

# BIG WHITE AND KELOWNA TSC TRIP

By Rita Cardenas

The Big White/Kelowna ski trip, sponsored by the Texas Ski Council and led by Terry Lippold, was an adventure for the avid skier with the opportunity to ski three mountains and partake in some of the best wines in Canada. Five clubs participated: Austin, Clear Lake, Lone Star, St. Bernard and Space City. First Tracks was offered at Big White on Sunday and Monday mornings.

The highlight of our welcome party was Big White Idol with Jerry Montgomery and his backup singers up for the challenge. Big White entertainers Dan and Drew were a delight at our welcome party; they have been invited to join us in San Antonio at our bid dinner. Big White, especially Amber French, gave a big Canadian welcome to TSC members, hospitality was wonderful and the ski conditions were the best. The snow-encased pine trees called "Snow Ghosts" were magical to see from the lifts and to ski between.

"Down is not out" might be the new slogan for our Club. Our three lady Racers in the TSC individual races all fell on one of their runs. Despite this mishap, we came home winners. Winning metals were Ellen Eastham, Silver, Pilar Gonzalez, Bronze, Marti Turner, Bronze, Mike Murphy, Silver, Alan Bitzer, Bronze, Dale Albritton, Silver, Bill Bomberger, Bronze and Keith Kirkman, Bronze. Space City won first in TSC Division 1 finishing with 480 points. Many thanks to Marti and Nelson Turner for serving as race assistants.

On Wednesday, the group moved to the 5-star Grand Okanagan Resort in downtown Kelowna. We were given royal treatment at the mid-week party "Taste of Kelowna" hosted by Kelowna Tourism at the Laurel Packinghouse. Special thanks to Joan Niemeir and Sheila Oclen who arranged the live music, food and of course the wine.

Part of the group enjoyed the one of the world's most spectacular wineries at Mission Hill and enjoyed lunch at Quails Gate. Ellen Eastham, Johanna Kuang and Ron Hayes indulged in early morning (2 a.m.) grape picking for Quails' Gate Estate Winery. The Quails Gate owner, Tony, fixed breakfast for the group and gave them each a bottle of Ice Wine. Ellen's motto is, "IF YOU SNOOZE, YOU LOSE!" Other members of the group enjoyed the ski hosts at Silver Star and the challenging runs at Apex. Word has it that the women's Canadian Olympic team was practicing at Apex.

Friday came too soon, but we ended the week with a great awards dinner and, as usual, Space City kept the DJ working until the very

end. The group enjoyed great wine hosted by Summerhill Winery.

The following are some memorable moments from trip participants:

Gail Clayton noted that this was her first SCSC trip and she enjoyed meeting new people and teaching Trish Ramirez how to play poker. She also learned a new phrase from Roger Holzman – "catch and release". Trish Ramirez, who was a first time skier, loved the glitter effect of the snow at Big White...oh, and mastering the greens, especially Hwy 33.

Bill Bomberger noted that there were three attempts on his life on the slopes. Sources say that a ski pole was broken, an attempt was made to take him out on the t-bar and another hit was made as a penalty for



not falling. Christie Burke got nervous when her goggles fogged up, but the best part of the trip was running into her cousin standing in line at Happy Valley. Roger Holzman (aka Director of Dirt) filled in first timers on wisdom of SCSC survival and also dished out a lot of dirt.

Stan Smith enjoyed the guide at Silver Star whom spent the day

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taking him around the mountain. Alan Bitzer enjoyed skiing through the trees at Black Forest with Dale Albritton. Bob Knupp loved the great hospitality and the guides at Silver Star and...oh, the snow was fantastic.

Peggy Montgomery enjoyed skiing with Trish and Gary Butler. Our trip leader Jerry Montgomery had a rough day on Monday after blowing the top two buckles of his ski boots, and then wiped out on a training race run. Jose Araujo enjoyed spending time at the ice skating rink practicing his triple sow cow and also managed to wipe out at the races. Johanna Kuang noted her experience of a lifetime picking grapes at Quail's Gate at 2 a.m.; her hands suffered a bit of frost bite, but the breakfast cooked by the owner and the bottle of ice wine helped ease the pain.

Tor Lileng loved the snow at Big White. Judy Schiro noted that Ron Hayes didn't lose anything going to the airport. The best part of the trip for Judy was "Ladies Day" at Big White. Ron Hayes was never able to ski on the left side of Big White, but did enjoy picking grapes at 2 a.m. Marti Turner was amazed that all three of the top SCSC women wiped out at the race, and Nelson was grateful he did not get hurt. Barbara and Michael Carr were thrilled seeing whiteout conditions while on the t-bar at the top of Big White and they really enjoyed skiing at Silver Star. Tom Huzzey enjoyed the great skiing conditions at Big White.

Robin Shouldis noted that racing was the highlight of his trip, even though he was listed on the women's race roster. Mike Murphy crashed and burned on the race course, but had a fabulous day of skiing at Silver Star with the ski host. Despite taking a fall on the race course, Pilar Gonzalez managed to come in second, adding to her trophy collection. Sandra McCunis enjoyed Big White, especially the

village at Silver Star. Sources say that Sharon Simandl had something to do with a "broken ski pole," but what happens on the mountain says on the mountain.

Many thanks are in order for our trip leader Jerry Montgomery for organizing such a great trip, and Peggy Montgomery for her support.

Beyond Boundaries' Dick Howard, Doug Lofland and Ute Jahnke worked diligently for the group as well as the team from Big White; Amber French, Jim Loyd, Rob Crickton and Josh Foster. Silver Star was superb with their ski guides. Many thanks to Robin Baycorft and Blair Ireland for the hospitality. SCSC must return to these beautiful and magical ski mountains.



Big White 2006  
SCSC hits the mother lode for the welcome party!!