



# UPSLOPE



## Newsletter of the NORDIC Ski Touring Section of PATC

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

August 2009

### UpComing Attractions In Fall UPSLOPE

- Season Planning Meeting—  
Sunday, August 30, 2009
- Laurel Highlands Work Trip—  
October 16-18, Erma Cameron
- New Date for Ski Fair—  
Saturday, November 14, 2009,  
PATC HQ, Vienna, VA
- White Grass Work Trip—  
November 21-22, Lynn Yates

### Help Plan the 2009-10 Ski Season

A meeting to plan the 2009-10 Ski Season will be held on Sunday, August 30 at the home of Kathy and Elliot Brumberger at 3022 Finsel Court, Olney, Maryland. All members interested in the upcoming season are invited to attend. Input from trip leaders and prospective trip leaders is especially needed.

Look, folks, if we're going to have this thing, we need to TELL PEOPLE some things, like:

Time—The meeting will begin at 5 PM.

Refreshments—The Club will supply pizza and salad. Participants are encouraged to contribute beverages of their choice, appetizers, desserts, fruit, and nibbles of your choice.

#### DIRECTIONS TO: 3022 Finsel Court, Olney, MD 20832 (301-774-7412)

>From Beltway (I-495): Go North on Rt. 97 (Georgia Avenue). Cross the University Blvd, Randolph Rd, Connecticut Ave, Norbeck Rd (Rt. 28) and Rt. 108 (Olney/Laytonsville Rd). (Note: As you're going north on Georgia, DO NOT turn onto the first Prince Phillip Drive you see. Continue into Olney and cross Rt. 108.) After crossing Rt. 108, turn right at next traffic light (Prince Phillip Drive). Turn right onto Finsel Court. Kathy's house is 3022 Finsel Court, in the 2nd group of townhouses, the 3rd house from the right. If parking is not available in the visitor's parking area (below her house), go back and park on Prince Phillip Drive.

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### Skiing (and Snowshoeing) in West Yellowstone and Jackson Hole



By Rob Swennes

The picture says it all. Three tired but exhilarated skiers/snowshoers atop the Sky Rim Trail in West Yellowstone in mid February. Jack Kangas, Ellen Bauman and Barry Weston along with several other STSers had made the ascent up to Sky Rim amidst periodic snow showers and on an uncertain trail. What the photo does not show is the several-hundred-foot drop off on the left side from the

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**ST\$ Officers**

**FROM BETWEEN THE POLES – Chair Notes**

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BETWEEN THE POLES

Notes from the Chair

Hope you're enjoying Maryland's relatively mild summer weather and able to be active. The snow is around the corner (I'm an optimist) and we need to keep those muscles strong.

The Club officers met to align our plans for the coming ski season. The most important item is the:

**TRIP PLANNING MEETING ON AUGUST 30.** All those interested in leading a trip should be there. Please call Kathy Brumberger or me if you can not attend but are interested in leading a trip.

Peggy Kenney, our publicity coordinator had some great ideas: sharing links on web sites, a poster at White Grass, having material at the PATC New Members' Meeting, posting fliers. If you know of some venues that would display our flier, call Peggy Kenney at 540-937-2393.

Our Ski Fair will be held on November 14, the SECOND Saturday in November, this year. We have had it on the first Saturday in November for years and years. The idea for moving it forward a week is that we may have more attendance since the weather may not be as welcoming for outdoor activities. We will see what happens.

We would like to extend our condolences to Doug Lesar, our dedicated membership coordinator. His Mother died on Monday, July 20.

That's it for now. Be well, loved, happy,  
 and.....THINK SNOW!



Peggy Alpert

**Mark your calendar for the first ski event  
 of the 2009-2010 ski season !**

The event will be a worktrip to the Laurel Mountain area of Pennsylvania on the weekend of October 16-18. Unless someone else is dying to take over this trip, I will once again be organizing the volunteers for this worktrip.

I expect that the format will be much the same as the last couple of years - the actual work projects at Laurel Mountain will be selected and supervised by the Pennsylvania Dept. of Natural Resources, and will take up only Saturday 10/17. There are always a variety of projects, such as reblazing trails, brushing back trails, resurfacing of trails, fixing drainage problems on trails, etc. We will be part of a larger organized group of volunteers, known as the Laurel Mountain Volunteer Group. STS will pay for our room at a Somerset motel for Friday and Saturday nights. We will have Sunday free to hike or for other activities.

So mark your calendars !  
 Erma Cameron

**Yellowstone (cont.)**

*(Continued from page 1)*

rim into the Gallatin National Forest and the less dramatic but still steep slope down on the right into Yellowstone. This was the pinnacle of our trip, both literally and figuratively.

Now to explain what got us there. The STS sponsored a Yellowstone ski trip two winters ago (February 2007) that proved very popular and successful. On that trip two dozen PATC skiers spent several days skiing at the higher elevations near Mammoth Hot Springs Hotel just inside the park. We then traveled by snowcoach down to the Old Faithful area for days of skiing in deeper snow and lodging in the spacious Snow Lodge. While those are two of the best venues for skiing in the park, other nearby areas draw Nordic skiers also. These include West Yellowstone and Jackson Hole.

The intention of this winter's trip was to complete our picture of skiing at Yellowstone (and the nearby Grand Tetons) by enjoying the backcountry ski offerings in these two locations. In fact, Yellowstone National Park and the adjacent national parks and forests are simply too vast to do more than sample in a couple of week-long visits.

I was introduced to West Yellowstone the summer of 2007 when I led a Boy Scout backpacking trip there. The crew I was with made the assault up to the Sky Rim Trail on our second day and spent the whole day backpacking along that trail which follows a tortuous path eastward along the high rim that cuts between the national forest and the park. The views in all directions from this high pinnacle were spectacular (notwithstanding several forest fires in the valleys below). The allure of seeing the same views on a mid winter ski trip was irresistible.

Now as to the logistics. A group of almost two dozen skiers met in Salt Lake City on Friday afternoon, February 13th. Most had flown in from BWI and other points that day. We had prearranged a fleet of 5 minivans to transport us from the Utah airport up to West Yellowstone, Montana. The drivers were Jack Kangas, Carroll Ridenhour, Steve Brickel, Rhon Nelson, and me. We arrived at the Kelly Inn in West Yellowstone near midnight that evening and marveled at the snow-covered streets (kept that way in winter to accommodate the many snowmobiles).

Our group broke into smaller clusters for skiing beginning the first day. Skiing options lay in almost every direction. Most folks that Saturday chose to ski on the Rendezvous Ski Center trails located only about 4 blocks from our motel. The extensive trail network is nestled into a small part of the Gallatin National Forest and accommodates both classic and skate skiing. Indeed, high school and collegiate ski competitions are conducted there regularly. We got to see several heats of a regional competition between high school skiers from at least four Pacific Northwest states. Classic ski races were conducted one day; skate skiing the next. Those kids were FAST.

But despite the excellent conditions at Rendezvous, most of us had traveled west more for backcountry skiing rather than the groomed conditions of a ski touring center. For most of our days in West Yellowstone, we enjoyed a wide range of ungroomed ski trails in the western sector of the park and in the nearby forest. The Free Heel and Wheel sports shop near our motel offered ski equipment and snow shoe rental. STSers skied the Riverside trail along the Madison River and launched into the park's backcountry from a number of trailheads along Highway 191, such as the Specimen Creek, Black Butte, and Fawn Pass trails.



Starting toward Sky Rim in the distance photo by Rob Swennes

On our second day in Montana I enticed about eight skiers including Steve Bergstrom and Nicole Fall to try the Daly Trail route up to Sky Rim. Since I knew the steepness of the later section of the trek, all participants were required to bring along snowshoes for the final ascent. Barry Weston (of Durham, NC), Ellen Bauman, Mark Delfs, Mollie Casey, Malo Bernal and Barbara Mandula completed the group. A few people opted for snowshoes the whole day—which they never regretted. At an early point I came upon Mollie who had inadvertently stepped out of one of her skis—and sunk up to her hip in the snow. This was not a snow depth to trifle with.

After about an hour of skiing, those in the lead group consisted of Barry, Ellen, Steve, Nicole and me. Barry was our "lead dog" heading the



Getting there photo by Rob Swennes

*(Continued on page 4)*

**2009-10 Ski Season Planning Meeting (cont.)**

*(Continued from page 1)*

>From I-270: Going Westbound, take the I-395 exit. Follow signs to Metro by staying to the right. Do NOT follow Sam Eig Hwy sign. Exit just before the Metro at Shady Grove Rd (EAST). Careful.... there may be a Shady Grove exit a couple of miles before that, but don't take the first exit. On Shady Grove (EAST), cross Mid County and continue on Shady Grove. Turn Right on Muncaster Mill Rd. (2nd traffic light past Mid County) and continue till you come to a traffic light at a dip in the road, then turn left on Bowie Mill Road and take it till it ends at Rt. 108 (Olney-Laytonsville Rd). Turn Right onto Rt. 108 and continue till Rt. 97 (Georgia Ave) Turn Left onto Rt. 97 Turn Right at next traffic light (Prince Phillip Drive). Turn right onto Finsel Court. Kathy's house is 3022 Finsel Court, in the 2nd group of townhouses, the 3rd house from the right. If parking is not available in the visitor's parking area (below her house), go back and park on Prince Phillip Drive.

**Yellowstone (cont.)**



Mollie post-holing Photo by Rob Swennes

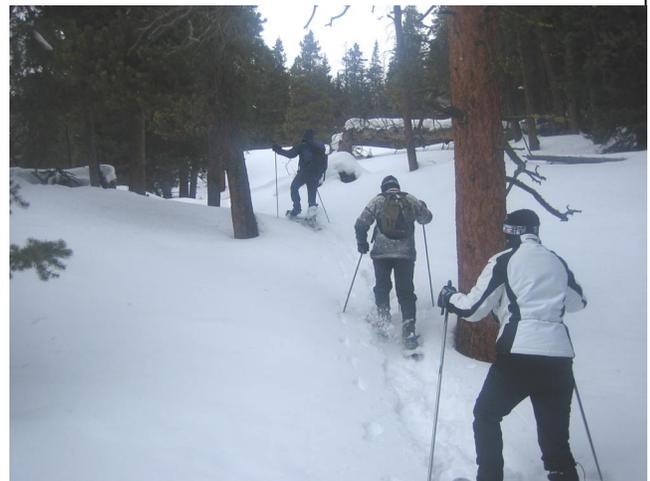
group along very faint old ski tracks in the snow. When those ended, he switched to following elk tracks and occasional blazes on the trees. The higher we ascended, the more challenging the Sky Rim escarpment appeared to us. In woods near the base of the ridge, we stopped for lunch and to switch over to snow shoes. We were very careful to balance on the skis when transitioning to the new foot ware. Our skis were left stuck into the deep snow like sentinels to await our return.

We climbed to the 7 kilometer trail marker that day before having to turn back due to the late hour. Pressing on further would have made for a dangerous return after dark. As it was, I took a couple of nasty falls on skis later at twilight during the return. It was dark well before we reached West Yellowstone.

The next day (Monday) most of the group chose to ski at the Lone Mountain Ranch ski resort in the Big Sky area about 40 miles north of West Yellowstone. I did not ski that day but did drive one of several vans full of skiers up to this historic western Nordic ski resort. Those who did ski praised the condition of the trails and the variety of the terrain.

We all enjoyed a fine après-ski drink in the bar adjacent to the restaurant before the drive back to West Yellowstone. On Tuesday part of the STS group opted to take a guided snowcoach tour in to the Old Faithful area of the park. They saw plenty of geysers and winter wildlife both going and coming. The naturalists who provide commentary on these trips are very knowledgeable about the fauna and geology of Yellowstone.

However, for me and a few other hardy (foolish?) souls, it was back to try the Sky Rim assault a second time. Barry and Ellen signed up again, as did Jack Kangas, Mary Bielefeld, and Ann Hitchcock. We got a significantly earlier start that day and made faster time by being able to follow in our own tracks—and avoiding a few erroneous turns from two days before. Back at the 7 km. marker and on snowshoes again, we had trouble finding the next tree blaze. Barry led the group up what appeared the most likely route to the saddle area on the escarpment. We never saw another blaze again till we reached the Sky Rim trail. The climb was challenging, even with ski poles and snowshoes. A couple of people threatened to turn back because of the conditions. But ultimately the group stayed together—and reached its goal. While it isn't a famous mountaintop, the Sky Rim escarpment felt like that to us. Under a heavy cover of snow-laden clouds we could see roughly 40 miles away. Some of the Big Sky downhill runs were clearly visible in the distance.



Once again, dear friends, into the breach...Photo by Rob Swennes

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## Yellowstone (cont.)

*(Continued from page 4)*

We were quiet on the way down, each of us caught up in reflections on what we had seen and were still seeing that day. Nothing east of the Mississippi compares to this stunning landscape. It is easy to see why the phrase "big sky" applies to much of Montana. This two-day endeavor to reach the Sky Rim trail was in my mind the acme of the trip and made all the months of trip planning worthwhile.

But there was more to come. On Wednesday morning we packed our vans and drove down to new lodgings in Jackson, Wyoming. On the way, most of us stopped at Harriman State Park in Idaho for several hours of enjoyable skiing on the park's groomed and backcountry trail system. It was a delightful break in our journey, and all enjoyed the plentiful trumpeter swans and other waterfowl and the clusters of historic buildings that grace this extensive, pleasant park.

Jackson proved to be a much larger and more bustling community than West Yellowstone. This town at the southern end of the Grand Tetons has plenty of money and style. The restaurant options were legion, and there were shops laden with attractive items. My favorite restaurant was the Snake River Brewing Co. pub. The weekday night we visited, the place was packed with about 200 people on two levels. The brew-pub's beer was excellent, and the dinner entrees were even better.

The Nordic skiing in Jackson Hole was also very satisfying. Many of us on the first full day there chose to ski northward to Jenny Lake, one of the favorite tourist spots in the Grand Tetons. The temperature was a bit warmer that day, and snow sticking to skis proved a problem. But glide wax solved that. We skied close to the mountain to avoid part of the long trail in from the parking area at Jenny Lake. As a result, we wound up climbing up to an overlook point above the lake—a spot where no one would be in the summer. Getting down from that point to the lake's frozen surface proved challenging. Erma

Cameron, I, and finally Ellen Bauman all slid down the steep hillside part of the way and almost got caught in a tree well. We had to disengage our skis and crawl up to where the rest of the crew had passed. Once on the frozen surface of the lake, it was a wonderful ski trek across. About that time the clouds began clearing. Before we reached our vehicles again, they had dissipated and revealed the majestic Grand Teton mountains rising above us. An inspiring sight.

The PATC skiers broke into smaller groups for our final full day of skiing on Friday. Mary Bielefeld, Carroll Ridenhour, Joy Saari, Barbara Mandula and I opted to ski in to Phelps Lake. Much of the land around it is part of the Laurance Rockefeller Preserve within the park. Another group of our skiers skied on the more challenging west side of the lake, which lies up against the foothills of the Tetons. It was a beautiful and very satisfying final day in the deep snow country. With a bit of luck, perhaps the section will host another week-long trip out to this most majestic part of the West in early 2011!



Deep snow in Yellowstone backcountry Photo by Rob Swennes

Others participating in this excursion but not listed above were Darleen Wall, Brian O'Konski, Lee Greathouse, Beverly Larson, Peter Dragon, Malo Bernal, and Lynn Yates. Thanks to all for their support in helping this to be a great trip!

Photos of the Yellowstone trip are online at [http://www.kodakgallery.com/ShareLanding.action?c=gyist5q.77sgo1fi&x=0&y=-gbo4d5&localeid=en\\_US&cm\\_mmc=site\\_email--site\\_share--core--view\\_photos\\_album](http://www.kodakgallery.com/ShareLanding.action?c=gyist5q.77sgo1fi&x=0&y=-gbo4d5&localeid=en_US&cm_mmc=site_email--site_share--core--view_photos_album)

And on the PATC-STC website at <http://www.patc.us/chapters/ski/SkiPics/West2009/index.html>

Weigh in on Rob's next Western Ski venue at the planning meeting on August 30.

**Minutes of PATC Ski Touring Section  
Annual Business Meeting  
March 29, 2009**



**Après Ski Meeting at Catherine Payne's aerie on the Potomac, March 2009**  
*photo by Ralph Heimlich*

Sitting STS Chair Peggy Alpert (her knees hurt, so she couldn't stand), fresh from eye surgery, pointed across the room to a poster-sized agenda that Peggy said would govern the progress of the meeting. We suspect there was a hidden agenda also, but Peggy did not reveal its location (probably behind host Catherine Payne's elegant antique).

With that, Peggy launched into the first item on the agenda with her now traditional welcome, by saying "welcome".

Before your secretary could offer to read the minutes from last year's annual business meeting, Peggy asked if anyone cared to move for acceptance of the minutes without reading. A chorus of "so moved", "seconded", and "duuhh", cascaded down from three levels of Catherine's sun room within a nano second. Thus were the minutes from the May 4, 2008 meeting accepted, without a dramatic reading by the author.

**Treasurers Report**—Next, STS Treasurer Rob Swennes presented the Treasurer's report, reflecting accounts as of March 15, 2009. Rob noted that the primary deviation between budget and actuals was in the category of trip expenses. The reason is that, if a trip leader chooses not to run the trip through the club account, neither the expense nor the revenue is recorded on our books.

Thus, the revenue would be lower than budgeted, but so would be the expenses, with no net effect on our balance. This year, actual trip revenues and trip expenses in the club accounts were lower than budgeted. In the end, all revenues exceeded all expenses by \$571 for the year. The club therefore continued to maintain comfortable (given our operations) balances in its checking and savings accounts. Rob noted that, with an ongoing positive balance, this allows trip leaders, if they choose, to submit deposits (e.g., for lodging) through the club so the leaders don't have to front the money themselves. But, they are free to do it themselves, outside of the club account, if they wish.

A pitch from the Secretary at this point: Rob's report showed that expenses for both postage and copying did exceed budget this year. Members can directly help this situation by choosing to receive the club newsletter, the "Upslope", electronically (i.e., via e-mail), rather than with a hard-copy mailed version. If you are willing to do that, please see the instructions for doing so in the Upslope, or contact Doug Lesar (Membership Coordinator), Ralph Heimlich (Editor) or Randy Kerr (Mailing Coordinator).

Thank you for your attention. Now, back to our regularly scheduled business meeting.

Rob's comment about positive account balances set off a mad dash for cash, with many members suggesting uses for that idle cash. An Executive Bonus program was not among the suggestions. Someone did mention TARP funds, thinking that referred to some sort of bivouac shelter, but this was clarified without undue embarrassment to any party. Nevertheless, there were suggestions that STS could contribute to the maintenance or enhancement of certain areas where the club goes on trips, such as Laurel Highlands, Tug Hill areas, or Blackwater Falls and environs. Merle Van Horne noted that many national and state lands have an official fund to which donations can be made, as well as a "Friends of...." type organization. The officers will examine such opportunities further.

Before proceeding with remaining agenda items, Peggy noted the large turnout for the meeting portion of the event (vice the subsequent eating and socializing portion), and asked that we go around the room and introduce ourselves. It became apparent that some had simply mis-timed their arrival, thinking that the feed-bag was already on. But, most participants chimed in with comments that made for a (keeping with the food theme, here) meatier-than-usual discussion of matters pertinent to the functioning of the Section.

Erma Cameron noted that the Section had a successful work weekend at Laurel Highlands last October, and that we plan to do it again this year, probably also around mid-October. She noted several incentives for participation: leaf color is at its peak, and last year at least, the park provided dinner for the volunteers.

**Trip Leader's Report**—Kathy Brumberger reported that 200 people signed up for STS outings this season (including work trips to White Grass and Laurel Highlands). Kathy asked Harvey Walden to report on the Western MD/ Backbone Ski Farm trip, so we could learn lessons from some of the logistical challenges that trip encountered. Harvey noted that we had secured flexible cancellation rights, so he was holding off on a final go/no go decision as late as possible. As of Thursday, the report was of marginal existing snow, but a possibility of additional snow overnight. Harvey advised participants to stand by for a Friday decision. In fact, they got more snow, and conditions were good by Friday, but when Harvey sent word out it was a "go", all participants reported that they were not going. Harvey was able to cancel lodging. In the end, he and one other person made the trip, and he reports it as a worthwhile trip for the future: a day at Backbone and another day at nearby Herrington Manor or Swallow Falls State Parks.

Kathy continued with her report, stating that "Ski/Dance" had no "ski" component this year—due to no snow, (rather than excessive exuberance over "dance" crowding out all ski activity). She also noted that Larry Doff has researched new venues, especially lodging possibilities

**Après Ski Meeting Minutes (cont).**

*(Continued from page 6)*

in the Laurel highlands area, which the club will mull over for next season. Present suggestions or tentative leader commitments for next season include New Hampshire, Laurentians/Quebec, and perhaps even Finland.

Kathy is recruiting new (additional) trip leaders for next year. See her if interested, or if you're curious what being a trip leader entails. Kathy and Peggy thanked all the trip leaders for their work and commitment.

Kathy also noted that we will continue to work for even more favorable (to us, not the inn-keepers) cancellation terms, in the event an outing arrives and there is no snow. She noted, as one example, that at Blackwater Falls State Park, if we reserve no more than 4 rooms, we can cancel up to 48 hours in advance, but for more than 4 rooms, we must give at least 30 days notice to cancel. Peggy and others mentioned various alternative lodging possibilities (such as a number of B&Bs) in the Davis WV area that we might want to investigate for Canaan/Blackwater trips.

**Election**—The next movement was Allegro Vivace—sorry, wrong program. The next item was the much anticipated, highly competitive election of officers for the coming year. Actually, despite having solicited nominations (including self-nominations) ahead of time, and providing for an “awkward silence” during the meeting to draw out additional nominations or expressions of interest or guilt, there were none. A nice fellow in the back of the room asked if serving as an STS officer would count as “community service”, but it turned out he was talking about his parole program.

So, Peggy read the slate of nominations, which had a familiar ring:

Chair—Peggy Alpert

Treasurer—Rob Swennes

Secretary—Al Larsen

There was no nomination for Vice Chair.

A unanimous voice vote swept all of these current officers back into office. Peggy, now operating with a clear mandate in light of the election landslide, announced the following appointments to other club positions:

Trip Coordinator—Kathy Brumberger

Membership Coordinator—Doug Lesar

Upslope Editor—Ralph Heimlich

Mailing Coordinator—Randy Kerr

Webmaster—Steve Brickel

In addition, the following people volunteered: Keith Chanon will be our **PATC Liaison**, attending PATC Council meetings, with or in place of our Chair. Peggy Kenney volunteered as our **Publicity Coordinator** whose useful and important functions are publicizing STS and the Ski Fair at outdoor stores, writing info blurbs for newspapers, exploring internet links, etc. She will need help. Anyone interested please contact her.

**Membership Report**—Membership Coordinator Doug Lesar noted that, what he so poetically described as the “slow bleed of membership losses”, continued this year, with the membership total down 18 from last year. Doug said some of that resulted from people moving away. Someone else said it was the result of the “bowling alone” phenomenon. [Secretary's note: I'm putting my money on the latter theory because unlike active participation in STS: 1) it requires no snow and 2) by definition, no complicated car pooling arrangements.] Doug noted several positive trends—increased use of multi-year membership sign-ups, and the highest percent to-date of members choosing electronic delivery of the STS newsletter, the “Upslope”. As noted, that saves money and is more environmentally benign. Finally, Doug noted that an increasing percentage of those signing up for the club list serve (the e-mail discussion/notification group) are not members. So, even though the number of people choosing to be members declined slightly, a growing number of people are “tuning in” to club matters, learning about trips, etc.

**New Business**—Peggy solicited information and discussion about insurance matters. At this point, the STS provides no insurance for trip leaders or officers. Ralph Heimlich noted that the Chesapeake Paddlers Association (his kayak club) is investigating Director and Officers insurance, but has no intention of trying to insure trip leaders. Peggy noted that Wilson Riley of PATC has had no answers for her about insurance, whether any is provided by PATC to STS or whether it may be available to STS from PATC sources.

Trips for the 2009-10 season. There was interest in looking further afield (i.e., outside of the Mid-Atlantic) to where there would more reliably be snow, even though logistics would be more complicated and costs higher. As always, the key is people stepping forward as trip leaders to organize and lead such trips. Please contact Kathy Brumberger if you have ideas and interest.

Brian O'Konski suggested we note, both at Ski Fair and in trip write-ups, that equipment rentals are available at certain of our trip venues.

*(Continued on page 8)*

**Après Ski Meeting Minutes (cont).**

*(Continued from page 7)*

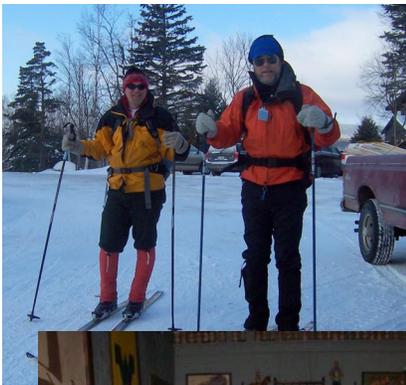
Issue for members to ponder: there was a discussion of the fact that a lot of club members have old sets of skis that they rarely use, just sitting around. For someone who wants to give x-c skiing a try without investing in equipment before hand, this could be a good match. Is there a feasible way to make this equipment available to loan out for a trip?

A suggestion for next year's trips: When STS is at some venue as a group, e.g., at White Grass or Laurel Mountain, we could put up a poster saying so. This would 1) let others know, e.g., members or friends who might happen to be there also, and 2) provide some publicity for STS (oh, I'm from Bethesda and look, there is some sort of ski club there in the area).

Having held the group spellbound for every bit of an hour and a half without appreciable grumbling, Peggy decided to declare victory, adjourn the meeting, direct the group toward the food (yeah, like that was necessary), and announce the slide shows, house tour, piano playing and ballroom dance competition that were all to follow. [Just seeing if you stayed with me to the very end here, folks].

Respectfully submitted,  
 Al Larsen, Secretary

**Were YOU on this Trip?**



**PATC-ST5 Western Maryland Trip**



Backbone Farm photo by Stephen Brickel

By Harvey Walden

This late January cross-country ski trip was advertised by STS as one that was to cancel if no snow. Seven participants, in addition to the leader, Harvey Walden, signed up and paid in advance beginning as early as the STS Ski Fair in November. As luck and Mother Nature would have it, weather and conditions did not look promising, based on our on-site evaluator at Backbone Farm, on Thursday afternoon preceding the scheduled Friday departure. The trip was then tentatively put on hold, pending an improvement in conditions.

As things developed, snow cover dramatically improved overnight on Thursday with 3 to 5 inches of fresh powder and new snow falling on Friday. The trip was happily reinstated.

Unfortunately however, all participants who had signed up had by then made other plans for the weekend and could not be rounded up. Not one to be easily discouraged, the trip leader contacted Steve Brickel, who had expressed interest in the trip at the last minute, although not on the roster of seven. We both agreed to leave early Saturday morning to test the newly improved snow. We were not disappointed.

As originally planned, we skied the back country trails at Backbone Mountain X-C Ski Farm in the Pleasant Valley area near Oakland in Garrett County on Saturday, becoming the first STS sponsored trip to do so. The proprietor of Backbone Farm, Max Dubansky, provided guidance on the trails from a warming hut/ski shop on the property. Although limited in scope, the trails were scenic and challenging. We found that Backbone is, indeed, an operating farm, with livestock on the premises. We stayed overnight at the Oak-Mar Motel in "downtown" Oakland, as originally planned. There was no problem in reinstating our reservation at the last minute.



Herrington Manor Trails photo by Stephen Brickel

On Sunday, snow conditions remained good despite moderating temperatures, and we skied the well-marked color-coded trails at Herrington Manor State Park nearby. We even came across a hot-blooded skier skiing topless on the trails! Late in the day, we also checked out Swallow Falls State Park and found conditions excellent there as well.

Moral of story: Always remain optimistic about a last minute improvement in snow conditions, and keep your skiing options open.

P.S. All participants who were not able to join us on "the trip that almost didn't happen" received full refunds of their payments, since the lodging reservations were cancelled in time to avoid penalties.



Max Dubansky, Proprietor photo by Stephen Brickel

**PATC-Ski Touring Section**

**c/o Doug Lesar  
2507 Campbell Place  
Kensington, MD 20895**

**August 2009**



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

<u>Membership Categories</u>	<u>1 Year Only</u>	<u>2 Years</u>	<u>3 Years</u>
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:

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> STS Officer           | <input type="checkbox"/> Publicity       | <input type="checkbox"/> XC Ski Instructor          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Web Content Assistant | <input type="checkbox"/> Ski Trip Leader | <input type="checkbox"/> Special Events Coordinator |