

Finger Lakes Trail NEWS

Winter 2004



Once upon a time...
bustling downtown Shinhopple - page 4

Hiking sea to sea
on the FLT? - page 8

President's Message

Trail Work, My Favorite Topic

by Irene Szabo

Well, hasn't this been a frustrating year out on the trail! It was so wet in May that I actually called off a group hike on my piece of the Bristol Hills Branch Trail because I knew that they would have a horrid time slogging through running water for long stretches of what should be trail in any normal year. On the originally scheduled hike day, I was out doing trail maintenance anyway and met a mountain biker who had passed several signs indicating that he was trespassing by bicycling on that private property: that poor boy received quite a load of my pent-up frustration for riding there when I'd asked hikers NOT to come! His arrogant tracks would haunt me for the rest of the season due to the severe dents he left in the mud.



Photo by M. Messer
*Irene, enjoying the overlook from
Thatchers Pinnacles on the Abbott
Loop south of Ithaca. (Nov 92)*

Nor did it stop being too wet, as you all know. Places that I mow along the trail either couldn't get done until much later than usual, or not at all, since mower wheels sink easily into the muck 'n mire, or those few lush places that I mow more than once seasonally (bushy field along Letchworth Branch behind the FLTC office and the roadside field walk entering our "Cobb property" near Ellicottville) needed more than twice as many mowings and STILL looked raggedy in September.

The sunny weekend two days after Hurricane Frances' soaking cleared out was frustrating: I really had to canvass all of my trail sections in my head in order to pick one where I thought I could walk without constant splashing and also avoid difficult creek crossings. I don't know what hikers did with all that sunshine September 11th and 12th; if they weren't rehiking a spot they already knew, they could have unwittingly chosen a really soggy slog. As it turned out, the same pickle prevailed the following weekend too!

Since I spent the 11th at a New York State Trails Council meeting at Schoharie Crossing State Historic Site (canals AND railroads, yum!), on the 12th I finally picked the Cobb property we own on map M-4 in Cattaraugus County, where I knew the trail was almost uniformly on

firm ground and what wasn't had bog bridging already in place over seeps and goo. Besides, I looked forward to seeing how our 2002 bridge over Devereaux Creek had fared in its first good flood.

Back when it was being designed, the Dept. of Environmental Conservation helped by providing historic flood level maps showing hundred-year statistical high points of water in that swampy valley where the curving creek can become a raging torrent with one good thunderstorm and beaver keep messing with water levels, too. My best guess was to put the bottom of the three-foot-high trusses four feet above typical summer water level, which put our actual deck seven feet up. The open webbing of the truss would permit water to pass through the bridgework should flooding waters exceed even hundred-year statistical flood levels,

and the sharp S-curve the stream goes through under the nearby railroad bridge (the perfectly good one we weren't allowed to use) should strain out any bounding tree trunks the flood might have picked up before reaching our bridge.

So far, we're okay. Mud on creekside weeds shows that water rose over three feet and washed up over the banks onto the approach trail a little bit, surrounding the very base of the piers built under each end. No damage, just a little mud, and the water obviously stayed several feet below even the bottom of the truss. The extra rocks a nearby BOCES class placed along the muddy bank next to one pier helped stabilize the ground under our pier, too. What a relief! And I noticed that the heavy water had wiped out a half-hearted impoundment beavers had begun downstream of our bridge, a result I don't mind at all.

I had entertained fantasies of sneaking off Friday, September 17th, to try another day of desperately needed trail work catch up, the day forecasters said Hurricane Ivan wouldn't come any farther north than southern Steuben County, and the same day I watched steady rain

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Did you know?

The FLTC has an email group (e-group) for its members. This service can be used to discuss hiking issues, inquire about trail conditions or find hiking partners. If interested in joining, contact Jack VanDerzee at vanderzee@ithaca.edu.



FINGER LAKES TRAIL NEWS

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Mission Statement

The mission of the Finger Lakes Trail Conference is to build, protect, and enhance a continuous footpath across New York State. Forever!

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Hiker Jack VanDerzee takes a break at an overlook on the trail during the September 2004 FLTC Fall Campout in the Catskills. Turn to page 16 for Sheila Ferrari's report with photos by Jacqui Wensich, and read Doug Cunningham's article (page 14) about hiking Slide Mountain that weekend.



Warren Johnsen

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Sue Slate

Cover: Balsam Lake Mountain Fire Tower (elev. 3,723 ft.) in the Catskills. The photo was taken by Warren "Trail Dawg" Johnsen in January 2004. It was minus 22 degrees! Balsam Lake Mt. is the highest point on the Finger Lakes Trail; the fire tower is located 0.3 mile from the FLT on a side trail.

Your Tax Dollars at Work by Irene Szabo

More visible results of our partnership with the North Country National Scenic Trail have been popping up along the Finger Lakes Trail this season, not all of them as massive as new shelters or bridges. For instance, one of the projects our VP for Trails, Howard Beye, applied to receive funding for has resulted in picnic tables at campsites. Anyone who has backpacked for days knows what a welcome relief it is to sit down at a table, and not squat on a log or a rock at nearly ground level. It's amazing what luxury a "chair" can become, much less a table to fix dinner upon.

For these programs, the National Park Service provides funds for the materials required, and the FLTC matches that money with the value of our volunteer labor, currently valued by the NPS at \$17.19 per hour. (Wow!) So eight tables have been made in kit form out of treated lumber by Ted Anderson, longtime FLT volunteer and ranger at Boy Scout Camp Sam Wood in Pike, Wyoming County (Map M-6), and several of those well-made kits of pre-cut lumber have resulted in tables popping up around the trail system.

There is one at the campsite at the top of the hill on our "Cobb property" on map M-4, Cattaraugus County, carried up there and built by the same Alley-Cat crew that built the bridge over Devereaux Creek,



Irene Szabo

Latest federally-funded additions to campsite on map M-12, east of Hammondsport—picnic table and fire ring with grate installed this fall, with one-holer in background from an earlier North Country Trail project. Red maple candleholder on table by Irene.

A Special Deal for FLTC Members!

Now you can join the North Country Trail Association for just \$16 per year! You'll get a subscription to North Star magazine, and the satisfaction of helping develop the North Country National Scenic Trail. To join, send this coupon to: NCTA, 229 E. Main St., Lowell, MI 49331 or call 888-454-6282

Name(s):
Address:
City, St Zip
Phone (optional):
E-mail (optional):
<input type="checkbox"/> I'm enclosing a check for \$16 payable to NCTA
<input type="checkbox"/> Please charge my credit card (MasterCard, VISA or AmEx only)
Card # _____ Exp Date: _____
Name as it appears on card: _____
Signature: _____

and another has just appeared on map M-12, at "Irene's Camp" east of Hammondsport above Keuka Lake. The latter campsite also now sports one of the federally-funded, fancy fire rings with hinged grate for downright luxurious cooking facilities.

Another project that has been helped along by NPS funding is our long-term project to install informational signs along the route of the North Country Trail. Many of you by now have seen one or more of them: two 4x4 posts support a wide oak board, all stained dark brown, with letters routed into the board and painted either white on private property, or yellow on state forests. At some trail junctions there are three posts and two signs at right angles to one another.

Landowner and great friend of the FLT Bill Garrison cut in the lettering for the first round of signs, nearly two dozen of them, while Bob Emerson has been making the most recent batch. The three-foot-diameter red oak Bob cut the slabs from had crashed in a Rochester suburb during a storm in 1998. Opportunistic Bob got permission from the owner to cut up a 32-foot-long section out of the trunk, and ended up working at just the removal for over a year!

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From the Desk of the Executive Director

by Gene Bavis



First off, thank you to Sigrid Connors, and the whole crew at the Cayuga Trails Club for hosting a VERY successful hike across Tompkins County. I had the privilege of attending the series picnic in October, and was impressed by the enthusiasm and camaraderie there. To those who have participated in the last three hikes... you are off to

a pretty good start on end-to-end status. We are pleased to announce that Sigrid and company are also hosting next year's hike series across Schuyler County. Stay tuned for details, both on the website and in the *FLT News*.

Thanks to Irene Szabo for organizing the Fall Campout AGAIN this year. I'm sorry I was unable to attend, but I hear it went well.

Speaking of weekend events, save the weekend of April 29 - May 1 for our Spring Outing and Annual Meeting, to be hosted by the Cayuga Trails Club. Details will be posted on the website as soon as we have them, and of course the spring issue of the *FLT News* will carry the information and registration materials.

You should have received your annual appeal letter from Irene in late October or early November. We are grateful for your support as members, and for those of you who can afford to give a little extra to help fund our operations. Many of you have already responded

generously. As of November 8 nearly \$5,000 has been contributed, BUT if we are to reach our goal, we'll need to raise another \$6,000. If you haven't already contributed, we would appreciate your consideration. We know that there are many non-profit organizations asking for your donations. We do our best to be frugal, so we hope that you will consider us worthy. I believe ours is a noble mission, and I hope you agree.

As you get into your holiday shopping, please consider giving a gift membership, FLT logo clothing, or some other item from the FLT Store. We could even provide you with a FLT Gift Certificate if that works better for you.

Lastly, I would like to thank the many FLT members who expressed their sympathy in so many ways to my family and me after the recent loss of my beloved wife, Pam. I would ask that you do me (and more importantly yourself) a favor if you are 50-ish or older... Go get a colonoscopy if you haven't had one recently. We waited too long. I also want to thank the Board, Officers, and members for being patient with me as I get myself re-focused on my director tasks. □

*Gene Bavis, Executive Director
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315/986-1474 (home)*

FLTC OFFICE HOURS: We are normally open Mondays and Thursdays, 9:30 to 3:30, but there are frequent exceptions, so call ahead if you want to be sure. 585/658-9320

Announcing new FLTC Hike Coordinators

End-to-enders Kim Meacham and husband Terry of Hornell have volunteered to coordinate the three annual Conference hikes: the Wally Wood hike in the spring, the President's Hike in mid-summer, and the Erv Markert hike in autumn. They will need other volunteers who offer to lead interesting hikes in their neighborhood, since the hikes should be well spread around the state. The Meachams will finalize all the planning, and will advertise the results in the *FLT News* so that all of us will have an opportunity to enjoy another piece of the trail in a nice group hike. Look for their announcement of the spring hike in the next issue. Kim and Terry can be reached with hike suggestions at 607/324-0374, meach@infoblvd.net



Walking Through Time in New York: #7 in a series

Next Stop... Shinhopple?

by Tim Wilbur

For those of us who have had the pleasure of hiking the road walk section on map M-29 at the west edge of the Catskills, it is probably hard to imagine that the sleepy crossroads called Shinhopple was once a thriving railroad community with loaded freight cars lining a siding for daily pickups. Up the road at Gregory Town, dairy products waited for their pickup, and further up the road at Colchester and Corbett the lumber industry once employed dozens of men. This short section of the valley of the East Branch Delaware River we walk through once supported a railroad that is credited for opening up this valley and establishing surrounding communities.

The first attempt at a railroad in this valley began upstream in 1870 at Arkville, but never saw fruition because of the Panic of 1873. The idea of a railroad remained on the drawing board until just after the turn of the century when a railroad man and a coal mine owner together convinced investors that a railroad through this valley was a good idea. Thus by 1906 a 37.5 mile railroad was born, called the Delaware and Eastern, that connected other railroads at each end of the line. The southern terminus at East Branch connected with the New York Ontario & Western Railway while the northern end connected with the Ulster & Delaware at Arkville. A 9.5 mile branch to Andes was also built, connecting several small towns which had hoped to become big.

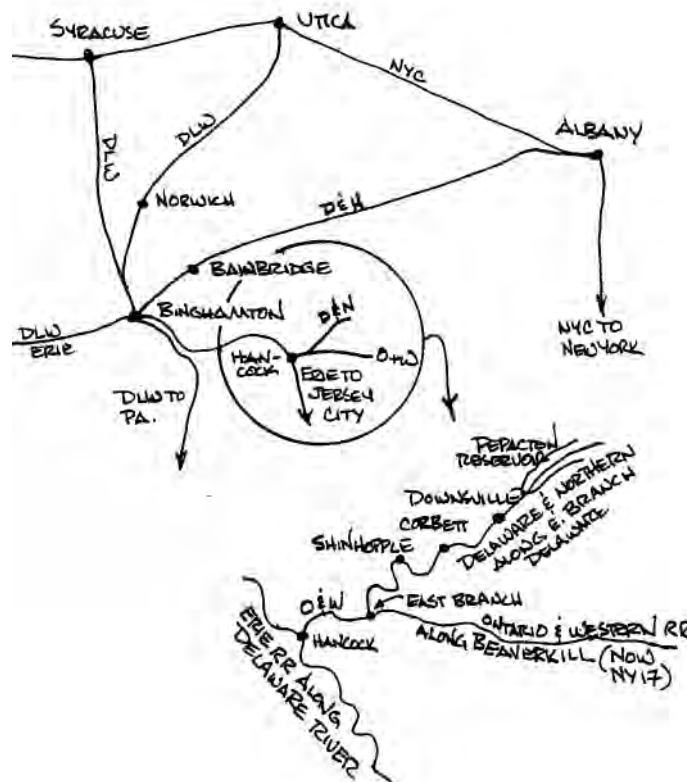
Outbound flatcars were loaded with quarried bluestone for use in highway construction. Dairy products were the chief money maker, transported in specialized milk cars to the cities. Lumber yards were built to handle the harvest of nearby forests, while at Corbett an "acid factory" was established. There hardwoods were distilled in a sealed retort to produce various chemicals, including wood alcohol and solvents, and the charcoal necessary for refining steel.

A passenger service hoped to lure vacationers to the Catskills, long a summer destination for New York City residents, and thousands used the passenger trains to attend the County Fair. Inbound trains delivered coal and general merchandise to the freight stations at each stop.

The D&E started out with great potential, and the connecting railroads saw her as a feeder line to their profitability as well. However, when the D&E petitioned to extend the line south to Wilkes Barre in Pennsylvania to tap coal fields and north

to Schenectady, these neighboring railroads opposed the expansion, seeing it as a threat to their empires. So the D&E lost its battle to expand, and therefore remained a regional short line, dependent upon the resources and demands of the small area it served.

The D&E went into receivership in 1910, reorganized, and renamed itself the Delaware & Northern Railroad. For several years the D&N prospered despite typical problems of the times from labor unrest and one unusual derailment, but no loss of life. However, in the 1920's the D&N lost much of its traffic base: concrete was now preferred over bluestone for road





The Delaware & Northern railway bed west of Corbett.

construction, so quarries closed (we pass evidence of some old quarries along our trail route in the hills). An improved highway system, local creameries, and trucks replaced the milk runs. As other heat sources came into wider use, demand for coal saw a steep decline. And as the forests outside the Catskill Preserve were depleted, lumber yards and the acid factory closed. Today our roadwalk reveals only the massive tall chimney of Corbett's acid factory, closed in 1934. By 1928 the railroad had filed for abandonment and was once again bankrupt.

This should have been the end for the D&N; however, a speculator stepped forward, buying the line with the knowledge that a reservoir was soon to be built near Downsville for a New York City water supply. The revived Delaware & Northern Railway secured many of the contracts to bring in supplies to build the reservoir and assumed the reservoir would always need servicing by the rails. Because the valley from Downsville nearly to Arkville would be flooded, they also assumed that the City would pay to relocate the railroad higher along the hillsides.

However, as the reservoir neared completion, it became apparent that the railroad was no longer justified. For what customers remained, service was unreliable. While management waited to negotiate a price with New York City, deferred maintenance left the line a shambles which earned the D&N the nickname of The Damn Nuisance. The D&N was sold to New York City in 1939, and in October of 1942 the line was officially abandoned. By the summer of 1943, the last ties were salvaged and sold to a railroad in Michigan. Other recyclable metals were sold for scrap to make bombs for the war effort. Workers

mostly found jobs with rival railroads at either end of the line.

Hikers on map M-29 will have a hard time finding the old railbed. No bump or hump or even a rise in the road is left to mark the spot our roadwalk would have intersected the D&N crossing near the sharp left turn out of Shinhopple near the campground entrance. If you peer into the overgrowth just to the northeast corner you should be able to make out the right of way. As you progress toward Corbett every now and then you should be able to see the old bed to the north side of the road. Some sections have been completely erased as homeowners incorporated the right of way into their lawns. One farmer has taken

advantage of the raised right of way for storing round bales of hay for easy access. But most sections have become a ripple of overgrowth on the landscape.

Just before we cut off onto Campbell Brook Road, one last look north and you should see a small cement abutment where the D&N once bridged Campbell Brook on its way toward Downsville Station. For an added treat, walk a half-mile west through Corbett to see the Brooklyn Bridge in miniature over the East Branch Delaware River.

Beyond Downsville, the D&N was drowned under the Pepacton Reservoir. □

The library in Walton has local history books that give more detail on the D&N including in-depth stories, labor problems, and final dealings with New York City and the reservoir. There is also an Ulster & Delaware Railroad Museum and regular excursion rides in the summertime in Arkville for the interested railfans among us.

Answers to the Name That Map! quiz in the Fall issue:

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| A. M2 Seneca Indian Nation | D. M25 Chenango River |
| B. M9 beaver pond | E. M19 natural bog by
deserted railroad
bed |
| C. M31 Alder Lake | F. M29 Campbell Brook |

Winners: Heidi Bellinger and Irene Szabo (Heidi started with 4/6 correct and got 6/6 with hints. Irene started with 2/6, also attaining 6/6 with hints.)

Hunting Season and Hiker Protocol

Our readers will receive this issue too late to be useful during December's shotgun and musket seasons, but the FLTC Trails Management Committee wishes to remind all hikers that some of our permitting landowners want their piece of trail closed during various portions of the annual hunting seasons.

Note: this does not mean that YOU, sweet adorable thing that you are, may ask to walk through anyway when you discover yourself right there in the middle of the closed time. No, it does not mean that you may bother the landowner at home to ask "special" permission for yourself. Nor does it mean that you may sneak through on weekdays when you hope the absentee landowner won't be there hunting.

Those who think they can get away with the above slippery behaviors are the ones who literally endanger our permissions with those landowners! We have indeed lost permissions for trail route from landowners who were frustrated by repeated disregard for their wishes, whether it has been a hunting season closure or a request that no bicycles pass through, so we must repeat our request that hikers NOT disobey landowner wishes! Please don't forget that many landowners have that spot we cherish precisely so that they may hunt there in peace for a few weeks a year.

This year's example: a property on map M-12, east of Hammondsport in Steuben County, which connects the abandoned portion of Longwell Rd. with the currently active road, was purchased in August, too late for notice in the autumn *FLT News*. The new owner bought it for the purpose of hunting during both fall and spring seasons, so allowed our route to continue where it has been for the last fourteen years, but insisted that we make it very clear that there is to be NO walking through there from October 15 through December 21, or during the whole month of May. While we would rather have year-round permission, reality dictates that we accept "imperfect" permissions through difficult areas where there are not a lot of other route choices.

The closure was put on our website under "Trail Conditions" in early September. The change will be on all maps purchased in late 2004, but most hikers during the autumn already had their maps. The

potential for problems is obvious. Bright new painted signs were placed at both borders of the property in question, AND one trail-mile further west so that innocents wouldn't blunder into the interior thinking they had a clear path ahead of themselves.

Nevertheless, at least two hikers blundered through, and those are only the ones the trail steward knows about. One was cross-country trekker Andrew Skurka, a "special case" if ever there was one, since he had begun walking months before on his cross-continent adventure and wasn't able to check our updated "Trail Conditions" on the web. While none of us had expected a through-hiker after October 15th, a phone call to the owner resulted in his gracious permission for Andrew to proceed.

The second socially awkward occasion involved a hiker who had been

dropped off miles to the west, with plans to be picked up again, many hours later, well east of the newly closed property. Worst of all, this hiker didn't see the 18" x 14" bright white sign proclaiming the closed season. (What did he think that big white thing was beneath the yellow FLT trailhead sign?) Yes, he was in a terrific pickle once he got to the closed border, but he chose to walk forward and ask the landowner when he did run into him. That's not a smart way to treat permitting landowners!

It will always be hard to inform every potential hiker about such changes in trail permissions. Some aren't members of the FLTC so don't read notices in the *FLT News*. Few would think to check the web site's "Trail Conditions" spot if their maps are relatively new. And some just decide they'll keep walking even when they run across a spanking new sign telling them that the trail is closed. THAT's the problem!

Please drill into your own head that there are many spots on the trail that are closed for any or all of the legal hunting seasons, so checking beforehand when you want to hike any time after October 15th through late December, or during the month of May, is the only way to ensure that you won't irritate a permitting landowner. Share the lesson with non-member hikers you know. Share with club members through your own newsletters, and repeat the warning every late

(Continued on page 7)

Latest hunting season closure just received:

Map M-9, a private parcel between Stearnes and Bishopville Roads, east of Bully Hill State Forest, this trail closure covering ALL of October, November, December, and May!

Hunting Season and Hiker Protocol...

(Continued from page 6)

summer or early fall: **Be sure you know the latest hunting season closures any time you want to hike between 15 October and 21 December, and in all of May.** We will strive to repeat that same warning in the *FLT News*, too, both spring and fall.

Spread the good word, please, and help us prevent lost permissions due to social clumsiness! □

FLT Bullthistle Hikers of Chenango County

The Bullthistle Hikers have a full schedule of hikes that runs right through the winter. There are 10 hikes scheduled between mid-December and the end of March, starting on Sunday, Dec. 19 with an easy snowshoe or hike (depending on snow cover) on FLT map M-23, led by Claire Ders. For something different, check out the snowshoe excursion in January, led by Warren Johnsen—it will be in the moonlight!! Full details of hikes, including times, meeting places, distance, and so forth, may be obtained by contacting Ed Sidote at 607/334-3872 or ejsidote@ghsfcu.net. Ed has extra snowshoes to loan to members for snowshoe hikes or for learning purposes. He will be happy to teach any member interested in learning to snowshoe.

Information provided by Betsy Almeter.



Rebecca Hargrave

Bullthistle Hikers on a fall hike

Your Tax Dollars at Work...

(Continued from page 2)



Irene Szabo

Steve Catherman, trail sponsor along map M-12 northwest of Hammondsport, holds intended junction signs where Bristol Hills Branch ends at main trail junction. Picture taken while there was still enough daylight, before Steve finished hole digging of near heroic proportions through rocks and roots.

Emerson-made signs have been popping up all over the trail system, and two more sets have just gone up before gun hunting season. Two at the Cobb property explain to passing hikers where the blue loop goes, since that is too much detail to put onto our normal map, which means Bob had to router not only a lot of “destination lettering” but also a little map of the property’s loops in blue and white.

A three-legged sign was installed at the junction of the south end of the Bristol Hills Branch Trail and the main white-blazed trail on map M-12, west of Hammondsport. One sign with orange letters points the way to Ontario County Park, 52 miles away, while the white-lettered sign gives hikers the daunting totals for mileage to either the Catskills or Pennsylvania! This impressive sign structure replaces two plywood orange signs (now well-tasted by porcupines and other creatures of the forest) that had served well since 1989 when Bob Muller and Irene Szabo installed them.

Steve Catherman, trail caretaker of that spot along the main trail, did heroic service whanging away at rocky, root-laced soil to make the three holes, each over two feet deep. Irene Szabo, who tends the southernmost miles of the Bristol Hills Branch, stained the posts and watched Steve. □

Sea-to-Sea Hiker Passes through our Neighborhood by Gerry Rising

Note: The author is an FLT end-to-ender. His article originally appeared in the Buffalo News.

Andrew Skurka is a distance hiker who has taken on one of those ultimate challenges.

Skurka is hiking across North America.

His trek is not in the mold of Peter Jenkins or "Gramma" Doris Haddock whose cross-country walks followed highways. Instead, Skurka's trek is along hiking trails twisting through the wild lands of our nation's northern tier of states.



Jacqui Wensich

Andrew Skurka
Watkins Glen — October 19

two Canadian provinces and thirteen states. His route follows the Canadian extension of the Appalachian Trail and a northern part of AT as well, then the North Country Trail which joins and follows the Finger Lakes Trail across New York, next a northern section of the Continental Divide Trail and finally the Pacific North-

Follow Andrew Skurka's progress across the continent at <http://www.andrewskurka.com/C2C/index.asp>

west Trail. Some of these trails are not yet connected, including a 700-mile section across North Dakota and Montana, and he will have to find his own way there.

I met this bright, 23-year-old recent Duke University graduate in Swain in late October. He paced down out of the woods southeast of the ski resort, continued across a meadow and along a lane to our Sierra Inn

meeting place, the ski poles he walks with clattering on the road surface.

Thank goodness I

didn't plan to hike with him. I would have had to trot to keep up. And he keeps up this pace for 25 to 30 miles every day. His longest day so far, he told me, was 34 miles, about the length of the Niagara River.

Skurka's physical appearance wasn't what I expected. At Duke he ran cross-country, but he doesn't have that spindly look of many track athletes. Although he had already lost almost twenty pounds when we met, his physique communicated strength rather than lightness. When asked about weight loss, he told me that he bulked up before he began his trip and does so on the rare breaks he takes from the trail. He recently stopped to attend his sister's wedding and will interrupt his hiking again for a few days at Christmastime. Even with those pauses, he will complete the hike in twelve months.

Skurka bulked up at our lunch as well. I jealously watched him down a big hamburger and then a giant slice of peanut butter pie surrounded by several scoops of ice cream. I'd have gained five pounds on the spot.

On Thursday, Oct 14th, I unexpectedly got the afternoon off from work. I went to Taylor Valley to walk east and immediately met up with a most amazing young man...

Tim Davis

When he completes his walk next August, he will be the first to hike the entire 7700-mile Sea-to-Sea Route from Quebec's Gaspé Peninsula to Olympic National Park on the west coast of Washington. He will have crossed



Most impressive to me was his light pack. He's well into one of the 250-mile sections between drops (post offices to which his family sends food and clean clothing) and it now weighs only about eleven pounds.

I couldn't believe it. We've had a history of decline in pack weight from the time when the Voyageurs carried one and sometimes two 90-pound packs. When I began guiding canoe trips fifty years ago, our canvas boats weighed about 100 pounds and boxes called Wannigans weighed at least as much. Canoes now weigh 40 to 60 pounds and the last pack I carried was 35. But eleven?

Skurka's nylon ground cloth and tarp/poncho are paper thin but still strong. His ski poles hold up his tarp at night. His down sleeping bag is a quarter the size of mine. He carries only dried food, which he occasionally supplements at stores along the way. But easily his most striking weight saver is his stove, a tiny cup in which an ounce of alcohol heats his meals.

The trip has already been eventful. A cow moose feeding quietly ten yards from the trail. Rain from the tail end of a hurricane swamping the trail in Canada and making him wade for several days. Beautiful views from the Presidential Range.

Soon Andy Skurka will face winter hiking through the intense cold of the Midwest. It doesn't faze him.

I wish him well. □

On Tuesday [October 19], Jacqui Wensich, Sharon Galbraith, and I stood in the parking lot near Rock Cabin Road, Watkins Glen, planning our day's work party. Like magic, a tall slender young man in a large orange translucent rain parka materialized.

Andrew Skurka is walking 7700 miles from the Gaspé Peninsula to Washington State, including all of the North Country Trail.

Strange coincidence: We had an appointment with our banker on Wednesday. Knowing that we share an interest in hiking, he started out by saying, "The other day as we were hiking near Cuyler, we met this tall young fellow on the trail..."

Jay Zitter

Night Hike

by Irene Szabo

October 26 - It's ironic that Jack VanDerzee shared his night hike with the egroup just days ago, since I sort of had to take my first night hike last night. I'd heard of people doing it voluntarily, but it never sounded very appealing to me, since I love to see what's around me in the woods.

I wanted to meet this likeable crazy guy, Andrew Skurka, who is walking all the way across the country from sea to sea (yes, in the winter too! northern states! North Country Trail! brrrrrrr), before he escaped our state at the terrific pace he's keeping up (24-30 miles per day even with our truncated daylight), so the only

On October 19, Jay Zitter, Jacqui Wensich and I went to Watkins Glen to do trail maintenance on the QCMT. We had parked and were standing in the rain gearing up for our work, when Andy appeared. We had a great chat, with each of us fussing over him: Do you have enough food? Do you need water? Are you warm enough? Do you need a phone? He admitted to having been wet for four days but didn't need anything. However, Jay did manage to get him to accept some chocolate bars. After a great encounter, Andy went on his way into town, and we went on our way to work on the trail.

Sharon Galbraith



Jay Zitter, Andrew Skurka, Sharon Galbraith

way to visit for a while was to meet him at his campsite at the end of the day so I wouldn't hold up his progress. (Also wanted to put some food in front of him after what Jay Zitter had said about him last week in Watkins Glen.)

We had talked on the phone, so I knew his plans put him at the Cobb campsite on map

M-4, just east of Ellicottville in Cattaraugus County, "at about 5:50," he'd said when I chanced to intersect with him during a brief road walk earlier that afternoon. What a slacker: he got to the top of Cobb's hill at about 5:55.

While he set up his wee teensy poncho-tarp-sortof-rainfly over his infinitesimal ground cloth and pad and skimpy looking down sleeping bag, we babbled about

(Continued on page 10)

Sea-to-sea hiker, Skurka...

(Continued from page 9)

his plans, and I worried at him about walking through winter...deep snow (he'll have snowshoes), invisible blazes when you're walking three and four feet above the trail, inability to keep drinking water unfrozen, never a warm moment, blah blah blah. He admitted that his winter camping skills were untested, but would certainly improve quickly! ai yi yi

We agreed that crashing boredom and lonesomeness would be the biggest problems, not the cold, or hunger, or exhaustion, even if I do privately wonder if he isn't a bit shy on fat and fiber in his diet.

It hadn't seemed like we talked long, but I ended up not getting back to my truck at the bottom of the hill until 9 p.m. While we sat at the campsite, we noticed that it never became truly dark even though it was completely overcast. I realized it was the nearly full moon shining on the cloud cover from above, making the sky a light gray, much like a city sky is gray from reflection from below. Last time I stayed overnight at this campsite, one July 4th with friends who are "doing" the North Country Trail in saner-sized chunks, the sky was completely dark, except for stars. There are NO civilized lights visible from the top of the hill, nor even any remote glow from Ellicottville.

But this eerie night stayed that funny light gray: tree trunks were visible dark against the carpet of fallen maple leaves on the ground while that gray sky kept large objects findable. Even though I had not been looking forward to going downhill on steep trail with wet leaves, and so was armed with several serious flashlights and a headlamp, it wasn't too bad! But as Jack said last week to our e-group, it sure is easier if you've done the trail before, and I know every curve of this one since I built it and still tend it.

However, sometimes I'd lose my place without the usual visual frames of reference, so would forget momentarily the correct wiggle in the trail and would have to turn on the flashlight again. But I'll admit it was neat to walk through that soft gray unlight, even if I did tread so timidly that by the bottom I felt like I'd been tense on the steep downhills, giving myself wobbly knees.

One surprise came shortly after I left the campsite. As I said before, there are no signs of civilized lights from the hilltop bivouac, but after only a modest descent, suddenly I could see a few house lights a trail-mile

away and 300 feet below along NY 242, and the occasional passing vehicle. With most leaves down, the vista at night was utterly unexpected.

It was a completely quiet night, no breeze, and not a sound from creatures. Sorry to have heard no owls, since at home I've been having conversations with screech owls. The dogs were unimpressed with walking down in the dark, and only wanted to know why supper was late. Devereaux Creek chuckled beneath our wonderful wooden bridge, and then I heard the inevitable splashes as the dogs swam across just because they like to. It's especially nice when they get soaked only 500 feet from the truck, and then shake once they're inside. Ha on me.

Andrew had to sleep in his little bivy sack high atop the Cobb hilltop as the temperature slipped lower in the forties. □

Corrections

Readers have pointed out some errors in the last two issues.

It's the Queen Catharine (with an "a") Marsh Trail in the Catharine Valley. Howard Beye spelled it right in the article he submitted, but your editor "corrected" it in a moment of editorial arrogance.

The first half, alphabetically, of the list of 10-year members was missing in the spring issue. They are:

Leslie & Carol Bement, Buffalo
Dr. Susan Black, Hammondsport
Boy Scout Troop 52, Bainbridge
Boy Scout Troop 56, Rochester
Jeannine M. Clark, Penn Yan
John D. & Jane T. Conklin, Norwich
Robert & Carol Dickey, Hornell
William C. Dieffenbacher, Endicott
Cynthia S. Dunham Arkport
Roger L. Easton, Jr., Scottsville
OCM BOCES Env. Science Careers Class, Cortland
Joan Ewing, Fairport
David F. Gardner, Wellsville
Barbara Hackett, Churchville
Richard E. Harrington, Richford
Gertrude M. Hauck, Kendall
H. Robert Herman, Penfield
Ruth B. Kane, Rochester
Keith & Bonnie Krabill, East Amherst

My apologies to those whose names were left out.

— Jo Taylor

President's Message...

(Continued from inside the front cover)

out the window and radar showing all of upstate inundated. One supposes we should be grateful the dark green on the radar doesn't indicate Dr. Seuss's sticky "oobleck."

On the 19th I did a pick-up tour of my Huckleberry Bog Nature Trail Loop on map B-3 of the Bristol Hills Branch, between Prattsburgh and Hammondsport in Steuben County. I've been working this hilltop for fifteen years now, and was amazed, even after two sunny days, to see the running and standing water in parts of the trail that haven't even been muddy before. Twice I was able to relieve huge impoundments of water in the old road that crosses the hilltop by cleaning out clogged natural outlets of their impeding mud and sticks. Even the trickle that normally relieves the bog northward had become a noisy stream.

But, for all our mutual difficulties this season keeping up with our own riotous lawns, soggy lawns, and sodden trail, our complaints must be tempered by the horrid realities faced by our counterparts in the south. The beautiful little town of Marietta, Ohio, where we enjoyed blissful sunny weather for this last summer's North Country Trail annual gathering, endured flooding from Ivan half-way up the first story of its

charming historic downtown buildings. That wide monster the Ohio River rose 22 feet in 22 hours, a terrifyingly fast advance, and crested one muddy foot above the lobby floor of the beautiful Lafayette Hotel.

The Florida National Scenic Trail travels the full east-west length of their panhandle, then turns south to take hikers all the way to the tropical tip of the state. Now 80% of the 1400-mile trail is closed due to downed trees and flooding. It's under water often enough as it is, but now there are pictures in their latest magazine of blazed trees sticking up from ponds, pictures clearly taken from a canoe on the "trail." Assessment and repair crews have begun the immense rehabilitation required, manned by many volunteers who also have to repair their own homes! We are reminded to be thankful we will never face a surge of salt water a dozen feet above normal ground level, or even 140 mph winds.

And I had thought the ice storm of 1991 wrought havoc on the trail in western New York! Thirteen years later I'll confess that my first tears were for the trail sections I love to tend, even as I lay in the dark listening to trees cracking and snapping all around my own home. Indeed there were whole acres of pines flattened across the trail in that freak icing's aftermath, but I realize now that the literal *thousands* of extra hours of trail work required that year were nothing in comparison to what southern states' trail workers are facing now.

Irene Szabo, President of the Board
6939 Creek Rd, Mt Morris NY 14510
585/658-4321 (fax 4438) treeweenie@aol.com

Own a Piece of the Finger Lakes Trail and Be a Hero, All in One Swell Foop

A handful of years ago one of our permitting landowners was savvy enough to let the Finger Lakes Trail Conference know before he listed it, that his property would be for sale, and it was a critical property for our trail route, too, one that connected the road with a long portion of trail on public land. The happy result was that a couple who are FLTC members bought it, and are even working gradually toward creating a permanent easement for the trail's passage through there.

So we are happy to share the news with our members that Hans and Helen Zandt, longtime permitting landowners on map M-27 of an equally critical

connection, wish to sell their 136-acre forested property at the west end of the Catskills. The trail route there goes between a long finger of Delaware State Forest where our trail climbs up, then down a steep hill (what else is new in the far eastern portion of our route?) and County Road 27, which starts our road walk across a wing of Cannonsville Reservoir, and without the Zandt's connecting piece between state forest and road, our trail route is very vulnerable.

To visit the property, or make an offer, please contact our longtime gracious trail hosts Hans and Helen Zandt: 151 Morman Hollow Road, Walton 13856 (607/865-4313).

Star Search?

Howard Beye, Trails Vice President, has been searching for over a year now, and asking in this publication, for a manager or leader of the effort to add a new chunk of trail in Steuben County southward to meet up with the extension of the Mid-State Trail that is already being built toward the border in northern Pennsylvania, below Corning. Still looking, and now the project has new luster! There is a serious effort afoot to connect a batch of existing trails, including ours, plus build a few modest-sized connections (like the Mid-State/Corning-plus link), to form an alternative north-south trail parallel to the Appalachian Trail and a few ridges west of it! No name for the new trail yet, but large and experienced trail groups of great stature and reputation, like the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club, have agreed to undertake this big project.

More news when we have it, but it is planned to connect Alabama with our Adirondacks.

What is definite is that the organizers want to include a big chunk of the main Finger Lakes Trail. So now, more than ever, those volunteers who have already raised their hands to help with the link to Pennsylvania **want a leader**.

Be brave: call Howard at 585/288-7191 or email fltcf@frontiernet.net

New Bog Bridges

On September 13, 2003, Mary Domanski volunteered her time by taking the Clever Clovers 4H Club of West Valley on an informative first-time hike on the Conservation Trail in Cattaraugus County (map CT-4 from access 5). Everyone enjoyed themselves very much. The club plans on hiking more of the trail in the future, so the members can learn more about the great adventures that are right in their own backyards.

This August, as a thank you to Mary Domanski, eleven members of the 4H Club and project leaders Mary and Rob Dallas used donated wood from area residents to build badly needed bog bridges on wet sections of map CT-4 near access 5 (before the bench).

The 4H Club members hope that these help make the trail more pleasurable for all hikers.

— Mary Dallas

Great Trail Easement News

At last, every administrative hurdle now jumped, a one-mile-long permanent trail easement on map M-11 is official and complete! Gail Higgins Quaintance, a niece who inherited Basil Parker's extensive hilly property that lies between Hughes and Burleson Roads in the Town of Howard, between Bath and Hornell, has generously granted the Finger Lakes Trail Conference a permanent route between two other private landowners. She did it because (a) she's a generous person, and (b) she knew Basil was contemplating the idea, and (c) most important to her, her aunt, Zita Higgins Parker, would have loved the idea, even if she did die before the FLT and Basil ever met.

Gail is planning to sell major portions of the property to others who want to farm the high hay fields, so trail protection BEFORE she sold off any of her inheritance is a fabulous gift to the trail and hikers. Large farms that end up being divided into multiple smaller properties have provided FLTC trail sponsors with ongoing problems all over the state. There is even a provision built into this easement that allows an alternate corridor down to Burleson Road should we ever lose permission south of her border.



**Tompkins Hikes:
October 9 Award Ceremony
by Sigrid Connors,
Tompkins Hike Series Coordinator**

In the rustic picnic shelter of the Lower Treman State Park we recognized and congratulated sixty-five people who completed the 52.2-mile "2004 Hike Across Tompkins County". Of the 150 registered hikers, another 24 completed three or more of the hikes and 43 folks made at least one or two of the six monthly hikes. Over ninety folks enjoyed the burgers, dogs, vegi-burgers and over twenty feet (really!) of the most amazing spread of casseroles, salads, and desserts. After we had a chance to sample the great smorgasbord, we somehow squeezed everyone in to start the award ceremony.

Hikers who completed the series received a certificate of recognition and the colorful Tompkins County patch showing a trail going through a cluster of trees with a hint of the hills and Cayuga Lake in the background. Special recognition was given to the youngest "completer", ten-year-old Peter Newman, and to another young one, Clainie Lashley. Clainie's achievement is that she got to enjoy the entire hike in her parent's backpack, starting the series at the tender age of 19 months!



The September hike: Ten-year-old Peter, David and Laurel Newman on Trumbells Corner Road.



Hikers enjoying the end-of-hike-series picnic at the South Shelter of Treman State Park.

When I undertook the role of coordinator for this series I had several goals. First, as a nurse in public health, I wanted to promote good hydration and replacement of body salts; hence, our focus on pushing the water, Gatorade and salty Dutch pretzels. And second, as one who likes to look at the bright side of life, I wanted people to relax and have fun. This part was made easier because of the dozens of volunteers who helped pull the event off and (literally) pull some hikers up that one last hill.

With that, we gave appreciation to the many dedicated volunteers that made the series so successful. Marsha Zgola helped as picnic coordinator and Jim Connors gave recognition to our two steadfast Birnie Bus drivers. Sag Wagon Coordinator John Andersson provided matchbox cars to "wagoneers" Luanne Andersson, Jim and me, Phil Dankert, Barb Morley and Tom Reimers. Tom also received a wooden hornet magnet for going above and beyond the call of duty while getting the trail ready for the last hike; he got stung on two separate occasions. Fortunately, our hikers were then detoured around to avoid more "stinging" encounters.

Hike Leader Coordinator Jack VanDerzee recognized the many sweeps including Susan Blumberg, Don French, Jonathan Laskowitz, Varya Seigel, Jack Sexton, and Chris Anderson. Sweeps Susan Collier, Keith Eggleston, Deb Patterson, Mike Whelsky and Jennifer Wilson were awarded with mini dustpan sets to help remind them of their excellent job of making sure all of the hikers finished the hikes.

Jack also distributed much-needed socks to the many hike leaders: Marsha Zgola with the swift and speedy group; Joe "Java Joe" Dabes with the medium fast

(Continued on page 26)

Hiking Slide Mountain on the 100th Anniversary of the Catskill Park

by Doug Cunningham

They say that success is defined, not by heights attained, but by obstacles overcome. As I reached the top of Slide Mountain at 4180 ft (the highest peak in the Catskills), I concurred. This mountain is not much when compared to those in the Rockies or even the Adirondacks, but was thrilling to me. Success, how sweet it is!

As three members of the FLTC—Jacqui Wensich, Dave Marsh, and I—started at the 2500 ft. trailhead about 9:20 a.m., it was a sunny, but (we would discover to our chagrin) hazy, day. It was an unusually warm September 23rd, with the temperature about 75 degrees. We chose Jacqui as our leader and proceeded to climb the steep, rocky first mile and a half, pointing out various natural sights to each other and shooting many photos. As the backpacker whom we sped by in our car on the way to the trailhead from Frost Valley overtook us on the trail, we rationalized that we were amblerers, not speed hikers, for heaven sakes, and therefore enjoyed many discoveries of nature that the backpacker totally missed. We assured ourselves, tongue in cheek, that we could have kept up with him if we had so desired.



Dave and Doug signing in at the register. (Only one other car in parking area. When we came back, the lot was full—at least 20 or more vehicles.)

Dave pointed out the many igneous rocks and what appeared to be beach sand. We concluded that this was evidence of the theory that the Catskills were formed from the rising floor of a prehistoric sea. I imagined walking under the sea and reminded myself that nature is my favorite teacher.



David Marsh, Jacqui Wensich, and Doug Cunningham hiked Slide Mountain while in the Catskills for the FLTC Fall Campout.

The trail became smoother and easier as we hiked through the pines and firs that replaced the prevalent broadleaf trees found at lower elevations. We reached the summit at 11:15 a.m. and took in the many vistas of adjacent mountains. The closer ones could be seen clearly, but many were shrouded in fog. We enjoyed lunch with the backpacker who had been in the fast lane coming up, another group of four, and a DEC forest ranger, Chuck Kabrehl. Ranger Kabrehl obviously loved his job and shared stories about the mountain with us. Later Dave would lament, “I would have loved to have had an outdoor job like that, rather than one behind a desk.” Dave didn’t believe that being behind a desk was “natural” for him.

On the front of the tabletop rock at the summit where we lunched was a plaque dedicated to the famous Catskill farmer-naturalist, John Burroughs. His quote read in part, “Here the works of man dwindle in the heart of the Southern Catskills.” He had slept under this rock many times. Upon arriving home, I immediately reserved some of his books from the local library. I can’t wait to get my hands on them now that I have hiked in the Catskills.

What made this hike so special was sharing it with Jacqui and Dave. One of the special moments was when Dave read two Thoreau poems to us as we relaxed on the wind-swept mountaintop. These poems were handwritten on cards and given to Dave by a nature-loving friend. The gist of the poems was that if

human beings could be still enough when engaging nature, it would give up some of its wisdom to them.

Jacqui wisely suggested that we take the loop trail down the mountain which enabled us to enjoy a spectacular landscape including many humongous rocks and neat bird habitat. The rocks must be the origin of the name Slide Mountain as they seemed to have cascaded off the mountain into various

twisted points. One was so imposing and isolated that it seemed to be the Titanic staring us down. Later we passed by several places where water was gushing out of the side of the mountain helter-skelter. The sounds were like being serenaded by a church organ. We all remarked on its unique beauty.

As we descended, the trail became full of hikers. Some were more prepared in terms of clothing, water, and raingear than others. We met people who ranged in age from a baby being hauled like a papoose on her father's chest to an amazing, spry old lady dressed in a long-sleeved madras shirt and hiking expertly with two poles. We surmised that this wonderfully conditioned and pleasant hiker had to be closer to eighty than seventy. When we said to her that this was a great hiking mountain, she rejoined with a comment to the effect that "Yes it is, and Slide Mountain is the most beautiful mountain to hike in all of the Catskills." It was easy for us to conclude that she was speaking from experience. Wow!



Jacqui Wensich

At the intersection of the loop trail and the main trail we discovered a stone marker that announced that a Mr. Curtis and a Mr. Ormsbee led the building of this first trail to Slide Mountain in 1900. This original trail was wide enough for carriages, and later, horseless carriages to carry folks up Slide Mountain for a day of pleasure. Dave pointed out a large stone foundation at a

stream crossing that was certainly part of the original trail.

The parking lot that had been almost empty when we started was filled with cars when we returned at 2:25 p.m. We had hiked about 7.5 miles. Jacqui quickly grabbed a cold bottle of water from her cooler for each of us. I had drunk all of my water on this very warm hike. We had a great time. My only regret is that the Cabin 21 hikers (Warren Johnsen, John Anderssen, and Jim and Sigrid Connors) were not with us. They were intent on starting their second end-to-end march on the main FLT.

As we rode back to Frost Valley YMCA, I couldn't help but appreciate the dedicated leadership of the FLTC and what they make possible for all of us to enjoy. My hat is off to Irene Szabo, Ed Sidote, Howard Beye, John Anderssen and all of our Board of Managers for making these annual conference weekends so special. "Hear, Hear!" □

FLTC Business Members

ADKO Printing	Jean Fowler & Cecilio Rios	Rochester
Berry Hill Gardens B&B	Rick & Linda Meister	Bainbridge
Black Dog Lodge	Laura Moats	Ellicottville
Cheshire Inn	Al Carpenter	Naples
Downsville Motel	Jon Gorton	Downsville
Four Winds Campground	Paul & Kathy Hildreth	Portageville
Grayhaven Motel	Randy & Janet Lehman	Ithaca
Hickory Hill Campground	Jane Eshbaugh, Mktg. Dir.	Bath
Holiday Valley Resort	Donna Gushue & Jim Buchanan	Ellicottville
Jefferson Inn of Ellicottville		Ellicottville
The Reynolds House		
Inn & Motel	Carmel & Des Lambe	Roscoe
—	Edson Gardner	Peru

For \$75 per year, business members receive all the benefits of regular membership PLUS a listing and link on our website. We will also list our business members in the *News* at least once a year.

We encourage all members to thank and use the services of these businesses which support the Finger Lakes Trail.

Addresses, contact information and links to these businesses can be found on the FLTC web site: www.fingerlakestrail.org



The END of the Finger Lakes Trail—this is it!



Friday supper at the Claryville Fire Department



The view from the bedroom window

*Guest speaker Chris Olney, Director of Conservation of the
Catskill Center for Conservation and Development*

FLTC Fall Conference Frost Valley YMCA Claryville, NY

by Sheila Ferrari

Photos by Jacqui Wensich

Like a dream it was! The actual END of the trail. For those of us who had walked the trail for decades, we were at the END! (Never mind the unwalked miles in between.) It was Friday, September 24, at about 12:30 p.m. We had met at the legendary Claryville Fire Department (thank you for your hospitality) and car pooled up to the trailhead. I had a feeling of unreality actually hiking to the trail junction that is currently the official END of the Finger Lakes Trail in the east. We genuflected, ate a banana, turned around and started the 10+ mile walk back to the Claryville Fire Department, where we enjoyed a catered meal of two giant subs, salads, drink, and dessert.

The next task was to register at our lodging at Frost Valley YMCA. This Family & Conference Center on Frost Valley Road was a delight, spaciouly laid out on a hillside, with a modern dining hall open from 6 a.m. until 11 p.m., several categories of lodging, brooks with bridges, even a castle. Trails lead up into the surrounding hills right from the grounds.

Saturday

After breakfast we broke up into hike groups (five choices - Alder Lake to Balsam Lake, completion of Map 32, Cabot Mountain, Big Pond, and Slide Mtn.). Car-spotting logistics were lengthy, both in the planning and execution stages. Trailheads were often an hour's drive away. That's the Catskills for you!

The group hiking the Map 32 completion decided to



split into two groups and hike the trail in both directions, exchanging car keys upon meeting. Such meeting took place at the Fall Brook Lean-to, a good meeting and lunch point. The weather was sunny and mild, the brooks were all full, and the leaves had started to turn. We used the word “beautiful” so much on the hike we had to consciously start searching for synonyms. Each glance was a vista. The headwaters of the Beaverkill River, with its resident kingfisher, and the stillness of the pond and marsh are still with me.

The evening program in Biscuit Brook Lodge was a presentation on the Catskill Park (celebrating its 100th birthday this year), made by Chris Olney, Director of Conservation of the Catskill Center for Conservation and Development. The presentation contained much early history of the Catskills and the political battle behind the creation of the Catskill Forest Preserve. Handouts of Catskill material followed the talk.

Sunday

Sunday started early with coffee and politics in the dining hall at 6 a.m. People did various hikes on Sunday, or finished parts of Saturday hikes. An ambitious group hiked Balsam Lake to Alder Lake, including the Balsam Lake Fire Tower. Another talked about climbing Slide Mountain. One group hiked to the Red Hill Fire Tower, 890 feet up (1.4 miles) to enjoy tremendously clear views of Slide Mtn., Balsam Lake Mtn., and many other Catskill high peaks. Board members had to meet instead of play. Some people started the trip home.

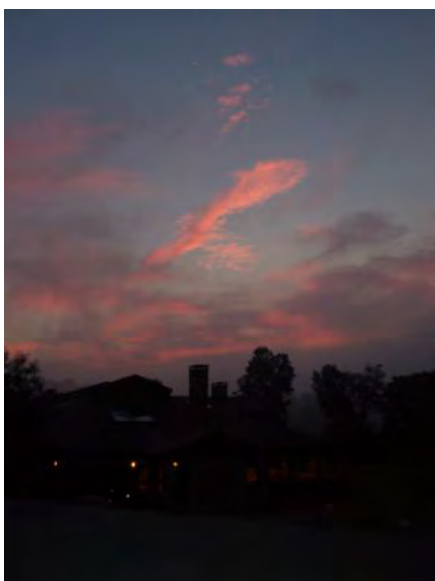
The weather was beautiful; the host center was beautiful; the hikes were difficult but awesome. Can we do it again in two years? Please?



Saturday dinner at the Conference Center



Early morning mist off Serenity Pond



The cafeteria at Frost Valley YMCA

What a splendid way to end a great day in the mountains!

Trail Topics

by Howard S. Beye , Chair
Trail Management Committee

Queen Catharine Marsh Trail Will Continue

You might recall that in the fall *FLT News* we were looking for people interested in taking on the maintenance of the Queen Catharine Marsh Trail, which is located between Watkins Glen and Montour Falls.

We could not have been more pleased when we received the many responses from interested FLTC members. It is my understanding that Heidi Bellinger, Sharon Galbraith and Jacqui Wensich of the Rochester area, Jay Zitter of Cortland, and Geogeanne Vyverberg of Naples will be maintaining the QCMT. We are in the process of trying to find other trail opportunities for the several others who inquired about the QCMT.

The new trail workers, calling themselves the QC MarshFellows, have taken off with flair. The entire trail has been cleared and reblazed and is ready for hikers. The QC MarshFellows found some changes as they came down the trail from the north. An athletic complex from the high school now cuts across the old railroad bed. The group installed signs indicating the way around the fields on a roadway. No sooner had the group started their project, than NYS Canals began work on raising by six feet the levee which the trail follows for a distance as it moves closer to the old airfield after passing through the Willow Walk area. About the same time, the NYS DEC also started clearing the old railbed between Watkins Glen and Montour Falls to make it more suitable for the multi-use Catharine Valley Trail. The Catharine Valley Trail uses the old Pennsylvania RR route (abandoned in the mid 1970's), which in turn followed the path of the Chemung Canal (closed in 1878).

Welcome to this new group of trail workers, and thank you all for answering the call for help.

FLT-Bullthistle Hikers

In a major undertaking, several FLT stalwarts from Chenango County have organized the FLT-Bullthistle Hikers. This group, although it is only a couple of months old, already has 78 members. Many are FLTC members who wanted a local club so they could



participate more frequently in hikes along the FLT and other trails in their area and help with maintaining the trail they love so much.

According to Ed Sidote, one of the "spark plugs" who started the club (you guessed it), they have developed a schedule of at least four hikes every month. The club members also meet the first Tuesday of each month, and their board meets the last Tuesday of each month.

If you are interested in joining or getting a hike schedule contact Ed Sidote at 607-334-3872 or ejsidote@ehsfcu.net Marie Inglee can also help you at 607-334-2433 or lightgirl54@yahoo.com

Good luck to the new FLT-Bullthistle Hikers. I see great things happening in Chenango County for the residents and for the FLT. [See the box on page 7 for more information about the activities of the Bullthistle Club.]

FLT Area Meetings for Maintainers

This fall we conducted three area meetings for our trail maintainers that also included representatives from the Finger Lakes Trail Conference Service Center in Mt. Morris and the Rochester Trail Operations Office. In addition, we had representatives from the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, and the North Country Trail Association. These meetings were held in several locations across the state to make it easier for the local folks to attend. The Area 1 meeting was in Springville with 28 people in attendance; Area 3 met in Hammondsport with 13 people present; in Area 5, held in Bainbridge, there were 18 in attendance. Thank you all for taking the time to attend.

This is the third year we have been conducting these area meetings. Their purpose is to enable everyone to better understand how they fit into the big picture of developing, maintaining and improving our trail system. I believe, and I know the belief is shared by many others, that we all go away from these meetings feeling it was worth our time to come and be a part of this learning, contributing, and growing community

(Continued on page 19)

involved with the Finger Lakes Trail and the North Country National Scenic Trail.

Conservation Trail Guide Book

At the meeting mentioned above in Springville, the question of the *Guide to the Conservation Trail* came up for discussion because it has been recognized that it is quite out of date. By consensus it was agreed that something needs to be done to make the guide worth selling. The members of the Foothills Trail Club, which maintains the 178.6-mile trail from the NY/PA border to Niagara Falls, decided to update the guide and add much new information to it. Mary Domanski took on the task of coordinating the work of all the individual Trail Stewards who take care of the 36 sections. The section stewards will write up their own sections using general guidelines, and then the information will be combined to produce the guide, resulting in a new, up-to-date *Conservation Trail Guide*.

The FLTC and everyone who will use the new guide thank, in advance, all of you who will be contributing to it.

New Parking Area on CR 88 in Pleasant Valley

Scott Kolo, who owns the property along County Road 88 in Pleasant Valley near Hammondsport on map M-12 where the trail heads through the vineyard to the bridge over Cold Brook, has offered to provide the land and the time and equipment to install a small 3-4

vehicle parking lot. A National Park Service Challenge Cost Share project will provide the funds to purchase the culvert pipe, fill and surface stone, and perimeter barrier material.

This project is one more way Scott Kolo continues to be a very helpful landowner and friend of the FLT/NCT. Back in June of 2001 Scott allowed the FLTC to build a substantial bridge to cross Cold Brook. The bridge uses two 45-foot wood power-transmission poles as the beams. Scott used his construction business equipment to place the two beams on their foundations. Without his help I am not sure how we would have moved these very heavy poles.

Food Purchaser for Alley-Cat Trail Crews

The Trail Management Committee is still looking for an individual or two who would like to take on the food-purchasing operation for our three yearly Conference-sponsored Alley-Cat Trail Crews. The crews generally work the middle weeks of June, August, and September. Volunteers would be reimbursed within two weeks of making their purchases. It would be most convenient if they lived somewhere near the middle of the cross-state trail, between the Rochester and Syracuse/Ithaca areas.

If you are interested in finding out more about this job or would like to volunteer to take it over, please contact Howard Beye at 585/288-7191 or fltc@frontiernet.net.

□

Latest Revision Dates for All FLT Maps

B-1	08-98	L-1	05-01	M-13	03-04	M-26	10-02
B-2	08-03	M-1/CT-1	08-99	M-14	12-00	M-27	12-01
B-3	04-01	M-2/CT-2	08-99	M-15	11-04	M-28	10-00
CT-4	03-02	M-3/CT-3	10-04	M-16	11-04	M-29	12-99
CT-5	10-03	M-4	10-00	M-17	05-02	M-30	02-01
CT-6	11-04	M-5	10-00	M-18	10-04	M-31	07-00
CT-7	01-02	M-6	10-00	M-19	04-04	M-31A	07-01
CT-8	09-04	M-7/L-2	05-02	M-20	04-03	M-32	07-01
CT-9	10-03	M-8	05-02	M-21	12-95	O-1	11-03
CT-10	01-95	M-9	10-04	M-22	05-03	QCMT	10-95
CT-11	01-95	M-10	10-03	M-23	08-99		
CT-12	10-03	M-11	7-04	M-24	07-00		
I-1	11-01	M-12	09-04	M-25	10-99		

Hiking with (or hopefully without) Low Back Pain

by Richard G. Zogby, M.D.

Dr. Zogby is an orthopedic surgeon in Syracuse who specializes in back problems and surgery.

Since low back pain is a very common problem in our society, it is likely that most of you reading this have low back pain currently or have had a bout in the past. Low back conditions for the most part are transient, but statistically almost everyone in our society will have low back pain sometime during their life depending on their activities and how long they live. Fortunately, most of the low back issues that we deal with are short-term problems and do not require surgical intervention or major treatment.

The anatomy of the lumbar spine includes muscles, bones, ligaments, nerves, and intervertebral discs. If the pain is located in the low back or lumbar spine area, even if it radiates up towards the neck or middle back, it is generally muscular. The intervertebral disc can also be a cause of low back pain. These problems are called mechanical low back pain and do not generally have any neurological symptoms. Pain that develops in the leg would be a neurological symptom. This is often referred to as sciatica which is a generic term for leg pain.

Most people tend to have trouble in the sitting position with lumbar spinal problems that are muscular or involve a herniated disk. The fact that hiking involves an erect posture tends to make these types of conditions less troublesome for most hikers. This is one reason that if a patient has back pain, walking and exercising is generally recommended. Therefore, most avid hikers would not necessarily have to limit their hiking or trail walking any significant amount due to back pain alone.

Chronic muscle strain in the lumbar spine is something that may come and go, and generally is located along the belt line. It usually remains localized to this area and is associated with tenderness. This is something that generally will not show any abnormality on x-ray or MRI scan. Muscle strain is treated with heat, anti-inflammatory medications, and at times short periods of rest. This is the least problematic but may be the



most chronic of conditions that we treat medically. Fortunately, it does not preclude people from resuming most activities.

Symptoms from degenerative disk disease or arthritis of the spine may be a little more limiting in the long run. These types of problems cause a lower grade pain or ache. These degenerative conditions may be diagnosed by x-ray or scan, and generally are treated sufficiently with conservative measures such as

physical therapy, medications, and the local treatments noted for muscle strain.

If leg pain develops, you would need to be concerned about nerve impingement. There are two types of problems that would generally cause these symptoms. One, the most common, would be a herniated lumbar disc. The pain from this condition is generally severe with a fairly acute onset. It would radiate from the low back area down to the leg and foot. This is usually worsened with a sitting position and would tend to be more problematic in a more sedentary occupation. Because of this, people could still hike with this problem, which is generally diagnosed by MRI scan. Again, this condition can be treated conservatively with anti-inflammatory medication and physical therapy. Occasionally, these symptoms persist, become disabling, and may require surgical intervention. Fortunately, surgery for this condition can be very successful and allow a full return to activity.

One of the more common and interesting problems experienced by people involved in hiking is lumbar spinal stenosis. Lumbar spinal stenosis is often a slowly progressive and degenerative condition. Although this is usually a problem occurring in middle age, younger people who have a narrowed spinal canal from birth may also be affected. Lumbar spinal stenosis causes leg pain to develop while upright or walking. This would obviously be a problem for people who hike, because walking is what they enjoy, but it would actually cause pain and aggravate the problem. This pain is usually improved with sitting. The diagnosis is ultimately made with a scan of some type, usually an MRI scan, but there are some conditions which cause spinal stenosis that could be

visualized right away on a regular x-ray. Lumbar spinal stenosis is often treated very successfully with physical therapy and ultimately a stretching program that people make part of their daily routine. If all else fails, this problem can be cured with surgery as well.

From a practical standpoint, even if you did have lumbar spinal stenosis, using a walking stick while hiking would automatically put you in a bit of a forward flexed position in regard to your spine. This would tend to lessen the pressure on the spinal nerves and allow you to enjoy more time on your feet.

Overall, spinal conditions are very common and almost always can be treated conservatively. Usually people can live and remain active with these problems and continue to enjoy their normal recreational activities. Ideally, before any outing, if you do suffer from any of the above conditions, you should set aside time to warm up. Before starting any lengthy hike you should do a stretching program that has been advised

by your physician, physical therapist, or chiropractor. Generally if you maintain this program and if it has worked in the past, it will continue to allow you to hike and be active without pain. Another suggestion would be to carry some anti-inflammatory medication in your pack or first aid kit. Any over-the-counter medications that have worked well for you in the past would suffice. Another option would be a prescription-strength medication recommended by your physician.

In summary, back conditions are very common and fortunately are disabling in relatively few cases. They usually can be managed in a manner that will allow you to continue to remain active and hike to your heart's content. Certainly, if you find that these low back conditions limit your ability to remain active, appropriate evaluation and treatment by a physician or chiropractor knowledgeable in these areas would be of significant benefit.

Best of luck and enjoy the trail! □

Eagle Scout Project

by Mike Caruso

On Saturday, October 2, 2004, under the guidance of Dan Caruso, Life Scout of Troop 61, New Berlin (Chenango County), a foot bridge was constructed on the FLT in the Town of Oxford off Puckerville Road (map M-27). The construction of the bridge allowed Dan to fulfill the Eagle Scout requirement to plan, develop, and give leadership to others in a service project.

The day began with seven members of the troop and three adult troop leaders meeting at the site. Once the 18-ft. pieces of larch were discovered and transported via the Scoutmaster's van (they had been mistakenly delivered to the wrong place), the group transported them (one at a time) to the location using three log carriers. Other materials, including 31 pieces of TREX decking and 2 - 4'x6"x6" pieces of pressure-treated lumber were also transported about a quarter of a mile from the parking area to the site. At that point the larch was stripped of its bark, and any places where there were branches were smoothed with an ax. The site of the bridge was approximately 15 feet downstream from where the trail used to cross the stream, and the pressure-treated lumber was dug into opposite sides of the bank to serve as places for the larch to rest. The larch was nailed into the headers using 12" galvanized nails. Next the TREX decking, which had been pre-drilled, was screwed into the larch, with a 1" space left between boards. While this

was being done, other members of the troop cleared the new trail of any brush and branches, and the trail was re-marked on both ends to indicate the path to the bridge. Finally, the troop retired back to the parking area to enjoy a snack of soda and donuts provided by Dan's parents. All in all, the troop spent about four hours that day on the project.

With the construction of this footbridge, hikers will now be able to cross this stream without getting their feet wet, or potentially slipping on the wet stones and falling into the stream. Additionally, the steep sides of the bank, which were being eroded by hikers, will now be safe from further erosion. □



Sue Caruso

Bridge builders from Troop 61, New Berlin. This bridge was the Eagle Scout Project of Dan Caruso, the 4th person from the left, in the white shirt and black pants.

Wildflowers along the Trail : Seasons

RW/W Taylor

To many minds the phrase “wildflowers in winter” will conjure up visions of dried flower stalks and ranks of brown seedpods scattered across a barren field. Take a closer look, however, and you will realize that this is by no means all there is to the story. Life goes on busily in many quiet ways during the winter months, and a careful search is likely to disclose active plant growth and even flowers in full bloom right through the coldest parts of the year.

Not, of course, the lush scattering of colorful blooms we see across the summer meadows and hedgerows, nor the discreet riot of color and form that spring brings to our woodlands, nor yet the painted roadsides of fall. Yet here and there will be seen low-growing green rosettes of leaves catching meltwater and rays of winter sunshine, building up reserves for the time when the plant will send up a hopeful stalk of flowers from its well-established root. Stems that bore bright blooms in a more favorable season may be spotted publishing a last few bits of blue or yellow or white in an effort to get just a couple more seeds out into the winter world. One might just find, in a sheltered cranny, an inconspicuous specimen or two of some small-flowering type of plant in full, stealthy bloom.

Only certain flowers can play this winter game, though. There is no point looking for buttercups or roses or bright orange day-lilies until their own favored season arrives. The question of when (and where) to set up shop and open for business is not a decision to be made by an individual plant, but is rather a matter of built-in capacity, part of what it means to be a member of a *species*. If you happen to spot a few green leaves and tiny white flowers of common chickweed flourishing where late January sunshine strikes into a protected corner, you know that many other small patches of chickweed will be blooming away in similar protected locations. When the time finally arrives for the dusky, dark-purple stems of blue cohosh pushing up through the woodland floor in spring to open up their equally dusky, dark-purple star-shaped flowers, this won't happen one week here, another there, but all at once in a rush, across counties and states and whole regions. Blue cohosh is out!

This striking seasonality, the result of the complex interplay of many factors, is part of the charm of

nature study, for both amateurs and specialists. There is a technical term, *phenology*, for the study of cycles of growth in nature. The particular, visible aspect of changing display of wildflowers in bloom through the year is often referred to as the “floral calendar”. Most wildflower field guides offer the reader a general guide in this respect, but—for a number of reasons—tend to stay at the “late spring and summer” stage of specificity, not usually a lot of help when one is trying to identify a particular flower one has noticed by the trailside.

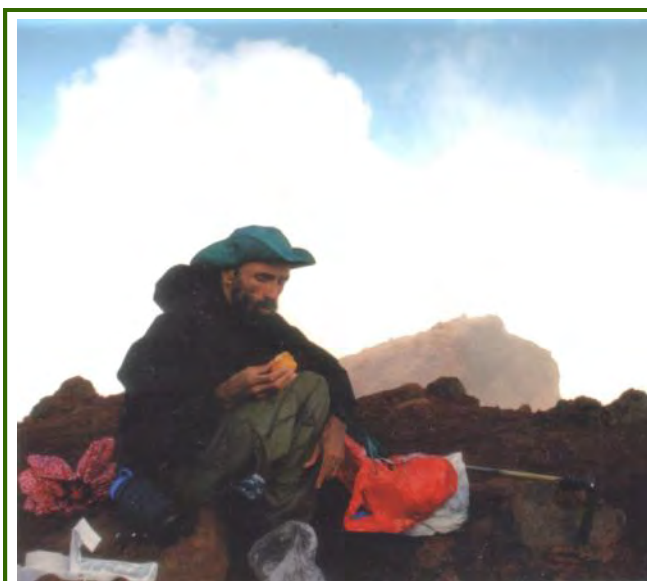
The fact is that each species of wildflower that can be sighted at a particular location has its own special pattern of growth that tends to be closely repeated year by year. The date of onset of first bloom for the year (often a sharp phenomenon), the beginning and ending dates when the flower is in most evident display, the date at which the last few straggly specimens might still be sighted in partial bloom—all of these are characteristic to the particular species and can be charted, with patience. Perhaps, with modern computer power available to all, we will soon start to see more specific phenological information being developed and shared.

In the meantime, take a closer look around you for signs that wildflowers are still pushing ahead with life, winter winds or no, and watch the rush of nature toward spring once more. □



Article redacted at the request of the author

Article redacted at the request of the author



Kurt Ramig (FLT end-to-end hiker #172) on the summit of Piton Des Nieges (10,072 ft), highest peak on Reunion Island off the northeast coast of Madagascar. When you read Ramig's letter on p. 28, you will notice that he apologizes for not being able to provide a picture, but he later found this one. (Photo taken Novmber 2003)

Welcome!

New FLTC Members August through October 2004:

Doug Ahlesen	Syracuse
Timothy Bergan	Auburn
Cornell Outdoor Education	Ithaca
Denise Costich	Ithaca
Diane Davis	Hammondsport
Richard Gastaver	Snyder
Althea Heider	McGraw
Paul Hoffman	Dansville
Peter J. Kappesser	Syracuse
Michelle Kelly-Buxton & Bill Buxton	Cortland
James & Virpi Loomis	Van Etten
Donna McLendon	Rochester
Gary Natalie	Rochester
James Ochterski & Family	Erin
Amy Parker	Johnson City
Marla Perkins	Ithaca
Joanne Quanz	Wayland
Douglas Robb	PennYan
Joan Shikowitz-Gerson	Hammondsport
Barbara Ullrich	Fayetteville
Wednesday Hikers	Penfield
Irene O. Werner, MD	Fayetteville

Tompkins hike series...

(Continued from page 13)

group; Larry Blumberg with the Medium Medium group, quickly renamed to the "M&M's"; Tom "The Mushroom Man" Homa's medium slow group and Gary Mallow, Jay Zitter, and Warren Johnsen who shepherded the cheerful self-named 'Turtles' safely home.

I also asked for a round of applause for Trails Coordinator Jim Connors for his dedicated work putting together the hike plots and directions. Jim scouted (this means hiked) all trails before each hike day to give Tom Reimers, CTC Trails Coordinator, a heads up for downed trees, briars and a well-placed blaze.

Lastly, I gave a big thank you to Irene Szabo and Gene Bavis for their emails, support, information, and yet more emails to help me with this very rewarding and enjoyable role. The troops awarded me with a thank-you bear, a card filled with thanks and a letter A. It must have been enough because I've volunteered to coordinate the 2005 Hike Across Schuyler County. Stay tuned! □



It's not too soon to start planning your National Trails Day event.

Individuals and groups can help promote and improve the Finger Lakes Trail.

At the American Hiking Society's website:

- *Event ideas*
- *Register your event*

<http://www.americanhiking.org/events/ntd>

End-to-End Update

by Edward J. Sidote
FLT End-to-End Coordinator

End-to-End Hikers

As of October 3rd the following hikers have completed the main trail since my last report. This brings us to 17 End-to-Enders for 2004 to date.

#182 Sheila Myer, Brockport
#183 John Myer, Brockport
#184 Barbara Hackett, Churchville
#185 Jo Taylor, Rochester
#186 Betty Schaeffer, Rochester
#187 Sharon Galbraith, Webster
#188 William Galbraith, Webster

End-to-end aspirants added to my list are:

Debbie Chapin, Norwich
Richard Gastauer, Snyder
Jeff Constable, Norwich
Betty Constable, Norwich
Steve Siegard, Feura Bush (Albany County)

I received progress reports from the following hikers on my end-to-end list:

Bill Baum, Rochester	Carrie French, Avoca
Debbie Chapin, Norwich	Karen Luciani, Hamilton
Joe Dabes, Dryden (Hike #6)	Deborah Patterson, Fulton
Lee Douglas, Endicott	Mike Welsky, Fulton
Sheila Ferrari, Rochester	Georgeanna Vyverberg, Naples
Kathy Foote, W. Seneca	Carol Watts, Rochester

Car Spotters

There have been two additions to the list of car spotters:

Margaret (Peg) Ross, Greene
Jeanne Walsh, Norwich

Fred Salvanti (Greene) and James Wheeler (Roscoe) have been removed from the list. On behalf of my end-to-enders, as well as myself, I want to express my thanks to Fred and James for all the car spotting they have done over the years. Fred also assisted Jim DeWan and me when we were doing the Catskill Expeditions. James assisted Jim DeWan in evacuating an end-to-ender who was ill, as well as assisting hikers with other emergencies. We will miss their help in the future. Thanks again.

If you use a car spotter, please offer to pay for the gas, especially if the shuttle involves considerable mileage like the one from Claryville to the Balsam Lake Mtn. trailhead at the end of Beaverkill Rd. Discuss cost sharing with the driver in advance.

FLT News from Chenango County

The Promote Oxford Now Assn. (PON) has started a

walking program on the Finger Lakes Trail in the Town of Oxford (Chenango County). A hiker who completes the 11 miles of the FLT in the town will receive a beautiful certificate signed by the FLTC president. Jacqui Wensich, a recent end-to-ender, did the original design work, and Jeanie Peterson put the finishing touches on it. The result is a very attractive certificate, and it is worth an 11-mile hike to earn it. Jeanie has also put the FLT on the PON website created by her husband. The PON newsletter includes a very informative feature article about the FLT that will help promote the FLT in the Oxford area and Chenango County.

(Continued on page 28)



Nick Natoli mounting road crossing signs as part of his Eagle Scout service project. Under the FLT logo, this sign reads "Partridge Rd."

End-to-End Album

Sidote...

(Continued from page 27)

Eagle Scout Project

Nick Natoli, a scout in Troop 63, Norwich, elected to do his Eagle Project on the FLT in Chenango County. I suggested that he make metal road crossing signs. He agreed, and the signs were completed with the assistance of local sign maker, Bob Wightman. Bob donated all the materials and considerable labor for the signs. They are made of aluminum, and are 4" wide and 12" high with black lettering. We started erecting the signs on October 28th at Stoney Brook Rd. and ended at Warner Rd. on map M-22 in Chenango County. Nick's father, Richard, drove us to the crossroads where the signs were to be erected.

(See page 21 for an article about Dan Caruso's Eagle project.)

Trail Registers

I have two green metal rural mailboxes and three large birdhouses on hand to convert to trail registers. I purchased the rural mail boxes at Wal-Mart for around \$5.00 each plus tax. Email me if you need instructions on how to mount a rural-style mailbox. I recently gave Howard Beye a couple of 50-caliber ammo boxes that I got from Mike Gebhard of TCHC. The next time Mike goes to Camp Drum, he is going to look for more boxes. These work really well as trail registers.

ALDHA Gathering 2004

Ray Ward, a 2004 end-to-ender from Waynesboro, VA, agreed to make an FLT presentation at the Appalachian Long Distance Hikers Gathering in West Virginia over the Columbus Day holiday weekend. I sent him the

FLT video plus the Four Season video, and he made an hour and a half presentation which included some of the slides he took on his end-to-end hike. Mary Ann Nissley, the first woman to backpack the FLT in one continuous trip, attended Ray's presentation and emailed me that he did an excellent job. Ray emailed me that the audience was very enthused so maybe I will hear from a few of them in 2005. Ray hopes to make an FLT presentation to a local college Outing Club. One of my early end-to-enders Joe Fennelly from Rhode Island, who backpacked the FLT, has been up several times to work in Howard's summer work weeks. Joe learned about the FLT from a presentation I made years ago at the ALDHA Gathering. The ALDHA Gathering is like a family reunion. Recently ALDHA started a museum.

In the past few years I have hoped to reach a goal of 20 end-to-enders for the year. However, the closest I have gotten is 19. If you have been on my list for years, please try to finish up next year so that we can reach 20 end-to-enders during 2005. If it hadn't been for five hikers finishing up on October 3rd, we would have had only 12 end-to-enders this year. If you would like me to present you with your end-to-end patches, you better get going in 2005; I am on borrowed time as I hike into my mid-eighties.

Happy Hiking!

Edward J. Sidote

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Meet Kurt Ramig, End-to-End Hiker #172

Kurt Ramig's end-to-end report took the form of a letter to End-to-End Coordinator, Ed Sidote.

New York, NY
September 17, 2004

Dear Ed:

Sorry, sorry, sorry for the very long delay in getting this to you. It's been a busy summer; throw in some procrastination and endless excuses, and you have it.

A few stories which I mentioned to you on the phone:

The FLTC published maps very early on showing what turned out to be the proposed route of the trail. I had a copy of what eventually turned out to be map M-30, which showed the trail running west from County Road 27. We parked our cars just west of County Road 27 just off (not on!) what appeared to be an abandoned wood road,

and went hiking for the day. There was only one marker all day, an FLT logo marker right at Route 27. After that we just bushwhacked our way and eventually ended up near Masonville. We got back to our cars only to find that the air had been let out of all the tires and all the valve caps stolen, about five cars worth. Luckily, one of our members had a foot pump and we were busy pumping up our tires when a band of locals from Trout Creek showed up, probably about six of them, all riding in one pickup, mostly in the back. They were “armed” with shovels, pitchforks, etc. and obviously were intent on beating the hell out of whoever dared to park there. They claimed we were blocking their road (a total falsehood), and who the hell were we, etc. But after a short bit, they realized that almost everybody was at least 55, some almost 80, many with foreign accents, about 1/2 female. They quieted down and said they thought they knew where they could find the valve caps. They returned about five minutes later with our valve caps and then left. I wanted to call the police and report the whole affair, but my parents in Downsville were afraid of repercussions from the locals if I did so, so nothing was done.

On another hike from the farm, we parked a car (for the shuttle) on Route 10, east of East Pharsalia. At the end of the hike, we returned, only to find that a huge rock had been thrown through the front window on the driver’s side. It was a mess cleaning up all the glass, patching things up. Needless to say, we, as city dwellers, immediately said that things were no better in the country, despite the fact that rural dwellers are always decrying conditions in the city. Nothing was reported to the police here, either.

There are, of course, endless tales of heat, mud, rain, cold, hunters (over the Thanksgiving weekends), wonderful small villages with friendly people, the joys of upstate New York. In the early years, we referred to the FLT as a blazed bushwhack. There was almost no footway at all at the time.

I suppose a bit of a biography and hiking history is in order. I’m 59 and have been an avid hiker since my mid-teens. I’ve belonged to the NY Ramblers Hiking Club for about 45 years now, have served as president, and have been in charge of producing the club schedule for over 25 years. The schedule has hikes every Sunday of the year, as well as trips far and wide on long weekends and for 1-2 week (or more) excursions.

An incomplete list of my hiking experiences follows, certainly not in chronological order!

- The Finger Lakes Trail!
- The AT from Georgia to just above the Maine-NH state line, plus parts in Maine.
- The Long Path from the George Washington Bridge to near Albany, NY.
- The Long Trail in Vermont from the Massachusetts line to the Canadian border.
- Many of the 50- to 100-mile long trails in Pennsylvania in their entirety.

My out- of- country hikes include:

- The Bruce Trail in Canada from Tobermory to Niagara. (I hope to do the Conservation Trail one of these years to link that up to my other hikes.)
- GR5 (sentier de grande randonnée 5) from Hoek van Holland (Rotterdam) to Luxembourg; also GR5 from roughly Lake Geneva to Modane.
- The Tour de Mont Blanc, circling that mountain at roughly the 9,000-foot level.
- The Grande Escursione Appenninica, a 26-day hike across Tuscany in the Apennines, roughly from the Adriatic to the Mediterranean.
- The Eisenach/Budapest “Freundschaftsweg.” This was a trail cobbled together by the Soviets in the countries they controlled in central Europe to counter the long-distance trails in Western Europe. I’ve walked about 700 miles on this from Eisenach (Germany) heading east, crossing into the Czech Republic, hiking through Bohemia, then up into Silesia in Poland, and finally back into the Czech Republic in Moravia, ending near the border with Slovakia. I hope to finish it one day all the way to Budapest.
- The “pilgrim route” of Santiago de Compostela from Le Puy en Velay in France (near Lyon) to Santiago de

(Continued on page 30)

End-to-End Album

(Continued from page 29)

Compostela in the Galicia region of northwest Spain, almost on the Atlantic, a distance of roughly 1100 miles. This is a fascinating route filled with history, which has been revived in recent years with the reblazing of the 1000-year-old route the pilgrims followed. It was estimated that two years ago, when I did it, over 60,000 pilgrims would arrive on foot at Compostela (although most only walked 100 or 200 miles or so).

- The Trekvogelpad, a 300-mile trail across Holland from the North Sea to the German border near Enschede.
- The 500-mile (or so) GR1, the belt around Paris. This is a huge circular route around the Paris basin, completely doable in day hikes by train from Paris.
- The Bernese Oberland in Switzerland from Montreux to Meiringen (near Luzerne), a two-week hike.
- The Southwest Coastal Way, 600 miles long and the longest hiking trail in England. It's spectacular, following the coast along the Bristol Channel to Lands End and then back along the English Channel to Bournemouth, passing through Somerset, Devon and Cornwall.
- The Coast to Coast Path across England from the North Sea to the Irish Sea.
- A three-week hike through the High Atlas of Morocco, rugged, and truly a trip back to the 13th century!
- The Southern Uplands Way which runs across Scotland from the Irish Sea to the North Sea just north of the English/Scottish border.
- Last year, 10 days of hiking on Ile de la Réunion, off the NE coast of Madagascar, perhaps the most spectacular place I've ever seen for hiking. Extraordinary! Réunion is an integral part of France and a long-distance hiking trail has been developed (GR-R1), of which we hiked a good deal. We then went on to Mayotte (one of the Comoro Islands), a French overseas territory, where the French have built an 8-day trail through the mountains, of which we did roughly half. This was followed by several days in the Islamic Federal Republic of the Comoros climbing a 10,000-foot volcano, and then 2 weeks in Madagascar, hiking around and climbing the second highest mountain in the country.
- A month of trekking in Nepal to the Everest Base Camp, back in 1973, when the country first opened up and was more or less totally undeveloped.

There are many, many other mountains, shorter trails, partially done trails, etc. that live somewhere in the recesses of my mind, but this list gives you some idea of my wanderings over the years. The list above is what sort of pops into my mind when recollecting. I might add that all of these trips were done either alone, or with 1 or 2 friends, and occasionally with 5 or 6 of the Ramblers. (I'm the one who organizes these things, and I serve as a kind of de facto leader.)

This coming January I'm leading a trip for the Ramblers to the Republic of Cabo Verde, a former Portuguese colony, on an archipelago off the coast of Sénégal. We're spending a total of two weeks or so hiking on the islands of Santo Antão and São Nicolau.

Anyway... Once again, Ed, my apologies for having taken so long to get this together. And sorry about the lack of a photo. I had two bad experiences with cameras in the early 70s (one destroyed by heat and sand in eastern Chad, the other burned up in a fire when my hotel burned down in Tokyo!), and have not owned a camera since. A few Ramblers have cameras and there are a few pictures around, but not many.

As you can see, it took many, many years to complete the FLT, but it was well worth it. It certainly is a unique trail, wandering as it does through the forests and fields and occasional small towns of upstate New York. A very special trail!

Thanks for all your help, encouragement, etc. for me and for all the other end-to-enders.

Sincerely,
Kurt D. Ramig

And that's not all! Ramig's "incomplete" list went on for another full page, but space limitations prevented us from printing the rest.

NOTE: Barbara Hackett, Betty Schaeffer, Jo Taylor, and Sharon and Bill Galbraith finished the FLT and were presented with their badges by Ed Sidote on October 3, 2004. The following lines were written and submitted by Sharon Galbraith.

End-to-End

The trail was there.
We started to hike.
There was mud.
 We hiked.
From west to east, sometimes from east to west,
 We hiked.
There were steep places (oh, my, they were steep!)
We went up one side, we went down the other (we complained, oh my, we complained)
There was rain, much rain.
We got wet. We kept on hiking.
There were streams to cross, and bridges, too.
We confronted some fears.
 We kept on hiking.
There was snow, there was hail.
There was heat.
 We kept on hiking.
There was good talk, there was laughter, there was companionship.
There were incomparable views,
We paused, we looked,
 We went on hiking.
There were flowers, and birds, and trees,
We looked and listened and we kept on hiking.
There were dogs that barked and dogs that growled and dogs that followed us.
We kept on hiking.
We lost things: hats and maps and walking sticks.
But still we kept on hiking.
We started in 1997. We finished in 2004.
 We hiked the trail.
Others hiked with us at times.
Others met us at road crossings with encouragement and water (Our thanks to them).
Five of us were at the end: Barb, Betty, Bill, Jo and Sharon.
We hiked the trail.

*The merry crew on a day of rainy road-walking between Corbett and Route 10 in Delaware County, April 23, 2004. L. to r.: **Bill Galbraith, Betty Schaeffer, Jo Taylor**, Nancey Wilbur (sag wagon), Tim Wilbur, Carol Smith, Bill Chervenak, **Sharon Galbraith, Barbara Hackett**. October 3rd finishers in bold. Photo by Fred Schaeffer, another member of the merry band.*



'Twas the night before Christmas on the FLT

'Twas the night before Christmas, away from the house,
The only creature stirring was the outhouse mouse.
The fire crackled and the flames leaped high,
Creating shimmers and shadows for us to dream by.

Rich & Sue were nestled all snug in their sleeping bag,
High in the shelter loft with nary a sag.
Both heads covered in tight fitting caps,
They settled down for a cold evening's nap,

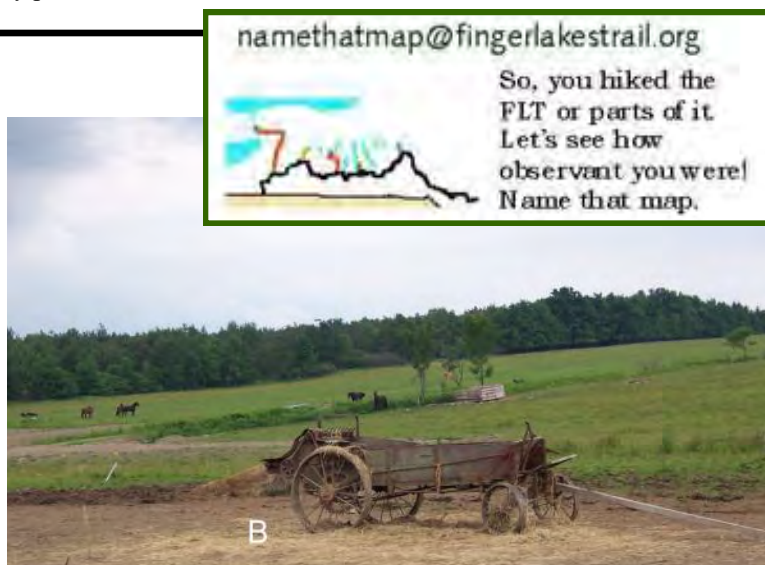
When out in the woods there arose such a clatter,
They banged their heads, sitting up to see what was the matter.
Away to the ledge they flew like a flash,
To glimpse a deer running the dash.

The sun arose upon new-fallen snow,
So Sue & Rich climbed the ladder to below.
They donned warm layers and slid frozen boots on their toes,
And hiked up the Finger Lakes Trail as flakes wetted their nose.

Sue watched from behind; a red bow in the snow,
As Rich ascended the hill with an outdoors glow.
She heard him exclaim, ere he hiked past the deer,
"Merry Christmas to all, and to all a Happy New Year!"

— Rich & Sue Freeman

Guidebook authors Rich & Sue Freeman (www.footprintpress.com) spent Christmas eve, 2003 in the Evangeline shelter on the Bristol Hills Branch of the FLT, then hiked the Huckleberry Bog area of Urbana State Forest before heading home Christmas day to see if Santa Claus had left them any presents.



Photos by Jacqui Wensich

Can you place these scenes along the trail? Send your guesses to Jacqui Wensich at namethatmap@fingerlakestrail.org. The answers will appear in the next issue of the *News* along with the names of those who sent in correct answers. Answers to the Fall *Name That Map!* appear on page 5.

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Finger Lakes Trail Conference, Inc. Calendar of Events

- January 21- 23 FLTC Board of Managers, officers, and
committee chairs retreat.
- February 4 Deadline for submitting material for the spring
issue of the *Finger Lakes Trail News*. See box on
page 1 for instructions.
- February 26 FLTC Trail Management Committee Meeting,
First Congregational Church-United Church of
Christ, 58 North Main St., Canandaigua, at
10:00 a.m.
- March 12 FLTC Board Meeting in Ithaca.
- April 29-May 1 Annual Meeting of the Finger Lakes Trail
Conference** hosted by the Cayuga Trails Club at
Seneca Lodge, Watkins Glen State Park. Mark
your calendar now. Registration information will
appear in the spring issue of the *FLT News*.
- October 14-16, 2005 .. FLT Fall Campout 2005** hosted by Foothills Trail
Club at Camp Turner, Allegany State Park,
Salamanca NY. **Save the date.**

In the interest of legally protecting those landowners who have
permitted us to build our trail across their land, the Finger Lakes
Trail System will be closed on all private lands for 24 hours on
Monday, February 7, 2005.

JOIN THE FINGER LAKES TRAIL CONFERENCE

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____ County _____

Phone (____) _____ Email _____

Make your check payable to the Finger Lakes Trail Conference and
mail to 6111 Visitor Center Rd., Mt. Morris, NY 14510 along with this
application.

Annual dues (Membership year runs from April 1 to March 1. Dues paid
after December 31 will be applied to the next membership year.)

Individual \$25 Contributing: receives enamel pin

Family \$30 designating contributing level

Student (full-time; give Pathfinder (emerald) \$45

permanent address) \$15 Trailblazer (ruby) \$75

Youth organization \$15 Guide (diamond) \$100

Adult organization \$35 Life (individual) \$350 (family) \$500

Business/Commercial (includes a listing on the FLTC website) \$75

Special Places on the Finger Lakes Trail

Conklin's Gully

by Margaret and Ken Reek

The Bristol Hills Branch of the Finger Lakes Trail offers many opportunities for fine hiking. This column describes two loop hikes on map B-1 in the Naples area that take you through lovely woods and by a babbling brook with a waterfall, culminating in a beautiful view overlooking Canandaigua Lake.

The first hike is a gentle four-mile loop with only 500 feet of elevation change. Park on Brink Hill Rd. about a mile north of Bassett Rd; this is parking for the Hi Tor Wildlife Management Area and is a little south of FLT access point 7. The first mile and a half is a Management Area trail that is wide, grassy and mowed, but it was quite wet and squishy in some areas, so wear appropriate footwear. The trail heads generally west from the parking area; when the trail forks, bear right and eventually you will come to a wide open area with a lean-to and views of the lake. This is a nice spot for a picnic lunch. From the lean-to, follow blue trail down the hill to an intersection with the orange Bristol Branch trail (access 5C) and turn right. You will be treated to a lovely woods walk for the next two miles, through mature mixed forest. Most of the time you'll be hiking within view of the creek, and you may catch some glimpses of the falls, but the trees tend to block the view. You'll exit the woods at access point 7 on Brink Hill Rd. and walk less than half a mile southwest to your car. The first part of the hike, up to the lean-to, is suitable for cross-country skiing.

The second hike is a more strenuous six-mile loop with 1500 feet of elevation change. Start at the parking area one-half mile up Parrish Hill Rd. where you'll see an FLT sign; turn onto the dirt road and there is a very large parking lot around one-tenth of a mile in on your left (access 5D). The trail is the dirt road, and is marked with blue blazes. Follow the road partway up the hill watching for a double blaze where the trail turns right at a public hunting sign. Keep going along the wide path, and where it narrows significantly look for another double blaze to mark the 90 degree right-hand turn; you'll hear the creek, so use this as an additional clue for when to make the turn. (The path you were on goes straight, so it is easy to be "snookered" if you aren't watching for the turn.) The trail follows a ridge over the creek, and it is very close to the edge, so be careful if you are traveling with small children. Where the trail crosses the creek, there are lots of rocks to hop on, but this



could be a challenging crossing in the spring when the water is high and fast. When you reach a big opening, you'll see the gorge and the falls—this is the best view of the falls from above. Keep following the blue blazes up a long hill and you'll be rewarded with a delightful place to have lunch with views of the lake, and a lean-to to rest in. After resting, keep following the blue blazes on a wide grassy lane of easy hiking. At the end of the lane, the trail dives left into the wood for a very pleasant woods walk. When you reach a junction with the orange trail (access 5A), turn left following the blue and orange blazes. After about half a mile, the two trails split (access 6A); keep following the orange trail. It will eventually follow an old service road, but will again enter woods, so keep your eyes open for the turn sign, or you'll get fooled into following the road too far. When you come to an intersection with the blue trail (access 5C), follow it downhill back to your car.

Hi Tor is a popular hunting area, so you should wear blaze orange from mid-October through mid-December. You might feel more comfortable avoiding the area during the big game gun season which is November 22 through December 14 this year. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) website (www.dec.state.ny.us) has information on season dates for each year.

The lean-to is available for group camping only, and requires a permit from the DEC. You can call 585/739-3866 for permit information.

**Finger Lakes Trail Conference, Inc.
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