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Hoboken Ski Club will go anywhere in the world to have some fun

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BY RICH FISHER
For the Star-Ledger

The Hoboken Ski Club is celebrating its 15th year of existence this winter and has established itself as not only a quality ski club, but almost a quality social club with skiing/snowboarding as its main interest.

"The key is, Hoboken is a vibrant area," said Rob Redanz, a member since 1999 and this year's president. "We have a lot of active, outgoing, friendly members. On one of my early trips, I didn't know one person and I came home with a load of friends.

"We go to Yankees games, we do a lot of hiking, mountain biking, road biking, camping trips, horseback riding, sailing, whitewater rafting. We've got to keep in shape for the ski season," he added with a laugh.

Afterall, first and foremost, it is a ski club. One look at this year's itinerary will bear that out.

The club has four week-long trips planned to the Canadian Rockies, St. Moritz, Switzerland, Jackson Hole, Wyo., and Mont Tremblant, Quebec. There are six weekend trips planned for Killington, Sugarloaf, Jay Peak, Okemo, Stowe and Sugarbush. Prices range from \$345 for a weekend at Jay Peak to \$1,315 for a trip to St. Moritz. The discounted trips are mostly all-inclusive.

"I've tried to price the trips that we've gone on, on my own, and it's really a challenge to come close to what we get as a club," Redanz said.

HSC Winter Coordinator Chris DeSanctis, who has worked in the ski business for 18 years, is responsible for researching and choosing the destinations.

"I try to get feedback from people whose opinions I respect," DeSanctis said. "From there, I'll contact as many as five different vendors, get a price list of three different places, flights and hotels. From there, I try to narrow it down to the best one."

The club was originated by Hoboken resident Bob McDonald in 1990 and started with roughly 80 members. Over the years, it peaked at around 700 and has settled in at the 550 range. Approximately 40 percent are from Hoboken, but there are no residency requirements, nor are there any limitations on age or skills.

"We're not really selective," Redanz said. "We're pretty open, a very social,

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diverse group. It spans the whole gamut. We've actually had people sign up for trips and not even ski, they just go to see Europe."

The age of the group members range from 24 to 40 (but is not limited to that), and the general demographic is between 29 and 33. As the average age of the club rises, so does the quality of trips.

A skier of lesser ability is welcome and the club also arranges for lessons on each trip for anyone who desires them.

The trips are based on a first-come, first-serve basis and are limited to the capacity of the transportation. This year's week-longs are sold out, according to Redanz, although there is a waiting list. All weekend trips are still available.

Anyone interested in joining the Hoboken Ski Club can check out the Web site at www.hobokenskiclub.com. Interested parties are also invited to attend one of the weekly meetings at Willie McBride's Pub at 616 Grand Street in Hoboken. Meetings are held 8:30 p.m. each Tuesday night.

There is a \$30 annual fee, which includes group discounts at Willie McBride's, newsletters and, of course, eligibility for the trips. The fee also helps subsidize some of the club's charitable events.

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