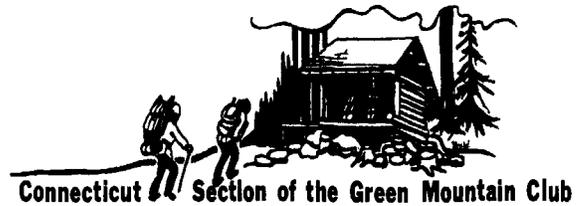


The Trail Talk

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Club Information: Please direct all inquiries regarding the Club to the President:

Carol A. Langley
67 Pondview Drive
Southington, CT 06489
(860) 621-2860
Cosmical14@yahoo.com

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:

Grace King
653 Marrett Road
Lexington, MA 02421
Kangti@excite.com

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

Happy New Year to all GMC members and their families. Since we are a four season club and hold activities all winter I would like to remind all hike leaders to be prepared for bad weather and make wise decisions as to when to cancel an activity. Members and friends, it is your responsibility to check with the activity leader if you plan to attend and there is a doubt in your mind concerning the weather. I would like to encourage all leaders to hike with at least 3-4 people in case of an emergency.

Dressing in layers and extra mittens, gloves and socks are very important. Hand and foot warmers which can be purchased at any sporting goods store should be a staple for your winter backpack. Even though you may not feel thirsty it is very important to drink fluids.

Since in the winter we can have a full cloud cover it is also necessary for leaders to carry a compass and take readings if there is concern as to the direction of the trail. Remember if you do not see a blaze for five minutes turn back to the last blaze you saw. Remember stay together and never loose sight of the hikers in your group. Carry a whistle if lost or in danger use distress signal – 3 short whistles – stop- repeat.

The Sun will always rise in the East so if you are hiking North to South the sun should be on your left side (East). If you are hiking South to North the sun should be on your right side (East). In the middle of the day N –S hikers will have the sun in front of the, S –N hikers will have the sun behind them. The sun will always set in the West N-S you should have the sun on your right side, S-N the sun should be on your left. Let's get out and enjoy the winter and be safe.

Carol A. Langley

**Catskills: Balsam Fir, Balsam and Eagle Mountains
and Bear Stories
Labor Day Weekend, 2004**

I needed some time away desperately, so I took a trip to the Catskills for the Labor Day weekend for some hiking. Leaving on Friday morning to drive out there, gave me the afternoon to do a short hike up Balsam Fir, and to check it off my 3500 foot club list, before checking into Phonecia Hotel in Pine Hills. According to the map, a shortcut, (Cross Highway), off the main highway, would take me directly to the access road to Balsam Fir. The short cut took me longer than expected. So much for a short cut.

Any case, the scenic route definitely was a challenge starting with going down a semi-paved road, past a farm and into the woods, where the road turned to pressed gravel and then dirt, as it wined and ascended to 3,000 feet. The higher the elevation, the slower my car crept, hitting many pockets of mud. I just hoped that I wouldn't get stuck. (Good thing I have front wheel drive). After I topped out at 3100 feet, the scenic route became more rural as I passed a few logging camps where I exchanged greetings with the loggers. The muddy road at this point was so narrow, that I had just enough room to squeeze between the loggers and the edge of the cliff. Ascending slowly down the winding and muddy road finally brought me to pavement and a 45 minute drive through quiet, rural farmland and desolate woods with abandoned cabins, century old houses and collapsed sheds which gave off an eerie feeling.

Finally, after about another hour of driving down the access road, I arrived in the trailhead lot, parked my car and headed up the 1.5-mile trail that took me to the top of Balsam Fir. The hike was so quiet you can hear what silence sounds like. The top of Balsam Fir had a cabin and a fire tower (one of two remaining towers in the Catskills). From the top of the tower a northeast view of Big Indian can be seen.

Lying in bed that evening I was reading the Phonecia Times when I came across an article on black bears. I remember what the bargirl at dinner was telling me about the problem black bears over the past few years. For instance, Phonecia campground's three resident bears make it a regular habit of playing yogi with the short-term camper's picnic baskets. The bears have even gone as far as knowing how to open a cooler if left unattended for a period of time. They also stand at the edge of the campground just waiting for an opportunity to run past your

campfire and snag your well-done marshmallow right off your stick! (Naw Paw-just kidding!) Seriously folks, reports of black bear aggressiveness have been causing quite a stir. While I was on a 10 mile hike to bag Balsam (3600') and Eagle (3800') mountains, the thought of seeing black bears hit me right at the moment of total silence in the woods, giving me an eerie kind of anxiety and a euphoric feeling.

With the knowledge of bear abundance filling my thoughts, I trudged up the 1200 foot ascent, along the waterfall, to the ridge line and headed towards Balsam, hoping I wouldn't have to bushwack off the trail too far to get my view of Big Indian and the surrounding area. The sun was shining, temperatures were on the nippy side (and nothing was stirring, not even a mouse....oh wait, that's a line from a Christmas story.) My mind went back to the newspaper article I was reading the night before about the presence of the aggressive black bears causing a stir among the locals. A number of reports had been made to the local police, who in turn had to recruit the D.E.C. to take control of the situation. Homeowners have come face to face with black bears in their kitchens and enclosed porches. Apparently, after rummaging through the garbage cans and vegetable gardens, the bears claw their way through backdoors and screened windows to get at food in the refrigerators, and tear apart shelves that are filled with staples, birdseed and other natural products. Homeowners have come home and found the bears in the refrigerator making little pigs for themselves! Confrontation erupts; the bear charges and trashes the house. During one or two confrontations, the homeowner has shot the bear in the kitchen (grill's on...bear meat anybody?).

As stated earlier, the DEC has stepped in and is encouraging homeowners to fence their properties (yeah, like who has the money), while they shout about extending the hunting season.... (While stockpiling ammunition). The DEC is setting box traps baited with peanut butter and honey-soaked bread loaves, which apparently have been working. The DEC comes back in the morning to find the belching bear caught in the bait box. They tranquilize the bear, weigh it, check teeth, (my what big teeth you have....oh wait, that's 'Little Red Riding Hood'), tag it and release the bear far away into the woods, hoping it doesn't find its way back to the peanut butter (please pass the jam) and the refrigerator.

Why doesn't the DEC release the bears elsewhere,

such as Adirondacks? “Because”, according to the DEC, “once a Catskill bear, always a Catskill bear.”

All this black bear talk reminds me of humans when they are hungry; attacking the refrigerator and knocking over the oatmeal as we reach back into the cabinet for that last .99 cent bag of Cool Ranch Doritos. I’m about one mile along the left ridge of the “T” bar heading towards Eagle Mountain thinking about all this black bear activity, when I come across, what else, BEAR SCAT, (bet you thought I was going to say BEAR), looking around I can feel their presence. Anycase, I study the scat closer, (geez dude, that’s weird). Looks vegetarian to me. (Bet you thought I was going to say peanut butter.) I press on towards the peak of Eagle Mountain in hope of another view. Several miles go by and still no view. I check my map and it indicates that I am right on top of it. I guess this is one of the few peaks without a view. Just woods, woods with a trail and thick wood groves of Aspen and Maple.

I turn the same way I came up and proceed back down the 1200-foot feeder trail and follow the dirt road back to my car, thus ending the 10-mile hike. Hmm...suddenly I am craving peanut butter and bear meat. Where’s the DEC when you really need them.

Steve Keri

Long Trail / Appalachian Trail Maintenance,VT October 1-3, 2004

Friday morning several of us met in Greenfield, MA, for a pit stop, before continuing on to Vermont. Jim Robertson, Richard Hinman and I met Bill Brodnitzki and Ed Lizewski at Rt. 9 and the Somerset Road before continuing our drive down the dirt road to the trailhead. After walking three miles we arrived at The Kid Gore Shelter, our base for the weekend.

After setting up, Friday afternoon we worked for about a mile and a half north of the shelter to the vista with a good view over to Mt. Equinox. The proposed relocation up the mountain has been revised so it now crosses the old trail several times with several switchbacks. The proposed trail is now being reviewed by the Forest Service, and many others, to make sure it meets all standards, rules, regulations,

conforms with the Trail Culture, etc. IF the new route gets approved I hope to make working on this relocation a major project for 2005. Later Friday afternoon Frank Maine joined us.

We had a great sunrise Saturday morning. In early October the sun rises directly in front of the shelter. Little chilly, upper thirties. The main task for the day was to refresh the blazes for the four miles to the top of Glas-tenbury Mountain, and if energy and weather permitted, the four-mile return trip. We inspected, clipped brush and blazed all morning, switching jobs every so often. After a short stay near the fire tower on the cold, damp mountaintop we started to work our way back. About mid-afternoon it started to rain so that was the end of the blazing.

Sunday morning there were some clouds out on the horizon so the sunrise wasn’t a great. We worked some around the shelter then packed and started the walk out.

Many Thanks For All The Help -

Ed Lizewski, Frank Maine, Richard Hinman, Bill Brod-nitzki, Jim Robertson.

Leader: Dick Krompegal

Cape Cod October 9-11, 2004

What a great weekend we had. Dave and Regina arrived first on Friday, and Ken and Mandy not far behind. After getting our gear organized, we headed on the rail trail east to a cute country store for dinner. We managed to clock in about 15 miles on the bikes before heading back to the campsite for a nice campfire. Grace arrived that evening to join us. Mandy made a ginger bread in the Dutch oven that was quite tasty. We really lacked for food this weekend. Saturday started out with a nice big breakfast. Janine and her daughters, Katherine and Grace joined us. We headed for the rail trails and spent the day exploring all of Cape Cod including several beaches, the lighthouses and the Visitors Center. For dinner, Janine brought delicious steaks and salad. We did some potatoes up in the Dutch oven and had a feast as good as any restaurant around. We ended the evening with campfire songs, smores and relaxation. Dave brought along crystals that made very interesting colors of purples, blues and greens in the campfire.

On Sunday, Ken taught the girls how to make campfire doughnuts. They were yummy. We had enough food for a week and continued to eat ourselves silly. We headed to Provincetown for the day, some of us by bike and some of us by truck. We walked around town, climbed the tower and enjoyed another beautiful fall day. That night, Mandy finally got the gang to play her some games around the campfire. It only took a little bit of whining. We did hamburgers and hot dogs and continued to eat through the pain.

On Monday after packing up we decided to do the western part of the rail trail, which completed the whole section of rail trail for the weekend. We got to see them harvesting at the cranberry bogs which was quite festinating. It's always fun to have Dave along on these trips because he is like a golden retriever that goes and snoops out the scoop. He did a bit of exploring and was able to explain some of the harvesting process for us. Janine's girls clocked in 50 miles for the weekend. Pretty darn good. Most of us clocked in around 145 miles of biking for the weekend. It was a great weekend.

Participants: Ken Williamson, Grace King, Mandy Brink, Janene, Katherine and Grace Batten and Regina and Dave Chatel.

Heublein Tower Foliage Hike October 31, 2004

Eight of us met at the parking lot at reservoir # 6 in West Hartford. The fall foliage was near peak. We walked over carpets of yellow and mixed colors. Near the top we spotted a black snake too cold to move very fast.

Upon arriving at the tower we climbed to the top. On this clear day we could see north to Mt. Tom and Springfield in Massachusetts and Bradley Airport. Jim & Jimmy left us early to drive to Norfolk to watch Bill Brodnitzki throw rocks on ice, or curling. The rest of us walked north on the Mettacommet Trail.

I had intended to take another trail back to the parking lot but we could never find the trail. We wound up bushwhacking until we crossed a trail which I knew would bring us back to our cars.

Dan Zelterman, Jim & Jimmy Robertson, Marge Hackbarth, Sarah O'Hare, Mary O'Neill, Sandra Hassan.

Leader: Dick Krompegal

Seven Falls November 13, 2004

To hike or not to hike, that was the question. As inclement weather was expected Friday night it was unclear as to whether the hike would go forth the following morning. Saturday's early light unveiled the first snowfall of the season and while three of us anticipated the wonders of a winter wonderland, five others watched winter from the comfort and warmth of their homes.

The Seven Falls Trail is a series of loop trails. We began on Rt. 154 in Middletown and followed the Mattabesett Trail down along Bible Rock Brook to the cascades area. Crossing the brook became a challenge as did following the blazes a little further along for a maze of aimless paths took us in all directions. Our plan was to take the Mattabesett Trail to our lunch destination of Bear Hill and then take the loop trails back. After a slow start we easily found our way out but the return on the loop trails was at times confusing, blazes were often faded, few and far between.

Seven Falls is delightful for those who enjoy a variety in terrain. Numerous ridges and brooks to cross and up, over and around ledges and boulders made for a fun hike. The snow cover added to the challenge as well as to the beauty of the woods. But hiking in the snow brought on wet, cold feet. Hence, we opted for a warm drive home rather than hunt for a pizza stop.

Hikers: Leslie and Richard Chandler, Sarah O'Hare

Hammonasset State Park November 14, 2004

GMC member Polly Silvers of Bolton joined Marge Hackbarth to walk the trails of this seaside park. There was an unusually high tide that day so the Moraine Trail was cut off by water. The park department has constructed a sand barrier to protect the boardwalk.

Hikers: Polly Silvers, Marge Hackbarth

G.M.C. Conn. Section Annual Meeting & Dinner

Saturday, March 12
Cheshire Grange
44 Wallingford Road, Cheshire, CT

Agenda:

5:00 pm: Social Hour

6:00 pm: Dinner

7:00 pm: Business Meeting

7:30 pm: Speaker - Sue Spring,

“Mama Lipton’s Appalachian Adventure”



The price for the dinner is \$11.50 per person. The deadline for reservations is February 26, 2005. Please make check payable to “CT Section - GMC” and mail the check and this reservation form to:

Sarah O’Hare, 111 Highland Street, Wethersfield, CT 06109 (860) 563-7018

Name	Phone Number	Email Address
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Total Enclosed = no. persons _____ X \$11.50 = \$ _____





Grace King
The Green Mountain Club
653 Marrett Road
Lexington, MA 02421



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