



Jim Weisphalen

INSIDE VL

A Wintry Mix

Like a lot of Vermonters, I have a love/hate relationship with winter.

I can't stand the chilly floors in the morning, the frigid dash to the mailbox or the steering wheel that's painful to the touch. Days that are so cold that the snow squeaks? They send chills down my spine.

So why do I live here, where it's not unusual to see snow before Halloween and after Mother's Day?

Because it's not winter I dislike, it's being cold. Add another layer or two, and the outdoors beckon once again.

When I watch snowkiters on Lake Champlain (page 50), I can still feel the rush I did as a kid when I would use a sheet for a sail to cruise across the local pond. When I snowshoe up the mountain behind my house and see Camels Hump glowing white under the full moon, or pink on a clear and frigid January dawn ... it's pure magic. And while the allure of downhill skiing has thus far escaped me (please don't tell anyone), sledding is even more fun now that my own kids are splayed on my back.

I live here because few things in life are as perfect as a glass of wine by the woodstove, especially if there's dark chocolate involved (page 64). Besides, "cozy" and "toasty" are words that do not compute in places like Florida or Arizona.

Our terrific new managing editor, Bill Anderson, is my polar opposite when it comes to winter passions. He's the type of guy who will work weekends in the fall in order to grab some extra ski days in January. He says things like "skiing changed my life" and means it. He's so enthusiastic — and verbally adept — that in just a month he's convinced me that skiing *is* what's been missing all my life.

Bill has his reasons for loving it here, and I have mine; the topic comes up surprisingly often in conversation among Vermonters. In this issue, we decided to ask some of this state's many gifted writers to explain, in 150 words or less, why they live here (page 54). Some are natives, some moved here long ago, and some are recent arrivals. All have consciously decided to make Vermont their home. Their reasons are as varied as their writing styles, but it's worth noting that not one of them says they live here because they like cold cars.

See you on the slopes.

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Vermont Life

MAGAZINE

is published quarterly by the State of Vermont

James H. Douglas, Governor
Kevin L. Dorn, Secretary, Agency of Commerce
and Community Development
Bruce J. Hyde, Commissioner,
Department of Tourism & Marketing

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Tel. (802) 877-2262, fax (802) 877-2949
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Advertising Director Gerianne Smart
Sales Representatives H. Abby Hummel, Tom Shampnois

Newsstand Coordinator Howard White & Associates

Single Issue: \$4.95

One-Year Subscription Rates \$15.95 in U.S.A.,
\$22.95 Canada & Foreign Delivery

For Subscription Inquiries
please go online at VermontLife.com
and click Subscriber Services
or call toll free (800) 284-3243 or email subs@vtlife.com

Vermont Life Magazine (ISSN 0042-417X) is published quarterly
in February, May, August and November.

Editorial and business offices are located at
6 Baldwin St., Montpelier, VT 05602,
(802) 828-3241.

Editorial comments or questions: editors@VtLife.com
website <http://www.VermontLife.com>

Change of address must be received eight weeks prior to publication
to ensure continuous delivery of magazine. Please include your
old address as well as your new address. Periodicals postage paid
at Montpelier, VT, and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER:
Send form #3541 to Vermont Life, 6 Baldwin St., Montpelier, VT.
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Printed in the U.S.A.

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