



# Chips & Clippings

Dedicated to the activities and history of the AMC Trail Crew

Fall 2016



## Message from the President...

As we move forward to a new season and step into the unknown, I was thinking that it would be helpful to know just how far we have come in the last few years.

- TCA is having its 7<sup>th</sup> consecutive **Annual Meeting and Reunion** on November 12<sup>th</sup> in the same location – Pinkham Notch. Don't forget to make your reservations for dinner and to stay at Joe Dodge for the weekend. It's still a work in progress and 'morphing' into greatness as we now are being asked by the AMC to provide an evening program to the general public. They recognize how important we are to the White Mountain experience, as well as, how interesting and diverse the TCA membership.

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## Secretary's Report –

Your Trail Crew Association Board had a very busy 2016 with the traditional business of maintaining our cabin, website, membership lists, Facebook group and related association business, but with an additional focus on supporting the current Trail Crew and working with both AMC and the Forest Service on the proposed relocation of the crew's base-of-operations in 2017-18 to Camp Dodge several miles north of Pinkham Notch Camp. In this latter case, the Board and other alumni met with AMC Trails Programs Director Andrew Norikin on April 30 at Camp Dodge, and visited AMC Headquarters at Joy Street, in Boston, on June 9 for a briefing about the facility. In August, the Board passed a resolution supporting the proposed new facility but with priority for funding from Trail Crew Alumni/ae being stipulated for bathroom and laundry facilities in the new Hutton Lodge instead of in a separate bath house as now proposed by AMC. The TCA also commented to the Forest Service on its support for this facility in response to "Scoping Report—Camp Dodge" this past August.

Members of the 2016 Board include Craig Whiton—President; Peter S. Jensen—Treasurer; Bob Proudman—Secretary, Robert Watts—Chair History & Archives, John Lamanna, Marc Lacroix, Jim Ludwig, Don Stevens and Tom Woods. The current Trail Master and AMC Trails Supervisor serve as *ex officio* members. In 2016 this is Ashley "Switchback" Fife (TM) and Zack Urgese (TS). In 2017 incoming Trail Master Sam "Archie" Kilburne will serve with our Board.

Recently, both Jim Ludwig and Tom Woods resigned from the Board so – as is the case each fall – we're receiving nominations at the Annual Meeting at Pinkham on November 12, 2016. We welcome your assistance and desire to volunteer for the Board!

*-Bobe*

Robert Proudman, TCA Secretary  
1965-68, Trail Supervisor 1971-79

## President's Message (continued from Page 1)

- We have been offering a **Life Membership** dues option - \$350.00 (equal to 10 years of dues) – to those that wish to stay involved and supportive long term. We encourage you to consider becoming a TCA Life Member.
- We have a great **Web site** ([www.amctca.com](http://www.amctca.com)) which is in its second generation, having just undergone a face lift and made mobile friendly. Our Web site allows the general public to learn more about us and for you to stay connected (see News & Information) and pay dues electronically. We try to get the Trail Crew calendar posted at the beginning of the season so alumni can visit during important activities.
- There is a **Facebook Group** that has seen incredible activity with wonderful stories and photos, and brought people back into the fold – Check it out! There are over 100 people as members of the group. Ask to Join Today! And, **post often** – sharing your latest of adventures and escapades is exciting to see! Even an old dog like me can do this.
- TCA has maintained its annual **Chips' N Clippings** newsletter. As you see in this issue, it is a great medium for you to communicate and tell a story (your story). We welcome input from everyone and wish to have every decade represented by someone!
- TCA has a monthly (almost) **electronic newsletter** that is distributed to nearly 200 people. If you aren't receiving this, please send us your email address ([bhwhiton@maine.rr.com](mailto:bhwhiton@maine.rr.com)). It has seen some really exciting publications by people that thought writing was not for them. It is wonderful (maybe better than that even)!
- We have adopted a trail – **Centennial Trail** – part of the AT. It's a perfect reason to swing an axe or roll some rocks – maybe paint some blazes (or at the very least visit the Shelburne Cabin). We will need to patrol again in the spring. Let me know if you'd like to participate.
- The lights are still on (well, sort of if you light them) at the **Shelburne Cabin**. Much of the roof was replaced last fall, in conjunction with the reunion. This was accomplished through some very generous donations, dues payments and a lot of really good volunteer work. Please visit and, if you don't know

where it is, contact me and I will show you (location is not published).

- TCA has helped fund '**BASH**' for the last four years – a (sort of) office 'Christmas Party' for our beloved current Trail Crew. Again, this is your dues at work.
- The **Golden Axe Award** is going into its 3<sup>rd</sup> year. If you have not seen it, you surely must. First presented to Joe and Sally May and last year presented to the descendants of Sherman Adams, it is prominently displayed at Pinkham Notch and rivals all awards. Attend the reunion to see who will receive it in 2016.
- Lastly, your **Board members** have been downright diligent and faithful about holding quarterly meetings.

That segues to the future...and brings me back to the beginning. This year at the Reunion we will look for new Board Members and Officers to lead us forward. Strong leadership is necessary as we head toward our **100<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2019**. We have great ways of communicating and keeping people aware (if we have your email and mailing addresses to reach you). Planning has begun. Attend the Reunion to hear more!

**Attend the Reunion** to see friends (and we know of some who are attending that haven't for years)!

-“Foo”

Craig Whiton, TCA President  
Trail Crew 1967, '69-'71

### **PAY YOUR DUES TODAY!**

**Without your dues, we can't fulfill our mission!**

**One Year Membership .....\$35.00**

**Life Membership .....\$350.00**

**Current Crew and Students.....\$25.00**

**Mail your dues to:**

**P.O. Box 100**

**Washington, VT 05675**

**Or pay on-line at: [www.amctca.com](http://www.amctca.com)**

**Strongly consider making a donation too!**

## Treasurer's Report –

This year's Treasurer's report begins September 1, 2015 and ends on August 31, 2016.

### Income

Donations	\$1,690.00
Dues	\$2,411.00
Interest	\$ 2.91 (checking&savings)

Donations were received from 10 members. Donations ranged from \$5 to \$1,000 (a \$259.36 increase over FY 2015). Annual dues of \$911 were received from 23 members, \$1,500 from 5 life members (a \$721 combined increase over FY 2015).

Life members are: 2 from the 1950's, 4 from the 1960's, 6 from the 1970's, 4 from the 1980's, and 3 from the 1990's. The decade is based on the first year that they were on TFC. We have a total of 19 life members, an increase of 4 from 2015.

Shelburne Lodge Fund: We still do not have such a fund - yet - we should set one up. \$1,375 was contributed toward repairs to the Shelburne Roof Project by three individuals, with the association chipping in an additional \$375 for total expenses of \$1,750.

### Expenses:

Shelburne Lodge	\$2,742.65
(Lease, taxes, insurance; \$976.65 increase over FY 2015)	
Annual Meeting/Reunion	\$ 483.17
(\$384.42 increase over FY 2015)	
Trail Crew Bash	\$ 400.00
(same as last year)	
AMC Trails Program Support	\$ 0
(same as last year)	
Chips and Clippings	\$ 638.17
(\$87.37 increase over FY 2015)	
TCA Operations	\$1,959.66
(Website \$1,797.72, the rest is miscellaneous; \$582.81 increase over FY 2015)	

### Account balances as of August, 15, 2016

Checking acct balance	\$1,692.54
Savings acct balance	\$5,163.70

Of note, in this period we had a deficit of \$2,070.65 (a \$1,004 increase over FY 2015). We need to boost

income or reduce expenses. (Item for the next board discussion.) During this financial period I had to transfer \$1,000 from our savings into the checking to cover expenses (life member dues are deposited in the savings as they should be drawn off over a period of years and not considered annual income).

Please let me know if you have any questions.

See you at the reunion!

-Peter Jensen- 1976-1979 TM '79

TCA Treasurer

## Trailmaster's Report –

On the night of the August 22, 2015 Bash, it felt like I went from a 3<sup>rd</sup> year crew leader to a 4<sup>th</sup> year Trail Master in a blink of an eye. The job started immediately. Alumni had bales of advice, everyone had questions about how I'd run the crew, and preparations already needed to be addressed for next year.

I spent much of the winter reaching out to different outdoor programs throughout New England and advertising for the new crew. In February, I commuted from Vermont to sit in on interviews with Zack. We had a lot of great candidates and I felt confident in the seven we chose.

I hopped off the Harriman project for Construction Crew and joined Trails on May 2<sup>nd</sup>. Looking back, I wish I came on sooner. With terrible weather and hours of waiting for helicopter flies, I did not get as much done as I had hoped. I also took on the project of creating sign routes based off of our patrols so we could pass off the sign duties to our awesome alumni Jad Brown (1971-72) and Craig Whiton (TCA President).

With millions of warnings to first years about how patrolling will bring you to your knees, it ended up being the easiest year of patrolling I have ever had. The weather was always beautiful and the blow-downs were scarce. We are a bit worried about the chopping skills of our future 2<sup>nd</sup> years, but I am sure there is a Christmas tree massacre in their future. We rarely got back to Hutton after dinner. The only bad weather was our infamous BEST PATROL EVER. This year, the winds were howling and the ice was laid on thick in the alpine zone. With the Washington Observatory reading -5 degrees, we decided to head back home. One member of the Greenleaf Hut crew once asked me if there was any

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### Trailmaster Report (continued from page 3)

weather we didn't patrol in. With confidence, I said "none!" But that day, TFC met its match.

There were definitely some injuries that slowed the crew down a bit including sprained ankle, concussion, stress fracture, and bad knees for all. But as usual, the crew stepped up and whapped out work straight off. We had 5 weeks on Crawford Path lead by Napoleon. It was staircase-city over there and our 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> years hit their stride. We also had All Crew Days there. One of the few rainy weekends of the year, but everyone kept in high spirits. Thor led 2 weeks on the 19-Mile Trail, where we were the whole summer last year. The parents of Luke Richardson donated money to the Trail Crew in memory of their son. We also began our summer-long project on the Mahoosuc Trail lead by Archie. Anyone who dared go into the Mahoosucs was looking at a 3.5 mile pack-in up and over Fulling Mill. Only to endure a week of packing base logs and stringers up and down the ridge. A grueling good time!

After Long Days, we switched things up and passed the Mahoosuc crew over Washburn. Once the 160 bog bridges were done, we switched over to rockwork. We also began working on the Champney Falls Loop which was supposed to go through last summer. Lead by Nova, he and his crew put in a gorgeous staircase made entirely of split rock. They worked with Jed Talbot to do some unheard-of things. But they learned some new ways and made a hell of a case. Lastly, we had the Sabbaday crew lead by Nomar. Without a train on goofers constantly coming over the trail, the crew put in wild amounts of water bars and some cases for the record books.

Some highlights from the summer included getting a crew swap together with the Adirondack Mountain Club (ADK). This has been a practice on-and-off throughout Trail Crew history. We swapped Archie and Thor for two of their guys, Contanna and Big Germ. By the end of the week, the guys found a home with us as did Archie and Thor in the 'Dacks.' We intend to keep this relationship strong, as they are the most similar crew to us in the area. They have a similar culture and hard-working attitude. We have already learned a lot from the experience.

Another highlight was the turn out for the Hut Traverse. The endurance challenge of a lifetime - 54 miles in 24 hours. We had about 10 lunatics up for the race, with a lot of first year stoke, as well as participation

from our Trail Supervisor Zack. Only about half finished, but we had the whole rest of the crew at Lonesome cheering for them. It's a hell of a sight to see that kind of support in the crew.

Looking back on my four years on crew, like many before me, I can say that these are the best people I could have ever met. They all know how to show grit, perseverance, and a whole lot of love and support for one another. I feel entirely comfortable leaving this crew to the 2017 Trail Master, Archie. He will do right by the crew and continue the legacy.

-Foo!

'Switchback', Afife124@gmail.com

### Current Crew (2016)

**Trail Supervisor:** Zack Urgese

**Trailmaster** – Ashley Fife 'Switchback' (4<sup>th</sup> Year)

#### 4<sup>th</sup> Years:

Dylan DiMartino  
"Goldrush"  
Sam Kilburn "Archie"  
Elijah Ober "Nomar"  
Alex Milde "Nova"  
John Connolly "Washburn"  
Ben Huber "Napoleon"  
Maggie Lacwasan "Thor"



#### 2<sup>nd</sup> Years:

Silas Fox "Aesop"  
Abigail Lown "Eugene Beauharnais Cook"  
Danny Walsh "Uni"  
Hannah Mellor "Penny"



#### 1<sup>st</sup> Years:

Malika Briggs "Spoons"  
Laura McManamy "Hazel"  
Anna Malvin "10-Gauge"  
Russell Werner "Buffy"  
Colin Pogue "Coupons"  
Nate Wilson "Johnny Mc"



## Trail Supervisor Report –

Every summer flies by. I think everyone on trail crew would tell you that and for the Trails Supervisor it's no different. So much time goes into planning, hiring, more planning, more hiring than before you know it patrols are over, somehow you've completed the coveted Hut Traverse, and Long Days are in the rear view mirror. As Switchback mentions in her TM report there were highs and lows this season, some great work was accomplished but we had our fair share of injuries and issues that challenged our flexibility. In all, things went well this summer, again read the TM as I don't want to be a broken record.

I want to say "Thank You" to Jad Brown (1971-72) and Craig Whiton (TCA President) for being our "Sign Guys" this year. With Switchback's great organizational skills Jad and Craig were able to pick up signs and sign sheets here at Pinkham with details about the routes, signs, and what to look for. It's been a good pilot year of TC Alumni acting as "Sign Guys" and I'll look to do it similarly next season too.

Now that it's "fall," I feel that I am just as busy now as I ever am in summer. I put much focus on the trail crew and our summer projects and looking ahead to future projects gets put on the back burner. Fortunately I was surprised by a couple early trail funding opportunities which I have explored so far with success. We will for a fact be working on the Lonesome Lake Trail in 2017; this high use trail is in need of it. We still have a work contract with the USFS that will roll over into next year, and I've submitted a proposal to work on sections of the Grafton Loop Trail, replacing bridges on Sunday River White Cap and the ladders on Stowe Mtn. I like this time of year to get out, explore, and get my eyes on as much trail as I can, with 360+ miles of trails it definitely has its days where it feels daunting and overwhelming.

-Zach Urgese  
AMC Trail Supervisor

## Honoring Crew...

### 75 Years Ago (1941)

**Trailmaster:** David Lovejoy

**Members:**

Joe Bailey (2)	Robert Horricks (1)
William Elliot (1)	Forrest 'Cabin House' (3)
Alden Flint (1)	Paul Johnson (1)
Robert Hartson (2)	Norton Smithe (1)

### 50 Years Ago (1966)

**Trailmaster:** Alan Thorndike

**Members:**

David Brooks (1)	Garvin Morris (4)
Russell Burnap (1)	Robert Proudman (2)
Mark Dannenhaur (1)	James Robjett (3)
David Hall (1)	Nick Sacco (2)
Bradford Jencks (1)	Edward Spencer (1)
Mark Lawrence (1)	Richard Standish (1)
Duncan Lewis (4)	Kurt Winkler (1)

### 25 Years Ago (1991)

**Trailmaster:** Matt Corbett

**Members:**

Kai Allen (3)	Gloria Hutchings (1)
Lewis Baldwin (1)	Tom Hutchings (2)
Dave Carlson (1)	Josh Lambert (1)
Craig Collins (1)	Michael Lane (2)
Chris Cote (3)	Tom Loveridge (1)
Kristen Dawley (1)	Mark Lucas (3)
William Deleo (2)	Kevin Metheny (1)
Ted Dettmar (1)	Jim Nichols (1)
Kari Geick (1)	Randy Noring (2)
Thad Gemski (2)	Dennis Regan (1)
Charles Giller (1)	Keith Rowland (4)
Jeff Greilsheimer (2)	Nat Scrimshaw (1)
Jim Gunning (3)	Jonathan Tauer (3)
Dana Hendrickson (1)	Brian Teixeira (1)
Caroline Hermann (1)	Thomas Trainor (4)
Sam Hodder (3)	Deacon Warner (4)
James Hourdequin (1)	Rachel Wheeler (1)

*(If you know of any errors in these lists, please email  
bhwhiton@maine.rr.com)*



## Blazing the Trail?

I have been asked to share my experiences as the first woman on the Appalachian Mountain Club Trail Crew. First some background. For those who weren't around in the late 1970s, there were lots of doors closed to women of my generation that we now take for granted. There was widespread gender inequity that seems hard to comprehend now. Here are few examples from my own experience. I always participated in sports in school. I had always wanted to try rowing. I was excited to learn that my new secondary school offered crew. Wrong. Turned out it was only for boys. When I got to college, I joined a newly formed Women's Crew. We were given a coach who had never rowed and issued ancient equipment that the men had long since rejected as inferior. These are a few small examples from the world of sport. This kind of discrimination was everywhere.

Yes, technically I was the first woman hired on the AMC trail crew in 1977. Actually, there were three women hired the first year. The other two were Joy Miller and Anne Michelac (Payson). Since I had worked for the AMC for several years and had worked as a backcountry caretaker, I was hired as a Second Yearman (or is it person now?). Did I know what I was getting myself into? Yes and no. I had a lot of friends on trail crew and had a lot of respect for them and the work they did. I had felt for several years that building trails was the right fit for me. I welcomed the challenge but was a bit leery about how I would be received. I knew there would be some push back.

The real challenge, as it turned out, was filling the shoes of a second year crew person. Here is a vignette. Before the summer actually started, I was out walking a trail with our Trail Master, Roger Moore, and Rueben Rajala, Assistant Trails Coordinator. Roger gave me the task of cutting a water bar. In truth, I don't think that at

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## Unlikely...

I was an unlikely TM. And on the surface of it, an unlikely crew member in the first place. I'd stumbled onto TFC. Although I'd always played sports, I was more of a library nerd and band geek than a jock or rugged outdoorsman. And although I'd grown up in small town New Hampshire, in the shadow of the White Mountains, and in the shadow of my formidable grandmother, Cornelia Wheeler (the long reigning president of the Chocorua Mountain Club), I'd never been the most enthusiastic participant in the annual mid-May ritual of tromping up Paugus or Chocorua in the snow or mud to clearing blowdowns and drainage while battling black flies. Plus, I was old, at least by TFC standards. I graduated from Carleton College in 1991 with a major in Religious Studies. I'd only made half-hearted attempts to find gainful employment for the intervening year before I would embark on a PhD program. And so, after graduation, I headed back to NH and to the mountains I'd grown up with and signed on for two weeks of volunteer work at Joe Dodge Lodge. I loved it, and continued on with Fall Crew. Our first job was to haul the remains of a small plane out of the Great Gulf Wilderness, by the shortest route, which happened to be up the head wall, and just across the trail to where the helicopters could swoop in to carry off the piles. After the plane, Thad Gemski gave me my first lessons in humping rocks and it proved to be a lesson I would learn over and over on crew—I could actually do things I never would have thought to do, and never thought I *could* do. My first summer on crew in 1992, I remember as my best summer. I also remember that it almost never stopped raining, and more often than not I was working in my wool army surplus pants. But I loved the immediacy and the intimacy of the work – intimacy with rock and mud, as well as the intimacy that comes through working, cooking, and sharing a tent with 11 other crew members.

My fellow first year, Dan Sheehan had just finished his senior year of high school and was just 18. He quickly picked up the name FlyBoy. The son and Grandson of Navy pilots he was headed for the military, already set on his path to becoming a Marine Cobra pilot. Dan was tough, he was funny, and he was sweet, in his slightly cocky newly-a-grown-man kind of way.

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### **Blazing the Trail? (continued from page 6)**

that point I had ever even cut down anything bigger than a sapling with an axe before. But rather than admit ignorance, I marched off into the woods and started chopping. After a long while, Roger came to check out why I wasn't finished. He appeared on the scene with his infectious grin and started to chuckle. I had selected an absolutely enormous beech tree and was chopping away about three and a half feet off of the ground. The tree looked like a beaver on stilts had gnawed it. Roger very patiently and with great tact explained what kind of tree I should have selected and what width I should look for. Then we commiserated about the inglorious fate of this majestic beech, which was far too wide to be used as a water bar. In retrospect it was a good thing that all of this transpired before crew actually started. I realized that I lacked fundamental skills to do the job, and I needed to acquire them pronto.

Part of the problem was that back then little boys were given toy tool sets and blocks to play with, while girls were given dolls and kitchen sets. I kind of broke that mold out of the gate. My mother gave me one doll - a French doll with beautiful long blonde hair. First thing I did was to grab a pair of scissors and give it a butch. No more dolls after that. I came to understand that because I wasn't socialized to solve problems that demanded spatial challenges, getting up to speed in TFC was not going to be an easy task.

There were a number of guys on crew who thoughtfully and patiently taught me everything I needed to know. If it hadn't been for Pete Jensen, Avery Jenkins, and Bob Leone, among others, I would have crashed and burned. Pete taught me how to move rock more efficiently. He was a patient and skilled teacher and an amazing trail builder. Avery just got me howling with laughter. I can still remember his booming voice letting out a huge string of expletives as the third rock in a row bounced over his hole and tumbled down into the valley below (maybe that's why today's crew lowers rocks on cables?). So maybe I "blazed the trail," but the guys on TFC gave me the paint and the brush to do it.

I never felt any overt hostility, just a lot of apprehension, particularly at the beginning of the summer. As the summer progressed, and it was clear that we women could more than hold our own, everyone seemed to relax. I felt accepted by most of the guys on the crew. It wasn't surprising that there was a lingering

nostalgia for the "old days," but given the crew's history I expected that. The initial fear that allowing "the weaker sex" onto the crew would lower work standards was replaced by a recognition that we could do the work just as competently, and we had just as much fun as a male only crew.

I am still an avid hiker. A few years back I took a hike down the Valley Way and was gratified to see that rock steps and rock waterbars that I had built almost forty years ago were still in place. The TFC continues to play a critical role in the stewardship of the Whites. I am proud to be a part of that legacy.

In truth, I was not really a trail blazer. I just followed the path already worn by the women that came before me in other branches of the AMC: the first hutwoman, the first female hutmaster, the first female winter caretaker, the first female caretaker... The list goes on and on. And finally, this experiment that the AMC TFC embarked on in '77 would have failed had it not been for the guys themselves who ultimately accepted me and taught what I needed to know.

-Joan Chevalier

1<sup>st</sup> Woman on Trail Crew-1978  
(Caretaker 1977)

REUNION 2016

## **REUNION 2016**

This is your year to attend!

**PINKHAM NOTCH**

**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 12<sup>th</sup>**

Dinner 6pm

Reservations should be made by  
November 1<sup>st</sup>

Call 603-477-2727 (Mon-Sat, 9-5)

## Unlikely (continued from page 6)

We went through the years together as the other first years drifted off. I spent my second summer in Acadia leading volunteers out of Echo Lake and working with the Park Service crew, which felt like an anthropological experiment. Back in the Whites for my third summer, I had fun putting my own spin on crew leading: I req'd food from Storehouse for meals straight out of the Enchanted Broccoli Forest. We had dress for dinner nights, where I remember Fly Boy sporting a lovely polyester dress from the local Goodwill. I read a short story every night to my crew after dinner: Isabel Allende, Pam Huston, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and Nikolai Gogol. They went through the motions of protesting, but someone would always find a way to ask me to read if I was slow to get the book from the tent. I loved the sense of commitment to a stretch of trail (5 weeks on about a mile of Mad Gulf) and even more I loved sharing with first years the brawn and the finesse techniques involved in spotting, quarrying, and setting rocks while also working on extensive projects of my own, like a 23 step case I completed over a couple weeks on Madison Gulf.



As the summer neared an end, conversation invariably turned to the next summer. Who would be TM? Freddy (Sam Coxe) was moving on to more gainful employment. FlyBoy would be busy half the summer in the swamps at Quantico in Officer Training Camp. I became TM by attrition. Not really the way anyone wants to become a first. FlyBoy was the obvious choice. I knew it. Salz (Dave Salisbury) and Carl knew it. FlyBoy had the commanding persona of a Marine in the making, the swagger available to college men. He had three years of TFC hard work and hijinks under his belt – van surfing, stomps,



and plenty of Natty Light. Given the age difference and my personality, I felt more like the den mother of Hutton, not the one to carry on the storied mantle of TFC. I wasn't the stuff of TFC legend.

Slowly, I settled into the role. I wouldn't be the one to be the last one stomping, plotting a hold up of the Cog Railway, or carrying the keg up to Madison. I remember worrying that as a woman I wouldn't command the respect of first years, but it was never an issue because I had such a solid set of crew leaders I'd already worked with for three summers: Val (Dan Breton), TBone (Tim Levesque), Lady G (Erika Kassop), Jack Bell, and Jed (Sam Hoffman). And there were frustrations, though these came more from those who hadn't been in the woods with me regularly – Forest Service reps or higher ups in AMC, who I always felt did not quite trust my skills. I remember one visitor who came into a work site and took over as I was working with a crew and using a chain saw. Maybe he would have done the same thing had I been a man, but I doubt it.

But I loved the work—I loved the challenge of rocks, the slice of an axe, and the beauty of life in the woods. The work gave me a deep appreciation of the power of body and mind, as anyone knows who has carried a packboard loaded with a full set of tools, food, personal gear and the occasional extras like winch box and cable. And most of all, I loved the camaraderie of TFC, which seems like such a scarce luxury now: to have five straight days in the woods with three other people away from all communication other than morning radio call. In 3 years, I'd somehow never had a trail name stick to me. Finally, in my fourth year one began to stick: Trail Mama.

-Rachel Wheeler, 1991-1995  
1<sup>st</sup> Female TM - 1995



## Guess I'm Old Now!

When Barbara Whiton asked me to write an article for Chips 'n Clippings, my first thought was "Damn, guess I'm old now." That thought was quickly ejected from my head when I realized I did actually have some reflections on my time with TFC that I'd like to share. So, thank you, Barbara, for the opportunity to pontificate a bit before heading back out to pasture.

Very few of us recognize the importance of an experience in real time. Usually we're too focused on the immediate actions required to see the experience through to completion. It is only later, sometimes years later, that we can see what those particular events taught or did for us.

That was certainly my experience with Trail Crew. When I arrived at Pinkham Notch two days after graduating from high school, I had no idea what I was getting in to. I'd hopped a train from Philly to Boston, then a bus to Pinkham, arriving after 9pm on a Saturday night. At least, I think it was a Saturday.

The majority of the crew were out at The Shannon Door, so Hutton lodge was empty. I walked around in awe, gazing at the bearded freaks biting their axes in pictures set against backdrops of stunning beauty. Reading the names etched in mushrooms on the walls, I almost jumped out of my skin when the phone in the hallway started ringing.

*It's not for me—I'm not going to answer it.* I thought. I stood against the wall, willing the phone to stop ringing lest it alert someone to my presence. I was not at all confident that I was in the right place.

Without warning, one of the doors off the hallway opened with a slam. Out stalked a tall (I'm 5'7"—everybody's tall), muscular man with lanky blond hair and a two-week blond beard. His hair hung down over his eyes and he made no attempt to look around the room as he mumbled into the phone. Oh, and he was buck-assed naked.

I tried to shrink into the wood paneling but my chameleon skills failed me. After promising to take a message he didn't write down, the giant noticed me standing on the far side of the room.

*Oh, crap,* I thought. *Here it comes. He's going to tell me to get the hell out of here.* I started eyeing the door and measuring my chances of making it out. Not good.

He shook his greasy locks out of his eyes and fixed them on me. Then, with a wide grin, he strode across the room with his hand extended.

"Hey, you must be the new guy! Hi, I'm Dave."

Dave Carlson's welcome was warm and genuine and a bit awkward—he was bare-assed naked after all. But it broke the ice and set the tone for my next four years on TFC.

After graduating college and finishing my fourth year on TFC, I entered the Marine Corps as a Second Lieutenant. I eventually earned my aviator wings and flew AH-1W helicopter gunships on three overseas deployments, the last being the 2003 Iraq invasion. I went back to Iraq in late 2004 as a forward air controller with the Marine Corps' nascent special operations unit, Det One. Throughout those experiences, some good, some bad, I never tried to process how anything I'd been through impacted me. It was simple: I had a job to do that people's lives depended on so, FIDO—Fuck It, Drive On.

That mantra worked okay in combat but after getting home it became an anchor around my neck. I compartmentalized my emotions and reactions so well that I had difficulty accessing them—and wasn't certain I wanted to. I told myself I was fine but couldn't quite avoid the mounting evidence that said I wasn't.

When the repercussions of lying about how I was doing threatened to hurt my family, I finally decided to be honest with myself. Problem was, I didn't know where to start. Without a guide or plan, I simply sat down and started to write what would become my first book, *After Action: The True Story of a Cobra Pilot's Journey*.

Using the written medium to 'get it all out' was cathartic for me. It allowed me to understand and process the personal impact of my experiences and gain clarity on how they'd followed me home. I eventually wrote a second book, *Continuing Actions: A Warrior's Guide to Coming Home*, to help other veterans and their families do the same.



Why am I blathering on about this in Chips 'n Clippings? Good question. I'm focusing on my post-TFC experiences because they are the lens I must look through to see the impact TFC had on me. With that said, here are some of my observations on TFC, in no particular order:

1. I learned that women are strong. Not just emotionally or mentally, but physically too. I went to high school near Philadelphia and while there were some strong female athletes in my school, they were not what my 18 year-old self considered strong. My world view changed forever, though, on my first pack-in. It was on the A-Z trail and I think we were heading about 3 miles in. Full of confidence, I loaded up my packboard and struck out up the trail at a good clip. Within a hundred meters, though, I was sucking wind. Going from

*(continued on Page 10)*

## Guess I'm Old Now (continued from page 9)

crump rock to crump rock, the rest of the crew passed me by, usually with a word of encouragement or a light "See you up there!" Every step was torture as my quads and calves cramped and I wasn't sure I'd ever make it to camp. Then along comes Peaches (Kristin Dawley). If you don't know Peaches, you don't know happy. With a smile on her face she crumped near me and commiserated about how packing-in sucks. Then she hoisted her load with a grunt and stepped off before I'd even regained feeling in my hands. Working with her and Rachel Wheeler, among other wickedly strong women, totally eviscerated my naive assumptions that women were somehow weak. This realization would serve me well in the Marine Corps, as I joined just about the time the officer corps was fully integrating women into the ranks. I knew enough then to give respect and admiration to my peers who earned it, regardless of their sex. This was a hard lesson for many of my male compatriots to grasp and sadly, some still haven't.

2. Nothing the Marine Corps ever put me through was as physically demanding as TFC. Nothing. There is just something about packing in, the complete solitary-ness of having to haul a monstrous load up a slippery mountain without help of any kind, that sets that experience apart from all the rest.



I've run through the streets of Najaf in August while getting shot at, I've climbed the exterior of buildings in Baghdad at 2am carrying my full combat load plus radio, and I've yomped for days across 10,000 peaks and passes on training evolutions in the States. And some of that was tough. But haul a packboard with full tools and a couple boxes of fresh fruit up a damn mountain? That's just pain. And there is nothing keeping you going except your own will to put one foot in front of the other. There are no orders and no task-masters snapping the whip: TFC teaches you to do that to yourself. That, right there, is one of the most valuable lessons TFC provides. You can do incredible things if you put your mind to it and simply don't quit.

3. Big successes come in small steps. Nobody looks at a washed-out, muddy hillside and says: *Cool, I'll just throw in a fifty-rock staircase and be done with*

*it.* No, you build a masterpiece like that one step at a time, likely over an entire summer if things are going quickly. The same perseverance is required for just about anything worthwhile in life. Books are written in twenty and thirty minute snippets stolen throughout the day from other stuff. PhD's are earned one paper, one project, one assignment at a time. The number of tasks required to raise a child to be able to actually wipe its own butt is stunning. Now try to get that little bugger to grow up into a productive and conscious member of society? Holy crap! Don't think about it—just put your head down and go.

I'm going to stop rambling now. Basically, TFC taught me that strength comes in lots of different packages, that my imagined boundaries of pain and exhaustion were well short of what I could actually do, and that seemingly insurmountable obstacles can be overcome with perseverance and determination. These are valuable life lessons and, while some of them were painful to learn, they have set me up for success across a wide spectrum of endeavors.

Thanks TFC.  
Foo!  
'FlyBoy'  
Dan Sheehan  
1992-1995



Dan Sheehan with his kids 2015

## Hello world's best trail builders,

Yes you, though you may now be chained to a desk job. Reflect for a moment on a short excerpt of a letter that the Trail Crew Association sent to the US Forest Service in qualified support of constructing a "new Hutton Lodge" at Camp Dodge.



Meeting at Camp Dodge - 2016

*"We would also like to offer hearty support and encourage the Forest Service and AMC to go into greater depth and detail regarding the interpretive display. Many of us could argue that Camp Dodge is the symbolic birthplace of the US trail building movement, or even a national or international heritage and trail resource of foremost significance. The most appropriate way to honor this history would be to have the commemoration developed through a collaborative design process, and possibly built by AMC trail builders."*

**Now let your imagination run wild!** How would you commemorate the founding of the US trail building movement? Would you build something of stone, or wood, or earth? Who inspires you - Abel Crawford, the CCC, the Italian stone masons of Gulfside fame, AMC's pro crew?

A coincidence of events is before us:

- The 100th anniversary of AMC Trail Crew in 2019 and,
- The construction of a new base of operations for the pro trail crew.

A subgroup of TCA has been formed. An offer of collaboration has been made. The setting is grand. If you have suggestions, skills you'd like to offer, sources of funding, please relay them to the TCA. We welcome your work, wisdom and wealth.

- Lee Burnett  
1974-1976  
Home 207.324.1596  
Mobile 207.206.2106

## One Hundred Summers –

The people of the Appalachian Mountain Club Professional White Mountain Trail Crew, their work, and adventures.

Our idea to collect stories from past TFC members, started back in the fall of 2011. We began by mailing everyone on the TCA contact list, asking for anything they were willing to share about their time spent on the Trail Crew. Later that year, we went on a 3-month road trip where we continued to receive replies from our initial mailing, and also met with several Trail Crew alumni at their homes around the country. Our progress on the project continued, on and off, over the next several years, with visits made to the UNH Archives, the Dartmouth College Library, and the Plymouth State Museum of White Mountain History. Ben English, Jr. (TFC 1956-58) of Jackson, NH has been a constant source of support, helping facilitate meetings with Alumni, and with many hours at both his house and ours spent editing line by line. Finally, almost five years later **we have a full length book of Trail Crew history and adventures!**

We are going to be self-publishing this book in the next month, and are currently in the process of designing the cover and compiling the bibliography. We plan to attend the Trail Crew Reunion this fall with copies for sale, and are very excited for people to enjoy all the stories. Thank you to all those who contributed and encouraged us. If you're interested in more information about the book, please email us at [nbeittel@hughes.net](mailto:nbeittel@hughes.net)

-Kyle "Tyla" Peckham 2008-2011 and  
Natalie "Smokee" Beittel 2009-2011

REUNION 2016

See you at...

REUNION 2016

This is your year to attend!

PINKHAM NOTCH

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 12<sup>th</sup>

Dinner 6pm

Reservations should be made by November 1<sup>st</sup>

Call 603-477-2727 (Mon-Sat, 9-5)

## Life After the Trail Crew

I was a rather introverted kid before joining the trail crew. I arrived in 1953 at the age of 15 a couple of weeks late because of my oldest brother Pete's (TFC 1948-51) wedding.

My first pack in was up the Ethan Pond Trail. All our gear was carried in beer boxes tied to pack boards. I didn't know how to tie the boxes on properly so things began to fall out of the bottom box and I had to stop repeatedly to pick up the dropped items, put them back in the box and re-tie the load.

The others quickly disappeared up the trail and I was left on my own struggling up the trail. I have walked the trail many times since and learned that the steep pitch at the beginning turns into a gentle incline after a few hundred yards. I didn't notice the transition that afternoon.

But I became more competent and began to enjoy life on the trail and the great meals and gallons of milk on the weekends back in Whitefield where we were quartered in those days.

One bit of relevant background I had was that I had participated in building our family log cabin on the Swift River off the Kancamagus Highway and I had worked for a summer at the age of 13 for Cliff Pratt, the man who had built it. So I volunteered that, with his advice, I could design and build shelters. I worked with a team of others and we

built two shelters: one above Ethan Pond (1957) and one in the Great Gulf (1959). After the Great Gulf was designated a wilderness area in 1964,

that shelter was torn down. The Ethan Pond Shelter was luckier. The Pemigewasset Wilderness that was designated in 1984 resulted in the destruction of the Desolation Shelter that brother Pete had helped build at the base of Mount Carrigan but stopped on the other side of the Ethan Pond Trail. The shelter still stands and is now a historical structure since it is over 50 years old and would, therefore, not be torn down even if the wilderness was extended to include it.

I was a physics student at MIT but the only thing that made me exceptional when I applied for a Rhodes Scholarship was the fact that I had worked on the trail crew and had risen to be trail master.



PREFABRICATION is the watchword with this trail crew. Having cut down trees and nailed one side of the shelter together, Lewis Gholston, Alabama, left, and Frank von Hippel, trail crew chief, get ready to lift it into place. When finished, this shelter will sleep 16 persons.

I got my PhD in Oxford and then returned to be a theoretical physicist working trying to understand the strange short-lived particles that are created in high-energy collisions between protons, electrons, etc. I didn't enjoy staring at the wall waiting for great ideas, however, and after ten years, I decided that I would never be missed and was able to switch to working on what I call policy physics.

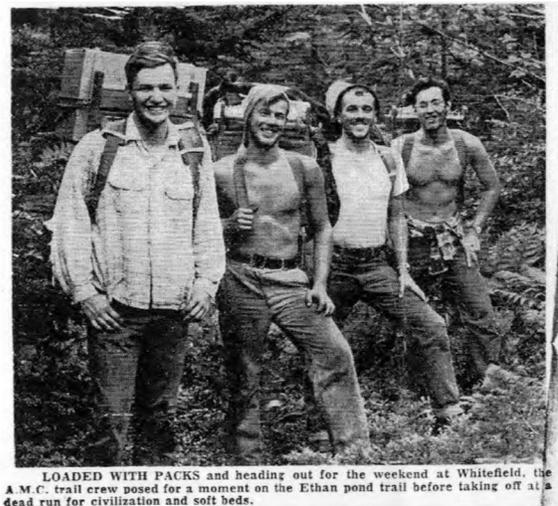
I have worked primarily on nuclear weapons and nuclear energy policy. I was lucky enough to get involved with advisors to Mikhail Gorbachev in 1983 and worked with them to end the nuclear arms race. In 1993 and 1994, after the Soviet Union disintegrated, I worked in the White House on policies to help Russia strengthen the security of its nuclear weapons and materials. And, in 2009, I got involved similarly with an advisor to the man who became Iran's Foreign Minister in 2013 and worked with them on the Iran Deal.

I have been at Princeton University at the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs since 1974, first as a researcher, then as a faculty member and now as a researcher again. I co-founded Princeton's Program on Science and Global Security and the International Panel on Fissile Materials.

I doubt my occasionally successful engagement in policy would have been possible had I not learned how to work with other people and develop leadership abilities in the Trail Crew.

I, therefore, would like to thank the AMC for establishing and sustaining a group that not only keeps trails in shape but also turns boys – and now girls – into men and women who can become leaders.

-Frank von Hippel, 1953-54, 56-57, 59



LOADED WITH PACKS and heading out for the weekend at Whitefield, the A.M.C. trail crew posed for a moment on the Ethan pond trail before taking off at a dead run for civilization and soft beds.

See the article, *Check 365 Miles of NH Mountain Trails* on the Web site at [www.amc.tca.com](http://www.amc.tca.com).

## A tale of two trails...

This morning I look out on the forested mountains of the Sandwich Range, breathe in the perfume of woodsmoke, and think back on my days of working on, leading and organizing trail crews for various organizations and initiatives in years past. These memories mingle with more recent scenes. While trail work has not always been my vocation—what earns my daily bread—it has always been my avocation, what I love to do. These days it's both. I currently divide my time between the Sendero Pacífico project in Costa Rica and the Franconia Ridge in the White Mountains. On the Ridge I carry on Laura and Guy Waterman's tradition of trail tending, keeping the informal West End Trail Tenders (WETT) going as an AMC trail adopter.

The Sendero Pacífico in Costa Rica envisions a trail and hut system between the Monteverde Cloud Forest at the continental divide and Mangroves in the Gulf of Nicoya. It connects both natural habitats and human communities on Costa Rica's Pacific Slope within the Bellbird Biological Corridor, one of the most biodiverse places on the planet (Costa Rica is only 0.1% of the world's landmass and contains 5% of the world's biodiversity). It is also one of the most threatened environments, having experienced the world's highest rate of deforestation in the 1980's. Fortunately, these green mountains have begun to reforest and the Sendero Pacífico plays an important role in this recovery as a recreational and economic development opportunity for local communities.

Trail making is a family tradition. My great grandfather, Arthur Lewis Goodrich, one of the charter members of the AMC in 1878, was a trail maker in Waterville Valley in the 19th century. His son and my namesake, Nathaniel Lewis Goodrich, is one of the "triumvirate of trailsmen" that unified the White Mountain trail system in the early 20th century (Waterman, Laura; Waterman, Guy, *Forest and Crag*). In his 1918 *Appalachia* essay, *The Attractions and Rewards of Trail Making*, Nat Goodrich writes, "Of trail making there are three stages. There is dreaming the trail, there is prospecting the trail, there is making the trail." I have been fortunate in Costa Rica to have experienced all three.

But trail making is not the only work. Those early trail makers did not anticipate the 'lug sole army' that would compact and erode trails, requiring waterbars, rock steps, scree walls and more. This was my early work, erosion control construction, where I wielded pick-mattock and pry-bar. While I still love to build trail (especially flipping and placing rock), as time has passed I have learned that trail construction has a short life without trail tending. Many years of cleaning waterbars

and repairing scree wall on Franconia Ridge has taught me how essential these less glamorous tasks are. Those of us who have worked "pro" crews don't always appreciate the amateur work of volunteers. The word amateur comes from latin *amare*, "to love." Trail adopters return year after year, come to know each twist and turn on their trail, how water drains after a storm, and where people tend to stray. We know our trails intimately, and, yes, we come to love them.

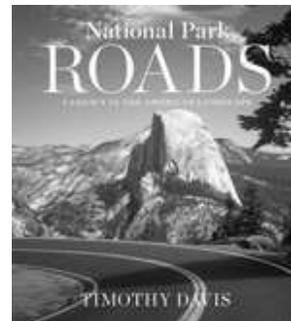
It's been 45 years since my first trail work as a twelve-year-old in Waterville Valley, guided by another old AMC trail hand, Seymour Smith. I'm still at it.

-Nat Scrimshaw 1991

NH Heritage Trail Coordinator

The AMC is offering two "volunteer vacation" weeks on the Sendero Pacífico in Costa Rica in 2017. Sendero Pacífico video: <https://youtu.be/Xz4Ke1nI2yQ>

In collaboration with the USFS and the AMC and starting summer 2017, WETT plans to offer an internship/apprenticeship for college students that will focus on tending scree wall and cairns on Franconia Ridge. WETT Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/wettrails/>



From Acadia and Great Smoky Mountains to Zion and Mount Rainier, millions of visitors tour America's national parks. While park roads determine what most visitors see and how they see it, few pause to consider when, why, or how the roads they travel on were built. In

this extensively researched and richly illustrated book, national parks historian Timothy Davis highlights the unique qualities of park roads, details the factors influencing their design and development, and examines their role in shaping the national park experience

Decisions about park road development epitomize the central challenge of park management: balancing preservation and access in America's most treasured landscapes. Park roads have been celebrated as technical and aesthetic masterpieces, hailed as democratizing influences, and vilified for invading pristine wilderness with the sights, sounds, and smells of civilization. Davis's recounting of efforts to balance the interests of motorists, wilderness advocates, highway engineers, and other stakeholders offers a fresh perspective on national park history while providing insights into evolving ideas about the role of nature, recreation, and technology in American society.

-Author Tim Davis was on Trail Crew in 1975-1977

## Greenland 1973

Our trip across Greenland was the culmination of 2 years work. The first attempt was a west to east crossing in 1972 which became a learning experience that ended with a retreat off the Ice cap after a month. The next year's try was much easier as snow covered glaciers go clear to tide water east to west.

A trip such as ours, like any long journey, is composed of many small steps. The overall project can and does look very daunting, but each step usually gets you that much closer to completion. We had many of those steps in place from the year before.

We redesigned the sled and used a single sled for the party and got one other person to go with us. Then it was time to gather, bag up food, and get our gear onto a flight to Reykjavik, Iceland.

Our flight turned out to be anything but direct. The airport in Iceland was closed so we got a tour of the airports of northern Europe. Upon our arrival in Iceland the weather turned sour again and we waited a week before we could get to the air strip in Eastern Greenland on the little island of Kulusuk. At that time, it was a supply strip for the Dew Line radar site on the island, and we were met by people that wanted to see our paperwork.

Much of the travel in that part of the world is by the helicopter which had crashed not long before we got there, so you wait. The Greenlanders have a saying that translates to "Maybe, we see, we try." That sums up travel in that part of the world most of the year. We did get a couple of local dog teams to take out onto the sea ice edge, but the boat that was supposed to meet us there never showed up. We headed back and waited for the new helicopter to show up.

After a week or so the new chopper got there, was put together, and then test flown. We are off to the main village in East Greenland, now called Tasiilaq. It is also on an island surrounded by winter Pac Ice.

Once there we set out the Air Chart of the Ice Cap and had a discussion about whether we should try a great circle or rhumb line. Remember, this was in the era before electronic navigation and though the great circle route is shorter it requires changing compass courses at specific spots during the trip. With this in mind we plotted the rhumb line course we needed for the crossing. Lastly we checked the sextant and the time on our chronometer. When we got everything organized and ready to go we flew across the fjord to the head of a bay where we started our TRIP.

When the chopper flew off we were on our own. Without the present day luxuries of SAT phone or GPS there was no way to communicate with or get back across the ice filled fjord to Tasiilaq. From here on out

we had to deal with all issues that might come up on our own.



After the chopper dropped us off we moved our gear from sea level 50 meters up a steep snow slope to a frozen lake and set up our first camp. From this point on we traveled during the colder nights so that we could be more comfortable in the tent during the warmer day time hours. The first night's move was along the lake, over a low pass, and down onto another lake that our ascent glacier dumped into. Our next move was onto the ascent glacier and up to a big boulder right in the middle of it. The timing of the move was not the wisest thing that we had done for a Peterac (cold air falling off the glaciers into the narrow valleys) began to blow. During the process of trying to set up our pyramid tent the center pole was snapped by a gust of wind forcing us to retreat to the base of the glacier, a spot somewhat out of the wind. A patch was created with a bunch of parachute cord and a couple of tent stakes which held for the rest of the trip.

While waiting out the Peterac we had the fortune to see very interesting natural phenomena. When we came onto the lake the night before, the ice near the edges was cracked much like the tide had been working it but we were well above tide water. During the largest of the wind gusts I could see the ice near our camp rise up as much as a foot. The wind blowing down the glacier was putting a great deal of down force on the center of the lake. That combined with the up draft at the glacier ice face caused the ice near camp to rise.

When the wind came down we moved back up onto the glacier to our cache, picked up our gear, and headed out onto the icecap. During the first few days, navigation was not too hard as there was always a cloud or blemish in the snow that we could head toward, however as we moved higher up on the icecap and away from the mountain that changed. The horizon became very even and we had 360-degree blue sky most days with no blemishes in the snow or on the horizon. This made keeping a compass course a bit of a challenge. The best solution that we could come up with was to line our skis up on the proper compass course and note the angle of our shadows. The lead man's job was to set the pace and stay on course. The other two people were on

*(continued on Page 16)*

## Volunteer Sign Man

A Trail Crew reunion presents a great occasion to reminisce, recall the days of one's youth, and revel in days of glory gone by. In my particular case, long gone by. We were Gods, did amazing things, and if we had to, by God, we could do it all again. That's the mindset of 60 year olds at a Trail Crew reunion. The present day AMC personnel are looking for volunteers. You're easy bait now! Suddenly a suggestion is made, an opportunity to relive those days of long ago presents itself and wham- you're falling through an invisible trap door. You feel great. Before you know it suddenly you've volunteered for something. You are now an AMC volunteer and in the moment quite proud of your new commitment. But, you're not thinking clearly. Forty three years ago you didn't have knee pain, hip pain, back pain, and those slightly unpleasant sensations in the body that neither you nor your doctor can quite identify. You weighed *much* less. You check yourself in the morning, doubt creeps in, but it's too late. You'd like to gracefully back out. Could you? Of course. Will you? God no.



That's how I volunteered to take on the position of AMC *Trail Crew Sign Man*. The plan was to complete a hike each week beginning in May and ending

in August. The goal? Complete 15 sign loops. This constituted about half the load this job entailed. The AMC has about 700 signs it maintains along 350 miles of trail. The sign loops are 8-15 miles long, averaging around 12 and each would take about 10-12 hours to complete. In my case an average of 6 hours of driving time would also have to be factored getting from southern NH to the White Mountains. Actually, the time commitment reality sank in later. The job entailed using sign sheets to critique the conditions of signs, replacing worn out signs with new signs, rotted sign posts with new sign posts cut and peeled from the woods, straightening and reinforcing sign posts with additional rock as necessary, and tightening loose lag bolts that secured the signs to their posts or trees. In some cases, as I later learned, loosening lag bolts to allow for tree growth. How long would it take to cut and peel a new sign post I wondered? I was told I didn't have to do this but this part of the job sounded to me like fun.

While talking this idea over at the November reunion with Trailmaster Switchback she seemed eager to pass

on this responsibility as it now fell to her to organize and delegate each week the signing responsibilities to various crews headed out for the week. The sign man position used to exist as a single trail crew member's summer responsibility (one that I had held in 1972) but it was now the Trail Master's responsibility to delegate sign responsibilities to individual crews each week. Why was the idea of a single sign man position abandoned? Good question. Most likely TC workers *stopped* volunteering for this position. At any rate, in its present form the responsibility was considered a true nuisance by both Switchback (who had actually overseen it for the past few years) and as I later found out, the crews. As they described it to me, sign sheets would get lost or destroyed during the week, crew members would get lost when they were sent off from the group to track down signs and the whole thing was just a huge interfering annoyance. I looked forward to it. And, as I reasoned with my wife in a somewhat desperate attempt toward a justification - there are worse mid-life crises.

It was now the end of February. I was in a panic about actually being able to pull this whole thing off. Each decade had added an additional 10 pounds of body weight. I needed a plan. Beginning in March I adopted a strict diet. After a time I began to throw in daily 5 mile runs. Weeks crept by. An older body was eventually whipped into reasonable shape, not 1972 body shape mind you but good enough I hoped. I bought a ll Bean retro daypack, ultralight bag/pad/tent weighing in at just under 5 pounds, jackknife type folding saw (awesome), hatchet, and the necessary clothing and emergency items. The loaded pack weight was around 20 pounds. Time for a training hike up Lafayette. It was after all only a 5-6 hour round trip, not the kind of 10-12 hour commitment that the sign loops would entail. That hike was completed on a cold sub freezing day in late April and a thin sheet of snow and ice covered the trail from the Greenleaf Hut to the Lafayette summit. I felt OK going up and tolerable coming down. The following two days, crippled with lactate acid build up, I found myself wincing with each step. It was a few more hikes before this effect, much to my mental and physical relief, subsided.

I began the hikes in early May as planned. Three and a half months later I've completed 11 of the 15 sign loops, or approximately 140 miles of trail. Reflections? Honestly it has proven more arduous, more exciting, and more fulfilling than I could have imagined. There were moments of exhilaration and moments of feeling a little overwhelmed. A hiker on the AT told me one day that hiking the AT changes a hiker's brain chemistry. When I asked him "How?" he replied, " It makes you kinder." His humility and kindness made me an instant believer.

*(continued on Page 15)*

## Volunteer Sign Man (continued from page 14)

And so, in short, the experience has been demanding but overall a great adventure. The feeling of standing in the Mahoosucs at the top of Mt. Goose Eye on a beautiful August afternoon, is nearly indescribable.

On each of the loops I've photographed every sign (AMC and Forest Service) and cut and peeled a number of new posts which has proven an unexpected pleasure. Peeling the bark



off a fresh cut spruce, cutting it to length, the slippery log in your hands and odor of spruce pitch on a windy day in the mountains - can't beat that! It has been equally satisfying to replace old faded signs with new ones. For me, the look of a new post or sign (white with green lettering) is a thing of esthetic beauty. It consoles and reassures the hiker. I've been thanked by many hikers showing genuine gratitude. Posts and signs have a positive psychological effect on the weary hiker.

The unexpected has been the norm on every trip. I've spent nights at the trail crew cabin thanks to Bob Proudman's generous donation of his private quarters, the Highland Center, Pinkham, and a beautiful little place called the Rostay in Grafton Notch. I found early on that it was important to be on the trail by 7:00 am or earlier which meant a drive from home the night before the hike in order to get an early start. I used separate taxi services in the various notches and a hidden bicycle in other cases to return to my car at the end of the day. I've hitchhiked once successfully and another time unsuccessfully, eventually begging a ride from the Forest Service. I've been freaked out climbing in early May hitting icy conditions up the Avalon trail, wind howling at 25 degrees, eventually coming down the Kedron Flume stairs in a torrent of icy water. I've been exhausted with painful swollen feet coming down in the dark not knowing if cell phone service would allow me to call the taxi service. I've felt elated in early August sitting at the Look Out on the Success Trail at 8:00 o'clock in the morning with a cool breeze and the wild cawing of a flock of crows riding wind currents up the valley. I've felt touched by the beauty of Zealand Falls and Zealand Notch and equally moved watching the Cog Rail car coming down near the summit of Washington right next to me at day's end with 8 workers lying about an open flatbed car like traveling hobos. Mt. White Cap in Grafton Notch? A hidden treasure as is all of Grafton Notch beginning with the Eyebrow on route 26. Hiking in the White Mountains over a four month period produces a lot of vivid memories.

For each of these loops I've submitted a Sign Report to my immediate boss Trail Crew Master Switchback,

Trail Supervisor Zach, and my former boss from 1972 Bob Proudman. Each has thanked me many times and that has been a huge support and one greatly appreciated. Honestly I think I might have bailed had it not been for their words of encouragement. I have 4 more hikes to go and will complete them on cool fall days... no ice, no bugs, no heat!

-Jad' Brown  
1971-1972

## Trail Report – September 3rd

Easy day hiking, nice weather. Left home at 5:00 am. Got to Greenleaf Hut 9:00 am with new sign. Said hello to the new fall crew and took our picture with the new sign and then went out to replace the old. Strange, the old one looked new. Neither I nor



the crew could figure that out. I called Zach (my boss) but we lost communication shortly into my inquiry. Oh well, replace the sign anyway. It had the old backing on it so at least I could get rid of that. Replaced the sign and went back into the hut. The crew was standing together out in the middle of the floor and an older woman from Alabama who I had just met was sitting at one of the tables in the back. She had complained to me that our mountains were too big and she was waiting it out at the hut while the rest of her party climbed Lafayette.

I held up the sign and asked, "Now, does anyone see anything wrong with this sign? As the crew collectively shook their heads no, the lady from Alabama shouted out from the back of the room in a loud southern accent, "Ya! It ain't spelled right! Bridle is misspelled! Saw it the minute I got up here." Then she added, "Yup, y'all mountains are too big and y'all can spell worth shit."

Everyone laughed, including her, and I ran outside to check the new sign I had just put up. Sure enough, Bridal had been corrected to Bridle. A closer inspection of the sign sheets revealed a fine notation reading 'sign is misspelled' (actually not misspell so much as an incorrect spelling). I kinda prefer Bridal over Bridle, I mean one references a young lady in white and the other a horse in harness. Of course I wasn't going to argue with the feisty woman from Alabama!

-Jad Brown

### Greenland 1973 (continued from Page 13)

either side and behind him. The leader's job was long and boring, so we traded off often.

We carried all of our food, 40 day's worth with us right from the start. Air drops were not possible or within our budget even if we could've been found. We had weighted it into individual and daily portions before we left the states: nuts, chocolate, dried soup, oatmeal, rice and tea. The decision was made at the start that any day that we could not travel we would be on half rations. This worked well for us for as we were a total of 48 days underway from the helo drop to Sondre Stormfjord and ended up with some food left. The pyramid tent was great for cooking in; we could zip out the floor and vent in the peak which acted as a chimney. This allowed us to do all of our cooking, and melting of snow inside the tent with little or no problem. The cooking was done on an Optimus 111B diesel stove that worked like a champ.

We had rigged the tent fly so that it could be use as a parasail if we had the right wind and weather conditions. There was a two-day span when we were able to hook it to the sled and get it to fly for us. It pulled the sled and two people most of the time. One person always stayed back with the compass to log our heading.

A noon sun sight is an important task when you are in the middle of an ice field 400 miles wide by 1500 miles long, and relying on dead reckoning (DR) for navigation. When I got out the Sextant to take some noon positioning shots we found that either the chronometer was gaining time or we were making very good progress. It was decided that the latter was not the case, but we did get some reasonable latitude readings and confirmed that our DR position was pretty accurate.

We were awoken one afternoon by a dark shadow circling the tent. Looking out we found a seagull flying overhead. This was a bit of a surprise. We might have been a bit misplaced, but he was lost. From that position it was at least 150 miles to open water with nothing but snow along the way. I bet that he was a bit skinny by the time he got to the coast.

Once over the height of land, at about 8000 feet, the terrain started to be in large steps with each one more pronounced than the last. The West Coast of Greenland is much warmer in the summer than the East Coast. The snow started to become wetter as we dropped in elevation and then down to the bare ice portion of our trip. We had lightened our load on the sled enough by this time that we could spilt the load between the three of us, and travel on skis. This allowed us to be more mobile and able to travel much faster.

At this time, we started to drop into the bare ice and the mountains to the west started to come into view. They got bigger each day and they were all in the right

places. We had managed to cover the 350 miles across the Icecap by compass and come out right on the mark. It was a great relief to have the proper peaks come into sight that were to lead us right down to the Russel Glacier. Spending the first night in 46 days not camped on the snow and ice was pleasant. Having the warmth of the ground and the smell of grass under us will always stick in my mind.

From there we had a 25 mile hike out to the road to Sondre Stormfjord. There was only one little problem. A couple of miles beyond the ice there was a river that came down from the north and was not fordable. We had to don the crampons and head back onto the ice in order to make our way around to where it flowed from under the glacier. This was a project that we were not looking forward to doing. We had to move back from the ice face in order to get onto stable ice and then find a route back off the glacier once we got beyond the river outflow. Then... It was just an easy hike out to the road to Sondre Stormfjord. We got a ride out to the airbase and flew back East Greenland for the rest of the summer.

Don Stevens  
1968-1971



#### Do we have your mailing address?

If not, you will miss out on this newsletter!  
We currently have ~**340 addresses** for alumni!  
(But are missing at least an equal number!)



#### Do we have your email address?

If not, you will miss out on the monthly updates!  
We currently have ~**185 email addresses** for alumni! (Lots more emails to get!)



facebook

#### Join the Facebook Group?

So you can see what other TFC are doing and saying! There are currently ~**105 members in the group!** (Many more people to engage!)

**Please help us  
keep our records current!**  
Email [bhwhiton@maine.rr.com](mailto:bhwhiton@maine.rr.com)

## Where do Alumni live?

State	# TCA Alumni	State	# TCA Alumni
Alaska	5	New Jersey	6
Alabama	2	New Mexico	5
Arizona	3	Nevada	1
California	14	New York	22
Colorado	7	Ohio	1
Connecticut	12	Oregon	9
District of Columbia	2		
Florida	8	Pennsylvania	6
Iowa	1	Rhode Island	3
Idaho	4	Tennessee	1
Illinois	4	Utah	2
Indiana	1	Virginia	5
Massachusetts	72	Vermont	33
Maryland	6	Washington	6
Maine	33	West Virginia	1
Minnesota	4	Wyoming	2
Missouri	1	British Columbia	1
Montana	3	Nova Scotia	1
North Carolina	2	Ontario	1
New Hampshire	40	Quebec	2
United Kingdom	1	Equador	1

For those that live within driving distance of Pinkham, we hope you will make every effort to attend the Reunion!



Sam Evans-Brown combines solid reporting and long-form narrative storytelling to bring the outdoors to you. You don't have to be a whitewater kayaker, an obsessive composter, or a conservation biologist to love Outside/In. It's a show for anyone who has ever been outdoors. In short, it's a show for \*almost\* everyone.



Sam interviewed several former TFC alumni and went to visit current crew at Champney Falls, while at work.

Listen to his story **WTF is TFC?** at:  
<http://outsideinradio.org/> (Season 1, Episode 16)

# REUNION 2016

## REUNION 2016

This should be your year to attend!

- Hear about planning for the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration!
- Who will receive the Golden Axe Award for 2016?
- Peter Jensen (1976-1979) and Cristin Bailey (1999-2006) will be our special presenters!

**SATURDAY,  
 NOVEMBER 12<sup>th</sup>  
 PINKHAM NOTCH**

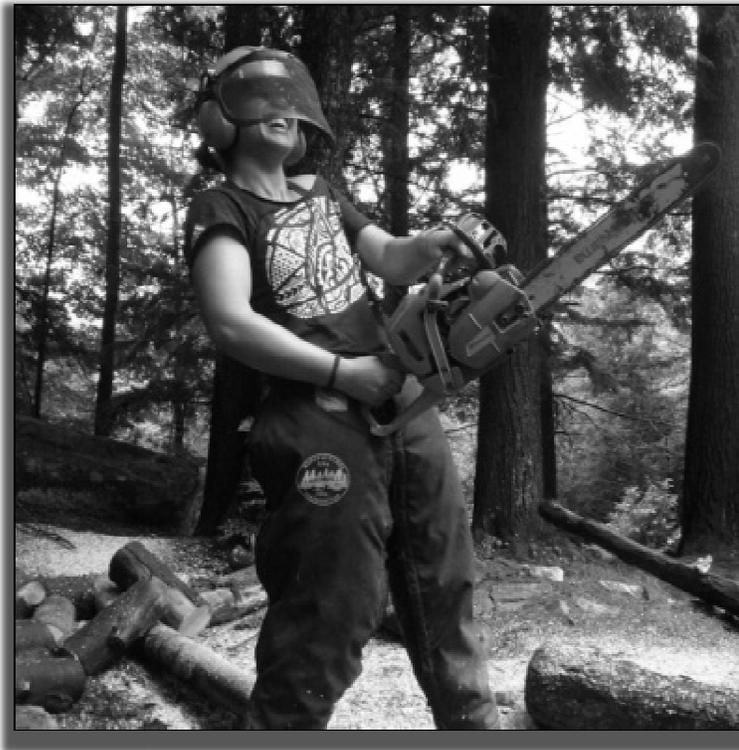
1pm-4pm Annual Board Meeting  
 4pm-6pm Social Time (beverages/munchies to share welcomed)  
 6pm Dinner  
 7:30pm-9pm Presentations and Camaraderie

Dinner Reservations should be made by November 1<sup>st</sup> -  
 Call 603-477-2727 (Mon-Sat, 9-5)

**Make it a weekend!**

Stay at Joe Dodge  
 Call 603-477-2727 (Mon-Sat, 9-5)  
 Call TODAY as space is limited!





c/o 32 Pinecrest Road  
Portland, ME 04102

Postage

TO:

**Annual  
Reunion...**  
**Saturday  
November 12<sup>th</sup>**  
Look inside  
for  
more information