

Minnesota Nordic Ski Association



**2016 Minnesota Nordic Skiing
Lifetime Achievement Award**

**2016 Minnesota Nordic Skiing
Lifetime Achievement Legacy Awards**

**Saturday, April 9th, 2016
Vasaloppet Nordic Center, Mora, MN**

Minnesota Nordic Skiing Lifetime Achievement Awards Program

1:30 Social Hour – Appetizers and Beverages
Slide show featuring 2016 Lifetime Achievement Award Recipients
Produced by Greg Fangel

2:30 Welcome – Vasaloppet Board of Directors
Key note presentation – **Jessie Diggins**

3:30 Break

3:45 Lifetime Achievement Awards Presentations

Welcome - MNSA Board of Directors - Bruce Slinkman

Recognition of current and past MNSA Board Members

Recognition of past Lifetime Award Recipients

2006 Glen Johnstone

2007 Norm Oakvik

2008 Mike Marciniak, Anne Ryken

2009 Lars Kindem, George Hovland

2010 Bob O'Hara, Pat Lanin

2011 Bjorn Lasserude

2012 Jack Jeffery

2013 John Filander

2014 Emily Lanin, Bill Simpson

2015 Avho Taipale

Recognition of crafters of perpetual Lifetime Achievement Award plaques
Mark Walters (2006) and Tim Youso (2016)

2016 Lifetime Achievement Award - **Bob Montebello**

Introduced by Bruce Slinkman

2016 Lifetime Achievement Legacy Award Honorees

Facilitated by Bob O'Hara

Nikolai Anikin

Robin Baker

Charlie Banks

John Burton

Earle Dickinson

Tim Knopp

Jinny McWethy

Brother Charles Rademacher

Toni St. Pierre

Al Waverek

Don Wolter

Closing Comments

*Thank you for your attendance and support of all of our
Minnesota Nordic Skiing Lifetime Achievement Award Recipients.*

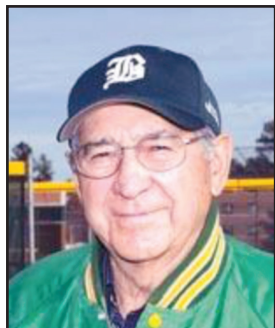


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2016 MNSA LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Bob Montebello

Bob Montebello took the long trail to get involved in cross country skiing, but when he did arrive at the Nordic ski trailhead he has been passionately involved ever since. Bob was born and raised in Stubbenville, Ohio. In high school he participated in club sports. He enlisted in the Navy and then attended Ohio State University and graduated in 1953 with his master's degree. While at Ohio State Bob decided he might give a shot at baseball and was a walk-on tryout for the Buckeye baseball team. Bob made the team as a third baseman. After graduating from Ohio State Bob began his career of teaching health and physical education. He taught at Rice University and at Ohio State University Teachers College. He then went to Columbia University and completed his PhD. He met his wife, Sally, while playing semi-pro baseball in Northfield, MN. They married in 1956 and had three children. In 1958 Bob and Sally answered the call of the North County when Bob accepted a position at Bemidji State Teachers College. Bob was heavily involved in coaching his entire career at Bemidji State. He was the head baseball coach from 1959 – 1987 when he retired from the university. Bob also coached cross country running and gymnastics. In addition to his teaching responsibilities, Bob was the long time Chair of Department of the Health and Physical Education.



Bob and Sally began cross country skiing recreationally in the late 1970's and at the nudging (or nagging) of fellow Bemidji State faculty member Muriel Gilman, who won the Citizen's American Birkebeiner in 1981, he got "roped" into his first "job" in Nordic skiing – driving a shuttle bus for the first Minnesota Finlandia Ski Marathon. And Bob never looked back since that first glamorous job in the Nordic skiing world. Bob's bus driving job earned him a spot on the Minnesota Finlandia Board of Directors.

Bob was one of the founding members of the Bemidji Area Cross Country Ski Club, which formed around the purpose of improving and expanding Bemidji area ski trails. When the club formed there was but one trail system, the Movil Maze, groomed by the local snowmobile club. In order for the ski club to become self sufficient in terms of trail grooming there was a need to write grants and Bob was up to that task. Thus, began Bob's new Nordic job as Trail Administrator and lead groomer for the Bemidji ski club, a role he held for over 20 years until he passed the torch to Mark Walters a few years ago. Under Bob's leadership in regard to trail expansion, the Bemidji ski club now grooms 7 trail systems totaling nearly 100 km of trail. Bob's grant writing skills has enabled the ski club's purchase of scores of grooming equipment. Bob was also very effective in working with city, county, and state agencies that are the landowners of the various Bemidji area ski trails. The lighted Bemidji city trail was renamed the Montebello Trail in 1994 in honor of Bob's leadership in significantly expanding and improving Nordic skiing opportunities in the Bemidji area. Bob continues to ski recreationally and for many years has organized an annual ski trip to Maplelag for Bemidji groomers and skiers.

Bob has been along for the full ride in the evolution of cross country ski trail grooming beginning with underpowered snowmobiles, bed springs, homemade drags and track setters, to today's state of the art Ginzu Groomers and super powered working class snowmobiles. Bob has continued to groom trails for the Bemidji ski club, even after retiring as Trail Administrator. At his current age of 89, Bob is the oldest active Nordic ski trail groomer in North America, proving that not only is cross country skiing a lifetime sport, but cross country ski trail grooming can be a lifetime endeavor (labor of love) as well. For all that Bob Montebello has done to grow and enhance cross country skiing in the Bemidji area for local and regional skiers he is truly deserving of the Minnesota Nordic Skiing Lifetime Achievement Award.

2016 MNSA LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT LEGACY AWARD

Nikolai Anikin

1934 - 2009



Nikolai Petrovich Anikin was born in 1934 in Ishim, a small village in Siberia, Russia. He was successful in cross country skiing at an early age. As a teenager, after having chiseled down the width of his wide wooden skis to a narrower racing width, he beat all the fast guys in the region by so much that the event organizer assumed Nikolai had taken a short cut. The proof came in the fact that Nikolai started late in the event and had passed all of his competitors and therefore they could verify his performance. Nikolai's passion for Nordic ski racing continued for the rest of life, ultimately to the great benefit of North American Nordic racers.

Nikolai's superb technique as a Nordic skier helped the Soviet Union become a force in the sport starting in the 1950's. He anchored the Soviet's gold medal winning 40 km relay team as his country competed in the Winter Olympics for the first time ever, in 1956 in Cortina d' Ampezzo, Italy, as the Soviets led the medal count to the great surprise of many. He placed 3rd in the 30 km event in the 1960 Squaw Valley Winter Olympics. He consistently placed in the top three in multiple events in both the USSR and World Championships during the late 1950s and early 1960s.

Following his Nordic racing career he went on to be the Russian national senior and junior team coach for 27 years. There have been many great skiers, but few can readily transfer their knowledge and abilities to help other developing skiers become even greater. Nikolai was one of those. He was a primary author of the legendary "Soviet Method of Training for Cross Country Ski Racing". He is believed to have accrued the most medals for skiers under his tutelage during his time as head coach.

In 1989 during a period of openness between Russia and America, the two countries engaged in an exchange of coaches. Nikolai was sent to the United States as a classical coach for the U.S. Olympic team and the U. S. sent a freestyle coach to Russia. In 1994, at the conclusion of the coaches exchange program, a group of elite Midwest skiers invited Nikolai and his family to Duluth to be the lead coaches for the Gitchi Gummi Sports Association. Nicolai and his wife, Antonina, have been a fixture of Minnesota and Midwest Nordic skiing ever since.

The Anikin's were a central part of Gitchi Gummi for 10 years before it came to an end and they coached as many as 20 elite Nordic athletes year round. These included Olympians and many national level skiers. They also put on many junior ski camps and masters clinics throughout the Midwest. Nicolai, with Antonia, continued to coach adult skiers out of their home base in Duluth until he lost his battle with cancer in 2007.

Nikolai is revered in Russia for his legendary Olympic and coaching successes and he never forgot his Siberian roots. He brought his talents across the Atlantic and graciously shared them with North American skiers. He was known for his humility, gentleness, patience, and humor on top of being an extraordinary Nordic coach for skiers of all nationalities. All of which, makes Nikolai Anakin most deserving of the Minnesota Nordic Skiing Lifetime Achievement Award.

2016 MNSA LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT LEGACY AWARD

Robin Baker 1941 –2014

Robin, born in Grand Rapids, MN, lived most of his life on Big Bass Lake in Cohasset, MN with his wife Brenda and where they raised their four children. Robin was very active in sports from a young boy to his final years including racing canoes, Quetico canoe trips, marathon running, triathlons, hockey, golf, and cross country skiing. Robin was passionate about outdoor activities, especially those that provided a challenge.



His passion for cross country skiing led to a 35 year intimate involvement with ski trails and Nordic coaching the Deer River / Cohasset area. The Blueberry Hills trail system, just outside of Deer River, was informally known in the area as “Robin’s Trail”. Robin was virtually the sole groomer of the Blueberry Hills trails for over 20 years. Robin’s dedication to the trails was to improve, expand, and maintain the trails for the enjoyment of local citizens and visitors to the area. With the support from both the City of Deer River and the Northern Lights Nordic Ski Club, he alone, worked countless hours through summers, falls and winters to maintain the trails. Robin had great influence as a public recreation advocate with positions he held on the Itasca County Planning Commission, and Itasca Parks and Recreation Commission. Robin also served as chair of the Itasca Trails Task Force. Robin was also infamous within the groomers community of Northern Minnesota for his creative engineering and mechanical skills in building and adapting grooming attachments (and the machines that pulled them) to meet the particular grooming demands of Blueberry Hills.

Robin was also very passionate about youth and Nordic skiing. Over the years he served as head coach, assistant coach, youth mentor, and volunteer for the Deer River High School Nordic program. The Deer River school district had challenges with promoting a high school Nordic ski team and Robin continually and successfully advocated on behalf of the Nordic program. Robin was especially aware and concerned about disadvantaged youth; he wanted everyone to have the opportunity to enjoy skiing. He donated or acquired ski equipment to outfit the team, so that the financial burden was not an overriding factor in their participation. Robin always tried his hardest to find a way for his skiers to participate in the “the big races” such as the Kortelopet . It was Robin’s nature throughout his life to contribute to youth and mentor them.

Robin volunteered for many years as a starter for the Mesabi East Invite, the state meet, and many section meets. He also skied competitively himself and very much enjoyed big ski events such as the Birkie. Robin was inducted into the Minnesota State High School Ski Coaches Association Hall of Fame in 2005 and again in 2014 as Volunteer of the Year. Robin passed away in April of 2014 after battling cancer and on December 29, 2014 a dedication ceremony took place to formally re-name the “Blueberry Hills Trails” of Deer River, MN to the “Robin Baker Blueberry Hills Trails”.

One thing Robin always said, “Skiing is a life sport” and he believed this for himself, and shared this with all he mentored. We all celebrate in his accomplishments, and his well-deserved Minnesota Nordic Skiing Lifetime Achievement Award.

2016 MNSA LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT LEGACY AWARD

Charlie Banks

1923 – 1998



Charlie Banks was born in Duluth and grew up in the 1930's in the Chester Bowl area of Duluth. It was there that Scandinavian immigrants taught him the alpine and Nordic disciplines, lessons he learned well, and which formed the foundation for his passion and love of winter sport. He attended Duluth Central High School where he was a member of the Nordic ski team. In 1941 he was the runner up at the state high school ski meet and in 1942, as a senior, he was the state champion. He went to college at the University of Wisconsin- Stout majoring in Industrial Arts Education. He returned to Duluth Central as a machine shop teacher for 30 years and Nordic ski coach for 27 years.

In 1955 he started and developed a 10 km ski trail behind his home which later became Korkki Nordic Ski Center. This trail and center has provided cross country skiing for the Duluth community for all these years - all on a non-profit volunteer basis. Charlie started the Eric Judeen Memorial Classic Ski Race in 1963 which is held each year at Korki making it one of the oldest ski races in the Midwest. In 1967 Charlie's trail hosted the Junior National Cross Country Ski Championships and it continues to host area high school races and other community ski events.

Charlie loved to compete on skis as he skied 24 Birkies as well as many Minnesota Finlandias and Mora Vasaloppets and he was a lifetime member of the United States Ski Association. But his greatest passion was teaching and coaching Nordic skiing to youth. His dedication to coaching is indeed a triumph in the sport of cross country skiing. As a "secondary" sport in the schools, and before the sport grew in popularity, Charlie labored in anonymity. It was difficult to get funding for his team. Charlie would joke that he "couldn't get a tube of wax from the district". But in that stubborn way that made him the athlete he was, he would drive the kids out to his trail 20 miles from the school, train and coach them, eat his supper, give his athletes a cup of hot chocolate, and then drive the kids back to Duluth where he would teach night school. This occurred while he was raising his own four daughters, teaching high school, and grooming the trail.

His accomplishments were many, including two state championships while coaching at Central. But Charlie was not about winning championships or medals. He simply loved the camaraderie, the kids he coached, and the many friendships he made through his involvement in the sport. He especially enjoyed the young men and women he coached that had little talent but much determination. He would often share stories of so-and-so who couldn't ski 10 feet without falling over, but, as he would say, "they were just plain tough!"

Charlie passed away in 1998 leaving his legacy of the Kokki Nordic Center, which his dear friend and neighbor, Mark Helmer, has carried on, and his coaching legacy. The team relay event for the Minnesota State High School Nordic Ski Meet is named the Charlie Banks Relay in honor of his coaching legacy. In this same light, Charlie Banks is also most deserving of the Minnesota Nordic Skiing Lifetime Achievement Award.

2016 MNSA LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT LEGACY AWARD

John Burton 1923 - 2014

John Burton grew up on Lake Minnetonka where from early childhood he cross country skied. John's father and uncle encouraged cross country skiing by holding tour races on Sunday afternoons. Between 1932 and 1940, they held 54 races on several courses. John first raced at age 9 and began entering major competitions while still in school. At Harvard College, he had to choose between hockey and skiing; he chose varsity hockey where he was named the team's most valuable player. Following college, he served as a Navy officer in the Mediterranean. After the war, at the University of Minnesota where he went to law school, he met George Hovland who was gearing up the U of M Ski Club. He and George held a race in 1948 on a course from the 1930s. John went on to compete in National Championships in Duluth and Oregon, the Central Championships in Wisconsin, the U.S. F.I.S. Championships in Lake Placid, New York, the National Championships in New Hampshire, and the Olympic Trials in Rumford, Maine. Both John and George were selected for the U.S. Team for the 1952 Winter Olympics, held at Oslo, Norway. He finished 67th in the 18km event.



For the next two decades, John continued cross country racing, but raising a family of five children kept him and his wife busy. When their youngest child turned 15, John raced in his first American Birkebeiner, beginning at age 50 his second wind in competitive sports. From 1974 to 1995, John raced in 22 consecutive American Birkebeiner 52K Races followed by three Kortelopet races. He was named to U.S. Masters Ski Teams, American Marathon Teams, Central Ski Association Master Teams, and Central Ski Association Marathon Teams. Many Nordic racers remember John and his wife Janette whose radiant smile encouraged all competitors. John and Janette started a ski program in 1970, introducing over 600 people to the joy of ski touring.

Like many Nordic skiers, John also excelled at long distance running. Starting at age 50, he completed 53 marathons including two Boston Marathons. In his 60's, he took up competitive in-line skating.

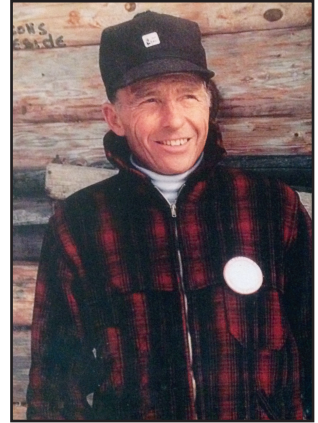
Modest despite his many victories, John was quick to praise his rivals, often displaying more interest in their times and triumphs than in his own. John's humility and genuine interest in others made him a beloved figure in masters racing.

In 2001 at age 78, during his 17th Twin Cities Marathon, he contracted shingles which shortened his athletic career. At age 82, he completed his last cross country ski race: the City of Lakes Loppet 10K with his daughter. In 2009, John traveled with his son to Rumford, Maine for the first reunion of his Olympic ski team, 57 years after Oslo. John found great joy in knowing that his five children and six grandchildren, and so many others, enjoy the sports he loved. John's Nordic skiing accomplishment as one of the first Minnesota Olympic skiers and role modeling of lifetime physical fitness through Master's level participation and competition has clearly made John fully deserving of the Minnesota Nordic Skiing Lifetime Achievement Award.

2016 MNSA LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT LEGACY AWARD

Earle Dickinson 1928 –2006

Earle Dickinson was devoted to Bemidji's diverse forests, hills, and lakes as Bemidji was the epicenter of his life, family, and career. Earle loved skiing, both downhill and cross country. He, along with his father and brother, established the Buena Vista Ski Area in 1949 and later carved out the Buena Vista Nordic ski trails through the maple and oak woods coursing through the Dickinson family's land, 12 miles north of Bemidji. Born in Bemidji, he graduated from Bemidji High School and attended the Minnesota School of Business. He served his country in the U.S. Army as a sergeant in the Korean Conflict from 1953-1954. He worked in real estate, insurance, at the Dickinson Lumber Company, as well as at the Buena Vista Ski Area



Buena Vista's Nordic ski trails and building facilities have been the home base of all of the Bemidji area's most prominent ski race events beginning with the Bemidji Birkebeiner in the early-1970s, the Buena Vista Snowjourn in 1976, and the Minnesota Finlandia Ski Marathon. When the Minnesota Finlandia needed to change its original course between Bemidji and Buena Vista in the early 1980's, Earle provided the land base and trail expansion opportunity for Finlandia to relocate entirely to the Buena Vista trail system.

The heart of Earle's contribution to Bemidji Nordic skiing was his energetic work in establishing and improving the trails that crisscrossed his acres of wooded hills. Earle spent countless hours operating his D-8 Caterpillar bulldozer to create and improve the trails in preparation for the winter's recreational and competitive Nordic skiers. Earle worked very closely with Bob Montebello from the Bemidji ski club in planning and facilitating improvements to the Buena Vista trails.

Earle was the driving force behind the establishment of the historic re-creation of the Buena Vista "Village" which includes, as its center piece, the famous rustic log Hall of Fame building which hosts the food feeds and awards ceremonies for the Finlandia and Snowjourn ski races. He was the energetic founder of the Buena Vista Logging Days festival and established the Lumberjack Hall of Fame, preserving the rich history of logging in Northern Minnesota.

Always athletic, Earle skied, both Nordic and alpine, into his seventies. At the age of 78, Earle was working his beloved bulldozer at Buena Vista when he suffered a heart attack and died suddenly on October 8, 2006. Following his passing the Dickinson family provided the Finlandia organization with its old ski patrol building and moved it to the start / finish line of the Finlandia race course providing Finlandia with a much needed home base building. In Earle's honor and memory, the building is named the Earle Dickinson Nordic Center.

Earle was known for his genuine smile, engaging personality, kindness, and his diverse talents as a woodsman, horseman, logging historian, and promoter of the Bemidji area. Earle and his wife, Mariann, and now his children and grandchildren, have worked tirelessly for over 65 years with the Bemidji community to provide the land base for the very scenic trails and building facilities for both Nordic and alpine skiing. It is altogether fitting that Earle Dickinson, representing the Buena Vista Ski Area and the Dickinson family, be honored with the Minnesota Nordic Skiing Lifetime Achievement Award for his rich contributions to Minnesota cross county skiing.

2016 MNSA LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT LEGACY AWARD

Timothy Knopp 1935 – 1989

Timothy B. Knopp was born and raised on a farm in Winona, MN. He was a University of Minnesota Professor, in the Department of Forest Resources. His educational background included degrees from the Universities of Minnesota and Arizona.

Tim had an undying love for the outdoors and silent sports including cross country skiing, cycling, running, hiking, canoeing and camping. His passion for the outdoors and Nordic skiing led him to be a pioneer in advocating with governmental institutions for the development of outdoor recreation opportunities and the protection of the natural resources that support them. He became active in a number of groups related to nature and outdoor recreation



One such group was the North Star Ski Touring Club (NSSTC), of which he was an early member. He was the club's government liaison for many years. Tim spoke passionately for the NSSTC and cross country skiing in the halls of governments at all levels. From dealing with local boards and councils to federal bodies, and through the people Tim knew, in and out of government, and through his tenacity and knowledge, Tim was eminently responsible for many of the trail systems we enjoy today. A letter from Tim to the right person carried weight. As a U of M forestry professor specializing in outdoor recreation, he preached from a bully pulpit. He was instrumental in convincing the Hennepin Country Park Reserve (now known as Three Rivers) to embrace trail expansion in their system. Today, Three Rivers is one of the jewels of Nordic skiing in the Twin Cities.

In 1982, Tim worked with fellow NSSTC club members Bob Tokar and Don Pusch to get the concept of a skier user fee off the ground. The need to supplement Minnesota DNR funding for public ski trails was evident and, with Tim's help and leadership, we now have the Minnesota Ski Pass as we know it today.

Tim was also involved with MinnTour, an umbrella organization formed to unite ski touring clubs. MinnTour was a major force in encouraging and promoting ski touring statewide. Tim's involvement with MinnTour and the Sierra Club was instrumental in successfully appealing a U.S. Forest Service decision to allow snowmobiles in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area (BWCA). Tim became one of the most wanted on the snowmobilers "hit list". The Banadad ski trail system, located in the BWCA, has a trail named the Tim Knopp Trail in honor of his efforts to keep the BWCA silent in winter.

As a key member of NSSTC Tim had many pivotal roles. In addition to governmental liaison, he served as board president for many years and was the first editor of the club's long standing newsletter, which he named "Løype", meaning ski track or trail in Norwegian. Tim was also responsible for designing the NSSTC five skier logo. Tim's buoyant sense of humor was evident in his hand drawn design of a Nordic "ski through" Outhouse featured in an early issue of Løype.

Tim left us at the young age of 54, a victim of heart disease. But the legacy of his Nordic accomplishments are with us every time we buy a ski pass, ski at Three Rivers, or enjoy the silence and solitude of the BWCA. For these gifts, Tim Knopp is unquestionably deserving of the Minnesota Nordic Skiing Lifetime Achievement Award.

2016 MNSA LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT LEGACY AWARD

Jinny McWethy

1917 - 1994



Born and raised in Minneapolis, Virginia “Jinny” McWethy attended Marshall High School and the U of M. She put on her first pair of skis (her mother’s, with beartrap bindings) in 1936 near the farm campus of the University. She married Dave McWethy of St. Paul and together they formed a very outdoor-oriented family that skied along the St. Croix River, canoed, and took many summer camping excursions throughout Minnesota and the Western U.S. She quickly developed a love for outdoor activities of all kinds, and this attachment continued after Dave died at the early age of 36 in 1954. She searched for ways to sustain this need for outdoor activities as a single woman working full time and raising two children. To this end, she joined the United States Ski Association (USSA), Youth Hostels, and the Sierra Club, to participate in their activities and trips.

Through USSA Jinny met Norm Oakvik, who had recently been asked to head up the USSA-Central Division Touring Committee, and in 1966 Norm, Jinny, Bob Larson, and Dag Helgestad initiated a group to organize ski touring trips and activities in and around the Twin Cities. They put together four local area trips for that first winter season. In 1967, along with two additional board members, they formed the North Star Ski Touring Club (NSSTC) with 17 members and 7 trips that season. By the next season they had 76 members and had fostered connections with a few Minneapolis and St. Paul news columnists who were enthusiastic about the “new” winter sport.

The following year a developer proposed a planned community named Jonathan, near Chaska, and enlisted Jinny, Norm, and NSSTC to develop a 7.5 mile Nordic ski trail system and teaching facility on the property. The developer leased a small farmhouse on the property to NSSTC for \$1/yr to serve as a clubhouse and gathering place. The following year NSSTC organized the VJC (Victoria/Jonathan/Chaska) ski touring race. It was the first in the Midwest to include both competitor and citizen racers. In its first year VJC had about 300 racers participate, and the number grew to well over 1000 in later years. NSSTC eventually grew to 3000+ members and was reportedly the largest ski touring club in the nation. Jinny became affectionately known as “Mother North Star” because she nurtured so many participants into the sport.

Jinny would search for new trail systems to organize North Star trips to. One such discovery of Jinny’s was a little place north of Detroit Lakes called Maplelag that was just beginning to invite cross country skiers to overnight in rustic accommodations. Well, North Star Maplelag Trips become a legend to themselves and, as a result, a central trail at Maplelag is named “Mother Northstar”.

Jinny was not a competitor or accomplished athlete, she competed and participated in many events, but her real contribution to ski touring was as an ambassador for the sport. She was a teacher, trip leader, event organizer, and her greatest gift was her enthusiasm in helping newcomers to feel at ease. Her mantra was promoting the FUN of the sport to all ages, and until she passed in 1994, she contributed as much as any one person to the growth of ski touring in Minnesota and beyond. As Mother Northstar, Jinny McWethy is fully deserving of the Minnesota Nordic Skiing Lifetime Achievement Award.

2016 MNSA LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT LEGACY AWARD

Brother Jerome Rademacher 1936 - 2012

Brother Jerome Rademacher, a De La Salle Christian Brother for 57 years, was born in Minneapolis in 1936. He earned a B.A. from Saint Mary's College in Winona in 1958, an M.S. from Saint Louis University in 1965, and a Ph.D. from the University of Tennessee Knoxville in 1974. As an educator, he taught at Cretin High School in St. Paul and at Christian Brothers College in St. Louis. He taught at Saint Mary's University from 1965-69 and from 1974 until his retirement in 2008.



One of the first people to teach computer science at Saint Mary's, Brother Jerome spent the majority of his 40-year tenure in the Physics Department and was a Fellow of the Health Physics Society. An avid outdoorsman, he was well known for his leadership outside the classroom as well. For 25 years, he took science students on trips to national labs, opting to camp during the excursion instead of staying in hotels. He relied on former students and a vast network of good friends to get the current students behind-the-scenes access and priceless experiences. Brother Jerome greatly enjoyed sharing his two passions - science and the outdoors - with his students, as well as with the public.

When not in the classroom, Brother Jerome could most often be found on the Saint Mary's trails he loved so dearly. In the early 70's he, joined by Brother John Grover, began the university's trail system that is enjoyed by so many for running, hiking, skiing and disc golfing. Brother Jerome happily spent innumerable hours on Bobcats and trail groomers. He was legendary for tinkering on his innovative homemade grooming machinery. When other area trails turned to ice, Brother Jerome would find a way make Saint Mary's trails ski-able. He painstakingly cared for the trails until his health would no longer permit him.

There are over 15 kilometers of trails carved into the Mississippi River bluffs surrounding Saint Mary's campus. It has been the home course for many Minnesota state high school individual champions and team champions for both cross country skiing and running. Saint Mary's University recently named a new Nordic ski center after Brother Jerome. It is located at one of the trail heads and includes a lounge, ski rental room, restrooms and small kitchen area. It also has a waxing/equipment room for Winona High School's cross country ski team.

Brother Jerome started cross country skiing in the 60's. He would take students and staff skiing on the backwaters of the Mississippi river. His first skis were army surplus skis from World War II. He had skied over 10 Birkebeiners. He gave up skiing in his later years so he could spend his time grooming the trails. He mentored some members of the Winona Nordic Ski Club who now take care of grooming the trail. For his passionate dedication to the St. Mary's ski trail system and Nordic skiing in the Winona area, Brother Jerome Rademacher is truly deserving of the Minnesota Nordic Skiing Lifetime Achievement Award.

2016 MNSA LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT LEGACY AWARD

Toni St. Pierre 1954 – 2013

Antoinette “Toni” St. Pierre was born and raised in Hopkins and attended Hopkins Eisenhower High School. By the time she graduated in 1973 she had made a major impact on Minnesota girls high school athletics that was felt nationwide. Toni loved to run and ski and she was very good at it, but her school did not have a girls track, cross country, or Nordic ski team and she wanted to compete. So she sued. The American Civil Liberties Union took up her case against the Minnesota State High School League, filing jointly with Peg Brenden, who was a St. Cloud high school senior who wanted to play tennis. The case went to trial in the spring of 1972 before U.S. District Judge Miles Lord. Lord ruled in favor of the girls. Judge Lord considered the girls case as one of his “proudest decisions”. The decision was one of the first in the nation to deal with the issue of equal rights for girls in high school sports, and came a few months ahead of federal legislation, signed by President Nixon. That law, known as Title IX, prohibits sex discrimination in programs and activities at schools that receive federal funds.



“She just wanted to compete,” noted her brother, Sam, who was a year behind Toni in school. “She was the kind of person who said, “Don’t tell me I can’t do that, because I will figure out a way to do it.”. He also noted that, he didn’t know what put the bug in her ear in 1972 that the lawsuit was the way to go about it, but she went at it. “She was a rebel!”

After the landmark ruling, Toni joined the boys’ cross-country, track and Nordic ski teams in high school. During her senior year she became state champion in the mile and half-mile, and her speedy half-mile time of 2:18.3 set a national record. Toni then attended the College of St. Benedict where she ran with the men’s cross country running team at St. John’s because St. Ben’s did not have a team. Following college she entered into her career as an obstetrical nurse. She also took volunteer trips to Nepal and Vietnam and other developing third world countries to provide care for pregnant women. She married Tim Heisel, another accomplished Hopkins athlete, and had three children together. Toni said her proudest moments were watching her two daughters cross the finish line in their girls cross country and track meets—truly a testament of the results their mother’s courage when she was their age.

During her adult years her love and passion for sports and competition never waned. She ran triathlons and marathons and her Facebook page flagged Jesse Owens as a favorite athlete. She was aiming for a run at the Boston Marathon before getting sidelined with a pain in her leg, which was diagnosed as a relatively rare malignant cancer of the smooth muscle. The cancer ultimately took her life at the way too young age of 58. Every time a Minnesota high school girls Nordic ski racer steps up to the starting line of a high school ski race there is a bit of Toni St. Pierre, “the rebel”, accompanying her to the finish line. For her courage to be a rebel, with a huge impact, Toni St. Pierre is fully deserving of the Minnesota Nordic Skiing Lifetime Achievement Award.

2016 MNSA LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT LEGACY AWARD

Al Waverek 1923 – 2014

Alhonse “Al” Waverek was born in Holdingford, MN, the youngest of 15 or so children. His family lost their farm during the Great Depression and they moved to St. Cloud. In 1938 Al and his older brother, Tony, took a train out west and enlisted in the Army. Al was just 15 when he enlisted as Al lied about his age, stating he was 17. He was assigned to an Infantry Regiment at Fort Lewis, WA. The Regiment was ordered to create an experimental ski patrol that ultimately became the 87th Regiment. Thus began Al’s involvement with Nordic skiing as a military endeavor which would result, 35 years later, with his



creation of a trail system and ski event in his home town of Avon that would honor the memory of one the most famous Norwegian / American Nordic ski jumpers of all time, Toger Tokle. Torger was a champion Norwegian ski jumper who immigrated to New York in 1939. He joined the U.S. Army and was placed in 87th Regiment where he and Al met and trained together.

The 87th Regiment trained in various Western mountain locations. In 1944 the 87th joined 10th Mountain Division and they set off for Italy with the mission to push the Germans out of the Italian mountains. The 10th Mountain Division became World War II heroes for their bravery and success against the Germans in some of the harshest conditions of the war. In 1945 Toger was killed in action while leading his unit on an assault against the Germans. Al returned home from the war and married his wife, Helen, and they started their family, which grew to eight children. Al also began his 38-year career with the Great Northern and Burlington Northern Railroads.

Al never forgot about his experiences with 10th Mountain Division and decided he wanted to do something to memorialize their heroics. His idea was to do it through a Nordic ski event. Al described his vision in a 1976 letter, “The Tour and Race will be called the first annual Toger Tokle Tour and Race and will be held in honor of the 972 skiers and mountaineers of the 10th Mountain Division who made the supreme sacrifice”. To accomplish his vision, Al practically single handily plotted out a 16 km ski course through the beautiful Avon hills and forests northwest of St. Cloud. The first Toger Tokle Tour (TTT) was in 1976. The TTT proved to be a great success and had as many as 700 skiers in its prime. The last TTT was held in 1988, a victim of landowner issues and dwindling civic support.

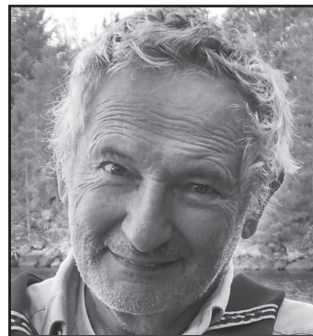
Al loved skiing and continued to ski into his 80’s. He also loved to groom and trained many new groomers. He also and enjoyed teaching skiing and countless numbers of people learned how to ski and wax through Al. He was one of a handful of skiers to start a cross country ski club in the St. Cloud area in the mid 70’s, which still exists today as the Nordic Ski Club of Central Minnesota.

Al’s unique vision to honor the service, heroism, and ultimate sacrifice of the men of the 10th Mountain Division through a Nordic ski event that ultimately stimulated the growth of cross country skiing in central Minnesota makes him totally deserving of the Minnesota Nordic Skiing Lifetime Achievement Award.

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Don Wolter 1939 –2013

Don Wolter was born in Morristown, a farming community in south central Minnesota, and started his academic career in a one-room school house. In grade school he once asked his parents if he could become a Boy Scout, and later he requested a bike for his birthday. Both wishes were denied. His parents and grandparents told him these activities were for city kids; farm boys helped out on the farm. It wasn't until high school that Don participated in sports, including baseball, 9-man football and basketball.



Don graduated from Mankato State College with a double major in English and German, a minor in Russian, and a Minnesota teaching license. During his college years he also joined the National Guard. Don won a two-year Fulbright scholarship for the University of Frankfurt, Germany, where he also met his future wife, Susanne.

In 1963 Don started teaching and coaching soccer in Minnesota. A few years later he received a Fulbright teaching grant, so Don, Susanne and their two children moved to Westerburg, Germany for a year.

When the Wolters returned to Minnesota in 1970, Don took a teaching job at the new Armstrong High School. It was here that he accidentally stumbled into the Nordic ski coaching job, mistakenly thinking he would get some free lift tickets. Oh, how surprised he was! With the help of the former coach, two of his accomplished student skiers, books, and ski clinics, Don learned quickly. He got his family involved and, with many of his school skiers in tow, he added weekend races all around the Midwest to their winter schedule. Despite his accidental start in the sport, Don and his assistant coaches were very successful, often fielding teams of 100 skiers and frequently bringing teams to the state meet over the years. He was also the first coach of the school's girls soccer team and an award-winning yearbook advisor.

In the late 1980s, Don and Susanne moved back to Germany for seven years to teach at a Department of Defense High School in Würzburg. When they returned to Minnesota in the mid-1990s Don went back to teaching at Armstrong HS and immediately got involved in XC skiing again. While he did not return as a full coach, he volunteered at practices, acted as team photographer, and worked as a timer and starter at races.

Don received several awards in the course of his career - Ski Coach of the Year, State Champion and induction into the Minnesota State High School Ski Coaches Association Hall of Fame. He also competed, racing in more than 20 Birkebeiners and countless other races.

Don's contribution as a coach extends far beyond any state titles the Armstrong team may have won. He shared his love of this lifetime sport with hundreds of students, many of whom went on to introduce their love of skiing to their own family and friends. Don truly gave a gift that keeps on giving and is most deserving of the Minnesota Nordic Skiing Lifetime Achievement Award.

MINNESOTA NORDIC SKI ASSOCIATION

Having formed in 2001 as a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting and advancing the sport of cross country skiing in Minnesota the Minnesota Nordic Ski Association (MNSA) is celebrating its 15th anniversary this year. Welcome to MNSA's Quinceañera (birthday Party)! MNSA's founding focus and a primary focus though out its history is to serve as the liaison organization between the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Grant-In-Aid (GIA) Ski Pass Program and ski clubs, trail organizations, cities, counties, and state parks that rely on GIA funding to maintain, improve, and groom 93 public ski trails in the ski pass system. MNSA's accomplishments in advocating for ski GIA issues over the past 15 years include: successfully proposing and lobbying to the Minnesota legislature for two increases in ski pass rates, thus increasing GIA program revenues, partnering with DNR to establish an accurate state-wide ski trail inventory, advocating for DNR financial response to ski trail damage by ATVs, advocating with the DNR for local and statewide enforcement of the ski pass, partnering with the DNR to improve the ski GIA system through structural changes and enhancements. MNSA was also the umbrella organization for the Minnesota Skinny Series, state-wide citizen race series, from 2006 - 2011. MNSA has also advocated for many other Nordic related issues on a state level as well as local levels. Finally, as per the occasion of today's gathering, in 2006 MNSA established the annual Minnesota Nordic Skiing Lifetime Achievement award to recognize individuals who have contributed significantly to the advancement of cross country skiing in Minnesota. Individuals, ski clubs, trail and race organizations and ski retail interests are all invited to join MNSA to help further the advancement of Nordic skiing in Minnesota.

Current Ski Club / Ski Organization Membership in MNSA

- Bemidji Area Cross Country Ski Club
- Brainerd Nordic Ski Club
- Duluth Cross Country Ski Club
- Itasca (Park Rapids)
- Loppet Foundation
- Nordic Ski Club of Central Minnesota (St. Cloud)
- Northern Lights Nordic Ski Club (Grand Rapids)
- Sugarbush Trail Association (Tofte)
- woodenskis.com

MNSA founded in June of 2001 at the Sawmill Inn restaurant in Brainerd, MN



Founding MNSA Board Members

Front row from left: Deb Diggins, Greg "Boomer" Moritko, Keith Sjoquist, Greg Fangel
Standing from left: Terry Holm, Ed Bouffard, Buni Slinkman, Bruce Slinkman, LeRoy Youngbloom, Roger Landers, Bill Meyer.

Current MNSA Board

Roger Landers, Tolly Vollen, Gary Strandemo, Bob O'Hara, Greg Fangel, Darby Nelson, John Baker, Bruce Slinkman, Greg "Boomer" Moritko

Past Non-Founding MNSA Board Members

Bill Blank, Rolf Forslund, Rich Hoeg, Dave Johnson, Pat Lanin, John Munger, Janie Weiderman

2016 MNSA Lifetime Awards Program Planning Committee

Bob O'Hara and Bruce Slinkman - Co-chairs
Roger Landers, Greg Fangel

Jesse Diggins

Keynote Presentation for 2016 Minnesota Nordic Skiing Lifetime Achievement Awards Program

I was on skis before I could walk, thanks to my wonderful and active parents who didn't mind having a small creature in their ski backpack pulling on their hair and yelling "FASTER"!!! We joined the Minnesota Youth Ski League (MYSL) as a family and spent every Sunday afternoon all winter long playing games and learning how to ski. I especially enjoyed the hot chocolate and sledding afterwards! I entered citizen's races all over Minnesota with my family as well as MYSL practices.



I attended Stillwater High School and skied on their team for 6 years, loving the team environment and camaraderie of the sport. I found so many friends on the team and we had so much fun! I also learned that I loved the competition side of skiing, and started taking the racing more seriously. I joined summer training programs, and eventually began training year-round for XC skiing.

After my high school graduation in 2010, I deferred an academic scholarship to Northern Michigan University and spent a year on the Central Cross-Country Elite team. I found that being a professional athlete was my dream job, and decided to go for it! I was added to the US Ski Team (USST) in 2011 and, after racing with Central Cross-Country for 2 seasons, I joined the Stratton Mountain School T2 (SMST2) Elite Team in 2012.

Now my summers are spent training in Stratton, Vermont with my club team SMST2, while hammering out some intense training at USST camps in-between. My winters are spent racing the World Cup circuit in Europe and Canada with the USST, that included a stint in 2014 at the Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia, so I'm living out of a suitcase and loving it from November-March!

Jesse Diggins Nordic Ski Racing Achievements

Top results:

World Cup, World Championships, and Olympics

- 1st - 2016 World Cup 5km Skate, Toblach, ITA
- 1st - 2015 World Cup 10km Skate, Gällivare, SWE
- 1st - 2015 World Cup Classic Sprint, Gällivare, SWE
- 1st - 2013 World Championship Team Sprint with Kikkan Randall, Val di Fiemme, ITA
- 1st - 2012 World Cup Team Sprint with Kikkan Randall, Quebec, CAN
- 2nd - 2015 World Championship 10km Skate, Falun, SWE
- 5th - 2016 FIS Ski Tour Canada Overall Standing
- 8th - 2014 Winter Olympics Skiathlon, Sochi, RUS

FIS World Cup Overall Standings by Year

- | | |
|-------------|-------------|
| 2016 - 8th | 2013 - 26th |
| 2015 - 22nd | 2012 - 15th |
| 2014 - 20th | |

Select U.S. Nordic Racing Achievements

- 1st - 2016 U.S. Long Distance (30km) National Championships, Craftsberry, VT
- 1st - 2016 U.S. Super Tour Finals 10km / 15km Interval Start, Craftsberry, VT
- 1st - 2016 U.S. Super Tour 1.5 km Classic Sprint, Craftsberry, VT
- 9 - U.S. Junior Titles
- 3 time Minnesota State High School Champion

Welcome to the Vasaloppet Nordic Center Complex

The Vasaloppet and Mora community is very proud of this facility, which was built exclusively with private donations. Construction of this three-building complex began in 1999 with the building of the Nordic Center. The Nordic Center features a wax room, changing and shower areas as well as saunas. The Center also has a small kitchen and plenty of room upstairs and downstairs for events. After that building was completed, the "Garage" building was constructed and today serves as a garage for the Vasaloppet grooming equipment during the snow season and as a social facility for Vasaloppet events. The third building of the complex is a storage and maintenance building for Vasaloppet groomers and equipment. The Nordic Center serves as the focal point of over 10 kilometers of ski trails, which also includes three kilometers of lighted trail. There is currently no cost for skiers to use the Center, which is maintained through Vasaloppet funds and volunteer labor. Thank you for attending this afternoon and we hope to see you next winter on the trails here at the Nordic Center or at the northern ski loops. -Mora Vasaloppet USA