



SIERRA REGIONAL SKI FOR LIGHT NEWSLETTER

Summer 2012

Volume 10, Issue 1

A CROSS-COUNTRY SKI PROGRAM

This newsletter is published annually, to provide information about the people and activities of Sierra Regional Ski For Light (SRSFL).

MEET THE SRSFL BOARD

PRESIDENT
Bruce Johnson
Gold River, CA



The 2012 *Sierra Regional Ski for Light* ski season...I'm REALLY glad that's over! We lost two ski events due to a lack of snow

and the third, our famed 3-Day Ski-a-thon, was touch-and-go for the very same reason. But wait...maybe I'm being too hard on Mother Nature and forgetting all the good stuff 2012 brought. For starters, your Board's total professionalism in dealing with the weather-hand it was dealt was a sight to behold. Given that 2012 was SRSFL's 20th anniversary you can well imagine the pressure to pull off the "best season ever." I think the worst part was dealing with promised storms that never arrived. This made for last-minute decision-making coupled with the fear that a critical element would be overlooked...like skiers

or guides showing up to a non-event. Fortunately, this was not the case. Let me use this forum to "publicly" thank all YOUR board members and committee chairs for their hard work, cohesiveness and ability to make extremely difficult decisions in a timely manner. Thanks guys...from ALL of us!

Ah, but there's more 2012 good stuff. Our 20th 3-Day event came off without a hitch...well; let's just forget about the bus "issue" and RC's "fender bender." What could be better than three days of being together again in the always glorious Sierra Nevada? I saw a dedicated snowshoer ski for the first time, "Lion's Leap" being conquered by folks who struggled with "Cup of Tea" last year. There were total strangers asking question after question about our program. I sent out over a dozen SRSFL brochures and answered even more emails...will any of this result in additional donations, skiers, guides or volunteers? Only time will tell, but the interest is out there. Here's a dirty little secret: when YOU, each one of YOU, don that nasty orange bib you become the world's best *Ski for Light* ambassador. Not a word need be spoken; your smile, your laughter, your showing everyone that YOU CAN DO IT says it all. Thanks for spreading the "silent" word.

As always, I've got some things for you to keep in mind over the summer...maybe I should call it "homework", but I REALLY want you to do it, not put it off. You guessed it, first on my list is fundraising. Trite as it may sound, "every little bit helps." Yes, the glory days of the \$1500

corporate donor have all but vanished; so now it's up to us. Think about it this way, if each of us twisted an arm for a mere \$10 donation we'd be on our way to pay for the 3-Day bus...our largest expense. Let's all try to be creative this summer. For example, instead of that second latte (I'd NEVER take your first away) mentally donate that coffee-coin to SRSFL. Let's see...\$3 once a week, 12 weeks of summer...there's a simple, caffeine-free \$36 donation. Maybe you could even talk some friends into taking the very same pledge. Enough table-pounding...just send the tax-deductible SRSFL donations you collect to our Treasurer, Jim Mrazek. If you, or your donor, need a tax letter just let me know.

Second on my list is recruiting. Please help spread the word...SRSFL is always looking for skiers, snowshoers, guides and volunteers. Sometime during the summer YOU will have the opportunity to recruit a new member into the SRSFL family. Don't let it pass by! When you tell others how much fun you had turning your, "I wish I could" dream, into a, "Yes I can...and I did!" reality, do you ever think they might have the same dream? This is the SRSFL goal...to turn dreams into reality. Skiers and snowshoers can cruise the trails because there are guides. Guides gain a true sense of achievement when their "partner" succeeds. Volunteers, from dog sitters to Miss Kay's dining room helpers ensure our events run smoothly. *Sierra Regional Ski For Light* is truly a team effort. Set yourself a personal summer goal of recruiting at least one new "team member." TEAM SRSFL will benefit...but not nearly as much as your new recruit! Simply put, recruiting for SRSFL defines a "win-win" situation.

My summer to-do list concludes with YOUR involvement. SRSFL does not run

itself. It is not a "self-licking ice cream cone." There are Board positions to fill as well as several committees to staff. All of these are opportunities for YOU to serve YOUR organization. Don't let me hear you say, "I don't have the time!" True, there may be exceptions just prior to a Sierra event, but on average you'll probably put in less than two hours a month. Service to YOUR organization is unquestionably more productive than watching a TV sitcom or listening to your favorite radio "talking head" personality. Let's get down to brass tacks...if not YOU, who? Do your part. It won't take much time or effort...but it will make a HUGE difference.

This is my last Newsletter entry as your president. I have enjoyed serving *Sierra Regional Ski For Light* in this capacity for two terms. Now it is time to hand the reins over to someone else. Although no one knows who that person will be, I'm confident whoever it is, he or she will possess fresh ideas, total enthusiasm and staunch dedication to improving the active lives of our blind and visually impaired companions. Thanks for your support...it was a pleasure to serve.

I have just one final request of each and every one of you, just one...THINK SNOW!

Have a peaceful and safe summer.



VICE PRESIDENT
Pat Slauson
Lodi, CA



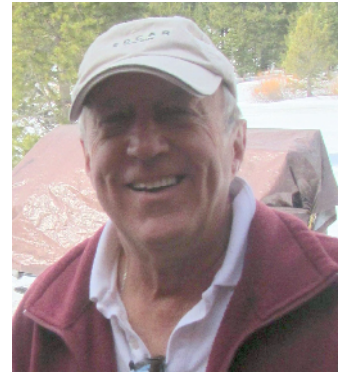
Hello to all my friends (old and new) at SRSFL. My name is Pat Slauson, and I am delighted to return to this organization as Vice

President. The 20TH Anniversary Event was super; I had a marvelous time and am sure that you all did, too. My late husband, Bob, and I, along with the Rowell's were instrumental in bringing the Ski for Light experience to California. I know Bob would be thrilled by the way this organization has grown and prospered. We all owe a debt of gratitude to the many people who have contributed time and much hard work to make SRSFL so successful.

As a Board Member, my personal goals include: 1) Listening and learning from my fellow board members and from the membership at large; we have a lot of untapped talent out there! 2.) "Marketing" SRSFL to both the blind and sighted communities through publicity (Press releases and use of other media).

I know that we, as board members, welcome input from all of our members. If you have any questions, concerns, or ideas, please contact me by phone **209 369-6570** or by e-mail **expsycho0602@yahoo.com**

TREASURER
Jim Mrazek
El Dorado Hills, CA



I have been treasurer for a year and keep track of our monies by an excel spreadsheet, primarily. The SRSFL checkbook is the balance in the system, which is checked against our bank statements. I don't keep other business books separate for the work, such as an individual A/P (accounts payable), as we don't have enough transactions for that.

Over the last year I have continued working in properties and real estate. No big/out-of-country trips this last year, but much camping and hiking done, and planned for this year also. Recently completed the Wilderness First Aid course again (2 year recert), and I am actually starting to understand what I am doing! Working as a volunteer for the Tahoe Rim Trail continues.

SECRETARY
Mike Bittner
Sacramento, CA



I have been with Sierra Regional Ski For Light (SRSFL) for 15 years. I have attended ten annual three day events and I am currently

employed with the State of California Teachers Retirement System as an analyst. I'm pleased to be able to serve another term as secretary on the SRSFL Board where I make sure all the i's are dotted and t's are crossed.

BOARD MEMBER # 1
Sharlene Wills
Los Angeles, CA



Hello, SRSFL Members and Friends. For those of you who don't know me, I have been a part of the SRSFL family for many years now, enjoying all the

fun of snowshoeing and cross country skiing that Tahoe Donner offers to us, as well as so many friendships and support of other SRSFL folks.

When I'm not at our 3-Day event, I'm enjoying the luxury of retirement from the County of Los Angeles District Attorney's Office (I was a Legal Transcriber for well over 25 years) and I'm now looking forward to a move out of the hectic city of Los Angeles to Bend, OR, where I hope to pursue my other "loves" of running, hiking, reading and volunteering.

I've had the privilege of serving on the SRSFL Board as secretary and now, as a Member At Large, I hope to continue my association with this wonderful organization for many years to come.



BOARD MEMBER # 2
Betsy Rowell
Sacramento, CA

I'm Betsy. As many of you already know, I have been with SRSFL since the beginning. We who have been around since the first ski weekend had no idea that SRSFL would become the program it is today. It WAS thrilling to celebrate 20 years of cross-country skiing and snowshoeing last March.



When not shuffling applications for skiers, organizing transportation, fundraising or coordinating housing, I enjoy kayaking, hiking, camping and traveling.

I look forward to working with the new SRSFL Board and continuing to keep our organization moving forward. Welcome back Pat!

PAST PRESIDENT
Vicki Post
San Francisco, CA



Hello to all of you. As immediate Past President, I have the pleasure of continuing to help guide SRSFL through all the twists and turns of its ongoing growth. In my current capacity, I love being

able to contribute my own vision and ideas, while helping others to blossom and bring new life to the organization I love. I ski when I can, hike and walk whenever possible, take part in social justice and other activities with a progressive group of Franciscans and still

eat way too much dark chocolate. I am a spiritual counselor and a singer/songwriter, and I look forward to being part of this new Board and preparing for the future of SRSFL; ah yes, a good mix of work and play!

MY FIRST SKI FOR LIGHT...

**By
Lynn Mullen
Truckee, CA**



As I have been an alpine skier for more than 50 years and have been an occasional cross country skier for over 20 years, I anticipated no difficulty in guiding blind Nordic skiers along the trails at Tahoe Donner.

Much to my surprise, I found that our blind skiers were quite adept, many of them having skied fast courses on steep terrain. I should have known that this would be the case as my husband and I had met Walter Raineri riding a bus from Marin to San Francisco. As we chatted and as he gave us directions and other helpful hints, we didn't know he was blind.

Only when all of us departed the bus at our stop did we observe his cane.

Frankly, Walt could guide himself through the busy streets of San Francisco better than the 2 visitors he was leading.

No surprise that Walter and other seasoned skiers set the pace in our first outing of the year. After one run on cross country skis, I thought I had better stick with those who were slow like me, but even they were pretty fast. So in the end, I decided to demote myself to guiding the

snowshoe crowd. No matter whether on skis or snow shoes, we all could enjoy the Tahoe landscape, the snow, the mountain air, and the great camaraderie among friends.

TAHOE RIM RACE/TOUR

**By
Sharon Fong
Truckee, CA &
Marilyn Gerhard,
Sacramento, CA**

On Saturday, April 7 the Far West Nordic Ski Education Association sponsored its fifth annual Tahoe Rim Race and Tour as a fund raiser for their junior ski program.

The race was originally scheduled for January, but had to be postponed due to a lack of snow. Thanks to Sharon Fong's willingness to guide me on the race, I was able to take part in it. The race was approximately 26 kilometers or 16 miles, going from the Tahoe Cross Country Ski Area to Northstar. At the beginning and end of the race, when we were at lower elevation, there was just barely enough snow; but in between we had some very good skiing conditions. It was a fun day of skiing and I was pleased the next day to find out that I had come in first in the women's 70+ category, beating the only other woman in the category by just 2 1/2 minutes. Thanks again to Sharon for guiding me on the race. Marilyn Gerhard



It was a great day, nice and warm, but cool enough at the start to keep the trail firm. They let us start early, even though with only about 130 people altogether, the trail didn't get mashed up like it does with close to a thousand people in the great race, and it even wasn't so warm at the end that it was too slushy. The classic skiers started first, and then the skaters and the snowshoers started a half hour later, perfect for keeping the track grooves from getting skated over and staying intact. It was 16.1 miles, about 2 miles less than the Great Race and no steep downhills: only one short section in Northstar that wasn't bad. I couldn't keep up with Marilyn and Shawna last year in the steep sections of the Great Race, so was relieved that this was much easier. We skied down from the cross country center on the regular ski run back to the village instead of taking the Gondola back. Sharon Fong

OVER 20 YEARS OF DEDICATED SERVICE



Mat Stein

Jon Courtway

Jon Courtway and Mat Stein started guiding blind and visually impaired skiers with the Sierra Club Inner City Outing (ICO) program in the mid 80's. As the ICO program phased out, the cross country skiing daytrips were taken over by the newly-formed SRSFL, and Jon and Mat came along too. Jon brought with him

some years of guiding experience and Mat provided his excellent skills as a ski instructor. They both have hung in there with the program until this day and have been most dependable in their support. Jon has transformed from a great guide to a great volunteer, helping with room orientation, luggage, running errands and much more. Mat has not only served as a guide, but has also given specialized instruction to visually impaired skiers. Many former meadow shufflers have become good skiers thanks to Mat. The dedicated service given by Jon and Mat has helped make SRSFL what it is today.

**WHY DO I GO TO SRSFL?
by
Tommy Leung,
Sacramento, CA**

Why do I go to SRSFL year in, and year out? Could it be the skiing, the snow shoeing, the food, etc.? Perhaps— those are excellent reasons.



But the main reason is you, my fellow members.

As we all share a common bond, I am comforted that our relationships, good and bad, are honest and not framed by our visual impairments – maybe it's something random like the color of my teeth!

In the “real” world, I often wonder whether my peers truly want to “friend” me or “put up” with me or “feel” for me. At SRSFL, if we are friends, then we are friends, and if you don't want to hang with me, then it must be the color of my teeth!

THE RETURN TO SRSFL WHERE'D THE SNOW GO?

**by
David Hoffman,
Fremont, CA**



Alas dear reader tis true. I did choose of my own free will to return to the 2012 SRSFL event. This

did occur despite the warning of Phil the Groundhog who appeared at his designated time with sunscreen and a Speedo bathing suit forecasting a truly early spring and all too soon fare thee well to winter 2012. However, my return proved to be a great choice for many reasons.

I was first introduced to Ski For Light at the 2011 international event, which was held somewhere in Colorado, also known now in SFL lore as where Hell did in fact freeze over.

From there I was told about the regional events held around the country, including the one in my own backyard, northern California.

I became legally blind just a few years ago and at the ripe age of 43 thought life as I knew it was pretty much over. If you are reading this, then you are really bored or you likely know or will know soon that the SFL family, however dysfunctional, saved many a soul, including mine own. Well, perhaps not my soul, but my sanity and certainly my outlook on life, and instilled in me the knowledge that truly, if I can do this, I can do anything. Except

perhaps beat certain super-human skiers in a SFL race.

In my first year of vision impairment I did balk at attending SFL events, but I can say with extreme confidence you will never find another group of dedicated, caring and amusingly weird folks anywhere. This is what kept me coming back and will keep me returning year after year as long as health, geography and whatever else fate has in store for me allows.

The guides are incredible, the skiers are fearless and all involved in the organization demonstrate a zest for life and the great outdoors that is infectious.

I look forward to March 2013. Best regards and cheers.

ANDREA THOM SACRAMENTO, CA JUNIOR SRSFL SKIER GRADUATES

Andi started skiing with SRSFL when she was about 8 years old. She is the daughter of Jeff Thom, a long time skier with, and past president of, SRSFL. Her picture along with that of Robin



Patche has long graced the cover of the SRSFL brochure. Now she is 18, a graduate of J.F. Kennedy High School, and ready to join the adult phase of SRSFL. Andi will be attending Sacramento City College this coming fall. Congratulations, Andi!

SRSFL 1st SUMMER ACTIVITY by Bruce Johnson



Pictured above are Jill Guilbeau, Jim Mrazek, Diane Johnson, Bruce Johnson, Lorena Morales and Cindy Quintana. They are clustered around a TRTA trail marker near our picture-perfect lunch stop. With full stomachs and ear-to-ear smiles...what could be better?

An absolutely glorious day and an absolutely glorious location. What am I talking about? Our first attempt at a SRSFL Summer Activity, that's what. We are starting with "baby steps" for sure but if this first activity was any indication...the sky's the limit!

This year the SRSFL Summer Activity Program is a joint effort between our membership and the Tahoe Rim Trail Association (TRTA). There is a common link here...one of our SRSFL guides, Jim Mrazek, is also a highly trained TRTA trail guide. Jim coordinated the initial meeting between the two organizations and the rest is now history. Here's how it went:

Jim Mrazek picked up Lorena Morales, Jill Guilbeau and Cindy Quintana very early on the morning of June 28th. Jim drove

them all up to Donner Lake where they were treated to a "nature break" at my house before continuing on to the trailhead at Tahoe Meadows. Upon arriving at the Tahoe Meadows parking lot, the three SRSFL hikers and their guides (Jim, Diane and myself) were met by Jaime Sousa and Rick Gallien. Oops...let me back-track a bit...

One more important detail should be noted: Jaimie Souza is the Tahoe Rim Trail Association's "Director of Trail Use." And Rick...well, he must have been hand-picked by Jaimie. His friendly chatter and wealth of knowledge about the Tahoe Meadows area assured us that this day was going to be something special. So...where was I? Ah, yes...at the trail head. When Jaimie and Rick met our excited hikers, Jim and I knew we could not have been in better hands. This was going to be a GREAT day!

After some not-too-formal introductions and a final "nature break", we were off to see what the Tahoe Meadows Interpretive Loop Trail had to offer. Diane and I could not believe that such a variety of nature's finest could be crammed into less than a two mile hike. Trees, wildflowers, birds-birds-birds, granite boulders, wooden bridges, breath-taking views were all encountered. Jaimie's total preparation was immediately evident. Not only did she patiently read and explain each interpretive sign but her ability to accurately describe each passing view was uncanny. The SRSFL hikers were provided the unique opportunity to touch and smell a wide variety of plant species. Jaimie's accurate verbal portrayal of the *Sierra Shooting Star* and the *Elephant Head* were true highlights of our wildflower experience. The green meadow we circled was filled with the sounds of life. Song birds doing their thing, insects buzzing and the gurgle of a snowmelt

stream were all music to our ears. But the best find of all was a nest in plain sight...complete with a baby bird anxiously waiting for mom to return with lunch. The entire day can be summed up in four words...nature at its finest!

Unfortunately, there is a storm cloud threatening the continuation of this Summer Activity Program. Sufficient transportation will be our Achilles Heel. You will note that we only had a single driver, Jim Mrazek, for our three hikers. That will never do if the Program is to continue and grow. What we desperately need is more SRSFL Guide/Driver involvement. I understand the Thursday hikes are a scheduling problem for many potential hikers, guides and drivers. But that should only be temporary. This year SRSFL has graciously been fit into existing voids in the already jam-packed TRTA schedule. Next year should allow of a scattering of weekends. That being said, additional guide and driver support is needed this year. By the time you read this we will have already had our second hike (July 12th)...but there is one more scheduled, September 13th. Please call me if you wish to hike, guide or (more importantly) drive. I hope to see you all on the trail as the SRSFL Summer Activity Program events continue to grow in popularity and frequency.

WORDS FROM THE WEBMISTRESS

**by
Edie Lott**



I'm your 70 year- old webmaster and guide coordinator. Who says you can't teach an old dog new tricks? Becoming webmaster for SRSFL and creating the current website about a year and a half ago was exciting and very challenging. I had managed a

church website for a couple of years before that, but it was an almost finished product when I took over the updating. SRSFL's site was put on a Word Press generic template and handed to me to develop. Over time it has become an informative and reasonably accessible site. I want to thank Steven Clark for critiquing it and giving me tips for making the site more accessible. I am working on getting all the photographs captioned for the blind and visually impaired. Please let me know if there is anything you'd like to see on the website. Check us out on the web at www.SRSFL.org. Phone: 530 582-5362, e-mail: thelotts@gmail.com

FUND RAISING



Starting in mid-July SRSFL will be selling the 2013

Entertainment Books. You can help SRSFL by purchasing a Sacramento book or a book in your area.

You can buy a Sacramento book from Betsy, 916 362-5557 for \$30. To order books from other areas go online to entertainment.com. To give SRSFL the credit, type in the SRSFL Group ID number:1 61163.

The 2011 – 2012 SRSFL ski season has come to a close, but fundraising goes on year round. We are seeking supporters, donors and cash. All money raised goes directly into the program for transportation, scholarships and other expenses, and to keep the cost down for all. If you know of someone who may like to help out in this way, contact **Bruce Johnson, President, at 916 858-8028.**

RECRUITMENT

Just as the SRSFL program depends on a steady flow of fundraising dollars to keep things running, it depends on a steady flow of guides, volunteers, skiers and youth to make it possible at all. The recruiting of such dedicated persons should come from us all, as we spread the word of the benefits of the program to others. If you would like more information about the SRSFL program contact Bruce Johnson at **916 858-8020**.

THANK YOU

SRSFL would like to take this opportunity to Thank the many organizations and businesses for their support of our cross-country ski program. Please show them how much you appreciate their support by patronizing their businesses and supporting their other activities. **MANY THANKS** also to the individual donors who have supported SRSFL this past year.

Adams Vending, Gold River, CA
Auburn Host Lions, Auburn, CA
C V S Pharmacy
Commerce Printing, Sacramento, CA
Folsom Lake Lions Club, Folsom, CA
Embarcadero Lions, Sacramento, CA
49er Ski Club www.49erskiclub.com
Land Park Lions Club, Sacramento, CA
Lions Education Foundation
North Tahoe Catering, Kings Beach CA,
northtahoecatering@sbcglobal.net
Sacramento Valley Sertoma Club
Sacramento Turn Verein Actives
Safeway, Truckee, CA
Save Mart, Truckee CA
Sunrise/Citrus Heights Kiwanis Club
Tahoe X/C, Tahoe City, CA
www.tahoex/c.org
Tahoe Donner Cross Country, Truckee,
CA www.tdxc.com
The Treat Box Bakery, Truckee, CA

MARK YOUR CALENDAR FALL GATHERING



FALL GATHERING
November 3, 2012
Gold River, CA
For more details,
Contact, Bruce
Johnson,

Phone: (916) 858-8020
E-mail: ahoyskpr@aol.com

GUIDE TRAINING ON AND OFF THE SNOW

The dates are to be determined. For more information contact Vicki Post,
Phone: (415) 928-2711
E-mail: VickiPost@earthlink.net

SATURDAY DAY TRIPS FOR CHILDREN AND ADULTS

Tahoe X/C, Tahoe City, CA
The dates are to be determined. For more Information Contact Betsy Rowell,
Phone: (916) 362-5557
E-mail: betsy.rowell2@gmail.com

21st ANNUAL 3 - DAY EVENT

March 9-11 2013
Larkspur Hotel,
Tahoe-Donner Cross Country
Truckee, CA
Contact: Cindy Quintana
Phone: (510) 483-2948
E-mail: cindyq12345@sbcglobal

SRSFL MAILING ADDRESS

SRSFL
c/o Edie Lott
10435 Royal Crest
Truckee, CA 96161



SRSFL CELEBRATES 20 YEARS

We experienced a little delay along the way to Tahoe Donner. Soon it was time to ski, snowshoe and celebrate 20 years.



SRSFL 2013

WHO WE ARE

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

The program is a way for blind and visually impaired individuals to promote good health by being involved in a vigorous physical activity. It is a program in which trained sighted guides ski one-on-one with a blind/visually impaired skier.



HAVE A FUN SUMMER

**Sierra Regional Ski For Light
Betsy Rowell
9608 Mira Del Rio Dr.
Sacramento, CA 95827**