Get your goggles

How to prevent snow blindness

One of the ma[illegible] threats to weekend or vacation skiers is snow blindness, but it can be prevented, says the Michigan Optometric Association.

Although [illegible] snow blindness can [illegible] accidents [illegible]. In some cases [illegible] can result.

But skiers [illegible] by wearing proper sunglasses or tinted goggles.

Snow blindness [illegible] out of the eyes [illegible] where the eye cannot [illegible] and bright lighting [illegible] Dr. Philip E. Irion [illegible].

He said [illegible] to the effect on the eyes [illegible] a flash bulb [illegible], however, the [illegible] lasts longer because it takes [illegible] the eye to recover [illegible] glare.

There are [illegible] types of sunglasses skiers can choose to prevent snow blindness. They are available in ready-made ski goggles, as well as in the special goggles available for skiers wearing prescription lenses.

THOSE WHO SPEND most of their time on the slopes—such as instructors—will want a tinted, impact-resistant glass lens which screens out both ultraviolet and infrared rays. Not all glass lenses do this, so it pays to ask before purchasing the lenses.

Most weekend or vacationing skiers, however, will be protected by quality plastic or glass tinted lenses that do not screen out infrared rays. Plastic lenses are lighter and more impact resistant than glass, a plus for skiers who have a tendency to fall on the slopes or to tangle with brush and trees. Most ready-made ski goggles have plastic lenses.

The best color for tinted lenses is medium or dark grey, Dr. Irion said, because it does not interfere with color perception. Medium or dark shades of green are satisfacotry, but they do distort color perception somewhat.

Dr. Irion cautioned skiers to be certain thier sunglasses are dark enough to screen out about 75-90 per cent of available sunlight. Many expert skiers find it necessary to change density of color while skiing in order to combat changing light conditions. For this reason, pros often carry several pairs of goggles with different tints or goggles with interchangeable filters to enable them to read the terrain accurately and to compensate for flat light conditions. For the latter, yellow-tinted lenses may heighten contrast.

COATED SUNGLASSES which have a mirrored look are desinged primarily for use under intense glare situations and are a good choice for skiers.

Another lens effective against glare is the polarizing lens, althought the tilting of the head can reduce its effectiveness.

Some skiers may find the photochromic or sun-sensitive sunglesses—which change density, going from light to dark and back again— adequate on the slopes. These lenses screen out about 80 per cent of the light at maximum. However, Dr. Irion cautioned low temperatures slow down the darkenian process.

In addition, the lenses need a breaking-in period and must be subjected to a number of light and dark cycles before maximum change can be achieved with relative ease.

Dr. Irion cautioned that in selecting ski goggles, skiers should be aware that curved or bubble-shaped goggles can distort vision. Also they should be certain frames do not block side vision.

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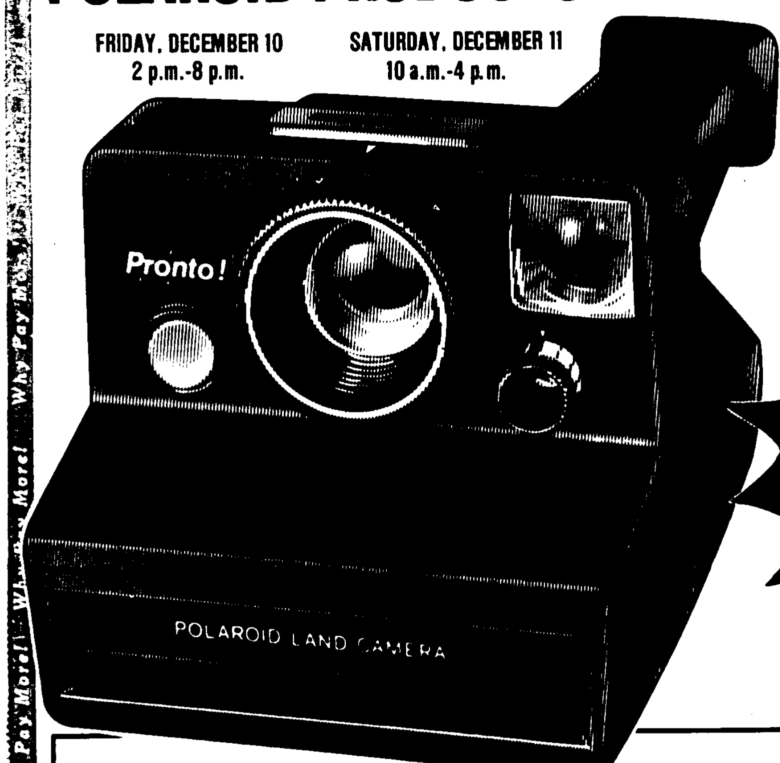

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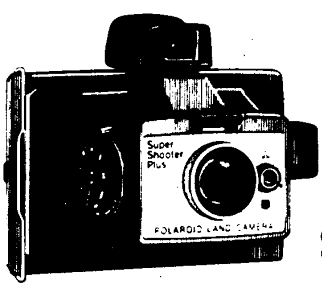

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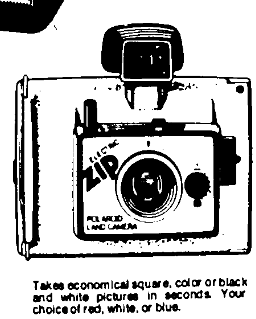

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