

Name: **Charlie Dee**

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Years of Membership in the ABSF: Long time

Occupation: Retired Professor, Freelance Writer

Signature of Candidate: 

The American Birkebeiner is a larger and more complex organization than when I was first elected to the board five years ago.

Back then, we ran the Birkie Week ski races, the Birkie Trail Run, and that was it. This seems like ancient history because we now offer eight races during Birkie Week and seven other events during the rest of the year. In addition, we host 8-10 events at our venues that other organizations run.

Consequently, our budget is significantly larger, our importance to the economies of Sawyer and Bayfield Counties is even more pronounced, and our challenges are greater.

Our national profile has grown dramatically as well: our bridge was a focal point of Super Bowl Week telecasts in 2018, articles about us now appear in national magazines, and we have recently established a partnership with the US Ski and Snowboard Association.

Most of this expansion results from the vision and tireless energy of Executive Director Ben Popp and the fantastic staff he's assembled. But it has also required the Board of Directors to be diligent, questioning, even skeptical to make sure this expansion is consistent with our core mission. I haven't always supported every event we've taken on. However, as soon as the vote is taken, and the majority approves something, I support it as a team player.

From my four-decade experience as a volunteer and board member with other non-profits, I know that governance issues become increasingly important as an organization grows larger and more complex. Simply doing things the way they've always been done isn't good enough.

So I have worked hard as Secretary of the Board for the past three years to research best practices of other non-profits, to suggest changes in our Bylaws when needed, and to keep our Procedures Manual up-to-date.

Most important of all, I've made a concerted effort during this expansion to monitor the impact of the ABSF's growth on our non-profit status. Protecting us as a non-profit organization keeps our expenses down and maintains the tax-deductibility of contributions made to the ABSF. The entry fees for our races don't cover our full costs, so those tax-deductible contributions maintain our trail system and benefit every skier, runner and biker.

In my opinion, our board presently has a very healthy dynamic: everyone's voice is heard and appreciated. We have differences of opinion but work together with respectful deliberation. We're not a rubber stamp for any thing or anybody.

We've worked hard to make your choice to ski, run, bike or live with us in Birkieland a quality experience. In order to continue this work, I'm asking for your vote for one more three-year term on the ABSF Board of Directors.

If I'm elected, this will be the last term I'll serve, and I'll be happy simply to race and volunteer, knowing that I've paid back a small fraction of what the Birkie has given me over the decades.

Thank you.

Charlie Dee

- Retired professor living in Milwaukee
- Completed 19 Birkies, two Korteloppets
- Five years on ABSF Board, three years Secretary of ABSF Board
- Chair of Documentation Committee, Member of Skier Development Committee
- Co-founder and Board VP of Wisconsin Nordic Network (Korte Scholarships)
- Member and Contributor: Lapham Peak Ski Club, CXC Masters, Northern Kettle Moraine Nordic Ski Club, Iola Winter Sports Club, CLCF Nordic
- Writes about Nordic Skiing for *Silent Sports* magazine