

TO THE SLOPES

Students remember fun, scary experiences on the slopes

By MEREDITH HENSLEE
THE BATTALION

Erin Castleberry, a senior speech communications major, was skiing with her family during Christmas break and said she went through a hair-pulling experience.

"I had just taken a shower and braided my hair into pigtails," she said. "It was pretty cold outside, and by the time we got to the top of the mountain, it was really snowing, so we just decided to go in." Castleberry successfully made it down the mountain and went into the lodge to use the restroom.

"I was washing my hands, and I reached up to move my hair out of the way and my pigtail broke off in my hand," she said. "I just kind of took it in stride, but the lady next to me thought it was the most awful thing she had ever seen. She couldn't keep her mouth closed."

Kristen Herlocker, a senior nutrition major, also knows the taste of catastrophe. While on a ski trip with friends, she ended up at the top of a run and said she was not sure she could make it down safely.

Herlocker took the chair lift up to the top of the mountain, expecting to ski down with no major problems. On reaching the top, she arrived at a trail sign that pointed to the one way down — a double black — which is the hardest trail possible.

Herlocker took her one way out, hoping it would not be too bad. "I just kept thinking, 'If I just go slowly and stay in control, this won't be too horrible,'" she said.

Taking off as carefully as possible, she picked up more speed than she wanted and came to a green trail merger that proved to be a disaster.

Herlocker was saved from hitting small children at the merger by a faithful friend waiting at the bottom of the run, who pushed her out of the way.

Herlocker's final destination was the tree that stopped her motion completely.

"It was awful, though I'm sure it looked hilarious," she said. "I ran face first into the tree and ended up in two or three feet of

snow that had collected at the bottom of it. It was almost impossible to get out."

During a trip last Christmas break with friends, Elyse Ackley, a junior elementary education major, and her group decided to go to the peak, a feat made possible only by using the T-bar lift.

"The T-bar is so different than a chair lift," Ackley said. "It should be so easy to let it come around behind you and just push you up the mountain as long as you hold on."

Ackley and her companion on the lift began their journey with those thoughts in mind.

"We were laughing at all the people who were continually falling off," she said. "We really thought we had it made."

Halfway up, Ackley began to lean slightly to her left. To balance the T-bar, she leaned back over to the right, crossing her skis accidentally over the skis of her friend.

The two girls tumbled down from the lift only to find that Ackley's jacket was still caught on it. While being dragged up the mountain, her companion lost a ski and had to hike down to the bottom of the lift.

Ackley finally detached herself from the lift and began to ski down, but was stopped by the ski patrol.

"I couldn't stop laughing while I was talking to him," she said. "I just kept replaying over and over in my mind what we must have looked like, and it was so funny. The man I was talking to didn't see the humor in the situation though. He just wanted to make sure I could get off the mountain without killing myself."

Taylor Shepard, a junior biomedical science major, described the ideal scene for a day of skiing.

"You want fresh powder from a snowfall the night before," he said, "but not clouds during the day. Perfect sunny weather and runs that aren't crowded with people are perfect."

Shepard spent last Christmas break skiing with friends in Colorado.

"The weather was absolutely perfect, and we went late enough



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during the break that there weren't too many people there," he said. "It was great."

Taylor Jackson, a junior English major, worked at Keystone over the last Christmas break.

"I'm really glad I did it," he said. "But this year I'm just going up there with my friends for the week instead of to work for a month. I just want to ride."

Jackson chooses to snowboard instead of ski and said that learning to snow board is an art.

"Riding is about learning to be the board," he said. "It's about listening to the board and listening to the snow."

Jackson agrees with Shepard on what makes for a good day in the mountains.

"Good [powder] is like a good woman," he said. "It can be cold and in your face, but you'll never leave it."

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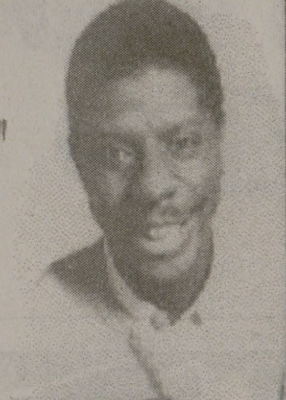
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