

**Minnesota Nordic Ski Association**



## **2023 Minnesota Nordic Skiing Lifetime Achievement & Legacy Awards**

**Minnesota Nordic Skiing Lifetime,  
High School, Collegiate, Biathlon,  
and Master Skier Recognitions**

**Sunday, April 2, 2023  
Vasaloppet Nordic Center, Mora, MN**

# Minnesota Nordic Skiing Lifetime Achievement Awards Program

*2023 Minnesota High School Individual Pursuit, High School Team Sprint,  
Collegiate High Achiever, Biathlon High Achiever and Master Skier Recognitions*

Minnesota High School Nordic  
Individual Pursuit Champions:  
Zoe Devine, Benon Brattebo

Minnesota High School Nordic  
Team Sprint Champions:  
Liesel Cope-Shaeffer & Greta Hendrickson  
Jame Kyes & Colin Willemsen

Minnesota Based Nordic  
Collegiate High Achievers:  
Linnea Urban, Joe Lynch

Minnesota Based Biathlon  
High Achievers:  
Evelyn Hudrlik, Jack Cashman

Minnesota Master Skiers:  
Dana Siskind, David Siskind

## **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  
2016 Bob Montebello  
2017 Bonnie Fuller-Kask, Larry Myers  
2018 Bruce Adelman, Darby Nelson  
2019 Glenn A. Fuller, Roland Ring-Jarvi  
2020 Paula Anderson, Gary Larson  
2021 Dave Paulson, Mark Helmer  
2022 Antonina Anikin, Jan Guenther

## **Recognition of Lifetime Legacy Award Recipients**

2016 Nikolai Anikin  
2016 Robin Baker  
2016 Charlie Banks  
2016 John Burton  
2016 Earle Dickinson  
2016 Tim Knopp  
2016 Jinny McWethy  
2016 Brother Charles Rademacher  
2016 Toni St. Pierre  
2016 Al Waverek  
2016 Don Wolter  
2023 Phil Zink  
2023 John Dyste  
2023 John Schmitt  
2023 Norman Kragseth

**2023 Lifetime Achievement Awards - Muriel Gilman, Dave Johnson**

**2023 Lifetime Achievement Legacy Awards - Phil Zink, John Dyste,  
John Schmitt, Norman Kragseth**



# 2023 MINNESOTA NORDIC SKIING LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

## Muriel Gilman

Muriel “Mur” Gilman grew up in Glenwood, MN where her first ski experience was downhill at Glenhaven, Glenwood’s downhill ski area. She recalls that her first skis only had a loop over the arch of her boots. She got her start in cross country skiing in college by using her mother’s cross country skis - skiing on a golf course, a nearby park, and her dad’s hunting land. During her high school years, in the 1960’s, girls were not allowed to participate in organized high school sports. But, in 1972, the year Mur graduated from college, with the passage of Title IX, opportunities for girls to compete in sports accelerated. Having missed organized sports in high school and college, one of Mur’s passions has been the advancement of athletic and active lifestyle opportunities for all, but especially for girls and women.

After high school Mur attended Macalester College, graduating in 1972 with a degree in Physical Education and Kinesiology. She completed her Master’s Degree in Athletic Training from Indiana State University in 1975 and obtained her Doctoral Degree in Physical Education/Exercise Physiology from the University of Minnesota in 1987.

In 1975 Mur began teaching at Bemidji State University (BSU). Downhill skiing was among the classes she taught. She recalls being on the chairlift at Buena Vista, Bemidji’s local downhill ski area, seeing skiers with bibs. Her interest in cross country skiing grew from there. Mur started tracking her own trails, which she enjoyed, as there were few groomed trails in Bemidji at that time. By the late 1970’s Mur began to train in earnest for cross country ski races, which she has continued to the present, although more relaxed now than in the height of her competitive years. Mur’s accomplishments as a Nordic racer are more than impressive, which include:

- 1981 American Birkebeiner, 55km -1st Woman Overall in March 7th Citizens Race
- 1981 Norwegian Birkebeiner, Lillehammer, Norway, 54km - 3rd in Age Class (Trip was the prize for winning the American Birkebeiner)
- Three-time Champion of Minnesota Finlandia, 50km - taking home the famed Rosemaled Axes!
- 5-time Champion, Ely Wilderness Trek
- Numerous first place finishes in regional citizen races

Mur was the Athletic Trainer at BSU from 1975 - 1986 and was one of the first 25 certified woman athletic trainers in the United States. Mur was the coach for the BSU Cross County Skiing Men’s and Women’s Teams from 1986 - 1992. Mur’s use of heart rate monitors and interval training were “cutting edge” at the time. Under Mur’s direction, the Men’s team went to the U.S. Collegiate Ski Association National Championships four times, placing 3rd 1991. The Women’s Team advanced three times to Nationals, taking 2nd in 1992. Mur was inducted into the BSU Athletic Hall of Fame in 2019 for her accomplishments as the BSU Cross Country Ski Coach.

Mur has always had a passion for introducing people to cross country skiing. She is one of the principal founders of the Bemidji Cross County Ski Club’s ski instruction program, called Sunday Ski School. She wrote the skill category teaching exercises and, as well, taught ski school instructors how to instruct. She has taught all age groups for over 30 years now. Until recently, Mur continued to teach adult classic style classes. Mur has also taken the lead in organizing fall trail clean-ups and was instrumental in establishing a multi-use trail on the north end of Three Island County Park.

Mur has had numerous leadership roles within the Bemidji cross country ski organizations. She was on the Board of Directors of the Minnesota Finlandia Ski Marathon for 6 years, serving as President for two years. She has been a member of the Bemidji Cross Country Ski Club for over 30 years, served on the Ski Club Board for 20 years, and was President for two years.

Mur has been active in other sports as well. By her late 60’s she had competed in as many biking, running, skiing, and triathlon marathon type events as her age. Mur retired from BSU in 2012 and in 2014 she was one of the founders of the Loop the Lake Festival bike event around Lake Bemidji. Further, she has been actively engaged in wild ricing, maple syruping, and home beer brewing. When Bemidji cross country ski gatherings occur, one of the highlights is Mur’s home brew and homemade root beer!

For all that Mur has done for Minnesota Nordic skiing - competing, teaching, coaching, and ski organization leadership, Mur is truly deserving of the Minnesota Nordic Skiing Lifetime Achievement Award!



# 2023 MINNESOTA NORDIC SKIING LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

## Dave Johnson



Dave W. Johnson lives in Duluth and has a long history of influence on the sport of Nordic skiing. Dave's family moved to Fergus Falls when he was in Junior High School. The Old Smokey downhill ski area was located in Fergus Falls and Dave started skiing there. He fell in love with downhill skiing, making trips to Sugar Hills and Lutsen Mountain.

After high school, Dave joined the Air Force and was stationed at McChord Air Force base near Tacoma, WA. He got involved with mountain skiing while stationed there. He was transferred to England and was recruited to join the Armed Forces Recreation Center near Garmisch, Germany, where he trained with army personnel. Dave had the opportunity to join the Armed Forces in Europe Ski Team, where he was introduced to cross country skiing. He loved it and continued to ski Nordic.

After Dave's six-year stint on active duty in the Air Force, he rode his bicycle from the east coast of the United States to Duluth, where he was going to attend the University of Minnesota Duluth (UMD) for Elementary Education. While in Duluth, Dave found

many cross country skiing opportunities. His favorite trail system was located at Chester Bowl.

His interest in the sport continued as he was taking a class at UMD where he needed a practicum for the sport of Nordic skiing. He decided to talk to Irv St. John, who was the Activity Director at Duluth East High School. Irv said that he didn't have a practicum, but did have a job opening. Duluth East needed a head Nordic Ski coach, so the job was offered to Dave. He accepted the position and started to use his military training to add discipline to his coaching style. Dave said, "I made them do pushups, when I found them goofing off".

When Dave started at Duluth East, they had 25 kids in the ski program, and as time went on, the numbers increased to 80-100. During Dave's 9-year tenure, the Boys' team achieved four State Championship titles and the Girls' achieved three. He had fourteen individual State Champions and was awarded Coach of the Year Award in 1995-1996 by the Minnesota State High School Nordic Ski Coaches Association.

Dave's daughter was going to school at Marshall School, so Dave decided to change jobs in 2001 and teach 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Science and coach at Marshall. While at Marshall, Dave proposed, planned, and constructed a 2.7km ski trail on campus. In addition, he secured and effectively outfitted a state-of-the-art wax room used by both Nordic and Alpine ski teams.

Dave met George Hovland and George recruited Dave to groom ski trails and work with him at Snowflake Nordic. Dave not only groomed, but maintained the trails in the off-season. This was the start of a long-standing relationship between Dave and Snowflake Nordic.

Dave developed the Charlie Banks Relay Races, to allow more high school athletes to race in a competitive environment. Dave also developed the Victor C. Dunder Award, to help promising first-year high school skiers with financial aid for their ski equipment.

Dave's legacy in the sport of cross country skiing includes: Head Coach at Duluth East High School, Head Coach at Marshall School, President of the Minnesota High School Nordic Ski Coaches Association, and Executive Board Member of the Minnesota State High School Coaches Association. Dave has organized many competitive events at Snowflake Nordic, Korkki Nordic, and Marshall School, including a national level USSA Super Tour at Marshall School. He currently serves as the Start Line Chief for the American Birkebeiner, a volunteer position that brings him great joy.

Dave notes that he was never a fast cross country skier, but loves every part of the sport, including providing opportunities for others. Dave retired from teaching in 2022. However, he continues to coach at Marshall and notes that he plans to "keep coaching until I can't coach anymore!" He continues to stay involved in the many aspects the sport today, and whenever there is a cross country ski meet or Nordic gathering in the Duluth area, you are likely to see the smiling face of Dave Johnson helping others. For all that Dave has done to promote and support Minnesota Nordic skiing, and especially for all that he has done in enhancing the experience of Minnesota High School Nordic skiers, Dave Johnson is truly deserving of the Minnesota Nordic Skiing Lifetime Achievement Award!

## 2023 MINNESOTA NORDIC SKIING LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT LEGACY AWARD

### Phil Zink • 1934-2021

Phil Zink was a multi-sport endurance athlete who enjoyed skiing, biking, and running, but anyone who knew him well thought of him, first and foremost, as a Master Ski Trail Groomer. Throughout the late 1990's and early 2000's, Phil could be seen regularly hauling his own grooming equipment to various ski trail locations throughout the area that he thought could benefit from frequent or more skilled grooming. He never asked for compensation or even to be acknowledged for his efforts. For him it was enough to know that someone was having a better ski on the trails he had groomed.

Phil and his wife, Anne, moved to the White Bear Lake area in 1989 from Iowa after his retirement, as an engineer and, later, college professor, in search of more reliable snow to ski on. Shortly after his arrival, he discovered that a cabin near the Birkie trail in Seeley, WI would provide even more opportunities for skiing, but more importantly to him, it seemed, even more trail grooming opportunities. Phil soon became a charter member of the Seeley Hills Ski Club and was instrumental in the establishment of the Seeley Hills trail system that continues to be very popular today. Every Friday during ski season when Phil arrived at his cabin he made a beeline out the door to the groomer shed to get those trails in shape for the weekend. He provided numerous pieces of grooming equipment to the Seeley Club, including his own John Deere Gator with tracks, upon his retirement from active grooming.

Phil's passion for grooming grew even stronger in the mid 1990's when his son, Dave, purchased the company that manufactured the Tidd Tech line of trail groomers. A new and greatly improved version of the groomer was soon developed that became Phil's pride and joy. He interrupted his own retirement to travel around to spread the word to many ski trail grooming entities throughout Minnesota and Wisconsin about its many benefits. As a result, it is likely that just about any ski trail in the area is now being, at least, partially groomed by one of Phil's beloved Tidd Tech G2 Snow Groomers.

One of the early beneficiaries of Phil's private ski trail grooming efforts was the White Bear Lake High School Cross Country Ski Team. The Manitou Ridge golf course was their regular practice site and occasional site of some of their ski meets. Phil made sure that those trails were kept in pristine condition for all of their activities. Of course, the community at large also benefitted greatly. Phil related how thrilled he was to know that numerous athletes that had trained and competed on his trails had gone on to compete on both national and international levels.

The Manitou Ridge trail grooming enabled Phil to develop a close relationship with the Ramsey County Parks Department. As a result, he soon began grooming the ski trails at the Tamarack Nature Center, another Ramsey County facility. This relationship further grew when the staff at Ramsey County asked Phil for input as to how they could improve the grooming at the Battle Creek Park. Phil immediately responded by suggesting the creation of an all-volunteer grooming staff for the Park. His idea resulted in a very unique and successful government / private entity that is still in existence today and provides some of the best trail conditions in the Twin Cities.

Phil took it upon himself to recruit and train a cadre of volunteer groomers for the Battle Creek Program. The ski trails at the Battle Creek Park were also very generously benefitted by numerous financial contributions from Phil. Every time there was a need for bulldozer work to give the trails some much needed improvement, Phil was there with his checkbook. Not only did Phil contribute significantly to the Park, he also extended financial support to many athletes and other ski related entities and causes.

Phil's enthusiasm, ingenuity, passion and to always strive for the best possible trail conditions that would ensure all skiers, young, old, fast, and slow would enjoy their time on the snow is part of his legacy to Minnesota Nordic skiing and, as such, Phil is most deserving of the Minnesota Nordic Skiing Lifetime Achievement Award!



## 2023 MINNESOTA NORDIC SKIING LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT LEGACY AWARD

### John Dyste • 1954-2021

John Dyste was a 1973 graduate from Minnetonka High School. He earned a B.S. in Sports & Exercise and a M.A. in Sports Management from the University of Minnesota. John was involved in athletics his entire life. He started skiing as a child on family vacations and fell in love with the sport of Nordic skiing as a teenager. In the late 1970's he met a couple of avid skiers at a park reserve and they became good friends and his love of competitive skiing started. He entered a number of Nordic ski races including the Birkie, Mora Vasaloppet, and many others. One year he took fifth overall and first in his age class at the Vasaloppet. He continued to enter races most of his adult life while also coaching. John worked at St. Olaf College in the Athletic Department and, also, for a number of sports equipment companies, especially Borah Teamwear, where he shared his expertise in skiing, cycling, and custom sportswear.



His passion was teaching and inspiring youth. He was the Head Nordic Ski Coach at St. Olaf College and Minnetonka, Chaska, and St. Louis Park high schools, where he strived to make a positive impact. St. Louis Park was his last coaching assignment before his untimely passing from a car accident while cycling. His gentle demeanor, while at St. Louis Park as a Co-Head Coach, made him a favorite among the skiers. John was an outstanding coach who cared deeply about every single skier's development. He excelled in teaching the basics to new skiers and, also, how to wax for race days for his experienced skiers.

After his passing one of his skiers wrote, "Thank you for everything. Your guidance and compassion helped me to accomplish my goal of making it to State. I'll never forget that you were always willing to stay longer to help me work on technique." John was known to ski with all of the team's skiers at practices, with tips and encouragement, and stayed at practice as long as it took.

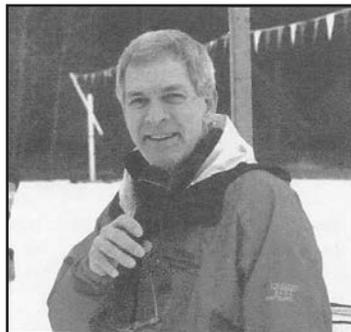
Another of one of his skiers posted a tribute, "'Dyste', as we called him, coached me in high school Nordic skiing between 8th and 12th grades at St. Louis Park. He was a great role model, teacher, and motivator. He instilled a passion for skiing in me and so many others. He made a real difference in my life and the lives of many around me. I feel extremely lucky to have had him in my life, and thank him for so many wonderful skiing related memories".

John was always present for the Minnesota High School Nordic Ski Coaches annual spring and fall meetings in Mora, where he interacted with so many of the state's cross country ski coaches, which he thoroughly enjoyed! John loved all outdoors activities, but most of all, cycling and skiing. He also loved spending time with his children, grandchildren, and friends. For all of John's time, energy, and passion that he put into Minnesota Nordic skiing and, particularly, high school coaching, John is very deserving of the Minnesota Nordic Skiing Lifetime Achievement Award!

## 2023 MINNESOTA NORDIC SKIING LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT LEGACY AWARD

### John Schmitt • 1936-2021 *“The Voice of Cross Country Ski Racing”*

John Schmitt was born in Southern Illinois in 1936, where he developed the distinctive, slightly Southern speech pattern that would make him immediately recognizable as a race announcer in the future. John found his way to Minnesota as a student at the University of Minnesota, graduating in 1958 with a degree in Mortuary Science. He began a career with Brown-Wilbert Vault Company that lasted 51 years. John married Mary Lou in 1961 and they had two children, Bob and Susie.



Mary Lou introduced John to cross country skiing. She had already completed several American Birkebeiner races when she convinced John to ski the Birkie in 1981. In 1982, as part of a promotional event, John parachuted into the Birkie and announced the skydive demonstration. His resonant voice and announcing talent earned him a future as the Birkie race announcer. From 1985 to 2003, John's voice was a treasured part of the Birkie experience for racers and he became known as the “Voice of the Birkie.” During the 20 years he announced, more than 200,000 skiers and 300,000 spectators were warmed by his cheerful summary of weather, course conditions, and tid bits about racers as his trademark “yee haa” sent wave after wave of skiers on their trek through the Wisconsin Northwoods and his enthusiastic response as skiers passed the finish line. At the finish line, John tried to get as many names announced as possible. John learned bits of 10 languages and was meticulous in the correct pronunciation of each. In addition to his “yee haw” at wave starts, John was welcoming for international skiers in their native tongue whether in English, Norwegian, Swedish, Finnish, German, Italian, French, Russian, Japanese, or Estonian, John had a gift with connecting with skiers.

John's Birkie success led to other requests for race announcing. Between 1990 and 2003 John announced many, many high school races and citizen races in Minnesota, such as the Minnesota Finlandia, often traveling from his vacation home in Winter Park, Colorado to do so. John began announcing for the Loppet organization in 2000, including the City of Lakes Loppet race.

During his 20 years of announcing, John saw everything from wooden skis treated with pine tar to the controversy of skating, from knee socks to the introduction of skinny racing suits, from frigid weather, to rain, race cancellation, and other ski event challenges. John also saw the tender side of a race when skiers carried a loved one's ashes, or skied in the memory of someone, or held themselves back to be with a new or slower skier. John's voice was known overseas as well. He spoke at 12 of the 14 international races that make up the World Loppet race circuit.

Along with his announcing, John continued to ski as well, completing 13 World Loppet races. John also ran two marathons, and enjoyed biking, woodworking, and playing bluegrass music on the fiddle and banjo.

John was quoted as saying, “My major objective at the start of every race was to make people feel welcome, ease their tension, and thank them from the race organizations for being there and making the race what it is. I want every person in every wave to feel special. I tried to make them realize and feel that they are an integral part of the race.”

Quick with a hearty hand shake, a smile, and a twinkle in his blue eyes, people who just met him or close friends, almost universally, referred to John as a “really, really nice guy!” For those of us fortunate enough to have enjoyed hearing John Schmitt at the start or finish of a race, his inimitable voice promised excitement, entertainment, challenge, and fun. John's commitment to creating a great race experience for racers of all ages and abilities make him a most deserving recipient of the Minnesota Nordic Skiing Lifetime Achievement Award!

## 2023 MINNESOTA NORDIC SKIING LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT LEGACY AWARD

### Norman “Norm” Kragseth • 1931-2022

Norm was born in Duluth in 1930 to Norwegian immigrant parents. He grew up on the Duluth central hillside and spent much of his youth kicking a football at Grant Field, golfing at Enger Park, and ski jumping, alpine, and cross country skiing at Chester Bowl. One of Norm's contemporaries at Chester Bowl was George Hovland, who received the Minnesota Nordic Skiing Lifetime Achievement Award in 2009. Norm's sister, Eleanor, recalled that Norm and George were extremely competitive with each other in the Nordic Combined event (ski jumping and cross country skiing) with Norm having the edge in jumping and George having the edge in cross country. Norm attended Duluth Central High School where he participated in seven varsity sports including skiing (jumping & slalom & cross-country), football, golf, track & field, baseball, basketball, and tennis, earning 23 total varsity letters. Norm was a seventeen-time Minnesota State Ski Champion, having been a member of four (4) consecutive Overall State Skiing Championship Teams (1946-49); two (2) State Alpine/Slalom Ski Team Champions (1946-47); three (3) State Ski Jumping Team Champions (1946-49); and two (2) State Nordic Cross Country Ski Team Champions (1946-47). Norm was also twice a State Individual Alpine/Slalom Ski Champion (1947, 1949); twice a State Individual Ski Jumping Champion (1946, 1949); and twice a State Individual Nordic Cross County Ski Champion (1946-47).



Norm attended Northwestern University, in Evanston, Illinois, on a football scholarship where he earned an undergraduate degree in Education along with letters in football and election to the Senior Leadership Society. While in college, Norm enlisted in the Naval ROTC and subsequently served two years active duty as a Junior Officer on the destroyer USS Brown operating off the coast of Korea during the Korean War. Norm remained in the Navy Reserve for a total of 20 years and retired from the Navy as a Full Commander.

After his active-duty military service in Korea, Norm returned to Minnesota, eventually earning a Master's Degree in Education at the University of Minnesota. During this time, Norm taught and was the head football coach at Marshall High School in Minneapolis. In 1958, Norm was hired as a teacher and head football coach at Hopkins High School where he taught History, Social Studies, Physical Education, Health, and outdoor skills, including winter camping in northern Minnesota. In the early 1960's, Norm started Hopkins High School's first ski program in the three disciplines of slalom, jumping, and cross country. Norm coached all three ski teams in these events. He also was active with the Minneapolis Ski Club, providing extracurricular club opportunities for his alpine, jumping, and cross-country skiers.

Norm coached four consecutive Boys' State Nordic Cross Country Ski Racing Team Champions from 1967 to 1970. He also coached four (4) Individual State Boys' Nordic Cross Country Ski Racing Champions and one Individual State Alpine/Slalom Ski Champion. In 1971 when Hopkins added a second high school, Lindbergh Senior High School, Norm transferred and continued his coaching success at Lindbergh. Norm also served as President of the Minneapolis Ski Club for one year.

Norm also had a second sports "career" with football officiating. Norm was hired as a member of the original "Chain Gang" holding the ten-yard markers at Minnesota Vikings home football games. He also worked at the North Central Collegiate Conference, and later, in the Big Ten Conference. In 1974 Norm was selected as the first NFL official from Minnesota and spent 13 years on the field as a Head Linesman, then as an NFL Instant Replay Official, NFL Observer, and NFL Scout. He officiated the first Vikings game at the Hubert H. Humphrey Metrodome, the inaugural NFL International Football game at Wembley Stadium in London, and he was a member of the officiating crew for Super Bowl XIV.

Norm was inducted into the Tri-State Athletic Hall of Fame in Duluth, the Hopkins High School Athletic Hall of Fame, the Minnesota State High School League Athletic Hall of Fame, and the Northwestern University Athletic Hall of Fame. Norm is remembered as an outstanding athlete (one of Minnesota's best), terrific teacher, and outstanding coach. Norm is also remembered, by all who knew him, as a genuinely nice guy, with an even-tempered personality, steady leadership, deep rooted integrity, and strength of character. For all that Norm contributed to Minnesota Nordic skiing, he is truly deserving of the Minnesota Nordic Skiing Lifetime Achievement Award!

# 2023 MINNESOTA HIGH SCHOOL NORDIC INDIVIDUAL PURSUIT CHAMPIONS

## Zoe Devine

Living in Ely, Zoe's introduction to Nordic skiing was riding in a ski pulk pulled by her parents. It didn't take long before she had skis of her own. As a youngster, Zoe participated in Ely's Minnesota Youth Ski League with her friends. In 6th grade, Zoe was skiing on Ely's Junior High and Junior Varsity teams. In the 8th grade she was elevated to the High School Varsity Nordic Team and competed in the first of five consecutive State Meets. As a freshman she finished 12th in the Individual Pursuit race at the State Meet and last year finished 6th. Even though this year she was considered one of the top contenders, Zoe did not imagine being on top of the podium. In this year's Individual Pursuit race Zoe had a two second lead after the Classic portion of the race. She considered it as no cushion at all and within the first kilometer of the Skate race Zoe was in front of a four-skier group. As they approached the stadium Zoe was in 3rd place, a couple seconds behind Lydia Kraker from Duluth East and Greta Hansen from Math and Science Academy. Zoe selected a lane and sprinted hard, then lunged at the finish with her right foot to earn the photo finish victory by one tenth of a second! Zoe has been an outstanding three sport athlete. In addition to skiing, Zoe excelled in cross country running and track, as well as academically. This fall Zoe will be attending Saint Michael's College in Colchester, Vermont on a ski scholarship. At Saint Michael's, Zoe looks forward to concentrating on her studies and skiing at the next level. Zoe is the daughter of James and Megan Devine.



## Benon Brattebo



Benon Brattebo burst onto the Minnesota State High School League Nordic skiing scene as a sophomore by placing 9th at the 2021 State Meet. Benon had started skiing as a 7th grader at Eden Prairie, which afforded him the opportunity to be challenged every single week both by his own teammates, and also by the very competitive Lake Conference, where he would develop healthy competition battles with opponents whom he now considers some of his closest friends. Benon moved up a bit the following year at the State Meet with a 6th place finish in Pursuit. At this year's State Meet, the leaders ahead of him looked strangely similar to the leader board from this past season's finishes, only the order would change in Benon's favor. After finishing the Classic leg in 2nd place by 14 seconds, in the Skate leg, Benon quickly reeled in the leader by the time they had reached the famed "Triple Threat" - but so had skiers 3,4, and 5. The only thing that changed at the 2km mark was that Benon was now in the lead, and behind him, skiing tip to tail, were four talented skiers that Benon

considers his friends. At the 4km mark, the radio report from an Eden Prairie Assistant Coach was that, "Benon is comfortably in second place, and looks ready to pounce!" He waited until the stadium, but pounce he did, and ended up a State Champion!

Benon has also seen success at the Junior National level, with two top 10 finishes in last year's competition at Theodore Wirth, 8th in U18 Classic and 4th in U18 Classic Sprints. This year, up in Fairbanks, Alaska, he finished 6th in U20 Classic, and 8th in U20 Freestyle Sprints.

Benon's proud parents, Craig and Jeanine Brattebo, along with younger brother, Owen, will have to travel even more next year to watch Benon race, as he has accepted the offer to attend the University of Vermont and ski for the Catamounts.

## 2023 MINNESOTA HIGH SCHOOL NORDIC GIRLS TEAM SPRINT CHAMPIONS

### Liesl Cope-Schaeffer



*Greta Hendrickson (left) and  
Liesl Cope-Schaeffer (right)*

Winters for Liesl early on were mostly spent alpine skiing and snowboarding at the local ski hill, Chester Bowl, just around the corner from her house. In 7<sup>th</sup> grade some friends convinced Liesl to join the Duluth East Nordic Ski Team. Liesl's plan was to go to practice two times per week (to leave time for snowboarding) and maybe try a race late in the season. After her first race, the combination of taking a team bus to a race, hanging out with friends in the woods all day long, and racing, had her hooked!

Liesl was excited when she found out that the Team Sprint race was going to be Skate style again for the 2023 State Meet. After she and her relay partner, Rowan Bixler, took 1<sup>st</sup> place last year, Liesl felt like it might be really fun to defend that Title! She was thrilled when they announced that she would be in the relay again, this year with a new partner, Greta Hendrickson. Liesl was so excited to race with Greta, knowing that Greta was just as motivated to give it everything she had!

They faced a strong team in their qualifying heat with St. Paul Academy (SPA) close after the first two laps. Liesl and Greta each pulled away on the hills on the second lap, winning the heat and moving on in the finals.

The finals played out almost exactly the same, with SPA once again as the second-place team chasing them and providing a close race through the first two laps. Liesl and Greta pushed as hard as they could, finishing 30 seconds faster than their qualifying race and winning the State Title with an 18 second margin. Liesl also participated in Junior Nationals Qualifier races this winter, and ended her season at Canadian Nationals in Thunder Bay, representing the Midwest Division. Liesl's parents are Jodie Cope and Dave Schaefer.

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### Greta Hendrickson

There are still a pair of wooden Nordic skis treasured by Greta Hendrickson's family, that were used by her Great Grandmother Millie to ski to and from school in her youth. That skiing heritage proved to stick with this young lady. Growing up in a family that embraced northland winters, Greta would be tagging along to ski areas like Korrki Nordic, Lester Park, and the Sugarbush trails, by Tofte, with her mother Sara, father Jon, and brother Sam. When she was in elementary school she participated in a fun program called Kid Ski at Snowflake Nordic.

The next step for her was being in Nordic North Stars in middle school, and currently training with North XC in the winter and summer. These programs have all played an important role in creating a love of Nordic skiing for Greta. Following her brother onto the Duluth East Nordic Team in 7th grade, she quickly found a love for the classic technique of skiing. After a strong top 20 performance at the Minnesota State Meet in 2022, she was excited about what 2023 had in store for her and her team. Greta began to work very hard with her teammates on her skate technique. Surprisingly, she found that her sprinting had improved, and she welcomed the chance to team with Liesl to defend the title on the Team Sprints.

At the Sections and State Meet, Greta and Liesl felt confident after their qualifying rounds. Although they were keenly aware that one small fall or one broken pole could lead to a large change in the field. More importantly, they were not going to relax any effort, as they knew their teammates were counting on their Team Sprint points for an overall state championship. Crossing the finish of the final leg with a healthy lead, Greta and Liesl could share the moment with arms raised and cheers from teammates. Greta classic skied the Kortelopet the last two winters and has had great success finishing first this year! Greta is wrapping up her ski season by competing at the Canadian Nationals on the U18 Midwest CXC Ski Team. Greta's parents are Sarah and Jon Hendrickson.

## 2023 MINNESOTA HIGH SCHOOL NORDIC BOYS TEAM SPRINT CHAMPIONS

### James Kyes & Colin Willemsen

James Kyes and Colin Willemsen both began skiing at a young age. Before joining the Duluth East Nordic Ski Team they skied together after school in the Nordic North Stars Program, developed by Siiri Morse and Kara Salmela, to encourage participation in Nordic skiing while refining skills and technique. At Nordic North Stars they both developed a love for skiing through games, drills, and mentorship. The pair continued training together, roller skiing and trail running in the summer along with running cross country in the fall. James and Colin were excited to be selected for the Team Sprint this year. Duluth East had finished second at State as a team last year and they set their sights on winning this year. Mission accomplished!

At age three, Colin Willemsen began skiing recreationally with his family and through Snowflake's Kid Ski Program. From there he got involved with Nordic North Stars and joined the Duluth East Nordic Ski Team as a 7th grader. This, his senior year, became an epic ski season leading him to receive the team's Most Improved Award. It was an honor for Colin to be selected for the Sprint Relay Team. In the race, Colin and James's goal was to start fast, ski hard and strong, and keep ahead of the pack, which they were able to do. Winning the Team Sprint Championship was an incredible experience! Colin was very happy to ski with James and know that they helped pave the way for the overall success of their team to become State Champions. Since the State Meet Colin has been enjoying



*Colin Willemsen (left) and James Kyes (right)*

spring skiing and having more time for one of his other passions, nature photography. Colin has been accepted at several colleges and is in the process of making his final decision, hopefully landing himself in a location where he can continue his love for Nordic skiing. He is thankful for his parents, Renee & Pete Willemsen, who first introduced him to Nordic skiing for their support as well as the support of all the amazing coaches he has had along the way including Bonnie Fuller-Kask, Dave Kask, and inspiration from Coach Mark Herman.

James Kyes also started his skiing life at the age of three, skiing a couple of times a year with family. He eventually found himself skiing, biking, and running more and more with encouragement from his parents, Deborah Ralston-Wolfe and James Kyes. This led him to the Nordic North Star Training Program. There James started really enjoying skiing with friends and learning how to ski well with the added benefit of playing fun games. These games and coaching sessions turned him from a beginner to a competitive racer. Joining the Duluth East Team in 7th grade, he started skiing five days a week and was soon in top positions with his best friends; Carl Morse, Colin Willemsen, and Paavo Rova. During his freshman year James encountered a massive setback. In a Junior National Qualifier race at Grand Avenue Nordic Center his ski caught a net fencing on a nasty corner (which happens to be adequately named, "Carnage Corner"). This crash took him out of the race and all other races for the next couple of months including just missing the Sections and State Meet with his team. James came back strong in his sophomore year making it all the way to the State Meet in the Team Sprint and going to Junior Nationals in Minneapolis. The motivation of a second place team finish at State that year, and another fantastic relay partner, helped him reach his goal of State Champion this year! At the end of the high school season James headed to Thunder Bay for the Canadian National Championships, and he will be training hard to do well again next year.

## 2023 MINNESOTA BASED NORDIC COLLEGIATE HIGH ACHIEVEMENT

### Linnea Urban



The 2023 Minnesota Based Collegiate Women's High Achievement recognition goes to Linnea Urban, a sophomore who skis on the Women's Nordic Ski Team and runs cross country at the College of St. Scholastica (CSS) in Duluth. Linnea, who started skiing competitively in 7th grade, cites her grandmother as her first classic ski instructor as they skied around the prairie on her grandparent's property when Linnea was much younger. Linnea attended Hastings High School where she captained the Nordic Ski Team for four years. Her high school skiing accomplishments include Four-time Conference Champion, Section runner-up, and All-State twice. Linnea also received the Athena Award for academics and athletics, earned the ExCEL Award, and made the honor roll.

In her collegiate results this year, Linnea finished 13th in the Central Collegiate Ski Association standings. Her best race finish was this year's 15th placing at the 32km Seeley Hills Classic Super Tour. She was 2nd Team All-Regionals this year, finishing in 10th place in the 20km Classic Mass Start in Ishpeming, M I. Last year she was 13th place for U20's at Junior Nationals in Minneapolis in the 10km Classic Mass Start. Linnea is also on the CCS cross country running team and has impressive results as a cross country runner. Linnea credits her high school coach, John Dewall, along with her many teammates and her great and very supportive coaches at CCS, with playing a major role in her development as a skier today. She also thanks her parents, Scott and Julie Urban, and her brother, Caleb, as her "biggest cheerleaders!" Linnea is a biology major, looking for a career in physical therapy. She has been on the dean's list every semester and has been named to the United States Collegiate Ski and Snowboard Association All-Academic Team in skiing twice. Linnea looks forward to "enjoying my next two years and keeping on improving".

### Joe Lynch

Joe started skiing when he was very young. His dad had Joe and his brother skiing from about the time they could walk. Joe's family had a cabin by the Birkie trail, so when he was young many of his ski outings occurred at the 00 Trail Head. In high school, Joe skied for Saint Anthony Village, and their team cooperated with Spring Lake Park High School. In high school, Joe was a Conference Champion and a 4-time State participant. Joe is a senior skiing for the St. Scholastic Nordic Ski Team and has skied on the Saint's team since his freshman year. Joe has had many racing accomplishments over those years.

Some of Joe's recent Nordic racing accomplishments include:

- NCAA Skiing All-Region Honors (2023 - 10K Free)
- NCAA Skiing Championship Qualifier (2023)
- 2x top 15 Super Tour Sprint Finishes
- Central Collegiate Ski Association 3rd place finish at Scholastica Saint's Invite
- Part of the first St. Scholastica Nordic Men's Team, in program history, to win NCAA Central Region and qualify a full team for the NCAA National Championships!



Joe is also a talented cross country runner and qualified for the NCAA Regions in 2021 and 2022.

Academically, Joe has made the dean's list 2020 - 2023 and the United States Ski and Snowboard Association All-Academic Team 2020 - 2023. Joe is a biology major with a career goal to become a physician's assistant. In reflecting about his four years at St. Scholastica, Joe states that "I love my teammates, coaches, and professors".

## 2023 MINNESOTA BASED BIATHLON HIGH ACHIEVEMENT

### Evelyn Hudrlik



Evelyn is a senior at Forest Lake High School. She is on the Nordic, cross country, and track teams. She started skiing shortly after moving to Forest Lake in 2013. Her first pair of skis were a Christmas present and she has been on snow every year ever since. She has skied for the Forest Lake Varsity Team for 6 years (alongside both of her brothers) and has raced in the last 5 MN State Meets. She was part of the Forest Lake Girl's Nordic Team that won the MN State Title in 2021. She also trains with the Nordicwerks SkiKlubb. Evelyn skied her first JNQ race in 2016, at age 11, and has been racing since then. She qualified for the Midwest U16 NENSA team in 2020 and the 2022 Midwest U18 Junior National team.

Evelyn was introduced to the possibility of pursuing biathlon when she visited a MN Biathlon table at the 2020 Birkie Expo. She started training with Bill Meyer in May, 2020 and has absolutely loved biathlon ever since. Additional training and support from Jeff Bozek and Marcus Landrum allowed Evelyn to start racing at the national level the next year. Some of her early biathlon racing highlights include a 7th place finish in her first USBA Nationals event in 2021 and a 6th overall finish at the 2021 USBA YJWCH Team Trials at Soldier Hollow, UT. Her results at Soldier Hollow included a 4th place finish in a sprint race. This past December, she finished 3rd overall for Youth Women at the USBA YJWCH Team Trials in Anchorage, AK where she had two 2nd place finishes. This qualified her to race in the Youth Junior World Championship races that took place in Shchuchinsk, Kazakhstan this past March. At this event, she finished 66th in the 10km Individual and had the anchor leg in the 3x6km Youth Women Relay that saw the U.S. team finish 12th.

In her free time, Evelyn enjoys sketching, painting, writing, and baking. She also loves learning languages, travelling, and being introduced to other cultures. As she graduates from high school, Evelyn looks forward to being able to transition to a more comprehensive training program during this coming summer that will allow her to build on her accomplishments. She has committed to ski for the Saint Michael's College Nordic Team in Colchester, Vermont this fall. She is excited about the opportunities to train and compete at the national and international level in the coming years. Evelyn's parents are Jennifer and Dave Hudrlik.

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### Jack Cashman

Jack is a 16-year-old 10th grade student from Red Wing. As a homeschooled student, he enjoys studying science and social studies. He also has enjoyed, recently, getting his driver's license and having the ability to get himself to and from his workouts on his own (and, maybe mom and dad appreciate this too). Jack is the oldest of three children and his involvement in skiing was his family's first experience with the sport. Not too long after his introduction to Nordic skiing, he attended a beginner's Biathlon clinic with Coach Bill Meyer in Brainerd. From that humbling beginning, and with the support of coaches, mentors, and other racers across the state, Jack's Biathlon and ski involvement has given him the blessing of some really great experiences including trips west to Alaska, east to Vermont, north to Canada, and, coming in a few weeks, over the ocean to Norway. His formal team involvement involves being a part of the Bluff Country Biathlon Team, Minnesota Biathlon, and the Red Wing High School Nordic Team.

Jack's top Biathlon results include 1st at 2022 U15 Nationals 6km Sprint and 3rd in 2022 Summer Nationals 6km Sprint and 7.5km Pursuit.

When not training and racing, Jack can be found preparing all kinds of coffee at Mandy's Coffee & Café in Red Wing, hopping on his road bicycle, or dutifully doing chores at home.

The Biathlon and Nordic ski communities are second-to-none in terms of support, encouragement, and relationships. Any success Jack has had, thus far, is due directly to the high character of coaches and mentors that have given of their time and knowledge to help Jack and all the other biathletes and skiers they work with. It is also due to the tight-knit racing community and friendships that have been developed with skiers all over the State. Their work ethic and commitment to the sport sets a high bar to follow. Any number of biathletes could receive this recognition and Jack is grateful to represent the Minnesota Biathlon Community. Jack's parents are Brian and Nicole Cashman.



## 2023 MINNESOTA MASTER SKIERS

### Dana Siskind

Dana was introduced to the world of Nordic skiing and the North Star Ski Touring Club (NSSTC) by her husband, David. Her first NSSTC trip was to the YMCA Camp du Nord near Ely and she fell in love with the sport, the area, and the people. Dana notes that she rolled down nearly every hill of the North Arm trails those first years, but her friends waited patiently until she got back on her feet and then they fixed the trail again. Those were skier set trails, no groomers, she recalls. In 1988 Dana went trail clearing with the NSSTC to Camp du Nord and worked on the trails that she had skied on. Walking through the beautiful autumn colors, trimming brush, cutting tree limbs, moving rocks to make the trails smoother was so much fun! she notes. Dana has participated in or led trail building /clearing trips every year since then.

Dana's children, aged 6-18, soon followed her ski passion and have enjoying both skiing and trail clearing. She worked in an after-school program in Minneapolis and introduced inner city children to cross country skiing at Theodore Wirth Park.

Although Dana was never a racer, she reports that she enjoys the camaraderie of friends and introducing others to the amazing beauty of the winter wonderland found on ski trails. She remembers her three-year old grandson, at Deep Portage Conservation Camp, being amazed that we could "ski in the forest" as the trail went from behind the lodge up a hill into the trees. He now enjoys trail clearing at Camp du Nord as well as other outdoor activities. Dana been involved with beginning skiers in the Minnesota Youth Ski League helping them find their ski legs and encouraging them by observing that they "can ski faster than a Grandma".

Dana has been active in NSSTC in many capacities - various board positions, trip leader, especially trail clearing to Camp du Nord, Banadad, and other trails, and as an avid participant in Nordic skiing promotional activities. She notes that cross country skiing is such a great way to exercise and enjoy our beautiful winter world here in Minnesota!



### David Siskind

David recalls that his knowledge of something called "cross country skiing" came from meeting Jacque Lindskoog, a skiing and biking legend in 1972. He then joined the North Star Skiing Touring Club with his first wife, Sylvia, also in 1972. He did some racing early on including the original VJC, King Boreas, and the Minnesota Finlandia in Bemidji. A second racing "career" included three Birkie's, the Kortelopet, and the Mora Vasaloppet in the 1990's.

David's favorite place to ski is YMCA Camp du Nord, North Arm trails system, near Ely, where he has skied 56 times since 1982. He also helped on fall trail work weekends 28 times, often arriving in camp by bicycle from Minneapolis and sometimes from the UP. Dave married Dana in 1986 and she since became active in skiing and trail work. With Dana as co-leader, they have led North Star's Deep Portage weekend trips between 1997 and 2019 and many North Arm New Year's and President's Day weekend trips. They have led three week-long North Star trips: Thunder Bay once and Sun Valley twice. Dave notes they have done North Star trips to Lone Mountain Ranch, Glacier Park, British Columbia, Norway, and Ontario, and non-North Star ski trips to Norway and Austria.

David has served on the North Star's Board as President, Treasurer and as Editor of "Loype", the North Star Club's newsletter from 2018 to the present. In recent times, David and Dana have served as assistant coaches for the Minnesota Youth Ski League, assisted in the league's ski swaps, and the Three River's Nordic ski openers. Skiing was also a family activity for Dave and Dana. From the start, they had their kids and extended family on skis, including North Star trips.

David reports that he is known as an incorrigible record keeper. Since 1972, he has skied 27,566 km on 11 pairs of skis. He also reports being thrifty (some say frugal or just cheap!) as 11,096 of those km was on one pair of skis, one of the first fiberglass types. He also bikes during the off-season. At age 81, with some cardiac problems, David notes that he may not ski much, but he still plans to remain active with the North Star Club and the Nordic skiing community.



## MINNESOTA NORDIC SKI ASSOCIATION

Having formed in 2001 as a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting and advancing the sport of Cross Country/Nordic skiing in Minnesota, the Minnesota Nordic Ski Association (MNSA) is now in its 22nd year of operation. MNSA's founding and primary focus throughout 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 the 93 public ski trails in the ski pass system. MNSA has had numerous accomplishments over 20+ years that has led to the improvement and enhancement of the Ski GIA program.

In 2006 MNSA established the annual Minnesota Nordic Skiing Lifetime Award to recognize individuals who have contributed significantly to the advancement of Nordic skiing in Minnesota. In 2017 the award categories were expanded to include the Minnesota State High School Individual Pursuit Champions, Minnesota Based Biathlon High Achievers, Minnesota Based Collegiate High Achievers, and Minnesota Master Skiers. In 2022 MNSA added High School Team Sprint Champions as an award category. Individuals, ski clubs, trail and race organizations, and ski retail interests are invited to join MNSA to help further the advancement of Nordic skiing in Minnesota.

***MNSA wishes to acknowledge and thank the generous banquet donations from the following:***

Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe • Geri Nelson • Nuun • Cascade Lodge • Solbaken Resort • 11 Wildflower Lane  
Severt's Woods Mapleworks and the Ursa Minor Cabin • Minnesota Finlandia

### **Current Ski Club / Ski Organization Membership in MNSA**

- Bemidji Area X-C Ski Club
- Brainerd Ski Club
- Duluth X-C Ski Club
- Itascatur Club, Park Rapids
- Lake Country Nordic Ski Association, Cass County
- Nordic Ski Club-Central MN, St. Cloud
- Norpine Trail Association, Lutsen
- North Star Ski Touring Club
- Northern Lights Nordic Ski Club, Grand Rapids
- Sugarbush Trail Association, Tofte
- Vasaloppet USA
- Willmar X-C Ski Club

### **Current Nordic Ski Business Membership in MNSA**

- Leaning Barn Farm
- Revolution Bike & Ski
- Finn Sisu
- Fast Wax
- Maplelag
- Fitz Harris Ski & Bike

### **Current MNSA Board**

Tolly Vollen, Bruce Slinkman,  
Deb Diggins, Neil Franz,  
Ken Jorgenson,  
Greg Fangel, Bob O'Hara,  
Greg "Boomer" Moritko,  
Arne Stefferud,  
Kent Montgomery  
Brita Sailor  
Nicholas Culp



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## Deb Diggins

### Keynote Presentation for 2023 Minnesota Nordic Skiing Lifetime Achievement Awards Program



*Diggins Family - Sjusjoen, Norway, March 2023  
From left to right: Jessie, Clay, and Deb*

Deb was born in the snowy wilderness of central Quebec, Canada. She moved to the less wild, but still very snowy, outskirts of Duluth at three years old, where she grew up enjoying the outdoors in every season. Alpine skiing was a favorite activity, but Deb had to be bribed with an offer of an outdoor picnic in order to go on her first cross country ski outing, at age twenty. Fortunately, she enjoyed the skiing as much as the picnic, and soon looked forward to cross country ski outings with her husband, Clay (the briber) and friends.

Deb and Clay moved from Minneapolis to Afton in 1987. In 1994 they joined the nearby Minnesota Youth Ski League Club

in Willow River, Wisconsin, so daughter Jessie could learn to enjoy cross country skiing with children her age. Soon they were club leaders, a role they held for eight years. They also started a Silver Skiers group there for the older kids who were interested in racing. Jessie and her little sister Mackenzie tagged along, and attending area ski races became a family activity.

From 1999 to 2008, Deb was the nationwide distributor for Fast Wax Ski Wax. During this time, she joined the inaugural MNSA Board.

When Jessie joined the Stillwater Nordic Ski Team in 2004, Deb and Clay became volunteer assistant coaches, continuing until the purchase of a retail business in 2009 required their full attention. With the sale of the business in 2020, Deb retired to pursue some favorite activities. She now finds time for gardening, paddling, traveling, cooking, reading, and of course skiing!

Deb is a volunteer coach for the Red Wing Ski Club, and back on the MNSA board after a hiatus. She has raced the Kortelopet, the Birkie, the Mora 13k and 35k, and a handful of other area races over the years, where she has yet to reach the top three in her age group, though she has been close a few times. Deb and Clay take a vacation each winter to visit Jessie, who has been on the US Ski Team since 2011 and spends the ski season racing in the World Cup in Europe and Canada. They have enjoyed spectating at many World Cup races, and two winter Olympics. They get up at ridiculous hours to watch World Cup ski races on live stream, and consider cross country skiing the best part of winter. They continue to live in Afton with daughter Mackenzie and two beloved dogs.

### 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 12 kilometers of ski trails, which also includes three kilometers of lighted trail. Snowmaking efforts cover the trail system with manufactured snow for great season-long skiing. There is currently no cost for skiers to use the Center, which is maintained through skier donations, 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. -Mora Vasaloppet USA