

# the catskill canister



October—December 2013

Volume 46 Number 4

*Inside this issue...*

Ghosts, Aliens, and a Halloween Night Hike!

*Aliens Attack the Catskills*

*By Gaty Lovett, PhD*

## TRAIL MAX A BLEND OF NEWS AND NOTES FROM THE CLUB

### *The King Post Bridge Replacement Project*

At 10 a.m. on Saturday morning June 30<sup>th</sup> there was no bridge over the Platte Clove stream on the Long Path. By 6 p.m. the new bridge was in place, with hikers crossing safely and some tired and very satisfied volunteers headed home. It never ceases to amaze me how much work can be done in such a short period of time! This collaborative project took place on the Catskill Center for Conservation and Development's Platte Clove Preserve property where the Long Path crosses the stream. The historic King Post bridge failed earlier this spring rendering the dicey stream crossing the only option.

On Saturday, members of the CCCD, the NYSDEC, the NYNJTC and the 3500 Club started out at 10 a.m. with a stack of materials (placed previously be the Senterman family - our invaluable secret resource). The plan came together perfectly, the weather cooperated and by 6 p.m. hikers were crossing the new King Post Bridge!

Many thanks to all of the volunteers

*Continued on page 3*

You think ghosts and goblins are scary? Picture this: Alien creatures infiltrate your home. One variety latches on to your skin and sucks out your internal fluids. Another type burrows under your skin and eats you from the inside out. A third type causes large blisters to form all over your body. Science fiction? Nope! This is what the trees in the Catskill forest are experiencing right now, and it is truly frightening.



*Up close and personal with an Asian Longhorned Beetle. Photo by James E. Appleby, University of Illinois*

The alien invaders are insects and diseases introduced from other continents, brought here usually either hidden in wood packing material (such as pallets) or hitchhiking on live plants imported for horticultural purposes. In their native lands, these insects and pathogens generally do little harm because the trees have evolved over millennia to tolerate and resist them. But when they are suddenly brought to North America, they find trees that have not evolved to tolerate them, and the pests have a field day. This problem is not new—in the last century chestnut blight and Dutch elm disease decimated two of our major tree species—but it is increasing because of the burgeoning volume of global trade.

*(Continued on page 3)*

## Views from the Top

### The President's Column

This is supposed to be the spooky issue. Many people already know this, but we have a 'spooky forest' in the Catskills, on Windham High Peak. It's a grove of Norway Spruce that was planted by the CCC back in the 30s. They have grown up to impressive height and they block out most of the light, even on a sunny day. It can look pretty gloomy in there when it's foggy, or at night. So if you want to get the full effect, wait for a 'dark and stormy night' this fall, and go for a hike up Windham High Peak. Turn your headlamp off and try to walk from one end to the other - if you're really brave! Wait! What was that?! A hand?! A ghost?! Aaahhh! Ruuuuun!! Buwaahahahahahaha!

Speaking of scary, recently Laurie and I met a large group of young men plodding up Westkill, as we descended. One had a pack, some had water bottles, but several had nothing but the clothes on their back! I was tempted to tell them they looked woefully under prepared, but it was a perfect day, there was no threat of rain, and they all seemed to be doing fine. I kept my mouth shut and just said 'Hi' a few times. Did I do the right thing? Would they have turned back in shame if I had lectured them, (surely not), or would they have mocked an old man? Probably, at least after we had parted company. This does make me wonder what is the best way to get the word out about safe hiking, and respect for the environment? More on that later. Enjoy the Fall and be safe! Tom Rankin - President ☘



Photo by Connie Sciutto

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The Catskill Canister is published four times yearly by the Catskill 3500 Club, Inc. for \$10.00 a year. Articles, not previously published, of less than 1100 words on hiking, essays, or poetry, should be sent to [editor@catskill-3500-club.org](mailto:editor@catskill-3500-club.org).

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Nominal dates for receiving the Canister are:  
 Mar 15, Jun 15, Sep 15, and Dec 15.

#### **Conservation Corner—**

##### *A Note from our Conservation Chair, Carol White*

Pesticides chemically related to nicotine known as neonicotinoids are thought to cause bee colony collapse disorder and to impact a vast range of wildlife. Half of all honeybees exposed to just 5 nanograms of these pesticides die. These poisons are absorbed by a crop and remain as the plants grow. Residue blows off as dust and enters the soil for up to 19 years, accumulating with each annual application and making soil more toxic. The entire food chain becomes affected, as birds and mammals eat worms and insects. These pesticides are also spread over pastures and parks and the good news is that some of it is washed out; the bad news is, it goes into rivers and groundwater. Studies show that even low concentrations of these pesticides wipe out half the invertebrate species in rivers. The European Union passed a 2-year ban on these poisons in April to study the risks and Save America's Pollinators Act would do likewise. Contact your Congressman to support Save America's Pollinators Act. Too many are more concerned about protecting pesticide companies' profits than protecting the natural world.☘

*Aliens Attack The Catskills continued from page 1*

The Northeast (and New York State in particular) is ground zero for these pest and pathogen invasions, because we are close to ports of international trade and because we have many types of trees in common with Europe and Asia, the source of most of our invaders.

The list of recent scary arrivals is long and getting longer. The hemlock woolly adelgid, a small aphid-like insect from Asia that kills hemlocks by sucking the fluid from their twigs, has infested hemlock trees in all of the major Catskill river valleys and is likely to spread to the uplands in the near future. The beech bark disease, a combination of a scale insect and a bark-blistering fungus, was introduced from Europe and is ubiquitous throughout the Catskills. It has infected over 95% of the beech trees in the region and has killed most of the larger trees, so that beech trees over 20 inches in diameter are hard to find. The emerald ash borer is a small green beetle introduced from Asia that has spread into the Catskills in the last few years. It burrows into ash trees, consuming the live tissue just under the bark. It is lethal to ash trees, and most scientists expect all ash trees in the Catskills to die from this insect within the next few decades. Another invader, the Asian Long-horned Beetle, has not yet been observed in the Catskills, but there have been outbreaks in New York City and New Jersey, so the likelihood of its getting here is high. An ongoing outbreak of this insect in Worcester, Massachusetts has required the removal of over 30,000 trees from that city. Its favorite food? Maples, which are the dominant tree species in the Catskills.

What can be done to stop the alien invasion? Yard trees can usually be kept free from insect pests by judicious use of pesticides, but widespread use of pesticides in the forest would be both impractical and unwise. It is very difficult to eradicate invasive species that have already established themselves in the region. However, we can help to slow the spread of those that are currently invading. Wood-boring beetles such as the emerald ash borer are often transported in firewood, so one key point is to not move firewood around. If you are going camping and need firewood, buy it near the campground.

Many insects and diseases are imported on live plants, so another thing that you can do to help this problem is to buy only native plants. Consumer demand for non-native plants fuels the plant importation industry, and with it comes the risk of new invasions.

Ultimately we need to try to stop these pests before they enter the country, and that requires increased federal spending on port inspections and tighter regulations on the live plant trade and on treatment of wood packing material. This is an “immigration” issue that would truly benefit from increased “border control.” To make this happen, our federal legislators need to know that this is a major problem that is affecting the economy and forest health in the Catskills, that the problem is caused by lax federal regulations on imports, and it can only be solved when Washing-

ton finds the will (and the cash!) to solve it. The most effective action you can take is to write to your Senators and Congressional representatives and make your voice heard.

*Gary Lovett, Ph.D., a Senior Scientist with the Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies in Millbrook, NY, studies the ecology of Catskill forests. ☼*



Overlook Mountain House Photo by Larry Swayne

*Trail Mix Continued from page 1*

who came and helped out and accomplished so much in such a short period of time!! We are forever indebted to each of you for all you do out there so quietly, particularly Mr. Pete Senterman!

Check our 3500 Club’s Facebook page for pictures.

## SAVE THE DATE!

Be sure to set aside the weekend of January 24th for the fun-filled annual 3500 Club Winter Weekend! As in the past 2 years, it will be held at the Frost Valley YMCA. Contact Maria Bedo for further details.

## Just a Reminder

When you’re out on a club hike, perusing the Club’s yahoo group, or just chatting with other hikers at a trail junction, you might hear someone mention **The Rules**. The top brass here at the 3500 Club are always recommending that all hikers follow all **The Rules** for hiking and camping – but what if you don’t know what they are? Never fear, the Catskill Canister is here to give you a quick and dirty run down.

**Group size:** keep groups small. How small do we suggest? The Club limits all our hikes to 12 participants total. All groups of over 20 for any event require a special use permit. Need more details for a specific hike? Check the DEC website or contact the ranger. **Gotta go?** Step off the trail to relieve yourself – WAY off the trail.

Never go in water. Carry a lightweight plastic trowel or some other tool for burying your waste and any TP you use. If you have ever encountered someone else’s waste you know how unpleasant this is. Don’t be that guy (or gal). Get off the trail and bury it and

*Continued on page 9*

## Rambles and Brambles: Hike Schedule October - December 2013

**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.**

**On the 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.

**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.

**Volunteer to Lead:** If you are a member of the Club please **consider becoming a hike leader.** Just contact Manuel Peraza ([outings@catskill-3500-club.org](mailto:outings@catskill-3500-club.org); 718-698-4422 [7pm-9pm]), and he will arrange to add you to the low-volume private Yahoo list through which hikes are coordinated. You will be contacted via this means when hikes are needed.

**Group Size:** All Club bushwhacks are limited to 12 participants including the leaders. The DEC limits group size to 12 in the Wilderness Areas. Accordingly, all Club hikes allow no more than 12 participants. If in doubt, please contact the leader.

### Sat., October 5 – PEEKAMOOSE & TABLE TRAIL MAINTENANCE

Come join us for our annual fall maintenance day. Bring work gloves and tools if you have them: loppers or hand clippers, garden hoe, hand saw. If you don't have tools, just bring work gloves and the Club will supply the rest. We will be adding a stop at the shelter on Table Mountain for light maintenance. Refreshments at end of day.

**Leaders:** Cathy O'Neill and Phil Knudson, [cathy-on1@gmail.com](mailto:cathy-on1@gmail.com) (preferred), or 914-737-4990 H, 914-772-7423 C

### Sun., Oct. 6 – SLIDE MT. (KIDS HIKE)

**Distance:** 5.6 mi. Ascent: 1800' Elev: 4180'

For those of you who have young 'uns: hike with them to the highest peak in the Catskills! Children must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. We expect the hike to be slow-paced, filled with exploration, and plenty of breaks!

**Registration Period:** Please contact leaders to register.

**Leaders:** Tom & Laurie Rankin #s 1503, 1337, [laurierankin@hvc.rr.com](mailto:laurierankin@hvc.rr.com)

### Sat., Oct. 12 – BLACK DOME & THOMAS COLE

**Distance:** 6+ mi. Ascent: 1800' Elev: 3980', 3940'

Moderately paced, but strenuous trail hike.

**Registration Period:** 9/26 - 10/10

**Leader:** Ryan Sloan, [ryan.sloan@bbh.com](mailto:ryan.sloan@bbh.com), 201-956-0371

### Sun., Oct. 13 – WINDHAM HP & BURNT KNOB

**Distance:** 7 mi. Ascent 1800' Elev. 3524'

Leisurely paced trail hike over Windham HP and Burnt Knob. Heavy rain cancels.

**Registration Period:** 10/1 - 10/10

**Leader:** Sterling Futterleib #1918, [stuhiker@gmail.com](mailto:stuhiker@gmail.com), 860-693-6528

### Sat., Oct. 19 – HUNTER & LEAVITT (SW HUNTER)

**Distance:** 10 mi. Ascent: 2225' Elev: 4040', 3740'

Moderately paced trail hike and bushwhack.

**Registration Period:** Please contact leaders to register.

**Leaders:** Steve & Fran Shumway #s 2050, 2049, [sshumway@twcny.rr.com](mailto:sshumway@twcny.rr.com)

### Sun., Oct. 20 – KAATERSKILL HP & Round Top

**Distance:** 8+ mi. Ascent: 1700' Elev: 3655'

Trail hiking plus difficult bushwhack, negotiating cliffs.

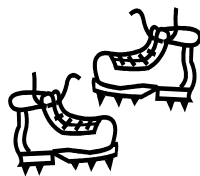
**Registration Period:** by 10/14

**Leader:** Michele Corn Farrell, #2055 W#848, [cornfarrell@hvc.rr.com](mailto:cornfarrell@hvc.rr.com)

### Sat. October 26 – ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY CLEAN-UP

As part of the state-wide Adopt-a-Highway program, please join us to help clean up the Club's segment of Rt. 214. Bring work gloves and a great attitude. All else will be provided, including refreshments at end.

**Leader:** Cathy O'Neill [cathyon1@gmail.com](mailto:cathyon1@gmail.com) (preferred), or 914-737-4990 H, 914-772-7423 C



### Sat., Oct. 26 – OVERLOOK

**Distance:** 4.6 mi. Ascent: ~1400' Elev: 3140'

Night hike at the Overlook Hotel ruins and to the fire-tower. Bring a headlamp, warm clothes for the summit, candy, and a costume!

**Registration Period:** by 10/19

**Leader:** Jay Hui #1546, [cycleslug@yahoo.com](mailto:cycleslug@yahoo.com)

### Sunday Oct. 27 – KAATERSKILL H.P.

**Distance:** 8 mi. Ascent 1900' Elev. 3655'

Moderately paced trail hike and bushwhack. Well behaved dogs are welcome.

(Continued on page 5)

Registration Period: 10/13 – 10/24

Leaders: Doug Garrity #1757, Suzanne Provenzano #1968, [suzanne273@gmail.com](mailto:suzanne273@gmail.com)

**Sun., Oct. 27 – SLIDE**

Distance: 7 mi. Ascent 1780' Elev. 4180'

Leisurely paced trail hike with views to the highest Catskill peak.

Registration Period: by 10/25

Leader: Sue Kenyon #1774, [snowsusie88@yahoo.com](mailto:snowsusie88@yahoo.com), 917-613-2042

**Sat., Nov. 2 – BEARPEN & VLY**

Distance: 8 mi. Ascent: 2035' Elev: 3600', 3529'

Moderately paced hike and bushwhack. Well behaved dogs welcome.

Registration Period: 10/27 – 11/1

Leader: Bill Winterbottom #1904, [billw@usdsoftware.com](mailto:billw@usdsoftware.com)

**Sat., Nov. 2 – LEAVITT (SW HUNTER)**

Distance: 6 mi. Ascent: 1770' Elev: 3740'

Moderately pace hike and bushwhack.

Registration Period: 10/28-11/1

Leader: Al Davis, [ad322@freeelectron.net](mailto:ad322@freeelectron.net), 518-947-6407

**Sun., Nov. 3 – LONE & ROCKY**

Distance: 11 mi. Ascent: 2000' Elev: 3721', 3508'

Bushwhack to two remote peaks. Hike is long and strenuous in parts. Early start, headlamps required.

Registration Period: 10/20 – 11/2

Leader: Eric Hazard #2132, [ehazard@yahoo.com](mailto:ehazard@yahoo.com)

**Sat., Nov. 9 – BALSAM LAKE & GRAHAM**

Distance: 8 mi. Ascent: 2040' Elev: 3723', 3868'

Moderately paced hike and bushwhack. Inclement weather cancels.

Registration Period: 11/4 – 11/8

Leader: Suzanne Knabe #1326, [suzkna@msn.com](mailto:suzkna@msn.com), 718-435-3092 after 7:00 pm

**Sun., Nov. 10 – PANTHER**

Distance: 6.7 mi. Ascent: 1900' Elev: 3720'

Easy to moderately paced trail hike.

Registration: 10/24 – 11/7

Leader: Ryan Sloan, [ryan.sloan@bbh.com](mailto:ryan.sloan@bbh.com), 201-956-0371

**Sun., Nov. 10 – FIR (Via Spruce & Hemlock)**

Distance: 6.5 mi. Ascent: 1800' Elev: 3620'

Moderately-paced bushwhack to a 3500' peak via a CHH peak, Spruce Mt.

Bad weather cancels.

Registration period: 11/1 – 11/8

Leader: George Preoteasa #1478, [gypreo@gmail.com](mailto:gypreo@gmail.com), 201-694-8344

**Sat., Nov. 16 – HUNTING SEASON BEGINS**

**Sat., Dec. 7 WINTER HIKING PRIMER**

While the Catskills are sometimes seen as 'easy' peaks, they can present formidable challenges to the Winter hiker. Tom and Laurie Rankin have climbed all of the Catskill 3500 peaks at least twice in Winter, as well as all the 4000'+ peaks in the North East. They will share their Winter mountaineering skills, learned over many years, during an early evening indoor presentation. Bring your gear! This would be a great way to help get ready for Winter weekend!

Leaders: Tom & Laurie Rankin #s 1503, 1337, [laurierankin@hvc.rr.com](mailto:laurierankin@hvc.rr.com) (preferred), 845-926-2182

**Sat., Dec. 14 – TWIN & INDIAN HEAD**

Distance: 8 mi. Ascent: 2200' Elev: 3640', 3575'

Moderately paced trail hike. Well behaved dogs are welcome.

Registration Period: 11/30 – 12/12

Leaders: Doug Garrity #1757, Suzanne Provenzano #1968, [garrid0@lycos.com](mailto:garrid0@lycos.com)

**Sun., Dec. 15– BALSAM CAP & FRIDAY**

Distance: 7 mi. Ascent: 2200' Elev: 3694', 3623'

Very strenuous bushwhack to two remote peaks.

Registration Period: 12/1 – 12/14

Leader: Eric Hazard #2132, [ehazard@yahoo.com](mailto:ehazard@yahoo.com)

**Sun., Dec. 15– WESTKILL**

Distance: 8 mi. Ascent: 1700', Elev: 3880'

Moderately paced trail hike. Well behaved dogs are welcome.

Registration Period: 12/1 – 12/12

Leaders: Doug Garrity #1757, Suzanne Provenzano #1968, [garrid0@lycos.com](mailto:garrid0@lycos.com)

**Sat., Dec. 21 – SUGARLOAF**

Distance: 3.5 mi. Ascent: 1580' Elev: 3800'

Relaxed-pace trail hike. This trail is known to be icy.

Registration Period: 12/16-12/20

Leader: Al Davis, [ad322@freeelectron.net](mailto:ad322@freeelectron.net), 518-947-6407

**Sat., Dec. 21 – WITTENBERG & CORNELL**

Distance: 9.4 miles. Ascent: 2850', Elev. 3780', 3860'

A moderate paced hike. Inclement weather cancels.

Registration:  
12/16 — 12/20  
(Continued on page 6)

***In case of bad weather or dangerous conditions, hikes may be canceled; if in doubt contact the leader.***

## Persevering Pigs

### By Samira Dere

There are a number of creatures that flit, munch and trample through the night here in the Catskills. One critter even manages to till its way across the fields and forests, digging through the earth as it looks for food. The Eurasian Boar, averaging at least 100 pounds, but capable or growing to weigh as much as 400 pounds, does not discriminate in what it wrenches from the ground. The swine aggressively consume everything from roots, tubers and vegetative material to softer, less crunchy items like bird eggs. Along with a varied diet that consists of nuts and acorns and virtually any agricultural crop that they can get their hooves on, swine have a frighteningly large appetite for meat. They have been known to feed on fawns, amphibians, rodents, ground nesting birds and young domestic livestock. Thus the Eurasian Boar competes for food with white-tailed deer, turkey, squirrel, bear and waterfowl.

Farms in the Catskills present an easy target for swine as the livestock and vegetable crops provide an immense, reliable source of nourishment. In Delaware County, one farmer sustained over \$15,000 in damage when a group of Eurasian Boar ate an entire crop of seed corn in two days.

The Eurasian Boar's efficiency at both foraging for food and reproduction, and its ability to adapt to the various habitats in the region make it a powerful invasive species. Since its arrival upon our shores in the early 1900s, the Eurasian Boar has made its home in 39 states and continues to spread. In New York State these creatures have established breeding populations in six counties- including Delaware and Sullivan. Most recently, the boars have been sighted in Woodstock and Hamden.

While the Eurasian Boar is not easy to spot during daylight hours, the remnants of its passing are easily identified. After a night of foraging, the boar leaves behind a wealth of clues. In your backyard, keep a look out for evidence of tree rubbing, wallowing and rooting. In agricultural areas and during daylight hours, if you see a group of animals with elongated heads and coarse dark hair among the livestock you might be seeing a sounder, or group of boar, scrounging on food meant for cattle.

If you ever wake to the sounds of something snorting its way through your backyard there is a good chance it is the Eurasian Boar feasting on your garden. Stay back! There is nothing



Devil's Path Wood Sprite photo by David White

scarier you might encounter in the Catskills (except for the headless horseman!).

If you have seen Eurasian boars or signs of them in the Catskills, please contact the Catskill Regional Invasive Species Partnership (CRISP) at (845) 586-2611 or email Molly Marquand at [mmarquand@catskillcenter.org](mailto:mmarquand@catskillcenter.org)

If you see feral swine or the Eurasian Boar, please report this to one of the DEC regional offices or email the DEC at [fwwildlf@gw.dec.state.ny.us](mailto:fwwildlf@gw.dec.state.ny.us).

If you need assistance in dealing with the Eurasian Boar or feral swine, please call APHIS Wildlife Services at 1-866-4USDAWS (1-866-487-3297). For more information about feral swine, you can visit <http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/70843.html> or [http://www.aphis.usda.gov/wildlife\\_damage/feral\\_swine/index.shtml](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/wildlife_damage/feral_swine/index.shtml).

Licensed small game hunters may currently hunt the animal at any time, in any number, so long as all other firearms and hunting regulations are observed. For more information on hunting regulations in New York State please contact the Department of Environmental Conservation.

*Samira Dere is an intern with CRISP. ☘*



*Hike schedule continued from page 5*

Leader: Suzanne Knabe #1326, [suzkna@msn.com](mailto:suzkna@msn.com), 718 435-3092 after 7:00pm.

#### **Sun., Dec. 22 – NORTH DOME & SHERRILL**

Distance: 5.5 mi. Ascent: 2,500' Elev: 3,610', 3,540'  
Relaxed-pace bushwhack. Car shuttle will be required.

Registration Period: 12/13 - 12/20

Leader: Hans Schick #1853 W759,  
[Hans.W.Schick@gmail.com](mailto:Hans.W.Schick@gmail.com), (845) 896-6454 (7 to 10 PM)

#### **Sun., Dec. 22 – BLACKHEAD**

Distance: 5.3 mi. Ascent: ~1750' Elev: 3940'  
Moderately paced trail hike. Well behaved dogs welcome.

Registration Period: 12/16 – 12/20

Leader: Erica Gelb #1903, [ericag@usdsoftware.com](mailto:ericag@usdsoftware.com)

#### **Sat., Dec. 28 – DOUBLETOP & GRAHAM**

Distance: 6 -8 mi Ascent: 3000' Elev: 3862' & 3860'  
Moderately paced bushwhack.

Registration Period: Please contact leaders to register.

Leaders: Tom & Laurie Rankin #s 1503, 1337, [laurierankin@hvc.rr.com](mailto:laurierankin@hvc.rr.com)

## The 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Lark in the Park!

The 10<sup>th</sup> Annual *Lark in the Park* will offer exciting hiking, paddling, cycling, fishing, nature walks and lectures as well as cultural events throughout the entire Catskill region. From October 5<sup>th</sup> through the 14<sup>th</sup> you can enjoy more than 50 outdoor activities during the 10-day “Lark” celebration, sponsored by The Catskill Mountain Club (CMC), New York – New Jersey Trail Conference, and The Catskill Center.

Help us mark the anniversary of the creation of the Catskill Park by hiking to a Catskill fire tower, paddling the Pepacton Reservoir, cycling on the Catskill Scenic Trail, learning about the region’s ecology, and much more. *Lark in the Park* group activities are typically free of charge – everyone is welcome!

The schedule of activities is available online at [www.catskillslark.org](http://www.catskillslark.org). Events continue to be added to the on-line schedule so check back frequently.

*Lark in the Park* was originally celebrated in 2004 when the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) called on the CMC to help them mark the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Catskill Park’s founding. The NYSDEC is again a key supporter of this important anniversary.

An important part of the *Lark* is the Catskill Mountain Club’s (CMC) Annual Dinner! Everyone is invited to join the fun which will include speakers, raffles, door prizes and auctions. For details, stay tuned to [www.catskillmountainclub.org](http://www.catskillmountainclub.org).

For more information on Lark in the Park, call the Catskill Center at 845-586-2611, e-mail [cccd@catskillcenter.org](mailto:cccd@catskillcenter.org), or follow the *Lark* on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/CatskillsLarkinThePark](http://www.facebook.com/CatskillsLarkinThePark)).



Abandoned Hotel Near Hunter Mountain  
Photo by Ken Anello

## Ghost Dog of the Catskills

By Ralph Ferrusi

Pete and I were slugging our way up Jimmy Dolan Notch on The Most Miserable Wednesday of the Year—grey, drizzling—our pricey GoreTex jackets might just as well have been cotton sweatshirts. Why didn’t we just go back to the car??? I knew there wouldn’t be anybody else, at least anyone in their right mind, out there.

Pete was up ahead. Slogging through the gloom, I sensed a presence overtaking me on the right. Totally unexpected, it spooked me. “It” was a little multi-colored wire-haired dog. My very first thought was “*I am looking at the Catskill Ghost Dog!*” After all these years, I had crossed paths (well, for the second time: that’s a whole other story) with a ghost. Well, the first one was a heck-*uva* lot scarier, middle of the night and all that, than this drenched-but-happy little mutt. But this ghostly mutt was a *legend*...

I glanced back down the trail and was disappointed to see a person, surely the dog’s owner, striding towards us. So much for *the ghost dog*... John introduced me to Benny the Bulgarian, a card-carrying Bosnian coarse-haired hound dog, with a story...

Seems John and Michelle located Benny on-line somewhere in Bulgaria via a rescue dog website. Benny’s original owners had brought him to a pound—left him at the gate and took off—but the pound had no vacancies, and Benny hunted the scoundrels down. They were so moved they posted him on the web, where New Yorkers John and Michelle found him, and arranged to have him airlifted to the USA.

Benny’s journey wasn’t simple. It began with a two-hour car ride (probably a Yugo), then Benny’s small cage was packed on a plane to Amsterdam, then transferred to a jet to Newark, where it landed a day or so (or more) later. When John and Michelle let Benny out of the cage, it was Love at First Sight all around. I asked John if they greeted him in Bulgarian—just a couple of words, “Welcome to New Jersey”, something like that??? Naw, Benny just had to figure it all out. The way he was skotching up that wet, rocky, trail, seems he’s adapted to life in the New World pretty well.

Thinking back, John was not your typical Catskill hiker; he was dressed in street clothes and shoes, quite casual, and quite *dry*, considering the rotten conditions. They both eventually disappeared into the gloom ahead. Actually, they both just kinda *faded*... Hmmmm.....



## Our New Members 2013

|      |                        |          |
|------|------------------------|----------|
| 2104 | Mark E Yoder           | 10/13/12 |
| 2148 | Cindi Girard           | 03/03/13 |
| 2149 | Christian Gallagher    | 03/15/13 |
| 2150 | Christopher J Anderson | 03/06/13 |
| 2151 | Jonathan Stelling      | 04/13/13 |
| 2152 | Todd Nappi             | 04/13/13 |
| 2153 | John Fellows           | 04/14/13 |
| 2154 | Andrew van der Poel    | 04/14/13 |
| 2155 | Dan Robinson           | 04/13/13 |
| 2156 | Thomas Rossner         | 04/13/13 |
| 2157 | Maria E Garcia         | 04/27/13 |
| 2158 | William Harkin         | 05/04/13 |
| 2159 | Daniel Harkin          | 05/04/13 |
| 2160 | David Auld             | 05/19/13 |
| 2161 | Patricia Frik          | 05/26/13 |
| 2162 | Mark S. Atchinson      | 03/13/13 |
| 2163 | Brian Reiss            | 05/23/13 |
| 2164 | Michael Patrick        | 06/09/13 |
| 2165 | Paul Knill             | 06/09/13 |
| 2166 | Melody Finnegan        | 05/19/13 |
| 2167 | Harry Barner           | 05/02/09 |
| 2168 | Valerie Schaff         | 06/22/13 |
| 2169 | Joy Perkett            | 06/18/13 |
| 2170 | Matthew Nuss           | 06/18/13 |
| 2171 | Matt Hicks             | 07/06/13 |
| 2172 | Tyler Barringer        | 07/13/13 |
| 2173 | Michael Bongar         | 07/20/13 |
| 2174 | Jaco Cusmano           | 07/21/13 |
| 2175 | Richard Williams       | 08/18/13 |
| 2176 | Geoffrey Dann          | 08/18/13 |
| 2177 | Patrick L Smith        | 08/11/13 |
| 2178 | John A Barringer       | 08/27/13 |



Windham High Peak Photo by Thomas Stabler

Jaco Cusmano is the youngest member of the Catskill 3500 Club, who completed the required peaks on July 21, 2013 at the age of 5 years, 311 days. He is member #2174. His brother, Arlo, and father, Ronnie, preceded him and his mother Gina is not far behind!

Remember those silly Gowns For Greenbacks people who said they would hike all 35 in ballgowns? Well, on 9/8/13, on Fir Mountain, Heather Rolland and Danyelle Davis put that fun project to bed: All 35 in ballgowns. Done. Heather says a wetsuit and flippers is next.

## New Life Members

|      |                      |
|------|----------------------|
| 1202 | Michael Lepore       |
| 2065 | Eric Perfecto        |
| 2070 | Joseph G. Busch      |
| 2075 | Daniel Murray        |
| Asp  | Douglas McKeige      |
| Asp  | Marie McKeige        |
| Asp  | Will McKeige         |
| 1303 | Philippe Asseily     |
| 1764 | Michael Grahlfs      |
| 2114 | David H. Hollenbaugh |

## New Winter Members

|      |              |      |          |
|------|--------------|------|----------|
| 0871 | David Shwide | 1702 | 03/16/13 |
| 0872 | Harry Barner | 2167 | 02/24/11 |



Overlook Mountain Photo by Jeff Glans



## Playing along

Remember in our last issue I suggested playing a game with catskillian and hikerly terminology? I received a fun answer from a “lurker” — one who has not yet hiked our beloved peaks, but is seriously considering it. I think he should dive in — if his sense of direction is as good as his sense of humor, he should do just fine!

**Plateaunic** (adj.) -- like being in love with one particular spot on the Devil's Path

**Haunter** (n.) -- a hiker who compulsively re-climbs the peak with the tower

**Panter** (n.) -- impatient hiker who arrives at 3720' completely winded

**Telegrapham** (v.) -- to fib about summiting a far southwestern peak

**Catskills** (pl. n.) -- a rare ability to literally herd felines

## 'Ghosts in the Catskills?'

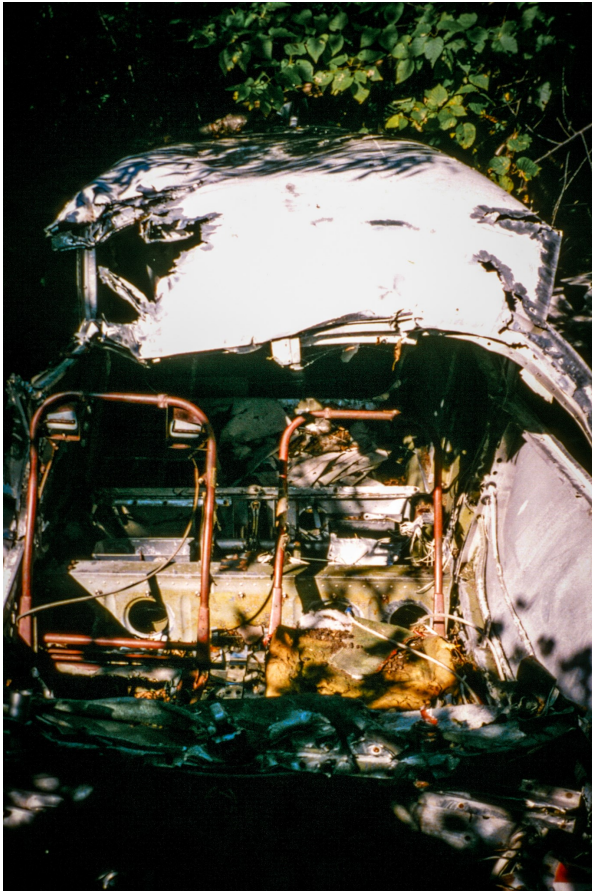
by Chris Maget

Two men were backpacking the 24-mile Escarpment Trail on a Memorial Day weekend after reading superlatives about this trail's “lush, thick, green forest with beautiful views and scenery” in Backpacker magazine. They write about how spectacular vistas along the edge of the escarpment were “like sitting in the cockpit of an airplane.” One from San Diego, familiar with alpine views out west, commented on how beautiful our mountains are. Reaching North Point after 7.6 miles, they took a long break enjoying incomparable views over the Hudson Valley, down to North and South Lakes and the mountains beyond. They pushed on another 1.7 miles to Stoppel Point; exploring for a flat area to pitch a tent, one man noticed something big and white ahead—it was the tip of a wing of an airplane! While eating dinner they heard someone over at the rock lookout and several times later. They couldn't see the viewing area from their site, but would've seen people on the trail. One of them went to the rock lookout, but saw no one; the other searched the woods for the rest of the plane, but gave up after fifteen minutes.

The next day, they came upon the entire fuselage of the four-seater single engine Piper Cherokee. The National Transportation Safety Board keeps records of every plane crash for the past twenty years, and the men learned that the pilot had taken off from Poughkeepsie on May 26, 1983 after being warned about bad weather—six miles of visibility with fog, the ceiling only 1,000 feet. The plane had collided with trees at about 3,400 feet and the pilot, the only person on board, was killed. They were camped there on May 27, exactly sixteen years later, and they couldn't help but think *Wouldn't it be something if this guy's ghost comes back to the mountain?* They hadn't yet found the wreckage of the plane after hearing talking several times the evening before with no one else on Stoppel Point, and they didn't know they were there on the anniversary of the crash and the pilot's death.

*Summarized from Catskill Peak Experiences, with permission from Black Dome Press, edited by Carol White.*

Photo by Carol White



*Trail Mix Continued from page 3*

teach your kids to do the same, every single time. And if there is a privy, please use it.

**Backpacking?** You may camp ANYWHERE (which is pretty amazing, when you think about it!) as long as you follow 3 guidelines. You must set up your camp at least 150 feet from any water source, 150 feet from any trail or road, and below 3500 feet (except during the winter season). That's it! Get off the trail, away from water, and below the summit. One important exception to this rule: if you are in a campground, then you must use designated campsites (think about traversing the Devil's Path — when you get to Devil's Tombstone, you can't just camp anywhere).

**Pack it in? Pack it out!** This includes “biodegradable” waste. Orange peels, eggshells, etc. all need to be carried out. Why? Ants, flies, bears, and courtesy towards other hikers. A summit experience isn't quite the same if you are standing in someone else's compost! And while you're at it — stick an extra plastic bag in your pack and help carry out any additional litter you might find.

**Fires:** This summer I noticed nearly every summit in the Catskills has had a fire built upon it. Fires are a bad idea on so many levels, despite being really beautiful and sort of magical in the woods at night. If you really want to sit around a fire, camp in a designated

*Continued on page 11*

## Sticks and Picks

*Gear Reviews by Ira Orenstein*

### Review of the McMurdo Fast Find 210

#### Personal Locator Beacon

Product: McMurdo Fast Find 210

Personal Locator Beacon

Manufacturer: Orolia Ltd

MSRP: \$250 with no annual subscription fee

Recall the book *127 Hours: Between a Rock and a Hard Place*, by Aron Ralston (and the subsequent motion picture) where in 2003 the author gets his arm stuck under a dislodged 800 pound boulder while canyoneering in Utah and ... well, you know the rest of this true story. Imagine if he had a way of sending a distress signal to activate a rescue. Since that time the personal locator beacon (PLB) has become available to outdoor enthusiasts (Mr. Ralston became the promoter of a PLB produced by ACR Electronics).

One of the wonderful characteristics of the Catskill Mountains is its remoteness. In how many remaining places in the northeast do we still have the opportunity to explore deep, rugged wilderness and ascend trailless peaks. In many areas of the Catskills cell phone coverage is spotty or non-existent. In such terrain carrying a device that in a life threatening emergency can launch a rescue surely makes sense, especially for the solo hiker or small groups. Reviewed here is the McMurdo Fast Find 210 Personal Locator Beacon.

A PLB is an electronic device that when activated transmits a 406 MHz signal to COSPAS-SARSAT (international satellite system dedicated to search and rescue). This signal is monitored by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and relayed to the Air Force Rescue Coordination Center (AFRCC) usually within 5 minutes of initial deployment. The signal has a unique identifier that cross references to the registration details that the user provides on the NOAA PLB Registration Form (NOAA provides the owner with a decal "proof of registration" that gets affixed onto the device). AFRCC then forwards your location to the appropriate local search and rescue (SAR). Fast Find 210 also transmits a 121.5 MHz homing signal that helps SAR further zero in on your location. Fast Find 210 will transmit for a minimum of 24 hours and has a battery storage life of 5 years (the new 220 model has a battery life of 6 years and includes a flotation device). The Fast Find 210 also has a GPS receiver that can further reduce rescue time by transmitting your GPS coordinates along with the 406 MHz signal. This product is waterproof to 10 meters but cannot transmit a signal from under water and operates within a temperature range of minus 4 to 131 degrees F. PLBs can be used anywhere in the world (check with each country for registration requirements).

Activation of Fast Find 210 requires three steps (to minimize the likelihood of accidental deployment). Transmission of the first signal is delayed for 50 seconds after activation to permit time to turn off the PLB in the

event of accidental deployment. A flashing light informs the user that the PLB is activated and the pattern of flashes indicates whether the GPS fix has been acquired. An LED light SOS signal pattern can be deployed to help searchers visually locate you at night.

I have never activated my PLB and thus cannot provide a first person review. That said, I found when researching this product consensus that PLBs and their associated support systems are extremely reliable.

Another popular but somewhat different product is SPOT (SPOT LLC). This product's greatest strengths and attractions are its ability to create a tracking map and to send pre-programmed text messages (Fast Find 210 does not provide either of these features). The MSRP is \$170 for the SPOT Gen 3 unit plus an annual \$100 subscription fee (rescue insurance is also available for \$13/year). The GEN 3 model weighs 4 ounces with batteries. It operates in a temperature range of minus 22 to 140F and is listed as waterproof. SPOT can be used in most places throughout the world.

SPOT works by determining your GPS position and transmitting the coordinates to commercial satellites that in turn relay the information to the GEOS Rescue Coordination Center for appropriate disposition. Unlike the Fast Find 210 PLB, SPOT depends entirely on the ability to achieve a GPS fix prior to transmitting a signal. Fast Find 210 transmits a stronger signal and does not need a GPS fix (although it will also transmit GPS coordinates if acquired), often in a more timely fashion. I sent a query to [3500club@yahoo.com](mailto:3500club@yahoo.com) in an attempt to get feedback regarding the reliability of SPOT in the Catskills. I received only one reply and that respondent noted that she had an older model and that it worked fine in the Catskill region.

In summary, I feel that the ownership of a PLB by people who venture into the Catskill wilderness should be strongly considered. I opted for the Fast Find 210 over SPOT because I was willing to trade off the ability to do tracking mapping and sending of messages for the apparently increased likelihood that my distress signal will make it to its destination. As noted earlier, however, technology in this field is progressing rapidly and I am confident that having the best of both worlds is soon to come.

*Please note that search and rescue technology is evolving very rapidly, making it challenging to provide a cutting edge product review. Since I purchased my Fast Find 210 a newer version (Fast Find 220) has come to market and there are sure to be many more upcoming changes. The fundamental purpose of this review is to bring an awareness of these devices to Canister readers.*

*Also: Activation of a PLB should only be performed as a last resort in the event of grave and imminent danger.*

*Reviewed by Ira Orenstein #415 W777*

## In Memoriam

**William J. (Bill) Hentschel**, president of the Catskill 3500 Club in 1967-'68, died June 5, 2013 at the age of 95. Bill started club sponsored hikes, beginning with a hike up Panther Mountain in September 1966. He was a mountaineer throughout the Northeast and promoted winter hiking; his route up Slide Mountain was the steep north slide, but an avalanche cut the expedition short! Bill introduced hundreds of hikers safely to winter climbing, one of the unique features of the 3500 Club, and thus began our Winter Weekend. Our membership chairman received a note from him that he would have had a lower number than 16 if he had not been tied to a tree by hiking companions! He was also an early winter member, #9. Climbing mountains was one of his passions, which he was able to do into his late seventies. Bill led canoe trips down the Allagash River in his 80s, delighted in paddling lakes and rivers, and ever energetic, loved woodworking and designed and built new living spaces. Building models of 19th century sailing vessels was a later life activity, which he thoroughly enjoyed, as was making excursions into the woods and paths in his motorized wheelchair. Among many interests were classical music, current events, engineering problems, geology, sailing ships, and early American history. Submitted by Dave and Carol White

**Bruce C. Wadsworth**, member #688, planned, coordinated, and wrote the first comprehensive guide to all trails in the Catskill Forest Preserve, *Catskill Trails*, with the Schenectady Chapter of the Adirondack Mountain Club. His wife Betty walked the trails with him, providing unending encouragement. Bruce died at the age of 75 in Lake Placid, where he had taught earth sciences. Bruce received a National Science Foundation Grant to study Adirondack biosystems at the Cranberry Lake Biological Station, SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry. While climbing Algonquin Peak he became hooked on hiking, and the entire family began hiking and became 46ers. He backpacked the Northville-Placid Trail four times and enjoyed trail maintenance;

special interests included wilderness preservation and Adirondack history. Bruce's many interests included writing, and his *An Adirondack Sampler: Day Hikes for All Seasons* was an instant success. This was followed by *An Adirondack Sampler II: Backpacking Trips; Guide to the Northville-Placid Trail; Guide to Adirondack Trails: Central Region*; and *With Wilderness at Heart: A Short History of the Adirondack Mountain Club*.

Submitted by Dave and Carol White

**Mark Sterling Atchinson**, avid hiker, backpacker, camper, snowshoer, canoer, and trout fisherman, passed away at age 23 on March 21, 2013, eight days after finishing his Catskill 3500 to become member #2162. Mark worked summers for the Adirondack Mountain Club's professional trail crew, including projects at Kaaterskill Falls and the bridge over the Neversink. A donation to the ADK trails program was made by the Catskill 3500 Club in his memory. He completed the 46 Adirondack High Peaks in 2012, through-hiked the Northville-Placid Trail, and was near completion of Vermont's Long Trail and New York's Long Path—always reading. He was in his fourth year at SUNY Cobleskill in the Wildlife program.

Submitted by Dave and Carol White

**Ruth B. M. Robinson** passed away in July after a brief illness. Ruth traveled extensively, hiking and skiing. She completed the Catskill 3500 peaks (#88 and W231); the New England and the Adirondack 4000-footers; skied and hiked with the Canadian Alpine Club; hiked the Tour de Mont Blanc; skied and hiked in the Colorado Rockies. Ruth also hiked and skied in Norway's Jotunheimen Range: She climbed Galdhopiggen, Norway's highest mountain, and Glittertind, the second highest. Google those peaks and you'll see how much Ruth accomplished. Her travels also took her to Nepal, Egypt, Scotland, Ireland, and other venues. Many of these trips were described in travel and outdoor articles for her employer, the New York Times. "Ruth was a very classy lady." We've spoken with quite a few friends since she passed on, and all agree that Ruth will be very much missed.

--submitted by Nancy Wolff, #364, and Lee Fanger, #541

### Trail Mix Continued from page 8

campground or build an awesome bonfire back home. The woods are just not a good place for fires. The rules on fires? Never above 3500 feet (unless it is a life threatening emergency), never on a trail (yes, this rule had to be created because enough people did build fires on trails), never in a parking lot (are you shaking your head yet?), and never during No Burn times of the year or when it is otherwise illegal. If you have built a legal fire, you must remain with it, extinguish it completely, burn only dead and downed wood (cutting any trees in the forest preserve is a giant Bozo no-no), and when it is out, you must remove all the stones and completely disguise the site. No burning trash or food. Whew. Wouldn't it just be easier to build the fire in your fireplace at home? ☘



Overlook Mtn. View photo by Larry Swayne