

Packing rented skis saves money on trips

By Laura Garrison

The price of rented ski equipment can seem as high as the mountains they are used on, but with some comparative shopping, skiers can find bargains.

Much of the difference in prices for renting ski equipment, which usually includes a pair of skis, boots and poles, depends on whether a person makes advance rental arrangements through a hometown sporting goods store or waits to get the equipment in the resort area he will be skiing at.

Lincoln sporting goods shops charge about \$20 to \$25 less for rentals than Colorado ski shops. Costs vary with the time the rentals will be used, usually the longer the rental time, the better the rates.

Gerry's Sport and Ski Shop, 1324 P St., has a seven-day rental fee of \$52.50. Free travel time is allowed on ski equipment leaving the state.

John Lawlor, ski manager and buyer for Lawlor's Sporting Goods store, downtown and in the Gateway Shopping Center, said Lawlor's has a base \$8 a day ski rental fee. For trips longer than five days, the store gives a 10 percent discount off the base rental. Lawlor's also offers free travel time for ski trips out of state.

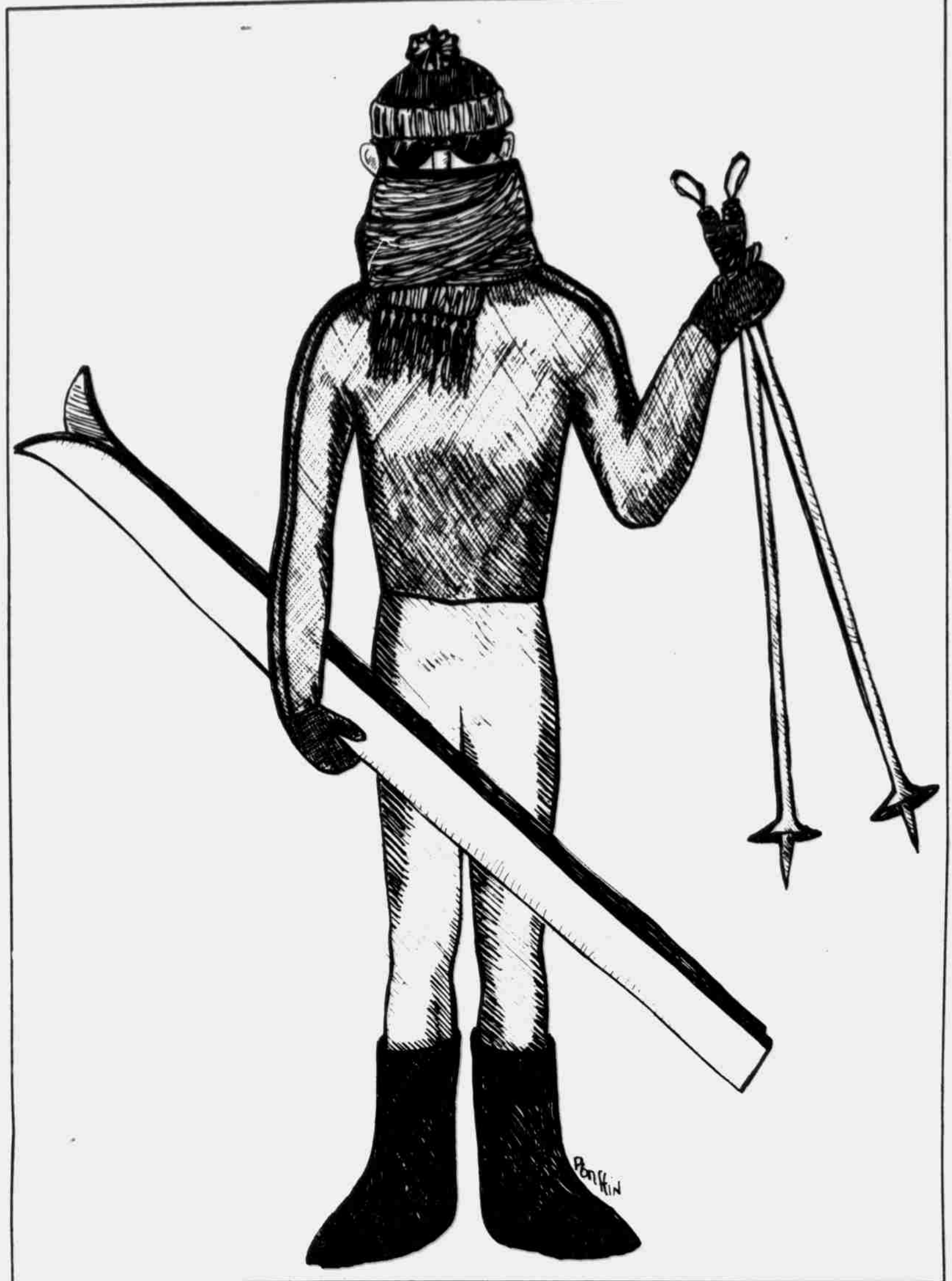
Compare these prices with the average rates of \$11 to \$12 per day at Colorado ski resorts such as Steamboat Springs, Arapahoe Basin or Keystone. The savings of renting local ski equipment can be substantial.

If equipment is rented locally, a car carrier for skis is needed. The carriers can be rented from the same shops as the skis. Gerry's Sport shop rents the carriers for \$2 a day with no travel time allowed. But skiers who rent equipment from the shop pay a maximum of \$12 for the carriers.

Lawlor said for peak ski vacation times such as Christmas vacation or spring break in March, it is best to get reservations in early for equipment.

Lawlor added that other articles for ski vacations such as warm gloves, stocking caps, dark sunglasses, wool socks, and long underwear are needed to have an enjoyable trip.

He advised first-time skiers to wear face protection to prevent serious sunburns from the glare of the sun at high altitudes.



Skiers to resort to higher rates

By Laura Garrison

The snow skiing season is here, the annual migration to the slopes is underway and it seems like everyone, from the beginner who doesn't know a ski pole from a walking cane to the advanced hot-dogger, is gearing up to test their skills on the powdery white stuff.

Colorado ski resorts will begin operations around Nov. 25 through April. Some ski areas such as Keystone, Copper Mountain and Monarch opened in early November.

Recent snow reports from Colorado ski areas report at least 20 inches of packed powder on the slopes with new snow on the way.

People planning ski vacations should be aware that the cost of skiing is increasing this year. According to *Skiing* magazine, the average price of a lift ticket will be \$13.38 this year compared to \$12.36 last year. The overall price hike will be about 8.2 percent. Approximately one-third of all U.S. areas will charge \$16 or more for a one-day lift pass ticket. Two-thirds will charge \$15 or less.

To hold down the cost of ski inflation, many areas, including smaller resorts, will offer reduced-rate mid-week tickets and specials on lessons or rentals, *Skiing* reported.

Much of the rise in ski prices is due to frills added to the slopes. Snowmaking machines, sophisticated lifts and better upkeep of the slopes contribute to the increased prices.

Popular ski areas such as Breckenridge, Arapahoe Basin and Steamboat sell lift tickets for \$18 to \$19 a day and \$11 to \$12 for half-day rates. Add costs for equipment rental, living accommodations and travel expenses, and a skier can pay up to \$100 per day for the sport.

Many Lincoln travel agencies offer ski packages that include lodging, lift tickets and free bus transportation to the resorts.

Lincoln Travel Unlimited offers a seven-day stay in a three-bedroom condominium at Copper Mountain, Colo. for \$277 a night divided between eight people. Rates vary for condominium rentals with the number of people and number of bedrooms available. Many condominiums for rent during the season will request vacationers to provide their own linens, food and cooking utensils.

Staying at a hotel or motel near a ski resort is more expensive than renting a condominium. A seven-night stay at the Frisco, Colo. Holiday Inn for four people will cost

approximately \$279.

Greyhound Bus Lines offers a round-trip ticket from Lincoln to Denver for \$95.20. The bus leaves daily from Lincoln at 1:10 p.m. and arrives in Denver the same day at 11:05 p.m.

The same trip on Continental Trailways buses costs \$122.76 round-trip and leaves from Lincoln at 2:05 a.m. daily arriving in Denver at noon, the same day.

Amtrak passenger trains also travel from Lincoln to Denver.

Depending on the type of gas mileage a car gets, car travel is transportation most skiers choose to take. From Lincoln to Denver, two stops at a gas station are the average it takes to make the trip. Gas prices vary in each state.

If the cash is too thin for Colorado, ski Iowa

By Laura Garrison

If you just can't shell out the money for a weekend of skiing in Colorado, try Crescent, Iowa. Crescent, Iowa?

Six miles east and 15 minutes away from Omaha, the Crescent Ski Hills area boasts four ski lifts, a towa lift and a ski run of 2,000 feet.

The owner and manager of the ski area, Russell Lindeman, said this year looks better than last year when Crescent Ski Hills had to close early in the season in February because of lack of snow.

Although Crescent Hills has no lodging for skiers, it does have a snow-making machine to help keep the average 30 inches of snow on the slopes.

Crescent Hills provides both down-hill skiing and cross-country ski lessons for all ages with 12 ski instructors, along with 35 ski patrolers watching the slopes.

The mid-west ski center has rental shops and ski shops, Lindeman said.

Ski rates are noticeably less expensive than Colorado resorts. Lift rates are \$9 per day on week-days and \$13 per day on weekends.

Lindeman said reduced rates are offered to college groups of 25 people or more.

The ski season begins at Crescent Hills ski area on Dec. 15 and runs through March 15, Lindeman said.

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