

**South Jersey Ski Club
Lake Tahoe March 4-11, 2017**

a.k.a the Honeymoon and D'Ascoli Family Reunion Trip



Photo courtesy of Jack Mazzeo – Mazzeo Studios

Our trip started smoothly, albeit early, at the crack of o'dark thirty. Forty of us left Philly on a 7 am flight, to be joined by eight more coming in from hither and yon. We connected in Phoenix and landed in Reno...on our second try. Heavy winds had our pilot abort the landing when we were about ten feet off the ground. Luckily, although it was a bumpy go of it, we landed safely on the second attempt. Don didn't have the same luck; as one of the other eight joining us, his flight was diverted to Sacramento due to the winds, landing in Reno after our bus had left for Tahoe. Only one luggage issue, which ended up leaving Kelly with a new ski bag to replace the one the airline managed to shred.

After a quick grocery and libation stop, we arrived at the hotel at 5:45, just in time to chug our two drink tickets before the 6:30 deadline. Our Heavenly rep clued us in on how to navigate the mountain and we discovered we were in the presence of newlyweds, Eileen and Jeff, who tied the knot the day before. Apparently we arrived just in time because those fierce winds brought in heavy snow which stayed with us the next few days. We would get close to four feet of snow in the mountains over the next three days.



With heavy snow and wind the next morning, the brave of heart headed out to ski. The gondola was closed so shuttles to California and Stagecoach saw long lines and waits to get to the slopes. Good thing there was a fantastic breakfast buffet each day to put some energy under our belts. Those of us who opted to shop instead found the nearby shops convenient. Several of us tried on Helly Hansen items to get the sizing right to use our \$100 gift cards for online purchases. After taking advantage of the 2 hour reduced price happy hour offered every day, we scattered to the various dining spots – and there were lots of great places to choose from including: Nephelle's, Isabellas, the Naked Fish, McP's, Artemis Café, Fire & Ice, the Lucky Beaver and of course – the plentiful buffet at Harrah's. With the snow so deep, we had to navigate canyons to access many of them.



Monday it was still snowing and blowing... what...skiers complaining about too much snow..say it ain't so. The diehards headed out again in the elements and loved every moment of it. Everyone got to share their stories of the day during the club happy hour party at the Stateline Brewery which was right next to our hotel. From 4-6 pm we enjoyed craft brews, wine, cocktails yummy wings, pizzas, jumbo onion rings, queso fries and other not good for you but delicious eats. It was a great event and an opportunity for everyone to get better acquainted and figure out who they wanted to ski with the next day.

Back at the hotel we had a large crowd playing a popular dice game that has been a club tradition for years – Crap Out. It's sort of a Yahtzee type game and since any number can play at the same time – many did and others became our audience and cheering squad.

Tuesday was our Kirkwood day. We had 41 of the group on our dedicated bus to ski another Vail Resort property, Kirkwood. The pass had been closed for several days because of the storm and had just opened in time for us; truly the snow gods were on our side. The snow depths at Kirkwood were indescribable; in fact Eileen G almost went off a cornice into the parking lot when she mistook a snow mound covering a condo as part of the slope. We had to look down at trail maps that had to be dug out to be seen.





Back to meet the bus at the Red Cliff parking lot we got to serenade our two errant members, Andrew and Gary for missing our 4 pm departure time. Back at the hotel Terri gathered a group to take advantage of her Harrahs card to get a discount on the buffet and after a group gathered to hear live blues in the casino lobby theater.

Wednesday we had our only injury of the trip, Ray misjudged where the corner of his night table was when he leaned down to pick something up from the floor and ended up with quite a shiner. While unfortunate for Ray, it was fortunate that it was the sole injury on the trip. The snow finally stopped and we had a glorious sunny day at Heavenly. The gondola was open and all took advantage of the great weather and conditions. Some of us found the Adirondack chairs at the Tamarack Lodge particularly comfortable as we crowd watch with drink in hand. We were all psyched now for our second excursion of the week to Northstar the next morning.

Thursday was another sunny day with true spring skiing conditions or as I like to describe it – Velcro snow. Our day started a bit challenging with our less than hospitable bus driver, DICK. (No, really, that was his name). Someone got up on the wrong side of bed and it wasn't any of the 48 people on the bus.



Once we made it to the slopes. Despite DICK's best attempts to keep us marooned in a remote parking lot, we had a blast. The sights from the slopes were spectacular lending to many photo ops. My highlight was meeting two of the mountain's avalanche dogs, Yuma and Micah, 8 month old golden puppies.

Yep...bought the shirt.

I've always been taught that bad behavior should not be rewarded, so I made an executive decision to repurpose the driver tip into a purchase of a couple of bottles of Jack Daniels Cinnamon Whiskey which was informally shared by all who gathered at the snow plow in our remote parking lot before our 4 pm departure back to the hotel.



Friday most skiers stayed local and skied Heavenly again. The light was flat but the air was warm so it was a good day on the slopes. For some it was a day off to do final shopping or take a walk down to check out the lake. Hard to believe we had been buried in snow just a few days earlier as the few mild days to put the snow in town to waste. Après ski we had our traditional leftover party in the breakfast area just outside the pool entrance. We finished up the libations that wouldn't make it back home and lots of cheese, chips, dips and snacks. Then it was off to pack and prepare for the next day's departure.

A much friendlier bus driver with a nice bus that had a working bathroom, showed up to take us back to Reno to start our journey home. A smooth flight, no lost luggage, flight crews that welcomed our club on every leg of our flights and decent boarding positions made it a pleasant end to a fantabulous week.



Thank you to everyone – you made this an awesome trip. You were fun, gracious, helpful and not a whiner in the crowd and I look forward to being your queen next year, same time. Renew your membership in May and SIGN UP EARLY. Wherever we're going, you won't want to miss it!

Cheers! Diane...da Queen