

# Stash

WHERE YOU FIND SPECIAL THINGS



Big wave maestro Laird Hamilton rips into a “four-foot” monster off the Indonesian coast. Photo: Tom Servais

## The Last Laugh

When surfers toy with snowboarders, it's hard to tell who gets worked harder

BY GERRY LOPEZ

A two-week surf trip to Fiji's Tavarua Island is always an exciting event. Laird Hamilton and Darrick Doemer were there, with Ken Achenbach and Don Schwartz from Canada. The Canadians are terrific snowboarders who had only recently discovered surfing and had tried it enough times to begin the love affair. With us lifers around to offer helpful tips, this trip would be their best opportunity to learn valuable surf subtleties.

After a few days of practice in smaller waves, we think they're ready to try the real waves of Cloudbreak Reef. The surf is little by our standards, certainly nothing life-threatening. Even though Cloudbreak is smaller, it's still a powerful wave, breaking over a very shallow and sharp reef. After riding a few insiders, Ken wants to know how big the waves are.

“There aren't any waves out here today that are over four feet,” chuckles Laird. The rest of us exchange knowing looks. “Well, four feet is only this

big,” replies Ken. He spreads his hands apart to demonstrate. “You're telling me that wave wasn't taller than this? Do you guys measure from the back or what?” asks Ken. “Don't be an idiot,” retorts Laird. “Nobody measures waves from the back.”

A few minutes later, a nice set rolls in. Laird yells for Ken to go for it. His arms are a blur as he paddles hard to catch the wave the great Laird Hamilton has personally selected for him. “How big is it? How big is it?” Ken inquires over his shoulder. It's a nice wave and quite a bit larger than any so far that day—almost seven feet by our standards. But Laird wasn't going to tell him that. “It's four feet, GO!”

The wave jacks up even more as we watch Ken, who is caught in the lip, get pitched headlong over the falls. He gets clobbered, washing all the way into the shallow “Shish Kabob” section. Battered and beaten, tail

between his legs, Ken goes straight to the boat, done for the day.

Later that evening, Ken keeps asking us how his wave could have been four feet. He insists politely that right before he got launched into space, he was looking down 10 or 12 feet. We assure him the wave was barely four feet, maybe only three. Ken shakes his head, plainly troubled that a mere four-foot wave could give him such a beating.

Later that winter, we meet again in Blue River, BC, where Mike Wiegele runs one of the finest helicopter-skiing operation's in the world. All day long, we race down mountainsides on our snowboards. We weave in and out of forest. We launch jumps made by fallen trees, wind cornices and even tackle some small cliffs.

At one point, Ken stops and yells back uphill about a great jump right below him. From our position, we can see the drop-off but not the bot-

tom. “Well, how big is it?” Laird asks. As Ken gets his camera out, he tells us it's only four feet so we should get all the speed we can, otherwise we won't even get off the ground. “Come on,” Ken insists, “I'll count back from three, you guys all go together, okay?”

On the count of one we all take off. We blast off the edge in unison and are all shocked not to find a four-foot drop but at least a 20-footer. We realize we're going too fast to make the landing, and we'd just been had by Ken.

After we dig ourselves out of the deep powder, Laird is a little pissed. He shouts back up to Ken, “Hey, I thought you said it was only four feet!” We can hear Ken cracking up as he yells back down, “We measure from the back here in Canada.” □



# For Nature

**Colleen McCrory left the beauty of her forestland home to save it, leaving behind a legacy of 1.25 million acres of protected land**

**BY FRAN WALLIS**

In her ancestral Ireland, Colleen commonly means “girl.” But here in BC, the name Colleen is anything but common. While Colleen McCrory’s record as an environmental activist is unique, her values were not. They were common values, at least on a species level: she was a female, a mother resolute in her courageous stand to preserve home.

Born in New Denver, in BC’s wild and beautiful Slocan Valley, Colleen was a defender of forest, of nature and of human rights. She dedicated her life to protecting the wild with focus and respect. On Canada Day 2007, she died of a brain tumour two weeks after diagnosis—a day and a woman to be remembered by all Canadians.

Colleen McCrory was born January 5, 1950 to Patrick and Mabel McCrory, the middle child of nine. Her appreciation and love of land grew out of an upbringing in the former mining community of New Denver, in a lifestyle unfettered by Nintendo or television. Her early years gamboling around the alpine tarns and mountain meadows with a gaggle of neighbourhood kids and her older brother Wayne, now a renowned bear biologist, instilled a deep reverence for life and the natural world.

Her mom, Mabel, who served as mayor of New Denver during the 1970s and regularly served up meals to aging local prospectors and miners and anyone else in need, fostered her love of family and the broader community.

At age 18, Colleen married and spent a year living in Western Australia with her husband. By age 28 she had resettled in New Denver, had three

children and a divorce. Back in the Slocan Valley, she reclaimed her family name and embarked on a typical local career path by doing whatever she could to earn an income. In 1975, she worked for the Canadian census, which further fostered her connection to community. This same year she encountered her first clear-cut.

A large logging outfit had bought up local independent mills and had begun 1000-acre clear-cuts of old growth forest. In the company of her brother Wayne, Colleen stumbled across the ravaged wasteland of what had, only days earlier, been a thriving, verdant forest. “It was our wake-up call,” acknowledges Wayne.

In 1975, she started her own dry goods retail business and began volunteering with the Valhalla Wilderness Society (VWS). Her brother Wayne, along with Richard Caniell and Craig Pettitt, formed the society a year earlier to protect what was then the proposed 49,893-hectare Valhalla Provincial Park: a unique, intact ecosystem from lakeshore to alpine, situated on the western side of Slocan Lake in BC’s West Kootenay region.

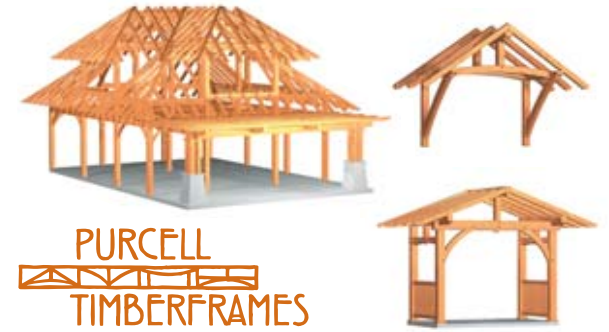
Colleen took on her VWS tasks with such zeal, organizing meetings and speaking engagements, that it soon became apparent she had both the instincts and energy to become the spokesperson for the group.

The words of anthropologist Margaret Mead are most applicable to Colleen and the cooperative effort of the team of writers, researchers, strategists and scientists of the Valhalla Wilderness Society. “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, dedicated citizens can change the world. Indeed, it’s the only thing that ever did.” Through prosperity and lean times, the VWS pushed through personal issues and adversity to stay focused on their vision. A boycott of Colleen’s retail store and a backlash to the society’s “stop the clear-cut” campaign drove her out of business and onto the road.

She landed in Ottawa as parliamentary secretary to NDP MP Jim Fulton, critic of the environment, following a successful campaign on his behalf in BC’s Skeena riding in 1987. She spent three years there polishing

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her political chops. Not yet 40, Colleen plunged headlong into the international political arena, promoting British Columbia as “the Brazil of the North” in countries like Sweden, Germany, Brazil and Japan. This ongoing campaign to stop the clear-cutting of BC forests brought her invitations to speak at environmental conferences around the world. The 1992 VWS campaign slogan read, “In BC we’re losing one acre of forest to logging every twelve seconds.” In spite of some success, that fact remains true today. “We’ve already lost a third of the world’s forest, a big factor in climate change,” says Anne Sherrod of the VWS.

“Colleen’s mission was to save as much forest as possible,” recalls Winlaw resident and campaign companion Marilyn Burgoon. “She had long-term vision... She loved reading maps and could envision how to repair the damage done... how to put the landscape back together for the survival of the species.”

Equally important were her instincts and skills when dealing with government and forestry officials. “She would make government accountable

## McCrory’s Legacy

**International Awards**  
**Goldman Environmental Prize: the world’s largest environmental prize (\$60,000), considered the environmental equivalent to the Nobel Peace Prize, 1992**  
**United Nations Global 500 Roll of Honour, 1992**  
**International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources’ Fred M. Packard International Parks Merit Award, 1988**

**National and Provincial Awards**  
**Equinox Citation for Environmental Achievement, 1990**  
**Governor General’s Conservation Award, 1983**  
**Vancouver Island Human Rights Coalition Citation for Outstanding Contributions to Protection of the Environment, 1988**

**Environmental Protection Projects**  
**The Valhalla Provincial Park, Valhalla Range in southeastern BC, 49,600 hectares**  
**Khutzymateen Valley, Canada’s first grizzly bear sanctuary, north coast of BC**  
**Goat Range Provincial Park, Selkirk Mountains, BC**  
**Spirit Bear Sanctuary of Princess Royal Island, coastal BC**  
**South Moresby National Park Reserve on Haida Gwaii, BC (Queen Charlotte Islands)**  
**Total protected area: 1.25 million acres**

**Resumé**  
**Executive Director, Valhalla Wilderness Society, New Denver, BC**  
**Coordinator, BC Environmental Network, 1989-90**  
**Founder, Canada Future Forest Alliance, 1991 (300,000 members)**  
**Green Party Candidate, 1991**  
**Co-founder, Taiga Rescue Network International Boreal Forest Protection**

for what they did,” says Burgoon. “A well-phrased question, well-equipped with facts, she’d cut through the rhetoric and get at the truth... She worked hard to save the Perry Ridge watershed. We owe her our success.”

With her keen intuition and instincts, coupled with her focused, ice blue gaze and luxurious auburn hair, Colleen was a daunting and handsome figure. She used the same sharp eye and famous McCrory nose for ferreting out a flaw or a leverage point in a government document as she would when scouring a thrift store to find treasures for her five grandchildren.

One recipient of that expectant gaze was independent film producer Ian Gill from Eco Trust, a non-governmental organization whose mandate is to build a conservation economy. “McCrory had this inescapable logic, unshakeable faith and unwillingness to say no... When I worked for CBC, she persuaded me, and the CBC executives to pony up the budget to fly a

crew up to cover the clear-cut-caused landslide story in Hills, BC,” recalls Gill. “And again for a crew to stay at San Francisco’s Four Seasons so we could tell another McCrory story: The Goldman Award Ceremony.” In 1992, she received the world’s largest and most esteemed environmental award, the Goldman Environmental Prize, for her efforts.

Even her opponents begrudgingly respected her. She didn’t go away when she was promoting a cause, and she didn’t back down. Instead, because of her deep love of humanity, she didn’t dislike her adversaries, nor hold a grudge.

Colleen championed injustice, whether it was clear-cut logging or health care for seniors and First Nations people. “McCrory knew that any injustice impacted the entire planet, as all are interconnected, and she lived that,” notes Dr. Mar Rodin. Rodin, a long-time friend, spoke at the August 25, 2007 memorial, which was held on the shores of Slocan Lake, opposite the pristine Valhalla Wilderness Park, attended by upwards of 400 family, friends and supporters from across the country.

Colleen’s political instincts were well-honed by the time she reached the age of 50. “Five years ago, McCrory saw the link between the hospital closures and budget cuts to emergency services and the 2010 [Olympic] games,” says Adriane Carr, the former leader of the BC Green Party from 2000 to 2006, where Colleen acted as her deputy leader.

Throughout the three decades of her activist career, while a skilled lobbyist, she still held a firm belief in the democratic process. According to her friend Marilyn Burgoon, Colleen was a true patriot and believed that changes could be made effectively through democratic process. After a long and arduous eight-year journey, she proved the process worked with the formation of Valhalla Provincial Park and later South Moresby National Park Reserve on Haida Gwaii, an archipelago off BC’s northern coast. She and the VWS are credited with protecting more than one million acres.

On the local political front, Colleen conducted a door-to-door campaign in Nelson. “McCrory worked hard to offer other policy choices to voters,” says her co-worker, Laura Tiberti. Their efforts through the Green party were worthwhile. The proof was at the poll when the Green Party rose from 4 per cent to 14 per cent in the West Kootenay. Throughout her involvement with the Green party, she visited aboriginal communities and rural villages to listen to people and to develop health care policies for the party.

National Green Party leader Elizabeth May says, “She was my sister, not by our birth families but in spirit. Our lives were entwined; she’s my daughter’s godmother. We weren’t just out saving the world, we were doing that too... We would laugh, drink wine, then clean the house and plan a meal for everyone.” Like her mother, Colleen always wanted to share a meal and include everyone in the circle.

Although she was frequently absent, whenever she was home, her children and grandchildren were around the house. Every day she would walk her dog up the Standard Mining Road to stay in shape for summer hikes with Wayne.

Throughout her life, Colleen drew strength from the peaks around her; she was introspective, like the bears that shared her beloved alpine. She was always questioning. What else can I do to make a difference? And who can I get to help? “She had a vast network of contacts,” says her son Shea.

As a testament to all her skills as a lobbyist, activist and concerned citizen of the earth—as well as the significance of her loss—right up until her passing, Colleen was working on the proposed Selkirk Mountain Caribou Park, part of the Inland Temperate Rain Forest mapping project. The only known inland temperate rainforest in the world, home to the endangered mountain caribou, immense biodiversity and thousand-year old trees, Colleen was vehemently focused on protecting it from large-scale clear-cut logging. The project is both politically and ecologically ambitious, spanning part of southeastern BC, northern Washington and Montana.

Remembrances of love, respect and inspiration continue to flow to the Valhalla Wilderness Society and the McCrory family from people mourning the loss of a strong and free spirit—our girl Colleen and her courageous stand for our common ground. □

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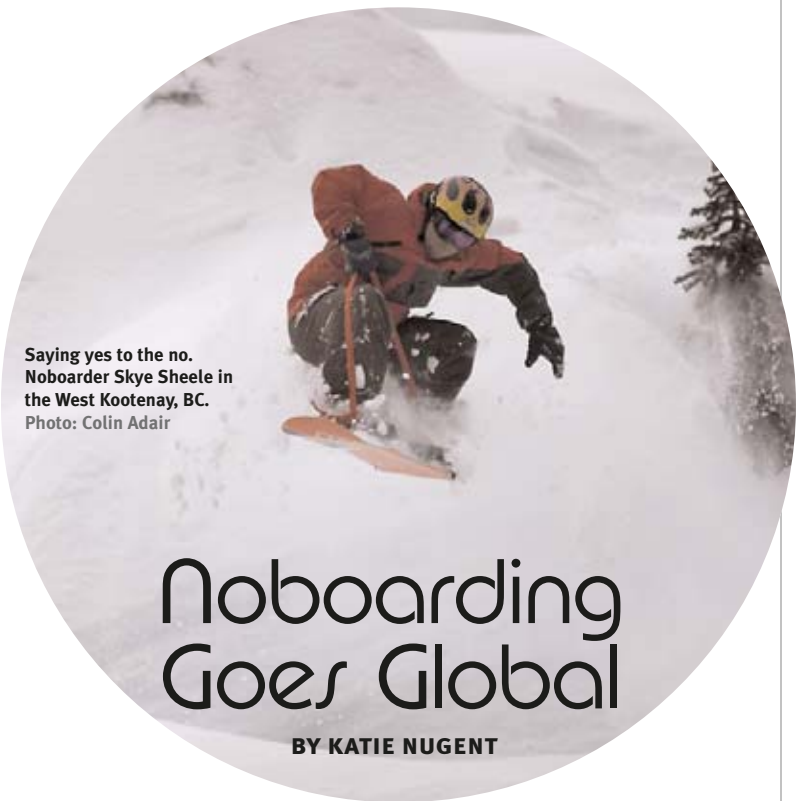
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Saying yes to the no. Nboarder Skye Sheele in the West Kootenay, BC. Photo: Colin Adair

# Noboarding Goes Global

BY KATIE NUGENT

Deep in the Selkirk Mountains, a cult gathers at first snowfall. Every winter, dozens of new members make the pilgrimage to the holy mountains. They are truth seekers in search of a community, one that promises freedom and soul. And they find it by relinquishing a vital part of their lives—their snowboard bindings.

Since its birth in 1998, riders have found new passion in a sport that blends the souls of snowboarding, surfing and skateboarding into the Daddy of all powder tools—the noboard. Nearly a decade since noboard inventor Greg Todds infamously ripped off his bindings, noboarding has officially hit the global scene.

“This year, 2007, is definitely the tipping point for noboarding,” explains Cholo Burns, co-owner of the Nboard Company. “Since the debut of the film *Yes to the No* at the Banff Film Fest, people are taking noboarding seriously.” The film, created by Rocky Mountain Sherpas and executive produced by Burns, has been shown worldwide, introducing the sport to countries like Japan, New Zealand, Switzerland and the US.

“The visual aspect of the film has really opened people’s eyes. At first people are skeptical, thinking we’re doing lame turns on tiny hills. Once they see the film, they realize we’re dropping cliffs and riding serious terrain. Now we’ve got product distribution in Japan and

Switzerland, where, prior to the film, people thought we were a joke.”

“People who noboard are people needing the next challenge without doing some crazy trick off a 100-foot cliff,” comments Scott Penner. Penner is one of the few core riders to pioneer a sport that has begun to attract attention from big names in the snowboard industry—names like John Gerndt, known as JG. JG, who recently visited the noboard lair in Trout Lake, is the Burton product designer famous for designing the Fish snowboard.

“He’s all for the movement and sees a place for it in the riding culture,” says Burns. Could this be the beginning of something big for the small Kootenay-based company? “I’d like to collaborate with a big-time company. They’ve got the means to push noboarding as far as we all dream it will go,” Burns concludes. Collaboration with a big company would mean the potential to distribute to the masses, which is the ultimate dream for all involved in the noboard cult.

JG isn’t the only industry professional jumping on the noboard bandwagon. Allan Clark, an ex-professional snowboarder, is one of a growing number of pros and local Kootenay riders who have given up their bindings. “Noboarding was a new challenge,” explains Clark. “Snowboarding was getting too crazy and

deadly. Noboarding brought me back to the roots of riding.”

The roots of noboarding run deep in the culture, which is why every January 13th the GT Memorial takes place to commemorate Greg Todds, the man who started the movement. Tragically, an avalanche took Todds in 2005, but he continues to be a driving force in the movement. The memorial raises money for Todds’ two children, Lily and Ashton, and the event is often an initiation for many first-time noboarders.

Those closest to Todds hope the global attention will further the dream of their fallen comrade. “I was there when Greg first put it together. There was major laughter. We laughed about it throughout the creation, but now it’s captured us all and we want to spread the word and carry on Greg’s legacy,” says Sky Sheele, an original noboard rider and long-time friend of Todds.

The invasion has begun, the cult is gaining motion and the soul of noboarding is growing bigger everyday. Opening day at Revelstoke Mountain Resort could be the kick-off to world domination.

To find out more about noboarding and the GT Memorial, check out [www.nboard.ca](http://www.nboard.ca)

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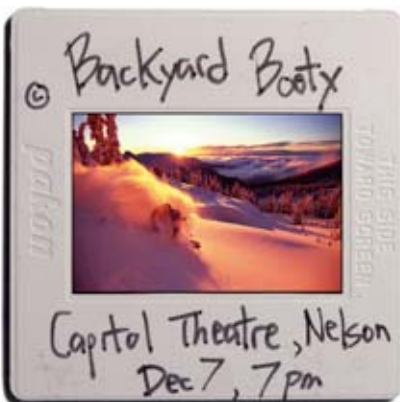
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# Deep Woods

EDITED BY TARA CUNNINGHAM

## Backyard Booty Cometh — to a Town Near You

It came from humble beginnings. A dream of congregating mountain folk into one large room to partake in a feast of photographs and film, to laugh and to share stories, basking in mountain culture and all of its beautiful quirks—



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8 pm showtime

ness. Now in its fourth year, *Kootenay Mountain Culture Magazine's* annual Backyard Booty is growing to epic proportions.

On December 7, 2007 at the Capitol Theatre in Nelson, BC, another spectacular night of high-grade, homegrown multimedia will be presented: slideshows, short films, digital media

and spoken word from local media mavens. Hosted by *KMC's* editor Mitchell Scott, this year's Backyard Booty will feature the now-famous storytelling competition, where audience members take the stage to narrate their tales of adventure and introspection, hoping to wow the crowd and walk away with one of many fantastic prizes. Last year the grand prize winner won a day of super-deep powder with Snowwater Cat Skiing. No wonder it's a dang good time—every year Backyard Booty sets the Capitol Theatre's annual record for alcohol sales. Make sure you get your tickets early at Valhalla Pure, Gerick Cycle & Sport or The Sacred Ride because this event sells out.

Good news for out-of-towners: in early winter, *KMC's* taking a "Best of the Booty" show on the road to Whistler, Revelstoke and Fernie. Stay tuned to [kmc.com](http://kmc.com) for more details.

## BCMC: A Century of Adventure

How time flies when you're busy exploring and conserving the BC alpine. The BC Mountaineering Club (BCMC) turned one hundred years old on October 28, 2007, a mere century after their first meeting back in 1907, where a small group of hard-core outdoor enthusiasts figured sharing adventures and knowledge amongst an established group would be the best way to explore the endless mountain opportunities of BC. Since its inception, the over-400-member club has continuously planned weekly climbing, hiking and ski mountaineering trips, while mountains and glaciers have been named after

several members. Conservation is also a hallmark of the club. One of Canada's most spectacular wildernesses, Garibaldi Provincial Park, was formed back in the mid-1920s thanks to the BCMC, which highlighted the start of the association's sustained commitment to the protection and promotion of BC's alpine. Trail and hut construction, trail maintenance, mountain safety and education have all been part of the BCMC's mandate, along with ensuring its members and the general public has access to the club's legacy. A number of centennial projects are in the works for the coming year: a new cabin, a book about the club's history, celebratory expeditions and even a Canada Post stamp. Happy birthday to a vibrant organization of volunteers who share a common vision and love of the mountains. Visit [bmc.ca](http://bmc.ca) for centennial information.

## Grizzly Bears vs. Jumbo Resort

The last issue of *KMC* featured a story about world-renowned grizzly bear biologist Dr. Michael Proctor and his leading edge, non-invasive techniques of gathering data and using DNA to chart grizzly population sizes (CSI: Grizzly, Dave Quinn, Issue 11, Summer 2007). Dr. Proctor's studies of grizzly bear populations in the Purcell Range in southeastern BC, specifically the Central Purcell Range, have recently been forwarded to the provincial government agencies responsible for deciding the hotly contested fate of the controversial Jumbo Glacier Resort, near Invermere, BC. His research shows

grizzly bear populations are much lower than original provincial government estimates. The BC government has estimated the grizzly population at 93 per cent of its potential in the Central Purcells and therefore able to withstand the impacts a ski resort would level on their habitat.

However, Dr. Proctor's studies reveal a significantly lower number—54 per cent—placing the grizzly dangerously close to "threatened" status, with 50 per cent being the threshold. What does this mean? Dr. Proctor strongly urges the government to rethink its plan. It seems all previous government decisions about Jumbo Resort's impact on grizzly bear habitat were made under the assumption grizzly populations were nowhere close to threatened. Time to think again.

## KMC Gets Greener

We are happy to announce you are holding the first issue of *Kootenay Mountain Culture Magazine* printed on FSC-certified paper. Our printing house, Vancouver-based Hemlock Printers Ltd., was the first printer in the Pacific Northwest to receive the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification, guaranteeing the paper is from well-managed forests. Readers can be confident the wood products in *KMC's* paper have been through a rigorous tracking and verification process, from the source to its final state. The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) is a non-profit international organization that promotes and

supports conservation and responsible management of the world's forests. Recognized and respected internationally, FSC's forest certification program is considered the most credible in the world. We are dedicated to exploring greener options.

## Winter Photographers, Unite!

Scheduled to be part of the second annual Kootenay Cold Smoke Powder Fest in Nelson, BC, February 22 to 24, 2008, *ARC'TERYX*, *Kootenay Mountain Culture Magazine* and Mountain Gear present the **Cold Shot Photo Faceoff**, a first of its kind winter sports photography contest for the Kootenays.

Five of the region's best photographers will team up with athletes of their choosing and spend four days shooting in the Selkirk Mountains around Whitewater Ski Resort. Their goal is to capture the winter culture and mountain landscapes of the Kootenays, not to mention the essence of riding here. Cash, incredible prizes and the rights to Cold Smoke Foto Phenom fame is up for grabs. Both pros and amateurs are encouraged to compete for the wildcard spot—while four photographers will be invited to participate, the fifth will be selected from judged submissions.

The Cold Shot Foto Faceoff event is part of the Cold Smoke Buff-eh and rager on Saturday, February 23, 2008. See [www.coldsmokepowderfest.com/fotofaceoff](http://www.coldsmokepowderfest.com/fotofaceoff) for more details.

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