

# Mountain P A S S A G E S

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## Getting to Know the Rumney Rocks Local climbing communities leading the way

TOM SINTROS

Anyone who knows about, or enjoys, sport climbing has knowledge of Rumney Rocks. Rumney Rocks is, without question, the top sport-climbing destination in the Northeast. It stands with Cathedral, Whitehorse, the Gunks and other major climbing areas that attract climbers from across the world. The AMC certainly knows Rumney Rocks, and many, if not all, of the chapters have led numerous trips there over the last three decades. Rumney is the “go to place” for clinics, outings and is one of the best destinations for “gym to rock” transition education. Thousands of AMC climbers have used Rumney Rocks and continue to do so.

Rumney Rocks encompasses ap-

proximately 150 acres on the south facing slopes of Rattlesnake Mountain in the White Mountain National Forest (WMNF). Scattered across these slopes are approximately 28-rock faces known by the climbing community as “crag”. The 1987 guidebook, *Rock Climbs in the White Mountains of New Hampshire* by Ed Webster showed 48 published routes. Two decades later, there were



RUMNEY ROCKS, TO PAGE 5 

## OUR MISSION

The Appalachian Mountain Club is the nation’s oldest outdoor recreation and conservation organization, and promotes the protection, enjoyment, and understanding of the mountains, forests, waters and trails of the Appalachian region. AMC has more than 100,000 members, 16,000 volunteers, 450 full-time and seasonal staff. The New Hampshire Chapter is the second largest of the 12 Chapters within the Club.

VOLUME 42, NUMBER 3  
MAY-JUNE 2016

## 20s & 30s Group Update

Young Members activities will be re-branded AMC-wide as “20s & 30s” in future online trip listings.

JAMIE GILLON

As you may have noticed, we’ve been a little inactive over the winter, but that’s all about to change! The 20s and 30s Group will have a spring kickoff dinner in April when our own Josh Goodrich will give a presentation on his 2012 through-hike of the Appalachian Trail. After that, we’ve worked with the Maine Chapter to plan a

number of inter-chapter camping weekends. We hope you can join us for at least one of them.

**April 24:**

Spring Dinner and AT Presentation;  
900 Degrees in Epping, NH

**May 20-22:**

Mitzpah Hut Weekend, Central  
White Mountains

20S & 30S GROUP, TO PAGE 4 

# A Winter Reflection

BEN GREENE

As far back as I can recall, I've loved winter: the stark beauty and transformation a snowstorm can bring to the landscape, the squeaky crunch of ice crystals underfoot, the gut-wrenching punch of the wind in warm lungs and nostrils, the newness in each day.

On a cold afternoon in February 2010, after an extended period with little work and some backcountry exploration with my dogs, I ran across a steep trail that lead to an icefall. I can still recall the terror and intrigue I felt, realizing that people actually climbed that ice. By the next season I had connected with Tom Sintros and the New Hampshire Chapter of the A.M.C. I was totally hooked by the mental and physical challenges of winter climbing and the solid community of people I met.

Winter 2015-2016 is certainly the shortest and most varied climbing season that I have experienced since those formative days. The cycle of rain and warm temps followed by arctic blasts that sent everything back to "early season conditions" had



Photo By: Teagan Rosendahl

us on our toes. Early season all year? Maybe. We made the most of every chance to get on the ice, and each outing was very unique.

Under the guidance of the Mountaineering Committee, and with the help of several local volunteers, Tom and I hosted two introductory climbing workshops and one day of open climbing at a small venue

outside of Keene, N.H.

In the late 1800's, sections of hill and ledge where blasted to create a level bed for the railway headed north from Keene through Westmoreland. Today, the cliffs on the rail trail provide a near perfect outdoor classroom with climbs ranging from

WI2+ to very near WI5 and several hard mixed routes. The cut offers an easy approach and quick set up which translates to participants getting maximum time climbing. Many of our "students" stated they

A WINTER REFLECTION,   
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## MOUNTAIN PASSAGES

Volume 42, No. 3  
May/June 2016

Mountain Passages is published six times a year by the New Hampshire Chapter of the Appalachian Mountain Club.

**Submissions.** Members may submit articles or photos (hi-res jpegs) to newsletter@amc-nh.org. Articles may be edited at the discretion of the editor to meet space and style requirements. Publication is on a space-available basis. While Mountain Passages does not pay for submissions; a byline or photo credit is given. Contact Mountain Passages for reprint permission.

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Please note: Member address updates cannot be handled by AMC-NH officers, committee chairs, or the newsletter editor.

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**Editor:** Brett J. Billings  
brettjbillings(at)gmail.com

**Graphic Design:** Jessica Clifford,  
Graphic Designer, Artist &  
Photographer.  
jess.amcnews(at)gmail.com



# Conservation Corner

## It's a Tough Life

PAUL HOPKINS

Hiking to the high peaks, as you approach the alpine zone, you will encounter signs reminding hikers to stay on the established trails and hard surfaces, and especially to avoid stepping on plants. The alpine zone is a tough place for plants to grow.

Above the tree line in the alpine zone, most plants grow low the ground, but where there is some shelter from the harsh winds, some trees like the black spruce can find a niche. Even in the relative shelter of the niche, the trees often take on a low-to-the-ground and prostrate form more like that of a bush or mat than a tree.

*Figure 1* shows a clump of black spruce that grew above tree line in the alpine zone.



*Figure 1*

Something changed in the niche environment, and now some, or all trees, in this clump are dying. The weather-beaten and twisted remains of the trunk and branches of the most recently killed stand in mute testimony

better adapted to the alpine conditions.

Note the twisted and grotesque shape of the dead tree trunks and branches. As the tree tries to grow outside the shelter of the niche, the wind and blowing snow nip the leader and cause the surviving branches to grow so as to remain in the niche. The shape of the branches indicate the prevailing winds blow from left to right relative to the photograph. The tree branches illustrate the structure of krummholz, "twisted wood."

*Figure 2* shows a view of the alpine zone in the vicinity of this clump of black spruce. All the plants are small and close to the ground to minimize the area exposed to the harsh environment. The dark green mats are *Diapensia* cushions, interspersed with clumps of rust-colored sedges.

You can see all this for yourself. It's located on the north side of the Crawford Path near the western junction of an unmarked loop path to the summit of Mt. Franklin. When hiking in the alpine zone above 5,000 feet, take a few moments to contemplate the forces and life adaptations that shape this environment.

to the fury of the alpine environment. Note, in front, the remains of a tree that died earlier and the newly exposed opening on the lower right, where the needles are being stripped away. That tree may not survive.

The space once occupied by the now dead spruce is being filled in by low-to-the-ground alpine plants. These plants are



*Figure 2*

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**YM** 20S & 30S GROUP,  
FROM PAGE 1

**June 10-12:**  
Western Mass Weekend

**June 24-26:**  
Squam Lake Weekend,  
Central NH

**July 15-17:**

Rangely Lake,  
Maine Weekend

**August 19-20:**

Barnes Field  
Weekend, Northeastern  
White Mountains

**September 9-11:**

Osceola Vista  
Weekend, Southern  
White Mountains

These weekends feature multiple hiking, paddling and climbing options, a large group dinner on Saturday night, campfire games and a chance to meet and explore the outdoors with young members from throughout the Northeast.

Check out the details for these trips and more, including day hikes, indoor and outdoor rock climbing, as well as social events at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/amcmaineyoungmembers/> and [outdoors.org](http://outdoors.org).

## Bike Leaders Wanted!

Do you have some favorite bike rides to share? We would like to be able to offer rides in every region of New Hampshire but we need more bike leaders. If you're enthusiastic about biking and would like to share your knowledge with others please contact us at the address below to learn about becoming an AMC Bike Leader.

[amcnhbike@gmail.com](mailto:amcnhbike@gmail.com)

## SPECIAL UPCOMING EVENT

 *Tuesday, July 19, 2016*

### Historical Cardigan

TERRI WILSON

The Bristol, N.H. Public Library (Minot Sleeper Library) will be promoting one of our favorite past times: hiking. The library will be hosting a summer reads program, "A Walk in the Woods", by Bill Bryson, as well as promoting hiking as recreation. N.H.'s very

own AMC Cardigan Lodge Manager, Thomas L. Fisher will be speaking at the library Tuesday, July 19 at 6:30. The topic will be on Historical Cardigan and promoting the local trails around the Lodge. Tom has been the manager at Cardigan for 11 years. As manager, Fisher fills many roles: innkeeper, chef, park ranger, outdoor education

teacher, plus performing a host of other duties.

Tom says to destress "he simple heads up the mountain." Sounds like the perfect remedy for all of us. Please come and support our speaker at the library, located at 35 Pleasant Street, Bristol, N.H.



## Where Are You Riding This Year?

DORIA HARRIS

Where would you like to ride this year? The local bike path? Your favorite day ride? Travel on gravel or take the unknown road? A bike overnight to your favorite inn or campground? Ride across the state? Across the country? AMC Bike Activities can get you inspired, started and out there!

We will be offering day rides on paths, paved and unpaved roads. These vary in length from 10 to 40 miles. In addition, this spring, we are offering two Bike Touring Workshops followed by two Bike Overnights in June to help you get started with your touring plans. We are also offering our Bike Challenges again so if you didn't get to them last year, you have another opportunity.

See our website for details of the Covered Bridge Challenge and the 140 Mile Challenge. Yes, 140 miles in recognition and celebration of AMC's 140th Anniversary. In addition to our Bike Touring Program and the Challenges.

Look on our activities calendar at: <http://amc-nh.org/calendar/activities.php> for our offerings.



Photo By: D. Powers



# Notes From The Chair

## Summer Fun: Hike, Bike, Paddle and Climb

Bill Warren

We all enjoy the outdoors no matter what the season brings us. It is difficult to explain to someone how exhilarating it feels to stand in the snow above tree line with the wind in your face and temperatures hovering around 0 degrees. Those memories are now deeply stored away and it is time to make plans to get out and enjoy all the New Hampshire landscape has to offer during the warm weather.

Has anyone ever said to you there is nothing to do? I am never sure how I should respond as there is plenty to do: There is just not enough time.

If you enjoy doing things with like-minded people, or you prefer to be like we were in the 60s, and do your own thing, it is right here waiting for you.

The trails, waterways and roads are here for you to use and the best part is they are free. All you need is a little imagination and a bit of time to set off on an adventure to remember. I have met many people along the trail and learned they not only hike but bike, paddle and climb. The people who are not currently doing all these activities generally hope to give one or all of them a try in the near future. If you are one of these people wanting to do more you can learn fun, safe ways to do these activities by participating in an activity with one of our well trained New Hampshire volunteer trip leaders. Current activities can be found by going to [www.AMC-NH.org](http://www.AMC-NH.org) and clicking on the local activities tab.

If you prefer to do it your

way, I highly recommend you obtain a copy of one of the many books available through your favorite sporting goods store or through the AMC. The White Mountain Guide is a must for hikers, Quiet Water New Hampshire and Vermont for paddlers, Backroad Bicycle Riding in New Hampshire for bikers and Rock Climbing New England: A Guide to More Than 900 Routes for climbers. These books, along with many others, provide you, the reader, with information you need for your travels. Another great source of information are the folks you meet along the trail. They will readily share their experiences and provide you with details you will never find in a book.

I recently had the opportunity, on a beautiful day, to bring



a group to the top of Mt. Madison and Mt. Adams. One young woman had never been above treeline prior to this hike. Later she told me, being there gave her a new reason to love life. The places we love and the things we love doing are all here.

We are so lucky to live in New Hampshire where the to-do list and the to-go list can be endless. People travel the world to use our playground while for us it is just outside our door whether we live in Coos, by the sea or anywhere in between.

It is time to get out there, so listen to your mother, drink plenty of water, bring your lunch, pack your camera, wear some sunscreen, take along your family and friends, and most importantly, have fun. I hope to see you outdoors.

**Sunday, August 7th**

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## RUMNEY ROCKS, FROM PAGE 1

more than 480 documented routes and today, there are an estimated 707 routes, 261 boulder problems and numerous ice routes. This is an amazing contribution to the climbing community.

Rumney Rocks has a storied and rich history dating back to the 1960's. It is renowned for both beginners and high-level professional climbers. There is a strong and consistent involvement from the climbing community to protect and manage this area and the formation of the well-established Rumney Climbers Association (RCA) is a testament to its climbing experience value.

Throughout the years, individuals and RCA alike have acquired the lands of Rattlesnake Mountain and donated it to the US Forest Service. The White Mountain National Forest Management Plan states that when climbing issues are "no

longer effectively addressed" by application of the Forest Plan standards and guidelines, "site specific climbing management plans should be developed". To address this issue the Forest Service developed the Rumney Rocks Climbing Management Plan (CMP) in 2008. Not only was this the first CMP on WMNF lands but the first standalone CMP for the Forest Service. It was developed with input from the local climbing community and other interested parties.

Rumney is and will continue to be an example of sound stewardship and partnerships that will keep climbing access and the "evolution" of climbing as a wonderful recreational activity for all to enjoy. Presently, the RCA is in the midst of a capital campaign to secure the "Final Frontier" of Rattlesnake Mountain. Visit their website to learn more.

# Kilimanjaro

KEVIN ROONEY

Two members of the AMC's New Hampshire Chapter recently traveled to Tanzania to climb 19,341' Mt Kilimanjaro. Kevin Rooney and Al Dwyer had planned the trip for nearly three years, but delayed it last

at 8,800'. The chosen route would take them on a newer, and lightly-used route along the Northern Circuit side of the Kilimanjaro massif, looking down into Kenya.

The next day they made camp at Shira 1 (11,300') on the Shira Plateau, followed by


Moir Camp at 13,650' on Day 3. The grades were anything but even, with frequent up and downs thru ravines and valleys. The guides referred to days with much elevation gain/loss as "good acclimatization days".

Day 4 took them to Buffalo Camp/Pofu where they camped

at 13,400' and Day 5 took them to Third Cave Camp (12,800') with expansive views.

Much of Day 6 was spent in mental preparation for the summit attempt which would begin at midnight that night after stopping at School Camp (15,500') for dinner and few hours sleep. The final 5,000' climb was made under ideal conditions – cold, with clear skies, no wind, and full moon – near perfect conditions.

They made the crater rim (Gilman's Point - 18,652') shortly before dawn. The climb during the night had been long, steep and steady. The pace was, as it had been during the previous days, "Polé, polé", Swahili for "Slowly, slowly". At that altitude it was cold – a bit

KILIMANJARO, TO PAGE 7 



year due to the Ebola. Both have extensive experience climbing fourteeners in the US, but this was their first climb above 14,500'.

They were looking for a climb spread over several days which would 1) allow for gradual acclimatization, and 2) allow for continuous ascent the last few thousand feet and then descending to a point at or below their last camp. They found that with an 8-day trip by Serengeti Pride Safaris (SPS), a company co-owned by AMC'er Erika Bloom (Southeastern Mass member). Several of their AMC-hiker friends had also climbed Kilimanjaro on trips organized by Erika.

After checking in with the Kilimanjaro Park Rangers at the Londerossi Gate, where everything going up the mountain was weighed and checked, the climbing party began the actual climb at nearby Lemosho trail-head in early afternoon, hiking a few miles to Big Tree Camp



**KILIMANJARO, FROM PAGE 6**  
 above zero, but with nearly calm winds, no face protection was needed. After the obligatory pictures standing in front of the sign, they made their way along the rim, dropping briefly toward the crater until they reached Stella Point where they'd return later on the descent). Finally, about 1.5 miles from Stella Point the high point of the rim, Uhura Peak, 19,341' was

reached at 8:14AM on February 21, 2016.

After many pictures and interacting with other groups of climbers they had met along the way, they began the steep descent from Stella Point, dropping 9K' thru Barafu Camp to their final camp at Mweka Camp, 10,448'. By noon the following day, they were checking out at the Mweka Gate at 5,380'. All-in-all, they had trekked 55 miles from start to



finish.

It had been a successful climb but their African trip was not over yet! That evening they were met by their wives and spent several days on safari in the Serengeti plains & Ngorongoro crater area of Tanzania.

Kevin and Al have been leading trips/hikes for the NH Chapter for many years, and have been active in outdoor

education workshops. Kevin is the co-founder of the Chapter's Winter Hiking Series, served as August Camp Manager, and currently serves as an Excursions Co-Chair. They wish to thank the guides, porters, cooks and other staff of SPS – as well as the co-owners, Erika Bloom and Lema Peters, not only for the carefully executed climb, but for the work they do on behalf of local schools and cooperatives.





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**Chapter Chair** ..... chairnh@amc-nh.org  
 Bill Warren

**Vice Chair** ..... vicechairnh@amc-nh.org  
 Frank Miller

**Treasurer** ..... treasurernh@amc-nh.org  
 Rick Desmarais

**Secretary** ..... secretarynh@amc-nh.org  
 Wanda Rice

**Biking** ..... bikenh@amc-nh.org  
 Doria Harris, Hiel Lindquist

**Conservation & Education** ..... conservationnh@amc-nh.org  
 Paul Hopkins, Linda Moore

**Excursions** ..... excursionsh@amc-nh.org  
 Kevin Rooney, Beth Zimmer

**Membership** ..... membershipnh@amc-nh.org  
 Trudi Fullerton, Ellen Ruggles

**Mountaineering** ..... mountaineeringnh@amc-nh.org  
 Joe Dorsheimer, Tom Sintros

**Newsletter** ..... newsletternh@amc-nh.org  
 Brett Billings, Editor  
 Brian Morin, Editor  
 Jessica Clifford, Design & Layout

**Paddling** ..... paddlingnh@amc-nh.org  
 Paul Berry, Joe O'Neil

**Programs** ..... programsh@amc-nh.org  
 Lu Ann Laquerre, Teri Wilson

**Skiing** ..... skinh@amc-nh.org  
 Paul Pinkham, Valerio Vifi

**Trails** ..... trailsh@amc-nh.org  
 Richie Holstein, Bill Foster, Denise Carter

**Web Committee** ..... webchairnh@amc-nh.org  
 Wayne Goertel, Paul Berry

**Young Members** ..... youngmembersnh@amc-nh.org  
 Jamie Gillon, Ann Hudnall

**Past Chapter Chair** ..... pastchairnh@amc-nh.org  
 Wayne Goertel

**Regional Dir. NH/ME** ..... regionaldirectornh@amc-nh.org  
 John Mullins

**AMC NH Chapter** ..... website: www.amc-nh.org

**Address changes and membership renewals:**  
 AMC Member Services  
 5 Joy Street, Boston MA 02108  
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## 'Mountain Passages' is only the beginning...

From hiking to biking, AMC's New Hampshire chapter has it all. Visit our website at [amc-nh.org](http://amc-nh.org) and read more about us and our many year-round events.

### A WINTER REFLECTION, FROM PAGE 2

climbed considerably more than expected.

Consistent with the steady growth we've observed over the past four years, all three outings drew a large interest from the AMC community and were waitlisted at least 10 people per outing. Participants practiced belay skills, rope management,

efficient movement on ice and mixed terrain, built v-threads, and tackled firsthand, the complex nature of keeping fingers and toes warm in cold weather. Thanks to the foresight of the Mountaineering Committee, a recent purchase of used double boots and new crampons enabled us to open up these climbing days to a wider variety of folks than we have in the past.



*Photos By: Teagan Rosendahl*

The Committee's push to fund American Mountain Guide Association training and certification for leaders insures that we are providing the highest-level instruction possible. Feedback from the more

came through the workshops and climbing day is that they want more. The bottom line is we are stoked about winter climbing and we love sharing it with new friends. We hope to see you next season!