



KONGSBERGER NEWS

APRIL 2007

CALENDAR ...

Club Meetings. Club meetings are over for the year, so your Tuesday evenings are free now, giving you time to bound up some hills, summer-wax your skis, roller ski long distances, bike an insane number of miles, run through our gorgeous mountains, and build up big strong lungs and legs. See you in October!

Snow-Park Cleanup and Chicken Barbecue. This is the worst of days and the best of days. First we clean up the snow park, where the melting snow reveals just how disgusting our fellow I-90 users can be. Then, to reward ourselves and restore our sense of what's good and right in the world, we get to feast on Kaare Gjolmesli's heavenly chicken barbecue. **This year's event is on Sunday, May 20.** Show up at the cabin at 9:00, wearing your sturdiest boots (it's likely to be muddy and it could well be raining) and your heaviest work gloves (you don't even want to think about what you'll be picking up.) Cabin chief Anna Louise Waerness is offering inside-cabin clean-up as a work option on the same day, if the outside stuff is too wet and cold (or icky) for your tastes. After everything is fresh and clean again, we'll eat. Kaare will provide the chicken (and he promises he has recovered enough from his triple bypass surgery to at least supervise the preparation of the chicken); you bring salads or desserts or something else to go along, and whatever you'd like to drink. (Note: the events committee will meet at the cabin after we're done eating to wrap things up for the year.)

17th of May. Be part of the biggest 17th of May parade in the US and celebrate Norwegian Constitution Day the way they do in the old country! Roller ski, walk, saunter, stroll, or hop skip and jump through the streets of downtown Ballard; with any luck, we'll have a good marching band behind us to provide inspiring parade music. After the parade, we'll gather at my humble Ballard cottage for the annual post-parade party, with hot dogs, cake, aquavit, and more. I'll send out more details soon, but block out your busy calendar now!

Mini-Ordeal Hike. The Mini-Ordeal Hike is scheduled for its usual day, the Fourth of July, which is a Wednesday this year. We'll hike about 18 miles on the Pacific Crest Trail from Stampede Pass to the summit at Snoqualmie, or do it in reverse if you prefer. Joan Nordheim is the coordinator, and details will be forthcoming. This is a great way to celebrate our nation's independence without getting drunk and blowing your fingers off with illegal fireworks.

More Hikes. Just like last year, Jim Lindsey will organize a couple of training hikes to get your legs ready for the big daddy of them all, the 27-mile Ordeal Hike, to be enjoyed later this summer, probably on the hottest, most bug-infested day of the year. Jimmy will post his hiking schedule soon, so drag your trail shoes out of the back of the closet and check your camelbak for leaks.

Trail Work Parties. You spend your days at work, hunched over a keyboard, staring bleary-eyed at your computer screen, when all your inner child wants to do is play in the dirt. Fortunately, your Kongsberger Ski Club is here for you! Trail Chief Jim Slyfield has four weekends picked out for trail work parties this September and October, to give you the chance to move rocks, dig out stumps, cut down trees, dig trenches, and get really dirty and tired, just like when you were a kid. Nothing is more satisfying than that, especially next winter when you ski on our beautiful pristine trails and remember how they got in such good condition. Show up at the cabin around 9:00 with heavy boots and gloves, any big manly tools you have around the house, and your lunch. Your kids, of course, are always welcome; there's plenty of work for every one!

NORWEGIAN BIRKEBEINER ...

Not. For the first time in the race's history, the Norwegian Birkebeiner was canceled, due to gale-force winds. Only the first 3,000 skiers were even able to start the race before it was aborted by race directors. Here is the short version of Per Johnsen's race report; the whole sad story is posted on our website:

"Precisely at 8:30, my wave started and we headed up out of the valley. Conditions were great, and my skis were perfect: three layers of klister topped with 4-5 layers of hard wax. The first food station is about 10k into the race and all was going well. I was feeling good, skiing easy, and arrived well ahead of schedule to that point. A few minutes afterwards, a few skiers met us, heading down. Seemed odd, and one of them said: "*Rennet er avlyst*," (The race is cancelled). No one reacted, thinking that those skiers were just giving up. At the next food stop, a little after 15 k, suddenly the course was blocked by officials and people at the food station. (A friend of ours from Wisconsin, in an earlier wave, didn't understand that the race was stopped. He thought they were being stopped to weigh their packs.) The officials announced that, due to extremely high winds in the mountains, the race was stopped, for the first time in 70 years. We could already feel the wind whipping. What was curious to us was that no fast skiers from Wave 7 were in sight. We found out later that the wave had been held for 30 minutes and then the organizers had decided to cancel. So Wave 6 was the last one to start. Thereby only a quarter of the field got to ski at all.

"The atmosphere suddenly changed, and a creepily quiet race, where no one spoke, turned into a friendly outing, now that everyone had some unusual circumstance to talk about. So, we turned around, and headed back down, each wave having been stopped at about the same time. At the first food stop, the personnel tried to hand us more to drink, but got no takers, and they were stuck with hundreds of liters of XL-1 and no further customers. The tail wind helped and the trip down to the start was ripping fast. Reports later from the mountains were that gale force winds whipped ski poles around and forced skiers to herringbone on the flats to make progress against the wind. The cancellation was the right decision, despite the protests of a few dozen racers who took their bibs off and finished on their own."

Other Kongsbergers who made the trip to Norway include Ozzie Nordheim, Rune Harkestad, Jeff Clarke, Gil Lund, and Gunnar Unneland. Those guys now have a head start on training for next year's race!

HEADLAMP SERIES ...

The eleven-week Marmot/KSC headlamp race series turned out to be a great success, drawing good numbers of skiers up to the cabin every Wednesday night from the beginning of January through mid-March. We skied in all kinds of conditions, from fresh snow to soft slush, in a wide range of temperatures. We even had three bold souls make it up to the cabin before the pass closed one afternoon for a 60-car chain reaction! All told, almost 60 different skiers raced at least once, with the most competitive age groups being the men's 40-49, with 16 racers, and men's 30-39, with ten. Only six women showed up, but hopefully that will improve next year.

The season-ender race was a two-person sprint relay, alternating classic and skating, on a shortened course. We tried to mix up slower and faster skiers, so that slower skiers got to experience the thrill of being farther up in the pack and faster skiers got to practice passing lots of people. It turned out great! We had parent/child teams, husband/wife teams, fast guy/fast guy teams, and a Maserati MC12/VW bus team. Most of us are more long-distance types, and these short intense bursts in the fresh clean air really blew the last bits of winter dust out of our lungs! After the race we had a party in the cabin, and our great series sponsor Marmot Mountain Works handed out all kinds of great prizes.

Thank you to Brent Turner, for realizing there really are plenty of people who think it's a great treat to drive up to Cabin Creek after work to ski in the dark with their headlamps, and to Jon Fewster, who negotiated the series sponsorship with Marmot. Thanks also to webmaster Val Karas, for posting our race reports and result lists every week on the website. We'll do this again next year, so check the website in December for the schedule.

RACE RESULTS ...

Chuckanut 50K. Skiing, running ... it doesn't make any never-mind for Jeff Hashimoto. Barely two weeks after he won the Ozbaldy 50k, he got a jump start on the summer ultrarunning season and headed up to Bellingham for the Chuckanut 50k trail run. Racing in the pouring rain, Jeff finished in 4:27:07, good for sixth place overall, only 17 minutes behind the winner.

Yakima Marathon. And then just a few weeks later it was Carey Gazis' turn, as she conquered the Yakima Marathon in 3:47:43, earning her fifth place in her age group and a ribbon. Carey reported that, although she had forgotten the particular agonies of the last eight miles of a road marathon, she managed to run steadily, pass lots of people toward the end, and take two minutes off her goal time. Carey's summer training is clearly off to a roaring start!

Vancouver Island Loppet. Martin Rosvall came up with a novel way of winning a ski race: first you drive to the race by yourself, since Kent Murdoch's dogs can't make their own dinners or read their own goodnight stories; then you somehow get a stomach virus that prevents you from being able to eat or drink for several days before the race, or even during the race. Then you ski really fast and gap your closest competitors, a Saskatoon biathlete and Vesa Suomalainen, so they can't see your so-called weakness, and next thing you know you've won the race! Martin used this strategy to win the 30k free-style race at Mount Washington in 1:25:14; the biathlete finished in 1:26:32, with Vesa just seconds behind in 1:26:34.

Incidentally, Martin reports that this is the most beautiful race course he has ever skied, although it was hard to appreciate it given how yucky he felt at the time, but you can judge for yourself from his photos:

**US MASTERS ...**

"The mountain, the snow, the atmosphere, David, Kyle, Brent, and all the other great skiers made this trip a great success."

This quote from Martin sums up the Kongsberger experience at the US Masters championships in Bend, Oregon. Kongsbergers sent a strong team of sea-level skiers to the Pluto-like atmosphere at Mount Bachelor, and they came back with lots of shiny medals and good stories. Saturday was classic day, with temperatures in the mid-50's and really wet tracks. Nevertheless, Martin brought his A-game, winning the 30k race handily in 41:40, a little over a minute faster than Subaru Factory Team's Patrick Weaver. Scott Tucker came in second in M3, in 48:37, and Brent Turner continued his excellent year of racing by winning M5, in 50:42. David Lindahl flew in from Vermont for the week, and finished in 51:41, a minute ahead of Bruce Christopherson. In the 10k race, Max Limb came in fourth in M7 in 44:23; Pat Kaald came in fourth in F8 in 1:19:27, and Paul Kaald was fourth in M9 in 57:54.

Below, Scott, Brent and Martin show off the cute little teabags they won. (Thanks to Pat Kaald for the photo.)



On Sunday it snowed heavily for the free-style race, although the sun obligingly came out for the awards ceremony and rewarded racers with spectacular views of Mount Bachelor. In the 30k, Martin spent a little too much time cruising behind the XC Oregon skiers and ended up in third in 1:18:59, barely eight seconds behind Patrick Weaver in 1:18:51 and two minutes behind New Moon's speedy Eric Martin, 1:16:50. Brent came in third in M5 in 1:31:08. David finished in 1:31:24 and Scott in 1:31:45. In the 20k race, Max Limb took second in M7 in 1:10, and Paul finished the 15k in 1:33.

Other local guys who made the trip include Sergei Ivanov (named to the US Masters Team), Kyle Nagle, Erik Brooks, and Tommy Aunan. Except for Pat Kaald, there were no Kongsberger women in attendance. Why is that? Next year the US Masters will be combined with the World Masters in McCall, Idaho, in late February and early March. Maybe some of our strong, fit Kongsberger women should step up and put that on their calendars! The training year starts now (or next month, for sure).

LIFE MEMBERS ...

This winter the Board of Directors bestowed Life Membership status on Ozzie and Joan Nordheim. This is the coolest membership status of all, and recognizes an extremely high level of service to the club and to the Nordic skiing community. The only other Life Members in the club are Kaare and Aase Gjolmesli, so you can see we don't just hand this out frivolously. There is not enough room in all the newsletters in the world to describe all that Ozzie and Joan have done for us and for cross country skiing in general; all we can say here is that, if there is a race somewhere, Ozzie has probably done it and finished competitively; if there is a check to be written or a job to be done around the cabin or in support of a race, Ozzie and Joan have done it; if there is something to be laughed at or enjoyed, Ozzie and Joan are the first to smile. For Ozzie and Joan, there is never a bad day of skiing, and we are lucky indeed to have them in our club!

SOMEONE ELSE SAID ...

"I have found no common prescription for how to train, but the unique part about skiing that has kept me interested is that whether you are an Olympic Champion or a sixth wave skier, everybody is doing the same things to prepare. The volume may differ, the intensity may differ, the skis may be faster, but so often the races are the same distance.

"Whether you start your journey at the age of 5 or 45, take what motivates you and run with it. When working with skiers of all ages and all abilities, we can talk in great detail about training and technique. These tips provide some direction, but it is *doing* that brings satisfaction.

"Winning is great and always keeps you coming back, but it isn't something you can count on. You must enjoy the steps that lead to success. There is no finish line on rainy Tuesday mornings in October. There is no glory in a 30-hour training week. Nobody sees the last interval of the workout that was faster than the first."

Chad Giese, Subaru Factory Team