

# OUTDOORS

# High Country Skiing



Hawksnest Golf & Ski Resort attracts skiers from all across the High Country and adjacent areas. Many mountains offer day and evening sessions.

Peter Larkins | *The Appalachian*

## Big mountain fun, small town flavor

**SARAH MANN**  
Copy Editor

**JESSICA HINES**  
Copy Editor

Appalachian State University students have an opportunity unlike most college students around the nation.

Grady Moretz, owner of Appalachian Ski Mountain in Blowing Rock, said his family-run ski resort has strong ties to Appalachian State. He and his wife, alumna Reba Moretz, grew up in Boone.

"We're Boone people," Grady Moretz said. "That puts a different flavor on it for us."

Moretz said approximately 40 percent of Appalachian Ski Mountain's employees are current students at Appalachian State.

Sophomore Elliott S. Langford said he enjoys his job in rentals at the resort.

"We do a decent amount of work," Langford said. "I work with a bunch of cool people, and we get good benefits."

Among the perks of working for Appalachian Ski Mountain is free skiing. Langford said employees can ski anywhere in North Carolina for free.

In addition to employing many students, Appalachian Ski Mountain is home to the French-Swiss Ski College, which provides ski and snowboard lessons to Appalachian students through Beginning and Intermediate Skiing courses.

Over 1,000 students are enrolled in the beginning class, and over 300 in the intermediate level, accord-

ing to information from the Office of the Registrar. For a one-time fee, students attend a night class once a week at Appalachian Ski Mountain.

Junior communication major J. Will Hildebrandt is currently participating in the snowboarding class.

"I think App is the best place to learn because the black [diamonds] aren't the hardest," Hildebrandt said. "The slopes aren't the biggest. You can do three good runs and get it down better than with one run."

"The instructors are all really good. They're out there to help you," he said.

The Blue Ridge Mountains became a primary location for skiing in 1959 with the advent of manmade snow, Grady Moretz said.

"There was no skiing south of the Poconos," he said. "[Snowmaking] got started in New England and spread like wildfire across the country."

Appalachian Ski Mountain is one of four ski resorts in the Boone area, including Ski Beech, Sugar Mountain and Hawksnest. There are also three ski resorts in the Asheville area: Cataloochee, Wolf Laurel and Sapphire Valley.

"Great thing about [skiing] is after high school and college, how many people continue football and basketball?" Reba Moretz said. "But skiing is something you can teach your grandchildren. You can be a lifetime recreational skier. Young people are fortunate around here to be able to ski. We didn't have the opportunity growing up."



Peter Larkins | *The Appalachian*

Students at Appalachian have been enjoying skiing in the High Country ever since since the advent of manmade snow in 1959.

# Learning the slopes

Ski clinics can help beginners, experts alike

**JOSH BROWN**  
Chief Photographer

Many students who attend Appalachian do so because they are outdoor enthusiasts. Some enjoy rock climbing, some mountain biking and others just enjoy a leisurely stroll down the numerous trails in the Appalachian mountains.

Many come for some of the best skiing and snowboarding in the East.

However, not all students can ski. Those who cannot need not worry though, because many local ski mountains offer lessons to people of all ages and abilities.

Beech Mountain offers classes for those at both the beginner and intermediate levels. The beginner classes are aimed at first timers, while the intermediate classes target people in a "skill group," said Beech Mountain Adult Ski School employee Erin Doak.

"Our instructors watch you coming down the mountain and assess your skills and put you into classes based on what they see," Doak said.

Classes are available in both skiing and snowboarding. The fee for these lessons is \$15 for the group rate and \$40 for the private rate. All lessons are one-hour long, but additional hours can be added at a discounted cost. The ski classes are limited to 10 people and snowboard classes to four people.

All instructors at Beech Mountain must participate in a clinic and pass a test before they can teach.

Skiers and snowboarders of all levels can go to Sugar Mountain for lessons. Most instructors are certified by the Professional Ski Instructors of America (PSIA) and can offer classes to even those in



Peter Larkins | *The Appalachian*

Appalachian Ski Mountain offers the French-Swiss Ski College to those seeking to further their skills on the slopes. Class options available at many area ski mountains include both skiing and snowboarding sessions.

the "expert" classes. Aside from PSIA certification, all instructors undergo training. Prices are \$17 for a group lesson and \$42 for private. Sessions are one-hour long and are usually no more than eight people.

Hawksnest caters to all skiers and snowboarders, experienced or not. The one-hour classes offered by Hawksnest cost \$15 for group lessons and \$30 for private lessons. An additional person can be added to the private lessons for \$20. The beginner classes here, as with the other mountains' schools, show details on the basic maneuvers to get the rookie skier or snowboarder from the top to bottom without losing control or injuring someone.

The instructors are all certified by PSIA and guarantee their students will increase one full skill level at the end of the lessons.

Classes offered by Appalachian State University are also available for students. The classes, which run four hours, handle up to 350 students, though they rarely fill up. The classes meet at Appalachian Ski Mountain once a week at night from 6-10 p.m.

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## Local ski areas thankful for wintry weather

**CARRIE BAKER**  
Senior Staff Writer

The record snows this winter may have created inconveniences for students but for skiers it could not get any better.

"This is one of the snowier, colder years we've had in the last decade," said Brad Moretz general manager at Appalachian Ski Mountain.

Moretz said the extra snow does not necessarily create better skiing conditions on the slopes, but it does add atmosphere.

"It's an all the time reminder that it is ski season," said Moretz.

Moretz said the extra snowy weather this winter may have put a halt to other outdoor sports and activities but the skiing is great.

The early start to winter also equaled an early beginning to the

ski season. Moretz said Appalachian Ski Mountain was able to open before Thanksgiving and create a longer season.

Moretz said good skiing weather during peak skiing holidays, such as Christmas and the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday, have also boosted business at Appalachian Ski Mountain.

"It's definitely one of our better years," said Moretz.

Moretz said the snow is 10 feet in some places on the slopes and expects good skiing until the end of the ski season on the fourth Sunday in March.

"I'm sure we will have snow on the mountain in May," said Moretz.

Beech Mountain Ski Resort reported 51 inches of snow so far this year.

"That's more than last year's sea-

## Ski Conditions

Mountain	Base	Condition	Runs
Appalachian	61"-126"	Groomed	9 of 9
Cataloochee	47"-97"	Groomed	8 of 10
Hawksnest	22"-70"	Groomed Powder	12 of 12
Sapphire Valley	27"-47"	Groomed Powder	3 of 3
Ski Beech	36"-46"	Frozen Granular	16 of 16
Sugar Mtn.	50"-82"	Natural Powder	20 of 20
Wolf Laurel	26"-70"	Packed Powder	12 of 15

source: skinc.com

son total," said Danielle Tyburski, assistant to marketing director with Beech Mountain Ski Resort.

Tyburski said a combination of snow during the week and sun on the weekends has attracted large numbers of skiers.

"As long as roads are open, the more snow the better," said Tyburski.

Tyburski said the mixture of real snow and manmade snow has created a good "not too hard or too soft" packed powder.

"The snow has been beneficial," said Tyburski.

Tyburski said Beech Mountain will still have to make snow for the slopes and will continue to create snow as long as the temperatures are below freezing.

The snow itself has attracted skiers to Beech Mountain, he said. "People hear about real snow up here and get excited and want to come ski," said Tyburski.

Lenny Cottem with Hawksnest Golf and Ski resort said the snow has created excitement and generated business for Hawksnest.

"It's one of the top 10 winters in the past 50 years," said Cottem.

Cottem said Hawksnest was still making snow for the slopes.

"The real snow only effects the slopes for the first day and a couple of days after," said Cottem.

## Snow tubing's safety catches up with its popularity

**HUGH KELLENBERGER**  
Staff Writer

In the grandiose plethora of winter sports available in the western North Carolina mountains, a new attraction starts to pull in plenty of people for two area ski resorts.

Snow tubing has become extremely popular at both Beech Mountain Ski Resort and Hawksnest Golf & Ski Resort this year, said representatives from both resorts.

However, snow tubing is not as safe as it would initially seem. In February 2001, a vacationer was killed in a snow tubing accident at Beech Mountain.

Since then, both resorts have put in measures to make the runs safer for the customers.

"Tubing is a safe sport when the rules for safety are followed and the individual uses common sense and listens to what we tell them regarding safety and restrictions,"

Risks associated with snow tubing includes: speed, changing weather and surface conditions, collisions with other tubers, as well as with natural and man made objects, lack of direction and speed control.

source: www.skibeech.com

Wayne Hoilman, president and general manager of Beech Mountain, said Friday.

Hawksnest reports no injuries this year on the runs. Statistics for accidents and injuries were unavailable for Beech Mountain.

"Most accidents are people slipping getting up there, if any at all," Lenny I. Cotton, general manager of Hawksnest, said Friday.

Beech Mountain only allows those six years old and older to



Foster Hunt | The Appalachian

**Skiers and snowboarders alike prepare for a ski session at Appalachian Ski Mountain earlier this month.**

participate. Parental signature is required for those 18 and younger and everyone must sign a waiver.

Beech Mountain has flags indicating when to begin slowing down, then mats in place for the tuber to slide across, bean bags located at the bottom of the tube slope for stopping and finally a safety net as the last resort, Hoilman said.

"We don't use the type of run Beech does," Cotton said. "We have a slight hill to lose momentum but do not use netting to slow down [tubers]."

Both resorts place staff at both the bottom and top of the run, do not allow ski boots to be worn while tubing and allow only one person per tube.

"With all these measures in

place, they only work if the tuber reads all the signage and listens to the attendant's instruction," Hoilman said.

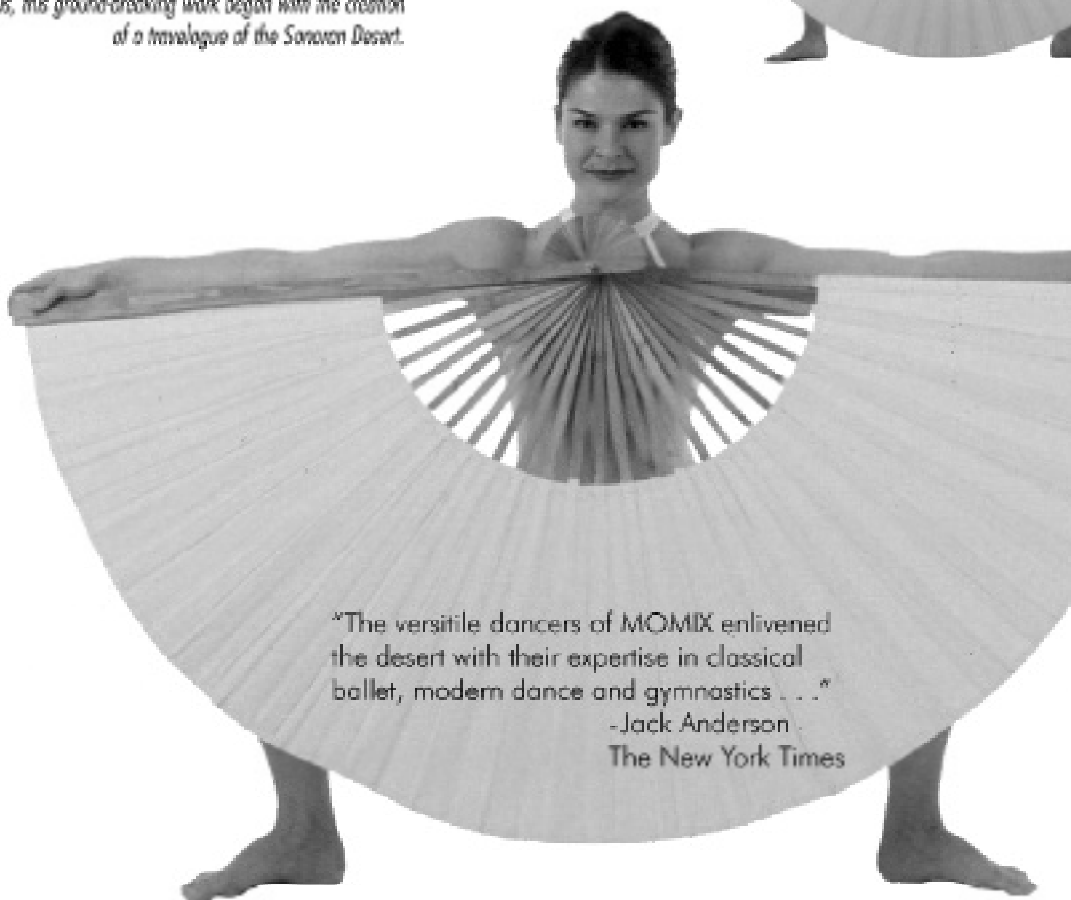
Beech Mountain also indicates the hazards of tubing on their Web site.

Hawksnest plans to cater to the tubers more in the coming years, adding much longer runs for the 2003-2004 ski season.

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