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# THE RECORD / EDITORIAL

## EDITORS

Leah Carey, Andrew McGregor

## DESIGN & PRODUCTION

Leah Carey, Andrew McGregor

## COVER DESIGN

Glen Jardine

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## CONTACT US

Email:  
 news@caledonian-record.com  
 Phone:  
 802-748-8121  
 Web:  
 caledonianrecord.com  
 littleton record.com  
 orleanscountyrecord.com

# THE RECORD / BUSINESS

## PUBLISHER

Todd M. Smith

## ADVERTISING SALES

Julie Poutre, Crystel McFarland, Glen Jardine, Sylvie Weber

## ADVERTISING DESIGN & PRODUCTION

Jeana Desilets, Kirsten Nelson



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EXTREME WINTER

# GET 'BACK' TO SKIING OFF THE WELL-WORN PATH

BY PAUL HAYES  
Staff Writer

Front country skiing is comfortable. You buy a ticket, ride the chair lift up, carve machine-groomed trails on the way down, and then retire to the lodge for a cup of hot chocolate. But back country skiing can be magical.

If you're willing to wake before dawn and spend hours climbing uphill — like friends Kevin Gordon and Zach Mangione — nothing beats the payoff of virgin snowfields and pristine terrain.

"The ultimate, underlying motivation is the reward of the untouched snow," said Gordon, 31. "I personally don't want to see one single track. I want to be the first one."

"That's the ultimate goal every time you go out: To find that snow," said Mangione, also 31. "You look out and it's a blank canvas of nice, deep, untouched powder."



Photos by Paul Hayes

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They're not alone.

Back country skiing — also called “uphilling,” “skinning” or “alpine touring” — is booming.

More than six million U.S. skiers and snowboarders are exploring the back country, and equipment sales are on the rise, according to trade organization Snowsports Industries America.

To see that boom first-hand, just visit the region's ski touring hot spots in New Hampshire and Vermont, where more and more people are uphilling in search of fresh tracks.

But before you tromp into the woods and leave the resorts behind, there's a few things you should know.

#### The gear

Back country skiers and snowboarders don't pay for lift tickets. But they do spend on specialized equipment.

And there's plenty of equipment to be had.

The American Alpine Institute lists nearly 40 items that are required or recommended for back country day trips.

The initial investment is steep.

A basic equipment package can easily cost \$1,500. That includes either free-heel alpine touring skis or a splitboard (a snowboard that can be split into two ski-like sections for skinning), along with boots, bindings, poles and climbing skins.

There is also safety gear (avalanche probes, transceivers and shovels) and clothing. Lots of clothing.

“You have to think about what you're wearing going uphill, so you're not sweating too much. Then you need to know what you'll wear at the top when you get there and have lunch,” said Gordon, an aspiring guide with more than a decade of back country experience.

That means wearing lightweight base layers that wick away sweat, and soft shell “action layers” for warmth. It also means bringing along heavier layers for the eventual arrival at the top and trip down.

Not to mention changes of gloves, hats and socks to keep warm and avoid sweaty-clothes-induced-hypothermia.

And as you leave your home you need to ask yourself: Did I remember food and hydration? Sunscreen and lip protection? Sunglasses and ski goggles? Headlamps and repair tools?

“There's a lot of nuance that comes with using gear,” Gordon said. “Knowing how to use gear is huge. Making sure everybody is on the same page with gear is huge. One person unprepared can impact the others.”

#### The grind

The first rule in back country skiing? Plan ahead.

Skinners need to map out their route, build an itinerary, and check the alpine weather report.

Some routes are easily accessible. Others require extensive prep work. It took Gordon four trips to the North Twin slide in Carroll, New Hampshire, before he could actually make the 10-hour round trip and ski its 1,000 vertical feet of terrain.

“That was one of the most difficult,” said Gordon, noting that he made two trips in the fall to identify a route, and two trips in the winter before conditions were acceptable.

The second rule: Set out early.

“They call it an ‘Alpine Start.’ Which is basically just before the sun is coming up,” said Mangione, explaining that an early start is necessary because “there's not a whole lot of daylight hours in the winter.”

And rule number three: Be prepared to turn around.

On his third trip to the remote North Twin slide, Gordon turned around because of concerns over fading daylight and avalanche danger.

“The adventure is part of it. But so is making the right call,” Gordon said.

During his first forays into back country skiing eight years



ago, Mangione said he often turned back.

“When I first started ... I did a lot of ski touring and not a lot of good skiing,” Mangione said. “I'd spend half a day trying to get to a spot, I wouldn't get there, and then I'd turn back. But in my opinion those weren't lost days. I was out in the woods exploring.”

#### The gift

As a ski patroller at Cannon Mountain, Mangione gets his fill of front country skiing.

He likes it just fine. But when he drives along the region's highways and byways, his eyes are drawn to the surrounding peaks and foothills.

“I'm always looking up and wondering ‘Can I ski that?’ I'm looking for new places to go and explore,” Mangione said.

The allure of back country skiing can be found in its name.

“When we say back country, it's always versus front country,” said Matt Keating, owner of Bad Ass Outdoor Gear in Littleton, New Hampshire. “The front country is what is tamed. The back country by definition is optional.”

On his shop's counter, Keating displays a map of Franconia Notch State Park which is bisected by the Interstate 93 parkway.

“I-93 is the front of the front country,” Keating said. “As you move out from I-93, you get from basic trails to harder trails to the [Appalachian Trail] to the Kinsman Range. That's when it becomes the true back country. When you are more

than a days walk from rescue.”

In the winter, the back country becomes even less accessible and more foreboding. It offers quiet and solitude. That, Keating said, only makes it more attractive to those with a thirst for adventure and exploration.

“The more like a snow globe it becomes, the more people view it from the front country. I'd rather be inside the globe and view it from the back country,” Keating said.

Want to find a place to try uphilling? A good place to start is the book “Best Backcountry Skiing in the Northeast: 50 Classic Ski Tours in New England and New York” by David Goodman.

There is also a wealth of information online. What's more, if you simply ask around, chances are you'll find someone nearby who skis the back country and can recommend a choice location.

Gordon recommended the Tucker Brook Trail on the back side of Cannon Mountain for beginners.

If you go, be ready to embrace the burn.

But don't worry. Odds are, if you're willing to earn your turns, you'll grow to like it.

“It's sort of a masochistic thing to do,” Mangione said. “You can really torture yourself and put a lot of physical effort into getting to these places to ski. You might spend the vast majority of your time killing yourself to get there, only to turn around and ski down for five minutes.”

“But it's still worth it to some people. It's worth it to me.”

SKI'S ON!

These are the mountains that helped shape the skiing careers of local Olympic competitors like Bode Miller and Mikaela Shiffrin, and the cross-country trails that are the training home for Susan Dunklee and Hannah Dreissigacker.

**VERMONT**

**Downhill**

**Burke Mountain** — 55 ski trails and over 100 acres of glades. The mountain is serviced by two high speed quads, one fixed grip quad and three surface lifts. For information visit [www.skiburke.com](http://www.skiburke.com).

**Jay Peak** — 78 trails over 385 acres and over 100 acres of gladed terrain. The mountain is serviced by one aerial tramway, four quads, one triple, one double and two magic carpets. For information visit [www.jaypeakresort.com](http://www.jaypeakresort.com).

**Lyndon Outing Club** — A local ski facility staffed by volunteers, the Outing Club has both Alpine and Nordic trails with a rope tow and a t-bar. For information visit [www.skilyndon.com](http://www.skilyndon.com).

**Cross-country**

**Beaver Brook Farm Ski Trails** - [www.bbftails.com](http://www.bbftails.com) — Marshfield

**Catamount Trail Association** - [www.catamounttrail.org](http://www.catamounttrail.org)— ski Vermont from end to end beginning near Jay Peak

**Craftsbury Nordic Center** — [www.craftsbury.com](http://www.craftsbury.com) and click “XC-Skiing” — Craftsbury

**Hazen’s Notch Association** — [www.hazensnotch.org](http://www.hazensnotch.org) — Montgomery

**Kingdom Trails Association** - [www.kingdomtrails.com](http://www.kingdomtrails.com) — East Burke

**Highland Lodge Ski Touring Center** — [www.highlandlodge.com](http://www.highlandlodge.com) and click “Highland Lodge Seasons” — Greensboro

**Memphremagog Ski Touring Foundation** — [www.mstf.net](http://www.mstf.net) and click “Trail Grooming Report” or “Trail Map” — Derby/Newport

**Northwoods Stewardship Center** - [www.northwood-scenter.org](http://www.northwood-scenter.org) — Charleston

Call ahead to find out if the trails you’re planning to use are dog friendly.



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**Bretton Woods** — 464 acres of skiing on 62 trails and 35 glades plus three terrain parks. The mountain is serviced by four high-speed detachable quads, one quad chair, one triple chair, one double chair, a t-bar, a red carpet and a wonder carpet. For information visit [www.brettonwoods.com](http://www.brettonwoods.com).

**Cannon Mountain** — 73 trails over 264 acres, 168 acres of snowmaking. The mountain is serviced by an aerial tram, one detachable quad, two fixed grip quad chairs, three triple chairs, one fixed grip double chair, one rope tow and a magic carpet. For information visit [www.cannonmt.com](http://www.cannonmt.com).

**Mt. Eustis Ski Tow** — Littleton, N.H. For information visit [www.mteustis.org](http://www.mteustis.org).

**Cross-country**

**Bretton Woods Nordic Center** — [www.brettonwoods.com](http://www.brettonwoods.com) and click “Nordic” — Bretton Woods

**Franconia Cross Country Ski Center** — [www.franconiainn.com](http://www.franconiainn.com), click “Activities” then “X-C Ski Center” — Franconia

**Franconia Notch Recreation Trail** — Access the 9 mile path from the northern or southern end of Franconia Notch — fair warning, this is a popular trail for snowmobilers

**Rocks Estate** — [www.therocks.org](http://www.therocks.org) and click “Trails” — Bethlehem


**Ski Hearth Farm** — [www.skihearthfarm.com](http://www.skihearthfarm.com) and click “XC Ski” — Sugar Hill

Also check out the snowmobile trails and corridors in New Hampshire. Skiers are allowed on the trails but snowmobilers have the right of way (and you can hear them better than they can see you!)


Call ahead to find out if the trails you’re planning to use are dog friendly.

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# WINTER EVENTS CALENDAR

**Please note:** This calendar was put together in mid-October and things may change. Please use it as a starting point for your winter fun and call, email, or check online to confirm times and locations before heading out!

## Saturday, Nov. 12

8 a.m. - Ski Swap, Franconia Ski Club. For info: franconiaskiclub.com.

8 a.m. - Snowmobile Safety Course, Norton. For info: 802-822-5750.

9 a.m. - Silver Tea and Craft Sale, Dalton Town Hall. For info: Doris, 603-837-2751 or Jean, 603-837-9592.

9 a.m. - Holiday Bazaar, Lyndon Outing Club. For info: skilyndon.com.

9 a.m. - Christmas Bazaar, Bath Congregational Church. For info: Virginia, 603-747-3472.

9 a.m. - Holly Jolly Christmas Bazaar, St. Johnsbury Health & Rehab. For info: Sandy, 802-424-4905.

9 a.m. - Christmas in the Country Bazaar, North Danville Baptist Church. For info: Joan, 802-748-4520.

9 a.m. - Christmas Bazaar, American Legion Post 30 Lyndon. For info: Karen, 802-535-5563.

10 a.m. - Candy Cane Bazaar, Whitefield Community Baptist Church. For info: Lois, 603-837-2578.

10 a.m. - Springfield College Open House, St. Johnsbury campus. For info: 802-748-5402.

2 p.m. - Into The Woods, Fuller Hall at St. Johnsbury Academy. For info: Bill Vinton, 802-748-8171.

5 p.m. - Northeast Kingdom Snow Blasters opening supper, Norton. For info: 802-822-5750.

5 p.m. - Hunters' Supper, Granby Town Hall. For info: Nellie, 802-328-2658.

5:30 p.m. - Catamount Benefit Auction, Catamount Arts. For info: catamountarts.org.

6 p.m. - International Games Day, Peacem Library. For info: 802-592-3216.

7 p.m. - The Fellers, fiddle tunes, Court Street Arts. For info: courtstreetarts.org.

7 p.m. - You're A Good Man Charlie Brown, Lyndon Institute. For info: lyndoninstitute.org.

stitute.org.

7:30 p.m. - Twilight Players Dance Ensemble Recital, Lyndon State College. For info: facebook.com/Twilightplayers.

8 p.m. - Lyndon State College Music Showcase, Village Hall. For info: parkerpie.com.

## Sunday, Nov. 13

2 p.m. - You're A Good Man Charlie Brown, Lyndon Institute. For info: lyndoninstitute.org.

3 p.m. - Now Playing Newport, NACO Wind Quintet. For info: nowplayingnewport.com.

## Tuesday, Nov. 15

1:30 p.m. - Community movie - Grand Hotel, Catamount Arts. For info: catamountarts.org.

3 p.m. - Lego challenge, St. Johnsbury Athenaeum. For info: stjathenaum.org.

6 p.m. - Coloring club, Catamount Arts. For info: catamountarts.org.

7 p.m. - National Theatre Live - Hamlet, Catamount Arts. For info: catamountarts.org.

## Wednesday, Nov. 16

1 p.m. - Osher Lifelong Learning lecture: Looking back at the election of 2016 with Eric Davis, Hebard State Office Building. For info: learn.uvm.edu.

5:30 p.m. - Contemporary line dancing, Troy Parrish Hall. For info: jayvt.com.

7 p.m. - Bolshoi Ballet - The Bright Stream, Catamount Arts. For info: catamountarts.org.

7 p.m. - Blues performance and talk by Scott Ainslie, Simpson Hall in Craftsbury. For info: townofcraftsbury.com.

7 p.m. - Vermont Reads Shackleton - The Southern Ocean, Fairbanks Museum. For info: stjathenaum.org.

## Friday, Nov. 18

8 a.m. - Clothing drop and swap, Newport Elks Lodge. For info: Celine, 802-334-5469 x3435.

7 p.m. - Dana and Susan Robinson concert, Colebrook Country Club. For info: gnwca.org.

See **Calendar**, Page 15

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# EXTREME WINTER WINTER SWIMMING (Are You CRAZY?)



COURTESY PHOTO

A winter swim participant takes the crazy hat challenge seriously.

BY LEAH CAREY  
Staff Writer

A few years ago a winter event started at Lake Memphremagog that many people would call crazy pants. Or perhaps, more appropriately, crazy no-pants.

Winter swimming.

Yes, that's right - they cut a hole in the ice and swim. They don't just jump in and do a one-time polar plunge - they spend weeks or months training to swim in water that is 35 degrees or less.

"There's a little bit of crazy that goes into it," agreed participant Janet Manning. "But it's a good crazy."

Manning has been participating in the Memphremagog Winter Swim Festival since its inception two winters ago.

"Everyone has their different reasons for doing it," Manning said. "I do it because I hate cold water, if you can believe that."

Manning is a marathon swimmer who found herself getting cold after a couple hours in 61 degree water. A friend introduced her to the idea of winter swimming, and she figured it would be a good way to re-sensitize herself for long-distance swimming.

"It was facing my fears," she said. "And I discovered I love it. I get this euphoric rush, which is unlike anything. It's ad-

dictive - a lot of people will describe it that way. Once you experience that high, you want it again."

The euphoria, she surmised, has something to do with how the body responds to extreme cold.

"When you first get in, it feels like acid on my skin. It's that cold," she said. "But then it makes your blood go from your extremities to your core. I'm not a scientist, but I believe it's your body's bio-physical way of protecting your organs. That I believe is what I'm feeling as euphoria - when your blood rushes to your core. It's your body's way of protecting against hypothermia."

It also gives her an opportunity to practice some mindfulness-type practices. "It hurts ... I just have to know that it's going to be okay. You have to trust the process."

### Training

Manning lives in Frederick, Maryland, but comes up to Newport each winter for the Lake Memphremagog Swim Festival in March.

She prepares for it by continuing to swim in the waters near her home as they get colder throughout the fall and winter.

"You need to acclimate to the cold," she said. "What we do as we're ending our summer season, the water temperatures get cooler and cooler. You just keep going to where you swim and as the temperatures drop, you body acclimates to the temperature. People swim in the 50s. If you can go 10 degrees cooler - well, if you can do that, you can do anything!"

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COURTESY PHOTO

Janet Manning participates in the butterfly race in 31-degree water.

the winter. Last winter, Manning said, it was about 31 degrees. That is, as you will notice, below freezing.

“When it’s still water, it freezes quite quickly ... so we put bubblers in the water,” Manning said. “They put them around boats to keep them from freezing. We put them in our pool to keep the water moving so it doesn’t freeze over.”

The “pool” is a 25-meter hole cut in the ice to create a two-lane swimming course. Last year, the ice was approximately 18 inches thick.

**Safety**

Safety precautions are in force in order to keep the event safe.

EMTs are on-hand for any unexpected

emergencies.

Swimmers are required to demonstrate that they have successfully swum at least 25 meters in water 41 degrees or colder (there are additional requirements for longer races.)

Swimmers are not allowed to dive into the water or to do flip turns. It’s partially to protect their bodies from the shock of the cold, but there’s another important reason: “When you dive or do a flip turn, there’s always a risk that you’re going to go outside of your lane,” Manning said. “When you only have a two-lane wide pool, there is a risk of going under the ice.”

**Day of the race**

The morning of the race, swimmers get ready inside, donning their swimsuits, caps,

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goggles and earplugs.

They wait inside until their race is announced, staying warm. When volunteers tell them it's time to head outside for their race, they put on their parka and boots - Manning likes to wear Uggs because they're easy to get on and off.

"You don't want to stand out there too long. You want to just walk out and be ready to go," she said. "Whoever is starting the race will say, okay, take off your stuff and put it in our basket."

Then they climb in the water and there's a quick "Ready, set, go" - and they're off!

"There are some faster swimmers that are there for the competition, but I would say the vast majority of people are just thrilled that they finished, or that they were able to do it," Manning said. "I tell people, You finish you win! We have a lot of winners ... I think everybody is just happy they survived. There's such a camaraderie, too."

When they climb out of the pool at the end of the race, volunteers are there with towels and their basket of clothing.

After a 200-meter swim, Manning said it can be hard. "When you get out, your fingers are inoperable. You have these strangers, volunteers, dressing you - pulling off your swimsuit, there's no modesty - and getting you so you can walk back to the warmth of the boathouse. They take care of us."

The race roster includes multiple 25-meter strokes (including a 25-meter crazy hat competition), 50 meter freestyle, 200 meter freestyle, and 200 meter relay.

"It's a challenge just to get in, so one length is admirable to be able to finish," Manning said with a chuckle. "But it's not horrible. If it was horrible, we wouldn't all want to do it. There's something about it. It's an adrenaline rush."

COURTESY PHOTO

Two winter swim participants approach the pool cut into the ice with their warm coats on, ready to shed them and dive in to the (literally) freezing water.



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# Calendar

Continued from Page 10

## Saturday, Nov. 19

8 a.m. - The Swap, Newport Elks Lodge. For info: Celine, 802-334-5469 x3435.

9 a.m. - Christmas in the Kingdom Bazaar, Danville Congregational Church. For info: 802-684-1151.

9 a.m. - Holiday ornaments workshop, Littleton Studio School. For info: littleton.nhcrafts.org.

9 a.m. - St. John's Christmas Angel Bazaar, Father Lively Center. For info: 802-748-8129.

10 a.m. - Winter Farmers' Market, St. Johnsbury Welcome Center. For info: sites.google.com/site/caledoni-farmersmarket.

10 a.m. - You Are A Soul Song with Donna Dia Lowrey, WREN in Bethlehem. For info: wrenworks.org.

10 a.m. - Quilting the Blues, a family workshop, Catamount Outback Artspace. For info: catamountarts.org.

5 p.m. - Arts Connect Juried Show Opening, Catamount Arts. For info: catamountarts.org.

7 p.m. - Eli Cook - Blues musician, 42 Maple. For info: 42maple.org.

7 p.m. - Vermont State Dance Festival, Lyndon Institute. For info: 802-535-3577.

## Sunday, Nov. 20

11:30 a.m. - The Brunch Beat, Court Street Arts. For info: courtstreetarts.org.

## Monday, Nov. 21

5 p.m. - Game night, Co-latina Exit. For info: cohase.org.

## Wednesday, Nov. 23

5:30 p.m. - Contemporary line dancing, Troy Parrish Hall. For info: jayvt.com.

7 p.m. - Vermont Reads Shackleton - March of the Penguins, Catamount Arts.

For info: stjathenaum.org.

## Thursday, Nov. 24

9 a.m. - Wobble n' Gobble Turkey Day 5K, Lafayette Regional School. For info: www.franconianh.org/wobble-gobble.html.

## Friday, Nov. 25

10 a.m. - The Festival Of Trees, Littleton First United Methodist Church. For info: Debbie, 603-444-5567.

12 p.m. - Littleton Holiday Parade, Littleton Main Street. For info: littletonareachamhernh.com.

## Saturday, Nov. 26

9 a.m. - Northeast Kingdom Craft Fair, Lyndon State College. For info: 802-274-8935.

10 a.m. - Country Crafters Craft Fair, St. Johnsbury Academy Fieldhouse. For info: Patricia, 802-274-3543.

10 a.m. - The Festival Of

Trees, Littleton First United Methodist Church. For info: Debbie, 603-444-5567.

5 p.m. - Chowder night, American Legion Post 30 Lyndon. For info: Karen, 802-535-5563.

## Sunday, Nov. 27

Freestyle race - 5/10K interval start race for all ages, Craftsby Outdoor Center. For info: craftsby.org.

Winter clothing drive, Bretton Woods Mountain Resort. For info: franconianotch.org.

3 p.m. - Holiday Concert, United Community Church at North. For info: stjohnsburyband.org.

## Tuesday, Nov. 29

3 p.m. - Lego Challenge, St. Johnsbury Athenaeum. For info: stjathenaum.org.

## Wednesday, Nov. 30

5:30 p.m. - Contemporary Line Dancing, Troy Parrish

Hall. For info: jayvt.com.

7 p.m. - Vermont Reads Shackleton - The Endurance, Catamount Arts. For info: stjathenaum.org.

## Thursday, Dec. 1

4 p.m. - Open house and Memory Tree ceremony, Northeast Kingdom Council on Aging. For info: 802-748-5182.

7 p.m. - Winter Dance Festival, Lyndon Institute. For info: lyndoninstitute.org.

## Friday, Dec. 2

5 p.m. - Holiday premiere, All About Flowers. For info: 748-5656.

6 p.m. - Tree lighting, caroling and Santa visit, Jay Town Hall. For info: jayvt.com.

7:30 p.m. - North Country Chorus Christmas Concert, Littleton First Congregational Church. For info:

See **Calendar**, Page 17



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# BURKE MOUNTAIN RESORT HOTEL'S FIRST SEASON

BY AMY ASH NIXON  
Staff Writer

**EAST BURKE** - This winter season will be the first for the new hotel and conference center located slope-side at the Burke Mountain Resort.

For years, the resort has yearned to have bed space at the mountain, and now that long-held dream has come true.

The hotel had its soft opening this summer, and its doors were opened for 365 day a year, 24/7 service officially on Sept. 1, to much fanfare.

The new Burke Mountain Hotel & Conference Center is a 116-bed hotel with a first-floor retail, restaurant, and service level, and the rooms, from studios to a three-bedroom suite, located on the upper floors.

Built with an east and west wing, connected on the ground level, the new hotel looks out its front onto the majestic view of Willoughby Gap.

With a locally-harvested wooden bar surface, The Gap bar overlooks the view.

On the other side of the hotel, the view is all about Burke Mountain.

The hotel is ski-in, ski-out, and there is a heated pool and hot tub with warmed flooring all around it for year-round use.

According to Burke Mountain's spokeswoman, Jessica Sechler, "The Burke Mountain Hotel & Conference Center is going to be THE place to be this winter season!"

"Offering a true ski-in ski-out experience the hotel's beautiful timber-framed day lodge is a cozy setting to relax in after pounding the groomers or finding the powder in our 14 glades," said Sechler.

Samantha Thompson of Montgomery, the designer for the



The new Burke Mountain Hotel & Conference Center in East Burke, Vermont.

interior of the new hotel and conference center, used local people and goods as much as possible.

"There is so much talent in our local area, why should we go any further ... Support the locals as much as possible was my goal," explained Thompson of her design emphasis. "I wanted to keep it local, close to nature, close to our roots."

The Anthill Collective VT painted the entryway walls of trees and birds in the restaurant, as well as the graffiti trail sign in the Gap Pub, said Thompson. The Jim Beam whiskey barrels in the pub were made locally by Taylor Guilmette, she said.

Some reclaimed wood from a barn on the Burke property was repurposed to make wood art for the restaurant, with Guilmette's help, said Thompson.

Vermont artist Elizabeth Nelson painted a night view of Lake Willoughby, which hangs in the restaurant, and another view of the mountain, said Thompson.

Thompson said, "During construction, there were many sightings of bears up on the ski trails. I felt like the bears needed to be represented. The great room (cafeteria) has two bears hanging out high in the beams. Brandon Wilson is a local Vermonter that chain sawed/carved these."

In the restaurant and bar, table bases, bar stools and chairs were made by Robert Beall, a blacksmith from East Montpelier, said Thompson.

Lyndon Furniture made coffee tables, dining room tables and stump end tables for each room in the hotel. The business also made the table tops for the bar and restaurant.

There are other stumps that were turned into useful furnishings in the hotel which came from the property of David Allard, former owner of Lyndon Furniture. Thompson said, "David felled, stripped and cut the stumps with his grandson."

Thompson also visited local secondhand shops where she found some reclaimed wood artwork, she said. Paintings were also purchased from art galleries in St. Johnsbury for the hotel.

The works of many Vermont artists were selected to decorate the new hotel throughout, as well as local photographers' works and a sculpture.

In addition to Edmund's Coffee Shop overlooking the slopes, there is also a full-service restaurant, Willoughby's, The Gap pub overlooking Willoughby Gap, and a grab-and-go cafeteria-style eatery. The hotel also has an arcade, ski shop, retail store, and an outdoor pool and hot tub with heated walkways and deck for year-round use.

Edmund's is named after one of the founders of the Town of Burke, said Sechler, so is a nod to the town's history.

All of the 116 rooms are equipped with kitchenettes (studio rooms) to full-size kitchens for the larger suites.

There is also the original lodge, at the Sherburne Base Lodge, where the Tamarack Grille has long drawn in locals and visitors to the mountain, and will be in operation this winter as well.

Tim Tierney, executive director of the nonprofit Kingdom Trails, which brings mountain bikers to the East Burke area he sees as "an outdoors destination wonderland."

"The word is out, this is a wonderful facility," said Tierney.

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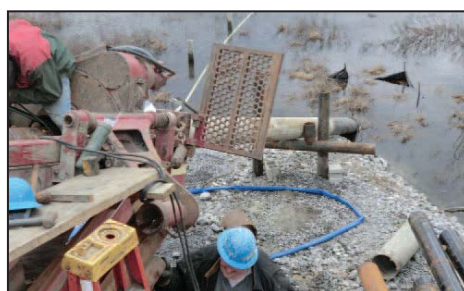
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# Calendar

Continued from Page 15

northcountrychorus.org.

## Saturday, Dec. 3

9 a.m. - Holiday Fair, Littleton First United Methodist Church. For info: Debbie, 603-444-5567.

10 a.m. - Burklyn Arts Holiday Fair, Lyndon Town School. For info: Linda Palmer, 802-626-9631.

10 a.m. - Christmas Artisan's Show, Wooden Horse Arts Guild. For info: woodenhorsearts.com.

10 a.m. - Lunenburg Gingerbread Bazaar, Lunenburg Primary School. For info: www.topofthecommon.org, Chris at 802-892-6654.

10 a.m. - Christmas Bazaar, Durrell Memorial Church. For info: bethlehemwhitemtns.com.

10 a.m. - Winter Farmers' Market, St. Johnsbury Welcome Center. For info: sites.google.com/site/caledoniafarmersmarket.

11 a.m. - Santa Festival and Santa Run, around Newport. For info: newportrecreation.org.

12:55 p.m. - Metropolitan Opera Live - The Magic Flute, Catamount Arts. For info: catamountarts.org.

2 p.m. - High Holiday Tea, Peacham Library. For info: 802-592-3216.

5 p.m. - Community Spaghetti Dinner, Durrell Memorial Church. For info: bethlehemwhitemtns.com.

7 p.m. - Fireside Fiddlers' Christmas Show, Colebrook Country Club. For info: gnwca.org

7:30 p.m. - The Turning of the Year: A holiday celebration with John Whelan, Low Lily and Katie McNally, Court Street Arts. For info: courtstreetarts.org.

7:30 p.m. - North Country Chorus Christmas Concert, Wells River Congregational Church. For info: northcountrychorus.org.

## Sunday, Dec. 4

10 a.m. - Burklyn Arts Holiday Fair, Lyndon Town School. For info: Linda Palmer, 802-626-9631.

3 p.m. - North Country Chorus Christmas Concert, Peacham Congregational Church. For info: northcountrychorus.org.

5 p.m. - Lunenburg Memory Tree and community carol sing, Lunenburg Methodist Church and Common. For info: www.topofthecommon.org, Chris at 802-892-6654.

6 p.m. - Lower Waterford Congregational Church Memory Tree lighting. For info: Carroll Campbell, 802-748-3455.

## Tuesday, Dec. 6

1:30 p.m. - Community movie - Holiday Inn, Catamount Arts. For info: catamountarts.org.

7 p.m. - National Theatre Live - War Horse, Catamount Arts. For info: catamountarts.org.

## Wednesday, Dec. 7

10:30 a.m. - Schoolltime Performance - Junkman, Catamount Arts. For info: catamountarts.org.

5:30 p.m. - Contemporary line dancing, Troy Parrish Hall. For info: jayvt.com.

7 p.m. - First Wednesdays, Goodrich Memorial Library, Classic Films of 1966. For info: vermonthumanities.org.

7 p.m. - Vermont Reads Shackleton - Antarctica: A year on ice, Catamount Arts. For info: stjathenaum.org.

7 p.m. - Community Holiday Celebration, St. Mark's Episcopal Church. For info: nowplayingnewport.com.



A scenic view from the snowmobile trails in the far north of New Hampshire.

info: 802-592-3216.

12:55 p.m. - Metropolitan Opera Live - L'Amour de Loin, Catamount Arts. For info: catamountarts.org.

7 p.m. - Jess Klein, 42 Maple. For info: catamountarts.org.

## Sunday, Dec. 11

9:30 a.m. - The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe, Littleton First United Methodist Church. For info: Debbie, 603-444-5567.

11:30 a.m. - No Room At The Inn Nativity scene display, Lyndonville First Congregational Church. For info: Teresa, 802-626-9570.

3 p.m. - Holiday Concert, LRHS select choir. For info: nowplayingnewport.com.

6:30 p.m. - Live Nativity followed by refreshments, Whitefield Common and Christian Church. For info: 603-837-2469.

## Tuesday, Dec. 13

12:45 p.m. - Open art studio, Bradford, Vermont. For info: recreation@bradford-vt.us, 802-333-3549.

3 p.m. - Lego challenge, St. Johnsbury Athenaeum. For info: stjathenaum.org.

## Wednesday, Dec. 14

5:30 p.m. - Contemporary line dancing, Troy Parrish Hall. For info: jayvt.com.

7 p.m. - Vermont Reads Shackleton - Chasing Ice, Catamount Arts. For info: stjathenaum.org.

## Thursday, Dec. 15

7 p.m. - National Theatre Live - No Man's Land, Catamount Arts. For info: catamountarts.org.

## Saturday, Dec. 17

Children's Christmas Party, Littleton First United Methodist Church. For info: Debbie, 603-444-5567.

9 a.m. - Texas Hold'em, Westfield Community Center. For info: jayvt.com.

10 a.m. - Winter Farmers' Market, St. Johnsbury Welcome Center. For info: sites.google.com/site/caledoniafarmersmarket.

12:55 p.m. - Metropolitan Opera Live - L'Amour de Loin, Catamount Arts. For info: catamountarts.org.

1 p.m. - TUBAChristmas, Trinity United Methodist Church in Colebrook. For info: gnwca.org.

7:30 p.m. - The John Larouche Trio, The Music Box. For info: themusicboxvt.org.

9 p.m. - Led Zeppelin Tribute - Get The Led Out, Jay Peak Resort. For info: jaypeakresort.com.

## Sunday, Dec. 18

12:55 p.m. - Bolshoi Ballet - The Nutcracker, Catamount Arts. For info: catamountarts.org.

## Thursday, Dec. 8

6 p.m. - North Country Toastmasters, Beal House Inn. For info: 603-396-5807.

7 p.m. - Winter Concert, Lyndon Institute. For info: lyndoninstitute.org.

## Friday, Dec. 9

4:30 p.m. - Barnyard Bingo, American Legion Post 30 Lyndon. For info: Karen, 802-535-5563.

7 p.m. - Vienna Boys Choir, Catamount Arts. For info: catamountarts.org.

## Saturday, Dec. 10

9 a.m. - Victorian Holiday, all around St. Johnsbury. For info: discoverstjohnsbury.com.

10 a.m. - Victorian Holiday Craft, Catamount Outback Artspace. For info: catamountarts.org.

10 a.m. - String Art workshop, Littleton Studio School. For info: littleton.nhcrafts.org.

10 a.m. - Santa, Crafts and Latkes, Peacham Library. For

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# HUNTING SEASON DATES

## VERMONT

This information covers Wildlife Management Units C, D1, D2, E, H1 and H2

### BIG GAME HUNTING

- Black bear, late season - through Nov. 20
- Deer (rifle) - through Nov. 27
- Deer (muzzleloader) - Dec. 3 to 11
- Deer (archery) - Dec. 3 to 11

### SMALL GAME HUNTING

- Gray squirrel - through Dec. 31
- Hare and rabbit - through March 12, 2017 (WMU D and E through March 31)

### GAME BIRD SEASON

- Ruffed grouse - through Dec. 31
- Woodcock - through Nov. 14
- Snow goose - through Dec. 27
- Crow - through Dec. 19
- Gray squirrel - through Dec. 31

### FURBEARER HUNTING

- Raccoon - through Dec. 31
- Red and gray fox - through Feb. 12, 2017
- Coyote, opossum, skunk, weasel - no closed season
- Beaver, otter, mink, fisher, marten, lynx, wolf, eastern mountain lion - no open season

### FURBEARER TRAPPING

- Beaver trapping - through March 31, 2017
- Fisher - Dec. 1 to 31
- Bobcat - Dec. 1 to 16
- Mink, skunk, red and gray fox, raccoon, coyote, opossum, weasel - through Dec. 31
- Otter trapping - through Feb. 28, 2017
- Muskrat - through March 31, 2017
- Marten, lynx, wolf, mountain lion - no open season

More information, including hunting tips, can be found at [www.vtfishandwildlife.com/](http://www.vtfishandwildlife.com/)



Hunter Murray poses with a prize deer.

FILE PHOTO



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hunt/seasons. Please double-check all dates before heading into the woods.

**NEW HAMPSHIRE**

This information covers Wildlife Management Units A1, A2, B, C1, D1, D2 and E3

**BEARS**

Bear (general season) - through Nov. 22 in C1 and D2

**WATERFOWL**

- Brant - through Dec. 2
- Canada geese - through Dec. 12
- Common snipe - through Nov. 14
- Coot - through Dec. 2
- Crow - through Nov. 30; March 16 to 31
- Ducks (mallards, black ducks, wood ducks, hooded mergansers, pintails, canvasbacks, redheads, scaups, scoters, eiders, long-tailed ducks) - through Dec. 2
- Falconry - Dec. 13 to Jan. 26, 2017
- Snow geese - through Dec. 12
- Wood duck - through Nov. 14

**DEER**

- Archery - through Dec. 15 (Dec. 8 in WMU A)
- Firearms - through Dec. 4 (Nov. 27 in WMU A)

**SMALL GAME AND FURBEARERS**

- Snowshoe hare - through March 31, 2017
- Cottontail rabbit - closed season
- Gray squirrel - through Dec. 31
- Ring-necked pheasant - through Dec. 31
- Ruffed grouse, northern bobwhite quail, chukar, Hungarian partridge - through Dec. 31
- Crow - through Nov. 30; March 16 to 31

**FURBEARERS**

- Gray fox, red fox, opossum, skunk, weasel, raccoon - through March 31, 2017
- Fisher - through Jan. 31, 2017
- Mink, muskrat - through April 10, 2017
- Coyote - no closed season
- Coyote night hunting - Jan. 1 through March 31, 2017

**PHEASANT**

Pheasant - through Dec. 31

**TURKEY**

- Fall archery - through Dec. 15 (Dec. 8 in WMU A)
- More information, including hunting tips, can be found at [www.wildlife.state.nh.us/hunting/hunt-dates.html](http://www.wildlife.state.nh.us/hunting/hunt-dates.html). Please double-check all dates before heading into the woods.



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# WHAT SHOULD WE EXPECT FOR WEATHER THIS WINTER?

**BY LEAH CAREY**  
Staff Writer

If you've ever listened to Vermont Public Radio's "Eye On The Sky" weather forecasts, or their daily "Eye On The Night Sky" broadcasts, you're probably familiar with Mark Breen.

Breen is the senior meteorologist at the Fairbanks Museum and Planetarium in St. Johnsbury, where he and his colleagues are the voices of the weather for VPR. We spoke with him in early October, before the winter weather could be accurately predicted.

Since last winter was such a dud for snow enthusiasts, we checked in with Breen to learn about what creates the winter conditions we experience.

First things first: Can we all agree that last winter was terrible? "It depends on your perspective," Breen said diplomatically. "Some people really enjoyed the fact that they didn't have to shovel. But I agree, the majority of us think it was a lousy winter. It was the least amount of snow we've ever had and it was one of the warmest weathers on record. Yuck!"

The ocean temperature is one of the key factors to determin-

ing the type of weather we will get. "Because the ocean covers 75 percent of the globe, it's going to influence the air that's above it," Breen explained. "One of the things we don't understand is how the ocean changes its temperature profile. That's where the challenge is in terms of forecasting. If a patch of water that's warm suddenly cools off, or cold water warms up, it's going to change how the weather behaves."

Last winter, he said, there was a "huge El Niño out in the Pacific that is no longer in play. [Editor's note: *El Niño refers to a warming of surface waters in the Pacific Ocean.*] So I can be very confident that this winter will be different than last year," Breen said with a laugh.

He went on to predict that "chances are" it won't be any warmer than last winter and that we'll get more snow.

But, based on the long-range forecasts that he is looking at, that doesn't mean that the snow will necessarily come at the beginning of the winter. "It might be mild right through the end of the year, and then come January things might get a little boisterous," he said.

That's probably good news for the ski industry.

"Historically a cold snowy October is not a good thing for winter lovers," he said. "There's an old saying - going way back before computers were even around - 'October mild, February wild.'"

Despite the long-range models and the old wives tales, though, Breen is keeping an open mind. "Long range forecasting is still in its infancy," he said. "We still don't understand all the things that go into it."

**Different kinds of El Niños**  
"It's one more piece to the

puzzle of understanding," Breen said. "Even if it's completely out of the ordinary, it gives you an idea of what's going on. And one of the things that is important to our weather pattern globally, an El Niño will make the entire globe warmer."

There are different types of El Niño effects based on where the warm water is located, according to Breen. "It has to do with whether the warm water is closer to the Americas, or whether it's out in the Pacific. We had an El Niño a couple years ago that produced a very cold winter here. So El Niño doesn't equal warm winter."

Another factor is the temperature of the water off the east

coast, since we are much closer to the Atlantic than the Pacific.

"In the past four to five years, water off the east coast has been abnormally warm. We don't know why, it just has," said Breen. "There's a thought that it's kind of run its course, that it's going to collapse and grow colder. And if that's the case, that would also affect our weather here. If we had cold water off the east coast, that



PHOTO BY LEAH CAREY  
Mark Breen looks ahead at what might happen this winter.

would tend to keep cold weather here."

Volcanic activity is also important, Breen explained, because a large number of active volcanoes can put a lot of dust into the atmosphere, blocking the sun and cooling things down. "That can be a factor."

But none of that helps Breen say at the end of September what the weather will be like in January.

"Everybody wants to know what the winter is going to be like. I have found in the museum records that the months of October

See **Winter Weather**, Page 27

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# WHEN IT'S COLD OUTSIDE, GO WATCH THE STARS

**BY LEAH CAREY**  
Staff Writer

In addition to his fascination with weather, Mark Breen is also the planetarium director at the Fairbanks Planetarium, the only public facility of its kind in Vermont.

He shared with us what we should be looking for in the winter skies this year, adding that winter is an especially great time for stargazing.

"One of the things that I love about winter is you don't have to stay up until 10 o'clock at night like you do in the summer to see the stars. They're out at 4:30 or 5 o'clock in the afternoon," he said. "Admittedly, usually if it's clear, it's cold. There's no question about that ... But if you're bundled up and you're nice and warm, staying out on a winter evening is really quite a treat."

Part of the reason is that stars in the winter are brighter than in the summer.

"It just has to do with where the earth is in its orbit and how our galaxy is lined up," Breen said. "If we were living about 12,000 years from now, that wouldn't be true. But I'm thinking most of our readers won't be hanging around for that!"

## Piercingly bright Venus

"Something that's going to be a great showpiece this winter any time it's out is Venus," he said. "Venus is going to put on a marvelous show - it will be piercingly bright in the western skies, right through the winter."

He said it will lay low in the west until late in November, but it will suddenly pop up into easy view in December, and by Christmas Eve it will offer a "beautiful view." It will remain easily visible throughout January and February.

## Old favorite Orion

"There's probably two or three constellations that people are really familiar with," Breen said. "Orion used to be a motion picture company and their symbol was actually the constellation pattern. It's three bright stars in the middle, two bright ones on the top and two bright ones on the bottom. And it kind of suggests an outline of a person."

Orion is a classic winter constellation that will start becoming visible in the late evenings in November, and remain in the skies into April.

## A bashful meteor shower

Mid-December is host to the Geminid meteor shower. It provides, according to Breen, practically twice as many opportunities to see shooting stars (at over 100 per hour) than its better-known summer companion, the Perseid meteor shower (at about 60 per hour).

However, December is also the cloudiest month of the year in this area. "It's not a good combination," Breen said. "I think I've only seen a handful of Geminid meteors in several years, just because chances are it's going to be cloudy ... but if you do happen to catch it on a great night, it's quite prolific."

## What is the Milky Way?

Breen spent a few minutes explaining what the Milky Way is and why it will be so bright in the winter skies.

"The Milky Way is actually our galaxy," Breen said. "The Milky Way is a huge system of stars that's essentially flat and round like a disk. And we're in it. We're in this disk. So when we look sideways, we see most of the other stars that are there in the disk. We call that band of stars the Milky Way."

It is so called because all the points of light that make it up combine into a vaguely milky-looking visage.

"But if you have good eyesight or a pair of binoculars - and nothing fancy, just any pair that you've got knocking around - and a clear night, you can actually see that it has a pebbly, grainy texture to it. And that's the stars. Those are all the gazillions of stars that are part of the galaxy."

## As long as we're asking questions, what the heck is a light year?

Most of us can probably hang on to the concept that a light year is a measure of distance - specifically, the distance light travels in one year. But when we hear the number - one light year is six trillion miles - it's hard to wrap our minds around it.

"It's so hard to conceive. Space is huge!" Breen said. "You can say a star is 30 light years away, but that doesn't really mean anything to us."

Rather than trying to explain the physics, Breen gave a way to think about it in terms of comparison.

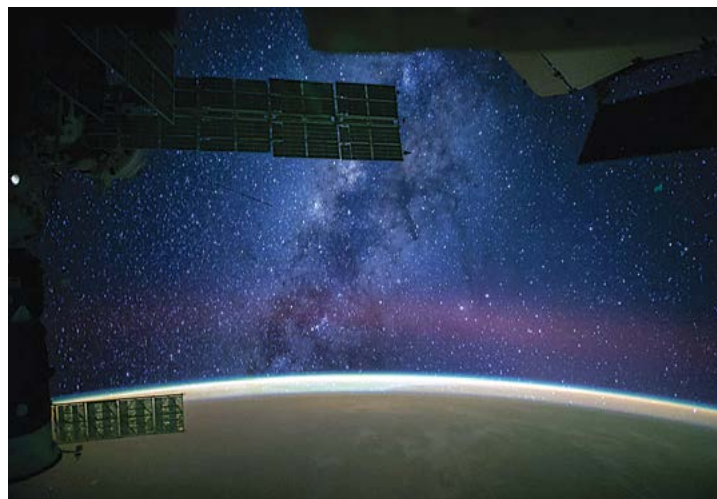
"We are 93 million miles from the sun, so we could say that it's 8 light minutes away," Breen said. "So if you compare 8 minutes to 30 years, you suddenly get a much better idea ... If you have to wait 8 minutes for something, or you have to wait 30 years for something, that's a very different thing."

## Daily shows at the planetarium

For those days when the weather is truly frightful, the Fairbanks Museum and Planetarium can provide a great indoor activity.

There is a daily show at 3:30 p.m. Weekends also boast a 12:30 and a 1:30 p.m. show. The 12:30 show is usually a commercial full-dome presentation, but the 1:30 (usually) and 3:30 (almost always) are an exploration of that evening's skies by one of the museum's in-house astronomers.

"It's a relatively rare thing around the world. Many planetariums don't do live programming," Breen said. "They don't have enough people who are familiar enough with the sky to be able to stand up for a half an hour or 45 minutes and talk about what's going on in the sky. We are very fortunate here to have four people on staff who are really good at describing the sky. When people come here, they can ask questions of the presenter. It's a great experience."



NASA astronaut Reid Wiseman captured this image from the International Space Station and posted it to social media on Sept. 28, 2014, writing, "The Milky Way steals the show from Sahara sands that make the Earth glow orange."

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# ON THE SNOWMOBILE TRAILS

**BY LEAH CAREY**  
Staff Writer

Russell Wood has been snowmobiling in the woods of northern New Hampshire, he says, “forever.”

But it was his wife who suggested he get into the snowmobile guiding business.

“She took a job waitressing part time,” he said. “And she said a lot of people would come in and say, That’s it! I’ll never go snowmobiling again! They were renting from the lodging companies and they’d give you a map. They’d say, We got lost and ran out of gas!”

“She said, They really need someone who will do tours.” That was six years ago. Now Wood operates Northern New Hampshire Snowmobile Tours in Clarksville, New Hampshire.

The Pittsburg/Clarksville/Stewartstown area is a popular haven for snowmobilers. Pittsburg alone has over 200 miles of snowmobile trails.

Wood partners with two locals businesses who rent snowmobiles, and he takes riders out on the trails for four-hour

and eight-hour trips.

“I specialize in taking people that have never been on snowmobiles before, showing them how to ride it, and then going slow and stopping a lot,” he said.

It involves helping people get beyond a lot of misconceptions. “They get out there thinking they’re going to freeze to death and it’s like, Oh my God, I’m dying I’m so hot!” he said. “You’re actually working when you’re riding a snowmobile. Don’t get me wrong - you go out on a day that’s 15 below zero, it’s cold. But for the most part, on a 10-degree day, you’re working.”

Despite the noise made by the motors, Wood said that he sees a lot of wildlife out on the trails.

“I’ve almost been run into by a deer,” he said. “We see deer all the time. Moose, it’s a little harder. I’ll go to places where we have a lot of moose, but you won’t always see one.”

He also sees lots of foxes, and last winter he had an ongoing relationship with a pine marten. “It’ll hide in the rocks. You show up there and if you had any crumbled crackers, you’d throw them down and he’d come out and steal them and run back,” Wood remembered. “Every time I went there, he was there.”



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**Tips for first-timers**

Whether you’re going out with a tour guide or on your own, be sure to dress warm. Wear two layers of clothing so that as you heat up, you have options.

Before you arrive to pick up your rental snowmobile, ask what is included in the rental. Most places include a helmet. Some others may also include winter weather gear - coats, gloves, winter pants. If they aren’t included in your rental, be sure to bring your own.

Plus, Wood said, “It’s work! People come thinking, I’m just going out for a leisurely ride. They come back and say, God I’m tired!”

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**Safety tips**

Wood is vehement about the first safety tip: NEVER ride alone.

Last year there was a man in northern New Hampshire who was out riding the trails alone, Wood said. "He happened to be out on one of the trails that doesn't get used by very many people. It goes off around and there's nothing to see. He got off into the deep snow and flipped it and he was under the snowmobile. He was out there all night. I think they found him the next day."

Also, for your safety and the safety of everyone on the trails, stay within the posted speed limit. "Watch out for other people. That's a big safety tip," he said.

When you go out, be sure that you're carrying water, matches, a flashlight, a compass and trail map with you. The compass and trail map can be your saving grace if, like those people at the diner, you get lost on the trails and there aren't always a lot of other people around to help guide you home. "You can get out in remote areas - Boundary Pond is right on the Canada/New Hampshire border, way out on a dead end road, right at the tip of the top of New Hampshire," Wood said. "The road up there is only snowmobile in the winter, there's no other way of getting there."

Finally, stay off frozen ponds and lakes. Wood won't take his tours out onto frozen water, period.

**First-timers**

Wood is dedicated to helping first-time riders

have a great time. One woman particularly sticks in his mind.

"I could tell she was scared to death. I went a little bit at 10 or 12 miles an hour, and at 12 miles an hour, I'd have to stop and wait for her to catch up," Wood said. "I says, you've gotta stop white knuckling it. I can tell that your knuckles are white even through the gloves."

He explained to her that the sled wasn't going to go off the trail - the skittering of the steering was a result of the snowmobile skis following in the snowmobile tracks ahead of it.

"We've got to go a little faster, or we're only going to go eight miles in four hours," Wood said. "She let loose and she finally got the hang of it. By the time we'd gone to Diamond Ridge to see the view and headed back, I had her up to 40 miles an hour. She was zipping right along and enjoyed it."

He also takes care to make sure that riders see the sights. Often, people get so focused on the track directly in front of them that they forget to look around.

"I could ride them around in circles all day if they're brand new to it, and they wouldn't know," Wood chuckled. "It's the service part. Going out, stopping. You're stopping and they don't know why you're stopping. But there's a beautiful view there. They're tickled to get a picture with the view."

All snowmobile photos courtesy of Russell Wood




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# SNOWMOBILE CLUBS

## NEW HAMPSHIRE

Information from [www.nhsa.com](http://www.nhsa.com), the website of the New Hampshire Snowmobile Association

### GRAFTON COUNTY

**Bethlehem** – Mount Agassiz Trail Association – [www.think-sno.com](http://www.think-sno.com)

**Haverhill** – Connecticut Valley Snowmobile Club – [www.ctvalleysnowmobileclub.com](http://www.ctvalleysnowmobileclub.com)

**Lisbon** – Lisbon Stump Jumpers – [www.lisbonstumpjumpers.org](http://www.lisbonstumpjumpers.org)

**Littleton** – Littleton Off Road Riders – [www.littletonoffroadriders.com](http://www.littletonoffroadriders.com)

**Lyme** – Lyme Pinnacle Snowmobile Club

**Monroe** – Monroe Bumper Humpers – [dmitton@roadrunner.com](mailto:dmitton@roadrunner.com)

### COOS COUNTY

**Berlin** – White Mountain Ridge Runners – [www.whitemtridgerunners.com](http://www.whitemtridgerunners.com)

**Colebrook** – Colebrook Ski Bees – [www.colebrookski-bees.com](http://www.colebrookski-bees.com)

**Colebrook** – Swift Diamond Riders – [www.swiftdiamondriders.com](http://www.swiftdiamondriders.com)

**Dalton** – Dalton Ridge Riders – [www.daltonridgerunners.com](http://www.daltonridgerunners.com)

**Gorham** – Presidential Range Riders – [www.presidentialrangeriders.org](http://www.presidentialrangeriders.org)

**Groveton** – Groveton Trailblazers – [www.groveton-trailblazers.com](http://www.groveton-trailblazers.com)

**Jefferson** – Jefferson Hi-Landers – [www.Jeffersonhi-landers.com](http://www.Jeffersonhi-landers.com)

**Jefferson** – Waumbek Methna Snowmobile Club – [www.waumbekmethna.com](http://www.waumbekmethna.com)

**Lancaster** – Lancaster Snow Drifters – [www.lancaster-snowdrifters.org](http://www.lancaster-snowdrifters.org)

**Milan** – Milan All Weather Riders – [www.milanall-weatherriders.webs.com](http://www.milanall-weatherriders.webs.com)

**North Stratford** – Startford Nighthawks – [www.stratfordnighthawks.com](http://www.stratfordnighthawks.com)

**Twin Mountain** – Twin Mountain Snowmobile Club – [www.twinmtnsnowmobile.org](http://www.twinmtnsnowmobile.org)

**Whitefield** – Whitefield Sno Kings – [www.snokings.com](http://www.snokings.com)

## VERMONT

Information from [www.vtvast.org](http://www.vtvast.org), the website of the Vermont Association of Snow Travelers

### CALEDONIA COUNTY

**Burke** – Drift Skippers – [www.burkedriftskippers.com](http://www.burkedriftskippers.com)

**Danville** – Danville S-Ski-Mos – [www.danville-s-skimos.com](http://www.danville-s-skimos.com)



**Groton** – Buckaroos of 302 – [www.buckaroosof302.com](http://www.buckaroosof302.com)

**East Hardwick** – Coles Pond Sledders – [www.colespond-sledders.com](http://www.colespond-sledders.com)

**Hardwick** – Hardwick Sno-Flake Ridge Runners – 802-371-8901

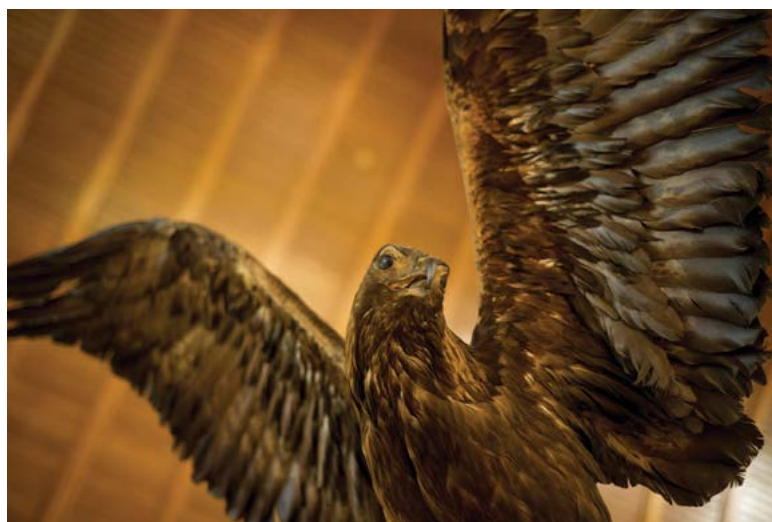
**Lyndonville** – Lyndon Sno Cruisers – [www.lyndonsnocruisers.com](http://www.lyndonsnocruisers.com)

**Newark** – Newark E-Z Riders – [www.newarkezriders.org](http://www.newarkezriders.org)

**Peacham** – Bayley Hazen Road Snowmobile Club – [www.bhrsnowclub.org](http://www.bhrsnowclub.org)

**Ryegate** – Ryegate Rovers – no contact info available

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**Sheffield** – Caledonia County Snowmobile Trail Club – [www.snowmobilecaledoniavt.com](http://www.snowmobilecaledoniavt.com)

**St. Johnsbury** – St. Johnsbury Sno-Blazers - no contact info available

**Walden** – Cole’s Pond Sledders – [www.colespondsledders.com](http://www.colespondsledders.com)

**Waterford** – Waterford Ridge Runners - [www.facebook.com/WRRSnowmobileClub](http://www.facebook.com/WRRSnowmobileClub)

**Wheelock** – Winter Wanderers - no contact info available

**ESSEX COUNTY**

**Brighton** – Brighton Snowmobile Club – [www.brightonsnowmobile.org](http://www.brightonsnowmobile.org)

**Canaan** – Canaan Border Riders – [www.canaanborderriders.org](http://www.canaanborderriders.org)

**Granby** – Moose River Rock Dodgers - [mooseriverrockdodgers.homestead.com](http://mooseriverrockdodgers.homestead.com)

**Guildhall** – Connecticut Valley Sno-Riders – [www.ctvalleysnoriders.com](http://www.ctvalleysnoriders.com)

**Lunenburg** – Lunenburg Polar Bears - [vt.vast.org/lunenburg-polar-bears.html](http://vt.vast.org/lunenburg-polar-bears.html)

**Norton** - Northeast Kingdom Snow Blasters - [www.northeastkingdomsnowblasters.com](http://www.northeastkingdomsnowblasters.com)

**ORLEANS COUNTY**

**Craftsbury** – Craftsbury Snowmobile Club – no contact info available

**Derby** – Drift Dusters – [www.driftdusters.com](http://www.driftdusters.com)

**Glover** - Glover Trailwinders Snowmobiling Club - [www.glovertrailwinders.com](http://www.glovertrailwinders.com)

**Newport Center** – North Country Mountaineers – [www.northcountrymountaineers.com](http://www.northcountrymountaineers.com)

**North Troy** – Hazen’s Notch Snowmobile Club – [hazen-notchsnowmobileclub@gmail.com](mailto:hazen-notchsnowmobileclub@gmail.com)

**Orleans** – Orleans Snow Stormers – [www.orleanssnowstormers.com](http://www.orleanssnowstormers.com)

**Troy** - Country Riders - [www.countryridersvt.com](http://www.countryridersvt.com)



# Winter Weather

Continued from Page 22

and November are much more indicative of what the weather is going to do, rather than what happened this summer.”

**Old Farmer’s Almanac**

Breen, like most meteorologists, doesn’t put a lot of stock into the predictions made by the Old Farmer’s Almanac. But that doesn’t keep him from reading it.

“It’s always fun to read!” he said. “I would say that because long-range forecasting is still in its infancy and they’ve been doing it for 200 years, they do have things that they use, and some of them are quite legitimate. They look at ocean temperature patterns. They also look at volcanic activity ... and then they have secret parts of their formula that I have no idea what they’re looking at!”

So how did the Old Farmer’s Almanac fare last year?

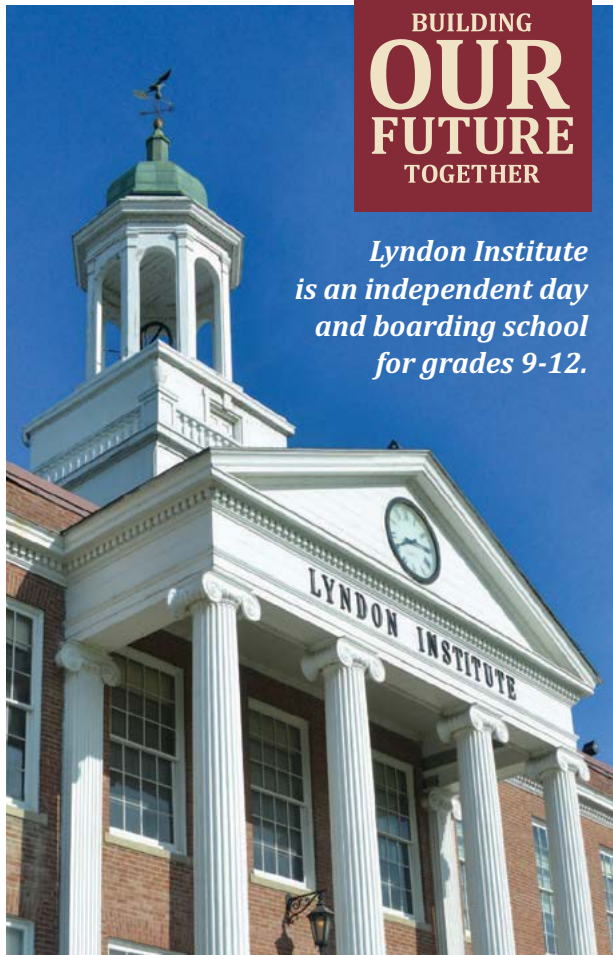
“Last winter’s prediction for the winter was for a cold, snowy winter. So I don’t think they could have been more wrong,” Breen said.

And what are they predicting for this winter?

“A cold snowy winter, of course,” Breen chuckled. “If you keep forecasting the same thing, you’re guaranteed to be right at some point.”

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# Calendar

Continued from Page 17

12:55 p.m. - Metropolitan Opera Live - The Magic Flute, Catamount Arts. For info: catamountarts.org.

4 p.m. - Candlelight Christmas service, Granby Victory Congregational Church. For info: Nellie, 802-328-2658.

7 p.m. - Concert with Dennis Hartwell, Littleton First United Methodist Church. For info: Debbie, 603-444-5567.

## Monday, Dec. 19

5 p.m. - Game night, Colatina Exit. For info: cohase.org.

## Tuesday, Dec. 20

1:30 p.m. - Movie - White Christmas, Catamount Arts. For info: catamountarts.org.

3 p.m. - Lego challenge, St. Johnsbury Athenaeum. For info: stjathenaeum.org.

6 p.m. - Coloring club, Catamount Arts. For info: catamountarts.org.

7 p.m. - Movie - White Christmas, Catamount Arts. For info: catamountarts.org.

## Wednesday, Dec. 21

5:30 p.m. - Contemporary line dancing, Troy Parrish Hall. For info: jayvt.com.

7 p.m. - Vermont Reads Shackleton - Encounters From The End Of The World, Catamount Arts. For info: stjathenaeum.org.

## Thursday, Dec. 22

7 p.m. - National Theatre Live - No Man's Land, Catamount Arts. For info: catamountarts.org.

## Saturday, Dec. 24

6:30 p.m. - Candlelight Christmas Eve service, Whitefield Community Baptist Church. For info: 603-837-2469.

7 p.m. - Candlelight Christmas service, North Danville Baptist Church. For info: Rev. Sargent, 802-748-1456.

## Tuesday, Dec. 27

3 p.m. - Lego challenge, St. Johnsbury Athenaeum. For info: stjathenaeum.org.

## Wednesday, Dec. 28

5:30 p.m. - Contemporary line dancing, Troy Parrish Hall. For info: jayvt.com.

7 p.m. - Bolshoi Ballet - The Nutcracker, Catamount Arts. For info: catamountarts.org.

## Saturday, Dec. 31

4 p.m. to midnight - St. Johnsbury First Night, locations around St. Johnsbury. For info: firstnightnorth.org.

## Sunday, Jan. 1

9 a.m. - Resolve To Revolve Fatbike Demo Day, Kingdom Trails. For info: kingdomtrails.org.

## Tuesday, Jan. 3

3 p.m. - Lego challenge, St. Johnsbury Athenaeum. For info: stjathenaeum.org.

6 p.m. - Coloring club, Catamount Arts. For info: catamountarts.org.

## Wednesday, Jan. 4

5:30 p.m. - Contemporary line dancing, Troy Parrish Hall. For info: jayvt.com.

7 p.m. - First Wednesdays - Face to Face with the Emotional Brain, St. Johnsbury Athenaeum. For info: vermonthumanities.org.

7 p.m. - First Wednesdays - Buddhism and Christianity, Goodrich Memorial Library. For info: vermonthumanities.org.

## Saturday, Jan. 7

10 a.m. - Winter Farmers' Market, St. Johnsbury Welcome Center. For info: sites.google.com/site/caledoniafarmersmarket.

11 a.m. - Ski The East Junior Extreme Challenge, Jay Peak. For info: jaypeakresort.com.

12:55 p.m. - Metropolitan Opera Live - Nabucco, Catamount Arts. For info: catamountarts.org.

## Tuesday, Jan. 10

3 p.m. - Lego challenge, St. Johnsbury Athenaeum. For info: stjathenaeum.org.

## Wednesday, Jan. 11

5:30 p.m. - Contemporary line dancing, Troy Parrish Hall. For info: jayvt.com.

## Friday, Jan. 13

4:30 p.m. - Barnyard Bingo, American Legion Post 30 Lyndon. For info: Karen, 802-535-5563.

## Saturday, Jan. 14

12:30 p.m. - Freeride Rail Jam, Cannon Mountain. For info: cannonmt.com.

12:55 p.m. - Metropolitan Opera Live - Nabucco, Catamount Arts. For info: catamountarts.org.

3 p.m. - Ice Castle Work Day, Newport, Vermont. For info: newportrecreation.org.

## Monday, Jan. 16

5 p.m. - Game night, Colatina Exit. For info: cohase.org.

## Tuesday, Jan. 17

3 p.m. - Lego challenge, St. Johnsbury Athenaeum. For info: stjathenaeum.org.

6 p.m. - Coloring club, Catamount Arts. For info: catamountarts.org.

## Wednesday, Jan. 18

5:30 p.m. - Contemporary line dancing, Troy Parrish Hall. For info: jayvt.com.

## Friday, Jan. 20

6:30 p.m. - Madrigal Dinner 2017 : Arthur's Dark Angel, Monroe Town Hall. For info: northcountrychorus.org.

12:55 p.m. - Metropolitan Opera Live - Romeo et Juliette, Catamount Arts. For info: catamountarts.org.

3 p.m. - Ice Castle Work Day, Newport, Vermont. For info: newportrecreation.org.

6:30 p.m. - Madrigal Dinner 2017 : Arthur's Dark Angel, Monroe Town Hall. For info: northcountrychorus.org.

7 p.m. - Gaelynn Lea, 42 Maple. For info: catamountarts.org.



Ice figure created by the fountain at Lyndon State College.

FILE PHOTO

## Saturday, Jan. 21

9 a.m. - Texas Hold'em, Westfield Community Center. For info: jayvt.com.

10 a.m. - Winter Farmers' Market, St. Johnsbury Welcome Center. For info: sites.google.com/site/caledoniafarmersmarket.

7 p.m. - The Bombadils concert, Colebrook Country Club. For info: gnwca.org.

## Sunday, Jan. 22

12:55 p.m. - Bolshoi Ballet - The Sleeping

See **Calendar**, Page 37

If you love gliding across the ice, there are plenty of opportunities in the area to get your skates on. Many of them are outside, but Fenton Chester and the Ice Haus in Vermont boast indoor facilities so you can skate even on days with nasty weather!

**VERMONT**

**Fenton Chester Arena** - 145 College Hill Road, Lyndon Center - www.chesterarena.com

**Four Seasons Park** - Corner of Main and Winter streets in St. Johnsbury - 802-751-2304

**Ice Haus Arena** - Jay Peak Resort, Jay - 802-988-2750

**Newport City Skating Rink** - Gardner Park, Newport - 802-334-5718

**Portland Street Rink** - Corner of Portland and Concord Streets in St. Johnsbury - 802-751-2304

**NEW HAMPSHIRE**

**Bethlehem Recreation Park** - Corner of Main and Aggasize streets in Bethlehem - www.bethlehem-whitemtns.com/fun.html

**Franconia Skating Rink** - Behind the Abbie Greenleaf Library on Main Street in Franconia - 603-823-7752

**Remich Park** - 165 Pleasant St., Littleton - 603-444-2575 or www.littletonparksandrec.com

**North Country Community Recreation Center** - 33 Rec Center Road, Colebrook - 603-237-4019

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# EXTREME WINTER VISIT SANTA'S REINDEER... IN VERMONT

BY LEAH CAREY  
Staff Writer

You'd expect to take a long journey to meet Santa Claus and his friends. So it's no surprise that the Vermont Reindeer Farm is down a long dirt road, in a place many people would call "the middle of nowhere."

But it's well worth the trip to meet some of Santa's closest companions in Orleans.

The Reindeer Farm has a menagerie of animals to visit - chickens, goats, donkeys, pigs, cows and more. But it's the reindeer that catch people's attention.

"There's only a thousand or twelve hundred reindeer in the whole United States," said owner Pauline Broe. "Prancer is the only reindeer in Vermont right now."

Prancer came to Vermont eight years ago, joining ponies, donkeys, chickens, goats, pot-bellied pigs, guinea fowl and more.

"People wanted to come to the farm to see the reindeer." But, Broe said, "It's the pot-bellied pigs and the donkeys and the goats that steal the show. People love those animals."

Part of that is because it's fun to look at the reindeer, but they're saving their energy to help Santa on Christmas Eve. "Prancer looks cuddly and soft and wonderful, but she's really pretty persnickety," Broe said. "They really don't care about people. They don't want to be petted, they don't want to be



Photos courtesy of Vermont Reindeer Farm

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touched.”

Who does love the attention? The Christmas donkey! “We’ll put a jingle bell collar around him and fix him up to look Christmas-y,” Broe said. “They’re the cuddle factor.”

But that doesn’t stop people from wanting to know all about them.

A common question that Broe gets is about whether reindeer are mythical or real. Indeed, they are real.

They’re a cousin to the caribou, Broe said. Only reindeer and caribou grow antlers in both genders - leading many people to think that Prancer is a male, which she is not.

**Reindeer education**

During the winter, the Vermont Reindeer Farm has extensive snowshoeing trails open for visitors.

“We’ve got some snowshoes here,” Broe said. “But people bring their own a lot of the time. They can visit the animals when they come.”

When they come back in from their outdoor adventures, Broe will offer hot chocolate and cookies next to the wood stove.

She’ll also provide some reindeer education to teach people about the antlers and hooves and fur.

“Every year they grow their antlers in about April,” she said. “It’s amazing how fast they grow. It takes about three months for them to grow.”

They shed and regrow their antlers every year. The antlers grow inside a layer of velvet, which protects them and provides blood and nutrients to their growing antlers.

“Their antlers are like their fingerprints. They have the same growth pattern every year,” Broe said. “It’s really interesting to see that growth pattern - how his body tells him to grow those same antlers every single year.”

Many reindeer have a large portion of their antlers called a “paddle,” which they use to dig through the snow to find grass.

“They can smell to two feet under the snow,” Broe said.

The size of each reindeer’s antlers serves to mark their place in the herd.

“When Comet [a former male at Vermont Reindeer Farm] had his big antlers, he was the king out there. As soon as he shed those, even though he weighed 200 pounds more than [female Prancer], when she had her hard antlers, she ran the show. It’s survival of the fittest - whoever had the biggest antlers is going to get to the food first.”

**Visiting the reindeer farm**

The farm is generally open January through March by appointment, Broe said. She asks that people call ahead so she can heat up the wood stove and make sure the hot cocoa and hot apple cider are ready.

She’s also planning a special reindeer school several times this winter. “They can come and learn about the reindeer. Then they can go snowshoeing and actually take Prancer for a walk,” Broe said. She’ll offer pizza for lunch and then do a reindeer craft so



everyone can take home a piece of reindeer antler with them. Space will be limited, so call for dates.

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# EXTREME WINTER LOSING A TRUCK THROUGH THE ICE

**BY LEAH CAREY**  
Staff Writer

Last winter, Phil White experienced an ice enthusiast's worst nightmare: he lost his truck through the ice on Lake Memphremagog.

Being a good sport, he was willing to share his experience.

White is not your typical ice fisherman, driving his truck out to his ice shanty. Instead, he is the founder and director of the Kingdom Games, which brings skating and swimming events to Lake Memphremagog in the winter (for more about winter swimming turn to page 12.)

A couple years ago, White purchased a plow truck so he could plow an oval on the lake for the speed skating events.

In January 2016, he was out on the lake preparing the ice.

"I measured the ice carefully - it was 8 to 10 inches thick, and it seemed to be fine for the truck that I had," White said. "Not overly good, but if it was consistently thick, it was good ice. It was supporting the truck's weight



well."

He went out at 11 a.m. - it was in the 20s, and the sun was out. "The sun was warm on the ice," White said. It had also rained a bit the night before.

He said that plowing the oval went well, but things turned bad when he attempted to push back a snow bank on the side of the oval.

"When the plow hit the bank, the bank turned out to be frozen solid like a block of ice because of the rain the night before," White remembered. "The plow caught the bank, and the bank happened to be right on a crack in the ice, and the crack was

soft because it had warmed up a little bit. So I ended up pushing the plate of ice away and my truck wheels went down."

What did he think when he realized his truck was going through the ice? It's rather predictable, of course.

"Oh s\*\*\*!"

He immediately opened the door and was able to step out onto the ice. In fact, the whole thing happened in slow motion.



Phil White displays good humor at the site of his drowning truck. Left: White's truck disappears slowly through the ice.

FILE PHOTOS

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"It took about 20 minutes. I almost went in and attempted to back it up using four wheel drive," White said.

He decided against it, realizing that it could make a bad situation worse. Instead, he reached into the cab and to turn off the ignition and get his keys.

"I saw there wasn't anything crazy happening quickly," he said. "I started to go back for the chainsaw but I said, I'd better be a little smarter than I've been."

Listening to the story, it doesn't sound like White was ever in imminent danger. But the saving grace of the situation is that this happened in broad daylight with plenty of people around.

"There are a lot of stories about people out on the ice alone at dusk or in the dark and there's no one around to even know that they've gone down, let alone help them," he said. "To be out there in a heavy vehicle at night, that's when I think some of the worst consequences occur, when a truck goes down through the ice."

It would be six months before the truck was fished out of the lake in June 2016.

The truck was only about 100 yards off shore, but it wasn't an easy find. The first time they went out, they searched for about four hours but couldn't pinpoint its location.

The second time the crew searched they found it and, with the help of divers, it took about six hours to haul it out.

"It ended up being worth nothing except for parts for my new Dodge plow truck," White chuckled.

**What he does now**

Having learned his lesson the hard way, White now keeps additional safety equipment in his truck and takes additional safety measures.

As for equipment, he's a fan of the small ice picks that Nordic skaters hang in a pouch around their necks. "If you fall through the ice, you can pull them off very easily. One in each hand can help you pick your way back onto the ice, so you're not just fighting it."

He also keeps a flotation device in his truck. "It's like the one that you use in an airplane. It inflates when you want it to

inflate, so that should be handy."

He's also more careful about how and when he takes his truck out on the ice. "I bought an ATV with a plow and I have a snowblower attached to that, so there's some lighter equipment that I can take out on the ice earlier in the season."

And, in this case, size matters.

"I think instead of waiting until it's 8 inches thick, I'll wait until it's 12 inches thick," he said. "One of the things I've learned is that once I think I have enough ice to plow, I need to avoid warm days unless it's really, really thick."

**Safety tips from someone who's been there**

Here are White's tips for others who are thinking of taking a truck out on the ice:

- Check the ice ahead of you on foot before driving over it. "Sometimes you'll see that there are other vehicles that have used a given track recently, and that's a pretty good indicator that the ice is sufficient."

- Prepare yourself and your truck for the worst-case scenario. "I'll only go out with a truck during daylight hours. I'll have those ice picks with me, I'll have personal flotation devices," White said. "I've added a tow strap to the rear of the truck, so if it were to go down again it would be easily retrieved."

- Be aware of the temperature, even when the ice is thick. "I would be careful about what I call soft days when it's above freezing," White said. "Sometimes there

can be different layers in the ice – there's a surface that's frozen, below that is slush and below that is more solid ice. That can be a problem ... I think it's important to go out when it's cold and not when it's warm and not after a warm stretch.

- Be aware of the currents in the water, because they can soften the ice. White said that Memphremagog has currents from the South Bay and the Clyde River.

- Don't park trucks in a cluster around a favorite ice shanty. "You want to distribute your weight out on the ice as much as you can," White said.

"I hope I've learned some lessons and don't go down again, but I'm not afraid to go back out on the ice with what I've learned," said White.



COURTESY PHOTO  
A crew pulled Phil White's pickup truck, which he calls Rolling Thunder, from Lake Memphremagog over the weekend. White, who owns and operates Kingdom Games, said on his Facebook page that he had help retrieving the truck from a slew of locals. She sank through thin ice last winter off the shoreline at the East Side Restaurant.

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# EXTREME WINTER GOING THROUGH THE ICE ... ON PURPOSE



PHOTOS COURTESY OF MARK TAYLOR

Trainees practice rescuing and being rescued, along with many other skills required for ice rescues.

**BY LEAH CAREY**  
Staff Writer

In our quest to find people who take winter to the extreme, people who voluntarily jump into ice-covered water to save someone who has fallen through definitely make the cut.

Mark Taylor is one of those people. A former police officer and current EMT in Franconia, New Hampshire, he has been training people to do ice rescues since 2008.

Walking, skiing, skating, or driving on ice can be tricky even in the dead of winter because ice does not freeze at a uniform thickness.

“Ice can be thinned by the movement of birds, fish, current, grass, rocks, any type of vegetation that’s under there, any movement of the water at all,” Taylor explained.

When a person falls through the ice, it’s people like Taylor who monkey crawl just beyond the edge of safety in their orange and red suits to bring the victim back.

### The suit

A huge part of the ice rescue training involves learning how to put on and maneuver in the ice rescue suit.

“The red and orange ice rescue suits are made out of seven or eight millimeter neoprene. They are a dry suit ... designed to keep you warm, dry, and afloat for up to eight hours,” Taylor explained. “If you’ve done a day of training with us on the ice, you get done you’ll peel the suit off and you’ll be soaking wet with sweat - because it’s hot and there’s no room for your body to breathe.”

The suits are designed to fit a 6-foot-6-inch person who weighs 330 pounds. “They’re very big and bulky,” Taylor said.

The one-size-fits-all scheme works because as the body enters the water, the air gets pushed up out of the suit, vacuum-sealing it to the body. “You burp the suit,” Taylor said.

But it works for people of any size, even a woman Taylor trained who was 5-foot-3-inches tall and 110 pounds. “You would literally drop her in the suit and she disappears!” he laughed. “She pulls everything up and she’s this little tiny blob on the ice. But you put her in the water and the suit vacuums to her, everything settles in, and she functions just fine.”

The suit is heavy too - about 25 pounds - so it takes a lot of getting used to, but it allows the rescuers to do their jobs.

“When you get into an ice water situation, or crawling

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across the ice, it's not so bad because the neoprene is thick and it gives you a lot of insulation and a lot of cushion on the ice," Taylor said. "It protects your knees and elbows as you're crawling along. And when you get in the cold water, you don't feel the cold."

**Staying safe on thin ice**

While most of us should avoid thin ice, it is a rescuer's work area.

"What we don't do is walk out on the ice," Taylor said. "We can either crawl out on our hands and knees, we can take a boat with us and slide the boat along and use the boat as a safety item. If the ice starts to break, we can hop in the boat. It gives us a platform to work off of."

Crawling on the ice allows them to disperse their weight over a larger area, rather than walking upright.

During the training, they must swim across open water and get themselves back onto the ice using a plastic grip with a nail in it. "It's just enough to give them a grip on the ice," Taylor said.

Then they practice rescuing each other.

"We put together a crew of four or five individuals. We'll have one person that we put in the water as a victim. The next person in line will be a rescuer. We always have a secondary rescuer ... to cue the shore crew as to whether they need slack in the rope, pull the rope, whatever the shore crew needs to do. And then the shore crew is the rest of the people," said Taylor. "And we rotate everybody out. So everybody gets to be a victim, everybody gets to be a rescuer, and everybody gets to be part of the shore crew."

At the end of the day, the trainees are roped together for the "Crawl For Life" - the entire crew must work as a team to crawl several hundred feet along the very edge of the ice.

"They'll usually break through the ice four or five times," Taylor said. "They have to be able to pull each other back onto hard ice and continue to crawl."

**In the water**

Taylor said that at his first training, he and his friends had so much fun that they drove down the road looking for a hole in the ice where they could "go play."

But that doesn't diminish his respect for the ice, the water, and the body in the water.

"It takes about 15 or 20 minutes, depending on who you are what your body composition is, for it to really start taking effect on you," he said.

He laid out a rough time line of what happens to an adult



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human in the water:

5 minutes - it becomes hard to move your fingers and kick your feet

10 minutes - you lose the ability to move your arms and legs and to grab anything

15 minutes - you lose the ability to understand simple instructions from a rescuer

30 minutes - you lose consciousness

Should you ever be the one who has fallen through the ice, Taylor has one recommendation: put your arm up on the ice.

“Let your clothing or your skin freeze to the ice,” he said. “If you lose consciousness, you won’t fall in. You’ll just stay stuck to the ice and we can at least get you back out.”

A person who is under the ice requires a more technical rescue, requiring specialized divers.

**Pets in peril**

Taylor said that they used to refuse calls to rescue pets through the ice. The problem was that a few minutes later they would get a call for a person through the ice, trying to save the pet. “So now, when we get a call for an animal through the ice, we just automatically go because if you don’t, you’re going to end up with a bigger problem,” he explained.

The problem is that when Paolo the Pug is in distress, he won’t understand that rescuers are trying to help him.

“When they’re frightened, they bite,” Taylor said. “These animals don’t understand what you’re trying to do to help them. They only know that they’re frightened. If something comes at them, they don’t understand so they bite at it.”


Rescuers carry a pole that they can use to hook the animals collar from afar.






“If they’re going to bite something, let them bite the end of the pole. That’s fine,” Taylor said. “Most animals, once they’re back up on the ice and you can guide them back to their owner, they’ll get back to shore and they’ll calm down. But you don’t want to be in proximity so close that you’re going to get chomped on.”

There is one other type of animal that they periodically see through the ice: long-leggeds like deer and moose.

They don’t try to pull the animals on to the ice. Instead, they use chainsaws to cut a channel out of the ice so the deer or moose can walk right out.





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# Calendar

Continued from Page 28

Beauty, Catamount Arts. For info: [catamountarts.org](http://catamountarts.org).  
 4:30 p.m. - Madrigal Dinner 2017 : Arthur's Dark Angel, Monroe Town Hall. For info: [northcountrychorus.org](http://northcountrychorus.org).

## Tuesday, Jan. 24

3 p.m. - Lego challenge, St. Johnsbury Athenaeum. For info: [stjathenaeum.org](http://stjathenaeum.org).

## Wednesday, Jan. 25

5:30 p.m. - Contemporary line dancing, Troy Parrish Hall. For info: [jayvt.com](http://jayvt.com).

## Friday, Jan. 27

10 a.m. - Vermont Specialty Food Day, Jay Peak. For info: [jaypeakresort.com](http://jaypeakresort.com).

## Saturday, Jan. 28

12:55 p.m. - Metropolitan Opera Live - Romeo et Juliette, Catamount Arts. For info: [catamountarts.org](http://catamountarts.org).

## Sunday, Jan. 29

3 p.m. - Northeast Kingdom Classical Series - The Hermitage Piano Trio, United Community Church. For info: [catamountarts.org](http://catamountarts.org).

## Tuesday, Jan. 31

3 p.m. - Lego Challenge, St. Johnsbury Athenaeum. For info: [stjathenaeum.org](http://stjathenaeum.org).

## Wednesday, Feb. 1

5:30 p.m. - Contemporary line dancing, Troy Parrish Hall. For info: [jayvt.com](http://jayvt.com).

7 p.m. - Bolshoi Ballet - The Sleeping Beauty, Catamount Arts. For info: [catamountarts.org](http://catamountarts.org).

7 p.m. - First Wednesdays - In This Here Place: Race, Nation, and Toni Morrison's Beloved, St. Johnsbury Athenaeum. For info: [vermonthumanities.org](http://vermonthumanities.org).

7 p.m. - First Wednesdays - Vincent Van Gogh, Goodrich Memorial Library. For info: [vermonthumanities.org](http://vermonthumanities.org).

7 p.m. - The Life of James Everell Henry, Bretzfelder Park. For info: [therocks.org](http://therocks.org).

## Friday, Feb. 3

11 a.m. - Mountain Dew Vertical Challenge race, Cannon Mountain. For info: [skiverticalchallenge.com](http://skiverticalchallenge.com).

## Saturday, Feb. 4

Winter Festival, Gardner Park and Prouty Beach in Newport. For info: [newportrecreation.org](http://newportrecreation.org).

10 a.m. - Winter Farmers' Market, St. Johnsbury Welcome Center. For info: [sites.google.com/site/caledoniafarmersmarket](http://sites.google.com/site/caledoniafarmersmarket).

## Sunday, Feb. 5

12:55 p.m. - Bolshoi Ballet - Swan Lake, Catamount Arts. For info: [catamountarts.org](http://catamountarts.org).

## Tuesday, Feb. 7

3 p.m. - Lego challenge, St. Johnsbury Athenaeum. For info: [stjathenaeum.org](http://stjathenaeum.org).

6 p.m. - Coloring club, Catamount Arts. For info: [catamountarts.org](http://catamountarts.org).

## Wednesday, Feb. 8

5:30 p.m. - Contemporary line dancing, Troy Parrish Hall. For info: [jayvt.com](http://jayvt.com).

7 p.m. - What's Bugging NH's Moose, The Rocks Estate. For info: [therocks.org](http://therocks.org).

## Thursday, Feb. 9

7:30 p.m. - Student Directed One-Act Plays, St. Johnsbury Academy Black Box. For info: Bill Vinton, 802-748-8171.

## Friday, Feb. 10

4:30 p.m. - Barnyard Bingo, American Legion Post 30 Lyndon. For info: Karen, 802-535-5563.

See **Calendar**, Page 38

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# Calendar

Continued from Page 37

7:30 p.m. - Student Directed One-Act Plays, St. Johnsbury Academy Black Box. For info: Bill Vinton, 802-748-8171.

## Saturday, Feb. 11

12:30 p.m. - Freeride Big Air event, Cannon Mountain. For info: cannonmt.com.

2 p.m. - Student Directed One-Act Plays, St. Johnsbury Academy Black Box. For info: Bill Vinton, 802-748-8171.

7 p.m. - Wild Ponies, 42 Maple. For info: 42maple.org.

## Tuesday, Feb. 14

3 p.m. - Lego challenge, St. Johnsbury Athenaeum. For info: stjathenaeum.org.

## Wednesday, Feb. 15

5:30 p.m. - Contemporary line dancing, Troy Parrish Hall. For info: jayvt.com.

7 p.m. - Bolshoi Ballet - Swan Lake, Catamount Arts. For info: catamountarts.org.

7 p.m. - Restoration of the American Chestnut, The Rocks. For info: therocks.org.

## Friday, Feb. 17

7 p.m. - Momix, Lyndon Institute. For info: catamountarts.org.

7 p.m. - Father Daughter Dance (4th grade and up), Newport, Vermont. For info: newportrecreation.org.

## Saturday, Feb. 18

10 a.m. - Winter Farmers' Market, St. Johnsbury Welcome Center. For info: sites.google.com/site/caledoniafarmersmarket.

11 a.m. - Memphremagog Ice Skating Festival, Lake Memphremagog. For info: 802-249-9100, phw1948@gmail.com.

5:30 p.m. - Father Daughter Dance (4th grade and under), Newport, Vermont. For info: newportrecreation.org.

## Sunday, Feb. 19

10 a.m. - Memphremagog Ice Skating Festival, Lake Memphremagog. For info: 802-249-9100, phw1948@gmail.com.

## Monday, Feb. 20

9 a.m. - Memphremagog Ice Skating Festival, Lake Memphremagog. For info: 802-249-9100, phw1948@gmail.com.

5 p.m. - Game night, Colatina Exit. For info: cohase.org.

## Tuesday, Feb. 21

3 p.m. - Lego challenge, St. Johnsbury Athenaeum. For info: stjathenaeum.org.

6 p.m. - Coloring club, Catamount Arts. For info: catamountarts.org.

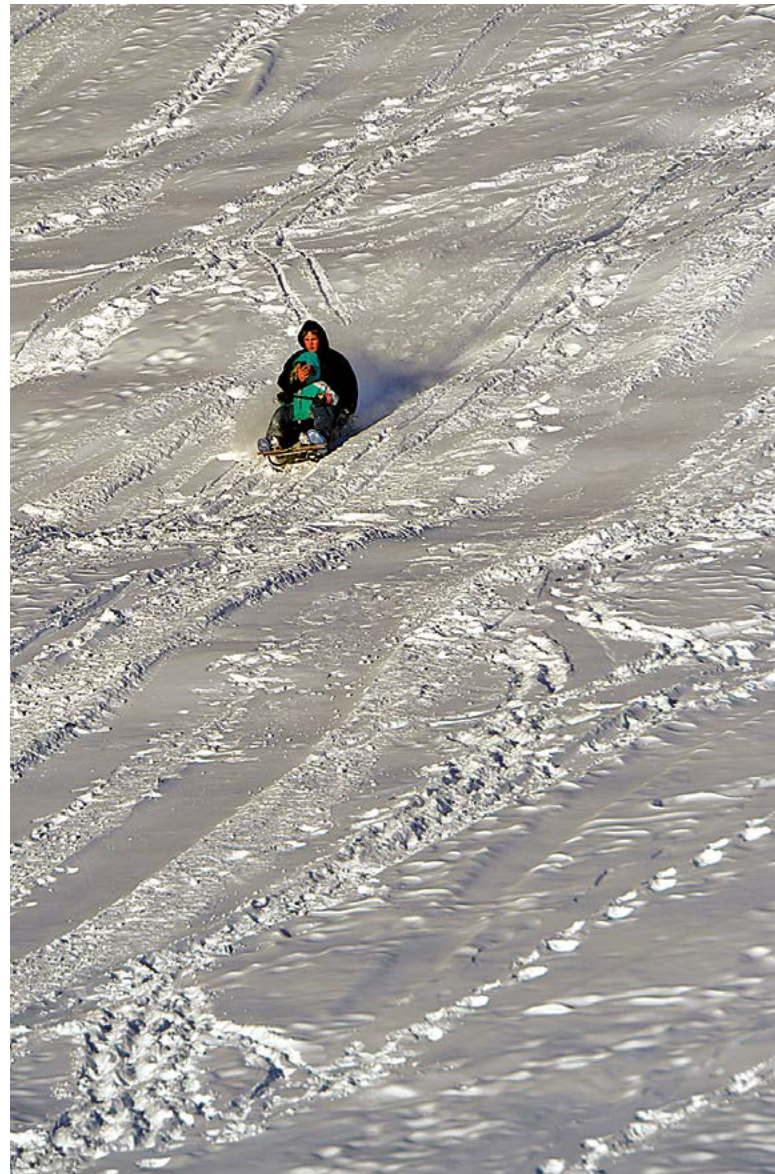
## Wednesday, Feb. 22

10:30 a.m. and 1 p.m. - Kingdom All-Stars, Fuller Hall. For info: catamountarts.org.

5:30 p.m. - Contemporary line dancing, Troy Parrish Hall. For info: jayvt.com.

7 p.m. - Wildlife Tracking, Bretzfelder Park. For info: therocks.org.

## Saturday, Feb. 25



12:55 p.m. - Metropolitan Opera Live - Rusalka, Catamount Arts. For info: catamountarts.org.

## Tuesday, Feb. 28

3 p.m. - Lego challenge, St. Johnsbury Athenaeum. For info: stjathenaeum.org.

## Wednesday, March 1

5:30 p.m. - Contemporary line dancing, Troy Parrish Hall. For info: jayvt.com.

7 p.m. - First Wednesdays - Hamilton: The Man and the Musical, St. Johnsbury Athenaeum. For info: vermonthumanities.org.

7 p.m. - First Wednesdays - Daisy Turner's kin, Goodrich

Memorial Library. For info: vermonthumanities.org.

## Friday, March 3

10 a.m. - Memphremagog Winter Swim, Lake Memphremagog. For info: kingdomgames.co.

11:30 a.m. - Lenten chowder luncheon, Littleton First United Methodist Church. For info: Debbie, 603-444-5567.

## Saturday, March 4

8 a.m. - Winterbike, Kingdom Trails. For info: kingdomtrails.org.

10 a.m. - Winter Farmers' Market, St. Johnsbury Welcome Center. For info: sites.google.com/site/caledoniafarmersmarket.

10 a.m. - Memphremagog Winter Swim, Lake Memphremagog. For info: kingdomgames.co.

12:55 p.m. - Metropolitan Opera Live - Rusalka, Catamount Arts. For info: catamountarts.org.

7 p.m. - Penny auction, American Legion Post 30 Lyndon. For info: Karen, 802-535-5563.

## Sunday, March 5

8:30 a.m. - Hope on the Slopes, Jay Peak. For info: jaypeakresort.com.

10 a.m. - Memphremagog Winter Swim, Lake Memphremagog. For info: kingdomgames.co.

3 p.m. - Northeast Kingdom Classical Series - Tempest Trio, United Community Church. For info: catamountarts.org.

## Tuesday, March 7

3 p.m. - Lego challenge, St. Johnsbury Athenaeum. For info: stjathenaeum.org.

6 p.m. - Coloring club, Catamount Arts. For info: catamountarts.org.

## Wednesday, March 8

5:30 p.m. - Contemporary line dancing, Troy Parrish Hall. For info: jayvt.com.

## Friday, March 10

11:30 a.m. - Lenten chowder luncheon, Littleton First United Methodist Church. For info: Debbie, 603-444-5567.

4:30 p.m. - Barnyard Bingo, American Legion Post 30 Lyndon. For info: Karen, 802-535-5563.

## Saturday, March 11

12:30 p.m. - Freeride Slopestyle, Cannon Mountain. For info: cannonmt.com.

12:55 p.m. - Metropolitan Opera Live - La Traviata, Catamount Arts. For info: catamountarts.org.

3 p.m. - Ride & Ski of New England, Jay Peak. For info: jaypeakresort.com.

## Sunday, March 12

3 p.m. - Northeast Kingdom Classical Series - The Varshavski-Shapiro Duo, United Community Church. For info: catamountarts.org.

**EXTREME WINTER**

# GOING UP IS OPTIONAL, COMING DOWN IS MANDATORY

**BY LEAH CAREY**  
Staff Writer

There are plenty of cars that have bumper stickers touting, “This car climbed Mt. Washington” or “This hiker climbed Mt. Washington.”

Ben Morehouse is one of a handful of people who could affix a different sticker to his vehicle: “My mush team climbed Mt. Washington.” And his vehicle a dogsled, not a car.

In March 2015, Morehouse and his team of eight Alaskan Huskies began a journey that would take them 65 miles from their home kennel at Mutt Mountain Dog Sledding in Concord, Vt., to the base of Mt. Washington, and up the Auto Road to the summit of the highest peak in the northeast. Two and a half days later, they reached their destination mid-day on March 20.

According to Morehouse only four or five people have done it before, but he would be the first to do it during the winter season. He scheduled his summit attempt to fall just hours before winter ended at 6:45 p.m. on the 20th. “I thought we might have a chance to sneak it in,” he said.

And so they did, with more than four hours to spare.

**Athletes on four legs**

Morehouse starts training his dogs for a run as soon as the temperatures drops below 50 degrees.

“It’s just like any other professional athlete,” he said. “You start your early season training with easy practices and runs and you work all the way up from two miles to hundreds of

See **Sled Dogs**, Page 40



PHOTOS COURTESY OF HEATHER EICH, FORGET ME NOT PHOTOGRAPHY & PRINTS

The Mutt Mountain dogs are excited and raring to go as Ben Morehouse “pulls the pin” to start the next leg of their journey.

*John Kascenska*

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# Sled Dogs

Continued from Page 39

miles by the time you're done at the end of the season."

He continually refers to his dogs as athletes with a bit of awe in his voice. "I've been an athlete most of my life," he said. "We're so inferior on an athletic level, it's just insane."

"They can literally run, once conditioned, a hundred miles a day, rest for a little bit and then get up and do it again. Their muscle recovery is just amazing," he continued. "If everyone in the world had the desire and the passion and the love to do what they did as much as a sled dog does, it would just be amazing."

Morehouse packed the sled for five days. "Most of that was food for the dogs and myself," he said. "It was pretty freighted."

### On the trail

Morehouse didn't want to just summit the mountain starting at the base; he wanted to start from his home kennel in Concord.

The first part of the journey went relatively smoothly. They left home Wednesday about 8:30 a.m. and bedded down in Lunenburg about 5 p.m.

Morehouse roused his crew and got back on the trail at 2:30 a.m. on Thursday, making most of the major road crossings at night.

It was during that overnight run that the team passed another sled dog kennel where Morehouse had worked for a few years. "We woke up over 100 sled dogs, which was great," he laughed. "We got the salute from about 130 sled dogs."

They bedded down again at 9:30 a.m. for a few hours before heading to the base of the

Mt. Washington Auto Road about 2 p.m.

That's when things got a bit dodgy. His lead dog, Trucker, developed a severe abscess on his forehead. "It was serious," Morehouse said. "I said, I'll call this trip right now."

His family came to meet him at the base of the Auto Road and they loaded the entire dog team into the truck for a trip to the emergency vet. The vet was able to deal with the issue and everyone was back in their home kennel by 11 that night.

Assured that Trucker was cleared to run, Morehouse got the crew up early the next morning and trucked them back to the exact place they had left in such a hurry the day before.

### Getting to the top

Despite the unexpected detour, the dogs were ready to head up the Mt. Washington Auto Road by noon on the 20th. The weather was good - 14 degrees with wind at about 22 miles per hour.

Knowing that it had taken other teams eight hours to summit, Morehouse told his support team that if he was still climbing at 5 p.m., he'd turn around and come back down.

"There can be 100 mile an hour winds and it can be 50 or 60 degrees below zero [at the top]. That's not something I want to put me or my dogs through," he said.

Despite that, he said, the dogs weren't pushing hard. "We were just running."

And before he knew it, they were at tree line. "I said we're going to go up and take a look," Morehouse said. "And that's what I said the whole way up, we're just going to keep going up and taking a look. We'll turn around at any time that we think it's not good."

The Mutt Mountaineers surpassed every-



After three days, 65 miles, and one mountain ascent, Ben Morehouse's dogs take a well-deserved, but quick, break at the summit of Mt. Washington in March 2015.

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Ben Morehouse's dogs gathered experience while he gathered ice in his beard.

one's expectations: they summited in just one hour and 45 minutes.

"The dogs just killed it," Morehouse said. "It was a very clear day, but the sun had a big ring around it and you could see off in the distance that snow was coming. The wind started picking up a little bit more."

After just 20 minutes of rest, Morehouse decided it was time to head down to beat the incoming weather.

**Coming down is mandatory**

That's when reality hit. "The entire way up was optional and now the whole way back down is mandatory," Morehouse said.

And the path that had been their friend on the way up wouldn't be quite so kind in the other direction thanks to gravity and momentum. "I knew it was going to be next to impossible to stop in those first

two miles."

Those two miles were not only sheer ice in many places, there is "a nasty switchback section," Morehouse said. "I remember on the way up thinking, That's going to be a problem area."

Entering the switchback, he knew his angle wasn't good. Faced with horrifying two options - crash into the rocks on one side and wreck everything (and everyone), or go off to the left and drop several thousand feet - his instincts took over and gave him a third possibility: flip the sled onto the pavement. "Me and the sled got dragged about 100 feet," he said. "The dogs were fine."

Too filled with adrenaline to notice that he was injured, Morehouse put the sled back on its runners and let his dogs run. "After we got that section done it was just a nice, easy relaxing ride down," he said. "People were out clapping and saluting us. It was almost overwhelming."

The whole ascent had been accomplished so quickly that the friends and family who were planning to arrive at 5:30 p.m. to meet him at the bottom weren't present when Morehouse and his dogs emerged at 3 p.m.

**Where to next?**

In the last year and a half, Morehouse has retired about half the dogs that made the Mt. Washington run

"We just had our first successful litter of pups last year. So we're in a building season of old guys needing to train some young guys," he said. "[With the previous team] we could have done 80 miles in a day if we wanted to. With these veterans and the young pups, we might get up to 20 or 30 miles a day."

This winter, his goal is to run the entire length of Vermont, from top to bottom. "[The young ones] will be just turning a year, so they're going to be experiencing a ton of things for the first time on the trail," Morehouse said. "There's no one trail to go from the top of the state to the bottom. They're going to get some pretty real training."

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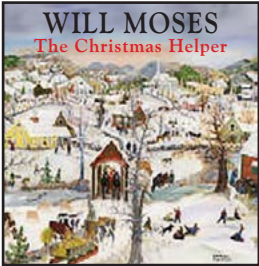
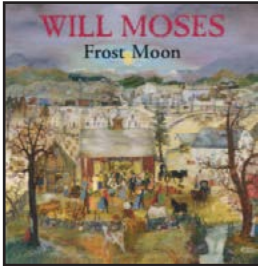




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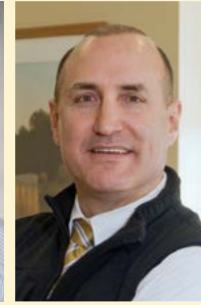
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