

Chicago Week 2011 In Telluride

Long Live Butch and Sundance.... We Most Definitely Continued the History

By Sue Finis, Trip Leader

Telluride was in for quite a shock when 250+ of us (13 ski clubs represented) invaded the town and Mountain Village to kick off Chicago Week 2011 from Feb 26-March 6. We had over 150 people staying at the Mountain Village and the rest staying in lodges and inns in the town itself. We couldn't have asked for better weather or hospitality. The sun was out most of the time, the temperatures were in the 30s, the skiing was fantastic, and the socializing was in full force.

We were bumped at the last minute from our informal "Meet and Greet" venue on Saturday evening. That, however, didn't stop everyone from meeting and greeting on their own. Many of the group headed down the street to Smugglers for cocktails and a bit to eat. It was like old home week that night, greeting and toasting to an upcoming week of skiing and fun.



Photo by Rick Drew

A Western ambience flavors Telluride, one of Colorado's top ski resorts.

Fitting right in with our Chicago Week 2011 theme of "Long Live Butch and Sundance...Let's Continue the History," everyone received a piece of "loot" at the first three social events of the week. As the story goes, Butch and Sundance left some of their "loot" in Telluride. Most was worthless fools gold, but it was the unknown number of valuable pieces of "loot" that had people excited. Was theirs a winner or not? A total of 140 said "You've Struck Gold" and were exchanged for prizes, ranging from gift certificates from Telluride merchants to ski accessories from Viking Ski Shop in Chicago.

Our welcome reception on Sunday evening had us all on "sugar highs" with a beautiful dessert and candy buffet. Many of the group dressed up with cowboy hats, cowboy boots, bandanas, holsters, etc. We even had a few stick horses in the mix. The best dressed and most spirited couple was Evelyn Vanek and John Hawkinson from Nomads.

We had a beautiful sunny day for our mountain lunch at Gorrano Ranch on Monday. Our barbecue lunch was served from a large snow and ice table made by Telluride Ski Resort. Food was aplenty and so were smiles as Rick Drew, our volunteer photographer,



The Nomads sported their Western duds at the welcome reception.

made his way through the group taking pictures. He also took club pictures against a gorgeous background of sun, sky, and snowy mountains. The pub crawl in town on Monday evening brought out quite a crowd. Many made their first stop at the New Sheridan, which was filled almost to capacity with Chicago Week people. The second pub, the Llama, was also very popular. The number of pub crawlers dwindled as the evening wore on as some of us decided to call it a night a little early due to the altitude.

Tuesday morning Rick took action pictures on Peek-a-boo run. Again the sun was in the right place at the right time. Telluride Ski Resort hosted a scavenger hunt (on skis and in the Mountain Village) for us. We had a total of 14 teams (six people per team) skiing the mountain looking for answers to Telluride trivia while those on foot scoured the Mountain Village for the same. Prizes were awarded to the top five teams, and all scavengers had a blast. That afternoon we took over Smugglers Pub and Brewery for our first official après-ski party of the week. Mike, the owner of Smugglers and a former Chicagoan, served never-ending appetizers and offered us a fabulous selection of beers on tap. Smugglers' four-person shot ski was also a big hit.

Wednesday was the traditional "no CMSC events planned" day. Again, the weather was almost perfect. Many chose to take advantage of what seemed like spring skiing weather and hopped on the slopes for a day of true spring skiing – 45 degrees and sunny! Others took advantage of "retail therapy" and/or strolling through the streets in the quaint town of Telluride.

Over 100 of us raced down (or as I call it, skied around the poles) the Nastar course on Thursday morning, challenging ourselves in hopes of winning a bronze, silver, gold or platinum Nastar medal. For some of us, our hope was to just cross the finish line standing up. Rick has great shots of each racer on the course. You can see how cool you look on the CMSC website, cmscphotos.com - click on the "Events Gallery" link. There was no rest for Rick—he was ready at the top of lift #4 Village Express at 1 p.m. with his camera for "stationary" picture taking. Rick hand-picked the best background for these shots and even took multiple shots to show our better sides. At the end of this picture-perfect day of skiing, we headed over to Gorrone Ranch for an après-ski party, fueling ourselves with appetizers and beer.

Sad to say, Friday was our last day (for most of us) of skiing this magnificent mountain. The morning started out with snow, snow and more snow billowing down - and let's not forget the wind Friday morning

either. It was quite the challenge to ski Friday morning, but who can complain about snow! By midday, the sun was shining and the winds subsided. Another beautiful day of skiing in Telluride!

Our farewell "Get Out of Jail" party had us eating, drinking, dancing and recapping the week with each other for some five hours. I myself lost my voice on Friday night....a little too much fun....never.

We'd like to extend our thanks to Winter Ski and Sport and Viking Ski Shop for their sponsorship, Telluride Alpine Lodging for our in-town contingent, and Telluride Ski Resort for our Mountain Village contingent and all the assistance in planning and executing a great week. Thank you, Telluride, for the hospitality shown to us by everyone in Telluride. Most importantly, thank you to all of the participating clubs (Chicago Friars, Duneland, EISCL, Fort Wayne, Hustlers, Inland, Lake Shore, Nomads, Omaha, Sitzmark, Skihasen, Skunk Hollow and Thunderbirds) and their club trip leaders who made this week one for the history books.

Long Live Butch and Sundance...we most definitely continued the history!

Don't forget to check out all of Rick's photos on the CMSC website (cmscphotos.com – click on the "Events Gallery" link). Rick did an amazing job documenting Chicago Week 2011–Telluride for all of us to reminisce and for those of you who have never been on a Chicago Week to see what I'm talking about ...we'd love to have you join the fun in Steamboat next year for Chicago Week 2012.



Many Chicago Week participants struck gold and came home with prizes.