



ALTA IS FOR SKIERS.  
ALTA.COM

# ALTA POWDER NEWS

Online edition available at [alta.com](http://alta.com)

## The season after our 70th

We hope all of you had a chance to spend some time on the mountain last season. A little anniversary gift in the spring- 290 inches of snow fell in March and April. It was an amazing way to wrap up a ski season and certainly a testimony that snow trumps the economy when it comes to loyal Alta skiers. We thank you for skiing to the end!

As Onno alludes in his message, our summer was nice and full with projects and planning. We welcome your feedback on the changes we made with the Cross Tow and the terrain change on the east end. If you have a child or a beginner in tow, and are coming from the Wildcat Base, life hopefully just got a little easier. Save your energy for the skiing! The Albion Day lodge project's primary focus was to make skier access much more friendly and to shine a light on our business friends who offer their services from that facility. We trust Lew Moore's Alta Java coffee will taste just as great with his new storefront!



A perfect powder morning at Alta

Here it is November 2009 and to coin a phrase, the only thing constant is change: changes in our weather patterns, the Albion Day Lodge, Alf's Restaurant, the Cross Tow, the health of our conifer forest and the formation of the Alta Environmental Center.

Much of this issue focuses on the history and change of avalanche control and ski patrolling and the vital and colorful role they have played in Alta's 70 years as a ski area. Many great men and women who have given Alta a part of their lives aren't named but are certainly appreciated and deserve to be in a more complete history.

Here's to a winter filled with great health and many turns in soft, quiet snow.

Onno Wieringa, general manager

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We invite you to peruse our Alta Environmental Center site on [alta.com](http://alta.com) and see what Maura, our Sustainability Coordinator, has been working on all summer. One thing Alta skiers can do is to visit "Go to Green Commute Options Program" on the center's homepage. There, skiers are able to consider sharing their commute either with a carpool option, or with a public transportation tailored to their commuting patterns.

Another project is a January rollout new look for [alta.com](http://alta.com). We are also close to launching our new booking system on [alta.com](http://alta.com). There, skiers will have the ability to book a room at one of many properties 24/7. Also, we will be contacting Alta

season pass holders shortly to get information on how many years they have been skiing here to help us appreciate long time Alta skiers.



Come experience the magic of Alta this season. Surreal lighting seen above Wildcat lift, circa 2008

Before, circa June 09



After, circa Nov. 09



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Gus Gilman circa February 1980

## Slopeside Spotlight

Gus Gilman, Ski Patrol Director

Alta enjoys a rich history of contributions to snow safety operations in America. What may not be so well known is that Alta's ski patrol and snow safety personnel continue to receive high plaudits from other winter snow professionals around the country. One of those deserving of special mention is Gus Gilman, current head of the ski patrol department at Alta Ski Area.

Gus hails from New Hampshire and started his skiing at Cannon Mountain at the age of 5. He first visited Alta in 1976 and decided to return the following year after graduating from UNH (University of New Hampshire). Because of his previous experience at Cannon Mountain as a snowmaker and in construction/equipment operations, he was hired initially at Alta at the Watson Shelter, under supervision of Neff Walker. In his third year at Alta (1980), he was able to join the Ski Patrol during the winter season on a part time basis. According to Gus, "the next season (1981) Alta installed the Supreme Lift and expanded the ski patrol by 6 people. I worked seasonally for Alta until 1985 when I was hired full time to replace a member of the cat crew who had left in the summer. That was the season we put the sewer system in at the Alpenglow mid mountain restaurant. I had previously been on a pipe crew in New Hampshire and had some experience. I also had some other skills like welding, carpentry and heavy equipment operation that come in handy around a ski area. This led eventually to a patrol supervisory job opening up and I was hired to fill the vacancy on a full time basis."

Gilman credits Onno Wieringa for starting the program of getting the ski area opened up as soon as possible following a heavy snow storm. Gilman states that Onno, who was the Snow Safety Director at Alta before taking over the reins as General Manager, originated the concept of early season skier compaction as an effective tool to reduce the avalanche threat. Said Gilman, "by putting skiers on a slope as soon as we can after a snowfall, we eliminate some of the layering that gives us problems down the road. This has led us to a program of making serious efforts to get things open... and keep things open, whenever possible, with the Alta skier being the beneficiary of that policy. Our current Snow Safety team has continued these practices and even refined them to a higher level over the past several years."

Another advance highlighted by Gus is in weather measurement and internet technology. He states that with the help of special snow, wind, and temperature sensors, and our own forecasting staff, weather forecasting is greatly enhanced throughout the winter season

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Gus Gilman circa Spring 2009

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and helps the ski patrol figure out what to expect when they go out on the mountain during storms.

Gus Gilman is also a member of the Alta Town Council. As a council member, he is a strong advocate of keeping the Alta experience as a quality experience for visiting guests. One of the major challenges the Alta community has to deal with, according to Gilman, is getting people in and out of Alta conveniently and safely, along with providing continued upgrades to overall lodging and services.

When asked about his views on the winter sports as an industry, Gilman replied, "the ski/recreation industry is a great way to make your living. You'll never make much money, but you'll enjoy most of your days."



Gus(leaning on ski pole) and some of his patrol members take in a beautiful frosted Mt. Superior

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