

Northeast Vermont & Northern New Hampshire

WINTER

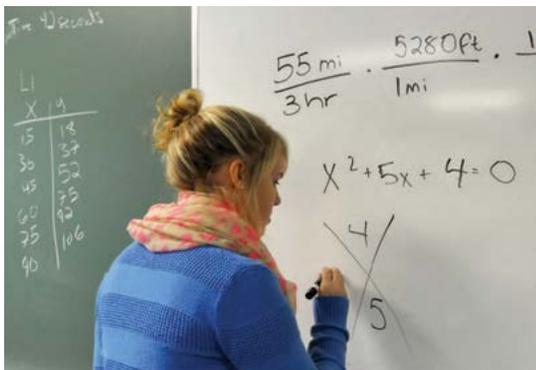
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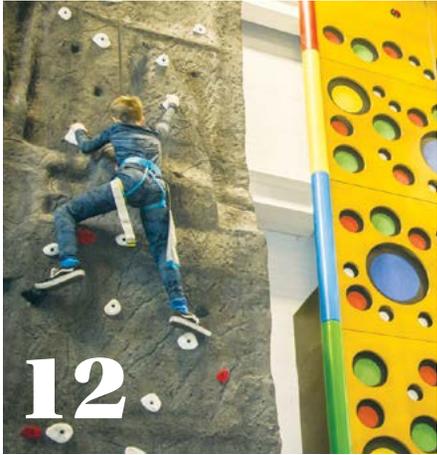
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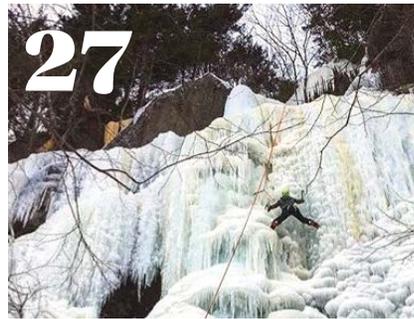
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Skiing in the 'old days'

Lifelong NEK resident recalls skiing's early days and his love for the sport

BY LEAH CAREY
Staff Writer

In the mid-1930s, Herman Hoyt didn't have the luxury of driving over to Burke Mountain for a few runs down the slopes. (Even if he had made his way to Burke Mountain, it would be another 20 years before there were trails for him to ski on!)

When Hoyt was in grade school, he and his friends would walk up the hills on a farm at the back of Arlington School in St. Johnsbury and ski down. They would build "little snow bumps" on the hills so they could have a jump.

"Skiing was just really come to life," he said. "It started with wooden skis and straps over your toes. That was all it was for bindings ... You locked in and if you took a spiral fall, generally the leg didn't survive."

A few years later, he got his first taste of a larger local hill when Lyndon Outing Club opened in 1937.

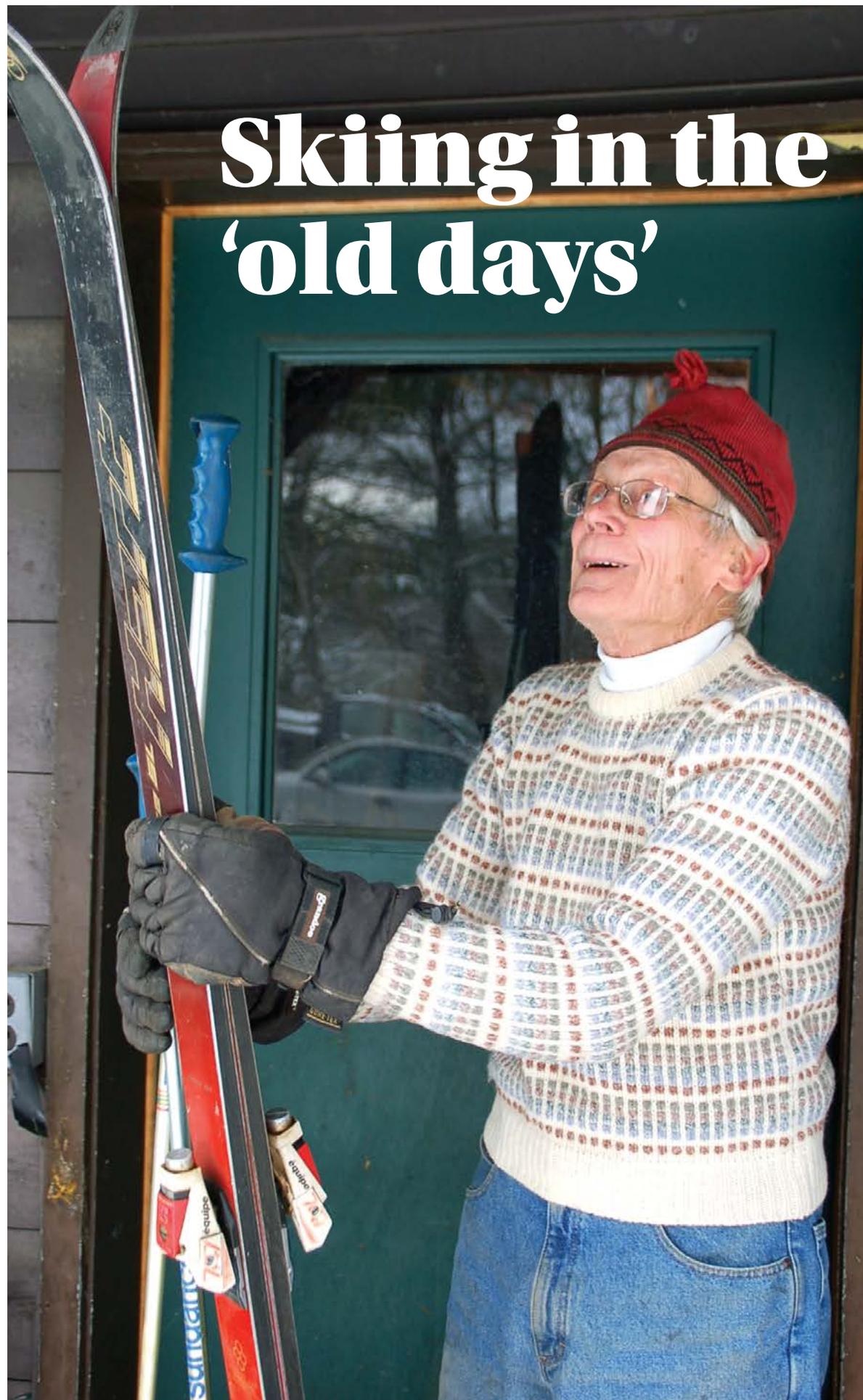
"The hut, as you came down off the steep part of the ski area, you had about 15 or 20 feet to stop," he remembered. "You'd be inside having a hot chocolate and hear a thump and, yep, somebody didn't stop!"

Eventually everyone got the hang of it. "After you did a few face plants into the building, you learned to slow down," Hoyt said.

Hoyt's love of skiing kept him on the mountain when Burke finally opened. "It was pretty nice ... two different trails from the top down," he said. "Some of it was pretty steep – in fact, very steep."

The "Ledges" was a steep area near the top that was eventually replaced with a gentler bypass, Hoyt remembered.

Hoyt continues on 6



Herman Hoyt looks over his old skiing equipment at his house in Burke a few years ago. (Photo by Amy Ash Nixon)

Hoyt

Continued from Page 5

He was a long-time member of the volunteer ski patrol. When he first started, the equipment was much less advanced. The ability to communicate, for instance, was slightly better than tin cans on a string.

“We had telephones on the trees. You rang the phone and you could talk to somebody. It was unreliable,” Hoyt said. “Now we’ve got radios. They work anywhere, anytime. That was a big help.”

He remembers his best rescue as a cold day with the wind coming off Willoughby Lake. “I was at the very top, had gone into the station to keep warm, and these people came up and said two kids are down right next to the lift line and they’re crying,” Hoyt said.

He knew there were only a few places where the lines fit that description, so he headed out.

“Yep, there they were. Not very big. I unloaded them onto the toboggan sled, got the bindings off their feet, and said, ‘Now jump to get them warm!’”

He got them wrapped from head to foot and started down the mountain to get them inside.

“As I took hold of the handle – it was steel – I realized

Hoyt continues on 9



At look at Burke Mountain in the “old days.” (Photo courtesy of Burke Mountain Resort)

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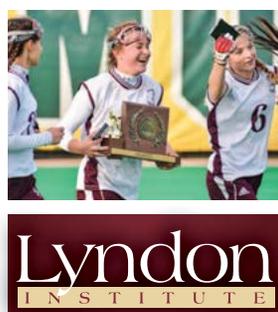
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Things to do

Please note: *This calendar was put together in October and things may have changed. 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. 10

8 a.m. - Franconia Ski Club Ski Swap, Cannon Mountain. For info: franconiaski-club.com.

9 a.m. - Christmas in the Country - crafters, book sale, raffle and more in two locations, North Danville Community Building and North Danville Baptist Church. For info: 802-748-1456.

10 a.m. - Meet The Makers - Lois Pesman and Linda Finn, Omni Mt. Washington lobby. For info: wrenworks.org.

1 p.m. - Short Play Boot Camp for teens and adults, Catamount Arts Outback Space. For info: catamountarts.org.

6 p.m. - Guys & Pies - bachelor auction and dinner, Haverhill's Alumni Hall. For info: courtstreetarts.org.

6:30 p.m. - Guildhall Cabin Fever Concert Series - The Ole Vermont Plowboys, Guild Hall. For info: 802-695-1305.

7 p.m. - Blues Night - Beg, Steal or Borrow, Catamount Arts. For info: catamountarts.org.

Sunday, Nov. 11

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

Tuesday, Nov. 13

5 p.m. - Community dinner bell, Littleton All Saints' Church. For info: normabth@aol.com.

Wednesday, Nov. 14

6 p.m. - Contemporary line dancing, Troy Parrish Hall. For info: 802-988-4193.

Thursday, Nov. 15

1 p.m. - Learn and Play Mah-Jong, Littleton Community Center. For info: littleton-communitycenter@gmail.com.

6:45 p.m. - Northern Vermont Songwriters - country music songwriting workshop, Catamount Arts Outback Space. For info: 802-467-9859.

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

7 p.m. - New Chinese Acrobats, Northern Vermont University - Stannard Gym. For info: catamountarts.org.

7:30 p.m. - Hungerfest 2018 - The Amer-

Alumni Hall. For info: courtstreetarts.org.

10:30 a.m. - Storytime, St. Johnsbury Ath-

7 p.m. - Sara Juli - Fringe Festival, North-



This old time photo shows a dog sled racing down Depot Street in downtown Lyndonville.

ican Vinyl All-Star Band, St. Johnsbury Academy - Fuller Hall. For info: catamountarts.org.

Friday, Nov. 16

9 a.m. - Little Apple Circus, Haverhill's

ern Vermont University - Stannard Gym. For info: catamountarts.org.

Saturday, Nov. 17

8 a.m. - Passumpsic Parade of Presents Christmas Bazaar - crafts, toys, bake sale

and more, Passumpsic Community Baptist Church.

9 a.m. - Christmas in the Kingdom Bazaar - food, crafters, cookie walk and more, Danville Congregational Church,. For info: 802-684-1151.

10 a.m. - Candy Cane Bazaar - food, crafters, cookie walk and more, Community Baptist Church in Whitefield. For info: 603-837-2578.

12 p.m. - Meet The Makers - Megan Mahan, Omni Mt. Washington lobby. For info: wrenworks.org.

12:55 p.m. - Met Live in HD - *Marnie*, Catamount Arts. For info: catamountarts.org.

Monday, Nov. 19

3:30 p.m. - Littleton Economic Development Celebration, Littleton Opera House. For info: info@littletonareachamber.com.

Tuesday, Nov. 20

5 p.m. - Community dinner bell, Littleton All Saints' Church. For info: normabth@aol.com.

7 p.m. - Bolshoi Ballet - *Sylphide*, Catamount Arts. For info: catamountarts.org.

Wednesday, Nov. 21

6 p.m. - Contemporary line dancing, Troy Parrish Hall. For info: 802-988-4193.

Thursday, Nov. 22

7 p.m. - National Theatre Live - *The Madness of George III*, Catamount Arts. For info: catamountarts.org.

Friday, Nov. 23

10:30 a.m. - Storytime, St. Johnsbury Ath-

12 p.m. - Littleton Christmas Parade, Littleton Main Street. For info: info@littletonareachamber.com.

Saturday, Nov. 24

9 a.m. - Northeast Kingdom Craft Fair - crafts, food, art, and more, Rita Bole Gym at Northern Vermont University. For info: 802-274-8935.

12 p.m. - Meet The Makers - Terry Zigmund, Omni Mt. Washington lobby. For info: wrenworks.org.

7 p.m. - Benefit Gala for Kingdom Kids - to benefit Kingdom Kids ski program, Burke Mountain Hotel. For info: nekchamber.com.

Events continues on 17

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Hoyt

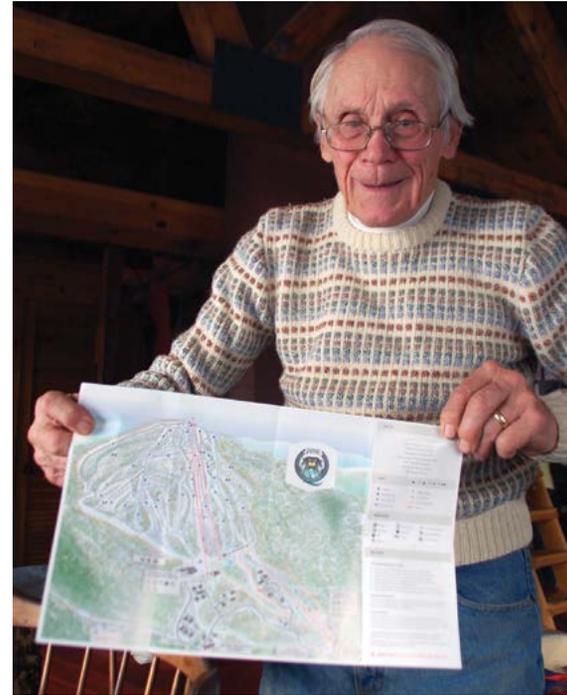
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my gloves, I don't know where they are! They got tied right in with the kids on the toboggan," Hoyt said. "It was pretty cold going down, but I got them down to the first aid room and got some hot chocolate in them. And the next day they were back at it."

He recalled another day when a snowboarder had landed 15 or 20 feet off the trail up to his waist in snow. "Both feet were tied into the snowboard and he couldn't kick himself out," Hoyt said. "We dug him out ... both feet tied down, the snow was right on top of his snowboard!"

Hoyt was on the ski patrol for about 30 years. He eventually retired from that crew in order to work the lift lines at Burke. First he worked the chair lift, then the J-bar. "That's where you had the little rascals," he said. "It's a good place to work." He liked the personal touch of the J-bar.

"You had one person that's going to go up on the lift, and if you wanted to talk to him, you would pull that J-bar with me standing there, and he could finish his conversation whatever it was. Foolishness or some real question that needed to be answered - it was more personal," Hoyt said. "You get on the chairlift and if you get where you're supposed to be, you're going to be scooped up and gone." ◀



Herman Hoyt, who started skiing in the area before there were any trails on Burke Mountain, holds up a recent trail map of Burke Mountain at his house in Burke a few years ago. (Photo by Amy Ash Nixon)

The banner features a collage of images: a skier on a red ski lift, a red motorcycle, and a red and black Polaris utility vehicle. The text "MOMS" is written in large, bold, black letters. Below it, "North Country Powersports" is written in red on a white background with a checkered border. Underneath that, "Since 1973" is written in white on a red background, with a red motorcycle icon to the right.

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Downhill

Burke Mountain — 50+ 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.

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 surface lifts. For information visit www.jay-peakresort.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. There is night skiing. For information visit www.skilyndon.com.

Cross-country

Virginia Stranahan Memorial Town Forest - www.town.marshfield.vt.us - Marshfield

Catamount Trail Association - www.catamounttrail.org - ski Vermont from end to end beginning near Jay Peak

Craftsbury Nordic Center - www.craftsbury.com and click "XC-Skiing" - Craftsbury

Hazen's Notch Association - www.hazensnotch.org - Montgomery

Kingdom Trails Association - www.kingdomtrails.com - East Burke

Memphremagog Ski Touring

Foundation - www.mstf.net - Derby/Newport

Northwoods Stewardship Center - www.northwoodscenter.org - Charleston

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

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Downhill

Bretton Woods — 464 acres of skiing on 62 trails and 35 glades plus three terrain parks. The mountain is serviced by 10 lifts. For information visit www.brettonwoods.com.

Cannon Mountain — 97 trails and glades over 285 acres, 192 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 T-bar, one handle tow and a wonder carpet. For information visit www.cannonmt.com.

Mt. Eustis Ski Tow — Littleton, N.H. For information visit www.mteustis.org.

Cross-country

Bretton Woods Nordic Center - www.brettonwoods.com and click "Nordic" - Bretton Woods

Franconia Cross Country Ski Center - www.franconiainn.com/cross_country_ski_center.php - Franconia

Franconia Notch Recreation Trail - www.cannonmt.com/recre-

[ation-path.html](http://www.cannonmt.com/recreation-path.html) - 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 and click "Trails" - Bethlehem

Ski Hearth Farm - www.ski-hearthfarm.com and click "XC Ski" - Sugar Hill

Also check out snowmobile trails and corridors in NH. 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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Where Winter Has You Climbing The Walls



Jay Peak Resort's Clips and Reels facility offers slopeside indoor fun

BY DANA GRAY
Staff Writer

JAY PEAK — Jay Peak Resort is thrilling winter-time adventure seekers inside-out. Boasting the most amount of snowfall in the East, 79 skiing and riding trails offer plenty of outdoor fun for every ability. And when the conditions aren't conducive to hitting the slopes, the resort has you covered.

With either the roof housing the Pump House indoor waterpark, the Ice Haus skating rink or the newest attraction, Clips & Reels Recreational Center, indoor action exists slopeside.

Clips and Reels reaches its one-year anniversary on Dec. 26. It is a 15,000-square-foot facility featuring climbing walls, a ropes course, an arcade and a movie theater.

"It's been really well-received," said JJ Toland, Jay Peak Resort's director of communications. "It's part of our mission to provide weather-proof amenities."

With nearly a year's worth of feedback, said Toland, "People just appreciate hav-

They're climbing the walls at Jay Peak Resort, enjoying the features at the Clips and Reels Recreation Center, which celebrates its one-year anniversary on Dec. 26. (Photo courtesy of Jay Peak Resort)

Clips continues on 13

Clips

Continued from Page 12

ing something to do when the weather is not the best.”

The “Clips” part of the facility features 16 clip and climb vertical climbing options. There’s also a ropes course with a plan for a new attraction next month called the Jungle Gym.

Toland said the age range for greatest enjoyment of the multiple features of the facility is 8 to 16, but said younger kids and adults also discover plenty of fun.

“We have 4- year-olds climbing around like spider monkeys and we have 44-year-olds doing the same,” said Toland.

Of the climbing features, Toland identified three that people find most enjoyable: the speed climb, which pits the climber against another climber and the clock, a Plexiglas wall, in which you’re climbing face-to-face against another climber on the other side, and “Stairway To Heaven,” which is a series of ascending 12-inch-diameter pillars. Toland called this attraction “harrowing.”

Currently the climbing experience is offered Fridays from 3 to 8 p.m.; Saturdays from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. and Sundays 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Once the ski terrain opens, and the resort gets busier, the facility will

Clips continues on 14



A teen boy ascends the Stairway To Heaven challenge at Clips and Reels Recreation Center at Jay Peak. (Photo courtesy of Jey Peak Resort)

A collage of images related to Catamount Arts. The central focus is the text "CATAMOUNT ARTS" in large, colorful letters, with "CATAMOUNTARTS.ORG" below it. The collage includes: a banner for "CATAMOUNT ARTS PRESENTS ST. JOHNSBURY MUSIC SERIES" with logos for "LEVITT FOUNDATION", "PEER LOGIX", and "Lake Mirror Resort"; a young girl in a light blue dress; a man in a blue shirt playing a banjo; a silhouette of a person with arms raised against a bright light; a person in a red outfit performing a dance move; and a person in a red outfit climbing a structure. The bottom of the collage features the text "PERFORMANCE • COMMUNITY • EDUCATION • GALLERY • THEATRE • DANCE • MUSIC • FILM" in a stylized font.

Clips

Continued from Page 13

open daily. Toland said the expectation is that beginning on Dec. 1, it will be open from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., seven days a week throughout the ski season.

The facility gets its “Reel” name by offering a movie theater featuring a 22-foot screen in a cinema space with 142 seats. The movie selections include popular titles just out of the first-run theater schedule as well as timeless classic films to fit with specific holidays or events. Leading up to Halloween, the theater played “The Shining,” “Hocus Pocus” and “Hotel Transylvania 3.”

Toland said the lineup of movies offered at Clips and Reels is “perfect for the family who may have missed the summer blockbusters.”

The theater also serves alcohol and sometimes offers drink specials to fit with the movie being shown. They’ve served White Russians during “The Big Lebowski” and Chianti while showing “The Godfather.”

Another popular feature of Clips and Reels is an arcade “that skews toward the virtual reality world” as noted on the center’s website.

Clips and Reels is located across the street from the Mountain Kids Adventure Center and Stateside Hotel.

It’s best to book climbing times in advance online, and check out what the movie lineup is when you plan to visit. If you plan to climb, you’ll need closed-toe shoes. ◀



Guests enjoy the thrills and spill at Jay Peak’s Pump House indoor water park.

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Sledding

Snowmobiling is a popular local activity with many miles of dedicated trails around the area. 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 – Search Facebook for Mt Agassiz Trail Association

Haverhill – Connecticut Valley Snowmobile Club – www.ctvalleysnowmobileclub.com - 603-989-3005

Lisbon – Lisbon Stump Jumpers – www.lisbonstumpjumpers.org - 603-838-6059

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

Monroe – Monroe Bumper Humpers – www.facebook.com/MonroeBumperHumpers

Coos County

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

Colebrook – Colebrook Ski Bees – www.colebrookskibeas.org

Dalton – Dalton Ridge Riders – www.daltonridgerunners.com - 603-236-6063

Gorham – Presidential Range Riders – www.presidentialrangeriders.org - 603-723-8741

Groveton – Groveton Trailblazers – www.grovetontrailblazers.com - 603-636-2504

Jefferson – Jefferson Hi-Landers – www.Jeffersonhilanders.com - 603-586-4473



Woodie French holds the lead during a 250 CC class qualifier during the Great North Woods Vintage Snowmobile Racing Series stop in Lisbon, N.H., on Feb. 13, 2016. (Photo by Paul Hayes)

Sledding continues on 16

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A snowmobile trail groomer works on Trail 14 in Derby behind the Border Motel in February 2018.

Sledding

Continued from Page 15

Lancaster – Lancaster Snow Drifters – www.lancastersnowdrifters.org

Milan – Milan All Weather Riders – www.facebook.com/milanallweatherriders

Pittsburg – Pittsburg Ridge Runners – www.pittsburgridgerunners.org - 603-538-7437

Stewartstown – Swift Diamond Riders – www.swiftdiamondriders.org - 603-237-5845

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

VERMONT

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

Caledonia County

Burke – Drift Skippers – www.burkedriftskippers.com – 802-467-3416

Danville – Danville S-Ski-Mos – www.vtvast.org/danville-s-ski-mos.html – 802-684-3372

East Hardwick – Coles Pond Sledgers – www.colespondsledgers.com – 802-533-2595

Groton – Buckaroos of 302 – www.buckaroosof302.com – 802-584-4862

Hardwick – Sno-flake Ridge Runners – [vtvast.org/snowflake-ridge-runners.html](http://www.vtvast.org/snowflake-ridge-runners.html) - 802-371-8901

Lyndonville – Lyndon Sno Cruisers – www.lyndonsnocruisers.com – 802-754-9385

Newark – Newark E-Z Riders – www.newarkezriders.com – 802-467-3436

Peacham – Bayley Hazen Road Snowmobile Club – www.bhrsnowclub.org – 592-3382

Sheffield – Caledonia County Snowmobile Trail Club – www.snowmobilecaledoniavt.com – 802-274-1118

St. Johnsbury – St. Johnsbury Sno-Blazers – No contact information listed

Waterford – Waterford Ridge Runners – 802-473-2513

Wheelock – Winter Wanderers – 802-626-8133

Essex County

Brighton – Brighton Snowmobile Club – www.brightonsnowmobile.org – 802-723-4316

Canaan – Canaan Border Riders – www.canaanborderriders.org – 802-266-7811

Guildhall – Connecticut Valley Sno-Riders – www.ctvalleysnoriders.com – 802-328-2182

Lunenburg – Lunenburg Polar Bears – www.vtvast.org/lunenburg-polar-bears.html - 973-897-4680

Norton – Northeast Kingdom Snow Blasters - www.northeastkingdomsnowblasters.com - 802-371-7301

Orleans County

Craftsbury – Craftsbury Snowmobile Club - 802-586-2891

Derby – Drift Dusters – www.driftdusters.com – 802-487-4313

Glover – Glover Trailwinders Snowmobiling Club - www.glovertrailwinders.com - 802-525-6214

Newport – Country Riders Snowmobile Club – www.countryridersvt.com – 802-988-1115

Newport Center – North Country Mountaineers – www.northcountrymountaineers.com – 802-673-9305

North Troy – Hazen's Notch Snowmobile Club – Search Facebook for Hazen's Notch Snowmobile Club - 802-988-1075

Orleans – Orleans Snow Stormers – www.orleanssnowstormers.com – 802-334-6179 ◀



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Events

Continued from Page 7

Sunday, Nov. 25

3 p.m. - St. Johnsbury Band Holiday Concert, United Community Church, St. Johnsbury. For info: stjohsburyband.org.

Tuesday, Nov. 27

5 p.m. - Community dinner bell, Littleton All Saints' Church. For info: normabth@aol.com.

Wednesday, Nov. 28

6 p.m. - Contemporary line dancing, Troy Parrish Hall. For info: 802-988-4193.

Thursday, Nov. 29

7 p.m. - National Theatre Live - *The Madness of George III*, Catamount Arts. For info: catamountarts.org.

Friday, Nov. 30

10:30 a.m. - Storytime, St. Johnsbury Athenaeum. For info: discoverstjohnsbury.com.

7 p.m. - Boston Children's Chorus, United Community Church, St. Johnsbury. For info: catamountarts.org.

Saturday, Dec. 1

9 a.m. - Christmas Bazaar, American Legion Post 30 in Lyndon. For info: 802-626-8210.

10 a.m. - Christmas In Bethlehem - holiday events around Bethlehem, Bethlehem, NH. For info: christmasinbethlehemnh.org.

10 a.m. - Lunenburg Gingerbread Bazaar - vendors, food, Mrs. Claus and more. For info: 802-892-6654 or questions@topofthecommon.org.

12 p.m. - Meet The Makers - Caryn Clark, Omni Mt. Washington lobby. For info: wrenworks.org.

12:55 p.m. - Met Live in HD - *The Magic Flute*, Catamount Arts. For info: catamountarts.org.

1 p.m. - Birch Bark Ornaments - for teens and adults, Catamount Arts Outback Space. For info: catamountarts.org.

7 p.m. - Memory Tree Lighting Ceremony, North Danville Community Building. For info: 802-748-1456.

Sunday, Dec. 2

12:55 p.m. - Bolshoi Ballet - *Don Quixote*, Catamount Arts. For info: catamountarts.org.

2 p.m. - Boston Children's Chorus, Haverhill's Alumni Hall. For info: courtstreetarts.org.

Tuesday, Dec. 4

5 p.m. - Community dinner bell, Littleton All Saints' Church. For info: normabth@aol.com.

Wednesday, Dec. 5

6 p.m. - Contemporary line dancing, Troy Parrish Hall. For info: 802-988-4193.

7 p.m. - A Cape Breton Christmas with Coig, Rialto Theatre in Lancaster. For info: 603-237-9302.

7 p.m. - First Wednesdays - Making Sense of the News, Newport Goodrich Memorial Library. For info: vermonthumanities.org.

7 p.m. - Film screening and discussion - *How To Survive A Plague*, Catamount Arts. For info: catamountarts.org.



An historic view of Littleton's Mt. Eustis ski hill.

Thursday, Dec. 6

7 p.m. - First Wednesdays - Charles Dickens and the Writing of *A Christmas Carol*, St. Johnsbury Athenaeum. For info: vermonthumanities.org.

7 p.m. - National Theatre Live - *Antony and Cleopatra*, Catamount Arts. For info: catamountarts.org.

Friday, Dec. 7

10:30 a.m. - Storytime, St. Johnsbury Athenaeum. For info: discoverstjohnsbury.com.

6 p.m. - Tree Lighting, Caroling and Santa Visit - please bring donations for the area food shelf, Jay Town Hall. For info: jayvt.com.

Saturday, Dec. 8

9 a.m. - Holiday Craft Fair, First United Methodist Church in Littleton. For info: 603-444-6052.

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

12 p.m. - Meet The Makers - Karen Schweizer, Omni Mt. Washington lobby. For info: wrenworks.org.

12:55 p.m. - Met Live in HD - *The Magic Flute*, Catamount Arts. For info: catamountarts.org.

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

6:30 p.m. - Guildhall Cabin Fever Concert Series - Winter Jam Session, Guild Hall. For info: 802-695-1305.

7 p.m. - Bluegrass Night - The Revelants, Catamount Arts. For info: catamountarts.org.

Friday, Dec. 14

10:30 a.m. - Storytime, St. Johnsbury Athenaeum. For info: discoverstjohnsbury.com.

6:30 p.m. - Film screening and discussion - *Modern Traditions in Hunting & Angling: Green Fire Film*, NorthWoods Stewardship Center. For info: northwoodscenter.org.

Saturday, Dec. 15

10 a.m. - Texas Hold'Em Tournament, Westfield Community Center. For info: jayvt.com.

12 p.m. - Meet The Makers - Sarah Rosedahl, Omni Mt. Washington lobby. For info: wrenworks.org.

12:55 p.m. - Met Live in HD - *La Traviata*, Catamount Arts. For info: catamountarts.org.

2 p.m. - Cabot Holiday Market - including outdoor artisan market and vendors, music, food and more, Cabot Village. For info: 802-373-6235.

7:30 p.m. - Chickweed, The Music Box. For info: themusicboxcraftsbury.org.

Tuesday, Dec. 18

5 p.m. - Community dinner bell, Littleton All Saints' Church. For info: normabth@aol.com.

Wednesday, Dec. 19

6 p.m. - Contemporary line dancing, Troy Parrish Hall. For info: 802-988-4193.

Thursday, Dec. 20

1 p.m. - Learn and Play Mah-Jong, Littleton Community Center. For info: littletoncommunitycenter@gmail.com.

Friday, Dec. 21

10:30 a.m. - Storytime, St. Johnsbury Athenaeum. For info: discoverstjohnsbury.com.

7 p.m. - Rodney Marsalis Philadelphia Big Brass, St. Johnsbury Academy - Fuller Hall. For info: catamountarts.org.

Saturday, Dec. 22

12 p.m. - Meet The Makers - Helen Friedman, Omni Mt. Washington lobby. For info: wrenworks.org.

12:55 p.m. - Met Live in HD - *La Traviata*, Catamount Arts. For info: catamountarts.org.

1 p.m. - TubaChristmas, Trinity United Methodist Church in Colebrook. For info: 603-237-9302.

Sunday, Dec. 23

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

Events continues on 28

Sunday, Dec. 9

3 p.m. - NEK Community Orchestra concert with EPIC Music, Northern Vermont University. For info: discoverstjohnsbury.com.

Tuesday, Dec. 11

5 p.m. - Community dinner bell, Littleton All Saints' Church. For info: normabth@aol.com.

7 p.m. - Bolshoi Ballet - *Don Quixote*, Catamount Arts. For info: catamountarts.org.

Wednesday, Dec. 12

6 p.m. - Contemporary line dancing, Troy Parrish Hall. For info: 802-988-4193.

Thursday, Dec. 13

7 p.m. - National Theatre Live - *Antony and Cleopatra*, Catamount Arts. For info: catamountarts.org.

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Finding fun for the whole family in the Great Outdoors

BY LEAH CAREY

Staff Writer

Don't look for Rusty Talbot indoors during the winter – the cold temperatures don't scare him!

In fact, the outdoor activities of the Northeast Kingdom and North Country are exactly why Talbot and his family moved to Sugar Hill, New Hampshire several years ago.

"In 2011, we thought 'Do we really want to raise our kids in Washington, D.C.?'” Talbot remembered. “We loved a lot of things about where we were, but we felt that New Hampshire was our home, and the mountains were our spiritual home.”

A long-time climbing enthusiast, Talbot opened the North Country Climbing Center, an indoor rock climbing gym in Lisbon, New Hampshire. But as soon as his work day is over, he's ready to head out onto the cliffs and trails.

So we asked him to give us a rundown of his favorite outdoor winter activities.



Rusty Talbot rides the chairlift with his son Jack. (Photo courtesy of Rusty Talbot)

Skiing

“Skiing has always been a passion of mine,” Talbot said. “I like the fact that the different ski mountains in the White Mountains have very distinct personalities.”

He described Cannon Mountain as “homey” with “steep and rugged” terrain that requires a lot of skill. “People believe that if you can ski Cannon any day of the year, you can ski anywhere.”

On the other hand, Bretton Woods has a more “cosmopolitan” feel with “meticulous” grooming. And Loon has the “resort-type experience.”

Talbot is particularly excited that back-country skiing is making a comeback.

“I see back-country skiing as one of the fastest growing sectors of winter recreation, not only here in New Hampshire, but nationwide,” Talbot said. “The

Talbot continues on 21

Jack and Ryder Talbot break a fresh trail through new-fallen snow during a winter hike. (Photo courtesy of Rusty Talbot)

Talbot

Continued from Page 20

gear is getting better and lighter and more comfortable. And obviously the internet makes it a lot easier to find out where there's good snow. Truly secret areas, more and more people are finding out about them."

Winter hiking

Talbot is also a big proponent of winter hiking, especially with kids.

"I think winter is the best season to go hiking because not that many people do it. The combination of being able to be in our mountains largely alone, plus the air in the winter is really crisp and clear. On clear days, you can see forever. You get the really sharp views and sharp sunsets. You can get out and feel really alive."

Talbot's kids are currently 5 and 8 years old and they go on short hikes together.

"If we bring a thermos of hot chocolate and some cookies and hike up the hill behind our house, we can sit and look at the view and have some hot chocolate," he said.

They keep hikes with the kids to about an hour or two, and they especially enjoy Mt. Willard in Crawford Notch because of its well-packed trail and great views.

"Going up Artist's Bluff or Bald Knob right across from Cannon can be great," he said. "We scamper up that any time with the kids because you can get to the top of Artist's Bluff in less than a half mile."

For hikes without the kids, Talbot suggests the hikes along Franconia Ridge. "Any time you get above the tree line is mind-blowing in winter," he said. "It's better in winter because there aren't many people around."



The Talbot family skis together. (Photo courtesy of Rusty Talbot)

Talbot continues on 22

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Rusty Talbot calls local ice climbing “truly world class.” (Photo courtesy of Rusty Talbot)

Talbot

Continued from Page 21

Ice climbing

“One thing that is really unique about this corner of the world is the prevalence of good ice climbing,” Talbot said. “There aren’t very many places where there’s good waterfall ice that freezes and is consistently available.”

But northern New Hampshire and Vermont have that in spades. “Ice forms early in the season and stays good throughout the season.”

“It’s truly world class,” Talbot said. “You’ve got to go out to the Canadian Rockies to get better or longer or steeper or bigger ice climbs.”

The ice climbing in the area ranges from gentle to very challenging, Talbot said, providing opportunities for people at all levels of experience and ability.

According to Talbot, modern ice climbing techniques were pioneered on Mt. Washington and local ravines like Huntington’s provided training grounds for big alpine climbers.

“Today that would be considered moderate,” Talbot said.

He recommended Franconia Notch and Crawford Notch as hot spots for great ice climbing in New Hampshire.

In Vermont, Lake Willoughby is unparalleled. “On the faces just above Lake Willoughby is some really unbelievably steep, consistent, hard ice climb-

ing,” Talbot said. “It’s out of this world!”

As his boys get older, Talbot is looking forward to introducing them to more of the winter activities that he loves. For now, they stick to skiing and short hikes.

“I don’t take them ice climbing yet. I’m not aware of ice climbing boots or mini crampons being made in their size. And I’m not sure I want a 5- or 8-year-old swinging around sharp ice axes and ice tools and kicking with sharp crampons!”

Talbot said that he’ll hold off on ice climbing with his boys for another few years. “But my goal would be to get out there with them and climb some ice and see if they like it. But certainly, with regards to skiing, that has been a great family activity!” ◀



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At Home In The Hills

A life filled with the best kind of ups and downs

BY LEAH CAREY
Staff Writer

Jean Haigh has the Northeast Kingdom in her blood. She grew up in Rutland and frequently came to the NEK to ski and snowshoe. She made Craftsbury her home in 1994.

She is a past president of the Green Mountain Club and still serves on the executive committee and board of directors. She is also a director for the Northeast Kingdom section of the organization.

For questions about winter hiking, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing, Haigh is the woman to ask.

From crampons to microspikes

Having been hiking these woods for upwards of eight decades, Haigh has seen many trends come and go.

The biggest change is in the footwear hikers use. "Some winters there is a ton of snow, but there's not nearly the snow that we had in the past – a lot less snow, a lot more ice," Haigh said. "Microspikes became an industry because of climate

Haigh continues on 24

Jean Haigh (green jacket) leads a group of snowshoers last winter. (Courtesy of Green Mountain Club: NEK Section)

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Jean Haigh (far left) offers a history lesson prior to a group hike and snowshoe on Victory Hill Trail. (Images courtesy of Green Mountain Club: NEK Section)

Haigh

Continued from Page 23

change.”

According to Haigh, snowshoes used to be the go-to for winter hikers. But as snow conditions have changed, microspikes have become a necessary part of outfitting for any adventure.

“A lot of people go out and don’t realize that trails will warm up and freeze and snowshoes won’t always manage it for you,” Haigh said. “I never hike without a pair of microspikes with me.”

The microspikes attach to the sole of your boot and have small triangular spikes that bite into the ice.

“If there’s been a thaw and then it freezes again, if there’s not a lot of snow – those are the conditions that will arise often,” Haigh said. “Microspikes really help a lot.”

Hiking safety

When it comes to winter hiking clothing, Haigh has one inviolable rule: “Don’t wear blue jeans.”

One time a hiker showed up in blue jeans

for a hike and Haigh told him he’d need to change but he refused.

“We went out on the ice and it was 20 below zero. He went through the ice,” Haigh recounted. “We got him out – getting him out wasn’t bad. But his jeans froze. If you’ve ever tried walking in frozen jeans, you can’t do it. They’re like boards.”

To keep warm and safe, Haigh suggests wearing long underwear made of wool – merino wool is her preference. On top, wear insulated hiking pants.

On your upper body, wear several layers (including the wool underwear) topped by a water-resistant down jacket.

While Haigh usually wears five layers when hiking, she doesn’t like feeling bulky “like the Michelin man,” so she is careful that her layers are thin.

“But I wouldn’t worry about fashion,” she warned. “Have a good solid jacket that’s warm, and long underwear that generally has some form of merino wool in it because it doesn’t itch, then layers of sport shorts.”

Haigh continues on 25

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Jean Haigh leads a group of snowshoers last winter. (Images courtesy of Green Mountain Club: NEK Section)

Haigh

Continued from Page 24

“Always bring hats, gloves, and a head lamp for safety, in case. Make sure you’re using a trail map unless you’re bush-

whacking and know where you’re going,” Haigh said. “Bring fluids and hopefully a hot drink and food that will sustain you.”

Haigh said that because she gets cold easily she always brings hand warmers to put in her mittens. ◀

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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

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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 ◀



Some kids enjoy an evening skate at the Lancaster town rink in January 2016. (Photo by Paul Hayes)

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Options abound

A student chooses the NEK for outdoor opportunities

BY LEAH CAREY
Staff Writer

Marie Vaine, in her senior year at NVU-L, came to the college because of the outdoor adventures available both during class time and in her off hours.

“I chose it mostly for the Mountain Rec Department because it had such a focus on experience and on getting the real-life experience to work outside,” Vaine said. “When I got here I fell in love with the mountain bike scene and have been mountain bike guiding in Burke for the past two summers.”

During winter, her favorite activities include cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, downhill skiing, and fat biking. She also does the occasional winter hike, though she said that “a lot of my hiking is to get to the top of mountains so I can ski down!”

Vaine continues on 29

Marie Vaine scales a wall of ice. (Courtesy of Marie Vaine)

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Events

Continued from Page 17

mountarts.org.

Wednesday, Dec. 26

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

Friday, Dec. 28

10:30 a.m. - Storytime, St. Johnsbury Athenaeum. For info: discoverstjohnsbury.com.

Saturday, Dec. 29

12 p.m. - Meet The Makers - Marilinne Cooper, Omni Mt. Washington lobby. For info: wrenworks.org.

Sunday, Dec. 30

10 a.m. - Lessons and Carols, St. Andrew's Episcopal Church. For info: 802-424-1061.

Monday, Dec. 31

4 p.m. - First Night North, St. Johnsbury. For info: firstnightnorth.org.

8 p.m. - Knight of Queens: New Years Eve Spectacular, Haverhill's Alumni Hall. For info: courtstreetarts.org.

9 p.m. - New Years Eve party and fireworks, Jay Peak Foeger Ballroom. For info: jaypeakresort.com.

Wednesday, Jan. 2

6 p.m. - Contemporary line dancing, Troy Parrish Hall. For info: 802-988-4193.

7 p.m. - First Wednesdays - Music, Storytelling, and Politics, St. Johnsbury Athenaeum. For info: vermonthumanities.org.

7 p.m. - First Wednesdays - The Original Renaissance Man: Understanding Leonardo da Vinci, Newport Goodrich Memorial Library. For info: vermonthumanities.org.

Friday, Jan. 4

10:30 a.m. - Storytime, St. Johnsbury Athenaeum. For info: discoverstjohnsbury.com.

Tuesday, Jan. 8

5 p.m. - Community dinner bell, Littleton All Saints' Church. For info: normabth@aol.com.

Wednesday, Jan. 9

6 p.m. - Contemporary line dancing, Troy Parrish Hall. For info: 802-988-4193.

Friday, Jan. 11

10:30 a.m. - Storytime, St. Johnsbury Athenaeum. For info: discoverstjohnsbury.com.

Saturday, Jan. 12



A historic view of the Lyndon Outing Club.

12:55 p.m. - Met Live in HD - *Adriana Lecouvreur*, Catamount Arts. For info: catamountarts.org.

6:30 p.m. - Guildhall Cabin Fever Concert Series - Comfort Country, Guild Hall. For info: 802-695-1305.

7 p.m. - Now Playing Newport Music Series - Liberated Libretto: A frolic with Gilbert & Sullivan, United Church of Newport. For info: nowplayingnewport.com.

Tuesday, Jan. 15

5 p.m. - Community dinner bell, Littleton All Saints' Church. For info: normabth@aol.com.

7 p.m. - Richard Woods and Gordon

Belsher in concert, Rialto Theatre in Lancaster. For info: 603-237-9302.

Wednesday, Jan. 16

6 p.m. - Contemporary line dancing, Troy Parrish Hall. For info: 802-988-4193.

Thursday, Jan. 17

1 p.m. - Learn and Play Mah-Jong, Littleton Community Center. For info: littletoncommunitycenter@gmail.com.

Friday, Jan. 18

10:30 a.m. - Storytime, St. Johnsbury Athenaeum. For info: discoverstjohnsbury.com.



A youth takes to the air at Littleton's Mt. Eustis ski hill in this old-time photo.

Saturday, Jan. 19

12:55 p.m. - Met Live in HD - *Adriana Lecouvreur*, Catamount Arts. For info: catamountarts.org.

Sunday, Jan. 20

12:55 p.m. - Bolshoi Ballet - *La Bayadere*, Catamount Arts. For info: catamountarts.org.

Tuesday, Jan. 22

5 p.m. - Community dinner bell, Littleton All Saints' Church. For info: normabth@aol.com.

Wednesday, Jan. 23

6 p.m. - Contemporary line dancing, Troy Parrish Hall. For info: 802-988-4193.

Friday, Jan. 25

10:30 a.m. - Storytime, St. Johnsbury Athenaeum. For info: discoverstjohnsbury.com.

Saturday, Jan. 26

9 p.m. - Pink Talking Fish concert, Jay Peak Foeger Ballroom. For info: jaypeakresort.com.

Sunday, Jan. 27

3 p.m. - Northeast Kingdom Classical Series - Ying Quartet, St. Johnsbury South Church. For info: nekclassicalseries.org.

Tuesday, Jan. 29

5 p.m. - Community dinner bell, Littleton All Saints' Church. For info: normabth@aol.com.

7 p.m. - Havana Cuba All-Stars & Dancers, St. Johnsbury Academy - Fuller Hall. For info: catamountarts.org.

7 p.m. - Bolshoi Ballet - *La Bayadere*, Catamount Arts. For info: catamountarts.org.

Wednesday, Jan. 30

6 p.m. - Contemporary line dancing, Troy Parrish Hall. For info: 802-988-4193.

Thursday, Jan. 31

7 p.m. - National Theatre Live - *I'm Not Running*, Catamount Arts. For info: catamountarts.org.

Friday, Feb. 1

10:30 a.m. - Storytime, St. Johnsbury Athenaeum. For info: discoverstjohnsbury.com.

Saturday, Feb. 2

9 a.m. - Newport Winter Festival - including snowmobile races, snow king & queen, fireworks and more, Gardner Memorial

Events continues on 38

Vaine

Continued from Page 27

Staying warm and safe

Vaine said that she doesn't like to be cold, but rather than staying indoors during the winter, she just piles on the layers.

"You can never have too many layers because you can always take some off," she said. "Just make sure that you're not wearing cotton."

In her mountain rec program at NVU, they have a saying: Cotton kills.

"When cotton gets wet – if you sweat, or if for someone reason you get wet – it doesn't keep you warm anymore. Whereas wool or synthetic clothes, even if they do get wet, they'll still keep you warm," Vaine explained.

They have another saying in her program: Be bold and start cold.

"As soon as you start moving, your body is creating a lot of heat to keep you warm," Vaine said. Shedding a layer right before you start can help keep your body temperature in check.

When Vaine is leading adventures, she always makes sure that her clients are prepared for the elements.

"Winter is not a joke around here. It gets really cold and the weather changes really quickly. Even if it's a beautiful



Marie Vaine enjoys all the NEK and North Country have to offer in the winter season. (Photo courtesy of Marie Vaine)

Vaine continues on 30



Marie Vaine skis on the slides below Mt. Pisgah. (Photo courtesy of Marie Vaine)

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Marie Vaine chooses ice climbing on days when the snow isn't great for skiing. (Photo courtesy of Marie Vaine)

Vaine

Continued from Page 29

sunny day, as soon as the sun drops down it gets really cold. Make sure that you know where you're going and that you have a backup plan, and that you have enough warm clothes to keep you warm for a while if something were to happen."

That backup plan might include an alternate route in mind in case conditions become too icy on the cross country trails, or a plan to keep warm until help comes if she got hurt in the woods during a winter hike.

Eeny, meeny, miny, moe

Now that she's got the clothing and safety taken care of, the next question is how Vaine chooses which activity to do on any given day.

It usually comes down to the condition of the snow.

"When it's a powder day, that's a no-brainer – I'll go to Burke Mountain to go downhill skiing," Vaine said. "When it's been really cold for a while but we haven't gotten very much snow, or if it's been rainy and then really cold and everything is really

Vaine continues on 31



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Vaine

Continued from Page 30

icy, I'll go ice climbing ... When the snow's not good, that usually means the ice is awesome."

Cross country skiing is good for the in-between times when it's not powder but it's also not icy. Those are the times when "they've groomed the trails, so there's enough snow to groom, but not too much so you're sinking in

with every step."

Fat biking, Vaine said, is good on any day that's not a powder day. "Usually it's great when the snow is a little bit harder, but it usually get packed in either way."

She'll also look to the skies for a clue of the best activity for the day. "Generally when it's sort of cloudy, and the views aren't great, I'll go cross-country skiing because it's mostly in the woods. You don't worry about views. But if it's a beautiful clear day, doing a nice snowshoe hike to get some

great views would be the go-to."

Vaine lives close to the Kingdom Trails cross-country ski trail network, so that's her choice when she's only got an hour between school and work.

Something for everyone

Vaine came to Lyndon from Keene, New Hampshire – just a couple hours away, but a world of difference.

"Here there's so much open space and so much opportunity!" she said. "There's something for

everybody up here in the winter. It's a unique place."

She lives with four roommates and they're all part of the mountain rec department at NVU.

"We say that the Northeast Kingdom is like a playground for us. Pretty much any time of year ... there's something to do outside. Whether it's skiing or biking or hiking or rock climbing or ice climbing – there's always something outside to do." ◀

"When the snow's not good, that usually means the ice is awesome."



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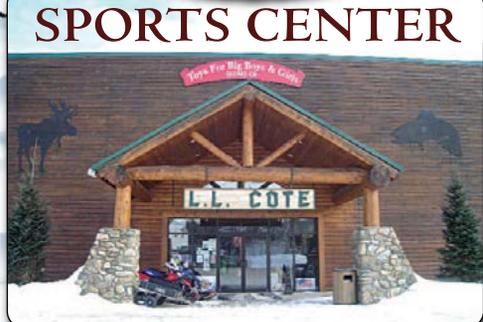
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When The Caledonian-Record brain-trust first started toss-
Thrills continues on 33

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Thrills

Continued from Page 32

ing around the idea of a story about sledding, we, being sports people, naturally gravitated towards a “top 10 in the Kingdom” angle. But there was a bit of a “duh” factor. Really Cal-Rec, there’s sledding at Lyndon Town School? Thanks for the news.

The best public and semi-public sledding is common knowledge in every community. Never been, but the Union Baptist Church in Waterford is said to be awesome. Shonyo Park (aka the Lyndon Outing Club) is as epic a run heading down as your legs are willing to carry you going up.

And I can think of three major local country clubs where sledding is at least tolerated if not exactly welcomed. I was recently clued in to a nice run at the summit of old Newport. Behind St. Mary’s Catholic Church is a pitch of about 50 vertical feet with an easy run-out onto a baseball diamond. And the vista from the top of the knoll will inspire both the secular and the faithful.

Someone close to me whose reputation I don’t want to sully speaks fondly of sledding in Mt. Pleasant Cemetery in St. Johnsbury. While that may strike you as gravely disrespectful, I can think of no higher purpose for any real estate that may some day be wasted on my own remains.

No, people know all the obvious spots. The story that would be fun to write until the lawsuits came rolling in would reveal the top-secret sledding stashes. I heard of a few while calling around, and these legacy runs, off-the-beaten-path, are almost always on private property. While it has been neighborly of the Jones family to let generations of children use their field for sledding, they probably don’t want to see an open invitation in the paper.

Sledding v. Sliding

The flatlander town I grew up in was 54 square miles split from side to side by one minor topographical feature that wouldn’t even register as a hill around here. Maybe 50-100 vertical feet, the escarpment as we correctly called it was a long series of cliffs occasionally broken by a navigable trail. About half a mile through the woods behind my house was a narrow gap called Andy’s Hill. Steep and rocky, and complete with a ditch at the bottom, that’s where I first experienced the joys of sledding.

Only upon moving to Vermont did I learn that some kids enjoying the exact same activity call it sliding. To be more precise, only since moving to the Kingdom did I hear the term. They’re all still sledding over in Chittenden County. A little poking around on the internet revealed that sliding (on a sled) is a term largely used in the upper Midwest where sledding can mean snowmobiling (or ski-dooing or snow-machining as I think they say in Alaska).

No surprise, the internet must have missed the Kingdom, because I’ve heard both terms from people born and raised here, but not interchangeably. You either sled or you slide.

Choose Your Weapon

When it comes to getting downhill on your butt or your belly, the options are limited only by one’s imagination. The most popular rides are the plastic variety roughly resembling a flat-bottomed boat. For a few extra bucks you can get fancy decals and plastic steering handles that are destined to snap off.

For those inclined to go wherever life takes them, the saucer sled is the obvious choice. Truck tire inner tubes and specially designed vinyl snow tubes are maybe the best option for catching air, especially if you’re not con-

Thrills continues on 35



Field, Farm & Forest preschool founder Mary Jo O’Neill and Antonia Montague head out for some sledding one morning in February 2018. (Photo by Amy Ash Nixon)

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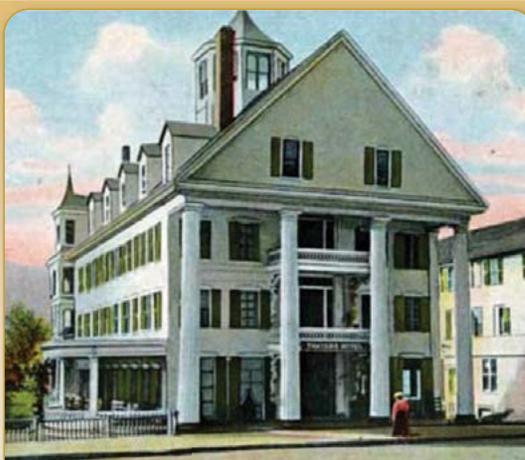
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Thrills

Continued from Page 33

cerned about sticking the landing.

Then there is the toboggan. While the saucer is unsteerable in a harmless way that skitters about and flips over, the toboggan is a wooden child missile – point it and it goes in exactly that direction. Children are probably safer driving an ATV while operating a chainsaw than they are screaming down a narrow shot through the woods on a packed toboggan.

Surpassed only by the lightning rod in the enduring perfection of its design is my childhood favorite, the flexible flyer. The metal runners aren't much use in powder, but once the surface gets packed, the flyer is wicked fast and handles like a dream. In 2002, a company based in Shelburne came out with the first Hammerhead sled. Hammerhead openly admits that its sled is basically an updated flexible flyer using space-age materials. You can pick one up for a little under \$200 if state-of-the-art is your thing.

At the other end of the spectrum, there is no shame in showing up at any hill with an improvised sled made

of random plastic scraps or corrugated cardboard. If it's slippery, it's fun. Snobbery on the sledding hill should not be tolerated.

Darwin Awards: Honorable Mention

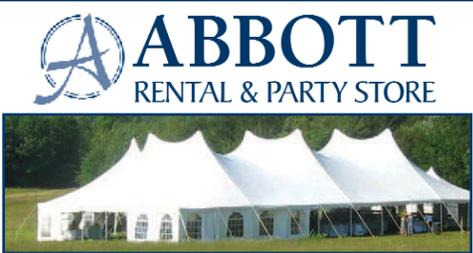
The most intense and by far the dumbest thing I ever did on a sled-like conveyance came not when I was 12, but when I was in my 30s working the night shift as a snow-maker at Burke Mountain.

The crew and I, idiots all, decided it would be a good idea to take a ride on one of the vinyl-covered foam pads that get wrapped around the lift towers. In terms of acceleration, it remains the closest thing I have experienced to jumping out of a plane; and the near absence of friction between the bottom of that pad and the snow is I think appropriate material for a graduate thesis in physics or engineering.

The lack of directional control made a saucer sled feel like a well-tuned pair of skis. There were three or four of us on that pad, and we were slaves to the fall line, which in this case meant cutting diagonally across Big Dipper heading for the woods at warp speed. But the real shock came when something approaching weightlessness made it nearly impossible to bail out. It's a hard feeling

Thrills continues on 36

The most intense and by far the dumbest thing I ever did on a sled-like conveyance came not when I was 12, but when I was in my 30s...



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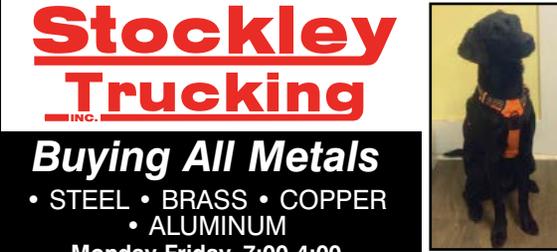
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Siblings Danika, left, and Mavrick Jantschek go sledding at the Lyndon Outing Club on Monday, Jan. 15, 2018. (Photo by Paul Hayes)

Thrills

Continued from Page 35

to explain, but there was no purchase to be had as we all scrambled comically to wriggle off the thing. Eventually, somehow, we all did, and continued rocket-like down the hill until the softer snow towards the edge of the trail gave us something to arrest our descent. The pad itself caught a little air underneath and jetted into the forest with a series of thuds.

And that's how we USED TO make snow up at Burke Mountain. Only a change in ownership and the fact that none of my fellow MENSA rejects still work there allows me to tell the tale.

Playtime

I had a conversation a couple of weeks ago with a recently retired professional who is also an avid multi-disciplinary winter sports nut. I put the question to him: where's the good sledding these days?

He remembered a couple spots from his youth including one starting at Morgan four corners, but finished saying he really didn't think kids sledded much anymore. I don't think he was being a curmudgeon, he's right. Sure, kids do sled. You can see

the tracks and occasionally even catch them in the act. Part of it might be that everybody has just upped their game—if you're born with the need for speed, chances are you're shredding through the trees at Jay by the time you're 10 years old. And yes, we could lament yet again all the amazing indoor distractions that didn't exist a few generations ago when the only thing keeping me inside was a Hogan's Heroes rerun.

But if we're not sledding or sliding like we used to in the good old days, it may be just another sign that we're all too busy. Abandoned ice rinks, disintegrating tree stands, and snow-covered slopes that remain untracked for the duration of the winter all point to a society that, for all its more serious ills, needs to get out and play more. I get borderline irate each time I drive past a vacant ice rink on the way to work. I'm mad not so much at the children who aren't using it, but at myself for somehow always having something more important to do.

Come on people, look around. We all need to play, and the snow is calling.

(This piece, by former staff writer Brad Usatch, was originally published in January 2015.) ◀



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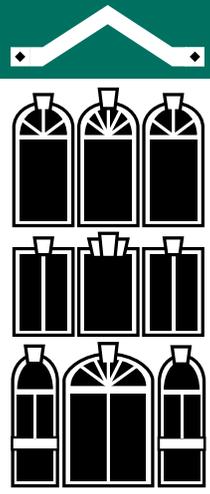
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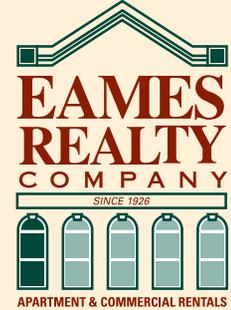


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The seasons within the season

Hunting is a way of life for many in the Northeast Kingdom and North Country

VERMONT

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

Fishing

Largemouth & Smallmouth Bass - through

Nov. 30

Pickrel, N. Pike, Yellow Perch - No closed season

Walleye (all waters except the Connecticut River) - through March 15, 2019

Walleye (Connecticut River) - check vtfishandwildlife.com

Smelt - No closed season

Hunting

Deer (bow and arrow) - Dec. 1-9

Deer (regular season) - through Nov. 25

Deer (muzzleloader) - Dec. 1-9

Black Bear - through Nov. 18

Moose - check vtfishandwildlife.com

Hare, Rabbit - through March 10, 2019 (WMUs D and E remain open through March 31)

Gray Squirrel - through Dec. 31

Ruffed Grouse (partridge) - through Dec. 31

Woodcock - to be announced

Crow - through Dec. 19

Snow Goose - to be announced

Furbearer hunting

Bobcat - Jan. 10 - Feb. 7

Red & Gray Fox - through Feb. 10, 2019

Raccoon - through Dec. 31

Coyote - open year round

Fisher, Otter, Beaver - no open season

Marten, Lynx, Wolf - no open season

Furbearer trapping

Mink, Skunk, Red & Gray Fox, Raccoon,

Coyote, Opossum, Weasel - through Dec. 31

Otter - through March 31, 2019

Muskrat - through March 31, 2019

Fisher - Dec. 1 - 31

Bobcat - Dec. 1 - 16

Beaver - through March 31, 2019

Marten, Lynx, Wolf - no open season

More information, including hunting tips, can be found at www.vtfishandwildlife.com/

hunt/hunting-and-trapping-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. 13 in WMs A, B, D1

Bear (general season) - through Nov. 30 in WMUs C1, D2 and E

Waterfowl

Canada Geese - Nov. 21 - Dec. 16 (Connecticut River zone); through Nov. 30 (northern zone)

Common snipe - Nov. 14

Hunting continues on 39

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Events

Continued from Page 28

Park. For info: newportrecreation.org.

12:55 p.m. - Met Live in HD - *Carmen*, Catamount Arts. For info: catamountarts.org.

7 p.m. - The Logger and the Fiddler, St. Johnsbury Academy - Fuller Hall. For info: catamountarts.org.

Tuesday, Feb. 5

5 p.m. - Community dinner bell, Littleton All Saints' Church. For info: normabth@aol.com.

Wednesday, Feb. 6

6 p.m. - Contemporary line dancing, Troy Parrish Hall. For info: 802-988-4193.

7 p.m. - First Wednesdays - The News about the News, St. Johnsbury Athenaeum. For info: vermonthumanities.org.

7 p.m. - First Wednesdays - The Artist as Activist, Newport Goodrich Memorial Library. For info: vermonthumanities.org.

Thursday, Feb. 7

7 p.m. - National Theatre Live - *I'm Not Running*, Catamount Arts. For info: catamountarts.org.

Friday, Feb. 8

10:30 a.m. - Storytime, St. Johnsbury Athenaeum. For info: discoverstjohnsbury.com.

Saturday, Feb. 9

12:55 p.m. - Met Live in HD - *Carmen*, Catamount Arts. For info: catamountarts.org.

6:30 p.m. - Guildhall Cabin Fever Concert Series - Alive and Well, Guild Hall. For info: 802-695-1305.

Tuesday, Feb. 12

5 p.m. - Community dinner bell, Littleton All Saints' Church. For info: normabth@aol.com.

Wednesday, Feb. 13

6 p.m. - Contemporary line dancing, Troy Parrish Hall. For info: 802-988-4193.

7 p.m. - Shanghai Opera Symphony Orchestra, Lyndon Institute Auditorium. For info: catamountarts.org.

Friday, Feb. 15

10:30 a.m. - Storytime, St. Johnsbury Athenaeum. For info: discoverstjohnsbury.com.

Tuesday, Feb. 19

5 p.m. - Community dinner bell, Littleton All Saints' Church. For info: normabth@aol.com.



A historic view of the Lyndon Outing Club.

Wednesday, Feb. 20

6 p.m. - Contemporary line dancing, Troy Parrish Hall. For info: 802-988-4193

Friday, Feb. 22

10:30 a.m. - Storytime, St. Johnsbury Athenaeum. For info: discoverstjohnsbury.com.

7 p.m. - Father-Daughter Dance - fourth grade and up, Newport Gateway Center. For info: newportrecreation.org.

Saturday, Feb. 23

5:30 p.m. - Father-Daughter Dance - fourth grade and under, Newport Gateway Center. For info: newportrecreation.org.

9 p.m. - Deadgrass concert, Jay Peak Foeger Ballroom. For info: jaypeakresort.com.

Sunday, Feb. 24

5:30 p.m. - Father-Daughter Dance - fourth grade and under, Newport Gateway Center. For info: newportrecreation.org.

Tuesday, Feb. 26

5 p.m. - Community dinner bell, Littleton All Saints' Church. For info: normabth@aol.com.

Wednesday, Feb. 27

6 p.m. - Contemporary line dancing, Troy Parrish Hall. For info: 802-988-4193.

Friday, March 1

10:30 a.m. - Storytime, St. Johnsbury Athenaeum. For info: discoverstjohnsbury.com.

Saturday, March 2

12:55 p.m. - Met Live in HD - *La Fille du Régiment*, Catamount Arts. For info: catamountarts.org.

Tuesday, March 5

5 p.m. - Community dinner bell, Littleton All Saints' Church. For info: normabth@aol.com.

Wednesday, March 6

7 p.m. - First Wednesdays - The Power of the Journey in Their Eyes Were Watching God, St. Johnsbury Athenaeum. For info: vermonthumanities.org.

7 p.m. - First Wednesdays - A Slight Sound at Evening: Why Thoreau's Quiet Writing Endures Today, Newport Goodrich Memorial Library. For info: vermonthumanities.org.

Wednesday, March 7

6 p.m. - Contemporary line dancing, Troy Parrish Hall. For info: 802-988-4193.

Friday, March 8

10:30 a.m. - Storytime, St. Johnsbury Athenaeum. For info: discoverstjohnsbury.com.

11:30 a.m. - Lenten Chowder Luncheon, First United Methodist Church in Littleton. For info: 603-444-6052.

Saturday, March 9

12:55 p.m. - Met Live in HD - *La Fille du Régiment*, Catamount Arts. For info: catamountarts.org.

6:30 p.m. - Guildhall Cabin Fever Concert Series - Sweet Jamm, Guild Hall. For info: 802-695-1305.

Sunday, March 10

12:55 p.m. - Bolshoi Ballet - *Sleeping Beauty*, Catamount Arts. For info: catamountarts.org.

3 p.m. - Northeast Kingdom Classical Series - Semenenko-Firsova Duo, St. Johnsbury South Church. For info: nekclassicalseries.org. ◀

Hunting

Continued from Page 37

Coot - Nov. 21 - Dec. 16 (Connecticut River zone); through Nov. 30 (northern zone)

Crow - through Nov. 30; March 16-31, 2019

Ducks and brant - Nov. 21 - Dec. 16 (Connecticut River zone); through Nov. 30 (northern zone)

Falconry - through Nov. 20 and Dec. 17 - Jan. 14 (Connecticut River zone); Dec. 1 - Jan. 14 (northern zone)

Dec. 12 to Jan. 25, 2018 (northern zone); through Nov. 21, Dec. 28 to Jan. 25, 2018 (Connecticut River zone)

Merganser - Nov. 21 - Dec. 16 (Connecticut River zone); through Nov. 30 (northern zone)

Snow geese - through Dec. 16

Woodcock - through Nov. 14

Deer
Archery - through Dec. 15 (through Dec. 8 in WMU A)

Firearms - through Dec. 9 (through Dec. 2 in WMU A)

Small Game and Furbearers
Snowshoe hare - through March 31



Vermont Fish & Wildlife urges wearing a fluorescent "hunter orange" hat and vest while hunting. (VTF&W photo by John Hall)

Cottontail rabbit - closed
Gray squirrel - through Jan. 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

Woodcock - through Nov. 14

Furbearers
Gray fox, red fox, opossum, skunk, raccoon - through March 31

Fisher - Dec. 1 through Jan. 31

Mink, muskrat, weasel - through April 10

Coyote - no closed season
Coyote night hunting - Jan. 1 through March 31

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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Winter swimming is a pastime that is definitely not for the feint of heart

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 in 2014.

“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 addictive - 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 the 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 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.”

Swimming continues on 41

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Swimming

Continued from Page 40

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!"

The water in Lake Memphremagog varies depending on 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, 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."

This story was first printed in October 2016. ◀

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