

# New Mexico Cross Country Ski Club

January 2010

Photo by Dave Saylor

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

## January 14th, 7 p.m. Program — Avalanches & Snow Caves



Sandy Kobrock, Wolf Creek Avalanche School Owner, will discuss programs available at the Wolf Creek Avalanche School. Classes are available for all levels.

Our Club recognizes that avalanche awareness is everyone's responsibility. Yes, we are not into the lemmings' response. We

want everybody going out with their full observant and cognitive skills. A quick description on how to build a snow cave is also on the agenda.

Remember the NMCCSC offers \$200 scholarships for successful completion of any of these courses.

### **Wolf Creek Avalanche School (WCAS) Level 1 Pagosa Springs, CO and Wolf Creek Pass**

February 26 - 28 Women-only  
March 13 - 15

### **Level 1 South Fork, CO and Wolf Creek Pass**

January 23 - 25

### **Level 2 Pagosa Springs, CO and Wolf Creek Pass**

February 5 - 8  
March 20 - 23 Women-only

They are also doing a free avalanche awareness clinic for the **Chama Chili Classic** on **January 16**.

**Level 1** is a three-day experience perfect for the introductory student, and a refresher for the more experienced skier and the recreational backcountry leader. You will learn to recognize avalanche terrain, gain decision-making tools,

practice travel techniques in avalanche terrain, and rehearse avalanche rescue skills. Classes are small.

Snowshoe, ski, and snowboard travel is appropriate. WCAS has tracker beacons, shovels, and probes for use during the course.

**Level 2** is a four-day program providing backcountry leaders the opportunity to advance their avalanche



knowledge and decision making skills. This course includes prerequisite components to progress to Level 3. This course builds on the

avalanche hazard management model introduced in Level 1, and adds evaluation of factors critical to stability evaluation. It includes in-depth tour planning, weather, snowpack, instability observations, snowpack layers and metamorphism, rescue scenario and group management techniques. Student instructor ratio is 3:1.

### **Instructors Sandra Kobrock and Mark Mueller**

own and operate Wolf Creek Avalanche School, and the year-round Pass Creek Yurt near Wolf Creek Pass. Together they have over 60 years of avalanche field work and education, educating neophytes to avalanche professionals about avalanches. Additional guest instructors are fun, approachable, seasoned avalanche professionals.

For more information see their website at [www.wolfcreekbackcountry.com](http://www.wolfcreekbackcountry.com), or contact Sandy at [info@wolfcreekbackcountry.com](mailto:info@wolfcreekbackcountry.com) or 970-731-2486. ■

## From the President

As we begin the new year, here are just a few ideas for improving your skiing experiences and the functioning of our Ski Club:



1. Ski somewhere you haven't skied before or in the last two years.

2. Ski with someone with whom you haven't skied before.

3. Lead a Club ski tour; if you lack experience, give

your name to Day Tour Chair Bill Heitz 259-8745 or [bill\\_heitz@hotmail.com](mailto:bill_heitz@hotmail.com) as someone willing to serve as an assistant tour leader.

4. Develop a regular personal exercise program, which stresses flexibility and balance.

5. Give serious consideration to serving as a Club officer or chairperson, and if willing, give your name to our Vice President, Chris Kramar at 903-4071 or [ckkramar@yahoo.com](mailto:ckkramar@yahoo.com), by February 11.

6. If you have any ideas for improving Club activities, pass them on to a Board member (see last page for their telephone phone numbers or e-mails).

7. Volunteer for announced ski trail maintenance sessions.

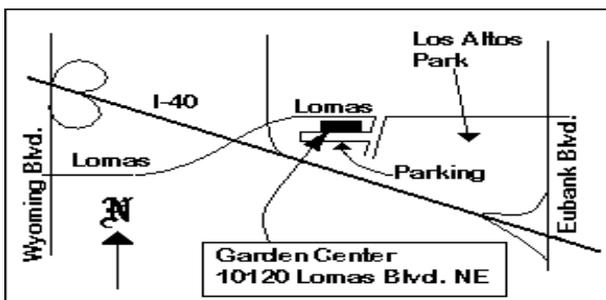
8. Invite a non-member to attend a Club meeting, and offer them a ride.

9. Carry a few Club business cards in your wallet for distribution. If you see someone on a ski trail who appears to be enjoying themselves, introduce yourself and hand them a card.

I'm confident if you think seriously about these matters, you can come up with other ideas I haven't mentioned.

*Wayne Kirkby*

## NM Cross Country Ski Club Meets Thursday, January 14th, 7 p.m.



## Lead a day ski or snowshoe tour

Post it via e-groups by sending it to:

[NMCCSC@yahoogroups.com](mailto:NMCCSC@yahoogroups.com). Obtain the *Release of Liability* form off our website and have all participants sign the form.

Then send it to Bill Heitz, Day Tour Chair, at 53 Valle Vista Road, Corrales, NM 87048.

*Happy skiing and snowshoeing!*

## Update on Day Tours

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

### **Windsor Trail, Santa Fe, Class II**

**Date:** Saturday, January 9

**Leader:** Jackie Hertel

505-265-2339, [jhquickbeam@msn.com](mailto:jhquickbeam@msn.com)

**Trail Length:** 5-6 miles

**Meet:** 9 a.m., Target parking lot west of building at Paseo del Norte and I- 25.

**Tour:** We'll get to the trailhead around 11 a.m. and ski until 3-4 p.m., stopping for lunch at Nambe Creek Meadow. The trail is narrow and winding so this tour is a Class I/II pace, but Class II ski skills needed for the close turns and some narrow down-sloping stretches. It's my favorite trail with gorgeous views of Baldy, a serene aspen forest and fun, gliding curves.

**Elevation gain:** 800-1000 feet, including a 500 foot, half-mile climb at the beginning, which we'll do by carrying our skis.

### **Sandia Surprise, Class II**

**Date:** Saturday, January 16

**Leader:** Steve Verchinski

238-2398

**Trail Length:** ~ 4 miles

**Meet:** ABQ Uptown Starbucks, Indian School NE and Louisiana NE

**Tour:** We'll drop off a vehicle at the base of the Sandia ski area and then go to the Crest. If conditions are good we will take Trail 130 across to drop onto the Service Road and go to the Upper Tram Terminal for hot cocoa. We will go back to the top of the Crest or go down to the base of the ski area. Skiers should have at least partial steel edges and be comfortable trying to negotiate a Green down the downhill slope (*basic telemark/stem turns*). It's great if we just get new snow and it's not fully groomed. Be prepared to fall a time or two. Once at the bottom we will complete the shuttle.

**Elevation gain:** Crest 10,000' down to 8,000'

*Continued on page 7/Day Tours*

## Section House Adventure

By Guy Miller

Perched at 11,400 feet atop the barren, wind-swept Boreas Pass, Section House is the most remote of the Summit Huts Association facilities. Unlike the modern, traditional Colorado huts, this location is a historic landmark. Originally built on-site in 1882, the remnants were refurbished (*completely rebuilt from ground up, using only materials and tools that were available at the time of original construction*) in 1996.



Sherry Fitzmaurice and Guy Miller arrive at Section House hut 3/1/09.

*Photos on this page by Bill Heitz*

In its day, this structure was used to house the railroad section supervisor, whose job it was to maintain a "section" of the railroad that crossed the pass on its way between Breckenridge and Como. He lived there with his wife and children, and he counted as his few neighbors, a store keeper with a criminal past, the neurotic widowed postmistress, the obligatory bartender from back east, and a few transient sporting ladies who roomed periodically at the tavern and who doubled as the community's school marms during the day.

Immediately adjacent to Section is tiny Ken's Cabin, which sleeps three skiers. Ken's is a refurbished miner's cabin which was moved and reassembled at its current site in 1996.

Our original plan was to book both cabins, but lacking enough skiers, we occupied Section House alone, and left Ken's to other skiers who wandered in and out during our time there. Our hut allegedly holds 10 persons, but we filled it nicely with nine. The period furnishings are not nearly as plush as the average 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Hut, but the undeniable ambience of the place more than made up for its shortcomings. There's something about being huddled around a struggling stove with good friends, warm food and



Karen Leach, Sherry Fitzmaurice, Guy Miller and Cynthia Adams tour the beautiful country around Section House.



Diane Simmons and Bill White cook a delicious meal.

cheap wine, while the wind howls and screams all night long, that makes a memorable occasion all the more special. This adventure was one for the books.

The ski in from the Como side was entirely enjoyable. The north facing slopes had deep snow, severely rutted by the many previous visitors into a bobsled type path. The final approach to the pass was steep and a tad dicey, but when we broke out onto the threshold of the pass, we were in skier's Nirvana. With the hut in sight, we took advantage of clear skies and windless conditions to glide the rest of the way to our destination.



Cynthia Adams on fire duty.

Day skiing around the hut kinda sucked, ok? Let's get that out on the table right away. Nevertheless, several brave forays sortied out of our quarters to take advantage of what opportunities there were. John Stephens took a group to a nearby peak to assault the hard-packed slopes. Hut cherries Cynthia Adams and Randy Simons gamely followed, along with hut veterans Bill Heitz, Bill White and Diane (*Give Me Gravity*) Simmons. Sherry Fitzmaurice and Karen Leach accompanied me on a much more sensible Nordic tour to Baker's Tank, the other remaining relic of the long ago mountain railroad line. On our second day of touring, the same group attacked the same slopes, while the same Nordic skiers went the other direction from the pass.

If it seems that the details of after-arrival activities are sketchy seven months after the fact, one might blame the high altitude for rapidly fading memory (see [www.highaltitudememoryfade.net](http://www.highaltitudememoryfade.net)). But, hey, the main attraction of this trip was the hut itself. And the ghosts. And the wind. And the incredible cold. That alone made this trip more than worthwhile. That's my story, and I'm sticking to it. ■

## Thanks Sam and Volunteers!

Sam Beard and his crew of volunteers have done an incredible job of maintaining our ski and hiking trails throughout the Sandia and Jemez mountains. Nothing stops this dedicated crew as they continue to cut trees in difficult winter conditions.



Sam Beard and his crew of volunteers maintain our trails.  
*Photo Carl Smith*

Mike Meier and Carl Smith recently joined Sam on a trail maintenance and ski day in the Los Griegos Area on NM-4 in the Jemez Mountains.

As reported by Sam, they skied about one-half mile on Ladera Trail and then turned left and went up the steep Elk Ridge Trail to Lower Road. They crossed the road and followed the upper two traverses of Ladera Trail to Griegos Junction. On Elk Ridge Trail they found a couple of trees across the road. They removed the smaller tree and cut the upper end of the larger tree so that skiers can easily ski past.



Mike Meier and Sam Beard remove a tree on the Elk Ridge Trail, 12/21/09.

*Photo by Carl Smith*

After lunch they ascended the Ladera Switchbacks to Upper Road. After returning to Griegos Junction, they skied Lower Road about 1/8 mile to the top of Big Pine Canyon and descended this route to the power line. They took the lower part of Ladera Trail back to the parking area.

Sam reported they found about 12 inches of excellent powder in the forest, although they did hit a few logs and rocks.

If you want to join this group on their next adventure, contact Sam Beard at 828-0673 or [samgbeard@msn.com](mailto:samgbeard@msn.com). ■

## Welcome New Members

Nathan Cost  
Erich Grotheer  
Nancy Jenkins  
Merry Kotschwar

Terrie Murphy  
Larry Ross  
Michelle Ryan  
Norman Stahulak



New member, Bronwyn Willis, gets acquainted with long-time members, John Thomas and Terri Elisberg, at our December holiday social.



Club members enjoying our holiday social from top: Karen Kvam, Katie Crawford, Gordon Eatman, Sharon Byington, Carolyn Tisone, Karen Griffith, Nancy and Mike and Stephaine Walti, and Diane Owens.

## Ski Tour Ratings

**CLASS I:** Tour with less than 1,000 feet of elevation gain and less than 5 miles in total length. Skiers should be able to execute stops and turns. Some, *but not all*, tours are appropriate for novice skiers with minimal cross country experience. The pace will be slow (*1 to 1.5 miles per hour*). Persons with no cross country skiing experience **MUST** take the beginning lessons offered by the Club or must obtain the leader's permission **PRIOR** to joining a CLASS I tour.

**CLASS II:** Tour with less than 2,000 feet of elevation gain and less than 10 miles in total length. A tour requires intermediate skills and ability to maintain control on moderate slopes with techniques such as snowplowing, turning and traversing. Skiers should have enough stamina for sustained kick and glide touring on near level ground at a pace of 2 miles per



John Stephens telemarks down the slope on the hut to hut trip last February.

*Photo by Rich Besser*

hour for several miles and should also be experienced at using climbing skins to climb trails with moderate slopes.

**CLASS III:** Tour with greater than 2,000 feet of elevation gain and/or greater than 10 miles in total length, or otherwise

characterized by technical challenges, or potential for same. A tour usually requires advanced skills and ability to competently and confidently climb and descend steep, narrow trails. The skier should be experienced with using climbing skins for both climbing and safely descending steep slopes. Skiers should have the endurance for skiing ten miles or more within the time constraints of the tour.

### Trail slopes are categorized as follows:

- 1) Gentle slopes have less than 5% grades.
- 2) Moderate slopes have grades greater than 5%, but less than 15% grades.
- 3) Steep slopes have grades greater than 15% grades.

### Exploratory designation:

A tour may be designated exploratory — the leader has not skied the route recently/ever or is unsure about the proposed route. Participants should be experienced in backcountry skiing. They should be prepared for any possible situation and should have emergency gear with them. ■



Members board the bus for a full day of skiing.

*Photo by Angela Welford*

## 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](mailto:thea.berg@comcast.net).*

*See you on the bus . . . .*

**Silverton, CO: Fri-Mon, January 15-18, 2010**  
*Martin Luther King weekend*  
Leaves at 3:30 p.m.

**Leadville, CO: Fri-Mon, February 12-15, 2010**  
*President's weekend*  
Leaves at 1:00 p.m.



Sandra Garcia, Robin Henry, Marsha Congden, Louise Broadbent, Steve Henry and others ski Fall Creek Road near Wolf Creek Pass, 3/7/09.

*Photo by Tom Broadbent*



## Snow Mt. Ranch Car Trip 2/24-28/2010

If you are going on the Snow Mountain Ranch car trip you will receive details soon. There is still a very short waiting list so chances are excellent that you can still get on this spectacular trip. Contact Sharon and Lester Byington at 275-5777 or [sharon@byington.org](mailto:sharon@byington.org).



## Beginner Cross Country Ski Class 1/16

Classroom session, presented by Guy Miller, will be held on **Saturday, January 16**, 3 p.m. at REI, 1550 Mercantile NE. Since the class is free, open to the public and promoted through REI, members are advised to arrive early. The on-the-snow session will be held on **Saturday, January 30** (provided there is ample snow). This session is open only to Club members.



## February's Program 2/11

Mark your calendar and plan to attend the Ski Club program on **February 11 at 7 p.m.** Guy Miller will talk about one of his favorite topics – 10th Mountain Division Huts, his many hut adventures and skills needed to qualify to go on one of these trips.



## Newsletter Deadline 20th of each month

Please e-mail your photos, stories and/or ideas to the newsletter editor at [karenleach7@msn.com](mailto:karenleach7@msn.com) by the 20th of each month.



Carol Marion, Angela Welford and Betty Martin skiing through deep powder on the Lake City bus trip, 2/14/09.

Photo by I-Ching Boman



= Monthly deadline for newsletter inclusion

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

## Continued/Day Tours

### **Durango Overnight Car Trip**

**Date:** Friday-Sunday, January 22-24

**Leader:** Guy Miller

294-7940, [xcskiboy@aol.com](mailto:xcskiboy@aol.com).

**Tour:** Variety of skiing, Nordic and Alpine. Stay at a local hostel or your choice. Contact Guy for additional details.

### **Sandia Loop, Class I & II**

**Date:** Saturday, January 23

**Leader:** Karen Leach

281-9836, [karenleach7@msn.com](mailto:karenleach7@msn.com)

**Trail length:** ~5 miles

**Meet:** 8:30 a.m., Tijeras Wells Fargo parking lot at the end of the Tijeras exit ramp and NM 333 (Old Route 66).

**Tour:** We will do a loop from trails leaving from the Crest parking lot, stop at the Crest House for a hot drink, and continue the ski tour on the network of trails through this area depending on snow conditions.

**Elevation gain:** ~500 feet

### **Los Griegos, Jemez Mts., Class II+ & III**

**Date:** Saturday, January 30

**Leader:** Alan Burns

281-3922, [aburns@sandia.gov](mailto:aburns@sandia.gov)

**Trail length:** 8-9 miles

**Meet:** 7:15 a.m., Target parking lot west of building at Paseo del Norte and I- 25.

**Tour:** This loop ski tour will start at Lower Los Griegos Road to Upper Los Griegos via Ladera Trail. For a thrilling downhill run we'll ski through the deep, narrow Squirrel Canyon and return to the trailhead.

**Elevation gain:** 1,000 feet



Skiers take off on Fall Creek Road Trail in Pagosa Springs, 2/7/09.

Photo by John Orman

### **East Fork Ridge Trail, Jemez Mts., Class I**

**Date:** Saturday, February 6

**Leader:** Ruth Bargman-Romero

842-9735, [rebrome@sandia.gov](mailto:rebrome@sandia.gov)

**Trail length:** ~5 miles

**Meet:** 8 a.m., Target parking lot west of building at Paseo del Norte and I- 25.

**Tour:** Trip is open to all skiers with a special invitation to those who completed the beginner class the week before. We will ski the ridge line through the forest to the overlook with a view of Redondo Peak and the deep canyons below.

**Elevation gain:** ~500 feet

### **San Pedro Parks Wilderness, Class III**

**Date:** Saturday, February 20

**Leader:** Alan Burns

281-3922, [aburns@sandia.gov](mailto:aburns@sandia.gov)

**Tour:** Call leader for details.

### **Tour to be Announced, Class I or II**

**Date:** Sometime in March

**Leader:** Diane Owens

917-0556, [saintsmastiff@yahoo.com](mailto:saintsmastiff@yahoo.com)

**Tour:** Possibly Valles Caldera area. Watch for details in the February newsletter.



Linda Standish, Angela Welford and Chris Standish snow shoe along the Continental Divide on the Salida bus trip, 2/28/09.

## *Leaders are Needed*

Contact Bill Heitz if you are interested in leading a ski or snowshoe tour at 259-8745 or [bill\\_heitz@hotmail.com](mailto:bill_heitz@hotmail.com).

## 2009/10 Officers and Board

President	Wayne Kirkby	898-1654	ski1071607@aol.com
Vice President	Chris Kramar	903-4071	ckkramar@yahoo.com
Secretary	Angela Welford	281-1198	jndaughter2@earthlink.net
Treasurer	Jim Iden	265-5021	jiden@unm.edu
Day Tours	Bill Heitz	259-8745	bill_heitz@hotmail.com
Long Bus Tours	Ray & Thea Berg	294-4112	rsberg01@comcast.net
Overnight Car/Hut Tours	Guy Miller	294-7940	xcskiboy@aol.com
Newsletter	Karen Leach	281-9836	karenleach7@msn.com
Instruction	Guy Miller	294-7940	xcskiboy@aol.com
Membership	Gene Lisotto	884-7331	gene_lisotto@msn.com
Programs	Sherry Fitzmaurice	798-4818	sherry.fitzmaurice@xilinx.com
Mailing	Lucy Miller	293-5673	millerabq@yahoo.com
Refreshments	Terri Elisberg Phyllis Pryor	281-9192 255-7972	telisberg@islclinic.net on_the_go@earthlink.net
Trails	Sam Beard	828-0673	samgbeard@msn.com
Web Site	Lester Byington	275-5777	lester@byington.org
Email Group	David Wegner	344-8554	dave@naturesgrandeur.com

### New Mexico Cross Country Ski Club

P.O. Box 8425

Albuquerque, NM 87198-8425



Lester Byington, Pagosa  
Springs, 3/7/09.

*Photo by Bob Long*