

## All Nothing, All the Time

*Bears do it, bats do it, human beings in B & Bs do it — spend time in winter inactive and blissfully unplugged*

By NEIL GENZLINGER

**I**F you're wearing a cast right now, this advice comes too late, but file it away for next winter: There's nothing wrong with doing nothing. And there's a bed-and-breakfast out there, framed in snow but with plush rooms and welcoming fires inside, that is made for helping you remember how.

A certain high-powered personality type, the kind that advertises itself with a ski rack on the car, doesn't grasp this concept. These folks may check into a cozy B & B on a chilly day, but then it's eat and run run run, to the slopes or the snowmobile trails or the icy sidewalks of some antiques alley.

People like this guarantee full employment for paramedics and anyone in the crutch or quick-set-plaster business. But we travelers who have attained more of what I like to think of as maturity — "slothfulness" and "decrepitude" seem like such harsh words — know that human beings are supposed to hibernates in the winter. A bed-and-breakfast or small inn is, to us, a well-appointed cave where we go with the goal of doing nothing. Not just a little bit of nothing between bursts of something. I'm talking about all nothing, all the time.

Innkeepers know us. "It's surprising how many we get," said Al Granger, owner of the Glasbein Inn, a converted farm in Fogelsville, Pa. "A lot of people just come and vegetate."

Debrah Masimann, who runs Swiss Woods in Lititz, Pa., with her husband, Werner, sees the phenomenon, too. "I have couples who will come park on the sofa, and that's where you find them four hours later," she said.

It's an art form, this aggressive inactivity, one that deserves a guide every bit as detailed as a Fodor's or Bradt. Here's a start, based on exhaustive research done on a recent weekend trip to the Inn at

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CHRISTOPHE NEWMAN

## Wintertime, And Fishing Is Easy

By GREG BREINING

**A**S the lakes of the Midwest, Northeast and Canada freeze, clusters of fishing shacks appear, forming villages above the best wintertime fishing spots — despite the cracking, moaning and eerie warbling of the thickening but unstable skin of ice.

Once a foot of ice accumulates, fishermen in New York tow houses onto Saratoga, Oneida and Champlain. In Michigan, ice-fishing villages sprout on Houghton, the state's biggest inland lake and nearby Higgins, where anglers camp in their shacks all night to catch rainbow smelt. The self-proclaimed ice-fishing capital of the East is Lake Simcoe, north of Toronto, where as many as 4,000 ice huts appear. And don't forget about Lake Wapigoon in New Hampshire.

But nowhere are these ad hoc housing developments more impressive than on Mille Lacs Lake in central Minnesota, where, in a typical winter, some 5,000 shelters create villages across 200 square miles of snow and ice. Most, known locally as icehouses or fish houses, are basic shacks cobbled from plywood and two-by-fours, and just big enough for a couple of guys to tend a fishing hole in each corner, drink a few Grain Belt beers and listen to hockey or basketball on the radio.

But as in any community, there are houses for the common folk and there are those that stand out from the rest: chalets with cathedral ceilings, sleeping lofts, hardwood floors, kitchens with custom cabinets. And, of course, satellite TV. They can cost as much as \$10,000, if you do the work yourself, and three times that if you don't.

Call them cabins on the lake — literally — or McMansions on ice. By law, the houses, some weighing several tons, must return to land by the end of February, before they sink. In the meantime, the best provide not only a place to fish but



J. C. WOODLEY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

**ROUGHING IT** Scott Daniels, left, and his cousin Steve Mattson in the ice-fishing house they built at Mille Lacs Lake in Minnesota.

also a hideaway where friends and family visit.

The fishing lines, with auto jiggers and rattle rods, pretty much tend themselves. Occupants just have to yank up the fish. Otherwise, they can crack, sleep, play cards, drink beer, gab with the neighbors — and savor the architectural detail.

Some owners of icehouses are so invested in

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### AWAY

## Off the Set, Into the Desert

By SUSAN MORGAN

**T**his is the story of a couple who moved to California from the East Coast and then, one day, built a home in the desert," said Tracy Tynan. Her voice slipped playfully into the earnest, dulcet tones of a museum docent, as if Jacqueline Kennedy's tour of the White House were being played as screwball comedy.

Ms. Tynan, a Hollywood costume designer who is married to the screenwriter and director Jim McBride, was standing in the kitchen of their 1,200-square-foot weekend home in Joshua Tree, Calif. With considerable fur and a suspicion of irony, she placed a small album that featured documentation of their property on the sleek white counter dividing the house's open living area. Across the room, a wall of windows revealed what real estate sellers describe as jettison views, a vast panorama of desert fringed by mountains on the horizon.

Ms. Tynan is named for Katharine Hepburn's character, Tracy Lord, in "The Philadelphia Story"; Ms. Hepburn was her godmother. "And Cecil Beaton was my godfather," she said. "They both gave me christening cups. But, of course, my parents never had me christened."

As the daughter of the English theater critic Kenneth Tynan and the American writer Elaine Dundy, Ms. Tynan grew up in the haute bohemian circles of New York and London, a far cry from the high desert.

They have both lived in Los Angeles and



JILL CONNELLY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

**COLOR CODE** Tracy Tynan and Jim McBride wanted their house in Joshua Tree, Calif., to match rocks and lichen in the landscape.

worked in film-related fields for 30 years.

Ms. Tynan recently designed contemporary clothing with a dash of 1960s influence for "Over Her Dead Body," the recently released comedy starring Eva Longoria as a deceased fiancée.

"When she returns as a ghost, all her clothes are white," Ms. Tynan said. "Very classic Audrey

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