

# Vail: Trapped In Death Gulch And Other Vail Tales

by Jessica Halter



It all started with nicknames for EVERYONE and the theme song...to the tune of "The Yellow Rose of Texas:"

We're the greatest Texas ski club that you will ever know.  
We come from Houston, Texas to frolic in your snow.  
When we reach the mountain, we ski until we drop,  
And then we party hard all night it seems we just can't stop!  
We crowd into your hot tub to soak and socialize.  
We have a famous motto that gives us alibis.  
What happens on the mountain must stay and never go.  
The stories stay in Colorado just like yellow snow.

And it all went downhill from there...Needless to say, some people LOVED the theme song and then there were the others...we won't call them sticks in the mud, but some people DID leave the premises when we launched into song. I just don't understand it! So, the song sucks, but how was the trip??? In a word...AWESOME! Here are the highlights:-

## THE TRANSPORTATION

Let's rate it like the mountains...ROCKY! Continental got us off the ground early and into Denver early, BUT in their rush to leave, they filled the seats of SIX SCSCers who ended being at IAH from 5 a.m. until lift-off at 6 p.m. Jose "Angel" Araujo, Sholeh "Dancing Queen" Safaeian, Gene "Tequila" Soo, ATC Linda "Catwoman" Beebe, "Babe-a-licious Becky" Reitz and hubby, John Gay made the best of the situation. Becky had her nails done and went to a movie with John. After Continental gave them travel vouchers and meal/drink vouchers, they managed to party the day away. It probably also helped that they had the entire stash of red and white wine with them. That is why we weren't at the gate earlier. We had to unload the vino due to overweight baggage.

The most interesting transportation had to have been the STRANDED SEVEN who hitch-hiked a ride to town after the lifts closed in Bachelor Gulch due to the lightning and blizzard that surprised us all. After hiking UP-mountain and then waiting an hour with the snow coming down at 3 inches per hour, TC Jessica "Hot Rod" Halter, waving a \$100 bill got a truck full of guys to take "Terrible Theresa" Tanchak, Charles "Buzz" Allen,

Todd "Big Banana" Buxton, "Damn-near Dead David" Stotz, Bob "Kuh-nupp" Knupp, and Gene Soo to the base area of Beaver Creek. The girls got to ride in the cab, and the guys braved the weather huddled in the bed of the truck...what strange bed-fellows! Jessica was just glad Theresa was there to keep the hitch hike story embellishments to a minimum. Diane "Snow Angel" Stotz and Kelly "Wild Child" Reynolds got the "Smart Award" since they headed inside for cocoa just before the stranded seven headed into "DEATH" gulch. Good move, ladies!

Other ladies making smart choices and actually LISTENING to the weather report were sisters-in-law, Becky and Melody "Pretty Dancer" Reitz. While some of us were struggling to survive Death Gulch and waiting for buses that were delayed for four hours due to I-70 being closed, these divas were living the high life at Cordillera, a primo spa. They lunched and had massages, facials, and body wraps all day and were afraid to even TELL condomate, Jessica, how wonderful the spa was after hearing her DEATH Gulch story.

The Reitzes had a wonderful week of family since one of Melody's sons (Becky and John's nephew) lives in Vail and her other son came during the week, as well. Melody, Ken "Flying High" Sanders, (her fiance'), Becky and John went to dinner and events every night with "the boys" who couldn't wait to get Mom and Aunt Becky to pay for delicious meals in all of the best restaurants! And a big welcome to Melody and Ken as new members to SCSC! You are DEFINITELY a positive addition to the club.

## THE ACCOMMODATIONS

Once we all actually arrived, and got settled, Vail International suited us all pretty well. There were a few blonde moments when some of us couldn't get out of the complex because we got lost, (Diane and Jessica) but other than that, the location was good for us. Janet "Spit-Fired" McKenzie was overheard saying "I've been in so many beds and so many rooms on this trip...What day is it? I don't CARE if they're married or not! I'm still looking for his pajamas (pronounced: pi ha' mas)." An added treat was the concert rehearsals of Peter Frampton and Roger Daultry right next door to Vail International in the Ice





Rink. We could hear "Do you, you....feel like I do" from the hot tub...COOL!

### THE SKIING

Now here is the AWESOME part. Can you say POWDER? Can you say LOTS and LOTS of POWDER? It snowed sooooo much! On race day, several powderhounds didn't even show up to race because the powder was too good. That was THEIR LOSS since the pace-setter was so slowed by the early morning powder that everyone who did show up to race medaled! Oh, wait...I didn't say that. What I MEANT to say was that everyone who raced was AWESOME and everyone medaled because we were all such fantastic skiers! The fastest SCSC male was Scott "Coach" McDonald and the fastest female was Janet McKenzie. Bronze medals were earned by Carmen Mikhail, Jessica Halter, Jan Labadie, and Steven Teoh. Silver Medals were earned by Janet, Scott, and David Stotz, Dennis Newell, Martha Zenger, and Jose Araujo. One Gold Medal was earned by Helmut Zenger. Congratulations to all racers.

All other skiing can be summed up with one word...POWDER! John Gay's nephews, Michael and Brandon, found him in a snow bank off the edge of a run after four hours of non-stop skiing. The impressive thing was John could keep UP with the 20-somethings. And then there was the OTHER end of the spectrum when our fearless (or is that fearful) ATC, Linda, required the assistance of Gene Soo and a total of three hours to get down the mountain from lunch. In her defense, she was at least ON the mountain and she did tear her ACL near the end of the week. Back in Houston, the diagnosis was made and she will have surgery later in the month. So we can't give her too hard of a time. She has earned her ski badge of courage.

### THE PARTIES

The arrival night lasagna party got postponed until Sunday night since SOME of us had not arrived the first night. But once we got the party going it WENT! The paper and pen "GAME" was interesting, and we learned a LOT about each other. For the record, there were NO virgins from SCSC on the trip, and Diane Stotz carries really unusual things in her pockets. Ladye "Rodeo Queen" Freitag debuted her chair and table dancing, (later to be repeated at The Club!) and the Hokey-Pokey and air guitar concert was performed by June "Dr. Junebug" Cullum, Concietta "Party Queen" Ruggiero, Linda Beebe, Carmen "Ski Babe" Mikhail, Sharon "I'm So Green" Rance, and Diane Stotz. "Mellow Margaret" Walker sat on the fireplace helping Jessica with the music while John Smith, Gene Soo, and David

Stotz, sat on the sofa enjoying the show. We also celebrated Linda's birthday at the Lasagna party. She sat in her birthday cake at some point and Gene was SUCH a gentleman at helping her clean off the icing! We laughed to the point of tears at that.

Breakfast was a party every morning. The TC and ATC wish to thank all who graciously opened their condos for the daily breakfasts: My condomates John G., Becky R., and Sholeh, Linda's condomates Ladye F., Melody R., and Ken S., also June C., Carmen M., Sharon R., Concietta R., Jose A., Bob Horan, Diane and Dave S., Phil "Blade Runner" and Ute "The Chef" Cezeaux, Dennis "The Menace" Newell, and John "Eligible Bachelor" Stokes, Blair "Light Blue" Huntington (who even made GREEN boiled eggs in honor of St. P's Day), Keith "Kool Strand" Strandtman, and Ted "Blue Eyes" Widmer. Several folks made breakfast gatherings a ritual, including Horst "The Force" Schwartz and Willi Murski. We were glad so many people participated in the breakfasts.

It wasn't billed as a "party," but it sure turned into one when a group from SCSC went to Adventure Ridge for tubing and laser tag. Unfortunately, our mountain rep did not follow through on our reservations for tubing, but we got the royal treatment for laser tag. We were moved to the front of the line, and they combined equipment so that we could all play at once. What a BLAST...pun intended. Jose was the best shooting male and Concietta had the happy trigger finger for the ladies. Let's avoid aggravating either of them in the future!

Gene Soo hosted a lovely wine and cheese party on Wednesday night with the help of Jerry S., Bob "Tex Rex" Rexford, and Linda B. (Have you noticed that Gene is always in the middle of EVERYTHING! That boy knows how to have fun!) There is a side-note here....something about Karyl "Green Bunny" Lawson and Linda in Wayne's World, but I'm not sure of the details.

Just after the wine and cheese party, several Survivor die-hards and some not-so-die-hards-but-wouldn't-miss-the-party-types gathered in Jessica's condo to watch the weekly episode of Survivor. Todd B., Charles A., and Bob "The Bomb" Horan, were not so true fans, but endured the explanations of Ladye, Theresa, Jessica, Kelly, and John Smith. We were ALL mad that Jerri didn't get voted off!

The Awards Dinner went very well. Vail Golf Club was the location and several people arrived early for the sleighride...Gene



(of course), Walter "The Bester" and Lynne "Mrs. Bester" Hester, Jerry Sadler, Dave and Diane Stotz, Anita "Party Coordinator" Suson, Bob H., Fran and Lou Kleinman, Jessica and Linda. We all enjoyed a specialty hot drink and then rode, horse-drawn, across the golf course on a beautiful night. When we arrived back at the club, other participants had arrived for dinner. After a quick group picture by Sharpshooters, the awards began. A few mentionable ones are..."Damn-near Dead Dave" became "Resurrected from the Dead Dave." He is happy to be among the living again. Best bruise award went to "Big Al" DelGaudio, Best Ski story was told by Bob Knupp who also received the St. Bernard Award for his flask contribution to the Stranded Seven of Bachelor's Gulch. Nancy "Bumble Bee" Schultz was awarded the Killer Bee Award, because of her ability to dodge the trees while leading her guy-pals right into them! She is a KILLER skier!

### THE HAPPY HOURS



Well, when we could find the right place to meet, we did have a good time. By Thursday we had it figured out and SCSC took over Vail at both ends of the town. The Club with Steve Meyers in Vail Village was its usual, raunchy entertainment. SCSC added to the sneers and jeers by performing our theme song. Sholeh danced on stage with Steve (he loved her name and kept repeating it over and over!) and Bob "The Bomb" Horan chugged beer against the human bag nag, Steve Meyers. Bob won, but he thinks Steve let him win. Ever the shy one, Jessica couldn't resist taking over for Steve while he was on break. She did "Bobby McGee" with Steve playing the guitar and then did several more tunes, playing guitar herself, while he ran to get rid of all of the tequila and beer he'd been consuming.

MEANWHILE, back at the Kaltenburg Castle at Lionshead, it is rumored that Charles "Buzz" Allen took over as lead singer for the polka band. He was singing something about how he LOVES those large German women, or something like that!

### THE SHOPPING

I did very little, but as I hear it, several husbands weren't so lucky, just ask **Walter Hester!** Lynne Hester earned the Most Successful Shopper Award, as she found her mother-of-the-bride dress in Vail. When Lynne was given the shopping award, Karyl Lawson protested and demanded a recount! We told her to move to Florida! Linda and Ladye had to borrow empty ice chests to haul home all of their treasures. Hey, Diane "Snow Angel", perhaps instead of checking out the designer outlet sale, you should have looked for some SKI BOOTS. Her 9-year old rear-entry boots finally gave up on this trip. She is terribly distraught about it and hopes someone can tell her where she can locate some "reasonably new" rear-entry, size 7 ski boots to buy!

### THE RESTAURANTS

Sorry, no report here, as all of the ones the TC chose were CLOSED! Some of them even closed while we were IN them (Beaver Creek after the blizzard!) OK, they weren't ALL closed, but the consistency of the ones chosen that were closed was pretty funny. Each night some SCSCers somehow managed to find each other and eat some nice meals. Jerry "Romeo" Sadler rightfully earned his "Wine" award for always choosing wine for the dinner groups, and Todd "Big Banana" earned the "Left Behind" award for ALWAYS being at the wrong place every time! We are all a little worried that Todd may REALLY be secretly anorexic and avoiding food! Or maybe it was that stupid theme song he was avoiding!

### COMING HOME

Door prizes the night before we left had a St. Patty's theme, so it was a delight to see Gene in his "Kiss Me I'm Irish" tiara. Lynne lit up every corridor with her lighted Happy St. Patrick's Day headband and Jose was dashing in his green sequined tie.

### THE POST TRIP PARTY

was at Anita Suson's home. A special thanks goes to her for hosting and to John Gay and Becky Reitz for their contribution to that party. We had Goode Company Barbecue, "Goode" wine, and "Goode" entertainment from Mullet and Starfish, an acoustic duo.

We can truly say we RAISED HAIL IN VAIL!!!