

BOOTPRINTS

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MAY 2009

Coltsfoot flower

By Marie Babbitt

I have a friend who recently introduced me to this lovely flower. I had never heard of it before this and had to Google it when she asked if I knew of it. It is one of the first spring flowers to bloom, and the sunny yellow color is sure to capture your attention.

Actually, it's a flower within a flower. The outside of the flower are like rays of sunshine, while the center of it is like the petals of a lily opening up, really very unusual.

I was visiting some friends in New York and found some during our walk together. I got right down on my knees to get a closer look at them. Had to flip up my glasses to be able to see them close up, a sure sign of maturity. They are not very large in diameter, maybe 1-1/2 inches, and grow low to the ground.

If you are out in the Berkshires, perhaps you will be able to find some. I have not seen any in this area yet, but I have not given up looking.

Hope you find some in your travels.



Coney Island

By Jeanne Kaiser

The slogan on the Coneyisland.com web site says, "Really Fun. Really Open." Twelve members of the hiking club, led by Gary Dolgoff, set out on Saturday, April 18th, to explore the truth

behind that slogan. I know at the end of the trip my conclusion was that, even though Coney Island is to a large degree a remnant of bygone days, it still is really fun, really open, and really interesting. And indeed, there are still thrill rides to be experienced. even though we bypassed the classic Cyclone roller coaster, having already experienced the thrills of driving caravan style through the crowded streets of Brooklyn on our way there. I know no rollercoaster was ever as exciting to me as sitting in the back seat while we careened across several lanes of traffic in an attempt to stay behind Gary's van. And although some of our members went on the bumper car rides later in the day, these couldn't match the excitement of watching Gary parallel park with barely an inch to spare on either end.

Now for the details. The twelve of us left Holyoke in a van (Gary's) and a Camry at around 8:30 a.m. and sailed down to Coney Island without a snag. There we met up with Gary's friend, Richard, and Harry Allen's friend, Matt, both of whom have met us on NYC bus trips in the past, in front of the iconic Cyclone roller coaster. Two things really impressed me about the Coney Island neighborhood. The first was that there are quite a few high-rise apartment buildings not far from the beach. But these are not the luxury apartments we see when we travel to Manhattan on the bus in the Fall. rather, they look like solidly middle-class housing. Nonetheless, some of the apartments are both high and face the ocean. which means that there likely are Brooklyn sanitation workers, office temps, nurses, clerks, and the like who have ocean views from their apartments that rival Trump's or Bloomberg's.

The second thing that impressed me was that Coney Island looked like, well, Coney Island. The area along the beach was filled with ticky-tacky shops, signs advertising freak shows, including, yes, a two-headed boy, as well as kiddie

rides. There were also the national landmark rides. the Cyclone coaster, the Wonder Wheel, and the parachute jump. Both the coaster and Wonder Wheel were open for business, although, to me, the Wonder Wheel looked pretty rickety and I swear the Cyclone was missing a few of the wooden slats on its tracks. And for more tradition, we saw the original Nathan's Famous Frankfurters restaurant. first one ever in the nation. A lot of us got food from Nathan's, which has great hot dogs, but possibly the slowest service in New York.

Down the street, there is some new stuff. We were able to walk into Keystone Park, the Mets minor league ballpark, and perhaps the only minor league park with a view of the ocean. This was a real thrill for me because I am a very serious Mets fan (we won't talk about how excited I got when we passed the new Citifield in the car). Keystone Park also has a wonderful memorial to firefighters and police who died on 9/11. We have to credit Matt, a retired firefighter, for directing us there. Even the locals we met in the (interminable) line at Nathan's did not know about it.

But the two best sights on the trip were the ocean and the people. Coney Island has a refurbished boardwalk that stretches quite a long way in either direction. A few of us made sure to walk across the sand to touch the Atlantic (very cold this time of year). And the people! As always in New York, there were people from every corner of the world. But unlike many of our trips to Manhattan, our people-watching wasn't limited to the young and

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uber-fashionable. There was a wide variety of rich and poor, loud and quiet, dressed, and, well, we never quite decided if that guy was wearing pants under his long T-shirt. In addition, on our ride through the surrounding neighborhood, we saw members of what must have been every sect and sub-sect of Orthodox Judaism walking to synagogue. It was an amazing sight. On the very same street, large families, where even the smallest children were wearing black suits, hats and ties, walked by scads of kids wearing shorts, tattoos, and flip-flops, with no seeming conflict whatsoever.

After our tour of Coney Island, Gary led what was by now a four-car caravan to the Park Slope neighborhood. He displayed a New Yorker's dogged conviction that there was always a free parking space to be had and he was going to find one no matter how many times he had to drive around the corner. And he had great success not only did he find a space for his van, but ones for the other three cars as well. This is where he got to show his incomparable parallel parking skills. You can take the boy out of New York, but you can't take the New York out of the boy.

Park Slope was a delightful neighborhood, full of beautiful brownstones. An added bonus was that a lot of people didn't draw the blinds, so we could spy inside and get a glimpse of chandeliers, fireplaces, and sweeping staircases. We all started to have city living fantasies, but these were tempered by ads in the real estate office window showing that,

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recession notwithstanding, these places are all priced over a million bucks. Plus you would need Gary to come down every day and parallel park your car because there is NO parking on these streets.

We capped the evening off with dinner. Some of us ate Italian, while the rest of us were more daring and ate at a Japanese-Peruvian place because, after all, how often can you do that? We were all happy with our meals. The day was over except for the above-mentioned careening through the streets of Brooklyn. But it was all easy after we got over the Whitestone Bridge.

In sum, Gary promises a full day, and a full day it was.

Merck Forest

By John Klebes

Our warmest weekend yet on the annual Merck Forest Trip was filled with spring-weather hiking! Twelve hikers took the scenic hike across farm trails and groves of maple trees being tapped for syrup, to arrive early afternoon at Ned's Place: a cabin on the slopes of Mount Antone, with views of Mt.



Equinox, that would be our home for the night. With such great weather we set up our sleeping bags and headed out for a loop hike down by the Beebe Pond lean-to, and over to another Merck cabin called Nenrod. I was able to talk the group into bushwhacking down the slope, weaving between all the maple sugar tap lines, to the old sugar shack at the bottom of the valley that they turned into Dunc's Cabin. Despite some deep snow encountered during our wooded bushwhack, it made for a great afternoon hike.



It was still early when we returned to the cabin, so Mimi suggested we do yet another hike to the summit of Mt Antone before dinner. Well, despite the initial response that we were too tired, the next thing I know we had everyone following

along on our second afternoon hike up to the highest point in Merck Forest with great views down into the valley and back toward the Merck Farm. We made it back down to Ned's Place for supper before sunset.

A repeat of last year's dinner menu included an oriental cabbage salad and salmon burgers with sautéed mixed mushrooms. Ann Mundy provided her delicious homemade cookies for desert. A few rounds of cards and dice games rounded out the evening.

Morning brought a leisurely breakfast cooked on the woodstove, of grilled potatoes and onions and scrambled eggs, with sautéed mixed vegetables and cheese. On the hike out on Sunday we took a longer route to visit the Spruce cabin and climb Spruce Peak. Very icy. We had to switch to crampons but the nice views made it worth the steep icy climb. Still, it was almost like springtime with the warm weather.

After saying goodbye to all my friends after gathering at a lunch spot afterwards, I headed back to my home in southeast New Hampshire and saw a sign for the Chesterfield Gorge (Vermont) Geological Park. Being such a nice day, I had to stop and took a solo hike down into this fascinating gorge to view the waterfalls, a fitting end to another Vermont adventure. (More photos can be viewed at: picasaweb.google.com/john.klebes)

Doublehead Mountain

By John Klebes

On March 28th, Rick, Wayne, Janice, my brother Mike, and I headed up toward the twin summits of Doublehead Mountain. It's always exciting to visit a new place, especially one that boasted an awesome view of Mt. Washington from your cabin window. So, it was with lots of

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Doublehead from page 2

excitement that we started this new adventure. None of us had ever climbed this mountain before.

We headed up the imaginatively named, *New Path+ Trail*, which traversed the south summit. Opting to take advantage of this loop over both summits instead of the shorter, but equally imaginatively named *Old Path+ Trail* that lead more directly to the Doublehead Cabin at the north summit. While the loop was a short trail at 1.8 miles, the ascent to the south summit was very direct and steep, made even tougher by my request that



everyone drag a piece or two of dry firewood with them. The trail was icy in spots and a few rocks poked through the snow on the steep sections that didn't hold the snow. Crampons were certainly useful on the ascent. At and around the south summit we found some great views looking into different parts of the area that are seldom seen



from this angle. We had a nice lunch in sunny and warm weather, and were treated to some homemade cookies by Janice. As we dropped down into the saddle between the two summits the snow was deep and soft and several of

us gladly made use of snowshoes to keep from post-holing.

Everyone was happy to see the cabin perched on the North Summit with its fine views to the west showing a panorama of Bootspur and the eastern ravines of Mt. Washington. A short spur trail behind the cabin led to another overlook to the west, with views of the Baldface range. Oh, to spend a night high on the summit in a cozy woodstove heated cabin! The Doublehead cabin, along with a sister cabin on Black Mountain, was built in the 1930s by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and newly renovated in 1993. While very rustic, with only wooden bunk beds and two small tables in the common area, it did have a wood stove and fantastic views! Sitting on a bench outside in the clearing around the cabin, surrounded by snow and trees, and looking at an awesome view into Huntington Ravine on Mt. Washington was a treat. The feel of the sun on you, while smelling the scent of spruce in the air, and sharing crackers and cheese with good friends was certainly a Henry David Thoreau moment. We were

later joined by Rick's brother, Jeff, who climbed solo to arrive just in time for dinner! Having no pots and pans to cook a large group meal with, I opted to put together a nice grilled chicken salad for everyone. Heating the pre-grilled marinated chicken on the woodstove, we layered this on a salad of spinach and

arugula, doctored with cherry tomatoes, pine nuts, Gorgonzola cheese, crunchy fried onions, hard boiled eggs, and, of course, warmed olive-oil-infused sun-dried tomatoes! It appeared to go over well with a side of rice pilaf and some crusty bread. In the morning I found that not only does this cabin have a great view at sunset, looking west, but the clearing behind the cabin had a great view of sunrise to the east! But,

alas, we were destined to hike out in a light rain. We opted to hike out the back-country ski trail, which turned out to be a pretty good trail. While it was getting towards the end of the snow season, this would definitely make a nice run for those experienced in alpine skiing.

Ending the afternoon with a stop at the Moot Pub for soup and sandwiches topped off a great trip. (More photos can be viewed at: picasaweb.google.com/john.klebes.)

Welcome New Members

Louis Arasate	January
Carole DuPont	January
John O'Brien	January
Michael Catalano	February
J. Danusia Lokii-Braese	February
Sharon Meaney	February
Chris & Shari Petrucii	February
Mark Bidus	March
Howard Eldridge	March
David Goldfarb	March
Ed Grabowski & Family	March
Denise Matthews	March
Peggy Sullivan	March
Maureen Sullivan	April
Ed Watson	April
Adam Makkaoui	April
Robert Aspinall	April
Pam Graves	April
Phyllis Vincent	April
Susan & Michael Ziff	April
Monica Sadowski	April

Oriental Cabbage Salad

Adapted from several recipes by John Klebes

Combine in a bowl:

- 1 Head Napa Cabbage (chopped)
{I used half a head of red cabbage and half of a head of green cabbage instead.}
- 1 bunch Green Onions or Scallions (chopped)
- ½ Cup Sunflower Seeds
{You can buy them already roasted and salted.}
- 4 TB Toasted Sesame Seeds
{I couldn't find them toasted, so I just toasted raw seeds in a dry frying pan for a minute or two until they were light brown and fragrant.}

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Salad from page 3

- ½ Cup Toasted Almond Slivers
- Two Packages of Ramen Noodles {Uncooked and crumpled up into small pieces. DO NOT USE the seasoning package.}

* I also added some broccoli (optional)

Toss with a dressing made of:

- 4 TB sugar
- 1 cup oil {I used olive oil}
- 2 TB vinegar {I used cider vinegar}
- 2 tsp salt
- 1 tsp black pepper

* I also added a teaspoon of toasted sesame seed oil and heated the dressing in a sauce pan to make sure the sugar mixed well. If you do that be sure to let the dressing cool.

NOTE: The recipe I have says to mix and let chill in the frig for at least two hours, but I think it would get soggy if you did. We ate it right away and I thought it was just right.

Mt. Greylock

By Marie Babbitt

Well, another hiking first for me. I joined Shari on her Mt. Greylock hike this year and hiked this well known mountain. The hike was rated difficult and so I was not sure what I would be in for. However, my confidence was pretty good after having done a White Mountains hike in February.

It was a comfortable day temperature-wise, and the sun was shining. It was one of those days where it was hard to judge how to dress, so I decided on the it's better to be warm than cold approach. However, early into the hike I realized that I had overdressed, and was opening every zipper and shedding whatever I could. The trail led straight up, and Shari in her usual way said, "oh, the road is just up a bit." Good thing I wasn't holding my breath on that one. The road took awhile to appear. Fortunately, others had blazed the way ahead of us so we could follow their footsteps. The mountain was beautiful and at times like these I usually have a better view of the mountain on the way up than on the way down.

We did pass some tents beside the trail just before arriving at the lean-to.

On Stoney Ledge trail. It was a nice day but I would not still be outside at night; heck, it was still winter. A fellow hiker was in the same boat as I, overdressed, and when we came upon the lean-to we took turns shedding clothes.

Shortly thereafter we met up with the rest of the group at the picnic tables which gave us a view of our destination. I swallowed hard as I looked up to where we still needed to hike to. I drew a straight line from where we were to where we had to go and, boy, I was ready to turn around. Thank goodness my hiking buddies said the trail was off to the right.

We had come upon some snowmobilers and I do have to say that the smell and noise of their machines were not what I would call pleasant. Still, I was able to see beyond this to the fact that there were several fathers and sons spending the day together. No matter how you slice that, that was the important point in my mind.

The snow was a bit soft and made walking on the road a bit difficult. Some in our group stopped to don snowshoes, something I try to avoid if I can. We then started up the trail again. The upper trail to me was easier.

We arrived at the top of Mt. Greylock. I did not know that the tower at the top of the mountain was a War Memorial. It was built in 1932 and dedicated in June 1933 as a tribute to the courage, endurance, loyalty, and self-sacrifice of the state's men and women in uniform, of the state or nation.

It was a fairly clear day and the views were good. It was a bit windy up top, which made for a quick lunch after exploring.

The trail down was pretty uneventful, except for the Jamaican lady we met. Hey, if you don't believe me just ask Eva and Tom, they were both there. And it was Eva that pointed her out to me.

At the end of the trail the stream we were walking parallel to afforded us some really interesting sights. There was a thin layer of ice still present over parts of the stream and we could see the water flowing below. At one area the frozen ice looked like a fish, while at other areas it looked like a little

amoeboid appearing and disappearing below the ice, a great screen saver.

We ended the day at a local pub with good fare. And, courtesy of the weather gods that day, the rain started while we were in eating our meal.

Thanks Shari and all who hiked that day. It was a wonderful experience.

Tick season is here

By Marie Babbitt

Just a friendly reminder that with Spring comes the ticks. They are pretty small and harder to see the older I get. It is recommended to wear light color clothing to be able to spot them more easily. Keep your pants tucked into your boots or you can wear your gaiters to keep them out.

Staying on the trail and avoiding walking through brush or bush-whacking can cut down on your exposure to the pesky little critters.

Enjoy the spring hiking.



Leaders of the pack



The pack



Don Leis received the Order of the Feather award

Pioneer Valley Hiking Club Officers & Committees

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- Marcia Kelly, Vice President
- Gail Carrier, Secretary
- Deb Gebo, Treasurer
- Scott Cook, Wilderness Experiences Unlimited
- Ray Tibbetts, Founder

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Bootprints is a publication of the Pioneer Valley Hiking Club. Send your story contributions to the co-editor at: marie_babbitt@hotmail.com or 21-1/2 New Ludlow Rd., Granby, MA 01033



Fully knighted

All from the Chauncy Peak Hike



Merck forest

Important Notice

The following memberships are up for renewal:

May Renewals:

- Hedy Beaudry
- Icelene Campbell
- Karen Giard
- Linda Goodman
- David Herships
- Susan Kelley
- Betsy Loughran
- Norah Lusignan
- Crystal Nepus
- Margaret O'Connor
- Michael Reed
- Don Rovero
- Sean St. Marie
- Robert & Georgene Trombley
- David Vibber
- Bruce & Jennifer Wade
- Janice Webb
- Joe & Carol-Anne
- Zawrotny
- Celeste Ziemba

June Renewals:

- Ted Barlow
- Linda Benoit
- Bill Burgart
- Joe Burros
- Lisa Edson
- Julia Fifield
- Gina Geck
- Marion Germino
- Sonja Goodwin
- Bill Grygiel
- Cindy Hibert
- Joan Huhtanen
- Eva Kealey
- Ed Cleciak
- Claire Norton
- Donna Porfilio
- Dorothy Pulowski
- Christine Ventulet
- Lirong Wen
- David Williams
- Kathy Young

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES & THE USUALS

- May 8 - Full moon hike Skinner, MA
- May 11 - Northampton Dinner & Walk, MA
- May 23 - Clark Art Institute . Williamstown (\$), MA
- June 5-7 . Battenkill Canoe/Kayak, NY
- June 20-22 . White Mountain Sampler, NH
- July 10-12 . Solarfest 2009, VT
- July 17-19 . Adirondacks camping, NY
- July 27-28 . Tully Lake Backpack/day hike
- Aug 13-16 . The Cabin, ME
- Aug 29-30 . Barton Cove overnight/canoe
- Sept. 5-7 . Katahdin Weekend, ME
- Sept 18-20 . Adirondacks Backpacking, JBL Lodge, NY
- Every Mon. - Morning Hike . various locations
- Every Wed. - Wednesday Evening Walks
- Every Thurs. - Afternoon Hike

IMPORTANT NOTICES

- ❑ Next Club Meetings:
June 2, 2009, 7pm at **FBC**
July 7, 2009, 7pm at **FBC**
- ❑ Deadline for Submissions for next BootPrints is: June 24, 2009

FBC . First Baptist Church, West Springfield

*** Check out our web page at:
<http://www.geocities.com/pvhcweb>

Members may join the PVHC Email List by sending a message to:
pvhc.hikingclub@gmail.com

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