

# The Liftline

# Pentagon Ski Club Summer, 2015

President's Corner  
By Dave Olsen



As I write this in early June, we're still ruminating over the various proposals we've received for our winter trips. We'll make the final selections at our June 7 Summer Summit council meeting, and also appoint the leaders for each trip. The results of those decisions are reflected in the table at the end of this *Liftline* edition, and in the trips list on our website, where you can sign up online.

This-year's trip schedule has been a greater challenge than in recent years. Not only have the prices increased significantly, predominantly due to higher airfare costs, but it's also been tough for our tour operators to even find flights to several of our preferred destinations. Our Christmas-to-New-Year's trip was a particular challenge, reflected in the substantially higher cost for that trip compared to previous winters. But we're one of the few local-area clubs that continues to offer a holiday trip, and we hope we're able to keep doing so.

I look forward to seeing you at our picnic on Saturday, July 18, noon to 4pm, at the same venue as the last two years: The Spates Community Club at Fort Myer. As before, we'll have all the food catered, so you don't need to bring anything for pot luck like we used to do. We've ordered pretty much the same fare as last summer. The food will be available until 2pm. If you've signed up for a trip online, you can bring your initial deposit check and hand it to your trip leader. If you have a conflict and can't make it, be sure to mail your check(s) so you can be confirmed on the trip(s) of your choice. Several of our more popular trips have been known to fill up early on, and your timely initial deposit locks you in for the trip.

Our September 15 meeting will also take place at the Spates Community Club; our cruise to the Adriatic, with too many members, trip leaders and council members on it, conflicts with our regular second Tuesday of the month meeting and the Officers Club is not available on the 15th. Please be sure to mark it on your calendar.



## Disabled Sports USA

At our last meeting in April we collected \$4,805 in donations for Disabled Sports - USA (including \$1,000 from the club, but that's still from you). Thanks to all of you for your generosity: since 2004, we have donated \$43,555 to this great charity (not including private donations individual members and PSC sponsored ski trips).



## PSC Picnic: July 18

Our annual picnic will be held on Saturday, July 18, from noon to 4 PM at the Spates Community Club at Ft. Myer (214 McNair Road, Fort Myer, VA 22211 — on the west side of the road between the PX and the bowling alley). All the food (served until 2 PM), including iced tea, will be catered, courtesy of the PSC. A cash bar will be available for other beverages of your choice.

Trip leaders will be available to answer questions about upcoming trips for the next ski season. You can sign up for the trips at the picnic, so bring your checkbooks!

## USAFMC Golf Classic

By Peter Porton

To all the volunteers who are listed in the USAFMC database for Disabled Sports-USA, the golf tournament is on Monday, July 27. You should have gotten an e-mail more than a month ago and replied if you would be there or not. If you haven't responded, please do so. If you didn't receive the e-mail, please let me know at psc001@verizon.net. This is not a request for more volunteers, we have more than we need (a victim of our own success).

# Pentagon Ski Club

2015-2016 Council & Committees

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www.pentagonclub.org

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## The Lifeline

Editor: Peter Porton

Copy Editor: Dave Olsen/Dick Fiske

The Lifeline is issued three times per year. 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

2015-2016

## PSC MEETING SCHEDULE

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

- Picnic, Saturday, July 18\*
- 3rd Tuesday, September 15\*
- 2nd Tuesday, October 13
- 2nd Tuesday, November 10
- 2nd Tuesday, December 8
- 2nd Tuesday, January 12
- 2nd Tuesday, March 8
- 3rd Tuesday, April 19

\* At Spates Community Club (where we have the picnic), Fort Myer

## 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 [cheree2be@yahoo.com](mailto:cheree2be@yahoo.com) or send her a check (see membership fees up above).

Cheree Peirce  
19701 Golden Valley Lane  
Brookeville MD 20833





## In Memoriam Charles Mamonas September 8, 1934 to April 22, 2015

I first met Charles in 2007 when I became a ski instructor at Liberty Mountain, PA. Although he preferred being addressed as Charles, he was introduced to me as Charlie, which was also reflected on his Liberty nametag. I didn't find out until years later that he preferred Charles.

We got to know each other quite a bit, as we spent many a ride carpooling with Jim and Dick back and forth to Liberty Mountain. Mostly, our conversations centered on skiing, ski instructing, and the Liberty life. We routinely had lively, crazy, and hilarious conversations about anything and everything. There was a lot of howling laughter going on in those car rides.

Charles loved being with his friends and was often ready with little notice to drop everything and get together to hang out with Jim, Dick, Bill, and me. Although he was normally very careful (some would say spartan) about his diet, he relished digging into some wings and some cheese pizza (with extra cheese and maybe some pepperoni). His favorite beverage to go with that meal was a very dark beer.

Charles learned to ski at Liberty Mountain at age 65.

They liked what they saw, and he was quickly recruited into becoming a ski instructor there. He was well-liked and respected by his peers. He was always active and would bike and walk to stay in shape. Over the course of the summer and fall, he would work his way up to alternating walking and biking 10+ miles a day, several times a week.

Charles had traveled widely. He was adventurous and an avid skier. He became animated, and his eyes lit up and danced when he talked about his skiing adventures or anything that brought him enjoyment, including the Bombardino drinks he discovered on a ski trip to Italy. When I last saw him in March, he was enthusiastically outlining his plans for next ski season. Charles had a sharp mind and was very organized and structured. He could get fired up easily about things for which he felt passionately. He was an astute person and was keenly perceptive and aware to what was going on to the people around him. He treasured his friendships. He enjoyed having his friends over and cooking up a delicious meal, paired with a nice wine. He appreciated the beauty in nature and would regularly send his friends pictures of beautiful nature scenes that he found on the internet. He had a great sense of humor and an absolutely delightfully warm and engaging laugh that radiated his gladness from his very core.

We will miss our Charlie, who left us with many fond memories of happy times together.

-Lucy

## Great Riding in Telluride!

*By Lucy*

Originally the trip to Telluride was to have been led by Jim. Unfortunately, shortly before the trip, and after he'd done most of the work, he got the unwelcome news that his job needed him more than Telluride did. Maggie and I were able to fill in to lead the trip. Although he wasn't on the trip, Jim later reported that he received three post-cards from Telluride . . . so although he wasn't able to be in attendance, he was with us in spirit. That didn't seem to provide him with much consolation on having to miss out on Telluride.

Saturday morning, Jan 10, 2015, those Telluride-bound got up way before dawn to make it to Reagan airport for a 7 a.m. flight. All went well with the flight and ground transportation to Telluride. On the way from the airport, the door in the back of our van kept popping open. Fortunately, nothing (and nobody) fell out. With teamwork effort and gracious help from several of our members, our gear was unloaded and schlepped up one or two floors (no elevator) to our rooms. The Victorian Inn is very centrally located in the town of Telluride and only a short walk to the gondola. Funny thing about the room numbers. The building has two above-ground floors. Room numbers in the 300 number range were actually in the basement level.

We had our pizza welcome party on Sunday in the very small hotel lobby, which only had about 12 chairs. We had 24 people on the trip so we made do by bringing in chairs from our rooms, so that we could all hang out together. There was still some pizza left when Joanne arrived after having to endure two delayed flights. By the end of the week, most of us decided the Victorian Inn did have a certain kind of charm that grew on us over the course of the week. Management was very friendly and accommodating to our requests; the rooms are a good size and were clean. Most nights, we had a few people meeting in the lobby for a tea and spirit party and conversation. Many of us made use of the hot tub and sauna, which provided a welcome

way to loosen up after our day of frolicking on the mountain and trade stories of the day's adventures. Overheard on the chairlift about an interesting fact of life: the reason men don't have much to say in the evenings is because they tend to use up all their words during the course of their day.

On Sunday, the first day to ski, we were delighted to awaken to a few inches of new snow. Some of us also awoke to a little altitude induced queasiness, which fortunately didn't last long. The Victorian Inn is at about an 8,800-foot elevation. Several of our group opted to start the day with a mountain tour led by the Telluride Mountain Ambassadors. John R. and Ricky chose to forego skiing in favor of watching the two big football games going on that day.

During the week, our group was scattered all over the mountain in different subgroups. With a pre-arranged lunch meeting spot, many of the group managed to meet for a break, where plans were made for the rest of the afternoon. A couple of times, when we had clear blue skies, we met at Giuseppe's, where one could sit outside or inside in the small area and enjoy the stunning panoramic views from about 12,000 feet. Many of Telluride's slopes were groomed on one side, which provided options when making one's way down for the next lift ride up. Lucie, queen of the moguls, had a misbehaving knee so had to make do by savoring just a few moguls this trip. Hubbie Ted tried to look disappointed about missing out on some moguls. We had perfect snow conditions all week, including a couple of fresh snowfalls of a few inches each. Some of us switched to powder skis for



*Telluride Ski Christmas Tree*

playing in the freshies. The snow conditions allowed for some great tree skiing adventures, as well as fun times in Revelation Bowl. Bill made use of his leadership skills and led daily excursions around the mountain, which included a ride down Galloping Goose to view the huge homes located trailside. A few people went back for another Mountain Ambassador led tour, as well as a Forest Ranger tour. Rogena and Donna took lessons. Leigh reported that she hiked up several times from the top of Lift 12 (approx. 11,815 feet) to about 12,800 feet to have the thrill of skiing down some chutes. She savored the fantastic view and having that part of the mountain virtually to herself.

Jonathan was the only one to opt for a day of heliski adventures. Although he had a terrific time, he reported that by heliski

standards, there was not an optimum amount of great snow, which meant, to his disappointment, that the guides limited the expanse of terrain on which the participants could ski. Even with that, he was tired after his four long heliski runs and had a smile on his face when he talked about his experience.

Unfortunately, Lester had to leave us after only one day. He decided to save himself for his other love, golfing, and went home to rest and recuperate his knee, which he'd twinged during the mountain tour. He was able to get a flight back home on Monday. At last report, he's doing quite well and enjoying his golf game.

When we weren't in schuss mode, we did lots of exploring and found good places for eating, imbibing and shopping, all within easy walking distance from the Victorian Inn. We managed to find some good happy hour spots and some delicious Cosmos drinks. Most of the group, at least once, rode the gondola at night to the mid-station, enjoying the night view of the lights in the town and the stars in the sky, while having snacks or dinner and a nightcap at about 10,500 feet. Although the Victorian Inn had a continental breakfast, several of the group opted to walk to a couple places which served good, hearty hot breakfasts. We were delighted to discover the Christmas tree in the town of Telluride made entirely of vintage skis. On the top was a star made out of ski poles. It was very artfully and creatively done and, from about a block away, appeared to be a real tree. It was a lot of fun to look at the "branches" and try to find the model skis that we'd used in the past. It was a unique and charming way to ride down memory lane and made people smile along with those memories. Telluride's streets and sidewalks are minimally cleared of snow, which results in lots of icy patches. Several of us fell while negotiating the slippery streets and sidewalks. Cat Tracks came in very handy when walking to and from the lifts. Marijuana is legal in Colorado, and a few "green" establishments are located in Telluride. A few people went on Mary Jane tours and perhaps came away with souvenirs.

Jerry drove out from Alexandria and made skiing with us in Telluride part of his grand tour. After visiting and skiing with his granddaughter in Iowa, he met up with us in Telluride. After more skiing in Utah and dropping Carol off, he finally made his way back home in April. His travel companion, Sock Monkey, seemed to enjoy the opportunity of going on a ski trip and hamming it up for any photo opportunity.

Our visit coincided with Telluride's first ever Fire Festival, a celebration of fire arts. The festival is inspired by Burning Man, which takes place annually in Nevada's Black Rock Desert. It started on Friday and continued through the weekend. We were able to enjoy part of it on Friday evening, as our return flight was on Saturday. The famous 26-foot high mechanical octopus from Burning Man was on display at Mountain Village, rolling its bulging eyes and waving its eight tentacles with flames spewing out in time to music. It was a spectacular site. Coinciding with the activities in Mountain Village, in the town of Telluride, fire performers and dancers and a fire spewing dragon were delighting spectators. Interspersed throughout were burn barrels to help people stay warm.

On Saturday morning, after loading and boarding the bus

and confirming we had the appropriate number of PSCers on board, we settled into our seats and started to the airport. After about one block the bus driver realized that he was one person short of the count on his manifest, so we rode around the block to pick up our very happy non-PSC passenger. The bus trip to the airport was uneventful, other than we were in a small bus and felt packed together like sardines, with barely enough room for ourselves and our gear. By late that night, most of us were nestled in our own beds, with visions of Telluride snowflakes dancing in our heads.



## BEAVER CREEK

*By Maggie Fitzgerald*

**T**he Beaver Creek, Colorado trip started off with a bang during the summer picnic when it sold out with 44 on board. It was a five-star trip at an affordable price in the beautiful village of Beaver Creek standing a stone's throw from its famous big brother Vail. It was especially exciting to go there because the 2015 World Alpine Ski Championship races had just taken place and televised days before our arrival, so everyone knew what a dynamite place we owned for a week.

Our flight left at a decent hour from Dulles where I worried (needlessly) if we all would get on the plane because of a computer glitch – it worked out fine. Our bus was waiting in Denver to sweep us off to our grocery/beverage/lunch stop. A few folks were delayed in receiving their skis but, again, it all worked out. We arrived at the Kiva Condos and were all pretty tickled that the condos were spacious and overlooking the slopes. Four sets of roomies were not as impressed with their lofts but eventually we came to an agreement that kept everyone on an even keel. To ski, all we needed to do was walk over a little bridge, suit up, and point the skis to the Centennial lift where we could choose whether to ride the chair or gondola. How easy was that? Oh, I must say that we lucked out with plenty of snow, so much so that on the last days, I actually heard a minor complaint about "all this powder is wearing me out".

One of the cool things about skiing at Beaver Creek is that it offers free photo opportunities; so we gaggled together and posted our mugs on Facebook as evidence of our joys. Another thing is their great mountain hospitality tours...we took them just to get acclimated and to make sure we made it over to Bachelor Gulch to the Ritz for some of their delicious and fancy hot chocolate. Believe it or not, they also host a "Women's Social Tour" and it was not for pussycats. 17 of us followed these no

nonsense athletes from *cliff to cliff*. We were awarded goodie bags full of Beaver Creek swag and freebies. Fun!

Our welcoming party was super! The Kiva recommended a fantastic place for après ski: “Powder 8” at the base of the mountain. At 6 PM we took over the place for our fire-grilled pizza and free beer, which was a treat from the Kiva’s management. I heard no complaints that night and no one went to bed hungry. We even had enough to feed our late arrivals.

Thursday night we took over the lobby of our condo and had a fabulous surprise birthday party for Helen Fiske and Terry Hipkins complete with birthday cake and bubbies. It was so much fun... each condo gave a special award to their fellow condo mates. Winners earned a blue ribbon or medal to wear as voted by the condo; it was all in good fun. I am not sharing the winner’s names to protect the innocent.

Meals fell in place nicely and we enjoyed lunch at the new restaurant “Talons” near the Birds of Prey lift and the Spruce Saddle Lodge. A lot of us caught the happy hour meals at the “Dusty Boot,” so condos cooked in every night...my condo mates tried the Chinese delivery at the cost of several hundred dollars, once.

I loved the way this trip melded together with some folks heading to Vail and others enjoying the Birds of Prey. There was something for everyone to make us happy! What especially touches all of us is that we shared the week with our dearly beloved Charles Mamonas, who passed away weeks after the trip. He was a delightful person who added a special touch of happiness to all of us. He was so tickled to have so much powder...the most he ever had in his skiing days. What a way to go! Thank you for joining us and making it a great trip, Charles. We miss you.

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## Bruges or Brugge?

*By Peter Porton*

**A**fter the ski trip to Sestriere, Italy, 23 PSCers visited Bruges, Belgium, to enjoy the delights of this medieval city with its canals, beautiful countryside and great food (and beer!).

Once one of the richest cities in Europe, it was a port known for trade and especially wool. It was also a connecting trade site for the southern Mediterranean routes and the northern European Hanseatic League and the British Isles. Unfortunately, it declined in importance as the Zwin channel, its outlet to the sea, silted up and trade moved to Antwerp. Today it’s a city of about 120,000, with one-sixth of them living in the city center. In other words, it’s not a crowded place. But it remained a beautiful city and is probably the most complete medieval city in northern Europe. It’s also a Unesco World Heritage Site. That made it a perfect place to see art, eat good food, and enjoy a new country.

We left from Geneva to Brussels (the capital of the European Union), where we saw the Grand Place and the famous (or infamous) statue of the Manneken Pis before heading over to

Bruges. I had wanted to visit Waterloo to the south, but time was against us; maybe some other time.

We arrived in the early evening, just in time to change and head out for dinner, in moderate groups. Well, silly us. It was Saturday night and any restaurant that was open certainly couldn’t handle large groups. My group of six split into two, one headed to a restaurant and the other to a pub. Of

course, we all had what you must in Bruges: Belgian beer and mussels – deeelicious! After our pub dinner, my much smaller group went to a bar that offered 100 different beers (instead of the too small amount of 50 in the pub; actually, they all have different types – Belgium has 2000+ different beers). It took us only minutes to realize this was also a different type of bar. Made no difference, the beer was good, the people nice, and I didn’t get hit on. We left at 2 AM, so we must have had a good time and we even made it back to the hotel.

Our hotel was right in the center of the old city, across from the Tourist Office and bus station and within easy walking distance of the city center. For those who wanted to do a bus tour, we were picked up right next to our hotel. PSCers went on a Tour of Flanders and a Flanders Battlefield Tour (probably Ypres). Flanders reminds me a lot of Holland, which makes sense because Belgium was part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands until 1830. But it remains a bifurcated country: the Walloon (French) south and the Flemish (Dutch) north. Flanders and Bruges therefore speak Dutch: right up my alley!

However, once the English-speaking guide learned I spoke their language, I did become the butt of the Dutch-Belgian rivalry jokes. When we visited a brewery, we were told that Belgium had no problem of disposing of the waste water, it was sold to Heineken! Actually, I admit that Belgian beers are the best in the world.

Now for shopping: Belgian Lace, do-dads, and chocolate, chocolate and more chocolate. And sights to see: the Church of Our Lady and its 400-ish foot tower (fun to climb) with its Madonna and Child by Michelangelo, the Markt (Market Place), the canals and required cruise (about 45 minutes), as well as the Belfry



*Manneken Pis*

of Bruges in the museum area. To me, the most fun is just meandering. Which word, by the way, comes from the Meander River in western Turkey (see the article). See how all our trips tie in together?

Finally, to answer my headline: it's Bruges. During the first world war, Flanders held the western end of the trench lines separating the German and Anglo/French troops. Since the Dutch double "g" is unpronounceable by the English or the French, the French used their name. The Flemish do not, to this day. I concur with them, but given that we sort of speak English in the US, I guess we go with Bruges.

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## Turkish Delight

*By Peter Porton*

The PSC trip to Turkey truly was a unique experience. I had called it the land of empires, and so it was: we saw Greek, Pergamene, Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman sites. That leaves out a half-dozen others in different areas (Turkey is 20% larger than Texas but with three times its population at 81,000,000): Phrygians, Hittites, Lydians, and Lycians, amongst others, some at the same time. Our trip was split into two areas: the Aegean and Istanbul.

Our flight via Munich went well and we landed on time in Izmir, Turkey's third largest city (after Istanbul and its capital, Ankara). Our guide, Kaan (Turkish for Khan) met us and in a bit over an hour we were at our hotel, the Charisma, in Kusadasi. The hotel was great, but strange with two different wings (ours was not completed but no problems) on different floors, so we watched out which elevator we took (and they use the European system of floor counting there). After a great buffet dinner (we got three meals a day in the Aegean area) we got a good night's sleep (after the bar, of course) and left the following morning at a comfortable hour of 9 AM to see the wonders of Pamukkale as well as the ancient city of Hieropolis (which we never got to, running out of time).

Located near the mouth of the Meander River (now Menderes, but from hence the word), Pamukkale is unique in the world. Its spring water (slowly reducing in volume) produces calcium carbonate, which becomes white when in contact with the air; Pamukkale means Cotton Castle in Turkish, which it resembles from many miles away. We weren't allowed on it without taking our shoes off, but it sure was spectacular. Thousands of years have produced a fabulous natural sight, the only one in the world like it. But it's diminishing and they have to alternate channeling the water to keep the whole area going.

Our guide, Kaan, was incredibly informed, with outstanding English and a great sense of humor. He was a true polymath and some folks on the trip said they enjoyed his talks on the bus as much as what we saw on the outside. But he was smart; always on the way back, he gave everyone an hour's rest to snooze off their lunch. He might have needed some rest as well, as he

was with us the whole vacation. Amongst the things we learned about Turkey is that its industry is in good shape, it builds (or assembles) most of the busses used in Europe. It's also very self-sufficient in food, importing basically during the off-season and exporting a lot. That would explain the freshness of all the veggies we had, especially real tomatoes and cucumbers. Meat is also very good as is fish; the only thing we could not get was pork, it is a Muslim country, after all.

The following day we went a short distance to Ephesus and spent a long time there (it's rather large) in the heat. The great Library of Celsus is still in remarkably good shape and next to it, the Austrians are excavating a huge area of the homes of the



*Library of Celsus*

well-to-do, showing how these condo-like buildings were the latest in technology during their day. Founded around 1000 BC, Ephesus became a very important port for both the Greeks and the Romans and one of the richest cities of its day. It's also famous for St. John's Letter to the Ephesians. Written from a distance, no doubt, as he got kicked out of town for heresy against the goddess Artemis. We also saw the supposed House of Mary, where it is said she spent her last years. It's a shrine to both Christians and Muslims.

After Ephesus we had lunch at a small farm (well, it had some four or five large tour busses there, so this was a bit of a set-up), but the food was fantastic, amongst the freshest I had all week. Not far away on the main road I had my first taste of Turkish ice cream, which has a taffy-like consistency but is very delicious – tastes just like ice cream but doesn't drip as much. Hmm. On the way back we stopped at the obligatory carpet store, though this one was more of a factory, teaching young women the craft and showing us how the carpets were actually loomed. They also grow their own grape for wine: amazingly good, especially their shiraz. We spent a fortune there and if our guide got his usual cut, it was more than all the tips he got for the whole vacation. That's shopping in Turkey, and bargaining, and most of us knew it. Its selection, though, was the best I've ever seen and we started

receiving them at home two weeks after the trip came back, instead of two months. My little decorative silk rug will be on the wall as a reminder of this part of the world.

The following day we had our long drive to Pergamum, an ancient capital city overlooking modern Kusadasi. It's built on a plateau (one can call the whole site an acropolis) and we had to reach it by a cable car! Very nice. The view was incredible and everywhere we looked we saw red poppies, very common in western Turkey (not opium poppies), a very delightful accent to the ruins of a once great city. Its last king, in a grand gesture, willed it to the Romans, preventing a serious war. Smart king! Pergamum's two great claims to fame was its library (number two in the western world after Alexandria and ahead of Ephesus), which ended up in Alexandria as Anthony's gift to the last of Egypt's Ptolemaic rulers, Cleopatra. The other was the invention of parchment, the scraped inside of mostly sheep which led to the invention of books of the style we have today and put a stop to Egypt's monopoly on material to write on, namely papyrus.

We then had lunch and went off to see the Asclepium, a healing center where doctors and healers of the day took care of the injured and sick and also taught the latest medicine. At this point, I realized I didn't have my camera (with almost all my photos and \$2K worth of equipment). Kaan called the restaurant, nope. But they gave him the number of the site of the cable car where I was sure I had left it inside one as there were only two of going down. I was asked to describe it and found out that one of the workers had retrieved it and brought it to the lost and found. A short ride back got it to me. I left a nice tip for honesty. And let out an enormous "whew!" Thanks to all for their commiseration.

We hit the Museum of Bergama to see the smaller stuff and headed back to our hotel. Though a long ride, the fact that it was Saturday and not rush hour got us home in plenty of time for dinner. Lucky us! All this while, the weather had been fairly warm and later on, in Istanbul, would cool off a little. Never needed a jacket, only a hat to prevent my scalp from burning!

The following morning we headed back to catch a noon flight from Izmir to Istanbul, about an hour away. Our arrival at the 5th biggest city in the world (population ~15,000,000) went smoothly and off we went to our hotel, the Sura Hagia Sophia, very modern, nice rooms, but lacking a bar and a usable lobby. (As a note, a lot of us also had internet connection problems at both hotels.) It's located on a small side street (two ways, with space for one – lots of quick sidewalk parking and backing up), a block away from the tram and a several minutes' walk from the Blue Mosque, all in the Sultanehmet district. This is literally the center of Istanbul, named after the Sultan Ehmet, who had the Blue Mosque built, and close to the Hagia Sophia and the Topkapi Palace. Luckily, there were a half dozen al fresco restaurants across the street, so that's generally where we would meet after our daily excursions. Also, Kaan finally got to go home at night to his wife and son.

On our first tourist day, we headed (walking) over to the Topkapi Palace Museum and its huge grounds along the Bosphorus.

This was the de facto headquarters of the Ottoman Empire for its last 400 years. The Sultans had their harems there (his mother was in total charge, even to deciding who he would bed on a particular evening). The architecture was typical Muslim and the treasury had jewels and gold a'plenty, along with many of the prophet Muhammed's possessions. And, of course, the famous Topkapi dagger with its magnificent three emeralds. It was to have been a gift to the Sultan of Iran, but he was killed, so it returned home and has been in Istanbul ever since. The view of the Bosphorus and the gardens were magnificent; the deeper you go into the grounds, the more private they were in olden days, with the last grounds reserved for family, eunuch slaves and guards.

Luckily we got there early because as we left, the line getting in was extremely long. We got on our own bus and headed towards to Spice Bazaar, the smaller of the two we would visit, and had both lunch and a chance to shop for, yes, doo-dads and a



*Hagia Sophia*

lot of spices. Outside they were playing loud music and dancing – Turkey's way of electioneering which was scheduled for two weeks later. After that, we headed to port and boarded our own boat and headed up the Bosphorus to see the fantastic homes on the European side. We also stopped in "Asia" (of course, the entire Aegean side was also in Asia) at Uskudar to meander around and then took a ferry boat to our bus back in Europe. Istanbul is the only city built on two continents.

How do you top that? The following day we visited the Hippodrome (not much left), the Blue Mosque, the Hagia Sophia, the Basilica Cistern and the confusing Grand Bazaar. The Blue Mosque is still active, to me beautiful on the outside and workmanlike on the inside. All have to take off their shoes and women have to wear shawls. It's called "blue" because of the color of its Iznik tiles on the inside. To me, the Hagia Sophia is more magnificent. It's also one thousand years older than the Blue Mosque (built in the early 17th century) and was the largest dome in the world until St. Peter's was built. It's a museum now and a lot of the white plaster the Muslims had put over the Christian icono-

graphic artwork actually helped preserve them and were taken off. One of the things we noticed in this area were the 1 PM and 6 PM calls to prayer (they have five daily). The muezzins seemed to be having a contest, alternating verses of the Koran. They use loudspeakers, with the emphasis on really loud. But Turkey is a secular country and I literally saw no-one kneel and pray towards Mecca; of course, I wasn't inside any buildings where customs are probably different.

In the afternoon, we hit the Grand Bazaar, or as I call it the Bazaar of the Bizarre. It is very easy to get lost in and has more shops than any place I've ever seen. There are areas where you can get gold, jewelry, food, knick-knacks, glassware, suits, carpets, most anything you can think of, old and new. Some of us said goodbye to Kaan within 15 minutes and went outside to enjoy the moderate temperature and a frosted one and watched the women come out, hours later and fully laden. You do get good bargains there, but you have to know the game. I already got my big souvenir but I should have taken Pat Berry up to bring me to the leather shop on the outside of the bazaar and look for a good sports-coat style jacket with protective zippers on the inside. But I didn't, c'est la vie. She bought a beautiful coat herself, reversible black leather and suede, looked great and very practical.

Our last two days were on our own, but our tour operator (Judy Miller of GTU) and I arranged for add-on trips. We needed ten minimum to get a bus, but ended up with 23 and 22 going. The best we saw, in my opinion, was the Chora Church near the old outside walls of Constantinople, with its fabulous frescoes. Kaan gave us their full history. There is a greater emphasis of Jesus' father Joseph as well as Jesus bring Adam and Even out of their tombs of Judgement Day. We don't hear these Bible stories in the west much, it's more and Eastern Orthodox thing. But immensely interesting. In the afternoon we saw more of the unseen streets of Turkey: the Galata Quarter, Istakial Street and the Flower Passage Great shopping (but watch out for the old tram), super and reasonable restaurants for lunch, and even a bank museum. Also lots of steps.

The last day was a bit disappointing. We took a public ferry to Prince's Island, a former exclusive vacation site for the wealthy. The horse carriage ride around the island didn't show us the old houses and driver thought he was Ben Hur in a chariot race, sometimes out of control. The horses also didn't look well taken care of. We then had decent lunches but left on a ferry boat two hours early. But it was an easy last day, so no real complaints and the salesmen on the ferry boats put on fancy shows that reminded me of late night TV ads. PSCers bought a lot of stuff!

All in all a great trip, made better by the folks that made the socializing so much fun. Thanks to all and hope to see you again. By the way, Kaan also had a great last minute idea. Perhaps some year: Istanbul, Cappadocia, and a cruise of the Black Sea.

**Postscript:** the election in Turkey turned out to go against the ruling party and its heavy handed president who wants to change the constitution. Good news for Turkey, which desperately wants to join the European Union (banking laws and human right violations prevent it right now). Good luck to them.



## 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 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](http://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.



## Mammoth's Still Mammoth

By Pat Riggs

California's in a drought! There's no snow! You're going to be hiking, not skiing...Got it. Understand. But it's Mammoth and we're gonna ski and ride it. And we did. 52 intrepid PSCers from DC, Virginia, Maryland, Florida, Connecticut, South Carolina, New York, Ohio, Georgia, New Jersey, Nevada and yes, California defied the odds and spent 5 excellent days on the top of the Sierras. It wasn't easy getting in or out (weather and broken airplanes) but we did it.

Getting in was touch-and-go. Why? Because it was snowing to beat the band. (There's no snow?) And it had been snowing off and on all day long. But the group finally made it to Mammoth Lakes Airport (minus a fair amount of baggage that had been off-loaded in LAX for additional fuel in case the flight had to return to Los Angeles) and managed to catch a late dinner and libation at the Mammoth Mountain Inn.

Monday dawned with the possibility of more snow and we headed out to see just how good (or bad) things were going to be. And they were pretty darned good. Why? Because it had stayed cold enough to allow Mammoth to make snow with their water supply a take care of what Mother Nature hadn't. So, with a combination of manmade and natural snow and some excellent grooming we had very good conditions on most of the mountain. Probably 25-30% of the mountain wasn't skiable, but Mammoth's so big there was plenty to cover. And cover it we did. On the groomers. Off in the bumps. In the trees. We covered all of the open mountain and had consistently good to very good snow all week long.

Most of our group took advantage of the free guided tours the resort offered on Monday. Mammoth's located in a seismically active area. (Remember, this is California...) So we learned about the previous eruptions, the venting of gasses and where the good skiing was. (A very important bit of information...)

They even groomed Scotty's, something that doesn't happen all

that much. So an intrepid group of us decided we just had to go try it out. For the most part it went well. Plenty of high-speed schussing down the hill on the groomed sections. And we had the ungroomed soft snow as bail-out options. What could go wrong? Well, Pat (aka: Princess) Berry came bombing down this hill as she is well known for doing. This is one fast lady. At some point she decided to exercise her bail-out option and went off to the skiers' left into the soft snow. In the process of doing this her skis and boots parted company and she buried herself in the white stuff. She still had her ski poles. In fact she now had three poles, since her supposedly unbreakable graphite epoxy sticks suffered a catastrophic failure on one of the poles. Ms. Berry doesn't have small falls, and this one will go on the top ten crashes list. Fortunately the only injury from this crash was to her pride.

Neil Ensslen didn't have such good luck. He was tooling down Broadway, minding his own business and bothering nobody when he was leveled by an out-of-control skier. The culprit was extremely apologetic, but that didn't do much for the broken bone Neil incurred. The Mammoth hospital sees this all the time, and when Neil re-joined us the next day he was sporting a cast on his wrist that was molded just so he could hold a ski pole with it. And he did, skiing for the rest of the week. Fortunately we didn't suffer any other Purple Heart qualifying crashes during the week, even if a few of us did manage to find some of Mammoth's population of snow snakes and subsequent yard sales of varying degrees of creativity.

There was a skiing Nature Tour that a group of us took advantage of, as well as a snowshoe excursion that made the fun things-to-do list.

By Saturday it was time to head home, or so we thought. Most of us Californians and the dynamic duo of Ken and Jo Simpson (they're the Nevada branch of the club...) climbed into our vehicles and headed down the hill. Unfortunately for those flying back on Alaska Airlines, they got to go through at least two or three Circles of Hell when their aircraft was delayed and delayed and delayed again until they missed the connection out of LAX. Co-Trip Leader Jim McDonough picked up a lot of gray hair in trying to get Alaska to do their job and get everyone home. They sort of kind of did, but it was on an American flight that went to Dulles and not Reagan. And, it was a redeye. Not the way you want to finish a trip, but everyone finally got back to the 11 states and the District of Columbia from where they had started

from and got to sleep in their own beds.

We'll be heading back to Mammoth in a few years and hopefully the entire mountain will be open. Because Mammoth is, well, mammoth....



## PSC 2015-2016 Ski Trip Schedule

*Prices may change due to fuel or surcharge increases. Insurance for N. America trips available, see trip insurance page on web. All trips, except Morzine (currently), are BRSC sanctioned. Check website for further trip details.*

1. Dec 27 – Jan 2. **Steamboat**. John Condia (703-335-5004). 6 nights (Sun – Sat) at Ptarmigan Inn (hotel rooms) with welcome party & daily breakfast. 4-day lift tickets. Nonstop on SW, Dulles – Denver. \$1780
2. Jan 3 – 10. **Vail**. Pat Riggs (703-615-2709) & Lesa Scott (703-250-3211). 7 nights (Sun – Sun) in Evergreen Lodge (hotel rooms) with daily breakfast and one-day lunch voucher. 5-day lift tickets. Nonstop RT on Southwest, Dulles – Denver. \$1700
3. Jan 9 – 16. **Whistler, Canada**. Maggie Fitzgerald (703-461-3027). 7 nights (Sat – Sat) at Fairmont Chateau Whistler, welcome reception, one breakfast in hotel, & one Fresh Tracks mountaintop breakfast. 5-day lift tickets. RT on United, Dulles – Vancouver via SF out; Chicago back. \$1900
4. Jan 15 – 23. **Morzine, France**. Peter Porton (703-471-7791). 7 nights (Sat – Sat), at Fleur de Neige Hotel, welcome party, daily breakfasts and dinners. Nonstop RT on United, Dulles – Geneva. Emergency medical and repatriation (not cancellation) insurance included; lift tickets extra. Optional 4-night trip to London (\$720) afterwards returns to Dulles Jan 27. \$2400
5. Jan 24 – 30. **Winter Park**. Steve Peirce (301-924-5173). 6 nights (Sun – Sat) at Vintage Hotel with complimentary apres ski party. 5-day lift tickets. Nonstop RT on United, Dulles – Denver. \$1275
6. Jan 30 – Feb 6. **Snowbird**. Christina Anderson (703-719-6714). BRSC Western Carnival. 7 nights, (Sat – Sat) in Cliff Lodge (hotel), three dinners, multi-club race. 6-day lift tickets. Nonstop Dulles – SLC. \$1925
7. Feb 7 – 13. **Snowbasin/Powder Mtn**. Fred Gardinier (301-739-5097). 6 nights (Sun – Sat) at Marriott Ogden Courtyard with daily breakfast. Evenly split 4-day lift tickets. Nonstop RT on Delta, Reagan – SLC. \$1475
8. Feb 13 – 20. **Sun Valley**. Steve Thompson (703-435-5170). 7 nights, (Sat – Sat) in Sun Valley Lodge. RT on United Dulles – Boise via Chicago out; Denver back. 5-day lift tickets. \$1985
9. Feb 20 – 27. **Banff/Lake Louise, Canada**. Susie Pumphrey (703-691-3944). 7 nights (Sat – Sat) split between Chateau Lake Louise & Banff Springs Hotel, welcome reception & 1-day breakfast. RT on Delta, Reagan – Calgary via SLC out; Minneapolis back. 5-day lift tickets. \$1740
10. Feb 26 – Mar 6. **Madonna di Campiglio, Italy**. BRSC Eurofest. Dave Olsen (301-579-2749). 7 nights in Carlo Magno Hotel Spa Resort with three parties, daily breakfasts and dinners, plus 1 night in Mestre (across from Venice) at Hotel Bologna with breakfast. RT on Air France, Dulles – Venice via Paris. Emergency medical and repatriation (not cancellation) insurance included; lift tickets extra. Optional 3-night trip to Florence (\$600) before Madonna departs Dulles Feb 23. \$2625
11. Mar 5 – 12. **Keystone**. Jean Esteve (301-352-5336). 7 nights (Sat – Sat) at The Inn at Keystone with welcome reception, daily breakfast & \$15/day lunch voucher. Nonstop RT on United Dulles – Denver. 5-day lift tickets. \$1625
12. Mar 12 – 19. **Taos**. Jim McDonough (703-619-0020). 7 nights (Sat – Sat) at Snakedance Condos with welcome reception. RT on Delta, Baltimore – Albuquerque via Atlanta. Custom fleece vest included. 5-day lift tickets. \$1950
13. Mar 20 – 27. **Red Mountain, Br. Col., Canada**. Steve Peirce (301-924-5173). 7 nights (Sun – Sun) in Slalom Creek Condos with welcome breakfast. RT on Alaska Airlines Reagan – Spokane via Seattle. 4-day lifts at Red, 1-day at Whitewater. \$1570

# Pentagon Ski Club

## *The Liftline*

Peter Porton, Editor

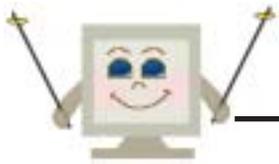
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# Summer 2015



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**CLUB WEBSITE: [WWW.PENTAGONSKICLUB.ORG](http://WWW.PENTAGONSKICLUB.ORG)**

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



**W**e are starting our 2015-2016 ski season with our annual picnic at the Spates Community Center at Fort Myer. See Page 1 for more details and directions. As usual, our trips are selling out early, so be sure to call your tripleaders for details on your favorite destination. Or wait until the picnic, but be sure to bring your checkbook. The schedule is listed inside.

Our regular season meeting starts on September 15 at 7 PM at the Spates Community Club as well. The yearly meeting schedule is on Page 2.

