



FOUNDED BY  
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### YELLOWSTONE IN WINTER

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#### February 13

I plug my ears with my fingers. James asks if the cabin pressure is bothering me. "No," I say, "I just don't want to hear the woman behind me retching into her airsick bag." It's been that kind of ride.

We miss the first approach to Jackson Hole in the foggy snow squall, bank, shoot up to 14,000 feet. The Grand, at 13,770, winks at us.

A stewardess warns us to "fasten seatbelts very snugly around the hips," and down we go again, for what the pilot dubs "a good ol' college try." We make it in, the last plane to do so for days, becoming the stuff of Jackson Hole folk legend. The plane explodes in relieved laughter and applause.

Valentine's Day: Karhu Ski Touring Center, Teton Village. The slate at the waxing hut reads, "green"—wishful thinking or deliberate deception. Temperature hovers at 31°, and we smear on violet, hoping not to have to go softer. We have a pleasant day touring the rolling hills outside Teton Village on newly groomed track. Refuel with Mexican food at the Million Dollar Cowboy Bar that night.

#### February 15

Heavy rain and nonstop shopping. Clara braves the icy slush to buy, among other things, a pair of hot fuchsia Lycra pants that reveal everything, including the pulse beating behind her knee. In the downpour I glumly follow Ed and Clara to a sad and smelly thrift shop. I purchase a pair of near-mint Galibier Super Guides for \$2.00. They even fit.

Snow King and Teton ski areas are closed because of rain, but unable to bear not skiing one more minute, some of us go to Snow King's bunny slope for telemark practice. We get wet and fall down a lot.

#### February 16

Barely make it out of Jackson Hole and on to Flagg Ranch in a heavy storm. Snowcoaches have to creep over Craig pass and are hours late. Paralyzed by the 24-hr bug and a megadose of Dramamine, I sleep the whole way to Yellowstone, mercifully unconscious of the reek of diesel fuel and the seasick sway of the tanklike cab.

The Haggglunder grinds on inexorable, for five hours. We feel like we've undergone some dreadful sort of kidney therapy at the end of the ride.