



Up in smoke

❖ Freeskiing legend Eric Pehota (shown) is slated to return for the second annual Cold Smoke Festival to be held jointly in Nelson and Whittewater February 22-25. Last year's festival was organized primarily by Mountain Gear, a mountaineering and ski shop in Spokane, Washington, but generated plenty of buzz among locals and visitors alike. Feature events included avalanche beacon searches (courtesy of Backcountry Access's "Beacon Basin"), a ski randonnee race, a multimedia show by ski mountaineer Greg Hill and telemarker extraordinaire Nils Larsen, a variety of ski mountaineering and backcountry safety seminars, and perhaps the most comprehensive backcountry gear demo ever at a Canadian ski resort. With superb snow conditions and the kind of organic vibe that Whittewater and Nelson are famous for, the Cold Smoke Festival and the Kootenays were truly made for each other. For 2008, the Crazy Rager After Party has been moved from Whittewater to the Nelson Rod & Gun Club; as well, a telemark race and Boondocks Booter Slopestyle Competition have been added to an already comprehensive program.

—Steven Threndyle



CHIC-CHOC'S MOUNTAIN LODGE GRANOLA BARS*

3 cups	rolled oats	1 cup	dried fruits
2 cups	mixed nuts and seeds	1 cup	dark chocolate chips
1 cup	raisins	300 ml (1 can)	condensed milk
1/2 cup	unsalted butter, at room temperature		

Butter a pan. Mix all dry ingredients. Add the condensed milk along with the butter and mix well with a wooden spoon. Pour mixture in the pan and press lightly to even out. Bake 20-25 minutes at 325 degrees F. Let cool in the pan, cut in portions and wrap in plastic wrap. Keeps for several weeks in the refrigerator, theoretically, but they'll likely be long gone by then.

* For the best place to eat these, turn to page 52.

Come on out

❖ Whittler welcomes the rainbow again when it plays host to one of the world's largest gay and lesbian ski events, February 3-10. The resort treats thousands of guests to top winter entertainment, drawing international performers and media attention. GayWhittler's WinterPRIDE (www.gaywhittler.com) is recognized as one of Whittler's most exciting festivals, with dance parties, contests, culinary, health and wellness seminars, and renowned skiing—including the legendary ski guiding and après. Participants who book by January 16 receive a fifth night free. As well, pre-booking rental gear will save you 20 per cent and includes complimentary ski/board storage—and, though most will have already thought about it, free waxing!

Photo: STEVEN THRENDYLE



Taking the high road

❖ By next summer, a futuristic-looking, \$7-million gondola will whisk skiers and pedestrians between Tremblant's base village and the new Versant Soleil development, where its casino and entertainment complex is set to open simultaneously. Designed by Doppelmayr, the eight-passenger gondola trip will take just under seven minutes and will run year-round—during the winter from 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 a.m.—perfect for a safe ride back after last call. Originally, the area had considered other options to link the various villages, including a passenger train that would have joined the Mont-Tremblant Park on the North Side, but the gondola option was deemed quieter and greener. The project was made possible, in part, by Canada Economic Development and Infrastructure Canada.

—Marie-Pierre Belisle Kennedy



Ski Instructor packages

❖ Who said the ski instructor has lost his mojo? Oh yeah, we did. Well, we might have spoken too early. Adding to global warming, Switzerland got a little hotter in the fall with the Win a Ski Instructor contest. Online voters have been casting ballots for the best-looking Swiss instructors and the pool is now down to 10 finalists. According to Ursula Beamish at Switzerland Tourism, "The majority of ski holiday decisions are made by women" and since six-packs are used to sell everything else these days, they might as well be selling Swiss scenery. The plebiscite is worth participating in even if you're happier with Heidis: every week a chosen voter wins a one-week trip to the Swiss Alps—and the instructor is included! www.myswitzerland.com/vote

Brohm Ridge update

❖ Garibaldi at Squamish is the latest incarnation of plans to develop a ski resort at Brohm Ridge, north of Squamish, B.C. It's been a decade in the making and the proposed Garibaldi at Squamish resort is mammoth in size. The developers are hoping to build 122 runs with 24 lifts. In addition to the ski area, the development includes two golf courses and 5,700 units of housing. The resort plans to bring 15,000 skiers to a skiable area of 2,150 acres. (Whistler-Blackcomb has more than 8,000 acres and a skier capacity just shy of 30,000.)

The development has been through many incarnations, starting with the Garibaldi Alpine Resorts in 1995. The company ran into financial difficulties, reorganized and eventually morphed into Garibaldi at Squamish. Mike Esler, president of Garibaldi at Squamish, said the company is now well heeled financially.

Regardless of the money, the resort has to jump through major hoops and convince local residents of its viability before becoming a reality.

—Kim Thompson



Photo: IAN MERRINGER

FREE-HEELING ONTARIO

❖ Being small in number and pride-bound to avoid crowded areas in favour of quiet backcountry terrain, telemarkers are rarely seen in large groups milling around outside resort base lodges. But puzzled snowboarders and alpine skiers had to tiptoe their way through a group of 55 telemarkers practicing deep knee bends outside Mount St. Louis Moonstone's base lodge last December when Ski Telemark hosted its annual warm-up day to kick off the mobile telemark ski school's 24th season.

Even in backcountry-deficient Ontario, the ranks of telemarkers are swelling like a pulled quadriceps, says tele-instructor Steve Kahn, who puts the increase down to improved equipment. "With today's supportive plastic boots and shaped skis, we are getting a lot of older skiers having the confidence to sign up. And alpine skiers also see there isn't much difference now between their gear and ours. The new gear has added 20 years to my skiing life." And he might just be able to afford to tele through those years, since the new critical mass of telemarkers is finally producing a pool of second-hand equipment. It's easier to entice people into a sport when there isn't an automatic \$700 entry fee for a new pair of boots.

—Ian Merringer

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The Winners' Circle

❖ BMO Mastercard doled out another \$1,000 through the Ski Canada Award to two of B.C.'s fastest young ladies. Jen Meyer, 15, of Whistler Mountain Ski Club (by way of the Big White Racers) has an impressive CV, including a 1st in super-G at the K2 Provincials and 2nd Overall. Teammate Madison McLeish, 15, placed 1st Overall at the K2 Provincials and 2007 Canadian K2 Championships, and 1st at the 2007 Gold Cup. Money raised by the BMO Mastercard is distributed each year to charities within the Canadian ski world. Contact your provincial ski association for more information. And to sign up for the skiers' credit card, call 800/263-2263.



Madison McLeish

Jen Meyer

Photo: LE PHOTO SHOPPE

POWDER PRINCESSES

❖ Are you a clever girl who, for whatever sad reason, has never been helicopter skiing? There's hope, there's always hope. Like a dream come true the people at Canadian Mountain Holidays (CMH), the world's largest heli-ski operation, want to hear why. And they're willing to throw in some free seats in the chopper to make it happen. CMH is offering women the chance to win a heli-skiing holiday for two, in exchange for completing a survey about why females make up a comparatively small part of the heli-skiing market. Simon Hudson, Professor of Tourism and Marketing at Calgary University, has created the online survey, which takes about 15 minutes to complete. Not a bad investment for a possible lifetime of thrilling memories.
www.canadianmountainholidays.com/survey/

—Leslie Woit

A SKI TRIP TO WHISTLER, BRITISH COLUMBIA!

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