

Winter Park 2020

I don't know why SJSC Western trips always seem to start with flights that are too damn early in the morning, but they do. Our 2/29 leap day flight left Philadelphia airport at 6:00 am, meaning yet another 3:00 am wake up to get to the terminal at 4:00 am. The group of 58 made the plane for an uneventful trip to St. Louis and a 2+ hour layover before the final leg to Denver. Once in Denver we met up with Tracy C., Kori K. and Dave P. who had made their own flight arrangements.

After gathering our luggage and finally meeting our busses, we realized that we were half a bus short. Instead of 2 - 54 passenger buses, the bus company sent 1 - 54 passenger and 1 - 28 passenger! With a little cramming we got loaded up and made our way to King Super and Apple Jacks for food and beverages. With some more judicious packing, and the bus drivers playing luggage tetris while we went shopping, we were finally on our twisty turny way over Berthoud Pass and to the Vintage Hotel in Winter Park.



The hotel's bus boys did a good job at getting all of our luggage off the buses and to our respective rooms with the exception of Douglas C's lost boot bag. Thankfully that was found the next day after having been delivered to an Ohio Valley Ski Clubbers' room. Distribution of lift tickets and meal vouchers also went pretty smoothly with everyone coming down to the "library" for their tickets.

Ski Day #1 went off without a hitch as people took the cabriolet lift to the village for the short walk to the Gondola and other base lifts. Many people took it easy as the altitude took its toll on the NJ flatlanders. The forecast for snow for Day #2 had people psyched for a real western powder day. Everyone enjoyed the 5-8" of fresh snow and the reduced crowds of a Monday vs. the weekend. That evening was our Welcome Pizza Party. Our tour operator, Gloria Woods from Ski.Com joined us at the party and gave us some of the latest info on IKON passes for next year. Club president Terri C. also clued us in on some of the planned destinations for next year's trips.

Ski Day #3 was our day to visit Copper Mountain. The buses were loaded and on the road by our 8:00 am planned departure time. Tuesday's beautiful blue skies made for a great day in the leftover powder from Monday. A missing Geri B. helmet and a lost Andrew S. phone seemed to be the only casualties, but the week was young. The riders on bus #2 had a funny sight when Andrew S. hopped off bus #1 back at the hotel wearing only swim shorts and ready for the hot tub!! He got on the bus at Copper fully dressed in ski gear and seemed to transform when he hopped off.



Mike M. was a victim of the altitude on Day 3 with a trip to the clinic for some oxygen and steroids but was back to skiing the next day thankfully. On Ski Day #4 the casualties took a jump though. Harry S. checked into the clinic with altitude issues and was promptly transferred to a hospital in Denver for the remainder of the trip. But he wasn't the only one in the clinic that day. Trip leader Bill C. took a major fall on the way down from the top of the Panorama Lift and got a ride down the mountain in a Ski Patrol Sled (the first time in 47 years of skiing!). X-rays and an ultrasound showed nothing definitive, but the ribs hurt like hell. And forget about coughing because that felt like a chef's knife to the chest. Thanks to my ski buddies Laura R., Laurie C. and particularly my bestest bud Eileen M. for hanging with me in the clinic until my co-leader Laura C. got there.

Although Monday was the only snow day, blue skies and warm temps dominated the weather for the majority for the week. Of course the hot tub got a lot of use, as did the Seven Tap Restaurant inside the hotel. Many people took advantage of the local shuttle buses to get to the Village of Winter Park and nearby Grandby. Throughout the week there were also all sorts of races going on on the mountain that were very neat to watch. Downhill and moguls just to name two. We saw some very talented people coming down the mountain.

Besides the 62 of us on the trip, there were many current and former SJSC visitors and locals who met and skied with various groups. It was great skiing and drinking with John & Jackie M., Tammy Mc., John S., J.T. & Lisa, Gene Z., Andy M. and Terry & Lynne H.



Multiple SJSC members also took advantage of the Coca Cola Tubing Park that was right outside of our hotel. You could see people going down the tubes when you rode the cabriolet to the village every day. Terry C. was great and coordinated with a group of members who wanted to go and they had a blast. Friday afternoon saw a large SJSC contingent congregate at the SunSpot Restaurant at the top of the gondola for a great Happy Hour with food and drink specials as well as live music

by the Moffat Tunnel Band. In true SJSC fashion, we were by far the majority of the people there.

There were many new SJSC members on this trip and for some this was their very first trip with the club. Randy and Autumn S., Jay and Ellen M., Steven and Georgean W. just to name a few. We hope they had a great time and can't wait to see them on more trips in the years to come.



However, all too soon the skiing was over and the bags needed to be packed for the return to reality. And, of course, the buses needed to load up and leave the Vintage at the ungodly hour of 5:00am. We all loaded up without a problem since most people had put out their luggage the night before for the hotel to collect and hold for us. Thankfully Harry S. was able to meet us at the airport and finish out the trip with all of us. After a short delay the flight left Denver and actually landed a little early here in Philadelphia.

Thanks to all the great people on this trip and particularly those that helped out Laura and I. What is this Covid-19 virus stuff we are starting to hear about? Good thing our trip wasn't a couple of weeks later.