

## DISTRICT 6 REPORT



By Les Chapman

First of all I would like to say thank you to the Okanogan Association of Snowmobile Clubs, and Dick Coppock for putting on a great Convention! Dee and I enjoyed both the rides on Friday to Hunter's Meadow and Sunday to Starvation Mountain. The guides were very friendly and flexible toward everyone's riding ability. The scenery was spectacular and the views of the Cascade Mountains were magnificent.

If you did not check out the 4-H display at the Convention, then you missed a good one! I observed them during the Quiz Bowl and was very impressed with the

speed in which they answered the questions correctly. The 4-H kids had very impressive individual exhibits also. I even learned what a snowmobile helmet is made of, by viewing the inside from a cross-section view.

The Blue Mountain Trailblazers Snowmobile 4-H Club is making plans for the 2003 WSSA Convention. Make sure you plan ahead and mark calendars next year for February 14-17, 2003, WSSA Convention in Walla Walla. It promises to be a family oriented Convention with lots of fun activities for all ages. Be sure to bring your sleds so you can experience some of our Blue Mountain infamous snow.

March 31 is the official end of the snowmobile season in the Blue Mountains. Please ride safely while you enjoy spring-like weather. The snow has a good hard pack on it now and might not be as forgiving as in previous months. March weather usually allows us to ride most anywhere and enjoy the scenery of the mountains around us and the valleys below us.

# Priest Lake, Idaho: A Paradise in White



The opening of the Schweitzer trial was monumental. Here, members of the ISMC enjoy the view from atop Schweitzer Mountain.

As a group, the International Snowmobile Media Council, takes one excursion per year to experience and expose another one of snowmobiling's secret destinations. This year's choice, Priest Lake, Idaho, came with many high recommendations for its famous lodging, cuisine and, oh yea, snowmobiling! And Priest Lake turned out to be an undiscovered mecca for every type and style of snowmobiler.

Idaho, if you are unfamiliar with its geography, is basically composed of Northern Idaho, with its lakes and mountain tops crowding the scenery, unique history, economy and culture that is distinctly different from that

of the rest of Idaho. Mountain tops and clear-cuts are the most fun for snowmobilers, and this is exactly what the folks at Priest Lake had in store for us. It seems that Mother Nature, in the late 1960's, via the Big Sundance Burn, cleared thousands of acres all over the immediate Priest Lake area. This makes for more play areas and hill climbs than even the most experienced and radical of snowmobilers knew what to do with.

Along this tour, we had representatives from all over the nation with us, each coming from different terrains on which they ride their sleds. Some hailed from Nebraska,

others from South Dakota, Minnesota, Oregon and Massachusetts. One thing in common with many riders was that not many had much experience with the huge hill climbs, powder bowls and uncrowded, groomed trails that Priest Lake will soon become famous for when these articles hit the newsstands. Better book your stay soon!

Our first part of the trip was spent on the east side of the lake, with the reception being held at the Inn at Priest Lake (208.443.4066 or [www.innatpriestlake.com](http://www.innatpriestlake.com)). The very wonderful establishment has a splendid lounge and restaurant, jacuzzi suites and even an outdoor heated pool.

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1. So choose your model — March 2, 150, 2, 300, 4, 400, 5, 600, 6, 800, 7, 900, 8, 1000, 9, 1100, 10, 1200, 11, 1300, 12, 1400, 13, 1500, 14, 1600, 15, 1700, 16, 1800, 17, 1900, 18, 2000, 19, 2100, 20, 2200, 21, 2300, 22, 2400, 23, 2500, 24, 2600, 25, 2700, 26, 2800, 27, 2900, 30, 3100, 32, 3300, 33, 3400, 34, 3500, 35, 3600, 36, 3700, 37, 3800, 39, 4000, 41, 4200, 43, 4300, 44, 4400, 45, 4500, 46, 4700, 48, 4900, 50, 5100, 52, 5300, 53, 5400, 54, 5500, 55, 5600, 56, 5700, 57, 5800, 58, 5900, 59, 6000, 60, 6100, 61, 6200, 62, 6300, 63, 6400, 64, 6500, 65, 6600, 66, 6700, 67, 6800, 68, 6900, 69, 7000, 70, 7100, 71, 7200, 72, 7300, 73, 7400, 74, 7500, 75, 7600, 76, 7700, 77, 7800, 78, 7900, 79, 8000, 80, 8100, 81, 8200, 82, 8300, 83, 8400, 84, 8500, 85, 8600, 86, 8700, 87, 8800, 88, 8900, 89, 9000, 90, 9100, 91, 9200, 92, 9300, 93, 9400, 94, 9500, 95, 9600, 96, 9700, 97, 9800, 98, 9900, 99, 10000, 100, 10100, 101, 10200, 102, 10300, 103, 10400, 104, 10500, 105, 10600, 106, 10700, 107, 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As everyone gathered at the reception to meet the hosts, you could feel the excitement in the air, which was enough to know this was definitely going to be a great snowmobile adventure!

Our group was even luckier than most, as we got to stay at the Blue Diamond Marina (208.443.2240 or [www.priestlake.org/blued.html](http://www.priestlake.org/blued.html)). This was truly a treat to be had! The guest accommodation was a deluxe cabin with two bedrooms, satellite TV, microwave, fridge and extras that slept four comfortably. The Blue Diamond Marina is an all season deep water moorage site on Cavanaugh Bay that features the Waterfront Restaurant. The Waterfront features exquisite cuisine such as we got a chance to sample for breakfast the next morning. The waffle bar was beyond tasty, simply the way to go before a hard day of riding (and today we were going to put on about 100 miles).

After breakfast we set out for Cavanaugh Bay Resort (208.443.2095) to meet our guides and start our day. Today

was the christening of the Priest Lake to Schweitzer Mountain trail. This is monumental in nature because of the long standing differences between skiers and snowmobilers. Freshly groomed all of the way, this trail was a pleasure to ride. From the start we travelled south-southeast along the 191 trail until we reached Lost Creek, where we took a left and headed along the 15 trail. This quickly hooked together with the trail 2 which brought us all of the way to the Schweitzer trail 102. This was one of the longer stretches of the day, passing around the west side of Atlasta Mtn. After a quick ride down the ski lift to the Schweitzer Lodge for some lunch, we mounted our sleds amidst a bunch of "Ooohs," and "Ahhs," from the skiers to head back down the hill to our evening's destination: Hill's Resort. Only a few of us, after arriving in Nordman just a few miles from Hill's Resort, decided to refuel and sled the rest of the way to the resort. For the record, after coming off of Schweitzer we travelled west on trail 14 and then 12 past the Dickensheet Junction



WSSA President Glenn Warren bursts back onto the trail after side-hilling down a fairly steep drop-off that only a few dared to play on.

and around the west side of Bismark Mountain on the trail 639 to Nordman.

That night, the dinner was held at the Hill's Resort on Priest Lake (208.443.2551 or [www.hillsresort.com](http://www.hillsresort.com)). Ohh and wonderful is was. Hill's Resort is well-known for its cuisine. In fact, many Hill's family recipes have received national recognition and have been featured in national cookbooks. We were lucky enough to sample the Calamari appetizer (Lightly breaded & sauteed,

served with avocado garlic aioli), Fresh Spinach Salad (Spinach, bacon, mushrooms, & sliced red onions tossed in Hill's hot dressing), Stuffed Sirloin Steak (Stuffed with roasted Pasilla peppers and Gorgonzola cheese.) and Hill's Signature Huckleberry Pie for dessert. What an absolutely wonderful treat.

The second day was a chance for some bookdocking, Idaho-style. This ride was basically to the Pelke Warming Hut (known amicably as 'The Ritz'

to locals). Most riders went straight to the Ritz but we got to visit a few mountain tops on the way, specifically North Baldy & the Grouse Knob. This ride put the rented RMK Trail 550 to the test. Four Seasons Rentals (208.443-0115 or [www.plmarina.com](http://www.plmarina.com)) provided a lot of the sleds for this ride, including the Trail RMK I was riding. A great ride, and the sled and rider both managed to make it to the top okay. From this vantage point one could

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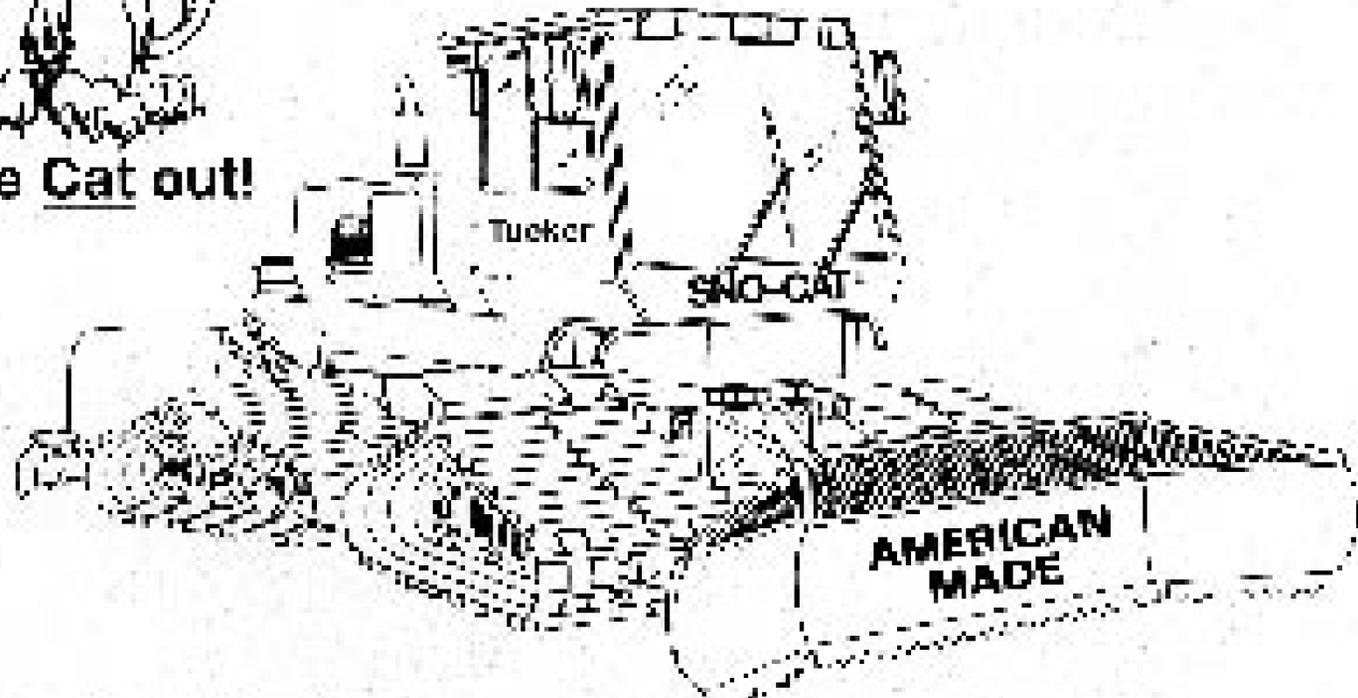
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## Priest Lake

from page 31

see the city lights of Spokane as well as the ski runs on Mt. Spokane and even Canada on a good day! The view is just simply remarkable when you are up on top of a snow-covered world like that. We, in the Northwest United States are



Our group stopped for a breather on top of Granite Pass.



The inside of our cabin at Elkins Resort was equipped with a 360° fireplace!

blessed with the fact that we have mountain tops in the back country that we can get to a snowmobile, traveling on nothing but groomed trails all of the way. While Priest Lake may offer more or better opportunities to explore and experience unspoiled back country, we should really count

our blessings and get involved more with our local state snowmobile associations or risk losing it all. That night, we got an opportunity to sample the cuisine at Grandview Resort (208.443.2433 or [www.gvr.com](http://www.gvr.com)). They treated us to some of the tastiest prime rib that I have personally known (and, yes dear Margaret, I have sampled my share of prime ribs). Simply and arguably a well cooked, medium rare prime rib is about the best and most healing meal that a sled-head could ask for after a hard day of boondocking!

The third day was the last official day of riding, this time with Mollie's Warming Hut the destination. Today, also, was scheduled to be a longer ride (upwards of 70 miles.) We had plenty of sites in line on this day's trip. Our first site was the Granite Falls. We travelled up the north fork of the Granite Creek (trail 302) just to the west side of Granite Pass to access the waterfalls. We then continued along the trail north to the Shoe Tree. Now, the Shoe Tree is a local historical landmark that you just have to see. After we finally arrived at Mollie's Warming Hut, we got a massive treat of barbecued ribs, hot and ready to be consumed. Snowmobiling rarely, if ever, gets any better than this! Ohh Yumm!

The trail back was brief as many were getting tired after three days of all-out riding. No time wasted, we just bee-lined for home. The treat tonight, after a blazing trail back to the lake along the Beaver Creek this time, was at the Elkins Resort on Priest Lake (208.443.2432 or [www.elkinsresort.com](http://www.elkinsresort.com)). Oh, and what a treat it was. First and foremost was that drinks were on the house! Can we say, "Smiles all around!" Then the appetizers were served: huge platters of BBQ pork, crab wantons and bruschetta.



Ed, of Four Seasons Rentals, (pictured here) not only guided us, but also provided sleds for our ride.

Before too long, people were wandering to their seats and dinner was being served. This dinner was fresh halibut encrusted with seasoned bread crumbs, parmesan cheese and garlic then oven roasted with a lemon beurre blanc. This definitely was the meal of meals!

After a long night of a well-hosted bar, people slowly started to wander back to their cabins for a night of rest before blazing a trail back to the office and all that awaited outside of this winter bliss. I think someone aptly put my thoughts into one sentence, or questions, rather... "I wonder what the less fortunate folk of the world are doing right now?" I wonder, because to get the opportunity to explore a place as wonderful as Priest Lake is incredible! I would suggest that if you want to visit Priest Lake and experience it as we did that you book your vacation soon. Remember that great places do not stay a secret for long. Before everyone else

does, please call quickly to reserve your weekend in Priest Lake: A Paradise in White.

In order to make this trip a success, many businesses put in many hard hours of work, time and effort. Please, when you book your vacation inn Priest Lake, support the businesses who made this possible, they are the businesses who support snowmobiling in the state. They are (in no order of importance) The Inn at Priest Lake, Cavanaugh Bay Resort and Marina, Blue Diamond Marina, Schweitzer Mountain Resort, Priest Lake Yahama Polaris Ski Doo, Hill's Resort, Whispering Waters, Chimney Rock Cafe, Priest Lake Service Center, Four Season's Rental, Nordman-Nickleplate, Chimney Rock Bed and Sled, Tom Holman -Buena Vista Photography, Elkins on Priest Lake, Grandview Resort, Priest Lake Chamber of Commerce, Search and Rescue and the Priest Lake Groomer's Association.

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