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Accidents

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Analysis from the White Mountains of New Hampshire and occasionally elsewhere

A spring 2020 snowstorm blurs New Hampshire's Route 16 and an ominous sign warning that Tuckerman Ravine below Mount Washington is closed. JOE KLEMENTOVICH

"Hear that?"

"What? I don't hear anything except background hum."

"Exactly. That's the sound of our absence."

That imagined exchange, between two imaginary friends atop Franconia Ridge, recalls last winter in the Whites, a quiet season that ended with the whisper of closure. With the late March closing of Mount Washington's

east-facing ravines and a number of trailheads, we entered a different sort of shoulder season, one of folding in instead of melting and blooming out.

Even before stats from the coronavirus began accumulating, winter 2019–2020's climbing and sliding season had raised barely a ripple of worry and seen only a few sloughs of people-catching snow in the usual slick spots. The weather had been ho-hum (for winter), and, whether through sudden wisdom or accumulated karma, backcountry wanderers and adventurers hadn't set off any major rescue efforts and the swirl of story they summon. A few of us had found trouble, of course, but the practiced people who extricate us from that trouble did exactly that. Or, we got ourselves out.

Then, first with a sort of cirrus overlay that suggested some change in the offing, and then in fits of arrival, the virus moved in. We learned quickly to eye each other as carriers, animals to be avoided or kept at distance (which got tagged oddly as "social"). Work went home with us; we grew overly familiar with a small cast of characters and a small set of rooms. From which we began to plan escapes, virtual and real. So many new Houdinis in tight spaces. We grew adept at twisting and turning within our bonds, slipping, finally, out.

But once out, where? Many of us who dream mountains turned to our local trails and lands, any place where a tree grew and the land roughed up, if we were lucky enough to have such places close by and preserved. Already bonded with a set of local trails and lands before the pandemic, I felt those bonds intensify as winter waned and spring tried to come on. My foot-dependent sister- and brotherhood reported the same.

Then, as March appeared and deepened, the viral storm broke. For those of us accustomed to mountain storms, so demonstrative with their racketing snows and rains and deep-voiced winds, this contagion puzzled. So little announcement; for some, no announcement at all, their roles simply being transport. "Take me to work," or, "Take me shopping," the virus might have said. And, for a while, we did.

The storm did raise its voice in our media, which, once they latched onto numbers and early deaths, raised a ruckus. And, given many platforms from which to speak, we joined in. "Can you hear me now?" asks a cell carrier's old ad about coverage. "Now?" "Yes," we all answered from our pods of place. "Yes." The storm, true to its mimicry of mountain cousins, was in full voice. We sheltered in place.

Here, before we return to a few ideas about bringing our mountains to our places, are a few incidents from the winter past.

Getting Out

January 16 broke as a usual gray winter day. Mount Washington's Observatory reported an average temperature of 4 degrees Fahrenheit and winds in the 40s, with a storm blowing in later in the day. For Gary C., age 62, such days suggested getting up into the mountains. He had already completed his list of 4,000-footers in winter, and he was back at the midpoint on the list and on Mount Willey for a second go-round.

A little after 1 P.M., on a steep section near the top, Gary fell, injuring his right leg to the point where he knew he needed help. Absent cell phone service in this spot, he began trying to slide himself down as a form of self-rescue, while also hoping and waiting for help; an hour or so later he got the luck of two prepared passersby. When Jessica S. and Monica N., both age 28, arrived, Gary said he thought he'd broken his leg and couldn't walk.

The two passing hikers were able to get Gary up, and, with their assistance, he moved short distance downhill, but then he had to stop and rest. Still some 2.5 miles from the trailhead, the group decided that Jessica would hike out and call for help, and Monica would keep working with Gary to get closer to down. Jessica got to her car and found a house that let her call 911 at around 4:10 P.M. She reported Gary's injury and his and Monica's location as the point last seen. New Hampshire Fish and Game set about organizing a rescue.

Sgt. Alex Lopashanski headed for Crawford Notch, arriving there a little before 6 P.M., noting that the temperature was 23 degrees and that "it was extremely windy with blowing snow." Lopashanski had summoned conservation officers to climb the trails leading up from Gary's and Monica's respective cars. Just before 7 P.M., as two COs were starting up the Appalachian Trail from Willey Station Road, they saw headlamps, which turned out to be Gary and Monica. Gary was then taken by ambulance to Littleton General Hospital. He reported to Lopashanski the next day that he had a fractured kneecap and separated quad muscle in his right leg.

Comment: This Thursday afternoon rescue caught my eye for its hiker competence and resilience. Begin with beginning: When Gary slipped near Mount Willey's summit in the early afternoon, he was already on the way down; a little later, when his rescuers found him, they too were headed down. That's as it should be in mid-January, when days are short, and when weather's on the way. NHFG reported that all three hikers were well equipped. Gary had the gear to wait, and Jessica and Monica had the gear to slow down and help him. Gear (in all seasons) is about two things: being where you are safely, and being able to wait there safely.

As I have noted many times, downhill is winter's problem direction. Even with traction devices, a hiker negotiating a steep, slippery section risks falling, with the fall's effects multiplied by sliding's quick accelerant. Which offers different consequence from that of the other three seasons. What would be a bump or a bruise from a summer sit-down can ramify quickly when we slide downhill and collide with whatever's at the slope's edge. The best winter hikers I know are far warier of steeps when there's ice around than at other times. And they switch over to crampons whenever the slope grows steep, even if it's only for a hundred yards of walking. Also, they will shift their routes from a steep open slope into trailside woods, even if that makes for thicker going.

Jessica and Monica brought skill and reassurance with them when they arrived at Gary's accident. They got Gary up and moving slowly down and were able to summon help quickly. Their decision to split up, while carrying its own risk, offered help in the two most likely scenarios—Jessica would get organized numbers of rescuers if Gary was unable to move enough to get out, while Monica would work to help him down, either getting him to the trailhead or shortening the carryout.

The other arena in any rescue lies inside the person in trouble. Not long after his rescue, Gary posted a description of it on his Facebook page. Its lines help us appreciate his efforts and, especially, admiration for the work and composure of his rescuers. Here are two illuminating clips from that post:

> Last Thursday while descending the Willey Ridge Trail in Crawford Notch I slipped pinning my right leg behind and subsequently heard a loud crack/snap above the knee near the femur. Obviously in pain, I placed my hands under my hamstring to straighten my leg. There was no support, no pressure, no muscle coordination, leg was limp. Hiking solo, I knew that I was in serious trouble and proceeded to slide/crawl through eight inches of fresh snow for the next twenty minutes. Time became a constant factor with shock and hypothermia imminent. The typical hiking day turned into life-threatening hike on a grand scale. . . .
>
> Jessica volunteered to trek back to her vehicle and drive to [the Appalachian Mountain Club's] Highland Center to contact the appropriate officials. Monica's calm demeanor and my insight concluded that we were on our own and that this was to become a self-rescue, for rescue was at least 6–8 hours away. With blowing winds, dropping temperatures in the teens and windchills below, for the next 6 hours I hobbled while Monica packed trail, gullies,

chopped ice/snow repeatedly from my micro spike while I bent the damaged leg. We traversed countless gullies, streambeds with me balancing precariously on two hiking poles over the next 2.5 miles. Monica's repeated statements that "we are close," that "we are going to succeed" and her refusal to leave me in the woods that evening in extreme conditions was nothing but positive coaching.

Finally, past the point of exhaustion with Monica's pigtails encased in ice, my backpack frozen to my Gore-Tex slicker, we arrived at the trailhead/parking lot at approximately 7:15 P.M.

We all can hope for this sort of help and resilience when a hike goes wrong.

Solo note: Gary's crisis was intensified by his being alone when he fell. Even as I practice and support hiking solo in all seasons, I prepare for possibly being stranded when injured and accept that my risk is heightened. Had Jessica and Monica not come along, it's likely that, at the least, he would have spent the night out injured and alone. How such a forced night out unfolds is unpredictable. But all of us who walk out solo should have conversations with ourselves that ask how we would fare in such a scenario.

Reminder "Rescue"

Here's a short read. On March 26, a clear, 40-degree day, at 6 P.M., NHFG received word of a 911 call from Brittany L.-D., who said that she and her friend Vanessa S. (whose ages were not reported) had lost Mount Passaconway's Dicey's Mill Trail on their way down and needed help getting out. NHFG was unable to reach the two hikers via phone, so they dispatched CO Joseph T. Canfield to the trailhead. As he pulled up, he saw two women getting into a car. They were the hikers who had called.

Brittany and Vanessa reported losing the trail at a river crossing rife with ice, where they had sought an easier route. They said they had called because the hike seemed to be taking longer than it should and they couldn't rediscover the trail. Canfield found that, although they had microspikes and adequate clothing and supplies, they carried no map, compass, or headlamps. The pair had been relying on the app AllTrails on their phones.

Comment: So, no rescue at all, nor, I would say, any need for the call. Headlamps? Always, in any season, for any length hike. The ongoing hiker migration from maps and compass and capability with them to map apps that rely on signals and GPS? A problem, with more frequent disorientation and loss of context; the mountains simply don't fit on a little screen.

Note the diversion to avoid ice that gets the pair off-trail. Such diversions are good practice, but they do put more pressure on one's route-finding and sense of a place.

Appalachia Editor-in-Chief Chris Woodside offered the following anecdote as support for this comment: "I had a sobering experience with AllTrails in late July in Royalston, Massachusetts. The app would not load when I needed to check where I was. Not even the map as I'd last viewed it would show up on the screen. Reception was too spotty. I agree that actual maps and compass are paramount. The problem as I see it now that the app failed me is not only a lack of wider context but the danger of suddenly not having a map at all."

Off the Rails

On March 22, a late-afternoon phone call alerted NHFG to 35-year-old Ashley F.'s fall near the Cog Railway on the west side of Mount Washington. Ashley's friend and hiking companion Lindsay T. had made the call. The weather was clear with temperatures in the 20s.

Earlier in the day, the two friends, equipped with experience and good gear, had climbed Washington via the direct approach of the railway corridor. Their microspikes had offered good purchase on the firm snowpack, which, in places, filled in the gaps between stones. Bathed in the westering sun, Ashley and Lindsay began their descent, again following the path of the railway.

Near the steep section called Jacob's Ladder, Ashley slipped and began to slide on the slick surface. In Lt. Mark Ober's incident report, based on interviews with Ashley and Lindsay, he wrote this: "She slid uncontrollably headfirst toward Burt Ravine. After sliding for approximately 200 feet, she was able to turn her body just before striking rocks, which stopped her fall."

When Lindsay made her careful way down to Ashley, she found her with a serious, bleeding gash near her hip and what seemed to be broken ribs. The pair was now perched on a ledge just above a steep drop-off, and Lindsay was sure they couldn't move safely, even if Ashley were able to walk. Lindsay called 911, and at 4:15 P.M. Ober got the call, with Lindsay's phone number and her coordinates, which placed the pair at around 4,700 feet, roughly two miles from the base. Ober's calls to Lindsay went unanswered.

Ober contacted three NHFG COs and the Twin Mountain Fire Department, asking that they make their tracked all-terrain vehicle available. He then set out for the Base Station, arriving at 5:30 P.M. Unable to locate the pair with

binoculars or his spotting scope, Ober was pleased when he got Lindsay's call. (Her phone had been turned off on advice from 911 to preserve her battery.)

Lindsay gave Ober a clear sense that Ashley's injuries were significant and that they were stuck in this steep, iced terrain. At 6:30 P.M. Chief Jeremy Oleson of Twin Mountain Fire started up in his tracked ATV, reaching Jacob's Ladder in roughly 10 minutes. There, he was stopped by the steep, exposed slope. At 7 P.M., the three COs started up on snowmobiles. They were able to cover roughly 1.5 miles before terrain and absence of snow halted them; they hiked up to join Oleson. When the four rescuers reached a level adjacent to the stranded pair, they set up their ropes and, while Oleson belayed them, the COs worked their way over 200 feet of steep, icy terrain to Ashley and Lindsay, reaching the pair at 7:45 P.M.

The COs determined they would need a litter and more gear to move Ashley and that once she was off the ledge, they'd need a better way down than snowmobiles. Ober called the Cog Railway and asked for a train to carry Ashley down. The railway hurried to ready a train, and Twin Mountain Fire called in two emergency medical technicians.

One of the three COs returned to the base on his snowmobile for the added gear and brought it back up, and the COs worked to secure Ashley in the litter and then move her to the tracks. At around 9:30 P.M. the train started up. As the train climbed, the three COs brought Ashley up to the tracks: two COs hand-hauled the litter, while one stayed next to it, maintaining balance. Then CO Robert Mancini returned to the ledge to help Lindsay up from it.

A little after 10 P.M., the train arrived, and by roughly 10:30 P.M. Ashley and Lindsay were aboard it and headed down. The train and passengers reached the base at 11 P.M., where an ambulance met them. NHFG and Twin Mountain personnel spent the next few hours retrieving gear, clearing the mountain a little after 1 A.M.

In subsequent interviews, Ober learned more about the genesis of the accident. Ashley, Lindsay, and two other friends had started up the railway corridor in the early afternoon, finding firm snow and good going with their microspikes. At the top, their two friends set out down the Crawford Path, while Ashley and Lindsay aimed back down the railway. There, in the steep section where Ashley fell, they encountered conditions icier than they'd found on their ascent. The warm spring sun had melted some of the snow and then the afternoon's cooling had refrozen it as ice.

When Ashley slipped, she landed on her butt and began sliding quickly; her body also turned with her head pointing downhill. As she neared the edge

of Burt Ravine, she was able to spin and ended up hitting the rocks with her side. That both stopped and injured her.

Lindsay said, "It happened so fast." When Ashley slipped, she rapidly slid out of sight, and Lindsay began calling her name and descending carefully in the direction of Ashley's slide; at a small crest she looked down and saw Ashley on the rocks. Lindsay was able to reach Ashley and make her 911 call. She turned then to keeping her friend warm while they waited. The wait would stretch out into hours, as is common with injuries in remote places.

Comment: A headshot of Mount Washington's west side makes obvious the snow-season appeal of a railway corridor route to the top. It's close to a straight shot, open and sun-happy on a clear late March day. Yes, it's steep in its direct approach to contours, but the tracks climb between Burt and Ammonoosuc Ravines, avoiding their dark, iced rocks or the trails that climb fitfully around them. Experienced hikers like Ashley and Lindsay wouldn't see trouble in such a climb.

Each climb is different, however, with variations showing themselves in subtleties and little surprises. This one turned on a change noted by Ober in his report: The snow was firm and the temperatures in the 30s as the four climbers went up in the early afternoon; the March sun would have been strong on the slope. By the time Ashley and Lindsay started down, the sun angle was dropping and the temperature cooling. When they reached the steep section where Ashley slipped and slid, the surface had iced over, making her descent riskier; when she slipped and hit that surface, she accelerated quickly.

Ober also noted that, ideally, the pair would have been equipped with crampons and ice axes—better traction and a possibility for self-arrest. But even those added pieces of gear wouldn't eliminate risk on an iced-over steep slope. As the U.S. Forest Service snow rangers in Tuckerman Ravine often write about the danger of long, sliding falls, there is very little time (or chance) for self-arrest on a steep, open, icy slope. If self-arrest doesn't happen immediately, the force of your body sliding at speed will overpower whatever strength and technique you bring to your attempt at self-arrest.

I recall working to learn self-arrest skills during an Appalachian Mountain Club winter workshop. We were on a moderately steep, open slope with a level, soft-snow runout at its base as insurance. Lying on my back, head pointed downhill, I shoved off tentatively; even having been instructed and warned about how quickly I would gain speed, I was shocked by it. There

was simply no traction between the synthetic shell I was wearing and the icy surface, and I felt out of control immediately. After a few attempts, I succeeded in rolling over and digging in the point of my ice axe (held firmly to chest with both hands)—while remembering not to dig in with my crampon-points at the same time to avoid ankle injury. Each attempt was experimental, fraught; only occasionally did I succeed. My primary takeaway was this: DON'T FALL.

That was when I *knew* I would slide and had had a chance to review technique before each attempt. What about an unexpected slip? I wondered. I knew my chance of self-arrest, even with more practice, would be on the low side of slim. "It happened so fast," said Lindsay, of Ashley's fall.

All of this suggests that those of us who go out and up in winter need winter eyes. Those eyes see familiar slopes, especially open ones, differently. Alert for shifts in surface and the ways snow and ice vary, even on the same slopes and with each passing hour, winter eyes also scan constantly for where a fall can take you. "Where might I end up?" they ask. The USFS snow rangers cite the need for such awareness repeatedly as they write about conditions, winter climbing, and skiing in the steep ravines on Mount Washington's east side. It takes only a little imagination to extend that need for winter eyes to any snow or ice slope you may be contemplating or crossing.

Crampons: It is also vital to carry these on any big mountain or open slope in the winter Whites. Using them effectively takes instruction and practice, but while microspikes may get the majority of the wear on any given day, crampons simply offer superior traction. That's even more evident when headed downhill, our problem direction.

Sliding Example

Here is a point of emphasis added to the incident just described. It took place on March 9, and my hope is that when you read this, the video clip of the fall (linked to from the Mount Washington Avalanche Center's website) will still be available at mountwashingtonavalanchecenter.org/long-sliding-fall-chute-3/. The narrative here is also based on that site's description.

March 9 saw mostly sunshine, and, for Mount Washington, it was mild, with a temperature average of 28 at the summit. A significant snowpack made Tuckerman Ravine a lure on such a day. Around noon, AMC's Hermit Lake caretaker happened to look up and see a body come hurtling downslope from

the gully known as the Chute. The caretaker and a snow ranger responded and found, to their relief, that the skier seemed uninjured. He was able to walk down to Hermit Lake; from there he was driven in a snowmobile down to Pinkham Notch.

The falling skier was reported to have been climbing near the Chute's top in leather boots with microspikes and without an ice axe; his skis and ski boots were on a backpack.

Comment: The snow rangers point out both the risks of such a climb and the necessity of using stiff boots, crampons, and an ice axe on such steep snow, when not belayed by a rope and partner. They write, "Preventing a fall from happening is a climber's/skier's primary means of safety since arresting a fall with an ice axe is difficult with, and impossible without."

Closures in Late March

A March 20 podcast posted on the Mount Washington Avalanche Center site and conducted by Andrew Drummond of Ski the Whites featured lead snow ranger Frank Carus and visitor and volunteer Mike Austin, who runs an avalanche education school in Chamonix, France. Carus and Austin have done a good deal of snow training and skiing together. Drummond's podcasts are available at mountwashingtonavalanchecenter.org. Search for the March 20 podcast under "News."

On Austin's first morning at Hermit Lake, a call came in at 10 A.M. saying that a hiker was stuck on the headwall. Austin and Carus climbed up to help. The hiker, a visitor from New Jersey, had "frozen" on the icy, steep slope, and as Carus talked to him, the hiker said he had been in a hospital emergency room at home, and, with a little more probing, Carus learned that there had been a COVID-19 case in that ER the day before.

That moment of exposure and recognition crystalizes the new risks rescuers assume when a pandemic is on. That story, joined with the general late March scene in Tuckerman Ravine, led the USFS to close the Cutler River drainage visitors at the end of March. In their March 28 podcast, Carus and Drummond could easily look up and count groups of skiers walking closely together and headed for more crowding in the bowl above. The drainage would stay closed until June 8, when it joined a number of other White Mountain locales in a general reopening of trails. A few days after the decision to close, Mount Washington Avalanche Center suspended avalanche forecasting, even as it acknowledged that doing so deprived those going to other

backcountry locales of a vital snow-knowing resource. The suspension represented an underlining of the recommendation—from all manner of authorities—that we, the mountain-going public, shift our goings-out to local ones with low risk.

What's Different: Even six months before this column sees print after our truncated winter, much has been written about our changed worlds, the mountain one included. Adjectives for difference pile up like winter snows: strange, odd, unprecedented, life-altering, isolating, mind-boggling. You have your own go-to descriptors. The mountains are—as they always are said to be—still there. If we leave aside the other 800-pound gorilla in the room, climate change, the mountains are largely themselves. Only the slow melting of stone toward the sea registers on them over many human lifetimes.

But we, of course, have changed, have had to alter behavior or stubbornly resist such change, even as our expectations for what we'll find in the mountains and who we'll be there have endured. We still seek "freedom of the hills"; we still want a linkage with a physical (and spiritual?) self who, like any good animal, needs getting out for exercise, vision, and affirmation. And so, as of this writing, we still go.

Those who watch over the mountains, who monitor our comings and goings and rescue us on occasion, suggest we take the frontcountry alterations of behavior (distancing, awareness of aerosols, regard for fellow seekers) to the mountains. Many of us have. Others, not so much. See, for example, the aforementioned USFS closure of the Cutler River drainage (the Tuckerman Ravine side of Mount Washington) and a number of trailheads in spring 2020 because of disregard and crowding. Where we are headed next with our backcountry lives seems as uncertain as our lives in our cities and towns.

In the late spring, I asked USFS trail steward and AMC Board of Advisors member Chris Eliot to reflect on this time. Chris lives in Ossipee, New Hampshire, and spends a good deal of foot-time in the Whites:

> In terms of volunteer work, WMNF has suspended all the trailhead and other steward responsibilities for the summer. We were also instructed that while we could wear our volunteer gear on hikes we should not proactively be giving hiking advice. Slowly but surely they have been opening up trailheads and parking areas but some still are "closed." Of course this does not prevent hikers from parking on the Kanc [Kancamagus Highway], near the

AMC Crawford and Pinkham centers and heading to the mountains. I was just at Crawford midweek last week and saw about 30 cars [even as the Highland Center was closed then].

In my limited travels throughout the Whites I would say that that trails are at 50 percent of normal activity. An interesting and probably expected development has been the increase in the hiking of lesser known and utilized areas. We have discovered many Audubon sanctuaries, Nature Conservancy tracts, and Society for the Protection of NH Forest reservations. Also, I have climbed many 2,000-foot mountains and hills that were previously under the radar screen for me. This latter occurrence has been quite rewarding, as I would probably have continued to overlook them without the pandemic. While the lengths of these hikes have been shorter, the views have been better than I would have expected.

At a recent AMC Board of Advisors Zoom meeting, many other participants echoed these sentiments. With proper social distancing we have also been connecting with peers for an every-Sunday-morning hike. The lower elevations have been more inclusive for those who don't want to or can't do the higher mountains. We consider ourselves extremely fortunate that we have these opportunities and recognize that many others do not.

One certain change goes to the heart of this column. Our search-and-rescue work has had to change in how we imagine it and how we practice it. Even with full protective equipment, there is no social distance in a rescue effort. Instead there is an intimacy. It sounds a trifle hyperbolic, but it is also true that rescuers bring with them the touch of life. Whether it's splinting a fracture, rewarming someone going cold, or the desperate hope of cardiopulmonary resuscitation, rescuers are suddenly close. And in that closeness they are exposed to whatever we "have."

That, I would argue, has put an even greater responsibility on us. Going out into the mountains always carries its risks, but it is up to us to minimize them more vigilantly than in the past. As NHFG's Colonel Kevin Jordan announced as the COVID-19 storm broke, "This is not the time for epic hikes or backcountry adventures." Instead it is (and always will be) a good time to savor the renaissance of self to be found on any trail up any rise in any woods.

It may seem odd—but these are "odd" times—to turn to a poet of place for advice about how to be and go outdoors, but Wendell Berry's "Traveling at Home" gets at the heart of going out . . . and coming back:

Even in country you know by heart
it's hard to go the same way twice.
The life of the going changes.
The chances change and make it a new way.
Any tree or stone or bird
can be the bud of a new direction. The
natural correction is to make intent
of accident. To get back before dark
is the art of going.

Another Way to Get There: Following Steve

There are few more knowledgeable (and understated) White Mountain walkers than Steve Smith, owner of Lincoln's Mountain Wanderer Bookstore, author of AMC's iconic *White Mountain Guide* and several other books set in the Whites, and curator-creator of *Mountain Wandering*, my favorite White Mountain blog. When I can't reach the Whites and pine still for connection to my home ranges, I check the blog every day. Two or three days of each week's seven, I find a new, photo-rich post, which is a signal to settle back and trace slowly along Steve's wanderings. Often, I break out a map to follow along. Those wanderings take me out of whatever little pocket of work or woe I may be tucked into.

In these days of closures and low risk-taking, because he is also a mountain citizen and former rescuer with Pemigewasset Valley Search and Rescue, Steve has been staying low and at distance from others, which takes him often into off-trail woods to visit historic sites or ledgy viewpoints. He is a frequent bushwhacker. The "whacking" he favors doesn't scuffle with thick firs and hobblebush—though he will do so if necessary—but rather it's hardwood whacking through big well-spaced trees. Steve's a hardwood connoisseur, enriching his blog with photos of large or anomalous birches and maples and ashes of various configurations and ages. He likes his hardwood groves almost as much as his ledges, where, given clement weather, he gazes out, names what he sees, and (sometimes) naps.

So what, if you were to click on mountainwandering.blogspot.com/, might you find? Where might you go? More than 1,000 possibilities have been archived over the past eleven years. Finger-walking back through these archives is like finding eleven seasons of backlogged episodes of a show you've begun to favor. Riches!

We all could do worse (much) than to walk like or with Steve.

—Sandy Stott
Accidents Editor