

PRESIDENT'S REPORT: Leg Stretchers and Loose Connections

By Sue Girouard

"It's just a little leg stretcher," I answer to an on-trail inquiry about my destination. "I'm going up for only an hour." A little leg stretcher is a term I coined some time ago to describe those brief forays into the woods that are more than a walk but fall short of a full day excursion to a distant destination. Some are planned, but more often than not "little leg stretchers" are those spur-of-the moment hikes when it's just too beautiful not to be out there, but I have only a few hours to carve out of my day. Once warm-up hikes to longer and tougher trips, little leg stretchers now match my mellowed peak-bagging enthusiasm (and possibly my fitness level too) but certainly don't diminish any sense of enjoyment and well-being gained by being out on the trail.

And here's another leg stretcher. Remember the water bar pledge? Marty Lawthers issued a challenge last summer to clean two water bars per hike. You don't need to carry any special tools and it only takes about five minutes. Here's the procedure, from GMC Field Supervisor Pete Antos-Ketchum:

- With the heel or outside edge of your hiking boot, dig out any debris that has accumulated on the uphill side of the water bar.
- With the side of your boot, scuff away any major leaf piles immediately above the water bar.
- Dig out the drainage channel to make sure that the water is diverted down and away from the trail. The heel of your boot makes a great shovel!

And speaking of challenges, did you check out the back page of the latest issue of the Long Trail News? If so, then you're already aware of the Club's current membership drive, complete with incentive coupons, to reach a goal of 10,000 members by April 2004. The Burlington Section currently has about 800 members. How about a Section goal of 1000 members by January 2004!

PRESIDENT'S REPORT – cont.

Recently, I participated in a pilot GMC membership "phonathon", contacting former members whose memberships had lapsed. What's the old adage – 'what goes around, comes around'. My treatment of telephone solicitors is far from stellar – I was afraid this could be payback time! How wrong I was! Overall, the response was very positive. Most folks asked to receive information about rejoining and one renewed his membership on the spot.

One last comment: Raise your trail maintenance skills to new heights! A reminder that trails above tree line are available for adoption. Adopters will be required to attend an Alpine Skills field program (free!) July 12, 2003. Call GMC to register. Contact Sue Girouard at 644-5941 or sueg@sover.net if interested in adopting a trail.

TRAILS REPORT

Light Turn-out, Trails in Good Shape

By Pam Gillis

At this writing, we have completed 4 of our 5 spring trail work outings (Long Trail walk through). The turnout has been lower than in any recent years, just 3 to 7 people (including leaders), probably due to the fact that the trail work outings were left off the Spring Schedule by mistake. However, the trails are in good shape and we've been able to do basic maintenance on lots of trails. We've done most of the work with groups of 2 or 3. We've taken some blown-down trees with the chain saw, but there weren't many down. The late spring means that the clipping needed was less than usual. The adopters will need to do some clipping in the summer after there has been more growth.

The Boy Scout troop that has adopted the LT from Jonesville to Bolton Notch Road is going out several days to do blazing and trail clearing. We covered that trail with 2 volunteers to do the required chain saw work.

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WHY I WENT SOLO

By Karen Richer

Quick! True or False?

The definition of wilderness is 1 mile or 1 hour from definitive care.

True.

Vermont has a "Brother's Keeper" law that obligates you to stop in an unfavorable situation to help in some way.

True.

These are just a couple of things I learned as I began my certification course in Wilderness First Aid. This sixteen-hour course beginning on May 13th was organized by the Burlington Section Education Committee, which consists of Walter Lepuschenko and Brynne Lazarus. The course met for three consecutive evenings during the week and a full Saturday, which gave ample time to reflect and absorb the material. Instructor Andrea Kane from Stonehearth Open Learning Opportunities (SOLO) led the course with much enthusiasm, knowledge, personal experience, and humor.

Since 1977, SOLO, with headquarters in Conway NH, has been one of the leading outdoor medicine educators. They have grown to include instructors not only in New England but also around the country and internationally. I was very impressed with the *quality* of this program as well as the *quantity* of information received during so short a time (and by the very reasonable price).

We covered such topics as anaphylaxis, burns, heat injuries, hypothermia and lightning. We also learned how to deal with musculoskeletal injuries by applying traction and making splints.

SOLO – continued

Within these topics we practiced primary and secondary surveys, how to organize pertinent information, and how to take vital signs and monitor the patient. The course had a total of eleven people, which worked well for practicing real life scenarios in smaller groups of two and three.

This course was held in part for trip leaders to become certified or to receive recertification, but was also open to folks like me who just wanted to feel more prepared when out and about.

Now, if and when I find myself in an unfavorable situation, I have the confidence and knowledge to help in a range of scenarios by simply offering some food or even setting a broken bone if need be. Thank you SOLO!

Update from Membership Director Dot Myer

The following people have joined the Burlington Section since the last edition of *Ridge Lines*:

Charles Billingsley, Tim Cohen, Matthew Fitzpatrick, Russ Hovey, Chris and Cheryl Howard, Laura Kadish, Lee Ann Lee, Brett Leonard, Mary Natches, Teri Gerbode and Fred Roane, Jim Morris and Pat Spielman-Morris, Arlene Torre, Janet Wiatrowski, Valerie and Scott Wilson, Michelle Gurnoyer, Mat Manghi, Paul and Janet Manny, April and Azur Moulart, Michael P. Nixon, Susan E. Pare, Jeremy and Stacey Rowland, Julie Silverman, Jessie Abbotts, Jennifer Andrews, Andrew Dawson, Bruce and Sally Gilbert-Smith, Melanie Grubman, Tami Koester, Richard Long, Carl Lorenston, Elsbeth Mode, Nathaniel Morse, John Rankin, Brian Roberts, Ongyel Sherpa, Dan Simmons, Chad Skowronski, Carol Stewart, Andrew Toy, Patricia Tursi, Roy Van Dusen

Welcome!

TRIP LEADER ORIENTATION

By Paul Houchens

Maria was growing more frustrated by the minute. She was in great shape and had been looking forward to this hike for weeks. Now Peter was going to blow the whole trip because he couldn't keep up with the group. The trip leader struggled with the decision that had to be made. Should Peter be allowed to go back to the car on his own so the group could continue to the summit? Should everyone turn around and return with Peter?

There was no way to please everyone and ensure the entire group's safety.

What would you do if you were the trip leader?

This was just one of the scenarios that participants dealt with during our first annual Trip Leader Orientation Trip to Butler Lodge on March 30. Many leaders had expressed a wish to hold a forum where they could share experiences and get advice from more experienced leaders. Phil Hazen felt that the best setting for such a discussion would be during a hike. He and I were co-leaders on a snowy March morning, stopping to deconstruct and discuss each part of the hike with the participant-leaders as we went along. Everything from how to put on a smile when meeting hike participants in pre-dawn hours to what to do with out-of-control pets was brought up. Butler Lodge provided a dry, though chilly, space for our role-playing. Though some cringed at the thought of having to act in front of the group, we had so much fun that by the end of our session even Phil Schlosser had set free his inner thespian.

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TRAILS REPORT

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Our work outings have covered the LT up to Butler, except for the section above Bolton Valley that's planned for National Trails Day. We've also done some maintenance (amount varying from trail to trail) on Nebraska Notch, Butler Lodge, Lake Mansfield, Sunset Ridge, and Halfway House Trails.

We've encountered almost no bugs so far. The sun was out and temperatures pleasantly cool for the first two outings. We had cool (almost cold) temperatures and on and off rain for the next two outings. It's better to be wet and cold than have black flies and mosquitoes surrounding us!

As you hike this year, let us know of any trail problems you find. You can send reports for the Rt. 2 to Rt. 108 trails from the Burlington Section GMC web page or phone Sue Girouard, 644-5941, trail adopter coordinator (and Burlington Section President). If the problem is not between Rt. 2 and Rt. 108, contact the GMC in Waterbury Center, 244-7037.

TRIP LEADER

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We have decided to make this orientation an annual event in our section. If you're interested in becoming a trip leader or participating in the next Trip Leader Orientation, please contact either Paul Houchens (658-1321) or Phil Hazen (879-1302). We have recently instituted a co-leader training program that allows beginners to assist experienced leaders on a number of hikes before going solo.

MEET LIZ MOLOFF

By Phil Hazen

Meet Liz Moloff, hiker extraordinaire. She is a member from New York who enjoys downtime with her husband Ron at their cottage in Vermont. On March 20th, she completed the Winter Northeast 111ers on Saddleback, The Horn, in Maine. Hiking partner Mary Natches, a member from New Hampshire, along with Phil Hazen and Phil Schlosser toasted Liz's accomplishment at the summit with a great bottle of bubbly. Following a career as an NBC network news camerawoman, Liz raised her twin sons, both recent college graduates, and then got involved in some serious hiking. Hiking is a natural expression of her love of physical activity and her awe of the beauty and spiritual grandeur of nature. If you see Liz on the trail, her joy in the quest will be evident in her smile and enthusiasm.

As of this writing, Liz is the 39th person (the 11th woman) to complete the "111ers" in winter. No small feat: this peak bagger list includes all the official peaks above 4000 ft. from New York to Maine! Liz is also an Adirondack 46er, Catskill 3500, and New England One Hundred Highest member. She has completed the Long Trail and is now section hiking the remaining 900+ miles of the AT. What else is left? Well, there are still a few peaks (in winter) left on the New England One Hundred Highest List just waiting for her. Next Winter???

Ridge Lines

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MAP AND COMPASS

By Kathy Adams

Knowing how to use a compass is an essential skill for experiencing a safe and enjoyable trip into the wilderness. Phil Hazen's map and compass course began with instruction at his home in Essex. Phil discussed the advantages and disadvantages of various compass types. We learned the difference between magnetic north and true north and how to adjust for declination, and then practiced taking field bearings.

We learned how to use a topographical map (map symbols, contour lines, elevation, etc.) and how to use the compass with the map. Then, with maps and compasses in hand, we embarked on a "little" 5-mile hike to test our skills. On the way, Phil pointed out foundations of old houses showing on the old geological survey map. Eventually we arrived at Colchester Pond - or was it Indian Brook Reservoir? There was no indication on the old USGS map of a body of water where we thought we were. Phil finally produced another set of newer maps that showed we were indeed at Indian Brook Reservoir. The lesson learned: look at the date of your map and be prepared for the unexpected!

The rest of the hike was quite an adventure as we maintained our compass bearing toward Colchester Pond. Taking turns, we led the group through dense woods, over beaver dams, and crashing down small cliffs with features too small to be on the map. What seemed like hours later, someone shouted, "I think I see the pond!" We had made it!

If you want to have fun, learn a valuable skill, and have an instructor who answers every question with, "What do you think?" then take this free course. It's offered every April with a money-back guarantee that you'll never become lost.

PORTRAIT OF A HIKER

DEB BROWN: Burlington Section Director and Trip Leader

Deb's earliest hiking memory was when she was five years old, on the trail with her father.

"We were near the top of Camels Hump, on a little landing or opening. I'll never forget how the trail looked – the rocks rising up on my left, towering over me. It's like a snapshot in my mind."

When she was 25, Deb decided to hike the Long Trail. Her dad suggested that she join the Green Mountain Club to get companionship on some of her hikes. A few months later she went with Pat Collier on a hike to the Adirondacks, and before the day was over, Pat had recruited her to be a trip leader. Deb's first hike as a leader was up the Jerusalem Trail to Mt. Ellen. Over the next few years, she continued volunteering and also finished hiking the Long Trail end-to-end.

"My father would drop me off at the trailhead and I'd start off wondering what I was doing. Ten miles a day felt really scary, especially with a big pack. It took me three years to do the LT. I did quite a few day hikes and then my first backpacking trip from the Appalachian Gap to Lincoln Gap. Later, I did longer hikes, including a six day, 75 mile section from the Massachusetts border to Danby."

After finishing the LT, Deb took a 30-day NOLS backpacking course in Wyoming.

"It was very different from solo hiking. I'd become used to planning my own trip and doing my own thing. Now I was traveling in a small group. Thirty days of trying to do well with all those people, when everyone's tired and maybe someone's sick and sometimes there are personality conflicts, and just about everyone else was a lot younger than I was. But NOLS was a great experience. Being outdoors for a whole thirty days was fantastic, and at the end I felt I could have gone another thirty. It was a proving ground, giving me the courage to be out for six months - to thru-hike the Appalachian Trail."

In spring 1998, Deb quit her job, stored her belongings, and caught a bus for Georgia.

*"When I was fixing dinner on Springer Mountain there was a man beside me with the trail name Long Drop - that's New Zealand slang for privy. There was a huge crowd of 40 hikers camped around the shelter. I whispered to Long Drop that twenty-five percent of the people who start the AT quit by the first road crossing. He said yeah. Somehow I knew that neither of **us** would quit. Long Drop was one of many quirky people I met along the trail. He snored a lot and he swore a lot and he smoked from Georgia to Maine."*

*"I remember that there was a birthday party on Bigelow Mountain in Maine, less than 200 miles from Katahdin. One of the hikers at the party said, 'The one quality that unites us all is we're just plain stubborn'. I think that's true. All the people who finish the AT and **many** of those who don't are really determined individuals."*

Since finishing the AT, Deb has hiked on the International Appalachian Trail, in Colorado's Holy Cross Wilderness, and on the John Muir Trail in California. She has celebrated three summer solstices by hiking all of New Hampshire's "presidents" in one day. (That's 20-24 miles, 9000' elevation gain!) She has also participated in several naked solstice hikes.

"Wearing hiking boots, of course. And insect repellent. And lots of sunscreen."

Besides hiking, Deb is interested in nature photography and birding. She also is helping her mother reach her personal goal of getting to the summit of Camels Hump.

Deb was asked what part of the LT she would choose if she wanted to just sit and look around her.

*"Well, I guess Prospect Rock and Baker Mountain. They've both got great views of the Taconics and they're usually not crowded. But, you know, it's hard to think about being in one place for a while. That's not what hiking is. I've heard yoga described as a moving meditation. For me, **hiking** is moving meditation."*

Interview by Maeve Kim