

Black River Currents

***A Publication of the Black River Chapter
Adirondack Mountain Club***



Volume 19

Number 4

Winter Outings 2010-11

January 21-23, 2011 Winter Outing

Enjoy a weekend of XC skiing and snowshoeing in the Tug Hill region. This is an ADK club wide trip that is nearby, and a great chance to meet members of other ADK chapters from around the state. If you cannot stay the whole weekend, come for a day trip. Membership to ADK is not required for this event, so bring a friend.

If you want to make a weekend of it, we will be staying at the Mad River Club, located 5 miles east of I-81 via the Sandy Creek-Lacona exit. The following meals will be included: breakfast Saturday and Sunday, lunch Saturday and Sunday, banquet dinner Saturday.

Some of the areas that we will explore around the Tug Hill include the Tourathon Trails, Chateaugay State Forest and Barnes Corners Trails. Dave Larrabee will be doing a Saturday trip to Black Pond near Henderson Harbor for those looking for a flat land trip. Exact routes have not been finalized and we may have last minute additions but there are miles of trails to explore and trips for a variety of skill levels. Year after year, this weekend provides outdoor enthusiasts with new friends and great outings. The food is terrific, too!

RESERVATION FEES are as follows:
(\$20 is non-refundable):

Full weekend: trips, meals, sleep at the clubhouse:
\$65 (accommodations are rustic – call for details)

Full weekend: trips, meals, but no accommodations:
\$65

Trips & Saturday banquet only, no other meals: **\$25**

There is no fee if you are coming just for a day trip, just contact us for meeting times and locations.

For information about this event see:
<http://www.adktravel.org/winterouting.htm>

To register, contact Janine Johnson at
janine.m.johnson@verizon.net

For general questions, contact Ron Fillhart at
rcfillhart@yahoo.com or 298-7424 (leave message)

The Black River Chapter is taking its turn hosting this event in 2011 and 2012. Come for a day or come for the weekend. As host chapter, we need people to lead trips and help out with various activities on the weekend of the event. Contact Janine or Ron if you can help out.

Looking East

As the year 2010 draws to a close, it marks the end of my three years as chapter chair. I have to end my last column of Looking East on a sad note. Willford "Bill" Thomas passed away on November 4 at the age of 93. Our chapter has lost one of its leaders from the early years and we have lost a dear friend.

Bill joined ADK shortly after the Black River Chapter was formed. He served on the chapter board for 14 years, including two years as chapter chair and four years as governor (now the board of directors). He and his wife Jane led or co-led numerous trips, many near their home on Chase's Lake. He headed up the Winter Outing on four occasions and took charge of work on the Centennial Trail for nine years. I once asked Bill, an avid birder, how many species he had on his life list. He responded that he had quit counting after he got to 1,000.

I first met Bill on a chapter outing in the early '90s; a hike to Pine Lake. I had the opportunity to hike or ski with Bill on several other occasions. Bill was quick with a handshake; always delighted to see you. His joy in life showed on hikes as he whistled along the trail.

If I could sum up Bill in two words, they would be quiet dignity. His whole life was a record of service. He served his country with distinction in World War II as a member of the 768th Bomb Squadron flying in missions over Singapore, Taiwan, Manchuria, Burma, Malaysia and Japan. His 36 combat missions as a bombardier earned him the Distinguished Flying Cross, among other awards.

In addition to his involvement with ADK, he served as an elder and a deacon with his church, he was a volunteer EMT with the Lewis County Search and Rescue, and was co-chair of the Lewis County United Fund. Bill was involved in Boys Scouts as a youth, having attained the rank of Eagle Scout. As an adult leader he had received the Silver Beaver Award, Scouting's highest adult award. Bill never boasted of his achievements; he just lived his life as an example to all of us around him.

One story I would like to share about Bill is from a ski trip on the Centennial Trail. We came in from the Steam Mill Road end and did the loop. At the split we went left. The two others who were with us did not want to deal with the hills on Bear Ridge Run so turned back at the next intersection and Bill and I continued on. Bill led the way. When we got to the intersection, Bill said, "I've probably been slowing you down. Why don't you take the lead for the home stretch?" So I decided to crank it up a notch and took off as fast as I could go. After I had gone a half mile or so I thought that maybe I should wait up for Bill, thinking I certainly must be at least a couple of hundred yards ahead by now. After all, Bill was in his 70's and I was in my 30's at the time. I took a quick peak over my shoulder. As it turned out, had I stopped Bill might have run me right over. He was right on my tail!

As I mentioned at the beginning of the column, this is my last year as chapter chair. Janine Johnson officially takes over that role on the first of the year. In the last few months I have had a chance to hike with Janine and her four-year-old daughter Sarah on four different occasions: Middle Settlement Lake, the Loj weekend campout, the fall picnic and Chateaugay State Forest. On each occasion I had my twelve-year-old daughter Lydia in tow.

For several years I was involved with the adopt-a-lean-to program and this was one of the lean-tos that I helped take care of. I have been to this lake numerous times in all seasons and all types of weather. I have camped there. I have been startled by snakes basking in the sun on the rocks in front of the lean-to. I have hiked, skied and snowshoed off trail in the area. It is a place I know well and consider one of my favorite places in the Adirondacks. At various times, I have hiked there with my wife, my son, my daughter, two nephews, a cousin and his daughter, several friends, acquaintances and complete strangers.

On the Loj weekend campout, the Johnsons brought the whole family, including Janine's mom, Doris Brown. On a cloudy Saturday, Lydia and I hiked up Owl's Head with the Johnsons while Marc and Debbie Baker set off for Marcy Dam with two grandsons. I had given Lydia the option of picking out whatever hike she wanted to do. It was pretty clear that she wanted to go wherever Sarah was hiking. Owl's Head is a small mountain between the Cascade Lakes and the hamlet of Keene and is well within the reach of a four-year-old. Lydia and I had done this mountain previous year. It has great views so I didn't mind doing it again.

Part of the experience of ADK is sharing your adventures in the woods with others. Part of the ADK experience is teaching the next generation to respect and love nature. Janine and her family are a proud part of that tradition, and Bill Thomas embodied that sense of sharing and teaching as much as anyone I have encountered in my years with ADK. He will be missed.

Ron Fillhart
Chapter Chair



Wilford "Bill" Thomas



Three generations on Owl's Head. Janine Johnson (Incoming Chair), Sarah Johnson, and Doris Brown.

Winter Outings, continued...

Date To Be Determined.... Inman Gulf ski.

This event is weather dependent and is not suitable for beginners. We need a stretch of cold weather to allow the stream to freeze at the bottom of the Gulf. Again, this winter, if the cold weather permits, we will ski down thru the Inman Gulf. It's over 8 miles from Barnes Corners to Rodman and can be very cold and windy, so dress appropriately. The blue ice along the walls, the wildlife, and hopefully a campfire to ease the chill will entice you hardy skiers to join me around 10am at the town barn in Barnes Corners. If interested, contact Dave at [232-2111](tel:232-2111) or thsmokey@imcnet.net.

Saturday, December 11th – Barnes Corners Snowshoe

Break out the winter equipment and join us for the first snowshoe trip of the season. We will head up to the Barnes Corners trails. It is still early in the season, so if conditions warrant we may move the trip to another location, depending on snow conditions. For more information, contact Janine at janine.m.johnson@verizon.net or [782-0651](tel:782-0651).

Saturday, December 18th. Whiteface Toll Road Ski Trip.

Join the Laurentian Chapter for their traditional early season 10-mile ski up and down the Whiteface Memorial Highway, the highest road in New York State! This is strenuous cross-country skiing and proper equipment and training are a must. Contact David Trithart, trithadi@potsdam.edu

Saturday, December 18th. Holiday HullabaZoo 10am -2pm

Here's something for the kids and grandkids at the New York State Zoo at Thompson Park. Get their picture taken with Santa, decorate holiday ornaments, Christmas carol through the zoo and much more. This is not an ADK event, so call [782-6180](tel:782-6180) to confirm or for more information. Check for other events at <http://www.nyszoo.org>.

Saturday, January 1st. New Year's Gathering Join the Laurentian Chapter on New Year's Day for an afternoon of skiing and snowshoeing followed by apres-ski potluck snacks. Meet at the Clarkson University Outdoor Lodge in the early afternoon for skiing; the gathering usually happens around 4pm. Contact Tom Ortmeyer, **265-8219** or tortmeye@twcnv.rr.com

Thursday, January 6th – Chapter Board Meeting

Non-board members are welcome. We meet at 7:00 PM at the meeting room at Gander Mountain in the Salmon Run Mall in Watertown. At press time, the room was not reserved, so contact Janine Johnson at janine.m.johnson@verizon.net or Ron Fillhart at **298-7424** or rcfillhart@yahoo.com to confirm time, place and date.

Saturday, January 8th – Tourathon Trails X-C Ski

We will plan to cover six to eight miles. The exact route will be determined by the trail conditions and desire of the group. Contact Ron Fillhart at rcfillhart@yahoo.com or **298-7424** for meeting time and place. This is not an ADK event.

Saturday, January 15th – X-C Ski or Snowshoe the Wiley Nature Trail

We will explore the nature trail behind the Wiley Elementary School in Watertown. We will meet at 10:00 AM for a 2 to 3 mile trip. For more information and to register call Marc Baker at **788-1566**.

January 21-23 – Tug Hill Winter Outing See page one for details.

Saturday, January 22nd. Winterfest/Try-It Ski Race.

This isn't just a 12.5 km freestyle cross country ski race. There are winter events for the whole family. Full details were not available when this went to press, so check <http://www.winonaforest.com/> for more information and a link to race registration. This is not an ADK event.

January 28 to February 3 - ADK Winter Mountaineering School

There are three programs to choose from – weekend day hike, weekend backpack, or a combination of day hikes and a three night backpacking trip. The purpose is to promote and teach safe winter mountaineering and camping techniques. The school provides both novices and experienced winter climbers the opportunity to come to the High Peaks for 3-6 days to learn new skills or brush up on existing ones. For more information including costs, visit www.winterschool.org. Even if you do not plan to attend, you might want to check out this web site. There is some great information about winter gear. The deadline for applications is January 15, 2011.

January 29 & 30 - Tug Hill Challenge Dog Sled Competition.

This is great event to take the kids to see. (Dogsled races also run in Feb. See below) Over the years, we've met the racers and had the opportunity to meet and pet the dogs. Competition starts at the old CCC camp on County Route 90 outside of Mannsville. Full details were not available when this went to press, so check <http://www.pennsledclub.com/events/2010-2011/events.html> or <http://www.winonaforest.com/> for updated information. This is not an ADK event.

Saturday, February 5th - X-C Ski Rodman/Barnes Corners Trails

We will determine our exact route depending on the desire of the group and trail conditions. We will meet at the parking lot about 2 miles west of Barnes Corners along Route 177 at 1 PM. For more information and to register, contact Dave at 232-2111 or thsmokey@imcnet.net.

Saturday, February 12th - Centennial Trail X-C Ski.

This interesting ski trail is located in Brantingham Lake. Part of the trail runs along the top of a winding esker. We will do this as a loop trip. Total distance is about six miles. This is not a beginners trail. Contact Ron Fillhart at rcfillhart@yahoo.com or 298-7424 for a meeting time and place.

Friday, February 18th – Full Moon X-C Ski

We will do one of the ski trips in or near Watertown – the Black River Recreation Trail, the Calcium Nature Trail or the golf course at Thompson Park. Bring a headlamp (just in case) and dress for night time temperatures. For a meeting time and place, call Marc Baker at 788-1566.

February 20 & 21. Dog Sled Competition.

Great family outing. Competition starts at the old CCC camp on County Route 90 outside of Mannsville. Full details were not available when this went to press and the dates were not confirmed as this is a Sunday/Monday, so please check <http://www.pennsleddogclub.com/events/2010-2011/events.html> or <http://www.winonaforest.com/> for updated information. This is not an ADK event.

Looking Ahead

Thursday, March 3rd – Chapter Board Meeting

Non-board members are welcome. We meet at 7:00 PM at the meeting room at Gander Mountain in the Salmon Run Mall in Watertown. At press time, the room was not reserved, so contact Janine Johnson at janine.m.johnson@verizon.net or Ron Fillhart at 298-7424 or rcfillhart@yahoo.com to confirm time, place and date.

Saturday, March 5th - Tug Hill Tourathon Cross Country Ski Race.

There are three race distances to choose from – 12.5, 25 and 37.5 km. Check for details and a link to race registration at <http://www.winonaforest.com/>. This is not an ADK event.

Back Tracks.....

August 20-22. Adirondack Loj Weekend Camping. Call this a generational camping trip. We had ten people total, including three grand children and three grandparents. After setting up camp and make dinner on Friday evening, we looked forward to a great day of hiking on the next day. Saturday was cloudy but dry. Marc and Debbie Baker headed to Marcy Dam with their two grandsons. Meanwhile, Ron and Lydia Fillhart joined Janine, Don and Sarah Johnson and Doris Brown for a hike up Owl's Head. They found a large group near the summit as a group from St. Lawrence University was rock

climbing. The evening entertainment in the High Peaks Information Center was a presentation on beavers. As we prepared to turn in for the night, the weather would turn as well. Rain set in and continued through Sunday, making breakdown of our camps a sodden affair.



September 19. Wanakena Fire Tower Hike. This fire tower was originally located on Tooley Pond Mountain. A few years it was dismantled and re-erected on Cathedral Rock on the Ranger School property. Adele Machia and Madeline Yousey joined Lydia and Ron Fillhart for this easy but interesting hike. This has to rank as one of the best views relative to the effort required. We were a couple weeks early for peak colors. On the way home we made a side trip to explore Greenwood Falls, just outside the Blue Line.



Lydia Fillhart, Adele Machia and Madeline Yousey at the fire tower on Cathedral Rock (Above). Greenwood Falls (next page).



September 25. Fall picnic at the Lowville Forestry Demonstration Area. We had about 15 people in attendance for our picnic this year. Skies were threatening but the rain held off. After lunch we took a walk through this old DEC tree farm, checking out the various trees and shrubs and some *Aminita muscaria* mushrooms (definitely not edible).



Chapter picnic at the Lowville Forestry Demonstration Area

October 9. Wehle State Park Hike/Bike. Seven of us joined for a short hike/bike to the picnic area along the shores of Lake Ontario. Dave Larrabee tended the fire for hot dogs. After dinner, we walked down to check out the pill box, a remnant dating back to when this area was used for military training. We watched the sun slip below the horizon before making our way back to our vehicles in the fading light. Look for future outings to this beautiful state park.



Dave Larrabee tending the fire at Wehle State Park.

Chapter Officers for 2011

Chapter chair - Janine Johnson
Vice chair- Help Wanted
Secretary - Donald Johnson
Treasurer - Cindy Stewart
Advisor - Debbie Baker
Advisor - Linda Nichols
Advisor - Wendy Newell
Director - Marcus Wuerschmidt

Conservation - Ron Fillhart
Education - Marc Baker
Outings - Tammie Miller
Trails - Dave Larrabee
Currents Editor - Ann Fillhart
Publicity - Clara Bingham
Membership - Dave Ciechanowski



The pill box at Wehle State Park.

October 17 – Chateaugay State Forest. We had 16 people and 2 dogs for this hike through a beautiful section of state forest in northern Oswego County on a sunny but windy fall day. The woods were wet, making a couple of small streams difficult to cross. The region had record flooding on the Salmon River two weeks earlier, causing the collapse of a retaining wall in the village of Pulaski and a declaration of a state of emergency in the village. Did I mention that it was a breezy day? We had a very close call as the wind brought down a dead tree. How close? When a tree falls on the leash between the hiker and her dog, that is too close!

*Keep an eye on the January issue of Adirondac for an article on the Chateaugay trails.



Chateaugay State Forest hike.



A close call at Chateaugay State Forest

November 20 - Black River Chapter Annual Dinner. We had a new venue this year, the Vineyard Restaurant near Lowville. Not only did we have a full house, we had a waiting list and unfortunately, had to turn some people away. The popularity of this event was probably due to a very interesting speaker, but we cannot rule out the wine tasting that preceded his talk as contributing to the success of this event. Dr. Manoj Vora entertained us with a slide show about his quest to climb the highest summits on each of the seven continents. He followed this with a movie on his unsuccessful attempt to make Mount Everest number six on his list. If Dr. Vora is successful in completing the two summits that remain he will join some pretty exclusive company as there are only about 150 people in the world that can claim that they have stood at the top of these mountains.



Do you have pictures of an ADK outing? Please send them to: rcfillhart@yahoo.com

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December 11	Barnes Corners Snowshoe
December 18	Whiteface Toll Road Ski Trip
December 18	Holiday HullabaZoo
January 1	New Year's Gathering
January 6	Chapter Board Meeting
January 8	Tourathon Trails X-C Ski
January 15	X-C Ski or Snowshoe - Wiley Nature Trail
January 21-23	Winter Outing – Boylston
January 22	Winterfest/Try It XC Ski Race
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February 12	Centennial Trail X-C Ski.
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