



PHOTO BY BARRY EDMONDS

WHICH WAY DOWN? — "Hot Dog" skiing is not for the faint of heart. Or for those short of acrobatic talents. Photographer Barry Edmonds took this picture with a long shutter cord, just in case. The scene is Mt. Holly, south of Flint. Pat Hardy of Dearborn, who works for a ski manufacturer, is a member of a professional freestyle and aerial demonstration team. His tricks include flips, forward somersaults, spread eagles and helicopters.

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Michigan Slopes Super For Skiers

BY JACK MOSS
Gazette Sports Editor

Whether your bag is downhill skiing, cross-country skiing or ski jumping, Michigan has something for you.

The advent of winter weather in the Kalamazoo area has sent skiing enthusiasts heading for their closest to get their ski equipment ready for the season ahead.

And persons who have been interested in, but never tried skiing are expected to head for the slopes this season in ever-increasing numbers.

Recession? Inflation? What's that?

Skiing isn't nearly as expensive as many believe and it's an activity that is excellent for the entire family, mom, dad and the kids. Sex and age are no barriers in skiing.

There's some in equipment and ski areas for all budgets.

There are many ski equipment outlets in the Kalamazoo area where equipment can be rented as well as purchased.

And there are ski areas within a few minutes drive of here that offer their facilities for nominal rates and have rental equipment available.

There is also instruction available at virtually every ski area and, of course, the annual Gazette Ski School at Timber Ridge Ski Area, northwest of the city, offers novices a chance to get expert instruction for bargain prices.

In these days of the money pinch, skiing doesn't cramp the budget all that much.

In addition to Timber Ridge, west of Alamo off West D Avenue, there are many other ski areas within a few minutes driving distance of Kalamazoo.

There's the Royal Valley near Buchanan in Berrien County and Swiss Valley near Jones in Cass County to the south and west.

The Ski Bowl at Grand Haven and Carousel Mountain near Holland are located about an hour or so drive from Kalamazoo, as well as

several ski areas in the Grand Rapids area, Cannonsburg, Pando, Brady's Hills and Brock Park.

There are a total of 34 ski and toboggan centers in the West Michigan area alone, plus countless others in the Upper Peninsula and in East Michigan.

Cross-country skiing does not, of course, require a ski area trip. It's available anywhere a skier is allowed to trespass.

The equipment is cheap (with as little as \$70 purchasing all you'll need for cross-country), and no slopes are necessary. There is never a crowd, either.

Most state and federal lands are open for cross-country and some ski areas have set aside special areas for cross-country skiers. Michigan's Department of Natural Resources is currently compiling a brochure of the state's public cross-country skiing zones and trails. It should be available from the DNR publications office in Lansing by mid-December.

The increased interest in cross-country — a Southwestern Michigan club is being formed here through Raupp Campfitters, W. Main street — does not mean that slope-skiing is losing any of its popularity.

Ski areas are expected to thrive again this year, although the money crunch has replaced the gasoline shortage as a discouraging factor.

Both the stay-at-home variety of skiers, who enjoy the facilities at nearby ski areas, and those who get a boot out of the trip north to areas there have ski club memberships available to them.

There are ski club organizations in the Kalamazoo area for high school students, collegians and just plain ski enthusiasts, single or married, young or old.

Here's the list of ski areas in West Michigan for handy reference when the snow flies:

TIMBER RIDGE — 13 miles northwest of Kalamazoo. Eight ski runs, seven rope tows, double chair, pomalift. 694-9741.

SWISS VALLEY — 10 miles west of Three Rivers off M-46. Eleven slopes, T-bar, 10 rope tows. 246-5635.

ROYAL VALLEY — Two miles north of Buchanan. Ten runs, trails, expert hill, beginner's area. 465-3667.

BRICK PARK — Two miles west of Ionia on M-21. Ski slopes for beginners only. Two toboggan runs, rope tow. 327-0478.

SKI BOWL — At Grand Haven. Three slopes, three tows, cross-country trails. 542-0820.

NUB'S NOB — Five miles northeast of Harbor Springs. Thirteen slopes, four double chair lifts, two rope tows, one pomalift. 526-2131.

BOYNE HIGHLAND — Three miles northeast of Harbor Springs. Sixteen runs, cross-country, two four-place chair lifts, four triple chair lifts, pomalift. T-bars. 529-2171.

MT. MCSAUBA — One mile north of Charlevoix. Three slopes, beginner's area, three tows. 542-2101.

PETOSKEY WINTER SPORTS PARK — At Petoskey. Two slopes, one two, two skiing runs. 347-4130.

THUNDER MOUNTAIN — Five miles northeast of Boyne Falls. Fifteen runs, beginner's area, racing area, one four-place chair lift, one double chair lift, pomalift, two rope tows. 549-2441.

BOYNE MOUNTAIN — Boyne Falls. Nineteen ski runs, cross-country, two four-passenger chair lifts, five double chair lifts, rope tows. 549-2441.

WALLOON HILLS — Four and one-half miles east of Walloon Lake. Nine slopes, cross-country trails, four-place chair lift, pomalift, three tows. 549-2441.

SHANTY CREEK LODGE — Two miles south of Bellaire off M-46. Fifteen ski runs, trails, two double chair lifts, T-bar lift, rope tow. 533-8671.

MAPLEHURST SKI AREA — At Kewadin. Eight slopes, four trails, pomalift, rope tows. 264-9675.

MT. MANCIELONA — One-half mile northeast of Manicelona on US-131. Eighteen ski runs and trails, cross-country, T-bar lift, two pomalifts, five tows. 587-7491.

SUGAR LOAF VILLAGE — Eighteen miles northwest of Traverse City. Twenty ski runs, cross-country, five double chair lifts, J-bar. 228-5461.

SCHUSS MOUNTAIN — Four miles west of Manicelona on M-88. Twelve ski slopes, cross-country, triple chair lift, two double chair lifts. 587-9162.

TIMBER LEE HILLS — Six miles northwest of Traverse City. Sixteen slopes, cross-country, two chair lifts, pomalift, rope tows. 946-2600.

TRAVERSE CITY HOLIDAY — Five miles east of Traverse City. Twelve slopes, cross-country trails, two T-bar lifts, five tows. 946-2623.

CRYSTAL MOUNTAIN — Ten miles southeast of Bellaire on M-115. Eighteen ski runs, two chair lifts, pomalift, six tows. 278-2000.

BRIAR HILL — Three miles east of Mesick. Six slopes, 200-2,000 feet two slopes, slalom slope, two ski jumps, four rope tows. Phone Mesick.

LOST PINES LODGE — Harrietta. 14 miles west of Cadillac. Two ski runs, cross-country, ice skating. 289-2222.

MISSAUKEE MOUNTAIN — Three miles north of Lake City on M-46. Seven ski runs, 1,000-2,000 feet. Three trails, three tows.

CABERFAE — Fifteen miles west of Cadillac on M-55. Thirty-five ski runs, 25-acre slalom bowl, downhill race course, intermediate bowl, two chair lifts, five T-bar lifts, 16 tows. 863-2300.

WARD HILLS — Six and one-half miles north of Branch. Eight ski runs, rope tows. 266-5202.

WHISKEY CREEK — Twenty-four miles northeast of Hart. Intermediate ski slope, toboggan run, rope tow. 873-3034.

NEWAYGO COUNTY WINTER PARK — Three miles north of Newaygo. Off M-37. Two toboggan runs, ski slope, cross-country, two tows. 632-2812.

PANDO SKI AREA — Twelve miles northeast of Grand Rapids on M-46. Seven ski runs, beginner's area, five tows. 866-1532.

CANNONBURG SKI AREA — At Cannonsburg. 10 miles northeast of Grand Rapids. Thirty-two ski runs, eight trails, one triple and one double chair lift, two T-bar lifts, 14 rope tows. 866-4434.