



Connecticut Section of the Green Mountain Club

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Winter 2016-2017

From the feel of the weather in early December, it seems that winter is upon us. This season provides some great outdoor opportunities, with clear blue skies (sometimes), invigorating air, and open views that were masked by foliage in the summer and fall. With the colder temperatures and shorter days, there are added risks to be considered, especially the need to stay warm and dry. If you haven't had a chance to read the GMC Winter 2016 Long Trail News, please take a look at the Winter Hiking Safety quiz on page 16 and the answers on page 23 for some good tips and reminders to make your winter events safer and more comfortable. I found the tips on clothing and the early warning signs of hypothermia to be particularly good.

SAVE THE DATE: Our Connecticut Section annual dinner and meeting will be held at the Cheshire, Connecticut Grange Hall on Saturday March 25, 2017. As always, the social hour will begin at 5 pm, dinner will be served at 6, and the annual business meet will start at 7. A guest speaker and program will follow. Watch the mail and the Section web site <http://www.conngmc.com/> for more information and reservations.

See you out in the snow.

Jim Robertson

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Please direct all inquiries regarding the Club to the President.

The Trail Talk is published four times a year, Winter, Spring, Summer and Fall. Activity schedules are included in each issue. Reports of activities and articles must be sent to the editor no later than the tenth day of the month of the publication. Send articles to:

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Membership

When filling out the form to join or renew, circle the **Connecticut Section** on the application to receive, at no extra charge, the Connecticut Section's newsletter and activity schedule.

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:
The Green Mountain Club
4711 Waterbury-Stowe Road
Waterbury Center, VT 05677-9904
(802) 244-7037, <http://www.greenmountainclub.org>

Thank you to the all our hike leaders who faithfully send in their activity reports. Those of us who cannot attend an activity like to read as to what happened and who attended.

HIKE LEADERS

All reports must be sent in a Word Document in Times Roman 11. Reports sent from I-phones or I Pads will be returned. Thank you!
Carol A. Langley & Celia Campbell-Mohn

Being prepared on the trail!!!

Winter is here never under estimate the weather here in New England. Carry that extra pair of gloves or extra hat even if you don't need them someone else might. I always carry a light weight blanket in the winter and yes it has been used.



New Hampshire AT May 20-22, 2016

Mount Moosilauke was the highlight of three days on the AT in New Hampshire. Mandy and Jim had originally planned this as a four-day backpack from Route 25A to Franconia Notch to add 35 miles to our AT total mileage, but we altered the itinerary to three day hikes of about ten miles each and skipped going over South and North Kinsman Mountains.

The change in plans was made possible by the generosity of "Packrat", the owner of the Hikers' Welcome Hostel in Glencliff NH which is only a quarter mile from the trail crossing of Route 25. Although the hostel doesn't officially open until June 1, Packrat told Jim that we were welcome to stay and use it as a base. This turned out to be a great decision, as it allowed us to day hike with lighter packs and without too much driving to spot cars. It also gave Mandy a good opportunity to give her healing knee a real stress test. After experiencing the trail conditions, we were grateful to be able to slack-pack.

We arrived Thursday evening and settled into the hostel. Joining us was "Pine Cone" a retiree from North Carolina who had started at Franconia Notch a few days earlier with plans to hike the AT southbound for several months. He had only progressed about a mile that day, having spent considerable time fording rain-swollen Oliverian Brook that parallels Route 25.

Friday - As we left the hostel, Pine Cone was attempting to offload some of his gear, saying that his pack weight exceeded 50 pounds. The three of us drove to the start point at Route 25A. To ensure we didn't miss completing any of the trail, we parked in the *exact* spot where Mandy, Alina and Jim had been picked up by a shuttle after a backpack from Hanover to 25A last year. We had a pleasant walk through forests as Sarah pointed out trillium (red and white), trout lily, wood sorrel and hobble bush amongst the many blooming flowers and budding trees. It was a beautiful sunny dry weather, with black flies being the only negative.

After brief stops at the site of the former Ore Hill Shelter (which burned down in 2011) and for lunch at the top of Mt. Mist, we headed down towards the road and the hostel. To our surprise, as we passed the side trail to Wachipauka Pond, there sat Pine Cone looking sweaty and tired. Said he had taken a wrong turn somewhere. We gave him quick directions and pointed to the white blazes on the southbound trail and wished him luck. After returning to the hostel and a few hours relaxation, we headed "into town" to recover Jim's car and have dinner at the newly-relocated Greenhouse Restaurant. After a leisurely meal, we returned to the hostel, and were amazed to see, sitting outside, Pine Cone! "I don't want to talk about it." So we let him be for a while, until he eventually came inside and admitted he had a

poor sense of direction and got confused quickly under duress. The next day he was planning to call his daughter who lives in New Hampshire for a pick-up and some time off the trail. (Pine Cone exhibited some of the same characteristics that appear to have been major factors in the demise of Geraldine "Inchworm" Largay in Maine in 2013.) We were also joined that evening by a thru-hiker Coach from California who had hiked the PCT in 2015. He provided some good insights about the PCT and commented that the AT is harder to hike, which made Mandy and Jim feel better about the planned trip out there in September.

Saturday - Moosilauke. We had heard from many people that the AT section from Kinsman Notch to Route 25 is best hiked north-to-south, climbing the steep northeast side of the mountain and then descending more gradually to the southwest. Mandy drove us to the Notch and the AT/Beaver Brook Trail. The trail was memorable, as much for the considerable packed snow and ice (!) as it was for the views of the majestic cascades pouring down the mountainside. If we had crampons or micro spikes we would have used them but we didn't. Our hiking poles were valuable friends for the slippery ascent. We took a well-deserved snack break at Beaver Brook Shelter and proceeded more gradually around Mt. Jim (Jim took a side trip to it, just in case it's on a "highest" list) and then Mt. Blue and up to Moosilauke above tree line. As this was a weekend and a nice day, there were dozens of people and several dogs at the top. We enjoyed the clear views and had lunch, then traversed the ridge to the South Peak side trail (0.1 mile to the peak according to the sign; turned out to be closer to a quarter mile in reality). The trip down was long, and got extended when Jim missed a turn off a paved road into the woods. We waded across Oliverian Brook, down in level but still cold and rocky, and returned to the hostel. As planned, Sarah left that evening to drive back to Connecticut.

Sunday - Mark Blanchard joined Mandy and Jim at the hostel in the morning and we drove to the Reel Brook Trail off Route 116. Hiked the three miles up to the AT, then south over multiple peaks (grrrr!) of Wolf Mountain each with rock scrambles and muddy bogs. Our stretch of more than two days of fair weather ended here, as steady rain started falling as we approached the main summit of Wolf. Despite the precipitation and dropping temperatures, we took the spur trail up to the partially open summit which provided decent views into the valley as the clouds and fog moved in. The descent down to Kinsman Notch was jarring on our legs - lots of rocks and a few steep sections - so we were glad to reach Route 112 and the parking lot with Mandy's car. Back to the Reel Brook trailhead to pick up Jim's and Mark's cars and we were all on our way home. Although we didn't complete the full section in the original plan, the trip covered about 26 miles of the AT in total, and some challenging terrain.

Mandy Brink and Jim Robertson, co-leaders; Sarah O'Hare, Mark Blanchard

Catskills Backpacking Trip July 8-10, 2016

Plans were to meet Jim Moore at the trailhead. Misha had heard about us from a meetup site and asked if he could join us for the weekend. Mandy picked him up in New Haven and what fun to have him along for the hike. Misha's family if from Russia and his parents had been wildlife biologists. He spent a lot of the weekend pointing out the neatest things to us while we hiked. He is now working on his Master's Degree at Yale after graduating from Princeton. Mandy and Misha joined Jim at the trailhead in the pouring down rain with thunder c rackling overhead. Jim made us an offer to stay over right at his sister's house. She lived locally so we decided to take her up on the offer.

After a pancake breakfast on Saturday we staged cars and headed for our first climb of the day Hunter Mt. which is one of the 4000 footers in the Catskills. There is a fire tower at the top to which we climbed although the views were scant as it was gray and still raining. There is also a cabin which for the weekend was being manned by two volunteers from the outdoor club there. We sat inside and chatted for a while with the volunteers before finally deciding it was time to get moving

From Hunter Mt. we began to do a part of Devil's Path. We had a second peak for the day going over Plateau Mt. before heading down into the Mink Hollow Shelter. While not doing a ton of miles this was a stout section because of all the ups and downs. We pulled into the shelter tired and wet. Another couple was already nestled in but they were happy to share the shelter so we didn't have to put up tents in the rain. It had been a fun day with Misha. He had pointed out all kinds of bugs, toads and such that we would have never seen if he hadn't been on the lookout. Not only would he find these wonders of nature but he would share all about them with us. He had been on a trail crew on the West Coast for several years also he loved the chance to out for the weekend, even though it was raining.

On Sunday morning, Karen & Jerry Marr joined us for a day hike. We left our packs at the shelter and hiked up Sugarloaf Mt. The sun had finally come out and it was quite a nice hike to the summit. We did an up and back trip, grabbed our packs, and hiked out to the cars. We still had some of the day left so we headed over to Dibbles Quarry. We had hiked there in the winter and thought it was worth showing off to the newcomers. There was a couple photographing. They were shooting pictures of a wild rare orchid. They shared with us about the orchid but made us promise not to reveal where we had seen it, if we wanted to take any pictures to post.

We made our way over to the Stone Throne. There was a large group with several other hikers at the location. It is a popular spot. We had worked up an appetite and headed into

town for lunch before our long drive back to CT. Mileage for the weekend was around 15 miles.

Hikers: Jim Moore, Mandy Brink, Misha Semenov, Karen & Jerry Marr

New Hampshire Weekend – August 19-21, 2016

Everyone had different goals in the same area of hiking for this weekend. Some were looking to nab some 4 K peaks, others looking to complete some sections of the AT. In the end it was a modge podge of hiking but I think everyone was able to accomplish their goals for the weekend. We hiked in the Mt Lafayette Range. Jim Fritz started up the Falling Waters Trail to grab Mt Lincoln while Jim Moore, Mandy and Mark headed up the Greenleaf Trail to the Greenleaf Hut and then onward to Mt Lafayette. Carol and Jim Robertson were hiking up the Liberty Spring trail, with Carol doing an overnight at the Liberty Spring campground and Jim R joining her on Saturday morning.

Mark hung around the Greenleaf Hut doing some photography while the rest met at the summit of Mt Lafayette. Jim Moore headed back down to the hut, working on his 4 K peak in his 70's list. From their Mandy finished a 3.9 mile missing section of the AT that she needed. Jim Fritz hiked along to nab Mt Garfield on his quest to finish his high peaks list. After nabbing Mt Garfield we began our last 5 miles out to the car. Jim R and Carol also crossed the AT to Mt Garfield and camped Saturday night. The rest of us hiked out to a shower and well deserved dinner, camping at the Twins KOA. It was early to bed as we were all pretty tired.

It was a beautiful weekend to hike. It was hot but oh the views were so incredible. There were lots of people and doggies out this weekend. The cars were parked for miles at the trailhead. We debated about a hike on Sunday in the end our bodies were happy with the 12-14 miles we had done the day before. We called it a weekend and headed for home after a nice breakfast.

Hikers for the weekend: Mandy Brink, Jim Robertson, Jim Moore, Carol Langley, Jim Fritz and Mark Russell.

Mystic River Paddle Saturday– August 27, 2016

It could not have been a more perfect day for paddling. We launched from the Mystic YMCA, heading towards the Mystic River. It's always fun to go through the marina to see all the different boats. We paddled over to the Seaport to see the Amistad, the Joseph Conrad and the Charles Morgan up close. A guide from the Seaport was on the Joseph Conrad and gave us history of the vessel. The boats all looked so majestic. We continued our paddle to the section of the river where the boat traffic slows down and

you are able to enjoy some of the wildlife which on this day included several blue herons. The water was full of pink jellyfish. We paddled as far upstream as we could go before we hit very shallow water. We turned around and headed to the Clam Shack for lunch. We moored the boats, had a nice lunch and then headed back past the Seaport. We had a second look at all the vessels before heading back to the beach. It was a magical day on the water.

Leader: Mandy Brink. Paddlers: Andy and Holly Hood, Jack Sanga Sr, Laura Sanga, Jack Sanga Jr and Mark Russell

Upper Goose Pond, MA AT October 7-8, 2016

After last fall's successful overnighter to Upper Goose Pond it was thought that it would be fun to do it again this year. Rather than beginning the hike on Rt. 20 as we did previously, we started at the Webster Road AT crossing. Beginning here we had a leisurely five mile walk along the AT and then a mere half mile on the side trail leading to our destination, the cabin and camping area on the NW side of the pond. The afternoon was most pleasant with a hint of foliage turning to its autumn splendor.

While there was an option to claim a bunk in the cabin we all chose to tent out back. As we got down to the business of setting up our tents, the caretaker made himself known. His initial comment to us was, "I've never before seen the likes of you." Hmmm... what does 'likes of you' mean? After a pause the meaning became clear. We're OLD! If it hadn't been so amusing we might have been insulted.

It wasn't long until we got out our cook kits and began preparing our dinner delights. Afterwards, as daylight faded, we went down to the pond's dock to enjoy the peaceful evening. Dozens of planes flew overhead, each following their own flight path. One by one the stars appeared. Jim mentioned that the Draconid meteor shower should be occurring. In time our patience was rewarded with several meteors seen. Indian flute melodies began to float across the pond and echoed off the shore beyond. It was then time to call it a night. Passing the cabin on the return to our tents, the caretaker was nowhere to be seen; no hikers sat rocking and chatting on the porch. It was eerily dark and quiet, in contrast from our stay a year ago.

It was still dark when we rose in the morning. As we stirred so did a mouse, investigating the platform on which Mark and Don's tents were pitched. It probably reappeared after we departed, expecting to hoard any bits that we left behind. The mouse would soon learn that hungry hikers leave no crumbs. An early start on the trail and we were off. A Ruffed Grouse startled us. The cacophony of roosting birds nearby, then walking beneath them later, gave us all thoughts of the old Hitchcock film, *The Birds*.

We were back at our cars before noon. Don and George headed home. The remaining three agreed to head into Stockbridge for there was another trail that interested us. There are three trails maintained by the Laurel Hill Association of Stockbridge. The Mary Flynn Trail is a wide path built on an old trolley line along the Housatonic River. Laura's Tower Trail is a 600' ascent to a fire tower with views from the top. The third trail, the Ice Glen Trail, was our trail of interest. It was approximately a mile or so round trip, beginning by crossing the Housatonic River and entering the woods. The stands of white pine, hemlock and ash were estimated to be 180 years old. After a half mile we entered the glen, a glacial ravine of giant boulders, caves and narrow fissures. With the moss and ferns this area was reminiscent of the Long Trail's Devil's Gulch. This short side trip to the Ice Glen Trail was worth our time and effort. A visit to explore the accompanying two trails is on our list for another time. A fun and memorable time was had by all.

Trekkers: Jim Robertson, George Jackson, Mark Blanchard, Don Hagstrom, Sarah O'Hare

Heublein Halloween Hike Sunday October 30, 2016

For the second year in a row we had warm sunny weather for this Halloween hike on the Heublein Tower's last open weekend. So warm, in fact, that the leader never donned the foam Great Pumpkin costume – it would have been steamy inside. That aside, our group of 10 of met at Reservoir Number 6 in West Hartford and started our usual loop north along the east shore and up the alternate trail to the Metacomet connector trail, with Molson leading the way.

Great views awaited us upon reaching the ridge and starting toward the Heublein Tower. We passed several other hikers, including Section member Barbara Froebel who was hiking with another group. While observing the western horizon, we thought we could see a tower that stands on private land in Canton or beyond, where Sarah led a hike a few years ago.

Several members of the group climbed Heublein Tower to enjoy the outstanding 360 degree view from the observation floor. As with last year, the skies were clear enough to see north to Mt. Tom in Holyoke and south to Castle Crag and West Peak in Meriden. Linda volunteered to sit with Molson on the lawn outside, while Jim took a walk up the tower.

After climbing back down the tower stairs we found two picnic tables for lunch. Several types of Halloween treats were swapped around the tables before we packed up and headed down the Metacomet through some nice foliage to the reservoir and our cars.

Thanks to everyone for a nice day and hike.

Hikers: Gary Griffin, Don & Linda Hagstrom, Bob & Mel Michaud, Rich and Leslie Chandler, Dick Hart, Larry Keckler, Kevin Vann. Leaders: Jim Robertson and Molson

Devil's Hopyard State Park Hike Sunday November 13, 2016

On a gorgeous November day, we had 13 GMCers turn out to hike several loop trails in Devil's Hopyard. The effects of this year's drought in Connecticut were obvious in the significantly reduced flow over Chapman Falls. The falls were still picturesque, but not nearly as spectacular as we have seen them in past years. We generally followed the route in the Hardy's *50 Hikes in Connecticut* book, starting on the Red trail to the southwest, connecting with the Yellow trail to a height of land and lookout, then back through the park's picnic and recreation areas to the covered bridge.

On the east side of the park, we climbed the Orange trail to the vista overlooking the Eight Mile River valley, where we found plenty of rocks and logs in the sun for a nice lunch break. Many other folks were hiking in the same area, enjoying the beautiful day. Molson relished the egg, cheese and chicken that Linda had brought along for him for lunch (he doesn't normally get lunch at home, but hiking builds up a appetite in humans and in dogs). From our stopping point, we dropped down the other part of the Orange loop along the river, finding the trail ill-defined and not blazed in locations, and with some challenging rock climbs in several places.

Hikers: Kevin Burke, Cathryn Dolan, Gary Griffin, Don & Linda Hagstrom, Dick Hart, George Jackson, Larry Keckler, Bob & Mel Michaud, Sarah O'Hare, Kevin Vann. Leaders: Jim Robertson and Molson

Teffweault Land Trust Hike Sunday November 27, 2016

We had a great morning exploring all the nooks and crannies of this former Girl Scout camp. We started by passing the old pump and looking at the foundation where the old lodge had been. We headed down to the waterfalls. We were presently surprised to see a little head bobbing in the water. We thought it was a beaver at first but then he popped out of the water and ran around the rocks. I looked him up on the internet and am pretty sure it was an American Mink. We sat on the Poet's Bench for a minute before heading down to the Pavilion and then onto the trail out in the back of the land trust. This is bordered by a large swamp. It was peaceful there and we enjoyed the ducks gliding along in the water.

From there we did the Doodle loop which took us to the Bell York Cemetery. This very old cemetery is marked only by

upright stones as headstones. I tried to find some history on the cemetery but was unsuccessful. We did the final loop on the map before heading back to the cars. I'm not sure of mileage for the day as we did all the loops but we spend a lot of time exploring and chatting about the history of the property. It was a relaxing fun morning.

Hikers: Mandy Brink, Cathryn Dolan

Natchaug Trail Sunday December. 3, 2016

Re-hiking a trail after many years is like a visit with an old friend. Each of us on this trek had hiked some or all of this section of the Natchaug Trail and we all remembered various highlights. From the southern terminus at the James L. Goodwin Conservation Center we hiked north following the western shore of Pine Acres Lake. The path turned onto old woods roads as we made our way to Black Spruce Pond. Our old friend provided us with a lunch spot atop Orchard Hill where there was a bench with a view. Alas, it was too cold and blustery to settle in for lunch so we found seating in a more protected area off the ridge.

Goodwin Brook, with its many cascades, was running fast, a refreshing sight after our many months of serious drought. It was remembered that Yellow Trillium bloom here in the spring but on this late fall day all we found were hickory nuts. A long boardwalk kept our boots dry as we passed through a damp area. An abundance of club mosses, more familiarly known as Princess Pines, gave a carpet of color to the otherwise bare forest floor. Just past the intersection with the CCC Loop Trail we came upon a spring. George explained that the elongated oval shape showed that it was provided specifically for cows. Its rock construction was still in perfect condition.

The Beaverdam Brook crossing was remembered by all. The wooden footbridge enabled us to cross safely and allowed us to admire the rock work of the mill of long ago. As we approached the Beaverdam Marsh Area a pair of Kingfishers called out as they flew from our sight. We paused here to scan the pond for more bird sightings and to look at the dam. Then, with less than a mile to go, we headed to the Nathaniel Lyon Memorial Park where our visit with the Natchaug Trail was to conclude. Thanks for the memories, old friend!

Hikers: Melanie and Bob Michaud, Linda and Don Hagstrom, Gary Griffin, George Jackson, Dave Wells, Sarah O'Hare