

# The Liftline

# Pentagon Ski Club Spring, 2010

## President's Corner By Peter Porton



The ski season is over, the weather no longer includes snow and temps are in the 70's, and we have only one more membership meeting on April 20. It will feature our race awards, the Wounded Warrior drive, our council election (see Page 15) and a catch-up on the whole season. We'll have good food as always and a cash bar for those who need libations.

Join us—it's our last event until the summer picnic in July.

You'll note that the newsletter is now a quarterly issue. For all the club's latest information, check our website at [www.pentagonskiclub.org](http://www.pentagonskiclub.org) or await the periodic messages from Jim McDonough, our membership communications chairman, via Constant Contact.

## Greek Cruise and Tour

By Christina Anderson

For me, the dream to share my beautiful homeland of Greece with my friends, family and fellow club members was becoming a reality. What a fantastic trip it turned out to be!

We landed in Athens on September 19 and checked into our Amalia hotel in the center of Athens, next to Syndagma Square, with magnificent views of the Parthenon, Lycabittus, the Parliament, the National Gardens and the city skyline. We had the afternoon and the evening to ourselves, walking around the Plaka and Monastiraki, the old part of Athens, shopping and having lunch and dinner, in the outdoor tavernas, tasting the Greek salads, souvlakis, gyros, spanakopitas, tyropitas and many other traditional dishes and sharing some very different Retsina wine. The next day we had a city tour of Athens, with Spyros, our personal driver and led by Hara, our very special archeologist tour guide. It included the Panathenian Olympic Stadium, the Temple of Olympian Zeus, the Hadrian Arch, the monument of Filopappus, the Odeum of Herodes Atticus, the Erechtheum with the Caryatides, and of course the magnificent Parthenon, with an extensive lecture of its history. In the afternoon we visited the newly opened Acropolis Museum and then more shopping, eating and sightseeing.

On Monday we went to the Port of Pireaus and boarded

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WOUNDED WARRIOR  
PROJECT

Disabled Sports USA

By Peter Porton

Over the last six years the PSC, with your incredibly generous contributions, has raised more than \$21,600 for Disabled Sports USA's Wounded Warrior Project (<http://www.dsusa.org/>). From their website, "What is Disabled Sports USA? A national nonprofit, 501(c)(3), organization established in 1967 by disabled Vietnam veterans to serve the war injured. DS/USA now offers nationwide sports rehabilitation programs to anyone with a permanent disability. Activities include winter skiing, water sports, summer and winter competitions, fitness and special sports events. Participants include those with visual impairments, amputations, spinal cord injuries, dwarfism, multiple sclerosis, head injuries, cerebral palsy, and other neuromuscular and orthopedic conditions."

Kirk Bauer, DSUSA's Executive Director, believes that one of the ways to overcome the mental and physical problems facing these men and women is through sports, especially skiing and boarding (skiing has the best adaptive equipment of all sports, as I'm sure all of you have seen). Kirk knows what he's talking about. A decorated veteran, after losing a leg in Vietnam he was helped by a soldier who skied and was convinced that it helped him recover. As he said, "It's all about doing." As one of the soldiers who was interviewed on the mountain (Breckenridge) in an HBO *Real Sports* show stated, skiing allows him to "Find the freedom."

The PSC has supported the Wounded Warrior Project for six years and we're doing it again this year. "Disabled Sports USA, in cooperation with its chapters and The Wounded Warrior Project, provides a variety of opportunities for our dedicated service members and their families to experience everything life has to offer through sports and recreation...Programs are conducted in the Maryland/Virginia area, while the soldiers and Marines are undergoing rehabilitation at WRAMC, and at sites throughout the USA".

With your help, we can make a difference. Kirk Bauer has informed us he will send one of his Wounded Warriors to come talk to us about this great project and our own WW, Dennis Walburn, will be there as well. Bring your checkbooks! If you

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# Pentagon Ski Club

2009-2010 Council & Committees

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## The Lifeline

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*The Lifeline* is issued quarterly. Any articles are welcome for publication, but the editor has the right to edit for size and PSC policy.

## PSC MEMBERSHIP FEES

	1-YEAR	2-YEARS	3-YEARS
SINGLE	\$30	\$55	\$75
FAMILY	\$40	\$75	\$100

## PSC MEETING SCHEDULE

**O**ur meetings are held on the second or third Tuesday of the months listed below at the Officers Club at Fort Myer, VA, at 7 PM (except for the picnic at the Coast Guard Station).

- Saturday, July 18 (Picnic)
- Tuesday, September 8
- Tuesday, October 13
- Tuesday, November 10
- Tuesday, December 8
- Tuesday, January 12
- Tuesday, February 9
- Tuesday, April 20



## Membership Benefits

To access the *Membership Benefits* area in the National Ski Council Federation website at [www.skifederation.org](http://www.skifederation.org) (all PSCers are automatically members), use the following:

**userid = skiclub; password = member**

## Membership Updates

Please take a moment to check the date on your newsletter label—it indicates the month your membership expires. If you need to renew or change your address, please see Cheree Peirce at our meetings, contact her at [scpeirce@verizon.net](mailto:scpeirce@verizon.net) or send her a check (see membership fees up above).

**Cheree Peirce**  
19701 Golden Valley Lane  
Brookeville MD 20833



*(Wounded Warriors, From Page 1)*

can't, you can mail me a check (made out to Disabled Sports, USA) and I'll submit them with the rest. My address is 11918 Moss Point Lane, Reston, VA 20194.

In addition, we again need volunteers from the Pentagon Ski Club for the USAFMC Golf Classic (last year it was called the Congressional Charity Golf Classic) on Monday, June 14. Last year we had some 15 volunteers helping out all day and got recompensed with a nice dinner, complete with Wounded Warriors and current and former members of Congress. We will be at the same location at the Army-Navy Golf Club, and the day will be run pretty much the same. Let me know if you can help and we will send you the appropriate information as the tournament approaches.

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*(Greece, From Page 1)*

the Aquamarine ship for our five day, four nights of cruising and visiting the Aegean Islands. Our first stop on Monday evening was the famous and cosmopolitan island of Mykonos with its beautiful windmills, hundreds of tiny chapels, narrow cobbled streets, chic boutiques, beautiful jewelry shops and white-washed houses. Some of us found a table on the waterfront for cocktails and grilled octopus, watching the beautiful sunset over its picturesque harbor, and others did more shopping and picked up embroidered linens, pashminas and jewelry.

Tuesday morning we visited Kusadasi, Turkey and ancient Ephesus, where history truly comes to life. Our guide was wonderful and the ruins were spectacular. Our walk took us down a marble and cobblestone road, passing architectural masterpieces like the Forum, the Odeon, the Library of Celsus and the Great Amphitheater where St. Paul preached. We also were lucky to have the special tour thru the newly excavated Terrace homes. They were inhabited by the most qualified and wealthy social class and for this reason they are also known as "houses of the rich" or "palaces on the slopes." Most of the houses were three levels. The courtyard was surrounded by columns and paved with marble. They had running water and were heated by a system similar to the one used in the baths. The inside rooms had frescoed walls depicting mythological subjects, while the floors were adorned with refined mosaics. In the afternoon we cruised to island of Patmos for a short visit. This island is known as the site of the apocalyp-



tic revelations of St. John the Divine, written here during his exile. In the evening we had a nice dinner and I was able to do some Greek dancing with the ship's crew.

Wednesday, we visited Rhodes, the beautiful Island of Roses with its rich and varied history. A group of us went on a tour of the charming town of Lindos with its ancient acropolis dedicated to the goddess Athena. Below lays the bay of St.Paul, where the apostle landed during his voyages. We also visited the old city and the castle. The crusading Knights of St.John left the medieval city of Rhodes behind when they were defeated by Sultan Suleyman the Magnificent. The Ottoman Turks then occupied Rhodes for almost 400 years, leaving mosques, minarets and a Turkish bath to mark their presence. In the evening we were treated with the special captain's dinner, after an audience and pictures with him.

Thursday we cruised to the island of Crete and Heraklion, the capital of Crete. We visited the fantastic ruins of the Palace of Knossos. The elaborate palace is believed to be the mythical Labyrinth of King Minos and the seat of ancient Minoan culture. We then cruised to the island of Santorini, the most breathtaking and romantic of the Greek Islands. Santorini also has a unique natural environment. The crescent-shaped island is the world's largest caldera (the result of volcanic explosion in 1500 BC). The town of Fira, with white-washed houses, narrow streets, open-air cafes and glittering boutiques clinging to steep cliffs with spectacular views, is accessible by cable-car or mule. One of the highlights was the fantastic sunset, a picture of a gold medallion dipping beneath the blue waters which many of us were lucky enough to experience over specialty coffees in one of the many cliffside terrace cafes. Many of us decided to walk down the many steps to the dock to return to our ship. It was not a bad walk, however we had to watch out for the donkey dung, which it was impossible to miss.

Overall the ship and the crew were very nice and the food was good, but best of all was the great weather. Friday morning we were back in the Port of Piraeus. Our private bus picked us up at the pier to begin our four-day sightseeing tour, led by Hara, our special archeologist tour guide. We traveled North to Kalambaka, Thessaly (Central Greece) and the Pindus Mountains and visited the breath-

taking monasteries of Meteora. The Greek word Meteora means

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“suspended in the air,” and they look like they are. The conglomerate and natural rock pillars have eroded into fantastic peaks upon which medieval hermit monks in the 14<sup>th</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup> centuries built the monasteries in order to protect them during the Ottoman occupation. We visited several of them, as they are still active and we were all taken back by the ambiance of this incredible area.

Saturday morning we stopped at Thermopylae with the statue of King Leonidas of Sparta, which was made famous to us with the recent film *The 300*. We then travelled on to Delphi. We visited the excellent museum, which displays some of the finest works of art in Greece as it chronicles the history and importance of Delphi. For the first time we had rain, so we took time to buy more jewelry and leave our visit to the archeological site for the next morning. So, on Sunday we visited the ruins of ancient Delphi. For the ancient Greeks, Delphi was quite literally the center of the world and it was marked by the sacred Omphalos, or “navel stone.” It is also the home to the famous Oracle of Delphi, which influenced affairs in the known world for over a thousand years. We then continued on to Olympia from Rio to Antirion crossing the channel on the new state-of-the-art suspended bridge, considered to be the longest and most modern in Europe, and through Patra. After lunch we visited the museum and the ruins of Olympia where the first Olympics were held in 776 B. C.

On Monday we traveled through the center of the Peloponnesus to Mycenae. The ruins of the Mycenaean Acropolis themselves are a delight. The awe-inspiring Lion Gates (the earliest known piece of monumental sculpture in the European continent) took us to the interior of the acropolis. From there, a steep path led our climb through several ancient buildings and pathways towards the palace where Agamemnon, after he returned victorious from the Trojan War, was murdered by his wife Klytemnestra and her lover. Then we visited the Tomb of Agamemnon. After lunch we continued on to the Port of Nauplion and visited the ancient theatre of Epidaurus. It was a cultural, spiritual and healing center where the ancient Greeks traveled to ask the gods for remedies for their physical ailments, and it is also famous for its acoustics. We then crossed the Corinth Canal to mainland Greece and back to Athens. Tuesday we had a free day in Athens and most of us did some last-minute shopping and some visited the Lycabittus Hill. In the evening, we all had a Greek dinner at the Skalakia (“The Steps”) Taverna, which my dear friend Georgina and I frequented when I lived in Athens, before Ed. We used the new, clean and easy-to-use subway system to get back to our hotel.

The trip was great because of the outstanding tour guides and the nice Amalia hotels in Athens, Kalambaka, Delphi and Olympia. But it was a fantastic trip and the trip of a lifetime, as many of you have told me, because of all of you that traveled with me, and I would be very selfish if I didnt mention you. Thank you, Bob & Candy Anderson, Marsha Arrington, Townsend Belser & Margo London, Nick & Judy Bennett, Don Blasl, Larry Caldwell & Caroline Smith, Bob Chatman & Sue Townsend, Janet Cyphers, June Doezema, David Eaton & Karen Olmsted, Al &

Nancy Egolf, Helen Fiske, Maggie Fitzgerald, Annette Foster, Jeanne Fox & Cort Peret, Jannette Gonzalez, Liz Groszer, Ginny Lester, Nina Litton, Sam Mantis, Pat McGinty, Luella Montgomery, Beth Nicholson, Dave & Ginny Olsen, Carol Overman & Chuck Tachett, Sandi Paige, Peter Porton, Larry Powers, Don & Sue Viacelli, Marylou Whelan, Shu & Elsebeth Wong, and my dear husband Ed. You guys made the trip one that I will always remember as one of my best as a trip leader and as a fellow traveler.

Please visit our many pictures on “SmugMug” on our PSC website.

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panorama  
mountain village 

## Panorama

*By Peter Porton*

**T**hey say timing is everything. We went to Panorama the day after the underwear bomber created travel havoc for all flyers. Getting into Calgary cost us an hour as the airplane departing our gateway was delayed due to body searches by US customs agents (in Canada, we can go through customs at the departing airport). More on this later on. Val Lester and Geoff Greer were delayed a day because of airline-induced problems in Chicago and were put up in Calgary very late at a hotel that evening, joining us the following afternoon.

The New Years trip is known for taking families and teachers, since that's when they have time off. Having led several of them over the years, this trip turned into a reunion of sorts. Ron and Chae-Im Pontius brought daughter Lauren. Leigh Broadhurst brought daughter Melanie and son Christopher. Ginny Lester brought the whole Lester clan: daughters Val and Pam, sons-in-law Geoff and Bob, and grandsons Ross and Clay. Finally, Bill Weigand brought daughter Corinne and friend Cheryl. Adding onto the trip, we got some people who just wanted to ski Panorama: Carrie Chernov (also a teacher), Mark Benavent, and Mike Fallon.

A convivial group, ready to ski this huge, 4,000 vertical-foot mountain. Our lodgings at the 1,000 Peaks Condos were satisfactory; close to the lifts, but some units were rather small and they all lacked closet space. In addition, it seems that Panorama is turning more into a family condo-oriented, eat-in resort. There aren't a lot of restaurants to choose from and the closest and least crowded were pubs (the Crazyhorse and Jackpine). Great for lunch and dinner and cheap to boot, but not a special evening out; for that we had the Earl Grey.

After the first day of skiing, we got an idea of the mountain and conditions: vast, long groomers down the front; glade skiing in Sun Bowl; double diamond runs in Tayton Bowl and Extreme Dream Zone; and all sorts of runs along Founders Ridge. The only problem? No snow for the previous several weeks (though a good base from early December's snowfalls), which turned even

the nicely groomed runs into hardpack by the afternoon. The cold weather (below 0 degrees F in the AM) ensured no melting. Unfortunately, this turned the diamond runs somewhat not fun; Leigh and Mike were the only folks I knew skiing Tayton; I don't know if Leigh even skied the front, except with her kids or coming back home.

Panorama has great mountain guide tours at 10 AM and 1:30 PM; many of us chose to ski with the guides several times, though they weren't allowed to take us down double-blacks.

We had a nice pizza party in the unit I shared with Mike and Mark; luckily, we did have space there and so we also had a "garbage" party at the end of the week. You know a social event is successful when it lasts three hours and the only reason people left was to go back to their units to bring back additional libations (soda for the kids). Kudos to the parents who raised such well-behaved kids (who also all skied very well, if skiing better than the trip leader may be so designated). I've seen a number of them from grade school to college; good for them, but it makes me suddenly feel very old.

One great thing about the trip was that there were no liftlines. Panorama now has high-speed lifts almost to the peak, an upgrade since I was last there. The only thing we really could have used was more snow. But that's always the skier's lament.

The biggest problem of the trip was going home. We had been informed by word-of-mouth and from our tour operator, that we needed to depart early to get to Calgary and its long check-in lines and customs. What time did we leave Panorama? Midnight! United did a good job getting us through check-in (the Lester clan flew NW with equal success) and the US Customs agents also got us through in remarkably short time. Total time in lines? Three hours. We all made it home safe, but not on time. A Dulles windstorm delayed us, both on the ground and circling Dulles, for hours. Despite getting home late, we all made it.

Thanks to all who went with us for making it an easy trip to lead and thanks to our tour operator, Effie Rubinstein, for adjusting the condo units to assist our family groups and save them a good amount of dollars.



## Alta/Snowbird Powderfest

*By Dave Olsen*

**T**he scheduling of pre-trip parties for early-January trips is often a challenge as the available dates usually conflict with Christmas and New Years. With so many people having family functions and other goings-on as the holidays were approaching, the timing for our get-together was already working against us. This time it just wasn't to be. With a major storm on the way and 8-12 inches of snow in the

forecast, I decided at noontime on Friday, December 18, to cancel our planned Saturday-afternoon gathering. We didn't want anyone getting stuck in the snow—or worse—trying to get to and through the Maryland countryside. That turned out to be a good call. The storm began in earnest late Friday evening and the entire DC area was nearly impassible by Saturday afternoon.

Jump ahead two weeks to Reagan National Airport's Delta Airlines counter. By the time I arrived at about 3 PM, several in our group had already preceded me including Helen Fiske, Carol McLane, her daughter Lynne, and Lynne's husband Doug Shuman, and were having variable success coping with the self-serve kiosks and the selection of queues to stand in. The biggest variable was the luggage fees we had to pay—or not. It seemed that the fees were being waived for most of us, for our first two checked bags, with skis and boot bags together counting as just one bag, depending on which agent checked us in. Ernie Becking was allowed two free bags but they didn't lump his boots and skis together, so he got charged \$25 for a 3<sup>rd</sup> bag. Carol got charged a particularly odd amount (\$41.06). Go figure.

Nearly everyone was checked in by about 4:00 PM, and the security lineup wasn't too onerous, so nearly all 35 of us were in the gate area by 4:30 or so for our 5:20 PM departure. Bill and Gail Memler had arrived early and were already at the gate, and Dalton Lane phoned to let me know he was about to check in. The several fast-food establishments were doing a brisk business as we enjoyed a quick bite or took on provisions for the flight, or both. Our flight offered a variety of on-demand movies (\$6) and mini-series (\$2), with a limited selection of free, live, network and cable broadcasts including the Liberty Bowl on ESPN.

Our nonstop flight arrived on time in Salt Lake City, and everyone's luggage appeared in a reasonable time. I was disappointed to learn that we were to be transported to Snowbird in three vans rather than a single bus. Canyon Transportation at first wanted everyone to check in individually with them, but they relented and accepted instead a list I gave them with everyone's name. They did insist, however, on loading us alphabetically, which meant that some couples or families were separated, but only for the short 45-minute ride up to Snowbird. The bell staff at Cliff Lodge helped unload the vans while we all queued up to check in at the front desk. I was able to distribute lift tickets right there, precluding the need to find everyone at breakfast—which would have been a challenge with a few needing to rent skis the next morning. Larita Killian came down for her lift ticket, having arrived at the Cliff around noon after a morning arrival in SLC from Indianapolis. She had shared a van ride with Marcia S who had flown in from JFK airport and Carol Christiansen from Newark. Everyone was checked in by about 10:30, and we all headed up to our rooms to unpack a few things and get to bed after a long day.

Sunday morning we were hosted to a modest "meet & greet" continental breakfast as part of the resort's Powderfest Week activities. This was also our opportunity to sign up for Thursday's race. We said hello to Lee Hagenstad, who had flown in from Denver on Saturday, and to Forest Walker and Sussan Eftekhari,

*(Continued Next Page)*

who brought our group up to 41 skiers. Forest and Sussan were joining us as part of their third annual “ski safari.” Forest explained that “after leaving Snowbird we are going up to Bozeman, MT where we have rented a house for the winter. We will be skiing mostly at Bridger Bowl with some trips thrown in to Grand Targhee, Big Sky, Discovery (near Butte), and possibly some others. It’s a great life as long as the \$’s and the health hold out.”

After breakfast we got suited up for our first day of skiing. Many of us opted to join the mountain tour that had been arranged for us, departing conveniently from the Plaza Deck at Snowbird Center, a short ski-down from the ski-locker area at the Cliff. We were divided into three groups, and enjoyed a bright, sunshiny morning with temperatures in the mid-20s ... a bit of a chill in the shade but glorious in the sun. The tours lasted past 11AM, at which time a number of us skied over to Alta for lunch, then skied the afternoon with Carol C’s friend Joe Glasser, who is a local at Alta/Snowbird. (Joe worked for Carol’s late husband Jules Sagui, who was the night manager at Cliff Lodge for a number of years.) Sofie DeLathouwer enjoyed the ski lesson she took in the afternoon.

Skiing between the resorts is easy if conditions are favorable. From Snowbird Center you head up the Peruvian high-speed quad, then hop on the conveyor that takes you through the tunnel to Snowbird’s Mineral Basin area. Then ski down to the Baldy Express. From the top of that lift you ski through the gate which lets you pass if you’re carrying a valid Alta lift ticket. The trip back is equally easy. Just ride up Alta’s Sugarloaf express lift, go back through the control gates, and you’re back in Mineral Basin. Ski down to the Mineral Basin Express and ride it to the top of Hidden Peak where you’re right next to Snowbird’s tram and can ski down to the base.

The other way to get between the resorts is with the free bus system. But we learned that the published schedule is basically just a suggestion and, with as much as an hour between busses, it can be a long wait. With that in mind, a group of us hopped on the 7:45 AM bus on Monday, planning to have a nice breakfast at the Albion Grill before the 9:15 lift opening. We got there plenty early only to discover that the restaurant didn’t officially open until 8:30. But they quickly got the coffee going and opened a bit early to start working on our cooked-to-order breakfasts. Carol C, on the other hand, put her considerable resort knowledge to work and opted instead for breakfast at the café in Alta’s Goldminer’s Daughter Lodge at the Wildcat base area (the first of the two Alta stops on the shuttle bus). The café opened much earlier and was a significantly better value. Then she grabbed the transfer tow up to the Albion Base and met us as we were having our breakfast. Several of us frequented the café for breakfast and lunch during the rest of the week.

Monday’s weather was similar to Sunday with mid-20s temps and a bit of an inversion (warmer at the top than at the base). It started to get cloudy in the afternoon, and the flat light was a bit of an issue. Monday evening we enjoyed an excellent group dinner at the Wildflower Restaurant in the nearby Iron Blossam Lodge. The club was able to subsidize everyone’s meal and host everyone’s first beverage, in lieu of (a) the snowed-out

pre-trip party and (b) a club-hosted pizza party, which couldn’t be affordably arranged. All but one of our group of 41 participated. The Ruby Red Trout entrée selection (17 ordered it) barely prevailed over the Lasagna (15). The Chicken and choice-of-pizza options (4 each) were less popular, but everyone seemed to enjoy their meals. We capped the evening with a drawing for some Snowbird-logo merchandise that the resort had provided including several neck gaters, duffle bags, and an Atomic helmet bag. The evening was pleasant for the 10-15 minute walk back through Snowbird Center to the Cliff Lodge; the Cliff’s staff provided shuttles back to the lodge for those preferring not to walk, as they had done for the trip over.

Tuesday was Powderfest race day, and our club had a respectable showing for the fun, dual-salom event, with fully half of our skiers participating. Our ladies’ team was represented by Christina Anderson, Betsy Brady, Sabine Cornelius, Sofie DeLathouwer, Laura Gabanski, Lee Hagenstad, Brenda Walburn, and Nina Litton and her daughter Lynn. Our men included Arun Bhasin, Phil Brown, Jeff Burka, Rani Emad, Guy Ensmann, Bill Foshay, Peter Lee, Steve Peirce, Larry Powers, Graham Smith, Dennis Walburn, and me. Our first obstacle was to find our way to the top of the racecourse, but the real challenge was the blue course which had a particularly icy section near the bottom, causing several wipeouts amongst our racers. Everyone’s best time, which was announced as the basis for scoring the race, was earned on the red course. Alas, we would not know how our times stacked up until the Friday evening race awards. With promise of an approaching storm (a little fresh snow would certainly be nice), the day remained cloudy with an occasional spotting of a snow flurry, and the flat light a particular nuisance. Temperatures remained in the upper 20’s to low 30’s. We learned that our 42<sup>nd</sup> skier, Liz Groszer, had arrived safely Monday night after an illness-induced couple-day delay in her vacation, and had enjoyed her first day of skiing, although she seemed to be suffering some altitude effects. Tuesday evening the Mexical restaurant, conveniently situated on the lower level of the Cliff Lodge, proved to be a popular spot for our skiers, with several larger and smaller groups spotted including Mike & Nathan Heatwole (who had spent the day snowmobiling); Nina & Lynn; Helen, Luella Montgomery, Larry Powers and Ernie; Brenda & Dennis; and Peter, Jeff, Christina, Lee, Betsy, Steve, and me. Back in the Cliff’s lobby I spotted Larry Bedell reading the Spanish edition of Dan Brown’s *The Lost Symbol*.

Wednesday morning we awoke to television reports of heavy snow falling at both Alta and Snowbird. Yeah! Indeed, it snowed heavily all day, with 6 inches reported as the official accumulation. This was a relatively heavy snow and although not the “Sierra Cement” that we sometimes suffer, nor was it any “Champagne Powder.” Visibility was an issue at times, but the fresh snow was a welcome blessing for many (Gary Lance characterized it as his “best-ever” day of skiing), although a struggle for a few of us and a near disaster for Dennis and Brenda (see the separate story). Temperatures reported on Alta’s message boards were constant throughout the day: 34 at the base and 24 at the top. Some of the trails were closed because of avalanche danger,

including the key Collins Traverse which provides the only path from the Albion side of the resort back to the Wildcat side, other than the transfer tow rope between the base areas. Rani rented some powder skis at Alta and was having a great time in the steeps and trees. After lunch he guided a gaggle of us through some of the more challenging terrain served by the Collins lift. Carol C, skiing with Lynne, suffered an unfortunate fall that resulted in a strained calf muscle and kept her off skis for the rest of the week.

Thursday we awoke to the coldest-yet morning of our trip with temperatures in the mid-teens. Those trying to access the tunnel found it closed while the ski patrol finished their avalanche-control blasting in Mineral Basin, but it was open by the time we made our second run up the Peruvian chairlift. The bowls in Mineral Basin were a particular delight to ski with the fruits of Wednesday's storm, and the off-piste skiing was spectacular all day with the prevailing blue skies and colder temperatures. Thursday night many found a place to watch the BCS Championship game with No. 1 Alabama defeating No. 2 Texas in the Rose Bowl Stadium.

Friday morning was another cold one with low 20's following overnight temps in the teens. The bus service to Alta wasn't running due to avalanche-control road closure. Several of us were waiting for the bus unaware of the situation, and a Snowbird employee kindly shuttled us up to Alta in his van, so we were able to catch our planned breakfast at the Goldminer's Daughter café. Blue skies and sunshine again prevailed throughout the day and although not as exceptional as Thursday, it was a great last day of skiing nonetheless. Doug finally resolved his boot issues by abandoning the boots he had bought and going with rental boots—in a size larger than the ski shop had been struggling to fit him into (see the sidebar on boot issues).

Friday evening the resort hosted us to a "St. Paddy's Day Themed Party" (baked potatoes were featured) with a DJ and awards from Tuesday's race. The PSC's 20-person team dominated the competition over the only other club participating in the Powderfest Week, the "George Lewis Group" with their 5 racers. Lynn, Laura and Nina swept the ladies competition with their 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup>-place finish, and Rani and I took 3<sup>rd</sup> & 1<sup>st</sup>, respectively, for the men. (George Lewis, the namesake of the other club, finished in 2<sup>nd</sup> place.) Dennis was given special recognition for competing on his mono ski & outriggers, and Lee and Larry topped the Senior rankings.

Saturday morning we had a minor snafu with our transportation, as they apparently had us mis-scheduled for a mid-day pickup. But the situation was quickly resolved and, after saying goodbye to Forest and Sussan, we again loaded the several vans for the short ride to the airport. We arrived at SLC shortly after 8:00, and our group check-in with Delta finished with time to spare for our 9:47 AM departure, including those with flights to other Delta destinations—Larita to IND, Carol C to EWR and Marcia to JFK. None of us were charged any fees to check our luggage, but the agents were actually weighing our boot and ski bags together to make sure they were under the 50-pound limit. Graham had to do some on-the-spot rearranging to avoid a pen-

alty fee, and Lynn did a fist-pump when her suitcase and ski/boot combination weighed in at 49 pounds each! Lee headed to the United Airlines counter to check in for her flight to DEN. Our flight arrived on time at National Airport just before 4 PM, and after a 45-minute wait for our luggage and a few quick good-byes, we all went our separate ways. Another great PSC trip!

As a footnote, there were a full 15 skiers on our trip that were also on the club's trips to Alta/Snowbird in 2006 (led by Dick McLane) or 2008 (led by Steve Peirce) including: Bill M, Dalton, Ed McDonald, and Sussan (2006); Christina, Dave, Doug, Helen, Jeff, Larry B, and Steve (2008); and Gary, Lynne, Carol C and Carol M (both trips). As popular as it is, it might be a safe bet that the PSC will be returning to the resort in 2012!

## Boots, Boots, Boots ...

Several of our skiers were unfortunately troubled with boot issues during our trip: Lynn Litton had numb, painful feet all day Sunday. Her issue was thankfully solved with a simple adjustment—quickly, easily, and at no cost at Snowbird Center's Christy Sports.

Johan Rosseel had such painful issues on Sunday that he couldn't ski the rest of the week. At least he took the opportunity to ride the tram to Hidden Peak one day.

Doug Shuman bought new boots, complete with orthotics, at Alta on Sunday. He essentially spent the rest of the week with repeated trips back to the shop—several trips each day. After several days, and when pressed to make good on their promise of "satisfaction guaranteed," the shop reluctantly switched him into a different make/model of boot. But the problems persisted and despite more trips back for adjustments, by Thursday afternoon he'd reached his limit. On Friday he returned the boots and skied painlessly on rental boots for his last—and most enjoyable—day of skiing. The considered opinion is that the shop had placed him in two pairs of too-small boots. The shop was loath to take his boots back, but finally agreed to a refund less payment of a daily Demo Boot rental fee.

## A Tough Day Skiing at Snowbird

*By Dennis Walburn*

Brenda and I had a fairly tough day skiing on Wednesday of this year's Pentagon Ski Club trip to Snowbird/Alta. That day it was snowing and was quite windy (about 40 mph) at the top of Mineral Basin. We had decided that we wanted to ski over to Alta by going through the tunnel at the top of the Peruvian Lift via Lupine Loop over to the Baldy Lift which would take us up to the gate and into Alta. That route at least was our plan. When we got off the lift and arrived at the tunnel, we were greeted by a sign advising us that it was advanced/expert-only conditions in Mineral Basin and that the green and blue runs were closed.

*(Continued on Next Page)*

Brenda and I discussed the situation and decided that since we had successfully skied the easier black runs there the past couple of days, this should present no problem. Also I should advise the reader that I am an amputee skier and use a ski leg, outrigger skis, and a mono-board that I am quite adept with—when things are going right...

So we entered the tunnel and rode the magic carpet into Mineral Basin. As Brenda and I came out of the tunnel we were faced with conditions that were quite a lot worse than we had envisioned. The wind was around 30-40 mph and visibility was quite limited. It was difficult to see the trail in many places. Here would have been the point we should have realized the route was going to be too tough and walked back through the tunnel. Instead we decided we were up to the challenge.

As I navigated down the Lupine Loop path the route was difficult to visualize, but there seemed to be sufficient signs for me to get us down to the Baldy Express chair lift. I noticed a sign that said "Easier Route" and thought I was following the best way down. What I was actually doing was heading us toward the black cliff area of Chamonix Chutes. Brenda had not followed me and was screaming for me to stop, but either the wind and/or my "husband hearing" was impaired at the time and I did not stop till I was at the "Danger Cliff" sign. The snow was quite soft and I could not get a firm grip in the snow till about 12 inches down. I unhooked from my board and was using the tether to drag it up the hill. Brenda walked down from the cat track to get the board from me and help me up the hill. I would estimate that I had to go 75 to 100 yards to get back to the cat track traverse route that would get us the several hundred yards to the easier Bassanova Trail. I was using my outriggers and good leg to push myself up the hill and was sometimes able to use my prosthetic leg to assist. Mostly I had to drag my prosthetic leg along through the snow.

We had made our way to within yards of the traverse and tower #5 for the Baldy Lift when my prosthetic leg kept slipping off my stump. As you might guess this is not a good situation to be in when you have become quite exhausted hiking up a hill. Around this time a couple of other semi-lost skiers came by and we asked them to notify the ski patrol. Brenda was quite tired and I was even more so. I set about the task of re-setting my leg while we waited. We had waited only about fifteen to twenty minutes when Ken from the ski patrol arrived. He discussed my situation and we decided I should be able to ski down once we got through the traverse. Ken asked for another ski patroller to join us to assist, and Kasey arrived within a few minutes.

Ken and Kasey stomped down a path for me to get on a high point of the traverse. The area was still quite steep, so it took a little hit and miss to get me locked back into my ski (including having to flip me over to get pointed in the right direction). Once this was done it was a fairly uneventful trip down to the Mineral Express lift. Ken and Kasey then invited us into the ski patrol hut at the top of the lift. After enjoying water and hot coffee Ken walked us over to the tram for a comfortable trip down the mountain. Brenda and I then went over to the Forklift restaurant and enjoyed lunch and a fine bottle of Shiraz with no

more skiing that day.

There are many things we should have done differently that day. First and foremost, we over-estimated our skill level on a pretty tough day on a pretty tough mountain. We did not bring radios or cell phones. No one else in the club knew our plan. We did not bring food or water. We did not turn around at the beginning of the run. I lost the trail and did not stop immediately. These and other mistakes could have caused one or both of us death or serious injury. Having been a soldier, police officer, and paramedic I should not have done something I was not prepared for, ditto for my current police sergeant (and former paramedic) wife. The bottom line is we were pretty stupid that day and a ski mountain is not Disney World.

One of the few things we did right was to not let pride get in our way in asking to be rescued by the ski patrol. Ken and Kasey made a difficult situation into a manageable one. Brenda and I are quite grateful to the unnamed skiers who notified the patrol for us and to Ken and Kasey. Our hope from this story is that it will allow you to make better choices than we did that day.



## Angel Mountain

*By Peter Porton*

**E**ngelberg: Angel Mountain. I could make references to Swiss Misses and Dutch Treats in an attempt at a more clever title, but I won't.

Some six years ago, I went to Engelberg with the National Ski Council Federation for their annual meeting at the end of summer and always thought that this unknown place would make for an interesting trip. When the Swiss Tourism Bureau and an Engelberg representative made us a presentation at GTU Inc., our tour operator Judy Miller's office, I was sold. Since the package was inexpensive, had direct flights to Zurich, and included free lift tickets and wine/beer/soda from 10-10, I knew this trip would be different. Indeed, with 90 sign-ups and 29 of them continuing on to my native country (Holland) to visit Amsterdam, this turned into the biggest PSC trip in memory. And I'm old enough that my PSC memory goes back a long way!

The PSC decided to set this trip up more like a BRSC trip (we took more people to Europe than all the BRSC clubs did last year), with two days of tours added on to Bern and Colmar (see Anne Willemann's article); for those who didn't ski or didn't want to do so for the whole week, these side trips were welcome additions and proved very popular.

When I first came to Engelberg in September of 2004, I felt that with a 6,000-foot vertical that the skiing was easily worth the trip; I wasn't so sure about our lodgings, the century-old Ho-

tel Terrace. It turned out somewhat the opposite. The mountain, despite reaching almost 10,000 feet in height, had several problems: narrow trails and shade caused by the closeness of the surrounding peaks. Visibility was affected and despite periodic snow, that proved to be the major complaint. On the other hand, challenging skiing was available if one chose to go off-piste; I never heard the final, accurate story of one of our boarders getting caught in a steep rock field. He was given the choice of heliing out for a grand or climbing out; I heard it was between a two and four hour climb. With 90 people on the trip, it was difficult to get everyone's stories. I didn't even try. But, only one person got hurt (a ripped calf muscle), so all things skiing turned out to be just fine.

The surprise of the trip turned out to be the Hotel Terrace. Rooms were more than acceptable (all European rooms are small-ish), the staff was fantastic, and the food was incredible (even though it was served buffet style, which turned out to be an advantage—choose what you like). Ski and boarding guides were provided the first day to let us get to know the mountain. Add on several 10 PM amateur shows (nothing like seeing your ski guide singing and dancing—well, lip-syncing anyways) and a 4 PM tea with delicious pastries (or no tea but a nice pastry with your beverage of choice or an outdoor Swiss BBQ for those who had missed the free lunch on the mountain that the hotel provided every day), and we all felt very relaxed. Oh, it didn't hurt that we had free wi-fi. Getting to the mountain was interesting: an elevator to the ground floor (the hotel sits hillside, overlooking the town), a tunnel walk to another elevator and ditto to town, where a bus took us to the base of the mountain. That sounds more complicated than it was—the busses ran promptly and were never too crowded.

The big issue that we were constantly talking about was the weather back home. Our return flight from Zurich got back to Dulles right after the first storm (luggage took ages since they were still emptying out delayed flights and were short on help) and the return flight from Amsterdam got back the day after the second storm. I think we used up a lot of luck with our flights.

The Amsterdam add-on was a true (Dutch) treat, and not just because it gave me a chance to use my native tongue, but a chance to renew my appreciation of the country I left 55 years ago. We stayed at the Hotel Nicolaas Witsen close to the Singelgracht, the outer of Amsterdam's circular canals, and not far from the Amstel River (Amsterdam was once known as Amstelledam, the city on the Amstel).

The hotel and its rooms were huge, but only compared to Madurodam (Dutch joke). But it was perfectly located for 15-20 minute walks to the Rijkmuseum, the Van Gogh Museum, the Concertgebouw, and the Heineken Experience (I think I had one of those with most every meal—Holland is a beer country, not a wine country). We were also lucky that there was a tram line within two blocks of the hotel and once we learned to use it and the maps, the three-day pass proved very valuable.

Other sights and experiences included the obligatory canal cruise, which is truly the best way to see Amsterdam; the city, after all, is the Venice of the north, despite what Stockholm claims.

Several of us also took a bus tour (decent but with an obligatory stop at a diamond factory; but even that was interesting) as well as a tour north of Amsterdam. This tour took us to Zaanstad, Edam and Volendam, perfect little Dutch communities that were largely restored to their former glory. We saw windmills, cheesemakers, wooden-shoe production, and got a good idea of what this part of Holland was like in its glory days (the 16th and 17th centuries).

More of the history of Amsterdam was available at the interactive Amsterdam Historical Museum and I imagine most of us went to the Anne Frank house to pay our respects.

With 29 people, it was too much to have a schedule set up for each day. I did arrange for a first night group dinner at Puri Mas, an Indonesian restaurant. Eating Indonesian in Holland is like eating Mexican, Chinese, and Italian in the US. Combined. I arranged for a 'rice-table,' which is a Dutch-created version of Indonesian food. At 20 Euros, it proved to be both a good bargain and a great success. Since it's the national dish of the country in which I was born (it was the Dutch East Indies at the time) and my cousin dropped by all the way from her home in Zandvoort, this was a great evening for me and my attempt to show my fellow PSCers something about Holland. The next day a number of us went to enjoy a good Dutch dinner, "hutspot," which is basically mashed potatoes mixed with some root crop greens (kale, broccoli, sauerkraut, whatever) and a good German-type sausage. The ultimate comfort food, which went great with a good dark beer.

The only downer was (a) it was cold and it even snowed before our last full day; my cousin said it was the coldest winter in 25 years and the canals were starting to freeze over in the countryside, and (b) bicyclists (of which Holland has millions) can be a royal pain when trying to walk through A'dam; they run lights and are way too self-righteous. Holland is not quite the polite country I remember; but then the world is not as genteel as it was when I was young.

Amsterdam is a small city (well under a million) and there are perhaps more museums than any place its size (except, probably, Florence), so there was always another place to see, another thing to do. We didn't come close to seeing all we wanted.

If we had spent a week there (later in the year), the flowermarkets and tulip fields, the busy port city of Rotterdam, the government capital of The Hague, Delft, the cheeses at Alkmaar, and the old cities of Utrecht and Haarlem were amongst the other sites to see. Ah well, too much of a good thing.

It was fun having so many of you join me in my native country; I think I felt the way Christina did when she led her trip to Greece: proud and thankful.

Big thanks go to our co-leader Dave Olsen, who proved such a great help by taking care of finances and was a darn good cat wrangler (dealing with 90 people is a bit like herding cats); to Anne Willemann, for arranging our side trips; and to Kathryn Leckey, who was a huge help locating our bus driver and helping with the hotel check-in the first day in Amsterdam.

Of course, thanks to all of you who joined us and, as they say in Holland, "tot ziens."

# Engelberg Side Trips

## Bern and Colmar and the Engelberg Monastery

By Anne Willeman

On our first sunny day (Tuesday), 21 of us took a bus to Bern and Luzern for the day. The scenery was gorgeous as we passed blue alpine lakes, the Swiss Alps and trees covered with new snow. As we passed Interlaken we caught a glimpse of the Jungfrau, with Switzerland's tallest observatory shimmering in the distance. We walked all around Bern's sandstone arcades with its famous clock tower and fountains—particularly one of a fairy tale showing a man gobbling children—go figure. Most of us met at our usual favorite restaurant where we shared moules (mussels) in cream, wine, tomato, and spicy sauces—delicious as usual. Even their French fries are wonderful. Of course, the local wine and beer helped make it smooth. We then drove to Luzern where we got to explore the wooden bridge connecting the two parts of the city and the famous lion statue dedicated to the Swiss guards who protected the Pope as well as French kings during the revolution. Luckily, we didn't need to put chains on the bus when we returned that evening.

Our second adventure on Thursday had 47 of the group—over half—taking a day trip on a fabulous doubledecker bus to Colmar in Alsace, France. We got some history along the way as we drove on smooth highways from Switzerland into France and viewed the beautiful countryside of farmland and vineyards. We stopped first at the tiny medieval town of Riquewihir, which has been preserved so well because one family owned it for centuries. We found out we were the very first tour bus to visit the town this year! The stores slowly opened up their wine tasting rooms as they saw visitors in their midst. We enjoyed seeing the half-timbered homes painted in bright colors of blue, green, yellow and coral, just as they've been for years. Check out our Smug Mug site for some great photos. We bought lots of delicious Alsatian wine to enjoy and wished we could return later in the season to try some more. The wine route of the Alsace runs from near Colmar to Strasbourg, further north. Getting into Colmar we had time to enjoy a fabulous lunch and it sounded like everyone enjoyed their restaurant. A canal appears and disappears from time to time in this lovely city with lots of shops and walking areas. Luckily off season it's not nearly as crowded and we had enough time to do a little shopping before getting on the bus for the ride home. It seemed to go so much faster as everyone opened their wine bottles and shared them throughout the bus.

During the week, 20 of us showed up for the 10 AM tour of the local monastery in Engelberg. They usually don't provide English-speaking guides, but with so many of us showing up they quickly located Brother Thomas who turned out to be a delightful and enthusiastic guide who answered our numerous questions and told us many stories of this lovely monastery in the mountains. They have a gorgeous chapel there that is much more ornate than anything we expected and we even got to hear a short organ concert that we enjoyed. They make their own cheeses and have a cheese shop right on the premises. On Friday night with a

lovely snowfall coming down, many of us again made the trek to the monastery to participate in a special mass in honor of the village firefighters. Even with the mass all in German, we enjoyed the special feeling of the service.



## Sunny Sun Valley!

By Steve Thompson

On the last Saturday in February, 26 hearty PSC skiers departed DCA enroute to Idaho. After a relatively smooth check-in (where we were not charged the baggage fees) and an easy connection in Minneapolis, we arrived at the Boise airport. Without much delay, we were loaded on the bus for the three-hour ride to Sun Valley. We also met up with Dottie Shaw at the airport. She flew in from Seattle ahead of our group.

We stopped for a club-sponsored pizza party at South Valley Pizza in Bellevue, just about a half hour from our condos in Ketchum. The timing all worked pretty well and everyone was hungry and enjoyed the assortment of pizzas that were offered. After some "speed grocery shopping" at Alberston's in Hailey, we finally arrived at the Christophe condos. As is often the case, the scene was chaotic, but it was compounded by the fact that another bus of skiers had arrived at the condos just 15 minutes ahead of us. After some effort and a lot of teamwork, we got the bus unloaded and everyone checked into their condos and the lift tickets were distributed.

Sunday through Tuesday proved to be wonderful ski days. The skies were clear and the temperature was moderate. All in all, it was nice spring skiing. The day lodges on the mountain were spectacular and the food was generally good. The resort staff and the locals we encountered in Ketchum were all very friendly.

Tuesday night was the group dinner, which was held at the Roosevelt Grill in downtown Ketchum. Everyone enjoyed the meal, where some chose typical grill options and others opted for Idaho trout. Throughout the week, many in the group enjoyed the wide variety of restaurants that are located within easy walking distance of the condos.

Wednesday night, a group of 18 embarked on the sleigh ride and dinner at the historic Trail Creek Cabin in Sun Valley Village. The night was clear and the stars were out in full force. We enjoyed a nice meal and the brilliant stars on the return sleigh

ride. Unfortunately, we just missed the bus back to Ketchum and had to wait nearly an hour for the next bus. Marian and Peter Penn opted to walk back and made the trip in surprisingly good time. Most everyone else chose to hang around the Sun Valley Lodge until the next bus arrived. Generally, the bus service was something that most of us felt could be improved.

Thursday was our snow day. Overnight and during the day, Sun Valley received 10 inches of fresh powder. The skiing was challenging and the visibility at times, especially at the top, was even more challenging. By Friday, clear blue skies had returned and we all enjoyed our final ski day. On Friday night, Norm Weinberg made some arrangements and several in the group took him up on the offer to have dinner at the Ketchum Grill. It was a wonderful last supper in Idaho.

The return trip was uneventful. We loaded the bus at a reasonable hour, 9 AM, and were at the Boise airport by lunchtime. After a short connection in Minneapolis, we finally arrived back at DCA around 10:30 PM. It was a long travel day home, but well worth the trip to see and ski America's first destination ski resort.



Racing by Dave Olsen

### Awards Ceremony – Tuesday, April 20

Our season-ending club meeting and racing awards ceremony has traditionally been one of our best-attended meetings. Come join us at 7:00 PM on Tuesday, April 20, for the festivities! The meeting will also feature the annual election of council members. Be sure to bring photos from the trips you've been on to show and share.

### PSC Competes at Lake Tahoe Western Carnival

Several PSC racers earned recognition at the Blue Ridge Ski Council awards ceremony in Lake Tahoe. Leigh Broadhurst and Christina Anderson placed 2<sup>nd</sup> in their age groups and Ken Simpson earned a 3<sup>rd</sup>-place spot on the podium. Overall, a total of 120 racers participated out of a possible 207 that *could* have raced (after discounting non-skiers, beginners, or those with injuries), representing a 58% participation level. The clubs with

the highest level of participation were Baltimore (85%), Richmond (77%) and Fredericksburg (69%). PSC was at the 50% level with 15 participants on the icy racecourse at Heavenly resort.

### Team Competition

BRSC team scoring is based on the two ladies and three men earning the best *medal points* for each club. Similar to our own recreational racing competition, medal points are calculated by subtracting from each racer's best-run handicap, the handicap needed by that racer, in their age and gender category, to earn a gold medal. Each team's medal points are added together and the results compared between clubs.

Seven of the nine clubs on the trip had sufficient finishers to compete for the award. The top three clubs were presented with honorary plaques recognizing their achievement, and their team members were recognized with medals. PSC placed fourth behind the Columbia, Richmond, and Sun, Snow & Surf ski clubs. Our top scorers were Christina Anderson, Nina Litton, Ken Simpson, Don Bischoff, and Steve Peirce.

### It's Not Nastar, But ...

Heavenly doesn't participate in Nastar, but they provided a pacesetter from their racing staff who carried a respectable—although unofficial—Nastar handicap. He said his handicap is about 7, but that he was probably performing better than that. When pressed, he said he was probably more like a 4 handicap. So that's what we used to score the competition, allowing us to calculate the medals each racer would have earned had it been a Nastar race, and to distribute some nice little bronze, silver and gold pins that the resort provided. The result was a respectable distribution of medals amongst the 120 racers: 30 bronze medals, 26 silvers and 6 golds. It also allowed us to compute the team medal-point scores as described above.

Although the results are not official Nastar results and won't appear online at [Nastar.com](http://Nastar.com), we've decided to count them towards our club awards. Anyone that raced at Heavenly and is able to get in two or more Nastar races during the season will qualify for our awards.

The Nastar handicap tables are tweaked each year based on their statistics from previous years, with the goal being that 5% of all racers (in each age group) will get platinum medals, 20% will get gold (or better), 40% silver (or better), and 70% bronze (or better). Our actual statistics for the race at Heavenly were 0% platinum, 5% gold, 27% silver (or better), and 52% bronze (or better). So this was a tough race based on the relatively low number of medals earned.

### PSC Race Deadline – Saturday, April 3

The November/December *Lifeline*, which discussed the rules for our competition, also established April 3 as the last day you can race Nastar and have your results count towards our end-of-season awards. If you do any last-minute racing and want to be sure your results are included in the award calculations, you should check at [Nastar.com](http://Nastar.com) to see if your results are posted. Make sure that your results appear with your race record that comes up under the Pentagon Ski Club in the listing of ski club teams;

(Continued Next Page)

sometimes the resorts erroneously attribute your results to the wrong racer, or wind up creating a new race record for you—and I won't see those results unless you call them to my attention. Drop me an e-mail or give me a call (301-579-2749) if your results don't appear as they should, so that I can include them when I finalize the awards.

### Nastar Results

The chart below shows the results earned by our club members as of mid-March. We publish the results for every current club member that races Nastar, as long as they've identified themselves at Nastar.com as belonging to the Pentagon Ski Club. Every member that races three times or more will be eligible for our awards.

Our Denverite, Lee Hagenstad, logged enough runs in the Town Race competition at Copper Mountain and Winter Park to qualify for our awards before suffering a season-ending broken arm. Lee is on the mend with prospects for a full recovery. Jo and Ken Simpson competed in the Far West Ski Association's ski week at Keystone in early February. The FWSA races were conducted in Nastar format, so they've both qualified for our end-of-season awards. Other early award qualifiers include Pat Berry (who snuck in a couple races at local resorts), Tom Strawbridge

(who's been racing all around Colorado, it appears), and, with an apparent early lock on our *most races* award, Jay Weides.

As of this writing we have two more club trips with good prospects for Nastar—Vail and Snowmass. We hope to have more award qualifiers from those trips, and possibly some more qualifiers from racing at local DC-area resorts.

### Nastar National Championships

Nastar's National Championships were scheduled to take place at Colorado's Winter Park resort March 25-28. To earn an invitation to the Nationals you had to rank in the top three in your age & gender category in your Nastar division (bronze, silver, gold or platinum) at a Nastar resort by February 16. Participants receive a Nastar ranking at each resort where they race after completing just one race. Nine of our racers earned that distinction including Townsend Belser, Jerry Bennis, Lee Hagenstad, Randy Knack, Lesa Scott, Jo Simpson, Ken Simpson, Jay Weides and Linda Wilkinson. Participants and their families "...will rub elbows with former Olympians, be witness to best-in-class entertainment, enjoy great food, and experience the red carpet rolled out by Winter Park and NASTAR staff." If any of our members accept the invitation we'll be sure to report the details here.

Racer	Name	Brecken-ridge 12/15	Key- stone 12/31	Taos 1/1	Key- stone 1/1	Brecken- ridge 1/3	Brecken- ridge 1/5	Key- stone 1/7	Brecken- ridge 1/12	Key- stone 1/14	Copper Mtn-1 1/14	Copper Mtn-2 1/14	Crested Butte 1/16	Crested Butte 1/17	Copper Mtn 1/21	Key- stone 1/22	Brecken- ridge 1/26	Park City 1/27	Key- stone 1/31
Townsend	Belser													44.71S					
Jerry	Bennis												61.89B	63.91 -					
Don	Blasl																	53.83B	
Lee	Hagenstad										60.39S	61.54S			119.59 -				
Randy	Knack												33.86S	27.34S					
Hank	Robinson			47.98B															
Lawrence	Robinson			46.26B															
Lesa	Scott												59.00B	56.17B					
Jo	Simpson																		49.33S
Jay	Weides	23.97G	27.47G		31.47G	21.67P	29.08G	23.36G	22.60G	24.02G						23.46G	41.57S		
Linda	Wilkinson												64.18B	48.18S					

		Blue Knob 1/31	Winter Park 2/1	Key- stone 2/1	Key- stone 2/3	Key- stone 2/4	Tellu- ride 2/11	Steam- boat 2/17	Key- stone 2/17	Deer Valley 2/22	Heavenly 2/23 *	Brecken- ridge 2/23	Key- stone 2/24	Key- stone 2/25	Timber- line 3/5	Brecken- ridge 3/5	Copper Mtn 3/6	Ski Roundtop 3/5	Shawnee Mtn 3/6	Beaver Creek 3/11
Christina	Anderson										52.93S									
Pat	Berry										54.27S							59.44B	58.11B	
Don	Bischoff										41.60S									
Sue	Bischoff										74.56 -									
Don	Blasl							65.60 -												
Leigh	Broadhurst										51.80S									
David	Burka										66.35 -									
Bill	Check							52.11B												
Clare	DeCesare								98.09 -											
Lee	Hagenstad		62.98S																	
Nina	Litton										54.24S									
Jack	McCririe										91.15 -									
Mary	Michels													84.42 -						
Dave	Olsen										51.53B									
Steve	Peirce										46.76B									
Peter	Porton										79.78 -									
Jim	Ross										66.02B									
Jo	Simpson			101.03-	64.67B	47.31G					66.88B									
Ken	Simpson			65.43-	44.76S	28.23G					38.44S									
Tom	Strawbridge	47.30B					61.57 -									47.36B	51.91B			65.39 -
Cece	Weber										177.29 -									
Jay	Weides							28.75G				23.13G	24.11G	18.21P						
Linda	Wilkinson																			

Note - Race at Heavenly on 2/23 was not official Nastar

# Update On Ski Helmets

By John B. Pratt II

(From Martin Forstenzer, contributor, *Ski* magazine)

*Last season's death of actress Natasha Richardson revived the debate about making helmets mandatory on the slopes. Should there even be a debate?*

*The long-running helmet debate has expanded into serious discussions of requiring helmets for everyone on the snow. Vail Resorts, the largest ski operator in the country, recently mandated that all employees wear helmets while skiing or riding on the job, becoming the first company to do so.*

*Richardson remains the lightning rod for helmet proponents. She wasn't wearing a helmet when she fell in soft snow on a beginner slope. She seemed fine afterward, joking about the mishap, but her condition quickly worsened, and she died the next day from internal bleeding caused by a "blunt impact to the head," according to the New York City medical examiner's office. As it happens, the Association of Quebec Emergency Room Doctors had called for ski helmets to be made mandatory about a month before. After the highly publicized accident, the Quebec legislature began debating a law to make helmets mandatory for all skiers.*

*Two months before Richardson's death, the helmet debate had been stirred in Europe by another high-profile skiing fatality. Dieter Althaus, a prominent ally of German Chancellor Angela Merkel, collided with a 41-year-old woman at the Riesneralm resort in Austria. The woman, who was not wearing a helmet, died while being transported to medical care, while the helmeted Althaus was hospitalized with severe brain trauma. He recovered and was later convicted of manslaughter and fined approximately \$50,000.*

*Some industry officials view helmets as the seatbelts of our time: A generation ago few people used seatbelts; now they are universally accepted as standard safety gear, and to not use them while driving is considered reckless. For now, helmets remain a personal decision.*

*Colorado resident Shawn Carlson, 44, is a lifelong skier and has been wearing a helmet for more than a decade, a decision partly prompted by his love of skiing fast. "Any other sport in which you're going 30 miles per hour, you would wear a helmet," Carlson says. "So it seems logical I should wear one."*

Now with all that said, how much is your brain worth? Or put another way, how much is it worth to you to be able to control all your body functions? That's a question from one of my Masters of Science in Safety professors at USC. There is an excellent article on the subject of ski helmets at <http://www.telemarktips.com/Helmets.html>. After you read it, you'll realize that through PSC you no longer have an excuse to ski without wearing a helmet. On the subject of safety it dawned on me one day that I would never think of driving my car without the seat belts fastened. That same epiphany also occurred to me on the subject of helmets. As a helicopter pilot, I would never

dream of starting a helicopter without a helmet on, even if I wasn't flying it anywhere. Nor would the Arlington County Chief of Police ever think of riding his bike again without wearing a helmet. But the thought of spending \$100+ for a helmet kind of held me back for a while, (God knows why, considering the price of skiing).

Now for the price of a lunch on the slopes you can have your own personal "Brain Bucket." The PSC is offering ASTM 2040 certified ski helmets. The ASTM certification process for ski helmets is explained in the above link. I will also have a copy of it with me at club meetings. For those of you who are really fashion conscious, at \$23 each, you can have one that matches all your ski outfits. That is the price for ordering and delivery a helmet at the next club meeting. If you want it delivered to your home, the price goes up to \$41.45 regardless of where you order it. They come in Black (as pictured here), Red, Blue, Silver, and Hot Pink. You can order them at club meetings and have them by the next meeting at



\$23 each. If you can't make the meetings, but want me to order one for you, send me an e-mail and I'll send you back the size charts and the website to choose your color(s) along with an order form. As soon as I get your check, I'll order the helmet(s) and when they come in I will let you know so we can make arrangements to get you your helmet, unless you want it delivered direct

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## PSC Logo Items

**W**ant to get extra Ski Lotto tickets or just some great clothing? At all ski club meetings except the picnic we have Ski Lotto, and if you are wearing something with the PSC logo on it, you are entitled to an extra ticket. Even if you don't attend the meetings or play Ski Lotto, the logo items are a great way to show off your club while you are on the slopes. We have all of the following in stock: automobile license plate holders, baseball caps, and cloisonné ski pins.

For clothing and others item such as tote bags, our supplier is Jill Lee of *Jill's Designs*. Jill has set up a web site at [www.jillsembroidery.com](http://www.jillsembroidery.com).

It's also on the PSC website as a link. At the website you can pick the item you want from the pictures shown there, but if you don't see it listed don't hesitate to contact Jill directly. Just pick out what you want, print out the order form, mail it to Jill, and she'll get back to you when it's ready.

In addition to picking out the basic color of the item you want, you also get to pick out the colors on the logo: the skier; the pentagon diagram; and the words can be all the same color or whatever colors you want them to be.

On a final note, if you live out of the area or your schedule just doesn't allow you to get to meetings and you still want other non-clothing logo items such as ski pins, license plate holders, etc., send Tom Strawbridge an e-mail at [tsbridge@fbbs-gsa.com](mailto:tsbridge@fbbs-gsa.com).



## Three Resorts In The Andes

By Peter Porton

The PSC has established a very successful schedule of skiing “down south” (New Zealand, Argentina, and Chile) every odd year since the late 90’s. In 2009 we forgot. Well, we’re making up for it now: a trip to Valle Nevado, Chile, September 2-12, 2010. Why Valle Nevado?

It’s on the windward side of the Andes, the longest mountain chain in the world and containing the highest mountain outside Asia—Aconcagua. The Valle Nevado ski resort has some of the highest quality snow in Chile, because of its high location. This resort was created in the late 80’s by the French and the modern buildings, hotels and equipment, like the Andes Express ski lift (the only high-speed lift in South America), are the most advanced of Southern Hemisphere. Valle Nevado is also connected to two other major ski resorts, La Parva and El Colorado, that skiers can visit. Valle Nevado offers the largest skiable surface of South America and includes eight lifts, covering 2,000 acres.

Its location is unique: just 37 miles from Santiago’s international airport, amidst incredibly breathtaking landscapes in the Andes Mountains. Also, there is an abundance of sun and quality snow. Furthermore, it is the gateway to the largest skiable acreage in the Southern Hemisphere perfectly suited for skiing and snowboarding. It’s a fully equipped complex: three hotels, apartments, six ethnic restaurants, bars, pubs, disco, heated pool, fitness center, gymnasium, day care center as well as an ample variety of stores and other offerings.

Valle Nevada’s skiable terrain starts at 9,450 feet and peaks out at 12,037 feet. Compare its height to Breckenridge, though the actual resort itself is much smaller, with commensurately fewer people. Skiing is more like Europe—it’s above tree level. The snow in the Andes (I’ve skied nearby Portillo) is high and dry: powder conditions are often perfect.

Next door, La Parva has a beautiful view to the valley of Santiago. La Parva has 24 miles of trails with 30 runs and is interconnected with Valle Nevado with our lift ticket. Its largest slope is 2.5 miles long. There are 14 ski lifts, including 2 quad

chairs, one triple chair, and one double chair.

El Colorado Ski Center is 7,970 - 10,930 ft above sea level and is formed by two interconnected villages, each one with hotels and shops. In addition to La Parva and Valle Nevado, it’s one of the best resorts in South America. Its skiable terrain is 25 miles long, with 70 ski runs for beginners, advanced and experts. The longest slope is three miles long. The ski center has 18 ski lifts.

In addition to the skiing at these three resorts, there is also heliskiing from Valle Nevado as well as helitouring: seeing these giant mountains from the air is truly a sight to behold.

Our hotel in Valle Nevado is the 4-star-Puerta del Sol Hotel. The hotel has 124 rooms, many with magnificent mountain views. It offers direct access to the heated pool, game room, cyber café, the Puerta del Sol bar and a cyber cafe. It’s located 150 feet from the slopes in Valle Nevado Ski Center in the resort’s Santiago Area.

The trip will be from September 2 - September 12: a Thursday through Sunday trip, remembering that the first and last days are flight days. At the end of the trip, we’ll be spending a night and approximately one and one-half days visiting Santiago, the capital of Chile. Depending on demand, that can be extended.

Although flights are not confirmed this far out, a typical flight would depart DC at 6:30 PM, arrive in Atlanta (thus it must be Delta) at 8:35 PM, depart at 10:05 PM and arrive on Santiago at 7:35 AM. The reverse would depart Santiago at 8:35 PM and arrive at DC, via Atlanta, at 10:10 AM. This is Labor Day weekend, saving some people a day of leave.

Features to be included:

Round trip transfers from Santiago airport to our hotel; seven nights lodging, double occupancy, in Valle Nevado; and breakfast and dinner daily in Valle Nevado (the breakfast served in restaurant Sur at the Tres Puntas hotel and dinner can be at Restaurant Sur or Restaurant Mirador del Plomo at the Puerta del Sol hotel).

We’ll have unlimited access to all three resorts’ ski lifts with six or seven days of lift tickets, depending on how early we arrive. There’s après ski at the hotel from 4 – 6 PM; we’ll have a welcome drink (always pisco sours).

We have access to an outdoor heated pool, game rooms, a pub, the fitness center, and the ski and snowboard maintenance shop.

There’s Wi-Fi in public areas, a safe box (you must request a key at reception; in case of loss you must pay \$100).



There's also one night's lodging, double occupancy, in Santiago at the Four Points Sheraton or similar hotel. As with our European trips, medical insurance is included. This trip is priced in US dollars so currency fluctuation will not be a problem.

Deposit for the trip is \$1,000. We'll have a payment schedule available shortly. Total trip price is \$3100

If you are interested, contact me at [peter.porton@gmail.com](mailto:peter.porton@gmail.com) or call me at 703-471-7791. Make out deposit checks to the PSC and mail them to me at 11918 Moss Point Lane, Reston, VA 20194.



*Puerta del Sol Hotel*

## Helmet Story

*By Larry Powers*

I emphatically endorse John Pratt's admonition to wear a helmet. I got myself a helmet after Michael Kennedy and Sonny Bono got killed in skiing accidents within a week of each other. Some time later I was skiing alone at Le Massif, Quebec and decided to try a trail that was marked blue on the trail map. Only after I was committed did I learn two things: (1) one side was a sheet of ice and the other was moguls from top to bottom, and (2) there was no one else on this trail (probably because of #1). Not being a very good mogul skier I elected to ski down the middle where there was a narrow band of loose snow that was neither ice nor moguls.

About halfway down the trail my tips caught, both bindings released and I flipped forward, somersaulting and landing flat on my back. As I landed I thought I heard a crunch and I lay there stunned for a few seconds. As I lay there I did a quick inventory and was relieved to find that every body part felt intact. I carefully made my way down to the bottom and took a lift back up to the main lodge (the lodge is at the top at Le Massif). When I took my helmet off I found there was a crack in the shell and the foam lining was broken. I am convinced the helmet saved me from a concussion or worse.

Listen to John and wear a helmet! You never know when a snowsnake is going to reach out and grab you.

## PSC Council Elections

At our April 20th meeting, the PSC will hold its council election. Normally, we print the ballot in the newsletter and also provide platform statements from those running for office.

However, when we have the same number of people running as positions to be filled, we elect those running "by acclamation" and a ballot and platforms are not required. That's the case this year.

The four people running for the four open slots on council: Anne Willemann, Christina Anderson, Jim McDonough, and Peter Porton.

# Pentagon Ski Club

## *The Liftline*

Peter Porton, Editor

11918 Moss Point Lane

Reston, VA 20194

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**MEETING DIRECTIONS: [WWW.PENTAGONSKICLUB.ORG/DIRECTIONS.PHP](http://WWW.PENTAGONSKICLUB.ORG/DIRECTIONS.PHP)**



**T**he next (and last) meeting of the year is on Tuesday, April 20.

This meeting will feature our race awards ceremony, the Wounded Warrior drive, and council elections.

It's also a great time to share your stories and even start thinking about next year's trips.

We'll have good food available, as always, and a cash bar.

Our meetings start at 7 PM, or earlier for some of the old-timers. But remember, don't drink and drive.

