

The Trail Talk

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Individual Adult	\$ 30.00
Family	\$ 40.00
Senior (70 or older)	\$ 20.00
Nonprofit or Youth Group	\$ 40.00
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GMC Board Meeting Sept. 18, 2004

This article presents a summary of the Green Mountain Club Board of Directors meeting held at the Stratton Mountain Ski Area on Saturday, Sept. 18. There were several agenda items for the 5-hour meeting, but I want to highlight the 2 major discussion items:

- (1) Report on a fund-raising feasibility study performed by an outside consultant.
- (2) Reconsideration of the GMC's position supporting additional Wilderness area designation in the Green Mountain National Forest (GMNF), including areas surrounding the Long Trail.

On the fund-raising study, a committee of GMC volunteers has estimated that the Club needs to raise over \$9 million to meet all its current and future needs for acquisition of trail land that still remains in private ownership, stewardship and maintenance of the land and trail, new headquarters buildings, etc. The feasibility study estimates the GMC has the potential to raise in excess of \$5 million, based on interviews of past and potential donors, and its experience with other non-profits. The committee will decide how and when to pursue the fund-raising.

The second major topic was whether the Club should continue to advocate for designation of new Wilderness areas in the GMNF in Vermont. Some areas of the Long Trail/Appalachian Trail pass through area that was designated as Wilderness by Congress in 1984, including the Lye Brook, Big Branch, and Breadloaf Wilderness. The 1984 Vermont Wilderness Law has specific language that states the LT/AT and its shelters may be maintained, but some staff of the US Forest Service (USFS), which manages the areas, have become quite aggressive about letting the forest revert to its

"natural state", to the extent the hiking trail is minimally blazed and shelters are not maintained because they are unnatural to the forest. During lunch, I had an interesting chat with a Forest Service supervisor, who said that some in the USFS point back to the original 1964 Wilderness Act with its restrictive intent that overrides the specifics of the Vermont Law.

The Board discussion was initiated by a letter from Joe Cook, a 30-year member of the Brattleboro Section and former GMC President, suggesting that the GMC Board reconsider its 1999 vote to actively support designation of additional Wilderness areas within the GMNF. Joe's letter was the result of the process required for the GMC and Brattleboro Section to get USFS approval to repair Douglas Shelter in the Lye Brook Wilderness. The GMC had to participate in several multi-hour meetings with the USFS to establish guidelines for the shelter repair, and had to concede to allowing one of the Bourne Pond shelters (also in the Wilderness) to be removed, as a compromise. Joe was at the board meeting and reiterated his concerns that Wilderness was being managed in a way that made it difficult for the GMC to maintain trails and shelters to ensure hiker safety, and therefore we shouldn't advocate more wilderness.

(The Connecticut Section executive committee had discussed the Wilderness issue and the Joe Cook letter at our Sept. 15 meeting a few days earlier. The Wilderness discussion and issues could have a direct impact on us in the future, because the Glastenbury Mountain area is currently part of a wilderness study area. We discussed the balance of additional trail protection that Wilderness would provide, e.g., prohibition of motorized vehicles such as snowmobiles, with the additional restrictions placed on trail and shelter maintenance. The feeling in our small group, while not unanimous, was that Wilderness designation may not be the best alternative from a trail preservation standpoint.)

The GMC board had a long discussion, during which time I stated the Connecticut Section concerns about the potential restrictions that would be placed on us if the Glastenbury Mountain area is designated Wilderness. When the vote was finally taken, I voted against continuing to advocate more wildernesses, but the GMC Board was overwhelmingly in favor of continuing to support designation of additional

wilderness areas. If you have any thoughts on this issue, or questions on any other club-wide issue, please feel free to contact me.

Jim Robertson
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A Mountain Top Too Far July 24 - 25

I guess my memory is fading. My plan was to have a tough hike then camp out on a ridge or mountaintop with a view west. I knew this hike was a stretch but since it was a long time since I hiked it I had forgotten exactly how far it was or how much energy it would take. We started at 10:00 in the parking lot where the AT crosses Rt. 41 near Salisbury, CT. We climbed up to Lions Head with great views south. After a, too long, break we continued on to Brassy Brook Shelter. After a more than adequate break we headed north toward Bear Mountain, the highest mountain in CT. On the way we met volunteers from all over the country doing trail work. Reaching the top we took another long break taking in the views. Around the end of July is normally the peak for low bush blueberries on the mountaintops and this year was no different. We kept getting held up picking and eating the berries. Others were there filling containers to bring home.

I knew of a trail off the west side of the mountain. After some hunting we located The Bee Line Trail then started the steep, very steep, descent west. It was in such poor shape most thought I was bush whacking and lost for sure. After the descent, and some for real bush whacking, we arrived at the AMC cabin. Knowing we would be without water for a while, and there were several short but gut grinding climbs, we filled our water bottles.

We took, for the most part, the survey line between MA and CT climbing up to Round Top. There we had a great view of Bear Mountain which we just come down, north up to MT. Greylock and south over Riga Lake and beyond with more blueberries. Some discussions started because now fatigue was setting in and there was another decent and gut grinding short climb to go. No water, can't stay here.

Another short descent then The Climb up to MT. Frisell. The south side of this mountain is the highest point of land in CT. It is also interesting because the register on top has many names of those who are doing the highest point of land in all 50 states. It would have been interesting if most of us weren't too busy resting to read

the register. We hiked down the south side to where the marker is indicating the highest point of land in CT. After a few pictures we continued on.

Going west we hiked to the tri-state marker, CT, NY and MA. After a few pictures the debates intensified about how far to go and would we make Alander MT. No water, can't stay here. We walked into NY then north into MA. the Washington Forest on the little used Ashley Trail.

After a couple of miles the climb to Alander was still several miles away and it was now about four. Too Far. We picked several level areas next to a brook, pitched the tents then settled in for the night. The Forced March Was Over For The Day. We guessed we had put in about 8 or 9 tough miles.

The next morning more debates. It was decided we should start to head back somehow. Many, too many, years ago I had found an old woods road south of where we were which wound up on the Taconic Ridge with views west. We thought we would try it. Hiking south on what looked like a cross-country ski and snowmobile trail we spotted a porcupine climbing a tree. After several pictures we continued on the ever smaller and disappearing trail. I kept trying to go west toward the ridge but never ending laurel thickets kept popping up. A fight of gigantic proportions for anyone, I was on a hike one time on which a lady was brought to tears poking through a laurel thicket we were in so I thought I better try to avoid them at all costs. The faint trail disappeared so we were bush whacking, again. I just know they all think I'm crazy & have them lost forever. Trending east, to stay out of the laurel, we wound up on the Ashley Trail again. We continued south on a almost trail into NY then back into CT., then east on a heavily used woods road. I just know there was relief when we started to see day hikers after about 18 hours of seeing no other people at all.

We now voted to travel the sissy way, but the shortest way back. After walking a dirt road south for several miles we entered the side trail to Bald Peak. On top there were great views again. Damn, they closed the trail east back to the AT. Don't tell anyone but we took the old overgrown trail anyway, almost bush whacking. Back on the AT going south, we went up over Lions Head again then mostly downhill back to the parking lot.

On the way home we had pizza in Winstead. We learned the next day that somebody was bitten by a timber rattlesnake Sunday near Bear Mountain. The mountains and ridges in northwestern CT do have a lot of rattlers.

Pictures of this hike, and others, can be seen in the

photo section at <http://groups.aol.com/gmct>

Sarah O'Hare, Mandy Brink, Ken Williamson & His Son Tod, Jim Robertson.

By: Dick Krompegal

Mattabesett Trail Maintenance August 7

After breakfast at Guida's we spotted cars on Rt. 68. We worked south blazing and clipped brush from the Black Pond area to Rt. 68. At one point we encountered a mound of trash, mostly beer cans. Dan picked up most but we had to leave some.

We stopped for a pizza after to reward ourselves for the day's work.

Thanks for all the hard work!

Janene Batten, Ken Williamson, Richard & Leslie Chandler & their friend Rich Nilson, Lora Miller, Dan Zelterman, John Bensenhaver

By: Dick Krompegal

A Short Tale of the Long Trail August 16-24

We met up in Newport, Vermont on the night of the 16th. The past days had been stormy and Highway 91 north of St Johnsbury was littered with coolers and apparel. Abandoned cars were parked by the freeway. Evacuation after a freak cyclone? No, it was the aftermath of the farewell Phish concert in Coventry the past weekend. We were probably the only guests at the Newport City Motel that took the term "double occupancy room" literally; most of the rooms seemed to be occupied by small nations of Phish-heads, and the common areas were festooned with wet, muddy camping gear.

The next day we shuttled Sarah's car to Journey's End and drove to Smuggler's Notch to start our walk to Canada. The hike started on the rerouted Long Trail, which proceeds out of the Notch on an impressive mile-high stone staircase. This new route, which has rearranged the LT slightly, incorporates existing trails and eliminates a dangerous road walk on Vt. 108. The weather was clear and blue and a little bit muggy, and we enjoyed a lazy break on the shores of Sterling Pond. (In the winter you can ski across this pond from Stowe to Smuggler's Notch.) We had plenty of company on this first mile, including many creatures that do not travel on two legs (babies, dogs, and leeches). Once we and the LT left the pond's shores, we lost the crowd. We got our LT legs on the uphill push to Whiteface Shelter. It was full so we camped behind it. The LT has got a new crop of composting privies.

The one at Whiteface does not have a front door, so a thoughtful hiker had edited the sign to call it a “publy” rather than a “privy.”

It rained gently in the night, and we had a wet scramble up to the summit of Whiteface Wednesday morning. This was our first exposure to the conditions that would prevail all week: slick, steep rock on the approaches to almost every summit, and deep mud once we got there. Vermont had record rainfall this summer. Good for maple trees and hikers’ characters. We made it to Round Top Shelter that night after bypassing John’s urban pleasures.

Thursday we walked through a small sugarbush and past magnificent ledges en route to the summit of Laraway Mountain. The views were limited by an oncoming storm. We made it to Corliss Camp just before the rain fell. That night the roar of a mouse awakened me. He was running laps around the windscreen of Sarah’s stove and it rattled like an old-time radio thunder machine.

Friday morning’s peaks included Butternut (pretty and innocuous) and Bowen (two summits connected by a mile of nettles). In the afternoon we went through Devil’s Gulch, a tropical ravine of cascades, moss and ladders, up a stone staircase to Ritterbush Lookout, and down a gentle and (idiosyncratically) dry slope to Vt. 118. We were between shelters at day’s end so we camped near Fisherman’s Brook.

In the night a cold front came through. We tramped up and over Belvedere Mountain in a driving storm that lasted till early afternoon on Saturday. The trail was running with water, 4 to 6 inches deep in places. At Tillotson Camp we read many log entries about the beautiful views from the Belvedere fire tower. Perhaps the log was overstating the case, as it did with regard to the mouse population in the shelter. (“Welcome to the Hanta Hilton” was my favorite quote.)

Sunday morning we could see our breath but the sky was blue and dry. We summited five peaks that day, ending at Jay Camp shortly before dark.

Monday morning we scrambled up Jay Peak, then took refuge from a stiff wind in the tramway lodge. Running water! Flushing toilets! Garbage cans begging for our donations! Now we were in the home stretch. Canada by night was still a possibility, but another storm was sitting over the valley. We decided to head for Shooting Star Camp instead. A mile and a half shy of it, however, an end-to-ender informed Sarah that there were five more people about to overtake us, and only six spaces in the shelter. I decided to fire the retro-rockets while my powder was still dry and ran the rest of the way to make sure that we wouldn’t be crowded

out. About 90 seconds after I heaved my pack into the lean-to, the rain arrived, followed by six end-to-enders and Sarah. The shelter miraculously expanded: all eight of us were able to squeeze in (two sleeping in the rafters) and we passed a convivial night.

In the way that storms do, this one swept the sky clean, and we had perfect conditions Tuesday for our last six miles. The terrain steadily lost altitude, and at 11 a.m. I saw a plaque on a tree. It told me that this was the beginning of the Long Trail. We were still in the woods, but just around the bend was a clearing, and a large boulder, and behind it hid Milepost 565 on the U.S.-Canada border. Just as I was saying to Sarah, “There must be a border guard around here someplace,” a man in a green uniform melted out of the bushes. He greeted us, walked a few yards down the Slash (which is what the Feds call the cleared zone that demarcates our northern border), and disappeared into the forest.

The Journey’s End Trail took us back to Sarah’s car via the new and old Journey’s End Shelters. The new one had just opened in October 2003 and still smelled of freshly-sawed boards. We stopped in Enosburg Falls for pizza, which we ate outdoors, not ready yet to rejoin civilization. Then we traveled south on Vt. 108 to collect my car. We visited GMC Headquarters in Waterbury on the way back to the freeway. We also stopped at the Ben and Jerry’s factory and the Cabot Cheese outlet, which offered free samples. Civilization does have its merits, most of them edible.

Submitted by: Laurene Sorensen
Participants: Sarah O’Hare, Laurene Sorensen

**GMC Family Hike & Swim –
Ward Pound Ridge Reservation in Cross River, NY
August 29**

On a hot and steamy August day, we set out into the cool woods of Ward Pound Ridge Reservation on a 3 mile hike in search of the Leatherman’s Cave. The Leatherman was a mysterious hermit who lived in the mid-1800’s and roamed a 365 mile circuit from Hartford, CT to Ossining, NY. Once we discovered his former cave home, we understood why he stayed there—it was cool and refreshing, and the kids had fun climbing the jumble of rocks nearby. We ended our adventure with a brisk swim in nearby Lake Oscaleta.

Hikers: Kathy Steffens & Kevin Karl (Leaders), Allison Karl, Jim Robertson, Brenna Robertson

Ten Mile River Camping Sept. 4-5

We resumed our annual trip to the Ten Mile River camping area on the Appalachian Trail near Bulls Bridge, continuing an outing that started in 1996 but was canceled in 2003 due to bad weather. New members Chuck Rexroad and Polly Silva joined me and my crew for the hike in from Bulls Bridge to the camping area. We were later joined by Kevin and Alison Karl for the afternoon.

After setting up camp, Polly and Chuck headed for Ten Mile Hill. A last bit of summer heat and humidity made wading in the river sound like a good idea, so the rest of us put on bathing suits and water shoes and made our way out from Ten Mile River into the Housatonic River. It became quickly evident that the water level was high and the currents were swift; later we heard that a water release further north on the Housatonic was causing the abnormally high volume and velocity. We didn't realize how swift until the kids started being pushed down river, unable to fight against the current or even get footing on the rocky bottom. I scrambled after them, sinking into chest-deep water in places. Eventually the kids all got over to the shore. As we made our way back upstream, we noticed a family with younger children in the middle of the river coming toward us. Soon it was clear that one boy, probably about 8 years old, who had been washed over a rock and was standing in its eddy, was unable to cross through the currents on either side to a shoreline. We gathered up some rope and a stick, and along with two adults from this other group, managed to recover the boy and bring him back to calm waters. From that point on, we limited our wading to the gentle Ten Mile River.

Kevin and Alison departed around dinner time. We explored a side trail from the group camping area back to the main trail, and made a visit to Ten Mile River Shelter, meeting AT thru-hikers "Flyin Brian" (who hiked the AT, PCT, and Continental Divide Trail in 2001) and his companion. As the sun sets quickly in September, we turned in to our tents fairly early, with Brenna and Jaclyn leading the way to engage in whatever conversations are typical for 11-year girls.

Sunday morning was overcast, with hints of rain, so we packed up after breakfast and walked north along the trail to our cars.

Jim, Brenna, and Jimmy Robertson, Jaclyn Beaudry, Chuck Rexroad, Polly Silva, Kevin and Alison Karl

A.T. MA Dalton to Rte. 20 Sept. 17-19

As we drove to Rte. 20 for our meeting spot a steady rain fell. No one was backing out so we put Henry's, John's and my pack into Charlene & Chuck Clarke's vehicle and drove off to Dalton to the Gulf Rd. parking lot. Rain gear on and packs covered we started our 3 mile hike into Kaywood Shelter. The first 1 ½ mile is a road walk but soon we were crossing the railroad tracks and starting our ascent of the mountain. It was mostly up and down and a few rocks to scramble over before we reached the side trail into the shelter.

When we arrived at the shelter it was a full house. Charlene & Chuck set up their tent under the overhang of the shelter. The others in our group had hiked faster and had claimed the bunks. Standing there wet and tired I had no intention of setting my tent up. So I politely asked if any one is willing to share their bunk. The rain drummed all night on the roof. Sat. morning was no different but we had a plan so off we hiked.

First Dennis Hennessey left, next John Bensenhaver and Ross Lanius, then myself and Charlene & Chuck Clarke. Henry Smith stayed behind and caught up with the group later. We hiked in a wind driven rain using fancy footsteps to keep our feet dry. Most of the trail was a running stream on the climbs and on the descents we encountered flooded areas where trees with White Blazes were standing with water all around like they were an island. In one place we were standing on a dry piece of land trying to cross to another when we saw a flash. Charlene thought it was Chuck's camera until we hear the clap of thunder and the rumble that shook the earth. We all jumped pretty fast to get out of the water and moved quickly up a hill, there was no place to go. We looked to the sky and saw that the clouds were moving from the South to North and we were traveling south, which meant we should be out of danger soon. Reaching Blotz Rd. we took off our packs and decided to do lunch. Suddenly we see John returning on the trail with his legs all scratched up from trying to cross a flooded river/stream up ahead. He says the water was up to his waist. Next Henry arrives on the scene, then Ross returned down the trail. He says the river is bad but he thinks there is a place where we all can cross.

The group agrees to hike ahead and assess the situation when we reach the flooded river. One look at the river and hearing its roar down the bank of rocks I knew that I was hiking back to Kaywood Shelter and would not attempt this dangerous crossing. Henry, Charlene, Chuck and Ross took some time in making their decisions. John was just standing there saying I'm not trying to cross again. Soon Ross was handing me keys to his van that was parked in Dalton. Dennis who had crossed much earlier in the day, we later learned had fallen in and made a quick hike for the shelter stripping off his wet clothes and jumped into his

sleeping bag. This was a defeating situation but a safety factor had to also be considered. So back to Kaywood hiked Charlene, Chuck, John and myself. Ross and Henry crossed and spent the night with Dennis at October MT.

Because we were tired and wet the hike back seemed like it would never end. We did have the opportunity to hear an owl and get a peak of sunshine and hear some birds sing. We reached Kaywood at 5:30 to find only John, a thru hiker and another guy named Walter who was hiking the AT for his week's vacation heading south. The thru hiker from PA. had not seen a soul for 9 days so he enjoyed our company. The two guys even built the weary hikers a fire. The temp. dropped to 38 degrees by Sunday a.m. As I started up my stove to cook breakfast I needed to hold my hands around the flame to warm them. We had a beautiful sunrise a gently breeze and a bright blue sky. What a perfect day for hiking. After John tidied up the shelter we packed our gear and headed out to Dalton. John being the faster hiker waited patiently at the railroad crossing for the rest of us. Unloading our packs John and I walked to get Ross's van. Then returned to pick up packs and the other hikers. We drove first to Gulf Rd. to drop off Chuck & Charlene at their vehicle. Next we drove back to Rte. 20 where John's car was. Just as I parked Ross's van out of the woods he and Dennis hiked out. Perfect timing.

A bit of information that I learned from Ross when hiking alone is to use the public transit system to get to trailheads. Then your car is left at the end of trail waiting for you on your return.

Thanks to all of you who joined me on this hike, Ross Lanius, Dennis Hennessey, Charlene & Chuck Clarke from the Montpelier Section, John Bensenhaver, Henry Smith.
By Carol Langley

**Mattabesett Trail Maintenance
September 26**

Marge Hackbarth had a coffee with us at Guida's, where we all met before the day's work, then she left for more fun things to do. The rest of us drove to Rt. 68.

Laura, Sarah, Peter & Dan started working while Carol, Beth & I spotted cars at Paug Gap. The main task for the day was to inspect and refresh the blazes from Rt. 68 south to Paug Gap, about 5 miles. Laura and Sarah painted blazes all day. Except for a short stretch at the start there was not much to clip and surprisingly there was not much trash to pick up.

Marge Hackbarth, Peter & Beth Hargett, Sarah O'Hare, Laura Miller, Dan Zelterman, Carol Langley
By: Dick Krompegal

NOTE:

Because of back to back hurricanes going by I had to cancel the August maintenance trip to VT. The first canceled maintenance trip.

**Burr Pond Paddle/Hike
October 3**

A beautiful early fall day with a clear blue sky and a gentle breeze greeted us. Lora Miller and Sarah O'Hare met me at the boat launch off Burr Mt. Rd. The water was calm as we entered the water the girls in Sarah's canoe and I in my inflatable Kayak. As we paddled around the banks of the pond we were looking for wildlife of any kind but only found a great blue heron. The sun danced on the water and sparkled like diamonds. This being my first time using my Kayak alone I was a little slower than the girls but as I got the rhythm of paddling I was moving alone with ease and enjoying the ride. The wind picked up after the first hour we were out, a few waves were noticeable adding to the ride. We scouted around all the islands and rocks.

Around 11:15 we headed back as Sandra Hassan was meeting us at 12:00 to do the 3.5 miles hike around the pond. Packing and changing into our hiking boots we were ready when Sandra arrived and we hiked to the picnic area to have lunch. The baker was with so we were treated to delicious oatmeal bar. The trail was very easy. We hiked the Main Blue Trail called the Wolcott Trail then took the Blue/White Dot and then hooked back up with the Wolcott Trail. There are two plaques mentioned in the write up for this trail but we did not find either.

This pond was created 150 years ago by Gail Borden for the purpose of producing and marketing Borden's Condensed Milk. In 1861 the company relocated to Wassaic, N.Y.

Paddlers/Hikers: Sarah O'Hare, Lora Miller, Sandra Hassan, and Carol Langley.

The Backyard

Today's society is in a fast mode. Wherever I look, there is the hustle and bustle of dealing with the congestion of getting to work, putting in extra hours, and then consuming more time returning home to a list of responsibilities, commitments and, for some of us, a second job.

I don't know about you, but I become drained and exhausted from the fast pace. I yearn to slow down and take

it easy. Relax and go at my own pace. Serenity? Peace of mind? Almost seems out of reach. Where does one find such tranquility when the day is full to the brim of human doing and everybody wants it yesterday...whatever "IT" is?

Upon awakening each morning, I slam the alarm clock button to off, shake the cobwebs out of my head and put on the coffee. My rented top floor apartment in a 1921 house, is a handyman's special with slanted floors and a crooked staircase balcony that overlooks the backyard. It is not your typical backyard with the patio on a picture perfect manicured lawn, surrounded by paper cut-out trees. It consists mostly of a patched asphalt driveway, over grown honeysuckle hedges, and a small square of lawn next to a garage that is on the verge of collapsing.

With a birds-eye view and a different attitude, I look past all of this every morning while drinking my coffee on the balcony. For a few minutes, I absorb the smell of the honeysuckle bush and the still quiet that emulates from the woods that divide the neighborhood properties. As my eyes start to adjust to the dawn, I make out silhouettes of four deer in the far yard having their breakfast. I stand there observing quietly. The need to clear my throat is easily heard by them, and with a flash of white tail, the deer dart into the woods. The greyish-blue sky is now waking up with life as I watch a small coven of fruit bats flutter and dart erratically above me. Their spontaneous flight patterns are mesmerizing and instill in me a sense of wonder.

After a few minutes, I carefully poke my head over the wood rail on the left side of my balcony to check the grey squirrel nest that is wedged in the triangular space of the roof overhang. Amongst the bedded leaves and twigs, I see a slight stirring of a grey, bushy tail. I attempt to draw the squirrel out by mimicking their familiar chirping sound. Vanished are some of the bread-crumbs that I laid out the day before.

The sky is now a lighter shade of grey-blue and alive with the sounds of chirping warblers darting back and forth between the trees and honeysuckle bush, several breaking from their flight patterns and stopping on my balcony rail to peck and nibble at the remaining bread-crumbs. Up close, warblers have an intricate pattern of earthy colors over-lapping one another. I would think one would have to study these birds up close to be able to tell the difference between the 100 plus species that are in New England. From the white pines at the edge of the backyard, a couple of blue jays announce their arrival by squawking. I raise my binoculars towards their direction and spot the two jays fighting over a squirming worm that has been plucked fresh from the dew-soaked lawn.

Following the blue jay's brisk flight pattern, I happen to spot the neighborhood woodchuck digging up grubs. With my binoculars raised again, I take in a 'close-up' and notice how meticulous the woodchuck is with its method of feeding. Looking away from the woodchuck, I take notice of the house spider sitting completely still in the center of her precision spun web, that is attached to the sides of the balcony, where the stairs descend. I study the cobweb closely, admiring the exactness of rectangular spacing on the circular design. The thought of reaching out and gently touching the back of the spider crosses my mind, but I withhold for not wanting to disturb her stillness.

Suddenly, out of the corner of my eye, I catch something circling above the far tree tops at the edge of the woods. Large wing span and gracefulness while gliding with the invisible wind currents. Too large for a hawk. Must be a turkey vulture. Ah, another one enters the circling. I am mesmerized by their gliding, as they approach closer. I raise my binoculars and my eyes fill with feathers of detail. Swoosh! One of the vultures swings down and across my backyard, maneuvering its way through the pine trees, and landing within an umbrella of branches. The vulture lets out an odd cawing as if to greet me good morning. Did I mention the two red tail hawks that fly between the oak trees of neighboring yards? My curiosity of the red tail is enough of an excuse to take the day off from work and just observe them. I wish I could, but...

Anycase, it's time to get ready for work.

As I retreat from my private backyard sanctuary, I hear myself starting to grumble about having to jump into the congestion of the day, do not stop/go directly to jail, uh, I mean work and earn my paycheck.

Oh well, such is life.

I thank God for my backyard.

Steve Keri 8/17/04

The CT Section would like to thank all of the people who have generously donated to the section –

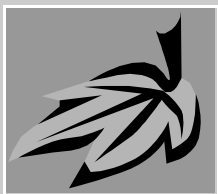
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