COLORADO
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

A Newsletter for Friends of the CAIC

Spring 2005 ❄ Volume 9, Number 3

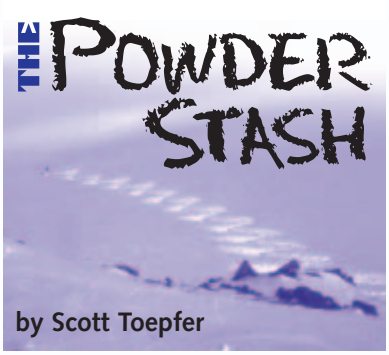
THE Beacon

As we close out the 2004–05 avalanche season and put the last issue of *The Beacon* to bed, I would like to extend a large thank you to all our "Friends" who have contributed to the program this year. It's the best we've had for membership and revenues in the nine years we've run the Friends Program. All of us at the CAIC are very pleased with your support. We strive to provide the best mountain weather and avalanche forecast possible. The job is sometimes quite challenging (I was once told, "Only fools and newcomers try to predict mountain weather."), but it's also extremely rewarding. When we see memberships going up, it tells us we are providing something in which you find value, and that's the best reward of all.

Our avalanche forecasts are more detailed every year as we receive good feedback and reports from friends in the field. We like to think that the information we provide helps people make the right decisions when they're looking for places to go. Colorado is a big state, so we know there is much more we can do. If you have suggestions or comments, feel free to let us know. Our ultimate goal is to give you the best service and information possible, every day.

As many of you recall, the new year began with the biggest avalanche cycle we have seen in a decade. A blocking weather pattern set up over the eastern Pacific ocean and this caused a steady flow of moisture first into the San Juan Mountains of Colorado, and later into the Central Mountains and Steamboat area. The rest of the Northern Mountains did not see moisture to the same degree, but snow fell for nearly two weeks across the state. I worked several of those days at the Boulder office. I knew that the mountains were getting pummeled with snow, and that avalanche activity must be widespread, but the reports were only trickling in. Why? What were we missing?

The trouble is that avalanches are very camera shy. They like to do their thing while it's snowing and/or at night. Either way they may not be counted. Our total slide tally during the cycle was 674 slides, but that's only what forecasters, patrollers, and observers saw. The real number? We can only guess that it was 10 or 20 times higher.



I was fortunate that this year I taught at both the Telluride and Silverton Level I Avalanche Schools. Both of these followed close on the heels of the storm cycle. When the opportunity arose I would climb into the backcountry where I could get a much better perspective of just how much activity had occurred. The avalanche destruction was quite impressive. Almost everywhere you looked there were fracture lines, debris piles and destroyed forest. The 674 reported slides were obviously a tiny percent of the action from the storm cycle.

Overall though, few people had avalanche encounters. A friend from the San Juans told me while touring they triggered a large collapse and suddenly they noticed a large slide run sympathetically nearby. It was a humbling experience for them, but a learning experience as well. When the danger hits EXTREME, it's best to stay away from the backcountry. Extreme is not a category we often use, but it was needed in the storm of January 2005, which is our lead story in this issue of *The Beacon*.

Our second article is about the third annual A-Basin Beacon Bowl. Nick Logan was there to help out and took some great photos and has written a piece about this very educational and fun event.

Enjoy your spring and summer and we'll see you in the fall. ❄

The Storm of January 2005

by Spencer Logan and Knox Williams

"If you weren't nervous, you weren't paying attention."

—Mark Rikkers, CAIC forecaster in the Silverton Avalanche Office

"Run!"

—Jerry Roberts, CAIC forecaster in the Silverton Avalanche Office (when the Battleship Slide ran large)

INTRODUCTION

About once a decade a winter storm of headline proportions hits the Colorado mountains and causes the havoc and excitement that only comes with big snows (think feet, not inches) and massive avalanches. The first half of January, 2005 brought the biggest storm to hit the Southern and Central Mountains of Colorado in a decade, and with it came the avalanches, the havoc, and the excitement. Here is the story of that period from December 29, 2004 through January 15, 2005, through the eyes of the avalanche forecasters who worked it.

The Battleship avalanche, south of Red Mountain Pass. (Photo: Jerry Roberts)

First, let's put the storm in perspective with historical storms and with the prevailing weather pattern of the winter of 04–05. Two previous storms stand out as being similar and comparable, while a third storm also deserves mention.

On February 12–24, 1986, the first mega-storm struck Colorado since the CAIC opened in 1983. This storm had its roots in the tropical Pacific Ocean west of Hawaii, and was the first time we remember the term "Pineapple Express" being used. The storm was so extensive that it brought avalanche mayhem to all the western U.S., from California to Washington, from New Mexico to Montana. In Colorado, snowfall was 4–7 feet (though Gothic, north of Crested Butte, got the most at 8½ feet). The CAIC recorded 750 avalanches, from the Park Range in far northern Colorado to the San Juans in the south. It was the largest avalanche cycle since the first avalanche warning program began in Colorado in 1973.

On February 8–14, 1995, a storm of equal proportions hit Colorado. This one had origins farther north in the Pacific, so it began cold, then continued as a warm storm. In seven days, 5–7 feet of snow fell in the Northern Mountains, 4–9 feet in the Central Mountains, and about 4 feet in the Southern Mountains. The CAIC recorded 842 avalanches, with most in the Central and Northern Mountains. Many of the avalanches ran larger than they had in the last 50–100 years.

On March 17–20, 2003, an intense upslope storm hit the Front Range (see "Our Perfect Storm," *The Beacon*, Spring 2003, Vol 7, No. 3). This storm affected a much smaller area than those of 1986 and 1995, but snowfall was 5–8 feet in four short days. We recorded about 200 avalanches, some with 50-year return periods.

Next we tried to see if there was a common thread that might link the three storms above and the one in January 2005. Climatologists have long studied sea-surface temperatures in the Pacific ocean to determine if extra-warm or extra-cold water temperatures have an impact on weather patterns. In a nutshell, they classify winters into three types:

El Niño: The eastern Pacific ocean is warmer than normal. That creates a tendency for lower pressure and a good environment for storm formation west of California. When this happens, the storm track is further south than normal, and a series of large storms often tracks from southern California toward southern Colorado. For the entire winter, there is a bias toward prevailing southwest flow and for storms to favor Colorado's Southern and Central Mountains.

La Niña: The eastern Pacific is colder than normal. That creates a tendency for higher pressure west of California, and this shifts the storm track further north. So for the entire winter, there is a bias toward prevailing northwest flow and for storms to favor the northern Colorado mountains.

Neutral: The eastern Pacific has normal temperatures. Therefore, there is no bias in the flow pattern, and there are equal chances for storms to track into Colorado from any direction. Snowfall, on the whole, does not favor one area of the Colorado mountains over another.

Of course, this is not the whole story. There are other varying influences on climate in addition to sea-surface temperatures. So it is a mistake to think, for example, that all El Niño winters are similar. Still, there is that bias toward bigger storms and heavier snow in the southern half of the Colorado mountains in El Niño winters.

So, back to the common thread between storms. The winter of 1985–86 was classified as neutral, while 1994–95, 2002–03, and 2004–05 were all classified as weak El Niños. However, the National Climate Center is not fully attributing the January 2005 storm to El Niño. They mention another phenomenon at play—the Madden Julian Oscillation, or MJO (doesn't quite have the ring of El Niño, does it?). The MJO is a cyclical period of disturbed weather patterns over the central Pacific ocean. On a time scale of 30 to 60 days, it is marked by warmer sea surface temperatures and an increase in deep atmospheric moisture. It seems that an MJO can enhance an El Niño to produce spectacular storms. Between Christmas and mid-January, an MJO episode resulted in a three week period of disturbances that brought heavy precipitation to much of the western U.S. A breakdown of this pattern then occurred during the last half of January, and the storms ended. That is the current thinking on the cause of our January storm, and tracking MJO's may prove to be a useful weather forecasting tool.

STORM DATA

The First Storm

There were two storms—a small one on December 29 to January 2 that set the stage for the big one on January 3–13, 2005. The first storm brought snowfall that totaled 20.5″ at McClure Pass, 21.5″ at Gothic, 19.5″ at Red Mountain Pass, 20.5″ at Coal Bank Pass, 12″ at Telluride, and 23″ at Wolf Creek Pass. It also prompted an avalanche warning from the CAIC on December 29 until January 1. This storm targeted not only the San Juans and the Elk and West Elk Mountains, but also the Elkhead and Park Mountains near Steamboat Springs. Heavy snow fell in those far northern mountains and wind built dangerous slab conditions. This contributed directly to the first avalanche death in Colorado for the season: On January 3, a backcountry skier was buried and killed by an avalanche that he triggered on Soda Mountain, which is seven miles northeast of Steamboat Springs.

The Second Storm

For the second and much larger storm, we have chosen eight sites for showing storm data: Wolf Creek Pass (1), Coal Bank Pass (2), Red Mountain Pass (3), and Telluride (4) in the San Juans of the Southern Mountains (Table 1), and Gothic (5), Aspen Mountain (6), McClure Pass (7), and Monarch Pass (8) in the Central Mountains (Table 2; numbers in parenthesis refer to locations on the map). Prevailing winds were from the southwest for the duration of the 10-day storm, and that meant the orographic effect (mountain lift of the airmass) was concentrated in the southwest quadrant of Colorado. Therefore, the heaviest snows fell in the San Juan, West Elk, Elk, and Sawatch Mountains. Snowfall was 5½ to 8½ feet in the San Juans, and 4–7 feet in the West Elk, Elk, and Sawatch Ranges. These amounts are comparable to the storms of 1986 and 1995. The 2005 storm had pummeled and devastated southern California before taking aim on southern Colorado, and we can lay blame on our old friends, El Niño and the Pineapple Express, and our new friend, MJO.

AVALANCHE DETAILS

Southern Mountains

The storm spit snow in the San Juans on January 3, but really got going on the 4th with heavy, dense snowfall and sustained strong winds. Anticipating much more to come, the CAIC issued an avalanche warning that day. What follows is a collection of facts, events, and anecdotes that captures the nature of the storm and our feeble efforts to fight back.

On Wolf Creek Pass (1) snow fell for 15 consecutive days from December 29, 2004, with 124 inches accumulating. This is more than one third of an average winter's snowfall. The pass was closed for 96 hours from January 8–12.

Red Mountain Pass (3) was closed for a total of 158 hours between January 8–15. South of Silverton, Molas and Coal Bank (2) passes were closed intermittently from the 8th to the 11th. On the afternoon of the 11th, the battle to keep the passes open was lost. Avalanches and drifting snow cut Silverton off from the outside world until the 13th.

Silverton forecasters Jerry Roberts and Mark Rikkers had to spend the night in their CDOT truck on Molas Pass when avalanches blocked their return to Silverton.

On January 9, Roberts took the editor of the *Silverton Standard and the Miner*, Jonathon Thompson, on a road tour. Thompson got an impressive view of control work in the Battleship slide path. His photographs and account make

continued on page four

Table 1: Snowfall and Water Equivalent (in inches) in the Southern Mountains

	Wolf Creek Pass		Coal Bank Pass		Red Mountain Pass		Telluride	
Day	Daily Snow	Water Equiv	Daily Snow	Water Equiv	Daily Snow	Water Equiv	Daily Snow	Water Equiv
3	0.5	0.06	1.5	0.10	1.0	0.10	0.0	0.00
4	7.5	1.10	11.0	1.35	10.0	1.10	7.0	0.65
5	16.0	1.70	18.0	1.40	15.0	0.90	11.0	0.90
6	5.0	0.42	6.0	0.30	5.0	0.50	2.5	0.10
7	2.0	0.15	0.0	0.00	0.0	0.00	0.1	0.01
8	7.0	0.40	12.0	0.55	8.0	0.45	3.0	0.30
9	20.5	2.62	8.0	0.80	10.5	1.00	9.0	0.60
10	15.0	1.90	24.0	2.85	10.5	1.00	8.0	0.75
11	13.0	1.30	9.5	1.10	14.5	1.00	5.0	0.40
12	15.0	2.20	28.0	3.40	14.5	1.00	17.0	1.75
13	0.0	0.00	0.0	0.00	0.0	0.00	4.0	0.25
Storm Total	**101.5**	**11.85**	**118**	**11.85**	**89**	**7.05**	**66.6**	**5.71**

Table 2: Snowfall and Water Equivalent (in inches) in the Central Mountains

	Gothic		Aspen Mountain		McClure Pass		Monarch Pass	
Day	Daily Snow	Water Equiv	Daily Snow	Water Equiv	Daily Snow	Water Equiv	Daily Snow	Water Equiv
3	0.0	0.00	0.0	0.00	0.0	0.00	0.0	0.00
4	3.0	0.18	1.1	0.08	2.0	0.20	1.0	0.20
5	6.5	0.49	7.5	0.55	8.0	0.65	7.5	0.50
6	4.0	0.21	3.0	0.12	9.0	0.50	9.0	0.50
7	3.0	0.16	2.0	0.10	3.5	0.15	1.0	0.05
8	9.0	0.34	1.0	0.10	4.0	0.25	2.0	0.10
9	16.5	1.37	5.0	0.45	8.5	0.95	7.0	0.55
10	17.0	1.60	6.5	0.50	9.0	1.00	9.0	0.90
11	16.0	1.40	8.8	0.70	10.5	1.20	4.0	0.40
12	12.0	1.04	9.0	1.00	20.0	1.80	19.0	1.30
13	1.0	0.05	0.0	0.00	0.0	0.00	8.0	0.40
Storm Total	**88**	**6.84**	**43.9**	**3.6**	**74.5**	**6.7**	**67.5**	**4.9**

The Storm of January 2005

continued from page three

the January 14th issue of the *Standard* a keeper (www.mountainjournal.org). It also includes a timeless quote from Roberts, "Run!", shouted when the powder cloud headed towards observers on Highway 550.

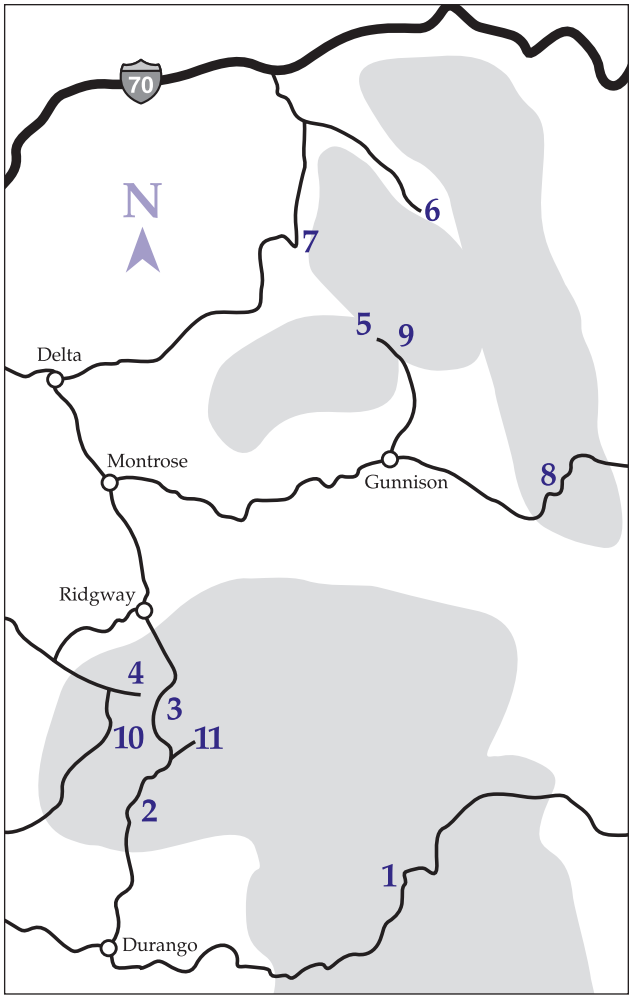
On January 8 and 9, at least three avalanches closed highway 145 over Lizard Head Pass (10) and took out the power line to Rico.

On the 11th, the Colorado Slide closed the road to Ophir (10), destroyed a shed, and barely missed a house. Power lines that serve Ophir (10) and Telluride Ski Area (4) were hit, disrupting power.

The Telluride Ski Area reported some impressive results from control work. On the 9th, Gold Hill fractured 12 feet deep. On the 12th, a dozen paths fractured 5–8 feet deep, and Dihedral Chute broke 15 feet deep.

Avalanches knocked out power to the Silverton Mountain Ski Area (11), and closed Highway 110 for six days. When the road opened, Silverton Mountain tried to bring in a backup generator. The truck slid off the road, and the generator went into the creek.

As the weather cleared on the 14th, forecasters were able to get out and see the extent of the storm. Susan Hale, intern forecaster in the Silverton office, reported by email: "The scope of these slides is sobering. Historic paths have slid, some that haven't run for 20 years, or that the old-timers cannot recall. Many paths have new trim-lines, destroying 100-year-old trees. Some paths have run more than once (Yellow Springs [near Rico] has run four times)."



A map of a portion of the Southern and Central mountains of Colorado, with numbered locations mentioned in the story.

With 71" of snowfall, Silverton endured its second snowiest January on record.

Central Mountains

In the Central Mountains, snowfall started in earnest on the 5th. Because the storm came in from the southwest, snowfall was much less dramatic on the northern side of the Central Mountains. The storm total for Aspen (6) was less than half the total for Gothic (5), on the southern side of the Elk Mountains (Table 2).

During big storms Western Slope (7) forecaster Rob Hunker inspects the road every four hours through the night (6:00 pm, 10:00 pm, 2:00 am, and 6:00 am), and naps on the couch in between. When the alarm went off one time, he woke to find his headlamp was still on his head and shining on the ceiling. What was worrying Rob was the chance of large avalanches onto the highways in his forecast area, specifically McClure Pass (7) and Grand Mesa. Though McClure Pass was spared, several large slides ran on the 10th or 11th and deeply buried the road to the Yule Creek Marble Quarry (see photo).

Avalanche on the Yule Creek Quarry road, near McClure Pass. (Photo: Rob Hunker)

Observers about to run from the Battleship avalanche, south of Red Mountain Pass. (Photo: Jerry Roberts)

On the morning of the 10th at Monarch Pass (8), the Big Slide released naturally and buried the highway 5–15 feet deep. One pickup was caught. The driver was able to climb out the window and was uninjured. A search was organized with the Monarch Ski Area and Chaffee County Search and Rescue to determine if any other cars had been caught, but none were found. A narrow escape!

On January 10, the Crested Butte Avalanche Center (9) raised the avalanche danger to extreme. Not only were widespread avalanches certain, but they were running near to or

exceeding historic dimensions. On the 11th and 12th, the CAIC issued an extreme danger for the Western San Juans as well.

On the 11th, a slide from Red Lady Bowl on Mount Emmons near Crested Butte (9) buried the Kebler Pass Road and buried a dozen parked snowmobiles. A similar avalanche occurred during the 1995 storm, damaging 40 snowmobiles.

Tree-filled avalanche debris buried CO 110, north of Silverton. (Photo: Susan Hale)

The same day, Billy Barr, our observer in Gothic (5), said, "No visibility but…I can hear slides on a regular basis…I heard this loud rumble...Very strangely it kept getting louder and lower… about a second after it stopped the ground underneath me settled, and I am about a few hundred yards from the debris area."

On the 12th, Snowmass Ski Area (6) reported that "one [controlled] avalanche went to the ground for the THIRD time yesterday…the crown was at least 7 feet deep, and broke into the ridge crest." Control work there continued to produce 6- to 10-foot-deep avalanches for several more days.

On the first clear day, Crested Butte Avalanche Center forecaster Billy Rankin was able to look around. "With one spin of the binoculars, I spotted upwards of 100 avalanches. Every mountain in the Elk Mountains had avalanche activity, every aspect."

At the end of the cycle, Billy Barr had recorded 64 avalanches that ran from January 6–11. Twenty-one of these were sizes 4 and 5-large and maximum relative to the path. He also stated that his 64 recorded avalanches "did not include probably 100 more that ran and got covered over so well that I will never see them." It took Barr until early February to catch up on recording all the avalanches.

SUMMARY

For the 16-day period that encompassed the two storms, snowfall was impressive: 124"at Wolf Creek Pass, 138" at Coal Bank Pass, 108" at Red Mountain Pass , 79" at Telluride, 95" at McClure Pass, and 110" at Gothic. There were three avalanche warning periods—December 29 through January 1, January 4–6, and January 8–17. It was during the third warning period, during the fiercest part of the storm, when the avalanche danger was extreme and when the largest avalanches fell.

Table 3 shows avalanches reported daily during the third avalanche warning period. As the weather cleared after the 15th, more avalanches were reported, increasing the final tally. The numbers do not include the reports of "numerous," "every slope," or "major rumbling" from the mountains. Our rule of thumb is that about one-tenth of the avalanches that occur are reported. In this cycle, the reported numbers are much less than a tenth of the slides that occurred. Consider that Billy Barr observed 64 avalanches (and estimated another 100 ran that he could not observe) in his one small valley of the East River north of Crested Butte. Take that number of avalanches and multiply by the number of valleys in the Crested Butte zone, and you get some idea of the 1,000-plus avalanches that must have fallen.

Table 3: Avalanches Reported During the Warning Period from Jan. 8–15

	NUMBER OF AVALANCHES REPORTED		
Date	Northern Mountains	Central Mountains	Southern Mountains
8th	1	15	4
9th	30	4	28
10th	9	4	31
11th	18	18	6
12th	72	51	54
13th	36	22	4
14th	26	24	4
15th	3	0	18
Total	**195**	**138**	**149**
Total for All Mountains			**482**
Reported after the 15th	56	81	55
Final Tally	**251**	**219**	**204**
Final Tally for All Mountains			**674**

The numbers do not capture the size of the avalanches. Many avalanches were large relative to their path (class 4) or exceeded historical dimensions (class 5). Old-growth trees along the edge of some avalanche paths were snapped off. Tree trunks embedded in avalanche debris complicated clearing off the roads. Other trees remained standing, but branches were stripped off the lower 40 feet of trunk. The trees have another 10 years or so to recover before getting hit again! ❄

The Third Annual Beacon Bowl

by Nick Logan

It's not the Super Bowl, not the Pro Bowl, but the BEACON BOWL-Arapahoe Basin's avalanche beacon competition. And at 11,500 feet, it's arguably the highest beacon competition in the country. But it's not all competition. There's plenty of avalanche related education, and, oh yes, it's a great party too!

This year A-Basin hosted the 3rd annual Beacon Bowl on Saturday, February 5th. It was a power-charged fundraiser that raised almost $1,300 for the CAIC. That's very good. But equally good is what this event offers to the participants.

Amidst all the fun and good skiing there was plenty of opportunity for serious learning. People were able to rub shoulders with CAIC forecasters, professional ski patrollers and the Ortovox beacon rep to learn more about snow, avalanche rescue and avalanche control work.

Many people took the opportunity to learn more about the mountain snowpack, not in a classroom but real hands-on. They climbed into a snowpit, examined a typical Colorado snowpack, and tested the various layers for weakness and signs of avalanche potential. They were surprised to learn how the snowpack's "personality" can be so variable from one place to another.

Learning about the snowpack (Photo: Nick Logan)

The ski patrol lobbed some explosive shots at the East Wall with their avalauncher in front of the gathering crowd. The participants got an up-close demonstration on how avalanche control is done in these steep chutes and cliff bands, and learned how an avalauncher works. Another demonstration was done by one of A-Basin's most valued patrol members, Tane. This 1½-year-old certified avalanche dog went through his paces with handler Rebecca Hodgetts flawlessly and found the practice victim, a real live person in about one minute.

But perhaps the most rewarding part of the Beacon Bowl for me was watching people get more proficient with their avalanche rescue beacons. It's become pretty easy to learn, as beacon manufacturers continue to improve their products by making transceivers more intuitive for backcountry travelers to use.

To be really proficient though, you first need proper training, and then you need to practice, A LOT! In the event of an avalanche burial, the other people in the party have to react instinctively. There's no time to stop and read the directions during an emergency. If your best friend is buried they're fighting for their life and survival depends on the rescuer's skill and speed. The Beacon Bowl provides the necessary training, and a person's conscience (or his partner) motivates him to practice, A LOT!

Scott Toepfer (far right) demonstrates proper beacon technique (Photo: Nick Logan)

Then came the beacon competition itself. There were two divisions—the recreation division and the pro division. More than 25 people of all abilities signed up to pit their skills for great prizes and the prestigious honor of having their name added to the "Beacon Bowl Champion" plaque. The competition was fierce in both the single- and double-victim scenarios.

Spurred on by onlookers, the competitors, one at a time, raced about 75 yards down a track to the "avalanche deposition zone" where they searched for the "victim." In this case the *victim* was a transceiver buried in a pack. The "rescuer" had to home in on the general location and then perform a fine search when their beacon told them they were within a few feet.

Left: A rescuer scrambles to get a fix on the victim's beacon signal Below: Searching close to the snow while zeroing in (Photos: Nick Logan)

Then they probed for the victim to find the precise location, just like in a real situation. This can save a lot of wasted digging time. When they made a strike to confirm the location they dug to the pack as fast as they could and pulled it out to

Left: Probing to confirm the victim's location (Photo: Nick Logan)

stop the clock. Adrenaline was pumping like there was no tomorrow—which is unfortunately the case for some real avalanche victims. It's all the more reason to do well in practice.

As the sun headed toward the western peaks, the participants and competitors made their way down to the well-known A-Basin a-frame, which is renowned for parties and good times. We were not disappointed judging by the line at the beer table, people worked up a pretty good thirst from the day's activities. A-Basin patroller Tony Cammarata (indeed a natural entertainer) emceed the raffle and awards portion of the Beacon Bowl.

In the recreation division Andrew Rosengren beat out his competition with a time of 3:02 minutes, while Dave Young came in a close second. In the pro division patroller Jeff Ferragi of Breckenridge won with a time of 3:48 minutes. Tony Cammarata of A-Basin was less than 10 seconds back, for second place. Strangely enough, the winners in each division won last year too. I guess practice makes perfect. Congratulations to Jeff and Andrew!

Several equipment manufacturers, local shops and restaurants donated items for the raffle. The table was full of things ranging from avalanche gear to clothing, bicycle tires to Frisbees, and even a season pass to A-Basin for next year.

If you attended the Beacon Bowl, thanks for coming. The CAIC appreciates all of your support, and I know you had a great day. If you could not make it this time, we hope to see you there next winter. Check our CAIC web page next fall for special events. We've got to unseat those winners next year and you might just be the recreational backcountry skier/rider or pro to do it! ❆

Jeff Ferragi takes honors in the pro division (Photo: Nick Logan)

To Ski or Not To Ski

by Scott Toepfer

(With apologies to William Shakespeare)

To ski or not to ski: that is the question.
Whether tis nobler for the ego to gain
First tracks or to suffer the slings and arrows
Of your peers as you insist upon a snowpit.
Or to take arms against a sea of moving snow
And by opposing common sense, huck the cornice
And by a missed landing allow stress to exceed strength.
By this error in judgement to die, to sleep:
No more: and by this lack of caution we cause
The heartache and the thousand natural shocks
For our friends and loved ones. Tis a consummation
Not to be wished. To die, to sleep:
To sleep: perchance to dream of better fore-thought
Aye, there's the rub, for in that sleep of death
By misstepped cornice hucked what dreams may come
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil
Must give us pause. There's that lack of respect
That makes calamity of our so short lives.
For who would bear the burial of time
If only a cool and thinking mind we answered.
The forecast right, the proud man's contumely
The pangs of too little O_2, the rescuers delay,
The insolence of the arrogant, and the errors
That powder blindness of the uneducated takes,
When a friend might his beacon make a quick
and hasty search. Who would burdens bear,
To grunt and sweat under the weight of a Buick
But that the dread of something after death
Hastens the searcher on with speed
The unsearched debris from whose boundaries
No searcher shall leave till all is covered
And makes us rather bear those ills we have
Than fly to others that we know not of?
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all,
And thus the native hue of the fool is found
Returned to pink from blue. Soft you now!!
No further chances shall thee take
And with them words of so sweet breath
Say thanks as made things more rich.
I humbly thank you—well, well, well. ❆

Mission: The Colorado Avalanche Information Center promotes safety by reducing the impact of avalanches on recreation, industry, and transportation in the state through a program of forecasting and education.

Staff:
Knox Williams—Director
Nick Logan—Associate Director
Dale Atkins—Forecaster, Web Master
Scott Toepfer—Forecaster, *The Beacon* Editor
Lee Metzger—Forecaster, Ike Tunnel
Stu Schaefer—Forecaster, Ike Tunnel
Mark Mueller—Forecaster, Pagosa Springs
Mark Rikkers—Forecaster, Silverton
Jerry Roberts—Forecaster, Silverton
Rob Hunker—Forecaster, Marble
Halsted Morris—Avalanche Educator
Brad Sawtell—Summit County Staff
Spencer Logan—Forecaster, Boulder

Durango.....970-247-8187
Summit County.....970-668-0600
Denver.....303-275-5360
Fort Collins.....970-482-0457
Colorado Springs.....719-520-0020
USFS-Aspen.....970-920-1664
Crested Butte.....970-349-4022

Friends of the CAIC
325 Broadway WS1, Boulder, CO 80305
Phone: 303-499-9650 Fax: 303-499-9618
E-mail: caic@qwest.net
Web site: http://geosurvey.state.co.us/avalanche

A program of the: Colorado Geological Survey
Division of Minerals and Geology
Colorado Department of Natural Resources
1313 Sherman St., Room 715, Denver, CO 80203
(303) 866-2611

CAIC
COLORADO AVALANCHE INFORMATION CENTER

325 Broadway, WS1 ❄ Boulder, CO 80305