

## **My last day of skiing**

By Rick Schieltz

My last day of skiing was Friday January 16, 1926, at Mad River Mountain in Ohio. The weather had gotten cold after a warm spell and the ski area had made some new snow. The snow conditions were decent but not great but the temperature was good for skiing. My first day of skiing had been in March 1969, so this was the beginning of my 58<sup>th</sup> ski season. I had made several runs down the hill already, so I decided to do one of my ballet skiing moves which I had done hundreds of times before. Starting off of the top of the hill, I lifted my left ski, crossed it in front of my right ski, put the left ski down on the right side of the right ski and transfer my weight from my left ski to my right ski and do a spin to end up skiing backwards with both skis in their correct positions again. Halfway through this maneuver, I lost my balance and fell toward the downhill slope and landed on my left shoulder. As I was lying there my left arm was straight out in front of me and I could not move it, so I knew something was wrong.

There were a few Ski Patrollers at the top of hill the who saw my fall and quickly came to check on me. Since I was the first ski patroller (now retired) at the scene, I took control of the situation and told the other patrollers that I had either dislocated or broken my left shoulder, that they should get a toboggan for transport, call for an ambulance and that they would need to put my arm in a sling and bind it to my chest. Once they brought the toboggan, I tuned control over to the other patrollers so they could complete the loading and transport that I could not do. On the ride down the hill in the toboggan, I realized that I had not felt much pain until now when every bump from the toboggan jarred my arm and caused pain. Once at the bottom of the hill, I called home to let my wife know what had happened and that I would be taken to Mary Rutan Hospital and she would need to come and get me.

On the ride in the ambulance the EMT put an IV in my arm so that he could administer a shot of fentanyl for pain relief, however the road was very bumpy and still caused pain in my shoulder. At Mary Rutan hospital they took x-rays and confirmed that my shoulder was broken in several places. I informed them that my wife was coming to pick me up and we would want to go to Miami Valley hospital in Dayton for treatment and they said that they would prepare documents for the transfer, and they provided a CD with the images of the x-rays they had taken. When my wife and daughter arrived, I got into our car, and my wife drove to Mad River Mountain so that we could pick up my equipment and my daughter could drive my car and then we all went to Miami Valley hospital.

After being admitted to Miami Valley hospital, we gave them the CD from Mary Rutan that had the x-ray images, and they could not read anything from the disk, so they had to take new X-rays. After new X-ray were taken, an orthopedic surgeon met with us to discuss what would need to be done. The first thing to do would be a Shoulder reduction so that they could align the shoulder joint into it normal position before surgery. A couple of other doctors or assistances came in to help, and they would first need to give me Propofol so that I would be out for the procedure. They injected a shot of Propofol into the IV which was still in my arm, and it did not do anything, and I said I do not feel anything. They were surprised and decided to inject a second shot of Propofol. When this also did not have any effect they decided to check the IV in my arm. They found out that the needle was not

in a vein but just into the muscle so they removed that IV and put in a new IV. This would also explain why the fentanyl for pain relief that was given earlier had no effect. This time when they gave me a shot of Propofol, I passed out quickly and they were able to perform the Shoulder reduction. However, when they wanted to revive me after the procedure, I did not wake up quickly and they had to use a bag mask to ventilate me. The two extra shots of Propofol injected into my muscle were still working their way through my system.

I then had dinner at the hospital and surgery was scheduled for the next day at 7:30 so I was told that I should not eat anything after 10:00 PM. The next morning, I was taken to the surgery waiting area and prepared for surgery and was visited by the surgeon and the anesthesiologist. When I was taken to the operating room they were about to transfer me to the operating table when one of the operating room staff told them to stop. While inspecting the table with all of the supplies and instruments for the operation, someone found that one item had not been cleaned and sanitized properly. Hospital protocol required that with contaminated equipment the whole table would have to be cleared and a new table would be set up. I was told that I would be taken back to the waiting area because it would take an hour or more for a new setup, and that the surgeon would go to the next surgery and then my surgery would be done after that. By the time I was taken to surgery again, it was afternoon, and by the time I came out of recovery and was transferred back to my room, it was after dinner time at the hospital so I could not get any food. Luckily, my wife and daughter had packed food for themselves for the day at the hospital and still had half of a sandwich left which I had for my dinner.

The next morning, the surgeon came to check on me and said I was doing good and that I would need to keep my arm in the sling for six weeks and then I would start physical therapy to regain strength and range of motion in my arm. We then asked about when I could go home. He said I was doing OK and it would be OK with him for me to go home today, but someone from physical therapy and occupational therapy would have to evaluate me before the hospital would release me. We asked for them to come as soon as possible, and it was not long until they came. They wanted to check if I would be able to function OK at home without going to a rehab facility first so they had me demonstrate that I could get in and out of bed OK, could go to the bathroom on my own, put on my socks with one hand and then we took a walk down to the end of the hall, walked up one flight of stairs and returned to my room. They concluded that I was OK to return home, and that the hospital doctor would prepare the release order. Shortly after noon I was able to leave the hospital and go home, and I received a wheelchair ride from my room to the car.

Before we left the hospital, the surgeon had told us that if I ever fell on my shoulder and did damage again, that another surgery would be more complicated and recommended that I avoid activities that could pose a risk. My wife and I therefore decided that I should discontinue skiing. My body was getting older and more fragile and I had already had 57 years of good skiing. I called one of my nephews whom I had previously given skis to when I got new equipment and asked if he was interested in receiving my current equipment. He was happy to get the newer equipment and came to our home to pick it up and visit and see how I was doing.

During my six-week checkup with the surgeon, he said everything was healing well and I could discontinue using the sling and start physical therapy. I started physical therapy once a week at a clinic and did daily exercises at home and also returned to volunteer restoration work at Carillon Park. After 10 weeks of physical therapy, I have recovered about 90 percent of mobility and strength in my arm and will continue exercises at home.

