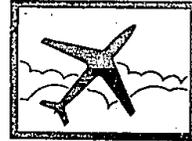


Travel



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O&E Thursday, December 20, 1985

Trips can be exciting a few miles from home

By Iris Jones
special writer

Many of you are on vacation for the next few days, through the New Year. Chances are that you are not flying south to the sun or you would be gone already, with the rest of the snowbirds. Christmas is over, and suddenly you have some time on your hands. Consider some of the exciting day trips you can make within a few miles of home.

If you want more than a day trip, you could ask whether there is "room at the inn." National Inn in Marshall, St. Clair Inn in St. Clair, Bay Valley Inn in Bay Valley, Wheels Inn in Chatham, Ontario. Make your own list. Common sense tells us that all such inns were booked long ago for the holidays, but experience tells me that every inn has last-minute cancellations. Find out for yourself. Another thought: many hotels in the metro area are offering seasonal package rates.

If it's just a drive and a dinner you want, you have a lot of choices. Conwell's Turkey House in Marshall is certainly in season in December, although it's in business all year. The marvelous buffet at the Doherty Hotel in Clare is worth the long drive. The Zehnder family serves its famous chicken dinners year-round in Frankenmuth, a town that has a special fairy-tale look when you can see your breath on a cold day. You could also buy next year's Christmas decorations at Bronner's.

MY CHOICE for a closer day trip is Holly. You'll find old-fashioned Christmas decorations draped across the restored storefronts of Battle Alley, crafts people at work in the shops and hot roasted

chestnuts for sale from a cart trundled along the old brick streets.

Holly is my choice because you leave the city and the expressways behind for scenes of red barns, huddled horses and old farmhouses as you approach the town. Wonderful old Victorian houses line the village streets.

Much of the activity at this time of year is around Battle Alley and the Holly Hotel, both part of Michigan history. The nineteenth-century rail-ways brought a rough crowd to this town and lots of noisy saloons to this street. It was named Battle Alley after a brawl between local rowdies and circus workers in 1880.

Carry Nation, queen of prohibition, put the street into the history books forever when she marched through Battle Alley in 1908, belting noisy drinkers on the head as she passed and bellowing about demon rum. The Carry Nation Festival celebrates that event every September.

Reserve in advance if you can for a meal at the Holly Hotel, which has been restored to its turn-of-the-century look and hosts many special food-music-dance-fun events in addition to the meals served regularly in the dining room.

FESTIVITIES AT Greenfield Village and Henry Ford Museum go on through the new year. The Christmas World of Animals, a scattering of exhibits focused on animals, especially the very popular stuffed bears, goes on through Sunday, Jan. 5.

Santa has been greeting the kids all season, and a special exhibit called Santa and Friends is on loan to the museum. You'll find the miniature rooms, and many figures showing how Santa has changed through the years, near the Corner Cupboard.

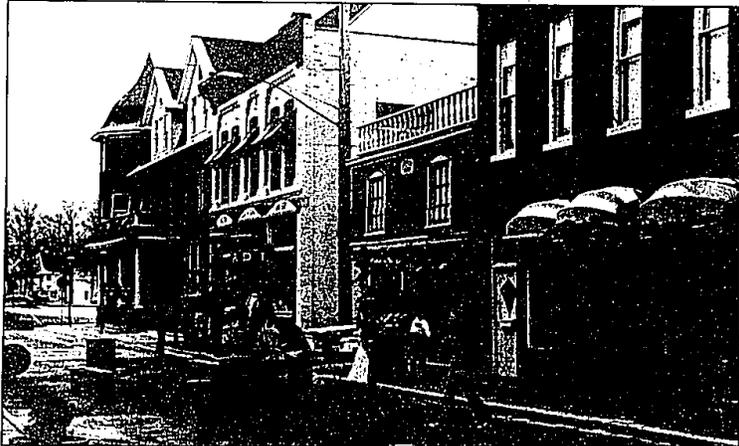
If you always wanted a train set for Christmas, and didn't ever get one, don't miss the elaborate model train layouts in the transportation section. Different train sets will be demonstrated every hour from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily.

The Wizard of Oz will be on in the museum theater Dec. 28 through 31 and Jan. 4 and 11. Yuletide Evening, through Jan. 5 (except for New Year's Day) includes a candlelit dinner, with lots of music, and a wagon for a sleigh ride tour of the village; \$24 per person for the evening.

If you don't mind bundling up against the cold, it would be fun to ride the horse-and-carriage or the sleigh through Greenfield Village, where many of the houses have been decorated for the season. Indoor activities are also plentiful.

They make decorations in the George Matthew Adams Birthplace, winter hats and bonnets in the Sarah Jordan Boardinghouse.

Christmas is celebrated in several places. A typical 1760's New England Christmas, when no real holiday celebrations took place, is shown in the Connecticut Saltbox House. There's 1850's southern Michigan tavern life in seasonal swing at Eagle Tavern. Christmas celebrations on an 1880's rural farm are demonstrated in the newest addition to the village, Firestone Farm.



Two popular winter attractions within easy driving distance of the Detroit area are Battle Alley (top) in picturesque Holly and the Forge (right), the blacksmith shop at popular Greenfield Village.



You can also celebrate Christmas in rural England, seventeenth-century style, in the Noah Webster House. Some of the buildings in the village are closed; i.e. the Wright Cycle Shop. "It's a slow season for the bicycle business so the brothers are off to Kitty Hawk."

Other possibilities: A Christmas Carol will be on at Meadowbrook Theater in Rochester through Dec. 29; the Detroit Symphony Orchestra will perform the Nutcracker Suite at Henry and Edsel Ford Auditorium in Detroit three times a day through Dec. 31.

If none of these ideas appeals to you, go to one of our great metroparks and join the kids sliding down the hills.

Happy New Year.



Visitors are greeted by this friendly snowman at Bronner's in Frankenmuth where you can find just about any Christmas decoration. Bronner's is a major tourist attraction the year-round.

Ski club is for members only

Those ski enthusiasts who want to take advantage of the slopes at the Otsego Ski Club will have to become members.

That's the word from Otsego general manager Richard Weber. Weber called to remind us that we were incorrect in our story of Dec. 19 that said that the Otsego Ski Club is open to the public during the winter season. It's not.

The club, founded in 1938, has maintained a private membership roster since that time. Those wishing to make inquiries about membership

correction

should contact the club at Box 556, Gaylord, Mich. 49735.

The club has 140 guest rooms, 17 downhill slopes, four chairlifts, two tow ropes and a groomed cross country ski trail.

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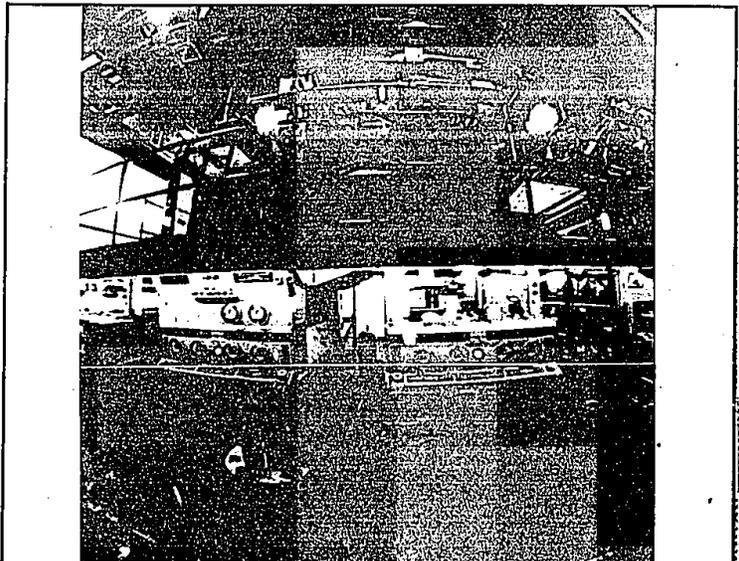
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