

THE FLAKEY NEWS

Publication of the Fox Valley Snowdrifters

March, 2024

**PRESIDENT:**

John Walsh
630-777-9008

jrwexplor@sbcglobal.net

VICE PRESIDENT:

Michelle Baker Etherton
630-777-8549

Carey_Michelle@live.com

TREASURER:

Laurel Davis
630-476-6896

laurelmdavis@comcast.net

SECRETARY:

Donna Ulatowski
630-279-1049

dulatowski@comcast.net

PAST PRESIDENT:

Greg Olson
312-520-5283

olsongregv@gmail.com

CMSC

Leo Ahasic
630-309-8885

bahasic@sbcglobal.net

MEMBERSHIP:

Cathleen Downs McDonald

Cathleendowns1@gmail.com

NEWSLETTER:

Joe & Dana Hopp

jhopp23@hotmail.com

SOCIAL:

Maureen Joy

mojoy@comcast.net

TRIPS

John Gamble
630-761-9550

john@johnngamble.net

TRIPS & INS AGENT:

Frank Hodowal
630-584-0868

ft hod@aol.com

WEBSITE:

Chuck Salisbury

2597fhd@comcast.net

Fox Valley Snowdrifters

P.O. Box 697

Batavia, IL 60510

Hello Snowdrifters,

The 2024 ski season and adventures are off to a great start. We have successfully completed our trips to Big Sky Montana, Val di Fassa Italy, and the day trip to Chestnut Mountain. As of this writing, Club members are enjoying their experiences on the Winter Park ski trip. For March, we complete our season with Big White, Canada and Lake Placid, New York. Months of planning and preparation goes into our ski trips and then it seems that the ski season goes by quickly.

We continue planning for a potential 2024 New Zealand/Australia trip and a 2025 Japan trip coordinated with Sanctuary Ski Club. We will soon be confirming member commitments for these "unique destination" trips to confirm we have enough members to proceed with the trips.

We have also started thinking about our 2025 ski season. Ideas have been brought forward for locations such as Snowmass, Steamboat, Canada, rescheduling the Porcupines Mountain weekend trip, and Europe. As always, we welcome member input on ski areas for the 2025 ski season.

I encourage our members to consider being ski trip leaders. Behind the scenes, we have a core group of members working on guidance documents, tools and resources, and training materials for our ski trip leaders. This is a great way to give back to the Club and can be a rewarding experience.

The Midwest region continues to have a challenging ski season with our above normal temperatures, especially the southern resorts in Wisconsin and Michigan. Resorts continue to make investments in snowmaking and becoming 4 season resorts (golf, water parks, sports complex, music venues) to mitigate reliance on a good winter season.

We began Board Nominations at the February Club meeting. We are currently seeking a volunteer for the Board Secretary position. The Secretary attends all Board meetings and records the key discussions, decisions, and actions planned for the Club. This is a good opportunity to be on the Board and to provide input on the Club's direction.

As Spring approaches, we are also generating ideas for Club events for the Spring and Summer season. Let us know your ideas and interest in being an Event Leader.

Have a Happy Spring!

John Walsh
President



MEETING NOTE:

The Old Towne Pub in Geneva has gone out of business. The Club Executive Committee will evaluate options to hold our monthly ski club meeting. We will provide meeting updates for the March and April on the location of the meetings.

Trip Coordinators' Corner:



John & Frank

As previously mentioned, we are considering two trips that the Club has never done in the past - a Tour/Ski trip to New Zealand and Australia and a Ski/Tour trip to Japan. These trips are still in the initial planning stages; however, we plan to send out a survey to obtain your interest in them. A brief description of these two trips can be found in last month's Flakey News.

Snowdrifters Social Happenings



You should have received an email about the Northern Illinois Food Bank Fight Hunger 5K run/Walk.

I hope you will consider registering for this event. NIFB has a great day planned! With your registration you will receive a complimentary beer or non-alcoholic option from our friends at [Revolution Brewing](#) and a \$2 voucher to be used at one of the Food Trucks. More information can be found at:

<https://runsignup.com/Race/IL/OakBrook/FightHunger?raceRefCode=jBMfTBLN>

I hope to see you there!

Save the Date!

Snowdrifters End of the Year Party

Sunday, May 19, 2024

2:00 – 7:00 PM



**Pig Roast, Quarter BBQ Chicken, Coleslaw, Mac & Cheese,
Baked Beans, Sliced Buns, and BBQ Sauce.**

2 Beverages

\$25 per person

We have the Back-Yard Tent.

Whiffle Ball fields, Bags, and Lawn Pong Available

Pickleballers –

If you wish - you can reserve a court for \$20

Once they have their pickleball league schedules done (Most likely in April, courts open in May) you can find all open

availability here: <https://www.hawthornesbackyard.com/pickleball>

**COMING SOON: WATCH YOUR EMAIL FOR
REGISTRATION**

Questions? Contact mojoy@comcast.net



54th ANNUAL
SWEDISH DAYS RIDE

FOX VALLEY BICYCLE & SKI CLUB • FVBSC.ORG

The Fox Valley Bicycle & Ski Club's
premier recreational bike tour featuring
quiet, scenic, paved roads through rural
Kane, Kendall and DeKalb counties.

SUNDAY, JULY 7, 2024

Harter Middle School, Sugar Grove, IL

Featuring 12 • 28 • 51 • 73 • 103 • 133 mile routes
(or mix & match loops to create your own distance)

Fully supported with SAG and indoor rest stop

www.fvbsc.org



SUPPORTING:



project **mobility**
Changing lives one bike at a time

easterseals
DuPage & Fox Valley

Swedish Days Ride 2024

REGISTRATION NOW OPEN

Sign up early for the best prices!

FEB 1-MAR 31

- \$25 for single rider
- \$40 for couples/family*

APR 1-MAY 31

- \$45 for single rider
- \$60 for couples/family*

JUN 1-JUL 5

- \$55 for single rider
- \$70 for couples/family*

JUL 6-JUL 7

- \$65 for single rider
- \$80 for couples/family*

**Family consists of up to two adults and children under 16*

See you on July 7th!

Maureen Joy

Social

NEW MEMBERS

New member to welcome to the Club:

Kimberly Holmberg

Cathleen Downs McDonald

Membership

VAL DI FASSA, ITALY



Another wonderful trip to Italy!

Canazei

On January 26th, 37 Snowdrifters flew from Chicago to Amsterdam and then onto Venice, Italy. We then took a 3 hour bus trip from Venice to Canazei. Driving on mountain hairpin curves and through hillside Italian villages, we finally arrived in the village of Canazei. Canazei, a charming town in the Val di Fassa (Fassa Valley), is in the Dolomites Mountain Range, surrounded by the Sella Group, the Marmolada, and the Rosengarten. The town has a cozy Austrian influence, with wooden houses, shops, and restaurants.

The village of Canazei is in the heart of the Dolomiti Superski region, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. This region is the largest interconnected ski area in the world, comprising 12 ski resorts, 450 lifts, 1200+ km of slopes, and over 29000 acres of skiing terrain. (We skied a LOT of it!!) Almost all of the lift infrastructure is up to date with high-speed chairlifts, gondolas, and trams, though you will find an occasional poma lift and a unique horse drawn rope pull lift.

Canazei has its own resort, Belvedere, and is one of several villages with direct access to the Sellaronda ski circuit. The Sellaronda, a must-see route that covers 26 miles and has garnered awards as the best ski route in the world, takes you over four stunning mountain passes, and covers the four Ladin valleys of Val Gardena, Alta Badia, Arabba and Val di Fassa. The scenery on the Sellaronda is simply breathtaking and includes skiing through forests, meadows, and past towering rock faces. The views are especially spectacular on clear days, which we mainly had, when you can see for miles over the Dolomites.



Most of the Club skiers completed the Sellaronda circuit either with the assistance of several mountain guides we hired, and/or completed the circuit on their own. There were



several of us that completed the Sellaronda circuit twice (!!!), in opposite directions and with some variations on the route, and a small group of skiers completed three circuits. **Many said that this was their best ski experience ever!**



And, of course, apres ski!



We took a day trip to the city of Bolzano. A local guide gave a tour of the city square, Piazza Walther. The square boasts several important monuments and historical buildings. On the southern corner stands the majestic ****Duomo di Bolzano****, a stunning cathedral that dates back centuries. Its intricate facade and soaring spires are a testament to Bolzano's rich heritage. The guide had some interesting insight on church practices.

Bolzano is also home of Ötzi the Ice Man! Ötzi was discovered by two German tourists, Helmut and Erika Simon, at an elevation of ****3,210 meters (10,530 feet)**** in the Ötztal Alps, which straddle the border between Austria and Italy (hence the nickname "Ötzi"), in September 1991. Initially, they thought they had stumbled upon a recently deceased mountaineer. The body was eventually extracted and transported to Innsbruck for examination. He is considered a "Wet Mummy" due to the extended time spent in snow, naturally preserved in glacier ice. Researchers believe Ötzi was killed due to the presence of an arrowhead embedded in his left shoulder and other wounds. His remains and personal belongings are on display at the South Tyrol Museum of Archaeology in Bolzano, Italy.

The afternoon found us on the Alto-Adige Wine Road to the Kettmeir Winery in Caldaro. We had a tour of the winery and enjoyed a charcuterie board/wine tasting after. Very scenic!



Other activities for the week included:

- Cross Country Ski race through part of Canazei going right past our hotel
- Exploring/shopping/dining Canazei
- Bus Trip to Moena for shopping and lunch
- Hiking the nearby trails
- Lunch on the mountain at Rifugio Salei



Every morning, we had great meetups to plan our days. Evenings before dinner found our group in the bar enjoying appetizers, drinks and good conversations. The staff and accommodations at Hotel Astoria were excellent.

Sicily

From Canazei, we took an early morning 4-hour bus ride to Milan to catch our flight to Sicily for our 3-day extension. Sicily is the largest island in the Mediterranean Sea, located off the southern tip of Italy. It has a rich and diverse history, having been ruled by various civilizations, such as the Greeks, the Romans, the Arabs, the Normans, and the Spanish. It has a unique culture and identity, with its own language, cuisine, and art.

As our flight approached the airport in Catania, Sicily we began to see views of the snowcapped Mount Etna, the largest active volcano in Europe. We boarded our bus and headed toward our destination city of Taormina ("the pearl of the Mediterranean Sea"), a picturesque town on the east coast of Sicily perched on a hill overlooking the Ionian Sea with stunning views of Mount Etna. As the bus wound up and down very narrow streets toward the Hotel Villa Diodoro, the driver (who spoke little to no English) pulled into a bus

terminal station and indicated that the bus was stopping, and we would need to walk to our hotel from there. To our surprise, the exact location of the hotel was not known to us until we used Google maps, and it was about a ¾ mile walk. After the coordinating of the portage of our luggage, we started our walking excursion to the hotel and, we arrived! Upon checking in at the hotel, we were rewarded with rooms that had balconies overlooking the Ionian Sea and Mount Etna, a beautiful setting that we enjoyed throughout our stay, including both sunrises and sunsets.



The town of Taormina has a lively and elegant atmosphere, with many shops, cafes, and restaurants. The weather was primarily blue skies with temperatures in the mid 60's and clear skies at night for viewing the stars and night-lit coastline from our seaside balconies.



On our first day, we started with a bus ride and guided tour of Mount Etna. On our way up the mountain, we passed through small villages and agricultural farms that specialize in vineyards, lemon trees, orange trees, and olive trees along with palm trees along the landscape. We stopped to sample a variety of locally produced honey and olive oil products. On Mount Etna, we toured an area with inactive craters

and historical lava flows. We then had a very nice lunch of Sicilian appetizers, two types of pasta, and some of the local red table wine. In the restaurant lobby, we had a tasting of liqueurs, which included "Mount Etna Fire Water." It's a blend of strawberry and citrus

flavors AND is 70% alcohol!!! We finished our day with a tour around Taormina, including the Greek Theatre, a 3rd-century BC amphitheater with a spectacular view of the sea and the volcano, and the Corso Umberto, the main street of the town, lined with shops and palaces.



On our second day we took a bus to Syracuse, an ancient city with a Greek heritage, and had a guided tour of the Archaeological Park Neapolis which comprises the Roman Amphitheater, the

Teatro Greco (Greek Theatre) and the Orecchio di Dionisio, a limestone cave. We had a quick lunch on the island of Ortigia

and then finished the day at the Zisola estate winery to sample some of the regional wines, including the Sicilian red Nero D'Avola wine.





Our third and last day was a day at leisure exploring local gardens, the shopping district, viewing the unique architecture, enjoying the sunshine, cuisine and wine among the many

cozy restaurants and outdoor cafes tucked away along narrow side streets, passageways, and overlooks of the Mediterranean. The food in Taormina was fresh and flavorful, with seafood, meats, pasta, pizza, and cannoli (cream-filled pastries).

And then the “long” travel home from Taormina to Catania, a flight to Rome, a delayed international flight and missed connections in Atlanta for most of the group (and some international flight reroutes for others), and finally arrival in Chicago (after 40+ hours of travel).

Our Val Di Fassa and Sicily trip will be remembered for a long time! Like so many European ski trips, it helps to bring along equal amounts of flexibility and adventurism. When you have both, you can truly enjoy a different culture, language, and cuisine not found in the U.S. We would like to thank all of you who made this trip a success. We hope everyone enjoyed the trip, and we can all look forward to another international ski holiday in 2025.

*Ciao,
Frank, Susan, and John*



Chestnut Mountain – Spring Skiing in February!

The Snowdrifters' family day trip to Chestnut Mountain was a huge success. Who would have thought that in the Midwest on February 10th, it would be 45 degrees and spring skiing conditions? The intent of the day trip was to encourage families to experience the Club and to support the local ski resorts. There was a total of 25 members which included 8 kids. Anyone that rented gear for the day also received a free ski or snowboard lesson. The instructors were great! In traditional Club fashion we hung the banner out the window of our meeting room, which was center mountain. There was a private room to secure our gear along with a breakfast and lunch which included sandwiches from Big Bill's Sandwich Shop. The original intent for the room would be a place for everyone to warm up, but on this day that wasn't necessary. Between 3:00 and 6:00 p.m. we all gathered around the bonfire to roast hotdogs, smores and watch the sunset over the Mississippi River. The folks at Chestnut were great to work with and very accommodating. We are already discussing repeating this event in 2025, more details to come over the next several months.



Michelle & Kathleen





BIG WHITE, CANADA BC

March 7th – 12th, 2024

The trip includes:

- Round trip air from Chicago to Kelowna, BC
- Ground transportation to the resort with a grocery stop
- Five nights lodging at Inn at Big White (ski-to-/ski-from)
 - Superior Hotel Rooms (2Q)
 - Heated outdoor pool with indoor entry
 - Three outdoor hot tubs
 - Complimentary secure overnight storage for your skis
- Four-day Adult Lift Pass
- Club Party

FLIGHTS: Alaska Airlines

AS 587 07 MAR ORD-SEA 600A 846A
AS 2517 07 MAR SEA-YLW 1200N 112P
AS 2517 12 MAR YLW-SEA 225P 333P
AS 538 12 MAR SEA-ORD 600P 1159P

For more information, please contact the trip leader:

Frank Hodowal:	ft hod@aol.com	630-222-6160
Paul Nepermann:	p_nepermann@yahoo.com	630-404-8477
Mark Green:	marksandy@sbcglobal.net	630-564-1763



Happy St. Patty's Day and Happy Easter!



Olympic Extravaganza @ Lake Placid, New York

March 19th – 24th, 2024



COST:

Land, Air, Adult Lift: \$2,075
Land, Air, Senior Lift: \$1,909

Have you been contemplating joining the Lake Placid trip?

POSSIBLY THE TRIP OF THE YEAR!

Check out all the extras - "Just for Snowdrifters!!"

This trip will give us a wonderful look at the U.S. Olympic History of not one but two Winter Olympics.

We will be able to immerse ourselves in U.S. Olympic History, experience the quaint setting of upstate New York and participate in a variety of activities.

- [Ski and snowboard](#) on the slopes of Whiteface Mountain and in the expansive Adirondack backcountry.
- [Cross-country ski](#) or [snowshoe](#) the miles of scenic trails in and around the area.
- [Ice skate](#) on the historic Olympic Oval.
- [Ice climb](#) using crampons and ice axes or watch climbers from around the region scale the frozen rocks.
- Lake Placid is home to many shops, spas, restaurants for a day of browsing and pampering



Just for Snowdrifters:

- Tour of the 1980 Arena
- Group Curling and happy hour
- Free Shuttle to the ski jump
- Olympic Museum
- Luge or bobsled - TBD

Questions? Contact

John
Maureen

johnhgamble@icloud.com
mojoy@comcast.net

Snowdrifters' Calendar

- | | |
|--|--|
| March 7 – 12 th | Big White Ski Trip |
| March 19 – 24 th | Lake Placid Ski Trip |
| March 18 th or 19 th | Board Meeting @ 6:30 PM
General Meeting @ 7:30 PM
(Place to be determined) |



Fox Valley
Snowdrifters
P.O. Box 697
Batavia, IL 60510