

Volume 59
Number 1

Potomac Valley Skiers, Inc.
WASHINGTON MARYLAND VIRGINIA

January 2024

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Presidents Message

I am looking forward to the upcoming ski trip to Snowmass and hope to have the opportunity to ski with as many people on the trip as possible. The first day out on the slopes is always fraught with a bit of apprehension – do I really remember how to do this? Why am I going out in the cold and wind and snow to slide down the mountain on waxed boards? Is my body too old for this? How crazy can I be?



Yes, we are all a bit crazy pursuing this sport. But, if we are relaxed and our technique is at least reasonably good, there is nothing quite like skiing for the sense of exhilaration and accomplishment from a good ski day. To make sure that we are skiing at the peak of our ability, I have long advocated the advisability of taking a ski lesson at the beginning of each ski season. After a year, many of us have forgotten some of the many elements that go into a good turn, and some of us still have little kinks that we need to work out. There are always fine points to be learned and practiced.

In this internet era, there are a multitude of free ski videos that are available to watch and ponder before heading out to the slopes. While such videos are not quite a substitute for an in-person ski class, they can go a long way in helping to ready us for the upcoming season. A quick google search turned up a series of videos from Deb Armstrong. In each video, she is shown teaching one or more students a variety of different techniques. For example, take a look at “Intermediate skier re-learning skiing” (geared for people who have been off the slopes for a few years), “Use of the inside leg to change turn radius,” “Ankle flexion for skiing, why and how,” “Teaching hips for high performance skiing,” and “Advanced ski lesson, short turn and bumps.” These are just a few of her many videos.

Some of the pointers offered by Deb Armstrong are the importance of ankle flexion, which perhaps can be most easily grasped as pressure on the tongue of the boot and the technique of shortening the inside leg and keeping the outside leg longer. Watching her demonstrations and her students applying her recommended techniques is helpful as a first step in learning to improve our skiing. I strongly recommend spending some time watching some of the Deb Armstrong videos (and videos by other instructors) before heading out to the slopes. Please let me know (rcjablon@aol.com) if you have found some videos from other instructors that you particularly recommend.



Tia

Another important thing to do at the beginning of each ski season is to have your skis professionally tuned and waxed. I like to bring my skis in for tuning and waxing after about seven days of skiing. Somehow, my skis seem to find all the rocks on the slope, requiring some bottom repair. At Snowmass, it is very easy to bring

your skis into a shop by 5 in the evening and pick them up at 8 the next morning. The Mountain Chalet will send out your skis in the evening, with the caveat that the skis may not be ready as early as you want to ski the next morning.

A final thought - For those of us who are “foodies,” I recommend advance reservations at popular Snowmass restaurants. If you are planning to head down to Aspen for dinner, advance reservations are even more important (see the review I wrote last year of the restaurants that we tried in Aspen). Last year, at Snowmass, Bob and I particularly liked The Edge (German food), and Kenichi (Japanese). We also like the Little Mammoth Steak House, although it is overpriced. Il Poggio is always popular.

Let’s hope for good snow and a wonderful Snowmass trip this year.

Cara Jablon



Coming Event



PVS - BYOB (Bring Your Own Book) group

How do you choose a book to read? For some folks, it’s an interesting cover (just as I pick wines - by the label - I admit it!). For others, they read all the end-of-year lists for the critics’ choices. At PVS, you have the advantage of hearing what your PVS friends found worthwhile to read - and not! Join us on Zoom for our monthly (no commitment) chat about our latest and greatest reads. See the info below and come along via Zoom **next time on Thursday, January 11th from 4 to 5 pm.**

Here’s what we chatted about in December:

Marianne Sponis has been reading “Collision of Power: Trump, Bezos, and The Washington Post” by Martin Baron. Baron recounts his time behind the scenes at The Washington Post amidst turbulent years in politics and journalism and the decision to create the Post’s motto: Democracy Dies in Darkness. **5***

Ellie Thayer brought us "True Biz" (real talk), a novel set in a boarding school for the deaf where American Sign Language is the communication of choice and whose protagonist uses the controversial and often-faulty cochlear implant. Ellie learned a great deal about the deaf community from author Sara Novic who also notes that deafness is not a disability but rather who you are. **5***

Karen Knopes read "Somebody's Fool," the third of a trilogy of novels by favorite author, Richard Russo. Once again set in upstate New York, Russo's cast of characters inhabits a fictional small town, this time North Bath, with all the quirks and foibles expected. As Karen notes when discussing the plot, "the story is the people." **5***

Mary Ellena Ward learned about Dr. Rosanne Leipzig's manual, "Honest Aging: An Insider's Guide to the Second Half of Life" from a review in the Washington Post. Leipzig focuses mostly on medicine i.e., how drugs can affect the elderly differently. Mary Ellena found it fascinating especially the frequent question one asks: is each new issue a real problem or just a natural sign of aging? **4.5***

Bonnie Sweeney joined us from Michigan with a Michigan-centric best-seller: "Tom Lake" by Ann Patchett. Unfortunately, Bonnie found this family story of cherry orchards and summer stock productions, "tedious and boring." Bonnie gave it **2*** and may now be done with Ann Patchett!

Jan Marx, as she so often does, has been reading another novel set in her home state of Minnesota. "The Quarry Girls" by Jess Lourey is a thriller and coming-of-age story set in 1977 in a town Jan is familiar with and that is known for its granite quarries. Missing girls deliver a real "page turner," per Jan. She gives it **5***.

Bob Jablon brought us a little-known work: "War and Peace" by a Russian author named LeoTolstoy which he felt was worth reading a second time. Bob extolled the well-defined characters and rich retelling of the events surrounding Napoleon's invasion of Russia in 1812. Tolstoy argues that events are less controlled by the acumen of the generals and more by the mood of the people. **5*** (natch)

Nancy McKinley likes to check in on the top-rated books of the year. "North Woods" by Daniel Mason is one. While the NY Times book critic suggests that it's impossible to summarize this novel, we can say that it features a house in New England over the centuries and its disparate inhabitants, both human and otherwise. **5***

The next BYOB Zoom call will be held on Thursday, **January 11th from 4 to 5 pm**. Let Nancy McKinley know at nancymckin@gmail.com or on 703 595 8375 if you'd like to join us or if you have questions or comments.

PVS Ski Trip

Snowmass, Colorado

January 10-17, 2024

Snowmass has been open since Thanksgiving Day! In the past week, they received a foot of snow with more to come. The slopes are calling us! Think SNOW!!!

In addition to a fun week of skiing we also have the following après ski activities planned:

Wednesday, Jan 10th – Welcome Party 6 - 9 pm

Saturday, Jan 13th – Pizza Party 6pm

Tuesday, Jan 16th – Dinner at The Artisan Restaurant 6 - 9 pm

Reminder: Trip insurance is recommended. It can be purchased through [Encompasse.com](https://www.encompasse.com) or by calling 866-385-4839. Be sure to reference the Encompasse Tours account #285880.

LET IT SNOW! LET IT SNOW! LET IT SNOW!

Kathy & Barry Lake
Trip Leaders



SKI TALK



The ski season is in full force! Many of us will be heading to Snowmass within the next 10 days. The mountains in the west have been getting blanketed with snow. The Aspen Snowmass area has received at least a foot of snow in the past week with more on the way. The long-term forecast, according to OpenSnow, is calling for snow the first 10 days of January. Just in time for our trip!



If you would like to venture to Aspen Highlands while there, Cloud Nine Alpine Bistro was just rated by OnTheSnow as one of the top 9 ski resort restaurants with great views. Cloud Nine has gone through several evolutions but has always had a charming alpine atmosphere to it. It features a European-style cabin vibe to the backdrop of Aspen's iconic Maroon Bells peaks. Ride the snow cat there in the evenings and nosh on warm fondue, flaky strudel and thick European stew. If you skied at the Highlands in the "olden days" of Whip Smith's ownership, you may not think to make lunch reservations, but you'd better. Standard lunch reservations are at 11:30 and 11:45, while après reservations are at 1:30 and 1:45.

The Winterskol will be taking place in Aspen January 11 – 14th. This is Aspen's annual "toast to winter" which dates back to 1951 when locals chose to commemorate Aspen's distinctive mountain way of life with a diverse weekend of events. The 4-day festival showcases on-mountain activities, snow sculptures, a soup recipe contest, a craft beer festival, a torchlight descent and fireworks on Aspen Mountain plus much more.

Travel Tips

It may be a good idea to download the MyTSA app before taking any trip. This app will let you know the length and time of wait lines going through security. It should be helpful in planning when to arrive at the airport.

When travelling to a high altitude this ski season you should be aware of altitude sickness. Dizziness is the most common symptom followed by weakness, shortness of breath, nausea, low appetite/low energy and sleep disturbances.

For mild cases go to a lower altitude - this is usually enough to alleviate the symptoms. Avoid alcohol and get extra rest. Drink LOTS of water.

If symptoms persist or worsen, you may want to seek medical attention.

Local Skiing

There are many local resorts that offer discount ski passes for Seniors. Wintergreen Resort is offering an Honorary Age Pass for Seniors 75 and over at a cost of only \$29 for the season, but with some blackout dates.

Massanutten offers a \$19 Special Value Season Pass to guests ages 70 and older. Valid throughout the season, but is restricted until after 4 pm on the busiest days. Most other local resorts offer reduced daily rates for those 65 and over, as well.

Please check with each resort for the particulars before going.

In you are interested in coordinating local ski trips for PVS members, please contact kathylakehomes@yahoo.com

Happy



Skiing!

submitted by *Kathy Lake*

Members' Corner

Theater trip to London



Bridge Theater

I spent a week in London in mid-October as part of the London Theatre Tour organized by the Round House Theater in Bethesda. Our group of ~20 drama fans, plus four Round House leaders, enjoyed five plays, plus group dinners, museum tours, discussions with London theater directors and critics and post-theater discussions every evening. I went on this tour last year and enjoyed it so much that I repeated the visit.

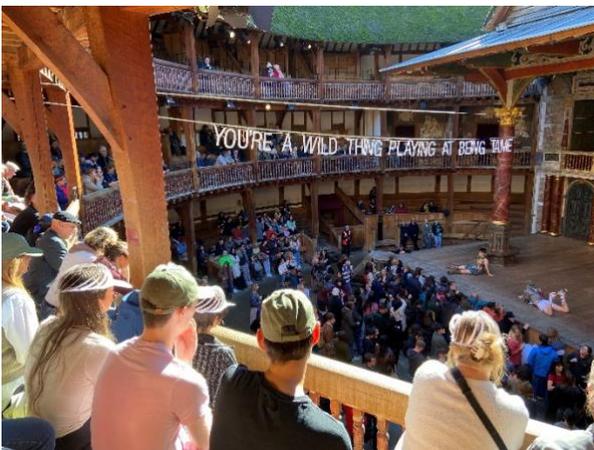
Highlights this year were a marvelous revival of “Guys and Dolls” at the Bridge Theater (right by Tower Bridge), featuring rising stages and an immersive arrangement that evoked the streets of New York of the 1940s; a fantastical version of “As You Like It” at the historic Globe Theater, with much gender crossing and delightful confusion; and the play “Hamnet” which presents a version of Shakespeare’s life as described in the book by that name. We had a tour and afternoon tea at Albert Hall, which I had never seen, and concluded the trip with a dinner aboard a canal boat as it traveled through the waterways near Paddington. In my free time I met a cousin at the National Gallery of Art and saw the major Frans Hals exhibit there and later saw the queen (and everyone else) at the National Portrait Gallery. Not much time for shopping, I’m afraid.



Dinner Cruise

Evidently there are similar tours organized by other Washington theaters, and some to other cities. It’s a wonderful way to see a range of productions, learn more about the challenges and backstage operations of theater organizations, and support regional theater in our area.

by Jill Nelson



“As You Like It” at the Globe Theater

The Year Ahead for PVS



The holiday party at Bob and Cara Jablon's home in December was the last event of 2023 and a nice beginning to holiday merriment!

The year found us making some changes in the calendar and for meetings, mainly due to lack of venues for meetings, and lack of attendance at events. It appears that our members lead busy, full lives, so the focus will be on our in-home meetings.

In **2024**, when there is a fee to attend a meeting, the amount members pay will change from \$3 to \$5. This will allow us to increase the amount we pay our hosts before the club's treasury makes up the rest. Costs for all refreshments have risen in 2023 and will probably not go down in the near future.

Here is an update about current plans for our meetings in 2024:

January – No meeting since many will be on one or more ski trips.

February – Jan Marx has offered her home for this meeting (No need to bring food; a \$5 fee).

March – No meeting planned.

April – Our annual meeting. At the moment, there is no host but we are hopeful! There is no fee since members bring appetizers or desserts.

May – No meeting planned.

June – Summerfest. We have a potential host (not yet asked!). There is no fee since members bring something for the food table.

July – No meeting – it's vacation time!

August --Steak and Swim (if we are lucky to have Marianne and Kerry host again). There is a charge for the steak; members bring a favorite dish (and a swim suit).

September – No meeting planned.

October – We will need a host and there will be a \$5 fee.

November – No meeting planned.

December – Another wonderful holiday party and no fee.

If you are willing to consider being a host, please let me hear from you. I can provide information and support! Meeting in member homes gives a family feeling that is special for our Potomac Valley Ski Club.

If you have an idea for an event, good for you! I'm here to assist you in the planning and marketing via the TOOT,

Happy New Year to all!
Marianne Sponis, Events chair
Marianne.sponis@gmail.com.

By *Ellie Thayer*

Great New Job Opportunity

BREAKING NEWS: Jan Marx has volunteered to take on the TOOT Coordinator position. Thank you Jan!

She is looking for a volunteer to serve as a layout editor for three or four issues a year. Jan, a long-serving layout editor herself, can explain the ins and outs of the position to anyone who is interested or simply wants more information. Contact Jan if interested. jebbmarx@aol.com.



Past Event

HOLIDAY PARTY



Cara and Bob Jablon must have an inside track with the weatherman because Saturday, December 16, turned out to be a beautiful, sunny day, perfect for a PVS holiday party. About 30 guests brought their smiles and good cheer along with their contributions to the food table to Cara and Bob's lovely art-filled home.

The appetizer table was filled with numerous types of cheese, crackers, dips, specially made "bites" with dates or walnuts and bleu cheese, cocktail shrimp, deviled eggs, salmon with capers and pickles, potato salad, olives and nuts. The bar beckoned with wine, water, soda and a warming glühwein. Nearby were a pot of chili and a large bowl of rice – the rice being a good complement to the spicy homemade chili. Desserts were plentiful with an assortment of cookies, nuts, bars, and a fruit plate and melded perfectly with a nice cup of decaf coffee. Yum!



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Cara Jablon welcomed everyone to the business part of the meeting, thanking everyone for coming and mentioning the need for a volunteer to help with layout for the TOOT. Marianne Sponis mentioned that there would not be a meeting in January because of the ski trip to Snowmass, but that Jan Marx had offered her home for the February meeting. Kathy Lake shared that there were 32 skiers signed up for the Snowmass ski trip



and reminded them of the pre-trip party at her and Barry's home on December 30. Those with information about local skiing shared season pass prices for seniors and Cara raised the idea that there might be spontaneous trips throughout the season, especially if someone were willing to ride with her. Nancy McKinley enticed book lovers to join the BYOB (Bring Your Own Book) club by extolling how much fun the group has and how much is learned.



The white elephant re-gift event followed with those bringing a give-away gift, marketing their item to be sure someone would take it. Among other amazing items, there were a pair of wool socks, leather gloves, a travel vest with pockets, an antique crystal candy bowl, a vintage PVS cookbook, an oversized fanny pack, a marble cheese plate, and a very special decorated wooden and straw chicken that may have found a home with the youngest (five year-old) attendee.



Thank you Cara and Bob for hosting this fun event.

Submitted by Marianne Saponis

Shirley offering an original PVS Cookbook.



Kathy finding a new home for her straw chicken.



Calendar

Jan 11 Thur BYOB book club, 4:00 - 5:00 pm, Nancy McKinley
Jan 23 Tue ExCom Zoom meeting, 7:00 pm
Feb 8 Thur BYOB
Feb 17 Sat Members Meeting, 1:00 pm, Jan Marx, Springfield, VA



Ski Trips:

Snowmass January 10 -17, 2024: K. & B Lake



ExCom Officers, Board Members, and Chairpersons

Officers:

President – *Cara Jablon*
Vice Pres – *Bob Jablon*
Secretary – *Ellie Thayer*
Treasurer – *Dick Schwartzbard*
Ex Officio – *Barry Lake*

Board Members:

First Term 2022-2024:

Salli Diakova
Kathy Lake
Don Vierimaa

Second Term 2023-2025:

Bob Knopes
Inge Lesjak
Rosemary Schwartzbard

Chairpersons:

Events – *Marianne Soponis*
Membership Records – *Barry Lake*
Ski Trip Coordinator – *Kathy Lake*

TOOT Coordinator – *Ellie Thayer*
TOOT Layout Editors – *Jan Marx, Kerry Hines
& Dave Warthen*
TOOT (E-Distribution) – *Barry Lake*

Webmaster – *Mary Ellena Ward*

Meeting Records – *Sue Lyon*

Historian – *Jan Marx*

Useful Ski “Links”

[Potomac Valley Skiers](#)
[BRSC Sanctioned Trips](#)
[DC Ski Online News](#)

Reminder: It is club policy that contact information in the club's roster not be used for promoting personal business, for advertising, or for personal financial gain without the advance permission of the individual member to be contacted. Membership contact information shall not be distributed outside PVS.