

## **HISTORY: 50s & 60s, OUR CLUB EVOLVES**

This article about our Club's history is presented as we celebrate its 75<sup>th</sup> year.

In 1951, Gorman Young and Hal Leich (past presidents now) went exploring, and discovered a glacier containing a reliable snow patch. There in Canaan Valley, West Virginia, Club volunteers constructed and maintained a volunteer-run ski area powered by a motorized rope tow. The volunteers became the Ski Patrol, and introduced ski instruction and Winter Carnival. The era is called "Cabin Mountain"; the slope called "The Drift". This modest ski area was the first eastern ski area south of the Mason-Dixon line. This era was marked by races, sloppy slaloms, gluwain, and close friendships.

In 1962, the Club abandoned Cabin Mountain as interest turned to closer and more developed ski areas. But West Virginia had 'seen the light' of skiing as a recreational activity, and decided to build the Canaan Valley ski area near Cabin Mountain. In entering a new era, the Club was broadening its prospective. Very soon after abandoning Cabin Mountain, the Club organized its first Club-run ski trip to Europe, traveling aboard a chartered plane.

Soon, the Club adopted a policy of encouraging membership growth in order to increase income and fill more trips. The increased membership required larger meeting facilities, more advanced planning, and more committees. The Club increased its involvement with various aspects of skiing including racing, ski patrol support, and external ski organizations; and it began showing ski movies at most membership meetings. The Club published its first sizable ski schedule in 1965, with seven of its own eastern trips and access to other trips. The Club ran its own first western ski trip to Aspen and Vail in 1967.

Skiing had always been the dominant focus. But now other activities were embraced, many with a social aim. There were conditioning hikes in the fall; tennis became very popular; and there were also volleyball, biking, and horseback riding. Our ski fashion show tradition started in 1962.

As the suburbs grew, our Club members followed the trend, and in 1968, the Club moved its headquarters from the District to Northern Virginia.

Through the 50s and 60s, Club membership increased from about 300 to over 2500. The Club had evolved from a moderate size group of dedicated skiers to a larger more diverse group with a variety of interests. The Club retained its skiing emphasis, but also became a club for all seasons.

*The above was largely derived from the SCWDC 50th Anniversary History Book*