

## SCHWEITZER 2019 TRIP REPORT by LINDA ERDMAN, Asst. Trip Coordinator

The fun started with a pre-trip pizza party on January 3rd at the original Fuzzy's, George and Barbara Bush's favorite pizza place. Little did we know at that time that pizza would be an ongoing theme for this trip.



Derek Shoobridge was at Hobby at 5:15 A.M. printing out boarding passes with the help of ATC Linda Erdman and LaDaune Ashley (Derek's better half). For being so early in the morning, the group was in high spirits and ready to get started on the last club trip of the season.

Joining us on the flight were Debbie Abadie, Bill Bomberger and Sharon Simandl, Craig Campbell, Andy and Leslie Cashio, Tom Grauer, Leslie Hajdo, Jim Hodges and Marina Wang, Melinda Hughes, Stan and Linda Kuper, Kasia Rezmer, Beverly and Charlie Roberts, Steve Slade, Dave Trevitz, Beverly Vosko, and Joan Waddill.

Some of the group, including Stan, had TSA PreCheck and



were whisked through the line while the rest of us, including his wife Linda, waited patiently to get through security. Being a nice guy, Stan decided to get coffee and muffins and meet Linda at the gate. When Linda arrived at the gate, no Stan. Long story short, he was at the wrong gate (gate 45 instead of gate 4) because he read his boarding number as the gate number. He was assigned a jewelry fine.

Having finally located Stan, the group was ready to go. The flight to Phoenix was uneventful with a lot of time to kill once we got there. The gates were confusing and several members of our group almost got on the plane to Albuquerque instead of Spokane, including Stan (is there a theme here?).

We arrived in Spokane right on time and met up with Mike and Nora Montgomery, Paul and Sandra Stolnacke, Anne and Tom Thomas, and Susan Stanley. Our group now numbered 30.

On the way to Schweitzer, we made a "35 minute" stop at Walmart. Derek warned the group that anyone who wasn't back on the bus on time would be left and guess who didn't



make the deadline....Derek and LaDaune. We considered hiding the bus but decided that after such a long travel day, they might not be in the mood for a joke.

After 6 (yes, we counted) hairpin turns up the mountain, we made it to Selkirk Lodge in Schweitzer Village around 6:30 P.M., got checked in and headed to the welcome reception where we caught up with Fred and Ali Pethick, Keith Kirkman and Ross Baker. They all spent the previous week skiing Whitefish and drove over to join us. At the reception, our tired little brains went into information overload as we promptly forgot most of what we were told. Then it was off to bed with visions of snowflakes in our heads.



The lodge provided a hot breakfast every morning at Chimney Rock Grill and that became the place to meet to tell stories about the prior day and make plans for the current day. Although it was great not having to worry about breakfast, many in the group were really tired of plain scrambled eggs by the end of the week.

Monday was a beautiful day so most of the group hit the slopes when they opened. Some in the group took advantage of the free mountain tour. Unfortunately for Stan, Fred and Ali, LaDaune and myself, the tour took off early when it got too cold to wait. Luckily, one of the ski instructors, Mary Jo, took pity on us and gave us a private mountain tour.



Of course, Trail Boss Keith took off with the "Big Dogs" on the trip (Jim, Melinda, Beverly R, Charlie, Bill, Ross, Leslie H and Kasia) and we didn't see them again until lunch. Here they are posing with Andy and Leslie C and minus Beverly R and Charlie.

The mountain was everything that was promised; lots of powder and trees and non-existent lift lines most of the week. Temperatures and sunshine were perfect for keeping the snow dry and the views from the mountain were spectacular, especially those of Lake Pend Oreille.

Monday was a short ski day with the group heading into Sandpoint for a little shopping followed by a trip to Mick-



Duff's Beer Hall for a few drinks and then dinner and more drinks at Ivano's Ristorante. Marilyn Swanson met up with us at Ivano's and the group was almost complete.

Everyone had a good time, especially Charlie. Not sure how it all happened but he ended up having the time of his life when the offer came up to have his photo taken with the ladies on the trip.



Tuesday morning, almost everyone was feeling more refreshed with one big exception. Charlie was heard to say that he had been over-served on Monday night...imagine that!!







It was another beautiful day and most of the group headed for the slopes and regrouped at the Sky House for lunch and to enjoy the incredible view. After lunch, the lady “Big Dogs” left for a mogul lesson and Charlie said to Leslie C that the men would be skiing a lot harder in the afternoon since the girls would not be there to slow them down (open mouth, insert foot). Charlie bribed Leslie with the promise of a pitcher of beer so she would keep her mouth shut.

The smack talk continued with Leslie C. It is rumored that she told LaDaune “if you can’t keep up, see ya later” (Leslie and Andy do like to ski fast, at least in the early part of the week before their knees hurt). LaDaune, Sandra, Marilyn, Joan and a few other stragglers took up the challenge; not sure how successful they were.



As for the Big Dogs, Keith is reported to have recommended that Bill and Charlie take a remedial course in getting on chair lifts since they both had incidents where they fell while loading.

One thing the group quickly noticed about Schweitzer Village is that the dining and entertainment options are extremely limited but you would never know it by our group. I was so proud of the way they turned every get-together into something special and fun. I agree with Leslie H that the trip had a particularly sociable group of fellow skiers. Lunch and après ski had very high attendance and great camaraderie; the best I’ve ever seen on a club trip.

For example, Tuesday night’s après ski was at Powder

Hound Pizza. As more and more of the group showed up, happy hour hijacked the scheduled game night and quickly turned into dinner. Anne and Tom T were so excited to join the fun that Anne didn’t bother to change out of her bedroom slippers. Nora, ever the good sport, packed up the games and brought game night to us. The staff was extremely accommodating and stayed open until the last of our group left. Unfortunately for Steve, he was coming down with something at this point so this was the last we saw of him until time to go home.



Wednesday morning, the winds picked up and visibility was limited so some of the group decided to have a spa day while others decided to go into Sandpoint. Of course, the better skiers weren’t deterred but some of them made a short day of it. The visibility was so poor that Derek thought he had skied into new territory with two unmarked chair lifts only to realize he was back at the base and the lifts were the Basin Express and the Great Escape Quad.



Linda K, Linda E, Sharon, Susan and LaDaune went shopping in Sandpoint with Linda K deciding she needed to be Susan’s personal shopper which Susan was having no part of. The ladies discovered lots of beautiful dogs in Sandpoint with their favorite being Jackson (a standard poodle who likes to have his photo taken).

Ash Moza arrived at the lodge on Wednesday night and the group of 36 was complete. During his short time at Schweitzer, Ash managed to get stuck on the Snow Ghost lift (the oldest, slowest lift) for 30+ minutes. When he disembarked, the lifty offered him a coupon for a medium hot



chocolate. Ash won the “Swiss Miss” Award and was officially recognized on the trip back to Spokane.



Bad visibility continued on Thursday morning. Some of the group went up and then decided that the bunny hill had better visibility and those runs were worth a shot. Of course, the biggest problem was that the Musical Chairs lift is designed for kids and even the short adults had trouble getting on and off so that was embarrassing. Susan, LaDaune, Marina, Sandra, Marilyn, and Linda E were up for the challenge. There is even a terrain park on the bunny hill that LaDaune was rocking.

Après ski at Chimney Rock Grill that afternoon turned into dinner with almost all of the group showing up. Special thanks to waiter Michael for re-arranging the restaurant as the group kept growing larger. This was our only night with the entire group since Fred and Ali headed back to Whitefish on Friday.



Friday was a beautiful day so the group was back out at full force. Tom G was spotted skiing to Stella lift totally out of control, almost impaling himself and remarking “well, that was reckless of me” after the fact. No kidding!!!

Mike took LaDaune, Marilyn and Linda E on an adventure after they got separated from Sandra and Debbie. He led them to the Little Blue Ridge Run (the longest run on the mountain). At the top of the run, the group met Jorge who it turned out was from Houston. Jorge skis totally out of control...this was only the second time in his life that he had skied and he had never taken lessons. The group tried to stay out of his way but did stop to help him pick up his gear when he wiped out. Mike was very patient and waited for the girls and Jorge to catch up. Everyone eventually made it down and the girls admitted they were glad they did it but vowed that once was enough even.

Jorge joined the group at Outback and told them about how he came over from Cuba and now has his own business. He is a very sharp and interesting 26-year old with a bright future. The funniest story he told was how he struggled trying

to learn how to say Whataburger which still comes out Whatabooger. We laughed till we hurt.

On the other side of the mountain, Dave, Beverly V and Craig were skiing down Springboard looking for an easy way onto Phineas Forest trail when they spotted a promising opening. Craig said “I think it opens up past those sticks behind that wall of evergreens” so Dave took off but once he got below the evergreens yelled back up “You don’t want to come down here!!” Over the next 10 minutes or so, a small pruning saw would have come in handy.



While skiing alone, Paul had an unusual view up on the ridge. The cloud bottoms were about 6 feet up so he could see down the slope but his head was touching the bottom of the clouds...how cool it that?

Friday night was a surprise birthday party for Keith who would have been more surprised if his inner circle had not gone out of its way to NOT wish him Happy Birthday... very suspicious. Kasia headed up the group assigned to keep Keith distracted until time for the party. We had pizza, cupcakes, snacks, beer and wine. Keith got a big stack of birthday cards, a couple of pathetic renditions of “Happy Birthday”, two candy bars and a cupcake with a candle. In honor of Keith’s birthday, he had his photo taken with the ladies but somehow Dave made it into the photo.





Jim made the mistake of telling Marina and Susan that Friday was his last real ski day since he would be skiing with them on Saturday. The girls immediately protested and Leslie C tried to help Jim out by saying he actually meant it was his last “tree day” but that didn’t fly. Jim was assigned a jewelry fine and it was rumored that he was required to ski down the bunny hill and use the Musical Chairs lift as a penalty.



Saturday was the last ski day and it was beautiful. Most of the group skied or snowboarded while LaDaune, Linda K, Sharon and Linda E went on the hosted snowshoe tour followed by tubing. Linda K thought the tubing was the best fun of the week even though she got off the tube incorrectly and had to chase her tube back down the hill twice. She ended up with the

“Most Snow on My Outfit” award.

Leslie H, Keith, Kasia, Bill, Ross, Melinda, Beverly R, Jim and Charlie concluded the Big Dog Traditional Skiing by en-masse skiing. This was so impressive to a local that she asked if they also went to the bathroom together.



The final get-together was Saturday afternoon with leftovers from the birthday party, including pizza (again). When Beverly R showed up with her “Attention Shoppers, 30% off apparel at the Alpine Shop next door and the store closes in 30 minutes” announcement, Kasia, Susan, Melinda and Marina quickly followed her back to the shop. Beverly acted as their personal shopper and then asked for a sales commission since there were 5 shirts sold but the sales lady just smiled and said NO. The ladies rocked their new tops on the trip home.

Sunday morning was “Spring Forward” so we had one less hour to get ready. Being overachievers, almost everyone was on the bus early and ready to go. A quick headcount and we discovered that Bill and Sharon were not on board. A call to Bill revealed that Sharon had one more e-mail to send before they were ready to go...so much for being on vacation.

We had a pleasant ride to Spokane where we said goodbye to everyone that we picked up there. Then it was off to Denver and then on to Houston after a 3+ hour layover. We finally

made it to Houston around 11:30 P.M. Sunday night.

There were a lot of good memories made and new friendships formed on this trip. I agree with Debbie that it was great skiing with different people and getting tips from some of the better skiers. We were very lucky that there were no major injuries, only a few bumps and bruises from falls (which made the spa very popular).

I don’t think anyone on the trip will be eating pizza for a while (or scrambled eggs). Both Craig and Tom T commented on how they came, they skied and they ate too much pizza....ditto for most of us.

Special thanks to Keith for bringing the leftover beer and wine back to Houston, to Sharon for acting as the trip’s photographer and to Nora for always being the first to volunteer to help with anything we needed.

The last trip event was the post-trip party on April 6th. Since several people were on both the Vail and Schweitzer trips, the party was a joint Vail/Schweitzer event co-hosted by Kasia (TC Vail) and Derek at Linda and Bob Erdman’s house on Chocolate Bayou. Joining us from the Vail trip were Barry Casper, Mary Heafner (with guest Dennis), George and Darlene Hirasaki and David Stotz (with wife Diane) as well as Keith, Ash and Joan who were on both trips. LaDaune, Bill and Sharon, Andy and Leslie C, Fred and Ali, Paul and Sandra, Tom G, Leslie H, Marilyn (with husband Larry) and Beverly V (with guest Jim) rounded out the group.

The threat of heavy rain kept several people away but it turned out to be a beautiful afternoon so they ended up missing a great finale to their respective trips. Catering was done by a local food truck and everyone was encouraged to try multiple dishes, all of which were very tasty.

The group spent their time visiting, relaxing and taking boat and golf cart rides. At the end of the day, several of those commenting about the long drive to Chocolate Bayou had such a good time that they were inviting themselves back down to the bayou for future events. All in all, it was a good day and a good way to end both trips.

