



# SKI FOR LIGHT BULLETIN

Fall 2017

*News and Information about the People and Programs of SFL International*

Skiing. Sharing. Learning.

The mission of Ski for Light is to enhance the quality of life and independence of visually or mobility-impaired adults through a program of cross country skiing.

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## President's Message

*By Scott McCall*

Hello Ski for Light Friends,

With fall weather arriving in most parts of the country, anticipation of the 2018 SFL International Week is definitely on the rise. The renewal of longtime friendships, the welcoming of new attendees, and the skiing on beautiful trails at a new venue contribute to the excitement. Being part of an organization focused on equality, opportunity and mutual respect for all, makes attending an SFL event a unique and rewarding experience. This focus distinguishes Ski for Light from other organizations and has kept me involved for more than thirty years.

For the past three and one-half years, it has been my honor to serve as President of this dynamic organization. We will hold elections in 2018, so this is my final Bulletin message in this capacity. We will be electing both officers and members to the board of directors. Later in this issue, you will read more about that from Amy Brannan, chair of the Board Development and Elections Committee. Serving in these capacities is a great way to get more involved in SFL, so I encourage you to contact Amy if being a part of a working board appeals to you.

Throughout the year, the SFL Executive Committee manages the organization and implements the decisions and policies of the board. In fact, if we had employees, the members of the Executive Committee would function as the senior staff. As president, I benefit from the support, guidance and energetic participation of these individuals:

Vice President, Bob Civiak leads our annual budgeting process, serves as chair of the guide recruitment and budget and finance committees, assists in preparing grant applications, and is a key participant in developing policy statements.

Treasurer, Brenda Seeger works year 'round to monitor our finances, to manage hundreds of accounting and bookkeeping details and to complete time consuming and complicated reports required to maintain our 501 (c) (3) status with the IRS.

In addition to preparing timely and accurate minutes of meetings, Secretary Judy Dixon prepares thank-you letters for all donors, updates our planning manual and provides valuable guidance based on her many years of involvement with SFL.

Tim McCorcle and Heather Berg joined the Executive Committee as Directors-at-Large in 2016. Heather provided outstanding leadership as chair of the 2017 Event Planning Committee. Tim is providing the same as chair of the 2018 Event Committee. This is definitely a full time year 'round job. Tim and Heather represent a younger generation of leadership for SFL and I am excited about the new ideas and energy they bring to the table!

Marion Elmquist serves as immediate past president. I benefit from Marion's knowledge and experience of managing the numerous details associated with holding this office. Marion leads our annual Ridderrenn team, participates in corporate and individual fundraising, and serves as a key liaison to the Sons of Norway and to our many Norwegian friends.

This is only a partial list of the contributions of these dedicated volunteers.

While not a member of the Executive Committee, past president Larry Showalter supports every major SFL activity and works throughout the year as our data base manager and webmaster.

Throughout the year, both board and non-board members serve on committees and as managers of special projects. This level of involvement allows us to continue functioning as an all-volunteer organization. This spirit of cooperation and commitment has kept SFL strong and vibrant for 43 years and it is my privilege to work with such a dedicated team. Thanks to all who continue to sustain us with your volunteer time and financial support.

Led by event chair Tim McCorcle, the 2018 planning team has hit full stride in its preparation for another exciting week of “Skiing, Sharing, and Learning.” When I ask for feedback following an event, I frequently am told that the week seems to run very smoothly with attention to every detail. Achievement of such a result requires the involvement of members of the planning team, other SFL volunteers, and staff from our host hotel and skiing venue. This level of involvement can be summed up in two words, “commitment and dedication.”

To get more information about Ski for Light, including applications for 2018, visit our web site at [www.sfl.org](http://www.sfl.org). Best wishes for a happy fall season and I hope to see many of you in the tracks as we ski the beautiful trails at Tahoe Donner this January!

## **ALL BOUND FOR TAHOE DONNER!**

*By Tim McCorcle*

The falling autumn temperatures out here in the Pacific Northwest and breathless reports of the first snows on our mountain passes fueled my curiosity to discover what meteorologists, almanacs and psychics foresee regarding ski conditions at Tahoe Donner during the third week of January 2018 for the 43rd annual Ski for Light International week. Like most good prognosticators, the various sources avoided specifics and did not stray far from predicting an average snowfall for the coming winter. Or slightly less snow than average. Or slightly more than average - all dependent on a dizzying number of variables.

One observation did strike a resonant chord. A Reno-based climatologist offered this, “We live in a land of extremes. It’s wait and see and be prepared for everything.”

In that spirit of preparation, members of the SFL planning committee gathered at The Nugget in Sparks, Nevada on the weekend of October 1. This past summer, the Nugget hosted the American Council of the Blind convention, and the staff is eager to demonstrate their trademark hospitality.

Sadly, The Nugget recently retired its mechanical bull, shipping him off to the pastoral, local machine shop, so our evening events this year will not feature bull riding or lassoing. Not to worry though, The lineup will include regular attractions like the silent auction and Norway Night, plus opportunities to cut a rug, to twirl a partner, to goofy foot boogie, or to bust a move. We have planned some special activities that capture the adventuresome spirit of the Sierra Nevada and that will provide ample opportunity for fun and mingling with fellow SFL’ers.

The Alder Creek Adventure Center will be our base of operations at the Tahoe Donner Cross Country Ski Area. We will lunch at the center, which features a full service ski shop with experienced technicians, outdoor seating with fire pits for those who want to catch some sun, and a trailside bar to slake one’s thirst after a great day of skiing. Several planning committee members walked, biked and rolled over much of the terrain that will soon be covered by snow for our 5k and 10k loops and practice areas. They were pleased with the results of their scouting trip and are confident that we will have a variety of trails to suit every ability and desire.

Some fun facts about snowfall at Tahoe Donner: On average, they receive 38.2 inches of snow in December and 41.4 inches of the white gold in January. Throwing my hat into the forecasting arena, I predict that the stars will align over Truckee and Sparks during the third week of January, delivering abundant snow, epic skiing on varied trails with fantastic tracks, great food and refreshing drinks, and a wealth of off-snow activities to share with friends, newfound and longtime, alike. Check out the 2018 event page at <http://www.sfl.org/events/next/> to discover more details about the fast approaching International Week and submit an application if you have not done so already. If you’ve already applied, now’s the time to finalize your travel plans, and to dedicate an extra 5 minutes or so to your stretching or

yoga practice, to your walking, running, biking or SkiErg workouts, or to that Crossfit or dance session.

I am eager to meet up with you in Sparks and on the trails at Tahoe Donner. I also look forward to being prepared for everything in the Sierra Nevada, because at Ski for Light everything is possible and just might happen!

## **SFL Silent Auction 2018**

Again this year, we will hold the ever-popular silent auction. For the newbies among us, this is a chance to bid on more than 150 items: Many jackets, gloves, and neat dog gear products are donated by our corporate sponsors while other fun or gifty things are donated by SFL attendees. Lots of us especially look forward to bidding on those great locally sourced edible goodies such as wild rice from Minnesota, almond roca from Seattle, and chocolate-covered cherries from Michigan. Sometimes, there's even a nice bottle of wine or two. So if you have a one-of-a-kind something from your corner of the world, consider donating it to the silent auction. You will be amazed at how much such treats bring in for SFL. Here are just a few guidelines to keep in mind: All contributions must be new, in original packaging, if applicable. Handmade items are welcome and anything unique would be great. A minimum retail value of \$20 is appreciated. This makes the tasks of sorting, cataloging, Brailleing, and recording sales more manageable for the worker bees who put everything together in just a few short days. Please feel free to contact Judy Dixon with questions at: [judy@judydixon.net](mailto:judy@judydixon.net). If you would like to donate something to the silent auction, you may bring it with you to SFL. But if you prefer to mail it in advance, you can send it to:

Judith Sneed  
Attn: Silent Auction  
6164 Carriage House Way  
Reno, NV 89519



Happy bidding!

## **IT IS UP TO YOU TO RECRUIT NEW GUIDES**

*By Bob Civiak*

To maintain the vitality of Ski for Light, we must continually bring in new guides. Last year was a particularly good one in that respect, but we still need to recruit proficient cross country skiers in the pursuit of capably-guided, enjoyable skiing experiences, and to continue making our mission and vision whole and possible. SFL is taking several steps to address this issue. We have a great Facebook page, [www.facebook.com/SkiforLight](http://www.facebook.com/SkiforLight), maintained by Leslie Maclin, and we are advertising on Google. We have also had articles in skiing magazines and have made direct pleas to ski clubs and Nordic centers around the country, while advertising in others. Word of mouth has always been our best method for attracting new guides. Each of you can help by talking to your friends and family who ski. We are particularly interested in recruiting those who are adept at Nordic skiing. Please refrain from recruiting new guides who don't ski well enough to guide others, without having to think about their own technique. Ideally, we want guides who can teach our participants how to ski better. Our completely redesigned website has lots of material to help in your recruiting efforts, including a link on the

main page to an inspiring video. The website also has a publications page with a link on the top banner. If you click on publications, there is a drop down menu that has a link to the media page. There you can find a flyer suitable for posting/using as a handout. There are also articles, news releases, a factsheet, and other information that can enhance the impact of your efforts to motivate and to inspire others to be a part of what we do. The video can be a great recruiting tool. Send the link to all of your skiing friends, along with an upbeat note on how great SFL is. If you have a Facebook page, post a link to the video there. Also, print copies of the flyer and distribute it to ski clubs in your areas, to outdoor equipment stores, and anywhere else that Nordic skiers might find it. If you feel comfortable doing so, put your phone number on the flyer so people have a person to call. The purpose of the flyer is to get interested skiers to go to the SFL website for more information and to view the fantastic video. Please distribute it widely. The future of our organization is in your hands. Go out there and recruit.

## More Than Words

By Andrea Goddard, Editor

“Words only cover the experience of living.”

Barbara Kingsolver’s observation still rings true a good 19 years after reading “Animal Dreams” as a high school senior. It’s all too easy to fall prey to the illusion that words are who I am. After all, they form our thoughts and communications. They pepper the music I listen to, and each book I enjoy reading wouldn’t exist without them! Many linguists argue that a self does not really exist without language; yet, there is at least one week a year when the bounds of language stretch, and when words become pleasant companions, rather than demanding bosses or annoying houseguests.

Many of us in the SFL family struggle to explain the charge, the glow, and the spirit pervading an International ski week. “You just have to be there,” is a common refrain, and, if “a picture is worth a thousand words,” a lived experience is worth a million!

Have you ever tried describing the taste of hot chocolate? Stop reading and give it a go... right now!

The words don’t quite do justice to your memory of the last mug of cocoa you savored, do they? And, if you are me, they will become lowly grovelers in the service of your tastebuds when enjoying the next one! That is what a week at SFL is; an elixir that invigorates, warms, and fortifies in me much that makes my days meaningful.

Over the past eight years, ski week has shifted and deepened in significance, marking the turning of the outer and inner seasons that shape my life. Some years (like my first SFL International event in 2010), I arrived full of words; words about the excitement and anxiety that accompanied trying something brand new, about whether I was using proper technique as I maneuvered my very first sit ski, and about the sound of skis shushing along a Soldier Hollow trail featuring decent powder and deep tracks. Other years, it’s more like coming home at the end of a brutally long day that’s lasted for months, knowing that laughter, love, and a certain kind of commitment to hard work and hard play will create the breathing room I’ve needed all year.

The start of the week finds me focused on my sit skiing technique and on my guide, exchanging ideas about what’s working and what isn’t. Good communication is critical to a successful ski, and the effort I put into articulating my needs and into developing an effective rapport can come back tenfold as the week progresses. Often, by about the second or third day out, the conversations start to shift from technique to observations about life, to interests

we share in common, or to other skiing adventures we may have had. Then, every now and again, I suddenly realize we’ve been skiing along (sometimes for moments on end) without having said anything much at all. These companionable silences often signal that my guide and I have really hit our stride, trusting one another enough to say what needs saying, and relaxing enough just to savor the stillness and quiet of the trail.

I try to think of a week at SFL as my “week of Yes.” That short, little word carries a multileveled momentum: The word can burst forth emphatically when a fellow skier or guide across the Nordic Center’s lunch table asks, “Are you having a good ski?” It sometimes means, “Yes, I’d love to sing songs with you by the fireplace!” It courses through my whole body when my guide and I are at the top of our game after skiing the first few K of the day, realizing I feel well enough to contemplate going out again, even if I end up calling it quits. On a day when fatigue or chronic pain yammers continually for my attention, “yes” can allow skiing to become a closed-focus meditation... the only thing I am doing, and all I need to do. I also find that an awesome ski week goes hand in hand with saying yes to vital selfcare; so, even on a day when I may opt to ski lightly or not at all, I’m still saying yes, and my body thanks me for it the next time I pick up my poles.

A good day of skiing exhilarates me and makes me feel like a tuning fork, vibrating in synchrony with all that is good in the outdoors, in the camaraderie of the week, and in my own body (a perspective I usually struggle to achieve). A tough ski reminds me that doing one thing in the moment is often enough; that climbing this brutal hill requires just one, small, short pole thrust at a time and that, in fact, that is the only way I can keep from sliding backwards, and can reach the top. My guide’s crucial support makes it nothing less than a team effort, and every successful ascent becomes a triumph we share in and celebrate together.

People sometimes ask how I cope with various life challenges. Before experiencing my first SFL ski week or subsequent ones, I used to think of wordy replies that involved a discussion of the finer points of mindfulness, or perhaps a cynical quip about not having much of a choice. These days, though I still resort to dry wit and to the truths I’ve come to know about living in The Now, I also go immediately to another kind of answer, altogether:

Temperatures are in the 20's, but there is no sign of the sun. I've already tipped over in my sit ski once today, and the shoulder I landed on is sore. The headache with which I woke demands more of my attention now. My guide and I are too far out on the trail to turn back, and the only option is to forge ahead to the lodge. While I set about inventing colorful phrases that might be a match for all this, my guide surprises me with just a couple words, referring to a shared, inside joke that makes me laugh out loud. This eases me into skiing forward again, still smiling. Though the following hill is so steep that my smile morphs into clenched teeth through which I curse like a sailor, we finally make the top. We stop to quaff from our water bottles before again picking up our poles. There is still way too far to go, yet something has shifted. My guide and I are in this together and, even though the trail is not being kind, I am still having one of the best days of my year simply because I am here, because we've "shown up," and because we keep skiing forward one outbreath and pole stroke at a time.

When memories like this are carried in my muscles - when the people I'm with help me come home to myself... when skiing becomes both an outward and an inward engagement with the things that matter... words finally become unnecessary.

## **Are you Ready? Nominations are open for the SFL Board of Directors**

*By Amy Brannan*

Have you ever considered running for election to the Ski for Light (SFL) Board of Directors? Do you enjoy being a part of our annual International event? Are you interested in further contributing to the organization's success? Now is your chance to get involved by submitting your nomination!

Made up of approximately 25 skiers, guides and other participants, the Board of Directors is SFL's governing/ managing body. It is a "working" Board, with each officer and director expected to mobilize her/his time and talents in the leadership of the organization.

We're looking for folks with great ideas about how to enhance SFL or who want to lend their skills to help ensure our longevity and vitality. Now, you can "seize the day:" Nominate yourself or someone else (just be sure to ask the other person first). Twelve seats will be up for election in January 2018. Members serve terms of four years and may then stand for reelection.

Nominations should include:

- \*The nominee's name, phone, and mailing and email addresses,
- \*A biographical paragraph containing a description of past and/or current participation in the work of Ski for Light
- \*A statement about possible areas of future involvement or responsibility that interest the nominee
- \*Anything else the nominee deems relevant

All nominations will be considered and the election results will be announced on Friday, January 19, 2018 at the annual board Meeting. The deadline for receipt of nominations is December 8, 2017.

Please email all nominations to Amy Brannan, Board Development and Elections Committee Chair: [acbrannan1@gmail.com](mailto:acbrannan1@gmail.com), by December 8, 2017.

## **COME SKI IN NORWAY!**

Join the Ski for Light group for the Ridderrenn in Beitostolen, Norway March 11 to 18, 2018. The Ridderrenn, started in 1964, is the event upon which Ski for Light is based. It's a wonderful week of cross-country skiing and includes a biathlon, 5k and 10k race for women and men and culminates in the 20 kilometer Ridderrenn on Saturday. There are all sorts of activities including a talent show, an auction, and entertaining evening programs, and of course, lots of time to meet new Norwegian and other friends.

If you are interested, please contact Marion Elmquist, by early December. Marion Elmquist, 5152793681 or [mlelmquist@aol.com](mailto:mlelmquist@aol.com)



## Hot Off The Presses



Two members of the Ski for Light family have recently published books that may be of interest to you.

In “The Bumpy Road to Assisted Living, A Daughter’s Memoir,” Mary Hiland describes the challenges of moving an elderly parent into assisted living against her will. Unlike most adult children, Mary had to deal with this crisis as an only child who is totally blind. You can order the book on Amazon.

In “Just Breathe Out: Using Your Breath to Create a New, Healthier You,” Betsy Thomason explains the benefits reaped by breathing-impaired individuals, athletes, firemen, and anyone else who uses the Breathe Out Dynamic system (BODs). The book describes how to breathe with an active, spine stretching out breath and a passive, relaxed in breath and how to incorporate BODs into everyday living. You can order the book on Amazon. Audio and Braille versions of the book are also available for download from BARD, or from regional NLS libraries.

## Adventures on the GAP and C&O Trail

*By Bob Hartt and Bonnie O’Day*

At our 2017 event at Snow Mountain Ranch, we conducted an SFL special interest session on tandem cycling. One of the guides, Barry Tulkki from Wisconsin, told Bonnie he has always wanted to ride some of the Great Allegheny Passage (GAP) and Chesapeake and Ohio Canal (C&O) trails between Pittsburgh and Washington, D.C., so before you could say “passing on the left” he committed to bringing his cycling friend, Greg, out to vacation with us for a week on the trails. As we didn’t want to pack tents and do the whole camping thing, we decided the most flexible arrangement would be to keep a rental vehicle with us throughout the trip. Although this meant cycling back to where our vehicle was parked before traveling further east, it gave us the ability to transport our tandems in case of bad weather, and to take additional side trips. With much appreciation for the new adventures that can blossom from a week at SFL, here’s a day-by-day summary of the fun!

*Sunday May 7:* We stayed in the Alexandria area this first day so our captains could orient themselves to our tandems and to riding with us. After biking our neighborhood streets to build communication between captains and stokers, we rode south about 20 miles to Mount Vernon, where we stopped to sample George Washington’s cherry pie before returning home.

At the Enterprise car rental, we tested a quad cab truck, but found that its standard length bed was not long enough for our two tandems. We switched to a Dodge Caravan minivan, which worked well. Both tandems fit in behind the driver with their front wheels taken off and with the split seats down. The van kept the bikes secure and dry during the rain we encountered.

*Monday May 8:* After loading up our tandems and luggage, we drove about three hours to Confluence, Pennsylvania, a small, pretty village at the junction of the Youghiogheny (pronounced yah ka gany) and Casselman Rivers on the 125 mile GAP trail between Pittsburgh, Penn. and Cumberland, Md. After a quick check-in at the bed and breakfast, we road west on the GAP Trail for 15 miles to Ohiopyle, Penn. and stopped at the visitor center and a big waterfall on the river before returning to Confluence

*Tuesday May 9:* After a good breakfast, we swung by a great local bike shop in town for a low cost, quick fix timing chain adjustment on our CoMotion tandem. Famous last words after Bonnie discovered a photography art gallery connected to the shop and dropped some significant dough on two framed photos of people on the GAP Trail, and after Bob spent additional bucks on rain gear, the store owner threw in the timing chain adjustment for free what a deal! We spent most of the day touring two private homes designed by world renowned architect Frank Lloyd Wright his crown jewel, Falling Water and a less well known house called Kentuck Knob. The homes were not easily accessible by cycling due to the narrow and hilly roads, so we used our minivan. Later in the day, we rode our tandems east 15 miles from Confluence along the GAP Trail. This area is part of Pennsylvania’s Laurel Highlands region, where our captains could view the area’s prebudding namesakes. As we rode, we heard the river on one side, and mountain streams flowing down the cliffs on the other, where they were channeled into culverts running under the trail bed. In addition to plenty of springtime bird calls, we also heard the freight trains and their whistles echoing up the narrow gorge in

which we found ourselves. Although the GAP Trail uses an abandoned rail bed on one side of the river, there is a well-traveled rail line on the other. As the trail's base is mostly hard, smooth sandstone, clumps and grains of sand crunched audibly beneath our wheels.

*Wednesday May 10:* As this was our last day with a forecast of dry weather, we drove east to cycle between Harper's Ferry and Shepherdstown, W.Va. Along the way, we stopped in Cumberland, Md for an early breakfast and to drop by the visitor center of the C&O Canal National Historical Park, marking the start of the 184.5 mile trail to Georgetown, Washington D.C. We then drove on to Harper's Ferry, cycling to a bridge over the Potomac River, where we hauled our tandems down some stairs to the trailhead, itself. We enjoyed a spectacular, spring day ride to Shepherdstown, cycling along the towpath, and pausing sometimes to view canal locks. Near Shepherdstown, we crossed Antietam Creek, which flowed away from the site of the first battle of the

Civil War to be fought on northern soil in Sharpsburg, Md. Heeding some good advice from a walker on the towpath, and after a brief detour onto the campus of Shepherd University, we made our way into the town's historic district for a few delicious late afternoon snacks and beverages in the outside garden seating area of a local restaurant.

*Thursday May 11:* This was a miserable, cold, and rainy day with a few more days of similar weather predicted, so we headed toward home. En route, we visited the Antietam battlefield, viewing a video about the battle, attending an excellent presentation by a park ranger, and driving to key spots around the site... sections through which we had originally hoped to cycle. On the way to Alexandria, we visited the National Air and Space Museum Annex at Dulles Airport, a very interesting and worthwhile experience.

Our lives have been so enriched by all the wonderful people we have met through Ski for Light! Happy Trails!



### **Regional Winter Events**

Ski for Light, Inc. is loosely affiliated with nine regional organizations around the United States that share our name, but are independent organizations. They are located in New England, Northeast Pennsylvania, Michigan, Wisconsin, South Dakota, Colorado, Montana, Northern California and Washington. Every winter, each group holds one or more local events that include teaching and guiding visually and mobility-impaired adults in cross country skiing. Several of them also offer other activities such as snowshoeing and downhill skiing. The events range from a full week to day trips. To learn more visit the Regionals page on the SFL website at [www.sfl.org/events/regionals](http://www.sfl.org/events/regionals). From there, you can access the website of each regional organization to learn about their programs for this winter.

### **The SFL Bulletin**

Editor: Andrea Goddard  
Layout and graphics: Janet Atkins  
Electronic version: Larry Showalter

The SFL Bulletin is published three times a year. It is available in ink-print or via e-mail. If you wish to change formats, please send your request to: [webmaster@sfl.org](mailto:webmaster@sfl.org)

The current as well as past issues of the Bulletin are also available online at [www.sfl.org](http://www.sfl.org).

In addition to an online edition that may be read in your browser, you will find a downloadable pdf version of the current issue.

For future Bulletins, remember that your contributions and feedback are always most welcome.

You may submit articles as e-mail or as a word or text attachment. Send all items to:

Andrea Goddard  
SFL Bulletin Editor  
E-mail: [chinook80@centurylink.net](mailto:chinook80@centurylink.net)

The deadline for the Spring 2017 Bulletin is March 15, 2018. We look forward to hearing from you.

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**SKI FOR LIGHT, INC.**

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