

Slippery Slope

by Kathryn Beisner

I was a junior in high school when we transferred to Colorado Springs in 1969. My parents decided I'd be the first one to learn to ski. We knew nothing about it, but with military efficiency Mom and Dad took out the map and discovered Pikes Peak had the closest ski school. I was elated because, to me, it embodied the rugged spirit of the West.

We began our adventure up the winding road. The wind howled. Blowing snow kept us from seeing more than a car's length ahead. My heart pounded at the impending challenge. At nearly 10,000 feet, Mom fishtailed to a stop. The parking lot could have held hundreds, but I counted only two other cars.

I was instructed how to lace up leather boots and attach them to wooden skis with cable bindings. Standing up, I slid into a metal drum holding an open fire, then finally crab-walked to the rope tow and was dragged up the slope. I struggled to snow plow back

down, but by day's end I had fallen more than I had skied, and my face was chapped from windburn.

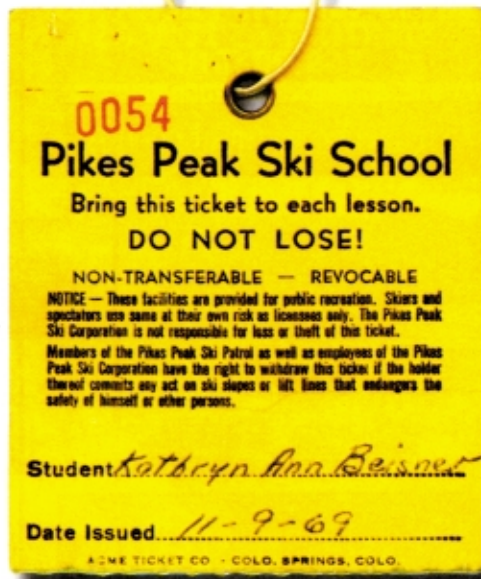
For a month of Saturdays Mom faithfully drove me up to the ski school. When I boasted to my friends about it they burst out laughing. "What?

You skied on Pikes Peak? Most people only climb there," they snorted. "We all learned in Breckenridge."

I told my parents, who then asked their friends, and the rest of my family went to Breckenridge for ski lessons.

I have never left Colorado, and in my thirty years of skiing I have never met anyone else who learned the sport on Pikes Peak. If you did, let's have a reunion—in the summer. ♦

Kathryn Beisner is a writer and motivational speaker who lives by the motto, "No Guts, No Story." Her inspiration comes from adventure, humor, and women in history. Contact her for a Pikes Peak Ski School Reunion at kathryn@kbsproductions.com.



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