LAPPE NEWSLETTER

Winter 2011/2012

www.lappenordic.ca

LAPPE NORDIC

President's Message
By Werner Schwar

Hello everyone. Hard to believe it is mid-winter already. At least I hope it is mid-winter – 3 months of skiing behind us and hopefully still 3 months ahead until mid-May! Despite the long rock ski season during November and December and the reduced snowfall and warmer temperatures we have been blessed with pretty great conditions compared to many regions of the country. A big "thank you" needs to go out to Pauli Kaki for all his hours shovelling and grooming with the skidoo.

A few weeks ago, Thursday Feb. 9, I was reminded why Lappe Ski Centre is such a great place to ski and the Lappe Nordic Ski Club is such a great club to belong to. We had Jackrabbits and Mini-Midgets doing activities in the stadium at the same time the Junior Racers were doing their regular training session and at the same time the Masters Group was working on technique. Throw in Big Thunder also training in the stadium and you have one dynamic place – one where there is something for everyone.

A big thank you has to go out to our Club volunteers that have run very successful events so far this year including our Christmas party, Boxing Day Classic, Ontario Cup, Lappe Invitational, Valentine's Party and Women on Skis day, as well as Wednesday Night Races. There is still more left to do with the LSSD Championships, 24 hour relay and Run & Ski. Please get out there and join in or offer to help volunteer at an event.

Please come out and join your fellow Lappe Club members at the LSSD Championships this weekend. Enjoy the rest of the winter.

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Big News for Young Athletes: Lappe Midget Ski Team

Starting this spring, young Lappe skiers are welcome to join the FUN and ADVENTUROUS Midget Ski Team. This is for youth having completed the Track Attack program and skills. Spring/summer/fall activities will include treasure hunt orienteering, soccer, paddling, roller-skiing, agility, etc. In winter, you will improve your ski technique, get fit and fast with other ski-loving kids your age, and compete in local and out-of-town races as part of the Lappe Midget Ski Team.

Every youngster who joins this spring will receive a FREE technical training shirt. Racers may order a Lappe race suit, toque and warm-up jacket in September. Your highly qualified and enthusiastic leaders will be Fred Hortis and Werner Schwar; however, other Lappe coaches will be assisting. Look for posters and brochures coming soon. If you are interested, please contact Werner at 344-5554 or wsla@tbaytel.net.

Somppi – The Ups & Downs

By Rod Somppi

As many of you will know, Michael Somppi is racing as a member of the Canadian National Development Team. Michael's skiing roots are at Lappe and then with the National Development Centre (NDC) here in Thunder Bay. Actually, he is currently still a member (in his 5th year) of NDC-Thunder Bay while at the same time experiencing his first year as a member of the National Ski Team.

Michael's first early season races in the NORAM circuit were moderately successful. His results improved as the season progressed to the point that he was offered a spot to represent Canada at the OPA and Scandinavian Cup races in early February, seven races over ten days first in Switzerland, then Latvia, and finally Estonia. Of course, racing seven races in ten days is madness; one must choose which races depending on a number of factors, one of those being how one feels physically at any particular time.

As I (his Dad) write this article, Michael is just arriving in Estonia where a sprint and a 15km classic event will take place. Michael has decided, I believe, to skip the sprint event and save his energy for the distance event. Frankly I am still surprised that he is able to compete at any significant level given the circumstances of the days leading up to Estonia and the busy race schedule prior to that. But at twenty-three, he is young and strong.

In mid-January, Michael raced in selection races at the Callaghan Valley (2010 Olympic Site) near Whistler and then the following weekend in Canmore at the Western Championships (a three-race mini-tour event). The last race was a 15 km pursuit start (based upon results from the previous two days' racing). This race proved to be his best result this season. In his own blog (www.michaelsomppi.blogspot.com) he shares the excitement of his performance, "I found out I also had the 3rd fastest time of the day! Only 8.8 seconds behind the fastest time and 3.8 seconds behind World Cup skier Ivan Babikov."

Michael returned home to Thunder Bay for only a few days, got some rest, and then embarked for Europe with Coach Eric Bailey to join rest of the Canadian contingent racing the OPA tour. His first race in Switzerland was a sprint event. His mental state was good as indicated by comments in an email just prior to the race, "First race is tomorrow and it looks like there are some fast skiers on the start list including world number one Dario Cologna. Should be fun!" In the time trial, he qualified to go on to the heats and ended up placing 20th overall – not bad at all for the first event. His own description of his quarterfinal heat includes the following, "…pushed myself harder. Everyone was together right to the end. One guy fell on the last downhill corner and I lost contact a little bit going over the top of the final climb but managed to pull back somewhat in the finish stretch double pole to pass one other guy and finish 4th in my heat. The guy that won my heat has medaled in the World Cup in a classic sprint before. I'm really happy with how I skied in the heat."

So Michael was "up" and so was I – it was a good start to the European tour. His next race was a 15 km classic interval start event. I expected him to finish somewhere in or near the top 20 as he did in the sprint race. When I checked the results, he was 53rd – I knew something had to have happened, perhaps a fall or an equipment issue. Later that day, I received a very short email from Michael, "Caught a stomach bug and will be out for a few days."

In addition to his being sick, I knew he would be really disappointed about getting sick while away at such an important set of races. What a bummer! I knew he was sick, but how sick was he? How long would it last?

Two days later, I received another email, "Quick update from the Munich airport. We are flying out to Latvia shortly. I'm feeling okay. I'm over the sick part but my stomach still feels a bit off, I'm often light headed and my energy is low. Still hoping I will be able to race in Latvia. Will try skiing tomorrow and see how it goes. Pretty frustrating to come all this way and be sick. There isn't much time to recover before racing again. I was pretty messed up on Saturday after the race. I had no energy, slept a ton, completely emptied my stomach and fainted once that night. At least I'm over the worst now."

So he was on the mend, but would he be able to recover sufficiently to be able race and race competitively in Latvia? Well, that question was answered pretty fast in an email the next day. It included the words, "A few World Cup sprinters are on the start list for tomorrow so it should be a competitive race. Looking forward to it!" Michael raced, qualified for the heats, and finished 20th overall, exactly as he had done in Switzerland. The next day, he competed in the 30 km free technique mass start, avoided crashing in what he describes as the "craziest mass start I have ever done. Guys were super aggressive and there were a ton of crashes and broken poles." He went on to say, "I had a good race today and finished 20th again."

What an up and down emotional roller coaster this racing life is. I marvel at how well Michael, and I'm sure his fellow team mates, are able to cope with the highs and lows of racing. I guess that's some of the mental toughness an athlete must acquire to be successful at the international level.

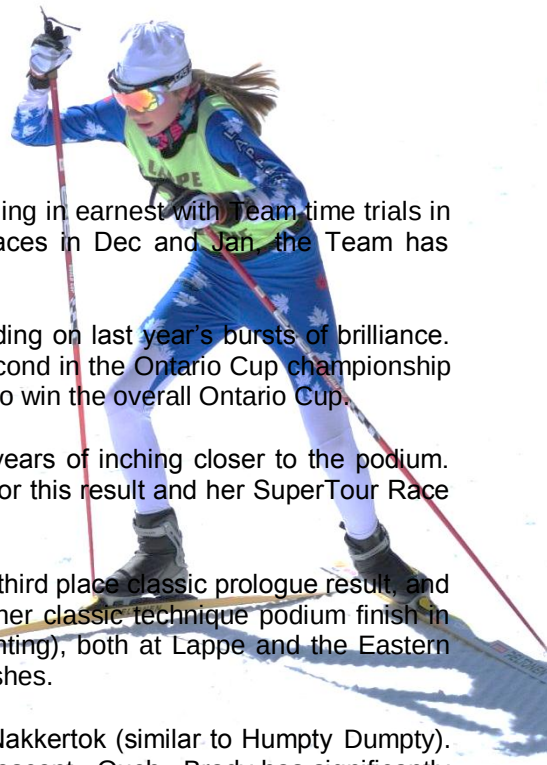
So now, just two days away, Michael will race the 15 km classic event in Estonia. He has planned his strategy and appears to be in good shape for this next challenge as evidenced by his latest email, "I'm gearing up for Sunday and not going to race Saturday. I'm still feeling good, same as in Madona earlier this week. I just need one more day to get mentally prepared to push my limits again."

So now I wait, hoping for Michael's best race ever – just two days to go.

Lappe Trivia!

How well do you know your ski club and ski centre? Test your knowledge with these Lappe trivia questions (answers are on the last page).

1. Who founded the Lappe Jackrabbits and was the first Jackrabbit leader at Lappe?
2. How did "Hil's 15-stitch corner" earn its name?
3. Which (3?) Lappe athletes have raced at the World Senior Championships?
4. Which Lappe supporter was once the Canadian Orienteering Champion and competed for Canada at the World Orienteering Championships?
5. Which Italian Olympic Champion skier broke his thumb at Lappe while training during the Pre-World Championships when he fell on Pilon's downhill?
6. How did "Leena's Leap" get its name?
7. What is the story behind the "Massaro Heartbreak" name?
8. What is the former name for "Humpty Dumpty"?
9. Which 4 Lappe racers have competed at the World Junior Championships?
10. Who was the "Woodpecker's Knoll" named for?



Lappe Racing Team - Winter 2011/2012

By Paul Inkila

The Lappe Racing Team is beyond the midpoint of the race season. We began skiing in earnest with Team time trials in early December…yes, there was enough snow. In addition to the usual local races in Dec and Jan, the Team has competed in 3 Ontario Cups with the following highlights:

- Evan Palmer-Charrette has produced consistent podium level results, building on last year's bursts of brilliance. He is always in the mix for medals in the Junior Boys category. Evan is second in the Ontario Cup championship standings based on 5 races completed to date, and is a definite challenger to win the overall Ontario Cup.

- Katherine Hall won her first Ontario Cup medal at Lappe's event after 8 years of inching closer to the podium. She was named Lakehead University's January Nordic skier of the month for this result and her SuperTour Race results in Minneapolis.

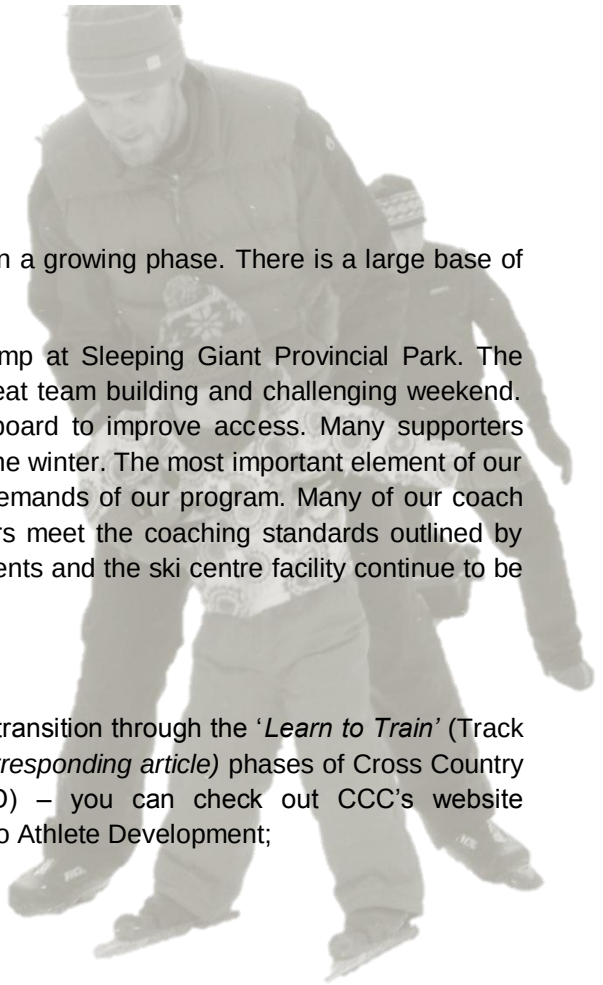
- Laura Inkila surprised the Juvenile Girls field at Lappe's Ontario Cup with a third place classic prologue result, and the second fastest classic sprint qualifier. She followed that up with another classic technique podium finish in Timmins at OCup #3. If not for several spills and wipeouts (at 6 and counting), both at Lappe and the Eastern Championships in Gatineau, there likely would have been more podium finishes.

- Brady Harkonen learned valuable lessons on the infamous Dirk's Dive at Nakkertok (similar to Humpty Dumpty). He was skewered by a pole while following a less competent skier on the descent. Ouch. Brady has significantly improved his classic racing, and is consistently finishing in the middle of the Ontario Juvenile Boys pack. He had his best ever results at OCup #3 in Timmins.

Lappe's racers have one final Ontario Cup in Duntroon Mar 3-4, before the Ski Nationals. The goal is always to peak for the Nationals, which this year are being held at Mont Ste. Anne the last week in March.

Thanks to "distracted" coach Steve Hart for continuing to develop the technical skiing skills of the race team (and those of the old-school coach) while nesting for his and Triin's baby. The work is paying off. Thanks also to Harold Harkonen and Paul Charrette who make things run smoothly while travelling and waxing on the road, taking photos, and video for evaluation.

On to Duntroon….



Welcome to Lappe Jackrabbits

By Fiona McKenna & Stephanie Marler

Our Lappe Jackrabbit Program welcomed 72 participants this year. We are in a growing phase. There is a large base of Bunnies and our wonderful ski moms are producing more as we speak!

In the fall, the Jackrabbit program offered an adventure-based training camp at Sleeping Giant Provincial Park. The children were all smiles as they biked, ran and played together. It was a great team building and challenging weekend. Back at the ski centre, some of our parents modified the equipment cupboard to improve access. Many supporters donated top quality ski equipment that could be borrowed for a small fee for the winter. The most important element of our program is that we have a number of new leaders to meet the increasing demands of our program. Many of our coach leaders upgraded their training this year which means that all of our leaders meet the coaching standards outlined by Cross-Country Canada for Jackrabbit and Track Attack programs. Our ski events and the ski centre facility continue to be among the best in Canada to develop skiing as a way of life.

Some of the ideas we are working on for the future include:

- building on the ability of our program to support Jackrabbits as they transition through the '*Learn to Train'* (Track Attack) and '*Training to Train' (New Midget Racing Program –see corresponding article)* phases of Cross Country Canada's (CCC) Long Term Athlete Development Model (LTAD) – you can check out CCC's website www.cccski.com – click on Development Programs then scroll down to Athlete Development;

- supporting our Jackrabbit Coach Leaders by providing training, structure and undying thanks;
- Improving our program to make it fun and enjoyable for both parents and children.

All of our Coach Leaders are volunteers and we are always looking to increase our numbers. Perhaps next year you would like to participate as an Assistant Leader to one of our groups?

Stephanie and I look forward to skiing and speaking with you over the remainder of the season. We certainly hope to "high five" many of you at the Sleeping Giant Loppet and the 24 Hour Relay.

Athlete Report

By Katherine Hall

Here we find ourselves in the Middle of the race season. Some athletes started racing in early December while others didn't start until the annual Boxing Day Race at Lappe. The annual LSSD Ontario Cup was held at Lappe January 6,7 and 8. 170 racers from across Ontario came out to compete. We had great results, highlighted by seeing Michael Somppi, Katherine Hall, Evan Palmer-Charrette and Laura Inkila on the podium.

After that the Lappe athletes travelled to Ottawa for the Haywood Eastern Canadian Championships at Nakkertok Ski Centre. Nakkertok has challenging trails similar to Lappe's which made it hard for some to stay on their feet! Again, Evan came out of the weekend with great results, breaking into the top 5 in both races.

Michael has spent plenty of time racing at NorAm races out west including Trials at Whistler and Western Canadian Championships in Canmore where his impressive results earned him a spot on the Canadian Team travelling to Europe to race the OPA Tour. The junior team just returned from Timmins, ON for the third Ontario Cup, held at Porcupine Ski Runners. They posted good consistent results and even made a few appearances on the podium again! Next they will travel to Duntroon, ON for the last Ontario Cup to be held at Highlands Nordic.

The big finish is Nationals in mid-March for Ski Nationals at Mt. Ste. Anne Quebec! We are also racing every Wednesday in the Fresh Air Wednesday Night Race Series. Every Wednesday there is a different race with a fun format! Happy Skiing!

How to Survive the Lappe 24 hour Relay – SOLO!

By Becky Puiras

When I moved to Thunder Bay from my hometown of Sudbury, there was no doubt in my mind which place was the best place in town to ski… the Lappe Nordic Ski Centre, of course! I had competed at races there as a junior and knew its reputation for producing top-notch racers, never mind its world-class lit trails, excellent grooming, huge chalet, saunas and Finn pancakes. So I joined the club, got a trail pass and proceeded to enjoy all the benefits of being a member. I immediately fell in love with the many traditions and long-standing races at Lappe, especially the Kilometer board, the Sawdust Run, Run & Ski and of course… the 24 hour Relay.

Wanting to get some good adventure race training in that first year in town, and not really having any clue what I was getting into, I gathered my two pairs of skate skis and my usual adventure racing snacks (very unhealthy) and signed myself up. The first 8 hours went surprisingly well (probably thanks to Leila's homemade blueberry soup... and Marc waxing my skis for me). I felt way too good, which meant I went way too hard. Then I got tired…super tired. The leftovers from the potluck dinner revived me enough to get out there and ski some more until I bonked really hard at about 2 am

and just had to sleep until I could summon the energy to get out there again (I'm sure I'd handle the lack of sleep much better now that I've had kids.. a little caffeine probably would have helped too but as a non-coffee-drinker it didn't really occur to me).

The bacon served at breakfast was the best thing I'd ever eaten... but I didn't really feel decent again until 11 am (with only 1 hour to go). My left elbow was so sore by then that the only technique I could do was offset on one side. I had skated for most of it because classic just felt too slow. My feet and knees were killing me, in spite of my handmade custom orthotics. Nancy Viljakainen saved the day by skiing with me for a few laps at the end and keeping my spirits up.

I was thinking of soloing again this year, to celebrate the 10-year anniversary of my first attempt, but as I am now too pregnant for that to be wise, I decided instead to gather some thoughts, experiences and words of wisdom from the other handful of people whose names are on the solo record board (a few of them more than once, or even twice!). Hopefully this will help you decide whether or not you are ready to take on the 24 hour challenge! The records are still kept at http://lappenordic.ca/24_hour.html if you're interested in seeing them.

This year's relay will introduce some new changes: we will be adding 6-hour event (for those who wish to attend the Kamview Gala which is held the same night) and a 12-hour event (for those who just don't want to be out there all night!). In order to accommodate the Gala, we will also be changing the relay start time from its usual noon start to an 11 am start time (and of course, end time). We hope to see you all out there March 31st and April 1st!

Here are some words of wisdom from Jeff Cameron (who skied 354.6 km in 2005):

Don't:
Don't think about how long you have to go.
Don't try to stay ahead of the kid's teams.
Don't plan on doing well in the Wednesday night race the following week.
Don't accelerate when Reijo tells you you are on pace for 400km with 12 hours to go.
Don't plan anything for the next few days following.

Do:
Do bring with you some extra skis and a wax tech.
Do expect to bonk like you've never bonked before.
Do spend lots of time double poling in the icy fast midnight track.
Do bring lots of food.
Do expect that your overall standing on the kilometer board will improve following this event... but you will lose it all back because you will likely not get out for another ski for a few weeks.

And here are Werner Schwar's Secrets for Soloing the 24 Hour Relay (Werner holds the current Lappe record of 407.8 km in 24 hours, and has skied the relay solo 3 times):

Drink every lap, no matter what.
Eat something every second lap no matter what and have a wide variety of foods from energy bars to pancakes to eggs to bacon and chocolate. You will get weird craving at different times and it is good to be able to satisfy that.
Have a break every 100km to sit down to eat a real and warm meal and stretch.
Do some brain activities such as mathematical or design problems in your head alternating this with turning your brain off and just enjoying the feeling of gliding over the snow.
Finally be at peace with yourself, accept the fact it will be a long day at the office, you will be sore and tired by the end, but always remember it could be worse – you could be working in a cube farm with no windows in front of a computer all day instead.

Here are some thoughts on what it would take to break the world record, from Jeff Lewis who skied 305.3 km at Lappe in 1999. Jeff also attempted to break the world record in Canmore in 2000 when Kamila Horakova set what is believed to be the women's world record of 333 km.

My take is that it is important to do some very, very long training sessions in the fall - like 6 to 8 hours of rollerskiing. Not just for physical acclimatization to those distances but also to dial in your feeding and drinking. I think food is one of the most important aspects to a long solo attempt. You have to figure out what you still find palatable after many hours of exercise and you have to figure out how much you actually need to eat - which is usually a lot more than you expect.

Stopping for any reason is a bad move if you want to break a record. It is shocking how quickly your average pace needs to increase if you even take a 5 minute break every hour. Do the math - that adds up to two full hours of standing still over a 24 hour period. Don't try anything new during the attempt. All equipment has to be tried out ahead of time and kinks worked out. Given that the average speed for the record is currently close to 18 km/hr, in my opinion that rules out classic skiing. The only exception is double poling in flat icy tracks. Having a crew to help with waxing and food prep would be very helpful, although I didn't have either.

The ideal trail in my opinion would be on a frozen lake, on a night with a full moon and no clouds (for visibility). Temperatures should be between -5 and -10 the entire 24 hour period. Hills of any kind kill your average speed and need to be avoided. I know - some argue that hills are necessary to allow you to switch up techniques. I disagree, the trade off in speed it too great (basic physics tells us for the same energy output we lose far more time climbing than we gain on the downhill). However, I would include a short optional loop that has a small hill so when you need to pee you can take that extra loop and pee on the way down to avoid stopping. The trail surface should be at the ice surface with almost all snow removed, then tilled and left to set for several days. It needs to be icy and fast. If someone ever figures out a way to set deep, smooth double tracks directly into ice, that would be the best. The loop should be about 5 km long, which is long enough to avoid the worst boredom but short enough to keep you near your support and food supplies at all times. Best of all would be to have two or three separate loops that connect at a single point.

In my day, the iPod had not yet been invented, but I would definitely use one now, with 24 hours of interesting podcasts to keep the boredom at bay. I listened to the same 45 minute mixed tape for 24 hours. I still know the order of songs by heart, even though I have not seen the tape in years.

Some thoughts from Nancy Viljakainen (who completed the 24 hour event twice, in 2004 and 2005, when she skied 265.9 km which set a new women's record at Lappe that stood for several years):

It's a weird thing to prepare for any kind of 24 hour event. But I do remember asking Werner for advice after the first one I did. He told me to eat and drink every lap and also told me to go in when the breakfast is served and eat the bacon and sausages, (he did say that's probably something you don't often eat) but it will get you through until the end. And he was right, I don't really ever eat that, but I did the last time I did the 24 and it tasted awesome! And I remember Kathy Storozuk brought me chocolate covered coffee beans and they too were awesome.

Over 30 Years of Skiing at Lappe

By Brook Latimer

With the Sleeping Giant Loppet celebrating 35 years, I would like to take a ski down memory lane as well. But my ski takes place at Lappe Ski Centre. Lappe is 33 years old this year and I have skied on the trails almost since its inception. I do admit I really cannot recall exactly how old I was when I started skiing at Lappe, but I believe I was nine or ten years old (I'm sure if I asked Reijo, he would know:)).

What I do recall about my first encounters with Lappe was that it was like traveling to Finland without the long plane ride over the ocean. Back then, the predominant spoken language was Finnish, the music at all the jackrabbit and adult races was Finnish and my best friends were Finnish. I was introduced to the sauna and jumping in the snow, a warm berry juice at races and names like Satu, Kai, Esko, Reijo and Tuija. I loved every minute of it.

Well, that's not entirely true. When I first started skiing at Lappe, the 'chalet' was Reijo's garage. It was one large warm room with a few tables. It suited me well until my early teen years when changing after skiing became important. I and a few other women were not too keen on changing in front of all the guys. So, a women's change room was born. It consisted of a few boards nailed together in the corner of the room with a hook to close the door. We've come a long way ladies with our sauna, showers, three bathrooms and many mirrors. Thank goodness!

When I started skiing it was all classic. Skating was to be introduced a few years down the road, although a few older Finn guys would demonstrate a sort of skate technique in mass starts at Tapiola. Skating style became popular during 1980s.

Allow me a little history here.....The Finnish skier Pauli Siitonen used the style in 1970s as he found the style useful at the middle of the race he already thought was lost. After switching to skating Siitonen managed to win the race, to his surprise. The success of Bill Koch (USA) in the 1982 Cross-country Skiing Championships held in Oslo drew more attention to the skating style. This trend was yet stronger at Seefield's World Championships in 1985. The International Ski Federation (FIS) was confused about these developments. At Seefeld there were some attempts to force competitors to use the traditional style by using plastic walls during the 30 km race. However, later that year the FIS decided to start organising separate races for traditional and skating styles. Separate traditional and free events were already being used in World Championships held in Oberstdorf (1987).

As skating developed into a credible technique, I remember races where organizers would paint green lines in the snow (where to begin skating) and red lines (where to stop skating). This method was typically used on corners. I was skiing on the Canadian National Junior team around this time and they brought the women`s team into a sports lab to test our hips. We were told women could not skate any distance over ten kilometres without damaging our hips. Obviously, this thinking became outdated fairly quickly.

I have to commend Reijo (who has never been a fan of the skating technique) for keeping Lappe trails current. He quickly saw what was happening with the techniques and brought in bulldozers and backhoes to widen the trails and keep us abreast of the changing times. I also have to thank all the volunteers over the years that have helped keep the trails trimmed and in tip top shape summer and winter.

Sometimes I enjoy flipping through old photo albums at my parents' home and looking at how different and how similar things are now from back then. I see pictures of my family in the ski fashion of the time...colourful woolen socks with knickers (or at least that's what the Latimer family thought was fashionable...?) The trails were only located on the west side of today's trail system. There was no stadium, no pond loop, and no Pilon's and the Grunt uphills.

However, other things remain very much the same: Jackrabbit children scattered over the trails on Saturday mornings, the best race organization in the country and hilly, challenging trails.

I have also been there to see the naming of a few key locations on the course. The year Leena took her fall and hurt her knee (Leena’s Leap), when Barry Massaro fell and broke his ski on the biggest hill at Lappe (Massaro’s Heartbreak), and when Reijo’s first grandchild was born (Maaritta’s Loop).

From being dropped off by the Gorham and Ware school bus in Grade 8, to learning to drive from Hillcrest to training with my anxious mother, to being pregnant and skiing the new 7.5 km touring loop, Lappe has been a consistent presence in my life. I hope to keep compiling memories with my family and friends for years to come.

What a Day - Women on Skis Day at Lappe!

By Erin Tribe

Andrea Lee and I headed out to Lappe on Sunday for the second annual Women On Skis Day. The weather was perfect and spirits seemed high and energetic as more than 50 women participated in a full day of ski-specific lessons. We both helped teach intermediate classic and skate lessons after a delicious vegan and gluten-free lunch. The meal was followed by a motivational talk from local Robbi Weldon and the chance to win one of many donated draw prizes. The day’s agenda also included a variety of other elements such as waxing clinics, stretching and equipment rental. Andrea and I also taught a waxing clinic which seemed to clarify a few questions for those who were new to the sport as well as provide a brush up for those who had a bit more experience. It was fun to see participants wanting to try the waxing techniques to improve their skills.

The ski lessons were the best part. Not only did we get to wear colorful leis and handmade pink or blue toques but everyone was so enthusiastic about getting on skis. I love to see people try the sport and this was an opportunity for us to help. The intermediate skate group took the instruction very well and asked a lot of questions to help themselves improve. We were out on the trails for just over an hour and covered every skate technique. Many women continued to ski after the lesson and take advantage of the beautiful day.

Thanks to the volunteers and supporters of the event as the day was a huge success! It is encouraging to see the sport grow throughout the city and have women join in from other sports as well. I think we were able to help everyone see that this is a heart-healthy sport that can be practiced for many years. And it's fun!

Thank you for letting us be a part of it!

Women on Skis Day Recipes (by popular request!)

By Stephanie Marler

Bouillabaisse of Spinach, Potatoes, Chickpeas, and Saffron

Bouillabaisse, which roughly translates into 'boiling hard without stopping,' is a French term applied to a whole family of soups and stews whose ingredients often bear little resemblance to the fish extravaganza so popular in American restaurants. Variations of this simple – and less costly – spinach and potato bouillabaisse are more likely to be prepared in home kitchens throughout Provence and Brittany, particularly during winter when it's too cold to fish. The Bretons, with a nod to their long-time trading partner, India, typically replace the saffron from Spain with curry powder – either way, the results are equally delicious.

MAKES 4 SERVINGS

2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1 cup chopped onion
3 garlic cloves, finely chopped
3 cups vegetable broth, home- made or low-sodium
½ cup dry white wine
1 pound spinach with stems, washed and stems discarded, or 1 (10-ounce) bag of fresh ready-washed spinach leaves, cut into ¼ inch wide strips
1 ½ pounds boiling potatoes, preferably red-skinned, unpeeled, cut into 1 inch pieces

1 bay leaf
Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
1/8 teaspoon of powdered saffron or ½ teaspoon curry powder, or to taste
2 cups cooked chickpeas or 1 (19 ounce) can chickpeas, drained and rinsed
4 thick slices peasant-style bread, lightly toasted (optional)

In a medium stockpot, heat the oil over medium heat. Add the onion and cook, stirring, until lightly browned and fragrant, 5 to 7 minutes. Add the garlic and cook, stirring constantly, for 1 minute. Add the broth and wine; bring to a boil over high heat, stirring and scraping the bottom of the pot to loosen any browned bits. Add half the spinach, the potatoes, bay leaf, salt, and pepper; return to a boil. Reduce the heat to medium and cook, uncovered, until the potatoes are just tender throughout, 12 to 15 minutes.

Stir in the saffron. Add the chickpeas and remaining spinach, stirring well to combine. Bring to a boil over high heat. Immediately remove from the heat, cover, and let stand for 3 minutes. Remove and discard the bay leaf. If using, place a toasted bread slice in the bottom of each of 4 serving bowls. Using a slotted spoon, divide the vegetables evenly among the bowls. Ladle in the broth and serve at once.

ADVANCE PREPARATION. The soup can be help, covered, over very low heat for one hour before serving, but the spinach will lose its bright green color. The soup can be stored, covered, in the refrigerator for up to three days. Reheat over low heat.

PER SERVING

Calories 388 - Protein 21g - Total Fat 9g - Saturated Fat 1g - Cholesterol 0mg - Carbohydrate 54g - Dietary Fiber 7g - Sodium 461mg

Recipe thanks to 'The Mediterranean Vegan Kitchen' by Donna Klein

Fennel, Orange, and Black Olive Salad

Here is a refreshing winter salad when fresh navel oranges are in season and fennel is readily available in most well-stocked supermarkets. If Niçoise, kalamata, or other high-quality black olives can't be found, however, omitting them is preferable to substituting with the tasteless canned California variety.

MAKES 4 TO 6 SERVINGS

2 medium fennel bulbs (about 12 ounces each), trimmed, cored, and coarsely shredded, 2 tablespoons of the feathery leaves reserved
2 large navel oranges, peeled (all white pith removed), cut into thin rounds
½ cup pitted Niçoise or other good-quality black olives, coarsely chopped
5 tablespoons fresh orange juice
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Arrange the fennel, orange rounds, and olives in a shallow serving bowl. In a small bowl, whisk together the orange juice, lemon juice, oil, salt, and pepper until well blended. Add to the fennel mixture, tossing gently yet thoroughly to combine. Cover with plastic wrap and let stand for 20 minutes at room temperature to allow the flavors to blend. Or refrigerate at least 1 hour and serve chilled

Sprinkle the reserved fennel leaves just before serving.

ADVANCE PREPARATION. The salad can be stored covered, in the refrigerator for up to twelve hours. Serve chilled.

PER SERVING

Calories 233 - Protein 3g - Total Fat 15g - Saturated Fat 1g - Cholesterol 0mg - Carbohydrate 25g - Dietary Fiber 7g - Sodium 461mg

Recipe thanks to 'The Mediterranean Vegan Kitchen' by Donna Klein

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Black Bean Brownies

MAKES 16 SERVINGS

1 (15.5 ounce) can black beans, rinsed and drained
3 eggs
3 tablespoons vegetable oil
1/4 cup cocoa powder
1 pinch salt
2 teaspoons of baking powder
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
3/4 cup white sugar
1 teaspoon instant coffee (optional)
1/2 cup milk chocolate chips (optional)

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C). Lightly grease an 8x8 square baking dish.

Combine the black beans, eggs, oil, cocoa powder, salt, baking powder, vanilla extract, sugar, and instant coffee in a food processor; blend until smooth; pour the mixture into the prepared baking dish. Sprinkle the chocolate chips over the top of the mixture.

Bake in the preheated oven until the top is dry and the edges start to pull away from the sides of the pan, about 30 minutes.

PER SERVING
Calories 126 – Fat 5.3g - Cholesterol 40mg

Recipe thanks to Elizabeth on Allrecipes.com

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Whole Wheat Première Moisson bread purchased at Metro

Granola Bars for Hungry Skiers

MAKES 36 SERVINGS

3 cups rolled oats
1 cup chopped nuts *(or substitute sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds, sesame seeds, coconut, dates, etc.)*
1/2 cup raisins *(and/or cranberries)*
1/2 cup wheat germ *(or double the oat bran for wheat-free version)*
1/2 cup sunflower seeds
1/2 cup oat bran
1 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips
1 can sweetened condensed milk
1/2 cup butter, melted

Preheat oven to 325 degrees F. Line a 15 x 10" jellyroll pan with foil. Grease lightly.

In a large mixing bowl, combine all ingredients and mix well. Press evenly into the prepared pan.

Bake 25-30 min or until golden brown. Don't over-bake. Cut into squares when hot.

Cool and remove from pan, peeling away foil. Store loosely covered at room temperature.

Recipe from the xcottawa.ca website several years ago… Adapted to be nut-free for Women on Skis day by Susanna Puiras and Becky Puiras.

Trivia Answers (to questions on page 3):

1. Tuija Puiras. The first year there were over 100 Jackrabbits registered, with more on a waiting list.
2. Hilary Petrus crashed on the corner while skiing on some early snow and cut his forehead on a rock, requiring 15 stitches.
3. Brook Latimer, Tasha Betcherman and Reijo Puiras (as a member of Sudbury's Voima club at the time).
4. Pauli Kaki
5. Silvio Fauner
6. Leena Pesonen went off the jump and flew into the bush, injuring her ACL in the early 1980s.
7. Also in the early '80s, Barry Massaro was out skiing on his brand new Karhu skis for the first time and broke both skis going over the hump on the downhill (which was much bigger at that time than it is now). He was heartbroken about breaking his new skis.
8. Formerly called "The Corkscrew", Humpty Dumpty was re-shaped and re-named for the 2000 Junior Nationals.
9. Brook Latimer, Joey Palinka, Markko Seppanen, and Forest Latimer (in Nordic Combined).
10. Woodpecker's Knoll was named for Terry Koivisto, the woodworker who made all of the signs at Lappe, inside and outside the chalet.

Newsletter Photo credits
Page 1 – Lappe Ski Trails: *by Paul Inkila*
Page 2 – Michael Somppi: *by Mary Tribe*
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Page 4 – Laura Inkila: *by John Sims*
Page 4 & 5 – Jackrabbits: *by Fiona McKenna*
Page 5 – Katherine at Nakkertok: *by Bernard Pigeon*
Pages 6 & 7 – 24 Hr Relay: *by Paul Inkila*
Pages 9-11 – Women on Skis: *by Mary Lee Barry and Becky Puiras*
Page 12 – Valentine's Day treasure hunt: *by Fiona McKenna*