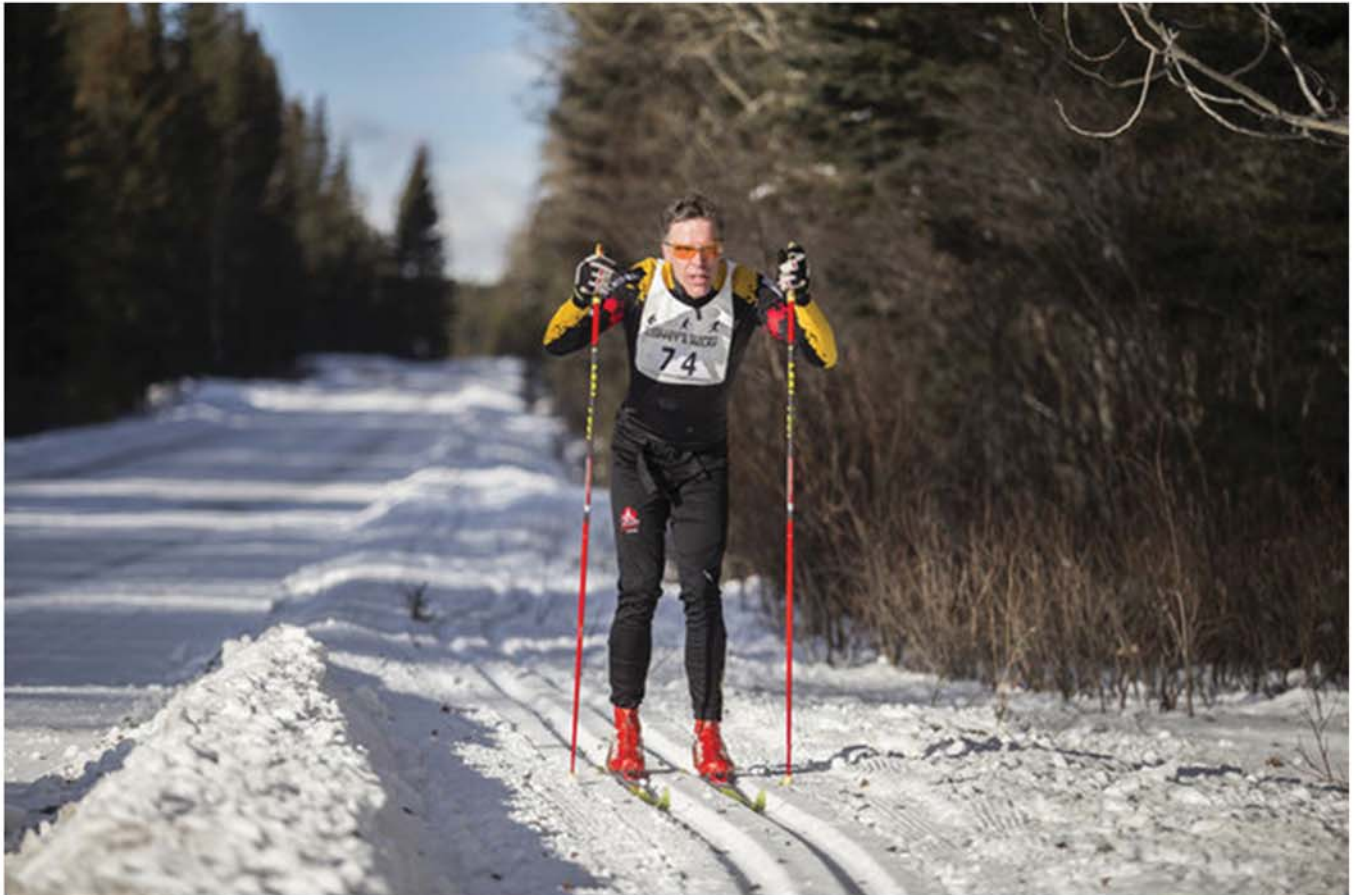


The Bow Valley
Crag & Canyon

By Justin Parsons, Canmore Leader
Tuesday, January 21, 2014 11:46:42 MST AM



Canmore's John Groeneveld has been competing in, and winning, the Lake Louise to Banff Loppet for longer than many of the popular event's participants have been in skis.

Groeneveld chalked up another win in the annual event after conquering the shortened 50-kilometre course in an impressive three hours three minutes and nine seconds on a pristine Sunday morning.

Add that win to a resume that already includes a victory in last year's 50-plus category, as well as wins back to 2000 where he finished the full-length 70-km course in 4:07.00

"I just went hard off the start to see what the competition would be like. Once I got a gap, I just tried to maintain an even pace. I went hard the last 10 km and made sure I had enough of a gap to get to the end by myself," said Groeneveld shortly after crossing the finish line Sunday.

Jeff Holmes finished behind Groeneveld with a time of 6:40, and Sean Huggins-Chan finished third with a time of 3:13:10.

Grand Prairie native and former Biathlon Alberta Training Centre biathlete Kathryn Stone was not only the fastest female competitor on the day, but completed the lengthy course that starts on Lake Louise equipped with skate skis, double-poling her way through most of the day's warm conditions for a time of 3:13:29, earning her a fourth-place overall finish and the admiration of her peers.

"Definitely the biggest advantage (to double-poling) was the first downhill. For the first three kilometres I was so happy, then it kind of went downhill from there. The hardest part was those last two uphill. It's so narrow it's hard to herringbone, so I actually fell down a couple times," said Stone.

"It was so much fun. I've always kind of wondered if I could do 50 km double-poled."

Mary Young, competing in the women's 50-plus, was the second-fastest female competitor on the day with a time of 3:25:47, followed by Jana Jurackova in the women's open category with a time of 3:41:37.

The mixed 40-plus Foothills Masters took the win in the teams category with a time of 3:18:20, followed by mixed open Csonkas with a time of 3:35:10 with family team Evergreen in third with a time of 3:27:32.