ORDEAL ON MT. TAURUS

Two perspectives on an emergency rescue.

Our Mid-Week Hike to Mt. Taurus in the Hudson Highlands was a great hike, until it wasn’t...

By Ginny Fauci

It was a beautiful January morning in the Hudson Highlands when twelve of us met at the new Washburn parking lot on Route 9D. Lalita Malik and I were co-leading the hike, and at 9:30 we started up toward Mt. Taurus. At the quarry on the way, some of the hikers took a walk around before continuing up to the top. We picked the summit rocks facing the Hudson as our lunch spot. You could see the Bear Mountain Bridge, the new Mario Cuomo Bridge, and a hazy NYC skyline. Gorgeous views! Time to head down.

And then, at 12:15, Lalita took a fall. She said she couldn’t get up and believed her leg was broken. Al Limone and I were able to get her into a sitting position with packs supporting her back, leaving her legs straight in front.

The first thing I did was phone the Park Police, and they took it from there. I began getting calls from Park Management, Phillipstown EMS, North Highland FD, Cold Spring FD, and even one from 911. That person told me that if I had called 911 I would have gotten Orange County, and it might have taken longer to get help.

I will always remember Thursday, January 17, 2019. That was the day I found out I am not invincible.

By Lalita Malik

GINNY FAUCI AND I were leading our Mid-Week Hike up Mt. Taurus. It was comfortably cold for the steep ascent. We made pretty good time and reached our lunch spot, a sunny rock with views of the Manhattan skyline. After lunch, we continued to the top of Mt. Taurus, and began our descent.

I stopped to change into warmer gloves. Wham! I was face-down on the ground, with a searing pain in my right thigh and in my left upper arm, which had broken my fall. I lay there, and, for the first time in my life, could not get up. Dazed, I called out to Ginny, and asked her to start rescue procedures. It was clear that I would not be able to walk out. I wasn’t sure if she comprehended what I said, so I repeated myself, still face-down on the ground.

Ginny looked up the Park Office number on a map and reported the incident. Then she called out to the rest of the group, which had gone ahead, and asked them to come back. Al Limone came over to help me up. I gradually rolled on my left side and was able to sit. The pain was excruciating, but once I was in a sitting position it abated somewhat. I could see...
Elected Officers

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Committee Chairs & Other Volunteers

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Thank you... to long-serving board members Dan Brown (former Board Chair, now our chapter’s Conservation Chair); Ellen Zelig (former Board Secretary); Bill Beehler (long-time Chapter Board Director); Sayi Nulu, who served as Conservation Chair and Meetup Coordinator; and Jean-Claude Fouere, who completed six years as our Club Director, representing the Mid-Hudson Chapter at the state-level ADK board.

Town of Lexington, Greene County
On Jan. 10, New York State Police reported to Forest Rangers that two hikers on the Devil’s Path in the Hunter Mountain-West Kill Wilderness Area needed assistance returning the five miles back to their starting point. Five Forest Rangers responded and found the 22- and 24-year-old Rockland County men within an hour. Rangers escorted the inadequately prepared hikers back to their vehicle.

Town of Shandaken, Ulster County
On Jan. 13, two hikers in the Slide Mountain Wilderness Area reported to 911 that they needed assistance descending Slide Mountain. A subsequent call indicated both hikers were cold and one had suffered a hip injury. Later that day, another hiker reported to 911 that the injured hiker, a 23-year-old New Jersey man, was now unconscious. By 8:30 PM, Rangers reached the injured hiker and found three additional hikers needing immediate evacuation due to the onset of hypothermia. As these hikers were led off the mountain, the injured hiker was treated for mild hypothermia and secured in cold-weather gear. At first light on Jan. 14, Rangers determined that he could hike out with their assistance, and a helicopter rescue was no longer needed. By 9 AM, the man was off the mountain, evaluated by emergency medical technicians, and released to his own care.

Town of Hunter, Greene County
On Feb. 2 around 5:15 PM, DEC Central Dispatch received a report of an injured 36-year-old visitor from Germany who had hit a rock and fractured his lower leg while skiing a steep section of the Devil’s Path. Forest Rangers hiked nearly a mile up to the patient from the Notch Lake Trailhead. Several volunteers, Hunter Police Department officers, and a New York State Police officer were already with the victim. “We hypo-wrapped him to keep him warm,” Ranger Rob Dawson told HudsonValley 360. “Then we placed him into a sked to secure him and attached ropes for a belay.” The trip down was slow and arduous. Working through the evening in steep, icy conditions, rescuers were able to get the patient to safety by 1:30 AM. He was taken to Columbia Memorial Hospital.
There was no sense in everyone standing around in the cold, so I sent the other hikers down. I was on the phone almost continuously, giving reports on Lalita’s condition (and our condition) and getting ETA updates. Meanwhile, we were fetching clothes out of Lalita’s pack to keep her warm. Al took my Therm-a-Rest seat and used it as a splint on her thigh, tying bandanas to keep it secure. We borrowed another seat and placed it beneath her and wrapped a down jacket around her legs. Then, without moving her too much, we put three emergency blankets around and under her as best we could. Al used duct tape to keep the blankets together. Lalita said she was warm all over, but I kept checking to make sure she wasn’t shivering. After a while, she said her feet were getting cold, so we got some hand warmers from her pack and tucked them under the tongue of her boot. Then we wrapped the blankets around her again. That seemed to help a little. I told her to wiggle her toes occasionally to keep them moving.

We headed down the mountain about 2:30. The rescuers took it nice and slow over the steep, rocky Notch Trail, stopping every so often to switch bearers. There weren’t enough rescuers to switch off six at a time, so some had to carry most of the way. They were very coordinated and did a great job!

We got to the bottom about 4 PM. An ATV awaited us on the other side of the stream. Lalita got a short ride over to the dirt road leading to Lake Surprise. A Park pickup and fire engine greeted us. The men transferred Lalita to the back of the pickup (we got in the front) and took a slow, bumpy ride over the rutty road to Lake Surprise, where the Phillipstown EMS Ambulance was waiting. There was also another fire truck there, and more Park pickups.

After making sure Lalita was safely in the ambulance and asking where she was being taken, I gave the Park Police all her info and mine. A Park pickup returned us to the parking lot to get our cars. Lalita had left her pocketbook with her medical cards in her car. (Always carry ID and medical cards with you in your backpack or in a little fanny pack, as I do.) Her carpoolers had put the pocketbook in my car and driven her car home for her. Anthony Sorace and I headed to Vassar Hospital to give her the pocketbook. It seemed to take forever—do not go up 9D or 9 during rush hour— but apparently the ambulance went the same way, because we got to the parking lot just as the attendants were unloading the patient. Inside, we visited with Lalita for a couple of minutes before a nurse came in with morphine. I got home at 6:30. The adrenaline had finally worn off, and then it hit me: I was exhausted! The rescue was fairly fast, but it had been a long day.
Ginny Fauci
swing. Ginny was in touch with multiple people and informed me that teams were coming up from Lake Surprise Road and would reach us in two hours. It was one o’clock. The sun was shining on me, and I was warm and smiled for a picture.
The rescuers arrived earlier than expected. That’s when the torture started. Matt Steltz, the rescue-team leader, removed my warm cocoon and asked me to lie down for an evaluation. I refused, arguing that it would hurt. He told me firmly that I had no choice and helped me gradually reposition myself. Another EMT, a woman, helped him with the evaluation. They tied something around my thighs to keep them together and slid something under me and slowly lifted me onto a stretcher. Once the movement stopped, the pain lessened, but I was cold now, and my feet were even colder.
Teams of six people at a time began carrying me down the mountain. I could hear someone in front warning the others when a boulder or a stream or some other obstacle was coming up. They kept reassuring me that I would soon be down and in a warm ambulance. When the carry teams switched sides, Matt warned them not to step over the patient. The female EMT kept checking to make sure I was OK, offering me Al’s hot chocolate.
After an eternity, I heard someone say we had arrived. They put me on an ATV for a short ride. Pretty soon after that, I was transferred to a flatbed truck, and eventually to a warm ambulance.
At Vassar Hospital, I received a V.I.P. reception and was rushed into a cubicle to be examined. My status was Trauma 3, which meant I was bumped to the top of the line for x-rays and tests. The x-ray revealed a split femur. The solution was surgery. A rod would be inserted in the bone and screws would hold it in place. I called my cat sitter to ask him to please take care of my cats and birds until further notice. I called Sayi Nulu and asked her to bring me my device chargers and fresh clothes. For the first time, I relaxed a bit.
In the ensuing days, I had surgery and my recovery got underway. I realized how lucky I was to have so many friends, mainly ADKers and neighbors. They kept my spirits up with visits, doing my laundry and bringing me clothes, food, tea, and sundries. I never felt alone.

UPDATE!
Lalita is out of rehab and is staying with her daughter and family down in Virginia. She can now put 50% of her weight on her leg, which is beginning to heal nicely. She will start physical therapy next week and hopes to be back in her own home some time in April.
Ellie Shortle, a long time MHADK member, and an avid hiker and kayaker, passed away on November 16, 2018 at the age of 91. She will be missed by so many.

When Ellie and I were on one of Russ’s Hudson River eight-plus-mile paddles, inevitably, on the return trip, the strongest paddlers would be up front, maybe a quarter-mile ahead. Ellie would start getting tired trying to keep up. I would drop back and stay with her. (Shh, don’t tell anyone, but, I was getting tired also.) Together, we would paddle at our own speed, talking, joking, telling stories, enjoying nature. We were not in any rush. The amazing thing was, even at 85, or 87, or 89, she was always willing to try—she never gave up.

—Eli Cohen

I had the huge pleasure of being in Ellie’s company just a few times. The last was this past September. We kayaked in the Hudson in Poughkeepsie. The river was not gentle that day: dark, menacing and, unpredictable. I was a little nervous, but then I looked over and there was Ellie, cruising along as though she were in a bathtub. She was so cool. So confident. So skilled. She and I went farther than the guys, and I’m pretty sure we could have gone to Beacon if we’d had our headlamps.

—Carla Barrett

I wanted to kayak on the Erie Canal... Don’s trip. Ellie offered to go with me. I was very thankful. I thought she was taking me under her wing. At the wake, her daughter told me Ellie had thought I was helping her out.

—Glenda Schwarze

Ellie was a cheery participant for over ten years in the MHADK Friday Breakfast. She rarely missed a Friday unless for illness or a kayak trip. Her laughter was contagious. She enjoyed sharing Bill’s bacon and brightened everyone’s day. To celebrate her 90th birthday, she dressed for the occasion in a yellow floral skirt. Her absence leaves a void.

—Ellen Zelig

I spent so many wonderful days on the water with Ellie. She always had a smile on her face and a fantastic sense of humor. She was in her late 80s when she paddled over 75 miles with us on the Erie Canal! She was truly an inspiration to us all. It was so common to hear another paddler say, “I want to be like Ellie when I

—Shari Aber

www.midhudsonadk.org
At the final 2018 meeting of the Adirondack Mountain Club’s Board of Directors, Jean-Claude Fouere, or JC, as some of us call him, received the ADK President’s Award. In presenting the award, President John Gilewic recognized JC’s active contribution toward “successfully revitalizing the Club’s Membership and Development initiatives.” As a member and then, as chair of the committee, Jean-Claude “helped cultivate, strengthen and sustain ADK’s membership and donor relationships.”

JC initiated a membership survey in 2015 that helped define ways to engage the younger generation and encourage them to become active members of the ADK. The older members were encouraged to remain active in chapter activities and to financially support ADK programs geared toward young people.

Jean-Claude has always led an active life in the outdoors. As a schoolboy, he walked through the Vosges Mountains in Eastern France, going uphill/downhill by foot or ski to and from the schoolhouse. Upon taking residence in the Hudson Valley, in the fall of 1988, he joined the Mid-Hudson Chapter, and has since spent 25 years as an active hike and paddle participant and then leader. He sought chairmanship of our chapter’s Conservation Committee while simultaneously serving on the ADK Club’s Conservation Committee.

While generating ideas on the Club’s Membership and Development Committee, JC was elected as our chapter’s Club Director. In that position he was a voting member of the Club’s Board of Directors and a liaison between the Club, with headquarters in Lake George, and our chapter, which essentially covers Dutchess, Orange, Putnam and Ulster Counties. Jean-Claude has just stepped down from that office after serving for three two-year terms.

Jean-Claude makes time to participate in High Peak Work Weekends, held every year at the end of April and in early November, cleaning up and improving the campgrounds and other areas around the Adirondack Loj. He recently joined the crew of volunteers which erected three yurts on ADK Loj premises.

Jean-Claude says he was surprised at being honored with the President’s Award and accepts it on behalf of all those dedicated staff and volunteers working on behalf of membership and development.

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And the President’s Award goes to…

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I don’t remember when I first met Ellie; it seems like I’ve always known her. She invariably came on our Thursday hikes until one day on the Long Path going over Hook Mountain, she told me that this was her last Mid-Week Hike. But she wasn’t done with hiking. She started leading easier hikes on Tuesdays and called them the “High Hopes” hikes. I paddled with her on the Hudson, the Erie Canal and local ponds. Then I invited her and a few others to join my brother Ken and me for four nights of kayak camping in the Adirondacks. Ellie, Shari, Joe, Roberta, Ken and I headed up to Lake Durant State Campsite for our first night and then, after leaving cars at Raquette Lake, started out on Blue Mountain Lake to Eagle Lake to Utowana Lake, short carry into the Marion River and finally into Raquette Lake. The lake had whitecaps on it that day, and we needed to cross over to the other side where there were two lean-tos. It was rough, but she was a trouper. At the holiday party this year, as I walked in the first thing I thought was that Ellie wasn’t sitting behind the table giving out hugs and signing people in. I miss her smiling face!

--Ginny Fauci

According to my records, Ellie started attending the ADK breakfast in February, 2012—and became one of the most constant attendees. She was always a good audience, with ready laughter if anyone had something amusing to say. It was a pleasure to have known her!

--Ralph Pollard

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Nov 4: Zaidee’s Bower  
Leader: Roberta Forest  
Zaidee’s Bower is a scramble that is not regularly done. We were an enthusiastic group and we took varied trails to get us to and fro our desired scramble. This hike was partly on trails, with one short bushwack, one ladder to climb and many fallen trees to surmount. Lots of fun!

Nov 10: Croton Aqueduct  
Leader: John Ragusa  
We met at 9:15 AM at the Croton Gorge Park. The day was blustery and cold, with some breaks of sun and a snow shower or two. The nine hikers who participated got to enjoy spectacular views of the New Croton Dam and the spillover, which was raging with water overflowing from the reservoir because of all the rains we’ve had. It was a sight to see. We then car-pooled to Ossining and entered the Joseph Caputo Community Center, where we watched a short film on the history of the Aqueduct that was given by a NYC DEP Engineer, with a Q & A after the film. We also went through a small museum with more history on the Aqueduct and of Sing Sing Prison. We then crossed over the double-arched bridge to the Ossining weir and descended into the water tunnel. Everyone marveled at this 19th Century engineering feat. We walked along the Old Croton Aqueduct trail heading back toward the dam. One of our walkers became very uncomfortable with pain, so at about the half-way point, we decided to leave her and a friend at the Croton Grange building, which was a private club, while the Leader pressed on toward the dam so he could get to his car and drive back to pick them up. The rest of the group were able to make it to the top of the New Croton Dam and look out upon the Reservoir and the Croton Gorge Park below. The uncomfortable walker recovered and the trip ended well.

Nov 17: Hyde Park Trails  
Leader: Mike Cunningham  
Normally I lead the “Patch in a Day” hike in May but the funding for the patch didn’t come in until late summer. Having to pick out a day way ahead of time and being busy with other hikes and backpacks, I could not schedule the hike until November. Two days before the hike there was a freak snowstorm which dropped about five or six inches of snow. Wonderful! Two of my buddies usually come on this hike but one of them dropped out ahead of time. We drove over to the Roosevelt Farm Lane trailhead on Route 9G and found that the lot had been plowed but the gate was locked. Additionally, the gate to Vall-Kill across the street was locked. We waited 15 or 20 minutes, but no one else showed up. Since we were there, we decided to do three of the hikes which did not include Val-Kill and think about adding two other hikes, likely to be Mills-Norrie, but that would add about four miles of hiking. We would decide about that later.

Our first hike was at Winakee Nature Preserve. We approached the trailhead and saw that a considerable section of the trail was flooded. We walked as far as we could, turned around and went to the other trailhead, on Terwilliger Road. We got to the other side of the flooded area and turned around again, then completed the rest of the trail.

Next up was Pinewoods Park and the big .7-mile loop. We enjoyed slogging through the snow and the waterfall. After that was Hackett Hill, with another slog. We could barely see the picnic table in the pond, because the water was so high, and we skipped Gorilla Rock but completed the required trails. There were some slippery spots on the hills but we managed not to fall.
We got back to the parking lot and decided that we were too tired after four or so miles of breaking trail through the fresh snow, so we decided to postpone the next two hikes.

A week or so later, when the snow had melted, I went back by myself and hiked the blue and white trails at Mills-Norrie. The next month both of my buddies accompanied me as we hiked all five of the original trails.

Nov 17: Mills-Norrie Trails
Leader: Annette Caruso
Two days after the first big snowstorm of the year, ten strong participants hiked the river trail loop through Mills-Norrie State Park. Lots of wet snow covered the rocks and leaves, though poles and micro spikes made the going relatively easy. The river views on our left were lovely, the woods on the right, serene... we saw deer and a large hawk. An invigorating, enjoyable walk in the park.

Dec 1: Lost City
Leader: Roberta Forest
We took a route that bypassed some of the more wet and muddy trails. Our route to Lost City was on an unmarked climber's trail. We enjoyed the Lost City vista and headed to Compass Rock after lunch. Next, down to the Peterskill and up a steep path that took us back to our vehicles. Another fine day in the Gunks.

Dec 2018: Holiday Season Short Hikes
Leader: Georgette Weir
A short-hike series offered on Friday mornings in December by Georgette Weir proved to be a popular formula (although the second two of the four planned walks were rescheduled to February owing to rain). Ten participants, including five guests, several from the Dutchess County Master Gardener program, enjoyed a walk along the Hudson River and through the woods at Mills-Norrie State Park on Dec. 7. On Dec. 14, seven explored the trails below the mansion at the FDR estate.

Jan 1: New Year Day Walk
Leader: Sue Mackson
What a winter—pity the poor skiers and snowshoers in our area—not enough snow to do anything. But without snow we were able to ascend to the heights of Peach Hill Preserve, the highest spot in the Town of Poughkeepsie. We went slowly through the woods to the high point and descended through the orchard, gabbing along the way. It had rained the day before and there were muddy spots, some of them covered by short boardwalks which we greatly appreciated. These were built by the Friends of Peach Hill over the last years. (Yes, they'd love to have your support.) The day was dry and somewhat windy. Temps were in the 40’s, warm for this time of year. Those of you who didn’t attend missed all kinds of goodies back at my house, including: panettone, mint cookies/candies, Italian butter cookies and red Jello. Twelve members and three guests participated. With great thanks to John Ragusa for bringing a trail map and washing all those soup bowls and cups!

Jan 6: Farm Lane Hike
Leader: Annette Caruso
Rain, locked gates and the U.S. government shutdown did not dissuade thirteen hikers from a Hyde Park Trail loop trek on the Farm Lane. Jeannette Baker, our MeetUp chair, brought three friends and the rest were all ADK members. The plan was to hike the red and yellow woods trails out and green gravel trail back. At the first junction, the majority of hikers decided the water level to reach the woods was prohibitive and opted for the green trail round trip. Ginny, Connie, Ellen and Annette ventured through the woods. An absolute perfect hike to split up as all led to same place in the middle where we met for lunch. The sky turned blue, the dewdrops in the bare trees glistened in the sun, bushy white-tailed deer dashed by, the forest was enchanting. It was a beautiful day.

Jan 11: Minnewaska
Leader: Georgette Weir
The day was predicted to be cold and windy but turned out to be sunny and beautiful, and so this Minnewaska jaunt was very much enjoyed by the leader and two participants. We stretched our legs on the High Peterskill Trail (no ice!!), looping back and passing magnificent Awosting Falls. Short, but sweet with good conversation, all agreed.

Jan 13 Castle Rock Unique Area
Leader: John Ragusa
We met at noon in the parking area of the Castle Rock Unique Area in Garrison. There were eleven members, including the leader and four guest participants. The day was sunny and cold with a brisk breeze. We started on the Blue Trail through the Meadow and up to the tree line with great views of Osborne Castle. We followed the trail past the gazebo, crossed a small brook and were shortly on the Red Trail. We noticed a big swath of blowdown from the micro-burst last spring. The trails were cleared of the debris but you could see all the downed trees around you. As we walked up in elevation, we saw a small pond to the left which in spring holds a lot of frogs. We then made the final ascent of Sugar Loaf Hill, which was steep but short. We walked along the ridgeline on top to the end of the trail, where there's an outcropping of rocks, and enjoyed the spectacular views of the Hudson River looking south and then north toward West Point across the water. Luckily, there was no wind on top, so we enjoyed a picnic lunch and observed the native cactus all around us. We then returned on the trails we came in on. We were back in our cars, smiling, by 2:30 PM. A cold day, but a great one to be out!

Jan 19: Locust Grove
Leader: Georgette Weir
Perhaps it was the prediction of impending bad weather that prompted fifteen walkers to join Georgette Weir for a short morning walk on the trails at Locust Grove in Poughkeepsie. In the end, the storm disappointed (too little snow, too much icy mix), but our very social group enjoyed a good stretch of the legs on easy trails at this convenient park. Eleven ADKers welcomed three guests (potential members) who found us via MeetUp. Highlights included Hudson River views, a pair of pileated woodpeckers and a juvenile eagle flying overhead.

Jan 18-21: “Go With the Snow” Tug Hill Ski Weekend
Leader: Ron Gonzalez
A mixed group of ADK and AMC members gathered for the Martin Luther King, Jr. weekend on north-central NY State’s Tug Hill Plateau. Hoping for powdery snow, we were not disappointed. We stayed at the comfortable Harris Lodging in Sandy Creek, conveniently located just off of I-81 and less than five miles from the Winona State Forest ski trails. We were lucky to have good weather for our trip up on Friday, avoiding the impending Saturday night storm.

www.midhudsonadk.org
For our first day, we split into two groups, with Russ Faller leading his contingent to the Osceola-Tug Hill XC Ski Center, while I (Ron Gonzalez) led a group for a scenic loop along Inman Gulf, in the Rodman-Barnes Corners ski-trail system. Except for one thing, that is—I managed to forget my ski boots! Fortunately, we had the chair of the AMC NY-NJ Ski Committee along for the trip, Ed Sobin. Ed graciously offered to lead the group while I and a kind participant doubled back to Harris Lodging to get my boots and hustle back. That we did, and we were able to catch up with the rest of the group around midday. It’s a good thing conditions were so good for cross-country skiing, with about 6 inches of cold, dry powder sitting on a supportable but not too hard base. It was so much fun to crank up the speed in the group’s tracks. Meanwhile, Russ’s group had a fine day skiing in excellent conditions at the Nordic Center. At Osceola-Tug Hill, we broke up into smaller groups so that everyone could ski at their own level – from easy to advanced trails. We met back at the lodge between 12:30 and 1 PM for lunch and shared our adventures. After lunch, we went back out for a few hours more of skiing before calling it a day. Everyone got back to Harris Lodging at the end of the day to warm up, make our group dinner, and settle in for the storm.

On Sunday morning, we found that about a foot of snow had fallen. It was very cold, right about zero degrees Fahrenheit. High winds had blown large drifts between the cars. We spent the morning shoveling out our cars while the lodging’s proprietor worked his snowblower on the driveway. We were underway by about 10 am, heading to the Winona State Forest ski trails. The parking area was plowed well enough for us to drive right in, and there was nobody else there! We got ready, split up into two groups, and started skiing. Ron led the more hardcore group, while Russ took the more laid-back skiers. The snowmobile trails (actually unplowed motor roads) had been groomed, but the cross-country ski trails had not, and had picked up about a foot of heavy, windblown powder. Trail breaking wasn’t too bad, though. After breaking trail for a short while, Russ’ group was fortunate to find a broken route on Salley’s Ride. We followed it to its end, then turned around and followed the tracks to more tracks on Bill’s Belly Trail, which led us back to the parking lot. It was very cold, staying around zero the whole day. Nobody wanted to stop for very long, so we kept moving. The laid-back group left by 3 PM, while the hardcore group stayed out for another hour after that. One of our participants had hurt his ankle a bit the previous day and stayed at the lodging, and to our surprise and delight, greeted us with a pot of hot soup he had made for us. We got back to a warm house with fresh hot soup, after being out in nearly arctic conditions for the day. How nice was that? It was great to see old friends, and to meet new friends. Everybody had a great two days of satisfying, strenuous skiing. The Tug Hill delivered once again. Great snow, and lots of it. I’m sure we’ll be back.

Feb 2: Vassar Farm
Leader: Georgette Weir

The single-digit temperature at the start of our four-mile hike around the perimeter of the Vassar College Farm in Poughkeepsie was no deterrent to eight hearty MHADKers who joined Georgette Weir for a Saturday-morning outing. The powdery snow was a delight and a challenge—a lot like hiking on beach sand. But the sun was shining and two hours later the temperature was up to 28 degrees as we returned to our cars. Our route took us up and over the drumlin (“an elongate or oval hill of glacial drift”—Merriam Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, 10th edition), over the Casperkill, where we saw the impact of beaver activity, through the woods and past the agricultural fields of the Poughkeepsie Farm Project.
Be on the lookout this year for hikes to fire towers in our region led by Georgette Weir. Hike difficulty will range from easy to strenuous; time commitments from half-day to full day. Not all towers are open to visitors, but many are. Some revisits may be planned to enjoy seasonal changes in views. Watch the schedule and join the explorations. Other lookouts, such as Perkins Tower, on Bear Mountain, and Skytop, at Mohonk Preserve, may be added.

Much of the info below comes from the New York page on the website of the National Historic Lookout Register: http://nhlr.org/lookouts/us/ny/

DUTCHESS COUNTY

- **Ferncliff Forest Fire Tower**, Rhinebeck. The current overlook is a 1933 International Derrick Fire Tower and is approximately 80 feet high. The overlook offers spectacular views of the Hudson River and Catskill Mountains.

- **Mt. Beacon Fire Tower** is in Hudson Highlands State Park. The property is owned and managed by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation. On a clear day, the tower offers views of both Manhattan and Albany in the distance.

- **Stissing Mountain Fire Tower**, Pine Plains. The tower is owned and managed by Friends of Stissing Landmarks. Hikers are welcome to access the tower at their own risk and at no cost.

ORANGE COUNTY

- **Black Rock Forest Fire Tower**, Cornwall. Erected in 1929 as a private lookout on the Stillman Estate, which in time became the 3,800 acre Black Rock Forest, owned by Harvard University. In 1989 ownership was transferred to the Black Rock Forest Consortium.

- **Graham Mountain Fire Tower**, Mount Hope. Erected on present site on the Shawangunk Ridge in 1948 by NY DEC.

- **Sterling Mountain Fire Tower** is located in Sterling Forest State Park. Built in 1922 on the Harriman Family’s Sterling Park estate, the tower is now owned and managed by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation. It was placed on the Federal Register of Historic Places on June 12, 2006 along with the observers cabin.

PUTNAM COUNTY

- **Mount Nimham Fire Tower** is in Nimham Mountain State Forest, Putnam County. The restored tower offers 360-degree panoramic views of the Manhattan skyline, the Catskills, and Mount Beacon.

ROCKLAND COUNTY

- **Jackie Jones Lookout** is in the Bear Mountain-Harriman State Park. On a clear day, the tower offers a view of Manhattan in the distance. The last remaining steel fire tower in the Park, Jackie Jones Lookout was constructed in 1928 by the Palisades Interstate Park Commission, which operated the facility until 1931. From that time the facility was operated by Forest Fire Control, until it closed in the 1970s.
**ULSTER COUNTY**

- **Balsam Lake Mountain Fire Tower**, “the oldest documented forest fire observatory in New York State” (National Historic Lookout Register), is in Balsam Lake Mountain Wild Forest, Ulster County. The restored fire tower offers views of the Pepacton Reservoir.

- **Mount Tremper Fire Tower** is in Phoenicia Wild Forest, Ulster County. Located in New York’s Catskill Forest Preserve, Tremper Mountain Fire Tower was constructed by the New York Department of Conservation (now DEC) in 1917. The tower was in active service for 54 years, until it closed in 1971. It has also been restored by a joint effort of the Catskill Forest Center, the Highlands Group of FFLA and the NYS-DEC.

- **Overlook Mountain Fire Tower** is in Overlook Mountain Wild Forest. The 60-foot tower offers views of the Hudson River Valley, Ashokan Reservoir, and Devil’s Path. Built in 1917, the tower was in active service for 54 years, until it closed in 1971. It has also been restored by a joint effort of the Catskill Forest Center, the Highlands Group of FFLA and the NYS-DEC.

- **Red Hill Fire Tower** is in Sundown Wild Forest, Ulster County. The view from the tower is of the Catskill High Peaks to the north, and Rondout Reservoir to the south. The tower was constructed by NYS-DEC in 1920 and staffed until 1990.

**Let’s Get Started!**

**Sat. Mar 9: Sterling Forest Fire Tower and Iron Mines, B loop hike. 4.5 miles**

Leader: Georgette Weir, georgette.weir@gmail.com.

This is the first in a planned series of hikes to fire towers in our region. We will begin from the beautiful Sterling Forest Visitor Center, which features history of iron mining in the region. Our route will take us past historic mining remains, the fire tower, and Sterling Lake. Contact leader for car-pooling and meet time.

**Fri. Mar 29: Short Hike plus Fire Tower, Ferncliff Forest, Rhinebeck, C hike, meandering– around 2 miles.**

Leader: Georgette Weir, georgette.weir@gmail.com. Contact leader for car-pooling, meet time.

**2nd Annual Catskills Great Outdoor Expo**

**National Park Service “Earth Day” Recycling Day (morning) at the Hyde Park Drive-In Theater property and an afternoon hike**

We will hike a portion of the Roosevelt Farm Lane Trail, leaving from the trailhead kiosk. Parking is in the lot there. Look for more details on the Hyde Park Trails Facebook page (https://www.facebook.com/HydeParkTrails).

Anyone wishing to help man a MHADK table at this event, should contact Salley Decker: sadecker2002@yahoo.com by April 12th.

**Celebrate Earth Day at Locust Grove with some trail TLC!**

**“I Love My Park” Day in New York State is back!**

Although the details are not yet available, events will be scheduled in several local NYS Parks. More information will be in the Weekly E-mail of outings in late March or April.

**AMC’s Harriman Outdoor Center on Breakneck Pond in the heart of Harriman State Park will be the base for daily hikes, paddles, and other excursions as ADKers from all over convene for the moveable feast that is the Club’s annual Fall Outing.**

**Fall Outing 2019**

AMC’s Harriman Outdoor Center on Breakneck Pond in East Fishkill. This is the third weekend of July, one week later than usual. Details will be available in June.

**Arbor Day** is celebrated in New York State on the last Friday in April. Does any knowledgable botany enthusiast want to volunteer to lead a tree-I.D. hike?

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**2nd Annual Catskills Great Outdoor Expo**

Saturday 10 AM–5 PM

Best Western Hotel and Conference Center

503 Washington Avenue Kingston, NY

The Catskill Great Outdoor Expo—learn about all the best the Catskills have to offer in hiking, paddling, bicycling, and all outdoor recreation activities in this one-day Expo with dozens of exhibitors, expert presentations, free samples and raffles—plus the famous Catskill Center Gear Sale. Tickets will be $3 at the door. Kids under 10 are free! More info at http://catskillcenter.org/outdoorexpo

**Celebrate Earth Day at Locust Grove with some trail TLC!**

On Saturday April 20, we’ll celebrate Earth Day (officially Monday, April 22) by tending to the trails at Locust Grove.

We’ll celebrate our Earth with two projects. The first is removing barberry and other invasive plants alongside the trail. The work will be cutting back brush and hauling it away. Stooping and bending is a given, as we use loppers, clippers and hand saws to cut and gather brush. The second project is building water bars to direct water off the trail. We’ll use picks and shovels to install the water bars to fix the drainage problems.

Long pants, long sleeves, work gloves and sturdy footwear are recommended. Safety Glasses are a good idea. And, of course, bring lunch and water. If you have tools bring them along. If not, then we’ll provide tools.

**Where: Locust Grove, Route 9, Poughkeepsie, NY**

When: 10 AM–2 PM, Saturday, April 20, (Rain date: Saturday, April 27)

Please confirm with Dave Webber, webberd1@yahoo.com or 845-242-9905

**Arbor Day** is celebrated in New York State on the last Friday in April. Does any knowledgable botany enthusiast want to volunteer to lead a tree-I.D. hike?

**E-mail of outings in late March or April.**

It’s time for the Annual Appalachian Trail Work Weekend at the RPH cabin in East Fishkill. This is the third weekend of July, one week later than usual. Details will be available in June.

**Fall Outing 2019**

AMC’s Harriman Outdoor Center on Breakneck Pond in the heart of Harriman State Park will be the base for daily hikes, paddles, and other excursions as ADKers from all over convene for the moveable feast that is the Club’s annual Fall Outing.

Harriman and adjacent Bear Mountain State Park feature more than 225 miles of marked trails and numerous lakes, making it a hiker’s and paddler’s paradise. Other notable parks are nearby, and five downstate chapters of ADK—with our own Mid Hudson Chapter as the lead—are collaborating to offer a rich selection of outings for all tastes and abilities.

Mark your calendars to explore the beautiful Hudson Valley this September, and sign up early to reserve your preferred accommodations at the camp! Watch for details this spring.

www.midhudsonadk.org
Stay Connected...

Adirondack Mountain Club: www.adk.org
Mid-Hudson Chapter: www.midhudsonadk.org
NY–NJ Trail Conference: www.nynjtc.org

To make a change of address, phone, or email, send a message with specifics to adkinfo@adk.org or call 1-800-395-8080 x2

To be included in the Mid-Hudson Chapter email list or to change your email, please send a message to ebc12533@yahoo.com