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Local News

A ski-riffic time

Club prepares to hit slopes this winter

David Hoffman
Current Editor

12/08/2004

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Almost 100 members of the Hoboken Ski Club sat in the back room of Willie McBride's bar on Tuesday, Nov. 30, holding their weekly meeting. Club officials informed them of the different trips, programs, and activities on tap for the new year.



"Is the dog coming?" whispered one member to another.

"Yeah," was the answer.

"No way; that's excellent!" said someone else. The two members proceed to discuss the logistics of bringing a dog on the bus.

The Hoboken Ski club organizes around 20 trips a year, giving members a discount and a group to travel with. The trip leaders gave 30-second presentations about the upcoming trips at the recent meeting.

A social group

The Hoboken Ski Club is about more than just skiing. It's a Hoboken-based social club that is active year round. Their calendar, available at www.hobokenskiclub.com, is filled with activities like hiking, whitewater rafting, volleyball, camping, golf, swing dancing, mountain biking, social events like happy hours, wine tastings, baseball games, and comedy shows, as well as volunteer and charity events.

The local events serve as a way to make the trips more social. People have a chance to make friends before they head for the slopes.

Not to be misleading - the room at Willie McBride's is filled with skiers, but skiing is only one aspect of a person's life.

"We make a whole weekend of it," said Voucher Representative Adam Weissman. "We have a drinking night where we explore the town, do a bar crawl, and get a nice dinner."

On the trip, board members and trip leaders work together to make sure everyone has fun, although the group usually forms itself.

"Some people make a party of [the bus ride]," Chris DeSantis said. "Some will sit up front by the bus driver and read a book. My first trip was an eight-hour bus ride to Sunday River in Maine. I didn't know anyone, but at the end you were part of the group."

After the trip leaders made their pitches, the meeting turned social. People mingled and drank as they signed up for trips.

"Cool, the picture made it in!" said a man, noticing a newspaper with an article on the

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Ski Club sitting on the pool table. "There I am!" he said, grabbing the paper and walking off.

All levels welcome

Member Eric Hoyt has been in the ski club for five years. He had only skied once before, as a child. His first trip was a week long to Whistler in British Columbia.

"Everyone is scared of going on a week-long as a beginner, but it's the best way to learn how to ski," said Hoyt. "I've seen people go from snowplow skiing to blue runs in two days. The best way to learn is to go out West on one of the week-longs."

Former Ski Club President John Risond said that the best way to learn to ski is by skiing with more advanced skiers.

A woman from Weehawken who has been skiing for 25 years came over, excited because she may have been moved off of the waitlist for a trip to Moritz, Switzerland. The trip initially had 42 spots, 40 of which were sold on the first day. The organizers added 22 more spots, and as of last Tuesday, 86 people are going.

Chris DeSantis has been a member since 1995. He works with three large brokerage houses to organize the trip. One is for the East Coast, one is for the West Coast, and one is for Europe. Killington, Stowe, and Sugarbush, all in Vermont, are standards each year.

The first trip of this season is to Panaroma in British Columbia Dec. 26 to Jan. 2.

"They're owned by a company that owns Copper Mountain, Vale, and Whistler," said DeSantis. "They're the largest ski company in the world. This is a brand new resort they're been renovating for five years." The trip costs \$1,275.

About 30 percent of the members are from Hoboken and 70 percent from out of town. Some networking and plenty of flirting goes on at meetings.

"It was predominantly a singles club, but we're getting couples now, because it's such a great value," said DeSantis. "There are a ton of people who've gotten married. I've been to probably two dozen weddings in the past five years."

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