

# NORTH WOODS NEWS

THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE NORTH WOODS CHAPTER  
OF THE ADIRONDACK MOUNTAIN CLUB



## Peggy MacKellar Named “Distinguished Volunteer”

North Woods Chapter member Peggy MacKellar recently received the ADK’s Distinguished Volunteer Award. The presentation read, in part, as follows.

Peggy MacKellar has been an ADK volunteer for over 16 years. Her generosity includes adoption of two bunks at Johns Brook Lodge, being a long time lean-to and trail adopter, and being a volunteer with Lean-to Rescue. She is a stalwart volunteer at the ADK’s Winter Host Program and routinely sets up the Henry Young Cabin for this event. She has led many day trips for the ADK. She is on the JBL Committee and has served three terms as Director for the North Woods Chapter.

Outside of the ADK, Peggy is a multiple round four season 46er, a long time 46er Correspondent, and a major planner for the annual Winter 46er Banquet. Peggy has helped multiple hikers achieve their goals through her communication skills and by sharing her knowledge while hiking. She was a major driving force in coordinating efforts between the ADK, the 46ers and the DEC to build the high water bridge over Slide Mountain Brook.

As an adjunct to her overseas hiking and climbing, Peggy started the non-profit Kili Guide Scholarship Fund which provides educational opportunities for the children of Mt. Kilimanjaro guides and porters.

It is for these reasons that the ADK presented its Distinguished Volunteer Award to Peggy MacKellar on December 3rd, 2016.

### OUTINGS HIGHLIGHTS

Climb the Tupper Lake Triad  
in Winter and all in one day  
(you can do it!)

Climb a High Peak in Winter

Ski to a Cookout  
on Grassy Pond

Celebrate the  
Vernal Equinox with  
John and Susan at  
Heart Lake

### *Part - Time Employment Opportunity*

#### **North Woods Chapter Program Chairman**

Manage a staff of other  
Volunteers planning programs  
for Chapter Meetings

#### CHAPTER OFFICERS and COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

Chairman: Marilyn Gillespie  
518-891-2626

Vice Chair: Gretchen Gedroiz  
Secretary: Lethe Lescinsky  
Treasurer: Peter Gillespie  
Director - Marilyn Gillespie

Programs: (open)  
Outings: Carol Edmonds  
Conservation: Tim Chick  
Membership: Elisabeth Craven  
Newsletter: Jim Edmonds

*From our Chapter Chair:*

## **Is the North Woods Chapter Dying?**

At the December ADK Board of Directors meeting, there was a group discussion regarding active and inactive chapters. Some of those present indicated that their chapters rarely held meetings, that only 10 people would attend and that the officers kept trading jobs among themselves. Other chapters said that they had a very busy outings schedule and felt that was what drew members. Many chapters do not meet monthly and most didn't have suppers preceding their meetings.

Neil Woodworth described what happened in the Albany chapter when newer members felt that the "old-timers" were doing everything. The younger members sort of staged a revolt and were elected to leadership roles. The response from the "old-timers" was "What took you so long?"

At our November chapter meeting, I read some statistics provided by our Member Services Center. North Woods Chapter currently has 2 student members, 45 children (part of family memberships) and a total of 440 voting members. The question those present asked was "Where are they?"

I am currently forced to wear three hats for the North Woods Chapter: Chairperson, Program Chairman, and now Director. So, I'm asking: "What is taking you so long?"

*- Marilyn*

## **ADK Board of Director's Meeting, December, 2016**

This is my final report as the Director of the North Woods Chapter. I have enjoyed my time as your Director. It's very interesting to hear all the things that go on behind the scenes at The Adirondack Mountain Club. It's an easy way to volunteer for ADK since I only had to go to Lake George four times a year to meetings and often carpooled with folks from other local chapters.

At this Board meeting, approval was voted for using monies from the Grow ADK Fund to purchase a yurt, fund a marketing company to rebrand the ADK and for use in the HPIC renovations. The yurt will primarily be used as an education facility.

The finances of ADK are better than budget currently, thanks to the good work by the Investment Committee and the good weather in October and November.

With the resignation of John Million, Deputy Executive Director, his duties were assessed and a new job title of "Chief Operating Office" has been posted. Many resumes were received with some excellent candidates. John will stay on to help with the transition and training of the new hire.

APA had granted approval and permits for all parts of the HPIC (High Peaks Info Center, located at Heart Lake) renovations, the new campground loop, and a new washhouse. Currently the HIPC "Info Tent" is in use during the construction/renovation phase of the HPIC. The HPIC reopening is planned for Christmas week, although

*- please continue on Page 3*

**Board of Director's Meeting** - *continued from page 2*

all the finishing touches may not be complete. Work will start on the new campground loop in April. Work to be done then includes a new well, road, establishing campsites, a new washhouse and leach field.

Julia Goren and the Summit Steward Program received several awards recently.

A 4<sup>th</sup> trail crew will be hired for next season. This season, the 3 trail crews did an amazing total of 50 weeks of trail work. ADK gets paid well by DEC for the trail work contracts.

Our Loj "Leave No Trace" educators went to the Catskills to train people there on LNT principles.

Also, in the Catskills, a comprehensive recreational plan is being considered. ADK may get the contract to create it.

Immediately following the Board meeting, the Annual Organizational Meeting was held. Directors and Officers were introduced, and the 2017 calendar was approved.

I wish you all a Happy Holiday Season and all the best in 2017.

Sincerely, your Chapter Director,

*Peggy MacKellar*

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Our resident poet has emerged from his recent political funk and has penned us a piece that is fit to print in our non-political, family oriented publication:

### Rallying

I'd intended a song of despair,  
Of madness, hatred o'erspread everywhere,  
    But 'tis of beauty I'll speak,  
    Of snow on great cedars and peaks,  
A'glow in the low winter sun, and of sweet air.

*The Bard of Birch Street*

## THE HISTORY CORNER

authored by *The History Guy***The 1960 Biathlon Course at The Whiteface Inn**

Recently when we were hiking on the Jackrabbit Trail in the hills behind his house near Whiteface Inn, in Lake Placid, Frank Lescinsky reported that there had been a biathlon course at the Inn, and possibly the hill we were climbing (toward MacKenzie) had had some ski slopes cut in it. The best part of his story is that the Inn discouraged use of its golf course as a biathlon course after that one season because the spent rifle shells left behind threatened the blades of their lawnmowers. This had to be investigated further.

Our first step was to explore the hills above Frank's house in search of relict ski slopes. We did find some slopes, but they were clearly more recent and intended for glade skiers. We also found a fine herd path that took us to a lookout on Big Burn and offered a side trail to Hennessy Mountain. But no old ski slopes.

I learned from Wikipedia that this nineteenth century Scandinavian sport was first introduced in the Olympics as a demonstration event in 1928 under the title "Military Patrol." Competitors used high-powered centerfire cartridges in military rifles. This justifies the story of the shell casings and lawnmowers. The biathlon was dropped after 1948, never having achieved full event status. It finally acquired Olympic status in the 1960 Olympics, which happens to be the time of our story.

Next I went to the local expert, Tony Goodwin, an historian of the Olympics for years. He graciously wrote back, "I have heard about the biathlon course set up on the Whiteface Inn golf course. I am quite sure it was a one-time event as a tryout for the 1960 Olympics. I am also quite sure that no new trail was cut on Big Burn. They just ran enough laps on the golf course to get in the required distance of 20 km with four stops to shoot."

Wikipedia explains that in 1960 the event was just one 20 km course passing four firing ranges with paper targets at 100, 150, 200, and 250 meters. The target distance was reduced to 150 meters in 1966. Mt. Van Hoevenberg's cross-country trail system was built in 1968, but there was no biathlon course. In 1978 the shooting distance for the sport was reduced to 50 meters and the rifles were downsized to .22 rimfire. For Lake Placid's 1980 Olympics a biathlon course was added to Van Hoevenberg. Paper targets were replaced by mechanical ones, in which a metal disk drops to indicate a hit. All competitors were men then. It wasn't until 1992, at the Olympics in Albertville, France, that women's events were added.

Tony concluded, "I don't know where the range was on the golf course, but my guess would be that it was on the lowest point where the hillside made a good backstop."

One story that I heard from that 1960 event came from Bob Allen, the long-serving director of the North Elba Park District. The Park District had the responsibility for setting up the range and packing the trails. Snowmobiles were in their infancy then, and the Park District apparently didn't have one. Therefore, all employees had to show up early one morning and snowshoe around the course to pack it down. According to Bob, one of the employees ... arrived to work only a few hours after he had left the bar. Within just a few minutes he was reportedly red-faced, sweating, and generally miserable when he shouted (remember this was a military sport then), "Bob, if there was a @\$&X war, would we have to be out front to get them to the battle?"

## TRIP REPORTS .... written by the Leaders of last quarter's Chapter Outings

### September 20, paddle Round Lake - Leader: Peter Gillespie

Well, what can one say about another uneventful paddle on that water? The sun was good, the wind not bad, we spent an hour at the usual sand beach, and went home in good condition.

### September 22, hike Phelps Mountain - Leader: Carol Edmonds



For this outing we had planned on taking the usual route up the Van Hoesenberg trail to the junction, then making our way up to the summit. We expected to have a lot of company and a very crowded trail. Luckily for us, however, the Omohundros joined the group and offered to guide us up the "back" way, on a herd path made by glade skiers. This route follows the Klondike Notch trail to the lean-to, and then heads up to the summit. It is relatively gradual, and is not used often enough to have become eroded. This

worked out very well, and we arrived on the summit to enjoy our lunch and the great views. We were alone there most of the time, but eventually we were joined by a solitary hiker coming from the "regular" trail. Except for a few moments of confusion as I started down the wrong trail from the summit, we had no problems on either ascent or descent, and we enjoyed a wonderful and different hike with great weather. We looked for the glades, but did not find them. Perhaps they are more obvious in the winter.

### September 24, bicycle ride on Grand Isle - Leader: Pati Peebles

Our group of 10 cyclists had a great day for this ride, without summer heat or significant wind on the bike trail or causeway. We reached the little ferry with its brief ride quickly, and were breezing straight through to the Burlington bikeway. At 1:30, 14 miles and a bit less than 1 1/2 hours into the ride, we stopped for lunch at Charlie's Boathouse, just off the bike trail, and took in the views of the Winooski River. The flat trail brought us into Burlington for fresh salads and a taste of cold beer. The city's streets offered us great bike lanes, and we were soon back on the bike trail, ready for ice cream at Charlie's and, up the shoreline, to revisit Snow Vinery, where we found a festive crowd. On the return to the ferry we admired the cute "bird barns" affixed to trees and the elaborate sand castles on the yards. The tiny ferry was waiting for us as we pulled up. This 40-mile ride, a B+ in terms of effort, pretty much did us all in by the time we got back on the ferry to New York. The winds had picked up by then, but the temperature stayed around 60 and the sun shone. The Vermont shoreline has much to offer cyclists.

### September 30, paddle Rollins Pond Loop - Leader: Gretchen Gedroiz

Nine paddlers launched from the Rollins Pond boat launch after spotting cars back at the Fish Creek Ponds boat launch, thereby allowing us to paddle the Rollins sequence without any carries. It was a quiet paddle overall, with a walk through the rocky stream from Rollins to Floodwood Pond



necessitated by the extremely low water level. We did see loons out on Rollins Pond and black ducks on the smaller waterways along our route. We stopped for lunch at a campsite on Little Square Pond and paddled the perimeter of Cooperas Pond before heading down the remainder of Fish Creek to take out at the boat launch.

### October 4, paddle Second Pond to Lake Flower - Leaders: Marilyn and Peter Gillespie



A poor weather forecast for Monday, October 3 led us to postpone the trip to the next day. Eight paddlers in 7 boats departed from the Second Pond boat launch before 10 a.m. The fall colors were brilliant. All went well until we reached the lower locks. The locks attendant was nowhere to be found. Two of our participants left their canoes in the hands of others and manned the wheels themselves. (A locks attendant would have done all the work electrically.) Our traverse of the locks took about a half hour, with a tricky reentry of the boats once we were through. We were met by another Chapter member, who

started at Lake Flower and reported that she had been on the water for 1 hour and 4 minutes. One participant stopped to speak with a new Chapter member, who lives on Ossetah Lake and in the future may provide a site for lunch on their property. We finished at Lake Flower around 12:30 after having inspected the Omohundro's building site from the water. Following a picnic-style lunch we retrieved the cars and headed home.



### October 6, paddle Lake Placid - Leaders: Lethe Lescinsky and Faust D'Andrea



On a beautiful 70-degree day during the peak of the autumn color 12 of us met at the State launch on Lake Placid. At a leisurely pace we paddled the "East Lake" of Lake Placid, proceeding down the lake toward Whiteface Mountain and back. Kathy O'Kane pointed out the house where she and her family had spent many summers. The property now sports a new fancy boathouse shaped like an exotic pagoda, which we examined as we paddled around it. After the paddle we all crossed Mirror Lake Drive and enjoyed lunch and conversation (with 3 others joining us) on the D'Andrea's charming patio overlooking Mirror Lake. Judy D'Andrea treated us to soup, drinks, and cake. Since the weather was sunny and warm, one of our number indulged herself by going in for a swim, and 2 others tried out Faust's stand-up paddle boards.



### October 12, hike Big Slide Mountain -

#### Leader: Carol Edmonds

We had to change the date for this hike, moving it up a day because of predicted rain. This turned out to be a happy decision indeed, since the 12th was a spectacular day. We were all prepared for the chill and wind that had been forecast, but our precautions proved to be unnecessary. It was a warm and sunny day. Seven of us hiked across the Brothers to Big Slide. Those of us who had been there before were surprised to see that the trail had become longer and more rugged than we had remembered. There was quite a bit of scrambling, but somehow I had erased that from

my memory. Nevertheless, we made our way across the Brothers, enjoying awesome views all along the ridge.

We were not alone on the summit, but it was not too crowded. We had a leisurely lunch, identified all the summits we could see, and located one of Verplanck Colvin surveyor's disks in one of the trees behind the summit ledge. Our trip down was uneventful, and we managed to arrive at our cars before dark.

### October 17, paddle Henderson

#### Lake - Leaders: Linda and Edward Roesner

It proved to be the case yet again: the weather forecasts, all of them, were not prepossessing, promising wet conditions and overcast skies, but the reality on the ground, at Henderson Lake, at least, was quite otherwise. The 7 of us who elected to ignore the weather pundits had a perfect autumn day on the lake, comfortably cool temperatures, brilliant sunshine, gentle breezes, and fall color that was not yet far off its peak. We had the lake nearly to ourselves: we saw only one other boat, and its occupants were on their way to Duck Hole. We circumnavigated



the lake, covering about 5.5 miles, admiring and identifying the mountains that surrounded us, Marshall, MacNaughton, Wallface, and the rest, and testing the streams and channels at both ends to see if we could make our way into any of them—without success, owing to the low water level resulting from the ongoing drought. We picked our way through the shallows to a sunny spot on the shore near the lean-to, where we had lunch on the beach, several of us climbing the bank to check out the lean-to and the trail beyond. We were back to our cars at the Upper Works parking area by mid afternoon. A pleasant day, just the ticket for this time of year.

**October 26, hike Owl's Head Lookout -****Leader: Elisabeth Craven**

The hike was postponed from the preceding day owing to the weather forecast, which predicted less wind and better visibility. As it turned out, our group of 8 hikers had a very pleasant outing, if a somewhat chilly one. We bundled up at the top, the more comfortably to admire the view of the east side of Giant and Lake Champlain. The clouds were a little low, and the Green Mountains were not really visible, but everyone seemed happy to get out on this decent fall day.

**November 2, hike Debar Mountain - Leader: Elisabeth Craven**

Seven hikers, including the leader, participated in this outing. It had recently rained, so the trail was much wetter than when the leader had scouted it just a few days before. Nevertheless, it was very enjoyable, with fast flowing streams and large moss-covered rocks gracing our way. The trail starts as a woods road and progressively steepens—aggressively so for the last third. Unfortunately, the summit was in a cloud, so no view of the St. Lawrence River and the valley were to be had, but overall the day was

mild, in the 50s, and the sun came out after lunch, of course, so there were no complaints.

**November 6, hike the Heaven Hill trails - Leaders: Lethe and Frank Lescinsky**

Seven of us enjoyed a lovely day strolling the beautiful trails and savoring the splendid views. In the description provided to the Outings Calendar, we said we would decide on the spot whether to walk the woods or the fields trails. In fact, we walked both: the Old Orchard Loop (fields), the Big Field Loop (woods and field), and the Bear Cub Loop (woods). Arguably the most beautiful (and most popular) of the trails is the Old Orchard Loop. It is mostly open field with views of the High Peaks. There are a few scattered old apple trees. Most of the remaining apples were high up in the trees, but one undaunted member of our group managed to get one and cut slices for us—delicious. Then we found a tree loaded with apples down low. The apples were proudly passed out—they were terrible! The Heaven Hill Trails are in Lake Placid near the end of Bear Cub Road, one mile beyond Heaven Hill Farm. There is a trail map in the kiosk near the parking lot.

**November 16, hike Round Mountain - Leader: John Omohundro**

As the gray, misty, unprepossessing dawn limped in, the gang of 10 hopefuls dwindled fast, taken out by pulled muscles, allergies, colds—you get the picture. In the end, 5 hardy souls arrived at the trailhead. The Weston Trail usually offers marvelous views, but we only saw nearby hills wreathed in wispy clouds. By the middle of the hike we were socked in, and at the summit we lunched in a light drizzle. The local scene was gorgeous, however: majestic hemlocks, open woodlands, huge outcroppings and erratics, deep orange cedars. The wet slabs we climbed worried us, but our

descent was protected by the angel of the woods, and we all arrived back safely, unbowed if a bit muddied.

**November 28, hike Little Porter Mountain - Leader: Carol Edmonds**

After canceling this hike on November 21 because of the weather, we lucked out on the re-scheduled date a week later. The temperature was in the high 20s and the sun was out. Six of us participated in a leisurely and very enjoyable hike to the summit of Little Porter. The trail was snow covered, but packed down so microspikes and other traction devices were sufficient for comfortable walking. The summit provides an awesome panoramic view of Giant Mountain, the Great Range, the Brothers, and Big Slide. This is a very nice hike for the short winter days. It is long enough to be a bit of a challenge, but short enough to not have to get up too early or worry about getting out of the woods before dark. Sometimes it is just as rewarding to look at a vista of the High Peaks as it is to climb them.

**December 2, hike and cookout on Copperas Pond - Leader: Carol Edmonds**

The weather forecast predicted snow flurries, but we actually got wet mist with occasional wet snow. Be that as it may, 14 of us undaunted and unbowed spirits decided to go anyway. We took a leisurely walk in the woods, stopping to admire Owens Pond, a large beaver dam, and the first view of Copperas. It was a bit windy at the lean-to, but we got a roaring fire going and got warmed up. A lot of hot dogs and sausages got cooked and eaten, and we polished off most of a bag of marshmallows. There was laughter in abundance, stories were told, and we had good fellowship all around. We managed to find our way back to the cars despite a few “misdirections” on the part of the leader. All in all, we had a great time, and agreed that it was more fun to be in the woods on a damp day than to be home indoors wishing the weather were better.





### December 6, hike Chimney Mountain - Leader: Denise Erwin

We arrived at the Chimney Mountain trailhead on a beautiful sunny winter morning. There were several inches of fresh snow, so we all ended up putting on our microspikes, as the trail was steep in some places. When we arrived at the Chimney at the top, it was covered with snow and conditions were slippery, so we checked it out, then traversed a herd path to a nearby summit where we had a 360-degree view of snow-covered mountains, including distant High Peaks. It was a pleasant and interesting day!

### December 8, Floodwood Pond Loop - Leader: Gretchen Gedroiz

We had a nice day for this hike. There were a few inches of snow on the ground, but not enough for snowshoes. Starting in the Fish Creek campground, we followed Fish Creek on a very pleasant trail past Little Square Pond. At this point many of us were wishing we had brought skis. We quickly changed our minds after we crossed Fish Creek on

the bridge just south of Floodwood Pond. The trail on the other side was also interesting, but did not have enough cover for skiing. There were quite a few trees fallen across the trail which would have made for problematic skiing. Nevertheless, we enjoyed the walk past Little Square, Whey and Black Ponds, ending up at Square Pond in the campground. We stopped to admire its partly frozen surface and speculate about the animals we saw in the water (otters?, muskrats?). Altogether a great day.



### December 16, ski Burn Road to Bum Pond - Leader: Elisabeth Craven



*(Bum Pond Selfie)*

Three brave souls, the leader among them, ignored the thermometer (-18 at 7 a.m. and -3 at 10 a.m. at the trailhead) and clipped on our skis for an outing in light fluffy snow under a sunny sky. There was very little wind, and we were mostly in the woods, paralleling Little Tupper Lake. The trail is an old woods road with gentle grades. It is not used much, and we had to break trail. That warmed us up—indeed, we had to stop several times to shed layers. After about 3.5 miles we came to a sunny clearing, where we decided to have lunch and take photos. We then turned back, savoring a nice glide on the tracks we had just made. We wish/hope for similar

conditions on all our ski outings this coming winter!

## The North Woods Chapter Outings Schedule was distributed as a separate document

Check for schedule changes online on our North Woods Chapter Calendar

and finally, a New Year's wish

*- from The Staff of the North Woods News*

May your trails be crooked,  
winding, lonesome, dangerous,  
leading to the most amazing view.

May your mountains rise into  
and above the clouds.

- Edward Abbey