

Brrrave ones

Polar Plungers dip into icy water to raise funds for Boys & Girls Club

By Lee Morris

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How cold it was, this water, which ice would have covered had the ice not been chain sawed away.

About 70 people jumped Saturday into Detroit Lake and its 33-degree water for the Polar Plunge.

"It's just like a North Pole bath," said Lee Kensinger of Detroit Lakes, before hopping into the 12-foot-by-12-foot square of liquid.

Other than swimming suits, a costume contest yielded Dorothy from "The Wizard of Oz," pizza slices and business professional attire.

Some flipped in, and others made splashes. They then went – most quickly – from that near-freezing hole to warming houses.

"It's only an initial shock," said Patrick Petermann, an organizer of what he calls the "granddaddy," the culmination to this city's Polar Fest.



Pam Felker of Detroit Lakes and Michael Hayes of Fargo represent the Lakes Area Parrot Heads as they take the polar plunge.

Faces showed hesitation, but no jumper chickened out. Many acknowledged craziness.

"It was cold," said Phil Flores of Albuquerque,

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PLUNGE: Better Through Design to match pledges

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N.M. "Real cold."

"I just wanted to do something different," said Alison Heurung of Detroit Lakes, who was dressed as a police deputy. "I think I'll go back to boring."

Petermann is executive director of the Boys & Girls Club of Detroit Lakes, for which this 12th annual swim will raise about \$35,000.

Jumpers earned pledges, of which Better Through Design manufacturing will match \$10,000.

BTD employee and jumper Jarred Bridgeman said, "(The water) is not as bad as people think."

"Don't believe him," said James Vogt, another BTD employee. "That water's cold, but it's for all the right reasons."

Petermann said the after-school program has more than 500 members, 90 of which are daily attendees, including Arica Jolicoeur of Detroit Lakes. The sixth-grader raised \$215 in pledges for her jump.

Children as young as 6 braved the water Saturday, as did 69-year-old Norm Danielson of Callaway.

"Come on in, the water's fine, boys," Danielson said, this plunge his fifth.

Meg Barker and Ron



Photos by David Samson / The Forum

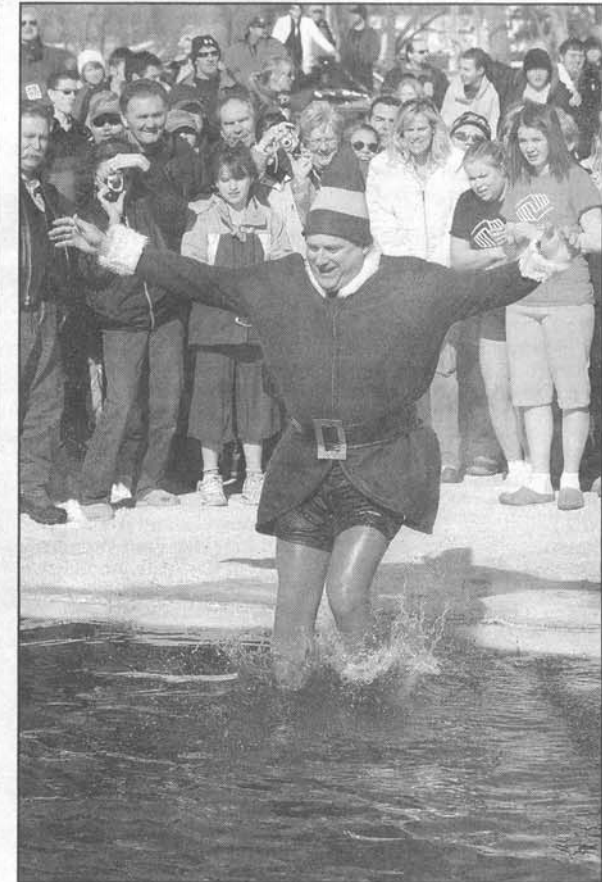
Ron Sprafka from Fargo and Meg Barker of Detroit Lakes prepare to dance their way into the drink.

Sprafka dressed as '90s prom dates, dancing into a dip before their dip.

"I just remember telling myself to breathe," said Barker, of Detroit Lakes, about her swim. "Or that we're really stupid. I don't know which one came first."

Sprafka, of Fargo, said, "It's just nice to be able to give back to the community in a cool way."

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Lee Kensinger of Detroit Lakes sports an elf costume while diving in.