

last run

Roy Riley

photograph by JERRY LEBLOND

Born for fun October 4, 1957

Raised in Upstate New York

Just for laughs "Director of fun" at Snowshoe, W.Va.; emcee of the resort's comedy club, Comedy Cellar; skis 40 days a year as the Snowshoe mascot, wearing a pink bunny outfit.

His ship came in "Snowshoe is like a cruise ship and I'm the cruise director but the ship never leaves port."

First time on stage "I started doing magic when I was 16 and worked my way through college (at Brockport State, N.Y.) by performing."

First time on skis "In 1981, when I was 23, I went to Bristol Mountain (N.Y.) with a friend. I couldn't stop or turn and it felt like I was going at light speed, even though I was probably going 3 mph. I was a big snowball, but I got hooked. I caught the skiing bug."

Go south, young man "I had the opportunity to go to Snowshoe to manage a restaurant. But my first reaction was: West Virginia? Skiing? What's wrong with this picture?"

A laughing matter "In 1985, I talked to the Snowshoe president about opening a comedy club at the resort. He gave me three weeks to show a profit. So every day I was down at the lifelines with a bullhorn, talking up the club. I had laryngitis the whole season. But the club worked, and we sell it out five nights a week with regionally and nationally known comics—people who have been on Letterman and Leno."

What's up, Doc? "About nine years ago, I figured the resort needed a mascot, so I went to a costume shop and bought some bunny outfits. Besides, I wasn't doing anything else during the day."

Bunny patrol "The comment I hear most often from skiers is, 'I wish I had my gun—it's hunting season!' Then they usually say, 'Yee haw!'"

Pink haze "Several times I've helped out injured skiers. They look up at me—a 6-foot-3 pink bunny towering over them—and I always say, 'It's OK, I'm supposed to be here.'"

Rain on his parade "I don't like to ski when it's snowing or raining because my fur mats."

Advice to aspiring skiers "Take a lesson. Don't let your significant other teach you to ski."

Advice to aspiring comics "Get out of the business."
—Reade Bailey