

Telluride aka To Hell You Ride

SJSC February 20-27, 2016 – submitted by Diane Kae



We arrived bright and early at the airport on Saturday, Feb 20 to start our journey to Telluride. I had a feeling this would be a trouble-free trip but didn't want to jinx it by saying it out loud. No drama – everyone showed up on time for the flight, no last minute cancellations, no weather issues - the luck of the queen was with us again. The journey was made even more pleasant for some of us when Jeff, our club United VIP, treated us to seat upgrades – Thanks Jeff!!!

When we arrived in Montrose, all luggage intact, we took the short 67 mi. bus ride, including a grocery/liquor stop and arrived at the Mountain Lodge in Telluride around 5:00 pm. We met in the main lodge, got our lift tickets and settled in to our first evening at 9,500 feet. Some like Suzanne had more trouble with that altitude than others as she was once again reacquainted with an oxygen supply.



Most of the group showed up for the mountain tour the next morning, bright sunshine and great conditions. We all had extraordinary hosts that extended the tour to 3.5 hours and took us as far as our ski ability would go, showing us the expanse and variety of terrain. Wearing our SJSC red buttons, we had several encounters with people who were from our area – turns out those buttons did more than help us recognize each other,

they were a real conversation starter. Deb and Mark found that out on a chair lift when they mentioned Hurricane Schwartz (channel 10 weatherman), which perked up the ears of their fellow riders who turned out to be from Mt. Laurel. Several of us including Joe and Cheryl enjoyed a delicious lunch on the patio of Tomboy Grill in Mountain Village – a perfect experience for this bluebird day.



Monday was a bit overcast but we welcomed it because we knew new snow was on the way. Linda H. and I bought our traditional souvenir of Ski Patrol avalanche dog shirts and continued on with Linda S. to enjoy the best bargain ever at the View Lounge back at Mountain Lodge - \$8 for a gourmet burger and Bulleit Bourbon drink! Word spread about this daily 2-5pm special – it was a real hit!

Between Mountain Village and the town of Telluride – there were plenty of culinary experiences to be had over the week. Steve, Don, Rich and John dined at the New Sheridan in town and they lived large eating at Bon Vivant on the mountain for Friday's lunch. Nancy and Jan went international eating tapas at the Village Table one day and then going for fondue at the Alpinist Goat on another.

But of course the most fun meal was our Apres ski pizza party at the Crazy Elk in Mountain Village. Pitchers of beers, lots of different toppings on the pies, generous wine pours and selfies with the Crazy Elk made for a great start to the evening (even the elk was wearing an SJSC button). And all that celebration helped the snow to start falling.

While some had a blast skiing in the snow on Tuesday, others decided to try some alternate activities. Pam, Lisa, Janis and Jinny tried fat tire snow biking along the river trail with a final destination of the Telluride Brewery. Several of us including the Lindas, Jim and I along with Suzanne, Donna and Chuck explored the town. At some point in the week Mark and Deb did a snowmobile trip to Alta Lake, and Joe B. checked out the historical center in town. Joe H. found time to buy a cool leather cowboy hat – looks like he's had it all his life!



Others, like new members Mike and Noreen, did some hiking to a frozen waterfall. Mike was prepared to try the paragliding equipment he brought with him but had to forego that idea due to some technical logistics.... something about wanting the air current to keep him aloft when he jumped off a mountain. And could this be the day that Joe took that photo of the "Bad Idea" sign in the middle of a treacherous trail that he spotted from the lift? We need to get a copy of that shot!



Wednesday was lots of fresh snow and a bluebird day – we obviously were in good favor with the mountain gods. Was this the day the out of control skier took out Mike, almost sending them both over the edge – to which a calm Mike suggested the guy should consider wearing a helmet in the future? And poor Jinny had to miss this great day laid up with a stomach bug for a few days which she unselfishly shared with her condo mates. And what better way to top off a great day of skiing than to catch happy hour at Allred's – the restaurant at the top of the gondola, to watch the sunset on the mountains and mesmerizing alpenglow. It almost made us forget our \$197 happy hour bill for 4 people – but those were good designer cocktails.

Thursday, Jeff was kind enough to coordinate those who wished to race Nastar. Chuck found out that while he legitimately earned a bronze...gold could be had at a price and apparently the value of gold was at an all time low in Telluride that day. The queen joined her condo mates Jim and the Lindas in renting a car to do the 257 mile San Juan Scenic Byway around Ouray, Silverton, Durango and back to Telluride – taking in the awesome sights along the way. Somewhere, Gary found time to practice his yoga, a clear goal for his full Telluride experience.

Friday brought another bluebird day – more skiing, soaking in the hot tub as the gondola passed over head, for Rich it meant navigating the free Galloping Goose shuttle in town to check out the brewery. As our ski week drew to an end we gave an opportunity to all to share what they hadn't consumed with a leftover party in the trip leader condo. Not



sure how we ended up with a full fridge and counter full of food at the end of a leftover party where the goal was to finish everything – but at least we finished the leftover pizzas from earlier in the week and put a serious dent in the libations including the Fireball and Jamesons!.

All good things must come to an end and this was surely a good thing. Ear to ear smiles, no injuries, and even a glimpse of a herd of grazing big horn sheep on the side of the mountain on our bus ride out. As always, Montrose was a “cluster” when it comes to checking in the baggage, which was particularly noted by Alex. At last we were all on the other side of TSA after watching the drug sniffing German Shepherd troll back and forth over ski bags in the long slow check-in lines.

You were a great group; so glad I got the opportunity to travel with you all – you made my job easy. I hope to run a trip again next year and see you all on it.

Think Snow,

Da Queen (aka Diane)

