



FEBRUARY 2009

Happy New Year and Welcome to *Thumbs UP!*, an e-media tip sheet created by michigan.org to keep you on top of interesting travel news from the State of Michigan. It is our goal to provide current news and upcoming events that your audience can use and enjoy. If you have any comments or suggestions, please let us know by writing us at jschilp@mediamattersdetroit.com; we value your feedback.

To schedule an interview for any item of interest below, please contact Jenny Schilp at 248-225-6744 or Joanna Wilbee Amis at 906-786-2412

Please consider referencing www.michigan.org as the official travel Web site for the State of Michigan.

Please encourage your readers and viewers to sign up for the Travel Michigan monthly newsletter for the latest vacation ideas at www.michigan.org/signup

SNOW MUCH FUN IN ST. IGNACE

Countless snowflakes will fly before baseball's Opening Day this spring, but snow is more than welcome at the **Frozen Yooper Softball Challenge** February 14-15 in the Upper Peninsula city of St. Ignace. The annual two-day unlimited arc softball tournament is free for spectators who will cheer on co-ed and men's teams at the snow-filled Shepler's Ferry field at the Straits of Mackinac. The area offers plenty of winter fun including **groomed snowmobile trail heads** in downtown St. Ignace, and snowboarding, skiing and tubing at nearby **Silver Mountain**. Cool fun strikes again February 21 with the **3rd Annual Adult Snow Bowl** and the **U.P. Pond Hockey Championship February 20-22**. Activities will take place on the ice of Moran Bay in downtown St. Ignace. There will be an exhibition game between **Detroit Red Wings Alumni Team** and 2008 Pond Hockey Champs Friday evening at Little Bear East Ice Arena. Call Jenny or Joanna for more winter fun ideas.

IT'S A CLASSIC

Some may not consider it 'classy' but it is certainly a classic. **The Outhouse Classic** is not only an annual event, but a U.P. favorite. Proving to be the cure for cabin fever for many, the tiny town of Trenary will grow from 300 to more than 3000 on Saturday, **February 28**. Fans of all ages will line main street to cheer on the racers pushing their outhouses, all outfitted with skis, a seat and t.p. – per the rules – some with more, some with less! To **learn more about this potty, err party**, contact Jenny Schilp.

FANTASTIC FEBRUARY SKIING!

Michigan vs Out West Makes Good Ski Cents

From several neighboring states you can get to many Michigan ski areas for the cost of a tank of gas, which is a lot less expensive than buying a plane ticket and renting a car at your destination. It is difficult for a family of four to take a four-day ski vacation in western states for less than \$4,000. With values like a midweek stay for four nights in a comfortable one-bedroom slope-side condo, including lift tickets for under \$600, **it makes good cents to consider Michigan for a winter ski escape.** Add food and gas, and you can have a nice trip for under \$1,000. To learn how to make the most of your downhill dollar, contact Jenny or Joanna.

REJUVENATE

When the winter weather gets tough, seek out a rejuvenating pause at Michigan's **newest luxury spa.** Located at a snow covered northern ski resort this **new 18,500 square-foot spa** offers 12 private treatment rooms, private men's and women's locker rooms, a manicure and pedicure area, and an outdoor meditation garden with hot tub. Relax and call Jenny or Joanna for all the details about this new spa and other soothing retreats in Michigan including the recent four star spa named by the Mobile Travel Guide.

INDIAN ARTISTRY

Intricate bead and quill work, weavings, clothing, silk appliqué, wood and birch bark objects from four private collections are on display in the special exhibition **Artistic Expressions of the Great Lakes Indians.** The examples date to the time of European contact in the region to the early 20th century, and will be on view through August 1 at the **Ziibiwing Center of Anishinabe Culture & Lifeways** in Mt. Pleasant. The Ziibiwing Center was created by the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe to "enlighten and educate all communities in the rich culture, heritage, and history of the Anishinabek people of the Great Lakes." Give Jenny or Joanna a call to learn more about this and other Native American exhibits and attractions across the state.

SWEET TREAT TO FLIP OVER

'Tis the season for the oldest agricultural activity in America -- the tapping of maple trees for the sap that can be boiled to make **a favorite pancake topper.** In Michigan the sap begins to rise as early as February in the southern parts of the state, and runs into April in the Upper Peninsula, making **maple syrup** the state's first agricultural crop of the season. Maple syrup production is found in every corner of Michigan, and is celebrated with **sugar bush demonstrations,** pancake breakfasts, and **festivals in March and April** each year. Contact Jenny or Joanna to tap into some sweet story ideas.

MICHIGAN STARS

The Mobil Travel Guide recently announced its four and five star awards for North American hotels, restaurants and spas. **Six Michigan destinations earned four stars:** two hotels, three restaurants and one spa. The Mobile guide is considered the gold standard for travelers seeking trustworthy destination information. Find out who won the stars by contacting Jenny or Joanna.

MICHIGAN TROPICS

Sure, you can spend a ton of money for a vacation to the islands in the sun, but you can save a lot by visiting **Michigan's largest tropical conservatory**. This indoors paradise offers the sights, sounds and smells of the tropics with 6,000 butterflies, desert gardens, natural trails and wetlands. To take an exotic excursion contact our tour guides, Jenny or Joanna.

DISTINCTIVE DESTINATION

For more than 100 years this Michigan city has been one of the top vacation destinations on the sunset side of the state with art galleries, great dining and shopping, water sports and historic lodging. This year the National Trust for Historic Preservation has included the landmark city as part of the **2009 Dozen Distinctive Destinations**. The top 12 offer cultural and recreational experiences different from the typical vacation destination. To find out more about this award winning town, contact Jenny or Joanna for all the details.

GOOD THINGS ARE "GROWLING" IN DETROIT

Detroit Kennel Club Dog Shows roll out the red carpet for canine stars and ESPN Nominated by Dogs in Review magazine for 2008 Show of the Year, the Detroit Kennel Club Dog Shows held annually at Cobo Center in Detroit are **regarded nationally as top competition shows amongst the elite in the sport of dogs**. Locally the shows are a tradition dating back to 1916, offering rare one-on-one face time with breeders, owners and handlers who are experts in their breeds and two days of canine demonstrations, lectures and fun for the whole family. Annually, the DKC shows draw 2000+ of the top dogs from around the country, representing 161 breeds. This year, the shows proudly **welcome the canine star of "Marley & Me"** and Westminster Kennel Club 2008 Winner, "Uno" as special guests. Visitors to the show on Saturday are invited to attend the Groups and Best In Show judging that is being taped for later **broadcast by ESPN**. Bark, don't growl, at Jenny or Joanna to get details on this great event scheduled for **February 28 and March 1**.

AMERICAN ICON

Norman Rockwell was familiar to millions when his artwork graced the covers of the *Saturday Evening Post*. Over six decades he captured the American spirit with his insightful and sincere brush strokes. Forty-two original artworks and a complete set of 323 archival *Saturday Evening Post* cover tear sheets, which span forty-seven years, make up this special exhibition at **The Detroit Institute of Arts, March 8-31**. Get all the artful details from Jenny or Joanna.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

FEBRUARY

February, 2009 Detroit

Black History Month

The Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History plans a month-long series of special programs including the exhibitions "Women of a New Tribe" and "Let Your Motto Be Resistance." The exhibit "Tutankhamen; Wonderful Things from the Pharaoh's Tomb" has been extended through February 28.

February 1-March 1, 2009 Dearborn
Celebrate Black History!

The Henry Ford hosts a month-long salute including hands-on activities, a spotlight on the Rosa Parks bus, and the 30-minute interactive show "Minds on Freedom."

February 2-7, 2009 Sault Ste. Marie
International 500 Snowmobile Race

There's a full week of time trials and events leading up to the drop of the Green Flag at 10 a.m. Saturday in the 41st annual "NASCAR on Ice." It's the biggest event in the snowmobile racing world, and guarantees thrills and excitement at the one-mile ice oval track. There's even a Kids Race under the lights on a special track.

February 4-7, 2009 Houghton
Winter Carnival

Michigan Tech University's 88th annual event features giant snow scenes sculpted by students, an array of activities in the snow, hockey games, a torchlight parade, fireworks, and traditional Sno-Ball.

February 5-8, 2009 Cadillac
North American Snow Festival

Michigan's largest snowmobile event features drags and races on the snow and ice, a chili cook-off, fun run, live entertainment, snow sculpture contest, ice fishing contest, and a Parade of Lights.

February 5-8, 2009 Grand Rapids
Michigan International Auto Show

The 11th annual event features more than 300 new and concept vehicles, from sports cars to SUVs and hybrids. Adding to the showcase is a "Million Dollar Motorway" with cars valued at \$100,000 and up, and vintage vehicles from the Gilmore Car Museum.

February 6-8, 2009 Detroit
Winter Blast

Cool winter fun in downtown Detroit includes ice skating, food and wine sampling, and music.

February 6-8, 2009 Keweenaw Peninsula
Keweenaw Telefest

Telemark skiers tour Mt. Bohemia and the Porcupine Mountains, plus clinics, parties, live music, chili cook-off and lots of tele gear.

February 6-8, 2009 Mackinaw City
20th Annual Mackinaw Mush

Watch mushers compete for the purse in, 4-dog, 6-dog and 8-dog races in this International Sled Dog Racing Association-sanctioned event.

February 6-8, 2009 Tawas and East Tawas
Perchville USA

Fishing contest, perch dinner, "Chilly" cook-off, kids events, and Saturday parade along Tawas Bay.

February 7, 2009 Detroit**Celebrate Black History!**

The Detroit Historical Museum hosts African American History Day.

February 7, 2009 Norway**Yooper Days**

Chainsaw throwing, pasty eating, frozen T-shirt contests highlight February frolic.

February 7-8, 2009 Grayling**Winter Fun Days**

Hanson Hills Recreation Area hosts cardboard sled races and other activities in addition to tubing, skiing and snowboarding.

February 7-8, 2009 Leelanau Peninsula**Taste the Passion**

“A Celebration of Wine, Chocolate and Love” is the theme of the Leelanau Peninsula Wine Trail event.

February 8, 2009 Oscoda**Snow Box Derby**

Cardboard, tape, glue and paint come together as cool racing vehicles in this 19th annual event at Old Orchard Park.

February 13-15, 2009 Traverse City**North American VASA**

The 33rd Annual VASA Festival of Races includes 12K, 27K and 50K Classic and Freestyle cross country ski races.

February 13-15, 2009 Iron Mountain**Pine Mountain Ski Jumping Tournament**

Top athletes come to one of the best jumping hills in the country for the annual jumping competition hosted by the Kiwanis Ski club, which was formed in 1934.

February 13-15, 2009 Cedarville**Snowsfest**

Cardboard box sled races, Snow Statue contest, pancake breakfast and snowman burning highlight this winter celebration in Les Cheneaux, known as “The Snows,” in the Eastern Upper Peninsula.

February 13-16, 2009 Traverse City**Cherry Capital Winter WonderFest**

Grand Traverse Resort and the National Cherry Festival event features a Winter Fun Zone, ice skating, sledding, snowshoeing and horse drawn sleigh rides, frozen fish toss.

February 14, 2009 Bay City**Winter Festival**

Snowman angel contest, ice fishing derby, snowshoeing and Owl Calling Hike highlight the family-friendly activities at the Bay City State Recreation Area.

February 14-15, 2009 Statewide
Free Fishing Weekend

All fishing license fees are waived on inland and Great Lakes waters (fishing regulations apply).

February 14 and 21, 2009 Hart and Pentwater

Winterfest

Neighboring towns host festivities over two weekends featuring Chili and Chocolate, wine tasting, art crawl, "Icicle Open" Golf Outing, bonfires, and activities for the kids

February 14-22, 2009 Detroit

Detroit Boat Show

The 51st display of 1,000 watercraft for fishing, cruising, waterskiing, wakeboarding and more at Cobo Center.

February 16, 2009 Flint

Black Classical Music Family Festival

The Flint Institute of Music hosts a concert featuring baritone Jubilant Sykes with the Flint Symphony Orchestra at Whiting Hall.

February 17, 2009 Petoskey

Winter Carnival

A bump-jumping competition and Cardboard Challenge sled event highlight a day and evening of outdoor recreation at Petoskey Winter Sports Park.

February 19-21, 2009 St. Joseph

Magical Ice Carving Weekend

A blend of magic shows and transformation of ice blocks into stunning sculptures in the charming downtown.

February 20-21, 2009 Naubinway

Vintage Snowmobile Show & Ride

The 17th annual Top of the Lake Antique and Vintage Snowmobile Show & Ride includes breakfast in nearby Engadine, and bonfire and Hus-Ski Hustle.

February 20-21, 2009 Paradise

Mardi Gras De Snow

Sled decoration contest, candlelight parade of snowmobiles, fun for kids, moonlight safari, Banquet Bash and more.

February 20-22, 2009 Marquette

U.P. 200 & Midnight Run

20th running of the exciting sled dog races and the challenging Jack Pine 30.

February 21-22, 2009 Saginaw

Saginaw Ice Fest

Food, music, dancing, kiddy games, Saturday's Arctic Zoo Fest at the Children's Zoo at Celebration Square, the Saginaw Spirit hockey game, and fireworks!

February 26-March 1 Novi
Outdoorama

Displays, Outfitter's Expo and activities for the family at Rock Financial Showplace.

February 28, 2009 Trenary
Sweetest 16th Ever Trenary Outhouse Classic

Wacky race between 50 cleverly and colorfully decorated outhouses, equipped with skis for speed, are a cure for cabin fever.

February 28, 2009 Coopersville
Outhouse 500

Annual race between decorated outhouses and Chili Blast, billed as the "Official Fuel of the Outhouse 500."

February 28-March 1 Detroit
Detroit Kennel Club Dog Shows

One of six American Kennel Club benched shows in the U.S., the annual DKC event features judging in the ring as well as an opportunity to meet more than 150 breeds of dogs and their owners, handlers, and breeders. Vendors offer all types of dog-related goods, and there are seminars and other activities for the whole family.

MARCH

March 1-April 30, 2009 Grand Rapids
Foremost's Butterflies Are Blooming

Frederik Meijer Gardens hosts the country's largest temporary tropical butterfly exhibit, with more than 6,000 free-flying butterflies of 40 species.

March 6-8, 2009 Detroit
Autorama

Cobo Center hosts 57th annual showcase of hot rods, specialty cars, a Cavalcade of Kustoms and featured vehicles and guests including KITT from Knight Rider and Chip Foose's P32 Traditional Rod.

March 8-May 31, 2009 Detroit
American Chronicles: The Art of Norman Rockwell

The Detroit Institute of Arts hosts images of American life captured by one of the country's most beloved artists.

March 7, 2009 East Lansing
Quiet Water Symposium

Non-motorized boats and other outdoor recreation are the subject of this annual showcase featuring handcrafted canoes and kayaks, nature photography, bicycles and more.

March 8, 2009 Calumet
Great Bear Chase

The 29th annual 50k freestyle, 26k classic and 26k freestyle cross-country ski events.

March 9-14, 2009 Clare
Irish Festival

The annual celebration of all things Irish features Irish food, lively entertainment, a parade, dancing, Guinness (and green beer) and activities for the “wee ones.”

March 13-15, 2009 Flushing
Walleye Festival

Fishing contest, fish fry, pancake breakfast, games and chili cook off.

March 13-15, 2009 Midland
Speedskating Championships

The 2009 Dow U.S. National Age Class Short Track Speedskating Championships and American Cup Final at the Midland Civic Arena.

March 14, 2009 Douglas
St. Patrick’s Day Festival

Erin Go Bark People and their Pets Parade and other festive fun.

March 14-15, 2009 Burton
Annual Sugar Bush Event

Learn about tree tapping, colleting sap, and sample the sweet syrup at For-Mar Nature Preserve and Arboretum.

March 19-22, 2009 Grand Rapids
Ultimate Sport & RV Show

Taxidermy, archery, fishing and other outdoor pursuits featured at the 64th annual event at DeVos Place.

March 19-26, 2009 East Lansing
East Lansing Film Festival

The annual event features foreign, documentary, short, and student films plus the Lake Michigan Film Competition.

March 21-22, 2009 Kalamazoo
Living History Show

The public is invited to view re-enactors from pre-Revolutionary days through the Civil War and more than 270 craftsmen and dealers of living history supplies at the 34th annual such meet.

March 24-29, 2009 Ann Arbor
Ann Arbor Film Festival

The oldest event of its kind in North America, the 47th annual festival screens independent and experimental film and video at the Michigan and State Theatres in downtown Ann Arbor.

March 28, 2009 Ann Arbor
University of Michigan Museum of Art

The art institute reopens after an extensive restoration and expansion that more than doubles the exhibition space.

March 28, 2009 Cadillac
March Dog Sled Demonstrations and Rides

Watch and ride sled dogs at the Carl T. Johnson Hunting and Fishing Center.

March 28, 2009 Grayling
Maple Syrup Day

Learn about the ancient agricultural process of tapping sugar maples and turning sap into delicious maple syrup at Hartwick Pines State Park.

APRIL

April 5, 2009 Ann Arbor
FestiFools

The annual community parade features giant hand-made puppets, entertainment, and fun.

April 17-18, 2009 Frankenmuth
Bringin' Back the 80's

Dial back two decades and celebrate the styles and sounds of the 1980's. The 5th annual walk down memory lane features breakdancing, live music, and costume contests. Proceeds from the \$5 admission go to the American Cancer Society.

April 22-26, 2009 Frankenmuth
Zehnder's 15th Annual Ragtime Festival

Step back in time to enjoy ragtime music, vaudeville night, silent movies, sing-along, and more.

April 22-26, 2009 Kalkaska

National Trout Festival

Fishy fun at festival first held in 1933. For more than 40 years a 600 pound, 11-foot tall trout statue has stood proudly in the heart of the town.

April 24-26, 2009 Shepherd and Vermontville
Maple Syrup Festivals

Real maple syrup makes quite a journey from the tree to the top of your waffle or stack of pancakes. Learn all about the process at a choice of two maple syrup festivals celebrating the sticky stuff, both on the last weekend of April.

The Shepherd Maple Syrup Festival in the "Sweetest Little Town Anywhere Around" boasts pancake meals all weekend-long. Highlights include a Sugar Bush open house, candy making and sales and the Sunday afternoon parade. Other activities include amusement rides, arts & crafts, entertainment and maple product sales, which you'll also find at the Vermontville Maple Syrup Festival. This community festival was founded in 1940 to promote the local syrup producers of Vermontville, which is located about 20 miles west of Lansing.

April 24-26, 2009 Paradise
Spring Fling

The Whitefish Point Bird Observatory hosts its annual Spring Fling, a weekend with experienced birders to “hot spots” on bird hikes and at demonstrations and workshops to help maximize birding activities.

April 26-May 2, 2009 Benton Harbor and St. Joseph
Blossomtime Festival

The theme of the 103rd annual event is “Blossomtime Sings Broadway Melodies.” The festivities begin with the Blessing of the Blossoms ceremony and continue all week at Michigan’s oldest and largest multi-community festival. Take a self-guided driving tour through blossoming orchards, and sit curbside to watch the two-mile-long Grand Floral Parade, as it winds through these neighboring Lake Michigan shore towns. Flower-decked floats and marching bands from 24 area towns participate.

###