

## Veggie Tour - First Impressions Are Lasting Impressions

Contributed by Conor Hurley  
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The Veggie Road

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Dispatch 7

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Parked next to me was a man whose car was buried in snow. His efforts at trying to get his car out of the snow bank were going nowhere, so I offered to help him dig his car out. After 20 minutes of digging, pushing and tires spinning, we were able to get his car out. Upon the exodus from the snow bank the guy offered me two days worth of lift tickets; he was heading home and had no use for them.

My plans were made for Saturday and Sunday, and Monday's plan would come about when the time came. However, I still had to get my dog some exercise, so she and I did a few laps on the mountain and then I stashed her in the car.

After all the ski touring I've been doing, riding lifts was an interesting sensation; frankly, I didn't miss it. However, I am not going to say I didn't have a blast. One thing I've always found interesting is the lift ride. Someone checks your ticket, you stand in line and then you join a group and ride up the mountain together. Well, on one of those trips up the mountain, I bumped into a guy named Whale, who happened to be the on-mountain supervisor for the ski patrol. We decide to meet up the next day and do some skiing.

I was on cloud nine after waking up to bluebird skies following another great night in the car. I strolled over to the patrol headquarters at about 8:15 a.m. Whale was busy getting ready for the day. I could see Whale was rushing to wrap up some paperwork; and was keen to get outside and tend to one of the more coveted ski patrol duties—trail-check. Over the course of the next hour-and-a-half, Whale, Pinky and I made sure Silver Star's vacant and unskied runs were safe for the public.

Whale and Pinky had to tend to other duties, so I figured it would be a good time to get Ealu some exercise. After a few laps up and down the mountain, I stashed the dog back in the car and headed out for some more skiing. And then it all happened.

While taking a line I had taken five times before, I launched into the air one more time. The trajectory was simple, landing seemed clear, so as I spun through the air, my only thoughts were focused on sticking the right turn as soon as I landed. Touchdown. My skis were on the snow, I flexed my bent right leg into the turn and then thud—No crack. No tear, nothing, just thud. And the pain set in. It was pain I'd never felt before, radiating from my hip, it gripped my entire body; I could hardly move. I tried to stand up, but fell as soon as I put any weight on my right leg.

"Holy shit, I am really hurt," I thought to myself. Up until this point, I'd had some near misses and a few bruises and bruises, but nothing like this. Precious seconds ticked by as I layed in the snow. I was facing a harrowing fact—my clothes were becoming saturated with hot blood and I was alone—it would be up to me to get help. Mustering all my strength I rose to my feet and skied my way down the mountain.

At the bottom of the nearest lift, I called to the lift attendant to get the ski patrol. With the help of a couple of bystanders I took off my skis and lied down in the snow. I couldn't help but think how lucky I was to be at a ski area. On one

hand I never take risks like that in the backcountry; but on the other, you never know what lies in front of you. With blood pulsing from my side, I closed my eyes, put pressure on my wound and waited. Before long, there was a crowd of ski patrollers hovering over me.

In less than an hour Whale and the rest of the Silver Star ski patrol had me off the mountain, into the ski patrol headquarters and in the back of an ambulance. I was completely in the hands of others at that point in time. Whale had the keys to my car and had promised to take care of my dog. The paramedic searched for a pulse in my feet and wrists as he tried to keep me from going further into shock. Knowing the situation was grave, as he struggled to find a pulse, I stared into the lights mounted on the ceiling of the ambulance awaiting our arrival at the Vernon-Jubilee Hospital.

After all sorts of tests, x-rays and ct-scans one of the doctors uttered to the others—"This guy is a lot worse of than you looks."

Up until that point in time, I harbored notions of a few stitches and my release later that night. However, those words struck me as hard as the rock that lay beneath the snow.

Some time after 10 p.m. I woke up from surgery and the reality of an open fracture of my ileum, most commonly known as the hipbone. The surgeon had done a nice job of cleaning up the wound and rebuilding my shattered pelvis. However, I quickly understood I would not be skiing for some time to come.

In the grand scheme of things, I'll be fine. The bones will heal, the muscles will come back and I will ski again. I am just counting my blessings it wasn't my head or my back that hit the rock.

In a year BC is seeing record snow fall, I'll be spending the month of January hanging out in sweat pants on Pinky and Whale's couch dreaming about blue skies and powder days. It's not so bad, because I will be back and a whole lot wiser. I guess I hadn't thought about it too much, but I've come to realize, it's not about the turn just down the hill, rather it's the turn 35 years down the road that counts.

"I am alive". Conor recovering.

When in doubt dress your dog up.

This was the clean stuff; good news for Patagonia, their clothes don't stain easily.

This is my father and yes he is wearing a mullet wig...Why? Why not?

When you don't have anything better to do, grow a mustache.

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