



SKI FOR LIGHT BULLETIN

Spring 2010

News and Information about the People and Programs of SFL International

A program of cross-country skiing benefiting blind, visually impaired, and mobility-impaired individuals and their guides

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 Marion Elmquist

It's turning to spring in Iowa and the daffodils are popping up, the grass is getting green, but I'm getting ready to go back to winter in Norway for the Ridderrenn. This year's SFL International Event was nearly perfect, and you can read all about it in a separate article. Meanwhile, mark your calendars for Ski for Light 2011, the 36th annual International event, January 30 to February 6 at Snow Mountain Ranch, near Granby, Colorado. Many of you are familiar with the wonderful trails at SMR - more than 80 kilometers in total - where we have skied seven times previously, the first time in 1992, and most recently in 2006. Snow Mountain Ranch is part of the YMCA of the Rockies and is near the Winter Park Resort. We will be staying right at Snow Mountain Ranch this time, a change from our previous visits to the area, in three hotel buildings where we can literally ski in and ski out. Snow Mountain Ranch is consistently rated as one of the top Nordic centers in the country, and with their new trail grooming equipment the tracks should be as nearly perfect as they can be.

I've written in these pages previously about the challenges of finding the perfect combination of good skiing matched with convenient lodging and a reasonable distance from our destination airport. The primary factor is a Nordic center with enough good beginner trails and practice terrain plus some more challenging trails that still provide safe skiing conditions - not to mention the likelihood of snow. Snow Mountain Ranch has provided all that and more in the past. The site selection committee is always on the lookout for areas that meet our needs, and we have been looking hard at trying to find another Midwest location to add to our roster of two good western locations, Colorado and Utah.

Get Involved!

Later in this Bulletin, you will read the new roster of Board members and officers. Twelve people joined or were re-elected to the Board in the recent elections, and I want to thank the nine retiring Board members for their hard work and service to SFL.

As you all know, Ski for Light is an all-volunteer organization and it takes the work of more than 75 guides, participants and others who serve on one or more of the various standing committees of Ski for Light each year to keep the organization going. The chairs and committee members work throughout the year to do all the various tasks that need to be done. You will see a listing of these Committee Chairs for 2010-2012 in another part of the Bulletin. If you would like to get more involved in Ski for Light, please contact me or the chair of the committee that is of interest to you.

YOU can help us continue to, as we say, "Keep Making a Good Thing Better."

Thanks



Marion Elmquist, SFL President, and Howard Peterson, Soldier Hollow Director, cut the ribbon to officially open the Ski for Light Trail. Holding the ribbon on the left is Andrea Faust, Soldier Hollow, and on the right are guide Kathy Emig and visually-impaired skier Suzanne Brown. The Ski for Light Trail sign is in the background.

Event Wrap-Up

Compiled By Vicki Post

Ski for Light 2010 was filled with the magic that seems to happen at every International Event. This year, SFL welcomed some 240 people and the usual contingent of guide dogs. But numbers only tell part of the story; the rest comes from a lot of generous, courageous and enthusiastic people. First, some highlights from 2010 Event chair, Cara Barnes:

"On Tuesday there was a ribbon cutting at Soldier Hollow to dedicate the Ski for Light Trail as a permanent part of the Soldier Hollow cross-country trail system. SFL President Marion Elmquist did the honors with 'skissors' made from a pair of child's cross-country skis.

That evening participants were treated to a local improvisational comedy group. It was a fun-filled show which included a lot of audience participation. On Thursday evening participants had the opportunity to take in some other local talent. Some chose to travel to Salt Lake City to hear an open rehearsal of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, while others chose an evening program by two nationally known story-tellers; Debi Richan and Mary Gay Ducey.

A revival of Friday Fun Day included a BBQ and a crazy hat contest. Esteemed judges Tim Byas, Richard Epstein and Chrissy Anderson had a difficult time choosing among all the great hats, but did manage to award some prizes although it is unknown whether any bribes were involved.

And let's not forget about skiing, skiing, skiing! The trails were wonderfully groomed and the weather was nearly perfect for optimal skiing

conditions."

From first-time skier, Jeanne Partaka:

Well, my story is a bit odd, but amazingly I gained my confidence after doing my first flip on skis. The first day, when I built up enough speed on the practice hill, I was going great! My guide had taken off her skis because she had not expected me to fly so fast, but just a tiny unbalanced moment threw me into a downward spiral! lol. She was racing along side, and I think received a few laughs from spectators. After that impact, I thought, "If I can take a spill like that and get up without any damage, I can do this! From that moment, I used mind over matter to tackle the first ski experience I had ever had. I loved every moment of the challenges, excitement, and victories. The week in Provo was not just a sporting event for me, but a healing week. So many past moments of doubt about what I can or cannot do were flushed away that week, and I only have gratitude and awesome memories from the absolutely incredible organization known as Ski for Light. Lastly, I would like to say that I plan on attending next year and bringing several more people with me!

From first-time skier, Christine Malec:

One of my nicest memories from the 2010 Ski For Light International was cheering for skiers crossing the finish line. I was still feeling great from having completed the 5K course without falling, a first for me. I was standing with my awesome guide and others, leaning on the wooden railing of the deck above the last few meters of the course. The air was crisp and the sun was bright and almost too hot in

our faces as the names of the skiers were announced. I cheered for everyone, but I cheered especially loudly for those I knew, friends I'd made during this amazing week! We'd spent such lovely times soaking together in the hot tub, socializing in the bar, chatting on the bus and sharing meals.

As a first time participant, a lot of things made the week unforgettable, but the most compelling part was the incredible people I met. The generosity of the guides and other volunteers was so beautiful, and yet when I said so, each one answered that they got as much out of it as the participants. Having been there, no one could doubt that they meant it. Cheering as friends I knew crossed the finish line, I was struck, as I had so often been, by the guts, determination and sense of adventure that we all share. Frankly, I've never met so many interesting, accomplished and likable blind people before. As skiers passed whose names I didn't recognize, I thought how little time there had been to get to know everyone. I can't wait to attend next year, renew friendships, and meet more dazzling and fun people. Thanks to everyone who makes this excellent event happen.

From first-time guide, Pat Lawrence:

SKI FOR LIGHT – AN INSPIRING EXPERIENCE

After mulling it over for the last few years, knowing that it was something that I really wanted to do, I finally signed up and did it! "It" was to be a guide at the Ski for Light International event in Soldier Hollow, outside of Provo, Utah. It turned out to be one of the most rewarding weeks of my life! I was nervous at first, wondering if I would be a good enough skier to guide someone who was totally dependent on me. But I reasoned that I have had years of experience as a North Star Ski Touring club member from Minnesota. Al Volkers, the North Star's champion SFL participant, has attended for nine out of the last eleven years. He was my source of encouragement, as well as that of our other new North Star participants, Dee and Rob Anderson, Julie Nelson and Mike Jubert. We were all proud of Al when he was given a round of applause for bringing in so many new recruits, and Minnesota was recognized as the state that had the most volunteers. The experience was not only gratifying as a volunteer. It also made me much more aware of our blind community and what they accomplish in spite of what we as sighted consider extremely challenging obstacles, and the many things that we take for granted! One night at dinner I sat between two men, both lawyers. One had been blind since

birth and the other partially blind since high school. It's hard to imagine the challenges they faced during that educational journey. And skiing! Many of them (men and women) could give Al Volkers a run for his money!

The SFL philosophy is to have all participants and guides mingle and interact throughout the week, at the ski area, during meals, and at the many social events (including three nights of dancing!). By the end of the week, you're not sure who is blind and who is sighted! The interaction is an important part of learning and better understanding the needs and challenges of the blind community. Everyone benefits from the experience. As I told my ski participant, LeAnn, who has been blind since birth, "You have taught me so much more than I could have ever taught you". It was truly an uplifting and inspiring week.

From SFL guide, Karen Anderson:

I had the privilege of guiding Jeff Knox this year at Ski for Light. Since Jeff is such a strong skier, my role was more simply lifeguard than guide. Becoming his friend and admirer during the week was a laugh-filled adventure that left me refreshed, refueled, and in awe. I am in awe that after falling out of a tree twenty years ago and becoming paralyzed from the waist down, Jeff has not only overcome the accident personally, but has a rare wealth of energy and talent which he draws on to inspire fellow participants. Here is an example of his gift:

It was race day, and since we were the first pair out on the 5K course, there was no traffic. So for the first time all week, we could let it rip. I could barely keep up with Jeff, in spite of repeating to myself my mantra - "You have legs. Use them." We were both spent at the glorious finish line. But instead of high fives, quenching of thirst, and general basking in his accomplishment, Jeff did an immediate 180, and sped back out on the course. He wanted to go back a couple of kilometers to intercept his sitski buddies, and talk them through the last part of their race, lifeguard in tow. So off we flew. Consequently, his buddies probably finished a little faster, smiled a lot more, hurt less, and definitely felt the love. And I am a better person for having witnessed it.

Thank you, Jeff!

And finally, we at Ski for Light would like to thank and honor all the "worker bees" who gave so generously of their time, elbow grease, ingenuity

and technological skill to make the Event the success that it was; it couldn't happen without you.

And hats off to everyone who participated so fully in this year's event; we look forward to doing it all again next year in Colorado. Stay tuned for details about next year's Event; for the latest updates, you can always check our web site: www.sfl.org.

Ridderrenn 2010

This year's Ridderrenn is being held later than usual, so we will have to wait until the summer issue of the Bulletin for their stories. Meanwhile, Ski For Light is sending one official team to this year's Event, and we managed to get a few words from them before their departure.

First, from skier, Theresa Montano:

My plan was to save my money and go to the Ridderrenn in 2011 or 2012. I was working on my ski technique and skiing ability since I only learned to cross country ski three years ago.

I was completely surprised and honored when I received the call from Marion with the news that the Executive board had voted for me to represent the SFL American team! The work I have done for Ski for Light is a labor of love. I enjoy working with our Corporate Sponsors, and on the public relations committee. It takes a lot of work and effort for our annual event and I am so very proud to be a small part of it.

My Guide is Bob Civiak and when I told him I had an injured MCL, and I wasn't the fastest skier, he said "that is all right, the sun stays up until around 8:00 at night, we'll have time to finish"- That Bob will be fun to ski with, he is already teasing me!

I am so excited and honored to spend time in Norway and learn about the Norwegian culture and Country. Thank you Ski for Light!

And this from SFL guide, Bob Civiak:

I am very excited about being one of the official SFL representatives to the Ridderrenn. I have gone on my own once before, so I have an idea of what a wonderful week it will be. Our Norwegian friends take very good care of the entire North American delegation, but I am expecting extra special treatment as the official SFL representative.

Whooo! Hoo!

Thank you, Ski for Light!



SFL Family News

Passings

This past February, SFL said good-bye to two of its long-time members, Patricia Beattie and Laurinda Steele Lacey. The two were friends, roommates, and often sang together in the talent show as the Klister Sisters. They each left quite a legacy, along with many wonderful memories. We remember them fondly in the following reflections:

Laurinda Steele Lacey (1950-2010)

By Annemarie Cooke

It was my first 10K race at Ski for Light and my guide and I were coming up fast behind a woman in a hat so familiarly day-glo orange that even a low vision diva like me could see it. She was wearing the familiar semiofficial tights that looked like a Jackson Pollack masterpiece. Yes, it was MY ROOMMATE, Laurinda!

"Hey Laurinda," I screeched, panting with effort. "Oh honey," soothed the familiar voice so distinctively hers. "You go right ahead and pass me; I know how much this means to you. You know I'm built for comfort, not for speed."

Another act of kindness that formed the continuum of my friendship with Laurinda Steele Lacey, a friendship that had started at the 1993 Ridderrenn. Five American women shared two rooms at the hotel; three in one, Laurinda and I in another. We discovered camaraderie in our coffee consumption, body clocks, likes and dislikes. And our consummate good fortune at being placed together. We resolved to always room together at SFL and that we did until her illness put an end to her skiing days and our shared champagne and fun together at SFL.

Most SFL veterans likely remember hearing the "Friends of Ski for Light, Friends of Ski for Light" Laurinda sang outside the dining room on most SFL evenings, hoping to raise more funds as well as friends for the organization she loved so. Laurinda was always looking for ways to serve others. She crocheted outfits for dolls the Salvation Army donates to poor kids at the holidays....her hands were always busy doing some sort of craft project. In all the time we knew each other, I don't recall her ever saying a mean word about anyone under any circumstance; a person larger than life she was.

Laurinda's sunny disposition and persistent good cheer carried her through a long battle with brain

tumors that wouldn't quit, as well as a condo deck collapse that left her unable to walk for some two years. When I last visited Laurinda at the end of January, I realized that this likely would be our last time together. As I hugged her goodbye with tears in my eyes, she was unable to speak in a regular voice but she did say goodbye in the best voice she could muster. Farewell and thank you for your kindness, generosity and examples of tremendous grace under fire, my dear roommate and friend.

Laurinda is survived by her husband, Chip Lacey, and her mother, Sally Steele.

Patricia M. Beattie (1936 - 2010)

By Laura Oftedahl

During the week in Provo, long-time SFL VIP and former board member Pat Beattie passed away of cancer in a hospital in Alexandria, VA. Pat attended 17 International events over the years, the last being in 2005. Many might remember her as the winner of the raffle in Anchorage 2003 when she got to ride in a dog sled in the ceremonial start of the Iditarod.

Pat left a real mark in the field of access for blind and visually impaired people with her 25-year career in legislative policy in Washington DC. The American Foundation for the Blind, National Industries for the Blind and other organizations were very lucky to have Pat's knowledge, skills, and energy to advocate for equal access and opportunity for blind and visually impaired persons in transportation, pedestrian safety, electronic technology, arts and culture and many other arenas.

Pat, who was born and grew up in Elyria, Ohio, was legally blind since early adulthood. She received a bachelor's degree in journalism and public relations and a master's degree in library and information services, both from the University of Toledo.

Like all of us, Pat made a few sitz-marks in the snow, but always got up with a sense of humor and can-do attitude. She was that way with everything she did - from testifying on Capitol Hill to throwing a New Year's bash in her home.

What an irony that Pat Beattie and Laurinda Steele Lacey were roommates at many SFL events, and they died just days apart. Both will be truly missed by the SFL family.

Leslee Lane Hoyum Honored

Leslee Lane Hoyum, who served as secretary and vice-president of Ski for Light, was recently awarded the St. Olav medal by His Majesty King Harald V of

Norway for her contributions in maintaining ties between the Norwegian and American communities. A number of esteemed SFL legends have already received this medal; among them, SFL founder, Olav Pedersen and SFL pioneer, Bud Keith.

The list of organizations for which Hoyum volunteered is long and impressive; she says she is especially proud of her time spent with SFL. She first guided in 1976, and served as Secretary from 1981-86; a time, she says, that was very full.

"I'm not sure I knew what I was getting into, since my volunteer hours were 30 - 40 each week -- after putting in 40 hours at my "real" job. In those days, we didn't have a committee system as you do today. So, the secretary and president chaired the international events and coordinated the guides and skiers. The secretary also handled all the correspondence, public relations, prepared the annual report, wrote the newsletter, solicited funds to support the event, thank you notes and record keeping, to name a few. It was a different world then and we managed it without computers! How about that?"

I did attend the 30th Anniversary as a guest and plan to do so again when SFL turns 40. I am very proud that SFL has continued throughout all these years and know that new leadership is always refreshing. These days I much prefer beaches when the snow flies."

Getting Involved

Over the years, Ski for Light has grown larger and become more complex, and these days, it takes a village to put on our annual International Event. Below you will find a list of committees and their chairs; these are not only the people who spearhead that committee's activities, but they are also the people you would contact if you want to contribute in some way. So please feel free to join them in their work, and enhance your own experience of Ski for Light. Whatever your skill or interest, you really can make a difference. We look forward to hearing from you, and we thank the chairs for the work they do and will do over the next two years.

Committee Chairs, Ski for Light, 2010-2012

Annual Appeal - Suzanne Brown/Scott McCall
Board Development and Elections - Judy Dixon
Budget and Finance - Larry Showalter
Constitution and Bylaws - Wendy David

Corporate Sponsors - Crystal Skahan
 Endowment - Suzanne Brown
 Foundations - Bonnie O'Day
 Guide Recruitment - Brook Yates
 Long-Range Planning - Scott McCall
 Mobility-impaired Participant Recruitment -
 Dianne Brunswick/Heather Hall
 Publicity and Public Relations - Richard Epstein
 Regional Liaison - TBD
 Risk Management - David Fisk
 Site Selection - Heather Hall
 Ski for Light International Week Planning -
 Theresa Montano
 Ski for Light Bulletin - Vicki Post
 Sons of Norway and Norwegian Community
 Liaison - Marion Elmquist
 Visually-impaired Participant Recruitment -
 Bob Hartt
 Web Site and Communications (ad hoc) -
 Laura Oftedahl/Julie Coppens

New Ski for Light Officers and Board Members Elected

Ski for Light is managed and governed by an elected Board of Directors, while the affairs of the organization are managed between meetings of the full Board by an Executive Committee of the Board. Members of the Board serve four-year terms of office, with approximately half of all Board seats up for election every two years. All officers serve two-year terms of office. During the recent Annual Meeting twelve people were elected to the SFL Board.

Re-elected to additional four-year terms as Directors were Renee Abernathy, Doug Boose, Judith Dixon and Marion Elmquist. Also elected to the Board were new members Tim Byas, Richard Epstein, Andres Gonzalez, Heather Hall, Robert Hartt, Eivind Heiberg, Theresa Montano and Bonnie O'Day. Elected as a Director Emeritus was Nancy McKinney.

The Board also elected officers for the next two years. Elected were: Marion Elmquist, President; Scott McCall, Vice-President; Heather Hall, Secretary; Doug Boose, Treasurer, Judith Dixon, Director-at-Large; and Brenda Seeger, Director-at-Large. The Executive Committee is comprised of these six officers plus the Immediate Past President, who is currently Larry Showalter.

Congratulations to all of those elected to the Board and/or officer positions.

Our thanks for their many years of service go to departing Directors Jennison Asuncion, Duane Farrar, David Fisichella, John Hollenbach, Valerie Kever, Chris Leghorn, Linda Mumford, John Olnes and Kevin Rich. Our thanks also go to Suzanne Brown, who is leaving the Executive Committee but remaining as a Director. The new Board roster follows.

Ski for Light, Inc. Board of Directors, 2010 - 2012

Marion Elmquist, President - Des Moines, Iowa
 Scott McCall, Vice-President - Atlanta, Georgia
 Heather Hall, Secretary - Girdwood, Alaska
 Doug Boose, Treasurer - Houghton, Michigan
 Judith Dixon, Director-at-Large - Arlington, Virginia
 Brenda Seeger, Director-at-Large -
 Red Lake Falls, Minnesota
 Larry Showalter, Immediate Past President -
 Seattle, Washington
 Renee Abernathy - Dallas, North Carolina
 Cara Barnes - Eureka, California
 Suzanne Brown - Smyrna, Georgia
 Dianne Brunswick - Glendale, Arizona
 Tim Byas - Ft. Collins, Colorado
 Julie Coppens - Cincinnati, Ohio
 Wendy David - Seattle, Washington
 Richard Epstein - Dummerston, Vermont
 David Fisk - Post Mills, Vermont
 Andres Gonzalez - Raleigh, North Carolina
 Robert Hartt - Alexandria, Virginia
 Eivind Heiberg - Minneapolis, Minnesota
 Theresa Montano - Denver, Colorado
 Bonnie O'Day - Alexandria, Virginia
 Laura Oftedahl - Berkeley, California
 Crystal Skahan - Durham, New Hampshire
 Brook Yates - Breckenridge, Colorado

Directors Emeritus

Egil Almaas - Plymouth, Minnesota
 Leif Andol - Huron, South Dakota
 Einar Bergh - Stavanger, Norway
 Nancy McKinney - Seattle, Washington
 Jean Replinger - Marshall, Minnesota

Honorary Director

Dan Rude - President of Sons of Norway,
 Minneapolis, Minnesota

Regional Round-Up

There are nine SFL regional affiliate groups; many offer a variety of summer and fall activities. All of the regionals were founded by people who wanted to recreate their Ski for Light experience in a more local and intimate setting. We encourage you to take advantage of all they have to offer, and to support them in whatever way you can.

For the most up-to-date listing of their activities, you may contact them directly or visit the regional round-up page on our web site: www.sfl.org.

Here are a couple of listings for some summer fun:

Northeast Pennsylvania Regional Sports for Health

Dates: July 25 - August 1, 2010

Land of the Vikings, Sherman PA

Hiking, tandem biking, swimming, canoeing and other activities.

Contact for guides: Joan Chelsen

Phone: (718) 477-7477, Email: ladyvikin@aol.com

Contacts for participants: Donna Goodman

Phone: (410) 730-9430

or Sigi Kay, Phone: (201) 327-5493

Email: lucellekay@gmail.com

TREKK FOR LIGHT

TREKK for Light 2010, a summertime activity of Colorado Ski for Light, will take place August 13-20 in the Rawah Wilderness in northern Colorado.

TREKK is a week-long llama supported hiking trip that has been enjoyed by VIPs and guides alike over the past decade.

TREKK is not a race nor an endurance contest; rather, it is an exhilarating and challenging mountaineering adventure!

Application deadline is May 1. To receive complete information and YOUR application form, contact Vicki Caldwell: Phone: (970) 556-3852
Email: caldwellvicki@comcast.net

Trekk for Light, Montana

Montana Regional Ski for Light will hold its own Trekk for Light event from August 15-19, 2010. We leave Lewistown at 2 pm on the 15th and return on the 19th after we get done cleaning the cabin. The applications must be in by June 1, 2010.

For more information, please contact:
Ed Durbin, Phone: (406) 366-0491
Email: edurbin@midrivers.net

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

If you wish to change formats, please send your request to:

bulletin@sfl.org

For future Bulletins, remember that your contributions and feedback are always most welcome. You may submit articles as e-mail or as a word attachment; if you do not have e-mail, you may send a typed article through the mail. Send all items to:

Vicki Post

E-mail: vickipost@earthlink.net

Address: 1849 Clay St. #2, San Francisco, CA 94109.

The deadline for the summer Bulletin is July 15, 2010. We look forward to hearing from you.

Editor: Vicki Post

E-mail: vickipost@earthlink.net

Layout and graphics: Bjorg Dunlop

E-mail: bjorgmd@aol.com

Electronic version: Duane Farrar and Larry Showalter

E-mail: duano@mindspring.com

E-mail: Larrysho@mindspring.com

Special thanks to: Fram Lodge #3-564, Sons of Norway

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



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 * Birkenstock USA LP * Blue Ridge *

* Canine Hardware * Columbia Sportswear * Dansko * Fox River Mills * Granite Gear *

*Hog Wild * Injinji Footwear * ISIS for Women * Katie's Bumpers * Larabar *

* Leki USA, Inc. * Life Is Good * Marmot * Mountain Hardwear * Pacific Cornetta *

* Park's Sportsman * Running Funky * Terrasoles * Timex * Utilikilts *