for Snow events and is always willing to lend a hand where needed).

You will find all of these people listed among the campaign’s contributors as well. These are people who put their money where their mouths and their hearts are. Thanks to them we may well have two kilometers of artificial snow by the winter of 2007-2008.

One more thing. This Campaign is not over. From the start, the 2K in 2007 idea was a plan on a shoestring budget. Because we did not raise as much as we had hoped, there is no doubt that more money will be necessary to complete this project. Additional contributions are, of course, welcome.

Finally, be aware that the group has been working on a parallel track as well. There is

no reason that the Wirth Winter Recreation Area should not be every bit as nice as the Three Rivers Park projects (retaining pond, new maintenance building, more snow guns, built-in booster pumps, etc.). To that end, we are working with Park Board commissioners to make the Winter Recreation Area a Park Board priority at the Capitol – meaning state bonding money toward the Winter Recreation Area done right...

To help with the snowmaking project send an email to info@cityoflakesloppet.com.

2006 TRAIL IMPROVEMENTS A BIG HELP

After the icy 2006 event, the Nordic Ski Foundation’s Trails Team determined that some fixes were in order to make the trails more friendly for the average skier. In their typical analytical manner, Course Chiefs Bill Dossett and Craig Rudd put together a comprehensive list of the locations that needed help. Problem areas included:

- Pre-Loppet Hill or Pine Tree Hill (the downhill coming out of the meadow near the Back-40 – about 3 kilometers into the Loppet). This downhill had a tough left-hand turn that occasionally caused skiers to end up tangled in a pine tree if they were unable make the turn. Chief Groomer John Gronquist figured out the answer here – straighten the hill out by re-routing the trail. With the new route, the downhill has become easy to negotiate and the problems of yesteryear are forgotten (but the name remains).
- Picnic Area Hill (in South Wirth, after passing the tennis courts there was a downhill passing through a picnic area). This downhill had a deceptively tricky off-camber area that caused skiers to fear



Skier trying to negotiate turn on Pine Tree Hill during the Pre-Loppet in 2006. Photo by Bruce Adelsman

running into an oak tree. Again, Mr. Gronquist figured out an answer – bypass the tricky area with a short re-route. The new route is easy and fun.

- Two-Way Hill (in the Norm Oakvik Trail Area (formerly called Quaking Bog or Flower Garden Trails) – there is a tree in the middle of the trail just past the bottom

of this hill). This downhill had camber problems and a sweeping right turn at the bottom. Led by Piotr Bednarski, the Trails Crew banked this turn on Trails Day. While still not easy, it is possible to ride the turn even on an icy day.

- 394 Hill Number 1 (in the Norm Oakvik Trail Area at the top of a large climb near the 394 sound wall). Piotr and Bill banked this hill on Trails Day. The banking lasts for over 100' and makes a big difference in this sweeping right hand turn. Taking this hill is now reminiscent of an easy luge run – just ride the bank.
- 394 Hill Number 2 (last downhill in the Oakvik Trail Area – near the 394 sound wall). This was another deceptively difficult hill. Bill stood at the bottom of this hill at the 2006 Loppet and had a ready answer – re-route the trail to the left of a large oak at the bottom of the hill. With the re-routing this is an easy downhill.

This year there were virtually no complaints about difficult downhills. In fact, skiers went out of their way to point how nice the trails were. Ken Nelson of Apple Valley wrote to say “all problems I remembered from the icy trails of the 2006 season were corrected and the trail was safe and good for my good skis.”

The biggest remaining trail difficulty issue is battling residual perception problems. Apparently some skiers who participated in the 2006 Loppet maintain the perception that the trails are too technically difficult. Hopefully, though, over time these skiers will see for themselves that most, if not all, of the areas of concern have been fixed. (It might help to have a snowy winter or two...).

2007 LOPPET AN AWARD-WINNING EVENT

At the recent Minnesota Skinnyski Series Awards Banquet, the City of Lakes Loppet won two awards – “Best Overall Event” and “Most Heroic Effort.”

The awards are based upon the vote of skiers who competed in each Skinnyski Series event. This year's Series events included:

- Pepsi Challenge
- City of Lakes Loppet
- Mora Vasaloppet
- Bemidji Finlandia
- Governor's Cup
- Seeley Hills Classic (cancelled for lack of snow)

Skinnyski.com coordinates and tabulates the voting, and the winners are unveiled at the Series banquet each year.

The Most Heroic Effort award goes to the or-

ganization that had to do the most to make its event happen for the year. This year the Loppet had to contend with little snow and extreme cold. More than 800 hours of time were spent shoveling the course to make it ready for this year's Loppet. Once the shoveling was complete, temperatures plummeted – and the official race-time temperature for the Hoigaard's Classic (the Loppet's representative race in the Skinnyski Series) was



minus-10 degrees Fahrenheit. The Loppet's medical and volunteer crews did a fantastic job and injuries were at a minimum – with only a few routine medical problems...

“I think we have the best and most capable cross country ski racing volunteer crew in the world, said Loppet Race Director John Munger. “It is an honor to win this award in the sense that virtually all the Skinnyski races had a hard time this winter. But frankly, we are tired of winning the Heroic Effort award. We look forward to winning the ‘Most Boring Preparation Effort’ award next year – just groom the trails and go...”

This was the first year the organization has won the Best Overall Event award. This award goes to the Series event that combines all of the elements – trails, snow conditions and grooming, atmosphere, and overall event coordination.



Amy Wyman and John Munger receiving the Best Overall Event Award at the Series Banquet. Photo by Mark Lahtinen

“Many things came together to make this award possible,” said Munger. “We just have a great organization – with leaders up and down the line... Rick Budde runs a tight ship for registration. Hal Galvin coordinated the making and distributing of 700 ice luminaries (no small task). His wife Peggy is a fantastic volunteer coordinator. Bill Dossett and Craig Rudd can make a ski course out of seven flakes of snow...The list goes on and on...”

BIG SNOW FOR THE RE-LOPPET TOUR AND PARTY

Over 200 people enjoyed a ski through Theodore Wirth Park and into Uptown this past March. Participants included numerous families, the old and the young, married couples, friends, and serious and casual skiers of all sorts. It was a perfect day for skiing - with two feet of fresh snow and temperatures in the mid-20's.

The Foundation provided pizza and soda at Old Chicago and transportation back to Theodore Wirth Park. Skiers chose their own courses – ranging from 10 kilometers up to the full 30+ kilometer Loppet course.

“We really enjoyed the day,” commented Maree Hampton, who was out skiing with her friend Joanne Guillery.

“This event was designed to get people out to see how wonderful the Loppet trails can be when there is lots of snow,” said Course Director Bill Dossett. “We have had plenty of time to learn about skiing in low-snow conditions, this new snow gave us an opportunity to show off the trails with lots and lots of snow – it was a perfect weekend and it was fun to see families out enjoying the course.”

Putting events like this together on short notice is one of the benefits of having an organization like the Foundation around. Weekends like that one are fleeting. Only a flexible organization with great volunteers and full-time staff can put this type of event together so quickly.



Skiers enjoying the snow during the Re-Loppet

Thanks to the volunteers and participants who helped make the Re-Loppet a magical day. (See Jon Swenson-Tellekson's article on his Re-Loppet adventure).

PROGRAMMING

We now run three youth programs and one adult ski program and we are hoping to expand our youth programming again next year (see article on the Pillsbury Skis Program). Through our programs over 500 Minneapolis area youth have learned to ski. This is a big deal. These are children who would typically not be afforded an opportunity to learn to ski. Through our programs, they learn a lifetime activity, an important tool for living in Minnesota (how to enjoy our winters), and the self-esteem that goes along with (1) mastering a new activity, and (2) having an opportunity to show off new skills in front of a cheering public (at the Minne-Loppet). This self-esteem is not limited to the “good” students. Some of our more successful skiers are the kids with Attention Deficit Disorder or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. Cross country skiing seems to be a perfect fit for these kids as it gives them a positive channel for their energy.

Of course, direct health benefits are equally important. America is facing an obesity epidemic among our youth. Over a 25 year period starting in 1975 overweight and obesity problems among our youth quadrupled. Inner-city and minority youth (the primary population covered by our youth programs) are even more likely to be overweight or obese than their white suburban counterparts. With obesity in youth comes a myriad of health problems, including:

- Significantly greater likelihood of adult obesity, morbidity, and early mortality;
- Significantly higher prevalence of Type-2 diabetes, especially among African-American and Hispanic-American children;
- Higher risk of high blood pressure
- Orthopedic complications (children’s bodies are not meant to carry all that weight);
- Psychological effects and stigma; and
- Sleep apnea.

Of course, our ski programs are not going to solve all of these problems for all of the kids involved. But we believe the programs have significant positive effects. First, the smiling faces of the students tells an important story – these kids are having fun exercising. Too often in



*R.T. Rybak and Bill Dossett
paddling in the Tri-Loppet*

today’s world exercise is a kind of penance – a punishment for eating an extra muffin... By making exercise fun we give the students an opportunity to make activity a permanent part of their lifestyle. Something they want to do – not something they have to do...

Second, we know students in the Bryn Mawr program have gone on to ski on the Anwatina Ski Team (a voluntary after school program). As the years go by we expect to see Bryn Mawr graduates skiing on high school teams across the city (at least one of our “star” Anwatina Ski Team girls is going on to Southwest next year).

The other important benefit of ski programs – that is not found in other physical activity – is the resulting environmental consciousness. Skiing not only takes place outside, but it is only possible to ski when weather conditions fully cooperate. In this way, skiing is different from basketball or football or even running or walking. Once a person is infected with a passion for skiing, a concern for the environment naturally follows. Not all skiers agree that there is a problem with our environment, and they certainly do not agree on the actions that should be taken in response, but all agree that the natural environment is crucial to our sport. Thus, raising young skiers will inevitably mean increasing environmental awareness and concern in the next generation. Increasing this awareness among inner-city youth is important because inner-city youth are not exposed to the same variety of outdoor experiences as kids from suburban homes.

Every year our youth programming is becoming a larger part of our activities. The only problem with this change in focus is funding. In order to further expand our youth programming, we need additional funding to hire coaches, purchase ski equipment, pay

for insurance, coordinate volunteers, transport kids to the Minne-Loppet, and administer the programs, among other things. Membership fees and contributions play a role in maintaining the Foundation but do not cover all of the costs. If you have other funding ideas or know of grants that might apply, please send an email to info@cityoflakesloppet.com.

TRAILS

Ten kilometers of disjointed and often poor trails, marginal grooming with outdated equipment, and, most important, no real concern for cross country skiing generally. That was the state of affairs when we started five years ago.

Now, Theodore Wirth Park is home to a 25 kilometer trail system, with an additional seven kilometers of skiing on the Chain of Lakes, 1.7 kilometers in Cedar Lake Park and a small, but expanding, snowmaking loop. Grooming has significantly improved, with generally consistent grooming with top-notch equipment, including new, quieter, and cleaner, snowmobiles, cutting edge implements and a Pisten Bully snow cat.

Our organization is largely responsible for these changes. We have worked closely with the Park Board to design and add trails. The organization has, in fact, foot the bill for many of the trail changes over the years. We have also put a tremendous amount of sweat equity into the trails; through our Trails Days alone we have put over 1,200 hours of work into making the trails and the park a better place.

Through the Loppet and the letter and phone campaigns we have coordinated on occasion, the Park Board and Park Board commissioners have come to understand that cross country skiing is important to the community and worthy of investment of time and resources.

Though it seems remarkable to some of us in



2006 Luminary Loppet

the ski community, these changes have not come without controversy. Change can be difficult and there are some people who just want the park to themselves. Educating Park Board commissioners about ski trails and their value, writing and coordinating editorials in the paper, attending community meetings and working directly with neighborhood groups on these issues takes countless hours and a coordinated effort. Hopefully we are nearing the end of the

acrimony – but there will probably always be a certain amount of resistance...

EVENTS

This is the part of the organization that needs the least explanation. The Loppet has always been the public face of the Foundation. Over the past few years we have run a number of additional events to raise awareness of, and funds for, our snowmaking efforts. Some of these events – like the Tri-Loppet and Trail Loppet – will hopefully be permanent parts of our repertoire.

Events play a few important roles in the overall organization. One of our goals is to involve more people in outdoor activity, and particularly skiing. Our events serve to highlight the outdoor recreational opportunities that exist in our community. The 2007 Loppet provides a good example. Forecasters were telling people to stay inside and watch television for the weekend because of the cold. Through the Loppet, over 1,000 people showed that outdoor activity was not only possible but could be fun and rewarding – despite the cold.

The Loppet has also been a good leverage tool for our youth programming and trail development activities. For example, we have provided sponsorship opportunities to companies like Rossignol in exchange for ski equipment that we have used for our youth programming. Companies that make ski wax have provided product that we provide to Minneapolis high school ski teams. And the sponsorship and registration fees from the events themselves help pay for the administrative time necessary to run these programs and work on trail development.

The hope is that events like the Tri-Loppet and Trail Loppet will grow in the same way that the Loppet has grown. By spreading costs like office space and administrative time over multiple events the costs become less prohibitive to bear.

FINANCES

As a small non-profit, paying the bills has always been a challenge. But this year the financial situation is worse than ever before. With the new tent at the Loppet this year expenses were higher than ever (between electrical contracting costs, heat and the tent itself, the cost was more than \$15,000!).

That would have been fine had it not been so darn cold that weekend. After several questionable snow years in a row, people were understandably gun-shy about registering early for the Loppet this year. That could have been a good thing – many people registering late at the highest prices. Unfortunately, many of these wait-and-see skiers decided to take a pass this year – not because of the snow conditions



Loppet Volunteer Larry Meyers competing in the Tri-Loppet

(the snow conditions were fine), but because of the extreme cold. Our numbers bear this out. The freestyle event had fewer people than in any year since the first year of the Loppet – with at least 200 fewer people than in any other year. At \$100 each for last-minute registrations, it is easy to see that the cold weather had a profound impact on our finances.

What about sponsorships and all that money raised for snowmaking? Sponsorship revenue has increased a bit each year but costs have increased faster than sponsorship revenue. That would be fine if registrations fees were on an upward trajectory. Unfortunately, weather conditions – be they extreme warmth (2005), lack of snow (2006), or extreme cold (2007) – have not cooperated, and registration fees have actually decreased.

And the money raised for snowmaking is just that – money raised for snowmaking. While the snowmaking fund will reimburse the organization for out-of-pocket expenses, the snowmaking account is devoted to snowmaking – not to the maintenance of our organization.

How bad is it? The organization has no cash reserves and will soon have trouble paying salaries without a significant change in financial position. So what can be done? To survive the organization needs to increase sponsorship (either through cash sponsorships or through non-cash sponsorship of items that would otherwise be expenses (see Foundation Needs)), increase membership and contributions to the organization (rather than to snowmaking), and/or find new grant opportunities. If you have ideas on any of these fronts, please send an email to info@cityoflakeloppet.com or call Executive Director John Munger at 612 604-5331. Membership and contributions are obviously important as well (see Membership and Contribution Form on back page).

Friends continued from page 10,

meet with all nine commissioners and attend multiple Park Board meetings. The work went on through that summer... In the end, the Park Board voted to keep the ski trails but to have the various groups involved meet to discuss a preferred trail overlay plan for the area.

The Trail Overlay group met over the past year. While the Friends and the Neighborhood Association never formally agreed to the new plan, a good workable plan resulted. Despite the Friends' and the Neighborhood Association's continued opposition to all organized skiing in the area, the Park Board voted to adopt the new trail overlay at a meeting on May 2, 2007. Again, without the work of the Foundation and its volunteers, the Park Board would likely have bowed to the pressure of the Friends and the Neighborhood Association.

It is easy to think that sensible ideas like ski trails will always prevail. But the reality is that unless the sensible idea has a champion, the idea making the most noise often prevails.

MOVING FORWARD

The new trail overlay plan represents a good opportunity to finally put this acrimony behind us. The Friends and the Neighborhood Association are full of good people who enjoy Wirth Park for many of the same reasons skiers enjoy Wirth Park.

Much of the initial complaint with the ski trails resulted from a lack of notice to these groups. Now, after a year of discussion and two years of process, no one can say that they have not had an opportunity to be heard.

The hope now is that we can find common ground with these groups. To that end, the Foundation is scheduled to appear before the Neighborhood Association on June 13 at 7 p.m. The idea is to discuss the trails generally, answer questions, talk about the proposed new alignment and about anything else bothering the neighbors. If interested in attending or if you have ideas or concerns, please call John Munger at 612 604-5331.



Theodore Wirth Historical Photograph

JON SWENSON TELLEKSON'S RE-LOPPET STORY

PRE-RE-LOPPET

Some of you may remember the year of my second and last Birkebeiner – 1996 – the hot year, when I finished on Main Street at 47°. Somehow I still improved my time, and was headed for wave 2 the next year. I didn't get there. That was the year I found out I have Multiple Sclerosis. Since then, my longest ski day had gotten progressively shorter, and I was down to 2-3K at a time. (Bear with me, this has a happy ending!)



Jon Swenson Tellekson

When the Loppet got started, I loved the idea of an urban ski race, but by then there was no way I could complete the race. At first I just came out to cheer on my friends, but then started volunteering -- which is a much more interesting way to not ski. I kept volunteering for jobs near the finish line and I never saw much of the course.

When my wife told me of the re-Loppet idea, I thought it was a stroke of genius. The race has had to struggle so much with weather; getting out and just enjoying the trail seemed like a

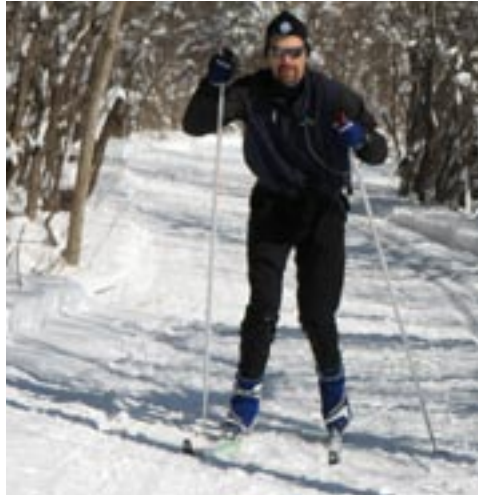


Susan Knutson skiing over Interstate 394

brilliant plan. It even sounded like something that I could do in spurts, since it wasn't a race. So, I got my cousin to ski with me, brought one of those "space-age" blankets, extra clothing and plenty of food and water. Wanting to finish at lunch time, we started earlier than the official time, forgoing the chance to have a guide. I had printed a map, but it only showed the 10K route, not the other trails. After a few wrong turns, we developed a rule for which way to

turn at any fork in the trail:

Look both ways. If there's a big hill, go the other way.



Jon Swenson Tellekson skiing during the Re-Loppet

Our rule served us well. The 10K tour trail is really well laid out for people who want a relaxing ski into Uptown. It was gorgeous! It was a glorious, sunny day with snow clinging to the trees. We had to fight the urge to say something about how much we were enjoying it every five minutes. Skiing over Highway 394 was great -- and I felt sorry for all the people in the cars. We had a great time. We met interesting people along the way, talked, laughed, ate snacks, and I realized that even on race day, the 10K is called a TOUR. It could be this fun and relaxing for everyone! I've been missing out.

We needed only a couple of breaks, found picnic benches along the way, and did not use the blanket until some friends borrowed it at the very end. And I made it... more than 10K!!

This was really good for my soul. Amazingly good.

POST RE-LOPPET:

My wife and I try not to drive very much, understanding that the more we all drive, the less we will all be able to ski. We thought that Highland was the closest trail system to our south Minneapolis home. I was thrilled to discover this amazing trail system at Wirth. It's even closer to work, and we can avoid traffic. Think how much less a lot of people would be driving if they could ski Wirth instead of making the trek to Elm Creek...all the inner-city students who will learn how to ski on these trails... all because of the vision of the ski foundation. Two days later, my wife took me on the hilly section south

of Glenwood Avenue with an understated "it's pretty hilly." WOW! I wish I had known about these hills when I was training for the Birkie. It's been a long time since I skied at Murphy, but I think these hills are more fun. I skied five more times before the snow melted! (5K or more each time.)

LOPPET PHOTOS

Looking for photos from the 2007 City of Lakes Loppet? Celia Davis and Steve Kotvis captured most skiers (see the Loppet's website – www.cityoflakesloppet.com – for links to those pictures). High resolution versions of Celia and Steve's pictures are free to Foundation members (one picture for basic members, three for Premium members). Bruce Adelsman of Skinnyski.com captured photos from both Saturday and Sunday as well. His photos can be found at:

SATURDAY:

<http://www.skinnyski.com/article.asp?Id=7482>

SUNDAY:

<http://www.skinnyski.com/result.asp?Id=7504>

CITY OF LAKES TRI-LOPPET COMING UP...

The second annual City of Lakes Tri-Loppet is set for Saturday, June 23, 2007. Once again, Hoigaard's is coordinating the paddling portion of the event, with Marc Beitz and John Schmidt heading up the run and bike courses, respectively.

With the exception of a crash or two in the bike portion of the event, last year's event was very successful. This year the bike course has been altered in a few ways. First, the suspect wooden bridge, where the crash occurred, is no longer two-way. Outgoing bikers will avoid the bridge by biking around the west side of Wirth Lake before coming back east along the shoulder of Highway 55. In addition, as they approach the wooden bridge bikers will be diverted off the pavement onto a much slower dirt trail. This way, bicyclers will approach the bridge at a slower speed and without having to worry



Start of 2006 Tri-Loppet

about oncoming traffic.

The bike course is different in a few other respects as well. Last year's course had been slated to run on the Minnesota Off-Road Cyclists' single-track trail network (because of rain the course ultimately ran on the ski trails rather than the single track). This year, the course will follow the ski trails whether there is rain or not. The idea is to make a physically challenging course without having undue technical biking. In this way the event will be welcoming to anyone with reasonable fitness.

Along those lines, the bike course includes another new section in the snowmaking loop area behind the Theodore Wirth Chalet. This area is generally wide open but includes some significant ascents and descents. "We're hoping to make a fun course that gives strong bikers a chance without making the biking too difficult from a technical perspective," says John Schmidt, who helped design the course.

TRI-LOPPET SPONSORSHIP IDEAS

One of the problems we have encountered in trying to find sponsors for the Loppet is the limited number of skiers in the community. Once a person participates in a Loppet event they tend to "get it" and are generally happy to sponsor our events.

This is where the Tri-Loppet comes in. Between the paddling, running and biking, the Tri-Loppet has something for everyone. Our hope is that we will have some Tri-Loppet participants who can ultimately help with Loppet sponsorship. (We already have one very good lead that resulted from the 2006 event).

If you know a non-skier who would otherwise be a good Loppet sponsor prospect, please call or email John Munger at director@cityoflakesloppet.com or 612 604-5331. We can arrange for a paddling partner or find some other enticement for the person to try the event.

FOUNDATION NEEDS

The Foundation has a variety of non-cash needs, including:

Electrical contractor/engineer.

- Design-work necessary for the snowmaking area. This is probably not a real big job, but will be necessary to ensure the proper completion of the snowmaking project. Obviously, donated electrical design would be preferable and would save snowmaking funds for other items, like snow-guns, water pipe, and infrastructure.
- Electrical work for Loppet weekend. With the Loppet's new Big Tent configuration, significant funds are expended on an



Start of 2007 Loppet

electrician to hook up to the local power source. This is a good opportunity for an electrical contractor to purchase marketing through the Loppet. The contractor provides the hook-up in exchange for Loppet sponsorship.

Office space. The organization continues to pursue a good office-space solution. Ideally office space would include two to three work stations and storage space. A view is optional... This is another good opportunity for Loppet sponsorship – office space for sponsorship marketing.

Storage space. Currently the organization stores most of its equipment and "stuff" in St. Bonifacius. The space works well except that it is too far away. A single stall in a garage would probably suffice.

Study. We are convinced that teaching youth to cross country ski is strongly associated with better academic performance as well as better fitness, nutrition and a greater appreciation for the outdoors. But we have nothing but anecdotal evidence to support these assertions. We are seeking a student to lead a study of the kids who have learned to ski through our programs versus the kids who did not learn to ski (kids were chosen at random for the ski program). Know a student who might be interested? Have them call or email John Munger at 612 604-5331 or director@cityoflakesloppet.com.

Cellular Phone and Communications. The organization spends considerable money each year on cell phone use and is expecting increased costs for information services. This would be a good opportunity for a communications provider to procure marketing through sponsorship of the Loppet.

Carpentry. The organization is looking at office space options that might involve some carpentry work. Again, a good opportunity for a carpenter to barter for sponsorship marketing.

BEST YEAR EVER FOR CITIZEN SKIER PROGRAM

Led by Tom Anderson and his team of hard-working facilitators, including Steve Casey, Jeff Richards, Sue Richardson, Betsy Hoiium, Chung-Lin Hsu, Lorelee Miller, and Dave Pedersen, among others, more than 30 people participated in the City of Lakes Loppet Citizen Skier Program. The Citizen Skier Program is designed to give beginning- to intermediate-level skiers a place to learn to ski in a non-intimidating environment. Starting in November, participants gather in the Theodore Wirth Chalet one evening per week. A guest speaker talks to participants about subjects ranging from eating to training to technique. Once the guest speaker leaves, the class moves outside and the facilitators lead participants on a ski or a pole hike, depending upon the weather conditions.

Over the past few years, our relatively snowless winters have caused some attrition. Beginning skiers have tended to lose interest during low- or no-snow periods as it is difficult to enjoy week after week of dry-land training with no actual snow.

But this year participation did not dwindle as the year went on. So what was the difference this year? No appreciable snow fell until mid-January. The consensus is that the small artificial snow loop at Theodore Wirth played an important role in retaining participants. While the loop was short, a small loop has some advantages. The group was able to stick together and each participant received plenty of individual attention.

"Obviously, it would have been more fun to have natural snow," commented Anderson, "but just having someplace to ski made a big difference."

While participants have been able to learn the basics of cross country ski technique through the program, the short artificial snow loop has made it difficult to achieve the fitness/confidence necessary to ski longer distances. The goal next year is to have more participants ski in Loppet events and with a longer artificial snow loop skiers should have a greater opportunity to obtain fitness as well as technique help.

To learn more about the Citizen Skier Program, contact Tom Anderson at 612 418-9688.

PROGRESS WITH "FRIENDS" AND NEIGHBORS...

Over the past few years the Nordic Ski Foundation has been struggling with a public relations problem related to South Wirth. South Wirth is the area between Glenwood Avenue and Interstate 394 and between Wirth Parkway and the Bryn Mawr neighborhood.

HISTORY

The problem first arose in the fall of 2004. After skiing a very basic loop through the South Wirth area during the winter of 2003-2004, the Nordic Ski Foundation had three goals for the 2004 off-season: (1) to facilitate youth programs, bring the Park Board's ski trails through the Bryn Mawr Elementary and Anwatin Middle School grounds, (2) avoid the asphalt "Xerxes Hill" section of trail (too narrow, too steep and on asphalt), and (3) better use existing terrain.

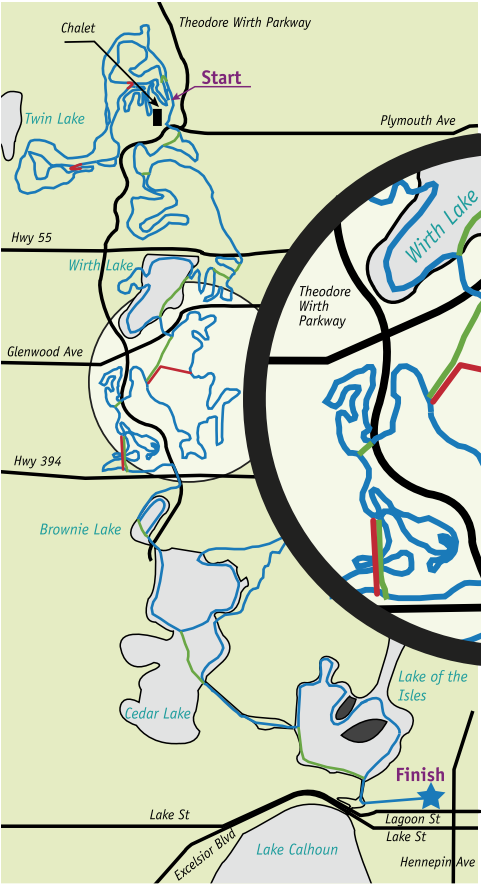
To accomplish these goals the Foundation approached the Park Board and the Minneapolis Public Schools. After meeting with a representative of the Public Schools, the Foundation developed a trail plan for the Bryn Mawr Elementary and Anwatin areas.



2007 Loppet at Theodore Wirth

Park Board staff had an idea for replacing Xerxes Hill by ascending in an eroded area where an asphalt path once lay. The Foundation met with various Park Board staffers, including representatives from the Park Board's Forestry, Environmental and Maintenance Divisions. After examining the area, Park Board staff determined that the area needed to be addressed whether a ski trail was added or not and, accordingly, the Park Board adopted that portion of the project area as their own. To avoid the potential for problems with the nearby Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden, the Environmental staff directed that the trail be kept at least 6' from the Garden fence. The trail that resulted once work was complete was nick-named "Gronquist Hill" – after Park Board groomer John Gronquist – who first identified the new trail section.

With the re-route of Xerxes Hill the Foundation was able to identify other trails that were compatible with the new Gronquist Hill but



had not been compatible with Xerxes Hill. The new trails were dubbed the "Tennis Court Area" because they ran past the tennis courts at the far northeast corner of the South Wirth area. After additional meetings with Park Board staff, a plan was developed to add the various trail segments (Tennis Courts, Gronquist Hill and school ground segments) and work commenced that fall.

The Gronquist Hill segment took the most work. First buckthorn was cleared, then new dirt was added to shore up erosion problems and, finally, a netting structure was put down to allow grass to grow without erosion.

Unfortunately, after this work was completed the Park Board's forestry crew identified several large diseased trees in the area. As per their routine, the forestry crew brought in large vehicles to remove these very large trees. One of the trees was growing on the inside of the Wildflower Garden fence. In order to access that tree the forestry crew drove up and down the newly restored Gronquist Hill, removed the remaining brush between the trail and the fence line, cut the fence open, cut the



tree down and dragged the remains of the tree to the top of the hill. When finished the hillside was essentially denuded of vegetation and looked like a "war zone."

Some time after all of this work was completed members of the Friends of the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden observed Gronquist Hill for the first time. They called the Park Board, demanding to know what had happened and wondering why they were not informed before this (radical-looking) work was performed.

After the initial call, Park Board General Manager Mike Schmidt arranged to visit the area with representatives of the Friends. From the vantage point of his office, he thought it would be easy to fix the problem by moving the ski trails away from the Garden fence. Knowing there would be no easy fix (the hill becomes steeper and steeper the further one travels from the Garden fence), representatives from the Foundation attended the meeting. Once Mr. Schmidt recognized that the problem was not so easily fixed, a decision was put off until the following summer.

The next summer the Friends and the Bryn Mawr Neighborhood Association (groups with many of the same members) demanded that ski trails be removed from South Wirth altogether. Short of that, they wanted Gronquist Hill moved.

IMPORTANCE OF THE FOUNDATION

The Friends and the Neighborhood Association appealed directly to the Park Board Commissioners. Commissioners are paid a small salary to manage this \$55 million operation. They are not well-set-up to make decisions on details like this. They do not have the time or resources to know all of the small issues. Typically, if a group or group voices strong opposition to something, the Park Board tends to bend to the pressure (this is not an indictment of the Park Board – merely a statement of their reality as very part-time politicians).

To combat the steady stream of allegations and (mis)information coming from the Friends and the Neighborhood Association ("The trails are 30' wide denuded swaths..." "All of the animals have been scared from the area..." "Ski trails are incompatible with natural areas..." "Many mature trees were removed to make way for the ski trails...") the Foundation had to

Friends continued on page 7,

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MEMBERSHIPS EXPIRE MAY 30 – TIME TO RENEW

Your membership in the Foundation helps keep skiing thriving in the Twin Cities. The Foundation has ambitious goals: add snowmaking at Wirth Park, expanded youth programming (the Foundation now runs programs at Bryn Mawr, Anwatin, and Andersen Open School in Minneapolis), continues to improve the Loppet trails for better daily skiing and, of course, for the Loppet itself. Like last year, members are entitled to special benefits, including discounts at local ski shops, voting rights at the Foundation's Board Meetings and periodic newsletters like this one.

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP REGISTRATION JUNE 1, 2007 – MAY 30, 2008

Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____
State: _____ Zip code: _____
Phone: _____
Email: _____
Club/affiliation: _____
Birthdate: _____

MEMBERSHIP FEE

Basic Level (Voting rights at annual meeting, 5% discount at Finn Sisu, 10% discount at Gear West)

Individual \$25 \$_____
Family \$40 \$_____

Premium Level (Voting rights at annual meeting, 5% discount at Finn Sisu, 10% discount at Gear West, stone grind and thermo-bag

treatment at Hoigaard's (\$70 value for only \$19.95))

Individual \$50 \$_____
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DONATE TO THE LOPPET FOUNDATION

Trail Development (snowmaking at Wirth Park) \$_____
Youth Programming \$_____
General \$_____
Total Payment \$_____

Note that donations to the Loppet Foundation are tax deductible to the fullest extent provided by law.. Please make checks payable to the City of Lakes Nordic Ski Foundation. (Tax ID # is 41 175 3882)

Please return this form to:

City of Lakes Nordic Ski Foundation
1406 West Lake Street, Suite 207
Minneapolis, MN 55408

Call 612 604-5330 for more information.

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Have an idea for an article? Want to place an advertisement in this publication? Contact Ben Kremer (612 387-2002) or John Munger (612 604-5331).



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