

# Trail Talk



## Seasons Greetings

Volume XLII Issue III

Editor: Carol A. Langley

Nov 2011 - Feb 2012

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The late fall and winter schedule is ready for us to go out and enjoy the great outdoors, however at this time we share the woods with others "The Hunter". Hunting is a great outdoor activity to them as hiking is to us. Please do not make yourself a target – NO WHITE HATS, MITTENS OR JACKETS. Hike leaders please make sure that all hikers are displaying BLAZE ORANGE for your safety and theirs.

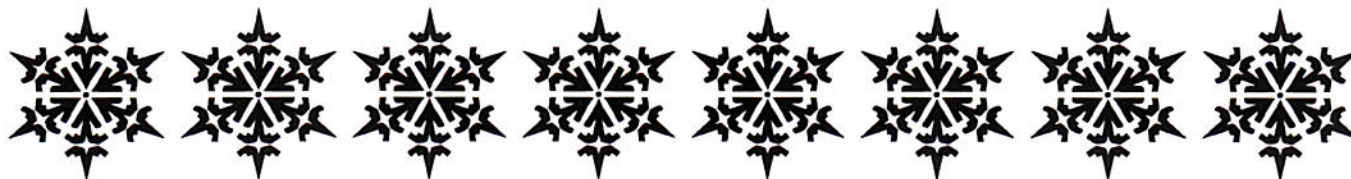
Also it is time to reload our packs of the essentials we will need to be prepared for the unexpected winter weather. A thermos of hot water, blanket, flashlight, energy bar, ace bandage, crampons, hand & foot warmers, lighter, hat & mittens – these items can suddenly become "TRAIL MAGIC" to an injured hiker. I know some of these items are extra weight but it is better to be safe than wish you had one of these items. Remember if you used all the clothes you packed and ate all the food you brought – YOU DID NOT BRING ENOUGH.

If you contact a hike leader and state you will be attending an activity – please give the leader a courtesy call if at the last minute you will not be attending. Waiting for a hiker who never shows leaves everyone on the activity wondering if this person is okay.

Look forward to seeing you on the trail. Be safe – make the right choice – leave the trail or turn back if conditions are a threat to the activity.

President

Carol A. Langley



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http://www.conngmc.com  
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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	\$40.00
Family	\$50.00
Senior (70 or older) or Limited Income	\$22.00
Nonprofit or Youth Group	\$50.00
Business or Corporation	\$150.00

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

**Connecticut Section Of The GMC**

Post & Receive Messages, Photos, Other Activities  
[http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ct\\_green\\_mountain\\_club/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ct_green_mountain_club/)

**Welcome New Members**

Karen Brown

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**Moodus Reservoir Paddle  
September 10, 2011**

Mandy Brink and I went out for a nice, few hour paddle on Moodus Reservoir. Moodus is shortened from *machimoodus* a Pequot word that means "land of noises". A deep fault line gives rise to tremors that are, sometimes, quite loud.

This is a 486 acre lake with a causeway effectively dividing it into two sections. There is a bridge under which 'yaks can pass as long as the paddlers keep their heads down. Of the two parts, the southern one is much less developed. Its easterly arm is completely wild and beautiful.

We saw many of the usual waterfowl and, surprisingly, only a few power boats – the ideal combination. It was an enjoyable and relaxing day.

Dick Hart

The CT Section of the Green Mountain is looking for someone to set up and maintain a Facebook Page for our Section. If you are interested please contact Carol Langley at [cosmical14@ayhoo.com](mailto:cosmical14@ayhoo.com) or 860-621-2860. Thank You!



Don Hagstrom ~ July 16<sup>th</sup> after a long hiking day

## Story Spring Maintenance Trip Sept 30-October 2, 2011

Mandy Brink, Carol Langley, Mike Shaw, Kevin Vann and I joined in on some maintenance work. Hurricane Irene had recently passed through the area so we weren't sure just what trail conditions we would find in the woods. Whole sections of state highways (Rts. 9, 100 and 112) and local roads were washed out. Some bridges were missing. The US Forest Service had even closed the entire Green Mountain National forest for a number of days.

Of key gastronomical interest to many of us, Dot's Restaurant in downtown Wilmington was destroyed by flooding of the North Branch of the Deerfield River and, by now, is torn down.

Carol, Kevin and I drove up on Friday. Kelly Stand Road, west of Forest Road 71, was badly gullied by the hurricane. We had to park further away than we preferred. We cleaned up around the shelter. Afterwards, we did some waterbar work south to the beaver pond on South Alder Brook and then north to the Stratton Outlook. We didn't find any blowdowns. This surprised us very much.

Following a beautiful, red sunset we had dinner and talked to some other hikers. It started to rain. It continued to rain off and on all night.

Saturday morning, Mandy and Mike walked around the corner of the shelter. Although it was still raining, we all grabbed our tools and headed north. We worked on more waterbar activities from the Outlook to FR 71. Much of that section was covered with standing water, so we weren't able to do as much as we had hoped. There was one blowdown that obstructed the trail and was removed. We all walked north to Kelly Stand Rd and west to the cars. Because Mandy and Mike could only spend Saturday doing trail work, they needed to head back home. They spent many hours travelling to and from Vermont just to do a day's worth of work. This is greatly appreciated!

The rest of us went back to the shelter. As we were eating dinner, we learned that the rain was to continue straight through Sunday and that the nighttime temperature was to fall below freezing. Following some discussion, we decided to end the trip early and head back home.

We did get some good work done. Once the surface water dries up, trail conditions will likely be pretty normal.

Dick Hart

## Esker Point Kayak Sept 25, 2011

The weather forecast was much better than expected and we actually had perfect paddling conditions. Our trip started out with an "Oh No" from Jack as he discovered he had brought two paddle pieces that didn't match, kind of like bringing two tops and no bottoms. For a brief moment, I thought of breaking out in song to the tune of "If I had a paddle" but decided to just hop in the car instead, with a quick trip to North Stonington for an extra paddle. We launched out from Esker Point, went under the bridge and headed to the right. Most of the trip was paddling along the homes of Groton Long Point. The waters were fairly calm and we got to see a lot of cormorants sunning themselves on the rocks and one lone egret in the grass by the shore. We paddled until the water got to shallow to continue. We could have waited 4 hours for the tide to come in but decided to turn around and head back to the boat launch. Jack's GPS credited us with 5.1 miles of paddling.

Paddlers: Mandy Brink and Jack Sanga

Dick & Kevin working hard



MA AT  
Pittsfield Rd. to Tyringham  
Sept. 16-18, 2011

This late summer weekend brought many people to the Massachusetts section of the Appalachian Trail. And part of any backpacking experience is the meeting of others, some memorable, some not. Much can be observed in a brief encounter, including variations in their character. For example, upon our meeting at Pittsfield Rd., George discovered that he had inadvertently left his trekking poles at home. A hiker from New York, just finishing his outing, kindly offered to loan George his. The gesture was accepted so that George's hiking experience would be more comfortable. The poles have since been returned to their owner.

We arrived at October Mountain Lean-to, our first night's destination. A south-bound thru hiker and his dog were concluding their rest and packing up to move on. After they departed Carol noticed her water bottle had disappeared from the picnic table. It left us all wondering about the hiker's intentions and whether he had taken it.

The next person we met at the camping area was a north-bounder. The mention of him is not about his character but that he was a character. His name was Don! New Don carried a smaller and lighter backpack! This gave Our Don pause. He had met his match. It appears that there will be more weighing of gear and ideas in the future. They received the nickname, "The Parallel Universe Dons."

Our second night's stop was at Upper Goose Pond and its cabin. There were all the indications of being prepared for guests, including an OPEN sign on the locked door. However, the caretaker was nowhere to be seen. Many, many hikers waited patiently for the caretaker to arrive, including many from our group. Hour after hour went by and the afternoon slipped into evening. We had passed the time snoozing on the porch, admiring the pond and wishing the canoe wasn't chained to the dock. Dinner time came and went.

Giving up with any thoughts of staying inside, we all pitched our tents without complaint. It was then that the apologetic caretaker arrived. Patience apparently paid off, for other folks happily settled inside. All were now content, especially in the morning while enjoying the pancakes that are customarily cooked for the hikers.

Setting out Sunday morning, the trail followed around Upper Goose Pond. Mist rose from the stillness of the pond and the Swamp Maples' brilliant red reflection whispered of autumn. As much as we wanted to continue our stay at the pond, seven miles of trail beckoned. We picked up our pace and arrived at Main Road in Tyringham by lunchtime. It was pizza at Athena's in Lee with conversation of our wonderful weekend in the beautiful Berkshires, including all the interesting folks we met along the way.

Hikers: Carol Langley, Jim Robertson, Don Hagstrom, George Jackson, Mark Blanchard

Leader: Sarah O'Hare

Bryce Canyon National Park  
May 5, 2011

Mike Shaw, Mandy Brink, Grace King, and Jim Fritz spent the first day of our vacation day hiking in Zion National Park. Jim McCoy and I drove to Bryce Canyon National Park, Utah. On our way up the arid landscape, I napped and missed a pronghorn. When I awoke, we had a discussion about what a pronghorn was. I told him that it was an antelope. Jim insisted that it was not. He said 'pronghorn antelope', as they are also sometimes called, was a misnomer and they were a kind of deer. A later Google search indicated that pronghorns are neither deer nor true antelope. True antelope are not native to North America. According the US Fish & Wildlife Service:

[Pronghorns] are so different from other hoofed animals that they are the only members of the family Antilocapridae. Their head ornaments set them apart from

deer and elk whose branched, solid antlers are shed each year, and from goats and cattle whose hollow horns are made from hair and are not shed. Pronghorn have branched, hollow, hair like horns that are shed annually. They are the only animal with this combination.

Later, as we attempted to stop, we disturbed a golden eagle feasting on a carcass with the sound of our minivan driving over the rumble strip. We tried to take a picture; however, I took a picture of the rear view mirror instead as it flew in front of us.

Jim M and I also stopped at an overlook 9,000 feet up, which gave us a breathtaking, panoramic view that included the northern end of Zion Canyon. We also passed silhouettes of mysterious creatures resting on logs. Their tails hung down, almost touching the expanse of snow underneath. We wondered what these strange Utah animals might have been, but a road kill sighting made us realize that they were probably porcupines like the poor fellow who had met his vehicular demise.

After a four-hour drive from Las Vegas, we arrived at Bryce. Where I would describe Zion as majestic, I would describe Bryce as mystical. The area of Bryce in which we hiked was populated by hoo doos. Hoo doos are oddly shaped rock formations that, as their name implies, have a mysterious look about them. The tall, slender spire hoo doos of Bryce are the result of small caps of less easily eroded igneous rock protecting the sedimentary rock beneath it.

Jim M and I attempted to hike the Navajo Loop starting at Sunset Point. We passed through a metropolis of hoo doos that included Thor's Hammer and Silent City as well as a few man-made passages in the rock. While resting at the bottom of the canyon, we were greeted by a Steller's Jay and a ground squirrel. We had to cut the hike short since part of the trail was closed because of rock slide debris. We hiked four miles that hot summer day.

Our first day in Zion was packed with great hiking. Our original plan was to do the Narrows, a challenging river hike through a narrow section along the Virgin River. Due to high, swift water, this area was closed. We got some tips on some good trails and headed out for the Grotto trail leading to Angel's Landing. This is certainly not a hike for anyone with a fear of heights. The trail was a series of switchbacks leading up to a very narrow traverse on the West Rim. It was narrow and steep with a chain to hang onto so there we no slipping over the side. The climb was fun, leading to a incredible view of the Zion Canyon. We sat in awe of the views. There was a grandfather doing the climb with his granddaughter. He was in his mid-eighties and an inspiration to keep on hiking. There are signs everywhere not to feed the animals but there were some very brazen chipmunks who climbed right into Mike's backpack to look for some snacks.

Our second hike for the day was to the Lower, Middle and Upper Emerald Pools via the Kayenta Trail. The Upper Pool was our favorite with a high waterfall dropping into a small pond tucked in the basin of the mountain. You could see the waterfall swaying as the wind moved it from side to side over the rocks below. Mike and Mandy climbed over to the rocks in attempts to get some good pictures of the falls. We got some good water sprinkles on that venture.

Our third hike for the day was the River Walk which led to the opening of the Narrows. It was a tease to look in at the canyon where we had hoped to hike. It gave us the inspiration to want to come back another time. This was a flat easy walk along the Virgin River. We ran into a tom turkey with his feathers open for a full display. He was really pretty cool strutting his stuff for all to see. His female friend didn't seem as impressed as we were as she was running down the trail ahead of us as if to say "I'm outta here".

After dinner, we ended our day with a hike on the Canyon Overlook Trail to Observation Point. It was a beautiful hike with our goal being to watch the sunset. While not the most spectacular sunset

we've ever seen due to cloud cover, it was still awesome to see the colors over the canyon. It was quiet and tranquil. Grace brought her pencils and sketch pad and was able to catch some of the beauty in pictures. Mike, Mandy and Jim just sat on the rocks and enjoyed the moment. We had the place to ourselves and it was the perfect ending to our day. Back at the trailhead, we heard the bleating of some big-horned sheep on the mountain. Jim and Mike started having a regular conversation with them. They answered back too while Grace and Mandy looked on in amusement. It was a fun way to end our day in this little piece of heaven.

### Red Rock Canyon

Our last day was spent exploring Red Rock Canyon. This conservation area features red rock formations, sandstone peaks and walls called Keystone Thrust. The Keystone Thrust fault was thought to form about 65 million years ago. We hiked the Keystone Thrust Trail which leads to one of the most significant geologic features in Red Rock Canyon. At the peak of the trail, we were able to see the older grey sedimentary rock which joined with the younger red rock that forms a red line that is said to run to Canada. After hiking this trail, we also hiked in Willow Creek to see the pictographs (rock paintings) and Petroglyphs (rock carvings).

### Zion National Park May 6-9, 2011

Our trip to Zion National Park in Utah wasn't quite a once in a life time trip, but it was definitely a once in a decade expedition. I had picked Zion because the terrain and climate were different from what we have here in New England. It's a desert environment. However, our greatest challenge didn't turn out to be the heat as I had expected.

Mike Shaw, Mandy Brink, Grace King, Jim Fritz, Jim McCoy, and I took the shuttle to The Grotto where our backpacking adventure started with an immediate, steep ascent. The others had already

made this part of the trek on the first day including out to Angels Landing. The half mile detour from the trail to Angels Landing is an acrophobic's nightmare. Much like Knife Edge in Baxter State Park in Maine, it's a path with steep descents on either side. Although guide chains were provided (probably more for mental comfort as opposed for actual safety), we didn't make it very far and abandoned our attempt. Way too scary.

After passing Angels Landing, we continued along the concrete path. Yes, I said 'concrete path'. Even though a clerk at REI in Las Vegas had said that the path was paved much of the way, we didn't realize how much of the way. It was paved the first four miles! The paved section of path was followed by switchbacks carved directly into the stone cliff. The switchbacks led us up to a plateau and our first reliable water supply, Cabin Springs.

At this point, we had hiked five miles with a 3,000-foot elevation change. At first, I was cursing myself for not reserving spots at the campsite next to the spring; nonetheless, my decision to reserve spots about a mile and a half away proved to be worth the extra grief. Not only was our chosen campsite more pleasant, offering an expansive view to the east of Horse Pasture Plateau, it offered a lovely sunset scene, which we enjoyed together. We watched as the cliffs across the valley change from white in the glaring desert sun to sharing the muted colors of sunset.

On the second day, Jim M hiked back down to The Grotto to take the shuttle back to the car for staging. On the way, he had to coax a couple mule deer off the path that defiantly stood between him and Cabin Spring. Having to overcome his acrophobia, he made the trek down the cliff-hugging switchbacks that took us 40 minutes to climb in about 15 minutes.

The rest of us continued the hike to the next campsite near Wildcat Canyon. It was an uneventful but peaceful section of the trip. Little did we know, much excitement was still ahead; and it had nothing to do with the desert heat.

After meeting Jim M at Wildcat Canyon Spring, we continued to our second campsite in an elk run. Despite my occasional overexertion induced I'm-never-going-backpacking-again upset stomach (usually forgotten by the next day), it was an otherwise peaceful night without any visits from the local elk (that we know of).

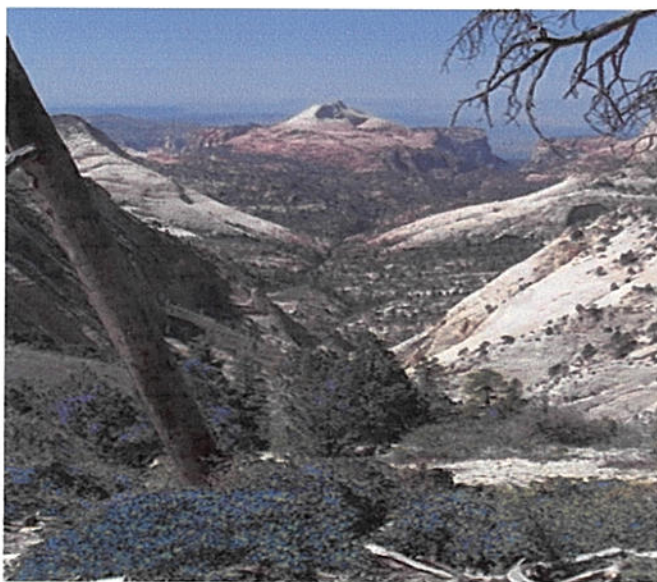
The next day, Jim M and I hiked back to the car and took a shorter trek to the final campsite to meet the others. The others traversed a 12-mile section of the path that included a stretch of desert sand. Over dinner, we compared river crossing notes. Mike, Mandy, Grace, and Jim F had a very challenging La Verkin Creek crossing. Jim M and I were relieved that we missed that bit of fun. Even though we crossed Timber Creek over twenty times on our way down, it was a more shallow water body; and the only danger was to slip on a wet rock and get your boots wet. We happily shared this information with the others, predicting an easy trek back to the car since we would be taking that same path along Timber Creek. That turned out to be a premature forecast. That night, it rained.

It didn't sound as if it rained that much, but it doesn't take much rain to cause flood conditions in the desert. The easy twenty or so Timber Creek crossings were no more. Many of the crossings required wading through cold, rushing, murky water that was thigh high (or waist high if you stepped into an unseen hole like I did). When we first saw how flooded the creek was, we were uncertain about what to do; but we realized we had to pressed on. Going back meant having to cross La Verkin Creek, which had become impassable.

Gingerly making our way along and across Timber Creek, we conquered each crossing until we reached the slippery, muddy passage that took us on our final climb to our cars at Lee Pass. We headed back to Sin City for the backpackers' delights of a much needed shower and a meal of "real food". The trail distance from The Grotto to Lee Pass was 33 miles.

Thanks to Mike, Mandy, Grace, Jim F, and Jim M for coming on this trip. I had a really good time with you all. ~ Mary O'Neill

Photos Courtesy of Mike Shaw & Mandy Brink





Join the Connecticut Section of the GMC

The Connecticut Section offers a wide range of outdoor activities all year around. Such as Hiking, backpacking, canoeing, snowshoeing and work parties in VT to maintain our section of the Long Trail. Members will receive our Trail Talk our section newsletter and The Long Trail News, a quarterly publication of the Green Mountain Club, published four times a year, and discounts on GMC items such as books and shirts, etc.

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Individual	\$40.00
Family	\$50.00
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