



UPSLOPE

Newsletter of the PATC

Ski Touring Section



Visit Us On the WEB at <http://www.patc.net/chapters/ski/> !!

April 2005

• Next UPSLOPE is summer...

Finish Your Ski Season at the STS Annual Après Ski Party

I have recently volunteered to be the official 2005 STS Après Ski Party planner, and I'd like to enlist your help in making it a success.

WHEN: Sunday, April 10, 2005

3:30 to 5:00 pm: Nominating and Business Meeting--everyone welcome (detailed agenda TBA via listserve)

5:00 pm to 8:00 pm: Party, including food, drinks, presentations and fun

WHERE: Bert's House

The party will be held at the lovely and spacious home of Bert Finkelstein, 2349 Horseferry Ct, Reston, VA

(h) 703-715-8534; e-mail: nfinkels@csc.com
(see [driving directions](#) below).

FOOD TO BRING:

Bert will be hickory-smoking (aka grilling) hamburgers and hot dogs in true gourmet-BBQ style. We need your help with the accompaniments. Volunteers are asked to bring the following (to serve about 6-8 people):

- Salads - green, fruit
- Appetizers - i.e. cheese & crackers, chips & dip/salsa, nuts
- Pasta/Vegetarian Dishes - i.e., pasta salad, baked beans
- Desserts - your specialty!
- Drinks: STS will provide soda, juice, beer, wine (Steve Brickell's favorites)

RSVP:

Please email Mollie Casey (molliecasey@gmail.com) or call me (703-929-0865) and let me know that you will attend, the number of your guests (spouses, significant others, children, ex-boyfriends and girlfriends, etc.) Also please let me know what kind of dish you will bring.

Feel free to contact me if you have other questions.

PRESENTATIONS:

Please provide Bert a burned CD with the photos you'd like to present before the party. Bert will provide a computer and slide projector. There will be a portable projector screen.

Hope to see you all there!!

Mollie Casey

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From The STS Chair

From the Chair:

Thankfully, Ullr had a second wind in March and stretched the ski season, which started with more rain than snow, into March. Our ever-resourceful trip leaders and members gleefully took advantage of Ullr's generosity. I invite you to extend your ski season to April 10th by attending our annual [Après Ski Party](#), which Mollie Casey graciously agreed to organize. Come to my house and have fun swapping stories about your ski trips (and hiking trips as it may have turned out), viewing trip presentations, and meeting members you didn't have a chance to ski with. We'll even have a preview of the 2005-06 trip calendar and lots of photos from your trips.

At our end-of-season meeting, a little earlier than the party, we'll elect your new officers, report on our finances, and plan next year's schedule. There'll also be an opportunity for trip leaders and would-be trip leaders to create the 2005-06 trip schedule and put their signature trips on the calendar. Don't miss out. After the success of our Garmisch-Partenkirchen trip last year and our Laurentians trip this year, be in on planning another excursion trip for next year. We're considering trips to Germany, Canada, Switzerland and France.

On March 7, STS Secretary Barbara Mandula notified the Board and I that she would not be able to continue in the position. Barbara, who has served STS since May 2001, will be sorely missed. Her "goodbye" from officership is below. To my heartfelt expressions of thanks for Barbara's service, some additions appear below.

Bert Finkelstein

Dear STS'ers

I'm grateful for the chance to help STS be the best it could be, which I think is a pretty great organization. I especially want to thank the other Board members--past and present--for putting up with my quirky views as we discussed policies, processes, and plans. I expect to remain active with the club in the coming months, and look forward to skiing with you next season until I flee the DC area for the west coast.

Barbara Mandula

I wish to extend my personal thanks to Barbara for her services to STS during her tenure as Secretary. She is one of those rare, hard-to-get members who managed to carve considerable time out of their busy lives to see to the affairs of an affinity group whose charter has nothing to do with monetary profit but everything to do with health, friendship, and personal happiness / growth. I wish all the best to Barbara. The STS officer cadre will miss her contributions.

Doug Lesar

I am sorry to see Barbara go. She was one of the officers I could count on consistently to respond with comments on the draft UPSLOPE. That input helped sharpen the message and improve communication within the section. I enjoyed interacting with her and appreciated all of her efforts on behalf of STS. Hope to see her in April at Après Ski.

Ralph Heimlich

Almost Heaven...West Virginia

Despite somewhat sparse January and February snowfall (see last issue and the first report below), West Virginia benefited from Ullr's late blast of winter in March. These trip reports show that PATC-STSerS took ample advantage of the powdery drifts.

Doug Lesar: Mary Vogel, a now-veteran STS leader and proud displayer of battle ribbons there from, managed yet another fine STS outing to Canaan Valley on Feb 11-13. Just a few days before Valentines Day, Ullr managed to find the "heart" to send some new bits of snow Canaan's way, though the amount turned out to be less than widely advertised. For the third time this year, the author's hopes of repeating a wonderful sunny day powder tour of the Dolly Sods heath barrens near Red Creek were dashed by snow cover too thin for the rocky terrain. Other STSerS found scratchy conditions in the north rim of Blackwater / Dobbin House trail vicinity.

Nevertheless, the trip enjoyed several high points, particularly Weiss Knob, the Pipeline, Powderline, Beech Lick, and Bald Knob trails. In a "winter of the barely ski-able" (a Chip Chase quote), those locations proved, as always, to be the best. The author, Mary, and four others (Bozena, Ralph, Caroline, Lee) opted to ride the Canaan downhill area lift to get to the Weiss Knob vicinity, and to find our way back down through [White Grass](#) trails. Somehow, we managed a car shuttle for six people and all their ski gear with just TWO cars, an accomplishment that should make military logistics top dogs like Halliburton flush with embarrassment.

That smooth operation contrasted, however, with the author's brazen broad-daylight assassination attempt on unwitting Bozena while entering the chair lift (bet she will never pair up with me again!). This ugly incident was forgotten with the free treat of hot cider at the top of the lift and the snow-covered spruce / hardwood forest on the knob. The National Nordic trails proved eminently navigable and very pretty. Even though the sun-exposed south slope of the pipeline was half-bare, the north facing portion was quite ski able. Mary and I met, by accident, visiting STSerS Mitch, Jack, and Greg, and adventure follows those guys like shadows. Our introduction to the "section line" downhill run through the trees occurred due a misunderstanding on my part as to where M, J and G were going, but Mary and I survived just fine (we usually do).

Mary once again took the opportunity to acquaint STSerS with the actions they can take to support West Virginians in their effort to preserve the Blackwater River gorge from development. Valerie Little, representative of the Friends of Blackwater Canyon, very graciously went out of her way to travel many hours in poor road conditions to reach Blackwater Park from Charleston to speak to our group on the challenges facing her organization. For details, see www.saveblackwater.org.

John, Robin & Warren Overholt: We got back March 3 from 2-3 days in Canaan Valley skiing. There is a lot of good snow there for cross-country skiing. It's been snowing (and blowing) since the weekend, and was showing no sign of stopping this morning. If you want to ski, this is the weekend for West Virginia. Don't trust the radar that doesn't show snow falling in Canaan Valley. It has been. That area is at the very outer limit for the four nearest weather radars.

Warren skied White Grass February 28, the three Overholts skied [Black Water Falls](#) park on March 1, and back to White Grass on March 2. There was at least 2 feet of powder up on top at White Grass. We didn't find a snow gauge, but skis compacted about 10 inches when breaking trail in the woods. It was nice snow. The wind is supposed to drop, which would make better skiing, as it

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Did You Know That Electronic Upslope...

- ⇒ Saves STS money, time, and labor—Each edition costs nearly \$1 to copy and mail—That's nearly \$1,800 per year, our largest club expense
- ⇒ Saves the environment, paper, ink and energy,
- ⇒ Shows your photos and illustrations in **COLOR**,
- ⇒ Lets you access UPSLOPE on the web page or on your home computer to refer to long after you would have trashed your paper copy,
- ⇒ Links to our website and others and "clickable" internal navigation

How electronic UPSLOPE works: Those indicating "electronic only" receive an email with a link to the new edition each time it is posted. An archive of past editions is maintained on the website. To start getting e-delivery of an Adobe .pdf file newsletter, email me at heimlichfamily@comcast.net that you want to "go electronic"!

Ralph Heimlich, UPSLOPE Editor

Almost Heaven...(continued)

(Continued from page 3)

was fierce. The long boring part of 3-Mile grade was an adventure of drifts. Chip had 3-Mile grade rolled, and it was a good run. You could go anywhere in this great snow. Chip said it was some of the best snow he's ever seen. Go to WV skiing...Almost Heaven!

Carl Modig: Reports by John Overholt and Ted Conwell about the abundant snow since the last week in February, with an unexpected 9" dump which turned everything from green to white. By the first week in March that snowfall consolidated and more was added each day, while cold weather preserved it. By the time our trip arrived on March 4, there was over a foot on the ground, and snow was still flurrying. Everyone went up early except Kathy Hudson, so we were able to meet at the Alpine Lodge in Davis in time for supper at the [Brew Pub](#) next door. Excellent beers and OK German food--it exceeded my expectations and I would go back. The afternoon of March 4, Katherine Kelleher and I skied off Rt 93 south and west of the power plant looking for a way south, but breaking snow got old and we went instead to north rim of Blackwater, where we found enough broken trail to zip around on. Also March 4, Randy Kerr and Bill Branson took the lift to the top of the Timberline downhill area and skied out on the Dolly Sods, where (even there!) there was enough snow to cover the rocks except for a windblown spot on top of Harmon Knob. The night of March 4 we got another 3-6".

We all went to White Grass on the morning of March 5, where all except Al Lilley headed for the top on 3-Mile Grade. Then, Katherine peeled off to Roundtop and later did Stonecoal Flats and Heartland. The remaining skiers lunched in the prefab shelter on Bald Knob (it's hidden back in a grove of conifers to the north of the open top), then skied down the gas pipe line. Kathy Hudson and Ralph Heimlich headed back, and the remainder of us (Bill, Randy, Dick, Steve, and Carl) skied the nordic "blue ribbon" impromptu trails off of the pipe line. Heading back, Dick Simmons and Steve Vikell headed back down from Bald Knob trail, while Randy Kerr, Bill Branson, and I stayed high and headed across Beech Lick to climb steeply up a trail marked "to Cabin Mtn", looking for some more blue ribbon trails. Lo and behold!--Kathy and Ralph reappeared, having arrived by another bushwhacking route in snow up to their tookus[es?]. All of us skied something lateral signed "Heaven's Gate" onto some blue ribbon trails, where we met a skier who informed us that he had skied up from Stonecoal Flats on a trail I did not know existed. So we five skied down to Stonecoal Flats on this skier's back trail, which went down a trail I have named "Sprucie" for all of the 2 foot high spruce sticking up through the snow, both on and off the trail. "Sprucie" ended at Cabin Mountain Trail, which we took left to ski a short distance to Stonecoal Flats. The Flats looked beautiful, full of snow. Late in the afternoon the clouds cleared, and beautiful slanting rays of sunlight fleetingly illuminated the whole landscape.

Needless to say, a good time was had by all. A full day. The old "ski pole depth meter" consistently showed 14-16" snow depth. We enjoyed a good meal at nearby [Muttley's Restaurant](#), which was strangely not full. One can walk from Alpine Lodge to Muttley's in 10 minutes. On Sunday, everyone went to [Canaan Valley State Park](#) across the road and in smaller groups skied most of the trails. It was sunny and windy, but we got tired of breaking trail since many of the trails were unaccountably still pristine. Everyone said it was the best skiing in years.

Mark Anderson: In this sparse year of snow, it was great to get this magnificent March dump. In my mind, you can't have too much snow, but fat backcountry skis come in handy for situations like this. Like many others, I also covered a lot of ground over three days of skiing.

Before meeting Cahil Converse on Friday, I did a few miles on the southern side of Blackwater Falls State Park. The snow was deep there - a rarity this year. I always like skiing the beautiful trails in Blackwater, which has a lost forest feel. By 11 AM, the snow was loading on my skis due to the warmth. Amazingly, some one had managed to hike right in the few ski tracks

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Ski Dance Proceeds



Eliot Applestein reports that the successful [2005 Ski Dance](#) netted \$446 for the PATC-STC as a sponsor. If you haven't attended this interesting hybrid event, consider it for next season. Ski all day, dance all night.



Almost Heaven...(continued)

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already cut even though my tour began early Friday.

Cahil and I skied and snow-camped in Dolly Sods March 4-5. We cheated with the Timberline lift and headed down the Big Stonecoal trail into the Sods. We camped near the Big Stonecoal and Dunkenbarger trail junctions on Friday night as 4-6 inches of wet snow fell on top of the 18 inches already on the ground as we worked our way in. On Saturday, we looped up the Dunkenbarger trail to the junction with Little Stonecoal then bushwhacked our way up to Cabin Mountain trail. There are only whiffs of trail in this area, so this last stretch really is a bushwhack. Using old ski tracks, both of us had recently scouted the "Little Stonecoal Extension" area. But this past weekend we still got tangled in several Rhododendron hells (did you know angry rhododendron will wrap around you when you tumble into it through deep snow?) before finding the old original trail cut. There are also blue ribbon trails in the area, but on this trip we never found the ribbon route. Once on Cabin Mountain, we returned via the Cabin Mountain road cut to Stonecoal Flats, then into White Grass country. We tried our hands at Fern Gully with full packs as a final hurrah.

The snow conditions were excellent. We cut our own trail for everything but Cabin Mountain to White Grass. It was deep and slightly difficult in spots, so I was glad I've kept in shape. Give me this amount of snow any day: The last trip I took there in February was a scrapefest that took a year off the life of my "rockskis."

Sunday was a "rest day." I went to White Grass and climbed an express route up to Bald Knob with Jen Paisner. Heavy snow was still clinging to the trees, even as it started to warm up the Sunday sun. On the way down, we spent all our time carefully skiing around in all the glades White Grass keeps pruned to the west of the Weiss slope. I think my favorite was the area they call Cathedral, which had plenty of snow for zigzagging in this beautiful bowl.

Katherine Stentzel: What do you mean, "Almost Heaven?"..... It WAS heaven! I skied at White Grass March 4-6 and found the conditions to be unbelievably wonderful. I was even able to ski across the trail called "Heaven's Gate", which had a handwritten note next to the name on the sign: "Needs a lot of snow". What was surprising was that White Grass was not crowded. I enjoyed visiting with Lynn Yates, Kathleen Moody, and Ron Alt, all of whom praised the conditions. It certainly doesn't seem like all of that deep, powdery snow could possibly disappear soon. Maybe we'll be lucky.

Kathleen Moody: I agree with Katherine Stentzel that the conditions on March 4-6 were great. It was just about as good as it ever gets. On March 5, she and I had to break trail in what seemed to be about two feet of GREAT snow up about halfway on Blackbird's Wing, until we met a group of 14 year-old Boy Scouts and their leaders coming from Dolly Sods, who had broken the rest of the trail for us. After we went through the gate at Forest Service Road 80, we climbed a bit more and Katherine headed right at the fork, whereas I took the trail to the left and ended up parallel to the Salamander downhill at Timberline. I bushwhacked on to Salamander and skied down. Since I don't telemark, I pretended to be an alpine skier, though I did get some funny looks from the non free-heelers. I then headed back towards White Grass on the trail that hooks up with Timberline. Initially the trail was hard to locate due to the new road and housing development at Timberline: "nothing looked familiar"

Potential Trip: Haute Trace des Escartons, France



This is a trip proposal for 2006 still in the thinking mode. The scoop for the hut-to-hut part is that skiers need to be reasonably fit and have some skill. Normally, this can be acquired in about 3 days of cross country skiing. For the hut-to-hut, the best time is mid January to late February. In February, it will not be easy to get lodging for three nights in Briancon or the Val Clarée. So the solution may be to stay in Aix les Bains and learn on Mont Revard. As the Olympics are next year in nearby Italy, it would be very difficult to secure lodging except for a whole week before the hut-to-hut in nearby Briancon or Val Clarée unless we stay the whole week. If a shorter tip is in the cards,

it could be Aix les Bains for 3-5 days, followed by the hut-to-hut. I would like the trip to provide an opportunity to initiate new skiers. Then the hut-to-hut should follow. There need only be 8-24 participants on the hut-to-hut part. For the departure from Dulles, we will need to be at least 10. I am thinking of offering this trip to a club in Boston who could market it with you. The dates would probably be best starting February 10th. This trip will require a lot of staffing from our side and I would like to plan it when I do not have other traditional ski groups. For the hut-to-hut it would be mandatory that an SAX rep and or guide go. For info, see http://www.skidefond05.com/haute_trace_escartons_presentation.php and <http://www.alpineexperience.com/index.htm>.

Some Different Canaan Valley Trails

The lady that runs the Canaan Valley State Park XC Ski hut on the golf course suggested I look at these trails. I didn't have a chance to check them out, but thought some may want to before next season.

A trail system has been established on the 15,245 acre Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge, opening 41 miles of existing roads and trails for wildlife observation, photography and education. Ten miles will be open exclusively for cross-country skiing and snowshoeing during the winter. Thirty one miles are open to year-round pedestrian use (walking, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing).

Forest Road 80 and Idleman's Run Road:

This public access route is open for pedestrians, bicyclers, horse-back riders, and vehicles. Forest Road 80 provides access from the valley to Dolly Sods Wilderness Area.

Beall (pronounced "bell") Trails:

A parking area on Old Timberline Road, off of Cortland Road, leads to 4.53 miles of trails. Loops go north and south from the parking area. Beall north trails pass through forest, field, shrub swamp and bog habitats, with a spur trail leading to the Blackwater River. Beall south trails offer good opportunities for viewing grassland birds, before dipping into the forest, down to the Blackwater River. Pedestrian only.

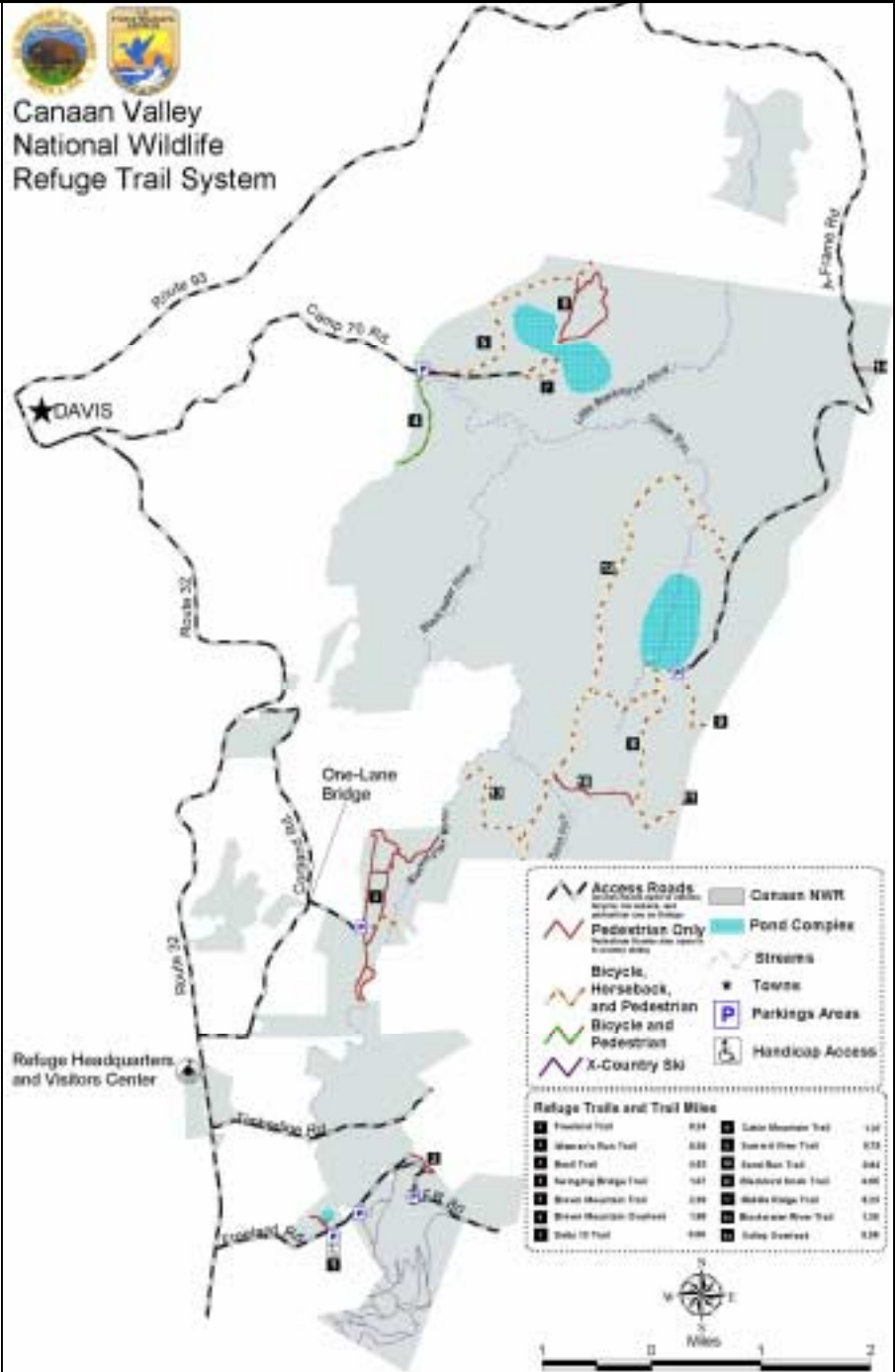
Camp 70 Trails:

Trails travel east and north from the parking area. Most are open to bicycles and horses. One loop that provides a beautiful overlook of the valley's wetlands is open for pedestrian travel only. Check the trail map. Trails travel through a mix of forest and field, skirting wetlands. Access is provided to Canaan Valley Institute and Western Pocahontas Land Corporation land. Seek permission from adjacent landowners if you wish to use their property.

A-frame Road and Adjacent Trails:

A-frame Road is a public access route open for pedestrian, horse, bicycle and vehicle use. From Rt. 93 to the parking lot at the end of the gravel road is nine miles. Only part of that is Refuge land, but all of it is open for public access. For most of its length, the road passes through the forested slopes of the valley. In a few locations, there are nice views of the valley. The primary parking area is near beaver ponds along Glade Run. Parking is also permitted on the side of the road. Trail loops west of the road provide an opportunity to experience the valley's wetlands, and the fields and forests of middle ridge. East of the road, trails lead through forest to U.S. Forest Service land, with more valley views. Some trails are open to bicycles and horses, while others are pedestrian only. Check the trail map. As always, seek permission from adjacent landowners if you wish to use their property.

For more information, check out <http://www.fws.gov/canaanvalley/cvnwr-trails.htm>



Directions To the STS Annual Après Ski Party

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Directions to Bert's from the beltway in Virginia:

Bert Finkelstein, 2349 Horseferry Ct, Reston, VA
703-715-8534; e-mail: nfinkels@csc.com

From 495 take the toll road (267) west to the Reston Parkway exit.

Turn left onto Reston Parkway (you will go over the toll road)

Turn left onto Glade Drive at the third traffic light (excluding the two on either side of the toll road)

Go through the first traffic light and, towards the top of the hill, take a left onto Charterhouse, then left onto Horseferry.

Bert's townhouse is at the corner of Horseferry and Abercorn on the right. The front door faces Abercorn. Park on Charterhouse or in an un-numbered parking spot.

Lost? Call Bert at (703) 715-8534

Trip Leaders for the 2004-2005 XC Ski Season

Without willing trip leaders, none of the wonderful trips that all the members enjoy would happen. When you run into one of the people listed below at the April 10 Après Ski Event, let them know how much you appreciate their efforts.

Elliot Applestein	Steve Bergstrom	Steve Brickell / Peggy Alpert
Elliot Brumberger / Kathy Doyle	Larry Doff	Susie Etcheverry
Bert Finkelstein	Bob Leaf	Doug Lesar
Carl Modig	Julie Nash	Rob Swennes
Jim Tomlin	Mary Vogel	Jack Wise

If you have been an active STS member, or are an experienced XC skier with knowledge of local ski destinations, consider

See The PATC-STS Photo Gallery

The STS slide show now includes pictures from the Section excursion to Far Hills, in Quebec's Laurentians Go to <http://www.patc.net/chapters/ski/SkiPics/FarHills05/image001.htm>

Kandersteg, Switzerland—See The Pictures—Plan the Trip



My plea for a more experienced co-leader was answered by Harvey Walden, an active STS member (Tug Hill and Laurel Highlands trips this year) who led an Alpine ski trip to Grindelwald, Switzerland, very nearby Kandersteg in the same Bernese Oberlander region, earlier in March with another ski club. That trip took 22 skiers to a 3-star hotel right in the center of Grindelwald, traveling through Switzerland via trains and buses. Airfares were arranged far in advance at wholesale rates through a group tour operator. So, we may have the right combination of enthusiasm and experience to pull this off.

I'll be showing some pictures of my brief stay in Kandersteg at the April 10 Après Ski Party, so come and share your enthusiasm, interest, and experiences.

Ralph Heimlich

STS Listserv

Sign up for the Ski Touring Section listserv to stay up-to-date on trip closings, weather reports, impromptu trips, and reminders to check the web site for more info. We don't want anyone to miss out on skiing opportunities by not subscribing to the listserv. To subscribe, send a message to majordomo@4gh.net with the following in the body of your message:

April 2005

To:



PATC Ski Touring Section Membership Form

The PATC/STS provides quality services and benefits to its cross-country skiing members while promoting and supporting the PATC and cross country skiing in general. Whether a novice, recreational, citizen racer or telemark skier, STS has something for every XC skier. Imagine yourself floating on the snow, climbing across hill and dale in the quiet of winter, stopping for lunch in brilliant sunshine on a vista with a view of snow-covered ridges and valleys stretching to the horizon, and then making a descent back to home. Our membership enjoys ski touring in the hills with the comradeship and safety of a group. When you become a member, you receive all issues of the club's newsletter UPSLOPE and other useful information. UPSLOPE is published six times a year by PATC/Ski Touring Section, a non-profit, educational and recreational group of cross-country skiing enthusiasts based in the Maryland, DC, Virginia, PA and West Virginia areas. UPSLOPE provides information about STS trips and events (e.g., Learn-To-XC-Ski weekends, Telemark instructional clinics, and mini-week ski trips). One year membership runs from October 1st through September 30th of the next year. If you join in April or later, your one year membership will run through September of the next year. To insure uninterrupted membership for more than one year, you may provide advance dues for up to three years. To join, select your desired membership category and term from the table below, complete this Form legibly, and send it with a check appropriate to your membership choice (payable to PATC Ski Touring Section) to:

PATC-Ski Touring Section, c/o Doug Lesar, 2507 Campbell Place, Kensington, MD 20895

Membership Classes

Membership Categories	1 Year Only	2 Years	3 Years
Individual	\$ 9	\$17	\$25
Family	\$13	\$24	\$35

PLEASE PRINT or TYPE THE INFORMATION BELOW !!!

Name(s): _____ Request is for: - NEW Membership: _____

Address: _____ Today's Date: _____ - New Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ - Renewal: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____ Email Address: _____

Add me to Annual member directory but do not list my: Home Ph.: __ ; Work Ph: __ ; Email: __; Postal Address: __

If checked, add me to STS LISTServ so I can get infrequent, adhoc announcements of local XC Ski activities: _____

If checked, add me to STS Bulk Email list so I get official club announcements important to all STS members: _____

NEW: If checked, send my UPSLOPE only electronically (no paper copy) to save the club copying and postage: _____

STS is an all-volunteer organization. We cannot function without the assistance of our members. If you are interested in volunteering to help STS in any of the following areas, please check the box and you will be contacted:

STS Officer _____ Publicity _____ XC Ski Instructor _____ Web Assistant _____ Ski Trip Leader _____ Special Events Coordinator _____