

TAKE ONE FREE

What to do this winter

How to get the most from our season of snow

A publication of the
Sullivan County Democrat
2025

Tons of winter fun at Holiday Mtn.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY ALEX KIELAR

If you are looking for something to do outside during winter and are willing to brave the elements of the colder months, look no further than Holiday Mountain. The ski hill is heading into its second winter season under new ownership after going through renovation and restoration with new owner Mike Taylor last year.

The mountain will again offer skiing, snowboarding, and snow tubing throughout the season. The North Lodge will host the 350-foot snow tubing run, featuring 12 lanes and a conveyor lift to bring you back to the top. One of the new features this year is a new quad chairlift, as they now have two chairlifts for eight total ski trails. Skiing and snowboarding will be centralized at the South Lodge.

The Learning Center has also

been updated with various stations that provide beginner-friendly terrain and a magic carpet lift. Lessons can be booked online with trained instructors in their Snowsports School. Resort Operations Manager Becky Mitchell told the **Democrat** that they have “doubled or even tripled” their number of instructors for this season.

“Our multi-week programs, lessons and bringing back the after-school program have been our biggest focus this season,” Mitchell said. “Our eight-week-long programs provide young students with lessons in the fundamentals of skiing. The skiers will stay with the same group for the whole eight weeks. For the after-school program, we have gotten a couple of the schools on board and working to get the others.”

Section IX racing is also returning to Holiday Mountain this season, and Mitchell also said that



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

An aerial view of Holiday Mtn. and its eight ski trails.

they will have some Section I races this year. The Friday Night Lights program is returning as well, which will feature adult racing.

Available on the website as well is the ability to rent ski and snowboard equipment from the online rental shop.

Be sure to also check out the hours of operation on the website, which will stay up-to-date throughout the season. As of this writing, Tuesday through Friday will be open 3 p.m. to 9 p.m., Saturday 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. and Sunday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

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Holiday is also taking the next step with its snowmaking, as they have added 130 new snow guns, and upgraded piping and pumps to ensure great conditions all season. They had two new transformers installed by NYSEG just a few weeks ago, which got electricity to the triple chairlift on the black diamond trail Roman Candle, as well as the snowmaking fan guns and the lights.

The chairlifts were inspected and tested the week of December 16 and snowmaking was able to start over the following weekend. The mountain's over eight miles of water and air pipes were also getting flushed and tested the same week, along with their snow guns.

Have fun and be safe out on the slopes this season!



Holiday Mtn. has several instructors for their multi-week programs for this year.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Tubing has returned this season held at the North Lodge!



The Learning Center has been updated this year with various stations that provide beginner-friendly terrain and a magic carpet lift.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The ski hill added 130 new snow guns this year to make snowmaking a smooth process.



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Winter time offerings:

STORY AND PHOTOS
BY CRYSTAL TWEED

There's a common misconception that there's nothing to do in Sullivan County during the winter. I'm sure many of us can attest to having heard someone say this at least once before. My short response when I hear that phrase is yes, there is plenty to do! The arts are essential to this area, and events and activities continue throughout the cold winter months. The Hurleyville Arts Center (HPAC) is well known, yet many have yet to discover the programs that it has to offer.

Located in the heart of Hurleyville, NY, HPAC serves as a hub for various expressions of art and cultural events in the region.

With the recent acquisition of The Hurleyville Train Station, HPAC now has a greater opportunity to offer more programs and space for activities and work-

shops. An all-new team is currently working on their calendar for 2025, which will include familiar programs as well as innovative ideas for the upcoming year.

The winter events calendar offers a wide range of enjoyable activities to help people escape the cold such as film screenings, salsa, and ballroom dance classes with a renowned instructor and an art gallery display. Stroll through the HPAC art gallery to view the latest artist exhibits.

We would like to incorporate more cultural events and programming to celebrate the area's diversity, shared Maria Hernandez, Administrative Coordinator. On display now is "The African Wildlife Exhibit" free for public viewing.

In December, HPAC successfully hosted: "Oh My Stars!" a cabaret-style burlesque performance, and "Holiday Horrors," a live comedy show. In The Cinema at HPAC, families can watch recently re-

Bundle up and join us at the Hurleyville Arts Center



Enjoy a first run film or a feature documentary in The Cinema at HPAC or inquire about using it as a rental space.

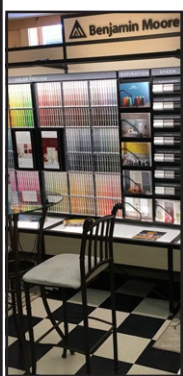
leased blockbuster films or attend documentary screenings.

Many locals enjoy dining out after a live performance or movie. Tango Cafe at HPAC has just launched an all new menu that includes starters, entrees, and

shareable bites.

"Rebuilding Sullivan County through the arts," said Toni Castillo, Community Outreach & Development Assistant. Let's inspire the younger generations by showcasing the incredible op-

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The ballroom at HPAC has a seating capacity of almost 200 attendees. It's just one of the beautiful spaces where live performances and events are held.

opportunities we have to offer to come and work at HPAC after they complete their higher education." The arts help strengthen communities by allowing people to participate in activities and events. The winter months can be tough for finding things to do, but HPAC is working to keep the community active, engaged, and entertained through the arts.

To stay up-to-date on all things HPAC head over to the website hpacny.org and sign up for their newsletter.



"The African Wildlife Exhibit" is now on display at HPAC and is free for public viewing.



With its all new menu, The Tango Cafe welcomes you for an evening of dining after a show.

UPCOMING CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

CINEMA

- Theater rentals
- First run movies
- Kid Sensory film screenings- last Wednesday of every month
- Adult Sensory film screenings- 2nd Wednesday of every month

KID PROGRAMS

- Books and Buddies- Every other Tuesday at 11 am
- Move and Groove- Every other Wednesday at 11 am
- Kid Craft- monthly dates and themes TBD
- Someone special dance- February 8, at 6 pm

ADULT PROGRAMS

- Senior Cinema- 2nd Thursday of each month at 11 am
- Sip and Craft- January 29, February 12, March 12, 6 pm
- Beginner graphite/ink workshop February 26, 6 pm
- Langston

TAKE A LOOK AT WHAT'S COMING SOON!

FUTURE PROGRAMMING

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- Film Festivals

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STORY BY VINCENT KURZROCK

The crisp air of winter brought something truly special to the community this year: the Neversink Ice Rink is back for its 2024 season, and it's already skating into the hearts of locals. Officially opening on December 23rd, the rink was a hit right from the start, drawing a crowd of 67 skaters throughout the evening. Whether gliding across the ice for the first time or taking part in an annual tradition, the rink is becoming the go-to-destination for winter fun in the area.

A Community Tradition Reborn

The Neversink Ice Rink has become an unexpected community gem, made possible in part by the vision of the town's previous Parks & Recreation Director. As the pandemic was drawing to a close, there was a collective need for safe, outdoor activities — spaces



Opening day for the rink promises a successful season.

where families could gather and enjoy themselves. The rink, built with this need in mind, offers an accessible and enjoyable winter pastime for all ages, and it's completely free to use.

"This rink was born out of a desire to bring people together after so many months of isolation," said Tanya Huggler, the Neversink Parks and Recreation

Director. "We wanted to create a place where families, friends, and neighbors could gather in the fresh air, enjoy the winter, and, most importantly, do so safely."

Skating for Everyone

The rink is open to everyone — no matter your skill level. It operates on a first come, first served basis, so there are no reservations for either the rink or the rental



The rink came about following a need for safe and fun activities during COVID. skates, which are available in a variety of sizes. The rink can accommodate up to 50 skaters at a time, ensuring it doesn't get overcrowded, making it a perfect place for a relaxed, fun outing with the family or a night out with friends.

While ice hockey isn't permitted due to insurance restrictions (and safety concerns around hitting the rink's walls too hard), skaters are

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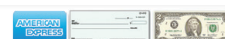
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encouraged to enjoy other activities such as relay games during quieter hours. As the season progresses, there will be themed nights and special events, including an exciting Disco Night and live music performances.

Winter Break Hours & Safety Guidelines

For those eager to hit the ice during the winter season, the rink is open daily until January 5th. After that, regular hours will resume, and the rink will be open from Thursday through Sunday each week. You can check the rink's Facebook page for up-to-date schedules and event announcements.

One of the key elements that make the Neversink Ice Rink unique is its commitment to safety. In order to ensure a safe experience for all skaters, helmets are required on the ice — and not just any helmet. Whether it's a ski helmet, a bike helmet, a hockey helmet, or even a motorcycle helmet, everyone is required to wear one while skating. "We take safety very seriously, and helmets are a must for all ages," said the spokesperson.

A Seasonal Favorite

The rink is open from December to March, depending on the weather, and has quickly become a favorite winter destination. As soon as the ice thaws, the rink will close for the season, so skaters are encouraged to enjoy it while the weather allows.

Whether you're looking for a fun family outing, a way to spend a winter evening with friends, or simply a chance to get outdoors and enjoy the cold air, the Neversink Ice Rink offers a little something for everyone.

"We have gotten many interested inquiries for the rink. People are delighted that this is a free activity for all to enjoy especially since we have skates and helmets for people to use," stated Huggler. "We're hoping even more people will take advantage. We will be asking 1 person from each group to sign in this year so we can see who travels the farthest to attend our Town of Neversink Ice Rink!"

For more information, including hours, special events, and weather updates, follow the Neversink Ice Rink on Facebook or visit their website.

ICE SKATING Schedule

THURSDAY: 6:30-8:30 PM
FRIDAY: 6:30-8:30 PM
SATURDAY: 1-3PM & 6:30-8:30 PM
SUNDAY: 1:00-4:00 PM

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 Saturday, 12/28 1:00-3:00pm & 6:30-8:30pm
 Sunday, 12/29 1:00-3:00p & 6:30-8:30pm
 Monday, 12/30 1:00-4:00p
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 Friday, 1/3 6:30-8:30 pm
 Saturday, 1/4 1:00-3:00pm & 6:30-8:30pm
 Sunday, 1/5 1:00-4:00 pm

Contact Tanya with questions: 845-807-7502

The provided information shows the best times to plan your next ice skating outing. In addition, the Parks and Rec. are taking signs to see how far people come out for the rink.

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STORY AND PHOTOS
BY VINCENT KURZROCK

Morgan Outdoors, which is situated directly on Main Street in Hurleyville, is the only place you need to go if you're searching for anything to sate your inner snowshoer.

Originally established in Livingston Manor in 2005, Lisa M. Lyons moved the store in 2022 after 17 amazing years to better serve the community and locals by putting it closer to the county center. Lyons also chose the site because it is about twenty miles from the Red Hill Fire Tower and adjacent to the friendly Hurleyville Rail Trail.

Being within nature, both of these trails will see their fair share

of snow like any outdoor trail, so you'll need a good pair of snowshoes.

Look no further than Morgan Outdoors and their plentiful array of gear to get you out walking on the snowy terrain this season.

You can stop by on Monday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m..

"We print our own gift certificates and they can be purchased in any amount," said Lisa Lyons, the owner of the store. "Someone bought one recently for \$29 for a friend's 29th birthday!"

A key seller for them this year is rentals which can range from snow shoes to microspikes.

"If it's icy out there - Microspikes are a great invention," said Lyons. "They are so easy to pull onto your

boots and give confidence walking on ice, whether it's on a trail that is more icy than snowy, on a pond for ice fishing, or an icy driveway. Microspikes save the day!"

However, snowshoes remain consistent in their inventory for the snowy days our areas get.

They also let customers rent out leg gaiters which keep that snow from getting into your boots and your lower legs warm and dry.

Morgan has been renting and selling MSR Snowshoes for almost 20 years and absolutely adore the brand.

It is advised that, since they are in demand, you may want to call and reserve the shoes if you are interested in "test driving" a pair.

They also have an Osprey Poco (for a child 24 to 48 lbs.) for rent if you're an adventurous parent who wants to take the kid along.

"We'll never forget the family that bundled up their 18-month old and set off to a favorite hiking spot on a winter day," recounts Lyons. "They came back glowing and described the most unforgettable winter adventure, where they saw all kinds of animal and bird tracks in the fresh snow and soaked up the natural beauty and quiet of the winter woods."

The secret to enjoying the outdoors in cooler weather is to stay dry and comfortable. They offer a complete Sock Wall full of great



Different sizes are available to the whole family can get in on the fun!

choices to keep your feet toasty and comfortable.

Children's, women's, and men's insulated snowshoe boots are available.

"Another essential item for the winter clothing is long pants. Both men's and women's tops and bottoms are available. We have hats, gloves and face masks that are made to keep you safe from the wind when it gets strong.

A trail map, hand warmers in case you need them, and some trail foods to keep you going are also essential items to include.

If you need trail recommendations, it's best to come to the store in person due to it being the only way they can learn about your physical abilities, footwear, factors in the forecast and trail conditions, and for Lyons to pass on her



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other winter-outing knowledge.

“Winter not only changes the look of the landscape but also its challenges,” states Lyons. “Sullivan County is blessed with many options for beginner hikes in winter. The O&W Rail trail has open sections with parking in Parksville, Liberty, Hurleyville, Fallsburg, Woodridge, and Mountaindale that are perfect for beginners. We love spending time at Walnut Mountain Park in Liberty for gentle uphill walks and snowshoes.”

She also points out the carriage trails that include scenic views at an overlook, an historic foundation at the summit, quiet and beautiful woods, and miles of mountain bike trails that are perfect for snowshoeing (or “spike hikes”) all winter long.

“For backcountry hikes, there are some excellent sources where you can learn about the importance of preparing for your adventure,” said Lyons. “Two of our favorites are the Catskill Mountain Club’s Hiking in Winter page <https://www.catskillmountainclub.org/skills> and the Catskill Vis-

itor’s Center tips for winter hiking <https://catskillsvisitorcenter.org/hiking-and-camping/winter-hiking-tips-for-the-catskills/>”

“In case of emergencies, cell phones usually work from summits and higher elevations. However, don’t count on reliable service elsewhere. In case of serious injury or if you become hopelessly lost, call 911 and ask for DEC Forest Ranger assistance. Or store this number in your contacts: 1-833-NYS-RANGERS (1-833-697-7264).”



See fresh animal prints on your trails? Lisa Lyons displays guides available at Morgan Outdoors.



Outdoor snowshoeing wouldn't be complete without essential gear. Clockwise from above left: Morgan Outdoors sells warm socks to keep your feet toasty and dry, gaiters to keep snow out, hats for head warmth, microspikes for the ice, and backpacks for additional gear.

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How to host a fun playoff watch party

January is among the colder months of the year, but for football fans things are just starting to heat up when the calendar turns to a new year. In addition to featuring the College Football Playoff semifinals (January 1) and championship game (January 8), January also ushers in the National Football League playoffs, which begins with wild card weekend on January 13. That schedule can warm the hearts of football fans no matter how cold it may be outside.

With so many great games on the horizon, now is the time for football fanatics to brush up on their hosting skills. A game watch party is a great way to enjoy the action with fellow fans, friends and family, and the following are some ways hosts can take those football festivities up a notch.

- Provide ample room and seating. When hosting a party for the big game, pick a room in the house with enough room and seating to accommodate all of your guests. Folding chairs can be brought in to the viewing area to ensure everyone has a seat, but the right viewing area is one where additional seats won't make everyone feel as though they are sitting on top of one another. A basement or open concept living room makes for an ideal viewing area.

- Set up more than one viewing area. Football certainly has its share of fanatical fans, but it also has plenty of casual fans who may attend a watch party to socialize more than see the action. Multiple viewing areas can accommodate various types of fans and solve any space and seating issues that arise. A separate kids-only view-



ing area also can accommodate young fans.

- Stock up on finger foods. When planning a watch party menu, keep in mind that most people will be eating in the viewing area instead of at a dinner table. Finger foods are ideal in such situations. Hosts who want to cook for the crowd can prepare small dishes like meatball or chicken sliders, chicken wings and frozen pizzas cut into bite-size pieces. And don't forget portable snacks like pretzels, chips, diced vegetables with hummus, and nachos.

- Take your tech for a test run. Food and accommodations might

garner the bulk of hosts' attention in the days leading up to the big game, but don't forget to take your tech for a test run. Many homes have abandoned traditional cable television in favor of streaming services, so if your home is among the legions of cord cutters, confirm in the days ahead that your streaming app is working and that you have the latest version of the app installed on all devices that will be used to show the game. Check speakers as well to ensure everyone can hear the broadcast clearly regardless of where they're sitting.



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- Inspect Calipers and Rotors
- Includes OEM Hardware

FRONT OR REAR

\$149⁹⁵

INSTALLED PER AXLE On Most Cars



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JUNE 7:
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JUNE 8:
Callicoon Tractor Parade

JUNE 14:
Livingston Manor Trout Parade

JUNE 17:
Boeing, Boeing
Forestburgh Playhouse
Season Opener

JUNE 22:
The Jazz at Lincoln Center
Orchestra at Bethel Woods

JULY 12:
Wurtsboro Founder's
Day Street Fair

JULY 27:
Narrowsburg Riverfest

AUG 10:
Monticello Bagel Festival

AUG 15-17:
Grahamsville Little World's Fair

AUG 16:
Parksville B'Kawk

AUG 31-OCT 5:
Harvest Festival Sundays
at Bethel Woods

SEPT 6:
Livingston Manor
Conductor's Clambake

SEPT 13:
Jeff Jamboree, Tractor Parade
& Duck Race

SEPT 25-28:
Big Eddy Film Festival

OCT 3 & 4:
Catskill Cuisine

OCT 11:
Callicoon Art Walk

OCT:
Peace, Love & Pumpkins
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NOV 28-DEC 28:
Peace, Love & Lights
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