

# VermontLife

MAGAZINE

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Dorcia Bishop

INSIDE VL

## In Winter We Trust

CERTAIN SEASONS SEEM TO ELICIT predictable responses among people. Warm spring mornings bring

optimism; summer afternoons, playfulness. With autumn, an internal back-to-school industriousness seems to kick in.

Winter, though ... winter tends to provoke wildly contradictory reactions.

Some people choose to retreat, to huddle indoors, hot chocolate in hand, blankets pulled up to eagerly await the gentler days ahead. Others embrace winter's stark ruggedness and celebrate its ability to push us to extremes, to challenge us (page 26).

This issue was created with that vigorous spirit in mind. We go to Brattleboro to visit New England's only 90-meter ski jump (page 36) and watch a new generation test its nerve on a hill that first opened in the 1920s. We highlight the beautiful (and slightly hazardous) art of creek skiing (page 32) and brave Lake Champlain's wind to capture the rough-hewn pleasures of ice fishing (page 16). We ride with sled dogs (page 18) and go behind the scenes to investigate the ethics of backcountry trail cutting (page 40). We even catch up with 1972 Olympic gold medalist Barbara Ann Cochran (page 46), who all these years later is still happily sharing her expertise and love of the sport with skiers at her family's legendary hill in Richmond.

But it wasn't until the issue fully came together that an unexpected commonality among the stories emerged, one that is particularly thought-provoking for people like me who tend decidedly toward the bunker-mentality approach to winter. It's this: Whether it's an Olympic athlete going for a medal or a ski jumper pushing off from the starting platform or a backcountry skier exploring a new route, those who seize the most out of winter are those who take a leap of faith and trust in winter's ability to reward their efforts. They trust in the snow and the ice and the beauty of an untracked mountainside. They trust their dogs, their ski partners, their training and their instincts. Most of all, they trust in their ability to go out in the cold and wind and have fun. What they gain, and we can too, is an unparalleled sense of satisfaction that comes from leaving a warm house for the unforgiving outdoors, conquering it and returning once again.

The hot chocolate will still be there. Trust me.

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