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Potomac Valley Skiers, Inc.
WASHINGTON MARYLAND VIRGINIA

December 2020

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President's Message

In the midst of this holiday season, we approach the close of another year: the year that few of us will be sad to see end.

For Thanksgiving, Mary and I enjoyed a traditional thanksgiving dinner - for two. Of course, we did not have as many side dishes or pies (only one), but the turkey was still delicious, and we continue to enjoy the leftovers and turkey soup.

I reviewed my 2019 holiday message. What a difference the difficulties of 2020 have made! Instead of enjoying the holidays with family and friends, Mary and I will be at home. While it will be a very subdued December without family gatherings or holiday parties with friends and neighbors, we are grateful for our health, the health of our loved ones, our comfortable home, our plentiful table and our ability to give to those who are more in need than ever before.

Our Christmas has started with gift-shopping online, putting up outside decorations, listening to holiday music and bingeing on holiday movies, preferably with snow in them. I will miss skiing in Vermont just before visiting family in Massachusetts during the holiday week. But I am sure Mary and I will still be busy with other activities,

such as remote-volunteering, walking, exercising, reading, sending holiday cards and visiting with family and friends via Zoom or the telephone.

Hopefully, the COVID-19 vaccines will soon be approved and administered to healthcare workers, the most vulnerable, essential workers and then to the rest of us. Maybe spring skiing will be possible in 2021.

For those who did not hear at the November PVS meeting, Vice President Kal Nossuli is resigning his position effective December 31. He will continue as a member. Kal has done an excellent job as vice president, and I thank him on behalf of the membership for his service to PVS for the previous 20 months.

The next PVS meeting, on Dec 15 at 7:30 PM, will be via Zoom. (There will be no in-person PVS Holiday Party this year.) Nevertheless, this is our remaining opportunity this year to see PVS members near and far and enjoy sharing and listening to accounts of the various activities that keep us engaged in daily life. I hope to see many of you at this meeting.

Best Wishes for Safe, Healthy and Happy Holidays,

*Tom Tycz
President*

**December Holiday ZOOM Party,
Tuesday Dec 15, 2020, 7:30pm**

See page 2 for ZOOM directions

Directions for December ZOOM Meeting:

Join Us at Our December 15, 2020 PVS Virtual Zoom Meeting

We will again be holding our PVS monthly meeting via Zoom on Tuesday, December 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. 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.

Looking forward to “seeing you” on December 15!

Tutorial for the PVS Zoom Meeting Tuesday, December 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 Hostess 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!

Home phone: 202-363-5250; cell: 301-332-3039



SKI TALK

December 2020

Another thirty days and 2020 will be over. But who's counting? It has been a rough year, but there is a glimmer of light beginning to show due to the great news about the vaccines. They cannot come too soon.

According to most reports, expect the most dramatic and unpredictable winter sports season in memory. Some resorts in Italy, Austria and France opened and within a few days closed again. Who knows what else will happen?

Report from PVS member, Kay Christensen, who lives in Colorado:

Most of Colorado, which suffered from many disastrous wildfires this year, is in a drought. Little snow has fallen so far, but the Vail-owned and Aspen-area resorts have opened. The Vail-owned resorts (Vail and Beaver Creek) require online reservations to access the mountain. No reservations are currently required at the Aspen-area resorts (Aspen, Snowmass, Buttermilk, Aspen Highlands) but a reservation-required system is highly likely to be implemented at periods this season. Copper Mountain requires parking reservations. All the resorts require the wearing of face coverings and social distancing. Many of the on-mountain restaurants will provide grab-and-go food only; but there will be some opportunities for limited indoor dining, all cashless transactions. Restrooms will be open. Ski lessons are still available, but will be limited to 6 participants at Vail resorts.



As with most of the country, the social restrictions periodically change due to the positivity rate of the coronavirus in each county. Prior to Thanksgiving, both Eagle County (Vail and Beaver Creek) and Pitkin County (Aspen) were allowed to continue indoor dining at 25 percent capacity. Summit County (Breckenridge, Keystone, A-Basin and Copper Mountain) has been forced to shut down all indoor dining, including the on-mountain sites.

Report from John Smith about local skiing:

Both Liberty Mountain and Whitetail require reservations to limit the number of people on the mountain at any time. The reservations can only be made online and the tickets must be purchased at the time the reservations are made. There will be no on-site purchase of tickets. At this time, they are still trying to set up the reservation and ticket purchase system and it is presently limited only to season Epic pass holders. They have not yet decided if they will sell individual day tickets or limit skiing only to season pass holders. If they do sell individual day tickets, the number available each day will not be known until a few days ahead. The reservations are good for skiing from 8 AM to 11 PM each day; there are no half day tickets or senior discounts.

Other news:

Taos opened and then quickly closed due to lockdown in New Mexico. The BRSC trip to Jay Peak, Vermont, has been rescheduled for March 2022.

Please let me know if you go skiing or have any firsthand information to share.
Stay safe.

Happy Holidays,

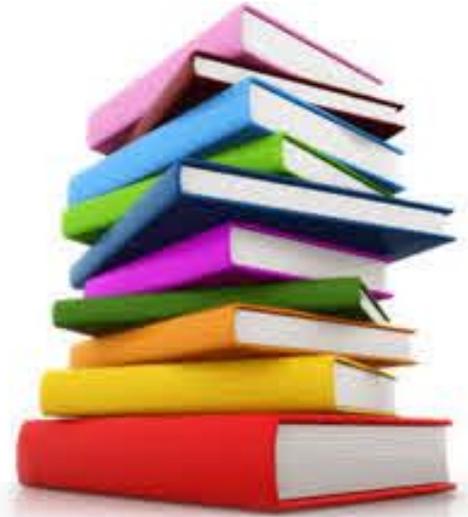
Rosemary Schwartzbard
rosemaryschw@gmail.com

PVS Virtual Book Group (BYOB) meets again!

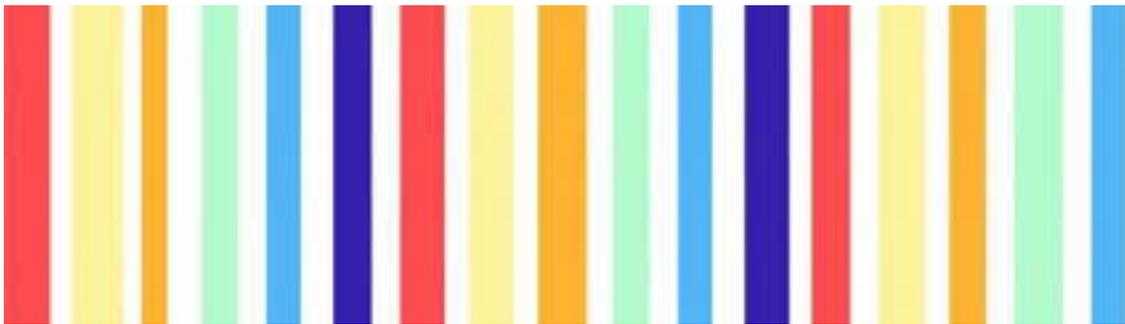
The second meeting of BYOB – Bring Your Own Book – book group took place on the afternoon of November 12th. We had a great time catching up with our fellow PVS readers before launching into light discussions of our current or favorite reads.

This month the choices from our members included:

- “Say Nothing” by Patrick Radden Keefe. This non-fiction work lays bare the not-too-distant past in Northern Ireland known as “the troubles.” Ellie Thayer noted that the riveting work helped bring to light what life was like during that tumultuous time.
- “A Great Reckoning” by Louise Penny was the choice for discussion from Marianne Sponis. This novel takes place in Quebec and provides some lighter reading during these times when we’re all staying cooped up at home.
- “Born a Crime” by comedian and late-night show host, Trevor Noah, describes in both poignant and humorous detail the stories of his growing up in South Africa during apartheid as a child of mixed race. Bonnie Sweeney recommends the tale especially as an audio book read by the author himself.
- If mysteries are your passion, Jan Marx proposes one of many she’s been reading lately: “Jelly’s Gold” by David House. It takes place in St. Paul Minnesota where the story is mired in St. Paul’s mafia history.
- Kal Nossuli described his latest pastime which is the narration of his own interesting life through short stories from his own pen.
- “Jasmine Nights” by S.P. Somtow is a semi-autobiographical coming of age story set in Thailand in the 1960s highly recommended by Nancy McKinley. It’s funny and a delight to read the antics of the protagonist who refuses to speak Thai while living with his unmarried aunts on their luxury estate in Bangkok.



The next BYOB Zoom call will be held on Thursday, December 10 from 4 to 5 pm. Let Marianne Sponis know at marianne.sponis@gmail.com if you’re interested in joining us. Questions? Get in touch with Nancy McKinley at nancymckin@gmail.com or 703 595 8375.



Trees and Skis with PVS

This was the clever name of the presentation by Brian Campbell of NASA as we joined Dorian Janney for another zoom session of our PVS/ GLOBE Observer Tree Project with her on **Friday, November 13, 2020**. Brian has a long title at NASA, some of which is “Senior Earth Science Outreach Specialist,” and also is support to the Satellite Commission. He joined us after finishing a full week of presentations. His voice held up well, as did his stories and examples!



Our project, measuring trees using our phone app, is important because tree height is the most widely used indicator of an ecosystem’s ability to grow trees. An obvious example of a good ecosystem would be the Amazon with a wealth of trees and moisture; a challenging one would be Death Valley with dry, sandy soil and limited water to sustain roots and trees. There are plants, such as the cactus, that are able to adapt and grow, but livability in terms of breathing good air increases with a good ecosystem. Measuring tree height allows observation of carbon that trees take in or release into the atmosphere, helpful to government agencies and policy makers.

On a practical level for us, tree height allows tracking the growth of trees over time; thus, a once-a-month observation would be a good timing for checking on the same tree. Our observations on GLOBE, sent in, allow mapping of trees on a larger map of the USA or of the world. Started in 2019, there have already been 40,000 observations from 13,000 global locations. Additionally, there is a technology that uses laser to measure objects on earth, called ICESat2 (Ice/Cloud/Land Elevation) that has 10,000 laser pulses per second. This allows a comparison of observations from the ground to be compared to that taken from space. Amazing science!



We are happy to report that Dorian and her husband are recovering from Covid 19, but still experience fatigue and loud tinnitus. After the holidays, Dorian may offer some other interesting observations to undertake, perhaps about soil or mosquitoes. We eagerly await!



*...Tom Tycz, Mary Ellena Ward, Dave DeVilbiss, Carolyn DeVilbiss, and Marianne Sponis...
(Jan Marx and Bonnie Sweeney were unable to join the call but are eagerly awaiting too!)*

----- *Monthly General Zoom Meeting, November 17, 2020*

Once again the camaraderie of PVS brought 27 skiers together for November's PVS meeting, coordinated via ZOOM by Marianne Soponis. On the call were Dave and Marsha Warthen, Dick and Rosemary Schwartzbard, Marianne and Clare Soponis, Ellie Thayer, Manfred Boehringer, Dorian Janney, Tom and Mary Tycz, Bing Van Nuys, Marianne and Kerry Hines, Cara and Bob Jablon, John and Blanca Hotaling, Sharon Mulholland, Kal Nossuli, Barry and Kathy Lake, Jill Nelson, Jan Marx, Nancy and Ray McKinley, and Bonnie Sweeney. The meeting began with catching up on everyone's comings and goings in this time of COVID isolation. We are a busy, active, inventive and involved group. Mutual enjoyment continues to be reading, streaming, ZOOMing, walking (with and without furry four-legged friends), biking, and gardening. We all looked pretty good and, for some, with longer, curlier hair of different colors.



Unique activities included...

Bing and Ellie constructing their annual Gingerbread houses; this year Bing's, which is a family affair, will be a covered bridge.



Tom personally taking on repairs to his rental property, in-between raking leaves.

Bonnie continuing to teach on ZOOM and raking leaves like Tom.

John and Blanca purchasing the 1759 Wayside Inn in Middletown, VA. Maybe a future PVS outing?

Dick joining the "I've seen them all" Game of Thrones club.

Kal writing his memoirs in the form of short stories (contact Kal if you would like to read what he has written and provide critique).

Kathy and Sharon continuing to be busy with an active Real Estate market, which needs more homes for sale.

Nancy learning Spanish and, through genealogy research, finding that **Ray** is a first cousin four times removed of Dolly Madison!

Dorian, Jill and Rosemary maintaining their fitness and daily steps while "TLCing" with grandchildren.

Marianne and Kerry rescuing a beautiful Weinaramer.



Sharon receiving a kitten, Sookie, from her daughter for her birthday.

Ellie and Jan trying to decide whether to visit grandchildren for the holidays.

Manfred hearing that his son enjoys driving in Manhattan with NO traffic!

Dorian experiencing and recovering from COVID, along with her husband, whose co-worker passed away from the virus. Their main symptoms were loss of taste and smell and fatigue. Residual effects have been tinnitus and fatigue. She highly recommends purchasing an Oximeter to measure oxygen blood saturation rates—below 94% call 911!

The Schwartzbards alerted us to an optional outing on December 13th when the 17-story Holiday Inn, 75ft away from their bedroom, is to be imploded. Viewing is NOT from their Condo.

Thanksgiving plans were discussed with some remaining at home with no company, some gathering with family and or friends and pretty much following COVID advisories. **Cara** said she would do the cooking and **Bob** would clean up. This gem was shared: if you do not want to bother with a turkey or ham, **Barry** offered that there is always Spam to fall back on! **Manfred** got a laugh since he didn't know what Spam was, it not being part of the German cuisine. **Bob** shared that Austin, MN has a Spam museum!



Business Meeting: Tom was finally able to get us settled down to PVS business. Events included a hike around Lake Accotink in Springfield, Virginia, led by Inge Lesjak; a once-a-month BYOB (Bring Your Own Book) meeting led by Nancy McKinley; and The NASA Tree project led by Dorian Janney (with another potential research project following the holidays). There is no outdoor GOOTH activity planned for December.



Ski Committee: Rosemary mentioned that the Blue Ridge Ski Council (BSRC) Annual Ski Event has been rescheduled to 2022. Snowshoe is blowing snow and ski areas in Utah are opening November 20.

Kerry Hines is heading the Nominating Committee for PVS officers. Please contact him if you are interested or have a recommendation. He is also looking for a replacement for Kal Nossuli (resigning as VP the end of the year) from January to April when elections will be held. Please call or email Kerry Hines if interested.

The December 2020 PVS meeting via ZOOM will be on December 15, 2020 at 7:30 p.m. Suggestions were made for using the occasion to share: our *Ugly Sweaters*, favorite holiday beverage, Christmas poem/writing, etc. Sharon will help organize this event with Marianne. Sharon has always enjoyed playing the guitar with a carol sing-a-long and hopes we can do this. Singing on ZOOM is said to be challenging (and they haven't heard us sing yet!), but we will have a festive get-together regardless.

Submitted by Bonnie Sweeney

Past Event

WALK AROUND LAKE ACCOTINK

November 18, 2020

Inge **Lesjak**, Blanca **Hotaling**, and Don **Vierimaa** left at 10:10 am on a chilly morning and walked about 3.5 miles around Lake Accotink, arriving back at 11:45am. We enjoyed some red and yellow colors, a smooth, wide trail, and good conversation. Our bodies warmed up from the exercise and cabin fever subsided.

Notes from Don Vierimaa



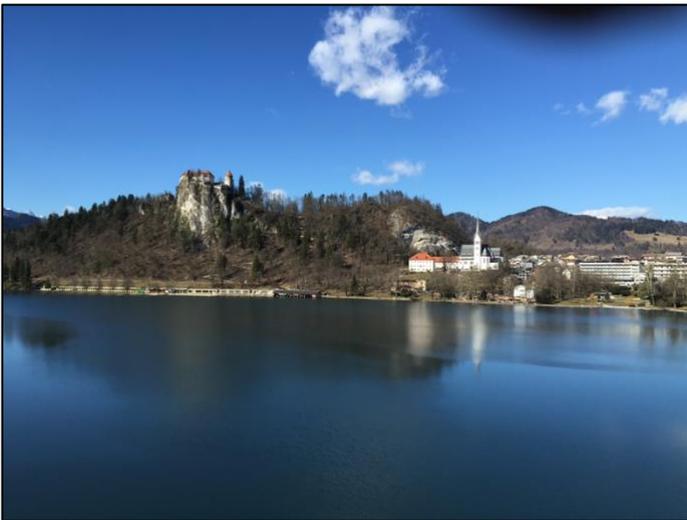


Looking Back to Slovenia:



Leaders





Members' Corner



J. David Warthen, Jr.
dwarthen409@gmail.com

Happy Hanukkah & Merry Christmas!!!

This has been a strange year, to say the least, but Happy holidays anyway. We will not be gathering together as usual around the holidays. And, if we do, it will be with family using social distancing, handwashing, the wearing of masks, and possibly the use of Zoom. All of a sudden, we have become Zoom-saavy skiers.

However, there seems to be a light at the end of the pandemic tunnel. So, we need to hang in there a little longer. Pfizer and Moderna will soon have vaccines with enormous efficacy and safety using mRNA available. After the FDA approves the vaccines for emergency use, we mature (elderly) people should be close to the top of the priority list for vaccination.

Those who emerge from this pandemic tunnel will be well-read, fatter, more tech-saavy, and have a host of other attributes that we did not have before. I, for one, cannot wait to return to some level of normalcy.

End of the Year Thank You's:

This issue of TOOT is the last publication for the 2020 year and marks 55 years of our [TOOT archive](#). Thanks go to the talented PVS TOOT Staff, led by Ellie **Thayer**, Coordinator; Layout Editors, Jan **Marx**, Kerry **Hines**, and Dave **Warthen**. Thanks also go to our webmistress, Mary Ellena **Ward**, our cybertechnologist. We also thank numerous PVS writers for interesting TOOT articles throughout the year. Thanks go to ExCom Officers & Chairpersons for their faithful service.



In Memory & Honor of Past Members for 2020:

Elizabeth Lawrence, Dec 19 '19 (92)
Bob McNeill, Jun 27 '20 (95)
Gertrude Lemke Santoro, Aug 18 '20 (88)
Sylvia Canova Lukens, Aug 6 '20 (91)
Adele Harman Waggaman, Sep 26 '20 (100)

TOOT Distribution to 118 Members: pdf: 108

-TOOT Coordinator - E. **Thayer**
-TOOT Layout Editors – J. **Marx**, K. **Hines**, D. **Warthen**
Dec TOOT Layout – D. **Warthen**
-TOOT Electronic - D. **Warthen**

Roster Changes: (contact dwarthen409@gmail.com)

mRNA vaccines have strands of genetic material inside a special coating; the genetic material has instructions for the cell to make a piece of the “spike protein” that is unique to SARS-COV-2, and it is antigenetic. Once displayed on the cell’s surface, it causes the immune system to begin producing antibodies and activating T-cells to fight off what it thinks is an infection. These antibodies are specific to the SARS-CoV-2 virus, which means the immune system is primed to protect against future infection.

mRNA vaccines have been studied for years, but have never been licensed in the U.S. Early stage clinical trials have been carried out for influenza, Zika, rabies, and cytomegalovirus (CMV). Recent technological advancements in RNA biology and chemistry has allowed for the Pfizer and Moderna coronavirus-19 vaccines to advance to the point of the FDA ‘emergency use application’ in a short period of time.

[CDC](https://www.cdc.gov/)

We are so blessed to have these kinds of advances in science that are so rapid, compared to years ago. None of us are old enough to have experienced such a pandemic as the one that is raging right now. There have been 250,000+ deaths from coronavirus-19 in the U.S., and there are still citizens who will not wear a mask to protect others and protect themselves. It is hard to believe that human beings would be so ‘stuck on stupid’ that they would flirt with death so openly.

Wear your mask, wash your hands, and abide by social distancing.



PVS 2020 Calendar

Dec 10 Thu BYOB, 4:00 - 5:00 pm, M Saponis, N. McKinley

Dec 15 Tue December General Zoom Meeting, M. Saponis, Hostess, 7:30pm

2021 Ski Trips

**DUE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC
PVS CANNOT RUN ANY GROUP SKI TRIPS
THIS SEASON.**



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- Editor -

Useful Ski "Links"

[Potomac Valley Skiers](#)

[BRSC Sanctioned Trips](#)

[DC Ski Online News](#)

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& *Dave Warthen*
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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.