

# NEW MEXICO CROSS COUNTRY SKI CLUB



March 2023

Greetings NMCCSC members! Has this season flown by or what? Although our general club meetings are coming to an end the season is not over yet! There is still plenty more skiing to be done (hopefully).

## Upcoming General Club Meeting

Our **March General Club meeting** will take place at the **Albuquerque Garden Center on March 9th from 7-9pm**. As is club tradition, there is no scheduled presentation for our final meeting of the season. Instead, our presentation will be given by our own members! Do you have something special to share with us about one of your ski outings this year? If so, please share some of your pictures and tell us all about it! It's Show-and-Tell night!



## NMCCSC Board Meeting

NMCCSC board members met via zoom on February 23.

### **Board Members for 2023-2024 season:**

Several of our board members will be stepping down at the end of this season so we are looking for some new faces to fill these positions. Want to be a part of the behind-the-scenes action for helping this club to function and grow? Now is your chance! Check out the board member descriptions below. If you choose one of these open positions you won't be alone. We can help you get your position up and running in no time.

**Our final board meeting of the season will be March 23.**

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**Mailing list:** [NMCCSCgroup@mailman.swcp.com](mailto:NMCCSCgroup@mailman.swcp.com) **Website:** <http://ski.nmccskiclub.org>  
**Meetup:** <http://www.meetup.com/New-Mexico-Cross-Country-Ski-Meetup-Group/>  
**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1663936723893594>

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## **Join the NMCCSC Board**

Want to help out the New Mexico Cross Country Ski Club (NMCCSC)? Join the Board. We go on fun day trips, overnight and other trips, have amazing instruction, and great meetings with fabulous speakers and refreshments, and somehow fit in all sorts of other things, because we have a strong and well-functioning board.

Some folks are moving off the Board and now you can help keep the club a well-oiled machine. Below is a very general list of the positions. **We are specifically looking for the positions of: Vice President, Newsletter Chair and Social Media Chair.** If you are interested in one of these or any of the other positions, please let us know.

### **President**

Run the Board Meetings and General Meetings. Represent the club.

### **Vice President**

Preside at meetings in absence of the President. Promote the Club through publicity, representation at ski fairs, more. Develop a slate of nominations for the following year's Board, present it to the current Board for approval.

### **Secretary**

Attend meetings and take minutes at the monthly general membership meetings and Board of Directors meetings.

### **Treasurer**

Prepare a budget. Keep track of income and expenses and report at Board Meetings and General Membership Meetings.

### **Programs Chair**

Arrange for programs at Club meetings. Programs usually consist of: lectures useful to cross country skiers by either outside speakers or club members, video presentations, style shows exhibiting cross country clothing and equipment, or other educational material of a similar nature.

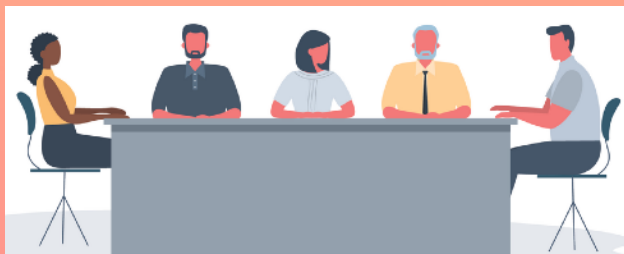
### **Refreshment and Facilities Chair**

Open building and set up for General meeting  
Provide refreshments and drinks

### **Newsletter Chair**

Update calendar and provide trails reports. Advertise summary of next month's educational program. Send out links to the website, facebook and meetup pages. Check online blogs and photos for appropriate content. Set a deadline for newsletter contributions. Solicit articles and pictures, suggest ideas for articles and provide deadlines. Develop the layout for the monthly newsletter and insert the stories/pictures.

Don't be intimidated by this position. Amy Mathis who has been our newsletter chair since 2020 will help you get started. She is willing to meet and help train anyone who may be interested in this role



**JOHN THOMAS**

**1943-2023**

**John Thomas**, a ski club member since the early 80's, died unexpectedly a few weeks ago. I consider myself fortunate to count myself in as one of John's many friends in the outdoor community. I like to think we are all better people for having shared time with him.

In the 90's, John served in Ski Club leadership positions. As president, John's easy-going demeanor and gentle persuasion helped our efforts to attract and retain new members. As program chair, he introduced the concept of Chautauqua presentations that featured



programs like that before, nor after, John introduced them.

Many people know John from the numerous day trips that he led over the years, including outings as part of our bus trips. He also participated actively in beginner instruction, and he was never too busy to give pointers to struggling novice skiers. He was one of the driving forces that helped get our hut trip program off the ground. It's still going 30 years later.

Our friend has skied off into the sunset, but he left a track for the rest of us to follow.



A memorial service will be held on Saturday, March 25, which is John's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday. It will be held 3:00 PM at the Tramway Plaza Event Center, 9600 Tennyson NE. This is right across from the County Line restaurant on the west side of Tramway.

Jean Hansen, John's wife of 30 years, who he affectionately called "Jeanie Beanie," will speak in John's honor.

*"I fondly remember fun skiing, backpacking and other adventures with him. And always those red gaiters! In addition to leading outings, John was the club instruction chair and taught new skiers with much patience and reassurance."*

*-Susan Russo*

**"John was a massive inspiration to me. He led my first ski I did with the club, which was Mt Taylor. He made me buy kicker skins. I didn't even know what they were! All these years later, I'm still using the same pair"**

**-Marlene Brown**

*"He was a sweet man that was always there to help us all in some special way! A great person!! I miss him very much as my memories come back for him being where I was with this NMCCSC on various trips."*

*-Bob Potter*

## Hut Trip Memories



This season, the NMCCSC went to Harry Gates Hut. It was a 7 mile, 2000 foot climb to get to this picturesque cabin in the wilderness. This was my first ever hut trip and gads was I nervous! Backcountry skiing is something my husband James and I have been trying to get into since moving back to Albuquerque several years ago. Truth be told, I still don't have the right gear for an outing like this so I was concerned that once we reached the hut I wouldn't be able to tour much with my skinny, 70mm Rossi skis, NNN-BC bindings and flimsy boots. They paled in comparison to everyone else's AT gear and fatty-daddy backcountry skis and truthfully at 9:45 the night before leaving I nearly dropped out! I'm so glad I didn't. We found the snow to be excellent. It was so peaceful to swish along in the backcountry with only our thoughts to guide us. We all made it to the hut and I couldn't believe how large the cabin was and how warm we all stayed once the fire was made and stoked. I was able to do several outings during the days and the skis held up beautifully. I wore kickers that were too big for my skis, but they worked. I wasn't able to really let loose and enjoy a powdery downhill ride, but mostly sunk into the snow and was forced to snowplow. No matter. At least I could do it and had fun while trying! Evenings at the hut brought on good food and wonderful fellowship. We relaxed by the fire, lit candles and swapped tales of our ski outings and travels. I wish to tell other club members not be be intimidated by hut trips. You can do them even if you don't have the best gear.

-Amy Mathis



## Chama Weekend

Huge thanks goes out to **Dana Price** for planning and organizing a weekend trip to Chama! Those who attended had excellent snow at the Cumbres Pass area. NMCCSC members Terri, Holly, Catherine, Perriane, Dana, Lisa C., Mike, Marlene, Amy W., and Ken enjoyed two days of skiing to two different yurts. There were beautiful forests and glades, with some bonus telly turn practice. The trip to Spruce Hole yurt was about a 5-mile round trip,



with incredible snow conditions. There is still tons of snow up there with more on the way so there is plenty of time yet to make a trip up to Chama. See for yourself how great this area is for skiing!





## Other Club Outings

As if the hut trip and the trip to Chama weren't enough, our club has done more instruction and held a few more day trip outings too. Several of our club members are enjoying their ski trip to British Columbia!

### *Telemark Clinic*

On Saturday February 25 we had our telemark clinic with **Barry and Bryan** at Ski Sante Fe. There were 8 of us knee-benders out there for a full day on the slopes. Barry and Bryan spent the ENTIRE ski day with us, from 9-4. They both were amazing instructors, were patient, offered great advice, and worked with everyone individually.

Barry said, "I don't think I've ever had everyone in a class absorb and try so much, with that much success! Some of you might think you didn't learn much, but EVERYONE got out of their comfort zone, tried new things and did learn. I know, many of today's skills and drills probably turned your understanding of the Tele turn on its head, but there are so many variations and approaches on such a seemingly simple and elegant turn." What a fantastic day! We are so very lucky to have these expert skiers in our club.



### *Class I Outing*

Several club members have enjoyed a couple of class I outings to the Jemez Mountains at the Valles Caldera National Preserve. **Michael Arndt** lead a group on the History Grove trail and cabin area. Did you miss it? Don't worry. There is still plenty of snow there too and winter is still here. Head on up and explore Valles Caldera!



### *Sandias, Jemez, & Sante Fe*

With nearly 2 feet of fresh snow in the Sandias this past month and even more in the Sangre de Cristos, is it any wonder that many of us have been out stomping around and sliding in the powder? We've been out enjoying the trails in the Sandias, the Norski Trail and Aspen Vista in Sante Fe, Redondo Meadow in the Jemez, Pararito ski area, Cumbres Pass, and even as far away as Alaska! More to come, so think more snow!



## **Avalanche Terrain**

Every winter alpine and cross-country skiers alike are caught in avalanche slides. Many don't survive being buried. You may think that a short visit to the Sandias gives you a pass to not worry about such things. What if you want to venture out to other places that have more snow? If you want to get more involved in backcountry skiing, understanding avalanche terrain should be a top priority. Are you skiing in a safe area? Could you trigger an avalanche or be vulnerable to skiing in an area where a runout could occur? Yikes. When I first joined the club and heard about avalanche beacon practice I had no earthly idea what that even meant. Can't I just borrow a



beacon from someone else? My friend that is going on the trip has a beacon so she can cover for both of us right? I quickly learned that this isn't a best practice at all. So, before the hut trip this year we invested in a full avalanche gear kit (beacon, probe, and shovel) for me and my husband. We got trained in that, but I'm still learning about what to look for in potential avalanche terrain. I feel fortunate that so many of our club members are knowledgeable in this and help the rest of us to understand what we are getting into!

Here is short article by [The Inertia Mountain staff](#).

### **What is avalanche terrain?**

To define that, avalanche terrain includes *slopes between 30 and 45 degrees with the prime angle of repose being at about 38 degrees*. Not all avalanche terrain is created equal. It's a very bell-shaped curve with 38 being in the middle and 30 and 45 being on each side of it. So as you work up into that terrain,

degree by degree, avalanches are going to want to release closer and closer to that 38-degree slope angle. You're probably asking, "How do I know what the angle of the slope is?"

And as humans, we're really bad judges of slope angle. What you need to do is get yourself an inclinometer, they're

pretty easy to find, easy to buy. You can stand on a slope, set it on a ski pole, place it on there, get a reading. You can use it in profile and hold it up and eyeball it. But this is really the only way to understand and to know and to learn what slope angle is and manage it accordingly.

### **What isn't avalanche terrain?**

Any slope under 30 degrees is not going to be steep enough to produce an avalanche. Ridges, those high points are going to be good, safe places. And along with that, nice wide valleys or meadows – you're not going to have an avalanche problem there.

Even if we decide that on any given day it's safe and we can go out and go ski in avalanche terrain,

it's best to always travel out of avalanche terrain. In the backcountry, we spend 80, 90 percent of our time walking around and getting to the slopes that we want to go ski. At some point, it just becomes a numbers game.

Of course, there are a few caveats with those pieces of terrain.

### **What to look out for when defining avalanche terrain**

*Ridges* — we always need to be very aware and cognizant of cornices. They're extremely unpredictable and can break a lot further back than you expect. So give cornices a wide berth of respect.

For traveling on slopes less than 30 degrees, we want to make sure that we don't have avalanche terrain *above us* that could potentially run down onto that slope that we're on.

In that same vein, if we're traveling through meadows or wide valleys, make sure we're not traveling through the run-out of those avalanche paths.



# CALENDAR

## March

Mar 9	General Club Meeting - ABQ Garden Center 7-9
Mar 23	Board Meeting via Zoom

### Board Members 2021-2022

President	Bill Heitz	259-8745	<a href="mailto:President@nmccskiclub.org">President@nmccskiclub.org</a>
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Long Bus Trips	Guy Miller & David D'Antonio	306-2628 553-2795	<a href="mailto:BusTrips@nmccskiclub.org">BusTrips@nmccskiclub.org</a>
Hut Trips	Guy Miller	306-2628	<a href="mailto:HutTrips@nmccskiclub.org">HutTrips@nmccskiclub.org</a>
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