

World Ski Championships for women, but not for men — the men competed on other slopes.

Bob Parker
Grand Junction, CO

AL GOTO BELONGS TO THE LANGE GANG

The May-June 2015 issue included a letter from Karin Hock Baker, daughter of Nick Hock, the advertising director for Lange in its early days. She mentioned several of the early staff, but she didn't mention my friend Al Goto, who also worked for Lange in those early days.

From Lange, Al moved on to Anderson & Thompson, a major supplier of ski accessories, Dynastar skis and the infamous Besser binding. After A & T, Al became the marketing director at Copper Mountain in Colorado, where he worked for many years. In the 1990s, he suffered a stroke that paralyzed one side of his body. Al is currently residing at the Holly Heights care center in Denver. He has a sharp mind and would love to see or hear from people he knew in the heyday of the ski business. The phone number is 303-757-5441. ❄️

Frank Payne
Palisade, CO

SKIING
DECEMBER 1976



SKI MEMORIES

A SKI BUS NAMED DESIRE

In 1956 my father, John D. Stout Jr., had a brilliant idea to save money on ski weekends in Vermont. His plan was to buy a city bus, take all the seats out of it, and turn it into a ski house on wheels. He found a 1939 GMC hand-shift bus for \$350 — \$50 for each tire and \$50 for the bus. Dad was the vice president of a bank in Hartford, Connecticut and an avid skier.

In the early fall, when I was 10, my dad and I traveled to New Haven to pick it up. Somehow we made it back, but we had to cut a tree down at the end of the driveway because the bus couldn't make the turn. My mother, Francie, was speechless; my brothers and sisters were thrilled. By the time the ski season started, my Dad had put in a 110-volt generator, two bunks, a marine toilet, and a pine-paneled, carpeted living area. He built a cabinet over each front-wheel bump; one held a gas stovetop and the other a sink. The good news was that he included a propane heater; the bad news was that he turned it off at night for fear of asphyxiation. Mom and Dad slept on mattresses on the floor in the "main salon." And did I mention the infrared spotlight that beamed onto the toilet seat? One November evening, after a christening party, the bus named "Desire" was ready to go.

The first winter, we drove up to Mount Snow every weekend. It was two-lane all the way. Much to the dismay of people following us, we would take the "short cut" over Colrain Hill, grinding along in first gear. As Dad drove, we would sit in folding beach chairs—no seat belts, of course. I can still picture my Dad, steering with one hand and a martini in the other. A classic line from my Mom's journal is, "We drove and had cocktails at 7; at 7:30, we stopped for dinner."

We parked Desire in the Mount Snow parking lot and soon became friends with the plow operators, so they wouldn't plow us in. We had 10th Mountain Division sleeping bags, and we slept

with our toothpaste to keep it from freezing. We kept our food in coolers. On one of the early trips, there was a knock on the door: It was Mount Snow founder Walt Schoenknecht, checking out this red-and-silver thing in his parking lot. He was so impressed that he gave us the keys to the lodge, so we could swim in the evenings.

For two years, we drove to Vermont every weekend, running off the road every now and then. One time we were getting gas and Dad had to buy 86 gallons! The gas-station owner felt sorry for him and offered a 10 percent discount. The next two years, we left Desire at a gas station in Wilmington and would drive up from Connecticut in our car in half the time. She spent the last years of her life parked behind Johnny Seesaw's, a ski lodge in Peru, Vermont. We used her as a bunkroom; we plugged in the generator and she got buried under snow, so it was very warm. Just before I went to college, Dad traded Desire for an acre of land and she ended up in the Landgrove dump. My Dad, who died in 1994, was like a lot of skiers during that era—resourceful and creative. I will always remember those days; we had so much fun. —Sam Stout



John Stout and his wife, Francie, relaxing in front of their converted bus, nicknamed Desire, in 1961 at Mount Snow in Vermont.

SAM STOUT