Summer in Iron County is filled by events, big and small, taking place every weekend. We know that, since we at the Reporter are scurrying around here and there, trying to get pictures of everything. Some events are well-known, some are more modest, but the warm weather season always has something to do.

But once summer ends and school starts, the outdoor events fall away like the autumn leaves. Life quickly gets much quieter, and it stays quiet until next summer.

There are exceptions for the sportsmen—but not everyone hunts or snowmobiles or skis or ice-fishes. Outside of the Holiday in Lights parade in December (and shoveling snow), there's not a lot to do outside in winter.

But that's going to change this January, when Iron County sees its first-ever sled dog race.

We attended the meeting last week at which plans for The IronLine were outlined. The IronLine is a series of sled dog races scheduled for Jan. 18 to 20. The races start and end in downtown Iron River.

We can only imagine what it's going to be like. It's going to be like the days or Jack London and Robert Service. Imagine Genesee Street closed to traffic, with a long fenced-off lane down the middle, where the sled dog teams start and end their races. Imagine your breath hanging in the air, everyone bundled up holding something warm to drink, the racers, the dogs passing by, all the barking.

Think what the mushers village (the RV park) is going to be like. Lots of people, lots of dogs. Lots of barking. Lots of laughter. How's that for a cure for the wintertime blues?

Think of all the people coming into town in mid-winter, hitting the stores, the restaurants, the gas stations, the motels. More traffic. There's talk of a folk and blues music groups coming in. A mushers' banquet.

To make it work, the organizers need support, both cash and "in-kind" support. Can you truck snow around in mid-winter? Can you help prepare trails? Can you register mushers as they arrive? Can you help organize things or help with food? Can you help with safety? Do you like to work with dogs?

Some volunteers are needed right away, and others will be needed all the way through the big weekend.

It sounds like there's going to be plenty to do—and all kinds of fun for everyone who gets involved. The IronLine is the first-ever dog sled race in Iron County, and it's coming to downtown Iron River for the weekend of Jan. 18 to 20.

In short, it's going to be a fun weekend, something Iron County badly needs in the middle of winter.

All you snowbirds out there—you're really going to be missing a fun time! They can't do sled dog races down south.

--Peter Nocerini