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THE SUGARLOAF ISSUE



❖ December 2014

❖ *Where the mountain draws you in,
and the community embraces you*

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THE MAGAZINE

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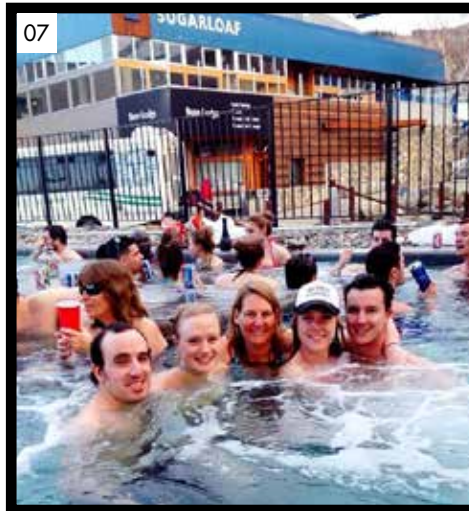
48HRS
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Carrabassett Valley in 48 Hours

Kelly Clinton **Managing Editor**



01 Chairlifts at dusk 02 Colorful choices inside Downhill Supply Co. 03 Stage lights inside the Widowmaker Lounge during a Reggae Fest concert 04 Breakfast at D'Ellies 05 The packed beach during Reggae Fest 06 Sam snowshoeing at Narrow Gauge Pathway 07 Enjoying the Sugarloaf Mountain Hotel hot tub



48 HOURS

The whole drive we ascend hill after hill, and I eagerly search the skyline for a glimpse of what might be Sugarloaf Mountain, where the annual Reggae Festival is being held this weekend. Our GPS tells us that we are almost there, but why haven't I seen it yet? Finally we round what I now know to be Oh My Gosh Corner and my boyfriend, Sam, and I gaze in awe at the 4,237-foot-tall mountain that juts into the blue sky above.

Friday

5:30 p.m. @ Sugarloaf Mountain Hotel In the parking lot tailgaters in lawn chairs sit around grills, and coming down the mountain, skiers and snowboarders are dressed in tie-dye and wildly bright apparel. Sam points to a duo with skis slung over their shoulders—one is in a gorilla suit and the other is dressed like a banana. We are quickly realizing that Reggae Fest is kind of like a Halloween party on the mountain, where 80s snowsuits are relevant and practical. The valet takes care of our car as we unload and head inside to check in at the hotel.

6:30 p.m. @ 45 North After a seamless check-in, we drop our bags in a guest room that has a beautiful view of the untamed Bigelow Range northwest of Sugarloaf. We follow the reggae music through an opened barn door into the hotel's restaurant that has a rustic, cozy interior. A six-piece

band plays to the après-ski crowd. After our first round, we head into the dining room, where we have a hard time choosing just one dish off a menu that features the kind of Maine comfort food one needs on chilly evenings. I decide on the baked salmon over snow peas and Sam goes with the flat-iron steak that he tells me is "cooked to perfection." So far, so good.

8:15 p.m. @ the Widowmaker Lounge

We walk over to the Widowmaker and take a seat by a window. We can't look away from the carved runs as the trees become deep purple silhouettes against a glowing pink sky. As night falls, the snowcats' lights are small distant beacons. They're perfecting the snow for tomorrow, and for the first of many times on this trip, we come to understand that someone is always taking care of the mountain.

10:00 p.m. @ Sugarloaf Mountain Hotel It's back to our cozy room so that we can be ready for a busy day tomorrow. The staff at the front desk nods at our decision.

Saturday

8:00 a.m. @ D'Ellies We meet our friends, Mac and Mattie, for breakfast at a place Mattie swears by. She has been coming to Sugarloaf since she was a kid, so we trust her opinion. We order breakfast sandwiches (some on English muffins, others on bagels) and the chef calls our names as we pick them up hot from the grill. We sit at a high top by the window, watching as a Santa suit goes by

with others dressed in neon attire. As I listen to conversations around me, I quickly learn that this weekend is a tradition for groups of families and friends—and as the years add up, groups expand, packing lists grow, costumes are passed down, and funny stories pile up.

10:00 a.m. @ Sugarloaf Outdoor Center Outside the center, which sits on Moose Bog, we take in a view of Sugarloaf and the western mountains that reminds us how small we are in comparison. We pack water and snacks, and then we're off snowshoeing well-maintained trails on a beautiful sunny day. Occasionally, we traverse over cross-country trails where we exchange hellos with jacketless skiers happily gliding along the trails.

1:00 p.m. @ Gepetto's We head back to grab some lunch at Gepetto's, where we just beat the rush as a line forms out the door of skiers taking a break after a morning on the trails. The restaurant is casual, and tables are pulled together to accommodate large groups. I order the chicken Caesar salad, Sam gets the burger, and the waitress convinces us to embellish our lunches with half-priced housemade sangria, "it's Reggae Fest after all," she tells us.

2:30 p.m. @ Narrow Gauge Pathway A short ride takes us to another snowshoeing trail. We talk conditions with other snowshoers who explain they are good, but unfortunately, melting. We hurry onward, crossing a bridge that takes us to

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a trail that runs parallel to the now-rushing dark-blue waters of the Carrabassett River. Ice chunks occasionally float by, reminding us of the river's still-frigid core. We walk in the same direction as the river, stopping to gaze into the thick forest, take pictures, and throw snowballs into the rolling water.

4:30 p.m. @ the Beach at Sugarloaf The Beach is located in front of the Widowmaker, at the base of the mountain. We stand in the sun, listening to the free live reggae show, which features Green Lion Crew, Royal Hammer, and CatchaVibe. Despite the chilly temperatures, we join the crowd in grabbing beers from the outdoor bar—exchanging money and cans from gloved hand to gloved hand with the bartenders. We talk with a couple who tells us they recently moved to the valley so they could ski all the time in the winter.

6:30 p.m. @ Sugarloaf Mountain Hotel Our legs are tired from snowshoeing all day, so we join Mac, Mattie, and another friend, Cyndi, in the Jacuzzi. Many hotel guests have the same idea, but we all pile in and enjoy sinking our bodies into the warm water while our faces catch the cool breeze that blows down from the mountain.

8:00 p.m. @ Shipyard Brew Haus Sugarloaf We catch a shuttle to the Shipyard Brew Haus, although we later discover that we could have either skied or hiked down from the hotel since it's located under the Sawduster lift on the Birches Trail. Inside, the atmosphere feels authentically ski lodge with dark wood and dozens of

mugs on display up over the bar. Mattie and Mac rave about their salads and we all devour spinach and artichoke dip in a bread bowl, fulfilling the hunger that comes from a long day of activity outdoors.

9:30 p.m. @ Sugarloaf Inn While it's not reggae music, the Sugarloaf Inn is hosting North of Nashville. The two-man new-country band plays tunes to an enthusiastic audience that two steps in pairs.

10:00 p.m. @ the Widowmaker Back at the Widowmaker, the feature show of the weekend takes the stage. Neon lights fill the lodge packed with the reggae lovers. Iration plays to a sold-out crowd.

12:00 a.m. @ Sugarloaf Mountain Hotel After the concert the crowds leaves the Widowmaker, emptying into a silent resort. We hit the hay back at the hotel, resting up for another day of fun on the mountain.

Sunday

8:00 a.m. @ Sugarloaf Mountain On our last day, the weather breaks from yesterday's warmth and sun, reminding us that we are still within the reach of a northern winter. Snow falls from an overcast sky, and the summit is covered by clouds.

9:30 a.m. @ Java Joe's We fill up on muffins and lattes from Java Joe's. Mattie bumps into her childhood ski instructor and they plunge into stories from years past. It must have been very special to be able to grow up coming

to a place like this—where relationships are forged and outdoor adventures are part of everyday life.

10:30 a.m. @ Sugarloaf Mountain Mattie and Mac take on King's Landing Trail, which is Mattie's favorite because it's long and winds down the mountain. I settle on Lower Timberline, which is a much easier run. The first run was carved in the 1950s. Today, the mountain has 60 miles of skiable terrain, with a good mix of easy, intermediate, and advanced trails.

2:00 p.m. @ the Bag and Kettle We have a late lunch at the Bag and Kettle restaurant and regroup to talk over our favorite trails and lookout points. Skiers unwind with a beer and swap stories about the day's rides.

3:30 p.m. @ the Downhill Supply Company I head into the ski shop to see if I can find anything to remember my trip by. The store sells ski clothing as well as an array of colorful boards and skis that kids call their parents over to—a hint for next year's Christmas. At the end of the season, many items are on sale, and I decide on a Sugarloaf sweatshirt, which features the mountain's snow-covered peak.

5:00 p.m. @ Sugarloaf Mountain Hotel It's time to head home. We're happy that we really made the most of our weekend. We leave with sore muscles, but mostly stories and reminders of how beautiful and satisfying a weekend spent in the outdoors can be.





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Carrabassett Valley and Kingfield in 48 Hours

Cyndi Smith



01 A scenic view of water, pines, and mountains **02** The Coplin Dinner House is a perfect spot to enjoy fine dining. **03** Caleb and Chloe enjoying the lobby of the Sugarloaf Mountain Hotel **04** Poplar Stream Falls is a delight in the summer. **05** Sugarloaf's Outpost Adventure Center makes the whole family smile with its zip-lining course. **06** Kennedy Farm is the perfect backdrop for the Kingfield POPS where the Bangor Symphony Orchestra entertains the audience. **07** Rolling Fatties in Kingfield offers vegan and gluten-free options as well as homemade ice pops. **08** Adventuring on Ira Mountain **09** The Rack is always a must for late-night entertainment.



We load up the car with our luggage and two of our three children. My husband Chris and I are heading out for a summer weekend in the mountains.

Friday

3:00 p.m. @ Kingfield Elementary School We pull into Kingfield Elementary School to take a photograph of the mural on the wall by the artist Dahlov Ipcar. My children have fun pretending to be the animals in the mural.

4:00 p.m. @ downtown Kingfield After stopping in at the shops along the historic main street, I score a Sugarloaf reggae shirt for my son on sale at the Sugarloaf Sports Outlet. We stop by the Ski Museum of Maine and take a look at the old wooden skis and other memorabilia collected there throughout the years. We pop into a cute artist co-op where we meet two of the artists who are getting ready for the Friday night art walk.

5:00 p.m. @ Schoolhouse Gallery We are met by the owners, Cynthia and John Orcutt, and shown around the spacious and beautifully designed gallery. I point out a wonderful sheep photo, and John chuckles and says that is one of the only images that taken in Maine—it was from a trip the Orcutts took to Italy.

6:00 p.m. @ Sugarloaf Mountain Hotel We check into our hotel with enough gear

for a week, and the kids immediately change into their robes for a trip to the large outdoor hot tub. We are very happy with our room, which has a loft bedroom for Chris and me, along with a full kitchen. I don't let the kids stay in the hot tub for long because we have dinner reservations at a nearby restaurant.

7:30 p.m. @ The Coplin Dinner House Several locals have recommended this restaurant and we're delighted to see a friendly face as soon as we sit down. Bonnie Holding, owner of Gold/Smith Gallery in Sugarloaf Village, is seated next to us and she raves about the food. We are excited to try everything and a bit anxious about ordering for a vegan, a gluten-free child, and a very picky eater. The chef and owner, Tony Rossi, is very accommodating—he even makes my son a grilled cheese. Chris, who is vegan, orders the spicy red Thai curry, and Chloe gets a cheeseburger without a bun to avoid gluten. I am happy with my beet salad, which is adorned with goat cheese and candied walnuts.

9:00 p.m. @ Sugarloaf Mountain Hotel Back at the hotel, we tuck the kids into the Murphy bed and climb up the spiral stairs to the loft just to collapse in the comfortable Boyne bed.

Saturday

8:00 a.m. @ 45 North We get up early, and the kids and I descend five floors to the hotel restaurant, 45 North. I have eaten dinner here before, but this will be my first breakfast experience.

The menu is varied and tempting. Chloe and I each select the cheddar cheese omelet. Our waitress is surprised when she returns and all the plates are completely clean!

9:30 a.m. @ Outpost Adventure Center We're ready to get outfitted for our zip line tour. My son is afraid of heights and feeling anxious, but our instructor, Tim, puts him at ease immediately. Geared up with our full-body harnesses and helmets, we follow our guides to the two-person chairlift that will take us to the first zip line. Chloe has tried it before in Costa Rica, so she volunteers to go first. She steps off the platform and lets her hands fly out to the side and squeals with delight as she zips across to the next line. The rest of us follow soon after.

11:00 a.m. @ the SuperQuad Continuing with the offerings of the Outpost Adventure Center, Chris and Chloe decide to try out the Segway Tour while Caleb and I take a spin on the SuperQuad. I watch my husband and daughter get used to the huge machines with beefy tires. They get on their way while Caleb and I enjoy the beautiful scenic chairlift ride to the top. The vistas are breathtaking and the ride down is super fun with the wind blowing through our hair.

12:30 p.m. @ Strokes Bar and Grille Chris and Chloe tell me that the Segway tour guide recommended Strokes Bar and Grille for lunch. We head over to the Sugarloaf Golf Club. Chris and Caleb are not too hungry, so they opt to hit a few buckets of balls at the driving range

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while Chloe and I eat lunch. She has chili and sweet potato fries and I devour the most delicious tuna melt I have had in years.

2:00 p.m. @ Poplar Stream Falls Trail Many folks have suggested that we tackle the Poplar Stream Falls hike with the kids—they're sure to like the flowing waterfall at the end. The short hike starts out walking through a field that is speckled with summer wildflowers. It is so pretty we forget about the bugs that are following us. The waterfalls are truly spectacular. Chris and the kids enjoy splashing in the swimming hole while I watch and take many photos.

5:00 p.m. @ Sugarloaf Mountain Hotel We take another quick trip to the hot tub to soothe our sore feet before getting ready for the Kingfield POPS concert.

6:00 p.m. @ Rolling Fatties We stopped by this food truck and barn on our way into town and decide to make a repeat visit. Chris is one happy dude as he feasts on a vegan burrito, complete with coconut tortilla and plenty of hot sauce. Caleb munches on the hot dog fatty, which is a hot dog rolled in homemade tortilla dough and deep fried to crispy perfection, while Chloe chooses the gluten-free chips with guac.

6:30 p.m. @ the Kingfield POPS We walk to the Kennedy Farm property and see the stage in the distance. I can hear Jonathan Edwards singing

one of his iconic songs, and the kids run off for kettle corn and ice cream. When Edwards finishes, the Bangor Symphony Orchestra takes over and starts their set with the "Star-Spangled Banner."

9:00 p.m. @ the Rack No trip to Sugarloaf is complete without a stop at the Rack, so we decide to make a quick one without the kids. The band is getting ready to play, and the sign out front is wishing Seth Wescott a happy birthday. It's been a very full day, so we leave after one beverage, but I'm glad we came.

Sunday

7:00 a.m. @ Stratton Diner The bright sky beckons me to get out of bed early. I wake everyone up and we make a plan to hit the Stratton Diner for breakfast. The diner is filled with hikers, and on our way we see hikers with full gear on the side of the road looking for a lift. We find out that the Appalachian Trail is nearby. Our food is good and tasty, and the bottomless cup of coffee hits the spot.

10:00 a.m. on the West Mountain Falls trail We heard about a short hike to a swimming hole near the golf course and decide to find it. The West Mountain Falls hiking trails are marked with a single sign on the side of the drive. The hike is easy and very picturesque. After a quick 20 minutes down the trail, it ends with a swimming hole along the river.

12:00 p.m. @ Mountainside Grocers We pull into this store at the base of the Sugarloaf road to load up on lunch items for a picnic. Having been in the store in the winter months, we know our way around and quickly grab supplies.

12:30 p.m. @ Sugarloaf Outdoor Center We drive into the outdoor center and see the remnants of a wedding from the night before. Folks are cleaning up the tent and we spy half-eaten wedding cake and champagne flutes, telltales of good times. We play disc golf and take in the splendid view of the mountain.

2:00 p.m. @ Ira Mountain This one last hike on the way out of town was recommended to us by many Facebook followers. Ira Mountain is halfway between Sugarloaf and Kingfield and is completely worth the stop. We drive across the one-way bridge and we find ourselves facing a huge rock wall that has been landscaped into the mountain. We take another turn and are stunned by a structure of rocks and stairs that begs to be explored. There are signs telling you where to clap and where the echo will be heard—it blows our minds. From the top of this trail, we take in the amazing view. I am so thankful that we were able to fully enjoy Carrabassett Valley in the summer as much as we do every winter.

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Carrabassett Valley and Kingfield in 48 Hours

Sarah Prak *Graphic Designer, The Brand Company*



01 View from the top of the snowfields 02 Artists Cynthia and John Orcutt in their studio at the Schoolhouse Gallery 03 Amazing Italian food can be found at Hug's. 04 The Sugarloaf Mountain Hotel is conveniently located at the base of Sugarloaf. 05 Contestants Curt Gurry of Vermont and overall reigning champion of the 2014 Banked Slalom, Seth Wescott 06 Après-ski happy hour bevies at the Rack 07 Photography by the Orcutt family at the Schoolhouse Gallery 08 Mountains of fried clams and lobster stew from Bob's Clam Hut 09 A contestant riding the windy Banked Slalom course



48 HOURS

The car is packed, our snowboards freshly waxed, the heat is cranked on high, and we're cruising down Route 27, Sugarloaf-bound. I have my boyfriend, Brandon, as co-pilot and we're thrilled to be exploring the new terrain up at the Loaf. It was just hit with 18-plus inches of snow, and while we haven't been up to the Loaf for a while, we're excited to see what the snow-covered mountain has to offer.

Friday

4:30 p.m. @ **Schoolhouse Gallery**

True to its name, the Schoolhouse Gallery was once a one-room schoolhouse. Now it's an art gallery and a studio for artists, photographers, designers, and architects, run by a jack-of-all trades husband and wife duo, John and Cynthia Orcutt. The current exhibit features stunning large-format nature photography of the western mountains of Maine, shot by John and Cynthia themselves. We chat a bit and get the backstory of most of the photography. We are designers ourselves, and the Orcutts invite us upstairs to tour the studio space where they spend most of their days working—that is, when they're not photographing the Maine landscapes.

5:30 p.m. @ **Stanley Avenue, Kingfield** The Orcutts point us to our next destination, Stanley Avenue, which is right down the street, over the bridge from the Schoolhouse

Gallery. We take a nice slow drive to check out the elegant Victorian homes on the street. One Stanley Avenue is currently a restaurant owned by chef Dan Davis, and adjacent to the restaurant is his bed and breakfast, Three Stanley Avenue. The Victorian-style furnishing, wood floors, and pristine stained glass windows make it look like you've stepped back in time.

5:45 p.m. @ **Tranten's Family Shurfine** We stop at the local grocery store to pick up some cheese, crackers, and orange juice to curb our appetite.

6:00 p.m. @ **Sugarloaf Mountain Hotel**

At the base of the mountain lies what looks almost like an enchanted castle. This is the Sugarloaf Mountain Hotel. Its shimmering Christmas trees twinkle in the distance. We lock up our snowboard gear and make our way to the entrance, where we are warmly greeted by the hotel concierge. We notice that the hotel is nicely decorated with photography from the Orcutts. We settle into our suite, which makes me feel like we are in our own secluded A-frame cabin deep inside a frosty wonderland. We relax a bit among the mountains of soft pillows and sheets.

7:00 p.m. @ **Hug's Italian** Make sure to make reservations if you're headed to Hug's. We make the mistake of not calling in, but luckily we're able to sit at the bar, known to locals as the Hardcore Corner. We see why the place gets fully booked, because the food is superb. I have the tri-colored cheese tortellini with pink alfredo sauce

and veggies. Brandon gets the sundried tomato pesto alfredo with penne. We're in heaven.

9:00 p.m. @ **45 North** We peek our heads into the restaurant that sits at the fore of the hotel lobby. It looks like a great ambience for winding down. We run upstairs to change into our flannel shirts to stay cozy. We walk back down to the restaurant, where we spend the rest of the night chitchatting with other hotel guests about the annual Banked Slalom competition that will be taking place the next day.

Saturday

7:30 a.m. @ **D'Ellies** We wake up early and head to D'Ellies and grab a quick breakfast. This hearty food is exactly what one needs before a long day of shredding.

8:00 a.m. **on the SuperQuad** The early bird catches the worm. We catch the first chair lift and get first tracks of the freshly groomed snow. I thank the snow gods for bestowing the additional 18 inches of snow from the big snow storm. Conditions are perfect and I don't know how we got so lucky. We cruise around for a bit and decide to check out the Banked Slalom event. It's the ultimate test of speed, agility, and skill, but it's also all about having fun. The event is only open to snowboarders; young and old compete against time down a winding course of banked turns. We can hear the yells of excitement as the competitors maneuver down the winding twists and turns.



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12:30 p.m. @ The Orange Cat Cafe

We drive back towards Kingfield to try out the Orange Cat for lunch. Almost everything they serve is homemade and delicious. We step inside the former colonial home, which has been transformed into a funky coffee house. We're surprised to be greeted by an orange cat. It runs away as we order our soups and sandwiches. We sit on the comfy leather couches while we enjoy our lunch and wonder about the mysterious orange cat.

1:00 p.m. @ Sugarloaf Sports Outlet

Down the road from the Orange Cat is the Sugarloaf Sports Outlet, which stocks previous years' models of ski and snowboard equipment. I'm in the market for some new snowboard boots, but to my dismay we have no luck finding the right size. We browse the outlet to see if we can score any other gear—they've got a great selection but we leave empty-handed.

1:30 p.m. @ Downhill Supply Company

Still in search for some new snowboard boots, we check out the ski and snowboard shop right in the heart of the Village Center. Luckily, they have one pair of boots in my size. My feet love me.

1:45 p.m. on the slopes

With my new boots and happy feet, we head back up the mountain and continue to explore the terrain. From the SuperQuad lift we catch a glimpse of the Banked Slalom below and cheer on contestants. There is so much excitement and happiness surrounding this

place I never want to leave. From the SuperQuad we make our way to Timberline to go to the summit. Next, we make our way over to Brackett Basin to ride some glades. We have some of the most unforgettable runs. The Loaf has become one of my favorite mountains on the East Coast.

5:00 p.m. @ the Sugarloaf hot tub

New to the mountain this season, this 30-person hot tub is located at the Sugarloaf Mountain Hotel. We decide to take a soak after our long day of boarding.

7:00 p.m. @ the Rack

We enjoy some après-ski beverages at the Rack, owned by local snowboard Olympic champion Seth Wescott. This seems like the place to be—it is pleasantly crowded with a friendly and fun energy from the ski mountain community.

8:30 p.m. @ Geppetto's

We meet up with our long-time friend, Brian Randall, winner of the first annual East Coast Pond Skimming Championship at the Loaf. We catch up over a nice hearty meal and delicious Maine beers, and get the inside scoop on Sugarloaf Mountain.

11:00 p.m. @ Sugarloaf Mountain Hotel

We call it a day and snuggle into the comfortable mountain of pillows in our loft while sipping on soothing chamomile tea.

Sunday

9:00 a.m. @ Java Joe's

It is a chilly morning, the opposite of yesterday's balmy conditions. We warm up with a hazelnut-flavored steamed milk and bagel.

9:30 a.m. on the mountain

It is cold and windy, but the snow conditions are still amazing in every other way. We head up to spectate the last day of the Banked Slalom and chitchat with a few of the riders who have been doing this competition every year since its inception. The riders say that they do the event not for competition, but for camaraderie and fun. We continue to explore the mountain, going in the terrain park, mini pipe, and glades.

2:30 p.m. @ Bob's Clam Hut

My nose follows the scrumptious scent of fried seafood to Bob's Clam Hut. I remember going to Bob's Clam Hut in Kittery as a kid and enjoying the fresh fried clam strips. I never imagined that I would be eating fried clam strips and lobster stew mountainside, but here we are, consuming a mountain of fried clam strips, calamari, and lobster stew. Still, the fried clam strips are the best in my book. It's a warm, crunchy, and all-around perfect ending to our Sugarloaf trip. ✚

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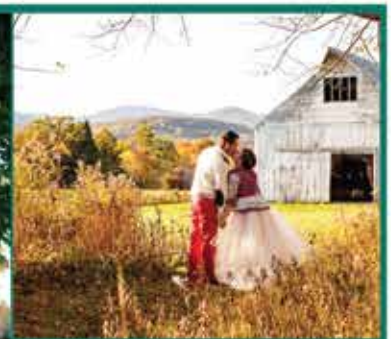


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