



the catskill canister

Vol. XX, No. 1

W I N T E R 1 9 8 7

OUR FIRST CATSKILL WEEKEND

Ty and I had planned this hike for a long time. The CATSKILLS were relatively unknown to us, but we were ready for a three-day backpack. We arrived at Fox Hollow late on a chilly Friday in March. A short steep hike up to the lean-to gave us time to explore the immediate vicinity. It was too wet to gather firewood so we pitched tent in front of the lean-to and cooked on a Peak 1 stove. Suddenly, the sun was glistening off the top of Garfield Mountain across the valley. It was a magical sight and set the mood for the weekend.

When we woke up it was calm and frost covered the ground. The sun climbed over the mountain and filled the lean-to with warmth, making it a great place to have breakfast. We hit the trail by 9:00 and reached the snow line in a half-hour. The quiet of the morning was broken by the noisy chatter of chickadees, nuthatches, and kinglets as they fluttered from tree to tree. We stopped to watch a brown creeper circle up a large beech nearby. Unfortunately, our trail book used maps without contour lines and this made following our progress more difficult. As we crested the ridge we actually believed we were at the summit. Gazing ahead on the trail we could see a large mountain connected to the ridge we were on. Was this the summit of Panther? After lunch we dropped down before ascending to what we thought might be the summit . . . not so, as we soon discovered. We then started the steep ascent on the northern slope where the sun never hits. The snow was getting deeper and deeper and made the going difficult. We were tiring when the sun hit us in the eyes; we hoped there wasn't much more to go. The mountain had fooled us twice, but now we had made it!

The view from the top of Panther was spectacular and will always be etched in my mind. It was getting late so we moved down the south side of the mountain. The snow on this side was wet, and it was much warmer. We pushed on and reached Giant Ledge with little difficulty. We admired the view over Woodland Valley, as a long shadow was being cast by the sun setting behind us. We moved on past the lean-to and set up our tent. We struggled to make dinner in the gusty unpredictable wind.

The night was cold and windy, but Sunday morning brought blue sky and calmness. I ran up to one of the viewpoints on Giant Ledge and watched a thick haze slowly burning off. We decided to hike to Woodland Valley and hitch back to our car. We got one ride to Route 28, but had to walk the next 6 miles. When we finally reached the road leading up to Fox Hollow we decided to eat. The end of a perfect hike! Sitting down I dropped the peanut butter jar and it shattered. So much for perfect hikes! We've since trekked all over the CATSKILLS and have learned from experience how to plan hikes better to enjoy these beautiful mountains.

--Lee McAllister, #484, 516-931-1497
20 Drury Lane, Syosset, NY 11791

THE CATSKILL CANISTER Published by The Catskill 3500 Club, Inc.

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SKIING HIGH AND HIGHER

This is skiing? A 45-pound pack, a five-mile uphill route, and the temperature in the 70's? Those were the conditions March 29 as we started up Brush Creek on our six-day ski mountaineering trip from Vail to Aspen, Colorado. On the road from Vail to the trailhead at Eagle, there had been no snow, but miraculously a two-foot-wide band of snow was now under our skis as we ascended out of the valley. More climbing increased the width of our snow route, along with repeated stops to remove clothing and to make equipment adjustments. Gradually, we settled into a climbing rhythm and started enjoying the increasing visibility from our efforts. Reaching the height of land at 9995', we had lunch, more views, and the anticipation of a two-mile downhill run to the Crooked Creek cabin, our first day destination. Back in our skis we started on a gentle, continuously descending route. Near the end, in a Jack London-like setting, was the cabin, an ancient log shelter with snow almost up to its eaves. To enter, we had to walk down a snow ramp to the door.

The next morning, following a breakfast of monstrous proportions prepared by our guides, it was off to the mountain meadows in back of the cabin for some early morning skiing. This was what we had come for: back country skiing in virgin snow in a beautiful alpine valley. Intermittent snow squalls swirled around us an hour later as we skied toward Diamond J Ranch, our new destination. For fun and to sharpen back country skills, our guides delegated the trail leadership among the rest of us, with each skier taking a turn at leading the group. It was surprisingly difficult because of limited visibility and no trail markers to help in finding the way. Recognizing the same land features in going from terrain to map and vice versa was also difficult.

Diamond J Ranch serves as a bail-out point for those who feel the past two days have been too difficult and that the next five days may be too exhausting. It is on the only road between Vail and Aspen that leads to the outside. Even only two trail days found us enjoying all the amenities of this cross-country ski center and dude ranch, including the hot tub. Perhaps our pleasure was based in part in knowing that our most strenuous day of the trip would be after leaving the ranch, involving ten miles and 3000' of climbing.

It took us seven and a half hours the next day to travel to Margy's Hut at 11,300'. The temperature was in the forties, sparing us from too hot a climb. Varying cloud cover and winds, however, made for much jacket, hat, and glove changing. Sometimes a parka was needed, sometimes a shell, and at other times a long-john top sufficed. Our group became spread out, but the plan called for regrouping at an alpine meadow a mile before the hut. We had spent the day traveling through the Hunter-Frying Pan Wilderness, and as if to underscore the wilderness designation, a pine marten was at the front door of the hut as our weary bodies arrived. He quickly disappeared under the snow to his lair.

Margy's Hut is a comfortable, new, back-country shelter accommodating fifteen, and it is typical of the huts being built along the route. A "rest day" was scheduled for our layover at Margy's, but who could resist going out touring in the new snow and the beautiful day that greeted us at breakfast? We started off with telemark* ski school in the meadows in back of the hut. Then it was off to climb 12,000' Mt. Prophecy for some steeper pitch telemarking on its sides, truly a great experience: the challenge of the climb, the fulfillment of being on top, and the exhilaration of the ski descent. Our day was not a rest day but would be remembered for a long, long time. That night in our steamy, comfortable cabin, the day's events were discussed over a Mexican dinner and red wine. All our meals had bordered on being gourmet. This was made possible because our guides had an agreement with the hut administrators to stock the huts during the summer with the necessary supplies so these meals could happen in the winter.

Next stop, McNamara's Hut. On the way, most of the 1800' loss of elevation occurred as we skied down through spruce and fir forests along side of a rushing mountain stream. Cool cloud cover caused a quick lunch as we prepared for the 1000' climb to a secluded plateau, the site of the hut. At a guide's suggestion, we spread out during the afternoon, spacing ourselves out of sight of each other for an hour. It was a tranquil and reflective experience, seemingly being alone in the alpine setting, intermittent snowfall, and with your thoughts, but knowing a friend was in front or back of you. We were to learn later that the slight snowfall we experienced was the fringe of a major snowstorm to the east. That night, another sumptuous dinner, and a crash into bed.

Our last trail day started with a pre-breakfast, 800' climb to the top of Bald Knob for panoramic views and powder skiing down through an old forest burn. Looking back at our figure-eight tracks in the dazzling snow, we all agreed that this had to be one of the more memorable ski events of our lives. After a brunch at the hut, we started the last five miles and 2000' descent to Aspen village. Actually, we walked the last half mile, as the snow turned to Rocky Mt. spring mud. On a side road to Aspen, our pickup van awaited to return us to Vail.

For this trip one needs to be in reasonable condition, know how to descend on skis with some kind of controlled turn, and be equipped with steel-edged touring or telemark skis. An intermediate skier can handle it.

--Howard Adriance, #327, 914-338-4603
75 Sharon Lane, Kingston, NY 12401

SNOWSHOES

In the January 1986 (sic) ADIRONDAC, the magazine of the Adirondack Mountain Club, is an article by Carl Heilman entitled, "The New Breed of Snowshoes." The editor of APPALACHIA thought it was so good that it was reprinted with permission in their December 1986 Bulletin Issue with the title, "The amazing, shrinking snowshoe." Another article by the same author, "Snowshoes . . . Why Wear Them?" appears in the January 1987 ADIRONDAC. Heilman is an acknowledged authority on snowshoes and snowshoe construction.

* A technique for making turns. --Ed.

S.W. HUNTER AGAIN

A resolution introduced at the 1986 annual meeting proposed the addition of S.W. Hunter to the official list of required peaks. This resolution, subsequently tabled, will be reintroduced at the annual meeting to be held March 28, 1987. Interested members should review their 1986 Winter, Spring, and Summer issues of the Canister (Vol. XIX, Nos. 1, 2, & 3) which fully discuss this motion, as time for debate will be limited at the meeting. Amendments to the Certificate of Incorporation require the affirmative vote of a majority of the members present at a meeting.

--Cyrus B. Whitney, President

CATSKILL 3500 CLUB

- 564 Deanna Long 10/19/86 603-224-8252
60 Washington St., Concord, NH 03301
- 565 Deane H. Morrison, III 10/19/86 603-224-8252
60 Washington St., Concord, NH 03301
- 566 Herbert B. Haake 10/25/86 607-754-8417
3715 Beechwood Dr., Endwell, NY 13760
- 567 Leslie Mills 10/25/86 718-698-1029
1300-8 Richmond Ave., Staten Island, NY 10314
- 568 Kathleen M. Borsody 11/2/86 203-334-3237
566 Capitol Ave., Bridgeport, CT 06606
- 569 Richard D. Martin 11/2/86 203-374-1624
78 Short Hill Lane, Fairfield, CT 06430

THE PERAPATETIC PORCUPINE

Our Adirondack cousin reports that Peter Fish, #12, made his 200th ascent of Mt. Marcy last October. It is rumored that he first went up on his hands and knees in 1958. * * * * Dave Mattson, #187, is doing most of his hiking in Minnesota, where he now lives. * * * * Gary Klee, #29, and Gary, Jr., #160, had a breath-taking hike to the bottom of the Grand Canyon. Coming up, father's breath held up better than son's. Like other shutterbugs, he knows that there is nothing like taking a picture to restore the oxygen. * * * * Norman Smith, #199, and Kip Patnode, #324, ended the 1985-86 season by completing the Northeast 111 in winter, wound up the summer with 15 of Colorado's 14,000 Footers, and topped off the year with a trip to climb Hawaiian volcanoes, after being joined in marriage by Father Donahue, #23.

ANNUAL DINNER DATE

Save the date of Saturday, March 28, 1987, for the annual meeting of the Catskill 3500 Club. The dinner will be at Meadowbrook Lodge, New Windsor, NY, near Newburgh.

DUES AND SUBSCRIPTION NOTICE

Annual dues for members and subscription fees for aspirants are now payable for 1987. Please note that dues include a subscription to The Catskill Canister. Since delinquent payments make extra work for the volunteers who have to send out reminders, and also cost extra in postage (about \$20.00 in 1986), please send your money now. A space is provided for those who wish to make a small contribution to the treasury.

Only one payment is required - dues or subscription.

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Annual dues for members - \$3.00. Make check payable to The Catskill 3500 Club, Inc. and mail to Elinore G. Leavitt, 246 Joslen Blvd., Hudson, NY 12534. Sign and retain the enclosed membership card.

Name _____ # _____

Address _____

Phone() _____ Please send roster supp.

Social Security No. (optional*) _____ Contribution _____

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Annual subscription fee for aspirants - \$3.00. Make check payable to The Catskill 3500 Club, Inc. and mail to Deborah P. Glynn, R.R. 1, Box 411A, Pleasant Valley, NY 12569.

Name _____

Address _____

.....

* Members of the Club "involved with operation, maintenance and development of trails on New York State Parkland" are eligible to have the protection of Workmen's Compensation coverage in the event of injury incurred while working on any trail maintained by the Club. Your name and social security number must be on file with the State. If you wish to be eligible, include your social security number above.

CATSKILL 3500 CLUB HIKES

- Mar. 7 MT. TREMPER Moderate trail hike on Long Path from Phoenicia to Willow.
Distance: 7-8 mi. Ascent: 1900' Elev.: 2740'
Meeting Place: Sweet Sue's Bakery, Phoenicia at 8:00 for breakfast.
Leader: Ralph Johns (#172), 293 Branch Brook Dr., Bellevue, NJ 07109
Home - 201-751-3580 Work - 201-284-2524
- Mar. 14 WINDHAM HIGH PEAK A moderate trail hike by way of Burnt Knob. Snowshoes and instep crampons required.
Distance: 7 mi. Ascent: 1400' Elev.: 3524' Order: 32
Meeting Place: Sugar Maples in Maplecrest at 8:30.
Leader: John VanHook (#334), Siena College, Loudonville, NY 12211
518-783-4162
- Mar. 21 RUSK A moderate bushwhack from parking area on Spruceton Road. Bad driving weather cancels.
Distance: 5 mi. Ascent: 1600' Elev.: 3680' Order: 20
Meeting Place: Jnct. Rts. 28 & 42 in Shandaken at 9:00.
Leader: Neil Zimmerman (#306), 10 W. 65th St., New York, NY 10023
212-873-5209
- Apr. 4 SHAWANGUNKS A joint hike with North Jersey ADK on the Long Path from Dashner's via Verkeederkill Falls and Lake Awosting to Jenny Lane. Supper at the Brauhaus for those who wish. A long hike at moderate pace.
Distance: 14 mi. Ascent: 1000'
Meeting Place: Jenny Lane parking area, Rts. 44-55, 4.9 miles east of Rt. 209 or 1.1 miles west of entrance to Lake Minnewaska.
Leader: Fred Schmelzer (#140), R. D. 1, Box 433A, Pine Bush, NY 12566
914-361-3629
Coordinator: Stella Green (#418) 201-391-9410 (Evenings)
- Apr. 11 HALCOTT A moderate bushwhack from Route 42. Snow conditions may still prevail.
Distance: 5 mi. Ascent: 1700' Elev.: 3520' Order: 33
Meeting Place: Jnct. Rts. 42 & 28 in Shandaken at 9:00.
Leader: Roy Messaros (#97), 249 Mulberry Way, Franklin Lakes, NJ
201-337-5004 07417
- Apr. 18 OVERLOOK Mt. & MINISTER'S FACE Easy trail to fire tower and bushwhack to Minister's Face at a moderate pace.
Distance: 7 mi. Ascent: 1960' Elev.: 3140'
Meeting Place: Woodstock Playhouse, Jnct. Rts. 375 (off Rt. 28) & 212 at 9:00.
Leader: William Lawson (#78), P. O. Box 2468, Albany, NY 12220
518-438-7783

ASSUMED RISK

Hiking involves certain inherent hazards, and persons participating do so at their own risk.



the catskill canister

Vol. XX, No. 2

S P R I N G 1 9 8 7

HIKING AND BIKING IN THE SAN JUAN MOUNTAINS

Biking has become my outdoor obsession. It was easy to generate this interest thru an active biking group in the NY/NJ chapter of AMC, plus the local 160-member Morris County Freewheelers, both of which have inspired some fascinating jaunts exploring many remote, interesting historical areas right here in New Jersey. But I have discovered that an even greater outdoor experience results from combining hiking with biking, such as the trip last July in the San Juan Mountains of Colorado, about 400 miles southwest of Denver.

A group of twelve from all over the U.S. gathered in Durango with our 15- or 18-speed bikes, and in one week we made a tour of 330 miles exploring the magnificent San Juan Range of the Rockies. We pedaled over four mountain passes above 10,000' elevation amongst spectacular jagged snowclad peaks rising dramatically from lush stands of spruce, fir, and aspen. We also did some interesting trail hiking around Mesa Verde National Park, seeing the largest cliff dwellings in the U.S., which were built by "ancient foreigners" of unknown extraction and used by them for a period of less than 100 years around 1300 A.D.

Another day I joined a group of four from the Colorado Mountain Club to climb Mt. Sneffels, "Queen of the San Juans," at 14,150', my sixth "Fourteener." (A rule of the CMC is that a valid climb of a "Fourteener" requires an elevation gain of at least 3,000). Mt. Sneffels was definitely the most interesting climb I have ever made. We encountered large amounts of snow, and in between the snowfields and the rocks were vast alpine meadows carpeted with beautiful columbines, gentians, primroses, asters, and Indian paint brush. There must have been millions, and you could not avoid stepping on them.

A bizzare experience was hiking across a "rock glacier" that is unique to the San Juans. This looked like a giant pudding of small rocks flowing downhill in small waves.

I left the biking group in the quaint, old (preserved) mining town of Silverton, for a week of hiking in the area, and bagged two more magnificent peaks: Kendall Mountain, 13,066' (starting from 9300'), and Grand Turk Mountain, 13,148' (starting from 10,910'). Also hiked up to beautiful, sparkling Silver Lake at 12,186', enveloped in a canyon of melting snow giving the appearance of molten silver.

Abandoned gold and silver mines were seen at high elevations on all the mountains I have mentioned, which made it an even more exhilarating experience for me, since I originally wanted to be a mining engineer. The mines around Mt. Sneffels alone produced around three-quarters of a billion dollars worth of ore--mostly gold and silver--over the past century.

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A fitting finale for my last day was a spectacular 45-mile ride over the narrow gauge railroad from Silverton back to our starting point in Durango. Four passenger trains of about seven cars each, propelled by the original steam locomotives, go this route daily through the remote 2,000,000-acre San Juan National Forest, along the wild and roaring Animas River, amongst numerous snow-clad peaks towering over 14,000 feet.

--Alton Dieffenbach, #244, 201-267-8091
42 Headly Rd., Morristown, NJ 07960

LETTERS

I've finally finished climbing all of the major Catskill peaks, and I must say that it was well worth every drop of sweat for all of the beauty and challenges that I found along the way. Having lived within sight of the mountains all my life, I've come to love them as my own. They may not be the highest mountains I've ever climbed, but they inspire me like no others can.

--Stephen Draiss, #537

Despite a few minor setbacks--like getting hopelessly lost on the snowmobile trail on our first climb up Kaaterskill High Peak--and some brief bouts with cold, snow, and rain, our mission is accomplished. It's been a pleasure, providing us with lovely views and an opportunity to meet many wonderful hiking companions.

--Kathleen Borsody, #568

I am getting out for hikes in nearby woods on Wed. and Sat., usually alone since my friend Sherman moved to Rochester. Both Florence and I are keeping well, though the pace is slower--five miles instead of ten, and Jersey Hills.

--Henry Young, #59

On December 21, 1985, at 5:08 p.m. (the start of winter), I began hiking from the Route 47 parking area to the summit of Slide Mountain, which I reached at 7:17 p.m., thereby completing the 38 climbs.

I had never been to the CATSKILLS and had no interest in hiking there, as I only thought of them as a hilly area between Long Island and the Adirondack Peaks. In July, 1984, I joined the L. I. Chapter of ADK, determined not to miss any hike. I was soon on hikes to Rocky, Hunter, and the Blackheads. I learned that the CATSKILLS were mountains, not hills, and that climbing to their summits was as difficult as reaching the peaks in the Adirondacks. I have anxiously anticipated every Catskill hike and backpack since, enjoying the challenge that each climb might present, the beauty of the mountain landscapes with the changing panorama of the seasons, and the exhilarating views from its peaks. It has been a wonderful experience. Thank you for promoting this program.

--George Form, Jr., #535

Last fall I climbed Chances Peak, a 3000-foot inactive volcano on the British West Indies island Monserrat. The trailhead and the trail were very vague, and it took a fair amount of skill (acquired in the CATSKILLS) to stay on the route. The higher we got, the denser the rain forest. The summit was socked in; there's just about always a cloud hanging around the top of Chances Peak.

--Ralph Ferrusi, #122

I enjoyed climbing the CATSKILLS. They aren't the highest mountains around, nor do they have the most spectacular views, but the open woods make bushwhacking a pleasure most of the time. I climbed Hunter and Slide in 1976 in order to join the Northeast 111 Club. Then the AMC decided in 1979 to hold its annual Spring meeting at Frost Valley, and since I was involved with one of the committees, I decided that I might as well take my son and climb some of the CATSKILLS. Danny had become the youngest person to climb the New England Hundred Highest at the age of eight in 1978. I made the weekend into a long one, and we climbed Balsam & Eagle the first day; Plateau, Sugarloaf, Twin, & Indian Head the second day; Black Dome, Thomas Cole, Blackhead, & Windham High Peak the third day. This seemed like a pretty good start, so I wrote to my friend Friedel Schunk for directions for climbing the trailless peaks.

The next year we were back, with a fairly good notion of how to attack the trailless peaks. We got one good day, and bagged off Doubletop, Graham, and Balsam Lake. The next day it rained all day, and after a soggy trip to Big Indian and Fir, we decided to head for home. In 1981 we came back with some reinforcements: after climbing Halcott, North Dome, & Sherrill the first day, we were joined by Friedel and Sam Steen for a day hike over Peekamoose, Table, Lone, Rocky, Balsam Cap, Friday, Cornell and Wittenberg. The third day we climbed Vly & Bearpen, a very pleasant trip. Being close to the end of the list, we decided to come back on Columbus Day weekend, and we climbed Slide and Panther the first day; Rusk, Hunter & West Kill the second; and Kaaterskill High Peak the next day to finish off the 34 peaks. I think High Peak is my favorite: The views from the open area north of the summit are excellent.

In the meantime, in January 1983, just before his thirteenth birthday, Danny became the youngest person to climb the New Hampshire 4000 Footers in winter. Then my wife's cousin in New Jersey scheduled her wedding for December 29, and I had a chance I couldn't pass up. We planned to climb the four peaks in three days (plus Hunter for the 111) and so on cloudy Sunday morning we climbed Balsam. It cleared out nicely, so we climbed Slide in the afternoon. We started out for Blackhead at 7:57, having fine views from the open area below the summit in a chilly wind with considerable ice. We returned to the car at 10 a.m., and drove to the Becker Hollow trailhead. We started at 10:45, reached the summit of Hunter, enjoyed the view for a few minutes, then descended to the car and headed for the hairpin above Oliveria. By this time the clouds had lowered to the summits. We had one glimpse of Slide on the way up Panther before it disappeared for the evening. Leaving the trailhead at 2:52, we knew we were certain to be out after dark. At the top of Giant Ledge we made a short side trip to the true summit. (I completed the New England Three Thousand Footers, a 451-peak list, in October and am presently compiling a Northeast list; Giant Ledge makes the list and I will not pass thirty yards from a summit and not climb to it.) We continued on to Panther, reaching the summit

at about 4:20 with barely enough light for pictures. My only real concern for the return was passing the cliffs on Giant Ledge before pitch darkness arrived, and we succeeded in getting to the shelter with only a couple of ten-second uses of the flashlight to locate trail markers. Although it was quite dark by then, we still managed to get back to the Phoenicia-East Branch Trail without flashlight. We were back to the car before we expected, at 5:52, and managed to get back to Concord, NH, with 40 minutes left in 1984. We hiked about 15 miles with about 6000 feet of ascent in 8 hours and 20 minutes of actual hiking time: not too bad for a day's work.

Anyway, it's been fun, as you might have guessed from the length of this letter. Best wishes from my club to yours; unfortunately, I probably won't be able to attend your annual meeting this year, but will try to get there some year.

--Eugene S. Daniell, III, #498*

Enjoyed reading "Our First Catskill Weekend" by #484. Almost made me feel homesick for the CATSKILLS. After twenty years out here, the winter rains are still getting to me, and I start thinking of those many beautiful Catskill winter outings.

--Ted Wolfrum, #20, 206-789-3175
507 3rd Ave., Seattle, WA 98104

CATSKILL 3500 CLUB

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3 Primrose Hill, Rhinebeck, NY 12572
- 571 Harvey Wachtel 2/8/86 718-232-0520
1315 W. 7th St., Brooklyn, NY 11204
- 572 Joe Gardner, Jr. 3/7/87 518-439-1074
68 Carson Rd., Delmar, NY 12054
- 573 Michael Zollo 2/21/87 607-286-7641
R. D. 3, Box 503, Cooperstown, NY 13326
- 574 Bernard Mansbach 3/15/87 518-393-3475
2201 Lynnwood Dr., Schenectady, NY 12309

CATSKILL 3500 CLUB HIKES

May 2 NORTH DOME & SHERRILL A moderate bushwhack.

Distance: 8 mi. Ascent: 2600' Elev.: 3610', 3540' Order: 25, 30
Meeting Place: Jnct. Rts. 28 & 42 in Shandaken at 8:30
Leader: Ernest Mahlke (#72), P. O. Box 464, Cooperstown, NY 13326
607-547-9019

May 9 ROCKY Moderate trail hike from Denning and bushwhack up from the Neversink. Joint hike with Albany ADK.

Distance: 9 mi. Ascent: 1400' Elev.: 3508' Order: 34
Meeting Place: Call leader for details.
Leader: Jonathan Clement (#68), R.D. 1, Box 223, East Greenbush, NY
518-477-6602 12061

HIKES (continued)

- May 16 HUNTER A circular trip from Spruceton for all hikers.
 Distance: 7 mi. Ascent: 1940' Elev.: 4040' Order: 2
 Meeting Place: Sweet Sue's Bakery in Phoenicia at 8:30
 Leader: Paul Hoyt (#315), 9 Fairmount Blvd., Garden City, NY 11530
 516-775-2059
- May 30 KAATERSKILL HIGH PEAK & ROUNDTOP Moderate hike to high Peak and its seldom visited neighbor by trail and bushwhack.
 Distance: 8 mi. Ascent: 2110' Elev.: 3655', 3440' Order: 21
 Meeting Place: Warm's Restaurant in Tannersville at 8:00
 Leader: Hamilton Topping (#481), Box 503, Tannersville, NY 12485
 518-589-6203
- June 6 BALSAM LAKE MOUNTAIN A good beginner's trail hike from Quaker Clearing at moderate pace.
 Distance: 6.5 mi. Ascent: 1520' Elev.: 3720' Order: 16
 Meeting Place: Robin Hood Diner off Exit 96 (Livingston Manor) of NY Rt. 17 at 10:00 (9:00 for breakfast). Take exit ramp to T-junct. & turn R; go short way to 2nd T-junct. & turn L to diner.
 Leader: Arlene Scholer (#441), 17 Willow Road, New Hyde Park, NY 11040
 516-354-0231
- June 13 TABLE & PEEKAMOOSE Trail clearing hike. Come one, come all. If enough people show up we will go in from both ends & meet on top for a picnic.
 Distance: 10 mi. Ascent: 2800' Elev.: 3847', 3843' Order: 10, 11
 Meeting Place: Big Indian Post Office just W of jct. Rts. 28 & 47, 8:00
 Leader: Tim Watters (#268), 30 Wagner Ave., Wallington, NJ 07057
 201-777-5758
- June 14 KAATERSKILL HIGH PEAK Mostly on trail, some bushwhacking, marvelous views, dinner together for those who wish.
 (Sun.)
 Distance: 9 mi. Ascent: 1900' Elev.: 3655' Order: 21
 Meeting Place: Howard Johnson's at Saugerties Exit of NYS Thruway, 9:30
 Leader: Richard Wolff (#321), 648 Market St., Newark, NJ 07105
 201-344-1214 (days) 201-746-7415 (eves)
- June 27 WINDHAM HIGH PEAK A gentle trail hike at slow pace through beautiful territory.
 Distance: 6 mi. Ascent: 1800' Elev.: 3424' Order: 32
 Meeting Place: Catskill Exit NYS Thruway at 8:30
 Leader: Benedict (Uncle Ben) Morelli, (#466), 117 Makatom Dr., Cranford, NJ 07016
 201-276-2200 (6-9 p.m.)

ASSUMED RISK

Hiking involves certain inherent hazards, and persons participating do so at their own risk.



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Vol. XX, No. 3

S U M M E R 1 9 8 7

FIR TO DOUBLE TOP

I had started climbing the summer before as a way of getting out of the city on those gloriously sunny weekends. I had walked into a camping store, and walked out again with a set of Hikers' Regional Maps, and the suggestion that I hike the Pine Hill Trail south from Belle Ayre to Big Indian, spending the night at the Rider Hollow lean-to. The experience had whetted my appetite, and I had since made a good use of the maps and the DEC trails to top about fifteen of the Catskill peaks.

On my last hike, I had parked my rented car at Quaker Clearing, hiked N up the Dry Brook Trail to Balsam Lake Mt., and then followed the unmarked wood road E to the summit of Graham where I spent the night. The next morning, I had taken out a newly acquired compass, and heading off on a 200° bearing, I had bushwhacked my way down the mountain to the Beaver Kill and thence back to the car. I had freed myself from the trail.

Having tested my wings on a descent, I was now ambitious to do away with trails altogether and trust myself to maps and compass. Double Top was on my mind because of a chance conversation with another hiker, and I laid out the following route using my HRM. (It was not until my next trip that I discovered the joys of topos.) Starting at the southern trailhead of the Pine Hill-West Branch Trail, I would hike N to the Biscuit Brook lean-to. At the shelter I would strike a 42° bearing up Fir Mt. and from there, a 298° bearing would take me across to Big Indian. Continuing W of Big Indian, I would find the Pine Hill Trail again, which I would follow S to the point where the trail turns sharply E. Here I would strike off on a 270° bearing which would take me to Double Top. A bearing of 170° would take me down to Pigeon Brook and out to the highway, about a mile S of the car. I would camp whenever I felt like it.

On a bright, clear Saturday morning, I arrived at the Biscuit Brook lean-to to find four campers who had stayed overnight. The number of empties and the crew's collective hangover indicated that hiking was not on their day's agenda. The embankment there is about ten feet above the brook, and one of the campers had fallen over it the night before. He had been disabled and feared that his foot was broken. I looked at the foot and it was terribly swollen. He could move his toes a bit, and when I gently wiggled them, he experienced no sharp pains. I concluded that nothing was broken, that the ankle was badly sprained, and that with a little help from his friends, he should be able to make it to the trailhead, after soaking his foot for a while in cold water. They were relieved that I seemed to know that he would be all right. I was relieved to be on my way.

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The 42° bearing from the lean-to carried me straight up Fir in a direct ascent. Not having to climb at an angle to the hill's slope, my instinct to go up agreed nicely with my plot, and in what seemed no time at all, I was there. It had been a breeze. I had not missed a trail at all. In fact, it had been easier than using a trail: I never had to check for markers. More surprising than the ease of the ascent, however, was my discovery on the summit, of a metal canister nailed to a tree with a plaque: Catskill 3500 Club. Never having heard of the Club, I nevertheless registered, and fighting off swarms of flies, rested myself with an apple.

There is a saddle between Fir and Big Indian, and it humps up towards the N, much like a horseshoe with its open end to the S. I had two choices. I could bear 320°, which would take me on an angle NW to the saddle's notch, where I would turn W onto 288° for the climb up Big Indian's E ridge. This route approximated the shape of the horseshoe. My second choice was to cut straight across the horseshoe on a direct bearing from one peak to the other. This latter choice would entail dropping down into the Biscuit Brook gorge a further 250 feet below the height of the notch to the North. I did not know much about topography, or have much faith in my ability to read the land, but I did know that I hated to give up any more altitude than I had to, and with my full pack, I had no desire to surrender and then recapture that 250 feet. I chose the horseshoe.

As I set off on 320°, angling down from Fir with the mountain sloping up on my right and down on my left, I reasoned that I would know I had reached the saddle when the terrain to my left levelled off, and I would know I had crested it and was too far N, if the terrain sloped up on my left. In either case, I need only to turn left onto my second bearing of 288°, and I would be climbing up Big Indian. Unfortunately, I had not considered the rate at which I was losing altitude, and as I slowly circled down around the inside bowl of the horseshoe of Biscuit Brook gorge, the saddle, at 3500 feet, slipped by above me on my right. Before I knew it, I had totally disoriented myself.

When I finally stopped, I was on the W side of the gorge facing S, while thinking I was on the E side of the gorge facing N. I had been hiking for almost an hour, and I could not understand how I could still be angling off the side of Fir Mt. Where was that damn saddle? Checking my compass at last, I not only discovered that I was no longer on my bearing, but that 320° led straight into the slope to my right. Once in a while I have come up from the subway and been surprised to find myself completely turned around. This was much worse. I was on a trailless mountain, facing the wrong way, and the right way was leading straight into a mountainside that should have been about 135° to my right.

I did not know which way to go, so I just sat down to figure it out. It was a hot day, and I was getting awfully tense checking and rechecking that compass. Each time I hoped to find it changed, and

each time the compass pressed me to admit that I was the one who had erred and not it. And as I sat there struggling with that idea, it finally came to me. The only way I could be facing the wrong way was if I had hiked down and around in the horseshoe, missing the saddle completely. I was now on the far side of the gorge, sitting on the E side of Big Indian, S of the saddle. All I had to do was turn to my right and start to climb. Of course I would not know if I was correct until I hit the Pine Hill Trail on the far side of what I now assumed to be Big Indian, and at the moment, I was all too aware of how fallible my assumptions could be. It was with a lot of concern that I started to climb.

An hour's anxious hiking brought me over the mountain, and a short time later, much to my relief, I intersected the trail. Locating an appropriate site, I immediately set up camp. It had been a long day, and I had been drained by its events. Tomorrow I would move S on the trail, turn off where it swung E and head up Double Top. Tonight I would eat and sleep.

Well, after midnight it began to rain. I was roused to run a line between two near-by trees, and drape my oversized tarp over it. Staking the tarp down to form an inverted "V", and throwing my poncho over my pack, I moved my ground cloth and sleeping bag into the improvised tent and dozed off to the increasing patter of the rain.

The morning dawned clear, and in no time at all I had breakfasted, packed and hiked to my departure point on the Pine Hill trail. Heading off at 270°, I made for Double Top. I was alone, without a trail, and in my fantasy at least, hiking where perhaps no man had before. It was an experience that brought me as close to those pathfinders who had hiked these hills 300 years ago, as it did to those who hiked it yesterday. It is a perspective I've come to enjoy as one of the great pleasures of bushwhacking.

The crossing between Big Indian and Double Top is broad and open, as it drops down a gentle 300' before the steep ascent to Double Top. As I casually strolled along, heedless of my surroundings, a fawn broke cover not more than six steps ahead of me. It bounded off into the woods and was gone before I knew it. I was shocked by the suddenness and intimacy of the encounter; it had been a live deer, and as my heart regained its normal beat, I marvelled at my luck.

The climb up Double Top was strenuous, and as I struggled up its E face, I thought about a friend's suggestion that I set up a base camp and day-hike the peaks. It was an idea I had dismissed as unworthy of serious backpacking, but this bushwhack was giving me cause to reconsider his suggestion. It was very hot and the pack very heavy. Reaching the southern peak, I dropped in my tracks, thoroughly exhausted. The flies were terrible, and the weather was starting to turn quite nasty. Had I known that a register lay on the north peak, I would have gone for it. Hearing thunder, however, I thought it best to get off the mountain top. A herd path descends from the south peak of Double Top, and I gratefully accepted its winding ways. Light rains followed me down, the trail more or less discernable until it opened up into a series of logging roads that led down to Camp Wawayanda.

It had been a hike of many firsts for me: the first aid, the bushwhacking, the canister, getting lost, camping in the rain, and the deer.

It is only as I write this that I realize how many, and I am surprised with what nonchalance I changed into sneakers, and comfortably drove back to the city.

--Robert B. Silver, #539 212-595-3119
120 West 74 St., Apt. 5F, NY, NY 10023

THE BIG INDIAN-FIR COL

The saddle between Big Indian and Fir is the most dramatic illustration of the meaning of contour lines I have seen in the CATSKILLS. It is especially impressive if approached from the west when there are no leaves on the trees. The contours of a topographical map and the topography of the land practically funnel one in the direction of what looks like a bridge between the mountains. It is a little trickier to approach from the east. Sidehill walking can be avoided by going north along the spine of Fir for a quarter of a mile, and then turning toward the col.

--F. B. C.

RESOLUTION REGARDING SW HUNTER

At the annual meeting March 28, 1987, the following resolution was adopted by a vote of 69 YES, 31 NO, 1 blank.

RESOLVED, That the Catskill 3500 Club add this summit to the list of peaks required for membership; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Executive Committee of the Club be directed to devise a plan for the orderly implementation of the above.

At a meeting of the Executive Committee June 13, 1987, it was decided to fix the date of April 1, 1990. for the new requirement. Before that date, SW Hunter will be optional; after that date it will be required for membership. Meanwhile, a canister and register will be placed on the mountain, and past president Ray Donahue has been authorized to apply to the U. S. Board on Geographic Names for a suitable name for the mountain. (It was President Donahue in 1969 who made the successful application for the names Friday and Sherrill, old names for two peaks that were nameless on the current maps in 1969.)

LETTERS

The Over-the-Hill Gang has triumphed again. Last March 22 old #92 finally reached the canister on Couchy, thereby completing the Adirondack 46 in winter.

It was a solo trip 3 days after my 67th birthday, my only winter solo in the Adirondacks, and my 4th attempt at Couchy, dating back to February of '83. And according to the register I was the only one in there this winter, which was a surprise.

I have already sent my report to Grace and entered my claim to have reached this goal at the oldest age. Little things like this take on a special significance for us seniors. I hope to follow in your footsteps and go around the 3500 again when and if I reach age 70.

--Sam Steen, #92

CATSKILL 3500 CLUB

575	Janine P. Vega 3/14/87 Box 162, Bearsville, NY 12409	914-688-7068
576	Warren F. Hale 3/20/87 443H Dreahook Rd., Whitehouse Station, NJ 08889	201-236-9543
577	Marlene Alexander 3/21/87 R. D. 2, Box 512, Red Hook, NY 12571	
578	Christina Insler 3/14/87 1 Highview Ave., Bergenfield, NJ 07621	201-384-9531
579	Jackson H. Kesner, Jr. 2/14/87 R. D. 1, Box 7955, Grantsville, PA 17028	717-469-7127
580	David L. Wilder 1/24/87 210 Washington Ave., Kingston, NY 12401	914-338-4757
581	Dr. Victor J. Schwartz 5/14/87 25 Windgate Dr., New City, NY 10956	914-638-1710
582	Julius Landau 5/23/87 504 Grand St., Apt. 61, New York, NY 10002	212-673-6629
583	Michael Calenti 5/24/87 23 Fairview Ave., Poughkeepsie, NY 12601	914-452-4578
584	Dennis Daut, M.D. 5/24/87 337 Downs St., Ridgewood, NJ 07450	201-445-1017
585	Frank L. Pilar 5/28/87 26 Newmarket Rd., Durham, NH 03824	603-868-5326
586	Patrick Clark 5/30/87 542 76 St., Brooklyn, NY 11209	718-680-9487
587	Samuel B. Hagner, M.D. 5/28/87 123 Madbury Rd., Durham, NH 03824	603-868-7473
588	Steffen Krachmer 5/24/87 Box 534, Hammer Lane, Walkill, NY 12589	914-564-4293
589	Bruce, B. W. Ross 6/13/87 367 High St., Closter, NJ 07624	
590	Wayne H. Foote 6/14/87 37-68 64 St., Woodside, NY 11377	718-335-3741
591	Paul Wulff 6/13/87 Box 213, Fox Hollow Rd., Shandaken, NY 12480	914-688-7559
592	John Swanson 6/13/87 40 Jacob St., Bloomfield, NJ 07003	201-338-5996

WINTER MEMBERS

168	Herbert Coles	172	William Schultz	177	George Form, JR.
169	June Fait	173	Marilyn Varley	178	Richard Dabal
170	Charles Goodrich	174	Alan M. Via	179	Christina Insler
171	Peter Ricci	175	Ray Reardon	180	Harvey Wachtel
		176	Jack Driller		

1987 OFFICERS AND CHAIRMEN

President, Cyrus Whitney; Past President, John Kennedy; First Vice President, James Stone; Second Vice President, Paul Hoyt; Secretary, Roman Hrycun; Treasurer, David Clapper; Annual Meeting, Roy Messaros; Canisters, Lawrence Leslie; Conservation, Ray Donahue; Membership, Elinore Leavitt; Outings, William Lawson; Search & Rescue, Jonathan Clement; Subscriptions, Cyrus Whitney; "The Catskill Canister," Franklin Clark; Trails, Timothy Watters; Winter Weekend, Walter Gregory.

THE PERIPATETIC PORCUPINE

Our Putnam County cousin reports that Walter Gregory, #18, has retired as Corridor Manager for the Appalachian Trail in that county. He not only selected most of the route, but is given credit for the rock steps at Anthony's Nose, Denning Hill, Mt. Storm, and Hosner Mountain. We had not known that our great bushwhacker was leading a double life. * * * * Kathleen Delphin-Balthazar, #520, and Victor Heitzman, #545, were married at Medway, NY, June 3. It appears that their friendship survived A Lesson in Orienteering (Vol. XIX, No. 3). * * * * Franklin and Winifred Clark, #33, #289, walked several segments of the Coast Path in Cornwall, in May, when the wild flowers are at their best. In England the word climbing is used only for rock climbing. If you use your hands to get up a ledge, it is scrambling. If you use only your feet, it is walking.

CATSKILL 3500 CLUB HIKES

Sept. 12 TWIN & INDIAN HEAD A long but moderate trail hike and bushwhack.

Distance: 10 mi. Ascent: 2300' Elev.: 3640', 3573' Order: 22, 29
 Meeting Place: Warm's Restaurant in Tannersville at 8:00
 Leader: William Lawson (#78), P. O. Box 2468, Albany, NY 12220
 518-438-7783

Sept. 19 BLACKHEAD RANGE A long moderate trail hike.

Distance: 8 mi. Ascent: 2640' Elev.: 3980', 3940', 3940' Order: 3,4,5
 Meeting Place: The Sugar Maples in Maplecrest at 8:30
 Leader: Tim Watters (#268), 30 Wagner Ave., Wallington, NJ 07057
 201-777-5758

Sept. 26 BEARPEN & VLY A moderate bushwhack.

Distance: 6 mi. Ascent: 1500' Elev.: 3529', 3600' Order: 31, 28
 Meeting Place: Municipal parking lot in Fleishmans across from Library
 Leader: Ernest Mahlke (#72), P. O. Box 464, Cooperstown, at 9:00
 607-432-2583 NY 13326

Oct. 3 PANTHER BUSHWHACK Fairly strenuous.

Distance: 8 mi. Ascent: 2300' Elev.: 3720' Order: 17
Meeting Place: Big Indian P.O. just W of Jnct. Rts. 28 & 47 at 8:30
Leader: Rev. Ray Donahue (#23), St. Mary's Church, Downsville, NY 13755
607-363-2565

Oct. 10 SLIDE ON FRIDAY MOUNTAIN A strenuous bushwhack.

Distance: 6 mi. Ascent: 2400' Elev.: 3694' Order: 18
Meeting Place: Call leader for details.
Leader: Jonathan Clement (#68), R. D. 2, Box 223, East Greenbush, NY
518-477-6602 12061

Oct. 17 DOUBLETOP A moderate bushwhack from Frost Valley.

Distance: 6 mi. Ascent: 1860' Elev.: 3860' Order: 9
Meeting Place: Sweet Sue's Bakery in Phoenicia at 8:30
Leader: Bleeker Staats (#272), R. D. 3, Box 192, Red Hook, NY 12571
914-758-6309

Oct. 24 SLIDE, CORNELL & WITTENBERG Strenuous trail circuit hike.

Distance: 15 mi. Ascent: 2700' Elev.: 4180, 3860, 3780 Order: 1,9,14
Meeting Place: Call leader early for details
Leader: Larry Leslie (#208), 914-431-5876, days 7:30 - 3:40

Oct. 31 SHAWANGUNKS A long hike at moderate pace with North Jersey
(Sun.) ADK on Long Path from Dashner's via Verveeder-
kill Falls & Lake Awosting to Jenny Lane. Supper at Brauhaus
for those who wish.

Distance: 14 mi. Ascent: 1000'
Meeting Place: Jenny Lane parking area, Rts. 44, 55, 4.9 mi. E of Rt. 209
or 1.1 mi. W of entrance to Lake Minnewaska at 8:30
Leader: Fred Schmelzer (#140), R. D. 1, Box 433A, Pine Bush, NY 12566
914-361-3629
Coordinator: Stella Green (#418), 201-391-9410 (evenings)

Nov. 7 BALSAM CAP A strenuous bushwhack.

Distance: 8 mi. Ascent: 2800' Elev.: 3623' Order: 23
Meeting Place: Jnct. Rts. 28 & 28A in Boiceville at 8:30
Leader: Roman Hrycun (#314), R. D. 1, Box 419B, Rhinebeck, NY 12572
914-876-2451

Nov. 14 RUSK Moderate bushwhack from Spruceton.

Distance: 5 mi. Ascent: 1600' Elev.: 3680' Order: 20
Meeting Place: Jnct. Rts. 28 & 42 in Shandaken at 9:00
Leader: William Riemvis (#171), Oliveria, NY 12462 914-254-4403

Nov. 16 - Dec. 8 HUNTING SEASON (firearms) No scheduled hikes.

ASSUMED RISK

Hiking involves certain inherent hazards, and persons participating do so at their own risk.

the catskill canister

Vol. XX, No. 4

A U T U M N 1 9 8 7

ENCOUNTER AT SHERRILL

One day last September I set out on a solo bushwhack to knock off my 27th & 28th peaks. From the access area off Rt. 42, I set my compass for a direct line to the top of Sherrill, although I knew I would use the creek for navigation. The wide trail I intercepted paralleled the north side of the stream for a while and then veered off to the left. Not knowing its destination, I bushwhacked on course, slowed by the jumbled terrain along the slope of the brook's V-shaped valley. After traveling that way for quite some time, I crossed the creek, seeking better footing. There was a trail there, built long ago, and judging from the placement of rocks, with considerable work. It was not long before the trail met a side stream. On the other side of this streamlet, the contour broadened and the understory became a field of bright green nettles. Conspicuous evidence of the trail vanished, but a line of nettles had been trampled recently, apparently by a group of hikers. I wondered when, since today was Tuesday and it had rained all weekend. Knowing the summit was up ahead and a little to the left, I shifted course, following a steep little stream, flowing lively from the recent rains.

In a wet seepage area, the imprint of a foot caught my attention. Picking up a leaf, I expected to see a lug sole print. Instead it was a wide, stubby footprint with toes. "Good size bear," I thought to myself, touching the toe marks. The steep sharp impressions indicated that they must have been made that day. Gazing around at the tall slim tree trunks and the seemingly inedible low growth, I wondered how the big animals found enough to eat here. Nearby was what had to be a bear scat, but it was atypical, as if the bear had diarrhea. It was full of wild black cherries. But the odd thing was that most of the skins were intact. Perhaps the bear had thrown up. As I climbed I noticed more tracks and fairly fresh scat. There were toe and claw marks where the moss had been peeled away during a scramble up the rocks. Now and then I'd see little toes. Since it had rained hard all day Sunday, I knew that the tracks had been made since then.

Closer to the top, I checked for tracks under an overhang of one of the numerous sandstone outcroppings: a tin can lid, a couple of old cans, 2 smashed liquor bottles, a stash of gathered wood, some reflective material stuffed into a natural shelf, only bird tracks. Hiker or hunter? Most slobs in either category were not this ambitious. At the canister, the log confirmed that a group had been up here Saturday. Big letters on the top of one page said "Rainy." Their other page was headed "Rain!"

Now I set the compass for a line to North Dome. With the mountain in sight, I stopped to pick some blackberries, surprised that the bears had not gotten them. A snorty whistle broke the silence. Casually I glanced over to watch a young buck bound out of sight. Once on North

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NEW EDITOR - The next issue of THE CATSKILL CANISTER will be edited by Douglas H. Robins, 33 Trailsend Drive, Canton, CT 06019. All articles, letters, and news should be sent to him. Membership matters will still go to Elinore Leavitt, and subscriptions to Cy Whitney.

Dome, I meandered around until I found the canister. Part of the party on Saturday had made it there.

Reversing the compass direction, I knew that heading should take me back to Sherrill, but it just did not seem right. Pulling out the map and replotting the course confirmed that same direction. Unlike the trip to North Dome, I could not see Sherrill for the foliage. It did not appear as if any peak was directly ahead, but I followed the compass heading on faith. Back on Sherrill, I took a compass heading that would lead me to just above the old trail. It was now ten minutes to five; the round trip from Sherrill to North Dome had taken three hours. The route passed cherry trees small enough for bears to eat from. There were more tracks, and more fecal material, but nowhere did I see the claw marks on the trees that male bears make.

I had seen black bears on numerous occasions when I lived in upper Michigan, working for the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, but I had never seen any in the CATSKILLS. They are timid animals and it is unlikely that a hiker would ever see one. In Michigan, I used to drive the back roads with a 300 mm. telephoto on the camera. When I did see a bear, in the seconds it took to stop the car and raise the camera to my eye, the creature would be gone. Sometimes I tried to follow for a ways, always amazed at how such a huge animal could vanish so quickly. The only time I could have gotten a good picture was when I drove around a bend in the back part of the refuge. There were a mother and twin cubs. One 'woof' from mom sent the kids scrambling up a tree. I decided not to stick around for a photo session.

I was remembering these things as I traveled down to the south edge of the field of nettles, when I heard a branch snap. Looking below and behind me I marveled at the tall black body standing on her hind legs staring at me. She was about 220 feet away. Then a cute little black head popped above the nettles, then another one.

On a signal which I did not hear, the cubs started running. I expected them to bolt up a tree, but they did not. One took off in a direction about 11:00 from me, but the other was running directly toward me through the three-foot-tall nettles. Then it veered off, shooting by me about 30 feet away. It disappeared past some thicker trees, where the slope became steeper. It surprised me that the little guys were still so small. Fat and squatty and just plain cute, you might have stuffed the two of them in a big garbage sack--if you could have.

Now I faced the interesting situation of having to walk between mother and cub. Across the sea of nettles the bears had performed their almost magical disappearing act. I proceeded slowly. The net-

tles obscured the footing on haphazard rocks covered with soggy moss that slipped off under the weight of a boot. And I kept an eye out for mama bear.

I'd like to report on an eventful encounter that ensued. But unfortunately, or fortunately, I can not. The dimming light had transformed much of the forest floor to shadow, and I did not see the shadow-like animals again. Picking up the old trail, I made great time back to the car where the real unfortunate encounter occurred-- a flat tire.

--Hilma L. Volk*

P.O. Box 343, White Lake, NY 12786

NEW TRAILS ON OLD MOUNTAINS

While I was working as a ski instructor several years ago, there were days when business was slow. This gave me the chance to teach myself how to ski down a lift-serviced ski slope using cross country skis. This is sometimes referred to as telemark skiing, although the telemark turn is only one of many turns that can be used when skiing downhill on such light equipment. In the beginning there were bruises on top of bruises, but I had read all three books available on the subject of cross country downhill skiing (XCDH) and I knew there was a way. Next came an equipment design breakthrough in the form of cross country skis with steel edges. These skis provided a quantum leap in the control of my descents.

Every spare moment I had, I spent working on technique. A group of three came to spend much time skiing together discussing and refining our skills. We went north to the Adirondack and Vermont mountains to meet other XCDH skiers and to attend clinics on the subject. We were all honing our new-found, exciting skills. One day I asked a XCDH skier, "Don't you get tired of skiing this same area day after day?" He replied, "Listen, in one day I get more downhill runs and therefore more practice than I would in a whole winter of climbing up a mountain to ski down." His answer made great sense: practice at ski areas and then take those skills into the outback. That is exactly what our group has done.

Now we are skiing terrain that we would have considered unskiable before. Logging roads, jeep trails, and hiking trails have been abandoned. With steel-edged XCDH skis, descents are being made through the eastern mountain timber in the Adirondacks and Vermont, and now in the Catskill Park. Certain conditions do make for a better day, while brush and hobblebush make for tough going. Hemlock groves generally have much less snow cover underneath. As the season progresses, however, more and more rocks and downed wood disappear as the snow pack increases, thus providing skiable terrain where none existed earlier.

Sherrill and Fir mountains in the Catskill Park are big-timber mountains, and we have made what we believe to be the first ski descents of these trailless peaks. To ski Sherrill, we started from the NY State parking lot on Route 42 near Bushnellville, and crossed the unnamed creek in back of the lot. Then, following a compass bearing of 80 degrees, we ascended to the summit on a broad ridge. Our excit-

* President, Sullivan County Outdoor Club

ing descent followed the same route down through the big trees, with only a couple of rock bands to contend with. To ski Fir Mountain- after obtaining permission to cross private land on Maben Hollow Road near the hamlet of Oliverea- we followed a 242 degree bearing to the summit ridge, changing to a 192 degree heading on the ridge. For our descent, snow conditions were deep fluffy powder. What a great trip!

A third descent, a small part of which is familiar to many skiers, was to climb Belleayre Mountain to the former site of the fire tower, and to start the descent to Pine Hill from there. Skiers generally follow the red trail to the blue trail, but we left the red trail at 3200' and skied a 32 degree course toward Mill St. in the village. This gave us 1675' of exciting descent through the woods.

The rewards of such ski trips are manifold. To look back up at your tracks down through the woods, off of a headwall, or through rock ledges brings a sense of achievement rarely felt in our advanced world. To ski something that has never been skied before, and to share this with your companions, is great! This is skiing as it should be: a recreation of the old days, not manicured, groomed slopes.

Climbing skins for your skis are very helpful. Occasionally, snowshoes are needed for the climb. Safety and weather considerations are paramount, as are map and compass skills. Packs contain ski-repair kits and the necessary equipment and food to overnight if necessary. Therefore, winter camping skills help too.

2000' vertical descents rarely occur at lift-serviced areas, but there are many Catskill mountain descents of this magnitude. The next time you are at the intersection of Route 28 and the Oliverea Road at Big Indian, look at the predominate mountain to your left. That is Balsam Mountain and its slopes are a 2000' drop. The skiing possibilities are endless.

--Howard Adriance, #327 914-338-4603
325 Sharon Lane, Kingston, NY 12401

CATSKILL 3500 CLUB

- | | | |
|-----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
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| 594 | Peter C. Van de Water 7/18/87
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R. D. 1, Box 314A, West Hurley, NY 12491
- 602 Susi Desy 8/23/87 914-679-9007
87 Wittenberg Rd., Bearsville, NY 12409
- 603 George Hallenbeck 8/30/87 518-456-0774
2 Ildra Lane, Albany, NY 12203
- 604 Richard E. Barr 9/5/87 212-877-2694
205 W. 86 st., New York, NY 10024
- 605 Robert M. Wu 9/7/87 914-679-2447
15 Niles Dr., Woodstock, NY 12498
- 606 Ernest C. Laug 9/13/87 203-348-3993
33 Vincent Ave., Stamford, CT 06905
- 607 Carole Linkiewicz 6/28/87 201-433-8820
19 Exeter Rd., Jersey City, NJ 07305
- 608 Sharon Roehrig 10/9/87 201-454-5804
45 Canterbury Rd., Phillipsburg, NJ 08865
- 609 Raymond B. Held 10/24/87 518-371-4867
33 Barkwood Lane, Clifton Park, NY 12065

PAST PRESIDENTS

C. W. Spangenberg 1963-66*; Brad Whiting 66-67; William Hentschel 67-69; Ray Donahue 69-71; Will Merritt 71-73; Allan Wirth 73-75; Elinore Leavitt 75-77; Franklin Clark 77-78; Roy Messaros 78-80; Jonathan Clement 80-81; Deborah Glynn 81-83; Fred Schmelzer 83-85; John Kennedy 85-86

THE PERIPATETIC PORCUPINE

Our New Hampshire cousin reports that wedding bells have rung for Deane and Deanna (Long) Morrison, #564, #565. * * * * Norm Smith, #199, completed the 54 Colorado 14,000-Footers on Pyramid Mountain 9/1/87. * * * * H. Neil Zimmerman, #306, is now president of the NY-NJ Trail Conference, and Howard Dash, #458, is treasurer. * * * * Our editor's error in the last issue has subjected Sam Steen, #92, to the slings and arrows of those who noted that 22 March does not qualify as a winter climb. Sam's letter was dated 22 March; his climb was 18 March. * * * * Tim Hauserman, #512, is living and hiking in the Sierra Nevada. * * * * Al Dieffenbach, #244, climbed 7402' Blue Mountain Peak (the highest in the Carribean) on Jamaica in March. In August he backpacked with a group for a week on the wildest section of the Bruce Trail (Canada) across the Tobermory Peninsula, between Lake Huron and Georgian Bay.

NEW ADDRESS

U.S.G.S. Map Distribution Center, Box 25286, Denver, CO 80225

* Organizing Committee until charter date of 1/1/66

WINTER HIKING IN THE CATSKILLS

December through April, the windchill on exposed ridges may reach 50 below zero. If you do not know whether your boots, socks, pants, sweaters, jacket, mittens, and hat will be adequate, telephone the hike leader for advice. If you cannot buy, rent, or borrow snowshoes, avoid the mountains in winter. Either full or instep crampons should be carried. Properly dressed, properly equipped, and in proper physical condition, a hiker can enjoy the CATSKILLS in what many people consider the most beautiful season of the year.

CATSKILL 3500 CLUB HIKES

Nov. 16 - Dec. 8 HUNTING SEASON (firearms) No scheduled hikes.

Dec. 12 HUNTER Moderate circular, via Becker Hollow and Myrtle Brook. Dedicated to the late John Nicoll.

Prior winter hiking experience required. Winter gear may be necessary. May add bushwhack to Southwest Hunter.

Distance: 7 mi. Ascent: 2300' Elev.: 4040' Order: 2

Meeting Place: Parking lot behind Bakery/Pharmacy in Phoenicia, 8:15.

Leader: Friedel Schunk (#248), 53 Christopher St., Ramsey, NJ 07446
201-825-9578 (8:00 to 10:00 p.m.)

Jan. 9 RUSK A moderate bushwhack; joint hike with Albany ADK.

Distance: 5 mi. Ascent: 1600' Elev.: 3680' Order: 21

Meeting Place: Call leader for details. 518-439-3514

Leader: Alan Via (#429), 27 Brookview Ave., Delmar, NY 12054

Jan. 22-24 CATSKILL WINTER WEEKEND AT ALPINE INN.

Jan. 23 SLIDE A required winter peak; ideal for beginning snowshoers; easy grades; superb scenery.

Distance: 6 mi. Ascent: 1650' Elev.: 4180' Order: 1

Meeting Place: Location of the Winter Weekend at 9:00.

Leader: John Kennedy (#247), P. O. Box 71, Rhinebeck, NY 12572
914-876-2055 (work) 914-876-3269 (home)

Jan. 30 BALSAM A required winter peak. Moderate trail hike.

Distance: 6 mi. Ascent: 1600' Elev.: 3600' Order: 28

Meeting Place: Sweet Sue's Bakery in Phoenicia at 8:00.

Leader: Fred Schmelzer (#140), R. D. 1, Box 433A, Pine Bush, NY 12566
914-361-3629

Feb. 6 BLACKHEAD Moderate trail hike to a required winter peak.

Distance: 5 mi. Ascent: 1780' Elev.: 3940' Order: 5

Meeting Place: Call leader for details. 516-775-2059

Leader: Paul Hoyt (#315), 9 Fairmount Blvd., Garden City, NY 11530

Feb. 13 BALSAM LAKE & GRAHAM Moderate trail hike.

Distance: 8 mi. Ascent: 2488' Elev.: 3725', 3868' Order: 17, 7

Meeting Place: Sweet Sue's Bakery in Phoenicia at 8:00.

Leader: Larry Leslie (#209), 19 William St., Catskill, NY 12414
914-431-5876 (days, 7:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.)

Feb. 20 SKI TOUR TO DUTCHER NOTCH Scenic and easy trip from Camp
 Harriman. (If poor skiing
 conditions prevail, we will snowshoe to Stoppel Point.)
 Distance: 5 mi. Ascent: 400' Elev.: 2500'
 Meeting Place: Warm's Restaurant in Tannersville at 9:00.
 Leader: Hamilton Topping (#481), Box 503, Tannersville, NY 12485
 518-589-6203

HIKES cont'd. on p. 8

ASSUMED RISK

Hiking involves certain inherent hazards, and persons participat-
 ing do so at their own risk.

CATSKILL WINTER WEEKEND

January 22, 23, 24, 1988 - The Alpine Inn, Oliverea, NY 12462, 4 miles
 on County Rt. 47, south of Rt. 28 at Big Indian, NY. Tel. 914-254-5026

Joint weekend with the New York section of The Green Mountain Club. If
 anyone needs one or two winter peaks, notify Walter Gregory, 8 Wall Ave.,
 Valhalla, NY 10595, before Jan. 10 and he will try to arrange for a
 leader. Saturday dinner is available by reservation only.

Reservations: \$25 per person must arrive by January 3. Make check
 payable to "The Alpine Inn" and mail to The Alpine Inn.

All rooms have twin beds. All rooms have private baths. Rates are
 based on double occupancy. Please specify preference of roommate,
 if any. Room assignments will be in the order of receipt of reser-
 vations. Saturday night only accomodations can be arranged if avail-
 able. Extra dinner Friday night and Sunday afternoon - \$14.50 plus tax
 & gratuity. Extra dinner Saturday night - \$16.00 plus tax & gratuity.
 \$3.00 will be added for Sat. p.m. "Happy Hour." Trail lunch - \$6.70.

.....
 2 nights = 2 lodgings, 2 breakfasts, 1 dinner (tax & gratuity included)

Deluxe accomodations have 2 double beds, standard have 2 twin beds.

Deluxe.....des Alps	_____ \$102.00	Edelweiss	_____ \$102.00
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Standard....Ski Hut	_____ \$ 89.00	Edelweiss	_____ \$ 89.00
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\$ _____ deposit enclosed for _____ persons. Roommate _____

_____ Friday evening dinner. _____ Sunday afternoon dinner.

Signed _____ Address _____

Phone (_____) _____

HIKES (cont'd.)

Mar. 5 SHERRILL A moderate bushwhack.

Distance: 8 mi. Ascent: 2200' Elev.: 3540' Order: 31

Meeting Place: Call leader for details. 914-876-2451

Leader: Roman Hrycun (#314), R. D. 2, Box 419B, Rhinebeck, NY 12572.

TOW AWAY WARNING

At least one member had his car towed away by the Town of Hunter when he was parked last winter on the Platte Clove Road. It is illegal to park on the pavement, or in any place used as a turn-around by a snowplow. A long-handled snow shovel, a bag of grit or sand, and an old burlap bag or two are recommended.

LONG PATH LINK

The missing section of the Long Path between the Platte Clove and the Kaaterskill Clove (pronounced Caught, not Cat) has been cleared and flagged with aqua-colored blazes and plastic markers. It follows the proposed route indicated on Trail Map #41, NY-NJ Conference, 1985 Edition. The new route starts on the snowmobile trail near the Police Camp, and ends on Malden Ave. in Palenville, about 1/2 mile SE of the junction with 23A. Unfortunately, there is no parking place on Malden Ave., but through hikers have to walk around the roads to the next section anyway, and there is room for two or three cars where the trail leaves the north side of 23A, about 1/3 mile E of junction.

It began in 1931 when Vincent J. Schaefer of the Mohawk Valley Hiking Club of Schenectady proposed that New York State establish a Long Path similar to the Long Trail in Vermont. In 1960, Robert Jensen of the Ramapo Ramblers urged revival of the project and began field work from New York City to the CATSKILLS. In the past ten years, the Trail Conference has re-vitalized the effort to complete this state-wide trail and a complete 216-mile trail now exists from the George Washington Bridge to Windham. The Conference publishes a Guide to the Long Path with maps.