



# The Oak Leaf

The Newsletter of the TRISTATE RAMBLERS

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## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Our beautiful fall weather will soon be fading, but there are still lots of great hikes out there. Winter hiking can be great fun and not as cold as you might think. Once you start moving, you will be surprised how warm you are. It's a great way to get out in the sunshine. Give it a try!

Once again, thank you so much to all our hike leaders. We just can't do it without you. I especially encourage our new members to consider leading a favorite hike. Our club training includes mentoring by an experienced leader, so for the first time or two you can co-lead with an experienced leader. If you have a favorite hike or trail that you feel fairly familiar with, contact me, Pat Horsch, or another experienced leader and we will get you going.

No time or inclination to lead a hike? You can help in another way — the TriState Ramblers is in need of technology-savvy helpers. Nothing complicated, just a facility with navigating the internet, etc.

I look forward to seeing you soon on the trails.

Happy hiking!

— Gail Biggs

## Annual Holiday Party on Dec. 3

Our Annual Holiday Party is coming up on Saturday, December 3.

The party will be held at the Morris County Cultural Center, located at 300 Mendham Road in Morristown. Contact: Ellie King, 908-233-8411. Bring lunch and something to share, anything from salad to dessert. Beverages will be provided. The party will go on, rain or shine. Steady rain or snow may cancel hikes.

There will be two two-hour hikes preceding the party/meeting, one at a brisk pace and one at a moderate pace. Jeff Sovelove will lead the brisk paced hike; the moderate paced leader is Jim McKay. Both hikes will leave from the Cultural Center this year, not from Jockey Hollow. Please arrive by 9:45 a.m., as the hikes start promptly at 10 a.m. Hikers can drop off their food before the hikes. The Social Committee will be there starting at 9:30 a.m.

Hikers, please note that no hiking boots will be permitted at the party. Please remember to bring a change of shoes. If you forget, you can attend,



but your boots cannot! The holiday party and a short business meeting will follow in the Cultural Center at 12:15. Non-hikers are invited to join us anytime after 10:30 a.m. for the party and the business meeting. Come early and socialize.

Don't forget to bring hiking equipment or clothing in good condition for the Exchange Table. This can be something that you do not use (or never have) and you wish to pass on to fellow hikers. If these items are not taken, however, remember to take them back home with you!



## The Oak Leaf

The Oak Leaf is a publication of the TriState Ramblers of New Jersey. Comments or questions may be addressed to the Editor, Jean Fletcher, at [jrfletc@optonline.net](mailto:jrfletc@optonline.net).

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# Dashing Through the Snow *by Pat Horsch*



**S**now does not have to be something dreary that locks you in the house until the spring thaw. It can be a wonderful adventure and lift your winter spirits! All you need is the right equipment and the right attitude to enjoy a different side of nature that is just as beautiful as the warmer months.

Even if the weather is cold, you will warm up on the first decent uphill. Dress in layers so that you can remove some layers as you are heating up on the uphill terrain and put layers back on when you are moving downhill or in the shade or wind. Some people will chill more easily than others, so plan accordingly. Clothing should be synthetic, so if you perspire, it will wick away from you and not make you feel cold once you have stopped climbing.

Gloves also work well layered. You can wear glove liners with waterproof gloves or mittens over them for the

cool times, and just wear the liners once you warm up. Fingerless gloves with pullover mitten flaps are also becoming popular.

A knit hat or headband will keep you from losing heat through your head. Scarves and neck warmers will also help keep away the chill.

Boots should be waterproof and high enough to keep the snow out. Gaiters can be worn over your pants in deeper snow. Ski pants work well also. Socks should be wool or synthetic, **NOT COTTON!!!** It is not a bad idea to carry an extra pair of socks in your pack.

Traction devices should be worn on your boots if there is snow or ice cover. There are several styles available, but the more popular ones with our club members are Micro Spikes and Stabilicers. Any outdoor outfitter will be able to help you select something appropriate. Poles are extremely helpful and highly

recommended for keeping your footing in the snow.

You may want to consider bringing along a thermos with a hot beverage to warm you up from the inside, especially if it is a longer hike with a lunch stop. No matter what the temperature, you still need to drink plenty of water during the hike to prevent dehydration.

Besides hiking, we also offer some snowshoe and cross-country ski events, snowfall permitting. Rentals may be available at some of the outings, but confirm with the leader to make sure.

Always be sure to confirm that an event is still on when the weather is questionable, as road conditions or park closures may force cancellations.

So the next time your family is grumbling about snow in the forecast and shoveling, grab your winter hiking gear and let's go play in the snow!



## Sometimes You Have to Get Out, Rain or Shine



## GAIL'S BIRTHDAY BASH





# Manhattan Perimeter Hike



*Participants standing near the Brooklyn Bridge on Hike 3 of the Perimeter Hike. Picture by Ken Saloway, who led the three hikes.*

## John Crump Leading His First Hike



## Member News

**Carolyn and Jim Canfield** drove to Alaska in their new motor home this summer with many adventures along the way. If you wish to read about their trip, you can find it at: [www.spiritof76cjc.com](http://www.spiritof76cjc.com)

This year will mark **Gary Petrie's** 50th year as a member of the Seaside Heights Fishing Club. Gary says he has held several hats in the club: recording secretary for over 25 years, chaplain, and a trustee on the Board of Trustees. When Gary leads hikes in the Seaside area he shows the hikers the club house and the property. In fact, he plans to lead a hike in February and looks forward to seeing many TSR members.



# CANOEING WITH TSR

We encourage anyone who has access to a boat to attend all of our paddles. For those with no boat, next year we are planning some paddles with a boat rental option.



*Paddlers assemble at the launch site*



*Paddlers go  
upriver first . . .*

*. . . and float back down*



*Turtles sunbathing  
on a log in the river*

# ON TRAILS, PATHS, AND DECISIONS by Nancy Wolff

## *Reading books is like running away from home*

I love that quote; if only I could remember where I read it. Seventy-plus years of reading books (and letters and periodicals and anything else that's out there, preferably printed on paper) have made me still an escapee from the harsh realities of life.

A recent book led me along paths of interesting distractions. *On Trails: An Exploration* by Robert Moor, published 2016 by Simon & Schuster, is a delightful adventure that explores the author's experience in thru-hiking the AT and the various mental and physical side trails he explored afterward.

Moor points out that the soul of a trail is not tied to dirt and rocks; its essence lies in its function and how it evolves to serve the needs of its users. He leads us into the pheromone world of ants and ghost caterpillars.

Let us consider the leaf-cutter ant.

Twenty years ago I wrote the index to a book about ants. *The Earth Dwellers* by Erich Hoyt (S&S, 1996) gives us this scene:

"A worker ant — a foraging scout, female, as are all ant workers — stands on the leaf of a low-growing bush beside a fallen tree. Her hind legs are digging in, her head is down, hard at work. Her serrated mandibles, her jaws, are moving, sawing through a leaf.

"The scout takes a portion of the leaf and runs with it along a pheromone trail. The leaf fragment is three times her body mass. As the scout runs along the trail, holding her leaf above her head, she lays a trail — a liquid chemical squirted out from the poison glands in her lower abdomen — in case her leaf proves valuable. Other colony members can then use this chemical trail to find the tree or bush and strip the area. The chemical, or pheromone, is a glandular secretion that many insects such as ants use to communicate within their own species."

The vapors from their trails, Hoyt says, can last for six to twelve days; with army ants, the trails can last a month or more.

"The pheromones for marking trails are sometimes understood by other ant and insect species, who may use some of the same trails or wait beside them to try to pick up food or other material dropped by the ants."

If you've seen leaf-cutter ants on a trip to, say, Costa Rica, or visited the insect exhibit at the Museum of Natural History in New York City, you've seen these creatures at their task. What a life!

But I digress. Back to Robert Moor and his book about trails. In addition to ants, Moor describes elephant trails and how they are used — to show the herd how to get to water or food, or to lead family members to the grave of a fallen relative, where the matriarch exhibits deep mourning behavior. Moor also tried herding sheep in California, trying to get the sheep to go where he wanted, not where they were sheepishly milling around and wandering somewhere else, following their own trail-less companions and having to be gathered up at the end of each day. He never understood their mental pathways.

Moor also walked with a Cherokee man, a hunter who followed animal trails to find and hunt deer for food. Marshall (the Cherokee hunter) was in the process of piecing together a map of "all the major footpaths of the Cherokee homeland."

Modern highways follow old Indian trails. "Practically the whole present-day system of travel and transportation in America east of the Mississippi River, including many turnpikes, is based upon . . . the system of forest paths established by the Indians hundreds of years ago." Moor's descriptions of the research into Native Americans and their pathways gives a different focus on trail patterns.

"The Cherokee trained themselves to walk heel-to-toe, like tightrope walkers. As one Cherokee man explained, 'There's no need for a big wide road. All you're going to do is to

go there, and the things that are there — plants, medicine, game animals — won't be there if you make the road wide.'"

There's much more to be said about the original people's uses of trails, but I'll move on.

This book is so irritating: It has no index. I took it upon myself to berate the author for that lapse. My email read in part, "For a book about trails, pathfinding, and trailmaking not to provide an index — a road map through the text — is beyond irritating to a reviewer." Moor responded very quickly. He said it never occurred to him (egad!). He pictured his readers progressing from the beginning to the end of the book (heel-to-toe along a very narrow path) and didn't think an index was necessary. I guess I was like a stray sheep to him.

He kindly provided me with a PDF of his book. To find the section on "ants" or "elephants" or "Cherokee," I'd simply download the file, input the specific keywords, and voila! I'd be on the screen looking at the text. Not my idea of a way to follow a trail, but I guess it's another way of pathfinding. To Moor, apparently, the destination is more important than the journey. By the way, the table of contents is equally unhelpful: "Chapter 1," "Chapter 2," and so on. No keywords or hints there. Sigh.

I guess it's like walking along a woodland path with one's nose in a GPS.

In Chapter 6, Moor attacks the idea of the International Appalachian Trail. After completing the AT in 2009, like many thru-hikers, he wanted something else. Moor pondered the question "Why does a trail exist?" as he slogged along on his five-month hike. He talked with many people and learned that the AT has been extended beyond Mount Katahdin in Maine and into Canada.

A few years ago, my husband and I went with another couple to sample the International AT. We flew to Mont-Joli airport in Quebec and picked up our rental car. Mont-Joli

*(continued on next page)*



# ON TRAILS, PATHS, AND DECISIONS *continued*

was constructed in early 1940s as an aerodrome, a training venue for a bombing and gunnery school until the end of World War II. Photos on the airport walls recall those days. (You see how easily one becomes side-tracked from one's original path?)

We didn't backpack but stayed in a lovely hotel within the Chic-Chocs area on the Gaspé Peninsula. It was a pleasant week, though my poor memory dredges up no brilliant events to place it into permanent mental storage. Just a nice holiday of walks with friends on terrain very much like that of northern New England, with the occasional moose sighting.

But Moor goes even farther with the IAT concept.

Geologists have discovered that the Appalachians continue on the far side

of the Atlantic Ocean. The story goes that some 400 million years ago, the continental plates collided, forming the Pangaea super-continent. Then, when Pangaea broke apart some two hundred million years later, the continents that would become North America, Europe, and Africa were formed. And so today, Appalachian rocks can be found throughout western Europe and North Africa. How do you like Morocco as the new "final" destination for the Appalachian Trail?

Moor traveled to Morocco to explore the area proposed as a new IAT terminus. Dealing with local guides threw up barriers of language, culture clash, context (Why are we doing this?), and sense of purpose, raising small daily discussions that slowed and detoured his mission. Moor moved on.

Pondering trails and their functions encourages the ever-popular habit of becoming side-tracked. So many intriguing trails to follow. Shall we think about that never-ending path, the Internet, and its possibilities? Shall we consider career paths and lifestyle choices? Or should we instead ponder the interesting topic of decision-making, narrowing our choices to one trail or quest and proceeding, heel-to-toe, to follow where it leads?

I leave it to you. *On Trails* is a great way to start your journey. But before there was Robert Moor, there was Robert Frost:

THE ROAD NOT TAKEN  
... I shall be telling this with a sigh  
Somewhere ages and ages hence:  
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I —  
I took the one less traveled by,  
And that has made all the difference.

## Delaware Water Gap Camping Hiking Weekend

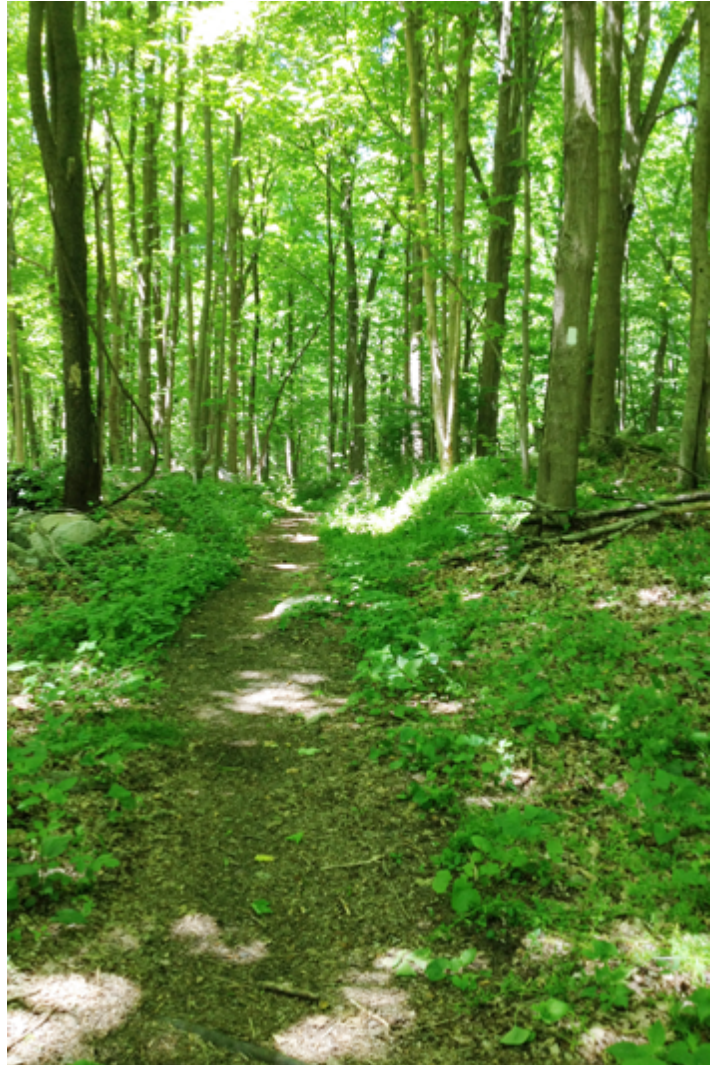




# Trail Maintenance in Wawayonda



*The crew*



*The finished trail*



*Pat uses the loppers to cut back brush*



## Sandy Hook Bike Ride

All of our bike rides are off busy streets, mostly flat, and paced to the group. If you have a bicycle (most bikes are suitable for our rides), please join us.



# Hikers on the Trail

*Photos by Pat Horsch*



*Hikers at Apshawa Preserve*



*Hikers at Merrill Creek*



*Hikers at Merrill Creek*



*Hikers at Mt. Minsi*



*Sunfish Pond*



*Hikers at Mt. Tammany*



# Hikers on the Trail

*Photos by Pat Horsch*



*Hikers at South Mountain Dog Park*



*Hikers crossing the brook at Norvin Green*



*Hikers at Van Campen's Glen*



*Hiker at Van Campen's Glen*



*Large group at Eagle Rock on National Trails Day*