

The Trail Talk

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Trail Talk: Published four times a year in January, April, July and October. 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 Dues: Annual dues are as follows:

Individual Adult	\$ 30.00
Family	\$ 40.00
Senior (70 or older)	\$ 20.00
Nonprofit or Youth Group	\$ 40.00
Business or Corporation	\$100.00

Dues are payable by December 31 for the following calendar year. Send annual dues to:

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

Website: <http://www.conngmc.com>



President's Message:

Our 36th Annual Dinner & Meeting was held at the Cheshire Grange on March 20, 2004. Fifty plus members, families and friends were served a sit down dinner of Roast Beef or Vegetable Lasagna, with all the fixings.

Sarah O'Hare, our V.P. of Activities, put out quite a spread of appetizers for our social hour: vegetable platter, crackers & cheese, meatballs, chips & dips, etc. Jack Sanga brought an assortment of homemade dehydrated foods. Others brought beverages and other food items. I want to thank those who helped, especially Sarah for her effort into the planning of this event.

*During the past year we had many activities and the following leaders were recognized: Sarah O'Hare, Lora Miller, Dick Krompegal, Regina & Dave Chatel, Ken Williamson, Mandy Brink, Jim Robertson, Jack Sanga, Marge Hackbarth and Steve Keri. **THANK YOU FOR A JOB WELL DONE!!!!***

The Trail Crew Rocker was awarded this year to Gerry Brodnitzki who has attended several work parties to Story Spring and Kid Gore Shelters.

Our new club Secretary is Regina Chatel. Thank you so much for volunteering.

Our special presentation for the night was about the GMC trip in South Dakota. Mandy Brink did the speaking and was very informative while Jack Sanga ran the photos of their great adventure out west. Thank you for a very nice presentation. Mandy is now thinking about a trip to the Glacier National Park in Montana.

Our new activity schedule has a little bit of something for everyone. Let's get out and support our leaders and remember to always call or e-mail if you plan to attend.

*See you on the trails,
Carol A. Langley*

**Pocono Cabin Weekend
January 23 – 25 , 2004**

We were able to get an early start to the Poconos and arrived at the cabin around 5pm. After getting the cars unpacked we headed out for pizza in town. After a full meal, we headed back to the cabin, got a fire going in the fireplace and then headed out to go sledding. For about 40 minutes we all acted like kids again, racing down the hill, piling up on sleds and making sled trains. After we were frozen, we headed indoors for an evening of games, food and being lazy by the fire.

On Saturday we headed out about 10am for the Delaware Water Gap National Park. It was a balmy 4 degrees but we were well layered. We hiked up Mt Tammany and then connected with the blue trail and the Dunfield Trail that eventually hooked us up to the AT for a short while. We ended up doing about 8 miles. One especially neat sighting was that of a wing expanse of both wings with the talon marks frozen in the snow. Next to it was blood and fur. We surmised that it was probably an owl that had gotten a squirrel. It was neat to see the entire event printed in the snow. We also saw some beautiful snow, ice, flowing water artistry along a brook that was indescribably breathtaking. We headed back to the cabin about 3:30 and on the way were in a desperate search for coffee (I won't mention who got high maintenance about needing coffee except to say they were the male members of the group). We never did find a coffee shop and headed back to the cabin for coffee and gingerbread there. After a nice lasagna dinner, there was more sledding before we settled in for more games and lazy time by the fireplace.

On Sunday, we lazed around a bit before we headed out about 11am. We went up the Promised Land State Park and hiked back to Bruce Natural Lake. A bit colder than the day before but we managed to enjoy ourselves regardless of the cold. The lake was frozen and making loud "whale type moaning sound" that Ken said was the water and ice movement below the frozen ice. It was very fascinating. After a 5 mile trip, we loaded up and headed home for CT. We stopped for a nice lunch at the Apple Valley family restaurant to end up a really fun weekend. We had a great relaxing time, good food, good company and great hiking.



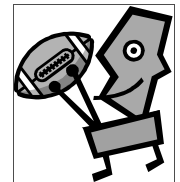
Participants: Sarah O'Hare, Steve Keri, Ken Williamson and leader Mandy Brink

**Super Bowl Hike 2004
Bigelow Hollow State Park
February 1, 2004**

A fine winter day for our annual hike before the Super Bowl. Clear skies and moderate winds accompanied a group of 10 as we hiked 5 or 6 miles in a loop around and across Breakneck Pond. We followed the park road north from the parking area on

Bigelow Pond, then headed along the west shore of Breakneck. About midway along the pond, some tested the ice and snow cover on the water, finding it a bit mushy and unsettling. Snowmobiles were traversing the center of the pond, however, so we probably had no reason to fear. We hiked a bit further north, then crossed more solid ice to the Nipmuck Trail. The wind was more noticeable as it blew from the west across the frozen openness. After a quick lunch break, we returned to our cars, then headed to Willington Pizza II for famous red potato pizza, chicken wings, and libations.

As I said, this hike has become an annual GMC Connecticut Section event on Super Bowl Sunday. That evening, those with the fortitude to sit in front of the glowing tube for four hours saw some over-the-top commercials and a half-time show that caused quite a stir. I believe there was also a football game played, which the Patriots won. And, finally, FINALLY, after many years of losing bets, Ken owes me the box of Pop-Tarts (I'm still waiting...).



Hikers: John & Mary O'Neill, Lora Miller, Jack & Ron Sanga, Sarah O'Hare, Ken Williamson, Carol Langley, Bill Falconer.
Leader: Jim Robertson

**Climbing the Snowy Trails of Mt. Monadnock
February 2004**

I'm not one of these people who can sit home in front of the television watching other people hike mountains on the Discovery Channel. I need to be physically involved. So in between responsibilities I had managed to pack food and gear, jump in my car and drive to New Hampshire in search of a snow-covered mountain to hike for the day. Have map, will travel. Just over the New Hampshire border and east of Keene is the town of Jaffrey--home to the baldface mountain known as Mt. Monadnock.

Mt. Monadnock is the centerpiece of the 5,000 acre state park and the most hiked mountain in the world. It stands at @3200 feet. The word "Monadnock" originally comes from the Abnacki Indian language meaning "mountain that stands alone". Because it "stands alone", the views from the tree-less summit stretch far into the distant surrounding states. Mt. Monadnock forms one end of the Monadnock-Sunapee Trail and is also the terminus of the Monadnock-Metacomet Trail that traverses the states of Connecticut and Massachusetts. Mt. Monadnock has at least a dozen accessible trails graduated to climbers' abilities. Thoreau and Emerson hiked this mountain and sanctioned in their writings Mt. Monadnock as being a symbol of spiritual and environmental awareness. The geological foundation of it began during the Devonian Period, 400 million years ago, when ocean covered this region. As

water receded, a flat table land composed of sand and clay was exposed. After a few hundred million years more, the surface-crust thrust upward, forcing folds and refolds of sand and clay. Extreme heat and pressure transformed the sediment into layers of quartzite and schist. The carboniferous stage of the mountain, two hundred and fifty million years ago, added its deposits of crystals and minerals forming a great fold of rock with seven distinct layers of quartzite and schist. Molten Magma forced its way through cracks and dikes to form present day Mt. Monadnock. So with that said..... I entered the parking lot at the end of the dirt road, proceeded to register with the park ranger at the visitors center and ask about weather and trail conditions. According to the ranger, the temperature is at minus 8 degrees with a 10 mile an hour wind and the main trails leading to the top have been packed down flat with varying areas of ice covered rocky sections. I ask him if snowshoes and in-steps would be needed and he says that most people hiking the trails today have been doing fine with just boots and using in-steps for the icy sections and hands me a map while pointing out the areas of ice on the main trails. I study the map briefly and choose the white dot trail start with.

I can't help notice how many cars are parked in the lot and think to myself, this really must be a popular mountain to climb.....even in subzero temperatures. As I start hiking up the trail, light flurries begin to fall. I stand still for a moment or two enclaved in a winterland of peace and silence until the distant sound of other hikers breaks my trance. I continue to follow the trail to its junction with the white cross trail and Falcon Spring, stopping to chat with the other hikers about wind conditions at the top. I get varying degrees of answers from not blowing too hard to hurricane winds. I thank them and proceed to follow the white cross trail, paralleling an old property divider fence. Climbing gradually up the side of the mountain for the next mile, I become engrossed in the quiet and white surroundings, while carefully negotiating my steps between the ice-covered rocks. I think to myself, it's a good thing I put on my in-steps to help me navigate. As I continue to ascend, my mind starts to wander to thoughts of being grateful for today's opportunity of playing in the woods. Nature has a way of providing plenty of peace for the mind, meditation for the soul and physical challenge for the body. Continuing my ascent at a sharper incline, I roam through a forest of "shortened in height" evergreens listening to the sound of the wind above the tree-line and the crunching of my in-steps. Part of the rocky trail is covered in frozen still water, reminding me of a camera freeze-frame of little waterfalls. As I wind my way through the shrub-like trees, I break tree-line and pause to check my map against the visible summit and conclude that I am somewhere around the 2700 foot mark. Standing still to view the summit in front of me, I am captured by an awe of an image of the snow-capped slabs of exposed granite which holds me mesmerized as the dizzy swirl of snowflakes catapult me into another dimension. All of a sudden, my cocoon of white

sculpture is interrupted by a pair of descending hikers. We exchange hellos as we pass one another. Finally I reach the wide open ledges beneath the summit. I stand here in a semi-trance state of mind, visually breathing in an arc of a winter forested valley dotted with frozen ponds and smoke-swirling chimneys. The wind is now blowing at hurricane force as I start to ascend the summit. I pick my way through slabs of snow-covered granite and mounds of icy boulders, I wonder if there is anybody else at the top braving the elements. The winds have increased to a steady blow, scattering swirls of snow in my face. Breathing fairly hard, I summit the peak and try to keep my balance as the force of the wind attempts to knock me over. I take a 360 degree turn and lavish in the surrounding 15 mile view of a white rural picturesque landscape. I feel so serene and continue to marvel at the postcard winter scene. Out of the corner of my eye, I glimpse a couple of other hikers hunkered down in a pit of granite boulders. I walk over to greet them. Soon, we all head down off the summit, no longer able to withstand the intense wind with a now dropping temperature. Having a hard time picking up the trail that I ascended, (everything looks the same on the summit), I decide to follow the other hikers who are more familiar with Mt. Monadnock.

We pick up the pumpelly trail following the cairns on its exposed ridge through frozen scrub and granite. I get down to tree-line, the arctic wind won't let up. Shortly thereafter, I pick up the red dot trail. According to the map, this leads down to a connecting trail for the parking lot. Traveling down the red dot trail, it is mending this way and that with dips of descents that test my knees, as I navigate over and between ice-covered rocks which after a while melts into one long frozen waterfall. I feel more comfortable to be amongst the snow-covered evergreens than in the direct path of the arctic winds. Finally, the trail flattens out as it mends through a low lying stream of run-off and enough stones to make sure that one is paying attention to where one is stepping. Proceeding further, the trail becomes wider and less filled with obstacles, giving myself permission to slide down the not so steep hills, like a kid on his first sled ride. I reach a T-bar with the cascade link trail at 2000 feet. This trail parallels a stream with small waterfalls, now frozen with the season, which winds gently through a forest of mixed hardwoods and connects me with the white dot trail that I had started my hike on. I stop and take one last look and listen to the winter silence before heading back to the parking lot.

By Steve Keri

If You Go: Mt. Monadnock State Park is located in Jaffrey, NH. There is a \$3 parking fee for the day. Trails are open year round Directions: I-91N to Rte. 9E to Rte 124. Look for the Mt. Monadnock State Park sign (on your left). Turn left onto Dublin Road and then a left onto Poole Road, which heads directly to the Visitor Center and Park Headquarters. For more information, contact Mt. Monadnock State Park at 1-603-532-8862.

**Death March
March 13, 2004**

Having been cooped up for a couple of weekends due to other responsibilities, I started to feel the effects of hiking withdrawal. I was looking forward to leading a challenging hike on the M/M trail that traverses the Holyoke Range in Skinner State Park (wedged between the towns of Amherst and Holyoke, Mass). The 390 acre park is named after Joseph Allen Skinner, a wealthy industrialist who donated the land to the state in 1940. The 1100 foot mountain range formed about 200 million years ago when lava flowed from the valley floor, cooled and was up-ended. Glacial formation also left their marks in a combination of jaggedness and smoothness, with exposure of bedrock, clay and sand.

Upon my arrival at the Mt. Holyoke visitor's lot, I took the opportunity to absorb the quiet stillness before the others arrived. The seven of us departed in two cars and drove to the other end of the mountain range and began our hike from Harris-Mountain Road at 9am, just as the sun burst open with its warm rays of heat dividing the chill in half, as birds sang and bucktails danced across the path in jubilation of the forth-coming spring season.....Ah, wait a minute, that's not how the hike began. I was hoping it would, but it didn't. Actually, we hit the trailhead first into a cold windy tunnel of hardwoods enclaved in morning grayness under cloudy skies for a short but tame walk to the base of Long Mountain, the first of 14 peaks that we would climb throughout the day.

Ascending Long Mountain, the muscles in my legs started to wake up. As my breathing increased, I was wishing for a switch-back instead of a straight-up climb on a muddy trail. For the next half-mile the trail increased in steepness until, what seemed like an eternity, we bagged Long Mountain and stopped for a water break. I commented that there was nothing like a lung buster first thing in the morning to wake one up and the response I received was heavy breathing while everybody broke out the water bottles. We sat there observing the breath-taking view north to Amhurst and west to our next peak.

Descending the leave-covered trail, brought the group down a muddy and rocky cliff side and through the first of only two areas of flat terrain zig-zag between bike trails. Being content for a while strolling through beech trees, I mentally started to prepare myself for the next climb. According to the map, it was going to be a steep. Ascent of the next peak broke the groups' pace up and personal adjustments were made for climbing to the top of Rattlesnake Knob where we all rested for a while. A relaxing feeling came over me as I took in the view to Long Mountain and the farmlands off in the distance.

We descended off the knob and spent the next half-mile hiking hard and breathing heavy as we navigated the rocky ups and downs. The muddy trail took us to the base of Mt. Norwottuck which holds the historically known Horse Caves, which traces its

name to Revolutionary times when Daniel Shays sheltered the horses for Shay's Rebellion. After exploring the caves, we started our lung-busting ascent to the top of the 1100-foot Mt. Norwottuck, the highest peak on the Holyoke Range. It presented us with a 360 degree view of a pleasantly serene, pine-tree dusted valley of forest, farmland and Mt. Tom to the west; the perfect setting for our lunch break.

The steep descent off of our third peak challenged our knees as we negotiated our way over the somewhat muddy trail into a slight ditch prior to paralleling the side of the mountain and down into Visitors Center Notch. Arriving at the notch, we could hear guns going off at the shooting range not far from us. We were now at our halfway point.

We took a short break, crossed Rte. 116 and continued on the M/M trail ascending another lung busting, straight-up climb to the top of Bare Mt., once again took in a spectacular view east and north and noticed the dirt roads we had crossed and the peaks we had climbed. Heading west, the trail paralleled the spine of the ridge for a half-mile making for some easier hiking, before we came up and around the north side of Mt. Hitchcock. It was during this time that I had pulled briefly ahead of the group and came upon a few rare red-tail squirrels playing tag. I stood there just observing. As the others caught up, we ascended and bagged Mt. Hitchcock and once again rewarded with spectacular views. Though with a full sun shining, the cold wind quickly cooled us down. Our descent off of Mt. Hitchcock took us through a number of ups and downs as we made our way through a gray and bare forest of hardwoods, reminding us that winter wasn't over just yet.

As we continued, we crossed the Low Place trail and started to ascend the first "bump" of the Seven Sisters mountain range, so named because it consists of seven small bumps that make up this one mountain. And so it went, ascending sharply then descending, ascending again and descending between 800 and 900 feet to the last "bump" and so came our last view of the countryside and Rte. 47 below.

We rested here for a while savoring the picturesque image, knowing it would be the last one for the day, and then descended over loose Basaltic rock into Taylor's Notch and back to our cars. All in all, we had bagged 14 peaks with at least 5000 feet of elevation change in ten miles.....Something of an accomplishment!

Until next peak, Happy Trails!

Hikers: Dave & Regina Chatel, Ken Williamson, Sarah O'Hara, Mandy Brink, Janene Batten, Steve Keri

**Hartman Park
March 27, 2004**

The first warm weekend of the year brought out thirteen hikers to explore the jewel that is Hartman Park. This park, with ten miles of trail, is host to numerous points of interest. After only a few moments on the trail we walked into the gnome and fairie circle, a children's delight of mobiles, painted stones, a fairie mailbox (we left no mail), a stick fort and other curios to delight children, of all ages!

Sadie, the pup, with unbounded energy seemed to know the way and led the group along the orange trail through stone walls and foundations. We ascended Chapman Ridge through Mountain Laurel, then following the ridgeline we came out at a rock overlook which happened to be along a powerline. We paused here for lunch under the watchful gaze of hawks and/or turkey vultures soaring above.

The woods are alive with the sound of..... frogs! The preceding days' warmth brought the emergence of frogs to greet spring, at times their joyful noise was deafening. The wildlife was beginning to awaken, the woods were showing their signs. Aside from the soaring birds, the frogs and the usual squirrels, we saw woodland birds and a few butterflies, one thought to be a Mourning Cloak. Jimmy and friend Andy discovered a large beetle.



With Jimmy, Andy and Sadie keeping the pace, we switched trails to the red trail. Our next notable feature was the Three Chimneys, atop Three Chimneys Ridge. It is speculated that they are the remains of a fort built in 1634 for the Puritan settlers of Saybrook Colony. The arrangement of the chimneys resembles medieval forts of that period. Continuing along the red trail we climbed up to Jumble Ridge where we searched for the rock formations Laughing Rock, Turtle Rock and Snout. The latter were aptly named but it was agreed that Laughing Rock should have been named Fish Rock, for it more resembled a fish face. After a little exploration here we passed below Coyote and Cave Cliffs then took a connector trail to return us to the orange trail. This would take us over the Flume, a cascade over moss-covered rock. A small wooden bridge made our walk over it a dry one. We then took a turn up a small hill to a small cemetery with unmarked stones. Retracing our steps we continued on the red trail which followed by a wetlands area showing recent beaver activity. Jimmy and Sadie fearlessly climbed atop a beaver lodge hopeful of a reaction from within. This lodge was built beside an old mill site, probably an old sawmill. After no success in rousing the residents we all headed a short distance back to our cars. The four-mile, easy paced and delightful hike deserved to be concluded with a treat so we went to FFiFFs in Salem for ice cream.

Hikers: Dick Krompegal, Mandy Brink, Leslie and Richard

Chandler, Jim Robertson and son, Jimmy, Andy Bedard, Ken Williamson, Nancy and Peter Finch, Alison Finch and fiancée Simon. And Sadie. Leader: Sarah O'Hare

**A.T. N.Y. Hike
March 28, 2004**

Bright sunshine, clear blue sky, gently breezes, temperature around 45 to 50 degrees and great people. What more could one ask for? By 9:45 everyone had arrived and we car-pooled to Rt. 55 to start our hike. Soon after we saw a yellow sign for a loop trail, which would skirt the south tip of Nuclear Lake and follow along the east side rejoining the AT at the north end. The view of the lake was great and the trail was easy. Nuclear Lake was once surrounded by property that was owned by the United Nuclear Corp., which operated a nuclear fuel processing research facility until 1992. In 1979 the National Park Service acquired the property and the existing buildings were razed. Testing of the area has determined that the site is suitable for unrestricted use.

We did not see any strange glowing objects in the area from the past activities in the area but we had to listen to a pistol range most of the time we were hiking in this area. Suddenly at 12:00 the noise stopped and the peace of the woods was restored to the singing of nuthatches, other spring birds and the drumming of the Pilated Woodpecker. Vernal pools buzzed with activity and the singing of the new frogs. We actually stopped, watched and listen to them. The water in these pools and streams was crystal clear.

The Summit of West Mt. was to be our for lunch. On our ascent Sandy thought she had a blister. After she removed her shoe we saw two blisters and a hole in her sock the size of a golf ball. In moments the crisis team was on the scene. Bill Nightingale and Doc Matt with the emergency medical kit came to the rescue. In minutes the heal was sporting a nice bandage job, the shoe had a bandage to stop the rubbing, sock was reversed so hole was on top, hiker now ready for another 100 miles. We found a nice lunch spot in the sun, with a nice big rock and plenty of room for everyone. As the sun warmed our backs we looked to the sky and saw several planes coming or leaving airports.

Now it was a steady descent till we reached the Telephone Pioneers Shelter where we took a break and checked this place out. It has a nice overhang and rain gutters, spacious sleeping accommodations and a nice fire ring. A cascading waterfall ran under the bridge to the shelter. Next we crossed County Rd. 20 and climbed up and over cow pastures and fields. Finally we spotted our cars and quickened our pace down the mountain over the planks for marsh preserve. Another clear brook and the end was in sight. This was too tempting and four of us had hiking boots off and were cooling our tootsies in the stream. Our actual hiking length was 7.9 miles! Thanks for joining me. Will be scheduling the next section late in august or early fall.

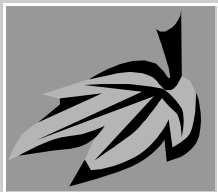
Hikers: Doreen, Melanie and Samantha Scott, Matt Golec, Dan Zelterman, Sandy Hassan, Bill Falconer, Carol A. Langley.



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