



SKI FOR LIGHT BULLETIN

Summer 2016

*News and Information about the People and Programs of SFL International
Skiing. Sharing. Learning.*

The mission of Ski for Light is to enhance the quality of life and independence of visually or mobility-impaired adults through a program of cross country skiing.

Ski for Light, Inc., 1455 West Lake Street, Minneapolis, MN 55408-2648
Phone: 612-827-3232 - Web Site: www.sfl.org - General Information: Info@sfl.org

President's Message

by Scott McCall

Hello SFL Friends,

I hope that everyone is having a safe and enjoyable Summer. Over the years, I have been inspired and challenged by the variety and intensity of physical activities pursued by members of our community.

Summer is a busy time for the SFL Event Planning Committee. This year's committee is chaired by Heather Berg and you will read more about the 2017 SFL week later in this edition of the bulletin. Be sure to visit www.sfl.org to complete your application for 2017.

As I was preparing this article, I received the sad news of the death of long-time friend and dedicated volunteer Kjell Skavnes, who passed away on June 28th, following an extended illness. Kjell died almost exactly one year after another much loved Viking, Arne Landvik-Larsen. Reflecting on these friendships and on the numerous contributions of Kjell and Arne, I was reminded of the strong bonds of friendship and support that have existed between SFL and the Norwegian-American community for our forty two-year history.

Most of you are familiar with Olav Pedersen's vision and efforts to bring the Ridderrenn concept to Colorado in 1975. In addition to generous support from the Norwegian government, the Sons of Norway, led by its President Tor Dahl, played a key role in raising funds and providing guides for SFL's first event.

Our second president, Bjarne Eikevik was instrumental in obtaining ongoing financial support for SFL from the Sons of Norway Foundation. Jan Haug provided skis, boots, and poles to many early SFL participants. The contributions of Bjarne and Jan are recognized each year through the President's award and the ski package that is given to a first-time participant.

For almost each year of the 1980's, Kjell and Arne transported ski equipment to events and managed ski fitting at the beginning of each event. In the early 90's, Minneapolis business man Tore Lund organized major fundraising events for SFL. These are only a few examples of countless contributions made by this early group of supporters. To learn more about these and other pioneers and their contributions visit the SFL history page of our web site www.sfl.org, or better yet, engage one of us old timers in a conversation over a beverage or two at the next event.

Generous support from Sons of Norway individuals, lodges, and the foundation continues to be vital to SFL. Annual gifts from lodges in every district provide an important source of financial support. Wherever we hold an international event, we can count on lodge members to volunteer as guides and airport greeters, and in many other roles.

(Continued on Page 2.)

Eivind Heiberg, CEO of the Sons of Norway, is a valuable member of the SFL Board. For many years, the Sons of Norway has generously contributed space for SFL in their office in Minneapolis and staff support for a variety of projects throughout the year.

For the past two years, Borton Overseas Travel, owned by long-time SFL supporter Kjell Berg, has provided generous support for the official team that represents SFL at the Ridderrenn.

We were honored to have the current president of the Sons of Norway, Jon Tehven, visit our 2016 event along with the current ambassador to the US from Norway, Kare Aas.

Due to space limitations, I have failed to mention many individuals who have generously supported SFL through their gifts of time, energy, and money, but I hope that I have conveyed the message that the generous and long-standing support that Ski for Light has received from the Norwegian-American community has been instrumental in our growth as an organization and is greatly appreciated. In fact, there were times when this support was critical to our very survival. Tusen Takk!



Mark Your Calendars for Another Week of Fun in Colorado!

By Heather Berg, Ski for Light 2017 Event Chair

Greetings Ski for Light friends and family! I hope this finds you all enjoying an active, healthy and happy summer.

Although the sun is high in the sky, the breeze is warm and snow skiing is not on most folks' minds, planning for the 2017 SFL week is in full swing.

As you may already know, SFL will be returning to its roots once again in Colorado for this event. From February 5th to the 12th we will be lodging and skiing at Snow Mountain Ranch, part of the YMCA of the Rockies in Granby, Colorado. Snow Mountain Ranch is a long-time favorite location for many SFL participants which should come as no surprise as it is consistently ranked as one of the top Nordic ski centers in North America. There is ski terrain for absolutely every level of skier and that terrain is expertly prepared and tended by a highly skilled and dedicated grooming team. Best of all, thanks to its elevation of approximately 9,000 feet above sea level we can all but guarantee the snow will be plentiful and conditions ideal for a terrific week in the tracks.

In addition to unparalleled skiing, SMR boasts a snow tubing hill, an indoor pool and a variety of other accommodations. Furthermore, lodging and skiing at the same location means no daily shuttle

rides to and from the ski site, making for long and fulfilling ski days.

SMR offers a variety of lodging accommodations in three separate buildings ensuring that there will be housing to suit every need.

If the prospect of long days of superb skiing and comfortable accommodations hasn't whetted your appetite consider that SFL and SMR are working together to provide a selection of hearty meal plans, fun and engaging evening entertainment and some new and exciting on-snow activities.

Ski for Light is also pleased to announce that our entire website, including event information, applications and all related forms, is undergoing a major overhaul thanks to the considerable efforts of a few dedicated volunteers. The intent is to improve accessibility of the information for all users and to streamline the information gathering and management for the planning committee. All information, forms and documents related to the 2017 event will be up on our new site and ready for use by August 1st.

So why wait, head on over to the SFL website after August 1st, check out all the exciting event details, fill out your application and you'll be on your way to being part of the 42nd annual Ski for Light week of skiing, sharing and learning.

Looking forward to seeing you all in the tracks!

Tusen Takk:

A Recap of the 2016 Ridderweek

By Sheila Styron

I was thrilled to have been chosen to represent Ski for Light at the 2016 Ridderrenn in the beautiful mountains of Beitostolen Norway. It was spring there, and I never needed my parka once. Our group consisted of 12 intrepid cross country skiers, and 3 others besides myself were chosen to officially represent the United States. Denise Avant was selected as a VIP, and the lucky guides were Rich Milsteadt who was kind enough to ski with me and whom I profusely thank, along with Lars Johansen, who was unfortunately unable to attend due to an injury.

Nearly 15 countries were represented at the 2016 Ridderrenn, and there were over 300 Norwegian national guardsmen and 400 plus university students in pursuit of OM/rehab training/teaching degrees always around to assist with guiding, ski waxing, driving and the amazing buffet. Imagine what could be possible if we could get all those US university students to help out at Ski for Light!

One still gets delicious airline food when flying internationally, setting the stage for all the fine fare we enjoyed in Norway. Buffets are worth the aggravation there, where one can easily sample more than one variety of salmon at every meal, which I did, not to mention all the desserts, a definite hit with our group! I studied Norwegian via iPhone from practically the moment I learned I had been chosen and had the best time trying it out with my distant cousins all the Norwegians.... My mother was an Ingebretsen.

It is a lot of work to bring a guide dog to Norway, but Paxton was an asset walking around Oslo and around the Radisson in Beitostolen. He got to hang out and play with some Norwegian labs on the last day when there was an option of skiing 5, 10 or 20 K. None of us came in last, and I had fun and did well with the target shooting earlier in the week during the biathlon, which was a big surprise!

Just about my favorite moment happened on Thursday, when several in our group took a picnic break and drove to the mountains where we tucked

our feet down into little snow depressions and sat on our jackets while enjoying lunch. The group reminisced about Ski for Light and previous trips to Norway, and I vowed to never forget how contented I felt that day.

We worked off lunch by skiing down to the stadium, and getting lost along the way, which only meant we got to do even more skiing!

I loved attending the Ridderrenn and highly recommend visiting Norway and becoming more acquainted with the wonderful Norwegians and their beautiful country. Thank you Ski for Light!

Almost too Much to be Fun!

By Nino Pacini

A handful of weeks ago, I received an email from a captain buddy asking if I'd consider riding a double metric hill century (125 miles and ten thousand feet of climbing) with him on Saturday, June 18th. Having done a short version of this ride (single metric century) years ago with another friend and having had time to dull my memory, I said "sure I would".

We drove up to my captain Herb's sister's cabin in Rose City, the northeastern part of Michigan's lower peninsula, Friday evening so we could be closer to the start Saturday morning. That next morning we left for the ride start in Boyne City (about 70 miles west) at 5:30AM. After a quick stop at McDonalds for some human fuel, we arrived at the Boyne City High School at 6:40. We picked up our packets, prepped my Trek T2000 and ourselves, and were ready to roll by about 7:10. It then took about 10 minutes for my captain to fire up all his electronic devices so we didn't cross the electronic start line until 7:23.

At a crisp 57 degrees, I thought I might be a bit chilly for the start. The kit for the day was one from our local cycling race club the Wolverines.

It's a race fit kit (very thin material and a snug fit) and I don't like being cold so I decided to wear a thin skull cap under my helmet to trap some additional heat. That didn't last long as just after the start there's a 2 mile climb at about a 4% grade. It didn't take

long for me to generate enough heat so that I could strip off that cap. Forecast temperatures for the day were about 90 degrees and humid, thus the thin kit and bucket of sunscreen!

The only trouble of the day came at about the three-mile mark when we got a flat. It really sucked having to fix it and watch many people I knew roll by as we tried to figure out why the replacement tube wasn't holding air. I think the pump has a bad seal so there we were with no pump. We asked about 50 people who were rolling by if they had a pump and... funny thing... no one did. Many offered CO2, but generally they don't offer enough pressure for a tandem. Finally we decided to try one anyway just so that we could roll until we saw a SAG or made it to a rest stop (where they would have a real pump). We blasted off for our second start at about 8AM and had no more mechanical issues for the rest of the ride. Turns out that the CO2 gave us about 90PSI, but we fixed that 12 miles later at the first rest stop with a serious floor pump. For our Michigan roads and team weight, I usually run about 115 PSI.

Having lost about 20-30 minutes during our mechanical stop and feeling good, we decided to skip the second rest stop at the 25-mile mark. I'm happy we did as immediately after pulling out of the rest stop there was a 12-14% climb that went on and on and on. That was bad enough while in full warm riding mode, but would have been much more difficult if we were just starting up from the rest stop.

We soldiered on for another 25 miles, hill after hill until the lunch stop came into view at the 50 mile mark. I was close to being out of water and running low on energy when we rolled in and took a break. I use a camelback and had already consumed about 70-80 ounces by that point, but the temperatures had been climbing rapidly and now it was about 85 degrees and humid.

This ride has wonderful rest stops featuring everything you might want from peanut butter to pickles, water to watermelon, strawberries to sunscreen (yes, I seriously re-applied) and sandwiches as well. After a turkey sandwich with lots of mustard, fruit and a bunch of fluid, we were ready to head out again (about 25 minutes).

We actually had a slight downhill from the lunch stop and that helped boost my energy and confidence levels as our legs warmed back up to operating temperature. Our next hill of note came 12 miles later at the 62-mile mark. We turned left from some road onto another road and BAM, the road went up! Herb started reading off grade percentages at 15 and the hill topped out at 19.5%. It wasn't that long, but it sure increased the heart rate!! Why is it that the downhills go by so quickly!!!

Five miles later we again turned and the road tilted skyward steeply. Herb started reading off percentages at 12% and at 16% I suggested he should save his breath for pedaling. He said that he was pedaling and that the grade was now constant anyway. That hill seemed to go on quite a while, but it was probably only a half mile or so. By the time we crested we were rolling at just under 5 miles an hour, not that I could have done that for an hour!!

I was starting to have serious reservations about being able to finish the next 45+ miles of hills (including "the WALL")!!! Decision point came at the 80-mile mark where the idiots (I wasn't all that happy by now) continued forward and all the smart people turned right. When Herb told me that we were at the point where the routes split, I instantly perked up and asked if he thought he had another 45 miles in his legs. I was truly hoping that he'd at least hesitate before saying "yes", but he didn't. He said right off "sure I do, but I'm not so sure about the hills". "AH" I thought, "perhaps this ride won't end up being a total bummer, after all"!!! I quickly pointed out that the distance included the hills, but he said he wanted to try. Since about 10% of me wanted to go for it also, the more intelligent part of me lost the battle and we went straight ahead. Oh, well, perhaps it wouldn't be so bad, after all, there was a rest stop coming up very shortly.

WRONG!!! I don't know who messed up, but the next rest stop wasn't for another 14 miles at the 94-mile mark. This meant that we had just ridden about 44 miles of hills since lunch. I was ready for a stop. In fact, just before we saw it I asked Herb to pull in at the next store/market/gas station we came across since I was about out of water and the sun was seriously cooking us by now. Temperatures had topped 90, there was no breeze anymore and the

humidity was high. I was sweating so much that the first few seconds of each descent almost felt cold.

The rest stop was a small new church out in the middle of nowhere and boy was I glad to find it! After downing about a half gallon, I'm not kidding, of cold cherry/raspberry something I felt like a human again. I gobbled up a couple bananas that I dipped into a cup of peanut butter and some orange slices. We sat in the shade for a few minutes while Herb studied the map (almost since the start we had had to resort to following road markings for the route). Before we started putting down roots, we got up and climbed back aboard my Trek for the next leg of misery, oops, I mean the ride.

The next stage was only a 10-mile loop that brought us right back to the same church/rest stop. Yes it did cross my mind to suggest we simply skip those 10 miles, but I didn't even get that far. I'd committed to finishing the entire enchilada at the route split so finish it I would!

Once again I was cheered slightly as we left the church since the first little bit was downhill. That quickly changed as the hills resumed. These were longer grades, but only in the 4 to 6% range. I say only because they sure felt steep! We finished that loop in about 45 minutes and returned to the church by about 3PM. This time when we pulled in one of the volunteers came right over and started filling me up with more cold cherry/raspberry stuff. It was goood!!!

Rolling out of the church for the third time we were at the 104-mile mark and the next rest stop was in Central Lake, only 10 miles away. "Yippee" I thought, quickly followed by "Central Lake, O poopy!!!!" Central Lake is like a hole in the Michigan hills. In fact, we had a beautiful 2-mile descent reaching speeds over 48MPH while occasionally tapping the brakes.

Unfortunately, we didn't find any rest stop there and we had to climb back out of that same hole in the ground. Yup, those same 2 very sunny miles took much longer to climb at 5MPH. The grade was about 8% and by the time we crested I thought for sure that there was steam coming out of my ears. Sweat was running out of my helmet, down my nose and

dripping onto my legs. More sweat was dripping off my elbows and I thought for sure that it was time for a break!!! The sun felt like a heat lamp and, for a while after we stopped, even the shade felt too hot to sit in. We took a 5-minute break and then we resumed the fun.

Our next stop came at the 119-mile mark in East Jordan. Speaking of East Jordan, the next time you step on a metal truncated dome plate in a curb cut you should know that it was probably made in the East Jordan Iron Works, but I digress! There was supposed to be a rest stop there, but I wasn't interested in anything but a Coke as big as my head with lots of ice! In fact, bigger than my head so that I could stick my head in it!! We bypassed the final turn by a block so that we could stop at a gas station in search of my preferred refreshment.

The biggest cup they had was 64 ounces so I had to settle for that. It did not take me long to suck it down and it did the trick. I felt almost human again and ready to face "The WALL"!

About 3 miles outside East Jordan is a 100-yard stretch of road lovingly called The Wall. This Wall is only about 100 yards long, but it's about an 18% grade. The 3 miles leading up to it are a mild 2 - 3% grade so you don't really get much of a break before you turn the corner and it goes UP.

I've done "The WALL" a bunch of times and it's always been difficult, but I've never done it 122 miles into a killer ride. The secret is to relax as much as possible on the approach, then steadily apply all the power you have for those final 300 feet and hope that it's enough. I thought "Coke, now's the time to do your stuff!!" Our speed quickly dropped to a crawl, but we still managed to pass a few people walking their singles up the steep part.

By the time we oozed over the crest we sounded like a couple steam locomotives and I had difficulty waving an acknowledgement to the cheers we received from the people standing up there. I did manage to free a hand long enough to wave before quickly returning it to the bars as the bike began rocketing down the other side. Normally, this is a fun rollercoaster section as the speed from one descent pushes you most of the way up the next hill,

but we were too tired to stand and take those few strokes that we needed. We stayed seated and slogged up the crests of the hills before rocketing down the next descent. "YEA," I was thinking, "we're about done!!!"

Five miles later, and just a few more hills, we rolled back into Boyne City and crossed the finish line to the cheers of our predecessors. Herb dashed off to find a beer, or six, while I just laid on the grass in the shade. We had almost 90 minutes before the showers closed so I had time to chill!

Total mileage was 130, 10K in elevation gain, 8:44 ride time and 10:15 total time. Our average was 15.4 which really surprised me as I thought we were going much slower than that, but then again those 48MPH descents probably cranked the average right up there.

Yes, I'm happy I completed the entire enchilada and no I'd not ride it again!! Not the 200K version that is, I'd consider doing the 160K/100 mile version. After that, we'll see.

Remembering Kjell Skavnes

By Laura Oftedahl

My first time at Ski for Light was a true Norwegian delight. Having a Norwegian name, and interested in learning more about my Norwegian heritage, I was paired with Kjell Skavnes as my guide and Brit Pedersen as my roommate. It was January 1980 at Ranch Rudolf in Traverse City Michigan and I was 40 pounds overweight and smoked cigarettes. That week changed my life forever.

The first day Kjell showed me the basics of cross-country skiing; I had ice skated as a kid and took one downhill ski course in the icy Midwest, so it wasn't totally foreign to me. We set out on the trail and it went pretty well, but after a few kilometers, I had enough for my first day. So my trusty guide pulled out the trail map and saw a road just one kilometer ahead. Hooray, for my aching body! I'm slogging along when I hear, "Oh no, Uff Da" It's a river, not a road...so we had three agonizing kilometers back to the ranch. I had blisters and bruises everywhere.

For the next 30-some years, Kjell had great fun poking me about how grumpy I was that day limping

all the way back to the bus. And I reminded him of his poor map reading skills!

During the off-snow time that week, I had the perfect guide to show me the Norwegian way of having fun. Kjell and his sidekick, Arne Landvik-Larsen, knew and were loved by everyone.

Race Day came along with a 5k course, and I was ready to finally show people what I could do, not what I couldn't do... you know what I'm talking about VIPs and MIPs. I had never participated in anything like this. I learned how competitive I was, but was huffing and puffing up the hills (cigarette smoking). And then my boot came untied and I thought, 'aha, I can catch my breath while I tie my boot.' Whereupon I hear yelling, "What are you doing? You don't stop to tie your shoe during a race!"

Kjell was quiet and unassuming and had a huge heart. In addition to being a dedicated guide, he was creative and generous, donating his sports car racing winnings to SFL. Arne, too, came up with a fun way to financially support SFL by instituting the SFL hugging tradition. Tusen takk for helping Ski for Light in so many ways.

Lunch in Copenhagen

By Laura Oftedahl

The best part of Ski for Light is the people. Meet at SFL the first time and we're friends for life. I was reminded of this earlier this year when I travelled to Denmark for the first time. My mother's background was Danish, so I was eager to see Copenhagen.

I emailed Sven and Kirsten Mogensen (who have attended a number of International SFL events) to get together. They chose a scrumptious place, an old world family restaurant. And what a spread we had: pickled herring, blue cheese, red cabbage, shrimp (they say 'shrimps'), and other Danish delicacies... some of my favorite foods! Thank you Sven and Kirsten for your SFL hospitality! Next year, it's a dining experience in San Francisco.



Adaptive Summer Fun in Oregon!

By Nancy Stevens

Oregon Adaptive Sports in Bend, OR is working hard to develop and expand summer programs for people who are blind and visually impaired. We have a few dates set up for hiking, kayaking and rock climbing at the rock gym in Bend.

July 28 and 29 we will be kayaking and rock climbing.

August 25 we will be hiking at Smith Rock State Park, with options to stay in Bend for additional activities.

September 29th will be our final hike of the season up Tumalo Mountain, a moderate to difficult hike with additional activities on September 30th and October first.

There are fabulous opportunities for hiking, cycling and kayaking. We hope your travels will include a trip to central Oregon in the near future.

For more information about Oregon Adaptive Sports please contact Pat Addabo, Program Director, at 541-306-4774 or pat@oregonadaptivesports.org. Cheers!



Methow Valley, WA

Ski for Light 2017

The third annual event will be held January 8 - 12, 2017 at the Mazama Country Inn in Mazama, WA.

This adventure is 4 nights and 3 days of Nordic skiing on the Methow Valley trail system groomed by Methow Trails. The Mazama Country Inn is offering a variety of room options plus dining on site including 3 meals a day. Other amenities include out the door skiing, on site hot tub and sauna, communal seating areas, two outdoor stores with soft goods and ski rentals and a well stocked general store within walking distance.

Additional activities within driving, or skiing distance include an outdoor ice rink in Winthrop, local brew pub, winery with a tasting room and a handful of restaurants, galleries and other shops.

The Methow Trail system includes 200K of professionally groomed classic and skate skiing tracks. Methow Trails has agreed to groom a large section for Ski for Light during our stay. All other trails are also available, just not double tracked.

For more information contact Nancy McKinney Milsteadt, nanomckinney@gmail.com.

The SFL Bulletin

Editor: [Andrea Goddard](#)

Layout and graphics: [Björg Dunlop](#)

Electronic version: [Larry Showalter](#)

The SFL Bulletin is published three times a year. It is available in ink-print or via e-mail.

If you wish to change formats, please send your request to: webmaster@sfl.org

The current as well as past issues of the Bulletin are also available online at www.sfl.org.

In addition to an online edition that may be read in your browser, you will find a downloadable pdf version of the current issue.

For future Bulletins, remember that your contributions and feedback are always most welcome.

You may submit articles as e-mail or as a word or text attachment. Send all items to:

Andrea Goddard

SFL Bulletin Editor

E-mail: chinook80@centurylink.net

The deadline for the Fall 2016 Bulletin is October 1, 2016. We look forward to hearing from you.

Ski for Light, Inc. is a registered trademark. All rights reserved.



SKI FOR LIGHT, INC.

1455 West Lake Street
Minneapolis, MN 55408-2648

Corporate Sponsors

Our thanks go to the following companies that have provided products or services to help support Ski for Light.

Many of these companies have stood behind us for years – and we're grateful. Be sure to think of our friends when you're gearing up for your next adventure.

- * JanSport * Acorn * Adventure Medical Kits * Blue Ridge Chair Works *
- * Borton Overseas Travel * Bridgedale Socks * Chums * Clif Bar *
- * Cocoons/Live Eyewear * Columbia * Crazy Creek * Dansko * Darn Tough Socks *
- * Farm to Feet * FasterSkier.com * Fjallraven * Fox River Mills * Haiku * Kavu * Olly Dog *
- * Patagonia * PEET Shoe Dryers * Peppers Polarized Eyewear * Travelon * Zukes *