

ATTENTION SPAM

Insignificant News, Events, and other Meat By-Products for your Head

Adventure Sports Go Hollywood

It's *Cliffhanger* meets *Melrose Place*. The ABC television series *Extreme* promises the ultimate rush for adrenaline junkies beginning this spring.

You'll see downed planes teetering on cornices, snowmobilers trapped under ice, mountain bikers tumbling off cliffs, climbers arrested at 200 feet, and snowboarders shooting through couloirs.

The pilot for the one-hour action/adventure drama, shot throughout Utah, premiered immediately after the Superbowl and captured the number one spot for Sunday night ratings.

The series stars James Brolin and four college-age, as-yet-unknown but, of course, good-looking actors as a search and rescue team working out of the fictional town of Steep, Utah, (a.k.a. Park City).

These mountain rescuers make a living saving lives and, in their spare time, risk their own by doing the extreme. The group embroils itself in everything from helicopter and rock-climbing rescues off Utah's jagged cliffs to love triangles.

"Don't call us Baywatch-On-Skis. This is like nothing you have ever seen on TV," says Director Anthony Hickox. "It has the action of the big screen, but Stallone never went 20 feet off the ground. We have Brolin at 2,000 feet."

As television screens get bigger and sharper, shows like *The A-Team* don't fly with audiences. Enter *Extreme*, with its three cam-

era units, comprising nearly 70 crew members each.

The second unit on a film or television production usually gets the hand-me-downs when it comes to shooting scenes for a show. While the first unit, defined as one camera and crew, is filming the principal actors and dialog, the second unit is shooting pickup scenes like back-grounds and crowds.

But the second unit on *Extreme* isn't complaining. "We get to do all the fun stuff. This show is all about action, so we usually upstage the first unit," says second-unit cameraman Dean Lyras.

"This show is eye-catching. You'll want to watch just to see what we do next," said Hickox. "This is like one big Reebok commercial." In fact, the really outrageous scenes are shot by Didier Lafond, famous for Reebok's sky-surfer commercials.

Seven episodes were completed this season, but you'll have to hold onto your seats until March, when the series airs regularly at 8 p.m. Pacific Time Thursdays on ABC.

By the way, *Break!* doesn't particularly support the irresponsible pursuit of adventure sports. Those who climb, mountain bike, paraglide, ski, or snowboard should do so safely — so they don't jeopardize the safety (and finances) of those who may have to come to their rescue. But, what the heck? *Extreme* sure sounds more up our alley than *Wheel of Fortune*.

Call Neun – Ein – Ein

Here's a group of students that just might need *Extreme*'s services some day. They go to the university in Spittal, Austria, and call themselves the Austrian Extreme Ski Team. We met them last spring in Colorado at the U.S. Extreme Skiing Championships.

Their most recent accomplishments:

- Arrested for skiing the staircase of Monaco's royal palace;
- Skied the longest escalator in Munich, Germany's international airport (without getting busted);
- First descent of the Arcachon sand dunes, France;

• Skied the back side of a 500-foot Austrian dam — attached to bungee cords.

Their achievements at the skiing event, however, were less impressive. Their two top contenders, Cornet Petzsching, 23, and Markus Gausler, 24, were eliminated in the second round of the four-day competition.

"Our guys just weren't used to these conditions," explained interpreter Roland Habel, a fellow student.

"Maybe they should try training on snow sometime," responded an unidentified skeptic.

Break!'s "Best of" 1995 Ski Area Marketing

It always amazes us what ski areas will do to get students to come to their resorts. Here's a short list of our favorite and least favorite marketing campaigns:

• Vail, Colorado. This campaign is based on an outright lie. "You're now entering the \$38 lift-ticket zone," a Rod Serling kinda guy says, imitating the introduction to the old TV series, *The Twilight Zone*. "At Vail, we're taking you back: back to a time when the AMC Pacer ruled the streets and John Travolta only killed people out on the dance floor; back to when lift tickets were only 38 bucks."

Gee, according to our recollection, lift tickets at Aspen — the most expensive resort in the country — were \$22 in 1983. That means that in 1976 or so (when *Saturday Night Fever* and the Pacer were in vogue), lift tickets at Vail were probably about \$15. Don't be fooled.

• Jackson Hole, Wyoming. "What's Up on the Mountain Can Strike Fear in You," says the headline for this ad, which features a radical photo of Jackson local Jason Tattersall taking huge air as he enters the famed chute, Corbet's Couloir. Problem is, Corbet's is rarely open. When Jason and friend "Sick Rick" Armstrong, both 24, decided to ski it anyway this winter, the ski patrol took their season passes away for one month (cost: \$1,200), then buried them in the snow for 45 minutes during a ski patrol avalanche training clinic.

• Crested Butte, Colorado. This campaign we like. When a series of Pacific storms rolled through the Rockies in January, Crested Butte launched a major advertising program in the college papers, with the headline, "There's Nothing Quite as Satisfying as a Big Dump."

Now, *that's* no lie.