

P.I. BLUES
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is "a really fun film" that's reminiscent of studio movies from the 1940s, and "a joy to watch."
Fritz is a "wannabe" private detective who works in a pet store. One day, his friend, a private detective, asks him to watch his reptile while he leaves town on a case. Fritz agrees, but begins to pretend he's a private investigator. The lovable, fun-loving Fritz manages to get involved with a down-on-her-luck woman who needs a P.I. to find her brother. Murder, intrigue, comedy, silly friends, and the Russian Mafia soon take over.
Jim Dudek wrote, produced and directed the movie that took more than two years to complete.

"It's a story driven by likable characters," Dudek said. "I enjoy movies from the 1940s, movies without graphic violence... that left something to the imagination. In P.I. Blues even the bad guys are likable."
"The production of P.I. Blues has been a blast," Dudek said. "I hope audiences have as much fun watching this film as we've had making it."
"We really liked shooting in Michigan, but there was great energy. Shooting in LA is old hat and there are people who are inconvenienced by it, but here people are excited about it. Everybody on the set took my ideas and made them better."
Also starring in the film is Doree C. Reynolds, Alex Saff, Peter M. Brown, and Alan Madlane.
Much of the movie's crew, including Dudek and DeMerrell are hardly newcomers to the business.

DeMerrell, raised in White Lake, earned a bachelor of arts in theater from Western Michigan University. He's toured with a national company of I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change; and the Little Shop of Horrors. Entertainment is his lifelong passion.
"When I was a child I walked on a stage at Frankenmuth and started entertaining... they couldn't get me off the stage," DeMerrell said.
He also worked at Jeff Daniels' Purple Rose Theatre in Chelsea. Two of his favorite roles were Valmont in Les Liaisons Dangereuses and the Cowardly Lion in The Wizard of Oz.
"It's ironic that I got my (paying) jobs here at home rather than when I lived in New York," DeMerrell said.



A "musher" drives his dogs through the home stretch during a race at the Double JJ Resort in Rothbury.

Ready, dogs? Let's mush!

BY SHARON DARLAY
STAFF WRITER
Ten barking, straining-at-the-leash husky dogs. One wooden sled with narrow runners.
Hold on tight, lean into the curves and watch that first hill.
Isn't as easy as it looks, is it?
said Dave Alvarez, stopping his snowmobile after I rapping my snowsuit, on the sled with a skilled musher, like Alvarez, takes the team on a 20-minute ride. For another \$15, resort guests can learn to handle the reins themselves, as I did on a recent visit. Get good enough and you might consider joining a dog sled organization, like the statewide MUSH club, which held its annual races at the Double JJ last month.
"Your dogs aren't racing. These guys would be going right past our dogs," Lipsitz said, watching MUSH teams race against the clock as they crossed the finish line.
Several competitors traded sleds for skis and raced in a dog and ski sport called juking. The skier wears a leash with one or more dogs attached.
"I trained her on my Roller Blades first," said Holland resident Austin Stauffer, who hooked his dog, Brian, to a leash pulled by their Springer Spaniel, Aladdie.
Lipsitz said dog and skier must "work together" to stay in control and on the move.
"You'll see skiers with two and three dogs and then for sure you have no control," he said, laughing.
"Where can a cross-country skier learn to ski juking?"
"Right here at the Double JJ," Lipsitz said.
Thanks, but after those tumbles off the dog sled, I'd better save that class for the next trip.

He was right. After falling off the snowmobile-towed sled four times, the dog sled drive was a cinch. I didn't even have to use my new musher's vocabulary ("Gi" for right, "Hi" for left) to guide my pack. The dogs knew the trail so well, they practically ran on automatic.
"We have about 30 dogs. Ours give rides," said Bob Lipsitz, resort owner.
Adults pay \$30 (\$20 for children) to sit on the sled while a skilled musher, like Alvarez, takes the team on a 20-minute ride. For another \$15, resort guests can learn to handle the reins themselves, as I did on a recent visit. Get good enough and you might consider joining a dog sled organization, like the statewide MUSH club, which held its annual races at the Double JJ last month.
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DOUBLE JJ
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was the original Club Med. You had to be single and the age was between 19 and 29. It's amazing how many old-timers from the area stayed in the area because they came here and met their spouse."
Lipsitz operated the resort as a summer-only facility, adding a golf course in 1993. He built a winterized conference center and restaurant, hotel, condominiums and tubing hill in 1997. The "Back Forty," which includes water slides, a Western town, cabins, horse barn, snowmobile track and RV park, opened in 1999. The original summer-only ranch operates from May through October. The rest is open year-round.



Snow tubing is easy when the trip up the hill includes a tow rope.

Lipsitz said he draws the majority of his customers from the Detroit and Chicago area for tubing, sled dog rides, snowmobiling, horseback riding and cross country skiing during the winter.

"Most places don't allow people to run horses, but we do," Lipsitz said. Guided advanced rides take horse and equestrian over trails at a fast clip. Beginning and intermediate riders walk or canter.
He said the resort's quarter mile snowmobile track is its newest attraction.
"It's got jumps and curves. It's not a straight oval track. The average snowmobiler can't go fast, but you can go around 12 miles per hour."
The resort can make snow for its tubing hill and snowmobile track, but Gail Zammol, public relations director, says there's plenty of natural white stuff to keep sleds and skis gliding.
"We have a ton of snow," said Zammol, a former Farmington Hills resident. "There's about a foot and a half out there."
A Plymouth-Canton Girl Scout troop spent a recent snowy weekend at the resort. It's a favorite destination for Scouts and other groups.
"The kids love it. But the people who really love it are the troop leaders because housekeeping will come in and make the beds. You don't have to bleach down the mattresses when you leave," she said. "It's not camp food. It's resort food."
"We get a lot of letters from kids. They count down the days until they come back. They say it's better than home."

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