

The monthly newsletter for Suburban Ski Club

October, 2015

Website: http://www.suburbanskiclub.org

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Suburban Ski Club Members,

It was great seeing so many of you at our 2015-16 season kick-off meeting in September and also at our annual clambake. It warms my heart to see the many deep friendships that have developed through our mutual love of skiing and adventures.

I am sure that most of you know by now that on Sept. 5th we lost **Bob Nemcek**, one of Suburban Ski Club's most beloved and admired members. On Sunday, Sept. 13th, there was a memorial service at his church in Rocky River that was attended by scores of current and former SSC members. All of us extend our deepest condolences to Bob's widow, Jeanette. Bob was a past president of SSC and occupied a cherished place in the hearts of all in our club who knew him. In the latter pages of this newsletter, we have produced a remembrance of Bob. For those of you who knew Bob, it will bring back memories of an extraordinary person and for those newer members who did not have the privilege of knowing him, it will give you an insight into one of the great men in the history of SSC. Rest in Peace, dear Bob.

If you haven't done so already, it is time to **renew your membership**. A membership renewal form is attached to this newsletter and also available at www.suburbanskiclub.org. We were very happy that we added to our membership last year and ended with more than 220 members. We have developed this year's ski schedule to accommodate a membership of 250 to 300. So, we are optimistic about the continued growth of SSC and we are counting on your continued participation and support. And, please, remember to tell your friends about the many benefits of joining Suburban Ski Club – great socials, the most ambitious ski program in the area and friendly, welcoming members.

I am delighted to welcome new members **Tom Bartlo**, **Sally Roseman**, **Jeff Weiler** and **Scott Willis** to Suburban Ski Club. We also welcome back former members, **Bob & Eulalia Henning**, and **Lori Katona**, We look forward to seeing you all on the slopes and at our social events.

With this issue of <u>Ski Trails</u> we bid a fond farewell to **Jack Ganz** as our Chair of Trips and Tours and a warm welcome to **John Danis** who has generously agreed to take on this key position. But you have not seen the last of our friend Jack. He plans to continue to be an active member of the club and, knowing Jack, an ongoing source of creative ideas. We cannot thank Jack enough for his eight years of dedicated service that has made our club's skiing program the envy of all. He has been the driving force behind the creation of the best skiing program among all the ski clubs in our region. We also want to acknowledge Jack's very patient and understanding wife, **Sandy Ganz**, for allowing us to take up so much of Jack's time.

John Danis brings to us a wealth of experience having served in many roles within the club which include being a trip leader for several western trips. His trip-planning experience, financial background and love of the sport make him an excellent fit for us and we are grateful he has agreed to take on this new role. He is already working on ways to ensure our 2016 bus trips are a great success and making plans for our 2016-17 season.

Please join us for our October **membership meeting** on **Thursday**, **October 8** at the Holiday Inn in Mayfield Village. Our Vice President, **Judy Stowe**, has lined up an interesting speaker to advise us on conditioning for snow sports. You can find more details later in this newsletter of the location and times.

We are looking for **volunteers to promote SSC** at the **Boston Mills Open House** that runs from Friday, October 16 through Sunday, October 18. We are scheduling volunteers in two-hour segments. Please let us know if you are available for this important event that spreads the word about SSC and is a source of new members. See the details later in this newsletter about how to sign up for a time slot. You will also find information about how to sell your used ski gear at the Open House.

On page 5, be sure to read club member, **Larry Grewe's**, idea about providing used ski clothing for kids in the Special Olympics at the Boston Mills/Brandywine program.

Last, but certainly not least, we want to send out our thanks to **Ed & Mary Ellen Noss** for again hosting our annual clambake at their lovely home in Hiram on September 19th. This year was our best yet with 52 hungry members and guests in attendance. The food was fantastic and everyone had a wonderful time.

Beth Silverman, President of SSC president@suburbanskiclub.org

OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

This is another edition of our series for recognizing the birthdays of our members. Don't worry, we will not publish the year of your birth, just the month and day. When you fill out your membership renewal, please include the month and date of your birthday so we can recognize your special day. Our data base of birthdays is far from complete. Please remember it is not necessary to include the year of your birth if you do not wish to do so but we need your day and month in order to recognize your birthday. Here are the October birthdays we have on file:

Mark Bacon (10/16), Wendy Bruzas (10/7), Michael Burley (10/6), Mircea Catana (10/23), Judy Edinger (10/7), Jeanette Gabele (10/22), Barbara Gibson (10/8), Richard Koletsky (10/30), Patricia Lewis (10/22), Tom Lukens (10/9), Lynn Miller (10/22), Greg Orlowski (10/9), Steve Richards (10/8), Donna Stefano (10/16), Friedrich Wolff (10/10) and James Zinser (10/13)

HAPPY BIRTHDAY to you all.

CALENDAR AT A GLANCE

October – December, 2015

- *MEETING:* Saturday, October 3, 9:00 AM: Executive Board Meeting
- *MEETING:* Thursday, October 8, 7:00 PM: SSC Membership Meeting
- *OPEN HOUSE:* Friday, October 16 through Sunday, October 18: Boston Mills
- *EAT*: Tuesday, October 20, 6:00 PM: Banana Blossom
- *MEETING:* Thursday, November 5, 7:00 PM: SSC Membership Meeting (please note the change from the second Thursday of the month to the first Thursday)
- *EAT*: Sunday, November 8, 3:30 PM: Zappitelli's at Stonewater Golf Club in Highland Hts. with SSC Alumni (please note the starting time is slightly earlier than previously published)
- SOCIAL: Saturday, December 12: Annual Holiday Party at Lakeside Yacht Club

UPCOMING EVENTS IN MORE DETAIL

Thursday, October 8, 7:00 PM: Membership Meeting

The meeting begins at 7pm in the party room of Alfredo's at the Holiday Inn; 780 Beta Drive; Mayfield Village 44143; (440) 461-9200. Beta Drive is only one intersection east of the exit for Wilson Mills Road on I-271. Turn NORTH off Wilson Mills Road at the traffic light on to Beta Drive. You will see a sign for the Holiday Inn as you make the turn.

As usual we will be meeting at 5:15pm for cocktails, food and socializing. If dinner is more than you want, order an appetizer, a salad or even pizza. You will find us at the back of Alfredo's.

Friday, October 16 - Sunday, October, 18: Boston Mills Open House

The annual Open House at Boston Mills runs on Friday from 10:00 AM – 8:00 PM, Saturday from 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM and Sunday from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM. There is a **flyer attached to the Email that brought you this newsletter** that provides all the information you will need. Although the flyer calls the event a "ski swap," most of you know it is more than that. You can bring used skis, poles, helmets, boots and clothing to be put up for sale. The flyer tells you the times for dropping off your items.

While you are digging out your used clothing, you may want to consider an alternative for recycling those items. Read below Larry Grewe's article about his program for donating used items to kids in the Special Olympics at Brandywine/Boston Mills.

For Suburban Ski Club the Boston Mills Open House provides us an opportunity to advertise our club. As usual, we will have a display table which will be staffed by club members. **We need to sign up SSC members to take a shift at our table.** Attached to the Email that brought this

newsletter is a PDF file containing a signup sheet where you can see the various available two-hour shifts. We like to have two members for each time slot. You can sign up alone or you may want to find a partner and sign up together.

Instead of trying to use the PDF to sign into a spot, it may be simpler for you to simply call or Email me with your preferred time. If you have more than one choice, please let me know that in case someone beat you to the punch. Later, I will confirm your time.

You will have the opportunity to choose your time slot at the Membership Meeting on October 8th. However, your preferred time may already be taken if you wait until then. If you cannot be at the meeting, you will need to reserve your place by contacting me.

Email to joe@suburbanskiclub.com or phone me at (216) 932-3636.

Tuesday, October 20, 6:00 PM: EAT at The Banana Blossom Thai Cuisine

Nancy Lukens will be our host for an evening of Thai cuisine at **The Banana Blossom** located at 2800 Clinton Ave; Cleveland, OH 44113. The location is just a few blocks south and east of The Harp, where we had an EAT last January – i.e., south of Detroit and west of W. 25th Street. Nancy says the trendy people call this area Hingetown.

The restaurant has a full bar and will take all credit cards except American Express. You can check out their menu at www.bananablossomthaicuisine.com.

As usual, we will assemble in the bar at 6:00 PM for cocktails. Tables will be ready for seating at 6:45 - 7:00 PM.

Please make your reservation with Nancy by phone at (216) 337-1489 or via email at nblukens@gmail.com

Sunday, November 8, 3:30 PM: EAT at Zappitelli's, Highland Hts

This EAT is the one that has become an annual event where we get a chance to mingle with some of SSC's alumni. For the past several years we have assembled at The Grovewood Tavern but, as you may have heard, Grovewood has closed. In its place we have found a very exciting location in Highland Heights at the Stonewater Golf Club. It is called **Zappetelli's** and the exact address is 1 Club Drive; Highland Heights 44043. Zappetelli's menu can be found on the website: www.stonewatergolf.com

We will be gathering for cocktails and socializing at the bar at 3:30 PM and plan to make our way to dinner tables between 4:30 and 5:00 PM. We will be dining at smaller tables to facilitate more socializing and the seating time for dinner will be staggered to allow for the kitchen and wait-staff to accommodate our group in a more relaxed fashion.

As usual, **Kathy Porcen-Robinson** will be contacting the alumni and taking their reservations. Our EAT Coordinator, **Mary Ellen Noss**, will handle that chore for SSC members. Mary Ellen can be contacted via Email at lpdptra@gmail.com or by phone at (330) 569-3170. Alumni should contact Kathy via Email at perobinson@sbcglobal.net or by phone at (440) 729-0939.

AN OPPORTUNITY TO DONATE USED SKI CLOTHING

[**Editor's Note**: In the March issue of this newsletter we ran **Larry Grewe's** article on his idea for contributing your used ski clothing to kids in Special Olympics. Those of you who attended the March Membership Meeting heard Larry speak about his program. Below, we are reprinting Larry's article. Please note that Larry will be at the October 8th Membership Meeting to receive your donations. Here is Larry's article:]

About 12 years ago I started serving hot chocolate to Special Olympics cross country skiers in Cuyahoga Valley National Park. I quickly realized what a special group of athletes were competing in Ohio Special Olympics Winter Games. When Ohio Special Olympics realized that I was a downhill skier, they told me that they really needed my help with downhill skiing at Brandywine. So, I became involved organizing those athletes. This past January I decided I wanted to do more and when special needs students from Cleveland schools came to Boston Mills to learn to ski, I was there helping them. For most of this group it was their first time trying to ski. Our goal was to get as many of these students as possible ready to compete in Ohio Special Olympics Winter Games. In doing that, one thing I noticed was the limited availability of proper clothing for many of the students.

So, I am appealing to my fellow members in Suburban Ski Club to help me with this problem. Here is what I am asking. Maybe you have ski jackets, ski pants, ski gloves, hats, helmets etc. that you no longer use or you may have some of these things that your children or grandchildren outgrew. Please consider passing them on. I will be collecting anything you may want to donate. Everything collected will be provided to Ohio Special Olympics Cleveland for next winter. As a first step, you can bring your donations to the club membership meetings on October 8th and November 5th.

Please feel free to contact me via Email: lagrewe@gmail.com or by phone: mobile (330) 819-6871 or home (330) 656-1284

Take care and God Bless SSC member, Larry Grewe

REPORT FROM TRIPS & TOURS

It looks like our Whistler/Blackcomb and Sunday River/Sugarloaf trips are just about full. If you are interested in joining one of these trips, please contact the trip leaders to see if any spots remain. There are a few more seats remaining on the Keystone trip depending on whether or not the current promises result in deposits. Again, contact the trip leader to see if any spots remain. You may also be able to put yourself on a waiting list.

Our three major trips are:

January 23 – 30: Keystone, Breckenridge & Arapahoe Basin; Colorado

February 21 – 27: Sunday River & Sugarloaf; Maine

March 6 – 13: Whistler Blackcomb; British Columbia, Canada

You can find fliers on our website: www.suburbanskiclub.org

Back in 2007, then President, Chris Wolf, asked me if I would be interested in taking on the responsibility for the skiing program for the club. I told him sure, why not, and I became the Chair of Trips and Tours. That was some time ago and we have come a long way over the years. But now I have begun to think about the future. I have had a great time working for Suburban Ski Club in developing ski programs for our members over the past eight years. We can be very proud of what we did together to develop the best and most ambitious skiing program in our area. But now it is time for me to step aside and give others the opportunity to continue to lead that work. I have great confidence in the abilities and talents of our members and I am confident that with new leadership our ski program will continue to develop.

Please be assured that I am not going anywhere. In past reports I have written, I have always told you I hope to see you on the slopes. That has not changed. Although I am giving up the Chair of Trips and Tours, I am not giving up my skis. So, please look for me on the hill and join me in sharing this sport we love so much.

As you know from the announcement at our September membership meeting by our President, Beth Silverman, **John Danis** has stepped forward to take over as Chair of Trips and Tours. I believe John is a wonderful choice and I would, personally, like to thank him for accepting these responsibilities. I have great confidence in his talents and abilities. John and I have skied together for many years. He has been a member of SSC for longer time than I and has been a trip leader for many trips both local and major western excursions. I know SSC's program is in good hands. Good luck, John.

Don't forget, "we ski every week" and do so more than any other ski club in the area. Please tell your friends and colleagues about our terrific ski program, give them a copy of our schedule and invite them to join a Suburban Ski Club trip.

Jack Ganz

Some Introductory Remarks from our New Chair of Trips and Tours

Congratulations to Jack on a job well done. All of us are very grateful to him for his years of service in making the skiing program of Suburban Ski Club the best in the area. I also want to congratulate the current and previous club officers along with all those members who helped build a strong and successful ski program that has revitalized Suburban Ski Club.

My aim in assuming these duties is to help in continuing to offer an ambitious program that will make us look forward to each winter's ski season with enthusiasm. I am sure that Jack will continue to offer his considerable abilities to ensure that this happens and I know I can count on the officers and all members to assist me as I take on this new job.

In the near future, we will be meeting with all 2016 trip leaders to review the elements that make all of our trips successful and enjoyable. We also know that it is not too soon to start planning for the succeeding season, particularly the week-long and multi-day trips. In that process, I will be seeking the input of current and prior trip leaders and any other SSC members who have an interest in contributing.

Looking forward to another great ski season with Suburban Ski Club.

John Danis, Chair of Trips and Tours john@suburbanskiclub.org

A REMEMBRANCE OF BOB NEMCEK June 3, 1958 – September 5, 2015



On Sept. 5th Suburban Ski Club lost **Bob Nemcek**, one of our most beloved and admired members. On Sunday, Sept. 13th, there was a memorial service at his church in Rocky River that was attended by scores of current and former SSC members.

Bob was a past president of SSC and occupied a cherished place in the hearts of all those in our club who knew him. We have produced this remembrance of Bob so that those of us who knew him would recall memories of an extraordinary person and friend and so that those newer members of our club who did not have the privilege of knowing him, would have some insight into one of the great men in the history of SSC.

The memorial service on September 13th was actually called "A celebration

of the Life of Robert Nemcek." And celebrate we did. In addition to the large contingent from Suburban Ski Club there were hundreds more of Bob's family, friends and colleagues in attendance. Those of us who were there at the church thought we knew Bob but this celebration of his life gave us a much deeper understanding of him and of his much wider circle of family, friends and colleagues who were part of the life of this remarkable man.

The Rev. Wayne Arnason presented a "biographical eulogy" that helped us come to know the depth and breadth of his unique life. He said that Bob "lived a life of service within medical care, and a life of pride and pleasure in his family and community, and as a result of such a life he made other people's lives better. When I think about examples of the best people that Northeast Ohio produces, I'll always think of Bob Nemcek."

He went on to say that when Bob's life started out, it didn't look like much was ahead for him. He was born on June 3, 1958 to John and Elizabeth Nemcek into a large Slovak family living on 103rd street in Cleveland, south of Woodland Hills Park. He was one of four brothers and he was the very youngest with his next oldest brother being seven years his senior.

The Nemceks lived in a tight-knit Slovak neighborhood. His mother was in very poor health and his father died when Bob was only ten years old. It fell to Bob to take care of his ailing mother until she also passed away four years later when Bob was only fourteen. His brother John and his wife offered to take him in and he moved to their home in Parma and finished high school at Parma High School.

Coming out of high school, Bob tried to continue his education and showed his first interest in the medical care professions that would ultimately frame his life of service. He enrolled in Tri C with the intention of becoming a nurse. The financial realities and requirements of this path made it difficult to continue as Bob was doing factory work at the same time he was trying to go to school. So Bob enlisted in the Navy.Bob joined the Navy in 1982 following a path that a lot of young men from working class families have chosen to get out of town, see some of the world and find out who they were. He spent five years as an enlisted man until 1987.

Bob came back to Ohio more certain about who he was and where his skills lay. He ultimately enrolled in a Pharmacy Program at the University of Toledo, graduated and got his first job back here in Cleveland at the Health Hill Hospital. After only nine months there, Bob transferred over into working for the University Hospital system, and there he stayed.

Bob Nemcek's career as a UH Pharmacist covered 21 years. He became the first Board certified Oncology Pharmacist in the UH system and, of course, that became very personal to him when he himself had to deal with his own cancer.

Bob developed a lifelong interest in watching and participating in sports. He loved the Browns and became very involved in running. Bob was a President of our club and he served as a trip leader on several western excursions.



At the left Bob is seen asking "Who has some green bananas?" Keep reading:

SSC member, Barbara Brennan, recalled a story from one of those trips that is a legend in our club and is representative of Bob's character and the way he enjoyed making others happy. Barbara wrote: "Bob was in charge of a western ski trip and when we stopped to buy food on the way in to our condos, everyone bought lots green bananas, assured they would ripen if a

day or two. However, at the end of the week we still had loads of very green bananas and Bob collected them all. On the bus on the way to the airport Bob was a charming MC and had us in stitches as he passed out prizes of green bananas for various stunts and activities that happened during the week."

Twenty-two years ago, while he was training for a triathlon, Bob first noticed an unusual shortness of breath and decided to have himself checked out. At age 35, he was diagnosed with lymphoma cancer for the first time. With a bone marrow transplant, Bob was able to move past that first cancer. But, as the Rev. Aranson noted in his eulogy, "those of you who share the experience of a cancer diagnosis know that it changes your life. Nothing about your attitude towards your own mortality is quite the same after that." It was that way for Bob and the Rev. Aranson told us how Bob "often talked about and observed September 28 each year, the date of that surgery, as a new

birthday for him. Weathering that first cancer storm gave Bob a gift. It changed both his career as well as his spiritual life."

Bob's friends in SSC knew this to be true. Bob was very open talking about his cancer and we were all less uncomfortable with the subject of cancer because of how Bob drew us in to his experience.

Again, the Rev. Aranson reminded us that one of the challenging things about being a cancer survivor is to use that experience to become a more spiritually engaged person. He said that "there is nothing automatic about that....It is a process and it is a discipline and it is an achievement to use the difficult things that life throws at you to become a happier healthier and more loving person. Bob Nemcek did just that."



No Remembrance of Bob would be complete without mentioning Jeanette, the love of his life. Some of us in SSC remember how Bob introduced Jeanette to skiing and how she persevered despite several misadventures including at least two broken bones.

Typical of Bob, when he decided he wanted to marry Jeanette, he concocted one of the most unique marriage proposals we ever heard of. On his "rebirthday," Sept. 28, 2006, the anniversary of his bone marrow transplant, Bob brought a calendar to Jeanette and asked her what she was doing on Saturday, Sept 13, 2008. Jeanette said she really didn't know but didn't think she had planned anything two years in the future. Bob said that was the closest Saturday he could find to his rebirthday and told her he wanted to marry her on that day. Jeanette said yes and they began counting down the days – or at least Bob did. He kept a literal countdown for the entire time prior to the wedding as many of us in the club can remember.

In his eulogy, Rev. Aranson said that "Marrying Jeanette was the greatest gift that life ever gave to Bob. [It gave him] ... the quiet, inviting and trustworthy conditions to blossom fully in his personal life and

career." Those of us in SSC saw that and delighted to see the new found love and happiness in Bob's life

There was a second eulogy at the service for Bob. It was given by the Rev. John Lentz, Senior Minister of Forest Hill Presbyterian Church. Those of us who attended Bob's wedding to Jeanette will remember Rev. Lentz.

We conclude this remembrance of Bob by quoting extensively from the eulogy given by Rev. Lentz since it captures so much of how we remember Bob.

Bob was a special man – I liked him a lot. A little nerdy, if I am going to be completely honest... but I think he would claim that proudly. He knew his stuff. He was smart. He loved his vocation as a pharmacist. He adored Jeanette! He wanted to help people and had a large heart. I remember first meeting him when he joined one of Forest Hill church's pilgrimage groups to Nicaragua. He and Jeanette were engaged at the time. They had set a wedding date pretty far in advance.

Each morning, and I mean EACH MORNING, he would come down to breakfast and announce how many days were left until he married Jeanette. It was like 257 days, 256 days, 255 days - we get it Bob you are going to get married in 254, 253, 252 days... but it became endearing and I remember when we got home from Nicaragua and I didn't see Bob for breakfast anymore, it took me a couple of days not to continue the countdown... 251, 250, 249...

[Editor's note: Many of us in SSC also remember counting down the days with Bob. We also recall how, on his wedding day, he looked like the happiest man in the world. And that was not the easiest thing for us to do since the wedding reception was at the Cleveland Zoo and the table with Bob's SSC friends was right next to the gorilla cage!]

The Rev. Lentz noted in his eulogy that the counting of days was the way Bob marked and celebrated time as he anticipated perhaps the happiest day of his life. He continued his eulogy:

And when Bob was faced with counting down the last days of his life – he faced his cancer with typical honesty, with a kind of interest and curiosity and dogged determination; he pulled no punches and gave you, perhaps, more information than you needed, but that was Bob – still giving information.

I remember when he and Jeanette received the report that the cancer was back and this time is wasn't going to go away and the prognosis was not very good – Bob was open about sharing – we were at table with a small dinner group during the Lenten season. The goal of the group was to build deeper relationships and one of the tasks was to share a favorite poem or song – and this one that I will read, Bob really liked.... It is one of my favorites too. It is by the German mystic poet Rilke from his collection "Book of Hours: Love Poems to God," This verse is from the section of the book entitled the Book of a Monastic Life.

"I live my life in widening circles//that reach out across the world I may not complete this last one//but I give myself to it. I circle around God, around the primordial tower. I've been circling for thousands of years// and I still don't know: am I a falcon, a storm, or a great song?"

Bob's life - both his inner life and outer life was lived in ever widening circles – his mind agile and broad - his care for the world and it inhabitants was not limited to boundary, tribe or clan, he travelled – Bob's mind and heart were expansive, he paid attention to detail... in other words he had the heart of the poet.

Bob in some ways didn't complete the last cycle – certainly not to our desires, but then again, maybe he did. His life, while short by our standards, his marriage to Jeanette not as long lasting as either one of them wanted – but he gave himself completely to life, to love, to his task of taking care of others; it was not an incomplete life – so that is very good indeed.

He certainly circled around the mystery of God – which every thoughtful and faithful person should be doing. A falcon, a storm, or a great song? Which of these was Bob? Well, I believe that Bob was - and now is (more fully) all of the above: A soaring falcon, free of sickness, pain and death; A storm – perhaps our tears of sadness and thanksgiving will wash us clean and water our roots and help us bear fruit;

A great song? Of course – Bob and all of us singing the eternal song of thanksgiving, of joy, of triumph.

Thanks be to God for the life of Robert Nemcek....