# LAPPE NORDIC SKI CLUB NEWSLETTER- SPRING 2013

## President's Message:

**By Paul Charrette**
*Lappe Nordic Club President*

Hello Lappe Members:

I hope everyone has enjoyed the ski season at Lappe and took advantage of the terrific late-season ski conditions.

As you will see in this issue of the Lappe newsletter the Club had an incredible year with new and expanded programs, exciting events and of course lots of skiing. I encourage you to read the newsletter to learn more about the many programs and activities that occurred at Lappe during the season and about some of the plans for the future.

I would like to give a big thank you to all those that have volunteered at Lappe to ensure that we were able to successfully host the high quality races and events that Lappe has become so well known for. The biggest event of the season was the World Junior/U23 trials and Ontario Cup races that occurred in early January and attracted over 300 top level racers from across Ontario and Canada. This event could not have occurred without a huge effort from a large number of extremely hard working volunteers that shovelled and moved snow onto the race trails. The event resulted in three racers from NDC Thunder Bay qualifying to attend the World Junior and Under-23 Championships in the Czech Republic, including Andy Shields from Lappe. Another event at Lappe that has quickly become one of the highlights of the ski season in Thunder Bay was the *Women On Skis*. The many dedicated volunteers led by Triin Hart and Becky Puiras, staged another popular and fun event. In addition, the event was successful in obtaining a grant from the Women In Sport Encouragement (WISE) fund.

I would also like to thank our new Lappe Head Coach, Kevin Shields, for all his involvement in starting new programs, enhancing many of our other programs and of course working with the racing team. Through his efforts, along with the many volunteer coaches, we have seen an increase in the number of participants in all the programs that the Club offers.

It has been rewarding to see that the efforts of the Club's Board of Directors to enhance and expand the services and programs available to the members have been so successful. We would appreciate any comments or ideas that you may have regarding the services and programs offered by the Club. Finally, I would like to thank all the Club members for your support and I hope that you have a safe and enjoyable summer.

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# Vasaloppet 2013

**By Lynn Crookham and Susan Fabius**
*Lappe Nordic Ski Club Members*

The Vasaloppet is an annual 90 km ski race held in Dalarna, Sweden. It is held the first Sunday of March and is the longest and most attended ski races in the world. Two familiar faces at Lappe skied in this year's Vasaloppet. Check out Susan Fabius and Lynn Crookham's *(mock)* interview with Anderson Cooper to learn all about their experience!

*Tonight on Anderson Cooper 360 on CNN watch for Susan Fabius and Lynn Crookham's interview on their recent epic journey to participate in the world's oldest and longest ski race, The Vasaloppet in Sweden.*

**A.C.** Well ladies, can you explain, why The Vasaloppet?

**L.C.** O.K. About five years ago, I suggested to Sue that we should consider skiing the "real" Vasaloppet in Sweden since we had been racing the Minnesota Vasaloppet on and off for the past ten years.

**S.F**. I could not let Lynn loose on the ski trails in Sweden alone!

**A.C.** So tell me about this race anyway.

**S.F**. This was the 89th Vasaloppet race and it was originally established to commemorate a ski journey that King Vasa took to defend his homeland. It's a 90km classic only race that attracts skiers from all over the world. In fact, this year there was almost 16,000 participants.

**L.C.** We had to register a year in advance with only a three- day window to get in. Next year's race filled up in only ten minutes, as it's the 90th anniversary!

**A.C.** I imagine that there would have to be a little bit of training involved before embarking on such an adventure. How did you prepare for the Vasaloppet?

**L.C.** We contacted our former coach, Eric Bailey, and received a training plan, which really helped us-because we really needed help!

**S.F.** We had to alter the plan due to the cold winter conditions, which forced us to do many long, extremely slow skis and we were unable to fit in double-poling and running workouts. However, we feel that our twice-weekly Pilates classes helped with strengthening our upper bodies.

**A.C.** So tell me about the race. It sounds truly awful!

**S.F.** Well, after a 90km bus ride at 4:00 A.M. we arrived at the start line two hours prior to race time. It was a cold wait but the Vasaloppet cheerleaders led us in a funky mass dance to help keep us warm. Luckily, it was only -4 degrees, not -40!

**L.C.** That was Awesome!!!

**L.C.** It was a perfectly orderly start at 8:00 even though we were in the second last wave with about 14,000 people ahead of us. No one was falling, swearing, breaking poles, or stepping on skis.

**S.F.** But once we got to the first hill, I was horrified to see all 14,000 skiers jammed together shoulder-to-shoulder snaking up to the sky. Thankfully, neither of us fell, broke poles or body parts.

**L.C** I looked up at the hill and remember saying "Holy Moly!!!" It was truly breathtaking! By the time we got to the 3km sign, I checked my watch and that hill took us over an hour to climb, or should I say shuffle, to the top.

**A.C.** Did you stop to eat or drink or rest along the way?

**L.C.** No Anderson, we hammered the entire 90km! No, seriously, we stopped at each of the seven rest stops where they fed us buns, blueberry soup, broth, coffee, Gatorade, and I even saw some guy handing out cups of beer!

**S.F.** We also purchased an Enervit Vaspack consisting of gels, mineral tablets, and protein bars with a sticker we attached to our poles that outlined when and where to consume each item. It was pricey but totally worth it!

**L.C.** Each stop was very crowded and we had to be careful not to lose each other. All of the volunteers as well as the skiers were all so enthusiastic and really happy to be there. We chatted with a few skiers at these stops, in fact, Sue even gave an interview along the way!

**A.C.** So how long did this journey take?

**L.C.** We didn't set any time goals since we were simply happy to be participating in the Big Daddy of all cross-country ski races. But towards the end, all of the skiers we were with were ready to be done.

**S.F.** Throughout the race there was a lot of camaraderie and chatting in Swedish, but at 10km left to go, everyone became silent and focused on getting the job done. Except for Lynn and an 80-year-old dude, who had done the race 42 times, who were having an animated conversation about his past races and his relatives in Vancouver. I have to say, this old guy looked a lot better than I felt at that moment!

**L.C.** The end of the race, of course, was the best! As we got close to the town of Mora, there were candles lining the race course and then we went up a ramp that was lit like the Olympics!!! We crossed under the huge, historic finish line sign that reads: "In the footsteps of our forefathers for the victories of tomorrow". This is more than just a motto; it represents Swedish tradition, the national soul, and a testament to physical and mental strength. Our time was 9 hours and 56 minutes. It was hugely exciting and we mugged for the photographer's camera. That will be a great souvenir.

**S.F.** We would like to thank the Lappe Ski Centre for having such great ski trails to train on and Eric Bailey for his assistance and Cory Berg for his practical information.

**L.C.** We also have appreciated all of the support from our families, friends, and fellow skiers who have encouraged us all winter long, even on the minus 20 days when we wondered why we were doing this!

**S.F L.C.** And to those seriously good-looking SWIX men who waxed our skis for us.

**A.C.** Well congratulations ladies on your accomplishment! What's next?

**S.F.** Summer!

**L.C.** Hmmmmmmm!

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# A Glimpse Into World Cup Racing

**By Michael Somppi**
*Lappe Athlete and National Ski Team Member*

The 2012/13 season was a breakout year for me on the NorAm circuit in Canada. I raced consistently well over the course of the season, claiming 7 podiums and 14 top 5 finishes. I claimed my first NorAm victory on the Lappe ski trails in January and went on to win two more. Based on my NorAm results I was able to secure the NorAm leader spot after Western Canadian Championships. As the NorAm leader I was entitled to start rights in the Period 5 World Cups, which meant I had the opportunity to race all of the historic Scandinavian World Cup events this spring.

Now that you have the background, I can give you a glimpse into racing on the World Cup circuit. The first thing you need to know about World Cup racing is the travel schedule is hectic. Five short days after battling at a NorAm mini-Tour to become NorAm leader I stepped on a plane to Europe. My trip was 25 days in total including travel from and back to Canada. In those 25 days I raced 7 World Cups in 3 different countries and 4 different cities. To handle this schedule well, flexibility is a characteristic you must become accustomed to using. Your normal race weekend routines will be disrupted and your customary racing diet will more than likely be abolished.

The next thing you need to know about World Cup racing is there are fans! At NorAm events everyone at the race site is generally there because they have a job to do. They're helping time the event or they're waxing racer's skis, people don't just show up simply to spectate. That changes when you race World Cups, especially in Scandinavia. There was a moment in one race in particular that really blew me away. I was about to round the corner and start climbing the final pitch to the top of the course in the Holmenkollen 50km when my ears were blasted by Norwegians chanting "SOMPPI SOMPPI SOMPPI". They were camped out on both sides of the course and the thundering chants followed me all the way around the corner and up the climb. When I crested the top of the climb, I took a deep breath and inhaled a thick cloud of smoke from nearby campfires. "So this is what they meant when they said the Holmenkollen is a special race", I thought. The thousands of spectators are what make it so.

The scene is set: your body feels a little heavy from recent travels, you've been forced to alter your regular pre-race routines, your diet has been less than ideal and now you have to block out your surroundings (the fans, the different languages being spoken, the fact that you just bumped into a top Norwegian skier who you will be competing against) to focus on yourself and what lies ahead, a World Cup race. You pass under the Viesmann starting arch and take your start position behind the wand while the TV camera focuses on you. 10 seconds… 5 seconds… 3, 2, 1, GO! You burst through the gate full of adrenaline ready to fight as hard as you can.

Michael in the World Cup Sprint in Lahti, Finland

If it were easy, everyone would do it. Racing on the World Cup is a big challenge. The competition is incredibly fierce and simply overcoming the logistical hurdles can be trying at times. However, challenges are nothing more than walls built for us to climb over. Racing on the World Cup is a challenge I am ready to work to climb past. The fact is I love to ski, I love to race, and I enjoy travel. My best World Cup result to date is 37th and next season I will work to improve upon that result, one step at a time.

# First Winter in Thunder Bay at Lappe!

By Kevin Shields
*Lappe Nordic Head Coach*

When we arrived in Thunder Bay early in December it was not what we had expected. Rather, it was more what we were familiar with - rain, damp and cold... Just like winter in Southern Ontario. Thankfully things improved and we enjoyed a true Nordic winter! Soon enough, summer will arrive and we will be out exploring various training sites in Thunder Bay and the surroundings, but for now I would like to share my TOP 10 Highlights of my first Winter in Thunder Bay @ Lappe.

**1) Track Attack and Midget Camp:** During the school break the Track Attack group and Midget Race Team had a two day ski camp at Lappe. The skiers were great to work with. Like the organizers, they were positive, energetic and inclusive. One of the activities had groups designing an obstacle course in the ski park areas. We had three great courses and the skiers lead and demonstrated their challenging and creative courses.

**2) Women on Skis:** What a great day! (I was familiar with great race events at Lappe and over the winter it was great to get to know the people behind the scenes and see their commitment and dedication). Super participation and the organizers activated many leaders, coaches and volunteers to provide a great day for women to get out on skis. It was wonderful to see how well the club can host a non-race event too.

**3) World Junior and U23 Trials:** This event blew me away! There were so many people out to shovel snow! Lappe is part of a great ski community in Thunder Bay. It was awesome to see two weeks of moving snow by shovel, sled, tarp and loader. And when that was done everyone just dusted of their "work-clothes" and hosted a National Team Trials event. Sure, like nothing to it! (I'm sure many people were fatigued after that event.)

**4) Team Sprint** - Have an idea for a race opportunity for athletes in the community? Lappe Ski Center and the Lappe Ski Club Race Event Team can make that happen! It's not just the big race events they do well. It's the Fresh Air Series, with fun race formats for all ages that encourages participation in racing, and other events too. Thanks to the volunteers that pulled a team sprint event together for athletes preparing for Ski Nationals.

**5) Starry Ski**: The sky in Thunder Bay is so blue and so clear.

**6) Evening Daylight:** More sky and light! The advancing daylight hours through February and March was amazing.

**7) Travis's Crash:** The Midget Team was a fun group to ski with. One night on the downhill on Kiirsti's K, Travis crashed at high speed. He hung in the air for a second, rolled and then came crashing down creating a big puff of snow. After catching back up with the group he said, "It was fun and scary at the same time".

**8) Whistler Trip** - Ski Nationals were in BC at Callaghan Valley / Whistler Olympic Park. What a great venue! And an enjoyable week for the team.

**9) Sleeping Giant Loppet** - It seemed to me that ever one that skis in T-Bay was at this event. It was great to see Jason Garner and many other Jack Rabbit skiers and

families heading out - and returning - smiling and happy in the 8 km event. And after a couple months of Sunday afternoon training sessions with the Get Fit for Sleeping Giant Group it was satisfying to see them heading out with confidence to ski the 20 or 50k loops.

**10) Our Car Starting all winter:** Our car does not have a block heater. On the Boxing Day Classic morning it was the coldest morning yet for the winter. I thought I should test that the car would start okay. It did, which was good. So I thought I would just let it warm-up for a few minutes. I locked the doors and went back inside. I don't have a second car key, but do have a remote door entry "thingy". Not having a second key was not so good. The remote entry devices do not work when the car engine is running.

Well, there are a few highlights of my first winter in Thunder Bay.

Thank you to everyone for welcoming us to Lappe and the athletes for trusting and taking some risks; for the coaches for offering their time and enthusiasm for sport and skiing; the event organizers for their hours of work for others to have fun; and to the club directors for taking a big risk in seeking a professional coach for the club. Thank you. I look forward to returning mid spring to continue. If you know of anyone looking for a 5 acre urban farm in Waterloo Region we have one for sale - we are moving to Thunder Bay!

# Lappe Race Team Update

**By Laura Inkila**
***Club Member, and Race Team Member***

The 2012/2013 ski season flew by so quickly, with many local and out of town races. The season didn't start off too well for Lappe skiers. With very little snow, volunteers poured in many hours of shovelling so we could host World Junior Trials. As a racer I appreciated the many people who came out to help. Our team won multiple medals on our home course.

Laura Inkila's Bronze Medal at Haywood NorAm Trials

A few members of the team then travelled to Sudbury for the Ontario Cup #2. The first race was difficult due to the 20+ cm of snow Sudbury received hours before the race. The snow was deep and tested our herringbone skills. The temperatures then dropped to below -20 for the second race. With threats of cancellation, it was the perfect temperature for Lappe skiers. For a skate long distance race, it was slow and cold.

Kelly Henry leading the charge of the Open Women at the Walken OCup

We then travelled to Ottawa/Gatineau for the Canadian Eastern Championships. This race is held at Nakkertok Ski Center, one of my favourite places to race. The trails and conditions are usually similar to those at Lappe. This year was different; Ottawa

received rain days before the races, making the course icy and waxing was difficult. The last race was a classic distance race and tested the coaches' abilities to wax for icy classic conditions. I knew our coach had gotten the wax when I learned that Lappe was one of the few teams that didn't have to re-wax.

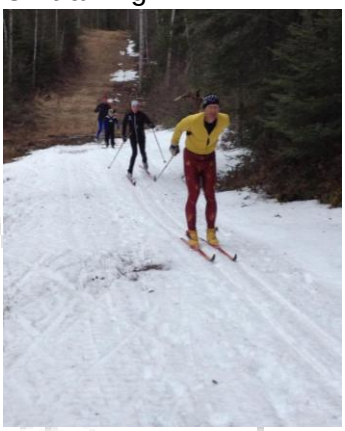
Gavin leads the pack over Dirks Dive at Nakkertok

The last Ontario Cup was at Hardwood Hills. Their trails had many steep up hills and twisty downhill's. Over 500 recreational skiers, racers, officials and coaches were on site for this event.

Between Ontario Cup #4 and Nationals we had a few weeks to recover before heading to Whistler Olympic Park for Nationals.

It was the first time for many members of the team to ski Whistler. The first race was the team sprint relay, in which I did not get to participate. We had one team in Open Men and were very close to making the finals along with the National Team racers. The second race was the Skate Individual Start and with a tricky course our team did well with a few top 30 finishes. The third race was a classic Individual Start. It was a great course for Lappe skiers with many diagonal stride uphill's. The fourth race was only for junior racers and was the sprints. It started off very icy and by the end of the day it was slow and warm. The fifth day of racing was the sprints for the senior athletes. It was a great experience watching the National Team which had just returned from the World Cup Circuit. After spending only a few hours in the sun I had big sunglasses and headband tan lines. The last race was the Long Distance Mass Start Skate race. This was one of best days for Lappe racers at nationals, with 5 athletes in the top 20. The morning conditions were icy and fast, however in the afternoon junior skiers were racing in +21 degree weather. These warm conditions made the trails slow and made itvery difficult to keep yourself hydrated. It was very different experience than what I have ever skied in before.

Now that the snow is ALMOST gone, our high school athletes will be competing in SSSAA biking and track, along with keeping up with our ski training.



Werner and the Midgets prove that the snow is ALMOST gone

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# My Journey on Nordic Skis

**By Larry Bilyk**
*Lappe Nordic Ski Club Member*

This is a story that begins like thousands of others on any single day. How it ends is what makes it a story that I feel is worth sharing with you.

"You have cancer", these are three of the most chilling words that a person can hear. On July 11, 2008, I was told those same words. It was cancer of the oesophagus, to be exact. Prognosis was very poor; treatments were surgery, chemotherapy and radiation, the triumvirate of cancer treatment.

Luckily, the thoracic surgeon was also there that day. She told me I was to have a CT scan in 3 days and we would meet immediately thereafter to discuss treatment. As it turned out, 11 days later, I underwent an eight and a half hour procedure to remove the tumour, half of my stomach and part of my oesophagus. This all seemed like a nightmare.

The morning after my surgery came another blow, even more devastating, if you can believe it. The night before, while I was in recovery, my sister, Nadia (her name means "Hope"), five years my junior, lost her seven year battle with breast cancer. Here I was, in hospital for the next nine days, and there was nothing I could do. I had begun to fight my own battle.

You would think that the weight of all of this tragedy would lead to anxiety and depression. As it turned out, I was angry, and channeling this anger would lead me on a journey that would change my life and that of my family completely.

I spent the next ten weeks at home with the option of staying home an additional ten weeks and then easing myself back to work. That was not going to work for me. After the first ten weeks, I went back to work. I needed to keep myself busy and to continue to interact with my friends at work and not sit, isolated and brooding, at home.

The next three months involved simultaneous chemotherapy injections and radiation treatments. I was told, as a result of the radiation, that there would be scar tissue on my lungs and longer-term potential issues with my heart. This was followed by a short break and then another six weeks of continuous chemotherapy, with a bottle attached to a catheter that would go into my right arm and feed the chemical 24/7.

Then came another complication. As cancer patients are more prone to cardiovascular events, I developed a small clot, where the catheter entered my arm. Now I had to make daily injections of anti-clotting agent under my skin, until the end of my cancer treatments. However, throughout all of this, I had very few side effects, and, astonishingly enough, I never missed a single day of work.

So, where are the Nordic skis, you ask? Is it because everything seemed downhill? The thing about Nordic skiing is, eventually you get to the bottom of a hill and then you have to climb the next one.

February 14th, St. Valentines day, 2009, that was my last day of treatments. I had come to the realization that my family and I had to make some drastic changes. The life in southern Ontario was stressful, congested, hectic, mundane, and not very conducive to good health. We had always loved the outdoors and our son Alex was currently studying forestry at Lakehead University. He was also continuing on to do his Masters in that field and was planning to make his home in Thunder Bay.

A light went on. With the support of my loving family, I started to look for properties and/or homes in the Thunder Bay area. In the MLS listings I found a newer log home on Pike Lake Road that looked promising. If we could purchase a home, our son could live there while doing his studies and we could start the process of finding a way to move to Thunder Bay. Our son went to see the place in Gorham, took some pictures and emailed them back to us with the words "This is the house you've always wanted!". Within a few days, a deal was made and we took possession the very next month.

It would take another two-and-a-half years before my wife, Linda, could get a position with her company, in Thunder Bay. She moved up in December, 2011, but I would not join her until the end of March, 2012, when our home sold, giving up a very good job with Hamilton Health Sciences in the process.

So, here I was in Thunder Bay, spending my time looking for work and sorting out our life here, while Linda settled in with her job and new friends.

Come the fall, I was looking for a physical activity that I enjoyed. I had given up cross-country skiing in Southern Ontario, with my last ski about 15 years ago. It is a sport that I always loved and I even did the Muskoka Loppet back in the late 1970s and early 1980s, when, guess who was winning, a gentleman named Reijo Puiras. We had never met, but I remember his name very well. Little did I know that our paths would cross again.

I looked for the closest club to our home, which turned out to be the Lappe Nordic Ski club! The property was owned by one Reijo Puiras, the very same skier I had encountered 30 years earlier. Talk about coincidence! As you now know, I joined the club and have enjoyed the facility every chance I get. But there was one thing left to do and that was to set myself a goal. Not being one to make things easy, I became the first person to enter into the Sleeping Giant Loppet, 50 km Classic ski event. Maybe I was out of mind at the time, but I figured with regular training, both fitness and technique, and putting in as much time as I could, I at least could make an attempt to complete it. It was the type of goal that would tell me that I was on the right track and that I had come back.

I signed up for the Recreational Technique lessons with Reijo Peltoniemi and Mark Thomas. I needed considerable work on technique, since I had never had any formal training. They were very good at evaluating technique while making it entertaining and enjoyable.

To learn how to train, I signed up with the "Get Fit" program under Kevin Shields. Kevin has been great with his various training methods. He has been excellent at tailoring the training to individuals, recognizing that everyone has different strengths and requirements.

Along with putting in the km's, these two programs were extremely important if I wanted to put myself in a position to achieve my goals. It was not just formal training that was necessary, but relying on the help, experience and advice from the many wonderful friends and acquaintances that I have made by joining the Lappe Nordic Ski Club.

Then came time to test myself. I decided to ski the 30 km Kamview tour. I had trouble with the amount of nutritional intake, but with the help of Marilyn Ailey, who skied the last 15 km with me, and the support and cheering of Werner and Anne Schwar and many more, I managed to complete it. I had learned a lot from that day, mainly that I needed more frequent nutrition and that I would not break any speed records, but that I had a lot of support.

After this ski, it was suggested to me to possibly drop down to a shorter distance for the Sleeping Giant Loppet. Again, with the encouragement of my friends at Lappe and being very determined, I decided to remain

in the 50 km classic ski race. Never lower your goals! If you don't meet them, at least you are true to yourself.

The Sleeping Giant Loppet is a day I will never forget. It was a beautiful sunny, winter day. I hit the wall in the last 12 km, just like everyone else. It slowed me down considerably. I was given encouragement by all of the checkpoint volunteers and by Marianne Stewart, one of the organizers, who skied the last few kilometres with me.

My sister, Nadia, lost her life to cancer those four and a half years ago, but true to her name, she passed on the "Hope" to her older brother and I took it all the way to the finish line at Sibley.

Thank you Lappe!

**Larry at the Terry Fox lookout after a successful 50 km at the Sleeping Giant Loppet!**

# Midget Report

**By Werner Schwar**

*Coach of the Lappe Midget Ski Team*

The Lappe Midget Ski Team has finished its first successful year. Our seven athletes trained three times a week plus raced throughout the whole winter.

The highlight of the season was our trip to Owen Sound at the end of February for the Ontario Midget Championships. Coaches Freddy and Werner drove straight through to Owen Sound from Thunder Bay with all the gear on Thursday, while parents and athletes flew Porter to downtown Toronto on the early Friday morning flight. This was an experience in itself for some, not having been to downtown Toronto before. There Uncle Dave (my brother in-law) met the team in a big van and became the bus driver for the team for the weekend and took everyone up to Owen Sound.

After the team arrived in Owen Sound in the afternoon it was time to ski the course. As all our athletes are still Pee Wee age it was a 3 km loop. Not super big hills but very twisty and turny and up and down, sort of like a roller coaster. I thought it was a fun course, but one you had to attack to go fast on.

On Saturday it was time for the first race in the morning - an individual start skate race in good fresh snow conditions. Then in the afternoon it was a fun skate sprint relay of teams that got made up from the results in the morning, so everyone got to ski with people from across the province. To top off a long day there was a banquet at night.

Sunday was mass start classic races. Not to make waxing easy for us, of course it snows like crazy at 0 degrees a few hours before the race and it was too warm to reset the tracks, so Freddy and I skied them in.

Then it got warmer. I made lots of our athletes nervous with last minute waxing, but in the end most didn't hate me too much and had decent skis.

All our athletes did amazing on the weekend with numerous podium finishes. After cleaning up, Freddy and I drove back to Thunder Bay through the night to arrive home at 8am, just in time for me to go to work. Freddy was amazing driving all the way himself while I dozed in and out of sleep with some pretty big head bobbing. The athletes and parents by contrast went back to southern Ontario and spent the night in Oakville near Toronto and had a night of lounging by the pool. On Monday they got to tour downtown Toronto. This would have been a sight to see - our Lappe kids walking up and down Yonge Street wide eyed at all the people and chaos that is downtown Toronto.

After the Midget Championships we participated in the Sleeping Giant Loppet, the Kamview Classic and the Wednesday Night races. After that the team kept skiing and training together until mid April with some great skis at Lappe and in the back country around Lappe. We officially finished the year with a team feast at Mongo's Grill in mid April.

A great first year, and we are looking forward to next year.

# Lappe Jackrabbits 2012-13 – Hopping Happenings!

**By: Fiona McKenna**
*Lappe Jackrabbit Coordinator*

Remember the heavy spring rains last year? Something in the water after that storm caused a definite swelling of Jackrabbit Program registrations this year. To start, we welcomed 25 Bunnies!
Let me rewind the clock. In the summer, some of our families kept in touch by hiking and biking and crossing paths at campgrounds. Our Boot-Up-Boot-Camp, at Sleeping Giant Provincial Park, gave us a hiking/biking blast of winter in September. This was on the same weekend that many of you were involved in the Miles for the Giant marathon in Thunder Bay- brrrrr!

Our Open House was an uplifting and enthusiastic day. We rented much of our Jackrabbit Ski Equipment to new families. Our season started in November with just the right amount of “dry land” Saturdays. This allowed everyone to get comfortable, make some friends and get ready for snow!

We offered the idea of a Thursday supplemental evening session for all Jackrabbits this year. Up to twenty jackrabbits came out regularly to ski. Some of the parents also participated in the Recreational Technique instructional program or assisted us or simply skied on their own. Even on the very coldest of nights we had fun and howled at the moon! We also witnessed substantial improvements in abilities and fitness in these kids. Some were even involved in the Wednesday night races. A number of children and families contributed to the

Happy Lappe Jackrabbits Ski team at the 24 Hour Relay at Lappe.

Our head coach, Kevin Shields, worked with Stephanie and me to problem solve, plan and mould our activities. Katherine Hall, Program Developer, assisted us with communication and projects, such as the terrain parks and bunny trail. Our Downhill Skills Clinic as well as the hastily-organized March Break JR Ski Camp were also launched this year and will be promoted for parents and coaches with more notice next year.

In 2013-14, we will be adding Track Attack component to the program. This group is intended for children who have attained level 4 skills. We will structure challenges planned throughout the fall, winter and spring. We envision a two year program intended to "turn on" adolescents to skiing as well as to develop of talent and to provide adequate preparation for skiers who may be thinking of progressing to a more intensive Midget Ski racing group. This experience can also help these skiers head into a coaching or officials' role. The Lappe Jackrabbit Program will also have an option for youth who have attained level 4 ski skills who wish to keep skiing with friends, recreationally, on a once per week basis. May we all find ourselves involved in skiing for life, somehow, for as long as we can!

Can you see how important coaching support will be in this program? I invite parents and guardians, friends and other volunteers to invest in club-sponsored, mandatory training for coaches or officials. We cannot provide the ski program without the leaders, waxing volunteers, race officials and project volunteers and board of directors' members. The basic coach training consists of a day in the classroom, followed by two days on snow to work on ski technique. In the end, we need to facilitate play with kids on the snow in order to make the best of winter and to take advantage of the best ski centre in Canada, at Lappe Nordic Ski Centre. Be brave, ski with kids and you'll be happier and fitter for it!

For more information, please contact Fiona McKenna and Stephanie Marler.

# Request for Help!

Greetings!

My name is Konrad Kuhne and I am a 17 year old competitive cross country skier currently living in Labrador City, NL. The aim of this letter is to provide a little background information about myself and why, among many others have decided to make the move to Thunder Bay where I can get closer to other athletes in my situation and get more exposure to the racing circuit.

Coming from a large family of 8, life is always energized in the Kuhne family. Growing up in the suburbs of Toronto, you could say I wasn't much of the "outdoorsy" type of child. Though my extracurricular activities were limited to minor league soccer and the occasional bike ride all of that changed when my father accepted a job with Rio Tinto, taking on a supervisory position at the Iron Ore Company of Canada in Labrador City, NL. With all of our extended family situated throughout Ontario, this was defiantly a giant leap of faith into the unknown. Though moving a large family was a tough decision, my parents felt it would pay off and short term pains would result in long term gains.

Continuing to grow in a small community served many benefits to my lifestyle choices and ultimately is the reason for where I am today. As I worked my way through the Jackrabbit program I discovered a passion for cross country skiing. Though I wasn't competitively racing at that point in time the volunteer jack rabbit and track attack leaders at my local ski club, Menihek Nordic made sure I was getting the safest and best experience possible.

By the time I was 12 I was on a full time program, training roughly 6 days a week, year round. After just getting off a successful season and travelling to races within the province my love for the sport took off and that's when I met the Cross Country NL provincial ski team. Under the guidance of a full set of coaching staff I was able to use this opportunity to soak up vital information I would need for the coming years.

Over the last 6 six years of skiing and racing with cross country NL, my perspective on life is completely different. So many doors have been opened up and I have been blessed with a support crew of people that care for me. I have reached the point where I need to get closer to the competition and with over a dozen races traveled to this year, moving to Thunder Bay only seems like the natural thing to do.

I am passionate about my sport and believe that with perseverance comes success. In moving to Thunder Bay, while finishing my grade 12 high school education my goal is to make a National Development Center (NDC) as well as to get to know the ski community on more of a personal level.

Although I have set goals and expectations for myself, I am put in a dilemma, in terms of trying to find accommodation. Being so far away, contacting people is difficult especially when just moving there. Whether you are a University student, athlete or family in the ski community any help would make a world of difference and I only ask for your support.

Below, I've listed some of my contact information to discuss any details or questions you might have.

I hope to hear from you soon,

Sincerely,

Konrad Kuhne

konrad_kuhne96@hotmail.com

1(709)-944-7222

# A Lifetime of Skiing at Lappe!

| Active Start | FUNdamentals | Learn to Train | Train to Train | Learn to Compete | Train to Compete | Train to Win | Active for LIFE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *0- 6 years* | *6-10/11 years* | *8/9 – 11/12 years* | *10-16 years* | *14-20 years* | *20+ years* | *23 + years* | *Any age!* |
| Fundamental Movement Skills | | Fundamental Sport Skills | | Building Physical and Mental Capacity | | High Performance | Healthy and Active |

## Children's Programs

### Bunny Rabbits
Saturdays
November – March

Goals: Kids get comfortable on skis at an early age by playing on skis with friends!

### Jackrabbits
Saturdays (&Thurs)
November – March

Goals: Kids develop their motor skills and learn to classic and skate ski in a fun, games oriented environment.

## Youth Programs

### Track Attack
Thursday/Saturday
September-April

Goals: To refine basic cross-country ski skills and further develop fundamental movement and fundamental sport skills.

### Midget Racing
Tues/Thurs/Sat
Year Round

Goals: Balanced introduction to racing. Athletes establish an aerobic base and develop speed and strength.

### Active for Life - Youth
Saturdays
November - March

Goals: Adventure based skiing. Will include different focuses throughout the year for improving ability and keeping skiing fun. Different venues may be used!

## Adult Recreational and Competitive Programs

### Elite Racing
Tues/Thurs/Sat
Year Round

Full year training plan and race support from a qualified coaching team as well as 3 team practices per week focussing on technique and fitness.

### Citizen Racing
2 days/wk
Sept-April

Seasonal Training plan plus in town race support from a qualified coaching team as well as 2 team practices per week with focus on technique and fitness.

### Loppet Racing Team
3 days/wk
Year Round

Full year training plan with 3 team practices per week focussing on technique and fitness for Loppet racing!

### Get Fit for Sleeping Giant
Sunday afternoons
On Snow

Weekly on-snow sessions to help you reach your goal of skiing the Sleeping Giant Loppet!

### Recreational Technique
Thursday evenings
On Snow

Weekly classic and skate ski technique sessions!

### Women's Ski!
Sundays afternoons
On Snow

A fun, social, women's ski! Skiers of all abilities welcome! Make new friends, and get ski tips along the way!

LAPPE NORDIC