



# UPSLOPE

## Newsletter of the PATC Ski Touring Section

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

June 2006

- Next UPSLOPE is October...
- Plans for Ski Fair,
- November 4, 2006
- Potential trips for signup

### 2005-2006 Ski Season Roundup Après Ski Party

The official 2005-2006 PATC-STC ski season ended with a bang at the Après Ski Party on May 7th at the Overlee Community Association clubhouse in Arlington. Some 30 plus loyal STSers assembled to grill meat, sample assorted pot luck salads, appetizers, desserts, drinks and other nosh, and also chew over the season's many successful ski trips.

Not of least interest were discussions of what we ought to do NEXT season. We elected a new Trip Coordinator (see below) and hatched plans for many great trips, including some new venues. Minutes of the meeting are on [page 3](#).



#### Inside this issue:

([blue links](#) are live)

<a href="#">Your STS Officers</a> <a href="#">Contacts</a> <a href="#">Chairman's Column</a>	2
<a href="#">Après Ski Minutes</a> <a href="#">Planning and Social Meeting.</a>	3
<a href="#">Trip Plans</a> <a href="#">Yellowstone National Park</a>	4
<a href="#">More Excursions</a> <a href="#">Haute Trace de Escartons</a>	5
<a href="#">STS Membership Report</a> <a href="#">STS sustains net loss of 20 member—Global Warming to Blame?</a>	8

### TRIPS ARE COMING, SO WATCH YOUR FALL

Or at least your early autumn. Hi, I'm Al Larsen, your new Trip Coordinator, and I'd like to introduce myself and tell you what we have in mind for the coming season. I know some of you from the trips I have been on the last two years, but I do not know most of you.

Getting elected is a funny thing. Rob Swennes and Bert Finkelstein urged me to attend the Après Ski Party a few weeks ago. I was watching as last year's officer slate was re-elected by acclamation, with the exception of the vacant Trip Coordinator slot. That position was chosen by taping the position title to the underside of a chair and then ruling at the appropriate point in the program that the person sitting in said chair was "IT". "IT" was me. They said something about Rob(ert)s Rules of Order.



Most of this job has to take place before Fall, so that everything is in place before the snow arrives (and it will—snow, that is). As most of you know, there is a lot of expertise and energy on hand in the STS, and a fair number of you have already stepped forward to lead a trip or two this coming year. I thought it would be useful in this issue to outline what is already shaping up, tantalize you with some additional possibilities and then solicit your further responses to round out the schedule. We'll have a great slate

of trips for you by the time Ski Fair comes around in November. Leaders have already staked out the following events:

(Continued on page 5)

**STS Officers**

**From The STS Chair**

**Chair**

Bert Finkelstein  
 H: 703/715-8534  
[bertanamo@gmail.com](mailto:bertanamo@gmail.com)

**Vice-Chair**

Steve Bergstrom  
 H: 301/564-9696  
[skifisc1@yahoo.com](mailto:skifisc1@yahoo.com)

**Secretary**

Izabella Zandberg  
 H: 301/545-0083  
[izandberg@aol.com](mailto:izandberg@aol.com)

**Treasurer**

Robert Swennes  
 H: 703/532-6101  
[robertswennes@hotmail.com](mailto:robertswennes@hotmail.com)

**Trip Coordinator**

Al Larsen  
 H: 703-807-1639  
[alarsen120@aol.com](mailto:alarsen120@aol.com)

**Webmaster**

Steve Brickel  
 H: 301-946-2520  
[sbrickel2003@yahoo.com](mailto:sbrickel2003@yahoo.com)

**UPSLOPE Editor**

Ralph Heimlich  
 H: 301-498-0918  
[heimlichfamily@comcast.net](mailto:heimlichfamily@comcast.net)

**Membership Coordinator**

Douglas Lesar  
 H: 301-587-8041  
[dlesar@comcast.net](mailto:dlesar@comcast.net)

**UPSLOPE Mailing Coordinator**

Dave Holton  
 H: 202-364-7055  
[dbdholton@mymailstation.com](mailto:dbdholton@mymailstation.com)

You know the ski season is over when your snow cone melts in the heat, your ski racks give way to bicycle or canoe racks, and you sign up for one of Diane Weil's trips and it's a 40-mile *bicycle* trip!

This year's been a good one in spite of canceling some trips because of lack of snow. Many trips went on under marginal conditions—proving that STSers can have fun under *any* conditions. Our trip leaders had to be nimble and resourceful. Rob moved his trip from Germany to the White Mountains to catch some of the only snow in the Northeast. We also ran our most ambitious trip yet—a 12-day trip to France that combined a sight-seeing trip to Paris, skiing at the Mount Revard cross country ski area, and a three-night inn-to-inn trip in the French and Italian Alps. A long way to travel for some of the best snow conditions of the season. Rob topped off the season with a trip to Bryce Canyon, with a side trip to Cedar Breaks to find snow.

The season wouldn't happen without our trip leaders. Our leaders have to be resourceful when the weather's beautiful—for non-skiers, that is. The trip leaders have to go through the same effort on a cancelled trip as one that runs, except that there's disappointment and few rewards. Julie Nash's learn to ski trip was cancelled as well as the Laurel Highlands trips led by Mitch Grunes and Bob Leaf. As a first-time trip leader, Mitch went well out of his way by finding a new venue in Somerset with a heated swimming pool, hot tubs, and a discount coupon. Too bad there was no snow. Eliot Applestein led a fun-filled Ski-Dance weekend with 100% dancing and 0% skiing. Doug Lesar filled up his annual cabin trip, but had to do some skiing at Timberline. Kathy and Elliot Brumberger and long-time members and short-time parents Greg and Anna Westernik led trips to Blackwater Falls. Mary Vogel had scheduled trips to Blackwater Falls, but she was called upon to lend her urban planning skills to New Orleans. Special thanks to Jack Kangas for stepping in at the last minute to make these trips a success. Fortunately some snow on the President's day weekend, and copious snow on the trips to France and Bryce Canyon, ended the season on a fluffy, white note.

Many thanks to the officers who serve the club—Steve Bergstrom, Rob Swennes, Doug Lesar, Izabella Zandberg, Susie Etcheverry and Ralph Heimlich—for all the time and effort they put in to bring you a fun and adventure-filled ski season. I'd also like to thank the many behind-the-scenes members who volunteer for the other club events—the ski fair, the meetings, and the après-ski party.

Al Larsen, our newly-elected trip coordinator, is already assembling next year's trip schedule (see [page 5](#)). We've already planned for a trip to Yellowstone (sign up early for this one) and Canada, along with our annual favorites. Want to sponsor a trip of your own? Give him a call!

Next year's ski season seems like a long way off, but it really isn't. We'll be having a meeting in late August or early September to finalize our ski season and prepare for the Ski Fair on the first Saturday of November. We also have a trail maintenance trip to Laurel Mountain the weekend after Columbus Day and a Whitegrass trail maintenance trip shortly after the ski fair. So, see ya on the slopes!  
*Bert Finkelstein*

**Did You Know That Electronic Upslope...**

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

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

## Minutes of Apres' Ski

Bert stressed the importance of having insurance coverage on all club trips that can be defined as "excursions." Such travel insurance covers not only the cost of emergency healthcare during the trip, but also the cost of the trip in case a participant needs to drop due to health reasons, as was the case of two original participants on the France trip this year.

The group discussed the solutions to the \$1,500 damage charges for one of the rental cars on the France trip. The fee was assessed by the rental company, and the amount was charged to the primary driver's credit card. Everyone agreed that in situations like this, the Club should cover the charges. It was decided that the damage fee will be paid by the Club. As of today, the damage charge is under dispute and has been removed from the primary driver's charge card pending resolution.

The group discussed plans for the trips for the next season. Two trips to Canaan Valley are planned (one in late January, one on February 1-4), and a trip to Yellowstone on February 16-24. [Editor: see trip schedule on [page 5](#)]

Treasurer's report: Our revenue last year was \$5,545 against a budgeted \$7,520; our expenses last year were \$5,443 against a budgeted \$7,350 with an actual net revenue of \$102 versus a budgeted \$170. Our current account balance is \$16,412.31.

Membership Report: We had a net loss of 20 members. We noted that the membership renewal rate seems to track the season's snowfall. [Editor: for more membership info, see Doug's report on [page 8](#)]

We elected next year's officers and key officials:

- Chairman: Bert Finkelstein
- Vice-Chairman: Steve Bergstrom
- Treasurer: Rob Swennes
- Secretary: Izabella Zandberg
- Membership: Doug Lesar
- Trip Coordinator: Al Larsen
- Upslope Editor: Ralph Heimlich

We adjourned to a social with barbecue and slides of the Tug Hill, Haute Trace, and Bryce/Cedar Breaks trips. In addition to the excellent club trip shown from a private Ski Mountaineer-Canada. It is expected that trip will be presented at the next Ski Fair in November.



### Correction—Tug Hill All Season's Lodge

In the last issue, I inadvertently indicated that Katherine Margaret Umland was a hostess at the lodge. She was the daughter of Rose Driscoll, the hostess and proprietor of the All Season's Lodge, who survives her daughter. My apologies for any anxiety the incorrect headline might have caused.

## Yellowstone National Park Ski Touring Excursion

by Rob Swennes

The PATC-Ski Touring Section is planning a ski excursion to beautiful Yellowstone National Park, at the intersection of Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming. The dates are February 16 (Friday) through February 24 (Saturday), 2007.



Yellowstone, the Nation's first national park, has developed an excellent cross-country skiing operation that offers extraordinary landscape beauty with a bountiful variety of wildlife and hot springs. Backcountry ski trail networks extend out miles into the park from both the Mammoth Hot Springs Hotel and the Snow Lodge near Old Faithful. Web site information on the available ski trails is available at <http://www.yellowstone-natl->

[park.com/winter.htm](http://www.yellowstone-natl-park.com/winter.htm) and <http://www.nps.gov/yell/planvisit/todo/winter/skiyell.htm> .

Once our STS group is lodged at a hotel, skiers will break into smaller groups based on their interests and ability and decide each day which trails to ski. No one will ski alone! Each skier is advised to travel with and use a compass and available trail maps when on the trails. The groups will rejoin each evening for dinner and compare their day's adventures and sights.

We will be spending four nights at Mammoth Hot Springs Hotel (6000 ft. elevation) in Wyoming, followed by four nights at Old Faithful Snow Lodge (7300 ft. elevation) in Wyoming, the park's newest lodge. Lodging will be in rooms/cabins with two double beds each.

STS Cost will be \$875 person (\$825 for those staying in the Western Cabins near the Snow Lodge). This cost covers 8 nights of lodging, breakfast each morning, round trip shuttle bus between Bozeman, MT airport and Mammoth Hot Springs Hotel, round trip snow coach shuttle between Mammoth Hot Springs Hotel and Snow Lodge, one drop-off vehicle ride at each hotel for day skiing back to the hotel, & National Park Service admission fee to Yellowstone.



An initial deposit of \$500 is required, with reservations on a "first-come, first-served" basis. Reservation is confirmed when the trip leader has in hand the deposit check and completed trip application form and waiver of liability form (downloadable from the STS web site <http://patc.net/chapters/ski/>). The group size for this trip is limited to **20 people** based upon our lodging reservations and assuming two people per room/cabin. The mix of lodging at the Snow Lodge near Old Faithful is due to the fact that skiers for next winter season have already booked out some room categories. It is expected that the STS group will be set before the end of 2006. Other costs will be your personal air fare from/to Bozeman, MT, lunch and dinner meals, any incidental expenses while traveling to or within Yellowstone, and trip insurance (if desired). Participants will probably be making their airline reservations beginning in August or September, 2006.

Experienced STS trip leader [Rob Swennes](#) will be organizing and leading this trip. Reservation material and deposit can be mailed to him at 6101 N. 22<sup>nd</sup> Street, Arlington, VA 22205 and he can be contacted at 703-532-6101(H) and 703-696-4432 (W), and email at [robertswennes@hotmail.com](mailto:robertswennes@hotmail.com).

Each STS member will provide his/her own ski equipment and a suitable travel bag for air transport of the equipment. Supplemental ski equipment is available for rent/purchase within Yellowstone. Though some trails are tracked by machine, the vast majority of trails are backcountry.



**TRIPS ARE COMING, SO WATCH YOUR FALL (continued)***(Continued from page 1)*

- \* 1st Weekend in November—Ski Fair, PATC HQ
- \* November ? —Whitegrass Work Party (Lynn Yates)
- \* December 29?-January? —Tug Hill (Steve Brickel and Peggy Alpert)
- \* January 11-15 (MLK Jr. Birthday)—Laurel Highlands (Bert Finkelstein)  
—Tug Hill (Rob Swennes) drive back the 15th
- \* January 19-21—Laurel Highlands (Elliot and Kathy Brumberger)  
—Learn to Ski at Camp Sequanota (Julie Nash and Larry Doff)
- \* January 26-28—Canaan Valley Cabin Trip (Doug Lesar)
- \* February 1-3 (Thursday-Saturday)—Canaan Valley (Kathy Brumberger)
- \* February 9-11—Canaan or Blackwater Falls (John Ausema)
- \* February 16-19 (President's Weekend)—Ski-Dance, Laurel Highlands (Elliot Appelstein)
- \* February 16-24 (Friday-Saturday)—Yellowstone (Rob Swennes)

There has been a lot of interest in and chatter about a Canada trip, probably Eastern, but maybe Western. We have a potential surprise leader, who would choose the location and itinerary—and it's sounding very enticing. This will be a surprise to be revealed later in the summer. Also, Rob Swennes is always thinking up new adventures and this year he's worked out a wonderful trip to Yellowstone (see [page 4](#)).

There has been some agitation for the club to return to the Adirondacks, perhaps Lake Placid area. Bert, flush with victory from last season's international outing, says he's going to lead a July trip to New Zealand where it will be winter (Just kidding—about the trip, it will be winter). There is definite interest in more Canaan and Blackwater trips, and I know there are potential leaders sitting on the fence. The officers have told me that we need to space out trips and not overload any one weekend, so, seriously, if a leader wants to assure club sanction for a given weekend, you need to get in touch with me to tie it down. If any of you have other ideas, either trips you would like to see, or trips you would like to lead, contact me and we will talk it through. Finally, no promises, but you should know that my wife and I lived in Oregon for about 20 years and love the Cascades—and happen to know they have snow there through April.

So, there you have it folks. Pretty promising news for June, wouldn't you say? Of course, we have as much snow right now as we had last winter, so why shouldn't we think SKI! I look forward to working with you, and for you. Send me your suggestions, and, uh, positive feedback. Complaints go to my good friend, Bert.

Al Larsen

**Skiing Haute to Haute***By Bert Finkelstein*

It's hard to imagine that so much could be packed into two short weeks; Paris, Mount Revard, and Le Haute Trace des Escartons—almost like three trips in one. The trip was an adventure with great skiing, lost luggage, more sights than you can imagine, fresh powdery snow, lost luggage, relaxing in hot tubs after a day's skiing, excellent food, newfound friends, a whiteout on top of a mountain, herding cats, an automobile accident, an industrial-strength wine tasting, missed airplane connections, dealing with the French and their strict adherence to rules, and a free day in Paris, courtesy of Air France. Oh yes, we had a bomb scare at our gate just prior to leaving for home.

After almost three full days of sightseeing in Paris (actually we compressed nearly seven days of Paris walking tours into 2-1/2 days), the Paris contingent got on our bus to De Gaulle to meet up with the rest of the group and continue to Geneva. We got our first taste of French bureaucracy as Barbara Coon watched her luggage go onto the conveyor into the luggage black hole without a tag. STOP! No, they wouldn't budge or hold the conveyor—there are rules, you know. The ticket agent assured us that the luggage would reach Geneva.

It was early Saturday morning at De Gaulle. Our flight to Geneva was boarding and there was *still* no sign of our group arriving from Dulles. All this after watching Barbara Coon's luggage go into the Air France maw untagged. The ticket agent absolutely assured us that the luggage would arrive even without the tag. The clock ticked. Then along came familiar faces—first Carl, then Peggy and

*(Continued on page 6)*

## Skiing Haute to Haute (continued)

(Continued from page 5)

Steve, then Darleen and Rhon. They were all making their way through security and onto the plane! No, Air France couldn't expedite them—rules are rules, you know. We were cutting it close, a theme that would repeat itself over and over.

Arriving in Geneva was uneventful...that is if you call losing all Barbara's luggage (including skis), Myrna's skis, and finding that Caroline's brother insisted she rent totally inappropriate skis, and Izabella waiting outside the airport while we were inside the airport. We couldn't return after going outside to meet her—rules are rules, you know. After an excruciatingly long wait at the van rental (we had missed our reservation while reporting lost luggage, so we had to renegotiate), and a missed turn while following Andre and Celena's car, we were off to Aix les Baines. It was late. We checked in at the Hotel Adelphia, freshened up, and drove to the center of town to celebrate Phil's 50<sup>th</sup> birthday at the Rotunda (a very swinging spot to which we and all the other young and trendy folks naturally gravitated). What a delightful way to end our first day.

**Mount Revard**—The next day, we got in our vans and drove to Mount Revard, careening wildly around the tight curves as we vainly tried to keep up with Andre and Celena. Our Mercedes vans were big, even by American standards, and filled more than their share of the road. The parking lot was crowded and the only parking was marked "Buses only" (in French, of course). Andre gave us the OK to park. After all, vans are buses, right? We parked and soon all the spaces filled up with minivans. We learn a basic rule of parking in France: The first person to park sets the rules, and then everyone else follows. *C'est la vie*.

It was a beautiful day for skiing. Conditions were perfect: the Crolles trails were freshly tracked and groomed for skate skiing. Most of the French skiers use skate skis and we rented some of the few remaining classic skis. Caroline concludes that she can't use her skis and heads back to Geneva to trade them in for more appropriate skis. We broke up into the usual smaller groups and were off enjoying the gently rolling, uncrowded trails under a perfect clear blue sky. We found our way to a warming hut where we feasted on such things as rabbit stew and drank *vin chaud* (hot spiced wine). Satisfied, we skied back, drove our vans back to the hotel (much slower, since we know the way) and broke up for dinner.

Monday was another day of perfect skiing at Crolles on Monday. We all hope the skiing's as good back home (it wasn't). We found our way to an après ski "wine tasting" where we drank *full* glasses of wine in the cellar. Seconds? Of course! Now we know why the French have such a carefree attitude towards life...*c'est la vie—c'est le vin*. The next day's activities were similar, but the evening found everyone in the hotel's spa happily dancing and singing to the water aerobic instructor's tunes. So what if he barked his instructions in French. Phil appeared to be the star pupil, but we couldn't be sure. We soothed our aching bodies with the tickly bubbled water jets and pounding high pressure showers (a' la fire hose). What a way to end the day.

But there was a storm brewing under a dark cloud. Andre informed us that there could be 1-3 feet of fresh snow on the inn-to-inn portion of the trip, making it difficult and dangerous. After a somewhat contentious breakfast meeting (some of us insisted that we could break our own trail and go no matter what the conditions. Others adopted the French "*c'est la vie*" attitude and were prepared to enjoy a longer stay at Mount Revard and the Hotel Adelphia. We'd find out more the next day.

Some of us went skiing on different trails at La Féclaz. Others decided to relax a little bit. We went into Aix les Baines to get some supplies we'd need on the inn-to-inn portion. Curiously, we noticed that the stores closed around noontime. Nothing was open except places to eat. Imagine having to eat lunch at lunch time! What odd people those French are—they actually enjoy life. I believe they call it *joie de vivre*. We invaded the *pâtisserie* (pastry shop) and *charcuterie* (delicatessen) to become temporarily French. This was reflected in our whipped-cream and chocolate covered smiles!



To the Col D' lozard, Trace Haute de Escarton

Barbara Mallory and I took a van tour of the countryside around Lake Annecy. We took the scenic route: Made a few wrong turns, *c'est la vie*, but made the most of them by spending time in the small French villages and picking up French delicacies for picnic food. We found a place to eat by the chateau at Lake Annecy, and parked in a "no parking" spot. But, we had mastered the innocent "I don't speak French and wouldn't park here if we only knew" act. Not to worry, though, as we had established that it was OK to park and someone soon parked and the remaining spaces were quickly filled. Later, we stopped at Talloires, a smaller town that established itself as a summer place for the rich elite. It still had not lost its character. As the sun set, Barbara and I stopped into a restaurant (€170 – that's \$212 – Euro fixed-price meal) and enjoyed a quiet glass of champagne in front of a fireplace overlooking the lake. Perfect service as only the French can provide.

Now, we had to directly confront the prospect of canceling the inn-to-inn trip because of *too much* snow. This was outside the zone of logic for many of the group. Further, there was no good,

(Continued on page 7)

## Skiing Haute to Haute (continued)

(Continued from page 6)

accurate information about what we would encounter. It might hit hard and heavy in certain localized areas, and miss others altogether. Erma Cameron said that she would break trail in three feet of fresh snow and that we should go under any circumstances. Little did she know that she would get her wish! Go or no go? We flipped a coin. It came up heads (rhymes with sleds) and we were on our way.

**The Haute Trace**—After finding that the storm was coming in over the Alps and we would be getting the tail end of the snow, we packed our bags and caravanned to our rendezvous at Montgenevre. Other than getting used to the “stand-on-the-footprints-and-crouch-on-the-hole-in-the-floor” bathrooms, filling up the car in a nanosecond (some of us, ah, used the truck nozzle, designed to fill an 18 wheeler promptly), not being able to charge more than one \$40 toll at a time through a 9-mile tunnel (rules are rules, you know), meeting a toll taker laughing so hard she had tears in her eyes after Phil had ordered croissants when he went through, the trip was uneventful. We transferred into a bus and headed to St. Veron, where we had our first taste of Le Haute Trace. What an irony. Not only wasn't there too much snow, the trail was totally bare for an extended portion at a point between here and our refuge for the night. So, we had to day-trip it, and then get bused. The snow was hard packed, fast, and a little icy. We slip-slided our way down the trail. Andre took us “one kilometer” (an Andre kilometer is about 2 actual kilometers) up a hill to a beautiful vantage point. A few of the women stayed with our handsome guide, Francois, for a semi-private lesson to brush up on their ski techniques. He was supposed to go with us on the rest of the trip, but was too sick to go. Fast conditions made for some spectacular face plants. At the end of the day, we took the bus to Arvieux. There, we scrambled to claim our rooms—reminiscent of the Oklahoma Sooners. The women graciously invited Terry to share the room with them. After we settled into our rooms, we went down to eat a family-style French dinner, washed down with wine and Genepe. This was the night when we discovered there are two types of people in this world: snorers and non-snorers. A light snow filled the air as we went to sleep.

Bonjour! The sun came up on 6 inches of fresh snow. Perfect conditions! What was all the noise and commotion? In the middle of the night, someone decided to start one hour earlier than planned. Have you ever known STSers leaving on time? Me neither. Getting 23 STSers and two guides out the door was like herding cats. Not quite on schedule, but we did manage to start a half hour earlier than originally planned.

We put on our climbing skins and started on the (mostly upward) trip to the Refuge Napoleon. We strung out and climbed. Erma and Jack broke trail. The trail was on a narrow two-lane road, covered with soft snow and some tracks already made by early-morning local skiers. The sky was mostly grey, covered by a layer of cloud. Every once in a while, the cloud cover would part, revealing a bright blue sky. On our way up, we'd stop at an overlook and see how far we'd climbed. The trail became colder and windier as we got higher towards the tree line. We took a lunch break at the Col La Platriere, right before the avalanche area where we'd leave the trees behind.

We paused at the summit to admire the obelisk marking the Col d'Izoard, which is a frequent route on the Tour de France bicycle race. Descending the other side, we saw the beautiful site of Refuge Napoleon. We had a meal of raclette, which would become our trip symbol, and some wonderful desserts. There were dogs and Bozena was banished to the annex building. We enjoyed a beautiful sunset, and watched the Olympic cross country skiing that was not far from us. More snow fell softly as we slept, leaving much more snow as we awoke the next morning.



The obelisk at Col d'Izoard

Some people had wax problems next day. The trail started off with a long, easy downhill, then flattened out along a creek. We found ourselves strung out on the major ascent of the trip. Various people were struggling from very different problems. The group pitched in to help each other—many thanks to Jack Kangus, Phil Wax, Al Larsen and Terry Ashby. This day was very challenging, but the way we handled it made us into a true group, not just a collection of individuals.



Raclette at Refuge Napoleon

The Haute Trace trail had been easy to find up to the ascent to the Col Bousson. As sweep, that's easy for me to say. Jack and Erma had a much different view. The trail up the Col was out in the open, above the tree line, wind swept, and snow covered. We navigated by finding marker poles. When we got to the summit, snow was coming down heavily and the marker poles were gone. We huddled behind an old building to get out of the wind, like cows huddling behind a barn. Andre had to scout the trail under whiteout conditions and featureless, flat terrain. At the summit, Andre asks: 1) does anyone have a compass, and 2) does anyone know which way is north. He ended up calling for directions on his cell phone. We skied down to Refuge Mautino, our home

(Continued on page 8)

## Skiing Haute to Haute (continued)

(Continued from page 7)

for the night, with 15 minutes of light left in the day. This one is not on the electric grid. Also, we had Turkish toilets—stand on the footprints, and keep everything out of the way. But, dinner never tasted so good.

Our last day on the Trace had many intersections, with questioning looks from Andre. We skied out through a downhill ski area—on our skinny skis: very challenging. We came out of the woods at the end of the trail in a town two miles from the downhill ski venues for the Torino Olympics. To our everlasting satisfaction, we found that the world-class ski weenies of the Olympics have cancelled their event, while we were skiing out through the whiteout, negotiating the downhill run with our XC gear. Take that, Olympians! So, the Alpine town of Claviere dug out from 2 feet of snow, and an hour later, the streets were clear. Sort of like DC.

**The Trip Home**—We drove to the French side of the Geneva airport. This is the best-kept secret in all of Switzerland. There weren't signs pointing the way and following the signs to the "airport" won't get you there. The trip home was hardly uneventful. We dropped off our rental cars, one of which had a dangling side view mirror courtesy of a double parked truck on a narrow French street. Our plane was a few hours late leaving Geneva. We made arrangements to be escorted between gates in De Gaulle. After running through the airport, escorted by two Air France attendants, we were told we couldn't get on the plane even though we can see the plane is at the gate. Rules are rules, you know. We were treated to a night at a hotel near the airport where we enjoyed a delicious French buffet at Air France's expense. Our wish for an extra day in Paris was granted.

We went to the airport the next day, checked in, and leisurely waited at the gate to board. So peaceful. What could happen now? As we started to board the plane home we heard whistles blowing. The Gendarmes were herding us away from the gate. Farther, farther! Finally, all was quiet. Someone had left an unattended bag at the gate. Now we could take the plane home quietly, safely. What a way to end a vacation! What an adventure! Even though so many things didn't go as planned, we adapted, circumstances presented us with new opportunities, and we all enjoyed the trip—one delightful day at a time. Why worry? As the French would say, "c'est la Vie!"

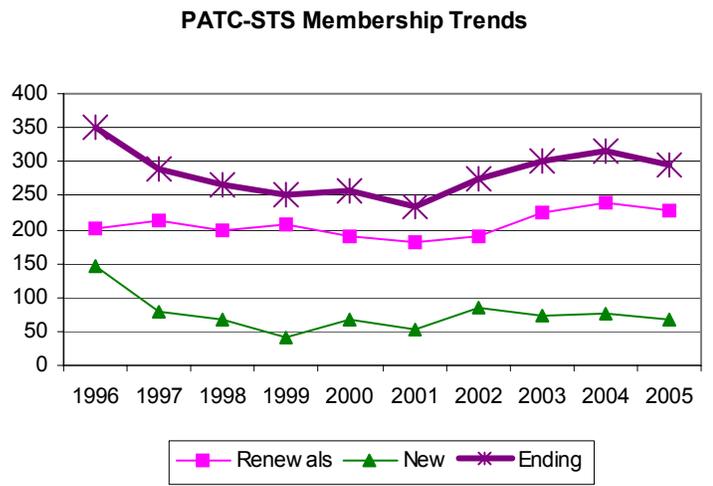
Participants: Paris – Bozena, Myrna Aavedal, Erma Cameron, Diane Weil, Barbara Coon, Bert Finkelstein, John Tichenor, Terry Ashby and Jack Kangus. Haute Trace only – Steve Brickel, Peggy Alpert, Al & Anne Larsen, Rhon & Darleen Nelson, Phil & Viola Wax, Caroline Neads, Donna Ogden, Carl Modig, Jerry Axelrad, Izabella Zandberg, and Barbara Mallory.



Refuge Napoleon from Col d'Izoard

## STS Membership Status, May 2006

By Doug Lesar, Membership Coordinator



STS almost maintained its eight-year membership high point during the past less-than-perfect cross-country skiing season. The group suffered a net loss of 20 people over the course of the past year, dropping from 315 to 295 individuals. The six percent decrease represented by these numbers is comparable to that experienced in past unfavorable seasons. Given that local Nordic skiing was quite limited (unless you could jump into your car at a moment's notice and head to Canaan Valley before the chronic post-snowfall warm temps and rain hit), this change is not at all bad!

The multiyear membership options remain popular, with about 35 percent of the membership currently being on two or three year cycles. Almost all new members request to be enrolled in our group e-mail list. Finally, 113 of 295 members now receive their newsletters electronically, saving the ever-faithful Dorothy and Dave Holton from much mailing work (and club expense).

I am hoping that STS maintains a membership level of at least 300 people in the next ski season. I ask all members to spread word of the club by personal testimony and recommendation!

June 2006

To:



# PATC Ski Touring Section Membership Form

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

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

Membership Classes

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

PLEASE PRINT or TYPE THE INFORMATION BELOW !!!

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Request is for: - NEW Membership: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_ - New Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ - Renewal: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

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

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

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