



Connecticut Section of the Green Mountain Club

Volume LV, Issue II

April to June 2023

President's Message Spring 2023

Annual Dinner and Meeting 2023 — I hope you'll be able to join us for our 54th anniversary annual dinner and meeting at the Cheshire Grange Hall at 44 Wallingford Road in Cheshire. The details:

Date: Saturday, April 15, 2023

Time: Social hour 5:00 pm, Dinner 6:00 pm, Meeting 7:00 pm, followed by our guest speaker

Cost: \$20 per person for the Grange's all-you-can-eat roast beef dinner or vegetarian lasagna

Reservations: A reservation form has or will be transmitted separately, or contact Dennis Himes at dennis@cookhimes.com or 860-643-6867 or 860-335-5672 to RSVP and make your meal selection

Guest speaker: Jeff Hatch, owner and lead instructor, Raven Wilderness School, "Survival Skills for Hikers"

GMC and Long Trail Updates — The GMC is hiring its seasonal field staff for the upcoming season. Director of Field Programs Keegan Tierney has hired three supervisors and said the Club has received a lot of applications for caretaker, ridge runner, and trail crew positions this year. Also, the GMC is eliminating fees at sites with caretakers such as Stratton Pond, Griffith Lake, Little Rock Pond, etc. This change is intended to make the Long Trail System more open and welcoming to all users, especially new ones, and will allow the GMC caretakers to focus on education of responsible trail use principles and not worry about holding large amounts of cash for several days.

GMC Rental Cabins — Over the winter we scheduled two multiday events at the GMC's rental cabins in northern Vermont, one at Bryant Camp in the Bolton Valley area (story on page 4) and one at the Hadsel-Mares cabin on Wheeler Pond in Barton. We had great turnouts of eight and nine participants, respectively. When the Club was first debating purchase of the Wheeler Pond camps many years ago, I recall being a bit skeptical about getting into the property ownership and rental business. But after several Connecticut Section stays at these facilities, I'm convinced that the GMC Board of Directors and other decision-makers showed great foresight in acquiring them to expand the outdoor opportunities that the Club provides. For more information on the cabins and rentals, go to <https://www.greenmountainclub.org/about/gmc-rental-cabins/>

See you on the trail,
Jim Robertson



Sugarloaf Mountain, see Catskills Weekend, p. 6

Green Mountain Club Information

<http://www.greenmountainclub.org>

(802) 244-7037

Connecticut Section Information

<http://www.conngmc.com>

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

New Members: The Connecticut Section welcomes these new members who recently joined:

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------|
| Diane Lucas | Paul Smith |
| Rob Muller | Meghan Lovegren |
| Brian McGovern | Pamela Hardiman |

We look forward to meeting you at upcoming events.

Publication Schedule: *Trail Talk* is published four times a year in March, June, September, and December. Please e-mail your activity report as a Word document to the Editor at fpclark1@comcast.net no later than the fifth day of the publication month.

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 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:
Green Mountain Club
4711 Waterbury-Stowe Road
Waterbury Center, VT 05677-9904

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

Special Thanks to member Charlotte Hitchcock. Each issue she facilitates the e-mailing of *Trail Talk* by formatting the layout and reducing the file size.

Want to help the Connecticut Section reduce expenses and save trees? Just send an e-mail to the Editor, requesting that you be e-mailed *Trail Talk*, rather than having it mailed to you. You’ll receive *Trail Talk* sooner, too.

Calendar of Events:

Upcoming events are listed here:

<http://www.conngmc.com/newwiki/doku.php?id=start>



Guilder Pond – see p. 5

ACTIVITY REPORTS

Wadsworth Falls State Park Hike Middletown & Middlefield December 6, 2022 by Mandy Brink

Jim Robertson was the only taker for this hike, but we had a great time in this little jewel of a state park. We started on the Orange Trail and then took a side trail to check out Little Falls. Here there is a small stream that glides down a jagged rock ledge. After viewing the falls, we crossed the small brook and hiked up a steep slope to rejoin the trail and head to Cherry Hill and the big falls. The Coginchaug River cascaded over the rocks, forming quite an impressive waterfall. We stopped at the fenced overlook and then headed down the path that took us to the base of the Wadsworth Falls. After nabbing a few pictures, we turned around, taking the Red Trail back to the cars. Bella rode in her sack for the 3 miles of hiking. After the hike, we drove over to the Veterans Cemetery to pay respects to former member Gary Griffin.

Savin Rock, West Haven December 27, 2022 by Carol A. Langley

It was a cloudy day when I left Southington, but as I reached the shore line there was a nice blue sky. My son **Brian Palumbo** and two boys **Robert** and **Ryan**, **Mandy Brink** and Bella, **Marianne Valley** and Harley were waiting and ready to go. The boys while waiting had done a great job of cleaning trash off the beach. We headed west to the farther end of Savin Rock where there is a beautiful monument area to those who have served in the United States Army, Air Force, Marines, Navy, and Coast Guard.

On our return trip, Robert and Ryan took full advantage of a pond of ice and were skating around it as we passed by. We turned around and headed east on the walkway that took us past the site of the old roller coaster that went out over the water in the 50s and early 60s until it was no longer deemed safe. Back then, the area was basically an amusement park and Jimmies was only a hot dog stand.

As the girls walked along, I realized that I no longer saw or heard the boys. Apparently Long Island Sound and the beach were much more interesting until the waves hit the boys, soaking them up to their knees. Brian quickly went back to his car and had them strip off their wet pants, socks and sneakers. When we

reached the boys, they were wrapped in blankets in a warm car having snacks and so the day ended on a positive note. A walk by the ocean any time of the year is refreshing and healthy.



Photo by Marianne Valley

Sessions Woods Burlington January 8, 2023 by Carol A. Langley



The trail starts off on the park's dirt and gravel road. Soon **Sarah O'Hare** and I saw the Blue/Yellow Trail blazes and started our hiking. The trail led us to West Chippens Hill Road, where we crossed a field

near a pond and much to our surprise had to pass by a fenced area with four goats and one donkey. Sarah took pictures.

We continued on to Greer Road. Reaching a pond with a parking area and a picnic table, we took advantage of the moment and had a snack. After a short distance, we reached the Mile of Ledges. As I looked ahead at the ledges, I remembered the day probably 30 years ago when Caroline Smith, Henry Smith, Tony Shookus, Herb Van Winkelen and others hiked the Mile of Ledges; then, it was just a walk on the Tunxis Trail. Today, it was a challenge to climb over the rocks to reach the top and try to figure a safe way down. Sarah had an eye for finding the safe way.

After climbing along the side of a rock ledge, we found a flat place and had lunch.

We reached the intersection with the Yellow Trail and continued on to an historic landmark, Tory Den. A small rock formation, actually a tunnel beneath a rock, was used as a hideout during the Revolutionary War by the Chippens Hill Tories when the Patriots came visiting. After passing Tory Den, I kept looking for the side trail that would lead us to Greer Road. Apparently, since my earlier visit, many houses had been built so the trail was moved a bit. Finally seeing the blue blazes, we headed down to the road, walking past many homes and finally the trail parking where the pond was. We continued on to West Chippens Hill Road and, when we reached the goats, we saw that the chickens were out of the coop. As soon as they saw us, they started cackling and flew into the coop fencing. Now we were retracing our steps and were very happy to see the park road. When we reached our cars, Sarah checked her phone and it registered 9 miles. Yes, it was quite a day. If you haven't hiked the Mile of Ledges, I am challenging you to go and hike them. It was quite an experience. We had the whole trail to ourselves except for two gentlemen we met at the Mile of Ledges.

**Bryant Camp
January 8-10, 2023
by Jim Robertson**

On our first excursion to the GMC's Bryant Camp in Bolton, Vermont, I was joined by **Mark Blanchard, Mandy Brink, Kevin Burke, Joe Conaci, Barb Kelly**, new section member **Diane Lucas, and Mike Shaw**. Bryant Camp was built around 1930, restored by the GMC in 2016 and is located further up the valley from Bolton Lodge, requiring an uphill trek of about a mile along an old wood road used by the Catamount cross-country trail system. Starting out on a cold but sunny January day we found some ice but very little snow on the trail leading to the cabin. Mark headed up first. Kevin started next but ran afoul of a member of the "backcountry police," who pointed out that the Bolton Valley Nordic trails require users to have skis or snowshoes (which he did not). Kevin returned to the parking area to advise us to carry our snowshoes, even if not needed. Hauling gear in packs and on sleds, we slowly made our way up the hill. Mark, after patiently getting the cold wood stove started up, walked

partway down to meet the group and help carry some gear. By the time we all reached Bryant Camp, Joe had already arrived and was splitting more firewood from the extensive supply that the GMC Burlington Section stocks in the wood shed. After settling in, we went out for a short walk along Birch Loop to the junction of the Bolton-Trapp Trail, which continues northeast to Stowe, finding more snow at this higher elevation (around 2700 feet). Back at the cabin we enjoyed Mandy's appetizers and Barb's beef and vegetable casserole, followed by an always-humorous game of Smart Ass.

The next day started with Kevin's breakfast pancakes. Mark led the majority of the group on a hike/snowshoe along the Bolton-Trapp and Raven's Wind trails up to the Long Trail at about 3300 feet in elevation, then back down Raven's Wind to the cabin. Jim and Joe walked down to the Bolton Valley parking area, Joe to get the evening supper from his car and Jim to get two more gallons of bottled water and to meet GMC President Howard van Benthuisen.



*Mike, Jim, Kevin, Mandy, Barb, & Joe at Stowe View,
photo by Diane Lucas*

In addition to his executive position with the Club and still serving part-time as a Vermont Superior Court judge, Howard creates new and replacement Long Trail signs in his workshop. As part of this collateral activity, Howard made and delivered several beautiful directional signs for our section of trail near Kid Gore and Story Spring Shelters, which we'll install this year.

After lunch of sandwiches and soup, we headed out again for what the leader intended to be a short loop of about a mile. Well, somewhere we missed the planned trail turnoff and decided to follow some ski tracks up an unnamed mountain. The trail map showed a section of glades, but we ended up bushwhacking. As the terrain started to level out, I was a bit befuddled as to our location. Fortunately, Mark came to my rescue again, suggesting we just continue a bit further. Lo and behold, we had “found” Stowe View, a prominent overlook. Despite low clouds, the view was very good towards the Stowe area. The return trip to the cabin via the Heavenly Highway trail was truly heavenly. About one mile planned, two-plus miles traversed. Dinner consisted of more appetizers, Joe’s delicious sweet potato soup, and Mike’s homemade bread. A food and drink trivia game followed.

During the second night, the wind picked up and a light dusting of snow fell. We were relieved to see Kevin emerge from his tent and come inside, although he mentioned that some spindrift had blown up under the tent fly. We enjoyed Diane’s cream cheese-stuffed French toast for breakfast, then set about cleaning and packing up. The walk back *down* the trail to the parking area, with lightened loads and gravity on our side, was much quicker and easier than the slog up.

Next up: the GMC Wheeler Pond cabin in early March.

Hemlocks Shelter Overnight January 15-16, 2023| by Jim Robertson

Kevin Breton and **Kevin Burke** joined me for this overnight on the Appalachian Trail (AT) in southwestern Massachusetts on a cold, sunny, and blustery weekend. We parked just off East Street and started up Mt. Everett Road which is gated and unplowed in the winter. The one-mile road rises gradually and intersects with the AT just beyond Guilder Pond where we paused to enjoy the frosted scenery.

Shortly after reaching the trail, we met a group of three day-hikers from Bridgeport. During our chat Kevin Burke found out that his father used to ride motorcycles with the father of one of the hikers, one more tale for the “it’s a small-world” chronicles.



Two Kevins at Guilder Pond

The trail dropped through some sections that were icy but fairly easy to navigate and we reached Hemlocks Shelter about 1:30 pm. After a quick lunch we set about gathering deadwood for an evening campfire. The Bridgeport crew stopped in on their way back to the Berkshire School side trail as one of the three hikers planned to camp at the shelter the following weekend. Two hours of the Kevins sawing and Jim splitting resulted in a sufficient supply of wood, and with some daylight remaining we decided to walk a bit further along the AT to the smaller Glen Brook Shelter. A consistent west-northwest wind accompanied us and the canyon in which Glen Brook sits seemed to channel the breeze, making it feel colder. We snapped a few photos, inspected the facilities and returned to Hemlocks.

After snacks and supper, we built and started a small fire, somewhat in the lee of the shelter, which warmed us until 9 pm when our bunks called us inside. The air temperature bottomed around 15 degrees overnight and the persistent wind probably resulted in a windchill near zero. The inevitable nighttime ventures outside were chilly.

The morning dawned sunny but still windy. While canister-fueled backpacking stoves can be tricky to start in cold weather, Kevin Breton got his stove going and graciously boiled water so we could all have a hot drink. We packed quickly and hiked back out to our cars, stopping once more to admire the ice-covered Guilder Pond and the surrounding hills in the morning sunlight. A stop at the McDonald’s in East Canaan for a delicious high-calorie breakfast and an opportunity to revel in our just-completed adventure put the finishing touches on a great weekend.

**Annual Catskills Weekend
January 27-29 2023
by Joseph Conaci**

After a pandemic hiatus, the annual Catskills weekend returned this January. We stayed at a new location in Jewett, with 1970s vibe. **Mandy Brink, Jim Moore,** and I arrived in New York early, for a Friday afternoon hike. We climbed from the Big Hollow Trailhead, north, to a viewpoint along the side of Burnt Knob. From there we could see across the foggy Black Dome Valley to Blackhead, Black Dome, and Thomas Cole Mountain. We reached the Airbnb in Jewett later that evening, and were shortly joined by **Kevin Burke, Dennis Himes, and Mike Shaw.** Just as we sat down for dinner, the Pennsylvania contingent of **Scott Black, Dan Stone, Mark Stone,** and **Tshepang Stone** arrived.

The next day we set out to hike a loop that included Sugarloaf Mountain, a 3,810-foot peak along the Devil's Path. The Devil's Path is a trail that runs east to west across Indian Head Mountain, Twin Mountain, Sugarloaf Mountain, Plateau Mountain, Hunter Mountain, and West Kill Mountain. On the way to the trailhead, we experienced the joy of driving in the direction opposite to the long line of cars that were waiting to turn into the Hunter Mountain Ski Resort.

We took a clockwise route from the Roaring Kill trailhead and stopped at a former Bluestone quarry. This location, known locally as Dibbles Quarry, has views of Roundtop Mountain and Kaaterskill High Peak. At some point since the quarry was abandoned, someone assembled the discarded bluestone into various chairs that look out from the mountain.



Photos by Joe Conaci

We continued along trails that were broken in, but quite steep to climb. Just after the summit, we took a side trail for a view to the south. From there we had a clear prospect of the hills and mountains around the Ashokan Reservoir, which is part of New York City's water supply. We continued our hike down Sugarloaf, with some steep and icy sections. Then, we needed to ascend to descend, as the trail skirted a property boundary. We returned to Roaring Kill, after eight miles and about 2,570 feet of elevation gain.

When we got back to the Airbnb, **Jim Robertson** was there. Jim had arrived that afternoon, and hiked the Kaaterskill Rail trail to Kaaterskill Falls. We had a leisurely dinner, followed by the trivia game, Smart Ass. Mandy supplied a chocolate in the shape of a donkey's rear as a prize, which Mike won.



The ruins today, and a historic photo

Most hikers departed on Sunday morning, but Mandy, Dennis, and I hiked up the fire tower road on Overlook Mountain. In addition to the cold and windy view of the Hudson Valley from the fire tower, this trail passes by the ruins of the Overlook Mountain House. Like many of the 19th and early 20th century mountain-top hotels, it was destroyed by fire multiple times. The ruins are from an effort to rebuild in fireproof-concrete. However, the project was abandoned before the hotel reopened.

**Sleeping Giant State Park
Hamden
January 28, 2023
by Carol A. Langley**

After a considerable rainy and cloudy week, the sun was shining today. After waiting 10 minutes with no one else showing up, I started out on the Horse Trail which was quite wet and muddy.

I had only gone a short distance when a gentleman was coming towards me, waving his hands and telling me to turn around. Apparently, the trail was not in good shape, so I decided to drive to the main parking lot and was able to get one of the two open parking spots.

There was a mega crowd, never had I seen this many people here before. I started out on the Tower Path. By the time I reached the Red Triangle, I had counted 50 people going in either direction. I decided to head south on the Red Triangle, then joined up with the Historic Trail which led me to a rock with a beautiful view of the Sound.

The sun was dancing on the waves, what a moment to cherish. Finishing my snack and break, I returned to the Historic Trail where I met a couple who were going to the same rock to take a break. This first part of the Red Triangle was pleasant, then the fun began, rock over rock. It was a slow go. Reaching the Orange Trail, I headed toward the main entrance. There was a merge with the Yellow Trail.

I saw a gentleman in front of me, a distance away, but then off to my right on the hill I saw a black movement. Not panicking, I stopped and yes, it was a black bear. He was sniffing the air, head turning from side to side. I just stood still and waited.

He apparently felt this “Old Hen” was too tough for him and turned around heading back to where he came from on the hillside.

Reaching the parking lot, I decided to say nothing and cause a panic scene. The rangers were having enough problems with people parking everywhere, even on the grass in front of their building. People were waiting in line to get into the parking lot.

**Selden Creek &
Brockway-Hawthorne Preserves
Lyme
February 1, 2023
by Sarah O’Hare**

The Nature Conservancy’s Selden Creek Preserve and the adjacent Brockway-Hawthorne Preserve include a variety of habitats which are traversed by approximately 5.5 miles of trail. **Jim Robertson, Mandy Brink, Carol Langley, Patty Adams** and faithful trail companions Bella and Arlo joined me in exploring this unique parcel in Lyme. We hiked through hilly woodlands leading to overlooks of the expansive tidal marsh of Selden Creek, down through a ravine with towering cliffs, passed through mountain laurel arbors, and crossed several small brooks and Whalebone Creek.

Stone walls were in abundance and more than a dozen rock piles led us to believe that they may have been a Native American ceremonial stone garden. Benches throughout the preserves offered opportunities for rest and quiet observation. We all enjoyed this hike and agreed that we should visit again, especially at a time when the marsh is alive with the call of the red winged blackbird and the mountain laurel is in bloom.

**Little Rock Pond Shelter Backpack
February 10-11, 2023
by Jim Robertson**

Some of the usual winter camping suspects – **Mark Blanchard, Kevin Breton and Kevin Burke** – joined me for this overnight backpack to Little Rock Pond Shelter on the Long Trail. We took the Homer Stone Brook Trail from South Wallingford, Vermont, up to the pond and shelter. Upon arriving at the trail head, we found very little snow in the woods but some hard-packed ice in the parking area and on the trail, so we all left our snowshoes in the cars and donned micro spikes from the get-go.

The trail follows an old wood road up at a gradual grade for 1.8 miles before crossing Homer Stone Brook and then starts to climb more steeply. A few of us grumbled that the trail had gotten longer and steeper than it was on previous trips in the past, despite the lack of any confirmatory scientific evidence.

Temperatures were well above freezing so negotiating the minimal snow cover was more like walking in (cold) mashed potatoes. Kevin Breton and Mark arrived at the shelter first, followed by Kevin Burke and the leader. There was a bit more snow around Little Rock Pond at an elevation near 1800 feet, but still less than six inches. We selected our bunk space in the spacious shelter then set about collecting and splitting firewood for the evening campfire. A steady westerly wind would stay with us for the entire trip.



Kevin, Kevin, & Mark at the shelter, photo by Jim

After a few hours of gathering wood, we broke out snacks, hot beverages and supper. Some had opted to bring dehydrated backpacking meals; others brought sandwiches for the ready-to-eat convenience. Mark got the fire started before dark and we spent several hours around it, swapping trail stories, jokes and perhaps a tall tale or two. A respectable campers' bedtime of 9:00 pm was observed. During the

overnight, the wind periodically gusted, swaying our packs that were hanging on wooden pegs under the porch roof and clanging together some cooking gear we had left out on the covered picnic table. The shelter opening faces south so the three walls made a good windbreak. Skies were generally overcast but cleared at one point to let the nearly full moon illuminate the thin snow covering.

We awoke to some snow showers, had breakfast, packed, swept out the shelter and ensured our campfire was fully extinguished. Surprisingly, the hike back down the trail to South Wallingford was remarkably easy. It's always nice when gravity is your friend, not your foe. By the time we reached the cars, the sun was shining, making for a beautiful trip home.

**Hammonasset Beach
Valentine's Day, February 14, 2023
by Carol A. Langley**

A beautiful sunny day greeted a nice group of hikers: **Mandy Brink** and **Bella**, **Carol** and **Scott Cella**, **Fred** and **Lisa Clark**, and **Marianne Valley**. For anyone who has not had the experience of a walk/hike on the walkway at Hammonasset, please take yourself and family there for some exercise and fresh air. Walking and talking, we reached Meigs Point in a short time. We then ventured out onto the sand jetty where usually this time of year sea otters are sunning themselves on the rocks. Today there were none in sight and I believe that was probably due to the very low tide. Otters like to swim around the rocks and let the waves help them onto the rocks to sun themselves.

Retracing our steps, we then walked out to the viewing platform where there are picnic tables. We then shared our Valentine sweet treats with one another. All too soon it was time to move on. We made a stop at the Visitor Center for a relief break. I offered to stay outside with **Bella**, Mandy's dog, and in two minutes I was chasing this little dog who once she was on the ground decided this was a great place to run around. All too soon we had reached our cars and another Valentine's Day hike was over.

See you next year!

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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