

President's Corner
By Dave Olsen



What an epic winter! Many of our members enjoyed what may have been record conditions at resorts out West and in Europe. Maybe the snow didn't always fall while we were there, but there were some great powder days to be sure, and the built-up snow base at several resorts was indeed epic. I'm speaking for the trips I was on myself that includes Vail and Crested Butte, and I heard reports of tremendous mounds of snow in both Japan and Arabba.

In the last *Liftline* I mentioned that the club council was already lining up our trips for next winter. That process is continuing, and we've now asked our tour operators to prepare proposals for the dates and destinations we've selected. We expect their initial responses, for our earlier trips, by mid-April, and for our later trips by mid-May. At the end of May or early June we'll have an all-day meeting – which we call our Summer Summit – during which we'll finalize our selections and appoint trip leaders. Then we'll put it all on our website and in our summer *Liftline* and you can start signing up!

We hope you'll join us at our season-ending meeting on Tuesday, April 8. The evening will feature our council election and our annual campaign in support of the Wounded Warrior Project.

As a final note, I'll pass along a tip on ski bindings. A club member suffered an injury this winter when a binding appeared to release unexpectedly. He subsequently discovered that the DIN pressures weren't set the same on all four



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10th Anniversary!

By Peter Porton

Over the last nine years the PSC, with your incredibly generous contributions, has raised more than \$34,600 for Disabled Sports USA's Wounded Warrior Project (<http://www.dsusa.org/>). This doesn't include more than \$20,000 in individual gifts and our taking a WW and his spouse on a trip this year.

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. 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."

The PSC has supported the Wounded Warrior Project for nine years and this year is our tenth anniversary. "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 and/or one of his Wounded Warriors will come to come talk to us about this great project. Bring your checkbooks! If you 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.

Pentagon Ski Club

2013-2014 Council & Committees

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

PSC MEMBERSHIP FEES

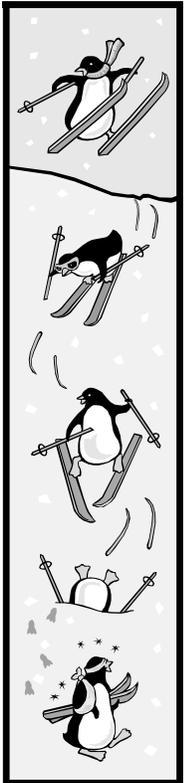
	1-YEAR	2-YEARS	3-YEARS
SINGLE	\$30	\$55	\$75
FAMILY	\$40	\$75	\$100

2013-2014

PSC MEETING SCHEDULE

Our meetings are held on the second Tuesday of the month, as listed below, at the Officers Club at Fort Myer, VA, at 7 PM

- *Picnic, Saturday, July 20*
- *Tuesday, September 10*
- *Tuesday, October 8*
- *Tuesday, November 12*
- *Tuesday, December 10*
- *Tuesday, January 14*
- *Tuesday, March 11*
- *Tuesday, April 8*



Membership Benefits

To access the *Membership Benefits* area in the National Ski Council Federation website at 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 cheree2be@yahoo.com or send her a check (see membership fees up above).

Cheree Peirce
19701 Golden Valley Lane
Brookeville MD 20833





Portillo, Chile September 5-14, 2014 \$3450

By Steve Peirce

At our summer picnic, lots of PSCers expressed their desire to go on our summer ski trip to Portillo, Chile. I am taking deposits and payments now (deposit: \$800; Feb 1: \$850; April 8: \$975; June 1: \$900). Send them (made out to the PSC) to me at 19701 Golden Valley Lane, Brookville, MD 20833. The flight to Santiago, Chile, is on Delta, via Atlanta. If you have any questions, e-mail me at speirce@verizon.net or call me at 301-924-5173.

Why Portillo? First, it's the best and most famous ski resort in South America; as a matter of fact, it's the only place in the Southern Hemisphere where they have ever held the FIFA World Championships.

Second, it's a high resort, located on the windward side of the Andes so it gets all the great, fluffy snow. It peaks out at 10,204 feet with a 2,665 foot vertical. Third, the Hotel Portillo, where we will stay, is in the middle of the resort at 9,450 feet, making access to any part of the resort very easy.

The last time we were there, in 2003, we raved about the hotel: three great meals a day, served on linen with silverware, plus high tea at 5 PM. They have a pool, hot tub, ski storage room, exercise room, bar with band, and a disco in the basement. They know how to party! And if you party too much, they have a doctor and nurse on staff with their own office.

How's the skiing? Fantastic! There are steeps that only

(President's Corner, From Page 1)

heel and toe pieces. He thinks that may have contributed to the incident. He thought that the DIN settings would have been scrutinized by ski shop personnel when he had his skis tuned. Maybe in an ideal case, but in my experience, not unless you ask (and pay) for a binding-release check. Many ski professionals recommend that you release your bindings at the end of each season. This, from an online blog from *Ski Heavenly*: *In order to protect your ski bindings in the off season, you should back them off to their lowest setting. [This is easily done with a screwdriver.] This allows the coil inside the binding to release pressure and tension while in storage, preserving the life of the binding. You will want to bring your skis into a ski shop next fall in order to have them reset at the appropriate release setting. This is an important safety measurement based on a formula of your height, weight, age and specific boot sole length [and also your skiing ability], which is why you should let the professionals assist you with this setting. It is good standard practice to have your bindings inspected prior to hitting the snow each year. Any time your equipment is not in use for any long period of time there is a risk of something being loose or in the release hardware that might not work properly, which creates an unnecessary risk.*

mountain goats can access and there are great blue and green cruisers. They have the world's only four- and five-person T-bars (that's a Warren Miller movie right there). Even though it was sunny and warm during our stay every day (mid-30's), the moisture sublimates so there is no slush or ice in the morning. Go figure.

The surroundings are incredible, from the azure blue of Lake of the Incas to nearby Mt. Aconcagua, the highest mountain outside the Himalayas (take a helicopter flight, either to see the mountain or to go skiing).

The Americans, Austrians and other national teams train there during our summer, so you know the skiing is great. You might even see them. Join us for the experience of a lifetime.



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Early Season Skiing @ Mt. Bachelor

By Steve Thompson

On December 26, a group of PSC skiers embarked on a trip to Bend, Oregon with skiing at the Mt. Bachelor Ski Resort. After a long travel day, that included flights from Dulles to San Francisco to Portland and a three hour bus ride past Mount Hood to Bend, we safely arrived at the newly christened Doubletree Hotel in Bend, formerly the Phoenix Inn and Suites. The drive past Mount Hood was scenic, but the lack of snow was evident, which made for an easy drive for us, but snow is a good thing to have when you're going on a ski trip.

The hotel organized a nice welcome reception with pizza and drinks and representatives from Mount Bachelor and Wanderlust Tours made presentations. The folks at Mount Bachelor were wonderful and made us all feel welcome. Each day, after breakfast at the hotel, the group had the choice of an 8:30 or 10:00 bus to the ski resort, which was 45 minutes away. Upon our arrival at Mount Bachelor, representatives from the ski area were there to greet us and direct us to ski rentals and anything else we needed.

While Mount Bachelor did have some decent early season snow, they had also recently been hit with some heavy ice, so the conditions on the mountain were less than ideal. The groomers at the resort had done the best job they could to make the runs skiable and honestly, given what they had to work with, the conditions of the runs were not too bad. Unfortunately, the top parts of the mountain were not open during our week there and there was no way to ski anything off the groomed runs due to the heavy ice.

Staying in the town of Bend was fantastic. Each night we had our pick of a multitude of restaurants and bars. Over the course of the week, folks tried Zydeco, McMenamins (in the old St. Francis School), Flatbread Community Oven where the pizza was delicious, and Brickhouse Steak and Seafood. For a group dinner, we enjoyed the food at 900 Wall. There were lots of local shops and even a movie theater, all within a short walk of the hotel.

In addition to skiing, we arranged some optional tours using Wanderlust Tours. Several folks took a day off from skiing and did a snowshoeing tour of Crater Lake National Park. A group also did an evening tour to a lava tube cave, where we encountered a bat! Unfortunately for the bat, because it came out of its hibernation during the winter, it would not find any insects to eat and would likely die. The cave we were in is the only one in the area that the government allows to be open during the winter

hibernation period because it isn't one that the bats typically use. One night there was also a brewery tour that stopped at a number of the local beer breweries in town.

This trip was also the first one where we had the club's Go Pro camera. Two of the younger (but also responsible) guys, brothers JJ and Bobby, tried out the camera for a couple of days and posted some of their photos and videos on the PSC Facebook page. Thanks guys for sharing your work with the club! The footage was definitely more exciting than anything I would have captured myself.

Next season's Winter Carnival is scheduled to be held at Mt. Bachelor and I would encourage everyone who hasn't been there to check it out. With the carnival occurring later in the ski season, snow will be plentiful and I am sure the whole mountain will be open. Hopefully the flights can be arranged to fly into Redmond, which would significantly decrease the overall travel time required to get to Bend. Hands down, this is one of the friendliest mountains you will ever ski.



A Japanese Adventure

By Steve Thompson

Just around 11 AM, on Monday, February 3, a pioneering group of PCS skiers embarked on an adventure to ski in the land of the rising sun. The adventure began with a nearly 24-hour travel period that involved a 14-hour flight from Dulles to Tokyo, a layover and slight delay due to de-icing in Tokyo where they were experiencing unusual snowfall, a hour or so flight to Sapporo, and then a three-hour bus ride to the Niseko ski area. It was around midnight Tuesday night when we finally got settled into our hotel rooms.

We were all in for a very pleasant surprise when we arrived at the hotel's buffet breakfast the next morning. It was an amazing spread of Western and Japanese breakfast items. Everything from made-to-order omelets to chocolate croissants to exotic Asian fruits and unusual Japanese breakfast foods. (All three of our hotels on the trip offered fantastic breakfast buffets.) After breakfast we had time to rent skis and get out to enjoy the first of two powder days at Niseko. There is a gondola right at the Hilton Hotel where we were staying, so that made for an easy start to each day. It snowed all day and the conditions were terrific, even if visibility was poor. There are four interconnected ski resorts on the volcanic peak and you move from one area to the next by either going to the top and skiing down into another area or you can take a free shuttle bus from one base area to another. Some of the higher lifts were closed due to windy conditions the first

two days, so we had some limited opportunities to move between the resort areas. Each of the resorts had gondolas, so even in the windy conditions, we were able to stay relatively warm as we moved up the mountain.

Day two of skiing Niseko was similar to the first day, as it continued to snow. We enjoyed some of the local lunch fare, including some delicious noodle dishes. One night, most of the group ventured out on the local bus to Hirafu where we ended up eating at Kabuki 1, which was an okonomiyaki restaurant, where we cooked our dinner on a hot plate in the middle of the table. On another night the concierge at the Hilton found a restaurant in Hirafu, called Kobito, that would accommodate our group for a dinner. We took the local bus from the hotel to the main intersection in Hirafu, which is a larger village just a few miles from the hotel. Without too much trouble we found the restaurant, which you entered by ducking under some stairs and going through a small door. A bit unusual for us, but somewhat typical for the small establishments that were abundant in Hirafu. Most of the group was accommodated in a room with a low square table where folks struggled a bit to find a comfortable way to sit on the floor. Four of our party ended up in another room sitting on stools, which turned out to be more comfortable, if less authentic. We all enjoyed an assortment of Japanese dishes that night.

On day three of our ski trip, we took a 45-minute bus ride to another ski resort called Rusutsu. The weather finally cleared a little and we had a chance to enjoy some powder skiing while actually seeing where we were skiing. Rusutsu is also a summer-time amusement park and at one point on the ski trails you found yourself skiing past amusement park rides that were half buried in snow. We also finally had the opportunity to get some nice views of Mount Yotei, one of the volcanic peaks in the area.

Our first six nights were at the Hilton Niseko Village Hotel. The hotel was recently awarded a travel industry award that recognized the hotel as the top ski resort hotel in Japan. From our experience, it was a top-notch hotel. In addition to the amazing breakfast buffet, they also offered several dining options in the hotel. There was also a spa and a traditional onsen, which is a hot spring bath. The onsen had an indoor pool and an outdoor pool, with a beautiful view of the landscape. Both pools were really hot and felt great after a hard day of skiing.

After our five days of skiing, we traveled by bus back to Sapporo. Along the way we stopped at a local tourist spot that celebrates the area's potato farmers with a local specialty of cooked potato balls dipped in a sweet batter, deep fried, and served three on a stick. It was a bit unusual to us, as were many things in Japan, but not a bad snack. They were very filling, eating just one was plenty to tide us over until lunch in Sapporo. After checking into our hotel, we had the afternoon to explore the snow festival in Sapporo. And some of us ventured out after dark to see the snow sculptures that were illuminated at night. We also visited another area where the local shops designed ice sculptures that were illuminated; some of them included fish and other seafood frozen in the ice as part of the sculpture.

The next day we had more time to explore Sapporo before our early evening flight to Kyoto. Many of us spent time in a

couple of the major department stores near the hotel. In the basement level of the department stores there are amazing displays of all sorts of food. Just in time for Valentine's Day, there were lots of intricately decorated chocolate candies in equally attractive packaging. Anytime you bought something in a shop, they were very careful in packaging it.

We arrived at our hotel in Kyoto around 9 PM and several of us went to a quick supper at the Royal Host restaurant, which was across the street from our hotel. Turns out, this place is a little like a Japanese version of a Denny's. Not bad and it certainly was convenient and the menu had photos, which was always a plus.

The next two days in Kyoto were spent with two guides arranged through Chris Rowthorn Tours. Both Hiroko and Kenzo were excellent guides. We started the days with a fleet of taxis to take us to our first sight. Taxi drivers in Kyoto wear suits, hats, and white gloves – very courteous and professional. Over the two days we saw many of the top attractions, including Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines. We learned a lot about the differences between the two, such as the temples have gates that are closed each night and when you cross the threshold you step over it and not on it. The Shinto shrines have arch-like gates without doors. Each day our guides made lunch arrangements for us and then after lunch we were on our own to explore the city. One afternoon a few of us went to see the Fushimi-Inari-Taisha shrine with hundreds of bright orange torii gates along paths up a hillside. Truly an amazing sight to see. There was a train station nearby and we thought it would be simple to buy a ticket and get back to the Kyoto station where we could get the hotel shuttle to the hotel. The ticket purchase and the train ride went relatively smoothly, it was only when it came time to put our ticket in the machine to exit the station where we ran into problems. Ultimately a woman took pity on us and spent about 10 minutes calling the various authorities on an intercom to get us released from the station. It seemed like quite the production for a train ride where the tickets cost around \$1.50. Once free from the station, we managed to find the shuttle bus back to the hotel and were able to relax after the busy day sightseeing. We never could figure out what we did wrong.

Another interesting experience was spending time at a hospital in Kyoto. One of our travelers had some health issues and ended up spending one night in the hospital. While the language was a bit of a barrier, the hospital's staff worked very hard to communicate with us. On the morning of the second day, one of the tour guides went with me to the hospital where we worked out all the details associated with the paperwork that would be needed for the insurance and she also made phone calls to the airline to let them know the situation and to make sure they had what they needed to allow the patient to travel home with the group the following day. Fortunately, the treatments provided by the hospital did the trick and the patient was much better after spending the night in the hospital and by that evening was able to rejoin the group at the hotel for our last night.

When the tour guide and I finished up at the hospital, we had time to visit a nearby temple before joining the group for

lunch. Kyoto has over a thousand temples and shrines, so it was no wonder that there was one near the hospital. As we left this temple, we hopped in a taxi to go to the lunch spot. Along the way, the taxi driver made a stop to show us a unique neighborhood temple. It was a small temple that the tour guide had only been to once before. The temple had an intricately carved wooden dragon on the ceiling in one of the structures. The taxi driver showed us around and explained things to us before we continued on our trip. This was just one example of the warmth and friendliness of the people we encountered in Japan.

Here are a few comments from folks that were on the trip.

“The highlight of the trip was the day in Rusutsu. Best powder, best trees, and then to emerge from the trees to see the views of volcanic mountains in every direction was truly awesome. And, of course, more so from a photographic aspect! One of my favorite images I did was of Mount Yotei through the trees.”

“Upon entering the bus right at the departure time of 4 PM after a great powder day in the trees at Rusutsu one participant said, that was f#*&%ing awesome.”

“Of many memories, our visit to the Torii shrines left an indelible impression as did Niseko’s incomparable powder. Thanks for suggesting it.”

From the Kyoto hospital patient - He asked the hotel concierge if there was an English-speaking hotel doctor. The concierge gave him the usual “hai” (yes) as well as a paper written in Japanese to be given to the doorman. He gave the paper to the doorman who put him in a taxi that drove him not to a doctor, but to the Kyoto Daiichi Hospital. The patient walked in, the hospital folks took one look at him and said one word: “oxygen.” It seems he had contracted pneumonia. The patient’s reaction to the whole thing - “I have been in Kyoto before so a night in a Japanese hospital gave me a new experience, like conversing with doctors and nurses who spoke no English using a smart phone translation app.”

“The skiing and particularly the snow was the best ever! The shopping was also great. Of course, the temples were amazing.”

“Definitely the best PSC trip I have taken since becoming a member. The snow in Niseko was every bit as good, if not better, than the snow in Utah. Accommodations were tip-top (warm toilet seats: what’s not to like) and ground transportation was flawless. I thank you and all the PSC members who put the trip together.”

Since returning home, sometimes I have thought back on the trip to Japan and it almost feels like it was a dream. For me, traveling without my family, I was plucked out of my routine life for 12 days and had some amazing experiences with a fun group of friends. It seems surreal, but then I look at some of the wonderful photos posted on the PSC Facebook page, and I realize that this was real. We did take this wonderful adventure, had a great time, experienced some remarkable things, and returned home to tell all about it.



Too Much Snow?

By Peter Porton

Can you have too much snow when you go skiing? Heck yeah: you might be skiing blind; the roads may be closed and you are trapped in town and be out of beer and wine; the airports may be closed; and the skiing may be semi-impossible. This is what happened to Arabba, the Dolomites, and the three countries (Italy, Austria, and Slovenia) that make up the Tyrolean area of Europe. Arabba received 12 feet of snow in a week, four feet in one day, and was closed for four days the week before we arrived. The Italian army was called in to help remove snow (they were still there during our stay). And the snow piles alongside the Burma roads in the Dolomites were higher than the bus; one pile in Arabba itself was at least 25 feet high and every brace young man was making money shoveling snow off steep roofs.

But what about our trip? All flights and busses were on schedule (well, except for a two-hour delay coming home via Newark, but at least we didn’t have to wait forever for customs in Dulles). Italy was semi-perfect, and that was only because it got somewhat crowded on Sunday as it was the first good weekend in a long time and Bill Sauer, coming from Chicago, hurt his knees on the come-home run and couldn’t ski the rest of the week. By Monday, folks figured their way around, skied the Sella Ronde, found the best resorts to ski (there are dozens in the Dolomites that are all connected), and the snow got better as the cruddy runs got better grooming and there was a lot of it. But we couldn’t reach the Marmelade, the “Queen” of the Dolomites, because the lift from Arabba was damaged by an avalanche (you could take a shuttle). The first three days were totally bluebird but not too warm; almost ideal for everyone. The last three days featured some clouds, not bad at all and it didn’t start (slightly) snowing until 3 to 4ish in the PM. In the mornings, we’d have an inch or two of snow on the ground and probably more on the mountains. Our Tuesday trip to Cortina proved a huge success, whether skiing or meandering about town or both (our driver met us again to take the PM skiers to the lifts five minutes away). Our drivers in the Dolomites all proved outstanding, driving in very difficult situations.

The Hotel Olympia met all our expectations: normal European hotel rooms, inexpensive wi-fi, great food, and two Euro beer and wine, both quite good. We had a great ski room right next to the lift and had to walk ten minutes or so (in regular shoes) to get there. Ski rentals were a great deal: under \$100 for some of the skiers and not much above that for the best equipment. Much cheaper than in the US! Next time I go, my skis and boots will (sadly) be left behind. Less luggage, less cost, and good equipment is a good deal with airline luggage costs hitting

\$200 for an extra bag (round trip) on United to Europe. Also, if you don't ski for a while, you can save money by returning them.

The hotel had a nice bar/lobby/lounge room that featured both après ski meetings and all the computers mavins at work as it had the best reception. Add in all the kids running around in weird costumes (it was Carnival week), and it got a bit chaotic at times. But that didn't upset the Zilch players; we can play in noise, chaos, keep drinking and even play with different rules. Zilchers are the hard partyers of the PSC!

For those of us not skiing (including yours truly with a bad back and Frank Gregg, my walking buddy, with bad knees), Arabba was a nice resort to meander, featuring a small, new church, two grocery stores (one open all day) and great eateries. The aptly names (if not original) Pizzeria was an instant favorite, when it was sunny, for eating alfresco. Italian alfresco is the best!

On Saturday, our first group left around 3:30 AM with my great assistant Susie Pumphrey to return via Munich with no problems. The rest of us (2/3 of the group) followed at 8:45, heading to Milan and then Margharetta di Ligure on the Italian Riviera. It rained most of the day, but that was OK – we spent our time in a bus or inside. Our hotel, Villa Anita, was all ready for our late arrival with a nice dinner! A wonderful surprise. The rooms were quaint and the mother/son hosts were very helpful. We had to walk uphill for ten minutes, but their two vehicles picked up our luggage (we were allowed to keep our skis on the bus). We took over the whole hotel and two of us had to room about a 20-minute walk away at the Hotel Yolanda; not as quaint but totally acceptable.

The first day, most of us took the train to Cinquaterza, the five adjacent hillside towns overlooking the Ligurian Sea. The towns are very scenic, feature great cuteness, and we could visit any of them using another train ticket or (as yours truly and others did) just several of the towns. I was amazed that they grew white grapes on lands going straight uphill. Good wine, too.

On day two, we had a bus take us to Luca and Pisa. Luca center's dates from the Renaissance, features many towers, narrow streets, old buildings, few cars, and great eateries. Your typical old Italian town. It definitely beat Pisa, which has the leaning tower and adjacent cathedral and more tacky souvenir shops that we'd ever seen and not much else. Poor Pisa, a former port all silted up and not much of a power anymore.

On day three, everyone was on their own. Most folks visited next door Portofino and finally got a good look at Santa Margharetta, a small seaport that was at one time the summer villa getaway for rich Genoan merchants. Many of those villas are now hotels; guess they built big in those days.

Our 4:30 AM departure back to the Milan airport proved flawless, the flight was slow going against a strong jet-stream, we were delayed in Newark for a couple of hours (no problem) and still got to DC and home at a decent time.

For a resort few had ever heard of, this trip proved a big success. But a trip succeeds only because the participants make it so. I was very lucky and thank all those who went with us. You guys were great! And thanks again Susie for all your help.

Facts about Portillo

Portillo receives an average snowfall of 27.3 feet (8 meters) of snow, which generally falls during short, but intense storms that are followed by sunny days with bright blue skies.

The Hotel Portillo is 9,450 feet (2,880 meters) above sea level, and is characterized by very low humidity. As a result of the dry air, we recommend that our guests drink plenty of liquid upon arrival and take it easy for the first day.

We offer several Après Ski activities. To name a few, you can use the gym and take a class like yoga or stretching; go to the pool or jacuzzi; relax in the bar before everyone gets there; play a game of indoor soccer in our full-court gymnasium; take a snowshoe walk (if this is on our activities calendar); get a massage; take a nap; read a book in the cozy living room; among other activities.

Our Main Dining Room functions just like on a cruise ship. Our maitre d' Juan Beiza assigns guests to a table the first evening, which guests will use throughout their stay. During lunch and dinner there are two seatings: 12:30pm & 1:30pm are the lunch seatings while 8:30pm and 9:45pm are the dinner seatings. If you have a seating preference, please talk to the maitre d' and he will do his best to accommodate your requests. Families with young children are always given preference for the early seatings. Since dinner is served late in the Chilean custom, we serve "Onces," or tea and snacks, at 5pm.

While there is no dress code throughout the day at Portillo (ski clothes are fine for breakfast and lunch), guests feel most comfortable wearing nice, casual clothing to dinner. We also politely request that guests use the following guidelines as a dress code for dinner: men should wear shirts with collars (no T-shirts); closed shoes (if you chose to wear sandals, please use socks); no baseball caps or swimsuits. If you have any questions, feel free to contact us.

Due to the unpredictability of weather, ski slope and lift access may vary throughout the day. Excessive wind, poor visibility, and heavy snowfall may sometimes force us to close some or all of our slopes. Please check our Information Center located in front of the Ski School office. The ski slopes located near the upper mountain, such as Roca Jack or Condor, are more exposed to avalanche danger. Depending of different factors, our avalanche team may decide to close some ski runs during the day. Your safety is always our main concern.

In addition to skiing, there is heliskiing, helicopter touring, snowshoeing, and other winter sports.





Lake Tahoe “Miracle” Snow, Great Scenery, and Good Times Had by All.

By Jean Desteve

Nineteen PSC members traveled to Lake Tahoe in February 8-15. At the end of the week, a good time was had by all despite the dubious snow conditions just a couple days before the group’s arrival.

The trip got off to a rocky start when the first-time trip leader couldn’t find his phone at Reagan National! Yikes, a “panicked” trip leader without a phone can be problematic. The indispensable piece of communications equipment was eventually found where it was supposed to be – in the carry-on bag. The lost phone episode and its conclusion was a harbinger of things to come ... every time things looked a bit uncertain, the outcome was favorable. The best example was snow conditions. Despite the California drought and the paucity of snow in the Sierras, the day before our arrival, the mountains in the Lake Tahoe area benefited from significant amounts of snow. In a two to three day period, more than three feet of snow fell, which resulted in an a tenfold increase skiable terrain. Then there was the episode of the “unsub” (police speak for “unknown subject”) who “stole” Larry Caldwell’s ski at the Reno airport. All ended well when a very embarrassed young lady who happened to still be in the airport enjoying a local brew with friends was contacted and brought back Larry’s skis and exchanged them for hers, which we were holding hostage. Even the rainy ride from Reno to Lake Tahoe had a silver lining – in the form a gorgeous full rainbow. When we got to Lake Tahoe, it was raining cats and dogs, but as uncomfortable as it might have been slogging through the rain, it was great to know that only a thousand feet above us, the wet precipitation we were lamenting at lake-level was producing tons of snow on the mountain. Even a broken down bus could not dampen our spirits as it permitted the group to experience a dazzling sunset over Lake Tahoe and the surrounding mountains. Yes, on our return trip from great day of skiing at the Northstar resort, we asked our bus driver to stop along the way so allow us to enjoy and photograph scenic Lake Tahoe. Following a 20-minute interlude and a great “family” picture, we loaded back into the bus, only to discover it wouldn’t start. But yet again, what looked like a downer, turned out to have a serious silver lining in the form of the afore mentioned sunset.

Speaking of pictures, it should be noted that the entire group, and the larger PSC community, benefited from the presence of an avid photographer on the trip in the form of Mike Trujillo. Mike took some awesome photographs on the mountain, around the lake, and throughout the trip. Most of the group photos from the trip that are on the PSC site are the result of

Mike photographic acumen. Speaking of extraordinary trip members, the Tahoe group arguably wins this year’s award for the person who traveled the greatest distance to ski. Yes, Jan Gurtner travelled from Kenya, where she is making remarkable contributions as a Peace Corps volunteer. On the subject of traveling great distances, Claire Meyer who had signed up for the trip, was unable to join us as she deployed to Afghanistan in the service of our nation. Parenthetically, as we enjoy the pleasures of traveling with friends and winter sports, we should take a moment to acknowledge the debt of gratitude that we owe to Claire and all of our brave men and women who are serving, have served, and will serve to protect our great nation. As a representative of all those Great Americans, thank you, Claire!

As for the trip itself, it was great. The hotel was excellent. The service and suites were outstanding, the complementary full breakfast was a great way to start off the day and, very popular, the two hour après ski open bar – which in addition to free booze, provided a wonderful opportunity for camaraderie. As previously mentioned, we were very fortunate to benefit from a significant snow fall as we arrived; as such, the skiing conditions were more than acceptable, even for the brave souls who ventured out in the thick of the Sunday snow storm and tackle hip-deep “California-cement.” Yep, there was plenty of snow, but it heavy and unforgiving, to which a number from our group can attest. Skiing and boarding (we can’t forget our “token boarder,” AKA “Tango Bravo”- Kristina LeBeouf) was good; and the fact we were able to ski/board three mountains, to include Kirkwood, in addition to Northstar and South Lake Tahoe’s Heavenly, add spice and variety. The only drawback was getting off the gondola at Heavenly and having to navigate a long flight of stairs, and then either trudge up hill to the first ski lift to ski the Nevada side, or pole a fair distance to ski the California side. The engineering of the exit from the gondola left a bit to be desired. Additionally, some of the chairlifts were closed a number of days due to weather, most high winds, which limited full access to Heavenly’s slopes. hat said, once on the mountain, skiing/boarding was outstanding, especially given the conditions two days before our arrival.

The Tahoe trip was more than just swooshing down mountains. With casinos two blocks from the hotel, some from our group enjoyed (and won at) the local gambling and entertainment establishments. We also had a wonderful group dinner at an exclusive five-star casino restaurant for which we can thank Sheryl Walsh who coordinated the event. Not only did we experience fine dining and exquisite service, but we got to “embarrass” Clay Bunting by singing happy birthday on his special day. Having previously alluded to the beauty of Lake Tahoe, some from the group took advantage of a spring-like Friday before our departure to rent vehicles and circle the lake. Of particular note were Dottie Shaw and Mike Trujillo who rented motorcycles! It was an absolutely gorgeous day, and not surprisingly, Mike took some great shots.

At the end of the day, despite the minor gripes about getting off the gondola, it was a great week. The mountains, the hotel, and the relatively small size of the group which allowed for camaraderie, all of which contributed to a fun trip.



Ski Helmet Update

By John Pratt

Most of us fly on airplanes to go on our club trips to destinations near and far. Now the question is: what would you do, as you settle into your seat and notice that the seat belt you're supposed to use, is worn, frayed, cut, or otherwise looks unserviceable and it might not work properly when you really need it? I think most of us would ask to be reseated or at a minimum ask for a new seat belt. Now take out that helmet you've used for the last several years and examine it. Have you taken a real hard fall wearing it? Is it dinged up pretty good? Is the Styrofoam, in the helmet liner, full of gouges and scrapes from using it as a pail to carry your ski gloves, goggles, etc. in? All of these things are to ski helmets what that frayed airplane seat belt is to your safety in that airplane. They render it as marginally useful in performing its intended purpose of keeping your brain from being damaged. In the military they call it Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). It is normally caused by explosions in combat zones, but the same type of TBI can occur when you brain meets a hard object on the ski slopes at 20 MPH. Bottom line is, inspect your helmet and see if it's time for a new one. After all, you get new boots and skis when they wear out.

Now that I've got you thinking that using a properly functioning helmet might not be too bad an idea, PSC has an easy, inexpensive way to make that helmet thing happen. For the price of a lunch on the slopes you can have your own new personal "Brain Bucket." PSC is offering ASTM 2040 certified ski helmets. The ASTM certification process for ski helmets is explained in <http://www.telemarktips.com/Helmets.html>.

Because of an increase in shipping costs and the desire to provide the helmets to our club members at the lowest cost, we have instituted a change. Your club will now only make one helmet order a year to our supplier. Orders for new helmets will be taken at all Ski Club meetings throughout the year, but the order will not be placed until after the November Meeting. The new model helmets have an adjustable nape of the neck strap, with turn ring, for custom snugness. For those of you who are really fashion conscious, at \$28 each, you can have one that matches all your ski outfits. That is the price for ordering at any meeting and delivery of the helmet at the December club meeting. If you want it delivered to your home, the price goes up to \$46.45 regardless of when or where you order it. They come in Blue (as shown, unfortunately without showing the nape strap), Red, Black, and Silver. The new manufacturer also provides X-Small and X-

Large helmets, for those of you who've had a problem with the normal S, M, & L. You can order them at club meetings and have them by the December meeting at \$28 each. If you can't make the meetings, but want me to order one for you, send me an e-mail snowsnke@aol.com and I'll e-mail you back a packet with: the size charts; the website to choose your color(s); along with an order form. As soon as I get your order form and check, I'll place your helmet(s) order on the list for the November order and when they arrive in December, I will let you know, so we can make arrangements to get you your helmet. If you want it delivered directly to your home the cost will be \$46.45 each. If you chose the home delivery method, I will order your helmet as soon as I receive your paperwork, and that way you don't have to wait till the December delivery.



PSC Logo Items

Want 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 items such as tote bags, our supplier is Jill Lee of *Jill's Designs*. Jill has set up a web site at www.jillsembroidery.com.

It's also accessible on the PSC website as a link to Jill's site. 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.

Pentagon Ski Club

The Liftline

Peter Porton, Editor

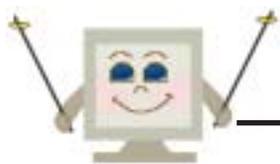
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The last membership meeting of this ski season is on Tuesday, April

8.

This will include our Wounded Warrior Drive and the council election. Plus it's our last meeting of the year, so be there!

Our meetings start at 7 PM, or earlier for some of the old-timers.

