



# UPSLOPE



## Newletter of the **NORDIC Ski Touring Section** of **PATC**

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December 2012

### UpComing Attractions In Winter **UPSLOPE**

- YOUR Ski Trip Reports
- More Trips and Tips



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### **Shadow Trip to Skiing's Darker (and Twilight) Side, SW Colorado**

By Doug Lesar

During the disastrously warm ski season of 2011-12, two longtime skiing companions and I resolved to salvage part of the winter with a backcountry-oriented ski trip to Colorado. One of these friends, Diane Weil, had moved to Boulder, Colorado, in early 2008 and had acquired the advantage of experiencing Rocky Mountain weather patterns for several winters, so Mitch Hyman and I deferred to her judgment on where to commit ourselves for a week of backcountry skiing. The initial plan was to go to the Summit County region, using the small town of Frisco as a base. However, during January even that snowbelt was not experiencing normal Rockies snowfall amounts and Diane began to doubt the wisdom of going there. She instead suggested the San Juan mountain range, specifically the Wolf Creek Pass neighborhood near the small town of Pagosa Springs. Unlike much of the rest of the state, this range had been receiving favorable winter storms. She had also visited that area with friends the previous winter and was impressed with the backcountry skiing opportunities. So, arrangements were made for a week's stay in Pagosa Springs during what, by sheer coincidence, was the same time span the STS was holding, in the same area, a western US cross-country ski week!

Backcountry skiing, is, to most STSers, using cross-country skis on routes other than groomed and trackset routes, skiing on moderately graded hiking trails, national forest roadways, or going off trail through rolling terrain where the density of trees and extent of underbrush allows. Whether in eastern mountain forest terrain or western foothills and mountain valleys, the ski gear requirements can be met with relatively stiff leather boots with traditional three-pin or NNN-BC bindings and skis with modest sidecut, metal edges, and lengths of 190 cm or less (old style "skinny skis" coming in at 200 cm and above and floppy boots made in the 80's do NOT work so well for this). The backcountry skiing we endeavored to do is quite different. The primary objective is, as always, to complete an excursion loop in safety and within daylight, but there is a significant added twist: We wish to go UP-HILL so we can go DOWNHILL again, and again, and again, repeating ad infinitum like the drinking duck toy, always bobbing, bobbing ... To satisfy these compulsive-obsessive wishes, the optimum ski gear changes to skis looking much more like their Alpine downhill cousins, but with bindings that allow freeheel motion when needed, i.e. Telemark (usually cable-based) bindings or Alpine Touring bindings that pivot freely during climbing and glid-



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As I write this, two days before Christmas, the odds of a snowy winter are good and getting better. A snowstorm with high winds that cruised through the Midwest continued on to drop 8 or more inches of snow through parts of New England. And the weatherman is calling for additional snow from Pennsylvania northward through Christmas week. A lot of folks on the Eastern Seaboard are getting a White Christmas—something they certainly did not have a year ago.

Of course, all of this could change in a few weeks, but as cross-country skiers living in the Mid Atlantic region, we have to be optimists. And in our case the optimism is one that calls out for fresh snow—much to the chagrin of the rest of the population.

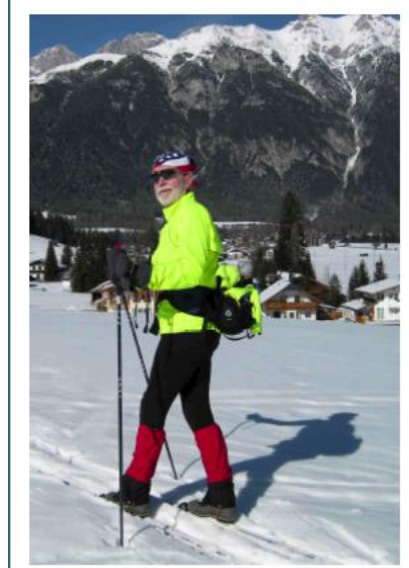
January and February—those are the months for our annual “snow fix”. If we don’t get it then, we are likely out of luck. So you need to be proactive in seeking spots where you can ski. The Section’s annual Trip Schedule is the place to go to find the best Nordic skiing trips, particularly in the states surrounding the Washington metropolitan area. By the time you read this, a number of these trips will be filled. Check out the updated list of trips in this issue of our newsletter to see which ones may still have space. Those who sit on the sidelines waiting for the perfect opportunity—spend a lot of time on the sidelines. Some may be equally satisfied with virtual skiing as with real skiing. But for those who really enjoy the snow in their faces and cutting track through virgin snow, there is no substitute!

But speaking of the virtual world, the Ski Touring Section has staked out some space on social exchange sites on the internet. STS has for a year or so had a Facebook page. You can find it at <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Ski-Touring-Section-Potomac-Appalachian-Trail-Club/226549600733615>. Please go to the page and “Like” us—which gives us more status on Facebook. And feel free to post some photos of your past ski exploits or some insights about skiing.

We also now have a presence on MeetUp.com—<http://www.meetup.com/Nordic-Skiers-of-the-Potomac-Appalachian-Trail-Club/>. We have taken this step to reach out to skiers or Nordic ski wanna-be’s in the Washington Metropolitan area who are not yet members of the Section and who are looking for others who love the skinny skis. We’ve had the MeetUp page up about 2 months and already have 46 people who have signed up as “members”. How many of these folks actually decide to join an STS trip remains to be seen, but we’re making the effort.

Hope to see many of you gliding on the snow over the next two months!

In Snow,  
 Rob Swennes, Chair



**It’s Time to Pay Your Dues Again!**

This emailed UPSLOPE has the expiration date for your membership in the subject line. UPSLOPE mailed through the U.S. Post Office has a numeric code in the mailing label with your membership expiration. If your email subject line denotes 2012 or if the mailing label string is 2012-12, your membership is expiring this coming New Years Eve (12/31/2012). Information on how to renew and a renewal form is on final page of this UPSLOPE.

Doug Lesar,  
 Membership Chair

# White Grass Work Trip Was...WHITE!

By Peggy Alpert, Photos by John Tichenor

The annual White Grass work trip was held on the weekend of November 10, 2012. Most of us stayed in Jim Norton's house in Timberline. We arrived to find a maximum (in some areas) of 2 feet of snow. We "reported" to Chip at 9am on Saturday morning. Although we could not do the usual agenda item of bridge repair, there was much trail clearing to be done from blow-downs caused by the storm; also the usual "lopping" of over-hanging branches.

Barry Weston had arrived a few days before the rest of the group and did much chain sawing. On Saturday he was joined by Al Larsen, Steve Brickel, Harvey Walden, PJ Gudac, and Andrea Legon on the Wilderness Trail - sawing, lopping, branch snow releasing. Many skied up to the area carrying snow shoes for work.

John Tichenor and Peggy Alpert lopped and cleared branches on the Fern Gully trail. Peggy was "knocked over" by a branch that released from the ground prematurely; and there was John with his camera..... Peggy and John used MSR White Grass snow shoes. Walking in them felt like stepping on your shoe laces (one size fits all??). If your feet are long enough the snow shoes became just a larger pair of shoes.



Peggy sitting on her "shoes"



Andrea, PJ and Steve in the WG Cafe

The weather was in Spring mode - temperatures were in the 50's on Saturday and the 60's on Sunday; they did drop into the 30's at night. When we skied on Sunday morning, there was a thin crust cover over soft mush. If you were lucky enough to find previous tracks that packed the snow, it was a nice ski.

The Center was crowded with skiers taking advantage of the first "dump" - may we have many more!!!!

Chip was amazingly ready, given preparation conditions of no electricity; all stock was out - skis, boots, accessories, and clothing. The Cafe was open from 8am to 4pm.



Bert and Steve: Nice work if you can get it?



Chip is READY!

**SW Colorado (cont.)***(Continued from page 1)*

ing phases, but can be clamped down during downhill runs. The boots needed to drive these beefy and dramatically sidecut skis look like Alpine skiing devices (with plastic outer shells and softer inner liners), but feature pivot points and buckles such that cross-country striding is still possible (though slower). These setups may also be utilized in lift-served ski areas! So, one can, in one trip with one gear choice, enjoy the Dark Side at a resort and the Twilight Side in the wilderness. As far as wilderness routes go, you can tread where even moderately heavy cross country setups fear to go, at least IN PRINCIPLE with a VERY LIMITING FACTOR: You need slopes for all this up and down business, and SLOPES are where uncontrolled backcountry snowpacks can and do SLIDE, and judging the risk thereof is a highly developed but always fallible skill!

Given the inherent hazards of out-of-bounds backcountry skiing and our limited knowledge of the Wolf Creek Pass area, we decided to hire a local guide for the first two days as preparation for our later unguided days. Sandy Kobrock, a resident of the Pagosa Springs area, is head of a backcountry snow safety / avalanche science instruction school during the winter months. Mitch, Diane, and I were fortunate to be able to hire Sandy as a personal guide for our first two days in the Wolf Creek Pass backcountry, giving us invaluable route finding pointers so that we could enjoy this marvelous skiing area as safely as possible during the remainder of our stay.

Day one was spent in “getting there”, via a non-stop Southwest Airlines flight from Baltimore to Denver, and driving from the airport to the San Juans in Diane’s Subaru Outback. The car trip took around six hours but featured lots of scenery, including extended viewing of the beautiful Sangre de Cristo mountain range looming mirage-like above the Kansas flatness of the San Luis Valley. The final stretch involved an up-and-over of fabled Wolf Creek Pass, with many hairpin turns and through a small tunnel. We finally reached Pagosa Town after dark, and had a late dinner at a Thai restaurant across the highway from our motel at which we met Rich, one of the STS group. They were staying at a motel right across the street from ours, so engagement with them looked promising at first.

First thing the next morning, it didn’t appear that we were going to be able to engage in very much activity other than occupying our cabin, since the deadbolt lock on the door refused to open from the inside! After a phone conversation with the motel staff, we were able to egress after dismantling the stubborn lock with a screwdriver, after which we handed resolution of the problem to the motel handyman. We were then free to proceed to our first ski day at the Wolf Creek Pass downhill area, which is across the highway from the access point for the backcountry skiing we were to enjoy later. Though weather was merely cloudy in town, a near blizzard was in progress 3,000-4,000 feet higher at the ski area! This ski area immediately entered our personal books as one of the best, not only from its reputation as receiving the most annual snowfall of any Colorado resort, but also because minimal grooming seemed to be the norm. It was, apart from tracking done by other skiers, nearly like skiing ungroomed backcountry in deep powder with freshies on top but with the benefit of professional avalanche control.

Being entirely new to the place, we kept getting “lost”, hardly ever skiing down our intended trails. We eventually surrendered to following our noses, which worked out quite well (except for one extremely bumped-up run that proved a tall order; so we side-slipped through the trees to an adjacent run that was more palatable. Thank heavens for those side-slipping exercises during all those telly skiing lessons!) Speaking of trees, there were plenty of opportunities for going off-trail through moderately sloped areas. Tree spacings and pitch angles were spot-on for well-under-control pleasure but we kept laughing at the “beware of buried hazard” signs. No such signs at White Grass and the hazard there is typically several orders of magnitude higher!

The first evening in Pagosa was spent learning a hard lesson about finding your way around a locale with which you are not yet acquainted. The main issue was finding the local grocery store so that we could put in for trail lunch food and various other necessities. Mitch initially relied on an “app” on his Smart Phone for navigation to said store, but the “app” kept steering us to a site at which nothing could be found but an empty building that COULD have been the main town store at one time. We did not at first realize that the principal commercial hub of Pagosa was not located in the “old town” east by the San Juan River (and its noted hot springs) but was now in a recently-sprouted “suburb” located several miles to the west! Residents of “old town” did not want to be paved over by new development, so suburban sprawl was pushed over to table land well west of where the city dot appears on the state



Doug and Diane, bundled up for blizzard conditions

**Be Part of UP\$LOPE**

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

Contact: Ralph Heimlich  
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### ST\$ Schedule 2012-2013 Update

We have a full season of trips scheduled from December and through February. Check the **RED (TRIP IS FULL)** and **GREEN (SPACE AVAILABLE)** labels below. Some of our longer trip destinations include Stowe, VT, Tug Hill, NY (two trips), and the White Mountains, NH. We also have trips scheduled for Canaan Valley and Blackwater Falls, WV, as well as the Laurel Highlands, PA area. Blackwater Falls State Park has new deluxe cabins similar to the ones at Canaan Valley State Park. We were fortunate to be able to reserve 2 weekends there. Other trips to Blackwater Falls will stay in the Lodge.

Always check the STS web page for changes to the schedule <http://www.patc.us/chapters/ski/trips.htm>

Think SNOW!  
Kathy Brumberger  
Trip coordinator

Date	Place	Leader
Dec 28-Jan 1	Tug Hill, NY <b>(TRIP IS FULL)</b>	Peggy Alpert and Steve Brickel
Jan 4-6, 2013	Laurel Highlands, PA <b>(SPACE AVAILABLE)</b>	Greg Westernik gmwester@gmail.com or phone 703-763-3833
Jan 4-6	*Blackwater Falls, WV <b>(TRIP IS FULL)</b>	Kathy and Elliot Brumberger
Jan 11-13	+Blackwater Falls Deluxe Cabin <b>(TRIP IS FULL, INCLUDING 2nd CABIN)</b>	Ralph Heimlich
Jan 17-21 MLK	Jackson, NH White Mts <b>(SPACE AVAILABLE)</b>	Rob Swennes 703-532-6101, robertswennes@hotmail.com
Jan 18-21 MLK	Laurel Highlands, PA <b>(SPACE AVAILABLE)</b>	Brian O'Konski 202-362-2982, brian1642@gmail.com
Jan 24-27	**Canaan Valley Deluxe Cabin, WV <b>(Space for one male)</b>	Doug Lesar , 301-587-8041, <a href="mailto:dlesar@comcast.net">dlesar@comcast.net</a> )
Jan 25-27	*Blackwater Falls, WV <b>(SPACE AVAILABLE)</b>	Julie Nash, 703-481-0292, triadsnash@aol.com or Marcie Schubert, 410-536-5080
Feb 1-3	*Blackwater Falls, WV	Jennifer Bine 703/533-2436, jenjobine@gmail.com
Feb 1-3	Laurel Highlands, PA <b>(SPACE AVAILABLE)</b>	Greg Westernik gmwester@gmail.com or phone 703-763-3833
Feb 7-12	Stowe, VT <b>(SPACE AVAILABLE, need pairs of same gender)</b>	Peggy Alpert and Steve Brickel 301-946-4497, mountain-mama15@verizon.net
Feb 8-10	+Blackwater Falls Deluxe Cabin <b>(SPACE AVAILABLE for one woman)</b>	Kathy and Elliot Brumberger 301-774-7412, kathy-brum@verizon.net
Feb 15-18 Presidents Week end	Ski Dance, Laurel Highlands, PA	Eliot Applestein, 301-984-6855, eliotapplestein@verizon.net; or Bob Mathis, 301-589-7539, talibob@starpower.net
Feb 15-18 Presidents Week end	***Blackwater Falls, WV <b>(SPACE AVAILABLE for one male and one female)</b>	Laurie Welch 301-565-4399, laurawelch123@gmail.com
Feb 21-25	Tug Hill <b>(SPACE AVAILABLE)</b>	Rob Swennes 703-532-6101, robertswennes@hotmail.com
Feb 22-24	W MD Oak-Mar Motel <b>(SPACE AVAILABLE for one male and one female)</b>	Jim Houghton 703-266-2209 deucepoints@gmail.com
Feb 28-Mar4	Tug Hill, Upstate NY <b>(SPACE AVAILABLE)</b>	Greg Westernik gmwester@gmail.com or phone 703-763-3833

**SW Colorado (cont.)**

*(Continued from page 4)*

map. Even after solving the grocery store location puzzle, finding a spot for each night's main meal was challenging, as the most oft-recommended eateries were typically very crowded with long waits for a table. We did manage to get into the two most highly spoken-of pubs one night apiece, but on one occasion it was sheer luck that it was not mobbed and on the other the wait for dinner was a long spell in a packed bar room. But if we go to Pagosa again we will waste no time pondering where to go eat and get there as soon as we change out of ski clothes (hang any pre-dinner shower).

On the morning of our second day, we met guide Sandy at a coffee shop, and we immediately knew we were going to have a great time with her. The object was to learn from her considerable skills and have a load of fun in the process. After introductions and settling of plans and expectations, we returned to Wolf Creek Pass, a location we were going to be yo-yoing to and from Pagosa all week long. The parking area for the backcountry routes was across the highway from the downhill area. Our initial few hours were spent at a "beacon park", a site next to the parking area where several avalanche beacons had been buried under the snowpack. Specific beacons could be switched on at a central control box, and with Sandy activating beacons of her choosing we took turns practicing buried (transmitting) beacon location with our own hand-held (receiving) beacons. Frequent practice sessions like these (locating, probing, and shoveling out buried beacons) are essential backcountry skiing safety skills (along with prudent and careful selection of slopes to ski according to recent snowpack hazard trends, even what SECTION of a slope to ski can be a crucial factor in safe skiing).



**Mitch and Sandy watch as Diane probes for the beeping beacon**

Prior to development of the resort across the highway, the Wolf Creek downhill area had been a small rope tow operation located at a high point (Lobo Overlook) that was now the start of several of the backcountry runs Sandy identified as suitable for us. Navigation in this neighborhood was not difficult as there was a well-established and easy to locate up-track, and once higher ground was attained thinness of the tree cover made the terrain features easy to read. Remnants of the old ski runs and an access roadway to telecom antennas were also helpful. The snowfall of the day before was hoped to be a blessing, but the initial slope we attempted was at such a shallow angle we could barely make downhill headway against the thick new snow layer! The usual prudent step of choosing a mild slope for shakeout and warm-up backfired, but this was easily remedied by moving to a steeper nearby pitch, on which the skiing results were much improved. During the course of the day we ascended and descended several times in the usual C-O mode, but although our tracks were usually not precisely aligned and spooned, they were not lame with zigzags.



**Hoowee! And even now only half the slope of Suicide**

After several successful runs in the Lobo Overlook neighborhood, toward end of day Sandy directed us to a final run going under the ominous name "suicide bowl"; don't know how it became so labeled and don't really want to know. In any case, her directions for the safest ski line were well on skier's right of the slope, and included a pause and angle-over to avoid a portion of the pitch that just might be a bit dicey for slide hazard. Sandy's husband, Mark Mueller, was waiting for us at the bottom. Mark has a seasonal job with the Colorado roads department and is responsible for avalanche control on slide paths leading down to the Wolf Creek pass highway. Mark has say-so on road closures, and was concluding a "day at the office" assessing hazard to the road from the previous day's snowfall. Could be also that he was just making sure that all was well with Sandy and her charges. Mark led the way back to the road along a zippy track that was a pleasure although you had to stay alert, balanced, and able to dump speed at will. Modern backcountry gear does great for that!

Our second day with Sandy was a bit different than the first; we commenced from the same trailhead but gained elevation along a different route, making large traverses up a ridge (Powerline Ridge) that was more forested than the terrain skied the day before. The day was sunny and since southerly and more exposed aspects were likely to get sun-baked and crusty, we sought more sheltered and northeasterly facing slopes in the trees that were a pleasure to ski. Sandy had room enough in her big guide pack for lemon bars to be shared at lunch with her clients, an unexpected extra treat. The day went by rapidly, and before we knew it

**SW Colorado (cont.)**

*(Continued from page 6)*

we had to bid goodbye to our guide at the end of her tenure with us, although it was possible that she and Mark would return to Wolf Creek Pass again over the next few days when we were on our own.

On Wednesday, we opted for a return to the Wolf Creek downhill area and we had another superb day there. Although it was midweek the place was bustling with plenty of alpine skiers and snowboarders, one reason being that this resort currently had some of the best snow conditions in all of Colorado. In addition, other than Taos it is one of the closest decent ski areas to Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas, and the Texan contingent was fairly obvious to the observant ('nuff said). One of the most amusing incidents experienced was a group of young boarders, apparently new to this resort if not to boarding itself, one of whom exclaimed when commencing the run we were committing to. "Are we gonna die if we go this way?" Like many of Wolf Creek's runs, it was ungroomed and heaved up with bumps and chutes, but we managed it considerably better than the inexperienced boarders, one of whom complimented us with something like "Looks like they know what they are doing". To the non-expert, survival skiing and improvisation can look like expertise, though that can be expertise in its own right. It's usually wise to do whatever it takes to get down safely and upright.

Then on Thursday came the big test: Can the present and former Washington DC threesome find their own good snow without a guide's aid? Thursday's weather (clear, sunny and bright) made this a challenge as we felt it was wise to begin with the Lobo Overlook area for which route finding was relatively easy and slide hazard minimal. The snow conditions were, ahem, "interesting" and "complicated" in this sun exposed area due to strong day time warming. The crustiness made smooth turning difficult and "zipper crust" acquired its name for a good reason; the slightly unnerving sound made when your skis cut it! We did manage to find a few small pockets that were not baked out, but all it took was to ski in and out of tree shadow to make the difference between "acceptable" and "barely tolerable". Nevertheless, though it was the poorest snow conditions day we experienced, though we argued a bit about what aspects of the slopes to ski, we came through safe and sound and never became anywhere close to being "lost", always laudable goals when skiing backcountry.

On our final full day we pulled out "Plan B", a visit to the Wolf Creek neighborhood called the "Plunge Area", a zone of tree runs just below the open slopes of Suicide Bowl across the unplowed roadway leading to the telecom facilities at Lobo high point. This area had been carefully described to us by Sandy a few days before and we were able to locate its upper reaches quite easily. Although a crease in this wooded slope had been sparsely tracked by a few previous skiers, the rest of the area was still pristine with the fresh snow from days ago, and being north facing and shaded promised to be a great improvement over the previous day. Indicated by Mitch's and Diane's smiles, the skiing in the Plunge Area turned out to be marvelous! A steady but mellow slope angle, generous tree spacing, and a lack of undergrowth barriers provided a near-perfect tree skiing experience. Starts and stops to re-collect bearings and wits were hardly necessary; you could confidently curve your way downward almost at will, arcing between trees with aplomb and insouciance. We lost count of the times we yo-yoed the Plunge Area. My only regret for the day was losing a prized winter ball cap off my head (went back to search but never located it). Late afternoon arrived too soon,



**All smiles at The Plunge Area takeoff point**

and we had to return to the trailhead, but at that point we were a little tired. For variety, rather than descend via the track we had employed three times prior, we chose to accomplish the return via the telecom facility access road. This was expected to be an easy cruise, but proved to be a slight ordeal as the unplowed roadway had been churned up by snowshoers, and being sun-exposed was iced over to boot. With our heavy skis and boots the going was painfully slow! Felt relief in emerging from the forest with the highway and trailhead in view, but one last unexpected challenge posed itself; tracks heading at a SLIGHT uphill angle, incidentally into a head wind. Our skis do NOT have any grip pattern whatsoever (steep climbs are possible only with climbing skins), and thinking it not worthwhile putting skins on we bulled our way to the cars in decidedly painstaking and graceless fashion. With our gear being out of its element, the "easy" way was emphatically not so.

One aspect of our trip that seemed to be cursed was the inability to socialize with our skinny-ski STS comrades, even though their motel was practically within sight of our cabin. Our ski destinations / terrain choices differed too greatly, and on the one night where we chose the same dinner spot our seating times overlapped only slightly. Another attempt to coordinate a meal

*(Continued on page 8)*

**SW Colorado (cont.)**

*(Continued from page 7)*

together failed due to schedule conflict. Also, the one hot springs spa we patronized was not visited by our STS friends that night. Oh well ...

Our final half-day took place at the downhill area, and we had enough time before hitting the road back to Boulder to enroll in a Telemark skiing workshop. Several of Diane's skiing friends were beginning their own ski trip in Pagosa that day, and a few of them showed for that same workshop (it's a small world). The lessons were useful as they usually are, but our instructor, a young dude half our ages at least, was able to ski skillfully with skis and boots barely more substantial than light touring equipment. In other words, a Chip Chase clone in southwest Colorado!

Summing up, our visit to the San Juans was one of the most memorable of several to the state of Colorado over the years. The Wolf Creek Pass area offered splendid skiing, both in- and out-of-bounds, and will be considered for future trips by both us crazy uphill / downhill-obsessives and our skinnier-ski cousins. Even though 2011-2012 was practically a bust for skiing closer to our eastern homes, the Pagosa trip provided many good memories for that otherwise rather disappointing winter.

**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.



**What's inside a Canaan Valley Cabin? This is an indoor "drying" rack, note the "feet" from a Doug Lesar Trip in 2008**



**Ski/Dance Weekend: Ski All Day/Dance All Night!**

In 2011 over Presidents Day weekend, I, along with 50 others, traveled to Somerset County, Pennsylvania for the famous Ski/Dance Weekend. Now, I've only attended this storied event for two years, but Bob Mathias has been going since approximately 28 years ago when he organized the three sponsors: The Folklore Society of Greater Washington, Sierra Club along with STS. He felt that traditional dancing fit perfectly with cross-country skiing.

Staying at Camp Harmony, the beautiful retreat belonging to The Church of the Brethren, is part of the fun. We slept four people to a room, or up to 20 in the dormitory. Sitting around the big fireplace with our new best friends, using the kitchen, or taking that delicious shower after a day of cross country skiing was a wonderful treat.

At the lodge we would eat hearty breakfasts prepared by long-time employees of Camp Harmony, put our own lunches together with the fixings laid out for us, and then head off for the the first half of the main event. This involved driving to either Laurel Mountain State Park, Laurel Ridge or just skiing right out the front door, around the trails of the Camp and adjoining reservoir. Did I mention the warming-hut that has a fire burning all day and the hot chocolate?



There's more fun in store during the evening. The first night we arrived, a giant potluck dinner was shared by all. On the other nights we were served buffet style with lots of vegetarian (my favorites) and meat dishes, with all the trimmings. After the chairs are set up in a semi-circle, and the folk song books are distributed, [Dave Weisler](#) stood in front of the fireplace and lead us in the best Sing Along I ever sang along to. There must be over 1,000 songs in that book, and when someone chooses their favorite, we all have the words, and Dave plays the tune. It's a joyful sound we make, and the hour ends way too soon.

But, of course, it's time for the dancing. Many of the folks dance at Glen Echo regularly, and see one another there. These American folk dances have precursors going back 200-300 years, originating from European cities and country sides. Bob says that Contra dancing builds a community feeling among people, and helps create traditions. I would have to agree, and add that it's a glorious feeling to be swinging and swirling the night away. For the past 8 or 9 years we've had [Laura Light](#) and George Paul join

Dave as our trio. The caller is well-known Robbin Marcus from Atlanta. Whether you are following the dance, or just sitting and listening to the band, you'll enjoy the beautiful music and happy people.

Many folks are thinking that if the snow doesn't show there won't be anything to do--but they are wrong. Along with the nightly events, we can hike, go to the Johnstown Flood Museum, the Steel Museum, or the just-opened 911 Memorial in Shanksville. Bob, along with Eliot Applestein, who has been co-leader for the last 12 years, report a number of romantic matches that have resulted in marriages, and the numerous kids that have been attending so long that they've become college students.

The Ski/Dance weekend should be on everyone's list. It's too good to miss.

Arleen Richter



**More Skiing and Dancing**—Last year I attended a ski-dance week at Craftsbury Outdoor Center in Vermont. It was sponsored by Road Scholar. The week is a great cross country experience. There were five instructors for about 30 participants. We were divided according to skill levels. Each group had an instructor who gave continuous instruction, skied with us all day, and guided us around the extensive trails. If needed, rental of all equipment is free. On two days we had the choice to get instruction in skate skiing. Rental of skate skis and boots was free. All three meals were included--very generous cafeteria style. Rooms are spartan but clean. I decided to pay a little more for my own room. Every night after dinner there were group country music dancing lessons and live music until about 10 PM. The snow was good--they make tons of snow and use it to repair thin spots.

For some reason, the two ski-dance weeks are not listed in the latest Road Scholar catalog. However, I telephoned Craftsbury and they said six weeks are on their schedule: January 13 through March 1, 2013. Sign-up is through Road Scholar at <http://www.road scholar.org/n/program/summary.aspx?id=1-5Q51QN>

I plan to attend one of these weeks.

Len Henzke

**PATC-Ski Touring Section**

**c/o Doug Lesar**

**2507 Campbell Place**

**Kensington, MD 20895**



Snow at Jackson, NH in 2011 photo by Joe Bachman

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 |