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Winter 2022

CYCLING Get moving with Vermont Bicycle Shop	6
CLOTHING Vermont Flannel brings decades of pattern.....	8
VINYL Take a spin at Buch Spieler Records	11
GIVING Gift ideas	13
CRAFTMADE Find unique gifts at Artisans Hand	14
TOYS Finding fun in Woodbury Mountain Toys	17
SKATING Ice is nice: Skating rinks offer winter fun	19
SKIING More than downhill: Cross country skiing opportunities abound.....	22

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PETER COBB PHOTO

Get moving

WITH VERMONT BICYCLE SHOP

By Peter Cobb

The main focus for Darren Ohl, owner, with his wife Ginger Cloud, of the Vermont Bicycle Shop in downtown Barre, isn't just bicycles: It's commitment to community.

"We're a community-focused bicycle shop with a goal to serve the community," he said.

Part of Ohl's commitment to Central Vermont is the fact that his shop doesn't

ship bicycles. All sales are in-store only.

"Our neighbors shop local and in turn Vermont Bicycle Shop will never ship. This means more availability of parts and bicycles for our neighbors," he said.

This was especially important during the early days of the pandemic, when there were serious shortages of bikes and bicycle parts.

"Our bikes were saved for our local customers," he said.

Ohl opened the shop in April 2016.

He and Ginger moved to Vermont from Oregon to be closer to her family in New Haven. Cloud, a mental health counselor, was hired by Central Vermont Medical Center. Their initial plan was to move closer to her family, but they decided to stay in Central Vermont.

"We just liked Barre so much, we stayed," Ohl said.

He is an active volunteer in the community and in the past has served

on the Millstone Trails Association Board and on the Barre Partnership's board of directors.

Ohl has been in the bicycle business for 20 years. Prior to opening his Barre store, he worked in bike shops in Oregon, Florida and Minnesota. He has traveled the world as a professional race mechanic and has been the private mechanic for professional athletes and world champions, including triathlon champions, national cyclocross champions and cyclocross world contenders.

"Some of the shops I've worked at are some of the biggest bicycle shops in the country," he said.

The biggest change in the bicycle business over the past 20 years isn't ebikes or fat tire bikes or any other type of bike, Ohl said. It is the fact that the bicycle business is more professional now than



PETER COBB PHOTO

it was when he started his career. Most bike shops have highly skilled mechanics and knowledgeable sales people who know the details about the bikes they sell, he said.

"When I started, I was just some schmuck off the street. I had worked in bike shops in high school but didn't have much experience. It's become much more of a profession. It

isn't just ringing someone up at the cash register or showing them where the jerseys are. It's a real trade with skilled professionals," he said.

Both Ohl and his fellow mechanic Josh Temkin are licensed and certified by the Union Cycliste Internationale and by the Professional Bicycle Mechanics Association. Ohl said he was

the first Vermonter certified by PBMA. He guesses he's fixed more than 1,200 bicycles.

In addition to selling and repairing bikes and selling bike gear, the Vermont Bicycle Shop, with the Vermont Bicycle Club, holds weekly group rides, geared toward people "new to biking as fitness," Ohl said. The tours welcome bikers of all abilities and the trips range from five miles to 15 miles.

"The Vermont Bicycle Club is focused on creating a community of people to help boost confidence and diversity, and we're interested in bicycle rides with folks who are either new to riding or looking to learn and build their skillset," he said.

Details about the bike trips are available at vermontbicycleshop.com



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VERMONT FLANNEL

brings decades of pattern

By Peter Cobb

When Mark and Linda Baker opened Vermont Flannel Company in 1991 in East Barre, naysayers told them the company wouldn't last three years; it's too expensive to manufacture clothing in the United States. The Bakers proved them wrong.

Now, 31 years later, three new owners, Colin King, Joe Van Deman and Matt Bigelow, who also own the All American Clothing Company based in Arcanum, Ohio, have taken over Vermont Flannel with the same optimism the Bakers had three decades ago. All three are convinced Vermont Flannel not only can continue to manufacture its clothing and accessories in the United States, but also the company can thrive and grow.

This past April, Vermont Flannel Company and All American Clothing Company announced a new partnership to support domestic apparel production in the United States. The strategic partnership is USA Brands.

"All American Clothing has always supported American manufacturing and American jobs, from the denim we purchase to make our blue jeans right down to the boxes we ship them in. It's all about trying to build a stronger American economy," said BJ Nickol, founder of All American Clothing. "And that fits so well with Vermont Flannel's mission of keeping manufacturing in America."

The partnership will continue to operate its base locations in Vermont and Ohio, as well as in Indiana, Kentucky and North

Carolina while supporting suppliers across the United States.

"Given Vermont Flannel's legacy as a supporter of US manufacturing, it makes so much sense for us to partner with All American Clothing as we continue to grow and expand nationally," said Mark Baker. "We couldn't imagine a better brand and company to pair with Vermont Flannel's legacy, culture and values."

Vermont Flannel employs 50 people in Vermont and more



PETER COBB PHOTOS

during the winter holidays, with 10 to 15 stitchers in Johnson and four in East Barre.

“Our employees are so excited to see the growth opportunities both for themselves, as well as American manufacturing,” said Van Deman, CEO of USA Brands. “Both of these companies began with hard work, entrepreneurial spirit and a commitment to making a quality product here in the United States.”

“We think this brand has the brand power and the following to do more,” Bigelow said. The plan is to expand manufacturing and add new sales outlets. Currently, Vermont Flannel sells its products, which range from shirts, pants, blankets, underwear, basically anything flannel, at five Vermont stores, online and at the Big E fair in Springfield, Massachusetts.

“We are looking at opportunities for additional stores,” Bigelow said. The company is considering opening stores both in Vermont and outside the state. According to Bigelow, Vermont Flannel is well known in Vermont and in the rest of New England but less so outside of this region. He said he hopes to change that and make Vermont Flannel a national brand.

“Vermont and flannel go together like bread and butter. It’s a natural fit,” Bigelow said. “I love being in our retail stores and seeing people’s reactions to the flannel.”

“We take pride in our products and in our people and in our mission in supporting US products and bringing about world comfort. Our brand is one we want to invite people to become a part of, to pick up the product and to hold it in their hands,” Bigelow said.



PETER COBB PHOTOS



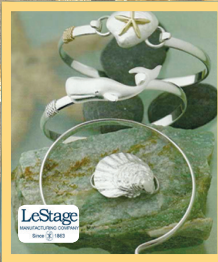
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We are looking for high resolution photo submissions of 300 dpi or higher in .jpeg format. The more vibrant the colors, the better. Judging will be done by our editors taking into consideration exposure, focal point, color and contrast as well as subject matter.

**The deadline for submissions is February 15, 2023.
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**By entering this competition, entrants agree that Brunswick Publishing, LLC has permission to publish submitted photographs in print, in special promotions and online with credit to the photographer. All photos must be taken in Vermont.*

TAKE A SPIN

at Buch Spieler Records

By Peter Cobb

The music sales business has been in constant motion over the past half century. It moved from vinyl albums and 45s, to eight-track cassettes and four track tapes, to CDs, Spotify and Pandora and other streaming services, to downloads. Now we are back to vinyl and CDs.

Thirty years ago, Tower Records and other big-box record stores were crushing small, locally owned stores. Tower Records had nearly 200 stores in 15 countries, with sales exceeding \$1 billion in 1999. The survival of small stores seemed unlikely.

But then came the internet, which disabled Tower Records, Sam Goody and a half dozen others.

Still standing is Buch Spieler Records on Langdon Street in Montpelier, which celebrates 50 years in business this January.

Founder and former owner Fred Wilber opened the store in January 1973, and sold it in 2015 to Xavier Jimenez. Knayte Lander, who had been the store manager, has joined Jimenez as co-owner.

“We will be 50 years old in January and I often thank every customer for helping us get there and far beyond,” Jimenez said.

Jimenez considers his store a “cultural institution,” where locals can share their love for music. “Music is medicine for the soul,” he said.

“When I came up here, I felt like I had become part of the community, which I feel proud about. My partner and I take pride in selling the best records. What are the best records? The album is good from the beginning to the end. You actually want to listen to it and not just put it on a shelf and brag about it.”



Xavier Jimenez.

PHOTOS BY PETER COBB

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PHOTO BY PETER COBB

Prior to buying the record store, Jimenez owned a record store in Cherry Valley, New York, near Cooperstown. He also was running a restaurant.

"I moved it all up here in a U-Haul. I literally tripled the volume of vinyl records," he said.

Vinyl, both used and new releases, are the biggest sellers at Buch Spieler, but CDs are not dead. In fact, they are seeing a significant increase, Jimenez said.

"The CD format has grown leaps and bounds over the past couple of years. What has gone down is the download," he said.

In addition to running the store, Jimenez is a disc jockey in the classic sense, he spins vinyl records. He also hosts a radio show every Thursday night from 7 to 9 p.m. on WGDR called "Xavwax," which was the name of his New York store.

The music selected for the show spans the generations, and often includes albums that are set to be released the next day.

The pandemic has been the biggest challenge since Jimenez and Lander took ownership.

"We got really innovative right away," Jimenez said.

The store added home delivery, internet sales, curbside pick-up, and subscription services, where a customer would pre-purchase records or CDs for pick-up once a month.

"After a while, we scheduled appointments, six to eight appointments a day, with 15-minute intervals. Even bigger than subscription services were gift certificates. People came out of the woodwork. They wanted us to survive," he said.

Buch Spieler sells new and used vinyl, new and used CDs, audio equipment, posters and Buch Spieler clothing and merchandise.

"What we would like the community to know is that we are here for them. We have been an institution here in the capital of Vermont. People tell us every day we are the best record store in Vermont," he said. "My partner and I aspire to be up there with the best in the world and feel closer every year. ... Especially, when world travelers and music enthusiasts remind us all the time of how much they enjoy their experience here at Buch Spieler Records."

Buch Spieler Records is open Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.



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DONATE A GIFT LOCALLY

Charitable groups have been in operation for as long as there have been people willing to offer assistance to others.

The oldest charities in Britain have been around for roughly 900 years. The Hospital of St. Cross in Winchester is one of the oldest. It was started in 1136 by Bishop Henry de Blois. The Puritans of early Massachusetts helped to lay the foundation for philanthropic efforts in the colonies. Their first real philanthropic organization was Harvard College. Established in 1636, it was designed to train young men for the clergy. The Scots Charitable Society of Boston and the Charitable Irish Society of Boston were some early benevolent societies that began operations in the 17th and 18th

centuries. George Peabody, a wealthy businessman, was known as the father of modern philanthropy. He helped guide other American millionaires who turned palaces into buildings opened to the public and helped many through permanent foundations. Peabody's last great effort was the Peabody Education Fund.

CommonGood Vermont reports "more than 6291 Vermont nonprofits serve all corners of the state. With healthcare and education driving sector revenue, public charities generate more than \$9 billion."

There are many pressures during the holiday season – parties, gift giving, shopping and the general hustle and bustle. One way to keep the meaning of Christmas and the holidays is to make

a gift to a local charity or nonprofit organization, be it a gift of time or of money. Here's a start to the endless list of giving opportunities to seekout locally.

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CRAFTMADE

Find unique gifts at ARTISANS HAND

By Peter Cobb

Artisans Hand of Montpelier enters its 45th year in operation this December.

Founded in 1978 by a group of local craftspeople, the store has endured the 1992 flood, the 2008 recession, and the COVID pandemic, and is now stronger than ever, according to Locklin Smith, a store employee and one of more than 120 artists whose art is on display in the downtown store.

The founders of Artisans Hand Craft Corporation, four of whom are still affiliated with the store — artist, Mary Azarian; potters, Kileh Friedman and Georgia Landau; and jeweler Bill Butler — opened a temporary gallery in a slightly dilapidated storefront on Langdon Street in Montpelier to sell their wares during the holiday season and to have more control over the display, pricing and marketing of their products.

“We started as a pop-up gallery meant to be here for one season but the store did so well we’re still here 45 years later,” Smith said. A jeweler, Smith has been affiliated with the store since 1980.



PHOTOS BY PETER COBB

The store subsequently moved to State Street and after the 1992 flood, moved to its current location at City Center on Main Street.

Initially, the gallery was a true cooperative. Along with creating their own work, the artists clerked in the gallery, displayed the crafts, did the promotion, marketing, maintenance, cleaning and anything else that needed to be done.

Over the years, the structure changed. Now all major decisions are made by the five-member board of directors and



PHOTO BY PETER COBB

there is a professional, paid staff which includes a director, manager, assistant manager, promotions manager, sales staff, and a professional bookkeeper. Of the nine paid staff members, several have been with the gallery for over a decade, and all are well versed in the world of crafts.

The mission of Artisans Hand, according to store manager and potter Deborah Van Ness, who has been affiliated with the store since 1996, is to promote and sell high quality crafts, handmade by Vermonter artists. The works for sale are crafted by artists from every corner of Vermont as well as a few artists from outside the state.

"We seek to provide a friendly, dynamic working environment in which the sales staff, management, directors and exhibitors share pride in the gallery and work productively together to maximize sales and customer satisfaction," Van Ness said.

Smith attributes the success of the store to a supportive and loyal local customer base, a growing number of tourists in Montpelier, and, most importantly, to the fact that the store has a huge variety of unique, high-quality products for sale.

"Montpelier is fabulous. I think it's one of the best towns in the country," Smith said.

Success has not always been assured. COVID 19 nearly closed the store.

"COVID was rough, very, very rough," Van Ness said.

To endure, the store added on-line sales and curbside pickup and enhanced its social media presence. The store closed for two months and it took 18 months before sales were back to pre-COVID levels.

"In the beginning it was tenuous. We got a lot of help from our landlords, we got help from the state, we got help from the feds, and it kept us in business. Now we're stronger than ever," Smith said.

"Montpelier Alive did a fabulous job helping downtown businesses," Van Ness said.

The art for sale includes handmade jewelry, pottery, wearable art, wood, glass, photography, prints, cards and more.

Store hours are Monday through Friday, 11 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; and Sunday, noon to 3 p.m. Details about the art and the artists are available on the store website, www.artisanshand.com

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FINDING FUN

in Woodbury Mountain Toys



PHOTOS BY PETER COBB

By Peter Cobb

How does a small, brick-and-mortar toy store compete with Amazon, the behemoth of retail?

There is no magic formula, says Karen Williams, the owner of Woodbury Mountain Toys in Montpelier. But what has worked for her, for 22 years now, has been attention to what the customers want, friendly service, a variety of toys, most of which are not available in the big box stores, detailed knowledge about the products on sale, a steady increase in tourist business and, most importantly, a community that strongly supports locally owned businesses.

Also needed, Williams said, is a love for the work.

"You've got to love what you do, and work really hard at it," Williams said.

She describes Woodbury Mountain Toys as a "whimsy, fun store that captures the imagination of people of all ages. There's a challenge for everyone here be it in a puzzle or board games or a science project."

Williams started working at Woodbury Mountain Toys in 1997, and bought the business in January 2000 from Tony and Charlotte Deon. The Deons opened their downtown store in 1992, the flood year for Montpelier City.



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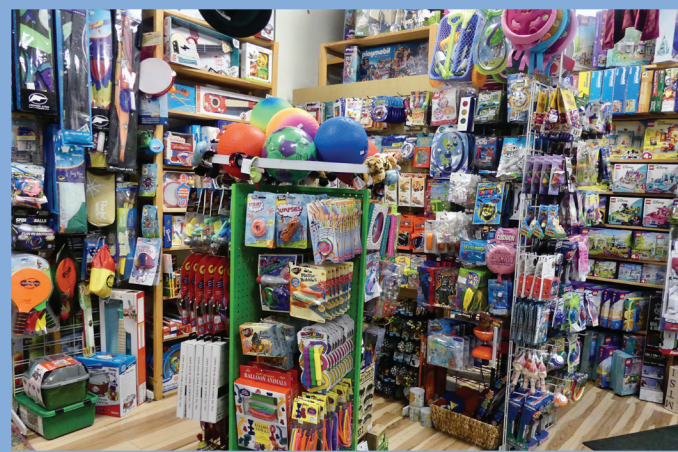


PHOTO BY PETER COBB

Williams' first challenge was the impending Y2K disaster that was feared would shut down all the computers globally on Jan. 1, 2000. When that didn't happen, she knew she was off to a good start.

The biggest change since she opened has been the rise of Amazon and other internet toy sellers. Amazon sells everything Woodbury Mountain Toys sells. The difference between Amazon and her store, she said, is her detailed knowledge not only of the toys, books, games, puzzles, science projects, costumes and more, but also her knowledge of what kids really want which helps her guide parents to buy the right toy for their children and for themselves.

One plus for Williams has been the steady increase in tourist business over the past 22 years.

"When I started, I knew everybody in the store but now more tourists stop in," she said. "There were buses back then but I don't think we were on the map for as many people as we are now. Montpelier is a destination stop. People are floored by the fact that there are no chain stores here. When they come in to the store they're wowed. They're impressed by the wide variety of items for sale."

Also part of the draw, she said, especially for the tourists, is nostalgia.

"Their stores closed down and they're happy to find a real store here," she said.

Definitely key to her success, Williams said, is the fact that Montpelier has so many successful businesses. "It's more vibrant now than it was 10 years ago. There are fewer empty storefronts. Montpelier is a good place to do business."

Williams said her biggest challenge in recent years was the negative impact from the pandemic. Woodbury Mountain Toys was shut down for eight weeks, and it took many months before business was back to normal. To survive, she added curbside pick-up and home delivery and increased her social media presence on Facebook and Instagram.

"The people in Montpelier were very supportive. They didn't want to see their businesses go under," she said.

Despite a drop in business, Williams said she was able to pay her employees. "The PPP (Payment Protection Program) loans helped immensely," she said.

Woodbury Mountain Toys is open Monday through Saturday, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Details are available on the store website, woodburymountaintoys.com

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ICE IS NICE

Skating rinks offer winter fun

By Janelle Faignant

Brett Myhre, of Shrewsbury, has played ice hockey his whole life. So, when a small patch of his backyard flooded and froze one winter, he decided to try and skate on it.

“We lived on Walker Mountain Road and had a flat area (that) froze. It might have been 15 feet wide,” Myhre recalled.

But it was enough to skate on, and the next year he tried to expand it.

“I said, I’m going to look into this and make it bigger and, now, every year, I try to improve (it) and get prepared early,” he said.

On a weekend in late October, he spent a good seven hours at his current home in Shrewsbury putting brackets in the ground and checking the plywood, making sure the boards were decent and getting the large sheath of plastic that acts as a base for the water ready to go for when the cold sets in.

“My wife bought me this cool system, the company’s called NiceRink, and it (comes with) L-brackets and plywood (that) you can make as big or small as you want for a hockey rink,” Myhre said, adding he did research and found out that putting plastic down prevented the ice from melting during January and February thaws.

His family and friends have been skating on his homemade 40-by 32-foot rink for over a decade.

“It’s like a part time job but it’s well worth it when you can skate under the stars,” he said.

“Sometimes we can skate before Christmas but I need three 17- to 20-degree days (to) fill maybe 6 inches of water, and then in three or four days it freezes up,” he said. “The best part is you invite all your friends and family over and have campfires.”

He estimated that, in the last couple of years, the rink had ice for



PHOTOS PROVIDED

Top, Brett Myhre's outdoor backyard ice skating rink. Middle, Proctor Skate Rink. Bottom, Burlington Skate Park.

80 days and they skated during 60 of those. Over the years, he added motion-sensing solar lights but noted that overall the venture is not very expensive.

"I'm fortunate where I am, I don't have neighbors because in the spring you don't want to flood anybody out," he said. "But I've had fun with it over the years. It's a lot of work but it's worth it."

Along the same lines, a Rhode Island-based company called Porta-Rinx & the Bambini sells portable, 20- by 40-foot refrigerated ice-skating rink kits that you can use to make your own rink and reuse every year. One such rink was put up in Washington County and is open to the public, located at 1325 VT-14 in East Montpelier. For information, call 802-479-1880.

But if you aren't able to put up your own outdoor backyard ice skating rink, here's a roundup of some of the public outdoor rinks around the state.

The Proctor Skate Rink is inching towards 100 years at its location at 33 Olympus Road in Proctor. Those years are well-documented throughout the rink and the warming hut with lots of old, archived photos.

On a typical weekend, more than 100

people will show up. The rink manager will post day-to-day opening hours on its Facebook Page and will display the open sign at the rink. If the sign is not displayed, the rink is not open to the public. You can call 802-459-2819 or go to the "Proctor Skate Rink" Facebook Page for updates regarding hours, special notices and events.

The North Barre Rink at 49 Treatment Plant Dr. in Barre offers free skating and free snacks at different times during the season, and information on free skate rentals at local sports establishments. Beginners can learn to skate with a pro. "There are few hidden Barre gems better than the outdoor rink," Sean Martin wrote in a review of the Barre Outdoor ice-skating rink. For more information, call 802-476-0257.

Lakeside Skating Rink on Conger Avenue in Burlington offers night-time skates, and kids-only skate times. You will see frequent updates to its Facebook page, like "Lakeside Rink in #btv is back open! We zamboni-ed Thursday night and conditions are very good. Come skate this weekend as the coming week looks quite warm." The 36- by 84-foot rink usually opens in late December and is maintained

regularly by neighbors. For more information call 802-598-3409, visit www.facebook.com/pages/Lakeside-Skating-Rink, or email lakesideskatingrink@gmail.com.

The Randolph Ice Rink at 26 Prince St. in Randolph is open seven days a week, unless the temperature is -5 or below, or the ice is deemed unsafe. Look for the open flag on top of the hill. More info is available by calling 802-728-3325.

The Portland Street Outdoor Rink at Portland and Concord Streets in St. Johnsbury is free to the public. There's a heated warming hut and benches, and night skating under the lights. This community rink is maintained by volunteers. Call 802-748-8414 for more information.

At Sleepy Hollow Inn at 427 Ski Lodge Dr. in Huntington, there is an ice-skating pond, which is available for night skating, too. Call 802-434-2283 or 866-254-1524 or visit www.skisleepyhollow.com for more information.

Be sure to check websites and Facebook pages for rink conditions, which can change frequently with the weather, before you go.

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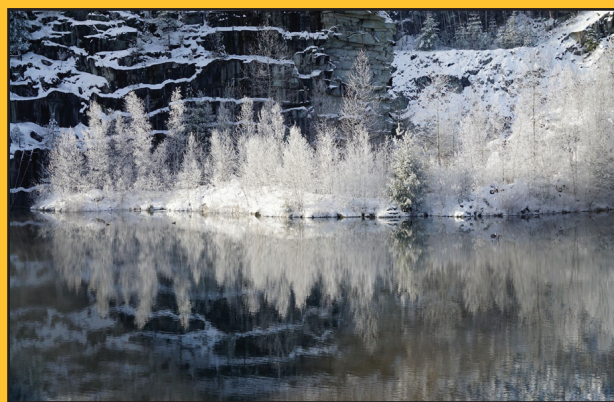
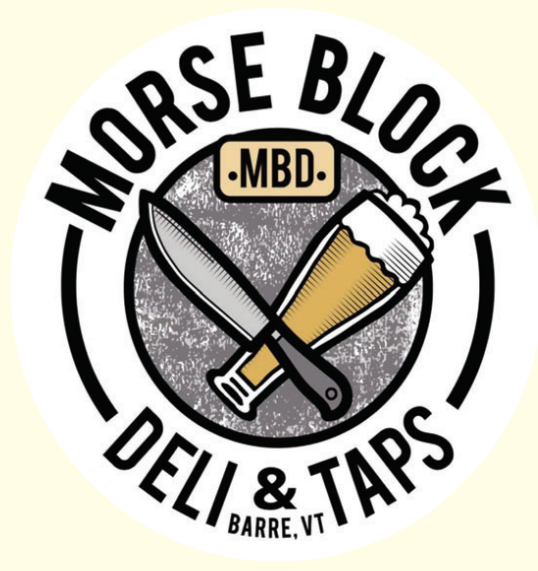


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MORE THAN DOWNHILL

Cross country skiing opportunities abound

By Janelle Fagnant

There is an old, unattributed quote that says “Vermont is known as winter in its original state.” If you were to put an image to that quote and brand it as the state slogan, it would most likely include an idyllic snow-covered countryside, a scenic sleigh ride and, of course, a skier. Downhill skiing seems to get more attention but, for those who prefer the more peaceful, slower pace of cross-country skiing, Vermont is full of places to go.

“We’re working on trails, getting them nice,” the outgoing message at Timber Creek Cross Country Ski in West Dover said recently. Its reviews are full of “awesome skiing with wonderful staff” comments. Located at 13 Tanglewood Road in West Dover, call 802-464-0999 or visit timbercreekxc.com for more information.

After 26 years of owning and managing Prospect Mountain Ski Area at 204 Prospect Access Road in Woodford, Steve Whitham and Andrea Amodeo decided to sell the ski area, which is currently owned by a nonprofit organization. But Whitham is still involved, and said, “Our season starts when it snows.”

“Typically, hopefully, it can be Thanksgiving, middle of December,” he said.

The paths are groomed and rentals are available, as are lessons.

“We have a base lodge with food, 30 to 40 kilometers of trails for skating and classical, and we allow dogs to go on a portion of the trails,” Whitham added.

The trails, from beginner to expert, are expertly groomed. There are also special snowshoeing and single-track trails. The lodge serves hearty meals and light snacks in a cozy atmosphere with a large stone fireplace, woodstove and big windows to enjoy the view. Prospect Mountain is seven miles east of Bennington, with the highest elevation above sea level of any town or city in Vermont — an important factor in maintaining consistent ski conditions, even if your own backyard is brown. For more information, visit www.prospectmountain.com.

Rikert Nordic Center at 106 College Cross Road in Ripton has been the training grounds for national champions and generations of skiers. Twenty minutes from Middlebury, its scenery ranges from forests to farm fields to stone walls and even Robert Frost’s summer cabin. It’s open from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. daily

from December to March. For more information, call 802-443-2744 or visit www.rikertnordic.com.

Viking Nordic Center Ski resort at 615 Little Pond Road in Londonderry’s slogan is, “The quintessential Vermont cross country ski area.” Known as a great place to introduce kids to cross country skiing, it has beginner-friendly trails, rental boots and skis. Call 802-824-3933, or visit www.vikingnordic.com for more information.

Ken Hannah reviewed Craftsbury Outdoor Center saying, “Outstanding cross country skiing,” and Brian Gallagher called it, “First class! Very fair prices for trail passes and delicious lunch!” Located at 535 Lost Nation Road in Craftsbury Common, call 802-586-7767 for more information.

The Mountain Top Inn & Resort at 195 Mountain Top Road in Chittenden has several winter activities open to the public including cross country skiing on scenic trails, where some U.S. Olympians have trained. The tucked away spot is generally accessible mid-December through March. For more information and rates call 802-483-2311 or visit mountaintopinn.com.

The Woodstock Nordic Center (802-457-1100, www.woodstockinn.com) offers meadow skiing, woodland trails at Mt. Peg and 30 kilometers

of trails on Mt. Tom on old carriage roads in Vermont's first tree farm and Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park site. Rental equipment and lessons are also available.

Trapp Family Lodge at 700 Trapp Hill Road in Stowe is credited as the home of the first cross-country ski center in the country. Day passes range from \$10 for children to \$26 for adults, and a rental of skis, boots and poles runs \$30 for weekdays and \$35 for weekends. For questions or more information, call the ski shop at 802-253-5755.

At the comprehensive website www.xcskiresorts.com, Burke Mountain at 223 Sherburne Lodge Road in East Burke is listed as one of the "Top Alpine Resorts with Cross-Country Trails." "It will all depend on weather," an employee said about when the season will start.



PHOTO PROVIDED

Viking Nordic Center.

"We don't make snow, it's all natural," she said, adding that typically the goal is to be open around Christmastime. Call 802-626-7300 for more info.

Smugglers' Notch at 4323 VT-108 in Jeffersonville was also listed in the "Top Alpine Resorts with Cross-Country Trails," and more information can be found by calling 802-370-3186.

Most cross-country resorts rely on natural snow for their season but the top cross-country ski resorts with snowmaking include Rikert Nordic Center, the Trapp Family Lodge, Mountain Top Inn & Resort, Craftsbury Outdoors, and Sleepy Hollow Inn, which is located at 427 Ski Lodge Drive in Huntington. Sleepy

Hollow has 35 kilometers of trails groomed for classic and skate skiing and another 20 kilometers of dedicated and marked snowshoe trails. There's also a lighted ski loop open until 9 p.m. on Monday, Wednesday and Friday nights. Rentals are available for cross country skiing and snowshoeing with snowshoes for toddlers to adults. Find more information at www.skisleepyhollow.com or by calling 866-254-1524.

And finally, The 4,700-mile VAST (Vermont Association of Snow Travelers) trail traverses the whole state of Vermont. Generous private landowners allow access to their properties in exchange for maintenance, signing and grooming. Portions of the trails are open for cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. More information can be found at www.vtvast.org.

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