

Smoke & Blazes

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Killington Section, Green Mountain Club

March 2019



Eliza (with Koko), Cynthia (with Millie), Kristi and Larry on the Notch Road hike.

Killington Section Directors:

Term expiration 2019
Larry Walter
Allison Henry
Wayne Krevetski*

Term expiration 2020
Herb Ogden*
Cindy Taylor-Miller*
Sue Thomas

Term expiration 2021
Sandy Bragg*
Ruth Hare
Gerry Martin

*Second consecutive 3-year term.
Not eligible for re-election.

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Sue Thomas Outings
Larry Walter Trails & Shelters
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Fresh snowfall at the Tucker Johnson shelter.

This n' That

- ▶ To receive Smoke & Blazes by email, send request to vivianbebee@gmail.com
- ▶ **April 13, 2019, 5:30 p.m., Killington Section annual meeting at Godnick Center, Deer Street, Rutland City (potluck supper, bring a dish to share and your own place setting).**
- ▶ **Annual Fall Potluck Lunch on November 18, 2018, by Herb Ogden**
This delicious potluck was attended by only a dozen Killington Section folks, but that worked out perfectly to form four, three-member teams to compete in a Section-oriented quiz with 33 questions that I cooked up. A bonus point went to the team that composed a question that stumped the other three teams. The winning team, with 22 points and a bonus, was: Bob Perkins, Sue Thomas and Larry Walter. The prize was . . . a mention in *Smoke & Blazes*. Congratulations!

Outing Reports

THE PINNACLE, WESTMINSTER WEST, December 1, 2018, Larry Walter and Vivian Bebee, leaders

We usually have great weather for the recon hike and really bad weather for the actual event. Not the case this time, as the forecast called for clearing skies in the afternoon. It's a two-hour drive to Westminster West, so I think that spooked some folks. Plus, it's shopping-for-unnecessary-plastic-objects season (Oh, the ribbons, boxes and bags!). We had three hardened GMCers show up: Bob, Sunghee and Claire. Viv and I had scouted out the route about a week ago (before snow) and figured out all the wrong ways to get there. Best route considering Route 103 construction: Routes 7 to 11/30, 11 to 121 to Westminster West Road to West Road and finally to Windmill Hill Road N to the trailhead. The roads were a little sloppy, so the ladies talked me into driving the Jones-mobile which could easily accommodate Bernie Sanders' entire campaign staff, plus snowshoes.

Vermont had experienced a pretty sloppy snow storm two days before our hike. Hence, the road crews were still out clearing the roads and lines. There was about 12" of snow in the parking lot, with a clearly trodden snowshoe path. A larger group with three dogs had arrived just before us, and I casually reached out to one of the dogs and was rewarded with two warning nips. Thankfully, he was on his leash. No harm done, but I'll have to revise my all-dogs-are-like-Burdock assumptions for future encounters.

This park is well maintained by local volunteers (Windmill Hill Pinnacle Association). Since the snowfall, someone had already been through with a saw. On the trail, we managed to stay ahead of the larger group on the way up to the view and 3-sided shelter at the Pinnacle. We enjoyed a quick lunch at the picnic table inside the shelter and then spent some time outside enjoying the fantastic views south, west and north. Even though shelter is an open-air design, there is a larger fireplace that would provide plenty of heat during the shoulder months.

We had taken the Holden Trail up to the Pinnacle (1.4 miles). The loop continued by going down the Ridgeline Trail (1.2 miles) and then turning onto the Headwaters Trail (0.8 miles), which eventually joined into the last 0.5 miles of the Holden Trail. No tracks had gone down the Ridgeline Trail yet, and a lone skier showed up when we were getting ready to leave. The skier decided to take the longer way back, out the ridge, so Bob and I figured we'd do the same while Viv, Sunghee and Claire returned on the Holden Trail. Unfortunately, we missed the return trail sign for the Headwaters Trail, despite retracing our steps. After failing in our efforts to find the elusive 'blue' trail sign, we followed the compass back to the Holden Trail and managed to make it back to the car a half hour later than the ladies.



SHREWSBURY TRAILS, January 5, 2019, Gerry and Chryl Martin, leaders

Shrewsbury's Northam trails beckoned to a Killington section outing assembling at 10 am at the Town Office. A light dusting of snow with 20 degrees greeted 15 walkers and 5 dogs who started on the Old Plymouth Road. A five-mile journey, much of it within sight of Shrewsbury Peak, included parts of 5 trails (Lee's Large Loop, The Big Easy, School House Meadows Trail, Rave and Run and La De Da). Lee Wilson, chief trail developer and maintainer, provided expert guidance and Jerry Parker identified and interpreted a multitude of animal trails. A visit to Pierce's Store concluded the invigorating trip.



Yikes! Did she really do it???

LONG TRAIL TO TUCKER JOHNSON SHELTER, MENDON, January 12, 2019, Larry Walter, leader.

Viv was looking forward to seeing the newly-constructed shelter, but the temp was hovering around 7 below that morning and she wisely decided this was not going to be her day. I wasn't sure either if anyone would show up at the park and, sure enough, after ten minutes of listening to vintage Chuck Berry on the car radio, no one did. I decided that it was going to be really nice up there as it had just snowed, so I might as well drive up and give it a whirl. While traveling at my usual 45 mph, getting passed by the 80 mph travelers up the mountain, I noticed a sleek black Nissan suddenly appear behind me, only to stubbornly refuse to pass. Due to my superior intellect, I deduced that it must be a fleeing fugitive from some credit union holdup, looking to switch cars once this obviously incapacitated old person ran off into a snow bank. Predictably, when I threw on the turn signal for the LT parking lot, said Nissan from hell followed suit. In a near panic, I skidded to a stop on the side of the road, left the engine idling, jumped out and began running up the road yelling "you can take the car!" The Nissan driver overtook me, rolled down the passenger window and offered me a brownie. It was hard to see the occupant, being totally covered with about 16 layers of wool and mystery-synthetics, but

only one person I know offers brownies to me and that's Sue (well, and Viv). So Sue and I decided to shoe-up and head out just as there was a merciful 5-second gap in the Route 4 traffic stream.

The woods were absolutely beautiful. A couple of people had post-holed up to the final bog bridge, but not too much further. The snow was fluffy on the top five inches but solid underneath, so it was much easier than Sue's hike up here last winter. I think there was over two feet of powder to deal with that time. When we hit Willard Gap, we saw several tracks heading in from the Not-A-Trail to the shelter. Didn't run into anyone the whole time, although someone had hiked most of the way out to the shelter only to turn back. Weird. The shelter is all finished now (see picture on Page 2), with a nice coat of paint (stain?). The new outhouse is really fancy (see below), although one of the hinges is broken.

Sue offered to take the Not-A-Trail and Robinwood Road back out to her car for an eventual rendezvous at the Inn at Long Trail. I took my time walking out the AT past the Deer Leap spur trail and out to the upper parking lot. There are a couple blowdowns waiting for us in that section. Sue had run into some treacherous footing along the Robinwood Road, since it had been scraped down to the equivalent of a 20-degree tilted ice hockey rink. Ha . . . that'll teach her for not braving the ice encrusted boulders I had to butt-skid over! When I got back to the Inn, I shed my pack along with 3 pounds of snow and walked in. Sue was waiting for me, having finished six drafts of Guinness along with two Michener novels and a crossword puzzle. I opted for a hot apple cider and warmed up a bit.

This above-described account is accurate to the best of my knowledge, although Sue may voice slight differences as to what actually transpired. Pay no attention to that woman behind the 16 layers of insulation!



BUCKLIN, NOT BUCKNER, January 19, 2019, by Herb Ogden, Leader

I had hoped for enough snow to lead a ski tour or snowshoe hike to the north end of the Nature Conservancy's Buckner Preserve in West Haven. Not only did my local informant tell me there was scant snow, but also the weather forecast was for bitter cold winds. So, the three of us who showed up on this wintry day decided to hike a couple miles up the Bucklin Trail, turning around where it leaves the Brewers Brook valley. The trail had already been snowshoed so much that we didn't need our snowshoes, but micro spikes came in handy in some places. There were some wide ski tracks as well as snowshoe tracks, proof that folks have been skiing down from Killington despite the out of bounds signs that basically say "All hope abandon, ye who enter here." Killington Rescue has wisely put up some signs telling wayward skiers how to reach Brewers Corners. They will remove them when hiking season arrives. We were a little concerned that skiers and some snowshoers have been trying to follow the pre-Irene part of the trail, which requires steeply slabbing the side of the valley at first. As we were leaving, a half dozen out-of-state snowshoers were about to head up that way till I pointed out the present blue blazed trail.

NOTCH ROAD LOOP, MENDON, February 2, 2019, Sandy Bragg, leader

Five bipeds and two quadrupeds (see picture on front page) braved the polar vortex on a straightforward loop along the Upper Cold River and back (amazingly no bushwhacking!). Billed as a Notch Road Loop, this might have been deceptive advertising. The original intent was to park in the lot at the end of Notch Road, near the trailhead to Bald Mountain, and begin our hike on the extension of Notch Road heading east, but a section of the road washed out in Irene. Although there is a passable trail across, it is not recommended for anyone with acrophobia because it is narrow and falls steeply down to the river bank. It had iced up in the cold temperatures so we prudently drove around, parking on what some maps refer as the Notch Road Extension and others label 'Northam Road' (and some old-timers owning camps on the road refer to as 'Russellville Road'). Whatever the name, we descended on a snowmobile trail to the bridge over the Upper Cold River leading to the real Notch Road, diverting south along the river before reaching the bridge, entering the upper spur of the Jim Jeffords State Forest. No snowmobiles had been on the trail yet, so we had a pleasant walk along the river, which was running green over its ice flows. At the half-way mark, the majority vote was to head up a side trail leading to the so-called Notch Road Extension rather than continuing along the river, keeping the outing to a short and sweet two miles.

BLACK MOUNTAIN PONDS, NEW YORK STATE, February 10, 2019, Allison Henry, leader

The Black Mountain Trailhead is several turns off Route 22 between Whitehall, NY and Ticonderoga, NY. This trail network is in the Lake George Wild Forest and includes Buck Mountain, Shelving Rock Falls, Sleeping Beauty, and a bunch of other hiking destinations, most of which are usually accessed from the south end at the Hogtown Trailhead. Yes, I tend to lead hikes in NY but it's really not that far away! The drive to the Black Mountain Trailhead is less than an hour from Rutland.

The day of the hike was sunny and about 25 degrees with occasional wind. We had a small party of three humans and one dog. The dog was calm and well-behaved, with a tendency toward eating sticks. Two out of the three humans were also well behaved. The third one has a tendency toward eating sticks.

Both at the rendezvous point in Rutland and at the trailhead, we had the usual discussion of "snowshoes or spikes?" The snow at the trailhead was packed and icy, but my concern was that deeper in the woods the trail would have a crusty top with unpredictable soft spots and we'd be sinking to our knees every third step or so. We ended up carrying our snowshoes and never put them on. I think mine enjoyed the ride though.

The first part of this hike is a well-traveled woods road leading to a junction with the Black Mountain summit trail. We briefly discussed doing the loop (which would include the peak and Black Mountain Pond), but decided not to because of the likelihood of ice at the top. From the junction we continued on toward the ponds.

There are three ponds within a short distance of the trailhead including Black Mountain Pond, Millman Pond, and Lapland Pond. At the next junction, we chose the trail leading toward Black Mountain Pond because it was packed down.

At some point during the hike Larry mentioned that he is planning a long-distance bike trip. Thus ensued a discussion of how I could sneak into their house and do things to make Vivian feel like Larry was still around. Some of the best ideas included a trail of dirty socks through the house, leaving crosscut saws on the couch, leaving the toilet seat up, and banana peels on the floor. Right before we reached Black Mountain Pond, we found a medium-sized blowdown, partially frozen into the ground, which Larry happily sliced up even though most of the limbs had to stay where they were because they were frozen into the ground.

We had lunch at the campsite by the Pond, which is a huge rock slab overlooking the pond, with a lean-to back in the woods. We returned to the trailhead via the same route and, as usual, the hike out seemed a lot shorter than the way in. According to our various electronic devices, the hike was a little over six miles.



Black Mountain Pond



Woe is me! I know that pond is around here somewhere.

SNAKE MOUNTAIN, ADDISON, February 23, 2019, Larry Walter, leader

Viv, our friend Jeff, and I did this hike a couple of weeks before scheduled group hike. Today was one of those rare instances when the test-hike weather wasn't as nice as the official one since some recent snow had been people-pounded into a nice solid surface without being icy. Perfect for the micro-spikes. Luckily, the ATV riders hadn't torn up the road like they had a couple weeks ago when it was all wet and then froze into large ruts that made it difficult to maneuver with micro-spikes or snowshoes.

Our group consisted of Burdock and Ivy, plus six humans (me, John, Jerry, Sue, Diane and Darby). Since the trail is so much nicer than the old road route, we decided to take it up and back. This is a relatively easy to moderate hike that gives you a wonderful view over the valley and into the western Adirondacks. Jerry got Ivy to climb a cantilevered log to show off her areal talents. Burdock, being the fine 12-year-old gentleman he is, stayed on grounda-firma. We passed several other people coming and going to the viewpoint. It's a popular destination for good reason. We'll repeat in the future for sure.



Jerry and Ivy



Darby, Sue, John, Diane and Jerry (with Burdock and Ivy)

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KILLINGTON SECTION

Your Invitation to Join **Killington Section, Green Mountain Club**

The Killington Section, based in Rutland, VT, is a chapter of the statewide Green Mountain Club. Membership in the Section includes membership in the Club. Members receive a membership card, the Club quarterly *Long Trail News*, and the Section quarterly *Smoke & Blazes* including a schedule of outings, trail work parties, and social events. Members also receive reduced rates on items from the Club bookstore and at most overnight sites served by caretakers. Membership dues help to maintain trails and shelters in the Killington Section (Route 140 to Route 4) and the Long Trail system throughout Vermont.

ANNUAL DUES:

Individual\$45
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Contact us for information on life memberships and categories for giving at a higher level.

NAME: _____

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I also enclose a contribution of \$_____ to the Kirk Trails and Shelters Fund supporting the Killington Section's maintenance and preservation of trails and shelters.

I would like information on volunteering for:

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Make check payable to "GMC" and mail with this application to:

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