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Mountain Goats Cope*

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Letters

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Letters

Rescuers on the Cover

What a sadly appropriate photo by Matt Bowman on the cover of the Winter/Spring 2016 (67 no. 1). Ominous, hunched, dark figures slogging silently into a whiteout, straps flying on a search for Kate Matrosova lying somewhere in the whiteness . . . and, as noted by the editor, a tribute to the commitment and efforts of rescue teams.

—*Alton Smith, Wolcott, Vermont*

More Memories of Mount Whitney

I was fascinated by the wonderful writing by Jia H. Jung about her experiences climbing Mount Whitney (“The Big One,” Summer/Fall 2015, 66 no. 2). My son, Will, climbed it a few years ago. His account said:

“There were six of us (two doctors, two computer professionals, one plumbing business owner, and me—all in our mid-40s). We started the hike at 2:19 A.M., since we weren’t sure how long it would take, and wanted to finish before dark. Vlad [his friend] timed the trip to take place during the full moon which really did provide a lot of light. . . . We actually split up into three groups of two about two miles before the summit. The plastic surgeon, Brian, and I were the first group finishing, in 13 hours (we got to the summit at 8:56 A.M. and back to the start at 3:30 P.M.). The views were quite breathtaking, as you might imagine. It was a relatively balmy 50 to 55 degrees for the first hour or so, but then dropped to near freezing at dawn when we were at around 12,000 feet. The sunrise was pretty, and that warmed it up a little, but I don’t think we ever reached 40 again until about two hours into the descent. We got several snow showers on the way down and a couple booms of thunder near the others in our group; I only heard it faintly. So that was a little scary.”

—*Mary Sauer, Naples, Florida*

Checking Facts

I read *Appalachia* cover to cover, and I enjoy it. But lately I've begun to wonder whether I can trust it.

In the Winter/Spring issue (47 no. 1), Lisa Densmore Ballard writes that Kaska Goose Lodge is "at the 58th parallel, just below the Arctic Circle." That's like saying the latitude of Wilmington, North Carolina, is just south of Boston. The 58th parallel is 590 miles south of the Arctic Circle. The latitude of London is closer to the lodge than the Arctic Circle is.

In the same issue, Stephen Kurczyk writes that a group of climbers once "climbed the tallest mountain in each New England state in one round-the-clock expedition (they finished in 41 hours, after driving 2,000 miles)."

Seriously? To cover 2,000 miles in 41 hours, with no time at all spent climbing, would require an average speed of nearly 50 miles an hour on the road. If they spent half their time climbing and half of it driving, they averaged 98 miles an hour in the car. Of course in New England they couldn't have maintained that speed continuously. So to keep up their average, they must have reached peak speeds close to 150 miles an hour.

I've tried, but I can't believe they did that.

—Dick Andrews, Springfield, Vermont

Editor's note: Lisa Densmore Ballard concedes that you are correct that the latitudinal distance between the Kaska Goose Lodge at 58 degrees north and the Arctic Circle at 66 degrees north is the same as from Wilmington, NC (at 34 degrees north) to Boston at 42 degrees north—both lie about 8 degrees or 480 miles as the crow flies from line to line of latitude. London (51 degrees north) is almost at the same latitude as Boston. Latitudinally, the Kaska Goose Lodge is about halfway between London/Boston and the Arctic Circle. All this is correct, but one must consider two things. First, London is located fairly far north, but ocean currents naturally warm the British Isles. And Kaska Goose Lodge lies at the boundary of the Arctic taiga/tundra and boreal forest and is frozen much of the year, similar to the region at the Arctic Circle.

The expedition up the highest peaks of each of the New England states took place in 1999. Steve Fagin (our book review editor) led the group, which included me. We suspect we've miscalculated how much road mileage our friend who drove us covered. It might have been more like 700 or 800 miles. We drove on back roads at moderate speeds. We can assure you that we did climb all of those peaks in about 41 hours.



TO OUR READERS of the Appalachian Mountain Club's *White Mountain Guide*: The Appalachian Mountain Club recently revised the acknowledgements in the *White Mountain Guide*, edited by Steven D. Smith and Mike Dickerman, to recognize the contributions of both Gene Daniell and Jon Burroughs. Here is an excerpt:

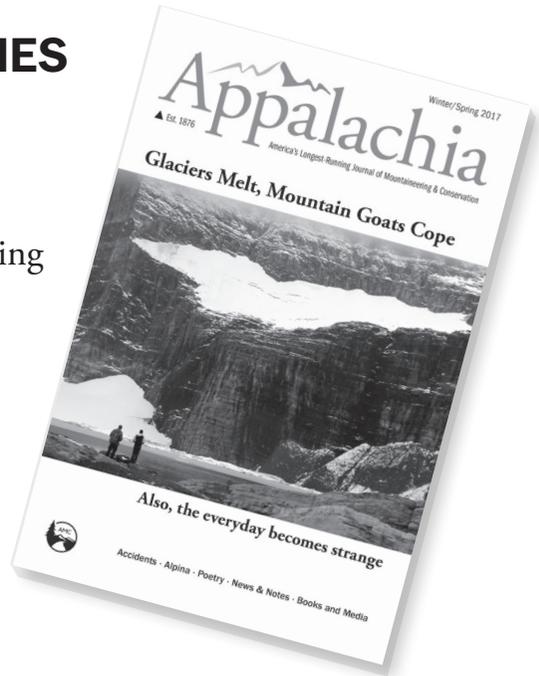
The current editors of the *White Mountain Guide* feel connected to a long and cherished tradition handed down to us by a century's worth of editors and committee members. There are far too many names to list here—for a comprehensive history of the guidebook, see *White Mountain Guide: A Centennial Retrospective*, published by AMC Books—but two individuals helped to bring the Guide into the modern era. Gene Daniell edited this guide from its 23rd through 28th editions (a period spanning a quarter-century), and under his stewardship improvements in voice and the addition of key elevation data and a list of easy to moderate hikes were made. For ten years he worked closely with Jon Burroughs, associate editor of the 25th edition and co-editor of the 26th edition. Jon used a surveyor's wheel and over the period measured every maintained trail in New Hampshire, covering more than 2,000 miles, and he took extensive notes in the field, contributing many corrections and the trail segment mileage that appeared in the book. We are honored to continue the fine work of both.

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