

STREET SCENE

Inside **S**

Punk lives

The Mekons were at the forefront of the punk movement in Great Britain in the late 1970s. Many bands

have since come and gone, but this English group is still going strong. See Page 3D.

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Dressing to kill for going downhill

By Nechama Bakst
special writer

Last August, in the stifling, sweltering heat of summer, the thought of snow was like a breath of fresh air that took forever to come your way.

To some, the dream was more concrete.

It took shape in the form of a pair of skis, and those who dreamed it, wistfully imagined themselves flying down a steep hill with the wind whistling in their ears and the sharp cold air whipping the blood in their cheeks.

Suddenly, winter and the dream are tantalizingly close. So close that potential skiers are filling the ski shops, buying in anticipation of the first real snow.

Business is definitely up, according to Tim Miller, assistant clothing manager at Bavarian Village in Farmington Hills.

"If the early season is any indication, we're off to a running start," he said.

His theory is that after the mock winters Michigan has experienced in the last few years, people are finally ready for some real winter weather. Southeastern Michigan "has a ton of dedicated skiers" and they're so dedicated that many travel west to ski areas in Colorado and Utah for more skiing, he said.

That's one reason people buy new ski wear when their old clothes might still be serviceable, said Sandy Vincent, clothing manager of Bavarian Village in Birmingham.

"THEY BUY partially to expand their wardrobes and partially because their needs have changed," she said. "They have become more aggressive skiers."

This year, they're wearing a lot of the lightweight, layered look, Miller said. Lightweight shells with turtle necks and sweaters underneath give all the warmth you need and allow you to shed clothing as you warm up.

According to Jim Laberge of Decente, the company that outfitted the U.S. Olympic ski team as well as teams from Canada, Switzerland, Spain and Japan, there's a whole

new technology involved in ski clothing. Manufacturers making fabrics that are waterproof, windproof and breathable, Laberge said.

"Gore-Tex used to be the big buzz word, but now there are new ones like Entrant SC, a fabric which does everything Gore-Tex does and is seven times warmer," he said.

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A ski jacket such as this can run anywhere from \$175 on up.

Save some bucks swapping ski gear

By Nechama Bakst
special writer

Yep, it's that time of year again. You're going to go out on the slopes and wish you hadn't because inevitably everyone who passes you is bound to look like a million bucks.

It's not that you're the jealous type, but how can you help not turning green, when you know you look like a tramp in last year's ski clothing.

You love to ski, but you can't afford to keep up with the fashion-conscious Joneses. What should you do? Cheer up.

More and more people are taking advantage of ski swaps, where everything from skis to car racks can be bought at bargain prices.

"We outdid ourselves this year," said Jerry Rodeman of the National Ski Patrol, one of the coordinators of

a swap shop held recently at Mt. Brighton. "Sales have almost doubled in the last two years."

"Last year we got all three of our kids skis, boots, poles and bindings for \$115," said Debra Nowlen, one of about 5,000 people who attended the swap this year. "My husband bought a pair of Olin skis for \$189. They were like brand new."

He had priced them at about \$100 less than what he would have paid somewhere else, she added.

A ski swap is "a place where people can get together and see what's out there," according to Rodeman.

THE SKI patrol sold sweaters, jackets, bibs, warm-up pants, foul-weather gear, car racks and more, all in conditions ranging from brand new to well used.

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Staff photos by John Stormland

R.U. Syrius

Karlos Barney



"Notice how each November these turkeys finally get serious?"

This is no snow job: We're the ski capital

A few years ago, Rand McNally gave Detroit the title of "Ski Capital of America."

Detroit? You bet.

No, nobody moved the Rockies... or the Alleghenies, for that matter. It's just that Detroit has the good fortune of being situated in a state with nearly 50 downhill ski resorts and thousands of miles of cross-country ski trails at almost 200 parks, resorts, quiet areas and wilderness sites.

In Michigan, the ski hills rise from 100 to 600 feet above the rolling upper Great Lakes country. Here, long quiet trails wind through the nearly 19 million acres of forest that blanket most of the northern Lower Peninsula and 90 percent of the Upper Peninsula.

It also is here that the winter winds, roaring out of Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario, pick up warmth and moisture as they pass

over the relatively warmer waters of the Great Lakes and deposit snow on the hills of Michigan.

Most winters, the snow is heavy and consistent on the downside of Lakes Michigan and Superior. In the Copper Country of the Upper Peninsula, annual snowfalls measuring 200 inches deep, or more, are not uncommon.

However, Michigan ski resort operators know the capriciousness of Great Lakes winters. Long ago they stopped relying on the wind and a prayer for good snow — particularly at either end of the winter season.

MICHIGAN resorts pioneered the use of snow-making equipment in the 1950s, and today some 35 Michigan ski resorts make their own snow when Mother Nature holds back.

In fact, five resorts will be using Soomax this year. Sugar Loaf, Crystal Mountain and Pine Mountain be-

gan using Soomax last year and this year Indianhead Mountain and Nob's Nob will too.

Soomax enables resort operators to produce up to 300 percent more snow than standard snowmaking normally provides.

With snowmaking equipment, skiing is good at most resorts from about Thanksgiving — with some of the best skiing available in late winter and early spring.

Michigan's best-known ski resorts tend to be clustered in the hilly northwest quadrant of the Lower Peninsula and in the relatively mountainous regions of the western Upper Peninsula.

Resorts and ski facilities, however, can be found in virtually every part of Michigan — from the suburbs of Detroit to Jones, located within shouting distance of South



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