



Volume 59  
Number 9

*Potomac Valley Skiers, Inc.*  
WASHINGTON MARYLAND VIRGINIA

September  
2024

[www.pvskiers.org](http://www.pvskiers.org)

[info@pvskiers.org](mailto:info@pvskiers.org)

---

### President's Message:

As fall approaches, it is time to think about skiing. I am looking forward to our annual Snowmass trip and plan to explore options for a second trip, perhaps with one of the clubs in BRSC. One issue that many of us "aging" skiers have is knee pain due to osteoarthritis. For many years, I have had hyaluronic acid injections in my left knee, usually in November. I have found these injections to be very helpful in reducing knee pain and allowing me to ski comfortably.

In osteoarthritis, the cartilage cap on the end of the bones breaks down and the bones of the joint no longer move smoothly against each other. The cartilage has a fluid coating that contains hyaluronic acid, which functions as a lubricant and shock absorber in the joint. Generally, in osteoarthritis, there is less hyaluronic acid than normal. The breakdown of the cartilage and loss of hyaluronic acid leads to pain, stiffness and swelling.

The research on the effectiveness of hyaluronic acid injections is mixed – some studies show the treatment is effective, while others show minimal benefit. The benefit is greatest for people with mild to moderate osteoarthritis. Hyaluronic acid is available in several different formulations, with injection regimes ranging from a single injection to a series of three or more injections. I have found that a series of three injections, spaced a week apart, works best for me. Medicare will cover the cost of the injections, and will pay for repeat injections every six months.

Injected hyaluronic acid may work by lubricating the joints and reducing friction, which will help the joint to move more easily and better absorb shocks. Further, the treatment may have an anti-inflammatory effect, and may stimulate cartilage cells to produce more natural hyaluronic acid. Some proponents of the treatment also theorize that the injections may stimulate an increase in the growth of cartilage-producing cells and strengthen existing cartilage and bone. In some individuals, the hyaluronic acid molecules form a boundary around nerve endings and prevent pain signals from being sent to the brain.

Cortisone injections can also be helpful for pain relief by providing an anti-inflammatory effect. However, there are potential side effects from cortisone, and injections cannot be given more than every 3-4 months. On a short-term basis, cortisone injections can cause insomnia, have an immunosuppressant effect, and increase blood sugar and blood pressure. Long-term use of cortisone injections may increase the risk of osteoporosis (loss of bone density), result in the loss of cartilage, weaken nearby tendons and make them more prone to tearing, and cause suppression of the adrenal gland. I have, on occasion, had cortisone injections in the knee, particularly after a very intensive ski trip where I pushed my left knee quite hard. I have also had cortisone injections in other joints where I have osteoarthritis or disc issues – my back, neck, hip, and feet.

Another treatment to consider if hyaluronic acid treatments or cortisone shots have not been sufficiently effective is the injection of platelet rich plasma (PRP). A major downside of PRP is that it is not covered by insurance. In this treatment, blood is taken from the patient and centrifuged to separate out the platelets, a type of blood cell that plays an important role in the healing process. Platelets contain growth factors and proteins called cytokines that can trigger cell reproduction and stimulate tissue regeneration or healing. In the

treatment, the platelets are concentrated and mixed with blood plasma, the liquid portion of the blood, so that the platelets are 2 – 8 times more concentrated than normal. The physician then injects the platelet-rich plasma into the target area, such as a knee, back, or neck, often using ultrasound to guide the process. While the mechanism of PRP is not well understood, studies indicate that the increased concentration of growth factors in PRP may stimulate or speed up the healing process.

Over the past several years, I have had PRP injections in various parts of my body, e.g., back, knee, hip, and most recently, my feet and neck. I believe that it has been helpful – I have been able to continue skiing and to avoid any joint replacements. Although the injections were not pleasant, they were bearable and no worse than cortisone shots – my doctor first injects lidocaine, which numbs the area, and then the PRP solution. I strongly recommend Dr. Ben Newton, a pain specialist, who is as gentle as possible with the injection process. He has an office in Chevy Chase, as well as one in McLean. I have used him for hyaluronic acid and cortisone injections, as well as the PRP treatment.

I look forward to seeing many PVS members at our fall and winter meetings and at Snowmass. We are fortunate that the Snowmass Mountain Chalet, with all its flaws, is still operating and able to provide us with a ski-in, ski-out experience.

Cara Jablon, President PVS

### **To our members,**

In the quest to look into the future of Potomac Valley Skiers, Don Vierimaa has researched area ski clubs and has attended some of their events. He recently met at Snow Searchers and recommended they attend one of our meetings and potentially join our Snowmass trip. For those who want to continue skiing, it's basically a question of whether to associate with another club or to remain as is.

Please read the article below and think about what you would like the club to do. Suggestions are welcome. Please send your thoughts to Cara Jablon, our club president. We will be having an Excom meeting on Tuesday, September 24 at 7:00 p.m to discuss possibilities. . You are welcome to join our Zoom call then as well. Just let Cara know if you'd like to receive the link..

### ***DECLINING MEMBERSHIP***

I volunteered to explore relationships with other ski clubs due to our declining membership. Potomac Valley Skiers, PVS, has 75 members and fewer than 25 active skiers. As president of Capital Golden Skiers, CGS, I led the dissolution of that club. Most of the members of CGS joined PVS.

I have talked to Columbia Ski Club, Washington Ski and Sports Club, Pentagon Ski Club, and Snow Searchers Ski Club.

Columbia Ski Club has 550 members and about 250 active skiers. They sponsor 11 ski trips a year and a couple over-seas non-ski trips. Their favorite ski areas are Snowmass and Taos. They have meetings at restaurants in the Columbia, MD area.

The Washington Ski and Sports Club has about 1,200 members and about 500 active skiers. They sponsor many non-ski sports and social events.

The Pentagon Ski Club has 400 members of which 300 are active skiers. They sponsor about 12 ski trips a year. They have catered dinners at Fort Myer where about 100 members attend.

The Snow Searchers Ski Club has about 70 members and about 60 active skiers. Their next ski trip is to Mammoth Mountain from January 25 to February 1, 2025. They began as employees of the Naval Research Laboratory and still have a few younger members from the Laboratory. Most of their members live in Virginia and are over 50 years of age. They were impressed by our newsletter.

I think we may get lost in merging with a large ski club. I recommend that we explore a relationship with the Snow Searchers Ski Club by inviting them to attend one of our fall meetings and joining us at Snowmass.

Don Vierimaa

## Past Event

### STEAK and SWIM The almost annual event Hosted by Marianne and Kerry Hines August 17, 2024

The forecast was for rain all-day, but this was the almost annual Steak and Swim and it has never rained on the Steak and Swim day. And sure enough the weather turned out beautiful, a perfect day for swimming. The pool temperature was also perfect, comfortable on entering and comfortable for swimming.

The perfect pool conditions invited several attendees in for a refreshing dip including Barry and Kathy Lake, Cara Jablon, Nancy McKinley and



Joe Jevcak. Meanwhile everyone enjoyed the shade with gourmet beer, wine and soft drinks and delectable appetizers.

Burr Schuler shared his adventures skiing with Billy Kidd at Steamboat, with Nancy Green at Sunpeaks and uniquely skiing in North Africa. Burr is planning to drive to Snowmass to insure he doesn't encounter cancelled flights. Nancy McKinley is devotedly caring for Ray. The Lakes fondly recalled their recent cruise to Alaska particularly their visit to Denali by train.







Marianne Hines is really getting excited about her upcoming trip to Germany. Kerry is pleased with his herd of retired horses and welcomed the 5 inches of rain brought by tropical storm Debbie that broke the summer drought. Marianne Sponis excelled as designated photographer.

Inge Lesjak enjoys her activities in DC and visits with her grandchildren at Massanutten. Our leaders Cara and Bob Jablon are having an enjoyable summer and planning our next meeting. Ellen and Joe were getting ready to leave on their trip to the Berkshires.

Then the highlight, top sirloin steak individually prepared by superb chef Kerry including salad, veggies and potatoes. The finale was an assortment of deserts including cakes and pies and of course coffee and tea.

Looking forward to future Steak and Swim events by our gracious hosts Marianne and Kerry Hines at their lovely estate.

Submitted by Joe Jevcak



# SKI TALK

*by*  
*Kathy Lake*

It's September 1<sup>st</sup> and Labor Day Weekend which is the "unofficial" start of fall. Always sad when summer is over. However, we have winter and ski season to look forward to which will be here before we know it! Now may be a good time to take inventory of your ski equipment. Check to see if your skis need to be tuned up, sharpened and waxed. Make sure your boots are still comfortable. If not, make an appointment with the boot doctor.

## **PVS SNOWMASS TRIP** – January 8 – 15, 2025

Reminder that final payments are due September 1<sup>st</sup>. There are still rooms available. If you are interested in joining the group please send your application and full payment ASAP. We need to return any unsold rooms by September 27<sup>th</sup>.

See the detailed flyer elsewhere in the Toot.

## **SKI RESORT TRIVIA**

- Powdr, which owns multiple ski resorts in the US and Canada, is selling Killington Ski Resort and Pico Mountain to a group of local passholders. Killington said the purchase by local investors represents "a commitment to keeping Killington and Pico in the hands of those who know and love it". Powdr also plans to list 3 other resorts for sale in the coming weeks – Eldora, Mount Bachelor and Silver Star. They will keep Copper Mountain and Snowbird.
- The world's first chair lift was designed by James Curran who was an engineer with the Union Pacific Railroad. He was tasked with increasing rail travel to Sun Valley Resort. While rail traffic never improved, his ingenious chair lift sparked a sports phenomenon. Curran was inspired by the conveyor belts used to load bananas on to boats in Honduras. He died in 1968, however, his chair lift helped the skiing industry explode in popularity worldwide.
- Chamonix celebrates it's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of hosting the Winter Olympics. As snow and ice sports became more popular in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the International Olympic Committee was persuaded to create a winter version of the Olympics and Chamonix was selected as the first venue for the 11-day event in 1924. It featured cross-country skiing, figure and speed skating, ice hockey, Nordic combined (ski jumping and cross-country skiing), ski jumping, bobsleigh, curling and military patrol, a forerunner of the modern biathlon – perhaps surprisingly there were no downhill skiing competitions, these not being introduced until 1936.

## Events



### PVS - BYOB (Bring Your Own Book) Group

Still reading! PVSers find the most interesting books to read. (E.g. how about a fascinating book on the lives of eels?!) Join us and listen in until you're ready to participate with your own interesting read. No pressure. This is the easiest book club ever! **See the info at the bottom for how to join in on Thursday, September 12th from 4 to 5 pm on Zoom.**

#### **Books we shared in July and August:**

**Karen K:** Birnam Wood by Eleanor Catton

Catton's eco/psychological thriller set in New Zealand follows a group of young activists who find out-of-the-way places to grow vegetables. They encounter a vicious technology magnate using them as a cover for illegally extracting rare-earth minerals on the same land.

**3 stars**

You Don't Belong Here: How Three Women Rewrote the Story of War by Elizabeth Becker  
Becker, a well-known journalist, has written a kind of biography of three female war correspondents who, as females in a "man's world," were disrespected, suffered, and yet continued their important work reporting during and after the Vietnam War. **5 stars**

**Marianne:** The Disappeared by C. J. Box

Prolific author C. J. Box again uses Wyoming game warden Joe Pickett as his protagonist. Pickett doesn't understand why the governor chose him to investigate the disappearance of the CEO of a British ad agency. Stars not given.

Executive Privilege by Phillip Margolin

Investigator Dana Cutler is hired to follow a student who is working for a candidate who is opposing the presiding U.S. President in the upcoming election. The thriller/mystery takes place in Washington and Marianne calls it great bedtime reading. **4.5 stars**

**Rosemary:** The Phoenix Crown by Janie Chang and Kate Quinn

Starting a few days before the San Francisco earthquake of 1906, the story revolves around two women thrown together within the orbit of a rich and manipulative man. The earthquake upends their lives until they track him years later in Paris to get revenge. **5\***

**stars**

The Second Mrs. Astor by Shana Abé

Madeleine Force was 17 years old when she met Jack Astor, 29 years her senior. Their courtship and marriage were a public scandal. After their honeymoon in Egypt, the couple planned to sail home aboard the Titanic. Pregnant Madeleine is saved when her husband puts her on a lifeboat sending her home to the US a young widow with a baby. **4.5**

**stars**



**Bonnie:** The Fourth Turning by William Strauss and Neil Howe

Bonnie's contribution, yet unread, relates to a compelling presentation she recently viewed. The authors posit that earth's history unfolds in cycles providing a hopeful vision that the current civil discord in our country is just part of a normal cycle and will reset.

A Sweet Taste of the Last Slice by RuthiE Neilan

Written by Bonnie's good friend, hospice nurse Neilan reflects on her personal experience with her own father and other hospice patients as she tells of caring and letting go at the end of life. Bonnie calls it "a beautiful book." **5 stars**

**Jan:** Dead to the Last Drop by Cleo Coyle

Jan's latest mystery is set in Washington DC at a coffee shop on Capitol Hill where a government employee suddenly drops dead. Further, the President's young daughter has snuck out to play piano at the shop and then goes missing. **4 stars**

**Mary Ellena:** articles about reading from The Economist

Mary Ellena has been reading about reading! First is a calculation of how long it would take to read a set of 500 books judged by multiple lists as the best written. Hint: a very long time! A second article asks how many books you will read before you die. A survey determined that only 54% of the US population read a book in 2023.

**Nancy:** Good Material by Dolly Alderton

One of the New York Times best-books-of-2024 so far, Alderton's tale of a 35-year-old English comedian's break-up with his girlfriend and his unravelling make great listening. Navigating single life suddenly forces Andy into living on a dilapidated houseboat and then with a 70-year-old curmudgeon while pondering what went wrong. "Loved this book," per Nancy. **5 stars**

Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead by Olga Tokarczuk

A quirky old vegetarian/astrology-believing woman in rural Poland is the (often unreliable) narrator of this mystery regarding the deaths of local men written by a Nobel-and Booker-Prize-winning author. Often funny, and always engaging (with a bit too much astrology...). **4.5 stars**

The next BYOB Zoom call will be held on Thursday, September 12th from 4 to 5 pm. Let Nancy McKinley at [nancymckin@gmail.com](mailto:nancymckin@gmail.com) know if you'd like to stop by and check us out and she'll put you on the list to get the Zoom link. No commitment!



## ***In Memoriam***

Margaret Maria Stojanski Wyckoff, 100, known lovingly as “Mucho” to friends and family, died on 22nd of July 2024 peacefully in her home, surrounded by family.

Margaret was born in Breslau, Germany on the 17th of December 1923, daughter to the late Richard and Hedwig Stojanski. She is pre-deceased by her sister, Antonie Hanson and her husband of 40 love-filled years, Robert “Bob” Lloyd Wyckoff.

She studied Mathematics and Engineering at the University of Breslau for 2 ½ years, but her degree was put on hold due to WWII. In 1952, Margaret and her family emigrated to the United States, settling in the Washington DC area.

While displaced from her homeland by fate, she found many places to call home in DC and



Maryland. She earned an Associate degree in Accounting from Strayer College and then worked her way up from a bookkeeper for a car dealership to Chief Accountant for the National Spa and Pool institute, from where she retired in 1984. Never one to stay still, she took her prowess with numbers to the world of commercial real estate, where she became a general partner for Elwey Associates, working as a real estate developer and investor. She served in these roles until she was in her 90's!

Margaret loved to ski, and through the Ski Club of Washington DC (where she was, of course, the Treasurer) and later the Potomac Valley Ski Club (where she served on the Board of Directors), she went on many trips, skiing in Europe and the U.S. In 1960, one such trip took her to Paris, where, under the Eiffel Tower, she met fellow skier, Bob Wyckoff. They were married in 1961, and in between leading ski trips to Europe, they did find time to have a beloved daughter, Patricia.

A devoted caregiver, she took care of Patricia as well as her own parents, welcoming them into her home where they lived for a decade. Later, after Bob had a series of strokes, Margaret was right there, taking care of him for many years; she was devoted to him fully through his death in 2001.

Margaret is survived by her daughter Patricia Vagonis (James), her granddaughters, Christine Li (Jordan) and Lillian Vagonis, and her grandson, Justin Vagonis. To the grandkids and many friends, she will always be “Mucho,” a woman who clearly loved life and charmed everyone she met. She was the matriarch and “Munko” to her cherished late niece Jacqueline Ebrahimoff and three nephews (Benjamin, Richard and Robert Hanson), as well their children.

She celebrated her 100th birthday in December, surrounded by 100 people who adored her. She radiated warmth and love. To meet Margaret, was to love her.

Family received friends at PUMPHREY'S COLONIAL FUNERAL HOME, 300 W. Montgomery Ave., Rockville, MD on Thursday, August 1, 2024 from 5 to 7 pm. Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated at St. Raphael Catholic Church, 1513 Dunster Road, Rockville, MD on Friday, August 2, 2024 at 10:30 am. Interment followed at Gate of Heaven Cemetery.

Memorial contributions may be made to your favorite charity in her honor.





# Potomac Valley Skiers

## 2025 SNOWMASS, Colorado Ski Trip

Wednesday – Wednesday  
January 8 – 15, 2025

### Trip Details

Once again, we will be staying at the [Snowmass Mountain Chalet \(SMC\)](#) which offers a convenient ski in, ski out location. The “**LAND ONLY**” package includes: transportation to and from Aspen airport; 5- day Senior (65 and older) lift pass ([good for all four ski areas in the Aspen complex, free shuttle bus](#)); 7 nights lodging (double occupancy); luggage handling; buffet breakfast, soup lunch, welcome reception, pizza party and farewell group dinner to celebrate our trip. Additional nights at Snowmass are an option **based on availability**. **Trip insurance is available through [www.Encompasse.com](http://www.Encompasse.com) and is [highly recommended](#).**

**The Basic Package price is based on 2 people per room. We have 20 rooms reserved consisting of Standard and Deluxe, King and Queen/Queen rooms. The Standard Rooms are on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor/ground level with no microwaves or coffee makers. Deluxe Rooms are on floors 2-4. See below for pricing. Room preferences will be on a first come first serve basis.**

### Costs:

		<u>Standard</u>	<u>Deluxe</u>
Basic <b>Land Only</b> Package (65 and older)		\$2,336	\$2,506 per person
Under 65	add	\$ 130	\$ 130
Single Supplement	add	\$1,605	\$1,775
Extra hotel night ( <b>pending availability</b> )	add	\$ 419	\$ 453 per room per night
Non-skiers	deduct	\$ 396	\$ 396
Extra ski days (65 and older)	add	\$ 119	\$ 119 <b>6 day Senior pass</b>
	add	\$ 199	\$ 199 <b>7 day Senior pass</b>
Under 65	add	\$ 247	\$ 247 <b>6 day pass</b>
Silver Pass (Age 70 and older)	add	\$ 353	\$ 353

### Payment Schedule

Deposit of \$1,250 due by **July 10<sup>th</sup>** with Application & Signed Waiver  
Final payment is due **September 1st**

Checks should be made out to **Kathy Lake** and mailed to  
11677 Fox Glen Drive, Oakton VA 22124  
(put PVS Snowmass 2025 on the check memo line).

**Cancellation Policy:** The entire cost of the trip is non-refundable after **September 27th**.

Kathy & Barry Lake are the trip leaders. Feel free to contact us at 703-625-2715 or [kathylakehomes@yahoo.com](mailto:kathylakehomes@yahoo.com)

Potomac Valley Skiers

# APPLICATION FORM

Potomac Valley Skiers Trip to Snowmass, Colorado

January 8-15, 2025

Name (List both names if a couple) as on your Official ID:

\_\_\_\_\_ Age 65 or older Y N

\_\_\_\_\_ Age 65 or older Y N

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Home phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact and Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

NOTE: Please let trip leader know of any special medical issues which may affect your trip.

Roommate (if a separate person) - Official name as on ID: \_\_\_\_\_

Bedding Preference (Pending Availability): \_\_\_\_ 1 King or \_\_\_\_ 2 Queens \_\_\_\_ Deluxe or \_\_\_\_ Standard

		<u>Standard</u>	<u>Deluxe Price</u>
Basic Snowmass Package (65 and older)		\$2,336	\$2,506 per person
Under 65	add	\$ 130	\$ 130
Single Supplement	add	\$1,605	\$ 1,775
Extra hotel night (Pending Availability)	add	\$ 419	\$ 453 per room/night
Non-skiers	deduct	\$ 396	\$ 396
Extra ski days (65 and older)	add	\$ 119	\$ 119 6 day Senior
	add	\$ 199	\$ 199 7 day Senior
Under 65	add	\$ 247	\$ 247 6 day pass
Silver Pass (70 & older skiing 8 or more days)	add	\$ 353	\$ 353

Please check all appropriate spaces:

Cost (will be filled in by trip leader):

\_\_\_\_ Basic package \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ Single supplement \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ Extra hotel nights \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ Non-skier \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ Extra day(s) of skiing \_\_\_\_ days \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ Silver pass \_\_\_\_\_

Total price of trip \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Additional nights at SMC: yes \_\_\_\_ no \_\_\_\_ if yes, what dates? \_\_\_\_\_

Additional comments \_\_\_\_\_

Potomac Valley Skiers

**WAIVER**

**RELEASE, ASSUMPTION OF RISK, AND WAIVER OF LIABILITY AGREEMENT PERTAINING  
TO THE JANUARY 8-15, 2025 SKI TRIP to SNOWMASS, COLORADO (Potomac Valley Skiers)**

- (1) I acknowledge that there are inherent risks in the sport of skiing and other sports or activities in which I might participate during this trip, and in the process of traveling. There may be bodily injury, illness, accident, death, property loss or damage, and unanticipated additional costs or other economic losses. I fully and willingly accept the responsibility and liability for all such risks, dangers, costs, and losses.
- (2) I agree not to sue or hold responsible the trip leader, Potomac Valley Skiers, Inc. (hereafter PVS), its officers and members of the Executive Committee, or its members for: (1) any accident, personal injury, illness, or death occurring to me or to any other trip participant, arising directly or indirectly from this trip; (2) any loss of deposit of payment, any other property or economic loss, or unanticipated additional costs, delay, or change of itinerary arising out of any action or inaction of any hotel, airline, tour operator, land transportation operator, or other entity or person providing services on this trip; and (3) any trip cancellation, delay, early termination or extension due to acts of God, forces of nature, or other force majeure events or situations. I willingly and with full knowledge assume these risks.
- (3) I understand and agree that the trip leaders, and the tour operators or agents with whom the trip leaders have contracted, have the right to substitute accommodations of similar or better quality, to change transportation arrangements and providers, and to modify other services. In the event of such changes, no refund or credit will be provided if the accommodations, transportation, or services are of comparable or better quality and cover the same approximate time period.
- (4) I agree that I am not entitled to a credit or refund for any included trip service that is not used by me.

I have read and I fully understand this "Release, Assumption of Risk, and Waiver of Liability Agreement," the final trip flyer, and the trip application, and I agree to all of the specified terms and conditions.

Signature of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

**Potomac Valley Skiers**



# Members' Corner

## LONDON AND THE BRITISH ISLES

June 5-21, 2024

By Rosemary Schwartzbard



We began our journey when friends met us in London on our first day and took us to an elegant English Tea at Fortnum & Mason's. Before boarding our cruise ship, Regent Seven Seas Splendor, in Southampton, we spent three nights in London. We visited Bath and the Cotswold's one day and Hampton Court, home of Henry VIII, on another day. We took a boat ride on the Thames where we drank champagne while we saw the new (The Eye) and the old (Tower of London) along the river.

On the way from London to Southampton we diverted to visit Stonehenge

We spent twelve nights on the ship, stopping each day in a different port, going as far north as the Orkney Islands plus visiting ports in England, Scotland and Ireland. What struck me about this trip was what I learned about the history and geography of this area. Some of the most memorable ports were Edinburgh, The Orkney's, The Hebrides, Isle of Man and Belfast. We went from the Neolithic Age to the Romans, to the Vikings, to the middle ages, to modern times.

### Neolithic (5000 years ago)

Visiting Stonehenge was dramatic. The Stone Circle built 4500 years ago atop a hill in England is an engineering marvel. The stones that weigh several tons sit in splendor, bringing about more questions than answers.

The Orkney Islands also have neolithic sites, including the Standing Stones of Stenness, the Ring of Brodgar and the Skara Brae Neolithic settlement, all older than the Egyptian pyramids. Our visit was difficult as we encountered the only bad weather of the trip, with high winds, rain and hail. It was a challenge to get to the sites, but we fought the elements and charged on.



### ROMAN ERA

Visiting the city of Bath was surprising as we walked along the bustling streets with totally modern shops and then visited the Roman Baths built 2000 years ago. The hot springs that supply the water are still operating. This Roman spa, with rooms of different temperatures, would be sought after today. Now it is a popular tourist attraction and is very well preserved.

We drove past Hadrian's wall near the town of Newcastle, built by the Romans to protect their northern empire.



### THE VIKINGS

The Vikings roamed and pillaged this area from 700 AD to around 1100 AD. In every port of call there were stories of the Vikings. We had an on-board lecturer who made the Vikings come alive with stories and pictures. She said they started out pillaging during the summer months for fun. After hundreds of years of havoc, the pillaging finally stopped but the Vikings left their mark throughout the United Kingdom.

## MIDDLE AGES



Castles, castles and more castles. Of course, the most memorable is Edinburgh Castle built on an extinct volcano. It dominates the skyline. From the castle, the Royal Mile is a historic thoroughfare lined with centuries old buildings, shops and taverns. Dunrobin Castle in Invergordon, Scotland, offers stunning views of the North Sea and beautiful gardens. My favorite is Lews Castle in the Hebrides which proudly overlooks the town of Stornoway. This is where I ran a parkrun 5K and became friends with some of the local people. Then, of course, there is the



Blarney Castle. We did not climb the 126 steps to kiss the Blarney Stone but instead blew it a kiss from the ground. The visit to Hampton Court on our pre-trip journey brought to mind the many books I read about Henry VIII and his six wives who all were at Hampton Court at one time or another. Standing in the 'room where it happened' was good fun. This is where King Henry first saw Anne Boleyn and lived such an extravagant court life. The Palace has lush gardens and lovely artwork.

We also visited the beautiful Cotswold where there are picture-perfect villages dating back to the Middle Ages. That's when the area became prosperous because of the wool trade. We visited the lovely village of Bibury and took pictures of the famous Arlington Row houses from the 17<sup>th</sup> century where the weavers lived and worked.

## TV SERIES

Two of my favorite shows are Bridgerton and Outlander. In Bath, we stood in the square with the tree in the middle where Penelope and Eloise of Bridgerton walked. The dress shop of that show is also on the square. Being a fan of Outlander made the Standing Stones come to life. I touched one but did not get pulled into an earlier century, as happened on the show. We were also near the Culloden battlefield which is part of the Outlander series.



## MOST INTERESTING

It is hard to say what was most interesting but here are a few things that really stand out.

1. The **Orkney Islands** with so much pre-historic history and the lush landscape with miles and miles of green fields with sheep and cattle.
2. The **Isle of Man**, located in the Irish Sea between Ireland and England, is a self-governing British Crown Dependency. Douglas is the prosperous capital city, with a sweeping two-mile seafront promenade. The seafront has beautiful Victorian style houses, with an Opera House in the center. We also rode a 1910 Steam train to the next town of Castletown.

3. In **Belfast** we had an excellent guide, who was a Catholic policeman



during the Troubles in the 90s and is married to a Protestant. He was able to bring to life how Protestants and Catholics fought against each other (but not in his marriage). We saw the walls that were built during the Troubles to separate neighborhoods. The town is now thriving and fast growing. Belfast was a major shipbuilding town, where the Titanic was built. The Titanic Museum is a standout building constructed of over 3000 pieces of Aluminum, each representing one of the men who built the ship.



4. I was surprised at how active and thriving the city of **Cork** is. Many company headquarters are positioned there -- IT companies, pharmaceuticals and others.

On our last day, we visited the beach town of **Weymouth** in SW England. After days of temperatures in the 50s, we encountered 70+-degree weather. We walked through this port city shedding our layers. It appeared that everyone in town was at the beach or eating fish and chips at the seaside restaurants. What a contrast to our other ports. As mentioned, we were on a cruise with 750 other passengers. The ship, Regent Splendor, was elegant and the service was impeccable. Upon first entering the ship we were handed a glass of champagne and it continued to flow. After sailing all night, we usually arrived in the next



port around 8am. Each day, we went on one of the tours offered by the cruise line and visited places as described above. We had sumptuous dinners on the ship in a variety of restaurants after sipping champagne in one of the lounges. After dinner we tried to catch a show put on by the talented entertainment crew who presented a variety of show tunes and musicals. We had one day of rain and wind and otherwise the weather was in the 50-60s with sun for about 20 hours a day. There is so much to learn and to see in our beautiful world. Keep traveling.





[illegible]

ExCom Officers, Board  
Members, and Chairpersons

*Rosemary Schwartzbard*

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

15