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Potomac Valley Skiers, Inc.  
WASHINGTON MARYLAND VIRGINIA

September 2020

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

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### President's Message

Welcome back from our PVS summer hiatus. I hope everyone has had a pleasant summer even though so many days reached temperatures above 90 F. Owing to the continuation of the pandemic during this time, Mary and I stayed put and enjoyed the amenities of our home, in-house library, WETA UK, yard, garden, pool and neighborhood. It was a very relaxing period for us. It was a staycation.

There was enough to keep me busy in July and August. For example, my major minor project was laying a new stone walk in our backyard. I was able to



use salvaged granite, slate and other stone that I had and that my neighbor provided from a patio that he had torn up. The new path is approximately 32 feet long. It meanders up a small shaded slope. I transplanted moss and plugged it in as a filler between the steppingstones to limit water runoff and

resultant soil erosion. I think it turned out fairly well. See photo.

The next PVS meeting is scheduled for Sept 15, 2020 at 7:30 PM. Due to the Covid situation, it will be another Zoom meeting. Marianne Sponis has kindly agreed to host it again and we will follow the same successful format as our June ZOOM meeting. See Marianne's article on page 2 for participant instructions.

The skiing situation is pretty much the same as we discussed in June. We are still seeking information



Late blooming  
native red azalea

about how to proceed with the Snowmass and Davos trips. The information we have to date on these trips is provided in the articles herein. The current ban on U.S. citizens from entering European countries will probably continue until we bring our Covid-19 cases to significantly lower numbers. However, we will also need to consider the Covid-19 situation in Europe. According to recent press reports, there have been some recent outbreaks there. Furthermore, we do not know how the beginning of the school year will affect the U.S. and European Covid-19 environment in the coming months. It will require close monitoring going

forward. All in all, it is an unsettling circumstance for skiing during the upcoming season. Let's hope a vaccine is created and widely available as soon as it is safe so that the Covid-19 virus can be contained to allow more flexibility for travel and skiing in the new year.

**Monthly Meeting**  
**PVS Virtual Meeting**  
**ZOOM**  
**Tuesday, Sep 15, 2020,**  
**7:30 PM**  
*instructions on next page*

My wish is that everyone stays well,  
**Tom Tycz**

## Join Us at Our September 15, 2020 PVS Virtual Meeting

We miss you!

We hope you have been keeping healthy, safe and in tiptop skiing shape. If not, you will have a chance to explain at our first fall meeting.

We will be holding our meeting via Zoom on Tuesday, September 15, 2020 at 7:30 p.m. For those of you who have used Zoom, you know that we will be able to see other attendees, share some stories, and watch our president, Tom Tycz, and others, cover some agenda items.

You will receive an invitation via email on the day of the meeting. We will also send information as to procedures and agenda items. If you are not familiar with Zoom, there is a short tutorial below and also free information on the Internet. If you have any additional questions, you can contact Marianne Sponis at [Marianne.Sponis@gmail.com](mailto:Marianne.Sponis@gmail.com).



Looking forward to “seeing you” on September 15!

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### Tutorial for the PVS Zoom Meeting Tuesday, September 15, 2020 at 7:30 p.m. EST

Understanding that there are different levels of experience with Zoom, below are some basics for our get-together for those who might be helped by it.

Marianne Sponis is the Host of the meeting and, as such, will send the invitation and also open the meeting to participants. The information below refers to the evening of the meeting.

- The invitation will be sent via email. Open the email and look for the link that says “Open Zoom Meeting”. Click on it.
- When the link opens, look for “Open with Video.” Click on it. (*Please Note: If your computer does not have a camera, you can call in via your cell phone. You can be heard but won’t be seen.*)
- When the video appears, take a look to see how you look! Then, look for “Open with Audio.” Click on it so you can be heard.
- If you come in too early, you may see the line “Please wait for Host to open the meeting.” If you see this, it means Marianne hasn’t started the meeting but should do so soon. Just wait and it will happen!

Once you are in the meeting, move your cursor to the bottom of the screen (if you are using a computer). If you are using an iPad, it will be at the top. You will see several things:

- “Mute/unmute” – you can choose either by clicking on the words. If everyone is talking a lot, or outside noises interfere (siren, radio, pet), the Host can mute everyone and then ask people to unmute when they have something to say. To begin with, you will be un-muted so you can chat until everyone gets on the screen.
- “Video on/off” – you should be able to see yourself and others. If you can’t, click on the words to get the video on.
- # participants – this shows how many of us are on the call and lists names.
- “Share screen” – Right now, we won’t use this.
- “Reactions” – allows participants to give a thumbs up!
- ‘More’ – If you click on this, “chat” comes up. It allows you to write comments or questions to everyone. It also says ‘record’, but I was advised not to do that.
- “Leave”- please only do this at the end as you leave.

Looking forward to seeing everyone! *Marianne Sponis*  
Home phone: 202-363-5250; cell: 301-332-3039



## SKI TALK- September 2020

We are living in uncertain times, and our club faces challenges as never before. PVS will be 55 years old this fall and throughout its existence club members had monthly meetings, social gatherings, and a variety of ski trips to choose from each year. It is now September, our meetings are virtual, our gatherings are non-existent, and we wonder if we will be skiing at all this coming season. In prior years, by September we would have contracts signed and at least two trips on our agenda. This year we have not signed any contracts as we are still negotiating with our vendors for more favorable cancellation terms. We may be able to get better terms, but with the Covid numbers going up rather than down, it seems reckless to encourage people to travel and to be part of large groups. We will continue to assess the situation and decide soon whether we can go ahead with any ski trips this year. As of this date, travel to Europe is restricted for U. S. citizens.

Skiing, if at all, will certainly be different this season. The information I have been getting is that you will have to make reservations for a time slot, stay socially distant, and only ride the lift with friends or family. According to a recent article, Aspen Skiing Co. plans to open its four mountains on schedule under a controlled environment with no indoor bathrooms (porta-Johns only) and no sit-down dining. Aspen also is considering blackout-dates for local skiers so it can manage the crowds. This has not been received well by local skiers.

Perhaps by then, we will be used to controlled, social distancing, mask-wearing events. This summer, kayaking on the Potomac and swimming at the Arlington pools have required making a reservation for a specific time and paying online. At the swimming pool, they ask if you have been exposed to Covid, then take your temperature. No lockers are available; there are spaces in the pool area to place your bag. After a 45-minute session, you gather your belongings and go out the back door. A mask is mandated except while in the pool. The system does have its benefits. I am assured of a lane to myself.

There is a similar system for kayaking at the DC boathouses. One makes reservations and pays online. You arrive



in a mask at your assigned time; you then get a boat and lifejacket and enjoy the water. The problem is that you have to decide in advance to get reservations and the number of boats has been limited. One can no longer be spontaneous and decide at the last minute to take advantage of the water. The good part is that these activities are available. I believe it will be the same with skiing. Resorts will be open but it will be a different experience.

Speaking of different experiences, we have embarked on weekly take-out dining. After spending a lifetime eating in restaurants, late April Dick and I realized it may be awhile before we could do that again. We decided to try take-out from some of our favorite restaurants and from some that we had been wanting to try, but could not get reservations pre-pandemic. We were apprehensive at first as take out has never been appealing for us. However, it has been a very positive experience. We explore menus the week before and decide on Thursday what our gourmet treat will be that week. We order and pay online. On Fridays at 6pm we drive to the restaurant to pick up our dinner. We bring it home and follow instructions on reheating (if any). We re-plate, open wine, and enjoy our feast.

It has been an adventure! So far we have had take out from 17 restaurants, all in DC. The dinners have ranged from a seven-course around the world menu from Compass Rose to a one-dish seafood Paella from Del Mar at the wharf. The Paella came in its pan (for an additional \$35). Part of the adventure is finding the restaurant. One was in an unmarked alley behind an unmarked door (Maydan). Usually we call when we get to the restaurant and the food is brought out. Last week we were greeted by the chef at I Ricchi who described the menu, which was from the Isle of Capri. It included a delicious fettuccine al limone. We are enjoying our experience so much we may never go back to eat-in restaurants (just kidding). The efficiency and creativity of the chefs at this difficult time is amazing. It is also a good way to support restaurants.

It is an unprecedented and unique time. Let's do our best to stay healthy and enjoy what we can. Your thoughts are always appreciated.

Rosemary *Schwartzbard*, [rosemaryschw@gmail.com](mailto:rosemaryschw@gmail.com)



# *Snowmass, Colorado 2021*

It's hard to believe that it's already September and we don't have on our calendar to send out final payment reminders to our Snowmass participants... What a spring and summer to either remember or forget.

While the optimist in us is still holding out hope for a ski trip this year – the realist in us is still seeing the dark side of the news. For us, if we don't get to ski at least once this year it will be the first time ever in the last 35+ years that we've been skiing together.

And what will skiing really be like this season – if it happens at all? As you will see in this month's Ski Talk, Aspen has already made various decisions that will likely make skiing this year a more unpleasant experience with long – socially distanced – lift lines, and how is a socially distanced 6-pack or Gondola really going to work? Outdoor Porta Johns (try that with a one-piece outfit). No indoor on-mountain food – just grab and go (eating standing up anyone). And all of this is already planned prior to any second wave that might happen in the fall/winter – which if it happens – things will get even more restricted. And, what will become of our other favorite Snowmass activities such as the buffet breakfasts and soup lunches? Chances are that if the numbers go back up, then Aspen or Colorado will limit such activities as well as any gatherings we might be planning, such as the pizza party, etc.

At the end of August, Vail Resorts announced a reservation system for all of their ski locations for the coming winter. Details are a bit confusing. However, it is quite possible that you may not be able to ski some days of the week, when you are there, depending on skier volumes and available capacity. It may be a matter of time before Aspen and many other resorts adopt similar policies.

Even given all this, we are holding out hope that we might be able to put a trip together, although there is nothing in place at this time as we are still in a wait and see mode.

Feel free to contact us at [KathyLakehomes@yahoo.com](mailto:KathyLakehomes@yahoo.com) or 703-625-2715.

**Barry & Kathy Lake**  
Trip Leaders



**SAVE THE DATE  
BRSC EUROFEST  
DAVOS, SWITZERLAND  
FEBRUARY 26 - March 6, 2021  
With Post-Trip Option to Portugal  
Led by Inge Lesjak and John Hotaling**

Downhill and cross country ski areas at **Davos** include Jakobshorn, Pischa, Rinerhorn and Parsen; plus the “Glacier Express,” a scenic train ride, connects Davos to the Matterhorn. **The cost is approximately \$2,200 per person in a Double Room (add additional \$200-250 for 6-day lift ticket).**

**Package Includes:**

- **Roundtrip air transportation** between IAD, DCA, BWI to Zurich, Switzerland and ground transportation.
- **Seven nights lodging in Davos at the 4 Star Hilton Garden Inn: with welcome reception, full hot and cold breakfast, buffet daily, - 5 night’s dinners at the hotel, Mid Week Après Ski Party, wellness center, Farewell party.**
- Medical Evacuation Insurance. (This does not include cancellation. More information will be coming about trip insurance.)**

Because of the travel uncertainty with Covid-19, we are not accepting reservations at this time until we are clear about cancellation policies and trip insurance. However, we do need to know who is interested in going on this trip. Please let Inge Lesjak know if you would sign up for Davos.

*Inge adds: We are planning (hoping) to again ski in Switzerland. Hoping for the corona epidemic comes to an end.*

[Lesjak.inge@gmail.com](mailto:Lesjak.inge@gmail.com)

703-869-7248



Looking Back at *Sun Peaks*, BC, Canada 2007  
Led by Nancy & Ray McKinley with the "5 Bobs"



# Members' Corner



By J. David Warthen, Jr.  
[dwarthen409@gmail.com](mailto:dwarthen409@gmail.com)

**TOOT Distribution to 118 Members:** - pdf: 106

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**Roster Changes:** contact <[dwarthen409@gmail.com](mailto:dwarthen409@gmail.com)>

**2020 is going by very slowly**, due to the pandemic, the quarantine, limitations on travel, etc. We all have tried to make our excessive time productive. Besides pulling our hair out, we have cleaned, straightened, read, gardened, walked and a myriad of other things. I chose to do some reading, which is not my cup of tea, after nine years of undergraduate and graduate education. However, I dove in with two popular books that seem to be quite scarce. I have almost finished the longer of the two and am looking forward to the other. Both will be helpful to me for this upcoming election. When I was younger, I would not have touched these two books with a ten-foot pole. However, I am either getting wiser in my senior years, or am really boring. I don't know about you, but I am praying for a vaccine as soon as possible. Stay well and hang in there for that light at the end of the tunnel.

*Dave Warthen*

**PVS Excom Meetings:** During the pandemic, PVS has been very fortunate to have Zoom technology available to us. Our thanks go to Marianne **Soponis**, who took the bull by the horns to lead us in this technology. Quarantining, social distancing, and masking have necessitated this new-found technology in not missing our ExCom Meetings each month. Thanks also goes to Tom **Tycz**, our President in not missing a beat in leading our Zoom meetings. However, we do miss the wine and accompanying snacks. But we do not miss the beltway traffic. Perhaps this will be a new format for our future ExCom meetings with BYOL. 😊



## September

Normally, September is Labor Day and back to school/college, Fall, crepe myrtle, chrysanthemum, astors, and a few other flowers. It is also a time to think again of skiing in the upcoming season. However, no one knows for sure if we will have a ski season in 2021 because of the pandemic which rivals the one we had in 1918, known as the Spanish flu. We can only dream. Thank goodness that we have memories to tide us over. An effective vaccine cannot come quick enough. It is so assuring to live in the age that we do when it comes to scientific advances.

We will make it through this pandemic and come out on the other side. I can hardly wait to go out to eat, to visit grandchildren, to go to church, and give and receive a hug. At times, we wonder if that will ever happen, but it will:



## *In Memoriam, Bob McNeill*

Bob McNeill, a PVS member for 34 years, died on June 27, 2020 at the age of 95. He moved to New Hampshire about 10 years ago, but maintained his PVS membership. He last skied at age 92. His son, Craig McNeill, informed PVS of his death and wrote movingly about *Dad's Last Chair*:



Skiers have a beloved expression about catching the “Last Chair”. It is considered great fortune to be on the final chair that ascends up the snow-covered mountains as the resort closes. The crowds have all left. When you arrive at the top of the chairlift, you are alone on top of that majestic peak. An alpenglow is frequently seen as the sun completes its daily routine. The world is filled with peacefulness, only the sounds of nature remain. And then, you have the mountain to yourself for that final, blissful ski descent.

Dad took his Last Chair peacefully this morning. Joyce and I were here to comfort him. His ashes will be spread next to his wife Martha - his eternal love whom he talked about to his final days. His wish was to not have any service, but that family and friends remember him and share stories when they are together. His children, grandchildren, sisters, extended family and friends will fondly remember him in their hearts forever. Thank you all for being part of his Wonderful Life.

Bob's wife, Martha McNeill (known as Marty), was also a long time PVS member who died in 2009. The McNeills were active PVS members, often opening their Rockville, MD home for club meetings.

Bob was a member of ExCom from 1991 – 1993. In 1991, the TOOT ran a brief profile of Bob when he became an ExCom candidate. The profile related that Bob was born and raised in the Boston area and, after graduating in 1952 from Northeastern University, earned MA and PhD degrees from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University. In 1957, Bob arrived in Washington where he worked in the Budget Office, President Kennedy's White House, Department of Commerce, and Ford Motor Company as Director of International Affairs. In 1967, he became the Executive Vice President for the Energy Committee for American Trade.

Bob's profile also quoted him as saying, “I love to ski.” He was especially proud of being a member of the Ski Liberty Ski Patrol.

### **REMEMBRANCES FROM PVS MEMBERS:**

**Jim Wingate** reminisces with Reg Heitchue: Bob and I had some wonderful ski adventures both at Liberty and VAIL. I remember one beautiful afternoon we were skiing in Game Creek Bowl. For some reason Bob was skiing with a large metal brace on his knee. We were skiing faster than we should have. When I got to the bottom, I turned around to see a large cloud of snow in the air, the result of Bob taking a tremendous fall. When I reached Bob, I noticed the splint was bent. We straightened it up as best we could, and Bob survived to ski another day. I invited him to his first PVS meeting. Bob only skied on Volkl, always purchased from Ski Center. He loved Volkl. I think he had a whole collection of them in his basement, because he always bought new ones each year. We spent many years carpooling to Liberty for ski patrol.

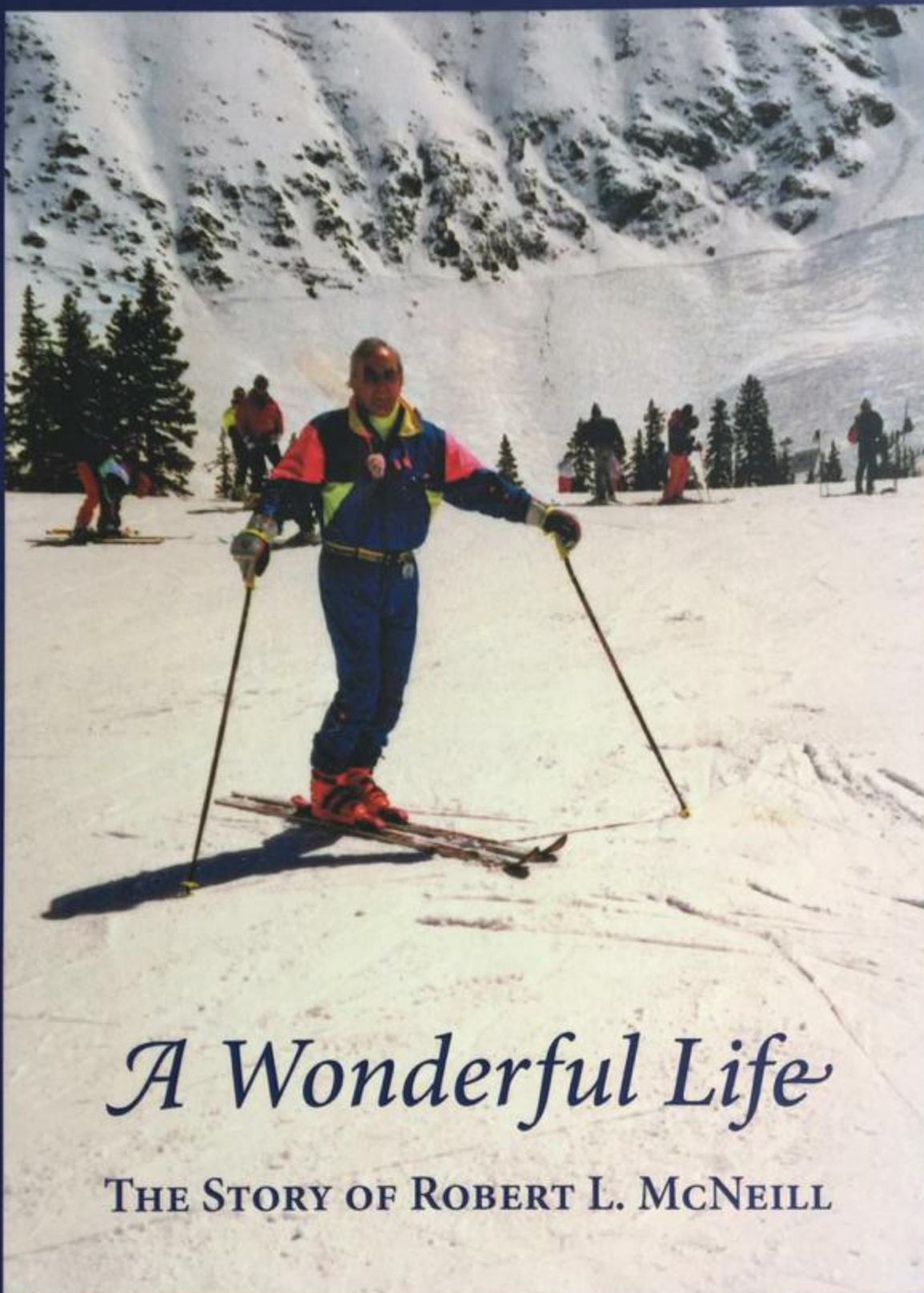
One incident I remember was when Bob and I caught the 6:30 am flight to Denver. Bob had rented a car, and we headed west. I said to Bob, let's get off at Loveland and head over to Arapahoe. That would have taken us over Loveland pass. Bob said absolutely not, he was too afraid of heights or going off the road or something he feared. So, we had to go into Dillon and backtrack to Arapahoe. We got there shortly after the lifts opened, skied all day and headed to your place in Avon.

I always talked of Bob as the Iron Man because of his weekend ritual. He'd leave work Friday night, drive to Killington or another Vermont area, ski all day Saturday and Sunday, drive back Sunday night, and be at work first thing Monday.

**Reg Heitchue** comments: He was a fantastic guy and a fantastic skier.

**Nancy and Ray McKinley** note: Bob wrote a book about his life at the request of his son. Bob gave us a copy. The book cover, showing Bob on the slopes, is replicated here:





*A Wonderful Life*

THE STORY OF ROBERT L. MCNEILL

*In Memoriam*  
**Gertrude “Trudy” Lemke Santoro**  
October 14, 1931 – August 18, 2020



Trudy grew up in Maryland during the era of the Great Depression when radio was still the primary entertainment option in the home. She was one of four children and the only daughter of Mary and Otto Lemke. As an adult, she loved to travel and ski. She visited many countries in her lifetime and was especially fond of the time she spent in Western Europe, the U.S. Rocky Mountains, and Alaska. She worked overseas for several years during her career with the Federal Government. She met her eventual husband on a return flight following mutual ski vacations. After marrying, she settled in Northern Virginia and had one child.

In addition to her parents, Mary and Otto Lemke, she was predeceased by her brothers Robert “Bobby” and Gerald “Jerry” Lemke, and her husband, A. Michael "Mike" Santoro, Jr.

Trudy is survived by her son, daughter-in-law, and two grandchildren -- John, Jennifer, Michael, and Julia Santoro -- and her brother, Charles “Charlie” Lemke.

Viewing was held at Murphy Funeral Home, Falls Church, VA on August 26. Mass of Christian Burial was offered August 27 at St. Anthony of Padua Catholic Church, Falls Church, VA on August 27, followed by interment at Quantico National Cemetery, Triangle, VA

Trudy is a Charter Member of the Potomac Valley Skiers, a long-time member of 47 years.



**PVS 2020 Calendar**

Sep 8 Tue September EXCOM Zoom Meeting, 7:00 PM

Sep 15 Tue September Zoom General Meeting, 7:30 PM



*Astors*

**2021 Ski Trips**



January 6-13, 2021, Snowmass, CO, Kathy and Barry Lake

February 26 - March 6, 2021, Davos/BRSC,  
Inge Lesjak and John Hotaling

**Useful Ski "Links"**

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

**ExCom**

<p><b>Officers:</b>  President – <i>Tom Tycz</i>  Vice Pres. – <i>Kal Nossuli</i>  Secretary – <i>Ellie Thayer</i>  Treasurer – <i>Dick Schwartzbard</i>  Ex Officio -</p> <p><b>Board Members:</b>  <u>First Term:</u>  <i>Cara Jablon</i>  <i>Kathy Lake</i>  <i>Don Vierimaa</i>  <u>Second Term:</u>  <i>Jannes Gibson</i>  <i>Jan Marx</i>  <i>Mary Rose de Valladares</i></p>	<p><b>Chairpersons:</b>  Ski Trip Committee – <i>Rosemary Schwartzbard</i>  Events – <i>Marianne Sopolis</i>  Membership Records – <i>Dave Warthen</i></p> <p>TOOT Coordinator – <i>Ellie Thayer</i>  TOOT Layout Editors – <i>Jan Marx, Kerry Hines &amp; Dave Warthen</i>  TOOT (E-Distribution) – <i>Dave Warthen</i></p> <p>Webmaster – <i>Mary Ellena Ward</i></p> <p>Meeting Records – <i>Sue Lyon</i></p> <p>Historian – <i>Jan Marx</i></p>
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**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.