

A skier in a dark jacket and light pants is skiing down a snowy slope in a forest. The trees are covered in snow, and the ground is a smooth, white expanse. The skier is in the lower right of the frame, moving towards the left. The background is filled with snow-laden evergreen trees.

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WINTER WONDERLAND

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DISCOVER MICHIGAN



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE MUNISING VISITORS BUREAU

A stunning winter view in Munising.

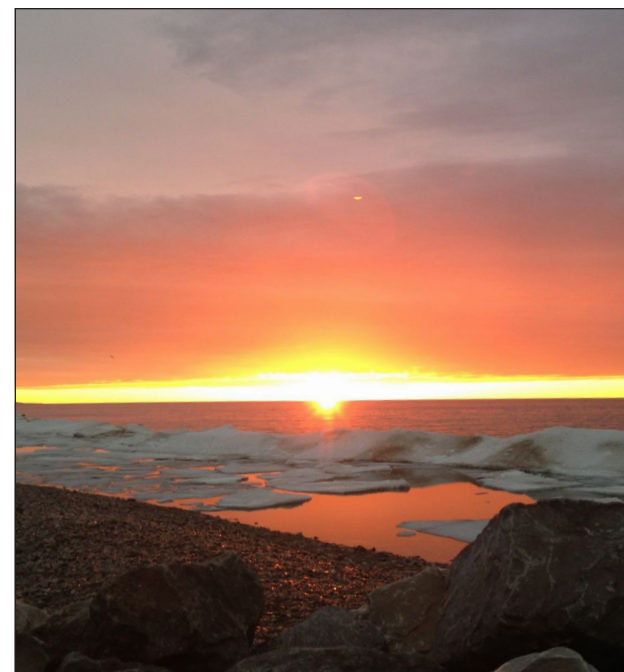


PHOTO COURTESY OF THE PETOSKEY AREA VISITORS BUREAU

Magnus Park in Petoskey provides camping facilities as well as day-use recreation opportunities and scenic views along the shores of Lake Michigan's Little Traverse Bay.



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE PETOSKEY AREA VISITORS BUREAU

The popular Tunnel of Trees route, located just north of Petoskey from Harbor Springs to Cross Village, is a spectacular drive in the winter.

Explore Michigan's winter wonderland for a new perspective

By Jane Peterson
For Digital First Media

If you ask Michiganders about their favorite fall activities, chances are one of them will be going on a drive or hike to see all the fabulous autumn colors. Well, the same elements of nature that make the landscape light up in the fall also makes for some spectacular viewing in the winter, especially after a fresh snow blankets the ground.

With its series of bridges, tamarack trees and location along the Rapid River, Seven Bridges Natural Area is among the most idyllic and enchanting properties protected by Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy (GTRLC).

"Visitors here traverse a series of bridges (despite its name, only four bridges remain) that pass over the

river. The largest branch of the river rushes vigorously under the largest bridge, which has been the site of countless wedding and graduation photos. The river throughout the property is framed by mature cedars that lean over the river and bend gracefully toward the sky. A loop through a meadow toward the back of the property is pleasant enough, but the river is the biggest draw," said Art Bukowski, communications and outreach specialist for GTRLC.

While photography, hiking and snowshoeing are the dominant activities here, hiking may be too strong of a word, he said. In reality, the most scenic views of the preserve are just a short distance from the parking lot on Valley Road. That makes the preserve ideal for a quick visit

as well as a longer trip as the property is 314 acres.

There is a boardwalk trail and Bukowski said many visitors tend to limit their visit to the bridges before heading back to the parking lot area. If you venture deeper into the property, be sure you are able to trace your path because signage through the preserve is being revamped and some trails are not well marked, he said.

The natural landmarks, forested areas and stunning sandstone cliffs on the shores of Lake Superior attract visitors to the Munising area.

"We have gorgeous frozen ice caves, beautiful frozen waterfalls and of course, Pictured Rocks in the winter is stunning," said Cori-Ann Cearley, executive director for the Munising Visitors Bureau. "Popular ways

to view them are by snowshoe, cross country skis and snowmobiles. People love all three and trails exist for all."

Munising welcomes visitors year round. There are many restaurants that offer everything from casual experiences to fine dining and local gift shops, including a few new ones that specialize in local apparel and U.P.-made gifts.

One of the state's most popular fall drives, the Tunnel of Trees route, located just north of Petoskey from Harbor Springs to Cross Village is a dazzling winter trek, said Diane Dakins, assistant director, Petoskey Area Visitors Bureau.

However, there are many more adventures to be had in the area if you hop out of the car.

"We also encourage our visitors to take a quick hop to Big Bear Adventures in Indian River to do a guided winter rafting trip down the Sturgeon River – just gorgeous," she said.

The Petoskey area is a great place for winter activities and many of these provide scenic views of snow on rolling hills, lush wooded forests and other natural landmarks. The views can be enjoyed by hiking, snowshoeing and cross country skiing while downhill skiing offers higher views from the chairlifts and ziplining provides a whole new perspective on the area.

Just as the 160+ downhill runs between Boyne Mountain, Nub's Nob and Boyne Highlands and outdoor ice skating rinks, sledding hills, miles of snowmobile, cross



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE PETOSKEY AREA VISITORS BUREAU

The Bear River Valley Recreation Area features steep bluffs, paved and unpaved trails, boardwalks, whitewater rapids and forest areas in Petoskey.

country skiing and snowshoeing trails offer recreational opportunities for visitors, in the winter wildlife like whitetail deer, turkeys, fox and other small animals also come out to play. The Little Traverse Conservancy helps protect the beauty of the land and educates adults and children about the benefits of nature in Chippewa, Mackinac, Emmet, Cheboygan and Charlevoix counties.

Visitors also enjoy an array of amenities in Petoskey. Dakins said there is unique shopping in the Gaslight District and a wide variety of lodging options including historic inns, condos, fam-

ily-owned and chain hotels.

"Foodies will find more than enough to satisfy their palates at trendy eateries, pubs and locally-owned casual to fine dining restaurants," she said. "Exciting gaming at the Odawa Casino, relaxing spa treatments and wineries and breweries are great options for couples seeking a romantic getaway. Families can play laser tag, bowl a few frames or visit a bounce house. Folks of every age will enjoy all the outdoor amenities and the concerts/exhibits and programs at Crooked Tree Art Center and the new Great Lakes Center for the Arts."

IF YOU VISIT

- Seven Bridges Natural Area is located at 6824 Valley Road in Rapid City. Once targeted for a subdivision, today the land is owned by the state of Michigan and managed by the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy. It is known for its four rustic bridges and scenic views of the Rapid River. For more information or to learn about its rich history in the community, including the remains of a sawmill built in 1882, visit GTRLC.org.
- Petoskey and its surrounding communities of Bay Harbor, Alanson, Boyne City/Boyne Falls and Harbor Springs offer plenty of activities and scenery that make the area a perfect place to visit in the winter. To learn more about upcoming events, winter recreation opportunities and entertainment options, visit PetoskeyArea.com.
- It is recommended that first-time visitors to Munising stop in to one of the visitor centers to pick up maps and guides for the area. This information will provide hints and tips on food and recreation opportunities. For more information, visit Munising.org.

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CYCLING

Fat tire biking: the perfect way to keep cycling all winter season long

Bikes equipped with large, knobby tires give plenty of grip in ice, snow



PHOTO COURTESY OF CRYSTAL MOUNTAIN

Fat tire bikes are equipped with oversized, knobby tires so that they grip better in the snow.

By Jane Peterson
For Digital First Media

Just because it's winter doesn't mean cycling enthusiasts have to put their bicycles away. Fat tire biking has become extremely popular in recent years, allowing cyclists an amazing workout in the fresh air and a glimpse at fantastic views they normally wouldn't have access to.

Whether headed out for a quick ride or a weekend of family fun, there's just nothing like the feeling of zooming through groomed trails on a bike. Fat tire bikes are equipped with oversized, knobby tires so that they grip better in the snow. The rims are wider, designed to add stability to soft, uneven surfaces like snow and mud.

"There's nothing better than riding in the woods when the trees are snow covered," said Danielle Musto, marketing director for Cannonsburg Ski Area



PHOTO BY TED BINGHAM — COURTESY OF CANNONBURG SKI AREA

Grand Rapids has several awesome trails that are groomed for fat biking in the winter.

near Grand Rapids.

No two fat tire biking trails are the same. Some are very challenging with hills and curves while others are more leisurely, with straight paths and wooded areas that lead to scenic views.

"Grand Rapids has several awesome trails that are groomed for fat biking in the winter. They are all relatively close to one another

so riders can visit multiple trails in a day," she said. "Riders can expect rolling to hilly terrain, with a mixture of open areas and twisty, tight single track. Cannonsburg Ski Area grooms a five-mile loop for fat biking in the winter."

Other popular trails in the Grand Rapids area are Merrell and Yankee Springs.

"All of these trails are groomed specifically for fat

biking and are ridiculously fun," said Musto.

Marquette is well known for its trails, having been recognized as a Bronze-level International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) Ride Center for its high-quality trails.

"This passion has poured over into winter as the community embraces the season," said Kirsten Borgstrom, spokesperson for

Travel Marquette.

She said Marquette is the perfect destination for fat tire cyclists because of the region's snowfall, with Marquette County averaging 120 feet of snow annually, and its trails system.

"Marquette County has approximately 80 miles of groomed fat tire singletrack trails," said Borgstrom in an email. "Marquette's snow bike routes were the first of its kind. It is very similar to a standard summertime mountain bike single-track flow trail, meaning it's fast, narrow and has fun features like bermed corners and rollers. Typically most places simply allow fat bikes on existing Nordic ski trails, which has a very different feel than buzzing through the woods on a dedicated bike trail. The Noquemanon (NTN) snow bike route is a really unique product, and one that was made possible due to the 30-year history of winter riding in Marquette."

She said the NTN even

designed its own trail groomer — a cross between a snowmobile trail groomer and a Nordic ski trail drag. It rolls and packs the snow leaving a 27-inch wide corduroy ribbon through the hills and forest within the city of Marquette.

The Harlow Lake Area features 15+ miles of groomed winter trails, including some of the most difficult technical riding in the Midwest, said Borgstrom.

"Additional trails throughout the area offer stunning views and incredible vistas, the Upper Peninsula's pristine wilderness, many rock outcroppings, lake crossings, bird's eye views of rivers and Lake Superior, plentiful snowfall and waterfalls," she said.

There are numerous fat biking trails throughout Oakland, Macomb and Wayne counties, too. Oakland County Parks and Recreation maintains fat tire bike trails at Addison Oaks County Park. These



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE PETOSKEY AREA VISITORS BUREAU

With the proper bike and winter clothing, fat tire biking enthusiasts are ready for an adventure anytime.

5.5 miles of groomed, multi-use trails available for cyclists, cross-country skiers and hikers as weather conditions permit. The 6-foot-wide trail includes many hills and scenic views as it winds through the park and loops cyclists back to their original starting point.

Those taking a fat tire biking road trip to visit other trails on the west side of the state or up north will find themselves welcomed with several other amenities beside just great trails.

At Cannonsburg Ski Area there's a restaurant on-site as well as other activities for the family to enjoy, such as tubing, skiing and snowboarding. Musto added that Grand Rapids is also known as Beer City, USA. The downtown area is within 15 miles of most of the fat bike trails and features several local breweries, restaurants and lodging. The Van Andel arena hosts hockey games, concerts and the area has great museums to explore as well.

In Marquette, the largest city in the Upper Peninsula, winter recreational enthusiasts can find ample opportunities to embrace and experience winter by cross-country or downhill skiing, snowshoeing, tubing or snowmobiling.

"After time outside, end any adventure with a burger and award winning

microbrew or a top shelf martini and tenderloin as Marquette has mastered the mix of feeding appetites for adventure and culinary delight," said Borgstrom. "The restaurants located downtown and along Third Street, collectively known as the Eastside Originals, are just that, locally owned and independently operated, spicing up the city's foodie scene."

The great thing about fat biking is that it is a very affordable option for fam-

ilies, especially for those who may not be interested in a winter sport where they will need to take lessons and invest in gear. With the proper bike and winter clothing, fat tire biking enthusiasts are ready for an adventure anytime.

Those new to the sport and not sure if they want to invest in bikes for their family can find fat bike rentals in some places, including Cannonsburg Ski Area, where they are available for two hours or the entire day.

TIPS FOR NEW CYCLISTS

While fat tire biking seems pretty straightforward and "just like riding a bike," there are some tips that those new to the activity may want to consider.

"I would suggest that cyclists visit or call a bike shop in Grand Rapids (there are a lot) to ask about trail conditions etc.," said Danielle Musto, marketing director Cannonsburg Ski Area near Grand Rapids. "Bike shop employees are the best resources when needing advice about tire pressure, terrain etc."

She added that another great resource is the West Michigan Mountain Bike Alliance. The group's website, wmmba.org, provides information on all trails, conditions and locations.

Kirsten Borgstrom, spokesperson for Travel Marquette, agreed that it is a good idea to plan ahead. She suggested checking out Visit TravelMarquetteMichigan.com for trail maps and information.

"Once in town, stop in and chat with the folks at one of the Marquette outfitters before hitting the trails. The fat bike enthusiasts can often share up-to-date trail conditions, tips and guidance before hitting the trails. For first timers in the area, consider contacting one of the guide services in the area to schedule a trail ride. The RAMBA trail network also hosts a church ride every Sunday with coffee at 9 a.m. and a group ride at 10 a.m. It's a great way to meet and ride with locals," she said in an email.

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CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING

Enjoy the great outdoors with cross-country skiing

By Jane Peterson
For Digital First Media

If you have ever peered out the window after a fresh snow and thought how beautiful and peaceful the scenery was, just imagine being able to venture outside and explore that quiet, untouched atmosphere.

Cross-country skis allow you to do just that. While in the cold and snow, you can get reacquainted with nature and remember what it's like not to feel the need to check your phone every five minutes.

"There are countless studies citing the positive effects it can have on your mental well-being, but with cross-country skiing specifically there is definitely the peace and tranquility of being outdoors, silently gliding across an open field or under the pines," said Brian Lawson, director of public relations for Crystal Mountain in Thompsonville. "We are so fortunate to have such incredible trails throughout the state combined ample snowfall. The same trails so many people enjoy hiking or biking in the summer offer an entirely different experience in the winter."

Crystal Mountain offers 25 km of groomed cross-country trails for all ability levels, with terrain from gently rolling hills through stands of aspens and oaks, to more challenging black diamond trails that cut across deep valleys and open fields. Each trail has its own personality and offers a unique experience.

"The flat Otter trail is great for beginners (and even lit for night skiing)," he said in an email.

There is also more challenging terrain that dips into Michigan Legacy Art



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE PETOSKEY AREA VISITORS BUREAU

Cross-country skiing is a fun family activity.

Park to offer views of a few of its 50 outdoor sculptures, Lawson added.

The great thing about cross-country skiing is that it allows you to move at your own pace. You are free to meander through the woods or sneak in a refreshing workout.

"It's a fantastic cardio-vascular workout in which an average person can burn around 700 calories an hour," said Lawson. "It gets you out into nature and an incredible workout ends up keeping you nice and warm in the process."

For those living in metro Detroit, Independence Oaks County Park in Clarkston offers groomed ski trails. Ungroomed trails are provided at Addison Oaks, Highland Oaks, Lyon Oaks, Orion Oaks and Rose Oaks county parks, weather permitting.

According to a Michigan Snowsports Industries As-



PHOTO COURTESY OF CRYSTAL MOUNTAIN

Cross-country skiing allows you to explore Michigan's beautiful scenery on winter's stage.

sociation (MSIA) news release, Cross Country Ski Headquarters in Higgins Lake offers beginner lessons appropriate for all ages. The lesson covers the

basics of cross country skiing and skate skiing. Participants will learn how to get up after a fall, as well as go up and down hills efficiently and safely. Each

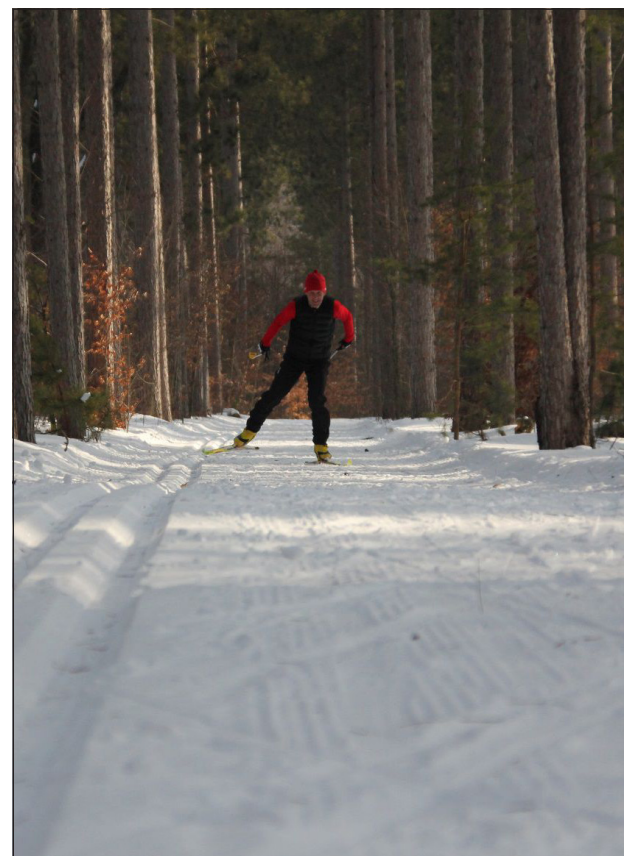


PHOTO COURTESY OF CRYSTAL MOUNTAIN

Cross-country skiing allows you to move at your own pace while taking in the sights and sounds of nature.

lesson ends with a guided ski tour to Trapper's Cabin, where skiers can continue exploring the HQ trail network, or stop by the bonfire and enjoy hot cocoa or a snack.

MSIA also shared that Shanty Creek made many cross-country ski improvements related to Nordic skiing. Its Nordic trails have been widened to 20 feet to allow for side-by-side track-set trails and room for groomed skate skiing. This was made possible by the purchase of a new Prinoth Bombardier MP groomer for Nordic trails. Shanty Creek is also bringing a new Nordic Center to Schuss Village. Located at the golf course pro shop, the Nordic Center provides out-the-door

access to easy and challenging Nordic trails.

If you don't own cross-country ski equipment, check out rentals, which are offered by many ski resorts and local outfitters. However, whatever you do, make sure you have proper outdoor clothing and footwear. While it may be cold outside, your body will sweat during cross-country skiing, so be sure to dress in layers and avoid fabrics that will trap moisture and make you uncomfortable. Also, don't forget quality gloves and headgear.

In addition to cross-country skiing, Crystal Mountain is also known for its 58 downhill slopes and more than a dozen miles of fat tire bike trails.



PHOTO COURTESY OF CRYSTAL MOUNTAIN

TIPS FOR BEGINNERS

Cross-country skiing is an easy activity to enjoy, but novice skiers are advised to heed a few tips from the experts to make your outing even more enjoyable. Here is some advice from Brian Lawson, director of Public Relations for Crystal Mountain in Thompsonville:

- Take a lesson from a trained instructor. Friends and family can be knowledgeable and well-intentioned but lessons always seem to go better with an objective third party. It's a much more enjoyable experience when there is someone to show you the very basics.
- Dress for the conditions and understand that you are going to be moving a lot. Dressing for cross-country skiing is much different than downhill skiing. You'll want a warm base layer and then another water- and wind-resistant later as well as good gloves, socks and a hat to keep your extremities warm. The movement of cross-country skiing alone does an effective job keeping your core warm.



PHOTO COURTESY OF CRYSTAL MOUNTAIN

A groomed trail at Crystal Mountain.

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DOWNHILL SKIING

Downhill skiing provides thrills unlike any other winter sport

By Jane Peterson

For Digital First Media

Some people can't wait for the snow to start falling as soon as October. They are ready to bundle up, head outside and play in the frosty air at a moment's notice. Many of them are skiers.

As often as they can, they travel to ski resorts both close to home and up north. They believe that downhill skiing is the ultimate sport for staying active outdoors all year long.

"Physically, you are outside exercising and it doesn't really feel like work — just fun," said Mickey MacWilliams, president/executive director of the Michigan Snowsports Industries Association (MSIA). "Emotionally and mentally it is also a big boost. We need to get outside in the winter to lift our spirits and skiing/snowboarding is a great way to do that."

Plus, she said it is a family-friendly sport.

"Anyone can participate at their own levels. Families can ski together, each choosing the run that suits their ability and meet for the ride up the lift," said MacWilliams.

The Upper Peninsula, as many Michiganders are aware, is often snowy from at least November through March. This has created many amazing places to go downhill skiing in Michigan. However, those living in the southeast part of the state can also get in some great time on the slopes close to home because of the colder temperatures.

The magic number for making snow, said Steve Kershner, chairman of the MSIA and director of snow sports for Shanty Creek Resorts, is around 28 degrees and lower depending on



PHOTO COURTESY OF NUB'S NOB

Downhill skiing is the ultimate sport for those who enjoy bundling up and staying active outdoors all season long.

humidity and other factors. With sophisticated snow machines and colder temperatures, he said in a news release that even if Mother Nature doesn't provide the perfect base of snow, Michigan's ski areas can build one.

"We have more ski areas in Michigan than any other state except New York so there is one close to just about any place you live here. They're all great," said MacWilliams.

Ski lodges and resorts continue to make improve-

ments to their snow-making equipment. According to a MSIA news release, Mt. Holly has built 10 new snowguns to upgrade and replace existing guns to a higher efficiency design that allows the southeast Michigan resort to make more snow with less water and electricity. In addition, Marquette Mountain plans to extend their ski season with the purchase of 20 SMI snow guns and Boyne Mountain has added a PistenBully 600 Polar to their fleet of groomers for

the 2018-2019 season. The PistenBully 600 Polar is the first snow groomer in the world to meet EU Stage V emissions-control requirements.

Many ski resorts also have numerous other amenities. Caberfae Peaks Ski & Golf Resort, for example, provides hotel guests with their own locker when staying at the Mackenzie Lodge with enough room for all of their equipment and boot dryers that keep everything dried out for multiple days of having fun on



PHOTO COURTESY OF MT. BRIGHTON

Embrace the snow and try downhill skiing this winter.



PHOTO COURTESY OF CRYSTAL MOUNTAIN

Skiing is a fun activity for the whole family.

fresh powder. It also offers an outdoor heated pool and hot tub, as well as a fire pit for those starry nights when guests want to roast a marshmallow with their

family.

"Our hobbies and passions play a huge role in the overall development of each individual's identity, getting involved in a winter activity is such a great way to develop life-long friendships and memories," said a spokesperson for Caberfae Peaks Ski & Golf Resort. "If you are willing to push yourself and put in the time and effort the progress will speak for itself and your confidence will help develop a passion that will last forever."

Dining options, rental equipment and ski lessons are other amenities often available at Michigan ski resorts.

Those wondering about ski conditions can check the Downhill Ski Area tab on the MSIA website, goshkimichigan.com, for a map of ski areas all across the state.

COLD IS COOL

Ski areas and resorts across Michigan have teamed up with Michigan McDonald's restaurants to provide free skiing to fourth and fifth grade students with the Cold is Cool Ski & Ride Passport. All fourth- and fifth-grade kids with a passport can ski for free, up to three times, at each of the 29 participating ski areas.

Steve Kershner, chairman of the Michigan Snowsports Industries Association (MSIA) and director of snow sports at Shanty Creek Resorts, says that when a child is in the fourth or fifth grade, they are at the perfect age to learn to ski or snowboard.

"They have the coordination and enthusiasm to pick up the sport quickly," he said. In order for fourth- and fifth-graders to use the free lift or trail pass coupons, a paying adult must accompany them.



PHOTO COURTESY OF CABERFAE PEAKS SKI & GOLF RESORT

Get outdoors and give downhill skiing a try this year.

"We feel that fourth and fifth graders should be supervised by an adult while on the slopes and trails. Our intention is to make this a fun, affordable and safe activity for the entire family," said Mickey MacWilliams, MSIA president.

Up to two kids with passports can ski free with each paying adult. The passport is valid through the end of

the 2018/19 ski season.

Applications for the Cold is Cool Passport are available at ski shops across the state and online at goskimichigan.org. MSIA charges a \$20 printing and shipping fee for each passport ordered.

In addition to the lift tickets donated by the participating ski areas, the Cold is

Cool Passport also includes coupons for 20 percent off a helmet purchase and \$20 off the purchase of \$100 at participating ski shops. Some ski areas have also included coupons for equipment rental and discounted lessons.

— Courtesy of the Michigan Snowsports Industries Association (MSIA).

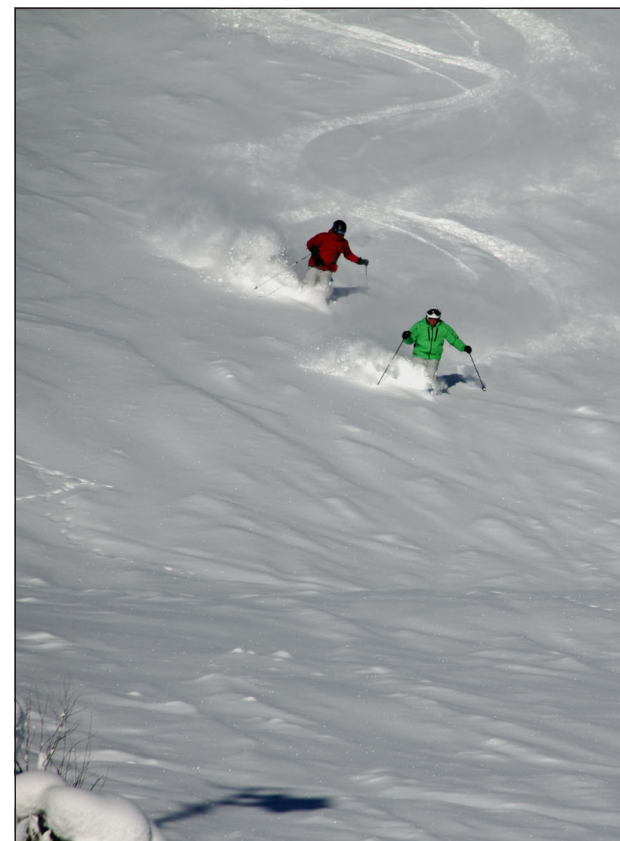


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SNOWBOARDING

Want to go snurfing?

Muskegon proud to have played a role in the birth of snowboarding

By Jane Peterson
For Digital First Media

Ever heard of a snurfer?
It's the predecessor to the snowboard and it was invented right here in Michigan by a man named Sherm Poppen.

A Muskegon native, Poppen designed the snurfer on Christmas Day as a toy for his daughters in 1965. His invention was a pair of children's skis bound together to create a single board. He began mass producing them and in the process gave birth to a whole new sport.

It didn't take long for snurfing to catch on. Just three years after the snurfer made its first appearance, the "World" Snurfing Championship was held at the Blockhouse Hill in Muskegon, said LaShelle Mikesell, administrative marketing coordinator for the Muskegon County Convention & Visitors Bureau.

"Sally Waite and Ted Slater were the world's first snowboarding champions," she said.

The name was changed to National Snurfing Contest in 1975 and the last event was held on Jan. 26, 1985 at the Pando Ski Area in Rockford, said Mikesell. By 1998, snowboarding became a sport at the Winter Olympic Games in Nagano, Japan.

A sculpture on Western Avenue in downtown Muskegon commemorates the Muskegon native's snurfer invention and his role in snowboarding. Created by artist Jason Dreweck, the figure at the top of the 10-foot-tall snow ribbon is Poppen's daughter, Wendy. In addition, Mikesell said the Muskegon Heritage Mu-



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE PETOSKEY AREA VISITORS BUREAU

Snowboarding is an exhilarating experience.

seum has a display of original snurfers manufactured by Brunswick.

Even if they aren't aware of Muskegon's role in the sport, snowboarders flock to the area to try out their snowboarding skills.

"There's ample snow covered sand dunes along our 26 miles of Lake Michigan shoreline, including trails at PJ Hoffmaster State Park, Beachwood Park and any snow covered hill... which we have plenty of," she said.

There's a ton of high-energy, family-friendly snowboarding fun to be had in Michigan.

"Winter can be a time that many will experience negative emotions and feel-



PHOTO COURTESY OF CRYSTAL MOUNTAIN

The great thing about snowboarding is that there is always something new to learn.

ings, a great way to avoid this would be to bundle up and head outdoors," said a spokesperson for Caberfae Peaks Ski & Golf Resort. "Getting the oxygen flowing

will increase brain functionality and increase positive feelings. Encouraging children and adults to start giving winter activities a chance will promote more

to live a healthier lifestyle and to receive more enjoyment throughout these long winter months."

Located in Cadillac, Caberfae Peaks Ski & Golf Re-

sort, like most of the state's skiing slopes, welcome snowboarders and their pristine slopes are ideal for the twists, turns and jumps of snowboarding. It offers skiing and snowboarding accommodations for all ages and skill levels as well as lessons.

The great thing about snowboarding is that there is always something new to learn. At first it may be a little frustrating, but once the basics, like turning, are mastered, there's no limit to what can be achieved.

"There is a special kind of freedom in sliding down a hill on skis or a snowboard. For those who have never tried it before, the idea may be intimidating but with a lesson and the right equipment the fear evaporates quickly," said Mickey MacWilliams, president/executive director of the Michigan Snowsports Industries Association (MSIA).

She suggested that first-time snowboarders check out the Discover Michigan Skiing program. Twenty-seven ski areas across Michigan have teamed up with Michigan McDonald's restaurants for this program, designed for those new to the sport to learn to ski or snowboard for as little as \$20. The package includes a beginner lesson, ski or snowboard rental equipment and a beginner-area lift pass or cross-country trail pass. Prices, valid through Jan. 31, are \$20 to learn to cross-country ski and \$35 to learn downhill skiing or snowboarding. The lesson normally covers basic maneuvering, including stopping, turning, riding the lifts and getting up from a fall.

"Michigan is the per-

fect state to learn to ski or snowboard in,” says Steve Kershner, MSIA chairman and director of snow sports at Shanty Creek Resorts. “No matter where you live, there is a ski area within 2 ½ hours of your home, our slopes aren’t as intimidating or expensive as the mountains in the West and you’ll find trained, friendly instructors who know how to make it a really fun experience.”

To sign up, interested beginners must fill out a Discover Michigan Skiing Voucher and then call or register online with the ski area they want to visit. Vouchers are available at participating MSIA retail ski stores and at goskimichigan.org. Program times differ from ski area to ski area.

Those new to snowboarding may also benefit from talking to someone with experience or stopping into the local shop to chat, get tips and be properly fitted



PHOTO COURTESY OF CABERFAE PEAKS SKI & GOLF RESORT

Grab a few friends and head to the slopes for a day of fun.

with the right equipment.

“When visiting a ski resort for the first time, come prepared for the conditions. Most will have an on-site ski store for purchasing last minute necessities, but making sure that you have the proper gear and properly fitting equipment is essential for having a good time outdoors this winter,” said the Caberfae spokesperson.



PHOTO COURTESY OF BOYNE MOUNTAIN

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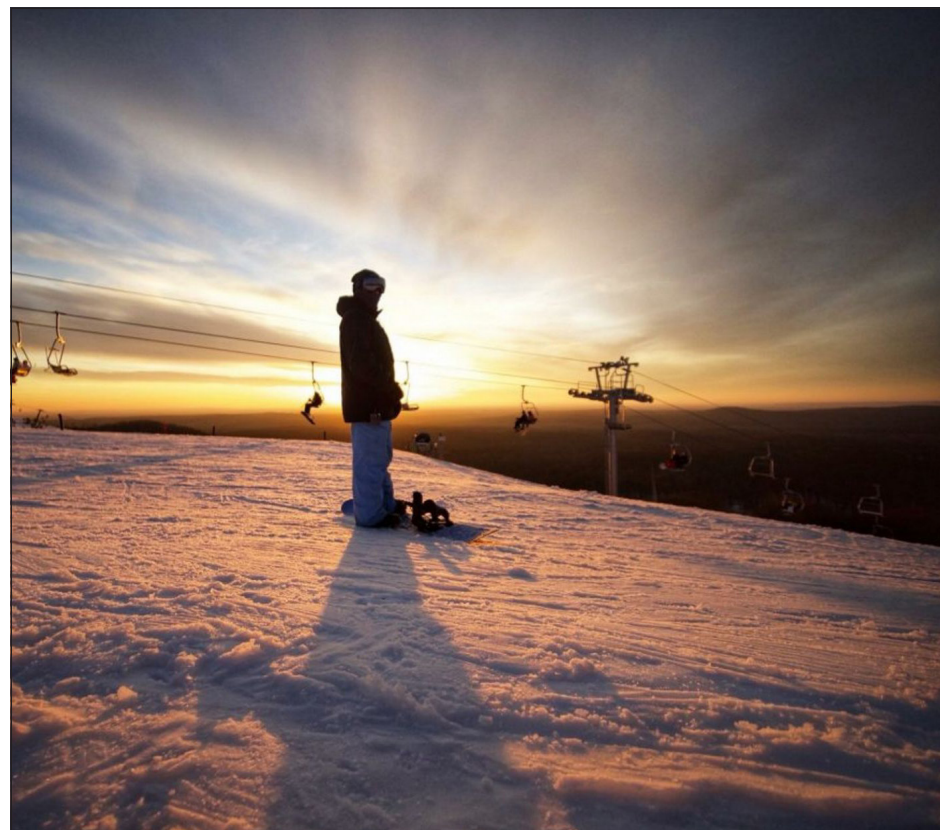


PHOTO COURTESY OF CABERFAE PEAKS SKI & GOLF RESORT

Michigan has lots of great choices for snowboarders both up north and closer to home.

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WINTER TRAVEL

Try these 4 ways to save money on ski trips

Skiing provides a great chance to enjoy the great outdoors at a time of year when such opportunities are often few and far between. As a result, ski trips can help combat cases of cabin fever that can settle in during winter months. Avid skiers and even novices often cannot wait for the season's first trip to the slopes to enjoy the fresh powder.

While an enjoyable recreational escape, people who love to ski would probably do it more often if skiing were more affordable. The following are four ways skiers can save some money when hitting the slopes this season.

1. Book an all-inclusive trip

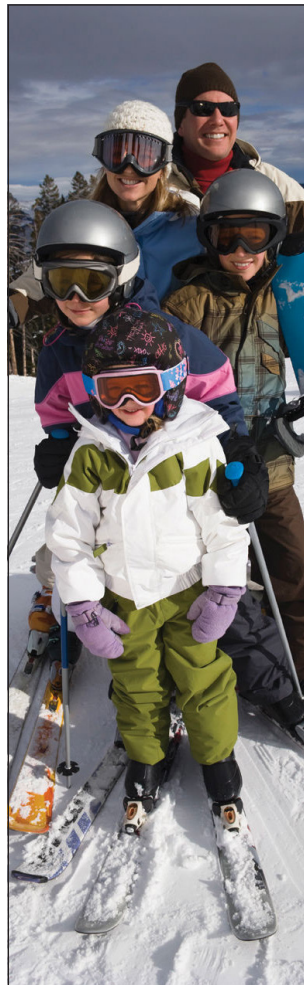
Lift tickets and equipment rentals can be expensive. Lift tickets are typically valid only for the day of purchase, so such expenses can quickly add up for skiers who want to spend several days on their favorite mountains.

Before booking a trip, shop around for all-inclusive offerings that include rentals and lift tickets for the duration of the trip. Skiers who plan to spend several days on the mountain may find it more economical to purchase all-inclusive packages than to pay daily charges for lift tickets and equipment rentals.

2. Book in advance

If all-inclusive packages are impractical or too expensive, skiers can explore paying for equipment rentals and lift tickets in advance.

Resorts may offer discounted rental and lift ticket prices to guests who purchase these items



online in advance of their stays.

3. Ski local

Skiing locally can save skiing enthusiasts substantial amounts of money while still allowing them to enjoy the slopes. By choosing to visit local mountains, skiers can save on overnight lodging costs. And since resorts are close, skiers won't need to purchase potentially expensive flights.

In addition, skiers with their own equipment can save on rentals by bringing their own skis. It's possible to do so when flying to a resort, but that can result in additional



baggage and/or packaging fees.

4. Make it a group effort

Many resorts offer discounted rates on passes and activities to groups of a certain size.

Look into the requirements for group discounts at local resorts, and then recruit friends and family to make the trip together.

Skiing is an enjoyable activity and a great way to avoid the cabin fever that can settle in as winter drags on. Skiers with tight budgets but a little creativity can spend much of the upcoming season traversing their favorite mountains.

— Metro Creative Connection



PHOTOS COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

SLEDDING

Prepare for a sledding adventure

Sledding has been part of snowy tradition for ages. Sledding is a fun-filled activity, but it can be made an even better time, and a little safer, if revelers learn a little more about it.

Sled styles

Sleds come in many different styles, each with its own advantages.

Sleds with metal blades will work like ice skates, balancing riders' weight on two metal runners. These sleds can work well during icy conditions or with hard-packed snow.

Toboggans can fit multiple people, which can increase the fun factor and downhill speeds.

Saucer-style sleds are good for one or two people. Foam liners on some saucers

can absorb shock for riders, making those downhill bumps a little easier on the backside.

Keep in mind that sleds with steering mechanisms are easier to control, which can equate to safer sledding.

Layer up

It is best to dress in layers when going sledding. Even if it seems warm at home, it may be colder and windier at the top of hills. Sweating when it's cold out can increase a person's risk for hypothermia.

According to experts at Timberline Trails, a person who works up a sweat and comes in contact with ambient air when taking a break will feel an immediate chill.

This is called evaporative danger, and can be remedied



died by dressing in layers and trying to stay dry.

Invest in a helmet

Sledding requires the use of a helmet. At high speeds, a blow to the head can cause a concussion or worse.

Let others go first

Wait until some sledders have already gone downhill, allowing them to compact the snow, which should

make for a smooth ride.

Choose safe hills, such as those that are free of bare spots, holes, trees, and obstructions, and do not end abruptly at a road. Hills with a long, flat area at the end make for easy, safe stopping.

Safety first

Put safety first when sledding. Sled during the daytime so visibility is better. Keep arms and legs on the sled, and only sled feet-first, advises the National Safety Council.

By keeping these guidelines in mind, sledders can make sure this popular winter activity is as safe as it is fun.

— Metro Creative Connection



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ICE FISHING

Get yourself hooked — try ice fishing this winter

By Jane Peterson
For Digital First Media

Those who enjoy ice fishing certainly know how to make the most out of winter.

For some, it is a time-honored tradition. They may have great memories of being out on the ice with their father or grandfather, spending hours talking and fishing once the hole was drilled and preparations made for the day.

For others, it is a time to soak up the solitude the winter months have to offer. Unlike the crowds that gather at popular fishing spots in the summer, winter is a little quieter and unless you bring music with you, there may just be your party and the fish around.

The ice fishing is great in many communities up north. Sault Ste. Marie is a great place to catch walleye, perch, pike and whitefish. Popular places to fish include the St. Mary's River, Munuscong Bay, Lake George, Raber Bay, Whitefish Bay and Potagannissing Bay.

Upper Peninsula towns know how to do winter and while tourism may peak in the summer, there is no shortage of places open that provide lodging, meals and activities for the family while you are fishing or want a break from the ice.

The Antlers in Sault Ste. Marie is a legendary restaurant that provides an interesting dining experience, said Mariah Goos, communications coordinator for the Sault Convention & Visitors Bureau. The rustic atmosphere features more than 200 taxidermies on the wall. Originally the restaurant was a saloon and according to its website, during the days of Prohibition, the front was



PHOTOS COURTESY OF SAULT CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

Ice fishing is a fun activity in Sault Ste. Marie.

an ice cream parlor.

"The food is fantastic and it's a must-have to visit while in town," said Goos.

Other eateries in town include The Palace Mexican Restaurant & Saloon and Karl's Cuisine Winery & Brewery, she said.

If you want to explore more of the region, head to Tahquamenon Falls, which is an hour and 20 minutes west of the Soo. This iconic state park and its copper-colored waterfalls are stunning in the winter, said Goos. Other good outings include the Algonquin Ski and Snowshoe Trail just 10 minutes from downtown Sault Ste. Marie and Sault Seal Recreation Area with its tubing hill, she suggested. There is also the Ke-

wadin Casino in town.

While the Upper Peninsula typically receives much more snowfall and colder temperatures for longer stretches of time than mid-Michigan or the southeastern part of the state, there is plenty of good ice fishing to be had locally, too.

Once the ice is safely thick enough, all across Michigan you'll spy anglers and shanties dotting the lakes, streams and rivers.

If you head out only a couple of times a year, you may bring your auger, fishing supplies and a bucket to sit by the hole waiting for a tug on the line. Avid ice fishermen and women may invest in a shanty that offers protection from the wind and many comforts



Sault Ste. Marie is a favorite place for ice fisherman when ice conditions permit.

of home.

For safety reasons, anglers should always check ice conditions and temperatures before heading out on the ice. It is also a good idea to bring along a fishing

partner, so you're not alone in case there is an emergency. Novice ice fishermen should bring along an experienced angler or visit a local outfitter to inquire about classes or a guide.

'GONE FISHING'

The Michigan Department of Natural Resource offers Free Fishing Weekends twice a year. According to DNR's website, Michigan.gov/dnr, this winter's Free Fishing Weekend is set for Feb. 16-17.

During this time, all fishing license fees will be waived so residents and visitors alike may enjoy fishing for all species of fish. All other fishing regulations still apply.

The DNR's website lists several Free Fishing Weekend events, including a Free Ice Fishing Derby from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Feb. 16 at Seven Lakes State Park, 14390 Fish Lake Road, Holly. The park will provide the bait and loaner gear on a first-come, first-served basis. Volunteers will be available to drill holes and give guidance, if needed. Free food, prizes and a warming fire will also be provided.

Another event will be held from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Feb. 16 at the DNR Outdoor Adventure Center in Detroit. February's Young Explorers program will focus on local fish species with an opportunity to try ice fishing at Milliken State Park, depending on ice conditions. Families should plan to arrive at the start time as this is not a drop-in program. The program is included with the admission fee and pre-registration is required by visiting secure.rec1.com/MI/michigan-dnr/catalog.

The annual Winter Free Fishing Weekend was initiated by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources in 1994 to encourage more people to fish in their local communities.

OUTDOOR FUN

Enjoy more time outdoors (even when it's cold)

The amount of time people spend outdoors has dramatically decreased, as the Environmental Protection Agency now reports the average American spends 87 percent of his or her time in a residence, school building or workplace.

Being outside is linked to better moods, more physical activity and less exposure to contaminants (concentrations of some pollutants are often two to five times higher indoors). Also, people who spend time outside may not come into contact with surface germs or develop various illnesses spread as often as those who spend a lot of time indoors.

Cold weather can make the desire to be outside less appealing, but it is important for one's mental and physical well-being to get outside.

The following activities might coax people outside for some crisp air.

Create snow critters

Why do snowmen and women get all of the fanfare this time of year? Just about any living or fictional creature can be molded from snow and embellish landscapes. Use food-grade coloring in spray bottles to add even more creative flair to snow designs.

Go on a nature hike

While many plants and animals hibernate in winter, there is still plenty to see.

Bring along a sketch book or camera and capture nature in winter. White-washed hills can be beautiful to behold, and many small animals and birds look even more vivid against the white



DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA FILE PHOTO

backdrop of snow.

Make an obstacle course

Turn an area of the yard or park into a homemade obstacle course.

It's much more difficult, — and a great workout — to try to jump over snow mounds or run down paths when decked out in warm layers. Engage in lighthearted competitions with friends and family members.

Build a bonfire

Children can set off in different directions to gather up firewood to craft a bonfire with adults in a safe location. S'mores taste equally delicious whether it's warm or cold outside, and in winter they can be accompanied by toasty mugs of cocoa.

Get sporty

Sledding, skating, snow-



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DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA FILE PHOTO

shoeing, and ice hockey are just a few of the winter sports that can get the heart pumping and muscles working outside. These activities are entertaining and also great exercise.

When venturing out-

doors in winter, dress in layers.

This way clothing can be put on or taken off to reduce the likelihood of hypothermia.

— Metro Creative Connection



METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

ICE SKATING

Ice skating a fun winter activity for the whole family to do together

By Jane Peterson

For Digital First Media

If you constantly wish for colder temperatures, chances are you enjoy ice skating. Ice skating provides a source of exercise and relaxation, especially at a time when many are hibernating for the winter.

Michigan has many opportunities for skaters, both indoors and outdoors. Some are small neighborhood ponds in local parks and others are large destinations, like the popular Campus Martius in Detroit.

For many Michigan residents, ice skating is an exhilarating experience that allows them to spend time with their friends and family outdoors in the frosty fresh air. It is also a good way to sneak in a little physical activity, because they don't really feel like they are exercising. The great thing is that all ages can enjoy ice skating and all you need is a pair of skates and a frozen rink – a little hot chocolate doesn't hurt either to keep warm.

The ice skating rink at the University of Michigan-Flint has a rich history. The destination rink first opened in 1985 as part of the Water Street Pavilion. It closed before the university announced in 1990 it would take ownership of then mostly vacant property and turn it into administrative offices. The facility was renamed University Pavilion and it continues to be home to administrative offices, the university bookstore, a tutoring center and five of restaurants.

The ice rink reopened and is one of several recent moves to prepare UM-Flint for the future, enhancing and allowing for growth of campus activities, said Theresa Landis, director of recreation, the



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN - FLINT

What make the ice skating rink at the University of Michigan-Flint special is its placement downtown along the Flint River.

University of Michigan-Flint.

"What makes the rink a perfect location is its placement downtown right along the Flint River," she said in an email.

Ice skaters have been coming to Buhr Park Ice Arena in Ann Arbor for more than 35 years, said Jason Nealis, recreation supervisor.

"The rink was opened in 1969 as a natural skating rink, meaning that the ice was dependent on the temperature outside," he said in an email. "By 1983, refrigeration was added so that ice could be kept even when it was warmer than 32 degrees outside. Sideboards and glass were also added at this time to provide a venue for outdoor hockey games. However, without a roof, the rink was at the mercy of rain and snow."

This often left staff members to shovel the surface of the ice before and after hockey games. During this time, Buhr purchased its first Zamboni, a model 200, which had to be pulled by a tractor and couldn't hold

much snow or lay much fresh water.

"In 1991, a roof was added with lights so that night games could be played and in 2006 a Zamboni 500 series was purchased and the refrigeration was updated so that Buhr can now keep ice even when it's 60 degrees outside," said Nealis.

Located in a neighborhood tucked back into a park, Buhr Park Ice Arena isn't visible from the street. However, it is a popular spot in the winter that draws skaters from all around.

Nealis said it is great because even though there is a roof overhead, skaters still get the feeling of skating outside.

For novice skaters, Buhr offers mostly evening skates that have music playing.

"It is a perfect place for beginners," he said.

First time ice skaters should remember to use caution when skating and be considerate of others on the ice. Skating is typically allowed in only one direction,



PHOTO COURTESY OF ANN ARBOR PARKS & RECREATION

Ice skating provides a source of exercise and relaxation.



JOSHUA LOTT — AFP/GETTY IMAGES

so follow the flow of others. Equipment such as hockey pucks and sticks are often not allowed on the ice during open skating.

New ice skaters may want to consider renting skates before buying their own pair.

It's a good idea to get a real feel for the sport before you invest any money. If you can see yourself returning time and time again to the rink, then purchasing a pair of skates can save you time and money.

LET'S GO ICE SKATING

The ice skating rink at the University of Michigan-Flint is open for free community open skates from noon-4 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays, 6-9 p.m. Wednesdays and 5-8 p.m. Fridays through March 3. The rink is open weather permitting, so it is best to call (810) 762-3441 to confirm rink status and hours.

The rink is cleared periodically for ice resurfacing. Skate rental (limited sizes and quantities) is available for \$3 inside the University Pavilion.

Buhr Park Ice Arena is open for public skating at the following times, according to its website: 7:45-8:45 p.m. Tuesdays; 4:45-5:45 p.m. and 7:15-8:45 p.m. Wednesdays; 7:15-8:45 p.m. Thursdays and Fridays; 2:30-4:30 p.m. and 7:15-8:45 p.m. Saturdays; and 3:15-5:30 p.m. Sundays. There is an admission fee and Buhr offers skate rentals for figure skates and hockey skates, in sizes from a children's size 8 to an adult 14. There are helmets available that are free to use and walkers for use out on the ice for beginning skaters.

HISTORY

The origins of popular winter sports

Many people spend winter huddled indoors. For winter sports enthusiasts, however, the arrival of snow and chilly temperatures means the start of a season of outdoor fun. Those who see winter as a time to embrace their love of sport may appreciate learning more about some of the sports that are most popular during the colder months of the year.

Ice hockey

Hockey is one of the most popular winter sports. In 1994, Parliament passed the Canada's National Sport Act, which declared hockey the official national winter sport of Canada. The origins of ice hockey are somewhat uncertain, though some historians claim the first set of rules to govern the

sport were written by students at Montreal's McGill University in the 1870s.

Downhill (Alpine) skiing

SnowSports Industries America indicates that, in the 2014-2015 season, more than nine million American Alpine skiers took to the slopes, and the sport continues to attract new devotees each year.

Historians state that skiing evolved as a method to cross the landscape in the winter when marshlands froze over. Cave drawings suggest that man used skis during the last Ice Age in the Palaeolithic period. Yet the birth of modern downhill skiing is often traced to the 1850s when Norwegian legend Sondre Norheim popularized

skis with curved sides and made skiing a sport instead of just a mode of transport. Skiing ultimately became quite popular in Russia, Finland, Sweden, and Norway. Today there are various types of downhill skiing, including mountain skiing, extreme cat skiing and heli skiing.

Curling

Curling may now be seen as a largely Canadian sport, but it is widely believed to be one of the world's oldest team sports, tracing its origins to Great Britain. The World Curling Federation states paintings by the 16th Century Flemish artist Pieter Bruegel portrayed an activity similar to curling being played on Scotland's frozen ponds. The earliest known curling stones came from the Scottish regions

of Stirling and Perth, dating all the way back to 1511.

Ice skating

Speed skating and figure skating are derivatives of early ice skating, which is believed to have started in Finland more than 3,000 years ago. Skates were sharpened, flattened bone strapped to the bottom of a shoe and glided on top of the ice. The Dutch added edges to steel blades around the 13th or 14th centuries. Eventually, skating was brought to England from the Netherlands.

Winter sports draw millions of participants each year, giving people a reason to leave the house even when temperatures dip below freezing.

Story courtesy of Metro Creative Connection



PHOTOS COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

WINTER ENTERTAINING

Try these five comfortable winter entertaining ideas

Winter entertaining need not end once Christmas and New Year's Day have come and gone.

Getting together with friends and family is still possible even if the weather outside is frightful. When Mother Nature takes a chilly turn, those who don't want the party can consider the following entertaining ideas.

Indulge in sweet treats

Comfort foods can make even the most blustery winds easier to tolerate. Invite people over for a dessert party.

At a dessert pot luck party, everyone brings along a favorite decadent dessert, from molten lava chocolate cake to warm bread pudding. Serve alongside tea, coffee and hot chocolate. Adults can enjoy the added punch of spiked beverages, which can warm everyone up instantly.

Host a "snowed in" party

Spending a day cooped up inside when the roads are covered in snow might not be your idea of fun, but invite a mix of friends and neighbors who live nearby over, and this impromptu party can make the cabin fever disappear. Ask guests to bring one food item or beverage.

Light a fire in the fireplace and set out some cozy throw blankets.

If possible, invite everyone outdoors to build a snowman.

Get physical

Get physically active with friends or family members by staging mock Olympic events in the yard. These can be fun "sports" created by participants or variations on fun winter activities.

Sledding races, snowball dodging contests, ice skating obstacle courses, and much more can make for an entertaining afternoon.

Get cooking

Cooking can certainly pass the time, and it can be even more enjoyable when done in the com-



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pany of others.

Send out an invitation for friends to stop by for a meal or plan a meal prep party.

Host a movie marathon

Handpick some favorite films and invite everyone over for a movie marathon. Fill the family

room, home theater room or living room to capacity and host a group for a film fest.

If space permits, set up one room with a children's movie for youngsters, while the adults retire to another room for movies that are more their speed. A buffet table set up with assorted

snacks will help keep bellies full while guests watch some favorite flicks.

Winter days and nights are ripe for entertaining possibilities.

These events help squash the cabin fever that can sometimes develop during the colder times of year.

— Metro Creative Connection

RECIPE



PHOTO BY TOM MCCORKLE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Triple Hot Chocolate.

This rich homemade hot chocolate is the ultimate

By Becky Krystal
The Washington Post

In the kitchen - at home or our lovely Washington Post Food Lab - the most common types of happy accident are not what you'd expect. They might involve a piece of food falling right into my dogs' waiting mouths or that time when I was testing a recipe that I knocked my glass mug off the counter and rather than shattering on the floor, it got stuck between two stools (true story). Those unplanned culinary genius moments? Few and far between.

That is, until now.

While on the hunt for a decadent, thick, full-flavored hot chocolate, I plucked two recipes to test from our massive collection of cookbooks. One was from

Alice Medrich's "Chocolate Holidays," the other from Lisa Yockelson's "ChocolateChocolate." Because they're pretty quick and easy to test and because I had an array of willing tasters in the Lab, I decided to make them back to back. They were both good, and we liked different things about each recipe. With a little bit of both batches left, more intending to just clean up than invent anything, I said, "I wonder what would happen if I combined these" and then unceremoniously dumped them into one bowl.

We laughed about how the world might end. I cracked a line about disrupting the space-time continuum.

After finishing the dishes, I decided to go in for one last taste, because why

not (or because my willpower is slim when it comes to chocolate). Well, guys, it was darn good, if not world-ending. I called in the rest of the team to try this Frankenstein hot chocolate, and the verdict was unanimous. The hybrid was the winner. While one recipe had been a bit thin on texture but great on flavor and the other was thick but not quite sweet enough, together they were beautiful.

After that it was a simple matter of combining the ingredients and tweaking the amounts for scale and measurements that didn't involve odd fractions.

The trifecta of chocolate - powder, bittersweet, semisweet - helps strike a happy balance in this rich brew with fruity notes. It is thick but not sludgy and sweet without being cloying.

TRIPLE HOT CHOCOLATE

Servings: A generous 6 (makes 3 1/4 cups)

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup water
- 1 tablespoon Dutch-processed cocoa powder (see OVERVIEW)
- 3 1/2 ounces semisweet chocolate (55 to 60 percent cacao), chopped
- 2 1/2 ounces bittersweet chocolate (about 70 percent cacao), chopped
- 1 1/4 teaspoons sugar
- 1 3/4 cups milk (whole, low-fat or nonfat)
- Pinch salt
- 1/4 cup heavy cream
- 1/4 teaspoon vanilla extract

STEPS

Bring the water just to a boil in a medium saucepan over high heat.

Remove from the heat and add the cocoa powder, stirring until smooth. Add the semisweet and bittersweet chocolates, sugar, milk and salt, stirring until most of the solid chocolates have melted. Return the saucepan to the stove top over low heat, stirring until the chocolates have completely melted.

Add the heavy cream; increase the heat to medium and whisk rapidly and constantly until the mixture is well incorporated, smooth and heated through, with small bubbles at the edges of the pan and steam wafting off the top. Do not allow it to boil or bubble rapidly.

If you are monitoring the temperature with an instant-read thermometer, aim for 150 to 160 degrees.

Remove from the heat and whisk in the vanilla extract. Serve right away.

Adapted from "Chocolate Holidays: Unforgettable Desserts for Every Season" by Alice Medrich (Artisan, 2005) and "ChocolateChocolate" by Lisa Yockelson (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2005).

Nutrition

Calories: 220; Total Fat: 15g; Saturated Fat: 9g; Cholesterol: 25 mg; Sodium: 85 mg; Carbohydrates: 22g; Dietary Fiber: 2g; Sugars: 17g; Protein: 4g.

Calendar

There is no place like Michigan in the winter. When the frosty breezes blow and the snow is flying, bundle up, hit the road and explore this great state that is home to so many winter activities, both indoor and outdoor. Remember that events and weather conditions change, so call ahead or check out the latest information online before heading out the door.

January

Jan. 30
Learn to Ice Skate at the Muskegon Winter Sports Complex in North Muskegon: from 5:30-7 p.m. Jan. 30. Children ages 4-16 can learn how to ice skate from skating coach Mark Jastrzembksi, who has more than 40 years of coaching experience. Skate and helmet rentals will be available. Information: 1-877-TRY-LUGE or MSports.org.

Jan. 31-Feb. 2
The North American Snow Festival: Jan. 31-Feb. 2 in Cadillac. For a schedule of events, visit Nasfcadillac.com.

February

Feb. 1-2
Gaylord Alpenfrost: takes place in downtown Gaylord Feb. 1-2. Events include the Frosty Plunge and a Craft Beer and Wine Festival at Treetops Resort, with a flurry of downtown activities, games and merchant sales. Alpine Village will unveil an open-air ice skating rink on the courthouse lawn during Alpenfrost. Schedule of events: GaylordAlpenfrost.com.

Feb. 1-3
The 15th Annual Magical Ice Fest: will be held in downtown St. Joseph Feb. 1-3. The event includes certified ice competitions, fire & ice tower, fire & ice party, frozen fish toss, SnowBiz scavenger hunt and more. Visit StJoeToday.com for details.

Feb. 1
Join the Guinness World Record Snowmobile Parade 2019 attempt: in downtown Sault



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Ste. Marie beginning at 3 p.m. Feb. 1. At least 1,048 snowmobiles are needed. All snowmobile operators must have a valid driver's license and registered sled. Details: SaultSteMarie.com.
A Lantern Lit Ski and Snowshoe: is scheduled from 7-9 p.m. Feb. 1 at the Waterloo Recreation Area in Chelsea. There will be a half-mile loop lit for cross-country skiers and a half-mile lit loop for walking and snowshoeing. A campfire will be available to warm up. Information: Michigan.gov.

Feb. 2
The Greater Muskegon Jaycees Annual Snowfest: will return to downtown Muskegon Feb. 2. This downtown winter festival features popular events such as the "Battle of the Bowls Chili Cook-Off," a "Battle of the Bloodies" Bloody Mary competition, a Snow Volleyball Tournament and a Cornhole Tournament. The evening will conclude with a downtown pub crawl. Details: (231) 412-0705 or find Muskegon Jaycees Snowfest on Facebook.

The Winterlaufe 8K Race: Feb. 2 in downtown Frankenmuth. The course winds through historic Frankenmuth, across the Beyer Road bridge and then back to Frankenmuth. Awards will be presented to overall and masters male and female and top in each division for each race. Details: www.facebook.com/Winterlaufe/.

Winter Survival Mini Camp: will be held from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Feb. 2 at Wint Nature Center in Clarkston. With staff naturalists, kids will learn to construct a shelter, build a fire and find their way through a snowy wilderness. Each child will also make a survival bracelet to take home. Hot chocolate and snacks are provided. This program is for ages 9 and older. A signed waiver is required. Cost is \$12/child. Pre-registration with payment required. Call 248-858-0916 weekdays.

The 51th Annual International 500 Snowmobile Race: Feb. 2 in Sault Ste. Marie. Experience all the thrills of NASCAR on a one-mile oval ice track. The I-500 is the biggest event in the Upper Peninsula and in the snowmobile-racing world. Details: SaultSteMarie.com.

The 2019 Traverse City Polar Plunge: is set from 9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Feb. 2 at North Peak Brewery/Kilkenny's Irish Pub in downtown Traverse City. Watch as participants brave the cold and plunge into a pool located in front of North Peak's patio - Front Street side. Details: TraverseCity.com.

Feb. 3
Winter Try-Athlon: is 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Feb. 3 at the Muskegon Winter Sports Complex in North Muskegon. Try three Winter Olympic sports: Luge, ice speed-

skating and cross country skiing. This event is family-friendly and geared toward those who have never done at least one of these sports. Serious competitors are welcome as well. Learn everything you need to know in continuous 20 minute clinics at each venue. Information: (231) 828-4627.

Winter Birding: is 10 a.m.-noon Feb. 3 at Hudson Mills Metropark Activity Center in Dexter. Find some of the hardier bird species that decided to stay here for the winter. Birds are very active this time of the year as they search for food. Dress for the weather. No birding experience is necessary. This program is for all ages. Pre-register: (734) 426-8211.

Feb. 6-9
Michigan Tech Winter Carnival: is set on the campus of Michigan Tech University in Houghton. The event features huge snow statues and activities like broomball, comedy skits and more. For more information, visit Mtu.edu/carnival/2019.

Feb. 9
A Skiable Feast: 9:30 a.m.-3 p.m. Feb. 9 at Treetops Resort, 3962 Wilkinson Road in Gaylord. Enjoy a 6km (3.8 mile) cross country ski excursion on Treetops' property at your own pace with five gourmet food and beverage stations along the way. Cost is \$89. Details: Treetops.com.

An Ice Fishing program: will be held from 3-5 p.m. Feb. 9 at Independence Oaks County Park in Clarkston. Enjoy Michigan's free winter fishing weekend by trying the exciting sport of ice fishing. Begin by learning how to operate ice fishing equipment, practice some fishing knots, observe an auger demonstration and then try to reel in some fish. Because this program takes place on a free fishing weekend, no fishing license is necessary to participate. This program is suitable for school-aged children and adults. Cost is \$5/person. Pre-registration with payment required. Call 248-858-0916 weekdays.

A Wilderness Sleigh Ride Dinner: is 5-9:30 p.m. Feb. 9 at Treetops Resort, 3962 Wilkinson Road in Gaylord. The event includes a four-course dinner. Cost is \$129/person. Details: Treetops.com.

The Honey Bear Classic Cross-Country Ski: is Feb. 9 in Marquette. Celebrate on the scenic Big Bay Pathway in Big Bay. This family-friendly event features the Honey Bear 12K or 24K classic challenge around the Bear Mountain Loop (timed event/\$5 entry fee) and youth events on the 7K Hidden Grin Loop. Enjoy the warming fire, prizes, refreshments and more. Details: TravelMarquetteMichigan.com.

Feb. 13-17

Michigan Ice Fest: will feature Ice Climbing at its best Feb. 13-17 in Munising. Events for novices and experts. Many events are planned each day. Details: MichiganIceFest.com.

Feb. 14-17
More than 200 teams are expected to take to the ice for the Labatt Blue UP Pond Hockey Championship in St. Ignace: Thursday evening starts with a meet-and-greet event. Pond hockey takes center stage Friday and Saturday, with the championship games and awards on Sunday. Information: StIgnace.com.

Come out to the Petoskey Winter Carnival: in downtown Petoskey and Winter Sports Park Feb. 14-17. There will be lots of cold weather fun and ice sculptures. Details: PetoskeyDowntown.com.

Feb. 15-16
Join the Spring Lake Rotary Club for Rotary Snow Jam: Feb. 15-16 in Spring Lake Central Park. Activities include a Snow Jam Euchre Tournament and activities for the entire family on Saturday including: Ice skating, kids activities, the Snow Jam Dart Tournament, food and beverages and the Grand Haven vs. Spring Lake Old Boys Hockey Match. For a full list of events visit RotarySnowJam.com.

Feb. 15-17
Crowds will gather along Marquette's downtown streets for the start of one of America's premier 12-dog, mid-distance sled dog races, the UP200: from Feb. 15-17. For years, mushers and their teams have endured the UP200 and the scenic trail that runs along the frozen shore of Lake Superior from Marquette to Grand Marais and back. For the mushers, it's a chance to test their dogs in an Iditarod qualifying race. For spectators, it's an opportunity to enjoy the wintry weather and local culture of this Upper Peninsula city. Details: TravelMarquetteMichigan.com.

Feb. 16-17
Serious snow in Marquette County means serious fat biking: The Polar Roll, held Feb. 16-17, is a 25-mile fat tire bike race featuring tons of awesome riders, excellent terrain and a Bacon & Hugs Aid Station. Note: This race typically sells out on the first day registration opens but it is a great event for spectators as well. Details: TravelMarquetteMichigan.com.

Feb. 16

A Wilderness Sleigh Ride

Dinner is 5-9:30 p.m. Feb. 16 at Treetops Resort, 3962 Wilkinson Road in Gaylord. The event includes a four-course dinner. Cost is \$129/person. Details: Treetops.com.

A Winter Wildlife Walk: will be held at 1 p.m. Feb. 16 at Stony Creek Metropark in Shelby Township. Learn how Michigan's wildlife survives the harsh winter months. Hike through the trails as we search for clues and signs of which animals are active and how they find food, water, shelter and stay warm. This program is for ages 7 and up. Pre-register: (586) 781-9113.

Parkas & Plates: will be held from 6-10 p.m. Feb. 16 at the Muskegon Winter Sports Complex in North Muskegon from 5:30-7 p.m. Jan. 30. This is a progressive dinner on lighted ski and snowshoe trails. The evening, for those 21 and older, will include skiing and/or snowshoeing, a special gourmet five-course menu, drinks and live entertainment. Information: 1-877-TRY-LUGE or MSports.org.

A Winter Night Hike: is planned at 6 p.m. Feb. 16 at Oakwoods Metropark in New Boston. Take a leisurely guided hike through the beautiful Oak-woods. Winter is a great time to be out in the nature study area to learn what is out and about in the winter at night. Dress for the weather. Preregister: (734) 782-3956.

A Skiable Feast: is 9:30 a.m.-3 p.m. Feb. 16 at Treetops Resort, 3962 Wilkinson Road in Gaylord. Enjoy a 6 km (3.8 mile) cross country ski excursion on Treetops' property at your own pace with five gourmet food and beverage stations along the way. Cost is \$89. Details: Treetops.com.

Feb. 17

A Winter Sports Demo Day: is 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Feb. 17 at Huron Meadows Metropark Ski Center in Brighton. Step away from the treadmill and discover the joy of outdoor winter activities including snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, fat-tire biking and more. Talk to the experts from local pro-shops and discover your next hobby. Dress for the weather, layers are best as some activities generate heat. This program is for ages 12 and up. Information: Metroparks.com.

Feb. 22

A Full Moon Snowshoe Hike: is from 8-10 p.m. Feb. 22 at Hartwick Pines State Park in Grayling. Meet at the contact



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE MUNISING VISITORS BUREAU

Michigan Ice Fest will feature Ice Climbing at its best Feb. 13-17 in Munising.

station for a 2-mile guided hike through moon-lit unbroken snow. Limited pairs of snowshoes are available to borrow. Shoe fitting will begin promptly at 7:30 p.m. on a first-come, first-served basis. Hikers do not need to go all two miles and all ages and abilities are welcome. Dress for the weather. This event will be cancelled in the event of inclement weather. A Recreation Passport is required for vehicle entry. Information: (989) 348-2537.

Feb. 23

A Guided Snowshoe Hike: will be held from 2-3 p.m. Feb. 23 at Tahquamenon Falls State Park in Paradise. Learn snowshoeing tips and view nature during this one mile off-trail excursion. No pre-registration is necessary and there will be snowshoes available to borrow. Details: Michigan.gov/dnr/.

The Dogman Challenge Fat Bike Race: is Feb. 23 at Mt. McSauba in Charlevoix. This is a two-hour winter endurance event held entirely on the multi-use trails around Mt. McSauba Recreation Area and North Point Nature Preserve in Charlevoix. Mass start is at noon on the bunny hill. Details: DogmanChallenge.net.

The Michigan Snowmobile Festival: takes place Feb. 23 in Gaylord. The event includes a Snowmobile Fun Run, live music and more. Details: GaylordMichigan.net.

A Skiable Feast: is 9:30 a.m.-3 p.m. Feb. 23 at Treetops Resort, 3962 Wilkinson Road in Gaylord. Enjoy a 6 km (3.8 mile) cross country ski excursion on Treetops' property at your own pace with five gourmet food and beverage stations along the way. Cost is \$89. Details: Treetops.com.

March

March 1-2

The 33rd U.P. Ice Golf Scramble and Glow Ball Challenge: is March 1-2 in St. Ignace. Details: StIgnace.com.

March 2

Slalom on Liberty during the Jim Wickham Memorial race: which begins at 1 p.m. March 2 at Caberfae Peaks Ski & Golf Resort in Cadillac. Registration runs from 9 a.m.-noon with an awards banquet following. This race is open to all with the following age divisions: 0-10; 11-14;



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE PETOSKEY AREA VISITORS BUREAU

15-17; 18-35; 36-46; 47-57; and 58 and up. Cost is \$14/racer for the Wickham or \$20 to add the Gold Cup. Details: CaberfaePeaks.com.

A Skiable Feast: is 9:30 a.m.-3 p.m. March 2 at Treetops Resort, 3962 Wilkinson Road in Gaylord. Enjoy a 6 km (3.8 mile) cross country ski excursion on Treetops' property at your own pace with five gourmet food and beverage stations along the way. Cost is \$89. Details: Treetops.com.

Maple Magic: will be held from 1-3 p.m. March 2 at Wint Nature Center in Clarkston. Maple syrup

is an icon of the region around the world. Learn to identify maple trees, take a hike to tap a tree and taste the sap. Learn the tools, tips and methods needed to make a own batch of maple syrup at home. Taste sweet maple treats by a campfire and take home maple-based recipes. Cost is \$5/person. Pre-registration with payment required. Call 248-858-0916 weekdays.

March 3

Giant Slalom on Liberty and Olympia: during the Earl Huckle Memorial race, which begins at 1

p.m. March 3 at Caberfae Peaks Ski & Golf Resort in Cadillac. Registration runs from 9 a.m.-noon. This race is open to all with the following age divisions: 0-6; 7-8; 9-10; 11-12; 13-14; 15-18; 18-35; 19-29; 30-39; 40-49; 50-59; and 60+. Cost is \$5/child or \$10/adult. All proceeds, other than entry fees, go toward the Cadillac Ski Club. Details: CaberfaePeaks.com

March 9

Shanty Creek Resorts Slush Cup: is 9 a.m.-4 p.m. March 9 at Shanty Creek Resorts. Watch as skiers and riders attempt to cross an icy 60' pond. Other events include a frozen fish toss, snow shovel racing and a seal slide. Details: ShantyCreek.com.

March 17

Super Giant Slalom on GGs Ride: during the Caberfae Peaks Gold Cup Super G, which begins at 1 p.m. March 17 at Caberfae Peaks Ski & Golf Resort's South Peak in Cadillac. Registration runs from 9 a.m.-noon with an awards banquet following the race. This race is open to all with the following age divisions: 8-10; 11-13; 14-16; 17-32; 33-45; 46-59; and 60+. Cost is \$14/racer or \$20 to add the Gold Cup. Details:

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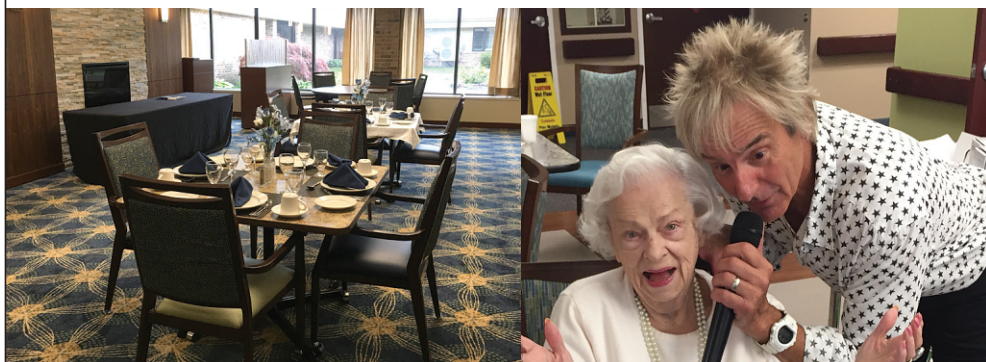
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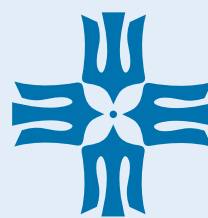
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