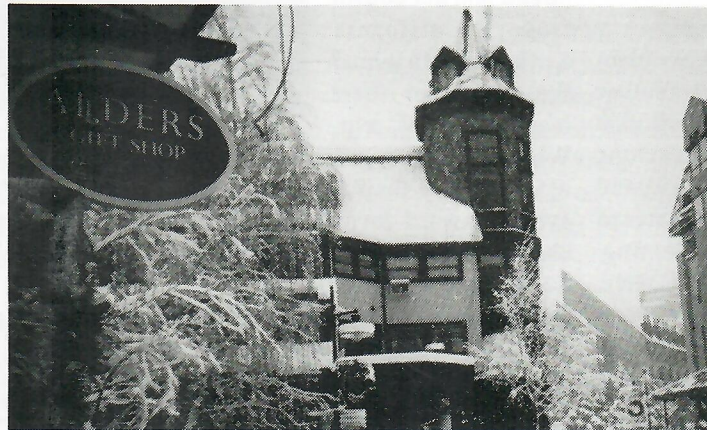


This past Christmas of '98 had become only a memory for the 41 participants who met at Intercontinental at 7:00AM on Saturday, the 26th of December, bound for a New Year in a friendly foreign fantasyland, Whistler, Canada. As this was a Space City family trip, the group included four children, and of the 37 others who claimed to be adults, some could have never proved it. We arrived late on Saturday to an 80-inch snow base, which at the time was more snow than anywhere in North America. The fresh snow began falling at daybreak as we awoke for our first full day, and continued nearly non-stop until the fifth day there. When it was discovered on the first morning that the local forecast was predicting such an enormous snowfall, **Barb Tuley, Marianne Pearce, and Jean Hoepful** were overheard trying to sell their lift-tickets! Dreadful reaction!

The serious dumping had other effects, such as causing our NASTAR race to be postponed by the local race attendants. They groomed the course at daybreak, only to have ten new inches by 10:00am. The race officials decided it was too dangerous for our novice skiers, all seven of the twenty who showed up. These conditions couldn't discourage the appearance of **Lou Kleinman, Rick Wasson, Ken Mach, Chuck Bridgeman, Willi Murski, David Cikvasvili, Jim and Patty Fitzpatrick, and Mike Biroski**. We all readily agreed a reschedule would have been the most logical course of action, knowing we were missing most of our

allow a gold medal to be won by the speedy **Chris Goll**, a silver to each of the nearly as quick **Mike Biroski** and **Jim Fitzpatrick**, and bronzes to the slower but sure-footed **Patty Fitzpatrick** and **Rick**



Wasson. Also racing, although missing medals by only scant minutes were **Judy Katany, David Cikvasvili, Kathy Young, Charles Bridgeman, and Lou K**.

And what is a Space City trip without a few awards? Clearly the award given for the most miles skied this week would have gone to **Brent Langford**, although a close second would have gone to **Susan Gaucher**, who spent an entire week doing a great job of staying up with him. Did anybody find out where they were going in such a rush, anyway?

The next award for the most distance covered while

standing on a snowboard goes to the helmeted and padded **Lee Swords**, who dressed 20, talked 30, and skied 40. This category had no runners-up. The award for taking care of a sick condo mate went to **Ron Schmidt** for taking care of **Willi M**. After Willi recuperated, they could be seen together in many of the local pubs. Now that's friendship! The final award, which was for skiing in total disguise, ended in a four-way tie: **Ron and Sharon Geedman**, daughter **Tanya Sherbin**, and **Andy Sloan**. They were so well masqueraded, no one except **Mary Kay Kitchens** or **Bill Whitehead** could recognize them on the slopes, or could claim to have skied with them. It was even said they could not even recognize each other. Is there any truth to any of this?

An unexpected thrill for **Rick W**. came mid-week at noon when what began as a routine gondola ride up from the base of Blackcomb in a nearly empty six person car turned into a shoulder to shoulder encounter with **Bill Murray** from *Saturday Night Live*!! What does one say during such an unexpected encounter on the way up to someone of such notoriety, you ask? "Mr. Ackroyd, you were great in all those films!" I exclaimed. "Well thank you, Mr. Starr!" he replied without hesitation. Well, I asked for that one! He was very polite, made a few jokes, and we talked about our favorite ski areas as we glided up the panoramic, tree-lined, Canadian Blackcomb Mountain. An hour later in the Horstman's Hut, a small 50-seat European style cabin near



Whistler

by Rick Wasson

the top of Blackcomb Glacier, fellow skiers **Bob DeBell, Sandra McCunis, and Linda**

The Wednesday lunch for 25 of us on the mountain was a delightful grilled Salmon

dinner with all the trimmings, white tablecloths, all with the glacier in full view for all to enjoy. The Whistler-Blackcomb staff did a fine job presenting this experience for us. This was a pleasant mid-week social event. I am proud to report that there were neither



Skinner spotted Mr. Murray eating lunch only a few feet from their table. They had just finished telling Rick W. that they did not believe his Starr story, but soon became convinced it was true. This was the planned Space City lunch meet-up, and these four were the only ones who showed up for lunch on this geologically correct Glacier. Maybe conditions made the journey up too rough for the others. At dinner in the Whistler Village one evening in the most Italian restaurant Canada has to offer, **Jo Ann Jordan, Kathy Y., Jim and Patty F., Rick W., David C., and Sid Eaton** not only spotted Bill Murray, but also ate twenty feet away from him for two hours. This seemed exciting for those of us who don't get out much.

This destination had something for everyone, including the non-skiers and children. **Shirley DeBell, Randa Holasek and son Damon, Peter**

MacDonald, Fran Kleinman, Ken M., Sandra Lehman, Sandra McCunis, Marianne P. and ATC Barb T. all boarded a van at daybreak on New Year's Eve to tour Vancouver and all the mountain-lined bays between there and Whistler Village. All those who shared this journey had many compliments for the natural beauty that the Canadian countryside presented.

injuries, nor losses of companions or luggage to report during the two plane rides up and returning. But an unnamed source did explain why we were held up at an airport checkpoint in Calgary on the return flight home. One of our Texans apparently forgot he was traveling with a *gun* in his carry-on, and the watchful eyes of the local authorities detected it. Not only was he detained, but also the whole crowd of passengers in line behind him was cleared back and closed off behind a locked door until this incident was cleared up. The airline people elected to allow the gun to remain in

the possession of the flight captain until departure in Houston. It was later explained that this weapon was only a plastic toy that belonged to Nat and Michael Margolis, although the father of the two, Lou K., was regularly seen playing cops and robbers with this pistol in Whistler Village!



By the time this article goes to press and finds its way to your mailbox, the shining spring sun in Houston will have all Space City members yearning for that next winter ski vacation, longing for all those white powdery first track breakfasts, and all the social happenings and unexpected events that a Space City ski trip is certain to provide.