

Times Union Article

[An Adirondack getaway](#)

July 16, 2009 at 4:19 am by Susan Mehalick



By Jack Leadley Jr.

As a native of the village of Speculator — and its municipal historian — I am probably somewhat biased. But if you're looking for something different to do this weekend, consider taking a drive up there. The trip itself is beautiful and Speculator is, well, spectacular.

The village, about 80 miles from Albany, bills itself as a four-season vacationland, and that is true. Spring events are a bit sparse, but do include the freshest offering of maple syrup made locally. Winter offers downhill and cross-country skiing, as well as ice skating, snowmobiling, ice fishing and other cold-weather pursuits. Fall has hunting and fishing, in addition to the fall foliage.

But summer, glorious summer, is my favorite time there, with many wonderful things to do and see. Here are 10:

1. If you're an athlete, you might want to take part in the Piseco Triathlon, which is Saturday, July 18. Click for a [registration form](#).

2. Want to see some old-growth forest? Here is a treat for those who don't have the time or the ability to walk great distances to see old-growth woods. A portion of the remote Powley-Piseco road traverses a stand of old-growth white spruce, perhaps the most spectacular in the Adirondacks, according to the local Chamber of Commerce. To get the Powley Road, drive west on Route 8 from Speculator, past Lake Pleasant, to Route 10. Turn left (south) on Route 10. The Powley Road will be on your right in about a mile or so. Incidentally, if memory serves, Route 10 was the last state highway in New York with a gravel surface, before it was finally first paved about 40 years ago.

3. Free public beaches are in Wells and Speculator, with life guards on duty regular hours.

4. Speculator has a world-class boxing history. Heavyweight champions Gene Tunney, Max Baer and Max Schmelling all trained there. The training ring was across the street from the public beach. Now there is a gazebo, pavilion, basketball court and ball field, where you can now picnic or play hoops or softball, on the spot where the eyes of the sporting world were trained. In fact, I exist in part because my grandfather, John Henry Leadley from Staten Island, started visiting Speculator during the 1920s and '30s to watch the boxers train. My Dad fell in love with the place as a kid and eventually moved to Speculator, met my Mom, and here I am.

5. A popular place to visit is the Leadley Compound, about 115 acres of mostly woods, which includes all our family houses, our maple sugarbush and the workshop where my Dad and brother, Rick, make rustic furniture. People from around the world have visited, including people such as big-league sports team owners, an astronaut, former White House chief of staff Andy Card, art lovers (Dad is also an artist), packbasket aficionados, visitors from as far away as Australia and the Philippines, and groups of school kids. If you want to call ahead, please don't do so after 4 p.m. The compound is about a quarter-mile north of the Four Corners on the left side of Route 30 as you drive north toward Indian Lake. The latter was immortalized in the Cowsills song of the same name.

6. Speculator, Wells and Piseco all have local history museums. Inquire locally.

7. Renowned hermit French Louie is buried in the Speculator Cemetery on Elm Lake Road.

8. Free tennis courts are at Elm Lake Road in Speculator and behind the Courthouse in Lake Pleasant, across the street from a public golf course.

9. The area offers a number of state campgrounds where you can camp, obviously, but also picnic or swim on a day pass. Moffitt Beach on Sacandaga Lake is among the most popular. There are also motels and lots of restaurants, including Melody Lodge, Logan's Bar and Grill, King of the Frosty's, Common Grounds Café, Sunrise Diner, Dragon City II and The Inn at Speculator.

10. Hiking is always a favorite. Here's a [list of trails](#), and I've outline some popular hikes below:

- The relatively new Sacandaga Pathway is a beautiful trail along the Sacandaga River where it originates as the outlet of Lake Pleasant in Speculator.
- Col. Loring Peck's Grave in Speculator is an easy hike to the resting place of an American officer in the Revolutionary War. As I recall, other graves there include a son of the colonel's who fought in the War of 1812.
- Tenant Creek Falls in Hope. Take Creek Road off Route 30 and go about 7 miles. The falls are a good place to take kids, I'm told, as it's an easy hike.
- Fawn Lake in the town of Lake Pleasant is a popular destination. According to the local Chamber of Commerce, the trail is a good family walk on a relatively flat trail into an uninhabited lake. There is a small sand beach at one end of the lake and areas for a picnic along the shore.
- Panther Mountain in Piseco is also popular. So is the T-Lake Falls trail, but be very careful if you take this one. It offers a spectacular view, but a number of people have gone too close to the cliff, slipped, gone over the edge and been killed. Just use common sense.
- Other popular places are Auger Falls, Christine Falls and Kunjamuck Cave, near Speculator. You can inquire about them at the [Chamber of Commerce](#) office at the intersection of routes 8 and 30 in the village, 548-4521.