

# UPSLOPE



# Newsletter of the NORDIC \$ki Touring Section of PATC

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

April 2015

# UpComing Attractions In Fall UPSLOPE

- Latest on Ski Fair
- More BS from Ralph!

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# 2015 Après \$ki Party

Despite the sneaking suspicion some of us were beginning to have, there actually is an END to this WINTER! Having been dumped on and battered, Spring is finally rearing her frost-bitten head. That means it's time to wrap things up in our traditional STS way--with our annual après ski gathering, or end-of-season party and meeting, on Sunday, April 19.

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.



Photos by Valerie Matthews



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: Peggy Alpert (H: 301-946-4497 mountainmama15@verizon.net)

#### APRES SKI PARTY NOW ON

Sunday, April 19, 2015
Meeting at 4PM Potluck at 5PM

Please R\$VP Peggy Alpert (H: 301-946-4497 mountainmama15@verizon.net)

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

**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 left onto Balls Hill Rd (north 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.

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# **UPSLOPE**

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# FROM THE SLOPES - Chair Notes

It has been a very interesting winter. The East Coast, particularly New England, has enjoyed (or endured, depending on your perspective) a winter of bountiful snow. Out West, not so much. The Section hosted a week-long ski trip in mid February to Banff National Park in Alberta, Canada. When we arrived, the conditions were almost balmy. The locals said they had been having spring-like conditions in the Rockies for six weeks at that point. We found places to ski, but it was above freezing almost every day.

The Washington metro area suffered through a bitterly cold snow storm (or two) while we were up in Canada, and on our return to BWI, we got a taste of that trying to get the ice off our cars in 12 degree weather with a strong wind to boot. Far worse than anything we encountered in Canada!

Who would have thought that would be our winter in 2015! As you may have noticed, the past two winters have been similar in several respects. Both arrived late and stayed around even later. We may have to rewrite the designated seasons to show winter as arriving sometime in early January and departing only in late March.

What this requires of all of us as Nordic skiers is **an agile mindset**. Many STS members are already there. Some may not sign up for many trips sponsored by the Section, but once word gets around that there's fresh snow in Canaan Valley or the Laurel Highlands, the pre-packed ski bag gets tossed in the car and they are on their way there. They have learned the necessary tricks for securing nearby lodging at the last moment. They are careful followers of the message traffic on the STS listserv.

The agility of others is their willingness to sign up for ski trips in the mid-Atlantic area and make do with hiking if that's what the weather brings. The socializing is still great, and a good hike in the outdoors in January is still winter sport, right? Others are agile in scheduling their skiing to more remote and frozen areas where fluffy snow is virtually guaranteed. Or at least used to be. (Remember Estonia early last March?) And the approach did work for this winter's Banff trip since we did have snow, even if daytime temperatures were in the low 40s.

And more people are showing agility by choosing to snowshoe one or more days on a scheduled ski trip, especially if the snow is icy. It's another great winter sport that's easy to pick up and gets us into the wintry outdoors.

So develop your own agile strategy for how to enjoy cross-country skiing in the winters ahead.

Finally, kudos to Bert Finkelstein for his new approach for getting folks trained in the fundamentals of Nordic skiing—and for volunteering to lead this weekend of instruction. See his trip report on <a href="mailto:page 8">page 8</a>. The weather on the trip may have been somewhat miraculous, but Canaan Valley has produced many such miracles over the years. And as you read his report, you will notice, here is an agile mind at work. So thanks, Bert, for both your achievement and the example you have set!



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## New Hampshire Ski Trip, January 2015

By Rob Swennes All photos courtesy of Rob

Thirteen STSers signed up for the mid-January excursion ski trip to the White Mountains in New Hampshire. Our primary lodging was the home on Attitash Loop in Glen, NH, that our group has rented and enjoyed for the past 5 years. We also reserved a room for three skiers at Wills Inn on nearby Route 302.

Our trip members traveled up to the Jackson/Glen area either by private vehicle or by flying on Southwest Airlines to Manchester, NH, and then driving by rental car to our lodgings. A good percentage of those taking part have been doing this trip annually for at least 6 years. Len Henzke was kind enough to drive up two large pots of frozen soup and other food items from my home in Arlington. We feasted on food from the Lebanese Taverna Market in Arlington the Thursday night we arrived.

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The next morning most of the skiers opted to ski on the trail networks at the Jackson Ski Touring Foundation in the town of Jackson. The ground was covered with fairly fresh snow and had been well groomed for skiing. Most of us decided to ski the interlocking set of trails across the village street that the ski touring center fronts on. This included classically tracked segments such as Yodel Trail, Christmas Farm Trail, Betty Whitney Trail and The Wave.



However, my initial skiing that day was delayed due to an equipment problem. I needed to seriously upgrade my Salomon ski system upon arrival in New Hampshire since somehow (wasn't me!) when packing for this trip I had discovered my favorite Salomon ski boots covered with mold due to dampness in my SportTube ski container. So I came to New Hampshire expecting to replace these 10-year old boots. What I hadn't factored in was that ski technology does not stand still. Finding a replacement set of Salomon Profil boots proved impossible. I had to upgrade to the newer 2-pin SNS Pilot boots, which meant that I also needed to upgrade my ski bindings to work with the same boots. Oh, well. A personal upgrade in ski equipment once each decade is probably to be expected. But the lesson was learned: never pack your ski equipment away without fully drying it, especially at the end of winter! And the White Mountains area of New Hampshire is a great place to acquire new equipment since the many ski touring centers are well stocked with the latest in gear.

Mary Bielefeld and I joined up to ski the Yodel Trail and others once I was wearing the new boots and bindings. That evening everyone enjoyed comparing notes on the day's skiing

while having dinner and drinks. We dug into the two home-made soups that Len Henzke had schlepped up to New Hampshire. That, good cheeses and farmers market breads made for a hearty meal.

Saturday some of us opted to ski again at Jackson, while others chose to ski at the Bretton Woods ski touring center (STC) over adjacent to the Mount Washington Hotel on the far side of Crawford Notch. Both groups had a great day. I was back at Jackson and skiing the Ellis River trail, a beautiful trail network that runs over 17 kilometers round trip parallel to NH Route 16. The snow conditions were good without being icy, so none of us had any problems with the course. Though we were able to ski across the frozen Ellis River to the Dana Place Inn (the end point outbound), the inn was locked up tight, so we had to eat a quick lunch in the parking lot before beginning the trek back. Barry Weston, Kathryn Good and Len Henzke were among those of us enjoying the Ellis River Trail that day. That evening we feasted on pizza courtesy of Kringles Pizza, the preferred local pizza joint. Yum Good!

(Continued on page 4)

# Are You Already Part of YAHOO GROUP\$? 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 <a href="http://www.facebook.com/pages/Ski-Touring-Section-Potomac-Appalachian-Trail-Club/226549600733615">http://www.facebook.com/pages/Ski-Touring-Section-Potomac-Appalachian-Trail-Club/226549600733615</a> 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.

You can also join our Meetup, Nordic Skiers of the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club at <a href="http://www.meetup.com/Nordic-Skiers-of-the-Potomac-Appalachian-Trail-Club/">http://www.meetup.com/Nordic-Skiers-of-the-Potomac-Appalachian-Trail-Club/</a>

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New Hampshire Ski Trip (cont.)

(Continued from page 3)

The third day many of the group shifted to the Great Glen STC to ski. This is a beautiful skiing venue high in Pinkham Notch north of Jackson. But this day we chose this spot to ski since heavy rain was predicted to fall beginning around noon. The one drawback of Great Glen is that its excellent network of trails is smaller than the trail systems available at other STCs near our lodging. But given the predicted rain, we figured the trails there would be all we could handle before the weather deteriorated. Though the sky was overcast when we began, we were given a clear view of Mount Washington as we left the ski center. The road that runs up to the peak of Mount Washington begins at Great Glen. After some great morning skiing on the trails at this center (which has entertaining

trail signs in both English and
French), the rain began pretty precisely at noon as we finished our
lunches in the warming hut. By the
time we skied back to the ski center.

it was falling steadily. The rest of the day was a rainy one, so we enjoyed ourselves back in our comfortable lodgings. That evening we dined on Thai takeout from a restaurant in North Conway that we had discovered several years before when skiing in the White Mountains in January.

Monday morning the group packed up and said their good-bys and departed, having had an enjoyable fournight Nordic skiing holiday in upper New Hampshire. Some began the drive south to the Washington area or to Manchester for a flight back to

BWI. Others simply shifted their skiing for the following days from New Hampshire to the popular Nordic ski trails available in northern Vermont. But Barry Weston and I opted to snowshoe up to a mountain peak nearby in the White Mountains for the day before driving on to Vermont. But that's another story.

More pictures at http://share.shutterfly.com/share/received/welcome.sfly?fid=9202f6e9d67496e4&sid=2AbMmTRw2ZNHoQ



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## Shenandoah National Park Skiing in March

By Harrison Snow

Shenandoah National Park can remain a winter wonderland because of its altitude, when the valley is mostly free of snow. However, access can be a challenge because the parkway is closed when any significant amount of the white stuff falls. One solution is to take the trailhead for the Appalachian Trail into SNP near Front Royal. If you want to avoid a long ski up, it is possible to drive to a side trail near the AT that is located in a rural subdivision called Blue Ridge Mountain Estates.

To get there, take 522 out of Front Royal, then right on 665, and then right on 610 until it dead-ends at the trailhead. PATC map 9 has all

the details. About a half mile in, you can turn right on the AT and head to Tom Floyd's Wayside shelter, or turn left and head up to Compton Gap.

I parked at the trailhead the day after the season's last snowfall in March (actually, not the LAST) and headed towards the AT. No tracks - no wind - just sunshine, at least a half-foot of snow and a gentle slope up all the way to the Parkway and Compton Gap at 2,400 feet. The air was cold, the woods white and the setting magical. I made tracks to the former Indian Springs Shelter, had lunch sitting on a red tool box next to shelter taking in the sunshine, and then ascended Compton peak via the AT. The route up was a steeper grade but very doable in the deep snow.

At the top, I enjoyed the expansive views towards the east and west of the Park. It was about 3 pm and starting to get colder, so I headed down before the snow cover hardened.

It was a gentle decent at first and then about 500 feet of fun telemarking back to the Gap with one good spill when I hit a hidden rock. Overall, the route took about 5 hours round trip, including the break for lunch.

# Adirondack \$kiing

By Greg Westernik Photos by Greg

Our trip to the Northern Adirondacks of upstate NY began in the midst of the coldest temps in eastern US for month of February since 1900. We lodged in Saranac Lake, a town 10 mi. west of Lake Placid, at the Best Western Mountain Inn which is situated across the street from Saranac Lake itself. We found the rates at nearby Hotel Saranac (see photo) inviting, but their lack of amenities keeps us at the Best Western.

Each morning our group (Larry Schoen, Marcie Weil, Dave and Cathy Collins, David Adams and myself) discussed ski options and other distractions during breakfast . On the first morning, we awoke to temps around 20 degrees below zero. By the time we started our first ski trip at 10:30 am, the temps had warmed nicely to near 5 below zero F. Leaving the back door of the Inn, we started our 7.5 mile tour on the Jackrabbit backcountry trail section from the Inn toward McKenzie Pond, past a high point just south of McKenzie Mountain and ending one-way at the Whitetail Club Nordic Center in Lake Placid. The first 4 miles of this backcountry tour was a gentle 200 ft

in Lake Placid. The first 4 miles of this backcountry tour was a gentle 200 ft one-way climb to McKenzie Pond using a short part of railroad route and forest trails. The snow was 2 ft deep in the woods, much less on the Pond and RR tracks, but mainly packed powder or hard-packed granular on trails in the woods. Early into first day tour, we encountered two NY State Dept. of Environmental Conservation staffers (including a woman in pink jacket) who were skiing back from the trail where we were heading. The next picture shows a typical mild rolling section in the woods toward McKenzie Pond Road crossing.



Once we completed the McKenzie Pond Road crossing (unskiable), we resumed our tour toward the Pond with next shot showing we had 2 miles to go, including one harrowing bridge over a gully crossing. Arriving so late at McKenzie Pond, our group separated into two. We all ate a very cool lunch on

either the edge of the Pond or an island in the middle of Pond admiring scenic views of nearby McKenzie Mtn as shown in the next shot with David Adams in background.



The Collins glided forward up to the next 1.5 miles of trail to the top of the saddle (a 1000-ft climb) in at least an hour. They were rewarded with a steep, twisting and narrow downhill

that took 13 minutes. The rest of us retraced our original tracks back to the lodge. Everyone was back between 4:30 to 5:15 pm.

In the evening four of us ate at LaBella Ristorante while Larry and Marcie ate in Lake Placid. On day 2 we split into 3 groups: Larry and Marcie went off to Lake Placid, the Collins went to ski backcountry trails near the Adirondack Loj that were unskied, and David and I headed over to the Cascade STC to try the easternmost section of the Jackrabbit backcountry trail (an intermediate tour from Cascade STC to Adirondack Rock and River Lodge in Keene). On my second day tour, David and I agreed to separate at the .75 mile mark.

He continued in the Cascade STC trail system, and I pressed forward on my Jackrabbit tour as next photo shows:

(Continued on page 6)



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# Adirondack Skiing (cont.)

(Continued from page 5)

The temps and snow conditions reached around 20 degrees F above zero in Cascade STC on the second day, but never got above 12 degrees where I went. Where this section of the Jackrabbit reached Rt. 73, I crossed north of it (unskiable), then resumed skiing to discover that the trail became part of Old Mountain Road. This was unskiable for its one-way length of 1.25 miles. Along the way walking you are teased with views of upcoming Pitchoff Mountain and sounds of woodpeckers.



At end of Old Mountain. Road this Jackrabbit section continued into the backcountry trail in the



off Mountain.

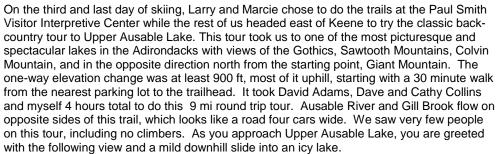
In the next shot, you can see ice climbers in the center of the center ice flow on Pitchoff. The song of woodpeckers was replaced by the sound of ice climbers slamming their ice axes into flows.

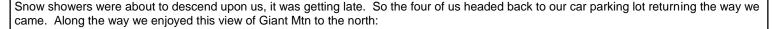


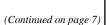
I enjoyed my lunch in the notch enjoying the view and watching the ice climbers. I reversed my course at the last beaver pond to head back southwest on the Jackrabbit to the Cascade STC to find my partner David.

In the evening most of us were quite tired. Four of us

dined at the Downhill Grill while Larry and Marcie tried a French place, The Left Bank...both in Saranac Lake.







# **Adirondack Skiing (cont.)**

(Continued from page 6)



The lake
was frozen
and the
whole place
was like a
wind tunnel
when I took
this frosty
shot of Dave
and Cathy
Collins:

We missed some backcountry tours on our list, including

the St. Regis Canoe area northeast of Saranac Lake and Avalanche / Colden Lake. And we only visited 1 of 6 six touring centers in the area. There are tons of trails for novice to expert here. Let's try again next winter 2016 to make amends!



#### **Just for Fun**

Cross-Country Ski Bloopers from the Olympics https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G0Ciu4DmLTU

Chip Sez "New XC Binding Does All De Wurk" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z2nl73NMCDE

#### Blackwater State Park Deluxe Cabin Trip, Feb 5-8

By Kathy Brumberger

Eight of us enjoyed the long weekend at Blackwater Falls State Park! Skiing was good Thursday, Friday and Saturday. Some folks skied at the State Park exclusively and some skied at White Grass.

We had planned a pot luck dinner for Friday night and had enough left over for our Saturday meal. Everyone shared what they brought; cheese, crackers, pate, chips, dips, green salad, chili, rice, corn bread, herbed bread, brownies, apple cake, wine, champagne. A wonderful spread!

On Sunday, the sun came out and the temps rose so it was starting to get a bit slushy. Some folks skied on Sunday but most went home. Our last event was to take a photo of the group in front of the cabin on Sunday morning before everyone left!



#### STS Learn to Ski Weekend 2015

By Bert Finkelstein

This year, we changed the format of the STS Learn to Ski weekend to use the ski instructors and ski rentals at <a href="Whitegrass Ski Touring Center">Whitegrass Ski Touring Center</a> to make it easier on the participants. We had 6 people interested in the weekend when the Ski Fair ended. The dates were set to coincide with the Winter Trails Day at Whitegrass. Winter Trails Day is sponsored by Winter Trails to promote cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. Each of the first-time ski participants was given free lessons and free ski / snowshoe rentals for the duration of the lessons (from 10am to 2pm).

Going into the weekend, the weather report looked as though there wouldn't be enough snow for skiing. Also, a number of participants had cancelled the trip and it looked as though the cabin would not be filled. As it happened, the trip was part miracle (the inaccurate weather reports worked to our advantage). We filled the cabin with last-minute signups and had one person left over, who filled a room on Joe Bachman's trip the same weekend. The Canaan Valley Wildlife Refuge also scheduled a snow-shoe nature walk on Sunday (snowshoes provided by Chip), so we had plenty of activities to look forward to.



On Friday night, the snow fell and the fog set in as the skiers rolled into the cabin. When we all arrived, we went to Canaan Valley Resorts for dinner, came back, drank hot toddies, and settled in for the night.



Saturday, we all took XC lessons and skied all day building up our new skills. We broke up into two groups, some took to skiing (and already had experience) and others weren't quite so good. Some of us tried snowshoeing the first time and liked it. Later in the day, we went to Whitegrass Cafe for dinner and music. Back to the cabin for more hot toddies.

On Sunday, we all went on the snowshoe nature walk and then snowshoed for the rest of the day. We all enjoyed being on snowshoes in the winter. It's amazing how accessible the difficult trails are when you are on snowshoes. Some of the skiers who had a hard time skiing found snowshoeing a good way to get outdoors without having to master the skills and physical demands of XC skiing. Others have spouses / SO's who do not want to ski, but would enjoy snowshoeing. In addition, the CVNWR nature trip also plugged Canaan Valley during the rest of the year and many of the participants are likely to come to the Valley during off-ski season. One of the skiers loves birds and almost hand-fed a black-capped chickadee, a bird that she had not yet spotted!

In all, we had a great time, met new people, and learned a new sport and more about

the environment we play in. The trip exceeded everyone's expectations.

Next year, I'll lead another **Learn to Ski trip** that would include snowshoeing as an alternate / adjunct. With both winter outdoor sports to choose from, spouses / SO's can share the outdoor experience, don't have to feel left out, and also be a part of the camaraderie on STS trips. Snowshoes also open up the many hiking trails throughout the Valley that are more difficult on cross-country skis. I would like to plan an off-the-beaten-trail trip that includes snowshoes. Chip also has lessons and rental skis and perks for young children to get them out in the winter. Would anyone be interested in a **Family cross-country ski day?** 

#### **Short Notes**

Blackwater Falls State Park—Eight STS skiers had a fairly decent trip January 23-25 at Blackwater Falls Deluxe cabins. Joining Beth and I were Marcie and Doug Schubert, Maureen and Francis Wright, and Bela Mariassy and Leigh Hall. Pics of the trip are online at <a href="https://plus.google.com/photos/102459087707170525949/albums/6108677650464003041">https://plus.google.com/photos/102459087707170525949/albums/6108677650464003041</a> including some pictures of the new sledding hill at BWF, said to be the longest on the East Coast (?)—Ralph Heimlich

**Laurel Highlands**—Snow was fresh and skiing was great January 23-25 for 9 of us. We stayed at the Comfort Inn in Somerset and everyone was happy with the accommodations, the staff, and the free breakfast. It snowed Friday night so conditions were great at Laurel Ridge and at Laurel Mountain.—Laurie Welch



**Photo by Laurie Welch** 

# Photos from the 2014-15 Season—Are You in the PICTURE?



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



Giant Mountain, ADK, from Upper Ausable Lake Trail photo by Greg Westernik

<b>)</b> :			

# PATC \$ki 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 T	HE INFOR	RMATION	BELOW !!!	
Name(s):			Request is	for: - N	EW Membership:
Address:			Today's Date	e:	New Address:
City:	State:	Zip:			- Renewal:
Home Phone: Work Phone: _		I	Email Addres	ss:	
Add me to Annual member directory but do	not list my: Ho	ome Ph.:	; Work Ph:	; Email: _	;Postal Address:
If checked, add me to New Yahoo Group so	I can get infre	equent, adho	oc announce	ments of loc	al XC Ski activities:
If checked, send my UPSLOPE only electron	nically (no pap	per copy) to	save the clul	b copying an	d 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:					
	Publicity Ski Trip Leadel	r			ii Instructor al Events Coordinator