

December 1999

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I hope everyone is enjoying the holidays. It's time once again to summarize the accomplishments of the Connecticut Section of the Green Mountain Club for the year, an outstanding year in my opinion.

Trails and Shelters: Dick Krompegal, as he has done for the past 15 years, directed the upkeep of the 12 miles of Long Trail, and 12 miles of Mattabesett Trail, in our care. Dick led five (!) work weekends on the LT in Vermont this year, and six days on the Mattabesett, with great support from several Section members. The trails are looking super.

Activities: Under Ken Williamson's guidance, our Section had 50 recreational activities scheduled, including 39 hikes, seven overnight campout/backpacks, and bike, canoe and orienteering trips. Thanks to all of you who volunteered to lead outings.

Membership: Allen Freeman reports that we are finishing the year with 163 voting members (87 individual adult members and 38 families), an increase of an amazing 30 percent over last year! Welcome again to all our new members in 1999.

Finances: Jack Sanga reports that we had just over \$1650 in early December. Our financial health is due in large part to your generous contributions during the year. As another positive note, the GMC Executive Committee has agreed to consider raising the percentage of dues that the Sections keep from the current 20 percent level.

The Trail Talk: Bob and Arlene Rivard produced six great Trail Talk newsletters again this year. Other Sections are astounded to hear that we issue six, not the typical three or four newsletters. We have one of the most comprehensive Section newsletters in the GMC, too.

Next Year:

Annual Dinner and Meeting on Saturday, March 18, 2000, at the Cheshire Grange. The menu will once again be the Grange's famous roast beef or vegetarian lasagna dinner. Full details will be provided in the February Trail Talk.

Section Officers:

We are looking for new candidates for several Section offices for 2000-2001: President, Vice President for Trails and Shelters, Secretary, Director to the GMC. If you are interested in filling any of these vital roles in our Section, please contact any of the current Section officers.

Dues and Membership Renewal: Please take a few minutes to fill out and mail the 2000 membership renewal form attached. Thanks in advance for your continuing support of the Green Mountain Club. Membership cards will be mailed with the February newsletter.

Best wishes for the New Year!
Jim Robertson

Shenipsit Trail October 30

Halloween festivities kept the little ones from attending this hike, a repeat of last April's easy outing in search of garnets, Connecticut's state mineral. So we five adult hikers proceeded with child-like anticipation of finding the little red gemstones. Studded rocks were easily seen along the trail but after about a mile and a half the trail turned into a garnet-laden path with the stones lying there for the taking. And take we did!

After collecting our fill we continued on and stopped at a pine grove for a short break. The Rivards, deciding that the autumn chore of leaf raking was necessary, continued the loop south back to the car, hiking about three miles in all. The others, not anxious to go home to yard chores themselves, hiked north then took a side trail loop with fading blazes which soon disappeared altogether. An unmarked trail on private property enticed the men to follow. Uncertain of Jack's sense of direction, the leader followed with much apprehension. Eventually we came upon the blue-blazed trail once again and hiked back to the cars. The traditional pizza and beer followed.

*Hikers: Bob and Arlene Rivard, Ken Williamson, Jack Sanga
Leader: Sarah O'Hare*

Penwood State Park

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November 7

After returning from a weekend adventure on the A. T. in the Berkshires with Ken, Allen, and Jack, I packed up my two girls and their friend, Molly, and drove to Penwood. We met Beth Wooding, a new Connecticut Section member, at the entrance parking lot. After reviewing the notice that logging operations will soon start on the hemlocks affected by the woolly adelgid, we headed up the Metacomet Trail. Since it was a nice, although cool and windy, day, many other people were in the park. We hiked along the ridge, through hemlocks and laurel, stopping periodically to eat some Halloween candy, before reaching Lake Louise. The kids found sticks with which to test the water' s depth, then I coerced them into climbing up the road that led to the (former) Veeder Cabin. Several years ago, Carol Langley had led a winter hike here, and the cabin had been still standing. Now it' s gone, with only a field and picnic area in its place. As the afternoon was short, we returned to the parking area by the main park road, noting several cistern-like holes along the way. Beth had to leave early, so the kids and I meandered down the road more slowly. A stop at the A.C. Peterson' s Farm Store in Bloomfield for ice cream (brrrr!) and hot coffee completed the day.

*Hikers: Beth Wooding, Kerry and Brenna Robertson, Molly Brink
Leader: Jim Robertson*

Devil's Den Nature Preserve November 13

Another beautiful fall day brought four hikers together at Devil' s Den Nature Preserve in Weston. The preserve offers 21 miles of well-marked trails with diverse terrain. Early on in the hike, we spotted a doe with her two yearlings bounding through the woods, aware of us, yet not wary of our presence. Our first pause was at Ambler Gorge, a picturesque ravine with a rocky cascade. Designated as our noontime lunch spot, we hiked on to the Great Ledge, which offered us a view of the Saugatuck Reservoir. As the trail brought us closer to the end of our hike, we stopped briefly at an old charcoal production site. Brooks estimated that we hiked eight miles. The delightful Devil' s Den Nature Preserve is worthy of hiking each season of the year.

*Hikers: Brooks Truitt, Erin Mahon, Steve Stevenson
Leader: Sarah O'Hare*

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Mina Gutcheon Family, Middletown
Michael Masal Family, Rocky Hill
Daniel Nash, Fairfield
Darlene Steinis, Waterbury
Mark Trainor, Canton
Beth Wooding, East Granby

Mattabesett Trail Series

The hikes in December have had phenomenal weather. It has been more like hiking in early September, the weather was warm and sunny. So far we have done about 28 miles of the trail. We have hiked from the eastern most portion by the power plant on the CT River to Route 79 in Durham. The trail so far has been moderately difficult. It is definitely not flat, but no mountains yet. There have been many rock formations where careful walking is definitely required. We passed some rock formations, that while not actually caves, would provide good shelter in inclement weather.

There have been several highlights provided by the hikers themselves. On the first hike, Matt did a fabulous Tarzan impression on a grapevine. However, the grapevine forgot that it wasn' t supposed to detach from the tree. Rather than a nice graceful arc, the swing was more like a rope breaking. Maybe Matt can' t be Tarzan, but could definitely pass as George of the Jungle.

During a lunch break we had conversations that included many areas of philosophy. Weighty matters were considered, such as the best comics in the newspaper. And does anyone get the following comics, "The Boondocks" or "Zippy"? If you do, please attend a future hike and clue the rest of us in. (These comics appear in the Hartford Courant).

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One last point. I will vehemently deny all allegations that we were ever lost. We may have been slightly confused at several points, but never ever lost. Besides, Ken wasn't on any of the hikes and someone has to uphold the tradition.

After each hike, we have gone for additional calories (because we have earned them). This is usually in the form of pizza.

*Hikers: Mary Horne, Doreen Scott, Sarah O'Hare, Brooks Truitt and Matt Golec
Leader: Jack Sanga*

Chatfield Trail December 11

Good things come in small packages, so, too, the Chatfield Trail in Killingworth! The 4.5 mile trail held many delightful surprises for the four hikers who braved the cold winds for a short morning hike. After a brief walk on Rte. 80 to the trail head, we found it abound with boy scouts about to begin their hike, some laden with full backpacks. Not to be lost in their crowd, the leader paced quickly to pass them all, attempting to leave some distance between the two groups. The attempt was successful immediately when the scouts' fascination with the first rock ledge slowed them.

The December morning showed its beauty with the sun's warmth melting the dew off an enormous rock wall's brilliant green moss. One can only imagine the view of the ice falls in the winter! The trail's terrain was extremely rocky, many times passable only with using one's hand to climb. The trail led up and down ledges. At one point, Dick and Sarah crawled through a cave. True to form, Ken and Jack took the easy way and walked around the outside of the cave.

At one rocky outcropping, a side trail led up through a crack in the cliff. We all managed to squeeze through after removing our packs. To our amazement, the crack ended at a rock-walled "room" and upon hearing children's voices from above, Ken made loud animal noises to spook them, successfully, too! When we emerged we overheard them talking about the growling coming from the rocks. Ken has probably frightened away a few future GMC prospective members!

The trail led through Deer Lake Scout Camp and continued along and over a near-overflowing brook, such a contrast from the summer's dried up waterways. A beautiful view of the brook from above completed the hike, as in a moment the drop car was in view. A short hike, yes, but a gem of a trail! We ended our outing at Dino's Pizza where Ken was delighted to find that they served red potato pizza. So pizza and beer it was, as usual.

*Hikers: Dick Krompegal, Jack Sanga, Ken Williamson
Leader: Sarah O'Hare*

ANNUAL MEETING

Saturday, March 18, 2000

Cheshire Grange

Speaker: Olive Wysocki:

"Iceland, Land of Fire & Ice"

See next issue for more details and registration form

ACTIVITIES SCHEDULE

January - February 2000

Friday/Saturday, December 31/ January 1 - Backpacking, Y2K on BM. Celebrate the New Year on top of Connecticut's highest

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peak, Bear Mountain.

Leader: Ken Williamson (860) 535-2622, e-mail: Ksub@aol.com

Sunday, January 2 - Day Hike, Day Pond State Park , Colchester. Short hike, probably 3-4 miles; option for longer loop; good for families. Meet at park entrance at 10 a.m.

Leader: Jim Robertson (860) 633-7279, e-mail: jrobert685@aol.com

Saturday, January 8 - Day Hike, Leader's Choice. Contact leader for details, mileage and directions.

Leader: Jack Sanga (860) 648-9614, e-mail: jsanga@aol.com

Saturday/Sunday, January 15/16 - Snow Shoeing. No snow yet up north so we will wait and see where this takes place. Could be a backpacking trip. Optional extra day on Monday (MLK, Jr. Day). Contact leader to work out the logistics and location of the trip.

Leader: Ken Williamson (860) 535-2622, e-mail: Ksub@aol.com

Saturday, January 22 - Cross-Country Skiing, Gay City State Park, Hebron. 10:00 a.m. start. If there is no snow, we can hike.

Leader: Sarah O' Hare (860) 5637018, e-mail: SEOHARE@aol.com

Sunday, January 30 - Day Hike, Pre Super Bowl Hike. Call for hike location and start time.

Leader: Jim Robertson (860) 633-7279, e-mail: jrobert685@aol.com

Saturday, February 5 - Day Hike, Leader's Choice. Contact leader for details, mileage and directions.

Leader: Jack Sanga (860) 648-9614, e-mail: jsanga@aol.com

Sunday, February 13 - Day Hike, Burr Pond State Park, Torrington. Contact leader for start time, mileage and directions.

Leader: Sarah O' Hare (860) 5637018, e-mail: SEOHARE@aol.com

Saturday, February 19 - Day Hike, Leader's Choice. Plan on about 10 miles. Contact leader for details and directions.

Leader: Ken Williamson (860) 535-2622, e-mail: Ksub@aol.com

Sunday, February 20 - Duck Pin Bowling in Manchester. Spend a couple of hours Duck Pin bowling. It doesn't matter how good or bad a bowler you are, in Duck Pins, an 80 is a real high score. Duck Pins use the small balls as in candle pins, but the pins are shaped like 10 pins. Contact leader for details.

Leader: Jack Sanga (860) 648-9614, e-mail: jsanga@aol.com

Saturday/Sunday, February 26/27 - Snow Shoeing, Vermont. Winter trip to check out condition of Story Spring Shelter. Distance about 9 miles round-trip.

Leader: Ken Williamson (860) 535-2622, e-mail Ksub@aol.com

SAVE THIS DATE!

Saturday, March 18 - Connecticut Section, GMC Annual Dinner. Cheshire Grange. Great food as usual. The speaker will be Olive Wysocki who will present: "Iceland, Land of Fire & Ice." See the February 2000 *Trail Talk* for more details and the registration form.