

New Mexico Cross Country Ski Club

February 2010



Photo by Dave Saylor

www.nmccskiclub.org

Date Change: Tuesday, February 9th, 7 p.m. Program — *Yellowstone Yurts*

Are you looking for a new exciting winter adventure? Come to the **Tuesday, February 9th** meeting and program (*note date change for this month only*) — Lester Byington will give a slide show on the Yellowstone Yurt Camp.



The Yurt Camp is located deep inside Yellowstone and many miles from the conventional lodging at Mammoth Hot Springs or Old Faithful. It is the only winter backcountry facility in the entire Park. Lester spent a week at the camp last winter skiing, hiking and doing his favorite thing — eating!

Mark your calendar for our last program of the season, Thursday, March 11th — Guy Miller will do a slide show and presentation on Colorado huts. ■



Share your Ideas — Complete the Member's Questionnaire

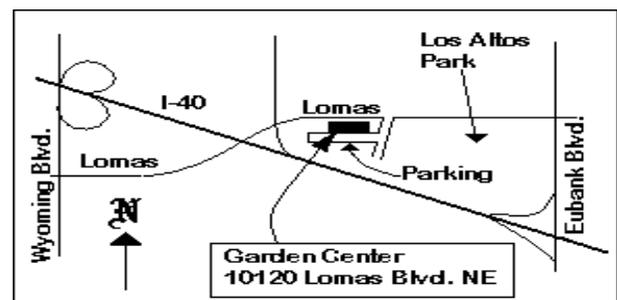
We need your ideas and feedback to strengthen our membership benefits! Take the opportunity to complete the enclosed questionnaire. Please return it by **Monday, February 15th**.



Mike Martin led a day tour in the Jemez Mountains on 1/2/10. Those who joined him were Betty Martin, Ruth Bargman-Romero, Tom Broadbent, Janie Gilmore-Daniels, Louise Broadbent, Angela Welford and Alan Burns.

(Note date change)

**NM Cross Country Ski Club
Tuesday, February 9, 2010**



From the President

As our skiing opportunities continue to expand, one of my most pleasant surprises this year is how many of our members have volunteered to lead local day tours. I also appreciate the amount of timely e-mail information being passed on to the membership about recent local trails, both by tour leaders and those who go on independent day tours. This helps us make more educated decisions on where and when to ski.



I also encourage day tour leaders to provide as much information as they can about the conditions participants are likely to encounter, keeping in mind that some of our newer members do not necessarily get a good picture from the trail name and class rating. On the other side of the coin, potential day tour participants should not be bashful about contacting the tour leader in advance to discuss any concerns they may have or to get a better idea of what they will encounter. If you are new to the Club, I encourage you to obtain a copy of Sam Beard's book, "Cross Country Trails of Northern New Mexico."

Lastly, I encourage members to complete the enclosed questionnaire about Club activities and return it promptly. If any of you have concerns that need a fuller response than the space provided, please contact Bob Moore or the other committee members (Ray Berg, Jackie Hertel, Karen Leach or Angela Welford) who developed the questionnaire.

Wayne Kirkby

Gliding on Griegos By John Thomas

On January 3rd, Marlene Brown and John Thomas led a ski tour on Los Griegos Mountain in the Jemez Mountains. We had a dozen people including new members Larry Ross and Bronwyn

Willis. Leaving the Target parking lot, we sped up to the Jemez Ranger Station and hence to Los Griegos parking lot along New Mexico highway



Jackie Hertel, leader of day tour on Winsor Trail, is joined by Marcia Congden and new member, Debra Cahill.

Photo by Wayne Kirkby

4, where the vigilant little skier man casts a diligent eye over his domain.

We skied down from the parking lot onto very adequate snow. We took the first left turn and then a right to climb up to a nice trail that runs up the ridge. (Sam Beard and other NMCCSC members had cleared and pruned this trail back in November.) We followed that up to the famous Griegos Junction where we had lunch and enjoyed the sunshine. After lunch some of the more energetic souls went up to the Upper Road connector trail and also down Lower Road a short distance.

After the short excursions, we all rejoined and skied down the road to the Elk Ridge intersection. The Elk Ridge Trail was fun and the snow was good enough for snowplows. At the bottom of Elk Ridge, we took all the turns to return to the parking lot and then headed to the Range Café in Bernalillo for supper and a measure of merriment. ■

Update on Day Tours

Watch your e-groups messages for details and updates on day tours. Tours scheduled are:

East Fork Ridge Trail, Jemez Mt. or Sandia Mt. trails, Class I

Date: Saturday, February 6

Leader: Ruth Bargman-Romero
842-9735, rebrome@sandia.gov

Meet: 8 a.m., location to be announced (ski location may change depending on snow conditions).

Tour: Trip is open to all skiers with a special invitation to those who completed the beginner class. We will ski into a beautiful box canyon with rock cliffs (see picture 1st page) and ski around the bottom of the canyon practicing our skills on small hills.

Trail length: ~5 miles

Elevation gain: ~500 feet

San Pedro Parks Wilderness, Class III

Date: Saturday, February 20

Leader: Alan Burns, 281-3922, aburns@sandia.gov

Tour: Call leader for details.

East Fork, Jemez Mountains, Class I & II

Date: Saturday, March 6

Leader: Diane Owens
917-0556, saintsmastiff@yahoo.com

Meet: 7:30 a.m. Target parking lot west of building at Paseo del Norte and I-25.

Tour: Ski gradual uphill and do a loop at the top. Class I skiers can turn and descend and not do the loop. Or we may ski in the Valle Caldera, Coyote Call/Rabbit Ridge or Bandelier Class I ski trails depending on snow conditions.

Trail length: 10+ miles

Elevation gain: ~ 500'

Life is Just a Hut (Half) Full of Cherries

By Chris Standish

We have been members of NMCCSC for three years, so we decided it was time to give the hut trip experience a try. Everyone says *it's the best!*



Guy Miller offered a beginner (*cherry*) hut trip this season so Linda and I signed up! But not so fast, says Guy! You need references since I haven't skied with you. So we reached out to Angela and Ruth (*thanks gals*) and got approved! Now what . . . we didn't even have backpacks . . . we gave them away when we moved here from Oregon three years ago since they had been collecting dust for 25 years. So we began collecting the necessary items and practicing carrying a load in our packs.



Bet Gendron, Carl Smith, Chris and Linda Standish, and Carolyn Johnson.

Photo by Dave Saylor

We all met at the predetermined spot and car pooled to Leadville, CO. After a nice dinner we gathered to divide up the hut food so we could all help carry it and to go over last minute details.

The next morning it was only 10 minutes to the trailhead. Once there we geared up and started up the trail, which was steep and icy (*oh great!*). We put skins on from the start.

Did I mention our group of 16 is half *cherries* — *never been on a hut trip!* Anyway, we are equipped with walkie-talkies to keep in touch with the group as we proceed up the trail for the three-mile trek to the hut.

The elevation gain is 1,500' so it was uphill most of the way. We continued on with the pack getting heavier at each stride! Maybe I should have left some stuff out, or been more prepared!

Finally we smell the smoke of a wood fire and we know the hut is close. We round the corner and there it is . . . but not what I expected. This isn't a hut . . . but rather a magnificent and huge resort cabin! We shed our gear and go in to check it out. The more experienced skiers have already arrived and have the fire going. The place is well laid out with two wood stoves, a large eating area and space for lounging. Off the front is a vast deck with wonderful views.

Our group is finally back together and the first night's cook is preparing snacks, then dinner and then dessert — *a full meal deal!* We take turns filling snow buckets to melt for water, stoking the fire and cleaning up after the meal. There are games to be played, stories to be told and books to be read. The upstairs is for sleeping and people start drifting off to recover from the day's efforts.

For the next two days we repeat the cycle (*except, thankfully not the ski in!*). Each day we take tours in different directions. The snow isn't wonderful, but we have clear blue skies and warm weather. The nights are crystal clear and the Milky Way is bright.

On our last night in the cabin Guy gives his hut speech — telling all us *cherries* we are now veterans and welcome on future trips. We make our plans for cleaning and preparing the hut for the next group and relax for the final night.

The ski out wasn't nearly as dreadful as some of us thought and one heck of a lot faster than going in! When we reach the parking area we see the next group getting ready to hit the trail. We all felt pretty good about going up and down together and we talked about our next hut adventure.

A huge thanks to Guy Miller for his time and effort in putting this trip together. It all starts about a year in advance as he makes the reservations, and chooses dates and destinations. We are all very fortunate to have him doing this for us — *thanks Guy!* ■

2010 Bus Trips

If you are going on a bus trip watch your e-mail for the final details or contact Ray and Thea Berg, Bus Trip Chairs, at 294-4112 thea.berg@comcast.net.

See you on the bus

Leadville, CO: Fri-Mon, February 12-15
President's weekend
Leaves at 1:00 p.m.

An Interesting Experiment!

By Guy Miller

Part of what made this late-January trip so successful was the phenomenal snow fall that hit just before we got there, and continued for much of the first day of skiing. A few members elected to bail due to weather and road conditions, but those of us who pushed on drove through intermittent light snow flurries on roads that had been well plowed.

Guy Miller and Ginger Larkin were joined by Mike and Betty Martin, John (*call me Ski*) Shaski, Sara Martin, Rich Besser, Sherri Fitzmaurice and Terri Elisberg.

The group stayed at the Durango Down Home Hostel (www.durangodownhomehostel.com) where we were given a special group rate. Skeptics in our group who expected to sleep on rickety cots with moth-eaten blankets and share bathrooms with drunks and streetwalkers were pleased to find 5-star hostel accommodations, which were sparkling clean and comfortable. Candace, our congenial, hard-working hosteller, was accommodating, friendly and helpful. We had two group breakfasts, and a memorable group dinner Saturday night.

Oh, yes, and let's not forget the skiing. Mike, Rich, and I visited the resort area on Saturday and partook of dream-like snow conditions on a mountain that was made just for us. Ginger and Betty skied the scenic Nordic center across the highway from the ski area, and the others went . . . where did they go? Somewhere in the backcountry.



After skiing, the group reposed at the Trimble Hot Springs and overdosed on the therapeutic heavy metal mineral baths therein offered. Sherry reported that her hand trembling momentarily slowed, Ginger's bum knee loosened up, and Guy's silver tooth turned to gold.

On Sunday, most of the group went to Chicken Creek, a free Nordic center, where conditions were reported to be pristine. Ski and I went to the resort area and crammed a year of skiing into a frenetic but spiritual 2 ½ hours, followed by cocktails on the patio. What could be more cool?

After a half day of skiing, the group returned to the hostel for showers (*where else in the world is there a hostel that will allow guests to leave their gear and come back to clean up without charging extra?*) and then headed home under sunny skies and clear roads. Whew! We gotta do this again, yes? ■



The red gang: Randy Simons, Ruth Bargman-Romero, Chris Kramar, Mike Martin, Frances Robertson, Alan Burns and Phyllis Pryor at Coal Bank Pass in Silverton with Engineer Peak in the background.

Ophir Pass

By Chris Kramar

Mike Martin led the day tour to Ophir Pass on the first day of the Silverton Bus trip. Joining him were Alan Burns, Tom Broadbent, Betty Martin and myself. We skied on a four wheel drive road that was originally a wagon road between the mines in Ophir, Telluride and Silverton.



The morning started out cold, but there were almost no clouds and the sun was out. As the day progressed, it became very warm and most of us were down to one or two layers on top. I had never skied in Colorado and thought that it was supposed to be cold in Colorado in January. This day was an exception and was quite enjoyable, as the next two days were colder and snowy.

We made good progress up the road as it traveled along the north side of the middle fork of Mineral Creek. We completed the four miles to the pass by about 1 p.m. At the 11,789' pass we were treated to a fantastic view of the San Miguel Mountains, including the 14,017' Mount Wilson.

We decided against skiing the extra 600' to Crystal Lake above the pass and headed down. By this time, the snow on the road had softened somewhat and the snow next to the road had a thin, easily breakable crust on top of 5-8 inches of powder. We skied back to the road at various speeds and some of us even had time to yo-yo a few slopes between curves on the road and were able to lay down some nice-looking tracks for all to admire.

We boarded the bus at about 4:30 p.m. and headed back to the motel for well-deserved rest, food and drink. ■

Solid Gold Skiing

By Ella Joan Fenoglio, Susan Wyatt and Nancy Costea

The ingredients for the Club's marvelous January weekend in Silverton included one big bus and 48 people, lots of food and drink, comfortable rooms in a historic

125-year-old Victorian hotel, the hospitality of proprietor George and Kerry Foster, and an abundance of ski clothing and equipment.



The massive safe in the lobby of the Grand Imperial Hotel confirmed the date of 1882. The town was established in 1874 at the height of the mining boom and got its name from "a ton of silver." A church and post office soon followed along with a still-active school.

Within the first few years of the town's beginning, thousands of mining claims were filed in and around Silverton.



Records show that the total value of the area's gold, silver, copper, lead and zinc during more than 100 years of mining activity is over \$138 million.

When the mines closed, the town continued its livelihood with tourists, restaurants and the Durango-Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad. Surrounded by seven ghost towns, once prosperous mining centers, Silverton owns the title, "a mining camp that never quits."

Although new snow didn't arrive until the day of departure, members enjoyed fairly good conditions with a solid base and some icy slopes. The first day Louise Broadbent and Lucy Miller led Class I and II trips to Ironton, one of the ghost towns. Other leaders led Class II and III trips in different directions.

On our second day, finding lots of deep powder from the night before, Bob Long led a delightful Class I trip with a little bit of falling snow to Little Molas Lake. Louise led an exploratory trip up Arrastra Creek, finding a hardy homesteader building his own cabin, accessible in winter only by snowmobile. Class III skiers were off to Coal Bank Pass led by Mike Martin.

The final day, Louise led a large group through pristine conditions along the Animas River. Skiers, with some stopping to check out beaver lodges, strung out all the way from Howardsville to Eureka (two mining ghost towns about four miles apart). Class III skiers went to American Forks again led by Mike Martin.



Betty and Mike Martin on top of Ophir Pass at 11,789'.

Photo by Tom Broadbent

Ray and Thea Berg, who did a marvelous job of planning and coordinating all details, declared, "I made it to Eureka!"

Other activities included shopping in the town's few open shops, dining at a couple of local restaurants, gorging ourselves on George's delicious heavy carb breakfasts and one Italian buffet, renewing old acquaintances and making new friends. The hotel bar, built of gorgeous mahogany in 1901 and framed

by three original mirrors from France, proved to be a good place for socializing. A bullet hole in its back panel is the source of several legends and continuous speculation.

From its population height of 5,000 during boom times, Silverton now boasts 250 winter

residents and an estimated 3,000 during the summer, which includes tourists and those who serve them. The restaurant in the hotel reportedly serves 300 lunches in 3 hours each summer day when the train comes in — *now that's hustling!*

Hotel staff reported a 50-inch snow fall *after* we left, which allowed us to get through the passes and back to work the next day. Was that a good thing?! The ardent skiers among us might well have preferred being trapped in a lovely little town with fresh snow and skiing right out the front door! ■



Father and son, Richard and Randy Simons on the Coal Bank pass tour in Silverton.

Photo by Ruth Bargman-Romero

Arrastra Creek Discovery

By Jackie Hertel

Was it going to snow out of that heavy gray sky? How far up this canyon could we ski? Why was some guy zooming up and down the snow packed road on his snowmobile dragging a sled carrying what looked like wood door frames and a comfortably enthroned shepherd mix dog? And what the heck was an “arrastra” anyhow? These questions bounced around our group of 10 as we headed up a side canyon from the Animas River east of Silverton.



John Esterl, Louise and Tom Broadbent, and Holly Noland ski up Arrastra Creek in Silverton, 1/17/10.

Photo by Jackie Hertel

Intrepid Louise Broadbent was leading us on an exploratory ski tour fueled by a hunch, some research and inside tips from George, the proprietor of our hotel. We were excited with the promise of discovering an interesting new trail along the Arrastra Creek.

The bus deposited us at the Power Plant on the edge of town where we began the first mile leg of our trip skiing along the road near the Animas River. Eventually we swung to the right, crossed the river over a picturesque bridge and started up a narrow canyon. The Arrastra Creek Canyon, which was once the location of some of the earliest, most successful silver mines in the vicinity. Here most of us donned our skins for the uphill onslaught. Steady climbing on cold, packed surface with a nicely ruffled quality quickly rewarded us with views of the Animas Valley below.

Bzzzzzz, a pesky snowmobile. On his third pass by our group, Mike, the driver and Sophie, the kissing dog, stopped to chat and invite us to their newly built home up the canyon on the edge of avalanche territory. No stopping for us, but we did accept Mike's suggestion to veer off the road to fork left up a

smaller, higher lane. We were pleased with the snow conditions, the welcoming forest and gradual ascent. Snowflakes finally began dancing around us so we halted for lunch to evaluate the severity of the advancing snowstorm.

By early afternoon, secure that the falling snow was friendly, we skied higher, almost to the top of the canyon, which by then had opened up into a wide bowl laced with craggy peaks. We spied rickety old structures far ahead up the mountainsides, evidence of the past mining activity. This felt like a *destination!* Giant snow drifts were blocking the trail ahead, a signal that we were ready to enjoy the thrilling downhill glide on newly freshened tracks. It didn't



Eddie Segears

take long to get all the way back to the bridge, whooshing down the canyon with a few butt plants from scattered patches of slick or crusty snow bucking skiers off the trail.

We had skied about four miles in and out of the canyon and still

had two more down the Animas, to town and our hotel. Luckily a new half inch of snow allowed us to ski without effort along the river and right to main street Silverton. Later when we joined other ski comrades to exchange the day's exploits, we gloried in our achievement of adding another exhilarating, scenic and easily accessible ski trail to the Club's repertoire of Silverton outings.

Note: Arrastras are crude drag-stone mills for pulverizing zing ones. They were first introduced by the Spanish in the 1500's. Ore was broken into walnut size chunks with a sledge hammer and placed into the circular milling area. Three drag stones, chained to a post in the center of the milling area, were rotated by hand or mule to crush the ore into fine powder to process with water and mercury for removing the silver or gold. ■

Serve on the Board

The Club is seeking members who are interested in serving on the Board for 2010-11. Get involved, share your voice and be a part of future policy decisions.

Contact Chris Kramar, Vice President, at 903-4071 or ckkramar@yahoo.com.

We had a Great Time in Silverton . .



Bill Savage, Dave Saylor, Marcia Congdon, Eddie Segears, Thea Berg, Noel Barstow, Bet Gendron, Angela Welford, Diane Cress and Terri Elisberg – thanks Ray and Thea Berg, Bus Trip Chairs!



Dave Saylor stays in contact with members of his ski group.
Photo by Angela Welford

Welcome New Members

- Audeen Bashista
- Dani & Brad Binkley
- Debra Cahill
- John Esterl
- David & Julie Frederick
- Mona Grigsby-Suarez
- Catherine Leicht
- Ruth Lynch
- Cynthia & Tom McConnell
- Laura Milligan
- Carol & Robert Richmond
- Peggy Roberts
- Donald Shroeder
- Ellen Watt



Diane Owens, 12 year old Liam Hurburt and Eric Russell on day tour in the Sandia Mountains, 1/24/10.

Photo by Dana Price



= Monthly deadline for newsletter inclusion

February 2010							
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
		Jackal Hut				Day Tour	
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
				Club Meets		Leadville	
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	
						Day Tour	
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	
	Board Meets		Snow Mountain Ranch			Hut	
28							
March 2010							
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	
Day	1	2	3	4	5	6	
		Margy's to McNamara Hut					Day Tour
7	8	8	10	11	12	13	
				Club Meets			
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	
28	29	30	31				

2009/10 Officers and Board

President	Wayne Kirkby	898-1654	ski1071607@aol.com
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New Mexico Cross Country Ski Club

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Terri Elisberg and Ruth Bargman-Romero in Silverton, 1/16/10.

Photo by Angela Welford