

Taos Trip Report by Jim Robinson
January 7-14, 2012

By all accounts this was a wonderful trip which began on Saturday, January 7th. Our group consisted of 18 skiers/boarders. Fourteen of us met at the Indy airport for our departure to DFW where we transferred to a flight to Albuquerque and a lengthy drive to the Taos Ski Resort by van. Along the way we stopped once for a bathroom break and again for a grocery stop at a supermarket in Taos to stock up on supplies for the week. Four members of our group made travel plans of their own. We were pleased to have Dave Zolle, who travelled from Brookings, South Dakota, meet us at the airport in Albuquerque and join our group for the week. Loren Rasmussen was accompanied by Dave Adair and Jim Guitterraz for their 27 hour drive to the resort from Indianapolis.

Upon arrival at the resort, we all checked into the Snakedance Condominium Resort, a very nice ski-in/ski-out resort located in the base area and within a short walk to several restaurants and shops. We all stayed in 2bed/2bath nicely appointed condos. The resort hosted a reception for our group at 7pm on our arrival day to discuss the week's activities. At the reception we were treated with an array of cold appetizers and drinks followed by a presentation by the condo staff, mountain staff, and ski school. During the month of January, Taos offers 'ski week' consisting of 6 days of morning ski lessons by their professional ski instructors for only \$99. Most of the members of our group signed up for the lessons and were impressed. One of our members commented that it was a little humiliating the first day because this person thought she was a strong skier only to find out that she had areas upon which to improve! Anyway, everyone in our group seemed to have benefitted from the lessons. As one member pointed out, even the best skiers have room to improve. The \$99 ski lesson package is a real deal! Best part of the lesson package was the video- taping and the martini tree at the end of the week!

At the sign-ups in August, I heard several folks in the club express concern about the fact that snow might be sparse in early January in the southern Rockies and as a result opted to not join the trip. Well all I can say is that when we arrived at the mountain, their base was 41 inches and the second best among all the other Western ski resorts. To the best of my knowledge, this was the club's third trip to Taos in January over the past few years and on each occasion the snow pack has been good. We got about 3 inches of new snow on our first day followed by continuous gorgeous 'blue sky' days the remainder of the week. Lift lines were virtually non-existent and the mountain staff were all extremely friendly.

Our group met each day for lunch on the mountain to regroup and on several evenings we had dinner together. On Monday evening our group visited the Rio Grande Gorge and was hosted for dinner at the home of the resort managers, Roger and Diane, which was fabulous. On Wednesday several members of our group travelled into the city of Taos to dine and shop. Sue Johnson and Fred Feldaverd both bought new ski boots during the week! Thursday evening our group had dinner at the 'Bavarian' restaurant for german food (and a wonderful apple strudel with ice cream desert paid for by John Oberlies but big enough to be shared with nearly everyone)! Friday evening we had our pizza party at the resort with enough pizzas to fill everyone's belly!

We had three folks on the Taos trip who were new to the club. Charlie Emery, a new member from Greenfield shared a condo with four other guys who won the prize for cooking due to the culinary skills of Jim Guitterraz! The other three guys in the condo (Dave Zolle, Dave Adair, Loren Rasmussen) all seemed well fed as well! With 5 guys sharing the 'man cave' Loren Rasmussen slept on the sofa all week! It was a pleasure to have Glen Bohlen and Ginny Allen join the trip, two other new members who

regularly ski at Perfect North in the winter. It was their first trip to the Western Rockies and both agreed that Perfect North will always be fun but no comparison to the Rocky Mountain ski resorts. Glen and Ginny both skied on short skies and were a little insulted when their ski instructor suggested to them that they needed to get some real skis! A suggestion to which Glen strongly disagreed!

Fortunately nobody got seriously hurt on the trip although there were several close calls. Jim Guitterraz landed upside down on the moguls but his helmet only incurred a small scrape. Dave Zolle almost became a human bowling ball while standing side-by-side with some other guys when an idiot skied into him. I heard Frank Wilder say he took a pretty hard fall. Noli Bently did a face plant that landed her in the resort's medical facility with a suspected concussion but fortunately nothing serious. Noli also broke her bindings off-loading from the ski lift one morning and waved to several members of our group coming up the lift as she was riding the lift down the mountain to get repairs. At the Friday evening pizza party when asked if anybody took a tumble during the week, everybody's hand went up into the air.

Great part of the week was that overall snow conditions were good, everyone at the resort was very friendly, great lesson package for only \$99, temperatures were mild, and virtually no lift lines the entire week. Also, very few snow boarders on the mountain staff. Mike Wier, our only club member snow boarder, must have felt lonely!!

We departed by bus on Saturday morning, January 14th for home and along the way sang 'happy birthday' to Noli on the bus. Happy birthday Noli!