

# Legends Yukon Orienteering Association

Newsletter

- December 2007 -

## President's Note from Barbara Scheck

Another orienteering season is behind us and the new one is already being planned. 2007 was another busy year. The year after the hosting the Westerns is traditionally one in which to regroup, however YOA took some big steps in an effort to expand orienteering beyond the Whitehorse area and offer even more programs. In addition, we hosted our full slate of Wednesday night meets, the rapidly growing Whitehorse Adventure Run, the Annual Learn to O, a Junior Program with almost 40 participants and the Golden Aspen Orienteering Festival!

The Yukon Orienteering Association was fortunate to receive a large grant through the Sport 4 Life funding. The funding was not confirmed until August, so most of it will be spent at the beginning of the 2008 season. Some of the funds were earmarked for Junior travel. YOA dispersed this to eight juniors who received a portion towards trips this past summer. Included in that grant were funds that are to be directed to Rural and Aboriginal Participation. Some of this money has already been spent on field work and drafting of a map in Haines Junction. Look for an orienteering meet in the Junction next year! As well, we will be strengthening our connection to the Kwanlin Koyotes group in the new season.

To date there is still one area that we have been unable to spend the money that was granted to us. The largest portion we received was to contribute 75% towards the cost of hiring a part time coach. The Yukon Government is trying to encourage the profession of coaching and is making substantial funding available to many sports to support this endeavor. Orienteering is

not the only sport to have difficulty finding qualified coaches to work with their programs and membership. We will keep you posted on this.

YOA members traveled far and wide this past summer representing the Yukon and Canada. For such a small association we are making our presence known. Pam James and Brent Langbakk once again represented Canada at the World Orienteering Championships. For the third time in her career Pam qualified for a final and finished the Middle Distance Final as the 41st women in the world. Wow! At the National Championships in Saskatoon, and the Westerns in Kamloops the Yukon was again well represented and extremely competitive. Check out the list of our members who received Awards of Excellences at the annual Sports Awards later in this newsletter.

But none of this could happen without the wonderful volunteers who give their time so generously to YOA and the sport of orienteering. My thanks and appreciation go to the other members of the Executive, all the meet organizers, registration volunteers, the members who offer to pick up controls both near and far, and the parents and coaches. If you haven't had a chance to offer your help in the past, please consider doing so this year. We are a friendly bunch and would be delighted share the tasks! At our Annual General Meeting on January 16<sup>th</sup>, the Treasurer and Vice-President positions on the Executive will be open. If any of these appeal to you please call for more information.

Until then I hope to see you on the ski trails.....

- *Barbara*

## **2007 Sports Awards**

The following awards and nominations were presented at the annual Sport Yukon Awards Ceremony on November 23.

**Awards of Excellence:** Lee Hawkings, Galena Roots, Logan Roots, Philippa McNeil, Pam James, Colin Abbott, Jennifer MacKeigan, Brent Langbakk, Juri Peepre and Ross Burnett

**Active Member Awards:** Female Athlete of the Year - Pam James, Male Athlete of the Year - Colin Abbott, Most Improved Athlete of the Year - Dustin Wilkinson, Orienteering Family of the Year - Stappers/Shier Family

**Major Awards:** Nominated for National/Territorial Male Athlete of the Year: Colin Abbott and Lee Hawkings

**Nominated for International Female Athlete of the Year:** Pam James

**Nominated for International Male Athlete of the Year:** Brent Langbakk.

## **Sass Peepre Camp**

This past season, I traveled with a number of other avid Yukon orienteers to Saskatchewan for the Canadian Orienteering Championships (COC's).

In the last week of July 2007 we departed a soggy, 15°C Whitehorse and landed in a scorching, cloudless, 35°C Saskatoon. That night, I raced in my first ever night race. For the first few controls, I was okay, but my small petzl headlamp couldn't pierce the dark to reveal the extremely technical terrain I was running through. I soon lost contact with my map, circling indistinct patches of forest trying to relocate. I didn't know where I was for the next half hour until I hit a road that (lucky for me) was still on the map. My advice to anyone who tries night orienteering is take a seriously strong headlamp!

The next morning we headed for the annual Sass Peepre camp, a training camp for orienteering youth around the country. This was great, as it allowed me a few days to acclimatize before the main competitions and

recover from the disastrous race the night before.

The camp itself was great upon first inspection. We were staying at a Christian camp/retreat with a lake situated 300m from the camp, basketball courts, adequate bunks, and a large dining hall. Something of that lovely image was shattered on our first night. It was again scorching hot during the day, and didn't get anywhere near cool that night. The dorms had no air conditioning, and leaving the doors open just let more mosquitoes in. Sleeping in boxers without a sheet, and still sweating was a new experience for me.

The first day training in the forest was probably the hardest. The week before we arrived, a windstorm similar to the one that blew through Whitehorse a couple of years ago had hit the map area we were training and racing on. It took me the entire camp to get used to thrashing through the deadfall, rosebushes, waist high grass and dense shrubs. We had 2-3 training sessions a day of map

reading, forest running, learning to move through the vegetation efficiently and some memorable stretching sessions with Ted, the camp leader. Interspersing the sometimes intense, but always fun training sessions were endless games of bump, cards, mud wrestling, football on the beach and swimming in the lake (which we later found out had leeches in it). When we weren't doing any of the above, we were either reading Harry Potter or eating some of the great food put out by the volunteer parents and coaches. When the camp was said and done, most of the competitors headed to Saskatoon to stay in air-conditioned water slide bliss at a hotel in a paved urban paradise.

## **Canadian Championships**

Night O is a strange thing for Yukoners. We are used to the dark, but we are not used to orienteering in the dark, especially a hot, dark night with crickets calling. Six brave Yukoners tackled the COC night O, which was held at Dundurn military base on a Tuesday evening in the middle of a scorching heat wave. Fortunately by the time the start rolled around the temperature was down to a pleasant 26 degrees C. For most of us it was our first night O -- an hour-long score event on a very open map with lots of small, complex features. The people who did well were not the usual fast-but-careful types, but those who basically threw caution to the wind and, as Randy Kemp from Ottawa put it, ran cross-country "at full biff on a compass bearing". It was definitely not a course to be timid on.

On the other hand, losing contact with the map was pretty much suicide, as there was no good way to relocate -- very few distinctive features in the dark, and the trails were just overgrown ruts in the sand -- remarkably hard to see in the glow of a headlamp. Lee Hawkings was a case in

The races started with the Sprint event at the University of Saskatchewan, with technical map reading and fast times. The next race was a competitive middle distance race where you had to be standing right next to a control to see it. The long distance race has to be one of the most grueling races I've ever completed. The heat affected everyone, and more than a third of the competitors dropped out. Of those that finished, most had 15-30 minute mistakes (I had 2 of them). But all in all it was a great trip, and with my results I have my fingers crossed in hopes of qualifying for the Junior Worlds next summer in Sweden.

– *Colin Abbott*

point. He racked up the controls at a furious rate for about 35 minutes, then got hopelessly lost for the rest of the hour. Nansen Murray, who is generally known to favour speed over caution, had a fabulous race.

Interestingly, a number of experienced competitors were smart enough to figure out that the value of a few extra controls far outweighed the meagre 2-points per minute late penalty, and they stayed out on the course accordingly.

David Ross from Moncton really went overboard....he took an extra 45 minutes on the 60-minute event! Personally, I found it completely unnerving and was petrified of losing contact with the trails for about the first half hour, then I started to get braver and was on a good roll as the time ran out. This was the first COC night-O in 30 years. Now that some of us have had a good shakedown, we will feel totally comfortable at the start line for the next one, slathered with insect repellent and sporting high-powered headlamps.

– *Jim Hawkings*

### **New mapping activities 2007**

Yukon Orienteering Association undertook three mapping projects this past summer:

1. re-mapping Mount McIntyre ski trails to add detail and new trail connectors
2. a new map of central Haines Junction drawn to IOF sprint map standards
3. new mapping near Lewes Lake

YOA received funding to bring Louise Oram, one time Canadian Orienteering Team member from Greater Vancouver Orienteering Club to map the Mount McIntyre and Haines Junction, while old map hand Afan Jones dusted the cobwebs

off his colored pencils and took on Lewes Lake. The first two areas may be used next season (?) while Lewes Lake will take a few seasons to complete and may be used for a regional or national level competition. In keeping with ever more detailed orienteering maps all areas promise to provide challenges. The choice of areas also allows the association to branch out of Whitehorse and introduce our activity to smaller, nearby communities.

– *Afan Jones*

### **AGM Announcement**

All members are welcome to the Yukon Orienteering Association AGM on **January 16 in the Sport Yukon boardroom starting at 7:00 p.m.**

Please join us, share your ideas, join the executive, have some pizza!

### **Current Executive**

**President:** Barbara Scheck

**Vice-President:** Jean-François Roldan (outgoing)

**Treasurer:** Ev Pasichnyk

**Training Director:** Brent Langbakk

**Past President:** Pippa McNeil

**Communications Director:** Wendy Nixon

**Mapping Director:** Ross Burnett

*Yukon Orienteering Association  
4061 4th Avenue  
Whitehorse, YT  
Y1A 1H1*