

Mariner Boys / Girls Shine at McGregor Track Meet

by John Sandstrom

Last week, the Silver Bay Mariners track team competed in a six-team meet, joining Lakeview Christian, Carlton, Wrenshall, Floodwood and host McGregor. The boys finished third and the girls took second (despite having only four girls available).

In the girls portion of the meet, Sophia Blanck placed first in the 100, 200, and 400 to continue her amazing first year in track. Allison Kaiser was the winner in both the shot put and discus. Sabrina Russell placed sixth in the 100.

Junior Raina Braun had a busy and successful day as she competed in four events. She placed first in the high jump, third in the long jump and 300 hurdles, and fourth in the 100 hurdles. When asked what she enjoys most about this season, she answered quickly, "That's easy, the friends I have made." Raina's aspirations are similar to many in track; keep getting better and improve her times.

Nate Bilben was another busy junior in the meet. He placed first in the 800 with a time of 2:20. He says he was far off his personal best of 2:10, but believes his time will continue to drop. He placed second in the 400 at 55 seconds, and was part of the first place winning 4 X 400 relay, along with Kaleb

Krech, Hunter Dow, and Dylan Schwarz. The relay also placed second in the 4 X 200.

This writer's typical question concerns the athlete's favorite part of their season. Bilben answered in familiar fashion: "Getting to be with my friends and being able to compete." His aspirations are to place in the top four at subsections which would qualify him to compete in sectionals.

Coach Rick Frericks was happy for his team. "They are all improving and a few of them are getting their PR (personal record). We have another meet in McGregor on Thursday of this week and I hope we can continue to improve."

Subsections are scheduled for June 3rd in Esko.

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Letter to the Editor

We are writing to let community parents know that we have been having concerns about Finland Teen Camp, over the past two years. These have included inappropriate language between staff and campers, safety, and promotion of an ideology without parental consent (emphasis on parental consent, not the choice of ideology). Giving staff the benefit of the doubt, we would hope that they are trying to address our concerns, but it is hard to tell. Communication with us has been reluctant, and after being told how our concerns from the first year were being addressed, the same concern arose again during the second year, along with a new one. We have now decided not to send our kids to camp this year, which has been a very hard decision; Elli initiated Youth Night and staffed it for the first year, and the Finland Youth Program has meant a lot to our kids over the years.

Our youth programs in Finland have been great. We don't want them to stop, and we don't want people to stop sending their kids to them. We just want parents to know what has been going on, so that they can make their own inquiry or give input if they want, and make an informed decision about where they are sending their children. We would also like to see a Youth Program Director hired, who has a good handle on commonly accepted best practices.

We want to say that we appreciate and thank every staff member of all of the Finland Youth Programs, including Teen Camp, for the time, effort, and heart that they put into the programs. We regret that this has been a frustrating process on both sides. Our goal is absolutely not to demonize anyone, or impact anyone personally, but to have youth programming in Finland that everyone can feel good about sending their children to.

Sincerely, Elli King and Rory Scoles

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