



Notes from the FLT Archives Erv Markert Georganne Vyverberg

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Every autumn there is a special hike in honor of a very special man. Erv Markert held the position of Trail Committee Chairman for over 20 years. That kind of dedication most likely had its effect on Howard Beye who was mentored by Mr. Markert. Recently Howard's meticulous files were brought to the Service Center and there in the back of many of the folders was Erv Markert's voluminous correspondence. It details beautifully the growth of a trail that was less than 50 miles on the ground when Erv took his place as Trail Manager. In June of 1964 along with some friends he flew more than 350 miles in a small plane piloted by Fred Hiltz scouting out routes in the eastern part of New York State.

He also served as FLT president from 1971-1973. When Wally Wood retired Erv graciously made a place for the office in his home and though he recruited help for some of the endless tasks associated with record keeping, he and his family were the folks who answered the phone when anyone needed something or had a question.

Like many of the other people I have written about in this column, Erv heard about the trail from a news article and attended those first meetings. Erv and his wife Kathy met Wally Wood on the trail of the Bristol Hills Branch one day. Wally knew a good thing when he saw it because soon afterward he knocked on the Markerts' door and proceeded to talk Erv into taking the position of Trails Manager. During those 20 years he worked tirelessly for the FLT and was the perfect public relations liaison with Appalachian Trail Conference and other groups. He served on the Board of the National

Trail Council, North Country Trail Advisory Board and was instrumental in the establishment of the New York State Trails Council.

In 1985 Erv was awarded the FLTC's Wally Wood Distinguished Service Award. At the time he was still *Finger Lakes Trail News* editor. When asked why he became interested in the FLT his reply was simple: "I have always been interested in the outdoors but hunting and fishing didn't answer all my needs. The Trail offered a chance for my family to do something together."

Erv's legacy is truly phenomenal. When he received the Wally Wood Award the main trail was 420 miles and branch trails totaled 196 miles. Most of those miles were nurtured by the intelligence and carefulness of Erv Markert. After reading so much of his correspondence with state and national legislators as well as trail workers and hikers who all looked to him with respect and affection I wish I had known this accomplished man.

If you attend the Erv Markert Memorial Hike this year, think about this remarkable man who made so much of this trail happen. □



Officers and members of the Board of Managers pictured after the May 21, 1966, meeting at Chanticleer Motor Lodge, Geneva. From left, first row, are Paula Strain (President), Helen McBride, Frances Jacobi and Wallace D. Wood. Next two rows: Carlton Wright, John Beverage, Charles Embree, G. Frederick Mohn, Gary Klee, Ervin Markert and Ralph G. Baker.

Photo: Ralph G. Baker