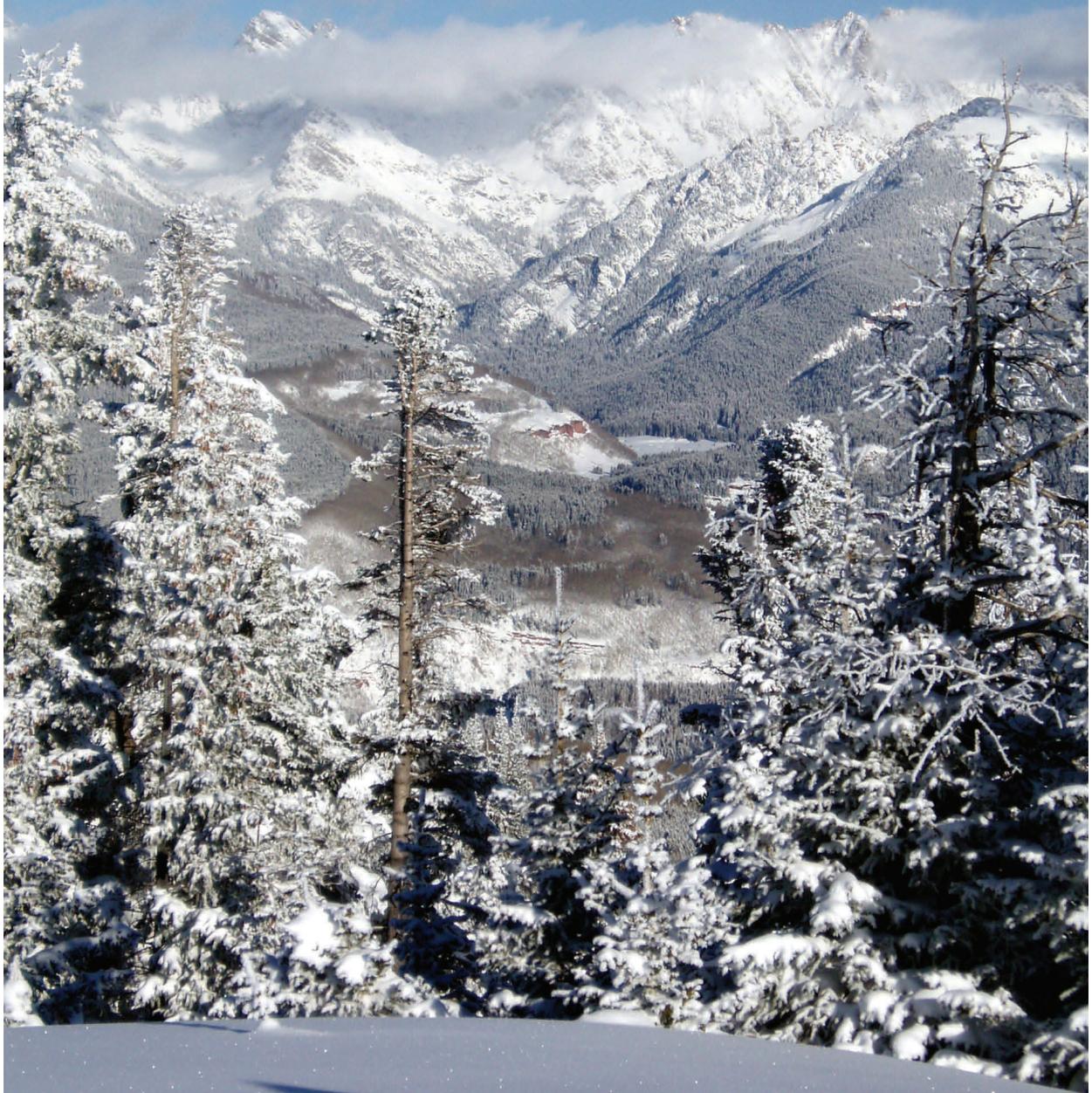


TOM BOYD

# PORTFOLIO

2009-2010



Tom Boyd/Vail's Gore Range

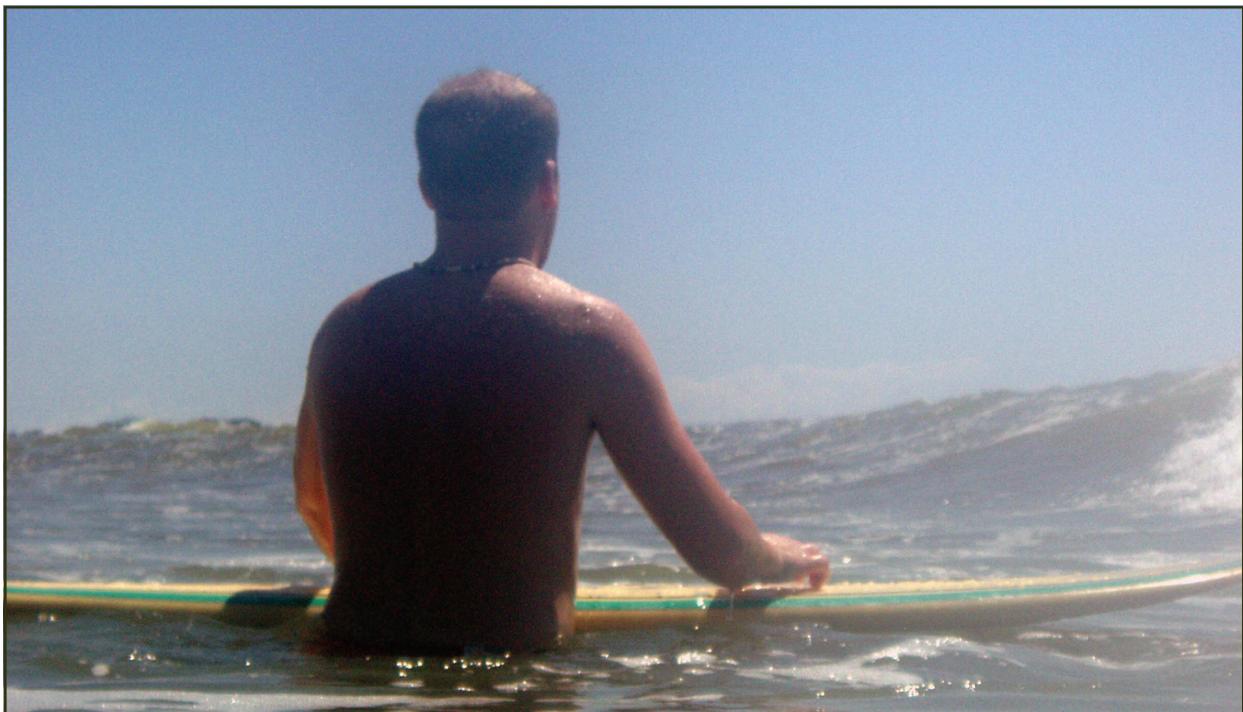
*The following pages contain examples of my work in recent years, including clips from various publications, photos taken, and copy written.*

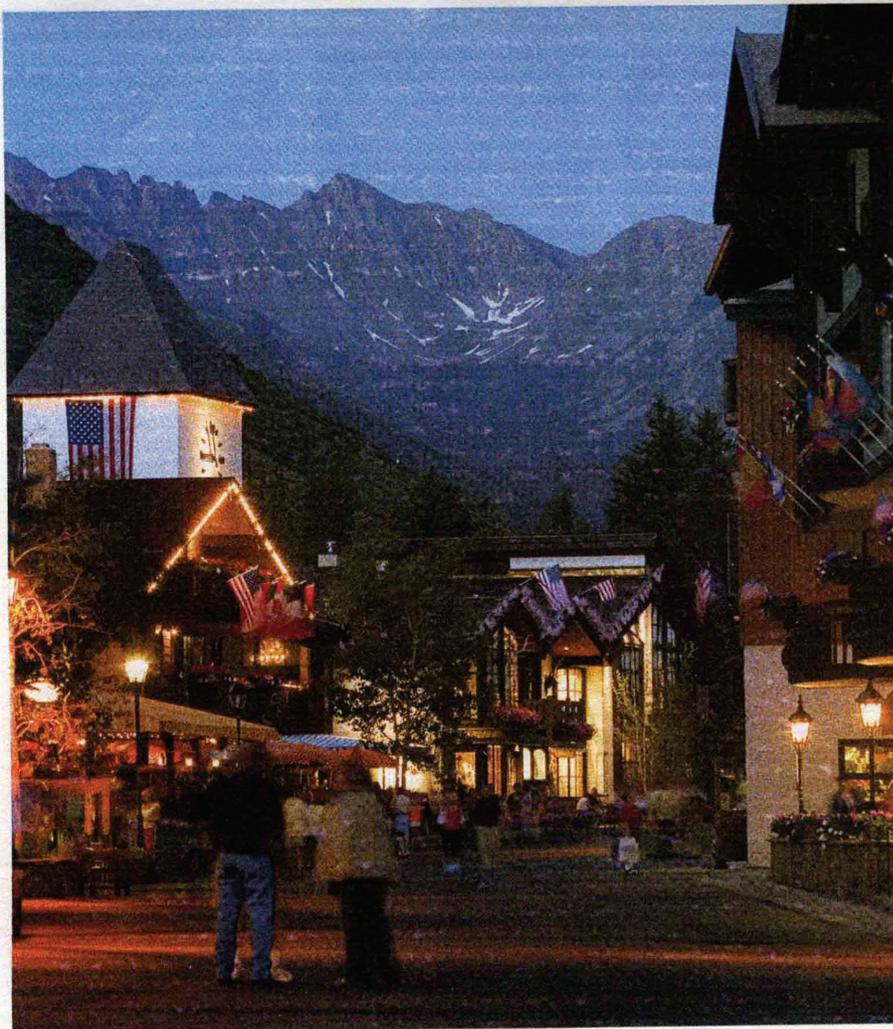
*I am primarily a writer and editor, yet have experience in design and photography. I can provide print samples of publications I have edited on request.*

*- Tom Boyd*



Above, backcountry skiing in Vail. Below, surfing in Costa Rica.





# DRINK

## Bar Hopping in the Valley

A local's guide to gluttony in Vail.

By Tom Boyd

Euphoria, I have learned, doesn't come automatically. You have to work for it. On the other hand, sipping a cold one in the outdoor bar of the Wolcott Yacht Club is hardly work—especially if fish tacos are in the mix.

This became clear to me on a recent Friday afternoon while I was perched on a WYC barstool, draining a Corona, and soaking in the scenery. I had a riverside view of the Rocky Mountains, good grub on the way, and sunshine on my shoulders: John Denver would've been proud.

I was, I admit, a bit proud of myself. I had picked the perfect beginning to a quintessential summer night of debauchery in the Vail Valley.

I don't know if JD ever tossed one back at the **Wolcott Yacht Club**, but every self-respecting Coloradan should. In Eagle River parlance the term "yacht" roughly translates to "kayak," so the preferred method of transport to the WYC is by boat (rafts will do, kayaks are better). On Friday evenings the owners, who are former sheep ranchers, pull regional talent to jam on the outdoor stage, and all the river rats get up and dance alongside a weird mixture of biker chicks, real estate agents, carpenters, and bankers. At its best, the WYC can come alive with the same rustic escapism as the Poudre River's Mishawaka Inn or Aspen's Woody Creek Tavern.

But its big draw is also its big flaw. The bar is close enough to Vail to make it a favorite locals' hangout, but far enough away to make it a transportation nightmare. Coming down from Edwards in a kayak was one thing, but rivers flow only one direction. My downriver paddle had left me famished and thirsty, but I was still alert enough to realize, halfway through a dripping-good taco, that I was going to have to find another way home.

With some quick work on a cocktail napkin, I calculated that my road to happiness was about

## CLIPS [5280 Magazine]

20 miles long, which also happens to be the distance from Wolcott to the Vail Village via Edwards. I divided my funding into two categories: beer and taxi. If I played my cards right, I had just enough to make a night of it.

If anyone from anywhere on planet Earth is going to have a beer in Edwards, it should be at the **Gashouse**. This is mostly in deference to its seniority as one of the town's original bars, but also because it's got lion heads, ox heads, and moose heads hanging from the ceiling, and that's somethin' right there. Over the past 15 years Edwards has been the epicenter of the Vail Valley's recent population explosion, and the once-sleepy ranchland is now expanding into a town in its own right, complete with high-grade strip malls, a head shop, and a quaint little farmers' market.

One of the few remaining ranchers is a fellow named Bruce Eaton. Once inside Gashouse, I took a quick look around and, not surprisingly, found Eaton situated on his favorite barstool. As the cousin of Vail cofounder Earl Eaton and owner of the adjacent strip of ranchland, Eaton is a kind

of town father. He's got a rugged face that looks natural beneath his cowboy hat, and a colorful way of talking that lands his quotes in the local papers from time to time.

I walked over and gave him a respectful nod.

"How'r ya doin' Bruce," I said.

"Who the heck are you?" he replied.

I bought him a beer, and the hops seemed to jog his memory. I settled back for a while and talked with Bruce about one of his favorite topics: the fairer sex. Bruce, it seems, has learned a thing or two in his ample time on Earth: He never goes long without pulling two or three beautiful young women into orbit around his barstool, and he gets away with saying things that are generally in the "sexual harassment" section of the corporate handbook.

I left Bruce in the midst of orbital maneuvers and made my way east for the final stage of my journey. As a hip hangout, Edwards is beginning to get its groove on, but the heart of mountain nightlife still beats in the **Vail Village**. The village has a powerful, somewhat dangerous

magnetism, which I (and everyone else) find irresistible. In a matter of hours it can suck you in, overtake you, steal your keys, and leave you lost, happy, and wondering where the hell you parked your sanity.

Around 9, by the time I made that familiar stroll down Bridge Street, the cobblestones were already packed and barstools were filling up. With a bit of patience, I secured myself a spot at the **Ore House** bar, one of Vail's original bars and probably the most down-to-earth place to grab a drink in the village. Woody and clean, the Ore House is one of the few places in the village where there's no scene, no cliques, and no BS—but there are definitely good people.

Some of those good people must have been in a particularly giving mood that night, because it was around that time of the evening things began to get a little hazy. At about 1:30 in the morning I found myself at **The Club** watching the Dionysian frenzy of late-night Jägermeister shots take hold of a throbbing mass of dancing people.

The particular elements of my wee-hour ascension to a state of Nirvana are forever lost to me, but apparently that's the payoff for taking the shortcut to the top of the peak. In the morning, with sticky eyes, I rolled out of bed to find all the money in my wallet gone, replaced with an impressive new collection of biz cards (who the hell is Rick Steves, and does the message "Gunshow, Memphis, this November!" apply to me?).

Groaning with each new revelation of last night's pandemonium, I headed to the source of the best and only hangover cure I ever employ: the Eagle River. I called up my buddies over at Timberline Tours and pulled a few paddlers together for a refreshing morning run down Dowd Chute. Nothing washes away the impurities better than floating downstream,

## The Best of Vail Valley

### Groovy tunes

The Sandbar Sports Grill, in West Vail, offers live acts in a cool space—that is, after a much-needed renovation in 2004. Sandbar is also one of the only places to play pool (and the only place to play ping-pong, when it's available), and with countless flat-screen TVs, it's a top contender for best sports bar, too. 2161 N. Frontage Road West, Vail, 970-476-4314.

### Table games

Garfinkel's in the Lionshead Village is the only place to play pool in the village, and if the foosball veterans aren't at The Club, they'll wander over to the table at Garfinkel's. 536 E. Lionshead Circle, Vail, 970-476-3789.

### Hanging out

The Main St. Grill in Edwards has a Cajun-American theme, but there's a lil' something for everyone on the menu. The live music is tasteful and not overbearing. If you actually want to hear what your friends have to say, Main St. is a good choice. 0097 Main St., Edwards, 970-926-2729.

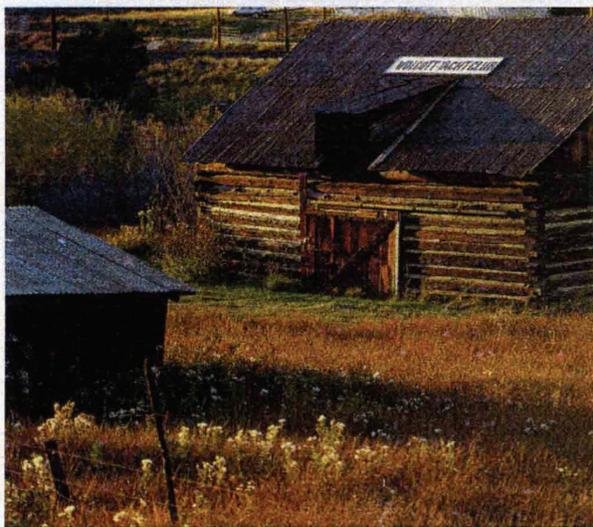
### Proper pints

Avon was always Beaver Creek's scuzzy cousin—that is, until a new town council reinvigorated the area. The centerpiece of Avon's revitalization is Finnegan's Wake Traditional Irish Pub, a roomy Irish pub complete with woodburning stoves, cozy chairs, and authentic Irish cuisine. 82 E. Beaver Creek Blvd., 970-748-4610.

upside-down, in ice-cold water. After a few rolls the headache was gone, and as we made our way toward the takeout I felt the pangs of hard-won hunger return. Hmmm, I thought, why not just paddle down to Wolcott? I hear they have great fish tacos.

*Tom Boyd is a freelance writer and former editor of The Vail Trail. He lives and works in Vail.*

**DRINK UP** This page: The Wolcott Yacht Club, a favorite hangout of kayakers and rafters, sits on the bank of the Eagle River in Edwards. Left page: The Vail Village (pictured) houses more than its fair share of restaurants and bars.



# No need for a map with iPhone's ski app

## Denver firm adds interactivity to area charts

By Tom Boyd  
SPECIAL TO THE ROCKY

A Denver company is putting itself on the map with a new mobile application called the "Snocator," a nifty piece of software that displays more than 70 maps

for North American ski resorts and shows the user where they are on the map, where they're going, plus weather and on-mountain restaurant information.

"We've taken the anxiety and intimidation out of navigating the ski resort, especially for skiers who may be worried about

avoiding difficult runs or getting lost," said Chris Glode, Snocator product manager for Denver-based Useful Networks, a subsidiary of Liberty Media Corp. "It's also very convenient, not to mention green, to never have to deal with the traditional unwieldy paper trail maps."

Snocator also provides access to daily snow reports for the resorts, which users can quickly sort by snowfall totals to find where the best snow might be. Links to webcams are also included in the current version.

An upcoming version will deliver information like how fast a snowrider is going, how much vertical has been skied and where other skiers in the group are located.

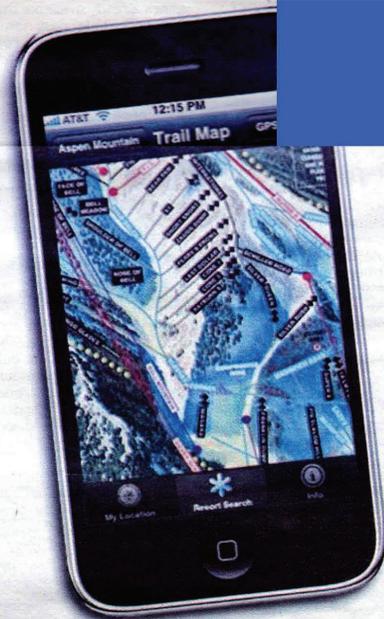
Location and GPS technology are the specialty of Useful Networks, which developed its most successful software in an application called SNIFF, a social network integrated friend finder. About 150,000 people subscribe to SNIFF in Scandinavia, where friends can find one another by sending a quick text message.

The group of 38 employees who work in the Denver office are ski and snowboard aficionados, so Snocator was a natural next step.

"We're in the location technology industry, but we also happen to be ski bums," Glode said.

Tested at Vail as a beta app last year and launched with maps of more than 800 ski resort trail maps worldwide Oct. 31, Snocator is now the second-most popular paid sports app for iPhone, and has received mention in Apple's staff picks.

Problems arose during testing last year in part because many ski areas have black-out zones on the hill. This year, however, Snocator works well even when out of range, so long as the cor-



### Snocator by Useful Networks

- **What:** Application for the iPhone
- **Offers:** Snow reports, GPS trail maps and weather for more than 800 ski resorts worldwide
- **Where to buy:** At the iPhone App Store under the "Sports" category or by texting "snow" to 90999 from your iPhone.
- **Cost:** \$2.99 during the holidays (\$5.99 regular price)

### RockyMountainNews.com

#### If you have iTunes...

- Find a link to download the Snocator app at RockyMountainNews.com/extras.

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## M2Z Network riles free-speech advocates

By Joelle Tessler  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — M2Z Networks' proposal to build a free wireless broadband network is not the only controversial part of

alarm at M2Z's plans to build a family-friendly network that would weed out objectionable sites by blocking particular internet domain names.

Federal Communications Commission Chairman Kevin Martin took up that idea in his

as a way for brands to reach customers with messages and offers at nearby store locations.

"Location is the unique and key element to providing the best possible experience in mobile apps, and we've made it our mission to make location simple, safe, and reliable for developers and end users alike," said Useful Networks CEO Brian Levin.

A subscription to Snocator is available at the iPhone app store for \$2.99 during the holidays (\$5.99 regular price) and it lasts throughout the ski season.

says any company that offers a free broadband service that is available to everyone must figure out how to protect children from illegal and unlawful material — much as TV networks do.

Yet this component of M2Z's plan has stirred a long-running

TUESDAY 1/6/09 ROCKY MOUNTAIN NEWS

tracks

# Mountains beckon with flurry of fun

There are two ways to get to the top of Keystone's Bergman Bowl: The first is to pony up for a snowcat ride to the top of Independence Bowl and then traverse west. The second is to heave the skis up onto the back and hoof it. Having recently chosen the latter, I was able to spend a greater portion of my 40-minute hike with burning lungs, contemplating how utterly dry the Colorado air can be in midwinter.

Dry? Yes. Hard to breathe? Yes. But on cold, sunny days, Colorado's

winter air is almost entirely free of

obstructive moisture molecules — making for the kind of views that will put the best HD DVD players to shame.

This is true in the day and, as they know in Aspen, at nighttime as well.

The beneficial side of clear night air will not go unnoticed at this year's **Wintersköl** celebration in Aspen, which takes on an astronomical theme Thursday through Sunday. The 58th episode of this quirky event has borrowed its starry demeanor from the United Nations, which designated 2009 as the Year of Astronomy.

Live music, rail jams, and other events at all four Aspen mountains (Ajax, Snowmass, Aspen Highlands and Buttermilk) will be interwoven with displays, artwork and lectures on the night sky. Clouds willing, the show should keep the town rocking from dusk until dawn and again from dawn until dusk. For more information, call 970-925-1940 or visit [aspenchamber.org](http://aspenchamber.org).

Aspen's Wintersköl hasn't shined as brightly as the **ESPN X-Games** competition in recent years — which is part of the reason the elder festival has maintained its charm. If a big-time, big-television, three-ring-circus-style event is the target, then the X-Games certainly shoots straight this January when it overtakes Buttermilk mountain (and the rest of the Roaring Fork Valley) Jan. 22 to 25.

Finding lodging can be difficult during the Games, but getting into the event for a front-row view of legendary riders like Shaun White, Gretchen Bleiler, Travis Rice, Daron Rahlves and Tanner Hall is fairly easy and admission is free. For information, visit [expn.com](http://expn.com).

Only **Breckenridge's Ullr Fest** (through Saturday) can stack up to the X-Games when it comes to pure party power. Breckenridge has long been proud of its ability to escalate mountain nightlife to new, often tottering, heights, and Ullr Fest is the apogee of all things Breckenridge. An annual toast to

the Norse god of Winter, libations flow liberally throughout multiple events, which include the Main Street Parade, an ice skating party, and the Ulllympics. For more information call 800-936-5573 or visit [gobreck.com](http://gobreck.com).

If January is a melee of major events, Steamboat enters the fray with something more on the "western" side of "country and western." Their grand-slam **MusicFest** (through Saturday) includes six

days, 30 bands, and more than 50 shows under a really big tent. Event passes

start at \$199; for more information, visit [themusicfest.com](http://themusicfest.com).

Steamboat also continues its long-standing, trademark tradition of mixing rodeo and skiing when it holds the **35th annual Cowboy Downhill**. The event is held each year during the National Western Stock Show in Denver. More than 100 cowboys registered for the Stock Show sally up to Steamboat on Jan. 20 to participate in rodeo/ski racing hybrid events on the slopes of Billy Kidd's hometown. For more information, visit [steamboat.com](http://steamboat.com).

The most anticipated event in Ouray each year is the **Ice Climbing Festival** Friday through Sunday at the inspired, man-made ice climbing park in Ouray. Crafted by slow-dripping water, the Ouray park has been heralded as one of the best by the ice climbing community, and the festival is a grassroots, small-town way of celebrating Ouray's remarkable centerpiece. The event hosts international ice climbers plus clinics, gear demos, and various creative parties at neighborhood bars. For more information, visit [ourayicefestival.com](http://ourayicefestival.com).

The event calendar at Vail and Beaver Creek almost never lies dormant, especially in the heart of winter. Although no particularly large events pop up on the January calendar, the **Wednesday night Streetbeat free concert series** continues each week in the Village, and the **Heavy Metal Weekend** (Jan. 24 and 25) brings metal casting artists into the streets, where bronze and iron will be cast nightly. For more information, visit [artinvail.com](http://artinvail.com).

January is a bustling time in the Rockies and probably the best time to mosey into the hills to sample a bit of the mountain lifestyle. Between major events, however, I recommend taking time to hike to the top of the nearest peak on a clear, cold day. It's an event that's almost always available, it's free, and it will improve almost anyone's January outlook.

Tom Boyd

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## **COPY**

### **Taos jumps on board**

#### **New Mexico ski valley shreds its skier-only image, might open new terrain**

**By Tom Boyd**

**Rocky Mountain News March 25, 2008**

To Colorado snowboarders, a road trip to Taos Ski Valley may not, at first, feel like a ski trip at all. There are long, straight roads through snowless Southwestern towns, gritty gas stations and fields of purple sage that seem better suited for a cowboy film than a ski flick.

The key is to stay within sight of the snow-capped peaks, which, if followed like bread crumbs, lead eventually to the jewel of New Mexican ski country: Taos Ski Valley, 1,200 acres of some of the most spectacular terrain in the Rockies.

Off-limits to all but skiers for the first 52 years of its storied past, the resort opened for the first time to snowboarders Wednesday to much fanfare.

Snowboarders who rode the mountain for the first time may have wondered what all the fuss was about when they took in their initial view of the mountain. Rather than soaking up a vista of wide-open runs through the Sangre de Cristo mountains, snowboarders craned their necks upward toward a lone, steep, bump run that seemed permanently captured in the shadows of the exceedingly narrow valley. (A sign reminds beginners that there are other, easier ways down the mountain).

Veterans know that Taos is more about lasting impressions than first impressions. Once lifted out of the base village by slow, old-school lifts, it's easy to see that Taos is actually a set of three bowls, with the bottom flats serving as beginner and intermediate terrain and the spectacular, whitewashed peaks above serving as some of the best expert terrain in the Rockies.

It's there that a hike-to ridgeline encircles Taos like the boundaries of a bull ring. Beginners and intermediates from around the Southwest have been coming to Taos for generations, but it's the steeps that have given Taos a kind of legendary status among expert skiers. Long off-limits for those with a single plank, snowboarders are now able to hike this burly terrain, befuddle their mind with the brilliance of the views and rattle their sabres at the mountain's multiple no-fall zones.

The 45-minute hike to the top of the 12,481-foot Kachina Peak is rewarded by about one minute of riding - a ratio that pales in comparison to Aspen Highlands, Snowmass and Telluride's hike-to terrain. Taos Ski Valley officials said they're looking into installing a lift that could improve the ski-to-ride ratio and possibly open up more terrain.

All is not lost, however. A better hike-to-ride ratio is found along the High Traverse, which leads westward away from the top of Chair 6. In the mornings, while shadowy areas are still a bit crusty, a hike to Twin Trees chute is worth exploring.

Riders beware: Skiers and snowboarders should bring shrewd judgment and plenty of experience to Taos' hot zones, where dropping cliffs can sometimes become mandatory.

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In an effort to make the Kachina hike more palatable, communications director Adriana Blake said the resort is talking to the Forest Service about making the summit a lift-accessible experience. The resort also is considering cutting new runs, installing high-speed quads (of which it currently has zero), and completely revamping the base area. Some of the construction, she said, probably will begin in summer 2009.

That might seem a long way off to Colorado skiers who witnessed huge revamps of several ski areas this past summer. Blake said bringing in boarders was the first step toward changing the mentality at Taos .

The new mentality might be critical to the resort's survival. Taos' skier visits have plummeted from more than 350,000 in 1990-1991 to just over 158,000 in 2006, something that is attributable - in part - to the resort's no-shredders-allowed policy.

"This is the beginning of a new era," said Blake, who is the granddaughter of founder Ernie Blake. Until the resort closes April 6, Blake and her relatives, who fill many of the key positions at the resort, will be throwing parties, hosting bands and putting on a beer festival, all to show that Taos, and New Mexico riding in general, is better than ever.

### Taos Mountain stats

- \* Closing date: April 06, 2008
- \* Average annual snowfall: 305 inches
- \* Current snow base: 103-120 inches
- \* Total acreage: 1,294 acres
- \* Number of trails: 110 total: 24 percent beginner, 25 percent intermediate, 51 percent expert
- \* Number of lifts: 12 total: 4 quad chairlifts; 1 triple chairlift; 5 double chairlifts; 2 surface lifts
- \* Base elevation: 9,207 feet
- \* Top of highest lift: 11,819 feet
- \* Kachina Peak elevation (top of in-bounds terrain): 12,481 feet
- \* Vertical drop: 2,612 feet
- \* Hours of operation: 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- \* Terrain park: Out to Launch terrain park located on Maxie's run under lift No. 7 offers two big airs, a hip, a quarter-pipe and rails. The park is groomed nightly.

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Regular (2+ days) \$60 \$47 \$36 \$47

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Novice chairs only \$20

### Details

- \* Getting there: From Denver take I-25 to Colorado Springs to Walsenburg; U.S. 160 to Fort Garland; Colorado 159 and N.M. 522 to Taos. The drive takes roughly 4.5 hours.
- \* Lodging: The base of Taos Ski Valley is located about 40 to 45 minutes from the town of Taos, and lodging is available in both locations. Some prefer to avoid the winding mountain road between Taos and the Taos Ski Valley by staying at the base of the resort in one of the roughly 15 rustic ski lodges

## **COPY**

located there. Dining and a small nightlife scene lend vitality to the base area, but a more diverse range of lodging and dining options are located in the town of Taos, which is well-known for its adobe architecture and Latino flavor.

\* Spring season ski packages: Start from \$89 per person per night, which includes two-day lift tickets, three nights lodging and continental breakfast.

\* Ski and snowboard school: Taos Ski Valley worked with industry experts to create a snowboard school worthy of its ski school, which has been honored by Ski Magazine several times. Beginner slopes are still fairly narrow, something resort officials hope to remedy in coming years. Private lessons run from \$150 for one hour to \$525 for a full day, while a single-day group lesson is \$49. Continuing lessons can be as little as \$90 (including lift ticket).

**#END#**

### **Annual Rafting Guide**

**By Tom Boyd**

**Rocky Mountain News Winter Escapes Magazine  
2008**

The 2008 Colorado rafting guide  
Winter's snowpack played no favorites this year  
By Tom Boyd

Tom Kleinschnitz isn't clairvoyant, but each spring he can look up at the snow-capped Rocky Mountains and see the future.

This season his future is looking very, very bright.

Long into this rafting season, Colorado's peaks will retain their reflective white sheen while cascades of fresh water fill Colorado's river basins.

Record, or near-record, snows have fallen throughout the state. Unlike years past, the snow has been distributed equally throughout the river basins, which ensures good rafting and kayaking throughout the summer, statewide, in perhaps the best water year in decades.

"This is an absolutely, extraordinarily, great snow pack," said Kleinschnitz, who is chairman of the Colorado River Outfitter's Association and owner of Adventure Bound River Expeditions out of Grand Junction.

"We've had years when we've had great snow in the north of the state, but the south doesn't get it," he said. "And we've had the opposite, too. This year we don't have that problem."

Every single river basin in the state recorded above-average snowpack as of April 2008, according to the Natural Resources Conservation Service, which monitors snowpack in Colorado.

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The Arkansas Basin, which hosts more rafters each summer than anywhere in the state, marked 141 percent of average. Combined with dam control and water management, Kleinschnitz predicts the Arkansas' rafting season will remain high-quality from now to well past Labor Day.

The Colorado River, which contains popular rafting runs like Vail's Eagle River, Summit County's Blue River, and the Upper Colorado's Gore Canyon, is reportedly 122 percent above average.

By the time the water collects and reaches Grand Junction, Ruby Horsetheif Canyon, and Westwater Canyon this June, Kleinschnitz expects about 30,000 cubic feet per second (cfs) of water to be pumping through the Colorado Utah border area.

Cataract Canyon in Utah, a popular destination for Colorado boaters because of its Grand Canyon-esque scenery and big whitewater, normally runs at about 30,000 cfs into Lake Powell. This year Kleinschnitz is preparing his guides for close to 100,000 cfs.

The numbers are similar throughout the state. The Yampa and White basin is close to 110 percent snowpack. The San Juan (southwestern Colorado) is at 124 percent. Statewide, the average snowpack is measured at 122 percent.

"It looks like it's going to be a fantastic season," Kleinschnitz said.

This motto holds true for beginners and experts alike. Big water may sound intimidating to the mellow-at-heart, but river dynamics ensure that, if there's water, there's plenty of runs for every type of boater.

In big water, flat sections of river remain flat, and even some difficult runs flatten out, too.

Much depends on the weather through June. A wet, rainy spring will ensure a very long season throughout the state. A sunny, warm spring will bring some of the biggest water the state has seen since the memorable 1984 season, which saw some of the biggest water on record.

Knowledge of the state's water supplies isn't critical for most – that's what the guides are for.

The key is to find the right guide and to make sure to ask good questions. River runners should be very up-front about their ability level and experience.

Also, conditions constantly change. Contact a guide, then let the guide find the right run for the ability level of the group.

Good gear is important, too, and it's likely the biggest difference between one raft company and another. Equipment quality can make or break a trip – especially during the colder, early months of the season. Most accidents on rivers happen to those without a life jacket (or personal flotation device, or pfd). Colorado's rivers are wild and unpredictable: wearing a pfd is an absolute necessity on every stretch of river in the state.

## COPY

For brochures and information on half-day, full-day, or multi day rafting adventures anywhere in Colorado, call the Colorado River Outfitters Association at (303) 280-2554 or check out [www.croa.org](http://www.croa.org).

### **Break out boxes:**

Top rafting trips

Here are suggestions for rafting trips for three different categories: scenic beauty, fun factor, and big adventure, along with a selection of guide services which operate in that area.

#### Scenic Beauty

Ruby Horsetheif on the Colorado River, class I-II: Those who shy away from the rapids of Westwater Canyon downstream revel in the tranquility of Ruby/Horsetheif, located on the Utah-Colorado border near Grand Junction. The southern bank of the river is largely wilderness area, and offers beautiful hiking and even some ancient Native American petro glyphs. The northern bank is excellent four-wheeling, horseback riding, or mountain bike riding. All of it makes for great grilling out and relaxing in the sun. This is among the most mellow runs in the state. Contact Adventure Bound River Expeditions at (800) 423-2668 or visit [www.adventureboundusa.com](http://www.adventureboundusa.com).

State Bridge on the Upper Colorado River, Class II: The Colorado River takes its time wandering through this high desert scenery between Pump House and State Bridge (between Vail and Steamboat), but a few interspersed rapids can still make a big splash. At lower levels (after mid-June) this is the place for inflatable kayaks and first-timers, but beware: big water in this canyon can be surprisingly dangerous, cold, and unpredictable. Inexperienced rafters and fisherman should stay away until runoff subsides. There are many different outfitters who operate on this stretch, but for a start call Colorado River Runs at (800) 826-1081 or visit [www.coloradoriverruns.com](http://www.coloradoriverruns.com); or call (970) 845-RAFT (845-7238) or visit [www.novaguides.com](http://www.novaguides.com);

Durango town run on the Animas River, Class II: Short of water in recent years, this stretch will likely have 90-plus days of rafting this year. At any level, this run is like a Sunday drive through the quaint mountain town of Durango. Rafters can stop, stretch, and hang out with the locals before floating into the alpine scenery downstream. Rafters can also watch the acrobatics of local kayakers as they perform tricks in Durango's whitewater park. There are many different outfitters who operate on this stretch, but for a start call Durango River Trippers at (800) 292-2885 or visit [www.durangorivertrippers.com](http://www.durangorivertrippers.com); or call Mountain Waters Rafting at (800) 585-8243 or visit [www.durangorafting.com](http://www.durangorafting.com); or call Outlaw River and Jeep Tours at (877) 259-1800 or visit [www.outlawtours.com](http://www.outlawtours.com).

#### Fun Factor

Shoshone on the Colorado River, class III: This is Colorado's classic rafting experience. Dam-release water ensures that first-timers and veterans alike can enjoy the big, soft waves of Shoshone in Glenwood Canyon through every month of the year – but summertime is when the water is warm and inviting. Beware: This year the water will rage at an expert-only level through late May and early June, so consider the Grizzly Creek run just downstream during this time of year. There are many different outfitters who operate on this stretch, but for a start call Colorado Whitewater Rafting at (800) 993-7238 or

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visit [www.coloradowhitewaterrafting.com](http://www.coloradowhitewaterrafting.com); or call Rock Gardens Rafting at (800) 958-6737 or visit [www.rockgardens.com](http://www.rockgardens.com).

Brown's Canyon on the Arkansas River, class III: Clearly the state's most popular rafting destination, Brown's Canyon on the Arkansas offers swelling waves and rugged mountain scenery. Brown's Canyon is somewhat dam controlled, meaning this year's season ought to extend well into September. There are many different outfitters who operate on the this stretch, but for a start call Wilderness Aware Rafting at (800) 462-7238 or visit [www.inaraft.com](http://www.inaraft.com); or call Arkansas River Tours at (800) 321-4352 or visit [www.arkansasrivertours.com](http://www.arkansasrivertours.com); or call Good Times Rafting at (800) 808-0357 or visit [www.goodtimesrafting.com](http://www.goodtimesrafting.com); or call Four Corners Rafting at (866) 745-7238 or visit [www.fourcornersrafting.com](http://www.fourcornersrafting.com).

Dumont on Clear Creek, Class III – IV-: Front Range residents can make a day-trip out of the Dumont run and cool off on a small, fast-paced mountain stream. From Dumont all the way to Golden, Clear Creek offers a run-and-gun journey through a canyon ecosystem which seems worlds away from the roads which follow its course. Kayakers should be sure to visit the very popular whitewater park in the heart of Golden. There are many different outfitters who operate on this stretch, but for a start call Clear Creek Rafting at (800) 353-9901 or visit [www.clearcreekrafting.com](http://www.clearcreekrafting.com).

### Adventure

Dowd Chute on the Eagle River, Class IV: Snowmelt from Vail's high country ensures that this local favorite is always rockin' in June. Ask your outfitter what "the gauge" reads, and get ready for a wild ride anywhere at 5 feet or higher, with mellower rides under 5 feet. If the sun comes out this spring, the gauge may all but disappear – if that's the case, choose to put in downstream of the Chute unless you're ready for the ride of your life. There are many different outfitters who operate on this stretch, but for a start call Nova Guides at (888) 949-NOVA (6682) or visit [www.novaguides.com](http://www.novaguides.com); or call Lakota Guides at (970) 845-RAFT (845-7238) or visit [www.lakotariver.com](http://www.lakotariver.com); or call Timberline Tours at (970) 476-1414 or visit [www.timberlinetours.com](http://www.timberlinetours.com).

Pine Creek/Numbers on the Arkansas River, class IV – IV+: This could be one of the best year's ever on the Numbers. At peak runoff it will provide the adrenaline it's been lacking in recent years, and after runoff it ought to be a great challenge for strong groups looking for a team-building experience. Twisting and turning, the run requires lots of paddling and the ability to listen well to the guide. For information call Arkansas River Tours at (800) 321-4352 or visit [www.arkansasrivertours.com](http://www.arkansasrivertours.com); or call Good Times Rafting at (800) 808-0357 or visit [www.goodtimesrafting.com](http://www.goodtimesrafting.com); or call Four Corners Rafting at (866) 745-7238 or visit [www.fourcornersrafting.com](http://www.fourcornersrafting.com).

Cache La Poudre Canyon: The Poudre is Colorado's only federally-designated National Wild and Scenic River, and it lives up to its billing for every level of rafter. It is, in a word, sublime: Aquamarine water slides through regal rock formations of varying color and type. It's location near Ft. Collins makes it a great choice for those in the northern part of the state, but again, beware: this run will be absolutely cranking during runoff. For information call Rocky Mountain Adventures at (800) 858-6808 or visit [www.shoprma.com](http://www.shoprma.com).

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### THE BIG ADVENTURE

Gore Canyon on the Colorado River, Class V: If you've run class IV water and loved it, then a huge adrenaline fix awaits at Gore Canyon on the Colorado River. A classic, pool-drop class V, Gore Canyon's rapids involve river-wide waterfalls and strong potential to swim (be prepared for a possible flip!). But it's all in the name of a good time and it all happens in the tight narrows between the razor-sharp cliffs of Gore Canyon near Kremmling. Damn release makes the water levels of this run follow strange rules – it can sometimes be bigger in July than June, or visa versa. Only a few guide services run this stretch, so for a start call Timberline Tours at (970) 476-1414 or visit [www.timberlinetours.com](http://www.timberlinetours.com).

### **INFOBOX (1) Rafting tips**

**What to bring:** Swimsuit; old tennis shoes, river shoes, or strap-on sandals; sunscreen; warm clothes to change into at the take-out; water-proof camera; wide brimmed hat that will fit under helmet.

**Kids:** Even in flatwater, families with children under 10 should wait until runoff is over this year, most likely mid-June. At that point, lifejackets (or personal floatation devices, or pfd's) are available for anyone weighing 30 pounds or more, but most raft companies will only do flatwater trips with small children. This kind of trip can double as a fishing trip. The limit on class III and IV trips is up to the guide and the parents, and is decided on a case-by-case basis, but youths should be about 16 years old if they expect to paddle strenuous whitewater.

**Sensible splashes:** All raft companies provide life jackets and paddles, but some companies charge extra for water-resistant splash tops, wet suits, footwear or helmets. Be sure to ask your raft company what they are providing with their fee.

**Fun in the sun:** Colorado's high-altitude sunshine is stronger than at sea level. Rafters should wear waterproof sunscreen to avoid burns, even on partly cloudy or cold days.

**Lunch and brunch:** Some raft guiding services offer refreshment, snacks or lunch on the river, but some don't. A small amount of personal snack food can be stored away in dry bags for those who love to munch.

**Dry and warm:** Advances in gear technology have made it possible for rafters to stay dry and warm during an outing, even on a cold day. Expect challenges and discomfort on any raft trip, however - it's not going to be as comfortable as sitting on a livingroom couch.

**Photo opportunities:** Cameras should be waterproof, but a small amount (two hands full) of other valuables can be stowed away in dry bags, where they are easily accessible and out of harm's way.

**Paddle power:** Four-to-eight paddlers ride on a paddle raft with a guide. Teamwork skills are a must for adventurous rafters who try bigger rapids; a boat moves much more efficiently when paddlers all stroke at the same time.

**Safety:** A mandatory safety talk beforehand gives passengers the heads up on boating common sense. Listen up: Following the commands of the guide, or captain, is a big part of rafting and meant to be taken seriously.

### INFOBOX (2)

Difficulty rating system:

Class I: Easy. Wide open water with riffles and small waves (All-ages).

Class II: Novice. Straightforward rapids with wide, clear channels. (All-ages).

Class III: Intermediate. Larger waves, twists and turns in the river, some obstructive material.

Class IV: Advanced. Powerful water requiring precise boat maneuvering.

Class V: Expert. Tumbling, violent, and unpredictable water with multiple obstructive materials.

Class VI: Deadly. The most difficult, unpredictable, and violent water available. **#END#**

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**Headline: Town of Vail may face supernatural forces in West Vail**

**By Tom Boyd**

**Vail Daily column, June 2009**

*And therefore as a stranger give it welcome.  
There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,  
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.  
Hamlet Act 1, scene 5*

I've written for and edited a fair number of publications in this Valley, including my current real-vail.com, but this is the first time I've written for the Vail Daily – so how will I get started?

I'll raise the specter of affordable housing – but not in the way you're probably thinking.

It seems the Town of Vail plans to build a two-unit housing structure at the bottom of Arosa Drive in West Vail. The building contract will be discussed at the next Town Council meeting June 16, but those in attendance may not know about the strange and storied history of this unique plot of land.

Lonely and deserted for nine long years, the Town-owned lot is slated for construction this autumn. The family-friendly homes built on the property will be the first domiciles on the lot since 2000. Before that, an A-frame house squatted at the base of the hill, overlooking I-70 with a malignant, hooded eye.

I remember the house clearly, not just because of its 200-yard proximity to my childhood home, but also because we all knew – everyone in West Vail knew – the house was haunted.

The legend began with screeching tires and a loud crash somewhere in the night, sometime long ago. Yet another winter driver had confused the North Frontage road with the highway on-ramp, but this time the mistake had been fatal. Just as the driver accelerated into high gear he slammed on the brakes, but not in time to avoid hurtling over the precipice and down into the drainage below.

Emergency medical personnel tried to resuscitate the man, but he perished in the driveway of that old, creaking A-frame ... where many say his spirit made a phantasmal home.

We didn't think much of the event in the years that followed, but then stories began to circulate. Lights flickering on and off, doors slamming, dogs howling and barking at the walls, and always the sensation that there was someone – something – there under the apogee of that A-frame, watching.

The home passed from one owner to the next, never one staying long, until the Town of Vail bought it in 1995 and used it for employee housing, renting it room by room.

Trouble seemed to plague the place. I once met a young couple in the old Jackalope (now the Sandbar), who looked stressed, harried, and guarded their luggage at their feet. They were homeless for an evening, by choice, because they had been living in the A-frame on Arosa but simply couldn't stay another night. Haunting, they said, was their sole reason for abandoning their room. They stayed with friends until they could find a more peaceful place to live.

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Peace was hard to come by at the A-frame ever since it was built in 1971. My dad was one of Vail's early home builders, and as he completed our house up the street he helped out on the A-frame from time to time. A good ol' boy named Frank Higgins ran the show, and to save a dime he decided to buy and build one of those "kit" homes, a kind of mail order home which falls somewhere between "double-wide" and "tenement housing" on the home-quality hierarchy.

Bob Armour, a former Vail mayor, has lived across the street from the lot for 20 years with his wife Mary Lou. He remembers a nice young couple who worked for the town, stayed in the house for a while before they were driven out. Their dogs, it seems, were constantly barking at thin air, appearing to chase specters round the house.

Armour believes it was mice, not ghosts, that were chased by dogs through that house. Doors slamming without warning, lights flickering on and off – it seems the symptoms of a haunted house are one and the same with symptoms of a slapboard, clapboard, murky old A-frame that creaked and splintered with even the slightest mountain breeze.

Still, the legend lives on. At a recent Town Council meeting, when someone asked why the original place was torn down, Vail housing coordinator Nina Timm roused old suspicions when she replied that it was torn down because it was haunted.

Lamentably, she told me she was only kidding around. "We didn't tear it down to rid the neighborhood of supernatural forces."

But how can we know for sure? I remember the signs, I remember the stories. And if the place wasn't haunted, then why the long, nine-year wait for reconstruction? Why do all of us who live, or once lived, in that close-knit, congenial community simply know, without question, that something strange was afoot at the old house on 2657 Arosa Dr?

And why does Armour still keep the wizened skull of a Big Horn Sheep on the corner of his property, it's cavernous eyes unceasingly fixed upon the empty vacant lot across the street?

"To ward off the evil spirits," he told me over the phone ... and I could barely, just barely, hear the sound of Bob and Mary Lou getting a good chuckle out of it all in the background.

So when new strangers move into our little hamlet on Arosa Drive in West Vail, we'll have to quote them the old verse from Hamlet, act 1, scene 5 – and then we'll wait, and watch, and see what rich legends arise in the next incarnation of that mysterious place at 2657 Arosa.

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### The Battle of Battle Mountain

The fate of a high-dollar, private ski and golf resort is now largely in the hands of voters

May 18, 2008

Colorado Independent

Photos and story by Tom Boyd

Tucked away in a narrow valley between Vail and Leadville in Colorado's central Rockies, in the shadows of the mega ski resorts of Vail and Beaver Creek, the small town of Minturn has long been home to people who like being off the beaten path, away from the hubbub, near to nature and yet not too far from Interstate 70, which buzzes past only a few miles away.



That's all changed in recent years, however, as Minturn finds itself in the center of the Vail Valley's largest land development since the

creation of Beaver Creek in 1980 – a private ski and golf resort called Battle Mountain. An estimated 200 to 300 of Minturn's 720 registered voters will decide the project's fate in a referendum election Tuesday.

Officials for the faded former railroad town have been at the bargaining table with Florida developer Bobby Ginn for three and a half years, wrangling over the details of a posh, billion-dollar-plus development that would include a private ski area, two gondolas, 1,700 homes and two 18-hole golf courses on a 5,300-acre chunk of prime private real estate cobbled together from old mining claims.

Supporters, including unanimous town council annexation approval in February, several Main Street businesses and citizen leader and former councilman Fred Haslee, say the project will reinvigorate a town that's been bypassed and overlooked by Vail, Vail Resorts and the entire Vail Valley for the past 40 years.

"With the Ginn development, all the things that we've seen in communities surrounding us are suddenly viable for our residents," Haslee said. "Right now there's one basketball court – half court – and a couple of horseshoe pits, some playground equipment ... this developer is going to build new amenities [including a recreation center] and put Minturn on the map."

But detractors say it will forever alter the funky hideaway off the backside of Vail Mountain, where skiers often head out of bounds and ski down to the Saloon, a legendary local hangout, via the Min-

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turn Mile, a classic backcountry ski run. Frank Lorenti, a political greenhorn, has openly called for Ginn to “pack up and head back to Florida.”

“If this goes through, I’ll make money,” said Lorenti, who owns a storefront building in town and circulated the petition that forced a referendum on the project, “but I don’t want to lose my small-town way of life.”

A portion of the resort, almost all of which would be located above 8,000 feet in elevation, would be built on the rust-colored tailings of an EPA Superfund cleanup site. Another section would be within the boundaries of the condemned and abandoned mining town of Gilman, and another portion would be built in pristine, high-elevation forest about a mile from Vail’s Back Bowls.

The Ginn Company, with golf and beach resorts throughout Florida and the southeastern United States, purchased the land for \$32.75 million in 2005, and suddenly a town that hadn’t seen high-powered negotiations since the decline of mining in the early years of the 20th century was across the table from a multi-billion-dollar corporation.

Town officials warmed to the task and began leveraging hard, asking for a list of improvements including a new recreation center, a new wastewater treatment plant, a scholarship fund, money for the purchase of nearby open space and \$3.5 million for wildlife protection – among other benefits totaling nearly \$200 million.

In return, Minturn would annex the Gilman property, approve the project’s increased density over what Eagle County would allow, and help provide the magical ingredient for any Western development project: water.

Lorenti said Ginn’s development will subjugate the town to the Ginn Company’s rule, dismantle the town’s unique character, decimate prime elk and other wildlife habitat, raise property taxes and choke two-lane Main Street in a cacophony of big trucks for years to come.

Supporters counter it will remove the specter of lead, zinc, gold and silver mining’s heavy pollution in the area. According to Minturn town documents, Ginn must have EPA approval to build his golf courses, which are planned for the still-contaminated Bolts Lake area just outside of town.

Lorenti isn’t sure Ginn has the power to complete the work that the multi-billion-dollar Superfund cleanup hasn’t yet fully accomplished. On the other hand, supporters point out that Ginn once converted Florida’s toxic Lake Apopka into the ritzy Bella Collina resort.



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The \$3.5 million included for wildlife protection is another boon, supporters say, but others argue the money is too little, too late.

Ryan Bidwell, executive director of environmental watchdog group Colorado Wild, said conservationists and the ski and real estate company Vail Resorts missed a critical opportunity early in this decade to buy the land from its previous owner, Turkey Creek, LLC – a pair of Denver lawyers who pieced together the property by snapping up old mining claims in the early 1990s.

“It’s unfortunate in a lot of ways that people didn’t have the vision to think about conservation of that property when it might have been an easier option,” Bidwell said. That option existed during a brief window between 2003 and 2005.

In the 1990s, Vail Resorts had 50-percent development option on the property, and some were concerned that the ski company – which was waging a war of public opinion during its Blue Sky Basin expansion – would build a resort similar to Ginn’s, then connect the two via a one-mile ski corridor.

After environmentalist protests over Blue Sky Basin turned ugly in 1998, with the eco-terrorist organization Earth Liberation Front torching several buildings and chairlifts on Vail Mountain, Vail appeared to give up on any plans to develop the Battle Mountain parcel. When Vail Resorts began publicly discussing a conservation easement on portions of the property, Turkey Creek sued for breach of contract. In 2003, a judge ruled in favor of Turkey Creek, Vail Resorts was out and Turkey Creek started shopping the property around.

Eagle County was engaged in an open-space buying spree at the time, spending millions for the Bair Ranch property at the mouth of Glenwood Canyon and the Eagle River Preserve in Edwards. The money, some contend, could have been used instead to buy the Battle Mountain property rather than smaller parcels down valley.

After the Minturn Town Council unanimously approved annexation on Feb. 27 of this year, Lorenti began gathering signatures to take the issue to a referendum. In a town with roughly 720 voters, Lorenti gathered 89 signatures – enough to put the issue to a critical vote. A “yes” vote would be a huge step toward development, but a “no” vote isn’t likely to kill it completely.

“If we vote no, (Ginn) is either going to leave or he’s going to renegotiate with us,” Lorenti said. If Ginn renegotiates, Lorenti said, the citizens of Minturn could fight for a lower mill levy, water and sewer fees, and “a lot of stuff that could be putting money in the citizen’s pockets rather than the town’s pockets.”



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“He’s smokin’ dope on that one,” Haslee countered, adding he thinks Red Cliff or Eagle County would jump at the chance to be a part of a project that could reap millions in property taxes for either entity – and Minturn would once again be left in the cold.

Ginn Company spokesman Cliff Thompson declined to comment until after the May 20 vote, instead referring questions to the citizen-support website at [Minturn Citizens for Annexation](#).

Town councilwoman Shelley Bellm, who voted in favor of annexation, said, “No matter how deep you dig or how shallow you go, you can find a benefit for everyone.”

She also pointed out that if Ginn takes his plans to Eagle County or Red Cliff, Minturn would still shoulder the impacts of the development, without any of the benefits.

If voters approve the project May 20, they will have a say in everything from how much traffic comes through the town to how much money is spent rebuilding Minturn’s aging infrastructure, Bellm said. And it surely hasn’t escaped notice that, although the ski and golf resort will be private, Minturn residents would be offered discounted membership. But don’t expect Lorenti and Haslee to be meeting up for a friendly round of golf anytime soon. Insiders say the project is still many years away from completion.

For more, visit the town of Minturn’s detailed outline of the project at [Minturn.org](#). Visit the supporter’s website at [Minturn Citizens for Annexation](#) and the opposition’s website at [Minturn Times](#).

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## PHOTOS



Cambridge, Mass.

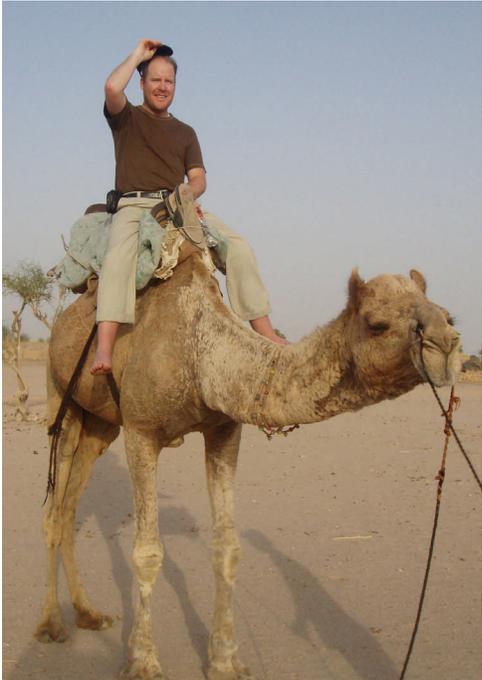


Torino 2006 Olympic Winter Games

**PHOTOS**



Still life of Zacapa Rum



Tom in Rajasthan, India

## PHOTOS



Antigua, Guatemala, 2009



Breckenridge, 2009