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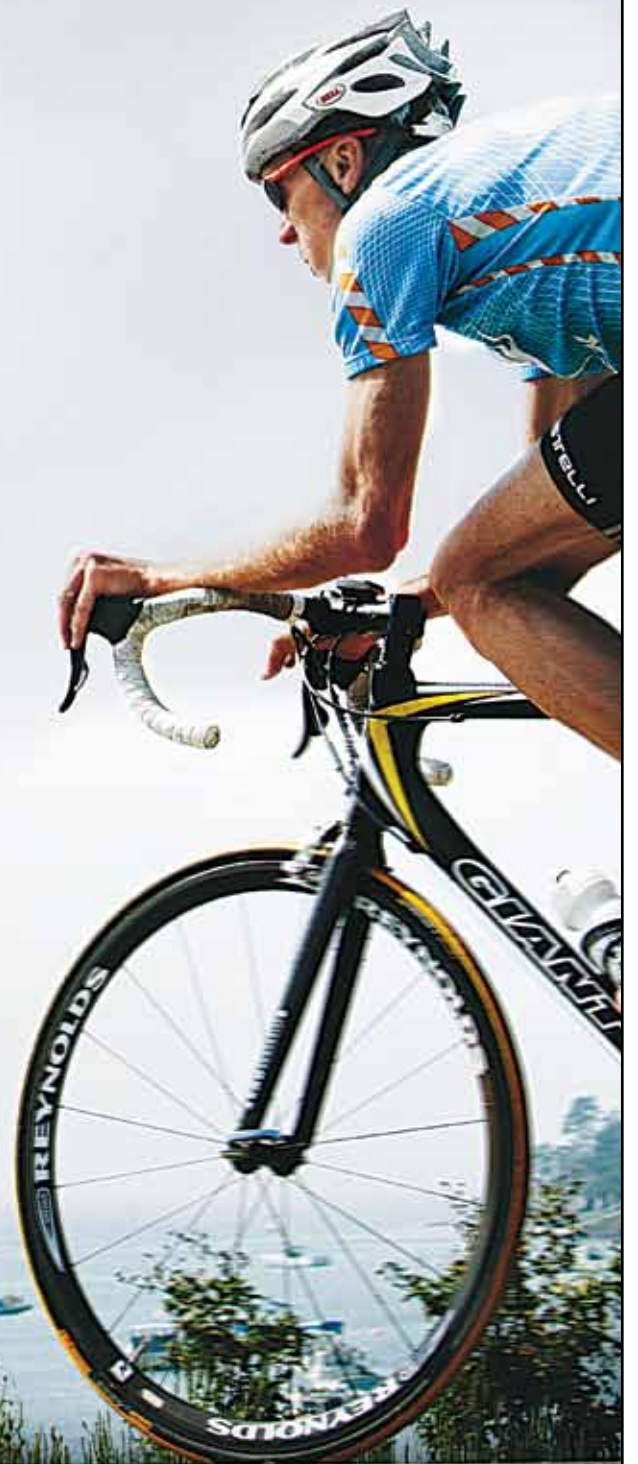
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ON THE COVER:

Griff, whose owner is Sheila Goss of Stowe, is our cover dog for this year's photo contest. He's shown here in the canoe in which he loves to ride.



Skaters glide across Lake Memphremagog in March as part of the first-ever Lake Memphremagog Speedskating Tournament. The race, organized by Kingdom Games Inc., drew a field of 19 skaters from Vermont, Colorado, Maryland, Ontario and Quebec.

Photo provided by Kingdom Games

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DEPARTMENTS

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DION NATIONAL SNOWSHOEING CHAMPIONSHIPS WERE HELD IN VERMONT FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 8 YEARS IN IDEAL CONDITIONS!

Pages 10-11

VERMONT'S BREWING SCENE JUST EXPANDED BY ANOTHER FOUR MICRO-BREWS IN THE CHITTENDEN COUNTY AREA.

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WE LOVE OUR DOGS — FOR SPORT, EXERCISE, SNUGGLING AND JUST FOR PLAY. HERE ARE A FEW PHOTOS OF OUR ANNUAL NOMINEES.

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A PROCTOR ACADEMY SENIOR TURNS A HOBBY MAKING WOODEN LACROSSE STICKS INTO A BUSINESS CALLED TIMBERSTIX.

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VMBA LAUNCHES AN EFFORT TO UNITE ITS 15 CHAPTERS INTO ONE STATEWIDE MOUNTAIN BIKING TRAIL SYSTEM.

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ADVERTISERS!

The space deadline for the May issue of *Vermont Sports* is April 21.

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publisher commentary *by Angelo Lynn*

We do love our dogs.

Take a gander at the dozens of photo submissions we received for this magazine's annual dog photo contest, and you'll see the depth of that love in the crazy things we do with them. We run them on leashes alongside our skateboards; toss sticks into lakes, streams and the ocean until they tire us out; hike to the tops of peaks with them, canoe and kayak, hunt, throw Frisbees, go skiing and riding; and, when we're not playing outside they laze around with us indoors.

I had two black lab mutts in succession that came to work with me almost every day for three decades. In their prime they could hit 20-plus mph behind the car going home on a dirt road and would run 6-8 miles on mountain trails with me without breaking stride. The first dog climbed 13,000-foot peaks with me out West, could leap over my head just barely using my hunched shoulder as a touch pad, and, I swear, could understand almost every word I said. Former Gov. Howard Dean, during his terms of office, used to say that dog must have been one of the smartest in the state — having sat through dozens of interviews with heads of state for the 20-plus years I had been editor. And sure enough, that dog used to get a lot more compliments from those



heads of state than I ever did.

It's clear many of us share much of our lives with our dogs and we're happier for it. Enjoy the photos and story on pages 14-17, and we encourage you to go to our website at www.vtsports.com to check out who the winners of each category are and to see the dozens of photos readers submitted in three categories: best looking, most adventurous and cutest/most humorous. It's a light-hearted take on sports, but meaningful just the same.

In Vermont, some love our beer almost as much as our dogs, so it's good to know the state is welcoming four new microbreweries all within Chittenden County. We introduce them to you on pages 10-11. This just reinforces the fact that Vermont has more micro-brews per capita than any other state in the union.

Must mean we like to work hard and play hard, and enjoy ourselves afterward.

Talk about excelling, at Proctor Academy in New Hampshire, senior lacrosse player and ski racer Cortland Begor has turned a woodcarving hobby into a business, all while attending classes, applying for colleges and being a full-time student athlete.

Begor and his brothers used to carve wooden lacrosse stick handles at their second-home in Sunapee, N.H., and became so adept at it that friends started asking if they'd make a handle or two for them. By the time he was a junior, Cortland took the hobby in a more serious direction, developed a name, TimberStix, and now produces the hand-crafted wooden shafts in batches

of more than 100. He's setting up a business plan and intends to have a production manager in place by the time he heads off to college next year.

The sticks? They deliver a sharp pass, are flexible and responsive when catching and pack a harder whack when checking opponents. Made of New Hampshire ash, they use local products and put ingenuity and craftsmanship to good use.

Our lead story focuses on a new initiative by VMBA (Vermont Mountain Biking Association) that is putting many of the state's existing mountain biking trail systems under a single statewide pass for \$49 annually. The passes go on sale this April and essentially weave the trail systems of VMBA's 15 regional chapters under a single umbrella.

It is in its infancy, but state tourism officials hint that the move may well give the association more clout if they can market Vermont as a Northeast mountain biking mecca. While smaller, it could be as important in summer as the Vermont Ski Area Association is to the state in winter — and that's big news.

But it may take a few years. Not all of the smaller chapters have trail systems that are ready for bigger numbers. Still, it's the start of a major initiative that will continue to drive the sport of mountain biking throughout the state — and that means more riders, more events and more trails to ride for everyone.

Like the explosion in backcountry skiing, this has its downside along with the upside, but all-in-all Vermont has a lot of land to explore and good reason to use it in ways that promote outdoor recreation.

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Former guide for whitewater kayak trips around the world, Karrie Thomas was recently named executive director of a Waitsfield-based association.

Karrie Thomas: New director of Northern Forest Canoe Trail

WAITSFIELD, VT – Karrie Thomas, a whitewater kayaker who has led private-party expeditions to Chile, India, Mexico, Nepal, Peru and throughout North America, is the new executive director of the Northern Forest Canoe Trail association based in Waitsfield. She takes over from outgoing director Kate Williams, who has joined Waitsfield-based 1% for the Planet.

A native of New Hampshire, Thomas graduated from Colorado College, and spent the past 15 years living in California and Washington states. Most recently, she managed fundraising and community relations for the Placer Land Trust in Placer County, California, and before that, daily operations for an alli-

ance focused on sustainable agriculture. She has also done independent development consulting for farm-to-school projects, and hands-on coordination for community-supported agriculture.

Before managing teams in the non-profit sector, Thomas had excelled in whitewater kayaking and co-led expeditions throughout the world.

“The Northern Forest Canoe Trail’s vision of strengthening communities – both of paddlers and of place – through 740 miles of the Northern Forest aligns with both my life and career goals,” said Thomas. “I look forward to working with paddlers, volunteers, community members, land owners and policy makers to ensure that the trail enhances

the vitality of the region for generations to come.”

The nonprofit’s board of directors conducted a national search to fill the executive director position seeking an individual to lead implementation of the organization’s 2020 Strategic Plan. Thomas’ background in development, program administration and staff management fit the nonprofit’s expectations and vision, said Warren Cook, president of the board of directors of the Northern Forest Canoe Trail, in a press release announcing Thomas’ hiring.

“The Northern Forest Canoe Trail has developed into a strong, internationally-recognized water trail,” added Cook. “We are proud of what we have built and look forward to expanding our impact under Karrie’s leadership. We will be forever grateful for the leadership and hard work that Kate Williams provided during her tenure, and we wish her all the best in her new pursuits.”

Miller takes over reins of Friends of the Mad River

WAITSFIELD — Corrie Miller, a scientist and dedicated conservationist, will take over as Executive Director of the Friends of the Mad River (FMR) starting in March. Miller has a strong background in non-profit management and, since Tropical Storm Irene devastated the region, has worked as the Executive Director of the Ausable River Association in the eastern Adirondacks. For nearly a decade before that she lived and worked in Vermont, most

recently with the Staying Connected Initiative finding community-based solutions for wildlife habitat protection.

“We are extremely pleased that Corrie has accepted our offer to build on the wonderful work of Caitrin Maloney,” said the river association’s board chair, Kinny Perot. “Corrie’s strengths and experience running a watershed association, her strong skills interpreting dense scientific material, and her interests in connecting the community and the river make her a wonderful fit for FMR. We are excited to work with her as we continue to focus on the watershed’s health and prepare for future climatic changes affecting our entire community.”

Miller received her Bachelor of Science degree from Vanderbilt University, and completed a post-baccalaureate certificate at University of Minnesota before obtaining a Master of Science degree from the University of Vermont. She has served as Associate Director of Smokey House Center in Danby, VT, and has worked to build community partnerships in seven Northern Vermont towns through the Staying Connected Initiative, a partnership of non-profit and state agencies across the Northeast fostering wildlife habitat connections. Most recently she served as the Executive Director of the Ausable River Association, a nonprofit organization formed in 1998 that works cooperatively with landowners, municipalities, and government agencies to protect the wild, scenic, and recreational resources of the Ausable River watershed.

“I’m thrilled to be headed back to Vermont, looking forward to getting to know the people and places of the Mad River Valley, and honored to become part of an organization doing such important and valued work” Miller said.

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DION NATIONAL SNOWSHOE CHAMPIONSHIP

RACE
RECAP

PHOTOS AND TEXT BY EVAN JOHNSON



From top, counter-clockwise: Amber Ferreira, the winner for the women's 10k race, crosses the finish line; a racer offers a hand to an exhausted competitor; and a smiling finisher after the women's 10k race. In addition to the 5k and 10k races, the weekend also featured the hillclimb — with runners (some in costume) competing for maple syrup. For an expanded photo gallery, see our website at www.vtsports.com.

PROSPECT MOUNTAIN, WOODBURY, VT — From Feb. 28 to March 2, the slopes and woods of Prospect Mountain, a previously closed ski area turned-Nordic ski center, became host to over 400 competitors, as well as families and spectators for the Dion Snowshoes 2014 US National Snowshoe Championships.

The national championships are held every year. Competitors who qualified in earlier races in the season came from points as close as Bennington, Vt., which acted as the host community, to as far away as Italy, Canada, Australia, Sweden and Great Britain. Competitors also varied in age. The youngest was eight years old — the oldest was 85.

The weekend featured a series of races, including junior men's and women's 5k and a senior 10k divisions for men and women on Saturday. The courses were, designed, marked and maintained by local resident and cross country ski coach Tim Van Orden, and featured 4 kilometers of climbing and 4k of descent. The courses extended across the front face of Prospect Mountain on and off the trails in snow conditions ranging from flat and firm packed trails to shin-deep powder with a crusty surface.

Mitchell Ryan, 18, from Plattsburgh, N.Y. took first in the boys 5k race, followed by Carter Stripp of Williamstown, Mass. and Zach Marshall from Hinesburg, Vt.

For the 18-year old Ryan, who competes on the cross-country and track teams at SUNY Cortland, the national championship was only his third race on snowshoes. The top finishing girls for the event were Jeanette Cudney from Cazenovia, N.Y., Rachael Jones from Fairpoint, N.Y., and Chloe Mattilio, from Paul Smith's College.

In the senior 10k championships, David Le Porho and Joel Bourgeois, both from Canada, took first and second respectively for the men's division with Eric Hartmark, from Duluth, Minn. taking third.

For the women's division, first place was captured by Amber Ferreira from Concord, N.H., followed by Kristina Folcik, from Northwood, N.H., and Ashley Krause from Easthampton, Mass., in third.

The weekend concluded with team relays and a hill-climb competition, with racers charging up 100 meters of deep loose snow for the coveted prize of Vermont pure maple syrup.

"The sport seems to grow every year," race director Mark Ellmore said following the championships on Sunday afternoon. "And the experiences people have keep them coming back year after year. We completely smashed our previous record from last year."

Planning for next year's race in Eau Claire, Wis. started the next day.

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Vermont Brewing

SCENE EXPANDS THIS SPRING WITH FOUR NEW BREWERIES

Text by Evan Johnson, photos by Evan Johnson and Oliver Parini

Featuring more breweries per capita than any other state, Vermont is a small state with a big appreciation for quality beer and this spring, the craft brewing scene expands with four new breweries in Burlington, South Burlington, Winooski and Williston. Earlier this spring, Vermont Sports visited these four (out of nine new ones statewide) to talk flavor, brewing and the ever-expanding variety of Vermont brews.

BURLINGTON BEER COMPANY

Operating out of 4,750 square feet of warehouse space lined with artwork picked up at Bonnaroo Music Festival, the Burlington Beer Company, based in Williston, is the result of the imaginative brewing of Joe Lemnah, and the business strategy of Jake Durell. The two friends started the endeavor in 2012 and after finding a suitable space in Williston, intend to bring an imaginative selection of beers to the Burlington area.

In addition to completing an intensive course at the American Brewers Guild in Middlebury, Joe Lemnah's brewing resume includes the Olde Saratoga Brewing Company, Dogfish Head Brewery and most recently, Evolution Brewing in Salisbury, Md. Lemnah says working at both large and small operations gave him a good introduction for when he wanted to start from the ground-up.

"At Dogfish Head, I would sign-off and the packaging people would take over," he says. "But at Evolution, it was just five of us working with all hands on deck. It gave me more background in what it's going to take to go from zero barrels of beer to five thousand."

While working as a professional

brewer, Lemnah continued to develop and perfect his own beer recipes, brewing hundreds of pilot batches until finally deciding on four flagship ales. They intend to sell their beer in 64-ounce growlers, cans and limited edition bottles. The brewery also offers a community reserve society, based on the models of community supported agriculture programs, with subscribers receiving monthly releases of barrel-aged and/or fruit beers instead of veggies.

Lemnah says as more people become interested in buying locally produced goods, they are also looking locally for their beer as well, an opportunity that brewers all over the state can share.

"We're getting more regionalized, generation by generation," Lemnah says. "It's more than just Wonder Bread and baloney for everyone. It's getting back to knowing your butcher, your baker and your brewer. As the tide rises, so do all the ships."

Address: 25 Omega Dr. Suite 150, Williston.

Hours: Open for tastings Thursday – Friday, 4-7 p.m.; Saturday, 1-7.

QUEEN CITY BREWING COMPANY

Queen City is a collaboration between four longtime friends and members of

the Green Mountain Mashers homebrewers club. Paul Hale, Paul Held, Phil Kaszuba, and Maarten van Ryckevorsel. Together, they bring 28 years of brewing experience and a combined total of 200 brewing awards, including the state homebrew competition to the new brewing venture under the direction of Hale. Queen City Brewing opens this spring, producing German lagers in Bock, Helles and Dunkel styles as well as English-style ales.

"That's the kind of beer I like to drink," explains Hale. "But I also like to be able to tell a story behind the beer. They have a tradition and history."

While most varieties of German and English beers are available at beverage centers in the United States, these export varieties have preservatives added when they're shipped overseas, which van Ryckevorsel says detracts from the authentic taste people deserve.

"There are a lot of beers that you're never going to get on-tap," says van Ryckevorsel. "Like a Bamberger Rauchbier you can get in bottles, but who knows how old those bottles are? You're never going to get them a week old and on tap. That's what we want to provide."

Queen City hopes their "Antwerp Ale," or "Landlady ale," each modeled after Belgian and English styles not imported in the U.S., will help to satisfy the thirst for these harder to find varieties.

"Over the years, we've been making real traditional beers and we'll stick to that," says Hale. "Our philosophy is to make traditional world-class beers fresh and have people experience what they're really supposed to be like."

Address: 703 Pine Street, behind Swish Cleaners, Burlington.

Hours: Expected to begin brewing in full scale soon.

INFINITY BREWING COMPANY

When longtime friends Glenn Cummings and Murray Seaman had parties, Cummings would buy beer for guests while Seaman would bring the beer he brewed himself. When the tenant next to Cumming's South Burlington shop moved out, they realized an opportunity to expand.

"Murray was always bringing some great beer," says Cummings. "And when the space next door opened up, I asked him if he'd ever thought about opening up a brewery."

Infinity opened its doors in late February with a soft opening publicized only by word of mouth and is a labor of love for the two of them. Cummings is the owner of Cummings Electric, and Seaman works fulltime as a project manager at IBM in Essex. Seaman brings 25 years homebrewing experience to the partnership and has stepped into the role of head brewer. He has 10 developed recipes, but has started with four until they have the equipment to allow more.

"It's very much a similar process, but with a bigger toy," says Seaman, describing moving from homebrewing to larger production methods.

For now, they say the goal isn't to compete with some of the larger producers. It's about staying true to the style of beer.

Since opening, the two have hit the ground running, releasing an Irish Red Ale, an IPA and a Belgian Saison Golden Ale, all available in their South Burlington tasting room in bottles and growlers, as well as on draught at Leunig's in Burlington,



Joe Lemnah and Jake Durell of the Burlington Beer Company are seen above in the soon-to-open brewery in Williston. At right: Glenn Cummings pours a pint at South Burlington-based Infinity Brewing alongside head brewer Murray Seaman.



Rozzi's Lakeshore Tavern & Restaurant in Colchester and McGillicuddy's Irish Ale House in Williston. The beers are the first varieties to be released, but Seaman says he's looking to keep experimenting.

"I don't want to pin myself into saying that we have just one flagship," he says. "We'll find out what the customer likes first."

Address: 80 Ethan Allen Dr., South Burlington.

Hours: The tasting room is slated to be open to the public three weekday evenings 4 – 8 pm and Saturdays.

FOUR QUARTERS BREWING

The weekend before Saint Patrick's Day, a small cluster of people gathered

outside a garage near downtown Winoski for the official opening of the Four Quarters Brewing Company. Operating in a large garage space with secondhand parts bought used from Southern Vermont and Maine, the operation is headed by Brian Eckert.

Like others, Eckert started small at home, brewing on a home brewers kit when he wasn't working fulltime as a web developer for Ben & Jerry's. He became involved with the Green Mountain Mashers and moved into the space in Winoski in April. His quest to expand sent him driving in a friend's pickup truck to Southern Vermont for oak barrels from the Saxtons River Distillery in Brattleboro to Portland, Maine for a

used tank.

Today, he still works fulltime at the ice cream giant and finds time to brew twice a week – often staying up until 4 a.m. or later, he says.

The result is six different Belgian styles of Patersbier, a historic style of beer once reserved only for the monks that brewed it hundreds of years ago. Eckert has taken those traditional styles of beer and added his own spin toward more experimental sour styles of beers.

Eckert says much of the inspiration for his brewing creations comes from his interest in Belgian beers and the newer experimental India pale ales that have gained popularity in Vermont.

"There's exceptional IPAs coming

from here, so much that it's almost its own style of beer," he says. "Because of that, we've tried to do our own."

Outside of brewing, he likes to read about space, physics and Greek mythology.

"There's a weird link between religion and astronomy," he says "And monks were some of the first astronomers and the first brewers. A lot of my beers and their names come from that tradition."

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Adopted from a rescue home at Glen Highland Farm, Sookie is primarily a Frisbee chaser, though she harbors a secret ambition to be a dock dog as well, and is able to satisfy her primeval urge to herd with her family's menagerie.

VS: Where were you born?

S: I was born in New Jersey, but I ended up at Glen Highland Farm with a bunch of other border collies. My humans took me home to foster me, but I was so adorable that they decided to adopt me. My humans are very good about fostering other dogs from the farm so they can go to good homes. I liked my time there, but I'm very happy to have found a forever home.

VS: What do disc dogs do?

S: We do what dogs are meant to do: chase Frisbees. There are lots

of competitions all over the country in two different categories: distance and freestyle. Distance is just what it sounds like; your human throws the disc as far as she or he can and we get to run and chase it. Freestyle is a bit more complicated. We do tricks, jump off things, or run complex patterns like those over-padded football players you see on television, only much more gracefully.

VS: What is your favorite event?

S: I love freestyle. Every Wednesday we do performances at Smugglers' Notch and the people there seem to love watching. When I get big air they get all excited and cheer. I like doing demonstrations because then my human can also teach dog safety skills to kids since not all little humans know how to interact with dogs.

VS: Where do you compete?

S: We've gone to Connecticut, Ottawa, New Hampshire and New York. I don't mean to brag, but I was second in the Vermont State Championships in 2012 and last year I won the Stanley Cup. Those are both local competitions which combine distance and freestyle. Ever since the little humans were born we've done more demonstrations than competitions. I know some dogs travel to competitions every weekend in the summer and even some indoor ones in winter, but we don't do as much traveling these days.

VS: Wasn't one of your humans a trainer at one time?

S: She was, but she gave up the business because of the little humans. She's still pretty good at helping me learn new tricks, though.

VS: So how do you learn your tricks?

S: Well, treats are always a powerful motivator. Running for the disc is easy but some of the tricks take me a while to learn. There's one where I vault off my human's back and first I wondered whether she really wanted me to do that, but she convinced me with treats that it was okay and boy is it fun. I've also learned to walk backwards and to spin around in circles. People seem to really like it when I do that.

VS: I know we're talking about you here, but your human needs to have some skills, too, doesn't she?

S: Absolutely. Some of the tricks are hard on her, but she's pretty tough. To be perfectly honest, I wish she had a stronger throwing arm. I know I can catch a disc further than she throws it, but I still love her.

(Continued on next page)

Sookie

VS: What are your best tricks?

S: People say my jumping skills are really good. I get some big air. People also seem to love it when I vault off my human's back.

VS: Where do you train?

S: What's really cool is we don't have to go far. We can work out right here in the backyard and sometimes we even do some practicing in the house. In the winter we practice once a week at the Field House in Shelburne and in the spring we go to the recreational field in Milton and a lot of different parks. In this sport you can practice almost anywhere and you don't need a lot of equipment.

VS: What other sports do you do?

S: I like to skijor with my human. We do that here on our land and also on the greenway in Cambridge. I love hiking, as well. We do that almost every day together.

VS: Do you like the water?

S: I love the water. If my human had more time I think she would enter me in dock diving competitions. I dive off rocks, I dive off docks, I'll dive off anything, especially if you throw something for me to chase. I bet I'd be pretty good at those competitions, but we just don't have the time to do it all.

VS: Since you're a border collie, do you ever have the urge to herd your people?

S: I most certainly do and I'm pretty good at it. I keep everyone in line. My humans also have two llamas, three sheep, and five chickens, so I make sure the animals don't get too far apart either. Keeping order is very important for us border collies. Children, adults, sheep, chickens ... I keep them all in line.

VS: I hear your nickname is Slithering Sookie. How did you get that?

S: It's a little embarrassing when they call me that but it's because I'm so stealthy. When people start petting me I get closer and closer and before you know it, if I've almost wrapped myself around their necks to kiss them. One minute I'm on the floor and the next minute I'm a furry scarf. I can't help myself. If people are nice to me I want to be friendly in return.

BEST LOOKING DOGS



Each year we present a photo contest of our favorite dogs. Here are some of the contestants, but for winners and more photos check out our gallery at www.vtsports.com. Clockwise from top: Griff, Lucile, Tyson, Ecco, Rebel and Diesel.



We're never more proud of our dogs than when they play with us in the outdoors, and the more rugged it is, the more endearing they are. Clockwise from top: Max, Lucille, Trudy, Griff and Edgar, and a water-logged Walter, who may not look like a wonder dog, but he is. See more photos at www.vtsports.com.

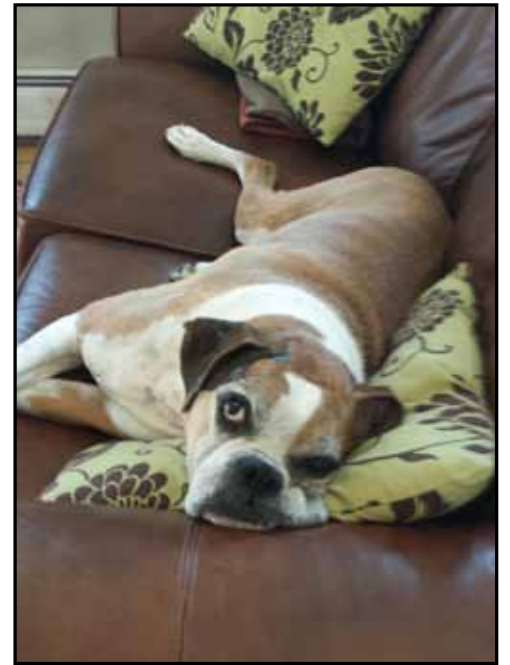


MOST ADVENTURESOME!





CUTEST/MOST HUMOROUS



Nothing could be cuter than our favorite pups in their most endearing moments. Clockwise from top: Max, Winnie, Dozer, Cody (facing off against a vole) and Diesel all earned recognition for cutest or more humorous. For more great photos, see www.vtsports.com.



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SUNAPEE, N.H. — Cortland Begor grew up with what he calls a “business mindset,” selling lemonade and managing an online bookstore on eBay. He says his entrepreneurship comes from his family.

“I always grew up with that kind of discussion around the dining room table,” he says. “As I grew older, it was something I aspired to and wanted to follow, but in my own way.”

That way has turned into a business manufacturing wooden lacrosse sticks.

Begor, 19, has been making ash lacrosse sticks in his family’s woodworking shop since he was in junior high school, and playing the sport since he can remember. Today, he’s the owner and sole employee of TimberStix, a line of handmade wooden lacrosse sticks that he says are the next evolution in stick design.

As a high school senior, playing attack on Proctor (NH) Academy’s varsity squad, he’s earned recognition not only for his performance on the field, but for the lacrosse sticks he manufactures and sells.

Growing up, he and his brothers made their own lacrosse sticks in the family woodshop of their second home in Sunapee, N.H. Once they perfected their design, they started to use the handcrafted sticks in games. When friends noticed the sticks and wanted to use them as well, Begor saw an opportunity.

Last spring, he increased production and packed a duffle bag with 50 sticks and brought them to a training camp where recruiters from colleges look for promising players. He sold them for \$37.99 each, and left at the end of the week having turned a profit as well as gained attention from the recruiters.

“People couldn’t get enough of them,” he says.

When he first started out manufacturing the sticks in earnest, he had straightforward goals: “I wanted to create the best possible lacrosse shaft, something that was flexible and tougher than the generic metal and composite lacrosse shafts. Being a woodworker, I knew I could make a high-performance wooden shaft just the way I wanted it and with my own unique branding. That’s just what I did.”

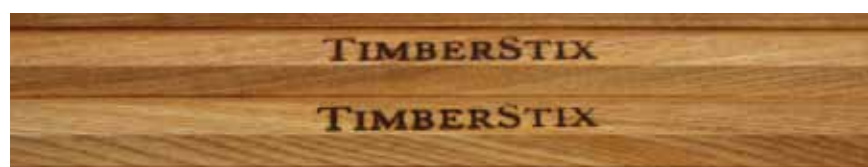
Today, Begor still keeps the handcrafted process during manufacturing, but he’s stepped up production in the woodshops at home and high school. When he was just making sticks for himself and a handful of friends, crafting a single stick took 15 minutes. Begor now produces large batches of 100 or more beginning by selecting ash from a local lumberyard. He mills and sands every piece to regulation length and width before branding them with a hand-forged brand and applying three coats of Danish oil with a light sanding between coats.

The result, according to Begor, is a more durable stick with more torque. Composite or aluminum sticks have to



Proctor student launches lacrosse stick venture

By Evan Johnson
Photos by Cortland Begor



be replaced almost every year, he says. By comparison, he’s played on Proctor Academy’s lacrosse team using one of his handmade sticks for three years. During that time he’s only broken one.

“I’ve worked tirelessly to create a superior product,” he said in his business outline. “After testing various local woods, I selected ash, which is a wood that routinely lends its strength and lightness to furniture and baseball bats. Ash is also local to New Hampshire and our ash is harvested locally and processed sustainably.”

The wooden shaft also has advan-

tages from the players’ perspective, Begor says. “A TimberStix shaft is light, versatile and provides a menacing blow — all characteristics of the highest performance shafts on the market. While many think of a wooden lacrosse shaft as purely a novelty item, it is truly one of the highest performance shafts on the market.”

MORE TO LEARN

Being young, Begor recognizes he has a lot to learn in the world of business. Fortunately, he says, he gets plenty of support from the faculty at his high school.

“One of the nice things about being in a high school is I can go to each person who is good in a certain subject,” he says. “If it’s marketing or outsourcing, these are all things that I need to learn.”

As a way to master the basics of entrepreneurship, Begor meets twice a week with the academy’s CFO as part of an independent study Begor designed himself. It’s a one-on-one course that covers everything from marketing strategy to production and distribution.

“It’s my favorite block out of the day,” he says. “I try and finish as much homework as possible in my classes before I go home and do TimberStix homework.”

Begor says he puts two hours of work into his company every day in addition to juggling a full schedule of classes and, during winter, training for the school’s ski team.

“There’s a lot that I want to get done each day that I have to put off for the next day,” he says. “But I enjoy it.”

His cell phone routinely rings with calls from manufacturers, product ambassadors and clients while he’s in AP statistics or on the ski slope training for F.I.S super-g races.

Many people, he says, are surprised that a high school student is filling and shipping their orders.

“A lot of the people that call don’t even know I’m in high school,” he says. “Most people are really excited about a high school student starting a company and trying to make it big,” he says. “Because that’s ultimately what I’m trying to do. I’m not trying to be a stagnant company.”

Begor also calls industry professionals and the heads of companies for their advice.

This summer, he’ll be going back to the recruiting camps, but this time as a full-time vendor. When he heads to college in the fall, when he hopes to play college lacrosse and major in business, he intends to outsource production to small woodshops in Vermont or New Hampshire while monitoring production from college. The goal, he says, is to increase supply and push into retail. With online and personal sales, he’s sold about 500 sticks and donated a portion of his profits to One Percent for the Planet, a nonprofit that connects funds with environmental preservation efforts.

For a high school student, Begor says, he’s off to a good start. Even though he manages all phases of production and sales, he still catches himself saying “we” when he talks about plans for TimberStix — as if he already has his own team and one day it’ll be a bigger business, but that will have to wait for another day.

“There’s definitely a lot of knowledge that’s aiding me in how I manage and run the company, but it’s just me — doing the phone calls, the production, packaging and shipping.”



GEAR: Ride Snowboards Baretta

Sorry guys, the Ride Baretta is a sweet, all-mountain ride made specifically for lady shredders. This directional snowboard is sized for our boots so there's no compensating for toe or heel drag while carving big turns or shimmying through the trees. Available in six sizes, you're bound to snuggle into the one that feels like it's built for you. It has rocker in the tip to help keep you afloat on powder, and camber underfoot and through the tail for those days you need extra grip to stay upright.

Like all women's specific sticks, there are lots of proprietary tech bells and whistles. If you have a backpack, fill it up with the Long Thaw, hitch up this snowboard and buckle into your snowshoes because this board will take you through the rest of the season's spring powder dumps, cream cheese frosting, corn kernels and snow cone slush.

\$399.95



GEAR: Tubbs Snowshoes FLEX ALP

Ready to earn some spring backcountry turns? There are still plenty of stashes yet to be found and you'll get there fast on Tubb's Flex Alp snowshoes no matter what kind of conditions you run into along the way. These babies are designed for extreme terrain with a pair of curved, serrated traction rails running the length of the shoe to grip hard snow and ice and prevent slide slipping. They also feature steel toe crampons and downhill snow breaks. When you take a step, you'll stay put where you place your foot. Gender specific bindings are easy to adjust on the fly, super secure and have a snap and clip to ensure straps stay out of your way. Limited toe rotation keeps effort down to a minimum so you have more energy for the hike down. Tails drop to shed snow while preventing the shoes from hitting your legs mid-stride. What about the flex? It's dreamy. Found in the deck, tail and binding, flexible materials ab-

sorb shock and adapt to the variable conditions we're bound to encounter in Vermont. Comfortable, durable, light and, dare I say, game changing. Wear them with your Sorrels, Boggs, or hiking boots or throw on your snowboard boots, strap your board to your back and enjoy the season's bounty. You won't be sorry. \$239.95

BEER: Harpoon Brewery The Long Thaw White IPA

Released in January, Harpoon's White IPA label celebrates the idea of spring with the full understanding that we're in northern New England and it'll be a while before we're smelling daffodils.

This light hued beer pours with a head that disappears quickly, but the hoppy bitterness of the IPA style sticks around and complements the spicy Belgian with characteristics on the other

side. Crisp notes of citrus from the hops balance nicely with the warm, slightly heavier, coriander spice.

This beer left me feeling content yet slightly eager for what's next. Perhaps it's the beer. Perhaps it's a sign of the season. Either

way, I'm ready to shed a layer or two and tread a little lighter. The Long Thaw, which is also labeled as the White IPA, is available in bottles, in cans and on draft in the region for a limited time... and time is limited, so like the snow, get it while it lasts. It's available in Windsor, Vt, and Boston. 6.2% ABV.



Hilary grew up in southern New England where she developed her love of nature and outdoor recreation, including learning to ski at Rhode Island's only ski hill. After exploring the Rocky and Cascade Mountain ranges, she transplanted to the Green Mountain State where she snowboards, skis, hikes, bikes, kayaks and stokes campfires from her home base in Montpelier.



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VMBA's on a roll!

Statewide mountain biking association launches plan to create statewide trail system

By EVAN JOHNSON

MONTPELIER, Vt. — Vermont's mountain biking community took a giant pedal stroke forward this past month with a commitment to create a statewide trail system.

The break-through came when the Vermont Mountain Bike Association launched a new membership platform in early March that integrates the state's 15 regional mountain bike chapters — which had operated independently with separate due structures — into a single annual membership. The hope is that it creates a united front with greater resources and greater trail access at a modest annual fee.

Tom Stuessy, executive director for VMBA, says he's excited.

"The new membership platform means all riders will pay the same for membership and have access to legal trails throughout Vermont," he says. "Most importantly, it means significantly more and better riding opportunities for riders through a robust trail grant that is built through riders' participation in membership."

In short, more money into a statewide pool will help develop trails throughout the state.

Starting with the March 5 announcement, statewide VMBA membership, which also includes basic local chapter benefits and other perks, will be \$49 a year; though some chapters also have higher premium programs that add to that fee for added value.

Stuessy says the new structure will help break through what he calls a "membership ceiling" that has seen some chapters plateau after years of growth.

"Chapters are loving it," he says of the response to the new system. "Lots of the larger chapters have seen steady membership numbers in recent years (but little growth). This new model ensures all chapters enjoy growth as riding develops in all areas of the state."

Local chapters, Stuessy explained, work to create agreements with landowners that permit access to the trails as well as provide maps and directions. There are more than 800 miles of trails in the state, the majority of which are on privately owned land. About 150 to 200 miles are

maintained on public lands. Additional chapters are in development, which, Stuessy says, could be added to the statewide system when and if they have the infrastructure to support more traffic.

In Chittenden County, Fellowship of The Wheel (FOT) is one chapter affected by the new plan. FOT is the largest chapter in the state, with 650-700 members and a trail network within the towns of Hines-

to "pay-to-play" trail areas, including the Catamount Outdoor Family Center in Williston, Kingdom Trails in East Burke, Trapp Family Lodge in Stowe, and Millstone Trails in Barre.

"We just gained a ton of value, and the price didn't increase by much," he says. "We're hoping that with the new membership structure, other riders throughout the state will look at the benefits that we of-

hasn't ridden, but more importantly, he says VMBA's move helps unify the voices of riders around the state.

"We really need access to state government," he explained. "We really need acceptance on a state level of mountain biking as a valid recreational pursuit to get access to funding and policies that don't lock us out of state or federal land."

With the increase in demand for access comes the need for corresponding policies. As a result, state and federal land managers have partnered with groups like VMBA to collaborate on issues of access.

Craig Whipple, Director for State Parks, says the department's partnership with VMBA is a new, collaborative approach to public land management.

"We tend to manage land by parcel, not by activity," he says. "This is the first time that we're tackling a planning effort by a particular activity parallel to our parcel-by-parcel planning. Mountain biking is so big and now we have the capacity for it to grow in a reasonable, systematic way."

VMBA and the department are in the early stages of planning a 10-year expansion of mountain biking on state land.

While benefitting riders and the trails they use, Megan Smith, State Commissioner of Tourism and Marketing, says having a unified voice for riders is also good for enticing more visitors to the state. While Vermont's tourism industry makes the lion's share of its revenue every year during the ski season, Smith says there's plenty of room to expand the Vermont "brand" as a leader in outdoor recreation with mountain biking. In the summer, Smith says, the biggest draw for outdoor recreation firmly remains hiking, but with the help of VMBA, she intends to add mountain biking to that list.

"Right now, we're focused on finding appropriate partners who can create a product we can market," she says, adding that VMBA is leading the way within the mountain biking community.

Matt Baatz, trail manager for the Green Mountain Trails in Pittsfield, describes the new system as a great option for smaller chapters that are

(Continued on next page)



This map represents an approximate location of many of VMBA's regional chapters, though some of the newer trail systems are not yet listed, and not all chapters have trails that are ready to open to the statewide system. For a complete listing of VMBA's chapters, see the sidebar at right.

burg, Essex and Colchester. Dana Allen, a board member for FOT, says the new membership policy adds value to their existing membership models. FOT currently offers a two-tiered membership system — a base-level membership, and a more advanced level that offers day passes

fer with our multiple trail passes and consider joining. Even though they may not be a Chittenden County rider, the benefits are there in terms of the sheer number of trails you can ride for a relatively low price."

Allen says he's looking forward to trying out new trails he previously

15 VMBA chapters offer bikers wide variety of trail options

By EVAN JOHNSON

The Vermont Mountain Bike Association's updated membership structure allows unrestricted trail access to 15 chapters in the state. The web sites for the chapters and trail networks below offer the latest information

and directions to the trail systems.

Franklin County Mtn. Bike Club - St. Albans

Based in St. Albans, the Franklin County Mountain Bike Club is an affiliated VMBA chapter that holds

group rides, lunch rides, potluck dinner rides, fundraisers and regular maintenance on Aldis Hills Trails. www.fcmfbc.org

Fellowship of the Wheel - Burlington

The Fellowship of the Wheel maintains 100 miles of trails (eight networks spanning seven towns) of multiple-use trails in Chittenden County. Their full calendar and directions to the trailheads are available on their website. www.fotwheel.org

Mad River Riders - Waitsfield

Mad River Riders, based in the heart of the Mad River Valley, is a resource for mountain and road bikers alike. The association maintains networks of single track in the woods and can direct road bikers to loops in and around the valley. www.madriverriders.org

Millstone Trail Assoc. - Websterville

Located in the heart of Vermont at the crossroads of I-89 and US Route 302, Millstone Trails is established on 1,500 acres of Barre's privately owned historic Quarry Lands. www.millstonetrails.com

Kingdom Trails - East Burke

The Northeast Kingdom's single-track destination, and which was voted best trail network in Vermont Sports' 2014 Black Diamond awards, contains 35 miles of trails. Kingdom Trail's network includes areas for cross country, downhill and free-riding. www.kingdomtrails.org

Catamount Family Outdoor Center - Williston

This 500-acre outdoor recreation center features 20 miles of terrain for riding on single track, double track, wider gravel trails, flat and hilly sections in fields and forests, and scenic views of the Green Mountains and the Adirondacks. www.catamountoutdoor.com

Trapp Family Lodge - Stowe

The Trapp Family Lodge offers one mile of intermediate single-track, more than five miles of intermediate/expert single-track, and 20 miles of beginner to advanced double-track that spreads all over the 2,500 acre property. The Lodge offers mountain biking skills lessons, guided trips on and off property, and a rental fleet of 40 bikes, from children's cruisers to full suspension bikes. www.trappfamily.com

Green Mountain Trails - Pittsfield

The Green Mountain Trails are a fast-growing multiuse network of flowing singletrack over varied ter-

rain in Pittsfield and Stockbridge. It's located about eight miles north of Killington with a thousand feet of climbing and descending. www.gmtrails.org

Sports Trails of the Ascutney Basin - West Windsor

Ascutney Trails is a network of about 30 miles of trails for non-motorized recreational use, located at the base and western flank of Mt. Ascutney. Although the double-track trails date back 30 years or more, starting in August of 2006, most of the trail system was built, and has been maintained by members of STAB. Maps are available at Brownsville General Store and local bike shops. www.stabvt.org

Upper Valley Mountain Bike Assoc. - Hanover, NH

While based in neighboring Hanover, N.H., UVMBA helps add to and rebuild multiple use trails in Plainfield, Lebanon, Norwich, Hanover, Hartford and Windsor, and has assisted building trails in Vermont as well. You can find more about them by searching on Facebook.

Manchester and the Mountains - Manchester

The MMBC develops trails and maintains riding opportunities for road and mountain bikers in the Manchester area. In the past year, the club has completed a road bike map, led group rides, held benefit bike events and expanded single-track riding by 2.5 miles. www.mmhc.us

Middlebury Bike Club - Middlebury

The Middlebury Bike Club was formed in the fall of 1999 to promote bicycling in the Champlain Valley and the Central Green Mountains of Vermont. They help maintain area trails on Chipman Hill in Middlebury and in the Moosalamoo National Recreation Area where a spectacular 13-mile single-track loop was built a couple years ago. www.bikeclub.org

Pine Hill Park - Rutland

Built in cooperation with the Rutland Department of Recreation, the 300-acre park offers a unique 16-mile single-track trail system built entirely by volunteers. It's elaborate and some of the best riding in a park in the state. www.pinehillpark.org

Rochester Area Sports Trail Alliance (RASTA) - Rochester

Founded in 2013, RASTA has been developing a multi-use trail network in the White River Valley. The group is working with volunteers and landowners to establish their first trail network. www.rastavt.org

VMBA

(Continued from Page 19)

just getting started.

Operating in a town of 400 people makes for a small core group of local riders, he says, even though the territory the chapter has staked out at Green Mountain Trails boasts 25 miles of maintained trails. Baatz says while the network of trails is fairly large, the number of people available to help maintain the trails is small – no more than a dozen. The group relies on volunteers to help out with trail maintenance and Baatz says he is looking forward to using his relationship with VMBA to help garner more volunteers and new members.

"I'm a little starved in terms of resources and volunteers," he says. "But I can use the strength of a statewide organization to help and then use that exposure to help bring in new members."

In addition to being able to ride all over the state under one fee structure, he adds that the new policy will help him better manage his time.

"Since we have such a low number of people, I have to wear many hats," he says. "This (VMBA's plan) takes away a lot of administrative and marketing burden so I can work on trails or whatever I need to do to keep the trail system thriving."

And, as his network looks to expand in trails and members, Baatz says he'll be able to rely on VMBA for help in the form of grants available to newer chapters.

"We're a budding system and we'll grow," he says. "But as we continue

to do that, it helps to have this sort of support."

Stuessy also says the new model will help newer chapters gain more access to land upon which to build trails.

"Every chapter is fueled by volunteers and one of the trickiest, most time-consuming parts of being a new chapter is finding access to begin trail projects. If we're able to put new chapters on state land, they automatically have a long-term partner

in stewarding a fresh new trail network in partnership with a district forest parks and recreation coordinator."

Once new chapters have trails, attracting riders — and their membership dues — is the next step.

"Access to state land

for a small chapter allows the chapter to map, announce and advertise where their trail network exists," Stuessy continued. "Because they're on state land, it's open for public use. Riders are great at recognizing the hard work of chapters. As riders fall in love with new trails, they are more likely to support the work of multiple chapters and see the value of membership."

It's that coming full-circle — from providing trail access to a growing membership base — that will ultimately keep VMBA growing and thriving, Stuessy says, adding that at the core of the move was the basic principle that "every rider loves a new trail."



TOM STUESSY



calendar of events

Event organizers! Listing your event in this calendar is free and easy.
Visit vtsports.com/submit-event, and e-mail results to editor@vtsports.com.

ADVENTURE RACING

March

- 30 **Mud and Ice Quadrathlon**, 10k freestyle ski, 5-mile run, 5-mile paddle, capped with a 12-mile bike ride on NEK dirt roads in mud season. www.craftsbury.com.

BIKING/CYCLING

May

- 25 **MEMORIAL DAY RACES DIRT ROAD RIDE**. 51.7 mi, self-supported ride. 7:45 a.m., Tanglewood Music Center, Lenox, MA. info@memorialdayraces.com.
- 31 **KINGDOM TRAILS COYOTE SCRAMBLE**. 6-hour (20-mile), 9-hour (30-mile) and 12-hour (40-mile) romp on Kingdom Trails — much less a competition than a casual day roaming single track. Bowling on Friday night. Kingdom Trails, East Burke www.coyotemoonultras.com/scramble

June

- 4-8 **TOUR DE KINGDOM**. Three days of guided riding and two days of supported century rides with optional routes each day. Prouty Beach, Newport. tourdekingdom.org.
- 14 **VERMONT GRAN FONDO**. A non-competitive supported ride through Vermont's Green Mountains with three ride options: 46, 75 or 103 miles, over two, three or four gaps (Brandon, Middlebury, Lincoln and App Gap). First of its kind in Vermont. Start is at Middlebury College

Snow Bowl. www.vermontgranfondo.com

- 14 **XIP SINGLE BYPASS MOUNTAIN CLIMB** The Single Bypass Mountain Climb is a sprint, with one ascent and one descent of Burke Mountain. Obstacles are announced the day of the event. www.xiptraining.com

- 20-22 **NEMBAFEST MOUNTAIN BIKE FESTIVAL**. A weekend celebration of Northeast mountain biking at Kingdom Trails in East Burke. Complimentary camping. www.kingdomtrails.com

- 21 **FOURTH ANNUAL LONG TRAIL CENTURY RIDE**. Century ride featuring 100-, 60- and 20-mile rides starting and finishing at the Long Trail Brewery in Bridgewater Corners. The event will benefit Vermont Adaptive Ski & Sports. www.longtrailcenturyride.com

- 21 **FNLC BIKE FOR THE LAKE**. Century bike ride around Lake Champlain with 25-, 50- and 70-mile options. www.northernlakechamplain.org/events

- 22 **CENTRAL VERMONT CYCLING TOUR**. A fully supported country bike ride on low-traffic dirt roads past farms, woods, lakes and historic towns with 13-, 33- and 60-mile options. All proceeds benefit the Cross-Vermont Trail, a 90-mile greenway across the state from Lake Champlain to the Connecticut River. www.centralvtcyclingtour.org

July

- 5 **XIP DOUBLE BYPASS MOUNTAIN CLIMBS**. a mid-distance adventure race including two ascents and two descents of Burke Mountain with several challenging obstacles that will be announced the day of the event. www.xiptraining.com

August 2-3 BIKE MS: GREEN MOUNTAIN GETAWAY.

A weekend of routes for beginner and experienced riders starting and finishing at the University of Vermont. <http://bikemam.nationalmssociety.org/>

10-15 **YOUTH MOUNTAIN BIKE CAMP**. Daily mountain bike rides will introduce campers to a variety of terrain, trails and teach new riding, bike maintenance, and trail design skills. Staff will offer tailored instruction to get motivated upper-level beginners on the trail — or to take advanced bikers to the next level. Fees apply. Hosmer Point, Craftsbury Common.

19 **HARPOON POINT TO POINT** presented by National Life Group. A century bike ride to benefit the Vermont Foodbank. Choose from a 25-, 50- or 100-mile rides finishing at the Harpoon Brewery in Windsor, VT. www.harpoonpointtopoint.com

- 23 **WHITE MOUNTAIN GRAN FONDO**. The White Mountain Gran Fondo is a timed loop through the White Mountains of New Hampshire with three ride options of 100, 50 and 25 miles. www.whitemountaingranfondo.com

CLIMBING/MOUNTAINEERING

Ongoing

LADIES NIGHT CLIMB. Valley Rock Gym, 5:30 p.m., Tuesdays, Sugarbush Health and Sports Center, Warren. 583-6700.

FLY FISHING

April

- 11 **FLY FISHING FILM FESTIVAL**. For the fourth straight year, the Middlebury Mountaineer presents the event series featuring reps from gear companies and tour guides, as well as door prizes and a raffle. www.mmvmt.com, Middlebury Mountaineer, 7:30 p.m.

- 12-13 **6TH ANNUAL OTTER CREEK OPENING WEEKEND FLY FISHING TOURNAMENT**. This catch and release, "paper tournament" was the first of its kind in the state of Vermont for fly anglers. All profits from this event are donated to the New Haven River Anglers Association (NHRAA). Middlebury Mountaineer, www.mmvmt.com, sunrise to 2 p.m., Saturday; Sunday sunrise to noon.

PADDLING

April

- 17 **REEL PADDLING FILMFEST**. Miscellaneous. Northern Forest Canoe Trail & Outdoor Gear Exchange host Rapid Media's 9th annual festival awarding winning films in 10 categories.
- 18 **A PERSONAL ODYSSEY ALONG THE NORTHERN FOREST CANOE TRAIL**. A multimedia presentation about one Peter Macfarlane 750-mile journey along the Northern Forest Canoe Trail.

Ongoing

ROLLER DERBY RECRUITMENT. We are committed to skating safe, skating hard, and having a blast. 5 p.m., Saturdays, Montpelier Rec Center, Montpelier. www.twincityriot.com.

DISC GOLF LEAGUE NIGHT. 1 p.m., Sundays. Brewster Ridge Disc Golf Course, Jeffersonville. brewsterridgediscgolf.com.

RUNNING/WALKING

April

- 19 **LIGHT THE NIGHT 5K**. Race to benefit the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. Fun and festive atmosphere with glow stick necklaces and tiki-torches at the finish. Shelburne Health and Fitness. racevermont.com
- 26 **36TH ANNUAL GMAA ROLLIN IRISH HALF MARATHON**. Certified half marathon (13.1 miles) through rural and scenic, dirt roads — very hilly. At least two water stops. Prizes to the top in each age group. Town of Essex Memorial Hall, Essex Jct., www.gmaa.net.

- 26 **ADAMANT 20-MILER**. Scenic out-and-back course on dirt roads with ponds and hills through Calais and Woodbury. Run 20 or share the run with a partner in the two-person relay. Barney Hall, Adamant Music School, www.cvrnners.org

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featured events

THE ROAD TO THE POGUE TRAIL RUN

May 10, 2014 | 8:30 am

Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historic Park
54 Elm Street, Woodstock, VT

The Road to the Pogue Trail Run is a 10k race along the carriage trails of Vermont's Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historic Park. The race is limited to 500 runners. Pancake breakfast to follow.

\$30, breakfast included

www.roadtothepogue.com

Dandelion Run

May 17, 2014 | 9:00 am

Derby Beach House, 4-H Road, Derby, VT.

"The Dandy" is a beautiful half marathon laid out largely on dirt roads and held when the fields are blanketed with millions of dandelions.

\$50 Adult (Individual) for the Half Marathon,
\$35 Adult (Individual) 10K.

www.dandelionrun.org

Kingdom Trails Coyote Scramble

May 31, 6 a.m.; Darling Hill Rd., Burke, VT.

A series of 6-hour (20-mile), 9-hour (30-mile) and 12-hour (40-mile) romps on Kingdom Trails — much less a competition than a casual day roaming single track. Bowling on Friday night.
<http://coyotemoonultras.com/scramble>.

May

- 3 **36 ANNUAL GMAA PUMP IT UP 5-MILER.** Rolling 5-miler on Old Pump Rd — out and back. Former GMAA Partners Race, but a partner is not a requirement for this race. Prizes will be awarded to age group winners as well to partners in a variety of partner categories. Jericho Elementary School, Jericho. www.gmaa.net
- 3 **JOE ENGLISH TRAIL CHALLENGE.** 25k run-hike trail challenge starting and finishing at Freestyle Farm in Amherst, NH and traversing mostly single-track trails in the Joe English Preserve. Freestyle Farm, Amherst, NH. joe-english.org
- 4 **24TH ANNUAL CHAMPLAIN CLASSIC 15K AND 5K ROAD RACE.** 15K and 5K courses are out-and-back routes both on paved roads and on the historic Ticonderoga haul trail/Shelburne Bay bike and recreation path. Shelburne Town Hall, Shelburne. champlainclassic.com
- 4 **MIDDLEBURY MAPLE RUN** ("the sweetest half") and 2-Person Relay: Beautifully scenic and well-organized half marathon through Middlebury's downtown, bucolic farmland, the Middlebury College campus (with hundreds of students cheering) and an out-and-back final five miles on a rural dirt road. Dubbed the "sweetest half," maple syrup is handed out as prizes. Live music and after-race lunch. Start, 9 a.m., Porter Hospital, Middlebury. www.middleburymaplerun.com.

- 10 **RACEVERMONT SPRING HALF MARATHON, 5K AND 10K.** This race will take you through some of the area's most picturesque scenery including the Ti Trail, Shelburne Bay, and Lake Champlain. Shelburne Health and Fitness, Shelburne. www.racevermont.com
- 10 **THE ROAD TO THE POGUE TRAIL RUN.** A 10k race along the carriage trails of Vermont's Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historic Park. The race is limited to 500 runners. Pancake breakfast to follow. roadtothepogue.com
- 10 **LINCOLN MOUNTAIN MAGIC 5K/10K.** Walk/run to benefit the Friends of Lincoln County School. 17 Dandelion Run. A beautiful, fun, and challenging race on dirt roads during the height of dandelion season. 9 a.m., Derby Beach House, Derby. dandelionrun.org.
- 17 **WILLISTON RUNS!** For Education 5K Run/Walk and Kids Fun Run. Fun Community 5K Run/Walk (timed) and Kids Fun Run with all proceeds benefitting Williston Schools. Music, Entertainment, Awards, Prizes and Raffle. Williston Community Park. willistonruns.org
- 17 **DANDELION RUN.** Derby Beach House, Derby. Half marathon run through the dandelion fields of Derby, Morgan and Holland. Dandelionrun.org
- 24 **GREEN STREET SCHOOL ANNUAL TULIP TROT.** A family-friendly event to raise funds for the Green Street School's PTO Enrichment programs. No dogs allowed. 802-254-3737. Green Street School, Brattleboro.

June

- 6 **TOUR DE HEIFER.** Farm-to-farm bicycle rides tailored to most levels of ability, with 15-mile, 30-mile and 60-mile routes. Lilac Ridge Farm, Brattleboro.
- 7 **FIGHT FOR AIR CLIMBS.** Support the American Lung Association in a fight for healthy lungs and clean air by climbing the Bennington Monument in Bennington. Bennington Battle Monument, Bennington. Climbofyourlife.org.
- 7 **THERE'S A BLACK FLY IN MY EYE 10-MILE TRAIL RACE AND RELAY.** A series of loops on the carriage trails and single track with unique features. Great Glen Trails Outdoor Center & The Mt. Washington Auto Road, Gorham, NH. Greatglen Trails.com.
- 14 **RUN FOR EMPOWERMENT.** The 7th Annual Run for Empowerment benefits Women Helping Battered Women. Race features 10k, 5k, and 1k Kids Fun Run. Burlington Waterfront, Burlington. Runforempowerment.com
- 15 **5TH ANNUAL GMAA EQUINOX TRAIL 5K, 10K RACE.** Fun yet challenging trail run through fields, single track and old sugar-wood roads. Prizes to the top three runners (male and female) in each race. A random draw will include all participants. Gmaa.net
- 21 **SHELburne 5K, 10K.** This race follows a scenic country out-and-back route. The 5K is relatively flat whereas the 10K has some hills. Shelburne Health and Fitness,

Shelburne. Racevermont.com

July

- 19 **RACE VERMONT 5K, 10K.** This race follows a scenic country out-and-back route beginning and ending at Shelburne Health and Fitness. The 5K is relatively flat whereas the 10K has some hills. Shelburne Health and Fitness, Shelburne. Racevermont.com

Ongoing

BEGINNING RUNNERS CLINIC. Two clinics: one for those new to exercise and one for people who are currently walkers. 2 p.m., Sundays. Monkton Elementary School, Monkton. getfitvermont.com.

SNOW SPORTS

April

- 3 **VTXC FOOLS' RACE.** 5K with fun obstacles and backcountry shots. Costumes recommended! 10 a.m., Trapp Family Lodge, Stowe. vtxski.org, vtxc.skiteam@gmail.com.

SWIMMING

Ongoing

MASTERS SWIM. Coached. Nov. 7–May 29. All levels welcome. First in Fitness, Berlin. 223-6161, john@qt2systems.com.

TRIATHLON

June

- 28 **VERMONT SUN TRIATHLON** Series I. Triathlon in the Green Mountains in central Vermont. Bradbury State Park, Salisbury. Vermontsuntriathlonseries.com

July

- 26 **WILLOUGHBY TRI.** 7-mile bike on the CCC Roads on Bartlett Mountain, a 1.1-mile swim from South Beach to Devil's Rock and back on Lake Willoughby, and a 2-mile trail run up Mount Pisgah. 9 a.m., South Beach, Lake Willoughby, Westmore. kingdomtriathlon.org.

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IN AN OCTOBER 1939 radio address, Winston Churchill described Russia as “a riddle, wrapped in a mystery, inside an enigma.”

I know what he was talking about.

In 1974, I competed in the Biathlon World Championships hosted in Minsk, which at the time was part of the Soviet Union. We saw imposing buildings and impressive statues along expansive boulevards that were almost totally devoid of vehicles, except for military trucks belching clouds of diesel exhaust. We saw grim-faced shoppers, bundled against the cold, patiently waiting outside grocery shops, the shelves inside virtually bare. I was fearfully approached by a Russian woman who, in broken English, asked if I would sell her ski wax so that her husband could teach his physical education classes.

And yet, more than 120,000 passionate spectators lined the biathlon course cheering the Soviet team on to victory in the men’s relay event.

In 1989, I returned to the Soviet Union as part of a pioneering Outward Bound project joining a group of Vietnam veterans with younger Soviet vets

from their conflict in Afghanistan. We were surprised to learn that the Soviet involvement in Afghanistan was largely kept secret from the population and that one of the largest militaries on the planet had virtually no organization similar to our Veterans Administration to assist the thousands of wounded combat vets following their tours of duty.

During short home stays with our Soviet counterparts in the city of Tashkent, following the Outward Bound expedition, we experienced genuine friendship and warm hospitality from young soldiers who had been trained to regard us as mortal enemies. We also observed the crumbling infrastructure of the Soviet Union: city streets marred by bone-jarring potholes; bleak, dirty apartment buildings with inoperable elevators, inadequate sanitary facilities.

So when this winter’s Sochi Olympics approached, I was ambivalent. To be honest, Russia was not on the top of my “bucket list” for return visits. Adding to my quandary was a long time friendship with Alexander Tikhonov, one of the Soviet Union’s most decorated athletes. Tikhonov and I had become

friends at the 1969 Biathlon World Championships in Zakopane, Poland, a friendship that grew through his retirement from international competition at the 1980 Lake Placid Olympics.

After the breakup of the Soviet Union, Tikhonov’s stature as a national sports hero and his competitive drive led him to wealth and notoriety as one of Russia’s new oligarchs. But in 2007, my friend was implicated in a plot to murder a Siberian government official. Although sentenced to three years in prison, Tikhonov was immediately released thanks to an amnesty law. Under Tikhonov’s leadership the Russian biathlon team was plagued by doping violations, and when he ran for the presidency of the International Biathlon Union, the U.S. delegation strongly opposed his candidacy. I was pretty certain Tikhonov would be a featured celebrity at Sochi and I was nervous about reconnecting with him.

But the American biathletes headed to Sochi comprised the strongest team we have ever had. Tim Burke of Paul Smiths, N.Y., won a silver medal at last year’s World Championships, while relative newcomer, Susan Dunklee of Barton, Vt. had an impressive fifth-place finish. Anyone following the U.S. biathlon team knew that an Olympic medal was on the horizon, and winning it on Russian soil would be especially sweet. My wife, Kay was especially concerned about the security issues, but I reminded her that security has been a part of the Olympics for decades and one of the most unfortunate, recent incidents occurred in Atlanta.

With some trepidation, we struggled through the Russian visa applications, made airline reservations, and wondered whether to pack for seaside palm trees or snow in the mountains. We shouldn’t have worried. Even with the acknowledged graft and corruption, it’s possible to build remarkable facilities with 51 billion dollars. In a sparkling new, Bolshoy Ice Dome we saw the USA men’s hockey team defeat Russia in a nail-biting shoot-out. Long after dark, under brilliant flood lights, we watched the world’s best ski jumpers soar the length of a football field and a half.

And high in the peaks above the new Alpine ski resort of Krasnaya Polyana, on a brutally challenging course, we watched our American biathletes put together their best Olympic performance ever. Led by Lowell Bailey’s impressive 8th place in the individual 20-kilometer event, and Susan Dunklee’s 11th in the Women’s 12.5 K mass start, four Americans combined for nine top 25 finishes in individual competitions, while both the mixed relay and the women’s relay teams finished in the top half of the field.

Make your reservations for Korea early. I’m betting we’ll see an American biathlete on the podium.



John Morton is a former Olympic biathlete and Nordic ski coach. He lives in Thetford Center, where he designs Nordic ski trails. You can reach him through his website, www.mortontrails.com.

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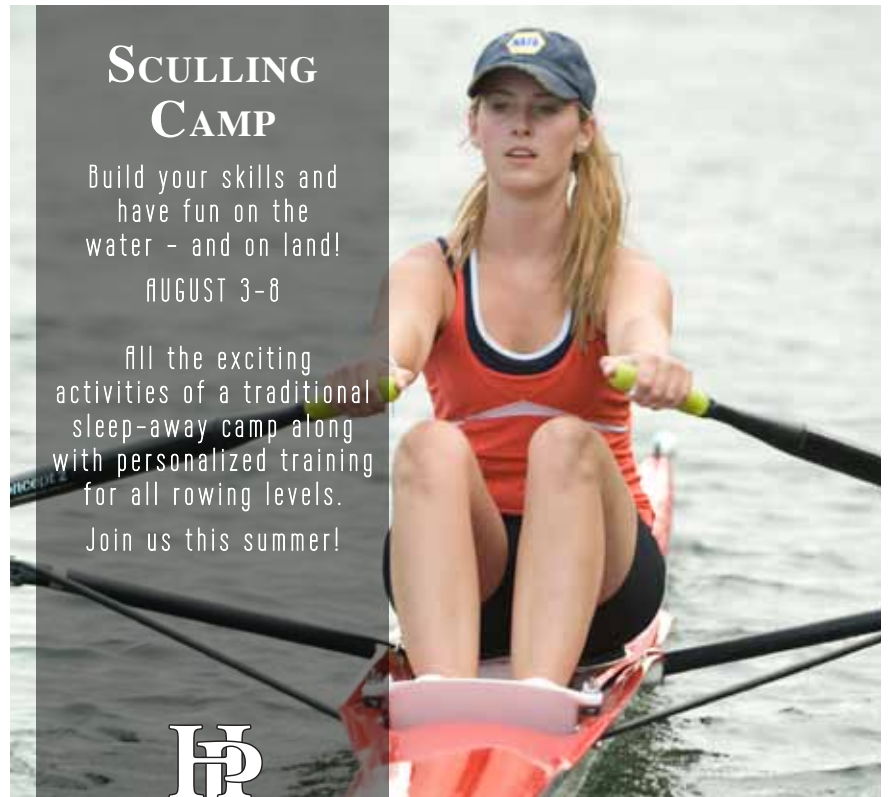
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XIP's Bypass Mountain Climb Series is a sequence of three rugged and challenging adventure races held at Burke Mountain in Northeastern Vermont. The naturally beautiful and mountainous terrain combined with series founder Adrian Guyer's challenging courses creates the perfect environment to test your inner athlete!

The Single Bypass - 6/14/2014

Registration: http://www.active.com/event_detail.cfm?event_id=2126277
The Single Bypass Mountain Climb is a sprint, with one ascent and one descent of Burke Mountain. Obstacles are announced the day of the event. The SBMC is a great race for first timers looking to get their feet wet in the Mountain Climb series, but it will also provide a rugged and challenging course to test the seasoned vet. XIP Bypass Series founder Adrian Guyer designed this course with the speed and strength athlete in mind due to its short and steep nature.

The Double Bypass - 7/5/2014

Registration: http://www.active.com/event_detail.cfm?event_id=2126276
The Double Bypass Mountain Climb is a mid-distance adventure race. This climb will include two ascents and two descents of Burke Mountain with several challenging obstacles! The DBMC course will still challenge strength and speed, but the athlete's endurance will surely be tested on that second climb! This course will also serve as an awesome training run for any athletes considering the Triple Bypass race in September!

The Triple Bypass - 9/6/2014

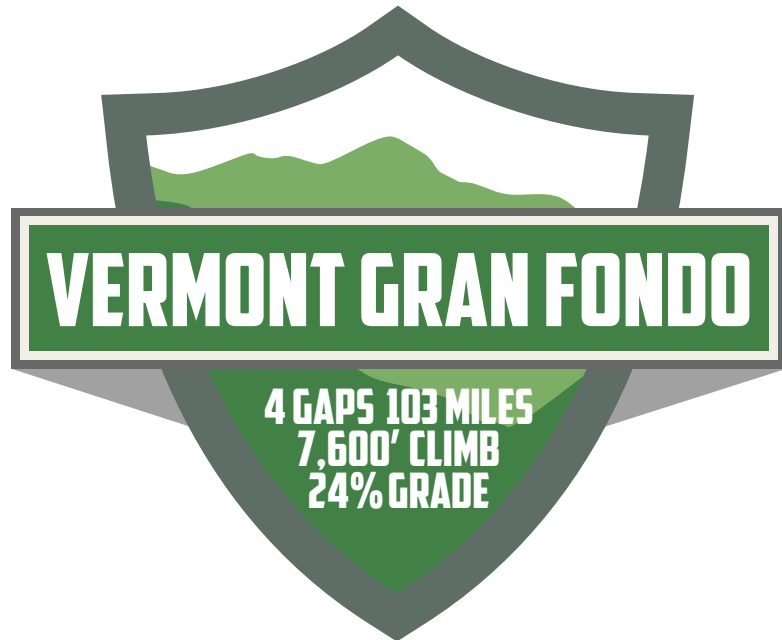
Registration: http://www.active.com/event_detail.cfm?event_id=2126226
The Triple Bypass is the mother of all mountain climbs, and is where the Bypass Series races originated! The TBMC consists of three grueling ascents and descents and includes the most obstacles of all Bypass races. The course is designed to test athlete's physical and mental endurance as they wind through the punishing trails. This race is meant for athletes who want to train hard and test their true limits.



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