

# last run

## Arn Menconi

*This Vail, Colo., resident is living proof that snowboarders aren't just a bunch of self-centered slackers. He's the founder and director of Vail-based Snowboard Outreach Society (SOS), which will introduce 400 troubled kids to the simple joy of sliding on snow this winter.*

**Born** May 22, 1959 (age 39)

**The First Time** "I grew up on the South Side of Chicago. My high school had the largest ski club in Illinois, and we took a train trip to Vail every year. The first time I ever kissed a girl was on Bridge Street in Vail when I was 16. I fell in love with Vail and Carrie Peters all in one week. She dumped me for a college guy, but I still loved Vail and wound up moving here in 1991.

**Love At First Sight** "I started snowboarding because my ski boots hurt, and snowboard boots looked more comfortable. I loved snowboarding right away and was teaching by my second season."

**A Call To Action** "I was tired of negative articles being written about snowboarders. I wanted to show how compassionate snowboarders can be. In the spring of 1994, I worked with Vail Associates to help plan a halfpipe competition that raised money for a kids' charity. That was the beginning of SOS. I liked the acronym SOS because it was a call to action."

**Lifting Kids Higher** "SOS has evolved to where we bring at-risk kids, ages 8-18, to the mountains and teach them to ride. We're working with about 15 resorts in Colorado, Utah, Washington and California. We have great partnerships with resorts and companies that donate lift tickets, equipment and apparel."

**Making The Difference** "These are kids who are living below the poverty line or who have had drug problems or trouble with the law. There's a saying in Buddhism about experiencing the joyful sorrow of the world. I'm so sad about these kids, but I'm joyful about what we can do to help." — READE BAILEY

