



KEYSTONE Trip Report **December 29 - January 5, 2008**

By Lou Sclafani

As the days and weeks approached our departure date many of us anxiously watched the weather report for Keystone. As the days got closer the temperatures dropped and the heavens opened up with plenty of snow. We expected great conditions and that is exactly what we got.

After doing spring skiing the last couple years it was interesting to see snow all over the ground in the Denver area. And that wasn't the only thing we saw on the ground. The floor of the Denver airport was still full of people sitting around waiting for a flight. You see it snowed so hard the previous few days the airport was closed and hundreds of flights were cancelled. These travelers were just waiting for seats to open up so they could fly out. Thus began our week of good luck and great skiing in Colorado.

After our ritual stop at King Soopers and Applejacks we headed off to Keystone where our bus was met by the staff of the Evergreen condos and they collected our stuff and showed us to our rooms. We had a variety of condos all roomy and comfortable. Later that evening many of us had our rental equipment delivered by Black Tie Ski service. If the rental shop isn't on site, this is the way to go. Delivered right to you instead of you going to the shop and hauling them back.

Sunday was a little overcast but the mountain was calling and we headed out for a day of fun. It began to snow that day and it pretty much snowed through Monday. By the time we got off the mountain Monday so much snow had fallen that the State closed the interstate and traffic was backed up at least 7 miles from the interstate into the town of Keystone. Traffic was at a standstill and the shuttle buses weren't doing much shuttling, mostly they were just idling forcing some of us to walk that last little bit to our condo. By Tuesday morning we learned that Summit County was essentially isolated from the rest of Denver and that thousands of people were stranded overnight necessitating the County to open shelters. No one was allowed to spend the night in their cars. The regular shelter reports given over the radio and TV reminded some of the Hurricane shelter reports we have experienced here. What did this mean to us. More Powder on the mountain of course!

Tuesday and Wednesday were blue bird days and the Interstate was opened Wednesday morning. That was good for us and many of us made plans for a snowmobile trip but this was near Copper requiring a complimentary and supposedly short ride. The ride was very slow due to the restricted number of lanes open and the number of crashed cars or cars stuck in snow banks along the way (I counted six). After some great snowmobile trail rides it was time to head back to Keystone for our scheduled sleigh ride dinner. This event has become one of my favorite parts of a ski trip. Everyone loves the sleigh ride, the food is always great and there is always a cowboy or two to entertain us with song and talk. On the ride back we bundled up with blankets and star gazed up through the clear skies of Keystone.

Thursday morning we woke to an air temperature of -20. One can only imagine what the wind chill was! This temperature kept a number of skiers off the mountain but for those of us who ventured out we got a fairly empty (for a Holiday week) mountain, ice on our masks and frozen cell phones. That night we all headed out to Dos Locos Mexican restaurant for a really good group dinner.

By Friday it was our last day to take advantage of the mountain. The weather was a lot like it was on Saturday and Sunday so we all took advantage and skied most of the day. That night we had a pizza and pot luck dinner at the indoor pool. What a great way to get rid of your left overs and get ready for the trip home. Black Tie came by the pool and collected everyone's equipment and we tipped them with a little of our left over beer. (It was a family trip).

Our timing could not have been better. By Saturday night a major snowfall was again hitting Keystone and both car and air traffic was affected. As for us, by then we were back in Sunny Florida telling