

Sun Valley 2019 Trip Report

I think we can safely say that this trip will become one of legend. From the travel snafus, to the exceptional skiing, and all the fun activities the group had along the way, we certainly made it memorable!

Saturday, March 2 dawned way too early for most of us as the 6 a.m. flight departure time required a very early arrival at MSP. Despite the early arrival, MSP was slammed with travellers and the wait line at the United counter ensured that most of the group almost missed the flight. Once everyone was safely on board, the announcement was made that the plane had a flat tire and there would be lengthy delay.

Faced with missing the connection in Denver, fearless trip leader Tim, with assistance of Bob & Chris, immediately sprang into action and figured out how to get everyone to Sun Valley despite the delays. (The rest of the group lunched, played games, bought shoes, talked and took walks, patiently waiting for the new schedule.) All would fly to Boise instead of Denver and a bus was arranged to Sun Valley. Through this, we had a wonderful group bonding experience that we are calling an "unplanned mixer".

The group finally left MSP for Denver, and due to the delays and de-icing, landed in Denver with zero minutes left on their connection to Boise. The group assigned Gary "superman" Heaser to run for the gate, leaving the rest to handle his carry-on bag. Gary made it and so did everyone else! Everyone made it to Boise and so did all the luggage, which is possibly a miracle. After this adventure, a relatively quiet and sleepy bus ride to Sun Valley finished off the journey. Everyone arrived in Sun Valley at 2:40 am on Sunday, March 3 (14 hours later than planned) and met up with the three group members who had come in on different flights.

We cannot say enough about the dedication and help provided by the staff at Sun Valley Lodge, particularly Pia on the front desk, and all the bellmen who worked all day and then came back in to work in the middle of the night to handle the luggage of all our very weary travellers.

Sunday, March 3 was a gloriously sunny day. Most went to ski, though some chose this day as a rest day to recover from the travel. We were joined by Felix, Sherry and Chris to bring our numbers up to the full complement of 25 skiers.

At the end of the day, we had a welcome reception hosted by the lodge and attended by several ski clubs that were enjoying the Sun Valley Lodge and Sun Valley Inn. We found out that our epic journey had already been shared with all the other ski clubs and everyone was very kind and welcoming to our club. After the reception, the trip leaders hosted a happy hour in their condo, very cleverly delegating the duties of food and party preparation to party host extraordinaire, Char, who eagerly accepted nacho making, bartending and food replenishing skills of helpful trip participants. At the Happy Hour we introduced the game we would follow all week, giving everyone in the group the goal of competing for Mardi Gras beads.

Monday, March 4 was another beautiful sunny day and almost everyone skied. Char, Gale, Angela and Denis went off to discover Dollar Mountain while everyone else enjoyed Mount Baldy.

Monday night was a night of Bowling at the historic and iconic Sun Valley Bowling Lanes in the Basement of the Sun Valley Lodge, built in 1936. Everyone bowled exceedingly badly, and had a great time teasing each other, and eating pizza and drinking beer. Mila had never seen a bowling ball before, apparently bowling is not the national sport of Russia!

Tuesday March 5 was the trip leader-sanctioned spa day so Angela and Gale went off to the Zenergy Spa, while others on the team either went to ski, or enjoy the town of Ketchum. The afternoon started to cloud over, foreshadowing the snow that would arrive on Wednesday. Tim managed to drop his gloves from the

chair lift into a difficult crevasse like area. Thankfully, Felix was able to ski down to retrieve them and Bob F. loaned Tim one of his gloves to help keep him warm while they waited.

Tuesday night was a group dinner at the Sawtooth Club. All we can say is WOW. The food was absolutely amazing. Several people barhopped in Ketchum after dinner, finding a couple of hotspots to return to.

Wednesday March 6 the snow moved in during the afternoon and the snow kept getting heavier all through the afternoon and into the night. A few folks in the group had arranged for tickets to see the Young Dubliners live on stage at The Sun Valley Brewery in Hailey. Others in the group enjoyed group condo dinners. We heard good things about delicious goulash and spaghetti.

Thursday March 7 was a grand snow day. Everyone said the resort doubled in size as so much of the terrain was so skiable due to the new snow. Thursday afternoon the sun came out and for a fleeting time there was epic bluebird skiing to be had. The late afternoon quickly got warm though and the day finished off with some spring skiing conditions.

Thursday night was garbage night. We did this one day early to accommodate a town wide art crawl of Friday night. Chris made his famous cheesy potatoes, we also had little smokies, wild trout, bread pudding and all the other great leftovers from all of the condos. It was this night we had our Rookie Initiation. We were blessed with eight rookies this trip. Joe, Frank, Nancy H, Nancy B, Chris, Bob, Jim and Melanie. We split the group into two teams of four for a rousing game of Prosecco Pong! The team of Joe, Jim, Chris and Bob narrowly beat the team of Nancy, Nancy, Melanie and Frank, even though Frank was a Prosecco Pong savant. Frank credited 5 years of post secondary education (apparently in advanced pong playing) for his skill. Prizes were awarded for the Rookies and other Mardi Gras bead-related accomplishments.

Friday March 8 dawned cooler and cloudy. Early in the day we had the only accident from the trip when Frank did not see the catwalk across the expert run in the flat light and fell on the hardpacked run breaking his collar bone. Fortunately, he was skiing with several of the club and they stayed with him, called the ski patrol, and helped the ski patrol while they prepared to get Frank safely from the hill. We can now report back to the team that Frank has had surgery to repair the collarbone and is healing very well.

Friday evening was a city-wide Art Crawl in Ketchum. The group chose to see a classic art studio and a modern art studio. The conversations on who liked which was very entertaining. After the art, we all retired to the Sawtooth Brewery so Silvia could have "elk burger and a baked potato" which she had decided would represent classic Idaho food. Since we all agreed, most of us joined her in the exact same meal.

Saturday March 9 was the day to return home. After a group photo in front of the lodge, we boarded the bus for the short ride to the airport in Hailey. There Frank left us to fly back to Sacramento, Sherry to Fargo and Chris on to meet another friend for more skiing. Most of the rest of the club flew to San Francisco to get a connection to MSP. The flight from San Francisco left two hours late, affording a few more hours of bonding. The planned midnight arrival became a 2 am arrival. With the time change that happened exactly at that time, it became a 3 am arrival. Everyone was grateful to arrive home because it was a very snowy night and more delays might have been possible.

All in all, it was a wonderful trip with a great group of people and some epic "travel stories"!

Angela and Tim