

RECORD 'ICED' AT SUPERIOR 50K

by phillip gary smith

'Volatile' is a staple of weather forecasts in the Superior Forest, sharing its mountainous, thickly wooded terrain with the world's largest inland fresh water ocean called *Gitchigumi* in the Ojibwe language. Snow, rain, blow-down winds, even a gigantic forest fire further north a few years ago, all combine to make this a challenging expanse to hold foot races before one ever plants a trail shoe on the revered Superior Hiking Trails. Paths are cut over rocks and roots, through streams, bridging rivers rushing wildly as if to escape their narrow confines to feed Lake Superior's thirst.

Weeks before the 2009 event was waved to start at race headquarters - Caribou Lodge, Lutsen, Minnesota - a freak ice storm devastated the forests, breaking trees off at their tops, making the trails not only impassable but unfindable. The Superior Hiking Trail Association garnered its troops and volunteers, and the Upper Midwest Trail Runners Association took multiple crews to the area for two consecutive weekends to saw, chop, and move, by hand, tons of woody debris to get the trails reopened.

What did they get as their reward? How about the quickest time ever for this course?

A long-standing record of 3:56:09, established in 2003 by Charlie Hubbard and often assaulted by top trail jockeys, fell to the amazing pace set by 33-year-old Minneapolisian, Chris Lundstrom, who notched a blazing 3:48:54. Charlie mans the turnaround at the Carlton Peak climb for this out-and-back course and no doubt realized Chris was on track to capture the new time banner.

Lundstrom entered as a relative unknown, with no record of any previous trail addiction,

or as Andy Holak put it, "Chris is unbelievably talented, [running] a negative split on the way back. Unfortunately, I didn't find out his resumé until the race was over."

Andy described the race from the front, "... Chris hit the trail in first, and I hit the trail second. Early on I had him in sight all the time, and when we hit the steep climb up Moose Mountain on the way out he was *running* up the hill. I didn't know who he was and had never seen him in an ultra or trail race before. He looked like a pretty young guy too, so I thought maybe he was an inexperienced runner. My thought at the time was to let him run those steep hills, I'll walk up, conserving my energy, and I'll see him later...he is going to blow himself up running those hills."

"Ha," I thought, "I'll use my experience."

Holak set a personal best with his second place 4:16:09. The Holaks (Andy and Kim) will introduce the new 50-km and 100-km Wild Duluth ultra trail races in October, 2009 at the Southern end of the Superior Hiking Trail in and around Duluth.

Minneapolis' Joe Ziegenfuss, winner of the 2008 50-km Upper Midwest Trail Runners Championship, took third place. Erik Lindstrom in his second attempt at this event knocked 20 minutes off his 2008 time. Then Mr. Smooth, Steve Schuder, a masterly 45, took another top-five finish as he has for years.

The Superior 50 km and its challenges continue to attract the region's top performers such as the winner of the women's race, Connie Lutkevich, with 5:27:31. A surgeon in Duluth, Connie had recently completed the Antarctica Marathon (second woman), which reminded her of

the Northern Minnesota trails. That experience no doubt proved beneficial in her first appearance here. Teri Wilkie, another women's master entry, took second with Traci Amundson, fourth place in 2008, moving up a notch even after having competed the previous weekend.

Steve Quick, director of the Fab 5 Fifties Ultra Series (the Superior 50K is the fourth event in the series), provided his take on the weather and course, saying "There was still patchy snow at the base of LeVeaux Mountain, but no snowman this year. Although spring is in full stride in the Twin Cities, the trees hadn't leafed out here, so the wind roared over the bluffs. And then the first snowflakes fell; later there'd be horizontal snow pellets making the already-soggy course a quagmire in the low spots. Early in the day, some of the numerous boardwalks were slippery. One comes to recognize different types of these: besides corduroy, there are old ones that shift on their supports, long ones that bend at the joints and thick hewn logs which roll. That makes three axes of rotation with which to contend."

At the critical Sawbill Aid station, volunteer Dale Immerfall described the leaders as "moving very fast. Most of the top runners did not stop or did not stop for long." In a resounding comment on the grateful runners, he added, "The one thing that always amazes my wife is how thankful and polite the runners are every time they go through the aid station, despite how focused they are on the race and how grueling it can be. Endurance runners are a great group of people and it is fun staffing the aid station and being a part of the event."

SUPERIOR SPRING TRAIL RACE

50 KM | LUTSEN, MINNESOTA
MAY 16 | TRAILS

1. Chris Lundstrom, 33	3:48:54!
2. Andy Holak, 41	4:16:09
3. Joe Ziegenfuss, 34	4:25:36
4. Erik Lindstrom, 33	4:25:46
5. Steve Schuder, 45	4:45:58
6. Rob Semmelroth, 34	4:47:42
7. Brian Peterson, 24	4:51:42
8. Kyle Klingman, 33	4:52:46
9. Guy Willey, 35	4:55:51
10. Jason Boon, 35	4:57:03
11. Kurt Decker, 38	4:57:45
Paul Holovnia, 47	4:57:45
13. Jason Buffington, 40	5:04:17
14. Ryanell Johnson, 39	5:14:18
15. Joseph Stromsness, 24	5:20:12
16. Mickey MacMillan, 38	5:26:25
17. <u>Connie Lutkevich</u> , 41	5:27:31
18. Sean Faulk, 36	5:29:28
19. Rob Anderson, 33	5:32:20
20. Richard Lunsford, 28	5:32:35

21. Michael Koppy, 58	5:35:46
22. Jeff Allen, 42	5:35:48
23. Matt Lutz, 23	5:36:48
24. Andrew Scobbie, 45	5:40:54
25. Davin Juusola, 33	5:41:51
26. Richard Bjork, 46	5:43:39
27. Zach Pierce, 35	5:55:29
28. Scott Rassbach, 38	5:57:27
29. Keith Krone, 31	6:09:34
30. Jason Husveth, 37	6:15:35
31. Patrick Susnik, 44	6:16:00
32. Matthew Ostrander, 47	6:17:42
Teri Wilkie, 43	6:17:42
34. <u>Traci Amundson</u> , 34	6:21:45
35. Kevin Martin, 34	6:24:48
36. Nicholas Olson, 29	6:25:14
37. Mark Seaburg, 49	6:28:30
38. <u>Julie Berg</u> , 44	6:30:17
39. Stephen Lamson, 51	6:35:06
40. Andy Bowman, 45	6:38:54
41. <u>Ronica Leege</u> , 30	6:39:05
42. Carl Gammon, 54	6:45:47
43. Thomas Glaeser, 54	6:45:47
44. <u>Dawn Long</u> , 53	6:47:29
45. <u>Diane Laughlin</u> , 45	6:47:31
46. Steve Felton, 51	6:49:51

47. <u>Amy Carolan</u> , 27	6:51:35
48. <u>Maria Barton</u> , 43	6:52:55
49. Ryan Carter, 31	6:52:57
50. Pierre Ostor, 52	6:53:44
51. John Pitera, 51	6:56:07
52. Allen Hoepner, 54	6:57:27
53. Steve Quick, 46	7:01:15
54. Al Boyce, 53	7:02:06
55. <u>Shelly Thompson</u> , 44	7:05:37
56. Andy Pederson, 32	7:06:38
57. Pete Peter, 51	7:07:18
58. <u>Alicia Gordon</u> , 43	7:09:02
59. <u>Brook Wheeler</u> , 38	7:09:08
60. Tom Rowe, 60	7:13:16
61. <u>JoAnn Fallis</u> , 57	7:14:23
Rick Kucinski, 57	7:14:23
63. <u>Karen Gall</u> , 49	7:18:27
64. Mark Stodghill, 60	7:20:57
65. Rick Bothwell, 47	7:28:23
66. Al Sauld, 62	7:41:11
<u>Debbie McKinzie</u> , 38	7:41:11
68. Steve Hagedorn, 50	7:44:13
69. Wayne Nelson, 43	7:49:23
70. Douglas Erickson, 42	8:04:40
71. Dan Mattimiro, 47	8:14:34