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Letters

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Letters

Motivation via the Hancocks story

I enjoyed reading Douglass Teschner's article, "The Hancock Loop Trail, Then and Now" (Winter/Spring 2021). I had enjoyed Mr. Teschner's presentation at the Appalachian Mountain Club's Worcester Chapter meeting a few years ago.

I grew up in Worcester and my primary outdoor activity was jogging around Elm Park. I'm 54 now and only got into hiking and the White Mountains a few years ago.

Just wanted to let you know that Mr. Teschner's presentation at the Worcester meeting and his following piece in *Appalachia* have motivated me to keep involved with AMC and hiking, even during these challenging times of pandemic.

In his presentation and in his article, Mr. Teschner mentioned specific individuals who had introduced him in the 1960s to the world of hiking and the White Mountains. I think it's important to acknowledge individuals like this. Not only because it's good to show that appreciation, but also because it implicitly reminds us that we all have a responsibility to help each other—especially intergenerationally.

—Matt Reidy, Worcester, Massachusetts

The Tetons in 1952

Steven Jarvis's article about his youthful adventures in the Tetons brought back wonderful memories of my own single climb in 1952.

My sister Virginia (age 20) and I (18) worked as cabin maids at Old Faithful Lodge in Yellowstone for the summer of 1952. On one of my days off, I got a ride south with the parents of a friend and saw the Tetons for the first time. On the spot, I vowed to climb the Grand one day, not knowing if it had ever been climbed or how difficult it was. A few days later, we learned from a group of young men hitchhiking around the West that it was possible to climb Grand Teton. They had done it, and they explained how to go about it. Virginia and I, along with four young men—fellow savages, as summer workers were known—joined forces to give it a try. One of our number had a car, which made the logistics work.

On August 6, after an early drive from Yellowstone, we started up the Grand. We were so lucky! Willi Unsoeld was our guide, with Doc Lee along to assist. What wonderful, steady, encouraging leaders they were. During the technical part, my sister was on the first rope right behind Unsoeld (then called Bill), and I was second to Doc on the other rope. I think Unsoeld arranged the ropes that way because he thought we two would be the weak links. In any event, it was a glorious climb. We made the top by the Exum Route in four hours. According to Unsoeld, that was the fastest time to date for a party that included women. We had to hurry down for the drive back to Yellowstone, to sleep a little before reporting to work the next day. My body was covered with bruises, but my head was full of that wonderful climb. I still have my Certificate of Ascent signed by Bill Unsoeld and a few photographs that show him with a beard, even in 1952.

I kept coming back to the Tetons to hike all that summer and the next, but I did no more climbs. Nevertheless, Steven Jervis and I may have crossed paths somewhere in the wilderness in those years.

—*Susan Davis Wiltshire, Gainesville, Florida*

Dogs

I enjoyed and appreciated Sally Manikian's article in Winter/Spring 2021 ("Eight Weeks on Scudder"). I have a problem with that picture of her unleashed dog on a mountainside trail. I understand that Sally is a "dog person" and I am not, having been bitten by a dog when I was a child.

I have been on many trails in New England, and unleashed dogs have bounded up to me and my family while their owner is far behind. You may think that your dog is friendly and won't harm me, but I am frightened when your dog jumps on me, slobbers on my clothes, sniffs at my shoes, barks at me, or accosts my children. For me, personally, it's terrifying when these unleashed dogs get close to me and I believe that it's the owner's responsibility to have them under complete control at all times, and that means having their animal on a leash. Calling out, "Come back," to your dog when it runs toward me is not an acceptable alternative because, I can tell you from personal experience, their dogs often don't obey this command.

—*Ronald A. Zlotoff, M.D., Woodbridge, Connecticut*

Editor's note: We agree with you that dog owners must control their dogs. The scenario of dogs you describe does not match advice Sally Manikian has given on

*an Appalachian Mountain Club educational video about dogs. She carries a leash at all times and leashes her dogs when she encounters other people on trails. The photo we published with her article showed her dog Speck on a trail up a local mountain in Shelburne, New Hampshire, with no other people nearby. Another of our regular contributors, Lisa Ballard, gives similar advice in a 2013 article for our member magazine, AMC Outdoors: “Give dog-less hikers the right of way. When you meet others on the trail, put your dog on a leash, step out of the way, and command your dog to sit until the other hikers have passed.” AMC’s video featuring Manikian, *Hiking with Dogs: The Ten Essentials*, is on AMC’s YouTube channel in the *How-to: Skills for the Outdoors* section. Ballard’s article is at outdoors.org/bestfriend.*

Of all the things we love about dogs, surely it is their loyalty to us that is most endearing and, frankly, remarkable. Forever loyal, they will follow us to the ends of the earth, but that does not mean we should take them there. Indeed, it is a violation of that trust to do so, if that means putting them in danger. Which is exactly what Amanda K. Jaros describes in her story, “The Edge” (Summer/Fall 2021).

Amanda, hiking alone with her dog, comes to a rock wall she must descend to finish her hike. She eventually coerces the dog to make the jump by pulling on her leash and dragging her down the wall.

The adventure ends well, but it might not have. What if Gaia broke her legs and had to be rescued? I can say from experience that dog stories do not always end so well. Twenty years ago, one gorgeous August day, our dog Skippy fell to his death at Crystal Cascade at the start of my daughter’s and my hike up Mount Washington. We did not see it happen but surmise he found loose rock or perhaps misjudged. We will never know.

—Steve Bien, Jay, Maine

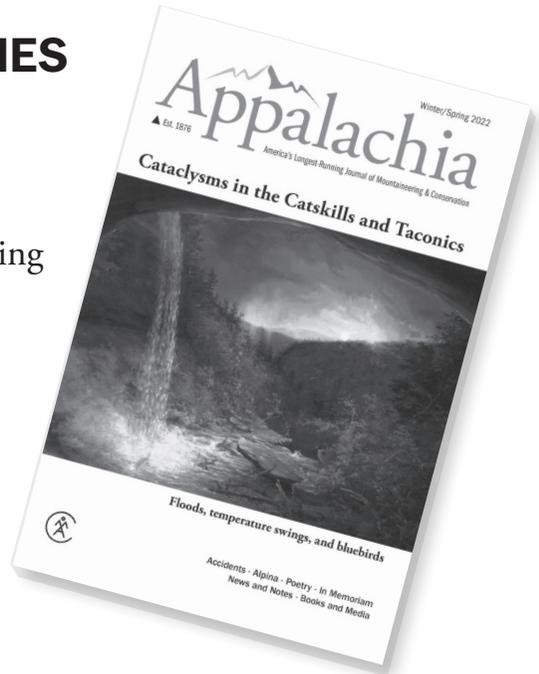
Editor’s note: As Jaros descends Cornell Crack on the side of Cornell Mountain in the Catskills, she realizes that her backpacking days with Gaia will end with this trip. We believe Jaros acted responsibly. We are so sorry that you lost your dog, and we appreciate your important point that dogs don’t necessarily belong in some places their owners go.

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