It's called **POW**-*dur*r. Wind. Icy roads. Whiteout conditions. *It's just another day of skiing for Crew 42.*

Most seek refuge from biting gusts and powder deep enough to bury the unwary in the lodges. But as these wimps hide behind some wood and hot cocoa, the Crew scales The Throne; six-thousand feet of unyielding rock, sharpened snowflakes, constant wind, (and chairlifts). This is Crystal Mountain.

The adventure began at o'dark hundred when we left home. We started with eleven of us and ended with that many. The drive was (as you can imagine) uneventful, except for a pair of disgruntled tire chains that did not want to go faster than 23.4 miles per hour. After much colorful vocalization, sweat, and blood, all vehicles arrived at the base. The weather was perfect. Snow was falling, but it was peaceful and there were very few people present.

The first run was the antithesis of a slap in the face. Powder up to the waist engulfed us. Falling wasn't the problem..not getting buried was! Immediately after the first run, everything was white. Whiteout conditions set in, tracks were filled in before you could follow them, and winds tried to blow you back up the mountain. The snow was perfect! It weighed nothing but was everywhere. Every bump, jump, and turn was a surprise, and it was endless.

After two hours of floating *(or tumbling)* down the mountain, most of us met at the base lodge for lunch. Chilidogs, cookie, and hot cocoa later, we were back on the mountain and wading up towards the Throne, but found an absolute whiteout there. Conditions continued to deteriorate, so we decided to bug out for safety. Ridge climbing becomes dangerous when you can't see the edge of the mountain. The final runs were excellent…there was no one else on the mountain. Whereas climbing the mountain had been troublesome, the descent was a glide. All the the snow on the road had melted and the sun (yes it does come out once in a blue moon in Washington) gleamed through the divided cumulus castles. The adventure had ended, but we all desired more.