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THE RECORD / EDITORIAL

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A PUBLICATION OF THE CALEDONIAN-RECORD PUBLISHING COMPANY, INC.
190 Federal Street, P.O. Box 8, St. Johnsbury, VT 05819
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ADVERTISING SALES

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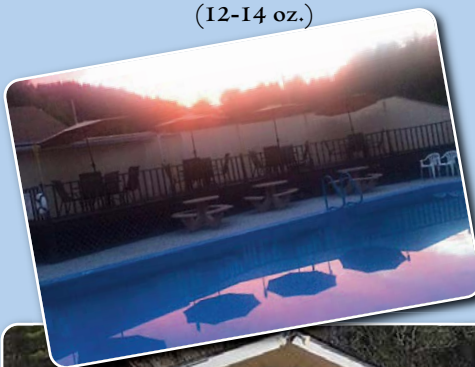
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REAL COMMITMENT.

BEHIND THE CONTROLS OF A TRAIL GROOMER

BY LEAH CAREY
Staff Writer

Whether it's snowmobiling or cross-country skiing that you're looking forward to on the woody trails of Vermont and New Hampshire, we're able to do those things thanks to the overnight ministrations of volunteers like Ross Page of Peacham, Vermont.

A long-time member of the Bayley-Hazen Road Snowmobile Club, Page has been grooming trails for his fellow snowmobilers for much of the last 20 years.

"I've run equipment more or less all my life and I just enjoy doing it," Page said. "It's producing a product that looks good and works well for everybody."

To someone who doesn't know a lot about machinery, listening to him talk about the trail groomer (a Tucker Snow Cat) sounds almost

like a foreign language.

"It has four 28-inch wide 150-long tracks on it, so that it can get grip in snow. And what we have behind it is a drag with a variation of cutters in it that smooths the snow. It puts it into a pan and packs it down."

To translate:

The vehicle has molded rubber tracks with cleats instead of tires. This allows it to move across the snow efficiently. Behind the main vehicle is the "drag," the equipment that actually does the grooming.

As the trail is used, the snow gets packed down and needs to be mixed and fluffed up before it gets smoothed out again. That's what the "cutters" do.

Then the "pan," a heavy flat surface on the back of the groomer, presses the snow back down so it's flat and hard.

"We don't generally go out the first time until there's a foot of snow and that pretty much gets packed down," said Page. "Once you get about



COURTESY PHOTO

Snowmobiling continues on 8

Ross Page sits behind the controls of a snowmobile trail groomer.

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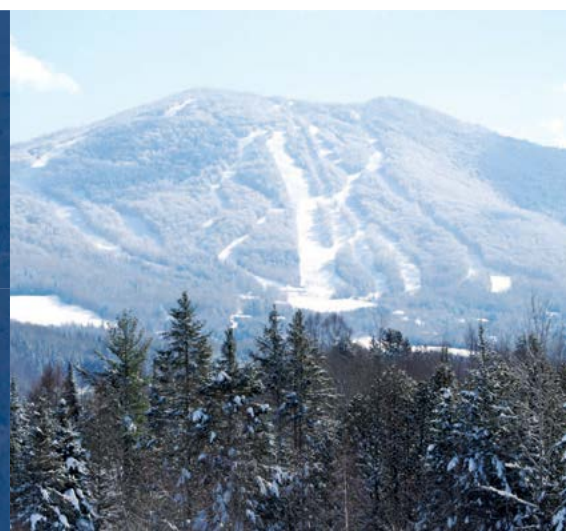
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REAL AMUSEMENT.

THE AREA OFFERS A FLURRY OF FUN EVENTS

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. 11

8 a.m. - Franconia Ski Swap, Cannon Mountain Peabody Base Lodge. For info: cannonmt.com.

8:30 a.m. - Peace On Earth Christmas Bazaar, St. Elizabeth Church, Lyndonville. For info: 802-467-3019.

9 a.m. - Christmas Bazaar, West Burke United Methodist Church. Bake sale and light lunch. For info: 802-467-3571.

9 a.m. - North Danville Craft Fair, North Danville School/Community Building. For info: lizsargent@charter.net.

10 a.m. - Candy Cane Bazaar, Community Baptist Church, Whitefield. Gifts, food, silent auction, luncheon and more. For info: Lois, 603-837-2578.

11 a.m. - Veterans Day Observance honoring all veterans, Lyndonville Veterans Park. For info: 802-535-5563.

7 p.m. - Bluegrass Night, Catamount Arts, St. Johnsbury. For info: catamountarts.org.

8 p.m. - Boys & Girls Club Art Show, The Loading Dock, Littleton. For info: the-loadingdocknh.com.

Sunday, Nov. 12

11 a.m. - Brunch, Beats & Silent Auction, Court Street Arts, Haverhill. For info: court-streetarts.org.

Monday, Nov. 13

9:30 a.m. - Hatchling Music, Catamount Arts, "Music Together". For info: 603-991-8191.

Wednesday, Nov. 15

7 p.m. - State of the Loons, Rock Estate, Bethlehem. The natural history of loons in New Hampshire. For info: therocks.org.

Thursday, Nov. 16

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

Friday, Nov. 17



FILE PHOTO

Skiers and snowboarders ride the lift at Jay Peak.

9:30 a.m. - PBS Kids! Preschool Film, Catamount Arts, St. Johnsbury. Must register in advance. For info: 802-748-2600 x108.

Saturday, Nov. 18

9 a.m. - Christmas in the Country Bazaar, North Danville Baptist Church. For info: lizsargent@charter.net.

12:55 p.m. - The Met Live, Catamount Arts, "The Exterminating Angel" screening. For info: catamountarts.org.

2 p.m. - Author talk and book signing, Fairbanks Museum, David Aguilar, "Wonders of the Solar System". For info: fairbanksmuseum.org.

8 p.m. - An evening with Amy Helm, Jay Peak Resort. For info: jaypeakresort.com.

Sunday, Nov. 19

12:55 p.m. - Bolshoi Ballet, Catamount

Arts, "The Taming of the Shrew" screening. For info: catamountarts.org.

1 p.m. - Burke Music Jam, Burke Community Building. Everyone is encouraged to participate. For info: 802-525-3412.

Monday, Nov. 20

9:30 a.m. - Hatchling Music, Catamount Arts, "Music Together". For info: 603-991-8191.

5 p.m. - Game Night, Colatina Exit, Bradford. For info: 802-222-1909.

Tuesday, Nov. 21

6 p.m. - Coloring Club, Catamount Arts. For adults and teens. For info: catamountarts.org.

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

Wednesday, Nov. 22

5:30 p.m. - Tree Lighting Ceremony, Omni Mt. Washington Hotel. For info: brettonwoods.com.

Thursday, Nov. 23

8 a.m. - Wobble n' Gobble Turkey Day 5K, downtown Franconia. For info: adaptivesportspartners.org.

9 a.m. - Holiday Craft Fair, Irasburg Town Hall. For info: 802-754-2281.

Friday, Nov. 24

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

Saturday, Nov. 25

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

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

12:55 p.m. - The Met Live, Catamount Arts, "The Exterminating Angel" screening. For info: catamountarts.org.

1 p.m. - York Street Meeting House Open House, Lyndon Center. See the renovations to the 1828 church. For info: 802-748-0449.

Wednesday, Nov. 29

7 p.m. - Bolshoi Ballet, Catamount Arts, "The Taming of the Shrew" screening. For info: catamountarts.org.

Thursday, Nov. 30

10 a.m. - Blessings From Bethlehem, Durrell Methodist Church, Bethlehem. For info: bethlehemwhitemtns.com.

5 p.m. - Bethlehem Community meal, Bethlehem. For info: bethlehemwhitemtns.com.

5 p.m. - Old Tyme Christmas, Downtown Lancaster. Hay rides, cookie decorating, crafters, letters to Santa, and more. For info: 603-788-3377.

7 p.m. - Natalie MacMaster and Donnell Leahy - A Cape Breton Christmas, Fuller Hall, St. Johnsbury. For info: catamountarts.org.

Snowmobiling

Continued from Page 6

two feet of snow, or had that much come on the ground over a period of time, you really begin to do well. Snow compresses awfully, so it takes a lot to get things straightened around.”

Snowmobilers might go out on the trail when it has just that initial base of one foot of snow, but Page said that isn’t always the most enjoyable ride.

“You haven’t got all the humps and bumps filled in and smoothed over. Some areas are kind of stony and it takes quite a lot to get up over them and get it filled in,” he said. “There are places where we have a real good base, or part of an old road to use, then things go a lot better.”

For those of us who are more familiar with food than snow, he offered this analogy: “It’s almost like putting frosting on a cake. If the cake is smooth, it don’t take so much frosting. But if the cake is uneven, it takes a lot more frosting!”

Page and the guys he works with are out on the trails grooming five days a week. The heavily-trafficked areas will get groomed as often as three times a week including twice on busy weekends.

“It’s a real time-consuming thing,” he said.

He’s not kidding. Page estimates that he spends approximate-



FILE PHOTO
Snowmobilers take part in a vintage snowmobile race.

ly 350 to 400 hours each winter grooming, plus any time required to repair equipment in the garage. With summertime trail construction and maintenance, plus local and state meetings, he estimates that he spends 1,500 to 2,000 hours a year on making great trails for snowmobilers.

Much of the trail systems throughout New Hampshire and Vermont are available thanks to the good will of landowners who allow the trails to cross their land.

“For the most part, these trails are in the same place they’ve been for a good many years,” said Page. “But due to land sales, or somebody getting disgruntled, you have to make new trails and you have to do quite a lot of work to make it happen – cutting brush and trees, building a bridge, building a culvert, that kind of thing. There’s a lot to it.”

In Vermont alone, Page said there are 5,000 miles of Class 1 snowmobile trails and “probably another 1,500 miles of secondary trails,” he said. “It’s a regular highway system!”

You can learn more about the trails, registration, and more from the clubs throughout our region.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Information from www.nhsa.com, the website of the New Hampshire Snowmobile Association

Grafton County

Bethlehem – Mount Agassiz Trail Association

Haverhill – Connecticut Valley Snowmobile Club – www.ctvalleysnowmobileclub.com

Lisbon – Lisbon Stump Jumpers – www.lisbonstumpjumpers.org

Littleton – Littleton Off Road Riders – www.littletonsnowmobileclub.com

Lyme – Lyme Pinnacle Snowmobile Club

Monroe – Monroe Bumper Humpers – dmitton@roadrunner.com

Coos County

Berlin – White Mountain Ridge Runners – www.whitemtridgerunners.com

Colebrook – Colebrook Ski Bees – www.colebrookski-bees.com

Dalton – Dalton Ridge Riders – www.daltonridgerunners.com

Gorham – Presidential Range Riders – www.presidential-rangeriders.org

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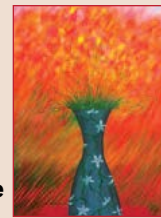


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Snowmobiling

Continued from Page 8

Groveton – Groveton Trailblazers – www.grovetontrailblazers.com

Jefferson – Jefferson Hi-Landers – www.jeffersonhilanders.com

Jefferson – Waumbek Methna Snowmobile Club – www.waumbekmethna.com

Lancaster – Lancaster Snow Drifters – www.lancastersnowdrifters.org

Milan – Milan All Weather Riders – www.milanallweatherriders.webs.com

Pittsburg – Pittsburg Ridge Runners – www.pittsburgridgerunners.org

Stewartstown – Swift Diamond Riders – www.swiftdiamondriders.com

Twin Mountain – Twin Mountain Snowmobile Club – www.twinmtsnowmobile.org

Whitefield – Whitefield Sno Kings – www.snokings.com

VERMONT

Information from www.vtvast.org, the website of the Vermont Association of Snow Travelers

Caledonia County

Burke – Drift Skippers – www.burkedriftskippers.com

Danville – Danville S-Ski-Mos – www.facebook.com/DanvilleSSkiMos

Groton – Buckaroos of 302 – www.buckaroosof302.com

Hardwick – Snowflake Ridge Runners – 802-371-8901

Lyndonville – Lyndon Sno Cruisers – www.lydonsnocruisers.com

Newark – Newark E-Z Riders – www.newarkezriders.org

Peacham – Bayley Hazen Road Snowmobile Club – www.bhrsnowclub.org

Ryegate – Ryegate Rovers

Sheffield – Caledonia County Snowmobile Trail Club – www.snowmobilecaledoniavt.com

St. Johnsbury – St. Johnsbury Sno-Blazers – 802-748-3833

Walden – Cole's Pond Sledgers – www.colespondsledders.com

Waterford – Waterford Ridge Runners – www.facebook.com/WRRSnowmobileClub

Wheelock – Winter Wanderers – 802-626-8133

Essex County

Brighton – Brighton Snowmobile Club – www.brightonsnowmobile.org

Canaan – Canaan Border Riders – www.canaanborderriders.org

Concord – Moose River Rock Dodgers – moosriverrockdodgers.homestead.com

Guildhall – Connecticut Valley Sno-Riders – www.ctvalleysnoriders.com

Lunenburg – Lunenburg Polar Bears – vtvast.org/lunenburg-polar-bears.html

Norton – Northeast Kingdom Snow Blasters – www.northeastkingdomsnowblasters.com

Orleans County

Craftsbury – Craftsbury Snowmobile Club

Coventry, Irasburg, Newport – North Country Mountaineers – www.northcountrymountaineers.com

Derby – Drift Dusters – www.driftdusters.com

Glover – Glover Trailwinders Snowmobiling Club – www.glovertrailwinders.com

Lowell – Hazen's Notch Snowmobile Club – www.facebook.com/Hazen-Notch-Snowmobile-Club-non-profit-111459765583746

North Troy – Nazen Notch Snowmobile Club – 802-988-1075

Orleans – Orleans Snow Stormers – www.orleanssnowstormers.com

Troy – Country Riders – www.countryridersvt.com

West Glover – Glover Trailwinders – www.glovertrailwinders.com

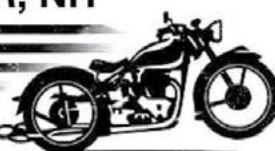
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FILE PHOTO
In this file photo from last winter, beginner skiers and snowboarders work the rope-tow hill at Lyndon Outing Club.

VOLUNTEERS KEEP LOCAL HILLS VIBRANT

BY LEAH CAREY
Staff Writer

It's a lovely irony: the president of the Lyndon Outing Club isn't a skier.

And yet Susan Teske, along with a committed group of community members, volunteers countless hours to make the LOC a stellar community skiing hill.

Teske is the current president of the LOC, while husband Joe Peters is former president and current vice president of the organization.

"The president's job – we joke about it," Teske said last week. "We joke that it's a 10-year position because once you get it, if you're doing it, people are happy with you doing it so they just let you!"

But neither Teske nor Peters is interested in taking a lot of credit for what happens on the hill.

"The whole board really runs the place ... we're just two of a whole group of people who run everything," Teske said. "There's this core of guys who basically maintain everything. Put the Ts on, make sure the motors are running, hook up new lights when they don't work, fixing things. Then there's a core of people who run the kitchen when we're open. This year that's kind of been my job. It's not my favorite job, but ... when we're open we have to have the kitchen open because that's one of the ways that we support the hill, one of the ways we pay for things."

In addition, Teske does a lot of grant writing to raise money and there are fundraisers throughout the year.

Peters, the quieter of the couple, explained, "Before when you had a good year, you made plenty of money to keep things going. But the way things are now, we don't make enough if it was just on skiing."

So there's also another effort that Teske and Peters are putting their back into: turning the LOC into a four-season activity center.

People use the hill for hiking and exercising their dogs through the summer. The LOC building is rented out for wedding receptions, parties, and more. The Lyndon State College Mountain Recreation Program uses the building and the hill for classes. They've opened a skate park that keeps kids engaged and away from the sidewalks with their skateboards during the summer.

The LOC hosted their first cyclo-cross last fall. "It was really exciting," said Teske. "The Burke Mountain Academy kids got involved with helping to lay out the track and community members got involved in helping to plan the course layout. And then we had all these cyclists come from all over

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Volunteers continues on 11

Volunteers

Continued from Page 10

the place to participate ... I still can't believe people did it because it was ridiculously hard!"

She hopes that event will continue to grow in years to come.

And then there are the plans that Teske and Peters hope will take them into the future.

A mentoring program is in the works that will give young people an opportunity to learn skills to take into the workforce. They're partnering with LSC to provide mentors and Blue Cross Blue Shield to provide ski equipment.

"They would be able to come work with the college students who are on board to be mentors and some of our board members. The mentees would learn how to ski and ride. They would learn various aspects of mountain management, for lack of a better term — they'd learn about guest relations and how to run lifts and working in the kitchen. So they'd

gain some employability skills," Teske explained. "They'd get some certifications for CPR and basic first aid. So they'd be building a portfolio for employment as they're being mentored ... and then the goal is that after they learned those skills, they would then also learn the skills of teaching lessons, so that they would then teach lessons to younger, to offer lessons for free at the hill."

They hope to launch the program this year so that it's up and running in the fall.

But even if it takes a little longer, Teske is willing to put in the time. "I don't get discouraged when things take too long," she said. "I want them to happen immediately, but it's like waiting for snow to come. You can't make it happen if it's not ready."

They're also talking about putting in a nature trail on the hill that will get people out hiking and learning. She hopes the mentees will also be part of that effort.

"I think it would be very cool to see the kids design it for kids."

One of their key collaborators at LSC is

Volunteers continues on **12** *A group of youngsters get ready to make tracks.*



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Volunteers

Continued from Page 11

Sean Doll, an assistant professor in the mountain recreation management department and overseer of the mountain resort management program.

"I don't think it would be possible for me to say enough about how much of their time and personal resources Sue and Joe give to the community," Doll said. "Their commitment to the Lyndon Outing Club is, for lack of a better word and stronger word, impressive. It's actually pretty crazy!"

Doll brings his students up to LOC to do their required community service hours and he said both Teske and Peters are committed to making sure the students get what they need from that time.

He's also looking forward to having his students participate in the mentoring program.

"They get the opportunity to learn something about the ski industry and then turn around and teach it," Doll said. "She's giving my students the opportunity to do that, and then she's giving these students who maybe can't afford to get into the ski industry the opportunity to do that. And they're getting to do it with cool college students!"

Teske, whose uncle was one of the founders of the LOC back in the 1930s, hopes that it will keep going far into the future.

"I want to see it grow," she said. "It's worth us keeping it going. In the long run, it's just our time. It's not painful to do, it's fun. And I love to see it when some little four-year-old comes up and learns how to ski and is so proud of themselves."



PHOTO BY LEAH CAREY

Susan Teske and Joe Peters give huge amounts of their time and resources as president and vice president of the Lyndon Outing Club.

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REAL HUNTING.



FILE PHOTO

Craig Batchelder bagged this 10-point, 186-pound buck in Waterford on Nov. 13, 2016.

WHAT DRAWS A LOCAL HUNTER TO THE GREAT OUTDOORS

BY LEAH CAREY
Staff Writer

Each year in the Winter Guide we run a story about hunting because it is a winter activity enjoyed by a significant portion of our local population. But it's not without controversy and occasional blow-back.

A few years ago, we got a letter from a reader saying that she had planned to send the publication to an out-of-state friend as a recommendation to visit during the winter, but couldn't because there was an article about hunting that included a picture of a teenager with his first buck.

While squeamishness around hunting isn't unusual, Ron Wright wants people to recognize that there is a mismatch between their eating habits and their feelings about hunting.

"There was one woman, I'll never forget it," Wright said in a recent conversation. "She was telling me how great the meat was. I told her she was eating deer meat and she said, 'Oh, I think I'm going to be sick! That poor animal!' And I was there, 'What do you think [it is] when you eat meat? They didn't kill anything?'"

Wright, who owns Wrights Sport Shop in Derby, Vermont, wants to dispel the myth that most hunting is just for sport.

"I won't hunt nothing I won't eat," he said. "I eat wild meat all year round. I always kill enough so I've got enough to eat."

Teaching youth to hunt

In addition to taking adult hunters on guided hunting trips out of state, Wright enjoys taking young men and women out into the woods for youth hunting weekends.

"My biggest thing is to take them and make sure they're safe, and then take them on the land and tell them a little bit more about what to do when they're out there," Wright said. "And try to keep them as calm as you can when it comes time for the shooting."

Before heading out into the woods with the kids, he spends some time scouting good locations. And it turns out that scouting is often not for the animals themselves, but for their food sources.

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Hunting continues on 15

"I enjoy all of it. I enjoy seeing the land, I enjoy watching the animals. I just love it. It's out there and nobody bothers you. It's just gorgeous to me to be out there ... I've set all day, just enjoying the whole outdoors. There's no stress out there!"

— Ron Wright

Hunting

Continued from Page 14

"I always study the animal I'm hunting," he said. "Like the white tail deer you. They have patterns ... Their feeding system, the way they feed and everything. If you've got a big acorn crop, you go up into the woods, you find a spot and you get a tree stand. You hunt the acorns."

Animals also tend to travel on predictable paths, which Wright calls runways.

The kids he takes into the woods are usually between ages 11 and 16. The moment when they first see an animal in the woods is one they'll never forget.

"They get excited, their heart starts beating fast. You just talk to them – don't move; just sit tight; make sure you just squeeze the trigger when you shoot at them," Wright said. "They ask you a lot of questions and you tell them. You try to tell them all you know."

He talks to new hunters a lot about scent. "I try to explain the wind situation, because if the wind is blowing the wrong way and the scent goes to them, you're never going to see them."

Wright also teaches first time hunters how to track a deer that was wounded.

Then he takes them through the process of weighing, skinning, and cleaning the deer.

The most important thing, he said, is to get the hide off the animal so the body heat dissipates and doesn't contribute to spoiling the meat.

"It's just like when they slaughter a cow at the slaughter house. They take the hide off, wash it, they open it up and they run it right into the cooler," Wright explained. "In the warm weather, I'll tell people to take bags of ice and put it inside the cavity just to cool it down."

Wright said that he expects this to be a good season for hunting because there are big apple and acorn crops.

He loves eating deer meat, but when asked his favorite part about hunting, that's not what he talked about.

"How peaceful it is," he said. "It ain't just the kill. I enjoy all of it. I enjoy seeing the land, I enjoy watching the animals. I just love it. It's out there and nobody bothers you. It's just gorgeous to me to be out there ... I've set all day, just enjoying the whole outdoors. There's no stress out there!"



AP PHOTO/JIM COLE, FILE

A deer stands in a yard in Concord, N.H.

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REAL HUNTING.

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. 19
- Deer (rifle) - through Nov. 26
- Deer (muzzleloader) - Dec. 2-10
- Deer (archery) - Dec. 2-10

Small Game Hunting

- Gray squirrel - through Dec. 31
- Crow - through Dec. 19, Friday through Monday only
- Hare and rabbit - through March 11, 2018

Game Bird Season

- Brant - Nov. 22 to Dec. 17
- Canada geese - Nov. 22 to Dec. 27
- Common Snipe - through Nov. 14
- Ducks, coots and mergansers - through Dec. 17
- Ruffed grouse - through Dec. 31
- Snow geese - through Dec. 27
- Woodcock - through Nov. 14

Furbearer Hunting

- Bobcat - Jan. 10 to Feb. 7
- Raccoon - through Dec. 31
- Red and gray fox - through Feb. 11, 2018
- Coyote, opossum, skunk, weasel - no closed season

Furbearer Trapping

- Beaver trapping - through March 31, 2018

Fisher - Dec. 1-31

Bobcat - Dec. 1-16

Mink, skunk, red and gray fox, raccoon, coyote, opossum, weasel - through Dec. 31

Otter trapping - through Feb. 28, 2018

Muskrat - through March 31, 2018

More information, including hunting tips, can be found at www.vtfishandwildlife.com/hunt/seasons. Please double-check all dates and regulations before heading into the woods.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

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

Bears

- Bear (general season) - through Nov. 21 in WMUs C1, D2 and E

Waterfowl

- Canada Geese - Nov. 22 to Dec. 27
- Common snipe - Nov. 14
- Coot - Nov. 22 to Dec. 17
- Crow - through Nov. 30; March 16-31, 2018
- Ducks and brant - Nov. 22 to Dec. 17
- Falconry - Dec. 12 to Jan. 25, 2018 (northern zone); through Nov. 21, Dec. 28 to Jan. 25, 2018 (Connecticut River zone)
- Merganser - Nov. 22 to Dec. 17
- Snow geese - through Dec. 27



Woodcock - through Nov. 14

Deer

- Archery - through Dec. 15 (through Dec. 8 in WMU A)
- Firearms - through Dec. 3 (through Nov. 26 in WMU A)

Small Game and Furbearers

- Snowshoe hare - through March 31, 2018
- Cottontail rabbit - closed
- Gray squirrel - through Dec. 31 (no hunting in parks or cemeteries)
- Ring-necked pheasant - through Dec. 31
- Ruffed grouse, northern bobwhite quail, chukar, Hungarian partridge - through Dec. 31
- Crow - through Nov. 30; March 16-31

Furbearers

- Gray fox, red fox, opossum, skunk, raccoon - through March 31, 2018
- Fisher - Dec. 1 through Jan. 31, 2018
- Mink, muskrat, weasel, otter, beaver - through April 10, 2018
- Coyote - no closed season
- Coyote night hunting - Jan. 1 through March 31, 2018

Pheasant

- Pheasant - through Dec. 31

Turkey

- Fall archery - through Dec. 15 (except WMU A through Dec. 8)

More information, including hunting tips, can be found at www.wildlife.state.nh.us/hunting/hunt-dates.html. Please double-check all dates and regulations before heading into the woods.

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Events

Continued from Page 7

Friday, Dec. 1

5 p.m. - Art opening, WREN, Bethlehem. WREN Member Small Works Show. For info: wrenworks.org.

6 p.m. - Community Christmas Tree Lighting, Jay. Caroling and Santa visit. For info: jayvt.com.

7 p.m. - Art opening, 42 Maple in Bethlehem. Charlie Hood. For info: 42maple.org.

Saturday, Dec. 2

10 a.m. - Holiday Ornaments, Littleton Studio School, Littleton. Make ornaments with Lori Silva. For info: littleton.nhcrafs.org.

10 a.m. - Burklyn Arts Holiday Market, Lyndon Town School. Crafts, entertainment, raffle, food. For info: 802-626-9631.

10 a.m. - Gingerbread Bazaar, Lunenburg School. For info: questions@topofthecommon.org.

7 p.m. - Atlas Key, Court Street Arts, Haverhill. For info: courtstreetarts.org.

Sunday, Dec. 3

10 a.m. - Burklyn Arts Holiday Market, Lyndon Town School. Crafts, entertainment, raffle, food. For info: 802-626-9631.

2 p.m. - Library Open House, North Danville Brainerd Library. For info: lizsargent@charter.net.

Tuesday, Dec. 5

9 a.m. - The Art of Recovery, Northeastern

Vermont Regional Hospital. Art show reception. For info: 802-748-7552.

6 p.m. - Coloring Club, Catamount Arts. For adults and teens. For info: catamountarts.org.

Wednesday, Dec. 6

10:30 a.m. & 1 p.m. - No Strings Marionette Show, Fuller Hall, St. Johnsbury. For info: catamountarts.org.

7 p.m. - First Wednesdays, St. Johnsbury Athenaeum. Rembrandt and Vermeer in their Place and Time. For info: vermonthumanities.org.

Thursday, Dec. 7

4 p.m. - Winter on Summer : A celebration of remembrance and joy, NEK Council on Aging, St. Johnsbury.

7 p.m. - National Theatre Live, Catamount Arts, "Young Marx" screening. For info: catamountarts.org.

Friday, Dec. 8

6 p.m. - Barnyard Bingo, American Legion Auxiliary Lyndon Unit 30. For info: 802-535-5563.

Saturday, Dec. 9

10 a.m. - Barnet Holiday Craft Fair, Barnet School. Food, music, crafters, etc.. For info: 802-274-9527.

12:55 p.m. - The Met Live, Catamount Arts, "Hansel and Gretel" screening. For info: catamountarts.org.

1:30 p.m. - Victorian Holiday Open House, Fairbanks Museum. For info: discoverstjohnsbury.com.



COURTESY PHOTO BY DENNIS CURRAN

Cross Country skiing on Kingdom Trails.

7 p.m. - Bluegrass Night, Catamount Arts, St. Johnsbury. For info: catamountarts.org.

Sunday, Dec. 10

12 p.m. - Meat Raffle followed by live band, American Legion Auxiliary Lyndon Unit 30. For info: 802-535-5563.

Wednesday, Dec. 13

7 p.m. - Choir of Clare College, Cambridge, United Community Church in St. Johnsbury. For info: catamountarts.org.

Thursday, Dec. 14

7 p.m. - National Theatre Live, Catamount Arts, "Young Marx" screening. For info: catamountarts.org.

8 p.m. - Bangkok Disco, The Loading Dock, Littleton. Jazz and funk. For info: the-loadingdocknh.com.

Friday, Dec. 15

9:30 a.m. - PBS Kids! Preschool Film, Catamount Arts, St. Johnsbury. Must register in advance. For info: 748-2600 x108.

Saturday, Dec. 16

9 a.m. - Texas Hold'em Tournament, Westfield Community Center. For info: 802-744-9927.

12:55 p.m. - The Met Live, Catamount Arts, "Hansel and Gretel" screening. For info: catamountarts.org.

Sunday, Dec. 17

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

1 p.m. - Burke Music Jam, Burke Community Building. Everyone is encouraged to participate. For info: 802-525-3412.

Monday, Dec. 18

5 p.m. - Game Night, Colatina Exit, Bradford. For info: 802-222-1909.

8 p.m. - Glenn Miller Orchestra, Omni Mt. Washington Hotel. For info: bretttonwoods.com.

Tuesday, Dec. 19

6 p.m. - Coloring Club, Catamount Arts.

Events continues on 28



FILE PHOTO

A snowy trail run.

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Skiers ride to the top of Cannon Mountain.

PHOTO COURTESY OF CANNON MOUNTAIN

MEET THE MAYOR ... OF ZOOMER LIFT

BY LEAH CAREY
Staff Writer

Just call Allan Girard “Mayor.” The Mayor of Zoomer Lift at Cannon Mountain, that is.

Girard has been manning the lift since 1984. For many years he was the guy who helps you get on and off the chair. About ten years ago he graduated to the “mayor’s” hut at the top. Now he’s the one who has the safety shut-off button.

“I don’t ski at all,” Girard said with a laugh during our conversation. “I tried it, but I’m safer on the ground.”

He said that he misses being outside sometimes, even though it can be windy, cold, snowy and even rainy. You get used to the cold, he said.

“You get to talk to people a lot more,” he said. “Every five or six seconds the chairs go by, so you can visit with people as they leave and then they’ll come back to make another run and you still carry on the conversation.”

Now that he’s at the top, he’s inside behind a big picture window. But he’s still as actively involved with everything as ever.

“You watch the weather, watch the wind and different things that come around,” Girard said. “The people that come up the lift, get off the lift, hopefully they get off the lift properly. There’s people that have problems with their ski equipment, or drop something, they get turned around, mixed up, lost.”

And he’s on hand to help in any of those circumstances.

The Mayor continues on 21



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John Stuart Mill



PHOTO COURTESY OF CANNON MOUNTAIN

Allan Girard

The Mayor

Continued from Page 20

If someone has a problem, he'll hit the button to stop the lift. Then he'll emerge from the shack to see if they're okay. He'll help them disentangle equipment from the chair, or reclaim lost equipment.

"Sometimes people will forget to get off and they'll go part way around the pull wheel [at the top]," Girard said.

When that happens, if he catches it quickly enough, he can stop the chairlift and help them down. But once they get past the ramp, there's no safe way off, so they end up riding back down.

"We'll call the bottom and tell them what number chair they're on," Girard said. "They'll slow the chair at the bottom and let the people off, and they can start all over again."

The "Mayor's hut" that Girard occupies at the top of Zoomer Lift has a big plate-glass window and an open door. He's known many of the skiers for years (even decades!) and they pop in to say hello.

"You get to meet a lot of people over the years," he said. "When I started, parents brought their little kids in through the lift. And now those little kids are bringing their kids in through the lift!"

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Jay Peak — 79 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.

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.ski-lyndon.com.

New Hampshire

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.

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.

Mt. Eustis Ski Tow — A local ski facility in Littleton. For information visit www.mteustis.org.



A snowboarder takes flight during a big air competition.

FILE PHOTO

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PHOTO BY LEAH CAREY

Elaine and Mike Gainer sit in the snowman's hand as Nick and Melanie Staley guard the snowballs at Santa's Village.

REAL FUN.

THE FAMILY BEHIND ALL THE FUN AT SANTA'S VILLAGE

BY PATRICK LOVETT
Staff Writer

Stories, slogans, and landmarks all describe the legacy of the Dubois family at Santa's Village. Now, as the family welcomes its fourth generation of park employees, they will pass these heirlooms down once again.

Opened in 1953, the park was founded by Normand and Cecile Dubois. Their daughter Elaine Gainer and her husband Mike took over next. The current owners are their daughter Melanie Staley and her husband Nick.

The newest generation of the family has started working right where their parents and grandparents began at Santa's Village — at the bottom. Owen and Austin Staley, 14 and 16 respectively, are now cleaning and

cooking at the park. "They are treated no differently than any 14-year-old or 16-year-old in the park," said Melanie, their mother. "Maybe they have to work a little bit harder."

Melanie and Elaine started out similarly, doing odd-jobs for their parents. Elaine began when she was about eight, dressing up as an angel and singing at the park's nativity scene. Melanie started in the schoolhouse, now called Elf University, before taking on more responsibility. Concerning Owen and Austin's future, Melanie says, "Hopefully someday, after college, they will come back."

Melanie said, "There are five or six grandchildren. Hopefully one of them will be here to continue [the park]. I'm pretty sure that will happen."

Melanie's husband Nick added, "I'm

Santa continues on 23

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Santa

Continued from Page 22

pretty comfortable in saying at least two of them will want to be here.”

Nick and Melanie’s confidence is backed by family history – time and time again members of the family have been pulled back to the park, even when they thought they would leave it behind. Elaine explained this phenomenon rather simply, saying, “When you have a passion for something, it dictates.”

This passion is something Elaine attributed to her parents, Normand and Cecile, who founded the park. “It was against a lot of odds they were able to do it, but they were determined and had the passion, so here we are,” she said.

Santa’s Village was not only founded on hard work, Elaine says it was also work of fate.

The story, as she told it, began with the Dubois family traveling back from The North Pole, a Christmas-themed park in Wilmington, N.Y., when she was 3 years old. As they passed the park’s current site, Elaine said, a little fawn jumped out in front of the car. She asked her dad if that was Santa’s Reindeer.

He said, “Yes it was.”

Afterwards, the parents looked into buying the property. “The property was for sale, it had evergreens in it, and a



Santa continues on 24

PHOTO COURTESY OF SANTA'S VILLAGE

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PHOTO COURTESY OF SANTA'S VILLAGE

Santa

Continued from Page 23

little brook,” says Gainer, “Those were the two criteria he (Normand Dubois) had.” The family opened Santa’s Village about a year later, beginning their 60-year legacy.

Elaine, along with other family members, attributed much of the park’s continued success to Normand’s saying: “If you don’t push ahead, you’ll fall behind.” This meant making improvements every year, whether by a new ride, shop, or renovations.

That is something Nick and Melanie still strive to do. “Just like my grandparents, every year we continue to add or make improvements to the park,” said Melanie. This past year, these improvements meant giving both the park’s gift shop and Burger Meister Food Court a “facelift.” In the future, Melanie expects they will add more rides to keep expanding the park.

Another Dubois motto, “Pure Joy. Family Style,” extends beyond work at the park. According to Elaine, it is not only the park’s mission, but “It’s everything ... that is how we live.” There is a lot of work and frustration that comes with running a business, but she also said, “for the most part it’s a joyful, fun business to be in. I think that is what my dad wanted.”

They also work to spread that joy to the surrounding community. “It’s all worth it when you see people coming in and their children are smiling and having the best time,” Elaine

Santa continues on 25



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PHOTO COURTESY OF SANTA'S VILLAGE

Santa

Continued from Page 24

said. "They come back year after year and generation after generation now, too. So it is very rewarding."

Some families have gone so far as to make traditions out of landmarks and experiences at Santa's Village. One such tradition involves a giant rabbit statue in the center of the park where visitors often take pictures.

"It has nothing to do with Christmas," said Melanie, "but if we ever got rid of that rabbit we would have a lot of angry people because it has been here generation after generation."

While the high season for Santa's Village is Memorial Day through late August the amusement park has special Christmastime hours in November and December as well as a special New Years Eve event with limited admission. Visit <http://www.santasvillage.com/> for details.



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REAL CELEBRATION.

LOCAL MUSICIAN EXPLAINS THE THRILL OF FIRST NIGHT

BY LEAH CAREY
Staff Writer

Once you've opened all the gifts and stuffed yourself with Christmas dinner, what do you have to look forward to? First Night festivities, of course!

Many communities have New Year's Eve celebrations that are sure to delight.

St. Johnsbury, Vermont, takes it to another level entirely with their First Night North extravaganza. With over a 100 performances

in venues all over downtown, and even performers in the streets, it is eight hours of jam-packed fun.

Every year's line-up is a little different, but we've come to expect magicians, circus acts, kids' activities, planetarium shows, food, and music.

Oh, the music!

There is a wealth of local musical talent, and it is on display at First Night.

We spoke with musician Linda Warnaar about why she enjoys playing at First Night.


"I've been playing at First Night for – I

First Night continues on 27



PHOTO BY PAUL HAYES

Linda Warnaar plays with Tritium Well at Dog Mountain this summer.



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First Night

Continued from Page 26

don't even know if I could come up with a date!" Warnaar said. "At least 15 years."

She's a multi-talented musician who plays drums, Conga drums, guitar, trumpet, and is also a vocalist and songwriter.

This year she'll be performing with three different acts at First Night: The Drummatics, Chickweed, and Tritium Well.

"I'm really thankful that the promoters of First Night really concentrate on local music, which I think is great," Warnaar said. "There are so many great local musicians and it gives them a chance to perform for a lot of people."

Over the years she's played in many of the First Night venues. "St. Andrew's Church is one of my favorites because the acoustics are nice, it's nice and intimate," she said. "You can see the audience and talk with the audience easily."

She also loves the Morse Center at St. Johnsbury Academy because it's great for dancing. "And of course all of the churches are just beautiful performance spaces. I think I've

First Night continues on 29

FILE PHOTO

The St. Johnsbury Academy Hilltones perform inside the South Congregational Church at a previous year's first night.



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Events

Continued from Page 17

For adults and teens. For info: catamountarts.org.

Wednesday, Dec. 27

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

Thursday, Dec. 28

10 a.m. - iPhoneography with Meg Brown, Littleton Studio School, Littleton. For info: littleton.nhcrafts.org.

Saturday, Dec. 30

6:30 p.m. - Torchlight parade and fireworks, Cannon Mountain. For info: cannonmt.com.

Sunday, Dec. 31

4 p.m. - First Night North, Venues around St. Johnsbury. For info: firstnightstj.com.
9 p.m. - New Year's Eve, Jay Peak Resort. Live music and fireworks. For info: jaypeakresort.com.

Tuesday, Jan. 2

6 p.m. - Coloring Club, Catamount Arts. For adults and teens. For info: catamountarts.org.
7 p.m. - First Wednesdays, St. Johnsbury Athenaeum. American Exceptionalism Revisited. For info: vermonthumanities.org.

Friday, Jan. 5

10 a.m. - Red Cross Blood Drive, Catamount Arts. For info: discoverstjohnsbury.com.
7 p.m. - Art opening, 42 Maple in Bethlehem. Raven Larcom. For info: 42maple.org.

Friday, Jan. 12

6 p.m. - Barnyard Bingo, American Legion Auxiliary Lyndon Unit 30. For info: 802-535-5563.

Sunday, Jan. 14

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

Monday, Jan. 15

5 p.m. - Game Night, Colatina Exit, Bradford. For info: 802-222-1909.

Tuesday, Jan. 16

6 p.m. - Coloring Club, Catamount Arts. For adults and teens. For info: catamountarts.org.

Friday, Jan. 19

7 p.m. - The Hot Sardines, Fuller Hall, St. Johnsbury. Classic jazz. For info: catamountarts.org.

Sunday, Jan. 21

12 p.m. - Jamboree followed by live band, American Legion Auxiliary Lyndon Unit 30. For info: 802-535-5563.



FILE PHOTO BY PAUL HAYES

A hockey player enjoys the ice at the Yvon 'Peanut' Girouard skating rink in Littleton, N.H.

12:55 p.m. - Ballet In Cinema, Catamount Arts, "Romeo and Juliet" screening. For info: catamountarts.org.

Saturday, Jan. 27

12:55 p.m. - The Met Live, Catamount Arts, "Tosca" (Puccini) screening. For info: catamountarts.org.

Wednesday, Jan. 31

7 p.m. - Ballet In Cinema, Catamount Arts, "Romeo and Juliet" screening. For info: catamountarts.org.

Friday, Feb. 2

8 a.m. - Vertical Challenge, Cannon Mountain. For info: cannonmt.com.
7 p.m. - Art opening, 42 Maple in Bethlehem. Doug Desjardins. For info: 42maple.org.

Saturday, Feb. 3

9 a.m. - Pirates of the High Skis, Cannon Mountain. For info: adaptivesportspartners.org.
12:55 p.m. - The Met Live, Catamount Arts, "Tosca" (Puccini) screening. For info: catamountarts.org.

Sunday, Feb. 4

12:55 p.m. - Bolshoi Ballet, Catamount Arts, "The Lady of the Camellias" screening. For info: catamountarts.org.
3 p.m. - NEK Classical Series, United Community Church South in St. Johnsbury. The Tempest Trio. For info: nekclassicalseries.org.

Tuesday, Feb. 6

6 p.m. - Coloring Club, Catamount Arts. For adults and teens. For info: catamountarts.org.
7 p.m. - Ballet Jazz of Montreal, Lyndon Institute Alumni Auditorium. For info: catamountarts.org.

Wednesday, Feb. 7

7 p.m. - First Wednesdays, St. Johnsbury Athenaeum. Why Facts Don't Always Change People's Minds. For info: vermonthumanities.org.

Friday, Feb. 9

6 p.m. - Barnyard Bingo, American Legion Auxiliary Lyndon Unit 30. For info: 802-535-5563.

Saturday, Feb. 10

9 a.m. - Freeride Event: Big Air, Cannon Mountain. For info: cannonmt.com.
12 p.m. - The Met Live, Catamount Arts, "L'Elisir d'Amore" screening. For info: catamountarts.org.
Memphremagog Women's Pond Hockey Tournament, Eastside Restaurant, Newport. For info: memphremagogpondhockey.com.

Sunday, Feb. 11

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

Wednesday, Feb. 14

7 p.m. - Bolshoi Ballet, Catamount Arts,



FILE PHOTO

Fresh snow covers a chairlift.



First Night

Continued from Page 27

performed in all of them at different times," Warnaar said. "They're all really nice venues with good acoustics."

Playing with three different groups over the course of one evening requires a lot of running around and good time management by Warnaar.

"Setting up for three different groups is kind of challenging," she said. "But they are very flexible in putting together a schedule that works for everybody, with plenty of time for me to get from one space to another. Or play in the same space with multiple bands."

As a music lover herself, Warnaar also wants to support other local musicians. "I try to make it to listen to as many acts as I can. But I'm oftentimes running from one gig to

the next, so it's hard for me to actually listen!"

It sounds exhausting, but Warnaar said it's a lot of fun. "Playing music usually gives me energy," she said. "It's a very long night for me and by the end of it, I usually do collapse. But it's all good fun!"

Warnaar loves that First Night brings out a large group of local music lovers.

"It's an opportunity to play for a lot of folks that I know, my home community," she said. "And a lot of folks come out so it's great to play for bigger crowds of people that I know ... It's a great time to support live music."

First Night is an alcohol-free event and there is a shuttle that runs every 15 minutes around town to various venues. There is a fireworks display at midnight.

For the full First Night North schedule visit www.firstnightnorth.org.

FILE PHOTO

The Nimble Arts Ruckus Circus performs a thrilling act at a previous year's First Night.

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REAL SKATING.

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BY LEAH CAREY
Staff Writer

It takes a lot of man hours to make an outdoor ice rink skate-able.

In St. Johnsbury, Mike Welch is one of the people putting in those hours. He is the primary caretaker of the Portland Street rink, a job he started years ago when his son wanted to learn

to skate. At the time, the rink was between maintenance people.

"My son started getting interested in skating," Welch said. "I said if I can figure out how to do this, I'd like to learn how so I can get it going for him."

Welch and St. Johnsbury Recreation Director Joe Fox, who maintains the Winter Street

Skating continues on 31



FILE PHOTO

Kids play on a fresh sheet of ice at the Portland Street rink in St. Johnsbury.

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Skating

Continued from Page 30

rink, got lessons from Bill Terrell, who had long been the keeper of the rinks.

"He instructed us what to do, the best way to get the thing started," Welch remembers. "You have to wait for cold weather. Not only below freezing, but quite a bit below freezing."

Ideally, Welch said, the weather would be around zero degrees for a couple of days to get the rink started. "If it's too warm, [the base] goes away quick, so the cold weather is essential."

There's one other ingredient necessary for flooding a grassy area: a coating of snow.

"When you're first flooding it, it's wetting down the snow, so it's really absorbing [the water] into the snow until it forms ice. The first time you're essentially making a rink of slush as you're flooding it. Once that freezes and you flood it again, the slush makes ice."

That initial layer of ice isn't enough, though. It's not thick enough to hold together if the temperature creeps up a little bit. But even worse, it's not a clean level surface yet. Welch said he usually has to flood the rink between seven and ten times for the surface to even out.

"Slowly it becomes that there's no more peaks and valleys," Welch said. "Water seeks its own level, but it takes a long time to make

Skating continues on 32



FILE PHOTO BY PAUL HAYES

Joe Fox sprays one of the first layers of ice for the Main Street rink in St. Johnsbury.

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FILE PHOTO
A makeshift hose prop helps with the flooding of the Main Street rink in St. Johnsbury.



Skating

Continued from Page 31

that happen.”

If the weather is right, Welch can get the rink from first flood to level over the course of two or three days. “I usually try to get it started on a weekend and I’ll just keep going down every few hours. Once it’s frozen, I’ll flood it again. If I can do that over the course of a weekend, I can pretty much get it to the point where it’s flat and skate-able.”

But that’s just the beginning of the season. Once the rink is open, Welch works on it almost every day. He’ll use a shovel to clean up places where skates have scraped or dinged the ice, then hose it down to add another thin layer of ice.

“It takes about an hour or so to shovel it off and flood it,” he said. “You hope it stays cold, hope it doesn’t snow too much.”

Welch enjoys the time he puts in each day.

“I’m kind of an insomniac, so to do something late at night or early in the morning, to do something productive is good. Joe [Fox] calls it his therapy.”

Others are also involved in the maintenance of the rink – the town provides the water and hoses, and Hugh Wescott of St. J Public Works does the plowing whenever it snows. Community members will also clean snow off the rink after a storm if they get to it before the town.

“I have people all the time who stop and say how much they appreciate me doing this, it looks great, we love it,” said Welch. “It’s great to have people really enjoy it. When I’m not there, I drive by to see how many people are skating. I like to see people out there skating!”

Now that his son is grown and back in town as a professional engineer, Welch is still happy to be serving the community’s kids

Skating continues on 33

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Kids take a moment while playing hockey on the Main Street rink in St. Johnsbury.

FILE PHOTO

Skating

Continued from Page 32

by grooming the rink.
“I think it’s important for the kids to get out and do something in the wintertime ... They’re outside doing something that’s physical and doesn’t cost anything,” Welch said. “It doesn’t cost a lot to get into it - you can get a pair of used skates pretty inexpensively - and no special training. You can get out and push a chair or a milk crate around. You can just get out and do it. It’s available for everybody. You don’t need money and you don’t need hockey gear or anything fancy. You just need warm clothes and you can get out and take advantage of it.”

Skating rinks in the area (both indoor and outdoor)

VERMONT

- Jay – Ice Haus Arena at Jay Peak Resort - 802-988-2750
- Lyndon – Fenton Chester Arena at 145 Col-

- lege Hill Road - www.chesterarena.com
- Newport – Newport City Skating Rink at Gardner Park - 802-334-5718
- St. Johnsbury – Four Seasons Park at the corner of Main and Winter streets - 802-751-2304
- St. Johnsbury – Portland Street Rink at the corner of Portland and Concord Streets - 802-751-2304

NEW HAMPSHIRE

- Bethlehem – Recreation Park at the corner of Main and Aggasiz streets - www.bethlehem-whitemtns.com/fun.html
- Franconia – Town skating rink behind the Abbie Greenleaf Library on Main Street - 603-823-7752
- Lancaster – Town skating rink behind the court house on Main Street
- Littleton – Remich Park at 165 Pleasant St. - 603-444-2575
- Colebrook – North Country Community Recreation Center at 33 Rec Center Road - 603-237-4019

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THE SCIENCE IN MAKING TERRAIN PARKS

BY LEAH CAREY
Staff Writer

It's a great feeling when you arrive on the slopes early enough to find an undisturbed corduroy waiting for you to make tracks.

Have you ever thought about how it gets that way? Brad Shedd is the head terrain park groomer at Bretton Woods and he gave us a behind-the-scenes peek into his world.

"Honestly, my favorite thing about this job is the sunrises every morning. All the pictures on my phone are sunrises," Shedd said. "I might be a sunrise addict."

Groomer continues on 35



FILE PHOTO BY LEAH CAREY

Brad Shedd grooms the trails at Bretton Woods as the sun rises.

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Groomer

Continued from Page 34

And with good reason – he's out on the slopes before sunrise and off the slopes by the time the chairlifts start for the day.

The science of snow

While it might be tempting to think that grooming doesn't take a lot of brain power and the machine does all the work, in fact Shedd is constantly monitoring temperature, trajectories and safety risks.

"This is for the kids: Stay in school!" he said, tongue in cheek, but not really joking. "I said, 'I'll never need any of this stuff!' And here I am 15 years later building shapes and angles and working with physics and trajectories every day."

"Yes, I was that snowboarder that they put in the cat and said, go build," he continued. "But I'm not just some dumb kid."

He said that adapting to snow conditions, knowing his machine, and understanding why snow does certain things are integral parts of his job.

"When the snow gets harder, the tracks will start shaking a little bit more," he said. "On the other hand, if it's 45 degrees out, that's when you start running into very sticky snow conditions. A lot of moisture will build up as the snow starts melting in the sunshine and the warm temperatures. And the moisture will build up in that snow and that can cause a lot of clumping. The corduroy won't be as nice. So it takes a little bit of extra care."

"The same thing in November when we're blowing a lot of man-made snow and man-made snow has a weird texture at first," Shedd continued. "We pump a lot of water into it, so that stuff can be like concrete. If you've got a lot of really wet snow and you go out and push it around with a groomer, you come back and till it while it's still really wet, it will harden up and be rock solid."

While days of fresh powder might be a little easier, the "rock solid" days are more challenging. "It takes a toll on the machine, the snow is a lot harder on the equipment. It takes a lot longer," Shedd said. "You're

Groomer continues on 36



FILE PHOTO BY LEAH CAREY

Brad Shedd in between grooming runs on the trails at Bretton Woods.

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PHOTO BY LEAH CAREY

Brad Shedd eyes the conditions at a terrain park at Bretton Woods.

Groomer

Continued from Page 35

looking at more fuel, more man hours, you're paying somebody to be out here for 12 hours instead of eight."

A day in the life

Shedd usually gets to the mountain around 4 or 5 a.m. "If I know that I have a lot going on, like if we're doing a big build in the park, I might come in at 2 or 3," he said.

"I warm up my groomer, jump in the groomer, check out the base area, the learning features down there, make sure that's good to go," he said. Shedd takes care of grooming right up to the steps at the base hut, a challenging endeavor with such a large machine. "The front stairs are one of my special projects."

"I make sure all the load ramps and lifts are looking good and smoothed out and at the proper heights for skier loading," he said. Then he heads into the terrain park and gets it ready for the day. "I've got a crew of younger guys that are really good and they'll go out and test our jumps. We test our elements every day."

Shedd is married and that kind of schedule could be tough on a relationship. "It's tricky, he said. "But my wife has the same work ethics that I do. Get up and go to work, do it very good, and then go home and enjoy life. She's an outdoor enthusiast like I am."

In fact, they met on the mountain when he was working in the rental shop and she was a ski instructor. She's still a fitness enthusiast and gets up early to do her own work out, so they manage to make their schedules work. "She sleeps roughly the same hours I do," Shedd said. "She's not up until midnight every night, which is good. We get to enjoy breakfast and dinner together."

But the timing of those meals might look odd to a lot of people. "People say, why do

you drink soda in the morning? Because I've been here for four hours!" Shedd laughs. "I get out of my cat and instead of wanting coffee at 9 a.m., I want some lunch!"

"I tell everybody it sucks. Yep, it's horrible!" said Shedd laughing more. And then, getting serious, "I really do have a passion for it."

Always learning

Each year Shedd attends "cutters camp," a place to see new grooming equipment and learn from colleagues at other mountains.

"There's like 60 park guys from 45 different resorts on the east coast. So you get a chance to share secrets and techniques with everybody," he said. "When you can go to any park in the east and see similar features, you can be more comfortable with riding them. If I'm hitting jumps here at Bretton Woods and I go over to Loon and they're somewhat the same, then you're going to feel comfortable and say, I know how to hit jumps like that."

"I was loading the lift the other day and there was a little girl standing there, she must have been 10 years old. She said to her friend, did you see me grab my board over that 10-footer?" Shedd said. "That excited me! Here's this young girl on a snowboard, and she's pumped because she just did a trick on a small jump that I built. She's going to remember that for a long time. That was probably the highlight of her weekend right there!"

For Shedd, it all comes down to having the safest park possible. "If we were just a bunch of cowboys out here throwing rails in the snow and doing crazy jumps, it would be pretty dangerous," he said. "This is a very dangerous sport ... but there's ways to manage the risk."

Plus, he gets to see something most others don't. "One thing about being a park groomer, you get to see the terrain park from a different view. I spend a lot of my time looking uphill at it."

First published in October 2015



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Clockwise from above: Fat bike riding near Burke Mountain. A family sledding adventure. Speed skating on Lake Memphremagog. The Santa Run in Lancaster.





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Events

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“The Lady of the Camellias” screening. For info: catamountarts.org.

Saturday, Feb. 17

12 p.m. - The Met Live, Catamount Arts, “L’Elisir d’Amore” screening. For info: catamountarts.org.

Monday, Feb. 19

1 p.m. - Charok Lama Rinpoche, Milarepa Center, Barnet. His only public talk in the U.S.. For info: milarepacenter.org.
5 p.m. - Game Night, Colatina Exit, Bradford. For info: 802-222-1909.

Tuesday, Feb. 20

6 p.m. - Coloring Club, Catamount Arts. For adults and teens. For info: catamountarts.org.

Wednesday, Feb. 21

10:30 a.m. & 1 p.m. - Kingdom All-Stars concert, Fuller Hall, St. Johnsbury. For info: catamountarts.org.

Friday, Feb. 23

10 a.m. - Memphremagog Winter Swim Festival, Lake Memphremagog, Newport.

Various lengths and themes. For info: kingdomgames.co.

Saturday, Feb. 24

10 a.m. - Memphremagog Winter Swim Festival, Lake Memphremagog, Newport. Various lengths and themes. For info: kingdomgames.co.
12:30 p.m. - The Met Live, Catamount Arts, “La Boheme” (Puccini) screening. For info: catamountarts.org.
6:30 p.m. - Torchlight parade and fireworks, Cannon Mountain. For info: cannonmt.com.

Sunday, Feb. 25

10 a.m. - Memphremagog Winter Swim Festival, Lake Memphremagog, Newport. Various lengths and themes. For info: kingdomgames.co.

Tuesday, Feb. 27

8 a.m. - Tibetan New Year, Milarepa Center, Barnet. Including potluck lunch and stories. For info: milarepacenter.org.

Saturday, March 3

11 a.m. - Bill’s Race To Beat Amyloid, Cannon Mountain. For info: billsrace.com.
12:30 p.m. - The Met Live, Catamount Arts, “La Boheme” (Puccini) screening. For info: catamountarts.org.



FILE PHOTO

Ivy holds up her big catch of the day while ice fishing on Lake Memphremagog in this 2015 file photo.

Sunday, March 4

12:55 p.m. - Bolshoi Ballet, Catamount Arts, “The Flames of Paris” screening. For info: catamountarts.org.

Tuesday, March 6

6 p.m. - Coloring Club, Catamount Arts. For adults and teens. For info: catamountarts.org.

Wednesday, March 7

7 p.m. - First Wednesdays, St. Johnsbury Athenaeum. The Parallel Lives of Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln. For info: vermonthumanities.org.

Thursday, March 8

7 p.m. - National Theatre Live, Catamount Arts, “Hamlet” screening. For info: catamountarts.org.
7 p.m. - Dublin Irish Dancers, Lyndon

Institute Alumni Auditorium. For info: catamountarts.org.

Friday, March 9

6 p.m. - Barnyard Bingo, American Legion Auxiliary Lyndon Unit 30. For info: 802-535-5563.

Saturday, March 10

9 a.m. - Freeride Event: Slopestyle, Cannon Mountain. For info: cannonmt.com.
12:55 p.m. - The Met Live, Catamount Arts, “Semiramide” screening. For info: catamountarts.org.

Sunday, March 11

12:30 p.m. - Freeride Series, Cannon Mountain. Slopestyle competition. For info: cannonmt.com.
3 p.m. - NEK Classical Series, United Community Church South in St. Johnsbury. Jeffrey Ladeur. For info: nekclassicalseries.org.



FILE PHOTO

A snowboarder soars over a terrain park.

REAL THRILLS.

DISCOVER WORLD CLASS ICE CLIMBING

BY LEAH CAREY
Staff Writer

According to John Kascenska of Kingdom Adventures Mountain Guides in East Burke, the Northeast Kingdom and White Mountains host some of the best ice climbing available.

“Lake Willoughby is considered one of the premiere ice climbing locations in the entire country,” he said. “We are lucky. We have a beautiful resource here in all sea-

sons – great rock climbing, wonderful ice climbing, downhill skiing, back country skiing, mountain biking.”

Until a couple years ago, you could find Kascenska on the campus of Lyndon State College looking every bit an academic dean and professor. But now he’s retired from academia and you may need to look higher to find him – specifically, to the top of the nearest cliff.

“I have a great interest in mountaineering and going into high places,” he said.

Climbing continues on 40



COURTESY PHOTO

An ice climber takes on a pitch while climbing with John Kascenska of Kingdom Adventures Mountain Guides.

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Climbing

Continued from Page 39

And because he enjoys winter, ice climbing is one of his great loves.

So much so that he started his own outdoor guiding business several years ago. He teaches rock climbing, ice climbing, wilderness first aid, avalanche courses and more.

He admits that, if given the choice, it would be hard to choose between ice climbing and rock climbing. But as we are going into winter, the conversation focused on the upcoming ice climbing season.

He begins by explaining the basics of ice flows. "The more snow we have and the more freeze/thaw cycles we have where it gets warmer during the day, colder at night, the ice starts to build and become thicker over time," he said. "It's nice when we have snow because the more snow we have over time, it will be able to disintegrate into flows of ice."

Rock faces that are very vertical tend to gather less freezing water than areas with a lower angle. Because less ice adheres to the rock face, that makes a more challenging climb.

However, as would be expected, that's not the only reason those climbs are difficult. "What determines the difficulty is the angle of the ice," said Kascenska. "The more vertical the ice, the more difficult the climbing. ... Some climbs that are very vertical for many hundred feet are obviously very challenging because there's very few resting points there."

While ice climbing is not for the faint of heart, Kascenska said that ice climbers tend to be very safe climbers. "Ice climbers don't like to fall," he said. "Ice is not as solid as rock, so therein lies the difference between rock climbing and ice climbing. I know lots of people who love to rock climb, but ice climbing for them is less secure. ... Ice is a fairly malleable substance."

Unlike rock climbing, where the rocks remain mostly

Climbing continues on **41**



COURTESY PHOTO

Above and right: Ice climbers scale pitches of different difficulty while climbing with John Kascenska of Kingdom Adventures Mountain Guides.

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Climbing

Continued from Page 40

unchanged from day to day, the landscape and consistency of the ice climb can change drastically. “On a given day the particular ice climb, depending on the temperature, might be softer, which is easier and a bit more secure because you can sink your tools and crampons in easier. When it’s really very bitter cold, the ice tends to be much more brittle and breaks away much more easily.”

But with a brand new ice climber, Kascenska starts slow. “Bringing someone out for the first time is never a big deal,” he said. “We teach them how to use the equipment, tie the right knots, how to belay, some real basic ice climbing technique. We start them off on a real low-angle terrain to begin with.” Over the course of three or four climbing sessions, students work their way up from low-angle climbs to something a bit steeper. “They begin to gain more confidence.”

“A lot of folks like climbing because they like being up high, the view it provides, the challenge of climbing,” he continued. “It’s kind of that sense of satisfaction of having accomplished a challenging climb for you for that day, whatever that means to you.”

Kascenska knows of some small roadside ice climbs that he takes first-timers on, “Only about 30 feet, not very high at all.” He likes them because they’re low-angle, easy to access and not a lot of people use them.

“If someone has never done it before,” he warned, “they should seek some instruction.”

First published October 2012

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A logo for North Country Climbing Center featuring a stylized mountain peak and a climber.

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