



Volume 60
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Potomac Valley Skiers, Inc.
WASHINGTON MARYLAND VIRGINIA

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President's Message:

It is hard to believe that another year has passed. I look forward to our holiday party on January 4 and to the Snowmass ski trip. Please RSVP to me (rcjablon@aol.com, 202-333-5332) for the holiday party and let me know if you are bringing an appetizer, salad, or dessert.

This column will be devoted to local restaurants – clearly PVS members enjoy food and have brought many wonderful dishes to our meetings and holiday parties. I am always amazed as how few of the “top 100” restaurants of the Washingtonian or the favorite picks of Tom Sietsema of the Washington Post that Bob and I have frequented. We tend to stay fairly close to home and keep on going back to a limited number of restaurants. Our “go to” restaurant is Bistro LePic, just north of Georgetown on Wisconsin Avenue. The restaurant is classic French and never is disappointing. Their sister restaurant, La Piquette, on Macomb Street, is excellent, but way too noisy.

For Belgian food, we have Et Viola right in our neighborhood on MacArthur Boulevard. Reservations can be hard to get there if you don't call well in advance. Their beef carbonade (a beer-based beef stew) is wonderful and they have good mussels. Their duck confit is fabulous, but it is not always on the menu. We used to go quite often to La Chaumiere, in Georgetown, but it has changed ownership and I do not think it is quite as good as it was in the past. They do make the best profiteroles in DC. Other French restaurants that we like are Le Chat Noir and Matisse, although we think that Bistro LePic is better.

Other local MacArthur Boulevard restaurants that we like are Claudio's Table (Italian), under the same ownership as Et Viola, and Bistro Aracosia (Afghan), which has excellent lamb dishes.

Holiday Party

**Saturday, January 4 at
1:00 PM**

**Bob & Clara Jablon's home
Washington, DC**

For steak, our favorite is the downtown Joe's Seafood, Prime Steak and Stone Crab on 15th Street – somewhat pricey, as are most steak restaurants, but with impeccable service and terrific food. The long-time Prime Rib on K Street is still good, particularly for prime rib. We also recently had a wonderful cowboy ribeye steak at the downtown Ruth's Chris Steak House on L Street. A classic downtown restaurant is the Old Ebbitt Grill – we don't go very often, but have had some very good meals there. A fairly new downtown restaurant (in International Square on K Street near 19th Street) is Casa Theresa – their focus is on pork dishes, but they also serve an excellent fish entree. I Ricci, on 19th Street, has a limited menu, but also is good.

In our view, the best local Chinese restaurant is Foong Lin in Bethesda. If we don't want to go that far, we head downtown to the Sichuan Pavillion on 18th and K Street. Bethesda also has our favorite Indian restaurant, Kadhai, on Norfolk Street. We also make the trip to Bethesda to go to Persimmon, on Wisconsin Avenue – they have excellent crab cakes, and many other choices. The restaurant on

the top of the Kennedy Center, where we go before opera, also has very good crabcakes – this restaurant is way overpriced, but very convenient. There are not many good restaurant choices near the Kennedy Center when time is of the essence before a performance. For a late dinner after an early performance, we have gone to Clyde’s on M Street – occasionally they have a lobster special that I recommend. The Clyde’s in Friendship Heights is also fine for basic American food, as is the Cheesecake Factory, also in Friendship Heights. Bob particularly likes their club sandwich, and I always get Chicken Madeira.

Another upper NW “go to” restaurant for us is the Parthenon on Connecticut Avenue a few blocks down from the traffic circle. They serve classic Greek food – I particularly like their swordfish. Finally, for an excellent and quiet restaurant in DC, we recommend New Heights on Calvert Street near Connecticut Avenue. The only downside is parking – there is very little parking near the restaurant – we usually park in the nearby neighborhood and walk about four blocks to the restaurant. On occasion, we go to J. Gilbert in McLean for classic American food – their ribs are quite good. We also had a nice meal at Jackson’s in Reston, but only tried it once.

I look forward to hearing about your favorite restaurants. While we do not think about going very far afield from DC, we certainly are open to going to Alexandria once in a while or to a restaurant in McLean or Reston. All recommendations will be appreciated.

Cara Jablon, PVS President

Coming Event



**PVS Holiday Party in January 2025
4573 Indian Rock Terrace, N.W.,
Washington, D.C. 20007.**



We look forward to hearing all about your holiday season which, for Potomac Valley Skiers, is extended into the New Year!

Our holiday party will be held on Saturday, January 4, 2025, 1:00 p.m., at the home of Cara and Bob Jablon.

Directions are below.

Please bring either an appetizer, salad or dessert. There will be no charge for participants.

Please let Cara know if you will be coming and what you will bring.

Please RSVP!!! to Cara at. rcjablon@aol.com, 202-333-5332. Thanks.

SELL! SELL! SELL!

To start the new year just right, we are sponsoring a voluntary “**White Elephant Giveaway**”, allowing you to bring anything you’d like to give away at our event. It can be something that’s been in your closet a bit too long; a special something you love but have realized you can live without, or maybe a duplicate gift. Just be willing to let it go!

No money will change hands, but you will have to market your gift to get someone to take it! Any questions? Just check with Marianne Soponis. marianne.soponis@gmail.com

Directions

From Northwest D.C.: Take Nebraska Avenue to the beginning of Foxhall Road. Go south on Foxhall Road one traffic light past the intersection of Foxhall and Reservoir to Q Street. Right on Q Street. Continue on Q Street for 1 block to the stop sign (45th St.) and make a right on 45th. Go two blocks and make a left (Q Lane). The street will dead end into Indian Rock Terrace. Make a right and go up the hill. The Jablons' house is the fourth house up the hill on the right (a red brick and frame contemporary house).

From Potomac/Rockville/Gaithersburg: Take 270 South to 495 towards Virginia. Exit at Cabin John Parkway and continue south on the parkway until Arizona Avenue (1st traffic light after light at Chain Bridge). Make a left on Arizona and a right on MacArthur Boulevard (1st light). Continue on MacArthur Boulevard for about 1½ miles past the Safeway on the left. Shortly after passing the Safeway, MacArthur forks to the right and Reservoir Road goes to the left. Continue on MacArthur to Q Street (the next light after the light at the fork). Make a left on Q Street. Go 1 block to the stop sign (45th St.), and make a left on 45th. Go 2 blocks and make a left (Q Lane). The street will dead end into Indian Rock Terrace. Make a right and go up the hill. The Jablons' house is the fourth house up the hill on the right (a red brick and frame contemporary house).

From Virginia (Chain Bridge): At the end of the Chain Bridge, make a right. Continue to the first light (Arizona Avenue). Make a left on Arizona and follow the directions immediately above from that point on.

From Virginia (Key Bridge): Stay in one of the left lanes at the end of the Key Bridge. Make a left at the end of the bridge to M Street (may be called Canal Road at that point). Get in the right lane and continue up the hill to the light at the beginning of Foxhall Road. Continue on Foxhall to the next light (Q Street). Make a left on Q Street. Go one block to the stop sign (45th St.) and make a right. Go 2 blocks and make a left (Q Lane). The street will dead end into Indian Rock Terrace. Make a right and go up the hill. The Jablons' house is the fourth house up the hill on the right (a red brick and frame contemporary house).

A Lithuanian tradition... (continuing the food discussion)

Growing up in Minersville, PA, one of the traditions we had was to eat a Lithuanian meal on Christmas Eve, called Kucios.

It consisted of 12 different, non-meat foods, to celebrate the 12 months of the year (or, to celebrate the 12 apostles).

I remember fish, herring, milk with poppy seeds, nuts, dried fruits, mixed grains, a vegetable, cold oatmeal and other things which probably were not my favorite since I don't remember them! If you tasted every dish, you were guaranteed a good year ahead.

Another tradition would be to leave one chair empty to remember those no longer with us.



I no longer celebrate Kucios but it's a great memory of the home town holidays!

Marianne Sponis



PVS - BYOB (Bring Your Own Book) Group

New year - new books to read - or maybe just to put in our extensive TBR (To Be Read) piles. No matter! We need books to get us through the long winter ahead. Come join us on Zoom, hear about what your friends are reading, and tell us about reads that have made you laugh, that inspired you, or even that left you cold. **See the info at the bottom for how to join in on January 9th, 2025 (the second Thursday of each month) at 4 pm!**

Here are the books we shared in December:

Bonnie Sweeney brought us the teasingly-titled "Sex Lives of Cannibals" by J. Maartin Troost. Troost and his girlfriend moved to the Pacific island of Tarawa and stayed for 2 years in this funny tale of working to improve the quality of life of the locals while experiencing horrendous living conditions. **5***

Marianne Sponis just read "The Four Winds" by Kristin Hannah, not an uplifting read. Hannah begins her novel in Texas in the 1920's as the devastating drought brought on the horror known as "the dustbowl" and in which the female protagonist was forced by poverty to relocate to California where she and others affected were treated poorly. **5***

Bob Jablon once again enriched our understanding of the history associated with New York by bringing "The Island in the Middle of the World" by Russell Shorto. Bob quoted "history is written by the winners" to explain why we hear little about the Dutch who dominated Manhattan and the rest of the colonial world in the 1600's. **5***

Karen Knopes noted that Anita Brookner's "Hotel du Lac" was not her typical cup of tea but that it held her interest. It's the story of a woman residing in an uninhabited hotel writing letters to her lover while the reader puzzles over why she was banished to this place. **4***

Ellie Thayer laughingly told us about a "pretty uninteresting book" she picked up in an airport store, Anne Hillerman's "Rock with Wings." Set in a Native American community, the two stories of a couple, both police officers, don't intertwine until the last page. **3***

Rosemary Schwartzbard enjoyed "A Funny Story" by the popular Emily Henry. Not only did Rosemary get interested in this millennial story, she found that Henry's depiction of how childhood affects adult relationships was very well developed and the main character became a better person in the end. **4.5***

Jan Marx found another tale that takes place in Minnesota. How does she do that? "Where Wolves Don't Die" (not "werewolves don't die...") is by Anton Treuer, the son of a man that Jan knows. A coming-of-age tale of a young man of Chippewa heritage who comes to appreciate his culture through his grandfather. **4***

Mary Ellena Ward read "The Royals" written by her friend John Muncie and second author, Ron Kolb. She described it as "All the President's Men meets The Thursday Murder Club." Retired journalists living on an island meet weekly and decide to investigate a mysterious local death. Mary Ellena called it "a fun read." 4*

Nancy McKinley brought a favorite, "The Winter Soldier" by Daniel Mason. A wealthy young man in Austria in the 1900's enlists in WWI before he completes his medical training. He's assigned to a remote field hospital where only he and a highly competent nurse/nun are the only practitioners treating the wounded, especially those with the new condition now known as PTSD. 5*

Our next BYOB Zoom call will be held on Thursday, January 9th from 4 to 5 pm. Let Nancy McKinley know at nancymckin@gmail.com if you have questions or comments. If you're interested in joining us, Nancy will put you on the list to get the link to the Zoom call. No commitment!

SKI TALK
by
Kathy Lake

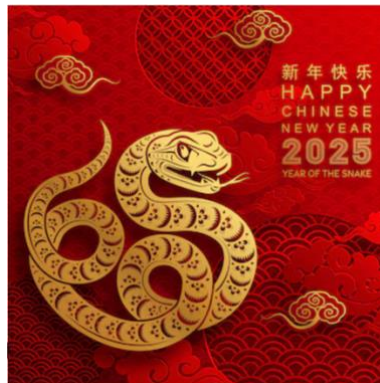
Within the next week 24 PVSers will be making their way to Snowmass for fabulous skiing and great times with old friends! It will be good to catch up with everyone. We'll be staying slopeside at our usual haunt, the Mountain Chalet. In mid-December Snowmass received 3 feet of snow in one week, and just this past week Snowmass got 11" more of snowfall. The slopes are calling us! Check out this cool video to see the snow piling up at Snowmass during Christmas week:

[Watch: Timelapse video shows snow piling up at Colorado ski resort | Watch](#)

Barry and I will be going out a few days early to experience Buttermilk. In all these years of going to Snowmass we have never skied Buttermilk. So, we thought it was time we did so. We have already been to Aspen Mountain (or some may still refer to it as Ajax) and Aspen Highlands. This will complete the full 4 mountains complement. We'll be staying at The Inn of Aspen located at the base of Buttermilk. We discovered the Inn last year when we were stranded at the airport due to flight cancellations and had to spend the night back in Aspen. It is ski in/ski out and has an onsite restaurant.

According to Powder Magazine Snowmass was recently named as 1 of the top 7 U.S. ski resorts with the best world class grooming. Aspen goes the extra mile when it comes to groomed terrain across all four of its world-class mountains. From the meandering beginner-friendly trails on Buttermilk to the 'super highway-wide' groomers at Snowmass, you never have to leave the piste if you don't want to.

Thinking about buying a ski house? A mansion with its own private ski gondola recently sold at Deer Valley in the high \$50 million price range. It's the highest priced home sale in the state of Utah. The gondola takes passengers to the top of a ski run on Bald Eagle Mountain. There are only two other private gondolas in Deer Valley, and building it required approval from the county and homeowners' association. Set on roughly 2.6 acres, the seven-story house spans about 21,000 square feet with seven bedrooms and amenities including an outdoor infinity pool, a basketball court, a bowling alley and a climbing wall. There is also a golf simulator and a spa with a steam room and dry sauna. The gondola, which is shared with a neighboring house, has a motion-activated door that opens from the home's ski room. Sounds fabulous! Maybe we could all rent it next year! Check it out here: [A Mansion With a Private Ski Gondola Smashes Utah's Home Price Record](#) .



Members' Corner

BELLISSIMA NORTHERN ITALY OCTOBER 16-29, 2024 *Rosemary & Dick Schwartzbard*

Northern Italy is truly beautiful, Bellissima! We went on a two-week tour starting in Milan and ending in Venice. Stops in between included the lake district, then on to Verona, Modena, Bologna and ending in Venice. It was our first Tauck tour and they lived up to their reputation of great service, 5-star hotels and wonderful meals.

MILAN exceeded our expectations. We stayed at the Grand Hotel et de Milan located centrally near the high-end designer boutiques and within a few blocks of the Piazza Duomo, La Scala Opera House and the Galleria. We went a few days early so were able to relax and enjoy Milan before the tour began. In addition to the above mentioned, we visited the Brera Art Gallery which contains an exceptional collection of art from the 13th to 20th century. We also visited The Leonardo de Vinci Museum and tried to understand his original drawings and writings. I was able to find a parkrun north of the city and took the very modern Milan Metro to get there.



In our down time, we enjoyed the local culinary treats. Italy has this wonderful tradition of aperitivo (predinner drink). A dominant aperitivo is the spritz (white wine, soda, ice and liquor of choice). I like Aperol in my Spritz. The drink is usually accompanied by nuts, olives and chips. Each evening after having our aperitivo we went to dinner. Veal Milanese (Veal chop breaded and fried topped with salad) and Risotto alla Milanese (with saffron rice and bone marrow) are traditional in Milan. Delicious!

Our next stop was the lake district. We started with a boat ride on **Lake Como** and saw Villa Carlotta, a splendid 17th-century villa with beautiful gardens, sculptures and fountains. Then we took another boat ride across the lake to **Bellagio** where we had a couple hours to shop for silk and have lunch with the rich and the famous. Lunch was delicious carpaccio of local trout. After lunch, we boarded another boat to see the grand villas along the water with George Clooney's house, a prominent tourist attraction. It was certainly not the biggest of the villas but impressive.



When we pulled up to the Grand Hotel Des Iles Boromees in **Stresa**, we all let out a gasp. It was truly *Grand*, both inside and out. The view of Lake Maggiore from our room was stunning. We enjoyed a dinner of Chateaubriand carved at our table in an exquisite dining room. We are told that Hemingway stayed there, so after dinner we had a drink in the Hemingway bar. The next day after touring the opulent Villa Borromeo on a tiny private island we went back to our hotel to swim and soak in the five pools, all heated, both in and outdoors. Such luxury. It was hard to leave this extraordinary hotel. But onward we went.

On the way to Verona, we stopped at **Bergamo** (UNESCO World Heritage Site) to visit the walled medieval city with magnificent castles and the Venetian walls. Strolling through the Old City was like going back in time. Lunch was at a winery where we had tastings of their sparkling, white and red wines. After an abundant amount of wine and a fantastic lunch of local delicacies, we bought several bottles of the sparkling wine to be shipped to us!



VERONA is definitely more than Romeo and Juliet, although we did visit the balcony. It is also a UNESCO World Heritage Site. In addition to its many historical buildings, Verona is famous for its Roman Amphitheatre which is still used for operas and other cultural entertainment. It is a large, bustling town with high end designer shops in addition to open-air markets and many pedestrian streets. It was quite a bit more than I had expected.

On our way to Bologna, we stopped at **Modena**. You may recognize the name from Balsamic Vinegar. We had a guided visit to learn about the art of balsamic vinegar making which is an elaborate process of rendering grapes and decanting into wooden barrels. After sampling the 10 to 25+ year-old vinegars, we bought a bottle of 15-year-old vinegar. It's like liquid gold. Just a few drops make any dish memorable.

To round out this gourmet tour, our next stop was at a Parmigiano Reggiano cheese factory. It was fascinating to see the process of cheesemaking in this huge facility where the milk is put in large vats and carefully massaged until it can be put in a container, aged and transferred into finished wheels. It was fun tasting the finished product at different ages. I preferred the oldest cheese which was tasty and crunchy and quite aromatic. We also learned that Parmigiano Reggiano is only from this region of Italy.



After wine and cheese and vinegar, it was a relief to visit the Ferrari Museum. Enzo Ferrari was born in this area. In the museum, we saw Ferraris from the 1930's to the most recent model just released last month! We did not order one to be shipped home -- needless to say.

After this busy day, we were happy to arrive at the Grand Hotel Majestic in **BOLOGNA**, home to the world's oldest university, founded in 1088. Bologna, with its marble-floored ancient porticoes and wide piazzas, was like being on a movie set. Maybe that is why so many celebrities have stayed at the Grand Hotel Majestic including Princess Di and Frank Sinatra. In addition to the history of this university town and the leaning towers, the cuisine is world famous. Who has not heard about Tortellini Bolognese, Cotoletta alla Bolognese (breaded veal cutlet topped with prosciutto and cheese), Tagliatelle al ragu, mortadella, Prosciutto di Parma. We even had a cooking lesson making tortellini from scratch and filling them with ground meats. The hardest part was folding and twisting them into the correct shape.

It was difficult to leave Bologna but we had one more stop. We went to the train station and boarded a high-speed train to **VENICE**, one of the world's most enchanting cities. Upon arrival, we boarded a private boat to explore the islands of the Venetian Lagoon. We started with **Torcello** where we had a gourmet lunch of local fish and lots of wine at a beautiful outdoor restaurant. After lunch and touring the island we went to **Burano**, known for its lacemaking and picturesque colored homes. I had no need for lace but I did buy a colorful scarf with a picture of Burano on it. What a beautiful island.



We arrived in Venice as the sun was setting over Piazza San Marco. Our boat took us to our last home of the tour -The Gritti Palace Hotel. Dinner was on the beautiful terrace of the hotel overlooking the Grand Canal. All we could manage was aperitivo as we took in the view of the busy canal and the church of Santa Maria Della across the water. Our last day in Venice was spent exploring the narrow alleys, seeing a glass-blowing demonstration and finding our way via vaporetto to the Jewish Ghetto. The Ghetto dates back to the 1500s when Jews were restricted to live in a small area of a couple blocks. The Ghetto greatly expanded. Of five synagogues, only two remain which can be visited on a guided tour.

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The Peggy Guggenheim Modern Art Collection was across the canal from our hotel. To get there, I paid 2 euros to ride in a Traghetto (special gondola) to cross the canal from our hotel. A bargain!! It was always an adventure walking through the passageways of Venice. You never knew what you might see.

That evening before our Farewell Dinner at the hotel, we walked a short distance to the Museo della Musica for a private concert of Vivaldi and Bach. Listening to this trio of talented musicians, surrounded by ancient stringed instruments, was magical.

The twenty people in our group bonded quite well. The wine flowed and the food was delicious. Some of the group were staying in Venice for a few more days, most were leaving the next day. We all said farewell and talked about future trips.

This is just a brief capsule of what we experienced on this amazing trip. We stayed in five major cities in Northern Italy over twelve days.



Saying goodbye to the Doge at Gritti Palace.

Another wonderful trip!

Keep Traveling!

Calendar

Sat Jan 4 Holiday Party, Jablons, 1:00 p.m.
Thur Jan 9 BYOB, Zoom, McKinley, 4:00 p.m.
Tues Feb 4 ExCom meeting, ZOOM, 6:30 p.m.



Ski Trips

PVS Snowmass Trip – January 8th – 15th, 2025

There are VERY few rooms available. If you are interested, please contact us ASAP and send payment in full - [703-625-2715](tel:703-625-2715) or kathylakehomes@yahoo.com

ExCom Officers, Board
Members, and Chairpersons

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Vice Pres. – <i>Bob Jablon</i>	Events – <i>Marianne Soponis</i>
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<i>Kathy Lake</i>	
<i>Don Vierimaa</i>	

Useful Ski “Links”

[Potomac Valley Skiers](#)
[BRSC Sanctioned Trips](#)
[DC Ski Online News](#)

Reminder: It is club policy that contact information in the club's roster not be used for promoting personal business, for advertising, or for personal financial gain without the advance permission of the individual member to be contacted. Membership contact information shall not be distributed outside PVS.