



The Sitzmarke

February 2004



Member
Texas Ski
Council

SPACE CITY SKI CLUB

www.spacecity.org

Vol. 37 No. 2





**On the slopes and enjoying
the evening in Keystone,
Colorado**



EVENT REPORT - THANKSGIVING IN KEYSTONE

By Janet McKenzie & Christine Burke

There were thirty-six Space City Ski Club Members enjoying the 2003 Thanksgiving holiday on the slopes of Keystone, Breckenridge, Copper Mountain and Vail, Vail, Vail.

Twenty-four of us left Bush Intercontinental Airport on Tuesday evening. Winning the "early birds to the airport" prize were, **Shirley** and **Bob DeBell**. The prize is peace of mind that we aren't taking off without you. They came from Nacogdoches to Houston for some shopping before flying with us to Denver. Shirley is a shopper par excellence and continued to shop in Vail and Breckenridge.

Many other SCSC'ers joined us from many other places by air or purchased a land package.

Ziad Elaazami and **Frank Adams** practiced their skiing in Vail for the week prior to our trip. They then drove to Keystone on Tuesday night to join our group now ready to ski with the big dogs! Also joining us were **Marti** and **Nelson Turner**, who squeezed in an extra day of skiing. **Guri** and **David Pryce** drove from their beautiful new log home in South Fork, Colorado. They had been skiing great snow for three weeks at Wolf Creek, which is just a 30-minute drive from South Fork. **Evan Lowe** has a fab motor coach, which he drove to meet us in Denver, then trucked along with us to Keystone.

It was a family outing as our Texas Ski Council Race Director, **Jeff** and **Nancy Sarff** brought their son, **Peter**, and his wife, **Paige**, on our trip. After a few lessons, Paige was skiing like a pro on River Run trail. In addition to Peter and Paige being on their first SCSC ski trip, we welcomed other club newcomers on the trip: **Mary Jo Luquette**, **Mimi Tran**, **Jim Parise** and **Chau Nguyen**.

Bright and early Wednesday morning, everyone was eager to see who all had arrived to make plans with whom they would ski. Everyone was eagerly consuming their complimentary breakfast to give them the much-needed energy they were about to burn on the Keystone slopes. Lift tickets were passed out and before you knew it everyone was scurrying off

to get to the lift lines first. Our Trip Coordinator, **Janet McKenzie**, took a group to the rental shop to ensure everyone renting equipment was properly fitted.

We had skiers of many different styles and skill sets on this trip. We only had one snowboarder, Jim Parise. He took snowboard lessons his first day, and yes, he is still alive. Everyone else rented skis.

Bob Wray was looking good as he practiced his new edging technique. Chau Nguyen had taken six carpet lessons at Sun and Ski in Houston and once on the real slopes, you could tell those lessons paid off for her. Accompanied by **Larry Landers**, she confidently rode the chairlift to the top of the mountain although she initially found it a bit scary.

After the first day of skiing, we all gathered that evening for the TSC Welcome Party. There were many members from the other TSC clubs. We all enjoyed a wonderful time mixing and mingling with them while snacking on great hors d'oeuvres, and sharing ski stories from the day.

Some more adventurous folks opted to ski Vail and Breckenridge on Thursday. And everyone made it back to Keystone that evening for a delicious TSC Thanksgiving Dinner Buffet. What a wonderful Thanksgiving resting your bones by a fire, having a Thanksgiving feast with wonderful people and looking out the window at a winter wonderland. That wonderful food made resting that night easy, and that was good because tomorrow we have a big race day planned.

TSC Race day was exciting. Making it even more suspenseful, Space City was the last club to race. We had 16 racers. We were depending in **Dennis Newell** who was our fastest racer, with a time of 26.58 - good for a Nastar silver medal. Janet was the fastest woman with a time of 25.16, but going around the first gate on the wrong side disqualified her! Humbug! Technicalities! Since she was the first skier down the course, the remaining 15 racers were watching her technique and line and couldn't believe what they saw. Her comment on her

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THANKSGIVING IN KEYSTONE (CONTINUED)

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error was, "This is my first time as Trip Coordinator, and because of that I have too much on my mind to worry about right side, wrong side, red flag, blue flag. I found the race course, that should count for something."

Other silver medal winners were **Marti Turner, Keith Kirkman, George Hirasaki, Nelson Turner, Bob Wray and Jeff Sarff**. **Natalia Nouel, Darlene Hirasaki, Tim Malone, Evan Lowe, Jose Araujo, David Pryce and Roger Holzman** earned bronze medals. In the individual races, George received a Nastar gold for two great runs, Nelson received gold for his performance, and, in Senior Women, Janet also received a gold (there was no mistake going around the gates this time). With a combined run total that was three seconds less than her closest competitor from ALL clubs; Janet also received another gold medal, the Individual gold. The rest of our individual racers all received silver medals: Dennis (best time for the club once again), Keith, Evan, and Jose. In the club competition, Space City was awarded second place in our division with 790.4 points to Lone Star's 1,092. Thanks go to our Race Director, **Craig Campbell**.

Friday night and time to go out! Evan scavenged everyone's leftover pizza for his subsequent days' nutritious breakfasts. After that, we went to the Snake River Saloon for a hot toddy and to relax and listen to a live band.

On Saturday, TSC provided a bus going to Vail for the day. On a scale of 1 to 10, Janet was doing a 9½ as she dashed through the hotel lobby on her way to make sure that all the SCSC'ers were on the bus. Ziad was mad for moguls that day and pulled a back muscle when he fell. In case anyone was wondering, Ziad has done a study and confirms for us, "slamming the ground at a high rate of speed actually does hurt". Janet, Roger, Natalia, and Jose skied until the very last possible second. They then realized that if they did not ride the download lift, they were going to be left behind. Talk about die-hard skiers! The lift operator did NOT lift the footrest when they were loading. Janet swivel-hipped, and was able to load, while Roger, Natalia, and Jose were scooped

under the chairlift where their arms, legs and skis were entangled, and drug across the ground. Everyone survived unscathed, but I'll bet they will try and win the early bird prize next time. The prize is peace of mind that the bus isn't leaving without you. **Tor Lileng**, Alice and Dale skied Copper Mountain. After three days on the big and little slopes, Chau and Larry enjoyed a sleigh ride. I am proud to announce that Tor did not hitch any rides with any garbage trucks this trip.

We did have one little mishap. Mimi Tran was trying to miss some snowboarders and caught an edge and fell the wrong way. She broke her tibia (leg). She was taken by ambulance to Vail Valley Medical where she had surgery to implant a plate and seven pins. While we skied, Mimi practiced walking with crutches and doing physical therapy. She was released from the hospital on Saturday and was able to fly back to Houston as scheduled with the group. Thanks to Frank for dropping off and picking up Mary Jo at Vail Valley Medical where she was visiting her roommate, Mimi. We all wish Mimi a quick and complete recovery.

Something I'll be you haven't seen before is George's unique technique of loading into a quad chair - with the bar down the center and squeezing into the same side with Darlene and Marti. Now that takes skill! Alice skied on her new K-2 skis while Dale was on his fifth pair of demos by Saturday morning. What's up Dale? Doing a study? Thank you, Keith, for all of your expert assistance to our TC. Thanks also to Roger for all of his duty reminders. Janet never had to be plagued with her training manual for Roger seems to have memorized the whole thing as he has been a member since the Louisiana Purchase. Natalia, a fifth grade teacher, regularly forgot she was on vacation. She kept trying to join groups of little children helping them out on the slopes. Roger proudly completed another trip with zero falls, even though he always needed to try to keep up with his faster ski buddies.

We had a fantastic Keystone vacation and a memorable Thanksgiving holiday thankful for the snow, great fun and camaraderie with old and new friends.

