



Connecticut Section of the Green Mountain Club

Volume LIII, Issue II April to June 2021 Fred Clark, Editor

President's Message Spring 2021

The days are getting longer, the weather is getting warmer, and COVID trends are providing hope that we may be getting the virus under control. Hopefully these factors will allow us to return to a more normal level of activity in the outdoors. With that sense of optimism, I'd like to summarize a few upcoming GMC initiatives and events.

GMC Plans for 2021 – The Club expects to fully fund and staff its field programs this year and is in the process of recruiting the normal complement of about 40 paid seasonal staff, including two roving Long Trail Patrol crews, caretakers for high-use areas, and a construction crew. Major projects planned for 2021 are work on the new Stratton View Shelter and north shore trail, replacement of at least some of the remaining 11 pit privies on the LT, building the Bromley observation tower and refurbishment of Kid Gore Shelter along with building a moldering privy. Timing for the Kid Gore work hasn't been set yet. The GMC has to schedule major construction work to align with windows of availability of funding for each project. When the Kid Gore schedule is clearer, we'll communicate that information.

CT Section Annual Dinner and Meeting - We cancelled the 2020 event in response to the state's COVID shutdown. The Cheshire Grange has advised Activities VP Dennis Himes that they won't re-open until at least Fall 2021 at the earliest. To prevent going another year without an annual dinner and meeting, we've decided to hold an outdoor "dinner" and meeting. The details:

- Date: Saturday May 8, 2021
- Starting Time: About 5:00 pm. The annual meeting will commence around 6:00 pm
- Location: Hammonasset State Park in Madison, CT, at Picnic Pavilion #4. This covered pavilion is near the Meigs Point Nature Center which is further from the beaches and from most of the crowds. It has at least 10 large picnic tables, four open sides, and plenty of surrounding grassy area. Upon entering Hammonasset, follow the signs along the main road toward Meigs Point. Once past the nature center buildings, turn left into the parking lots. Bring chairs if you would feel more comfortable sitting outside the pavilion.
- Food: Bring your own picnic
- Guest speaker: To be determined. Dennis is working on a couple of options.
- Cost: Free (except for the food you bring)
- Reservations: None required, but it would be helpful if you let Dennis know that you'll be joining us. Dennis' contact information is located on page 2.

Finally, a sad note. Long-time Connecticut Section member Bill Falconer passed away in early January. A friend wrote a nice obituary for Bill which appears on page 8.

See you on the trail, *Jim Robertson*



West Woods Hike – see page 3

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INQUIRIES: Please direct all inquiries regarding the Connecticut Section to the President.

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MEMBERSHIP: When filling out an application to join or renew your membership in the Green Mountain Club, circle **Connecticut Section** on the application. You will receive, at no extra charge, the Connecticut Section's newsletter.

DUES:

Individual Adult	\$45.00
Family	\$60.00
Senior (70 or older) or Limited Income	\$25.00
Sponsor (Individual/Family)	\$75.00

Send annual dues to:
Green Mountain Club
4711 Waterbury-Stowe Road
Waterbury Center, VT 05677-9904

You may also join or renew online at:
<https://www.greenmountainclub.org/>

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ACTIVITY REPORTS

Metacomet Trail December 12, 2020 by Carol A. Langley

The day was foggy and soggy so I decided that I would not stay home. I waited until 9:45 but no one showed, so I started out. This trail has had a serious problem with dirt bikes so, just a short distance in, I had to climb over a cement block and some logs then I was on my way. Taking advantage of the time, I removed several branches along the trail, and cleared leaves out of streams. As I started my climb up the mountainside, I met a young man who looked at me and said there are some big downed trees before you reach the top. He probably thought that Great-grandma was going to turn around but I did not, just thanked him and moved on. Well, soon I saw the trees and I could not climb over one, so I went around. Reaching the old fire service road that was used in the 1940s and 1950s, I headed south. The fog was thick and in some cases I had to look around to make sure that there was a blue blaze in front of me.

The leaves and rocks were slippery so I skirted around some iffy areas. Just before I reached the towers and West Peak, I met another young man who had climbed up the rock slide from Camp Sloper in Southington. We chatted for a few minutes and moved on. Just as I reached West Peak, I felt gentle rain drops on my face. Looks like lunch will be delayed. Finding a nice pine tree, I took cover and put on my rain gear and pack cover. When I got back into the woods, it was a gentle mist again.

Following the road most of the way, I was able to spot a pair of deer down in the valley. A wild turkey was busy digging for food in a pile of leaves and did not even see or hear me. The quiet of the day was wonderful. I did not even hear planes flying overhead. There was only a muffled hum of traffic on I-691.

As I reached the final half-mile, there was a stand of beech trees that had their golden leaves and limbs with dew drops that gave the illusion of strands of clear Christmas lights. This was Mother Nature at her finest. Reaching my car and while I was searching for my keys, the sky opened and it really rained. Sorry you missed this lovely quiet and peaceful day!

West Woods Trail January 9, 2021 by Carol A. Langley

A beautiful sunny day greeted us for this hike. **Sarah O'Hare, Rob** and **Marianne Valley** joined me at Peddlers Rd. parking. Rob Valley, who sits on the board of directors for this property, became our guide and shared a wealth of information with us. We started out on the White Trail and crossed the Plank Walk, which led us to the trail over hills and rocks. Taking a side trail, we found ourselves climbing through rock caves. Back to the White Trail, we headed south to the rock overlook of Lost Lake where we had our lunch and took in the beauty of this area.

After lunch we scrambled around for a bit before we were back on the right trail to Colonial Caves. In 1781 the colonists hid women and children here when the British made an attack at Leete's Island. Now to find the site of the Rock Carvings ... After spending some time walking in circles looking for them, we decided it would have to be left for another time. Getting back on the White Trail, we finally connected to the Orange which would bring us back to our cars.

Along the way, we hiked a ridge for a while then through White Pine Nurseries. More rocks where we climbed down to the Indian Caves. Our last set of rock formations was the Dinosaur Rock, where we took photos.

When we connected back to the White Trail and saw the Plank Walk, we knew the end was near. It was a long day, 8 miles, but worth the effort for all the sites we saw. A huge thank you to Rob for his wealth of knowledge that he shared with us.

I checked my records of past hikes and the first time I led this hike on the Orange & White Trails was January 8, 1995 — 26 years ago!



*Carol Langley, Marianne Valley, and Sarah O'Hare -
Photograph by Rob Valley.*

Shenipsit Trail
January 6, 2021
by Sarah O'Hare

Hike #3 in the series of hiking the entire Shenipsit Trail began on Dickinson Road in Glastonbury. Years ago, Dickinson Road was the connector trail to the Shenipsit where it would lead east to and over Route 2. To avoid the perils of bolting across Route 2, the trail had been re-routed, now following Dickinson Road, along residential roads, over a bridge spanning Route 2 and to the end of Toll Gate Road. This 2.5 mile paved road walk didn't appeal to us for it really meant a 5 mile out and back road walk. As there is no rule stating we must follow the present route to complete the trail end to end, it was decided instead that we would attempt to locate and hike the old trail that would take us to Route 2 and then hike back. Then, on the next hike, we'd pick up the trail on the east side of the highway.

Don Hagstrom, George Jackson, Patty and Tom Adams with their pup **Arlo**, **Jim Robertson** with his faithful companion **Molson**, and I began the hike south along Dickinson Road, an old and rocky woods road. **Molson** allowed **Arlo** to take the lead this morning. We kept a lookout for anything suggesting a former trail leading east. We found one trail that could have been the old path. However, a little further along, we found the former Shenipsit Trail, well defined and with the blue blazes painted over in black. A posted trail map came with a warning about the danger of crossing Route 2. Apparently, adventure seekers are still using this trail.

Hiking along, it was somewhat of a disappointment that this section of trail was especially rocky. Flooded areas had us balancing along the edge of the roadway. **Molson** paid no mind as he walked right through the cold and muddy water. Arriving at the Mott Hill Road connector trail, where we began and ended hike #2, we stopped for lunch before our return.

Our trek back was more eventful. **George** and **Don** gleefully discovered a discarded bumper from some old car and posed for pictures. Then, as planned, at the junction with the former Shenipsit Trail we turned onto it and, for the first time today, found ourselves off the rocky road and on a real foot path. It wound through mountain laurel arbors and led downhill, over rocks covered in slippery leaves. We made it about half way to Route 2 when it was decided that it would be in our best interest to turn back. Weary hikers and hilly, uneven and slippery terrain were not a good mix. Through the trees we glimpsed cars on the highway and thus felt we had accomplished what we had set out to do. We turned back and continued on to Dickinson Road where it was estimated that we hiked 6.5-7 miles.

The next hike in this series begins at the end of Toll Gate Road, where, after a short distance on another roadway, our feet will be content for a hike on a real footpath. One need not have started this series to jump on board for a section or two, or for completing the rest of the trail with us. Watch the schedule for our next Shenipsit adventure.

Canfield Meadow Forest Hike
January 28, 2021
by Mandy Brink

We joined up at the parking lot and thank heavens for **Patty Adams** and **Sarah O'Hare** who brought detailed maps. The *AllTrails* app hike just showed one loop trail but in fact there were many loop choices. We decided to follow the trail that took us around the circumference of the forest but opted for a few loops in addition. We hiked the Canfield Trail, the Long Trail and the Primitive trails as well as some crossover trails. It was a crunchy hike with just enough to snow and ice to make it a bit nosy as we hiked. Highlights of the day included seeing a massive tulip tree that was well over 100 years old. It is said that at one time it was the only tree providing shade in that area because all the forest around it was much younger. We then ran into a Nurse Log. **Patty** and **Mandy Brink**, being nurses, well we loved the idea. A Nurse Log is a downed log that is important to the eco-system of the forest. They are called the healers of the forest by offering seedlings shade, nutrients, water and protection from disease. We hiked to the platform that gives you a view of Essex. **Dick Hart**, **Marianne Valley** and I took a quick look at the view while **Don Hagstrom** dug out snacks for the pups, **Arlo** and **Bella**. We did not sit long, because it was cold, and we started to cool down. After a group picture we headed out. We learned from a posting on a tree that we had just hit the high point for the town of Essex at 315 feet. Back at the cars, we compared GPS readings and decided that we had done just about 5 miles.

Shenipsit Trail
January 22, 2021
by Sarah O'Hare

#4 hike of the Shenipsit Trail series began on the east side of Route 2. We were the usual group of six plus two pups: **Jim Robertson, George Jackson, Tom and Patty Adams, Don Hagstrom, Sarah O'Hare, Molson** and **Arlo**. We picked up the trail at the end of Toll Gate Road and proceeded south along the former New London Turnpike, a/k/a Old Route 2. Passing by the deserted Glastonbury Shooting Range, the old roadway crossed Dark Hollow Brook and passed a few unmarked side trails. **George** remembered driving this former road way back when, however, the old structure alongside was lost to his memory. After taking a tour of the stone and cement foundation,

complete with wide steps, ideas were tossed around on what it could have been. While it dated PG (pre-George), he realized that it had been a gas station. The five tall posts behind the foundation gave it away, as they would have held up the gas tanks.

Turning east off Old Route 2, the trail began its steep ascent, through mountain laurel arbors, along and over a brook and over huge rock faces. The day was cold but sunny and the climb warmed us. A well-worn side trail piqued our interest and, taking a detour, we found ourselves atop a rock ledge overlooking the woodland below. A large fire ring revealed that it was often used, probably by mountain bikers. Back on the main trail, we continued onward, to a ridge top with a view of the city of Hartford. Then, as we approached unpaved Windham Road at about mile 3 or so, we decided that it was to be our end point of this hike, and also the end point for the next section hike. We then turned to retrace our steps back the way we came.

Hiking back proved to be much different than the way we came. Following the familiar trail, we kept an eye out for the stone wall and abandoned farmstead that we missed on our hike through earlier. It was easily found, although little to explore as the forest had reclaimed much of the remains of the farmstead. As we hiked along, dark clouds moved in and we began to get chilled. As we approached a woods road to our right, we weighed the option of taking this roadway, hoping it would lead us back to Old Route 2, or continue on the Shenipsit Trail. The thought of scrambling and sliding down those huge rock faces made the decision an easy one. We unanimously voted for the road. It did lead us in the right direction and with much delight we found ourselves back on Old Route 2. And just as we walked that last short section back to our cars, it began to snow.

Sleeping Giant
January 26, 2021
by Carol A. Langley

Promptly at 10:00, **Jim Robertson, Molson, Sarah O'Hare** and I started our day's hike. We first walked $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of the Rails/Trails, crossed over Route 10, and soon entered Sleeping Giant Park. After a short distance on the Tower Trail, we moved to the Yellow Trail which had several ups and downs. A Boy Scout troop had recently installed stairs, making a difficult climb a safe and easy one. We then decided to connect with the Yellow/Green Trail. That took us between the right hip and leg at 650 feet which gave us a good cardiovascular workout. Crossing over to the Green Trail, we hiked at the base of the rock mountain and over rocks under foot. Soon Jim saw the Red Trail, which would connect us to the Tower Trail.

Soon we were at the tower and, after lunch, we took in the view of the coast line that all too soon would not be visible. We started down the tower path and the promised snowflakes started to dance in front of us. By the time we reached our cars it was SNOWING. We reached our cars at 1:00 and said our goodbyes. Molson had his two words with his barking as I drove away and started home. We hiked approximately 5 miles.

Gay City State Park Hike
January 31, 2021
by Jim Robertson

This 5.5-mile day hike turned out to be our Plan C. Plan A was a weekend at the GMC's Bolton Lodge in Vermont which was a blast in 2020 and had great interest this year, but which I cancelled due to the rapid increase in COVID-19 infections and Vermont's request that out-of-staters minimize incoming travel. Plan B was a weekend backpack to Wiley Shelter on the AT in New York just over the Connecticut state line. Weather forecasts for temperatures near zero and wind chills of -10 degrees scuttled that idea.

Instead, we scheduled a day hike at Gay City and had a good turnout. **Patty Adams, Mandy Brink, Don and Linda Hagstrom, Dennis Himes, George Jackson**, and I—and Arlo, the only canine who braved the cold—met at the main parking area on Route 85 in Hebron. Departing from our typical route, we hiked clockwise, walking the snow-covered main park road to the red trail and south through rolling terrain down to the Blackledge River, finding mostly a thin crunchy snow cover with minimal areas of ice. After crossing the river, we took the yellow trail back to the old mill area, stopping for a snack before heading north along the white trail, across the pond outlet dam and through silent forests. The pond had a sufficiently thick layer of ice, evidenced by numerous footprints, and the outlet flow presented interesting patterns of ice and water. We stayed on the white-blazed trail that mostly follows old woods roads and eventually loops back to the small cemetery, which along with several cellar holes, a chimney and the mill foundation are the remaining reminders of the village that thrived in the area in the first half of the 19th century. Although temperatures barely reached 20 degrees, it was a very enjoyable day spent enjoying one of our state's many outdoor recreational resources.

**White Memorial
February 6, 2021
by Carol A. Langley**

When I arrived at 9:15 the parking lot was filled, so I left my right-hand side car door open so **Mandy Brink** would have a spot. Mandy was using a GPS app so she was driving in circles. Finally, she saw me and was able to park. It is best that when you are hiking to use the OLD FASHION maps that tell the truth. These were designed by people who hike! The snow looked soft and mushy so we headed out without snowshoes. Bad idea. All too soon we wished we had our snowshoes.

We decided to use the Mattatuck Trail, hoping that there would be fewer people. We had only gone a short distance when Bella decided she had enough of this slippery, crunchy path. Mandy picked her up and soon was safe inside her jacket. Bella became the attention getter as everyone had to say hi. Finally, just ahead Mandy spotted a log that had two spots cleaned off for us to sit down. Time for a snack and some ice stabilizers. Now we tried to climb a hill which would lead us to Route63 only that did not work. We were still sinking in and decided to turn around and head out. The pine trees that lined the trail back were beautiful; it looked like a winter for joining me Mandy & Bella.

**McLean Refuge
February 10, 2021
by Carol A. Langley**

A cold but beautiful clear blue sky was the setting for this winter day. **Sarah O'Hare** was waiting as I drove into the parking lot. Soon we had on our snowshoes and started our planned trip into Spring Pond. There were very few people out today. We had one big climb just before we reached Spring Pond. Most of the snow was crunchy and had ridges from the cross country skiers. After a short lunch break, we decided to take off our snowshoes and hike.

We followed the blue trail which led us to an old woods road which we followed for a distance. We then took a right turn and followed the Purple North Trail. It had several ups and downs but also followed ridge lines for a while where we took the time to sit on a log and take in the beauty of the snow-covered trees. When a breeze blew, the snow danced in the air and fell on us like glitter turning the day into a winter wonderland. One can only appreciate the moment if one is there!

Where the Purple Trail ended, we followed another woods road which took us by the Red, Orange, & Yellow trails that start about 0.2 mile from the parking lot. The woods road then led us to a junction

with the original trail into Spring Pond. All too soon a lovely winter day was coming to an end.

**James L. Goodwin State Forest
February 21, 2021
by Sarah O'Hare**

It was that time of year when restlessness sets in, a long winter with spring not yet in sight. Anxious for a hike with conversation and laughter, and with a pleasant Sunday forecasted, an enthusiastic group of hiking friends gathered at the James L. Goodwin State Forest. Our large group included: **Tom and Patty Adams** with their pup **Arlo**, **Melanie and Bob Michaud**, **George Jackson**, **Kevin Breton**, **Eric Breton**, **Marianne Valley**, **Jim Robertson** and **Sarah O'Hare**. Alas, Jim's pup, Molson, was unable to join us. While Molson was not injured or sick, those pesky snow clumps and ice balls that collect on his paws make for an uncomfortable walk. And, so, he spent the day in total comfort, at home lying by the wood stove.

With Arlo and Tom setting the pace, our planned route was to hike the perimeter of the park. We all donned our microspikes/foot traction, for the snowy trail was icy. Hiking in a counter-clockwise direction, we skirted the east side of Pine Acres Pond, headed north, circled a small pond, then picked up the Natchaug Trail at Black Spruce Pond. While we saw no wildlife today, there was much evidence that the woods are alive in the dead of winter. Deer tracks criss-crossed the trail and oak leaves and snow had been churned up where the deer rooted for acorns. Bob identified a set of tracks left by a bobcat.

The Natchaug Trail led south and brought us back to our cars. Our feet were relieved to be off the uneven, icy trail. After an enjoyable 6.5 mile hike, it was now time to head home and, taking a cue from Molson, enjoy the remainder of the afternoon by a warm fire.

**New York AT/Wiley Shelter Backpack
February 27-28, 2021
by Jim Robertson**

We were finally able to align schedules and weather for a winter backpacking trip this year. **Andy Hood**, **Kevin Burke**, **Kevin** and **Eric Breton** joined me for this short trek and overnight at Wiley Shelter on the AT in New York, just over the border from Connecticut. Up until the last moments, I thought rainy weather might scuttle this weekend as well, but we delayed our start time on Saturday until a cold rainstorm had moved through. The hike from Connecticut Route 55 in Sherman was damp nonetheless, but the walking was fairly easy. There was packed-down snow on the trail, which had seen

plenty of foot traffic, but no more than six inches of snow in the woods. We navigated into New York and up to the shelter, arriving just after 3 pm. Andy and Kevin Burke cleared snow and ice from the two tent platforms while the rest of the crew set up in the shelter and started gathering firewood. We'd learned from an overnight trip last November that two large trees had fallen near (but not on) Wiley, so there would be plenty of fuel for the stone fireplace. It just had to be cut and split. Better yet, Mr. Burke had stashed a bag of seasoned firewood, along with the leader's bag of kindling, just off Duell Hollow Road, which is only two-tenths of a mile from the shelter, so we walked down and hauled those bags up. After the tenters were set up, they joined the firewood collection effort.

Appetizers and cooking commenced shortly after 5 pm, and as darkness crept in around 6, the campfire

was built and lit. Contrary to the weather forecast for full cloudiness, the skies cleared and we were treated to the full moonrise. With the fire, subsiding winds, and mild temperatures, it was quite comfortable for winter camping. We enjoyed several hours discussing world affairs, politics, hiking and camping equipment among other weighty topics before deciding to retire around 9 pm.

Overnight the clouds filtered back in so by dawn the skies were cloudy again. Low temperature was around freezing. Andy and Kevin reported that the tent platforms were slippery when they stepped out. We enjoyed a leisurely breakfast, packed, and hiked the two miles back to our cars in Connecticut.



*Photographs by Jim Robertson.
Kevin Burke, Kevin Breton, Eric Breton, and
Andy Hood. Dinner at the campsite, above.
Sunday morning, below.*

IN MEMORIAM

Bill Falconer, age 86, passed away January 4, 2021 at his home in Athens, Tennessee. Bill was a lifelong resident of Ludlow, Massachusetts, and had recently relocated to Athens to live with his daughter and son-in-law.

In 2003, Bill, through an invitation by Carol Langley, joined the Connecticut Section and soon found himself attending many of our hikes and activities. In 2006 he enthusiastically began leading a series of hikes on the Metacomet-Monadnock Trail through MA and into NH to successfully complete the 122-mile trail. In addition, he led many other hikes and outings in his home state where he was knowledgeable about the flora and local history of the woodlands. He was kind, generous and had a wonderful sense of humor, reflected through his countless stories.

Bill served in the U.S. Air Force and was a member of the Ludlow Fire Department. With his wife, Ellie, he founded the Sunchasers Travel Club. He was a long time Scoutmaster with the Boy Scouts. He was a seasonal lighthouse keeper at Race Point Lighthouse in Provincetown, MA. He had a passion for gardening, cooking and photography. Bill was predeceased by his wife Ellie and his son William IV. He leaves his daughter Marie Falconer and her husband Tom Nutting of Athens, TN.



Dinosaur Rock in West Woods — photograph by Rob Valley.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Upcoming events are listed here: <http://www.conngmc.com/newwiki/doku.php?id=start>.
