

SnowMass January 7 -14, 2011 by George Lopez—TC

This past January Camille and I and 45 other SCSCers joined 340 fellow Texas skier and riders for the TSC Traditional tip to Snowmass. For newcomers, Juniper Jairala, Juel Hill, and Bob and Betty Donellan, this would be their maiden voyage with the club. The trip turned out to be a lot of fun, but getting there was quite the challenge.

Flying into Aspen is often difficult and this year was no exception. It all began routinely enough with the typical airport departure from Bush. The warm Houston weather did not deter Anne Thomas, Debbie Kloote, Camille and several other ladies from an opportunity to wear their furs. Merlyn Harger was making new friends with his homemade awesome candy and Ted Widmer was wearing his perpetual smile. It was there that the group had the first of what proved to be rare sightings of John Gay and Becky Reitz as they debated the fine points of first second and third bag charges with the United personnel. After some momentary consternation about Gin and Michael Knebel's misspelled names, the group cleared security and soon it was up up and away on a nice flight to Denver.

Mother Nature had been stingy with her snow up to that point in the season and unfortunately for us she decided to cut loose the day we were travelling. Upon our arrival in Denver reports started to come in about what lay ahead. Ron and Roberta Rambin, Margaret McCord, Lori Gilliland, Ash Moza, Bob DeBell, Pat Piech and a few others had been diverted to Grand Junction then bused to Aspen. Keith Kirkman and Frank "Rat" Adams (our beer man) had driven to Aspen and reported the roads were slick. Wandering through the concourse were Chuck Pena and David Gunn, who had twice been flying sorties around Aspen only to land in Denver for a third time that day.

Our flight to Aspen was delayed twice and ultimately cancelled. Good thing there was a bar near the gate. With the Texans playoff game on the tube, survivalists Cindy Moore, Mike Mason, Robert Clements, Bruce Lowther and Janet McKenzie did their best to stay hydrated during the long ordeal. Ron Hayes and Judy Schiro had rented a car and had volunteered to secure



wine and other essential supplies at Apple-jack's for the group, bless their hearts! Mission accomplished they were reporting that I-70 had been closed. It was looking pretty bleak in Mudville til the folks at Sports America came through with a bus for our rescue. As word got out about the bus, our group began to grow. Chuck, David, Marsha Lutz, and Jim and Marina Hodges were all familiar faces. Then came 13 others from Club St. Bernard and even 3 unknown others who had heard of the magic bus to Aspen. We would leave no skier behind, but unfortunately the same could not be said for our luggage. Six hours, a sketchy bathroom and a couple of so-so movies later, it was just before 2 am when we made our police escorted arrival into Aspen.

SnowMass (Cont)

First stop was the Stonebridge Inn. Jan Ferrell, Bob Olsen, Chuck Britton, Bernie Clinton were among the smaller group staying there. Then came the climb to the Top of the Village condos for the rest of the group. Tired dazed and confused we struggled to get Oxygen and find our way to bed. The next day was a blur. Working on a couple of hours sleep, Camille led 3 expeditions to Aspen airport and by the end of the day had recovered all the luggage that had been left behind (thank you Camille). Only a handful of folks got to ski that first day, but the stage was set for a fun week. Yes we could have used a little more snow and a few less rocks (sorry Bruce), but any day on the slopes is better than a day at work.

John and Cindy McGowan as well as Richard and Becky Adams were among the 12 couples from our group attending the two welcome parties. Speaking of parties there were a couple of free wine tastings as well. I can't be sure, but I don't think that Bill Volz, Jim Walker, Gary Hercules or Lori Haischer missed a one. I don't think that Mike Mason had to pay for a drink til about Wednesday. Oh yes and then there was our pre-race game night. You will have to ask Kimber Kane where she found the game we played. That was fun. Thanks Kimber.

Of course it would not be a TSC trip without races and an awards dinner. Ross Baker, Marsha, and Camille helped coordinate the events and Betty Donellan, our race director, led some 26 SCSCer to one of the Club's best performances in recent memory. Thanks for all your efforts folks!

On a somber note, Rick Wheeler and three other members of the TSC family were involved in a serious car accident on the way to Aspen. Sadly Rick ultimately succumbed to his injuries. Our thoughts and prayers go out to his family and friends. He will be always remembered.

And on a much happier note, during that tumultuous week, I asked Camille to marry me and she said YES! That made it the best ski trip ever for me. Love you baby

