

The Connecticut Section Of The Green Mountain Club

The Trail Talk

VOL. XXXVIII NO. II

April 2005



The President's Message

The Ct. Section of the GMC is starting its 37th year. Membership continues to grow and we have several members who have been with the club for many years giving us a strong membership foundation. At this time our club has two positions vacant. Grace King has resigned as the Editor of Trail Talk as of this issue. The club "Thanks Grace" for her years of hard work to see that our newsletter reached members in a timely manner. Richard Krompegal has taken on the responsibility of producing the newsletter on a temporary basis.

Our other vacant position is that of the Secretary which Sarah O'Hare has been doing besides her position of V.P. of Activities for the past two years, which the club greatly appreciates. This is your club and we need you to volunteer your time to help fill this position. All sincere inquires should be directed to me.

Once again our activity leaders, with the help of Sarah O'Hare, have put together a great schedule for the months of May, June & July. Let's get out there and support them.

"Have Fun in the Sun"
Carol A. Langley



New Members

Peter & Beth Hargett, Meriden
Michael Vielleux, South Glastonbury

Annual Dinner March 12

Guests to our annual dinner and meeting at the Cheshire Grange began arriving at 5:00 to socialize and snack on punch and appetizers. Sixty one people arrived despite the snow storm that threatened to cancel our evening. Much to our delight two uninvited guests arrived, a pair of Red Tail Hawks who perched close by in a tree in the front yard of the grange.



The roast beef dinner began promptly at 6:00 and afterwards we moved upstairs for our business meeting. Two guests from headquarters in Vermont were Ben Rose and Dave Hardy. Ben, Executive Director of the GMC, provided us with an update of the new barn construction plans and commented on other important topics such as dues and the upcoming 100th anniversary (in 2010) of the GMC. He also elaborated on the importance of volunteers in the organization. Dave Hardy, Director of Field Programs, commented on the status of our section of the Long Trail, including the permits for our proposed relocation, the refurbishing of the fire tower and the rebuilding of Goddard Shelter. Dave generously donated five items for our raffle. His book, 50 Hikes in CT, three Vermont trail guides and a PBS video on the Long Trail were given away to happy winners.

At the conclusion of the business meeting began the highlight of our evening. GMC member, Sue Spring, shared with us her thru hike experience of the AT in 2003. Our thanks to Sue for making our evening a success.

A thank you also to the fifteen people who led activities over the past year. Because of their efforts there were a total of 68 activities. These dedicated leaders were: Carol Langley, Marge Hackbarth, Mandy Brink, Jim Robertson, Dick Krompegal, Ken Williamson, Steve Keri, Lora Miller, Jack Sanga, Allen Freeman, John Bensenhaver, Grace King, Kevin Karl and Kathy Steffens, Sarah O'Hare.



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Club Information

<http://www.conngmc.com>

Officers & Executive Committee

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Please direct all inquiries regarding the Club to the President:

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The Trail Talk is 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

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 \$ 35.00

Family \$ 45.00

Senior (70 or older) or Limited Income \$ 20.00

Nonprofit or Youth Group \$ 50.00

Business or Corporation \$125.00

Send annual dues to:

The Green Mountain Club

4711 Waterbury-Stowe Road

Waterbury Center, VT 05677-9904

(802) 244-7037, <http://www.greenmountainclub.org>



Backpack On The AT In NY

Nov. 5, 2004

We had a change of routes since we wanted to go down Friday night and stay at Bear MT Inn only to find out that there was a big army football game and there were no rooms to be found. Mandy's cousin lived a bit more north and offered for us to stay at her place on Friday night so we did the more northern route which was closer to her home in Pawling, NY. Rick and Julie Stuckey, Mandy's cousin and husband, live in a beautiful home overlooking a mountain range and were happy to greet us on Friday night with wine, chili and a fresh apple pie right out the oven. We had a nice evening visiting with them before retiring for our early start in the morning.

We ended up starting even earlier than we imagined. Dave had set his alarm for 6:15am. When John got up to go to the bathroom he noticed the clock in the bathroom said it was 6:20 so thinking we'd overslept, he got us all up and raring to go. We were downstairs eating breakfast when we realized that the clock in the bathroom hadn't been moved from the time change the weekend before and in fact it was 5:15am. Actually Dave realized this when we got him up and gave us a real look of wonderment when he came down for breakfast. Sorry Dave. Anyway we sure did get our early start. We had time to make coffee and everything. We staged our cars and were on the trail at Rt 55 by 8am. It was a beautiful day for hiking and we did the gentle rolls up and down for 12 miles. We stopped at the Morgan Stewart shelter for a nice snack and then tallied to the RPH shelter for the night. What a spacious shelter. It had two tables and four bunk beds and was big and roomy. It was interesting that the one end had a door with a lock on it when the other end was completely opened. Of course Dave had to knock on the door to come in. We debated about locking him out but he is always the prepared one that we have to borrow stuff from, so we let him in. Anyway we had a nice dinner and then built a nice campfire to sit by for the evening. Dave brought all the fixings for smores and we sure did enjoy.



At about 5am, Mandy awoke, deciding she was really hungry and wanted to get a snack from her pack which had been right by her bunk when she went to bed. Well it was gone. After lighting her flashlight and checking out the shelter, only three packs were to be found. She was sure a bear had come and taken her pack because she had not hung her food up, which included some ham. Well as soon as it was light, she got up, went looking outside and no backpack was anywhere to be seen. After announcing to the gang that her backpack was gone, it was soon discovered that the bear was John who had grabbed it for a pillow thinking it was his. It gave us a good laugh to start our day.

Sunday was a 6 mile day, warm in the 60's and beautiful. We had some beautiful views of Canopus Lake in Fahenstock State Park. Regina had some protesting piggies and we were all feeling a bit stiff and sore from our hike the day before. It

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was actually hot hiking and we were all envious of Dave in his short and t-shirt. We got off the trail at Rt. 301 at 12:45 and headed to town for our well deserved pizza. Thanks to all for a great weekend, great weather and great company.

*Hikers: John Bensenhaver, Mandy Brink,
Dave and Regina Chatel*



Housatonic Range Trail Dec. 5, 2004

When Lora Miller, Henry Smith and myself arrived at the Gaylordsville Cemetery Steve Kerri was already waiting. Next Dick Krompegal and Sarah O'Hare arrived. Since Dick had the larger vehicle we all piled in and motored off to Rt. 37 to start the hike. The last time this hike was done as a GMC activity in the 80's the description of it was something like an episode of the Key Stone Cops. Today was not nearly as bad with Henry Smith our Scout engaging his brain to do a quick recall of the place to park cars. We saw Blue Blazes then we saw no blazes. Finally we found the parking area, which was off a side street of new homes.

A cool clear early December day greeted us as we started the hike and entered the woods following the Blue Blazes. We were soon scrambling over rocks the trail went up and down. Our destination was the Summit of Candlewood Mt. Rocky Ledges gave us fine views to the East and the Housatonic Valley along Rt. 7. Our real challenge soon appeared, huge slabs of step boulders each hiker viewing the site differently we each tried our own way to reach the top. While Lora found an alternate route around the maze the rest of the group conquered the "Corkscrew" as we climbed up and over, down and under sometimes getting a shove or an extended arm by someone to help us.

The trail then passed through an area of Caves with a valley so we thought we might get our voices to echo but it did not happen. Henry scouted out the caves taking caution not to arouse a bear our two. Finally we reached the summit where we found a neat fire ring with a semi circle of seating made from slab stones. The sun was shining as we ate lunch, Dick and Sarah did photo shoots of the group. In a few minutes a stiff breeze blew from the west bringing in storm clouds time to move on. Since I had not seen any other Blazes I started down the trail the way we had hike in. Suddenly there is a ruckus amongst the hikers seems Henry feels we need to go ahead not back down since we can hook up with a loop trail. See here it is on the map. Well what was on the map was not on the trail or in the woods. After about 20 minutes of Blazes then no Blazes and a short Bushwhack the leader had enough and directed her now scattered hikers to head North and straight ahead feeling we would cross over a dirt road and soon find the Blue Blazes to lead us out of this mess. Back on the trail we followed the Blazes out except for one hiker who had to check out Kelly's Slide. We finally made it out and lost no one a star for the group.

As we drove back to get the other cars we saw Blue Blazes on Rte. 7 could this be the trail to the Tories Cave. On the return trip we stop and yes this was the cave we had come to scout out. Lora and Dick stood outside with cameras ready for our emergence from this hole in the earth. Headlamps on Henry, Sarah and myself lowered our selves into the dark, cold, wet cave. Water was dripping everywhere bats hung to the ceiling in there winter color of white not disturbed by our intrusion so we didn't have these little creatures flying around us as we checked things out. Climbing out was a cool because we needed to place our knees against and on the rocks to hoist ourselves out. Wet, cold and excited with our short expedition of spelunking we returned to the outer world. The group then had the mission to find a piazza place to be warm and socialize with good friends.

Thanks for your participation in the hike.

*Hikers: Sarah O'Hare, Henry Smith, Lora Miller,
Dick Krompegal, Steve Kerri.
Leader: Carol A. Langley*



Goodwin State Forest January 16

After a mild start to January the winter cold had finally set in to stay. That didn't deter our group of nine to take to the trail this brisk Sunday morning. Ken arrived extra early to warm up with a bike ride on the Airline Trail and after his quick switch from biking attire and shoes to warm hiking clothes and boots we wasted no time in setting out on the yellow trail. We followed the path along the east side of Pine Acres Pond only to continue to Brown Hill Pond. In warmer months this pond is a flurry of wildlife activity but today the iced-over pond was quiet.

We retraced our steps to connect briefly with the red trail and then to the white trail which closely followed the edge of Pine Acres Pond. This trail was a boulder field, a fun challenge. This pond, too, showed no visible wildlife but recent beaver activity of additions to the lodges and gnawed trees was quite noticeable. Either the beaver activity or the recent heavy rains or a combination of both has expanded the pond's bank causing the trail to be flooded and partially frozen. Because of this our plans for exploring the island were dashed, the side trail was not quite frozen over enough for safe passage.

Our lunch destination was Black Spruce Pond where the white trail ends at the blue-blazed Natchaug Trail. We stopped for a brief lunch then turned south on the Natchaug Trail to head back, our last leg of the loop around the park. Closing in on our final few minutes of hiking the trail became a frozen swamp for Pine Acres Pond had encroached into the trail. Beaver activity had a pronounced effect on this area. Hence, we had to tread carefully and make our way through the undergrowth until the trail made its way to higher ground up to the parking lot.

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An easy decision was made to head for the local pizza restaurant. After a cold, six mile hike we warmed ourselves with light conversation, libations and mediocre pizza before heading home.

*Hikers: Lora Miller, David Chatel,
Sandra Hassan, Ken Williamson,
Polly Silva, Mary and John O'Neill, Dick Krompegal
Leader: Sarah O'Hare*



Nipmuck Trail January 29

On a cold winter morning with bright sun and blue skies our group met at Kathy John's Restaurant in Mansfield. Anxious to get underway we dropped the cars off at the Rt. 44 trail crossing and drove north to begin our hike at Perry Hill Road. Strapping on our snowshoes and donning our packs we stepped onto the Nipmuck Trail. The trail, with gentle terrain covered with several inches of snow made the conditions perfect for snowshoeing.



The woods were beautiful this morning. Deer prints were visible everywhere, following and criss-crossing the blue-blazed trail. With so many tracks it was assumed the deer would make themselves known to us but we saw not a one. Squirrel tracks, too, and those of the white footed mouse added to the patchwork of prints. The most picturesque area was within the last two miles of our 6.3 mile hike. The trail passed through a hemlock grove, then through a pine plantation before following along the Fenton River. The Fenton River, partially frozen over was running fast. Soon we reached Rt. 44, removed our snowshoes and crossed to walk down Old Turnpike Road to our cars. Half of our small group had prior commitments awaiting elsewhere so there was no post-snowshoeing pizza. Thus we parted refreshed from our few short hours of invigorating winter fun.

*Snowshoers: Jim Robertson,
David Chatel, Rich DiGirolamo
Leader: Sarah O'Hare*



Super Bowl Hike McLean Game Refuge Sunday, Feb. 6

A rare, warm sunny February day greeted us for the annual pre-Super Bowl hike, this year at McLean Game Refuge in Granby. At that point in the winter, the snow had settled and the trails had been packed down, so we could walk without snowshoes or skis. We wound our way through brightly lit woods and shadowed roads before bushwhacking to the top of the east Barn Door Hill. After a lunch stop, viewing, and some photo ops, we descended and made our way back towards the parking



area. A few ventured out onto the ice-covered pond by the old ranger cabin, and the kids in the group proceeded to start a running snow ball fight on the walk back to the cars. Jimmy learned that initiating snow-throwing contests with bigger, older kids like Ken may not be a wise idea.

After the hike we went in search of pizza, expecting that on Super Bowl Sunday, most restaurants would be open. Town Line Pizza in Simsbury was closed as was Goomba's in Granby, but fortunately for the intrepid leader (who was expecting a mutiny or at least ridicule), ABC next door was open, so we enjoyed two pies.

*Hikers: Carol Langley, Dick Krompegal,
Lora Miller, Sarah O'Hare, Laurene Sorensen,
Ken Williamson, Jimmy Robertson
Leader: Jim Robertson*



Hike At Westwoods In Guilford

My husband is sometimes aghast at the helter skelter way I lead my life. Anyone who's married to an ADDer can probably relate: finding melted ice cream in the cabinet; car keys in the freezer; unpaid, forgotten bills under the bed; arriving to appointments in the nick of time, if on time at all... Even when I look back on my own life, I wonder how I managed to make it this far intact. I must have somebody or something watching over me...or just a lot of sheer dumb luck. This hike as a testament to this luck.

The Hike

I have one word for this hike: awesome! It was a really cool hike. We hiked about eight miles, which took about five hours. I bonked at the end, despite my constant grazing, but what else is new?

The terrain was very rocky and undulating. We started from Parking Lot #3 and headed north on the white trail and returned on the yellow trail.

The Planning

Now, you must understand, as opposed to my typical style, I actually planned this hike. I figured it's bad enough subjecting my poor husband to the highly unpredictable (and nerve wracking) nature of my recreational activities; however, fearing for my own safety, I figured I'd better not subject a group of people to it. It's hard for other people to hear you screaming for help in the middle of the woods.

Mr. McGoo Luck

The plan was to hike the white trail to Junction 28 and then take the yellow trail and head north. However, I missed our turn for the yellow trail. (I did a better job of staying with the intended course during the pre-hike that was the week prior.) Normally, mistakes ruin events for people, but, as customary

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in my life, my Mr. McGoo luck rendered all my planning moot (which is why I don't bother half the time) and made my mistake our good fortune.

Paths through Bedrock and Other Fun Stuff

Missing the yellow trail, we continued to the northern most end of the white trail. North of Junction 28, things got very interesting. This part of the trail passes through the bedrock in several areas. We had to squeeze between the rock faces to get through. We also walked the plank walk through the wetlands. It was fun. We decided to return via the yellow trail, which also passed through the bedrock, in one or two places, between the junction at the southwest end of the plank walk and Junction 34.

A Couple of Discoveries

On the way back on the yellow trail, between the waterfall and Junction 36, we found the ladder! During the pre-hike, we never did see the ladder mentioned in the 50 Walks in Connecticut book and had wondered what happened to it. On the official hike, Sarah found an 'errant' blaze, which led her to the ladder! The trail appeared to have been rerouted along this section to no longer include the ladder; dead tree debris littered that particular part of the trail.

After the ladder fun, we hiked a bit more—once again, an 'errant' blaze led Sarah to another path through bedrock. This one was a little more challenging than the other bedrock paths. Fallen trees also seemed to be the reason that this part of the trail was rerouted. I'm actually a little anxious to go back to this park to see what other treasures may be hidden there.

Park Quirks

The blazing in this park is odd. They're spaced rather far apart, and we played 'where does the path go now' game quite a bit on the hike. I figured it's the park people's way to get you to take a look around you and enjoy the scenery. However, the junctions are prominently marked. (Yeah, I still managed to miss my junction.)

At the end of the hike, we finally decided to look at the park sign at the parking lot. It turns out part of the white trail we took was closed. Lora admitted to not looking at the sign with all its warnings of closed trails because she assumed that, as the leader, I would have looked at it and planned accordingly. She's actually right about that. As the leader, I would have looked at the sign—if I'd seen it. When you're an ADDer, you could miss a car rammed halfway into your house...though you might find the annoying, cool breeze a bit distracting.

*Participating Members:
Mary and John O'Neill,
Sarah O'Hare, Lora Miller*



GMC Hike to Hubbard Park, Meriden CT Saturday, March 19, 2005

It was a beautiful spring day. Time to clean the cobwebs out of the hiking boots and get outside. Eight of us met along the Chamberlain Highway in Meriden at 9:30. Heidi and Olga sprinted ahead and left the rest of us in their dust. The other six of us, traveling at less than light-speed, trudged on up to the first reservoir. We left the blue-marked Metacomet Trail and detoured south, up Elsmere (the mountain) for views to the east and south. It was wet and sloppy with a lot of late winter snow-cover still on the ground. Sarah and Marge took a shortcut down and the rest of us toured the ridge ending with views to the west of Castle Craig across Elsmere (the reservoir).

Meanwhile, back at the dam: Marge and Sarah were well into their lunch by the time the GMC hike was reunited to a combined strength of 6 hikers. Sarah shared brownies she baked for the occasion thereby earning her the day's Generous Hiker award. Marge wisely bailed out at this point. With appetites sated, five hikers opted to take the road up to the tower rather than slog through the slippery trail. The views were quite rewarding. We could see Long Island across the Sound. There were turkey vultures at eye level. We returned following a trail straight down the face of the cliff and walked along the reservoir. We were back at our cars by 4 PM.

This was the first hike that Dan has led. It was viewed as a success even though three of the original eight participants failed to return with the main group. His next hike will attempt to improve upon this.

*Participants: Marge Hackbarth, Dick Krompegal,
Sarah O'Hare, Mary O'Neill, Dan Zelterman (leader),
and guests: Sanjay Unni, Heidi Brown, Olga Babakina
(5 hours, 7 miles)*



Wadsworth Falls April 3, 2005

With a morning break in the heavy rain, two GMCers joined by two from AYH hiked the muddy trails in the park. Little Falls and especially Great Falls were spectacular. After lunch three people visited Westfield Falls visible from I91 going north. The amount of water was tremendous.



*GMCers: Sarah O'Hare and
Marge Hackbarth*



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