

Schweitzer – March 19-26, 2011

by George Lopez, TC

Schweitzer Ski Resort, the Best Big Little Ski area, that most of us had never heard of, was our agenda as 28 SCSC'ers yawned our way to Bush Intercontinental way before dawn. Anticipation was the theme of the day as Judy Schiro, Ron Hayes and JoAnne Dougherty welcomed TC, George Lopez and Camille LaRoe just before 4 AM, long before United Airlines opened the ticket counter. At least the 4 hour layover in Denver gave us ample opportunity for a leisurely breakfast and lots of people watching. For all but Larry and Cindy Thompson, Halcyon Learned, and Carmen Mikhail who had alternate flights to our ultimate destination of Spokane, WA. It was at the gate in Denver that we got our first opportunity to meet Pretrag Tasic, our last minute replacement for Michael Testa who along with Bill Bomberger and Sharon Simandl had to cancel the trip due to injuries. "Last Minute" was a theme that Pretrag took on with vigor throughout the trip.

On the flight to Spokane, Merlyn Harger broke out his stash of his irresistible homemade peanut brittle. He was the guy to sit by from that point on! At baggage claim in Spokane, the group greeted the missing four and said a temporary goodbye to Ann Rogers who was off to visit a friend locally for a couple of days.



The group boarded a big comfortable bus to the resort and the first head count gave rise to the refrain "Where is Pred"? A grocery stop gave all a chance to stock upon munchies and liquid refreshments and again wonder "Where is Pred". The road east from Spokane was flat and uncomfortably devoid of snow though off in the distance, white capped mountains held promise of fun days ahead. As the bus zigged and zagged up the mountain road, a group of deer and the building snowpack let us know that we weren't in Kansas anymore Toto.

Once there, the group was treated to a friendly welcome party by the resort staff who provided information about the facilities along with appetizers and refreshments. The evening was capped off by a raffle that netted Al Smith a foot massage that he graciously gave to his wife Anna and a groomer ride won by Cindy Thompson who shared with hubby Larry. Groups of skiers began to band together the first morning. Janet McKenzie, Nancy Schultz, Andy Smith, Tom Huzzie, and Marty Kaminsky planned to blaze a quick pace on the slopes all week. Paul and Sandra Stalnacki were looking to regain their ski legs after a several year hiatus. First stop though, was the ticket office where the group scored a late season pass, for can you believe it, \$18 a day!



The SCSC group was treated to a mountain tour which proved to be very handy particularly during white outs in the coming days. The group quickly discovered that the mountain offered a large selection of groomed terrain and that Mother Nature was determined to cover it all with fresh powder. The views at this resort are awesome!

Roger Holzman, Carmen, Ron, Judy, JoAnne, Camille and George teamed up to explore the resort. Stan Kuper and Larry Thompson skied together and it is rumored that Larry may have recorded the first fall of the week. Nancy led those who were game in explorations of the glades and deep woods. Rumor also had it that Ray Villareal and Pred may have been doing undercover work for the CIA as their slope side sightings were few and far between early in the week but seemed to surface later. The second day brought new snow and unfortunately Carmen fell and injured her knee. The accident ended her skiing for the week but we are happy to report that she is recovering quickly after some minor surgery in Houston. We wish her a speedy full recovery.

By Tuesday Ann had rejoined the group and Ray and Pred had come out of hibernation. That evening the group boarded a bus for nearby Sandpoint and did some exploring and imbibing before settling in for a wonderful club dinner at Trinity at City Beach. The lakeside restaurant provided breathtaking views of Lake Pend Orielle and the surrounding mountains. The group and several of our hosts feasted on the local cuisine.

The middle of the week was highlighted by a number of non-skiing events. Linda Kuper, Ana and Cindy went snowshoeing around the resort. Ron and Judy lead a couple of sightseeing tours of the region. Halcyon organized an evening's entertainment with a viewing of Friday Night Lights in the Lodge's own movie theater. Sandra and Camille organized a game night in an attempt to consume some of the vast accumulated quantities of drinks and goodies.

A Thursday evening farewell reception signaled the inevitable end of our wonderful Schweitzer experience. After a full day of skiing the next afternoon, we boarded the bus back to Spokane and yes, Pred was the last one to board. Our thanks to Gwen, Devin, Susie, Laura, and the entire Schweitzer staff for hosting a dynamite experience that we will always remember. Page 5

