



BIKE AND SKI TAHOE

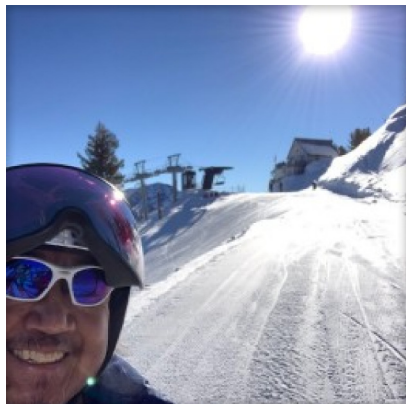
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ROAD TRIP TO REHAB

Posted by Curtis Fong on Feb 27, 2019



Road Trip to Rehab...

This past year has been extremely challenging, personally, with medical issues looming in my mind as well as keeping up with my Bike the West events... Recalling early last year, being told by my cardiologist not to elevate my heart rate with No Skiing, No Biking, No Working out and basically No Life... But, I heeded the warnings... I did ski, but half the days and half the number runs I

normally ski – just cruising blue runs... It was extremely hard not to ride my bike or hike in the summer months... I did get out a do some fishing, but limitedly...

Well, I'm pleased to say that after a series of three surgeries, from end of June through end of October, to correct aneurysms and re-plumb both my legs and repairing the aortic aneurysm, I have a new lease on life and hoping within a few months to get back to my normal active outdoor lifestyle... Unfortunately, it is taking longer than I imagined, to get my legs in shape as I still suffer fatigued

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buttocks / gluts when walking any distance, but have found, it is easier for me to be sliding on skis, than to walk.

For the past 18 years, I look forward to my NASJA (North American Snowsports Journalist Association) Western Winter Summit Meeting as a kick off, with old friend and ski buddy, Dan Giesin, to our annual road trip incorporating the meeting with another 2 weeks of travel to other resorts...

The NASJA Western Winter Summit meeting was scheduled for January 27 – 31, 2019 for Salt Lake City with skiing the resorts in both Little & Big Cottonwood Canyons... Here is the account of my Road Trip to Rehab.

Saturday: January 26, 2019:

Blue Skies and Sunshine predicted this day as I prepared and posted my Lake Tahoe Mountain Resort Report on my www.bikeandskitahoe.com website... All resorts were open with snow depth bases ranging from 40 to 100". This will change immensely by the time I get back...

Dan had to take care of some business that morning and was driving up from his home in Marin County that afternoon, so I continued to prepare and pack for the 17-day road trip... I had the Subaru serviced a week before, knowing that I would be putting at least 3000 miles on the road and gassed up and pre-packed the vehicle when Dan arrived about 4:30pm... After loading in his skis and bags, we set out to drive to Elko that evening...

I-80 now has several sections posting an 80-mph speed limit, but the drive was good with dry roads and good visibility... We stopped in Winnemucca for a dinner at a Mexican restaurant in a small casino and nearby the west exit / entrance from I-80... This also gave us an opportunity to watch the end of the Dub's game.

We continued the drive under darkness until the 303 Exit in Elko, NV and checked into the Holiday Inn Express... As mentioned in previous blogs, HIEx is our lodging of choice when on the road as they are consistent with cleanliness, have good wi-fi and feature breakfast at a reasonable price... Glad there was an elevator to get to the second floor room...

Sunday: January 27, 2019:

Woke to another nice day, with blue skies, a bit chilly, but the hot coffee served in the breakfast room was enough to get me going.

This morning, we headed out to Elko Snowbowl to meet up with Roche Bush, the General Manager for an interview and a few runs to do research on my February blog for the NevadaGram on the Nevada Travel Network.

Both Dan and I had met Roche, 11 years ago, when we skied with Ruby Mountain Heliski Adventure and found out there was a local ski hill...

We drove north of Elko about 5 miles on a frozen dirt/muddy road to get to Snobowl and they were open, operating both the Chair Lift & the Rope Tow... The parking lot was an ice rink, but we managed to meet up with Roche and get the information that I was searching for, for my article and then took a few runs... This Snobowl has about 700 vertical feet and Roche grooms a few runs from the top down and, it was fun to ski and get up top to view the Ruby Mountains...

February 2017

March 2015

Categories

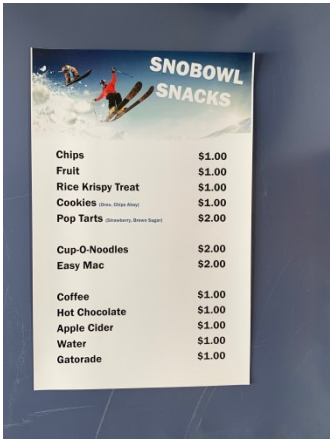
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Roche Bush



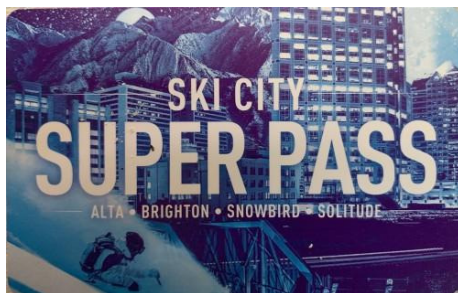


View of the Rubies

After several runs, my legs were working okay, and we changed pants in the parking lot and packed it up to continue our journey to NASJA WWS in Salt Lake... The road back from Snobowl continued to melt out and get slick with mud and by the time we got back in Elko, there was about 3" of mud caked in the wheel wells and wheels of the Subaru, so after a Subway lunch, I had to find a spray-off car wash to at least get most of it cleared off... this did set us back about an hour for the drive to SLC and the check in to the Hyatt Place and the welcome reception set for 6:00pm.



We made it to SLC and the welcome reception at 6:15pm, after taking the wrong exits off 215 twice, but none the less made the reception at Bandit's Grill & Bar, with-out checking in to the Hyatt Place. The reception was hosted by Visit Salt Lake to which, they are branding "Ski City" with Shawn Stinson welcoming NASJA. Other resort P.R. people were also in attendance representing Snowbird, Alta, Brighton & Solitude... The resorts that we would be skiing over the next four days... We all received a SKI CITY SUPER PASS that would allow us access on the UTA shuttle bus system as well as serve as RFD lift passes at the four resorts... Ski City offers their SUPER PASS online, if you plan to visit, and is \$100 per day of skiing at the four resorts. Visit: www.skicity.com



For those who traveled with-out equipment, Ski Butlers provided complimentary equipment to NASJA Members. Ski Butlers is great source for renting gear when one travels as you can reserve online and they personally meet you at your hotel and set you up. They serve various resort locations in the western U.S. as well as in Europe... For more info on Ski Butlers, visit: www.skibutler.com

The four resorts, Alta, Snowbird, Brighton & Solitude are also IKON Pass resorts, if you invested in an IKON Pass...

We checked into the Hyatt Place Cottonwood and this location is convenient if you plan to ski resorts in both Big & Little Cottonwood Canyons... Hyatt Place is set up like a corporate boutique hotel with spacious lobby, bar & restaurant as well as included breakfasts and large breakfast area... good wi-fi, as well... the location is

also near shuttle bus stops and several nearby restaurants and a ski shop... for more info visit: <https://www.hyatt.com/en-US/hotel/utah/hyatt-place-salt-lake-city-cottonwood/slczc>



View from room at Hyatt Place

Monday: January 28, 2019:

Our Ski City Super Pass also allows you to use the convenient UTA shuttle bus services to the various resorts in both Little and Big Cottonwood Canyons... Today's destination was to gather and ski at Snowbird. Unfortunately, the shuttle bus pick up was about 2 blocks away and I could not figure out how I would be able to walk with my boot bag and skis to this stop and walk back to the hotel afterwards... So, I opted to drive on my own to the resort...

When I arrived in the Snowbird parking lot, I was greeted by a friendly parking attendant that told me, since I was in a Subaru, they had special VIP Parking, as Snowbird is a Subaru sponsored resort... This was good news and so I was allowed to park near the resort center... This was still about 200 yards from the tram building, but I mustered the energy and after booting up, grabbing my skis, I headed up the lot to the resort center... I found that about 40 steps was my limit and I would have to rest before continuing... I think I had to stop 3 times before I got to the resort center... Then, two flights of stairs up to area to which our group was to meet... I made it!

The shuttle bus arrived with the NASJA media members and everyone booted up and headed up to meeting area in the tram plaza... A beautiful bluebird day greeted us with plenty of packed powder conditions...

We took a mountain tour with Snowbird host, John Gray, and we headed up the mountain via the Wilbere Lift, skied down the rode the Gadzoom Lift back up and then, Little Cloud to the top of Hidden Peak... I was able to keep up with the group, as mentioned, it was easier for me to slide on snow than to walk... We skied down to the bottom and rode up the Peruvian Lift to access Mineral Basin through a unique moving carpet tunnel that was filled with photos and artifacts reflecting the mining heritage of the resort. We skied 2 runs down their Mineral Basin and rode back up the Baldy Lift and back up to the top via the Mineral Basin Lift. I skied about 11 runs that morning and that was about my limit and although mostly groomed intermediate run, I also skied a couple of more challenging

higher angle runs, so I skied down to the base and took a rest, then rode up the tram to meet the group at the Summit Restaurant atop Hidden Peak.



We were surrounded by beautiful views on the second level of the Summit Restaurant and was hosted by Brian Brown, Communications Director and Snowbird Resort...



This was really my first day of skiing much harder and testing my ability to set each turn and riding the arc into the next turn... and I did feel fatigue setting in my legs... We were losing our blue skies by afternoon and light started to get flat, so rather than to ski down to the base, I opted to ride down the tram to the base with several other NASJA members who also felt the altitude and fatigue...

Snowbird Resort offers 2,500 acres of terrain, serviced by 10 Lifts and the Snowbird Tram leading to 171 trails and offering 3,200 vertical feet from its 11,000 ft summit. Powderbird Helicopter Skiing, Snow Cat Skiing, Back County Tours are

offered as well as on site lodging and spa services offered at the famous Cliffs Lodge. For more info, visit: www.snowbird.com

Apré ski found a group of us heading to the Elixer Lounge just across the parking lot of the hotel for craft beers, me being non-alcoholic, finding great flavor in Ginger Beer, and watching some NBA on the tube... After that, we gathered at Bandits for dinner... all in all a great day, my legs are getting there and feeling more confident...

Tuesday: January, 29, 2019:

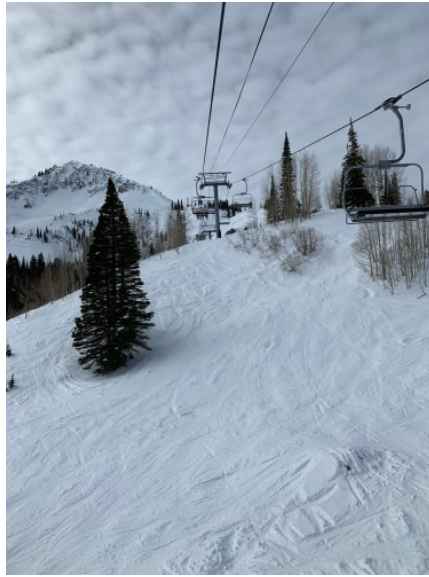
Breakfast is included at Hyatt Place and their spread is not disappointing... Today's destination was set for Brighton Resort in Big Cottonwood Canyon... I offered fellow journalist, Bob Goligoski to ride with me as he was also having a challenging go at walking, so we loaded up and drove to Brighton... As we arrived, we were greeted by friend parking lot staff who allowed us to park up front in their handicap parking area to which was greatly appreciated... The shuttle bus delivering the rest of the NASJA Group arrived and we all gathered in the lodge to boot up and get ready for a great day... it had been over 15 years since Dan and I skied here and I recall when we did, we were the only skiers in the lift line, surrounded by snowboarders...

Clouds started to move in this morning and light was flat, but, goggled up with helmets we headed out.





We had a pretty sizeable group lead by a Brighton guide for a mountain tour... But, we all headed up the Majestic Lift for a warm up run... Snow surface was great packed powder and everyone got into “zoomer” mode... We then rode the Crest Express and skied down the Pacific Highway... This was really good, so we did this again... I was lagging on this run down and missed where the group was heading, but met up with a new NASJA member, Dan Gibson from New Mexico, so we continued to ride lifts attempting to catch up... Never did catch up, but did in fact manage to figure out how to get to the Miley Lift that was across the parking lot at the base... This area also had a series of great runs and well balanced with greens, blues and blacks and we took a couple of descents down this side of the mountain.



Lunch was hosted by Jared Winkler, Communications Director of Brighton and Brighton Resort on the 3 level of the Alpine Rose Cafeteria... Another nice setting to enjoy a meal... After lunch, Dan and the boys wanted to charge more runs and I decided to go off on my own and get a couple of more cruisers under my legs... I rode up Majestic and skied down to the Snake Creek Express then up to ski Thor down to the base of the Great Western Express. After riding back up to the top, took my last run down the Western Trail to the base... The sun popped out and visibility improved and I felt pretty good, skiing at my own pace... All in all, about 12 runs this day (not keeping track of vert) and that was enough for these re-plumbed legs...



Brighton Resort is so less crowded than Alta or Snowbird which makes this a local's favorite with 1,050 acres, serviced by 5 lifts (4 HS Quads) offering 1,875 vertical feet with 66 established trails... the rustic and colorful Brighton Lodge is at the base with 20 hotel-style rooms and their daily lift ticket rate is \$94. For more info, visit: www.brightonresort.com

Bob was waiting for me in the lodge as he decided to quit after lunch and we packed up and headed back to the Hyatt Place...

Later that evening found us again at Bandits for dinner before turning in... walking up to the restaurant and back was still fatiguing on my legs, but glad I was able to ski as many runs as I wanted with more aggressiveness... getting there!

Wednesday, January 30, 2019:

The group headed out early this morning to take the Alta Shuttle, Bob G. was riding with me and before we hit the road, another NASJA Member, Lee Juillerat, also needed a ride up, so I made space in the back seat and headed out...

We got close parking near Gold Miners Daughter Lodge and met the group in the Café and got ready for a great day at Alta. Dan and I skied here last year to meet with them and pre-set up this year's Western Winter Summit to ski the 4 resorts in Big & Littlewood Cotton Canyons... Blue skies greeted us as the sun came over the peak this morning... We were divided up in groups to ski with various guides... I went with the fast group...

We were privileged to ride up the Collins Lift from the base before the lift opened to the public and got a bird's eye overview from the top of this lift. Our guide, Mark, was a long-time employee who was a "do everything kind of guy" working year-round at Alta... He had great knowledge of the history from Alta's mining start to their progressive rebuild of their lift system and on mountain amenities...



We skied down Main Street to the base and rode back up and skied to the base of Sugarloaf Lift... From the top we could see the gate that allowed access to Snowbird and skied down Roller Coaster and road back up and skied down Devil's Way / Elbow to the Supreme Lift. We Skied down Rock N Roll and Home Run back to the base and took the Transfer Tow from Albion East to the Wildcat Base, then rode back up the Collin's Lift... Somewhere half way down, we took a traverse into the trees to cut across to another run... I blew it! I caught an edge and went down, hitting my helmet on a tree stump and falling on my left side... I was stuck on the side of this traverse and what made things worse, it was under the lift... So, voices from the lift continued to call down, "Are you Okay?", to which I would at least give them a "Thumbs Up"... I struggled to get my body in a position to get up, but failed several times and just lay there, resting till I could muster enough energy to stand up... One of those voices from above was a ski patrolman and he came down to assist me, but by that time, I managed to get my skis and body in a position to stand up and get myself sorted out... I let him know that I was skiing with Mark and a group of journalists and got separated... I continued along the traverse to an open run and skied down to the mid mountain lodge, Watson's Shelter.

I texted Dan to let him know I was okay and would meet them at Watson's Shelter where our group was to meet for lunch... When they arrived, they did mention that the ski patrolman, informed them that I was okay...

An area on the 3rd level of Watson's Shelter was reserved for our group, this also with fabulous views and we all enjoyed telling stories about our morning runs... Our lunch was hosted by Alta Resort and their Public Relations Director, Andria Huskinson.



After this break, I still had a couple of runs in me, so I headed off back to the upper mountain and took a run off the Sugarloaf Lift and a run from the Supreme Lift back to the base... All in all not a bad day, but logged my first fall of the season, but happy to ski some higher angled groomed runs with about 10 runs this day... I can feel my ski legs getting more responsive to adjust for late day changes in the snow surface on the groomed runs... and, feeling more accomplished this day.



High Rustler at Alta

Bob Goligoski was waiting for me at the base and also long-time NASJA Sports Byline voice, Charlie Coane, also squeezed in the Subaru to get lift back to the hotel... Lee ended up taking the shuttle bus back...

Alta is a great resort steeped in history and with runs... conveniently located next to Snowbird, in Little Cottonwood Canyon, this is a one – two knock out for anyone traveling to Salt Lake City for a rewarding mountain experience... Alta offers 6 Lifts leading to 116+ runs, spread over 2,614 acres with 2,538 vertical feet. For more information, visit: www.alta.com

Back at the Hyatt Place, Dan and others headed to the hot tub, but I was on deadline to get two articles together, so I opened up my laptop and started writing my monthly column for the Lake Tahoe Entertainer Magazine... Not, being in Tahoe and with most attention before leaving dedicated to this road trip, I did my research on upcoming February events at Lake Tahoe resorts and wrote about 750 words and submitted it my editor...

Later that evening NASJA had a Dinner at Café Trio, just across the parking lot from the Hyatt and we all gathered to break bread together, this dinner covered by remaining funds from NASJA West. Peter Schroder & Risa Wyatt brought some wine to share from their Sonoma Valley Winery and they toasted with their special limited-edition Syrah...



Thursday: January 31, 2019

A beautiful bluebird morning and Solitude Mountain Resort was our destination this day and Bob took a day off, so I drove up on my own... I managed to get there early and so parking close up was still available... I have improved my walking distance and can get about 60 steps before stopping to rest... This is a good thing, but it's my gluts that feel tight and then I start to over compensate and find myself walking from side to side effecting my hips... I keep reminding myself to walk heel & toe, with good posture and walk in a straight line...

The group gathered outside the Moonbeam base lodge and we had enough time to take a couple of runs off the Moonbeam Express to warm up... Shawn Stinson from "Ski City" was on hand to help guide us around the mountain as most of Solitude's staff was quite busy preparing to host the FIS World Championships. Solitude was one of the sites that was hosting the FIS World Championships with Snowboardcross and Skiercross events, scheduled to start the next day. Courses were set up on the mountain and athletes from all over the world were training on this mountain.





We headed up the Moonbeam Express, skied down Hal's Hallow to the base of Eagle Express... Rode up and skied Sundancer back to Eagle then rode up again to ski to the base of Powerhorn II. Then, back to Moonbeam to ski to the base of Apex Express... From Apex Express we skied to the Summit Express and rode up to the top of the mountain... I departed the group and skied back down to the bottom to take a break, then rode up Moonbeam to meet the group at the Roundhouse for our lunch break. Once again, this resort in Big Cottonwood Canyon skis bigger than one would expect and there were a lot less skiers & boarders on the slopes... Lunch was hosted by Sara Huey from Solitude and Solitude Mountain Resort... I went for the Chicken Pot Pie and shared some Poutine with Vicki Andersen...



After lunch, Vicki and I skied down the base and she rode back with me to the Hyatt... Although, I did not ski any more than about 10 runs... I decided to take it easy and not push it, and my legs were feeling pretty good this day...

I was still on deadline to produce my blog – monthly bike and ski article for the NevadaGram promoted through the Travel Nevada Network and put myself at task to write about 1000 word with photos covering my interview with Roche Bush and our experience at Elko Snobowl. This is the link to my story:

<http://nevadagram.com/skiing-elkos-snobowl/>

This was the completion of the NASJA Western Winter Summit and many journalists were departing this afternoon and evening as well as the next morning. Dan and I decided to stay an additional evening to ski another day before heading out... That evening a small group of remaining members had dinner together at Bandits... I felt pretty good, now skiing 5 days in a row and ribeye steak was calling my name...

Friday: February 1, 2019

After breakfast and checking out of the Hyatt Place, we loaded up the Subaru and noticed that my cell phone was not in my pocket... I got a duplicate key and checked the room again and it was nowhere to be found... Humm? Dan called it and we could not hear it ringing... I decided to pull out my luggage and open it and there it was, mistakenly packed... Whew! What a relief!

We headed to Park City Mountain Resort entering the mountain via the Canyon's Village... Being a Friday and end of Sundance week, plus FIS World Championship weekend, the parking lot was full, but we managed to park in the last row... Dan, graciously carried my skies and I walked, with several stops to the base of the access Cabriolet Gondola... Mind you, this lot was frozen mud and really slick, but with two sets of poles, I steadied myself getting to the Cabriolet.

Over the past 20 years, Dan and I have skied, Deer Valley, Park City and The Canyons since before the 2002 Olympic Games and have returned to "Winter's Favorite Town" many times on our annual road trips... I skied the area when it called "Park West" and It may have also been known as Wolf Mountain after that... But, now consolidated and joined by a Gondola, the two areas is known simply as Park City Mountain Resort.

I was fortunate to cover the 2002 Olympic Games from the Park City Media Center and wrote multiple daily blogs... Going out to catch the feel of the events, having to go through intense security checks getting on and off the lifts... I would do interviews and photograph various events from the bumps competition at Deer Valley to the Downhill held at Snow Basin and write stories related to each event and send back to Virtual Tahoe, where they posted it when received... I didn't realize then, that this was blogging... A memorable experience that I will always be grateful for, in being able to cover an Olympic Games... Funny how all things come around... As the Director of the Park City Media Center during the 2002 Winter Games was non-other, than Shawn Stinson, who we just spent several days with, as Visit Salt Lake City – "Ski City" hosted our NASJA group.

We rode the Orange Bubble Express up and skied around the mid mountain Red Pine Lodge to access various lifts including DreamScape & DreamCatcher... Nice groomed runs descending through The Colony where chunks of real estate reveal massive mountain homes... We took several runs in this area and then decide to

take the Quick Silver Gondola to the Park City side... We took a coffee break at Miners Camp Lodge... Lines were backing up in this area, so we headed back on the Gondola and skied down to Tombstone and rode back up to ski back to Red Pine Lodge... Dan wanted to ski back down to the base, so I took the Red Pine Gondola down to the Canyon Village... FIS World Championships Big Air training was going on at the base and the launch and run out was there for everyone to view...



Back at the Subaru, we changed out of ski pants to jeans, using my good ole beach towel to stand on, that, by the way absorbed plenty of dirt from the melting muddy parking lot... Instead of driving in to Park City, we headed back out to Kimball Junction to hit I-80 and Hwy 40 into Heber City, where we refuel and grabbed some lunch...

We head South through the beautiful Provo Canyon in route to Moab, Ut for the evening... It was a beautiful drive with Mt. Timpanogos, base of Sundance Resort, peering through the cloud layers...





We made to Moab and checked in to the Holiday Inn Express and had dinner at McStiff's, one of our favorite sports bar that we have frequently visited while passing through...

Having skied six consecutive days, my legs were feeling it, but also feeling more confident on the slopes... not so much walking long distances but getting better...

The next day, Chapter II of my Road Trip to Rehab, would continue as we complete the drive to Durango, Co and ski Purgatory Mountain Resort, Telluride and Crested Butte.