



A small but very enthusiastic group of seasoned skiers jumped on a plane in Houston to embark on Space City Ski Club's "most unique" trip of the year. Dubbed the "Texas Invasion" by our reps, we were pioneers from Texas trekking east (and north) to a resort that Skiing Magazine had dubbed one of the Top Ten Ski Resorts in the country. Although weather caused delays in Chicago and a late night arrival in Sugarbush, all were in good spirits and took the obstacles in stride. And true to his word, Jim Halavonich met us at the airport and led us to Sugarbush. We saw that layovers don't slow down **Angie-Doodle Westergren, Sister Sarah Granbery, Bubba Bobby Viktorin, or Bubba Mark Chambers....**they just found the nearest waterin'hole and settled there to wait off the hours! Come to think of it, not much slowed them down all week!

Everyone was ready to hit the slopes the first morning. Our reps, Shawn Sullivan and Jim greeted us on the mountain and took us on a super mountain tour. This place was good for the ego...much skied black runs instead of blue. Most of us skied all day just checking out what the group of mountains had to offer. It was a promise of things to come. We never had to stand in line for a lift; even on the last Saturday when local traffic is usually so heavy, Roger and Bobby went out and endured no long lines. And it was also proof that terrible icy conditions are a misconception. We did hit a few patches of ice on places that were getting a little thin, but hey, who *doesn't* have a little ice when it's time for new snow? Overall, the conditions were very good everywhere we skied.

That night Jim and The Bridges hosted our "first night" party in the lodge's fireside lounge. It was a pizza party with all the extras (including tequila shots) and a small group, who I won't

name again, closed the place down! I understand the instigator this time was **Joe Walker**. Jim showed up at Karla's condo early the next morning in total amazement at the tequila that went down! He just *thought* he was a partier!

Day 2 was Monday and our own "Tour Guide Dave" (**Dave George**), who had graciously rented a 15 passenger van, chauffeured **Roger Holzman, Joe W., Mark, Sarah, Janell Peyton, and Yvonne Guy** to Montreal for a city tour. From what we heard, it sounded like a great day. Their outing included dinner so that night another group walked to The Warren House right around the corner and enjoyed a wonderful meal. It was a cool walk over and even colder walk back! By the time **Bob and Karla Darden, Cindy Jones, Bill Dahl, Donna Bergland, Mitch Gaspard, Priss Davis, and Kathy McManus** got back to the condos, they were experiencing unusual nearly-zero degree temperatures. Only Mitch was adequately dressed in his long fur coat (which he was lucky to keep!).

Day 3 was another touring day for those who wanted a break from skiing. Thanks to the efforts of Dave (all week), a group of thrill seekers when to Stowe to go snowmobiling in the morning. With Dave were Joe W., Bobby, Mitch, Priss, Janell, Bill, and Cindy. There they took a 2-hour tour and had a great time. Well, until a bold tree dared to jump out in front of Mitch's snowmobile!

That afternoon Jim chauffeured the Dardens, Yvonne, Donna, and Janell to meet Dave and switch out people so a bunch of us could go on a covered bridges tour. We ate at a great Italian restaurant and then took off through the countryside to take as many pictures as we could find bridges. The weather was clear and we hit about 8-9 bridges (bad choice of words!). We got back late and found that another group had already gone across the road to celebrate Fat Tuesday at Emilio's, a local Mexican restaurant. I was surprised that the fun ended rather early that night...maybe it was because we had to walk back in the snow! Could it be that we were slowing down?

Day 4 was a ski day, but we traveled first. With Tour Guide Dave hauling people and equipment, Shawn and his wife, Candace, took 14 of us up to Killington to ski for the day. He arranged for a 2-hour mountain tour. What a great place! And they were making snow the whole time we were there. This time **Joe Kulpinsky** joined us. For him it was a return to an old "stomping ground" as he had skied there many years before. Kathy was familiar with Killington as well. They are both excellent skiers...they must teach them well in Vermont! And by the way,

Sugarbush (continued)



although Priss was a first-time skier, you never would have known it. I understand she took to skiing on one ski *real* fast! And although Donna *said* she wanted to ski with us, she spent considerable time trying to lose us! Was it because our handsome young guide Scott went back to look for her? Upon returning to Sugarbush, some of us ate dinner at The Common Man, a restaurant housed in a huge old barn. Both of the Joes, Donna, Roger, Bob, Karla, Mitch, Priss, Kathy, and Yvonne enjoyed an elegant dinner in this romantic restaurant warmed by a huge fireplace at one end of the barn.

The next day was Thursday and everyone opted to stay at home and ski instead of prowling the countryside. (Can you believe it...they gave up a trip to Ben & Jerry's?) Well, everyone but the Dardens, that is. It seems that after dinner at The Common Man, Joe W. came calling at the TC's condo with a rather large bottle of tequila. Bouncing Bob, not being much of a drinker tried to keep up with Joe and our condo mate, Roger (where *does* he put all that tequila?). Unfortunately, Bob's drinking skills are not quite up to par, so he slept away most of the next day. Karla was under the weather but NOT under the spell of tequila! By the way, Roger was out of the condo by 9:00 am the next morning. He's either *real* tough or *real* crazy! By the way, what lift goes to Mt. Ellen?

If anyone saw him fall that week, would they please step up to the plate and admit it?

Thursday night Roger, Joe K., Donna, Kathy, Mitch, Priss, Yvonne, and Dave ventured out to the Sugarbush Inn for dinner. They said it was the best meal of the week. Bar-b-que ribs to die for! The rest of us picked a bad night to stay in! After dinner, Joe W. invited everyone to his condo for homemade apple pie

and coffee (so he said...I bet it was tequila!). I think we all agree that the bakery in Waitsfield does a fine job! Meanwhile, at the TC's condo, our last 2 participants are finally arriving. **Dan Conery** and **Slava Karnauk** replaced the Dan Conery Sr's who had to cancel unexpectedly at the last minute. They skied Friday at Sugarbush, partied with us on Friday night, and moved on to Jay Peak on the way back home.

On Friday, Jim hosted a trip to Mad River Glen for those skiers daring to ski on ungroomed slopes. Only Donna, Kathy, Mitch, Priss (the first time skier), Yvonne, and Dave were brave enough to go there and survive the elements. As it turned the rest of us missed a great day...they said the snow was the best yet. While they were melting down the snow, the rest of us were getting ready for the last night party. Joe W. has many talents! If you take a trip with him, ask him to prepare a pasta dish...he does a fine job! For desert we had a selection of Ben & Jerry's ice cream so as not to miss out completely. Jim and Shawn stopped by to help eat all the goodies.

The bus didn't pick us up until 3:00 p.m. on Saturday, so in the morning, Bill, Cindy, Bob, Karla, Kathy, Donna, and Mark put on their ridin' duds and went on a trailride at the Icelandic Horse Farm. We had a great time and our guides were pleased that we all did so well. Now the folks in Vermont *really* believe that if you are from Texas you have horses, cows, and oilwells in your backyard! After the ride, Jim again saved the day by picking us up and taking us back to the lodge...no short drive.

The trip back home was nicely uneventful and we arrived back here in the heat and humidity right on time. The trip home was entertaining as Sarah and Angie "adopted" an unsuspecting traveler, male of course, and taught him about Bloody Marys. I am sure he will never be the same! In fact, we are all forever changed...we have all now skied the wilderness of the northeast U.S. and are all back in Texas in one piece to tell about it.

I would recommend that everyone try to ski here at least once and see what Vermont has to offer. I think you will be pleasantly surprised.