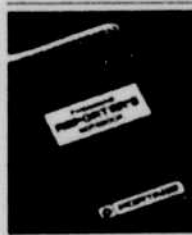


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So it's all downhill from here?

By Jason F. Jensen
 Emerald Contributor



Reporters Notebook

locked down to a four-foot board, which, unfortunately, was not stationary.

Snowboarding was not quite what I had anticipated.

However, I couldn't expect much because I had never previously locked my feet to a board, stationary or otherwise.

Mount Hood Meadows rents snowboards, but I don't blame them. They didn't force me onto one; rather, it was my ambitious friend, Drew.

I'm sure that somewhere on Mount Hood is a place or a person who offers some sort of educational approach to snowboarding in exchange for financial compensation. But Drew didn't think this was important.

"What could be so hard about sliding down the mountain on a board?" he asked.

"The surface of the snow," I pointed out.

Drew clapped me on the back, assuming I was attempting humor, and convinced me to try it out.

Before I could say "broken neck," we were at the top of the express lift looking down the slope someone had named "Elevator Shaft."

The image produced by such a name needs no clarification. It speaks for itself: 100 vertical yards of mogul-infested snow.

An expert's dream. A beginner's nightmare.

I suggested that perhaps the Buttercup slopes were more my speed. Drew hit me with the usual pansy-wimp names and sat on the snow to buckle his boots to the snowboard.

I did the same, deciding to replace my despair with the spirit of adventure. Securing my straps and filled with vigor, I flipped myself off my knees and stood on the board — then promptly fell over.

Drew laughed while standing on his board to prove his superior ability. Then he, too, quickly fell over. Unfortunately, he had been resting very near Elevator Shaft, and his fall took him over the edge. He was quite adept at reaching the bottom, never breaking from his excessive tumble.

Unstrapping my board and descending the slope on my

two stable feet, I found Drew at the bottom, nursing a swollen wrist and emitting a green cloud of profanity.

Drew hiked back up the slope, rode the lift down and traded his snowboard for skis.

I have skied for many years, but snowboarding was something entirely different. Balance and courage play key roles, and I didn't have much of either.

Controlling the board requires twisting your upper torso and kicking your feet. If done correctly, the board will either slide straight, or turn and glide on its rail.

The feeling produced is like none other — defying gravity and slipping across the snow with a surfer's agility.

This, of course, is the ideal situation. My attempts were not exactly ideal.

The board had a tendency to go where it wished, which proved frustrating. My memory of the day falls into sections of motion, separated by violent collisions with the packed snow.

I found success in the midst of these crashes. A certain sense of "What the hell am I doing?" visited my brain as it repeatedly connected with the snow. Somehow, and somewhere in it all, came a whole lot of fun.

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Chippendale's markets Gateway

By J.A. Sparlin
 Emerald Contributor

SPRINGFIELD — From strip shows in Europe to calendar signings in Springfield, actor, model, magician and Chippendale's dancer Tom Romano has seen it all — and been seen by all.

Romano is touring with the dance company to promote Chippendale's 1993 calendar in 200 Coach House Gifts stores across the country, said Loretta Knapp, manager of the Springfield location, where Romano stopped Tuesday.

Romano arrived at the store with slicked-back hair and a tight tank top to sell his goods. When asked by Knapp how the display should be set up, Romano told her, "You can use me any way you want me."

Romano is the calendar's centerfold, stretched out between February and March.

Shot on Marlon Brando's Tahiti Island, Romano sports a low-cut, white leotard-type top, with a nearly clear shade of pink g-string. His g-strings are not custommade, Romano said.

"There's a wardrobe person," he said. "But one guy does get them (custommade) because, well ..."

Romano shaves his chest.

"I have about 15 hairs right here in the middle, and I think it's disgusting," he said. Not all the dancers shave, though, he said. "We see as many as 2,000 to 5,000 women at each show, and they like all types of men."

After the calendar tour, Romano said Chippendale's will launch its world tour, which includes Australia, Hong Kong, Europe and Asia.

"We are trying to get away from the male stripper kind of show," Romano said. "Instead, we will be producing more of a musical featuring 42 songs."

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