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1/18/75

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Date 1/16/75

TO: The President

FROM: Paul A. Miltich

FYI X ACTION

OTHER :

Mr. President: I thought you would want to see this piece that Sharon Mikutowicz of the National Newspaper Association did on your stay at Vail.

*Paul / Good piece. Thanks.
Might write & thank her.
Put in scrapbook. MCY*

memo

FROM: SHARON MIKUTOWICZ

Date: 1/13/75

To: Paul Miltich

JAN 14 1975

PLEASE PASS ON TO THE PRESIDENT.

Sharon Mikutowicz

SHARON MIKUTOWICZ
National Newspaper Association

News Editor
PUBLISHERS' AUXILIARY

491 National Press Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20045
Tel. (202) 783-1651



NATIONAL NEWSPAPER ASSOCIATION

491 National Press Building, 74th and F Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20004

orig. to Dorothy Downton



Two Vail weeklies' coverage of Ford low-keyed

By LINDA W. WILSON

VAIL, Colo.—He's an average skier, but he's by no means an average person. That's why when President Ford visited his second hometown here for a 12-day working holiday, complete with entourage of national press, Secret Service and top-level advisers, it was a little hard to overlook him.

When winter comes, there is one thing to live for in Vail and that's skiing. That's why when Ford took to the slopes with his long-time ski instructor, he didn't create the commotion that some might think. President or not, he wasn't the main attraction. The snow was.

AND SO IT was with a sigh of relief that the two Vail newspapers greeted the end of Ford's stay. Ford had come, he skied, he worked and left without turning this Bavarian look-a-like town into another Key Biscayne or San Clemente.

The older folks who flock to this skiing mecca have a great pride in ignoring celebrities. Calvin Thomas, publisher of the Vail Villager told Publishers' Auxiliary. "But you can't ignore the President. He's a national figure, not just a celebrity."

Thomas' paper is the more moderate of the town's weeklies and his coverage of the Ford visit reflects it. He said while the coverage might have been low keyed, it was certainly there in notice.

George Knox, the 70-year-old publisher of the Vail Trail harbors fears of Vail being San Clementized so his approach was even lower keyed. The weekly, not out to beat the national press which would give it abundant treatment, focused especially on the social side of the Presidential stay but the Trail's main stories were his arrival and departure.

The Trail beat out the national news media with exclusive shots of the Fords at some of the social gatherings they attended. This is because Knox has known Ford since they met at a Vail cocktail party five or six years ago and discovered they belonged to the same fraternity in college—Delta Kappa Epsilon.

THOMAS' VAIL VILLAGER was the first to break the story that the President would give up his condominium this time in favor of staying at the seven-bedroom home of Dallas oil investor Richard Bass.

Publisher Thomas said some of the townies were dismayed that he reported this because it added to the brightness of the spotlight on Ford.

The front page of the Villager the week Ford arrived carried stories pointing out that this was a working as well as pleasure trip and that among the activities would be meetings with environmental advisors. The weekly, mindful that ecology is a major concern of this resort, carried an interview with Russell Train, administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, who was among the advisors to visit Ford at Vail.

The Villager's page one art that week showed a man and his pet wolf picketing the house where Ford was staying to protest Mrs. Ford wearing a wolf-skin coat.

Thomas' attitude is that the President's visit is "an important event to Vail and there is the same obligation to report it as with any other new paper."

The publisher feels he gave "an honest perspective" to the sojourn covering a lot of aspects that would be of interest. For instance, there were reports of avalanches in the area, but the Villager printed out that they posed no threat in the area where Ford was skiing.

THOMAS CRITICIZED the treatment given his town by the national media saying one story in the New York Times made it out to be a "shake and bake Bavaria with plastic Hansels and Gretels on the balconies." But to those who make Vail their home, "it's a pretty serious place," Thomas said. "We work as hard as anybody else, but we do it in a nicer environment."

The Vail Villager and the Vail Trail were obvious in their casual approach to coverage of President Ford's two-week stay.

As far as the widespread publicity being turned on Vail as a result of Ford's visit, Thomas said he has some apprehensions that the area will draw "rubbernecks" but that "everybody has the right to come up here and are welcome to do it. I think Ford's being here affects it too much."

worries that it would bring a gala premiere night atmosphere with police and security lines everywhere he ventured. But that never materialized.

Publisher Knox emphasized the President got no special treatment on the slopes. He said Ford was ushered to the head of

ski lift lines but that was because anyone who has a private instructor is accorded this courtesy.

Both Knox and Thomas said the President stressed that his stay shouldn't interrupt the normal activities at Vail and it didn't.

Vail Associates would close off the mountain the President used but that the President mingled along with the other enthusiasts using the intermediary slopes.

One characteristic of Vail-goers is that they tend not to hassle celebrities, Thomas said. "Few would dash up and ask for an

autograph. It's an unwritten rule to appreciate privacy."

Thomas said the town, which naturally swells over during the holiday season, was as crowded as expected this season but didn't think the growing numbers are attributable to Ford.

In all, the President's visit turned out to be big news to the rest of the world, but to Vail, the biggest story during those 12 days remained the same—skiing.

And so it seems the more Ford comes to these Colorado slopes, perhaps the more the town will grow.

When the aurora of Ford's new status of President has dimmed a bit he will be just an average skier and about all there will be to say about this man named Ford is what publisher Knox said: "Ford's a great guy. Very down to earth. Everybody in Vail likes him."



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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

January 18, 1975

ADMINISTRATIVELY CONFIDENTIAL

MEMORANDUM FOR: PAUL A. MILTICH

FROM:

JERRY H. JONES

The attached material was returned in the President's outbox with the following notation:

-- Paul/Good piece. Thanks. Might write and thank her. Put in scrapbook.

Please follow-up with the appropriate action.

Thank you.

cc: Don Rumsfeld
Dorothy Downton

