

Ski films invigorate riders

By Peter Shelton, Watch Newspapers

It works every time. The season's new ski movie comes to town in November just as snow is starting to fly, and all those dreams and memories built up over the summer come rushing out like a wind between the theater seats and the screen.



It happened last weekend in Telluride with the screening of Matchstick Production's 2010 offering "The Way I See It", starring, along with a host of new-school luminaries, 19-year-old local product Gus Kenworthy.

What Kenworthy did, with Bobby Brown and Colby West and others, on a huge jump in Alaska, requires a special language to describe, a language in which I am not fluent. They were flipping and twisting, grabbing tips and tails and spinning like out-of-control satellites off what Kenworthy called a "120-foot semi-stepdown." The village of Alyeska and the pink, sunset waters of Cook Inlet looked to be straight down below them, as they were filmed, sometimes in super slo-mo, from a helicopter flying alongside the birdmen.

This is not skiing that most of us can relate to. But that didn't stop a little voice to my right from shouting again and again, "I'm going to do that! I'm going to do that!" He was maybe 6.

Most of us aren't, of course, going to do that. But the job of the ski movie from the beginning has been to summon awe – of genius athletes in fantasy locales – awe that transports an audience to a place of visceral identification. John Jay did it in the 1940s, when his shots of the world's best skiers ripping down the glaciers of Mount Rainier inspired upwards of 5,000 American boys and men to join the 10th Mountain

Division. Warren Miller continued the tradition in peacetime with his unique brand of ski-bum, chairlift humor. In the 1970s Dick Barrymore made day-glo, psychedelic ski-movie art.

Now Matchstick and their ilk are selling the same vicarious magic, and it might be argued that the boys from Crested Butte do it better than anyone of their generation. They've won two Emmys for cinematography and *Powder* magazine's "Movie of the Year" award six times out of 10.

Read the whole story