



The Grand Traverse Hilton Resort has a new ski touring center which features what the Hilton calls the largest lighted trail system in the Midwest. A

total of six kilometers of the resort's five on-sitlo trails will be lighted.

MICKY JONES



The further north you go, the more Michiganians know how to enjoy the beauties of winter, such as these ice formations (left) near Marquette. Once winter really gets going, vacationers can see evergreens frosted like Christmas trees as they approach the Mackinac Bridge and natural ice sculpture turning the Lake Superior shore into an alien planet in all directions.

# The cold facts:

## State offers 101 ways to enjoy winter

The Snowbirds have already flown south to warm weather places, leaving us to contemplate that inevitable moment when we first get stuck in the snow. The unseasonal green grass not withstanding, winter is here.

The farther north you go, the more Michiganians know how to enjoy winter instead of just cursing it as many Detroiters do. There are 101 mostly crazy ways to have winter fun, from the traditional carnivals and downhill skiing to more exotic pastimes like the National Snurfing Championships in Grand Rapids, the Polar Ice Can Golf Tournament at Spring Lake and the Irish Weekend at Shanty Creek, where they drink green beer on the slopes.

If you just enjoy looking at winter, you will find snow mounding the billboards soon-enough, evergreens frosted like Christmas trees as you approach the Big Mac bridge and natural ice sculpture turning the Lake Superior shore into an alien planet in all directions.

Some northerners know how to spend a day climbing and photographing the icy shorelines, walking away from civilization on snowshoes, taking off alone into the woods on a cross-country skis. They also know how to dress for such an experience, and the kind of safety measures that bring them back alive.

Safety in very cold weather includes layered clothing for warmth, a ski pole or crampons for balance and support, sunglasses. City slickers may forget that it can be dangerous to be lost in the woods at 10 below zero, so follow common-sense safety directions if you plan to walk, ski or snowmobile alone.

If you would rather go winter-crazy in a group, there are winter festivals in every village and town in the state. According to Jim Hill, President of the East Michigan Tourist Association, there are more than 50 winter carnivals in the eastern half of the lower peninsula, from Flint north, alone.

The biggest are in the upper part of the state. P.E. Tip-Up Town in Houghton Lake Jan. 15 and 16 and Jan. 23 and 24; the 58th annual Winter Carnival at Grayling, oldest carnival in the state, traditionally held the second weekend in February.

THE TRIPLE CROWN Snowmobile races start with the Thunder Bay 250 during the Alpena Winter Carnival Jan. 14 to 23 and move on during February to Lincoln, Traverse City and Sault St. Marie.

The Snow Carnival, Jan. 28-30, including the Moose Jaw Safari Jan. 29, is the highlight of winter in Harbor Springs. The North American VASA cross-country skiing race takes place Feb. 12 in Traverse City, which also hosts the Frozen Cherry Festival Feb. 18-20.

Simelania, first held during the Great Depression and revived three years ago, will dominate the ice of Lake Charlevoix at Boyne City Jan. 28-30.

Lots of winter events are connected with downhill ski resorts, especially at Crystal Mountain in Thompsonville, where a variety of ski races and other



1-of-a-kind traveler Iris Jones contributing travel editor

activities are listed throughout the winter.

There's the Lang Lauf five- and 15-kilometer race at the Pando Ski Area in Grand Rapids Jan. 15; Pando also hosts the National Snurfing Contest Jan. 29 for those who like to surf on snow.

Hilton Shanty Creek has a Bavarian weekend Feb. 4-5 and Irish Weekend March 19 at Bellaire; there's a snow festival at Timber Ridge in Gobels Feb. 12-13.

Here's a list of some of the other fun things to do in the Lower Peninsula this winter:

West Michigan — winter sports festival in the White Lake Area Jan. 28 to Feb. 6; White Lake also has the Snowfari at Montauk Feb. 4 to 6; Winter Festival, Saugatuck, Jan. 29; Winter Fun Festival Ludington Feb. 2 to 13.

Gun Lake Winter Festival Feb. 4 to 6; Hart Winter Carnival Feb. 11 to 13; Valentine Winter Carnival at the Swiss Valley Ski Area near Jones Feb. 25 to 27.

Schuss Mountain Spring Carnival at Mancelona March 4 to 6; Royal Bikini Contest at Royal Valley ski area, Buchanan March 5; Crystal Mountain Spring Carnival at Thompsonville March 18 to 20.

East Michigan — Gladwin County Ice Carnival and the Roscommon Sled Dog Race Jan. 8 to 9; Tip-Up-Town and Snowmobile Drag Races Jan. 15 to 16 and Jan. 22 to 23; Grayling Cross Country Ski Race Jan. 15 and Midland Sled Dog Race Jan. 15 and 16; Ilae Area Winter Carnival Jan. 21 and 22; Pigeon Snow Carnival Jan. 26 to 29 and Pigeon Snowmobile Drag Races Jan. 30.

Southeast Michigan — Alive with Pleasure, a dance and ski contest at Mt. Brighton Jan. 8 and 9; Slaton Races, Alpine Valley, Jan. 19 and Jan. 26;



The "Say Yes to Winterfun" guidebook published by the Travel and Tourist Association of Southeast Michigan features the close-by travel attractions of the 17 counties of southeast Michigan.

Snowrush Ski Race, Davidsburg Jan. 22; Alpine Valley Ski Patrol Winterfest Jan. 22-23 and Ski-A-Thon Jan. 30; Central U.S. Ski Association races Jan. 23 and Jan. 29-30 and downhill ski races Feb. 6 at Mt. Brighton; Cross Country Ski Trak at Glen Oaks Golf Club in Farmington Hills Feb. 6.

For more information, contact: Southeast Michigan Snowline, a 24-hour hotline, at 585-7233; the state snowline at 1-800-292-5404; or call the Michigan Travel Bureau (MTB) toll-free number at 1-800-292-2520. Write to MTB at P.O. Box 30226, Law Building, Lansing 48909; West Michigan Tourist Association, 136 Fulton East, Grand Rapids 49503 (616-456-8557); East Michigan Tourist Association, One Wenonah Park, Bay City 48706 (toll free 1-800-292-6154); Travel and Tourist Association of Southeast Michigan, P.O. Box 15090, Troy 48099 (313-585-8220). The Upper Peninsula office is at P.O. Box 406, Iron Mountain 48801 (906-744-5480). The Metropolitan Detroit Ski Council 24-hour hotline is at 774-1188.

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