



The Oak Leaf

Newsletter of TRISTATE RAMBLERS

Volume 47 Number 1

SPRING 2024

Message from the President *by Gordon Thomas*



At our holiday party and annual meeting in December 2023, TSR members elected officers for 2024 (see article in this issue). Recording secretary Elise Morrison and I enthusiastically started the year with a special board meeting in January, at which 20 action items were approved. There was progress on most of those issues by the time of our regular board meeting in March.

We continue to focus on ways to welcome new leaders and members. In this issue, you'll find articles, short pieces of advice, and examples of leadership. They all tell the story that being a TSR member is great – and being a leader is even greater.

Membership chairs Paul Augustyniak and Jodi Ordovery have simplified the application process for new members, maintained our Meetup subscription, refurbished our SignUpGenius connection, and formed a new membership team.

Outing chair Linda Hetcher worked with another team (Sheree Bennett, Sue Bennett, John Crump, Lynn Tucholke, and me) to create a webinar on leadership into which we will “Zoom” on April 17 at 7 PM. Additional contributions to the marketing effort were made by Dave Hill, Kaat Higham, Dianne Jones, and Gail Waimon.

Linda and other TSR members are also coordinating many more good leadership ideas such as guides to navigating our website, promoting sweeps, improving schedule creation, and updating guidelines for hike, paddle, and bike leaders. Webmaster Dianne Jones spearheaded compilation of the TriState Ramblers Leader FAQs.

In addition to encouragement for leaders, vice president John Jurasek is gently reminding members of key best practices in general. To that end,

guidelines for event participants were developed by Linda, Dianne, schedule coordinator Nancy Sierra, and me. To help someone on the waiting list for a popular event, outreach chair Kaat Higham and Dianne suggested that we remind members of their commitment in SignUpGenius to cancel promptly if they can't come. To help everyone, Dianne wrote “Who Ya Gonna Call?” (in this issue).

We have added Friday hikes to our schedule, with Julie Stanton as the coordinator. Kaat has taken her place as the hike coordinator for Wednesdays. Paddle coordinator Linda Lang mapped out a full schedule, while bike coordinator Linda Laidlaw and I led a trip in March with more coming.

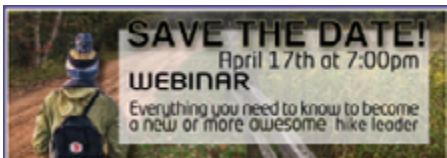
And there's even more in this issue of *The Oak Leaf*, thanks to our editor, Lise Greene.

About 130 new members and more than 10 new leaders have joined our club in the past eight months. Participants have often been able to choose from among more than 10 events a week; I have enjoyed each one that I've either led or joined. Here's to all the great people in TSR!



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. 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.





● LEADERS ●

● LEADING ●

● LEADERSHIP ●

Click [here](#) to join via Zoom Meeting ID: 859 1791 3825 Passcode: 085807

The webinar on Wednesday, April 17, will benefit both first-time and experienced leaders. We will address how to get started, emphasize best practices, introduce you to new trail locations, and provide key information to answer your questions.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Why you should consider leading a hike
- What steps to follow to become an effective leader
- Where to find information on our website and cloud server
- Whom to contact if you need help scouting or co-leading
- How to leverage a few popular hiking tools

WEBINAR TEAM

Sheree Bennett
 Sue Bennett
 John Crump
 Linda Hetcher
 Gordon Thomas
 Lynn Tucholke

QUESTIONS

Linda Hetcher
linda.hetcher@gmail.com

How I Became a Leader *by Carol Czajkowski*

I used to paddle and hike with Marie Taranto. I'm directionally challenged and never volunteered to lead because I didn't think I could do it. But at a time when more leaders were needed, Marie recruited me for Monday hikes (must have been really desperate). To prepare, I went on a Monday hike in Jockey Hollow with Betty Mills as leader and took notes on what to do.

On my first hike as the leader, also in Jockey Hollow, I was hoping only a few people would attend and we could find our way. But more than 34 showed up. (We ran out of room on the sign-in sheet.) I missed the first turn and was lost. Thankfully, other hikers got me through.

Some of those participants must have noticed my distress, because they called later to say they enjoyed the hike! I have since learned the route and have led it numerous times.



Carol enjoying another sport

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 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.

Gentle Reminders for Leaders from the TSR Board

Leaders are the core of TSR's success; we value and respect them highly. All members should keep in mind that leaders are in charge of their trips and must be flexible, using judgment in unexpected circumstances. The TSR board offers the following three gentle reminders for both leaders and participants. Although they may be described in terms of hiking, they are also relevant to paddling and biking (with some obvious differences, of course).

First: Leaders and participants alike will have a much better hike (or paddle or bike) if they match an event to their ability. A fast hiker or leader may not want to be held back by slower members of the group. A slow hiker will be safer if he or she stays close to the group. The good news is that we offer hikes with a variety of paces and difficulties. Leaders can help by carefully describing in advance the pace, distance, and elevation. Members should read the notices carefully – and believe them!

Generally, Monday hikes are relaxed; regular Thursdays are vigorous; and the rest (including alternate Thursday) are in between, but still vary. If the description is unclear, contact the leader. Frequent hikers get to know the leaders and what to expect. We would like those who are new or have not hiked recently to participate in a way they can enjoy.

Second: Remember that leaders are encouraged to start their events on time, as punctuality simplifies the departure. For example, sometimes participants can't come, but are unable to communicate their situation; the group is not obligated to wait. On-time departure also accommodates those who have arrived and might otherwise have to wait for the start or worry about a time commitment afterward. There is also a concern that late starts might escalate and become expected. To cooperate, leaders and participants should plan to arrive 20-30 minutes early to allow for possible navigation delays and time to get ready.

Third: A group should stay together as much as possible. This proximity helps with safety; staying on the trail; and enhancing the pleasure of social interactions. The leader's goal is to keep everyone between him/her and the sweep, and to direct the group at all junctions along the route.

Of course, careful leaders stop as much as necessary for the group's comfort, safety, and orientation. When group members have a similar pace, the stops are fewer and shorter; the leader can accommodate to the slowest person and save the stops for snacks and views.

Although a participant may leave the group, if necessary (after letting the leader know), the disadvantage is that the person is no longer under the leader's guidance and responsibility.

The vast majority of our hikes, paddles, and bike rides are a pleasure because of the cooperation between leaders and participants. We are mutually grateful.

Andiamo (Let's Go!) *by Philip Ross*

Nine TSR members plus a person from California spent two weeks hiking and sightseeing in Italy from March 5-19. TSR's Sheree Bennett organized the trip and contracted a pair of local guides in Italy. Unfortunately, she was unable to participate due to a last-minute health issue. My fellow club members were Ursula Anders, Yanling Cheng, Cheryce Mallette, Lori Mayer, Warren Page, Charlie Sheridan, Carol Tosone, and Wei Zhao.

People in Italy were friendly, joyful, and generous – eager to share food, history, and experiences with us. Our guides were warm and knowledgeable. They arranged an amazing array of experiences that went far beyond phenomenal hikes to include the cultural and natural history of the region and (perhaps most important) cuisine. We ate exceptionally delicious food, learned that Italians never eat spaghetti together with meatballs, and were good-naturedly



View from path on Capri Island (Philip Ross)

teased about the American practice of putting pineapple on pizza.

The mountain roads wind steeply uphill with sharp curves and sheer drop-offs. Many locals drive with abandon and the roads are very narrow, which can be disconcerting at times. Although drivers

were surprisingly adept, vehicles in Italy often have battle scars from trying to navigate tight parking and rock walls close to the road edges.

Unlike most hikes in New Jersey and New York, many of those we did in Italy had expansive views of beautiful scenery – sea and mountains. The region has incredible beauty and features prominently in Greek mythology, including the sirens and Circe. One of many surprises: There are three enormous Greek temples at Paestum. Paintings, structures, and other treasures are also surprisingly well-preserved at Pompeii.

Click [here](#) for video summaries (each about 2.5 minutes) of our hikes and other experiences.

A New Leader's First Hike

by Bonnie Ackerman



Coppermine Trail

I led my first TSR event just after Valentine's Day this year! Our club president (Gordon Thomas) was a sweep that day, and he suggested describing how I planned the course and how it turned out.

I chose an area I am very familiar with and had hiked many times near the AMC's Mohican Outdoor Center in Blirstown. From that experience, I selected a moderately paced route from the center's high point – over ridges and streams – down the Coppermine Trail to near the Delaware River – and back up so we could end on a ridgeline with beautiful views.

The hike coordinator sent an email that walked me through the process of entering the hike description online. I noted the length (6.5 miles), elevation gain (1,300 feet), expected pace (moderate), description of trails, options, and recommended gear. This let club members know that the hike would be neither easy nor very fast.

At the start of the hike, I gathered the group for introductions, reviewed the trails we would be taking, asked for a volunteer sweep, and checked for emergency contact cards. Everything was set to go; but there was an extra challenge. While my route was planned for a dry trail, there was a recent snowfall of about 10 inches.

I suggested that everyone put on spikes, and then led with a few other strong hikers to break the trail. I also slowed down the pace to keep everyone in view between myself and the sweep as we stopped for breathers, water, and separations. On the way back, it became obvious that the snow and steep path were challenging, and some participants (including myself) were dealing with cold feet. I decided to alter the route, cutting more than a mile from the initial plan. Everyone made it!

Organizing events is easier now because of answers to FAQs in a new document on our [homepage](#). The support and direction from TSR leaders was also very helpful in planning my hike. Leading an event is a wonderful way to give back to this community that gives so much to us. A willingness to be open and inviting is more than enough prequalification! Unexpected things can happen and, while you may be the leader, you're never alone. It is beyond rewarding to share your favorite outdoor places with a group of friends.

Editor's Note:

Short pieces of advice and encouragement from many TSR event leaders are sprinkled throughout this issue. Thanks to all who have shared your wisdom and experience!

ADVICE from Leaders

It's been helpful for me to have positive hiking experiences with people who are fun and very supportive. I felt so grateful for those who do lead that it inspired me to give back. Perhaps starting with a co-leader can help you to get accustomed to it.

Donna Burkat (hiking)

Leading for our TSR community has been a very rewarding experience. I can share my favorite places and routes with fellow members. I encourage everyone to lead at least one hike. You will receive all the support you need and more.

Anastasia Tavarez (hiking)

Let's keep our groups together. The leader might have to slow down a bit, but it's nice to chat and important to be there for every junction and obstacle. When I get left behind, I feel sad.

Gordon Thomas (hiking, paddling)

Leading a hike is easier than I thought it would be. It doesn't need to be perfect, because people just want the opportunity to go on a hike. Since becoming a leader, I've hiked more and, consequently, have gotten to know more club members.

Lynn Tucholke (hiking)

Starting out as a new leader, it is helpful to have a seasoned co-leader. As I progressed to lead on my own, I found if I scouted the route a few days before, I could iron out potential problems.

Debby Bronner (hiking)

Leading a paddle trip is pretty easy since it is unlikely you'll get lost – just know where the launch and take-outs are. Start by leading in a familiar place. YOU can do this! It's very rewarding to lead an event that members enjoy. Thank you to all our leaders!!

Carol Czajkowski (paddling, hiking)

TSR's Sign-Up "Genius"



Did you ever wonder who posts those captivating images for our club events on the weekly sign-up site? From all of us who enjoy the seasonal variety, a big THANK YOU to ... Sue Griffin! In addition to that weekly work, Sue and her husband, Jim, are among the MVPs for our summer picnics and holiday parties. They do much of the grocery shopping and transport everything in laundry baskets packed with ice bags. We appreciate both of you!

Tick Time – Take Care!

Source: [ACI Medical & Dental School](#)

Tick Season in New Jersey

Tick season in New Jersey is upon us. A moist spring following a wet winter results in dense vegetation in places where ticks can thrive: fields, woods, and backyards. Ticks start emerging in May, June, and July, exposing people to potential tick-borne diseases. Advantage Career Institute Medical & Dental School has some tips to help get you through tick season.

Know Where Ticks Like to Hang Out

It is important to avoid being in potential tick habitats whenever possible. For example, if you're out hiking, try to remain on the trails. Avoid dense vegetation, such as the shrubs and bushes, where ticks could be hiding. Lawns should be mowed short to make them less attractive to ticks and animals that can transport them.

Cover Up and Spray

When you're outside, there are several tick prevention measures you can take. Keep your skin covered as much as possible: for example, wearing long sleeves and tucking long pants into your socks. Wearing

light-colored clothing also makes it easier to spot ticks on your body. It is also important to use insect repellents containing DEET for your skin, and permethrin for your clothing and gear.

Check Your Pets

You should treat your pets for ticks to avoid having them carry ticks inside your home. It is important to regularly check your pets for ticks, especially if they have been outdoors for long periods of time.

Safely Removing Ticks

When you come indoors after being outside, be sure to check yourself for ticks, taking special care to check areas ticks are known to hide, such as the scalp, armpits, groin, and behind your ears. If you do find a tick, here are some steps to safely remove them:

- Using fine-tip tweezers, grab the tick as close to the skin as possible.
- Gently pull straight up. Take care not to jerk or twist the tick, as the tick's mouthpiece can break off and remain in your skin.
- Clean the skin with soap and warm water and safely dispose of the tick.

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. That, again, is an issue with your email provider's spam filters. In both cases, check your spam/junk folder and add tristateramblers@googlegroups.com to your contact list.

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).

ADVICE from Leaders

Leading hikes is fun and rewarding and allows you to give back to TSR.

Bernadette Miglin (hiking, alternate Thursday coordinator)

There are pleasures in leading a hike, such as planning and scouting out the route, returning with as many hikers as you started with, help from hikers when you make a wrong turn, listening to the happy chatter behind you, imparting your knowledge of points of interest along the way, etc.

Stan and Bev Kaltnecker (hiking, Monday coordinators)

Tick Shapes and Potential Diseases

Tick Species	Adult Male	Adult Female	Habitat	Disease Transmission
Black-legged tick a.k.a. Deer tick (<i>Ixodes scapularis</i>)			Needs moist habitats to survive. Prefers leaf litter (wooded areas) but can be found in tall grasses too.	Lyme disease Anaplasmosis Babesiosis ...a few others
American dog tick (<i>Dermocentor variabilis</i>)			Hardier than the deer tick & can survive in drier habitats where there are tall grasses (open fields).	Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever ...a few others
Brown dog tick (<i>Rhipicephalus sanguineus</i>)			Needs warm, protected indoor locations where there are dogs (its preferred host). Doesn't like our cold climate but has been seen in Toronto.	Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever Babesiosis Ehrlichiosis

Blue Sky Bike Ride *by Linda Laidlaw, Biking Coordinator*



Bikers at Duke Farms (photo taken by a passerby)

Biking season is back! Under a blue March sky, 13 TSR members took off on a 12-mile leisurely journey. The scenic route at Duke Farms in Hillsborough was led by Gordon Thomas, with stops along the way. Some were brief because the group stayed together for the most part, making forks in the road easy to navigate. Near the halfway point, we paused for a group photo.

As the picture shows, our bikes were ordinary: No mountain bikes were needed since the route is paved

and the elevation is only a bit above 100 feet. No expensive racing bikes were needed since the pace was relaxed at about 8 miles an hour.

After the picture break, we walked across three bridges over a lake in the Japanese Garden. Our longest stop was a delightful visit to the Orchid Range, a glass and steel building housing almost 1,300 exotic varieties of orchids. Some participants stayed after the ride for coffee and well-earned treats at the Farm Barn Café.

The group discussed about 20 trails similar this one offering smooth surfaces, leisurely paces, no cars, and perhaps a place to gather at the end. As with hikes and paddles, club members can lead multiple rides and repeat their favorite trips on rail trails and park routes. Eager leaders were recruited that day to begin scheduling events.

Are you interested, but unsure how to start? Contact me at linlaidlaw@yahoo.com for guidance. Don't miss out – join the fun on our next ride!

Accidents Happen – Are You Prepared? *by Philip Ross*

Accidents can happen anytime, anywhere. Injuries often occur at home, work, or around town. But when you are in wilderness, miles from a vehicle, injuries can be even more challenging. Relatively short distances may be too far for someone with a serious injury to get out on foot.

I was recently on a (non-TSR) hike that required helicopter rescue of an injured person. The experience provided evidence of how useful and important simple precautions can be in such situations.

We called 911 and were transferred to the sheriff's emergency rescue services. They asked what the problem was, our location, how many

people were in our group, and whether we all had water and food. While waiting for the helicopter, we lost phone contact because the battery died. It was a relief that the owner had a battery backup and reconnected.

Although the day was warm, by late afternoon some people were getting cold due to increasing wind and dropping temperatures. Fortunately, some of us had extra clothes to share.

The sun set shortly after the helicopter left, and most in the group did not have headlamps or flashlights. Although the terrain was rocky, we were not in a forest and there was enough moonlight to follow the trail out.

Lessons learned:

- Carry more food, water, and clothing than you expect to need, in case of unforeseen delays.
- A first aid kit is always important, and a lightweight rope can be useful for fabricating a splint or stretcher.
- Know how to use AllTrails, Google Maps, or another app to pinpoint your location for emergency services.
- Carry a backup battery for your phone/GPS.
- Carry a headlamp with spare batteries, even if you expect to return before dark.
- And always be careful, especially if you are in a hurry or tired – not just on the trail, but everywhere.

The Double-Ring Hike by Carol Hodge and Gordon Thomas

On February 7, a group of 30 hikers traced out the pattern of two overlapping rings around the roughly circular Grand Loop trail in the Jockey Hollow area. At the beginning, the group split in two. Carol Hodge led one half in a counterclockwise direction and Gordon Thomas led the other half clockwise.

There were probably a lot of participants because the weather was nice, Jockey Hollow is centrally located, and the waiting lists on other hikes that week were long. So we raised our hiker max to 30 – which required two leaders. Years before, on Gordon's first hike as a co-leader, Bill Reynolds had split the large group with a 15-minute delay. This time, checking the map in advance and noticing that there was a nice circular trail, the co-leaders transformed that idea: two rings where the groups started at the same time and partied together at the midpoint.

Each hiker covered the entire five-mile route and each group had its own good sweep. The two groups cheered when they met at the halfway point (in distance and in time). Although it was on an inconvenient, narrow part of the trail across a steep hillside, we had a sort of party with crunchy fruit squares, fresh strawberries, and chocolate hearts. So that all hikers could trek with each leader, Carol and Gordon switched and the two halves moved on, meeting again at the end. The design worked, even with so many people.

Because both of us knew the trail, there was no need to scope it in advance. Still, without mentioning it,

Carol scoped it anyway ... and found Gordon scoping there on the same day at the same time.

The double-ring hike was unconventional in our experience – and fun!



Starting the two rings (Gail Waimon)



Snack time (Gail Waimon)

Hooray for Chocolate Chip Oatmeal Cakes!

by Elise Morrison

Here's a shoutout to Jeff MacWright and his wife, Beth, for supplying us with her homemade chocolate chip oatmeal cakes on our hikes. Each is individually wrapped with a gold twist tie. On the two hikes I've done with Jeff, he handed out these beautiful and delicious treats that were baked just the night before, specifically for us hikers. He even sent me the recipe Beth uses ([click here](#)). I would include a photo except that all of us ate the cakes immediately. Even the one person who tried to save his treat for his ride home couldn't resist eating it on the hike. Thank you, Jeff!

What Puts the Joy in a TSR Hike?

by Gordon Thomas

A comparison of two of my hikes, a month apart, indicates that joy is not just in the number of hikers. Happiness and satisfaction for everyone, including the leader, arises from joining in the exercise and fellowship.

One hike had many participants because the day was beautiful. The other hike had two participants because it followed a day of heavy rain and roads were flooded. The large group stayed together by matching its average pace to that of the slowest hiker and by following the expected route. The small group also stayed together, although they voted unanimously to go off script, take off at more than a moderate pace, and climb Eagle Peak in addition to Cushetunk Mountain. The big group engaged in friendly chatting up and down the line since someone was always nearby. The two in the small group also shared conversations, but fewer when charging up steep hills.

Sometimes, part of the treat of a hike is a special day and place. In this

case, the large group hiked on the Winter Solstice with strikingly long shadows. (See the photo taken on top of Cushetunk Mountain around noon.) However, weeks later the small group was happy enough to skip a picture on the same summit that was buffeted by wind gusts. The large group descended carefully to the shore of the lake and enjoyed a comfortable, leisurely lunch at the picnic area. The small group bounded down and ate quickly at the picnic area while being hit by gusts blowing off the lake. There were whitecaps and the wind chill index dropped to about 20 degrees. Nonetheless, both groups were okay with the picnic.

In the end, the large group hiked about five miles with 700 feet of elevation, while the small group flitted through about seven miles and 1200 feet, all without muddy boots or falls. Leading and remembering these two hikes gives rise to the impression that, big or small, both were wonderful because they were healthy and a source of fellowship.

Signup Etiquette

Just a reminder about a few things: Whenever you sign up on the **Waitlist**, put in the comment area “1st hike” or “2nd hike.” It helps our hardworking volunteers to more easily monitor the signups.

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 hiker list if there is availability. Signups are time stamped so it can be verified if the queue is jumped.

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.

If you need to cancel, please remove your name before 8 pm the day before the hike. Otherwise there may be people on the waitlist who do not get to hike.

Thanks for your cooperation.



Solstice on Cushetunk summit December 2023

ADVICE from Leaders

Leading paddles is a bit looser than leading hikes. You have the pleasure of picking the place and enjoying a few hours on the water with others who love paddling (almost?) as much as you do.
Helen Lippman (paddling)

As a relatively new leader, I plan to lead shorter, less challenging hikes in my own area. This will allow me to get outside for a couple of hours, gain experience in leading, and meet other members. Over time, I expect to expand both the areas and the frequency of hikes. Such a strategy may work for others considering leading.
Dean Leistikow (hiking)

Arctic Adventures *by Margo Moss*

During the Christmas and New Year holiday, I enjoyed a two-week Fred Olsen cruise: “In Search of the Northern Lights at Christmas.” We boarded the ship in Southampton, England, and followed the coast of Norway up to the Arctic Circle and back. Stops included Narvik, Alta, Tromsø, and Ålesund. Our search for the northern lights was in vain because of the full moon, which can (and did) hide the lights in the sky. But there were many other highlights:

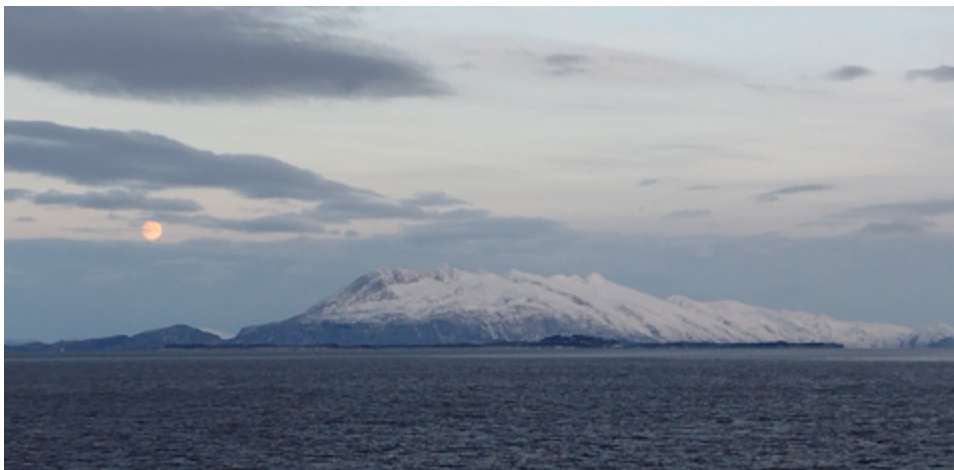
- Staying in Sorrisniva, the world’s northernmost igloo hotel: It is rebuilt every year with a special theme using harvested ice and snow produced from water in the Alta River.

- Mountains: Although there were no opportunities to do TSR-style hiking, I viewed breathtaking mountains as we cruised along the coastline.
- Shopping: Getting around the streets was a bit tricky. They were only semi-cleared of snow and ice, but everything was lit up. It was a totally different experience.
- Dog sledding: There were two people to a sled and a driver standing behind us, with relatively small dogs (not big Alaskan huskies) pulling the sled. For about 25 minutes, we went down a narrow, bumpy, mostly ice track in pitch black darkness with a gorgeous full moon and some lights

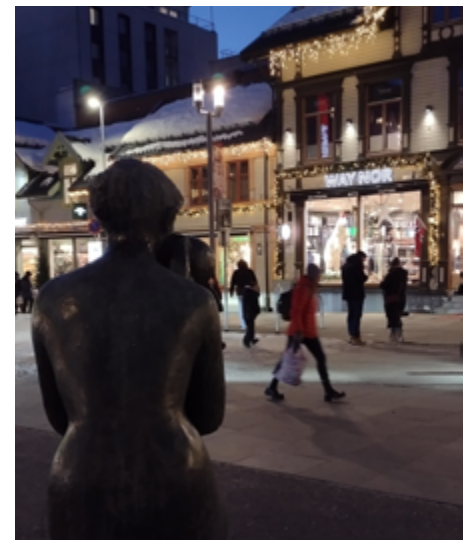
illuminating the trail a bit. It was an amazing experience.

- The light: This was the most unique aspect of the trip. The winter light was beautiful – though some days we didn’t see any light at all.

My journey was an emotional experience – something truly exceptional to see a part of the earth that in many ways does not resemble the world in which I live. I highly recommend exploring the area by ship rather than by bus. When it got up to about 30° on the boat, I actually felt like swimming in a bikini – it felt so (relatively) warm and the ocean was right there! However, two weeks later, I was on another cruise to spend about 10 days in the Caribbean to *really* warm up.



Arctic light



Shopping in Alta, Norway, early afternoon



Troms, Norway



Igloo hotel

New York State Forest Rangers: 22 Questions

by Thea Landesberg

Have you ever wondered what a forest ranger actually does? To find out, I interviewed Allison Rooney.

1. How did you first become interested in a career in forest service?

Let me start by clearing up a very common misconception! My job title is New York State Forest Ranger; I work exclusively for the state of New York. It's rather common that we get confused with national park rangers, who protect federal lands. We are sworn state police officers who serve and protect forest preserves, state forests, and other state-owned wild lands. We have a rather diverse job since we are responsible for wildland fires, search and rescue, and enforcement. I sometimes describe it as a combination of all first responder positions (fire, EMS/rescue, and law enforcement), except that we do our job in the backcountry. I learned about the forest rangers through someone who had been on the job for nearly 15 years before she moved to my town and became the local ranger. Through our friendship, I became interested in pursuing it as a career for myself.

2. How long was your training and where did it take place? I went through a 28-week training at the Basic School for Forest Rangers, also called the Academy, which took place in three different locations: Wanakena, Oriskany, and Newcomb.

3. Describe your instructors. The Academy was run entirely by current forest rangers. They were often the lead instructors, but we also had guests from other agencies and backgrounds.

4. What skills, indoor and outdoor, did you learn? Our course load was diverse: from defensive tactics and firearms training to medical first responder and wildfire training. All our outdoor work was specific to the job responsibilities, such as land navigation (working map and compass) and various types of rescue training, including swiftwater and technical rope rescues.

5. What skills were the easiest for you to learn? I've been an avid rock



Allison Rooney

climber for 18 years and volunteered my time and skills for search and rescue work prior to starting this job, so the technical rope rescue was among the easiest.

6. What skills were the most difficult for you to learn? I don't have any firsthand experience with wildland fire. While we had a lot of classroom time to cover concepts, I'm sure there will be a learning curve when I experience my first big fire.

7. Did you live in a dormitory during your training? Yes, we were bunked 2-5 per room, depending on the location where we were training.

8. Describe a typical workday. Most of my days are spent either patrolling state land or improving skills for search and rescue missions. Patrol is done by whatever means of travel is appropriate for the season or the area: cross-country skis, motorboat, canoe, snowmobile, ATV, or on foot. In addition, we constantly train to maintain and improve our skills and knowledge. For example, in early winter we practice flat-ice rescues to extricate subjects who have fallen through frozen lakes and ponds.

9. Do you spend time in an office? Not at all. We have the privilege to do computer work from home when

necessary. Other than that, I'm in my truck or out in the woods.

10. Do you work weekdays and weekends? Yes, I work every other weekend.

11. What geographic area are you responsible for? I cover southern Franklin County, which essentially includes the portion within the Adirondack Park boundary.

12. How many other rangers work in your district? Four other rangers cover that area with me.

13. Do you get firearms training? Yes, we had extensive firearms training in the Academy and have routine annual trainings as well.

14. What certification do you have now to be a forest ranger? I'm a sworn New York State law enforcement officer under the Department of Environmental Conservation.

15. What are the main challenges of your job? It can be very difficult to strike a balance between training and preparedness with both search-and-rescue and wildfires, the need to be out patrolling, and knowing your area well. I was told by a seasoned ranger that we have a lot to juggle and realistically, you only excel at a handful of skills at a time – meaning there are always aspects of the job that you feel you could be doing better. Fortunately, every ranger shines at different aspects of the job, which creates a good mosaic of skills across the region and takes the pressure off any one ranger to be a master of everything.

16. What are some enjoyable moments that you have had? The obvious answer is: anytime I help save a life. To hear that people who have been in pretty severe accidents walked themselves out of a hospital sometime later means a lot to me. On the other end of that spectrum, with all the adrenaline and intense focus required on a rescue mission, sometimes the most enjoyable moment of my week is a quiet patrol in the woods where I seemingly have the whole place to myself.

17. What are some typical violations that you deal with? I'm not sure there
(continued on next page)

22 Questions

(continued from previous page)

is anything typical! They run the gamut from hunting and fishing violations to snowmobile, boating, or camping infractions. Education is the first and best tool we use. Educating people about why they should follow the rules is generally far more impactful than writing citations.

18. *Are you involved in public information such as presentations, tours, or visiting schools?* Yes. I've helped train our volunteer search and rescue groups, worked with our local fire departments, and even played the role of Smokey Bear at a public event!

19. *From your perspective, what is the biggest threat to the Adirondacks?* At this moment, I have a hard time thinking about anything but climate change. Our winters are becoming shorter and with more unpredictable weather. We are seeing less extensive cold snaps and fewer sizable snowstorms. Having less "winter" significantly affects the local economy – when recreation isn't reliable, neither is tourism. As a winter enthusiast myself, it's difficult to witness it change so rapidly over the last couple of decades.

20. *Have you been injured on the job?* Fortunately, no. But rangers' bodies go through the wringer, especially during rescues where we must physically carry people out of the woods. Keeping ourselves fit and healthy to withstand these types of rigors is an important component of the job.

21. *What kind of health coverage do forest rangers have?* We have the option to sign up for a state employee health insurance program.

22. *What is your favorite season to work as a forest ranger?* Every season has its own merits – long summer days, snowy winters, leaf season, and vernal bloom – I appreciate them all! The most difficult time of year to work is when it's somewhere around 33-45° and raining. Many people underestimate how challenging it is to stay warm and dry in those conditions, and it's no different for those of us working outside in them.

Who Ya Gonna Call/Email?

by Dianne Jones

Not sure who to contact when you need help? Note: A list of TSR club officers can be found on our website (www.tristateramblers.org/officerspublic). 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 sign-up – email the outreach chair (tsrregistration@outlook.com).
- Have *questions about your dues payment, current membership status, updates to contact information, etc.* – email the

membership chair (tristateramblersmembership@gmail.com). Contact information updates can also be made online (www.tristateramblers.org/update).

- Are *interested in becoming a new leader* – email the outing chair (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).
- 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 to your contact list.
- Would like to *submit an article for our newsletter* – email *The Oak Leaf* editor (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).
- Have *suggestions for improvements* – contact any TSR club officer.

Signup Problems? by Dianne Jones, Webmaster

Now and then, members may find they cannot get to the TSR weekly signup their "usual" way. The reason is hard to diagnose, but the solution is easy.

- Go to www.signupgenius.com.
- Log in or don't log in (it doesn't matter).
- In the top right corner, click on the magnifying glass.
- On the left side of the page under "Search for a Sign Up by sign up creator's email," type tsrregistration@outlook.com in the box.
- Confirm you are not a robot.
- Click on "Search."

And that should take you to the open TSR signups.

EXCITING EIGHTIES-PLUS!

This is the fourth 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.

Leaders of the Exciting Nineties by Dave (and Naomi) Sutter

Our memoir is about “leaders of the exciting nineties” as I am now 96 and Naomi is 91. For us it all began long ago when our club was led by the renowned Fred and Anne Dlouhy, Bill Myles, Dick Wolf, Peter Rabbit, and others. Where are those darling friends of eras long past?

Our introduction to this precious activity came in June 1964. Claire Federbush, a friend and fellow research chemist from Schering Corporation (my first employment), suggested to Naomi a ramble with the group she had just joined: Union County Hiking Club. The hike, to be led by Dick Hess, was listed as “Waterloo Circular” in the schedule.

“Never!” I snarled. “I hate hiking!” Ever cheerful Naomi insisted we had to go because she promised Claire, and so it was determined: Waterloo Village and a wasted Sunday that could have been better spent inspecting mastodon bones at the American Museum of Natural History.

At 9:30 on Sunday, accompanied by our 12-year-old son, John, we assembled at the parking lot of the long-vanished Palace Theatre in Netcong. The group started walking along the abandoned route of the Morris Canal, which dates back to 1824 when it served as a path for transport of anthracite from Pennsylvania to Jersey City. Flat, dull, no interest – but very friendly people like Lee Fanger, Dick Wolf, and Fred and Anne Dlouhy were on that



Naomi and Dave Sutter

inaugural hike. After a quick stroll, we reached Waterloo Village; visited delightful, antiquated shops; and sat down for an al fresco lunch with Dick, our instant new friend.

While Naomi visited the cute shops, Dick suggested that my son and I depart the 19th-century town of deserted homes and join him for an ascent of Mount Olive. “No great effort,” he proclaimed. Slowly but surely, my derision of hiking proved incorrect. I rapidly became an aficionado of the great outdoors, where anything that transpired beneath a blue sky constituted true perfection.

Dick, my immediate comrade and guide, announced that Fred and Anne were leading at Schunemunk the next Sunday. He suggested that we be in attendance for this beautiful ascent. “Fine!” I said. Naomi and I both prepared for another slow and easy exposure, this time in lower New York State.

Oh, how different was this locus! Our penny loafers, in lieu of hiking

boots, pinched our toes and provided minimal traction support. Halfway through the hike, Naomi cried. I was embarrassed and tried to run ahead and avoid the frightful scene. [See the [Fall 2018 issue](#) of *The Oak Leaf* for Naomi’s tale of that hike.] Fred said three hikes were required before one could apply for membership – but since Naomi was so gallant, only two would be necessary for us!

For the next Sunday? “Perhaps,” I said – not intending to inflict further punishment on poor Naomi. Nevertheless, with new boots (Danner Mountain Lights suggested by our guru, Dick), we arrived at Nature Friends, a German hiking club, for more excitement.

Naomi and I started leading hikes for Union County Hiking Club almost immediately and have never stopped. We began with High Mountain from the now-closed Bridal Veil Falls on a cold winter day with icy snow falling. From the distance approached a 6-foot-tall specter carrying an ax. I was frightened and made a conversational gambit, trembling a little: “Is this trail on Bill Hoeflerlin’s map”? With a mouth that had only one tooth the wraith said indistinctly, “Om Hoeflerlin!” That’s how we met the renowned trail mapmaker. What stories we can relate.

Thus began a lifelong pursuit of friendship and concomitant physical activity in our nearby woods and mountains. Naomi, John, and I joined Union County Hiking Club (now TriState Ramblers) and remain members to this day.

ADVICE *from Leaders*

Volunteer to lead a hike YOU LIKE! Long, short, or corny – if it was a pleasant hike for YOU in the past, step up and help others to enjoy it!

Ken Donhauser (hiking)

There is great satisfaction in leading a paddle with an enthusiastic group. I like sharing locations I am familiar with, and appreciate learning of new places from other leaders.

Sue Bennett (paddling)

Welcome, New TSR Members from 8/1/23 - 3/31/24!

Deborah Aliotta, Montville
Lynn Aylward, Princeton
Dawn Bakie, Cranford
Ron Baldassano, Sparta
Stefanie Barro, Morristown
Cee Bee, Westfield
Judy Berk, Plainfield
James Calero, Matawan
Donna Cataliotti, Denville
Suzanne Cekoric, Glen Ridge
Ann Charles, Lawrenceville
Dian Cliffe, Florham Park
Hamid Dehnavi, Glen Ridge
Kelly DeJesus, Flemington
Lynn DePaola, Cedar Grove
Maria Dominguez, Livingston
David Drescher, Montclair
Gabrielle Eichel, Morganville
Richard Eichel, Morganville
Laura Enos, New York
Cynthia Evans, Scotch Plains
Mary Fernandez, Madison
Pam Ferrer, Titusville
George Foulke, East Hanover
Karen Frank, Denville
Talia Furleiter, Fair Lawn
Stephen Gamberale, Livingston
Joseph R. Garcia, Elizabeth
Eylana Garfinkle, Kinnelon
Marc Garfinkle, Kinnelon
Anna Genke, Colts Neck
Julie Gerke, Basking Ridge
Steven Gerke, Basking Ridge
Susan Golden, Paramus
Donna Goldstein, Morristown
Stephen Goshorn, Hopewell
Sue Greenbaum, U. Saddle River
Amy Greenberg, Towaco
Tony Grelli, Sewell
Andrew Griffith, Summit
Don Gunther, Newton
Ed Guy, Brick
James Hargrove, Essex Fells

Marie Harris, West Orange
Scott Harwood, West Orange
Christine Haus, South Orange
Melia Hays, Morristown
Heidi Hellring, Maplewood
Walt Heskes, Edison
Mark Jay, Short Hills
Pam Karr, South Orange
Adina Kelman, Ramsey
Jane Kiernan, Somerset
Jeanette Kievit, Netcong
Barbara Kirrane, Madison
Max Kleinman, Fairfield
Vicki Korlishin, Glen Ridge
Keith Kral, Howard Beach
Emily Kullmann, Rockaway
Kathleen Lacey, N. Middletown
Philip LaMothe, Dover
Scott Leavitt, Ringwood
Gail Leicht, Mahwah
Teri Lodato, Red Bank
Donna Lynch, Fairfield
Al Maccaro, Bridgewater
Tema Maccaro, Bridgewater
Mary MacGowan, Madison
Ruth Mack, Summit
Susan Mackay, Fanwood
Christina Madsen-Duggan,
Scotch Plains
Daniel Malone, Maplewood
Elaine Manganello, Westfield
Diane Mariotti, Rockaway
John Marra Jr., Clarks Summit
Laura Mayer, Morristown
Linda McAdams, Yardley
Tremell McKenzie, West Orange
Bill Medeot, White Plains
Chris Mercer, Basking Ridge
Jay Messina, Westfield
Andrew Mitchell, Roseland
Geri Modell, North Plainfield
Nancy Moseson, Morristown
Jim Mulvey, Stirling

Jaqueline Nardolilli, Ringwood
Gavin Norwitz, West Orange
Isolina Oyola, Elizabeth
Therese Passafiume, Cedar Grove
Laavanya Pasupuleti, Howell
Yashna Patel, Bridgewater
Thomas Piccolo, Maplewood
Jennine Pommier, Summit
Meera Rao, Berkeley Heights
Michael Reid, Floral Park
Sherry Remsen, North Caldwell
Michael Reynolds, Califon
Betsy Richardson, Bloomfield
Bob Rinklin, Cedar Grove
Janet Rivera, Croton on Hudson
Ingrid Roe, Wantage
Ellen Ann Roth, New York
Rebecca Ruiz, Ringwood
David Salzberg, Livingston
Mary Beth Sampson, Morris Plains
Jerry Sattin, Montclair
Stacey Schlosser, Morristown
Nancy Schneberger, Allendale
Amy Schonhaut, Livingston
Liz Schwartz, Mountainside
Beatrice Scifo, River Edge
Jocelyn Senatore, Sparta
Bill Shamieh, Whippany
Maria Shelton, Maywood
Jane Shu, Roseland
Mark Sotsky, Cranford
Kathryn Spann, Califon
William Teale, Manville
Amy Ulto, Long Valley
Ingrid Vandegaer, Parsippany
Ralf Vogel, Fort Lee
Sarah Watson, West Orange
Ann Wendlocher, Califon
Carl Whitaker, Plainfield
Wayne Wiedman, Denville
June Witty, Towaco
Ann Wolf, Hamilton
Joan Zanfardino, Garwood

ADVICE from Leaders

I find leading club hikes over the years to be a most rewarding experience! I look for what would make a practical distance (for me) and some wonderful memories (for all). I always ask at the end: Did you have fun, maybe challenge yourself, and will you return?

Gail Waimon (hiking)

I post add-on hikes, as opposed to hikes scheduled months out, so I can check the weather and my personal schedule in the short-term future. I find it more manageable to lead no more than 15 hikers. The number can be adjusted in sign-up if you prefer a smaller group.

Debbie Stuart (hiking)

Double-Digit Event Leaders in 2023

Cheers to the 16 TriState Ramblers who led 10 or more club events during 2023! Continuing our special feature on matching members' photos with their current or previous professions, see how many of our double-digit leaders you can guess correctly. Answers are found at the bottom of this page. Scroll up to cover the answers. Scroll down to see if your guess is correct. (Note: Six of our prolific leaders who were featured in previous issues as board members or outing coordinators and another who has chosen not to participate are listed by name/number of events only – no photo or profession.)



Sheree Bennett



Gail Biggs



Debby Bronner



Bill Correa



Jay Dibble



Ken Donhauser



Philip Ross



Charles Stepnowski



Diane Willer

Double-Digit Event Leaders in 2023 listed by number of events led

- 30 – Dianne Jones
- 28 – Sheree Bennett
- 27 – Gordon Thomas
- 25 – Debbie Stuart
- 18 – Philip Ross
- 18 – Jay Dibble
- 18 – Ken Donhauser
- 17 – Bev Kaltnecker
- 16 – Stan Kaltnecker
- 15 – Diane Willer
- 15 – Lynn Tucholke
- 15 – Debby Bronner
- 13 – Louis Thompson
- 12 – Bill Correa
- 11 – Charles Stepnowski
- 11 – Gail Biggs

Professions of Double-Digit Event Leaders

- Media/Sales Analyst
- Property Manager
- Inventory Manager for Tuxedo Chain/
School Bus Driver
- Elementary School Teacher
- Printing Composer
- Radio Operator and Announcer/
Boring Bean-Counting Bureaucrat
- College Career Counselor
- Pharmaceutical Clinical Researcher/
Epidemiologist
- Real Estate Developer

THE ANSWERS: Double-Digit Event Leaders and Their Professions

- Debbie Stuart – Media/Sales Analyst
- Philip Ross – Pharmaceutical Clinical Researcher/Epidemiologist
- Jay Dibble – Inventory Manager for Tuxedo Chain/School Bus Driver
- Ken Donhauser – Radio Operator and Announcer/Boring Bean-Counting Bureaucrat
- Diane Willer – Elementary School Teacher
- Debby Bronner – Property Manager
- Bill Correa – Real Estate Developer
- Charles Stepnowski – Printing Composer
- Gail Biggs – College Career Counselor

Annual Meeting and Holiday Party: Dec. 2, 2023

by Elise Morrison and Kathe Serbin

Three current officers – John Jurasek, Gordon Thomas, and Linda Hetcher – gave brief reports prior to the election of officers for 2024. The proposed slate was elected unanimously. Incoming president Gordon Thomas thanked his predecessor, John Jurasek, and other officers for their dedication during the year. Gordon created a slideshow of TSR hikes and events, including videos by Gail Waimon, that was available for everyone to enjoy.

Gail had also made centerpieces and organized the swap table, where lightly used gloves, hats, shirts, backpacks, books, and more were recycled within the membership. Phil Ross donated his time and skill to sharpen knives and scissors. (One of those knives was used to cut the delicious hero sandwich brought by John Jurasek.) A fire ring was set up outside by Sue and Jim Griffin, complete with marshmallows and roasting sticks. Social chairs Elise Morrison and Kathe Serbin and the following additional volunteers were applauded for their work in organizing the annual event.

Setup and During Event: Meiling Chin, Jim Griffin, Sue Griffin, Carol Hodge, Ellie King, Linda Laidlaw, Jenny Monteleone, Phil Ross, Nancy Sierra, Gail Waimon

Cleanup: Donna Burkat, Steve Burkat, Margaret Davey, Linda Lang, Dean Leistikow, Kathleen Leistikow, Deborah Thomas, Gordon Thomas

Hike Leaders: Gail Biggs, Pat Chorman, Ken Donhauser, Dave Hill, Bernadette Miglin, Lorrie Vece

TSR Officers 2024

President	Gordon Thomas
Vice President	John Jurasek
Treasurer	John Crump
Recording Secretary	Elise Morrison
Editor, <i>The Oak Leaf</i>	Lise Greene
Membership Co-Chairs	Jodi Ordover Paul Augustyniak
Nominating Chair	Sheree Bennett
Outings Chair	Linda Hetcher
Outreach Chair	Kaat Higham
Schedule Coordinator	Nancy Sierra
Social Co-Chair	Carol Hodge
Social Co-Chair	Jenny Monteleone
Webmaster	Dianne Jones



New board members Carol Hodge and Jenny Monteleone (Donna Burkat)



(Donna Burkat)



(Jenny Monteleone)



Party in Poetry by Kathe Serbin

On December 2, at the Barn we convened.
Fortune smiled down as good weather intervened.
More than 120 souls gathered, hearts alight;
Their laughter and joy filled the barn so bright.
The handmade centerpieces, a wondrous sight,
Crafted winter scenes that were filled with light.
Overflowing tables held food galore:
A feast of delights, a bountiful score.
Thanks to all for the spread so divine
With each dish a treasure, a taste so fine.
Volunteers, their heartbeats guiding the way
By leading hikes, setting tables – a role they play.
Their efforts were truly a symphony of care
In preparing and cleaning – a collective affair.
The president put gratitude into the air
By honoring volunteers for their dedication rare.
Good weather's gift was a fortunate sight:
December's warmth made a day of delight
With four hikes explored on trails of good cheer.
And July's club picnic is now drawing near!
May our laughter still echo along every trail
As happiness prevails, always without fail.
With every step, may our spirits arise:
The TriState Ramblers under open skies.

WILD ABOUT FLOWERS

Enjoy these beautiful wildflowers photographed by our members. Some are welcome harbingers of spring and others bring beauty throughout the seasons. The fall 2024 issue will feature burls and twisted branches/roots. Photos can be emailed (as JPG attachments) to the [editor](#) at any time.

(continued on next page)



Virginia Bluebells, Bowman Wildlife Preserve - Lynn Tucholke



Sumac, South Branch Preserve - Lynn Orlowitz



Snowdrops, Elmdale Trail, South Mountain Reservation - Carol Hodge



Mood display - Gail Waimon



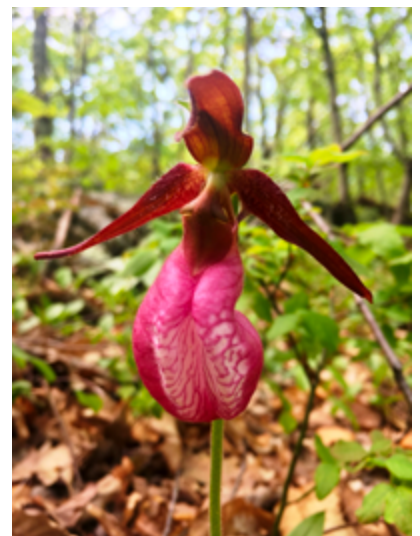
Mullein, Willowwood Arboretum - Lynn Orlowitz



Crocus one day, deer food the next! - Gail Waimon



Anthodite (cave flowers), Skyline Caverns, Virginia - Carl Wilder



Pink Lady's Slipper, AT near Rutherford Shelter - Lynn Tucholke

WILD ABOUT FLOWERS

(continued)



Field of flowers, Denmark - Lise Greene



Daffodils, Wilmore Woods - John Powell



*Firecrackers on display -
Gail Waimon*



Mont Blanc - Paul Sanderson



Iceland greenery - Gail Waimon



*Rockaway River Wildlife
Management Area -
Paul Sanderson*



Moisture on bluebells - Gail Waimon



*Snow Trillium, Bowman Wildlife
Preserve - Lynn Tucholke*