



# The Oak Leaf

Newsletter of TRISTATE RAMBLERS

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## Message from the President: A Modified Winter Hike *by Gordon Thomas*



At the start of the trail, the hike leader (GT) stepped off on his left foot – into snow that gave way with a crunch as his foot slipped to the side. He said to himself, “Hey, my mini-crampons worked fine on the parking lot which was cleared but icy.” Then he stepped on his right foot, slipped again, and thought, “Oh, oh.” He took a third step, slipped, turned around to the hikers, and said, “I know that I planned 5 miles, and a mountain summit with a 2 mph pace. But let’s play our hike by ear.”

The group had been watching the leader’s first steps. Although no one hopped back into a car, they all liked the idea that we would simply revise the plan based on what we could enjoy. So, off we went, crunching along together much more slowly than 2 mph even with using our poles. When we got to the top of the first small hill, we were pooped. So we picked an easier

route than over the main summit and staggered forward, the snow shifting with each step.

Finally, when we stopped for a rest after about 2 miles, one of the hikers said, “Let’s declare victory right here, have a snack standing in the snow, and play it by ear back to our cars.” The leader was as pleased as anyone. As we climbed back over the little hill, it seemed bigger.



*A modified winter hike*

Trudging into the parking lot, one of the hikers commented, “Hiking in these conditions for 4 miles is like hiking on a bare trail for about 8 miles.” Another said, “It was cool that the trip could go with a change, when it might have been canceled.”



**The TriState Ramblers  
Annual Picnic and Barbecue  
is BACK –  
and better than ever!**

**Saturday, June 6**

**Tulip Springs,  
64 Cherry Lane,  
West Orange**

*We’re excited to gather at our new location featuring a beautiful pavilion and modern bathrooms – while keeping all the things we love:*

- Scenic hikes before lunch (all levels welcome!)
- Lunch at 11:30
- Delicious food
- Just like last summer – bring a savory dish or dessert to share
- Great memories and even better company
- Knife sharpening, swap table (equipment and clothing), outdoor first aid class
- Rain or shine – we’re outside and making it count
- This is the perfect opportunity to meet fellow Ramblers and build community
- Registration for hikes and picnic opens on SignUpGenius in May
- Want to lead a hike or volunteer to make the day amazing? Email: [brooketippens@gmail.com](mailto:brooketippens@gmail.com)

Let’s hike, eat, connect, and celebrate another unforgettable summer together!



**The Oak Leaf** is a publication of TriState Ramblers of New Jersey. Comments or questions may be addressed to the editor, Lise Greene, at [lise.greene@montclair.edu](mailto:lise.greene@montclair.edu). The newsletter is created electronically by the graphic editor, Jay Winslow, and emailed to all members. It is also posted on the TSR website. In order to ensure receipt of *The Oak Leaf*, please keep your email current with Jodi Ordovery, membership chair, at [TriStateRamblersMembership@gmail.com](mailto:TriStateRamblersMembership@gmail.com).

## Exciting Eighties-Plus *by Tim Burman*

*This is the eighth in a series of articles by/about TSR leaders age 80 and above. We invite others to share their hiking perspectives and experiences in future newsletters.*



*Tim Burman*

I really haven't thought about old age and hiking. So far, it is just something I like to do, and my body is not complaining about getting out for a hike or two each week. It is not something I have been doing all of my life, but after retiring, I was looking for some activity.

In my high school days, I spent a couple of summers as a ranger at Boy Scout camps. That entailed a number of hikes and backpacking, which were great ways to enjoy Mother Nature.

As a father, I worked in New York City, so the commute there and back to my home in Kendall Park ate up a full day. That left only weekends to catch up with things around the house. Although I did spend a number of weekends camping with my kids when they were young, that wasn't usually a challenging effort.

Before my daughter went to law school, she worked in the Grand Canyon for two years and remained attached to the Colorado River. She returned to live in Arizona and, over the years, has organized a number of backpacking trips in the Canyon

and surrounding areas for friends and family. The most recent in which I participated was two years ago. The Canyon is an amazing place. If you haven't been there, do so, and at least go down the trail to Indian Gardens. (Plan on making a day of it, and carry water.)

But back to my more recent history: After retiring as controller for a privately owned ladies clothing company, I looked for some activity and joined the Appalachian Mountain Club. However, most of their activities were farther away than I wanted to drive. I don't remember how I found TriState Ramblers, but I joined in 2020 when Covid was spreading, so there were not very many hikes listed. I started by participating in the ones near my house, including the D&R Canal path. While chatting there with Debby Bronner, she suggested that I join an unofficial group led by Debbie Stuart. Most of her outings were south of Route 78, so were relatively close by.

I took that advice and my hiking days picked up speed. On one of

those trips, in Sourland Mountain Preserve, we were eating lunch by the creek when a lone hiker came walking by. Debbie started talking to him and told him about TSR. Well, a couple of years later, Gordon Thomas became the TSR president.

But back to me: I usually aim for two hikes a week, thanks to our great leaders. I have now led a few hikes myself and am working on doing more. Although being 83 hasn't slowed me down, I must admit that I don't retain the details of the trails nearly as well as some of our seasoned TSR hands such as Jay Dibble, Willard Dye, Diane Jones, Bijoy Mechery, and Louis Thompson.

It's been great relying on Phil Ross to come up with unique plans and on Sheree Bennett for organizing hiking trips in Utah, Spain, and Italy. It was Sheree who suggested I serve as TSR's vice president, and I am now in my first term. I'm counting on keeping up the pace as long as my body allows. See you on the trails!



*Motley crew on a mountain top (Tim on left)*

# A Winter Adventure *by Dianne Jones*



*Yurt camp*

The day before the big January snowstorm, four friends (Liz Babos, Margaret Casagrande, Dianne Jones, and Phil Ross) flew west for a long-anticipated snowshoe trip. Ironically, given New Jersey's weather, we didn't need to go west to snowshoe. But we did need to go west for an amazing winter experience in Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks. (And happily, there was still snow waiting for us back home.)

In the middle of Yellowstone, we spent five days/four nights at a yurt camp near the Grand Canyon of Yellowstone. Other than Old Faithful Snow Lodge, this is the only park lodging available in the winter. It's rudimentary –

essentially a small, heated, wood-sided shed with a canvas roof and primitive (though heated) non-flushing toilet. Showers would have to wait until we got to a hotel, but there was a sauna, which was great for relaxing before 5:00 appetizers. All meals were provided in the main yurt and daily excursions were guided.

As the park is accessible only by snow coach in the winter, the yurt camp was a perfect base. For hikes each of the five days, we had to wear snowshoes (but I'll use "hike" for simplicity), either directly from camp or after shuttling to the starting point by snow coach – no wasted time! In addition to leading the hikes, our guides provided context and information about the

park and wildlife. We experienced the grandeur of the Grand Canyon of Yellowstone and its upper and lower falls from both the north and south rims, viewed Yellowstone Lake and its thermals up close, and hiked Natural Bridge. Just like in New Jersey, we hiked to a waterfall for lunch with a view. Unlike in New Jersey, the view included a herd of bison and a visit by a pine marten.

After the yurt camp, we took a day trip back into the park to visit Old Faithful; the eruption we caught was a little underwhelming. We also hiked around the Upper Geyser Basin and visited the Lower Geyser Basin. The guides were helpful in pointing out animal tracks, which are easy to see in the winter, and there were plenty of animals: bison (some *very* close on the road or on the trail, but we made sure to not get within 25 yards even if it meant scurrying to get out of the way), coyote (including one enjoying the remains of a swan kill), pine marten (who came to investigate lunch), trumpeter swans, goldeneye ducks, and blue dipper birds. We never did see otters or wolves.

It was very interesting to learn what animals must endure to survive the winter. For example, coyotes eat whatever small critters they can. Bison must paw through



*Lunch at a waterfall*



*Lunch with bison*

## A Winter Adventure *continued from previous page*



*Lunchtime visitor*

deep snow just to reach the hard, tough, cold grass; the effort required to eat can leave them very weakened and vulnerable. And wolves have to consume 20-30 pounds every few days, which means regular bison kills are helpful.

There were some photography tourists, who drive to scenic points, and plenty of snowmobilers, who have to stay on park roads. But something truly astonishing is that we did not see any other people on the trails! It really felt like we had the park to ourselves. Even at Old Faithful, except when it erupted, we saw hardly a soul as we hiked the boardwalk and visited many thermal features.

After Yellowstone, we drove to Grand Teton National Park in Wyoming for another three days of snowshoeing. On our way, we passed Harriman State Park of Idaho. (It is actually related to Harriman State Park in New York – Google it!) One of the guides at the yurt camp had given us suggestions for hikes in the Grand Tetons, including an out-and-back that was only worth doing if we made it to the lake overlook. Oh my gosh – the views of the mountains on the way in were stunning! True, the trail went into the forest where there was less to see until we reached the overlook, but talk about underselling the early views!

We then got a recommendation from a volunteer at the visitor center to hike at Colter Bay, about an hour away. There were, of course, more astounding views of the mountains, but what made this hike unique was walking off trail onto the frozen water – one good thing about winter is being able to make your own route! We met a family ice fishing who said the ice was about 16 inches thick.

Our last hike was a loop to Bradley and Taggart Lakes with more incredible views, more walking across lakes, and a “snow whack.” Rather than taking the established trail, we followed a random, more interesting cross-country skier’s route back to the parking lot.

At first, we weren’t sure we would have as much luck seeing animals in the wild. We had been assured by our Yellowstone guides that we would see moose in the Grand Tetons (after all, one of the park entrances is called Moose), and there is a huge elk refuge in Jackson. But during our visit, we only saw some in the far distance through a telescope.

On our drive to Colter Bay, we saw lots of traffic signs warning

about animal crossings; one even said it was No Joke that we could expect moose in the next five miles. No moose. We tried other “hot spots” for moose viewing, according to the National Park Service. No moose. On our drive back to the hotel, we were determined to find moose, even after our waitress at Dornans said, seemingly flippantly, “Yeah, they’re just all over.” As it turned out, she wasn’t kidding. We saw moose! And elk!

The next morning, needing to get an early start, we saw more elk – lots of elk! It really made us wonder how they seemingly just appear. Where do they come from and go to? But once again, we hardly saw any people on the trails. The weather was near perfect every day – sunny skies, no wind – and temperatures were never really an issue. To paraphrase a saying, there’s no such thing as too cold temperatures, just not enough layers.

After experiencing the beauty and solitude of these two parks in the winter, I don’t think I could go back in any other season because of the crowds. It may be time to explore more winter experiences.



*Walking on Colter Bay*



*Elk herd*

# Paddlers: Harmless Green Algae or Harmful Cyanobacteria?

by Anthony Caruso



*“In the Spring a young man’s fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love.”*  
(Alfred, Lord Tennyson)

This (not young) man’s fancy turns to the new paddling season!

On many outings, I’ve seen surface blooms like the one above at the Great Swamp, and assumed them harmless. But be aware that there are different types of algae. **Green algae** appear as floating mats of hair or spaghetti; they are generally non-toxic, filamentous, and stringy. **Cyanobacteria** (blue-green algae) blooms are toxic; they thrive in warm, nutrient-rich water. Always avoid water with suspected cyanobacteria!

## KEY DIFFERENCES

**Appearance:** Cyanobacteria look like spilled green paint, bright green/blue paint, or pea soup, often with a fine, granular texture. Green algae may appear as bright green, long, stringy filaments or slimy mats.

**Safety and Toxicity:** Cyanobacteria can produce toxins that are harmful to humans, pets, and wildlife. Green algae are harmless, non-toxic, and considered a nuisance rather than a safety threat.

**“Stick Test”:** If you insert a stick and the material breaks apart, has no structure, and looks like paint, it is likely cyanobacteria. If it hangs

on like hair or sludge, it is likely green algae.

**Location:** Cyanobacteria typically float on the surface as scum. Green algae can be found at the surface, but also grow along the bottom and can be found on docks or submerged items.

## WHEN TO WORRY

**Bright Green “Paint”:** If the water looks like it has been contaminated with paint, it is likely a cyanobacteria bloom.

**Foam/Surface Scum:** Cyanobacteria often form a layer that breaks up easily and forms a paint-like sheen.

**Animal Illness:** If pets or livestock become sick after entering the

water, it may be a toxin-producing cyanobacteria bloom.

**Odors:** While both can smell, cyanobacteria also can produce a musty, earthy, or septic odor when breaking down.

Thanks to Paul Augustyniak for locating the following link from the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection so that we can track algal blooms of several types: <https://njdep.maps.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/49190166531d4e5a811c9a91e4a41677>

And remember: Whenever possible, we should wash off our canoes/kayaks after every paddle to prevent cross-contaminating our favorite waterways.

## BOOK NOOK: Finding the Mother Tree

by Suzanne Simard by Bonnie Ackerman

This book is part fascinating and digestible scientific research and part beautifully written memoir. The author takes us on two journeys. One goes through the forest where we learn about how trees grow and support one another; the other, through her life, shows how the forest weaved around her work. The many details about trees will allow you to see the forest with completely new eyes while connecting deeply with the author through her stories of schooling, marriage, parenting, and personal change.



# Annual Meeting and Holiday Party *Photos by Ryan Shemitz*



## Best Practices: For Leaders and Future Leaders

by Linda Hetcher, TSR Outing Chair

Be-coming a leader for TSR serves to keep our club vibrant and growing. Ten members volunteered to lead for the first time in 2025, which was an excellent response.

It is relatively easy to become a leader. If you are not sure what is required, reach out to an event leader, a coordinator, or directly to me as the TSR outing chair. We have a very simple initiation process. There is also documentation on our website with guidelines and FAQs. They are designed to ensure that members enjoy hiking, paddling, and biking events while remaining safe outdoors. These are a few of our “leader best practices” to keep top of mind:

**Provide as much detail** as possible in your event description to ensure that prospective attendees

can make the most informed decision when signing up. It’s always a good idea to include pace, terrain, and potential challenges. Adhere to these descriptive details during an event to match attendees’ expectations.

**Leaders have the authority** to reject a member who is not prepared for an event, especially if it might affect the safety of others. Examples include the requirements to carry an emergency card; have water; bring hiking poles; wear life jackets; or use traction devices.

**TSR can support** multiple events per day if the details are markedly different. For example, leaders can add an event with a different location, level of difficulty or pace, start time, etc.

**While scouting a route** in advance, leaders should also

confirm adequate and safe parking for the number of cars expected. This is especially critical during the winter due to snow and ice potentially eliminating spaces.

**Any changes to an event** – location, leader, or route – must be sent to the TSR Outreach Chair at [tsrregistration@outlook.com](mailto:tsrregistration@outlook.com) as soon as possible. Ideally, submit these changes before Wednesday of the week prior to the event.

**It is fine** to add an optional social activity to the end of an event such as lunch for attendees at a nearby restaurant or conducting a yoga or stretch session.

Please consider becoming a leader! It’s easy, fun, and gratifying – and you will be giving back to a wonderful organization. If you have any questions, please contact me at [linda.hetcher@gmail.com](mailto:linda.hetcher@gmail.com).

# Farewell to Our Friend: Charles Ferrigno

Sadly, our friend and active TriState Ramblers participant, Charles Ferrigno, has passed away. Charlie led both paddling and hiking trips, and was equally active in biking. His humor and kindness were appreciated by everyone who knew him. A remembrance was held at his home in Union on April 4. Some thoughts shared by TSR members:

My memories of Charlie – where to start? I remember him as the jokester who was full of life and fun. He was known to us affectionately as “Mr. Chatty.” He was extremely knowledgeable and could (and did) talk to anyone on many subjects. Charlie introduced us to Green Turtle Pond; while small, it is a rare gem of bird and aquatic life. One of his favorite places was Lake Lefferts, which held nice memories of kayaking and breaking bread there with his family. He also really enjoyed White Lake with its pristine beauty. In fact, I don’t believe he ever met a lake he didn’t like. Along with kayaking, he biked with us on the canal trails in Princeton and Delaware. Charlie was a rare and beautiful coin. He will be missed.  
*Linda Lang*



*Charlie - Diane Willer*



*Charlie at Little Swartswood Lake - Maryann Kozaczek*

My fondest memory of Charlie is from when I considered buying a lightweight boat and he offered to let me try his Hornbeck canoe. We met at Potash Lake, where I fully expected to sit back and watch a “Hornbeck 101” lesson. Charlie had a different idea. He coached me in doing every step from car top to portage to water entry. The water entry is very intimidating for a newbie, so I was elated to get into the boat without capsizing! Lesson over? Not so fast ... Charlie had me repeat the water entry two more times. He was a superb teacher – kind, funny, but also a taskmaster! At the end of the day, I felt so confident paddling the Hornbeck that soon after, I headed to the Adirondacks to buy my own. I owe it all to Charlie!  
*Diana Rodriguez*

I celebrate his life. *Gordon Thomas*

I would refer to him as one of our best group explorers. Once on the water, Charlie would seek out any hidden channel. Off he would go, draped in an oversized bath blanket, his protection from the elements. His expertise on purchasing a Hornbeck (28 pounds) proved to be a good choice for senior paddlers. Charlie, you will be missed by all of us. Rest in peace with your paddle.  
*Arnold Bauer*



*Charlie (orange shirt) and Arnold with Great Blue Heron - Linda Lang*

Charlie’s good cheer and friendliness brightened my first day paddling with TSR. His infectious smile and love of the “small gem” paddle (such as Aeroflex, Little Swartswood, and Green Turtle Pond) are his great gift to us. He led my first paddle at Little Swartswood Lake, which will always be inseparable from Charlie in my memories.  
*Maryann Kozaczek*



*Charlie at Rahway River in Cranford - Linda Lang*

# Leader Statistics 2022-2025 by Dianne Jones

**D**uring the four years 2022 through 2025, we have had approximately 120 different leaders. Some have gone many extra miles as highlighted below.

*Most events led in a single month*  
Debbie Stuart (8 in March 2023)

*Most months with at least one event led*  
Dianne Jones and Philip Ross (44)

*At least one event led every month in a year*  
Sheree Bennett (2022)  
Jay Dibble (2023)  
Charlie Stepnowski (2023)  
Philip Ross (2025)

*Months with most events led*  
April 2022 and June 2025 (46)

*Most events led in a year*  
Sheree Bennett (43 in 2024; the next highest is 33)

*More than 100 events led*  
Sheree Bennett (129)  
Dianne Jones (109)  
Gordon Thomas (117)

*Averaged six or more events led per year*  
Sheree Bennett  
Gail Biggs  
Rosie Brancato  
Debby Bronner  
Bill Correa  
Jay Dibble  
Ken Donhauser  
Willard Dye  
Linda Hetcher  
Dianne Jones

Stan and Bev Kaltnecker  
Bernadette Miglin  
Jodi Ordovery  
Philip Ross  
Charlie Stepnowski  
Debbie Stuart  
Gordon Thomas  
Louis Thompson  
Lynn Tucholke  
Diane Willer

*New Leaders in 2025*  
Udi Cohen  
Rich Dugan  
Len Friedman  
Bill Medeot  
Will Obecny  
Guy Percival  
Shelley Schwartz  
Siggi Sindel  
Carolyn Smith  
Mark Strauss

## “Traction Devices Required”

**A Reminder That Winter Hiking Can Be Both Beautiful and Dangerous** by Walt Heskes

**F**eared injury from a slip or fall on the ice, I chose not to join any outing where the hike leader posted this warning. Sadly, I missed both the company of my hike-mates and the opportunity to add steps to my daily routine.



I started browsing online ads for traction devices and discovered numerous designs. However, none of them satisfied my desire for a single solution comprising elegant design, effective traction, and excellent value.

“Hey!” I thought. “Why couldn’t I create my own solution by simply

drilling cheap little sheet metal screws into the chunky soles of my hiking boots? Wouldn’t the sharp edges of the hex-headed screws ‘bite’ securely into the ice and snow?”

With childish excitement, I drove to the hardware store where I found two different sizes of hex-washer-head-slotted-sheet-metal screws: #12 (1/2-inch deep to penetrate the heels) and #8 (3/8-inch deep to penetrate the outsoles). Neither of these screw depths would reach into the shoes and pinch my feet. Total cost: less than three dollars.



Back at home, using a cordless, variable speed drill fitted with an appropriately sized socket, I carefully drove the hex-headed screws into the thick neoprene soles of the boots. It was easy to find a suitable location for each screw. Twenty minutes later, I was done. The results: perfect!

All I needed was an opportunity to test my handiwork. Luckily, this past winter season was blessed with abundant snowfall. It wasn’t long before the modified boots could be “pressed” (sorry for the pun) into service. They worked beautifully.

# Welcome, New TSR Members from 10/1/25 to 3/31/26!

Kevin Ainsworth, Martinsville  
 Donna Anderson, Ringwood  
 Spencer Aste, New York  
 Monica Baez, Union  
 Thomas Barnett, Madison  
 Marta Bautis, Englewood  
 Athena Bedkowski, Springfield  
 Naomi Brenner, New York  
 Christyna Brown, Manalapan  
 Lesley Carter, Jersey City  
 Tamara Caruso, Flemington  
 Kandi Chan, Branchburg  
 Guyollette Chery, Parlin  
 Craig Child, Madison  
 Jenny Chung, New York  
 Cindy Clayton, Greenwood Lake  
 Roger Cocchi, East Williston  
 Richard Cole, Hoboken  
 Anna Defrancesco, Princeton  
 Justin Derman, Bound Brook  
 Lisa Distefano, Morris Plains  
 Karen Donelson, Montclair  
 Tina Ellis, Bloomfield  
 Pam Farina, Summit  
 Paul Fatum, Manalapan  
 Alan Fisher, West Orange  
 Carolyn Frederiks, Park Ridge  
 Sandy Friedman, Matawan  
 Barbara Fuchs, New Providence  
 Phil Gillhaus, Martinsville  
 Dave Goldson, Millburn  
 Carolyn Greenberg, North  
 Brunswick  
 Krina Griffin, New Providence  
 Douglas Gruber, Astoria

Suzanne Hall, Long Hill  
 Amanda Hardy, Trenton  
 Cindy Herf, Scotch Plains  
 Mark Horberg, Pine Island  
 Dave Jones, Tappan  
 Kitty Jones, Monroe  
 Khushi Kadakia, Flemington  
 Eric Kanter, Short Hills  
 Elizabeth Koster, New York  
 Jim Kraus, Westfield  
 Kenneth Kraus, West Orange  
 Yong Kwon, Warren  
 Laura Laregina, Oxford  
 Eileen Leahey, Cranford  
 Douglas Lehmann, Park Ridge  
 Diane Lettiere, Morristown  
 Joyce Lorusso, Pompton Lakes  
 Florence Lotrowski, East  
 Brunswick  
 Douglas Macneil, Westfield  
 Diana Magno, West Orange  
 Diana Malkin, East Rockaway  
 Margarida Marsi, Port Murray  
 Monica McCormick, New York  
 Kerry McGlame, Cedar Grove  
 Loren (Lon) Mendelsohn, Denville  
 Lucinda Mercer, Hoboken  
 Emily Mines, New York  
 Patience Moore, Montclair  
 Holly Muller, Middlesex  
 Monica Mulligan, Park Ridge  
 Ganga Muralidhar, Jersey City  
 Mary Nakashian, New York  
 Nikki Nasr, Fort Lee  
 Rachel O’Gara, Verona

Angeles Onis, New Paltz  
 Patricia Ortiz, New York  
 Joe Patchett, Basking Ridge  
 Lisa Pieciak, East Hanover  
 Reed Puryear, Irvington  
 Nancy Quast, Morris Plains  
 John Richardson, Bloomfield  
 Joe Rigney, Fanwood  
 Catherine Romania, Wayne  
 Susan Ronga, Wyckoff  
 Mark Ross, Colonia  
 Phyllis Sacchi, Lincoln Park  
 Hardeep Sandhu, Berkeley Heights  
 Lisa Sands, West Orange  
 Pauline Schneider, Somerville  
 Alice Schreier, Bedminster  
 Edward Schug, Scotch Plains  
 Lorraine Schug, Scotch Plains  
 Lisa Serrani, North Caldwell  
 Deborah Sharp, Bloomfield  
 Paul Sherman, Freehold  
 Katarina Shyers, Gillette  
 Robert Simonofsky, Annandale  
 Vikram Siram, Morris Plains  
 Donna Somerville, New York  
 Brad Stonberg, Verona  
 Jim Susko, Lebanon  
 Alita Thompson, Newark  
 Adam Tucker, Short Hills  
 Laura Walker, Berkeley Heights  
 Jo White, Boonton  
 Jim Williams, Mountainside  
 Cathy Woodward, Hillsborough  
 Anne Zimmerman, Paramus  
 Christine Zon, Stirling

## Quarterly Financial Report

by John Crump, Treasurer

The TriState Ramblers have taken a number of steps to reduce expenses. Most notably, replacing the printed schedule with an electronic version has reduced our expenses significantly. Additionally, all club work is performed by unpaid TSR volunteers. Savings from these steps have helped the club’s net assets to grow to \$23,875 as of March 31, 2026. TSR has also formalized a cash reserve policy to retain sufficient funds to protect the club if there are unexpected new expenses (such as insurance and information technology). Because these financial surprises have caused the dissolution of other outdoor clubs, it is important to protect TriState Ramblers from these risks as much as possible.

For Period Ending March 31, 2026		
Simplified Statement of Activities		
	Twelve Months ending 3/31/25	Twelve Months ending 3/31/26
All figures in \$ except Number of Members		
<b>Revenues</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Projected</b>
Dues (Renewals)	7,955	7,861
Dues (New Members)	3,279	3,452
<b>Total Dues</b>	<b>11,234</b>	<b>11,313</b>
Interest income (Investment account)	413	603
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>11,651</b>	<b>11,916</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Printed schedules	2,731	0
Events - picnic, holiday, other	1,492	1,122
Gifts for Leaders	1,265	1,052
IT (Web, Meetup, email, cloud, SignUpGenius)	2,188	1,503
Insurance	1,080	1,351
Other	752	612
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>9,908</b>	<b>5,640</b>
<b>Change in Net Assets</b>	<b>2,143</b>	<b>6,276</b>
<b>Statement of Financial Position</b>		
<b>Net Assets - Start of Period</b>	15,456	17,599
<b>Net Assets - End of Period</b>	<b>17,599</b>	<b>23,875</b>

# WINTER WALK *by Thea Landesberg*



By the time you read this, snow and cold will be a not-too-distant memory. But perhaps you will keep this outing idea for next winter.

In December, I drove up to Harriman State Park with my hiking buddy, Angela, and we parked in the Tiorati lot next to the lake. There is no fee at that time of year, and only one other car was in the lot. We walked around the circle to the entrance of Tiorati Brook Road and started up the hill. As many of you know, the road is closed to traffic, yet kept plowed from December 1 to April 1 – which means that it is a gloriously peaceful scene.

Heading north on the road about a mile, we arrived at the Fresh Air Fund Camp Junior on the right. This very large complex next to Lake Tiorati is full of cabins large and small. As we strolled along the camp's paths, a Palisades Interstate Park truck came by. The driver kindly explained that we were not permitted in the area; no problem. Back out on the road, we continued north.

Arriving at the northern side of the partially-frozen lake, we enjoyed a view of the beautiful water as well as the flow under the dam. Perfect photo ops! Just beyond the dam is the entrance to the privately run Day Camp in the Park. Unfortunately, the entrance was blocked by a PIP truck and we did not want to

trespass. About 10 feet past the entrance, where the plowing had ended, the road was full of very wet knee-high snow. In the distance, we could see the camp's large swimming area and boating docks jutting into the lake. We turned around and walked back to the car.

Our two-mile winter walk lasted about two hours, with some invigorating uphill to exercise our lungs and legs. We passed snow-covered forest, hills full of trees waiting patiently for a new season, and some early-arriving birds testing out their spring songs. Cabins and swimming areas were

reminders of my own fun-filled camp days.

There were about 100 summer camps in Harriman State Park in 1940; now there are about 25. If you are interested in the background of the summer camps, I recommend a podcast on the Crossroads of Rockland History website. Click on [www.rocklandhistory.org/rockland-history-2011-13-radio-programs](http://www.rocklandhistory.org/rockland-history-2011-13-radio-programs) and scroll down to "100 Years of Harriman Park Summer Camps."

Finally, because the camps are considered private property for campers and staff, a good idea is to view them only from the road.



# Ferns

Enjoy this issue's photo theme: ferns. The Fall 2026 theme: **mirror images**. Photos of interesting and beautiful mirror images can be submitted as email attachments in JPG format at any time from now through the next deadline (October 1) to [lise.greene@montclair.edu](mailto:lise.greene@montclair.edu). Please send original photos only *with no editing of any kind*. However, you may request cropping or other edits to be made by our graphic editor. Include a caption with your name, the location, and the subject.



*Appalachian Trail just north of Stairway to Heaven in Vernon, NJ, on a backpacking trip with my 7-year-old son Cameron (Bonnie Ackerman)*



*Apshawa Preserve, Kinnelon – golden glow of the fading fern field (Siggi Sindel)*



*Haupt Conservatory at the New York Botanical Garden (Siggi Sindel)*

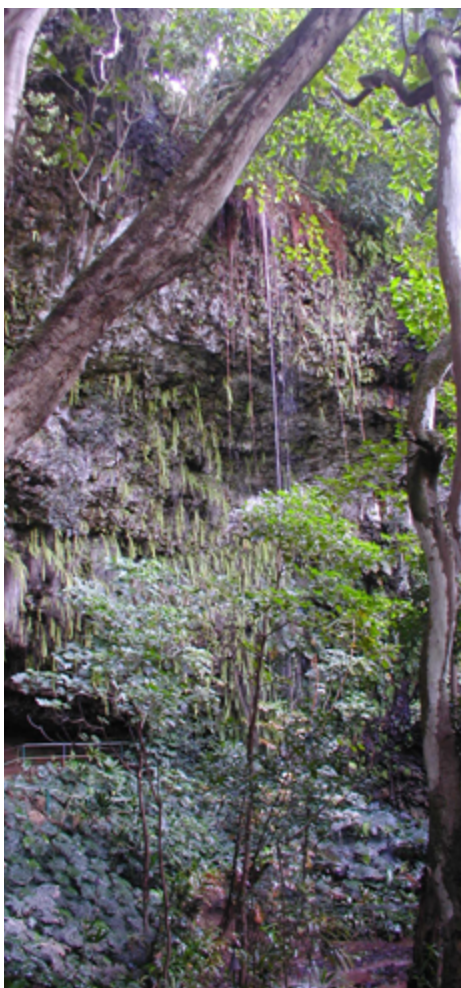


*Costa Rica (Gail Waimon)*

# Ferns *(continued from previous page)*



*Ferns (Anthony Caruso)*



*Fern Grotto, Wailua River, Kaua'i, Hawaii (Lise Greene)*



*Ferns (Anthony Caruso)*



*Snowy ferns, Prospect Mountain, Vermont (Maria Vargas)*

# TRISTATE RAMBLERS NOTICES

## Be Our Guest!

**Yes, guests can attend TSR hiking, biking, and paddling events (under certain conditions, of course).**

Guests are welcome to participate in TSR events with the following conditions:

1. There cannot be a waitlist.
2. The member must get *advance* approval from the leader to bring a guest. The leader may not be able to approve until very close to the event.
3. The member must print out the [paper waiver](#) (found on the [For Leaders](#) page of our website). The guest must complete the form, including the emergency contact information on the second page, and show it to the leader.
4. After the event, the member must submit the completed form as instructed on the waiver.
5. Guests may participate in a maximum of three events before joining.

If a member brings a guest without following the protocols, neither will be allowed to participate in the event.

While we understand that this process doesn't make it "easy" for a member to bring a guest, we hope you can appreciate the prioritization of club members over guests. We hope you also appreciate not burdening leaders with paperwork in order to facilitate guests. The "easiest" is for your guest to join our club!

But for those likely limited circumstances where this process can work ... be our guest!

## Getting There

Have you ever gotten lost or been late getting to a hike/bike/paddle because you were not sure of the meeting location? TSR has a [Directions document](#) (also available at the top of the [Directions](#) page on our website) with directions to most

meeting places. If the meeting location is not in this document, specific directions are provided in the event description itself.

For those who rely on GPS, there is also a handy feature in the TSR calendar. The calendar entry includes the meeting location. Just click on the location to easily map out the directions (the default map app is Google Maps). You can access the link to the TSR calendar or find instructions to link the TSR calendar to your own calendar on the [Member Info](#) page of our website (member log-in required).

Remember, a park can have multiple meeting locations. Make sure you know the correct destination by fully reading the event description and referring to the TSR Directions document.

Also remember that the listed time is the start time of the event, which means the ready-to-move time. Give yourself enough time to find the hike start point, get situated, gather your gear, use the facilities (formal, portable, or natural), hear any leader comments, etc. so you are ready to set off at the scheduled time. Out of courtesy to others, the leader is not obligated to wait for any latecomers.

## Not Getting the Weekly TSR Emails?

As you probably know, an email goes out every Thursday evening to members who have subscribed to the TSR Google Group. The email serves as a reminder that registration is open for the next week's events. If you believe you are subscribed, but are not receiving the weekly email, it is likely an issue with your email provider's spam filters (especially if you are not using a Gmail address).

It's possible you are receiving other emails from TSR, but not the weekly reminder. Again, that is an issue with your email provider's

spam filters. In both cases, check your spam/junk folder and add [tristateramblers@googlegroups.com](mailto:tristateramblers@googlegroups.com) to your contact list.

If you're not sure if you are subscribed to the TSR Google Group, send an email to our webmaster at [tsrhikers@gmail.com](mailto:tsrhikers@gmail.com). If you are a newer member without a Gmail address, you may have missed the invitation to join the TSR Google Group.

The good news is that you don't need the weekly email! All the information contained therein (schedule, process, rules, registration link) can be found on the [Members Only](#) page of our website (log-in required).

Remember, we use the TSR Google Group to provide information about upcoming events, schedule changes, cancellations, and other notices. So if you want to be an active member, make sure you are subscribed and read our emails!

## Show-and-Go: Did You Know?

As a reminder about these events, please be aware of the following:

- Show-and-Go events can include non-TSR members (up to three outings before they must join).
- Guidelines for Show-and-Go events, including instructions and examples of how to write a proper description, are on the TSR website. Click on "For Leaders" and then on "Guidelines Add-on and Show-and-Go Events."
- Email the write-up to Kaat Higham at [tsrregistration.com@outlook.com](mailto:tsrregistration.com@outlook.com) (ideally at least three days in advance).
- Print a copy of both sides of the club's waiver form, which can be found on the website under "For Leaders" or "Forms." Ensure that each attendee signs the form prior to heading out.
- If you have any questions, contact [linda.hetcher@gmail.com](mailto:linda.hetcher@gmail.com).

# TRISTATE RAMBLERS NOTICES *continued*

## Signup Etiquette: Please Be Considerate of Your Fellow Members

Just a reminder about a few things:

- Members are limited to initially sign up for **two hikes per week**. Join additional hikes if there is space available by signing up *after 8:00 PM the night before* and writing “after 8 PM” in the comments section.
- Whenever you sign up on the **waitlist**, put in the comment area “1st hike” or “2nd hike.” It helps our hardworking volunteers to monitor the signups more easily.
- **Do not jump the queue**. Before adding your name to the hiker list, review the waitlist to see if anyone else is a “1st hiker.” If so, add your name to the waitlist with “1st hike” in the comment area. Our hardworking volunteers will move you to the main list if there is availability. Signups are time stamped, so be assured that names are moved in the order of signup.
- **Similarly, do not “move” yourself** from the waitlist to the hiker list. Our hardworking volunteers will move you when they have the opportunity to do so.
- Note: That means your **“2nd hike” should always be on the waitlist**. Never put your second hike on the hiker list; you will get moved there if space is available.
- **If you need to cancel**, please remove your name *before 8:00*

*PM the day before* the hike. Otherwise there may be people on the waitlist who miss the opportunity to hike.

- Should an emergency arise and you have to cancel the morning of the hike, please let the leader know *by at least one hour before the start time*, as there are trailheads with no cell reception.
- Click [here](#) for complete signup rules. We appreciate your cooperation.

## Who Ya Gonna Call/Email?

Not sure who to contact when you need help? If you:

- Have *questions about a specific hike/bike/paddle* (meeting location, difficulty level, etc.) – ask the event leader using contact information in the TSR schedule event description. Do not text if the leader has specified no texts; your message will not be received.
- Must *cancel late or last-minute* – contact the event leader as a courtesy.
- Are a *leader and need to communicate about an event* (for example cancellation, update, Add-On, Show and Go) – see the TSR Leader FAQs on the [For Leaders – Members Only](#) page of our website (log-in required).
- Still *need help with SignUpGenius* after reviewing the [rules](#), instructions for [signing up](#), or instructions for [deleting](#) your

signup – email the outreach chair ([tsrregistration@outlook.com](mailto:tsrregistration@outlook.com)).

- Have *questions about your dues payment, current membership status, updates to contact information, etc.* – email the membership chair ([tristateramblersmembership@gmail.com](mailto:tristateramblersmembership@gmail.com)). Contact information updates can also be made online ([www.tristateramblers.org/update](http://www.tristateramblers.org/update)).
- Are *interested in becoming a new leader* – email the outing chair ([linda.hetcher@gmail.com](mailto:linda.hetcher@gmail.com)).
- Would like to subscribe to, have questions about, or have problems with the *TSR Google Group email list* – email the TSR webmaster ([tsrhikers@gmail.com](mailto:tsrhikers@gmail.com)).
- Believe you are *subscribed to the TSR Google Group email list but are not receiving messages* – it is likely an issue with your email provider. Check your spam/junk folder and add [tristateramblers@googlegroups.com](mailto:tristateramblers@googlegroups.com) to your contact list.
- Would like to *submit an article for our newsletter* – email *The Oak Leaf* editor ([lise.greene@montclair.edu](mailto:lise.greene@montclair.edu)).
- Would like to *volunteer to help with our social events* (summer picnic and holiday party) – email the TSR social committee ([tsrsocialcommittee@gmail.com](mailto:tsrsocialcommittee@gmail.com)).
- Have *suggestions for improvements* – contact any TSR club officer.

Note: A list of TSR club officers can be found on our website ([www.tristateramblers.org/officerspublic](http://www.tristateramblers.org/officerspublic)).



## TriState Ramblers Executive Board 2026

President – Gordon Thomas ([TSRPresident3@gmail.com](mailto:TSRPresident3@gmail.com), 609-977-0267)  
Vice President – Tim Burman ([timburman@gmail.com](mailto:timburman@gmail.com), 732-682-8684)  
Recording Secretary – Elise Morrison ([elisermorrison@gmail.com](mailto:elisermorrison@gmail.com), 201-927-4275)  
Treasurer – John Crump ([johnmcrump@yahoo.com](mailto:johnmcrump@yahoo.com), 973-534-6168)  
Membership Chair – Jodi Ordover ([tristateramblersmembership@gmail.com](mailto:tristateramblersmembership@gmail.com), 201-264-4206)  
Newsletter Editor – Lise Greene ([lise.greene@montclair.edu](mailto:lise.greene@montclair.edu), 973-663-4396)  
Nominating Chair – Mark Strauss ([mfstrauss@yahoo.com](mailto:mfstrauss@yahoo.com))  
Outing Chair – Linda Hetcher ([linda.hetcher@gmail.com](mailto:linda.hetcher@gmail.com), 973-769-1773)  
Outreach Chair – Kaat Higham ([tsrregistration@outlook.com](mailto:tsrregistration@outlook.com), 862-221-0170)  
Schedule Coordinator – Nancy Sierra ([nsmd\\_solo@yahoo.com](mailto:nsmd_solo@yahoo.com), 908-347-0690)  
Social Chair – Brooke Tippens ([brooketippens@gmail.com](mailto:brooketippens@gmail.com), 973-902-5650)  
Webmaster – Dianne Jones ([tsrhikers@gmail.com](mailto:tsrhikers@gmail.com), 973-428-4924)

## Outing Coordinators

Monday – Bev/Stan Kaltnecker ([kaltnecs1@aol.com](mailto:kaltnecs1@aol.com), 201-602-4074)  
Tuesday – Louis Thompson ([ltpt1@yahoo.com](mailto:ltpt1@yahoo.com), 732-239-1012)  
Wednesday – Lynda Goldschein ([lyndagoldschein@usa.net](mailto:lyndagoldschein@usa.net), 908-347-5012)  
Thursday – Dianne Jones ([diannejones428@gmail.com](mailto:diannejones428@gmail.com), 973-428-4924)  
Alternate Thursday – Kaat Higham ([khigham@verizon.net](mailto:khigham@verizon.net), 862-221-0170)  
Friday – Julie Stanton ([julienyc@msn.com](mailto:julienyc@msn.com), 917-972-0212)  
Saturday – Lorrie Vece ([dixonlowe@aol.com](mailto:dixonlowe@aol.com), 201-970-1000)  
Sunday – Sheree Bennett ([shereestarrett@yahoo.com](mailto:shereestarrett@yahoo.com), 973-857-0543)  
Biking – Marianne Ansari ([marianneroman@hotmail.com](mailto:marianneroman@hotmail.com), 201-519-8975)  
Paddling – Linda Lang ([allinkcorp@aol.com](mailto:allinkcorp@aol.com), 973-960-7421)

## Special Volunteers

Aide to Outreach Chair – Sue Griffin ([sgriffin5@optonline.net](mailto:sgriffin5@optonline.net), 732-322-6300)  
Directions Coordinator/Event Recorder – Tom Pollard ([pollard.tom@gmail.com](mailto:pollard.tom@gmail.com), 973-600-2301)  
Membership Analyst – Paul Augustyniak ([paugust586@aol.com](mailto:paugust586@aol.com), 973-219-4807)  
Membership Analyst/Constant Contact – Dave Hill ([esruc104@verizon.net](mailto:esruc104@verizon.net), 732-570-1381)  
Newsletter Graphic Designer – Jay Winslow ([jaybirdlow@verizon.net](mailto:jaybirdlow@verizon.net), 845-658-8104)  
SignUpGenius Monitor – Linda Laidlaw ([linlaidlaw@yahoo.com](mailto:linlaidlaw@yahoo.com), 973-449-3977)  
Trail Maintenance Coordinator – John Jurasek ([jurasek@optonline.net](mailto:jurasek@optonline.net), 845-365-3618)

*Note: Check the TSR website for the most up-to-date list.*

## How Quickly They Grow *Photos by Jay Winslow*



*Baby Girl and her mother visited us frequently throughout 2025. Now that she is all grown up, Baby Girl comes by on her own to see if any treats are available.*