

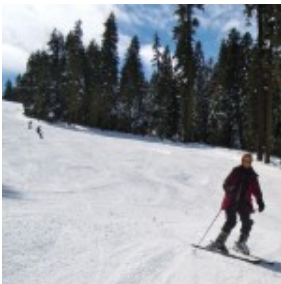
Returning to skis after 16 years on a snowboard

By Kathryn Reed

TWIN BRIDGES – Yahoo was incorporated that year. Bill Clinton was president of the United States. A gallon of gas cost \$1.09.

1995 was also the last time Pam Valentine was on skis.

At 51, she decided to trade in her snowboard for a day for two planks. It's not like this was her first time on skis. She had skied from about age 15 to 35.



Pam Valentine returns to skiing after a 16-year hiatus.

Photos/Kathryn Reed

“I couldn't remember what to do with the poles,” Valentine said. “They were more of a nuisance.”

This was a bit obvious with her upper body swivel.

But as her younger sister, I limited my advice. It had been suggested she take a lesson to figure out what do again. No, she said. She preferred if there were to be any embarrassing

moments, I would be the only one to see them.

What amazed me is the ease at which she took to the sport. Of course it helps to be fit and athletic. But, still, skiing and snowboarding are two distinct sports even though plenty of people do both.

I'm not one of those people. I tried snowboarding years ago and failed miserably. Skin changed colors that I didn't know it could change. But I digress.

As much as skiing takes balance, my sister said skis were easier than her board because of not having to be on the front or rear edge.

Plus, this was her first time on the wide skis.

"It was easier to turn," Valentine said of the new type of equipment. "With them being shorter, it didn't feel like I was crossing the tips like I used to."

In fact, she tried to snowplow but found that more difficult than paralleling.

She stopped skiing years ago when she lived in Sacramento and her friends were getting into boarding. They often made the trek up to Sierra-at-Tahoe for the day. Now when she comes to Tahoe from Redding we still end up at Sierra.

The guys in the rental shop were friendly. Mike reminded her her toes should not wriggle too much. Tyler explained why she might want a certain length of ski over another. And Bryan the pole dude said, "I think the blue ones will be the key to your happiness."

Basic rentals at Sierra are \$41 for the day or \$35 for a half day.

Although we started on Easy Rider, we only lasted one run. My sis was ready for West Bowl. Then we headed up Grand View.

Other than the fast skier nearly taking her out on Lower Main, she ended the day with a smile and ready to start demoing skis to possibly buy some in the near future.

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