

Connecticut Section of the Green Mountain Club

VOLUME XXXXVIII ISSUE II CO-EDITORS: CAROL A. LANGLEY/CELIA CAMPBELL-MOHN April – June 2017

President's Message Spring 2017

Depending on the publication date for this newsletter edition, our March 25 Connecticut Section annual dinner and meeting at the Cheshire, Connecticut Grange Hall is imminent or just past. If it follows/followed the course of many previous dinners, we had a good turnout with plentiful food and a great opportunity to meet with Section members we don't see often. We had two guest speakers, with Jim Fritz performing the warm-up role with a short presentation of our 2016 Pacific Crest Trail trek followed by featured speaker and GMC executive director Mike Debonis presenting an overall picture of the Club and specifically the Bolton Lodge and Bryant Camp restoration projects in northern Vermont.

I had the pleasure of participating in the GMC's Winter Trails Day at the Long Trail Brewing in Bridgewater Corners Vermont during the first (very cold and windy) weekend of March. Despite the weather conditions, there was a good offering of workshops and hikes during the day, and bottomless coffee and hot chocolate. Attended a nice hike of about four miles to Winturri Shelter on the AT with other GMCers from Vermont and Massachusetts. And speaking of GMC events, the Club's annual meeting will be held on Saturday June 10, 2017 at the Common Ground Center in Starksboro Vermont. The annual meetings are always a good chance to meet folks from all the Sections and many states, especially during the afternoon hikes. The schedule and registration form are found in the Spring Long Trail News.

Our own Spring activities schedule is included in this newsletter. Trails and Shelters VP Mike Shaw has scheduled our first two Long Trail maintenance weekends for April 28-30 at Story Spring Shelter and May 12-14 at Kid Gore Shelter. These weekends are great opportunities to give something back to the trails, and usually get us in and out of the woods before the hungry black flies make their appearance.

Finally, a sad note: Mary Ellen Melesko, a former member of the Connecticut Section passed away in December 2016 after a long, hard battle with breast cancer. Mary Ellen joined our section in 1993 and soon after started leading hikes in the state. She served as our vice-president of activities from 1994 to 1998. Despite the difficulty of her illness and treatments Mary Ellen always had a smile on her face and kept a positive attitude, expressing the sentiment that every day she could wake up and smell the fresh air was a good day. She was a neighbor and friend of Carol Langley who saw her walking through their neighborhood till the end.

See you on the trail,

Jim Robertson

Club Information
<http://www.conngmc.com>
Officers & Executive Committee

James E. Robertson President
(860)-633-7279, jrobert685@aol.com

Dick Hart, 1st Vice President, Trails & Shelters
(203) 484-9925, ihike@sbcglobal.net

Mandy Brink, 2nd Vice President of Activities
trekeragb@sbcglobal.net

James Fritz, Director
(860)-221-9173 james_fritz@sbcglobal.net

Andrew J. Hood, Alt Director
(860)-646-2753, andrew.hood@snet.net

Kevin T. Burke, Secretary
(203)-729-1603, burke-kevin@sbcglobal.net

Marianne Valley, Treasurer
m_valley@att.net

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:

Carol A. Langley
67 Pondview Drive
Southington, CT 06489
cosmical14@yahoo.com

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:

| | |
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| 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>

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

Kitchen Sink Cookies – Ross Lanius

1 cup whole wheat flour
¼ cup spy flour
1 1/3 cups rolled oats
¾ cup unsweetened coconut
¼ cup powdered milk
½ tsp salt
1 tsp. cinnamon
½ tsp. powdered ginger
2/3 cup raisins
2/3 cup chocolate chips
¼ cup chopped nuts(optional)
1/3 cup sunflower seeds
¼ cup oil or melted butter
¼ molasses
¼ honey
2 eggs beaten

Mix all dry ingredients, beat together eggs, butter or oil, molasses, honey pour into dry ingredients a little at a time mixing well. Add a little water if necessary. Drop on to unoled cookie sheet, bake 350 for 10-12 minutes. Makes 4 dozen. Recipe can be found in Small Planet Cookbook 1973 edition



McLean Refuge – Annual Turkey Trot Sat. Nov. 26, 2016

A gloomy grey day with showers and temp's in the 40's kept many GMC hikers home. In all the years that this hike has been held, never did we have just two hikers.

Sarah O'Hare and Jim Robertson and Molson did not let the weather man discourage them to get out. Promptly at 9:30 we started our way into McLean Refuge. We took the orange, red and blue loop which gets little use. We climbed Stony Hill at 380ft with ease. Next we took a dirt road which led us to the backside of the Summit Trail. As we reached the Summit at 580ft we heard the pitter –patter of rain drops on our jackets. Taking a short snack break we put on our raingear and pack covers. This is a lovely place to have lunch but not today.

Leaving the Summit we headed west on a rocky old road around the mountain which led us to the side Blue Blazed Trail which led us to the Purple North Trail. Reaching the junction of the old woods road we decided to end the hike since the raining was not going away. Soon we reached the Trout Pond and McLean Cabin in a short distance we reached our cars. A short hike of 5 miles, with friends and good conversation sure beats sitting home on a raining day!!. Thanks for joining me.

Hikers: Sarah O'Hare, Jim Robertson & Molson, Carol A. Langley

New Year's Day Hammonasset State Park Sunday January 1, 2017

The weather in the middle section of the state delayed Jim and Carol to get there on time. Our original plans to hike a short distance on the Greenway and then through the campground did not pan out either. The State of CT. is doing over the gas and water lines in the park so the whole area was closed by a chain link fence and a Park Ranger.

Driving back to the original parking I spotted Ross and Kaz walking in on the road. Plan B we were all assembled in the west parking lot and ready to go. Molson and Thor were happy to be there but first

things first the sniffing then the growling. Once it was established who was boss they led the way.

Thor tolerated our stopping to watch two young boys riding the waves on their skis but when he had a enough of standing around he would "bark". This seemed to be the rule of thumb for the day no dawdling just walking.

Our next stop was the new nature center where the CT. Section of the GMC made an inspection of the Ladies and Men's rooms. They passed so a second stop was made on our return trip. We visited the Island where at one time there was a wildlife viewing stand. On our walk around we passed through the oldest stand of Sassafras Trees in Connecticut. When we reached the split in the walkway, which led back to the Nature Center, Cathryn left the group.

Jim, Ross, Kaz, Molson & Thor and I went out to the pier where there were picnic tables for lunch. Ross and I sat at one table with Thor and Jim, Kaz and Molson took the other table. The dogs needed their space so each could be the king of his area. Thor was tied on near the entrance where people were coming up the walkway so everyone was welcomed by barking. However, so humans did not appreciated the welcome from Thor and turned around. One lady greeted him with petting and loving him. "Whow this made his day!!!! Ross shared with the group his homemade cookies, recipe is on 2nd page.

As we walked out to Megis Point parking we could not believe how many people there were. The group guessed that there were probably 300 people and 100 dogs. There were several people at the farthest point by Clinton Harbor watching seals with their binoculars and other fancy viewing equipment. I thought that I saw a Lighthouse but it turned out to be a marker. "Looks like these old eyes are playing tricks on me".

When we reached Middle Beach, on our return trip Ross, Thor and Kaz walked the road back to the Greenway Parking Lot. Jim, Molson and I walked back to West Beach. Miles for the day Cathryn Dolan, 4miles, Jim Robertson, Molson and Carol A. Langley 5.8 miles, Ross Lanian, Thor and Kaz Rybak 7 miles.

Thanks for joining me and getting the New Year off on a good foot.

Chatfield Trail

Saturday– Jan 21, 2017

Cabin fever must have been hitting everyone because we had a great turn out for the hike. We met at the parking lot at Route 80, gathered our gear and hit the trail. This trail isn't quite as easy as one would think. It had a fair amount of ups and downs. One really interesting spot was a lemon squeezer area where it was a scramble up rocks, over rocks or through rocks, whichever route you chose to try. Poor Molson wasn't so pleased at Jim R's and Mandy's choice when there was a significant drop down a rock area. After some coaxing he nudged to the edge and let Jim lift him down. We hiked out the Deer Lake Camp which is run by the Boy Scouts. It has pods of 6 to 7 new shelters in each pod, quite nice. It was a sunny day so we enjoyed lunch at the picnic tables there. It was warm enough to stir up several mice families who had hibernated in the mattresses in the shelters. One even took up residence with Cathryn when she used the privy.

After filling our bellies and exploring the camp a bit, we turned around and headed back. It was hard for the hike to end because it was lovely outside. We all knew when Jim R headed away as we could hear Molson's good by bark from a ways down the road. I believe mileage was around 7 miles.

Hikers: Mandy Brink, Dick Hart, Alec Dwyer, Tom and Patty Adams, Kevin Vann, Larry Keckler, Cathryn Dolan, Don Hagstrom, Gary Griffin, Jim Robertson and our four legged friends, Molson and Arlo

Winter Catskills Trip

Fri. – Sun. January 27-29, 2017

Last year on this trip there was little snow in the mountains so this time we were determined to find snow! We were successful and got to wear snowshoes even though there wasn't much fresh snow, just crusty trails. We stayed at the same 1800's renovated farm house in Woodstock and enjoyed great food prepared by (or bought) by the GMC's master chefs. For Friday arrivals there was a choice of vegetarian or meat lasagna (Kevin

Burke) with bread and tabbouleh which was brought by Allen and Diane Grunthal who are GMC'ers from the Killington chapter by way of New Jersey where they live (well familiar with hiking in the Catskills). Sat/Sun breakfasts (Mark S. and Mike S.) included omelets and SOS, bacon, etc. (leftover lasagna). Sat dinner was Mandy's turn with Cream of Broccoli and Chuck Wagon Beef soups (or leftover lasagna). Sat night was games night with Apples to Apples and Smart Ass to challenge what brain power we had left after the hike. Alas, last year's champion Adam ceded his throne to either Dennis H. or Kevin B., my mind fogs over at remembering what happened. He's gearing up for another run next year.

By the way, we did get out and hike in mild winter conditions, even if overcast. Kevin B. and Jim M. arrived early enough on Friday to hike Blackhead Mt which is on the list of 35 peaks 3500 ft in elevation or more, and which needs to be done in winter as well as in another season. There were great views on the escarpment higher up out over the Hudson River valley, viewed somewhat from afar by Kevin.

On Sat we divided into two groups with Mandy, Jim F. (ratty and slither as well) and Diane heading up Slide Mt, one of 2, 4k peaks, while the other 9 of us went up Balsam Lake Mt, not to be confused with 2 other peaks with the word balsam in their names. It's also on the 3500 ft list and has a fire tower at the summit with great views out over the Catskills in all directions, if you climbed the steps to but not into a locked cab at the top. On the descent we found out why Scott B. (aka Cesar Millan) is known as the "dog whisperer."

Sunday was a day for a shorter group hike before heading home to Overlook Mt past the ruins of a burned out resort mountain hotel from the Catskill's heyday in the early 1900's. I can't figure out what the attraction would have been for the well-off folks and what they did to amuse themselves near the top of a mountain they were transported to in a carriage – "let's go have another look out over the wonderful views before dinner and evening partying"?? There was another fire tower at the summit with fine views (a Catskill summit staple).

The Catskills seem to be a favored place for religious or communal collectives. Last year Scott was intent on "checking out" a Buddhist monastery with a "do not enter" sign on the gate. Near the parking lot at the

trailhead for Overlook Mt. high up on the side of the mountain, was another monastery, the world headquarters of a Buddhist group that was once visited by the Dalai Lama, Scott wasn't tempted this year.

We haven't by any means exhausted the hike possibilities in the Catskills, there are 3 more fire towers and many other nice hikes for future winter weekends, if ever there is a "real" winter in the cards. Group (12): Jim Moore, Jim Fritz, Mandy Brink, Scott Black, Mark Stone, Jon Conville (Mark's son in law), Kevin Burke, Dennis Himes, Allen and Diane Grunthal, Mike and Adam Shaw. Trip leaders: Mandy Brink and Jim Moore.

Greenway Rte. 315 North Sun. February 5, 2017

I was joined by an old member, Darry K. Ruiter who had just rejoined the CT. Section. The day was clear with strong winds however, the path was not clear and had many icy spots.

We talked about old members who now are hiking in the clouds and those who are arm chair supporters who read the Trail Talk faithfully. We took you all in thoughts this day.

Once we reached the open fields where the greenhouses stood empty waiting for the spring crop, the wind started to real blow. Because we were so busy talking and walking we hardly noticed the increase in the wind and just kept moving.

Darry is building his own backpack which I found quite interesting. When we reached mile marker 17 we decided to turn around since we started at 13.2. On our return Cattails danced in the wind along the path. Reaching the parking we decided to take advantage of a bench and had our lunch.

We had decided when we met there would be no phones, no discussion of religion or politics so this turned out to be a real old fashion walk and talk.

Walkers & talkers Carol A. Langley & Darry K. Ruiter

Winter Poconos/Delaware Water Gap Weekend February 24-26, 2017

Being the good and thorough leader that I am, I never checked the weather forecast. In my optimistic La la land it was going to be sunny and beautiful. The first thing Dick says to me when I get to his house is, "well it is supposed to rain all day tomorrow". Um I'm thinking. I didn't pack rain gear, I didn't think I'd need it. Oh well. Jim F, Dick and I headed out with a stop for dinner to break up the drive. We arrived at the cabin at 9pm. We started a fire, made it cozy and settled in to be lazy. We chatted a bit and before we knew, Dennis had arrived at about 10pm

It was an early start for the day. Dennis mistakenly set his alarm for 6am instead of 7am. It was fine as we got up, had a great breakfast and headed out. The forecast was for rain to start at 11am although it was somewhat sunny when we headed to the park.

We decided to hike to Buttermilk Falls on the NJ side of the Delaware Gap National Recreation area. The road was gated off so we hiked into the trail head from the road. What a pretty falls. They were flowing well and so pretty. The trail had several platforms built up along the falls for viewing. We hiked the 1.5 miles to join the AT. It was a 1100 foot elevation gain in that 1.5 miles so it was a steady climb up. Once we joined the AT, we headed south to the Crater Lake area. Now it is Feb 25, this day we are hiking. Most would expect to be hiking for winter weather. Well we were overdressed. It actually got to 69 degrees and we were "hot" for most of the day. We were a bit envious of hikers who were in their shorts and T-shirts. After a lovely lunch stop at Crater Lake, we headed north again and decided to hit the summit of Rattlesnake Mt. Still no rain and while the sky was grayer, there was sunshine trying to peek through at times. At the summit of Rattlesnake Mountain, we took in the views before heading back to the junction for the Buttermilk Falls trail. We figured we had done about 10 miles till we got back to the car. What a great hike it had been, it had the elements for everything enjoyable, a waterfall, a lake and a summit.

We had no sooner got in the car and driven about 10 minutes when guess what? The biggest, blackest clouds rolled quickly in and the storm hit hard. We had thunder, lightning and rain so heavy Jim had to pull over due to invisibility. There was a temperature

dropped of 20 degrees in 10 minutes. It settled into a steady rain which made it even more appealing to be going back to a cozy cabin. Back at the cabin we started a fire, cooked a nice dinner and enjoyed an evening playing games.

Sunday was another hike before heading back to CT. We hiked Mt. Tammany on a loop trail which was 4 miles. It was a fairly rocky hike up, a bit smoother coming down. The mountain afforded us beautiful views of the Delaware Water Gap and the Delaware River. We ended up hiking through the Dunsfield area which was beautiful. It has a pretty waterfall along with a beautiful walk along a stream. I would recommend hiking in this area and exploring more on another trip. It was sunny on Sunday but quite cold, in the 30's. It was a switch for sure from Saturday. So the weekend had offered us lots of outdoor variety and we had a great time.

Weekend Warriors: Mandy Brink, Dick Hart, Jim Fritz, Dennis Himes, Ratty Trekker and Slither, the traveling snake

Farmington River Greenway Sun. March 5, 2017

As I reached the parking lot in Collinsville the temperature was 14 degrees and a stiff north/west/east wind was blowing. However, I had two smiling GMC members ready to go. Thank heavens we were hiking south into the sun. This was the first time I can remember the Farmington being this quiet. The low water level and cold temps had slowed the water considerably.

Darry and Sarah were the two brave souls. The path was clear so we walked and talked. Very few people were out this day. When we reached the parking lot off of our destination we took a snack break and sat in the warm sunshine.

When we started back it was like walking into freezing cold water as the wind bit our cheeks. The sun on our backs did nothing to warm us. Walking back the sun was shining just right on the rocks and the granite and mica sparkled like diamonds. Soon we approached the bridge over the Farmington River. Next was LaSalle Market for some warm beverages, food and treats. Sarah or Darry had never been here before and were amazed by the extensive menu that was hand written

on the wall. Good conversation and a brisk walk was the menu for the day. Thanks for joining me!!!

Walkers & talkers: Darry K. Ruiter, Sarah O'Hare & Carol A. Langley



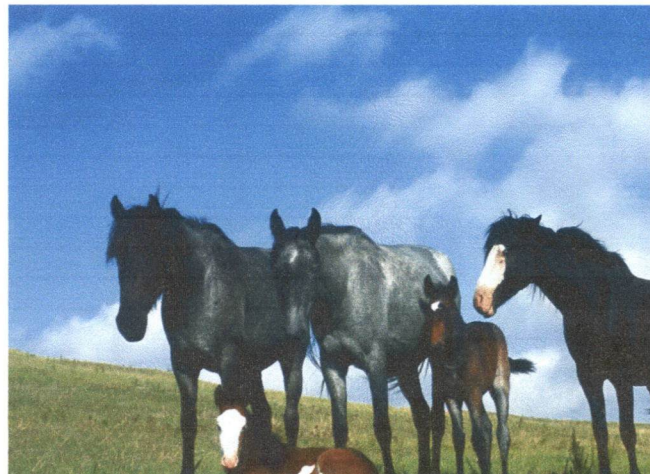
Spruce Peak Shelter Full Moon Snowshoe Backpack February 11-12, 2017

Although Spruce Peak Shelter on the Long Trail between Stratton and Bromley Mountains was built in the early-1980's I had never seen it. The last time I'd hiked that section of the trail was with my Boy Scout troop years earlier. After a great weekend with a hardy crew of winter backpackers, I wish now that I hadn't waited so long to get up there. Spruce Peak Shelter is a gem and one of the few remaining Long Trail shelters with a wood stove.

We caught a window of cloudy but relatively dry weather, starting out from the parking lot on Vermont Routes 11 & 30 late Saturday morning. Several inches of fresh powder on top of a crust from an earlier storm necessitated snow shoes. Kevin Breton (KB1) and son Eric started out first; Kevin Burke (KB2) and I caught up with them a while later at a point where the white trail blazes seemed to disappear. With snow cover, some places in the woods appear to have multiple open pathways which could be the trail. We spread out along the side hill for a while, until the Bretons eventually found another blaze and we regrouped.

After a number of ups and downs on the west side of the ridge, taking turns breaking trail, we finally turned up the steady grade to the spur trail to the shelter. After a 2.5 hour trek we arrived, pleased to see that

After a number of ups and downs on the west side of the ridge, taking turns breaking trail, we finally turned up the steady grade to the spur trail to the shelter. After a 2.5 hour trek we arrived, pleased to see that previous visitors had left an ample supply of firewood on the front porch and inside. A small stream was open and running very close to the structure. A mouse darted across the top of the snow towards the shelter, convinced KB2 that he was going to set up his tent and not deal with mice scurrying around him at night. He set about tamping down a campsite so it could sinter in preparation for his tent. KB1, Eric and I decided to bunk in the shelter so we rolled out our pads and sleeping bags and had lunch. The remainder of the afternoon was spent collecting additional kindling for the woodstove and sawing and splitting the long logs that were lying on the porch.



As the afternoon moved towards dusk we got the wood stove going and broke out stoves, food and libations. Tales of past trips on trails and humorous stories from many angles of life filled the evening, as the stove got the inside temperature up to near 40 degrees. While we did see one mouse tail disappearing into the eaves, we weren't bothered at all during the night by scurrying little feet.

Sunday's weather forecast was for more snow to start in the morning, so we were up early, ate, packed and beat a quick return to our cars at the highway parking area, arriving just as the snow began. Having made the decision to brave the elements and go to Vermont despite television forecasters' dire warnings of doom, we unanimously assigned ourselves the moniker of *The Four Horsemen of The Snowpocalypse*. (The drive home to Connecticut did turn out to be a pain, taking almost twice the usual time. I-91 conditions became progressively worse from north to south.)

The Horsemen: Kevin Breton, Eric Breton, Kevin Burke, Jim Robertson

