Still Time to Register for the Marathon
Come Out & Celebrate Fitness
in the Great Outdoors at Whaleback

Glenn Kirby lines up for the 1986 c. NL Ski Marathon in Kippens

When I first arrived on this big wild piece of real estate, 80 km off the coast of my native Cape Breton Island, I was intrigued by the stories about NL Marathon Ski Tour. Bruce Innis, an old ski buddy from my Stephenville Ski Club days, talked about the "marathon" with great fondness and kept insisting that I had to sign up for the next marathon. So in March of 1977, when the Pasadena Recreation Committee summoned cross country skiers from all across the province to come out to the 7th Annual NL Marathon Ski Tour, Marjie and I teamed up with Bruce and Sue Mitten and headed off to Pasadena to join 275 skiers at the start line.

While the Pasadena trail was primitive and not much wider than a snowshoe trail, it served us well and I was immediately captured by the enthusiasm and the spirit displayed by the participants. The only racers in the event were the members of Frank O'Connor's MUN team and they were eagerly chased by a handful of ambitious souls who erroneously thought they could catch up to Frank's young charges.

In those days, classic skiing was the only technique in town. And seeing as water bottle carriers had not yet been invented, wine skins slung over the shoulders of methodical skiers were the only hydration choices of the day.

Skiers line up at the start of the NL Ski Marathon in Kippens 1986 c.
The course was the gruelling "Around the Whaleback" course

Although we have never been able to match the 275 participants that turned out for the Pasadena Marathon, the comradeship and spirit of the Marathon is still alive and well despite the reduced numbers. But in order to catch that spirit, you must make the effort to participate in the event. And that is what President Greg Noonan and his devoted helpers at Whaleback Nordic are asking of fellow cross country skiers from all across the province. Just COME OUT and PARTICIPATE. We're especially looking for a big turnout from Whaleback and our cousins from Blow-Me-Down and Pasadena.

Right now (Thurs. afternoon), the weather is holding with cloudy skies and a temperature of 3 C. Later this evening it is cooling down and the forecast calls for flurries and light snow leading into the weekend. The outlook for Saturday is sun and cloud, temperature of - 9 C, and a westerly wind at 25 km. And considering that you'll be tucked into the sheltered trails at Whaleback, Saturday will be just a perfect day for the Marathon ... a cherished event that some speedsters will choose to race, and others will prefer to tour at a leisurely pace.

My choice this year will be a 40 k classic tour with maybe a spell at trailside to boil the kettle where can take a moment to catch the true spirit of the Marathon. Hmmmmm ... But it's Dan Rumbolt's turn to carry the stove, kettle, frying pan, bologna, butter, an onion and two cans of Chunky Italian Stew ... Maybe I should check with him first!

Hope to see you there and have a chat on the trail!

Graham Oliver
(A few pics below depicting the spirit of the Marathon)

To Register: https://whalebacknordic.files.wordpress.com/2016/01/marathon-package-2017.pdf

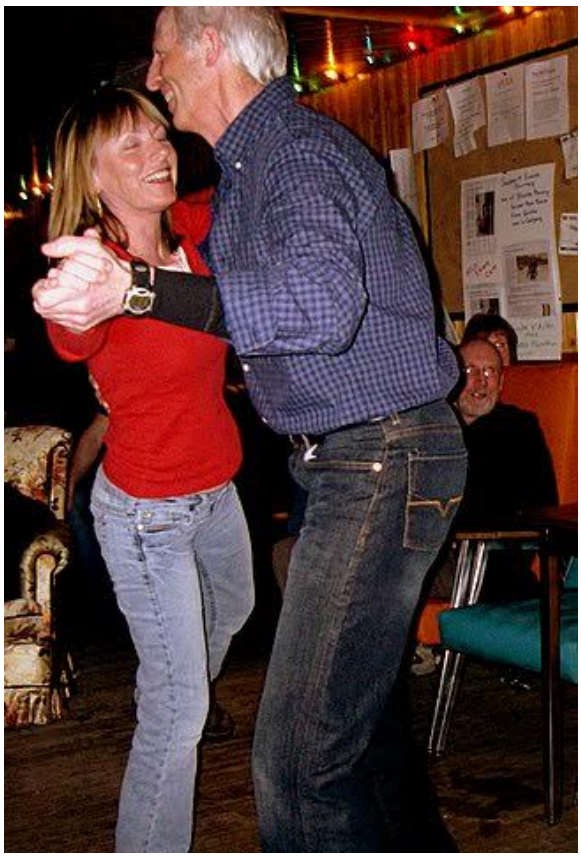
Remembering Marathons of Days Gone By

Wayne Hounsell, Norma Chapman and Susan Whalen complete the WB Loppet in preparation for 2012 Marathon

Friendship and hospitality is always front and centre at post Marathon socials.
Don Cormier's newfound friend from St. Anthony insists that he has a generous helping of fresh shrimp.

Meeting old friends is part of the marathon experience. Laura Smith and Will Fitzgerald share a pre-marathon Breakfast with the Whaleback gang in Clarenville (2007)

Marathon's can become a family tradition.
The Rumbolt's prepare for the start of the 1997 marathon at Whaleback. Go Sasha Go!



Marathon skiers have megatons of stamina.
What's better that a lively scuff after 40 ks of kicking and gliding?

The presenting sponsor for this year's Marathon is the Outfitters. Hope to see you at the start!