

January 2022

HALIFAX NEWS

HOGBACK MOUNTAIN SKI AREA (1946-1986)

by Laurel Copeland, Halifax, Vermont

When I was a child in the 1960's, we spent our summers in Halifax, Vermont, traveling three days by car from Chicago (freezing in winter, sweltering in summer, and flat as a pancake). It was wonderful spending each summer carefree in the fields and forests on Hanson Road. Toward the end of that decade, though, we moved to New Hampshire, only a half-day's drive from Vermont, and suddenly our winter horizons expanded. And I learned to ski.



My first winter in Halifax, true, was earlier: it was 1962. That tale has been recounted elsewhere (see the February 2020 Halifax Newsletter, <https://czresearch.com/newsletter/HalifaxNewsletter2020-Feb.pdf>). We encountered a snowdrift in the living room and a frozen pail of water beside the wood stove. We also took a few skiing lessons, but keeping up the skill in the flat cornfields of Illinois proved difficult. It was not until we were living in New England, close to Mount Agamemnon in Maine (overlooking the sea: think icy moguls) and Haystack in Wilmington, that our skiing really took off. One of our favorite take-off zones was Hogback Mountain Ski Area. At only 2.5 miles distance as the crow flies (but what crow skis?), it was rarely more than a half-hour drive away, blizzard gods and tow trucks willing.

A contemporaneous article in *Vermont Life* by Michael W. Seely reported, "Largely the personal venture of Harold and Arnold White when it began in 1946, the ski complex is now owned by a local corporation headed by John L. Dunham...."There is a more pleasant atmosphere, with none of the Coney Island effect that apparently applies to some of the larger areas', he remarked. 'We're a family area where everyone is most friendly. We have a long list of season ticket holders who are here each weekend. At Hogback, everyone seems to know everyone else.' If business is prospering here it's for good reason: 13 trails, ranging from a few hundred

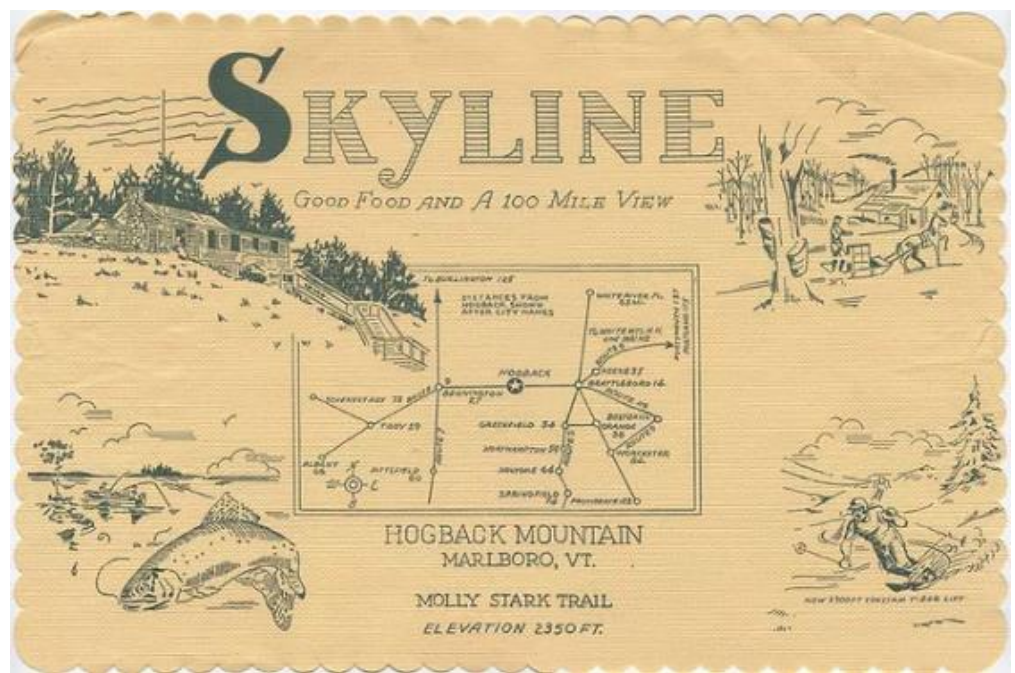
feet to half a mile, are serviced by five lifts, including three T-bars. The daily weekend charge is \$6.00 for adults, and \$3.00 for juniors. The capacity for each lift is about 1,000 skiers per hour, insuring very short lift lines, even on peak weekends. In addition, a ski school staffed by six instructors offers instruction in American Technique.” A childhood memory was contributed by Scott Cole: “Trails like Bobcat Alley truly had bobcats on it, and you had to race down it for fear of being eaten alive.” [source: <https://www.nelsap.org/vt/hogback.html>] I probably shared his fear of that trail!

We also loved the Skyline Restaurant. I remember having breakfast there even as a young adult. Dick and Joyce Hamilton ran the restaurant from the late 1940s to the 1990s. And, of course, we had a childish love of the gift shop, with its



shop, with its balsam-scented *tchotchkes* and wind-powered thingies—I don’t even have a name for those...little wooden tableaus on tall posts with tiny propellers in the front...also all the maple sugar candies and the maple syrup and Vermont post cards and every other treasure to delight a child enchanted with southern Vermont.


Hogback’s ski area closed in the mid-1980’s when insurance costs exceeded total annual income. It sat for some years before investors bought it in 1993, but their development plans were never realized. In 2005, the property was put up for sale, and a Herculean community effort resulted in raising the funds to purchase it for preservation as the Hogback Mountain Conservation Association (HMCA). HCMA maintains trails for hiking and hosts wildlife educational events. The 600 acres are home to an amazing assortment of birds, including the migrating songbirds of spring and fall, and also to a host of interesting mushrooms, to many amphibians such as the wood frog, with its ephemeral vernal pool breeding grounds, and to moose, bears, bobcats, porcupines, deer, and the ever-energetic fisher. Here is their website: <https://www.hogbackvt.org/>.





TOWN NEWS

SORROW

It is with a heavy heart that I tell of the passing of **Linda Coombs**, wife of Ray, of Gregory Lane in Halifax, on Christmas Eve. Linda was a wonderful, fun-loving person. She will be missed by many in the days to come. I don't believe I ever saw her without a smile. Rest In Peace, my friend. 

SENIOR MEAL

FRIDAY, JANUARY 14, at the Halifax Community Hall at 20 Brook Road in West Halifax, serving at noon. Menu: Roast Turkey, potato, vegetable, roll, and dessert. All seniors are welcome. A call to Joan is appreciated: 802-368-7733. A free-will donation of \$3.00 is asked but not mandatory. Hope to see you. Take-out is available.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

On December 6 at 6 AM three men responded to a medical assist call to a residence on Collins Road for a man having trouble breathing. Deerfield Valley ambulance transported to Brattleboro Memorial Hospital.
On December 11 six men and one truck responded to Marlboro, VT fire station to 'cover' their station but were turned back.
On December 15 at 10:55 AM two men and one truck responded to Guilford to 'cover' their station; they returned at 3:15.

On December 15 at 2:19 PM two men responded to a medical assist call on Gregory Lane. Deerfield Valley Ambulance transported to Greenfield hospital.

On December 17 one man responded to a medical assist call on LaRock Lane. Deerfield Valley Ambulance transported to Brattleboro Memorial Hospital.

On December 21 at 7:30 AM three men responded to a medical assist call to a residence on Collins Road. Deerfield Valley Ambulance transported to Bennington hospital.

On December 27 at 10:12 PM crew responded to a man fallen on Hanson Road; assistance was rendered.

On December 28 at 5:05 AM crew responded to a man fallen on Hanson Road; assistance was rendered.

2021 WINNERS HALIFAX FIREMEN'S MONTHLY RAFFLE

February	Jen Herzig
May	Jeff & Danny Longe
June	Beth Borisoff
August	Kip Carrier
September	Robin Gabriel
October	Katie the Shy
November	Alan Ashcroft
December	Jeff & Danny Longe

No winning tickets drawn in months not shown. Tickets are available for this monthly raffle....call Wayne for information at 802-368-7733. Help support your firemen. \$10.00 a month!

JOAN'S SIGHTINGS

The snow on the ground has brought more birds, plenty of Blue Jays, quite a few Juncos, a couple of White-Breasted Nuthatch, two Red-Breasted Nuthatch, a few Chickadees, a couple of Grosbeak just passing through (haven't seen them lately), a few Sparrows, two pair of Cardinals, lots of Mourning Doves, Titmice, Starlings, and Finches, and believe it or not but I am seeing a House Wren nearly every day. I keep telling it to head south to warmer weather! (But I love seeing it.) Still the Woodpeckers are coming—a Downy and a Hairy, and now I see a Red-Bellied Woodpecker nearly every day. A couple of Goldfinches. A Hawk flying around. We have a large doe deer coming some nights, cleaning up the fallen seed. Herman & Marion Canedy saw a Bobcat at their place. AND I saw a Seagull at Walmart in the parking lot (in NH)! Kind of far inland, I would think.

—Joan Courser

On Hanson Road, we see turkeys and owls and admire the red fox who visits regularly. Our orange cat, Simba, often alerts us to the fox's presence. Simba can see the fox moving around the yard when the moon is hidden,

and the night is dark. Sometimes we catch sight of the fox in daytime and watch it pouncing on the small rodents under the snow.





I snapped a picture of the local red fox in our driveway today (left). The red fox has characteristic black legs and often a visibly white tail tip (see photo on right by Jacob Dingel); the smaller, tree-climbing grey fox has a stripe down its back and tail (uncredited photo at right).



WILDLIFE. Help build a database of where **five wide-ranging mammals cross roads in Halifax** by reporting sightings of these animals or their scat on roads: **moose, black bear, bobcat (pictured below right), river otter (below left), fisher (bottom)**. If you see one on or crossing a road, or if you see tracks or scat that suggest one crossed the road, let me know (LaurelACopeland@gmail.com, 802-368-2439). Include **date, time, & location (address or landmarks or smart-phone photo of the location)**.

Thank you!

– Laurel Copeland



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Newsletter
P O Box 27
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An Old Mill Chase in Halifax Center



Barred Owl in a Wintry Birch Tree

Halifax News

JANUARY 2022

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