

Head to Meany Lodge for lessons in history and rope tows



Skiers and snowboarders are towed 2.7 miles back to their cars by a 1954 Bombardier snow tractor after a weekend of skiing at Meany Lodge.

Photos by CRAIG HILL/Staff writer

Skiing LIKE IN THE days of yore

BY CRAIG HILL | Staff writer

The instructions for time travel are as follows:
Step one: On a winter weekend, follow Interstate 90 east to Exit 62, then drive south until the road ends.

Step two: Haul your gear to the southeast corner of the parking lot and step into your skis.

Step three: Put on a pair of heavy duty leather gloves and wait.

You'll hear a rumble rising from the woods before you see your escort to the winter of 1938.

Seventy-five years ago, Washington's ski scene took a giant step toward the future thanks to the arrival of a device called the rope tow. The relatively simple contraption used a long rope loop, a car engine and pulleys to tow skiers up hills that they previously had to hike.

A Tacoma lumber baron urged on by an East Coast visionary installed rope tows on Snoqualmie Pass, Mount Rainier and Mount Baker while others assembled a tow on Steven Pass. Meanwhile, near Stampede

Pass, an outdoor recreation club called The Mountaineers built its own rope tow at its 10-year-old ski hut, Meany Lodge.

Most of Washington's first rope tows saw popular ski areas take shape around those tows before these glove shredding lifts were replaced with comfy chairlifts.

But at Meany Lodge, it's as if time stood still. Here, just 10 miles from the Summit at Snoqualmie's crowds and modern lifts, a Chevy truck engine still powers the

See MEANY, C6



ABOVE: A young skier grabs on to ride Mach, Meany Lodge's main rope tow.

IF YOU GO

Meany Lodge

LOCATION: Near Stampede Pass.

LIFTS: Three rope tows.

SKIING: Runs range from beginner to expert. All runs from the top are considered advanced.

PRICES: \$115 adults, \$73 children ages 5-13 (Friday-Sunday visit). \$100 adults, \$58 children 5-13 (Saturday-Sunday visit). \$40 adults, \$20 children 5-13 (day use). Rates are discounted for members of The Mountaineers.

WHAT'S INCLUDED: Skiing and meals for day use. Lodging is included for multi-day passes.

OTHER PERMITS: Discover Pass and Sno-Park Pass.

DIRECTIONS: Follow Interstate 90 east to Exit 62. Drive south until the road ends at the Crystal Spring Sno-Park.

SHUTTLE SCHEDULE: Fridays 7 p.m., Saturdays 8:30 a.m., 10 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. Sundays 8:30 a.m. Visitors are towed in and out 2.7 miles by snowcat.

WHAT TO BRING: Ski clothes that you won't mind getting torn up a bit. Leather gloves. Ear plugs if you're spending the night.

MORE INFO: meanylodge.org



Andy Smith of Meany Lodge pulls a rope that activates the clutch on an old Chevy pickup engine that powers the 75-year-old rope tow.

MORE ONLINE • For more photos and a video of Craig Hill's trip, go to thenewstribune.com/adventure