

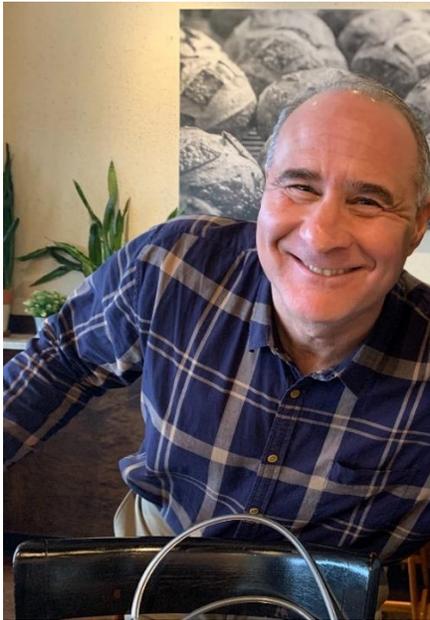
Ski Trails

The monthly newsletter for Suburban Ski Club

August 2020

Website: <http://www.suburbanskiclub.org>

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dear Suburban Ski Club Members,

As we enter month six of living through the COVID-19 pandemic, I don't have much to report, other than to say that the uncertainties about the upcoming ski season and other club events during the remainder of this year and next remain. For example, with clambake season just around the corner, Mary Ellen and Ed Noss recently inquired about the possibility of going forward with the club's annual clambake in September, and, when I asked members of the Executive Board to weigh in, the overwhelming sentiment was that it was not prudent or safe to have the clambake this year. In a similar vein, we do not intend to re-start our monthly membership meetings as usual in September (which has historically included our annual ski fair) due to COVID-19 concerns. If and when our meetings can resume, or other events such as the annual Christmas party can take place, remains to be seen.

A few members may have already heard but for the rest of you I have the sad duty of writing that, (if COVID-19 hasn't brought enough dreariness this year) **Ralph Dixon**, a beloved member of our club, recently lost his battle with cancer. I'm sure that many of you, like me, have fond memories of skiing with, or just being around, Ralph, and will miss him dearly. This month's newsletter includes several club members sharing their thoughts and photographs of Ralph, which hopefully will bring a smile to everyone's face.

As I'm concluding this message, I keep thinking, can we just end 2020 right now and move on to next year? I'll make a motion for that right now. Is there a second? Seriously, I know that we'll eventually get through these rough times and return to happier days and more normal lives. I just want that to happen soon, and certainly before the upcoming ski season.

We do plan to hold another Executive Board meeting some time over the next few weeks, and we will continue to keep the club members advised of any new or updated information about the ski season, meetings, or other club events. In the meantime, I hope everyone stays healthy and safe.

Ron Friedberg
president@suburbanskiclub.org
216-832-7717.

AUGUST BIRTHDAYS



Happy Birthday to the following members born in August. Our database of birthdays is far from complete. Please remember to enter your birthday when you renew your membership so we can include you in our birthday wishes.

Jack Binder (8/17), John Danis (8/31), Ned Finzer (8/23), Percy Finzer (8/7), Sandy Ganz (8/19), Lacey Hood (8/8), Donna Lehman (8/7), Adam Leitch (8/4), Jane Leschnik (8/3), Wayne Miller (8/20), Bill Ryan (8/12), Al Schadenfroh (8/2), Mike Tuason (8/3), Ron Turk (8/25), Chris Ujich (8/12), Mike Wagner (8/20), Susan Wanamaker (8/5), Betsy Wolf (8/11) and Chris Wolf (8/25)

RALPH DIXON - RIP



With a heavy heart we announce the death of SSC member, **Ralph Dixon**. He passed away on Saturday morning, July 25th in his sleep at home with his wife, Shirin, at his side. An obituary is forthcoming and a memorial service is planned for a time in the future when we can gather safely to celebrate the life of this extraordinary man. In the meantime, what follows are some SSC members sharing their memories and photos of Ralph.

From Elisa Budoff



Ralph and I became close friends this past February on the Maine ski trip. He had hurt his knee two weeks before the trip. Being an experienced skier, he didn't want to go alone on the easy trails. I asked him to ski with me to give me some pointers and we spent the week skiing together. He helped me so much. By the end of the week I was skiing parallel and even hit 26 mph - in control!



While we were skiing under one of the lifts, **Bob and Mary Anthony** were riding above us. Bob yelled out to Ralph "there goes the King of the Greens!" Ralph truly was the King of the Greens, humbly skiing with me when he was capable of so much more.

But much more than a wonderful instructor, Ralph became a very dear friend. I will always cherish in my heart that week skiing with him

Elisa

From Jan Jones

January 2020, Mammoth Mountain, California: All week everyone told me I had to ski with Ralph. He was fast and safe and good. Well, they were right. “RD” and I spent the entire day zooming over the trails, eating snow and planning the next trail adventure.



Who knew there were escalators at a ski resort?

Stop for lunch? Heck no....let's grab a water and get back to the map. Bye!



Afternoon conversation with Ralph at the table: (Pictured here from the left are Bill Ryan, Maggie Layman, Jan Jones, Ralph, Debbie Axelrod and Ron Friedberg.)

“RD, I really want to ski from the top but I’m afraid to go alone.” “Okay, Jan, let’s go together!” Chair 23 was so ominous. All it needed was a skull and crossbones! At the top, no signs, lots of wind and craggy rocks! Whaaaat??? We chose Scotty’s. In dropped Ralph. “Come on Jan. It’s not so bad!” Gulp! In dropped Jan. Oh, did I tell you I have real

From Maggie Layman



Ralph Dixon was the first person I met at the first Suburban Ski Club meeting I attended. Within minutes, we were laughing and chatting like old friends. He was so kind and welcoming. I will always remember how he made me feel so comfortable so quickly. His keen sense of humor and witty one-liners were legendary and very much appreciated during long bus rides and at our apres ski gatherings!

An excellent skier, Ralph definitely had a need for speed! During our last trip together at Mammoth, he actually clocked himself skiing over 60 mph!

Even though I didn't know Ralph very long, I feel great sadness that he left us so soon. He will be dearly missed. RIP, dear friend.....

Maggie

From Patty Costigan



It isn't often that one has the opportunity to make such a good friend at my age but I was lucky to be able to do that with Ralph. When I think of words to describe Ralph they are: fast (boy did he love to ski fast) and fun (you always knew you were going to have a laugh if you were with him).

He loved his gin martinis and good food. He was my loyal hospital companion when I got hurt as well as my favorite skiing and drinking buddy. He will be missed by me and so many other club members.

Patty

From SSC President, Ron Friedberg



A break from skiing in Mammoth: from the left are **Maggie Layman, Ron Friedberg, Ralph** and **Debbie Axelrod**.

What I will remember and miss most about Ralph are: (1) his genuine warmth and kindness; and (2) his sharp wit and sense of humor. I have two brief stories that illustrate these qualities.

The first occurred during the Park City trip two years ago. While out on the slopes with a group that included Ralph, I fell into a big snow drift. Because the snow was so deep and heavy, I had real trouble getting back up, and it was Ralph who finally helped me get back on my feet after about 20 - 30 laborious minutes of pulling me up and out of the snow. The funny thing about this was, the fall didn't even occur while I was actually skiing. I was just standing at the bottom of a run and just lost my balance. Ralph and I would continuously joke about this episode, and how, if it wasn't for Ralph, I'd probably still be stranded in that snow drift.

The second story happened at Mammoth earlier this year, and I still laugh about it every time I think about it. A group of us, including Ralph, were enjoying dinner after a great day of skiing, and Ralph had gotten up to use the restroom. While he was gone, we were talking about the Alaskan cruise that June Kelley had been planning for this summer. We were still talking about this when Ralph returned to the table, and someone asked him, "Have you been to Alaska?" Without hesitation, Ralph responded, "No, I was just in the bathroom."

Rest in peace, Ralph. You will be missed.

Ron

From the Editor, Joe Sullivan

Unlike the others, I have no stories of skiing with Ralph because, frankly, I couldn't keep up with him. Well, actually, I do have one skiing story – and that is from last year at Sunday River in Maine. You read the earlier testimonial from **Elisa Budoff** about how Ralph spent the week with her as he helped her become a better skier. I was a witness to all that and I can remember thinking what a kind and generous man he was. That one story tells you a great deal about Ralph Dixon.

Ralph was also a gregarious and welcoming person. The earlier story by **Maggie Layman** about her first SSC meeting is only one example of that. There are numerous other times when Ralph could be found in the midst of SSC friends (or even people he just met) where he demonstrated his unique ability to bring people together and help them enjoy some good times.



In this photo we see Ralph surrounded by the “Murphy Clan,” a group of skiers from Ireland who joined us for our Sunday River trip two years ago. You might spot your editor in the background looking on as Ralph made them all feel right at home. **Patty Costigan** was also there on Ralph's right. The Irish folks had their pints and you can see Ralph's icon martini on the table in front of him. “Erin go bragh,” said Ralph as he made the Irish contingent feel most welcome.



When Ralph was not on a SSC ski trip he spent most of his winter days at Boston Mills.



Ralph at Boston Mills with his wife, **Shirin**, as he displays his senior skiing pass.



Ralph with his daughter, **Jill**, on the final 2020 ski day at Boston Mills.

So, my dear friend, Ralph, as the editor of these pages I get to write the last words. I want you to know that I will not be able to have a martini on a ski trip without thinking of you – and wishing you could be there to share one with me.

And I also want to speak for all your friends in Suburban Ski Club in telling you how grateful we are for having you in our club. Your presence at our social and skiing events added so much to those times. You shared with us your joy of life, your infectious enthusiasm, your wit and humor and your respect for each of us. There is no way we can replace you, Ralph, but even as we miss you so much, we go forward with some wonderful memories of all the times we had with you.

Rest in Peace, dear friend.

Joe