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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

ANNUAL DINNER AND MEETING MARCH 18

I hope you will join us for the Connecticut Section's Anniversary annual dinner and meeting on Saturday evening, March 18, at the Grange Hall on Wallingford Road in Cheshire. The standard schedule of the social hour with punch and snacks will be held from 6:00 to 7:00, followed by the Grange's roast beef (or vegetarian lasagna) dinner at 7:00. The reservation form is attached to this newsletter. (inside back page)

Following dinner we'll move upstairs for our annual meeting at about 8:00 p.m. The meeting, which typically lasts 30 minutes, will include reports by the Section's officers summarizing 1999 activities, election of officers for 2000-2001, and any other business that you want to discuss. The slate of officers to be nominated includes:

President: Ken Williamson
Vice President for Activities: Sarah O'Hare
Treasurer: Jack Sanga
Director: Jim Robertson

The positions of Vice President for Trails and Shelters, Secretary, and Alternate Director are still available for the upcoming year. If you are interested in filling any of these 1-year terms, please contact one of the current Section officers.

Following the meeting, Ken Nichols of New Britain will give a presentation on his rock climbing adventures on Baffin Island in northeast Canada. (Note that we had a change in guest speakers from the announcement in the December newsletter.)

THANKS FOR YOUR RENEWALS AND GENEROUS DONATIONS!

Thank you to everyone who has renewed their membership in the GMC for 2000. In addition, we have received over \$320 (!!!) in donations this year. Your generosity and continued support of the Green Mountain Club are greatly appreciated. If you haven't sent in your renewal yet, please take a few moments to send a check to Allen Freeman, whose address is listed on page 2.

There is more good news on the financial front. The GMC office has informed us that the Sections may now keep 25% of the dues we collect. For the last two years, we kept 20% and remitted 80% to the Vermont office for GMC programs. The Main Club now operates with an annual budget of over one million dollars, and expects to end its current fiscal year April 30 with a sizable surplus.

Hope to see you at the Grange on March 18th!
Jim Robertson

(Better Late Than Never Department - Dick recently submitted these two reports from October - Co-Editors)

Long Trail Maintenance October 1 - 3

After four previous trips to VT in 1999 to do maintenance, there was not too much interest in this fifth trip. Bob Schoff and Art Runnels joined me for the trip. We arrived at the Kid Gore shelter in early afternoon. As we were settling in, 3 hikers arrived from the north informing us that an elderly woman with severe abdomen pain, and a man with her, were north of the shelter hiking north. Apparently they were concerned that it was appendicitis - that begs the question, "Why did these 3 guys leave them?" I cleared my pack, threw in some items I thought I might need then headed north. After a half mile I came across the woman's pack with a note indicating why they had to abandon it. I kept going north for several miles with no contact. I had to assume they would make the next 2 miles to the Wardsboro Road. I headed back to the shelter, - we learned the next day the woman just had a bad case of colitis from something she ate, good news.

On the previous 2 trips to this area we maintained the trail south to the top of Glastenbury Mtn. and north of Kid Gore for about a mile. Therefore, on this trip we decided to work around the shelter. We put in a lot of hours clearing the trees in front of the shelter to

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maintain the view. We also cleared for a tent site and hauled mineral soil to top it off, cleared a small blowdown on the LT, brightened the letters on a directional sign, and several other tasks.

On Saturday morning we had a spectacular sunrise and in the evening spotted about 7 falling stars as well as several satellites. As usual we also spent the evenings swapping stories with other hikers.

*Crew: Bob Schoff, Art Runnels
Leader: Dick Krompegal*

Mattabesett Trail Maintenance October 31

I guess back in August it didn't hit me that this was Halloween when I scheduled this trip. However, John Bensenhaver did join me. He does live very close to this section of the trail. We spotted cars then walked the section from Route 17 to Paug Gap. We need to re-blaze this section very early next year.

Crew: John Bensenhaver, Dick Krompegal

Pachaug Hikes #1 and #2 November 28 December 26

Winter has yet to arrive. Both hikes were held on days that seemed more like early fall than winter. We started the first hike from the Hell Hollow Road Trailhead. To get in a few more miles we started off our hike doing a 2 mile loop of Hell Hollow on the Pachaug and Quinebaug Trails. Back at the start we continued on the Pachaug Trail to Route 138. We enjoyed a nice lunch stop alongside some fast water in Loudon Brook. We finished with about 10.8 miles on the day.

Hike #2 started from the trailhead at Beach Pond on the CT/RI border. Having not been on this section of trail in several years I had forgotten how nice this section is. Many rock ledges and great views of the pond on days with clear blue skies. We were several miles from the cars when, I in the lead, rounded a corner and saw one of the most beautiful, old trees in all of Connecticut. I would imagine the old fellow was at least 250 to 300 years old. Tall and stately, its branches reached for the sky. As I stood there in admiration I glanced at Sarah. She, too, was admiring the tree but there was something odd about the look in her eyes. I had seen that look before but where? Then it came to me. That is the same look my cat gives the top of the kitchen cabinet as she wonders how to leap from the floor to the top. A quick dare from Jack about getting 10 feet off the ground and Sarah was gone in a flash. Up the tree. Not to be outdone, Mandy also started to climb which surprised me, as I have never known Mandy to climb a tree. Sit in water, yes. Climb trees, no. Both went a lot higher than the initial 10 feet dare. Jack and I just pulled up a rock and waited. We finished the hike with 10.8 miles on the day and, of course, pizza.

*Hike #1: Sarah O'Hare, Clare Lindsay,
Hike #2 Mandy Brink, Sarah O'Hare, Jack Sanga,
Leader: Ken Williamson*

Y2K Hike to Bear Mountain December 31 - January 1

Oh, the power of the Internet. 18 people inquired about this trip and at one point in mid-December I was thinking I would have to limit this to 8. However, in the end only Jack Sanga, his son Drew (age 3) and I answered the call. Now you may think what a wonderful father (which he is) to spend time with his son in this way. I know his real motive however, was to avoid the midnight ramble to the summit of Bear Mountain. I must admit he did look for a baby-sitter but there were none to be found at Bond Shelter. Drew is a most impressive camper and in fact has, at an early age, learned one of the basics of backpacking. When the sun goes down, sleep; when the sun comes up, hike.

I left the shelter for the summit too early as hiking alone on a clear trail put me there with 35 minutes to spare. I set my trekking poles next to a plaque placed on the summit in 1885 by Robbins Battel wrongly proclaiming Bear Mountain to be the highest point in Connecticut, and scrambled up the stone monument to await Y2K. For those who haven't visited the highest point in Connecticut it is nothing but a green metal stake on a trail that runs along the side of Mt. Frissell. No vista. No awe-inspiring sight. Just a green metal stake. And sitting alone on the highest peak in the most beautiful part of Connecticut waiting for Y2K to arrive I decided that this

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grand spot should be the highest point. And that I should make it happen.

My first thought was to bring in bulldozers to reshape the mountain. I rejected that idea as there isn't a lot of dirt there, only a thin veneer on a really big rock. So why not bring dirt in? Large piles of dirt could be placed at the Undermountain Trailhead and everybody going up the mountain could fill their pockets with dirt and empty them on the summit. A great plan until I remembered that many day hikers to this area are children. Children will gladly fill their pockets with dirt but a large percentage would get tired of carrying the dirt and dump it on the trail before the final destination. Even worse some would forget to take the dirt out of their pockets, thereby clogging the family washing machine. A plan to cap the mountain in 10 feet of concrete to prevent erosion while Mt. Frissel was left to the elements was discarded as possibly taking too long. And then I came upon the solution.

I was born and raised in Colorado, a state with tall mountains and very, very straight borders. Borders so straight and square that 4 states meet at one point. Contrast that with Connecticut. The Rhode Island border is fairly straight, as is the border with New York, except for that "panhandle" area around Greenwich, which can be argued, is not part of Connecticut anyway. I understand the reason for the ragged southern border, being Long Island Sound and all, but what about the Massachusetts border? Being from Colorado it has always bothered me, when watching the weather on the nightly news, that here is a perfectly straight border with a notch taken out of the center. A notch serving no purpose. Until now. Moving the notch approx-

imately 36.43 miles to the west to what is now the highest point of Connecticut will become just another hillside in Massachusetts. The beautiful summit of Bear Mountain now takes its rightful place as the highest point in Connecticut and Robbins Battell, Stonemason, after 115 years is vindicated.

I intend to sell T-shirts and bumper stickers to finance this plan. A percentage of the proceeds will go towards required research but most will go to my Kayak fund.

After solving this problem, watching the fireworks and ensuring the lights in the valley were still on I headed back to the shelter. Both my shelter mates were asleep but I woke Jack to wish him a happy New Year anyway. Not much longer after that the sun rose, along with the youngest camper. After some hot cocoa and coffee we left for a trip down the mountain and a gourmet breakfast in Caanan.

*Hikers: Jack Sanga, Drew Sanga
Leader: Ken Williamson*

Day Pond State Park January 2

On the first Sunday of the year, we took a quick 4 mile hike around Day Pond State Park and the Salmon River State Forest. We first hiked the Salmon River Trail South Loop, then under the power lines to Day Pond Road and past the old settlement towards the river. The old Pontiac Catalina still sits silently, rusting, almost a mile away from the current park roads, although the alternator still appears to have some nice copper windings that may be salvageable. We investigated the old stone foundations, remnants of early farming settlements, before taking the north loop back to the pond and parking area.

*Leader: Jim Robertson
Hikers: David Egan-Robertson, Mary Horne, John O'Neill, Bob Schoff, Ken Williamson*

New Members

Regina Chatel Family, Willington
Elisabeth Craven, Old Lyme
Mary Horne, Vernon
K. Grace King, Hamden
Jan Lang, Enfield
Katie Launer, North Stonington
Beth Moriarity, Norwich
David O'Donnell Family, Windsor
John O'Neill, Tolland
Brooks Truitt, Ansonia

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Terry Vidal Family, New Haven
Brian Zawodniak, Suffield

**Two Perspectives of a GMC Outing
Snow Shoe Trip to Bourne Pond
January 15 - 16**

Unofficial Trip Report by Jack Sanga

The trip was billed as a short 4 mile snowshoe trip. I should KNOW Ken better by now. What he meant was it is 4 miles to Bourne Pond shelter from the trail head. (Neglected to mention the TWO MILES UPHILL on snowmobile trail to get to the trail head.) Our final destination is the new Stratton Shelter (which is 2 miles past Bourne Pond). We arrive in the parking lot around 11:30. Ken has to pack and get ready. Leave Jeep around noon. Get to trailhead around 1:00. My vote at this point was Story Spring, distance about 1/2 mile. But NO!!! I' m overruled. We are headed for Stratton via Bourne Pond. Trail poorly marked blow downs galore, trees covered with snow. We are only lost about half the time. (Ken' s average is improving.) Well, we get to Bourne Pond around 4:00. 2 plus miles to go just to reach Stratton. I' m exhausted. Darkness in about 30 minutes. Scrap the plan for Stratton. Temperature falling. Struggle out of wet clothing, put on dry clothes, crawl into sleeping bag. Must be all of minus 5 degrees. Decide to start new diet and skip supper as it is so cold, fire won't burn. Candle won't stay lit. Ken takes pity and shares some of his supper. (Has to wake me up.) Luckily for us about 2:00 a.m., wind picks up. Trees popping and shattering wakes us up. Wind blows the clouds in. Temperature rises to about upper teens to low twenties. Wake up fully refreshed, make breakfast, wait for Ken to pack up. We decide to take loop from Bourne Pond to Stratton Shelter to check it out. Leave around 9:00. Trail poorly marked, blow downs galore, trees covered with snow, etc., etc. Get to new Stratton Shelter around 11:30. It is VERY IMPRESSIVE. Break out stoves, make hot drinks, I have last night's supper, Ken has frozen bagels. 4 miles to go to get to Wardsboro Road. Leave Shelter around 12:00, get to road about 2:30. Have a mile to go to get back to parking lot. Dodge snowmobiles. Watch 1 crazy lady driver go into ditch. Get to Jeep around 3:00. Buy hot dogs and drinks from vendor selling to the snowmobilers. Stop in Greenfield for coffee and windshield wiper fluid. Add LOTS of coffee brandy to coffee. Tastes great. Back to South Windsor around 6:00. Transfer about 1/2 my gear from Jeep to my truck. Ken is selling the rest cheap.

On the plus side, Saturday hiking in, the sky was DEEP BLUE. Frozen ice on the trees made it postcard perfect. Get to Bourne Pond, absolute silence. Only sounds are breathing. Moon is 1/2 full. Reflecting on the snow it is very bright. Sunday a gentle snow is falling again very quiet. Very Normal Rockwell. Sights are great. Stratton Shelter gave us some ideas for Kid Gore Shelter. Learned how to use snow shoes. Had a GREAT TIME. Need to do it again in a month or so.

Official Trip Report by Ken Williamson

Driving to Vermont my mind drifts to adventures past. As an Arctic explorer and 3-time visitor to the North Pole I look forward to once again tasting winter's icy blast. The snow deepens as we approach our final destination, the trailhead at Stratton Mountain. Immediately on arrival I make final adjustments to my gear,

ensuring that the essentials for thriving in this hostile environment are secure, when Jack decides to strike out on his own. I know, perhaps better than most, that time spent in contemplation with one's self on the trail is time well spent. However, this time is spent more effectively if one is on the correct trail to begin with. After waiting for a short while Jack returns and I lead him out on the correct path.

It is a glorious day as we head up Arlington Road to the trail that will take us to Bourne Pond and beyond. A day so beautiful and full of wonder that even the snowmobilers are courteous. As we make our turn off the road and into the woods I hear a faint whimper. It is my trusty companion Jack. Aware that shelter lies a scant .5 miles away he desperately pleads his case for turning the other direction and taking the sissy weekender approach into Story Springs Shelter. Using leadership skills honed sharp and true over the years I convince him that backpacking, like life, cannot be full of short cuts and compromise. That there comes a time when we must face our demons and march off into the unknown, confident in ourselves and our ability to "make it happen."

The trail to Bourne Pond is obscured under a layer of snow, blazes that scream forth in the summer are smothered by layers of ice and snow. My senses awaken to the challenge of leading us to our destination. While Jack could only see the trees and snow I felt the path beneath my boots. Yes, some may have seen many obstacles in our way but I only saw challenges to be met and bested.

The path to disaster is a chain. To avoid disaster one must only break a single link in that chain. On arriving at Bourne Pond I know that this must be our camp for the night. We unpack our gear and I settle down with a hot mug of fresh brewed coffee, the

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entertainment provided by Jack building a fire. As the fire slowly sinks into the snow, Jack rapidly sinks into his sleeping bag. I prepare a gourmet dinner of honey-roasted chicken and couscous and another cup of coffee. Sensing Jack is not inclined to cook tonight, I offer him food from my pot. Soon afterwards Jack is asleep.

I would like to tell you about "Big Daddy" Hurtt. In the mid-seventies Big Daddy was a cook aboard the USS Narwhal (SSN 671), the finest submarine to ever sail the seven seas. Big Daddy, in addition to being a great shipmate, was known for 2 things. A most interesting collection of "art and literature" and the ability to snore face down into a pillow. I will see your Big Daddy and raise you one Jack Sanga. Although a porpoise may have 9 orifices from which it can make noise I believe Jack has 10. Sounds like I have never heard before shook the shelter.

That is my story and I' m sticking to it. Both stories are in agreement from Greenfield on. Like all GMC events, you really had to be there to understand.

Gay City State Park January 22

Five degrees with a wind chill of at least 20 below zero! If I had not obligated myself in leading this cross country ski outing, I would have preferred to stay home! No one would possibly come out on a morning such as this. Wrong! Eight of us gathered in the parking lot of Gay City State Park in Hebron, quickly losing all feeling in our hands and feet from the frigid temperature. Seven of us came to ski and one, Jim, came to hike. Mike, the most ambitious skier of the group led the way and broke the trail in which the remainder of us could ski. None of us had skied recently, so Jim, on foot, was able to keep up with us for quite a distance.

We proceeded into the woods only to come upon the park' s biggest downhill. It was icy with exposed rocks. As we, one by one, slid down the hill, Regina broke a ski pole and became hiker number two. The trails, for the most part, had sufficient snow cover but in many areas it was either too icy or rocky for good skiing. In no time we had warmed and the wind seemed to have died down. It really had become a delightful day.

After about an hour and a half Jack turned in his ski boots for hiking boots and became hiker number three. Eventually we all met up together and the general consensus was that it was time for pizza. After making haste back to the parking lot we headed out to Buckingham Pizza in Glastonbury.

Leader: Sarah O' Hare

Skiers/hikers: Kim Proia, Jack Sanga, Jim Robertson, Regina Chatel, Laura and Jack Sanga (Jack's parents), Mike O' Hare

McLean Game Refuge Ski and Snowshoe January 30

Our 4th annual pre-Super Bowl outing was held this year at McLean Game Refuge in Granby. A good base of snow provided us with the condition for skiing and snowshoeing for only the second or third weekend this winter. Regina and David headed out on their skis, followed by John and Mary on snowshoes, and me and the kids following. We have only one pair of child's skis, so Kerry and Brenna had to take turns using them. The other would use either snow-

shoes or their boots to follow the trails, which were well packed in most places. We spent about three hours exploring the preserve at our respective paces, Regina and David getting to the top of one of the Barn Door Hills, and met up again as we returned towards the parking area on Route 10. Pizza at Goomba's in Granby capped a most enjoyable day.

Hikers: Jim, Kerry and Brenna Robertson, Regina and David Chatel, Mary Horne, John O'Neill

Donations

James & Miriam Barlow
Regina & David Chatel
Sherrill & Ruth Collins
Frank & David Demarest
Rosemary Miller

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Sarah & Michael O'Hare
James Robertson
Herb van Winkelen
Ken & Chris Williamson
Kathleen Wright

Thank You !

ACTIVITIES SCHEDULE

March - April 2000

Sunday, March 5 - Day Hike, Goodwin State Forest, Hampton. 9:30 a.m. start. Several trail loops, mileage to be determined by the group.

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

Saturday, March 11 - Day Hike, Shenipsit Trail, Ellington. 9:30 a.m. start. Steep climb to Soapstone Mountain summit. Approximately 8 miles.

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

Saturday, March 18 - Annual Dinner and Meeting, Cheshire Grange. See the newsletter for details. Contact Ken Williamson, ksub@aol.com or (860)-535-2622 if you need directions.

Saturday/Sunday, March 25/26 - Backpacking, Overnight trip on the CT AT. Meet at Kent (CT). If the weather is bad, a short hike to Mt. Algo shelter. If the weather is nicer, a longer hike to Stewart Hollow Brook. Contact leader for more details.

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

Sunday, April 2 - Day Hike, Nehantic Trail, Pachaug State Forest. Approximately 10 mile hike. Start time 9:30 a.m. Contact leader for details.

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

Saturday, April 8 - Day Hike, #5 of the Mattabesett Trail series. Weather should be clear to allow the ridge walking. Trip will be in the 6 - 8 mile range. Start time 9:30 a.m. Contact leader for more details.

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

Sunday, April 16 - Day Hike, Leaders Choice. Contact leader for details.

Leader: Stephanie Buhl (860) 563-8203, e-mail: buhlsm@pweh.com

Saturday, April 22 - Day Hike, Mohawk Trail. Approximately 10 mile hike. Start time 9:30 a.m. Contact leader for details.

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

Saturday, April 29 - Day Hike, Devils Hopyard. Series of loop trails to select from. Distance can be long or short. There is one great scenic overlook. Waterfall is picturesque. Start at 9:30 a.m. Contact leader for details.

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