

The Catskill Canister
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Eastern Devil's Path from Hurricane Ledge. Photo by Tony Versandi #1488 W637

The newsletter will print best if downloaded as a pdf file directly from the [Club's site](#)

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Attention all members in good standing! Since the Club was not able to have an annual meeting and our by-laws require the election of officers yearly, the 3500 Club Nominating Committee is asking for your help by responding to this notice. The Club normally votes for our officers at the annual meeting, but, because of COVID-19, New York State law allows us to conduct a mail in vote. **We need your timely response by September 30th to stay in compliance with our by-laws. Thank you in advance!** As this issue of *The Canister* went to press, all members in good standing (i.e., a member who is either a life member or is up to date with their dues) have been already notified of the vote. As a reminder, the ballot form can be found [here](#) and your responses should be forwarded to this [address](#). Thank you for your timely responses!

Trail Spice

The President's Column by Maria Bedo-Calhoun

Well...here we are approaching the fall and still adjusting to these different times! I think no one will be surprised that the Annual Dinner is still on hold. Our wish is that we can all gather in April 2021, but I think we have learned in these past six months that nothing is certain right now. Our Winter Weekend has been scheduled (see Trail Mix section below), but it will most likely be a series of hikes with, sadly, none of the social activities that normally happen on that weekend. Our Wilderness First Aid Class is on hold as well. If the spring is still not suitable for large get-togethers, perhaps by next summer we can have an outdoor celebration where we can meet in a safer environment, hand out certificates once again and share that great Club energy that we all miss. But, despite the hiatus of certain activities, this does not mean that all the activities of the 3500 Club are completely in limbo. Far from it! Our hiking schedule and maintenance trips are on, slightly adjusted, but going forward.

Also, in my winter column I discussed how the Board was considering officially becoming a 501c3, not a decision to be made lightly. I suspect many of you have thought we were always one anyway and did not realize that there are different categories. I know I was not aware of the differences before I joined the Board! The Club was formed as a 501c7 over 50 years ago, which is an IRS designation for a social club. A c7 or social club is an organization where “a significant portion of all of its activities must further pleasure, recreation, and other similar purposes. This can include country clubs, garden clubs, and alumni associations.” There are limits to the amount of money that can be donated to a c7 since there has to be more of a focus on the members versus other activities. What makes a 501c3 different is that this designation applies to charitable organizations which do good work in a specific area(s). Because the emphasis is on a bigger impact than just on members, it allows for tax deductions for donations, matching grants and is required to utilize something like Giving Tuesday on Facebook to raise funds for an important cause. None of which we can currently do as a c7.

I am sure the wonderful founders of the 3500 Club had no idea of what would be happening over 50 years later here in the Catskills and the number of hikers and visitors the mountains would see. In those earlier days, by offering hikes and sending *The Canister* they were doing good work for the mountains already. But they could not envision social media and the effect that would have on trail usage and its impact. Some of that activity is to be celebrated – we should never lose sight of that important purpose of the Club – people interacting with nature, challenging themselves, making lifelong friends and learning to overcome is the spirit of why the Club exists. We love to see the incredible satisfaction people have in finishing the list and getting their certificate. But it is bringing change and whether the larger amounts of people on the trails are there because of the Club list or not, it affects the mountains we love. I think anyone on social media has seen that impact this summer – the trash, the crowded trailheads, the fire rings on the summits. These are not our members, of course, but, as hikers, we see these things and it saddens all of us.

While we are able to fund some initiatives already, like two summit stewards through our collaboration with the New York–New Jersey Trail Conference and the Table lean-to project you will read about later, becoming a 501c3 will allow the Club to do more – particularly education through more stewards – and, hopefully, lessen the impact. We also need to be realistic about the current budget situation of the state and how it affects the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation and their initiatives. In July the \$3 billion Restore Mother Nature Bond Act was removed from the NYS November ballot as the impact of the COVID-19 costs on the state budget is too dire. That act had proposals “to make trails more durable to increased use and analyze and develop new visitor flow solutions to better manage traffic to provide a more enjoyable, less congested user experience.”

There is a limit to what the Club can do as a volunteer organization, but we can do more, and the Board strongly feels we *should* do more by funding worthwhile efforts and initiatives when possible. By becoming a 501c3 we have an avenue to do that. So, I am happy to report that at our most recent board meeting, on August 16th, the Board voted to move forward to become a c3. As with everything, there are a few legal hoops to jump through, but my hope is that we will be official by the spring. I am excited to think about the options this change will give the Club. I know how much we all care about these mountains and being able to give back even a little after what the peaks give us, is something we all can feel good about, especially in these challenging times.



Codfish Point. Photo by Steve Aaron #3199



Trail Mix: News and Notes from the Club



Dues for calendar year 2020 were due on April 1st. Those of you who receive the emailed quarterly link from us also get a dues reminder. Members and Aspirants who joined after the middle of the year may renew at a half year rate to get back to "calendar year renewal." Contact [David White \(members@catskill-3500-club.org\)](mailto:members@catskill-3500-club.org) or [Jake Haisley \(aspirants@catskill-3500-club.org\)](mailto:aspirants@catskill-3500-club.org) to confirm your status. Forms and rates are on the [membership page](#) of the Club website.

You may now use PayPal at the [Club site](#) or renew by mail and/or order additional member items using [this form](#). Please make checks payable to the Catskill 3500 Club.

As a reminder, good standing is required to maintain voting rights and privileges of membership (e.g., *The Canister* subscription, ability to buy patches). An active member is one who has completed his requirements for membership and who has paid their prescribed dues for the current year or who is a life member (life membership can be obtained for a one-time fee of \$200). Please note that the initial fee only covers the registration and the first year. Delinquent members may regain good standing by payment of one year's delinquent dues.

By renewing your membership (or becoming a life member), you help us support our mission of being the stewards of the Catskills and help us give back to the mountains. We appreciate your continued support!

By: Dave White, Membership Chair and Jake Haisley, Aspirants Chair



We are fortunate to have some private property owners who allow hikers on part of their lands to access several of the 3500 peaks: Doubletop, Graham, Halcott (from the south which requires permission from the owner). Doubletop and Graham are more limited currently because of the COVID situation, but we hope the owners will relax their guidance at some point.

Additionally, the approaches to Balsam Cap and Friday from Moon Haw Road border private property and all hikers should be careful of not trespassing on that land and should study their approaches thoroughly to avoid doing so.

In order to not lose these privileges, we ask everyone to be respectful of where on those properties hikers are allowed and where not. Our aspriant chair, [Jake Haisley](#), put together a great [guide](#) with some mapping and guidance to give everyone a better sense of the correct approaches to the mountains. Please share with your hiking friends to get the word out!

Speaking of Doubletop, the Can Man [Jim Bouton](#) has a message:

"Even I need permission and I asked for it. So do you. No matter what direction you approach from, you need permission. There is no public way to tag this peak. When signing this canister book - and you must sign this one as per the Gould Family wishes - use the name and phone number and where you told the caretaker you are from. If with a group, the leader signs for you all, since the leader is the one who called. You of course can add your name and comment, but make sure you are clear about who you hiked with, the original permission getter. This way we can keep this peak open for future hikers. And as with all the canisters, sanitize."

Translation: Jim is going to compare the canister sign-ins with what the caretaker has on his list for those who asked permissions. Those names will be passed on to the Club membership chair. If you are not on the list, you will not receive credit for the climb.

We are doing the best we can to keep these mountains open, but we are getting reports of people not asking for permission. The caretaker is aware of those and, needless to say, it is not helping in the discussion.

Note: the owners are still only allowing neighboring counties access. We hope that will change soon, but it is up to the owners. Please do not call unless you are from the following counties: Ulster, Sullivan, Delaware, Schoharie, Greene, Otsego.



The Club extends appreciation to departing board members



After nine years of devoted service, **Ira Orenstein**, #415 W776, and **Karen Bloom**, #1733 W777, will be moving on and giving up their duties as T-Shirt Coordinators, which are non-voting Board positions. We deeply appreciate their dedicated volunteer work for the Club. We had hoped to give them the plaque in this photo at the Annual Dinner, but are sharing with all of you virtually what was mailed to them in appreciation of their service. Happy hiking Ira and Karen!



We are very fortunate to have two longtime Club members (and close friends), **Margaret McGrath**, #2009 W939, and **Terri Baker**, #1955 W888, who will be taking over those duties. Their bios are below. We are also changing the name of the positions to Merchandise Coordinators as the Club will start to expand items beyond T-shirts and hats in the future. Welcome Margaret and Terri!

The 3500 Board extends its deepest appreciation to **Melissa McCutcheon**, #1877 W884, for her past service as the Club Secretary. Melissa joined the board the summer of 2017 and has contributed many ideas, energy and suggestions while taking precise and clear notes at board meetings. We thank her for her work, attention to detail and service to the Club during her time on the Board. We wish Melissa the best in her future endeavors!





Catskill 3500 Club Welcomes New Board Members



As the Club is growing, we have welcomed new non voting board members.

Terri Baker, #1955 W888, joins the board as the co-coordinator of the Merchandise Committee. Back in 2002, at the ripe age of 42, a neighbor of Terri's mentioned having recently become an Adirondack 46er. "What in the world is that?", Terri asked. Aside from a flat mile loop at her local community park, Terri had never stepped foot on a trail or heard the term 46er before. So, her neighbor began to explain. Captivated and intrigued by the sense of adventure and conquest, Terri made up her mind right then and there to give becoming a 46er a shot. Naive? Yes. Not having the slightest clue what she was in for? Double yes! Never expecting her legs to be screaming, "What the \$@#% were you thinking?????" every step of the way up Cascade Mountain a month later? You bet your tail end!! But, after reaching the summit of her first high peak on that crystal clear day, with not another soul in sight (yes, things looked different on the summits back then), the course of Terri's life changed. While bandaging 9 out of 10 toes that night, she whispered to herself "challenge accepted" and she hasn't stopped hiking since. She has completed two rounds of the ADK 46 and 12 rounds of the Cats, recently completing the Catskill 420 grid alongside her husband, Scott (#1956 W889). She is a volunteer at the Balsam Lake Mountain fire tower and looks forward to supporting the 3500 Club as a co-coordinator of the Merchandise Committee. Terri is a registered day care provider and owner/operator of a family day care in Burnt Hills, NY. When not hiking or caring for kids, she also enjoys tutoring high school math, and traveling and hanging out with her dear friends and family.



Margaret McGrath, #2009 W939, joins the board as the co-coordinator of the Merchandise Committee. Margaret grew up in a hiking family, with four siblings and parents who became hike leaders, hiking every weekend with the ADK Mid-Hudson Chapter. After all, what do you do with five kids that is cheap and wears them out? In that group, it was the thing to be a 46er. Margaret's favorite hikes were in the Shawangunk Mountains, white scrambly rock, green pines and blue skies, but she did not hike what one would consider peaks, except Slide Mountain on a Thanksgiving Day once, while in her teens. Her family camped in the southern Adirondacks and Catskills, and Margaret hiked Mount Marcy and paddled on Saranac Lake with the Girl Scouts when she was 12, which really cemented her pull to the Adirondacks. About 10 years ago, when Margaret turned 55, she wanted to start to climb the Catskill peaks, to challenge herself and to get back to the frequent hiking she did as a child, as a step to the Adirondack 46 peaks. With the help of many hike leaders who became friends, Margaret finished her first round of the Catskill 3500 and started on the Adirondack 46. She became a hike leader for the Catskill 3500 as a way to pay it forward from all the hike leaders who supported and taught her. Margaret kept going with the Catskill 3500 peaks, Winters, 4 Seasons, and has now completed the grid, thanks to great support from her partner Jim Bouton, and has also finished the ADK 46. Along the way she picked up a lot of Leave No Trace ethics and has tried to pass them on to her daughters and other hikers where possible. Margaret recently retired from working at hospitals as a Respiratory Therapist and is looking forward to giving back as a Merchandise Co-Coordinator for the 3500 Club, visiting with her grandkids and introducing them to the woods and doing more camping.

Marv Freedman, Life Member #2242 W951, Catskill All Trails Challenge #35, 420 Grid #28, joins the board as an assistant to the outings chair. Marv has enjoyed outdoor sports ever since he took up rock climbing and caving in college. Over the years he's been an enthusiastic bicyclist, canoeist, kayaker, downhill and cross country skier, runner, and even a figure skater. But he never enjoyed organized hiking. He complained that wherever he spotted something interesting and stopped to admire it, the next person in line, rushing ahead with eyes on the trail, would walk into him. But after years of working as a programmer and systems engineer, with eating as his only hobby, he realized that he had become so overweight, that the only exercise he could still handle was walking. When walking around the block became boring, he started doing local hikes in Hunterdon County, NJ, soon graduated to the Catskills, and joined the 3500 Club as an Aspirant in 2013. He's been a 3500 Club leader since June 2018, and has led over 40 Club hikes, mostly long bushwhacks. He's also a Lieutenant in the Club's Catskill Mountain Search and Rescue team.



Chris Adams, #2710, joins the board as an assistant to the membership chair. Chris is a lifelong outdoor enthusiast. It was immediately apparent during his first visit to Devil's Tombstone Campground in 1996 that the Catskills were a special place that would have to be a part of his life. Growing up in Central Pennsylvania, he was always out in the woods with his dad and his

friends, whether it was hunting, fishing, hiking, biking, camping, exploring, sledding, or finding a great spot to take a nap. Chris was almost through with his first round of climbs of the 3500+ peaks when he decided to join a Club led hike to see what the Club element of this challenge was about. The people he met and the conversations that he had that day up Rusk, East Rusk, Hunter, and Southwest Hunter enriched what started as a personal challenge by gaining insight into the bigger picture of the Catskill 3500 Club, its members, and the conservational and educational work in which the Club participates.



These days, Chris can most often be found hiking in the Catskills, Hudson Highlands, or the Alleghenies of his childhood—partly because all that he wants to clean at the end of his days in the woods is his Camelbak. He has been a hike leader for the Club for a few years. Chris lives in Hastings-on-Hudson and Phoenicia, NY, with his wife, son, daughter, cat, and his main hiking partner, Rosie the standard poodle.



WINTER WEEKEND UPDATE



The 2021 Winter Weekend is tentatively scheduled to take place over the weekend of January 23-24. With the continuing uncertainty of the COVID-19 situation, the dinner portion of our annual Winter Weekend remains in jeopardy, although chances are good that the hiking portion will continue. We will continue to observe what occurs through the Fall and hopefully reach a final decision then. We are hoping for the best, but in the end will do what's safest for our participants.

By: *Bill Chriswell, Winter Weekend Chair*



Club Brochure Update



Many thanks to club member and hike leader Jess Prekel, #3106 W1308, graphic designer extraordinaire!! She offered to redesign our Club brochure and the results are just wonderful. Brochure is available for [download](#); please share with your friends and aspirants!

Also, our deepest appreciation to Tony Versandi, #1488 W637, longtime Club member, for contributing some of the beautiful photos! You can see more of his images on our [website](#) under the peaks descriptions.

MEMBERSHIP
Those wishing to become members must summit all 35 Catskill High Peaks and also climb Slide, Blackhead, Baham and Fambler mountains again in winter. The Club also awards a separate patch for members who climb all 35 peaks in winter.
All 35 peaks may be climbed in winter; the four mentioned above must be climbed a second time in any season. Peaks climbed in winter in percent of the regular patch may be counted for the winter patch.

ABOUT US
The Catskill 3500 Club was founded in 1962 to foster interest in hiking in the Catskills. The club educates members and the public in outdoor recreational skills, engages in public service and stewardship, and encourages responsible recreational use of the region's natural resources.
The 3500 Club lobbies for environmental issues that impact the Catskills and has taken on an active stewardship role in the region. Dues, donations, and lifetime memberships help fund conservation efforts, and also go toward acquiring/repairing tools for trail and lean-to maintenance, search & rescue, summit stewardship, wilderness first aid training.
The Club is an active organizational member of the NY-NJ Trail Conference and many of our members are trail and lean-to maintainers. We encourage you to become an aspiring member, to volunteer, and to hike and enjoy the mountains we call home.

STEWARDSHIP
Proper stewardship is one of the key missions of our organization. We encourage members and non-members to join us in following simple guidelines to help keep these mountains in as natural a state as possible, and to ensure that hikers who explore and use them stay safe. Find these helpful guidelines and Leave No Trace principles on our website.

CLUB PRINCIPLES
Follow the rules.
Use a map & compass.
Know your limitations.

CLUB ACTIVITIES
The Club's outdoor program includes regularly scheduled day hikes, a weekend of winter climbing with camaraderie and housing options at a Catskills-based inn, lean-to and trail maintenance projects, and litter patrol along the Club's two-mile Adopt-a-Highway section of Route 214. All are welcome at these Club activities.

VOLUNTEERING
Many opportunities await trail maintenance, hike leading, search & rescue and more. We also help the NY-NJ Trail Conference, DEC and other organizations with their maintenance and conservation efforts. Stay informed of all those opportunities through Facebook, our online message group, or by signing up for the online newsletter at catskill3500club.org. For help, just email the Trail Stewardship Chairperson at trailsteward@catskill3500club.org.
@groups.io/g/Catskill3500Club
facebook.com/catskill3500club

NEWSLETTER
The Catskill Canister is our quarterly newsletter. It includes news, the Club hike schedule, and stories about the Catskill mountains and the people who love them. Have a tale to tell? Contact editor@catskill3500club.org and your contribution may be featured in a future issue.

CLUB ACTIVITIES
At our annual dinner in early spring, new members receive their certificates. This is a festive occasion where those interested in hiking have a great opportunity to meet one another.
The Club also offers a yearly Wilderness First Aid Course and has formed a Search and Rescue group that works with the DEC and trains regularly in the Catskills.



NY-NJ Trail Conference Update



The Catskill 3500 Club continues a strong alliance with the [New York-New Jersey Trail Conference](#) (NYNJTC) to support stewardship in the Catskills.

The NYNJTC has resumed trail maintenance in the region, including training of new volunteers. As part of returning to the Catskills, the Conference has instituted clear anti-COVID19 protocol and is distributing Buffs and other swag to help the trail maintainers stay safe while performing their tasks. Look for maintainers out on the trails and please thank them for their

dedication and hard work!

The Trail Conference won the DEC bid to place backcountry stewards in the Catskills for 2020, but due to the current NY State budget freeze the program is officially on hold. Despite the bureaucratic roadblocks, the NYNJTC is using their own budget, including \$5,000 from the Catskill 3500 Club, to place two stewards at highly trafficked locations in the Catskills: Slide Mountain summit and Giant Ledge/Panther.

The NYNJTC backcountry stewardship program is critical to educating forest visitors and protecting sensitive ecosystems, and with increased visitation to the Catskills, it's more important than ever. We're hopeful that the program will return to normal funding and staffing next year.

The Trail Conference is also supporting the construction of the new lean-to on Table Mountain. The work is being performed under the NYNJTC Volunteer Service Agreement in coordination with the DEC. Read more about the status of the project under the Table Mountain lean-to update below.

The Catskill 3500 Club has partnered with the Trail Conference to help fill open positions for Trail Supervisors. A recent call for volunteers on Facebook resulted in 38 new volunteers, so all Trail Maintainer slots are now full! With all of the new volunteers, the Conference will need supervisors and leaders to perform training and reporting. Available Supervisor positions are listed below.

Trail Supervisors are key volunteer leaders who are the boots on the ground overseeing and supporting a team of Trail Maintainers. Trail Supervisors ensure the trails in their assigned area remain in good condition so that the public can have a positive experience in the beautiful Catskills.

Available Positions

- Available Positions
 - Wawarsing to Phoenicia (Long Path) – Long Path as it travels from Wawarsing to Phoenicia
 - Belleayre Region – trails in Willowemoc Wild Forest and Big Indian Wilderness
 - Hunter-West Kill Region – trails in Hunter-West Kill Mountain Wilderness
 - Phoenicia-East Branch Region – trails in Slide Mountain Wilderness

Volunteer Local Trails Committee Chair

Local Trails Committee (LTC) Chairs take a broader look at managing the trail systems. They are the volunteer leader principally accountable for planning and reporting on the maintenance and development in their region's trail network. LTC Chairs oversee a team of Trail Supervisors and communicate with agency partners, land managers, trail crew leaders, and Trail Conference staff to ensure that the trails in their region are in good condition.

Available Positions

Catskills Local Trails – oversees five supervisor regions throughout the Catskills

By: Matt Smith, NYNJTC Representative



Save the Date for Trail Maintenance and Adopt-a-Highway Events



PEEKAMOOSE-TABLE TRAIL MAINTENANCE

Join us for our club trail maintenance outing on Saturday, September 26th, 2020. Please help us keep the Peekamoose-Table Trail clear and safe for the enjoyment of all. Bring work gloves and your favorite trail maintenance tools (the Club will also have tools available). It's fun work and a great way to help the Club and the hiking community. Refreshments will be provided afterwards. Please be sure to sign up so we know who's coming. We still need extra hands! Registration information: open; to sign up, please contact [Lourdes Sonera](#).

ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY CLEAN-UP


Join us on Sunday, October 18th, 2020 for the Route 214 clean up. Bring work gloves and a great attitude – all else will be provided, including refreshments afterward. Your participation helps the Club, the environment, and keeps the Catskills

beautiful! See the schedule listing below for the registration information.

If anyone is interested in joining the volunteer list to stay up to date with the future trail maintenance and road clean-up opportunities, please contact [Lourdes Sonera](#).

Please note: Club volunteering outings schedule is subject to change. Group sizes may be reduced to conform with the social distancing requirements; a mask may be required for situations when social distancing is not possible. Current NYNJTC Trail Maintenance guidance recommendations will be followed.

By: Lourdes Sonera, Trail Maintenance Chair

 **Update from the Treasurer** 

Even though most people would agree that 2020 is a very unique year for the Club and its members and aspirants, what hasn't changed is our desire to spread the wealth around through our support of the region and organizations dedicated to the Catskills. This year we have made first-time donations to many groups to support their safety as they support our safety, by donating to the Claryville Fire Department and the Phoenicia Fire Department \$500 each for PPE and SAR equipment, as well as a donation of \$1,000 to the Twin Cloves Rescue Team for PPE and SAR equipment. We also continued to make a donation to the [NY-NJ Trail Conference](#) for the summit stewards program to the tune of \$5,000, as well as \$3,500 to the [Adirondack Mountain Club](#) for the legislative issues that affect the Catskill Park. We made another \$1,000 donation to the [Friends of the Feathered and Furry Wildlife Center](#) this year to support wildlife rehabilitation in the Catskills. Another new donation organization this year is an inspiring \$2,500 donation to [Team Wilderness](#) supporting trips to the Catskills by urban high school students. I suggest you look them up! And last but not least, another new donation was made to the [Student Conservation Association](#) for \$1,000. So there are more new organizations receiving our donations this year and we hope to continue this trend. We can do this via all of your continued donations through PayPal or simply "rounding up" with your membership or aspirant fees. The club and these recipients all thank you for your continued generosity.

By: Jay Hui, Treasurer

 **Congratulations to Marv Freedman** 

It is with honor and appreciation that the Catskill 3500 Club presents the Hike Leader of the Year Award for 2019 to Marvin "Marv" Freedman. Marv is always in high demand leading multiple hikes on average per week. As a charter member and a Lieutenant of the Club's SAR team, Catskill Mountain Search and Rescue, Marv's dedication to the safety and enjoyment of the Catskills is unwavering. Hiking with Marv is the ultimate way to experience the peaks. Thank you, Marv!



By: Bill Winterbottom, Outings Chair

 **Table Mountain lean-to update** 

Last fall the Club joined the [New York-New Jersey Trail Conference](#) and the Bruderhof Community, under the guidance of Ian Dunn of the DEC, to work on replacing the Table Mountain lean-to (Bouton lean-to). The Bruderhof spent the winter building that lean-to (among others) in their indoor facility. All this was done under a volunteer service agreement between the NYNJTC and the DEC. We contributed to the material costs and were going to call out to volunteers this summer to help in removing the old and raising the new lean-to.

But then.....COVID. The lean-to is all ready to go, but the state froze the budget so there is no funding to pay for the helicopter lift to bring the materials in. Additionally, with social distancing protocols, erecting it would not be possible at this time anyway.

But, we do want to share the great photos of what is waiting when the all-clear moment comes in. Many people worked really hard this year and their efforts are so appreciated! Some day there will be a wonderful new lean-to up ready to be enjoyed!



NYSDEC Seeks Public Comment on 2020 Draft Revision of Shandaken Wild Forest UMP



Below are excerpts from the press release. For a full press release, read [here](#) and for the full revised Unit Management Plan (UMP), read [here](#). (Editor note: start at Page 115 for a summary of changes).

Public Comments Accepted Until Sept. 28. Comments can be submitted by [email](#), by mail to NYSDEC 21 South Putt Corners Rd. New Paltz, NY 12561 Attn: Pine Roehrs, or by phone (845) 256-3075.

The original management plan for the Shandaken Wild Forest was completed in 2005. Since that time, DEC has acquired 1,200 acres on the eastern slopes of Belleayre Mountain, 610 acres of which were added to the Shandaken Wild Forest.

In 2019, with funding from the Catskill Watershed Corporation, the contractor Tahawus Trails was hired to develop a conceptual trail plan for these acquisition lands that were added to the Shandaken Wild Forest and Belleayre Mountain Ski Center Intensive Use Area. A public meeting was held on Jan. 18, 2018, at Belleayre Mountain Ski Center Discovery Lodge where Tahawus Trails/Sinuosity LLC presented the conceptual recreation plan. Public comments were accepted and the proposals were incorporated into the 2020 draft Shandaken Wild Forest Unit Management Plan.

The draft 2020 Shandaken Wild Forest plan proposes:

- Developing 10.1 miles of new and improved multi-use trails on the newly acquired lands on Belleayre Mountain that are now a part of the Shandaken Wild Forest;
- Building an accessible fishing platform to expand fishing opportunities on the Allaben parcel;
- Removal of buildings and debris on the Lower Birch Creek parcel that pose a threat to public health and safety;
- Improvements to the impoundment on the Lower Birch Pond on the Lower Birch Creek parcel; and
- Establishing a scenic vista on the Giggle Hollow parcel.

Following a review of public comments received, DEC will finalize the plan and begin the process of implementation.

Trail Mix Photo notes: Terri and Margaret photo: L-R: Terri, Margaret; Table Mountain lean-to update photos by Ian Dunn (DEC).



View from meadow on south side of West Cave. Photo by Alan Via #429 W174

THE DIOGENES CHALLENGE

Text and Photos by: Kenneth Posner #2573 W1108

As Catskill 3500 members are well aware, “The Nine” consists of a 20-plus miles route which summits nine of the Catskill High Peaks: Slide, Cornell, Wittenberg, Friday, Balsam Cap, Rocky, Lone, Table, and Peekamoose. What makes the route challenging is that five of the peaks have no trails. Even with map, compass, and GPS, bushwhacking along this ridge is no simple task, for the terrain is steep and rocky, and the forests thick and tangled, which renders “the eye of little service,” as Catskills author John Burroughs once wryly noted.



Over the years, I’d had the chance to complete “The Nine,” or parts thereof, on several occasions: once trying to run it for speed, once at night, once in the winter, and once as part of an unsuccessful attempt to thru-run all 35 peaks.

Over time, my practice of running and hiking began to evolve in a minimalist direction. Inspired by Chris MacDougall’s bestseller, *Born to Run*, I started experimenting with barefoot hiking. I decided to take on “the Nine” without shoes, but only lasted through six of the peaks before my feet had enough.

I was also developing an interest in “natural navigation,” the art of moving through the forest without technology — meaning no map, no compass, no GPS. This was great fun, especially with friends (even if we didn’t always reach the intended destination) because the exercise forced us to pay close attention to the lay of the land.

Another minimalist direction for me: I began to incorporate intermittent fasting into my dietary and training plans. The goal was to break my dependence on sugary snacks and teach my body to burn fat, the way people did before power bars.

One day these themes coalesced in my mind, and I came up with a grand plan: to complete “the Nine” not only barefoot, but navigating naturally, and without carrying food or water. I would call this the Diogenes Challenge, after [the ancient Greek philosopher](#) who advocated for simplicity and self-discipline.

Upon reflection, however, the Diogenes Challenge seemed like a little too much, even for an arch-minimalist like me. I quietly let it slide and focused on other things.

Until one day, to my surprise, my friend Kal Ghosh asked, when were we going to do it?

* * *

You may have seen an image of Diogenes (412- 323 BC), one of the founders of the Cynic school of philosophy, holding a lantern aloft in daylight, searching for an honest man (he never found one). Diogenes lived outdoors with only three possessions, a cloak, satchel, and staff. At first Kal and I thought we'd leave behind sleeping bags and lights, since Diogenes didn't have them. But after considering differences in climate between New York and ancient Greece, as well as the need for us to start a little late, we relaxed those standards. We would complete "the Nine" barefoot, navigating naturally, without carrying food, and drinking only from springs.

Our operation kicked off at the Denning parking area at 7 p.m. on Friday, June 12. We ambled off into the cool evening air at an easy pace, with Kal in the lead. The two of us have a lot in common: corporate workers, barefoot runners, past participants in the Escarpment Trail Run. We're also different in many ways, and there was plenty to talk about as we sauntered along: history, current events, personal stories, athletic goals, not to mention the different surfaces we were treading on.

The trail toward Slide Mountain is full of large, tilting, "ankle-busting" rocks that make walking difficult no matter what you're wearing. Kal and I kept up a slow but steady pace, availing ourselves of dirt and grass along the trail's edge, or aiming for flat rocks to step on and avoiding the sharp ones.

Turning onto the Curtis-Ormsbee Trail, we found a more pleasant surface, for this path was covered in dirt, leaves, and fir needles. The trail curled up along a ridge and snaked through gaps in sandstone ledges — steep enough in places to leave me short of breath.

Meanwhile, the light was dimming. We reached a vantage point near 3500 feet, but it was nearly dark now, and little to see — just a faint glow along the horizon. With Diogenes in mind, we persevered without lights a little longer — I could see the white of my feet and light-gray sandstone rocks, but the path itself had become so dark it looked like water. I was surprised each time I placed a foot upon the ground and it stayed dry.



Walking barefoot in the dark is a magical exercise: it teaches you to step slowly and carefully, requires good posture and balance, and seems to activate circuits in the mind we rarely use, judging from how even the faintest bit of light was enough for us to place our feet subconsciously, it seemed, in just the right places. But walking barefoot in the dark is slow. Eventually we could no longer see the trail. At this point we clicked on our lights.

Nearing Slide's summit, the surface changed again. Now the ground was littered with the rough conglomerate of the "Slide Mountain Formation," and the path was covered in fine gray sand, which was pleasing to the soles, and gray pebbles and knobby rocks, which were not so much. I asked Kal what he thought — "Well, it's interesting," he replied. The constant change in surface conditions is part of what makes barefooting an adventure.

We paused on Slide's summit, pleased to have completed the first peak of "the Nine." It was pitch black now. In the distance, a few lights glowed from the city of Kingston or its environs. Overhead, the sky was clear and full of stars. It was getting cold. My breath was steaming in my headlamp.

After stopping for some water at the spring, then descending Slide's steep backside, we pulled up around midnight at a primitive campsite, where we spent a cold night. My sleeping bag is rated to 32 °F, but that's a survival rating, not a comfort rating, and I spent much of the night shivering, while Kal, who'd brought a synthetic blanket, was so cold he got barely any sleep at all.

Nonetheless, with eight mountains still to climb, the next morning we were up at first light, packed, and on the trail a little after 5 a.m., with Kal once again in the lead, while I lagged behind, feeling cold and sleepy. Without its customary breakfast and

cappuccino, my stomach was growling, but after a little while, it was fine. The sun flared gold and red against the clouds, and then a few minutes later we were treated to a misty morning scene from Wittenberg.



Dawn over Cornell



Misty morning view from Cornell

With these two peaks bagged, now it was time to enter the forest and put our natural navigation skills to the test. We backtracked to Cornell, where Kal and I probed the wood line for the best point of entry. Then we stepped off the trail and into a welter of spindly fir trees. To reach Friday, the plan was to orient ourselves to the south by keeping the early morning sun on our left; then we'd aim to hug the mountain's steep eastern edge, which would be hard to miss.

"At least we're off the trails," Kal commented. For barefoot hikers in the Catskills, the trails are much rockier than the forest floor, which is covered in a springy mix of club moss, fallen leaves, and fir needles — although in the fir forest there are lots of scratchy sticks and fallen branches with sharp points. Even with these kinds of hazards, I've come to prefer barefoot to shod hiking, because I find that I can fit my foot into just the right spots on the uneven forest floor, and the sense of touch helps me keep my balance.

As we made our way through the forest, a faint path began to appear where other bushwhackers had passed this way. It was sometimes visible from a faint compression on the ground and sometimes a scuff mark on a fallen log, but mostly from the absence of protruding branches which would otherwise have scratched and poked. These kinds of "social" or "herd" paths are the best way to move through dense forest, because they follow logical routes, and weave around the worst obstacles, and because they concentrate human impact in one place leaving the rest of the forest unscathed. There's an art to following these trails — it's called paying attention. And we did, in due course, reaching the canister on Friday's eastern edge.



Ken and Kal on Wittenberg



Cornell and Wittenberg, view from Friday

Now we could relax, as the trail to Balsam Cap was familiar. In fact I'd been here just two weeks prior in the company of legendary Catskill hiker Ralph Ryndak. Now as Kal and I descended from the summit, we stopped for a moment on "Ralph's Ramp," where I filtered some water from a seep running down the cliff. A few minutes later we found ourselves standing beneath the canister on Balsam Cap, the excellent social trail having wafted us to the top in seemingly no time at all.

Now we faced the single most critical point in our journey, for there is no social trail from Balsam Cap to Rocky (or if there is, I've never found it). To start with, we would first need to turn from south to west, otherwise we'd plunge into the depths of Peekamoose Valley on one side, or the Neversink Valley on the other. Now that it was a little later in the morning, the sun ought to be in the southeast, or so I judged, and turned until the shadow of my head was to the right and slightly behind me,

and then we headed off.

We dropped down a steep slope, under thick canopy, totally blind to our surroundings. The slope leveled out for a little while, then it began to drop again. Finally, through a gap in the canopy just a few leaves wide, a glimpse of a fir-clad ridge — that had to be Rocky! And then it was gone. We kept pushing forward through hobble-bush and birch and beech until we reached the base of a band of cliffs.

Going uphill is a simpler exercise while navigating in the mountains, because if you keep climbing, sooner or later you must reach a top. After scrambling up a few more ledges and back into fir-spruce forest, we spotted the bright orange canister on Rocky's summit.

Six down, three to go. From Rocky to Lone would be the last real bushwhack, I commented to Kal, because there's a very good social trail from Lone to Table, after which we'd be on the trails again. "So let's stay focused," I said, "and not screw up!"

We pushed off down Rocky's backside, still orienting west, the sun still hanging in the sky on our left, our shadows still on the right, although I cautioned Kal that the sun moves rapidly overhead at noon.

We fought our way through dense stands of fir and spruce. I hadn't been through here in at least two years, and now the forest seemed unfamiliar. I began to feel uncomfortable. Kal was lagging behind, the effects of his sleepless night catching up, but he thought we were a little below the ridge crest, so I edged uphill — when suddenly through a break in the forest, there was Lone Mountain, looming above us and to the front.



What a relief to spot Lone Mountain, from the shoulder of Rocky

It was a steep climb up Lone, but once on top, our navigational challenges were over — or at least they should have been. We marched off along the social trail to Table, which is well-used and easy to follow — and somehow lost it. I'd spotted an easy way down through a gap in the rocks, figured the trail went that way, but it must not have, as no further signs were evident. However, the northern corner of Table mountain was visible in the distance. So, we decided to plunge straight down the mountain in that direction. Bad call!

Now the forest thickened, and Table disappeared. I climbed a few feet up into a twisted birch tree but couldn't see a thing — although open views to the right meant that Table was hiding somewhere else. We must have gone too far right, and now we tried to contour back left, but the terrain was steeply slanted, as if the Neversink Valley were determined to suck us down into the depths.

From behind me, Kal kept insisting: "Push further left!"

I was growing exasperated, for what was supposed to be easy had turned into a problem.

Then Kal spotted light through the trees above us and suggested we head uphill.

"What, climb back up Lone Mountain," I protested, "are you out of your mind?"

I was about ready to call it quits and pull the GPS out of my pack.

"But look at the sun," Kal said. It was in front of us. I stood there perplexed (wasn't it supposed to be on our left?) — until finally I realized that it was late enough in the day for it to have swung over into the west.

Then I became even more confused. On the one hand, I was convinced we had gotten turned around. But on the other hand, if we were heading west, then we should be climbing Table. I stood there, perplexed, until looking behind me, there was a big mountain visible through the trees, and it didn't look like Table. To my astonishment, a few steps later we stumbled onto that sneaky social trail, and it took us straight up to the top of Table.

The natural navigation was done, this time for good. From here, five miles along the official blazed trail would take us to Peekamoose and back to Table, and then down into the Neversink Valley and to our cars.



View from Peekamoose: approximate route from Friday (upper left) to Balsam Cap (center) to Rocky (lower left)

You'd think this would be the easy part, but the trail down Table was steep and full of rocks, and by this point, soles, ankles, knees were getting tired. To keep from poking feet and jarring joints, each step required total concentration and perfect balance. We marched down the hill in silence. It took a long time to reach the cars.

At 7 p.m., 24 hours after we'd first started, we arrived back at the Denning parking area, congratulated ourselves for the successful completion of the Diogenes Challenge, and said goodbye. I don't know how Kal spent Sunday, but I relaxed, put my feet up, and enjoyed a beautiful day at home.

* * *

You may be wondering, what exactly was the point of the Diogenes Challenge?

We all rely on technology to such a large extent in modern life, and generally it does the job — but the risk is that we become dependent on this stuff and lose some of our natural strengths and capabilities.

- Going barefoot teaches balance, agility, a light step, and patience
- Going without food teaches the body to burn fat efficiently, helping to break dependence on sugary snacks which may well be the biggest health threat in modern life
- Navigating naturally teaches you to understand the lay of the land and pay attention

You are welcome to design your own version of the Diogenes Challenge, which doesn't have to be in exactly the same format as what Kal and I did. If you do so, at a minimum, the experience should help clarify for you both the benefits and costs of various types of gear.

Maybe you'll, feel the thrill of self-reliance, which comes from discovering you can get by with less. And maybe, just possibly, you'll find that moving naturally, the way our distant ancestors did, is actually a lot of fun...

Good luck!

Author's note: this is a version of a trip report originally published on Ken Posner's blog, www.thelongbrownpath.com, and specially revised for *The Canister*. Before attempting anything similar to the Diogenes Challenge, please recognize that barefoot hiking, intermittent fasting, and natural navigation are not necessarily suitable for beginners without adequate training. Please make sure you have a thorough safety plan for every hike including navigational gear and other emergency supplies.

Kenneth Posner is a lifetime Catskill 3500 Club member, board member and volunteer with the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference, and race director for the SRT Run. He has completed the Catskills Grid and the ADK 46 and has set fastest-known time records thru-running the Long Path and the Badwater Double. You can follow him on Twitter @Long_Brown_Path and on his blog at www.thelongbrownpath.com



Kaaterskill High Point and Roundtop form Sunset Rock. Photo by Matty Lonergan

**An Ode to Rocky Mountain,
Upon Learning That Its Elevation May Only Be 3487 ft**

By #283

Oh, Rocky, my Rocky
What have they done to you?

You were Catskill Royalty,
Proudly raising your head to be included in the lofty ranks of the highest,
Held in awe as the “most inaccessible” of the group,
Respected for your dense mantle of balsams and terrifying ledges,
You were a prize to be relished and boasted of.

Now it is said that earlier assessments of your stature were wrong,
That you do not qualify,
That your name should not be included in the list of 3500 Peaks.

Are you to be stricken from the list?
Are you now to be ranked with the likes of Little Pisgah and Red Hill?
Is “The Six” to become “The Five”?
“The Nine,” “The Eight”?

NEVER!

You will always remain in our hearts as one of the most high,
As one of the few,
As a challenge worthy of our efforts,
As a hard-won prize to be cherished.
We shall insist that the newcomer include you in their ascents
As they “aspire.”
We shall continue to include you in our tours of The Six and The Nine.
You will always be *in album*, Rocky!

Rocky Forever!!

Editor's note: The editor stumbled upon the poem (hidden inside the Rocky canister) back in September 2019 (while hiking "The Six"). The poem is reprinted with the permission of the author. It's hard to believe that it's been two years already since we [broke the news](#) concerning the new elevation for Rocky.



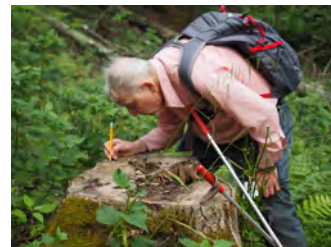
Bearpen viewpoint. Photo by Siu Samantha Yuen #2894 W1311

SPRUCE? FIR? BOTH? NEITHER? WHY?

Text by: Mike Kudish #147

Most 3500 Club members have observed that some Catskills summits bear red spruce, some balsam fir, some both, and some neither. This applies as well to summits below 3500 feet and even to middle slopes and some valley bottoms. But why?

This question – why? – first nagged at me between 1965 and 1968 when I began to explore the Catskills as an informal, recreational hiker. I already knew that Adirondack summit forests were PREDICTABLE above 3500 feet: spruce-fir-paper birch-mountain ash. I learned a little later that summits in northern New England and adjacent Canada also were PREDICTABLE; I knew what would be on top before I started climbing (the exceptions are the very highest summits which still have maintained their Arctic-alpine tundra).



But the Catskills were different – and still are – not only regarding the spruce and fir, but also regarding the hardwoods. Catskill summits were UNPREDICTABLE! Some bear sugar maple, some not. Some bear northern red oak, some not. Again why?

I soon ruled out elevation and climate. Each tree species can grow well over a wide range of elevations and climates. Spruce and fir NEED high elevations to grow? Nonsense! They grow better at lower elevations where growing season is longer and soils are better. Look at the spruce-fir populations in the far northwestern Catskills – in the Towns of Harpersfield, Jefferson, and Summit at elevations of about 2000 feet. Look at the headwater valleys of the Schoharie and its main tributaries – Spruceton on the West Kill, Elka Park on the main stream, Tannersville on Gooseberry Creek, East Jewett on the East Kill, and Maplecrest on the Batavia Kill. Look at Sullivan County's northern Towns of Rockland and Neversink. All these sites are between 1500 and 2300 feet.

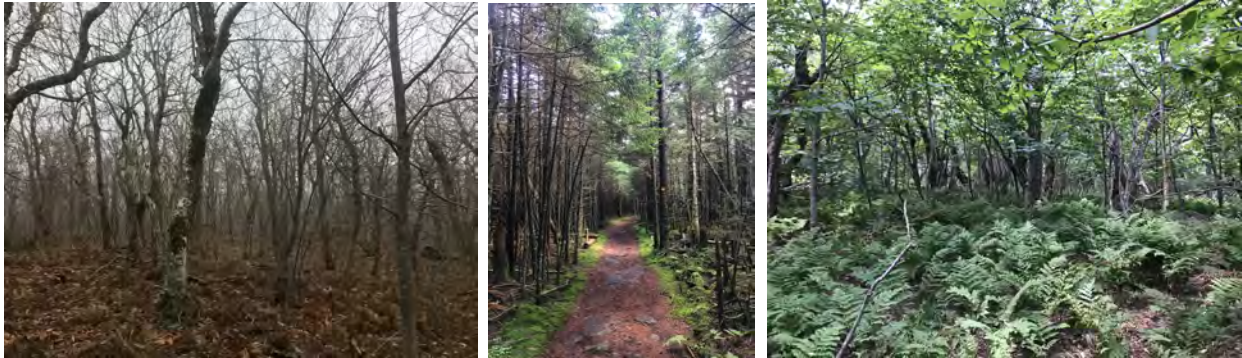
I had to map precisely which summits had which type of forest. This mapping resulted in a Ph.D. thesis, “Vegetational History of the Catskill High Peaks”, completed at the New York State College of Environmental Science and Forestry in 1971. This thesis was not the end of a study, but the beginning of a life-long quest.

It wasn't until 1995, when I began an ongoing bog study (over 120 wetlands now) looking for tree and plant parts preserved in peat as fossils, that I learned my first clues. Fragments of spruce, fir, hemlock, and hardwoods — leaves, needles, wood, bark,

roots, seeds, and cones — could be identified and could be radiocarbon dated (Beta Analytic of Miami, Florida has been a great partner). Not only did I learn WHAT was growing in and around a bog, but also WHEN.

THE SPRUCE-FIR POSTGLACIAL MIGRATION ROUTES: EASTERN VS. WESTERN AND THE GAP IN BETWEEN

Did you ever wonder why the western summits have no spruce and fir? Graham's summit is the highest, although there are a few fir groves on its shoulders. But also the summits of Mill Brook Ridge, Dry Brook Ridge, the Beaverkill Range, the Huntersfield Range, Halcott, Vly, along the Moresville Range all the way from Bearpen to Utsayantha, and Delaware County's Pisgah and Plattekill — all above 3200 feet — have no spruce and fir.



From L-R: Summits of Halcott, Hunter, Vly

I had thought, from my thesis year (1971) through 1995 (when the bog study started), that somehow the western peaks had LOST their spruce and fir. Not true. Was I in error! The western peaks never had spruce in the first place; there were a very few scattered fir here and there but were never dominant as in the eastern peaks.

Both species migrated postglacially, about 14,000 years ago, from the Poconos of what is now Pennsylvania via a Parksville-Fir Brook route and spread northeastward into the eastern Catskills. In addition, red spruce migrated into the Catskills also via the Shawangunk route from what is now New Jersey.

Within the Poconos, the postglacial spruce and fir northward march somehow split up, the larger army turning northeastward into the eastern Catskills. A smaller army headed more north into the Delaware and Schoharie County Towns of Harpersfield, Jefferson, and Summit.

Most of the East Branch Delaware watershed was therefore bypassed by these armies of conifers — except for a very few balsam fir. In other words, the armies went AROUND this watershed for some unknown reason. That's why the western peaks have none. I call this the Delaware Spruce and Fir GAP. To see maps of the hypothesized migration, see the fall 2012-winter 2013 and spring 2013 issues of the *CFA News*, publication of the Catskill Forest Association in Arkville, NY.

WITHIN THE EASTERN HIGH PEAKS

On those eastern High Peaks where there IS spruce and/or fir today, the two conifers cannot be treated the same; they are ecologically quite different in their behavior. The populations do often overlap locally so that they can grow together. We need to wrestle with the reasons for their distributions WITHIN the main migration route: why are they where they are, and why aren't they where they're not?

BALSAM FIR

Why does balsam fir enter often as we approach the summit? The reasons are its ability to grow on poor sites and its lack of longevity. Fir is as shade-tolerant as its competitors — sugar maple, beech, hemlock, and red spruce — but it is old when people are old — about 100 years. Its competitors can live two to three times that long. Therefore, if a site is good enough to support the hardwood-hemlock-spruce competition, fir is eventually outcompeted and eliminated. I wrote an article on this process on Slide Mountain for *Kaatskill Life* magazine (winter 2015 and summer 2016 issues). The process has been going on for almost 14,000 years; we see today one stage in the continuing saga. Simply put, fir persists where the other species permit it — on those sites with the worst growing conditions: shallow and stony soils, excessive dehydrating and limb-breaking winds, and short growing season. Fir does not thrive on the summits over 3500 feet, but it can tolerate the harsh conditions. The other species (except occasionally red spruce and beech) cannot.



From L-R: Balsam fir has very unique cones - the point up and in June and July have a blue-purple color; On the thin soil on the saddle between Caudal and Camel's Hump, both balsam fir and lowbush blueberry can thrive where other species cannot; This solitary balsam fir towers over the mountain ash on the sunny high-point of Caudal; A sprig of Balsam Fir foliage sprouting from the bark of a mature tree.

In the valleys, fir is most abundant around wetlands, where two of its competitors, sugar maple and beech, cannot grow.

One can demonstrate the reasons for the distribution of fir very clearly, for example, on Slide Mountain. On its western slopes, especially along the Curtis-Ormsbee and Dutcher's Steps Trails, fir occurs in groves. Look underneath these groves: bedrock is very close to the surface – about 12 to 18 inches down. Outside the groves, the forest is dominated by beech, yellow and paper birches, red maple, and black cherry where the bedrock is deeper down – about two to three feet - and soils are better. The hardwoods have never been able to colonize the sites with shallow soils, leaving the fir to grow in blissful peace without competition for over 13,000 years. This also explains the fir caps on Balsam Lake, Doubletop, Eagle, Table, West Kill, North Dome, the Blackheads, and other eastern peaks.



From L-R: Balsam firs growing on the thin soil above a piece of exposed bedrock. Like yellow birch, their roots have no trouble reaching out over rock to find patches of soil; Fir-capped summit of Balsam Lake; On the thin soil on the saddle between Caudal and Camel's Hump, both balsam fir and lowbush blueberry can thrive where other species cannot.

RED SPRUCE

Along its eastern postglacial migration route, like fir, red spruce is also present locally. It often forms patches or groves large and small. It is long-lived and can better compete with sugar maple, beech, and hemlock, so can grow outside of the wetlands in the valleys. It can also grow commonly on the lower slopes in the headwaters of the Schoharie and its major tributaries. Why it is absent where it is absent has not been fully worked out; much might have to do with chance distribution of seed.



From L-R: A young red spruce along the Escarpment Trail, at around 3200 feet; Two mature red spruce trees growing at the edge of the Escarpment at around 3200 feet; sharp needles of red spruce; Bark on a mature red spruce.

SUGAR MAPLE

Not only do red spruce and balsam fir have complex distributions in the Catskills, but so do certain hardwoods. These species also occur on some sites but not on others. Sugar maple is a fine example. It occurs on a few summits up to 3000 feet and seldom to 3500 feet; where it is this high up, it is more commonly so in the western Catskills. It rarely dominates the forest at

high elevations; instead it is scattered among the dominant species: beech, yellow birch, red maple, and black cherry. Examples are Ashland Pinnacle, Evergreen, Sherrill, Windham High Peak, and Dry Brook Ridge.

The reason is well known. Sugar maple needs lots of water – flowing water, not stagnant, poorly-oxygenated water in wetlands. Therefore, those summits with deeper-to-bedrock, less stony soils with greater water-holding capacity can support it.



From L-R: A cluster of leaves growing out of an old sugar maple around 2600 feet (on the way up Caudal); an old sugar maple around 2200 feet (west base of Halcott); sugar maples thrive on Catskill slopes with flowing, oxygenated water - the same conditions favored by stinging nettles!

One way to demonstrate the requirement for great quantities of flowing water is to examine the highest elevation sugar maple groves. On page 32 of *The Catskill Forest: A History* (Purple Mountain Press, 2000, reprinted 2015) is a list of eleven of them. All these groves are in seeps and springs, with abundant flowing water for at least part of the year. They occur between 3000 and 3800 feet on benches and terraces on the mountainside. The highest is on Hunter Mountain at 3820 feet.

NORTHERN RED OAK

The distribution of this species is easy to explain, too (see the many articles on oak in the *CFA News* and in *Catskill Tri-County Historical Views*). Oak follows areas that have been repeatedly burned by Native Americans for at least 7,000 to 6,000 years. Examples are South Mountain (Kaaterskill Region), Ashokan High Point, Overlook, Plattekill (Greene County), Tremper, Tobias, Ticeteneyck, Pleasant, Romer, and Mombaccus. Oaks are common also along the Escarpment northward to about North Mountain.



From L-R: Triple trunk northern red oak along the Phoenicia East Branch Trail at approximately 2000 feet; A cluster of leaves and a bark of a mature northern red oak; Foliage of a mature northern red oak.

Some of the peaks continued to be burned over regularly by European settlers until approximately the year 1909 when fire towers started growing on the summits in full force. Even clearing for farmland by European settlers induced the continuation and spread of oaks in places that had not regularly burned.

CONCLUSION

The reasons for the distribution of each tree species are different for each species. To make some sense of these puzzling distributions, one needs to obtain some insight into the unique personalities of each individual tree species, and how they interact with each other, i.e. tree behavior. Also, it is necessary to obtain some degree of familiarity with how people have affected the forest on a very, very local level, peak-by-peak and slope-by-slope, for over 10,000 years.

Michael Kudish's Ph.D. thesis was on the vegetational history of the Catskill High Peaks (SUNY E.S.F. 1971). This thesis initiated a life-long study on the forests from the end of the Ice Age to the present. He became member #147 on Panther Mountain in March of 1973, and around that time wrote several articles for *The Catskill Canister*. Professor Mike taught in the Forestry Division of Paul Smith's College in the Adirondacks for 34 years, retiring in 2005, and moved to the Catskills to

continue studying the forest full time.

Photo credits: Mike's photo in the field by Alan Via #429 W174; Summit photos by Yana Levchinsky-Grimmond #2814 W1222; Balsam fir photos by Jake Haisley #2488 W1065 (apart from the cone phone (Yana Levchinsky-Grimmond) and the summit photo (David Turan)); Red spruce photos by Yana Levchinsky-Grimmond; Sugar maple photos are by Jake Haisley (left and right) and by Yana Levchinsky-Grimmond (middle); Northern red oak photos are by David Turan (middle and right) and by Yana Levchinsky-Grimmond (left).



Tunis Pond. Photo by Steve Aaron #3199

A Friend of the Mountains is a Friend of Mine

Text and photos by: Dan Kriesberg

It is hard to say when mountains are born, but their story must start somewhere.

380 million years ago

Twenty-five thousand-foot sky-scraping Arcadian mountains were flattened by erosion's never-ending power and became the Catskills Delta. When massive continental plates collided, the Catskills Delta did not buckle, bend or fold; it rose as one and formed a plateau about 7,500 feet high.

50 million years ago

Water, wind, ice, and time did their work. Weather-resistant rocks became the mountains. Softer rocks flowed to the Atlantic. Their absence became the valleys and sharp sided coves that split the plateau into mountains. The mountains were formed by what was taken away.

16,000 years ago

Ice sheets miles thick crept south and covered the Catskills. Except for Slide Mountain, all else was buried. Over the years, cycles of advances and retreats like slow-moving tides shaped the mountains into what stands today. When the last glacier retreated, people advanced.

10,000 years ago

For thousands of years, The Minisink and Delaware tribes lived on the eastern side of the Catskills, and the Mohawk lived on the northern and western sides. The interior of the Catskills was relatively uninhabited and was primarily used for hunting expeditions. Henry Hudson and his crew were the first Europeans to sail up the river and see the Catskills. Dutch settlers followed, and then the English took over. Few people ventured into the mountains. Fear of the wilderness kept the mountains wild.



200 years ago

Eventually, economics overcame fear. Tannins were required for the leather industry, and the hemlock's high tannin content made it a valuable resource. An estimated 70 million trees were cut down for their bark. By the 1880s most of the hemlocks were gone. Much of the other trees and wildlife were gone too.

120 years ago

On September 15, 1894, the New York State constitution was amended to include these words "The lands of the State, now owned or hereafter acquired, constituting the forest preserve as now fixed by law, shall be forever kept as wild forest lands. They shall not be leased, sold or exchanged, or be taken by any corporation, public or private, nor shall the timber there be sold, removed or destroyed." These are the words of public officials that were thinking about the future. The Catskills began their recovery.

30 years ago



After my move to Long Island, I soon discovered that the Catskills were going to be a place to satisfy my hunger for wildlands. Trips to the Burroughs Range and Neversink began my explorations. The following year, my friend, Steve (#2596), moved back to New York and we met up for our first trip in a long time. The next year our friend, John (#2377 W1183), joined us and the first weekend of December became an annual backpacking trip. It soon expanded to other weekends.

Born from experience, the planning is easy. It used to take a phone call, but now a couple of emails and the route is decided. We each bring our own breakfast, lunch, and treats. It is hot dogs for the first dinner and pasta for the second. We meet at a trailhead early on a Saturday, quickly get organized and throw on the packs. My body works into a rhythm despite the winter weight. A typical trip brings us to a lean-to by late morning, which allows us to drop the packs off and climb summits with less weight.

The short days and long nights don't give us much time, so we tend to get back to the lean-to with the last bits of light and just enough time to gather firewood. Catskills wood is slow to light, reluctant to give us its heat, but in the end, with careful placement of twigs and sticks, the fire burns on its own. We are grateful to the trees for sharing some of their carbon for our campfire.

After dinner, it's time for a bit of scotch. The conversation flows from job talk to trading stories about our boys and, lately, aches and pains. We show off our new gear and tell the same jokes. As the drinks go down, the talk turns to the retelling high school folklore and making realistic and unrealistic backpacking plans for the future. We have been hanging out for a long time trying to unravel life's mysteries. All the talk and even more of life's experiences have not led to much progress, but we continue. The conversation is easy, and the silence holds no pressure. The night passes into dawn.

Steve and John move slow in the mornings, they make oatmeal and coffee, fuss with their gear. I munch on brown sugar cinnamon Pop-Tarts and happily pass the time sitting in my sleeping bag, watching the view framed by the lean-to opening. When they are ready, we go off to climb a Catskill peak or two.



In the winter, these are bare bone mountains with ridges bright through the leafless branches. Once hidden cliffs and rocks come into view making it easier to understand the work of time and erosion. The human story is visible as well in the scattered fields down the valleys and old logging roads that are hiking trails. A second-growth forest tells a story of hope and is comforting to walk in. As we climb, tracks translate our elevation by the stories they tell. We hike past the deer tracks into the land of the snowshoe hare and bobcat. This past trip, we climbed Plateau Mountain. We walked the summit in the quiet hush found only in winter's balsam forest. There was snow enough for all the beauty of winter camping but not enough struggle with

snowshoes.

Back at the lean-to, the first night's rituals are repeated. A barred owl called from the edge of our hearing. The next day's agenda was pretty much the same, and that is the way we love it. We returned to the trailhead at dusk and said our goodbyes. Even though I have the longest drive, I procrastinated, to be in the woods even a little longer.

These experiences have ground our friendship into this place. Our time scale is not measured in millions, thousands or hundreds but we are in our third decade of Catskills trips. Without the Catskills, our friendship would not be what it is now, and we would not be who we are. People ask, why would you go camping in the winter? It is both hard to explain and simple: friendship in the presence of wonder. The Catskills are a place to share the slowness of time well spent. It is a place to share the glint of light in snowdrift off a hemlock and moon shadows through a web of tree branches. It is a place to share the challenges of cliff faces and zero degree nights. Steve and John do understand; for these mountains are our habitat for continued friendship.

References:

- 1) Burroughs, John *In the Catskills*, NY: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1910
- 2) Henry, Edward G, *Catskills Trails, A Ranger's Guide to the High Peaks Book One, The Northern Catskills*, Hensonville, NY: Black Dome Press, 2000

Dan Kriesberg is the author of *A Sense of Place, Teaching Children about the Environment with Picture Books* and *Think Green, Books and Activities for Kids*, as well as over 100 articles on environmental education and essays about his personal experiences in the outdoors. He lives on Long Island with his wife, Karen. Whenever possible he spends his time in wild places backpacking and hiking. You can view his work at **Witness to the Wild** <https://www.dankriesberg.com/>



Vly Pond. Photo by Steve Aaron #3199

This Fall, Take the Ones Less Traveled

Text and Photos by: Chris Adams #2710

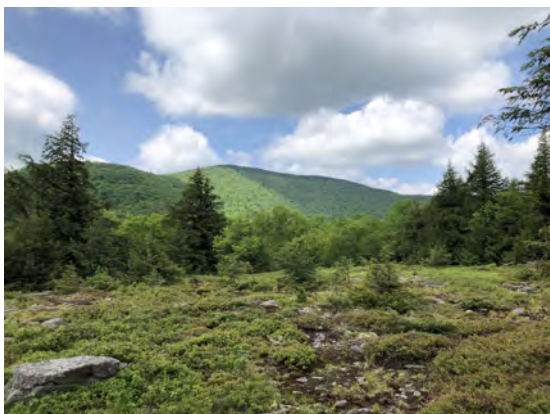
When my wife asks me why I don't want to learn how to downhill ski, besides not wanting to put my 40-something knees through the process, I always have the same response: I don't purposefully go on mountains where people congregate. This spring and summer, with COVID-19-related lockdowns and restrictions encouraging more people than ever to recreate outdoors, all with social distancing being a constant thought, I decided to make that response my hiking theme. Don't go on mountains where people congregate.



Guidance for hike planning, especially in these times where green spaces nationwide are seeing record numbers of visitors, is to always have a backup plan—and even a backup plan for your backup plan—in case your planned trailhead is full. However, the right planning will cut down on the times you have to utilize those backup strategies. All of the other ways people typically spend their recreational time—restaurants, malls, gyms, bars, sporting events, concerts, street fairs, museums, festivals, domestic travel, international travel, and the list goes on—are highly unlikely to re-open in any large-scale manner by fall. With the likelihood of a complete easing of lockdown measures by the time the leaves start putting on

their annual autumn show being nil, these strategies will serve hikers looking to get out into the woods while avoiding the crowds this fall.

During normal times, my primary means of socially distancing my hikes is boots on the ground by 6 a.m. I typically wouldn't see another hiker until the final mile before returning to the trailhead. This year, that wasn't enough to guarantee an escape from the crowds. Many of the popular trailheads that access the 3500-foot-plus peaks were filling to overflow capacity at record speed—even on weekdays. So I spent some time with my maps figuring out where I needed to go to find the solitude I was seeking.



Looking at Panther



Following an off-trail stream

While the mountains above 3,500 feet will always have their lure to me, these same mountains were clearly an attraction for those looking to get outdoors. I mean, I can't blame anyone for wanting to take in the special beauty of those mountains. Even I couldn't resist the call of lungs full of balsam fir-rich air a few times during the season, but those trips were carefully orchestrated in terms of weekday, time, forecast, and approach.

Otherwise, my adventures were found in the relatively unoccupied lower reaches of the Catskills. Doing so often takes more pre-hike preparation than visiting well-traveled trailheads and trails that have easily available intel online. The starting point for preparing for these hikes is to bust out your maps. Having the skills to look at a topographical map and envision the lay of the land is important because many hikes of this type follow woods roads and streams or are off-trail in open woods. There is an array of hiking navigation apps available—Avenza and Gaia being the most useful—that can help you navigate. However, a navigation app isn't a replacement for having a physical map, compass, and navigation skills—phones die, screens freeze, apps crash, sometimes your phone doesn't connect well with the GPS satellites, etc. If you're unsure of your navigation skills, there is a variety of resources available to help build your skills. Online, <http://www.compassdude.com> is a great resource that lays out the basics of navigation in a systematic and straightforward manner. I like to regularly test myself by navigating solely with map and compass and occasionally trying to pinpoint my location and comparing it to my location on my navigation app. Also, be sure to utilize any in-person guidance you can get. Hiking with a more experienced navigator is a great way to build navigation skills safely. The Catskill 3500 Club has regularly scheduled hikes led by experienced hike leaders who would be happy to help you work on your navigation skills.

This spring and summer, even my handful of often-quiet spots were often crowded. So, I dug deeper. I used a couple of strategies to find peace, quiet, and thorough social distancing on my hikes. While driving around the Catskills, you will come across small, rectangular signs that simply say "Forest Preserve Parking" with an arrow pointing the way. Sometimes these signs lead to a trailhead and sometimes they just offer parking and a jump-off point for exploring the woods. Another strategy is to pull out your New York-New Jersey Trail Conference *Catskill Trails* map set and look for the grey circled P symbol. While the black P symbol denotes a parking lot, the grey P indicates roadside parking, which is typically used less frequently.



Forest preserve parking sign



Sheridan Mt. cairn



Remote fern glade

The next step with either strategy is to study maps of the area near these less-used parking areas. Is there a mountaintop nearby? Is there an approach from the parking area to that mountaintop? There's your hike for the day. Is there a stream or two that pass nearby? If so, following the stream, also known as bluelining, is a great way to explore the woods while having a reliable navigational landmark to follow. In either case, ensure that your route is on state land.

Before using these strategies to get out into the woods this fall, a word of caution. Research whether hunting is in season where you'll be hiking. If so, a little caution and respect goes a long way. It should be a given that if you are hiking during any hunting season that you should be adorned in high-visibility materials. Also, especially during hunting season, if there are cars already parked in that low-key parking lot or at the roadside spot when you are heading out to hike, consider an alternate location.



Wear orange in hunting season

During normal years, the summer is the busiest time for trails and trailheads in the Catskills. These are not normal times, so I would expect a very busy fall hiking season. That doesn't mean that hikers will be forced to navigate the hordes of leaf peepers. Utilizing a couple of strategies and then doing pre-hike preparation can help you find peace and quiet in these hills. It is possible to get out there and enjoy all of the Catskills' fall splendor while avoiding the record crowds that these mountains have attracted since lockdown restrictions began in March.



Open field just before "baby Cap" summit (southern sub-summit of Balsam Cap). Photo by Jim Hopson #1813 W782

A Perfect Time in Schoharie County...for The Scary 19

Text by: Jim Hopson #1813 W782

When last we heard from Jason (Jay) Pelton, he had just guided his 4-year-old daughter, Luna, to become the youngest-ever finisher of the Catskill High Peaks. Since then he and Luna have been working on her All Trails Challenge (Jay is finisher #37), after taking a break to stay local during the early days of the pandemic.



So what does he do in his spare time?

He comes up with a new hiking challenge, that's what!

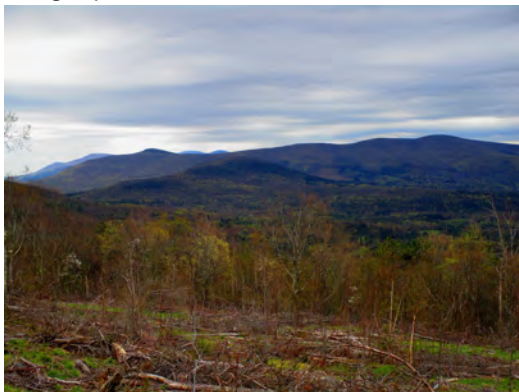
Jay and his wife Laura have lived with their three daughters in the northern tier of the Catskills near Middleburgh for the past seven years and when he hasn't been hiking the 3500 foot elevations or the Catskills Hundred Highest (yes, he's finished that too), he'd be out exploring the striking hills around his Schoharie County home...and it was from this picturesque setting that he got the inspiration for his challenge..."The Scary 19."

Name	Elevation	Latitude	Longitude	2 nd Location	2 nd Location	Comments
Bald Mountain	2730	42.4236	-74.5937			
High Knob	2664	42.4283	-74.3127			
Hubbard Hill	2625	42.4491	-74.3437			
Leonard Hill	2618	42.4509	-74.3528			
Steenburg Mountain	2570	42.3945	-74.2749			
Lutheranville High Point	2470	42.6058	-74.6135			
North East Fulton Hill	2346	42.5892	-74.5088			
Bates High Point	2330	42.5203	-74.2871			
Petersburg Mountain	2323	42.6329	-74.4489			
Rossman Hill NW bump	2205	42.5441	-74.5036			
Patria High Point	2169	42.6059	-74.4149			
Armlin Hill	2159	42.5494	-74.3524	42.5556	-74.3516	(Both Points Mandatory)
Dutton Ridge	2159	42.5298	-74.2759	42.5251	-74.2708	(Both Points Required)
Cotton Hill	2113	42.6301	-74.2682			
Gates Hill	2106	42.5244	-74.347			
Scott Patent	2044	42.4552	-74.2548			
Keyserkill High Point	2024	42.4825	-74.3773			
Blenheim Mountain	2005	42.4551	-74.4624			
Stone Store	1985	42.5086	-74.3126			



Don't be intimidated by the title. "Scary" is more a derivative of the Schoharie name rather than a description of the challenge's parts. Pronunciation tends to be slurred a bit by the natives to a "skaharry", "skarry", or, with a little imagination..."Scary." Thus, when Jay came up with 19 public access, off trail high points in the county, "The Scary 19" was born.

The gorgeous terrain of Schoharie County tends to be ignored by large sections of the hiking community who often drive through this region bound for the higher elevations to the south. Being the grizzled old bushwhacker that this correspondent is, I can personally vouch for the reasoning behind Jason's enthusiasm, and was honored to be the Challenge's first finisher. I was most taken by the English countryside setting of 2159-foot Armlin Hill (including walking through a farm-yard gate), the jigsaw puzzle approach to 2024-foot Keyserkill High Point and 2106-foot Gates Hill via a maze of interlocking state land parcels, and the glorious seclusion of 2169-foot Patria High Point from the roller-coaster ups and downs of The Long Path. From the grand vistas of 2664-foot High Knob to the secluded quiet ponds surrounding 2346-foot Fulton Hill, this list offers a wide variety of hiking experiences.



View of High Knob clear cut slopes (WHP, Blackheads, Pisgah, Richmond)



Remote Pond (unnamed) in Scott Patent State Forest

While the Scary 19 may not be frightening, this challenge should be undertaken with all due respect to its off-trail components. Map, compass, and GPS skills are integral to the bushwhack approaches, but because these hills are located very near roads in the small acreage of state forests, an emergency exit is always available for those who run into trouble...and trouble always IS a possibility. For example, 2205-foot Rossman Hill's highest point and 2005-foot Blenheim Mountain have extremely thick sections of conifer and brush. There is a steep brook crossing on the approach to 2204-foot Scott Patent, 2470-foot

Lutheranville High Point must be navigated through a closely spaced pine plantation summit, and 2570-foot Steenburgh Mountain is a short but challenging climb. To those who favor trailed hiking with the guaranteed knock out views (and subsequent crowds) this list may not be to your liking. Counter the challenge's more laborious summits, however, with lovely views from the Scary 19's highest peak, 2730-foot Bald Mountain, or the rock walls near the summit of 2330-foot Bates High Point, and the more difficult undertakings will be more than compensated for with the rewards. It IS, after all, a challenge!



View from Keyserkill State Forest to Hubbard and Leonard Hills



Jay crossing Keyserkill Creek between Keyserkill High Point and Gates Hill

The most appealing aspect of hiking this list, to me, is the seclusion one finds at these varied locations. At a time when social distancing is a reality we all must live with, this challenge takes us off the beaten path, which is exactly why Jay came up with the idea...to stay out of the popular high peaks and stay local.

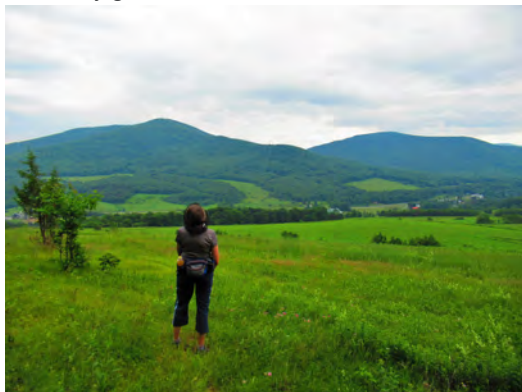


From Dutton Ridge looking at Stone Store HP, Hubbard and Leonard Hills

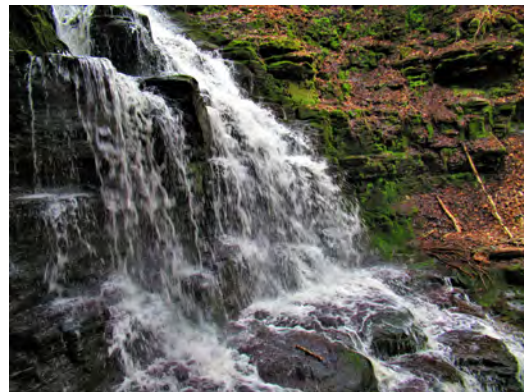


"English Countryside Setting" Armlin Hill

This journey will take you to a part of the Catskills that get short shrift. The sandstone ledges, the rolling hills, the secluded cloves, and the myriad of rock walls that we expect in the Cats are all here in Schoharie County...just at a little lower elevation. These are 19 destinations of 2000 feet or above (Stone Store High Point may be just under) that are all open to the public but are off trail. Jay Pelton undertook considerable research and exploration in compiling the Scary 19 Challenge. I, for one, am extremely grateful he has done so!



Caryl Hopson on Bald Mountain looking at Utsyantha and Churchil Mts



Waterfalls on Scott Patent

All photos are by Jim Hopson, except for the image of the patch (courtesy of Jay Pelton) and Jim's photo with the certificate (taken by Jay).

Join "Scary 19" [Facebook group](#) to help you with your quest, where you can ask questions, plan trips and connect with the fellow challengers!

IN MEMORIAM

Geoffrey Hoderath, #657 W239, who was a longtime member and served as Club President from 2005-2007, suddenly passed away at the too young age of 62. We gathered some memories from past and present board members who knew him to celebrate his memory. His love for these mountains was deep—he even proposed to his wife Wendy at a viewpoint on Overlook Mountain. He will be missed.



“When one got to know Geoff two things were immediately obvious: his love for our Catskills and his devotion to his fraternal order, the Masons, which required train rides to New York City for meetings. His enthusiasm for both knew no bounds! Geoff was a much appreciated First Vice-President during my term of office. His legal mind sorted things out rapidly and spit out good ideas. He once pitched in and on a day’s notice testified at a hearing in regard to the Belleayre development. He took my prepared remarks and, no surprise, improved on them. He was funny, yet so proper. His passion for our Catskills will be sorely missed.”

—Wanda Davenport, Club President (2003-2005)

“Geoff had a wicked sense of humor of the subtle variety that I really enjoyed. I always felt he was a true gentleman, perhaps because he dressed so formally for the Club dinners. I always felt he had a razor-sharp mind. It is sad for the world to be deprived of him.”

—Jean Taylor, Club President (2011-2013)

“Geoff and I loved to discuss public policy. My most vivid memory is one Winter Weekend at Hilltop Acres. Being night owls, we’d start talking after everyone had gone to bed. One bedroom was right off the living room. Geoff’s melodious voice carried some and I’d get drawn in by his astute observations and forget to speak in low tones; no doubt we guffawed a bit. At long last a voice came from the bedroom: ‘Be QUIET! Come to bed!’ It was his dear wife, Wendy.”

—Carol White, Club Conservation Chair

“I loved the way he twisted words, referring to Albany as Albania. Not considering himself able to digest the finances of the club, he referred to himself as “barely numerate.” He was indeed one of a kind! One of the things the Membership Chairman dreads is having a missing or misspelled certificate at the annual dinner. Not to worry if Geoff were there; he would take out his fountain pen, with just the right nib, and handwrite a perfect certificate in Old English font. During the annual elections, he would expedite matters by standing and moving “that the secretary cast one ballot in favor of the slate of nominees.”

—David White, Club Membership Chair

John (Fish) MacPherson, #27 W3 recently passed away at the age of 90. John rediscovered his Scottish roots later in life and from then on went by the surname MacPherson. He was the last of the Charter Members of the Catskill 3500 Club who created the Club in 1962. Not only was John active in the Club, but he had a tremendous impact on introducing young people to the Catskills and the outdoors.

We will let the words of Annmarie Spiciarich (#276) speak for John's legacy.

"John was our English teacher at Red Hook High School and started the Red Hook Mountaineers, a mountaineering program, which in most schools would have merely been a club. It was treated as a sport at Red Hook High, with JV and Varsity letters given (I was captain one year). He took many a shy student and built their confidence with trips to the playground of the Catskill Mountain range. I would hazard a guess that many of the lower numbered 3500 Club members are some of the hundreds of students John introduced to the mountains over the years. Indeed, his tutelage started my lifelong love of the mountains. Without John's dedication to introducing young people to the great outdoors, many of us never would have discovered the wonderful playground that is the Catskill Mountain range."



Arthur Zimmerman, #866 W327, a longtime resident of Long Beach, NY, and most recently a resident of The Knolls of Valhalla, NY, passed away on March 13, 2019, at the age of 96. Art served as the Catskill 3500 Club Winter Weekend coordinator for many years.

David White, Club Membership Chair recalls one memorable Winter Weekend, at the Alpine Inn. There was such a blizzard that the turnout was six: Art's good friends Bernard Japy, David and Carol White, Geoff Hoderath, and one aspirant. We had to dig our way out of the motel in the morning, dig into the parking area at the Giant Ledge trailhead, and then dig our cars out after the plows had been by!

Karen Glemming, # 2370 W1019, passed away in July after a long fight with leukemia. Karen was born and spent most of her life in Newburgh, NY, before moving to North Carolina three years ago. Karen was at her happiest when hiking the Catskills, a hobby she took up in the past 10 years. One of her proudest moments was hiking all 347 miles of Catskill trails, and becoming the 29th person to earn the All Trails Challenge patch from the Catskill Mountain Club. She also gained great joy spending time with her pets, including several cats and her dog, Morgan, who always accompanied her on her hikes. The family is planning to hold a celebration of life for Karen next year in New York. If anyone is interested in attending the celebration, please email her son Adam at amg410@yahoo.com.

Norman Clark Gittinger, #633, passed away peacefully at Ellis Hospital on Saturday, March 28, 2020 after a short illness. He was 89 years old.

Clark lived a full life enjoying many outdoor activities. He was an avid hiker. He was an Adirondack 46er and one of the first to climb them all in the winter. He was also a New England 4,000 Footer, a New Hampshire 4,000 Footer, and a Northeast 111er. He was a Charter Member of the Schenectady Chapter of the Adirondack Mountain Club and served as Chairman of the Outings Committee and the Trails Committee during the 1960s. He was also a member of The Appalachian Trail Conservancy, The Appalachian Mountain Club and the Schenectady Wintersports Club.

Edward Gorczynski, #2398, passed away on August 26, 2020, from 9/11-related cancer. Ed was a veteran NYPD detective who was most recently assigned to the Manhattan North Vice Squad, where he worked on human trafficking investigations.

Ed was also an avid outdoorsman. He was the founder of Vertically Inclined Wilderness Guides and was a licensed guide and Catskill 3500 Club hike leader. He started his outdoor career as an adventure-based counselor for at-risk youth in an upstate New York residential facility, where he ran an outdoors program that focused on leadership skills, group dynamics and problem-solving skills.

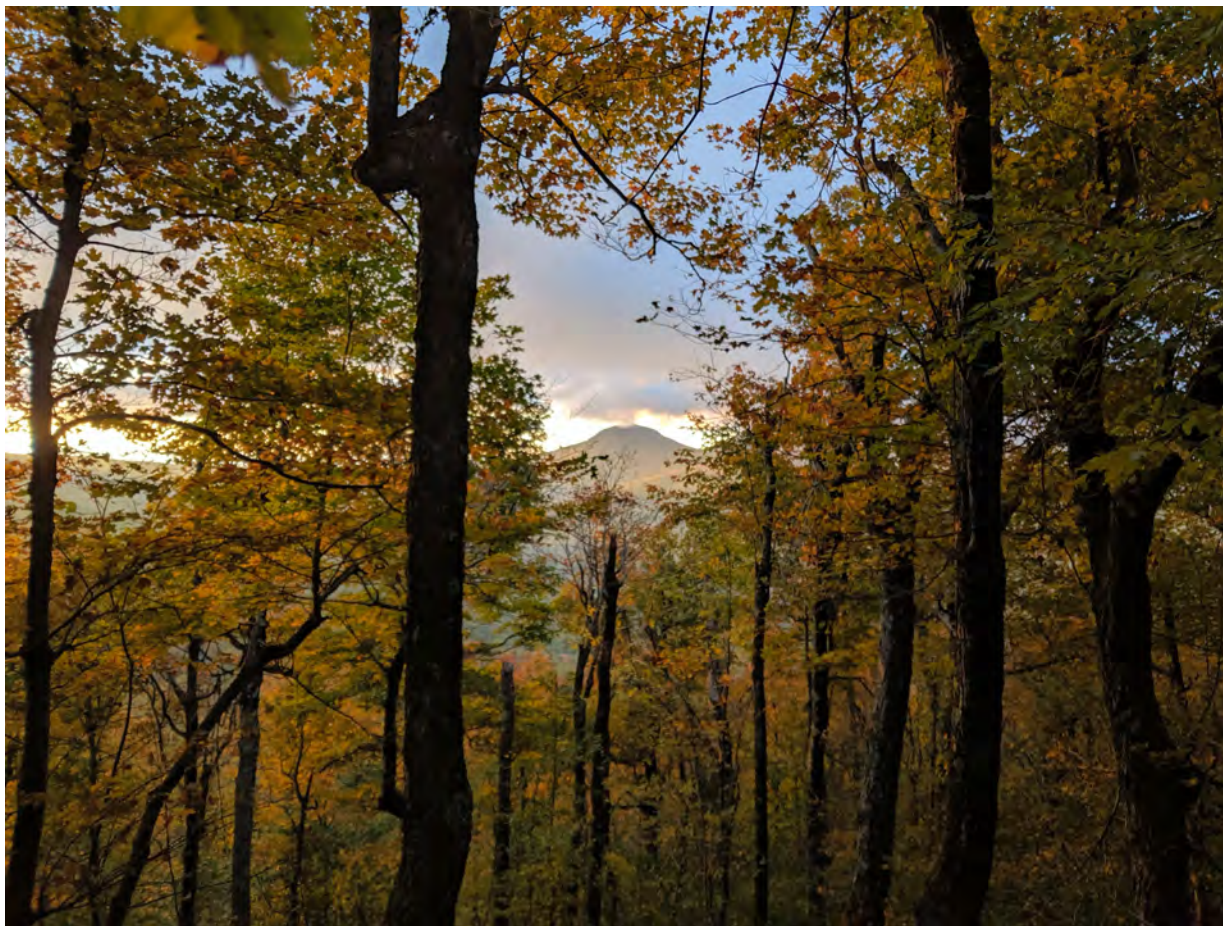


Wendy Porter, #2346 W1046, was a frequent hiking companion of Ed's and she shared a heartfelt tribute:

"Ed Gorczynski was the one who first told me about the 3500 Club and we climbed almost every tall peak together while

working on our memberships. Ed not only was my hiking partner, he was also my teacher and for a long time one of my very best friends. We always had fun on our Catskill hiking adventures and hardly a weekend went by that we weren't bagging tall peaks. Many of my cautionary tales came about from trouble (not always bad!) or from crazy situations that Ed and I managed to get into on the trail. I would not be the guide I am today without the important lessons that Ed taught me. I regret that in recent years we grew apart and that I never told him this in person or had the opportunity to thank him for all that he did for me."

Photos of Geoff are a courtesy of Jeff Glans, Archivist and Prior President (#793 W655); photo of John is a courtesy of Peter Stelman; Ed's photo is a courtesy of Wendy Porter (#2346 W1046, senior guide at Adventure Untamed).



Early morning view of Blackhead from Windham in late September. Photo by Harold Oakhill #283 W1244

Rambles and Brambles [Hike Schedule](#) October - December 2020

Familiarize yourself with the seven [Leave No Trace](#) Principles for all your hikes:

1. Plan Ahead and Prepare;
2. Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces;
3. Dispose of Waste Properly;
4. Leave What You Find;
5. Minimize Campfire Impacts;
6. Respect Wildlife;
7. Be Considerate of Other Visitors

The Catskill 3500 Club's hiking credo includes 3 basic principles:

1. Follow the rules
2. Use your map and compass
3. Know your limitations.

The Club also promotes the adherence to the [hikeSafe](#) hiker responsibility code. [hikeSafe](#) encourages hikers to be prepared:

- with knowledge and gear
- to leave your plans
- to stay together
- to turn back for emergencies
- to share the hiker responsibility code with others.

Assumed Risk: Hiking involves certain inherent risks and persons participating do so at their own risk. In cold weather hike participants should avoid cotton clothing, as it retains dampness and the resulting chill can result in hypothermia, **which can lead to death**. Instead, wear (and have available in your pack) garments of wool or fleece. Silk or polypropylene make the best base layers, as they tend to wick moisture away from the body. Hats, gloves and a headlamp must be part of the standard fall kit. Ice and snow can come early and unexpectedly to these peaks; if there is any doubt about the conditions that may be encountered, each hiker is strongly advised **to bring snowshoes and full crampons to the trailhead**; the leader may advise that these do not have to be taken on the hike, but be aware that while there may be bare ground at the trailhead, there is often very significant ice and snow as the elevation increases, which could result in those improperly prepared being sent back. Anyone not properly equipped may be refused permission to participate, at the leader's absolute discretion. **Fall in the Catskills is not to be treated lightly.**

Rating System: Please be advised that the hikes listed herein would most likely be rated more difficult by clubs who hike in non-mountainous terrains.

Club hikes may be canceled at the hike leader's discretion if dangerous weather conditions exist. When in doubt (heavy rain, high winds, or other serious weather conditions), please contact your hike leader.

Group Size: Please note that the club has reduced group size to conform with the social distancing requirements; a mask may be required for situations when social distancing is not possible. Refer to the current group size guidance as posted on the club's [schedule](#) page.

The hikes listed here and on the [online events calendar](#) are official 3500 Club hikes. Any other advertised hikes to the 3500 peaks are private hikes and, while they can count for membership to the Club, the Club is not affiliated with those hikes.

Private Property: All Catskill 3500 Club hikes respect "No Trespassing" signs and the owners' wishes in such regards; leaders shall obtain permission to cross private property when so required. Access to [Graham](#) and [Doubletop](#) requires a prior permission from the caretaker. See Club's website for the [latest guidance](#) on the access and the [contact info](#), as well as the [Catskill 3500 Club Hiking & Private Property guide](#).

Blaze Orange Alert: The hunting season is coming! Refer to [this DEC link](#) for the summary of hunting seasons. Wear orange, avoid white and remember the same for your four-legged hiking companions!

Daylight saving time ends on Sunday, November 1st, 2020 at 2 am. Don't forget to reset your alarm clock by 1 hour (turn forward).



Rogue Harbor Ridge in Vernooy Kill State Forest. Photo by Jim Hopson #1813 W782

The calendar of the current hike schedule can also be found on the [Club site](#).

Club hiking schedule is subject to change. The club has reduced group size to conform with the social distancing requirements; a mask may be required for situations when social distancing is not possible.

Sat. Oct. 3 - Plateau, Sugarloaf & Twin

Distance: 10.6 mi. Ascent: 3868', Elevs: 3835', 3783', 3650'
Challenging trail hike with steep scrambles at a moderate pace.
No dogs, please.
Registration Period: Sept. 26 - Oct. 1
Leader: Harold Oakhill #283 W1244
hoakhill@gmail.com

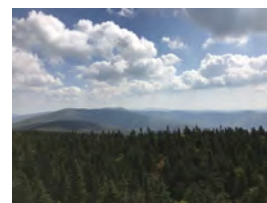


Sun. Oct. 4 - NORTH DOME & SHERRILL

Distance: 7 mi. Ascent: 3100', Elevs: 3605', 3558'
Moderately paced bushwhack.
Registration Period: Sept. 28 - Oct. 2
Leader: David Bunde #2269 W925
david@dgbdesign.com

Fri. Oct 9 - BALSAM LAKE MOUNTAIN (Weekday)

Distance: 7 mi. Ascent: 1475', Elev: 3729'
Relaxed pace trail hike, beginners welcome.
Registration Period: Sept. 20 - Oct. 3
Leader: Sharon Klein #3364
MusicWithoutWalls@gmail.com



Fri. Oct. 9 DOUBLETOP (Weekday)

Distance: 5 mi. Ascent: 1900', Elev: 3874'
Relaxed paced bushwhack hike.
Registration Period: Oct. 4 - 8
Leader: Michael Bongar #2173 W997
michael@bongarbiz.com

Sat. Oct. 10 - INDIAN HEAD, TWIN, SUGARLOAF & PLATEAU

Distance: 13.05 mi. Ascent: 4000', Elevs: 3575', 3650', 3783', 3835'
Moderately paced hike with sunrise from Sherman's Lookout.
Registration Period: Sept. 27 - Oct. 6
Leader: Russell Ley #2927 W1262
russell.buildingscience@gmail.com 518-370-3600



Sat. Oct. 10 - BALSAM LAKE MOUNTAIN

Distance: 4.3 mi. Ascent: 1150', Elev: 3729'
Moderately paced trail hike. Rain, inclement weather will cancel.
Registration Period: Oct. 5 - 9
Leader: Suzanne Knabe #1326
suzkna@msn.com 718-435-3092 (after 7:00 pm)

Mon. Oct. 12 - WINDHAM HIGH PEAK (Weekday)

Distance: 6.2 mi. Ascent: 1500', Elev: 3525'
Relaxed-moderate pace.
Registration period: Oct. 5 - 10
Leader: Lyn W. #2865 W1312
catskill35r@gmail.com

Wed. Oct. 14 - BLACKHEAD, BLACK DOME & THOMAS COLE (Weekday)

Distance: 7.2 mi. Ascent: 2600', Elevs: 3940', 3994', 3953'
Moderately paced trail hike.
Registration Period: Oct. 5 - 12
Leaders: Shari Aber #2224 W944 shnaber@yahoo.com
Joseph Ferri #2223 W945 newpaltz33@yahoo.com

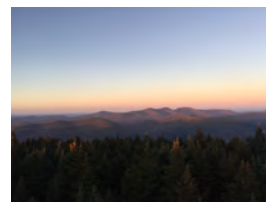


Sat. Oct. 17 - Friday & Balsam Cap

Distance: 6.2 mi. Ascent: 2765', Elevs: 3692', 3608'
Challenging bushwhack at a moderate pace. No dogs, please.
Registration Period: Oct. 10 - 15
Leader: Harold Oakhill #283 W1244
hoakhill@gmail.com

Sat. Oct. 17 - HUNTER

Distance: 6.5 mi. Ascent: 1900', Elev: 4030'
Moderately paced hike with a short yoga session at peak.
Registration Period: Oct. 10 - 16
Leader: Pamela Martin #2102
pamelamartininc@gmail.com



Sun. Oct. 18 - ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY CLEAN-UP

Route 214 Clean Up. Bring work gloves and a great attitude – all else will be provided, including refreshments afterward. Your participation helps the Club, the environment, and keeps the Catskills beautiful!
Registration Period: Open
Leader: Lourdes Sonera #2525 W1075
200chu@gmail.com

Sun. Oct. 18 - RUSK

Distance: 3.3 mi. Ascent: 1580', Elev: 3686'
Moderately quick-paced bushwhack.
Registration Period: Oct. 12 - 16
Leader: David Bunde #2269 W925
david@dgbdesign.com

Sat. Oct. 24 - WINDHAM HIGH PEAK

Distance: 4 mi. Ascent: 1600', Elev: 3525'
Map and compass instruction with relaxed pace bushwhack. Beginners welcome.
Registration Period: open
Leader: Al Davis #2192 W1082
ad322@freeelectron.net 518-947-6407

Sat. Oct. 24 - FRIDAY, BALSAM CAP, ROCKY, LONE, TABLE & PEEKAMOOSSE

Distance: 11.3 mi. Ascent: 4878', Elevs: 3692', 3608', 3487', 3700', 3825', 3819'.
Moderately paced bushwhack hike with sunrise from Friday Mtn.
Registration Period: Oct. 1 - 20
Leader: Russell Ley #2927 W 1262
russell.buildingscience@gmail.com, 518-370-3600



Sun. Oct. 25 - PANTHER

Distance: 7 mi. Ascent: 1800', Elev: 3724'
Relaxed-moderate pace.
Registration Period: Oct. 18 - 23
Leader: Jake Haisley #2488 W1065
jacobhaisley@gmail.com

Sat. Oct. 31 - WEST KILL

Distance: 7 mi. Ascent: 1800', Elev: 3898'
Relaxed pace trail hike.
Registration Period: Oct. 24 - 30
Leader: Al Davis #2192 W1082
ad322@freeelectron.net 518-947-6407

Sun. Nov. 1 - TWIN (Note: Daylight Saving Time Ends on Sun, Nov 1st, 2 am)

Distance 5.4 mi. Ascent: 1750', Elev: 3650'
Relaxed-moderate pace.
Registration period: Oct. 25 - 30
Leader: Lyn W. #2865 W1312
catskill35r@gmail.com



Fri. Nov. 6 - VLY & BEARPEN (Weekday)

Distance: 6.5 mi. Ascent: 2000', Elevs: 3541', 3587'
Relaxed-moderate pace.
Registration period: Nov. 1 - 5
Leader: Michael Bongar #2173 W997
michael@bongarbiz.com

Sat. Nov. 7 - KAATERSKILL HIGH PEAK

Distance: 7 mi. Ascent: 1900', Elev: 3652'
Relaxed paced partial bushwhack, with map and compass instruction.
Registration Period: Oct. 24 - Nov. 6
Leader: Al Davis #2192 W1082
ad322@freeelectron.net 518-947-6407



Sat. Nov. 7 - TWIN & INDIAN HEAD

Distance: 6.8 mi. Ascent: 1600', Elevs: 3650', 3575'
Moderately paced trail hike with stops for compass and map review.
Beginners encouraged and welcome.
Registration Period: Oct. 20 - Nov. 1
Leader: Russell Ley #2927 W1262
russell.buildingscience@gmail.com 518-370-3600

Sun. Nov. 8 - BLACKHEAD, BLACK DOME & THOMAS COLE

Distance: 8 mi. Ascent: 2550', Elevs: 3940', 3994', 3953'
Moderately quick-paced trail hike.
Registration Period: Nov. 2 - 6
Leader: David Bunde #2269 W925
david@dgbdesign.com

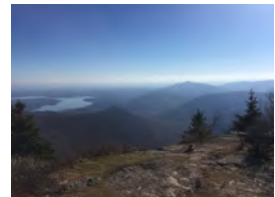


Wed. Nov. 11 - DOUBLETOP (WEEKDAY)

Distance: 5.2 mi. Ascent: 1900', Elev: 3874'
Moderately paced trail hike and bushwhack.
Registration Period: Nov. 2 - 9
Leaders: Shari Aber #2224 W944 shnaber@yahoo.com
Joseph Ferri #2223 W945 newpaltz33@yahoo.com

Sat. Nov. 14 - SLIDE, CORNELL & WITTENBERG

Distance: 10 mi. Ascent 3000', Elevs: 4184', 3857', 3782'
Moderately paced thru hike.
Registration Period: Nov. 9 - 13
Leader: David Bunde #2269 W925
david@dgbdesign.com



Sun. Nov. 15 - VLY & BEARPEN

Distance: 6.5 mi. Ascent: 2000', Elevs: 3541', 3587'
Relaxed-moderate pace.
Registration period: Nov. 8 - 13
Leader: Jake Haisley #2488 W1065
jacobhaisley@gmail.com

Wed. Dec. 2 – WEST KILL (Weekday)

Distance: 6.3 mi. Ascent: 1800', Elev: 3898'
Moderately paced trail hike.
Registration Period: Nov. 23 - 30
Leaders: Shari Aber #2224 W944 shnaber@yahoo.com
Joseph Ferri #2223 W945 newpaltz33@yahoo.com

Sat. Dec. 5 - PLATEAU

Distance: 6 mi. Ascent: 1600', Elev: 3835'
Relaxed pace trail hike, traverse with shuttle.
Registration Period: Nov. 21 – Dec. 4
Leader: Al Davis #2192 W1082
ad322@freeelectron.net 518-947-6407



Sun. Dec. 6 - Balsam & Eagle

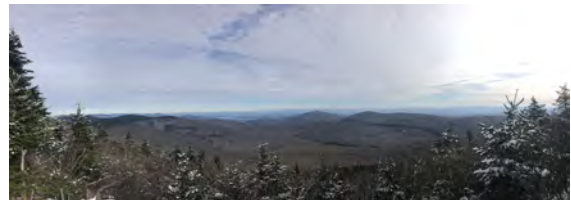
Distance: 9.4 mi. Ascent: 2580', Elevs: 3607', 3583'
Trail hike at a moderate pace.
Registration Period: Nov. 28 - Dec. 4
Leader: Harold Oakhill #283 W1244
hoakhill@gmail.com

Sat. Dec. 19 - HALCOTT

Distance: 3.7 mi. Ascent: 1690', Elev: 3509'
Moderately quick-paced bushwhack.
Registration Period: Dec. 14 - 18
Leader: David Bunde #2269 W925
david@dgbdesign.com

Sat. Dec. 19 - PEEKAMOOSE & TABLE

Distance 7.8 mi. Ascent 2600', Elevs: 3825', 3819'
Relaxed-moderate pace.
Registration period: Dec. 14 - 18
Leaders: Jon Gordon #2816 W1252 & Ben Gordon #2817 W1251
jonathan.gordon@gmail.com



Sun. Dec. 20 - FIR

Distance: 10 mi. Ascent: 1700', Elev: 3629'
Moderately paced bushwhack and trail hike.
Registration Period: Dec. 14 - 18
Leader: David Bunde #2269 W925
david@dgbdesign.com

Mon. Dec. 21 - PANTHER (Weekday)

Distance: 7 mi. Ascent: 1800', Elev: 3724'
Relaxed paced trail hike.
Registration Period: Dec. 5 - 20
Leader: Al Davis #2192 W1082
ad322@freeelectron.net 518-947-6407



Tues. Dec. 22 - PANTHER (Weekday)

Distance: 7 mi. Ascent: 1800', Elev: 3724'
Moderately paced hike with sunrise from Giant Ledge.
Registration Period: Dec. 1 - 17
Leader: Russell Ley #2927 W1262
russell.buildingscience@gmail.com, 518-370-3600

Tues. Dec. 22 - INDIAN HEAD & TWIN (Weekday)

Distance: 7.2 mi. Ascent: 2200', Elevs: 3575', 3650'
Moderately paced trail hike.
Registration Period: Dec. 15 - 21
Leader: Michael Bongar #2173 W997
michael@bongarbiz.com

Photos used in this section are by Yana Levchinsky-Grimmond, *The Canister* Editor.



Sunrise on Giant Ledge. Photo by Alex Burrows.

NEW MEMBERS

Members listed are as of the publication; more recent finishers will be listed next quarter.

New Lifetime Members:

Number	Name
276	Annmarie Spiciarich
2488	Jacob Haisley
3330	Jean Mammato
3331	Russell Hanford
3341	Andrew Lessig
3362	James Jensen
Asp	Joanna Nadoolman

New Members:

Number	Name	Date of Finish	Final Peak
3326	Michael Schoeck	3/7/2020	Cornell
3327	Kyle Holden	5/14/2020	Twin
3328	Todd Palmer	5/16/2020	Balsam Lake
3329	Jessica Mokhiber Palmer	5/16/2020	Balsam Lake
3330	Jean Mammato	5/19/2020	West Kill
3331	Russell Hanford	5/19/2020	West Kill
3332	Angelo Lazzara	5/23/2020	Graham
3333	Tara Krupitsky	1/16/2016	Panther
3334	Steven J Krupitsky	11/3/2019	Balsam Cap
3335	Lauren Hunt	12/28/2019	Bearpen
3336	Sage Fiore-Yansick	1/12/2020	Slide
3337	Kaitlyn King	5/24/2020	Indian Head
3338	Michael Deciel	5/28/2020	Graham
3339	Yan Wang	5/24/2020	Plateau

3340	Conor Gillis	6/6/2020	Kaaterskill
3341	Andrew Lessig	6/6/2020	Doubletop
3342	John Basirico	6/6/2020	Slide
3343	Brian Spataro	6/5/2020	Cornell
3344	Maryellen Wander Eyer	6/10/2020	Halcott
3345	Mike Karnas	6/12/2020	Slide
3346	Melanie Forstrom	6/13/2020	West Kill
3347	Alison Kralick	6/12/2020	Twin
3348	Jonathan Kralick	6/12/2020	Twin
3349	Daniel Kralick	6/12/2020	Twin
3350	Ezra Kralick	6/12/2020	Twin
3351	Matt Benham	5/31/2020	Doubletop
3352	Fiona-Rose Lacedonia	6/12/2020	Graham
3353	Cody Claussen	6/13/2020	Graham
3354	Brooke Beideck	6/19/2020	Slide
3355	Mick Beideck	6/19/2020	Slide
3356	Felicia Reale	6/21/2020	Friday
3357	Kent Larson	5/30/2020	Kaaterskill
3358	Naomi Larson	5/30/2020	Kaaterskill
3359	Daniel Sclafani	6/28/2020	Doubletop
3360	Jesse Taylor	7/6/2020	Sherrill
3361	Billy Thompson	7/6/2020	Sherrill
3362	James Jansen	7/11/2020	Sherrill
3363	Dillon Utter	5/25/2020	Rusk
3364	Sharon Klein	8/1/2020	Blackhead
3365	Barbara E Jones	8/3/2020	Lone
3366	Jeremy D Alexander	8/7/2020	Balsam Cap
3367	Jessica Velez	8/13/2020	Kaaterskill
3368	Peter Brown	8/13/20	Rocky
3369	Ralph Wagner	8/24/2020	Graham
3370	Alex Rabinovich	8/14/2020	Fir
3371	Taisei Rabinovich	8/14/2020	Fir
3372	Cathy Moore	8/22/2020	Fir
3373	Krystal Cole	8/22/2020	Table
3374	Owen O'Connor	8/8/2020	Plateau
3375	KayCee Wimbish	8/8/2020	Plateau
3376	Sparrow Wimbish	8/8/2020	Plateau



Ryder Hollow Lean To. Photo by Steve Aaron #3199

Editor's Notes

By Yana Levchinsky-Grimmond



I hope you are continuing to enjoy *The Canister*, and I thank each and every one of you who has reached out with feedback and suggestions. Feedback, as well as submissions to future editions and ideas are very much welcomed and appreciated. Submissions on the topics of hiking with kids, pushing your limits, exploring something new and exciting, history of the Catskills, ecology and geology, your personal experiences, advice, etc. are just some of the examples of what we would love to include in the next issue of *The Canister*! For photo submissions, please ensure the photos are high resolution (several MB at a min) and the landscape format is preferred. We would love to see your photos of foliage, geological oddities, waterfalls, wildlife, views, flora, sunsets and sunrises. Please contact me at editor@catskill-3500-club.org.

Department of corrections: many thanks to David Hayes, #3181, for alerting us that we had inadvertently identified Cow parsnip (*Hercacleum maximum*) as an invasive species. It is in fact, native to North America. But it may still burn and blister your skin, so avoid contact! Wild parsnip (*Pastinaca sativa*) for which a [link](#) was provided, causes severe burns and should be avoided, and it is an invasive. Of course, Giant hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*) is a most dangerous plant of them all, and it is an invasive non-native from Eurasia. This [DEC brochure](#) is a useful guide in how identify giant hogweed and its lookalikes; this DEC link is another great resource on additional lookalikes (thanks to Marv Freedman, #2242 W951, for the link!).

Please note: the newsletter will print best if downloaded as a pdf file directly from the [Club's site](#).



Fall giving in to winter on Balsam Lake Mountain Photo by Michael Kucinski #3210

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Balsam's shadow from its viewpoint. Photo by Yana Levchinsky-Grimmond #2814 W1222