

outdoor extremes - notes

"Steep" goes deep with rare footage

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Moviegoers at New York's Tribeca Film Festival last weekend got a first peek at the much-anticipated documentary "Steep," a feature by the late Peter Jennings' film crew exploring the sport of big mountain skiing. The early buzz - humming quietly in remote corners of skiing's online communities - is the multimillion-dollar feature film has upped the ante of ski filmmaking with unique camera angles and historical perspectives on the nascent sport.

Filmed in Alaska, Wyoming, Canada, France and Iceland, "Steep" shows high-definition action by skiing's elite, including Colorado's Seth Morrison and Chris Davenport as well as Ingrid Backstrom, Shane McConkey, Glen Plake, Bill Briggs and Eric Pehota.

The movie revolves around the late Doug Coombs, who was filmed only a few days before a ski accident in France took his life last year. Coombs' amazing life and tragic death anchor the flick's exploration of the risks and rewards found while skiing the world's biggest, remotest and wildest slopes.

No word yet on when "Steep" moves out West - where it certainly will be welcomed with sellout screenings. Click over to www.thedocumentarygroup.com for the latest news.

SKI AREAS: Colorado Pass gets extra week's action

Imagine that. Vail Resorts has extended the sale of its Colorado Passes. Scheduled to expire Sunday, the company this week announced its passes would be available through this Sunday, continuing a just-one- more-week streak that has lasted since the passes hit the Colorado market a decade ago. The Colorado Pass, good for Breck, A-Basin, Keystone and 10 days at Vail or Beaver Creek, cost \$419 for adults and \$199 for kids. The Summit Pass, which drops the Vail days, is \$379 for adults or \$189 for kids. Renew at www.snow.com/passsales.

RUNNING: Murray masters Bloomsday run

Boulder's Patty Murray finished second in the masters and 14th overall among women in Sunday's Lilac Bloomsday 12K in Spokane, Wash., a race that annually attracts more than 40,000 runners. Murray finished in 42 minutes, 43 seconds, an average of 5:43 per mile, and was the second American female finisher.

"It was my day," Murray said. "I went out conservatively, then felt good and passed people without being passed through the rest of the race."

SKI AREAS: Environmental work honored

Utah's Snowbird ski area beat out Aspen and Jackson Hole to win this year's Golden Eagle Award for Overall Environmental Excellence. The National Ski Areas Association (NSAA) announced the award at this year's annual meeting last weekend in Palm Springs, Calif., citing Snowbird's reclamation efforts with mine tailings on its slopes.

The association delivered its Silver Eagle Award for visual impact to Winter Park, citing the Grand County resort's work to protect critical viewing areas during the development and installation of a new chairlift on the back side of its Parsenn Bowl. Vail Resorts won the association's Silver Eagle Award for stakeholder relations. The company raised \$213,000 for the National Forest Foundation and supported renewable energy by offering lift tickets to guests who purchased renewable energy credits. Vail Resorts also took home the association's award for waste reduction and recycling by recycling more than 5,000 tons of material at its network of ski areas.

At the same meeting, the NSAA released preliminary skier visit numbers showing a 6.9 percent downturn from last year's record showing. Early tallies reveal 54.8 million visits to U.S. ski areas in the 2006-07 season, down from a record 58.9 million the previous season. Warm temperatures and below-average snowfall led to declines in every region of the country except the Rocky Mountains, where resorts posted an estimated 20.9 million visits, setting a record.

SNOWBOARDING: Halfpipe coach earns USOC award

Recently retired U.S. Snowboarding halfpipe coach Bud Keene last week was named the 2006 national coach of the year by the U.S. Olympic Committee in Washington. Keene led U.S. halfpipe snowboarders to a four-medal showing at the 2006 Olympics in Turin. Keene steered praise toward the sport of snowboarding, which found renewed legitimacy on the world stage, thanks in part to his efforts.

"I'm the recipient, but snowboarding deserves the honor," he said in a statement released by the USOC.

Vermont snowboarder Hannah Teter won the 2006 sportswoman of the year award, in part for the 2006 gold medal she won in the halfpipe at the Turin Games.

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