

Trip Report – Winterpark

By Tony Curry

The Winter Park Spring Break trip was our club's last ski trip of the season. Winter Park (WP) has 5 Mountains of Seven Territories with the expanded terrain for all abilities and a state-of-the-art base village. The low-key casual atmosphere is an ideal and affordable place to learn to ski with family activities as a prime focus.

Beginners to intermediates found the best terrain within Winter Park, Vasquez Ridge, and Parsenn Bowl. Advanced to expert skiers skied the "No Pain, No Jane" terrain. With youngsters out of school for spring break, parents, grandparents and uncles/aunts took those youngsters on a memorable ski vacation in the Snow Country of the Rocky Mountains. Scouts had an opportunity to earn a Snow Sports Merit Badge.



Carolyn Curry and Austin Skiers Gary and Nancy Roth

We joined two other TSC Clubs, including Austin Skiers, led by Gary Roth, and Capital Ski, led by Shannon Owen, who is also the TSC Youth Foundation Chairperson. Meeting, dining and skiing with the other friendly TSC clubs was a wonderful bonus on this trip.

Space City and Ski Club offered full packages including air transportation. The air transportation was a major challenge during the week of spring break. Most airline prices were so steep; we started to look into bus transportation from Houston to Winter Park. John & Nancy Burk opted for the Land package and drove for 18 hours straight with their son, Joe. No baggage fees & TSA lines for the Burk Family on this trip. Since John drove much of the drive, I was amazed that he rose early the next morning from his coma and was ready for First Tracks at 8am.



Boarders Break - Joshua Wyatt, Trinity, Neo and Kaley Curry

First Tracks program was fantastic!!! Each morning at 8am we got on the mountain before everyone else with WP top professional private lesson instructors who know where to find the best conditions and provided us with skiing techniques and tips along the way. Yes, I did state it was at 8:00am. Our Ski in/out accommodations was a great help to ensure we arrived on-time because the groups were gone at 8:01a. We could also start before and avoid the morning rush gathering at the base lifts. At just \$20 a day, the first tracks program was one of the best deals of our trip that was only offered to our TSC clubs on this trip. Our First tracks guide, Darian Liu, would carve a turn so sharp his hip would touch the snow. Our other guide, Tom Cat, said Darian, "had enough force to head back up the mountain."

The first tracks program was such a big hit that WP was expanded to include our last ski day. Kathy Quigley was one of our die-hards to arrive each and every early morning for first tracks. Kathy knew that at 8:01am, the first track groups would be on the chair lifts. During the afternoon, the spring-like conditions and temperatures warmed up to a high of 50f near base with a snow base of nearly 60". But with so much skiable terrain open, most folks started early and skied/boarded the higher elevations as mid-day approached.



Tristan Thomson and Aunt Sharon Goodwin

All three clubs attended the Welcome Party hosted by Winter Park. WP had provided drinks and refreshments. Shannon Owen of Capital Ski recognized each youth on the trip and presented them with an individual TSC Youth Foundation (TSYF) medal of participation. WP representatives presented the many other activities offered on/off the mountain that we could partake in. They also drummed up the interested in a group mountain tour. The folks at Winter Park Guest Services hosted a Mountain Tour group for our clubs. The WP hosts guided us with GoPro Video cameras in tow. They also had published and distributed a fine professional quality complimentary tour video capturing our folks traversing down the mountain. The video included a trace app which is a really cool overlay showing the video footage

alongside with the elevation and traveling speeds.

Organized by Gary Roth of the Austin Skiers was a first class dinner at Doc's Roadhouse at WP base just across from zephyr lift. Louise Wyatt of Space City had volunteered to take really nice photos of each of the families attending. We met up with fellow skiers/boarders daily at lunchtime on the mountain tops at either Snowasis or Sunspot restaurant facilities. WP provided free S'mores by Fire Pit at base at end of one of our mid-week ski/ride day with the Curry triplets (Neo, Kaley & Trinity) and Joshua Wyatt who enjoyed their fair share.

It must have been a coincidence that the morning after St Patrick's Day I noticed some folks getting a much later start on the ski day. I did hear some mumbling about Pub Crawls on St Patrick's Night. The Burk family, Sharon, Tristan and Kathy's first stop was Randi's Irish Saloon which had a live Irish band and served green beer. Due to the spring conditions at WP we had to cancel our evening tubing event, but a group of folks from Capital Ski Club went into Frazer Tubing location and had a great time. The daily trip pattern seemed like Déjà vu or a scene from the repeating Ground Hog day movie.



Kathy Quigley, Joe Burk, Keith Hayden (Austin Skiers), & John Burk

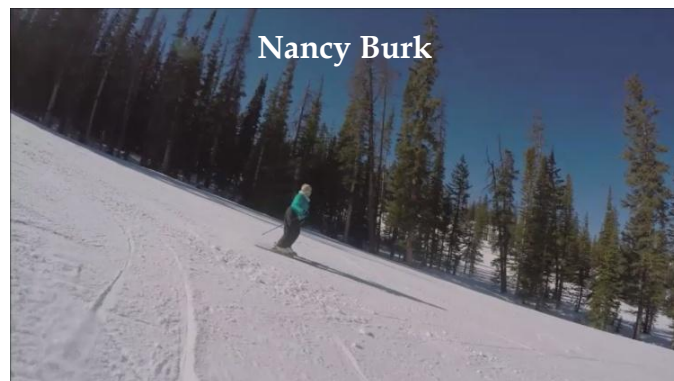
As I finished skiing on the mountain for the day, I would see Sharon Goodwin getting her couple of miles of walking/jogging in around the WP Village. I also noticed a woman resembling Louise Wyatt in the hot tub which I later discovered was Louise. I would find myself chatting with Louise and in a blink Louise would find the array of outdoor hot tubs. It was like how superman would find a phone booth and change clothes. My Family and the Wyatt family all decided to take one midweek day off from skiing the mountain and venture to Cooper Square and downtown Winter Park for some shopping and a bit of sightseeing.



Joshua and Louise Wyatt



Carolyn Curry, Louise Wyatt, Kathy Quigley, Pricilla Johnsen (Austin Skiers)



Nancy Burk



Curry Family Carolyn, Tony, Kaley Trinity, Neo

Towards the end of the journey, the Burk family had arrived home safe with a return drive in 16.5 hours which was faster than their arrival due to fewer stops and faster driving. John Burk was still exhausted a bit, but got back into his normal routines in Houston and back on the tennis courts. This is our family's second Spring Break Trip to Winter Park with Space City which each time has been a unique adventure.

Between the 3 clubs we had 24 youth on the spring break trip. We all had such an enjoyable trip that we will plan for a three peat next season.

Ski U Later.