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# BIRKEBEINER BULLETIN



Volume 32  
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June 2009

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## Official newsletter of the Birkebeiner Nordic Ski Club

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## Editorial

Another year has rolled around and another AGM has gone. There are two new committee members, Michelle Forrer and Paul Gray. The annual casserole dinner and the mid-season dinner are both on, see notices elsewhere. Check the expiry date of your membership on the address label or if you get the newsletter from the website check the shared files for membership expiry dates. It is easy to overlook. If you are coming to the casserole dinner, bring your membership form and cheque or correct weight. I will have some forms there though.



# The Birkebeiner name

## *Historical Background*

There was civil war in Norway. Faction pitted itself against faction, each having a pretender fighting for the throne and the supremacy of the country. Father fought son, brother against brother. No one felt safe.

One faction was the **Birkebeiners**—the underdogs who were persecuted and victimised. Living out in the open these people were in such dire need that they had nothing but the bark of birch trees as footwear. The word Birkebeiner, (literally “birch legs”), has come to mean a person strong in adversity, never daunted by trials and hardships.

The chieftain of the Birkebeiners, Sverre, had gained ascendancy over great parts of the country, but the rival faction, the **Baglers**, prevailed in the Oslo area and in the more affluent eastern parts of the country. Under Sverre’s son, Haakon, the conflict subsided, but the fighting flared up again when Haakon died in 1204.

Haakon’s son, Haakon Haakonsson (the little prince), was born a couple of weeks after the death of his father, and in him the Baglers saw a dangerous rival pretender. The Birkebeiners knew that the life of the young prince was at stake and decided to take him north to Trondheim where he would be safe. On Christmas eve the party of refugees came to a small farmhouse in Lillehammer, where they stayed in hiding over Christmas.

Early in January 1206 they set forth again. Finding it risky to follow the route up the Gudbrandsdalen valley to Trondheim, they cut across the mountains to the neighbouring Osterdalen valley. Due to bad weather and difficult snow conditions the two best skiers, Torstein Skevla and Skjervald Skrukka, had to go ahead and leave the rest of the party behind. Never flinching, the two of them carried the child, in whom they had high hopes for the future of Norway, across the barren mountains to Rena in the Osterdalen valley, a distance of 55 km. There they were well received by local farmers and given horses and food for the further escape north to Trondheim.

Haakon Haakonsson eventually became king (1217-63), ended the civil war and established peace in the country. Under him Norway enjoyed its heyday in the Middle Ages.

On this trip they suffered much from cold, snow and wind. Behind the saga lies a deed of valour and strength with an appeal to skiers of all ages and nations. Their deed is celebrated today with the annual Birkebeiner races in Norway (55 km), USA (50 km) and Australia (21 km). The first Norwegian Birkebeiner race was held in 1932 (155 skiers), the American Birkebeiner 1973 (70 skiers) and the **Australian Birkebeiner in 1979 (80 skiers).**

The 5.5 kg pack carried by the present-day Birkebeiners (now only in the Norwegian race) symbolises the weight of the 18 month old prince. The idea is that it should contain the necessities for rough mountain weather.

As in all races some skiers compete for a top placing, but it is a feature of this race that the ultimate goal of every participant is to finish inside a time limit. Those who succeed are awarded a pin, considered the hallmark of a skier. The time limit in each age group is made up on the basis of the average of the time of the 5 fastest (3 fastest in the Australian Birkebeiner) skiers in an age group, plus a time increment of 25% added.

Both the Norwegian and American Birkebeiner races are foundation members of Worldloppet which was established in 1981. The Australian Birkebeiner is not part of Worldloppet but the 42km Kangaroo Hoppet, which developed from it, was admitted in 1990 with the first event being conducted in 1991. **Note:** The Australian Birkebeiner is still conducted as part of the Australian Worldloppet event but done in the skating technique, no pack is carried and a pin is awarded to all those who complete the distance regardless of time.

The 2009 event on Saturday August 22 will be the nineteenth Kangaroo Hoppet.

*Updated May 2009*

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## Canadians Looking to Visit

Hi!

I'm Stephanie Drolet, 19 years old and a member of the Quebec cross-country ski team in Canada, I am planning to make a trip this summer with my twin sister also member of the Quebec ski team and Australia is definitely a place we want to visit.

We are looking for someone interested to welcome us and give us a place to stay for approximately 1 month during July-August, we want to see how you do things and get a chance to put some good quality ski on snow during our summer time (your winter), practice our English and also visit the region. (Sorry for the mistakes, my first language is French)

In exchange, the people who would welcome us would be invited to come in Quebec and discover the North American culture and can get the possibility to learn French.

Thanks a lot

I hope I will receive positive answers

For more information about me go to [www.droletsisters.com](http://www.droletsisters.com).

Stephanie Drolet

If anyone is interested, please contact Marso. [marso@westnet.com.au](mailto:marso@westnet.com.au) or 5754 4541

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## ANNUAL CASSEROLE DINNER

6.30 pm Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> June 2009

**Mt Beauty Bush Lodge, Mountain Creek Road**

BYO Drinks and Glasses

Bring food to share (singles - a casserole, families - casserole and dessert)

**What's on?**

Second hand equipment sale (bring it along, someone may buy it). Videos for the kids

Lots of talk, It's a great night to meet members & get fired up for the coming season.

New & old members most welcome. No charge: bring along 2008/2010 membership fee (cheque or exact weight preferred) and membership form.



# Birkebeiner Nordic Ski Club Inc.

## Membership Form 2009

Name: .....Date: .....

Address: .....Postcode:.....

Postal Address: .....

Telephone: .....Email: .....

Family members (family. m'ships): .....



I wish to get my newsletter from the my connected community website (mc2.vicnet.au)

## FEES

### Annual membership fees



Family

\$66.00 (including fulltime under-graduates)



Family 5 year

\$330.00



Singles

\$33.00



Single 5 year

\$165.00



Students

\$20.00 (fulltime)



Associate\*

\$20.00

\*Intended for existing members who no longer ski, nor use the club house, but would like to remain club members and receive the newsletter, or for new search and rescue squad members who do not require the use of club facilities.

Please make cheques payable to BNSC and send to:

**The Membership Secretary,  
BNSC,  
Box 192,  
Mt Beauty 3699**

**Fees are due on June 1 and are payable by the end of June.**

*The club offers the following activities and services to members:* • a day clubhouse facility at Falls Creek, a junior ski squad, • learn to ski days, • social activities, • a search and rescue squad, • races at club, state and national level, • the annual Worldloppet event, the Kangaroo Hoppet. The club advises the Falls Creek Alpine Resort on XC matters.

For our midseason dinner bring your festive spirit along to:

# Christmas in July at Roi's Thursday 30th July

## TRADITIONAL FEAST

### MAIN COURSE

Roi will cook you a delicious feast of hot ham, roast turkey breast, and roast beef.

These will be accompanied by special sauces, gravy and chutneys which Roi will create for each meat.

A vegetarian option will be available and roast vegetables will accompany the meats.

### DESSERT

Plum puddings with hot brandy custard or lemon tart or Roi's tiramisu for those who prefer.

\$25 pp (subsidised by BNSC). Drinks extra.

**RSVP:** by Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> July to Ronice Goebel Ph: 57 544 910

Insert race calendar here



Dave Panozzo and Bill Little at the Emergency Services Open Day held on the 4<sup>th</sup> April highlighting the work all the emergency services perform



Gerry Van Der Ploeg and Phil Evans dressed as our mascots, complete with Haakon jnr.

### **News from Marg Hayes and Bruce Wharrie, ex club members.**

Just to keep you up with our latest news: Bruce and I went to Europe for 3 months earlier this year and skied 14 worldloppet races in 10 different countries. We successfully completed our 2nd and 3rd gold worldloppet passports. We were ecstatic, as it was quite a challenge, especially since we had never completed 2 races in a weekend before but we managed to in 4 different countries. We also went hut to hut ski touring in Norway for 9 days which was absolutely brilliant. There were so many highlights but certainly lining up at the start of the Vasaloppet with some 16 thousand other people and all starting at the same time was an amazing experience. After 1 hour I had only skied some 3kms because of the crowds and I couldn't believe I still had 87kms to go. Reaching the half way mark there was a huge wide screen TV and the winner was being interviewed at the finish. I still had 45kms to ski. We were lucky that Europe had a great winter for snow and all the races we entered ran.

# Club Calendar

## June

Sat 14	6:30	Annual Casserole Dinner	Mountain Creek Lodge		
Sun 28	10:30	Junior Joey Series 1	Falls Creek	Jenny Kromar	0439 999 788

## July

Sat 4	11:00	Birkebeiner Classic 2.5/5/10km	Falls Creek	J Bottomley	03 5754 1101
Sun 5	10:00	Ski de Femme 1/2.5/5km	Falls Creek	Ronice Goebel	03 5754 4910
Sun 26	10:30	Junior Joey Series 2	Falls Creek	Jenny Kromar	0439 999 788
Thur 30	6:30	Mid Year Dinner	Rois	Ronice Goebel	

## August

Sat 8	9:30	Aust Sprint Camps Open/Jnr (F)	Falls Creek	J Bottomley	03 5754 1101
Sun 9	10:00	Aust Open 15/30km Champs (F)	Falls Creek	J Bottomley	03 5754 1101
Sun 9	10:00	Falls Creek Junior Cup 2.5/5/10(F)	Falls Creek	J Bottomley	03 5754 1101
Sun 23	10:30	Junior Joey Series 3	Falls Creek	Jenny Kromar	0439 999 788
Sat 29	9:30	Kangaroo Hoppet (F) 42km	Falls Creek	Race Secretary	03 5754 1045
Sat 29	9:40	Australian Birkebeiner (F) 21km	Falls Creek	Race Secretary	03 5754 1045
Sat 29	9:50	Joey Hoppet(F) 7km	Falls Creek	Race Secretary	03 5754 1045

## September

Sun 6	10:30	Junior Joey Series 4	Falls Creek	Jenny Kromar	0439 999 788
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## Birkebeiner Bulletin

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If undelivered please return to:  
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