



BOON PRIMS



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Summitting the new year

I can see why climbers die on Mt. Washington. It's beautiful, alluring, and dangerous.

Those who climb the mountain need to know and respect their personal limitations, make safety a top priority, and pocket their pride. Our club members did this and made wise decisions in accordance with their experience and personal needs.

Eight club members--Bob, John, Mike, Doug, Donna, Shari, Dave and Rene--participated in the January 1-3 Mt. Washington trip coordinated by Rob Schechman. We stayed at Pinkham Notch where both accommodations and food were great.

We arrived Friday evening and Rob instructed us on knot-tying techniques, web tying, making harnesses and tying-in on a central line. It's important to be prepared for icy or white-out conditions. Knowing Rob was knowledgeable and experienced set my mind at ease.

The wind that howled throughout the night prepared us mentally for Friday's trip. Weather conditions at 6:00 a.m. were as follows: Pinkham, 7° with winds gusting from 20 to 38 mph, wind chill, -48°. Summit, -16° with winds gusting 70 to 88 mph. Wind chill, -78°, visibility 80 miles. Lion Head, 10°, wind 60 mph.

We left Pinkham at 8:00 a.m. and started up the Tuckerman Ravine Trail to the Lion Head Trail. The Lion Head Trail reconnects with Tuckerman Ravine Trail .5 mi. from the summit of Mt. Washington. We stopped at Tuckerman Ravine lean-to to eat and gear up for colder, windier, and icy conditions. The cold sets in quickly when you stop moving. I let everyone know that my right foot was extremely cold (thanks for Please see **Washington**, Page 4



"Ring-ing" in 1999

The temperature reading a quarter of a mile in on the trail at Beartown New Year's Day was 11 degrees, but there were no cold feet for Bill and Rose who pronounced their vows in the presence of approximately sixty well-bundled-up guests. Congratulations, Mr. and Mrs. Joy. Rumor has it they'll be honeymooning "Solemate"-style (à la Cheryl & Ron) on the AT.

SPECIAL FEATURES

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HONEYMOONERS ON THE AT

SOLEMATES CHERYL & RON GAUDREAU

Monadnock rescue

Bernadette Johnson and I showed up at the store on New Year's Day for the Mt. Monadnock climb. After driving an hour and forty-five minutes to Jaffrey, NH, we arrived at the base of the mountain, paid the \$2.50 each state park fee, donned instep crampons and began our climb.

An inch or two of crusty snow covered the trail, enabling the crampons to hold pretty firmly on top of most of the underlying ice. Although neither of us had adequate walking poles, we managed pretty well.

We occasionally had to pick and choose our way up some icy spots on the White Dot trail, but, most of the time, the snow-covered trail packed down by previous hikers marked the easiest route. After climbing for about two hours, we reached an exposed area above treeline and donned balaklavas to shield our faces from the brutal wind. The wind chill was easily way below zero.

Further up the trail, we met two guys looking for the ranger who had passed us on his descent about ten or fifteen minutes earlier. Someone had been injured; they were going for help.

When we reached Paradise Valley, a flat section in the trees about three hundred yards from the summit and about 300 feet in elevation below the summit elevation of 3,165 feet, we came upon the victim who was shivering uncontrollably. Two others were trying to keep him warm.

We decided at that point not to try to summit. By then, Bernadette had the use of only one instep crampon; more importantly, this person was injured and needed help to get off the mountain safely.

The victim, whose name was Ed, was a forty-two-year-old engineer who Please see **Rescue**, Page 2

Rescue: hiker down on Monadnock
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had slipped on some ice and possibly fractured a bone or bones in the pelvic or hip area. There was no way he could walk out. I got out my emergency blanket and wrapped it around him. Bernadette got out her space blanket (purchased just days before) and we wrapped that around him as well. Others were trying to slow down Ed's heat loss by huddling close to him, and urging him to drink hot liquids.

One person used a cellular phone to call for help. Waiting for a ranger's assistance, we were reluctant to move Ed, who was in considerable pain. We did our best to keep ourselves warm, walking about or putting on extra clothing. Bernadette decided that others would be able to help better than she could, and wisely headed back down the mountain.

Upon learning that help was at least forty-five minutes away, we decided that it would be smart to get Ed into a wire rescue litter. The litter had been retrieved from its storage area somewhere close to the top of the mountain.

With Ed firmly in the litter and secured, a team of rescuers, about twenty in all, started down the trail. Only eight to ten rescuers were able to carry the litter at one time. Shortly thereafter, a ranger appeared with extra emergency gear, including a sleeping bag. He took charge. What impressed me most was his sense of confidence. We needed a leader and he stepped in.

The rescue party had to stop at the edge of a particularly steep drop and wait for further help. Help arrived in the form of another ranger, exuding even more confidence which boosted our spirits. He and his companions brought with them an orange folding rescue sled/litter with built-in wheels, a climbing rope and climbing hardware. Ed was transferred to this litter. The rope was attached to the uphill end of the litter and was used most of the way down, especially in steep elevation drops, to provide belay for the sled. The hardware, anchored to an available tree, allowed the rope to play out slowly as the rescuers carried the litter down the mountain.

It was exhausting work as we slid and slipped down a relatively narrow ice- and snow-laden trail. Arm muscles burned through the strain of isometric litter carries and frequent passing of the litter down to fellow rescuers in the steeper drops. After a pass, it was necessary to get down the trail below the litter to receive the litter once again. In one attempt, I slipped off a four-foot ledge, falling onto my side. All heads turned in my direction, aghast and concerned for my safety. I had landed safely, except for a little wounded pride. Further down the trail, a similar incident occurred to another rescuer.

The rangers, aware of the difficulty of the work, had us stop several times to drink water and eat in an effort to stay hydrated and energized. It was important that none of the rescuers became victims themselves.

Ed did not seem to be in a lot of pain through all of this. Higher up the trail, he had been in excruciating pain when moved, but, immobilized in the rescue sled, he seemed to be bearing his injury stoically.

Further down the trail, I found it difficult to hold the sled up since my arm muscles were quite strained. Early in the rescue, nylon straps had been placed all the way around the sled. The straps on the uphill end of the sled were essential in the steep pass-down areas. They enabled us to keep the sled level most of the time. I found myself relying on these straps more and more to relieve the strain on my arm muscles. Further down the mountain, we used the straps almost exclusively to drag the sled across the snow in the flat sections.

The last quarter to half a mile was a breeze even though most of us were spent. Many of us had on daypacks, which, when added to the load of the sled, had put added strain on our backs.

We reached the turnaround at the bottom of the hill just as the ambulance pulled up. A mighty cheer rang out. There's immense satisfaction that comes from being a part of a successful rescue team. We had struggled and strained for five hours as a team with one short-term goal in mind: to get Ed safely off the mountain. We had succeeded.

Mt. Monadnock and Mt. Fuji in Japan are reputed to be the two most frequently climbed mountains in the world. One hundred and twenty thousand people climbed Mt. Monadnock last year. Monadnock State Park averages about fifteen non-winter mountain rescues a year. This was the first winter rescue one of the rangers had experienced in his six years as a park ranger. He speculated that, in winter, snow usually acts as a cushion. This time, there was relatively little cushioning where Ed had fallen, merely hard rock with marginal snow cover. Since his injury had occurred high on the mountain, it's probable that wind had blown off whatever snow cover had existed.

--Richard Forrest

Editor's Note: Dick and I were with the group from the hiking club who assisted in the rescue at Ascutney Mountain in Vermont last May 30. Happy New (?) Year!

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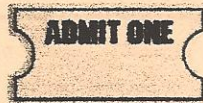


CROSS-
COUNTRY
SKIING

CLUB
MEETINGS
CLINICS—
FIRST TUESDAY
OF EACH
MONTH



IMAX—
EVEREST
THE MOVIE



PIONEER VALLEY
HIKING CLUB
AGAWAM, MA
HEADQUARTERS:
BACKPACKING, ETC.



CLUB PICNIC
SHADY PINES
CAMPGROUND
SAVOY

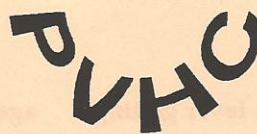


SPECIAL
EVENTS—
LAKE GEORGE
CABINS—
HIKING
BALLOON SHOW
FIREWORKS
HARBOR
CRUISE

OVERNIGHTS—
REMINGTON
LODGE
SAVOY CABINS



TRAIL
MAINTENANCE
BEARTOWN



PVHC
CHRISTMAS
PARTY



SINGLES'
MINGLE
FIRST NIGHT
NORTHAMPTON

MT.
WASHINGTON
SAMPLER
WASHINGTON
MADISON
NORCROSS &
NANCY PONDS



Washington: New Year's Day climb
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putting up with me). I'm grateful to Shari for giving me a mini heat pack which I placed in my boot; my foot eventually thawed out.

We helped each other with crampon adjustments, tying harnesses on, retrieving items from packs, and with encouraging words. On a winter hike like Washington, individuality dies and group spirit reigns. It's this spirit of caring and love which carries us through and back safely.

Our climb continued until we emerged above tree line. The wind was fierce and the view breathtaking. Words can't touch the experience nor can pictures capture the absolute beauty. I fell in love with the other side of Tuckerman Ravine, The Bootspur Trail. We also had views of Wildcat and Carter Mountains and Hermit's Lake.

Crampons, ice axes, and having all skin well covered were absolute necessities. The wind was relentless. It pushed us around like specks of sand on the beach. We were nothing; the mountain was everything. It became our teacher, we, its students, humble enough to learn from it. Because of the strong winds, we had to be careful and conscious of our footing. We relied a lot on our ice axes to help us maintain balance and not get blown over.

At Lion Head and the base of Mt. Washington, several members turned back. For various reasons, they did not feel comfortable trying to summit. Rob, Bob, John and Rene reached the summit. Congratulations to all!

We were all satisfied with the hike. We all made it above tree line where visibility was perfect and the views unsurpassed.

I now understand why hikers die or get seriously injured on Mt.

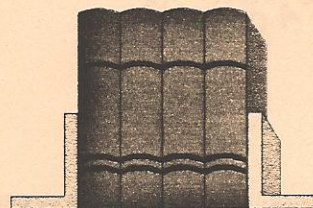
Washington. Using improper equipment, lack of knowledge, hiking alone, making unwise decisions and perhaps, an irrational desire to get to the "top" can claim lives. Sometimes, despite adequate preparation, accidents simply happen and lives are lost. Teamwork, communication and respect for the mountain are essential.

The ride home took seven hours and was slow and stressful. Driving conditions, snow and freezing rain, were dangerous. There were many accidents and I'm happy to say we arrived back safely.

A special thanks to our coordinator, Rob, who made the trip possible and did a wonderful job organizing everything. We're looking forward to New Year's 2000.

It was a great adventure--and, incidentally, the worst hair-day of our lives.

--Donna Omega



OFF THE SHELF

"To a lot of people who try to hike it right through, it becomes a job and a task, whereas it really ought to be a joy. It's hard enough without taking all the pleasure and gratification out of it."

--Bill Bryson

A Walk in the Woods

Snowed in? Worse yet, iced in? Cabin fever getting you down? Dreaming of hiking the AT?

Pick up a copy of A Walk in the Woods: Rediscovering America on the Appalachian Trail at your local library and step into Bill Bryson's humorous account of his attempted through-hike of the AT.

Reverence, humor, history, realism, satire--all combine in this tale by the renowned author of Neither Here nor There (hitchhiking through Europe). We meet up

again with Bryson's friend, Stephen Katz ("That's not his real name, by the way, but in all other respects he's a real person"), this time portrayed as an overweight, out-of-shape, atypical hiker whose concept of "good nutrition" is a pack filled with Little Debbie cakes.

I invite you to pick up, no, I challenge you to put down, this far-fetched account of a walk on the wild side, and then, mail, fax, phone..send me your reaction.

Speak out for the next issue of Boot Prints.

Think spring

think summer

think fall.

I know winter has just started and it is hard to plan for next fall; however, I am planning a trip to Baxter State Park in Maine for Labor Day weekend. I plan to drive up on Saturday, about an eight-hour drive. A nine-to-ten mile strenuous hike will be planned for Sunday. We will be returning home on Sunday unless you choose to do some backpacking.

I am making reservations for 16 people at the Big Moose Inn in Millinocket, ME, eight miles from the entrance to Baxter State Park. We will be staying in cabins with cooking facilities, for approximately \$35.00 per person, per night. The inn also has a dining area if you choose not to cook. I may be looking at a package deal which includes meals. The inn has a Web site at www.agate.net/~bigmoose/bigmoose.htm.

If you are interested and need further information, please contact me. I will need a forty dollar deposit by March 2 to hold your space, on a first-come, first-served basis.

--Shari Cox

Why hike?

Friends ask, "Why hike?" Like most hikers, the answer I give is "to get to the top and enjoy the view." That's not the real answer. Hiking is about the climbing. If you climb with a group, it's about sharing the experience. It's about the exhilaration of nature's beauty, the nurturing of your soul.

For some, it's overcoming a fear, perhaps of heights, or just physically challenging yourself. It's testing what you're made of and what you can accomplish. It's laughing and feeling alive. It's about looking around your world and appreciating what God and nature have given you. Climb--remember what's important and renew yourself!

Sometimes, you climb in the sun, the warmth awakening you. A wind blows, energizing and refreshing, cooling you on a steep ascent. You climb through a rock pass, to find that place your foot or hands can secure to pull yourself up and over. You climb through the forest and find an outlook and look back at where you have come from, often amazed by the wonder of what you've just done.

There are days when the view is clouds or fog, and visibility is only 100 feet or less. You climb anyway.

Then there is rain. How much rain stops you from hiking? A light rain keeps you cool. In the summer, it keeps the bugs away. Rain pouring down, soaking every fiber of your being--that is an experience you remember and talk about often.

You continue to climb. You set a goal--to get to the top. Sometimes, weather works your way, other days, it just doesn't. You climb.

You climb because it's what you do to feed your soul. The mountains hold wonder. Wonder touches the soul. You climb.

--Monica Kendra

Recipe Corner

Pecan Butter and Oatmeal Trail Muffins

1/2 cup water
 1/2 cup dried figs, finely chopped
 1 cup old-fashioned oats
 3/4 cup flour
 1 tsp. baking powder
 1/4 tsp. baking soda
 1/4 tsp. salt
 1 cup pecans
 1 large egg
 1/2 cup packed light brown sugar
 2 tbsps canola oil
 1 tsp. pure vanilla extract

1. Preheat oven to 350°. Lightly oil two miniature muffin pans or coat them with non-stick spray.
2. In a small saucepan, bring water to a boil. Remove from heat. Stir in figs and set aside to plump.
3. Spread oats on a baking sheet and bake for 15 minutes, or until light golden and fragrant, stirring twice. Let cool.
4. In a bowl, whisk flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt. Set aside.
5. In a food processor, grind pecans until they form a paste. Add egg, brown sugar, oil and vanilla; process until smooth, stopping to scrape down the sides of the bowl. Add to dry ingredients. Add figs (with liquid) and oats; stir just until combined.
6. Divide batter among prepared muffin cups. Bake 12 to 15 minutes, or until muffins spring back when touched lightly. Turn out onto a wire rack to cool. Pack in airtight plastic bags.

Makes 24 mini muffins, 100 calories per muffin, 2 gms protein, 5 gms fat (0.5 gm saturated fat), 13 gms carbohydrate; 50 mgs sodium; 9 mgs cholesterol, 1 gm fiber.



WGBY AUCTION

Shari Cox is looking for volunteers to help out at the WGBY Auction on April 23rd. If you're interested, call Shari at (413) 796-1326.



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Boot Prints appears four times a year.

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