

# Far West NewsFlash

February, 2024

**GUEST STUCK OVERNIGHT IN HEAVENLY GONDOLA:** The trip for one recent guest to *Heavenly Ski Resort* was anything but heavenly. A female snowboarder was trapped overnight on its gondola. The guest told reporters that she was directed by a Heavenly staff member to board the gondola shortly before 5 p.m. on Feb. 25. The lift stopped running about two minutes after she boarded. Resort workers only discovered her predicament when the lifts began running again the next morning, about 15 hours after she had boarded. "We have rigorous protocols to ensure our gondola and chairlifts are fully unloaded each day. I have reviewed our investigation, and it is clear there was a breakdown in those protocols that day. I take full responsibility as well as ownership to ensure it is addressed so that it never happens again", said Heavenly COO, Tom Fortune. The guest said she did not have a phone with her, and her cries for help went unheard by passing employees, so she ended up spending the night in the gondola.

**STIFEL PALISADES TAHOE CUP GETS THE GREEN LIGHT :** It's Official -- the Audi FIS Ski World Cup Tour cleared for takeoff at Palisades Tahoe. The International Ski and Snowboard Federation (FIS) gave the go-ahead for The *Stifel Palisades Tahoe Cup* to host the Giant Slalom and Slalom scheduled for February 23rd - 25th. As with every stop on the Audi FIS Ski World Cup, each mountain must pass "snow control" ahead of the races to ensure course quality for the racers. Palisades Tahoe has received 179" inches of snowfall this season and groomers and racecourse planners have been working on the course since February 1st. "It's a great honor to be the host resort for the Stifel Palisades Tahoe Cup as we continue to bring international competition back to our legendary slopes," says Dee Byrne, COO and President of Palisades Tahoe.

**CLIMATE CHANGE TERRIFIES SKI INDUSTRY:** According to National Ski Areas Association, climate change is "the number one threat to the snowsports industry". According to Rutgers University Global Snow Lab, "as the globe warms, snow, overall, is decreasing. Between 1972 and 2020, the average portion of North America covered by snow decreased at a rate of about 1,870 square miles per year". That trend is expected to continue, scientists say. "Climate change is an existential threat to the industry", Adrienne Saia Isaac, spokesperson for the Ski Areas Association, told USA TODAY. "It's way beyond skiing and riding." She said that the snowsports industry is weather-dependent and the key is snow. "While we're used to the inherent uncertainty of our business, climate change exacerbates this challenge in different ways across the 37 states and six regions in which ski areas operate". Scientists say that climate change represents a substantial risk to the profitability and sustainability of ski tourism because of reduced and more variable natural snow, and increased snowmaking requirements and costs. As the Earth continues to warm, it's natural to assume that ski seasons will be getting shorter due to the lack of snow. But until recently, this wasn't the case. Ski seasons across the U.S. were actually getting longer in the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s, despite warming average temperatures and in some regions less and more variable natural snow. The massive investment in snowmaking made this possible. However, in the 2010s that trend stopped and now average ski seasons have stabilized or have declined slightly. This tells us snowmaking can no longer offset warming and as temperatures continue to rise, we're now past the era of peak ski seasons in the U.S.

**ANOTHER BIG YEAR, EVEN BIGGER LIFTS:** North American ski areas installed 57 new ropeways in 2023, including some of the biggest lifts ever built on the continent. One year ago, the major lift story was Vail Resorts' Epic Lift Upgrade, a scramble to build 18 new lifts across 12 mountains in one summer, part of a banner construction year across the industry. This year, the pendulum swung as Alterra Mountain Company and Boyne Resorts became the largest customers for new lifts, from fancy eight-passenger chairs to utilitarian fixed-grip triples. While the overall number of projects stayed about the same as 2022—57 new ropeway

installations at North American ski areas this year compared to 58 last year—average project size increased in 2023 as operators boosted capacity and installed some big lifts with a total of 125,735 vertical transport feet per hour (VTFH), up about 7,200 from 2022. Now, that was a BIG project!

## FAR WEST TRAVEL

**FWSA 2024 NORTH AMERICAN MINI SKI WEEK:** **COPPER MOUNTAIN has 4 rooms at Cambria still available.** Go to: <https://fwsaminiCP.sat.tours> for further information. The dates of the trip are **March 17-22, 2024**. Noni Love, of Copper Mountain will be our representative host, while Sara Clemons, President of Sports America Tours, will be the tour operator for this particular trip. For further information, contact Nancy Ellis: [fwsatravelnancy@sbcglobal.net](mailto:fwsatravelnancy@sbcglobal.net)

**FWSA 2024 AFRICA ADVENTURE TRIP:** **TANZANIA & ZANZIBAR! September 27 – October 7, 2024**, are the dates set for the next Far West Adventure Trip. We will fly into Kilimanjaro Airport, then head off to our lodge in Arusha. From there, we will travel to Lake Manyara National Park, to see the famous tree-climbing lions. Ngorongoro Crater, considered to be the 8<sup>th</sup> Wonder of the World, is the next stop. We will have a 2-night stay in Ngorongoro, where we hope to see a spectacular concentration of wildlife and the “*big five*”, and then it’s off to Serengeti National Park, where we will see herds of buffalo, elephants, giraffes, gazelles, and many other animals and birds. The golden-maned lions, cheetahs, and leopards will be on the prowl. We will stay 2 nights at the Serengeti Serena Lodge. An optional Hot Air Balloon safari will be available for an early morning flight over the beautiful landscape, followed by a bush breakfast, for a real “Out of Africa” experience. Then, just a flight away, is the island of Zanzibar, where we will be taking a tour to see and experience the highlights of the area. We will have a 1-night stay in the 5-star Hotel Zanzibar Stone Town, followed by 2 nights at the Star Neptune Pwani Beach Resort. For more information on this trip, contact **Debbie Stewart**: [fwsaintltrlv@prodigy.net](mailto:fwsaintltrlv@prodigy.net).

**FWSA 2024 DIVE TRIP TO THE PHILIPPINES:** We are going back to the **PHILIPPINES!** The 2024 FWSA dive trip will be **October 19 – November 2, 2024** to Marco Vincent Dive Resort in Puerto Galera and Buceo Anilao Beach & Dive Resort in Anilao! A 3-hour drive away from Manila, Anilao is one of the world's best macro photography destinations. It is literally heaven-on-earth for muck diving, blackwater diving, and macro photography. It is considered the Capital of Nudibranchs...colorful mollusks without shells. The Puerto Galera diving area stretches from White Beach right around to Coral Cove. It is part of the Verde Island Passage and named by some scientists as the center of the world's marine biodiversity. There are more than fifty dive sites that are an interesting mix of sloping reefs, coral gardens deep pinnacles, shipwrecks, channel dives, muck diving, drift dives and sea grass beds. The divers who joined us on the 2019 Philippines dive trip not only called it “*the best dive trip ever*”, but many said “*my best trip ever*”. For more information, contact **Randy Lew** at: [fwsa13randy@telis.net](mailto:fwsa13randy@telis.net).

**FWSA 2025 NORTH AMERICAN SKI WEEK:** The 2025 North American Ski Week will be to **BANFF** from January 25-February 1<sup>st</sup>. Steve Pampel and Ski Big 3 will be our hosts, with Sandy Gaudette, Ski Group.Net as the tour operator. Go to the Far West website for further information: [www.fwsa.org/natravel](http://www.fwsa.org/natravel).

## FAR WEST SKI ASSOCIATION ANNUAL CONVENTION

**2024 CONVENTION JUST 4 MONTHS AWAY:** **Thursday June 6, through Sunday June 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024.** These are the dates set for the 91<sup>st</sup> Annual Far West Ski Association Convention. The convention will be held at the beautiful *Atlantis Casino Resort Spa*, In Reno, Nevada....co-hosted by *Bay Area Snow Sport Council* and *Sierra League & Council*. Registration materials were sent out February 9<sup>th</sup> and are now posted on the FWSA website. Please make a note NOW that hotel registration will close **MAY 13, 2024**. We have a number of activities planned for you: A *Tahoe Adventure* on Thursday, followed by the *27<sup>th</sup> Annual Pub Crawl*. On Friday, we will have our *17<sup>th</sup> Annual Michael German Memorial Golf Tournament*. Something fun and different this year. Come see what it’s all about. We will also have a tour of the *National Auto Museum*, so if you are

interested in old cars, hot-rods, classics, this is the one for you! On-line registration will be coming soon. For further information, contact your regional council president, or go to [www.fwsa.org/conventions](http://www.fwsa.org/conventions).

## 2023-2024 FAR WEST RECOGNITION PROGRAM

**RICHARD LUBIN SAFETY PERSON OF THE YEAR:** This yearly award honors the person who has done the most to promote safety consciousness within the association during the previous two calendar years. This can be done through safety articles, on mountain activities, presentations, public speaking, working ski patrol creating poster or banners and other activities. **CONTACT** Monica Palmer: [safety@fwsa.org](mailto:safety@fwsa.org).

**FAR WEST COUNCILS' VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR:** This award is presented to an outstanding individual at the grassroots level. Selection criteria is based on each individual's involvement in snowsports, club, council, regional and national activities and knowledge and enthusiasm for snowsports. **CONTACT** Sheri Parshall: [voty@fwsa.org](mailto:voty@fwsa.org).

**WESTERN SKI HERITAGE AWARD:** The purpose of the Far West Western Ski Heritage program is to raise awareness for Snowsports participants and non-participants alike of the contributions made by individuals, groups, independent scholars, authors and companies to all aspects of snowsports – competitive as well as that of outdoor winter recreation and fitness activities. A parallel purpose is to convey the positive role Snowsports has had in its contributions to the communities in the West. **CONTACT** Jane Wyckoff: [history@fwsa.org](mailto:history@fwsa.org).

**ENVIRONMENT AWARD:** This recognition program encourages development of awareness and programs that educate club and council members about sustaining snowsports through conservation and protection of our environment. The award recognizes a special action the applicant took, or something he or she put in place that made an impact in the community. **CONTACT** Janine Rands: [environment@fwsa.org](mailto:environment@fwsa.org).

**CHARITIES & OUR COMMUNITY SERVICE RECOGNITION:** The intent of this recognition program is to encourage charity and community service involvement in all our FWSA councils and clubs. To recognize a club/council for its outstanding financial and/or volunteer support to one or more charitable organizations and show the ski world how much the FWSA encourages that volunteerism and charity involvement. Clubs are encouraged to take photos and videos of their Charity activities all year, to be included in the *2024 Charities Video*. Action photos, with club members, and short videos are the best, but any photos and logos are acceptable and very welcome. Deadline for this year's entries is March 18<sup>th</sup>. For further information, **CONTACT** Sigrid Noack: [charities@fwsa.org](mailto:charities@fwsa.org)

**HISTORIC SKI CLUB, COUNCIL, SKI SCHOOL OR SKI PATROL DESIGNATION:** Clubs, Councils, Ski Schools & Ski Patrols with over 50 years of operation may be eligible to be designated as a FWSA Historic Organization. The organization must provide proof of operations with their request. Proof may be articles of incorporation, minutes, press clippings or other significant historic evidence and may be 1-10 pages of copied material. The applying organization will be required to provide a reproduceable logo. **CONTACT** Jane Wyckoff: [history@fwsa.org](mailto:history@fwsa.org).

**CLUB AND COUNCIL HISTORY AWARD:** The objective of this program, launched in 2008 to develop club, league and council histories, is to compile a set of histories that collectively will describe the history of organized skiing as a whole. It is important to collect information about snowsports from the participant's perspective and especially that of the club skier/boarder. **CONTACT** Jane Wyckoff: [history@fwsa.org](mailto:history@fwsa.org).

**COMMUNICATIONS & OUTSTANDING CLUB AWARDS:** The club and council communications awards are designed to promote excellence and outstanding performance. Entries are for the following five competitions: *Tollakson Outstanding Club of the Year*; *Wentworth Outstanding Club Publication of the Year*; *Wentworth Outstanding Council Publication of the Year*; *Outstanding Club Website Award*; and *Outstanding Council Website Award*. Club classes will be determined by the club's performance over the previous 4 years.

Classification is based on the Club or Council, not their editors or webmasters. For further information:

**CONTACT** Bill King: [commawards@fwsa.org](mailto:commawards@fwsa.org).

**OUTSTANDING CLUB OR COUNCIL SOCIAL MEDIA AWARD:** Clubs and Council compete collectively and those that wish to compete for this award will submit their Facebook insights file for either or both the pages or groups. **CONTACT** Todd Hood: [socialmedia@fwsa.org](mailto:socialmedia@fwsa.org).

**NOTE: ALL OF THE ABOVE AWARDS HAVE A DEADLINE OF MARCH 18. YOU MUST HAVE YOUR INFORMATION SUBMITTED TO THE CHAIRPERSON OF EACH AWARD BY THAT DATE. FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CHECK OUR WEBSITE: [WWW.FWSA.ORG/AWARDS](http://WWW.FWSA.ORG/AWARDS).**

## FAR WEST SKI COUNCILS

**NORTHWEST SKI CLUB COUNCIL:** *Skiyente Ski Club* will be celebrating the 69th Annual King Winter Coronation and Dance on Saturday, February 24th. The club is delighted to announce that this year's King Winters are Charlie and Alicia Sperr. Charlie and Alicia have followed Charlie's dad, Charlie Sr., in continuing to support Skiyente and other ski clubs and organizations in fundraising and activities throughout the years. Alicia is also a founding member and board member of the Mt. Hood Learning Center, which offers pre-school and after-school activities for those in the Mt. Hood community. The club will honor past kings at a King Winter Dinner at the Mt. Hood Cultural Center and Museum, followed by a party at Charlie's Mountain View. For more information, contact Sheri Parshall at [cougskier@aol.com](mailto:cougskier@aol.com).

**LOS ANGELES COUNCIL OF SKI CLUBS:** *The Wailer's Ski & Snowboard Club* is hosting a vertical ski/ride-a-thon that combines their love for winter sports with fundraising for a very worthy cause – *Dave & Roma McCoy's Mammoth Lakes Foundation*. Saturday, March 9<sup>th</sup>, participants will ride or ski Mammoth Mountain to complete the most vertical feet between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m., to raise funds in support of MLF's mission to support higher education and cultural enrichment in the Eastern Sierra. The event is open to all. Participants may register as individuals or as part of a 4-person team. Pledges or flat-fee donations are solicited, with each pledge being a dollar amount per 1,000 vertical feet covered by each team's skiers or riders during the event. Support the Wailers Ski Club event by joining us on March 9<sup>th</sup>. Contact Regina Reilly, fundraising committee at: [reilly\\_regina@yahoo.com](mailto:reilly_regina@yahoo.com) or by calling 424-205-3247 for more information.

**ALL COUNCILS:** You have heard that the Far West Ski Association (FWSA) is the "Voice of the Western Skier". NOW is a great time to hear from you! We're listening! As a club or council leader, you have opportunities and challenges to move your organization forward. The Vice President of Council Services is collecting input from club and council leaders as to what is important to you, and how the FWSA can help you achieve your goals for your club and overcome barriers. Please email: [ypcouncilservices@fwsa.org](mailto:ypcouncilservices@fwsa.org) with your thoughts of services, programs, and activities the FWSA should Start, Stop, or Continue. Input will be compiled and reported to the FWSA board.

## FAR WEST SKI FOUNDATION

**SRING YUM-RAISING: Easter is coming!** What could be sweeter than chocolate for a good cause? Buy delicious See's Candies to show your support for the *Far West Ski Foundation*. The deadline to make a purchase is **March 15, 2024**. Visit our shop to pick and choose your favorites and buy and ship your candy online. It's that easy! Ship to your family and friends! Our storefront is located at the following link:

[https://www.yumraising.com/secure/farwsf\\_far\\_west\\_ski\\_foundation60/JanWyc9529/](https://www.yumraising.com/secure/farwsf_far_west_ski_foundation60/JanWyc9529/)

FWSF is an autonomous public benefit corporation, in compliance with law and regulations under Section 501c3 of the IRS Code (<https://farwestskifoundation.org>). For additional information please contact: Jane Wyckoff, FWSF Vice President, 949.933.9607, [jnewyckoff99@gmail.com](mailto:jnewyckoff99@gmail.com)

*Stay healthy! Stay Safe!*