

VHT Pathfinder

The Official Newsletter of Victor Hiking Trails, Inc.

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Tombstones or Mile Markers

By Dave Wright

If you have hiked or ridden your bike on the Auburn Trail, especially recently, you may have noticed a strange concrete object along the side of the trail. One is located between School Street and Route 251. (See picture on page 6.)

History tells us that these were mile markers for the engineers operating the train. The "S" stands for Syracuse and the number indicates how many miles from that point to the Syracuse station.

When VHT and the Victor Parks Dept. were discussing what type of signs we should use to indicate miles along the trail, it was suggested that we duplicate

the railroad mile markers and use the same numbering system.

Hopefully, when other sections of the Auburn are converted to trail, the same numbering system will be used.

VHT has pledged \$4000 in labor, materials and cash toward the Auburn and Lehigh Connections Trail Improvement project. Part of that is being used to make the concrete mile markers. On a few weekends in February, several VHT members, Victor Parks employees and Tim Harvey from Pooler, Inc. mixed the cement, poured it into the forms built by Chauncy Young. They will be put in place as soon as the ground softens.

Quotes found inside:

This spring's hike will center on two mountains to the north of Ray Brook, NY: Haystack Mountain (2878') and McKenzie Mountain (3861'). (page 2)

There was about an inch of fresh snow on top of a foot of well pack base. (Page 3)

On the climb we were supported by over one hundred porters. (Page 4)

There was a magnificent brilliant orange-gold band of light across the horizon as far as the eye could see with a deep, dark blue sky above. (Page 5)

Climbing Mount Kilimanjaro

By David Coleman

It's 6:00AM, March 2, 2008. The sun will be rising shortly.

I am are tired, sleepy even. We are all tired. There are forty one of us united in a common goal.

I'm sure I have fallen asleep several times on my feet in the last couple hours. I am wondering and pretty sure I am hallucinating.

It's cold.

I try to sit down to rest. We have just reached Stella Point. This is only the third break we've had since we started. Tom, our guide, ever vigilant to make sure we make it, doesn't let me sit for long. He gets me up and I get in line to continue climbing.

We still have another one hundred fifty meters (500 feet) to climb before we

reach the summit.

We have been climbing for seven hours already with most of another hour to go. Seven hours in the dark with the surrounding scenery restricted to the beams of our headlamps, the stars in the sky, and the distant lights of Moshi on the plains far, far below us.

Occasionally I look up, straight ahead, and I can see headlamps far above, or are those stars?

This quest started six days ago. Or was it a week and a half ago on another continent?

It was more than a year ago that we began on this journey, a Journey of Inspiration. I first heard about this in December 2006 and had committed to the journey by March of 2007.

This was a journey to spread hope to the

(Continued on page 4)

HIKES FOR 2008

VHT 2008 Officers:

Dave Wright– Chairman
 Jeff Hennick– Vice Chairman
 Nat Fisher– Secretary
 Chauncy Young– Treasurer
 Carol MacInnes– Trailmaster
 Larry Fisher– Trail Boss
 David Coleman– Membership
 Ruth Nellis– Education

Apr. 12– Canadice Lake Trail.
 May 10– Browncroft Road / Irondequoit wetland trails.
 Jun. 7– National Trails Day. Hike Victor Trails.
 June 14– Bike ride. Also ADK Outdoor Expo at Mendon Ponds.
 Jul. 12– Robert H. Treman State Park / Buttermilk Falls State Park
 Aug. 9– Fillmore Glen State Park
 Sep. 6– Hang Around Victor Day
 Sep. 6– Bare Hill Ring of Fire supper picnic and evening hike
 Oct. 11– Swifts Landing
 Nov. 8– Finger Lakes Trail, Bristol Section
 Dec. 13– Sherwood parcel (Penfield)

VHT Pathfinder

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The Victor Hiking Trails Pathfinder is published quarterly for the members of Victor Hiking Trails, Inc. We encourage submissions of letters, editorial items and advertising pertaining to trails, Victor and the environment.

Ask about our rates. To submit articles for the *VHT Pathfinder*, please contact:

Dave Wright, Editor
 Victor Hiking Trails, Inc.
 85 East Main Street
 Victor, NY 14564

(585) 234-8226

www.victorhikingtrails.org

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Note: Please check the message line at 585-234-8226 for details. All hikes meet at Victor Town Hall rear parking lot at 9:00 a.m. unless otherwise noted. Most hikes are relatively easy and take 2-4 hours. We usually car pool to the trailhead. If you have any questions regarding any of the hikes, or if you have suggestions for places to hike, please leave a message.

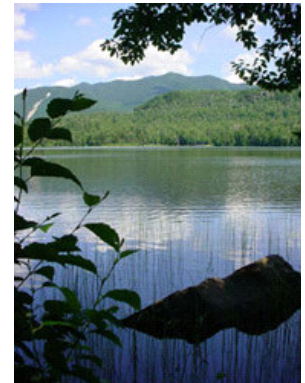
We are planning our Adirondack hikes for 2008. If you are interested in joining us or need more information, give us a call.

Annual Spring Adirondack Hike

Marcia Bryan, the founder of Victor Hiking Trails, has once again invited us to hike in the Adirondacks. Our annual spring hike will be on the weekend of May 2, 3 and 4, 2008. We usually leave Victor around noon on Friday and head to Schroon Lake. We will return on Sunday afternoon.

This spring's hike will center on two mountains to the north of Ray Brook, NY: Haystack Mountain (2878') and McKenzie Mountain (3861').

If you are interested in going with us for a very enjoyable hike in the Adirondack Mountains, or if you would just like more information, contact David Coleman at 585-657-2140 or send him an email at dcoleman@victorhikingtrails.org.



Past Hikes

Jan. 12– Mendon Ponds Park. It was unseasonably warm in January and a definite lack of snow. We got it all in December and then it stopped. But we still had a great hike on the trails on the east side of the park. This was also a photo opportunity for VHT as the Democrat and Chronicle decided do a feature story on us. A great ticle with a couple pictures of us hiking in the park appeared the following week.



The group waiting for Larry and Chauncy to take the picture.

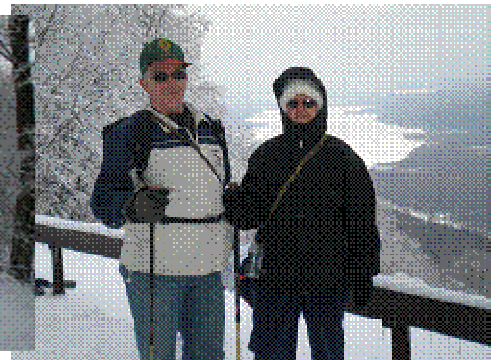
We hiked up to the water tower, hiked some of the cross country ski trails (some of the trails in the wooded areas still had a little ice on them) and even did a little bush whacking. The woods always look different in the winter when the leaves are off the trees. And it allows for wonderful views of the country side from the tops of the hills.



"How do you turn this camera on?"

Feb. 9– Harriet Hollister Spencer Memorial State Recreation Area.

We still didn't have much snow in Victor, but we knew there would be some base at the top of Harriet Hollister. There was about an inch of fresh snow on top of a foot of well pack base. The temperature was close to freezing and the sun was shining, so careful waxing of the skis was required. The trails through the woods were fast and a little rutted, but gave us a good workout.



It was a winter wonderland on the top of the hill overlooking Conesus Lake.

Mar. 8– Dryer Road Park. Finally we had enough snow at Dryer Road Park so we could ski and snowshoe the trails. We enjoyed a beautiful morning on the trails at the park, as well as the trails at Fort Hill. Now that the weather is turning warmer, this park will be alive with hikers, mountain bikers, organized team sports, families and pic-nic-ers (is that a word?).

A beautiful winter morning with fresh snow on the trees and enough to ski on.



world, celebrate the struggles, courage of spirit, and the sharing of community, of the lives of those affected by cancer.

All of the Journeys of Inspiration (JOI) Kilimanjaro climbers were, in some way, affected by cancer; as cancer survivors or in some other way deeply touched by cancer.

The group began to form over a year ago and as we prepared for the climb we also raised money for the American Cancer Society. Our goal was to raise \$100,000. To date we have raised more than \$180,000!

Fund raising was done as a group and individually.

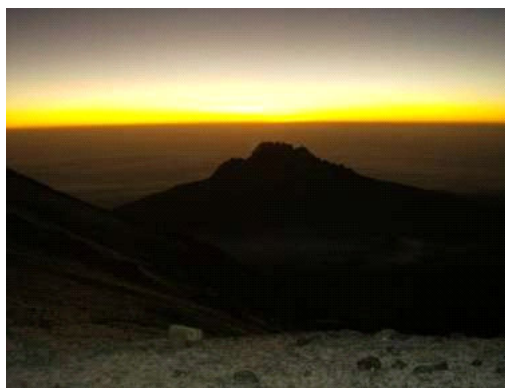
Some of our group fund raising activities included a pair of Swing dances last Spring, a Casino night, a golf tournament, and a food & beer pairing at Rohrbach Brewing Company.

By the time we left for Africa this journey was deeply rooted in the support, friendship, strength and trust of all the JOI climbers. These relationships were built through the group fund raising efforts and the weekly hikes in the Finger Lakes / Bristol Hills area.

On February 25th six climbers started on the north side of Mount Kilimanjaro following the Rongai (or Loitokitok) route and twenty three climbers started from the west on the Lemosho route over the Shira Plateau to climb in eight days.

On the following day twelve more climbers (including me) started up the mountain from the south on the Machame route. Our climb would take only seven days. On our first day, while going through the rain forest... it did, for two solid hours!

Shortly after the rain started our guide decided it was time for lunch. We stopped and made shelter as best we could



under the cover of trees to eat. This was, however, the only significant rain seen by any of us on the mountain.

In two days we had climbed up to the Shira Plateau at about 13,000 feet. To help us acclimatize, the next two days we climbed as high as 15,000 feet but returned to around 13,000 feet each night. We had been hiking,

and continued to hike at a very slow pace. This made breathing much easier as the oxygen at this elevation is only about two-thirds what we are used to. "Pole Pole", the Swahili term for "slowly" was often repeated.

On the third day our route merged with the Lemosho route as we hiked around the south side of the mountain toward the east. We were now in eye contact with the twenty-three JOI climbers on the Lemosho route. Our camps were adjoining at night.

On our fourth day we started with a "near vertical scramble up the Great Barranco Wall." It sounds much worse than it was although there were times we were using our hands and knees to climb or there would be a drop off at the edge of the trail. From the top of the wall, and while climbing it, we could look back at the majesty of the mountain.

On the climb we were supported by over one hundred porters. They would have everything set up for us by the time we reached camp each day. They cooked our meals and of course carried much of our gear. We only carried a day pack with any items we needed during the day.

On one overnight, while I was up at 2:30 in the morning, I

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)

took a picture of the moonlight on the glaciers of Kibo. It was not until I was home a couple weeks later, that I discovered the Big Dipper in that picture directly over the peak.

On day five, we climbed from 13,000 feet to 15,000 feet. A short day, we were in camp by 12:15. Along the trail we were serenaded by the music made by the loose shale under our feet. The sounds were like the ringing of crystal glass.

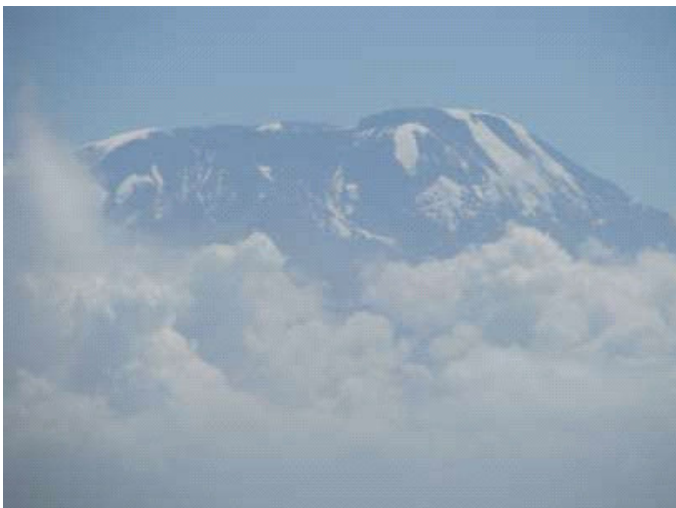


We then had to rest up and prepare for a late evening start for our final assault on the summit of the mountain. At 11:00 PM we began our final push for Stella Point and Uhuru Peak; a long night of climbing with our guides and our headlamps to direct our paths. We moved very s-l-o-w-l-y ("Pole, Pole") on that long cold night, but we were implored by our guides to not stop. We stayed together all the way to the top.

On March 2nd, between 6:00 and 6:30 AM, thirty-eight climbers reached the rim of the volcano known as Kibo, the highest of three volcanoes making up Mount Kilimanjaro. Most (including myself) went on to the summit, Uhuru Peak, at 19,344 feet above sea level, the highest point on the African continent.

The sun rose as we made our way along the rim. One of the most beautiful sunrises I have ever seen. There was a magnificent brilliant orange-gold band of light across the horizon as far as the eye could see with a deep, dark blue sky above.

There was much elation and emotion as we greeted each other on the rim on the way up to and returning from the summit.





An original mile marker. 85 miles to Syracuse.



The concrete was mixed by hand.



Ruth Nellis with the 20 bags of concrete needed to make two mile markers.



The forms were filled, leveled, numbers placed in the concrete and left to cure for a week.



Tim Harvey uncovering the first "tombstone".

Chauncy Young, CFP®
 Managing Member



Sage Financial, LLC
 660 Old Dutch Road
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