

Superiorland Cross Country Ski Club



www.superiorlandskiclub.com

From the President:

Our Young Skiers

2011-2012

Board of Directors

Tom Wagner,
President
wagnert60@gmail.com

Dan Wiitala,
Vice President
dwiitala@northjacksonco.com

Pam Fjeldheim,
Secretary
pamfjeldheim@hotmail.com

Debby Muskovitch,
Treasurer
debby@northjacksonco.com

Megan Dixon
dixonmegan@hotmail.com

Ingrid Fjeldheim
ifjeldhe@gmail.com

Sten Fjeldheim
sfjeldhe@nmu.edu

Paul Gray
pgray@sbcglobal.net

Michelle Halley
michelle.halley@sbcglobal.net

Jane Jacobson
ajacobson11@charter.net

Mark Jacobson
ajacobson11@charter.net

Mikael Kilpela
m_kilpela@yahoo.com

Claire Twohey
cps2e@aim.com

"All the dads are hugging their sons!" Marty Gray's younger sister Ketlove exclaimed at the finish of the boys' pursuit race at the Michigan High School Championships on February 18th.

Dads and moms were indeed hugging their sons and daughters in the finish corral. This certainly isn't an unusual sight at a high school championship ski race where we all hope for great performances. But the excitement that weekend for the Marquette team was easy to see for anyone watching the racing. The boys' team collected 6 of the top 10 spots in the distance pursuit, and 9 of the top 16 in the classic sprint. Ellen Wiitala won her fourth straight individual state championship. Our growing girls' team had 6 skiers finish in the top 20, showing our increasing depth. The red and black race suits of Marquette just kept coming in fast and furious!

This year's high school race team was special. It was made up of both experienced racers and kids who were new to cross country ski racing— all the way from skiers focused on competing in the Junior National Championships in Utah in March to very good high school athletes who hadn't raced or even skied much before December. It even had a couple of very fast young skiers, Bethany Wright and Logan Zueger, moving up from the middle school ranks who will be racers to watch in the years to come. In addition, the team was our largest high school team ever, evidence of the quality of the Superiorland Ski Club's programs, our coaches, and the team members themselves. The day was a great end to the high school team's racing season and a proud day for the ski club.

Young skiers— like these on the high school team, the younger kids in Ski Cats, and those in between on the Prep and Adventure teams— are much of our focus as a ski club. We see how creating opportunities to learn to ski, to enjoy our wonderful U.P. winters and to meet the challenges of competing bring health and joy to our community. So, here's my appeal to you: support these programs by becoming a Superiorland Ski Club member if you're not, tell your friends and others about the great programs we have, and congratulate the high school team members on their successes!

—Tom Wagner, Club President

SSC to benefit from Econo Foods We Share Program

The Superiorland Ski Club is collecting Econo Foods receipts. The club will receive 1% of the receipt total! The Ski Club collected \$645 worth of receipts last fall from members and also during the Nov. 5, 2011 MSHS race team bagging event.

Please save your receipts to help fund youth skiing!

You can mail receipts to:
Superiorland Ski Club,
PO Box 864,
Marquette, MI 49855
or email Claire Twohey
cps2e@aol.com to arrange drop-off. There will also be a collection box at the Bike Swap on April 28.

Thank you, Econo Foods!
We appreciate your generous support for SSC!



Looking Down the Trail...

April 25 Wednesday, Annual SSC Banquet 6-8 pm with food by
Border Grill, Marquette Commons

April 28, Saturday, Bike and Kayak Swap, 9 am-12:30 pm drop off,
1 pm-3 pm sale, Marquette National Guard
Armory, 1820 Lincoln Ave., Marquette

Sept. 22 Saturday, 18th Annual Lake Superior Shore Run,
Little Presque Isle

Mark your calendar so you don't miss a thing!

The Superiorland Ski Club meets at 7pm on the second Monday of every month at the Peter White Public Library (PWPL) in Marquette. The public is welcome!

Our Mission: To provide Marquette's ski community a chance to work together for the betterment of trails and facilities and to help provide and support youth and adult skiing in the area.

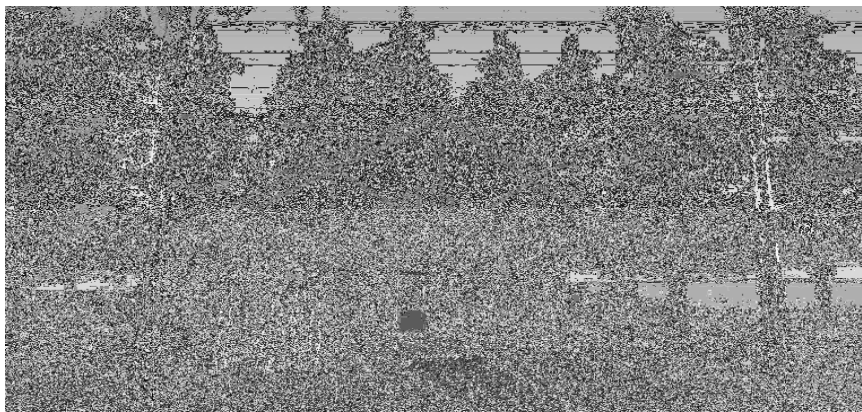
Blueberry Ridge Hut

Superiorland Ski Club Spearheads the Building of the Blueberry Ridge Warming Hut

As many of our members already know, plans are underway to build the warming hut at Blueberry Ridge Lighted Loop (South parking lot). The Superiorland Ski Club (SSC) is partnering with the DNR and Sands Township to accomplish this goal of skiers and other silent sports enthusiasts in our area. Sands Twp. and the DNR have reached a long-term lease agreement to allow the building to be constructed, while Sands Twp. and SSC have agreed to partner for the financing, operations and maintenance. This optimal arrangement allows BBR state forest lands to remain accessible and open to the general public. The DNR will continue to manage the trails, and the public will be encouraged to make donations in the fee pipe to support ongoing trail maintenance. This partnership assists the BBR Warming Hut project in qualifying for Michigan Natural Resource Trust Fund and Recreational Passport grants. If one of these grants is secured, only 25% of total financing costs are required to be raised by the local community. This sight is well within our reach of the total projected cost of less than \$200,000 for this building. Now the fun in fundraising begins!

SSC Board members Pam Fjeldheim and Debby Muskovitch are heading up the effort and have already begun securing corporate and individual financial support, in addition to working with Sands Twp. on seeking public (state) grant funding. River Valley Bank has generously become our banking partner for this project and has also agreed to a Platinum-level financial sponsorship. Thank you River Valley Bank for your ongoing support of our ski club, and especially our junior ski racing teams! In-kind technical support has been provided by Barry Polzin Architects who have generously drawn up detailed building plans and specifications based on original concepts provided by NMU Construction Management students and the BBR committee members. Also, thanks to our youth program and general members who have generously donated time to make presentations to community service groups, and to speak at public meetings held by county and township boards, and the DNR .

Please donate now or assist us with securing additional support from businesses and individuals. An envelope for donations is attached to this newsletter for your convenience. Working together with the community, we can make this building happen. The Blueberry Ridge Warming Hut will not only warm fingers and toes but will warm the hearts of the Marquette area community and its visitors!



The Blueberry Ridge Warming Hut is modeled after skiing facilities in our area: the Valley Spur building in Munising and the Nara Chalet in Houghton on Michigan Tech Trails. Our simple warming hut will promote universal design and green features. For more information or to volunteer to assist in this project, please contact Pam or Debby.

2012 Shore Run

Get ready to run!

Hi! My name is Jenifer Kilpela, and I'm excited to help with the **2012 Lake Superior Shore Run**. I love the Superiorland Ski Club for what it supports – healthy recreation for all ages, especially kids. I know many others feel the same way, which is why countless volunteers have helped with past Shore Runs to benefit the Ski Club. Every contribution matters, so if you'd like to help, financially or otherwise, please contact me.

Set for **Saturday, September 22, 2012**, the 18th annual family fun event promises to be bigger than ever. Last year saw a record number of runners, nearly topping out at 300. This year we hope to break that number. With their challenging terrain and scenic vistas, Top of the World and Bareback Mountain offer premiere trail running courses for the Half-Marathon, 5k and 1k kids' race. I hope to see you there. Check out the race online at www.superiorlandskiclub.com.

Oh, and did I mention that kids race for free? Isn't that cool?

-Jenifer Kilpela
Director, 2012 Lake Superior Shore Run
JeniferKilpela@yahoo.com

Annual SSC Banquet

The Annual SSC Banquet is set for **Wednesday, April 25th from 6-8 pm**. New this year the banquet will take place at the Marquette Commons in downtown Marquette. Dinner will again be provided by Border Grill. A suggested \$5 donation is requested to offset the food costs. RSVP required. Please email Debby@northjacksonco.com if you will be attending.

Recognition and awards will be given for youth program achievements including MSHS/Junior Racing Team, Prep Team, and Ski Cats as well as other club programs like Wednesday Night Relays, Fundraisers, and significant club initiatives. All club members are encouraged to attend as it should be a fun time to celebrate the past year's success and kick off a good future year.

We will be honoring the following folks for the club's annual awards:

Lifetime Achievement Award: Beverly Laughna
Skier of the Year Award: Marquette High School Team
Volunteer of the Year Award: Ingrid Fjeldheim

The Superiorland Ski Club has recently updated the website to allow its members to stay informed on the latest club information. The site is updated regularly with results, pictures, calendar of events, club functions, and information on youth programs. The club will have suits available for purchase this spring; the design will be posted online within the month. Check it all out at www.superiorlandskiclub.com.

Ski Cats

After a great season, Ski Cats ended with a fun celebration with the NMU Ski Teams and special guest, Wild Cat Willy. It was a beautiful, sunny day with temperatures in the 40's. We couldn't have asked for a better way to end the season than to be surrounded by young, talented skiers who were great with the kids. The format for the Ski Cats program was different than previous years. It was, honestly, a bit of an experiment. Instead of skiing only at Forestville, we went to Forestville, Blueberry Ridge and the Fit Strip. Although some locations did not have warming facilities, we had cocoa and snacks "tail-gate style." Families and skiers seemed to enjoy the changes and the chance to ski different trails around Marquette. Keeping families abreast of the locations was the only tricky part.

We had a successful rental program for families to rent skis and boots for skiers. After getting grants from the Birkie Foundation and the Kiwanis, we were able to purchase an additional eight pairs of Fischer skis and boots from Sports Rack. For fifty dollars families could keep their skis and boots until the end of the ski season....beyond the end of Ski Cats. We rented every pair of skis we had!

We had a fantastic group of volunteer ski coaches that I would like to thank for their hard work and dedication to this great youth program: Steve Kuhl and Bryan Dixon (coaches for 3-5 year olds) Andrew Grosvenor and Dick Ziegler (coaches for 6 year olds) Tom Asmus and John Bruggink (coaches for 7-8 year olds) and Jim Gallagher and Vicki Asmus (coaches for the 9-10 year olds). Also, thanks goes to Pam and Ingrid Fjeldheim for their help with many of the little details.

-Megan Dixon, Ski Cats Coordinator
dixonmegan@hotmail.com

Wednesday Night on Thursday Night Relays

Another awesome year of relay racing for youth and master skiers alike is in the history books. The relays seamlessly moved from Wednesday night to Thursday nights with great success. Thanks goes out to Kevin Carr and Tom Asmus who expertly groomed and designed the courses at the Fit Strip this year. They incorporated some secret sections of trail into the sprint and longer courses, and the change-ups were a lot of fun. Each week a different local business sponsored the relays. A huge "thank you" goes out to the local merchants for continuing to support the sport of nordic skiing in our winter city.

Nordic ski history was made on March 1st when the first ski marathon at the Fit Strip was held. The Fit Stripper 50k was born from the creative nordic minds of Kevin and Tom, along with the organizational skills of Ingrid Fjeldheim. The marathon distance was achieved by adding the efforts of all 3 members of the team together. Giggles and smiles were abundant; fun was had by all. When the snow settled and the smoke cleared, the team of Tom & Vicki Asmus, along with Katie Brang, was victorious. Not far behind was the youthful team of Logan Zueger with Mike and Dan Wiitala. Make sure you are training this summer to get into condition for next year's Fit Stripper 50k Marathon!

-Greg Nelson

Prep Team Success

The 2011-12 season saw new faces on the trails in both coaches and athletes. The Prep Team, comprised of 12 athletes ranging from 5th to 8th grade, from all around Marquette County, started practice in November. First year coaches Doug Kozeluh and me (Mik), and veteran coach Dan Wiitala made up the coaching roster. Sessions began with dryland workouts at the Marquette City Fit Strip. Athletes worked on fitness, agility, and ski specific strength. Though the December weather was not cooperative for skiing, the athletes' enthusiasm for outdoor workouts was not dampened. In anticipation of snow a running time trial and strength testing session was held at the request of the young skiers.

Some goals of the Superiorland Ski Club Prep Team included teaching skiers proper ski technique (both classic and skating), introducing athletes to competition, and learning ski specific training methods. Along with the mechanics of skiing, this season fostered enjoyment of sport and the great outdoors. Practices were held on Tuesdays and Thursdays of each week. Athletes were encouraged to participate in competitions or the Adventure Club (the recreational skiing group) on weekends.

As 2011 rolled to a close, the winter weather showed up and allowed for some on-snow coaching. Sessions were held at Blueberry Ridge, Forestville, and the Marquette City Fit Strip. Prep team skier experience ranged from skiers just starting out to skiers with multiple years of race experience. Significant improvements were made by all. Throughout the winter athletes competed in events such as the Junior Noguemanon, the High School Championships, and various local and regional races. Many personal record performances were accomplished at these races.

Overall, the 2011-2012 season was a success. Athletes made leaps forward in technique, were able to meet new peers, formed friendships, and, most important of all, had fun! As a first year coach, it was encouraging to see young skiers' enthusiasm as they worked hard to learn ski technique. It was inspiring to hear a fifth grader excitedly ask when the V2 Alternate (a skating technique) would be covered in practice, with the hope that this would open up another gear to his skiing and racing.

I would like to see many returning skiers and new recruits in the 2012-2013 season. I hope the program will develop youth skiers and give them the opportunity to compete at any level.

-Mikael Kilpela



State Champs!

MSHS/SSC Nordic Ski Team Wins Michigan High School Cross County Ski Overall State Championship Title for the first time in 11 years! The meet was in Houghton at the Michigan Tech Trails. Ellen Wiitala won the girls' state pursuit race for the 4th year in a row and captured her second consecutive sprint title. Andrew Twohey, Blake Murray, and Marty Gray took the podium as state sprint champions; Blake Murray and Eric Wagner went 1st and 2nd in the pursuit championships, with Andrew Brunning from Traverse City Central 3rd.

The MSHS boys' team took the boys' team championship, and the MSHS girls were the runner up girls team at the state meet. Their combined points placed them in first for the Overall High School Team. Copper Country was second, and Traverse City Central was third.



Three traveling high school trophies will be displayed this year at MSHS: The Boys' Overall Pursuit Winner, The Girls' Overall Pursuit Winner, and the High School Team Overall Championship. Only once before have all three traveling trophies been held by one team. (This was in 2001 when Emily Anderson and our current coach and MSHS Alumni Joe Graci took the top individual honors.) We are proud of all of our nordic skiers! Congratulations Nordic Skiers 2012!

Junior Olympics



Photo from 2012 High School Championships

This March, my teammates Andrew Twohey, Marty Gray, Ellen Wiitala, Eric Wagner, and I flew to Salt Lake City, Utah, to compete in the 2012 USSA Junior Olympics. After staying the night in Salt Lake City, we piled into a van and drove an hour into the mountains, where we would be training and racing for the following week.

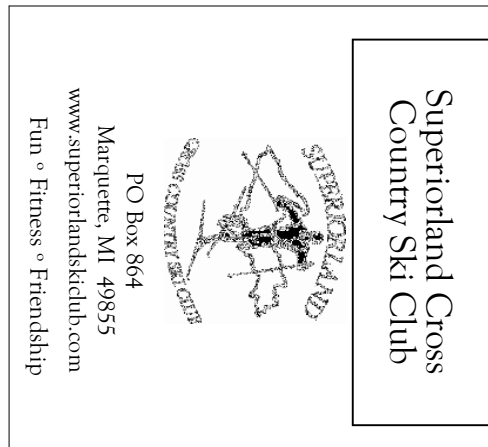
Around 500 of the nation's best junior skiers competed at Soldier Hollow, where the 2002 Winter Olympics were held. For a couple of days, we skied easily and previewed the course. The course was at 5,423 feet, so this was also time to get acclimated. It surprised many of us by how hard it was to ski slowly on those first few days. The opening ceremonies were held at the beginning of the week at the Olympic ski jumping venue. Gold Medalist Billy Demong (Nordic combined) gave an inspirational speech, and we watched an athlete from the Junior Olympic nordic combined competition (being held at the same time) go off the jump. As for racing, it was an awesome experience to compete with athletes of that caliber. We all felt the effects of altitude on the first couple of days, but by the end of the week, our bodies were acclimating and racing got a bit easier.

Throughout the week, we competed in two distance races, a sprint race, and a sprint relay. The spectator-friendly course was surrounded by mountains; you could see skiers the entire race from the stadium. The weather was warm and sunny (high 50s during race time), making for some tricky waxing conditions, but our coaches Joey Graci and Caitlin Cassidy handled it extremely well. Because of the hot weather, the race officials switched the course to a man-made version, which held up well considering most of the 500 athletes had to ski it twice for each race. At the end of the week, we had awards and the famous/infamous JO dance. The five of us from Marquette stayed an extra day to go downhill skiing at Park City's hill, which was obviously extremely easy for us, because it was nice to let gravity do the work for once. The next morning we flew home, proud to represent the Great Lakes Region and the Superiorland Ski Club.

-Blake Murray

www.superiorlandskiclub.com

Fun ° Fitness ° Friendship



The Superiorland Cross-Country
Ski Club Presents:

Bike & Kayak Swap

Saturday, April 28, 2012

*Sell your used bikes and kayaks *

Buy "new to you" equipment

9:00am-12:30pm: Drop Off

1:00pm: Early Entrance for Ski Club
members only!

1:15pm-3:00pm: General Public Sale

3:00pm-3:30pm: Pick up of unsold
equipment

Location: Marquette National
Guard Armory, 1820 Lincoln Ave.

15% Sales Commission to Superiorland Ski Club with all
proceeds benefiting Ski Club Youth Programs

For information email: Tom at
wagnert60@gmail.org

Become a ski club member!