

BIG SKY, MONTANA, By Ann Rogers, ATC

The TSC Final Showdown was held in Big Sky, Montana March 14 – 21st. There were 34 of us that made the long journey to Big Sky. The Burk family (John, Nancy and Joey) road tripped from Houston by driving! The rest of the group flew either on their own or with the group. The trip was worth the time as the snow was fabulous for spring skiing!

We stayed at the Huntley Lodge which is a beautiful hotel on the base of the slope. Alex Bunsch was notified on the bus ride to Big Sky that he and his roommate, Mark Ehrlich, had been upgraded to a loft suite! One of the great things about the Huntley is the breakfast buffet. The buffet provides an opportunity for people to meet up and find someone to ski with. Saturday night some made it to Chet's Bar in the Huntley to see the hysterical Crazy Austrian Brothers.

Sunday several people went to Yellowstone for a day of snowmobiling. The group included Cindy Moore, Jason LaRosa, the Burk family, Patricia and Isabelle Conner and Mark Ehrlich. They were 5 feet from a herd of 60 buffalo at one point. The Baker family (Ross, Diane, Matthew and Andrew) rode a snow coach through Yellowstone. They all had a great day and saw lots of wildlife and Old Faithful.

For those that did not go to Yellowstone, it was a day to hit the slopes and ski. Caryne and Kenny Prater skied with Kayleen Kill and John Rice. However, before they got started there was an issue with the Prater's ski boots. Although Caryne and Kenny's ski boots were 10 years old, they remarked these boots were the most comfortable they have ever had. Immediately thereafter they noticed pieces of black plastic on the floor and as Caryne took a step, another piece came off her boots. So it was off to the rental shop to get her some rental boots. As they walked to the rental shop, Kenny's boots left trails of black plastic along the way. By the time they arrived at the rental shop, Kenny was walking in his liners! So much for the comfortable ski boots!



The TSC hosted a Welcome Party on Sunday night. It was a great chance for people to reconnect with members from the other clubs while sampling great Montana heavy appetizers. They had drawings for some door prizes and Nancy Burk and

Jason La Rosa were the lucky winners from our club.

Monday was a perfect day for skiing; a beautiful, sunny day. Early birds Ed Freiter, Bob Debell, Bill Bomberger, and Sharon Simandl were at the lift when it opened. Other groups that skied together were Allan Smith and Bea Gomez and Nancy Burk, Mark Ehrlich and Vicki Gorske. Unfortunately, Mark Ehrlich was injured on Monday, his first day skiing. He broke a bone near his right ankle and had to be taken to Bozeman on Tuesday, then flew back to Houston on Wednesday. We are happy to report that Mark had a pin placed in his ankle and is on the mend!

Tuesday brought six inches of new snow to Big Sky and was a dream fulfilled for the powder ski lovers. Ed Freiter rented special skis for powder snow. Bob Debell was in heaven! However, powder skiing isn't for everyone. The Prater's and Kayleen and John Rice decided to go horseback riding. They said that horseback riding up and down the mountain was an incredible experience.

Our club dinner was Tuesday night at Whiskey Jack's. The food was great and had something for everyone. It was also St. Patrick's Day so everyone was wearing their green and celebrating. The band took the stage at 9:30 and then the party really started.

New to Big Sky this year was the Zip Line. It was open on three days so people could take advantage of this thrilling experience. Cindy Moore elected to snowshoe uphill was a workout!! Others who rode the zip line included, Jason LaRosa, Kayleen Kill, John Rice, the Baker Family and Ann Rogers. There are three lines that you ride on; zipping between the trees and one line is above one of the ski runs. It was a great time.

Wednesday was the TSC Scavenger Hunt/Poker Run. This was a charity event with the money going to the Texas Youth Foundation. Cindy Moore and Ann Rogers participated in this event and had fun deciphering the clues although they didn't win. Winners were awarded for best hand, worst hand and first to finish.

Thursday was race day and Bill Bomberger did a great job coordinating the races for our Space City racers. Space City had 17 racers and won 12 medals. Among the racers were Phillip Vice, Ed and Mim Freiter, Sharon Simandl, Caryne and Kenny Prater and several others.

Taking the tram up to the top of Lone Peak Mountain is a highlight of Big Sky. For those brave and experienced skiers, you can ski down from the top of Lone Peak. Ed Freiter, Bob DeBell and a few others did just that. For those who are not so experienced, you can ride up and then back down on the tram. Chuck Pena, John and Nancy Burk and Vicki Gorske rode the tram and got some great pictures from the top.

Thursday night was the TSC Dinner and the food was fabulous and plentiful! Patricia Conner and Cindy Moore had on their dancing shoes. Ed Freiter, Chuck Pena and a few others moved and grooved on the dance floor. While the adults enjoyed their party, the kids were having their own pizza party and movie night. Isabelle Conner, Matthew and Andrew Baker enjoyed the pizza and movie.

Moonlight Basin was the hidden paradise to ski and Thayer and Challie Hutcheson skied there everyday. The runs are groomed and there was even less people at Moonlight Basin. It

BIG SKY MONTANA, (continued from page 5)

Joyce Holcombe became a "puppy" as she skied with the Big Dogs on Wednesday. Bill Bomberger reported that she passed the first test on her way to becoming a Big Dog. She was able to keep up with them on all the black runs. Way to go Joyce!!!

Xena Murugappan took snowboarding lessons for three days and then skied. Her Dad, Basker, enjoyed the skiing but kept receiving phone calls from his office when he was on the slopes!!

The award ceremony was held Friday evening in the Huntley Dining Room. Isabelle Conner received a medal for being a first time skier. She did great and had lots of fun skiing with her Mom, Patricia.

Saturday morning was quiet as 18 boarded the early morning bus to Billings with their box breakfasts. Then came the hardest part; saying our sad farewells and contemplating getting back to work or school. Thanks to all who came on the trip! We had a blast!