

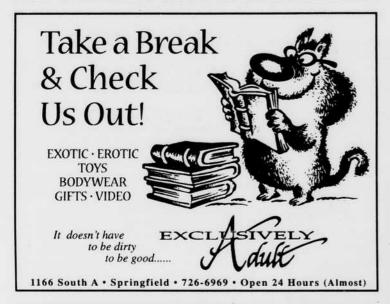
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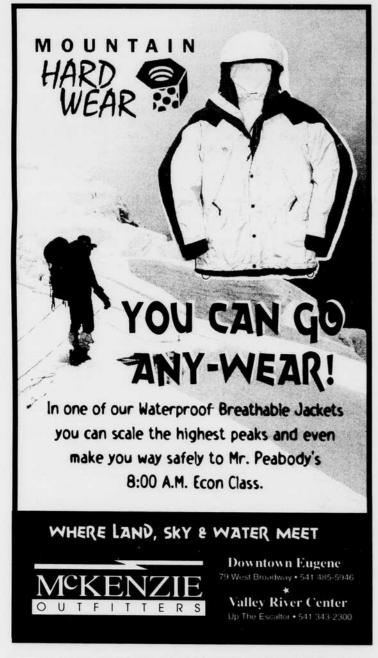
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Ski season could be best in 30 years

New and faster lifts will provide skiers with more runs than in the past

By Paul Horsell

Unlike most university students, ski and snowboard bums are already anxious about the upcoming winter.

Freezing levels in the Oregon Cascades have fluctuated between 4,500 and 9,000 feet throughout the month of September. This is good news for those who ski and snowboard as the weather industry speculates that the 1998-99 ski season could be the best in 30 years.

Last season was not a tragedy by snow-level standards, but every die-hard skier knows last season was sub par. During winter break last year some lower elevation ski resorts in Oregon had so little snow they were almost forced to shut down. The snow last season was sparse and unpredictable, but if the freezing levels stay low this season, skiers and snowboarders in the Oregon Cascades will likely get their reward.

Luckily, the beginning of this ski season has not been hit by a ticket price increase at Oregon's premier ski areas. Mt. Hood Meadows, Timberline and Bachelor will keep their ticket prices the same for at least another season. All three offer all-day lift tickets for under \$ 40.

Unfortunately, the high cost of lift tickets does not always ensure the snow will be ideal. However, Mt. Hood Meadows and Bachelor have ensured this season's skiers will get in more runs with the addition of faster lifts.

For the 1998-99 season, Mt. Hood Meadows introduces its new Shooting Star Express. Meadows replaced its old Shooting Star lift with a faster, more comfortable high-speed quad. The new Shooting Star Express will provide snow riders with faster access to the diverse terrain underneath the lift and to the double-black diamonds at Heather Canyon.

Last season, Bachelor began operation of the Summit Express Quad, which extends high above Bachelor resort and seemingly into the clouds. The Summit Express is the beginning of Bachelor's growth into a 360-degree mountain resort. The availability of terrain from this lift for advanced skiers is extreme.

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