

SJSC Sunday River trip – December 11-14, 2015

Article by Harry West

Friday December 11<sup>th</sup> 12:20, looking for the Philadelphia Pretzel Factory on Rt 73 no RT 30 no RT 73. Damn GPS is lost again. Never did get the pretzels, had to settle for hard pretzels at Wal-Mart along with crackers, water, trash bags, movies, etc. – hurry up we're running later AGAIN!

Arrived at Ramblewood at 12:37 I see the bus is there and it's almost fully loaded with everyone's gear. I pulled up and Bob F, Bob W and Pat are at my car helping me get my stuff out and on the bus. I look around and there's really nothing to do. This is going to be a fun trip. Everyone is being real helpful and anxious to get on the way. We had a couple of folks show up after I did but at 1PM we were pulling out just as planned. Sweet!

We ran into some heavy traffic on the way up which was expected but the accident we ran into was not part of the plan. Our ½ an hour until our first stop turned into 1 ½ hours and folks were anticipating the stop to stretch their legs and get some food and for a few to catch a smoke. The balance of the trip was occupied by separating the bus into groups and playing trivia games. It was actually a lot of fun and it did what we wanted it to do. Pass time.

We arrived at The Snow Cap Inn at about 10:25. Everyone checked in pretty quickly with few exceptions, a key issue developed but we were able to come to a mutual agreement without any bloodshed, and off to the rooms we went. Breakfast was, at least for me, 4 cups of weaker than I would have liked coffee and an assortment of Danish, muffins, Bagels, cereal and English Muffins. Enough to get the systems started which is what we all expected. The shuttle ran every 30 minutes to the slope and back and to a person the drivers were as nice as could be. In fact everyone at the resort was extremely nice and very helpful. We had one driver take us to the gift shop at The Grand Summit and shut the bus down to take us in and show us around on Saturday then again on Monday he did the same thing at The Jordan.

As we all expected, the slopes coverage was thin to say the least. There were only 24 trails open but all levels were represented. Cold temps at night caused a little crust in the morning but by 9:30 the snow started to loosen up and the

skiing/riding was delightful. Most of us were off the mountain by 2PM as the snow was breaking down and it was becoming more difficult to hold an edge. But there were a few intrepid souls that closed the lifts both days of the weekend. I was NOT one of them. We all met at 6PM for the pizza party in the upstairs common area that was the brain child of Co-Trip leader Jeanine Clark.

After the party, we got on the shuttle and went to the Foggy Goggle for some adult beverages, a live band and fireworks. The fireworks were actually better than we could have expected. And the zip line was a blast. And what was the Food Network doing there? As we were leaving The South Ridge Base we found a Coke machine that was giving away free sodas for hugging the machine. Awesome!!! Even though I am a Pepsi guy myself.

All in all, except for Mary Ann falling victim to the bumped up blue trail at the end of her 90 minute perfect turns clinic, Saturday was a very good day.

Sunday started out pretty much the same as Saturday, deja vu all over again, same timing and conditions of the snow quality and the same quitting times for most of us. The biggest difference was the group went out to dinner together to The Matterhorn Restaurant. The food Network was there also. Were they actually following us? We got permission to use the bus and driver Tom to take us into town as the town shuttles were not operational. With no natural snow on the ground and very warm temperatures there weren't many people at the resort. Therefore a lot of the shops were closed and getting around was impossible without the town shuttle. The mountain shuttles only operated on the resort property. When dinner was completed we returned back to the Inn and sat around for quite some time to discuss the day's events and talk about how well we were all getting along with each other.

Monday morning was not a pleasant morning. Looking out the window I saw the fog was thick like pea soup. Many of us did not go out but went to the mountain to purchase some shirts and other remembrances then went to the market to get lunch for the trip back home. It rained a little and I took my unused lift ticket to guest services and got a voucher for another day. This might not have been the best idea. As Jeanine came back off the mountain and said it was the best day of the three on the mountain. There was no one on the mountain and therefore you

could fly. Andrew Z told me on the way home he got in 10,000 vertical feet in before noon. In wet snow that's sick!

We all got back to witness one of our members sitting in the hot tub with all of his gear packed and ready to roll. 😊 We took some pictures and said goodbye to our hosts and pulled out of The Snow Cap parking lot at 12:59. One minute early. It was an eventless 9 hour ride home. Everyone cleaned up the bus before exiting and pulled the gear out of the bus in record time.

Although we did not experience EP IC snow like I was hoping, we did get to get in some early turns. We got to experience 3 x 90 minute ski clinics and got our legs under us for what I hope is a great ski season, if El Nino would loosen its grip and the jet stream cooperate.

I've said it before and I'll say it again. I would go on any trip with this group again. They were great and I made some more good friends. Thanks to each and every one of you from the bottom of my heart. I would love to try Sunday again next year. Some said maybe in early January and I'm ok with that but I still like the idea of the December trip to start the year, Quebec maybe? We can discuss it at Bob Ws' pool party he invited all of us to.

Happy New Year's  
Harry West