

Banff February 4—11, 2012 by Arlen Isham—TC

After six months of anticipation, 15 excited skiers headed for the best snow of the year in Banff, Alberta Canada. **Harvey Heller & Linda Case** were the last to arrive at the airport, but in plenty of time. The Air Canada check in was slow with only one person working, but we were patient. At our arrival at Calgary had everyone scatter to chow down before getting on our bus for a 90 minute ride to Banff.

The Banff Aspen Lodge turned out to be very nice with the beds separated into two rooms by two separate sinks, the bath, and a hanging closet. Each room had ample dresser space to unpack with separate TV's and night stands. Our skis were stored in a downstairs storage area with locks. **Arlen Isham, T.C.**, forgot to bring the lift ticket list, but the passing out of the lift tickets came out correct.

Ross Baker helped Arlen buy both regular and adult beverages for the parties. A rolling luggage carrier was very helpful to bring back all the drinks.

Sunday - Sunshine - About half the group rented their skis with a 25 % discount. **Linda Case** was so excited; she left her skis and poles at the shop and had to rent them at Sunshine for the day. **Cynthia Schneider** signed up for her beginners ski lesson and after a ski jetted away from her while putting them on, decided maybe this was not her sport. **Ana Smith** was on the trip just to enjoy the scenery of Banff, while husband **Al Smith** skied.

Sunshine is unique with a long gondola ride to get to the mountain. The group warmed up in the morning under beautiful sunny skies with great snow. Banff had received about 3 feet of new snow in the week before we arrived. After meeting for lunch at the Alpine Grill, we planned to ski with the Sunshine Host for a complete mountain orientation. However, no one showed up, so the group scattered to explore. **Ross Baker, Ash Moza, Gary Davis, Ed Freiter, Steve Nickels, Matt Cyvas, Angela Stagg, and Arlen Isham** skied together much of the afternoon. **Harvey Heller** and **Linda Case** were somewhere else on the mountain. **Brigitte Florschutz** and **Kimberly Swanson** also were together. Most everyone came home early to watch the Super bowl and get ready for our welcome party in the hotel. Sports American provided a very nice spread of food for our party. We were disappointed the TV did not work in the conference room, so we kept up with the game score with a computer.

All week, TC **Arlen** had his GPS running along with a special watch to measure vertical feet, miles traveled, and number of runs.

Monday - Lake Louise - Cloudy in the morning and sunny in the afternoon. **Ross, Arlen, Ash, Gary, Ed, Steve, and Matt** did a great morning tour with the Mountain Host. We had 14,000 vertical feet by lunch. In the afternoon, **Arlen, Matt, Angela, & Ash** skied together while **Ross, Ed, Gary, & Steve** went to find moguls and trees. **Al Smith, Brigitte & Kimberly** were together. **Harvey** skied some with us while I think **Linda** took a lesson. The top run of the day for some of us was called Rock Garden. It was a blue run with a narrow approach traverse to get into the area, and then miscellaneous narrow trails through huge rocks. Amazing run.



Banff (Cont)

Ana & Cynthia were wandering around Banff someplace all day, probably spending money

Ana Smith did the research to find our evening dinner locations all weeks and did a great job. We went to the Elk & Oarsman for dinner, though **Arlen** forgot to tell **Kimberly and Brigitte**. They caught up to us at the restaurant.

Tuesday - Lake Louise - Cold in the morning today, but a blue sunny day. The group decided to change the schedule and go back to Lake Louise instead of Sunshine, since the snow was so good. **Brigitte, Al, Kimberly, Matt, Angela, and Arlen** went to the Larch area first, but it was cold, so moved back up to the sunny side. **Ross, Ash, Gary, Steve, & Steve** headed for Paradise Bowl and the back side. Today, we started talking about "Beer Fines" for things we do while skiing. This was the development of the series of categories used for our awards on Friday night. Yard sale, double release, longest slide, wrong lift, and lost equipment were a few ideas. **Ash Moza** had a "Longest Slide" on black polished Meadowlark as he went down, and slid from the extreme left side of the run about 400 yards down to the right side, head first then feet first, while missing **Steve Nickels** on the way down. **Steve Nickels** had a "yard sale" fall today. The run of the day was Double black Paradise Bowl, which had great snow.

Ana Smith and Cynthia Schneider did a full day Explore Lake Louise (10:30 am - 1:30 pm) walked around the grounds of The Fairmont Hotel and admired the Ice Sculptures that had been competed in the Tournament the previous week, and then went on the "Great Divide Dog Sledding" (2:00 pm - 4:15 pm), a dog sled ride over the Great Divide into BC.

Dinner was at Eddies Hamburger after time in the two hot tubs with wine. We had wine in the hot tub every day after skiing.

Wednesday - Sunshine - **Ash** left for home for business reasons. Today was another sunny day. **Brigitte & Kimberly** decided to go sight seeing at Chateau Lake Louise for the day. This was also a rest day for some of the others in the group. **Ana, Al & Cynthia** did the "Discover Banff & It's Wildlife" tour (8:45 am - 12:40 pm), then on to the Banff Sightseeing Gondola (5:00 pm)

Ed, Gary, Ross, Arlen, Matt, Steve, & Angela skied together some of the day. We actually found the Sunshine Host and toured the mountain with them for a couple hours in the afternoon. **Harvey & Linda** came later and skied together. **Harvey** made some of the runs with the rest of the group. The run of the day was "Shaken, not Stirred". Ask **Angela** who went through it with **Arlen**. **Angela** also slid down a black mogul slope leaving a ski for **Arlen** to pick up. Today was the day that **Arlen & Ross** were doing giant slalom turns and kissed skis at speed, but did not crash.

Much excitement at the hot tub. A older man passed out and EMS was called.

Nine of us went to dinner at Balkan's, a Greek restaurant. Someone came up with a new skiing term call a yellow feather. If you decided to not do a particular run, you would add a yellow feather. **Gary** dropped a fork & tipped over a glass at dinner and **Brigitte** was making paper confetti. Has anyone seen our mystery skier, **Cynthia**? She was going to evening seminars every night someplace in Banff.

Thursday - Lake Louise - Today was sunny with clouds with temperatures at minus 8 to 19 Centigrade. **Gary, Ross, Ed, & Steve** skied blacks & chutes. **Steve** was lost for awhile, but then was found. **Harvey & Linda** arrived later to join us for lunch and then ski in the afternoon.

Kimberly & Al skied together and had a great time. **Arlen, Brigitte, and Angela** decided to cruise the blues and greens. **Matt** took a day off. The buses run on time at Banff. The new road up to Lake Louise makes the bus ride seem short.

Al Smith left his belly pack at his locker at the end of the day, but fortunately virtually nothing of value was left in it. **Ana & Cynthia** did the "Johnston Canyon Ice walk (1:35 pm until 4:00 pm).



Banff (Cont)

Dinner was at the famous Bison Cafe with everyone except our mystery skier, **Cynthia**. Did she find a man in Banff or was it really evening seminars?

Friday - Sunshine - Everyone skied here except **Ross** who met Ski Banff host, Dave Spence to ski Norquay in the morning and then relaxed in the hot springs in the afternoon.

Ed, Gary & Steve topped off another day of moguls, & trees here at Sunshine.

Since most of the group skied with the TC **Arlen Isham** about the same amount during the week, the summary for the Ski Banff 2012 was about 151,000 vertical feet, 110 runs, about 250 miles including the lift distance, a max speed of about 45 miles per hour, and an average speed of about 9 miles per hour. Our maximum vertical was at Lake Louise on Tuesday with 29,540 feet, just over the height of Mt. Everest.

Misfortune caught up to us today, when **Linda Case** got a shoulder injury in her skiing lesson. It was later found to be a broken bone in her arm, back in Houston. She was a real trouper, going home with her arm in a sling.

Ana & Cynthia visited the Cemetery (10:00 am to 11:15 am). Special sights.

We all met for a pizza and various adult beverages in the Banff Aspen Lodge conference room that evening. After much conversation and great suggestions, we awarded the following prizes.

Yard Sale	- White stocking hat	- Steve Nickels.
Slide for Life	- Black bag	- Ash Moza
Worst Injury	- Neck Gaiter	- Linda Case
Biggest Whiner/ Paper Shredder	- Drink Bottle	- Brigitte Florschutz
Most Vertical Feet	- Pocket Medic	- Arlen Isham
Full Body Contact (Clash of Titans)	- Drink Bottle	- Ross Baker
First Fall of the Trip	- Hand Warmers	- Gary Davis
Lost Pouch	- Gaiter	- Al Smith
Restaurant Scout / Most side trips	- Black stocking hat	- Ana Smith
Most tree runs	- Hand Warmers	- Ed Freiter
Generous to Ski Instructor	- Green stocking hat	- Harvey Heller
No Falls (pushing to her own limits)	- Chevron Bag	- Kimberly Swanson
Most original places for snow	- Ski Band carrier	- Matt Cyvas
Badge of Bravery	- Drink Bottle	- Angela Stagg.
Mystery Skier / Dog Lover	- Neck Gaiter	- Cynthia Schneider

Saturday was a relaxing day for the group as we wandered around Banff in the shops, visiting the amazing Fairmount Banff Springs Hotel, watching some street hockey, and eventually left beautiful Banff for our return to Calgary and our evening flight back to Houston. **Ross** left early in the morning because he just "had" to go on to his next ski trip.

It was a fun week for all of us.