

# TRAVEL



**'SOUND OF MUSIC' GOES HOME**  
Salzburg, Austria, finally warms to musical.



**COMBINE VACATION, EDUCATION**  
British Columbia is one place that makes list.



**GRIZZLY WARNINGS TAKE ON NEW URGENCY AFTER DEADLY ATTACKS**  
It's thrilling to see bears in wild, but there are precautions to take in Yellowstone, beyond.

**FAMILY FUN >> E10**

**ADVICE >> E10**

**THEATER >> E7**

**ADVENTURE >> SKIING IS ONLY THE BEGINNING**

## What's new on the ice, ice, baby?

BY ANNE Z. COOKE  
McCLATCHY-TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

**PARK CITY, Utah**—The Porter clan, 14 strong, were assembled at Park City Ski Resort for the last ski run of the family's annual winter reunion. But Nick, 14, and Andrew, 12, oldest of the cousins, had other ideas.

"Aw, Mom, this is our last chance to do the Alpine Coaster," begged Nick, putting on a woeful face. "We'll meet you later, I promise."

"Yeah, Mom," echoed Andrew.

If you listened to the boys—or looked at ski resort numbers, flat over the last couple of years—you might wonder if skiing was in trouble. That would be a mistake.

Die-hard alpine skiers and snowboarders will always be the core mission. But with more families traveling with kids, even the smallest ski hills are rebranding themselves as family-style playgrounds.

If the Porter kids are like mine, they'll grow up to be skiers. Right now, though, the Alpine Coaster, a high-speed bobsled ride on a roller-coaster track, delivers much bigger kicks. And as ski resorts have discovered, the newest high-speed chair lifts have changed the way you can plan your day.

"You used to spend more time riding uphill than you did skiing down," said Jeff Hanle, at Snowmass Resort, in Colorado. "Now you can ski more and quit earlier, leaving plenty of time for something else. Ice skating, the tubing hill, or dog sledding."

You can expect to find the usual: snowshoeing, ice skating, snow bikes, cross country skiing and tubing. But how about fly fishing, ice climbing, paragliding, snowmobiling, hot springs, Olympic-style bobsledding



Been there, done that when it comes to skiing and tubing? If you're in Aspen, Colo., paragliding above the slopes is just one of the alternative activities at your disposal.

**HIT THE ROAD**

**parks**  
**YELLOWSTONE LACKING IN SNOW**

Yellowstone National Park opened for the winter season this week, but a lack of snow will limit where snowmobiles can go for now. Commercially guided snowmobiles or snowcoaches will be allowed to travel only between the park's South Entrance and Old Faithful. Roads in the rest of the park have too much snow and ice for regular vehicles but not enough for snowmobiles or snowcoaches.

Commercial snowmobile and snowcoach operators can use snowcoaches or regular vehicles to transport visitors from West Yellowstone and Mammoth Hot Springs to Old Faithful.

**going green**  
**NO FOSSIL FUELS FOR ONE SKI LODGE**

Mount Abram in Greenwood, Maine, is going all green to heat its ski lodge. The western Maine ski resort is using locally produced wood pellets, and no fossil fuels, to warm up its lodge.

Mount Abram has taken delivery of a wood-pellet boiler that will heat the 5,500-square-foot base lodge using wood pellets delivered from a local distribution center. It means Mount Abram will no longer require 12,000 gallons of No. 2 heating oil per year to heat its lodge.

**geography**  
**IT'S QUIZ TIME**

**GEOQUIZ:** Where are the Sandwich Islands?

(Answer: In Hawaii. Capt. James Cook named the Sandwich Islands in 1778 in honor of the Earl of Sandwich and was killed there a year later. Today we call them the Hawaiian Islands.)

—From wire services



**ARMCHAIR ADVENTURES >>**  
**PAUL SULLIVAN**

*Inspiration can strike at any time, any place*

**I**N ALL the crazy turmoil of ideas that freelance through my mind, it is safe to say that this weekly written meander is forever at or near the forefront.

There is a never-ending fascination among readers for the sources of subjects for this or any other regular column.

Where in the world, the query typically goes, do you get those ideas? And just as surely, I reply that I am not quite certain.

That's a simplification, but it takes too long to tell the whole story.

Sometimes I steal them. That's right, I am a thief of ideas and inspiration. Not of the material itself, but of the germ that grew into someone else's essay. No self-respecting writer steals material.

By the time I finish kneading and reshaping an idea and start tapping on my ancient Toshiba, it bears no resemblance to the original source.

Other people's writing is but one source of ideas.

There are books. There are conversations with all sorts of people wherever I happen to come across them.

Taxi drivers are a rich font of column ideas. They often carry around brilliant plans for all kinds of things, such as world peace, reshaping the economy and American politics and the perfection of human nature. I absolutely love cab drivers. You never have

**SEE SULLIVAN, PAGE E11**

**GREETINGS FROM KAYSERSBERG . . .**

While strolling down the main street of the quaint French Alsatian village of Kaysersberg in September, Tom and Prov Moeller of Stafford County came across a restaurant with a familiar name. Unfortunately, they did not have time to sample the cuisine of this restaurant to see how it compared with that of the "real" La Petite Auberge in Fredericksburg.

—Tom Moeller, Stafford

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PHOTOS FROM McCLATCHY-TRIBUNE

Many ski properties, including Keystone Resort (above) in Dillon, Colo., provide visitors the popular option of lacing up ice skates.

## SNOW: Check out some of the offerings at ski resorts across nation

FROM PAGE E12

and extreme winter driving classes? You have only to ask.

Here's a sampling of resorts out West, in New England and in Canada. There are, of course, options much closer to the Fredericksburg region.

### PARK CITY RESORT

Park City, Utah; 435/649-8111; parkcityresort.com.

Park City Ski Resort's 3,300 skiable acres boasts some of Utah's friendliest, best designed ski trails. It's almost impossible to blunder onto an expert-only trail or to miss the signs that name the trails to the next chairlift. And yes, the Alpine Coaster is a hoot, but so are the Gorgoza tubing park, dog mushing, snowmobiling and sleigh-ride dinners.

But it's the restored mining town itself, at the resort's base that gets my vote as North America's most authentic ski village. You'll never find a more inviting place to shop, dine well, sample local brews or people-watch.

As for my favorite thrill, it's the real bobsled rides on the official bobsled track built for the 2002 Olympic Winter Games. With an experienced pilot at the helm, you screw up your courage, climb into one of these tin cans-on-steroids and hold your breath. The thing goes at speeds up to 80 miles per hour, reaches 5 Gs acceleration and drops the equivalent of a 40-story fall in one minute. Holy Moly, Superman!

### TELLURIDE SKI RESORT

Telluride, Colo. 800/778-8581; tellurideskiresort.com.

Here at this remote mountain hideaway, in southwestern Colorado, it doesn't get any better. And scenic snow-capped peaks, 2,000 acres of dry powder, groomed cruising runs and plenty of expert-only glade skiing is just the beginning.

But for an out-of-the-box experience, drive to neighboring Ouray and the natural hot springs that made this mining town such a hit with 19th century fortune hunters. The 150-degree water flows into three pools where it cools to 106, 96 and 82 degrees, for intensive heat therapy, luxury soaking or swimming. Pick a grey, snowy day to come, and wallow while the flakes drift down and the steam rises. It's an out-of-body experience. Changing rooms, lockers and showers are available; the pools are open daily from noon to 9 p.m.

Alternately, sign up—and layer up—for the guided half-day snowmobile tour to the ghost town and historic mining sites in Alta Lakes, in the Alta and Turkey Creek basin. After you've explored the

### HELPFUL TIPS . . .

Ski resorts offer some non-ski activities on site. Others, like horse-drawn sleigh rides, log cabin dinners, snowmobiling and fly fishing, may be provided by local outfitters or concessionaires. Advance reservations are advised and fees are separate.

Remember to dress warmly. Skiers stay warm because they're always moving. But snowmobilers, parasailors, fishermen and sleigh riders need a lot more layering.

All ski resort websites list additional on and off-the-snow activities with details and contact information. Convention & Visitors' Bureaus also keep lists of recreation, entertainment, lodging and restaurants.

deserted lanes and seen the skewed timbers in what remains of these drafty cabins, that cozy condo with the fireplace you've rented will look twice as nice.

### BIG WHITE RESORT,

Kelowna, British Columbia, Canada; 800/663-2772; bigwhite.com.

You've never heard of Big White? It's a 2,000-acre ski resort, in the southeast corner of British Columbia, specifically designed for multi-generational recreation. When the resort's family-friendly ski trails pale, there's dog-sledding, a tubing hill and an ice skating rink to try. For kids, the apres-ski starts with bonfires and marshmallows and ends with fireworks. For adults, there's a choice of pubs. But the newest thrill here is a bonafide extreme sport.

Test your mettle—and bone up for that "Survivors" tryout—on the Ice Tower, a 60-foot ice climbing feature created from cross-braced telephone poles encased in a three-foot thick layer of blue ice.

The Tower, ice-clad in such a way as to create routes designed for beginning, intermediate and expert climbers, is managed and operated by ice climbers who are also members of the American Mountain Guides Association. You'll be outfitted with special boots, crampons and safety gear, and will learn how to use ice climbing's specialized gripping tools. It's fun, safe and a hoot.

### STRATTON MOUNTAIN

Stratton, Vermont; 800/STRATTON; stratton.com.

Skiing has always headlined winter at Stratton Mountain, in Vermont. One of the East's larger ski areas, the resort has 2,500 skiable acres and 600 acres of marked trails, plus another 1,500



Buckle up! Snowbikes take curves like racecars at Keystone Resort.

acres (the golf course) where they've laid down groomed tracks for cross country skiers. But for more than a few visitors, at least some of the attraction is actually indoors: the Sport Center's two indoor tennis courts, 25-yard swimming pool, basketball court and a steam room.

If a snow storm keeps you off the mountain, check out the Land Rover Driving School's "off-road winter driving class," an offer unique to this resort. Their slogan, "the worse the weather the better," says it all.

My favorite was the guided snowshoe trek which meets at the top of the Gondola. From here the trail winds across the summit to the far side and the site of a fire-lookout tower. On a blue-sky day, climb to the top for an aerial view of four mountain ranges: the Green Mountains stretching away beneath your feet, and in the distance, the White Mountains, Adirondacks and Alleghenies.

### KEYSTONE RESORT

Dillon, Colo.; 800/468-5004; keystoneresort.com.

Your spouse, it seems, would rather paint the peaks than ski on them. I get that. So while he or she is capturing Keystone's silver shadows and snow-flecked pines in watercolors, head outdoors with snowshoes, or take the kids to the lakeside ice skating rink or the tubing hill, at Adventure Point.

But a more interesting option is fishing for trout in the Elk River, as good in winter as it is in summer. Hire a guide; they provide rods, reels and waders, and will provide the required out-of-state license. Most important, they know just

where to find those special trout pools and riffles. Afterwards, pamper yourself at Keystone Lodge's Rock Resorts Spa, a 10,000 square-foot full-service facility, with massage rooms, relaxation therapy, an indoor swimming pool, a sauna and hot tubs. Powered entirely by solar and wind-turbines, and partially lit by natural light, this officially "green" spa uses only natural products.

### ASPEN MOUNTAIN

Aspen, Colorado; 800/525-6200. aspensnowmass.com.

Aspen is the sort of ski town where people come for the mountain and stay for the lifestyle. By day three you'll notice that the gung-ho skiers that rode up with you on the Silver Queen Gondola to the summit of Ajax are now sunbathing in rows of deck chairs facing the mighty snow-capped peaks of the Maroon Bells.

Or start your ski day by joining one of the residents who don shorts for the daily (grueling) hike from the resort base to the summit; they wear hiking boots and walk on the edge of a groomed run.

At the top, join a naturalist-led snowshoe hike, scheduled twice a day. Or explore the valley below on a guided snowmobile tour; check starting times with local outfitters. Once again, layer up for a two-man paraglide launch off the top of Ajax; the pilot controls the glide—you are the passenger.

Window shopping is a must in this town, at least if you expect to say you've been here. At sunset, find a tapas bar then stay for dinner.

## SULLIVAN: Here an idea, there an idea

FROM PAGE E12

to cajole them into talking. All too often it's hard to shut 'em up!

Chats with cabbies remind me of those little kids' toys you push along the floor, then let go and watch them race ahead.

Take Walt. He drove an airport shuttle I was riding not long ago in Arizona. He'd been around the barn, as my dad used to say. Over a couple of hours, Walt told me his life story, from his beginnings in a small city in eastern North Carolina. A smart kid, he learned electronics and became a trouble-shooter for a big company, fixing computer business computer systems. But that wasn't nearly enough for Walt, so he took his other "skill set" and began making the rounds of pool rooms in small towns.

**SOMETIMES I STEAL THEM. THAT'S RIGHT, I AM A THIEF OF IDEAS AND INSPIRATION. NOT OF THE MATERIAL ITSELF, BUT OF THE GERM THAT GREW INTO SOMEONE ELSE'S ESSAY.**

He made no bones about his talents: "I made a lot more money as a pool shark than I did at my day job."

I told him about a guy I shared a rental house with in Athens, Ga., as a student in the '60s. He paid his way through grad school as a pool pro—shaking down the local rubes. Turns out the guy was quite well off, despite the carefully crafted look of outward poverty.

"The guys with no talent are the easiest," he told me, "they are so sure of themselves."

Early on, my roommate learned to avoid the quiet, unassuming guys. Guys, in other words, like himself.

On Fridays, he'd head out of town in his rattling Beetle, beat-up little pool cue case in hand, off to work the tables.

He never showed me his pool-shooting brilliance, but he sure did show me how he put together the finest vegetable beef soup I ever tasted, then or since. He would simmer up a huge pot of that brew and it would feed the two of us for a week.

So ideas to write about? They are absolutely everywhere. Good ones pop up any old time, day or night. I have thousands. Every writer does.

But an idea just can't be lifted off the shelf and used. Like good grapes headed for the vintner, they have to be nurtured, turned this way and that, looked at and really understood. It is often a long process that no one can actually explain.

When a good idea is ready, a little light snaps on—something just pops up and says, "Yep. It's ripe. Good time. Let's go with this!"

And as Bugs Bunny would say, "That's all, folks!"

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### travel brief

#### Dubai scene of QE2 New Year's bash

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP)—More than three years since it arrived in its final port of Dubai, the storied cruise liner Queen Elizabeth

2 will welcome well-heeled guests again—for a night.

It will be the first time the ship's government owners are throwing down the gang-plank for a large group since the vessel pulled into port in November 2008. An Emirati event planning company, Global Event Management, said it's throwing a New

Year's Eve bash with live music, fireworks and laser light show. Most revelers will be invited guests, though a limited number of tickets will also go on sale.

The black-tie evening is being described as "one of the most exclusive New Year celebrations in the world," with "royals, dignitaries,

celebrities and VIPs." Ticket prices haven't been released.

Dubai's state-run Istithmar World bought QE2 from Cunard for \$100 million in 2007, to turn the luxury liner into a floating hotel docked alongside one of the city-state's man-made palm-shaped islands. Those plans were shelved when Dubai's economy tumbled.

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