



UPSLOPE



Newletter of the NORDIC Ski Touring Section of PATC

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

February 2013

UpComing Attractions In Spring UPSLOPE

- YOUR Ski Trip Reports
- Après Ski Party

PATC-ST\$ Aprè\$ Ski Party

There is still snow in the mountains, but we are starting to look ahead to Spring. That means it's time to wrap things up in our traditional STS way--with our annual apres ski gathering, or end-of-season party and meeting, on Sunday, March 24. In what has become a favorite outing for many of us, we are once again gathering at the home of club member Catherine Payne, just off the Beltway on the Virginia side near the Rt. 193/GW Parkway exit, abutting Scott's Run Nature Preserve in a beautiful wooded setting, with access down to the river.



John Tichnor, Dick Simmons, Steve Viezell, Marcie and Doug photo by Dick Simmons

We will have a meeting of the entire club starting at 4:00 PM to discuss this year's outings, ideas for next year, election of officers, and any other business that needs to be addressed. After the meeting (about 5PM) we will have a "pot luck" dinner. So, bring a dish of your choosing—main dish, salad, or dessert, and maybe some drinks. As has become our tradition, in addition to the good food, we'll enjoy the fun of re-living this year's trips, and a reunion with your trip participants. Feel free to call me or e-mail me if you have questions: Al Larsen, STS Secretary, 703-807-1639; alarsen120@aol.com.



Julie Nash and Steve Viezell at the Pipeline photo by Dick Simmons

APRES SKI PARTY NOW ON

Sunday, March 24, 2014

Meeting at 4PM Potluck at 5PM

Please RSVP Al Larsen alarsen120@aol.com

This is a **POT LUCK PARTY**: Everyone is to bring a dish or edible contribution that others will enjoy, either beatifically healthful or sinfully rich—Your choice

Driving directions: Driving directions: Capital Beltway to Exit 44, Georgetown Pike, Rt. 193. Turn onto Georgetown Pike inside the Beltway, toward Langley, not outside toward Great Falls. Almost immediately, turn north onto Balls Hill Rd (toward the River, not south toward McLean). Take the first left off Balls Hill Rd, which is Live Oak Road, a bridge going over the Beltway, and then paralleling the Beltway. Take first left, onto Green Oak Drive. Follow to end of cul de sac, and take the driveway to the left of the large eagle statue/sculpture. Catherine's house has the green roof, number 7035 Green Oak Drive. Her phone is 703-827-0370.

Inside this issue:

(blue links are live)

Your STS Officer Contacts	2
From the Slopes	2
WG Photos	3
Early January Blackwater Falls	
Tug Hill Delivers!	4
Snow Seekers-Northern Vermont	5
Changes at Laurel Mtn	6
Give the ADK Another Chance	7
A "Brown" Blackwater Non-Ski Trip	8
Snow Seekers (cont).	

STS Officers

FROM THE SLOPES – Chair Notes

Chair

Rob Swennes
 H: 703-532-6101
robertswennes@hotmail.com

Vice-Chair

Jennifer Bine
 H: 703-533-2436
jenjobine@gmail.com

Secretary

Al Larsen
 H: 703-807-1639
alarsen120@aol.com

Treasurer

Brian O’Konski
 H: 202-362-2982
brian1642@gmail.com

Trip Coordinator

Kathy Brumberger
 H: 301 774 7412
kathybrum@verizon.net

Webmaster

Steve Brickel
 H: 301-946-2520
sbrickel2003@yahoo.com

Membership Coordinator

Douglas Lesar
 H: 301-587-8041
dlesar@comcast.net

UPSLOPE Editor

Ralph Heimlich
 H: 301-498-0722
heimlichfamily@comcast.net

UPSLOPE

Mailing Coordinator

Randy Kerr
 H: 703-937-3920
lerrkerr@aol.com

I can hardly wait till March 24th and the Ski Touring Section’s annual meeting and, more importantly, our annual après-ski social! That is our opportunity to bond again with the people we met on the trips taken this winter and also with friends we haven’t seen on the trails this year. If you haven’t been to this après-ski event in the past, please come. Roughly 1/3 of our STS membership base is people who have signed up to be members but who, for some reason, never make it out on a trip organized by the Ski Touring Section. What a waste! If a medical issue, or work pressure, or shyness or any other reason kept you off the snowy trails this winter, then at least come out to drink some beer and wine, enjoy good food, and hear stories about what you missed and what trips are likely to be offered next winter. It’s a pot luck event, so please bring along one of your favorite dishes to share. And Catherine Payne’s house, which overlooks the Potomac River near the American Legion Bridge, is a wonder in itself. It’s well worth the trip just to see that marvelous home!

This has been a good winter for Nordic skiing. Unlike last winter, there has been plenty of snow in West Virginia and southern Pennsylvania and presumably in Garrett County, Maryland as well. So, many of you have driven out to Canaan Valley and other ski locations to rebuild your connection with the snow. The attendance on the more distant excursion trips outside the mid-Atlantic region was more spotty. The trip up to the Tug Hill region over New Years was well attended, and the participants had marvelous snow. You will see a fine article on that trip in this issue. The trip I led to the White Mountains of NH in mid January was also successful. A great group of people. But as the winter drew on, the trip attendance dropped, including for the two trips up to the Tug Hill area in New York scheduled for later February. It wasn’t lack of snow. Indeed, they still have plenty of snow for skiing and more coming! We should be so blessed each year.

The STS leadership has been trying to reach out to other skiers and wannabes in the greater Washington area to get them involved in the Section. How people who share common interests find each other in 2013 is something of a mystery to those of us with roots in the mid 20th century. We have set up a Facebook page. Put “Ski Touring Section, Potomac” into the Facebook search box, and you should get a quick link to the site. Several skiers have used it to help coordinate local trips this winter. “Like” us on this Facebook site if you haven’t already. It increases our status in the world of Facebook.

Our other on-line social media effort has been through Meetup.com (<http://www.meetup.com/Nordic-Skiers-of-the-Potomac-Appalachian-Trail-Club/>). We started this Meetup group last fall, and to date 66 people in the Washington Metro area have signed up. Two women on my New Hampshire trip joined through Meetup, and they were great folks! Hope this turns out to be a new source of STS members and skiers in the years to come.

Finally, check out <http://skitrailreport.com/trails.php>. It maps the location of over 200 Nordic skiing locations on the East Coast of the U.S. as far west as Ohio! The more active locations update snow and ski condition reports every few days and are identified as such on the map. Includes hot links to each center’s web page. How cool is this!

Hope to see you all on March 24th! In Snow,

Rob Swennes, Chair



Photos from January 25-27 Whitegrass Trip

Some shots from Julie Nash's WG trip. WG was green (or brown) the Monday before and Tues after the weekend but good snow Wed thru Fri made for a great trip. Nice powder in the Pipeline.



John, Steve and Marcie near Blackwater Lake photo by Dick Simmons



Marcie, Steve and John at Pinnacle Point photo by Dick Simmons

Be Part of UP\$LOPE

Send me your comments, pictures, poetry, stories and articles. I will be happy to publish them.

Contact: Ralph Heimlich
(heimlichfamily@comcast.net)



Steve at Dobbin Trail photo by Dick Simmons



Steve being "Natural" photo by Dick Simmons

Early January at Blackwater Falls

By Erma Cameron



Dobbin Trail, Blackwater Falls photo by Dick Simmons

The ski trip of January 4-6 to Blackwater Falls State Park / Canaan Valley was a huge success! Originally led by Kathy Brumberger, I took over the reins when Kathy and her husband had to be out of town on a family matter. That left 6 participants, plus 3 "adjunct" participants who were not part of the official trip, but joined us for the skiing and meals.

The snow was in very nice shape, the weather having been cold in the past few days, so that the snow stayed powdery. And the coverage was good. We took advantage of skiing both Whitegrass and the trails at Blackwater State Park. Unfortunately, the weather warmed up after the trip, and a check of the "snow-cams" as of 1/18/13 now showed brown ground (see related story on page 8).

TUG HILL DELIVERS!

By Peggy Alpert

True to its snow history Tug Hill delivered its abundant snow for the December 28-January 1 PATC-STC trip. It had failed us for the last few years; but this time, the Lake effect snow off Lake Erie performed as it historically had for the past 15 years. The participants were: Peggy Alpert, Steve Brickel, Brian O'Konski, Barbara Nash, Kathy Porter, John Tichenor, Dave Jordahl, Harvey Walden, Rich Galloway, Joy Saari, and Jim and Jojie Houghton.



Highland Forest, Fabius, NY photo by Stephen

On the way to Boonville, NY, we stopped at Highland Forest in Fabius, which is on route 80 at exit 14 of route 81. It was well grounded with snow and a good preface of what was to come.



Blackwater River Environmental Improvement Association Trail System (click for larger view)

We lodged in Boonville. Their trail system is more extensive than those available in the Pulaski area; and Osceola ski touring center is only 1/2 hour away; it's 45 minutes from Pukaski.

The extensive trail system is wonderful: The BREIA (Black River Environmental Improvement Association) Trails are maintained thanks to a grant from a wealthy Booneville resident who enjoys cross country skiing. BREIA is a not-for-profit corporation funded by a private family foundation, as a gift to the people of New York. Access to the trails and facilities is free, and donations are never accepted. The trails remain open throughout the year, and offer hiking and biking opportunities during the warm seasons. The trails are graded at varying difficulties – mostly easy.



PATC Skiers at Jackson Hill Trail Section, BREIA photo by Peggy Alpert

You can see a map of the trails at the BREIA web site (http://www.breiax-countryski.org/pdfs/BREIA_Brochure.pdf) and get updated trail conditions and a webcam online at http://www.breiax-countryski.org/trail_conditions.php5. The three sites have warming huts. After much effort to enter one of these huts and therefore thinking they were locked, John observed a couple gain entrance by turning the door handle in the opposite direction – silly us. The huts had a wood burning stove that was supplied with adequate logs. And of course Osceola was it's usual terrific self.



Dining Room, Headwaters Lodge, Boonville, NY

We stayed at the Headwaters Lodge on route 12. It was about a 15 minute drive to the BREIA Trails. Nothing fancy but very adequate. There was coffee and other morning beverages, instant oatmeal, pastries, a microwave to heat our own, and a small refrigerator in each room. And if you look at the pictures, you can see the "dining" room, but we don't have pictures of the lounge area, with sofa, easy chairs, and TV. There were some good restaurants nearby, and some interesting shops in "downtown" Boonville.

All-in-all, a very satisfying and enjoyable trip, made possible by a great group of people and of course the SNOW!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!



Osceola Trails, Tug Hill Plateau photo by Stephen

Snow Seekers – Northern Vermont

By Randy Kerr

Getting out the maps and guides for this year was inspiring enough to write down last year's Vermont tour. With no snow anywhere nearby, we started considering far flung possibilities. As usual, we departed with no plan but to head for Vermont and head north until we found snow – with passports, just in case.

The climb into the Green Mountains started at East Middlebury on Route 125. After gaining some elevation, and entering Moosalamoo National Recreation Area (worthy of future exploration), the Robert Frost Wayside and Trail had some patches of wet snow. Further on, Middlebury College's Rikert Nordic had very wet, thin snow cover – they suggest we go up closer to the downhill where they often get more snow. Just a few miles further, but enough of an elevation change to make all the difference, we found six or so inches of fresh snow at the pass where the Long Trail crosses Route 125. A snow shoe climb north, up and along the ridge, was a welcome change from driving.



Bill and Randy on the Catamount Trail

Tucked into the east side of the pass, we stayed the night in a parking lot at Texas Falls Recreation Area – with the only company being a couple of snowmobiles passing in the night. Awaking to a bit of fresh snow on a groomed snowmobile trail, we skied up what we learned later was the original north-south road in the area. A friendly snowmobiler stopped and chatted with us, telling us about the local history and trails. On his advice, we skied up into the upper orchard of an old homestead for lunch with nice views of the valley. It was a wild ride downhill back to car, made somewhat safer as we went, by the rapidly warming snow.

Driving north on Route 100 along the White River, the devastation from the hurricane floods of the previous summer was evident everywhere. After stopping and briefly considering the lift at Mad River Glenn, we moved north and eventually secured the only room left in Waterbury. It was dawning on us that it was Presidents' Day weekend as we paid the premium season rate at the Old Stagecoach Inn in Waterbury. The Stagecoach is a very comfortable, family-oriented place and turned out to be worth every penny. The proprietor suggested we might find skiable snow at nearby Little River State Park.

Little River Park is on the hills above the Waterbury Reservoir, just to the east of Bolton Valley. The park trail network circles through an interesting, now abandoned, historic community from the 1800s. The local dogsled concessionaire uses the main trails and it's a joy to see them flying along. Snowmobiles are not permitted; through in one of far flung loops, we found where one had poached the fresh snow. There is a lot of vertical in the trail network and mixes of road width and single track. After several forays, an obscure trail was found that looked to lead to a trailhead further north toward Stowe. We only explored it a short distance, but this will be worth a future trip.

The next night we joined Peggy and Steve's STS group in Stowe for dinner and were lucky to have found a room where they were staying because some of the group declined to make the trip for the poor conditions.... which of course meant we needed to move on.

Next, we landed in the Craftsbury Outdoor Center and though we had to move rooms at least twice, we stayed several days. Craftsbury had just this year put in snow making and so they had pretty much all trails open and well groomed. Bill had skate skis, and I rented a pair and we were flying on the fast frozen lake. So the next day we took the shuttle to Highland Lodge to skate the 19.8K connector trail back to Craftsbury. Though a net drop in elevation, the many intervening hills hammered us with the amount of effort required to maintain any pace going up on skate skis. All in all, it was still much faster than classic style and we had new sore muscles to prove it. The next day we took a skating lesson which was very helpful and got us skiing more efficiently - that's they way I was taught - do first, read the instructions later. Bill went for another skate tour around Craftsbury; I went to do some "work", put my feet up and rested.

At one of Craftsbury's magnificent local food dinners, we met Dr. Margo. After bonding with Bill about the glories of potatoes as trail food, we learned she was half way through an eight day tour on the Catamount Trail. We were welcomed to join for the next four days from Craftsbury to the Canadian border. We didn't have to be asked twice and promptly joined the Catamount Trail Association (CTA). Each day was set up with a shuttle and a different local leader in addition to the overall tour leader. Day one, CT section 28, 12.9 miles from Craftsbury to Lowell Village crossed some thin and icy sections but later ended up on the historic Bayley-Hazen Road after going through a working sawmill. Day 2, to Montgomery, 12 miles, section 29 (9 miles plus something like a 3 mile out over Hazen Notch and back to the cars), and it finally started

(Continued on page 9)

Are You Already Part of YAHOO GROUPS? Facebook?

If you haven't joined Yahoo Groups, make sure to do it.

Go to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/PATC-STS/>

Ask to join the group. You will get a confirmation message in your email.

FACEBOOK: Please sign on to the STS Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Ski-Touring-Section-Potomac-Appalachian-Trail-Club/226549600733615> and "Like" us. You can easily locate it by putting the phrase "Ski Touring Section" into the search box at the top of the Facebook page. "Likes" are critical for getting status on Facebook and thus for helping others find us when they want information on Nordic skiing.

Changes at Laurel Mountain, PA

By Greg Westernik



Fellow skiers should enjoy the change to new downhill part of east-bound Bill Alper's trail at Laurel Mountain, as the long steep straight segment was converted into two, less challenging S curves. The rest of the notable changes to your skiing experience were driven primarily by the DCNR work crew efforts at Laurel Mountain in 2012.

As the web link at <http://www.paccca.org/news-article/laurel-mountain-volunteer-group-workday-10-6-12> suggests, there were some 40 or so participants, including Boy Scouts, XC skiers, hikers, Sierra Club, snowmobilers, mountain bikers, equestrians and two STSers: John Tichenor and myself.

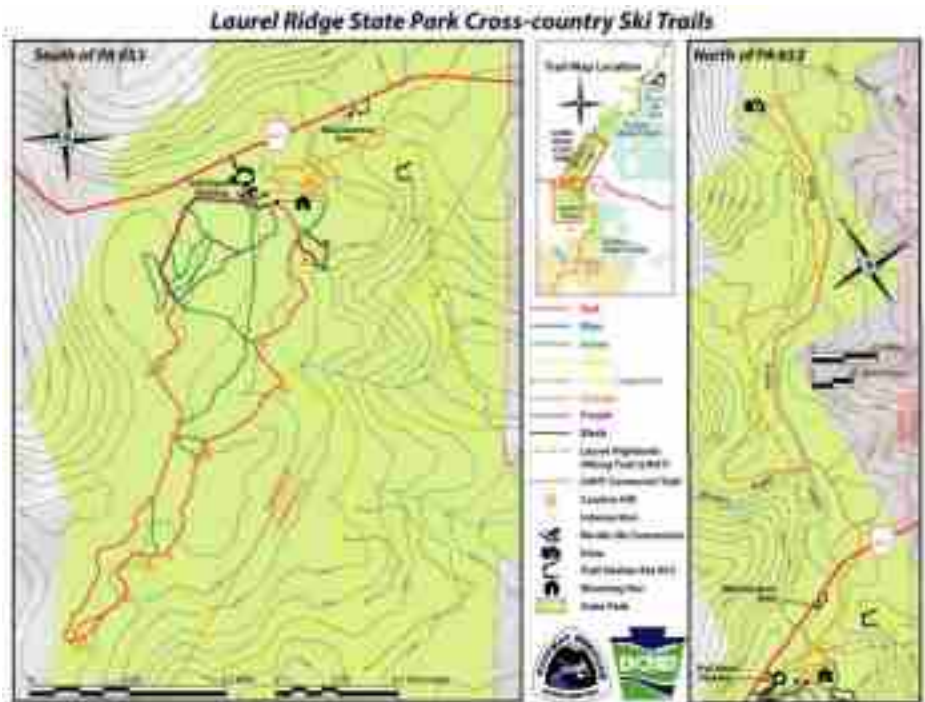
Under cool weather and gorgeous Fall foliage, the biggest maintenance problems involved renovating the North End warming hut, cutting blowdowns in a number of snowmobiler trails and trail maintenance work (e.g., bush whacking, rock smoothing, filling wet spots, tree limb cutting) especially on the red-blazed biking trails. I headed a novice crew of 4 working on trail maintenance on strictly XC ski trails, including: Interstate, Towhee, Bill Alper's, and Burma trails, as well as part of Spruce trail. I expect STSers should now see no limbs or briars hanging into middle of these trails when the snow sticks to the trees and bushes, unlike my experience skiing parts of Laurel Ridge's red-blazed trails in December.

Another impact skiers will notice as a result of the October maintenance crew renovations with John's help involves the warming hut. The warming hut is now a much "hotter" hut, with better replacement windows giving users even more pause to enter due to overheating. In the south end of the Laurel Mountain portion of Forbes State Forest, we found the snowmobile trails still smoother and better graded than most of the trails designated for "XC skiing".

We noticed machine grooming has begun on a few trails at Laurel Mountain this year, including Lippo's Loop, Interstate, part of Bill Alper's and the Loop Summit Road. Skate skiers are still trying to glide on Laurel Summit Road.

Back in downtown Somerset the favorite roads and hotels nearby Interstate 70/76 have undergone some change. The Knights Inn has renovated some of its rooms and is now opening these few rooms for renting. The one renovated room I saw had two double beds, was acceptable (new paint, new refrigerator, new electric heater...same sink, same tile, same bath). Their room rates were about the lowest of the gang near the Interstate toll booth with the quality just below Super 8. However, make sure you get a "renovated" room, as the others are often in poor, unacceptable condition.

A new hotel has opened in the parking lot belonging to the Quality Inn hotel. A new semicircle road (Tollgate Road) was constructed that intersects the Turnpike Access road between the Comfort Inn (formerly Holiday Inn Express) and Knights Inn. You need to turn onto Tollgate Road in order to access the Comfort Inn, Super 8 motel, Knights Inn, and the new hotel in the Quality Inn parking lot.



Click to download .pdf map

The Laurel Ridge folks claim that they have enlarged their trail network. See web site http://www.paccca.org/sites/default/files/docs/Laurel_Ridge_CC_Ski_map.pdf for their new trail map. The new black trail (expert) is for advanced skiers only, whereas the new entrance to the orange trail (intermediate) creates a more gradual incline down the hill to reach the rest of the orange trail. I saw the trail, but did not try it. The new map also shows the purple trail (easy), which was added last year by PACCSA and DCNR. The purple trail enables skiers to make a gentle 1km loop without encountering any big hills.

The small red numbers on the map show the location of key intersections on the red trail, marked in situ by red and white numbered signs.

I found some of the usual non-skiing distractions (Frank Lloyd Wright Falling Waters home, Flight 93 National memorial [at web site www.nps.gov/flni/ near Storytown]) very quiet with few visitors during my visit in December.

Give the Adirondacks Another Chance

by Al Larsen



When I first joined the Ski Touring Section around 2005, I did the usual game with my new-found skiing buddies: Where else have you skied? Have you ever gone to such and such? Oh, yeah that was great. Where else? Oh, I'll have to try that. Then, I said, Anne and I have really enjoyed going to Garnet Hill in the Adirondacks. The response from quite a few folks was that they didn't know Garnet Hill, but they had been to Mt. Van Hoevenberg, the xc ski venue for the Olympics at Lake Placid, and it wasn't worth the trip. I found that curious--and not consistent with my own experience in the Adirondacks. Well, this year we went back to the Adirondacks, and went over to Mt. Van Hoevenberg as part of our trip. I'd like to urge folks to give it another chance (or try it out if you've never been there).

But, first a little context regarding an outing to that area. We went this year between Christmas and New Years to the Au Sable Forks area, about 40 minutes East of Lake Placid Village. They had about 16 inches of powder on the ground when we arrived at our friend's place. We had to park at the end of the plowed road and ski and sled our stuff into their house. That was an adventure as well as a hoot of way to start. Then, they got about 6 more inches over night. It was winter wonderland. Just sitting inside an Adirondack cabin with a fire going and reading and contemplating would be a good outing. But, of course, we had brought skis, and fully intended to use them. There are lots and lots of trails and trailhead parking areas all over the area. Plus, many dirt roads become wintertime trails as well. We had a great time breaking trail in pristine snow, and then swallowed our pride and followed some snow mobile tracks for respite from trail breaking.

But, after several days, we decided to venture out from our isolation and head over to Lake Placid. For those who may not

ADK Destinations photo by Al Larsen

realize it, Mt. Van Hoevenberg continues to operate as an xc ski venue. It has miles and miles of trails. Like most venues these days, they have set tracks and skating, and there are green, blue and black trails--did I mention, miles, and miles of them? We were there New Years Eve day, and as you would expect, there were many other folks there as well. But, with all the different trails available, we didn't feel crowded at all. We were alone on any given section much of the time. The terrain had a lot of interesting variation--curves, elevation change, scenery change, vistas. And, the snow was great.



Snow enough, and time. Photo by Al Larsen

I have to think that the bad reviews (and bad memories) from our club compatriots must stem from their having been there in a bad snow situation. So, panning Mt. Van Hoevenberg is like panning White Grass, based on being there one weekend when rain moved in. One could spend multiple days at Mt. Van Hoevenberg and be doing different trails each day. Plus, as I say, there is a lot of trail and off-trail stuff close at hand for variations. Don't forget to go into Lake Placid Village, and ice skate at the outdoor Olympic rink (open to the public) where Eric Heiden set world records at every distance from 500 meter sprint to the 10,000 meter long haul at the 1980 Olympics. And if you're a downhiller, the Olympic downhill venue Whiteface is also a public venue.

We have been going to the Adirondacks, one place or another, every year since 2003, shortly after we moved back East from Oregon. It's a wonderful combination of mountains and lakes, snow and forests, towns and wilderness. Give it a chance.



Ann in a winter wonderland photo by Al Larsen

A "Brown" Blackwater Non Ski Trip

By Ralph Heimlich

Not all the trips that are planned have snow. Inevitably, some of our trips have to go, "snow, or no snow" because we've made deposits to get favorable room availability. I led a trip to the newer cabins on the north side of Blackwater Fall State Park, WV, on the weekend of January 11-13. The trip was so popular, that the "overflow" rented another cabin and filled that one, as well. While there had been snow earlier in the week (see report on p. 5), the weather warmed up and wetted down by the end of the week and most of the snow cover melted or washed off.

However, we are both STS (Ski Touring Section) AND PATC (Potomac Appalachian Mountain Club), so if you can't ski—HIKE! Besides, the Ravens were in a do or die playoff with the New England Patriots that weekend, so Saturday night was going to be a great time to be in a cabin full of fans with a big satellite TV. Many lodgings in Davis don't have TVs or even a signal, but the deluxe cabins do—HIKE that foot-ball!

Participating were Beth Heimlich, Dorothy Lange (Perez), Ray Perez, Suzanne Farace, Jennifer Bine, Bela Mariassy, and Dave Jordahl, in the "official" cabin, and Norma Broadwater, Alan "Saki" Sakakihara, Jim Allen, Al and Ann Larson, and Peggy Kenny in the "add on" cabin. Friday afternoon folks dribbled in at various times, and we had a large pot of fish stew and a smaller pot of vegetable soup and crusty bread on the stove. New member Catherine Bushnell, who was staying at the Blackwater Lodge, joined us for dinner and to meet folks. We were all impressed with the quality of the cabins: 4 big bedrooms, nice hardwood floors, beautiful kitchen, 2 big bathrooms, and well furnished living room and dining room—and satellite TV with the big flat screen.

Saturday morning, we scattered in different directions. Some (Al and Ann) were going to try Whitegrass, some (Saki and Norma) were going to ski/hike up near Bald Knob in Dolly Sods, some were hanging around the cabin, the lodge, and the viewpoints on the Blackwater Falls and canyon. I led a group of four hikers (Jennifer Bine, Suzanne Farace, Bela Mariassy and I) on the Canaan-Blackwater trek, 9 miles on the Allegheny Trail between the two lodges. We drove to Canaan Lodge and parked, then headed out on the soggy trails at Balsam Swamp Overlook, to the Middle Ridge Trail and out to the yellow-blazed Allegheny Trail.



Saki on Bald Knob runs out of snow photo by Norma Broadwater



Ralph Heimlich, Jennifer Bine and Belá Mariassy near Balsam Swamp, Canaan Valley State Park photo by Suzanne Farace

The hike started in fairly deep but spotty, wet snow cover, but once we left the Canaan Valley ski trails, the impact of the earlier winter storms became apparent in the number and tangle of blowdowns that called for step-over, sit-overs, and go-arounds. As the trail gradually rose toward the divide between the two parks at the Canaan Loop Road, the melting snow and falling rain caused sheets and rivulets of water to cascade down the trail. The rhododendron and mountain laurel closed in, and every stack of blowdowns caused painful detours "bushwhacking" through thickets of rhodo and laurel. Finally, the forest thinned out and we approached a level, swampy area. Amazingly here were carefully graveled trails between rock and timber side bars! Apparently this is some trail improvement project, but the imported crushed stone and timber didn't extend more than a quarter mile from the Loop Road.



Allegheny "Trail" (river?) through the rhododendrons photo by Suzanne Farace



Finally out of the woods at Blackwater Canyon photo by Suzanne Farace

We ate lunch at the side of the road, then walked along it to the junction of the Davis Trail heading south from Blackwater Falls. Plunging again into the thick rhododendron and mountain laurel, we were now following a gathering stream downhill toward Engine Run, and eventually, the Blackwater River. At last we staggered out onto paved road, walked along it to the bridge above the Falls, and then around to our cabins. While the hike was tiring (and wet!), skiing the same trail under all but the deepest snows would have been far more so due to the number and complexity of the blowdowns we encountered.

(Continued on page 9)

Blackwater Falls (cont.)

(Continued from page 8)

A large party made reservations for the Whitegrass Café, some tried Siriani's, and others opted to use the well-equipped kitchen and cook their own. We convened back at the cabin and dialed in the Ravens-Pats game. You will recall that the game was a real nail-biter, but the Ravens eventually pulled it off and won their slot in the Super Bowl. Much popcorn, beer and conversation occurred, especially among those not enamored of football, but we all enjoyed it together.

After a long, leisurely breakfast on a sunnier, drier Sunday morning, some of us decided to hike Blackwater Canyon. We peeked in at the overlook on the north side, then drove around to the warming hut and parked for a hike down to Lindy Point.

The canyon was spectacular, even without snow, and everyone enjoyed the short, brisk hike. Then back in the cars and heading out for home. Even without snow, sometimes in winter it is just fun to get out in a group and enjoy the best of West Virginia.



Jim Allen, Dave Jordahl, Suzanne Farace, Dorothy Lange and Ray Perez enjoying the Ravens-Broncos game in the DeLuxe cabin photo by Ralph Heimlich



Beth Heimlich, Jim Allen, Suzanne Farace, Al and Ann Larsen, Norma Broadwater, and Saki Sakakihara at Pendleton Point overlook photo by Ralph Heimlich



Blackwater Canyon from Lindy Point overlook photo by Ralph Heimlich

Snow Seekers (cont.)

(Continued from page 5)

to snow. Day 3, section 31, 12.5 miles with some fun down hills out of Jay Pass in fresh powder and to the border in a full on blizzard. Day 4, section 30, only 6.5 miles but the hardest day. The storm had dropped up to 30" which made for easy fun downhill off Jay Pass again (south this time) but then we had a long, slow traverse climb breaking trail uphill. The CTA folks are a great group of trail stewards/advocates, excellent skiers and friendly people.

The closest place to crash that night was Grandpa Grunts, a "rustic" ski hostel in Montgomery. Quiet to our taste mid-week, it looks like it could get wild and crazy on weekends. The blizzard had pretty much stayed to north Vermont and so we decided to do likewise and the next day headed east to Vermont's Northeast Kingdom. After some touring of the towns along the border we ended up at North Woods Stewardship Center in East Charleston. After being welcomed to stay in the parking lot and use the lodge, we had a night snowshoe in fresh snow. The next day, we got in an early ski on their relatively small but nice trail network.

Back under way we arrived at the south end of Lake Willoughby in time for a several hours ski in the Willoughby State Forest area trails on CCC built roads. The climb up gives tremendous views of impressive rock faces along the glacial lake. With advice from a local skier, we used a snowmobile trail connection to find a quiet trail leading to Duck Pond, tucked in behind Mount Bartlett.

We had heard a lot about the Kingdom Trails area and so headed to East Burke and significantly upgraded our accommodations to the Wildflower Inn. Back to skate skiing, we spent a day at the Kingdom Trails Nordic Center and a day skiing from the Inn to the Darling Hill area through picturesque farms along the ridge. A third day, we were back to classic in a really fun network of un-groomed single track mountain bike trails through the sugar maple farms in the hills along the East Branch of the Passumpsic River.

With enough skiing to have pretty much made a season, we headed home. Check out some of these Vermont locales, if you get the chance.

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



Sledding in photo by Al Larsen

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 New Yahoo Group so I can get infrequent, adhoc announcements of local XC Ski activities: ___
- 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 |