

Moonlit glide

A line of 1,000 luminarias stretches across Wisconsin's Chequamegon Bay, beckoning skiers down Book Across the Bay's 10K track. Their welcoming flicker—and more than a little adrenaline at the idea of cross-country skiing across Lake Superior after dark—pulls 3,000 adventurers away from the enormous on-ice bonfire behind the Hotel Chequamegon and across the starting line.

As skiers glide past each kilometer marker, cheers erupt from volunteers working the water tables: 1K down, 9 to go on the journey from Ashland (70 miles east of Duluth, Minnesota) to Washburn. The skiers (and more than a few snowshoers) clump up at the start, but the hardcore racers eventually pull ahead, exhaling puffs of steam in a measured cadence.

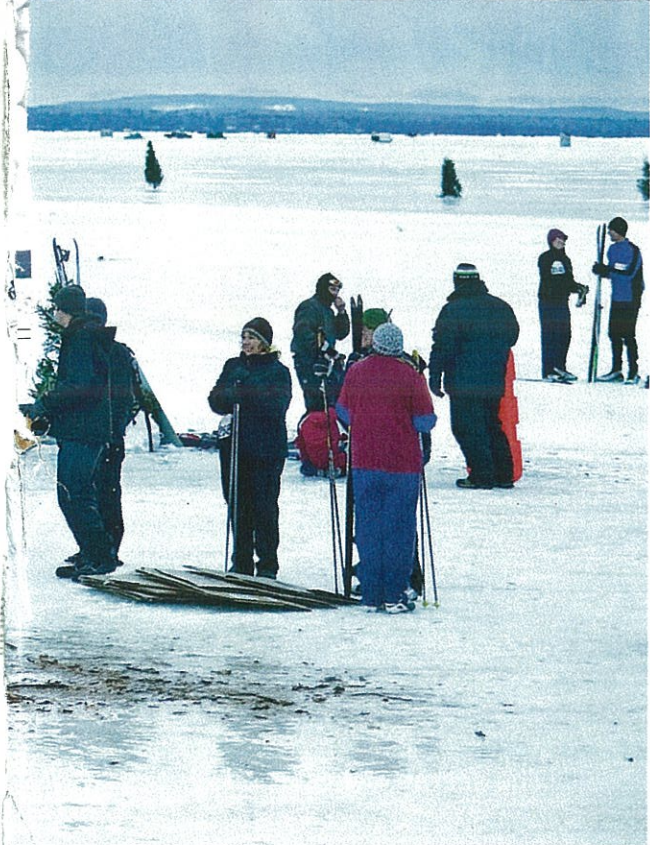
Sunset's ruddy glow on the ice dissolves to reveal mirrored moonlight, and fireworks sprinkle

red, green and gold over the course as the leaders raise their arms in victory and rush inside heated tents, eager to grab a mug of hot chocolate or steaming bowl of chili. Slower skiers and snowshoers trickle in much later, smiling to hear their names called out on loudspeakers as they cross the finish line, thanks to the computer chips strapped to their ankles. As they pop off their skies, a band revs up, determined to keep the party going (February 18, 2012). This frigid fundraiser for the local library has blossomed since it started 15 years ago, and it's easy to see why. Bonfires. Luminaria-lined paths. Fireworks. Cheering crowds. Steaming chili and ice-cold beer. And an invigorating trek with several thousand fun-loving folks across the largest freshwater lake on earth. *That's how you do winter in northern Wisconsin.* *Melanie Radzicki McManus*

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• The bonfire will spark again February 18 for Book Across the Bay in Ashland, Wisconsin. (Above right) Luminarias brighten the frigid route.



PHOTOGRAPHS: (SNOW DAYS) FOCAL PLANE PHOTOGRAPHY

Skidding down the Batterhorn

From the top of the bleachers at Cleveland's Progressive Field, the tube run seems a little scary. No matter that friendly attendants are there to help, or that these closed-bottom tubes don't have the typical big holes in the middle, or that a guy in a hot dog suit just skidded his way down without a problem. Second base at the bottom feels dangerously far away. But it comes up quickly—just a few seconds, with some air-catching along the way.

In its second year, Snow Days, a pop-up winter amusement park, shows off the home of Major League Baseball's Indians. Vintage Christmas lights strung throughout salute GE's long history in Cleveland. Fireworks draw crowds on Snopening Day (November 25) and on New Year's Eve (the fest runs through January 16, 2012). But ice-skating on the iconic ball field competes for crowd fave. A quarter-mile-long Frozen Mile, groomed by the Lake Erie Monsters' Zamboni but bumpy nonetheless, winds gracefully through the park and guides skaters to a center-field rest area teeming with holiday vignettes and light displays. Christmas trees line the ice, and locals snap pictures of the blow-up version of the famed leg lamp from the classic holiday movie *A Christmas Story*, which was filmed in Cleveland.

Still, thrill seekers can't resist the lure of the Batterhorn. A ski-resort-style tow rope hauls the tubes to the top of the mountain, so all people have to do is walk up, hop on, hang on and smile as they zoom. ■ Sarah Routh

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