



WEATHER OUTLOOK

on Wednesday, January 6

by Gary Sprung

Powder fiends stuck on Queen

We have not seen powder like this since that great storm of February, 1986, I believe. Like that event, this storm came in on a giant band of clouds which stretched from here to Hawaii. As its approach to Crested Butte was from the west-southwest, it dumped heavily. Our 11 inches new on Tuesday morning was surpassed in Colorado only by Winter Park, which got 13 1/2 inches. Observers at Gothic reported 15 avalanches Tuesday.

The powder fiends, including me, turned out in droves. We were

hungry for this delicacy, this supreme experience. Not once last winter did we see a double-digit overnight snowfall. Many lined up at the chairlift a half hour early.

I boarded the Silver Queen with a lovely friend. We engaged in excited conversation and debated which slope to hit first. At the highest spot of the chair, over the International runout, an abrupt halt sent our chair down about 25 feet in one second, then back up. Instant terror. Then quiet.

We soon realized the lift was

broken. We sat there for an hour, dangling sixty feet in the air and watched the early bird skiers shred the fluff. It was like a horny guy watching people have sex.

We still had a good time, as it kept snowing all day, yielding another eight inches by Wednesday morning.

Today, Wednesday, that long cloud band still stretches far into the Pacific, but it has already moved

south of Colorado. Today's storm derives instead from an upper-air low which this morning sits above the Colorado-Utah border. National Weather Service has issued weather warnings for the entire state. The Sangre de Christos and Monarch Pass will get hit hardest today, with eight to 16" predicted. For Crested Butte, I forecast another six by Thursday morning.

The storm will end this afternoon as the waves pass quickly to the Southeast. By Thursday, some lingering fog or scattered cumuli will quickly dissipate. The high pressure ridge arriving tonight will open our skies to the sun until the weekend. An arctic airmass which will flow into the Great Plains on Friday will reinforce the high, but that cold air won't cross the Continental Divide and won't affect us. Highs on Friday and Saturday should approach freezing, while

nighttime lows will drop below zero. We won't see the bitter chill of New Year's weekend. That blast rode in from the north when the jet brought bitter, dry continental air down from the Yukon directly to Colorado.

Today, two fronts appear on the satellite photo out in the northern Pacific. We'll see the first one this weekend, but the lingering high may weaken it. I expect just scattered snowshowers beginning Saturday night. The next storm, now south of the outer tip of the Aleutian Islands, may do better by the middle of next week.

The outlook for next week and for all of January is for below normal temperatures, above average precipitation. I'll be out of town the next two weeks, so no weather column until the issue of January 29.

Weather in Crested Butte —courtesy L.C. Adams

Date	High	Low	Snow	Date	High	Low	Snow
12/16	27	-16	0	12/27	19	-9	0
12/17	40	10	tr	12/28	30	-15	0
12/18	33	9	0.5"	12/29	27	-14	0
12/19	33	14	2	12/30	19	13	tr
12/20	28	-15	0.5	12/31	22	-4	5
12/21	21	-18	tr	1/1/88	21	-20	tr
12/22	35	-14	7	1/2	11	-37	0
12/23	28	11	2	1/3	14	-33	0
12/24	23	-3	4	1/4	23	-12	0
12/25	20	-14	0.5	1/5	28	7	10
12/26	11	-19	0	1/6	18	12	

GNURPS FORECAST FOR FRIDAY NOON

