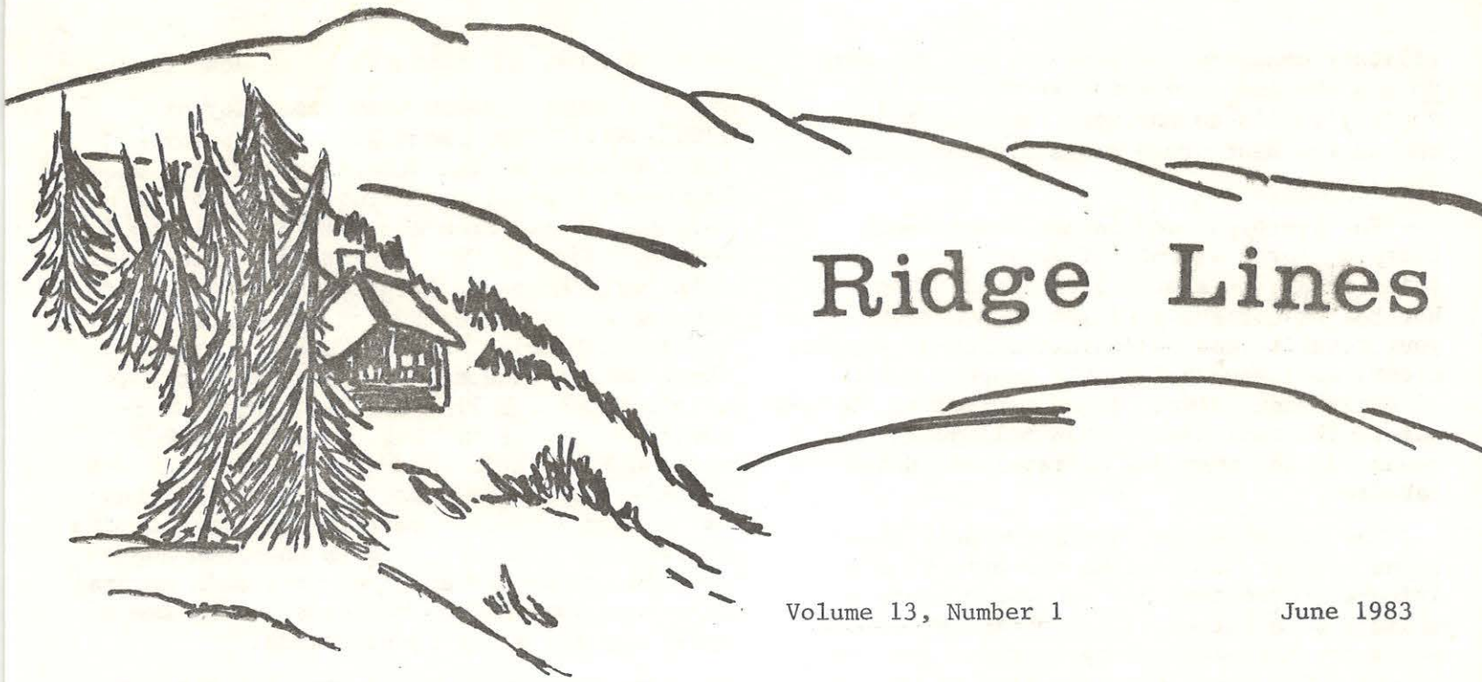

Ridge Lines

Volume 13, Number 1 June 1983

GREEN MOUNTAIN CLUB
BURLINGTON SECTION

NEW TENT PLATFORMS READY FOR USE

Judy Lance (985-2914)

As reported in the last issue of Ridge Lines, the executive committee decided to install tent platforms and an outhouse on a site just off the new section of the Long Trail near Bolton. The job has now been completed, and the facilities are ready for hikers.

The work was done in two phases. On May 7 lumber and other materials were carried to the site. Once again, we have Bill Ward and his troup of Boy Scouts to thank for coming to our aid. (This group also gave assistance recently at Taylor Lodge repairing damage caused by vandalism.) Also assisting section members with the project was Ben Davis of the main club staff.

After carrying in and creosoting the lumber, there was time to spare so the group constructed a "chum" outhouse, custom-designed by Basil Goodridge. Completing this facility is an antique wooden seat, compliments of Steve Worcester.

The next day a small group of GMC'ers returned to blaze a temporary trail from the Long Trail down to Bolton Lodge. This will provide emergency shelter for hikers during this season while we evaluate the feasibility of our tent platform site as a permanent shelter site.

On May 14, a work party constructed the two 8' by 8' platforms. With all the rain that had fallen during the intervening week, the creosote was still wet. A big THANK YOU to all who helped with this project. We hope that many hikers will have the opportunity to visit the site this year.

DRINK, BUT BE WARY

Ron Whipkey (863-5754)

In the past several years, magazine articles have warned hikers and backpackers of a newly identified environmental hazard -- Giardia. Giardia has been identified in some mountain water sources in well-travelled parts of the Cascades and the Rockies. It is almost positively the cause of serious and prolonged abdominal and intestinal illnesses suffered by some hikers drinking raw water in those regions.

Considering the even more heavily used environment of our eastern mountains, I decided to learn more about the occurrence and consequences of Giardia. I have talked with half a dozen backcountry "professionals" from Washington, Utah, and Colorado. Nearer home, I discussed the subject with Ray Leonard, project leader of the U.S. Forest Service backcountry research work in the northeast. Instead of attempting to identify and discuss specific bacterial or viral pathogenic culprits (or indicators such as F. Coliform), these specialists recommended almost unanimously that we review and emphasize age-old water safety and hygiene precautions to use on the trail.

First, like many other environmental components, drinkwater (pure or impure) is a functio of place obtained, original source, time of year, quantity in the stream, and so forth. A water supply source along one of the heavily travelled Green Mountain trails is probably perfectly safe in April or May when continuous mixing from snowmelt, rain, or subsurface seepage takes place. This may be true even in the heavy usage summer months if rainfall amounts are abnormally heavy. But in a normal year when summer rainfall amounts contribute little or nothing to streamflow, the effects and concentrations of potential pollutants are greatly increased. In other words, it is necessary that we get mixing; this mixing tends to dilute and hopefully prevent surface water pollution. (In technical hydrology, we speak of lateral, vertical, and longitudinal mixing.)

Most of us here in the Green Mountains are dayhikers throughout most of the year. We should know our water needs and then correspondingly carry enough water from home to get us through the hike. Just as oldtime

military chaplains assured us that the word no was the best preventative for many of society's ills so the word canteen defines one of the best protections against impure trail water.

For overnight and longer trips where carrying large amounts of water is not the thing to do, we should practice boiling. Hot tea or coffee, bouillon, or whatever your favorite can be as refreshing as a cold, clear, sparkling but highly suspect drink of trail-side water. In an hour or so, boiled water will cool down. Then fill your canteens for the next day's travel and drink carefree.

The Green, White, and Adirondack Mountains are not at all like the arid Utah or Arizona canyonlands and mountains where a minimum of a gallon in our packs may be necessary for each and every day. For prolonged trips here, the main item we have to carry is a little extra butane or white gas fuel to boil all the water we consume on the trail and in camp.

Finally, let us not forget chlorine, iodine, halzone, etc., additives, or even the newer Walbro-type, et al., water purifiers. I have personally used all these and have never suffered the slightest abdominal, intestinal, or whatever, upset. (Come to think of it, some of my fellow hikers who drank the same water "neat" apparently didn't suffer anything either.) But the memory of six plus weeks of infectious amoebic torture in the South Pacific swamps a long time ago is still very vivid.

No discussion of trail water practice should neglect mention of trail environmental etiquette. Do not be like the heroes and villains of the western "B" movies we used to see in the 1930's and 40's and on today's late shows. Remember how, when their canteens went dry at crucial moments in the desert, they would contemptously fling them aside! When this happens on the trail, place the empty canteen in your pack. The section walkthroughs and trail patrols have enough work to do without spending time and energy carrying out empty canteens.

TEE-SHIRT TIME AGAIN

The fresh spring breezes have brought a new look to Burlington Section's tee-shirt enterprise. A new logo proclaiming the recognized "ornery member" of the GMC was dreamed up through committee effort, brought to life in black and white by Peg Whitson, and will travel with you wherever you go.

Tee-shirts are available in blue, yellow, and orange; in small, medium, large, and X-large sizes; and can be ordered through Janice Lange, 208 Colchester Road, Essex Junction 05452 for $6 each, 2 for $10.

JAMES TAYLOR, GMC FOUNDER John Cowles

Few people really knew James Taylor (1872-1949), even among his contemporaries. But I was one of the privileged few who knew him well, especially during the height of his personal powers from about 1916 until the late 1930's. Born in New York State, educated with a Phi Beta Kappa at Colgate, he came to Vermont about 1907 to serve as associate headmaster of Vermont Academy, Saxtons River. There he led student hikes and fell in love with Vermont's hills, valleys, and indomitable people. From that time, he worked vigorously to stir Vermonters to cherish the state's beauty and charm, to make the mountains play a greater part in the lives of its natives and visitors, and to champion appreciation and conservation of Vermont's natural resources long before conservation became a necessity for state preservation.

Jim, as he was called, was not blessed with a family; his only close relatives were his sister, Marie, and a nephew, both of whom rarely came to Burlington. He was welcomed into my family's inner circle of home and friends; he felt at ease to visit frequently and without prior notice, even just before evening mealtime. We three Cowles boys called him Uncle Jim, or just "Unc." He was a playmate for general roughhousing, and he generously responded to the family hospitality by giving us our first and only football, L.P. Wood's best. He also gave each of us and our very young sister a pair of skis, long before Vermont became a ski paradise or developed a ski industry.

Arriving at our house, he would leave his cigar outside and then pace the living-room, rehearsing in dramatic form his newest versions of speeches, editorials, or brochures on such topics as roadside beautification, elimination of signs, planting of trees, and the establishing of more paved highways. He was always on a first name basis with the governor and other officials who might yield to his persuasions. He was very well read in classics and humanities, history and politics, and his utterances, gilded with carefully chosen metaphors and allusions to great writings of others, were masterpieces of eloquence. But he did not look for lasting fame, except through the people he inspired. His writings and brochures, expensively prepared by Ben Lane and other creative printers, are now rather rare collectors' items or lost to posterity.

I myself was the subject of a lavish, brown-covered oversize pamphlet with corded binding on the topic of food conservation during World War I: "Food will win the war -- Don't waste it." He illustrated it with large photos of me making speeches to an imaginary audience with the family sofa as a platform. It reveals his own skillful photography, accompanied with those little round wooden boxes of magnesium powder for flash photos. The brochure was addressed to President Herbert Hoover, and my pride overflowed when Hoover sent an appreciative reply to Jim and mentioned the patriotic extemporizer (only 7 years old) on the President's favorite theme. I still have that brochure and photostat of the reply.

Jim was also an accomplished musician; he played well a rather old wooden flute with few metal keys. My mother accompanied him on her Steinway, and their favorite pieces were German lieder by Schumann, Franz, and, less often, Schubert. Many a night I went happily to sleep as they played an informal concert with Mother singing the German words.

Taylor is remembered best and publicly for his tireless devotion to the founding and development of the Green Mountain Club and its trail system -- the Long Trail and its approaches and shelters. Most of us know the familiar story: Jim brought his dream to some 22 other lovers of the mountains and together they signed a charter for the Club in early 1910, with the principal objective that of a ridgeline trail from Massachusetts extending well into Canada. Jim's own chart of the proposed trail became a prime exhibit later for the AMC, which followed with a White Mountain trail system connecting with the Long Trail at Sherburne Pass. (The AMC, of course, is a much older Club going back to the late 1870's.) I can still hear Taylor's baritone voice as he proclaimed such catch phrases as "Jay Peak or bust!" , battle cry of trail builders who, understandably, finally reached Canada, but did not pursue Jim's original scheme to end the Trail at Quebec City. The loop around Post 592 was obviously more satisfying; it ended the Trail within the boundaries of Vermont, where the mountain wilderness remains a distinct feature of that final section of Trail.

Jim became too busy with his several other state development themes to be an active trailbuilder and blazer, but he did participate in many Burlington Section hikes where his genial humor and rugged physiognomy lent appropriate atmosphere, especially on winter outings into the mountains or nearby trips to East Woods. His lasting friendship for my father, Clarence P. Cowles, was very definitely linked to my father's founding and devoted fostering of the Burlington Section, GMC. Our family's circle of friends sounds in retrospect like a roster of the early, most active members of that Section: Theron Dean, Ernest Smith, Mabel Brownell, Miss Guthrie, and the Unsworths, to name a few. Subsequently, a large group of UVM faculty members and their families including the Buchanans and Puffers joined the group and were among the early builders and developers of the northern portions of the Long Trail and its shelters.

One of Jim's special loves, besides the mountains, was Lake Champlain. He had a canoe and rented space to store it at the Queen City Park boathouse. He sent Mr. Peters, guardian of the boathouse, a written note that the Cowles boys could use the canoe. Rock Dunder became a common objective of our trips. Uncle Jim had taken us there by rowboat and had given a lesson in the Rock's dubious history as a mistaken Yankee frigate, fired upon by a British man-o'-war in the dim dusk one evening in 1812. We even searched the shore unsuccessfully for cannon balls and imagined pockmarks on the Rock's scrappy shale. But Jim's canoe was soon held in fief for unpaid rent, and we had to sweeten the loan of the canoe with partial payments. To the balding Mr. Peters, tired of the smell of the boathouse, some back rent for the unclaimed Taylor canoe that was awaiting its owner on a dusty rack was better than none.

A less well-known phase of Jim Taylor's devotion to Vermont was his purchase of a Model-T Ford touring car in which he travelled around the state to mobilize conservationists from Brattleboro and Bennington to the "Northeast Kingdom," as it is now called. He loved the Lake Willoughby, Ascutney, and Mt. Equinox areas, despite their being off the Long Trail. His inspiration helped open up those areas for future development and state parks. He called his flivver "The Chariot of Democracy," and I remember well the many times he took us with him on statewide travels. He insisted that people drive with the top down, and we frequently got soaked with rain before he would let us put up the top and side windows. He would often stop the car suddenly when a roadside vista presented itself and "frame" the scene with parallel outstretched hands to test its suitability for a later photo. I recall our backing up old Harlow Hill at the base of Smugglers' Notch so the gas would feed from the under-the-front-seat gravity tank -- only to have the radiator boil over and have to be water-fed with a folding canvas bucket. Driving with Jim Taylor in his "tin lizzy" was an experience!

Jim was Vermont's first secretary for the State Chamber of Commerce. In his dedication to this position, he devoted himself to travelling and to devising attractive publicity to encourage individuals, businesses, and industry to cast their lot in a rural state far from the madding crowd of larger cities. His enthusiasms worked a charm, but he received little financial reward and depleted his own resources. He had to sell his camera, pawn his flute, and forgo a replacement of his aging Model-T. He lived an almost ascetic life in a small room in the Van Ness Hotel, and, as his money failed, he began to show all too many visual cues of self-denial and self-effacement. He never wanted to be a burden on his friends, and he would hardly murmur a greeting when met on the streets of Burlington, hatless, his face a leathery worn texture and his jaws hollow from lost teeth. Poor Jim, we would say, as his visits for a free meal tapered off as he gradually disappeared from public view. Self-neglect was written all over his person.

Doubtless long-planned, he spent his final day surrounded by the natural beauty of the state to which he had dedicated life and means of life. With his last few dollars, he ordered a full-course meal at a hotel on one of the northern islands, rented a small rowboat, and alone and silent, rowed to the middle of the narrow Lake in view of his loved Green Mountains. The next day the boat was found, empty. Jim's end epitomized his self-sacrifice for the Vermont he admired, adopted, and nurtured.

TRAILS WORKSHOP Dot Myer (863-2433)

On April 30-May 1 several Burlington Section members gathered for a trails workshop.

Other participants included members of other sections, Long Trail Patrol members and GMC caretakers, and Forest Service personnel.

The workshop was divided into two parts. On the first day we concentrated on "speed clearing" and trail maintenance. The second day covered trail construction. Each day started with a demonstration at the Forest Service headquarters in Danby, VT, and then we divided into groups and worked on nearby trails.

Saturday morning started with a demonstration of various tools and stressed safety. One tool that was new to me was the grub hoe, somewhat like a mattox, but with one very broad blade. It was very useful for cleaning out water bars as well as many other jobs.

We then worked on the trail to Little Rock Pond. We spent most of our time cleaning out water bars and reditching so that the water would run off the trail. Our group leaders (each group had one from the GMC and one from the Forest Service) stressed finding the source of the water and channeling it from there, thus avoiding having to work on many places along the trail.

Saturday night we had a delicious stew supper prepared by Herb Reed of the St. Albans Section. Then there were demonstrations of, and a chance to practice, making signs using routers and a "branding machine" which burns the GMC emblem on a sign in a few seconds. A second demonstration covered sharpening of tools. We slept in a huge dormitory-style tent and heard a thunderstorm and rain on the roof. But it cleared in time for Sunday's work.

Sunday morning started with a session on chain saw use. The dangers of chain saws were stressed with many examples of accidents, but it was also shown that they are very useful tools when used properly. Safety equipment including hard hat, ear protection, goggles, chaps made of bullet-proof material, and safety-type chains were shown. Chain saw "kickback" in which the saw hits something and jumps back in a fraction of a second was demonstrated. This is the cause of many chain saw accidents. Then a tree was cut down, notched on the side it was to fall so that it would fall in the right direction. It would be necessary to cut down trees for making waterbars, puncheon, and bridges.

We then formed new groups and went back to the trails to help in trail construction. We worked on four types of construction. Ditching, similar to what we did Saturday, was first, again stressing the importance of keeping water off the trail. Then we built water bars and puncheon. Each of these is needed for different water problems, and each problem on the trail needs to be looked at to decide what to do about it and where. Water bars are partially buried in the ground with rocks holding the ends in place. Pegs, which you may see on older water bars, are no longer used since they turned out not to last as well. The water bar is put in at an angle so that the water will run off the trail, not be dammed up in it. Puncheon was made by placing short sill logs not more than six feet apart across the trail and spiking two large (8" or more) stringers to them. The stringers were flattened on top with chain saw and ax to make them safer to walk on. The bottom of the stringers can be flattened at the ends to make it easier to attach them to the sill logs, but the sill logs should not be flattened because they wouldn't last as long. Stringers can be as long as necessary to cover the wet area. A fourth type of construction which we helped with was steps. These were built with logs and rocks for the purpose of preventing erosion.

It was an enjoyable and informative weekend, worthwhile both for beginners and for experienced trailbuilders who wanted to keep up on newer methods.

LT WALK THROUGH COMPLETED

Carlene Squires (434-2533)

The first walk through to check our section of the Long Trail (May 15) was cancelled because of threatening weather. When the second day (May 22) dawned bright and clear, 8 hardy souls met to begin a long day's hike.

Some may have wondered if we would ever get out of the parking lot as various plans were suggested as to where we would go, who would drive, etc. After much discussion, we decided to split into two groups, one covering the LT from Taylor Lodge to the new tent platform site, and the other from the tent platforms to Jonesville. This would be about 19 miles and leave only the section from Taylor to Smugglers' Notch to be cleared by the GMC rangers and caretakers working in the Mt. Mansfield area.

Winter wind and snow damage was light so work progressed quickly. We cleared blowdowns and placed signs at shelters to inform hikers of the reroute and new tent platforms as well as of the temporary trail to Bolton Lodge.

For the most part, we enjoyed the day. We saw an abundance of lovely spring flowers, refreshing views, lots of black flies, and a garter snake with a small frog clamped in his jaws. It was an especially long day for the crew who came out of the woods at 7:30 pm and couldn't start the International that was to take them back to the cars at Stevensville. After an hour, they finally started it. They reached home about 10 pm!

Thanks to all who helped. I hope to see you next year on the next Long Trail walk through.

THE PERFECT LATE SUMMER VACATION

Jan Abbott (878-4873)

For those of us who've already exhausted Alaska, met all the grizzlies we care to in Yellowstone, or are simply looking for a low-cost outing in congenial company, spending all or part of the week of August 20-28th (please correct the error in dates on your Burlington Section outing schedule) at this year's Intersectional would be an ideal holiday.

How long has it been since you've attended an Intersectional? The first week-long GMC Intersectional Camp Week, held in 1960 at the Mt. Norris Boy Scout Reservation on Lake Eden, was enthusiastically sponsored by the Burlington Section under the able leadership of

Larry and Al Dean. But in recent years, Burlington Section representation at this annual gathering has been minimal.

Due to its highly favorable reception last year, Camp Thorpe in Goshen is back as the Intersectional location. Nestled in the foothills west of Brandon Gap, the camp is near both the Long Trail and the stores and attractions of the Brandon-Rutland-Middlebury area. Major Vermont peaks lie nearby for serious hikers (and chairlift fans!), who will profit from the chance to complete sections of the Long Trail and Appalachian Trail usually less accessible to northern Vermonters.

Vacationers and families with young children will enjoy the Camp Thorpe tennis courts, farm animals, large fenced-in swimming pool with diving board, pond stocked with trout (and boats), playground, and sports equipment. There are a number of cabins for rent if your tent doesn't look as though it will last the summer or your family has outgrown it, and Camp Thorpe has several amenities (hot and cold running water and indoor flush toilets) that many of our Intersectional sites don't.

The Intersectional Committee is planning a varied program of long, short, and do-it-yourself hikes, bingo games, slide shows, and of course the auction (don't forget to bring your white elephants), the square dance, and the dinner.

Camp Thorpe is just far enough away from Burlington to make a pleasant change, yet close enough to come home for a day or two if the weather turns bad. It has to be one of the most scenic Intersectional locations ever; the view alone is worth planning your vacation for that week.

For specific information and further details on rates, cabin rentals, etc., please see the current issue of the Long Trail News.

OUTINGS

June 25 (June 26 optional). Adirondack Museum.

Enjoy a visit to this fine regional museum near the village of Blue Mountain Lake, NY. The museum consists of 18 exhibit buildings and display areas depicting life in the Adirondacks over the years. A minimum of 3 hours should be allowed for our visit. The museum has a snack bar where light lunches can be purchased, but there is a picnic area for those who would rather "brown bag" it. For those who are interested, we will plan to camp overnight in the area and hike on Sunday.

The museum offers a discount of $1.25 off the regular admission price of $4.50 for organized groups of 10 or more adults. Children between 7 and 15 are $2.50; children under 7 are free. We will plan to leave the UVM Dairy Science Building at 8 am on Saturday, June 25.

Please let me know by June 21 if you plan to go so I can make arrangements. Judy Lance, leader, 985-2914.

July 3. Fourth of July from the Top of Vermont

Lights from many towns in all directions can be seen from the top of Mt. Mansfield so we're going there on July 3 to watch the fireworks. It will be an evening hike and could be one of the most interesting Fourth-of-July's we've had. Be sure to bring warm clothes and a good flashlight. Dot Myer, leader, 863-2433.

July 9. "Carburs Express" Bike and Ferry.

Bicycle to Carburs for lunch -- in Plattsburgh, NY. Combine 3 of the best things in life: Carburs, bicycles, and Lake Champlain ferries.

Start in Burlington 9 am, ride through Grand Isle, ferry to Plattsburgh. Enjoy 1 of Carburs' several hundred sandwiches, good beer, wine, or milk, follow with a marshmallow sundae, and back to your bicycle. Bicycle south to Port Kent and return to Burlington via the big ferry. Leisure fun day. 45 miles. Bring ferry and lunch money. Rain cancels or postpones. Call Tom Brooks, leader, 899-2048.

July 30 Bike Hike.

We will start our bike trip in Vergennes, ride to Middlebury, head west to Lake Champlain, and then north along the shoreline, ending in Vergennes. The route passes Middlebury College and UVM's Morgan Horse Farm and through a covered bridge. A stop along the Lake for swimming is planned. The loop is 50 miles of mostly level riding through pleasant countryside with some panoramic views. After the ride, those interested can meet for dinner at the Dog Team in Middlebury. Meeting place will be Burlington so that those without cars can participate. Let's hope for good weather. Pam Moritz, leader, 879-1451.

August 28. Blueberries and Birthday at Butler Lodge

Late in August blueberries along the trails often tempt hikers to stop and pick instead of continuing to the summit. This year we have a hike planned especially for picking and eating blueberries. We'll go up the Frost Trail on Mt. Mansfield (where there were plenty of blueberries last year). Those who don't spend too much time picking blueberries may reach the top of the mountain.

Then we'll go down the Rock Garden or the Wampahoofus Trail to Butler Lodge for a supper of pancakes, made from our berries, and a birthday cake to celebrate a special birthday.

Butler Lodge is 50 years old this year. Built in 1933 by the Long Trail Patrol, Butler is one of the oldest shelters still in use on the Long Trail. We hope that many GMC members will be there. Come for a day of hiking and blueberrying or just join us later for supper. If you come for the day, don't forget your blueberry pail. Dot Myer, leader, 863-2433.

ANNOUNCEMENT

As a new member of GMC and the Burlington community, I would be very interested in meeting other artist/hikers. I'd like to get together with anyone who would be interested in painting and drawing in the great outdoors. Please feel free to call me at 862-2480 until 10 pm, and ask for Nilda Scherer.

NEW MEMBERS

Burlington Section welcomes the following new members.

Kirk Amondsen, Maple Ridge Road, RD 1, Box 169, Underhill, VT 05489; Bruce Beauregard, 128 North Street, Burlington VT 05401; Andrew Cook, Box 45, Underhill Center, VT 05490; James and Caroline Dawson, Birchwood Drive, Peru, NY 12972; Pharilda Galloway, 21 Woodbriar Manor, Milton, VT 05468; Joseph Gerberg, 967A Pine Street, Burlington, VT 05401; Micheal Greenia, RD 1, Box 15, Underhill, VT 05489; Michael and Sharon Monson, Nicholas and Amber, 21 Bay View Road, Colchester, VT 05446; Nilda Scherer, 331 Flynn Avenue, Burlington, VT 05401; Eric Sklar, 1 East Street, Apt. 2, Essex Junction, VT 05452; William and Mary Ward, Carl and Becky, 28 Bilodeau Court Burlington, VT 05401.

RIDGE LINES

Ridge Lines is mailed to Burlington Section members in June, September, January, and March. Send news items to Sally S. Spear, RD 4, Colchester, VT 05446, or call 655-3071 or 893-7962. Ridge Lines is not forwarded or returned if your address is incorrect so please notify Ridge Lines or membership chairman of name and address changes.

Contributors to this issue: Jan Abbott, Tom Brooks, John Cowles, Judy Lance, Corky Magoon, Pam Moritz, Dot Myer, Kari Jo Spear, Sally S. Spear, Carlene Squires, Elizabeth Thompson, Ann Thornhill, Ron Whipkey.

GMC, BURLINGTON SECTION
Sally S. Spear
RD 4
Colchester, Vermont 05446

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