

BOOTPRINTS

AMC's Winter 48s
By Bob Morgan

The Winter 4000s game was established in 1958 as an off-shoot of the White Mountain 4000-Footers Club. Its founder, Miriam Underhill, set the rules. The winter period for any given year was defined as beginning and ending with the Winter Solstice and Spring Equinox, respectively. The peaks have to be summited and descended during this specific time frame to count as a winter peak. They have to be completed under your own power, whether on foot, skis, or snowshoes. They can be completed over the course of a lifetime, during a single season, or over several seasons. In 1958 there were two completers of the White Mountain 4000s (WM 4000s) and zero of the Winter 4000s (W 4000s). By 1960 there were two completers of the W 4000s. In the year 2000 there were 6,932 completers of the WM 4000s and 241 completers of the W 4000s. As of 2012 there were 10,098 completers of the WM 4000s and 550 completers of the W 4000s. After completing the all season WM 4000s in 2007 and 2006, respectively, Tom and I both looked enviously at the lower number of completers of W 4000s and set a long term goal of trying to join that club. Whether we would ever join would be played out over the next 6 to 7 years.

Tom and I discovered that we liked hiking in winter, despite the drawbacks of the cold, shorter days, higher safety risks, and additional pack weight



Bondcliff #48W

After finishing the all 48 4000-footers in November 2006, I started the New England 67 4000-footers (NE 67) and continued on to the New England Hundred Highest (NEHH), which I am still working on with a projected finish in 2013. Tom Pedersen finished his WM 4000s in 2007, as well as the NE 67. He then went on to complete the Adirondack 46ers this past year, and will also receive the NE 115 patch, which acknowledges that he has



Bob on Bond

completed the NE 67, Adirondack 46ers, and two 4000 foot peaks in the Catskills. While pursuing these peaks

Tom and I discovered that we liked hiking in winter, despite the drawbacks of the cold, shorter days, higher safety risks, and additional pack weight. We found the conditions could be managed to make for

an enjoyable day. This is pretty significant for a guy I once heard say %d never hike in winter.+ Some of our winter peaks we summited while doing the WM all season 4000s, and others we did together as specific winter peaks or with other hiking partners. My goal was to do peaks I could safely do solo or with others. I never set a time frame or ever seriously considered completing the list. I felt that the extended distances due to winter road closing was probably more than I could manage. In January 2013, on a PVHC hike to Monadnock, Tom and I discovered we both had accumulated 40 or more winter peaks. We had done this independently and had not hiked together for a couple of winters. We decided that we could try to finish this year with a little effort and a lot of good luck with the weather. We also found that we both had left the longest and hardest till the end, although I had Adams and he had Isolation. We decided to help each other with those peaks and finish the rest together. We attempted Adams in mid-February, from Gray Knob, with the intention of also doing Jefferson, which we both needed. We failed due to weather and visibility. Tom went back the next week, and on a partially clear day with a heavy under cast, was successful and added Adams to his list. We proceeded the next week to do Owls Head and had a good but long

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summit day, and met five others along the way that we knew or who knew mutual friends. Tom then helped me with Isolation. It was a moderately cold day with low visibility and snow flurries. All went well along the traditional routes and bushwhack from Engine Hill. We had a moose encounter on the trail in the morning that left us wondering if the day would end successfully. The moose eventually decided that a breakfast of young tree buds was more important than dealing with these peak-bagging intruders to his territory, and so fortunately he left the trail to us.



Bob and Tom and Bondcliff Wilderness Trail Junction

We were into early March with five peaks left to do. We did Jefferson on March 9th. It was a clear, crisp, bluebird Saturday, with moderate winds and temps in the teens. We were joined by PVHC member Shari Cox, and met many hikers above tree line, some that we knew. It was a great day with terrific views. The ones you get only several times in a season. We were now down to our final four, with ample time to finish before the March 20th, 7:00 AM deadline, if we could balance work and the weather successfully.

We decided that we needed to cut the distance of a full Zealand/Bonds traverse to four peaks and 23.5 miles. We determined we could do this with a stay at Zealand Hut, saving about 7 miles on summit day, and by traveling north to south we could cut off 500 feet of elevation gain. A look at the weather pushed us into a mid-week trek, in the middle of the month prior to the cold and snow mix predicted for around the closing of the winter season. This was just as well as the hut fills up on the weekends and we needed to leave some extra time for a second attempt if we failed. The two days before our trek it had rained and then refroze. We headed in on Zealand Road and arrived at the hut at dusk. We met Steve the caretaker, who had a warm fire going in the stove, and two other hut guests. There were only the four of us that night, so we had our choice of bunks. We set off in the morning with temps in the teens and the sky partially cloudy, with

flurries predicted for the day. Major snow bridges were out due to the swollen streams from the previous rain two days earlier. The low temps made for a firm track, so it was snowshoes from the start. We hit Zealand and after a false start found the spur sign and the summit. We took the obligatory summit photo and headed toward Guyot. When we broke tree line it was flurrying and blustery. We headed up Guyot in those conditions and made it to the Guyot/Bond col and shelter. We were now committed if we could make it across to the Bondcliff. Leaving the col we dropped our packs at the West Bond Spur to give our legs a rest, and took what we needed to the summit of West Bond. The winds were light with partial clearing. We took our summit photo with the occluded Bondcliff in the background. Back on the trail we headed up Bond. The snow was very deep but the snowshoe track was fairly well packed. As we crested the summit it was bare, and the large cairn came into view. After the customary summit photo we headed down Bond toward the Bondcliff. Winds were predicted to be 35 to 45 mph, stiff but manageable. We geared up and snacked at the scrub line then headed out. At first there was adequate snow for footing but as we hit the windier areas the snow cover decreased to rock and ice. We kept the snowshoes on as it was cold and too windy to deal with them. We felt the need to keep moving. We met our hut guest descending as they had passed up to Bond when we were on the West Bond Spur. The pleasantries in the stiff wind were understandably brief but it was obvious they were having a great adventure day+ like we were.

The wind seemed to blow and then stop, and sometimes swirled, buffeting us from side to side as we were perched on the ice covered rocks. Thankfully, it was never strong enough to totally dislodge us. We crested Bondcliff, took a quick summit photo and headed off to get out of the wind. Once in shelter we made a short stop to take inventory and reaffirm our location. We then began our long 10-mile trek down to the Wilderness Trail and the car we left at Lincoln Woods. The descent was uneventful and we had plenty of time to mull over in our minds the four peaks we had summited and the crossing over the Bondcliff. We hit the Wilderness Trail after four miles, snacked, took a photo, put on a headlamp that would be needed later and prepared for the continued long walk out. After reaching the bridge where we had hoped to take the snowshoes off, we unfortunately found the surface was uneven and icy. Traction was still needed. We eventually were able to remove them after the Black Pond Trail and bare booted the next two miles back to Lincoln Woods where our car was waiting. It was the end of a long, tiring day filled with a sense of great personal accomplishment and satisfaction.

Accomplishment is never achieved without persistence, hard work, sacrifice, and the help of others. Tom and I had plenty of help along the way. We want to thank the others that have mentored and assisted us, or
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who have merely acknowledged our accomplishment. The White Mountains are truly a great natural resource. It is a place of beauty, lofty peaks, waterfalls, and spring wild flowers. It is also a place where the raw power of nature, in its rivers, winds, rains, snowfalls and temperature extremes, can truly test the skills and abilities of those that venture into them.

WHAT HAPPENS IN STRATTON POND- DOESN'T ALWAYS STAY IN STRATTON POND

By Rick Briggs

On March 9th and 10th, under a cloudless deep blue sky and layer of freshly fallen snow, nine backpackers from the PVHC began the annual trek into Stratton Pond, situated on the Long Trail of Vermont. The hike is also known as the Fondue Hike, as it is served to any lucky bystanders during the evening meal, under the porch overhang of the shelter.

The first mile of this hike begins like few others. In order to access the Stratton Pond Trail you first have to ascend the snow covered Stratton Arlington Road and hope you don't get hit by any of the hundreds of snowmobiles whizzing by— never mind the noise and smell of the unburned fuel and oil. Why can't they make these things smell better, and quieter?

The only smart people to avoid this road (or so they thought) were Karen, and Rob's friend, Dale, who decided to backpack to the shelter via the Long Trail, over Stratton mountain. Most of us choose not to go this way, as it was longer (6 miles) and steeper than the 4 or 5 miles of gently inclined trail, off of the road that we took.

As soon as we turned off the snowmobile road, we left the noise and smell behind, and entered a quiet world of fresh snow that coated everything and created imaginary shapes of wild creatures. I stop and take a picture of one that reminds me of a dinosaur. As the sun

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climbed higher, we shed our coats, just as the snow begins to melt off the trees above. Every so often a wet blob of snow seems to find its way down my neck but, heck, no complaints, it was a beautiful warm March day. Another downside though of it getting warmer was that the snow stuck to our snowshoes, and I am constantly banging wet clumps off the bottom.



Eating Fondue at Stratton Pond

The Stratton Pond shelter is the largest on the Long Trail and sleeps approx. 20 people, which sometimes is not enough as this is the busiest section of the LT/AT.

After everyone claimed their bunks, we began heating water and melting snow for hot drinks. We did manage to get some pond water but it had a funny smell— so, melted snow it was!

As the afternoon wore on, we were hoping that Karen and Dale were getting close so I could begin heating the fondue. Just before dark, however, with Karen and Dale still having not arrived, Rob decided to take a walk heading down the trail in the direction they would be coming from. He returned a short while later to report how difficult it was to follow the trail due to the untracked snow and scarcity of trail markers, some of which had apparently been covered over by snow.

So I decided to heat the fondue, and 10 minutes later we were indulging in the delicious stuff. Still no sign of the overdue hikers and it was now dark. We decided we would finish eating dinner and if they still didn't show, we would go out looking for them with headlamps.

After dinner was through, Al, Wayne, and myself headed down the LT south towards Stratton Mtn. looking for the lost hikers. It was a beautiful starlit night and I felt that if you had to spend the night out, this was it.

Just as Rob had reported, we also had trouble finding the trail but were able to go out far enough to run across a set of snowshoe tracks heading uphill toward the pond. I was pretty certain the tracks were Karen and Dale's, as most
See Fondue continued on page 4

Fondue continued from page 3

day-hikers come to the shelter in the winter via the Stratton Pond Trail. As we agreed to be back at the shelter in an hour, we did not have time to follow the trail of the lost hikers, so we headed back to the shelter to see if they had arrived there by some other route. Back at the shelter, Rob and Mike R were still up, but still no sign of Karen and Dale. We began discussing what we should do next when Lisa jumped up from her bunk and announced she had just received a text from Karen and Dale. They had walked all the way back to the car after losing the trail, and were tired but otherwise fine. We fired off a quick message back to let them know that we received it. I was quite surprised we were able to get any messages at such an apparently remote location but had previously discovered when I hiked on the LT this past fall, that being near a ski area made it possible. We went to bed that night much relieved.

Next morning was another clear and not too cold day, and soon the shelter was humming with the sound of stoves boiling water. My stove barely makes a sound but another one sounded like a miniature 747 ready for takeoff. Coffee and oatmeal, and what was left of Lori's oatmeal raisin cookies, were surely enough to get me to the car. After breakfast was over everyone hastily packed up, and soon we are rambling down the trail again under blue, sunny skies. The packs were lighter, the trail was packed down, and with the colder morning temps there were no sticky snowshoes this time, so we make better time back out. I sensed that we are getting close to the road when my nose picked up the unwelcomed scent of stinky snow machines. Maybe I should've just stuck out my thumb and begged for a ride back to the car to save me a mile of misery . never!

DALE & KAREN'S NON-FONDUE BACKPACK

By Karen Markham

It started on a crystal clear sun-filled day, around 11:00 am, as ten of us headed to the Stratton Pond Shelter. Dale & I decided to go up and over Stratton Mountain, instead of with the rest of the group along the Stratton Pond Trail . how could we not on such an amazing day! What views we would have, and did!!! We peaked around 1:30 pm and it was stunning, what with Friday's 7 inches of fresh snow. Simply beautiful!!! We headed down the backside of Stratton and were grateful that the trail was easy to follow, that is, until we crossed the snow mobile road, which was not so easy, although doable at first.

You could make out the pre-Friday storm's snowshoe indentations, and every now and then we were reassured by a white blaze. When I got to the small bridge (around 3:45 pm), I definitely knew we were on the trail as I remembered crossing over it the past two fondue backpacks, as we had hiked over Stratton Mountain on our way out on Sunday, each time. So, all was good! Now I was thinking we'd get to camp around 4:30 pm, as it was not much further. Then the snowshoe indentations faded out and the blazes were barely to be seen. Still, we

persevered and were thrilled when we'd spot a blaze!!! And we then came upon a swamp that I remembered passing the previous two years, which was great! So, we hiked up a small hill with the swamp not far behind us and smack in front of me was a beautiful old maple and a BLAZE . Yahoo! Still on the trail! and not far from the shelter, maybe 15 minutes, I was estimating, although now the question was which way to head???

Dale and I scoured the hillside for over an hour looking for any clues, snowshoe indentations, blazes, howling, a view of Stratton Pond, anything!!! I got very familiar with that old maple as Dale and I kept going back to that infamous blaze! For the last time we gathered by that maple as the sun was setting and begrudgingly decided it was best to head back to the snowmobile road to the car . yup, the car.

Once we reached the road and finished snacking it was close to 6:00 pm when a snowmobiler stopped to check up on us. He offered us a ride, even though he didn't know the area well, as he was not from around there. Dale turned him down thinking we weren't far from the trailhead that would take us back to the car. I, on the other hand, wanted to jump on and show up at the shelter on a snowmobile . just in time for Rick's fondue!!! But didn't. We put our (full) packs back on and headed down the road. It turned out to be much farther than Dale thought . great!

We were very happy when we happened upon the trailhead a little after 7:00 pm, knowing now it was only about 40 more minutes through the woods to the car. The sky was magnificent, with not a cloud to be seen



Dale at the alternate Stratton Pond Shelter

and thousands upon thousands of stars . unbelievable!!! Simply magnificent. Dale went first with the headlamp, and I enjoyed following him and looking up at the sky most of the way . WOW! We arrived at the parking area a little before 8:00 pm, whereupon Dale grabbed his phone from his car and texted Lisa to say we were okay, and what had happened. They were thrilled to hear from us and that we were safe! It being too late in the day to do anything else, Dale and I headed for home, but shortly thereafter we realized we were hungry and tired
See *Fondue 2 continued on page 5*

Fondue 2 continued from page 4

(from 9 hours of hiking with full packs) and decided to crash at the Old Red Mill Inn in Wilmington

Lessons to be learned: never panic, always carry a map, maybe even your cell phone, maybe some money, make sure the batteries in your headlamp are new, don't carry your other partner's lunch, dinner, & breakfast (unless you take the same route!), and give your Thermarest mattress to Mike R to carry (who didn't have one) [Editor's note: please ignore the comment in parentheses] if you're not going to make it to the shelter!

SLEEPING GIANT

By Marie Babbitt

This year a group of 18 of us descended upon the Giant as he lay Sleeping (or is it a she?). The day was sunny but cold. I was expecting a 60 degree day but Mother Nature had other things in mind. (Next time I will check the weather forecast myself!) We had quite an array of after-hike plans and so, after figuring out whose car would bring us to our final desired destination, we headed out. We all arrived safely at the State Park and met a couple of other hikers. Shari described the loop we would be taking and then we headed out. The hike started out with a climb, followed by a bit of a tricky decent, which gave us the choice of either descending over tree roots to the right or first climbing over a wall to the left. We experimented with both. Rick and Dick gave a hand to all the hikers that

followed after them. During this section of the hike there was quite a racket from some birds that were either fighting or mating, depending on who you spoke to and their vantage point. After we were all through that section we continued along the trail, which continued to rise and fall. To me it felt like a mini White Mountain hike, with the rocky terrain and the ups and downs. We arrived at the Left Hip section of the park, which is where the Tower is, and to our disappointment realized that we had only hiked a little over of mile.

The tower was built by the WPA between 1936-39 and numerous Indian artifacts were found, providing



Sleeping Giant Tower



Our leader Shari at the Tower

proof that native American Indians hunted in these mountains. The Quinnipiac Indians were the inhabitants of this area when the colonists arrived in 1638. Sleeping Giant was a place where the Indians believed their spirits dwelt.

From the tower we could see Long Island Sound and Long Island, and even spotted a tanker in the sound, as well as New Haven. My day was complete with the sighting of the city. What we liked most though was that there was a ramp to the top of the tower and not stairs. After taking in the view we were off again, headed towards the Left Leg and Knee, and along the way we heard the call of Spring Peepers . yipee!! We were hiking down the Giant's left side and would return up the right side, back to his head.

We stopped along the way to gather as a group, and to try and figure out which part of the Giant we were at. We stopped at Hezekiah's Knob for lunch and took in more of views of the sound and island. The day had warmed up but a cool wind kept most of us in our wind breakers to protect us from the chill. After lunch and a lively discussion about proper eating habits, a stranger offered bananas to our group. (How did he know we are

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Giant continued from page 5

a hiking and eating club?) We were treated once again to the almost deafening sound of peepers along the trail. It was music to my ears, and to others as well, some of whom were recording their song. These guys were not shy either, even as you approached the wetlands, as they quieted down a little but were still pretty boisterous. I think they were just as happy as us to be alive that day. Good friends, a mountain to hike, and a beautiful day . what's not to like?

There were additional overlooks that offered the same view of the sound as we made our way back to the start. As I look at the trail map with the Giants different body parts labeled, it reminds me of the game Operation where you pulled out bones, wrenches, and other odd items from the patient, none of which, thankfully, we found on the trail! Thanks for a great day, Shari and all my hiking buddies.



Snow Dragons on Stratton Pond

CONTINENTAL DIVIDE NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL

By Marie Babbitt

John Klebes, longtime member and past President of our hiking club, began hiking the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail on April 17th, and expects to finish in September or October. The trail extends from the Mexico border to the border of Canada, and is 3100 miles long, spanning five (large) states. The trail was established by Congress in 1978 and runs along the spine of the Continental Divide through New Mexico, Colorado, Wyoming, Idaho, and Montana. John has a blog that you can follow his progress on, johnklebes.blogspot.com. When John completes this trail he will have completed the so-called "Triple Crown" of hiking in the U.S., which requires the completion of the Appalachian Trail, Pacific Coast Trail, and Continental Divide National Scenic Trail. As of October 2011, a total of 155 people had been recognized by the American Long Distance Hiking Association's western chapter as having completed all three long distance hikes. Good Luck, John. I'm rooting for you!



Bob on West Bond with Bondcliff in background

TICK SEASON IS HERE

By Marie Babbitt

Just a reminder that, with the warmer weather being upon us, we will now be sharing the trails with many an insect, one of which is the tick. Please check yourself after each hike to make sure you don't have any unexpected traveling companions.



DAR Snowshoe

HAPPY SPRING

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

March	April
Susan Willis Bill Grygiel Kate Lee	Alice & Dan Hackett Jackie Miles Ann Burinskas Brian Pentman Dianne Carey Gail & Mike Cuccovia Cindy Kennedy Heather Rienti

Pioneer Valley Hiking Club Officers & Committees

Chip Pray, President
 Marcia Kelly, Vice President
 Lori Tisdell, Secretary
 Carol Vanderheiden, Treasurer
 Scott Cook, Wilderness Experiences
 Ray Tibbetts, Founder

Standing Committee Chairs

Hike Schedule: Sue Forest & Chip Pray
Backpacking Coordinator: Rick Briggs
Trail Maintenance: Chip Pray & Rob Schechtman
Web Page Editor: Dick Forrest
Non Member Email Coordinator: Rob Schechtman
Club E-mail Coordinator: Chip Pray
Quartermaster: Mike Carrier
Bootprints Editors: Marie Babbitt & Mike Reed

Bootprints is a publication of the Pioneer Valley Hiking Club. Send your story/event contributions to the editor at: marie_babbitt@hotmail.com.



Eva on Sleeping Giant

Important Notice

The following memberships are up for renewal:

May Renewals:

Elizabeth Avalone
 Dianne Baran
 Patricia Bock
 James & Diane Brown
 Icelene Campbell
 Steven & Amy Dane
 Brenda Doucette
 Marcella & Paul Fish
 Terrie Gaiser
 Rosemarie Goyette
 Lee Guarda
 David Hershops
 Steven Hilbun &
 Kelly Turney
 Joan Huhtanen
 Beth & Craig
 Kronlund
 Betsy Loughran
 Ann Maher
 Becky Mason
 Peggy McLennan
 Patricia Miller
 Ron Morrissette &
 Family
 Crystal Nepus
 Michael Reed
 Sean St. Marie
 Donna Sweeney
 Robert & Georgene
 Trombley
 Fran Van Treese
 David Vibber
 Bruce & Jennifer
 Wade
 Janice Webb

June Renewals:

Bill Burgart & Marianne
 Huber
 Allison Cook
 Gina Geck
 Sonja Goodwin
 Cindy Hibert
 Leonard Jasionkowski
 Cathy Kaszowski
 Eva Kealey
 Edward Kleciak
 Bruce Morin
 Kelli O'Donnell
 Susan Turnbull
 Lirong Wen

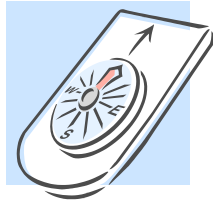
Please renew early, and renew by mail. (*Make checks payable to PVHC.*) Mail your renewal with your name and any address or phone number changes to:



Stratton Pond Shelter

UPCOMING EVENTS AND THE USUALS

- Every Mon. (MA) Morning Hike . various locations
- Every Tues (MA) Tuesday evening hikes with Carol
- Every Wed. (MA) Wednesday evening hikes with Marcia
- Every Thurs (MA) Afternoon Hike
- May 18 (MA) Orienteering Instruction Hike
- May 25 (NY) NYC bus trip (\$, Res)
- May 25-27 (MA) Backpack Glastonbury
- June 4 Hike award meeting
- June 15 (MA) Kayak Swift River
- June 21-23 (NH) White Mt. Sampler (\$, Res.)
- June 29 (MA) Biking -Acushnet Bike Trail -Lanesboro to Adam
- July 6 (MA) Mohawk trail
- July 19-21 (NY) Adirondack Heart Lake car camping & hikes
- Aug 25 PVHC picnic at Mt Tom



IMPORTANT NOTICES

- ❑ Next Club Meetings:
June 4, 2013, 7 pm at **FBC**
July 2, 2013, 7 pm at **FBC**
- ❑ Deadline for submissions to the next BootPrints is April 24, 2013

FBC - First Baptist Church, Piper Road,
West Springfield

**** Check out our web page at:**
www.pioneervalleyhikingclub.org

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

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