

Sugarloaf's zip line express ready to go

The zip line has arrived at Sugarloaf Mountain. My first encounter with one was at Heavenly Valley ski resort in Lake Tahoe a couple of years ago. Two riders seemed to be flying overhead to the sounds of Zzzzziiiiiiippppp! It looked like a really cool thing to do some day.

That day came last Thursday, when I got my first up-close experience with the new zip line at Sugarloaf in Carrabassett Valley.

Not really knowing what to expect, our group assembled outside the base ski shop. Several pieces of equipment were spread out on the ground and my thoughts of military basic training came rushing to me. Were we harnessing up for a mountain



Ziiiiiiiiiiippppp! That's the sound of the new zip line ride as Erik McClure rides at Sugarloaf Mountain. Photo by Dan Cassidy

climb, a search and rescue or possibly jump from an airplane? "Welcome to the zip line," said Erik McClure, formerly of Winslow, and our guide for the session. McClure is a 'liftime' during the winter months at the mountain resort and most recently worked at the golf course. It didn't take him long to love his new job.

He gave us the basic instructions of the equipment. The gear consists of a nylon full-body, belt-like harness, two lanyard straps of different lengths, two self-locking carabiners, a fully-adjustable helmet and a 'trolley.' The zip lines begin at the top of the Skidway chairlift where we were given final instructions from McClure.

"We really don't want to get 'banged' up," McClure said, as he explained how the harness system works.

I watched McClure flying through the trees, something like Tarzan. The runs begin in the woods and end up on the backside of the Competition Center, with the cable running right over Gondi Brook. Six zip lines will

be in operation. Business was brisk for the opening weekend with about 80 riders taking their first runs.

Safety is of great concern for operators and guides like McClure. The cables are strung through a narrow passage attached to large trees at either end, strong enough to carry a 275 pound rider, the maximum allowed. Riders climb up on a platform where their harness and lanyards are attached to the cable with the trolley wheels. A second lanyard is also attached for safety. The ride is nothing short of a complete adrenaline rush!

Once on the zip line, gravity takes over, whisking passengers towards the end of the ride, where a braking system operated by another guide gently slows you as you arrive onto the next platform.

The six lines run in length from 160 to 240 feet. The cost of riding the zip line is \$39 per person and takes between one and one half and two hours to complete the course. Tours are scheduled to leave at 9 a.m., 11 a.m., 1 p.m. and 3 p.m., and are open to 20 spots per group. Reservations are recommended. The zip line is scheduled to be in operation Fridays through Sundays depending on demand.

Riders must be a minimum height of three feet and weight at least 60 pounds, and no more than 275 pounds. All riders must wear a helmet, which will be provided at no additional charge. It's best to wear hiking boots or sneakers. Open toed shoes, sandals and bare feet are not permitted.

Riding the zip line requires being in good physical shape. There will be some hiking and climbing when moving from one zip line to the other. If you have any medical conditions, you should consult with your medical provider before participating in this activity. All riders are required to sign a liability waiver. Riders under the age of 18 will require a parent or guardian signature. Weather also plays a factor in zip line riding and operations may be suspended due to inclement conditions. For reservations or additional information call 1-800 THE LOAF.

If you're bike riding, roller blading, rock climbing or zip line riding, do so safely and don't forget to wear a helmet.

Ray's Choice award: Ray Haskell donated and presented

Winners from China and Palermo car shows announced

Once again the China Community Days car show was well attended, drawing cars from a wide area. Blue skies and music provided by DJ Al Music created the perfect combination for an ideal day. Literally hundreds of votes were cast by car enthusiasts as well as those simply casting a vote for the car that evoked a special memory of the past or dream of the future. The winners were:

1939 or older: first place, 1922 Buick Model 45, owned by Anne and Rick Fischer, of China; second place, 1933 Rat Rod Roaster, owned by Richard Peck, of Union.

1940-1959: first, 1959 Cadillac owned by Donald and Lisa Breton, of North Vassalboro; second, 1956 Chevy 210 owned by Wanda and Willis Turner, of Augusta.

1960-1979: first, 1967 Chevy Camaro, owned by Shawn Houghton, of China; second, 1960 Nash Metro, owned by Joe Murphy, of Augusta.

1980 and newer: first 2004 Ford Thunderbird, owned by Doug Doyon, of Winslow; second, 2005 Ford Mustang, owned by Gordon Page, of South China.

Trucks 1959 or older: first, 1930 Ford AA, owned by Anne and Rick Fischer, of China; second, 1941 Ford Pickup, owned by Ron Wallis, of China.

Trucks 1960 and newer: first, 1971 Chevy C-10, owned by Ron Jones, of Jefferson; second, 1975 Ford F-250, owned by Larry Brown, of China.

Ray's Choice award. He stated the decision was a difficult one, but as were others, he was influenced by a dream car of his past and thus chose a well-detailed 1971 Dodge Charger, owned by Ron Harris, of Oakland, as the winner.

Submitted by Mary Ann Constanzer.

During Palermo Days, Tobey's Grocery sponsored a car show with the following winners:

First place, Shawn Houghton, China, '67 Camaro; second, John Boynton, of South China, '39 Chevy coupe; tied for third, Daryl Hoague, of China, '51 Chevy pickup, and Willis Turner, of Augusta, '56 Chevy; fifth, Gary Dyer, of Palermo, '20 Dodge touring car.

Submitted by Jay Pucci.



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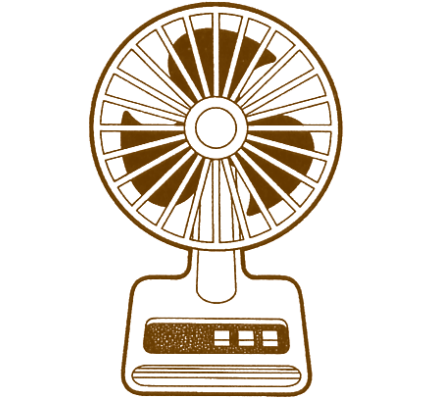
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