

2017 Memories

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Caledon

January 12, 2017

Everything was perfect. We had snow and skiing was absolutely divine... on December 17, 2016. Then came the rain and the freezing rain. And the warm temperatures.

It killed all hopes of have a great ski season. What conditions are to be expected after the Christmas thaw and the frigid cold temperature of the New Year day?

Really! It is absolutely unfair to allow me to dream about perfect ski conditions and to be brought back into reality of today's uncertain weather.

But I pulled myself out of bed on this grey, dull morning at 6 o'clock, convincing myself that if the skiing was not to be, at least I would reconnect with all my ski friends. Catching up on last summer's activities, on this year's ski trips, I said to myself, is enough to head out to Caledon. So, let's get going girl!

I was pleasantly surprised! The snow was coarse but great to ski on. It was even better than the spring-like snow since the steady near-zero temps kept it from melting away. It was a great morning of skiing.

Stewart was on foot, matching skier's ability to the instructors. Everyone was quite eager to sharpen their skiing aptitude. I did not know that I could also get a private lesson. Or as many as I wish. Or is it as many as I need???

And then came the rain! In January! On a ski hill! I had to break. And the stop was quite timely as the lunch bell was ringing all the skiers in. A warm and plentiful plate of pasta

was exactly the type of comfort food I needed to transition from the morning workout to the afternoon free skiing.

The Board of Directors, through the capable hands of Theresa, welcomed the 100 + skiers who braved the grey, dull morning to test the slopes. I could see the glimmer of excitement in the coordinator's eyes when they announced the Aspen and Sun Peaks trips were fully booked. I was pleasantly surprised to see the member's list in my inbox. The Board has stepped into the world of e-communication.

Of course, a weekly draw was done and of course, I did not win. But I am happy for the winning recipient.

It was time to get back on the slope for a few more runs before the end of the day. The rain had stopped but it was still a grey, dull day.

One can only hope that the sun will be at the rendez-vous next week at Craigleith!

Craigleith

January 19, 2017

I double-checked my email because there seemed to be some confusion as to where Skicousi was to meet this week. No... it is right – Craigleith it is.

But then I wondered why I would be so concerned... I ride on the bus. So as long as Howard and Pat (she's the bus organizer) know where they should be heading, I am to enjoy the worry-free ride.

We landed at Craigleith. (so the email was right, I thought to myself. Glad to know that Pat read the same email too!) In no time, the ticket was purchased and I was out on the slopes.

No rain – at least that was pleasant.

No sun – maybe next week.

Spring skiing conditions in January. I had to watch for some thin base on some of the slopes. But it still made for great conditions.

The lessons started on time with the instructors leading their flock to predestined slopes to improve abilities. I simply love those lessons. I always get some tidbits that I can improve in my afternoon free skiing. I'm saying that I am retaining the coaching but to apply... that's a different story!

At lunch, Cindy advertised the trip to Holimont. I really want to go. And I want the bus to be organized by Pat. Oh! How I do wish there will be a great turnout! Last year was a

disappointment and this is the only trip that is subsidized by the club. I remember the years prior and how much the snow conditions were perfect. How we danced the evening away.

In the afternoon, I saw a sign. NO... not a sign from heaven. A sign posted by the hill safety personnel, no doubt. 'Attention. Moguls ahead' on a beginner's hill. Hey! Not that I ski down this slope often but Craigleith had a small racing course on that hill and I wanted to check it out. That's my story and I am sticking to it. The moguls turned out to be packed snow from the slaloming of the skiers and could have been treacherous to beginners. That's how much the snow was granular.

I left the moguls behind and went to the other slopes to apply all the teachings of the morning that I had already forgotten. Before I realized, it was time to come in, change and get ready to load the bus.

Maybe the sun will be out next week...

Alpine Valentine's Party

February 10, 2017

I am in awe! There is this beautiful sun rising over the horizon. Has the ski gods answered my prayers and allowed me to ski a perfect day? With real winter snow conditions, temperatures below (well below) freezing? Having to dress warmly to protect myself against the wind?

It is! It is!

Alpine with its new club house is absolutely stunning. And what better place to celebrate Valentine's Day.

I pondered, sleeplessly on what to wear for Valentines... I do have red clothes but I could not decide on what to wear – you see, the Social Committee has sent out a notice asking to dress in white and red. So I decided to wear every piece of clothing that had a hint of red. And so did every member skiing that day.

It was breath-taking to see Stewart with his 'Heart' tie, Pat and Deb with their tutus (yes... they were on the hill doing their pas-de-deux so elegantly). And did you happen to see Willie with his tutu? There was a lot of double-takes from other skiers and it was a laugh!

But the clincher was in the Georgian Room where tables were a-glitter of hearts, kisses and out-of-this-world decoration.

One table (I believe it is the usual suspects) had an absolutely elegant set-up. Enough to make Cupid jealous. And it had so much food, it had commandeered a second table

just for the layout. These skiers absolutely deserved the prizes. However, the other tables were not too shabby – they were all exquisitely decorated. The place was so festive!

And the food... Everyone participated and everyone shared on the succulent dishes of a now traditional pot-luck. I had to pull myself away from this entire gluttonous offer to return to the hill and attempt futilely to shed the intake of calories from the chocolate and sweets.

The conditions were simply adorable. The snow was fast, compact and easy to ski. The slopes were well-groomed and though some ice showed towards the end of the day, the skiing was superb.

Alas, it came time to pack the equipment and get on the bus for the return home. More sweets were passed along the riders and I fell into a somewhat comatose sleep, blaming the sugar intake. In fact, it was the absolute perfect ski day that sent me into dreamland.

Oh! How this setting simply begged for more... More skiing, more sun... More fun!

Holimont, Ellicottville, U.S.

I am furious... I cannot make the trip. I have 'work obligations'! Really! Many members are opting in a 2-day stay in Ellicottville.

I am getting reports throughout the day on what is happening down there. I feel like a foreign correspondent reporting on the latest top story.

The conditions are absolutely marvelous. There had been rain and unpleasant weather all around but somehow, in the Holimont area, it turned to snow which made the trip memorable. The camaraderie is pushed to its limit with friendly competitions.

Everyone had a wonderful time skiing and DANCING! There is word, unconfirmed, of videos of footloose dancers. I simply can't wait to see those at Closing Day.

Thank you to Cindy who organized the trip. It was an evident success!

Devil's Glen

February 23, 2017

What?!!! Another grey day for skiing?!? The sun did attempt to peak through the clouds but it failed... There were too many clouds to fight off.

The conditions were not great either... It had rained earlier in the week and the temperatures had climbed. On top of the hill: slush, mid-section: ice, bottom: granular. I guess it provided for all-season skiing.

However...

The Skicousi members did not seem to care. The last scheduled lesson was a blast and soon it was time to participate in this year's theme.

It was MARDI-GRAS and the festivities were well underway by the time noon struck. Everyone had beads of some shape or form. And of purple, green and gold colours. They kept it true to a real Mardi Gras. But why those colours, I asked myself. It appears these colours represents faith, justice and power. Digging further, I discovered that it was so much more complicated. It was for metal (gold), royalty (purple) and coat of arms (green). Way to complicated to explain, so I decided to drown and down my findings with Bloody Marys!

Costumes were so elaborate. And table dressing. It came as a complete set. It was marvelous to see. I was just glad that I was not a judge to decide on the best costume because there were so many and so magnificent.

The Social Committee did a brilliant job with the day's organization. And the prizes which were donated by Skicousi's generous sponsors.

Of course, I was all excited, regardless of the poor conditions because it meant that I was leaving for one of the ski trips in a couple of days.

I trotted through the mud in the parking, leaving the resort behind and thinking that overall, it was another fabulous season. And I simply can't wait until next year when it will start all over again.

Sun Peaks – Kelowna B.C.

February 26 – March 4, 2017

'Hello folks! This is your captain speaking. We are heading in to Vancouver for refueling. The high tail wind and the airport socked in makes it impossible to land in Kelowna'. *(Well, I'm glad he had an alternate plan and Vancouver was willing to let us land!)*

That is how the Sun Peaks trip started. Or landed. Because we did land in Vancouver, refueled and received the OK from Kelowna to try to land as the weather had cleared up. I don't know what you think but when the crew announces that it will 'try' to land, I simply don't have a warm feeling. Either you land or you don't take off!!!

Well, the plane took off from Vancouver and landed safely in Kelowna. The schedule was behind by a mere three hours. Hey! We're on vacation, we're heading to one of the most spectacular resorts in the interior. What else could go wrong???

We made one stop for food and beverages... The adult-kind of beverages. And lo and behold, the liquor store is closed! Must have to do with the delay we encountered by landing where we should not have landed. Some pretty ingenious skiers did find an open liquor store and our driver Cal was good enough to drive us there. He must be a skier too and knows how important it is to replenish with liquids after a day of skiing.

We got to Sun Peaks in the darkness so the outstanding horizon revealed itself the next morning. And what a scenery it was! The mountain had done its best to have a fresh blanket of snow – just a little, enough to tease us. We're eager beavers so we were on the lifts at 8:30 and though they were not first tracks, they were pretty close to the real thing.

We discovered the mountain with the ski host on the first morning. An excellent variety of green and blue runs. As for the blacks, they were there too. Some groomed, some not. Everyone had a choice. As thorough as the ski host was in showing us this gem, we were biting at the bit to discover on our own.

We had a meet and greet at the coordinator's condo. Twenty-seven people eating pizza and salads, elaborating tomorrow's plan of action. The newcomers were instantly part of the group. As for the seasoned travelers, they shared their past experiences. It was a wonderful evening and a wonderful start to the week.

Some were fortunate enough to be invited to the Fondue and Night Skiing. They were taken to the Sunburst Lodge where they shared a Chinese Fondue, a Traditional Fondue and... a Chocolate Fondue. Then it was time to return to base... in pitch blackness... But these Sun

Peaks folks think of everything: each skier had a headlamp, a guide with reflective stripes and reflective poles brought them safely down.

Others were in line early (way early) in line for First Tracks. Off they went into the rising sun, gliding into 20 cm of powder in the runs of the Crystal Bowl. The sun made the snow glitter and it was a magnificent sensation of skiing weightlessly. They ended their first track with a copious breakfast at Sunburst Lodge.

And then, there was the famous 5-Mile Challenge. One had to go from the Top of the Mountain (after a 20 minute chairlift), glide down the 5-Mile run – without stopping! This was not for the meek, for sure! But all 13 participants faced the challenge with grace and succeeded. For their effort, Deb distributed Sun Peaks pins! A great memento for a tremendous dare!

We had some collateral damage and we can only wish a return to good health to the few who had to ease up on the intensity of the activities.

The return home was uneventful. The plane was loaded, the passengers seated. 'Hello Folks! This is your captain speaking. We have started our descent into Toronto and we ask that you return to your seat and buckle in'. *(Well, I was sad to hear that the plane did not have to divert to some exotic destination!)*

Next year's destination: Europe