

# New Mexico Cross Country Ski Club

January 2012



Photo by Dave Saylor

www.nmccskiclub.org

## January's Program —

*Understanding Weather Conditions*

**Presenter:** Byron Morton, Certified Broadcast Meteorologist for Action 7 Television News

**When:** Thursday, January 12<sup>th</sup>, 7 p.m.

**Where:** Garden Center, 10120 Lomas Blvd, NE, Albuquerque

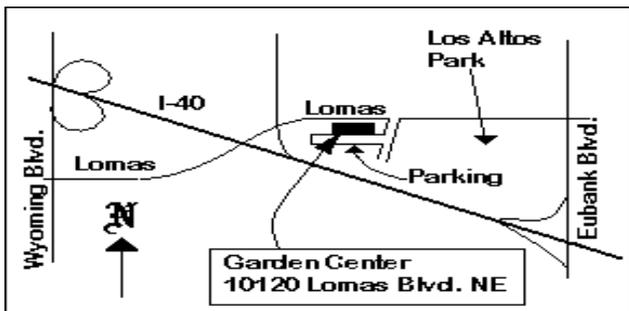
You can catch Byron Morton on the weekend edition of Channel 7 television news weather forecast, both morning and night. Or better yet, come see him live at our Club meeting! You'll learn about different weather patterns that will help you prepare for a day of skiing and other activities.



Before joining the Action 7 news team in December 2001, Byron was chief meteorologist in Madison, Wisconsin. Prior to this, he served as weather producer for Good Morning America, the LA Times, and Televisa Mexico. Byron is the 2<sup>nd</sup> forecaster in the state to earn the prestigious designation of "Certified Broadcast Meteorologist" and holds a seal of approval from the National Weather Association.

This is a unique opportunity to hear a highly qualified, experienced weather forecaster and get your questions answered, so mark it on your calendar and plan to attend!

**Terri Elisberg, Program Chair**



## Holiday Social



Marcia Congdon and Dave Saylor admire Susan Williams' photo cards.



Susan Wyatt tells Betty Martin about her book "Arabian Nights and Daze".

New member, Jim Passmore, with Kim Feldman and John Thomas.



Bill White and Sam Beard chat about Sam's book, "Ski Touring in Northern New Mexico".

## From the President

In the past columns I have told you about our Club programs for skiing (bus, hut, car and day trips) and the various support programs (safety, training, equipment, etc.) we have put together for our members. This month I would like to tell you about



the Board's activities that bring these all together: bringing on the snow!

Many of you are aware that snow in New Mexico is a kind of "iffy" thing. We have some good years and a lot of bad years. There is always Colorado, but to have snow close to home, in the Sandia and Manzano Mountains, is by far the best option. So to that end, I have organized the Board into two teams,

one for the Sandias, led by Bet Gendron, and one for the Manzanos, led by Karen Leach. The goal of these two teams has been to bring snow to our cross country ski trails.

To date, they have had several major successes. There have been several snow dances, and one of the groups even consulted with a rain dance expert, who recommended bring in some colder weather. So we have done that, even though we have risked aggravating part of the city population because of the resultant higher natural gas bills. One consultant, from Sandia Laboratories, suggested something about Silver Iodide crystals. So one of the groups got some crystals and rubbed them carefully while sitting in a tight circle and chanting something weird, but that didn't do anything. So that direction was abandoned.

These efforts have paid off handsomely: there is adequate snow to ski not just in the Sandias along our traditional ski paths, but in the Manzanos at places like Oak Flat, which often don't have any skiable snow for entire seasons at a time. So the next time you talk with one of your Ski Club Board members, tell them how much you appreciate all that they have done.

*Ray Berg*

## Bus Trip Update By Angela Welford

The first bus trip of 2012 is to **Ouray, CO** on **Friday-Monday, January 13-16**. The trip is full but cancellations are still happening, so if you are on the reserve list keep your bags packed and your fingers crossed!



Marcia Congdon skis up O-Be-Joyful valley with Wayne Kirkby and Dave Saylor's following, 2/12/11.

*Photo by Carl Smith*

If you are on this trip, by the time you read this newsletter you should have received an email from me with details for the trip (*called Ouray Trip Information*) sent on or around December 22. If you did not receive that email, get in touch with me right away at [awelford1017@gmail.com](mailto:awelford1017@gmail.com) or 281-1198.

**Change:** Be sure to note the departure time from Albuquerque since it is earlier than indicated on your registration form. We will load the bus starting at 11:00 a.m., and depart Target parking lot at 12:00 noon on Friday, January 13. Randy will share more details about the skiing options while we are on the bus up to Ouray.

The next bus trip will be to **Frisco, CO, Thursday-Sunday, February 23-26**. Watch the newsletter and email for details.

See you on the bus! ■

## Hut Trips Update By Guy Miller

Our beginner hut trip to the Continental Divide Hut, scheduled for **January 23 – 27** is full, with no one on the waiting list.

The trip to Fowler-Hilliard Hut, **March 3 - 8**, is also full, with no waiting list.

To get on the waiting list, or for information about these or future hut trips, contact me at 294-7940 or [xcski-boy@aol.com](mailto:xcski-boy@aol.com). ■



Bob Potter skis out of the Continental Divide Hut in 2008.

*Photo by Bill Heitz*

## The Season Opener Ski

By Susan Corban

The first Club tour of the 2011-12 season was a Class I ski at Oak Flat, off Highway South 14 in Tijeras. The skiers: Susan Corban, leader, Dianne Cress (*cutest hat and snowflake top*), Dennis Crowther (*team GPS technician*), Jon McCorkell (*chocolate cookie monster*), Guy Miller (*who's behind those Foster Goggles?*), Norma Perez (*best downhill "woooooo"*), John Thomas (*best ear flaps*).



Susan Corban with her telemark skis on top of Homestake Peak near 10th Mountain Hut.

We found decent snow even several days after last Monday's storm. There was some nice powder, but it got predictably sticky when the sun was high and we left the shade. We had to stop to scrape and apply various products a few times. The terrain included rolling and flat

sections of narrow trail and some dirt roads left by wood cutters. We got in a couple of short hills for a little fun.



Guy Miller, John Thomas, Norma Perez, John McCorkell and Dennis Crowther ski Oak Flat.

Photo by Susan Corban

The group skied two loops with total mileage of

about 4.6 miles. The tour went through USFS land and adjacent property belonging to Albuquerque Open Space. We saw a few animal tracks and the famous landmarks of Oak Flat, that included a defunct weather station, a drinker that collects water for wildlife, an ancient Volkswagon carcass, and a couple of nice views through the trees to the Sandias.

We tested the Chocolate Food Group along the way and Dennis clocked our mileage on his GPS. Jon McCorkell asked if the loops have names, so I'm making up names, Jon. First loop will be the *Gamogany Loop*, which incorporates parts of the *Gamble Oak Trail* and *Mahogany Trail* (*named by the Forest Service, obviously for the Gambel Oak and Mountain Mahogany species that flourish there*). GamoganyPonderPinon just doesn't have a ring to it. The second loop I could call *The Mama and Booboo Trail* for the bears I once saw there. How's that? Astoundingly original, eh?

As winter progresses I can report to Club members who don't live out here whether there's snow worthy

of a trip to Oak Flat. There are many miles of trails for Class I and II skiers and the trails connect to the Forest Service areas around Juan Tomas, Cedro Peak and Chamisoso Canyon. It's a good location for novice skiers to practice and some of us to warm up our legs and lungs for stronger stuff. ■

## Pass Creek Yurt Ski

By Chris Standish

On the final day of the Pagosa Springs bus trip, our group of eight hardy skiers (*Ray Berg, Tom Broadbent, Marlene Brown, Alice and James Knapp, Ginger Larkin, Linda Standish and myself*) left from the parking lot of Wolf Creek Pass to seek out the Pass Creek Yurt. I had stayed at the yurt the previous summer on a mountain biking trip and wanted to see it in the snow.



We were provided directions by yurt operator Sandy Kobrock, who presented at Ski Club meeting in November and is an Avalanche Training Instructor. So how hard could it be? Ray set us on target to find the bridge over the dam of the Alberta Reservoir. It was a brisk ski downhill in two parts — fast and steep down a ski run, then gently down another groomed run to the dam. A very good start!

After removing extra clothing layers, six of us decided to continue on as planned. Marlene and Ginger decided to take advantage of the groomed trails by the reservoir. As soon as we crossed the dam we discovered a steep and icy hill so we skinned up and made the ascent! Ray was grumpy because he hadn't had to use skins in the past two years! It turned out that it took more time to gear up than to climb the hill so all was good! (*continued, page 4*)



Ray Berg, Chris Standish and James Knapp check their GPSs for directions to the yurt.

The trail continued a gentle climb in and out of the trees with excellent views and snow. The path was well marked with orange ribbons. We climbed around 200 feet to a saddle, then glided down about 300 feet to the yurt. We were glad to smell the smoke as we approached the yurt as our time was running short and we knew we had only about 15 minutes before turn-around time.

Tom and Ray were first to the destination and talked briefly to the weekend yurt inhabitants just as they were off for a trek. It looked like they had plenty of skiing options. After a brief stay at the yurt we backtracked to the ski area with time to spare for a snack along the way.

I would love to lead this route again next time we are in Pagosa Springs and continue past the yurt and back out to Highway 160 for a 10 miler with about a 1400 foot elevation drop! I'll look forward to having you join us! ■

### Chama Weekend Ski By John Thomas

We now have 25 members signed up for the car trip to Chama on **Friday - Sunday, February 10-12**. We will have both Class I and Class II ski tours. Our leaders will be myself and Lucy Miller for Class I, beginner ski tours, and Bill White, Karen Leach and Dave Gabel for the Class II ski tours. Bill knows some fun country for telemark turns, so we will have a nice variety of terrain for different levels of ability and interest.



Bryan Garner, Susan Harris and Jean Hanson in Chama, 2/3/11.

Photo by Karen Leach

Our plan is to drive to Chama on Friday. We will stay at the Chama Trails Inn, 575-756-2156, [www.chamatrailsinn.com](http://www.chamatrailsinn.com). Participants are responsible for making their own room reservations. They have just 15 rooms, so I encourage you to make reservations soon if you plan to come. Karen Leach is maintaining the list of participants, so contact her for potential roommates and carpools at [karenleach7@msn.com](mailto:karenleach7@msn.com) or 281-9836.

The rooms do not have kitchen facilities, so if you want this amenity, try the Y motel or the River's Bend. Last year, some people had breakfasts in their rooms and it worked, but most went to a restaurant in Chama and there is one within walking distance from the hotel.

Each day's tours will leave from the Chama Trails Inn, and we will carpool as much as possible. Please contact me if you plan to come at 298-5234 or [jt87111@comcast.net](mailto:jt87111@comcast.net) and watch e-groups for updates. ■

### Sandia Peak Snowshoe Race

Join Albuquerque's only snowshoe race on **Saturday, January 21, 2012 at 10 a.m.** The 3.2-mile race is held atop the Sandia Mountains. See: [www.sandiasnowshoe.com](http://www.sandiasnowshoe.com)

### Chama Chile Ski Classic

**When: Saturday - Monday, January 14-16**  
**Where: Chama, NM**



XC ski & snowshoe races, 5 & 10 K events, live music, chili/chile contest, costume contest, Yurt tours, family fun and more!

**Hotels fill fast so make reservations now!**  
[www.chamaski.com](http://www.chamaski.com)

## What's in Your Pack?

By Guy Miller

In preparing one's pack, a number of factors need to be considered. The skier should know how long, time and distance, the tour will be, as well as



weather, terrain and snow conditions. I always go prepared for any condition.

I take a selection of layer clothing, lunch, energy snacks, and a thermos of coffee/tea. Most of us fall sometime during the day so you want to be prepared with extra clothing in case you get wet or cold.

Suggestions on what to throw into your pack: I start with water and build from there. I use a two quart Camelback

bladder with a cordura nylon cover ([The Unbottle: www.rei.com/product/749987](http://www.rei.com/product/749987)). In freezing conditions I use an insulated tube and mouthpiece. Despite the warnings of the nay-sayers, it is easy to keep your water from freezing: after drinking, simply drain the liquid back into the bladder by holding the bite valve above the level of the bladder, and squeezing the valve. If you should get some icing, place the drinking tube inside the front of your jacket!

Since long lunch breaks are generally **not** a good idea, I keep food simple. My favorite is a PB & J sandwich. Bagel and cream cheese is another good choice. Snacks consist of dried fruit, beef jerky, and mixed nuts. If you must have sweets, Snickers bars and Fig Newtons are the way to go.

I put a lot of effort into clothing selection. I dress in long johns, with my nylon ski bib and a light shirt or vest. I use a forearm-covering gauntlet glove with a removable liner. I also take light, medium, and heavy glove liners. As for covering my head, the same principle applies: light weight skull cap liner, medium weight pullover cap, and heavy balaclava. My ski parka is waterproof/windproof with a hood. I'll wear what I think I'll need at the trailhead, and the rest goes into my pack in color coded stuff sacks for easy retrieval. It's best to start skiing a little cool, otherwise, you will have to strip down soon.

Unless I am skiing a prepared track area, I always take climbing skins with me, either "kickers," or full-length (*and sometimes both*). And I ALWAYS carry my Swiss Army knife.

The decision to carry optional items depends on the conditions. The skier should also evaluate ski



Carl Smith, Mona Ghattas, Diane Owens and Linda Standish head up the hill in Crested Butte, 2/11/11.

Photo Ray Berg

companions and their level of experience, as well as one's level of responsibility to others in the group.

My emergency kit: 2 emergency space blankets that pack down to about 2" X 4," steel wool, binding screws, and a "Binding Buddy" tool to repair loose bindings. If a binding screw gets ripped out, steel wool can be stuffed into the hole, and a replacement screw will be able to be snugged into place. The



Carl Smith and Marcia Congdon

Photo by Dave Gable

Binding Buddy is a ratchet tool with a bit that fits binding screws. A Phillips screwdriver generally will NOT suffice for this function. There is also a mini roll of duct tape and a bit of bailing wire. There is no end to the list of repairs that can be done with these two low tech wonders. I carry a spare ski basket, ski tip, and ferrels for my adjustable poles.

Possibly the most important item in my magic bag is a spare cable for my cable binding, AND a cable wrench. A workable substitute for a spare cable is a nylon wire tie of sufficient length to go through the binding and around the boot.

I also take a first aid kit with bandaids, tape, a gauze wrap and extra bandages, and antibiotic ointment. For skiing in potentially hazardous terrain, a metal shovel, avalanche probes and beacon are essential. The shovel and probe are stored on the outside of the pack for quick retrieval. If I know that you are not carrying a shovel, I'll let you carry mine!

One final tip is to keep all your ski gear in one place so it will be easy to find and pack. I could probably write another 1000 words on this topic! ■



David Wegner, Dianne Cress and Diane Owens in Crested Butte, 2/12/11.

Photo by Don Schultz

## DAY TRIPS – *also check web for details*

### **Date: Saturday, January 7, 2012**

**Location:** North Crest Trail (*possible extensions*)

**Leader:** Wayne Kirkby, [ski1071607@aol.com](mailto:ski1071607@aol.com), 898-1654

**Rating:** Class II

**Distance:** 5 – 8 miles

**Elevation gain:** < 800 feet

**Description:** From Crest parking lot ski North Crest Trail to Del Agua Overlook. Return on same trail. Ski down through the meadow and network of trails that parallel the service road at Ellis Trailhead.

**Meet:** Contact leader to confirm tour. Meet 9 a.m. at Smith's Grocery store, 4-Hills (*Central and Tramway*), SW corner of parking lot.

### **Date: Wednesday, January 11, 2012**

**Location:** Sandia Mountains, Survey Trail

**Leader:** Guy Miller, [xcskiboy@aol.com](mailto:xcskiboy@aol.com), 294-7940

**Rating:** Class II

**Distance:** 5 miles

**Elevation Gain:** 500 feet

**Description:** Starting at Ellis Trailhead ski Survey Trail, cross highway, ski to Del Agua Overlook, and return on Crest Trail. Pace will be semi-pokey (*except for a few steep downhill sections*), with time to take in views at the overlook. We'll take a lunch/snack break on the trail. If snow conditions are icy, leader has a plan B. Skiers should check e-groups to confirm trip or contact leader.

**Meet:** 9 a.m. at Smith's Grocery store, 4-Hills (*Tramway and Central*), far south end of parking lot.

**Who can go:** Members and their guests

### **Date: Sunday, January 22, 2012**

**Location:** Aspen Vista Trail, below Santa Fe Ski Basin

**Leader:** Jackie Hertel, [jhquickbeam@msn.com](mailto:jhquickbeam@msn.com)

**Rating:** Class II

**Distance:** 8 miles

**Elevation Gain:** 1500'

**Description:** Intermediate ski to the open rocky overlook point past the last stretch of forest.

Moderate pace ascending, a steady climb uphill one way, and enjoy a wildly fun ride back down. Skins helpful for climb up. Lunch will be a weenie roast on the side of the trail. Everyone needs to bring a few small dry pieces of wood, scraps of paper and garnish for wieners. I'll bring turkey wieners, buns and skewers. We'll ski until 3:30 p.m. and probably stop for chocolate elixirs at Kakawa in Santa Fe, return to ABQ by 5:30 p.m.

**Meet:** Email me no later than 1/15. I will email time and location of carpool confirmation by 1/19.

**Who can go:** Members only

### **Date: Sunday, January 29, 2012**

**Location:** Jemez Mountains, Los Griegos area

**Leader:** Pam Reynolds, [thunderpass@gmail.com](mailto:thunderpass@gmail.com), 505 989-8574, cell 505 501-4879

**Rating:** Class II

**Distance:** ~ 8 miles

**Elevation gain:** ~ 1000 feet

**Description:** Ski north facing slopes that provide good powder and lovely glades. Skiers must be able to climb, negotiate moderate descents, turn and stop.

**Meet:** ABQ skiers meet at 7:15 a.m. on west side of Target, Paseo del Norte and I-25 (*where we meet for bus trips*); figure out drivers and carpool, meet leader in Santa Fe. Reimburse drivers \$.10/mile. Meet leader at southwest corner of DeVargas Mall (*near Office Depot*) at 8:30 a.m. Call leader to confirm trip.

**Who can go:** Members and their guests

### **Date: Saturday, February 4, 2012**

**Location:** Sandia Mountains, Ellis Trailhead

**Leader:** Terri Elisberg, [terri.elisberg@gmail.com](mailto:terri.elisberg@gmail.com) or 450-9961

**Rating:** Class II

**Distance:** ~ 5 miles

**Elevation Gain:** 500 feet

**Description:** From parking at Ellis Trailhead ski trails off Service Road (*Rocky Point, Gravel Pit, Switchback*). If snow conditions are not good, may switch to snowshoes. Check e-groups for change.

**Meet:** 8:15 a.m. SE corner of Smiths (*Tramway & Central*) to carpool and/or meet leader at 8:30 a.m. at Molly's Bar parking lot at bottom of Tijeras exit ramp off I-40, head up N-14 to Molly's. Contact leader to confirm.

**Who can go:** Members and their guests

### **Date: Sunday, February 5, 2012**

Class I beginner tour, intended for those who attended the Beginner Class in January, but open to other Class I skiers. Check February newsletter and website for details to be announced soon.

### **Date: Monday - Thursday, February 6-9, 2012**

**Location:** Durango Hostel car trip

**Leader:** Guy Miller, [xcskiboy@aol.com](mailto:xcskiboy@aol.com), 294-7940

**Rating:** Class I, II & III

**Distance:** Varies each day

**Description:** Skiing options: Purgatory ski area, Nordic center, and numerous backcountry possibilities, mostly Class II and Class III. The Nordic center is ideal for Class I skiers, although skiers of all levels can have a good time. We will probably stay at Durango Hostel, [www.durangohometownhostel.com](http://www.durangohometownhostel.com), ~ \$25/person/night. It's a great place to stay and socialize. This trip is a great opportunity for those who have been unable to get on a bus or hut trip to ski with the Club.

**Meet:** Contact leader

**Who can go:** Members only

**Date: Saturday, February 11, 2012**

**Location:** Winsor Trail from Santa Fe Ski Basin

**Leader:** Jackie Hertel, [jhquickbeam@msn.com](mailto:jhquickbeam@msn.com)

**Rating:** Class II

**Distance:** 6 miles

**Elevation Gain:** 1000 feet

**Description:** Intermediate tour due to narrow, winding trail and some tricky turns. Ski to a point 1 mile past Nambe Creek with 1000' of uphill. Lunch at the meadow by Nambe Creek. The beginning steep, often icy, half-mile climb up to the cattle gate is usually hiked, carrying skis or bring skins. Some skiers also find skins useful for the last 2 miles of the return trip. After enjoying the snow until 3:30 p.m. or so, we'll hit Santa Fe and Kakawa Chocolatier for heavenly rewards for our winter exercise.

**Meet:** Contact leader no later than 2/4. I will email time/location of carpool confirmation on 2/8.

**Who can go:** Members only

**Date: Saturday, February 18, 2012**

**Telemark Clinic** at Sandia Ski area with trainer/leader Gordon Eatman. Those interested should contact Gordon at [geatman@yahoo.com](mailto:geatman@yahoo.com) or 573-8067.

**Date: Sunday, February 19, 2012**

**Location:** San Pedro Parks Wilderness

**Leader:** Guy Miller, [xcski-boy@aol.com](mailto:xcski-boy@aol.com), 294-7940

**Rating:** Class III

**Distance:** 10 miles

**Elevation Gain:** 1000 feet

**Description:** From Cuba we'll start at San Gregorio Lake trailhead. We'll ski to the lake and proceed into the wilderness. If conditions allow we'll ski a loop, returning on Palomas Trail. Except for the ascent to the Lake and return descent, which can be walked or skinned, skiing will not be technically difficult, but potential distance makes it Class III. Strong Class II skiers can participate. Contact leader to confirm trip.

**Meet:** 7:30 a.m., west side of Target, Paseo del Norte (where we meet for bus trips).

**Who can go:** Members and their guests

**Date: Saturday, February 25, 2012**

**Location:** Winsor Trail/Raven's Ridge, Santa Fe Ski

**Leader:** Susan Corban, [scorban@unm.edu](mailto:scorban@unm.edu), 286-0989

**Rating:** Class III

**Distance:** 4.5 miles

**Elevation gain:** 1700 feet

**Description:** From Santa Fe Ski parking lot, we'll go up Winsor Trail to fence line at the top of the first ridge, turn uphill along the fence and ski along Raven's Ridge to top of the ski area. We will return via ski slopes. This trip features a very steep ascent and all skiers absolutely MUST have climbing skins and strong legs (NOTE: Skiers who show up without climbing skins will be turned away). Skiers should possess appropriate backcountry skis and boots. The descent requires good downhill skills.

**Meet:** 7:30 a.m. at NW corner of Target on Paseo del Norte (where we meet for bus trips). Skiers from elsewhere, contact leader to arrange meeting. **NOTE:** Skiers MUST contact leader to confirm they are going. Class III skiers, don't miss this one!



= Monthly deadline for newsletter inclusion

January 2012						
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4 Trail project	5	6	7 Train Ski
8	9	10	11 Day Tour Guy Miller	12 Club Meets	13	14 Chama Chile
15	16 Chile	17	18 Trail project	19	20 Ouray Bus	21 Snow Shoe Race
22 Day Tour Hertel	23	24	25 Trail project	26 Board Meet	27	28
Train snow	Continental Divide Hut					Yellow
29	30	31				
Ski	Yellowstone Air Trip					

February 2012						
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4 Ski
			Yellowstone Air Trip			
5 Ski	6 Durango Hostel	7	8 Car	9 Club Meets	10	11 Chama Car
12 Chama	13	14	15 Trail project	16 Board Meet	17	18 Telemark Training
19 Ski	20 Clock icon	21	22 Trail project	23	24	25 Ski
				Frisco Bus Trip		
26 Bus	27	28	29 Trail project			

## 2011-12 Officers and Board

President	Ray Berg	366-8104	rsberg01@comcast.net
Vice President	Wayne Kirkby	898-1654	ski1071607@aol.com
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Treasurer	Chris Standish	400-7089	standish.chris@gmail.com
Day Tours	Guy Miller	294-7940	xcskiboy@aol.com
Long Bus Trips	Angela Welford Randy Simons	281-1198 294-0192	awelford1017@gmail.com randy_simons@msn.com
Overnight Car/Hut Trips	Guy Miller	294-7940	xcskiboy@aol.com
Newsletter	Karen Leach	281-9836	karenleach7@msn.com
Instruction	John Thomas	298-5234	jt87111@comcast.net
Membership	Sherry Fitzmaurice	205-7155	skimembership@nmccskiclub.org
Programs	Terri Elisberg	281-9192	terri.elisberg@gmail.com
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Web Site	David Wegner	344-8554	dave@naturesgrandeur.com
Email Group	Bob Potter	831-9779	hvac87108356@yahoo.com

### New Mexico Cross Country Ski Club

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Sarah Stout came from Santa Fe to ski Oak Flat, lead by Susan Corban, 12/27.

*Photo by Susan Corban*