



# LIFTLINES!

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The Most Fun You can have in Winter and Spring too!

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## Pre-Christmas Trip

By Michelle Rowan

On Friday night at 5:15PM as Evelyn and I were chatting at the Masonic Hall, we received a very pleasant surprise - up to the curb rolled the Hampton Jitney with Shawn and Adam. They were as amazed at no traffic as we were amazed to see them so early. When the balance of the trippers arrived, off we went. David Wallenstein treated us to apple brandy as we rolled up 6th Ave and other snacks were also provided. Adam took a huge detour between exit 16 and 18 on the Thruway due to a motor vehicle accident which shut down the highway. Thanks to great driving we arrived at the lodge right on schedule.



It poured rain in Vermont Friday so everyone was a little leery of the snow conditions. To our surprise, and relief, all admitted Sugarbush was quite good and had a very pleasant day. In the evening we started the first of Evelyn Konrad's birthday celebrations. She showed off her new skis, boots and carrying case. Sugarbush also welcomed her with a lifetime ski pass. Her children and grandchildren were arriving to continue the celebration later in the week.

The trip had many wonderful guests. An Aussie who Rafael chatted up at a running race. A couple who was at an AMC event and heard about Miramar. A few who found us on the web. Three brand new beginners using the Huntley program were among them.

Sunday we went to Killington. No lines, snow making and excellent weather made all happy. The entire group met at the lodge at the peak for lunch.

2 folks in our group got lost at the end of the day. The lifts closed. Instead of waiting for a shuttle to bring them, the bus drove over to Bear Mountain to pick them up. This delayed our departure by an hour.

All in all we were quite the merry group on our trip back to the tri state area.

## January 4-6 Bus Trip

### By Arthur Cadet

The New Year started with promise for twenty-four skiers from Miramar and guests on Friday, January 4. A record of sorts was established by our expert motor coach operator Adam, who piloted our bus to a same-day arrival at the lodge of about 11:45 PM. An on-time departure helped. The early arrival no doubt provided more sleep for the first day of skiing.

Carolyn's breakfast added five miles per hour for all skiers. Most of us went to Sugarbush, but four skiers went to Mad River Glen. At day's end they reported excellent conditions, interesting trail layouts, and no lift lines. Allison rented a pair of Dynastar skis at Mad River, which she liked so much that she plans to buy a pair.

By the time cocktail hour started, our fire starter Adam was thwarted by heavy winds into the chimney which blew the embers into the house, so it took a second effort to clear the smoke and restart the fire. Steve had rave reviews for the in-house martinis. Dinner was Carolyn's lasagna and Italian sausage, followed by ice cream cake. Pursuant to club policy, we were allowed to turn on the TV in the lodge to watch playoff football. Actually very few viewers.

As a consequence of predatory pricing at Stowe, we skied Sugarbush North on Sunday. The nice thing about Mount Ellen is that the bus can drop us off very close to the base lodge, ticket office, and lifts. Upon arrival, however, we were scolded by the guest services manager for dropping off our crew sixty feet too close to the facilities. Hospitality, indeed.

Springlike weather on Saturday was contrasted with a blizzard on Sunday. It snowed all day, with winds of up to forty miles an hour. Whiteout conditions were witnessed. Renata reported not only being blown uphill by the wind, but also being blown downhill past the lifts. Nearly one foot of snow had accumulated by the time we left.

Allison and Conrad recommended the \$17 buffet at Rumbles, across the way from the base lodge at South. They also enjoyed skiing the trees in Inverness Woods at North so much that they skied it three times. On one of their trips they spied and photographed a white rabbit, which they proudly displayed on their phone.

Sandy, our elder statesman, was accused of chauvinism for ditching Richard and Amir in favor of Kim, Bonnie, and Renata. Wave of the future, ladies???

Neil gave some thought when asked for his impressions as a first time guest. His reflections are familiar but bear repeating: (a) members socialize with everyone and do

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Miramar Ski Club is a not-for-profit organization that owns a lodge in Waitsfield in the Mad River Valley of Vermont's Green Mountains. Miramar runs year-round programs and trips centered on outdoor sports and activities.

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not isolate with old friends; and (b) assigning everyone a chore helps guests to engage with members and other guests, and provides a good idea of what makes for a successful trip and lodge.

On the return trip, a splinter group called ahead and dined at the Outback, while the rest of us ate at the Chinese buffet. For the balance of the ride we were treated to *My Cousin Vinny*. He won his case.

## January 11-13, 2019, 2-day trip by Liz Field



The January 11th two day weekend trip was wonderful! Not only was it completely sold out (and included 22 guests) but it was superbly led by Gail and staffed by Rafael. They were so organized and fun and led a terrific weekend! On Saturday we headed to Sugarbush where all trails were open and despite the extremely low temperatures (our wake-up temperature was announced at negative 6 degrees) it was a lot of fun and very nice conditions (there

had been snowfall in previous days too). The Saturday at Sugarbush provided excellent skiing and the stories at lunchtime, on the bus ride home and in the evening reflected the great experiences. A group ventured to Ole's and I enjoyed hearing accounts of cross-country skiing, snowshoeing and fat tire biking. And all three sports done in the same day by several individuals – impressive!

Saturday evening was lively, and a fun game of left-right-center was introduced to some for the first time, and won by Ruth! Socializing and dancing were also on the agenda and I enjoyed checking out the dance moves of some of our members who have taken lessons and displayed





some of their dancing expertise and shared some pointers!

Skiing at Killington on Sunday with the Club was a first for me and very enjoyable. Thankfully, the temperatures were warmer than Saturday and the conditions were still wonderful. There are multiple mountains and lots to explore and try there. From conversations at the mountain and on the bus, all who skied there seemed to really enjoy Killington that day.

I hope that all the upcoming trips for the 2019 season are completely filled up and have such a fantastic and fun crowd of trippers!

Loved it!



## **My . . . MLK Trip**

### **By Evelyn Conrad**

Both Tom Fleming and Kim Lovett (this time acting as Tom's staff) are the kind of group leaders who literally spend hours in the wee mornings up at the lodge, trying to figure out the day trip that will make everyone in the group happy. The MLK weekend was a challenge on that score. Tom had considered Smugglers' Notch for the second day, but we were expecting a snow dump of many feet both overnight and on Sunday, and that was likely to make the local roads pretty dicy. I really wanted Smugglers Notch, before that family mountain, the other side of Mansfield, gets taken over by Vail, which seems hellbent on owning the best of Vermont and then gouging the hell out of us as they have done at Stowe. Mercifully, Adam, our wonderful driver, is game for anything, and the anything was something else. After dropping us, the downhill people, off at Sugarbush, the bus took the cross country people and snow-shoers to the Mansfield Sport Center, which, I must admit, is pretty much in a class by itself. Was it worth four hours on the bus? It was for most of those who love Mansfield as I do.

Back to the snow conditions and the downhill folks at Sugarbush. Let me tell you, everyone was gung-ho about the soft, dry snow that was covering the roads and the valley, and which brought record crowds to Lincoln Peak. Sandy Geiger took off with Bill Epstein, hell-bent on getting the most out of this Aspen snowfall in New England. Tom told me that "this is the kind of snow that makes even lousy skiers look good." "Them-thar" words were just right for me.

Anyhow, it still takes me tons of pain, outside help, and some twenty minutes to get in and out of my new Lange boots, but they are comfortable like slippers and responsive to control

once they're on. As for my new skis, I can't stop raving. But I figured I'd play it safe for the first run and take the Gatehouse chair for an easy test of this "champagne snow," that had everyone at the lodge screaming in ecstasy.

Well, first my left eye goggle fogged up. This despite the fact that I had made damned sure to have the goggles fitted on skin, not on fabric or hair. Right? Then, a field of white opened up before me, without a track in sight. Did I tell you that I love following, both in downhill skiing and in sailing? Unlike any other activity in life. Well, in lousy form, I did get to the place where the trails divide. There was a five or six-year-old kid standing to the right of the first hill on Pushover, screaming his head off, while the Sugarbush teacher tried to coax him down.

"I won't!" He or she, the kid that is, screamed. "I can't! I don't!" I looked at the unbroken swells of white and felt like standing right next to that kid. "I don't! I can't! I won't!" It seemed forever, but the teacher finally got the kid to snowplough down behind her, but I was still standing there, and I wasn't screaming. I was just praying. And doing a lot of talking to myself. Of course, the right eye goggle had also fogged up by then, but I told myself that I knew this trail like the back of my hand, and my skis would just find their way down. They did, because I'm here telling the story.



I also got some passers-by to step on my releases, took off my skis, and swore never to try powder again. But you can't quit for the day after one lousy run, can you? And, by the by, most of my ski buddies told me at end of the day that (1) their goggles had fogged up; (2) they could not see three feet ahead; and (3) it had been heavy going.

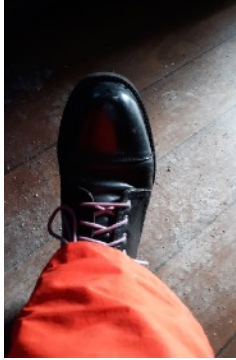
So, I signed up for the two-hour guided snow shoe tour of the mountain, warning them that I might not last more than an hour. I was the tour. My guide was saintly Tim. He kept praising my technique and I would not have dared to cut the tour short. By the way, it was pure heaven, just gorgeous. A trail down and up the mountain barely marked in the snow, but certainly well marked with signs on the trees. Well, just to let you know, it took me three hours to do the two-hour tour, but I did it. I also was so bushed, that I fell in the snow right in back of our bus, in sight of one and all!

That's where Tom and Kim came in: They took pity on me and let me beg off my usual cocktail snack duty for the night. You can judge how tired I was: It was nearly 6:30 when I came down for my glass of red wine, and I did limit it to one glass, for fear of having my head fall in the soup.

P.S. Next day, Killington, I dressed for New York. Many of those who skied regretted it, because there was an Arctic wind, and the snow was heavy and new and fresh. Anyway, to other old Miramar skiers, Killington lets you ski for free from age 80 on. Can you imagine, I wasted ten years!!!

## January 25th Weekend

### By Michelle Rowan



1. The trip leader, Tom Kaniewski, dressed for his role.

2. Pre-wake up coffee klatch with Tom Kaniewski, Michelle Rowan, Nancy Rosenthal and guests.



## Stowe Rope Evacuation

### By Chip Martin

So, guess who got rope evacuated off the double chair at Stowe? Yup! I was on the double because the Gondy and Quad were closed due to very high wind. I run and I got stuck for well over an hour! Here's a photo of my chair partner being lowered down. At least I got a free lunch out of it!



## The Four Day

### By Evelyn Conrad

It turned out to be one of the very best four-day weekends ever, partly because of trip leader Sharon Lieberman's and her staff Ruth's and Ellen's determination that we would not miss out on anything, and because of the best skiing conditions in years. Of course, it didn't start out ideally for me: Because of the wind at Sugarbush, I submitted to abject cowardice and did not ski on our first day. But I made up for it on the second, when we actually went to Smugglers' Notch, a treasure I'd been hearing about for years



from Cousin Paul Ehrlich, and he was right. The skiing was terrific, and the place has the warm welcome and friendly laid-back atmosphere that used to characterize Vermont ski resorts. It's sort of the Okemo of the north, a family ski place, still cheap compared to other famous Vermont ski resorts, but likely to change if or when Vail takes over. The local skiers seem to have mixed feelings about that likelihood, although faster chairlifts would certainly be welcome. And the chance to ski over to Mansfield isn't so shabby either.

I made a resolution, after a full morning of skiing, and return to the slopes in the snow showers after a quick lunch, until my goggles fogged over: If I was to ever write another Lifeline report, I had to get back to skiing blacks, so that I could report on the activities of "the Miramar grownups." After all, who gives a damn about an old lady on easy blues. Bushed from my unusually rigorous activity on the slopes, I crashed at 6, without dinner, which was just as well, because after the Friday slothful day of no skiing, I couldn't close my white ski pants at the waist. Back to the diet.

On Sunday, Sharon had Adam drop off some 13 gung-ho skiers at Mad River, one enthusiast for few amenities at Mount Ellen, yet thanks to an energetic Sugarbush sherpa who got me to the ski school at Lincoln Peak, five minutes before 10 am, where I signed up for a clinic. I turned out to be the clinic, and got a super great lesson and tons of good skiing with Helen, my instructor, in my effort to get back to blacks. . . "easy blacks." After my innumerable, and apparently pretty good runs, down Hotshot, Helen said, "Sleeper?" My chance at last: "Sure."

Helen, "The chute?"

Me: "Of course!"

Well, it's been around four or so years since I last did Sleeper, and I had not quite remembered how steep the chute looks from the top. And, like a jerk, I forgot to keep my eyes just on the very next turn. Of course, conditions were close to perfect. My skiing, not so great! I did ski ahead of Helen, but half-way down, after a bad left turn, I did the rest of the chute on my behind, ski flying off, pole flying off, and me shouting, "I'm fine! I'm fine!" fearing that Helen would have a heart attack, seeing the headline before her eyes: "Sugarbush ski instructor kills old lady on top of mountain!" But Sleeper is far from the top. Well, Helen helped me up, I hobbled down the two or three feet to the place where the chute-alternative trail meets Sleeper, where I got my skis on again. Rest of the journey was tons of fun and totally uneventful. Only contact I had with the "Miramar grown-ups" was at late lunch, where I urged Kevin, Freddie et al. to go to Sleeper, because conditions were great! On Presidents' weekend, I hope to do that run entirely on two feet. Oh to be eighty again!

That night, Sharon arranged for dinner to be served on tables huddled before the tv set for all those who had to watch the SuperBowl, which did not include Vera and her terrific son, Misha, both of whom joined our table and turned their back on tv. Well, in Europe, from Portugal to Russia, "football" means "soccer," not the body-to-body carnage that we tend to cheer. Me, not mad about it either.

## **Not exactly the weekend I was hoping for!**

**Text by Phil Caracci with photos by Ruth Yashpan**

I decided to call the Feb 8-10 weekend my “birthday trip”. I’ve been doing this for over a decade; select a weekend near my birthday and encourage a lot of friends to sign up. I highly recommend doing this if you have a winter birthday because it is so much fun! 48 trippers headed north as the rain was coming to an end in VT. Yes, Friday was a rainy day just where we wish it wasn’t. Daytime highs that were near 50 degrees were hovering near zero by midnight setting up the classic worst-case scenario. The rain-soaked snow had been transformed into the dreaded Vermont Ice! And there would be no time at all to make snow to cover it either.

These conditions aren’t beneficial to anyone but maybe racers. And by coincidence... this was Club Race Day!

The NASTAR course set up on Racers Edge at Sugarbush looked an awful lot like an Ice skating rink on a slant. Several racers slid off the course throughout the contest but it is a fun event and everybody was careful not to get hurt. I should mention there also were wind gusts that blew people backwards at times and the real-feel was around 2 degrees. But hey, it was sunny!!!

Trip Leaders Ruth & Ted encouraged everyone to dig deep and find their inner 60’s fashion to wear Saturday night. Some people really went all out and Kim won the prize for the best outfit. Overall the music, decorations and costumes made it a fun party for our 16 Guests and 32 members including 3 brand new



members doing their first trip as a Miramartian.

On Sunday the bus rolled south to Killington. “The Beast” did a fabulous job getting the intermediate and beginner trails back into some sort of skiable shape. There was a layer of ice but it was covered on many trails by what looked like 3+ inches of man-made snow. It was again a beautiful sunny day. I do not know Killington well and opted to follow a new member and a G2 as we skied across the trail map from right to left and







back. I was having a great day getting to know the mountain better and getting to know these two women too.

Because we are much farther south than our other resorts we had the luxury of skiing until 4:30 but just after 2pm I decided this is going to be my last run.

And it was. As it turns out it was the last run of my ski season.

I hit

some ice within sight of the base lodge and went down and rolled and in the process twisted my right knee damaging virtually every internal component.

I'm not going to dwell on how bad this is. Actually I don't really know the answer yet! But what I do know is that every single person came up to me to ask what they could do to help. Some carried my skies, others my boots, I got a ride from First Aid to the bus and had all the help I needed to get in a taxi and head home. When your ski day is at its worst; Miramar is at its best. I really appreciated the kindness!

I tried to be philosophical about the injury. There are so many people dealing with more serious conditions with almost no chance of improvement. How could I get depressed over a setback that is probably measured in weeks? I won't let this beat me. See ya next season...

June 8, 2019 update from Phil: It's about four months to the day from when I got injured. Yesterday I biked for 21 miles; earlier in the week I ran almost 5 miles and I ran up 75 steps coming off the #7 train at Grand Central. A day later ran down the steps too. So while I can't say how this will translate to skiing I am optimistic! I opted NOT to have surgery so this is all with a full tear of the ACL treated only with Physical Therapy.



# MIRAMAR SKI CLUB RACE

Results for: 2/9/19

## A Race: Women

Place	Name	Best time	Hcap	Adjusted	NASTAR
1st	Ruth Yashpan	47.00	-5%	44.65	
2nd	Lauren Franck	47.98	-5	45.58	
3rd	Tamara Liechtenstein	53.51	-10	48.15	

## A Race: Men

Place	Name	Best time	Hcap	Adjusted	NASTAR
1st	Emri Cumali	46.46		46.46	
2nd	Rafael Mellace	52.78	-5%	50.14	
3rd	Marc Parenteau	53.51	-5	50.83	

## Invitational: Women

Place	Name	Best time	Hcap	Adjusted	NASTAR
1st	Allison Dees	38.31		38.31	<b>Silver</b>
2nd	Rebekah Newman	45.32	-5%	43.05	
3rd	Azra Krek	43.67		43.67	<b>Bronze</b>

## Invitational: Men

Place	Name	Best time	Hcap	Adjusted	NASTAR
1st	Don Leib	39.59	-5%	38.31	<b>Bronze</b>
2nd	Edward Pitt	50.08	-15	42.56	
3rd	Phil Caracci	55.43	-10	49.88	

## Super Invitational: Women

Place	Name	Best time	Hcap	Adjusted	NASTAR
1st	Karen McFarlane	44.30	-15%	37.65	<b>Silver</b>
2nd	Colleen Curry	39.16		39.16	<b>Silver</b>
3rd	Ann Cooper	43.82	-10	39.43	<b>Silver</b>
	Renata Tenenbaum				<b>Bronze</b>

## Super Invitational: Men

Place	Name	Best time	Hcap	Adjusted	NASTAR
1st	Chip Martin	38.16	-5%	36.25	<b>Silver</b>
2nd	David Wallenstein	44.22	-5	42.00	
3rd	Shawn Grand	56.28		56.28	

## **Martin Luther King Holiday Bus Trip**

### **By Evelyn Conrad**

What an incredible three-day weekend! Absolutely glorious conditions in a whole season of exceptional snows! I think we all skied more than usual, because of our enthusiasm, and some of us were pretty bushed by Monday, when we arrived at Mansfield in another snow storm.

I used the snow as an excuse to “ski Spruce stores,” and buy stuff I do not need nor should spend money for. But my legs were tired from two days at Sugarbush. When we all gathered in the main lodge cafeteria (most of us by 2 pm, even though the bus was not expected to load until 3 pm!), confessions of being spent and out-skied were heard along with the thrill of an exceptionally good mountain, without ice showing up yet on most of the Mansfield trails.

The cross-country people (only four this time!) were overjoyed and enthusiastic about the Mansfield Sport Center, which I also absolutely love! They got on the bus all smiles and not even appearing tired, because their Sunday stop at Smugglers’ Notch had not been much of a challenge.

Many of the downhill skiers told me, Sunday night when cocktails and dinner were scheduled for a half-hour later because of the long bus trip to and from Smugglers, that they were glad that they had gone to Smugglers, but once a season was enough. Most talked about the slow chairs, which are very slow indeed. The trails are good and conditions for downhill were excellent. But they were darned good at Sugarbush too, and our first-time guest, Blythe Austin, a lovely skier and lawyer (Stanford Law School 2012), were glad that we had taken the pleasant public bus to and from, and enjoyed Sugarbush (me!) and Mount Ellen (Blythe!). I took a clinic with Monique, a young mother and Boston lawyer, who wanted the same thing I did: someone whose tracks we could follow on more challenging stuff than Hot Shot. What we got instead was a stream of technical stuff that she did not need and that knocked me back practically to snowplough. But we did go on Jasper, which was great, and we met by sheer luck on the lifeline to Hot Shot, delighted to be off and skiing without the interruption of endless technical explanations; I think I’ve had clinics for this season. I’ll just finally find a ski buddy, all blues except when conditions are as extraordinary as this year, then easy blacks like Waterfall.

Miramar will find me someone.

Anyway, on our first day, I found the snow nice and packed in Sugarbush, but the all-day folks said that the wind did take off the snow and reveal some ice in the afternoon. By then, I was on my second mountain snow-shoe tour, again with Tim, my sensational guide from two weeks ago. This time, I bugged off after two hours because of a hideously painful big toe on my right foot. We got onto the Sleeper, in snow shoes, and Dave, from



the rescue team, came up with a sled to take me down. No way!!! But I did get to ride a snow mobile with Chad, and that was my first, but not last. What a blast!

On Sunday, the Sugarbush conditions were so good that, after that couple of hours of misspent clinic, I went back up. Even near two o'clock, the light had not flattened, and there was absolutely no ice, at least on Hot Shot.

This tale of our Presidents' weekend would not be complete without at least a mention of the wonderful, congenial bunch, both members and guests, who enjoyed Kyung Lee's guitar and singing in front of the fire on Sunday night. What a totally "gemutlich" evening. He skis too far beyond my skills for me to judge that, but let me tell you, he plays a helluva a guitar and has a warm, lovely voice, and knows the songs that Gayle Tuzman and others joined in singing that night. What a totally ideal weekend, and what nice guests we had as well!

Hey, guys, this was the year to ski as often and as much as humanly possible. The conditions and the amount of fresh snow were never better, at least in the 20 years that I've been a Miramar member!

## **March 3 and 4, Two Day Bus Trip**

### **By Evelyn Konrad**

In an unusual season for Vermont, and anywhere in New England, with the exceptionally large snowfalls of "champagne snow," last Saturday, the first day of the two-day weekend led by Tom Fleming, was nevertheless a standout: absolutely superb conditions, fast snow, no ice until mid-afternoon, and an unparalleled blue sky with crisp, beautiful sunshine! We had a rather large group, with many guests, and all of us enjoyed that day at Sugarbush beyond words.

My own group consisted of new member and son Robert, as well as his daughter Sophie and his niece Madeleine, recently returned from a year of tri-lingual journalism in Berlin, and Rob's good friends, Harry and Christina. Maddie, who had been at the club one Christmas when she was eleven years old, has been an excellent skier, but this was her first time in ten years. She skied the first three runs with me on Hot Shot. After that, I urged her to ski at her own speed, well beyond my middle-blues level, and join Rob and Sophie on the blacks. She did, came back to the lodge suitably tired, having had a great time.

There wasn't anyone who had less than a wonderful time.

Day Two was at Killington. Mindful of the storm predicted for New York starting midafternoon, Tom had the bus leave the lodge at 8:15 a.m., and both members and

guests did make it on time, so that we got to Killington by 9:15 a.m., in time to enjoy a full day of skiing. The weather was not as spectacular as it had been on Saturday, but the snow was fast and the conditions were great. Killington, with its five mountains, is large enough to offer every type of skiing that anyone might want.

Like an idiot, I had decided not to ski, partly because I'm not that fond of Killington, and mostly because I had had a spectacularly bad last run on Saturday, and had been awakened a couple of times during the night from some most unusual stiffness in my back. I did take two Advils, which would probably have worked fine if I had had patience. Instead, I walked around in the slush and snow searching for any two-hour hiking or snow-shoeing tour or trails, finding none of the above. (By noon, I was driven to drink by boredom!) I went to the Killington golf course, where I missed a snow-shoe tour by a few minutes, but frankly, the thought of snow-shoeing around a golf course was not very appealing.

I did discover another "winter diversion," which dares not call itself a sport: tubing or something like that, surely not intended for anyone over ten. The participants sits in the middle of a huge inflated rubber tire and slides down a moderate hill, only to be pulled back up, so that he/she does not even get the exercise of dragging the damned tire uphill.

Frankly, the only other "dumb sport," in my view, is grass-skiing, which I discovered with two of my four kids one summer in Vermont. It consists of getting tiny tractors put on one's shoes or boots and then making "ski-like" turns going down some grassy rocky slope. Well, never mind. That dumb activity appears to have been invented in France.

Enough about such sidelines, but there's one thing I know: Next time, when in Killington, I intend to ski, even if I have one arm in a sling!

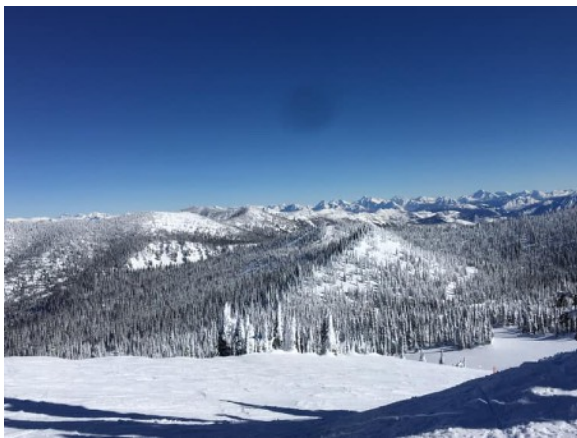
We all got to the bus on time, around 3:15 p.m., left as scheduled a half-hour later, which is a remarkable accomplishment for 37 people! We stopped, as always, for dinner at the Chinese buffet, with all you can eat in forty-five minutes, which is a pretty remarkable lot, and then, Adam, our hero, got us back on the road. The much-ballyhooed storm hit us around 9:30 p.m., but turned out to be more rain than snow, and, by the time we got through the tunnel into the big city, it was purely rain, with taxis easily available, and the clock showing 10:00 p.m., a bit of a record. A terrific weekend!

## **The Big Trip: Whitefish Mountain Resort March 1 – 9, 2019**

### **Miramartians in Montana: Blue Skies, Cold Air & Powder** **by Peter Maloney**

And the skies are not cloudy all day ... - Brewster M. Higley

Whitefish did not live up to its reputation. Locals call the mountain Whiteout, but then the Miramartians arrived, bringing four straight bluebird days. The clear skies were ushered in by a frigid polar air mass that swept across Canada and into Montana and the Dakotas.



By the time their craft descended in Kalispell in the waning hours of March 1, Miramartians were greeted by temps of 14 degrees below zero (Fahrenheit) and gusty winds.

The bleary eyed trippers, the advance guard of Miramar's Big Trip, boarded the waiting buses, eager for warmth and to arrive at their destination, The Lodge at Whitefish Lake, a cozy, three story resort hotel built in the rustic log cabin motif so

popular in Montana.

The early birds woke up Saturday morning to temps still in the double digit negative territory and to the sight of gleaming snow from the storms that had passed through on Thursday and Friday. The first topic of conversation of the day was whether or not to brave the weather and, if so, what to wear.

As Colleen said, "Wear everything."

It *was* cold. It was the coldest February in Montana since 1929, and it was stretching into March. The cold was a constant topic of conversation, with folks you met on the chair lift, with the bus driver who took skiers up to the mountain every morning, with folks on the bus that runs between the lodge and the town of Whitefish (a short, walkable jaunt, as Gene proved one night). Even the weather discussion on the ordinarily staid NOAA web site couldn't help but comment on the "impressively cold weather."

The cold preserved the snow, but it was brought in by 30 mph winds. That put the #1 chair at



The ritual morning bus queue in front of The Lodge (photo: Ruth Yashpan)



Whitefish on wind hold. That, at least, is how Eastern skiers interpreted it. Whitefish Resort CEO Dan Graves gave a different explanation. His main concern was frostbite. With wind chills at the top of the mountain expected to be negative 56 degrees Fahrenheit, anyone stuck on a lift could be in serious danger.

The chair lifts at Whitefish all have names – there are 11 lifts – but they are usually referred to by their number designations. Chair #1 is the main lift serving the front of the mountain. It runs to the summit of Big Mountain (elev. 6,817 ft.), which is nearly bald and open to winds sweeping in from Canada just 66 miles to the north.

With chair #1 out of service, the upper parts of the mountain, as well as the bowls to the north and west, were out of reach. There were essentially two lifts running on Saturday, #2 and #4.

The salubrious effect of the cold is that it kept the half-hearted at home. Anyone who ventured out had an almost empty playground of nearly fresh snow. Whitefish usually hosts 4,000 to 5,000 skiers per day on a weekend. On that first weekend of March, there were only 1,700 skiers.

Locals said Friday was “epic.” About 14 inches of snow had fallen in the two days before Miramar’s arrival, and the total got higher every time you rode the chair. By the end of the day, many people were reporting that 24 inches had fallen over the last two days.

The snow from #2 was lovely packed powder, starchy and yielding with small moguls just beginning to form. Lift #2 is mostly intermediate terrain. The trails off lift #4 are more varied, serving the eastern flank of the mountain’s front slope. In particular, the area right under the top of the lift, Upper Langley, was a powder trove. And, because it was so cold – cold not only can preserve snow, it gives it more loft – the snow was beautifully light and fluffy. Powder hounds could be heard whooping it up in the woods all afternoon.

With forecasts of sub-zero temps and high winds again on Sunday, the expectation was that lift #1 would still be closed. Once again, the forecast kept the thin blooded at home, but the intrepid were pleasantly surprised when #1 began spinning at 11am.

It was indeed cold at the summit. Much of the frontside slope is bare of trees and the summit bald, giving free rein to the wind.

The opening of #1 granted access to Ptarmigan Bowl (don’t pronounce the “P”), a nearly bare open bowl populated by Whitefish’s famous snow ghosts, pines coated with rime. (Rime forms when super cooled water droplets in clouds adhere to a stationary surface.) Cold weather and limited access had left Ptarmigan Bowl nearly untracked, at least until the end of the day.



Skisus, Lord of Powder, and his acolytes

Later in the day, lift #7 opened, giving access to Whitefish's North Side, a heavily treed bowl that affords protection from wind and fog. The area had been lightly skied, offering fresh tracks, even on named trails such as Black Bear, well into the day.



Snow ghosts (photo: Catherine McNally)

Monday morning brought warmer weather, minus 5 Fahrenheit at the summit and minus 8 at the base. Face masks were no longer needed, and there was still not a cloud in the sky.

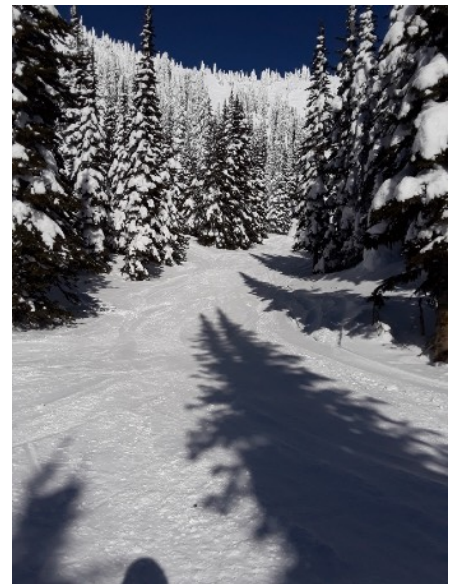
Hellroaring Basin, behind the east ridge of Whitefish's main slope, had been closed for avalanche control since the storms had blown through. It opened on Monday, giving access to 180 degrees of fresh tracks. All the slopes and gullies of

Hellroaring Basin – including Hell Fire, an intermediate trail and, at 3.3 miles, the resort's longest trail – funnel down to a point called Grand Junction. From there the trail cruises through the woods to the base of lift #8, the only way out of

the bowl. Number 8 is an old, slow double that lands back close to the top of #2 on the main, south slope of the mountain. From there, skiers have to ski back to #1 to return to Hellroaring Basin, a long lap, almost 40 minutes, but well worth it to dip into the nearly knee deep powder again.

Tuesday brought clear skies again and the full complement of Miramartians, nearly 70 trippers, all ready to ski. The crew had divided in two, based on a late perk trip leaders extraordinaire Sharon and Jill were able to secure, an extra day of skiing for the same price. The eager group left first, Friday afternoon, arriving very early Saturday morning. The second group went through Denver and came in on Saturday but many arrived without their luggage. Their lack engendered numerous lobby conversations for the first couple of days as folks discussed strategies for reconstituting their ski kit, whether through loans from other members or trips into town. Another contingent had bailed from the overbooked Delta flight on Friday, finally biting as Delta up the bidding for being bumped.

By Tuesday most Miramartians had figured out the mountain, sometimes with the help of Whitefish ambassadors who conduct free tours around the mountain twice a day. The North Side proved to be one of the most popular spots for its ability to hold snow despite blowing winds. The area is also served by two lifts, #7 and #11, and offers easy access back to the



View from the bottom of Hellroaring Basis (photo: Peter Maloney)

main, #1 lift and the summit where there is a well stocked restaurant, offering everything from chili, soup and grilled cheese sandwiches (reputed to increase skiing moxie) to pho and seared tuna bowls at reasonable prices. There is also a magnificent, panoramic view of the peaks of Glacier National Park to the east.

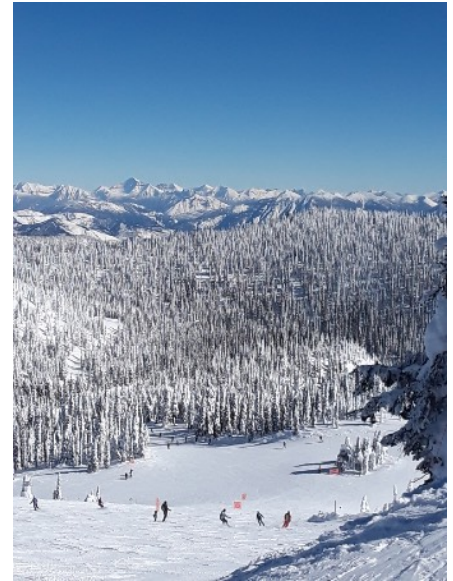
Wednesday's forecast called for about 1 inch of snow, but the snow gods hadn't bothered to read the weather report. It snowed lightly but steadily throughout the morning, filling in skied out bits and providing free refills.

Many Miramartians returned to the North Side and lifts #7 and #11 to seek out fresh stashes of powder. There were still unexplored, or lightly explored, areas waiting to be skied. Lift #5, meanwhile, had seemed to get short shrift because of its location. It serves the bowl off the eastern ridge of the main slope, including North Bowl Face, Schmidt's Chute and Elephants Graveyard. They can be accessed from the ridge accessible from #1, but dropping into the North Bowl leaves two options, ride back up #5, which does not go all the way to the summit, or take a long logging road back to #1, or #6 to #1, if you miss the turnoff.

Lift #5 runs along the crest of a ridge with some of most challenging terrain in the area, cliffs and steep chutes. The lift, a 35-year old triple that thankfully has a safety bar, passes over a 40 foot cliff. In many ski areas it is clear that some people ski off such cliffs, but not at Whitefish. There is not a lot of room to land before running into trees. But telltale tracks along the edge of the cliff tell a tale, a tale that some Miramartians witnessed.

The edge of the cliff is marked with three or four fluorescent markers on bamboo poles about 10 feet above the edge of the cliff. They form a visible, but not a glaring, warning system. Anyone who rides the lift would know what to expect, nevertheless, a guy, earlier in the week, skied below the markers and just feet away from the cliff edge. His ski tracks were still visible skirting the edge of the cliff and coming to a stop just before reaching a chute. At that point, his instructor or a ski patroller starting shouting directions to him. The smashed down snow was still visible where he had to slowly and carefully side step up and around the chute and out of harm's way. Just looking at the tracks from 30 feet above in the chair is enough to make one's hands sweat.

Chair #5 itself is enough to scare away some skiers. It is old and when it rises 20 or 30 feet over the 40 foot cliff, it is a long way down. Not to mention the fresh memory of the 140 skiers and boarders who had to be rescued from # 5 in December when the bullwheel liner failed. There is a video of a boarder being belayed and rappelling down the cliff face, his board still attached to his feet. It took about two and half hours to evacuate everyone from



Glacier National Park from the summit of Big Mountain  
(photo: Peter Maloney)



the chair: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oJrXc5MQVpk>

(It was an eventful first year for the relocated #5 which was doing duty again after two years of being idled on the main slope. Lift #5 used to land at the summit where the defunct shed is still visible just above Ptarmigan Bowl.)

All things being equal, the chair is the most comfortable way to access the terrain on either side of ridge with its tight trees and steep chutes. (One of the runs in the North Bowl is named Moe Mentum for Tommy Moe, the Olympic medalist from Missoula. Whitefish was Moe's home mountain, and his father was a member of the ski patrol there.)

The après ski scene at Whitefish often began in the outdoor hot tub. Who wouldn't want to wander out to soak in a hot tub in their bathing suit in zero degree weather? The tub was usually well populated by other ski clubs, particularly a group from South Carolina who appeared every evening like clockwork with their blue cans of Bud Lite. Lucky for them, Miramartians were on hand to demonstrate proper schvitzing technique by punctuating their soak with rolls in the snow. The tub has a beautiful view of the slopes of Whitefish resort, and was the perfect place to plan the evening's activities.

For a town of about 6,000, Whitefish offered a surprising variety of dining, drinking and listening options. The Lodge has two restaurants, The Boat Club, and a more casual venue next to the bar where there is also live music three times a week. Many Miramartians also ventured into town to try venues such as Great Northern,

### Montana Fun Facts

- Montana has an area of 147,040 square miles, making it slightly larger than Japan and the fourth largest state after Alaska, Texas and California.
- Montana is one of few places in the world whose rivers form parts of three major watersheds: the Pacific Ocean, the Gulf of Mexico, and Hudson Bay. The watersheds divide at Triple Divide Peak in Glacier National Park.
- Montana's highest point is Granite Peak, 12,799 feet high.
- The coldest temperature on record for Montana is also the coldest temperature for the contiguous United States. A temperature of -70°F was recorded on Jan. 20, 1954, at a gold mining camp near Rogers Pass.
- The most extreme recorded temperature change in a 24-hour period in the United States was from -54°F to 49°F on Jan. 15, 1972, in Loma, Montana.
- The population of Montana, as of 2015, was 1,032,949. Only Billings has a population of over 100,000, and only Missoula and Great Falls have populations over 50,000. Kalispell has 20,000 people and is one of the fastest growing cities in the state. Whitefish has a population of 6,000. Montana's population is 89.4% white and 6.5% Native American.
- Montana is ranked as the least obese state in the U.S., at 19.6%, according to a 2014 Gallup Poll.
- Montana ranks second nationally in craft breweries per capita.

a local favorite with live music and pool tables, The Craggy Range, a more upscale gastropub adjacent to the local craft brewery, and Tupelo Grille, which offers New Orleans inflected food and can host a quiet dinner, a large party, or dancing to live music on Mardi Gras.

Sharon booked a group dinner at Tupelo Grille one night and invited a guest speaker, Rabbi Francine Green Roston, who settled in Whitefish in 2014 from New Jersey.

Although Roston moved to Whitefish to slow down her pace of life, she soon became active in the local Jewish community. (There are about three Jewish families in Whitefish and 100 in Flathead County.) It didn't take long for hate groups to begin targeting her and her family and neighbors, <https://www.npr.org/2018/01/23/579884628/victims-of-neo-nazi-troll-storm-find-difficulties-doing-something-about-it>

They became the target of Richard Spencer, who boasts that he created the phrase "alt right," and Andrew Anglin, the publisher of the Daily Stormer, a neo-Nazi website.

The Daily Stormer tried to organize an armed neo-Nazis march in Whitefish but, in part thanks to Roston's efforts, a bipartisan group of Montana state and federal leaders signed a statement condemning the march, and it never took place.

Midway through the week, some trippers decided to go off piste and have a closer look at nearby (35 miles distant) Glacier National Park. One group went snow shoeing in the park. Another went to the dogs to enjoy sledding behind a pack of huskies. On Thursday morning Whitefish finally lived up to its name. The night brought an inch or two of snow, and it was still snowing, which of course meant the top of the mountain was totally in a cloud. The standard solution to this problem at Whitefish is to head to the

North Side and lifts #7 and #11. The trail to get there, however, Russ's Street left across the ridge, was particularly treacherous, a nearly total whiteout with about two feet of visibility. A large group of



Proper headgear for a dog sled ride (photo: Sarah McGrath)



The snow shoe crew (photo: Ruth Yashpan)



Frank Bamberger turned 90 years young during the Big Trip

Miramartians had assembled at the top, waiting to start until intrepid Chris pushed off. If not for his glowing orange ski jacket leading the way, half the group might have been lost over the side of the trail.

By Friday the temperature had warmed significantly and the sky was sunny but partially overcast. It was the last ski day of the trip, and conditions were still so good that some folks regretted buying only a six day pass and



The Orange Brigade: These are the people you want to ski with when the fog settles in.



The joy of skiing

finagled for a seventh day of skiing. The light crowds and the new snow on Thursday combined to leave fresh patches and tracks scattered about the mountain as Miramartians revisited their favorite spots one last time before skiing down to Hellroaring Saloon, the local, mid-slope watering hole, for a final slopeside libation, a fine end an epic week of Western skiing.

## **The Best in an Awesome Season: the 23-24 March Weekend**

### **By Evelyn Konrad**

“This was the most terrific day of the year,” Sandy Geiger told me, as he got on our bus about to leave Killington for New York on Sunday afternoon.

Sandy ought to know: He spent the day at Killington skiing all double black diamond runs, according to one of the skiers who joined him: Christina Giorgio, who mentioned the others in that elite group – Kim, Farnaz, and David – all super-great skiers! It’s all the more astounding because the three super-duper skier ladies are all slim, extra-slim, delicate-looking women, with not a single muscle bulging. And, let’s credit Sandy: He told me that he had not even noticed the wind, which had closed Mansfield that same weekend, whipped the trails at Sugarbush on Saturday, and frankly, made the chairs most uncomfortable for me on Sunday.



Yet, after that marathon performance on the slopes, Sandy and David still found energy to join me in hosting the popular cocktail hour on the bus going home. It's a big favorite with many of us, not just for the snacks of celery, carrots, crackers and cheese for the energetic all-day skiers, but, in some cases, because of the "liquid Advil," which comes in the form of a delicious white wine, a recognizable red, and the usual Bloody Marys, and screwdrivers.

Miramar had a record crowd the last weekend: Some 46 people, both members and guests, and the super-elite skiers with Sandy were far from the only ones to have a spectacularly great day at Killington. There was a whole bunch of other energetic members who joined Ted, our group leader, Ruth, the assistant leader for that weekend, as well as Alice Winkler, Steve Questore and Tamara Liechenstein.

I overheard one of that group tell Ted what a great joy he had been to ski with, and how great his Sunday skiing had been! I'm living for the day when someone says that to me. Oh well! Actually, Ruth reminded me that I whisked by her and Michelle half-way down the trail in Sugarbush on Saturday, as I headed for my warm-up run on Hot Shot, below Avalanche. I did see them, standing at the half-way spot, apparently deciding between Hot Shot and the other two trails.

But I did get to ski with one member, Pat, and that was an unexpected pleasure on Sunday when I met her at the bottom of my first run, chatting with Winnie, who went on to the 11 a.m. Ambassadors' Tour. I had done that tour a couple of times, when we got to Killington on time, because I seem to remember that there was only a 10:00 a.m. tour. At any rate, that's a entirely blue tour of the mountain tops, which is supposed to provide a spectacular view from the top. I've been there, but the spectacular view wasn't. I've seen nothing but fog. But Sunday was a clear, sunny day. Anyhow, contrary to Sandy Geiger et al., I had found the wind absolutely horrible, not so much on the trail, but on the lift, and so, I was about to bag it when I met Pat and Winnie.

"Have a run with me," Pat said.

Best thing I've done in years: We did the same run, with Pat leading, and boy, was she great to follow! And that's what I need: someone to follow. It was such fun that I went back up for another couple of runs on my own, in spite of wind on chair.

My son, Robert Jereski, a new club member, skied with his best friend Harry Bubbins, and Harry's girl, Christina Giorgio at Sugarbush, but Christina split off on Sunday to join Sandy Geiger's super-bunch on Sunday. She and her young nephew and Harry and son Robert with daughter Sophie (my granddaughter whom I'm taking to Vienna in mid-April) will be back on the 5 April weekend, and Christina has promised to do some runs with me. I owe her my new-found ease with skiing powder – my downfall, literally, both at Keystone (dislocated shoulder) and in Chamonix (torn ACL, MCL, and meniscus!) I'll always be grateful to Christina, but not about to risk 6 feet of deep champagne powder! I can't wait to follow her in Sugarbush during our last weekend for the year!

Off the trail, the mood in the lodge was festive and fun! I can only speak for the predinner

cocktail hour, but a bunch of members and guests had really gotten into the mood of welcoming Spring with Ted's Hawaiian theme, and the outfits alone were worth fotos and a few giggles. Can't swear by the after-dinner party, since I crash around desert time, but I heard that some folks were actually up at that party until 10 or 10:30 p.m. As you all know, that's pretty much a record for a club of totally dedicated skiers. This has been a super season with the best conditions ever! See you all at the Snowball in May!

## IRENE KORB

passed away in Riverdale, NY, on March 20, 2019, at age 89. She was born Ida Korb on August 7, 1929 in Ellenville, NY, to Morris and Fannie Arons Korb. She was the second youngest among six girls and one brother.

Irene lived in New York City most of her life (August 15, 1962 at 225 w. 23rd. St.), working for the New York Port Authority for 29 years—starting on September 24, 1962, and retiring January 5, 1991. She began as a toll collector at the Lincoln Tunnel; then was the Supervisor Toll Collector at the Holland Tunnel; worked briefly at JFK Airport; and then transferred to the Bus Terminal in April 1979 as Operations Supervisor in the Information Room, and later as Parcel Check Room Supervisor.

She was a member of the Congregation Emunath Israel in Chelsea.

She was a long-time member of the Miramar Ski Club.

Volunteered often at the Holy Apostles Soup Kitchen.

She never married nor had children.

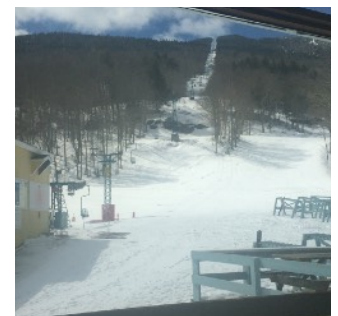
Irene is buried next to her mother at Congregation Anshe Tzaydik Cemetery in Ellenville, NY. She will always be remembered for her generosity, big smile, and jovial laugh. She is survived by many friends, two sisters, and several nephews & nieces.



## Support Vermont Ski Resorts and Go Skiing in April!

By Paul Banks

Just because the bus isn't rolling doesn't mean you don't have a wonderful lodge, sunny skies, and an amazing base waiting for you in Vermont in April. Spring skiing means you don't always need to wear every item of winter clothing you own. The snow is deep and great, it snows a lot in April, lift lines are short or nonexistent, and it's a lot of fun to ski in a Hawai'ian shirt and shorts. Sunday March 31st found Shari and I on the closing day of the Sensation Quad on Spruce Peak at Stowe with fresh powder and no lift lines. It even



The single chair at noon on a Monday!



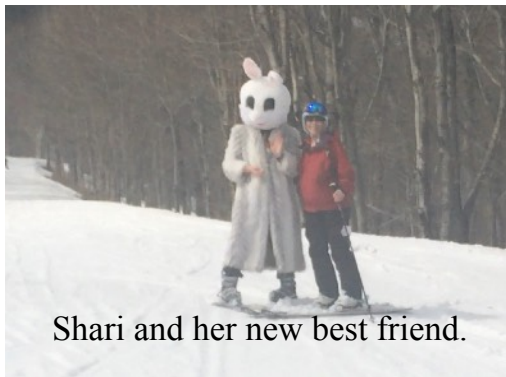
Skis in powder!

snowed from 1:30 to 3 pm and then the sun broke out for the last hour. Monday April 1st was even better. We met up with Bill B. at Mad River Glen with 4-5 inches of fresh powder, a great base, an empty parking lot and no lift lines anywhere. We were still finding freshies at 3:45 PM.

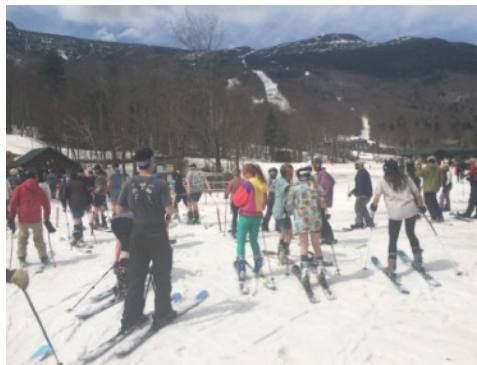
Below are a few photos taken April 21st for the closing day at Stowe.



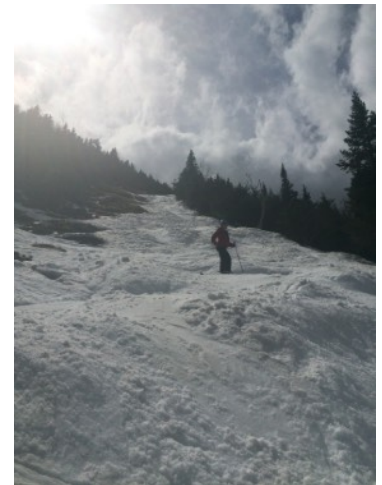
Empty slopes!



Shari and her new best friend.



The scene at the bottom of the Fourrunner Quad.



Goat: full coverage & excellent quality, top to bottom

We went to Jay Peak the day after where the woods were still open and our lift tickets cost \$48! It was some of the best skiing of the year in a year of some of the best east coast conditions ever.

*Remember, Spring Fling is only the beginning of some of the best skiing of the season—so amazing and so underrated. Put it on your calendar for next year.*

## Snowball Photos by Ruth Yashpan





## Snowball

Photos by Ruth Yashpan

