

Big Sky Montana—Home to America's Biggest Skiing®

February 26 – March 4, 2012

Thirty seven of us arrived in Big Sky to the best snow most had seen all season, and that was just the beginning.

Our first activity was the Welcome Party at the Base Camp where the Sunday fliers met up with Frank Adams (who drove) as well as the six land packagers who arrived on Saturday. We learned that a few of our early arrivals ended up at the nearby Summit hotel since the Huntley Lodge was overbooked. Ron and Roberta Rambin really appreciated their Honeymoon Suite and found a great use for the indoor hot tub...to stow their luggage! At the welcome party, our Big Sky resort representative, Katie Grice, provided some great mountain information not to mention the generous wine and cheese party. Afterwards, many were off to the hotel theater where we were able to catch the Oscars on the big screen. At the front desk, Roger was thrilled to learn he was able to snag a corkscrew, and then was surprised to later learn that his big bottle of Blackberry Merlot had a screw cap!



Most awoke early on our first day to head down to that famous Huntley Lodge breakfast with made-to-order omelets plus a huge array of hot and cold breakfast choices! Melinda and Dennis earned the first beer fine of the trip for forgetting their lift tickets on the first day! (Usually the beer fines are for double releases). Peggy Schillinger, Chuck Britton, Marty Kaminsky and Jill Nanney took the morning tour to learn the mountain and found it was especially helpful to understand how to avoid those "fun" runs like Snake Pit, Wounded Knee, Sticks and Stones and Broken Promise! It was a blue-sky day, a perfect day for a tram ride up to Lone Peak. So guess where you could find the Big Dogs...they were skiing the incredibly steep runs off the Tram. This famous and invincible group of 13, led by Keith Kirkman, included Frank Adams, Diane and Ross Baker, Bill Bomberger, Gary Davis, Jim Hodges, Dennis and Melinda Hughes, Beverly and Charlie Roberts, Nancy Schultz, Carl Webb. We all (well most of us) met for lunch at Lone Peak Café in Mountain Mall (our daily meeting spot) and enjoyed après ski at Andiamo Italian Grill with \$3 drafts and \$10 pizza!

The following day, while Frank lolled in the hot tub, we had an impromptu happy hour at Chet's in Huntley Lodge and got to "experience" the Crazy Austrians. While Nelson watched with amusement, Marti Turner got pulled onto stage to play drums with the band while donning a crazy fur hat. Then Peggy was drug out to the dance floor by her chair to join the chicken dance. And what Beverly wouldn't do for a new pair of shoes - she was awarded the Jagermeister flip flops (not to mention to the Schnapps shot/s) after she and Charlie danced the first polka. Later, the bus picked us up for the optional group dinner at Buck's T-4 in nearby Gallatin Canyon. Besides the quaint rustic atmosphere, we enjoyed a house salad, 14oz Ribeyes /local Montana trout, plus a yummy chocolate torte for dessert.

On leap day, our third ski day, most were ready to experience Moonlight Basin which was a lift ticket option. Even though Diane Baker "hip checked" Craig Campbell off the lift, Craig still hung with the Big Dogs for the day! It was also fun to run into them at the appropriate moment to take a picture of the entire group in front of "Bad Dog" run! Chuck Pena and Steven Ying created their own Survivor episode while in search of a steep powder run. They almost landed in a creek and took most of an hour crawling out - Chuck had to do snowboard chin-ups to escape. "Cost me three runs" said Steve.

On Thursday, March 1st, we awoke to 4" of fresh snow. A group of ten was off early for their pre-arranged Yellowstone tour. Dennis and Melinda Hughes, Stan and Daniel Kuper and Marty Kaminsky rode the snowmobiles; while Peggy Schillinger, Linda Kuper, Mark Monroe, Beatriz Gomez and Al Smith enjoyed the snowcoach tour. Back on the slopes, the Roberts family set a ski club record with 4 double releases in one day. Beer fines for the double releases were paid at après ski at Whiskey Jack's!

Friday was our next to last day for the main group, and while the Big Dogs were enjoying a very rare cruisin' run down Little Calf, a small group of "Little Pups" mistakenly went down Lobo Meadows which turned into "Stump Farm". Let's just say it was a four-letter run! Later, Chuck B. asked Roger "did you mean to wear your goggles sideways like that"? Since it was the last night for the Sat-Sat crew, we celebrated this fabulous trip with a S'mores party at the Firehole inside the Lodge. Jim Hodges and Dennis helped entertain the crowd while engaged in a big stakes checkers match. And we were glad to hear from Larry Thompson that his wife Cindy, coping with pneumonia, was feeling better and they both were able to secure an early flight home. Dave George who was also feeling a little under the weather earlier in the week, made an appearance and told us how he had gotten caught up on The Godfather movie/s.

Our last ski day on Saturday was epic, with 7" of fresh powder! Those who skied were thankful the trip turned into Sun-Sun so we got to enjoy this marvelous ski day! Keith continued to lead the Dawgs on his favorite runs - anything that started with a yellow caution sign. Janet McKenzie took a rare tree run and said "I couldn't have made it through if my chest was any bigger!" The Kupers and Marty enjoyed their run namesake, Mr. K, and Mark Monroe and Craig Campbell tried cross-country skiing. At après ski at the Carabiner @ Summit Hotel, we watched in awe as a girl in her wedding dress (without a jacket) took photos in the falling snow. Later that evening, we celebrated at Bev's final bash; our impromptu pizza dinner at Mountain Mall (although some folks like Mary and Bob Simpson celebrated their last evening in a slightly ritzier establishment!)