

The Trail Talk

January 2002

President's Message.....

A New Year has arrived complete with 52 weekends, and if you're lucky weeks, to explore the outdoors of New England. I have even noted some white stuff finally falling out of the skies after such a mild fall. Perhaps it is time to finally dust off the snowshoes. Join us on an outing.

Communication with the membership has become an issue as, with this issue of the Trail Talk, we start a quarterly instead of bimonthly publishing schedule. It is time to bring our club communication more into the electronic age. Please note our new web address is <http://home.attbi.com/~gmcctsection/>.

For several years, thanks to the efforts of Allen Freeman, we have had an Internet site. Many of us, myself included, first became aware and joined the CT Section because of our web page. Now, in addition to the web page, Dick Krompegal has started a CT Section Group Message Board.

The group message board has several advantages. It's a near "immediate" form of communication, effective in getting the word out, and best of all it's free. It can be personalized so you can choose to get every posting to the board as it is sent or can have it in a daily or weekly digest form. One example of how the message board works is this. It's Thursday night and the forecast for Saturday is sunny with highs in the 70's. Perfect hiking weather but checking the GMC schedule the weekend's event is Sunday. You want to hike Saturday and would like some company. A quick post to the message board would inform all members and perhaps find you someone with similar

Connecticut Section of the Green Mountain Club

thoughts for the weekend. It can be used to post questions and answers and also has an area to put pictures from our events.

The group has been set up in such a way that you must be "invited" to join. This ensures that our email addresses stay within the club and, hopefully, eliminates the message board as a source of "junk mail" that clutters most of our inboxes. How to join? Send Dick Krompegal (Rkrompy@aol.com) your email address and shortly you will receive the message board address and simple instructions on how to join. If you decide that you do not want to join the group still send us your email address. We have most members' email addresses although I am certain that many are out of date.

The CT Section annual meeting and dinner is scheduled and I hope that everyone will join us. The Section officers are: President- Ken Williamson; 1st Vice President Trails and Shelters- Dick Krompegal; 2nd Vice President Activities- Sarah O'Hare; Treasurer- Jack Sanga; Secretary- Steve Keri. Your support of this event is needed. More information on this event is included in this issue of the Trail Talk.

Most members should have now received their membership renewal forms. Although the club has gone to a rolling membership, most of our members have a January renewal date. If you joined the club since June and received a membership renewal form, this is probably in error. Please contact me and we will get it straightened out.

Ken Williamson



The Trail Talk

Backpack on AT in New York November 10, 11

After a slight delay in shuttling cars, we had managed to get going on our 20 plus mile hike over a two-day period. The five of us, Mandy, Kati, Jeremy, Mojo (the black lab) and myself headed out of Elkspen trailhead lot in Arden, NY going south on the AT, with a funny feeling that we probably would be rolling into Wild Cat Shelter near sundown.

The first day contained a number of ups and downs with mostly rocky terrain and slippery dead leaves as we all got a major cardiovascular workout and a surprisingly assortment of views to our east, south, north and occasionally west. Even though most of the leaves had turned completely dead, there was still speckles of yellows, lime greens, reds and patches of burnt oranges scattered throughout the mountainsides that glistened in the warm sun as we spent a fair amount of time absorbing the surrounding landscape and listening to the sound of the wind rustling through the tree tops. This first day did contain a few challenges that we stepped up to tackle successfully. It was good that we all had some form of backwoods skills and much common sense to communicate and help out.

Heading towards our destination, we passed at least 15 other hikers. We got into the shelter site just around sundown, and using the remaining daylight, set out to find a water source, since the brook was dried up and the water pump that the description in the book said was located there, had been removed last year according to the deer hunter we ran into, or should I say scared the ba-jee-bees out of us.

Luckily, after following the dry brook for a while, we located a puddle that we filtered from. One of us was able to get a tent up before complete darkness settled in, and the rest of us set up our sleeping gear inside the shelter which was nicely equipped with special necessities such as candles, log books (which stated water shortage problems in the area), foodbag pegs, stairs, plenty of space and a roof and sides in great condition. We basically ate supper, chatted and then crashed out about 7pm, exhausted from a hard day.

I woke the following morning before



sunrise in hopes of spotting black bear which are abundant in the area, but didn't see any. So I made some coffee, climbed a hill and watched the sun break over the burnt orange mountain-side as the landscape sparkled to life. What calmness came over me. Around 7am we had breakfast, packed up our gear and headed south on the AT over the Catrocks and Pinnacles towards Mt. Peter. Our second day of hiking entailed a fairly easy and quick pace with the miles just going by as we skirted across the near flat ridge containing Mt. Peter, Bellvale Mt., Furnace Brook Ravine and Mt. Prospect at @1500' with numerous 360 degree views including Greenwood Lake, Warwick Mt. and Taylor Mt. to the west, with the winds almost blowing us over.

As we came to the NY/NJ stateline on the AT, we followed the stateline trail east down to our carspot in the lot below the ridge, drove back to Arden, thanked the troops for a good job and making it to the frontline without any casualties, and said our good-byes. Until next time, Happy Trails!!

Hikers: Mandy, Kati, Jeremy, Mojo
Leader: Steve Keri

Sessions Woods November 17

Eight GMCers plus two people from the joint AYH hike enjoyed a fine 5 miles circular hike through Sessions Woods



and the Tunxis Trail. Sessions Woods maintains various demonstrations to illustrate wildlife management practices for large tracts of land such as parks, state forests and private properties. In addition there are outstanding vista such as the summer house and the firetower. At the Beaver Pond at the top of the hill were some ducks and geese but no beaver. Later, we stopped for lunch in a sunny spot on the blue trail and enjoyed Jack's delicious brownies.

Hikers: Richard and Leslie Chandler, Dick Krompegal, guest Laura Miller who found us on the Internet, Sarah O'Hare, Jack Sanga, Bob Schoff, Ken Williamson

Leader: Marge Hackbarth

**Meadow Woods
November 25**

Meadow Woods is a Nature Conservancy Preserve whose trails link up with trails through Canfield Woods. We began our hike following faded and poorly blazed markings through Meadow Woods. The blazes were few and far between, which made for some confusion and resulted in frequent backtracking. Once we entered the Canfield Woods area the trail markings improved greatly. However, these blazes were painted metal strips nailed to the trees. Each and every one showed evidence of gnawing. We speculated on which animal did this, unanimously deciding on the porcupine.

The 323-acre natural area was particularly pretty with the woods laced with stone walls. The hike was planned for a 3-4 mile walk but we ended up hiking about five miles.

Hikers: Marge Hackbarth, Bob Schoff, Ken Williamson, Lora Miller, Rosemary Miller, Sarah O'Hare

**River Highlands Park
December 16**

An afternoon hike brought together seven members to explore newly constructed trails in Cromwell. Following the white blazed main trail we walked along a 100' high bluff with spectacular Connecticut River views. This section of trail ended at the edge of the River Highlands Country Club, where we stopped for snacks. Retracing our steps along the bluff, we then followed the yellow blazes, taking us steeply down to a winding brook which emptied into the river. This streamside trail brought us to the canoe camping area which was strewn with trash and flotsam. We explored the river's edge, with Jimmy finding a few treasures worthy of a young boy's interest.



On our return to the cars we followed the streamside trail, which took us into an area that had become a biker's playground. Homemade bridges

and ladders had been constructed for the riders' challenge. The enticement was too much for many of us who just had to climb on them. Jimmy had discovered that even grown men (and women) enjoyed being a child again!

Our three mile hike finished, we went to Sarah's house to feast on holiday hors d'oeuvres, libations and dessert. Jimmy was quite content to roast a hotdog in the fireplace and had his fill of cookies. Quite a change from the usual post-hike pizza!

Hikers: Dick Krompegal, Jim Robertson, son Jimmy, Ken Williamson, Regina and Dave Chatel, Sarah O'Hare

**New Year's Hike
December 31, 2001 - January 1, 2002**

Last time I talked to Ken (the usual leader for this annual event) there were supposed to be 5 people on this glorious overnight expedition. For those of you who have never attended one of these marvelous winter campouts here is how it is supposed to work. We hike up on Dec 31st, in the afternoon. We arrive at Bond(or now Brassy Brook) shelter, make camp, have supper and generally while the night away. Around 10:30 pm, our fearless leader usually shames us out of nice warm sleeping bags and into ice cold boots (brrrr) and we make the 1.5 mile trek up to the top of the mountain. We arrive, celebrate New Years, by shivering, and then saunter (or race) back down to our now cold sleeping bags. Some years we have seen fireworks lit by other towns. From the highest peak in CT we can see both Mass. and NY.

Once back at camp, someone without frozen fingers usually gets a stove going, we have something hot, like coffee, tea, chocolate, rum toddies, whatever is handy. Get back to our sleeping bags, and hibernate until about 6:30 am. We pack up, and head for McDonalds and have a hot breakfast. The choice of restaurants is severely restricted on New Years day at 8:00 am in the morning.

This year our normally intrepid leader called at the last minute and dumped everything into my lap. No problemo. At this point it looked like just Steve Keri and Olivia Sanga and me (Jack Sanga) were going. Steve was going to take the AT in

The Trail Talk

over Lions Head. He wanted to do some miles. Olivia (my 8 year old daughter) and I decided to take the Undermountain trail. Mostly I decided that, since dear old dad was lugging two sleeping bags, a tent big enough for 3 people, a space heater (christmas present), all the food and necessities.

We arrived about 1:30 in the afternoon, and Steve arrived about 1:35. Olivia and I set up our tent. Steve elected for the shelter. About 2:00 we had lunch and then Olivia and I retreated to our tent. It was nice and warm as the sun was shining. The tent had the oven effect going. We played word games, "Guess Who" which is like 20 questions and finally the "States Games". I was busy regaling Olivia about how tough it would be to get up at 10:30 and hike to the top of the mountain. We had a 5 cent bet as to whether she would do it or not.

Anyway around 5:00 pm, we're bored. Olivia suggested we go to the top of the mountain and celebrate New Years Italian style. Since Italy is exactly 6:00 hours ahead. We would get the top around 6:00 pm. and celebrate as though we were in Italy. Steve and I thought this was a marvelous idea. We hike to the top. Get there around 5:57 and celebrate. The temperature was probably about 20 degrees at this point, and there was probably a 10 mph wind at the top. We had a light stick which Olivia activated (in lieu of fireworks). While we were at the top we watched the moon rise. It wasn't quite full, but it was very bright. Have I mentioned there was about 2 inches on snow on Bear Mountain.

Headed back to the shelter and we had supper. Olivia dropped off about 8:00 and I soon followed. I woke up around 5:30 am and learned some new words from Steve who was (calmly?!!) remarking on the temperature. It was a balmy 8 degrees and all his water had frozen solid. Next time any of you see Steve, be sure to comment on how well his new winter stove worked.

Both Olivia and Steve mentioned hearing gunshots at night. I being the vastly more experienced winter camper informed them that these probably weren't gunshots, but were trees exploding from the severe cold. This didn't cheer them up as much as I had thought it would.

On the hike down the mountain we all commented on why these highly informa-

tive, extremely entertaining social events aren't better attended every year. This question stumped us for quite a while. In fact we still haven't quite figured it out. However, we do have some suggestions for future years.

- 1) Hold it at Springer Mtn in Georgia (or somewhere further south)
- 2) Hold it in July
- 3) Perhaps stay at a Bed and Breakfast and have a night hike to the top and back to a warm bed

If anyone else has positive or constructive comments please see Ken I-stayed-home-and-drank-warm-mulled-wine Williamson.

Intrepid adventurers were Olivia Sanga, Steve Keri and Jack Sanga.

Hiking in the mountains is a natural high!



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

Saturday March 9, 2002
Polish American Club of Newington
140 Wilson Ave. Newington, CT 06111

Schedule:

- 5:00 p.m. Social Hour, with BYOB permitted
- 6:00 p.m. Dinner
- 7:00 p.m. Business meeting
- 7:30 p.m. Guest Speaker - Dave Hardy, Director of Field Operations for the GMC

Dave will have a slide presentation and talk about his updated edition of 50 Hikes in Connecticut, due out this spring.

Reservations must be in to Sarah O'Hare by March 1



- The price for the dinner is \$11.00 per person.
- The deadline for reservations is March 1, 2002.
- Please make check payable to CT Section - GMC and mail 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 \$11.00 = \$ _____



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



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Hours: Tuesday, Wednesday & Friday 8:00-5:30
Thursday 8:00-7:00, Saturday 8:00-3:00

GMC Members Receive 10% Off At All Times

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

Ken Williamson
3 Mill Village Pentway
North Stonington, CT 06359
(860) 535-2622
Ksub@aol.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 | \$ 27.00 |
| Family | \$ 35.00 |
| Junior (under 18) | \$ 7.00 |
| Organization | \$ 35.00 |

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

Website: <http://home.attbi.com/~gmcctsection/>