



KONGSBERGER NEWS MARCH 2007

CALENDAR ...

Club Meetings. The last meeting of the season is Tuesday, April 2, at the Nordic Heritage Museum. This is a good chance to grab those highly coveted race director positions for next year before someone beats you to it!

Coming Soon. Snow-park cleanup and chicken barbecue, 17th of May parade and post-parade party, Tiger Mountain workouts, Jim Lindsey's summer hiking schedule, and trail work parties. Stay tuned for details.

OZBALDY 50K ...

It might be spring in Seattle, but it's still winter in the mountains, and the 56 racers who showed up for the Ozbaldy enjoyed fantastic conditions. Temperatures hovered in the mid-30's, but a high layer of fog blocked the sun and a good solid cold base of snow kept the course in excellent condition throughout the day.

Jeff Hashimoto skied a masterfully paced race to win in 2:13:14, patiently following the two frontrunners in the first couple of laps until they faded and he powered into the lead. Second place went to XC Oregon's Shane Hoelz in 2:17:07, followed by Warren McDermott, from Whitman College, who actually arrived at the start line eight minutes after the race had begun and surged his way into third place, finishing in 2:23:46. After he finished, Jeff skied a cool-down lap and (now pay attention, children!) picked up the used Gu wrappers that he and other skiers had cast off beside the trail, thus earning the feed station crew's undying admiration!

In the women's race, Ginny Price gave her usual strong performance, winning in 2:46:58 and making it look easy. Second place went to Carey Gazis in 3:10:34, followed by Terry Meyer in 3:17:57. Full results are posted on the website.

Many thanks to race directors Dale Bohm and Susie Main, who ran a smooth and crisis-free event, and to chiefs of course Max Limb and Robin Pederson, who designed a route that included Ozbaldy in the first lap, just to give racers something to be thankful for in the next four Ozbaldy-free laps. David Evans was chief of food, providing plenty of chili, bread, and other assorted treats to all the hungry racers, for which we give thanks. Thank you to Jeff McGrew, who handled parking lot duties, and to Jon Fewster, who arranged fabulous deals with our great sponsors and was able to give almost everyone a prize. And thanks also to all the many good-hearted volunteers who came up on race day and helped make the race go so smoothly.

Below from left, race director Susie Main congratulates winner Jeff Hashimoto; Jon Fewster and David Evans congratulate each other after racing neck and neck for the entire 50k and finishing one second apart; and junior assistant chief of course Lollipop Evans ferries supplies out to the feed station. (Thank you to Jennifer Evans for the pictures.)



HANNE AND IVY'S MOST EXCELLENT ADVENTURE ...

"What could you do if you didn't know you couldn't do it?"

Eight-year-olds Hanne Boveng and Ivy Spiegel-Ostrom were out skiing on the Viking loop one afternoon when they spied Martin double poling up Ozbaldy. Their eyes bugged out, their jaws dropped, and they said, "Hey, let's do that too!" And so they did, double poled their little eight-year-old-girl way right up Ozbaldy, not even realizing what an amazing accomplishment that is, which just goes to show you what a little confidence and a good strength-to-weight ratio will do for a girl!

CAREY AND DON'S MOST EXCELLENT ADVENTURE ...

Carey Gazis and Don Brooks made up a two-person team in a local adventure race out of Hyak last month. They snowshoed and skied on cute little adventure skis, and with Don's encyclopedic knowledge of the backcountry of Snoqualmie Pass, they had no need to trouble themselves with such details as compass- or map-reading.

MARTIN'S MOST EXCELLENT ADVENTURE ...

Most of us will probably never know what it feels like to be attacking in the lead pack at the end of a world loppet race like the Vasaloppet. Fortunately, we have Martin Rosvall to describe just what it was like this year, skiing in dismal and trying conditions. He finished in 22nd place in 4:45:54, and here is his race report:

The expected clear sky and -8C in the morning was -0.6C with falling snow when I woke up at 4.30 to eat breakfast. I knew this could happen and I had prepared a pair of skis for just below freezing. However, I assumed the snow was just a local shower and that we would get hard tracks after just a couple of kilometers. This was wrong, and it was a mistake to use soft kick wax...

My only chance was to stay far down in the giant group that was formed in the very slow conditions. In this way, and by only double poling, I could avoid ice in the kick wax and skis that just stopped. The real problems started when I tried to get a better position when the first attacks came --- it was impossible. We were all skiing on a long band in one or two tracks (there are 4-6 in total), and untouched tracks were incredibly slow. I decided to stay calm and wait for the hard tracks (which never came).

There were two major attacks in the front of the group, but by the inertia of the many skiers in front of me I could hardly notice any change of speed. Frustrated, but very fresh, I could suddenly and very unexpectedly see the snowmobile in the front of the group 20k before the finish. They had more or less stopped in the ridiculously slow snow-- and I got a second chance. With some luck I managed to get a decent position before the final attack --- now in faster tracks because of more "Sunday skiers" closer to the finish in Mora. When the attack came we were all again skiing on a long stretched band, but I managed to advance position by position by short visits in the slower tracks until the gap to the next skier was too long to try to fill. We then formed a small group of about 10 skiers and my goal was to win this competition in the competition. Unfortunately I was too pending when an attack came 500 meters before the finish and finished third in the group.

The final result is good, but it feels very strange to have skied max speed only about 10 minutes in an almost 5 hours long race --- and be "too" fresh after the race.

RACE RESULTS ...

Chicks on Sticks. Check out the results for this year's all-women Chicks on Sticks race in Leavenworth: right there in the middle of all the 30-somethings and 40-somethings is our own Ivy Spiegel-Ostrom, nine-and-under, finishing the 8k race in 29:51 and 15th overall. It was her first race at that distance, and Marcy skied with her as an untimed skier to provide moral support. Governor Christine Gregoire was the official starter for this race, the proceeds of which went to breast cancer research. Go, Ivy!

Race of the Methow. Meanwhile, over in the Methow, Brent Turner used his Wednesday night race training and well-waxed skis to turn in a smokin' hot time in the 10k classic race, finishing fourth overall behind two MJ1's and Laura McCabe in 40:09. Several other Kongsbergers also headed over the mountains for that race, including Kent Murdoch (40:56), Jeff Clarke (41:34 and second in the MM5/MM6), Robert Hardwick (43:44), Dan Weinstein (51:28), Jim Slyfield (55:38), and Elizabeth Bailey (1:08:21). Evan Turner finished the 5k in 20:13.

Boulder Mountain Tour. The 32k Boulder Mountain Tour boasted of fast conditions this year (from the website: "The track was hard and perfect from start to finish and a strong tailwind contributed to blistering fast times."), although Kongsbergers who went said it has been faster before. Nevertheless, Kent Murdoch finished in 1:16:28, good for fourth in his age group and 37th overall. Also racing were Brian Dumais (1:23:10), Kevin Hinckley (1:27:44), and Robert Hardwick (1:30:33).

Canadian Masters Downhill Championships. Anyone who has skied with Volker Elste and lived to tell the tale knows he is a crazy downhill-skiin' maniac, and he proved it last month with a fifth place overall finish in the masters downhill championships at Silver Star. Volker hit speeds of 103 km/hour (that's almost 62 miles an hour for you gringos, and is obviously way too fast to be safe!) and held a good line all the way down. It was a strong field, with plenty of ex-national team racers participating. Last year, in the team event, the senior stud scored a silver medal.



Methow Rendezvous. Kongsbergers gave a good showing in the Methow Rendezvous, as Ginny Price (1:49:21) and Terry Wolber (2:11:26) came in first and second in FM5/FM6, Per Johnsen (1:47:53) won the MM7/MM8 age group and Max Limb (1:54:45) came in third, and Jeff Clarke (1:35:44) earned a second place in MM5/MM6. Other Kongsbergers racing include Jeff Eustis (1:56:04), Gil Lund (2:12:26), Ted Young (2:13:45), and Robin Pederson (2:47:11).

American Birkebeiner. Per and Sandy Johnsen probably wish they could have carried a truckload of our great snow with them to Wisconsin. Conditions were so pitiful there that only 250 elite skiers were timed in this year's event, to preserve the meager amounts of snow. Everyone else skied 25k, instead of the full distance, and received an untimed certificate of participation. Doug Holtan and Tom Lenchek also participated, as well as local guys Jim Kelley, Andy Kindig, and Wednesday night regular Kyle Nagle.

Tour of Anchorage. Brent and Evan Turner and several other Kongsbergers headed up to Anchorage, along with 2,000 other skiers, and turned in some excellent results. Evan finished fourth out of 53 in the 25k race, eighth overall and just a couple of minutes out of first place, which was especially impressive given that he was in the third wave and didn't have anyone to race against. Brent then tackled the 50k freestyle and had another smokin' hot race, coming in second in his age group in 2:53:07. After the race, the Turner boys took in the cultural sights, including the start of the Iditarod sled-dog race and a 350-pound halibut, dead, displayed in the Iditarod headquarters. June Lindsey's shiny new titanium knees carried her to a first place finish in the 70-74 age group 25k classic race, in 3:00, and Berit Flora came in second in the 60-64 age group in the 40k freestyle race in 2:53:39. In the 50k freestyle, Sam Flora won the 65-69 age group in 3:31 and Jim Lindsey won the 70-74 age group in 3:53. Congratulations, everyone!

Meanwhile, back in the Methow, Boo cruised through the 70k Tour of the Methow, which she highly recommends to skiers not intimate with the wearing of race bibs, and, over the course of the winter, managed to ski on every trail in the Methow system, many of them more than once!

World Masters Cup. A small contingent of Kongsbergers made the long trip to Rovaniemi, Finland, for the World Masters this year. In race 1, Ozzie Nordheim picked up a fourth place in his age group in the 15k classic (1:04:02), while Paul Kaald finished in 23rd in 1:30:11. Bert Larsson came in third in the 10k classic (M11) in 51:24. In race 2, Ozzie earned a seventh place in the 10k classic in 35:25, with Paul in 30th in 52:03. Bert got another third in the 5k classic, in 26:03. In race 2 freestyle, Kent Murdoch came in 11th in 27:10. In the 4x5km relays, Kent's team took fifth in M04, and Ozzie's was seventh in M07. In race 3, 45k freestyle, Kent was 14th overall, in 2:02:40. In race 3, 15k classic, Bert came in third in M11 in 1:15:00, and in the 30k classic, Paul was 21st in M09 in 2:18:29. Ozzie had a good time in this race, but was disqualified for not staying in the right lane for the first 100 meters—that's unfortunate! By the way, many Kongsbergers know Trina Hosmer; she was on the very first women's US Olympic cross country ski team and now lives in Vermont. Now age 70, she medaled in every single race she entered at the world masters, for heaven's sake!

Vasaloppet. Martin's report described the conditions at the pointy end of the pack, but it was even more difficult for those farther back, where tracks were nonexistent and skis prone to icing. Vasaloppet organizers reported that an unusual number of racers dropped out, but not Gil Lund—he toughed it out to the very end, and finished in 9:21.

RACE VOLUNTEERS ...

Now that another race season is successfully behind us, I had originally planned to try to individually recognize each volunteer who helped out with our races. However, I quickly realized that for sure I would miss someone, then that person would feel slighted and I would feel bad and there would be a certain awkwardness between us the next time we met. So instead, I'm putting the burden back on you. You know if you gave up some of your valuable time or contributed your special skills this winter to do whatever needed doing in order to have our races run smoothly and efficiently, and you are very appreciated by all our club members and all the racers who showed up this winter. Every single one of you, from the biggest race director to the smallest bell ringer, is important. Thank you all, and have a great summer!



MARTIN SCHOOL ...

More than 25 eager Kongsbergers gathered in the stadium area on a sunny Sunday afternoon last month for a chance to learn the very latest in the art and science of double poling from master double poler Martin Rosvall. Martin explained why the technique has changed from earlier years, and used his training as a scientist to break down the method into understandable pieces that benefited both relative rookies and regular medal winners. Then we moved onto the Berg loop to put theory into practice, using our strong upper bodies to power our way up the hills. Martin also threw in a free waxing lesson, suggesting that many of us wax too short and then, when we slip, add warmer wax, which only makes our skis slower. Instead, we should try extending the wax pocket, at least for the first layer or two, then make each additional layer a little shorter than the previous one.

Martin is off to Sweden for a couple of big races in February and early March. While he is gone, those of us who attended the clinic can practice practice practice our new technique and use this time to think of some additional questions. He will offer a follow-up clinic when he returns, to iron out those last little details that prevent us from flying over the snow like a rocket!

CABIN MEMBERS ...

If you've been to the cabin recently, you may have noticed the new door to the two smaller sleeping rooms upstairs, with the words "Cabin Members Only." You might wonder, "What's this all about? And what's a cabin member anyway?" For those of you who maybe haven't read the by-laws lately, here is a little background information. Each member of the club constitutes a family, and a family may consist of one person, or one person and a spouse or (not and) a significant other, and any dependent children. One family = one member = one vote. At last count, we had about 85 members, which of course is equivalent to many more individuals, which of course can lead to a crowded cabin on some occasions!

Among those 85 members, about 20 are cabin members; these are members who have paid an additional, not insignificant fee and are essentially the owners of the cabin. Most of the cabin members are old-timers who have given, over the years, and continue to give a great deal of time and manual labor to making the cabin comfortable and safe and functional. It seems only fair that those members should always be able to have a place to drop their packs when they come up to the cabin, and a bed to sleep in when they want to stay overnight. So the new cabin-members-only designation just makes sure those members will never be crowded out of the cabin. It is never meant to be exclusionary or divisive; our club members are far too nice for that! It just means that, when you come up to the cabin, use the larger main sleeping room first, whether you're there for the day or for overnight. If the main room fills up, and there is room available in the cabin members room, the cabin members welcome you to share their space. This way, there is room for everyone!

SOMEONE ELSE SAID ...

"The people who interest me even more, though, are the racers, the people who, however slow, are trying to go as fast as they can and not worry about keeping the pain at bay. What masters runner would race the hundred-meter dash year after year if he always came in near last? All he'd prove is that he was slow. But in a race that lasts long enough for will to become as important as physiology or training, you can win or lose as easily in the middle of the pack as at the front. You can win or lose a dozen times; if you wimp out on the first lap, you can step up on the third. There are as many dreams, triumphs and desolations among the mediocre endurance athletes as among the stars. It's the closest thing sports offers to a democracy."

Bill McKibben, Long Distance

