

## **Telluride, Colorado** \_January 16-23, 2010\_ *by Steve Bratcher*

Forty-four members of the Jacksonville Ski Club (JSC) ventured to Telluride January 16<sup>th</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> for the first trip of our ski season. The trip was a Florida Ski Council (FSC) trip, made up of the various ski clubs throughout the state of Florida. In total, more than 600 skiers from Florida were present on the trip.

In Telluride there are essentially two options for lodging, either you stay in the historic town off of the mountain <or> you stay up on the mountain in Mountain Village. Our club, along with several others, opted to stay in the picturesque Mountain Village at the Telluride Mountain Lodge. The accommodations were very clean and modern and offered ski-in / ski-out access to/from the Double Cabin run. The lodge also had a restaurant / bar, as well as a pool and hot tub to soak our tired muscles after a long day on the slopes. Mountain Lodge also provided free shuttle rides to the Village, as well as to the local market and free gondola.

Upon arrival, JSC hosted a Pizza Party at Mountain Lodge in The View restaurant and bar, which also hosted our farewell dinner. Those that required rental equipment were able to pick those up at Christie's Sports, located right in Mountain Lodge. Later that evening, everyone attended the FSC orientation & registration and were able to sign up for lessons, tours, and other activities.

Our first day of skiing was Sunday and the runs were somewhat scraped up, but the Snow Fairies quickly gave us what we came for – SNOW, and lots of it. The rest of the week the conditions were excellent, with a couple days being Powder Days, the likes of which caused some local merchants to display signs on their shops that read, "Closed for Powder Day." Our group scheduled meeting spots for lunch the first couple days to bring everyone together and give folks the opportunity to find ski partners of their respective levels.

On Monday evening, the FSC hosted a Welcome Party at the Telluride Conference Center, located in Mountain Village. The party featured a buffet dinner, libations, and music/dancing, as well as a silent-auction on various donated merchandise. The proceeds of the silent-auction are then donated to a local charity chosen by the FSC and Telluride Resort.

A unique feature of Telluride Resort and the local town is the **free** gondola. The only one of its kinds in North America, the gondola links the town of Telluride to Mountain Village and it is available to all. It even runs late into the evening for those that wish to experience the Telluride nightlife. The town of Telluride is a great experience, in that it is a true, old mining town with historical buildings that represent the era in which they were built. There is a nice variety of shops, restaurants, and bars in which our travelers were able to experience.

On Tuesday, the FSC hosted the Florida Cup NASTAR race, in which all of the clubs and individuals can compete in a slalom-style race course. As a group, Jacksonville picked up the 3<sup>rd</sup>-place award which was pretty good considering we had 44 skiers and the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> place clubs had in excess of 100 each. Members of the JSC race team

that brought home the bronze are: Craig Smith, Jay Miller, Anthony Martinez, Michelle Gaudins, Sandra Ricardo, and Barb Wilson. Individually, however, JSC member – Michelle Gaudins – claimed the ***Fastest Woman on the Mountain***, having beaten all other females that competed in the NASTAR race.

The NASTAR race was followed by the ever-popular Mountain Lunch, which was held at the Gorrone Ranch restaurant located on the mountain. This day was also the crazy-hat and boxer shorts day and many of our group had fun with that, as evidenced in the group photos taken following the lunch.

Thursday evening brought us back to the Telluride Conference Center for the infamous FSC theme-party, which was ***“Safari”*** for this year. Prizes were awarded for best costumes in various categories, and although nobody from JSC won, there were some excellent ideas for the theme. Dinner featured “wild game” fare and all the trimmings. Okay, really it was a choice between steak and chicken, but the caterers did a great job with the food. Prizes were then awarded for the NASTAR race and the night capped off with more dancing and socializing.

Friday evening, JSC members gathered for one last time at The View restaurant at Mountain Lodge and we had our Farewell to Telluride dinner. We also took the time to “roast” each other on some of the week’s more humorous happenings....such as our only snow-boarder on the trip unknowingly trying on ski boots at the rental shop, or another member riding up a lift only to look down and realize that he had on someone else’s skis.

***Fun times!***