

►► **Plys**

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After watching their son, Chris, curl in the 2010 Olympics, the cancer came back.

"(We) came back from the Olympics to an MRI showing more growth tissue," Laura Plys said. "It was like a punch in the gut."

During his third brain surgery, in May 2010, a doctor cut a vein in Plys' brain, causing a stroke.

"I remember his eyes being wild looking at me," Laura Plys said. "He couldn't walk. He couldn't talk. He couldn't move the whole right side of his body."

Not long after waking up from the stroke he wrote on a white board: "I choose Joy."

He also addressed the surgery.

"I forgave the doctor," Patrick Plys said last week — one of the few times he spoke, as speech is made difficult by the chemotherapy he's undergoing.

Laura Plys confirmed that was one of the first things her husband communicated to her after surgery.

After spending months in a wheelchair, Patrick set his sights on making the Circle Tour. His sister, Jackie Hall, and her husband, Gordy, decided to help Plys conquer Lake Superior.

Plys began training on an exercise bike in the fall, logging a few miles a day. Now he averages 26.2 miles a day. Since October he has pedaled more than 2,300 miles on his "spin" bike.

"He's as stubborn as the day is long," Laura Plys said. "There's just no stopping him. Some family members would say, 'I don't think this is such a good idea.' In the back of my mind, I thought even if they go 10 miles up the road and turn back, at least they tried."

On May 28, Patrick started the 1,300-mile trek around Lake Superior on a tandem bike with Gordy Hall, Jackie Hall, Laura Plys and some of the Plys kids followed them in a van. After a couple days, Laura Plys and the kids left the rest of them on their own.

"The hardest part was being away from each other," Laura Plys said. "We literally have not been apart for one year. I think it was good for him to have that independence away from me."

For almost the entire trip, every five miles Hall would park the van ahead of Plys to make sure everything was going OK.

"She was good enough to take me," Patrick Plys said of his sister. "I mean this with my whole heart. She sacrificed for my good."

Plys biked through 70 mph winds and had to ride in the van when a chain broke on his bike in the middle of nowhere. Despite the difficulty of his journey, Patrick completed the tour, arriving in Duluth on June 4.

"His doctors call him Mr. Incredible because he beats the odds with the recovery he's had, fighting the battle, not giving up," Laura Plys said. "I couldn't do it on my two healthy legs."

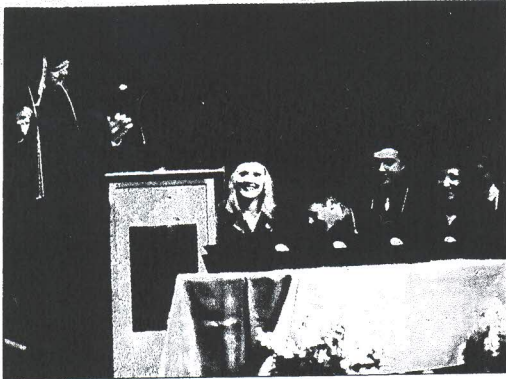
Biking around Lake Superior is only one of Plys' remarkable accomplishments. He arranged to have a school built in Nairobi, Kenya, where hundreds of people have learned to read and write. He has secured grants to build housing for teachers who work at the school. For many years he helped organize the Thanksgiving dinner at the Duluth Entertainment Convention Center and would donate food for funerals when people couldn't afford catering. To honor those efforts, Plys was inducted last year into the Duluth Hall of Fame.

Plys said he hopes his story of overcoming obstacles will inspire others to overcome their struggles.

"I can do all things through Christ's strength in me," he said. "God has things work together for those who love."

Patrick's next goal is to travel to Nairobi with his family to see how his school has benefited the community.

Marshall grads get marching orders



Several classmates react to Marshall School class of 2011 valedictorian Patrick Sheedy during his address at Sunday's commencement in Fregeau Auditorium. Steve Kuchera / skuchera@duluthnews.com

►► **GOP**

Continued from Page A1

The more conservative branch includes businessman Herman Cain, former Pennsylvania Sen. Rick Santorum, Texas Rep. Ron Paul and still undecided candidate Minnesota Rep. Michele Bachmann.

They often pledge allegiance to the conservative Tea Party movement that helped elect dozens of congressional Republicans around the nation last year. They have long, vocal histories of opposition to healthcare mandates and an eagerness for dramatic budget slashing. And they demand ironclad opposition to abortion.

Christopher Crawford, chairman of the New Hampshire Conservative Future Political Action Committee, summed up the difference between the two party wings: "Independent Republicans don't demand the same record of standing up for cultural issues. The independents tend to be more focused on the fiscal message."

The candidate who may intrigue the ultra-conservatives most is Cain, thanks to his energetic performance in last month's South Carolina debate and blunt speech on the trail, with lines like "stupid people are ruining America."

The conservative crowd wants someone eager to fight for their beliefs, no matter what the more practical politicians say. One of the

big New Hampshire struggles today concerns "right-to-work" legislation, which would bar future collective bargaining agreements from forcing employees to join a union or pay part of the bargaining's cost.

Right-to-work laws are popular in the more conservative South but rare in Northeastern states, where labor unions are powerful. But conservative activists — touting the bill as giving all-important freedom to workers — push legislation through the state House and Senate.

Democratic Gov. John Lynch vetoed the bill, and an override effort is under way. Conservatives say they're standing up for important principles. More moderate Republicans say the right is pushing an agenda that's oblivious to voters' real concerns.

New Hampshire state Rep. Tim Copeland, R-Stratham, noted that when he was campaigning last year, going door to door, "right-to-work never came up once, not once."

A moderate, he's not enthusiastic about any of the presidential candidates, "I'm still hoping some wonder person will come through," he said.

The problem for more moderate Republicans is that each of their candidates has political liabilities.

Former Utah Gov. Jon Huntsman, who has visited the state twice recently exploring a possible bid, was U.S. ambassador to China

through April — and appointed by President Obama. "I'm not sure we have someone unwilling to criticize President Obama," said GOP activist Jennifer Horn, Nashua-based president of We the People, a grass-roots conservative group.

Romney is under fire for signing into law as governor the Massachusetts health-care plan considered a model for the federal government's 2010 law, which most Republicans abhor. That's a "challenge he has to overcome every day he's campaigning," Horn said.

Gingrich appeared in a 2008 public service ad with House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., saying "our country must take action to address climate change," an issue conservatives consider a liberal effort to impose new burdens on business.

Pawlenty in 2007 supported a tough Minnesota plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, a step environmental groups lauded. At last month's South Carolina debate, Pawlenty said, "I made a mistake." Doubts grounded in those issues create an unpredictable race, and a potentially volatile debate.

NORTHLAND BRIEFS

Two hurt in motorcycle crashes released; one still hospitalized

Three motorcyclists injured in separate accidents Saturday all appear to be on the mend.

David Alan Haugberg, 49, of Le Sueur, Minn., was listed in stable condition at Essential St. Mary's Medical Center on Sunday evening.

Meanwhile, John Finnelly, 57, of Duluth and Andrew Anderson, 33, of Duluth were both treated and released from the same facility.

Traffic diverted in Blatnik Bridge incident

The Superior Police Department received a report of a woman possibly endangering the welfare of a small child on the Blatnik Bridge about 12:20 a.m. Sunday. The bridge was briefly closed to traffic as squads responded.

The situation was resolved quickly and without any injuries, Sgt. William Lear said.

Further details were not immediately available Sunday afternoon.

Northbound I-35 to close tonight

The Minnesota Department of Transportation is warning late night and early morning drivers that northbound Interstate 35 in western Duluth will be closed for several hours beginning just before midnight tonight.

The closure will take place from 11:59 p.m. to 5 a.m. with a detour onto Central Avenue, Grand Avenue and 40th Avenue West before moving back on the freeway.

Southbound traffic on I-35 will remain open. The closure is to allow construction crews to set beams for the new freeway bridge near the paper mill, part of the two-year I-35 mega project in Duluth.

Drivers can get real-time road construction information at 511mn.org or by dialing 511.

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SPORTS

NBA FINALS | MAVERICKS VS. HEAT

MAVS WIN

Nowitzki, Dallas clo

TIM REYNOLDS Associated Press

MIAMI — For Dirk Nowitzki, the resume is complete. He's an NBA champion.

For LeBron James, the agonizing wait continues for at least one more year.

Avening what happened five years ago in perfect turnaround style, the Dallas Mavericks won their first NBA title by winning Game 6 of these finals in Miami 105-95 on Sunday night — celebrating on the Heat's home floor, just as Dwyane Wade and his team did to them in the 2006 title series.

"I really still can't believe it," said Nowitzki, who had 21 points and took home finals MVP honors.

The Mavericks won four of the series' last five games, a turnaround that could not have been sweeter after seeing the Heat celebrate their first title in Dallas after Game 6 of the 2006 finals.

"Tonight," Jason Terry said, "we got vindication." James did not. Not even close, and a year unlike any other ended their way they all have so far — with him still waiting for an NBA title.

He scored 21 points for Miami, shook a few hands afterward, and departed before most of the Mavs tugged on their championship hats and T-shirts. Chris Bosh had 19, Mario Chalmers 18 and Dwyane Wade 17 for the Heat. "We worked so hard and so long for it," Nowitzki said. "The team has had an unbelievable ride."

So did the Heat. Unlike Dallas, theirs wasn't a joyride.

"It goes without saying," Heat coach Erik Spoelstra said. "You're never really prepared for a moment like this... Neither team deserved this championship more than the other, but Dallas earned it."

"Hands down, they were the better team in this series," Bosh said of the Mavs. All we can do is just admit it and move forward."

See NBA, Page B3



Dallas' Dirk Nowitzki, the NBA champion, defeated the Miami Heat 105-95.

LeBron loses, and

Admit it, NBA fans.

You're secretly glad LeBron James made his now-infamous "Decision" to bolt from the Cleveland Cavaliers and land surf-first on the Miami Heat roster.

It gave the NBA finals featuring the Heat and Dallas Mavericks a level of drama you might have publicly scoffed at the idea of King James creating his own "Must-See TV" event that was 99 percent LeBron infomercial and 1 percent revelation, but a sly smile probably crept across your face during one of the commercials.

And that smile turned to laughter as the Mavericks "upset" the Heat in six games Sunday night.

We love sports villains; they're almost as fun as sports heroes. It's entertaining to cheer for athletes we adore, but it's human nature to enjoy watching the athletes we loathe fall flat on their faces.

And when "The Decision" aired last July on his flagship station, ESPN, James unwittingly



Rick Lubbers

NHL | STANLEY CUP FINALS

Canucks aim to raise

Associated Press

BOSTON — Even after the taunts, bites and vicious hits that the Vancouver Canucks have thrown at the Boston Bruins over the past two weeks, skating the Stanley Cup around the Garden Ice would be the biggest insult of all.

The Canucks could do it after Game 6 tonight, when they'll attempt to finish off the testiest Stanley Cup finals in recent memory. If the Bruins win again, the Cup will be claimed Wednesday in Vancouver.

After racking up the regular season's best record and then surviving several playoff scares, the Canucks don't want to wait another day for their franchise's first championship.

Vancouver vs Boston

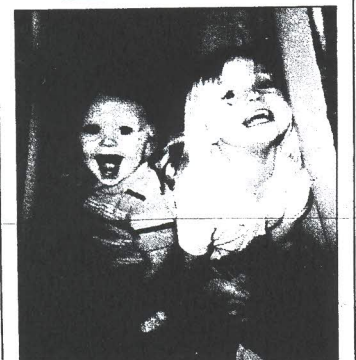
Vancouver leads the Boston Stanley Cup finals 3-2 7 p.m. today in Boston

away from our game, us, to come in here to the way we have all y

Although New England behind the Bruins in their first Cup since 1

downtown Boston are filled Monday night w 100,000 screaming ho elers, as Vancouver w when the Canucks m with a 1-0 victory in G

GRANDMA'S BRAG BOOK



Aiden Warren Samuel Moen and Lillian Marie Ness enjoy hanging out together. Aiden's parents are Ethen Moen and Ashley Buchin of Superior. Grandmother is Dana Moen of Superior. Lillian's parents are Amber Love of Superior and Ian Ness of Green Bay, Wis. Grandparents are Wayne and Lonnie Zillmer and Brenda Hess, all of Superior. Grandfather to both children is William Buchin of Oliver. Great-grandmother to both children is Maureen Pederson of Green Bay.

let's get started!