

# Smoke & Blazes

Volume 77, Number 4

Killington Section, Green Mountain Club

Winter 2024-25

## Mist on the Mountain



*A Killington Section hike up the Bucklin Trail in August led by Sheamus Fagan found Killington's summit in the clouds.*



**KILLINGTON SECTION**



Winter 2024-25

**Killington Section Officers**

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Herb Ogden, *Vice President*  
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**Web Site: gmckillington.org**

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**Smoke & Blazes**

Sue Thomas, *Editor*

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*Term expires 2025:*

Bill Cooke  
Dave Coppock  
Herb Ogden

*Term expires 2026:*

Wayne Krevetski\*  
Melissa Reichert\*  
Allison Henry

*Term expires 2027:*

Sheamus Fagan  
Amy Peacock\*  
Maura Wildman\*

*\*Second consecutive 3-year term, not eligible for re-election.*

**Contact us:**

KillingtonSection@greenmountainclub.org

# From the President

Hey gang, just a short note on Long Trail Day. I want to thank folks for stopping by and joining in on the fun. I think that the 103 location worked out well, at least better than 140. A couple of people saw us set up there and stopped by to see what we were about.

A number of hikers took paperwork because they were interested in joining, and we were able to encourage them to become section members. We met Long Trail end-to-enders, AT thru hikers, and day hiking families, about 20 folks, all total. We also collected \$61 in donations, which are on their way to Waterbury. All in all, I believe a successful day.

Wayne



# Trail Mix

In addition to the donations collected at the trailhead on **Long Trail Day**, Herb and Bruce solicited pledges which brought the Killington Section's contribution to an impressive total of \$1286. Well done everyone!

The **History Committee** and several KS board members met with GMC Director of Field Programs **Keegan Tierney** in September to walk the proposed reroute of the Sherburne Pass Trail, which will place it back on the original LT through the Long Trail Lodge site, and include Adirondack Lookout. Part of an ongoing project to clean up the historic site and open it to the public, along with a state historical marker and signage, many steps remain in the process.

**Minerva Hinchey Shelter** in Cuttingsville was relocated in early September from Spring Lake Ranch property to a new site about 200 yards west on the LT/AT, and a new accessible, moldering privy was built. The original shelter, then called Sunnyside Camp, was erected in 1955 but burned in 1968, and was rebuilt the next year. Extensive renovations were completed by a Killington Section crew headed by Jerry Parker in 2006. In August of 1979 Sunnyside Camp was rechristened Minerva Hinchey Shelter. Who was Minerva Hinchey? See *Backtracking* on page 7 to find out.



# Outing Reports

## **Up the Stack | Haystack Mountain, North Pawlet, August 11, 2024 by Diane Bargiel**

Since we had been having more than our fair share of rain that week, the hike up Haystack Mountain in North Pawlet was delayed a day in order to allow the trail to dry out a little bit on Saturday. The trail ended up being in great condition, and we got our reward at the top. That's a spot with beautiful views of the Adirondacks to the west, Greens to the east, and the Mettawee Valley to the south, with hills, mountains and farms. The sky had sun and puffy white clouds, and the forests and farms were a stunning green. At the top and along the trail, we met a number of lovely people, some there for the first time.



## **Boat People | Lowell Lake State Park, Londonderry, August 24, 2024 by Vivian Bebee**

What a beautiful day! Three others joined us at the park by the Rutland Fire Station: John, Sue and Candy, and off we went with two canoes and one kayak. The trip to Lowell Lake State Park was uneventful and a pleasant drive for the most part. When we arrived, there were already several cars in the small parking lot so it's a good thing we left fairly early from Rutland. When Larry and I took a trip down to the park a few days prior to this, we were told by the staff that checked us in to carpool as much as possible due to lack of space or we



might have to wait in line until another car leaves to open up a space. Interesting, but it all worked out. Shortly after exiting our cars, I heard a loon call, which is always a welcoming sound to me. After we all managed to get our boats in the water and ourselves into

the boats without mishap, we were off for a leisurely paddle. No motors allowed on this body of water, so it was heaven. We enjoyed a small breeze most of the time, paddled in many nooks and crannies along the shore and watched several turtles sunning themselves in various spots on wood debris sticking out of the water. Continuing on, we saw a few ducks tucked back in a more secluded spot. Shortly after that, we spotted some picnic tables along the shore and made our way there for lunch. There was some talk of a swim, but we opted to head back to the put-in and take a short walk on the trail that surrounds Lake Lowell. On our way back to the put-in, we went off track a little closer to an island and saw a loon headed our way. The loon seemed unconcerned with our approach and was keeping a close eye on a couple of rubber rafts with some noisy people coming across from a different direction. Heading home, we stopped for a maple creamy at Dutton's Farm in Manchester and enjoyed watching their various farm animals including geese, donkey, goats and chickens, a few of which were free-range.



## Winter Preview | Rattlesnake Cliff, Salisbury, September 8, 2024 by Sue Thomas

Summer took a short vacation in early September, and hats and gloves were dragged out of storage for the trek up to Rattlesnake Cliff. It didn't take us long to warm up though, as the trail is quite steep all the way. We stopped briefly to examine beech drops, a parasitic plant that feeds off the roots of beech trees, and nearly lost John when he wanted to sample a hog peanut seed pod but wisely reconsidered – I later researched it and found they are not edible! Larry of course insisted on cutting several trees that were blocking the trail, while my focus was on getting us to the lookout ahead of the rain. He could not be dissuaded, so I turned him into a newt. Up top the view is well worth the climb, looking out over Lake Dunmore, Silver Lake and the distant Adirondacks. Turkey vultures and a peregrine falcon glided by as we ate a hurried lunch watching the rain approach across the valley, and we packed up quickly and skedaddled when it found us. Back down below we made a detour to see an inscription on a rock dedicated to “Aunt Jennie,” who once ran a roadhouse there. *“Jennie Dutton Rickert, 1856-1934; All that I am and all that I ever hope to be I owe to my mother;”* a steal from Abraham Lincoln, but a nice sentiment nonetheless.



## Long Trail Day | Minerva Hinchey to Clarendon Gorge, September 21, 2024 by Herb Ogden

We had beautiful weather for Long Trail Day. Four of us celebrated it by hiking from Spring Lake Ranch to Minerva Hinchey Shelter and then north on the Long Trail to Vt. 103. Once we reached the height of land, we spent some time



looking over the shelter in its new location in the Appalachian Trail Corridor just west of the Long Trail. We understand that the floor is unusually high off the ground because the movers unexpectedly encountered bedrock and had to put the concrete pillars on top of it. Steps are being added and eventually a ramp will make the place handicapped accessible, as is required for new construction on the AT. The rest of the hike yielded nothing new, just a lot of pretty scenery, especially from the Airport Lookout. When we reached Vt. 103, we helped Wayne Krevetski reduce his surplus of hot dogs and chatted with some of the hikers who had stopped in for Trail Magic. Even though I registered the hike with the GMC at the last minute, I am happy to report that I raised \$225 for the GMC. I was hoping for \$270, or \$100 per mile of LT hiked. Maybe more of the people I solicited will still respond and make the goal.

## The Curse of the Pink Pig | Bromley Mountain, Peru, September 28, 2024 by Sue Thomas

Checking out the new observation tower on top of Bromley seemed like such a good idea – the forecast was ideal for views, leaves were beginning to turn...what could go wrong? I should know by now that's a question that should never be asked. The Rutland contingent and Herb from Mount Tabor arrived simultaneously at the turnoff to Peru, only to find the tiny town completely blocked off for their Fall Festival, and the entrance guarded by gatekeepers who offered no alternative route. I swear I saw the cheerful pink pig signs which advertised the event snickering as we and several other frustrated drivers backed out to the highway, where Herb tried the next turnoff and was again turned away, but this time the attendant was able to direct us a few short miles up the road, and yay, the hike was on. After that less than auspicious

start all went swimmingly, and what a delightful day it was to be in the woods, ahh, fall. Up top the sun was shining just as I'd ordered it, and the new tower, much higher than the old wooden one it replaced, offered a stunning view in all directions. Many thanks to the Manchester Section, whose years of fundraising made it possible. Those pink pigs may have done us a favor in the end, luring away some of the leaf-peeping crowds I expected to see at the summit, it was delightfully uncrowded and we were tempted to bask in the sun and the views longer before reluctantly descending. We took the more scenic route home, stopping in Weston for maple creamies, a pretty perfect fall weekend.



## Ellie Returns | Merck Forest, Rupert, October 5, 2024 by Larry Walter

We had an excellent turnout today of nine people, including my brother Mark, from Honolulu. It was just about perfect weather, although a little on the nippy side for Mark. Colors were well on the way, with a lot of green to set off the red maples and poison ivy.

Some history is called for. A female coon cat named Ellie has been a fixture of the Merck visitor center for over 13 years now. She had accidentally been locked out of her home a couple months ago by a new employee, and had been missing for several days when Viv and I showed up for a hike. The staff, at that time, figured she had met her demise after being outside with non-domesticated critters. We had assumed the same, so were really surprised to see her highness in her favorite chair when we walked in. That really made our day. She's a little more 'reserved' now. In her youth, Ellie was known to tag onto hiking groups, including ours, as an escort/guide. She'd even attempt to urge laggards ahead and to dictate where folks should go at the next junction. Quite the little lady.



We chugged up the hill past the hollow red oak (now decapitated...sad) to the farm area where we regrouped and continued on up Old Town Road, past where a young Ellie first introduced herself from the cover of a log pile (intersection of Stone Lot Road) and up that steep, continuous grade to the first saddle. Merck was running a tractor/trailer up and down the same, for \$5 a ride. First time they've done this and it appeared to be a smashing success. After gathering at the hilltop intersection, we continued straight, up Antone Road to Clark's Clearing. The cabin of the same name was rebuilt a couple years back and is an excellent choice for two or three people, especially in the winter since the stove easily heats up its small interior. For some reason, I always forget how steep it is from there, up to Antone Mountain, especially up the last spur trail to the top. There were a lot of people up there, so we had a quick lunch at the grand view point, which is actually a short distance beyond the height of land. Then it was back down Antone Road, complete with all of those annoying little up-grades, to the car and an Aloha to Ellie.



## High on the Hog | Hogback Mountain, Goshen, October 12, 2024 by Sue Thomas

Our hike this day had an international flavor, with participants from France, Brazil and Korea, as well as at least three U.S. states. Four of our eight were researchers and grad students at UVM in various fields, which made for lively and interesting conversation as we made our way along the loop trail through a forest of shimmering yellow leaves and white trunks against a bright blue sky. I love to introduce this trail to newcomers – emerging from the woods into the mountainside clearing with its breathtaking panorama for the first time is...well... it leaves you speechless. Oohs and aahs are the best you can do for a bit, with an occasional wow! We certainly timed it right, as the surrounding mountains and foreground blueberry bushes were all dressed in their finest golds, reds and oranges. We climbed up the hillside for an even better lunchtime view, before reluctantly descending and bidding adios and adieu to our new friends, who I hope will join us again soon.



## Autumn Bushwhacking Bliss | Bucklin Bypass to White Rd., October 19 by Dave Coppock

On the heels of June's Blue Ridge point-to-point bushwhack, I vowed to design another bushwhack hike that merited a lower case "b" instead of a capital one. To that end, I cleared an existing set of old woods roads to some extent, and connected them through beautifully gladed and fairly open woods. The woods portion had no real trail, just some flagging I had rigged to mark the way. The weather was flawless, and the 10 hardy souls who showed up were pumped for the outing. We had a woman who was visiting from Toronto who learned about the hike from the K.S.G.M.C. website, and I convinced her to give it a try.

We set out on what I call the "Bucklin Bypass," a ski trail that would also serve as a way to evacuate injured skiers or hikers from that drainage. We followed this woods route, briefly joining the Bucklin Trail, to Lenny's Gut, where Brewers



Brook bifurcates and its tributaries rise steeply up toward Snowden Mountain. From here, our route climbed an old logging road for half a mile to where we sat in a clearing and had a positively luxurious dining experience. The sun filtered through brilliant red and yellow leaves; the temperature was about 65, and the air was dead still.

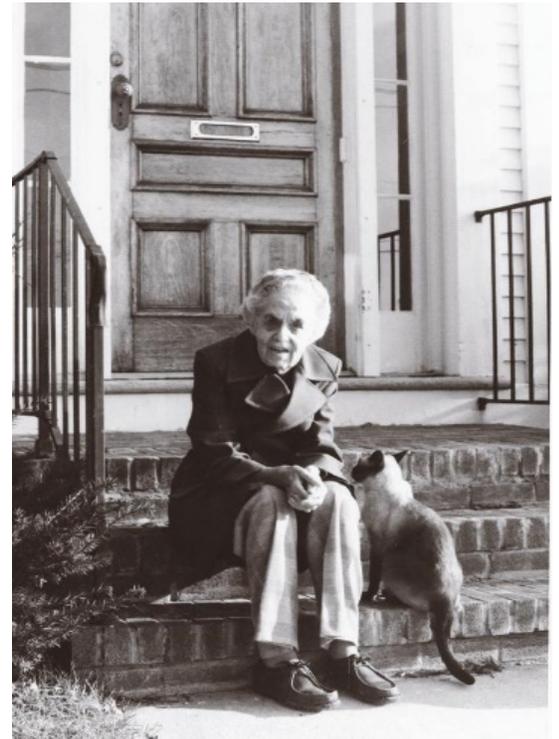
Leaving the old road, we set off into the woods. The next mile and a half featured sidehills, trip hazards, rocky footing and brook crossings. But I heard very little complaining and generally folks were thrilled to be seeing these beautiful birch glades. We topped out a 3090' where we looked down "Joels Bowl," a sweet little natural open area that's good for a few turns in the winter.

Moving downhill from here, we made our way toward the brook crossing where we would pick up the "White Road" for our grand finale. All of these woods and roads are a ski tourist's mecca. Winter is the time to really appreciate a trip like this. After locating the White Road, we eased into a more deliberate pace to cover the final 2.5 miles down to the cars. Light filtering through the beech and maple trees put a warm glow on all. It seems the day had made strangers into friends and opened their eyes to a hidden forest gem, hiding in sight of Killington and Pico.

# Backtracking

## Minerva Hinchey

The namesake of our Killington Section shelter, Honora Minerva Hinchey, served as corresponding secretary and business manager at GMC headquarters, then located in Rutland, for 22 years. The daughter of Irish immigrants, Ms. Hinchey worked as a bookkeeper in the insurance office of Fred Field, an active Killington Section member, and in 1955 she was hired as the GMC's only year-round paid employee. With the closing of the Field Agency in the early 1960s, the GMC office moved from Merchants Row into the Hinchey home. Her duties included mailing out newsletters, maps and guide books, replying to mail, and answering questions from hikers who found their way to her door on Park Street. After several years the office moved again, to a rented space on Center Street next to the Back Home Café. Minerva retired at age 82 in 1977 when operations were moved to rented offices in Montpelier. She passed away in 1979 and is buried in Evergreen Cemetery in Center Rutland.



*Minerva Hinchey and her cat, Fu*

Go to [www.greenmountainclub.org/minerva-hinchey-historical-profile-secretary/](http://www.greenmountainclub.org/minerva-hinchey-historical-profile-secretary/) to read a wonderful personal account written by Larry Van Meter, who was hired as the GMC's first executive director in 1975 and worked with Minerva Hinchey in the Center Street office.

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## Board of Directors Report | *September 14, 2024, submitted by KS rep. Bruce Peacock*

The 2024 fiscal year ended April 30th with a \$44,000 deficit. The impacts of three major storms this year and rising health care costs have made the club realize that the 2025 budget needs to be reduced by 5%. This is being achieved by eliminating two positions, restructuring workloads and reducing other costs.

The July rains caused more damage to the trail in certain parts of Vermont than last year's storms, especially between Bolton Mountain and Mt. Mansfield. Several bridges and access roads were also damaged. Keegan reported that scouring of the northern abutment of the Clarendon Gorge Bridge was discovered this past week.

Under Projects: The Bromley observation tower was completed, a new bridge on the Forest City Trail was installed, the 3-year reconstruction of the Burrows Trail is wrapping up, the Minerva Hinchey Shelter was moved and a new privy constructed. Trail work and a new bridge near Rootville Rd. in Manchester is underway. The new visitor center is on budget and should be completed later this fall.



Need help with your  
Holiday shopping?

Check out the GMC store at  
[www.store.greenmountainclub.org](http://www.store.greenmountainclub.org)  
for T-shirts, hats, sweatshirts, water  
bottles, maps, guidebooks and more

The Club has a Governance Committee looking at the bylaws and structure of the GMC, perhaps looking to reducing the size of the board and change the way the sections are represented. The work is expected to be completed in 2026.

The board spent time reviewing the Statement of Inclusivity drafted by President Nancy to align with the statement adopted by 160 Vermont towns, and discussed ways to implement it at the visitor center.

**December 2024 – February 2025**

Bring water and a lunch. Wear sturdy footwear, dress appropriately for the weather and be prepared for weather changes. Snowshoes or grippers may be needed for winter hikes. Distances are round trip and approximate, as are elevation gains. Hike leader has discretion to refuse anyone who is not adequately prepared. If you are sick or have any symptoms, please stay home and join us next time.

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**December 7, Saturday, weather date Sunday – Ludlow Mountain (Okemo), Ludlow**

Hike with us up the Healdville Trail to the summit of Ludlow Mountain (AKA Okemo) and enjoy some views from the ski runs – or venture up the fire tower, if you dare! 6 miles, moderately difficult with a 2000-ft elevation gain. Be prepared for snow and an early start. Give the hike leader a call for meeting place & time. **Sheamus Fagan, 802-498-8751**

**December 14, Saturday, snow date Sunday – Poultney Area Hike or Snowshoe**

Winter weather is unpredictable, so our destination will be determined by conditions. Call hike leader for time, meeting place and hike information. **Diane Bargiel, 413-687-1109**

**January 4, Saturday, bad weather date February 15 – Stone Mysteries, Stockbridge**

Beginning at Vt. 107, we will hike or snowshoe about 1.6 mile on old roads, and end with a few hundred feet of bushwhacking, ascending about 1100', to an area with over twenty stone piles. A cemetery commissioner familiar with Abenaki graves is pretty sure they are Abenaki graves. A couple archaeologists disagree. The chief of one of the Vermont Abenaki bands doesn't think they are graves either but might be Abenaki. We will pass the remains of two long-abandoned hill farms with some views on the way. Participants must agree not to reveal the location of the piles. Contact **Herb Ogden, 802-293-2510** [hogden@vermontel.net](mailto:hogden@vermontel.net) for meeting place and time.

**January 11, Saturday, weather date Sunday – Mendon Peak, Mendon**

Climb up Rutland County's highest trailless peak on the well-established bushwack route following Eddy Brook. Enjoy views of Killington Peak to the east and the hills of Shrewsbury to the south. 7 miles, difficult with a 2000-ft elevation gain. Snowshoes will be required. Give the hike leader a call to find out the meeting place and time. **Sheamus Fagan, 802-498-8751**

**January 18, Saturday – Murray's Ridge Killington**

We'll follow the AT/LT north to Willard Gap and bushwhack up the ridge, with several options to return. Difficult 5-6 miles with 800 ft. elevation gain. Snowshoes and/or grippers may be needed. Call leader for meeting place and time. **Larry Walter, 802-775-3855**

**January 25, Saturday, bad weather date Sunday – Cadwell Loop, Pittsford**

Snowshoe or ski along Otter Creek, where we may see otter tracks and slides. 2.5 miles easy to moderate, and if it's too nice a day to go home, we have the option to add another nearby trail. This is dependent on snow, so if Mother Nature doesn't provide any another destination will be substituted. Call for meeting place and time. **Sue Thomas, 802-773-2185**

**February 1, Saturday – Pharoah Lake Wilderness, Ticonderoga**

Snowshoes may be needed for a 4-5 mile trek of moderate difficulty in this beautiful natural area. Call leader by 5 p.m. Friday to sign up, and for meeting time and place. **Allison Henry, 802-779-4404**

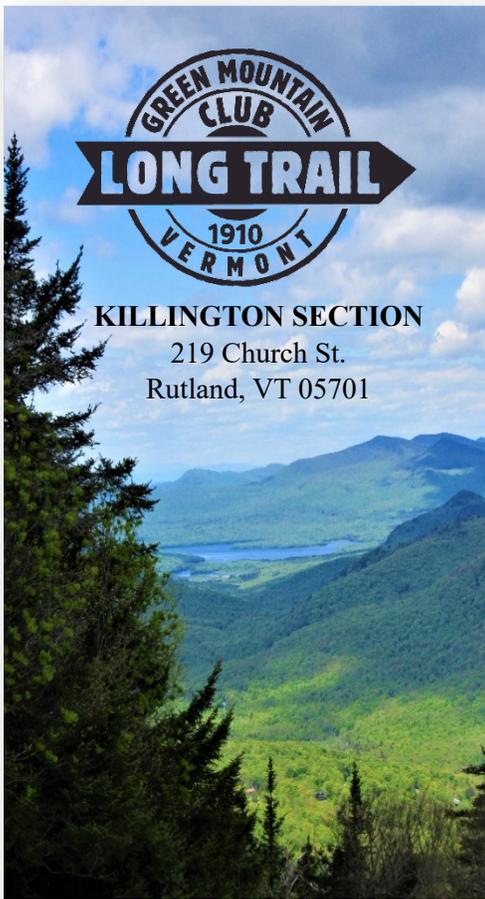
**February 8, Saturday – Back Country Ski Adventure, Killington**

A somewhat challenging trek for experienced skiers through woods and glades in the Killington/Mendon area. Location and distance will be determined by conditions, call leader for info, meeting place and time. **Dave Coppock, 802-683-1614**

**February 22, Saturday, bad weather date Sunday – Plymbsury Loop, Shrewsbury**

We'll hike or snowshoe on wood roads in the Plymbsury Wildlife Management Area, keeping an eye out for animal tracks and winter wildlife. About 4.5 miles, moderate. Call for meeting place and time. **Sue Thomas, 802-773-2185**





**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 store 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
- Family.....\$60
- Senior/Student/Friend.....\$25

Contact us for information on life memberships and categories for giving at a higher level.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

I 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:

trail work,  shelter work,  sign making,  publications,  leading outings,  publicity,  education,  tech support

Make check payable to "GMC" and mail with this application to:  
Green Mountain Club, 4711 Waterbury-Stowe Road, Waterbury Center, VT 05677