

# TELLURIDE 2000 - MEMOIRS OF A SKI JUNKIE

by Jessica Halter



**Feb. 19-26** - A good shrink will say that writing about emotional highs and lows is therapeutic. Telluride 2000 was a DEFINITE high, and I'm not just talking altitude, baabeeee!!! This report will only bend the truth when morally necessary. Of course we must adhere to the motto, "What happens on the mountain STAYS on the mountain." But here are the parts we CAN report:

Arrival and check-in at IAH went smoothly on Saturday morning...or so we thought. Several SCSCers became official PCs by upgrading to First Class. Enjoying the free drinks and comfy seats were **Jose Araujo, Dennis Newell, Dan Hendricks, Janet McKenzie** (who was **Dennis's** guest and bumped ME out of being **Jose's** guest!), **David Stotz**, and though it took some cajoling, our PC/TC, **Diane Stotz** agreed to join her hubby for the extra attention. We also began making new friends right away as we quickly discovered the Atlanta Ski Club was on board. Little did we know that THEIR luggage was loaded first, and our "smooth" check-in gained a new perspective when we discovered upon arrival in Montrose that about half of the SCSC luggage was never loaded due to overweight baggage!

After a short delay to place baggage claim reports, we finally hit the road for the one-hour drive to Telluride. We were assured that our

luggage would arrive that evening, and it did.

We checked into our condos and regretfully found that a few of our group were assigned to condos that were substandard. Luckily we had no problems getting changes made for **Walter and Cheryl May** and **Lotty and Karl Gautschi**, and the "Leper Condo" (an explanation follows in the race report) and after the first night, all substandard rooms were replaced with ski-in/ski-out accommodations. We wished the entire trip that everyone could have fit into Boomerang, our "headquarters" and condo location for most. This lodge and the next door lodge of West Willows (accommodating, **Bob Rexford, John Stokes, Ute and Phil Cezeaux**, and the **Cezeaux's adult daughters & roommates** who "shadowed" the trip) were about a block and a half from the Coonskin lift.

Our first gathering was at the Wild Flour Café where Atlanta and Houston enjoyed free drinks and snacks. On the walk back to the condos, about half of the SCSCers stopped at a restaurant called The Cosmopolitan. The restaurant wasn't expecting us, but did a good job of trying to accommodate us...(except for the Lisa Kudrow act-alike!)

There was a rumor that **Janet**

**McKenzie** wanted to exchange pj's with **Jose** on the first night, but according to **Jose**...he's STILL waiting!

The gung-ho skiers hit the slopes at 9:45 on Sunday. **Dennis Newell** logged the first official injury as he decided to test his flexibility while exiting a lift and ended up in a split position that gave his knee a twist. He spent the rest of the afternoon in the ER with **Janet McKenzie** lending moral support. After one day "off", some good "magic ointment" from **Randy and Susan Viereck** (awarded "Best Pharmacists" for their contributions), lots of ice, and a couple of days of careful skiing, **Dennis** made a stunning come-back to be the fastest male racer on Thursday. (He raced under **David Stotz's** number, as **Dave** was busy earning his "Damn-Near Dead Dave" award for being sick most of the trip. The post-injury **Dennis** logged the fastest time...much to the consternation of **Darrell Teague** who was .10 seconds behind!)

The group met for lunch at Goronno Ranch and the evening brought gourmet pizzas from South Park Café. **Mimi Markel** provided a fabulous salad and the Pillsbury Dough Boy and this author created a simple birthday cake for **Donna Hahus**. Indidentally, **Mimi and Donna** took one run called "Headbanger" VERY literally. It seems that **Mimi** actually DENTED her helmet on the run while **Donna** banged her head with a ski and had to have a couple of stitches. The party eventually became a dancing/sing-along/karaoke party. Tunes from "Grease" and the Dixie Chicks were performed by **Jessica Halter and Dan Hendricks**, with assistance from **Anita Suson**. Dancers, **Carrie Niemeyer** (the FASTEST female racer) and fiancée, **Darrell Teague** (the 2<sup>nd</sup> fastest male racer) were spinning and twirling everywhere! Other dancers included **Diane Stotz** with different guys, and **Anita with Bob Rexford, Jose Araujo, Joe Walker**, and anyone else she could talk into dancing.

Several people took the Free



## TELLURIDE 2000 - cont.

Guided Mountain Tour on Monday including **Diane & David Stotz, Bob Knupp, Donna Hahus, Mimi & Marc Markle, Jimi Hendrix, Bob Rexford, John Stokes, Mike Williford, Park Combest and Dave Launaray...** most of whom became affectionately known as the "True Blue Skiers."

The hot tub party that afternoon found **Anita** with seven guys in the tub... (**Bob, Dan, Mike, Mike, Jose, Marc, and Jim**) How does she do that? **Sue DeWitt and I** spoiled private party. An interesting side note...**Jose** wore **Anita's** PINK shorts all week in the hot tub. When offered men's trunks, he said he preferred the pink ones. Now THAT's a man who is secure in his masculinity...probably the reason he earned the "Best Escort" award. He was particularly attentive and helpful to **Sholeh Safaeian** on the beginner slopes.

For dinner that night, the group was nicely taken care of at **Fat Alley's** Barbeque. Afterwards, **Todd Buxton, Robert Todd, Mike Williford, Bob Rexford, Jessica Halter, Anita Suson, Jose Araujo, Sholeh Safaeian, Bob Mahan, and Jim Hendrix** did some pub crawling to the **Sheridan** and the local's bar.

Tuesday was a SNOWBOARDERS day! **Mike Rothermund, Todd Buxton, and Cheryl May** were old pros at it, while **Danny Singley and mom, Vicki**, decided to go the lesson route...smarts must run in the family! So that his backside didn't end up looking like his bruised calf, **Danny** went for ingenuity...he DUCT TAPED a towel to his behind for padding, earning him the "Most Inventive Skiwear" award, as well. (Hmmm...I wonder if THAT's why **Todd Buxton** was missing a towel that morning!!!) **Vicki Singley** earned the "Coolest Mom" award as she hung with **Danny** in every endeavor...skiing, snowboarding, and snow biking all in the SAME day!

Several brave souls took to the slopes at 4:30 to attempt snow biking.

It was reported that this "bike" with skis instead of wheels and short skis on your feet, was close to riding a bike for the first time. Attempting this unusual sport, in addition to **Danny and Vicki Singley**, were **Diane and David Stotz, Bob Mahan, Cheryl May, Mike Wolfe, and Donna Hahus**. **Bob Mahan** had the most spectacular wipe out and since most of the group had several wipe outs, that a BIG honor...congrats, **Bob**. So in addition to being part of the "Bob" Award, you should have also received the "Snow Biking Wipe Out" award!

**Terri Ullrich, Linda Erdman, and Sue DeWitt** cooked dinner on Tuesday night for their exhausted condomate, **Vicki Singley**. Son, **Danny**, and his condomates, **Robert Todd and Mike Rothermund** rounded out the dinner party. An interesting comment..."What exactly were **Mike R. and Robert T.** doing that required so much privacy and time together?" Behaving themselves, probably!

Just after lunch on Wednesday, unfortunately, 79 year-old **Karl Gautschi** was run over by one VERY large man in a slow skiing zone. Luckily, **Karl** was OK, and although a little sore, he did manage to ski the next day. You should have heard the tongue lashing that **Lotty, Karl's** lovely wife, gave the guilty skier! And with the help of "NO cheap wine," hopefully, he was able to ease the pain.

I joined **Sue DeWitt** (aka T.B. for Tiny Bladder!) and her "groupies", **Dan Hendricks, Bob Knupp, Mike Wolfe, and Bob DeBell** at lunch and we took the mountain by storm on Wednesday reaching the 30,000 vertical feet mark! Now, most of us have no clue about measuring such things, but **Mike Wolfe** was diligent with his wrist altimeter and kept us well-informed. The quest also gave us the "Ultimate Butt Slide" award that **Dan Hendricks** earned as he slid down one entire slope.

During that evenings hot tub party, we finally figured out it was **Robert Todd** doing his best "Cy Young"

impression as he hurled snowballs into the hot tub from below. Good Shot, Hot Shot!

Thursday brought race day and LOTS of snow...ALL DAY!!! Atlanta challenged us to a duel. We were humored to see the Welcome Sign at the NASTAR course calling us the "SpaceD City" Ski Club. If the shoe fits...Well, it turned out that the NASTAR folks were more "spacey" than us, as all kinds of weird thing occurred. The scores, names and numbers were so jumbled that they asked us to return Friday morning to try again. **Marc Markel and Janet McKenzie**. Our race directors, did a great job of awarding the following medals at our Friday night dinner: Earning a Gold Medal was **Karl Gautschi**. (Actually, since he'd been run over the day before, a really nice ski patrol guy skied a gold in **Karl's** honor. **Karl** did earn a silver on his own the day before.) After two days of racing, earning Silver Medals: **Marc Markel, Park Combest, Dan Hendricks** skiing under **David Stotz's** name, **Darrell Teague, Dave Launarey, Carrie Neimeyer and Janet McKenzie**. Earning Bronze Medals: **Todd Buxton, Mike Wolfe, Cheryl May, Randy Viereck, Lotty Gautschi, Danny Singley, Jessica Halter, Mike Williford, and Mimi Markel**. A race story...after crossing the finish line on his Silver Medal run, **Dave Launarey** had an incredible wipe-out. We expect his "Agony of Victory" to soon replace ABC's "Agony of Defeat." It is worth noting, too, that the self-named "**Leper Condo**" (so named because they weren't in Boomerang) was the ONLY



## TELLURIDE 2000 - cont.

condo with a clean sweep of race medals. Way to go **Dave Lauranrey, Mike Williford, Park Combest, and Jim Hendrix!**

After the race, we met at Goronno Ranch for a group photo. Because it was snowing pretty hard, we opted for an indoor photo in the lodge. **Jim Hendrix**, the "Most Social" award winner, showed up an hour early for the picture and unfortunately, went downstairs to the bathroom just as the photographer showed up. By the time he returned, the entire Kodak moment had passed!

Thursday evening brought us to dinner at Howie's Floradora. **Anita Suson** provided the majority of the entertainment. She included an encore performance at the Sheridan bar later during our "official" pub crawl that included **Anita, Jessica, Jose, Todd, Bob R., Bob M. and others.** It is just one of those times that you HAD to be there. 'Nuff said! Even with my award status of "ATC that goes above and beyond the call of duty," I still had trouble keeping up with **Anita!**

**The Cezeaux's** will forever hold Telluride dear...their daughter, **Andrea** accepted a proposal of marriage from her boyfriend, **Andrew Synott** coming down the gondola. A September 24 wedding in Boston is planned.

So Friday brought a final day of skiing, some re-racing for some of us, and a big crash for me. After a lengthy ER visit, I found that I may have hairline cracked my 11<sup>th</sup> rib, but otherwise, I just bruised my tailbone and strained some back muscles. The

rest of the trip is sort of a blur due to the pain killers, but I will do my best to continue. I DO know that I did not have to carry any luggage on the way home thanks to the chivalrous gentlemen on the trip. Thanks, guys!

We gathered at a nearby German bar to average our scores against Atlanta that evening and SCSC was VICTORIOUS over Atlanta. The Continental Flight Attendant congratulated us over the plane's microphone on the return trip! I wonder who clued the flight attendant in on THAT one...MOI???

Friday night the group enjoyed a fabulous awards dinner at the Powderhouse. In addition to the race medals, we gave door prizes and some additional "fun" awards. With the help of my condomates (**Jose, Sholeh, Linda, Dennis, Anita, and Joe Walker, honorary condomate**), we came up with the aforementioned awards, and added a few more...There was the "**Bob Award**", as we had FIVE on the trip...And then there was **Robert Todd** who prefers "Todd" to either Robert OR Bob! Confused? We were!

We also had a "**Mike Award**" for the three Mikes we had on the trip. **Linda Beebe and Sholeh Safaeian** won the "Best Breakfasts" award. **Anita**, amidst many nominations won the "PATC" (Party Animal Trip Coordinator) award, and **Joe Walker** won the "Joe Walker" award because he is in a class all by himself! **Diane Stotz**, our fantastic TC, was presented a signed picture frame from everyone on the trip and she, in turn, gave me a beautiful Telluride frame...do we think alike, or what?

Several people still had energy to dance after dinner, including **Diane and David Stotz, Bob Rexford, Jose Araujo, Sholeh Safaeian, Jessica Halter, and Anita Suson.**

Saturday brought the trip to a close. We purposely beat Atlanta to the airport to make sure OUR luggage made it on this time. We stopped long

enough to get a group photo along the road and yes, **Jim Hendrix** made it for THAT photo. **Sue DeWitt and Dan Hendricks**, having left early, were the only two not originally in this group shot. Through computer magic, they appear in the photo.

A hot game of Trivial Pursuit ensued at the airport, (girls vs. guys) and sadly, I must report that the guys beat the girls really badly. How did **David Stotz** know that Harry's American Pub was located in Paris...Come ON!?!?

We were glad that **Danny Singley** was allowed to fly with us. Had it not been for the insistence of "THE MOMMA," he might not have been able to join us. A little last minute drama is always fun!

I then drifted off into a drug-induced sleep until the First Class PCs came back to the peon section of the plane to disturb and disrupt. It seems the free-flowing alcohol in First Class had kicked in and they wanted to party! So we did! (Twist our arms!)

We bid farewell at baggage claim amid hugs, smiles, and maybe even a few tears. The group really bonded on this trip, and I, for one, had severe withdrawals the next week. I missed all of my friends, old and new. My jacuzzi bathtub just wasn't the same, and I couldn't figure out why restaurants wouldn't give me my first drink free. I kept explaining, "In Telluride they do!"

So, Doc, now that you've heard my ramblings, is there hope for this ski junkie? Wait a minute...there MIGHT be some hope. Maybe the answer is to be a TC for a trip in 2001. It could happen! Watch for details.

Telluride 2000 remains **THE PARTY TRIP OF THE YEAR!** We challenge anyone to beat our supremacy! (and I want ON the trip that is better!)

