

APRIL, 2004



League / Council Events Calendar

2004:

April 24 Sierra League BBQ & End of the Season Awards Party
May 1 May Day-May Day, Alpine Meadows
June 10-13 FWSA Annual Convention, Reno/Sparks, NV

2005:

Jan 29-Feb 5 FWSA Ski Week, Aspen, Colorado
June 9-12 FWSA 75th Annual Convention, Long Beach, CA

Don't forget to check-out the Sierra League webpage: www.sierraleague.com for updates!

SIERRA LEAGUE BBQ & END OF THE SEASON AWARDS PARTY , Saturday, April 24th, 2004, 1 PM; Alpine Meadows, Subway Parking Lot

Presentation of Council Awards and election of officers will take place.
Bring side dish(es) to share, chair(s) to sit on. BYOB. Meat provided by Sierra League.
Please RSVP , 530-550-9452, gsracer@calis.com,

LEAGUE / COUNCIL 2004 ELECTIONS

Sierra League/Council election of 2004 - 2005 officers will be held Saturday, April 24th at the annual picnic. If you are interested in running for one of the board positions, please contact Ken Simpson, jksimp@msn.com, 775-787-7556, or Neil Ordiers: neilo@northbay.com, 707-769-8412, for information.

Running for office (as of 4/12) are:

President:	Barbara Bryant, Joe Loader	VP of Travel:	Amur Rutz
Vice President:	Donn Bryant, Chris Rutz	Head Gatekeeper:	Lisa Collins, Dan Hopper
Treasurer:	(open)	Webmaster:	Pavel Bosin
Secretary:	Jo Simpson	Newsletter Editor:	Beth Perryman

FAR WEST SKI ASSOCIATION ANNUAL CONVENTION

June 10 - June 13, 2004, John Ascuaga's Nugget Resort Casino, Reno/Sparks, NV

To register, see your club president; Council/League President, Barbara Bryant; Joe Loader, Convention Chairman; or go online to <http://www.fwsa.org> and selection "Convention" from the list of options. All necessary flyers/forms are available in this *Convention* section. More details in the May issue!!

**SIERRA LEAGUE/COUNCIL
OFFICERS
2003—2004**

President: Barbara Bryant

530-550-9452 / gsracer@calis.com

Vice-President: Donn Bryant

530-550-9452 / gsracer@calis.com

Secretary: Jo Simpson

775-787-7556 / jksimp@msn.com

Treasurer: Doug Ball

775-851-2923 / ballgd@aol.com

Race Chairs: John & Nancy Manter

775-831-6667 / Nkelmanski@aol.com

Statistician: Dan Jeffrey

Dan@jeffrey.reno.nv.us

Head Gatekeeper: Lisa Collins

775-673-3388 / drcskis@nvcbell.net

Race Practice: Paul Laudenschlager

530-550-7504 / plaud@onemain.com

Trip Chair: Amur Rutz

530-587-5814 / amur@jps.net

Webmaster: Pavel Bosin

408-374-1648 / pavel@bosin.net

Newsletter: Beth Perryman

775-322-5805 / slabanshee@aol.com

Club Race Chairs:**CSSC:** Jeff Schellhammer

530-661-1560 / jeffshellhammer@msn.com

Reno Ski & Rec: Joe Loader

775-972-8019 / Skiloaders@aol.com

Fagowees: Jack Ottosen

916-721-8230 / ejotto@hotmail.com

Code 3: Jim Sommer

775-322-5805 / sommer@ci.reno.nv.us

Rat Pack: Mark Lilly

530-541-8250 / marklilly@aol.com

Club/League/Racing websites:Sierra League: www.sierraleague.comFar West Ski Assoc: www.fwsa.orgFar West Race Assoc: www.fwra.comFar West Masters: www.farwestmasters.comReno Ski & Rec: www.renoskiandrec.comCapital Ski & Sport: www.capitalski.orgFagowees: www.ricero.com/Fagowees

"RACER READY!! 5-4-3-2-1-GO!"
JOHN & NANCY MANTER, RACE CHAIR COUPLE

What a Ski season!! It started out with good snow storms and great skiing for the holidays. As for the races, one thing we noticed about this race season is that we had snow and weather conditions that were extreme and challenging! At Lake Louise in January it was freezing cold with light powder, For the past six weeks we have had warm Spring conditions. It has been difficult for the ski resorts to set perfect race courses with the changes in the snow that plagued us at Northstar for the GS, at Diamond Peak for the slalom, at Alpine Meadows for Norcals, and finally at Heavenly for the FWSA Championships. However, they did their best, and with the help of many volunteers from Sierra, Open, and Single's Leagues, we succeeded in having a good time and racing our best too.

We want to thank everyone who helped us throughout the race season. There were gate-keepers, registration helpers, bib distributors and collectors, awards helpers, course officials, scoreboard helpers, starters, and always many who gave us encouragement, advice, and support for coordinating all the stuff that goes into the races. We appreciate your help and want to say "We couldn't do it without you!!!"

We also want to recognize and give special thanks to the pacesetters for doing such a great job during the 2003-2004 race season. We appreciate your commitment and the extra work you did at each race. We know it prevents you from skiing all over the ski resort before and after your race, when you have to be available to pace set and give advice to less-experienced racers. We know you enjoy running the gates again and again, but we also know it is a sacrifice and a responsibility. Thank you very much. And good luck to the new pacesetter for next race season!!

Our next get-together is the Sierra League Awards Picnic on Saturday, April 24th at Alpine Meadows. There will be great food, awards, election results, and a first look at next year's race schedule, which we're finalizing now. It's our last chance to see all our ski racing friends before we get involved in our summer sports. We hope to see you there.

Nancy & John Manter
Race chairs for 2003-2004

What's News in Sierra League / Council?

April 2004



FWRA CHAMPIONSHIPS APRIL 2-4 AT HEAVENLY

Scared witless is the way several of us described Sunday's GS on East Bowl down World Cup. The S1 and S2 course was delayed for 45 minutes due to icy conditions on a narrow race course.

Just getting to the start arena proved to be a challenge. A narrow, icy, steep corridor which most side-slipped, provided the only means to get to the starting arena for the S1-4 racers. The race course softened just enough for the S3-4's that ruts, holes, and chatter marks appeared, making it an extremely difficult championship run. Few strikes resulted on either Course 1 or 2. Sighs of "Whew, glad I made it down that run in one piece!" could be heard.

Sierra League Racers Take Top Honors

Cory Ritchie, S1 Open Women, winning two **gold** medals, was the fastest woman in both the Slalom and GS at the Far West Race Association Championships held at Heavenly on April 3-4. Fastest man on the hill in Slalom on Saturday was **Chris Probert**, bringing home a **gold**. In addition to **Cory**, racers winning **gold medals** in both GS and Slalom were **Barbara Bryant** 2VW, **Keisha Curtis** 3OW, and **Adam Laub** 3JM. **Other Gold Medalists:** **Don Little** 2VM; **Nancy Pita** 4VW; **Dan Jeffrey** 4VM; **Kathy Ann Wilson** 10VW. **Silver Medalists:** 2 silvers - **George Richter** 1OM; 2 silvers - **Sarah Price** 5OW; **Paul Laudenschlager** 1VM; **Don Little** 2VM; **Greg Peairs** 2VM; **Rachel Laub** 4JW; **Pat Pierucci** 8VW; **Kathy Ann Wilson** 10VW. **Bronze Medalists:** **Pavel Bosin** 1VM; **Kris Buttenberg** 1OM; **Ryan Ritchie** 1OM; **Greg Peairs** 2VM; **Nancy Manter** 5VW; and **Ken Simpson** 6VM.

by Barbara Bryant

Sierra League Volunteers Make the Championships a Success

Thanks to the entire Sierra League race team for working hard as volunteers at registration, starters, finishers, pacesetters, Course Officials, awards, and the silent auction. The following racers either helped and / or raced at the championships: **Mike Vialpando, Mark Ostroff, Neil Ordiers, Lisa Collins, Jennifer Jeffrey, Jo Simpson, Avery Laub, Dennis Corcoran, Steve Jackson, John Manter, Helen Laub, Jack Kennedy, Brien Walters, Bill Ramoni, Donn Bryant, Jim Sommer, Joe Loader, Cam Clarkson, Mark Lilly, Joe Laub, Mike Williams, Norman Quigley, Cliff Young, and Dave Garner.** The event could not happen if it weren't for the hard work of the many volunteers from all of the leagues. Thanks from you to all our volunteers would be greatly appreciated.

First Ever Silent Auction A Huge Success

As the chairperson for the FWRA Silent Auction at the Awards Banquet on Saturday night, I can testify as to the huge amount of work it takes to contact donors, collect items, and put on the auction. I would like to recognize the donors who contributed items to fund the FWRA safety, educational and racing programs.

- p Reno Mountain Sports and Dave Garner
- p George Koster, Prudential Realty, Kings Beach
- p Vail Resorts
- p Alpine Meadows, Northstar, Sugar Bowl Ski Resorts
- p Porter's Ski & Sport
- p Village Ski Loft
- p Sports Rack Vehicle Outfitters
- p Izzy Governmogot
- p John and Nancy Manter
- p Bob Ellis, President of FWRA

What's News in Sierra League / Council?(cont.)

Sierra Council BBQ, Awards, and Election of Officers.

Saturday, April 24, Sierra Council/League will host a Ski & BBQ Day at Alpine Meadows. Following skiing, meet at the Subway Parking Lot (next to Tahoe Adaptive Ski Center) at 1 PM. Sierra League will provide the meat for a BBQ. Bring a side dish to share, your own beverage, and a chair. Race and council awards such as the **Bill Ramoni** Award, Legends Award and Council Man and Woman of the Year will be presented. Come and vote for your board members who will represent you next year.

Charities and Community Service

- On Tuesday, March 16, Code 3 held its annual fundraiser at Northstar with a race series - 2 slalom races followed two GS races. About fifty racers participated in raising money to benefit the **Pacific Burn Unit**. The donation contributes money to send young burn victims to summer camp.
- Reno Ski & Rec contributed close to \$1000 at the Multiple Sclerosis Fundraiser at Diamond Peak in March. **Dave Miner** was the lucky winner of a pair of skis.

Sierra Council Hosts FWSA Convention 2004 at the Nugget

Your convention committee has been working hard on convention activities. The Welcome Pool Party, the Mt. Rose Hike, the Golf and Tennis Tournaments, and the M.S. Dixie Dinner / Dance Cruise on Lake Tahoe are certain to sell out prior to the Convention which is being held June 10-13. **Committee Members:** **Joe Loader**, Chairman; **Jan Holman**, Hotel Liaison; **Joel Marlowe**, Registration; **Brien Walters**, Tennis Tournament; **Glenn Pederson**, Golf Tournament; **Patrick Deenihan**, Golf Shirts; **Lisa Collins**, Volunteer Coordinator; **Boyd Hanson**, Assistant Volunteer Coordinator; and **Chris Rutz**, Mt. Rose Hike Chair. The public is invited to the Silent Auction where any-

one can place bids on ski trips all over the U.S. and Europe. It's possible to get some fantastic buys at Friday night's event. **Donn** and I have been to Park City, UT and Crested Butte CO on two of those great ski trip bargains.

Sierra Council / League Injuries

It's good to finally see **Dick Olson** back on skis after injuring his shoulder last winter. **Jim Sommer** has also been nursing an injured shoulder all winter. **Ken Schopfer** tried skiing a bit early and found that his calf muscles still weren't ready. His fractured leg appears to be healing well. **Linda Kennedy** tore knee ligaments in a fall during her Nor Cals slalom and is facing surgery soon. **Jennifer Lee** has been on crutches after pulling a muscle in the Diamond Peak slalom. **Mark Luster** tore his Achilles tendon and will undergo surgery to reattach it. No, not a ski injury, but a football injury!

SIERRA LEAGUE HOSTS FWSA ANNUAL CONVENTION VOLUNTEERS WANTED!

With the FWSA convention being held in Reno/Sparks, June 10 - 13, we're in the midst of planning great activities and programs for everyone.

We need volunteers to do all sorts of things. To help out, call or e-mail Lisa Collins at (775) 673-3388 or drcskis@nvcbell.net. You can volunteer for specific jobs or days and Sierra League's help is really wanted to make this a smooth and successful event. Thanks in advance.

Lisa Collins, FWSA Volunteer Coordinator

FWSA ALASKA CRUISE, SEPT. 19 - 26, 2004

Leaving from Vancouver, B.C., cruise the "Inside Passage" aboard Royal Caribbean's *Serenade of the Seas*. For further information, go to the website: www.FWSACruises.com. Sign-up online or contact Lynnell Calkins, VP of Travel, at the FWSA Travel Line (310) 370-6948.



Travel & Events

FAR WEST SKI WEEK 2005 75th Anniversary, *Aspen, Colorado* *January 29 - February 5, 2005*

The trip price will be \$765 to \$989 (not including transportation), depending on the type of condominium requested and includes:

- 7 night lodging at Snowmass or Aspen
- 5 of 7 days lift ticket
- Welcome reception
- 3 races (Qualifier, SL, GS)
- Mountain picnic
- Après ski party with Fireworks
- Registration and activities fee
- Council party / potluck dinner - Tuesday
- FWSA Ski Week Farewell & Awards Banquet

.....We are planning for this trip already, so do not be left behind.

Send your **\$25 non-refundable** deposit to reserve your spot. Make checks payable to: Sierra League and mail to:

Amur Rutz,
POB 11092
Truckee, CA 96162

Cancellation Policy for Aspen/ Snowmass:

- \$25 non refundable
- July 1st to Sept 1st \$100 total non refundable
- Sept 1st to Nov 1st \$300 total non refundable
- Nov 1st non refundable unless resold
- Final payment Nov 15, 2003
- Payment schedule to be determined

For More Information: Call Amur at 530-587-5814 or e-mail at crutz@jps.net

COME ONE, COME ALL TO ASPEN!

Lodging & Transportation options:

Snowmass:

Top of Village Condominiums: Spacious 2 bdrm/2 bath and 3 bdrm/3 bath apartments with kitchen, fireplace, private balcony, gas grill, ski slope view, washer/ dryer, and entertainment components. Complex includes re-designed exteriors and courtyards, pool, hot tubs, sauna, exercise room, elevators, covered parking, on-call village shuttle and daily housekeeping. With full amenities package for ski week, plan approx. \$994 per person. (does not include transportation). Luxury.

Woodbridge Condominiums: Located across the skier's bridge at base of ski lift #6, these 2 bdrm/2 bath condos are within walking distance to slopes. Complex is a short shuttle ride (15 minutes) from Village Mall and Conference Center. Units offer mountain views, fully equipped kitchens, fireplaces, and private balconies. Other site amenities include Sauna, heated outdoor pool and whirlpool. With full amenities package for the ski week plan approx. \$770 per person (does not include transportation). Economy.

Aspen:

Gant Condominiums: One of Aspen's finest condominium resorts just 3 blocks from the gondola and 5 blocks from center of town. They provide transportation to/from airport and throughout town, daily housekeeping, bell service, and concierge services. Property amenities include 2 pools, 3 hot tubs, small exercise facility and tennis courts. All units include full kitchen, living room w/television & VCR, wood burning fireplace, and patio or balcony. With full amenities package for the ski week, plan approx \$950 per person (does not include transportation).

Transportation options:

- Air via Denver or LA to Aspen - estimate \$350 round trip.
- Train (Amtrak) from Davis, Sacramento, Truckee, or Reno. Leave Friday to Glenwood Springs, CO arriving 12:50 pm Saturday and bus 1 hour to Aspen or Snowmass. Estimate \$150 round trip.
- Drive on your own

Travel & Events (cont.)

MAY DAY - MAY DAY

Saturday, May 1st, **Capital Ski and Sports Club, Sierra League** and assorted fellow travelers will hold the **6th Annual Mayday-Mayday Party** at Alpine Meadows.

While not the end of the world, the impending end of the local ski season is a source of "dismay" to us all. No pre-registration for this party, no bibs, no FIS requirements, no strikes. Arrive if and when you wish. Alpine usually sells lift tickets at approx. \$25 for those who show a season pass from any resort.

We will rendezvous at **8:30 AM** at the base of Summit Chair or just show up and ski. Look for us at the 1/4 hour intervals at the base of Summit Chair (e.g. 9:00, 9:15, 9:30, etc.) or meet us **on the deck at 1PM**.

Contact **Dennis Corcoran** if you have any questions at 530-756-8775 or email him at: dcorcoran@aol.com

DEMO DAY @ DIAMOND PEAK A SKI REVIEW by Pavel Bosin

This year's St. Patrick's wkn'd at Diamond Peak, I had less time to try demo skis due to the AM slalom race. But the selection was good and I tested 9 pairs. I started with slalom skis while the snow was still hard and I had fresh memories of the race (which was a rare slalom success for me! **Rossignol Oversize 9s (green label) 164cm**. I tried these right after the SL race, which I had run on SL Atomics 157cm (Misha's skies). These Rossis felt great. Maybe it is because of the extra 7cm of length, maybe because the snow just started to soften up. But I felt extremely comfortable and solid making short radius carving turns on the hard steep slope. All thumbs up!!!

p **Atomic SL11 164cm**. I expected to have the same feeling as of Misha's skis, but these felt a bit awkward. Maybe their turn radius is larger, maybe the softer snow was not letting them to be smooth. The guy at Atomic booth told me that this ski was redesigned compared with 2003/04 model - less shape, narrower, etc. Anyway, Misha's Atomic SL 157 from 03/04 season felt better to me.

p **Volkl P60 Slalom 155cm**. The guy at Volkl told me that this is not the top SL model, but a "retail" version and it felt that way. Both Rossi and Atomics were much more stable. I did not have that nice feelings I had the previous year on P60.

My next goal was to try all-mountain skis. I love my Atomic RE-X 03/04, which I bought after demoing lots of skis last year. I hoped to find progress this year, and I did.

p **Atomic Metronic M11 175cm**. This is the ski with powder ski tip and tail and SL type sidecut. I've heard excellent references about these skis, but was not that impressed under the conditions we had. These skis are probably very nice at moderate speeds. For the runs I made, I was going fast, and felt very uncomfortable. They were easy to turn but lacked the SL ski stability. When I hit some soft wet snow, the bases sank, changing the turn radius abruptly.

p **Volant 188cm V2 Silver**. I've been a long time Volant fan for the all-mountain skis. These had very similar feeling as my PowerCarvs 190 - very smooth, forgiving, cutting through crud, but no power whatsoever.

p **Atomic Metronic EX 185cm**. This is the updated REX, which felt even better. Very stable on high speed, cuts through heavy crud and slush, carves nicely on groomed, goes smoothly through little bumps. Overall awesome skis! It is a true all mountain ski with almost GS power and stability at high speeds.

p **Volkl 724 PRO 175cm**. After EXs these skis felt like nothing exciting, especially on high speed where 175 is probably too short for me. They were lovely at the beginning of the run when I went slow, but for low speeds it is nicer to ride on M11 side cut.

At this time in the afternoon I wanted to try some GS skis. The snow was still holding well in the shade and on the slope where we had slalom courses in the morning.

p **Fisher RC4 World Cup GS 180 cm**. - Awesome sensation!!! I felt like these skis were going along the precise line I envisioned in front of me. No chatter, no sinking is soft spots, total control and stability. I had a similar feeling on my Atomic 10.22 GS the afternoon of the race the previous weekend at Northstar, but not to this extent. It also seemed like RC4s are slightly more shaped making them easier to carve. And on top of everything, I felt a lot of energy in these skis. They snap and give you acceleration at the end of a turn if released properly.

p **Rossignol Oversize 9x (green label) 180cm**. These are supposed to be equivalent to 9s skis, but in GS. They ARE smooth and stable, but for a GS ski they seem to lack the power and felt too mellow after RC4s.

The winners:

SL - Rossi Oversize 9s 164,
GS - Fisher RC4 World Cup 180,
All mtn - Atomic M EX 185.

Ski safe and have fun! *Pavel*

Travel & Events (cont.)

A "TRUCKEE YANKEE" ABOARD

As some of you may have heard, I (*Chris Rutz*) had the opportunity to go on a FAM trip to my home country, Switzerland, in March. The trip was offered by Ski Europe out of Houston, TX and sponsored by The Swiss Tourism Board, American Airlines, Swiss Travel system and Postbus. We started with a long flight from Dallas to Zurich, transferred to a high speed train to Lausanne, transferred to a local train to Aigle where we then boarded the local Postbus to our first Hotel, the Eurotel Victoria in Villars-Ollon. It seems like a lot of work, but the Swiss have figured out how to make public transportation work. We never had to walk more than 2-3 minutes from one gate to the next and or wait more than 10 minutes. There are two kinds of time, Swiss time and the rest of the world. Swiss time is punctual. If the schedule says that the train will leave at 9:16, you can set your watch by the departure of that train. The Swiss Transportation system offers the option to check your bags through to your final destination. It was nice! All I needed to do was deal with my carry on luggage. The rest showed up at the hotel that evening.

When we arrived in Villars we were treated to a great meal - *the first of many*. The Chef has a garden where he grows only local herbs that would be found in Alpine Meadows in Spring. He prepared a local fish fillet with herb sauce, tomato flan and a Geranium and Mint Sorbet. The entire meal was native and organic. After lunch we viewed two hotels and then had dinner at La Renardiere.

Our third morning we split into two smaller groups. I went with four others to Chateau-d'Oex. The interesting thing about Chateau-d'Oex is that the first circumnavigation of the world in a balloon departed from there with a local resident as the pilot and an American as the co-pilot. We met Pascal Widmer from the local tourist office. He showed us one hotel in Chateau-d'Oex and took us skiing at Videmanette. Our first run was 7 km on a run that was groomed the night before and had 6-8 inches of fresh on it. We did not see another person the entire time. Of course we were treated to another fine lunch at the top of the resort with more wonderful broken views. After lunch was more skiing, then on to Rougemont to look at a nice hotel. Rougemont is situated between Chateau-d'Oex and Gstaad. The town is very traditional and does not have much to offer the person who likes the *Après-ski* scene. It has a nice feel to it and represents the true traditional Alpine village. The train stop is a short walk from the hotel and takes only 10 minutes to get to Gstaad, the "Aspen" of Switzerland. Upon returning to Villars, we headed over to the Bahnhof to catch the cogwheel train to Breilay for an authentic Swiss meal - an appetizer consisting of

Buntner fliesch and smoked ham salad followed by a three-cheese fondue with a fruit salad. After which we put on our skis, along with 100 Swedes, lit our torches and had a 6 km parade down to the Bahnhof. Now about these torches, you get a stick that is 16" in length and the top 11" are covered with a honeycombed material and wax. There isn't much to separate the fire from your glove. Some of the participants had a little difficulty controlling their fire. I'm not sure what kind of field day the lawyers would have with this in our country. Any guesses?

Friday started with breakfast, check out and bus ride to Leukerbad. Leukerbad is the wellness center of Switzerland. They have over 5 million liters of hot mineral water flowing from the valley every day. They have two large public bath houses with all kinds of different pools to choose from plus most of the hotels have numerous pools to choose from. All offer massages and saunas. Swiss insurance companies will actually pay clients to go to these bathhouses and wellness centers as preventative medicine. The town itself is rather old and has some great old-time houses there. It has a "small" ski resort, about the size of Northstar. We didn't ski there but we did have lunch in the restaurant with a panoramic view. For real this time as the weather was clearing. Of course we had another great diner. The next morning we departed for Verbier via Postbus. This was to be our first day to just ski. The weather was a little fickle with most of the mountain was closed due to wind. Our guide, Carrol, was great in finding the good spots and we thoroughly enjoyed the day. In the evening we had dinner at La Channe Valaisane. This is an older building that specializes in Raclette. It was interesting - at the beginning of the meal you need to remember the number on your plate as this is how the waitress serves you. A few people had difficulty remembering their number, especially after tasting the local wines and the language barrier didn't make it any easier with each subsequent glass of wine. I had the privilege of sitting with our bus driver, Miki, who is Swiss German. We had the greatest conversation over dinner in my native tongue. This was a treat because my family comes from the northern part of Switzerland and up to this point we had been in the French part leaving me linguistically challenged.

Sunday morning we left Verbier at 7:00 a.m. by bus for Zermatt. Our bus could only take us as far as Tasch. From there we took the train the remainder of the way to Zermatt. The town itself is a no-vehicle town. Every one and everything comes and goes by train. When we arrived we met with Danie Luggen, the marketing director of Zermatt tourism. He had these wonderful words to say, "You've probably seen enough hotels, so let's go skiing." Danie took us all over the mountain. We skied the

Travel & Events (cont.)

Rothorn, Hohtalli, Gornergrat; we made it up to the highest point accessible by lift in Europe, Kline Matterhorn (3820m.). We stopped for lunch at a little place on the mountain that had a view to die for. I sat on the deck eating my Walliser tatter (a wooden plate covered with Waliser fliesch, cured ham and salami served with Waliser brot) looking at the Matterhorn in all its glory. There is an old Swiss myth that the first time one comes to see the Matterhorn, she will never fully show herself. That had been the case all morning; I even made a bet with one of my traveling companions that we wouldn't see the entire mountain. The bet was that the loser buys the other an espresso. I am happy to say that half way through our lunch I conceded to losing the bet. I have seen the Matterhorn before, from a distance, but never that close. I believe that it is one of the great marvels of the world. After lunch we skied over to Testa Grigia (which is in Italy). I was surprised when I walked in to find the walls plastered with Alinghi memorabilia. I started talking with the owner and it turns out his establishment is the highest based fan club of the Alinghi challenge, which won the last Americas cup race. I told him that the last race leading up to the Americas Cup was hard for me. I am of Swiss decent and I grew up in the San Francisco bay area. I wasn't sure who to root for, Oracle BMW or Alinghi. He insisted that I become a member of the fan club, even though I ended up routing for Oracle BMW. So now I am an honorary member of the Ritugio Guide del Cervino Alinghi fan club. I signed the book stating, "At least they brought the Cup into the correct Hemisphere". After that we had a nice 10k ski back down to the village, had another great culinary experience, then hopped on the train back to Tasch where we boarded the bus back to Verbier.

My last day in Switzerland dawned crystal clear. Our host, Patrick Messeiler, decided to cancel the hotel inspections so that we could enjoy the day on our own. I walked around town a bit and decided to walk up on one of the many hiking trails. Growing up, my parents always took me to Switzerland in the summer to visit family. I have spent many days walking along these trails. They are abundant throughout the country. It seems that anywhere you go there is a maintained, marked trail system. I found one of these trails and just started walking. It lead up through the forest and came out on an "Alp" meaning high mountain meadow. It was nice to just be off by myself for bit and enjoy the scenery. I later met with a few of my traveling companions for lunch in the village at one of the open terrace restaurants. It was the perfect end to awesome week. The next morning our bus departed for Zurich at 4:00 a.m. I did not want to leave. It is 22 years

since I have been home and a 7-day visit was not enough. I have to admit it is nice to be back to my wife and my home in Truckee.

Amur and I plan to return to Switzerland next winter and hope some of you will join us. We are in the process of getting bids put together and organizing a trip. I would love to hear from any of you who are interested in going next year. We have lots of options and I would love to hear what you would want from a trip to Switzerland.

Danke fur ales und herzliche gruss, bis bald

Chris Rutz,

crutz@jps.net; 530-587-5814



**Double Whammy
Group Season Pass**

Two mountains for the price of one!

Sierra League is organizing a Group Pass for the 2004 - 2005 season under the Double Whammy program.

\$359/person includes free Vertical Plus membership, Northstar's and Sierra's frequent skier & rider program.

Northstar and Sierra Group Season pass valid ANY DAY, excluding blackout dates at Northstar, and ANY DAY at Sierra

Combined pass provides 4,480 acres of terrain, 116 runs, 27 lifts, free-style terrain parks at both resorts, and 50 kilometers of Northstar Nordic trails.

Contact: Kathy Ann Wilson, 775-322-4356

Mail completed registration form (included in this newsletter) and registration fee to:

Kathy Ann Wilson, Sierra League
313 West Pueblo, #1, Reno, NV 89509-2881

May checks payable to *Sierra League*.

Note: Pass available to ages 23 - 69 only. Passes sold on first-come, first-serve basis until Sept 30, 2004 or until sold out. All passes non-transferable and non-refundable.

Blackout dates: Nov 26-27,
2004; Dec 27, 2004-Jan 1, 2005;
Jan. 15-15, 2005; Feb 19-20, 2005



Public Affairs

The source of the following news and features is "The Snow Industry Newsletter", a bi-weekly publication with timely information about the ski industry.

ASPEN SKIING CO. UNVEILS MAJOR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS: Aspen Skiing Co. (SkiCo) is putting \$10 million into major capital improvements for next season. According to reports these improvements include new chairlifts on Aspen and Buttermilk Mountains, and renovation of Merry-Go-Round Restaurant at Aspen Highlands. SkiCo announced that it will launch a study to determine the design and construction of a new chairlift at Aspen Highlands that would add 270 acres to Temerity, Steeplechase and Highland Bowls. The study, to be conducted with the aid of the U.S. Forest Service, will take at least a full season, officials said.

BOOTH CREEK REPORTS INCREASED REVENUE AND SKIER VISITS: Booth Creek Ski Holdings Inc., owners of Northstar-at-Tahoe and Sierra-at-Tahoe, CA; Waterville Valley, Mt. Cranmore Mountain Resort and Loon Mountain, NH; and the Summit at Snoqualmie, WA, reported increased revenue and skier visits. Despite challenging conditions in the East for a 25% decline in skier visits at its New Hampshire resorts, Booth Creek saw total skier visits increase from 913,000 visits for the 2003 period to 953,000 visits for the 2004 period, an increase of 4%.

HEAVENLY TO BE REWARDED FOR OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE: The new star in Vail Resorts' (VR) stable, Heavenly Mountain Resort, will be rewarded for its stellar performance this season. After announcing a 22% rise in skier visits at its California resort, VR announced that it intends to dump another \$10 million into Heavenly, bringing the tally to \$25 million in three years. VR pledged to spend \$40 million over five years to upgrade Heavenly. Among planned improvements: a new high-speed six-pack and upgrades to the East Peak Lodge. VR has already poured about \$15 million into the resort since acquiring it from American Skiing Co. two years ago. VR took a gamble on Heavenly. The only dollars VR reaps from Heavenly come from lift tickets, ski lessons and on-mountain dining.

LAKE TAHOE HOPES TO CASH IN ON GAY AND LESBIAN BUSINESS: Lake Tahoe, CA, hopes to gain from the market that proved profitable for Aspen, CO and for Whistler-Blackcomb, BC - gays and lesbians. The Lake Tahoe Gay Lesbian Foundation is in the process of incorporating as a nonprofit. One of the first action items of the nine-member board is a big ski party next winter. The idea of throwing a weeklong event has heavy hitters behind it, including Heavenly Mountain Resort Chief Operating Officer Blaise Carrig who addressed the idea during a conference call with Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority Executive Director Bill Chernock; Tahoe Douglas Chamber of

Commerce Executive Director Kathy Farrell; Larry Friedman of the Nevada Commission on Tourism; casino marketer Skip Sayre; and South Lake Tahoe Lodging Association President Jerry Birdwell, a foundation member who co-owns the Black Bear Inn. Most of the organizers believe the local business community will choose economics over social misgivings, though they agree that there could be some backlash. For the most part, tourism industry officials have found an inclusive community in Tahoe.

LACK OF WATER COULD IMPINGE ON WINTER PARK DEVELOPMENT: Plans for a base village at Winter Park Resort, CO, by developer Intrawest could hit a snag due to lack of water. That's the not-so-surprising report being given to public officials by the district manager for the Winter Park Water and Sanitation District who says he can guarantee only a few hundred more taps beyond the 1,150 now in service. Intrawest is planning on roughly 1,000. During the drought of 2002, there was fear there would be too little water to keep the ski resort's toilets flushing. The problem in the future is compounded by increased development and by Denver planning to take significantly more water from the Fraser Valley.

COPPER MOUNTAIN EXPANSION PLAN INCLUDES 'PUBLIC BENEFITS': Intrawest Corporation got approval to expand its village at Copper Mountain, CO, by at least 50%, according to published reports. The new proposal would add about 1,150 units to include condos, single-family homes and hotel rooms, as well as commercial, recreational and cultural facilities. The plan's residential density has been a sticking point with the county commissioners and some Copper residents. The county commissioners have indicated that Intrawest would need to provide substantial public benefits to earn the go-ahead for substantial development. In response, Intrawest VP Joe Whitehouse offered funding for Summit County's Community Care Clinic and the proposed Swan Mountain Recreation Path.

\$127.9 EXPANSION PLANNED FOR BIG WHITE RESORT: Big White Ski Resort Ltd. announced a massive summer construction project scheduled for completion prior to the 2004-2005 winter season. \$127.9 million will be spent on infrastructure and luxury accommodation and will include two new chair lifts, a state-of-the-art ski and snowboard terrain park, a new on-mountain day lodge including viewing deck, six new intermediate and advanced runs will expand the skiable terrain by 200 acres, two new grooming machines, and luxury resort accommodation bringing the on-mountain bed base total to over 14,000 beds.

Ski Area Status Report (as of 4/12/04)

Alpine Meadows: no close date listed yet, \$99 spring passes.
Boreal: open until 4/18

Diamond Peak: closed for the season

Donner Ski Ranch: closed for the season

Heavenly Valley: open until 5/2, Discount spring lift tickets are \$49

Homewood: closed for the season

June Mountain: open until 4/18

Kirkwood: last day for daily skiing is 4/25. Open week-ends until 5/23,

Mammoth: No closing date listed yet.

Mt Rose: open until 4/18

Northstar: open until 4/18

Sierra at Tahoe: open until mid-April (4/18?)

Soda Springs: open until 4/18

Squaw Valley: open until 5/31

Sugarbowl: Closing date has not yet been set.



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April, 2004

To:

A large, empty rectangular box with a thick black border, intended for the recipient's name and address.