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20100201 – A Proper Holiday

Monday – we're on our way at last to the promised land, Park City, Utah, no it's nothing to do with a sudden conversion to Mormonism – one wife is more than enough – but it is to the greatest snow on earth. A months skiing, no miserable Belthorn weather, no bwankers, no depressing news from the British nanny state and its headlong dash to sacrifice everything British on the alter of multiculturism.

But first we have to get there. Does anyone remember what a joy / treat it used to be to fly? Just turn up at the airport and off you went, no passport; no queue to checkin; no queue to go through security; no security; no removal of belts, shoes, laptops, liquids, ear rings, nail files, sharp objects; no intimate body searches; no sound of the slap of rubber gloves being donned; no queue for a second security search, just in case the first was inadequate; no queue to board; no queue to wait whilst some imbeciles block the gangway whilst trying to fit a 36" suitcase into a 24" locker and can't grasp why it won't go in; no sitting in a seat so cramped that you need to eat with your elbows and kneecaps in your mouth; no delay waiting for an engineer to come and fix the plane; no queue on the runway for a take off slot; no food so disgusting you wouldn't put it in with pigs swill; no circling prior to landing waiting for a landing slot; no queue waiting to disembark because the same imbeciles with the luggage finally managed to get it into the locker and are now struggling to get it out; no queue waiting for Immigration to perform their 18th century green card stamping ritual. Whatever went wrong?

I must admit that this time immigration (also commonly known as ICE) was the fastest it's ever been. I can only put this down to the American Intelligence Agency, who have obviously been eavesdropping on my previous emails and blogs bemoaning what a disgrace ICE was and did they really want tourists. I can only assume they have passed this on and that nice Mr Obama having recognised the imminent danger of me ceasing to visit and has decided to do something about it before the country gets itself into serious financial difficulties.

Whilst suffering a 6 hour stopover in that hell on earth known as Ohare airport we did see the ultimate in birth control. A mother travelling with two of the noisiest 2' 6" high kids, everything was screamed like the sound of a neurotic fish wife; then they decide to use a row of chairs as a climbing frame and trying to run across the tops of the chair arms whilst continuing with their screams. Turn this into a 2 minute video for compulsory viewing in third world countries and it will reduce the population explosion.

After 24 hours we finally get to our condo – home from home.

Tuesday – up bright and early like an excited child on a long awaited trip to the seaside. Nothing in so we have breakfast at a diner. Buttermilk pancakes (so big and fluffy they look like they're about to explode), bacon and eggs with lashing of maple syrup and boysen berry sauce, fantastic, beats any of that tarty French haute cuisine anyday. Who says the Americans don't appreciate gourmet food! The view from the diner is stunning, all the ski runs laid out before me – I can't wait.

Then it's off for a great days skiing. Blue skies, good snow, quiet slopes, no queues. What more could you desire. Meanwhile Wendy has the treat of the American supermarkets, all that choice I can imagine her eyes just lighting up.

Meanwhile I can't seem to escape the daily drudgery of dealing with the problems created by our banks. It seems the purchase of a season ski pass has thrown the Nationwide Credit Card computers into an infinite loop and they've blocked all future transactions. THIS IS A HOLIDAY, THAT MEANS NO BANKING ISSUES. Bloody bwankers.

Now we just love our trips to the US but every time the two things that really wind me up are ICE, not an issue this time, and pricing everything without tax. I get caught everytime, I fish out the correct change for the two dollar coffee only to be told it's \$2.25. I try pointing out that I'll take the one without tax but just get a blank look of miscomprehension. So Mr Obama if you're eavesdropping on this why not bring some long overdue common sense to bear and either insist on quoting the full price you pay with tax, or even both.

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20100203 – Who Needs A Caribbean Beach



seem to suffer from group narcolepsy when they all sprawl out for a sleep across the slopes, totally oblivious to anyone else.

Meanwhile the Olympic ski team are practising here. I resisted the temptation to give them any tips such as "don't eat yellow snow".

Wednesday – great sunny days skiing. Sat out sunbathing for an extended lunch, it's no Caribbean beach but at least here the sweat is not dripping off the end of my nose.

Today we've seen the extremes of sartorial style. At the over 50's end we've encountered guys skiing in shorts with colourful lycra suits underneath – could they be friends of Dorothy? Then you have the usual under 30's scum boarders complete with baggy pants, crotch hanging down by their knees and their disgusting underwear on display for all to see. Like scum boarders everywhere they also

Then for a real treat we get to go to a whole food store. They have more types of granola and healthy breakfast cereals than I could try out in a year – too bloody healthy. Let's get back to some good old fashioned junk food.

Chairlift conversations over here often turn to health care reforms or the President, not necessary a good thing as in the event of differences of opinion you can't get off. However I've developed the ultimate tool to identify political bias, just mention "That nice Mr Obama"; any adverse reaction then they're republican (conservative); otherwise they're democrats (labour); seems to work every time.

Thursday – yet another blue sky day and overnight we've had 2" of powder, heaven. I'm on the slopes by 9:30 to try and catch some of the powder, Wendy's still giving it a miss. If there is a heaven and hell, complete with skiing, then I'm sure that heaven will be no scum boarders allowed (Deer Valley), blue sky and a foot of powder every day; whilst hell will be 90% scum boarders, white out, rain and sheet ice (Aviemore – Scotland).



Wendy's credit cards finally been reactivated. It seems the USA is a hot spot for credit card fraud, mainly because they don't use chip and pin. Mind you they have something infinitely more secure, you have to sign your name on an LCD tablet; the shopkeeper doesn't bother checking it to the signature on the card as you have to tick a box to confirm that it is your signature – hello is there anybody there! Probably implemented by the same bright spark that added the question "are you a spy or terrorist?" to the green US visa waiver form.

I've also discovered the scum boarders secret greeting "What's up dude", usually followed by the usual swift attack of group narcolepsy.

Of course no ski resort would be complete without some of the trees at the side of the chair lift being adorned with various items of underwear such as bras and knickers. Sadly very little of the underwear can be described as sexy. What really intrigues me is whether part of the ritual includes removing said bras and knickers whilst sat on the chair lift with scum board on (I'm sure no skier would be involved in such scandalous behaviour) – intriguing!

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20100208 – A Very, Very, Very Blue Sky Day



Monday – it must be a very, very..... blue sky day as Wendy's finally made her debut on the slopes – scum boarders watch out, do not incur her wrath. It's a stunning day but my is it cold 17 F and although we have plenty of snow it would be nice if it could manage to freshen up every night with some new powder. Despite predictions of snow over the weekend hardly any fell.

I don't know what's wrong with my left ski today but it seems to have a mind of its own. They've been repaired waxed and sharpened and are in excellent condition but off it keeps

wondering, so it's either not used to skiing on skis without rust on them; yesterdays cross country has ruined my downhill style (what style?); going slower on the greens is harder than cruising the blues; lack of alcohol.

Anyway we have a great leisurely days skiing together, then in the PM I nip off for a bit of blue cruising. Certainly a lot less arduous than yesterdays cross country.

The US may have a 33% obesity problem but you don't tend to see many blobbies around here, having said that I have encountered two noticeable exceptions today. The first was a lady downloading (coming down on the chair rather than skiing – rare) on a 6 seater chairlift with her skis off, as she got to the bottom she failed to lift the safety bar and wrecked the footrest on the chair – pretty dumb really. The second blobby was the classic ski cartoon with skis each side of a post, very painful despite the fact that the post was padded, definitely not a recommended way to stop.

Meanwhile Kurt has decided to come out next weekend and join us for 7 days skiing, so I'd better get in some serious training.

For those nerds out there I saw this saying that, being an ex-high priest of the binary world (nerd), made me chuckle – *"There are only 10 kinds of people in the world. Those that understand the binary system and those that don't".*

Tuesday – yet another blue sky day but Wendy's having a rest today. Actually she's got a more tempting offer than skiing and she's real excited about it. Yes, it's supermarket day! Mind you I have to admit the supermarkets here are very impressive, excellent choice; fantastic salads; in store Starbucks with newspapers to read; car parks that you don't need to do a 10 point turn in order to park your car; fantastic mountain views from the car park – just like ASDA.

I suppose I'll have to show willing and go skiing again. It's even quieter on the mountain today than yesterday. At least today my left ski seems to be behaving. I think it might be because these skies prefer the faster blues, not too fast mind, especially today as there is some hard packed snow around, thankfully not quite the sheet ice you get in Europe. Whilst it may be very sunny it's also very cold. That cold that I'm sneezing icicles and my eyes are watering with the wind chill as I ski down, the tears then form ice on my sun glasses so I can't see where I'm going, mind you it never seems to bother scum boarders. Yet after lunch – a coffee – you can sit out in the sun quite comfortably. I think I may actually have a cold but my nose is so cold it's hard to tell.



I've already commented on scum boarders and their trousers around their knees, but on top of that they walk as if they've filled their pants. What a site.

After skiing we need to go and draw some cash out so we take a stroll across to the bank. Being car less we have to walk around to the drive through ATM machine as they have no facilities for people with legs!

Amongst the 1,000's of TV channel they also have BBC America. Interesting on the "f Word" they have the sense to bleep it out.

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20100210 - Powder

Wednesday – another blue sky day but not blue enough for Wendy, she's seen a cloud on the horizon.



I get 3 hours skiing in and then go for a walk with Wendy. We explore the whole of Main St, exciting stuff, and then walk up towards the old mine workings. Quite leisurely but it's up hill, I think I'll stick to downhill skiing at least someone takes me up hill and cruising down is no effort. There are some really old timber frame houses up there, well at least old by US standards, and they seem to come in all shapes and sizes to fit into the hillside. They're so colourful as each one is painted, or flaky painted, in a different fairly bright colour.

I've come to the conclusion I have a cold, it's not just the freezing air that's playing hell with my sinuses. That's what you get when you don't drink for a week.

Well I see it's finally happened, software controlling Toyota car brakes has a bug in it and 475,000 cars are being recalled in the US. Am I surprised? Not at all, it is only a matter of time. I feel sorry for the poor guy who wrote the code, but he's not to blame. Firstly blame the geezer who decided to use software to do the job and then look at the testing regimes. After 40 years in the software industry my money is on minimal software in critical areas and KISS - Keep It Simple Stupid.

Thursday – 2" powder over night and it's still snowing on and off. Some good skiing to be had, but Wendy gives it another miss.



I've tried all sorts of medicines to dry up this runny nose, but so far they all seem to make it worse and the only benefit has been to the pharmacists who've sold these snake oils . Despite medical sciences best efforts I've come up with a **cure for the common cold**. Well at least if not a cure it alleviates the symptoms. It's simple just go skiing, it's so cold your sinuses don't stand a chance, no runny nose. Unfortunately I have to come in when it gets dark and then the taps turned on.

On the left we have a view of the ski jumping hills from the 2002 winter Olympics. For \$200 you can go on a ride down the Olympic bobsleigh run. I'd love to do it but not at that price. I bet you have to spend an hour signing indemnity forms.

As I'm sure you've realised by now I've no time for scum boarders. Yes I know there's good and bad in all, except scum boarders that is – they're all bad. And if you think I'm biased or unreasonable then Wendy makes me look like some liberal softy who loves them. For those of you who've ever been skiing you'll know that there is a "Skiers Code", for those that haven't it is a set of safety rules you're meant to abide by and failure can result in prosecution or civil litigation. Well here's my version of the "Scum Boarders Code":

Always be out of control so that you can't stop or avoid other people.

People ahead of you have no right of way. It's their responsibility to keep out of your way.

When you stop – usually with due to a narcolepsy attack – make sure you obstruct the trail, or are not visible from above.

Whenever starting downhill or merging with another trail do not bother to look uphill or yield to others .

Never use a device to prevent runaway equipment.

Ignore all posted signs or warnings, especially SLOW signs. Closed trails or closed areas do not apply to you.

Prior to using any lift it doesn't matter one jot if you don't have the knowledge or ability to load, ride and upload safely.

Friday – it's snowed overnight and it's still snowing when we get up, so for me it's an early start to try and catch some of that fresh powder. Wendy stays in with a view to going to the Outlet stores.

There's about 5" of fresh snow, fantastic, but it's a lot harder work. Really gets those leg muscle burning.

Apparently I was supposed to meet Wendy down at the Outlets just after lunch, but I got somewhat carried away with all that powder, and didn't get back till late so I'm in the doghouse. Never mind it was worth it, just too good to miss.

Now I know why the scum boarders wear their trousers down around their knees. It's so that when they stand in front of a urinal they don't need to bother unzipping.

Despite an exhausting days skiing we've set our own new world record by staying awake until 23:15 while we watched the Winter Olympics opening ceremony

20100213 – Valet Parking Decadence



Saturday – another snowy day but my season ski pass only covers weekdays. We go for a walk down to Willow creek; Wendy plays some musical instruments on the way – see picture. Although it's snowing it's a lovely walk and a lot of people are doing it on cross country skis, not a scum boarder in sight.

I forgot to add one of the most important rules to the "Scum Boarders Code":

Queues do not apply to scum boarders, just ignore them.

In the evening we splash out and go for a Western Evening on the mountain. Arrive at the Marriot Hotel and are accosted by a gang of spotty youths wanting to take my car off me. Are we to become the victims of street crime, no it's valet parking! \$8 to park it yourself or \$8 for valet parking, not a difficult choice I suppose but I do hate this concept of valet parking, so far we've always managed to avoid it. Out of sheer cussedness I was so tempted to tell them I'd park it myself, I'm sure they'd have had

cataleptic fit, and of course I don't expect a tip when I go to get my car. Sheer decadence, but what the heck we give it a go. At this rate I bet 100 years from now Americans will have evolved into a legless species.

Then it's a gondola ride in the dark up to the mountain lodge. There's a western group on and a buffet of the most bizarre combinations of food. But the ribs we're excellent and if you can close your eyes to the bloody slow cooked prime rib (rare) it just melted in your mouth. Unfortunately we seemed to have the stereotype dumb blonde waitress; couldn't tell me which of their 8 beers was an amber; told Wendy they didn't sell bottled water when it was there glaring at you from the cabinet; then finally managed to produce a credit card receipt where their copy differed in value from our copy! I was very cool (one of them awful words) and managed to avoid a Victor Meldrew impression.

Then we get the benefit of that \$8 valet parking, whilst in the time it would have taken us to walk to the car, we wait for our car to be delivered. Is this progress?

Sunday – fabulous blue sky day, happy valentine's day to us both, I'm still waiting on my card from Wendy and unfortunately I think I've left Wendy's in Belthorn.

We're off cross country skiing. We've graduated to the Blue track – big boys loop – it has some hills on it. I thought it was a 5 mile loop but thankfully it was only 5Km. We get our first experience of gliding downhill, the speed seems awesome (sorry but not a sentence goes by over here without that dreaded word or "cool" in it), yet in reality it's even slower than a downhill nursery slope.



Halfway round we can see the ski slopes, those lucky devils on their lifts to take them up and then just glide back down. At the end of it we're knackered and I've not a drop of sweat left in me, it's even worse than those dreaded cross country runs we had to do at school. Wendy quite enjoys this torture, but give me downhill any day it's so much easier. But it's a change, so very quiet, fantastic scenery and quite a feeling of achievement when you look back on it from the comfort of the lodge. Of course they're all svelte young things and not a blobby in site; mind you if I did this on a daily basis I think I too could get to be svelte old thing.

Well two weeks have nearly gone, they've flown by. It's like a home from home here. Our host here tells us we can stay on as long as we like as she has no one else coming in after us. Unfortunately our flights are non transferrable otherwise it would be very tempting, never mind perhaps next year we can push it to the immigration limit of 90 days. I'll have to gradually introduce the concept to Wendy, it could be my 40th Wedding anniversary present to her!

Another late night as we have to pick Kurt up from Salt Lake airport, mind you after 24 hours travelling he'll be more knackered than we are. I need to psyche myself up ready for serious skiing if I'm going to keep up with him.

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20100215 – Kurt Hits The Slopes

Monday – a real snowy day, but Kurt and I are up bright and early, especially Kurt he was awake at 04:00. Kurt gets kitted out with his expensive, top of the range, demo skis and boots; while I manage on my 15 year old boots and 8 year old skis, and we're off up the mountain. Needless to say this is not Wendy's sort of ski day. It's busy today, Presidents Day whatever that's all about, every man and his dog and especially his kids are out. At least after the first lift queue it's not too bad for queues once you're up there and the slopes are amazingly un-crowded.

Well I mange to hold my own with him today but I have to admit it's tough going and I can see that once he gets over his "take it easy day" I'm going to be feeling my age – c'est la vie.

Despite the snow and the pace, a great days skiing. I have to admit Kurt's made me improve my game.

I had one of those "Oh my God - Victor Meldrew" moments today when I'm watching some scum boarders – yes it's them again – there they are baggy pants hanging around their crotch; disgusting underwear; giant vest shirt over it all, even though its pouring down with snow; walking like they've filled their pants; and it suddenly occurred to me these urchins are the same the world over, and they're the generation who we're going to be relying on to fund our state pension – terrify thought!



strange after all of yesterday's snow.

We have a lazy lunch together at Payday and then Wendy and I have a last run after lunch.



Back at the condo it's a cross between casualty and a plague ward. Wendy has started with a cold, has a pain in the groin and a dodgy knee; Kurt has a cold, bad cough and a fractured finger; I'm the fittest of the lot as I'm just shaking off a cold. We've more tablets and cures than you can wave an overworked hanker-chief at. Fortunately skiing seems the only temporary respite from the colds. But just to be on the safe side I've a bottle of Pinot Noir to ease the symptoms.



Now we're trying to understand the US stop sign. How come the sign and the solid white line is always placed 10 to 15 feet back from the main road so that you can't see what's coming up or down the main road?

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21/02/2010

20100217 – Snowy Days



Wednesday – a grey misty day on the mountain. Kurt's no better so he's having a day off to try and get better. I think if truth be known he just can't keep up the pace with me – age and experience counts.

I set off up the mountain at lunchtime for a half days skiing. Mist hangs over the very top runs so it's that horrible white out experience when you've no idea what's up or down, but I manage to survive.

Wendy goes downtown to the post office and try and gets some new boots, but typical with all the shops over here they never seem to have her size. Never mind she enjoys a 2 hour walk.

Meanwhile Kurt stays in bed, watches UK football and the tripe on US TV, if that doesn't addle his brains nothing will.

Thursday – a snowy day with 2" powder overnight. Kurt's seems to have recovered. I think it's the US TV that's finally got him screaming out for anything else, even skiing.

It's a fantastic days skiing. The new snow keeps coming down making the runs great. I even manage to keep pace with Kurt, well at least most of the day. Let's hope it keeps coming down overnight in which case tomorrow should be tremendous (cool and awesome avoided).

Wendy has a quite day at home.



After skiing we have a hot tub in the snow – great. The US seems to excel when it comes to hot tubs just a pity no alcohols allowed; but their saunas are so mediocre. You have to give it the Austrians for the best of both; hot Jacuzzis; very hot saunas; waitresses serving alcohol to you in the Jacuzzi; beds in the Jacuzzi; proper ice cold plunge pools to stop your heart; no state law notices banning anything enjoyable; mixed and nude!

Then it's pizza and pinot noire for dinner with another good DVD to watch.



Well Kurt may just have a bit of an edge on the slopes but at least we can stay awake until 23:00, unlike Kurt who is ready for bed by 20:00.

Now you can even buy M&M's with your photo on them – unbelievable!

Friday – another snowy day but at least it improves the skiing. Kurt and I have a mornings skiing in the downpour. We meet Wendy for lunch. Kurt's had enough skiing for the day. I think the colds got to him. I still manage a couple more runs in the afternoon. It seems the older

generation are still capable of setting the pace!

In the evening Kurt comes back to life and sets off to Park City to try and find to après ski night life. Meanwhile the snow keeps pouring down, lets hope it keeps it up all night for a good powder day tomorrow. For Wendy and I it's another evening in with a good DVD, hopefully, and some excellent pinot noir – no I'm not sharing it.

Interesting development on cars, they're advertising automatic crash reporting but in addition some of the cars have a "theft slowdown" facility. If a car is reported stolen then a central service can issue commands to the car to slow down and turn the engine off – smart technology. And of course they now have smaller SUV's – doing there bit for the environment – but of course smaller is a relative word, they still make my Kia Sorrento look like a dinky toy.



Saturday – 4" of fresh powder so it's up early for a 09:00 start to catch the fresh snow. The mountain is shrouded in mist and clouds, but once we get to the top runs we're above the cloud, - described by one colonial as colonial as the epitome of cool (see pictures at the top) - it's clear blue sky. Later on in the morning the snow starts pouring down. What a great (awesome) ski day.

We quit just after lunch time. Kurt wants to go to the Outlet stores for a merchandising opportunity - the "epitome of awesome and cool".

Now lets consider the expensive fashions associated with skiing, you get all sorts of colours and styles – ignore the scum boarders – and some of the colours are unbelievable. Now let's think about what colour would be sensible to wear on a snowy, misty, whiteout sort of day, is it a – Black; b – dark colour; c – bright colours; d – brilliant white. Well I'm sure even none skiers can guess that d - brilliant white is not what you want to be wearing, unless you want to be so well camouflaged that everybody can just crash into you, but of course some fashion gurus wear such expensive gear, usually trimmed with some fur – unbelievable. Then of course you have the latest fashion in ski boots, see through clear plastic with more buckles than scum boarders asleep at the top of the ski lift. They look very expensive, professional, racy and I'm sure they're so comfortable; that's why they spend all their time in the restaurant unbuckling and adjusting. Of course if you want to spend even more then you can have heated boots, these have their own rechargeable power supply to keep your feet warm. Meanwhile Wendy and I stick with our 15 year old, rear entry boots that are as comfortable as slippers and about as fashionable as a camel duffel coat.

20100220 – The Downhill Racers Last Day



Sunday – 5" of fresh powder waiting for us on Kurt's last day, so we're out by 8:40 – is this a holiday or not – to catch the early tracks. Luxury today we're skiing at Deer Valley, aptly named but missing an "a". When we arrive a young lady chats me up, unfortunately she's not after my body, but sadly seems more intent upon getting our skies and sticks out of the car for us – a bit of a blow to the ego.

By 10:00 we've skied every run on the first mountain and are knackered. The slopes and new snow are awesome – yes I'm slipping into the vernacular – but it is a great word to describe the conditions, some really great runs. To add to the splendour all of the trees are covered with snow. All the lodges up here are spectacular, roaring fires, big settees, great restaurants, superb marble toilets and pristine corduroy runs. But the best of all about Deer Valley is that they do not allow scum boarders on their pristine corduroy. Despite it being Sunday there's not a queue in site, and the weather starts off with a bit of sun peeping through the clouds, by lunch time the snows back.

It's Kurt's last day so we have a hectic non-stop morning. We meet Wendy in the restaurant for lunch, well in my case I resort to a couple of beers for the first time this holiday; I need them after such a exhausting morning. After a long lunch we manage a few runs in the afternoon before quitting for the day.

In the evening we have a long soak in the hot tub while the snow keeps our heads cool. Always an interesting experience in the US as they drink their over strong beers; smoke big cigars; interrogate foreigners on life in the UK and put the world to rights.



Now I know we all have the occasional grumble about repeats on UK TV, but just imagine this, Forrest Gump on every night of the week on the AMC channel; not only on once but running continuously all night long, mind you with the amount of adverts at least that limits it to only two showings per evening. Next week it's a different movie to run every night – unbelievable!

Monday – up at 04:00 to take Kurt to airport. Fortunately it's only 35minutes away, but incredibly cold - 6 F.



It's been good skiing with the downhill racer; it's improved my skiing no-end just keeping pace with him as speeded me up. Less cruising down, more straight down with fewer carved turns, it's actually easier and less tiring. It's reminded me that just like life, skiing is all about confidence, when you have the confidence you ski so much better – that's the philosophy lesson over with for today. Watching Kurt ski is so gratifying, I remember that this is the three year old I taught to ski. I used to tell him to imagine his knees were tied together and now whether he's skiing blacks or moguls he glides down with effortless style, legs perfectly together, you can tell it's him at a distance.

It's a very, very, very ... blue sky day, with 4" powder, but Wendy's sunbathing outside the restaurant instead of skiing. I have half a day and meet for lunch and sun. It's so quiet on the mountain, no queues, no crowds and good snow. But I get a stark reminder of how dangerous it can be, as a helicopter flies away with a skier strapped to a spinal board; then 10 minutes later another skier is being dragged down the mountain in a sled; but even more off putting is a skier strapped to spinal board, left waiting in front of the information desk – not a good marketing ploy!

I'm sure the great skiing must be addling my brains, turning me into "modern Man", as I agree to accompany Wendy to the super market. Mind you it's not too bad, a pleasant walk to the video shop; a supermarket with fantastic choice, almost interesting; a Starbucks and nice gas fire to lounge by; and view of the mountains from the car park you could die for; oh and roomy easy parking slots, all on a slant – just like ASDA!

Amazing they sell this stuff called smart water, just normal water in a tarty bottle at a none too smart price of \$1.46 per litre – mindboggling that people are dumb enough to buy it.

For dinner we have the traditional US junk food, hot dogs, yellow mustard and sauerkraut. Gourmet food, we sure know how to live.

Wendy seems obsessed with watching the "Office", why they need to have a US version is a mystery; it's not a patch on the UK version.

Tuesday – another very.....very blue sky day so the ski bunny dons her skies and comes skiing in Park City. It's just a great relaxing days skiing and I think I'm even catching the French disease, one hour lunches. At this rate there'll be no time left for skiing.

After lunch we have a couple of runs and then quit for the day.

Wendy skies very well for a 61 year old ski bunny(she'll kill me for that), she's always in control, no matter what the slope, but lacks the confidence, especially when she hears the screech of the dreaded scum boarder scraping all the snow off the hill behind you.

After a trip to the elusive liquor store – state controlled of course, nearly as bad as prohibition – the ski bunny and I go to the hot tub, where I manage to smuggle a can of US Nats Piss (what I wouldn't give for a quality German lager such as Hofbrau or Lowenbrau) past the duty guard. How can you have a hot tub without a beer - now that is prohibition? Then for dinner there is a US sized T-Bone, that's if we can find a big enough plate for it, and a bottle of Pinot Noir, what a perfect finish to yet another perfect day. Let's hope we can stay awake through East Enders (joy) and our daily DVD.



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By 10:00 we've skied every run on the first mountain and are knackered. The slopes and new snow are awesome – yes I'm slipping into the vernacular – but it is a great word to describe the conditions, some really great runs. To add to the splendour all of the trees are covered with snow. All the lodges up here are spectacular, roaring fires, big settees, great restaurants, superb marble toilets and pristine corduroy runs. But the best of all about Deer Valley is that they do not allow scum boarders on their pristine corduroy. Despite it being Sunday there's not a queue in site, and the weather starts off with a bit of sun peeping through the clouds, by lunch time the snows back.

It's Kurt's last day so we have a hectic non-stop morning. We meet Wendy in the restaurant for lunch, well in my case I resort to a couple of beers for the first time this holiday; I need them after such a exhausting morning. After a long lunch we manage a few runs in the afternoon before quitting for the day.

In the evening we have a long soak in the hot tub while the snow keeps our heads cool. Always an interesting experience in the US as they drink their over strong beers; smoke big cigars; interrogate foreigners on life in the UK and put the world to rights.

Now I know we all have the occasional grumble about repeats on UK TV, but just imagine this, Forrest Gump on every night of the week on the AMC channel; not only on once but running continuously all night long, mind you with the amount of adverts at least that limits it to only two showings per evening. Next week it's a different movie to run every night – unbelievable!

Monday – up at 04:00 to take Kurt to airport. Fortunately it's only 35minutes away, but incredibly cold - 6 F.



It's been good skiing with the downhill racer; it's improved my skiing no-end just keeping pace with him as speeded me up. Less cruising down, more straight down with fewer carved turns, it's actually easier and less tiring. It's reminded me that just like life, skiing is all about confidence, when you have the confidence you ski so much better – that's the philosophy lesson over with for today. Watching Kurt ski is so gratifying, I remember that this is the three year old I taught to ski. I used to tell him to imagine his knees were tied together and now whether he's skiing blacks or moguls he glides down with effortless style, legs perfectly together, you can tell it's him at a distance.



It's a very, very, very ... blue sky day, with 4" powder, but Wendy's sunbathing outside the restaurant instead of skiing. I have half a day and meet for lunch and sun. It's so quiet on the mountain, no queues, no crowds and good snow. But I get a stark reminder of how dangerous it can be, as a helicopter flies away with a skier strapped to a spinal board; then 10 minutes later another skier is being dragged down the mountain in a sled; but even more off putting is a skier strapped to spinal board, left waiting in front of the information desk – not a good marketing ploy!

I'm sure the great skiing must be addling my brains, turning me into "modern Man", as I agree to accompany Wendy to the super market. Mind you it's not too bad, a pleasant walk to the video shop; a supermarket with fantastic choice, almost interesting; a Starbucks and nice gas fire to lounge by; and view of the mountains from the car park you could die for; oh and roomy easy parking slots, all on a slant – just like ASDA!

Amazing they sell this stuff called smart water, just normal water in a tarty bottle at a none too smart price of \$1.46 per litre – mindboggling that people are dumb enough to buy it.

For dinner we have the traditional US junk food, hot dogs, yellow mustard and sauerkraut. Gourmet food, we sure know how to live.

Wendy seems obsessed with watching the "Office", why they need to have a US version is a mystery; it's not a patch on the UK version.

Tuesday – another very.....very blue sky day so the ski bunny dons her skies and comes skiing in Park City. It's just a great relaxing days skiing and I think I'm even catching the French disease, one hour lunches. At this rate there'll be no time left for skiing.

After lunch we have a couple of runs and then quit for the day.

Wendy skies very well for a 61 year old ski bunny(she'll kill me for that), she's always in control, no matter what the slope, but lacks the confidence, especially when she hears the screech of the dreaded scum boarder scraping all the snow off the hill behind you.



After a trip to the elusive liquor store – state controlled of course, nearly as bad as prohibition – the ski bunny and I go to the hot tub, where I manage to smuggle a can of US Nats Piss (what I wouldn't give for a quality German lager such as Hofbrau or Lowenbrau) past the duty guard. How can you have a hot tub without a beer - now that is prohibition? Then for dinner there is a US sized T-Bone, that's if we can find a big enough plate for it, and a bottle of Pinot Noir, what a perfect finish to yet another perfect day. Let's hope we can stay awake through East Enders (joy) and our daily DVD.

20100224 – The Best Skiing Ever – I think



Wednesday – a grey snowy day when all the snow appears flat so your only hope is to ski near the trees, at least then you have a clue to what is vertical. Fortunately it's not a complete whiteout. The sprinkle of new snow makes for great skiing.

As we have no pictures for today I've included a couple of our comfortable home from home, unfortunately the maids not tidied round yet and you can't see the broadband speed, but its impressive!

Today I've made the supreme sacrifice, skied early morning and come off at lunch. Why? Well to take Wendy to the Mall of course for some retail therapy – "homo sapien moderno" that's me! Tea in bed each morning for Wendy, but don't worry it's only on a skiing holiday, but it is a little unnerving for Wendy.

Well I have to admit the Mall is fantastic; big; airy; clean; lovely food court; good choice; massive stores and hardly anyone around – just like the ski slopes. I bet Blackburns new shopping centre will be just like this if not better!!!! I managed to buy 3 good quality typical US button down shirts for only \$40. Mind you that's after a 40% discount to card holders. No worries sir of course a UK resident can have a card; I don't think so; 15 minutes later after battling with the computer trying to input our zip code, "computer says no"! Floor manager called to authorise 40%; no, above his authority; store manager called, not possible. Finally agree with a kindly Mormon gentleman that he will pay with his new card and I will give him cash - much to the shop assistant and floor managers consternation.



Then joy of joys we spot a Cheesecake Factory, another one of those great American gourmet institutions along-side Taco Bell, Subway and Loco Lizard. Just a pity we don't have them all in the UK or better still France that would shake up those gourmet snobs. But disaster they no longer do a Toblerone Cheesecake like the one that Wendy gobbled up last time, never mind I've located several recipes.

Snow continues to fall, so hopefully great skiing tomorrow.



Thursday – on the slopes for 09:00 to catch the 7" of champagne powder kindly deposited overnight. For those of you who have not skied words just cannot describe how fantastic the skiing is, but I'll try; for those of you who have then I'm sure you'll appreciate what I'm raving about.

Yes 7" inches of champagne powder, light and fluffy; no queues; just ski, ski and ski; pretty S tracks in the virgin snow; skis sunk into the powder and blasting the snow up onto your knees; sunny periods yet another 2" of snow laid down just to keep it fresh; warm and dry in a gortex cocoon; trees laden with snow; just one more run, just one more..., just one..., just... I

somewhat belatedly meet Wendy for lunch and then slip in just a few more runs after lunch. That has to have been the best days skiing I can remember, mind you with memory and the age thing yesterday could have been better!

After skiing we take a ride on the people carrier up to the canyons for a look around the shops up there – yet more of “homo sapien moderno” – hopefully I’ll get back to normal when we return to the UK.



Finally to finish the perfect day we drive up the mountain to Deer Valley’s Empire Lodge for a Fireside dining meal. All very elegant, Raclette cheese cooked over an open fire with a selection of cooked meats to start; pheasant, quail stew with rosti potatoes; salad, banana squash soup, lamb roasted over an open fire, macaroni cheese, parsnip gratin and veg; finished off with giant strawberries and a selection of fruit and cookies and white and dark chocolate liqueur fondues; all very expensive and very fattening but good.



What is it about the waiters it seems they are all foreigners, film star rejects, who speak with highly effected accents and over expressive flamboyant gestures, whilst the US staff seem relegated to clearing tables. Is this what rick folk crave?

Friday – another blue sky day and plenty of snow yesterday so it’s early tracks for me. All the powders been groomed down at least it’s perfect corduroy and worth the 09:00 start. By 11:00 I’ve pounded the slopes, just as if skiing with Kurt, so I’m truly cream crackered

and ready to meet Wendy for some truly recreational skiing. Yes it’s sunny enough for the ski bunny ready to hit the slopes.

We have a pleasant ski and a long lunch – getting in training for France.

What is it with drivers in the US? If they see a pedestrian they immediately slam on the breaks, keep a safe distance of at least 50 feet and become as courteous as a spinster on a church outing, not a bit like the “they’re fair game, kill them if you can” attitude of the UK. Yet once they’re on the highways they’re like demented psychopaths, overtaking and undertaking whilst trying to bugger every car in front of them, and seem to think that safe stopping distance guidelines are in inches not feet - Jekyll and Hyde.

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20100227 – Bears v Scumboarders



Saturday – blue sky day but my season pass doesn't work weekends so I take a break after 12 days skiing.

We have a drive down to Soldier Hollow where they staged the 2002 cross country Olympic events. Quite an impressive course, very hilly but there is hardly anything there and the lodge isn't a patch on Park City. We then visit the Heber Valley train station, followed by a drive through of Heber City, nothing there worth stopping for.

Back in Park City we have a very pleasant lunch sat outside the Silver Star lift in large comfortable armchairs. The picture shows how Wendy would prefer an encounter with one of these to a scumboarder.

Well we've been here nearly 4 weeks now and sadly have only 4 days left before we return to Belthorn – joy ☺. During that time we've paid for nearly everything on credit card; not once have we used a chip and pin; not once has anyone ever checked my signature; quite often a signatures not even required; and on a few occasions I've had to tick a box to confirm it is my signature - incredible. Today one place wanted drivers licence or photo Id. I was quite impressed, so I gave them my UK license which has what is an obvious loose passport photo - anyone could have found my card with license and put their own passport photo in - yet despite this they still didn't bother checking my signature. No wonder credit card fraud is rife here.

Meanwhile on a lighter note I thought I'd share a few Scumboarder jokes with you:



This guy walks into a bar and says "Hey, you guys wanna hear a snowboarder joke?" The bartender says, "I'm a snowboarder, the guy on your right is a snowboarder, same with the guy on your left, and the guy behind you is a snowboarder." So the guy says, "OK. I'll tell it a little more slowly then..."

There's this skier standing on one side of a mogul slope. "Yoo-hoo!" she shouts to a snowboarder on the other side, "I can't ski moguls, how can I get to the other side?" The snowboarder looks up the slope and then down the slope and shouts back, "You ARE on the other side."

A guy finds out he needs a brain transplant. The doctor proceeds to show him various brains. One brain, which belonged to a skier, cost \$500, the other, which belonged to a boarder, cost \$5000. Perplexed, the guy asks the doctor about the price difference. The doctor replies "Well, the boarder's brain has never been used!"

The skier, says to a snowboarder that he was a telemarker. Snowboarder replies "I used to do that, but I got so sick of making all those phone calls."

Q. How many snow board instructors does it take to change a lightbulb?

A. Three - one to hold it, one to video tape it and the other to say "AWESOME DUDE!"

Q. What do you call a snowboarder with no girlfriend/boyfriend?

A. Homeless

Q. What is the difference between a snowboard instructor and a snowboard student?
A. 3 days!

Q. If you have a car with 3 snowboarders in the back seat, what do you call the driver?
A. The police!

Q. How does a snowboard instructor meet his group?
A. He rides into them!
Q: What's the difference between a snowbaord instructor and a bucket of chicken?
A: The bucket of chicken can feed a family of four.

Q: What does a snowboard have in common with a vacuum cleaner?
A: They're both usually attached to dirtbags.

Q: How many snowboarders does it take to change a lightbulb?
A: It's unknown. Never been done.

Or, better yet.

A: Two. One to hold the bulb and one to smoke enough pot to make the room spin.

Q: What do snowboarders use for birth control?
A: Their personalities.

Q: How does a snowboarder introduce himself?
A: "Sorry, dude."

Q: What do ski instructors and snowboard instructors have in common?
A: They both can't snowboard!

Q: What is the last thing a snowboarder ever says?
A: "Dude, watch this!"

Q: What's the hardest thing about being a snowboard instructor?
A: Nothing!

Q: What do you say to a snowboard instructor in summer?
A: A Big Mac and fries please!

Q: How can you tell if the lift is balanced?
A: The snowboarders drool out of both sides of their mouths!

Q: A Cadillac with five snowboarders runs off a cliff, and everybody dies. What's the worst thing?
A: Cadillac seats six!

Q: Why are most skier jokes one liners?
A: So the snowboarders can understand them!

Q: How do you get the snowboard instructor off of your front porch?
A: Pay for the pizza!

Q: "Mommy, mommy, I want to be a snowboard instructor when I grow up!
A: "Now Johnny, you can't do both!"

Q: What do you say to a snowboarder in a three piece suit?
A: "Will the defendant please rise...."!

Q: What do you call a successful snowboard instructor?
A: A guy who's girlfriend has two jobs.

Q: At a party, how do you tell who the snowboard instructor is?
A: Don't worry. He will tell you.

Q: On a date, what does a snowboard instructor say after the first hour?
A: "That's enough talk about me; now let's talk about snowboarding."

Q: How many snowboard instructors does it take to change a light bulb?
A: 2, one to change the bulb and one to say "Nice turn, nice turn!"

Q: What is the difference between God and a snowboard instructor?
A: God does not think he is a ski instructor!

Q: What do ski instructors and snowboard instrutors have in common?
A:They both can't snowboard.

Q: A ski and a snow board instructor were walking around the San Diego Zoo one summer afternoon. Eventually they wandered into the primate house. How do you spot the snow board instructor?
A: He's the one writing an MA on the gorillas knuckle walking technique. 😊