

Sports

Most resorts open now

Area ski resorts 'spruce up' for 1984-85

By DOTTY MARTIN
Editor

Bill Stenger sat in his newly-constructed office and overlooked the wintery white slopes of Jack Frost Mountain. It was opening day at The Big Two - Jack Frost and Big Boulder - in the Poconos this past Saturday and Stenger, marketing director for the two ski resorts, found himself both reflecting and anticipating.

The Big Two Ski areas will feature over \$2 million in expansions this year. The expansion program has resulted in improvements at both Pocono resorts - improvements which were about 90 percent in operation this past weekend and which will be, according to Stenger, operating at full-speed ahead this coming weekend.

Included in the renovations are slope and lodge expansions, the addition of a slope, extensive snowmaking, a brand new triple chair, enlarged child care facilities, expanded food service and dining areas, and dramatic changes to both landscaping and lodges.

Stenger, who has been employed by The Big Two for 11 years, explained that the most important thing to officials at The Big Two is the satisfaction of their customers.

"We try to reach out to our customers' wants," Stenger said, white sitting comfortably in his new

office atop the Jack Frost lodge. "We ask our customers what they want and how they feel we can improve our ski areas."

Stenger explained that customers of both Jack Frost and Big Boulder expressed the utmost satisfaction in snow conditions, were very pleased with the friendliness of staff members, felt the slopes were okay and the lift lines were not intolerable.

The biggest complaint of customers of The Big Two, Stenger found, was overcrowding in the lodges. "Our customers felt our lodges were too crowded, especially on weekends," he said, "and we didn't offer enough cafeteria services."

Stenger, who feels the general public is entitled to some diversity in the food it consumes, spoke proudly of how Jack Frost answered that complaint. At Jack Frost, 500 new seats were added as was a new cocktail lounge with a glass front that overlooks the top of the mountain. A New York style deli will be featured as will a Mexican style deli, a pizza shop and the regular cafeteria. Also, a cafeteria and rest rooms have been constructed at the base of Jack Frost Mountain.

Through the \$2 million expansion program, Big Boulder boasts a newly renovated Glass House, a brand new triple chair, an expanded beginner area, and nightly skiing on 100 percent of the mountain.

The 5,000 square foot expansion to the Glass House features an

expanded cocktail lounge of current Alpine decor and architecture. Reflective glass surrounds the bar area with an all glass chandelier and laminated beams with inset lights overhead. An adjacent restaurant with similar accents and waitress service will offer a deli-menu selection with other special attractions.

The Snow Bunny Slope for beginners at Big Boulder has been widened and leveled, offering a very gradual run. A brand new triple chair, which is slow-moving and close to the group, is regulated to accommodate first-time skiers and is in place to service the expanded area.

Stenger says the object of The Big Two Ski Areas is to make skiing an enjoyable experience for the whole family without costing an arm and a leg.

"A lot of times parents quit skiing because of their kids," Stenger said. "They think skiing is too expensive when you have to take the whole family."

"There are more children age five and under in this country now than ever before," he added. "Our children's programs have been instituted so that the entire family can enjoy the sport."

At both Jack Frost and Big Boulder, children seven years of age and under ski free with rentals costing just \$5 for the entire day. A learn-to-ski program at both ski areas is just \$10 and includes a lift ticket, rentals and a lesson. Free child care is offered at both areas for parents who want to ski without their children.

"We try to ease the financial and emotional burden for parents who want to ski," Stenger said. "We try to eliminate the excuses to make skiing a meaningful family experience."

Stenger looks at other area ski resorts as healthy competition, but is opposed to the use of federal tax dollars to build a ski resort such as is the case with Montage, the area's newest ski resort scheduled to open this coming weekend.

"We finance \$2 million worth of renovations to our areas and we have to pay 13 and 14 percent interest just like the next guy," Stenger said. "Philosophically, I'm opposed to Montage because we're paying the going rates and they're not. But, competition-wise, I have no problem with them."

Stenger said he is more concerned with other forms of recreation than he is with other ski areas since only 15 percent of the American has ever tried skiing and there are only 19 million skiers in the entire country. "We produce a good product here," he said. "And with a good product, people will continue to come here to ski. I'm more concerned with the other types of recreation. I'm more concerned with all the people who are doing their Christmas shopping at the Wyoming Valley Mall today rather than being out here on the slopes."

Stenger feels not enough people take advantage of the four seasons Northeast Pennsylvania has to offer and invites the public to visit the renovations at both Jack Frost and Big Boulder Ski Areas.



'Tis the season

The 1984-85 skiing season is upon us with most of the Pocono resorts opening last weekend. Montage Mountain, the newest ski resort, and Masthope in Lackawaxen are scheduled to open this weekend. Here, two skiers enjoy the slopes at Jack Frost Mountain in Lake Harmony.

Gift ideas for the skier

Skiers of all ages look forward to the holiday season not only as a time for family gatherings and celebrations, but also the time of year they can expect great skiing as well as the latest ski-related gifts.

"The best way to give someone skis, boots or poles for Christmas is

with a gift certificate at the local ski shop," advises David Ingemie, president of Ski Industries America. "The ski shop professionals make sure the equipment will match the person's size and abilities."

Ski apparel also makes a wonderful gift, but again, fit and comfort are very important. Make sure the ski shop has an exchange policy on items like one-piece suits, parkas, jackets and stretch pants.

Other great holiday gifts you can find in the ski shop include updates on ski classics like long underwear now made with silk, which adds warmth without bulk, ski goggles with defrosting fans, ski sunglasses styled with the latest cat's eye, New Wave or '50s "wayfarer" frames. Skiers who complain of cold hands and feet will love waterproofed gloves and mittens lined with low-bulk insulations, sock and sock liners made of wool and silk blends or super-warm polypropylene, gaiters and furry after-ski boots. For the skier on the go, ski and boot bags; car racks, which now fit any size car and can also carry bicycles or sailboards; and ski touring accessories for the nordic skier, like the fanny pack with a built-in flask, are excellent gifts. Ski tuning kits, ski waxes, ski totes and gadgets, like the ski tie which can be used as a tire chain, are all practical gifts any skier would appreciate.

A way to give a gift and to help the U.S. Ski Team raise training funds is to buy a stocking stuffer item like a coffee mug, jacket patch, lapel button or key ring embossed with the U.S. Ski Team logo. These items are usually found on the counter near the cash register in the ski shop.

The National Ski Areas Association (NSAA) recommends giving the never-ever skier a "certificate" for a full day of skiing at a nearby resort. "The gift could include rental equipment for the day, a ski lesson with a trained instructor and maybe a hot rum drink after the last run of the day," suggests Kathe Dillmann, director of communications for NSAA. Most ski lesson packages include the use of the ski lift to the top of the beginners' slope too.

The ski family can even trim their tree with ski ornaments, including hand-crafted tiny woolen ski hats and ski figures!

Here's all you'll need to know

Following are facts and figures on ski resorts in our area. Montage Mountain is scheduled to open this Saturday while all other ski areas have been opened since last weekend.

JACK FROST MOUNTAIN

Jack Frost Mountain is located in the Western Poconos just four miles east of the intersection of Interstate Route 80 and the Northeast Extension of the Pennsylvania Turnpike on Route 940. It features six chairlifts, one J-Bar and has 19 slopes with 100 percent snowmaking over terrain varying from five novice and eight intermediate areas. Summit elevation is 2,000 feet with a 600 foot vertical drop. Adult weekend or holiday tickets are \$19 and \$17 on weekdays. New this year are morning lift tickets, 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. for \$14 during the week and \$15 on weekends. For up-to-the-minute conditions, call 717-443-8425.

BIG BOULDER SKI AREA

Located in the Western Poconos, just off the Blakeslee Exit of Interstate Route 80 at Route 903, Big Boulder Ski Area has seven chairs, one J-Bar and 12 slopes with 100 percent snowmaking over terrain varying from novice to expert. It has a summit elevation of 2,175 feet, a verticle drop of 475 feet and offers skiing seven days and seven night a week. All slopes are illuminated including beginner, intermediate and advanced terrain. Adult weekend or holiday tickets are \$19 and \$17 on weekdays. New this year are morning lift tickets, 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. for \$14 during the week and \$15 on weekends. For up-to-the-minute conditions, call 717-722-0104. (Lift tickets purchased at either

Jack Frost Mountain or Big Boulder Ski Area are reciprocal and can also be used at the other mountain the same day.)

CAMELBACK

With a total of 24 slopes and trails, 11 lifts and a vertical drop of 800 feet, Camelback is the largest of the Pocono ski areas. Camelback also has night skiing seven nights a week. Other facilities include several lounges, a complete ski shop with rental equipment, a child-care center and Cameltop, a top-of-the-mountain lodge with food and beverage service. For more information on Camelback, call 717-629-1661.

SHAWNEE

Six double chairlifts now service Shawnee Mountain's 700 foot verticle drop. Seventeen slopes and trails with 100 percent snowmaking on all slopes and trails offers skiing variety from gentle beginner terrain to advanced trails. Night skiing is available at Shawnee from mid-December through mid-March. The Shawnee Mountain Ski School offers all levels of ski instruction, beginner's packages and a special "Ski Wee" program for kids. For more information on Shawnee Mountain, call 717-421-7231.

ELK MOUNTAIN

Elk Mountain is located in Uniondale and may be reached by taking Exit 63 off Interstate Route 81 and following the signs. The mountain has a vertical drop of 1,000 feet and features 17 slopes and trails and five double chairs. Hours of operation are 8:30 a.m. to 10 p.m. seven days a week with night skiing every night from 4:30 to 10 p.m. Lift ticket prices are \$15 on weekdays and \$18 on weekends. For snow conditions,

call 1-800-982-4331.

LITTLE GAP SKI AREA

Located in Palmerton, Pa., Little Gap Ski Area features 10 slopes, two chair lifts and one T-Bar. Sporting an 801 foot verticle drop, Little Gap may be reached from the Pennsylvania Turnpike by taking Route 209 and following signs. Hours of operation are 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. on weekdays and from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. on weekends. Adult lift tickets are sold for different time periods and vary from \$12 to \$17.

MONTAGE MOUNTAIN

Montage Mountain, the area's newest ski area, is scheduled to open this Saturday with nine slopes and trails, three triple chair lifts and one double lift. Reachable from Exit 51 off Interstate Route 81, Montage will be in operation from 9 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. during the week and 8:30 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. on weekends and holidays with night skiing offered seven nights a week. The mountain features a vertical drop of 1,000 feet and adult ticket prices are \$14 during the week, \$18 on weekends and \$9 for night skiing.

Shape up before skiing

If your body shape doesn't match your "minds-eye" image, your "ideal weight" fails to come close to what the scale reveals, or you puff climbing a flight of stairs, it is time to shape up.

Experts admit "shaping up" isn't easy. Too often the resolution to take off pounds and shed excess bulges results in a crash diet and too rigorous an exercise program - programs that are not only dangerous but have little chance of continued success.

Penn State offers a study-at-home course that explains the conditioning effect of exercise and how, through exercise, sport, and recreation, it is possible to forestall rapid deterioration of the body through aging.

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Kids love to ski, too

Most area ski resorts offer learn to ski programs for children with instructors who cater to a youngster's special needs. Shown in this photo, a young skier receives personal attention from an instructor at Big Boulder Ski Area.

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