

Volume 55  
Number 10

*Potomac Valley Skiers, Inc.*  
WASHINGTON MARYLAND VIRGINIA

October 2020

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

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

### President's Message

October is Fall. Temperatures are falling from the very high summer 90<sup>o</sup>+ F to the cooler and more pleasant 50 to 60<sup>o</sup>F range. Leaves are turning yellow, orange, red and chartreuse. It is time to be a "leaf peeper" and take a drive or a bicycle ride or just a walk in your neighborhood to see the foliage and enjoy the season.

With the continuing Covid situation, the 20/21-ski season, especially for groups like ours, is in jeopardy. The resorts are placing ticket reservations and other restrictions on those who wish to ski. Of course, there are also concerns about air travel, staying at hotels, and eating in large gatherings in restaurants, lodges and mountainside eateries, if allowed at all. Groups will also need to consider contingencies if one in the group or others staying at the same hotel contract Covid-19. Does everyone at the hotel need to quarantine? Does the group as a whole need to quarantine, etc.? It is very complicated to consider the possibilities. With these kinds of considerations, some tour operators are not recommending that people ski with groups this season. It may be OK for a couple or a very small group to go skiing, if they are able to essentially stay in their rooms to eat meals; and that will require planning. Considering all of these factors, the Executive Committee sadly decided that PVS will not sponsor any ski trips for the coming season. It will be a "bye" year for us to assure our collective health.

This is the time to consider other activities we may enjoy as a (socially distanced) group. Marianne Sponis secured Glenstone Museum reservations for five people for Sept 24. These reservations are difficult to get. Those who went on the excursion, I am sure, had an enjoyable day. If anyone is willing to coordinate and lead a bike trip, a walking tour of the mall, a tour of a Smithsonian museum, or other outing, please let Marianne know and she will help advertise the outing to PVS members.

The Sept. 15, 2020 PVS Zoom Meeting was another success graciously hosted and facilitated by Marianne. The next PVS meeting will also be a Zoom meeting on October 20, 2020 at 7:30 PM. I hope to "see" you there. Enjoy our Fall and stay well.

*Tom Tycz*



### Monthly Meeting

Via

**ZOOM**

**Tuesday, October 20,  
at 7:30 PM**

**See page 2**

## Join Us at Our October 20, 2020 PVS Virtual Meeting

We will again be holding our PVS monthly meeting via Zoom on Tuesday, October 20, 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. 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 Soponis at [Marianne.Soponis@gmail.com](mailto:Marianne.Soponis@gmail.com).

Looking forward to “seeing you” on October 20!

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### Tutorial for the PVS Zoom Meeting Tuesday, October 20, 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 Soponis 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 recor, 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 **Soponis**

Home phone: 202-363-5250;

cell: 301-332-3039



## Coming Events

## GOOTH Trips

### “Get Out Of The House” Trips

With a desire to socialize while keeping safe, we are introducing a new concept for PVsers to get together. The focus is on small groups meeting for an activity, mainly outdoors where social distancing and keeping safe is easier, but, could be a museum or other event. For example:

- You do some research and offer to meet somewhere, mentioning
  - Why come? What is there to see or do?
  - Is the activity indoor or outdoor?
  - Do you have reservations, or is it just come and meet?
  - Is there much walking?
  - Other information (restrooms, time, eating opportunities, etc.)
- Send the information to Marianne Soponis ( [Marianne.Soponis@gmail.com](mailto:Marianne.Soponis@gmail.com) ) who will advertise this to members, and ask interested parties to contact you.
- You meet, enjoy and do a short write-up for the TOOT.

We will continue to see each other during our monthly Zoom meetings but this adds another dimension to your social life!

*Marianne Soponis*



### GOOTH Trip to the National Zoo in DC

We have six free reservations for a visit to the zoo, located on Connecticut Avenue in DC

On Thursday, October 15, 2020 at 10:30 a.m.

If you are interested, please contact Marianne Soponis, 202-363-5250 or [Marianne.Soponis@gmail.com](mailto:Marianne.Soponis@gmail.com) for more particulars.

- The zoo is open with many animals to see
- There is public transportation via Metro or parking in nearby streets
- There is as much walking as you can do but benches if you need a rest
- Everyone must wear a mask
- There are sanitizer stations throughout
- No mention of restrooms but I'm looking
- The animals are lonely!



## Coming Event



Read any good books lately?

Calling all PVS readers to join us for a different kind of Book Club:

## **BYOB - Bring Your Own Book!**

Here's how it works:

- Meet on Zoom from the safety and comfort of your own home (frequency to be determined)
- Each attendee takes a few minutes to talk about a book they're reading or enjoyed in the past
- Learn about other good reads and maybe ones to put on our own reading list
- Get to chat with our PVS friends and share our love of reading. All book genres welcome
- NO REQUIRED READING!
- NO STRESS OR PESKY READING DEADLINES!

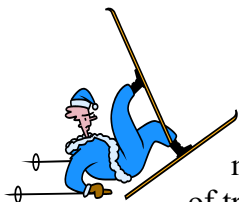
If you're interested, please send an email to our program chair, [Marianne.soponis@gmail.com](mailto:Marianne.soponis@gmail.com). The first BYOB will be held on Thursday, October 8 from 4-5 p.m. A zoom link will be sent to you to join. At that time, we can discuss any further refinements to our plan. We hope you will join us!

.....*Nancy McKinley.*



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## **SKI TALK** **October 2020**



While PVS will not be running any ski trips this season, you still have many opportunities to ski besides local skiing. One of the many benefits of belonging to a ski club is that you can take advantage of trips run by other clubs in the area. PVS is a member of Blue Ridge Ski Council (BRSC), which is an umbrella organization of more than twenty ski clubs in the Metropolitan DC, Annapolis, Baltimore, and Richmond areas. The BRSC includes Ski Club of Washington, Pentagon and Columbia ski clubs, and a number of other clubs. Many of these clubs are, as of this time, planning on running trips this upcoming ski season. Please see the list of trips elsewhere in this TOOT. You may join any of these trips. Just contact the trip leader and tell him/her that you are a member of PVS.



One highly recommended trip is the BRSC Western Carnival at Telluride, February 6-13, 2021. See the flier in this TOOT. You can contact any of the participating trip leaders or go directly to the tour operator, Effie Rubenstein. She can be reached at: [sportours@comcast.net](mailto:sportours@comcast.net)

Tell her you are a PVS member and she will sign you up. You have your choice of staying at several different properties. If you do sign up, please let me know.

## **BRSC Meeting**

BRSC Representatives from ski clubs in the Metropolitan DC area, Richmond, Annapolis, and Baltimore gathered on ZOOM this past Saturday, September 26, for this fall's semi-annual meeting. During this meeting the representatives voted on future ski destinations for the Council and selected the tour operators who will arrange the trips. At this meeting the following 2022 BRSC trips were selected:

The **Western Carnival** will be held at **Jackson Hole, Wyoming, from January 29 to February 5, 2022**. Presentations were made by three potential tour operators. Winter Ski and Sport was selected as the tour operator. Several different lodging arrangements are available and will be described at a later time.

**Eurofest 2022 will be held at Sölden, Austria from February 18 to February 26, 2022**. Winter Ski and Sport was also selected as the tour operator for this trip.

PVS will decide at a later date if we will join the above 2022 trips.

I also learned at the meeting that the BRSC Eastern carnival to Jay Peak, Vermont, March 7-12, 2021, may be cancelled. This will be decided by November 15. As of today, people from the Metropolitan DC area have to quarantine for two weeks \*or quarantine for 7 days and test negative on a COVID test prior to going to Vermont. There are other, more complicated guidelines that allow a person from a county with a COVID case level the same or lower than Vermont's (400 cases per million) to enter without any restrictions. Guidelines are at this link: <https://accd.vermont.gov/covid-19/restart/cross-state-travel>\*. If the trip is cancelled, it will be offered in 2022.

The BRSC Eurofest to Davos, Switzerland, scheduled for this February 2021 was cancelled due to low interest because of Covid.

Just a word of caution, if you are signing up for a ski trip this season be sure to buy trip insurance that includes "Cancellation for any Reason." You must buy this within a week or so of signing up for a trip.

## **Spring 2021 Ski Show**

The Paul Weber Spring Ski Show is scheduled for Friday evening, April 30, at the Marriott Hotel located at Tysons Corner. Mark your calendars. Hopefully, we can meet in person by then.

**DUE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC  
PVS CANNOT RUN ANY GROUP SKI TRIPS  
THIS SEASON. BOTH SNOWMASS  
AND DAVOS ARE CANCELLED.  
See Ski Talk for more information**

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



Hello Rosemary,

Thank you for extending the Telluride Western Carnival to your members. We can accommodate your members with as few as one guest with a single supplement or, I can try and pair them w/ another traveler. It would be great to have your members reach out to each other and confirm their roommate and/or condomates before signing up. I can accommodate air from both BWI and DCA on the itineraries below.



Please let me know if you'd like additional info and if interest warrants, we can reserve a larger block for your members.

**PACKAGE PRICE:**

**Mountainside Inn**

\$ 2,010.00 per person, double occupancy, Kitchenette (Q TW)  
Add \$ 629.00 for single occupancy

**Bear Creek Condos**

\$ 2,580.00 per person with four guests per Two Bed/Two Bath Condos (K 2TW)  
Add \$ 1,149.00 for single occupancy

\$ 2,486.00 per person with six guests per Three Bed/Three Bath Condos (K 2TW 2TW)  
Add \$ 1,055.00 for single occupancy

**Telluride Mountain Lodge**

\$ 2,630.00 per person with four guests per Two Bed/Two Bath Deluxe Condos (K 2DBL)  
Add \$ 1,249.00 for single occupancy

**The Peaks Resort & Spa includes breakfast daily**

\$2,686.00 per person, double occupancy in a room with two king beds (KK)

\$ 3,846.00 per person, single occupancy in a room with one king bed (K)

**PACKAGES INCLUDE:**

- Roundtrip air on American Airlines, BWI or DCA to Montrose, including app. tax as of 5/18/20
- Roundtrip transfers Montrose to Telluride
- Seven nights lodging as indicated, lodging tax and resort fees
- Baggage Handling (Where applicable)
- BRSC Catered Events
- Five of Ten Day Adult Group Lift Tickets

**Blue Ridge Ski Council Events including:**

- Welcome Reception Superbowl Party
- On Mountain Western Barbecue
- Final Farewell Dinner and Dance
- Mountain Tours

**AIRFARE: American Airlines (Subject to Change)**

**BWI**

2/6 # 1403 7:00am – 9:23am # 2682 10:35am – 12:02pm BWI/DFW/MTJ  
2/13 # 2682 2:36pm – 5:43pm # 1615 8:45pm – 12:49am MTJ/DFW/BWI (arrives 2/14/21)

**DCA**

2/6 # 889 6:59am – 9:19am # 2682 10:35am – 12:02pm DCA/DFW/MTJ  
2/13 # 2682 2:36pm – 5:43pm # 2752 6:55pm – 11:00pm MTJ/DFW/DCA  
Deduct \$ 450.00 for the package without airfare.

**LIFT TICKETS: Five of Ten Day Adult Lift Tickets Included**

Deduct \$ 395.00 for the package without lift tickets  
Add \$ 25.00 to the package price to upgrade to six day Adult Lift Ticket

Seniors 65 – 79

Deduct \$ 16.00 from the package price for Seniors with a Five Day lift ticket  
Add \$ 9.00 to the package price for Seniors with a Six Day lift ticket  
Seniors 80+ SKI FREE!

**EPIC PASS PROMO:** Purchase an EPIC PASS for the 2020/2021 season from Sportours and take \$100.00 off the 2021 BRSC Western Carnival package when the EPIC PASS holders travels on the BRSC Telluride Western Carnival. Pass must be active and not cancelled. Deduction will be taken off your club's final invoice. EPIC PASS purchases do not count toward complimentary lift tickets.



**BLUE RIDGE SKI COUNCIL EVENTS**

**Welcome Reception/Superbowl Party:** Sunday, February 7th 4:00pm – 9:00pm  
Telluride Conference Center

**On Mountain Western Barbecue:** Tuesday, February 9<sup>th</sup> 2:00pm – 4:00pm  
Gorrono Ranch

**Final Farewell Dinner and Dance:** Thursday, February 11<sup>th</sup> 6:00pm – 10:00pm  
Telluride Conference Center

**Payments:**

\$ 500.00 per person at time of booking  
\$ 500.00 per person due October 1, 2020  
\$ 1,000.00 per person due November 1, 2020  
Final payment due December 1, 2020

Individual deposits and final payments should be made payable by check to Sportours. Credit card payments are not accepted.

Rosemary, thank you again for promoting the Telluride Western Carnival. Your members will have a BLAST!

Thank you, *Effie*  
SPORTOURS

[BRSC Sanctioned Trips 2021](#)

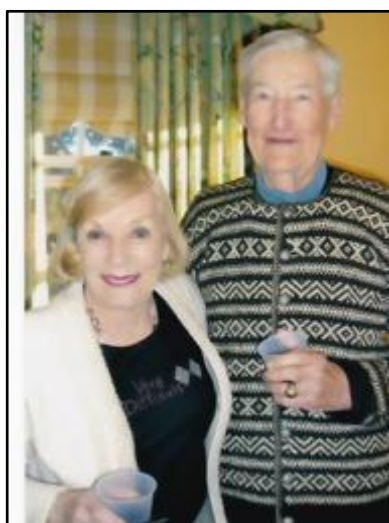
## *In Memoriam*



Sylvia Lukens, who died on August 6, 2020, became a PVS member in 1995 and remained a member on and off until her death. Her husband, Wally Lukens was also a PVS member. The following is a Legacy obituary published in the Washington Post on September 6, 2020.

### **SYLVIA CANOVA LUKENS (Age 91)**

Passed away in her beloved summer home in Sconset, Nantucket Island on August 6, 2020. Sylvia was born in October of 1928 in Allentown, Pennsylvania to Victor and Elizabeth (Mooney) Canova. Her primary residence for over 50 years was in Alexandria, Virginia. She had previously lived in California and Stuttgart, Germany with her husband Wally. Sylvia had a passion for painting, skiing, fine dining, and traveling the world. A cultured eye for beauty inspired her collection of antique furniture, carpets, and ancient and contemporary objects of art. She remained very close to her extended family of nephews and cousins and the many friends she made throughout her life. Everyone who knew her considered her an adventurous, creative and dynamic individual. Sylvia lived a full life and will be missed by many. Sylvia was preceded in death by her loving husband, Walter Patrick Lukens. Wally was a decorated Army officer awarded two Bronze Stars with Oak Clusters for valor, a world class skier, an enthusiast of fine sports cars and a father figure within his extended family. She is survived by her sister, Elaine C. Biondi of Allentown, Pennsylvania and two nephews, John W. Noble of Vero Beach, Florida, and Tim Noble of Berks County, Pennsylvania, as well as several cousins. A funeral service will be held at Ft. Meyer Chapel on a date to be determined, with burial to follow at Arlington National Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to the Alzheimer's Disease Association, Northern VA Chapter or the Humane Rescue Alliance.



Sun Valley 2008



Cortina, Italy

Joan and Glade Flake were the Lukens' PVS sponsors. Joan relates that Glade and Wally met while stationed in Stuttgart, Germany. The Lukens were frequent participants on European ski trips lead by John Smith. Joan was in touch with Sylvia in May before she went to her summer home in Nantucket. They had planned lunch upon Sylvia's return.



## Past Event

### SEPTEMBER 15, 2020 PVS ZOOM MEETING IT WAS NOT ALL ZOOM AND GLOOM

It was a hardship, but 30 PVSers made the strenuous trek from their dining rooms to their computers to attend the Zoom meeting facilitated by Marianne Sponis on this Tuesday evening in September. Many of their summer stories were similar. Members were walking, gardening, reading, finishing long-postponed projects, and lamenting lost opportunities. Despite the boredom, as Barry Lake quipped, there was a sense of loosening up of some covid-19 related restrictions. Jan Marx and Don Vierimaa both traveled to Minnesota this summer. Blanca Hotaling spent time in her vacation houses, Dick Parlow visited wineries, Herb Bennett biked and had a paper published, and Bonnie Sweeney helped arrange small outdoor concerts.



Jill Nelson and Ellie Thayer ventured out to eat in outdoor restaurants for the first time, Rosemary and Dick Schwartzbard perfected Friday take-out meals, while Serge and Liz Triau scouted out sparsely attended restaurants. Kal Nossuli had cataract surgery, Dave and Marsha Warthen “escaped” from the Riderwood community complex occasionally, and Cara and Bob Jablon accumulated their daily quota of steps by walking the dog. Carolyn and Dave DeVilbiss appeared to win the walking contest with their sometimes-lengthy forays into the unknown.

Mary Ellena Ward and Jim Slack meanwhile walked their neighborhood strategically to avoid covid-infected neighbors. Bing Van Nuys and Tom Tycz were yard workers and Mary Rose de Valladares walked to work. Mary Tycz concentrated on her volunteer political work. Nancy McKinley commented that it was Ray’s birthday. It was clear what our facilitator, Marianne Sponis, had been doing – preparing for Zoom meetings for ExCom and the club and thinking about possible activities.

After the social hour (everyone provided their own drinks and appetizers), President Tom opened the short business meeting. Marianne spoke to the upcoming event at Glenstone where she had secured a reservation for five people. Among the group, Mary Rose and Jill were excited to join.

Cleverly, Marianne coined the term, “GOOTH trips.” That would be – **Get Out Of The House**. Marianne urged members to organize safe outdoor GOOTH activities for PVS members to join. Information about the club’s 55<sup>th</sup> anniversary event and the opening of the time capsule will be addressed in 2021.

With respect to 2021 ski trips, Rosemary relayed the unfortunate news that the club would not be leading any ski trips next year. The resorts in the West are imposing rigorous restrictions on access to the slopes and available facilities and, at this point, Americans are not allowed to fly to Europe. There is hope that there might be local skiing.

Tom concluded the business part of the meeting and the group sang Happy Birthday to Ray McKinley. The singing was not world class, but the recipient was.

*Submitted by Ellie Thayer*





## **GLENSTONE VISIT**

**September 24, 2020**



On a brisk September day, four hardy PVSers enjoyed their first GOOTH trip to Glenstone, a privately owned Maryland museum. The vision for the owners' collection highlights experimentation, accessibility and everydayness of art across the full spectrum of media, including video and vocal.

They enjoyed a delightful visit, including the main gallery, which was open to limited numbers. There was a broad collection of contemporary art (since WWII), including works by Jackson Pollack, Cy Twombly, and sculpture from Giacometti to Serra. Docents were helpful and explained that all the works are personally selected by the owners to represent artists who have

made a difference in how we view art.

The café and some other buildings were closed, but the bookstore was open and restrooms were available. There was time to walk the paths and see some of the large sculpture installations. The grounds were stunning and will continue to be so in the fall.

Although you need reservations, it's a good idea to check online, since there may be cancellations. It's worth a try to see a museum that unifies landscape architecture with the built environment and fine art. How restorative it was to get out and walk in a fabulous setting - a great trip!

.... *Jannes Gibson, Jill Nelson, Mary Rose de Valladares, and Jorge Valladares*

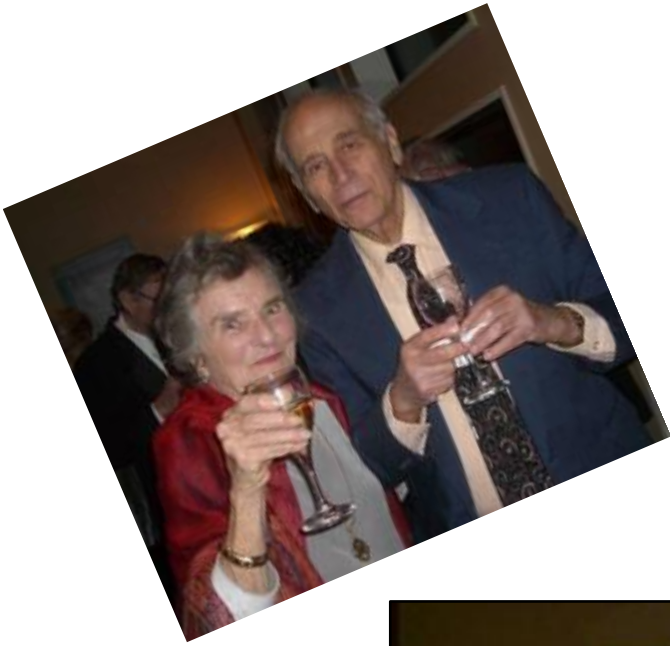


*Jill Nelson*



Looking Back ..... 45th Anniversary Gala





# Members' Corner

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



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

**Thanks to:**

- TOOT Coordinator - E Thayer
- TOOT Layout Editors: K Hines, D Warthen;  
September TOOT – J Marx
- TOOT Electronic Distribution – D Warthen

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

## 2020 Coronavirus-19 Pandemic:

An astounding 200,000+ souls have lost their lives in the U.S. so far to this highly infectious virus. Comorbidity issues are a problem for all age groups with this virus, but even more so for the elderly. It is unlikely that there will be ski trips for the 2020-2021 ski season, due to restrictions on travel, dining, lodging, etc. Travel plans and everything associated with traveling cannot be set, due mainly to the social distancing problems. Stay well; and pray for a safe and effective vaccine.

*J D Warthen Jr*

## October 31 Halloween:



Don't forget the candy treats for grands, and money for their dentists. Halloween is a celebration observed in many countries on the eve of All Hallows' Day, remembering the dead [saints (hallows), martyrs, and all the faithful departed]. It is widely believed

that many Halloween traditions originated from ancient Celtic harvest festivals.

*Wikipedia*

## Daylight Saving:

Fall back on November 1. This is easy to forget and embarrassing if you show up for a meeting at the wrong time. Of course, with the pandemic, no one seems to have meetings anymore, except by Zoom.

## General Election Day: November 3

This is probably the most important election in our lifetime. It would be wise to vote early. Don't forget to vote either in person or mail-in, dropping the latter at your local board of elections or in a board of election's drop-off box. It would also be wise to avoid using the post office due to the recent sabotage of their government

property. Exercising your right to vote is a blessing in this democracy. Make sure that your vote is counted by planning your strategy.



Remembering all the great fun we had, all the memories we have, and skiing again as we used to:



[How to Choose the Best Ski Pass This Season,](#)  
by Jan Murphy,  
Bloomberg, September 21

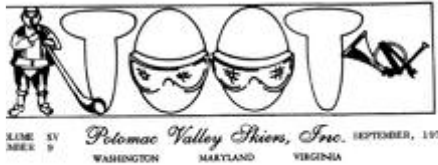


## PVS 2020 Calendar

Oct 8	Thurs	Bring Your Own Book mtg. 4-5 p.m E-mail <a href="mailto:Marianne.soponis@gmail.com">Marianne.soponis@gmail.com</a>
Oct 15	Thurs	Gooth trip to the National Zoo, Soponis
Oct 20	Tue	Zoom monthly meeting at 7:30 p.m.
Oct 27	Tue	Zoom ExCom meeting at 7:00 p.m.



## 2021 Ski Trips



- Editor -

**DUE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC  
PVS CANNOT RUN ANY GROUP SKI TRIPS  
THIS SEASON. BOTH SNOWMASS  
AND DAVOS ARE CANCELLED.**

**See Ski Talk for more information**

### Excom

#### **Officers:**

President – *Tom Tycz*  
Vice Pres. – *Kal Nossuli*  
Secretary – *Ellie Thayer*  
Treasurer – *Dick Schwartzbard*  
Ex Officio -

#### **Board Members:**

##### **First Term:**

*Cara Jablon*  
*Kathy Lake*  
*Don Vierimaa*

##### **Second Term:**

*Jannes Gibson*  
*Jan Marx*  
*Mary Rose de Valladares*

#### **Chairpersons:**

Ski Trip Committee – *Rosemary Schwartzbard*  
Events – *Marianne Soponis*  
Membership Records – *Dave Warthen*

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

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.**