



## KONGSBERGER NEWS

### SEPTEMBER 2006

#### CALENDAR ...

*Club Meetings.* Leaves are turning colors, the evenings are cooler, and it's time for monthly club meetings to start up again. The first Tuesday of every month, starting with October 3, we'll look for you at the Nordic Heritage Museum at 7:00 pm. This is your chance to find out where you can help with the club's races and to make any suggestions or comments. See you there!

*Women's Weekend.* **DATE CHANGE** ... October 7 and 8. On the agenda: mountain biking, eating, hiking, eating, laughing, sleeping, eating. Berit will prepare her fabulous baked salmon, and all the rest of us will bring delicious salads, appetizers or desserts. Please RSVP to Debbie to let me know you're coming and what you can bring. Show up at noon on Saturday if you want to participate in Saturday's activities; otherwise, join us for dinner that evening and stay over. Breakfast will be provided, but bring your own lunch, snacks, bubble bath, Champagne, and whatever else you need to really rough it at our cozy little cabin in the woods.

#### JOYS OF TRAIL WORK ...

Trail chief Jim Slyfield had 23 souls show up for his trail work party of the fall – that's a great turnout, and thank you to everyone who came! Jim reports that the main trail system is in really good shape now, but that doesn't mean you've missed your chance to do your share; there is plenty of work still to be done before the snow starts falling. Jim has scheduled several more trail work parties to focus on Amabilis (if you feel like hacking at trees and bushes) and the main trails (if you're more inclined to dig out the remaining big rocks that grab at Ruben's groomer). Notice also: in the last work session, several members brought their children, who were a very welcome and enthusiastic addition to the effort. Jim can find plenty of work to keep your kids busy, so pack up the car with your little skiers, your lunch and your biggest tools, and join us at the cabin this fall! Remaining trail work dates: September 23 and 24 (note: Events Committee meets on the 24th at the cabin after the trail work), October 14 and 15, October 28 and 29.



#### OFF SEASON TRAINING...

Many Kongsbergers are using these beautiful long summer days to get in some serious training before winter returns.

*Triathlon.* Lisa Newton made a big splash in the Danskin women's triathlon at Lake Washington, her strong swim pushing her to a 1:26 finish. That turned out to be good for 33rd out of 516 in her age group and 187th out of 3,966 overall.

*Ultrarunning.* The Gray Rock 50k, in the Cowiche Mountains west of Yakima, bills itself as the hardest little ultra in Washington, and if temperatures in the mid-80's and 6000 feet of elevation gain qualify as hard, then it is! Nevertheless, Jeff Hashimoto and Carey Gazis rocked the course. Jeff finished first in just over five hours, taking almost two hours off the previous course record, and Carey won the women's race, finishing in about 7:30. Nervous about the heat and the strict time cut-offs, your humble editor opted for the 25k. This is a very fun and challenging ultra, only in its second year, with excellent support, beautiful scenery and very few participants (ten runners in the 50k, six in the 25k), so put it on your calendar for next year.

Carey barely had time to cool down before she headed for the rugged Cle Elum 50k, which she polished off in 7:03. That was good enough for second in her age group, which earned her a ribbon and a hat that says "Run like a girl." Lots of us want to run like Carey!

*Whitewater Kayaking.* Boo Turner continued to hone her upper body strength this summer, with a first place finish in the women's race at the Washington Kayak Club Salmon Le Sac race on Salmon Le Sac and another win in the US Age Group Nationals on the Snoqualmie River.

## ROCK HARD QUADS HIKE...

Jim Lindsey promised rock hard quads to anyone who participated in his second pre-Ordeal training hike, and four candidates joined him at the Pratt Lake trailhead off the Denny Creek exit: Jon Fewster, Koll Hagen, Joy Blakeslee, and your humble editor. After a mile or two in the forest, we turned right and began the steep ascent of Granite Mountain. The first couple of miles were sweltering in the forest, then we broke out above the tree line into a splendid field of boulders, with incredible vistas all around. A last scramble up a steep rock slope brought us to the lookout, where we chatted with the lucky forest service intern who was working there, wolfed down a powerbar, and admired the 360-degree views of most of the western hemisphere.

We headed back down to the intersection with the Pratt Lake trail, where we found Pat and Paul Kaald, on their way to Pratt Lake. The trail meanders gently upwards for a number of miles, then branches down to several pretty little alpine lakes. At that point Jon turned around and headed back and the rest of us pushed onward. We walked by several lakes, then stopped at Mason Lake to dabble our toes and eat a snack. Most of us were running short of water by now, but Jimmy miraculously still had a full bottle, which he kindly shared with us (probably out of fear of having to carry our sorry carcasses back to the car).



Then we headed down the trail to Koll's car, waiting for us at the Mason Lake trailhead parking lot. From there, we picked up our own cars back at Denny Creek, then reconvened at the Dairy Freeze in North Bend for rejuvenating root beer floats and french fries. Another successful seven-hour training day in the books, with no injuries, no bee stings, and lots of scintillating conversations and gorgeous views to fill our brains.

## ORDEAL HIKE

*"We have no sweep, no way to rescue the lame and none of us know first aid."*

With this sunny, optimistic sentiment, hike organizer Jim Lindsey announced this year's Ordeal Hike, so perhaps it's no wonder our numbers were fewer than normal and there were several new faces along. It was a gorgeous day, though, perfect for a long ramble in the mountains: temperatures in the mid-70's, sunshine, a refreshing cool breeze, and no bugs.

The nice thing about the Ordeal Hike course is that there is something for just about everyone, regardless of how far or how strenuously you want to travel. This year we had several different groups with a multitude of different goals. Jimmy led the Alpental-to-Lake-Kachess group, accompanied by Per Johnsen, Sergei Ivanov and Eric Brooks. Mona Deprey set a blistering pace for Koll Hagen and Paul Karas on the Kachess-to-Alpental route before she finally sped off and left them to their own devices. Robyn Pederson took the Artist's Trip, hiking into the Joe Lake overlook with her paintbox and sketch pad. Ozzie and Joan Nordheim and Val Karas did the Gentlemen's Tour, getting a more leisurely start out of Alpental and hiking to the Joe Lake overlook and back. Pat and Paul Kaald chose the Mini-Gentlemen's Tour, to Ridge Lake and back, and your humble editor went for the Extended Gentlemen's Tour, hiking from Alpental to almost the Chimakum Gap, where I met up with Koll and Paul and turned around. We joined Val and Joan at the overlook and found Ozzie and Pat and Paul at Ridge Lake, then everyone made their way back to the parking lot at their own speed. Everyone finished before dark, in good spirits and without injury or distress. Ozzie even got to witness a llama vs horse encounter, which evidently the horses won.



We finished off the day with dinner at the Pancake House, where we found Kaare and Aase Gjolmesli, on their way home from five days of backpacking in the Enchantments. The Nordheims, Karases and I then spent the night at the cabin, indulging in Czech beer, cognac and cookies, and cooled down the next day with mountain biking (Ozzie, Joan and I) and swimming (Val and Paul). Lots of Kongsbergers out in the mountains this weekend, filling their lungs with good clean air and their muscles with new mitochondria ... ski season is just around the corner!

## THE BELLINGHAM TRAVERSE ...

Not content with a simple little trail run, our one-man adventure team Jon Fewster headed up north for the Bellingham Traverse and filed this man-on-the-spot report:

This was a multi-sport race: six miles of road running, seven miles of mountain biking, 17 miles of road biking, four miles of trail running, five miles of kayaking, and a half-mile sprint.

I did this race several years ago and knew it was tough. I went out hard on the run, finishing second soloist, fourth overall in 36 minutes, then hopped on the mountain bike. The mountain bike was extremely hard with steep climbs, technical drops, 180-degree switchbacks and constant change of speed. Not having practiced the course in three years, I was suffering and got caught by some, especially by some teams.



The MTB to road bike transition was chaos, but I quickly got rolling on the road bike. During the two bike legs, my calves were cramping up, which worried me. The last half of the bike, I was working with a group of people. (The Bellingham Traverse is a community benefit event simulating the migration of Salmon, so cooperation is an intrinsic part of the event. Thus, drafting is allowed.) Because of trading leads on the bike, I was going quite hard. Hopping off the bike and attempting to get into my running shoes proved difficult, as one of my calves totally cramped, leaving me screaming in pain and barely able to move. Thanks to my support crew, I was able to get my running shoes on and start to hobble onto the trail run.

I had visions of cramping up, falling over a log and having to crawl the next four miles...but luckily my calves began to loosen a bit. I managed to lengthen my stride and head toward the ocean for the kayak. I was getting close when I was caught at a train crossing. A freight train was in my way! I lost only 30 seconds, but some other runners had lost more time.

There was lots of help at the run-kayak transition so I was able to get my boat put in easily and start paddling. I kept pushing my heels down to keep my calves OK. It was nice to use the upper body for once, and I started catching some other kayakers. One two-person team in a tandem kayak asked if I was OK. I had ridden the road bike with the guy and they saw me rolling in pain at the bike-run transition. I passed them and kept going. I saw a solo competitor on a surf ski ahead and managed to hunt him down. Just before I reached him he fell over. He got himself back on and was paddling when I passed him. Apparently he was cramping pretty badly as well. My support crew reported that he had had the same cramping-in-pain experience on the bike-run transition. I was excited to pass him. Only a single team paddler passed me on the kayak. On reaching the shore, helpers stopped my boat and I tried to get out. I totally stumbled over the logs on the beach-- I must have looked pathetic. My legs were really stiff and all I could think was "DON'T CRAMP!" I climbed the hill from the shore in very short steps, worried that I was going to get caught from behind. My calves kept twinging, but I kept moving forward. My sister (in from NYC for the weekend) yelled lots of encouragement. I was glad to see the finish line getting closer. The finish banner was right at the Bellingham Saturday Market, so there were lots of people there as I crossed the line.



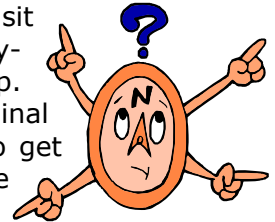
I was the third soloist to finish, eight minutes behind the first soloist! It took me three hours and fifteen minutes to cover the whole course. Only nine teams finished ahead of me, so I was 12th overall out of 107 total teams and individuals. I was very glad to have been able to work through such tough courses and keep moving, not in the least to finish so well. I was glad to have a support crew of my sister, her boyfriend Bob, both in from NYC, and my girlfriend Victoria. This was a race where support was a big help – and they were great!

## THE GREAT TIGER TRAVERSE ...

Ever since my first Wednesday night Tiger Mountain workout, I've wanted to try the entire Tiger Mountain Trail from top to bottom, but I've never been able to find someone foolish enough to go with me. Finally, Joan Nordheim agreed to come with me this summer and she talked Ozzie into joining us. It's just 16 miles, which is very do-able, but it turned out to be quite a bit longer and harder than we expected.

We picked a 90-degree day, to maximize the chance of heat exhaustion, and we chose Labor Day weekend, to give the trail a chance to achieve the most overgrown, brushy status possible. We left my car at the High Point trailhead, then took Joan's car to the southern point of the trail and took off from there.

The trail is lovely at that end, soft underfoot and gently rolling, and completely deserted. At some point along the way, however, we became tragically lost and ended up bushwacking our way up a long steep mountainside. We finally came out on a trail that led ... who knows where? So we followed it for a while in one direction, followed it in the other direction, and finally decided to sit down, eat something, and use our brains. So Joan consulted her brand-new birthday-present GPS, Ozzie calculated the angle of the sun, and I stared blankly at my map. We finally concluded that we had climbed Middle Tiger, which was not in our original plan at all but gave us an invigorating bonus workout! So we had to backtrack to get back to where we thought we were, and then we still had quite a long walk to the end.



That part of the trail was really overgrown, with toe-stubbing rocks buried in the brush and long thorny viney things grabbing our ankles. Finally we emerged at a point that Joan and I had been to before in an earlier exploration, so we knew it was just a matter of slogging to the end. And slog we did, all the way back to the car, for a total of 17.3 fun-filled miles that left us filthy dirty and scratched and thirsty (all three of us) and bee-stung (Joan). Once we got to the Mexican restaurant to restore our glycogen, we allowed as how it had been a fun day and a fabulous workout, and we might even be willing to try it again sometime, maybe in reverse ... in another year or two.

If you've had a fun and/or interesting adventure this summer that you'd like to share with the club, send me an email with the details and I'll put your story in the next newsletter!

## SOMEONE ELSE SAID ...

"What motivates me to train hard and compete is most likely the same thing that motivates you to train and compete. Being a cross-country skier opens up the best of what life has to offer. I get out of bed on 40F rainy days in October because I like the fresh smell of the rain. I go into the woods for six-hour runs because I love looking at the leaves, the rocks, the animals, the beautiful views, the sky, the sun and countless other reasons. I am not the person that puts my head down and only checks my watch to see how much longer I have to go only so I can get in my hours for the week. I love being outside and that is really what being a cross-country skier requires. I push harder during the last interval because I love testing my system, not the system, but my system. All of these are necessary parts in reaching my ultimate goal, but they are in a way an end in themselves, not just a means to an end."

*Chad Giese, National Team Skier*

