

**Name:**

Andy Ubel

**Address:**

Saint Paul, MN & Cable, WI

**Years of ABSF Membership:**

5

**Occupation:**

Attorney & Entrepreneur

**Why are you interested in being a member of the ABSF Board of Directors and what knowledge and skills do you possess that can benefit the organization?**

What an exciting time for the Birkie! It has grown dramatically into a year-round silent sports management organization. The acquisition and preservation of the Telemark property coupled with the impending development of Mt. Telemark Village present both opportunities and challenges moving forward.

My candidacy for the ABSF Board is based on my belief that my family, career and volunteer experiences have prepared me to be able to contribute to leading the Birkie organization through both the challenges and opportunities ahead.

Like many of you I caught a chronic case of Birkie fever. At first my Nordic passions were focused on my own skiing activities (Birkie races, World Loppets, skijoring, roller training camps, etc.). As much fun as that was, I realized that helping others enjoy this passion was even more important to me. So I got involved in volunteer activities at two Twin Cities area nonprofit ski organizations that share the Birkie's goals of growing the Nordic community and promoting it to future generations of skiers.

Years ago my children began skiing through the MYSL organization. That early skiing experience made it easy for them to transition to middle school and high school teams. I was lucky to be able to help coach at some MYSL events, but later I learned that many other MYSL parents didn't ski at all. Thankfully through my ski club, Endurance United, I was able to volunteer as a Learn-to-ski instructor and help these non-skiing parents. While it was a huge joy to see MYSL kids learn to ski, it was even better knowing that their parents were also learning to ski and that the whole family could enjoy skiing together.

The Birkie has made great progress developing fun youth races, including the popular HS wave at the Korte. Building for the future is good marketing, in my view, and I would like to explore ways the Birkie Foundation can keep the cost of its youth events down so the younger crowd isn't priced out of these foundational events. Currently Birkie week is a huge family event, but it seems like we could do more to help youth (including 20-somethings) experience Birkie managed events with young people their ages. Bottomline, we need to teach the young people to ski, and then find ways to promote events that young adults can enjoy so they will become part of our lifelong community.

The Birkie's year-round programing and new Telemark property seems like an ideal center for youth focused events of all kinds. It could include serious training events (where ski clubs come to work out), fun camps for school-aged kids, and even social mixer events for young adults. But expansion into youth and young adult programing will require careful planning and governance. I would like to help with that task, while protecting the organization and its core Birkie events that we all love.

If elected as a Birkie Foundation Board member I would seek out the opinions of fellow Birkie participants (and former participants) and help the Board develop the Telemark property accordingly. My past work experiences as a scientist, patent attorney and entrepreneur will help me be an effective and useful Birkie Board Member. I have prior non-profit board experiences, including helping a 501(c)(3) organization transition from being an afterschool tutoring program to a successful K-8 charter school serving inner-city kids and another organization establish a youth camping and wilderness education program. I am currently serving as a board member for two startup companies in the Twin Cities.

Meg and I have a residence near Cable WI and I have both the time and skills to help the Birkie Foundation. For example, my experience helping the Loppet Foundation prepare for a World Cup event would be invaluable in the event the Birkie community considers hosting a World Cup event at Telemark. My legal training would also be helpful as I have developed a keen eye for legal land mines and a practical sense of how to work around such issues.

In summary, I am grateful there is no vaccine for Birkie Fever. Please support my candidacy and I will work towards continuously improving the Birkie events and organization and thereby spreading this fever to as many others as possible.

See you on the trails.

Regards,

Andy