

MEET OUR LOCAL OLYMPIC HOPEFULS

ADIRONDACK LIFE

THE MAGAZINE OF THE MOUNTAINS SINCE 1969

VOTE
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OF THE
ADIRONDACKS
SEE PAGE 69



26 Joys OF Winter

#17
HAVING A HIGH
PEAK SUMMIT ALL
TO YOURSELF



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ADIRONDACKS

A to *to* **Z**



THE JOYS OF WINTER, FROM
APRÈS-SKI TO ZILLIONS OF STARS

ILLUSTRATIONS BY MICHAEL MULLAN



PRÈS-SKI

Half the fun of a day on the slopes or the trails comes afterwards, when you're sharing a drink and a laugh with friends. While Lake Placid nabs much of the post-Whiteface action, Wilmington's own Pourman's Tap House (518-946-6160, www.pourmanstaphouse.com) draws a friendly local crowd for regional craft brews, pub fare and live music.



BALSAM

Aside from providing the signature sweet-piney scent of the Adirondack woods, *Abies balsamea* is essential to the winter well-being of our woodland neighbors. Moose munch on its twigs and needles to maintain their strapping physiques through the season, while white-tailed deer and snowshoe hares shelter among its boughs.



CURLING

The most fun you can have on ice with a broom and a 40-pound rock, this quirky sport is gaining popularity south of the Canadian border. Discover how to tell a biter from a burn through the Learn to Curl program (www.lakeplacidcurling.com) at the Saranac Lake Civic Center.



DOG-SLEDDING

You don't need to go to Alaska to experience the exhilaration of dashing through the snow in a canine-powered sled. Both Newcomb Winter Fest (January 13, www.discovernewcomb.com) and Indian Lake's SnoCade (February 16–24, www.adironackexperience.com) include dogsled rides among the festivities.



EXTRAVAGANCE

The Boathouse at The Point (www.thepointsaranac.com, 800-255-3530)—the most-requested guestroom at the Adirondacks' toniest resort—was recently winterized. Now you can curl up by the massive stone fireplace after a day of skiing, skating or ice fishing and take in the million-dollar Upper Saranac Lake view.



GUIDES

Whether you're trying out a new winter hobby—like ice-climbing or backcountry skiing—or want to discover off-the-beaten-path destinations, a licensed professional outdoor guide can show you the ropes. Contact the New York State Outdoor Guide Association (www.nysoga.org, 866-469-7642) to find an expert who specializes in your area of interest.



FANNEL

It's the official winter uniform of the Adirondacks. Any plaid will do, but we're partial to classic red buffalo check.



HOT TODDIES

Nothing soothes on a sub-zero day like a steaming spiked beverage. Use Gristmill Distillers' Black Fly Maple (www.gristmilldistillers.com)—corn whiskey infused with syrup from Keene's Black Rooster Maple—to put an Adirondack spin on the traditional toddy.



ICE BARS

As sparkly as Cinderella's glass slipper, the Sagamore Resort's Glacier Ice Bar and Lounge (www.thesagamore.com; 518-644-9400) is a swanky spot for a cocktail in Bolton Landing. But like that fairy-tale shoe, this 18,000-pound creation comes with a deadline: catch it the weekends of January 19 and 26, before it disappears.

JACKRABBIT TRAIL

Follow in the foot-glides of Adirondack skiing pioneer Herman “Jack Rabbit” Johannsen—a living testament to the health benefits of winter exertion who lived to the age of 111—on the 24-mile trail between Keene and Saranac Lake he helped design. Visit www.jackrabbittrail.org for maps and trail descriptions.

MCCAULEY MOUNTAIN

Like the other mom-and-pop or community-run ski centers around the park, Old Forge’s local hill (www.mccauleyny.com, 315-369-3225) offers terrain for skiers of every level, for a fraction of the cost of the state-run operations.

NIGHTTIME TREKS

Guided moonlight snowshoe tours at Lapland Lake Nordic Vacation Center (www.laplandlake.com, 518-863-4974), in Northville, start with a warming bowl of chili and lead to a lakeside bonfire. Be sure to reserve in advance; this year’s outings are planned for January 27 and February 24.

KUNJAMUK CAVE

The origin story of this van-size grotto near Speculator is a mystery, but it’s fun to imagine who might have sheltered here long ago (hermit French Louie is one rumored occupant). An easy snowshoe hike of a little over a mile brings you to the cave. Visit www.adirondackexperience.com for directions.

LUMBERJACK BREAKFAST

Early Adirondack woodsmen scarfed heaping plates of flapjacks, bacon, eggs and sausage to sustain them through a grueling day outdoors. The new Adirondack Mountain Coffee Café (www.adkmountaincoffee.com, 518-946-6080), in Upper Jay, tops off its gut-busting Woodcutter’s 1800s-Style Breakfast with a slice of pie.

PROUTINE

The best thing to happen to french fries since ketchup, this Canadian import—topped with squeaky cheese curds and smothered in gravy—is the ultimate comfort food for a wintry North Country night. The Lean-To restaurant at Great Pines Resort (www.greatpines.com; 315-369-6777), in Old Forge, offers an especially satisfying take.



QUIET

With six-million acres to explore, you can find pockets of solitude within the Blue Line any time of year. But winter is your best chance to stand alone on a High Peak summit or any of the other spots that are jam-packed in warm weather.

OWLS

Even if you don’t give a hoot about birdwatching, there’s a thrill in spotting an owl in the wild. All the better if it’s a snowy, which sometimes ventures south from its arctic breeding grounds in winter. Look for the bird in large open spaces.



RUSTIC ARCHITECTURE

Skiing the five-mile trail to Camp Santanoni—one of the oldest and largest of the Great Camps—is a fun way to combine outdoor recreation and Adirondack history. The 32-acre site near Newcomb was built by an Albany banker around the turn of the 20th century. It was used as a retreat and to entertain guests, among them Theodore Roosevelt.

SKATING WILD ICE

Nordic skating requires special equipment—and extra caution—but its fans say the rewards of gliding for miles over the natural ice of Lake Champlain and other Adirondack lakes are well worth it.



TROBOGGAN CHUTE

Lake Placid's rebuilt 30-foot converted high-jump trestle is once again sending intrepid sledders careering down an icy chute onto frozen Mirror Lake. Ten bucks (five for students) gets you unlimited runs during the scheduled period. Check www.northelba.org for conditions and hours.

UPYONDA PROGRAMS

At Up Yonda Farm (www.upyondafarm.com, 518-644-9767), a four-season environmental education center in Bolton Landing, families can discover the secrets that help local critters survive winter, learn how to identify our cold-weather constellations, or just tag along for a naturalist-led snowshoe hike.

VISTAS

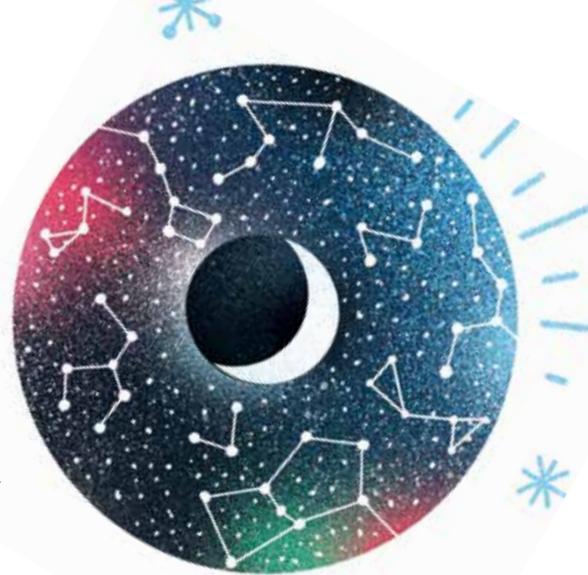
In the Adirondacks, summer and fall get most of the attention, but winter here has a beauty all its own. Flocked in snow, without dense foliage to block the sightlines, your favorite views undergo a dazzling transformation.

WINTER CARNIVALS

Around the time cabin fever sets in, towns around the park vie to outdo each other for the craziest way to celebrate the season. Take your pick from outhouse races in Lake George, the frying-pan toss in Saranac Lake or human foosball in Brant Lake. It's all good, wacky fun, and a guaranteed cure for the winter blues.

XIII WINTER OLYMPICS

The international village now houses inmates instead of athletes, but many of the other facilities from the 1980 Winter Games around Lake Placid are still being used for their original purpose. Take a few laps around the speed-skating oval where Eric Heiden won five gold medals, or ride to the top of the ski jumps and imagine sliding over the precipice. Visit www.whiteface.com for information.



YELLOW BIRCH

"Such a generous tree," writes Robin Kimmerer in her *Adirondack Life* essay "The Giving Tree" (December 2005), of one of the Adirondack forest's most abundant species. Among yellow birch's gifts to humans is its fire-starting capacity; for many animals it provides food and shelter in winter.



ZILLIONS OF STARS

The upside to seemingly endless dark nights is the primo stargazing potential. The Adirondack Public Observatory (www.adirondackpublicobservatory.org), in Tupper Lake, offers public viewing on the first and third Friday evening of every month in winter, starting a half-hour after sunset.