

Longtime Schenectady ADK members recall early days

By Gillian V. Scott

In honor of the 70th anniversary of the Schenectady Chapter of the Adirondack Mountain Club, Norm Kuchar, Walt Hayes and I recently sat down with some long-time members and asked them to tell us about the chapter's early days.

Rudy Dehn, a General Electric engineer and active member of the YMCA OYK outings group, was one of the founding members of the Bouquet River Lodge chapter, later renamed the Schenectady Chapter, in 1943 and served as the first chair. The others joined during the 1950s. Larry King served as chapter chair in the late '50s and also became very active over many years in the chapter's and main club's conservations issues. Clark Gittinger, who met his wife Millie through the OYKs and ADK, served as chair of the chapter's outings and trails committees in the early '60s. Barbara Hennig was an active member of the OYK group through the YWCA before joining the ADK, where she served as the chapter's membership chair. Jeanne Place became active in the 1950s and was a chapter director in the 1960s. All of them had come to Schenectady to work for General Electric.

Dehn arrived in the city in 1941 with a wave of other GE workers on a test course. Though many found lodging at the YMCA or YWCA, Dehn opted to rent a room in a private home.

"So I didn't go to the Y but a lot of people did," Dehn says. "They all landed on the Y and the Y had to handle them somehow."

One of the ways the Y kept GE employees busy was through several outings groups, including the OYK co-ed hikers. Early activities of the Bouquet River Lodge chapter were a blend of the OYK group and the ADK. Often, there was so much overlap in membership and it was hard to distinguish between the two groups.

"The OYKs and the ADK were so closely matched and put together that a lot of the time I don't remember which trip I went on, if it was an OYK trip or an ADK trip," says Jeanne Place.

The Ys had other outings groups as well, including the Live Wires and the Questers, but OYKs were the "most macho," early chapter members agreed.

"Live Wires was the next best," according to Barbara Hennig.

"There was a bit of rivalry between the clubs," says Clark Gittinger. "We had some people that came to other clubs' meetings and such. We siphoned off a few Live Wires as I recall."

The early chapter members looked back fondly at time spent at the Bouquet River Lodge property near New Russia. During the war, GE employees worked six days a week and gas was rationed, but they still managed to make the long trip up to the rustic two-story building.

"We worked six days a week but on Saturday night, we left as early as we could get away, get on the bus, get up there somewhere around 11 o'clock at night," recalls Rudy Dehn. "Beat our brains out all day

Sunday and then 4 o'clock we'd have to get the bus back home again."

The enthusiast young people rebuilt the lodge, adding a fireplace, paneling and a deck, doing the wiring, digging a well, and building cedar bunks. Water was piped over from nearby Stevens Brook or pumped from a well, but in the winter, the pipe had to be taken from the brook so it wouldn't freeze.

"In the wintertime all you had was the pump," recalls Place. "And you had to have a can of water or ice on the stove so that you could heat that up and prime the pump."

Cold temperatures didn't deter members from using the lodge, but early arrivals were rewarded.

"We had two bunkrooms upstairs – one for the men and one for the women," says Place. "The women's bunkroom was in the front and the fireplace was in the front. So the sooner you got there, the more likely you were -- in the wintertime especially -- to get a bunk that was right close to the fireplace or the chimney."

Dehn says one weekend, chapter members arrived to find the outside temperature hovering around 10 degrees below zero. They built up a fire in the fireplace and kept it going all night, but the temperature inside the lodge in the morning was only ten above.

"We'd get up there on a Friday night after work, get the fireplace started and the kitchen stove going and start square dancing. That's how you got warm," says Place.

"We worked all during the war rebuilding that place and had a great time," Dehn says. "In 1943 or '44, we went up to Saratoga and went to the nursery and bought trees. If you go up there now, you can't even see the place through the trees."

At one point, a joint outing with the Albany chapter saw the group taking 100 trees up Bald Mountain to plant on the summit.

"We were young," Dehn says, laughing.

Place recalls annual work days at the lodge during the 1950s.

"In the spring and in the fall, each organization that used the Bouquet River Lodge had to schedule a work trip," she says. "In the fall, you usually were cutting down trees and getting the wood pile ready and the woodshed and outside the woodshed. In the spring it was mostly cleanup. We'd work all day on Saturday and then go hiking on Sunday and then go home."

One year, the projects included building a new women's outhouse.

"We dug and dug and we made a beautiful, gorgeous two-holer," Place says. "Going out there in the wintertime was, I'll tell you, something else."

Besides pooling their gas ration stamps during the war, members would also pool their food stamps. One member's father owned a general store at the corner of Rosendale Road and Route 7 in Niskayuna and would set aside scarce items for the members. Food also got picked up at the local co-op.

“A few times, things were missing,” Clark Gittinger recalls. “I remember one long weekend canoe trip on the Oswegatchie. We got in there and the first night discovered the only tea bags that were in the supplies were leftovers in the bottom of the pack basket. So what do we do with this mob of people all drinking tea and we just had about 3 or 4 tea bags? We strung them up on the limb of a tree. Anybody who wanted tea would get hot water and go and hold it under the tea bag. By the end of the week we were holding that tea for a long time.”

In 1944, the group took a backpacking trip on the Northville-Placid trail, stopping by the Cold River lodgings of hermit Noah Rondeau.

“As you probably know if you ever met him, he wasn’t a real hermit,” Dehn says. “Kay Flickinger was an English major and she got to talking to Noah. He started to recite some of the poetry that he had written. He had nothing else to do for days sitting there. He wouldn’t stop talking. We had to get going because we had to make our next leanto. We finally just walked away because he wouldn’t stop talking about some of his poetry.”

The co-ed hiking clubs from the Y and the Adirondack Mountain Club proved to be an ideal place for people to meet a spouse.

Clark Gittinger and his wife, Millie, originally met through the OYKs (they still have club patches on their packs). Barbara Hennig met her husband at a club meeting in the 1950s. Larry King and his wife were both in the club, but also worked together at GE.

“[My wife] said if you still like me after we’ve been sleeping outdoors and it rained all night and my sleeping bag was in a mud puddle and my hair is all over my face, I guess we’ve got it made,” says Dehn.

Though hiking may have drawn many into the club, it was founded on two principles: recreation and conservation. Larry King was drawn into the ADK not through outings but through his passion for protecting the environment. Over the years, he worked on issues surrounding Panther Dam, Lake George, the Northway and other, smaller projects.

“I had a long interest in conservation and when I got out of the research lab, the Panther Dam fight was going on,” King says. “I wanted to get in on that, so I hunted up [club president] Art Newkirk and said what can I do and who can I work with and so on. ... After a while I found out that I was a member of the chapter. It wasn’t until a number of years after that I found out that a requirement was that you go on two chapter trips and get voted in.”

Though the Schenectady Chapter’s founding members are no longer climbing High Peaks, many are still active in the outdoors and with the club, supporting the organization they helped create so many decades ago. We thank them for their contributions and for taking the time to share their stories with us here.

Hitting the Trail with the Bouquet River Lodge Chapter

By Norm Kuchar

For decades, the ADK Schenectady Chapter has offered a variety of hiking, backpacking, snowshoeing, ski touring, and whitewater paddling trips throughout the year, making it well known for its outings program. But what kind of outings did the chapter have during the first few years after it was founded in May of 1943?

At that time, the chapter, then known as the Bouquet River Lodge (BRL) Chapter, had only about 50 members, and World War II brought a six-day work week and gasoline rationing that would seemingly restrict the kind of outings we now enjoy. This article will explore some of the early outings of the chapter. What kind of recreation did they pursue? Where did they go? What problems did they face in doing outings 70 years ago?

When the chapter was founded, there were serious questions about the kind of outings program it would have. In the July 1943, *ADK Bulletin*, Fay Loope, a chapter founder, expressed one view, "It is not expected that the new chapter will have an active outing program. The reason for this is that Schenectady has a number of clubs already active in this field and we wish in no way to compete with them. These clubs include the Mohawk Valley Hiking Club and six co-ed clubs of the YMCA and the YWCA."

But, there were other views as well. At one of the first BRL chapter meetings, in July 1943, member Herb Uhlig proposed that there was room in Schenectady for another club with an active outing program, in as much as the age range in the chapter was broader than those of the Y groups, and the outings would probably be held much further north than the territory covered by the Mohawk Valley Hiking Club. Later that month, the chapter board appointed a five-member outings committee, including both Loope and Uhlig, to plan outings "as the need arose."

Indeed, the chapter's first outing was planned at the same meeting. It would be held in October and would be a local hike rather than one in the Adirondacks due to the rationing of gasoline. As it turned out, the club's first outing was a smashing success, as attested by a report of the event, poetically written by Kay Flickinger and published in the January 1944, *ADK Bulletin*: "The first outing of the new Bouquet River Lodge Chapter was held on October 10th, which was – surely a good omen – a perfect day for it. Thatcher [sic] Park outdid itself as a substitute for the Adirondacks, and cameras were unpacked immediately upon arrival, with an enthusiasm and speed usually reserved for trail lunches. It was a rarely beautiful day for Kodachrome, with the sky deep blue overhead and very pale at the horizon, so that distant hills and nearby brilliant foliage stood out against it with a Maxfield Parrish clarity.

"In due time a familiar aroma drifted from the campfire, with a magnetic effect on the crowd. Here hot coffee and an amazing variety of trail lunches stimulated the business of getting acquainted. This little matter having been taken care of, the group proceeded to Haille's [sic] Cave, some bushwhacking along the edge of the ledges, the others following a shorter, easier route through the woods. The cave being dark and gloomy as usual, and the air and scenery outside being so unusually crisp and bright, the ranks of the explorers thinned rapidly, though a handful of die-hards continued, accompanied by a few Boy Scouts and a great many bats, until the water became too deep for further progress, under the circumstances.

“With the end of the day came the consensus of opinion that the whole outing had been a lot of fun. First of a long series, we expect.”

A weekend at Bouquet River Lodge

Of course, the namesake Bouquet River Lodge, located in the Adirondacks near New Russia, was the destination of many early BRL chapter outings. Time spent at the lodge was used for working on the facility as well as hiking in the surrounding area. In March 1944, the BRL chapter invited the neighboring Albany chapter to join them for a weekend at the lodge. Elizabeth Denison, BRL chapter secretary, wrote to the Albany chapter about the proposed lodge weekend. Her letter minimized the travel problems: “It is very easy to get there. There are Greyhound busses leaving Albany at 6:45 a.m., 2:20 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. every day, which traveling via Schenectady, Saratoga and so on through Schroon and Loon Lakes, will leave passengers off at the front door of the Lodge at 11:05 a.m., 7:06 p.m. or 11:25 p.m., respectively. Round trip from Albany to New Russia, N.Y., the nearest bus ticket station, is only \$6.38. If a group, by pooling gas coupons, can come by car, they follow the same route.

“Food will be arranged by Schenectady members. We will, however, need three meat points or tokens apiece from each person going and these we must have in advance.” [Meat was also rationed during the war.]

The Albany chapter responded that 15 of its members planned to come, and the required 45 meat points were duly enclosed. Interestingly, two Albany chapter members drove their cars to the lodge on Friday night, bringing 11 members of the party, a cozy arrangement in the small cars of the time. The other four went up by bus on Saturday afternoon.

A subsequent report on the weekend, written by Elizabeth Denison in the May-June 1944, *ADK Bulletin*, stated, “After spending a comparatively quiet day getting in shape by taking short jaunts on Saturday to the nearby scenic spots, the group tackled harder terrain on Sunday, some climbing Giant Mountain and some bushwhacking Bald Mountain in back of the Lodge and planting thereon about one hundred pine trees in an effort to provide some covering for its bald head.

“Cameras clicked constantly to record views of Split Rock Falls, Bouquet Valley looking toward the Dix Range, Bald Mountain, Stevens Brook, the Lodge itself, and such scenes as lunching on the trail, chopping wood, “before” and “after” hiking, swimming in the icy Bouquet River, and loafing in the sun, collecting the first installment of a summer tan. Good company, ideal weather, plenty to eat – a perfect week-end anytime in the mountains.”

Meeting at the bus stop for a local hike

In June 1944, the chapter planned a local hike. The announcement stated, “In June we will direct our footsteps in another direction - to the foothills of the Berkshires - for a Sunday trip. Hikers can meet at the Toddle House [on State Street, near the YMCA] to get the 9:00 A.M. Troy bus or board it further uptown if it goes near their homes. In Troy, we board the Fifth Avenue Bus and ride to the end of the line, where our hike begins. We are going to climb Rafinesque Mountain, from which, we understand, there is a very good view of the Helderbergs, Berkshires, and the foothills of the Adirondacks. The total distance of the hike is probably not more than six or seven miles so we will arrive in Schenectady at a very reasonable hour. Be sure to bring your own trail lunch though.”

A report of the hike, written by Ruth Tallmadge for the July-August issue of the *ADK Bulletin*, stated, "Lots of things distinguished the Rafinesque trip from just ordinary ones. For one thing, the next generation of ADK-ers was represented by very young Karin Uhlig [about 2 years old], and she promises to be a good future member because already she does her own hiking and carries her own pack. Another distinction was the extremely unusual trail marked out by Schuyler Miller – marked with strawberries in such profusion that the hikers were hours eating their way to the top, and they could just as well have left their lunches at home. Enjoyed in a different way were the thousands of wild flowers, and wading in the Deep Kill was lots of fun and very refreshing. Then they stopped at a farmhouse and secured some honey (but no eggs). [This may refer to the war-time shortage of eggs.] This excursion must have done wonders for these ADK-ers for, in their own words, they 'picked up the car and came home.'"

An encounter with the hermit

Despite the wartime travel restrictions, the BRL chapter managed travel farther from home on some of its early outings. In 1944, some members made an interesting week-long backpacking trip on the Northville-Placid Trail, which also served the needs of some aspiring 46ers. Betty Denison, writing in the Sept-Oct 1944, *ADK Bulletin*, described the trip: "In the last couple of months, several members of the Bouquet River Lodge Chapter have been able to check off quite a few names from the list at forty-six peaks in N.Y. State over 4,000 feet. For eleven of the members and two non-members took a week and hiked over the section of the Northville-Placid Trail between Long Lake and Lake Placid and climbed the peaks along the way.

"Leaving Long Lake Village the afternoon of Sunday, July 30th, we proceeded by boat up the lake to Harper's Dock and then hiked in to Latham Pond lean-to where we stopped for the night. Starting on the next day, the group arrived at Seward Lean-to in good time for a swim in the big pool before lunch but, because the lean-to was occupied, pushed on to Cold River City. The hermit of Cold River, the "mayor of the city," Noah John Rondeau, was on hand to greet us and invite us to spend the night with him. Because of the size of the group, we decided to cross the river and pitch our camp on the other bank, however. The hermit came down in the evening, bringing along his photograph albums which contain many pictures of other ADK members.

"The next morning found a bouquet of the hermit's loveliest flowers on our doorstep for the ladies in the group and also, when we passed through the "City," a proclamation on the door of the "Town Hall" warning of the invasion of the City by a group from Schenectady composed of 'ten men and three young ladies (bound to be old maids).' We made camp at the Cold River lean-tos that day and again enjoyed swimming in the cold Cold River. Wednesday found everyone up bright and early for ten of our group were to make the trip over Seymour, Seward, Donaldson and Emmons. The three left in camp adjourned to Duck Hole, the lowest of the Preston ponds, to do some painting.

"The climbers encountered stiff bushwhacking on their trip and were able to get a view from the top at only one mountain – Emmons. They returned about 11 o'clock that night, having made the thirteen miles in 15 hours, too tired to chew their beans.

"A five-mile hike the next morning brought us to Moose Pond where we camped. The pond looked very cool and inviting to swimmers surrounded as it is by mountains and woods but, closer investigation proved it to have a very soft mud bottom and to be infested with large leeches.

“Friday’s stint was very short according to the trail book - only two miles to Wanika Falls leanto, so everyone set out full of enthusiasm to get it over with quickly and then go on up Street and Nye Mountains. The trail proved to be in a low region of ground and finally led down to the edge of a beaver flow with trail markers resuming again on the other side of one hundred feet of open water. Several different routes were used in crossing the flow but there were still several casualties and our sugar was flavored with ‘beaver juice’ for the rest of the trip.

“So many had wet hiking boots after this crossing and so much time was lost that only four made the Street and Nye trip. The rest of us spent our time trying to get our clothes clean to wear into Lake Placid the next day.

“Saturday, with dragging feet, we at last left the woods behind us and plodded into Lake Placid Village. It was a wonderful trip – congenial company, nicely spaced, beautiful forests, plenty of good food to eat.”

Sailing on Lake George – in February

At the chapter’s annual banquet in January 1945, charter member and ardent conservationist John Apperson showed photos of skate-sailing and ski-sailing, unusual sports in which an ice skater or skier carries a kite-like sail and is propelled by the wind across the surface of a lake. Apperson, a General Electric engineer, was an expert at the sports, and in fact had designed a sail which became known as the *Schenectady* type. His photos generated a lot of interest, so Apperson invited the chapter to a mid-February outing on frozen Lake George to introduce the art to chapter members.

The subsequent “Trip Tale,” written by Ruth Tallmadge in the March-April 1945, *Ad-i-ron-dac*, stated, “Everybody knows of the beauty of Lake George in the sparkling summertime, and now a few ADK-ers are acquainted with its mid-winter charm. Inspired by movies of ski-sailing shown at our annual meeting in January, a ski and sail-equipped group journeyed north one February weekend. Mr. J. S. Apperson was both story-telling host to the party at his camp and instructor to the ski-sailing novices. All you have to know is how to put the sail up and get it into the wind and turn about at high speeds, without blowing you over, which it did in some cases. Wind was scarce in the morning, but when it freshened in the afternoon they sailed a round trip between Clay and Dome Islands. It is extremely easy to ride before the wind, and the speed is tremendous compared to canoe travel. The difficulty is trying to get back against the wind, tacking back and forth. One of the members knows all about this for he found himself at Shelving Rock Mt. in no time, but took three hours getting back. It was an ideally clear and beautiful day, with snow-capped Tongue Mt. an unusual sight when viewed from the middle of the lake.”

In its first years, the BRL Chapter enjoyed a wide variety of other outings – camping on Log Bay Island in Lake George, downhill skiing at Big Bromley (reached by train from Troy), climbing the High Peaks from Johns Brook Lodge and Heart Lake, and shorter hikes in Pack Forest and the Taconics. Despite its small size and the restrictions of World War II, the chapter used a lot of ingenuity and energy to start the strong outings tradition we still enjoy today.

Memories of Betty Lou Bailey

by Mal Provost

Paddling a canoe in whitewater with Betty Lou Bailey often meant swimming with her as well. She was game, all who knew her would attest, and committed to precisely how she wanted to get it done. (She was, after all, one of the early female engineers for GE.) But the rivers have their own way and Betty Lou's firm opinion of paddling protocol was not always enough to keep the boat upright, though she always came up smiling.

Long-time Schenectady ADK Chapter member Ken Robbins recently wrote a recollection of paddling with Betty Lou:

“About a week after I completed the whitewater instruction course I signed up for a class 3 trip on the Hudson from North Creek to Riparius being led by Betty Lou. At the time she did not have a partner so she asked me if I would like to go with her, to which I replied “sure.” The water level was very high and we ended up with a couple of very long swims. After getting home I received a call in the evening from Betty Lou to tell me that she knew I was going to be a good paddler because after swimming through two rapids I still had my paddle in my hand -- a fact that I hadn't even recognized! This was her way of saying I had passed the course, I guess. This is the kind of person she was.”

Many Roles

As the chapter celebrated its 70th anniversary in 2013, members did considerable historical work on its formation and development, including some of the individuals most critical to the founding, successes and evolution of the group. Betty Lou Bailey was one of those landmark people: intelligent, tireless, focused and committed to conservation and enjoyment of the outdoors. She fought the early fight for public access to free-flowing rivers.

Paddling – even between swims – was important to her, but she also snowshoed, cross country skied, hiked and bicycled. While the chapter members did some whitewater paddling before she joined, Betty Lou is credited with starting the whitewater training and trip activities for which the chapter is known. Further, she was heavily engaged with the oversight and legal issues involved in conservation, particularly regarding protection of rivers from development and ensuring public recreational access.

Ken Robbins' notes written for this profile cited the startup of regular whitewater activities:

“As with all her undertakings, Betty Lou was thorough, well organized, ambitious and motivated. I believe the first Schenectady Chapter whitewater instruction was offered in 1972 as a result of her urging and under her leadership. ... She arranged to travel to Pennsylvania to participate in white water instruction offered by Bob McNair, a well recognized contributor to the sport of whitewater canoeing. The format for the instruction was developed by Betty Lou, probably based to some extent by what she had learned (from McNair) but also from soliciting ideas from many other people. The instruction consisted of a 2 hour lecture on a Friday evening followed by “in the canoe” experience on Saturday and Sunday. Betty Lou was always cognizant of the dangers involved with river canoeing and recognized, early on, that it was much safer to have

one student and one experienced paddler in a canoe, compared with having two students in a canoe. This was the format for her course.”

Lake Algonquin in Wells was used for the initial flat water practice, with a trip on the Sacandaga from below the dam at Wells to a takeout at the Hope town garage undertaken the next day.

Other senior members of the Schenectady Chapter commented on Betty Lou's distinct ways of doing things, whether on the water or land.

Jack and Sheila Daniels were close friends for decades. Jack wrote:

“Paddling as her stern person was an exercise in following her course, good or bad, to avoid broaching. This resulted in an occasional swim.”

“Anyone who paddled bow with her was firmly told exactly what to do.”

He also recalled:

“Her mechanism for suspending the Blue Hole (her aged, heavy canoe) in her garage and loading it on her car was an engineering marvel. However, at one point she held a rope by her teeth. I insisted she not do this at least when I was there to help.”

“She was adventurous in scouting and leading new and unusual trips, both on water and on land.”

“Trips invariably ended in a meal at an unusual but modest restaurant. She wasn't fond of cooking.”

Kathie Armstrong and Chet Harvey also paddled with her for years. Kathie wrote:

“Betty Lou was a good sport and very brave about it. She would paddle with anyone even if she knew she was courting disaster. I recall one weekend on the Moose River when she paddled with a partner who we all knew was not capable of quick turns. There was a class 3 drop near the end of the run. We all watched as Betty Lou and partner dropped over beside a rock and missed the next turn. Over they went, but Betty Lou came up smiling. That's how she was: happy to be there.”

River Protection

Betty Lou's terrier instincts also were applied to the protection of rivers and of paddling rights; for some 30 years she challenged power companies and fought for river access. Neil Woodworth, ADK executive director and legislative counsel, worked with Betty Lou for years, advocating for the rivers and the public. Part of Woodworth's recollections follow:

“Besides the DEC, Betty Lou was often the only citizen advocate in the (Federal Energy Regulating Commission) hearing process. Betty Lou often managed to participate in 2 or 3 relicensing proceedings at a time while managing a demanding General Electric profession and her many outdoor recreational activities. Betty Lou's work on dams often focused on ensuring that there were sufficient water releases for both the health of river life and good recreational whitewater fun. She battled the dam owners to provide paddler parking lots with usable access

to and egress from the river. She skillfully knew the federal laws governing these FERC dam licenses and relicensing as well, or better, than the attorneys for the dam owners. She used her scientific analysis of the river characteristics, the dam's mode of operation and water levels to ensure both the health of the ecology of river life and the zest of the whitewater experience. She fought hard for each increase in dam water releases to ensure a sufficient run of river below the dam in question.

(One small digression on the point of technology: Both Ken Robbins and Jack Daniels noted she never owned a television. Ken wrote: "Betty Lou rented a TV for two weeks every four years – so she could watch the Olympics.")

Bob Ringlee, another leader of the ADK over the decades, cited Betty Lou's work with Dave Newhouse on the Club's Conservation Committee. "Very quickly, she became involved in the movement to oppose the Prattsville Pumped Storage Hydro project. This 1000 MW project proposed by the New York Power Authority would have involved the Schoharie Reservoir and would have had adverse impacts on the flows and water temperatures in Esopus Creek." That battle over seven years concluded with abandonment of the proposal, Ringlee wrote.

His assessment comes from the memorial he wrote following Betty Lou's death Nov. 13, 2007, age 78, as she prepared for a bicycle ride:

"Betty Lou foresaw the need for preservation of free-flowing rivers and for public access rights. At a time when the licenses for the hydro projects on many New York rivers were coming up for review, she was instrumental in forming the club's Canoe Routes Subcommittee and served as its chair for many years. When the criteria for licensing hydro projects were amended to include consideration of recreation, Betty Lou took this opportunity to justify the club's intervening as a party in the licensing proceedings to assure fair consideration of river protection and public recreation. As a result of her considerable efforts, the club successfully intervened in licensing renewals for many projects on New York rivers. Some of these include the Black River, Hudson River, Sacandaga, Mohawk River, Salmon River, Raquette River, Saranac, Ausable River, Oswagatchie, Oswego, Schoharie, Susquehanna, Esopus, Hoosic, Paultney, Housatonic, to name a few."

His commentary continued:

"She applied her efforts with equal vigor in the preparation of recommendations for additions to the Wild and Scenic Rivers of New York and to the review of Unit Management Plans for the state's Forest Preserve and forest lands. She was a dedicated advocate for Catskill Park and worked tirelessly to keep the Club's attention on the Catskills as well as the Adirondacks. She served for many years on the Club's Catskill Subcommittee. She loved to hike in all seasons and lead many Schenectady Chapter hikes and snow shoe trips for the Club.

"Her efforts and successes have been recognized; she was awarded the Distinguished Volunteer award and the David L. Newhouse Conservation award."

Near the End

Walt Hayes, cited at the annual chapter dinner in 2013 as likely having led more trips than any other member, knew Betty Lou for 35 years and was with her on several trips near the end of her life. Walt's comments:

“With my wife and daughter, I was a participant on the last outing with Betty Lou as leader. It was on October 21, 2007 on the Appalachian Trail in Massachusetts.”

“In the more recent times I was with her on four occasions when she fell while we were snowshoeing. Two times she tripped and two times she fell backwards and was momentarily unconscious. One time she tripped as we were coming back from a snowshoe bushwhack to Slide Mountain near Thirteenth Lake. She fell under a small spruce tree and broke her glasses. The group got her glasses fixed with duct tape and thought we were in good shape to continue when she asked where were we and what had we done that day. We slowly made our way to the trail head and wanted Betty Lou to go to a hospital emergency room to be checked out. She was more interested in getting dinner and promised us she would soon check with her doctor.”

Clearly, slowing down was never on Betty Lou's agenda.

Education & Career

Like many of the active members of the Schenectady Chapter, particularly in the years after World War II, Betty Lou was an engineer with General Electric. She worked for GE for 44 years.

For this profile, ADK member Howard Hart provided the text of an interview the Society of Women Engineers (SWE) did with Betty Lou on Nov. 4, 2005, in Anaheim, CA.

As told to interviewer Deborah Rice, Betty Lou was the youngest of five children and grew up in Chicago in the 1930s and 1940s. Her father was an engineer and apparently a bit surprised that one son, Clark, had not taken up engineering. Betty Lou was in high school at the time and felt an inclination for technical work but was a bit hesitant, as it was not looked upon as a female role at the time. However, her older sister and her husband supported the idea and when it was finally broached to their father, he was supportive. He had seen women in the engineering ranks during the war years so when Betty Lou took that direction there was no significant issue, at least with dad. She recounted at length in the SWE interview that she received a mixed reception through the years from male counterparts, but her capabilities and focus carried her past prejudices.

According to a separate biographic sketch published by the Society of Women Engineers, Philadelphia Section, Betty Lou graduated with University Honors from the University of Illinois in 1950 with a bachelor's in mechanical engineering and from the Penn State Graduate Center in King of Prussia with a master's in engineering science in 1967. She was the first female member of the Engineering Society of Cincinnati and served as chair of its Guidance Committee. She also served on committees for the National Society of Professional Engineers, the Engineers Joint Council, and the American Society for Engineering Education.

She was an SWE Pioneer, Fellow, and Life Member, was active in the Philadelphia Section from May 1961 through September 1969 when she worked at the General Electric Missile and Space Division in King of Prussia, PA., according to that sketch. “Betty Lou was committed to career guidance activities

and often spoke with high school students, their parents, teachers, and counselors about what engineers do, their education and training, salaries, and the satisfaction you get from a job well done. She was elected to the SWE College of Fellows in 1985.”

The sketch continues: “Though Betty Lou originally planned to focus her engineering talents on household appliances, her experience as a test engineer led her to realize that she liked turbines more than refrigerators. After completing the new-engineer program, she went to the GE Large Jet Engine Department in Evandale, Ohio and then to the Knolls Atomic Power Laboratory in Schenectady before transferring to the Spacecraft Department in King of Prussia in 1961, where she worked on the Nimbus weather satellite and the Manned Orbiting Laboratory program. In 1969 she transferred to the GE Gas Turbine Department in Schenectady and worked in NY until she retired in 1994.”

Note: *My sincere thanks to the ADK members quoted in this profile, and to Charlie Beach and others for their commentaries, references to biographic material and critiques of this piece. Their caring and respect for Betty Lou are remarkable, as have been their own efforts with the club. - Mal Provost*

White made Adirondack hiking fun, unique

By Robert Grimm

Bill White belonged to the Schenectady ADK from the early 1960s to his passing in 2007. During those years he led countless trips, some quite involved and unique in their logistics. For example, he led one from Long Lake Village to Adirondack Village (a.k.a. Upper Works), via the Northville-Placid Trail. White also led ski and hiking trips culminating in a steak roast for lunch or dinner; and he led ski or canoe trips to one of his remote camps on Lake George; “Car Key Hikes,” with parties leaving Adirondack Village and Adirondack Loj, trading car keys as they passed in Avalanche Pass, then reuniting at a pre-determined dinner location in Keene or Olmsteadville. A particularly popular hike was from the Garden to JBL to spend the night, then either the high road via the Phelps Trail over Marcy to the Loj, or the low road via the Klondike Trail to the Loj, where Mary White met them and shuttled drivers back to the Garden. A variation of this was “The Toothbrush Tour” from Adirondack Village to the Loj via Indian Pass, stay overnight (all you had to pack was your toothbrush), and return to Adirondack via Avalanche Pass/Lake Colden.

White was a pioneer in popularizing cross-country skiing, well before groomed trails were the norm. He and Almy Coggeshall (one of three ADK presidents from our Chapter) made great strides in introducing the public to the skill. White also conceived and ran the Chapter ski/snowshoe rental program out of his garage, until winter enthusiasts got the hang of it and got their own gear.

White and colleague Clark Galloway conceived, developed, and operated the club’s Northville-Placid Trail recognition program for hikers completing the N-P Trail program, which continues to this day. White was heavily involved with the likes of Art Newkirk (ADK president from Schenectady), John Apperson, and Bill’s cousin, Irving Langmuir (Nobel Prize, 1932, for science). In saving Dome Island on Lake George, placing erosion control rip-rap on its shore to protect it from the wakes of the marine traffic and ultimately having it placed off-limits to irresponsible campers.

In his spare time, White served as Chapter vice chair, chair, conservation committee and outings chairs, project coordinator, and Silver Lakes monitor.

A major but undocumented skill was that of “Practical Joker developer and producer.” Two of countless examples:

Bill had a group of friends at his remote camp on Lake George one winter. After dinner and dishes, they skied on the lake. As they passed one of the islands, including DEC’s campgrounds, the phone in the phonebooth began to ring. (Reader, are you old enough to remember phone booths?) Bill answered it and said something like, “Hello? Yes? Oh. Yes, ma’am, he’s right here.” And handed the phone to one of the men. It was the man’s wife who said, “Just checking up on you guys to make sure you aren’t just hanging out in some bar in Lake George.” (Reader, imagine the timing and logistics needed to pull this off.) Bill had noted the phone number that summer and set it up.

Bill was best man at a wedding. Since it was to be held at the V.I.C. in Saratoga Battlefield, a gathering permit was needed, this in response to the 1960s Vietnam, drugs, free love, etc. This had to be done. As the first anniversary approached, Bill and Mary invited the couple to their home for a champagne toast prior to going out for an anniversary dinner. The phone rang (Reader, you see this coming, right?). Bill answered it and said something like, “Hello? Yes? Oh, yes, sir, he’s right here,” and handed the phone to

the groom. The caller was "Ranger Rick" from the U.S. Park Service, he confirmed the grooms' name and that the wedding had taken place at the VIC. Then, the Ranger informed the groom that the "ranger" who had issued the permit was an imposter, therefore the wedding never took place. (Reader, some 41 years later, that marriage survives.)

Scant mention has been made of Mary White. Clearly the reader knows that any successful person is so due to the support of a spouse or partner. Mary delivered cars to proper trailheads, made food drops for multi-day trips, made phone calls, maintained a house-hold, family, and as many as three camps, all while maintaining some semblance of sanity.

Those of us having the good fortune to have hiked/canoed/skied or socialized with Mary and Bill know the value of their services to ADK and to humanity.