



Henry Phipps Returns to New London

March 27, 2025

Sherry Williams, AIL Member

It's reminiscent of Jackie Gleason's "Poor Soul" with the directorial spirit of "Hey kids, let's put on a show!" and it pokes fun at the 1970s New Hampshire ski scene. It's *Henry Phipps Goes Skiing*, a mostly silent comedy film written, produced, and directed by Bruce Cronin, in Claremont and Newport. The film was featured at AIL's March 27 Community Spotlight event in Lethbridge Lodge. Bruce hosted the event.

The film, released in 1977, features New London's multi-talented "Babe" Sargent as the hapless Henry Phipps, who wins a free weekend at a ski resort. Henry's experiences are both funny and poignant. An exuberant cast of local extras shares his misadventures and unexpected triumph. Two of those cast members sat in the front row to watch the film.

Glimpses of once-familiar faces and scenes in Newport, Claremont, and local ski areas stirred memories for many in the sold-out audience. AIL Program Manager Nina Tasi supported the nostalgic mood with movie-house snacks – popcorn and York Mints.

Following the screening, Bruce responded to audience questions and shared stories about the fun, miracles, challenges, and satisfaction associated with working with Babe and the cast.

Henry Phipps Goes Skiing was made possible by a grant from the American Film Institute in association with The National Endowment for the Arts. This was the second of Bruce's and Babe's two film collaborations. Their first, *The Wild Goose*, received twelve film festival awards.

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