

Never SAY NEVER

— LARRY'S SHORT STORIES #139—

My first invitation to snow ski came while stationed at Ellsworth Air Force Base, just outside the Black Hills of South Dakota – in the 1974-1976 timeframe. There were a couple of ski mountains there, but I flat out said “no” – for two reasons.

First, a small group of us shot skeet all year round at the Elks Club – near Rapid City. One of the guys, named Jack, hadn't been around for quite a while, during the winter months. When he finally showed up, we questioned where he had been and his reply was simply “skiing.” I asked what was so special about skiing that would keep him off the skeet range. Jack replied that if he could downhill ski anytime he wanted, he would sell all of his guns and never shoot again. My thoughts

came quickly – “wow, what a disease; I'm never going skiing!”

Second, one of my fellow lieutenants in the hospital squadron was Cam Strong.

He and his wife Irish, had two sons and they all skied a lot during the winter months. The high cost of skiing was always a topic of conversation with Cam. Being pretty conservative with money at that time and very interested in guns and shooting, I never accepted an invitation to go skiing.

Sometime, much later in life, skiing came to be something that I was willing to try – even looking forward to. Kids and grandkids were the answer, I just had to wait for an invite. When the invitation came, my response was quick: “Sure,



Homestead Road, coming down off Buttermilk Mountain

I'll try it, frankly it's something I've wanted to do for quite a while. It looks like a lot of fun, and it would be a great way to spend time with the kids and grandkids.”

Soon I found myself in Aspen, Colorado, getting fitted up with boots, skis and poles and taking lessons. Then, there was the lift ride to the top of the mountains to ski the greens on the west side, and finally skiing the summer road to the bottom. In three days, after a lifetime of denial and several hours of training, the instructor pronounced me to be a level four skier (4 of 9), and I was comfortable skiing all of the green hills and getting started on the blues. Now, I'm ready to go back; and the best part – I still have my guns.

“Wow, what a disease; I'm never going skiing...”



Brenda with skiing instructor Michael Rogalski, who also taught me.

USA
Midway

Larry Potterfield
Buttermilk Mountain
Aspen, Colorado
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Grandson Benjamin and I, about to get started – on the first day.