



It was a BIG TIME in BIG SKY in March when 52 Space City skiers headed for the mountains of Montana. The trip started without any hitches for most of us. The group was gathering bright and early at the airport, ready to go, and then our first accident occurred. **Jo**

and **Gary Evans** "accidentally" left their identification at home in Clear Lake. Discovering it on the way to the airport, the Evans succeeded in breaking the land speed record from Clear Lake to IAH. **Jim Kane** and **Eileen Kendrick** anxiously awaited their arrival so that their 20-year reunion would proceed as planned. Family members **Ann** and **August Koedding** joined **Bill** and **Eileen Kendrick** for a 'mini-reunion' at Big Sky. Unfortunately, a couple of others had to cancel due to medical reasons, but they stayed in our thoughts all week.

The flights to Montana were smooth and uneventful and the breakfast muffins were plentiful. After a quick bus ride, we arrived at the rustic Huntley Lodge. Founded by newscaster Chet Huntley, this resort had everything, including fireworks on the first night of our arrival. A prompt and efficient check-in was followed by a wine and cheese reception in **Hope** and **Pat's** condo.

Our group included first-time skiers as well as old hands but all had a terrific time. Of our beginner group, **Marnie Lamb**, who had only been on skis 4 days prior to hitting the slopes in Big Sky, was "skiing the blues" by the end of the week and mastering those moguls! Expert skiers **Janet McKenzie** and **Bruce Baird** took **Marnie** under their wings and taught her the "secrets" of a successful Space City Ski trip. Ski and have a good time! **Bruce** did not realize that "denial" is a river in Egypt. Yes, **Bruce**, you did fall and we have it on film. All that practice and friendship paid off! **Marnie** will be assisting with a trip for 2005. Congratulations **Marnie**!

Unfortunately, one of our first time skiers, **Harry 'Zack' Zachau** took a tumble the first day in ski school and broke his hip. Requiring 3 pins to repair, **Zach** joined the fun for the final night party and promises to "try it again" once mended. What a great attitude!

Of course, there are always the mischievous ones, and **Bill Bomberger** and **Bob Debell** take the award for being the "menaces" in Big Sky. The nice certificates they received from the ski patrol made them feel like kids again.

It was questionable if Yellowstone was going to be open during our visit, but adventurers **Sharon Rance**, **June Cullum** and **Concietta Ruggiero** succeeded in having an exciting visit to the park. Unfortunately, it wasn't the wildlife that made it so exciting. The snow bus they were traveling on went out of control and ran

"out of bounds," a bit like **Bill** and **Bob**. The bus was promptly stopped by a snow bank and the passengers only slightly bruised. Luckily, they made it back to Big Sky safe and sound!

**Susan Wicker** found shopping to be a success and secured a beautiful new pair of ski boots. Her old ones were graciously donated to charity which will enable others less fortunate to ski and have their own equipment. Thanks **Susan**!

Generosity abounds in the mountains. Big Sky has a wonderful reimbursement program for those who suffer an inconvenience due to mechanical failure of the "state of the art" equipment. A cup of hot chocolate was given to **Joe Daleo**, **Susan Blome**, **Cindy Moore** and **Hope** for just "hanging" around for 45 minutes! The stalled chair lift named Southern Comfort was no comfort and was avoided like the plague for the rest of the trip. A little "Southern Comfort" would have gone a long way with that hot chocolate.

TSC final showdown would have not been complete without the Welcome Party! Again the wine flowed freely and we welcomed a couple of new members to the fold with an appropriate celebration. **Carol Newman** joined us from San Antonio and quickly caught on to **Nora Cortez'** contagious laughter. We all laughed and listened to the "tall mountain" ski stories from the day.

Although it was a bit wet, the group enjoyed a fabulous sleigh ride and dinner at the Lone Mountain Ranch thanks to the recommendation of **Kathy Young**. It was like traveling back in time. The cabin was totally lit with candles and lanterns. Prime rib was slowly roasted and fresh bread was baked on the 100-year old wood burning stove that once prepared meals for the railroad workers. Wine, laughter and song flowed freely. Topping the night off, we all joined in singing "Deep in the Heart of Texas".

The food was great all over the mountain. We gathered bright and early every morning to discuss the upcoming day's events and significant points from the day before at the fantastic breakfast buffet. This was a great way to start the day.

Dinner plans turned out to be a bit harrowing for the first group to venture down the mountain in the motor coach, a.k.a. old, dilapidated school bus with a crazy driver. Taking an icy curve at 60 miles an hour was a bit much. We're an adventurous group but not just that much. Upon arrival at the restaurant, the group was quite shaken up. The Mi Luna restaurant made the trip worthwhile. The highly acclaimed restaurant Buck T-4 served us well. Just about everyone made a trip there during the week. **Bob Debell** enjoyed it so much that he decided to stay longer and almost missed the bus back to the lodge.

St Patrick's Day found us a bit spread out. A large group ventured a couple of hours away to Bridger Bowl for some glade skiing. Upon arrival to Bridger, we were greeted by a wonderful group of

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Koedding, Evans and Kane Reunion

ski ambassadors to show us the mountain. Of course, après-ski did not pass us by and we all enjoyed spring-like weather on the deck.

TSC Final Showdown would not be complete without the races and SCSC was well

represented on the winners' podium. Our most determined finisher was **Shannon Powers** who crossed the finish line on one ski, earning SCSC another all important point. Thanks **Shannon**. A wax lesson provided by **Bill Bomberger** (he swears) resulted in **Lori Gilliland** and **Janet McKenzie's** medals (oh, yea, it's been said that they may have beat him!) Our medal winners, each of course with a great story to tell, included **Sharon Simandl**, **Carol Newman** and the phenomenal skier **Karin Schidlowski**. Our men made a good showing as well with **Bob Wray**, **Bruce Lowther**, **Phillip Vice**, **Kurt Schidlowski**, **David Whitehead**, **Jim Hodges**, **Bill Bomberger**, **Joe Daleo**, **Dennis Stockton** and **Merrel Smith**.

Space City camaraderie was not short on the dance floor as fellow trip-goers **Lori Gilliland**, **Cindy Moore**, among several of the gentlemen like **Bruce Lowther** and **Joe Daleo** danced to a little bit of country and a little bit of rock n' roll.

Memorable sayings always come along with a group trip and this trip was no exception. Of course, the adage, "What happens on the mountain, stays on the mountain" creates an air of misbehaving, however, in **Bruce Baird's** case it's all a matter of falling and we have photos! It was reported he was in denial that the summersault-type fall occurred. Hardnosed skiers **Phillip Vice** and **David Whitehead** dared not to stop and view a map! Echoes of "put that map away Man, you're burning daylight" could be heard periodically the first couple of days.

We take care of our own, too. **Janet McKenzie** kindly went to advise them that fellow skier **Jeff Kovacs'** binding had broken and he was walking down the mountain. The innocent question from the lift operator of "what color is his jacket" resulted in endless laughter as the story was retold. "Hey, he's walking down the mountain!" His bright yellow jacket was a great thing for the newer skiers; he was easy to follow down the mountain. Daily, you'd see the more expert skiers unselfishly skiing with the less experienced. **Christine March** took a group on an adventure.

Departure day was equally exciting due to bit of overbooking that resulted in 4 newly found friends jetting off to Cincinnati on Delta. **Concietta**, **June**, **Marnie** and **Sharon Rance** were the adventurous ones who took advantage of the "overbooked" offer from Delta and jetted off to Ohio for the night. It paid off though, and they took the opportunity that Sunday morning to wait yet again for the next flight for more compensation. These girls are smart and were immediately planning another trip!

Old time friends **Walt Duemer** and **Tommy Thompson** were quite the pair seen here there and everywhere throughout the whole week. Quite the wild ones! A lot like **Philip Vice** and **David Whitehead**! Oh yea, **Philip**, beer does freeze.

All in all we can say we had "a Big Time in Big Sky!"



Cozy Dinner in the Cabin



Sleigh Ride to Dinner at Lone Mountain Ranch



Bruce Baird Fell for Us