

# In the woods of Vermont

Near the small rural town of Woodstock, stands an old New England farm house called Talbot House, a gift of Laurence Rockefeller, which is rented out by MIT to living groups and activities. It is a trip which has become a yearly excursion for many groups, provided they are able to get it, for the house is very popular, especially during the skiing season.

Woodstock is in the middle of Vermont ski country, the best on the East Coast. Less than thirty miles away is Killington with its extensive slopes and prices to match. At similar distances are a variety of smaller slopes, such as Roundtop, which have fewer trails but have lift ticket prices on

the order of \$2 to \$3. Cross Country skiing also abounds in the vicinity at Mt. Tom and the Woodstock Ski Touring Center as well as the less maintained trails running through the nearby woods.

In the spring and autumn, the activities are somewhat different although they still provide a relaxing weekend for any group. The local town of Woodstock is a picture perfect image of a small New England town. Away from the bustle and noise of a city like Boston, one can just sit out in the fresh air. Alternatively, there is horseback riding through the endless woods which infiltrate the area.

What follows are the excerpts



from the accounts of two groups which visited Talbot House last year, one over a week during IAP and the other over a spring weekend. Hopefully, they will give you some idea of what happens at Talbot House.

#### First the Spring group:

Our departure was dragging along. It didn't look like the entire group was going to get left until about six o'clock at the rate we were going. At that point, John, Dave, Tom, and I reached the conclusion that if we could just get the booze, we could take off to Talbot House ourselves and have a good poker game before anyone else got there, which is exactly what we did, although not before running into a friend of mine who took one look at me, one look at the half gallon of Scotch in my hand, and then said "Don't you think you're starting a bit early?" We had a big party later that weekend which I was coming back for.

When the rest of the group arrived, the party and games got started in earnest. A few card games and monopoly games started up. In their grand tradition, the few Dean's Office people in our group started to play Perquackey. The night became more interesting as it went along. Steve started what would become a

twelve page entry in the Talbot House log book. People just kept adding items of varying degrees of oddity throughout the weekend. As with our parties, strange things began to happen around eleven or twelve o'clock. Steve won a monopoly game after Katy sold him five hundred dollars worth of properties for one dollar while giggling. "I have a very low resistance to alcohol." That about did it for the night.

The next day we didn't do much of anything in particular. Frisbee games went on most of the day behind the house. A few of us drove into Woodstock for a while, wandering through the rustic town and over the recently restored covered bridge. We lay out in the sun for a while, in short, relaxed and had a good time.

#### Now the Winter group:

Wednesday, almost everyone went to Roundtop because "It always snows at Roundtop!" Cancel that. Chug has just threatened to kill me if he hears that again. He claims you just can't imagine how nerve-racking it is to hear "Good morning. Welcome to Roundtop. Today is Wednesday, Men's day. Lifts, Lessons, and Equipment for \$6.00. Our ski school meets at 12:30 in 27 minutes. That is 12:30

in 27 minutes and remember 'It always snows at Roundtop!' " at five minute intervals for an entire day.

We constituted a noticeable percentage of the people on the slopes that day. At times twelve or so of us would be skiing down the hill at one time. The skiing was excellent. In the morning there were close to five inches of powder which packed down toward the afternoon.

Wednesday night Keith made another booze run and everyone settled down to play backgammon, perquackey, cards, etc. One of the more interesting games of the night was a Monopoly game between John, Dave, Bill, and myself. It turned into a hate-crazed game. John got Boardwalk and Park Place and the remaining three of us made a trade which gave each of us a set of properties. The game then started getting vicious. At one point John paid me too much for landing on a hotel. When he discovered this several moves later an argument ensued. One of the bridge players arbitrated for us and asked "Is this game for fun or for blood?" Everyone instantly responded "BLOOD!" Dave eventually won with me second, Bill third, and John fourth. That about finished it for the night although upstairs



things got noisy again as there was a bath-tubbing and a collapse of Brad's bed. When Peter Richardson, our faculty host, came in to enquire about the bed, he was told: "It was just an accident" to which he replied: "And I suppose the bath-tubbing was too."

The next day, most people went to Killington or Roundtop. It was a very interesting day. Hopper started out by losing a ski rack. "How do you lose a ski rack," you may ask. Well, it isn't easy. Bert had the only real ski rack on his car. He also had his muffler tied by wire to his rear door handles. It seems that when he was leaving Talbot House someone neglected to close the rack. A lit-

tle way down the road, Roger saw one of his skis take off behind them. He was a little upset. Bert stopped the car and Bruce got out the back door to retrieve the ski. Yes, you're right. It was the back door that Bert had his muffler tied to. The wire snapped when Bruce got out of the car. The ski was recovered, but now Bert's muffler was dragging. John, who was trailing Bert, saw this and at the next traffic light pulled him over to the side. He then offered Bert a piece of rope to tie his muffler up with. Where did this rope come from? It was the rope which was helping to hold John's roof rack to his car. That night, John's only explanation for this behavior was temporary brainrot to which

a few people murmured something to the effect that they weren't so sure it was temporary. In any case, when they arrived at Roundtop and Jon said: "I hope to hell your ski rack's in your trunk!". John's mouth dropped several feet as he turned around and looked at the car. Enough said.

The same day, John snapped one of his metal skis in two and then proceeded to irreparably damage a pair of rental skis. In the meantime, John Cochrane had broken one boot, two ski poles, and four skis although none of them were destroyed as badly as Hopper's masterpieces.

Photo essay by Gordon Haff