



Randolph Mountain Club Newsletter

The mission of the Randolph Mountain Club is to promote the enjoyment of the Randolph area through hiking, trail development and maintenance, upkeep of camps and shelters, and the sharing of the collective knowledge of its members.

June 2025

Volume 23, No. 1

Lowe's Path Projects for Summer 2025

by Emma Brinks, for the RMC Trails Committee

This year's trail crew project work will cover the two remaining sites addressed in the Lowe's Path RTP grant the Club received last year. One hundred fifty-one years after it was cut, Lowe's Path not only maintains its historical significance as the first route to the summit of Mt. Adams, but is preferred by many caretakers and camps guests. Lowe's also serves as a key evacuation route for carry-out Search and Rescue efforts. The 2025 improvements to two sections will ease the burdens on first responders and allow imperiled hikers to be evacuated more rapidly. This is particularly true of exposed rock ledge sections such as L4 (described below), which require rescue teams to pause the carry-out routine and establish a belay system to slide the injured hiker over steep and dangerous ground. For such an important year-round trail, long-lasting stone structures will be significantly better than the wood ladders traditionally installed at steep trail sections, and the RMC is currently one of the few trail-maintaining organizations in the Northeast whose crews are trained to execute them successfully.



Project Work Description:

The two sites, L4 and L3, lie within a 0.5-mile stretch of the trail beginning about 1.8 miles from the Lowe's trailhead on US Route 2. This is at roughly 2,650 feet of elevation, and very near to last year's project sites below the Log Cabin.

Site L4 is a large, slick, exposed rock slab that has long needed improvement. Sixteen years ago this slab was the site of early experimental pinning by the RMC trail crew. It is fitting that the

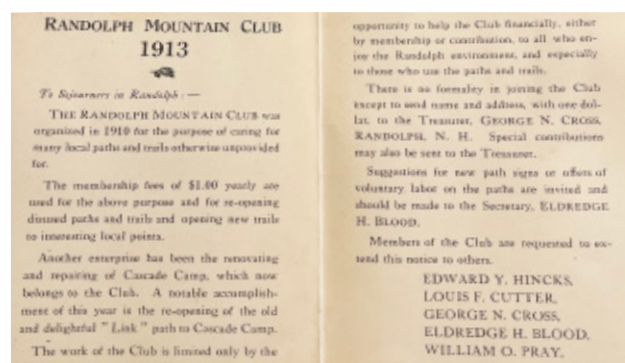
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From the Archive:

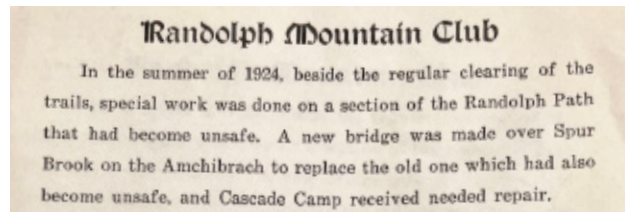
RMC Annual Appeal Letters, Part I

by Steve Chase, RMC Archivist

Among the Club archives, curated by Judy Hudson and Al Hudson (the RMC's historian and late archivist), is a three-ring binder of annual letters. These provide great insight into the Club's growth, its stories, and the shifting dynamics of priorities, programs, and membership. Let's look here at several from the Club's first half-century.



The 1913 letter, from our nascent era, is striking in its simplicity. Addressed 'To Sojourners in Randolph', the folded pamphlet offers membership to anyone willing to pay the \$1.00 annual dues. The funds are used "to reopen disused paths and trails, and open new trails to interesting local points" and for the "renovating and repairing of Cascade Camp, which now belongs to the Club."



A story appears in the 1925 letter on the completion and dedication of the Memorial Bridge over Spur Brook on the Amphibrach. A few additional dues categories were introduced alongside the \$1.00 Active Membership, with a \$2.00 Contributing Membership and a \$5.00 Sustaining

continued on page 7

Above, an illustration from the grant application. At Site L4, a new pinned rock staircase following the lines of cones will provide a route around the steep bedrock slab. C. Campbell photo.

Top, two pages from the 1913 Annual Letter pamphlet; above, the first paragraph of the 1925 Letter. Steve Chase photos, from RMC Archive materials.

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Randolph Mountain Club 2024-2025

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committee chairs and honorary members

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Vice President Eric Sandin, Freeport ME
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Secretary Joel Douglas, Andover MA
Clerk Sally Micucci, Randolph NH

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Trail Easements Randy Meiklejohn
Trail Adoption Christoph Geiss, Sally Micucci
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members Paul & Michele Cormier
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www.randolphmountainclub.org

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*From the President ...*

Summer 2025 is just about here! Although as I write this in early May the summits just got twenty-two more inches of snow, so the "7" should remain intact for a little longer.

Soon enough we'll be launching into the RMC summer season with another Beers, Bites, and Bids at Big Day on Sunday, June 22, and then gathering at the Kelleys's barn for the Fourth of July Tea. There we will be looking

for folks to lead work trips and hikes, and to volunteer at RMC events through the summer. We'll repeat last year's special Rendezvous / Gourmet Hike on Saturday, July 26 at Castlevue Ledge, with a potluck lunch to be shared near the ledge, beginning at noon with hikers arriving via their desired route. For all our events, joining Eliza Horton as Events co-chair is Joan Ostergren, and the two of them have some great new events planned, as you'll see on the website and in the Randolph Weekly. At the Annual Meeting on August 9 will be a presentation this year by author Sandy Stott (see page 3); you won't want to miss it!

Much of this newsletter issue is about our trails, especially about phase two of the Lowe's Path project which will be accomplished by one of the most skilled trail crews in the RMC's history. At the same time we're planning for the next major project on and around Mt. Crescent in 2026, in a shift to address our town-side trails. The condition of RMC trails will benefit also from the second year of our Trail Adoption program, which had a gradual start last year. You'll also find a preview of this summer's volunteer trail work trips on page 5.

Treasurer Adam Berger's report on page 10 shows we're in good condition; but just the same, we need to plan new roofs at both Crag Camp and Gray Knob along with an additional tent platform at the Perch. In mid-May there is a team evaluating replacement of the Peeko Folsom Bridge (at the Bee Line crossing of Carlton Brook), parts of which ended up being washed to the far side of Route 2 during the storms in December 2023. Your donations to the RMC will be more critical than ever given all this needed construction, and given the uncertainty surrounding federal funding that RMC has depended upon for many years.

Within the Club's board, Chris Cross and new director Scott Meiklejohn will be leading our Revenue Development Team. I appointed Scott after Deva Steketee stepped down from the board following the birth of her son Charlie, in April. Deva is now well into her second decade of service to the RMC (for which we owe her a debt of gratitude) and while she remains involved with the Trail Committee, there's some deserved competition for her time. In other news, we're very pleased that Emma Brinks, longtime trail crew member and the 2024 Field Supervisor, has joined RMC's Trails committee. We expect her to become involved in grant writing, which is one of the subjects of her page 1 article about Lowe's Path.

See you soon in Randolph -

John Phinney, President
President@randolphmountainclub.org
 (862) 222-5566 mobile

New RMC Director

by Joel Douglas, RMC Secretary

Scott Meiklejohn joined the Club's board of directors in April 2025. He is Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid *emeritus* at Bowdoin College, where he has worked since 1997 and continues now in a part-time role as senior advisor. Prior to joining Bowdoin, he was a school headmaster in Honolulu, Hawaii. He is a former director of the Randolph Foundation and a former trustee at Colgate University, the Waynflete School, and Kents Hill School. Scott and his wife, Ellen, live in Harpswell, Maine. He is grateful to his parents Meg and Jim, his brothers Randy and Brad, his cousin Keith Dempster, and his grandmother Elizabeth McShane Hilles, for building and keeping a family connection to Randolph. He's a member of the RMC Trails Committee, and his most recent hiking adventures include completing the New England Hundred Highest, a trek in the Kanchenjunga region of Nepal, and a portion of the Alta Via I in the Dolomites.



Scott Meiklejohn

Summer 2025 Events

by Eliza Horton and Joan Ostergren, Events co-chairs

Please join us in June, July and August 2025, as the RMC community comes together for another season of summer events, in both traditional and twenty-first century styles! For the newsletter we're providing an overview of them all, and a summer-at-a-glance Events calendar, continuing on page 11. For up-to-date info, check the RMC website and the [Weekly](#).

And: *We Need Volunteers!* Help is needed for all events. Would you like to help out at the Tea to welcome people, bake or serve punch, lead a Charade, or donate a raffle item? Please sign up at rmcevents.org/rmc-volunteer.

Please consider supporting the RMC! We need your help to keep our beloved traditions going. Donations are greatly appreciated, and some events may require ticket purchases this year to help cover expenses. Thank you for your continued support!

Sunday, June 22: **Beer, Bites and Bids**, 6-9 PM, at Big Day Brewing (20 Glen Rd., Gorham). \$10 per person, all RMC members are welcome. Craft brews and delectable appetizers provided; donations happily accepted; merch, trail signs and raffle baskets.

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Annual Meeting Notice

by Joel Douglas, RMC Secretary

The Annual Meeting of the Randolph Mountain Club will be held at the Town Hall on Saturday, August 9, 2025 at 7:00 PM. The meeting is open to the public and all are welcome to attend. Following a business meeting for officer and committee reports, and for election of new directors and a president, we will have a presentation by a guest speaker (see below). Refreshments served and Club merchandise will be for sale.

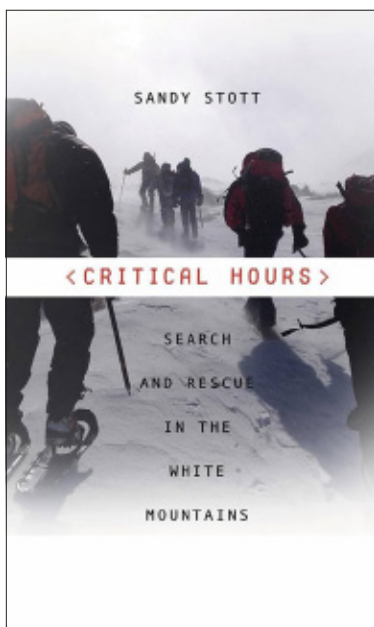


Annual Meeting Speaker: Sandy Stott

by John Phinney

I'm very pleased that we'll be welcoming Sandy Stott to this year's Annual Meeting, where I've asked him to share from his writing about our mountains and the people north of the notches who care for them. Sandy has written the Accidents section of AMC's *Appalachia* since 2012, and in 2018 wrote the book *Critical Hours – Search and Rescue in the White Mountains*, published by the University Press of New England and now in its fourth printing. I think we'll even hear from Sandy about some people we know in Randolph; recently he wrote to me that he had met with Mike Pelchat and Ray Cotnoir (from AVSAR) last year at the Gorham Airport when he was working on an essay for *Appalachia* about the adoption of drones in SAR work.

Far left, the cover of *Critical Hours*. Left, Sandy on the trail at the Randolph Ramble, Oct. 2023. Courtesy photo.



**Trails Preview and
Meet the 2025 Crew**

*by Annalise Brinks,
2025 Field Supervisor*



Annalise Brinks
Grand Rapids, Michigan
Field Supervisor

The trail crew is looking forward to working again on Lowe's Path, whose hazards are well known to RMC members and hikers. On our very first day there last season, we met a few hikers coming down from Gray Knob. One of them gallantly stepped onto the top of the steep slope of bedrock where we were working, planning to walk straight down the middle. The next thing we knew, he was flat on his back in the middle of our project site--living proof our staircase would be incredibly helpful for hikers and demonstrating one of the hazards we would be dealing with all season. Thankfully, he was alright and cheerily thanked us for our work as he climbed out of the mud.

In June, the trail crew will begin dividing our tools and stringing up our packboards to hike up Lowe's Path. Carrying rock drills, shaping hammers, pick mattocks, and double jacks, we'll tackle several projects, including a large pinning project on a steep bedrock section of the trail, as well as the construction of steps and other in-tread repairs. At the helm of our two projects this year are Maya Barnett and Max Buttrill. Both skilled trail workers, they will lead the crew in learning and adapting the pinning and traditional rock work techniques they've honed over the past few years.

RMC members will be familiar with the steep bedrock slabs long present in this old path. As these have become project worksites in 2024 and 2025, our crew has become skilled in both pinning techniques and navigating the site hazards, where the bedrock slope is nearly 45° ! We'll apply these techniques again this season, especially at one site, a steep, cliff-like area on Lowe's. Former crew member Benzo Harris has trained the crew on pinning techniques, and plans to return this season for more. He was even a member of the crew that pinned stones in this area in 2009, so it will be fitting to have him return to guide us this summer with more advanced pinning techniques.

continued on page 5



Maya Barnett
Plainfield, New Hampshire
Crew Leader - 3rd year



Max Buttrill
Jacksonville, Florida
Crew Leader - 3rd year



Dustin Baker
Arcata, California
2nd year



Owen Hoggard
Annapolis, Maryland
2nd year



Izzy Hughes
Smithfield, Rhode Island
1st year



Declan Kiley
Franconia, New Hampshire
1st year



Wyatt McAbee
Broken Bow, Nebraska
1st year



Aidan Schilke
Eatontown, New Jersey
2nd year

To support rocks on extreme grades, we use two different styles of pinning: through pinning and external pinning. (See diagrams of both on page 6, in the related Lowe's article starting on page 1.) The aptly-named process of through pinning involves drilling through the rock we are trying to place and into the bedrock below it, then pounding a steel pin through the hole to stabilize the stone. The advantage of through pinning is that you can't see the steel rebar pins, but it comes with the risk of cracking rocks or leaving them slightly unstable after the pinning process is complete. Several times, we spent hours painstakingly placing the rocks in the perfect position, only to have them crack in half during the final step as we pounded the pins home. External pinning, on the other hand, involves drilling into bedrock and pounding pins around a rock to hold it in place. Often, external pinning is necessary on steeper rock faces as it allows us to use gravity to maintain stone stability and make minor adjustments after we place the pins.

While the crew strives to build structures that look as natural as possible, the pinning techniques allow us to build in environments where historically we have not been able to work. These slopes pose several challenges for the crew. For instance, it's hard to move stones on slippery, steep bedrock and maintain our footing while using tools on such extreme slopes. We've used creative approaches to moving stones, like additional rigging systems (see *left photo below*). We discovered that stones were almost impossible to move from side to side on the slab without releasing tension in the rigging system. Sometimes it can be hard to let go...

We also learned the importance of supporting each other last summer, sometimes even physically! Maintaining our balance on wet sloping rock while using the drill can be quite challenging, so a second crew member will often stand below the driller and brace their body weight so the vibration can't shake their balance (see *middle photo below*). We always ensure that the supporter and the driller have solid footholds. The supporter doesn't experience the vibration or the torque of the drill, so they can maintain their firm stance more easily. This method keeps the driller and supporter safe in the case the drill moves unexpectedly. While it seems a bit daunting, our crew is trained to have high levels of situation awareness and communicate effectively during these tasks.

Our crew is very excited to lace up our boots and jump into work this season. Hope to see you all on the trail!



Left, the crew's field-built rigging system transports a rock up the slab surface; Max Buttrill photo. Center, Maya Barnett supports Annalise Brinks while she operates the rock drill. Right, closeup of drilling a hole for through-pinning. Emma Brinks photos.

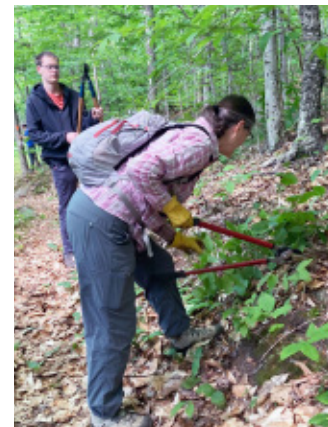
Benzo (below) and June Hammond Rowan (right) brushing on Lowe's Path in 2024. C. Geiss photos.



This summer will be the fifteenth consecutive season of volunteer work trips on RMC trails! Most will be on Saturdays in June, July and August, and some Wednesdays, and most will include brushing and blazing. Both the half-day and the full-day trips start at 9:00 AM. First-time volunteers are always welcome, and if you're a new member or new to the Randolph community, the trips are a great way to get connected and help the RMC. The day's leaders will provide guidance and instruction to new volunteers, and the Club will provide tools from the Goetze workshop. As of June we are still seeking volunteer leaders for some trip dates; please do consider stepping up to lead so that these fun and crucial work trips can happen.

Work locations will be across the entire network this summer, including trails on Madison, Adams and Jefferson (Brookside, Brookbank, King Ravine Trail, Cabin Cascades) as well as in Randolph and on the Crescent Range (Pasture Path, Diagonal, Underhill and Four Soldiers). Keep in touch with our trip schedule by visiting the website, or you can email me at worktrips@randolphmountainclub.org.

Trail Volunteer Work Trips for 2025 by Benzo Harris



Lowe's Path, cont'd. from page 1

crew can return to it now, after a successful pinning project in 2024, to complete the long-needed work on Lowe's Path. The current path, which originally led straight up the middle of the steep slab, now follows the left edge of the ledge when looking uphill. The work will follow this line, pinning ten rock steps up along the side of the slab. This will bring ascending hikers to the top, where roughly five feet of pinned rock will retain crushed stone and soil to create a comfortable landing pad. The safe route on the new steps can be expected to be attractive to hikers, and to prevent further erosion by keeping them on the trail.

Site L3 is a section that has seen significant erosion leading to gullying just above a rock water bar. Hikers are reluctant to step down into this eroded section, and instead they step off trail, creating a herd path which increases erosion and widens the trail. The crew will rebuild the eroded section of trail with eighteen rock steps to raise the grade and re-establish the tread, tying the structure into the water bar. Just below the rock water bar, another shorter gullied section will receive four check steps which will tie into a rock water bar immediately below. This rock water bar will replace an existing wood water bar which has rotted.

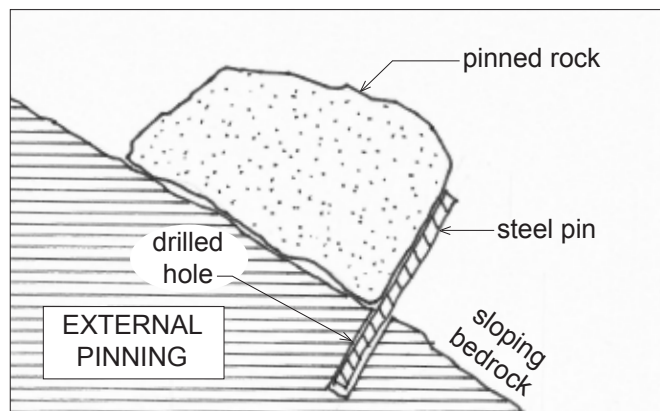
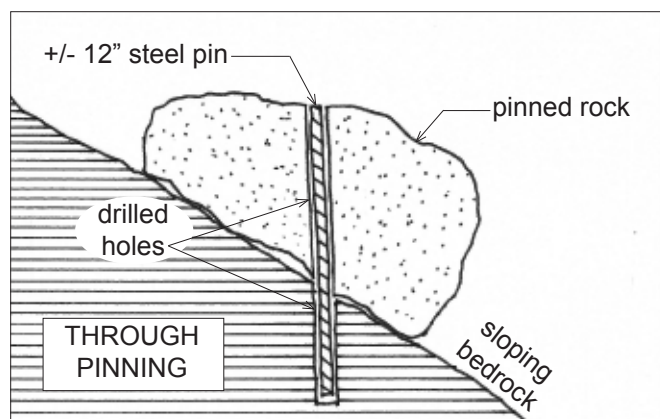
In addition to the two main project sites, the crew will complete additional maintenance elsewhere along Lowe's Path. These will be limited to "in-tread" work, a categorization that allows crew members to use materials from the existing treadway to repair or adjust structures that no longer function as desired. This loss of function may be on account of water, changing traffic patterns, insufficient construction, or other environmental changes. The "in-tread" designation requires less evaluation from the Forest Service since it has a very low impact on the land surrounding the trail. It also allows the crew the flexibility to address sections of the trail that have become more dire since the grant process was begun, as trail conditions (e.g. mud, flooding, erosion) tend to be very dynamic across seasons and years. Work at these smaller sites will be as directed by the Field Supervisor and the Trails Chairs to best serve the trail and make most efficient use of the crew's labor, since they will require crew members to transport tools to new work sites throughout the season.

Finally, thanks to a Waterman Fund grant, the smaller RMC fall crew will make improvements to the treadway of Lowe's Path in the alpine zone. These will be focused on improving locations of trail where the tread is difficult and unappealing to hikers, and will prevent them from stepping off trail and impacting fragile alpine flora.

The RMC trail crew is fortunate to have the expertise of six returning members who have experience in rock pinning, a technique few trail crews are familiar with. The RMC also benefits from the addition of three highly qualified incoming crew members. The crew will be using rigging systems and rock drilling, splitting, and shaping to complete these projects and limit the impact on the surrounding forest. Site L4, particularly, will demand a highline rigging system in order to quarry material from the steep surroundings. These are skills that crew members have received training on both internally and externally. The returning crew members continue to develop these skills and to emphasize passing on this knowledge to new members, in order to ensure the success of future crews.



Above, Site L3, where a new eighteen step staircase will span the area between and under the cones. Chris Campbell photo. Left, the project sites shown on the trail map. Below, diagrams of the types of pinning work done by the crew in 2024 and 2025; see description in related article by Annalise Brinks, starting on page 4.



Archives, continued from page 1

Membership. Members were also reminded that late or missed payments hindered the Club's work.

By 1930, the Annual Letter stated that the Club included 36 Sustaining Members, 73 Contributing Members and 194 Active Members with 42 new members. The letter described current trail work, saying *"Two men who know the woods and can swing an axe are employed by the Club in May, to clear about sixty miles of trails"...* at the cost per mile of \$5.60. The letter, written by Secretary/Treasurer Elizabeth Jones, states that the work is concluded when there is no more money.

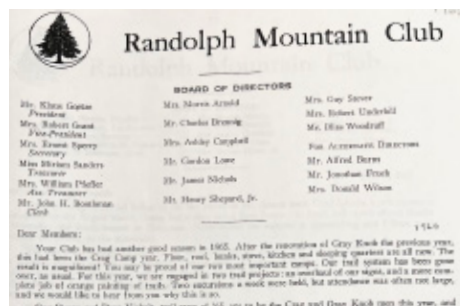
The 1942 letter, reflecting wartime conditions, reported \$708.43 available for work of the Club. It stated that gas rationing would greatly limit the number of people in the Mountains, adding that *"Crag Camp, our lovely gem, will be ours as never before."* And the letter asked that the Club be informed of any members who were in *"the armed forces or in Government Service...information which is of such vital interest to us this summer."*

In the 1945 letter at the end of World War II, RMC President Charles Blood expressed regret over the effects the war had on the Club, including a manpower shortage, a lack of gasoline, and general disruptions to daily life. He stated that he would not be able to be in Randolph all summer, so he was establishing program committees to *"take charge of some of the Club's activities"*. The new trails committee was to manage the trail system and implement trail classifications, which would allow the most-used trails and paths to be cleared before the lesser-used ones. What we must assume was the Camps Committee requested that guests at Crag Camp limit their stay to two consecutive nights when the cabin was crowded.

By 1953, Club President Nora Joensson reported that Spring rains and storms had wreaked havoc in the Randolph forests, which would lead to a busy season for the trail crew. She also reported that Klaus Goetze had recruited Andrew McMillan for trail crew and another boy to be caretaker at Crag Camp, both of them students at Phillips Academy in Exeter, NH.

The Old Man of the Mountain was featured on the letterhead of the annual message in 1958. This letter, written by President Klaus Goetze, was brief, letting members know that a Princeton Man, Charlie Swift, would be caretaker at Crag and Moby Mudge and John Stevens would be on trail crew, *"both with long climbing experience and the spirit of Randolphers"*. Klaus also appealed to the young people in Randolph to step up to work with the Club, stating *"The R.M.C. has good reasons for existence as long as its trails and camps continue to be there. If, in addition, it is to be once more the Club that all Randolphers regard as the bond which holds them together, then our young members must come forward with new ideas and new enthusiasm. We old ones are waiting!"*

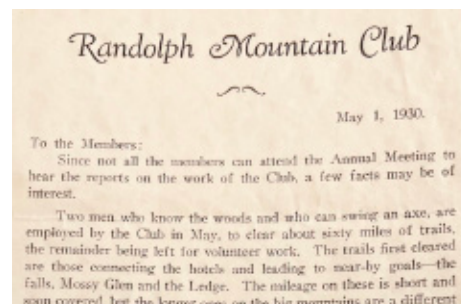
The mid-sixties brought renovations to the Gray Knob (1964), the Log Cabin and Crag Camp. After the Crag Camp renovations, which were done at great expense to the Club, President Goetze wrote in the 1966 Annual letter:



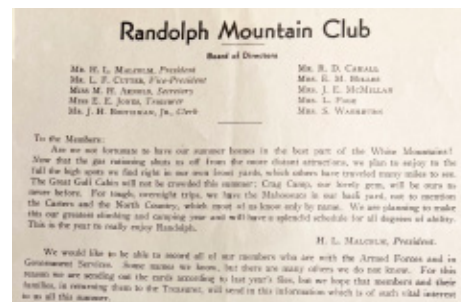
1966

"For we are poor, really quite desperately poor. To renew Gray Knob, many of you gave us a contribution. But Crag Camp was redone out of R.M.C. funds and cost us \$2,068 above our income from it. If you look at our "Balance on Hand" below, you will see that Crag Camp ate up almost all of the "cash on hand of 1965."

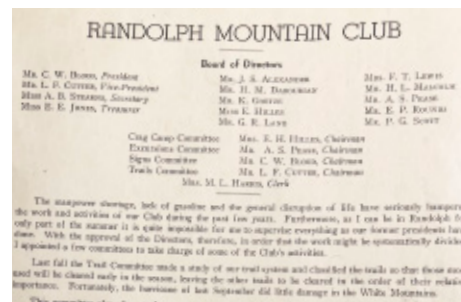
To be continued in an upcoming issue...



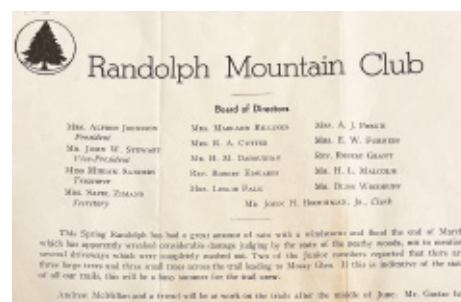
1930



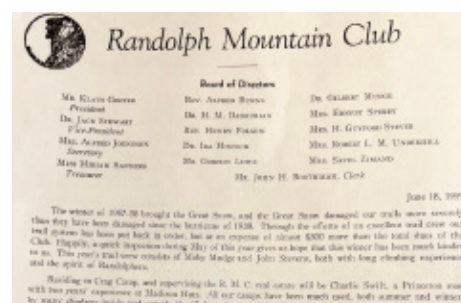
1942



1945



1948



1958



Harold the Gray Jay, on the rock outside Gray Knob.



Sarah Geiwitz
summer 2025

Meet the Camp Caretakers for 2025

by Sarah, Jack and Lea

Sarah: I grew up in Massachusetts, but I've spent the last ten years living and working in New Hampshire as a mountain guide and outdoor educator. I studied Recreation Management and Environmental Sustainability at Acadia University (in Wolfville, Nova Scotia), which fueled my passion for outdoor adventures, community development, and conservation.

I'm an avid naturalist with a deep love for the White Mountains. These trails feel like home to me and the native plants and animals feel like old friends; I'm so excited to be living among them this summer. When I'm not on the trails, I love riding my bike, crocheting, and getting lost in a good book. I first experienced the unique magic of the Randolph community when I lived on the hill during the winters of 2021-22 and 2022-23. I'm looking forward to returning to Randolph and joining the RMC as a steward of the Northern Presidentials. I can't wait to meet more of you this summer!

Jack: I am from Enfield, New Hampshire where I've spent my whole life. This coming spring and summer will be my first season caretaking for the RMC, which feels like a dream come true. In the past couple years I've been saying that I want to live in the mountains and now it's finally happening, thanks to this opportunity provided by the RMC. As a young child I was always out hiking in the White Mountains and Upper Valley area with my family and grew to love it more deeply as I got older. The Whites Mountains are just so unique and very special to me for so many reasons but mainly because I am always the happiest when I'm in nature and disconnected from the normal busyness of life. I spend a lot of my time trail running and training for ultra marathons, backcountry skiing, ski patrolling, and taking photographs of life's moments. I am super grateful and honored to join the RMC family of caretakers and crew. Come say hi this summer, I hope to see a lot of you out there.

Lea: Hello again, my name is Lea and this will be my fifth season as caretaker for the RMC. I look forward to embracing a new season, spring, and all its challenges. As the snow melts and turns to mud, the rivers swell, the birds return, and new life begins to grow I will be up here filled with gratitude for the opportunity to continue taking care of this special place. Although I have filled in and been a caretaker for periods of time in April and May I have not officially been the spring caretaker yet. A few highlights for me so far this season include a snowstorm that dumped 22 inches in 24 hours, baking a two-layer vanilla cake with frosting and blackberries, knitting several hats, skiing the snowfields, and enjoying the sunshine outside with Harold, our resident Gray Jay. Just like these mountains I look forward to thawing out, warming up, and blooming this Spring. See you out there!



Jack Buffington
summer 2025



Guests stir-frying in the wok they packed up, Nov. 2024.



Harold again, perching on the signpost.



Lea Giguere*
spring 2025

**Lea adds: This is me at Wildcat on February 17th, skinning up the mountain before work in minus 30°. The mountain was unable to open that day due to winds of over 100 mph. It was below zero air temperature and much colder with the wind. I was the only skier to get turns in, to my knowledge, because I skinned up. It makes for good winter caretaker training!*

Camps Report

by Adam Ritchie

The RMC camps are treasures and enduring symbols of the Club's deep-rooted connection to the northern Presidential Range and the shared wilderness experience we work hard to preserve. For over a century, the camps have offered refuge, inspiration, and community to generations of hikers, hailing from Randolph or elsewhere. Crag Camp, Gray Knob, the Log Cabin, and the Perch are more than just shelters—they are part of RMC's heart.

With legacy comes responsibility and safeguarding these structures and the surrounding alpine environment is a continual challenge—and one we take seriously. Preserving the camps for future generations means anticipating wear, planning for future needs, and making thoughtful investments in infrastructure and care. The camps are remote and rugged by design but keeping them operational year-round—comes at increasing cost.

The cost of running the camps has grown significantly, particularly the cost of the helicopter airlift to supply the camps with fuel, and the cost of building materials, both of which have more than doubled over the past seven years. The price of Biobricks (for heating, to support the Club's year-round caretaker program) has also risen sharply, but without them we would be hard pressed to maintain a safe human presence at such high elevations. These expenses are not optional; they are central to our mission and to the experience we offer visitors.

Compounding these operational expenses are long-deferred capital projects that can no longer wait. The Club is in the process of planning long-overdue roof replacements at Crag Camp and Gray Knob as the current roofs have served beyond their expected lifespan and have begun to leak. Timely reinvestment in these structures will preserve their usefulness for decades to come.

Through extreme cold, deep snow and driving rain, our caretakers keep the camps clean, welcoming, and in good working order. Their attention and commitment to hospitality are what make our camps more than just shelters but places hikers return to, year after year. To accommodate hikers who may have travelled a great distance to stay at the camps, the RMC is testing out an on-line reservation system which we hope to implement in 2025.



At present, we are in a moment of calm after the winter season, and before when the trails bustle with summer hikers and the camps fill with the sounds of shared meals and trail stories. Whether you are returning for your hundredth visit or planning your first stay, the RMC is ready for you!



One Year on the Mountain

by Declan Kiley

I have had the great honor of being an RMC camps caretaker for three seasons this past year spring, fall, and winter. I began at the beginning of April 2024, and started things off with a big winter storm. I then experienced all the phases of spring on the mountain—both the joy of seeing ephemerals and leaves emerge and the agony of navigating crumbling monorail. I got to spend some time filling in and assisting with composting last summer, though I was not one of the summer caretakers. I began the fall season early, in late August, and continued right through the winter season into the spring, staying on until late April. So despite the gap in the summer, I have experienced one full cycle of the seasons on the mountain.

Besides welcoming guests and simply enjoying the special atmosphere of Gray Knob, witnessing the changes of season has been my favorite aspect of caretaking. Staying at Gray Knob for long shifts allows you to see daily changes in the weather, snowpack, and wildlife. Then returning after spending a week away, you become very aware of how drastic those changes are when experienced all at once. The changes can be slow, as in the fall when awaiting consistent cold and snow, or in the spring when waiting for the snow to finally disappear. But the changes are more often sudden, and can often cause torturous conditions in the shoulder seasons. I consider it a privilege, however, to be a witness to the cycles of the seasons in this unique mountain environment.

continued on page 10



Top, two fall 2024 guests, musicians who teach middle school orchestra; this and camps photos pp. 8-9 by Lea Giguere. Above, Declan, Izzy Hughes, Maya Barnett and Alice Cutter at GK, Feb. 2025. Declan Kiley photo.

One Year on the Mountain, continued from page 9



Above, Declan (L) with guests Theo and Ted Simpson, at the Quay in winter 2024-25. Ted (R) and Theo (middle) are father-and-son hikers who've come to Gray Knob for at least twenty years, since Theo was six. Photo by member Jonathan Boswell.

I had an incredible winter at Gray Knob and enjoyed the snow and consistent cold temperatures. Those who were in Randolph or anywhere in New England will know how cold it was this past winter. Gray Knob did not see temperatures above freezing between December 30th and March 5th, and days even in the 20s were rare. January was especially cold and dry, with extended cold snaps below 0° and many days below -10°. It was often a challenge to keep my toes warm, but I much preferred the bitter cold over the frequent thaws of the previous few winters. As a result of the constant cold, the snow stayed soft and unconsolidated up on the mountain and I never left the vicinity of Gray Knob without snowshoes during the winter season. I fell into a nice routine of visiting the spring to chip away ice after my morning chores at the cabin, which warmed me up for the day and made it feel much warmer inside after returning from the cold. I was very grateful (as were the guests) for the good supply of Bio-Bricks at Gray Knob. I have a great respect for the previous caretakers who spent long winters on the mountain with small supplies of firewood. I was able to get the cabin up to a comfortable temperature most nights, and for the most part it stayed above freezing until the next evening's fire.

Though I enjoyed my long fall/winter season and am in no way eager to leave Gray Knob, I am very excited for this summer as I will be joining the Trail Crew and working on Lowe's Path. I think it will be a great transition from caretaking and I am eager to give back to the paths of Randolph. I also look forward to spending some time in the valley meeting and getting to know more of the residents of Randolph!



Letters From the Mountain
by Steve Chase and Brad Meiklejohn

Summer 2025 will see the publication of a new volume of writing by RMC caretakers, Letters from the Mountain. Collected and edited by the two of us, the book includes contributions from caretakers in eight decades, from the 1950s through the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Some of the narratives are from oral histories recorded at the 2010 Club centennial, others from a later solicitation by us, asking our alumni how their lives had been shaped by their experience on the Mountain. On the cover: the Quay, a perennial favorite of camp caretakers for photographing winter sunsets. Look for the book at the Annual Meeting's merchandise table and at other RMC events this summer.

Treasurer's Report

by Adam Berger

	Admin.	Camps	Dev't.	Stearns	Trails	Trails Grants	Total Actual
Revenue YTD 04/27/25:	\$15,884	7,730	18,884	-	-	21,000	63,498
Expense YTD 04/27/25:	\$7,613	12,656	410	1,748	1,150	-	23,577
Net Operating Income:	\$8,271	(4,926)	18,474	(1,748)	(1,150)	21,000	39,921

The financial situation of the RMC remains solid with over \$350,000 in current (liquid) assets, including approximately \$160,000 in donor-restricted and board-restricted funds. Revenues remain equivalent or ahead of past years, with notable increases in dividend revenue from investments and restricted fund contributions. The exception is camp fees, which are currently lagging behind historic numbers and were about 40% lower November to March than the same period a year ago, when the current guest rates were already in effect. Expenses have also remained consistent with past years to date. Although inflation is likely to affect trail crew wages and other costs over the summer season, we don't currently anticipate any difficulty meeting operating expenses.



Featured merchandise for June 2025: t-shirts! You can be the first to support our upcoming trails project on Crescent Ridge (*see President's letter*) by purchasing the all-cotton Carlton Notch shirt (right). It features the trail sign at the junction of the Crescent Ridge and Carlton Notch Trails, complete with bear scarring. Supplies are limited, so buy now! The shirt normally retails for \$17, but you can round up your purchase to \$25 and the additional proceeds will support the trails project. When you make your purchase (online) just click the "additional donation" button. Thank you for your support!

And: every purchase supports the Club and its usual endeavors, so consider picking up the last of the 2024 Randolph Bicentennial shirts featuring Woodard's historic "hiker dude" on the back (left). For all apparel items, and many other RMC publications and gifts, just head to our online Store.

RMC Merchandise

by Michele Cormier



Events, continued from page 3

Friday, July 4: **Fourth of July Tea**, 3-5 PM, Kelleys's barn (98 Randolph Hill Rd.). A longstanding Club tradition, made sweeter by punch and baked goods. Catch up with the latest club news, meet the trail crew, stock up on RMC merch, sign up to lead a hike and connect with friends old and new.

Saturday, July 26: **Rendezvous / Gourmet Hike**, noon, Castlevew Ledge (Mt. Crescent). Come and take in the splendid views and enjoy a potluck lunch, beginning at noon. Prize to be awarded for the most innovative hiking route to the Ledge.

Saturday, August 2: **Ravine Mixer**, 2-5 PM, Ravine House Pool Pavilion. Join us for a picnic, refreshments, music and games; please bring a dish to share.

Saturday, August 9: **Annual Meeting**, 7 PM, Town Hall. *See p. 3.*

Sunday, August 10: **Softball Game**, 12-3 PM, Bradleys's field (behind 11 Cold Brook Rd.). Come for a blast from Randolph's sporting past. Teams assigned on the day.

Thursday, August 14: **Songs for a Summer Evening**, 7 PM, Town Hall. Randolph musicians will lead us through another exceptional evening of joyous performance. Donations will benefit the RMC, refreshments served.

Saturday, August 16: **Annual Picnic and Charades**, noon, Mossy Glen. Join us for our oldest, largest and most fabulous event, with traditional rounds of singing. Bring a picnic lunch and a mug (punch provided). Rides to Mossy Glen are available.


Saturday, August 16: The **Barn Dance**, 7:30 PM, Sugar Plum Farm (232 Randolph Hill Rd.). Complete the day with the exuberant RMC benefit square dance, generously hosted by the Beringers. All ages and experience levels are welcome.

See you this summer! -- Eliza and Joan

Left, from top: Refreshment table at "Songs"; the Picnic amphitheater; the spread at the Gourmet Hike & Rendezvous, all in 2024. Photos by Ginny Umiker and Franklin Stone Wenk.



1	2	3	4	5	6	7
JUNE						
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
JULY						
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
AUGUST						
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

 rmctrailcrew
Randolph, New Hampshire

The Antipodean RMC

by the editor

A new distance record may now have been set for “RMC-spotting” outside of Randolph. The group photo at left appeared on the trail crew’s Instagram account in March: Sarah Allen, Emma Brinks, Joey Schilke and Benzo Harris at McMurdo Station. Interesting, but no longer breaking news, since RMC alumni and other Randolphians have been going to Antarctica for years. What was new was who spotted them there and took the photograph.

Gabe Maletta (right), a member of the May family in Randolph, is a clinical psychologist who was posted to McMurdo last summer as a counselor to the personnel living at that isolated station. Before shipping out, he’d had a heads-up from Andy Gallop that some RMC folks might be there, and sure enough, one day in the mess hall he spotted the Club logo decal on Emma’s water bottle (right). Bottle photo by Emma, all others by Gabe.

Have you had an RMC double-take or surprise encounter in an exotic location? Send it along to newsletter@randolphmountainclub.org and share with other members. Decals are still just \$1.50!

