

Vail 2008

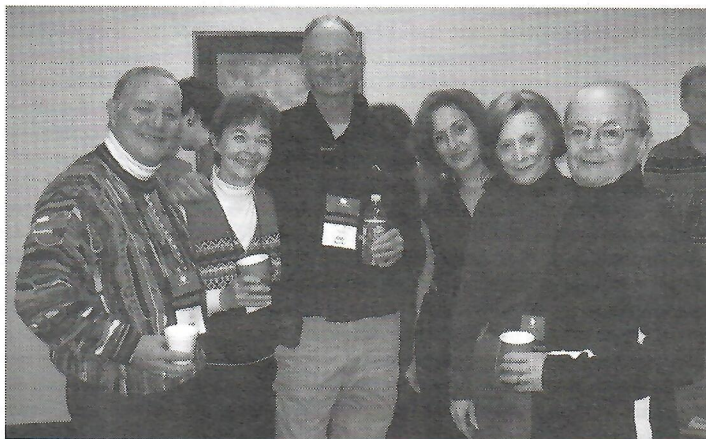
by Diane Stotz and George Lopez

Vail was certainly a wonderful destination to ski and party. The skiing was great. It snowed every day and everybody partied together. So what more can you want, besides having the condos on the same side of the highway near Lionshead! Know better next time.

The Vail long trip began their journey bright and early Saturday morning, January 5th. Most people showed up sleep deprived, but still ready to ski, party, shop and relax. We had several early-birds like **Laurie Haischer, Belinda Parker, Chuck Pena, and Jimmy Walker** who checked in early before **Diane Stotz, Elizabeth Barker and George Lopez** handed out their boarding passes and trip itineraries. The airline flight was uneventful (which is good in today's orange alert status), so we all arrived in Denver safe and sound. We caught up with several participants at the Denver airport: **Frank Adams**, who just recently moved with his wife to Loveland, Colorado, **Tom Norton** who flew in from New Jersey, and **Bob Rexford** who flew in on another airline.

After everyone got their luggage, 50 of us attempted to board the bus. Fortunately, the other 7 participants of the Vail long trip had their own transportation because the bus was packed with us and lots and lots of luggage. It seems like we skiers tend to bring a great deal of luggage. Are we clothes horses or what?! Someone said they spotted a kitchen sink in the luggage bay.

We stopped in Wheat Ridge (just outside Denver) to shop at King Soopers Supermarket and Apple Jacks. The mad scavenger hunt was on. We got lots of supplies (food, beer and wine) for the week, so we didn't need to go out for breakfast or happy hour very often. It was great to see the beautiful mountains as we traveled the I-70 corridor to Vail. Houstonians are not used to seeing mountains along the roadways, so this was a treat. Our participants



were relatively quiet, as we still felt sleepy from waking up so early. We arrived two hours later, eager to unpack, relax, rent our equipment, and get to know our condo-mates.

The SCSC Welcome Party / Happy Hour began at early sundown. Fortunately, the party was set up by **Camille LaRoe, Janet McKenzie and Maria Mendez** so everyone could enjoy their wine, beer and munchies. With beer for so many, they creatively improvised and used snow to cool the beer. **Diane, Elizabeth and George** arrived with the eagerly awaited the lift tickets and TSC materials. Everyone was able to get their essentials and began plan-



ning adventures for the days ahead. Our shadow participants, **Marie Henry** and **Louella Steller** showed up as well as Colorado transplants, **Martha** and **Helmut Zenger**. Yes, the party was complete.

On Sunday morning, it was a cloudy, powder day. Many participants decided to go on the Mountain Tour. It was heard that at least 5 people in a tour group, including **Roger Holzman** and **Carman Mikhail**, said they were enjoying the tour until their tour guide left them behind in China Bowl. Let the adventures begin. Day one on a black diamond ski area with only one blue run to ski down. What a way to begin your ski trip!!! Fortunately, they skied down safely after two hours on the mountain. Later, many skiers met for lunch at Eagle's Nest. After a rest, some participants continued skiing with their friends, and others re-grouped with a new bunch. That's the great advantage of planned lunch meeting spots! That night, TSC had their Welcome Party at Evergreen Lodge. We saw **Gary Hercules**, **Bob Rexford**, **Steve Slade** and **Mark Ehrlich** as well as **Gin Knebel** and her husband, **Mike Knebel**. It was also nice to visit with the other Texas ski clubs. Everyone talked about how great the snow was that day.

Unfortunately, that night **Jana Rosenbaum** received a message that her room-mate, **Kelly Reynolds** had broken her leg that afternoon. **Jana**, **Diane** and **David Stotz** along with **Bob Wray** visited Kelly at Vail Medical Center. After her successful surgery, she was also visited by **Alice Allbritton**, **Gary Barrett**, and **Maria Mendez**. During the week, **Chuck Pena**, **Gretchen Weis**, **Miriam Glover**, and especially **Jana Rosenbaum** and **Bob Wray** were on hand to provide help and company.

Kelly later wrote: "I only skied Vail a short period of time before I broke my left leg in 3 places: tibia twice and fibia once. Vail Valley Clinic did a great job and I now have a titanium rod and screws in it! I want to thank everyone for the great card that they got for me. I appreciate so much all of the help and comfort I received from the members. Many people came to visit me in the hospital and at the condo. It's so nice to be part of this great club! Special thanks to my condo-mates for putting up with me and my other friends that took me places. You all made it bearable!!"

Among the troops, it was rumored Kelly's ski accident was due to "French Fries". While having a nutritious lunch of a grilled chicken sandwich with French fries, **Gary Barrett** offered his fries to Kelly, who witnesses say, enthusiastically ate most of the fries. After Kelly broke her leg, Gary refrained from eating French fries for the rest of the trip. But Gary has his own story. When trying to recover his lift ticket cost for days he was in lessons, he was accused by mountain staff of reckless skiing or stealing the pass that appeared to be marked as a reckless skier. We all know neither could be true and eventually Vail realized so and gave Gary his refund. But Gary tells it so much more humorously!

On Monday, some such as **Steve Slade** chose the "Intro to Powder" Group Lessons, in Blue Sky Basin, while others such as **Alex Bunsch**, **Mike Murphy**, and **Davis Tucker** skied on their own. **Janet McKenzie** skied all week with new member and snowboarder, **Edmond McGee**. She learned the first day that there is a good reason (no poles) why snowboarders stop on inclines and not on flats. That night, over 20 "football fans" met in Camille, George, **Larry Edmondson** and **Gary Barrett's** condo to watch NCAA football finals. More LSU fans than Ohio State. Go figure.

On Tuesday, **Belinda Parker** was probably the only one to remember it was Elvis Presley's birthday. She served her condo-mates, **Laurie Haischer**, **Cindy McGowan** and **John McGowan**, peanut butter sandwiches for breakfast

to celebrate! (Elvis loved peanut butter sandwiches). Several Elvis sightings were later reported on the slopes. Not only does the king live, he skis! At least 15 skiers hiked their way up to Two Elks for lunch - among them **Mike Murphy**, **Camille LaRoe**, **George Lopez**, **Frank Yu** and **Dale Allbritton**. Later that afternoon, George



drove to Denver to meet up with the short trip participants. **Kay McKeough**, our unofficial AATC, handed out the boarding passes and trip itineraries to the participants in Houston and got them safely to Denver. Thanks Kay! After another scavenger hunt at the grocery and liquor store, the group finally arrived at Vail, at midnight. They looked happy, but exhausted.

On Wednesday, we had our SCSC Breakfast bright and early for both the long and short trips. Most of the short trip was there so they could get the mountain scoop from some long trip skiers. **Isabel & Thomas Chin**, **John Gillies**, **Marsha Lutz**, **Peggy Schillinger**, **Anne Nettles**, and **Pat Piech** were all seen enjoying their nutritious breakfast, as well as the much needed caffeine.

Ron and Roberta Rambin took advantage of the free powder lessons offered by Canadian Mountain Heliskiing on Wednesday. They reported "The Powder Clinic was a great idea!! The clinic was awesome." Roommate **Frank Yu** kept directing **David Launarey** to the powder area to ski even though David wanted to ski on non-powder areas. Eventually, they went their separate ways. **Frank Adams** and **Kay McKeough** skied the day together and had a great time. Many skiers met for lunch and after everyone regrouped, **Janet McKenzie**, **Al Smith**, **Roger Holzman** and **Diane Stotz** skied together. Diane remarked "I never heard so many one-liners on one ski run in my life".

Monica Rey and **Mike Turner** commented that "Vail was a great place. Even for beginners like us. The green trails were great and fun." Other enthusiastic "green" skiers included **Janice Harris**, **Gin Knebel** and **Gary Barrett**. One large group always skiing together was **Isabel & Tom Chin**, **Corrina & Edward Huang**, **Paul & Irene Lee**, **Tony Tarn** and **KC & Betsy Wang**.

Chuck Ratliff arranged an evening shuttle for 17 adventuresome souls to Midtown. We heard they ate quail and really enjoyed it. It was also the TSC Pub Crawl and some participants went to different bars to enjoy the local brew.

On Thursday, were the NASTAR Races. Ten skiers from the club entered the races on the black diamond, Golden Peak Race Course which was difficult to find. **Bob Wray**, our race director, reported that over 50 people had signed up, but only 10 participated. Must have been the big night the night before. Hey the race was a challenge; it was on a black run!!!! Of the ten, most managed to finish. That night was the SCSC Club Party at the Simba Run Conference Room. 85 of 88 participants showed up to wine and dine from food catered by Foods of Vail, and by the trip coordinators. It was a huge success



as everyone had lots of eat and drink, with lots of socializing. Diane was seen taking lots of pictures.

Later that night, Jana organized an impromptu BYOB, "Bring Your Own Banana" for Kelly. What a trooper, Kelly bounced back quickly and was faster on her crutches than most of us on our skis! Especially after receiving a plethora of bananas at the BYOB (bring your own banana). Bananas are healthier than French Fries aren't they? The party was held in room 1419 where **Dale Allbritton** and **Roger Holzman** entertained us with stories of the good ol' days of SCSC! You know -- those wild activities of the 60s and 70s!

Friday, most of the group tried to get as much slope time as possible. The wonderful trip was drawing to a close. Some chose to shop. Others took pictures. Still others like Elizabeth were seen making snow angels. That night SCSC partied at the Final TSC party at Dobson Arena. **Eileen Kondor** and **Peggy Schillinger** were seen taking lots of pictures, particularly later on, when many SCSC contingents put on their version of Dance Fever.

The TSC awards were given: SCSC came in 3rd place in Division 1. **Bob Wray** reported the race results: Morning Club Race -- **Marie Henry** received a silver Nastar medal and was our fastest female. **Barry Casper** was our fastest male and received a bronze medal. Other racers earning bronze medals were **Mike Murphy**, **Tom Norton**, **Larry Edmondson**, **George Lopez**, **Dale Allbritton**, **Helmut Zenger** and **Kurt Schidlowski**. Unfortunately, **Karin Schidlowski**, **Dave Stotz** and **Bob Wray** DQ'd. But again, it was on the black diamond course. We all know those guys are often medal winners. Afternoon Individual Race -- Marie and Mike both won third overall in their divisions and also received silver Nastar medals. Other individual racers were Dale, George and Tom, with bronze medals awarded to Dale and George for their performance.

On Saturday, the long trip flew home, while the short trippers stayed for one more day of skiing. Everyone made new friends or spent time with old friends and we all returned with precious memories of our ski trip. 'Til next year in Vail - in Lionshead.