

# Press-Republican

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## AuSable Acres marks 50

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**Press-Republican**

--- — JAY — Nestled in a forest and sitting on highlands above the Ausable River lies a tranquil community where residents enjoy the solitude of a wilderness setting and the comforts of close-knit people who share a fondness for the region.

Those words may sound like they come directly from an advertising flyer for a real-estate agent, but they truly do describe the little piece of heaven that residents of AuSable Acres call their homes and vacation sites.

### HUNDREDS OF HOMES

The “Acres,” as it is affectionately known by the locals, is a collection of about 400 homes spread out along winding roads in a thickly wooded area between AuSable Forks and Jay.

The homes are built on the hills above Route 86, far removed from any regular traffic routes.

AuSable Drive is the main corridor and stretches from the Forks to Jay. A collection of winding roads — some paved and some dirt — meander through the forestland from one home to another, with street names like Cross, Summit, Lake, Beach and several honoring the trees themselves: Beech, Alder and Cedar.

Many of the homes are designed as Swiss chalets, perched on hilly landscapes and promoting the region’s attraction to nearby Whiteface Mountain and its famous ski slopes.

Some have romantic names: Dream Catcher Chalet and Snow Flake Chalet, for instance.

Other homes are log cabins or rustic ranch houses. Some are as old as the community itself; some are new and add a flare of modern architecture to the warm surroundings.

They all share a rustic quality that suits them well, sitting on their one-acre lots, half hidden to any passersby.

Residents are especially fond of their homes, their setting and their neighbors as they mark the 50th anniversary of AuSable Acres.

## **SPACIOUS SUBDIVISION**

Construction began in the 1960s as a dream of developer John Eaton to build a massive subdivision unlike any other. Rather than having a collection of homes placed in close proximity on small lots, Eaton cut up the forest into one-acre lots with plenty of wooded space between one home and the next.

Eaton, from Vermont, had plans to develop more than 900 lots on the land stretching from the east branch of the Ausable River to the west branch, but he died before he could completely develop the property.

Still, he left behind a community that has survived and continued to grow.

## **‘GREAT COMMUNITY’**

“Everyone up there is very happy to be there,” said Rosemary Barry, president of the AuSable Acres Property Owners Association Board of Directors and a part-time resident.

She spends her retirement years with her husband, Doug, traveling back and forth between their Long Island house and their home-away-from-home at the Acres.

“The people are what really makes the place,” she said. “

It’s a great community with a lot of great community support.”

The Barrys have owned property at AuSable Acres for about 13 years now. They learned of the opportunities at the Acres from friends who summered in the Adirondacks.

“She’s had a place up there since the ‘80s,” Rosemary said of her friend from Long Island. “They would keep inviting us up, but I’d say it was way too far to drive for the weekend.”

The Barrys did visit their friends during Christmastime one year, and the breathtaking views of an Adirondack Winter sold them in no time.

“After the third time (visiting), we decided it was time to look for a house,” she recalled. “We started looking in the summer, and I was blown away with how beautiful it is in the summer. We like every season (in the Adirondacks), except maybe spring.”

Rosemary has been on the Board of Directors for about seven years.

“My husband and I were both elementary-school teachers our entire careers, and we were always very active in the teachers union,” she said.

“We’ve always been involved in community activities, but I didn’t expect to get involved in something like this (the Property Owners Association Board). I was up here for vacation.”

The president of the board back then asked her if she would like to serve, however, and after convincing her that part-time-resident representation on the board was important, Rosemary decided to accept.

## **WORKING WITH TOWN**

The board takes an active role to ensure AuSable Acres continues to be a high-quality community for its residents. Rosemary works regularly with Town of Jay officials to provide a strong connection between town and community.

“From the beginning, one of the first accomplishments for our board was to get the town to take over our roads,” she said of the community’s first years as an organized subdivision.

“Back then, all of the roads were private and were almost impassable in winter. I don’t know how people got out in winter.”

Now, the Town of Jay actively maintains the roads as part of the greater Jay community.

## **OPPORTUNITIES**

Ginny and Bob West, who also call Long Island home, came to AuSable Acres in 1971 and have enjoyed their second home in the Adirondacks ever since.

“We had made a down payment on some land on a lake (in the Adirondacks) that was never developed,” Ginny recalled of their first foray into Adirondack living. “We were looking for a place to build a vacation home.”

The Wests were in Lake Placid one winter on a skiing vacation when they discovered Adirondack Acres on an advertisement while eating dinner. They checked out the community, looked at a few more places in Vermont and decided AuSable Acres was their choice.

“We liked the fact that it was close to Whiteface Mountain,” Ginny said. “But we also liked hiking the High Peaks, boating, canoeing and kayaking. AuSable is close to a lot of activities.”

The Wests also enjoyed the opportunities the close-knit community offered in raising their two young children, who grew up with AuSable Acres as their vacation destination.

“It’s just a great place to be, a great place to play,” Ginny said.

## **GROWTH**

Joe and Norma DeMarco are “locals” who have called AuSable Acres their home since 1975.

“We were returning from a trip to Niagara Falls in 1964 and decided to visit the Adirondacks, stopping at Paleface Mountain (in Jay) for lunch,” said Joe, who has spent time serving the community as president of the Ausable Valley Taxpayers Association.

He and Norma learned of the newly developed AuSable Acres just down the road from Paleface and decided to take a look. From that first visit, they decided to purchase a lot to build on in the future.

“In 1966, we started building our Snowflake Chalet,” he said. “It was built on piers at first; later on, we had a basement built under the house.”

The DeMarcos decided to move to Adirondack Acres as full-time residents in 1975.

“Many things have changed since then,” he said, noting the construction of a tennis court, pickleball court, volleyball court and bocce court. A new pavilion is also in the planning stages.

### **CELEBRATION**

AuSable Acres recently held a 50-year celebration picnic for its residents at the community’s center of activities on Lake Eaton, the man-made lake in the heart of AuSable Acres.

Residents hold an annual July Fourth celebration at the lake, but this year’s gathering attracted more than 150 people, who took part in the day-long festivities, culminating with a fireworks display.

Several homes and vacant lots are for sale at AuSable Acres, opening opportunities for future residents to enjoy the next 50-year celebration of a community that treasures what the Adirondacks have to offer.

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