

Steamboat Springs, Colorado Jan 13th-20th

Forty-eight members of the SJSC joined the Steamboat Springs trip Jan 13th-20th. The trip sold out on opening night with several people on the wait list. The Ski Committee expand the trip by 6 spots! Why is Steamboat so popular? Steamboat Springs offers a mountain with 10,568 ft altitude with 18 lifts (including a 6 passenger gondola) & 165 trails offering a diversity of trails for all levels of ability and an authentic Western town with restaurants, shopping & bars!

We flew on Southwest Airlines from Phila to Denver. Our members prefer Southwest airlines because there are no baggage fee\$. The scenic bus ride to Steamboat is over 3 hours – a bald eagle flew over the bus, we spotted some mountain goats and many ranches with cattle & horses along the way. Some were able to watch the Eagles game on phones/tablets & provide us with updates. We stopped for a grocery/liquor store stop along the way. Our bus was greeted by the Ptarmigan Inn's General Manager Ben. We rushed to our rooms/bar to watch the remainder of the Eagles/Falcons game. We celebrated the nail biting victory (except for Don M, he's a NE Patriots fan)!

The Ptarmigan Inn is located just above the gondola making it convenient to get on the mountain every day. We were invited to a Welcome Reception that included wine, beer, cheese & crackers. Ben gave us information needed to get us through the week smoothly. Thanks to Suzanne for helping distribute the lift tickets. A storage locker was conveniently available to us. The Inn also had an outdoor heated pool & Hot tub. Buffet breakfast every morning included oatmeal, cereal, yogurt, fruit, 2 types of scrambled eggs, pancakes, French toast, bacon, sausage, juice & coffee.

We each received 5 x \$10 vouchers for lunch to enjoy on the mountain or in the village. Bison Chili, Turkey Pot Pie, Soups & Chili in a bread bowl or a fresh baked cookie and hot chocolate.

Sunday evening we experienced Balloon Glow at the base of the Steamboat Ski Area. Six magnificent hot air balloons illuminated the Mountain Village. Spectators can stroll among the standing balloons or watch from the warmth of a slope side eatery.

Balloon Glow provided a beautiful site from the gondola as we uploaded to attend the Western BBQ Dinner on the mountain with LIVE music and dancing. We enjoyed ribs, BBQ Chicken, carved Roast beef & Turkey with all the fixins – mac & cheese, corn bread, mashed potato & a desert table that included "make your own ice cream sundae". Ava & Larry led the way on the dance floor with some good old line dancing! We surprised Ralph with a rendition of Happy Birthday! Stephanie was having so much fun that she didn't want the night to end!

The 44th Annual Cowboy Downhill was held on Monday afternoon. The Cowboy Downhill is a unique event which includes a slalom style race with a jump, a lasso challenge & then putting a saddle on a horse – all on skis/snowboard. The finale is a Cowboy stampede where all the participants race to the bottom. Both Cowgirls & Cowboys participated!

We all met for Happy Hour at the BRAU HAUS for 30+ draft beers, authentic German pretzels, Bavarian meatballs & pulled pork sliders. Steve R enjoyed some Happy Hour priced cold beers with the group.

Some of our club's EXPERT Skiers & Snowboarders – Chip, Liam, John S, Bobby, John Mc, Tammy, Geoff, Becky & Terry went on an CAT excursion in Buffalo Valley. John S came back with a fat lip – hmmm, he wasn't talking.

A group decided to snowmobile & tube midweek – Cindy, Joe B, Miles, Barb & Bob F enjoyed a fun day playing in the snow!!

Wednesday night 23 of us headed to the beautiful natural Strawberry Park Hot Springs about 20 minutes from our hotel. Bathing suits optional after dark – *isn't that so Georgie?!* Bev brought her waterproof camera and got some nice pictures of our group. Tony slipped on the icy surface but thankfully was not hurt. Rishi remembered to bring his flashlight as darkness set in quickly. The night sky provided a gorgeous view of the stars!

Thursday après ski was held at Bear Creek @ the base of the mountain with Live Entertainment – *HELL YEAH!* Roy & Steve C joined us for a Colorado Rocky Mountain High Happy Hour to end a great day on the mountain!

Thirty-two club members participated in a NASTAR race. Our Club Team received 1 GOLD, 6 SILVER & 13 BRONZE metals. Congratulations to all that participated; it was an exciting run down the course! Congratulation to the medal winners: GOLD -Rich K, SILVER - Tammy, John P, Dean, Chip, Don B & Rich R, BRONZE - Scott, Meg, Chuck, Joe B, Jeff Stev, John Mc, George, Liam, Bobby, John S, Marshall, Ava & Barb. Pat, Roy, Mare, Andrew, Joe H, Jeff Stn, Rick, Nancy & Ralph were all first-time racers! The SJ Ski Team is now ranked in the top 10% of over a 1,000 clubs!

Debbie pampered herself with spa treatments all week! Deb took a lesson to improve her confidence on the mountain. Joe H debated politics in the bar with anyone who would listen.

The Ptarmigan bartender introduced Debbie, Suzanne & me to Carmel Salted Bailey's – oh my! Andrew & Don M took many fantastic photos on & off the mountain.

Paula & Ken had an unfortunate incident while offloading a chairlift. Paula visited the local emergency room. Thanks to Don B for driving us to Walmart to get supplies for the patient. We all wish Paula a speedy recovery.

Many ended the week at the Truffle Pig for an upscale Happy Hour with smoked cocktails & gourmet appetizers. Gwen ran into some friends from another Ski Club and Geri enjoyed sparkling beverages! Friday night we were treated to a Fireworks display on the mountain. It was a great ending to a great week!

Thanks to the Ski Committee & JP Tours for putting together another fantastic trip!

Terri Corbo

Trip Leader