



HERALD PHOTO BY TIM JONES

MIGHTY WINGS: Visitors to New Hampshire watch for hawks.

Gone leafin'

FOLIAGE SEEKERS HIKE, BIKE AND PADDLE NEW ENGLAND

By **TIM JONES**
SPECIAL TO THE HERALD

15912

Ask even a world traveler: New England is the place to be in foliage season. Our rare combination of picturesque landscape, cool climate and abundance of different tree species — each with its signature colors — makes for perfect leaf peeping.

But merely peering at the changing leaves through the windows in a car, a tour bus, or an excursion train cuts you off from the experience. You might as well be watching it on a TV travelogue.

The way to truly appreciate the fall foliage is to get out where the colors surround you, where the rich smell of autumn air fills your lungs, where you can reach out and touch the textured bark of the

trees, hear the wind and watch views change at the relaxed pace of human-powered travel.

There's plenty of time to enjoy the spectacle. By Labor Day, there were already individual trees showing wonderful splashes of color in New England's north country. As you read this, northern Vermont, New Hampshire and the western mountains of Maine will be well on their way to peak. And it will be after Halloween before the last of the colors fade in southeastern Massachusetts, Rhode Island and on the Connecticut coastline.

Here are some favorite places and pastimes in New England where you can actively enjoy the season.

BIKING NORTHEAST KINGDOM, Vermont

■ **When:** Now to late September
If I could have only one more

opportunity to view New England foliage at its finest, I believe this is the spot and I'd do it on a mountain bike. Here's why: First, a mountain bike takes you off the road, away from traffic and continually opens new vistas.

Second, the Northeast Kingdom is quintessential New England: rolling hills, hay fields, patches of woods with maples, beeches and birches, the Passumpsic River, Burke Mountain rising majestically above — this place has it all.

Third, the Kingdom Trails Association marks, maps and maintains more than 100 miles of bike trails, all rated like ski trails. If you're a novice mountain biker, explore the green-circle trails such as Loop and Cupcake — the views are still breathtaking (if you've got any breath left to take). Intermediate and aspiring advanced riders have plenty of blue-square and black-diamond terrain to choose from, and there are plenty of tight, single-track double diamonds to challenge the very best riders.

■ **Diversions:** On Sept. 30, if you can tear yourself away from the



PHOTO ABOVE, COURTESY OF KINGDOM TRAILS;
BELOW, COURTESY OF MOUNT SNOW

SEEING RED: Mountain bikers of all levels tackle Vermont's breathtaking Kingdom Trails, above, while

SEE FOLIAGE, Page 48

Nature lovers come out



...offers miles of gentle lanes.

FOLIAGE, from Page 47

mountain biking, enjoy the Burke Fall Foliage Festival in East Burke Village, with a parade, arts and crafts show, live music and a children's area.

■ **Information:** Kingdom Trails Association in East Burke, Vt., (802-626-0737; www.kingdomtrails.org) gives good biking information and links to area lodging.

■ **Lodging:** The Comfort Inn and Suites in St. Johnsbury (802-748-1500; www.vermontvacationland.com) has value-priced bike and stay packages. The Inn at Mountain View Farm (802-626-9924; www.innmtn

view.com) and The Wildflower Inn (802-626-8310; www.wildflowerinn.com) are both right on the trail network. For other options go to www.travelthekingdom.com or www.burkevermont.com.

HIKING

CARRABASSETT VALLEY, Maine

■ **When:** Now to late September

From the treeless top of Sugarloaf Mountain you can see all the way from Mount Washington to Katahdin and spectacular foliage displays between.

Sugarloafers love to stroll along the Narrow Gauge Pathway — an abandoned railroad bed from the town of Carrabassett Valley up to the base of the ski area. Seven miles along the Carrabassett River with a gentle grade, it's pleasant on a bike or on foot.

For more challenge, hike Burnt Mountain Trail for a five-hour round trip suitable for average trekkers and kids. The rocky top can be just a little challenging.

If you're fit and feelin' frisky, pick up the Appalachian Trail off Caribou Valley Road, which turns off Route 27 a mile north of the Sugarloaf access road. The blue trail spur off the Appalachian Trail leads directly to the summit of Sugarloaf; then hike down the Binder ski trail.

■ **Diversions:** Golf (don't take a cart and you'll get a real workout on Sugarloaf's hilly course), fly-fishing, back-road biking.

■ **Information:** Sugarloaf/USA (207-237-2000; www.sugarloaf.com)

■ **Lodging:** A personal favorite is The Sugarloaf Inn, with The Shipyard brew pub/restaurant inside. All lodging in the valley can be booked through Sugarloaf Area Reservations: 800-THE-AREA.

Fall Getaways

Lodging ★ Overnight Accommodations ★ Rentals



Maine

KENNEBUNKPORT

RT Fall Spectacular. Kennebunkport's only resort with indoor & outdoor pools, indoor & outdoor. Large rooms with CCTV, mini fridge. Fall Getaway 2 nghts w/AC, CCTV, & mini fridge, 2 Deluxe Cont. restaurants (see web for details). Fall Rooms only for Free. Near beaches & golf. Escape to the Maine thumblinemaine.com 1-800-337-4862.

KENNEBUNKPORT

OTTAGES 20 acre oceanfront resort directly on Kennebunk Beach. Breathe the fresh ocean air, stroll the private beach, dine with its unique shops and restaurants. Inn rooms only \$170-189 including expanded in-house breakfast room after Labor Day. Owned since 1667. Kennebunkport's premier beachfront in Boston. Call today: 1-800-967-4461

KENNEBUNKPORT

Visit Maine for the Foliage Season and get Fall Savings with our Super Value Packages from \$129.00 and cool evenings, enjoy long cool walks on the beach, hot and appetizing dining experience in our popular restaurant. Weekend specials for Sat/Sun evening with full breakfast also offering Fall Season Spa Packages and girls Getaway around the corner ... We give discount rates for large key. Check out our website on www.villagecoveinn.com 967-3993. Gift certificates available.

KENNEBUNK BEACH

Maine

OLD ORCHARD BEACH



CREST MOTEL

Located on 7 miles of sandy beach, indoor heated pool, 2 hot tubs, and sauna. Come enjoy the slower pace of fall on the beach. Stay 3 nights for the price of 2 or mention the Herald and stay Sunday to Friday morning for \$195 plus tax. Call now to reserve: 800-909-4060 or book online: www.crestmotel.com.



SEBAGO LAKE

POINT SEBAGO GOLF RESORT

775-Acre resort on Sebago Lake. All-inclusive theme Getaway pkgs incl. lodging, meals, activities and more. Labor Day Weekend avail. Sept Adult Getaways: Murder Mystery and Oktoberfest. Oct Family Retreats: Monte Carlo and Halloween Weekend Specials with haunted hayrides, haunted house and more. Fall Golf Pkgs incl. lodging, meals, and greens fees w/cart at #1 rated course with unlimited golf on select dates for only \$79 ppdo. Marina. Boat Rentals. Fishing. Tennis. Lakeview Dining. See Web Site for all Fall Weekend Package Specials. Only 2.5 hrs from Boston. www.pointsebago.com 1-800-769-8811



SEBAGO LAKE

SEBAGO LAKE LODGE & COTTAGES: Waterfront Bed & Breakfast and Cottages directly on the shore of Sebago Lake. Canoe, Rowboat and Kayak use or bring your own Boat, 2.5 hours from Boston. Enjoy our lower Fall Rates! Call 207-892-2698 for reservations or brochure, or visit us at: www.sebagolake.com



YORK HARBOR

YORK HARBOR INN Getaway to the Maine Coast and our Historic Oceanfront Inn w/award-winning dining only 1 hour fr. Boston. Many rooms w/fireplaces, spa tubs, ocean views & decks. Outdoor hot tub. Innkeepers Pkgs incl. 2 nights lodging, expansive Continental breakfast each morning, dinner for 2 in our oceanview Dining Room (\$60 voucher), all for only \$308-648 per couple for 2-nights. Ask about "All About Romance" Package add-on. See last minute "Internet Specials" on our Web site and including midweek rooms from \$99 and luxury rooms fr.

HAWK WATCHING

MONADNOCK AREA, New Hampshire

■ **When:** Now through mid-October

Want a little something extra with your fall foliage? How about hawks, eagles, falcons and vultures? If the glimpse of a single soaring raptor inspires you, imagine 100 hawks "kettling" in an updraft like rising bubbles in a cauldron of boiling water, or 1,000 hawks of 10 species soaring overhead on a warm afternoon.

Hawk-watch central in New England is less than two hours from the Hub. Miller State Park in Peterboro, N.H., is home to the New Hampshire Audubon Society's Pack Monadnock Raptor Observatory.

The best way to get to the observatory is to climb from the base on the 1.6-mile Raymond Trail, the 1.4-mile Marion Davis Trail or the 1.4-mile Wapack Trail. You also can

to play when leaves fall

hike the four miles of the Wapack Trail from Mountain Road between Peterboro and Greenfield, or the 22 miles from Mount Watatic in Ashby, Mass.

Fortunately, this adventure is accessible to anyone. For a \$3 per-person entry fee you can drive to the top of South Pack Monadnock, where a wheelchair-accessible gravel path leads a tenth of a mile to the observatory area.

There's a field biologist from the Audubon Society at the site daily through the end of October. There's also a host of avid amateurs who seem happy to share

their excitement and knowledge.

■ **Diversions:** Mount Monadnock (www.nhstateparks.org/Parks/Pages/Monadnock/Monadnock.html) is a classic foliage-season climb. Several thousand people will make it to the summit on a sunny fall weekend.

■ **Information:** Find hawk-watching information at www.nhparks.state.nh or www.nhaudubon.org. A Web site called Hawk Count (hawkcount.org) maintains a list of proven viewing sites.

■ **Lodging:** There are lots of area inns and B&Bs. Find them online at www.peterborochamber.com.

ROADS, RAILS AND TRAILS

THE BERKSHIRES, Massachusetts

■ **When:** October

The whole corner of the Berkshires around Jiminy Peak in Hancock is just made for biking. The valleys are long and sinuous, and the hills are (mostly) gentle, though you can get a good workout cranking up some of them. Most of the roads have wide shoulders for safe riding.

Or try the smoothly paved, mostly flat Ashuwillticook Rail Trail, which

Turn to FOLIAGE, Page 50

Pick from cornucopia of outdoor adventures

By TIM JONES
SPECIAL TO THE HERALD

Getting outdoors and enjoying the foliage this fall is a simple pleasure. Here are some more ways to appreciate the season.

■ **Pick apples (or pumpkins).** These are great adventures with little kids along, or for folks facing mobility limitations. Even a short walk in the fresh air does everyone good, and supporting local agriculture helps maintain open space and wildlife habitat. Go to www.pickyourrown.org.

■ **Play a round of disc golf.** Check www.pdga.com for a list of all the courses in New England. This sport involves a Frisbee instead of golf clubs and balls; it is lots of fun and can be great exercise on a mountain course such as the ones at Bolton Valley (877-9BOLTON, www.boltonvalley.com) or Smugglers' Notch (800-451-8752; www.smuggers.com) in Vermont.



Fall Ge

★ Lodging ★ Overnight Ac

■ **Try geocaching.** This high-tech treasure hunt involves using GPS units to find hidden caches throughout New England. Learn more at www.geocaching.com.

■ **Climb a cliff.** The Green Mountain Rock Climbing Center (www.vermontclimbing.com) in Rutland, Vt.; EMS Climbing School (www.emsclimb.com) and IME (www.ime-usa.com/imcs/index.html) in North Conway, N.H.; or Zoar Outdoor (www.zoaroutdoor.com) in Charlemont are all good places to start.

■ **Ride a horse.** Personal favorite: Windy Willows Farm (802-635-7300) in Johnson, Vt., features fabulous views across the Lamoille Valley to Butternut Mountain.

■ **Hike a ski hill.** Wide-open ski slopes and twisting ski trails are the perfect places to view fall foliage; the vistas widen with each step you take up the hill. There are almost 70 operating ski hills in New England.

The Islands

YARMOUTH

VALUE ON CAPE COD:

ng Columbus Weekend. Daily rates from the ocean beach. Close to sightseeing, es, in room refrigerators, outdoor pool with per room. 800-448-9744, 508-398-2370 ve, South Yarmouth.

UTH

ated pool & sauna. HERALD FALL SPECIAL: \$19 for 2 plus tax, kids stay free. Rooms \$78 1 block from Martha's Vineyard Ferry. LARGE 2, and Fishing Pkgs our specialty. Watch for our www.falmouthinn.com for more info.

icut

OCKS

Comfort Suites hotel is located just 8 miles ew England, minutes from the New England ar attractions. Bradley Int'l Airport is under a rates. The hotel features 107 suite rooms with high speed and more. Special opening e Thur- Sun for just \$140.00 (including 2 rmation and to book your reservation.