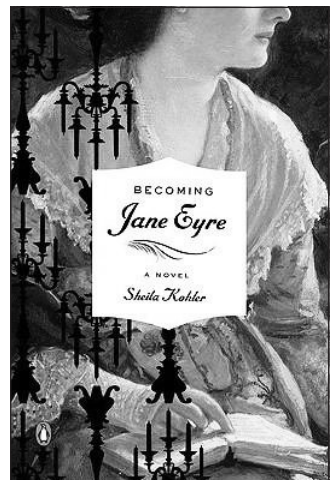


A professor is one who can speak on any subject — for precisely 50 minutes.

— Norbert Wiener

PACKET PICKS



Thursday, Jan. 14

‘Becoming Jane Eyre’

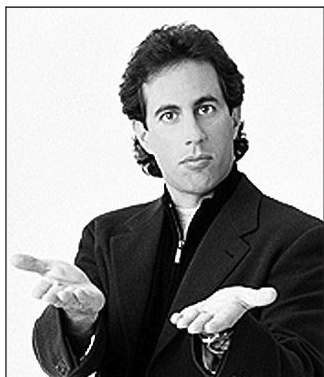
Labyrinth Books presents Sheila Kohler in a reading and discussion of her new novel, “Becoming Jane Eyre,” at 5:30 p.m. at 122 Nassau St., Princeton. Admission is free.

“The year is 1846. In a cold parsonage on the gloomy Yorkshire moors, a family seems cursed with disaster. A mother and two children dead. A father sick, without fortune, and hardened by the loss of his two most beloved family members. A son destroyed by alcohol and opiates. And three strong, intelligent young women, reduced to poverty and spinsterhood, with nothing to save them from their fate. Nothing, that is, except their remarkable literary talent.

“So unfolds the story of the Bronte sisters. At its center are Charlotte and the writing of ‘Jane Eyre.’ Delicately unraveling the connections between one of fiction’s most indelible heroines and the remarkable woman who created her, Sheila Kohler’s novel will appeal to fans of historical fiction and, of course, the millions of readers who adore ‘Jane Eyre.’ ”

Ms. Kohler teaches in the Creative Writing Program at Princeton University. “Becoming Jane Eyre” is her 10th book. She has twice won the O’Henry Prize.

‘No soup for you!’



Jerry Seinfeld

Remember when Jerry Seinfeld couldn’t kiss a girl because she had dated Newman, and when George got fired because of a white cashmere sweater with a small red stain, and when the low talker convinced Jerry to wear the puffy shirt, and when the Soup Nazi told Elaine, “No soup for you!”?

Come to Mary Jacobs Library at 7 p.m. and put all this trivial information to work during a “Who Knows the Most about Seinfeld and Friends?” contest.

Participants will watch some outtakes, eat some Seinfeldian refreshments, and have a lot of fun.

The contest will begin at 7:15 sharp. Participants will have one hour to answer 100 questions. The winner will get a \$50 Amazon.com gift card. Second and third prizes will also be awarded.

Participants must pre-register for this adult program by calling 609-924-7073, ext. 4, or by writing to cwil-lis@scslsnj.org.

The Mary Jacobs Library is located at 64 Washington St. in Rocky Hill.

The library’s full calendar of events is available at www.somersets.lib.nj.us/.

— Michael Redmond

AROUND TOWN

The door’s open to active people open to adventure

By Michele Alperin
Special Writer

The name Princeton Ski Club is a bit of a misnomer for a club that, in addition to downhill and cross country skiing, sponsors summer sailing jaunts and barbecues, get-togethers at Charlie Brown’s in Kingston on the third Tuesday of each month — and parties, theater trips, and scavenger hunts thrown in for good measure.

The club started in 1957 as an outgrowth of the Town Club and initially was strictly for skiing — until members figured out that people who enjoy skiing in the winter might like doing other activities together in the summer, and so it grew, up to 800 members at its height and still with about 400 members today.

Something about the club’s ambience, structure, and schedule have woven a thriving community out of what might have been a bunch of ski jocks meeting at the slopes. With both sports-related activities and others to choose from, club members have options for creating personal connections.

The club’s newsletter reads like a cross between a slick brochure for adventure travel at exotic, dreamy venues and the more mundane listing of down-home and friendly trips with a local Sierra Club chapter. Over New Year’s, for example, a four-night trip to Iceland is on the calendar. Surprisingly, the weather there is moderated by the Gulf Stream, so in temperatures similar to those of New York City, participants can visit geysers, see the Northern Lights, and, if global warming is kind, they get to do a little skiing, mostly cross-country.

Other ski trips planned for the near future range from regional jaunts to others that require a significant bus ride or air travel but whose destinations are significant mountains. A January trip will combine cross country at Garnet Hill and downhill at Gore Mountain, both in the Adirondacks, a week-long February trip will head to Davos, Switzerland; a mid-February trip will take skiers to Monts Orford and Sutton in Quebec; a late February, early March trip will go to Park City, Utah, and, finally, in a mid-March, will be an end-of-season trip to Killington, Vt.

The club’s overwhelming strength, members suggest, is probably its warmth and geniality. Bill Sesini, who at 31 is one of the club’s younger members, has been involved for three seasons. He and his girlfriend have stayed with the club because of the friendships they have made. “Everyone is extremely nice at the club,” he says. “There are no little cliques; it is mel-low and welcomes you with open arms.”

Joan Klimpl of Hillsborough, a new member who is not a skier, was looking for area activities. She met a couple of club members at the Zim-



Princeton Ski Club

Enjoying a fine day on the slopes of Mont Tremblant in Quebec are Princeton Ski Club members Dmitri Rizer, Olga Zakharov and Bruce Blomgren.

SPOTLIGHT

Volunteer!

Giving voice and vision to others

By Pat Ellard
Special to The Packet

Victory Chase stepped into one of the 12 identical soundproof booths. It was hi-tech, climate-controlled and comfortable, with a large window into the room where we stood. It looked like a booth from a quiz show: Victory could see out, and people could see her. But we could not hear each other without using headphones.

Victory consulted a chart to find the page and paragraph where she should begin reading. Her director was doing the same thing. She would read, and the director would follow along to make sure that nothing was skipped, nothing added. At Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic in Plainsboro, Victory is a valued volunteer. Her dad was in the service when she was young, and because they lived abroad, Victory can read German and Italian easily. That comes in handy for recording some books.

Michelle Ioselevich, production director, said that the books have to be carefully recorded and monitored. “Each reader has a director (they used to be called monitors) following the text in a second book. The recording has to be exact; the student must be able to rely on it. The readers are not allowed to interpret the material or convey their opinion of what they are reading. That job is up to the student who needs the book.”

“Isn’t that hard when you get caught up in the text?” I asked. “It can be,” Michelle said.

“How do you pick what to record?” I asked, intrigued by the possibilities.

“We don’t pick it ourselves,” Michelle said. “We get requests from individuals, schools, colleges, or universities. If we have already recorded the book, we make a copy from the master we have on file. National Headquarters keeps the library of master recordings. It is huge — many books are already done. We don’t have to record novels anymore — they are all done except for the latest releases. Schools are not likely to request those.”

“Wow,” I said, “how long have you been doing this? Not you personally, I mean Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic.”

“Well,” Michelle said, “I’m a relative newcomer, but RFB&D, that’s short for Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic, began in 1949 as a way to enable wounded veterans to take advantage of the GI Bill of Rights. RFB&D actually began in New York City, but it soon moved to the Princeton area. It has grown like an idea whose time had



Staff photo by Mark Czajkowski

Victory Chase at the Plainsboro studios of Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic: ‘For me, reading is like breathing, and I want to help others enjoy books as much as I do. It’s so much fun that you forget you’re actually performing a service.’

come: We now have 20 recording studios in 18 states, and we send material to 237,298 members.”

The next question was a natural. “How much does it cost to get a recording?”

“Individuals don’t have to pay for them,” Michelle said. “But they are available only for people with handicaps. Schools, colleges and universities do pay. Most of our funding comes through donations. Many publishers donate two copies of their books for recording. Of course, we have to be very careful about copyrights. That’s why the student needs special equipment to play

our recordings.”

“What kinds of books do you record?” I asked, noticing that Victory was recording a book on advertising. “Usually textbooks,” Michelle answered. “We have 400 volunteers who read for us, but we are always happy to get more, particularly to read science and math. We even have some doctors and nurses who read medical books.”

I looked at the director’s copy of the book that Victory was reading. It had been written in. Michelle laughed. “The book markers do that. They write in the books in pencil to let readers know what to read and the order to read it in. They read the text first, then charts or descriptions under pictures. Notice where it says RTT? That means Return To Text.”

Victory was updating the chart for her book. “She is letting the next reader know where she stopped,” Michelle said. As she stepped out of the booth, Victory told me that she won’t be the only reader for this book. She is part of a team, a team that includes the book markers, the readers themselves, the directors, and the checkers. Checkers are the volunteers who give the recording its final check before it goes into the RFB&D library of recorded books.

To get recordings done in a timely fashion, several readers are often assigned to one book. There might be a single reader on a book if it is very short, but even books in foreign languages have multiple readers. “We record in French, German, Spanish, and Russian, as well as English,” Michelle said.

I could feel my eyes getting wider and wider at the scope of the work, the number of volunteers, recording sites, and people requesting the books.

Victory, who lives near Griggstown, has been volunteering at RFB&D for over 20 years. When I asked her why she volunteers there, she said, “For me, reading is like breathing, and I want to help others enjoy books as much as I do. It’s so much fun that you forget you’re actually performing a service.”

Michelle said, “The most astonishing thing is that these volunteers read week after week without ever seeing the people they are helping. But look at their faces.”

The volunteers looked serious but serene, sequestered from the noise of the outside world, and happy. Definitely happy.

For more information on RFB&D, including volunteer opportunities and donation information, visit www.rfbd.org or call 609-750-1830.



Princeton Ski Club

It isn’t all about the slopes: During a sail on the Chesapeake Bay, Princeton Ski Club members Uri Goldinger, Maxwell Taylor and Lou Walshak, deal with ‘a minor problem’ aboard Our Dreams Awake.

merli Art Museum in New Brunswick who told her to try it out, and she did. “Everybody is very outgoing,” she says. “There is a lot of camaraderie; and when they do events — camping, hiking, sailing — there is always an esprit de corps; everyone is there to help each other.”

The same kind of inclusiveness that is apparent in interactions among members also extends to the club’s acceptance of all levels of skiing ability. As Hans Weinrich, the current president, writes in the newsletter, “All of our trips have one thing in common (on top of being high quality and expert led) and that is that they offer terrain suitable for beginners, intermediates and experts.”

The club’s spirited love of life comes through most in the stories its members tell about experiences with the club. Some recurring stories have become club myths — for example, the bus problems that always happen on the President’s Day weekend trip.

Last year, says Mr. Sesini, the bus’s brakes froze. The season before that the bus broke down on a highway, which meant that luggage needed to be unloaded and loaded back onto the replacement bus that took them back to the hotel, where they unloaded again. When a new bus arrived, they had to heave the luggage and equipment on to that one, but upon arrival at the Canadian border, one participant realized she had left her passport in her suitcase, which of course meant unloading and reloading. Many club stories turn on romance. David Corbishley, who has been a club president and usually runs the New Year’s Eve trip, talks about how a club member proposed to his wife in front of a statue on the grounds of the Parliament building in Quebec City. Corbishley does not approve of the pedestrian choice for this spur-of-the-moment request. “Quebec is an extremely romantic place,” he says. “I would have picked a little better venue (than the Parliament building).”

Marty Bloomenthal tells the story of how he and his wife, Anne, got to be a couple. The two of them had been roommates at the house the club rented from a member’s family in Ludlow, Vt., a half-hour drive from Killington. “It had a bunch of bedrooms with as many beds as could be squeezed into each room as possible,” recalls Bloomenthal. “We would have low-end trips and pack as many people into the bedrooms as we could, and everybody shared with food prep and shopping.”

That was not when they actually “noticed” each other for the first time, but rather the following summer on a sailing outing, or as Bloomenthal calls it using club lingo, “what we do on melted snow, which is sailing.”

It was a day sail on Barnegat Bay, and Anne was the qualified skipper of the small sailboat. Marty jokes that despite the fact that he and Anne had been roommates in Vermont, all he had seen of Anne there was her face, whereas on the sail she happened to be wearing a bikini. He offered her a ride home, convincing her that she was on his way, which she wasn’t. He ends the story with a line used by many for whom the club has spawned happy marriages: “The rest is history.”

The club is continuing to log in new stories of fun and friendship, and the only regret of members, young and old, is that the club is not attracting more young members. For anyone interested in getting off their couches and signing on for some strenuous physical activity and good fellowship, club members suggest checking out the club’s new Web site at www.princeton-ski.org. Bell Mountain, the former ski slope in Mercer County that the club affectionately referred to as “our Bell bump,” may have closed due to global warming, but the Princeton Ski Club plans to keep Princetonians on the ski slopes way into the planet’s future.