

BOOTPRINTS

Volume 10 Issue 4

July 2006



Allison, Kathy, & Richard on the Wildcat Ridge Trail (Photo by Bob Morgan)

Wildcat Mountain Traverse Plus

By Richard Harris

The White Mountains Sampler is an opportunity to explore a new facet of the White Mountains. The past several years involved explorations in the rain and other less pleasant conditions. This year was different. June 17, 2006 was a gorgeous day for hiking, clear skies, no rain, and warm temperatures (maybe a bit too warm). So, four of us (Alison Cook, Kathleen Damon, Bob Morgan, and I) set out to explore Wildcat Mountain and part of the Carter Ridge.

Hiking the White Mountains, especially the 4,000 footers offers the opportunity of gorgeous vistas and views. The Wildcat Mountain Ridge and Carter Dome surely afforded us those opportunities.

{Wildcat - continued on page 2}

A Perfect White Mountain Sampler Moderate Hike

By Dick Forrest

For the White Mountain sampler, Sue and I led a trip up Mt. Kearsarge North. We had no idea what the hike was going to be like, since we had never climbed the mountain before. The trailhead was close to our motel in North Conway, a mile and a half off of Route 16 on Hurricane Mountain Rd. The mountain was only 3268 feet in elevation, but it had an elevation gain of 2600 feet. The trail to the top was 3.1 miles.

Eleven intrepid PVHC hikers decided to brave the climb. The climb didn't seem that steep, but most of the time we seemed to be ascending. The trail started in forest, and closer to the top, broke out into granite slabs, which were easier to walk on. Initially, the bugs were bad, since we started following a

brook down below us. It's when we stopped that we had problems with mosquitoes and black flies. They were a nuisance, but they weren't overwhelming, especially if we put on bug repellent.

Bryan Goodwin (aka, EB, Energizer Bunny or Energizer Bryan) was first to the top. It took him an hour and fifty minutes on a trail rated for 2 hours and fifty minutes. The rest of us followed up to the summit in drips and drabs. On the summit, even though we were told about its presence in the literature, there was an incredibly well maintained fire tower. It's no longer used as a fire tower, since airplanes now spot forest fires. This is the only fire tower that exists in the Whites, and it was beauty.

It was short and squat in design, not like the typical tall fire tower that we normally see. You could walk up some steep stairs for about 25 feet to a walkway that went around the fire tower.

{Perfect Sampler - cont' on page 2}



April 2006 AMC 4K Awards Dinner
- Club Members Laurie Mahoney, Ann Marie Visconti and Wendy Mitchell were honored for completing climbs of the summits of all 48 of the Official peaks of the 4000 Footer Club of the White Mountains.

{Wildcat - continued from page 1}



Allison Climbing the Rugged Wildcats (Photo by Bob Morgan)

We started out well, hit the trailhead at 7:00 as planned and proceeded along Lost Pond Trail to begin the steep ascent up Wildcat Ridge. The views were spectacular and we earned them. Bob led us around and over, the increasingly steep, longer, and higher ledges on the first 1.8 miles of Wildcat Ridge. After each ledge, we would stop and take in the views (and tell ourselves "I am not going back that way!!"). As much as I dislike ladders, Wildcat Ridge Trail taught me something to dislike even more – steep ledges without ladders. Once past the last of the steep ledges, we began the less strenuous ridgeline hike.

Between Wildcat E and D, we encountered a number of people who took a more leisurely approach to reaching the ridgeline – they were taking the ski gondolas – now, when those are available, why do we insist on hiking up a steep, ledgy trail? After watching with a little envy as these people disembarked without any sweat and not showing signs of scrambling over ledges and steep rocks, we proceeded to the first 4,000 footer of the day – Wildcat D. This summit was distinguishable by the viewing platform and the gorgeous views of Mount Washington and the Gulf of Slides. We then began a series of ups and downs over what we learned were Wildcat C and B to a gorgeous vista of Carter Notch and our lunch time goal of the Carter Notch Hut near Wildcat A – our second 4,000 footer for the day.

After over 6 hours of hiking, we reached Carter Notch Hut at 1:30 with the idea of a brief respite. We took a bit longer to enjoy the time away from the bugs and the heat of the trail. After nearly 50 minutes to refresh ourselves (and purchase the obligatory hats and shirts, we proceeded up Carter Dome Trail. While the ascent out of the Notch is steep, it was a bit refreshing from the Wildcat Ridge Trail. We had an opportunity to enjoy a beautiful view of the Presidential Range.

With some clouds moving in and feeling the stress of the Wildcat Ridge traverse, we decided to skip the Mt. Hight summit and hiked down Carter Dome Trail. Even with two water crossings, the 3-mile descent to the 19-Mile Brook Trail was pleasant and well appreciated. We hiked along 19-mile brook, which provided a beautiful setting for the final 1.9 miles to the trailhead. We completed the 12.5 miles in 12.5 hours, a bit longer than anticipated, but another wonderful time in the White Mountains. One conclusion, we hiked the Wildcat Ridge and have no need to do it a second time. ~ Richard Harris

{Perfect Sampler–cont' from page 1}

The cool breeze in the shade on one side of the walkway was also welcome, since we were hot from the climb and from the heat of the sun.

You could also walk into a large, windowed (on all four sides) room in the center of the fire tower. The 360-degree views were magnificent. You could really see where you were, and where North Conway is, in perspective to the surrounding area. We had lunch below in the shade of the fire tower, and thankfully, out of the sun. The black flies feasted on those who didn't apply bug repellent. Again, a minor nuisance on a glorious day.

Our hike down was uneventful, since we came back down the same trail we went up, except that Bryan scraped his knee, getting a minor boo-boo from falling down on a surprisingly slippery section of the granite slabs. With the presence of the fire tower, this hike is worth doing again and again. Afterwards, we went for ice cream at the ice cream parlor, Lickety-Split. Al Goodhind would have been proud of us.

Thank you, Al, for suggesting this hike and getting us to lead it -- it was a perfect White Mountain Sampler moderate hike.

~Dick Forrest

"If future generations are to remember us with gratitude rather than contempt....we must leave them a glimpse of the world as it was in the beginning, not just after we got through with it."

President Lyndon B. Johnson, upon signing the Wilderness Act, 1964

The Clubs' 'White Mtn. Sampler' ...'Twas Great!...

by Cindy Taylor & Gary Dolgoff....

Every year for the past several, Al Goodhind (one of our 'founding members' of The Club, our first Club President, and a very likeable, 'good fellow'...) organizes the yearly White Mtn. Weekend, sometime in mid-later June...each participant gets a 'loaded packet' ...loaded w/info on the area, info on the hikes...plus 'discounts galore', for area outlets and eateries (including a free meal for each participant at the wondrous and atmospheric Flatbreads restaurant...).

This year, it was on the weekend of June 17-19; around 42 hikers participated...

Our Club weekend began on Friday evening, at the comfortable Briarcliff Motel in North Conway, where most of us stayed (We love a weekend of hiking adventures & club camaraderie, coupled with a comfortable nights' rest on a bed, accompanied by 'AC' in the summer...and I think a # of our 'Club Brethren' share our proclivities in this directions...hey, thank you Mr. Goodhind!

Al held his organizational mtg. at 9:30pm, as he always does for this event...giving us all time to get up there, plus enjoy leisurely dinners, etc.

Everyone was given a choice of 5 different hikes (ranging from easy/moderate, to somewhat tough, to 'super-strenuous', etc...) for Saturday...

Gary & I chose Al's hike, because it was a moderate one- plus it combined the hike with a trip to the grandevous Mt. Washington Hotel for lunch (we like to eat) and the Heritage Museum, which sadly is closing forever after this season.

Our hike got off to an early start. It was a perfect day for hiking- sunny and warm, and relatively bug-less. Our destination was Zealand Hut, total distance around 5.5 miles. The hike proceeded along trails, through streams and rocks and man-made bridges. There were a lot of waterfalls. When we reached the hut, we spent some time resting and enjoying the view. I never

knew that the trails had huts where you could stay overnight. Zealand Hut is quite nice.

Some of us enjoyed some left-over pancakes for breakfast (although Gary was 'holding out' for his big lunch...)

As we headed back down the rocks, it got hotter but still comfortable. I was tired but happy at the end. It was nice to see Al and Gary assisting a new hiker. I believe this Club truly has a spirit of making new hikers feel welcome and safe.

Al is truly a compassionate and 'with-it' hike-leader...long may he lead!...

We proceeded to Mount Washington Hotel for lunch. The place is, in short, awesome...in size, scope (one of our group even got a massage there!) ...plus the vast views of the mountain range, when you are sitting in the back enjoying your well-earned lunch, as we were...can't be beat!...

Al gave us an abbreviated tour of the Hotel, before we went to our next destination, namely The Heritage Museum.

The museum details the history of New Hampshire, beginning in the 1600s. It is interactive and very nicely done. Definitely low-tech, it's got a charm all its' own, this museum. They start off by putting you in a 'boat', where a gent working there, fills your head with tales of what it's like to journey over the rough seas for 2 months or so, all the while not being able to bathe...phew!...(Actually, the gent representing this for the museum, really made you feel almost like you could be there- as he spoke, it was easy for one to imagine these things, that time...)

In fact, all of the various interpreters (who did 'chapter & verse', as tho they were the actual people living in those times), were very encapturing, and it made the Museum visit come alive, together w/the low-tech but clever, as well as original-'things going on', as you walked thru it all...(they even had a few talking mannequins of historical people of that time, 'making speeches' in a town meeting!...)

It truly is a shame, that the museum will no longer be open after this

year...they should film the entire inside tour for posterity, I'd say...& let people buy the film, over the years...

Hikers got together for dinner Friday and Saturday night.

We dined at Flatbread Pizza, along with fellow 'Clubbies', both evenings. The food, as well as our company, both nights- were truly 'notches above', and the furthest thing from 'humdrum'...truly, the food there is very excellent...(and to top it off, Al procured those free pizza coupons for all of us at this weekend...)

On Sunday, everyone went their own way after breakfast. We went on two short hikes on the way home (they were both very nice, 'natch), which was the Kankamagus Highway.

Thank you to Al for organizing this enjoyable event. It is a weekend I will remember for a long time.

~Cindy Taylor & Gary Dolgoff

DOLGOFF'S ADVICE:

HIKE IN LONG PANTS AND SHIRT IN THE WARMER WEATHER ('wicking material' clothing, 'natch..)

Why? Several important reasons:

- 1) Less chance of a deer tick jumping onto your skin
- 2) Little worry about getting scratches, poison ivy, etc.
- 3) Less skin-exposure to excessive sunlight

HONESTLY, FOLKS- THOSE 'THIN, WICKING-MATERIAL SHIRTS & PANTS, ARE THE 'CAT'S MEOW'! AND VERY COMFORTABLE IN HOT WEATHER!...

Summer Solstice

By John Klebes

The summer solstice "Death March" tradition continues. Back in 2003 Ed Laroche started the tradition by talking us into a 1-day Presidential Range Traverse. Twenty-five grueling miles of some of the rockiest steepest granite in the White Mountains. If that wasn't enough in 2004 we took on the Devils Path, 27 continuous miles through the

Heart of the Catskills with an incredible 18,000 feet of elevation changes. Then, to kick it up a notch, in 2005 we took on the entire Pemigewasset Wilderness Loop with a total of some 32 miles and 18,000 feet of elevation change.

So what did Ed have in store for us for this year? How about the complete Sunapee Greenway Trail. Fifty miles from the summit of Mt Monadnock to the summit of Mount Sunapee. Given the distance Ed suggested cutting us a break and spreading this leisurely hike over two days. What a guy! Of course he neglected to mention that that doesn't including hiking up to the summit of Monadnock and back down from the summit of Sunapee. Add another FIVE miles will you?

So off Rick Briggs, Ed Laroche and I go on our summer stroll. We started with a long distance car spot the night before. Given the lack of good roads it's close to a two-hour ride between the beginning and end of this hike. We staged a car at Sunapee and camped Friday night at the base of Mount Monadnock. With an early morning start we headed up the steep majestic slopes of Monadnock as the sunrise hit. Despite the early hour we were not the first to the summit given this popular mountain.

We reached the summit in record time but of course none of that counted because the trail really doesn't start until you reach the summit! From here we headed out on what turned into a long 30 plus mile day with many pretty spots but just as many muddy, wet, buggy, and logging damaged spots. How do I say this nicely, "It was, well, a "Death March!!!" Rick Briggs takes the prize for controlling the pace; relentlessly refusing to allow us to ever take a break. We had a near mutiny just to get a short break to eat lunch.

One of the major milestones on our first day was the fire tower on the summit of Pitcher Mountain. Boy was I glad to see it. But of course the approach to it was all up hill and after hiking all day Rick say no way would he let us take a break short of the summit. Up and up we went till we stood under the fire tower. We had humid overcast conditions all day but it was at this point that we saw, and heard, the approaching



Monadnock Summit (Ed, Rick, John)

thundershowers. A dark mass of clouds was fast approaching and as tired as we were we rain to the safety of the porch on the fire-tower caretakers cabin. The cabin was locked up and the porch was small but it allowed us to rest out off most of the coming rain. The wind swept water over much of the porch so we had to huddle near the back but it was a welcome rest. After the storm passed we hiked on to our camp for the night crossing numerous overgrown grassy summits hills that soaked our clothes from the wet grasses.

We finally made camp at a spot called Fox Brook. Lucky we didn't get more rain since Rick was using a hammock tent and wasn't so sure it was very well setup to handle the rain and ultra light Ed had decided to travel light and leave the rain fly at home. My bivi tent would not have helped them, as it was barely big enough for one.

We got an early start and were off again but soon found we were really in for a treat. We came to a section of trail that was completely underwater! Must have been knee high. After trying in vain to find a way around the swamp we ended up hiking right on through. By this time the bugs were posting fliers on the trees advertising the ready availability of hiker blood with arrows pointing in our directions. They were coming from miles away just to say hello and wish us well on our hike!

All morning Rick and Ed promised me pancakes when we got to road crossing on the map. Taking a look at the dirt roads, the size of the town, and the remote area I was convinced that their dream of a pancake breakfast was a delusion brought on by dehydration but thankfully at the end of this dirt road we cross a main road and there to my thankful eyes I see: A general store and kitchen with a full pancake breakfast. What a way to re-energize!

From here the terrain got more interesting and we crossed many rocky outcroppings. The relentless march north was no match for the pancakes and I was soon feeling the toll of abuse to our tortured bodies. My legs were tired; my shirt soaked in sweat, the humidity would not let anything evaporate. I feared for my life, anemic from the loss of what seemed like gallons of blood siphoned of despite lathering myself with DEET. Between the heat, grueling hike, loss of blood, and shear exhaustion was close to my limits.

Despite our desire to finish we took a long break to recover when we reached Lake Solitude. A beautiful spot where we could take of our boots and soak in the cool water. It

gave us a chance to cool down and gain the strength to move on to the final summit on Sunapee.

A very long and difficult endurance hike this year. So what's in store for next year? Anyone want to join us?

~John Klebes



White Mountain Sampler 2006

By Don Leis

Unlike the last several White Mountain Sampler (WMS) weekends, the 2006 version was different in one notable respect: clear skies with no rain. Several of WMSers chose to take advantage of the clear and sunny conditions for a hike up Mount Washington.

Don Leis, Carol Vanderheiden, Heather Wyman, and Denise Matthews began their hike at 8:00 a.m. from the National Forest parking area, located near the base of the cog railway line. They followed the Ammonoosuc Ravine Trail, stopping a couple miles into the hike for a photo taking session at The Gorge, which offers a view of two parallel streams cascading down into a "black pool of chiseled rock" (according to Carol's White Mountain guide book). The section of the trail between The Gorge and the Lake of the Clouds hut was definitely the steepest and the most aerobically challenging part of the climb. At the hut itself the views were spectacular and the AMC volunteers who were manning the hut had prepared soup, freshly baked bread, and carrot cake, all of which were available for a modest monetary contribution.

Don and Heather then continued along the cairn marked Crawford Path to the crowded summit of Mount Washington. Carol and Denise followed about a half hour later and hiked to the trail junction about .4 miles from the summit. The crowded conditions on the summit were due to the fact that this year's WMS happened to coincide with "Biker Week" in New Hampshire. The summit area was heavily populated with several hundred motorcyclists and tourists who had arrived via the cog railway. In order to have their photos taken at the Mount Washington summit sign, Don and Heather had to wait in line with a bunch of the leather-clad bikers – there should be a rule giving priority to those who actually hiked to the summit!

Don and Heather descended on the seemingly never-ending Jewell Trail, which crossed and then ran roughly parallel with the cog railway tracks. They reunited with Carol and Denise about midway down the Jewell Trail, and the group made it back to the place where the car was parked at approximately 6:00 p.m. The hike covered between 10 and 11 miles with a total elevation gain of some 3800 feet. The sparkling clear and sunny conditions certainly made the trek well worth the effort.

Don's wife, Kathy, a first time hiker, went along for the WMS weekend and she participated in Al Goodhind's "easy" hike to the Zealand Falls hut. Given her lack of hiking experience, Kathy probably would not have characterized the hike as being easy, but she completed the hike with a lot of help and encouragement from Al and from Gary Dolgoff. The Zealand Falls hikers then went for a visit to the grand old Mount Washington Hotel.

Our thanks go out to Al Goodhind for yet another well-organized WMS weekend.

~Don Leis

Upcoming Hikes:

Sept 29 & 30: Fall Adirondack Backpacking Trip

Adirondack Backpacking trip to Johns Brook Lodge Sept 29&30, 2006. Hike in is 3.5 mile and 800 ft elevation gain. From there we will climb ADK High Peaks. Bunk for 2 nights and dinner Saturday night for \$45.

Send check immediately to Ann Mundy, 35 Christopher Drive, Westfield, MA 01085 if you wish to be added to the list, as I will make final reservations the week of July 15. There will be no refunds after that date. Questions 1-413-562-1864

~Ann Mundy



Donna's Hike to Tipping Rock - Photo by Ann Marie Visconti

Important Notice

The following memberships are up for renewal:

July Renewals:

Rick Briggs
Robert Church
Donna Delisle-Mitchell & Family
Donna & Wayne English
Elaine Furtak
Jacqueline Goveas
Jeanne Kaiser
Marcia Kelly
Norm Plante
Robert & Lisa Frigo Schechtman

Aug Renewals:

Ben Allen
Harry Allen
Marie Bienvenue
Thomas Burton
Daniel Devlin
Lesley Dowd & Family
Meg Eakin
Connie Fogarty
Roz Gwozdz
David Keith
John D. Leary, Jr.
Ajay Menon
Ann Mundy
James O'Donnell
Florinda Peck
Catherine Perina
Gail Schoonover
Gary Tompkins
Juliana Vanderwielen
Ann Marie & Leah Visconti
Heather Wyman & Family

Please renew early, and renew by mail. (Make checks payable to PVHC) Mail your renewal with your name and any address or phone number changes to:

Pioneer Valley Hiking Club
c/o Wilderness Experiences
P.O. Box 265
Southwick, MA 01077

(Dues are \$25 member, \$40 family, and \$15 for students)

Pioneer Valley Hiking Club Officers & Committees

Ann Marie Visconti, President (413) 547-2729
 Mike Carrier, Vice President (413) 532-2990
 Monica Gross, Secretary (413) 536-6611
 Mike Gross, Treasurer (413) 536-6611
 Scott Cook, Wilderness Experiences Unlimited
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Hike Planning Coordinator: *Sue Forest & AnnMarie Visconti*
 Backpacking Coordinator: *Ed Laroche & Mike Rattelle*
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Bootprints is a publication of the Pioneer Valley Hiking Club. Send your story contributions to the editor at: j.klebes@ieee.org (Email) or by USmail to John Klebes, P.O. Box 51385, Indian Orchard, MA 01151.

IMPORTANT NOTICES

- ❑ Next Club Meetings:
 Aug 1, 2006, 7pm at **FBC**
 Sep 5, 2006, 7pm at **FBC**
- ❑ Deadline for Submissions for next BootPrints is: Aug 25, 2006
- ❑ **PVHC Summer Picnic**, Sept 17th
 Nonotuck Park, Easthampton, MA

FBC – First Baptist Church, West Springfield

*** Check out our web page at:

<http://www.geocities.com/pvhcweb>

Join the PVHC Email List by sending a message to: pvhc2000@hotmail.com

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