

Each month my challenge is to write an attention grabbing first page for our newsletter. This month however, it's easier than usual because I did something I never had before which was to ski on New Year's Eve. I'm on the mailing list of **Bear Creek Mountain Resort** in Macungie, Pennsylvania and several weeks earlier learned of their New Year's Eve party with fireworks. Since I had no plans and had never been there (or any other ski resort on New Year's Eve) I decided to give **BCMR** a try. Late afternoon December 31<sup>st</sup>, a friend and I headed out of NJ on Route 78W into Pennsylvania. The slopes were open till 1am so we planned to boot up and get outside by 6pm, ski for several hours then hit the lodge for a meal around 9-10. Grabbing a bite earlier would allow us to view the sparkles ushering in the new year. I have to tell you I was really I-M-P-R-E-S-S-E-D with this surprisingly not-so- little ski resort!

Our evening began at Guest Services to get lift tickets, where we were greeted by Carol Sicher, Guest Services Manager. The staff at the front desk were genuinely helpful and we had a delightful conversation with Carol who gave us some insight to Bear Creek Mtn. Resort before heading out to the slopes. The base lodge is a very modern design, architecturally pleasing and the firm designing this complex knew what a base lodge should have or got input from the owners as to what they wanted for this resort. Amenities were obvious including lockers on each floor and restrooms everywhere you expect them. Someone finally figured out it's not fun (or safe) to walk up/down flights of stairs in clunky boots for a rest room when you NEED one. The entire complex is first class: contemporary, good eye appeal, ski racks where they should be, rental shop when you first come in and a separate shop for tuning and repairs so the two don't clash. The dining area adjacent to the cafeteria is pleasantly decorated has a beautiful stone fireplace, holds hundreds and was full on New Year's Eve. The lodge is conveniently connected to the hotel making it easy for hotel guests to get breakfast before heading out to ski. If you want a drink one minor quirk is that the bar and Cafe are a rather long walk from the cafeteria but being attached to the hotel it's very convenient for overnight guests. Opting for the 'Cafe' rather than the cafeteria, we ordered our meal and in five minutes it was hand delivered to us in the adjoining bar. Just outside the base lodge sits an inviting, steaming pool. I didn't see anyone swimming probably due to the fact many were dressed for New Years' Eve and the rest were skiing and it was night-time. More trails were closed than open due to uncooperative weather for weeks but those open were in good shape! A credit to their snowmakers is that on NYE so many snow guns were blowing that a virtual blizzard was in progress. I love resorts that cater to those who enjoy the snowsports and a nice amenity was the complimentary slopeside Ski Valet to check skis or boards releasing us from hunting for them in the racks. For any who've never been to **BCMR** here's a run-down on the Mtn. stats which puts it on an even keel with the Pocono resorts.

Bear Creek: 1,100' summit, 510' vertical, 21 trails (30% green, 40% blue and 30% black).

If you're looking for family-friendly skiing at an upscale modern resort with on-site lodging in the country this is the place. It's not a huge mountain but the ski experience was surprisingly good and the drive is shorter than going to the Catskills. I recommend it for a day or two of skiing or for families with a longer stay in the hotel with young children learning to ski. I will return soon to ski the whole mountain; Bear Creek Mountain Resort gets my vote!

**Council Trip: Telluride, Colorado**

The Council trip to Telluride, Colorado is not far away running February 21<sup>st</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup>. If you are a member of NJ Ski & Snowboard Council you already know the particulars about this trip. However, if you need the info. log onto the Council website and click on “News and Events” and you’ll get a drop-down of the (3) Council trips. What you might not know is the history and other particulars about Telluride and that’s what I’d like to discuss here.

Telluride, Colorado is the county seat of San Miguel County and lies in the south-western part of the state. By any measure it’s a special destination on the bucket list of many skiers. As a quintessential Colorado ski resort, the town lies in a valley known as a ‘box-canyon’ because it’s surrounded by mountains. The San Juan Mountains are steeped with a rich history of silver mines and gold rush lore. The heady days of mining claims and instant fortunes created an aura brighter than the gold and silver itself and caused Telluride to become a place in the hearts of skiers everywhere. How wouldn’t it, with grand scenery, great vertical and plenty of acreage to get lost in (figuratively speaking please). Mountains anywhere are candy for the eyes but the Colorado Rockies, well a part of you stays there when you leave. Just look at the pictures of Telluride in any magazine....it is natural beauty at the absolute best. Telluride has a down-town area that’s made the cover-photo of many ski magazines over the years. Reportedly the town has great night life with plenty of good eateries and bars. This is an area that is more than a ski hill.....it’s a ski town in a ski region.....a place where winter thrives, a place where people look forward to and embrace each snowfall. If you are fortunate enough to live in Colorado you know how beautiful it is and here, that beauty is spelled.....*T-E-L-L-U-R-I-D-E*.

History: Telluride was first inhabited by Native Americans, the Ute Indians who hunted deer, elk and mountain sheep in this part of the San Juan Mountains. Their idyllic life continued uninterrupted until the Spanish Explorers (dam Spanish they got into everything) and fur trappers arrived in the late 1700’s. Oddly enough neither the Spanish nor the fur trappers stayed very long, leaving the area to the Ute’s for another 75 years or more. In 1875 a prospector name John Fallon made the first mining claim in the Marshall Basin above Telluride. He registered the Sheridan Mine with the Silverton County Clerk, which proved to be rich in zinc, lead, copper, iron, silver, and gold. The town of Columbia, Colorado was established as a mining camp in the Telluride valley in 1880. However confusion with another mining camp of the same name in Columbia, California, caused the US Post Office to refuse to grant the town its own post office forcing it to find another name. There are two theories as to how the town came to be known as 'Telluride': 1) The name was derived from the mineral tellurium, a non-metallic element often associated with mineral deposits of gold (and ironically, not found in this valley), or 2) The town was named for the famous send-off given to fortune seekers headed to the southern San Juan Mountains -- "To-hell-you-ride" (certainly the more colorful of the two). “Telluride” was first known for its gold and silver which lasted a number of years. Minerals plus the arrival of the railroad in 1890 were responsible for the population soaring to 5,000. The town became known for its fast life of wild bars, bordellos and even Butch Cassidy. Almost as suddenly as things went up, things went bust when in 1893

silver prices crashed and the economy began to degrade. Still, Telluride held on for a number of decades but the death knell sounded when WWI hit; the price of gold was fixed and many men left to fight the war. By 1960, Telluride was little more than a ghost town with 600 residents. Then came WHITE GOLD!!! In 1972, Joseph Zoline built the first ski lift and a fledgling ski area known as “Gold hill” (because of earlier fortunes). A few years later in 1978 two locals named Ron Allred and Jim Wells assumed control of the ski area and together came up with a plan for sustained but sensible development of the area and the ski resort.

Stats: Telluride is blessed annually with over 300” of WHITE GOLD (snow not jewelry), has 127 trails spread over 2,000 skiable acres with 23% beginner, 36% intermediate, 41% expert. The longest trail is Galloping Goose at 4.2 miles which should keep you going for 30 or more minutes of non-stop skiing. The mountain crowns out at 13,150 feet with lift service to 12,570. The base is at 8,725 giving Telluride ski resort a very respectable vertical drop of 3,845 feet! This also means you’ll be living at or near the altitude known to cause altitude sickness.

Caution, handle with Care: Having said that, I’d like to talk a bit about Acute Mountain Sickness (altitude sickness) which is a condition caused by a lack of oxygen or ‘thinner air’ at high elevations. The theoretical altitude for the onset of altitude sickness is somewhere between 8,000 and 10,000 feet. However, the altitude where you normally live is a major factor so if you live ‘at the beach’ be cautious because you are prime for an ‘event’. While no one is immune there are a number of things that can trigger a bout of altitude sickness including over-indulgence with caffeine (coffee, chocolate or otherwise), smoking, alcohol, lack of sleep and not being well hydrated. The best advice is to throttle back on all in the days before you leave and make sure you drink LOTS of water during that time. After three days at altitude you can phase in alcoholic beverages but don’t over-indulge.

If you’ve had altitude sickness before you know how debilitating it can be. Several medications are recognized as helpful and one is Acetazolamide (Diamox). If you are coming from sea level or know you are susceptible seek the advice of your physician before travel and consider medication BEFORE you go and continue taking it until you leave. If there is any humor in this, it’s that Sildenafil citrate (Viagra) causes the blood vessels to dilate allowing a better flow of blood. It is often prescribed in country once you experience mountain sickness as a way to allow greater blood flow to the brain (and other areas). Ladies beware! If your SO should fall prey to mountain sickness you may be in for sleepless nights!

Tech talk: many think there’s nothing more to discuss in the way of new trends in the ski industry as it’s all been invented. The reality is that there’s so much new gear I hardly know where to start. However, this month I’ll review one invention that deserves merit because I always have cold hands. For years skiers have bantered whether gloves or mittens keep hands warmer. Conventional wisdom is keeping fingers together allows them to stay warmer than in a five finger glove. But wait, Seirus just introduced electric five finger gloves AND mittens! Boot heaters have been around for years but Seirus introduced heated gloves for those of us whose fingers don’t stay warm. The heat wires and a flat battery pack are sewn into the

gloves and reportedly the battery pack is lite enough you hardly know it's there. Like heated boots, you plug into an outlet and charge them for the next day. Each glove has a settings button on the back of the glove at the base of the index finger. The battery pack is sewn into the gauntlet at the wrist but the heat elements are where you need them, in the fingers to keep you warm. Seirus offers (3) models of heated gloves and one heated mitten for women (women get more choices than men). The top of the line is the Heat-touch Inferno (five-finger glove) at a whopping \$374.95 and has three heat settings: Low 6+ hours, Medium 4+ hrs. and High 2+ hours. It is made with 150 grams of Primaloft insulation and 100grams of 200g (denier) HeatLoc™ premium hollow-core insulation. I haven't tested any but if anyone out there has a pair, PULLEASE let me try them! The (4) glove offering has prices ranging from the lower-end "Heat touch Hyperlite All-weather glove (\$259.95), Heat touch Hyperlite All-weather Xtreme (\$274.95), Ladies Mitt (\$255.95) and the Heat-Touch Inferno (\$374.95). The meaning of trip insurance just got ratcheted up because I'd hate to lose a pair of these after plopping down \$374.95 + 7% tax= \$401.20!!!!!!!!!!!! If you're about to climb Mt. Washington, K27 or Everest maybe this is the glove for you. Although I'd like to 'demo' a pair, \$400 will buy a lot of hand warmers for my existing mitts and by the time I'd work \$400 off, the gloves probably would have long vanished from my equipment trove.

Telluride.....Oh My God Country, Colorado!!!!!



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