

THE VISITOR

A Spectator's Guide to the
American Birkebeiner



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COMMENT

Ok, this isn't your grandmother's Visitor you're holding in your hands. This year for Birkie, we joined forces with the Birkie Foundation and combined the Birkie's Annual Race Guide, which goes out to all the skiers, with our new Visitor Spectator Guide to the Birkie, which we hope gives spectators and family members and even skiers all the info they need to have a great time over Birkie weekend. So if you haven't done so yet, flip this magazine over! It has two covers, one the Visitor, and one the Race guide.

And if you're a skier and you've never visited our little paradise at other times of the year, remember that here in Hayward and Cable we have plenty to offer in ALL seasons — we'd love to see you be a year-round visitor... and perhaps eventually a resident. What could be better than living by the Birkie Trail?

— Paul



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Spectator's Guide to the Birkie!

VISITOR

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THINGS TO KNOW ALL ABOUT THE BIRKIE

The American Birkebeiner ski marathon — the Birkie — is North America’s largest cross-country ski marathon, and the third largest in the world.

- Spans 52 kilometers from Cable to Hayward for skaters, and 56K for classic skiers.
- The Kortelopet — the Birkie’s companion race — is the second largest cross-country ski race in North America at 24 kilometers.
- These two races, the Birkie and Kortelopet, attract nearly 10,500 skiers each year.
- The Birkie is part of the Worldloppet circuit of 20 international ski marathons.
- Over 250,000 skiers have finished Birkie ski events — the Birkie, Kortelopet, and the 13K Prince Haakon (pronounced “HO-ken”) — since the races began in 1973.
- An estimated 40,000 spectators and skiers gather in and around the Hayward area for this annual celebration of winter Nordic sports. Spectators join in the celebration on Hayward’s Main Street by ringing cowbells and cheering on skiers.
- The legendary Birkie Trail is actually a

107-kilometer trail system that weaves its way through the forests of Sawyer and Bayfield counties.

- Used by skiers, runners, bikers, trekkers, and hikers alike, the Birkie Trail is groomed by the American Birkebeiner Ski Foundation and is available for use by outdoor enthusiasts 365 days a year.
- The mission of the Birkie is to promote and conduct the finest international cross-country ski competition and healthy, active lifestyle events; to serve as steward of the unparalleled American Birkebeiner Trail; and to support healthy and active lifestyles among people of all ages and abilities.
- Today, the Birkie has grown into much more than just a race. Today the Birkie represents a year-round, healthy, active lifestyle that provides events for thousands of outdoor fitness enthusiasts of all ages and abilities.
- As of 2014, the American Birkebeiner Ski Foundation has awarded nearly \$400,000 to youth cross-country ski programs across the U.S.



BIRKIE FEVER STRIKES

What is it that defines the intangible Birkie fever? For some it is the visceral anticipation of the challenge, mingled with apprehension, woven with an unspoken camaraderie as fellow adrenaline-junkies make their pilgrimage through the hardwood forests along the Birkie Trail.

For others it is the annual tradition of family and

friends escaping to the north woods, it’s the sound of drums thrumming along the trail, a celebratory post-race shot-ski, or the ringing of cow bells announcing the sweet taste of success.

Birkie Fever is the palpable sensation of determination and accomplishment in the air. For those with Birkie fever, it’s more than a race — it’s a lifestyle and a feeling held close all year through.



BIRKIE ROOTS: MEDIEVAL ADVENTURE

In the year 1206, Norway was in the midst of a brutal civil war. Two “Birkebeiner” skiers — so called for their protective birch bark leggings — skied through the treacherous mountains and rugged forests of Norway’s Osterdalen valley to smuggle Prince Haakon, the son of King Sverresson and Inga of Vartieg, to safety. The flight took the Birkebeiners and prince from Lillehammer to safety in the town of Trondheim. Inga of Vartieg never became queen as the prince’s father was killed before he could return for her in Vartieg. Norwegian history credits the Birkebeiners’ bravery with preserving the life of the boy who later became Norway’s King Haakon Haakonsson IV and forever changed northern Europe’s history by his reign.

The story and painting of the flight were the

inspiration for the first Birkebeiner ski race held in Norway in 1932. To this day, Norwegian skiers still carry a pack, symbolizing the weight of an 18-month child, in the Worldloppet’s Norwegian Birkebeiner Rennet race.

The American Birkebeiner began in 1973 as the dream of the late Tony Wise.

Each year, in homage to the race’s roots, two Birkebeiner warriors and Inga ski the entire Birkie course on traditional wooden skis and in full period costume inspiring fellow racers along the way. The Birkebeiner warriors carry a baby doll along the course route and pickup a real infant “Prince” before skiing the last two blocks to the finish line on Hayward’s Main Street. It is a true celebration of the roots, legacy and traditions of the race.

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THINGS TO DO

SPECTATORS GUIDE TO EVENTS

Thursday, February 18

1-8 p.m. Birkie Expo, Hayward High School

Check out merchandise from top brands like Swix, Madshus, Advantage Emblem, GU, Cliff, Nuun, Trek, Salomon, Craft, Fischer, Rossignol, Atomic, Alpina, SportHill, Hidden Bay Graphics, Hayward Area Memorial Hospital and Water's Edge, Kemp's and many other vendors and local organizations.

1 p.m. Barkie Birkie Skijor, Main Street, Hayward.

Beginning and ending in front of Sophie's Dog Bakery, the expert 5K starts at 1 p.m., Sport 3K at 1:45 p.m. The Barkie Birkie is the annual skijor race for skiers and dogs to show off "Barkie Fever." The dog is attached to a skier with belt and towline. The 5K is for fast, experienced teams that can finish in 25 minutes or less. The 3K is for novice, slower or less experienced teams that can finish in 40 minutes or less. They will head west on Main Street to 6th Street, turn left and then right onto the Hayward Primary School fields. A large loop circles the Hayward Golf Club course. They then retrace their route back to the start. Skiers may use skate or classic technique. All proceeds benefit the Northwoods Humane Society.

3-9 p.m. Birkie Wax Cabin

Back by popular demand, the Birkie Wax Cabin will once again be offered leading up to Birkie races. Location will be announced on Birkie.com.

4:30 p.m., Elite Sprints, Main Street, Hayward

Top national and international skiers compete

for the Elite Sprints titles in both women's and men's events. The sprints feature head-to-head elimination rounds of four at a time. They start on lower Main Street in front of the Birkie office, cross the International Bridge and finish at 4th Street.

5:45 p.m. The Giant Ski, intersection of Main and Second streets, Hayward.

Six people get on one pair of 25-foot giant skis and race up Main Street for 50 yards. A real crowd-pleaser! First and second-place teams receive awards.

6:45 p.m. Opening Ceremonies, Champions Stage, downtown Hayward.

Master of Ceremonies Peter Graves will host the opening ceremony. U.S. Ski Team member Kikkan Randall will be the torch bearer, skiing down Main Street for the torch to be lit by the honorary captain of Team ALS Wisconsin, former Hayward resident and 17-time Birkie skier John Jaeckel. Ken Frame will sing the National Anthem.

7 p.m. Legacy of the American Birkebeiner, Park Center, Hwy. 63 in Hayward

Tom Kelly, longtime skiing historian and vice president of communications of the U.S. Ski and Snowboard Association, will take people back to the origins of the Birkie with stories of the Birkie's early years and founder Tony Wise, whose entrepreneurial vision helped shape the Hayward and Cable communities. There is no charge.



Friday, February 19

8 a.m., Worldloppet Breakfast, 8 a.m. Flat Creek Eatery, Hayward

Everyone is welcome to join Worldloppet skiers, delegates from other competitions and honored guests for a hearty breakfast. Tickets at the door.

Junior Birkie, 8:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. starts, Hayward

The individual race and team sprint relay for youth and juniors 7-19 years old will feature three race distances, with a finish at the American Birkebeiner finish line. The mass start is at Lake Hayward City Beach. This race offers young skiers the opportunity to experience the Birkie in their own race.

10 a.m. Snowshoe Hike, Cable Natural History Museum, Cable

Join the museum for a family nature hike on snowshoes. This is a 1-mile leisurely walk through the winter woods with a museum naturalist. Learn about winter wildlife and tracking, and learn the history of snowshoeing. This event is free, and contingent on a temperature of 5 degrees or

higher. Call (715) 798-3890 to register by Feb. 18, and indicate whether you need snowshoes.

12:30 p.m. Barnebirkie Youth Ski Tour, Lake Hayward City Beach to Main Street, Hayward

Nearly 1,000 youth ages 3-13 will ski a non-competitive race from Lake Hayward, over the International Bridge and up Main Street to the American Birkebeiner finish line. Kids can ski 1.2K or 3K, based on age and ability level. There is a separate start time for each distance this year, and a wave for parents to ski with kids who would like to be with them. There will be a Celebration Plaza near the finish, where kids can enjoy Swiss Miss hot chocolate and homemade cookies by the Sons of Norway, receive their victory medal, ski bib and hat, and test skills on the snow terrain park from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Among the largest youth ski events in the country.

1-9 p.m. Birkie Wax Cabin

Back by popular demand, the Birkie Wax Cabin will once again be offered leading up to Birkie races. Location will be announced on Birkie.com.



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THINGS TO DO

Friday, February 19

1:15 p.m., Adaptive Birkie, Lake Hayward City Beach to Main Street

This ski event features para-athletes competing in three categories: sit-ski, visually impaired and standing adaptive, over 3K or 1.2K routes. Category results are based on how the finisher's impairment impacts their skiing. All competitors receive a Birkie finisher medal, and there are overall awards for top three male and female finishers in each category in both races, at the Celebration Plaza.

2 p.m. Nikkerbeiner, Lake Hayward City Beach to Main Street

Show off your vintage ski clothes, bibs and equipment from the '70s, '80s or '90s, and relive bygone eras of cross-country skiing. There are 3K and 5K options. The Nikkerbeiner, named after Norwegian

knickers, skis up and over the International Bridge, up Main Street to Hayward Primary School, and then heads back to the finish line via 3K or 5K routes. This tour is non-timed, and all finishers receive a commemorative pin. Pre-registered skiers are eligible for a drawing of prizes from Out There Shop of Rice Lake.

2:15 p.m., Family Fun Ski, Lake Hayward City Beach to Main Street

All families are invited to join this non-competitive 3K or 5K ski event, which heads over the International Bridge up Main Street to the Primary School and crosses the Birkie finish line. All skiers get a commemorative pin and a cup of Swiss Miss hot chocolate in the Celebration Plaza. Pre-registrants are eligible for a drawings of prizes from Out There Shop of Rice Lake.

Saturday, February 20

7 a.m. to 4 p.m., Camp Birkie for Kids, Cable Community Center

An environmental education camp is offered for children in K-6 grades. It is a great option for child care for those skiing in the Birkebeiner, and sponsored by the Conserve School of Land O'Lakes. Children learn about the winter, make crafts, visit the Cable Natural History Museum and play indoor/outdoor games. To register, call (715)-547-1300.

American Birkebeiner 52K Skate & 56K Classic, 7:50 a.m., Cable Union Airport to Hayward's Main Street

North America's largest cross-country ski marathon attracting over 10,000 skiers, part of the Worldloppet circuit of international ski races, begins. Spectators cheer on the racers with cowbells at many points, including the finish in downtown Hayward. There are overall prizes for first six male and female competitors, a "Support American Skiing" award for the first American finisher, Wave Winners for the first overall male and female in both skate and classic, a "00" Sprint Bonus for the first skaters to

cross the intermediate sprint line before the 00 aid station, overall awards for classic top three male and female competitors, age class awards, finisher awards for first-time finishers, 10-year awards, Birchlegger awards for 20-year finishers. There will be a wax cabin with ski forms and power all set up this year for waxing and final touch-ups.

Kortelopet 24K Classic and Skate, 7:50 a.m., Cable Union Airport start and finish

This race attracts 3,000 skiers who want the challenge of a shorter distance or recreational ski. Skiers use the Birkie Classic Trail for the first 9K, then veer into Bayfield County for the Telemark trails, finishing back at the airport. There are awards for the top three men and women in both skate and classic, recognition medals for first-time Korte skiers, age class awards and 10-year recognition.

Prince Haakon 13K, 10 a.m., Cable Union Airport

A shorter, exciting race from the Birkie/Korte start line, which finishes at the airport. This event includes challenging uphill, downhill and turns in both skate and classic styles. All finishers receive pins.

Sunday, February 21

On-Snow Ski Demo, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., "00" Trailhead Stay for the third annual demo, where you can try out the latest in new equipment – skis, poles, boots, bindings, and new, fat bikes this year. Many of these products are brand-new and you can try them out right on the trail.

Bircheggings Club Breakfast, 9 a.m., Steakhouse & Lodge, Hayward

Birchleggers, skiers who have completed their 20th Birkie race, are eligible for this status, which is the nickname for birch bark-armored warriors who saved Prince Haakon. They can accept their awards at this breakfast, or if they cannot attend,

pick them up at the Birkie Cabin on Main Street from 5 to 8 p.m. Saturday. Tickets for breakfast available at the door.

Fast and Female Champ Chat, 9:45 a.m. to 12:15 p.m., Hayward High School

Join U.S. Ski Team member Kikkan Randall and other local athletes for a morning of games, fitness stations and inspirational stories. Connect with professionals, meet other girls interested in sports and hear about the World Cup life. There is a Parent & Coach Seminar for info about raising female athletes. Register at www.fastandfemale.com by Feb. 20.

DINING

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THINGS TO DO

North American premiere of feature film 'The Last King (Birkebeinerne)' to be held in Hayward Birkie weekend

Magnolia Pictures, in collaboration with the American Birkebeiner Ski Foundation (ABSF), is pleased to announce the North American premiere of the extraordinary Norwegian feature film, "The Last King." The event will mark the first time the film will be viewed in North American.

"The Last King" is rooted in Norwegian history and tells the story of the very legacy upon which the American Birkebeiner ski marathon is based. In 1206, Norway was ravaged by civil war, and a boy, Prince Haakon Haakonsson, the illegitimate baby son of a Norwegian king, was guarded in secrecy. He was a boy who half the kingdom was out to kill and whom two brave Birkebeiner warriors, so called because of their birch bark leggings, vowed to protect with their very lives by skiing the infant prince over the Norwegian mountains to safety.

"The Last King" is the story of the escape which forever changed the history of Norway.

"Once we learned of the American Birkebeiner ski marathon, we knew we wanted to share the film with this fiercely dedicated group of adventurous spirits," said Neal Block, Magnolia Pictures Head of Distribution. "The American Birkebeiner is a true celebration of the courage, perseverance, character and determination of the warriors at the heart of 'The Last King'."

Each year, in homage to the race's roots, the American Birkebeiner reenacts the historic flight of the Birkebeiner warriors, Torstein and Skervald, when two skiers in full traditional costume and on wooden skis reenact the escape along the entire 55K classic cross-country race course, surrounded by over 10,000 other determined skiers. Along the race course, the warriors are joined by Prince Haakon's mother, Inga. The Birkebeiner warriors carry a baby doll throughout the journey and pick up an infant child to ski with them over the International

Bridge, toward the finish line, and past the thousands of cheering fans on Hayward's snow-covered Main Street. It is a true celebration of the roots, legacy and traditions of the race.

"We can't think of a more fitting place to debut 'The Last King' and can't imagine an audience more passionate about this story," said Ben Popp, ABSF Executive Director. "We are grateful to Magnolia

Pictures for the honor of sharing this legacy film with skiers and fans of the Birkebeiner story."

The film will premiere in Hayward as part of the American Birkebeiner's week of Nordic festivities.

Location and show times were not finalized as this issue of the Visitor went to press, but the information is available at Birkie.com or in the Sawyer County Record's special "Birkie Preview." Tickets will be sold in advance and exclusively at www.Birkie.com. Tickets are \$20 apiece.

Magnolia Pictures is donating \$5 from every ticket sold to the ABSF to further their mission of promoting healthy, active lifestyles for

people of all ages.

The action film inspired by actual events in Norwegian history is directed by Nils Gaup, who won an Oscar nomination for another wintry Norwegian film called "The Pathfinder (Veiviseren)." A Paradox Rettigheter AS production, distributed by Magnolia Pictures, "The Last King" stars Kristofer Hivju (Torstein) and Jakob Oftebro (Skjervald) in the two main roles of Birkebeiner heroes Torstein and Skjervald. Hivju (Torstein) is perhaps best known for his role as wildling leader, Tormund Giantsbane, on HBO's fantasy series "Game of Thrones." "The Last King" is scheduled to premiere in Norway in early February. Magnolia Pictures has slated the US theatrical release for late spring or early summer of 2016. This film is not yet rated. The official trailer for "The Last King" may be viewed in English and Norwegian.



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HISTORICAL VIGNETTES

THE FIRST BIRKIE, AS REMEMBERED BY DAVE LANDGRAF

BY WALTER RHEIN

Dave Landgraf was an inspiration to many. He skied the first Birkie in 1973 and at the time of his death he was one of three Founding Skiers to have skied every race. On August 9, 2011, at the age of 62, Landgraf died from injuries after being struck by a vehicle while riding his bicycle here in Sawyer County. This piece is his story of the first Birkie, as told to Walter Rhein in 2010. Rhein is the author of "Beyond Birkie Fever," and this excerpt is reprinted from the Sawyer County Record's 2012 "Birkie Preview."



PHOTO BY DARLENE PROIS

Dave Landgraf at the finish line of the 2010 Birkie.

Dave Landgraf was an inspiration to many. He skied the first Birkie in 1973 and at the time of his death he was one of three Founding Skiers to have skied every race. On August 9, 2011, at the age of 62, Landgraf died from injuries after being struck by a vehicle while riding his bicycle here in Sawyer County. This piece is his story of the first Birkie, as told to Walter Rhein in 2010. Rhein is the author of "Beyond Birkie Fever," and this excerpt is reprinted from the Sawyer County Record's 2012 "Birkie Preview."

Back in 1973, the American Birkebeiner was the dream of legendary Northwoods Wisconsin promoter Tony Wise. The first race had less than 40 participants, and was a considerably different experience than the tremendous spectacle that it has become today.

Among those competing in the first event was David Landgraf. Landgraf himself is something of a living legend, although he was too modest to describe or even think of himself as such. In 2010, retired and having completed every single Birkie, Landgraf

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HISTORICAL VIGNETTES

was still competitive with the fastest skiers in the event.

I sat down with Landgraf on December 31, 2010 to get his account of the first Birkie. Initially I had asked him to write it down himself, but soon found that when there's snow on the ground it's fairly difficult to pry the man off the ski trails.

As we enjoyed a bowl of split pea soup, I glanced around the walls at a lifetime of Birkie photos and mementos. It was instantly obvious how elevated a position the Birkie occupied in Landgraf's life. I soon discovered that he was a wealth of information on all things skiing as he regaled me with stories about the improvements in equipment and clothing throughout the years as well as the various histories of the individual Birkies themselves.

As we finished our soup, I hit the voice recorder function on my Blackberry and pushed the device over to sit in front of Landgraf as he jostled with some notes he'd jotted down in preparation.

"I wanted to set the stage as to what 1973 was like," he said, and then proceeded to list off a series of interesting facts, "a gallon of gas was 40 cents, the average income was \$12,900, and a new house cost you \$32,500. The popular films of the day were 'The Exorcist,' 'Deliverance,' 'American Graffiti,' and the best picture that year went to 'The Godfather.' On the radio you were listening to 'Dark Side of the Moon' as well as groups like Led Zeppelin, The Eagles and Abba. And ... the first American Birkebeiner took place in Hayward, Wisconsin."

At this, Landgraf pushed aside his notes and became reflective. I got the impression that he had told this story many times although I didn't get the sense that the tale had inflated or become exaggerated through repetition. There are some moments in life that are so precious that people seem to do everything they can to preserve their veracity, and that's how I perceived Landgraf felt about his first Birkie experience.

It all started with a phone call from Landgraf's childhood friend and fellow founder, Ernie St. Germain in early February of 1973.

"David," St. Germain said, "Tony Wise is having a cross-country ski race up in Telemark. I dare you to do it!"

Among other things, Wise had established the Telemark lodge up in Cable as well as the Lumberjack World Championships that still are held annually in Hayward to this day. Landgraf had worked up at Telemark throughout high school and college, so he was well aware of who Tony Wise was. What he didn't know anything about, at the time, was cross-country skiing.

"A cross-country ski race," Landgraf replied, "what's that?"

"Well you strap some skis on and ski from Hayward to Cable," St. Germain replied.

"Well, that sounds kind of crazy."

"Come on let's do it!"

At this point, Landgraf emphasized that neither he nor St. Germain had ever participated in any kind of endurance sport before. His love was baseball with the occasional game of pick-up basketball thrown in. He had downhill skied a dozen times or so because he had worked at Telemark and could downhill for free at night but he had never cross-country skied before. In fact, he didn't even know what a cross-country ski was and neither did St. Germain. But St. Germain (perhaps trusting Wise's ability to create special events) said that since Tony was having this race they should do it.

Thus committed, Landgraf went about the task of getting himself some cross-country skis. He was living in Bloomington, MN then and he went around the local ski shops in quest of skis, boots, and poles that he could rent for a couple weeks. Eventually finding a pair, Landgraf was beset by another problem.

There wasn't any snow!

No place to practice.

Nothing upon which to train!

After another exhaustive search, Landgraf discovered that there was a big snowbank around Met stadium where the Twins and Vikings played. Presumably the snow pile was what had been left over after the parking lots had been cleared off. Well, Met stadium was right near where Landgraf lived, so he walked over there a couple times, and skied on top of the big snowbank that went around the stadium and after a while figured, "well, that's not too bad." But of course he'd never been on a hill, never been on a trail, and those meager laps around the Met comprised the entirety of his preparation.

Today, people train all year in order to have the fitness necessary to complete the Birkie. 50 km is more than 30 miles! A running marathon is a grueling 26.2 miles, and those are generally run on warm summer days. Landgraf had sentenced himself to more than a marathon distance in the sub-freezing conditions of a Wisconsin winter to boot.

No running.

No endurance training.

No bicycle riding (in fact Landgraf didn't even own a bike).

Not even a decent familiarity with how to balance on a pair of cross-country skis.

This was Landgraf's preparation for one of the most grueling sporting events in North America.

He's the first to admit that he simply didn't have the first clue about endurance sports.

But things were about to change.

When you're 23, you can get away with such unprepared craziness.

On the day of the race, Landgraf showed up with his rented equipment at the designated starting area behind Historyland (another Tony Wise creation) in Hayward. Landgraf was wear-

DINING

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JIM ANDERSON is a local author who produced the book "Discovering America One Marathon at a Time." It's a great, behind-the-scenes look at the U.S.A. through the eyes of a runner who, at the age of 51, began a quest to run a marathon in every state. Wonderful, inspiring reading.

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THE HAYWARD AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE would like to invite you to take a walk at a slower pace and enjoy our wonderful Hayward Lakes region of Northern Wisconsin. Come to the Hayward area where you'll find a community rich in history, culture, recreation and commerce. After all, thousands of vacationers and second-home owners return every year, because they can't get enough of the area's Northwood charm. 15805 US 63 Hayward. 715-634-8662.

A black and white advertisement for Blackiron Bar and Grill. At the top, a curved banner reads "FULL BAR, FRESH FOOD, TVS AND MORE!". On the left, a cloud-shaped callout says "PREMIUM GAS ONSITE". On the right, another cloud-shaped callout says "OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK TIL 11:00". In the center, there is a silhouette of a deer standing in front of three pine trees. Below this, the word "BLACKIRON" is written in large, bold, white letters with a black outline. Underneath that, "BAR AND GRILL" is written in smaller white letters with two small stars on either side. At the bottom, a red banner contains the text "- FISH FRY EVERY FRIDAY -" in white, followed by "Easy Access to ATV and Snowmobile Trails" and "10 miles East of Hayward on Route 77" in white. To the right of this text is a white star with the number "44" inside. At the very bottom, the address and phone number "12/31w STATE ROAD 77 - (715) 462-9515" is written in white.

HISTORICAL VIGNETTES

ing a pair of sweatpants, an old wool sweater, cotton long underwear and, appropriately, a tassel hat.

Less than 40 people were there at the start that day.

Somebody shot off a starter's pistol.

And off they went...

Today the Birkie trail is a national treasure that cuts through the rolling Wisconsin wilderness and is as wide as a county highway. The trail is groomed with the best equipment money can buy, and is touted as one of the premier cross-country ski destinations in North America.

In 1973, that wasn't the case.

Heading out across lake Hayward, Landgraf soon found himself upon an unmarked, haphazard trail that wended along on old logging roads and abandoned railroad beds. The trail itself had been made by a guy on skis being pulled along behind a snowmobile (which was probably an exhausting task to complete in itself).

For the vast majority of the race, Landgraf never even saw another person.

Surely the fact that 'Deliverance' was in theaters at the time, did little to abate his concerns.

Slowly, slipping and sliding along on his rented skis, Landgraf made his way towards Cable. Most of the time he was uncertain if he was in the right place or not. The single aid station reassured him that he was still on track, but otherwise he was sure he was lost the entire time.

The one saving grace was that the temperature wasn't all that bad during the first Birkie. Although as Landgraf recounted this he was quick to add, "the next year, however, was a brutal fourteen below zero! This was made worse by the fact that we didn't have the right clothing of course. But that first year wasn't bad."

Hours passed, disappearing into that vortex of time that only exists in the midst of a cross-country ski race, and a certain sense of despair began to creep in. Cross-country skiing is essentially the act of skiing uphill, which can be fairly tricky on a piece of equipment that is designed to be free of resistance and is made to glide across the snow. Skiing uphill can be difficult even if you know what you're doing, but for somebody who has no idea, it's virtually impossible.

So it was that as the kilometers clicked by and the exhaustion set in, Landgraf eventually resorted to literally crawling up the hills on his hands and knees. His only salvation was that he knew the terrain surrounding Telemark and the finish line was quite a bit more hilly, so as things got more difficult, he knew he must be approaching the end. Eventually he piqued up when he thought he began to hear the downhill ski lift equipment up at Telemark echoing off in the distance.

The hills continued, up and down, and Landgraf trudged wearily on, crawling on his hands

and knees. Suddenly, at the top of the next rise, Landgraf caught a glimpse of something that gave him a surge of energy.

There, also crawling along miserably on all fours, was none other than his old friend Ernie St. Germain.

"The guy who got me into this mess."

Encouraged by the fact that, St. Germain looked just as miserable as Landgraf felt, he got inspired and made a super-human effort to catch up.

Flailing like mad, Landgraf eventually pulled up alongside St. Germain at the top of the bunny hill at the Telemark lodge. Some choice words were probably spoken which have since been lost to history, and the two of them proceeded on down the bunny hill towards the glorious finish only to subsequently crash in a tremendous tangle of limbs, rented ski poles, and the sincere desire to simply have the race be over.

As they were sitting there trying to figure out who's arms, legs, and poles belonged to who, they heard a tremendous voice scream "get the hell out of the way!" which sent both Landgraf and St. Germain scrambling.

The voice belonged to Karl Andresen who had been Landgraf's political science teacher back in college at Eau Claire. Later, Landgraf would find himself moving back to Eau Claire, and it would be Karl Andresen who would take him under his wing and teach him how to ski, to train, and to eventually love and appreciate the sport.

But on the day of the first Birkie, it was all about survival.

Stumbling to their feet, Landgraf and St. Germain skied up the last little hill to the finish where they had an unassuming table set out in the cold. Landgraf couldn't remember if they were given a medallion or some other trinket, and he was probably too exhausted to care.

Prying off their skis, Landgraf and St. Germain stumbled down to the Ratskellar bar there at the Telemark lodge and proceeded to order pitcher after pitcher of beer.

"It was the most miserable athletic event that I'd ever been involved in, and I made a vow right then that I would never be talked into any other kind of ridiculous escapade by Ernie St. Germain," Landgraf said.

A vow that he has diligently broken once a year for nearly forty years and counting!

The magic of the Birkie is that it has a way of drawing you back each year for more.

As I was packing up my things and heading out the door, Landgraf nodded with one final thought.

"That phone call from Ernie in 1973 literally changed my life."

The Birkie changes everyone's life, and always for the better. •

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THINGS TO DO

Thursday: Legacy of the Birkebeiner

For over 40-years the Birkie has helped shape the lives of tens of thousands of participants, from elite athletes to recreational skiers.

The American Birkebeiner ski race was the vision of Hayward native Tony Wise, who discovered skiing as a soldier serving in Germany in World War II. After the war, he brought his concept home to found Telemark Lodge near Cable, and later evolved the concept into a cross-country ski race through the north woods. The American Birkebeiner was patterned after the Birkebeiner Rennet ski race held each year in the forests of Norway. Wise's vision shaped a community, a sport and brought the world to-

gether with the founding of the Worldloppet an international sports federation of cross-country skiing marathons.

At 7 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 17, longtime Birkie PR leader and skiing historian Tom Kelly will take you back to the origins of Birkie, regaling the crowd with some of the legendary stories of the race's roots. He'll take you inside the mind of Wise, a native son of Hayward, whose ingenuity and vision created a ski race that has become a lifestyle and an iconic festival of cross-country skiing.

The public is welcomed to this free presentation at Hayward's Park Center.

Friday: Pasta nosh and carbo load

Local spots are hosting pre-Birkebeiner dinners before the main event on Feb. 20.

- Steve's Kitchen Café will be hosting a benefit spaghetti feed for the opening of Harvest Spaghetti, garlic bread, salad, cookies, alcoholic beverages and soft drinks at the cash bar. \$14 per person. 10603 California Ave., one block off Main Street in downtown Hayward. Seatings at 5:30 and 7 p.m. Reservations highly recommended to avoid lines by calling (715) 558-7301.

- St. Joseph's Catholic Church on Dakota Avenue in Hayward annual spaghetti feed from 4 to 8 p.m. Friday, Feb. 19.

- Cable Legion Hall spaghetti feed Feb. 19. No other info available at press time.

- Carbo load and fuel your engine at any of a multitude of great local restaurants in the greater Hayward and Cable area. Restauranters are eager for your business, and hope to see you return at other times of the year.

Sunday: Fast & Female 'Champ chat'

From fitness to inspirational stories, Fast and Female's third annual Champ Chat at the Birkie will start a conversation for young, female athletes during Birkie weekend.

On Sunday, February 21, from 10 a.m. until noon in the Hayward High School gymnasium, girls from ages 8-18 can participate in games, go through a fitness circuit and listen to stories from U.S. Ski Team Members Kikkan Randall and Caitlin Gregg and other local athletes. The fitness stations will incorporate balancing, agility and ski techniques and practices.

Champ Chat at the Birkie, provided by the American Birkebeiner Ski Foundation (ABSF), is a unique opportunity for girls who are interested in sports to meet other girls, connect with professional skiers and hear about life on the World Cup from Kikkan Randall, the head of the United States division of Fast and Female. Randall is a four-time Olympian and World Champion from the United States. She is known for her strong sprinting ability, pink hair and positive personality.

There will also be a Parents and Coaches Seminar, which will provide information on raising female athletes. Holly Hart, who is the mother of Annie Hart, a SMS-T2 skier and Birkie Ambassador, will be in attendance. Stillwater High School Ski coach Kris Hansen will

also be at the event. Stillwater High School has the largest ski team in the Midwest and Hansen provides a great atmosphere for all of her skiers.

"Champ Chat at the Birkie is a great space for girls to get encouragement from elite athletes to stay and thrive in sports and physical activity," said Kristy Maki, ABSF Sport Development and Operations Manager. "It shows that girls can do something with their love for sports in the future, too."

Parents, coaches and girls can sign up online at fastandfemale.com or at the door. There is a \$25 participant fee and a \$20 parent and coach fee. Check in will begin at 9:45 a.m. Girls will receive a free T-shirt and a chance to get an autograph from Kikkan Randall. This money will go to the Fast and Female organization.

Fast and Female's mission is to keep girls in sports while they are growing up and to empower girls to continue working hard in sports and physical activity. They offer events like the Champ Chat at the Birkie in both Canada and the United States.

"We are excited to be bringing the opportunity to meet with Kikkan Randall and Caitlin Gregg and learn about empowerment and skills to girls in the Birkie community again this year," said Ben Popp, ABSF Executive Director.

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THINGS TO KNOW SKIERS FOR CURES: TEAM ALS

The Birkie Skiers for Cures program partners to raise awareness and funds for organizations that support health issues affecting many in the skiing community. Since 2009, Skiers for Cures has been partnering with global organizations focused on awareness of health problems, and has raised nearly \$500,000.

The next three-year commitment, through 2018, is to ALSA, the Wisconsin Chapter of the ALS Association.

Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) is a motor neuron disease, first identified in 1869 by French neurologist Jean-Martin Charcot. The cause of ALS is not completely known,

but recent years have brought a new scientific understanding about the physiology of ALS, also known as Lou Gehrig's disease.

"We are very excited to join the fight against ALS through our 'Skiers for Cures' program," said American Birkebeiner Ski Foundation Executive Director Ben Popp. "I hope our partnership will bring resources and visibility to their ongoing efforts to support those with ALS and find a cure for this terrible disease."

Over 400 Wisconsin patients are battling ALS.

Learn more about ALS Association – Wisconsin Chapter at www.alsawi.org.

WATCH FOR... DETOURS AND ROAD CLOSURES

Detours

Tuesday: Highway 63 closed at Main Street for bridge installation: Detour Dakota to 5th St. to Kansas Ave.

Saturday: Highway 77 closed at Hatchery Park for the race, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.: Detour Highway 27 to Highway B to Highway K.

Sunday: Highway 63 at Main Street closed for bridge removal: Detour Dakota to 5th St. to Kansas Ave.

Tuesday through Sunday: Highway 63 at Main Street height restricted to 13'6". Oversized vehicles detoured through Stanberry, County Highway M to Highway 77.

Lane Closures

Wednesday through Saturday: Highway 63 from Dakota to Kansas restricted to two lanes

Road Closures

Tuesday, Feb. 9
All day: Main Street between Highway 63 and Railroad Street

Wednesday

All day: Main between Highway 63 and Railroad

After 5 pm: Main between Railroad to 5th

After 5 pm: Railroad between Kansas and Main

Thursday

All day: Railroad between Kansas and Main

All day: Main between Railroad to 5th

All Day: 6th Street

Noon to 3 pm: Main between 5th and 6th reduced to one lane; no crossing Main at 5th

Friday

All day: Railroad between Kansas and Main

All day: Main between Railroad to 5th

All Day: 6th Street

6 am to 5 pm: Main between 5th and 6th reduced to one lane; no crossing Main at 5th

Saturday

City of Hayward

All day: Railroad between Kansas and Main

All day: Main Street from Railroad Street to 5th

All Day: 6th Street

Town of Hayward

9 am to 5 pm: Highway 77 at

Hatchery Park

9 am to 5 pm: Wheeler Road at the Birkie Trail crossing

9 am to 5 pm: Duffy Road at the Birkie Trail crossing

Town of Round Lake

7 am to 5 pm: Pit Road

Town of Lenroot

5 am to 1 pm: Seeley Fire Tower Road

8:30 am to 2 pm: Mosquito Brook Road at the Birkie Trail crossing

8:30 am to 2 pm: County Highway OO at the Birkie Trail crossing

8:30 am to 2 pm: Boedecker Road at the Birkie Trail crossing

Town of Spider Lake

5 am to 9 am: Telemark Road

Town of Cable

5 am to 9 am: Telemark Road
5 am to 10:30 am: McNaught Road at the Birkie Trail crossing

5:00 am to 1 pm: Randysek Road south of the North End Cabin

5:00 am to 1 pm: Timber Trail Road between Korte Trail Crossing and Randysek Road



LIFE-SAVING CARE in the field and in the air

Life Link III continues to be a major sponsor of the Slumberland American Birkebeiner®, providing race-day air medical support for the Birkie® event. During the race, a Life Link III helicopter will be stationed at Hayward Area Memorial Hospital to ensure any racers requiring emergency air medical transport receive the critical care they need. Northwest Wisconsin residents are well-covered during the Birkie and every day with a Life Link III helicopter base located in Rice Lake, and another in Cloquet (MN). Life Link III is proud to be part of your community – race day and every day!

SPECTATOR Q & A

Q: What events are there this weekend besides the Birkie on Saturday?

A: There are many great events for spectators, such as the Barkie Birkie, the Giant Ski, the Barnebirkie, the Nikkerbeiner, the Elite Sprints, the Junior Birkie, Sunday's Ski & Bike Demo (open to all)... check out the calendar of events on pages 6-8.

Q: Where is the Birkie office? Is it open?

A: The Birkie office is located at 10527 Main Street in Hayward. Hours Birkie week are Wednesday, 8 a.m.-4 p.m.; Thursday 8 a.m.-5 p.m.; Friday 8 a.m.-6 p.m.; Saturday 7 a.m.-7 p.m.; and Sunday 8 a.m.-1 p.m.

Q: Can I find out if someone I know is registered for the race? Can I follow their progress?

A: To check registration "Go to Birkie.com; click on 'Ski.' Under Registration, click on "Am I Registered?" Search by first and/or last name. Family, friends, and fans can follow their favorite skier with live tracking from Race My Race at www.racemyrace/trackmy-birkie.com

Q: Where and when is the Birkie Expo? Can I go even though I'm not a skier?

A: The Birkie Expo is in the Hayward High School. It will be open on Thursday, February 18 at 1 p.m. and on Friday, February 19 at 9 a.m. The Birkie Expo is open to anyone.

Q: Where can I buy Birkie gear and souvenirs?

A: Birkie branded apparel and souvenirs are available at the Birkie Store booth at the Expo and at the Birkie Cabin located on the intersection of Main St and Hwy 63 at the base of the International Bridge: Thursday & Friday, 9am – 8pm; Saturday 7am-8pm; Sunday 8am-2pm.

Q: What roads are closed and when? Are there detours?

A: See page 20 of this edition of the Visitor.

Q: Can I pick up someone else's bib for them?

A: Yes, however, you will need a photocopy of their driver's license, a copy of their 2016 Bib Confirmation email, and a written and signed statement naming you as allowed to pick-up their bib. Documentation on phones will not be allowed.

Race Day:

Q: Can I sign up for an event the day of?

A: Yes and no. You can sign up for the Barnebirkie, Junior Birkie Relay, Family Fun Ski, and Giant Ski (if there is room) the day of. You can do it online or Birkie.com will provide you with information on how to sign up in person. You cannot sign up for the Birkebeiner, the Kortelopet or the Prince Haakon on Saturday.

Q: Where is the start? The finish? Parking?

A: • The Birkie, Korte and Prince Haakon start at Cable Union Airport
• The Birkie finishes on Hayward's Main Street; the Korte at the Cable airport; the Prince Haakon at the Cable airport
• There is no parking in the Main Street area and corridor
• Cable Airport parking opens at 9:30 a.m. (otherwise only by permit)



Q: Can I park at the start area to watch the race begin, or to watch the Kortelopet?

A. If you are going to Cable for the Birkie Start or the Kortelopet, you can park in the designated parking lots at Birkie Ridge, Como Field or Donnelan Field, and take a bus to the Start Area. (See the map on pages 24-25 of the Official Race Guide [you're holding it... just flip this book over]) for a map that shows parking and busing information.

Q: What time do I really need to be on the bus to see a wave start?

A: Be on a bus one hour or more before the wave you want to see goes off. If you get to the start area early enough you can enjoy watching the elite, the founders, the +70, and be motivated to watch the beauty of it all.

Q: Is there a Lost and Found on race day?

A: Yes! The Hayward Veteran's Center at the intersection of Hwy. 63 and Main, Hayward.

Q: Where will the results be posted?

A: The results printer will be in the Celebration tent in Hayward. A results printer for the Kortelopet will be in the start/finish tent as well.

Q: As a spectator, how should I dress?

A: Dress in layers. Although we cannot predict weather, standing around for hours in the snow or in the cold means your body will need an extra layer or two to stay warm. Focus on keeping your extremities, like fingers, toes and your nose, warm throughout the day.

Q: Where can I park on race day?

A: Parking is available for spectators at the Hayward High School. Transportation from the school to downtown will be provided. There is also parking at Donnelan Field on Dyno Drive. If you are going to Cable to watch the Birkie Start or the Kortelopet, you can park in the designated parking lots at Birkie Ridge, Como Field or Donnelan Field, and take a bus to the Start Area. Priority will be given to skiers when loading buses.

Q: Is there a good place to watch the big race on Saturday?

A: Yes! Several. See page 24.

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SPECTATOR Q & A

1. The Start and Kortelopet finish - Cable Union Airport: The Cable Union Airport is adjacent to Telemark Resort in Cable. The only way to reach the Start Area is to park and take a bus from the parking areas to Telemark Resort. Skiers will be given priority when loading buses.

2. The halfway point at County Road OO & The Birkie Trail. Seeley is seven miles south of Cable or 10 miles north of Hayward on USH 63 and the Birkie Trail is 3 miles east of 63 on OO. Spectator parking is limited, and spectators should be prepared to walk up to half mile or more from their cars to view the skiers.

3. Birkie Finish Line – Main Street, Hayward: The Birkie finish line is in downtown Hayward on Main Street at the intersection with 4th Street. Good viewing is possible along the length on Main Street. Parking is available throughout the city of Hayward except for areas designated as no parking. It is important to obey the "No Parking" signs within the City of Hayward in order to allow emergency vehicles to have access to all areas.

Q: What do the different colored bibs mean?

A: Good question! See page 26 for a bib key.

Q: What's up with the cowbells?

A: You can't hear clapping when people are wearing mittens, can you? Rumor has it that the cowbell tradition started in Switzerland. Cows were kept in barns in the winter, so their bells were available as noise makers at ski races. And hey, who doesn't have a fever for more cowbell? (If you do, get the T-shirt at the Birkie store!)

Q: Where is a good place to eat?

A: Just about everywhere. The Hayward, Cable and Stone Lake areas are a year-round tourism destination, and there is a surprising variety of wonderful

restaurants in the area. Try something new!

Q: I'd like to become a Birkie volunteer. How do I do it?

A: Sign up for volunteers is on www.birkie.com. There are 60 different positions and more than 200 shifts to choose from.

Q: Where do I find a good post-race wrap up and results, and get a souvenir of a fun weekend spent in the Hayward and Cable areas?

A: The local newspaper, the Sawyer County Record, publishes a special, free Results Edition! It is printed and distributed late Saturday night, so look for your copy in Hayward and Cable area stores, gas stations and restaurants on Sunday morning. Copies are also available outside the Birkie office and outside the Sawyer County Record office, located at 15464 County Highway B, Hayward.

Q: I had a great time in Hayward. Where can I find information on things to do here during the rest of the year?

A: There are lots of ways to keep up with what's going on in Hayward

- Subscribe to the local paper, the Sawyer County Record, 715-634-4881 or haywardwi.com
- Visit the paper's website often, www.haywardwi.com
- Subscribe to a 10-issue season of the Visitor, \$20, by calling 715-634-4881
- Visit the Birkie's website, www.birkie.com
- Visit the Hayward Area Chamber of Commerce website, www.haywardareachamber.com
- Visit the Hayward Lakes & Convention Bureau website, www.haywardlakes.com.
- Visit the Cable Area Chamber of Commerce's website, www.cable4fun.com

WHERE TO GO WHEN YOU HAVE TO GO! TO MEET YOUR SKIER AFTER THE RACE

Birkie spectators can find toilets (of the Porta-potty variety) at the following places in downtown Hayward:

- The Reunion Zone – Hayward Intermediate School
- Celebration plaza (near Peoples Bank)
- 2nd, 3rd and 4th streets off Main Street
- American Birkebeiner office – municipal parking lot off Highway 63

Celebration Plaza

- All are welcome to come to the Celebration Plaza to watch others finish, share their race stories, and fuel-up
- Vendors will be in the tent offering a variety of food and drink available for purchase
- Downtown restaurants will also be open for

both the spectators and skiers alike

Reunion Zone

- The Finish Zone and Changing Area are restricted to skiers only
- Please plan to meet your skier in the reunion zone on the corner of 5th and Wisconsin

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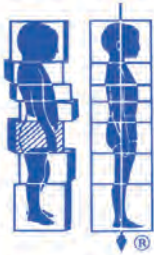
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Men's Skate Elite, Men's
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WAVE 1:
Classic & Skate Skiers,
Men & Women Classic
Elite



Birchlegger:
Skied 20 or more Birkies



Uber Birchlegger:
Has skied 30 or more
Birkies



Founding Skier: Skied in
the first Birkie in 1973



'Spirit of 35': In com-
memoration of the
original 35 founding
skiers, given to each
year's most seasoned
and experienced skiers



Wave 70
Skate & Classic:
Skiers aged 70 and
over; start just after
Wave 2 (unless earned
an earlier start)



WAVE 2:
Classic & Skate Skiers



WAVE 3:
Classic & Skate Skiers



WAVE 4:
Classic & Skate Skiers



WAVE 5:
Classic & Skate Skiers



WAVE 6:
Classic & Skate Skiers



WAVE 7:
Classic & Skate Skiers



WAVE 8:
Classic & Skate Skiers



WAVE 9:
Classic & Skate Skiers

*Classic Skiers will have a red "C" before their bib numbers
Kortelopet Bibs: The same colors indicate waves as on the Birkie bibs.
However, the bibs say Kortelopet in a yellow stripe.*

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WHERE TO PARK

To make navigation downtown during Birkie Week easier, the American Birkebeiner Ski Foundation has designated the following spots where spectators can park.

- Thursday, Feb. 18 – There will be parking in the municipal lots around town and there is on-street parking.

- Friday, Feb. 19 – Municipal lots will be open for parking, along with the lots by the Big Fish at the Fishing Hall of Fame

- Saturday, Feb. 20 – Parking can be found at Hayward High School on Green-

wood Lane, and at Donnellan Field (between Dyno Drive and Railroad, behind Subway), with shuttle buses running continuously to the Hayward Bus Center (adjoining the Intermediate School).

NOTE: There will be no street parking around the Main Street area on either Friday or Saturday from 6 a.m. to 3 p.m. Skiers and spectators are strongly encouraged to park in designated Birkie lots and ride the shuttle buses to and from downtown Hayward.

WHEN WILL THEY FINISH?

SKIER ARRIVAL TIME ESTIMATES AT VARIOUS POINTS AND THE FINISH LINE

THE BIRKIE

Point on Trail	Kilometer Mark	ETA 1st Arrivals Women	ETA 1st Arrivals Men	Cutoff	ETA Last Arrivals
Start	0	8 am	8:20 am	10:30 am	
Power Line	4	8:12 am	8:30 am		11 am
Timber Trail	9	8:27 am	8:43 am		11:45 am
Fire Tower	13	8:39 am	8:53 am		12:15 am
Boedecker	18	8:54 am	9:06 am		12:55 pm
OO	23	9:14 am	9:19 am	1:45 pm	
Gravel Pit	32	9:41 am	9:41 am		2:05 pm
Mosquito Brook	38	9:59 am	9:56 am	3:45 pm	
Hatchery	44	10:17 am	10:11 am	4:45 pm	
Finish	52	10:41 am	10:30 am	6 pm	

THE KORTE

Point on Trail	Kilometer Mark	ETA 1st Arrivals Women	ETA 1st Arrivals Men	Cutoff
Start	0	8:10 am	8:10 am	10:30 am
Telemark Trails	16	9:15 am	9:05 am	2 pm
Finish	24	10:20 am	10 am	

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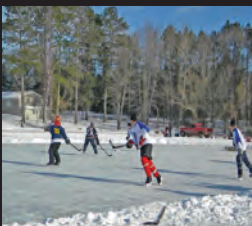
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- | | |
|--|---|
| *January:Jack Frost Fest, Spooner | July:Birchwood Bluegill Festival |
| *May:Food & Wine Tasting Event | August:Minong Summer Days |
| June:Railroad Memories Celebration, Spooner | *August:Jack Pine Savage Days, Spooner |
| *June:Jack's A Hack Golf Tournament, Spooner | September:Town & Country Days, Shell Lake |
| June-Oct:Farmers Market, Spooner | October:Stone Lake Cranberry Festival |
| July:Shell Lake Lions Triathlon | *October:Jack O'Lantern Festival, Spooner |
| July:Heart of the North Rodeo, Spooner | December:Shell Lake Holiday Saturday |



Jack Frost Fest
Pond Hockey Tournament



Jack Pine Savage Days



Savage Dash 5k Mud Run



Jack O' Lantern Festival
5k Zombie Run

THINGS TO SEE

Historic trio to hit the trail

The American Birkebeiner Ski Foundation has selected three cross-country skiers to depict the two Birkebeiner Warriors and Inga, the mother of baby Prince Haakon, an homage to the 43rd American Birkebeiner race's roots.

On February 20, 2016, Duluth residents Jen Pearson, Steve Long and Bruce Derauf will portray Inga and Birkebeiner warriors, Skervald and Torstein respectively. The trio will reenact the historic flight on wooden skis in full costume along the entire 55-kilometer classic cross-country course.

The threesome will be ambassadors on the trail, encouraging both skiers and volunteers along the course route. They will be at multiple events throughout the weekend, including the Barkie Birkie on Thursday and the Barnebirkie on Friday.

During the Birkebeiner, the warriors will carry a doll along the course until Main Street where they will pick up a real infant, representing Prince Haakon, before skiing the last two blocks to the finish line. The portrayal is a true

celebration of the roots, legacy and traditions of the race.

All three skiers have taken part in the Birkie tradition for years, all competing at various times on classic and skate skis.

"For me, the Birkie is an annual touchstone — a time to reflect on my Norwegian heritage, family Birkie history, and a time to be grateful for friends and family with whom I share a love of skiing," said Long, 54.

From talking to friends before the race, remembering previous completed races and persuading their families to participate during the weekend, the trio said the Birkebeiner has become a part of their own personal life stories. Pearson, 49, will be celebrating her 20th Birkie while Derauf, 60, will be completing his 35th.

"Whether you are kicking in a fine track with blue hard wax or skating down hills with fresh corduroy, the sport of cross-country skiing embodies an active lifestyle, enjoyment of the outdoors and year-round fitness," Derauf said.



RECREATIONAL

THE HAYWARD LAKES VISITOR AND CONVENTION BUREAU

is an organization dedicated to the ongoing promotion of Sawyer County and the Hayward Lakes Area as a premier tourism destination in Wisconsin. Our members are businesses, organizations and governments that have a financial interest in a sound and growing tourism economy. Their interest may be directly related to tourism or indirectly related, such as vendors, suppliers, professional services and other services supporting the tourism industry. 15805 US 63 Hayward, 715-634-4801.

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SERVICES

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mission is to continuously improve the health status of the people of the Hayward area. We will strive to develop a health care campus which will provide physician care, outpatient care, acute care, long-term care, hospice and home-care services. We believe that health care begins with prevention. 11040 N State Rd. 77, Hayward. 715-934-4321.

NAMEKAGON TRANSIT offers public transportation to all of the Hayward area. All riders accepted, buses are wheelchair accessible & bike rack equipped.

This year, **LIFE LINK III** is celebrating its 30th anniversary and the many life-saving advances that have been made in achieving better outcomes for patients when time is critical. We are committed to our partnerships with emergency medical services and public safety, referring hospitals, our Consortium members and other receiving facilities – and, above all, to the care of our patients. Today, Life Link III operates six helicopter bases located throughout Minnesota and western Wisconsin. Helicopter and airplane services are available 24/7, providing on-scene emergency response and inter-facility transport. Life Link III's transportation services are accredited by CAMTS (Commission on Accreditation of Medical Transportation Services), ensuring the highest standards of quality and safety are met on every transport.

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