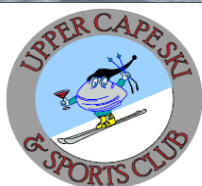


The Avalanche

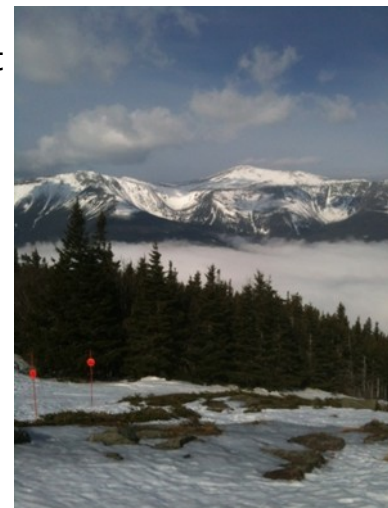
MAR/APR 2012



From the Summit

When it comes to spring skiing, my sympathies are aligned with Bluto: "Over? Did you say over? Nothing is over until we decide it is! Was it over when the Germans bombed Pearl Harbor?" I'm convinced most people put their skis away WAAAAY too early, and they miss some of the best skiing of the year. Corn snow, sunglasses, tanning, skiing in shorts, all combined with a mid-day barbeque, make for an awesome day. The lack of snow-fall this year means we'll probably see a really short spring season, so get it while you can. In fact, by the time you read this, the season might already be over.

Sadly, the club's scheduled trips are over. We ran our last trip March 14th to Wildcat which had spring conditions, and it was quickly melting away. However, their snowmaking trails still had great coverage, and they could last another month or so. Other resorts—Killington, Sugarloaf, and Jay—should last until the beginning of May. And then there is always Tucker-man's, once the avalanche danger is gone. It looked very inviting across the fog bound valley of Pinkham Notch from the 'Cat. I've never hiked it, but it is on my "bucket list".



Lastly, I'd like to thank our trip leaders for doing such a great job this season! Bud Shaw (2x), Len Hills, Scott Northrup, Mimi Schlichter (2x), and Camille Morgan. They are the public face of this club, and the reason our trips are so much fun. We are always looking to involve more people; if you'd like to run a trip next year, drop me a line.



Regards,

Roger Stokey
President



We're having a ... **PARTY!**

Grab yer partner, friends, and family and drag 'em out to our annual end-of-winter banquet! The Beach House has prepared a dinner for us, including Caesar Salad, Rolls, Vegetable Tray, Chicken Parmesan, and cake. Let's celebrate another great winter! We'll also feature a short film highlighting the club's recent trip to Steamboat, a preview of our favorite summer activities, some thoughts for next winter, and some free raffles!

Registration via the website is required (Need help? Call Michael—774-392-2567)

When: Thursday, April 5, 2012 at 7:00pm

Where: The Beach House—Route 151—North Falmouth

Cost: \$15 members
\$17 non-members

Contact Us?



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Scott Northrop

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Rick Howe

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Tom Burt



Steamboat, CO

in a nutshell...

By Tom Burt

February was a nervous month for several club members. Twenty-three, to be exact. Like most of the country, Steamboat was short on snowfall. We've seen dry spells on trips out west before, but nothing like this. All was not lost, however, The two weeks prior to the club's trip there, Steamboat began seeing some snow. In fact, they received about two feet in the two weeks leading up to our trip. Even better, snow was now in the forecast for our trip! Things were looking up.

Arriving in Denver on a Sunday afternoon, we started the long bus ride into the mountains. There was a storm in the forecast, with up to nine inches predicted! Things were getting nasty as we approached Steamboat. Visibility was poor and the driver did well to get us there. We sat through the usual welcome orientation with anticipation over what the night's storm would bring. Still on east-coast time, many of us arose early, peering out into the still-dark sky. Too early to actually see the accumulation, it was up to the mountain's snow report to fill us in. What's that? 27 inches? Unbelievable! And it's still snowing!

The line for the gondola that morning was intense. We expected lines due to the Presidents' Day holiday, but not quite like that. It turns out the whole town shut down and hit the mountain to ski the biggest 24-hour dump on record since they began tracking snowfall at Steamboat. Several of us headed straight for the trees. With the prior couple weeks' snow still intact, the new snow made for some pretty epic tree-skiing. I got buried on my first run. Literally buried, with snow all around. Tree wells were a serious threat that day and a few of us found them, thankful to climb out. Drifts were knee to waist deep and the snow easily crept up our chests with occasional face shots. Some could be seen wearing snorkels. Yes, snorkels. It's the type of skiing we all dream of. Well, most of us. Not a single trail was groomed that day.



THE AVALANCHE

The groomers did venture out that night, knocking down about 500 acres of Steamboat's 3,000 acres of terrain. They were fighting a losing battle—we awoke to an additional nine inches. Let's just say that was an *amazing* day. The weekenders were gone; the locals back to work. But all that fresh snow from the previous day was still there plus all the new stuff! Trails started getting bumped up awfully quickly. The mountain reminded us that there was no preparing for the amount of exertion required. It was nothing a couple of beers at the umbrella bar at the bottom couldn't fix.



By day three, my internal clock was thoroughly confused but I was starting to get used to local time. The morning ritual continued—get up, make the coffee, check the snow report. Ah, crap, another twelve inches. WOO HOO! It was day three and we had seen four feet of snow since our arrival. Hump day on a ski trip can be tough—the legs really start feeling it. By early afternoon, we were getting a little bit of mixed precipitation and a crust was forming on top of all the powder. A few runs after lunch was all it took before it was time to seek therapy at the Bear River Bar and Grille.

Day 4. Wake up. Coffee. Snow Report. Six more inches! Okay, the site only said two inches, but the mountain clearly under-measured. We found a solid six inches at the top. Thinking of all those back home that were suffering at work, we make a valiant effort on the mountain.



That's right, valiant. It was hard work, but we managed. We made it to the chutes that day, trying out Chute 3. We had peeked into Chute 1 the day before but didn't like the entry and opted for Deo's Descent instead. Steamboat has some steep stuff, but we decided it was somewhat tame compared to the stuff we skied the prior year at Jackson Hole. What Steamboat is truly known for is the tree skiing. I can confirm it is pretty amazing, with a mix of pine and aspen that makes for spectacular scenery as well.



Day 5 came without any new accumulation. A sad day... But not too sad—we still had amazing conditions! The sun came out that too and we had tremendous views. I even got a little sun! By now, we had seen pretty much the whole mountain. 3,000 acres is a lot, but not so much you can't cover it in a week, believe it or not. We started hitting our favorites again, timing the lifts to maximize our runs before they close. No stopping early on a day like this. Late in the day, I ventured over to Chute 1 alone, to take another peek. Just when I was ready to opt out, a kid of maybe 10 years dropped in, his father videotaping close by. The entry wasn't as bad as initially thought, so I followed him down. It was well worth it, with the chute packed full of the week's snow and the perfect northern exposure to hide it from the sun's freeze-thaw cycle. That night was an adventure as well. The group gathered for a delicious dinner at the top of the mountain. We took the gondola up, then hopped in a cat-drawn sleigh for a moon-light cruise across the mountain to the restaurant. Well worth it, if you ever make it to Steamboat!

Day 6 of skiing was pure gravy. Any time you can get six great days of skiing in a row, you have to be thankful. It was with such thanks that we skied a great morning under bright blue skies. After lunch, winds picked up and wind-holds started plaguing the upper lifts. By early afternoon, the mountain was all but closed and we were sipping Fat Tires listening to a lousy cover band. What a way to end it all!



A few final thoughts on the trip.

1) Steamboat is a very cool place, well worth seeing. 2) We had essentially no incidents this year. Perhaps our best trip ever. 3) I have no idea what the town is like—I spent far too much time skiing. That is why we go though, right? I have heard the town is nice. Maybe some day I'll get there. 4) Bud, you're the man! Where to next year?





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