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SNOWMASS ANNOUNCES KING & QUEEN FOR MARDI GRAS ON FEBRUARY 5TH **Sign up now for floats, costume contests & Mother of All Ascensions race**

(Snowmass Village, CO.) January 30, 2008-- On February 5, Snowmass Village morphs into the "Biggest Show on Snow" for the 26th annual Mardi Gras Festival. Leading the festivities will be this year's reigning King, Steve Rausch, and Queen, Susan "Mouse" Carollo, both year-round employees on Snowmass mountain.

Mardi Gras kings and queens are chosen traditionally based on "the luck of the bean" where nominees are each given a box that either contains a winning golden bean or a piece of cake. In Snowmass Village, it takes more than a legume to receive the royal nod, and the King and Queen are chosen based on their dedication and commitment to Snowmass.

"I can't think of two people who exemplify the spirit of Snowmass more than Susan "Mouse" Carollo and Steve Rausch," says Snowmass Mountain Manager Steve Sewell, a former Mardi Gras king himself. "They are both long time ski patrollers and summer rangers, and I credit the success of our summer bike program to the hard work and vision of these two. But perhaps the trait that they both possess that is absolutely critical for the King and Queen of Mardi Gras is their ability to have fun. I have no doubt that they will reign over the Snowmass Mardi Gras celebration with style and exuberance."

Steve Rausch

Steve Rausch is an avid skier and mountain biker and has worked at Snowmass for 15 years. Since 1998 he has worked as a ski patroller in the winter time and with the summer bike program each summer. "No matter the season," says Rausch, "Snowmass has the best atmosphere. I've got great friends here and I look forward to going to work." Rausch is thrilled and not a little surprised this year to follow in the footsteps of his boss, Steve Sewell, as Mardi Gras King.

Susan Carollo (a.k.a Mouse)

While Carollo has only lived in Snowmass for three years, she has worked at Snowmass for over 30 years as a ski patroller in the wintertime and on bike ranger patrol in the summertime. Carollo, who earned her nickname Mouse during a game of flag football that involved wearing powder puffs which made her look like Mickey Mouse, is accompanied throughout her work by her trusty canine avalanche and rescue dog Caleb. Carollo also cites last year's Mardi Gras with King Steve Sewell as one of her most memorable.

Snowmass Mardi Gras Festivities:

Sponsored by KSNO and The Aspen Times, this annual Fat Tuesday celebration comes earlier than usual in 2008 and is one of the biggest parties of the season in Snowmass, annually drawing between 3,000 to 5,000 visitors. Fat Tuesday starts at dawn on February 5 with the Mother of All Ascensions uphill race. Local restaurants kick off the afternoon with Cajun cuisine and drink specials, while a King Cake will be served on the mall at 1 p.m.

The afternoon is filled with festivities including a Kids' Carnival with face painters and stilt-walkers and a popular bead throw at 3 p.m. with nearly 30,000 bead necklaces thrown into the crowds. The annual parade at 4 p.m. is filled with floats, bagpipers, dancers, stilt walkers, clowns, costumed revelers and more. After the parade, the parties move indoors to local hot spots such as Zane's Tavern, Mountain Dragon, Big Hoss Grille, and the Cirque, which celebrate with live music, Mardi Gras giveaways, and Fat Tuesday drink and food specials.

Registering for The Mother of All Ascensions Uphill Race:

Celebrating its 16th year, this early morning uphill race kicks off Mardi Gras and is open to snowshoers, skiers, hikers, and runners, and costumes are highly encouraged. Ascending 1,741 feet in elevation, the race heads from Fanny Hill up to Gwen's High Alpine where \$15,000 worth of prizes are awarded for everything from best and worst costume to best and worst time. To pre-register (\$35) and receive a fabulous goody bag and long sleeve T-Shirt, racers should visit Christy Sports in Snowmass, The Ute Mountaineer in Aspen, or Summit Canyon Mountaineering in Glenwood Springs. Download the application off www.snowmassvillage.com.

Registering for The Parade:

Businesses, families, visitors, and organizations are encouraged to get their message out to crowds as large as 5,000 during the annual Mardi Gras Parade. Snowmass offers cash prizes for Best Float (\$450), Best Use of Theme (The Greatest Show on Snow) (\$200) and Best Costume (\$150). The Snowmass Marketing & Special Events Department provides \$100 reimbursement towards float expenses as well. To register costumes or floats or receive reimbursement, stop by the TOSV Marketing offices in Snowmass Village (between the Mall & Daly Lane) or download the registration form from www.snowmassvillage.com.

For the complete Mardi Gras schedule, visit www.snowmassvillage.com or call 1-800-SNOWMASS. For media information or photos, contact Allison Johnson at (970) 309-5485 or aj@snowmasspress.com.

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