



Sierra Regional Ski For Light NEWSLETTER

Summer 2015

Volume 12, Issue 1

WHO WE ARE by Betsy Rowell, Editor

Sierra Regional Ski For Light (SRSFL) is an all volunteer, non-profit cross-country ski program for blind and visually impaired children and adults. Donations are tax-exempt under section (501)(c)(3) of the IRS code.

The program is a way for blind and visually impaired individuals to promote good health by being involved in a winter cross-country ski program and a summer program including hiking and water activities.

This newsletter is published annually, to provide information about the people and activities of SRSFL.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

by
Vicki Post
San Francisco, CA

As I write this, the fog is rolling in for the evening in San Francisco, and this makes me think of cooler weather and the snow that I hope we will experience this coming winter. For the moment, I hope you are all enjoying sunshine and some good outdoor fun. I want to thank you all very sincerely for choosing me



Vicki Post, President

as President; it is a privilege to help guide and shape such an organization as SRSFL. I come to this term as President a little older and wiser than when I was first elected back in 2005. In spite of this, I appreciate the chance to take a fresh look at how we are operating, and to allow the spirit of SRSFL to guide the Board, the Committee chairs and me as we work to plan our upcoming activities.

First, I want to thank our past President, Dave Hoffman, for his hard work over the last two years. I know he had many a restless night as we sorted out what, if any, activities could actually happen given the weather. I look forward to working with him over the next two years.

I also want to welcome and acknowledge the Board of directors and the various committee chairs. I look forward to collaborating with each of you

as we navigate the trail called SRSFL leadership.

Speaking of activities, I am quite pleased with the success of our summer/fall hiking weekends over the last two years. I have loved the chance to see many of you more than once a year, and it is also a thrill to spend time in the mountains, no matter the season. As for our winter plans, the last couple of years have presented their challenges. I love the resiliency of our SRSFL family, and as we move forward, we will continue to adapt to our changing climate as we can.

Assuming we do have snow, I would like to spend my energy strengthening our fund-raising and recruiting efforts, and promoting cross country skiing itself. I am aware that, in this day and age, blind and visually impaired youth and adults have many opportunities for outdoor fun and recreation, and I believe it is important to make sure that cross country skiing remains one of them.

And, even though it does not sound as glamorous, I do intend to help maintain those programs that are currently working to keep SRSFL the reliable and vibrant organization we've all come to know and love.

On a more personal note, I continue to enjoy long walks and hikes with my guide dog, working as a spiritual counselor and lots of music as I am now singing with the San Francisco Choral Society.

Yes, you might hear a little extra noise out on the trails next year as I practice. And since singing and skiing both burn calories, I plan to enjoy at least one pumpkin/chocolate chip muffin next year.

I look forward to seeing many of you, both on and off the snow. Keep the snow dance going; it just might work!

Welcome to the New Board.

Under our current system SRSFL now holds elections every year. This means that every year, we welcome three new or returning members to the Board of Directors.

This system allows for some continuity from year to year as the Board changes.

This year's new Board members include Vicki Post, President and Cindy Quintana, Treasurer. Sylvia Reese, is returning for a second term as Board member-at-large I. Dave Hoffman is now Past President.

Congratulations and welcome to the new members.

If any of you have ideas or suggestions, or would like to volunteer in any capacity, please feel free to contact any Board member, and do what you can to support the Board in its ongoing work.

THINK SNOW



SQUEAKY SHOE, KNIFE WIELDING BETSY AND CHOCOLATE

**by
Sylvia Reese
Sacramento, CA**



John, Marc and Carol on the highway

This year along on our 3-day event were new comrades Mark and Jon. This was Mark's first time, and Jon's second time to join us. I asked these men to tell me some of the highlights they experienced. Both men were immediately all smiles. Mark told me that from the very beginning he felt welcomed. Starting with eating pizza at the Fairfield Inn, he immediately knew that he had found a fun group to hang with. He had expected to go hiking in the dirt or mud due to the drought. But as our bus climbed the interstate the snow began. All of a sudden, oh my God, we had snow! It was just awesome. While on the bus, SRSFL members came by and spoke with both Mark and Jon, making them feel really welcome. Jon said that he really liked that our Betsy took the time to sit with him for a while just to check in with them.

Mark and Jon recounted these memories: During the uphill journey our bus had to stop due to an accident. Jon had an idea to get off the bus and sell chocolate. Our president, David also liked the idea.

So, Mark, Jon, David, Pat and Carol walked up and down the Interstate selling World's Finest Chocolate to the stopped cars. What a fantastic initiation for our newest members!

Jon marveled by the wisdoms and intellectual conversations with his guides. He recalled stopping at Donner Lake which had been blanketed fresh with snow. "I placed my hand on Mary's shoulder and we walked." Mary had said, "Let's go wade DOWN in THE Donner Lake." And Jon replied, "Okay, you go first." Mary said, "Oh, well then, maybe next time." She was really funny which I really liked. Mary was always kidding that "I'll do it if you do it, if I do it you got to do it." Jon recalled that later, on the third day while snowshoeing,, Mary told Jon not to step too far back because he would land in the creek. Jon joked, "Well if I step into it, hum, well... Mary your turn!" And laughter followed.

Both Mark and Jon really enjoyed their guides humor, conversation, and the feeling of safety. They appreciated how their guides really knew the area and offered a choice of trails to match their energy level. Jon was impressed at the guides' familiarity and ability to explain his whereabouts, he said, "They made me feel like I could see the area myself."

I was reminded that being blind that we often have a different perspective on our surroundings. While being guided, I often do not know where I am, since I do not touch landmarks, nor may even not know the direction in which I am traveling. So I often try to listen to distant sounds to orient myself. That **way I know that I am not simply going** 'round in circles. While snowshoeing I had noticed that far from me was a squeaking sound; how odd of



Jon, Marc, and Dave,
Can I sell you a candy bar?

a sound that was out in the snowy wilderness. But I followed that sound in a somewhat straight line. Some times I could not quite hear that squeaky beacon, but as I would turn into a new trail that squeakiness would re-appear. This made me wonder, we were going away from the lodge and I had not heard a large fan or windmill out here ever. Another hill and there it was again, but it stopped, and so did the wind. I kept going along the trail and found Mark and Jon with their guides, we stopped for a minute and visited. Then off we were again, and low and behold there was that sound. It was Jon's snowshoe! Jon was the squeaky one on the mountain! Squeak, squeak, squeak. So if your guide is difficult to hear then just follow the squeak.

Mark told this: On our second night's banquet after dinner, thanks were given and Betsy was about to cut into a cake, someone asked a question. Betsy turned to answer, and while talking, she walked right down the middle of the tables holding the knife with her fingers while swinging the knife like a samurai. People were quiet while intensely watching her. Pat shouted, "Betsy, set down the knife." Everyone laughed!

Mark said some of the weekend highlights were selling chocolates on the freeway, sitting in the hot tub in snow,

and our dinners. He really liked his guides and mentioned that guides Zinnia and Ken were wonderful.

Jon said that to him the first day alone was more fun than last year. "I mean the chocolate, walking up and down on the interstate, talking with new friends, and the witty conversations. Jon said that, "Last year I could only go a day and a half before my knees went out, this year I did all three days. And I tell you, the first day alone made the whole trip worth it." While Jon had not stepped into any large puddles, creeks or frozen lakes, he and his guides joked throughout the weekend. "Just awesome, it was fantastic." He also said the Subway sandwiches were great. And what made them better was Edie. The effort she put into it, then getting injured and still coming to join us, that made Subway a little more special. That was fantastic.

Both Mark and Jon found the SRSFL guides absolutely made the day. They are all so funny. "They sparkle, upbeat and sparkly!"

What else does Jon say? What did the fish say when it swam into a wall? DAM! What do you call a fish with no eyes? Fsh (sound it out!) What do you call a deer with no eyes? No I-dear!



Edie and Monte pass out Subway lunches.

WHAT NO SNOW?
by
Richard Rueda
Union City, CA



Richard Rueda

To snow or not to snow, that was the worry we bit our nails and tapped our toes in the week leading up to the 23rd annual SRSFL three-day cross country event. Waking to gloomy skies Saturday morning, the region looked more like it was going to rain vs. snow. We trudged through the morning ritual of getting up, eating quazi decent hotel breakfast food and soon after, boarded the bus.

Not long after we encountered the white stuff falling from the sky. At first it was slow and heavy with rain and soon after it was all snow and more snow. Despite a minor set back on the highway, many of our more entrepreneur minded folks took to the highway, quite literally and sold candy bars to stranded motorists.

Since 2000, I believe I have attended the three-day SRSFL event five or six times, this being a return after a four or five year absence. It is so refreshing to see folks so enthusiastic and eager to go and enjoy time in the great outdoors, despite the unknown weather conditions. A small portion of Saturday

and a good lengthy time Sunday and Monday on the hills in snow shoes had me smiling and enjoying the crunch of the snow and having Shawna, my guide take many pictures of the area. While on the snow, we had great conversations and long periods of peaceful silence while taking it all in. That peacefulness is a good detox for all the hustle and bustle of city life leaning and pouring out of our skin.

It's only three weeks since the 2015 three-day event has past and I am already doing the snow dance for 2016 as climate change goes we will need all the snow dancing we can get.

Thank you one and all for making this an exceptional year and for volunteering selflessly of your time and donations.

STUCK ON THE HIGHWAY
by
Steve Holmes
West Sacramento, CA



Guide Pat and Skier Dave
AH, We made it!

When we all realized, we were probably not going to have any snow during the

scheduled 3 day event, we as members of the organization decided to go ahead and get together anyway because we generally have fun together despite the lack of snow. Well then, that Saturday morning I heard that chain control was in effect, I really wasn't expecting much, if any, snow, let alone requiring chains on the way up there. Maybe there is some real meaning in the term "March Miricle."

Ahh but then we get into a traffic jam related to the road closures up ahead and we ended up just sitting in the bus for two hours or so. Any other time, I would probably have been totally disgusted or mad about the situation; I mean, who wants to sit around in a bus for two hours not going anywhere? Well, we all were in the same situation, cracking jokes and whatever and that whole scene actually had its own elements of fun in it.

I think the climax of just that traffic jam and being stuck there was when several of the members got out and began peddling candy bars to other motorists, also stuck on the side of the road with us.

Well, since we did actually get a fair amount of snow that weekend, we ended up doing some skiing and snow shoeing after all. Before this weekend began, I don't think any of us could have expected this final outcome; at least, I didn't.

Another observation I would like to make, while we were out getting about in the snow and some of that time, it was actually snowing I noticed a really peaceful silence around me. I guess the falling snow was muffling the sounds and it was really neat and peaceful. I certainly had loads of fun over a weekend which actually had quite a spontaneous effect; we all were able to adapt to whatever the weather was going to bring and nothing stopped us from having fun around it.

RIDING THE RAILS TO THE SRSFL EVENT

by
John Paxman, Tooele Utah



I just want to thank you at Sierra Regional Ski For Light for letting me attend your great event. I come because it is easy for me to get to Truckee by train from Utah, but I keep coming every year because of the great people in your organization. I will laugh every time I think of being stuck in traffic and instead of hearing complaints, watching blind people selling candy bars to other stranded motorists. Thanks again for a great time

Editors note: For the last two years, SRSFL has held a three-day hiking weekend in the late summer/early fall. It is rapidly becoming as popular as the winter event, with its own kind of magic.



KING LAKE TAHOE
by
Jeff Thom
Sacramento , CA



Guide Pat and Hiker Jeff

Even the occasional smoke from the forest fire off in the distance couldn't dampen the spirits of our merry band of SRSFL hikers as we meandered around the incomparable environs of Lake Tahoe. For some, a hike isn't a hike unless you're completely exhausted by the end of the day. For me, however, the chance to stroll along, smell and touch the flora and interact with my guide and whoever we come across was all the satisfaction I could ask for. I also enjoyed visiting an old Tahoe estate, and envisioning the life they led more than a century ago. The only thing that compares to a SRSFL hike is an SRSFL ski trip

HIKE AT THE
PRESBYTERIAN
CONFERENCE CENTER
by
Barney Jones
Folsom CA.

Timing is everything. Last year it was the snow. This time it's the fires; smoke, road closures, and dire forecasts for the

prospect of going to the mountains for a nice outing. But we went anyway. They're not going to give us a refund just because of a little smoke.

Traveling up highway 50 we passed about 50 fire trucks, but suffered no serious delays. When we arrived at Spooner Lake it was beautiful: clear, sunny, calm and perfect for a walk around the park trails.

Then we went to find our lodgings. Wow, what a spread out bunch of cabins and structures. So where do we go? Ah, there's Mother Bear and Monte, we must be in the right place. Then the other Monte tells us, "we're up in number 40." "Here?" I point to a nicely situated cabin nearby. "No, up there somewhere," Monte gestured vaguely, but all I could see was a trail that disappeared in the mist. I thought I'd had my hike for the day, but we were on a trail again, going up, climbing dirt steps and scrambling across rocks. We made it without ropes or pitons, the sighted and partials guiding the totals. So each day after the scheduled hike some of us had this one more hike to do.

Ah, dinner time. This way, down at the bottom of the hill. Tough climb out with a full stomach. Thank goodness for Cari's taxi service.



Lunch on a log

Our full day of hiking was overcast and cool with intermittent smoke, but undaunted, we split up for a variety of hikes that I believe were enjoyed by all.

The last day was a perfect weather day, with sun and a light breeze. Thanks to Mat, some of us got to experience Chimney Rock Beach, a great location, the best Tahoe has to offer.

Overall I'd say the weekend was a success. Smoke would come in, then usually blow out and leave us in the clear—more or less. It was sure better than sitting at home with the TV and worrying about the fires consuming our Sierra forests. We got to see it in person! But not too close.

Editor's note: SRSFL is a success because of our dedicated volunteers.

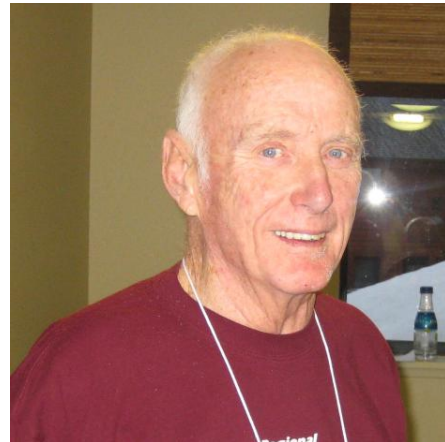
**VOLUNTEERS WITH A
SMILE
Kay and Charles Beazell
Woodland , CA**



Kay Beazell

Kay: I will take care of it. Charlie: I'm waiting for Mama Bear. These are quotes from Kay and Charles Beazell

who have volunteered for SRSFL for the past 19 years.



Charles Beazell

In the early years Kay and Charlie loaded up their van in Woodland with everything but the kitchen sink. I'm sure we all have good memories of Kay's homemade soup, cherry crisp, and main dishes. Some of you may remember the time when Kay, Charlie and other volunteers prepared the dinners at a church across the street from the hotel. They ran back and forth in blowing snow, and this was before the hotel had an elevator.

When the caterer was brought on board, Kay was on top of it to see that things would be done. She always added seasonal decorations to the tables.

Kay introduced us to the goodie bags and her home made chocolate boot. One guide asked, why just one boot? I have two feet. This person found two boots in her goodie bag the following year.

Because of poor health Charlie and Kay did not volunteer this year. They were dearly missed. The SRSFL family gives them our heartfelt thanks and wishes them all the best.

DOGGY DAY-CARE
by
Pam Bittner
Sacramento, CA



Mike, Pam and Judge

My first year of doggy day-care was in 2005, when I was introduced to SRSFL through my then boyfriend, and now husband, Mike Bittner. And, I have been hooked ever since. It gives me such great joy to be able to care for such wonderful dogs, knowing that their humans can relax and have fun on the snow. And, it is more than pleasurable to be able to spend a weekend playing with the wonderful dogs - giving them a play vacation too!!!

A FUN TIME
by
Laura Woods, Soda
Springs, CA

Why do I keep coming back as a guide for SRSFL you ask? Because I always have such a fun time. The skiing is great, of course, but it is the wonderful, zany



Snowsowers Coyote and Guide Laura

and diverse bunch of people that really turns me on. Over my years of being a ski guide and snowshoe guide I have made many new friends among both guides and skiers, and I enjoy them all. I have found that hiking in the summer with SRSFL has also been a beautiful experience.

One more of my passions is giving back to others. I find that this group affords me that opportunity while giving me a really fun time. That is why I look forward to every outing!

FUND RAISING

The 2015 SRSFL ski season has come to a close, BUT fundraising goes on year round. Fundraising may seem like a bit of a mystery to many of us, but it is one of the most vital elements to ensure SRSFL's bright future. And now that we are adding summer activities to the program, extra funds are more critical than ever! So, anything you can do to help will be greatly appreciated. We are seeking supporters, donors, grants and cash. All money raised goes directly into the program for transportation,

scholarships and other expenses, and to keep the cost down for all.

Signing up for Amazon Smile is another way for SRSFL to raise money. Go to Amazon and choose SRSFL as your charity.

Donate 0.5% of your purchase to charity

amazonsmile
Start Here!

If you have questions, ideas and/or contacts, please contact Betsy Rowell, chair of the fund-raising committee.
Phone: (916) 362-5557
Email: betsy.rowell2@gmail.com

SRSFL would like to take this opportunity to thank the many organizations and businesses for their support of our cross-country ski program and summer outings. Please let them know how much you appreciate their support by patronizing their businesses and supporting their other activities.

Active 20/30 Club No. 1 of Sacramento
Adam's Vending, Gold River, CA
Auburn Host Lions Club, Auburn, CA
Commerce Printing, Sacramento, CA
Embarcadero Lions, Sacramento, CA
49er Ski Club, Sacramento, CA
Kiwanis Club of Citrus Heights, CA
Lions Education Foundation
North Tahoe Catering, Truckee, CA
Royal Gorge X/C, Soda Springs, CA
Sacramento Turn Verein Actives
Sacramento Valley Sertoma Club
Safeway, Truckee, CA
Save Mart, Truckee, CA
Tahoe Donner X/C, Truckee, CA
The Treat Box Bakery, Truckee, CA

MANY THANKS also to the individual donors who have supported SRSFL throughout the years and the past year.

2015 - 2016 SRSFL



CALENDAR

SUMMER OUTING

August 7 - 10, 2015

Hiking retreat weekend at Zephyr Point Presbyterian Conference Center, Zephyr Cove, NV
Contact: Vicki Post
Home: 415 928-2711
E-mail: VickiPost@earthlink.net
OR
Betsy Rowell
Home: 916 362-5557
E-mail: betsy.rowell2@gmail.com

SKI GUIDE TRAINING

Thursday, January 21, 2016
Sacramento (evening)
Saturday, January 23, 2016
in Truckee (evening)
Sunday, January 24, 2016
On the snow TD X/C in Truckee
Contact Edie Lott:
Guide Coordinator
Home: 530 582-5362
E-mail thelotts@gmail.com
OR
Contact: Vicki Post,
Guide Training Coordinator
Home: 415 928-2711
E-mail VickiPost@earthlink.net

**SKI TRIPS FOR
CHILDREN AND ADULTS
AT Tahoe Donner X/C
Truckee, CA**

Saturday, January 23, 2016
Saturday, February 6, 2016
Saturday, April 2, 2016
Contact Betsy Rowell:
Home: (916)362-5557
E-mail: betsy.rowell2@gmail.com

**24th ANNUAL
3-DAY EVENT**

March 5 - 7, 2016
Contact Cindy Quintana:
Phone: (510)483-2948
E-mail: CindyQ12345@sbcglobal.net

SRSFL BOARD

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VickiPost@earthlink.net

VICE PRESIDENT - Pat Slauson
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MEMBER AT LARGE 2 - Betsy Rowell
Betsy.rowell2@gmail.com

IMMEDIATE PAST President
David Hoffman
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KEEP IN TOUCH.

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WE'RE ON THE WEB
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