

# Finger Lakes Trail NEWS

*Winter 2010*



## Inside...

- ◆ A week in the life of an Alley Cat crew member
- ◆ Hiking seen through the eyes of a small child
- ◆ 10 new bridges and a bridgette on the Bristol Hills Branch Trail

# President's Message

Pat Monahan

**W**inter is easily within our reach here in Upstate New York. We are well aware of the chilling temperatures, the snow storms, the slippery driving, maybe some cancelations coupled with longer hours of darkness and the usual gray skies that just seem more troubling the colder it gets. We also have an opportunity to throw some more wood on the fire, serve our best homemade soup and spend time catching up on a good book or visiting one of our parents who lives alone in another town. (Yes, I know some of you head for warmer climates for the winter. You know what you are missing.) It also gives me an opportunity to hike along the trail to see some of the vistas hidden by the canopy in the other seasons. I truly enjoy a winter walk in the woods bundled up, snow shoes on my feet, sipping some warm soup while looking and listening to the wintry sights and sounds. It has a very refreshing appeal to those who like the outdoors in the winter. It is like a breath of fresh (but cold) air for the mind, body and soul.

Let me look back over the FLTC for the past several months. We have not been resting. Trail improvement projects occurred during the construction season. We have successfully launched our Passport Program highlighting some of the best hiking spots in the central part of our trail for families, new hikers and/or newbies to the FLT for their enjoyment. We have established new policies like the geocaching policy to clarify our expectations to those on the search with GPS in hand as well as to our landowners with a cache on their property. We have written our position about gas well drilling—a politically charged issue with landowners and members on both sides of the issue. Most recently, we submitted a comment letter to the NYS DEC (Department of Conservation) regarding our position about the strategic plan for state forest management acknowledging the well established footpath we call the FLT system as well as our concerns about gas well drilling in the state forests. Our largest land partner, the NYS DEC, faced a shakeup in its top administration. It is yet to be seen how that will impact the shrinking work force in the field. If I could predict the future, I would explain here how that will affect our mission to build, maintain, enhance and promote the trail. Forever. Without knowing the details, it will be much more difficult to attain our goals on the trail. It is worth strengthening our partnership to keep moving forward one step at a time even though the steps may be smaller and slower.



As we continue to plan and position the FLTC for these and many other issues, the Board of Managers spent a weekend at the Letchworth State Park Conference Center planning for our future. Topics discussed included looking to the future as an organization, membership and marketing issues, succession planning, membership dues structure, 2011 budget review, and gas well drilling. We were also treated while there to great food and conversation with some of the best leaders in the FLTC. I will report more about our progress in the spring newsletter.

On a more personal note with a different hat on as project manager for the Crystal Hills Trail, I have been amazed at the volunteer help to build this new trail in Steuben County. Volunteers from throughout the state ranging from being held in mom's arms to some of our oldest members have worked side by side using a variety of hand and power tools. In the early years, most came to a work party to help out with no experience. They just wanted to help and keep coming back. There are many who now have the skills and the knowledge to build a quality trail the first time from the established flagline. It shows. Trail that was constructed last year has hardened and shows little if any damage from our worst enemy—water erosion. So my sincere thanks go out to all of the volunteers who have given their all to make this trail a reality. I am truly humbled by all of these efforts. I guess it is time for me to tell myself, "Go take a hike." I could use one. Enjoy the holidays with your family and friends.



*Nancy Luger (right) staffing the FLT table at the Ridgewalk in Wellsville. Pat Monahan, Paul Hoffman and Gene Bavis also assisted at this event. Photo by Joan Schumaker.*

## Join the FLTC Yahoo! groups e-mail list

The Finger Lakes Trail Conference's e-mail list is a discussion group hosted by yahoo.com. Its purpose is to allow the subscribers (approximately 400 people) to communicate information to each other pertaining to FLT hikes and other FLTC activities, and to also allow subscribers to post general hiking-camping-backpacking and/or FLT-related questions that can be answered by any of the other participants.

The co-moderators who will oversee the use of this electronic mailing list and offer help with questions are: Larry Blumberg ([lblumberg@stny.rr.com](mailto:lblumberg@stny.rr.com)) and Jack VanDerzee ([vanderzee@ithaca.edu](mailto:vanderzee@ithaca.edu)).

To join the group, send a note to one of the co-moderators, or go to the FLTC website ([fingerlakestrail.org](http://fingerlakestrail.org)) and follow the instructions for subscribing.



# FINGER LAKES TRAIL NEWS

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## Mission Statement

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

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Jacqui Wensich

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*And on the back cover...*

Trail Town: Bainbridge, *by Laurie Dando*



Jacqui Wensich

*page 14 - Bridge on the  
Bristol Hills Branch in sorry  
shape, 2004*

**Cover:** This photo was taken by Warren Johnsen of the Bullthistle Hiking Club. The site is in Bowman Lake State Park (Chenango County, FLT Map M24) and is not far from the Berry Hill Fire Tower. Fire towers are a passion of Warren's, and he belongs to a group that is currently restoring the cabin at the tower. His stunning photo of the Balsam Lake Mountain Fire Tower in the Catskills appeared on the cover of the Winter 2004 issue of the *Finger Lakes Trail News*.

# Imagine

by Bob Michiel

*Bob Michiel, MD, is the editor of the Trail Medicine column, and is a practicing cardiologist in Syracuse as well as a runner and hiker. This is the 51st Trail Medicine column! For more than 12 years, Bob has been obtaining contributions from his medical colleagues for this popular column.*

One of my joys in life is listening to favorite old music on an MP3 player while running. At these times, I find that I actually listen to words and lyrics rather than just hear pleasant tunes. "Imagine" by John Lennon has been a special gift. The song is pure magic, seducing the listener with the possibility of brotherhood, harmony, and absence of greed, hunger and materialism, goals that unfortunately have been elusive over the millennia, and certainly since the song was composed.

As my mind wanders during these runs, I sometimes imagine things related to my work:

Less coronary heart disease and heart failure. (One hundred years ago, before the invention of many of our labor saving devices, heart attacks were rare. Now coronary heart disease is a major killer in our society.)



Better blood pressure and less hypertension and kidney failure.

Less obesity.

Better lipids.

Better bones. Less osteoporosis. Less arthritic pain.

Lower rates of cancer and improved survival with cancer.

More happiness and higher endorphin levels. Less depression.

More energy, less lethargy.

Less need for medication and medical care.

This is more than a dream. There is a way to achieve major improvements in

physical and mental health. The means is reasonable, inexpensive, and not unpleasant.

"You may say I'm a dreamer, but I'm not the only one." There are groups, of which the FLTC is one, that advocate the path to improved health: exercise. If combined with a healthy diet, regular exercise is deadly effective. Regular exercise does not replace our many wonder drugs and procedures; it works with them and enhances their benefits, and sometimes can reduce and even obviate their need. If we can overcome inertia, the many benefits of regular physical exercise await us.

Take a walk, a hike. Run, bike ride, snow shoe, or cross country ski. Engage in aerobic exercise on a regular basis, at least 30 minutes five to seven times a week. We are blessed by living in one of the most beautiful parts of the country, as evidenced by the Finger Lakes Trail, which makes this panacea a delight. In the words of John Lennon, "I hope some day you'll join us, and the world will be as one."

**I hope to see you on the trail and not in my office. Happy Holidays! □**

## *Another claim to fame for Blodgett Mills*

In the fall *FLT News* Ray Recchia featured Blodgett Mills in his Trail Town article. Another claim for Blodgett Mills is that a railroad runs through it as seen in this September photograph. This Susquehanna Railroad train was idling next to the post office just before the crossing where our trail also crosses. Note the three different railroads represented by the engines. This is considered a real find by us rail fans.

— Tim Wilbur



**D**espite the condition of our economy, we are getting by. Our membership continues to grow, but not quite as quickly as we had hoped. This year, we had more “non-renewals” than normal. New members for the year to date at the end of October 2010 were 189 compared to 180 for the same time period in 2009. Our prediction at this point is that our year-end numbers will be flat rather than the 5% growth we had set as our goal. We hope that YOU will continue your membership year after year AND that you will help us promote the trail and the FLTC with your friends. The best advertising is word of mouth.

In terms of finances, we will probably not meet our budget predications on the membership line. The Sidote Stewardship Fund and our unrestricted donations have exceeded budget predictions. It’s too early to tell what the result of our Annual Appeal will be. Our budget line item for that is \$14,000. You should have received your appeal request the last week of October, so if you haven’t already, we hope that you will consider a donation. As you know, the FLTC provides our



## From the Desk of the Executive Director

.....  
**Gene Bavis**

wonderful trail for the public with funds that we raise primarily through dues, donations and sales. Occasionally, we are able to secure some grant money, but that is a small portion of our annual budget. Thanks to YOU and other members who support this great venture with your hard-earned dollars.

Our Passport Project got a somewhat later start than we had hoped, but we have had GREAT feedback. People love the idea. We received sponsorship grants from Wegmans, Monro Muffler Brake, Eastern Mountain Sports and Hickory Hill Family Camping Resort to make it possible for us to print 15,000 passport booklets. To date it appears that about half of them have been distributed. If you or someone you know who would like one hasn’t picked one up, they are available from

**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

our sponsors (see a complete list of where to get one on our website). If you are making a special trip to get one, we recommend that you call to make sure they still have them in stock. Most should at this point, but it’s hard to say with any certainty how many will be in demand at any location. The booklet in PDF format is also available on our website. The rewards (a patch and sponsor coupons) will be good through October 2011, so you have next season to work on collecting your rubbings at each marker post.

We have begun plans for our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration. It’s hard to believe that the Finger Lakes Trail

*(Continued on page 4)*

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***“The trail has become a dear friend to me.” — “Java Joe” Dabes***

## Meet End-to-End Hiker #300, also #2, #8, ...

A summary of Joe Dabes’ historic, world-record-setting NINE end-to-end hikes on the Finger Lakes Trail

**by Jacqui Wensich**

### 1. (#2 overall - July 1985)

Joe found the Finger Lakes Trail on this hike while trail running. He joined in building/filling in some of the remaining gaps in the FLT. He carried a 50 lb pack! Ray Kuzia was his partner.

### 2. (#8 - June 10, 1992)

Joe called this one his “run packing” hike. He ended up finishing with Dr. Ed Hart who was fascinated with the “run-packing” concept. (They completed the Northville-Placid Trail for good measure.)

### 3. (#113 - June 13, 2000)

The just-retired Java Joe decided to use this hike as a training ground for his 4<sup>th</sup> hike which was to be done in record time. He decided to hike rather than run.

### 4. (#131 - June 28, 2001)

Joe hiked this “fast” end to end in a total of 23 days. He did take a month off after the first six days to allow his inflamed feet to heal. He blamed his foot problems on non-Gore-Tex shoes, woolen socks and no liners... lesson learned.

### 5. (#167 - October 9, 2003)

Joe called this his “burger and beer tour”. Probably enough said here, although he does endorse The Outpost near Bowman Lake State Park.

### 6. (#198 - October 2, 2005)

As the new FLTC mapping supervisor, Joe needed to GPS the entire main trail. He accomplished this on his own and by leading cross county hikes.

### 7. (#235 - October 5, 2007)

Number seven is better known as his wife Kathy’s first and only end-to-end hike. John A-X Morris also joined in for his own third end-to-end hike. Ed Sidote and I hiked the last short piece with them in Birdseye Hollow State Forest.

### 8. (#270 - May 19, 2009)

Joe continued to update maps along the way.

### 9. (#300 - October 8, 2010)

“Had to do this to inventory all of the facilities along the main FLT.”

P.S. Joe completed his second branch trail end to end October 8, 2009 (#56). His first branch trail end to end was August 8, 1999 (#27)

## In Memoriam: Peter Bushnell

by Bruce Hanat



Peter Bushnell, Trail Sponsor for 27 years, passed away October 11, 2010. Peter's trail is part of the Bristol Hills Branch. It starts at Ontario County Park, crosses through the park and graces private lands, finishing at the county road across from BSA Camp Cutler's property. Peter wore many hats during his time with us, as many of us have; he was a father to five children and Papa to twelve grandchildren and also one great grandchild. Besides his main job as a parent, Pete wore the hat of BSA Leader for 40 years in many positions:

Scoutmaster, Trainer, Mentor, Poet and best of all, Friend. He touched many lives using his love of the outdoors as a classroom to pass on his message. It was a regular sight on the trail to see him with his grandchildren, scouts and friends just enjoying being together outdoors.

Peter was an avid hiker, backpacker, mountain climber, and also a member of the Adirondack 46ers (winter and summer). He also climbed Mt. Rainier and traveled to Nepal to visit Everest Base Camp. For the past 25 years, Peter taught a Winter Camping course called "Okpik" (Inuit for Snowy Owl) to adult BSA leaders at Camp Massawepie, Childwold, NY, in the Adirondacks. Just this past spring he added the certification of "Leave No Trace" Trainer to his list of specialties, just so he could protect a little more of the world he loved and shared with all. Peter's memorial mass was held at St. Andrews Church where he began as the Scoutmaster of Troop 70. The church was packed with family, friends, neighbors and Scouters. Some of the Scouters were old friends but there were many young adults now married with their families. They were all there to say farewell to their mentor, teacher and friend. Peter's hidden message taught to them over the many years, of compassion, character and self-reliance, was visible on their faces.

Rest, my friend.

## Executive Director ...

(Continued from page 3)

Conference will be 50 years old in 2012. If you have ideas for the celebration, please let me or Jacqui Wensich know. Jacqui is chairing our planning committee.

In the nearer future, we are preparing for the Spring Weekend at Cazenovia College on May 20-22, 2011. ADK-Onondaga Chapter will host this. The date for the Fall Campout in 2011 hasn't been set yet, but the FLT Bullthistle Hikers will host it. We hope you will join us for both events.

In closing, I wish to thank Jon and Kathy Bowen for organizing and

carrying out another successful cross-county hike series in Chenango County this year. Thanks to Kim and Terry Meacham for a successful "Sampler" hike series. This was aimed at beginners and novices. Thanks also to all of our volunteers who worked on trails, organized hikes, worked at the State Fair or other promotional events, volunteered in the office, attended various meetings, or did anything to support our mission. We are 99% volunteer-driven. A special thank you goes to my wife, Liz, who accompanies me and helps out on most of my FLT activities. □

Gene Bavis, Executive Director  
gbavis@rochester.rr.com,  
315/986-1474 (home office)

## Faces of the FLT

### Bob Collins



**Birthplace:**  
Buffalo, NY

**Residence:**  
Snyder, NY  
(suburb of Buffalo)

**Occupation:**  
Engineer, now retired

**Favorite outdoor pursuits:** Skiing, Hiking, Camping, ADK

**Other interests:** Family. Member Amherst Conservation Advisory Council. Photography, building wooden toys and other projects

**How I "met" the FLT:** Through the Foothills Trail Club and ADK

**Relationship to the FLT:** Alley Cat crew for past 4 years, enjoy the spring and fall conferences. Working on hiking the FLT end-to-end.

**Favorite section of the trail:**  
Allegany, Ithaca trails

**Memorable FLT experience:** Met many nice people at various county hike series, conference events and Alley Cat crews

*Note from Jacqui Wensich: Bob volunteers his time for many FLT displays each year. His documentation of the Tamarack Shelter project—dismantling the old shelter, clearing, foundation, building and finishing—is worthwhile viewing and useful for planning future projects. Bob always has a smile for everyone.*





## Notes from the FLT Archives Heinz and Dottie Altmann ..... Georgianne Vyverberg

In a recent article about measuring wheels and the ways (often tedious) we formerly used to measure trails I mentioned Heinz Altmann and the measuring wheel he crafted for their section of the Bristol Hills Branch. In 1973 Heinz and Dottie “officially” took over the sponsorship of that section of trail through Camp Cutler Boy Scout Camp in Naples. Before that “official” status the couple had been diligently working on that trail with the assistance of Boy Scout Troop 220 since 1966! So lets back up a bit to see just what Heinz and Dottie were doing before “official” status. In 1970 Heinz was appointed to the Board of Managers for a term of three years and also served as Vice President for 1973 and 1974. He and Dottie hosted Bristol Hills Branch meetings and helped with arrangements for the 10<sup>th</sup>

Annual Meeting at Lisle Conference Center.

In 1973 Heinz began to draw nineteen detail maps and two index maps for the trail system. As Scoutmaster for a troop in Monroe County he had drawn all the maps for the Scout camps and was responsible for the maintenance of those trails. A letter in the archives from Heinz to trail sponsors asks for their help with the FLT maps. He outlined detailed suggestions for the collection of data. For example, “Walk the trail in both directions; take with you a topo map, compass and clipboard. Don’t forget a pencil!” He asks sponsors to list attributes of access points and what to do with the car. Also he encourages them to note among many other details elevation points and historical info as well as scenic points.

At the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference in Cortland the result of that work by the sponsors and Heinz was presented. In the words of Fessy Washburn who

wrote a report on the meeting in the newsletter: “The most spectacular display of all was Heinz Altmann’s new series of 25 letter size maps of the completed sections of the Finger Lakes Trail, mounted on a huge map of central New York State. The floor didn’t seem quite the proper place for it, so with half a dozen assistants he succeeded in carrying it across the room, looking like the Yankee Clipper in full sail, to mount it on the wall. It was the center of attention for the rest of the weekend.” The maps that were completed were mostly Conservation Trail and many from the Syracuse area and of course the Bristol Hills Branch. Heinz became map custodian and work began on the first guide book project, taken on by future Conference president Robert La Belle.

Heinz and Dottie still reside in Naples and still sometimes get on those old trails they helped to build. By the way, another measuring wheel has come to light. Kalista Lehrer gave one that was used on the Conservation trail to Irene Szabo recently. I look forward to seeing it, and we are thinking of having all three on display at the FLTC’s spring meeting. □

### *Welcome!*

#### **New and Returning Members August '10 through October '10:**

Frank & Jessica Allen, Otego  
Karen Alpha, Corning  
Dena Beratta, Marcellus  
Brendan Brady, Canandaigua  
Tom Brocculeri, Buffalo  
John & Marcia Browning, Ocoee, FL  
Astrid Brueckner, Ithaca  
Gerald Dartt, Rochester  
John Doviak, Bloomfield  
Anthony & Melissa Duell, Rochester  
Claire Dunn, Marcellus  
Eileen Fairbrother, Morrisville  
Linda Feldman, Snyder  
Eileen Flanagan, Honeoye Falls  
MaryAnn Gorman, Pompey  
Bruce Grannan, Ithaca  
Christopher Greene, Rochester  
Brett Haranin, Ithaca

Louise & R Macy Harris, Rochester  
Julia Hoover, Big Flats  
Wesley Hunter, Hammondsport  
Luana Pesco Koplowitz, Duck Flats Farm, Plainville  
Eric Merz, Hilton  
Cynthia Morrow, M.D., Manlius  
Scott Nather, Brockport  
Rich Owczarzak, Cheektowaga  
Jeffrey Patterson, Rochester  
Kerry Perese & Doug McCausland, Buffalo  
Erin Riddle, Binghamton  
Chris, Julian Riley & Nicole Roy, Ithaca  
Craig Russell, Port Crane  
Sara Sabatine, Victor  
Jessica Seem, Brooktondale

Shepard Family, Bellflower, CA  
Cleo Sioris, Yorktown Heights  
Karen Stewart, Watkins Glen  
Stephen Stewart, Delevan  
Gregory Stone II, Akron  
Don & Liz Tesch, Seattle, WA  
William Thompson, Ithaca  
Johanna & Carl Tomik, Salt Point  
Jeff True & Sue Schattschneider, Ithaca  
Scott Vonderheide, Wellsville  
Bill Wadsworth, Amherst  
Zach Walker, Painted Post  
Justin Whitcomb, Elkland, PA  
Robert Wild, Fairport  
Toby Woodard, Gardiner, ME

## Neighboring Landowners Grant Easements On Four Parcels

by Mary Coffin

**T**he Finger Lakes Trail Conference and North Country Trail Association are grateful to two neighboring landowners in Central New York (FLT Map O2) who have donated Trail Access Easements that protect trail on a total of four parcels. This section of trail is located near New Woodstock, NY, and can be accessed from Webber Road or Fairbanks Road.

Tom Hirt and his family still cultivate 300 acres of corn and hay and have an active dairy farm (Holsteins) and agribusiness that has been in the Hirt family for five generations since they emigrated from Switzerland in the 1800s. It is one of the largest farms in Madison County. The Hirts have been wonderful trail supporters and appreciate having hikers on the property to

help monitor its use. The beautiful wooded acreage contains some very old maple trees that were formerly tapped for syrup. Although the Hirts are avid deer hunters they have not imposed a hunting season closure. However, we do not recommend hiking on either private or State land during hunting season.

Hamilton Armstrong purchased land from Tom Hirt's father in the 1950s and soon built a four acre pond and cabin for his family to enjoy. The pond is stocked with fish and has a resident beaver population and many birds and ducks. Since the pond is on a little divide its two outlets flow north and south, keeping the beavers busy. Mr. Armstrong or Ham or "The Old Burdock" has been a lifelong nature lover, hiker, avid environ-

mental issue supporter and member of Finger Lakes Trail Conference, Adirondack Mountain Club and a board member of many local organizations. The Armstrongs are also noted for family property that is now part of Green Lakes State Park in Manlius.

Tom Hirt and Ham Armstrong have enjoyed a friendly relationship as rural neighbors sharing and coordinating the land uses. These easements by adjacent landowners on the four parcels protect the trail for generations to come and we greatly appreciate their generosity and support. □

*This good news was submitted to both the FLT News and the NCTA's North Star.*

### Hammondsport Scouts Spent an October Day Hiking and Maintaining the FLT

**O**n Sunday Oct. 17<sup>th</sup>, Hammondsport's Boy Scout Troop 18, Webelos Pack 18 and quite a number of parents, spent the day hiking and maintaining the FLT between Winding Stairs Road and the Vinehurst Motel. All together, there were 31 participants who enjoyed the hike and opportunity to improve the trail.

For many of the Webelos' parents, this was their first time on the trail and they were delighted that such a nice trail exists so nearby. Hammondsport's Boy Scout troop is very active and uses the trail frequently.

Troop 18 camps at least once a month (even in the winter months!) In August, Troop 18 went on a fantastic week-long camping/canoeing/hiking trip in the Adirondacks. In November, they will be camping at the campsite on the FLT's June Bug spur after spending the morning helping the Cub Scouts and Webelos collect and sort food for Hammondsport's food pantry.



Like other Scout troops, Troop 18 is always looking for experienced adults who would like to share their expertise with the scouts. If you would like to get involved with helping Troop 18, we would be especially interested in volunteers who could help teach the scouts about hiking, trail blazing and maintenance,

camping, paddling, and plant and animal identification. Please contact Scout Master Tom Mitchell for further information.

Tom Mitchell  
7351 Fish Hatchery Rd.  
Bath NY 14810  
Tel. (607)241-5369  
e-mail: [tmitchell@hport.wnyric.org](mailto:tmitchell@hport.wnyric.org)



## Walking Through Time in New York: #27 in a series

### Our Train below the Holland Ravines by Irene Szabo

*Very few Western New Yorkers [in 1868] lived beyond the sound of a locomotive whistle or the smell of soft coal smoke.* A History of Railroads in Western New York, Edward T. Dunn, page 142.

**O**n sunny October 16<sup>th</sup> I was doing a little reroute at the FLT's Cobb property on M4, more than half way up that beastly 300 foot high hill, trying to soften the steepness for at least one short spell. While the current Buffalo and Pittsburgh Railroad that crosses our property at the bottom of the hill normally hosts one round trip daily, southbound before dawn and northbound late in the evening, the unmistakable bleat of a diesel horn sounded miles west in the valley beyond Ellicottville...mid-afternoon!

Had I been ten years younger, I'd have run down to catch the picture that has eluded me for a decade now, but that would have meant I'd have to re-climb the hill to finish my project. So the inertia of fat old age lost me yet another chance to photograph the train going through OUR property.

I could see snatches of it far below through the trees, since most of the maple leaves here had been stripped off by wind and hard rains: two locomotives pulled a modest-sized train of mixed tank cars and covered hoppers. Grain? Gasoline? Maybe it would stop to deliver cars at Arcade to Blue Seal Feeds, giving me a chance to get ahead of it? So an hour and a half later I drove northward on NY 16 to an area on Map CT 6 where the map showed the railroad ran close to the highway AND where the Conservation Trail crossed the tracks just south of Holland, Erie County.

Found the trail crossing, and walked east from NY 16 into a thin line of bushes and woods before the tracks.

There they were, a single pair of tracks shiny on top. Had they been used today, or was that yesterday's polish against the inevitable light layer of rust that follows every shower? Across the tracks the trail beckoned, maple woods with a yellow layer of fallen leaves on the forest floor, with the added *cachet* that this piece of trail led to the recently improved "Holland ravines" section. Nerts: too late in the day.

I looked to my right, southward, and discovered a pair of quite antique classic Pennsylvania RR signals only 200 feet away, and they were LIT. Seldom are the lights on if there isn't a train within the next "block," so perhaps this boded well? I'd seen similar PRR classic "position light" signals north of Franklinville along route 16, but those were dark with no train in the system. Three bright yellowish lenses were in a tight horizontal line within a black steel circle, telling any oncoming train to STOP because something was ahead. Parenthetically, this style of signal light hasn't been installed since the 1940's, so these are historic treasures probably even twenty years older than that!

This was at milepost 27+, nearly 28 miles from some point in downtown Buffalo, and about 10 miles north of Arcade's potential train pause. Alas, daylight was dwindling on this autumn day, so I lost even this opportunity to catch "our" train.

Let's back up and track the elusive Saturday afternoon B&P train where it crossed our trail more than once, even if only in our imaginations. After it followed the swampy valley at the bottom of the FLTC's Cobb property in Cattaraugus County on old Baltimore and Ohio rails once destined for Rochester, at Machias it joined another set of rails coming up from Pennsylvania and turned left, north,

creeping behind Lime Lake's cottages and boat docks. (The rails continuing toward Rochester are gone.) South of that Machias junction of two historic railroads, our main trail crosses those Pennsylvania RR tracks coming up from the south on Bear Creek Road just before hitting NY 16, north of Franklinville, still Map M4.

*(Continued on page 30)*



Irene Szabo

*The old-style Pennsylvania RR signal still in use along the current Buffalo & Pittsburgh line through Holland on map CT6, southern Erie County. This one is about 200 feet south of our trail crossing and is between sixty and ninety years old. Believe it or not, the black steel disk is 4'4" in diameter, and the "little" lights are 7.75" in diameter; they sure don't look that big from the ground. With the three horizontal lights lit (there are also vertical and diagonal rows), the command is to STOP. Presumably there is a train ahead in the next block. Corning Glass helped the PRR invent lenses that would create a piercing light with only a 3 to 10 watt lamp, visible even in daylight to the oncoming engineer.*

## A week in the life of an FLTC Alley Cat crew member

by Roy Dando

**T**his past June a crew of approximately 20 volunteers from all over the state participated in the building of the new Tamarack Lean-to. I had such an excellent experience as part of this crew that I felt compelled to share it with the hiking community.

I have stayed in many trailside lean-tos during my backpacking trips, but had never been involved in the construction of one. The perfect opportunity arose for me to do so this past June. The FLTC, along with the Cayuga Trails Club, had removed the old Tamarack Lean-to near Ithaca and was going to replace it with a brand new structure. I was a bit nervous about being involved as I have very little construction experience. The crew quickly made it evident that I should lose the nerves and simply gain the experience while working alongside some veterans of many past Alley Cat crews. Crew members came from a wide variety of backgrounds. I had an awesome time meeting and working with different people each day. Everyone on the crew was so outgoing and genuine that I quickly forgot that I am a shy person by nature. The many conversations I had with people were fun and insightful. I can't tell you the last time I witnessed a group of such diverse people click so well together.

It was truly exciting to watch the daily, or should I say hourly, progress on the structure itself. What a feeling

of accomplishment to see the building come into being one log at a time. There was never anyone hanging around looking for work to do. Anyone who wanted to chip in had a job to do. Gary Mallow, the Trails Chair for the Cayuga Trails Club, did yeoman's work in planning enough important side jobs that allowed people to choose what type of work they wished to do on any given day. One day I was moving and bolting the logs for the structure walls, the next I was leveling the privy structure so people could have an "even" experience. One day I met Joe Dabes in Slaterville Springs to put a new open air privy near the Kimmie Lean-to before helping assemble the picnic table back at the Tamarack site. The table was designed by Bob Collins and is an excellent addition as there is nothing better after a long day of hiking than eating your dinner at a sturdy table instead of sitting cross legged on the lean-to floor.

We spent the week at the Lion's Club Camp Badger about 6 miles from the job site. Most people chose to stay at the camp overnight and drive back and forth from the site. Some commuted from their homes near Ithaca while a few of us decided to ride our bicycles back and forth. The facility was perfect for us. Having rooms with showers allowed us to clean up quickly after a hard day so we could feel refreshed again before the evening festivities. My wife Laurie joined Jacqui Wensich in the

kitchen to prepare gourmet meals each day. Having good food and plenty of it helped make the weeklong experience special. The dining room and screened porch were large enough for all to gather and sit during and after dinner. I truly enjoyed the long conversations we had after dinner about everything trail related as well as simply random banter. Melanie Okoniewski, who works for Buffalo Games, brought a number of jigsaw puzzles for the crew to work on during the evening hours. Many gathered around these puzzles and chatted until bedtime.

My 14-year-old nephew Jordan flew in from California to lend a hand during the last few days of the project. It was awesome how everyone not only made him feel welcome but they made him feel needed. Their acceptance of a younger, willing worker made him feel like he truly fit in. He left the project with an appreciation of what it takes to build a lean-to and the sense of satisfaction one gets in knowing they helped with a worthwhile project. Oh—he had fun, too.

If you ever get a chance to participate in a future Alley Cat project, I can almost guarantee that you will gain more from the experience than the trail will gain from you. This was one of the most interesting, fun and satisfying weeks I have ever spent. □

*Photos by Bob Collins*



# Through the Eyes of a Small Child: Doing the Passport Hikes with my Grandson

by Karen Serbonich

It began that going on a hike from the booklet, with the goal of finding the mailbox and doing the rubbing, was my motivation to take my four-year-old grandson and add some excitement to our trek. What I discovered is that the world through the eyes of someone much closer to the ground can be far more educational and inspiring. Rule number one: pack snacks and drinks when hiking with a child, even if it is for a half mile. Our first hike in Robert Treman State Park, it rained. So what, we were trail blazing on an adventure and wearing rain gear. We learned to look for certain colored blazes so that we knew we were on the right trail. So many little things that I would brush past on my walks were a source of fascination and questions to Noah: fungi, millipedes, woodpecker holes in trees, a feather, a wildflower.

On our second hike to Shindagin Hollow I brought my digital camera, which he then asked to use to capture

nature as he saw it, with what interested him. He took his grandpa back to check out the rock pile, as well.

He had a thousand questions. Why did someone leave a dirty diaper on the lean-to roof? Why aren't they logging on this road anymore? Why don't you know what this mushroom is called? If it is poisonous can I die from touching it? Why did someone make this stone pile? In the end I was more mentally than physically exhausted, but what fun we had!

These hikes are an opportunity for wonderful family time. You may

realize just how amazing and fascinating nature is and appreciate more this wonderful blessing called the FLT and the volunteers who maintain it. I know that I do.

Hiking with a child will have its challenges. I still faced the "when will we be there" and "I'm hungry" and "my legs are tired," but there are boundless distractions in nature to take advantage of.

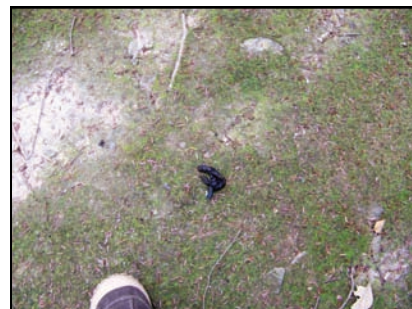
I do not have a photo of him getting a rubbing of the Passport hike number on top of the post for his map booklet. He is too short to do it himself. □



*Lean-to log bench, by Noah*



*A frog in a tree, by Noah*



*Photo 1, by Noah*



*A cool bridge*



## Wildflowers along the Trail, #32: Rarities

RW/W Taylor

**W**hat are the rare, special wild flowers whose sighting in bloom along the trailside can add extra pleasure to the day's hike? And why is it that these flowers are rarely to be seen? One way to start answering this question is to turn it around—what are the common wildflowers, and why are they common? Now, an impulsive answer to a request to name a common wildflower might be “dandelion”, but despite the golden dominance of this flower along Maytime roadsides and across pastures, dandelions in bloom are rarely to be encountered by the cross-country hiker, except at trailheads or other disturbed areas. Dubbed “the white man’s footprint” by early Native American tribes, dandelions are adventive, thriving best in disturbed ground.

Here is an important clue, the requirement by an established wildflower species of a stable environment year after year that allows for the development of a steady pattern of propagation over time. Plants, by nature, cannot pick up and move to a more favorable location when conditions change—at best they can hope to disperse enough seed far and wide that the species contrives to survive and flourish through the years. But this is a slow and uncertain process at best. Therefore, one key to spotting uncommonly seen flowers is to look in stable, idle, quiet, left-alone locations.

Individual species of wildflowers, of course, prosper according to their own particular individual requirements, adapted to over long periods of time—moisture, sunlight, temperature, soil conditions, the presence (or absence) of certain other species of plants, animals, insects or microscopic life. Careful observation may disclose some of these factors for a particular species, but others remain inscrutable and mysterious. It is clearly the case, however, that many wildflowers will bloom only “when they want to”, when conditions are exactly right. To catch these flow-

ers in bloom, an enthusiast needs to specifically seek them out.

It is the less fussy, more adaptable species that make up the overwhelming bulk of blossoms meeting the hiker’s eye. But even flower species that can be caught in vistas of countless bloom, mile after mile, tend to have their own patterns of geographic distribution, not easily explainable by direct circumstance but nonetheless persistent through the years. Why for example is the ragged robin, or cuckoo flower, which so prolifically carpets central New York each spring, not to be found at all growing along roads and trails in the western part of the state? Why, in contrast, should blossoms of the attractive four-leaved milkweed plant be observable throughout central and western parts of the state, but be missing throughout the Catskill region? The answers are not known, but the implication is clear—more (and different) miles put in on the trail means that more different species of flowers are likely to be spied.

Timing is another important factor to be considered in the question we are weighing. Time of day can be important; the spiky blossoms of yellow goatsbeard open early in the day but begin closing as the morning wanes, and can only be spotted closed up tight on an afternoon walk. In one case, the “flower of an hour” (*Hibiscus trionum*), a passerby needs to be especially lucky to catch sight of the fragile flowers of the plant during the short stretch of the day during which they open. and fade

A more dominant factor is of course time of year, as a large portion of the observable spectrum of wildflowers blooms strictly by the season, making up the large “floral calendar” we live by. Violets in the spring, daisies in the summer, goldenrod in the fall... In some cases the window of possible observation is brief—notably so in the case of “spring ephemerals” such as bloodroot, whose snow-white flowers can open and then be gone for the year in a matter of just a few days. Other



species only require patience on the part of the observer; they bloom at their own selected time, but not before, though in many cases they will remain on show for the rest of the growing season. There are latecomers to the show, too, only to be seen in bloom after the crisp, cool weather arrives in the fall. Some of the many different species of aster that adorn our autumn fields and byways have adopted this strategy, carefully timing their floral displays behind those of their more precipitate cousins.

One of the most rewarding visual treats available to the hiker falls into this late time window: the deep, deep blue flowers of gentians growing low in favored spots along the trailside in October’s chill and even on into November. A number of different species of gentians can be spotted in bloom across our area, falling into two main categories. On the one hand are the closed or “bottle” gentians, bearing flowers made up of petals locked together into tubular structures. On the other hand are the flowers of the “fringed” gentians, spreading their four petals widely to display the intricate lacy edging that gives them their nickname. In either case no bluer flower is to be found in nature, and lucky indeed is the individual who sights a trailside patch of these uncommonly beautiful flowers. □

## *In the founder's own words: the early years*

***Forty-nine years ago, Wally Wood had an inspiration. In the run-up to the fiftieth anniversary of the FLT, we will reprint his three-part account of the early years, which appeared in the Finger Lakes Trail News in 1974. Chapter 1 was reprinted in the Summer 2010 issue.***

### THE FINGER LAKES TRAIL

#### Chapter 2

#### White Mountains Adventure Prologue to the Idea

(Series on the early years by Wallace D. Wood)

In the summer of 1961 a fringe benefit in the form of a fourth week of vacation was granted by Taylor Instrument. Betty went to summer school, and both Darrow and Darcy had summer jobs. What to do with one of those weeks of summer was strongly lurking in my mind.

Two years previously, at a trade association committee meeting in New York City, I met Bob Temple, of the Foxboro Co. of Mass. His job previous to his current one was Assistant Hut Manager of the Appalachian Mountain Club White Mountain Hut System. Each hut was a day's hike apart where one could get supper, lodging, breakfast, and a trail lunch.

So I wrote the AMC and made plans for a week of solo hiking with Pinkham Notch Camp as my base, where I could lay out and discuss my mountain route with Bruce Sloat, Assistant Hut Manager at that time.

I hitched a ride to the camp with a friend and on Saturday made a practice hike over Wildcat Mt. It was a clear day, and Mt. Washington peaked against a clear sunny sky to the West. All you could eat, family style, was the rule at the base camp, and also later at the huts.

Sunday morning I climbed on the hut food supply delivery truck, which took food to the hut depots where hut boys by the shortest route available backpacked the supplies to each hut. The truck dropped me off near the west end of the Hut System. From there I hiked up the mountain to Old Lonesome Lake Hut.

It was quiet at mid-afternoon at the hut, and for a sign of life I peeked into the bunkhouse. An old man with his mouth open was snoring away – how could such a man be interesting?

Some 20 souls gathered for supper around the table in the kitchen, the floor of which sloped at least four inches from one corner to the other. Most of us started that meal as strangers. (Years before it had occurred to me that gatherings comprised an excellent opportunity to be a student and observer of a new group as well as a feeling participant. I had also learned that first impressions are often way off the track.) I followed my usual practice – inquiring as to the name, home area, and vocation of each person – with the information often serving as a springboard to conversation about a mutual acquaintance or experience. Then the mouth open sleeper confessed that he was traffic engineer for Worcester, Mass. and asked about me saying that it was my turn, having done the rounds of the others.

Next morning, the traffic engineer and his nephew hiked down the mountain with me; we parted in the Notch. I proceeded alone up to the Franconia Ridge Trail and went along the Appalachian Trail over Mt. Lincoln, Mt. Lafayette, and down to Greenleaf Hut. The guest list was small and included a few men planning to do the last of their forty-six the next day – a bushwhack to one of the most difficult mountains (46 over 4000 ft. listed) to the east. The roast turkey supper was great as also the breakfast including French toast with a poached egg in a hole cut therein – an example of the excellent cooking of the hut cooks throughout the system.

Tuesday morning brought a heavy steady rain, blasting the hopes of the forty-sixer aspirants – pretty hard to do a compass route and bushwhack a strange mountain. But my route was well marked with white AT paint blazes, over Mt. Garfield to Galehead Hut which I reached about 3 p.m. It was a most interesting day, meeting several spruce hens and enjoying in particular at least a full acre of Indian pipes, their heads silent in the grey and green mist of the forest floor.

At supper I met the Novotneys. The young man from Czechoslovakia and his young bride from England had met at college in Canada and were spending the first of their two weeks of vacation at their favorite hobby – hiking.

The next day was also one of steady rain, and I caught up with the Novotneys going up South Twin Mountain. We were thence companions for the day. At Zealand Hut, mid-afternoon, the walls were full, hung with drying clothes. People sat around in small groups, but soon conversations started and acquaintances found. In small groups, at supper when shoulder to shoulder, there are no snobs. After all, we could laugh at our soaked clothes now that we were dry, around good food, and it was fun drying dishes and helping the hut boys clean up and set the breakfast table.

After a long hike the next day, including a climb over the long rise to Mt. Washington, I arrived at the Lake of the Clouds Hut. Over 100 people were there because it could be easily reached, taking a car to Mt. Washington and dropping down only about a mile to the hut. Along with mass production eating was the relative loneliness of being in a large group.

The next day spelled better hiking though foggy and misty, as I went over Mt. Washington. The trail to the north went under the trestle, over which whizzed the cog train with its load of

*(Continued on page 12)*

(Continued from page 11)

sitter people to get a hundred foot view from the mountain. The trail that day all above tree line was guided by yellow painted stones atop cairns, the next one just about visible. As I went over Mt. Jefferson and around Mt. Adams, I passed two elderly men and a middle aged lady, all of us headed for Madison Hut.

I met them later at Madison Hut, learning the two men were retired, one having been a letter carrier, and the other a minister from Penns Woods. The latter was most interesting; he gave nature talks and led nature walks at a youth camp as a retirement activity.

The next day I returned to Pinkham Notch. About 300 yds. before the hut, I passed a family, each with a backpack, each slender and gaunt. He was head of medical at Princeton. (Could it be that doctors think hiking a good activity?)

Next morning I took a bus to Boston and then to Rochester. Somewhere across Massachusetts this recent hiking experience, perhaps coupled with my recent reading about the Appalachian Trail and a book on the geology of the Finger Lakes, generated the idea of a hiking trail across southern New York State.

On August 28, 1961 I wrote a thanks letter to the AMC and to Bruce Sloat, which contained the following paragraph: "During return, I conceived, probably not originally, the idea of a cross New York State hiking trail that would touch the regions of the southern edges of the Finger Lakes. These areas have terrific geological interest, provide the greater elevations outside the Adirondack region, and there are many spots of great historical interest such as portions of the Sullivan Expedition. The thought occurred that it might be possible for various hiking and outing clubs of central New York to participate in such a project."

(In the next issue – a proposal before the Genesee Valley Hiking Club on Sept. 21 and the Initial Organization Meeting at Boy Scout Headquarters on Nov. 18, 1961.)



### **Conservation Trail's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration**

The Conservation Trail, a 177-mile footpath in Western New York and a branch of the Finger Lakes Trail System, will be 50 years old in 2012!

Come join the Foothills Trail Club (maintainers of the Conservation Trail) in this celebration.

Starting in April 2011, we will hike the first 99 miles of the trail starting at the grand and majestic Niagara Falls and continue through to Springville, NY. Along the way we will hike by:

- the proposed site of the United Nations before it was located in New York City
- Cross the mighty Niagara River twice
- Hike along "Dewey's Ditch"
- Walk along "Murder Creek" and watch it fall...in Akron Falls Park
- Take a walk down "Lover's Lane"
- Pass a church on "Sinn Road"
- Hike through the famous "Holland Ravines" so named for the 25+ ravines you will cross in eight miles of trail

And be treated to an extra special "sag wagon" on the very last hike of the series.

In 2012, we will finish the remaining 78 miles of the trail with a weekend in Allegany State Park. Everyone completing the 2011 and 2012 events will receive a one time only 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemorative Conservation Trail Patch.

#### **Interested?**

See the Foothills Trail Club web page at [www.foothillstrailclub.org](http://www.foothillstrailclub.org)

or contact

Annette Brzezicki [anet42brz@roadrunner.com](mailto:anet42brz@roadrunner.com) (716-685-2183), Mike Schlicht [pageazi@yahoo.com](mailto:pageazi@yahoo.com) (716-316-4388), or Jake Kern [j3kern@yahoo.com](mailto:j3kern@yahoo.com) (716-735-7302)

# Crystal Hills Trail, aka GET in NY

by Pat Monahan, FLTC President

**Winter 2010.** "GET in NY" will continue to hold a special place in the hearts of many who have worked on it over the last four years, as all of us make the transition to calling it the Crystal Hills Trail.

Congratulations to two scouts who reached the rank of Eagle Scout because of their projects on the Crystal Hills Trail last year. Mike Parken (bridge construction) and Kyle Pruden (crew leader) were recognized for their efforts at an awards ceremony in Painted Post on August 15, 2010. As you read this article, two more Eagle Scout projects are in progress. Arick Swain from Dansville is constructing a kiosk to hold a trail map of the Pinnacle/McCarthy State Forest/Addison area at Pinnacle State Park. Tristan Ponader is constructing a bridge over a channel in the Meads Creek area. Two more projects are awaiting Council approval for Tyler Gee and Patrick Greaney to build identical kiosks on Watson Homestead along with some trail improvements.

Congratulations also go to the first hikers to complete the Crystal Hills Trail on July 14, 2010. Ruth and Dan Dorrough have hiked the entire length (actually twice since they did out and back day trips). Personal congratulations were given to them for this accomplishment, but no patch—it hasn't even been thought of yet!! Design and construction have been on top of the list for the last few years. Patch design will make it to the top of the list in the winter months. There is a strong possibility that a thru-hiker may attempt to hike the GET from south to north. We will welcome him to New York next year if he takes the challenge.

One particularly interesting project for the trail this year was to determine how to go from one side of an eight-foot deer fence to the other side. With the permission of landowner Terry Towner, Jim Bange, Marsha and John Browning and Pat Monahan added a corral gate to let the hikers easily move along the trail while keeping the deer



away from the tree farm. Nice work—just be sure to close the gate!!

Work efforts in 2010 occurred on the northern section and the Addison area of the trail. The trail has been blazed from M13 at the Moss Hill Lean-to in South Bradford (the northern terminus of the Great Eastern Trail) to Meads Creek Road, across Watson Homestead Conference and Retreat Center to West Hill State Forest/ Rogers Rd below the cemetery. This will give the hiker approximately nine miles of uninterrupted trail. In the Addison area, the trail has been extended from Maple Street in the Village, through a cemetery, across Towner Tree Farm and other private landowners' properties to the Mose Rd./Beeman Hollow Rd. This will add approximately four miles of marked trail to the Addison area from the NY/PA border. Many thanks go to students from RIT, families from the Alternative Math and Science School in Corning and numerous community volunteers from the area and throughout the state. Next year, we will continue construction from West Hill down the hill to the I-86/Painted Post area. The trail may be completed in

2012, followed by moving sections below Addison off road to the Pennsylvania border in the future.

If you are interested in becoming involved in any aspect of building the Crystal Hills Trail, please contact Pat Monahan at [pmonahan@stny.rr.com](mailto:pmonahan@stny.rr.com). Your name can be added to the email distribution list for all information about the GET in NY. □

## Moving?

Instructions for notifying the FLTC of address changes appear at the bottom of the masthead on page 1 of every issue of the *FLT News*.

## Answers to the Fall "Name that Map!" quiz

Correctly identified the drain at the Alley Cat crew's new Tamarack Lean-to on M17:

Irene Szabo

John Oldweiler

Phil Dankert

Joe Cobb

Ken Reek

Roger Hopkins

Quinn Wright

Gary Mallow

Laurie Dando

Roy Dando

Mahlon Hurst

(mostly crew members)



Order maps of the  
Crystal Hills Trail  
CH1 - CH3  
585/658-9320  
[www.fingerlakestrail.org](http://www.fingerlakestrail.org)

## **It took the whole summer, but...**

### **10 Bridges Were Rebuilt on the Bristol Hills Branch Trail**

**by Lynda Rummel, Regional Trail Coordinator, Bath – Watkins Glen**

**T**here's no other place quite like it on the trail. There are no rocks! Along the eastern edge of one of the most productive farming areas in the state (the muck lands southeast of Prattsburgh, FLT Map B3, where the early autumn smell of freshly harvested onions can be overwhelming), the trail passes through a mile of explosive growth that includes acres of touch-me-knots, stinging nettles, and ash and maple draped in Virginia creeper and poison ivy. The thick vegetation sprouts from dense dark soil, the compacted silt of a shallow lake left by the glaciers 10,000 years ago.

A tributary to Five Mile Creek wends its way through these woods, as well. Typically shallow and peaceful, this creek flash-floods occasionally, undercutting the dirt bank, carving new channels, and leaving trenches and swampy areas that the trail must cross. Four are deep and wide enough to require bridges with stringers (the lengthwise supports) made out of 30-40 foot telephone poles; the remaining six require stringers of 10 to 14 feet.

Over the last couple of decades, all 10 bridges fell into disrepair. One of the big bridges collapsed completely, while another sagged with a broken stringer and was threatened by two huge, dying overhanging ash trees. None of the stringers had been set on sills, which meant that every end had been subject to rot, and in many cases the rot had worked its way through the entire stringer. This fact changed the project from a simple rebuild to a complex salvage, replace, and rebuild operation.

The sponsor for the segment of trail between Elmboise Rd. (CR 77) and Bean Station Rd., next to the muck land, has been the Prattsburgh Boy Scout troop. Now disbanded, this troop tried hard to maintain the bridges, but the bridges were simply too big, too many, and too complicated for young Scouts to take care of.

After years of make-do repairs, Tom and Donna Noteware, Regional Trail Coordinators for the Bristol Hills Branch, decided that some serious rebuilding needed to be done. With three Alley Cats already scheduled and no trails club to help, the work would have to be done by friends, neighbors, and anyone else willing to lend a hand. Working with Steve Catherman, FLTC VP for Trail Maintenance, and me, the neighboring RTC for the main trail nearby whom the Notewares had often helped, Tom and Donna devised a plan that required Bath Rural Electric to donate 40-foot telephone poles that Empire Telephone Co., based in Prattsburgh, would transport to Bean Station Rd. I recruited Gerry Benedict, an FLT main and branch trail end-to-end from Phelps who was eager to give something back to the trail, and Mike Schlicht, an active Foothills Trails Club member from Snyder with whom I had worked on the Holland Ravines Alley Cat crews, to serve as Construction Managers. My own job was "clerk of the works." I carried supplies and tools, cast the deciding vote if Mike and Gerry disagreed, offered suggestions and advice when I could, and identified steps or tasks that needed to be done.

Throughout the spring, Gerry and Mike spent hours working on alternative plans since no one knew the diameter of the poles or whether they would sag too much without reinforcement. In the end, although the poles were warped, they didn't sag too much; so the final plans were very much like Tom and Donna's original drawings. To expedite the discussion, we gave each bridge site a number, starting from Elmboise Rd. and working south. Thus, the four big bridges became bridges #1, #2, #6, and #10.

Over the spring and early summer, while waiting...and waiting...for the poles to arrive, the six smaller bridges were all replaced or rebuilt so that

every one of the stringers sat on sills. The foundations for two of the bigger bridges (#1 and #2) were replaced, a new railing was added to #2, and an old telephone pole, salvaged from an earlier repair job but still in decent condition, was hand-carried in *on the shoulders of volunteers* to bridge #1, to replace a stringer that was found to be too rotted to save. Some planks were salvaged and reused, but many new boards and what seemed like tons of nails and rebar were carried in and used or stockpiled.

Most of this work was done the weekend of July 17-18, with the help of Dave Petersen, a family friend who summers on Keuka Lake, and a "wellness class" of five Rochester Institute of Technology students, their instructor, Michelle VandenBout, who devised the weekend wellness course in "trail building and maintenance," and her teaching assistant. The student crew spent two nights at the lovely Evangeline Shelter just south of Bean Station Rd., and gave roughly 14 hours (plus 6 hours travel) to the project. (RIT students must complete two "wellness credits" involving community service work in order to graduate.) The lesson from this weekend: find a better way to get the poles in!

The poles were delivered in early August. How we would get the poles to and across the first big creek crossing (#10) and then move two through the thick woods to and across the next deep trench (#6) remained a big question, but this was solved partially by Dave Potzler, who trailered his tractor down from the east side of Buffalo on August 9<sup>th</sup>, and used it to drag in the poles and then deftly push them across bridge site #10. Potzler, a retired arborist and certified sawyer who had taken down one of the big overhanging ash trees for us several weeks earlier, put on his climbing spikes and rigged up a pulley

*(Continued on page 15)*

## 10 Bridges ...

(Continued from page 14)

system in a big maple beside the trail to keep the nose of each telephone pole from falling beneath the opposite bank.

At the same time, Gerry's son, Jason, figured out how to use the FLTC's Grip Hoist to haul the two poles from #10 to the next wide creek crossing (#6), which was some 170 feet and three new bridges away. This, Gerry, Mike and I agreed, would be a job for the next class of students from RIT, who would also have the task of completing big bridges #6 and #10!

The second class of RIT students consisted of three students, including a deaf student from Japan, his interpreter; the instructor; and her teaching assistant. Again they stayed two nights at the Evangeline Shelter and worked two days (September 18-19) with us beside FLTC volunteers Joe Striano, Gary Haff, and Jason Benedict.

After getting the poles at site #10 set up on their sills, I belatedly realized that a second huge ash next to the poles was too rotted to leave standing. The tree trunk had separated into two thick branches and decay could be seen where the branches split and at its base. Fortunately, Jason, who works as an arborist in Texas over the winters, had brought his tree climbing gear. After climbing up one of the two big branches with ropes and a harness, Jason cut off the top of the branch while several volunteers gave the rope attached to its top one sharp tug to pull it away from the bridge. Other pieces were quickly dispatched in the same manner. When Jason made the next to last cut near the base of the trunk, the hollow center of the tree was exposed, confirming the wisdom of taking it down.

Once the tree was down, Joe, Gary, and two of the RIT students started nailing on planks and putting up the railing. In the meantime, other volunteers worked the Grip Hoist and hauled each of the two poles through the woods to site #6, at a rate of about 6" with every pull, punctuated by frequent stops to lift the

pole nose over large tree roots. When it came time to move the poles across the creek, all hands pitched in. Two additional pulley systems were rigged to help hold up the nose of each pole, but Mike and Gerry had to help with a final lift while standing underneath.

When the students' 2:00 Sunday departure time rolled around, the last bridge – #6, the big one in the middle of the stretch – was not quite finished. Committed to finishing everything by the end of that day, Gerry, Mike, Gary and I pounded away on the last planks, sections of railing, strips of asphalt

shingle, and steps, and then cleaned up the worksite. Gerry even had time to run home and get some tulip and red oak seedlings to plant where we had had to clear away vegetation. The lesson from this work weekend: the Grip Hoist is a marvelous device that is very easy to use and that gives those who need to move big objects, like huge rocks or heavy telephone poles, a tremendous mechanical advantage. With it, one 120 lb. person can move a 1200 lb. telephone pole, and Sisyphus could easily move that boulder up the mountain! □



*Above: Most of the Sept. 19 team on bridge #6: L to R, RIT instructor Michelle VandenBout, FLTC VP-Trail Quality Lynda Rummel, trail sponsor and railing builder Gary Haff, project co-manager Mike Schlicht, RIT TA Jacob Norris, RIT student Mark Kerbel, project co-manager Gerry Benedict, international RIT student Mitsuyoshi Yabe, interpreter Terri Reisinger. Weekend warriors not in photo: Joe Striano and Jason Benedict*



*Above: As the pole is inched across the creek, Mike Schlicht and Jason Benedict attach extra pulleys and lines to keep the pole's nose up. Photo by Leona Jensen*



*Right: Hand carrying a salvaged pole to bridge #1. Photo by Lynda Rummel*

## Map B3 Gully Bridgette

by Irene Szabo

**V**ery near the south end of the orange-blazed Bristol Hills Branch Trail, on Map B3 up in the hills above Hammondsport, orange meets the main white-blazed east-west trail on property that used to belong to Wally Wood, the man who first thought up the notion of our cross-state hiking trail. So it's no surprise that the Bristol Hills Branch ended at our founder's property back in 1967 when Mary and Coe Coykendall built this part, since I'm sure it was part of Wally's plan.

However, there is an ongoing erosion problem crossing the trail. I first adopted this section in 1987, when the blazed gully crossing I inherited was a little dicey but manageable. In subsequent years, I have found ancient blazes, two series of them in fact, downhill from the crossing I first knew, faded particles of orange paint on big trees, one of them where the gully is now at least thirty feet deep! How this seasonal little dribble erodes the soil so badly among a healthy stand of trees is mystifying, but erode it does! In the first half of the 90's, Bob Muller and I dug a little sidehill path up the south, steeper side to help hikers, but after only a few more years, the bottom of the gully had dropped below even that helpful spot to the point that people started clambering up the hill by using one young tree as a handhold.

By now that little tree has fallen under the stress. The bottom of the gully has dropped a few more feet. Why? There is seldom even running water in it! Mysterious erosion, but people were starting to walk upstream to find a shallower crossing.

The problem with that solution is that the deer, too, need an easier crossing of this big gully, so our longtime permitting landowner here has his favorite hunting stand at the head of the gully. At the other end of the gully another trail-friendly landowner who permits us north of this spot has HIS favorite hunting area at the next easily crossable spot at the bottom of the gully. Rats.

Did you do the jungle song when you were a kid? Can't go under it, can't go over it, can't get around it, gotta go through it! Thus a funky unusual bridge has appeared over this maddening gully, one which should give us passage for another twenty? years before the next design will be required. Rather than a bridge over the whole thing, which would be too massive, a sort-of ladder leans against the taller steeper side, and its legs are several feet taller than required. The hope is that these extra feet will provide future length as the gully bottom drops. Future steps can be added between those tall rungs as needed, and some lumber is already stored on site.

Partway down the "ladder" a short bridge crosses. It's not attached to the ladder so as things change, the bridge can be adjusted. And in high hopes that the primary trees near each end of the crossing will remain intact and well-rooted, ropes have been extended from the two wooden parts to keep all parts nearby should a true flood try to move everything down to Keuka Lake.

First users were the Friday afternoon hike of our fall campout. I greeted the hikers and told them of their historically significant crossing, just after I had nailed down the last few shingles to keep the steps from being slippery in wet weather. Only two days before, the

whole smash had been built by two friends and me, those two utterly new to trail stuff but strangely amenable to following me into the woods carrying long sticks of treated lumber, nails, and tools, about five trips each. Frankly, I assumed with two brand new helpers we'd at least get all the materials carried that half-mile in from where we could park, and maybe a little bit of material cut. Well, Gin Shear and Sue Slate surprised me no end by sticking with it until we had finished everything except those shingles before dark!

Uh-oh. This is what happened to my life twenty-five years ago. Now they are all excited to help me build a re-route further north on B3! Shhhhwoop. That's the sound of your life slipping away into trail stuff. □



*Above right: Gin and Sue cutting pieces for the funky little gully bridge/ladder. Photographer Irene Szabo using Sue's phone*

*Right: Annette Brzezicki crossing the "improved" gully with the Friday afternoon hike during the Fall Campout... and she lived! Photo by Paul Hoffman*





*Landowner Steve Zembsch and his granddaughters were the first to walk the new section of trail.*

*Photo by Roy Dando*

## Dangerous Rte 206 Road Walk Eliminated Thanks to Two Landowners

Last Spring Triple Cities Hiking Club/FLT trail steward Roger Ashworth alerted Larry Blumberg and me that he had received permission from two landowners to avoid the Route 206 road walk into Bainbridge. Those of you who have walked that section of 206 will recall how truly dangerous it was. A few weeks later we met and shook hands with landowner Gary Smith before proceeding. We had previously met landowner Steve Zembsch and received his enthusiastic support. Within four hours the crew transformed the raw landscape into a picture perfect 1.8 mile piece of trail. What comes to mind is the old Looney Tunes cartoon with the Tasmanian Devil, as the chain saw, wheeled string trimmer, and multiple lopper/pruners were all going to town simultaneously. The trail now leaves Case Road one quarter mile north of the current trailhead and enters the

woods onto Gary's property instead of heading south to Route 206. There were more blaze-painting and trail-clearing trips made throughout the summer but on September 4th, the trailhead signs were erected and the reroute was officially open. Joe Dabes has included the new section on M26 with up-to-date GPS data. Steve Zembsch stopped by with his two granddaughters to appropriately be the first to walk the new section. We would like to thank the many volunteers who helped with the project, especially Roger Ashworth for doing the leg work with the property owners. Please thank Gary and Steve for graciously allowing the trail to cross their land by walking this section of trail and admiring the beauty that their land has afforded us, the hiking community.

— Roy Dando

Last year a group of students from SUNY Geneseo spent part of their Freshman Orientation over the Labor Day Weekend contributing their sweat equity toward building the Robinson Loops near Swain as part of their community service project and also got the opportunity to learn about backpacking on the FLT. This year, nine students, accompanied by Joanna Kirk, their faculty advisor, made another major contribution of sweat equity to the trail, benching hundreds of feet of trail on the steep hill-sides of the blue loop. Several students had so much fun last year they returned to school early to participate again this year. Danica Stewart and Steve Fisher from outfitters Pack, Paddle and Ski taught the students the secrets of "Leave no trace camping" and led them in a series of team building exercises throughout the weekend. The consensus is that this was a great weekend for students and the FLT.

## Geneseo Students' Project on the FLT

by Ron Navik



Ron Navik

Article removed at author's request



# TM

**Steve Catherman**  
**Vice President of**  
**Trail Maintenance**

## Trail Topics

### How to Contact Trail Management

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Quinn Wright, Director of Crews and Construction  
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Joe Dabes, Director of Trail Inventory and Mapping  
kabjnd@msn.com  
607/844-3872 (Apr. 20 - Oct. 20)  
352/861-0563 (Oct. 20 - Apr. 20)

**A**fter our editor, Jo Taylor, let me have the summer off to take a family vacation and get my two daughters back to their respective colleges for the fall semester, I'm back with some more scintillating commentary on what's happening on our trail and with our Trail Sponsors. Thanks, Jo, for letting me enjoy the last two weeks of one of the finest summers we have had in upstate New York in many years. There shouldn't be any excuses from our Sponsors for not getting out and maintaining their trail sections this season.

### Trail Sponsor Update

On the Bristol Hills Trail on Map B3 in Steuben County, **Mark Musso** from nearby Pulteney has agreed to take over nearly a mile of the trail between Access Point 15 on CR 77 and 16 near Bean Station Road, formerly maintained by local Boy Scout Troop 34. In addition to the trail itself, Mark is inheriting 10 bridges on this section, all of which were rehabilitated this summer by an FLTC work crew including Mark himself. Many thanks to Mark for his help on the bridges and becoming their new Sponsor.

In a bit of old news (only because I didn't submit an article for the Fall newsletter), another current Sponsor, **Warren Johnsen**, from South New Berlin, has adopted the 1.6 mile spur trail from the main trail in Arctic China State Forest to Oquaga Creek State Park on Map M27 in Delaware County. This is one of those good news/bad news stories as Warren has asked to be relieved of his sponsorship of the Campbell Mountain Trail on Map M30 in the Catskills (see below).

On a very sad note, long time FLT Trail Sponsor and Boy Scout leader **Peter Bushnell** passed away in October leaving a big hole to fill on the Bristol Hills Trail above Naples. In what I view as a telling tribute to this man, several people that knew him and helped him maintain his section of trail immediately stepped forward and volunteered to take over his section. New FLTC member, and current FLT landowner, **Robert Wild** from Fairport is now the new Sponsor of the first 3 miles of trail on Map B1 that Peter maintained. This piece of trail begins at Access Point 1 in Ontario County Park and ends at Access Point 2 on CR 33, West Hollow Road. We thank you, Robert, not only for becoming a member and Sponsor, but also for allowing our trail to exist on your property, and we offer

our condolences to Peter's family and friends. Our thoughts and prayers go out to you.

### Trail Sections Available

As mentioned above, with Warren Johnsen volunteering to maintain trail closer to his home by taking over the spur trail to Oquaga Creek State Park, there is now an opportunity to sponsor a 2.3 mile section of the Campbell Mountain Trail between Campbell Mt. Road and NY 206 in Delaware County on Map M30 in the Catskills.

Also in the Catskills on Map M30, 3.2 miles of the Mary Smith Trail that begins at Holiday and Berry Brook Road and ends at Mary Smith Hill Road is still available for adoption. This is a rugged section of the trail that would offer big rewards to its new Sponsor(s). Please contact me if you know of anyone who may be interested in either of these Catskill Mountain trails.

There are also several brand new sections of trail available for adoption in the Addison and Painted Post areas along the Crystal Hills Trail in Steuben County. For more information on these sections, contact Pat Monahan at [pmonahan@stny.rr.com](mailto:pmonahan@stny.rr.com).

*(Continued on page 20)*

## Trail Topics, continued...

### Trail News

David Ridge, a 16 year old Life Scout in Boy Scout Troop 18 from Hammondsport, is in the process of constructing a trail that will connect to the FLT spur trail just east of Access Point 7 at Winding Stairs Road on Map M12 in the Town of Urbana. The trail will begin at Champlin Beach on Keuka Lake and, when completed, will extend approximately 1.5 miles uphill across Town of Urbana land and two private properties to tie into the FLT. David, who is working with FLTC Regional Trail Coordinators Tom and Donna Noteware, has completed scouting and flagging the route for this project, which will earn him the rank of Eagle Scout. The trail will gain elevation quickly and require multiple switchbacks through mixed hardwoods and hemlocks with splendid winter views of Keuka Lake. David hopes to accomplish much of the work this year, which marks the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Eagle Scout, before completing his project next spring.

This proposed trail will not only tie into the FLT main trail via the blue spur at 'lookout point', it may also provide a link to another proposed trail envisioned by the Town of Urbana. Currently, Town officials have agreed to apply for a federal Recreational Trails Program grant administered by the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. This grant could bring in as much as \$200,000 for an extensive trail system linking Champlin Beach with the Village of Hammondsport. If this Town project reaches fruition, David's trail would allow hikers on the Finger Lakes Trails to directly access the Village of Hammondsport and all that it has to offer, and vice-versa.

Once in the village, people could access yet another trail system, the Hammondsport Historical Hike. This 1.25 mile walking loop around the community was created by Mattie Catherman this past summer for her Girl Scout Gold Award. Her project includes a trail map and brochure which are available at the Visitor's Center, and a route that highlights the natural beauty and history of the village. Mattie appeared previously in these pages upon earning her Girl Scout Silver Award for rerouting a section of the June Bug Trail, which was created by another Eagle Scout from Troop 18 under the Notewares' guidance several years ago.

### Trail Condition Reports

Please send trail condition reports to both the FLT Office (fltooffice@frontiernet.net) and the Mapping Supervisor Joe Dabes (kabjnd@msn.com). Trail condition reports are posted on the FLTC's website as soon as possible, so be sure to check the website *before* you go out hiking.



# TQ

**Lynda Rummel**

**Vice President of  
Trail Quality**

### This Isn't Your Grandfather's Trail

This is to encourage all of you who like to play in the mud to consider pitching in to fix up old trail. We've got a lot of old trail (some over 40 years old) that is in need of improvement—the grade may be too steep, erosion has taken away the outer edge or trenched the inside of a curve, the center of the tread is concave and collects water, or just the impact of many hiking boots has created mud puddles and soggy soil where once it seemed dry. So, while we wait for spring to return, think about those places you've slogged through or stepped around and consider contacting the section sponsor (listed on the back of the maps) or Regional Trail Coordinator and offering your ideas and help. **We have many sections that are sponsored (maintained) just by individuals, not clubs, and many of them could sure use an extra pair of hands!**

The kinds of repairs I'm talking about can be made pretty easily if you have the right tools, so do not be intimidated by lack of experience or unfamiliarity with trail tools. All you really need are a Pulaski (because a Pulaski does everything!) or a chopping mattock (for digging drainage ditches, preparing waterbars, taking duff out of the inside of the trail bed on a slope, making sure the outer edge is lower than the inner, and cutting annoying unessential roots), a pair of loppers to cut back a branch or a root near the repair you're working on, and a small handsaw, such as a pruning saw or bow saw, or if you are already into tree trimming and gardening, one of the nice Japanese handsaws. You don't have to buy these tools—we've got plenty stored in the FLTC tool shed in Mt. Morris that you can borrow.

Consider offering to help the person who maintains one of your favorite sections of trail build a puncheon or small footbridge (you might have to bring a hammer!), or donating the materials to make one (leftover exterior pressure treated wood and old asphalt shingles are really needed!). Or next spring, when the temperature is above 50 and the weather's dry, volunteer to help paint-blaze the trail. Trail work is actually fun; it gets rid of nails you'll never use anyway, and of course you are contributing directly to the longevity of the trail.

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If the sponsor doesn't know exactly what he or she wants to do to fix a problem, there are a lot of books plus material on line, and any member of the Travelin' Training Team will be glad to come to the location, help assess the problem, develop solutions and demonstrate how to use the tools. All the sponsor has to do is to contact Lynda at [ljrassoc@roadrunner.com](mailto:ljrassoc@roadrunner.com).



cc

**Quinn Wright**  
**Director of Crews**  
**and Construction**

### **2010 Alley Cat #3 in Allegany State Park**

Once again Foothills Trail Club was fortunate to have an FLTC Alley Cat project (the 4th consecutive year, 7th one since 1997). This very necessary, but far from glamorous, project was accomplished with the enthusiasm and energy that is typical of every Alley Cat crew that I have observed. Under the very capable leadership of Dave Potzler and his assistant Melanie Okoniewski (her 3rd Alley Cat this year) three privies were rebuilt, a bridge re-decked, steps installed, a long section of trail re-constructed, and 14 miles of trail cleared of fallen trees. And, once again, our weary workers were well-rewarded with wonderful food.

Dave Potzler and crew members, Joe Cobb (his 3rd alley Cat this year), Jake Kern, Pete Nye, Gus Phillips, Mark Potzler, and Joe Wawrzyniak repaired three privies, dug a new privy pit, and re-decked a small bridge. Melanie Okoniewski and crew members, Jean-Pierre Arnaud (all the way from Florida), Georgianna Binder (her 3rd Alley Cat this year), John Burnham, Mark Hittle, Ron Navik, and Gus Phillips rebuilt a very long section of washed out trail as well as installed some steps up a very steep rise. For three of the days Ben Petryszak cleared fallen trees over fourteen miles of trail with the assistance of Gus Phillips, John Schmitt, and Charlie Stirling.

Donna Flood (assisted by Sally Castren), Sue Hittle, Barb Morrissey (assisted by Fran Campagna, Lucy McCabe, and Gayle Syty) and Gloria Potzler provided great food for the work crew during the recent Alley Cat. These chefs continue to build upon the reputation of the Alley Cat meals that can only be described as fantastic!! What makes these women even more special is that this Alley Cat took place in Allegany State Park. These volunteer chefs not only prepared the meals, but also transported the food almost 75

### **Major Trail Construction Projects for 2011**

Sometime in June a large bridge construction project over **Birdseye Hollow Creek** (Map M13) will occur under the leadership of Steve Catherman (project manager) and a construction manager to be named.

**June 25 to June 30** – A new lean-to, privy, fire ring and picnic table will be built and installed in **Beales Pond SF** near Getter Hill Rd., Masonville (Map M27) under the leadership of Roy Dando (project manager) and Ken Reek (construction manager).

Sometime in August/September a major trail reconstruction project will occur near the **Corbett Hollow** section on Map M13 under the leadership of Lynda Rummel (project and construction manager).

**October 8 to October 12 (tentatively)** – a new lean-to, fire ring, privy and picnic table will be constructed at **Hickory Hills Campground** (Map M12) under the leadership of Dave Drum (project manager) and Matt Branneman (construction manager).

As always we will be looking for help and assistance in any way that you can. Until all project details have been solidified, the project dates should be viewed as tentative until our Alley Cats are once again in season next spring.

miles to the Alley Cat location. Their efforts provided a great complement to the work crew who provided the physical labor to maintain and enhance the trail system that we all enjoy every time we decide to go out for a hike. And to quote President Monahan, "Go take a hike" in Allegany State Park—I did fourteen miles of it last weekend with Melanie, Jewell and Shoki and will do about the same this weekend. The trail is in great shape, and the through hikers that we encountered greatly appreciated the lean-to and the reconstructed privy and asked me to extend their "thanks."

Thanks, again, to each one of you.

### **2010 Alley Cat Summary**

Well, my second season as Director of Crews and Construction is over and I couldn't be more satisfied with the results. These results could not have been achieved without the magnificent organizational skills of the project leaders: Gary Mallow, Tony Rodriguez and Dave Potzler. Their planning and organization made these projects easy for me to oversee and enough praise cannot be thrust upon them.

This year's projects were varied in type and quite successful. A lean-to was demolished and replaced in Danby SF. A treacherous stream crossing and hill ascent/descent as well as trail improvement was accomplished at Tinker Falls. And three privies as well as trail improvements were accomplished in Allegany SP. As was

## Trail Topics, continued...

(Continued from page 21)

demonstrated last year, and even more emphatically demonstrated this year, the FLTC is populated with hard-working, dedicated people who freely offer their time, energy and expertise to making the hiking experience on our trails as positive as possible. Just as impressive is the fact that we had non-FLTC members who traveled from California, Texas and Florida to help on our projects. Whether you worked one day or many more, I thank each and every one of you for your contribution to maintaining and improving the quality of our trail systems.

Seventy-eight people worked 2836 hours and traveled a total of 23,374 miles over the duration of these three projects. Last year we had fifty-five people who worked 1660 hours and traveled 16,507 miles. I hope that next year's projects continue to have even more participation. Just think how much we can get done when we set our minds, bodies and spirits to these tasks. You are an amazing group of people! Special recognition should be given to the three people who worked on all three projects: Georgianna Binder (13 days), Joe Cobb (16 days) and Melanie Okoniewski (16 days). Your commitment to the FLTC is inspiring.

It has been my privilege to have worked with you on these projects and I hope to see many of you on the trail and, if I am lucky, on future projects. Next year is shaping up to have two shelters constructed, a bridge and one major trail reconstruction project.



# J

**Joe Dabes**

**Director of Trail  
Inventory and  
Mapping**

### Inventorying Trail Facilities

The FLTC has never had a good inventory of structural facilities along the trail. This summer I took more than 600 photos (with latitude/longitude coordinates embedded) of facilities along the entire main trail. Facilities include things such as lean-tos, outhouses, bivouac areas, bridges, registers, and wooden signs. Dimensions, including sizes of structural boards, were noted.

The complete inventory of the main trail will be made available to regional coordinators, trail chairs, and

sponsors. Amazingly only eighteen "sub-par" facilities were found, and already four of these have been fixed or replaced. Regional coordinators have been notified and it is hoped that the remaining "sub-par" facilities will be improved soon.

As for the general hiking community, we are working on how best to present photos of selected facilities.

I ask your help in keeping our facilities inventory up to date. If you can send me a photo of any facility you've replaced, I can put it in the location of the previous photo. If you've installed a new facility, please send coordinates or approximate location (e.g., new outhouse is 100 yards SW of lean-to). Please also send dimensions of the structure and sizes of boards for things such as bridges. At a minimum, please let me know where the new facility is located, so that I or one of my assistants can photograph it.

Don McClimans and I welcome Dave Drum to our GPS/mapping team. Already Dave has re-GPSed the Bristol Hills Branch more accurately and has taken photos (latitude/longitude embedded) of the facilities along it.

### Updating Maps

Our trail is constantly changing. The last twelve months saw nineteen significant trail relocations or new trail additions, and eight new hunting season closures. We update our maps almost immediately after a change; most trail organizations take longer (sometimes years). Make sure you check "Trail Conditions" on our website before hiking unless you've recently purchased new maps.

Our major accomplishment in the last year was adding three maps (CH1 to CH3) for the new Crystal Hills Trail, which connects the main FLT to the Great Eastern Trail in Pennsylvania. The GPS and map creation work for these maps was done by Don McClimans, working closely with Pat Monahan and Pete Fleszar.

### GPS Data Available

First, a reminder that **free trailhead coordinates** for the main and branch trails are available on our website for entry into your automotive GPS unit. These are embedded in the End to End Tracking Excel spreadsheets. From the [www.fltconference.org](http://www.fltconference.org) home page: At the top click Go Hiking > End to End Hiking... > Tracking Forms and Trailhead Coordinates > Track your hikes on the Main FLT (or Branch Trails). Follow the instructions to save the file and open with Excel or a compatible program. Print out the file and put it in your vehicle so you have it there all the time!

Second, the updated GPS data we now sell has 1) all waypoints included, 2) the main trail tracks and waypoints have been entirely re-GPSed this last summer, and 3) elevation profiles can now be generated within Garmin MapSource or Garmin BaseCamp (free, see below).

*(Continued on page 27)*

## **An Appreciation of Mary Domanski from her Foothills Trail Club Friends by Quinn Wright and Annette Brzezicki**

**M**ary's list of contributions to the hiking community seems to be endless and some of her major contributions must be mentioned. She was President of the Foothills Trail Club for five years and served on the Board of Directors of the FLTC for multiple terms. In addition, Mary also served on several statewide committees.

For more than 15 years Mary Domanski has been in charge of Landowner Relations for the Foothills Trail Club. When Mary took over this job, the club knew of only a handful of landowners. She has worked very hard to maintain a relationship close enough to each individual landowner to ensure the continuity of the trail, maximizing the number of trail miles off road. Mary has managed to find a way to keep our trail experience off the road in spite of many problems such as logging activities damaging or closing the trail, property-owners closing the trail, and changes in property ownership. Over the last fifteen years she has searched out, contacted and followed up with existing and new landowners. Today, thanks to Mary's perseverance and diligence, we now have a positive relationship with about 175 landowners on the Conservation Trail.

What Mary has done for the hiking community is not apparent to most of us, but every time we put on our hiking boots and set foot on the Conservation Trail we should be thanking her for her contribution to our hiking enjoyment. She has, in her capacity, and in a "silent manner," done so much to advance the Club's mission, "to build, maintain, enhance and promote the Conservation Trail as a footpath."

This thankless yet rewarding task has been handled solely by Mary with almost no help until two years ago. It is difficult to imagine how much time

and energy she has expended over the years to maintain the relations she has been able to achieve with each landowner. For example, during the holiday season Mary sends each landowner a card with a personal note thanking them for allowing the trail to be on their property. Two years ago Annette Brzezicki agreed to help Mary by assuming the same responsibilities for the property-owners on CT Maps 5 & 6. As Annette has said, "I can really appreciate her hard work, dedication and the time involved in keeping up with the current landowners."

In addition to this gigantic task and during the same time Mary found the time to contribute to the Foothills Trail Club and the Finger Lakes Trail Conference in many ways. For example, Mary's positive spirit and good communications with the landowners enabled the Foothills Trail Club to build the first shelter on private land on the Conservation Trail on Map CT4 as a National Trails Day project in 2000. For this project Mary even obtained a grant from EMS to cover some of the expenses of the building.

Further, property owned by the Becker family has been a cornerstone in the development of the Conservation Trail. The very first official section of the Conservation Trail (1962) provided a nice view of the Becker's pond. Over time, the trail was moved further into the woods and away from the pond. So, in 2006 Mary worked with an Eagle Scout to build the Becker Nature Trail to take hikers back to the pond. Finally, Mary's longtime good relationship with the Becker family has resulted in a permanent trail easement; the signed copy was just received in late October!

In recognition of the tireless efforts of Mabel James, a founding member of



Jacqui Wensich

*Mary Domanski was the 2005 winner of the FLTC Wallace Wood Distinguished Service Award.*

the Foothills Trail Club, Mary was instrumental in having a section of the trail on CT6 (through which a portion of the trail travels over Becker property) dedicated and named to honor Mabel James. Finally, in 2007 Mary created a 99-page guidebook for the 177 miles of the Conservation Trail, complete with a lot of historic background.

Now, Mary has said that she is ready to step aside from her many long-held tasks. How will Foothills Trail Club replace Mary's energy and dedication? To quote Annette, "Mary, you have set the bar really high and your shoes will be very hard to fill." Thank you, again, Mary, for all of your work and dedication to New York State's hiking community whether in support of the Foothills Trail Club, the Finger Lakes Trail Conference, or New York State activities. You magnificently accomplished your tasks and objectives in a selfless fashion and you will be sorely missed. □

## Fall Campout a Success!

**A**pproximately 120 people attended the FLT Fall Campout at Hickory Hill Family Camping Resort in Bath on October 1-3. Randy Lehman and his staff did a great job for us.

On Friday night our speaker, Richard Shear, owner of Hamilton's Shoe Store in Wellsville, gave us some valuable insights into proper fitting for our hiking and walking shoes. Saturday night's program by John and Marcia Browning was about the High Points of America. The Brownings have visited nearly all of the 50 states' highest elevations. For those looking for yet another goal to meet, this could be an interesting one!

Two of the eleven hikes organized by Kim and Terry Meacham took hikers on sections designated as FLT Passport Hikes. One other hike explored part of the new Crystal Hills Branch.

— Gene Bavis, Executive Director

*Right: Friday hike led by Barb and Ron Navik sets out.*



*Left: We finally learned where Waldo lives.*



*Left: Pat Monahan introducing our Friday speaker, Richard Shear, owner of Hamilton's shoe store in Wellsville.*



*Right: On Saturday's Huckleberry Bog hike two young hikers get their Wegmans Passport rubbings.*

*Right: Larry Newman, End-to-End #299.*



*Saturday's program on the High Points of America featured John and Marcia Browning (right).*



*Photos by Jacqui Wensich*

# Hiking Bullthistle Country, Chenango County

by Jon and Kathy Bowen, photos by Jackson "Jet" Thomas

**W**e had terrific hiking weather for the final two hikes across Chenango County in September. 71 people had completed the hike series by the picnic on September 25th and six more hikers finished after the hike series ended for a total of 77 hike series completions.



Left: Chenango County patch, designed by Nancy Bergenstock, who also designed the 2009 Delaware patch.

The Chenango County section of the FLT is generally rolling with only a few challenging spots. The trail is in great shape thanks to the stewardship of Bullthistle Hiking Club, Triple Cities Hiking Club and ADK-Onondaga. Hikers encountered very few problems with blow-down, berry bushes, missing blazes or other issues. It was great to have two certified sawyers on our prehikes, including Tom Bryden from the Bullthistles. When we encountered problems on our prehikes, he would make sure it was taken care of prior to the hike series event.

Members of the Bullthistle Hiking Club finished their soccer game early to help set up and cook hot dogs and hamburgers for the picnic at the DeRuyter Fairgrounds. They also cleaned up after the revelers left. Ed Sidote awarded patches for the people who completed the entire FLT end-to-end, some for the second time. Certificates and patches were given to all hikers who finished the 74 miles of trail in Chenango County. Everyone brought a "dish to pass" so there was an abundant amount and great variety of food.

Hikers were generous this year when playing the "Waldo" game. They donated over \$588 during the seven hikes towards maintaining and improving the trail. An anonymous donor offered to double the amount donated (\$123+) on the final hike. The entire \$588 will be set aside to be used on the FLT in Chenango County.

This is the second hike series we have coordinated and, since we have conflicts with next year's dates, will be our last as coordinators. The past two years have been much fun and we've enjoyed meeting the many people who participate in the hike series. During the two years, many people have volunteered to help make the event a success.

Karen Serbonich of the Cayuga Trails Club will coordinate the Cortland County series in 2011. The hikes will be held on the third Saturdays from April through September. In May, two hikes will be held simultaneously with the FLTC Spring Weekend, May 20-22, at nearby Cazenovia College.

*FLTC Executive Director Gene Bavis presented the Lifetime Achievement Award to Ed Sidote on behalf to the North Country Trail Association. Ed, age 93, declined to travel to the NCTA annual convention in Wisconsin to receive the award.*



Members of the Bullthistle Hiking Club set up for the picnic and cooked hot dogs and hamburgers. Everyone brought a dish to pass so there was an abundant amount and great variety of food.

*They earned the patch!*



*New end-to-enders: Tim Wilbur (2nd time), Brian Nagy, and soon-to-be-wed Jennifer Wilson and Joe Wertyschyn. Jennifer completed a second end-to-end hiking with Joe.*



# End-to-End Update

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

## End-to-End Hikers

The following hikers completed the FLT main trail since the last issue:

- #293 Diane L. Smith
- #294 Brian Nagy
- #295 John Joe Cobb
- #296 Joseph Wertyschyn
- #297 Tim Wilbur (2nd end-to-end)
- #298 Jennifer Wilson (2nd end-to-end)
- #299 Larry Newman
- #300 Joe Dabes (9th end-to-end)
- #301 Larry Telle
- #302 Larry Reister

Toby Woodard of Maine started out backpacking the main trail east to west but due to blisters had to give up at Bowman Lake State Park where I picked him up. He stayed with me for five days, but the blisters did not improve enough for him to continue the hike so he took a bus to his home. At this writing he is okay and planning to do the Florida Trail.

Harold Herring of Las Cruces, NM, backpacked from Claryville to Buffalo. He took the Conservation Trail from Map M4 on the main trail to Buffalo, and may return someday to hike through Allegany State Park.

Future end-to-enders recently added to my list:

- Toby Woodard
- Marcia Herrick (plans to finish next year in Cortland County)

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

- |                |                |
|----------------|----------------|
| Larry Blumberg | Marcia Herrick |
| Howard Camp    | Carol Webb     |

Progress reports for the branch trails:

- Will Roden
- Mary Ann Cascarino

## My Final Column

As of this issue of the FLT News I am retiring as FLT End-to-End Coordinator and will be replaced by Jacqui Wensich. Send future FLT end-to-end patch applications to her at 425 East St., Pittsford, NY, 14534.

I joined the FLT sometime during 1977 which is about 33 years ago. Shortly after joining the organization Doris Abbott talked me into becoming a Board Member and after a stint as a Board Member I believe I became a Vice President which was followed by President in 1987 and 1989. I served two terms as President and my goal was to close the six gaps remaining in the FLT. However, I did not get even one gap closed during my presidency. Following my presidency, I



Jacqui Wensich

## Ed is retiring!

*Ed Sidote with everything organized, labeled, and boxed with detailed explanations for the transfer of his duties as end-to-end coordinator to Jacqui Wensich. He gave her ALL of his photos organized by years (16 boxes) along with every piece of end-to-end correspondence, organized by person!!*

would contact FLT members that I had become acquainted with and ask them to volunteer to work on one of the gaps so that we could eventually get all of them closed. I would usually come up with 15 to 25 volunteers and we would close one of the gaps each year. We were able to close the last gap near Bath and the Birdseye Hollow County Park in 1992 during the FLTC's 30th Anniversary Celebration. The Bath gap was ten miles and Terry Giarrosso helped me to lay out the trail by going to the tax office to look up the property owners. She also helped contact the property owners, none of whom denied her permission to go through their property. She also helped to clear the trail on many occasions. We started this ten-mile stretch in the middle of April and finished it in the middle of October during a work-week weekend. Bob Muller and I did a lot of work on this section as did Hudson Close and many others I do not recall anymore. I spent many weekends camped on Bob Muller's camper lot at Hickory Hill Campground during that year. A re-route near Birdseye Hollow Park was built a year or two later on State Land to avoid a swampy area in the park.

My hiking partner Rufus Perkins and I completed hiking the FLT on Sept. 29th, 1990 on CR 13 at the trailhead north of

*(Continued on page 27)*

Hickory Hill Campground north of Bath. George Probst was present and took pictures. There was considerable publicity in newspapers and our FLT newsletter as I was #3 and my partner was #4 to complete the entire FLT. Bob Fordon was #1 and Joe Dabes was #2 to complete the trail. I started the End-to-End program back then and started to develop a list of Trail Angels who help end-to-enders to complete the trail. Mostly they assist hikers by spotting their car where they plan to finish their hike for the day, but they also help in many other ways. At present we have 302 End-to-Enders and we average around 20 per year. I sincerely believe that the End-to-End program has been a big help to the FLT as End-to-Enders tend to volunteer to become officers of the FLTC, Board members, committee chairs or members, or trail maintainers. In this way they give something back to the Trail.

During our end-to-end hike of the FLT my partner and I got into a discussion at Irene Szabo's home about how underused the FLT was at that time. I kept that in mind and following our completion of the FLT I called three FLT members to my home (Don Windsor, Dave Conner, and John Nesbitt) and suggested to them that we have a Cross County Hike Series starting with Chenango County. They thought it was a terrific idea so back in 1992 we held the hike series in Chenango County for the first time. We did not use buses back then but spotted cars for each hike. The largest number of hikers to participate in one of these hikes was 82. We had a hike each month for seven months and gave out a special patch to those who completed the series. The picnic and the buses came along later on. The series was so successful that the next year the Cayuga Trails Club held the series in Tompkins County and the following year I got a committee together and we did Cortland County. We had about 70 hikers finish the Chenango County series and around 40 finish the Cortland series. If I recall correctly these hike series helped to swell our FLTC membership by around 300 members.

I served on the Board of Directors several times, was the FLT End-to-End Coordinator, was on the Trails Committee, was Trails Coordinator and Trails Chairman for the FLT and the FLT-Bullthistle Hikers Club. I was also Publicity Chairman for many years.

In the event that I should pass away unexpectedly like our longtime Vice President for Trails Howard Beye did and you would like to remember me please send a donation to the Finger Lakes Trail Conference, Inc., earmarked for the Sidote Stewardship Fund.

**THANK YOU VERY MUCH**

*Happy Hiking!*

Edward J. Sidote

5 Clinton St., Norwich, 13815-1903

607/334-3872

*[ejsidote@frontiernet.net](mailto:ejsidote@frontiernet.net)*

## Trail Topics ...

(Continued from page 22)

### Newer Garmin Field GPS Units

In the last couple of years Garmin has come out with improved field GPS units: Colorado, Oregon, Dakota, GPSMap 62, and GPSMap 78. Improvements include the ability to store 200 saved tracks of up to 10,000 track points (older units can save only 20 tracks of up to only 500 track points). Also these newer units support loading "birdseye view" aerial imagery into your GPS unit (at \$30/year for unlimited downloads to one unit).

These new units work best with Garmin BaseCamp (rather than Garmin MapSource) for loading and retrieving tracks and waypoints. It has controls similar to Google Earth (hover your cursor over the blue Garmin triangle to see the controls). BaseCamp does not come with these units, but you can download it free at [www.garmin.com/garmin/cms/us/onthetrail/basecamp](http://www.garmin.com/garmin/cms/us/onthetrail/basecamp). (There are both PC and Mac versions.) You attach your newer GPS to your computer with a USB cable and it opens the GPS unit as a drive in BaseCamp. You can then (after importing GPX files into BaseCamp's "My Collection") simply drag tracks, waypoints, and imagery into (or out of) your GPS unit. □

## Join the North Country Trail Association

### A Special Deal for FLTC Members!

Now you can join the North Country Trail Association for just \$23 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 866-Hike-NCT

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Name as it appears on card: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Article removed at author's request

Article removed at author's request

## Walking Through Time ...

(Continued from page 7)

Switch to the Conservation Trail maps, where the rail line crosses map CT6 diagonally, shown as the Norfolk Southern Railroad, which leases operations to the Buffalo and Pittsburgh daily train.

Then finally as our train approaches Buffalo, well after dark, it travels a short way behind Quinn Wright's home, where he was surprised to learn that the railroad property where he likes to walk his dog hosts the same train that goes in the valley below the Holland ravines! Quinn, our Director of Crews and Construction, confesses that he's been stopped by railroad police for trespassing during his dog walks. Naughty Quinn.

Immediately west of Quinn's neighborhood the NY State Thruway, Interstate 90, stays above Buffalo streets on elevated piers where once the Lehigh Valley Railroad came into downtown. Yes, that same railroad we walk along between farm fields on map CT8 and several other places in the middle of the state! Got all that?

The summit of the New York portion of this old Pennsylvania RR line was at Lime Lake, just north of Machias at more than 1600 feet above sea level, a good thousand feet higher than the Buffalo end 40 miles north. So this was a "helper district" where extra coal-fired steam locomotives were added to most trains to help them up the hill. The tracks were at elevation 970' at South Wales, map CT6 again, but passed 1300' below Holland, only six miles further, so even though the tracks

follow a valley, it too climbs mercilessly. Old track diagrams show a six-mile passing siding from South Wales to Holland still in existence as of 1964, and the current USGS topo dated 1979 shows the same six miles of double track, but it's not there now. The signal at milepost 27 near our trail crossing for northbound trains includes an extra oval of lights below the big circle, intended to let an engineer know if the siding was occupied or not, but it's dark now.

In fact, in 1910, the PRR double-tracked the entire line from Emporium in Pennsylvania up to Buffalo, a big commitment to the perceived traffic there. Don't forget that, in addition to coal, lumber, and oil coming north from Pennsylvania, passenger trains were frequent, too. In fact, even in 1871 a commuter from Holland could leave on a predecessor railroad at 7:35 and be in downtown Buffalo by 9:13, but that was the ONLY way he could have gotten there without more than a day's travel of 27 miles.

Those signals reflect a lot of western New York input. Corning Glass was responsible for many of the lens shapes, designed to concentrate a 3 or 10 watt lamp's glow into a beam visible for great distances from the locomotive cab, plus the creation of colored lenses for styles of signals used by other railroads. General Railway Signal in Rochester was responsible for many of the increasingly intricate signal systems that protected trains from running into one another.

Stop, look, and listen, even in Holland. It's hard to imagine, but during the earlier years of the Conservation Trail, hikers had to cross two tracks here, and they were way more busy. □

**Our sincere thanks for  
gifts in memory of:**

***Harry Clar***

from  
Lonnie Clar

***Robert & Barbara Hopkins***

from  
Roger & Ruth Hopkins

***Peter Bushnell***

from  
Gene & Liz Bavis

### **New Life Member**

Joe Cobb

### **New Forever Society Members in 2010**

Tim and Nancey Wilbur  
Roger and Ruth Hopkins

**SATURDAY, JANUARY 15, 2011**

**First Annual Winter / Howard Beye Hike**

**Leader:** Cathy Concannon, [catrina616@gmail.com](mailto:catrina616@gmail.com)

**Bristol Hills Trail, FLT Map B1**

**Hike:** Break out those boots and snowshoes and start working off all of those cookies, cakes, etc., you ate during the holiday season. As Howard spent quite a bit of time maintaining parts of the Bristol Hills Trail, we will celebrate his service by hiking his favorite area, High Tor, where we will utilize both the Bristol Hills Trail and the High Tor Blue Trail to complete a loop of approximately 5-7 miles.

You can expect some climbing and possible views of the lake. Please pack a lunch and water and dress in layers appropriate for the weather. And although Bob & Ruth's is closed for the season, Monica's Pies is open year round. Pack a spoon or fork as people have been known to dig into one of their famous grape pies (or one of many other varieties!) on the ride home.

**Meet:** 10 am at the parking area near access point 5 of FLT Map B1. There is some additional parking at Bob & Ruth's Restaurant at the intersection of NY Routes 21 and 245 in Naples, although they do not plow during the winter. Please try to carpool to reduce the number of cars.

**SATURDAY, APRIL 23, 2011**

**Spring / Wally Wood Hike**

**Leader:** Phil Dankert, [pdankert@twcny.rr.com](mailto:pdankert@twcny.rr.com)

**Abbott Loop, FLT Map M17, Ithaca area**

**Hike:** This 8.4 mile-long loop hike, located in the Danby State Forest, was planned and built by Doris and Cliff Abbott and other Cayuga Trails Club members. It is one of the premier FLT loop trails. One of the highlights is Thatcher's Pinnacles which provides a 180-degree view of the West Danby area below. We will be hiking it clockwise which means the first 1.7 miles will be on the main FLT.

**Meet:** 10 am at the FLT trailhead on Michigan Hollow Road on FLT Map M17.

**Directions to Meeting Location:** Take NY Route 96B for approximately 5 miles south of Ithaca, NY, and then turn right on Michigan Hollow Rd in Danby, NY. Follow Michigan Hollow Rd for 2 1/4 miles to its intersection with the FLT. There is ample parking along the shoulder of Michigan Hollow Rd.

**Carpooling:** From the Binghamton, NY area please contact Larry Blumberg, [LBlumberg@stny.rr.com](mailto:LBlumberg@stny.rr.com)

*Also, Foothills Trail Club Conservation Trail series (see p. 12)  
and the Cortland series on the 3rd Saturdays, April through September*

### **Erv Markert (Fall) Hike**

Sixteen hikers representing a large cross-section of FLTC members and member-clubs enjoyed a very pleasant walk through the heart of the Catharine Creek Wildlife Management Area in Watkins Glen on October 16, 2010. The marsh serves as the inlet to Seneca Lake and is home to many varieties of birds and water fowl.

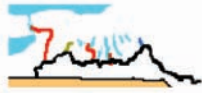
John A-X. Morris led this hike. Thank you, John! And thank you to all of the participants for coming out for this hike. John had some unexpected help from John Smith, a local resident who is heavily involved with trail maintenance on the network of trails within the Catharine Creek Wildlife Management Area, including the Catharine Valley Trail, which is a rails-to-trail conversion that will ultimately link Watkins Glen to Mark Twain State Park twelve miles to the south.

— Larry Blumberg



John A-X. Morris

*Post-hike apple harvest at Clute Park, Watkins Glen*



NAME THAT MAP!  
So, you hiked the FLT or  
parts of it. Let's see how  
observant you were!  
Send your guess to:

[jwensich@rochester.rr.com](mailto:jwensich@rochester.rr.com)

Can you place the tree on the right? **Extra credit if you know the species, too.** The answer to the fall issue's Name That Map is on page 13.



Roger Hopkins



Ed Sidote

Eagle Scout project of Chris Pfeiffer  
(Troop #63, Norwich) at Bowman Lake  
State Park



A gift to the Finger Lakes Trail  
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6111 Visitor Center Road Mt. Morris,  
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(585-658-9320), or  
e-mail address

[information@fingerlakestrail.org](mailto:information@fingerlakestrail.org)

## Club Presidents Council

The Club Presidents Council is composed of regional organizations that find strength and support through association. If you wish to join, volunteer for trail work, or participate in the activities of these organizations, contact may be made through the telephone numbers or websites listed.

### Buffalo Area

ADK Niagara Frontier Chapter

[www.adk-nfc.org](http://www.adk-nfc.org)

Foothills Trail Club

[www.foothillstrailclub.org](http://www.foothillstrailclub.org)

### Rochester Area

ADK Genesee Valley Chapter

[www.gvc-adk.org](http://www.gvc-adk.org)

Genesee Valley Hiking Club

[www.gvhchikes.org](http://www.gvhchikes.org)

### Syracuse Area

ADK Onondaga Chapter

[www.adk-on.org](http://www.adk-on.org)

### Ithaca and Elmira

ADK Finger Lakes Chapter

607/936-3988

Cayuga Trails Club

[www.cayugatrailclub.org](http://www.cayugatrailclub.org)

### Corning Area

Three Rivers Outing Club

607/962-5157

### Binghamton Area

Triple Cities Hiking Club

[www.triplecitieshikingclub.org](http://www.triplecitieshikingclub.org)

### Chenango County

FLT-Bullthistle Hikers

[www.bullthistlehiking.org](http://www.bullthistlehiking.org)

### Eastern NY

ADK Mid-Hudson Chapter

[www.midhudsonadk.org](http://www.midhudsonadk.org)

## Thank You



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## ***Trail Towns: Bainbridge***

**by Laurie Dando**

The sidewalks of Bainbridge in Chenango County will unfold to the hiker who emerges from the nearby rolling hillside on the Finger Lakes Trail. As a matter of fact, the trail emerges from the woods only 100 yards or so before the sidewalk starts its descent through the neighborhood. Until recently hikers had to walk an extra mile on busy and almost shoulderless Route 206. The generosity of land owners Gary Smith and Steve Zembsch has allowed the trail to cross their properties and emerge on Route 206 directly next to the large sign announcing your arrival in Bainbridge.

During our thru hike in the summer of 2009 we needed to walk two miles along that busy stretch of road before reaching town. A benefit of this was that we were able to visit the Pine Ridge Grocery Store, a unique shopping experience that offers a chance to enrich our sense of culture. The price and selection of fresh Mennonite products makes it a must stop for any hiker walking through the area.

We now fully understand why this town is a popular stop for hikers on the FLT. The people were friendly and enjoyable, so much so that we decided to stay an extra day. We must note that taking a zero day in mileage for a thru-hiker is not a decision that is made easily.

After checking into the Susquehanna Motor Lodge we left our laundry in the dryer of the local laundromat and crossed the street to enjoy a steak and spaghetti dinner at Jerry's Inn. As they were preparing our dinner we went to purchase a celebratory bottle of wine at the liquor store across the street. Amazingly enough, the bus boy dropped his dishes (not literally) and went across the street to work the cash register there before returning to work at Jerry's. Family owned businesses are always a warm and welcoming attraction in a trail town.

The next day found us strolling from the motel through a beautiful town park and into the center of town. We were engaged in conversations with many local residents—how refreshing to run into genuinely friendly people. We met a father and son who were bicycling to Cape Cod. We shared some stories and wished them luck just as another bystander introduced herself. She was the mother of an Eagle Scout who had constructed a shelter on the FLT. We were to meet her again two days later down the trail in the Catskills. She was providing a ride



Roger Ashworth

to her husband who was doing a bit of trail running. We chatted some more while standing in the rain under the roof of a park kiosk.

Our visit to the local post office proved enjoyable. When we mentioned that we were hikers and should have a box awaiting our arrival, the response was “Oh, you must be Roy and Laurie.” It was a very pleasant experience as we chatted about our hike and then learned about the local community.

Even the grocery store provided a unique experience; it was well stocked, yet provided the feeling of a family owned establishment, rather than being owned by a large chain. We easily stocked up for six nights and 110 miles of walking through the Catskill Mountains.

Having been smitten by the town's charm we decided to do a bit of research on Bainbridge: In the mid 1700's the Nanticoke Indians explored the banks of the Susquehanna River and decided to settle in this fertile river valley. The town became known as Jericho as European settlers spread into the region. In 1814 the town changed its name from Jericho to Bainbridge. The town's new namesake was the Navy Commodore William Bainbridge. He carries the unique distinction of being a sea captain who lost a formidable number of ships during the War of 1812. Luckily, these defeats were offset by pivotal triumphs that were recognized by Congress. This unique distinction has earned William Bainbridge the lasting legacy that: “As long as his luck held he was one of the best captains of the sea.” So may we wish you the luck that affords you the opportunity to hike into Historic Bainbridge.