

Lou Vozab

by John Davis

Lubor Vozab (known as Lu or Lou) was one of the many unrecognised pioneer workers involved in the early ski resort development in NSW. Lu was quite a character, friends with all he met except Park officials, and a member of the group affectionately known as 'the mad Czechs'. Sadly he passed away on 9 January this year, aged 87.

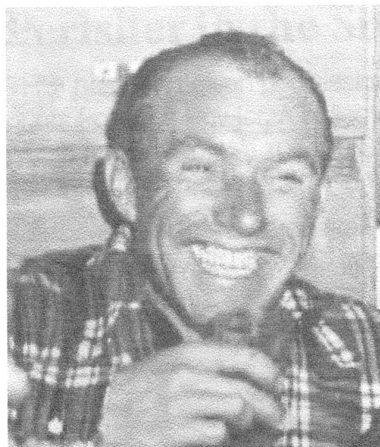
Initially, a job with a hydrographic company contracting to the Snowy Mountains Authority brought Lu to the area.

He joined the Ski Tourers Association (now Australian Alpine Club) and was involved in building Kunama and Albina Lodges and the Mt Northcote ski tow.

After a couple of years as manager of Albina Ski lodge, where conversations with his imaginary friend Max alarmed some visitors, he moved to Perisher Valley for a stint as co-manager of Warrugang Lodge. One of his partners in this venture was Merv Burrows and their tenure was legendary in the Valley for the mayhem and the fun had by all.

In 1963 the Australian Alpine Club asked Lu and his wife to open and manage Perisher Huette, their new lodge in Perisher. After two years Lu, knowing his obligations to Dawn and the difficulty of raising a family in Perisher Valley in the crazy sixties, reluctantly said good bye to the mountains and settled on the hills at Katoomba.

Pat and I have many happy memories of Lu's sense of fun and disdain for authority. We



first met him at the Chalet in 1955. Lu was bunked down at the weather station but always seemed to be involved in the activities of our group, which included Adam Zapenski and Dawn Bullman, Lu's future wife.

Lu was a pretty good skier and in 1962 won a Golden Eagle in the speed event held on the Main Range near Kunama. The new Mrs Vozab promptly got herself a Golden Eagle, no mean feat as only 14 Golden eagles were ever awarded.

The Saturday night schnitzel at Warrugang incorporated one of Lu's legendary pranks. One poor unsuspecting guest would receive a wettex, cut to shape, coated with egg and breadcrumbs and lightly browned in olive oil. Naturally locals and any members from the previous week would be in on the joke and had a riotous time watching the poor victim, too embarrassed to complain, trying to eat their schnitzel. Wettex came in many colours and it was particularly amusing to watch the diner cut into a light blue or bright green 'schnitzel'.

Unable to cut himself off completely from the snowfields after his move to Katoomba, Lu included a jigsaw postcard with a snowfield scene in the range

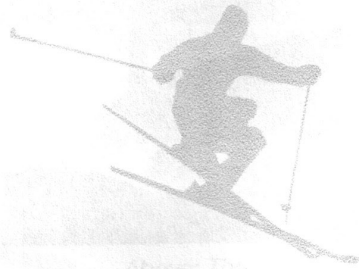
of souvenirs he was creating and selling. Corny but a good seller – you wrote on the card, pulled it apart, put all the pieces in an envelope and sent it off to family or friends who had to put the jigsaw together to read the message.

One souvenir that Lu desperately wanted but didn't ever get was the mile peg three miles from the summit of Mount Kosciuszko. He was always crooked on me for having the last mile peg on the Kosciuszko Road – K1 on one side and J30 on the other. These posts were made of solid concrete, with as much buried below the ground as showing above. K1 was mine, K2 was gone but K3 was still there. Traffic was no longer permitted beyond Charlotte Pass, so mile posts were obsolete and a blot on the landscape.

Lu packed a wheelbarrow and some tools into his car, drove through the Park entry gates late at night, on up to Charlotte Pass, parked near the barrier and headed off in the dark towards his goal, 3 miles away. Somehow he got the post out and with guts, sheer determination and strength managed to get the heavy, unbalanced load back to the Pass just as signs of dawn were in the sky. Unfortunately a Park vehicle arrived as he was loading his prize into the VW. Exhausted, Lu was unable to answer any questions about what he was up to and took off down the mountain, only to be met by a road block set up by the Park and the local cop. The Park confiscated the mileage peg and no charges were laid but the cop later admitted he was secretly overawed by Lu's feat.

Postscript: Ruth Lyons (Lu's daughter) provided the photo and the following words about her father.

"I think my father had some of his happiest days in the Snowy Mountains. My sister and I have very fond memories of skiing with Dad: "follow me", he'd say to us, as he disappeared over a precipice. You'd be hard pressed to describe Dad as graceful, except when he was on skis. To watch Dad ski a slope, was like watching a butterfly delicately, but purposefully, alight at each turn, then with a slight movement carry on to the next - truly poetry in motion."



Back Perisher

Perisher in the Sixties

PHS has been given permission to reproduce these black and white prints from the Powierza collection. The photographer, Joe Gois was a member of Warrugang Ski Club and these images have been scanned from his fine darkroom prints.

It appears that they were taken in the late 1960's. These and other images will be added to the photographic collection on the PHS website.



Corroboree Lodge far left, Eiger Chalet in the Centre, Rock Creek on the right



Ku-ring-gai Lodge far left, Telemark Lodges centre with Sundeck Hotel on the hill behind, Cronulla Lodge far right