



# Chips & Clippings

Dedicated to the activities and history of the AMC Trail Crew  
Fall 2013

## Message from the President:

Well, it's been an interesting year!

Too hot, too cold, too wet, too dry ... And, what about those forest fires? Too much water washed out roads and did much trail damage, especially springtime rain. Current crew is hard at work.

It has also been an interesting year for TCA. During the last year or so, we began communicating with those of you who we have an e-mail address for, through a service called Constant Contact. It allows us to send news and information to everyone. We hope you have been receiving those communications. If not, please notify us of your correct e-mail address.

### We have a new Web site that rivals anyone's.

Visit [amctca.org](http://amctca.org) (or .com)

A few items worth noting...

- **THE WHOLE CREW** – Is a place you can verify your own contact information or find an old friend. It is password protected. The e-mail address to use is: [bhwhiton@maine.rr.com](mailto:bhwhiton@maine.rr.com) and the password is: whatho. We would like to populate it with as much current information and as many e-mail addresses as possible. If you have any changes to submit, send an e-mail to that same e-mail address, [bhwhiton@maine.rr.com](mailto:bhwhiton@maine.rr.com).
- **NEWS & INFORMATION** – Provides all of the latest information on the upcoming reunion (Saturday, November 9<sup>th</sup>). Spend Saturday night. Make your reservations at Joe Dodge Lodge NOW. Or if you can only join us for the meeting and dinner, contact Pinkham to make your dinner reservation (included if you stay at Joe Dodge).  
(Continued on page 2)

## THE AMC PROFESSIONAL TRAIL CREW URGENTLY NEEDS OUR HELP!

As many of you know, budget constraints on many of the organizations (such as the USFS) that have historically funded the Professional Trail Crew in recent decades are experiencing "new normals" with respect to their funding from both government and private sources. This summer these constraints resulted in reducing the size of the summer Professional Trail Crew from 18 to 12, and for several months, it appeared that there would be no funding for a Fall crew. This latter shortage was relieved largely by the release of some USFS funds in mid-summer so that the Fall crew will operate, but on a somewhat limited scale.

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### (President's Message Cont. From Page 1)

- Have you paid your annual dues? Or maybe you want to become a lifetime member? On the Web site, you can now pay your annual dues on-line, using PayPal.

Check it out! And, we always welcome feedback and suggestions. Send those to [coachwhiton@maine.rr.com](mailto:coachwhiton@maine.rr.com).

Your board has been at work, meeting almost monthly either in person or via telephone conference.

During this past year with federal funding cuts, our beloved Trail Crew took a big hit. Its very existence was threatened. Sending an important message to the AMC headquarters in Boston, that the Professional Trail Crew matters, **the TCA Board of Directors approved a hefty donation to the AMC to help sponsor trail work and keep our "A" team employed.** In addition, through many generous donations, we funded **a new upgrade at Hutton Lodge** to make living conditions a bit nicer. This effort was led by Bob Watts (Trail Crew '52).

Once again, I'm pleased to tell you that for the third year in a row, **'Chips' is produced by our current crew**, led by 'Pants' and 'Romney' and proofread by Ben English. Nice job!

As with any organization, we are only as good as the people who are involved and engaged, working to keep the spirit alive. I would like to encourage you to **get involved on some level** and see what a difference you can make. It's important to maintain this valuable organization. Start by attending our annual meeting and Reunion. It's always fun and you will be surprised by who shows up. This year we have a special guest – Peter Limmer of Limmer Boots!

Please enjoy this issue. Consider updating us with an article about your trail crew exploits or your current activities. Some of us still hike, many do not. But, we all have a story to tell and good friends made during our years on Crew. Above all, please make sure we have your contact information, so you won't miss an exciting issue of 'Chips' or an important e-mail communication.

Foo-  
Craig Whiton  
"Get Involved"

### (Funding Crisis Cont. From Page 1)

To address this severe funding problem the AMC embarked on an urgent fund-raising appeal to its membership - raising over \$26,000 to date. Among the donors who responded was our Trail Crew Association, when our Board of Directors unanimously approved a one-time donation of \$2,500 from its treasury. In addition, a number of donations were received from TCA members as well - most significant were donations of over \$1,000 by several members, totaling \$8,000! These latter donations of course benefit from the fact that their individual donations to the AMC are tax deductible because of the AMC's 501 (C) 3 non-profit status.

Since the funding shortage to support the historically very important work of the AMC's Professional Trail crew, of which you were all once members on the crew or as Shelter Caretakers, the TCA would like to encourage all of you to consider making a tax-deductible donation of any amount (of course the larger the better) to the AMC's Trails Program by sending a check to:

Appalachian Mountain Club  
Attn: Celeste Miliard  
5 Joy Street  
Boston, MA 02108

On your check please make an entry on the memo line that reads "TCA Trails Fund Appeal" so that donations from TCA members may be carefully tracked for proper credit to the TCA membership over time.

This is a very important aspect of TCA membership, and all donations will go directly to support the work of the Professional Trail Crew and no other AMC programs or projects. And, this is not a short-term, one-time effort, as the budgetary

constraints on funding sources for the Trail Crew reflect a "new normal" rather than a passing event! So our support is important now, and over the long haul!

If any members have questions regarding this appeal they may contact Bob Watts via email at [voltxamps@cox.net](mailto:voltxamps@cox.net).

## Secretary's Report

### Summary of Work in 2012-2013

The Trail Crew Association Board met in person November 10, 2012 at Pinkham and again August 10, 2013 at the Cabin. The Board held three conference calls in the interim. The notes from these meetings can be found at: <http://www.amctca.com/Our-Home-And-Board.php>.

At the November 2012 meeting, Ben Read (1969-72), Don Stevens (1968-71) and Rachel "OTL" Hudson (2000's) were elected to the Board. President Craig Whiton had released inactive directors so we could more reasonably reach a quorum (two-thirds of existing directors must be present), with thanks from the Association for their past work. Stephanie "Suzie Q" Oleksyk recently stepped off the Board.

The Board extends its deep appreciation to Barbara Whiton for her awesome contributions to the Association, getting our records updated and securing for us our website.

Business that took place since November 2012 includes:

- History & Archives (Trail Crew *Appalachia* articles & 60-70's photos)
- Hutton Cushions fundraiser
- Development of [www.amctca.com](http://www.amctca.com)
- Fundraising aid to AMC for TC (\$2500)
- Getting Chips & Clippings published
- Updating our computer and paper records
- Encouraging and acknowledging the Trail Crew's importance and reputation as AMC's pro-crew, at Pinkham and thru-out AMC

- Maintaining the Cabin
- Paying our bills, collecting dues, raising funds, maintaining mailing list.

Bob Proudman (YEARS)

## Treasurer's Report

### Profit & Loss

January 1 through August 9, 2013

January 1-Aug 9, 13

Ordinary Income/Expense	
Income	
Dues Income	
Membership Dues	365.00
Total Dues Income	365.00
Member Contributions	
General Contributions	15.00
Shelburne Lodge Fund	965.00
Total Member Contributions	980.00
Promotional Sales	15.00
Total Income	1,360.00
Expense	
Chips & Clippings	
Editor Stipend	250.00
Total Chips & Clippings	250.00
Donations-AMC Trails Program	2,500.00
Shelburne Lodge	
Liability Insurance	205.00
Total Shelburne Lodge	205.00
Total Expense	2,955.00
Net Ordinary Income	-1,595.00
Net Income	-1,595.00

### Balance Sheet

As of August 9, 2013

Aug 9, 2013

ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	
Northway Checking	1,732.81
Savings- Northway	8,495.58
Total Checking/Savings	10,228.39
Total Current Assets	10,228.39
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>10,228.39</u>

### LIABILITIES & EQUITY

Equity	
Opening Balance Equity	8,754.09
Unrestricted Net Assets	3,069.30
Net Income	-1,595.00
Total Equity	10,228.39
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	<u>10,228.39</u>

## Trails Supervisor Report

This year was certainly a challenging one for the White Mountain Professional Trail Crew program. The big issue was the lack and uncertainty of funding for the trail work we do. Federal budget cuts and late release of moneys that support various grants and funding agreements we receive from the U.S. Forest Service created a bit of a budget crisis for us as we entered the summer work season. The major ramification of a decrease in funding was that we were able to fund a Trail Crew of only 12, instead of the usual 18-20. With ten returning crew members that meant we were able to hire only two new First-Years.

Although smaller in number, the crew did lots of high quality trail work, as TFC always does. Credit goes to the leadership and steady hand of Trail Master Mike "Pie" Saucier and the experienced Crew Leaders. The entire crew's positive attitude and "of course we can get that done" outlook to the wide variety of projects they faced was evident in their efficient, quality work.

Following training, orientation, and patrolling, the crew began their woods weeks on the trail construction projects. A major project this year was the Nancy Pond Trail relocation. Due to damage from tropical storm Irene a 0.6 mile section of new trail, through some very difficult terrain, needed to be constructed. This project was done for the Forest Service with funding from the National Forest Foundation. Another major project was the reconstruction, primarily rock work, on the Mt. Jackson Branch of the Webster-Jackson Trail. This work will continue this fall and next summer. Other projects included replacing rotten bog bridges with 106 new lumber bridges on the Forest Service's Church Pond Trail. The crew also installed 22 lumber bog bridges on the ridge along Hancock Loop Trail, rebuilt scree walls along the Franconia Ridge Trail and completed short relocations on the Avalon and Mt. Willard Trails, also damaged by Irene.

All in all the crew had a successful, safe and fun season. Next year's funding looks a lot better already and we expect to build back the crew's numbers and continue the fine work and traditions of the Professional Trail Crew.

David Salisbury, White Mountain Trails Supervisor

## Trail Master Report

Crew List:

1st years:

Alex "SuperTramp" Macmillan, Ashley "SwitchBack" Fife

2nd years:

Steve "S.B. Doobis" Dubis, Dan "Romney" Shea, Evan "The Todd 6-4" McManamy, Kevin "Joker" McDermott,

3rd years:

Ben "Scrubbie" Chase, Jessica "Zero" Blank, Andrew "BoyScout" Washburn, Ian "Macintosh" Head, Paul "Cookie" Tillyer

TrailMaster:

Michael "MikePie" Saucier

Supervisor:

David Salisbury



As we all have experienced, the day-to-day grind of the trail crew season seems endless. That is, until we reach the end of the season. Or, in some cases, the end of careers on TFC. The end of the season shows up and everybody always says, "I can not believe that the season is over already."

Well, this season was no different, and when we look back on it we'll always be amazed at what the spirit of this crew brewed up for incredible accomplishments. Despite some controversy, major losses of trail funding, and a small crew of just 12, we were able to whap some serious work out.

The season started with an extra week and a half of patrolling. Some questions have been asked about the extra time it took to patrol, but we all know the main reason. Mohawks. Yes, one of the largest disputes of the season was the brutal attack on the heads of the crew. That's right, due to the lack of professionalism, our beloved management stripped us of our rights to bare hair that is longer in

the middle with shaved-down sides. How are you going to pay a guy dirt to break his back and also tell him what to look like? Despite the lack of aerodynamics, and some interesting takes on "not a Mohawk," we had some of the fastest patrollers that I have seen. Blow downs were very spotty, but I would say there was an overall rise in the number from the past two seasons.

As we got near the end of patrols, we sent one crew into Church Pond to do a little bog bridging for the Forest Service. This project was an absolute smash. After two weeks, our crew of four put in over 110 bog bridges, in some worst conditions of the summer. This was not our only bog bridge work as the old folks installed 22 more on Hancock loop.

Macintosh lead a crew for a huge relo on Nancy Pond Trail, turning what seemed like a complete disaster project into a shiny new 1/2 -3/4 mile section. We even had time to throw some rocks into the thing. Which, for a while this season, seemed like it might not happen. We were almost 3/4 through the season when we got our first taste of working on our own trails and doing traditional rock work. The AMC has over 350 miles of trails and somehow our crew of just 12 is working on Forest Service trails. How does that make sense? As for work on our trails; we picked up rocks and put rocks down on Franconia Ridge as the scree walls were falling apart. We also went to Webster-Jackson Trail for some reconstruction of the Jackson arm. Overall, we ended up putting a lot of rock in, and I think everyone feels great about their accomplishments this season. Our first years needed to get a lot more time becoming familiar with rockwork in order to be primed for second-year stardom, but I think these two cats will progress very quickly with help from their insane off-season work ethic.

Our fun times really made this season fly. From Hut parties, bluegrass fest, bike dodge ball, crushing RMC in hockey, fireworks, and boats in trees, to beers with John at the Door and racecars with Ben, the spirit of TFC was at an all-time high. Was it too much fun? No. Just the right amount. That was until Bash happened. A band was acquired at the bluegrass festival (where the TFC will be forever famous as the life of the festival) and with tunes, booze, good food and people on hand, we certainly exceeded the safe levels of fun. Cali is still

not sure if Bash even happened. It was truly unbelievable.

Next season TFC is going to be as strong as ever with a lot of the core coming back for their 2nd 3rd and 4th years. These returning folks will have the absolute honor of being Trail Mastered by the one and only, Scrubbie. I could not be more proud; he has earned every part of this position. I know this crew will thrive under your leadership, Scrubbie.

This season really put TFC to the test. Our professionalism was questioned, and we were under a very close watch. It was truly unbelievable to see this group of mutants pull through like they did. On day one, we were already wiping spit off of our faces; I think everyone on the crew felt a huge amount of disrespect when we were told that we had to act more professionally. Luckily, our crew just says "frig it" and whapps it out anyway. In the end I look back and can honestly say TFC 2013 was the essence of pros being pros.

FOOO!

Michael "MikePie" Saucier  
**2010-2013TM**

## **Blood in the River**

This event happened on Saturday, June 30, 1956, the first day of my second week on the Trail Crew.

Ever since I was in third grade, I have worn eye glasses. Back in those days and right up into the late 1950s, I had worn plastic frames which included a plastic nose piece or bridge. Over the years, my plastic bridge had become riddled with tiny fractures, although it still held together. Somehow, during my first week on the Crew, the bridge broke, so I taped the two pieces of my glasses together with white, adhesive tape.

Now, continuing with June 30. That day, four of us left Hutton Lodge in Whitefield and drove to the Dolly Copp Campground at the beginning of the Great Gulf Trail. Included in this Crew were Trailmaster Joel Nichols and three of us first-years: Warren Lightfoot, Dan Leary, and I. We were to pack to the Great Gulf Shelter, patrolling the trail as we went along. The shelter was located near the junction of the Great Gulf, Wamsutta, and

Six Husbands Trails. After the patrolling, we were to start standardizing the trails in that vicinity.

The four of us were spread out along the trail, leap-frogging to the next blowdown. It was a hot and muggy day, and droplets of salty sweat were running down my forehead into my eyes. I finished chopping out a blowdown and started walking to the next tree, which was about 10 or 12 feet ahead of me. For that short distance, I decided NOT to tie the sheath onto my ax. After all, I could walk a few feet WITHOUT the sheath on. I carried the ax in my right hand. The sweat apparently had percolated into the adhesive tape and released the sticking characteristic of the tape. My glasses separated. I stopped walking. Down my right cheek began to slide the right frame, lens, and ear piece; and at the same time, down my left cheek, the left frame, lens, and earpiece were doing the same slide. My instinct instructed me to reach up and catch my separated glasses before they hit the ground, but that instruction overlooked the fact that I was carrying an UNSHEATHED ax. Both pieces of my glasses fell to the trail. I glanced at the back of my left hand and saw that it was bloody. Somehow my ax had slit my hand from the middle of the back of my hand down to the beginning of my index finger.

I picked up the sections of my glasses, and, with my ax, set them beside the trail. Then I figured I should do something about my hand. It did not hurt (apparently because the cut was not deep and the ax was sharp), but there was a bunch of blood around. I decided to slow the blood flow by putting my left hand into the West Branch of the Peabody River which flows along the Great Gulf Trail. So I leaned down and dunked my hand into the water. That felt good. Then I realized that I should keep my hand elevated. I also realized that if I fainted, I might fall into the river and drown. I didn't want to drown, so I located a level piece of ground just a bit above the water. Here I lay down on my back with my left arm from elbow to fingertips on the gravel in some shallow, cold water. My hand wasn't elevated, but at least it wasn't hanging down. Life was good. After 10 or 15 minutes, the blood stopped flowing, and I felt pretty good.

Next I retrieved my glasses and stuffed them into my pack. Then I sheathed my ax, put on my packboard, held up my left arm, and slowly headed

to the shelter. Joel was there, looked at my hand, slapped a large gauze pad onto it, tied some adhesive tape onto it, and told me not to chop or standardize for a day or two. He said it was fine to use my right hand to gather branches and brush that the rest of the Crew cut. Good ole "Doctor" Joel Nichols.

To this day, there is a two-and-a-half inch scar on the back of my left hand. Every member of the Crew has memories of stand-out events of their first year.

Ben "Moses" English (1956-1958)

## A Walk to Work – August 1953

In mid-August 1953 work was largely complete on the new Great Gulf Suspension Bridge (See December 2011 Appalachia for article on construction of the bridge, by TM Douglas W. Rankin) and after living at the bridge site for six weeks I was assigned, along with Stretch Hayes and Bruce "Old Carpy" Carpenter to replace the deteriorated roof on the Garfield Pond Shelter. As a side note - that will be relevant a bit later in the tale - Bruce Carpenter had served on the AMC Trail Crew in the late 40's and had returned in '53 to lend a hand for the final three weeks of the summer. So at the start of the next workweek on Saturday, Stretch, Bruce, and I packed three rolls of "extra heavy" tar paper, roofing nails and tools up the Garfield Trail to the Garfield Pond Shelter – the shelter that Jack Hutton and his crew had built in about 1940. We arrived in the early afternoon and, after looking at the weather, stripped the old, remaining tarpaper from the roof. By the end of the afternoon we had completed replacing half of the roof cover.



Stretch Hayes at Garfield Pond Shelter – Aug 1953 – Note Old Roof



The next morning we finished the new roof, cleaned up the work site of bits of old paper, nails, and the new roll wrappings, and began the trek over to Galehead Hut for the next work assignment – standardizing the North Twin Spur – then the only trail leading to North Twin - from the summit of South Twin. That trail was in miserable shape and kept all three of us occupied on Monday, Tuesday and most of Wednesday. That thousand-foot climb from Galehead to the trail was always a great way to warm up for the day!



Bruce Carpenter at Garfield Pond Shelter – Aug 1953 – Note New Roof

Since our next work assignment was to report to the Great Gulf Bridge site at 8:00 AM on Thursday morning to assist in packing out all of the construction materials – tools, tent, pot kit, kerosene for the lantern, etc. we knew we'd have to quit work around 3:00 PM to return to Whitefield for the night. I've now forgotten who had the bright idea, but Bruce and I decided we'd hike over to the Great Gulf Bridge from South Twin's summit – leaving Stretch to head back down the Twinway and Gale River Trails with the minor tools from the Garfield Pond Shelter roof replacement job and his personal gear, to retrieve the red jeep that was parked at Five Corners. In those days the trail head was right on Rt. 302. This was before the road to the current parking area at the new trail head was built so the pack trail was then 7 miles long.

At about 3:00 PM, Bruce and I, with only pack boards, our axes, and a small box of essentials – including flashlights, Dopp kit, and a few dry clothes – headed for Zealand Falls Hut. We arrived there a few minutes before 6:00 PM, just in time for dinner. Eating a quick meal, we then headed via the

A to Z Trail to Crawford Notch in order to hit the small general store before it closed at 9:00 PM to buy a supply of extra batteries. That store was in a small building (formerly the Portland & Ogdensburg RR freight house) a few yards east of the RR station that is now the AMC information center.

After buying the batteries and a few miscellaneous candy bars, we headed up the Crawford Path just as it began to get dark. No flashlights were needed for the first mile or so, but we finally lost enough light that we needed to rely on them, particularly when we reached tree line so as to locate cairns that were now buried in low hanging clouds – making it necessary for one of us to proceed ahead to the next cairn while the other remained at the last one. This resulted in some slowing of the pace. But a larger factor was emerging; Bruce Carpenter's short time on crew had not yet resulted in a summer's worth of conditioning as it had mine. Nevertheless, we marched onward at whatever pace he could sustain – he is well over six feet tall and had a far longer stride than did I!

We arrived at Lakes of the Clouds hut at about 1:00 AM and, of course, found the hut dark, all quiet, and the doors – fortunately – open. So we went into the kitchen to catch a few hours sleep on the floor. At around 5:00 AM, we awoke and promptly cooked ourselves a great and much appreciated pan full of scrambled eggs and bacon – all while the crew continued their night's sleep. They apparently never heard us, or even woke up, so we left an appreciative note in the frying pan and headed for the Great Gulf – via the Crawford Path and Great Gulf Trails – arriving at the bridge site about 5 minutes before 8:00 AM. Trail Master Doug Rankin did not seem too pleased with our choice of route to work, but he quickly let it pass, and we began a long day – each of us making two pack trips on the Madison Gulf Trail from the bridge to the vehicles parked at the two-mile mark on the Carriage Road – a four mile round trip, twice, adding to our overnight 27-mile jaunt from South Twin! Needless to say we slept well in Whitefield that night. Oh to be that young again.



Bob Watts & TM Doug Rankin – Last Day at New Great Gulf Bridge – Aug 1953

Written from memory in July 2013 by Bob Watts – TC '52 to '55

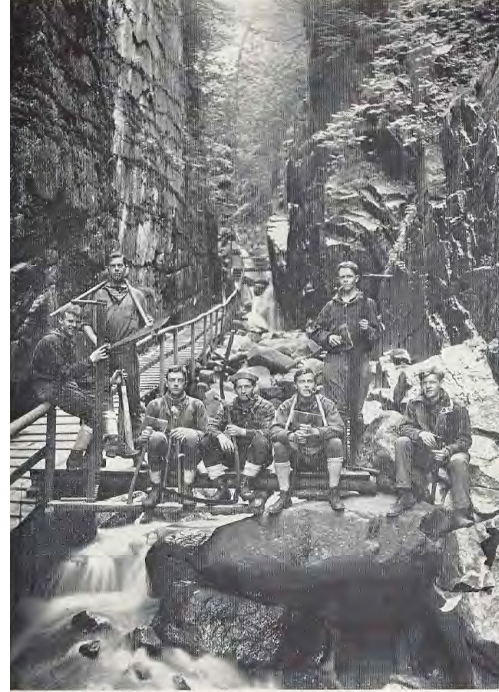
PS: None of us was aware that the red jeep had developed a coolant leak resulting in all the coolant draining out of the engine during the five days it sat at Five Corners. The result was that Stretch Hayes ended up with a overheated and damaged engine on the way back to Whitefield. I don't recall how he got back there, or how the jeep was retrieved. Thus the week did not end well! Not an easy thing to explain to the TM, or to our AMC boss, then Councilor of Trails, Al Folger!

## With The Trail Gang

**The following is a historic article that was first published in Appalachia in the June 1929 issue. The author, Charles W. Blood, along with Paul Jenks, Nathaniel Goodrich, and Karl Harrington, comprised the group of men referred to as "The Old Masters," who were among the first to start building trails.**

How many of us, when we walkover a trail, stop to think what it means to keep that trail in order? Perhaps we have a vague idea that at some time in the past someone opened the trail. We may feel that we could have done a better job in that respect. To be sure, if we find a log lying across the footway we are apt to think, and perhaps express our thought, about a badly run organization which permits such a thing. Indeed, we are likely to write about it to the Councillor of Trails of the A.M.C., completely ignoring the fact that a different club may be responsible for the particular trail in question.

But if we encounter no difficulties we are apt to take the whole thing pretty much for granted; and if we pay our club dues we feel quite righteous and even wonder how much of our money is being spent on the trails.



THE 1924 TRAIL GANG, IN THE FLUME  
Left to right: Sisk (Trail Master, 1926), Beach, Henrich (Trail Master, 1927), Starr (Trail Master, 1925), Fish, Miller (Trail Master, 1924, and present Councilor of Trails), Backus

Some day, however, when traversing the Mahoosuc Range or making the circuit of that wonderful horseshoe curve of the Franconia and Twin Ranges, we may come upon two or three college fellows working away with axes or a cross-cut saw on some fallen timber, or perhaps toting their heavy packs and trail tools to their camp site, or packing roofing up to some shelter. These boys are members of the A.M.C. Trail Gang. What is a Trail Gang, do you ask? What does it do? Why does the Trail Department employ amateurs for such work, and why should these fellows want to do it? If we are lucky we may find them coming into camp at the same shelter with us. Let us watch them and listen, and perhaps our questions will be answered.

The most mature fellow is evidently the master, but he isn't sitting in state while others wait on him. He is cooking the supper, and a good supper it is. Tonight they are having soup, fried ham, succotash, hot biscuits, canned fruit, and cocoa. We had some trouble getting *our* fire to burn. The logs were big and none too dry, the camp axe was dull, and we were too tired to do much



splitting. These boys, however, who have been working all day, have made quick work with their cross-cut saw and double-bitted axes and in a few minutes have cut all the wood they need to cook supper and breakfast, for the cook must be provided at all times with an adequate supply of fuel.

Supper over, life seems more worthwhile. It is easier to joke and to take a joke—both essential qualifications for a good member of the Trail Gang. The grind of carborundum stone on axe steel fills our ears as first one and then another puts the best edge possible on his axe for the morrow. No man wants to suffer the disgrace and ridicule of having one of the “Old Masters” (as former Councillors of Trails are called) find him trying to work with a nicked axe. In fact, the first year a man works on the trail he has impressed on him the examination of the axe work reports on the character of each man’s performance and the condition of his tools.

But axe grinding does not prevent conversation.

“How many logs did we take out today?” the Trail Master asks.

“About seventy-five.” (The great wind storm of the preceding fall had swept over this ridge and laid flat acre of forest, wiping out trail for an eighth of a mile.)

“Well, you fellows think that’s a good day’s work, but it’s nothing to what the gang did on the Davis Path in 1922. In three and a half days Elliott, Stilly, Harold, and Bill, with P.R.J., took out four hundred and thirteen logs which had to be sawed or chopped at least once. There were giants in the land those days!... How many more are there?”

“Twenty to twenty-five.”

“Well, tomorrow morning Paul and Gyp will finish those with the cross-cut and then pack ahead to meet Hot and me. I understand there is about a two-man day’s work this side of Gentian Pond Shelter. The other three boys are due there tomorrow night, working up the range. Saturday we can clean up what is left and take out the logs on the Austin Brook Trail. That was standardized last year and won’t take much time.”

“Do you mind my interrupting a minute?” I break in. “You just used the word ‘standardized’; what do you mean by it?”

The Trail Master explains that about once in four years it is necessary to go over every trail in

the forest and widen it out where the trees or underbrush have grown in from the sides. If that is not done the trail ceases to be a standard trail; it becomes obscure and is abominable on a rainy day.

“Now, that is one of my jobs,” says the Trail Master. “Last winter, after the Councillor of Trails appointed me, I began to lay my plans for the season. I knew that there were to be six others in the gang. This is my fourth year. Gyp and Bill are working their third year. (Bill is in charge of the other crew and will probably be Trail Master next year.) Paul and Hen are second year men, and Hot and Jack are new this summer. We have a card index of all A.M.C. trails. That contains the record of each trail, when it was last standardized, the amount of time spent in clearing it each year and more or less data. With this as a foundation and my own experience I made up a tentative schedule for the summer. It took me some time, for there are so many facts which must be reckoned with,— for example, we work from about the twentieth of June to the first of September; every trail below timberline must be patrolled or inspected and any fallen trees or cross logs taken out; the trails that are most used should ordinarily be cleared first; a job of standardization takes so much more time in proportion that it is seldom wise to do it till the more important trails have been patrolled; in practice it has proved better for the morale of the gang not to keep them in the woods more than a week at a stretch and, of course, every man is entitled to one day off in seven—Sunday, if possible; transportation must be considered.



CAMPING ON THE LIVERMORE TRAIL

Frederick Fish

"It was like putting together a picture puzzle to work out any schedule. Our base is at Whitefield, which is about as central a location as could be picked, for our trails extend from Lost River to Grafton Notch. We do most of our traveling in an old seven-passenger Cadillac touring car. It takes a big heavy car to carry seven fellows on these mountain roads with fifty to a hundred pounds of equipment for each man. In the old days when the train service was good the gang traveled on the trains, but in recent years the trains have been so few and the connections so bad that the department saves quite a bit of money and a lot of efficiency by having its own car."

"After I got my schedule worked out I submitted it to Mr. Jenks, who is a wizard on such details. He was Councillor of Trails from 1917 to 1919 and has been Secretary of the Department ever since. I suppose he is responsible for the creation of the Trail Gang as an organization. In the old days local woodsmen were employed in different districts and one year a professional was hired for the whole summer. Such men could, of course, clear more trail in a day than any of us can, but they had too many outside interests. They had their own farms to supervise-hay to be cut, barns to be repaired, and, not infrequently, fish to be caught. The results were uncertain and unsatisfactory. Then the Councillor turned to college undergraduates. The first year or two was not wholly successful. The fellows were all new to the game. They had to be divided into groups and little personal supervision could be given to more than one group. Gradually, however, a system was developed. The men who were least interested-and as a result least efficient-dropped out after one year and the best men stayed. By the end of 1923 so good a group had been gathered that in 1924 the fellows were put in charge of one of their own number as Trail Master and Mr. Jenks was relieved of the burden of ordering supplies, paying bills, arranging time-schedules and assigning work from day to day, as he had done for several years.

"This system has been followed ever since. Every year one or more new men are taken on-preferably fellows just entering college. The first few weeks a new man acquires some experience and many blisters. His attempt to make a cook fire with large green logs meets with such ridicule that

he doesn't try it again. He learns how much well-cooked food adds not only to his comfort but also to his morale. He learns to take care of himself generally. He gradually gets oriented in the mountains. The ranges cease to be mere names. He listens eagerly to the experiences of other members of the gang. By the end of the season he has begun to see what it is all about. If he has acquired a love of the game he is keen to come back the following year. Otherwise, he drops out. The department never urges any man to come back. If he doesn't want to come back he isn't the kind of man that is wanted.

"We have found it better to confine the gang to college fellows. It may seem snobbish, but at our age we have so much more in common that it makes a more homogenous group. Of course, lots of colleges have been represented, and the more the better....

"Excuse me, Sir. What's that, Paul? How are you and Hot going to pack the rolls of roofing in to the shelter? On your backs, of course. Yes, it means that going just as light as you can you will have seventy pounds apiece....

"Yes, Sir, we all hate that job. A roll of roofing is about as mean a baby to carry as there is, but each shelter has to be re-roofed every two or three years. Sometime, however, a man will ask for a roofing job because in that way he gets a chance to add a mountain to his list. The competition to see who can climb the largest number of mountains is equaled only by that to see who can kill the most porkies. They are a terrible pest around camp, you know. I believe the porky for a single night was made at Imp Shelter by a former Trail Master....



ONE NIGHT'S WORK

Frederick Fish

“Hot, if you want to use your axe tomorrow you’d better hang it up where the porkies can’t get it. And put that machete in a safe place....

“Yes, Sir, we find a machete very useful for widening out a trail. Sometimes we use a bush hook, too....

“My second year I began to look forward to the possibility of being Trail Master and determined to study the ‘why’ as well as the ‘how’ of trail work. I knew that by my third year the Councillor of Trails would probably have decided whom he would choose for the job this year. It’s a great prize to hold out. The job is a lot of work, of course, but it means good pay and is a distinct honor. A fellow holds the job only one year. This is a definite policy of the department, so that every fellow who joins the gang knows that he will have an equal chance of becoming Trail Master his fourth year.

“Next week I am going to tackle a new job. Bill and I are going to try stringing a half-mile of new trail for a cut-off. The Old Masters generally do that work but they like to have us try it alone occasionally for the experience we get. This is my first chance....

“Yes, Paul, you and Bill are to go as slaves on the Trail Spree.”

“What is a Trail Spree?” I ask.

“Well, almost every year some of the Old Masters get up a camping party for the purpose of locating and clearing some new trail. They enjoy the work so much that they call it a Trail Spree. They generally take at least two of the Trail Gang in with them to help. It isn’t that the Old Masters can’t take care of themselves, but that they want to spend their time and energy on the problems of the trail location and not on packing extra supplies or washing breakfast dishes.

“The Old Masters like to take the most promising fellows and teach them the technique of trail construction, so it is considered a distinct compliment as well as good fun to be assigned to the Trail Spree. You’d be surprised to know how carefully these problems have to be studied and the papers that have been written about them. We are supposed to follow the suggestions laid down-or hear from it when our work is inspected, for we never know when some member of the department may appear....

“What does the weather look like, Hot? Cloudy? Let’s hope it won’t rain. Cutting trail in the rain is a mean job, but we must finish this section tomorrow, rain or no rain....

“Well, if you don’t mind, Sir, I guess I’ll turn in. We make a pretty early start in the morning.”

In a few minutes every one is rolled up in his blankets and the only sign of activity is the flicker of the dying camp fire.

Charles W. Blood

## **Trail Crews of the Past**

75 Years Ago - 1938:

Jack Hutton

E. Kent Eanes

50 Years Ago - 1963:

Dave Edel

Enoch Bell

Gene Brooks

James Munro

Wayne Daggett

Carl Jagodzki

Alan Thorndike

25 Years Ago - 1988:

Nicholas Moore

Mark Van Everen

Michelle Zanga

Robert Riman

Jim Frimel

Frederick Schmidt

John Weeman

10 Years Ago - 2003:

Christa Sanders-Flemming

Annie Doran

Dan Schieffelin

Dave Cloutier

Ed O'Brien

Joel George

Alex Lester

Graham Platner  
Alison Kidder  
Kate Miller  
Russell Lester  
Trevor Pratt

## **Band of Primate: 70s Crew Canoe Trips**

Almost every spring since 1999 (the only missed year being 2001), a group of TFC members from the early 70s has assembled somewhere in Maine or Quebec for a four-day wilderness canoe trip. The 2013 trip followed the usual pattern: participants met up on Thursday night at Millinocket's celebrated Hotel Terrace, were dropped off with canoes, gear, and boxes of wine at the headwaters of the East Branch of the Penobscot, and paddled Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, arriving at a scheduled pickup at mid-day on Monday.

At this point, we've paddled most of the classic Maine canoe routes, including the lower Allagash, the St. John, the Machias, Webster Stream, and the East Branch and West Branch of the Penobscot. We've also checked out some lesser-known waterways, such as Depot Stream, LaPomkeag Stream, Sawtelle Stream, and Millinocket Stream, among others. Some of those, we now know, deserve to be even less well-known than they already are. Among the Quebec rivers we've done are the Noire and the Coulonge—both of which drain into the Ottawa River—and the Bonaventure on the Gaspé Peninsula. The Chochocouane and the Capitachouane provided two great trips in the La Verendrye Reserve, 200 miles north of Montreal.

All the trips so far have featured a fair amount of white water, and most (though not all) of the TFC voyageurs are reasonably capable paddlers by this time. However, we tend to line or carry around a lot of rapids, mostly because the real point of these vernal excursions is to eat great food and drink qualitatively unassuming but quantitatively impressive red wines. Capsizing a boat and losing its contents would put that part of the mission in jeopardy, so we cheerfully spend a lot of time humping our stuff over carry trails.

The largest trip so far probably had 15 or so members, while the smallest—the St. John in 2002—had just four. A typical trip seems to have about 8 to 12 members, largely drawn from—but not necessarily limited to—the following: Bruce Davis, Dave Bayne, Tom Huntington, Jad Brown, Steve Rice, Bob Proudman, Marc Lacroix, Mark Bromley, Lee Burnett, Jon Vara, Chris Swenson, Dave Carey, Bill Birchard, Gordon Bowersock, Mark Porter, and Jake J. Jacobson. (To see brief clips of many of these fine people in action, simply conduct a YouTube search for “Geezer Outdoors,” or <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7t5lxYU70hs>).

In recent years, some adult children and other ringers have appeared in the mix from time to time. That trend will likely continue as the 70s crew grows gray and feeble. But we are not gray and feeble yet. Most of us will be turning only 60 this year. There are a lot of rivers left.

Jon Vara 1972-1975

## **The Great Stone Face –RIP**



**Joel Nichols in 1954**

My dear friend Joel Nichols, who was the Trailmaster my first year on Crew (1958), died January 30, 2013 after a struggle with tongue/throat cancer. Back in 1958 I thought of Joel as indestructible and learning of his cancer was a real shock. He and his family (and I) had about a year to face the idea that this was a terminal illness, but that doesn't make his death any easier to absorb.

Joel was born November 16, 1936. He grew up in West Newbury MA, attended Governor



Dummer Academy in high school where he played lacrosse, and graduated from the University of Vermont. He started working on Trail Crew in 1953. The story he told was that he hitch-hiked from West Newbury to Pinkham Notch at the age of 16 and got a job from Joe Dodge, but that after a few weeks he and Joe had a loud disagreement during dinner time and that he then hitched to Whitefield and managed to get a job on the Trail Crew. Joel had some unmentionable Crew nicknames, but the printable one he favored was "The Great Stone Face."

Joel loved the woods and the Crew. He also loved dramatic gestures. He was one of a small group of hutmen and Trail Crew who hung a beard on The Old Man of the Mountains during the night before President Eisenhower drove north through Franconia Notch. Ike was visiting NH as the guest of Sherman Adams, a Trail Crewman in 1918, later Governor of NH, and Eisenhower's White House Chief of Staff. Joel was Trailmaster in 1956 and again in 1958. That second year Joel organized the daytime raid on Lakes of the Clouds by the full Trail Crew to steal the Lakes "Green Chair", following the AMC's dictum that nighttime raids by small groups were "too dangerous".

After a period in the Army in Albuquerque NM, Joel and his new wife Pia moved to Woodstock Vermont where he worked for Poma Aerial Tramways, then ran his own concrete business, and eventually started a lacrosse supplies company. He had two children, a son Lars and a daughter Kit. Lars died an early sudden death as a result of infection by a flesh-eating fungus several years ago. By the time of Joel's death Kit had provided him with two grandchildren who he adored.

Joel was a wonderful story-teller. I can remember many many times when he had me and the rest of his audience convulsed with laughter, tears rolling down our cheeks, as he recounted some story we all already knew.

Joel was a great friend. He was an usher in my wedding. He was the godfather of my daughter. He and Pia fed me and gave me a bed innumerable times. His death leaves a hole that can't be filled.

Alex "Mahoosuc Mac" McKenzie (1958-1960)

## People of the Trail

*The following poem was performed in the First Year Talent Show at BASH! 2013*

People of the trail. I would like to tell you about the 101 things I have learned this season, but there is really only one reason why I will leave tomorrow better than I came three months ago. I may only be a first year, but this is my second year being a person of the trail, and I have to say, this way/ of life/, has taken me and shaken me, awake.

Tomorrow, when we leave and go back to the "real world," I feel that we will begin to see the cracks in reality and see the outlandish fallacy of it all.

It is all a show, polished and pretty like a museum of statues who know nothing more than the white walls that we have no trouble seeing through. Think about a pack-in where you feel like you are lackin' but the fact is, you think of how you stack/ up against the other however many million Americans who can't even do a push up. Life on the trail, it is easy to see that the word "society" is simply a world out there, where security comes in the form of an *office chair*. On the trail, without fail your heart will beat so hard, you can't but help notice yourself as alive, a beauty you will never receive working the nine to five. So many shy away from suffering, but all that is, is buffering. As Tyler Durdin would say, "this is your pain, *this* is your reality." But by sterilizing, we are paralyzing/ ourselves. As the people of the trail we invite misery and make beauty out of pain. We are not meant for this Novocain we swapped for true, human life.

On the trail, you begin to no longer take luxury seriously. Like children, we put on fancy slacks and dresses, knowing that our worth is not hinged on such material stresses. On a tired and tattered Friday, the sound of the highway grounds your faith you made it through the week. The sight of civilization solidifies the prospect of a bed. The taste of a lukewarm Genesee might as well be your life elixir. Not many people get the gift of nothing.

We are the people of the trail. Like phantoms, our shadows stretch across the trees. Our presence is

known but not always seen. The mysterious “mountain boys” and girls, if you will. We are on the outskirts where we find an alter ego that allows us free to go and be who we want to be without the confines of society. The society that tells me what a young 20-something should be. Because my body odor is more overpowering than synthetic smells that come in bottles. Because men will obviously want to date me if I swap my carharts for something pretty. Because dancing is somehow embarrassing. Because achieving comfort is more rewarding than admitting to pain. That is what society has taught me. We are not meant for metal bars we have swapped for human life

So many parts of our human self have been stripped away, left on a shelf to get dusted and rusted, seen as an antique of who we were simply in history. We’ve grown into adults looking in a mirror putting worth on appearance and adhering to standards someone else has made. I may be from the West and you may be from the East, but you all know the beast. On the trail, we are our purest form. We are the simple elements that are the basis and the rejection of complicated and **f\*\*ked up** norms. But on the trail, rawness comes in a rampage, realness comes running and the “real world” becomes as fake as a hut kid’s customer service smile with hangover on a Wednesday.

People of the trail. Look to your left and look to your right and look at this god damn sight. The presence you are in is one in a million. We are the people of the trail. These mountains have unlocked a beautiful creature in all of us. I do not care if you are TFC, RMC, a Dodgey, maybe even a god damn huttie. Please cease/ to feed the beast. And remember who you are on trail. Remember this tale because there is nothing better than being on the outskirts of “reality.” (RAISE A GLASS) To the hands that never get clean, the self that never got sleep. To the strength we gained, to every Tuesday where it f\*\*king rained. To the Gene Cream that came by the rack, and the weight we held on our back. A toast to all of you, but most of all, to my trail f\*\*king crew.

Ashley ‘Switchback’ Fife (2013)

## Nancy Cascade



Paul “Cookie” Tillyer chopping in 2013

When I was a first-year, I saw a blowdown in a pool on the Falling Waters Trail where I was working. It looked like it’d been there a while and had lost all its bark and limbs. But it still took up a big part of the swimming hole. I just remember really wanting to take it out and improve the swimming there. I never asked any of the upper years about it, or whether they’d help me or anything. I wasn’t sure if that was under our purview. Does improving swimming off trail count as trail work? I never got up the nerve to go it alone, so as far as I know its still there.

We cut a half mile relo on Nancy Pond Trail, right below the Nancy Cascades this summer. Macintosh and I had a tour-de-force week with chainsaws in hand. On Monday, we set up who all was going to be sawyers (Mac and I) and the swamper pulling our brush and the stumpers pulling out the stumps we left. Full-on destruction went down until we hit the end on Thursday, victorious.

To Ben English’s suggestion we visited the Nancy Cascade on Wednesday that week and my eyes widened a bit when I got a second shot at my dream chop. A bad, burly birch tree had come down in the waterfall. It was still attached to the bank across the pool from the falls so the very top of the crown was getting hit by the water.

Well, on Thursday night over dinner I broached the subject with Mac. Having finished an impressive amount of work cutting out the relo that week, I wanted to get a whack at this amphibious project. He gave me the go-ahead to spend Friday

morning on that before we packed out. It was raining. Hard.

When you're going to be getting soaked in a waterfall anyways, it seems like it shouldn't make much difference if it's raining. I thought so, at least. I kept trying to convince myself this was true while I was standing atop the horizontal trunk of this blowdown, getting simultaneously soaked by rain and river water. The first few branches I encountered as I walked up the tree went easily enough. The bark wasn't actually that slippery, despite all the wetness, but as I got further up towards the crown, and closer to the blasting water of the cascade, things got a little hairier.

I was midway through a branch that was underneath the trunk chopping at a very wonky angle. The way I was sitting was something like how a jockey straddles his horse in the Kentucky Derby. Anyway, as I was chopping like this, I couldn't keep hold of the handle of my axe and it glanced which caused me to drop it. Immediately it was below the surface and completely hidden for the rain and the natural churning under the waterfall. I had to sit there for a minute and absorb what I'd just done. Then, I climbed down into the pool and started fishing around with my boots. That didn't work, so I tried leaning in and reaching one arm down, futilely trying not to go for the inevitable plunge into the cold water. I ended up taking off my wool jacket, my baselayer and my t-shirt and fully submerging myself underwater. My eyes snapped open when I was under and I saw what looked like a stick, but proved (thank God) to be my axe handle.

After my little dip and subsequent set of warm-up jumping jacks in my jacket, I saw The Todd 6'4" stroll up the trail to check whether I'm alive. He snapped some pictures, swamped all the brush from the blowdown and hung out with me for a while, while I finished this ridiculous ordeal I had signed myself up for.

I know no one reading this would question whether it was worth the blue lips, chattering teeth, soaked pants or awkward chops. Some people want to build cases up waterfalls; some just want to chop blowdowns out of them. Others want to set rocks while on belay. Being on TFC affords us so much freedom to do things that very few other people get to do. Everyone has their unique little dream project within this job. Get after it! It really is all about

enjoying your work, and doing what you want. Otherwise it's all meaningless.

Paul "Cookie" Tillyer (2011-2013)

## Note From the Editor

**Hello All,**

**First and foremost, we would like to thank everyone who contributed to this issue of Chips. Sometimes it can be a hassle to collect copy from alumni and current crew alike, but this year went fairly smoothly. Without stories, recollections and updates, surely this publication would be more snooze-worthy.**

**Having said that, we strongly encourage everyone reading this issue to consider writing a piece for next year's issue. It is never too soon to start writing or too soon to send it to the email address below.**

**We hope that everyone enjoys and appreciates this issue!**

**FOO!**

**Quincy "Pants" Lacwasan**

**Daniel "Romney" Shea**

**Please send us updates! Your old crewmates are interested in what you are up to. You can send updates or memories of trail crew by email to**

**[Chips\\_Clippings@hotmail.com](mailto:Chips_Clippings@hotmail.com)**

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### SAVE THE DATE!

*Trail Crew Association  
Meeting and Alumni  
Reunion*

**November 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> 2013**

Pinkham Notch Visitor's Center  
Gorham, NH

TCA Board Meeting, Alumni  
Social Hour, and Pinkham  
Notch Dinner

See inside for details on making  
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