

THE RESUSCITATOR

THE OH ASSOCIATION 17 Brenner Drive, Newton, New Hampshire 03858
The OH Association is former employees of the AMC Huts System whose activities include sharing sweet White Mountain memories

75th Anniversary of OH Association

Highland Center Crawford Notch FALLFEST ANNUAL MEETING Weekend of Oct 31-Nov 2, 2008

If you haven't done so already, reserve now for Special OH Overnight Lodging Package—bunk room \$74.91 per person; private room \$112.71 per person; child under 12, \$63.03. Includes Saturday lunch, reunion dinner and Sunday breakfast.



Coming for Saturday only? Lunch \$17.54 per person, dinner \$24.43 per person, lunch and dinner \$41.97 per person, child dinner \$14.41, child lunch and dinner \$31.95. All these lodging discount rates are guaranteed until September 30, after which regular rates apply.

Dinner-only resis must be made by October 15.

Last year, there was no space in the two dining rooms for walk-ins, **so reserve now.**

To make reservations: call AMC resi line 603-466-2727 Mon-Sat 9 am-5 pm and use OH Reunion Group Reservation number #100291.

If you come for the weekend, the Saturday lunch can be a trail lunch. Happy Hour starts at Thayer at 5:30.

This reunion promises to be a special time to see your friends, acknowledge the Latchstring Award croo, elect officers and Special Members Andy Falender and Clare O'Connell and Honorary Member Hanque Parker. Earle Perkins' and Bill Aughton's "The Unforgiving Whites" presentation will be our featured after-dinner entertainment. It's an illustrated compilation of rescues and recoveries of lost and injured hikers in the Whites.

Happy Birthday! Your OHA just turned 75, and remains as relevant and robust as ever. Which should come as no surprise if you're an active member, or have been reading about us in the pages of *The Mountain Ear* or *Appalachia*. We continue to offer a full menu of social activities and other benefits for our members, as well as support for the AMC White Mountain huts, and this past year has been as busy and exciting as any.

For starters, last November's Fallfest was a smashing success, with an SRO crowd taking in a short history lesson on Maine Sporting Camps from our own Gerry Whiting. Over the first long weekend in March, two dozen or so OH skied into Gorman Chairback and Little Lyford Pond camps, now owned and operated by the AMC. We hosted another reunion in May, at the OH Cabin, complete with Bob Temple serving up clams and lobsters as always to the appreciative survivors of the Annual Spring Softbrawl game. Just around the bend is this year's Fallfest, featuring Bill Aughton and Earle Perkins speaking on search and rescue in the Whites. We'll also be honoring the 2008 Greenleaf Croo for snagging this year's Latchstring Award "for public service above and beyond." For 75 years our core mission has been bringing OH together, and we hope to still be at it 75 years from now.

The Cabin in Pinkham Notch remains a focal point of OH activities, a place where any dues-paying OH can rusticate, anytime, along with other OH. With the help of Caretaker Mike Waddell, volunteers, and a good chunk of our annual budget, we're maintaining it in peak condition. Ditto for the surrounding hiking trails, which we've adopted from the United States Forest Service.

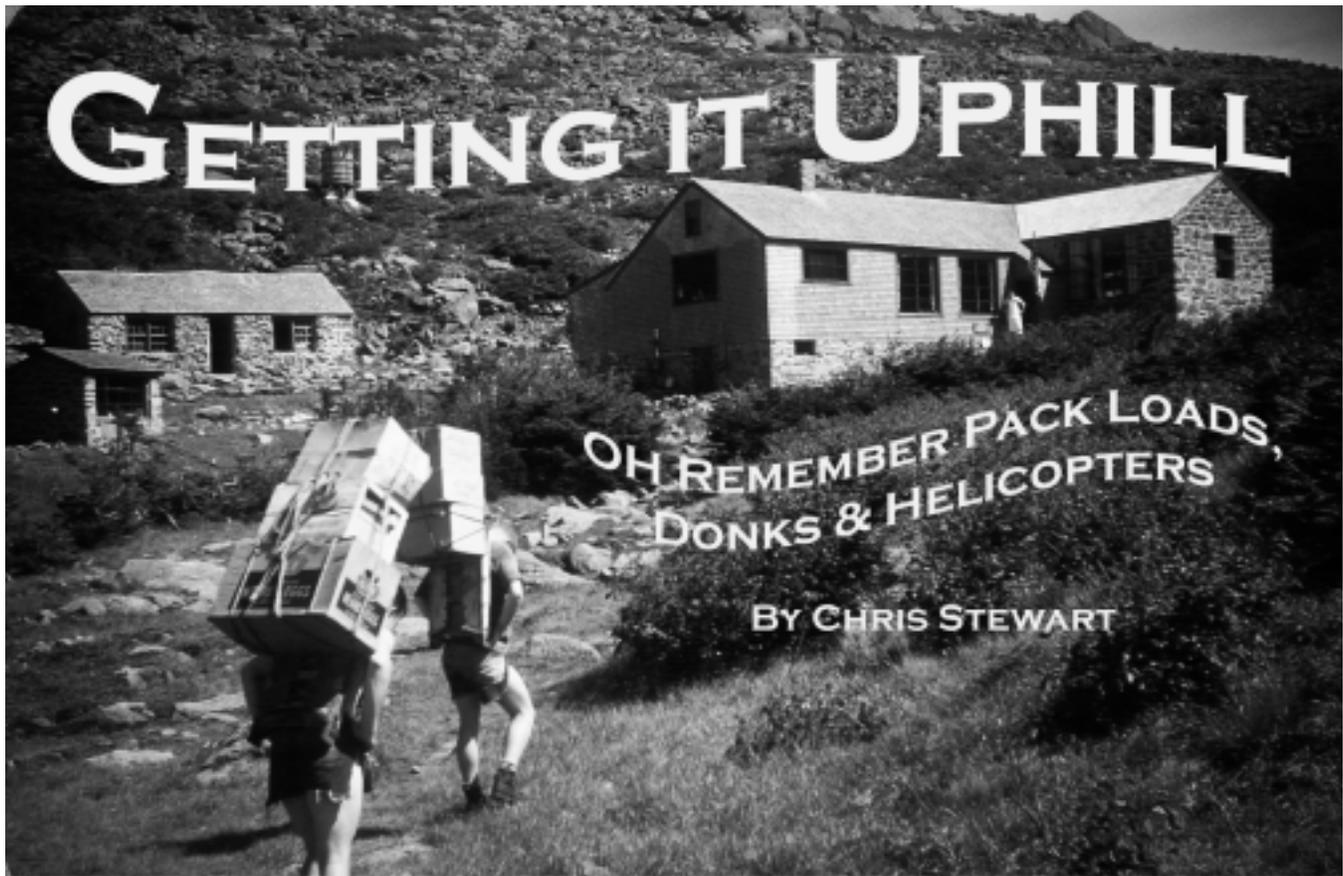
Another tradition we provide our members to help keep in touch is this newsletter, featuring quality reporting by professional scribes like OH Peggy Dillon, Chris Stewart, Emily Kathan, and Jim Hamilton.

Then there's the OH website and a presence on Facebook. Reaching out to younger OH and current croos is vital to our future, which we do in a variety of ways including the Latchstring Award and the Hut Croo Photo Project. For those of you living under a crump rock, this involves professionally refurbishing croo photos in every hut. Just finished Lakes, with Madhouse next.

Last but not least, the OHA will continue our moral and financial support for the AMC huts, as we've been doing these first 75 years. Working in or around those huts is what unites us; it's what for a time gave each of us purpose and pocket change, not to mention lifelong friendships, and responsibilities none of us were ever really sure we could rise to meet until somebody gave us the chance. OH donors gave \$2.6 million towards hut-related projects on the AMC 125th Anniversary Campaign and close to \$1 million toward the Club's current Maine Woods Initiative Campaign. Not bad for a 75-year-old with an addiction to hiking.

Solvitur Crumpus,

www.ohcroo.com for current news



HUTMEN WEREN'T THE FIRST TO SHOULDER supplies to the Appalachian Mountain Club's huts, high up rocky trails in New Hampshire's White Mountains. Horses preceded them.

Pack horses first hauled lumber, nails, cement, saws, hammers, shingles, glass and assorted building materials via the Valley Way Trail from Randolph to the construction site of the original hut at Madison Spring in the col between Mt. John Quincy Adams (5,410 feet elevation) and Mount Madison (5,366 feet elevation) in 1888. (For a more complete story, read *Appalachia*, December 1963). The hut was a hit.

Fast-forward 18 years. Mountain hiking had become a popular pastime and Madison Hut was much too small.

By the time the cramped and dank stone hut at Madison was enlarged in 1906, new routines had evolved. A summer season hut "Keeper" or "Caretaker" was now employed to serve guests and as a deterrent to vandalism.

Supplanting the provision-packing role of the horse, the Caretaker also prepared meals for the ever-increasing numbers of hikers staying overnight at Madison Spring. The caretaker had to bring in the supplies himself. How much these first hutmen packed is unknown.

This story reports some of what is known about how, and how much, supplies have reached the AMC's huts in the past century or so. Many participants have shared varied recollections and most seem to agree: Packing to the huts is unique memorable work. As long as the huts welcome hikers, it will continue to be.

1920s

Howard K. "Howie" Goff was on a two-man crew at Carter Notch Hut in 1920 and 1921. He revisited those summers in "Carter Notch in the Twenties" in the June 1980 issue of *Appalachia*. What was it like?

"You put cans and solid stuff down at the bottom and eggs and loaves of bread on top. It made quite a weight pressing down on your rear end if you filled the thing up."

Howie backpacked supplies in a floppy canvas rucksack fitted with an upper sleeve extension to accommodate larger loads.

On occasion, he also pitched in at Lakes of the Clouds Hut, where the kitchen stove ran on charcoal. How much did he carry there? One summer day, he and Harold "Tex" Benton (Lakes 1917, 1919 and 1920, Pinkham 1946), the Lakes hutmaster in 1920, made two pack trips, each taking two bags of charcoal in the morning, and two more each in the afternoon, from the summit pack house (on the side of the old Mount Washington Observatory) to the hut. A single bag of coal weighed 38 pounds.

Equally impressive in the days before helicopters were the feats of Joe Dodge, the longtime Huts Manager for the AMC.

Joe brought in supplies by skiing 11 miles with a 100-pound load from Gorham to Pinkham Notch Camp in the winter of 1926-1927 — the first year that the camp remained open year-round to serve guests. If Joe rightly earned a reputation for expecting the best effort from those he hired as hutmen, he led by example.

Others during that era carried heavy loads, too. For some, it was a matter of hard-earned dollars and cents.

Packers were paid by the pound to deliver supplies to the Lakes of the Clouds Hut expansion project in the summer of 1927. It might have been the start of a tradition of competitive packing. Writing in the December 1963 issue of *Appalachia*, Joe Dodge recalled the Herculean efforts of Ralph "Batchie" Batchelder, a crewman from Madison presumably visiting the Lakes construction site to earn some extra cash. On one day in the summer of 1927, Batchelder (Lakes 1925, Madison 1926, 1927, 1928, 1932, 1933 and 1934) completed ten round-trips from the summit to the hut, each time carrying a bag of cement lashed to his backboard. For his efforts, he took home \$23 — at a rate of 2.5 cents per pound — less

the \$2 Joe Dodge deducted for board.

Remarkable as Ralph Batchelder's effort was, Joe professed even higher regard for a "wiry, tough lad from Berlin," Poof Tardiff. In a 28-consecutive-day stretch, this contract packer averaged 421 pounds a day. Joe considered this "one of the greatest of all records for packing."

Joe Dodge wasn't the only one to notice these macho packing feats. And a vocal group of well-connected observers was much concerned.

Jeff Leich (Lakes 1968-1969, Galehead 1970-1971), the director of the New England Ski Museum in Franconia, found a copy of a petition that demanded an official investigation into perceived packing abuses by hut crews. Dated September 1938, and signed by more than a dozen AMC members (including my grandfather, Walter Peabody), the petition asked that an inquiry be conducted to determine the dangers of excessive packing. The petitioners feared that overpacking led to permanent heart strain or, as they described it, "cardiac degeneration." Eager young men were taking on too much, too fast, with potentially deadly consequences later in life.

An inquiry was conducted.

Heart specialists and physicians were consulted.

Questionnaires were answered by 109 former hutmen.

Data was analyzed.

The Hut Committee's findings allayed most fears.

The Committee did find that after 1925, wood and canvas packboards — first used at Lakes for heavy downhill packing — were being used at all the huts. Statistics showed that slightly heavier loads were, in fact, being carried.

However, because donkeys were now transporting most supplies for construction projects, there were fewer pressures for hutmen to overpack. There were reduced economic incentives, as well: The practice of by-the-pound payment for construction work had been halted.

The Hut Committee also noted that — using the figures for Madison Hut — the loads packed from 1915-1920 were "within the range of averages reported" for each subsequent period, including the weights packed from 1936-1938. By way of comparison, the maximum packed at Madison from 1915-1920 was 110 pounds; the maximum packed from 1936-1938 was 130 pounds. In other words, there was little to substantiate rumors of excess.

More important, no evidence linked heavy packing to damaged health.

In its summary, the Hut Committee pointed out that "in the opinion of a substantial group of physicians, there is no inherent danger to the heart from back-packing as such." On the contrary, several former hutmen who became physicians insisted that backpacking promoted longevity.

A list of new procedures did emerge from this investigation, however. Among other points, the Hut Committee now called for:

*Physical exams before and after a summer's stint in the huts;

*Weekly reports from the hutmaster about the health of each hutman;

*Hygienic inspections of the huts; and

*A standard be established for maximum loads.

Joe Dodge was left to set the standard. Subsequent generations of hutmen would continue to balk at directives toward packing moderation.

Donks and Men

By the early 1930s, teams of donkeys — prodded by two or three donkskinners — were lugging in the summer's "initial" requisition of hut supplies: blankets, canned and dry goods to Madison, and the almost-new huts at Zealand, Galehead and Greenleaf. This work took place for about four weeks when the huts opened and early into the season. Skinners and donks together spent several days at

one hut, hauling up as much as 500 pounds of goods in a day, then moved on to the next hut. Donk teams also did a stint in the fall helping to close the huts.

It was not a job for the faint of nose.

The donkskinners in the spring of 1942 were Bob "Beetle" Elsner (Pinkham fall 1941, donkskinner spring 1942, Pinkham 1944-1945) and Edwin "Moose" Damp (Madison 1941-1942)

"Everything smelled like donks," Moose recalled. "Your shoes smelled like the donks. Your hair smelled like the donks. Everything smelled like the donks all the time. It had to be.

"We always had good days. You started early and loaded up the donks while your breakfast was cooking," Moose said. "Then you started up the trail. Three, four or five hours on the trail, depending. Then you unloaded and came down and were all finished for the day."

When packing the initial to Madison, the donks were corralled in a field just off the Beechwood Way trail, about where a power line now crosses the path. (The clearing remains to this day.) Usually, while packing to the huts, donkskinners slept at makeshift trailhead campgrounds nearby in tents. For packing Greenleaf, luckier skinners slept in a shed at the New Hampshire Highway Department camp. This was the height of comfort.

How did this donkskinning start?

Bertram "Swoop" Goodwin (Lonesome 1941) remembered that the donks (perhaps as many as 41 — Joe Dodge put the number at 40) were originally imported from Roswell, New Mexico, when "a couple of hutmen" formed the White Mountain Jackass Company in 1929.

These far-sighted hutmen figured that busy times were coming, and there was money in donks. They figured right. In the spring of 1929, the Hut Committee had OK'd several building projects — including construction of a new hut at Eagle Lake on the side of Mount Lafayette in Franconia Notch, an expansion at Madison Spring Hut, and the acquisition of camps for another hut at Lonesome Lake, west across the notch from Greenleaf. These renovation and building projects were to be conducted under the direction of Joe Dodge, who had been hired as full-time Huts Manager on January 1, 1928.

And there soon would be more projects.

In the fall of 1930, the Hut Committee OK'd the addition of two new huts, Galehead and Zealand — construction projects also to be completed under Joe's energetic direction that following 1931 summer. This fueled demand for heavyweight transportation.

"So these guys got together and figured that this donk business would be a good thing," Swoop recalled. After one summer season, though, the company founders had had enough. That fall, they sold their business to the AMC and the donks became part of the expanding huts operation overseen by Joe Dodge.

Joe organized an efficient operation. In his story, "Donkeys to the Huts," Robert L. Wells wrote about his friend, Bob Elsner, describing Elsner's experience as a donkskinner. The donks, Elsner told Wells, were boarded at the Harris Farm in Whitefield, an arrangement well established by the mid-1930s.

The farmer's son, Winston F. "Winnie" Harris, taught donkskinning to the young men whom Joe selected for the task. "These are good boys," Joe advised Winnie, "but they've never seen a donkey before." By all accounts, Winnie proved a good teacher.

Skinners began around Memorial Day. A team of eight donkeys — loaded cross-wise, side by side, head to rump, on the AMC's three-quarter ton pickup truck — could be transported from the Harris Farm in one trip. The donks had personality. There was Little Horse (remembered by John Howe as the lead donk), Tex, Rocky, Noah, Old Jack (who once lugged a kitchen sink and toilet bowl — the sink on one flank, the toilet balancing on the other) and Whitey.

Smokey, Johnny and Trigger, the most reliable carriers, could be counted on to take at least 90 pounds. Fitted with cross-tree saddles, most of the donks could take between 70 to 110 pounds a trip. Softer blankets might be tied onto the saddle first, with more rigid items and boxes lashed at the top of the load.

Once, in 1944, Smokey and Johnny, spent all summer at Madison — “the only time that Madison had a couple of resident donkeys,” John Howe remembered. (Howe worked at Madison 1943 and 1944 and was a donkskinner in 1947 and 1948).

During World War II, with so many young men in the armed services, crews tended to be very young, with less experience. John Howe, the hutmaster, was 18, the oldest on a five-man crew. Brookie Dodge, Joe’s son, already working his second summer at Madison, was 14 years old in 1944. Donks were a necessity.

“I had just flunked out of getting into the Air Corps,” John remembered, “because I was supposed to have had a bad heart, which was a lie. Brookie (Dodge, Madison 1943-1946, Lakes 1949) was on the crew again. He had just had an appendicitis operation. I guess Joe was worried so he gave us a couple of donkeys to help out with the packing,” John said. While the donkeys were somewhat of a help, John emphasized that the crew did still continue to pack as much as always.

Donkskinners’ labors started at dawn, and, as many hutmen and donkskinners recalled, the daily routine could be a challenge. Writing in the spring 1994 *Resuscitator*, Joe Harrington (Greenleaf 1956-1958) expressed his admiration for the men behind, beside and in front of the donks:

“I never envied the donkey skimmers. They got up earlier than hut crews, to feed their charges and get them set for the trail. They got on the trail early or not at all, for burros and afternoon thunderstorms are not compatible, especially on exposed ridges. If the weather was questionable, they stayed downstairs, and likewise, they got the hell off the hill by early afternoon if it looked like you might get some thumpers later on. So there the skimmers would be, 2 or 3 in the afternoon, with nothing to do but watch the hayburners munch away, make up the saddlebags for the next day’s run, and turn in early so as to be able to get up before dawn. Exciting. Leave camp? One at a time, maybe, but better not let Joe come by and find the animals unattended, nor take a chance that the canny rascals would note your absence, bust loose, and go rambling down Route 3 or cause consternation by roaming through Lafayette Campground.”

Worst, donks didn’t toil on schedule. Moving them took ingenuity. Prodding, poking, whipping, shouting and shoving proved effective. But not always.

John Howe remembered a tough day on the Zealand pack trail, “the worst place by far,” as he explained.

“Zealand is really a muddy trail. The donks got bogged down in the beaver swamps in the flats below the hut, sometimes right up to their bellies. ... If you went away and left them, they would have died in the mud. To get them to move, you’d have to pinch their nostrils closed. ... eventually, they get desperate enough for air that they just get themselves out.”

Donks could be a nuisance off the trail as well. Tom Heffernan was a donkskinner in 1955 under Swede Shogren. Tom remembers the runt donkey, Pizon, who had a particularly loud bray.

“Pizon was always in the back of the truck and he caught hell when Swede would screech on the brakes. You could hear him braying a mile away when all the other donks shifted back into him... ”

And donkskinners had reason to bray themselves, Tom remembered. “My most vivid memory is sleeping near their corral during black fly season and soaking myself in the famous Pinkham Notch Fly Dope. This concoction was pine tar, citronella, oil of pennyroyal, creosote and kerosene. It really did work, especially if you drowned a bandanna in it.”



Donks at Madison, 1958.

Bruce Sloat worked for the AMC from 1951 to 1972. He describes another successful technique to move a stubborn donkey.

“We drove them from the Harris farm to a corral at Zealand, but some of them wouldn’t want to walk down the ramp from the back of the 1.5-ton truck,” Bruce remembered. “Couldn’t convince them to budge. So I tied one end of a rope to tree, the other to the stubborn donk, and then began to drive slowly away. That convinced them to move.”

By the early 1960s, experienced crews were hard to come by, the AMC donks had aged, and helicopters could now lift unbeatable payloads to the huts. In “A Century of AMC” from the June 15, 1976, issue of *Appalachia*, C. Francis Belcher wrote that, “Backpacking will always be there, despite the fact that in 1964 we got rid of the jackasses.”

1940s

Moose Damp (Madison 1941-1942). His record was 206 pounds up the Valley Way. More common were loads in the 100-to-150 pound-range, especially in 1941 during the rebuilding of Madison Hut. An accidental fire in October 1940 had burned the hut to its stone foundation.

Pete Richardson (Lakes 1942, Madison opening 1942, Zealand 1948). “In 1942 Madison and Lakes, someone packed at least one load most days and more at Lakes about 100 pounds. At Zealand (1948, with wife Keenie Richardson), I packed each truck trip, twice a week, and usually two more days carrying 60-70 pounds.”

Henry W. “Hanque” Parker (Galehead 1942, Pinkham 1946). “We packed twice a week. We could usually take up everything on truck day. At closing we had to pack out all the blankets, a two-trip-a-day schedule. On average for the entire summer, the range was 60 to 85 pounds.”

William Hank “Porky” Curwen (Zealand 1943, construction, packing, opening and closing 1946). At Zealand, Porky packed twice a week (when the truck came by), averaging 150 pounds. Packing in 1946, loads were Madison, 80 pounds; Lakes, 160 pounds; Greenleaf, 100 pounds; and Carter, 120 pounds. Curwen carried sections of a new outhouse for Crag Camp: he packed an 80-pound load up to the foot of the Spur Trail, then repacked and carried 120 pounds up to Crag Camp. In 1946, in company with Kibbe Glover and Lew Bissel, he carried 100-pound loads of roofing paper for construction work at Zealand and Galehead.

Richard A. Maxwell (Pinkham 1943-1944, Zealand 1944-1945, Greenleaf 1950-1953). At Zealand, he packed 50 pounds, once a week. At Greenleaf, he packed 80 pounds twice a week – plus wood. “The biggest and heaviest load I ever carried was 150-plus in about 2.5 hours to Greenleaf. This was a record for a while. But Tom Deans told me much later that he carried more and faster when

he became hutmaster at Greenleaf.”

And wood: “The crew at Greenleaf packed logs for firewood from the vicinity of the spring. We could hardly lift some of the logs. Using wood for cooking and heating was something I had learned from Slim Harris 1945 at Zealand, where there was plenty of wood within dragging distance from the hut.”

Roger “Rajah” Pugh (Carter 1943-1944). Roger packed three times a week, averaging 90 pounds a trip.

Dick “Boogie” Kimball (Lakes 1945-946). “As I remember, one or two crew members would pack down from the summit every day. Not always the same ones. There was a schedule of some kind, but those who preferred cooking to packing could exchange with the non-cooks who liked to pack. For example, I was a cooker; Li’l Moose Damp was a packer. I seem to think that 75 pounds was a normal load, but if I were you I wouldn’t put too much confidence in that recollection 60-plus years later. The relatively short distance from the summit to the hut meant the Lakes crew could make more frequent trips, two a day if necessary, and so there was no incentive to go for the super heavy loads, which I understand became a rite of passage for some hutmen in later years. Anyway, we were mostly teenagers and often skinny teenagers at that. ... Helicopters? What were they?”

Peter Walker (Galehead opening crew 1946, Greenleaf 1947-1949). “In 1946, my first summer in the huts, I was 15 years old. Beginning as a packer traversing the 4.5-mile trail to Galehead, I was convinced that there was a better way of supplying the huts, and using a helicopter immediately came to mind. For my three summers at Greenleaf, I packed up the Old Bridle Path, which rises about 2,000 feet in three miles. Although I enjoyed doing the packing, the helicopter idea persisted.” In 1946, Pete packed every other day, averaging 75 pounds.

“I had one load of 114 pounds! It darn near killed me.” The following summer, his average climbed to 80 pounds a trip. In the summer of 1948, he averaged 85 pounds a trip. His last summer as Greenleaf hutmaster in 1949, he averaged 90 pounds a trip.

“I was very lucky for all four summers to be able to use an extra-length Freighter packboard (AMC No.1), since I was 6’4” tall. Its top two rungs must have been 10” apart, and the board was probably 6” longer than the others. This enabled me to have loads with a high center of gravity – a real treat.”

1950s

Al Starkey (Pinkham 1950, Zealand 1951, Lakes 1952-1955). In 1950, he packed roughly three times a week, with loads averaging about 130-150 pounds. “I was then 15, but 6’2” and about 180 pounds,” Al wrote.

From 1951-1955, he averaged five to seven trips per week, excepting initial order packing, which was often two trips daily. “Loads ranged from 175 to 220 pounds, with my highest being 278. This was an era where no ‘copter help was available; we routinely carried the big LPG containers, which ran 200 pounds full, and when req orders during August camp season often ran to half a ton. Construction packing was also a factor in one or two of these years too.

“During the last two of the years at Lakes, I was training for college football. The loads were helpful for endurance, though not for speed or quickness training. Strength training was the big issue, and I feel that the packing experience was a very good one for me, but surely recognize that it was not for every one of us. During my Lakes time, the six-person crews were usually about evenly split on lines of age and size, with the younger, slighter guys packing a bit less often, usually toting 150 to 175 pounds, depending on their own size.”

Brooks Van Everen (Carter 1950-1952, Lakes 1953, Zealand 1958-1959, with Peetie Van Everen). “I remember packing every

other day at Carter, but only every third day at Lakes and Zealand. I suppose the average weights at Carter were 125 pounds and 140 pounds at Lakes. Zealand was lower, perhaps 100. ... I can still recall almost every step of that Carter Notch trail and every stone that I, and many others before and after me, rested their loads on. I always loved the sound of the birds and sensation of running down that 19-Mile Brook Trail to meet the pack truck at the Glen House very early in the morning. That is still very vivid 57 years later.”

Dave Porter (Greenleaf 1951-1953). He packed about every second day, with loads in the early season beginning at 60 pounds, climbing to 80 pounds in two weeks, and to 95 to 120 by August. “My best load up the Old Bridle Path was 155 pounds. If I had to average it, I’d say 85 to 90 pounds. I considered myself the least-capable packer since I was smaller, younger and less athletic than my crew mates. I carried my share of the load, but it took me longer on trail.”

Carlton “Hoagy” Hoagland (Lakes 1952-1953). “We packed every day usually, unless working as cook or bull cook. We had a lot of goofers to feed. I carried 150 pounds on average, but with wide swings around it. Many trips were devoted to propane and red gas. Two goofer bombs and a jerry can of gas weighed exactly 150 pounds.”

Roger Foster (Lakes 1953-1956). “I packed on average about every other day. This was the brief era when the large propane tanks were packed in. Prior to then the small tanks had been used.

“Al Starkey was hutmaster in 1955. Al was a Penn State football player and had a lot of both upper and lower body strength. He began bringing down the propane tanks. While I did not have Al’s upper body strength, I had a strong back and legs, and I soon followed his lead. The storehouse tried to send us the tanks with the lightest tare weight, but once tied up on a pack frame they were 200 to 210 pounds.

“It is mostly downhill packing at the Lakes, but there is a short uphill section just before the hut. The liquid in the tanks had a rhythm that one learned to adapt to with each downward step.

“During the summer of 1956, my crew was younger and somewhat smaller, so I ended up bringing down all the propane tanks. My recollection is that we needed two to three tanks a week. Uphill the empty tanks and pack frame were about 100 pounds.

“By the end of the summer of 1956 I was in pretty good shape and feeling my oats, so I tried to tie up a 300-pound load. I remember that there were 48 cans of beer in the base box, and I believe a 50 pound bag of flour on the top. Chuck Kellogg and Ray Scheimer came down with me and helped balance the load on some of the rests so I could get out from under it for a few moments. We had to split the load to weigh it, but the scale would not give me 300 pounds. It added up to 293.

“The biggest uphill load that year was a 145-pound generator that needed to go in for repairs at the end of the summer. With a knock on wood, 50 years later I have yet to develop back problems.”

Larry Eldredge (Madison 1949-1950, Lakes 1950-1952). “My memory tells me that we packed every day when we weren’t cooking or bull-cooking, but that seems like a lot of packing. We had the donkeys to get up the initial req, but we had to wait our turn – and at Lakes they never worked at all. So early on there were a lot of staples to get to the hut, and later the twice weekly reqs.

“Uphill I could manage 70 to 80 pounds, but I never tried to get 100 pounds up there. Downhill I could do about 120 to 130 pounds. Once I tried for 200 pounds, struggled like Billy-O, and found at the hut that I only had 190. Damn.

“I remember one summer at Lakes when Joe sent up a new generator. It came in a couple of pieces, and I said that I would pack the casing — because it required a sure-footed packer, and I was self-centered enough to think that I was the boy. So of course I spilled the load half-way down the pack trail, put a dent in the

casing, and Bob Temple had to hammer it out a couple of days later. So it goes.”

Leonard B. "Sleezy" Dalton (Pinkham 1949, Tuckerman 1950). “I started at Pinkham in the fall and ended in Tuckerman winter, spring and summer, 1950.

“I packed at least twice a week. My loads averaged 100 pounds and as high as 120 pounds.”

Bruce Blake (Zealand 1952, Carter 1953, Madison 1954). At Zealand, he made 18 trips, averaging 77 pounds, and had a maximum load of 100 pounds. At Madison he made 30 trips, averaging 84 pounds, and had a maximum load of 121 pounds.

“I’ve never been in as good condition as I was at the end of those summers. Working in the huts was a great place to grow up.”

Ray Scheimer, M.D. (Pinkham 1954, Lakes 1955-1956). Ray packed five days a week with an average weight of 120 pounds.

“I was the lightest packer on the crew. Packing at Lakes, before helicopters, required very heavy loads, on every trip, by everyone in the hut. Because I only weighed 125 pounds, I was not able to carry the full utility gas cylinders (around 200 pounds) down to the hut. Therefore, I was expected to carry the empty ones (110 pounds) back to the summit. Then they could be taken to Pinkham on the supply truck.

“One day I was packing two jerry cans of gasoline and got caught in a lightning storm not too far from Lakes. When one bolt hit near where I was standing, it scared the hell out of me and I just dropped the load and ran.

“It was an unspoken rule that we were expected to pack at least our own weight on each pack trip while working at Lakes.”

Tom Heffernan (Huts 1955-1958). “I packed an average of every other day. I would say the average I packed was 135 pounds but I did pack my weight up to Tuckerman in 1957 and that was 165 pounds.”

Joe Harrington (Greenleaf 1956-1958). The first half of the summer, Joe packed three or four days a week, averaging 100 pounds. The last half of the summer “after the hutmaster hyperextended his knee running downhill and couldn’t pack for the rest of the summer — he cooked, virtually all the time — the one other crew member, and I did all the packing, five or six days a week, 130 pounds — average.”

In 1957 and 1958, Joe packed three or four days per week, depending on needs, averaging 115 pounds.

“My best single load was 160 pounds, which was the record for the Bridle Path for a couple of years until Tommy Deans wandered in one day with 179 pounds.

“Usually the injuries were the result of nonsensical stuff, like trying to start off in the first days of summer with big loads to show how macho you were. I had a sensible hutmaster that first year and was firmly told that 60 or 80 would be just fine until I got into condition and was ready to do more. It does take a while, and as has been said so often, the only conditioning for the trail is — the trail.

“Then there were the stunts. One guy, whom I could name but won’t, packed an extra box up each time he packed, but hid it in the pucker brush a few hundred yards from his hut (not Greenleaf). When he had amassed a cache of 4-5 extra boxes of canned goods, he put them on top of his next normal load, and staggered into the hut carrying about double anything ever seen, to the oohs and aahs of all present. Unfortunately he did serious damage to his spine — damaged some disks or something — and couldn’t pack for the rest of that summer, and needed treatment well beyond that time. Pretty expensive stunt.”

Bruce Shields (Lonesome 1958-1959, Pinkham 1960). “Lonesome was a curious case: We had some unrefrigerated storage at the packhouse (a one car-garage). The truck came by Tuesday and Friday, if I recall. We would get meat, which we ran up the hill

directly, to store in a little box buried in the ground behind the lodge. Most meat had to be cooked immediately, though if a turkey was frozen, it could be stored for a day. We averaged about 15 goofers a night, and used about one pound per person per day, plus various supplies, the bulkiest of which was propane. We tried to pack about 60 pounds per trip, i.e. one propane bottle at 42 pounds, plus some other supplies.”

Leew Lloyd (Pinkham crew 1954, Lakes 1955-1956). “In 1955 and 1956 there was a crew of six young men at the Lakes. My recollection is that one of us was usually on days off. So the five remaining crew members worked this way: One would be the cook, we rotated each day, and the four others would pack, every day.

“The summer of ‘55 was made more complicated by this: That summer we used standard, suburban-size propane tanks to heat our hot water in the kitchen and to fuel the stoves. The tanks weighed 200 pounds full and 100 pounds empty. Since the donks refused to pack downhill to the hut from the summit (where our storeroom was) and the AMC didn’t use helicopters at all for the usual provisions, it meant that the hut crew had to pack the propane tanks.

“The crew was populated by three big guys — Terry Underwood, Al Starkey and Roger Foster — who each weighed 185 or so, and three smaller guys, Ray Scheimer, Roger Foster and me. I weighed about 155 that summer.

“So the deal was that the three big guys would pack the propane down to the hut and three of us ‘small’ guys would pack the empties back up. Since the tanks were half filled with liquid propane, bringing them down was quite a task. We broke many packboards carrying the damned things.

“Because of the size of the hut and the volume of supplies needed, the crew packed every day you weren’t the cook or on days off. The average weight of our packs followed a curve of the number of guests. During high season — the first three weeks of August, Fourth of July, Labor Day — I regularly packed over my weight, averaging about 160 and reaching a high of 175 to 180 on one trip. The scale was an old butcher’s scale which hung by the back door.

“My recollection about my heaviest pack is that I carried a case of beer (of course) on top of a jerry can of diesel fuel for our pumps, then on top of the beer cases of canned goods, some meat and a pullman of eggs on top. There were ten resting points on the 1.6 miles between the summit and the hut. I used them all.

“I was blessed that summer by discovering Limmer boots. How that happened was this. I got to Pinkham in June ‘55 to catch a truck to the summit. As a sales promotion, Limmer had put a pair of their hiking boots on the desk. I tried them on, they fit perfectly. I bought them for \$20. I still have them, and until two years ago (50 years on) I still hiked in them, once resoled, once restitched. I believe I was the first person to use them in the huts for packing. I was the only person at the Lakes (and the first I think) to have them.”

Edward E. (Ted) Vaill (Hut closer 1958, Zealand 1959). As a hut closer and floater in 1958 Ted went to Madison, Lakes, Greenleaf, Galehead and Zealand, packing three to four times a week. He averaged about 100 pounds a trip, except to Galehead where he packed about 75 pounds. “Packed my weight (125 pounds) a few times. And I was 6’2” — skinny! Had the strongest knees in the world.”

Modern Times

And then came the planes and helicopters:

Bruce Sloat worked for the AMC in the huts from January 1951 to 1972, serving as Huts Manager for the last five years of his stint. He helped to organize the AMC’s use of planes to bring supplies to the huts, and then led its more steady reliance on helicopters.

It was a rough beginning.

Put yourself in the plane for the first frigid flight, and dress warmly.

Bruce remembered delivering construction materials to Carter Notch Hut during the winter of 1962, flying in a well-ventilated lightweight, fixed-wing aircraft.

Taking off from the airport in Whitefield, this plane carried one pilot, Bruce and six 80-pound bags of sand.

As Bruce remembered:

“The aircraft was a Piper Tri Pacer with the door and seats removed. I fixed a short safety rope around my waste as a restraint. We found from early experimentation that each bag of sand required four layers of burlap, each tied separately and in the form of a thick pancake. On impact, at least two of the bags would tear off. It made no difference if the surface was the runway or ice. The Tri Pacer was a four-seat aircraft and Shirley Mann was the pilot. With the seats removed and a minimum of fuel, we could get into the air with an additional 480 pounds, so six bags it was.

“With my feet hanging out the door, I stacked three of the bags, pancake style, next to me. We flew very low over Carter Notch. Shirley would line up a tree and another marker and nod. I’d push the pile of bags over and out the door opening. When they landed on the ice of the larger lake, the outer two layers of burlap on each bag would tear off.

“The bags landed in line and were about 50 feet apart when they hit. With the aircraft 240 pounds lighter, Shirley would make a sharp 180 degree turn and I would push out another three bags on the return toward the notch. (We lost a few bags when we were first getting used to the exact trajectory.)

“The crew on the ground would retrieve the bags and pile them in an area on the side of the lake adjacent to the trail. We probably made about 35 total flights and put in some 200 bags of sand.

“We did not airdrop any cement as we felt that it would just make a mess if the bags broke. In addition, the cement would probably turn into stepping stones before we could use it several months later in the spring.”

Bruce also recalled a second, less-successful airlift. During the late winter of 1968, in anticipation of the ambitious renovation project about to begin at Lakes, another plane attempted to deliver food and blankets.

“We later tried dropping blankets at Lakes and were told that we could also drop supplies if we wrapped cans in the center of each bundle,” Bruce said. “Well, the experiment was a failure as the blankets on the outer layer of the bundle would tear and the #10 cans in the middle exploded. Chicken stew exploding in the middle of a bundle of blankets does indeed make a colossal mess.”

At about the same time, the AMC followed the State of New Hampshire’s lead in using helicopters in the mountains.

As Bruce remembered: “The site selected for the new Lonesome Lake Hut was on the opposite end of the lake from the old hut.

Clinton Clough of Littleton was the contractor for this state project. A horse stumped out the site and a small G4 Bell Helicopter carried out the airlifting.

“This helicopter was a three-seater with the bubble in front. With marginal fuel, it could lift about 450 pounds or so – including precast cement pillars that support the buildings, and much of the construction material.”

Then came Mizpah and the first use of a bigger helicopter, a Sikorsky S55, painted white.

“We then relocated to the area in front of the railroad station in Crawford Notch to airlift a prefabricated building, support planks, and about 200 bags of sand to the Mizpah site to house the professionals for the hut construction,” Bruce said.

“In spite of having been given permission to airlift from a field just up the trail behind the Crawford Notch station in June when guests of the hotel started to arrive, we had to relocate to the gravel pit north of the Crawford House which was used by the state. However, before we started in earnest on the Mizpah project, we tried some early lifting from the Glen House field to Madison. We had made some cargo carriers out of plywood with metal angles and low sides to haul the supplies. They were fine on the up trip but their lack of aerodynamic qualities made them difficult to return empty under the helicopter.

“I then designed a new system with regular cement pallets and four ropes that made a harness from the corners of the pallet. These worked fine and after about

six trips the pallets could be bundled together and brought down under the helicopter all at once.

“Carl Blanchard and I set up the building for the crew at Mizpah by cutting off trees at an exact level and spanning the distance between the trees with planks we had earlier lifted in. The tractor trailer could not make it across the bridge to the lifting site so we had to off-load the 2,220 sacks of 80 and 90 pound each of concrete mix and cement mix. We also took in a bunch of 94 pound bags of Portland cement to go with the already lifted-in sand.

“Franks Parks (the pilot) started the airlift, and later it was taken over by Joe Vernon, who with his wife and daughter lived at Pinkham the bulk of the summer. Fuel had been delivered to the site in 55-gallon drums and we would put a full drum of fuel in the helicopter and start with 12 bags of material. After each two flights we would add another bag to the pallet.

“We would make eight trips and then refuel.”

Safety was always paramount in helicopter lifts, but Bruce noted that there was one very close call:

“About the only serious almost-crash we had was due to equipment failure on the helicopter. We were part way through the operating day with our routine of eight-trips-then-refuel when the helicopter came in and hovered for a ninth load which I hooked on. When the helicopter returned for a tenth load I figured something



Bruce Sloat at a 1971 Greenleaf crapper barrel lift.

was wrong and had the mechanic that was directing the pilot set the ship down.

“We had been having trouble with the electric fuel pump but it was only used during startup. The mechanical pump took care of all fuel after startup. While the ship was on the ground, the AMC crew pumped in another drum of fuel and Frank and I discussed the matter. Frank said he had enough fuel for another flight. About that same time the owner of Carson Helicopters arrived by car with a replacement electric fuel pump.

“We decided to make the change at once. The fuel pump is in the bottom of the bladder type fuel tank. What to do with the 55 gallons of fuel just pumped into the ship?

“I put a hose on the suction side of our hand pump and the AMC crew pumped the fuel back out of the helicopter into the empty drum. That having been done, we switched to another drum but the hand pump did not prime. We decided to drain the remaining fuel out the bottom of the bladder into a large wash tub that we had at the site. Well about only a gallon came out. Frank Parks, having been watching this operation of fuel removal, suddenly realized that there was only a gallon or so of fuel when I had the mechanic signal a landing.

“Frank went over to a pile of cement bags and held his head and swore to himself. There was not enough fuel in the bladder for another two minutes of flight. I had done some checking with my volt ohm milliamp meter earlier and with very limited knowledge from my Mt. Washington experiences with the S51 did additional checking. The culprit was the 400-cycle inverter in the tail of the helicopter, which had vibrated out of its mount. That probably happened on the next-to-the-last trip, which meant that the fuel gauge which requires 400-cycle power was stuck and indicated enough fuel for more trips. In any case, it was a close call. In fact, I call it too close.”

Building Mizpah by Air, 1963

Clinton Clough, the contractor for the state at Lonesome, was the contractor hired by the AMC for the Mizpah project. He was responsible for all the building material and was given the charge of delivering all the material to the site in packages that did not weigh more than 1,200 pounds. Bruce Sloat remembered:

“Ben Stein of Burlington, Vermont, was the architect. The steel bents and related parts also had the same weight restriction. All of this material arrived at the site in assorted packaging or no packaging at all. The AMC had no front-end loader so I brought my Ford 8N tractor loader over for the job.

“As loads were made up, we moved them with the loader out to the pickup spot in the gravel pit. When we worked out of the Crawford House site, there was not a dust problem, but when we relocated to the gravel pit, the dust was impossible.

“In order to operate, we had to bring over the fire pump from Pinkham each day and lay out 800 feet of hose to the brook to keep the dust down. The pump had to be returned to Pinkham in case of fire each afternoon.

“Early in the job, there was a period when helicopter repairs required the ship to be grounded for a while and the masons needed cement. It was back to the old-fashioned method. About 12 crew went to packing the 80-to 90-pound bags. We established a cache about half-way up the trail and a packer would take a bag all the way on the first trip and then leave the load half ways on the second trip. The next day would be a repeat, then complete with the bag left the first day for the second trip. Almost 15 tons went in that way.

“The second year of the Mizpah job was mostly hauling in material for furnishing the hut. This meant pre-made bunks tables and routine supplies. It did not require a lot of heavy lifting so we tried a small Bell G4 from Norwood, Massachusetts.

“Wiggins Airways was the operator. We were limited to about 400 pounds per load. The operation went pretty well, and we used a small grassed area near the Mount Washington Hotel to avoid the dust. Some of the other huts were supplied as well, but it became apparent that bigger (helicopter) was a lot better and much more cost-effective.

“I was running the show then and arranged with Carson Helicopters to do the airlifting with a Sikorsky S58, which at sea level could lift two tons with full fuel. We had worked out a deal of one week for a fixed charge plus so much per hour of actual operation. Frank Parks was always the pilot.

“Fuel required was 115/145, and on several of the airlifts I had Jess Lyman from North Conway supply a truck and go to the depot in Boston to pick up a load, as the radial engine was a real fuel hog. With that fuel, we could operate with 3,000-pound loads or more at the elevation of the highest hut, Lakes. Local fuel 100/130 at the Whitefield airport reduced the capacity to loads of about 2,500 pounds. The S58 had plenty of room in the belly of the ship, which made it easy to load initial supplies into the huts. Mizpah hut was built from start to finish for a total cost of a little over \$100,000.

“Landing of such a large aircraft did require some doing. There are two rocks with white paint marks, which are the location for the tail wheel and the left front wheel at Greenleaf between the hut and the water tank site.

“An early airlift of sand for filter beds at Lakes was done from the base of the Cog Railroad before the railroad started operation. That airlift consisted of 800 bags of special grade sand. We also took part in one emergency evacuation from the pasture-like area adjacent to Guyot shelter trail. It was just at dusk and the landing in Bethlehem was after dark. The rebuilding of Lakes involved a hundred loads of steel, building material, and of course tons and tons of mortar and concrete mix.

“The material was all staged between the administration building and the service building at Pinkham. That airlift was from the Pinkham parking lot and was done in late March. That was the winter of 1969, when we had 14 feet of snow on the ground and recorded the largest snowfall ever for New England at Pinkham Notch: 76 inches.

“A final note concerning airlifting. When we started using helicopters and pretty much through my term as manager, the companies that did this kind of work did not do any of the rigging. We had to do all rigging and have an inventory of rings, swivels, wire rope and countless other items to pull off the assorted jobs.

“I am not certain as to whether it was dumb luck or God’s will, but nobody was ever injured. George Hamilton and I discussed a few years ago that we pulled off the Mizpah job with not one job related serious injury. The Lakes job was also done with little professional help, and we had no job-related injuries. George was manager and I assistant during the Mizpah construction. For the Lakes reconstruction it was all under my watch.”

When the April 1969 fly-in began, six Antioch College students were already at Lakes, where they had been ushered in a few days before. They would serve as ground crew and Sherpas, clearing pallet loads from the drop zone, and carrying them closer to the hut. To prepare for this work, Bruce had accompanied the Antioch students up the Auto Road to the summit in the television station’s snowcat a few days prior the lift. He then led them through a thick and cold fog to the hut, encouraging each to pay strict attention on the descent to the hut from the cone. His advice: “Keep an eye on me and stay close because if you miss me, you’ll be dead.” They all lived. Bruce assisted the students in opening the hut and then returned to supervise the helicopter operations.

“The day I guided them to the hut, visibility was about 20 feet and the deep snow covered almost all of the cairns,” Bruce said. “None of them had ever been on Mt. Washington and had arrived

the day before at Pinkham and I had given them a pep talk that evening. They followed me very closely. Melvin McKenna (the Pinkham cook) had been to France earlier and had given me a bottle of 180 proof French rum. I produced it before supper that first night. It indeed sedated all of the frazzled nerves.”

1960s

Robert R. Prescott (Pinkham, Greenleaf closing 1959, floater 1961, Carter 1962). “Lakes was short on propane and several of us went up to Lakes to pack the large propane tanks down from the summit of Mt. Washington. During the winter of 1960, I had built my own packboard at Pinkham (still have it – the board weighs 13 pounds empty). We each packed down two of these tanks to Lakes. I weighed one the loads, and it was 230 pounds. This the heaviest I ever carried. Going down hill with this kind of load requires a lot of caution!

“I also remember packing lumber into Carter for a construction project. If I remember correctly, most of the boards that we carried were at least 10 feet long. Apparently a trail crew had come through on the pack trail and had tried to clear the overhead branches so the packers would not get hung up as we were packing in the lumber.

“While we were at Carter, we would pack three to four times a week. If I remember correctly, my heaviest load was 152 pounds — we had a scale at Carter.”

David Raub (Lakes 1960-1961). “Packed five days out of seven, average load between 160 and 180 pounds. In 1961, we were using one tank of gas per day cooking and had our hands full keeping up with the crowds.”

Henry P. “Hank” Rogerson (Donk driver and floater, 1960). “As a floater, I packed nearly every day averaging about 90 pounds. Max load was an unintentional 125 pounds after dunking a load of sand and boards in the first stream crossing on the way up to Galehead.

“As a donk driver, I was dropped at the Zealand packhouse in mid to late June to join a string of 10 donkeys and a gent with previous experience. The donks were fresh out of pasture and the black flies were merciless. I had a pair of hightop work boots, minimal gear and three years’ experience in a livery stable. Before I slept that night, I learned that Joe Dodge Bug Dope was the only thing that worked on black flies, how to fit a packsaddle on a donkey, and that my instructor didn’t cook any better than I did. The next morning I learned how to secure a load to a packsaddle and that the donks would not accept a load they felt was too heavy (about 100 pounds). If you overloaded them, they would lie down and refuse to move until the load was lightened.

“By mid-morning we set forth through the cool damp behind the loaded and unmetered donks. Foof, the lead donk, was experienced and responded to verbal commands if she agreed with them. The rest of the donks followed Foof. And so we all broke each other in hauling non-perishables into Zealand, offloading the cargo, having a bite with the hut crew (the donks got a little water and foraged) and plodding back to the trailhead tent and corral to prepare to do it again the next day.

“The Valley Way trailhead to Madison had a corral for a retired donkey called Paisan. Paisan was friendly, vocal and an escape artist, despite his overgrown hooves that looked like long shoes with turned-up toes. When he got out, he would try to break into the working donks’ corral. When he succeeded everybody got out, including me and my assistant, who would then spend a hour or two getting everybody back to bed.”

Bob Kreitler (Greenleaf 1960, Galehead 1961, miscellaneous opening and closings). Bob packed three times a week. At Galehead, he averaged 90 pounds. “I think I carried slightly more for Greenleaf. Galehead had the original long trail in (about six miles) and this was a long time for the weight to sit on our backs. I carried in my weight to Greenleaf one day with a load of about 128 pounds – a cast iron wood stove. Boots were put on the scales to make it equal my body weight.”

Dr. Peter L. Ward (Lakes 1960-1962). Peter packed three to four times per week, packing 125 pounds on “light” days, 165 pounds on “heavy” days — averaging 140 pounds. “Basically, each week you were cook, then bullcook, and you had 1.5 days off per week. Otherwise, you packed.

“Plus the trail crew would do a lot of trips in early June to get cans and propane supplies stockpiled for the summer. In most of July and August, it was hard to keep up with all the fresh food with four people packing every day.”

Robert K. “Linus” Story Jr. (Construction/Greenleaf 1961, Greenleaf 1962-1964). Linus packed four to five times a week and kept a log. The first year at Greenleaf, he totaled 4,439 pounds, “Most at the Flea — can you believe I kept a log?”

From 1962-1964 at Greenleaf, he packed three times a week or so, averaging 90 pounds per trip.

“Early in the season we also had to carry loads from the base of First Agony because the trip from there up was too rugged for the donks. Those trips were multiple per day and heavier. Had successful back surgery ten years ago.”

Ted Prescott (Pinkham 1961, Carter 1962). “At Carter I think it took a couple of weeks to pack in the initial req, which was (packing) almost every day. There was a floating crew that helped with that too, and Johnny Hodgdon had the donks up there on a couple of occasions, I think. ...

“Once the initial supplies were in, we packed about two, sometimes three times a week. I think the average was about 75 pounds going

into Carter (SS Pierce canned goods!). I remember that my largest load into Carter was 128 pounds, and I think I once packed a larger load into Lakes, but I hesitate to say how much. Again, the haze....”

Allen V. Koop (Lakes 1961-1962, parts of 1963-1964, and then, a generation later, packed about five trips each when his daughters worked at Mad, Gale, and Lone). “The first year at Lakes, I was the smallest on the crew, so once in a while I packed my weight (150), but usually my loads were about 120 to 130. Of course, as you know, we were always told by others that we carried heavier loads only because the trail was so very short, and downhill. But, as you also recall, that’s not completely true...There were those ten tough uphill portions (a few steps each) on the Crawford Path! The bigger guys on the crew that summer probably each packed over 200 at least once, just to do it. I’d guess our loads were usually within 20 pounds either side of 150. We packed every day that we weren’t cook or bullcook.”

Then “The Friendly Huts of the White Mountains” article by William O. Douglas appeared in the August 1961 issue of *National Geographic*. The summer of 1962 was different.

“We expected a lot of people, and we got them, with full house at Lakes (90 people) many nights in July and August, and a maybe one or two a week over 100. To meet the demand we had a seventh man added to the crew, I think at the last minute, much to our delight. There was a lot to pack, especially because in mid-summer we were going through at least one goofer bomb per day.

“So we tried to make sure that two 110-pound bombs got packed each day, plus all the rest of the stuff. In August, we fell behind,

**LINUS PACKED
FOUR TO FIVE
TIMES A WEEK
AND KEPT A LOG...
4,439 POUNDS...**

primarily because two guys sprained ankles. So those of us who could still wobble down the mountain sometimes made two trips per day. I remember one stretch when I had to pack two 150-pound loads a day for about five days. Finally George Hamilton sent the CC to pack one day for us, getting a whole bunch of stuff down to the hut. The crew stayed in the hut, opening the packages as they arrived on the backs of the big CC guys, as at a birthday party!

“You know, there’s just something about packing. Decades later, it was a real blessing to get under a packboard and 70 or 80 again and follow a daughter up the Valley Way or Gale River Trail. Then I got my hip replaced. Hmmm.”

Steve Neubert (Construction Crew 1962, Greenleaf 1963-1964). On CC in 1962, Steve packed from 60 to 100 pounds. “Being a very macho construction crew, we packed twice a day and competed with each other for heaviest pack load. My heaviest load during those two days was 215 pounds, which I packed on the morning of the second day. That set a record for the summer up to that point, but the record lasted only about three hours until another CC member packed in 230 pounds that afternoon. I think we ate most of the food we packed in during those two days, so I am not sure how helpful it all was. But it was a nice break from the daily routine at Carter.”

At Greenleaf: “We packed pretty much every day except the day we were chief cook (every fourth day), since we had no helicopter delivery of supplies and we only had pack donks early in the summer to help with the initial requisition. We met the supply truck twice a week to pick up our last requisition and give them the next one.”

At Greenleaf, “Our packs also ranged from 60 to 100 pounds with the average being around 75 to 80 pounds. They ranged from the small metal propane ‘goofer bombs’ to two to four boxes of supplies stacked up on the board. I believe the official record in the early ’60s was set by Tom Deans at 179 pounds. It was apparently too heavy for him to take a crump stop during the pack trip up the Old Bridle Path, because he was afraid if the pack fell over he would never get it back on. So he just kept going...”

Paul Buffum (Lakes 1962, Madison 1965). At Lakes, Paul packed 150 pounds a trip, five days a week.

At Madison, Paul packed 90 pounds a trip, five days a week.

Syd Havelly (Construction Crew 1964-1969). “If I were to name pack trips that are burned into my brain from the six summers I spent on CC, they would be three:

“That pack trip up to Madison that won me two weeks off from hut duties for overpacking due to George Hamilton’s between-a-rock-and-a-hard-place decision to let me keep employment if I promised never to carry a load that heavy again.

“The 308 pound load down to Lakes, consisting of pipe fittings for the leaching field that nearly did the same, except for the kindness of Carl Blanchard and Fudd the Plumber, who remained mum on the subject.

“And the iron stove out of Lonesome for Steve Liebeskind that did in fact get me exited from the Hut System by Bruce, because I borrowed a goofer car from Pinkham to get to Lonesome to pack said stove for Steve.

“Other than that, I was just a guy who loved packing and thought Mike Lonergan and Willie Ashbrook walked on water because they could basically carry the packhouse up to any hut they wanted. And most of my CC crew, including Da Coach and Sheldon Perry and Mark Kingsbury, could do the same.

“Sometimes we packed every day, certainly three times a week.

Loads were highest at Lakes and we averaged probably 150-plus; Carter maybe 135; Mizpah 125; Madison 115-plus; Zool 125 to 150; Galehead 115 to 120; Greenleaf 120; Lonesome 140 to 150, sometimes higher.”

Doug Dodd (Mizpah 1967, Lakes 1968, 1969, 1970) remembers Syd packing: “Seems to me I helped you weigh in that 308-pound load at Lakes... I remember Fudd the Plumber moving that load by himself. He was twice as big as you. That load consisted of four cast-iron 90-degree elbows to rebuild the septic system. They were about 75 pounds apiece. ... George or Bruce were always trying to catch you overpacking. You were the outlaw packer. I remember you telling me about packing plywood into Zealand (I think) and the load being weighed, and the only reason you didn’t get caught for overpacking was the middle pieces of plywood had slipped down and didn’t get weighed with the rest. Funny what we remember. I remember that we were supposed to have a 100-pound limit. ... We would still be packing Lakes to empty the packhouse if we only packed 100-pound loads.”

Hugh Thompson (Madison 1964). Hugh briefly kept a packing journal. In June and July he recorded carrying loads of 125, 75, 114, 84, 143, 103 and 119 pounds.

“We usually packed down laundry and small goofer bombs. We would trot down. I remember racing Tony Macmillan down Thousand Yards. I was in front and to my utter amazement he took advantage of a short widening in the trail to actually run around me on the outside. Remember, I was already running as fast as I could. A couple of years later Kenny Olson and I, while working Mizpah offshore, had a similar down-hill race but with empty, full-sized propane tanks.

“We usually packed Madison every other day. Every day would have been tough. Bruce Sloat was always countering our complete machismo with mandates to keep our loads within certain limits. To that end, we packed our beer in glass bottles at the beginning of the season so that we could recycle them for home brew for the second part of the summer. For some reason Bruce did not understand our strategy. When he discovered our almost ready-to-drink

cache, he made us dump it all and destroy the bottles. We packed cans the rest of the season. Remember, those were the days of steel, not aluminum, cans.

“The real packer for the hut was Willy Ashbrook—routinely in the mid-100s. Syd Havelly on CC probably brought the all-time record load. ... I think it took him 6 to 8 hours. He had two others with him to help him stand up from crumps. Bruce was at the hut when he arrived and (suspended or fired him on the spot for breaking company rules). In all fairness, by no means do I intend to make Bruce out as a villain. From the perspective of age, his prudence was an absolutely necessary balance to our out-sized hubris. Besides, rebellion was part of the fun. Still is, sometimes.”

Dick Low (Madison 1964-1965). He packed every other day, an average load of 115 to 120 pounds.

Bill Clifford (Mizpah 1965). He packed about three times a week, averaging more than 100 pounds.

“Willy Ashbrook was hutmaster and could carry heavy loads so we all tried to keep up. I think we all tried to carry our weight (I was 170); doubt I did that but maybe got close?”

Bob Stillings (Madison 1966). “The rotation meant that you packed every day you weren’t cook, assistant cook, doing cleaning

“...MIKE LORNEGAN AND
WILLIE ASHBROOK WALKED
ON WATER BECAUSE THEY
COULD...CARRY THE
PACKHOUSE...”

SYD HAVELY

or on days off. My heaviest load was 110 pounds, and the average was around 85 pounds. Peter Trafton and Paul Bartlett were the workhorses — I think they both averaged over 100 pounds.”

Bill Barrett (1961-64, then briefly in 1967 and 1973. At one time or another at every hut). “I did not consider a packtrip to any hut, even ones with a demanding packtrail, to be worthwhile unless I had at least 100 pounds. For Lakes, and for huts with ‘easy’ packtrails (Zealand, Lonesome), I usually tried for 125 pounds or more. I think my heaviest load at Lakes was 180 pounds, a load that I dumped on the flats of the Crawford Path when the extra weight caused a normally stable rock to shift. Luckily, I dumped the load without incident, but getting it back on — on the flats, with no good crump rock nearby — was the most difficult feat of packing that I ever attempted or accomplished.

“From my observations, today’s crews pack only on truck days, and rarely exceed loads of 80 pounds. However, this does not make them any less ‘worthy’ than pre-helicopter crews. Indeed, if there is no longer the need to pack heavy and often, it is better not to do it, and this should pay orthopedic dividends in later life for today’s crews.”

Thomas A. Loucks (Greenleaf 1967-1968). Thomas packed every other day, averaging 109 pounds. “I kept a log and have never forgotten the number.

“I am relatively small compared to many hutmen (5’9”), but came to the huts in great shape (high school record 2-mile run), and think I was considered one of the faster packers. Yet, while I had no trouble carrying more than 100 pounds, and averaged 109, the heaviest load I ever carried about killed me and was not a whole lot heavier — 118 pounds. This always struck me as curious. The ‘decline curve’ was pretty steep!”

Brian Copp, (Lakes 1967) “Skinniest hutman ever!”. He packed three to four times per week, taking about 130 to 140 pounds per load. “Just to say I did it I packed my weight only once —165 pounds.

“At Lakes, sometimes we would pack the empty propane gas cylinders back up to the summit. They had been brought in by helicopters on pallets at opening. Each weighed about 60 pounds empty – with the packframe it was close to 75 pounds. Ed Damon from our crew loved to do it, so we let him most of the time, since he was in training for the Dartmouth Ski Team over the summer.”

Christopher S. Nesbitt (Pinkham 1967, Lakes 1968, CC 1969-1970). “Nancy and I had the pleasure of watching our John work in the huts for six years. I must admit to more than a few moments of living vicariously through his experience. One of the best moments with him was a packing trip we did together when he was AHM at Zealand in 1997. It was one of those great days in the Whites with crystal clear skies and light winds. I had bought two cases of wine (one red and one white, of course!) for the crew to enjoy for the summer and wanted to pack it in myself. John met us at the pack house and lent me a board. We had a great time on the trail. It was a crumpled pack of a little over 80 pounds. I can’t remember how long it took but the last climb up to the hut was longer and steeper than I had remembered from days as a hutman!”

At Lakes (1968) Chris packed almost every day; in late July and August the crew might pack two or three times a day (including packing empty gas bombs back up to the summit). “My biggest load was 212 pounds, which was not bad for a skinny a 150-pound guy. However, the best pack trip I was ever on was with Syd Havelly. I spotted for Syd on the trip he made when he carried 308 pounds — six cast iron elbows for the new hut — from the Summit to Lakes. I guess the average load for the summer was about 150 pounds but I am not sure.

“Construction — packing for the construction crew resulted in some very strange loads. I packed lumber into the first tent site at Liberty Springs shelter. The boards were so tall they were con-

stantly getting caught on the tree limbs. We packed in dynamite and the detonating system for blasting when the CC was building the tent sites at the Nancy Pond shelter. Great fun to actually press the plunger with Sloat and seeing Conway granite fly through the air! Biggest load uphill was to Lonesome — 178 pounds of lumber for another rebuilding effort.”

Thom Davis (Carter, Greenleaf, and Zealand — about one month each in 1968). “Packed three out of every four days at Carter, where I shared in cooking, and almost every day at Greenleaf and Zealand, where I did not share in the cooking. Packed between 100 and 140 pounds each carry, with the higher loads at Zealand greater than my weight at the time. I may have paid the price with long-term degeneration of my cervical spine.”

Brian Fowler (Lakes 1967-1968). “My max load was 186 pounds and my average of 123 pounds. ... We were always quite close to the line on necessary supplies, which that summer (1968) included mainly food and consumables. All we had flown in that year, early in the evolution of airlifting and exclusive of construction materials, were our summer’s supply of 100-pound gas bombs, 50-pound bags of flour and sugar, and a basic supply of No. 10 canned stuff (Spanish Rice, Chili, Hams, etc.).”

Chuck Stata (Pinkham 1963, CC 1965, Lonesome 1969). “As one who worked the ‘packing’ era of the huts, it has always been one of the things that set working in the hut apart from everything else for me. As a small guy (5’3” at 135 pounds) I was never one to be considered macho or even suspected to be a hutman when off the mountain. This was the time of record loads and records for everything else as well. As I recall, the target for everyone was to pack their weight. Some did, some didn’t — but my recollection was that packing your weight was an acknowledged and regarded accomplishment.”

At Pinkham, Chuck packed twice a week, averaging 85 pounds. His heaviest load was 128 pounds.

With the CC, he packed in the 120-pound range. That summer, his heaviest load to Lakes was 178 pounds. His heaviest load to Mizpah was 158 pounds.

At Lonesome, Chuck packed every day, some days twice, usually in the 110-pound range, with some loads in the 130s.

His final pack trip was in 1984 (“when my daughter was crew at Lonesome”) when he carried 85 pounds and retired his Limmers.

John “Moose” Meserve (CC Mizpah and Greenleaf 1965, Mizpah 1966-1968). In 1965, Moose packed twice a day at Mizpah construction “the week or so before opening ... 2 times a day” and six days a week at Greenleaf.

In his summers at Mizpah, he packed four to five times a week.

“The weight really depended on crew mix. 1966 was lighter weights and ‘speed’ was the driving force. Average was probably around 90 pounds. 1967 was a weight-driven crew. We even had barbells and stuff at the hut. Average was more in the 110 to 115-pound range. We set many records that summer. Willy Ashbrook carried 235 pounds one day. I hit my personal best at 195 pounds. How stupid we all were. 1968 was back to lighter is better. I did not pack as much as I had torn my knee up playing lacrosse. Averaged back in the 95-pound range.”

Dave “Rattlesnake” Eastman (CC Mizpah 1965). Dave packed two to three times a week, averaging from 109 to 114 pounds.

“I did pack my own weight from Zealand out in blankets (!), when I weighed 145 as a skinny kid then!”

Douglas Dodd (Mizpah 1967, Lakes 1968-1970). In the Summer of Love (1967), Doug packed three or four times a week, probably averaging 100 pounds. At Lakes in 1968, he packed four to five times a week, averaging 140 pounds. At Lakes in 1969, he packed four to five times a week, averaging 150 pounds. At Lakes in 1970, he packed four to five times a week, averaging 160 pounds, packing twice a day and three times a day on occasion, “to empty the pack

house so we could go to Inn Unique before next rec.

"I remember 2,500-pound requisitions, so that was 5,000 pounds per week that we had to get down. I remember (Garth) Quillia and (Chris) Richardson packing five trips of 100 pounds each in one day. I remember Lassie (Deadhead, F) packing two or three loads of 100 pounds in one day. I wouldn't let her pack over 100. I am sure she could have.

"I remember packing empty bombs out (these loads weighed 90 to 100 pounds with a board). I remember many of us packed in at least one load over 200. In 1970, Lakes has a seven-man crew. There was always one or often two on days off at a time. That summer, someone was always sick, too. This left three or four of us to empty the pack house before the next rec arrived. There was supposed to be a Hut Committee rule against packing more than 100 pounds. If we followed that rule, we would still be packing today."

Carlton W. "Chip" Ellms III (Madison, 1968). Chip packed "at least three trips per week. Average was about 50 pounds.

"On the very hot days we packed wearing only kilts and the front rolled up so as not to chafe our legs. If we heard someone coming down the trail we would unroll the kilt for courtesy. If they came upon fast, the goofers got a show. No one ever complained as far as we know. In those days the outside and only shower had no curtain or screening. As it faced the upcoming trail, I am sure some folks got a thrill whether they wanted it or not. The good old days."

Josh Alper (Construction Crew, Lakes, Lonesome Lake, 1969).

"We did a number of pack trips on snowshoes to bring clean blankets (perhaps 70-pound loads) into Carter and a number of other huts: Average two per week.

"During the initial construction season (May to June), we probably averaged twice weekly pack trips – sometimes empty propane bottles up to the summit of Washington, or food and materiel down to Lakes. One would alternate carrying down a 90-pound bag of concrete on one trip, and on the next trip you would hoist a bag on one shoulder and someone would put another bag on your other shoulder and you'd trudge down to the hut. This was agony for a little guy like me.

"Tony Buckovich asked me one day, 'Hey, Alper, what's the most you've packed?'"

"I don't know, Tony, probably my biggest load was an empty bottle to the summit, that'd be about 125 pounds."

"Tony replied, 'I've packed 600 pounds.'"

"No way, Tony."

"Hell, yes. When we were on the run in Korea, I carried out two dead GIs and all their gear, as well as my own."

"At Lonesome, we generally packed four or more times a week (80 pounds). We carried out all of our empty propane bottles, a 125-pound load. There were a number of empties lingering from the prior season. Galen Gilbert came in on days off, and offered to carry out a large bottle on his way down. He tied on the load on the upper steps of the lower bunkhouse. When he stood up, he lost his balance and the load went over his head with Galen still wearing the pack. I can see it now all in slow motion, like a Wiley Coyote cartoon — he arched up and the load carried him, then tumbled forward landing him upside down with his legs in the air. It was astonishingly funny."

Eric Bauman (Pinkham 1968, Lakes 1969, Carter Notch 1970).

"At Lakes, my recollection is that we packed about four days a week, with an occasional day for helping with bringing down some construction materials (like one day with icing conditions and strong winds that turned our 8-to 10-foot planking into sails).

"At Carter, I think we did about the same — four times a week on average. But as a gray beard, my memory isn't what it used to be. Or perhaps I've suppressed the memories of the pain. Though I have fond memories of that great crump spot at the base of the

summit cone on Mount Washington (forgot the name), where you could settle into the depressions just off the trail and rest for a moment looking out over the Southern Presidentials."

At Lakes, Eric packed 100 to 125 pounds. At Carter, 80 to 95 pounds.

John Schultz (Lonesome 1967-1968, Zealand 1969, Carter 1970-1971, Lonesome 1972). In 1967 he packed an average of 105 pounds four or five times to Galehead. In 1968 at Lonesome he packed an average of 120 pounds more than once a day (with a few heavier loads). In 1969 at Zealand he packed an average of 115 pounds (with a few heavier loads) once a day. In 1970 at Carter, he packed an average of 110 pounds four to five times a week. In 1971 at Carter, he packed an average of 110 pounds three to four times a week. In 1972 at Lonesome, he packed an average of 110 pounds three to four times a week. ("Hmmm...., could there be a trend "hidden" within the data?")

Annette Shultz (Carter 1971, Lonesome 1972). In 1971 at Carter, Annette packed 65 to 70 pounds twice a week; in 1972 at Lonesome, she packed 65 to 70 pounds twice a week.

John Shultz remembers: "For the 'warm up' year at Pinkham and the next couple I was perhaps overly enthusiastic about packing, but gradually calmed down to find a level of weight and frequency that was more appropriate for me. If I had started there, would my knees and back be healthier now? I doubt it. Running down to pack (and the infrequent but inevitable crash and burn) and skiing bumps and etc., etc., etc., probably would have been quite sufficient to see to a slightly gimpy 'old age.'"

"Annette also, accidentally, took 117 (I'm pretty sure that's the right number) up to Lonesome and (again this is my memory, not hers) was far more embarrassed about goofing up the weight than proud about setting (what we understood at the time was) a women's pack record."

Tom Johnson (Mizpah, 1968-1969, Zealand 1970, Lakes 1971). "For my part I worked for the AMC for six summers — four in the huts if you exclude my first year as a Pinkham weenie and last running the guided hikes program.

"I almost always enjoyed packing. I was never an uber-packer, but certainly enjoyed the workout. It was also a great excuse to get to the valley and pick up girls at the Crawford House or swim at the Inn Unique.

"As for weights, I'd guess most of the time I carried 90 to 100 pounds while working at Mizpah (125 pounds maximum). At Zealand, the usual load was 100 to 110 pounds, and I remember carrying in one 150 pounder. At Lakes, loads were in the 100 to 125 pound range."

1970s

Dave "Gooker" Donahue (Greenleaf 1969, Carter 1970, Lakes 1971, Trail Crew, fall 1971, floater 1972). Dave packed three and, on occasion, four times a week. "I always packed in from daze off, unless it was in the middle of the night. Those were the more exciting trips — I rarely had a flashlight with me." He packed from a minimum of 70 pounds to a maximum of 95. The most he carried to Greenleaf was 92.

"When packing the empty propane tanks up to the summit from Lakes, we sometimes attached a Styrofoam cup with a piece of hose to make it look like you were taking shots of oxygen. When I was with the trail crew, we packed a rock drill up to the shelter that was built to replace the pond between Flea and Galehead huts, and was overused. The trail crew regulars said they planned on an easy day by having the hutboy (me) pack it up all the way. Being the only hutboy in the group, I just took the kidding. But when we hiked in, just two of us, the trail crew regular refused to give it up, and packed it in all the way. I think it weighed 90 pounds. I was the one with the easy day. It was an interesting observation in human

pysche or whatever you want to call it.”

Doug George (Pinkham 1968, Madison 1969, Madison 1970, Greenleaf 1971, Greenleaf 1972, Madison 1973, Tuckerman 1975-1976). “Two days after reporting to Pinkham Notch Camp for duty I went on days off rotation. I drove over to the Cog base with rookie Steve Bridgewater and up the Ammi to Lakes. Dougie Dodd was cooking and sent me to the summit to pack — my first pack trip. At this time, I didn’t know the number 30 with a circle around it in black magic marker on the box was the weight of the box so had to judge how much (forgot the board weighed anything) to carry. Tied on a box of canned pears, case of Hersheys, and something else I can’t remember and figured it to weigh around 60 pounds. It was raining and foggy, and you couldn’t see the hut. I headed three times, had to crump every hundred yards or so, and pretty much thought I wasn’t going to make it as a hut boy. . . . My first load at Lakes weighed in at 116 and I figured I was redeemed, that I might make it as a hut boy after all.

“At Madison in 1969, I remember we packed every other day. We packed this often not because we wanted to, but because we HAD to or we wouldn’t keep the flour and sugar bins full. Back then, we were also packing bread, meat, oranges, and eventually Hershey bars for T.Ls.

“We all were ‘encouraged’ to hump up at least 80 (or was it 90) pounds per trip. In my opinion, the best load, due to its compactness and ease of attachment, was a case of eggs and a case of oranges (although you did have the added worry about all the eggs making it up in once piece). I recall this combination weighed in at around 115 pounds with board. I packed this much probably three or four times this summer. . . . I think I averaged 90 pounds per load that summer. . . .”

At Madison in 1970, Doug still packed every other day, and probably averaged around 90 pounds.

At Greenleaf in 1971, Doug appreciated the change in pack trails. “What was great about working at Flea after Chez Belle was the pack trail. At Greenleaf packing from the valley .9 of a mile past the hut to the summit of Lafayette was about the equivalent of packing to Madison. Whereas you would have to leave Madison by 10 to return by 4, at Greenleaf you could leave after lunch and actually be back up before 4.

“This enabled all sorts of valley adventures that Madison did not . . . One day while contemplating what to do with 10 pounds of nasty looking stew beef we decided to serve beef fondue. At 1 p.m. this necessitated a trip to the valley. Ned Baldwin and Gordy Crim went to four hardware stores before they found fondue pots in St. Js. After scoring 4-1 gallon jugs of Gallo they returned to the hut in time for a late, but fashionable dinner at 7. An entry in the log book the next morning read, ‘Here’s to the crew that turned the beef for beef stew into beef fondue, and stewed the guests instead.’ Now that’s what mountain hospitality is all about!

“This was the summer when we most competed for heaviest load. I didn’t keep track of others, but mine was 127 which included a case of large blue cans of Maxwell House coffee.”

Packing could be an adventure. “About half way through the summer, on a particularly hot day, Channing (Snyder), Ned and I were packing. I was second in line. We were sweating bullets, as they say. On a section of the old (now relocated), cliff-like trail just

“...WE SOMETIMES ATTACHED A STYROFOAM CUP WITH A PIECE OF HOSE TO MAKE IT LOOK LIKE WE WERE TAKING SHOTS OF OXYGEN.”

DAVE DONAHUE

below Tramway Watch, I took a vertical power step and found myself face-to-face with a set of bare breasts attached to a rather cute young hippy girl! . . . This girl, I’ll call her Harmony, was totally unabashed and carried on quite a conversation as I caught my breath and put my tongue back in my mouth. At the hut, Channing Snyder met me at the back door, with bug eyes. Harmony was THE topic of conversation. A short time later, we found her and her boyfriend swimming naked in the water supply (Eagle Lake). Of course, we could have nothing of this polluting of our drinking water by a naked girl, so, in a show of force, all four of us went down to the lake to evict them, and evoked much shouting and name calling. It was then that I realized that not everyone loved the AMC.”

At Greenleaf in 1972, Doug remembers packing out 40 years of gaboon.

Gordon Crim (Greenleaf 1971, Madison 1972, Mizpah 1973). Generally he packed every other day. “We needed one day to recover. We packed from 110 to 125 pounds, except when we were making ice cream and needed an express trip with a block of ice. At Greenleaf, Doug George was HM; Ned Baldwin AHM; Channing Snyder, crew; yours truly, rookie.

“Didn’t really work on heli lifts, but made my first trip to ‘Flea on board the helicopter, to Doug’s chagrin (‘How come the rookie gets to ride?’). I think it was one of the first years of using the helicopter, and mostly it brought propane gas bottles and a few barrels of dry staples. Also one of the first years of using the new BS (Bruce Sloat) outhouse system, wherein they hauled out full barrels by air.”

Tim Traver (Lakes 1971, Mizpah 1972, Lakes 1973, Madison 1974, Lakes 1975, Tuckerman 1976). “I worked at Lakes the last year of the sauna on the lake, the last of the ‘lusty old hut system’ by my reckoning – summit girls coming down and giving their sweet delights to everyone but me, the year we adopted Mr. Bradford Swan, retired *Providence Journal* reporter, who wrote the poem “Eagles Below Me” — we adored that guy.

“1972 Mizpah, under the august leadership of Chris Stewart, who, like a good parent, allowed any sort of behavior as long as it was kind. (Well, we stabbed a few mice at night in the kitchen.) This was the summer when the hut crew all assumed the same name (the five Lance Bulbo brothers, after Albert Camus) when the trail crew built Nauman Shelters and lived an uneasy truce with us.

“1973 Lakes, lost my virginity to the vodka girl and bonded in a brotherly sort of way only (honest) with David Cleveland. Sang John Denver songs most nights and performed Cheech and Chong skits for goofers as D.C.’s sidekick. The best kitty take of all five summers. Numerous run-ins with illegal campers on the tundra (finally had the law behind us).

“1974, Madison, hutmaster (Nixon resigned, the plane crashed, fell briefly in love, began to plot the murder of D.C.).

“1975 Lakes hutmaster. Did virtually nothing except rest on laurels since crew was so competent. Drank too much, entertained my future wife, ran from a few others, and chased a few more. Year of the famous stewpot incident. That was the night of swimming incident, all night high, full house, Der pans dropped, thinnest bread-slice competition, dish washing competition fiasco (so much of the problem of human nature comes down to mistaken perception of the ascendancy of competition – truly Darwin and the devil’s work). Suffice to say, snow, bitter cold clear day and an undercast on last morning closing two days later. The most glorious exit from the birth canal of mother AMC as could be imagined.

“How often did I pack? C’mon. These were all the high huts, before helicopters. We were packing every day and all night as much

weight as our brawny backs could take. Sometimes we slathered mud all over our bodies and came up the trail like wolves, we packed commando ALWAYS. We forgot English and all other normal languages and took to howling. Hurting was our stock in trade. We packed through electrical storms, direct lightning strikes and snow squalls. The packhouse at Madison was...whatever. Nobody cares. Do you want to see an X-ray of my neck vertebrae today? How about the numbness in my right arm? MRI that. The tire of fat around my waist? (Well, can't blame everything on the AMC).

"How much weight on average? I'll tell you about weight. As a female-fearing, wasp-raised, sexually repressed, guilt-ridden, highly-educated future inheritor of halls of American power (if rules were followed which they were not) person, I carried a massive psychological burden that evolved as did levels of responsibility, nearness of the inevitable leaving of the huts, and inversely so with gradual loss of self-consciousness. The weight — the real weight — it's all intangible. Two hundred and forty pounds once (14 crumps, by the way), was easy. It's all the other burdens that we carry. It's not the weight on our backs, it's the weight on our consciences. (I am available for the counseling of old hutman and all others at \$250/hour).

"Of course everything above this line is fiction. I love those damn mountains and the women that worked in them."

David L. "Captain" Allen (Construction Crew 1971-1973). "I worked at all the huts doing all kinds of repair and maintenance, beginning with a major renovation at Galehead. In 1971, to satisfy my yearning to be a 'real hut boy,' I worked days off with the Lakes crew. They took me in and I was made to feel like regular crew through the course of the summer, on my days off from the CC.

"I packed tools, maintenance supplies and all kinds of other stuff a couple of times per week; 50 pounds would be average.

"I worked on helicopter lifts with Joe Brigham. One of my most memorable assignments was packing a heavy sewage pumping hose across the ridge from Mizpah to Lakes, where I rendezvoused with George Winslow.

"This was around the first of June and we had to stir frozen crap in the Lakes septic holding tanks with long two-by-fours so that it could be hand pumped into 55-gallon drums.

"We stirred and pumped frantically in order to keep up with Joe Brigham who helicoptered the stuff to Pinkham. As I recall, this was in 1972. The weather was fine and Joe was really doing quick turnarounds, so Bruce Sloat decided it would be a good time to remove some of the contents of the Lakes gaboons. Well, we took the lid off the gaboons and managed to fill one drum with a long 'honey spoon' but the smell was so revolting that we couldn't continue. We radioed this information to Bruce Sloat and he said to get help from the hut crew. I forget who on the crew came down to assist but after smelling and seeing the work, they bolted. So we put the lids back on the gaboons and returned to the relatively pleasant task of stirring and pumping frozen crap.

Brian Diskin (Lakes 1972, Galehead 1973-1974). "Packing at Lakes: 1972 — Mostly every day except when the cook or bull cook. Would make two trips if I met the truck in the a.m. One day met the truck and came down with a load. Second trip up, packed LP tank (110 pounds) up to summit. Packed third load back down. Working at Lakes and packing downhill would allow 90 to 110 pounds.

"Packing at Galehead: 1973 — With a crew of three and only two

with someone on days off maybe three or four times a week. Weight in the 75 to 85 pound range.

"Galehead: 1974 — I think this was the last year Galehead was an all-male crew and the trips were still the same. Weights still the same. We had airlifts at both Lakes and Galehead. Worked on the receiving end of airlifts at Galehead."

Bob Gearheart (Tuckerman Ravine 1972, Lakes 1973, Mizpah Fall 1973, Galehead 1974). "One to two days a week packing. I hated packing, would offer to cook for others to avoid it. 50 to 75 pounds per load."

Nancy Thomas (Guided hikes 1972, Lonesome Lake 1973, Greenleaf 1974). "I am hoping that my memory for averages is correct. Maximums I am quite sure are reality, because they only happened once and were memorable.

"In 1972, I led Guided Hikes with TJ Johnson. Packed 60 to 70 pounds a couple of times to 'help out' and thought I'd die, but didn't.

"1973: Assistant Hutmaster at Lonesome Lake. I averaged 80 to 85 pounds, three or four times a week (only three crew members then).

"I once did 115 pounds. It wasn't really intentional. I had convinced my little sister to pack with me, and she just couldn't manage once we got a couple of hundred yards up the trail. So I took on another 20 pounds or so and was amazed when we weighed in at the hut.

"What was most interesting was packing bombs down. The full tanks were air-lifted in, but the helicopter couldn't get low enough to pick up the empty tanks. They were a bear to strap onto the board, and I often had to stop and re-tie the load.

"And I believe they weighed about 80 pounds, empty (though my memory could be exaggerating there). At any rate, it was a heavy down-load, but it was worth it all to see the looks on hikers' faces and especially campers down at Lafayette Place when they saw a 'mere' woman with a full-sized propane tank on her back.

"1974: Hutmaster at Greenleaf. As first woman hutmaster in the system, I wanted to be sure there wasn't any question that we could pull our weight in terms of packing, though we had a great crew and there was never any pressure from other crew members. I averaged 80 to 85 pounds, three times a week, sometimes more often. My birthday present to myself (July 29) that summer was packing 95 pounds up the Bridle Path just to show myself I could do it.

"Since I worked fall and winter '73 and '74, I did get to do some helicop-

ter lifts with Joe as well as some openings with him in the early spring. Getting the hooks onto the full crappers and ready to haul was memorable. Always prayed hard that it wouldn't fall and break open near the hut."

Jack Tracy (Lakes 1974, Madison 1975, Greenleaf 1976, Zealand 1977). "At Lakes, we packed twice and sometimes three per day. Plus we packed out bombs daily it seems. We were the last of the non-airlifted crews. We packed all our initial which our hutmaster over-rec'd BIG Time. In fact, we were still packing out initial up until closing!

"It was a hard-core crew, with very strong packers. My average was 155 a load (my weight). Jon Davie, Joe Gill, Sam Osborne, Gary James, Paul Boghossian and Jean Farquhar. There were three hard-core nordic skiers, and none of us wanted to 'let the side down.' We also did a serious amount of raiding that summer. We

"I ONCE DID 115 POUNDS....I TOOK ON ANOTHER 20 POUNDS OR SO AND WAS AMAZED WHEN WE WEIGHED IT AT THE HUT...."

NANCY THOMAS

were TUNDRA. Invincible and unstoppable. A life-changing experience that proved to me that nothing was impossible. Nothing.

“And the trou-less pack trip to the summit, only to be greeted by Huts Manager Joel T. White. He was obviously quite impressed. He sent us a picture showing us gathered around the old pack shack that stood against the old Obs. Our butts exposed, attempting a serious conversation with the Boss. An Obs employee shot the photo. Joel sent it to us with a note on the back saying, ‘This is how a Huts Manager judges the success of his summer.’

“At Madison, we packed two or maybe three times a week, my average of 110 pounds. Again a great skier on the crew became my pack mate – Hutmaster Dave Cleveland. Contrasted with lots of whirly trips with my AHM Bill ‘it’s ssssshowtime’ Oliver. A few crumpleless packs plus the obligatory *Chemin des Dames* pack trip. The crux was getting the pack board around the ‘key hole’ squeeze.

“At Greenleaf, the first ‘one-pot’ hut. Whatever we didn’t pack in turkey mass, we made up for with Jack Daniels and enough crew steak for three steak meals a day. As I recall, Bill Blais and I set a record that summer for packing weight by humping a full gas bomb down to the pump house. A nightmare load since the path was well covered with krummholz. My average was probably about 115 pounds a trip.

“My worse trip was with Bill Blais, on one of those 100-degree, 100-percent humidity days, after a long evening of drink. I bivied just below the First Agony, after attempting to suck the salt out of the corned beef. I did make breakfast, however.

“My most interesting trip was a trip initiated to solve a grave problem, a rescue of the highest order: No Jack Daniels for supper. I volunteered and raced down the Bridle Path in 16 minutes.

Forgetting it was Sunday and no liquor stores open, I rummaged hotels in Franconia for a bottle of the precious fluid. Success! Then I hiked up in rip-roaring thumpers, including an indirect strike on the ridge. Wow, what a hutman will do for a drink.

“At Zealand, my retirement duty as hutmaster. Management thought they would cool my jets. HA ! Definitely, my heaviest uphill pack trip average. Probably over 135 pounds, with a max of 185. Twice a week. Get it all up the hill on the truck day was the motto.

“Lily Dean and Huts Manager-to-be Barbara Wagner were top-flight packers. The rookie wasn’t.

“How much weight did you carry on each pack trip? Truth? Yes. To the best of my ability. The glorious pain of the experience is tattooed on my soul for eternity.

“My very first pack trip was with Tim Traver. As rookies, Fred Walsh and I volunteered for blanket packing into Lakes before opening day and whatever that gathering was called, on a wild, wet, windy day.

“On the way up, I farted loudly on the truck trip and being a rookie had the audacity to apologize. To which Tim dismissed my apology as absolutely unnecessary: ‘We fart and burp all the time.’

“At the summit, Fred and I learned how to tie on our loads using a diamond hitch, etc. pathetic load by comparison to the standards of the day, but our first trip. Boards loaded with blankets, Tim led Fred then I down the trail. As Fred stepped off the ‘diving board’ (all of 100 meters from the summit), a gust blew him head over heels off the diving board — crash !!!”

David L. Hall (Zealand 1974, Lakes 1975, Carter (AHM) 1976, Greenleaf (HM) 1977). David recalled that he packed “daily when not cooking.” How much did he pack? “Enough to destroy my hips. Like Jack Tracy, I believed then that anything was possible. Unlike Jack, I no longer believe that.”

Bill Blais aka “Hutboy,” “Uber Hutboy,” “Bronzed Hut God,” “Titan Wrestling with the Gods,” etc. (Lakes 1975, Greenleaf 1976, Mizpah 1977, Lakes 1978). “Weight averages were pathetic in ‘75 (despite good looks, etc.) due to post-Afghanistan illnesses, but also

felt especially weak packing with (Tim) Traver and (David) Hall, both of whom routinely packed in the 150 range. I weighed 130 that summer and averaged more like 100. I remember Tim coming down one day with the entire rec (200-plus pounds) on a dare.

“‘76, 115-pound range. (Jack) Tracy whipped me into shape by shaming me with his routine 135 pounds up the Bridle Path but the ham (not corned beef) was my idea so I was smarter anyway.

“‘77 I went big — no airlift, packed every day, once took 175 (cases of beer for Octoberfest) and ran into a girl with a Doberman who told me about her friend Rusty from the night before — There ought to be more dudes like Rusty in da world...”

“‘78 I went wuss — Joanne Beckett packed more bombs than me. But unlike her husband (Tracy) and Hall, I still am ambulatory.”

Lincoln Cleveland (Pinkham 1975, Madison 1976, Lakes closing 1977, Carter AHM 1978, Madison HM 1979). “I simply cannot compete on the heavy-lifting numbers of my esteemed colleagues, and therefore feel like the spindly-legged wuss that I was. On the other hand, I have no knee or back issues as my 50th birthday approaches. I happened to have worked with two Huts Managers to be... Dave Warren at Madison ‘76, whose large frame and heavy packing loads fit the hut god legends, and had me in awe. Instructive was the contrast with Mike Torrey at Madison ‘79, whose packing style defined the ‘relay load.’

“He would try to pack 90 to 100 pounds, 30 pounds of which would be a weekly case of beer. He would always have to undo his load after trying to lighten it by a can or three, would drop some fresh or frozen in the woods (usually well before Thousand Yards) and continue up with the beer. He’d promise to pick it up next trip, only to repeat the process, so that there was always something in the woods, and always something in his bloodstream.

“My personal best at Madison was 90 pounds crumpleless in 90 degree weather, followed by an all-night Lakes raid across the ridge and back.

“Madison ‘79 was the ‘airlift hut of the system.’ The septic system was being replaced, so we used outhouses on the leaching fields/heliport. Not only that, but Brad Washburn from the Boston Museum of Science was doing a high peaks re-mapping project with lasers. I am proud to say that my entire crew and our personal was flown in that summer.

“Not only that, but I arranged to have former donkskinners and Randolph legends Jack Boothman and Gordon Lowe flown up for August Fest, not to mention some of the Pinkham secretarial staff. This was particularly noteworthy since Gordon and Jack had been in some sort of feud for years and years and apparently was the first time they had spoken.

“Finally, at Carter we made a ‘scenes you’d like to see in the huts’ super-8 movie featuring Ellen Hartwell as a bikini-clad nymph ministering to the needs of a sweaty hutboy (Jon Leonard), mopping his brow and pouring him a cool glass of water. Sadly, but to Ellen’s relief, this film has disappeared (unless Joel Mumford still has it).”

Andrea Lukens (Carter 1975, Lonesome Lake 1976-1977).

“At Carter, twice a week, 65 pounds. Both years at Lonesome Lake, twice a week, 75 pounds.”

Maria Many Gail (Carter 1976, Mizpah 1977, Carter 1978, Lakes 1979). “I’m surprised your survey doesn’t ask how everyone’s knees are. I’ve had surgery on both of mine...”

“As I remember, I packed two to three times a week at Carter and Mizpah, 75 to 90 pounds. Probably four times a week at Lakes, 65 to 80 pounds, coming downhill. How much did those empty gas bombs weigh? I think I did one or two of those, up.”

John Braunstein (Pinkham 1977, Greenleaf 1978). “At Greenleaf, packed two to three times a week; roughly 80 pounds a trip.”

Andrew Cook (Pinkham 1969, Lakes 1970, Lonesome 1971). “At

Pinkham, I had to beg for a chance to pack. Once I packed an 85-pound bag of concrete to Carter. Mike Bridgewater was the hutmaster and he had a super assistant, Dave Bird. I had no idea what an ass load was or how to tie on, and that for sure was an ass load and a long and ugly trip.

“Occasionally I packed 40-pound cases of chocolate bars up to Tucks on these super old pack boards that were just two boards held together by some cross pieces, no corset or padding. It worked fine... . And I got to pack blankets out of Carter when they closed that summer — I had over 100 pounds on a crummy ‘emergency’ board. It was too narrow and really dug into my shoulders, but I did it and had fun! The ‘Der (Comander Robert Marvel) was there and a whole closing crew. Great time.

“At Lakes, we packed Saturday (trips for me — rec day), Sunday — usually one trip for me, Wednesdays (three trips for me) and Thursday usually one trip. I typically packed 150 pounds each trip (down hill). That summer I attempted to break Syd Havelly’s record and failed. I only brought in 278 pounds and left the record part somewhere on the trail in bits of debris and crushed vegetables. Syd did 308. I wonder if anyone ever broke that?

“We sometimes packed empty bombs uphill. I recall Eben Damp took two up at one time one day, and he bushwhacked up!

“At Lonesome we didn’t have much of a pack trail, so I tried to push it. Early in the season I typically did three trips on rec day to try to get a workout. And I pounds up total one day in three trips. But I may be off, maybe it was 400. Anyway it’s all in the goofer book, I kept careful track of every load we packed. I always packed 100 at Lonesome.

“But by the end of the summer, the loads were way down, we had taken so much up. So we started packing any hut we could. I did Greenleaf several times. . . . When I packed Greenleaf, I usually ran down and then packed Lonesome. But the loads were light at Lonesome and the end of the summer so I only got to take 60 or so up to Lonesome.

“And then you remember the day I met Chris Stewart in the pack house at Madison late that summer? I took 130 up that day — low and slow. Without a doubt, it was my all-around best personal effort! Chris hung in with me until Thousand Yards and then took off. I think he was cold and tired of waiting for me. I was crumping too much, but I was tired! But it was a great pack trip, I appreciated his company, and I remember the entire trip to this day.”

Marty Womer (Zealand 1972, Madison 1973, Galehead 1974). “At Zealand, I think we each packed every third day. At Madison, I think we packed about two to three times per week. At Galehead, I think we also packed about two to three times per week.

“At Zealand, I had a goal of packing my own weight by the end of the summer, which I did not succeed in doing. I probably started my rookie summer packing about 50 pounds, but worked up to packing 119 pounds, at a time when I weighed 128 pounds. That was by far my highest weight, and I suspect that it was rare that I packed more than 90 pounds. I probably averaged about 80 pounds over the summer.

“At Madison and Galehead, I averaged about 55 to 60 pounds, and I was really not able to pack a lot more than perhaps 65. I doubt that I ever packed more than 70 pounds in to either Madison or Galehead.

Jon Leonard (Pinkham 1977, Carter 1978-1979, Madison 1981). “At both Carter and Madison, the pattern was pretty much the same: If you were not cooking, you were packing, with an occasional day off. So I would say we packed three times a week. At the beginning of the summers at Carter, the

loads were in the 50 to 75 pound range (I weighed about 170 pounds at the time). By July, the load weight went up to around 100 pounds for me.

“There was a hanging scale with a hook attached to a white birch tree outside the hut where we would hang our loads when we arrived to see how much they weighed. The scale arrow would drop down, depending on how heavy the load was, with 100 pounds the maximum. A couple times with an extra-heavy load the scale banged down off-scale with the arrow registering the weight stuck to the bottom way past the 100 pound mark. I estimate that the heaviest load I ever carried to Carter was 130 pounds

“Madison was a different story. For one, I was older by the time I was hutmaster there (in 1981 I was 25). The time it took to recover from a heavy pack day was noticeably longer than when I was 20. The maximum loads I carried up the dreaded Valley Way (AKA Valium Way) was around 100 pounds. I remember a number of times calculating the weight at the packhouse and thinking, ‘Ah, this isn’t that heavy,’ and then cursing myself at the base of Thousand Yards.

“At any hut, we got very familiar with crump rocks (places to temporarily set the load down and rest) and had names for each and every beloved resting place.

“At Madison on the downhill run we got in the habit of lashing a Jim Beam whiskey bottle filled with hot tea to the top of the packboard. We rigged a stopper with a surgical hose so we could sip tea on the way. Of course it was often difficult for passers-by to tell that it was tea in the bottle.”

Pete Furtado (Zealand 1978). “How often did I pack? I don’t remember. A couple times a week? I probably around 50 pounds, always using an aluminum frame and not a packboard. I had torn my ACL that spring and didn’t want to push things too much. I do remember the assistant hutmaster, Barb Wagner, packing out an empty propane cylinder at least once (and, I think, both regretting it and feeling good about it).

“Once I started working at Pinkham (storehouse summers 1978 and 1979 and assistant hutmaster from 1980-1984), I helped with a lot of fly-ins and fly-outs. Sometimes I would fly in and work up top, sometimes staying down below, but it was always fun, especially the lifts from The Horn or Homestretch on the Auto Road. I remember once when they were constructing the new septic system at Lakes, I was working with Andrew Dombek on the Homestretch (the flat section of the Auto Road just before the final climb to the summit), and we had to shovel gravel into a hopper in the time it took for Joe Brigham to fly one to Lakes and dump it and fly back, which was not really very much time. It was exhausting! I also remember once flying back down to Pinkham from Lakes and Joe flying really low over the rim of Tuckermans and down to Pinkham!

“I also remember being on the ground crew once when the crapper barrels were being flown out of Greenleaf (I think) and the lid on one or two were not really that tight and there was shit flying in the air.”

David Douyard (Pinkham 1978, Lakes 1979, Zealand 1980, Mizpah fall 1981). “At Pinkham, I packed blankets up to Madison, Greenleaf and Galehead with 60 pound loads in waist-deep snow. I remember the trail being firm but don’t step off. I also witnessed Ben Campbell pack a large load of trash down from Greenleaf wearing nothing but two pot holders.

“At Lakes, the average load was 110 pounds two or three times per week. I also set at the time (as best I know) the record for the most empty gas bombs packed up to the summit at 17. George Holt tied the number the next summer. Bomb hauling up to the summit was soon banned. Maybe it was the beeline from the base of the cone up to Goofer Point where the goofers would suddenly see someone carrying a propane tank emerge out of nowhere.

“David Huntley brought in a whole wardrobe of secondhand women’s clothing. Many of the goofers on the summit were repulsed by Dave’s knee-high white patent leather boots, wig and short skirt.

“At Zealand, I averaged 85 pounds two to three times per week but once carried 135 and did 95 pounds in 25 minutes. At Mizpah, thank goodness I did pack much less at 80 — but I did carry a keg up for Oktoberfest.”

Modern Times: Helicopters Rule

For many hutmen and hutwomen, the story of helicopters in the huts is the story of Joe Brigham. Although the AMC’s use of helicopters debuted with the construction of Mizpah Springs Hut in 1964, routine air-lifting of supplies began, expanded and solidified under Joe’s tenure. If a helicopter was flying to a hut from 1969 to 1995, Joe was its pilot.

Joe grew up in Whitman, Massachusetts, and started his career studying to be a helicopter mechanic in the Army in 1958. He finished third in his class, and so qualified for flight school. To learn his profession, he trained for 10 months, first in Texas and then in Alabama — “at bases selected for their remoteness,” Joe recalled, “and for having more than 300 days of sunshine each year.”

Schooled on a Hiller helicopter — a craft that had two pilots and could transport a squad of nine men — Joe became a pilot and eventually served six years active duty (to be followed by 20 years in the National Guard).

After leaving the service, he thought about settling in New Hampshire because he had worked summers in Warner as a young man and liked its “friendly, independent people.” Luck was with him. Joe found a job nearby, flying helicopters for Wiggins Airways out of Boston. That was close to New Hampshire where the company worked.

Then “one day in the fall of 1969, Bruce Sloat showed up and wanted to try me out,” Joe remembered. “They were looking for somebody to fly supplies and construction materials up to the huts.”

Joe’s first flights in the service of the AMC took place later that fall and winter to Carter and Lakes, where large-scale construction projects were under way.

“Tom Dionne supervised my first job — flying a large propane stove (Garland) into Carter Notch,” Joe remembered. That flight went very well.

“When I finished, he said, ‘You got the job.’ It turned out that I was the first pilot to set a stove down without breaking its legs.”

The first helicopter Joe flew in this work was a Bell 47, a super-charged “bubble” helicopter — famous from appearances on “M*A*S*H.” “With the Turbo-charger, we could carry 500 pounds on a hot day and 600 pounds on a cool day — and we could work at altitude,” Joe said.

Lifting capacity improved with the arrival of the Bell Jet Ranger helicopter: Joe began to pilot this model on occasion in the mid-1970s, and was flying them full-time for hut operations by 1980.

“With this helicopter you could lift 1,000 pounds all the time — in cold weather and hot,” Joe said. “With the Jet Rangers, you could work in winds as high as 30 miles an hour — as long as you didn’t

scare the guys on the ground working on hooking and unhooking the loads.”

Another advantage of the newer machines: The Jet Rangers flew faster than the Bell 47. The Bell flew uphill, loaded, at 40 knots, and downhill, empty, at 60 knots. The Jet Ranger went up at 80 knots and down at 120 knots. “The hard part was to slow it down and bring it to a stop for a landing.”

Operations followed the weather. “Once we began to work in the huts, the helicopter lifts might start in early April, with building supplies and small stocks of food for construction crews and opening crews,” Joe recalled. “All the huts were served, from Lonesome to Carter. Generally, the last two weeks in May saw the most activity, with the bulk of the supplies and construction materials lifted to each hut.”

While these days the Forest Service restricts flying in June, July and August in the interest of preserving the backcountry experience, for many years, there was also a mid-summer lift to restock food supplies or to assist construction projects. Those projects were often unusual. Joe might be called upon to drop off supplies for the AMC Trail Crew in the remote Mahoosucs or to deliver pre-cut sections of an Adirondack shelter to Kinsman Notch or to fly a Huey (Bell UH-1) helicopter a distance of up to 10 miles carrying 3,000-pound loads of lumber to Galehead Hut during the rebuilding in the mid-1990s.

Up until he sold the business in 1995, Joe did most of the flying, tapering off his work schedule after the sale. (Today, the AMC contracts with USFS-approved helicopter firms. The vast majority of airlift work is contracted with Joe Brigham, Inc. of Bow, New Hampshire.)

Safety has always been paramount in helicopter operations. As Joe noted, Carl Svenson — who now pilots most helicopter flights to supply the huts — helped develop the electric-release hook, starting about 1984. This system was improved in 1988 and again in 1994. A swivel design solved the problem of cables becoming entangled, giving crews a safer and more efficient way to hook and unhook loads.

Improvements in radio communications between Joe in the helicopter and ground crews followed in tandem, as did a system of helicopter-mounted mirrors (designed by Joe) for better constant visibility in attaching and dropping loads. With these mirrors, Joe could gently and accurately deposit or retrieve a 55-gallon steel drum (suspended at the end of a 50-foot cable) from the porch at Zealand Hut. Not to mention ferry nervous passengers to the postage-stamp-size



Tom Bindas and Phoebe Hausman-Rogers working an airlift at Camp Dodge.

clearing 10 feet from the picture window at Mizpah Hut.

Cargo was lifted by many inventive means, and these, too, improved over the years: via pivoting buckets that could be tipped to release content, via heavy-duty fishing nets laden with boxes of canned fruits and vegetables, via synthetic gear bags that contained as much as a cubic yard of aggregate. This custom suitcase could snugly hold anything that could be placed inside the cargo net. A mat platform was also devised for heavy earth lifting, enabling the transport of fill for leaching fields and hut foundation work. Joe pointed out that helicopter companies throughout New England have borrowed many of these adaptations.

Today, the helicopter is the critical component in supplying the huts, far surpassing what is carried on hut crews' backs. How big an operation is it?

"Did I mention that I rent tractor trailer bodies for each hut to fill with food and supplies?" expressed **Kim "Schroeder" Steward**, the Storehouse supervisor (Pinkham 1989, Carter 1990, Pinkham 1991 to 1994, Storehouse 1996 to present).

"Just before the main airlift in May, we have each trailer moved to the airlift location so that the food is ready and waiting for the helicopter and is safe from rain, etc., if we are delayed."

The Forest Service describes the helicopter operations thusly in its Record Of Decision (ROD) for permitting:

"AMC conducts airlift operations for the purpose of transporting supplies, equipment, waste and material to and from the huts. Helicopter airlift is an effective and sometimes only method of transporting needed items into the backcountry. Careful inventory management, load management to maximize two-way transport, and the practice of human 'packing' of perishable supplies minimizes costs and impacts. Airlifts are limited to necessary material and administrative needs."

So what's it like? Schroeder and fellow airlift veteran **Dennis McIntosh** offer their perspective on current operations:

When do you begin planning for the hut airlift?

Schroeder: "I probably begin thinking about the next airlift as soon as that particular one is over. Though realistically, I start working on the May airlifts in January. Bidding for the food goes out in March and the food order is placed later in March to be delivered the first of May-ish."

When does the airlift take place?

Schroeder: "There are several airlifts that take place. The caretaker one is usually the first week of May and includes cleaning supplies, merchandise for sale, toilet paper, construction materials and other things just to get the hut ready for caretaker service. This will also include a small amount of food for the caretaker. This lift does not include Lakes or Madison."

"The second lift is the week before Memorial Day. This includes a tractor-trailer load of food for each hut and anything else that didn't go already — such as blankets, new mattresses and other goodies."



A recent airlift at Lakes during the new bathroom construction.

All huts are done on this round.

"There are several airlifts in the fall. We fly all huts on or about September first, if needed, to get them dry goods to flush out their fall needs. One outgoing lift for Madison and Lakes in late September, one outgoing lift for the rest of the huts in October, and one ingoing lift for Carter, Zool and Lone to get them stocked for the winter."

Can you quantify the operation?

Dennis: "We spend between \$70,000 and \$100,000 on airlifting and associated fees per year. We fly between 30 and 44 loads to Lakes at 800 pounds to 1,000 pounds per load. Other huts get fewer loads."

How does this break down, hut by hut?

Dennis: "Using Lakes as an example, we fly around 40,000 pounds of food and supplies. Crews pack about 300 pounds to 400 pounds per week." (The helicopter of choice is now a Bell JetRanger III hired from JBI, Inc in Pembroke, New Hampshire.)

What is your window for conducting the airlift?

Schroeder: "The USFS does not allow us to fly after June

first or before September first as part of our permit renewal. At times, when the weather has stymied us in May, we have been granted special permission to fly in June, but this is very rare and involves lots of begging and permission. Overall, this means we no longer have a mid-summer airlift and have to fly everything."

How does a lift work?

Schroeder: "Materials are placed in nets, each load amounting to 800 pounds. The nets are gathered at the corners and 'choked' with hardware. Lumber is tied up with loops of webbing, so that the webbing can be attached to the choke."

"They are then hooked to a cable that comes from the belly of the bird and has a hook on the end. The pilot can open and close the hook and does so when he is picking up or dropping a netload. If dropping, he places the net gently on the ground and then releases the hook. If picking up, someone stands under the helo and grabs the hook and attaches it to the waiting hardware. Fridges and other oddly shaped items are fun to fly."

In total today, is more material airlifted or backpacked to the huts?

Schroeder: "Much more material is lifted than packed."

Dennis: "It's probably 15-20 times more lift than pack."

Are today's hut crews muy macho enough?

Schroeder: "No, not like you and Dave Hall!"

Dennis: "Today's crews are much smarter and more aware than crews of the '60s and '70s. Today's crews realize that back and knee surgery are far more expensive than helicopter time."

1980s

Dulcie L. Heiman (Pinkham 1974-1993: Construction crew

spring and fall, project cook, hut inventory-taker — before computers! — Manager/Supervisor reservations, 1987-1993). “I worked airlifts for several years, as an employee of Wiggins Airways/Joe Brigham, Inc., and was sometimes pilot Joe Brigham’s chief hooker, meaning I was the ground person for hooking and unhooking loads. Guess this would have been the mid-80s.

“...For Lakes and Madison airlifts, we worked from just below the Summit on the flats (for Lakes) and from the Horn on the Auto Road (for Madison). I drove the fuel truck up and down Mt. Washington; just a pickup truck with 100 gallons of Jet A fuel (kerosene). I knew that road pretty well, and, to make any progress with a line of goofers driving in front of me (especially going down hill), I’d put my flashers on, and gently tap on the truck horn now and again to let them know I was there, as if they couldn’t tell with a big pickup truck barreling down behind them. Most of them would get out of my way when they could find a spot to pull over!

“I remember being under the helicopter at Pinkham once, unhooking a full crapper barrel, and getting ‘rotor-washed’ with some of the liquid contents. (bleh) (I did NOT receive hazardous duty pay, now that I think of it! Hmph!)

“...I did love having a multitude of opportunities to ride over (and land on) the Whites over the years. A few examples:

“Pilot Joe Brigham would fly up toward Lakes from Pinkham, lift up over Tucks and the lip; to come back, he’d fly fast and low over the Lawn, and the Headwall would just drop from under the ship, leaving your stomach up where you came from! Yeeehaaaaaah!

“I also had a few flights up close and personal with the Old Man in Franconia Notch. He was held together with cables and bolts. Joe used to fly the man up there who maintained the New Hampshire icon.”

William L. “Peatcutter” Kelley, Ph.D (Pinkham 1979, Tucks 1980-1882, fall 1981 and spring 1982 at Tucks — winters at Zealand 1981-1982). “Tucks in the Joe Gill era, which lasted nearly a decade, was renowned for its aversion to packing. Joe got stuff on the Thiokol (20 kilograms couscous, three cases of Ragu, 20 kilograms whole wheat macaroni, etc.). In the summer, I did a lot of the packing if I wanted a different diet or if we wanted the ingredients to brew beer.

“In spring ski season, Joe even managed to show up with a cane and a bum leg once after days off. ‘Kelley, I can’t pack anymore!’ ‘So when did you ever?’ I replied.

“One memorable packtrip had nothing to do with our operations, but related to the Forest Service and the public toilets. We had continual problems with the leach fields, and one morning, Androscoggin called up and wanted the purge valve hauled up from the bottom of the purge tank and packed down. If anyone knows anything about the Tucks septic system, the purge tank was about 10 to 15 feet deep and the purge valve rested on the bottom of the reeking brown septic scum liquid that occasionally purged out over the siphon to the sand leech field across the stream.

“I took a long-handled garden rake, snagged the purge valve from the depths of the slime, and hauled it out. We then sun-baked it dry before I packed it down, thinking all the way what a mess I’d be in if anything started to drip on my leg. Worse feeling than packing garbage or wet goat.

“A few days later we hauled a whole toilet back up, complete with copper tubing and PCV fittings. The goofers on the Tucks trail loved it strapped to the packboard, and I took forever posing for pictures. Then I told them there were no facilities at Hermit Lake, or that they were out of order. Gotta bring your own!

“The memorable toboggan drag that Steve Colt alluded to happened in Zealand, February 27, 1982. For some reason Pinkham decided to send up new mattress covers — not in summer when you could bring them in with a shopping cart, or even by helicopter, but in the middle of winter. Bill Hastings helped haul the load up the

closed Zealand Road on his snowmobile, then Steve and I took it from there on a sled, slogging along on skis, foot, and on our knees for most of the afternoon. The load had not only the new mattress covers (OK, so we had used a few for a luge run on slippery mattresses down from the hut next to Whitewall Brook over the Christmas holidays), but all of Nancy Bazilchuk’s food req for an incoming Elderhostel trip, and who knows what else.

“As we slogged along at our pace of a few steps forward and a lot back in deep snow, who should come skiing briskly by but Ray Evans. He added also sorts of commentary and lapped us eventually. Pictures exist of all this.

“I also recall a story at Lakes when Joe Gill loaded huge stacks of paper towel cartons on a packboard and wowed the goofers who asked by answering, ‘I’m carrying 250 pounds.’ Then a little ways up the trail, they would run into Jack Corbin, who had strapped a few small cases of roofing nails that legitimately weighted 50 pounds each to his board. ‘How much are you carrying?’ the goofers would ask. Jack would reply honestly, ‘100 to 150 pounds.’ The goofers would laugh and say, ‘Hey, that guy up ahead has 250 and look at his load!’ Jack wanted to kill Joe when he got to the hut.”

Cha Cha (Charlotte) Hartwell Gesten (Pinkham 1978, Lakes 1979-1980, Lonesome 1981). “I think I packed twice a week, but I remember there were times at Lakes when the crew would have to do two pack trips just to get everything to the hut. I also remember crew members packing out the propane tanks from Lakes.

“It was always quite a show — both working up to carrying that weight and showing off all the way to the summit with that spectacular load. We’d hear the goofer stories when they got back to the hut: ‘Is that some sort of as missile you’re carrying?’ With each new question, the crew member would make up another story ‘nuclear scientific experiments,’ or ‘top secret’ or ‘I’m with NASA,’ etc. etc. ...

“My favorite all-time load was about 100 rolls of toilet paper. It weighed about 15 pounds but looked spectacular (remember, I’m 5’2”). People would ask, ‘How much does that weigh?’ and I’d say, ‘Oh, you don’t even want to know!’ The only problem was the stiff breeze on the summit, which knocked me over a few times.

“I believe I carried about 75 to 80 pounds by the time the summer got into full swing (which explains my poor aching knees now). The most I carried was 100 pounds at Lonesome, and I weighed about 120. I believe that Madam Hutmistress Lynn Marie Elizabeth Dombek carried more than her body weight up to Lonesome that summer, perhaps 125. (She probably weighed 110). She was always close to the vest about that stuff, not a boaster, just strong as an ox.”

Steve Colt (Greenleaf 1979, Mizpah 1980 and 1982, Madison 1982, Zealand winter 1981-1982). Steve packed two to three, rarely more than three times. On average for the entire summer, he carried about 80 pounds, sometimes more sometimes less.

“The hills were alive with the sound of music when Joe Brigham brought (via helicopter flight) a vintage upright piano from the Crawford House Carriage Barn direct to Madison in July 1982. Joe reported that he nearly had to dump the ivories trying to get over Madison Col. Apparently yours truly had implied the weight to be about 500 pounds when in fact it was more like 800.”

Peggy “Peggles” Dillon (Pinkham 1979, Pinkham winter 1979-1980, Mizpah 1980, floater 1980, Galehead 1981, Madison 1983, storehouse fall 1983, Galehead 1984). “At all huts, I usually packed twice a week, sometimes three times a week. I was never a super-packer; I’d start out the summer packing about 60 pounds and work my way up to 90 to 95 pounds per trip by the end of the summer.”

Sue Hall Cool (Pinkham 1979, Zealand 1980, Greenleaf 1981, Carter 1982, Zealand 1983). Sue packed, on average, about three times a week for all huts. How much she carried depended on the pack trail. At Zealand, she carried approximately 85 to 90 pounds

(Here, as in the other huts, the crew packed out empty propane tanks). At Carter, her loads were about 80 to 85 pounds; at Greenleaf she took about 70 to 75 pounds.

Gwen Wilcox (Lakes 1980, Mizpah 1981). Gwen packed once a week on average, carrying about 80 pounds per trip.

Alan Kamman (Mizpah 1981, Lonesome 1982, Galehead 1983

— As *my macho* as Madison, no matter what any elitist tells you! Mizpah 1984).

“I averaged 95 to 100 pounds per trip, no kidding, through all my summers. We packed three times a week.

“Fresh fish days were the best! Especially when it was pushing 90 degrees. It made for an interesting pack trip, shooing the flies away when the juice would run out of those damn tin boxes and drip over your shoulders, down your legs and into your boots.

“Packing wet goat out was just as much fun and made you that much more attractive to the Franconia Dairy Bar girls!

“Madison always had the aura, but I had a cold beer in my hand on the raft after packing in to Lonesome while they were just starting up Dead Ass Hill!

“When I was 19, I remember thinking I’d worry about my back when I turned thirty. Then I turned thirty!”

Cindy Makin Brown (Galehead 1981, Madison 1982, Greenleaf 1983). Cindy remembers packing every other day to every third day. “65 pounds was a light load, 90 was heavy.

“My most vivid memory of helicopter lifts was being on the ground at Madison when Joe flew in a piano that they had taken out of the old Crawford’s barn. I have a picture of Stroker (Rogovin) playing the piano out on the tundra (backyard). Not sure what happened to the piano, but we had many a great night singing around it during the summer of 1982.”

Joan Doyle (Pinkham 1982, Galehead 1983, Greenleaf 1985, Lakes 1986, Galehead 1987, Madison 1988). “When I was crew, I packed twice a week, sometimes three times. As assistant or hutmaster, days off started on Wednesday, so I only packed once or twice a week. When I was at Greenleaf, one of our crew had to leave because he had packed too much, a hernia I think. He was a smaller guy and there was much incentive to pack more or as much as anyone else.

“The first year at Galehead, I tried to pack the same as the hutmaster Al Kamman, who had a half a foot on me. I remember following him up Jacob’s Ladder and for every step he took, I took three.

“I generally packed around 80 to 90 pounds. I think the most I packed was 100. We packed some empty propane bombs up the hill for ‘fun’ from Lakes. The general rule was not to pack more than two-thirds your weight, or something like that.

“I think that over the time that I worked at the huts the amount helicoptered-in increased. The mid season fly-ins got a lot bigger. Can’t remember if we even had them the first year. The fly-ins were pretty great. They could land a box of eggs without breaking a single one.”

Scott Lutz (Lakes 1984). Scott packed twice a week, carrying 80 to 100 pounds. “Don’t remember exactly, but I was no slouch.”

Chuck Wooster (Lakes and Zealand, 1984 fall, Pinkham 1985, Greenleaf 1986, Lakes 1987 fall, Greenleaf 1988, Mizpah 1989, Zealand 1990, Lakes 1990, Pinkham 1990 and 1991). Chuck packed two times minimum per week, four times maximum. He averaged about 85 pounds a trip, with a range between 60 and 130 pounds.

“I loved packing. Nothing was better for cleaning out the brain and refreshing the attitude. (And priming the legs for hiking on non-pack days.) Two most memorable pack days: Coming up through Red Rocks on the Old Bridle Path amidst lightning bolts in ’86, and packing bombs to the summit with the whole Lakes crew on an August Saturday in ’90.”

Doug MacKenzie (Greenleaf 1985). Doug packed twice a week, averaging about 90 pounds.

Emily Buesser Ewald (Lakes fall 1987, Zealand 1988, Mizpah 1989, Galehead 1990, Crawford winter caretaker 1990-1991, Storehouse head trucker, 1991-1992). “In all huts, I packed twice a week roughly 50-80 pounds a trip. My last couple of years with the AMC were all about supplying the huts through truck trips and Joe Brigham operations.”

Dave Ward (Carter 1987, Lonesome 1988, Lakes 1989). At Carter, Dave packed two to three times a week, averaging 50 to 75 pounds a trip, though perhaps not as much in June, “back when there was the occ zero count.” At Lonesome, Dave also packed two to three times a week, averaging 50 to 75 pounds a trip. At Lakes, the weight increased to 75 to 100 pounds, plus “a good 30 to 50 pounds uphill of trash.

“I think it would be interesting to learn whether, for individual pack trails, what types of memorable landmarks people remember from their frequent trips. I am sure most of the trails have accepted/common break points, crump spots, etc. Hearing peoples’ stories regarding life along the pack trails will certainly be interesting. (And no, we didn’t have many crump spots on the puny Lonesome Lake Trail...)”

“Perhaps you should include a question as to what percent of the time the individual packed naked.”

Ann Pollender (Galehead 1987, Madison 1988). Madison celebrated its 100th anniversary in 1988, and it was “always an exciting occasion, all summer long, with extra pack trips for the BIG party) and the first all-woman crew (also exciting all summer long).

“We packed two times per week on the usual pack days, Wednesday and Saturday. If anyone of modern times tell you they packed more days (like Al Kamman, my husband), it is because they didn’t carry enough or they didn’t know how to tie on a good load.

“I really don’t remember how much we carried. After Dead Ass Hill they all seemed heavy. Swimming holes kept me going and a sip from Thousand Yards Spring is the best water on earth.”

1990s

Schroeder (Kimberly) Steward (Carter 1990, Pinkham 1991-present). “At the start of the summer, I packed twice a week, unless I was cooking. Once my crew-mates figured out I was really pathetic at packing but adequate at cooking, they made sure I packed once a week and usually cooked on the other pack day.

“Packweight: I think it was somewhere between 60 and 70 pounds at a time. I sometimes didn’t take my entire weight on the pack day and would return the next day to get the rest of my allotment. They didn’t make the smaller packboards back then, like they do now, and the giant man-size packboard was torture on my small frame. I preferred to take what I could and put the rest in my regular pack the next day.”

Kate Edwards (Pinkham 1990, Zealand 1991, Lakes 1992). Kate packed twice weekly, carrying from about 50 to 125 pounds.

Margaret Thompson (Lakes 1991, Madison 1992, Galehead 1993). “I packed one to two times a week. We got resupplied every Wednesday and Saturday, so everyone packed on those days except the cook. You packed either once or twice a week, depending on the cook and days off schedule.

“I think I once carried 100, downhill, to Lakes. The most I ever carried

“...I HAD A COLD
BEER IN MY HAND...
AFTER PACKING IN AT
LONESOME WHILE
THEY WERE JUST
STARTING UP DEAD
ASS HILL!”

ALAN KAMMAN

uphill to either Mad or Ghoul was 80, more typical loads were 60 to 70. I can still hear the creak of the canvas... ”

Bryan (J. Bryan) Wentzell, (Pinkham 1990, Mizpah 1991, Zealand 1992, Greenleaf fall 1992, Galehead 1993). “Like everyone during that time, every Wednesday and Saturday unless we were cooking. I once weighed a pack board: about 15 pounds, so that gets factored in.

“I am trying to remember, but I think the most I ever tied on was about 90 pounds, so with water had about 100 pounds on my back. Not a lot compared to most. On average, I probably tied on 40 to 80 pounds. I’m no hero.

“Once packed in Texas (sandals), as I forgot my boots.

“Zealand is a funny pack. 98 percent of the trail you just plod along, not working too hard. The last 2 percent (or less) kicks your ass, and you arrive at the hut as if you’d been struggling all day — not at all indicative of the trip.”

Jeremy Eggleton (Greenleaf fall 1992, Galehead 1993, Carter 1994, Galehead fall 1995, Crawford winter 1995). Jeremy usually packed twice per week in every hut, with occasional extra trips, packing an average of about 85 pounds.

Amy (Porter) Grohman (Lakes 1992, Greenleaf fall 1992, Mizpah 1993, Greenleaf fall 1993). “At Lakes I packed two times a week for sure, sometimes more. At the other huts, it probably averaged out to more like one and a half a week.

“As for weight, at Lakes I know I carried one load (down from the summit, of course) of about 80 pounds. A more typical load for me, though, was about 55 pounds. I also packed up the Ammy a few times but those loads were lighter — more in the range of 40-50 pounds.

“At Mizpah and Greenleaf, I’d say my loads averaged about 40 pounds. In the fall at Greenleaf, we often ended up having to pack in dry goods like flour and sugar when the supplies from the summer started to dwindle, so those loads could be on the heavy side, more like 60 pounds.”

Emma Ansara (Lakes 1993, Zealand 1995, Lonesome 1996). “I typically packed two times a week, unless I was cook/bullcook. My first summer at Lakes, I was scheduled to pack every day, possible because I had terrible balance, and so Chris Thayer (HM) and Wendy Prentiss (AHM) wanted to make sure I got lots of practice carrying up/teem dozen eggs from the summit (though I fell lots, the eggs always arrived intact).

“I’ve always worked at the huts with the shortest pack trails, but that means heavy loads. I must admit I can’t remember how many pounds exactly, but upwards of 80 to 90 to 100 at times. I’m guessing typical was 65 to 70. When I worked at Zool, we were an all-female crew and had a bug infestation problem, so that required extra packing in and out though Heather Harland (HM) pressured the powers that be to do an extra fly.

“The spring of 1997, I also worked for storehouse with the explicit purpose of doing spring flies (I wanted to fly in the helicopter). We moved every box at least five times (into storehouse, out of storehouse into the tractor trailer trucks, into the nets, out of the nets into the hut). I LOVED flying in the helicopters and being a “hooker” — the person who wears a hardhat on the ground and clips the helicopter line to the net (or crapper barrels).

“Now I’m 38 weeks pregnant and can barely bend over to tie my own shoelaces, but all that activity in the past has made my extra 20+ pounds not too uncomfortable to carry up until now!”

Meghan “Fred” Prentiss (Carter fall 1993, Madison 1994, Galehead 1995, Lonesome fall 1995, Zealand 1996, Greenleaf 1997, Carter 1998, Galehead fall 1998). Meghan packed one to two times per week, carrying between 40 and 45 pounds a trip. Her heavy load was 82 pounds up the Valley Way. She also reports: “Lumbar Discs herniated: 1.”

Brian Post (Lakes 1995, Greenleaf 1996, Lakes 1997). Brian

packed twice a week throughout his hut summers.

At Lakes he packed 60 to 80 pounds, “more likely 80 pounds for most of summer, many times 100 pound trips. Maximum of 123 pounds, and I only weighed 120 pounds at the time.”

At Greenleaf he packed 40 to 60 pounds. “Can’t remember as well. It was more exciting at Lakes.”

At Lakes in 1997, he carried “less than my first summer because I was smarter and HM. Fifty to 70 pounds?”

Stephen Engle (Madison 1994, Greenleaf 1995, Mizpah fall 1995). Stephen carried 60 to 70 pounds.

Caroline Kiernan (Madison 1995, Greenleaf 1997, Mizpah 1999, Crawford’s fall 1999, Lonesome 2000, Lonesome caretaker spring 2003). “Every summer, except for 1997, at Greenleaf the huts operated on a 8/3 day cycle. I packed Wednesday and Saturday unless cooking.

“In ’97 they tried to operate the huts on a 5/2 schedule (work 5 days, off two) but it was a disaster because you spent too much time trekking up and down and really never got any time off.

“My summer at Madison the loads were much heavier because there were only five crew members at the hut. The following and all subsequent years there were six crew members at each hut (with the exception of Lakes, of course) because a naturalist was added on.

“This extra person cut down the loads substantially! And of course, at Lonesome the loads were lighter because kids eat less!

“I believe the loads at Madison were generally 50 to 70 pounds (including packboard). I recall at the end of the summer, I had a lot of pain in my knees just bending down thanks to the Valley Way! The rest of the summers, I would say the loads ranged from 45 to 70 pounds at max; Mizpah they were closer to Madison because the crew:guest ratio is lower.

“The most weight I ever carried was 90 pounds up to Mizpah on a crew-switch day my summer at Madison. I hope never to carry that amount of weight again!

“The loads in general I expect are much lighter than what you carried during your times in the huts; thanks to the summer helicopter lift, we were generally relieved from carrying such big supplies as flour, syrup, canned products etc. (and of course, propane!)”

Andy Davis (Galehead 1995, Galehead fall 1997). “I packed on average 55 pounds a week in the summer and maybe an average of 40 in the fall. We packed twice a week on Wednesdays and Saturdays. We tried to keep the pack on the 4.6-mile hike under 2 hours and preferably at an hour forty five. Less time to get down — although I think my knees have paid a price for that run... ”

2000s

Amanda Henck (Lakes 1999, Lonesome 2000). At Lakes, Amanda packed “probably around 60 pounds per pack trip. Box weights got up to over 70 pounds. I once or twice packed a total pack load of over 100 pounds. We tried to keep the pack weights lower for girls. I ended up badly injuring a knee that summer, probably due to packing.

At Lonesome, it was “probably close to 50 pounds per pack trip. Box weights never got above 60 pounds per person (so 70 pounds with a pack?). And I certainly would not have been willing to carry that much after my injury the previous summer (I had spent six-plus months in rehab due to it). Since Lonesome was so close to the road, when we had a lot of stuff, we would sometimes just do a second load the next day.”

Kristie Robson (Zealand 2000, Galehead 2001, Mizpah 2002, Zealand 2003, Lonesome fall 2004). At Zealand, Kristie packed two times per week, with an average pack weight between 50 and 60 pounds. She carried a maximum of 90 pounds.

At Galehead, Kristie packed twice per week, averaging 50 pounds

a trip. “My packing pride of the summer was making it up the GRT in under two hours (one hour 58 minutes?) with 50 pounds box weight.”

At Mizpah, she packed twice a week, averaging 45 to 55 pounds.

At Zealand, she packed twice a week, averaging 35 to 50 pounds. “We worked hard to keep weights low and move fast.”

As Lonesome caretaker, Kristie packed 10 to 20 pounds, “all fresh, just for the caretaker,” packing once per eight-day stint.

“For the 2002 GALA, we were all at Mizpah training when summer flies came in. The entire summer crew formed a fireline from the back door (off the dining room, not the kitchen) upstairs and into the poop. We took a couple hours out of our orienting to move all the summer dries. I remember standing in the poop, out of line, trying to direct all of my crew’s summer stores into semi-organization to save us time during our own hut ream and organization.”

Beth Eisenhower (Zealand 2001, Galehead 2002, Lonesome 2003). At Zealand, Beth packed 70 pounds per trip. At Galehead and Zealand, Beth packed 60 pounds per trip. On average, she packed one to two times per week.

Bethany “Benny” Taylor (Lonesome naturalist 2003, Mizpah naturalist 2004, Mizpah fall 2004, Mizpah spring 2005, Galehead 2005, Lakes fall 2005, Carter 2006, Greenleaf fall 2006). At Lonesome, Bethany packed an average of 45 pounds, twice a week. As Mizpah naturalist, she packed 50 to 55 pounds twice a week. At Mizpah in the fall, she packed 50 to 55 pounds, “descending to 15 to 30 pounds as temperatures and counts dropped.” She packed one to two times a week.

As Mizpah caretaker, she “ate the stuff that had been flown in to avoid packing the Crawford Path in the residual ice.”

At Galehead, she packed 40 to 45 pounds, one to two times a week. As Lakes naturalist, she packed three times in the three week season, averaging about 35 pounds.

At Carter, Bethany packed “once for my two-week stints, averaging 30 pounds.” At Greenleaf, she packed one to two times a week, carrying 30 to 40 pounds.

“I’m sure that you will find that as time has progressed, crews have packed less and less, which while it hurts my ego, is just fine for my back.”

Gabriella Stockmayer (Zealand 2004, Lakes fall 2004, Madison 2005). Gabriella packed twice a week, averaging 55 pounds or so, in a range anywhere from 70 to 40 pounds.

Gabriel Yospin (Greenleaf 2004). Gabriel packed twice a week, “barring the unexpected cook-day, which was rare (since I was the Natty) but delightful.”

How much did she pack? “This shouldn’t actually be very difficult to figure out, empirically, since the storehouse should still have records for all of the rec, with total weights. Our crew, like any modern functional one, in accordance with rules from 12 and 16 and advice from anyone who knows what they’re doing, split the total weight as evenly as possible.

“So, Wednesday pack weights were usually 1/5 of the total weight, and Sunday pack weights were usually 1/4 of the total weight. Savvy personnel on my crew were careful to keep total rec weights around 200 pounds for Wednesday delivery and 160 pounds for Saturday delivery. This breaks down to 40 pounds/person. All that being said, various self-aggrandizing hutboys and hutgirls have been known, on occasion, to give themselves extra weight, not only to further buffify their already hot bodies, but also to earn greater glory for themselves. This practice will increase an individual’s average pack-weight. Beyond that, sometimes people take days off, leaving their load to their stalwart crew. For the most stalwart of us, who never took a day off from packing, this also acted to increase pack-weights.

“Further, packboards are heavy! Mine clocked in at 13 pounds, dry, and it wasn’t ever dry while I was packing. Adding in water

(and supplies, e.g., guitar, clean clothing, etc.) will also increase the average. From all of this, I would estimate my mean pack weight to have been 65 pounds for that season.

“Another important question would be to determine the range of pack-weights that crews suffered; averaging 65 pounds but carrying 110 half of the time is a big difference from always coming in at a steady 65.

“I’ll also be interested to see how peoples’ memory biases affect their recollection. I imagine that people remember their heaviest loads best, and tend to forget the lighter pack days. The solution to all this bullshitting, of course, is to put scales at all of the pack houses, but that would take all the fun out of it. This is just one more situation where it’s better not to know the truth too precisely.

“Finally ... I was also on the Totally Awesome Ream Team (TART) in 2006, and helped to unload helicopter flies ... as I recall, it involved a lot of throwing flour at my boss, leaping into piles of mattresses and a frantic search for, and consumption of, peanut M&M’s.”

Luke Ingram (Madison 2005, Mizpah 2006, Greenleaf fall 2006, Tuckerman 2007). “We pack every Wednesday and Saturday now, which are also the days that our crew either go on or come back from days off. My average pack has probably been around 45 to 50 pounds, which is at the higher end of things, mostly because I’m a bigger, stronger fella.

“Weight depends a lot on the hut you’re at lately, because of crew-to-guest ratios, and the level of culinary excellence you’re hoping to achieve. (For example, I only like fresh eggs, another 25 pounds a week). Madison was closer to 40 pounds per trip, Pah was near 60, and Flea was somewhere in the 40 to 50 range usually. I’ve packed as much as 105 pounds, and as little as 10 last fall when I sprained my ankle.

“The only reason I enjoy packing is that it teaches you every good place to crump in the mountains.”

Eric Pedersen (Greenleaf 2004, Galehead 2005, Greenleaf 2006, Huts Manager 2008). “At all of these huts, I packed twice a week, averaging 45 to 55 pounds, not including packboard weight.

“I have many stories about packing in bad weather, difficult trail conditions, hundreds of Canadians in the way, and goofers telling me that we don’t work as hard as they did in the old days as a fellow crew member walked inside with 80 pounds of the gentleman’s food on his back.”

Nate Lavey (Madison 2004, Galehead 2005-2006, Carter 2007). “We had/have two standard pack days per week — Saturdays and Wednesdays. However, we often will do an extra day packing in essential ‘liquid’ products.

“How much did you carry on average? This is difficult to say because some days we only carry 20 pounds, but on the very next pack day we might carry 80 pounds. The average, I guess, would be around 50 pounds, but that number isn’t particularly enlightening because the weight range is so large.

“All current crew (and crew from the past five years or so) have some firsthand experience with lifts, because a few days before opening are spent at Mizpah where a chopper will drop Mizpah’s supplies. All the crews from that year help unload the food by passing it in a fire-line from the drop zone to the poop. It is a sort of bonding experience for the before we face the summer’s Diaspora. “Of course, many crews will then have to do the same thing once they reach their hut, but instead of having 30 to 40 people helping out, they’ll have to do it with five.”

Heather Day (Lonesome 2005, Mizpah 2006, Zealand fall 2006). Heather packed twice a week (applicable to all seasons).

At Lonesome, she packed “somewhere between 35 and 50 pounds.” At Mizpah, “consistently around 55 pounds.” At Zealand, “started out around 45 or 50 pounds, then quickly decreased to around 35 pounds as the guesties decreased.”

Emily Taylor (Mizpah 2005, Zealand 2006, Carter 2007). “We had two pack days a week, Wednesday and Saturday. Packed both in and out on every packday (second- and fourth-setters pack one way the day they leave and come back. We rotated it so that everyone got roughly even cookdays/packdays, so maybe every two or three weeks I packed once a week.

“Average pack weight was maybe 50 pounds, ranging from 45 to 55 pounds being normal, anything on either side being super light or heavy.”

Beth Weick (Lonesome 2004, Lakes 2005, Madison 2006, Lakes 2007). Beth packed twice a week. At Lakes she carried 70 to 80 pounds; at Madison, she carried 45 to 50 pounds. She carried a maximum load at Lakes of 115 pounds, “not impressive except that it’s more than me.”

“Best packing experience would have to be a two-day litter carry of a keg up to Madison for Madfest. To avoid questioning guests, we kept it wrapped in bags and called it a replacement shasta. The first day we didn’t get started ‘til the afternoon. There were only three of us crew available, but we garnered the help of thru-hikers as their work-for-stay, and suckered a friend on days off.

“In about two or two and a half hours time, we made it up the Valley Way to the entry of the Scar Trail. Covered the shasta in an AMC blanket about 50 feet off the trail. It was a foolproof plan. Second day, there are four of us who set out in the pouring rain. We wait ‘til last night’s guests have passed the keg’s hiding place as there were area EMTs in the crowd who seemed to know too much about hut shenanigans as it was. We didn’t want to be called out this close to success. So after noon we get going...make a harness out of the front litter straps, and rotate turns hauling the litter on all fours with the other three assisting from the sides and back. Best goofer comment: ‘Ahh!! Is that a person?’ Back to the hut in time for go-time. Best lager ever.”



Former hutman and editor of Appalachia, Chris Stewart is a freelance editor and writer working in Portland, Maine and greater New York. He formerly worked for the Mount Washington Valley Mountain Ear and as an editor for the Portland Press Herald/Maine Sunday Telegram. His work has been published in the Resuscitator, most recently his 2005 article “A Shooting at Carter Notch.”

In the 1970s, Chris personally interviewed scores of OH and typed their responses. These manuscripts have become a part of our history and provide valuable resource material for the OH and AMC archives at the Joy Street library.

Chris would like to thank all the OH who answered his query for packing memories and, particularly, the following people who contributed to this article: Bruce Sloat, Jeff Leich, Joe Brigham, Schroeder Steward, Doug Mayer and Dennis McIntosh.

Chris can be reached at stewart.christopher1@gmail.com

Photo credits: Kirk Sibson, pages 2 and 4; John Gross page 7; Schroeder Steward, pages 17 and 18; Bruce Sloat, page 23; Dick Smith, helicopter lift, with airbrushing by Jim Hamilton, page 23



Gulfpride Oil at Its Best! by Brad Washburn

The AMC has many huts in strategic locations high on the slopes of New Hampshire’s Presidential Ridge. In the old days, the problem of disposing of toilet output was simple: they’d just let it trickle into the rocks behind the hut and rain did the rest. But today, with thousands of hikers using these huts, this is a very different problem.

At the end of each summer, sewage concentrates are pumped into 50-gallon barrels and helicoptered down to the valley where trucks disposed of them — goodness knows how or where!

Late one afternoon a few years ago, a crisis began to develop at the Club’s Mizpah hut. They were running out of barrels and badly needed three more. The hutmaster radioed down to the highway at Crawford Notch and frantically asked the trucker to get three more barrels. He speedily drove to a nearby gas station and got the three barrels, all clearly marked Gulfpride Motor Oil.

The helicopter pilot brought up these empty barrels on his final flight. They were duly filled by the hutmen and flown down to the roadside at dusk. But, on arrival there, they discovered that the trucker had quit at 5 o’clock, leaving a note that he’d pick them up early the next morning.

The helicopter headed back to the Twin Mountain Airport for the night. And when the trucker returned in the morning, he discovered that these precious three barrels labeled Gulfpride Motor Oil had been stolen!

This was a story that the late Brad Washburn liked to tell at AMC meetings. He wrote it down and sent it to the OH in November 2000. Joe Brigham swears that it’s 100 percent correct.

2008 Summer Crews

CARTER

Emily Taylor HM
Madeleine Polivka AHM
Marc Leonard
Chelsea Alsofrom
Alex May, Naturalist

MADISON

Dan Cawley HM
Catherine Klem AHM
Gates Sanford
Drew Hill
Amelia Harman
Iona Woolmington, Naturalist

LAKES

James Wrigley HM
Eliza O'Neil AHM
Nate Lavey
George Heinrichs
Cathy Enders
Hannah Orcutt
Hilary Burt
Keith Sidle
Will Tourtellot, Naturalist
Jenna Whitson, Research

MIZPAH

Erin Robson HM
RD Jenkinson IV AHM
Johannes Griesshammer
Emma Leonard
Tom Schnitzer
Kate Keefe, Naturalist

ZEALAND

Ben Lewis HM
Lindsay Bourgoine AHM
Nick Anderson
Anna Cable
Andrew Riely, Naturalist

GALEHEAD

Tristan Williams HM
Caroline Woolmington AHM
Ashley Nadeau
Taylor Burt
Margaret Graciano, Naturalist

GREENLEAF

Hillary Gerardi HM
Brian Quarrier AHM
Helon Hoffer
Matt Didisheim
Meredith Leoni
Ellen Lewis, Naturalist

LONESOME

Katherine Siner HM
Thad Houston AHM
Carrie Piper
Miles Howard
Cameron Berube
Betsy Cook, Naturalist

Tucks Assistant: Anthony Brezzo
Tucks Caretaker: Luke Ingram
Backcountry Education Ass't: Lynne Zummo
Senior Interpretive Naturalist: Nancy Ritger
Huts Field Supervisor: Jesse Billingham
Huts Manager: Eric Pedersen

2008 Latchstring Award Crew

Greenleaf won the Latchstring Award presented at the August 20 End-of-Season Party. Congratulations for a job well done and hope to see the entire crew as our guests at the November 1 Reunion dinner. This is the 9th annual Latchstring Award which Greenleaf also won in 2000 and 2005.

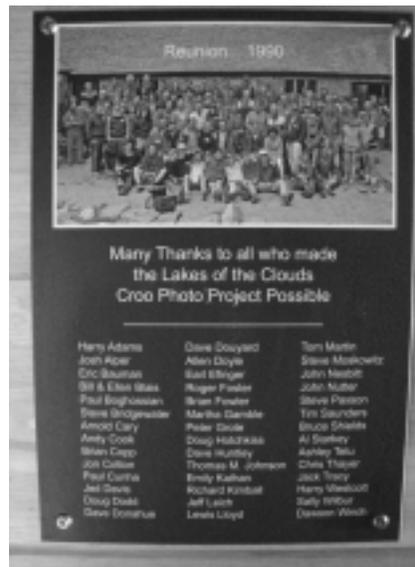


Photo by Eric Pedersen

Lakes Crew Framing Project

Lakes joins Galehead, Greenleaf, Zealand and Mizpah as the most recent hut to have crew pictures digitized and hung at the hut. These pictures are laminated to a backing board rather than framed in glass. This process should better withstand the dampness and temperature changes and will be used in the remaining huts, Madison being the next hut. Thanks to Sally Dinsmore for scanning, printing and archiving the supplied crew pictures. Thanks to Jed Davis and Doug Hotchkiss for their successful managing the fund-raising and the impressive list of names on the donor plaque who gave generously to this project.

Madison Crew Framing Project

Thanks to those who have already contributed towards this current project, but we have a way to go before we can match the generosity of that old Lakes gang across the Presies. Please contact Dick Low who is heading the project, organizing existing crew pictures, and requesting old crew pictures. His email is richardalow@comcast.net. Contributions can be sent directly payable to OHA, 17 Brenner Dr., Newton, NH 03858.

Oktoberfest Weekend October 4-5

It's that time of year again, where der food's da wurst and there's plenty of strudel and bier for those loyal OH willing to do some trail work, clean up the Cabin, and prepare it for winter. No tab for these delicious vittles for those willing to work, but Dick Stetson would like to know how many to expect, so email him at Richard@Qualey.net if you plan to enjoy this beautiful weekend in the Whites.

Slate of Officers and Members-at-Large

Josh Alper reminded us that we need to publish the names of the following OH who faithfully serve each year and are elected at our business meeting November 1;
John Moose Meserve, *treasurer*
Tom Kelleher, *secretary and webmaster*
Jim Hamilton, Emily Kathan, Peggy Dillon, *Resuscitator Editors*
Peggy Dillon, Emily Kathan, John Thompson, Dick Low, *Members-at-Large*
Hanque Parker, *Honorary Member*
Andy Falender, Clare O'Connell, *Special Members*

Reunion Saturday, November 1, is also a special time to acknowledge the Greenleaf croo who won the 2008 Latchstring Award, and to recognize special guests and our Honorary Members: George Hamilton, Guy Gosselin, Sandy Saunders, Ann and Jack Middleton, and Mary and Bruce Sloat.

Steering Committee Meetings

Always welcome to any OH in the neighborhood of Burlington, MA, where Doug Shaffer's Lester's B-B-Q holds a couple of tables for us. Next meeting starts at 6:00 p.m., Tuesday, October 7, 2008. Check ohcroo.com for winter dates.

Spring Reunion May 16, 2009

It's never too early to jot that date down in your 2009 calendar. Last spring, the weather was beautiful and the lobsters and clams were as filling as the ballgame across the Ellis was entertaining. Come celebrate our 76th Anniversary! Watch for either a spring 2009 mailing reminder or go to ohcroo.com for making your resi.

OH Support the Maine Woods Campaign

Last March, OH received an appeal about supporting the AMC Maine Woods Initiative. To date, approximately \$800,000 has been raised from eighty OH who have answered the call, many of whom have visited the area and seen for themselves what has excited so many of us. Our goal is to raise \$2,000,000 towards the AMC's \$45,000,000—an attainable goal since nearly \$40,000,000 has already been raised from overall contributions and pledges. The campaign has received a matching gift from the Kresge Foundation with several more foundation matches to come. Please think about visiting these camps in Maine by joining us for our next OH Ski-in on February 27, 2009.

OH Phonathon for Maine Woods November 12, 2008 at Joy Street

Doug Shaffer will supply the ribs from Lester's B-B-Q as we make calls to OH. Please join us that evening to make calls to your friends (a lot easier than calling your enemies). Contact hamilton.james@comcast.net or call 617-212-7193 if you will join us.

OH Ski-in to Little Lyford Pond Camps and Gorman Chairback February 27 - March 1, 2009

Over twenty OH and friends enjoyed last year's brisk and bracing weather to visit these two camps by muscle-powered skis and snowshoes. We have reserved both camps with a cut-off date of January 25, 2009. Reserve at AMC resi line 603-466-2727 and reference OH Ski-in Group.

Gormings

Malcolm McLane, 83, died February 2, 2008, at his home in Hanover, NH. Born in Manchester, he served on the Concord City Council for 20 years and as mayor of Concord, NH, from 1970 to 1976. He ran for Governor in 1972 as an independent in the general election. Inspired by his

grandfather, Governor John R. McLane, he devoted his career in public service to improving the quality of life in New Hampshire.

A 1942 graduate of St. Paul's School, he served as an officer in the Air Force in World War II. He flew 73 missions before he was shot down in a dogfight over Luxembourg during the Battle of the Bulge in December 1944. He spent the remainder of the war in *Stalagluft I*, a prisoner-of-war camp run by the German air force. The Germans abandoned the camp, which was liberated by Soviet forces May 1, 1945. He returned to New Hampshire a decorated war hero and spent the summer of 1945 recuperating at his family's home on Newfound Lake.

After the war, he graduated from Dartmouth with the Class of 1946. In 1948, he married Susan Neidlinger of Hanover and moved to Oxford, England, where he was a Rhodes Scholar. He graduated from Harvard Law School in 1952. He then moved to Concord with his young family and began practicing law at Orr and Reno.

An avid skier with a lifelong devotion to the sport, he was captain of the Dartmouth College Ski Team and served as an international alpine ski official at the 1960 Olympics in Squaw Valley California and numerous World Cup competitions. He was inducted into the Ski Hall of Fame in Ishpeming, Michigan. In 1957, he joined **Mack Beal** and Olympic skiers George Macomber and **Brooks Dodge** in founding Wildcat Mountain Ski Area in Pinkham Notch. An account of founding Wildcat was written by **Jeff Leich** in the 2005 *Resuscitator*. Mal served on the Wildcat board for 30 years and as president of Wildcat.

Mal worked at Greenleaf hut in the 1946 season and held one of the fastest packing records on the Bridle Path.

Mal was a former member of the AMC Board of Advisors and served on the OH/AMC 125th Capital Campaign, which raised \$2.6 million dollars for the campaign. It was a treat to see him at our Fallfest reunion last year.

Dr. Herbert "Hub" Sise died peacefully on April 18, 2008 in the company of his children and his beloved care-giver. Born in Medford, Massachusetts in 1912, his mother was Eleanor Stanwood Sise and his father, Dr. Lincoln Fleetford Sise, was the anesthesiologist for Dr. Frank Lahey, founder of the Lahey Clinic. Hub schooled at Phillips Exeter Academy, Harvard College, and Harvard Medical School.

He married Marjory Gallison in 1940, and they were together 61 years. In 1942, he enlisted in the U.S. Navy and was stationed onboard an LST in the Pacific Theater. Upon return in 1946, he began

practice in internal medicine and cardiology. He worked at the City Hospital and Mass Memorial Hospital, now the University Hospital. In 1975, he became the Chief of Medicine at the Brockton VA until retirement in 1985.

Throughout his life, he was an outdoor enthusiast, working for Joe Dodge in the huts from 1931-1935. He celebrated his eightieth birthday at Greenleaf. Skiing was his main passion, and he was a founding member of the seventy-five year old Schussverein Ski Club in Bartlett, New Hampshire, along with his older brother Albert, also an OH. He leaves his three children (one being OH Jim), five grandchildren, and two great-granddaughters.

John Trumbell passed away in September 2007, according to his son John who enjoyed trips to the Whites with his dad to hear about his Greenleaf and Lakes 1944-1945 hut adventures and to ski with him. A graduate of Harvard 1952, he was a salesman for Taylor Instrument Co. and, at retirement, business manager for the Yale Department of Comparative Medicine.

Arthur Harris, age 87, died on January 6, 2008. He worked at Pinkham in the late '30s and early '40s.

The late **Peter Limmer Jr's wife Marianne** died April 25, 2008. Peter died in 2000.

Somewhere between going into labor and having three weeks of sleep-deprived delirium, I have misplaced the tidy packet of hand-written notes that you all sent in to appear here...and now we're past the Gormings deadline! My sincerest apologies to you all. Please do not utterly despair and continue to send in your news; I will do my darndest to keep better track in the future and get all your notes and how-dos out! The bit of news I do have to include was either sent via email or through the grape vine. *Emily Katham*

Larry Kilham has been living in his home town of Santa Fe, NM again for some time and just sold his ozone sensing instrument business to an outfit near San Francisco. He and his wife, Betsy, get back to New England from time to time, particularly to visit the Maine coast and his sister Anne (who worked at Pinkham).

He writes, "We have great mountains here in the Santa Fe area (Santa Fe is 7,000'+ and the local ski area peaks out at 12,006'), and right now I get out about every other day doing both back country skiing and downhill. Every year or so my OH friend **John Schultz** (Carter) comes out from Vermont, and we do some runs.

I checked out your website. Nice job. I note however that I am only listed for Zealand '59. I was also Construction '57

and Donks '58. They don't count?

Brian Fowler sent in this interesting update with his latest geologic findings: "During this past winter, **Thom Davis** and I organized and collaborated with others to carry out a "grassroots" climate-change project here on Big Pea Porridge Pond in Madison, NH (+/- 15 airline miles SSE of Mt. Washington). After some local fundraising from folks in the Pond basin, we drilled a hole through the ice at the Pond's deepest spot (46 feet) and retrieved 33 feet of ancient sediment from the bottom. The last two samples taken penetrated glacially-deposited material, so we know we retrieved everything that has been deposited since the glacial ice departed and that we have samples representing all of the climatic, paleoecological, and human events that have occurred in the Pond's basin since.

"Analysis of the samples has begun, and so far we have a carbon-14 date for the oldest (deepest) sediment of between 13,910 and 14,100 calendar years before present, and we have retrieved fossil midge-larvae heads from this same sample that show the water temperature, and the surrounding ambient environment, was then like that today on northern Ellesmere Island in the high Arctic. Further sampling will use these same techniques, along with detailed pollen species analyses, to track the changes in the climate here up to very nearly the present.

"This is the first such data to be retrieved for the southeast side of the White Mountains, and the geologic and paleoecology communities are all over us for further results. It's all very exciting—sort of "got a tiger by the tail," but it is particularly rewarding that we've been able to show local folks that climate change has and does occur in our own backyard (to paraphrase the late Tip O'Neill, "All climate is local").

"Interested OH can check out photos and additional information about the project at its blog site: <http://bigppp.blogspot.com>. Thom and I are hoping other "grassroots groups" will be interested in this kind of project for their lake, pond, bog, or swamp and will eschew arcane public funding and support local efforts like this one themselves. Now that we've "Yankee proto-typed" the project (in the true spirit of Hizzoner!), we can help. All we need is 7-10 inches of good ice. The cost turns out to be relatively cheap—way less than your typical NSF grant proposal. —*Semper altior*, Brian Fowler"

Malin Bengtsson has landed back on the east coast and has taken up residence in Rockland, Maine. When not working at Primo Restaurant, she can be found crafting her eco-design art and handmade wares in her seaside studio. You can check them

online at www.malinb.etsy.com. **Jim Hamilton** and his wife **Laurie** and **John and Sue Gross** were delighted to see some of her accessory pieces at Turtle Gallery in Stonington, Maine, on Deer Isle just this August. Well worth a visit at either venue.

Lots of new OH babies have joined this crazy, beautiful world in the meantime. **Amy Porter Grohman** and husband, Martin, welcomed a son, Henry, back in April. Amy, daughter Hannah, and the boys were able to spend a good chunk of the summer at their house on Webb Lake in Maine.

Mike Eckel's wife, Jenn, got the heck out of Moscow this July in time to deliver their daughter, Lillian Mae. They had planned to take a few months off before returning to "the former Soviet Union" when all hell broke loose in Georgia and the AP summoned Mike back to cover the "skirmish."

Jeremy Eggleton and wife, Sarah Schweitzer, welcomed a girl in August. They live in Exeter, NH, and Jer is working for the Conord law firm of Orr and Reno, a veritable enclave of OH—**Jesse Story** and the late **Malcolm McLane** (see previous obit).

And, lastly, my husband, Scott, and I added a daughter to our family with the August birth of Oona Ann Kathan. Hope to see you at the Highland Center November 1! *All the best, Emily Kathan*

Larry Eldredge, from Oxford University where he is a classic literature scholar, has sent another great piece about his years at Lakes in the 1950s, which appears in the box at the end of Gormings. He previously attained literary fame in the Whites by writing about Lakes and Madison in the 1950s in the 2004 *Resuscitator*. He asked what *Solvitur Crumpus* meant, couldn't seem to find it in his library of Latin translations. It's Dog Latin for The Solution is in Sitting Down! He sent us his dues in pounds sterling, but Moose can figure out the conversion (after all, he is a banker). Thanks, Larry, for the extra for the Madison framing project. Please look us up when you visit in Vermont next time.

Special OH **Max and Ruth Wiener** are hale and hearty octogenarians living in Israel. Max at 84 folk dances and Ruth at 81 walks and jogs. They invite any OH to visit them in their southeast corner of Jerusalem. They enjoyed the fall *Resuscitator* and assured us that our overseas mailings are getting to their adopted homeland. Thanks for the back dues.

Thanks to **Jon Cotton** for paying his 2007 dues and sending something extra for the Lakes framing project.

Welcome new member **Melissa Dickey** who works with Moose Meserve's daughter in Aspen. She worked at Lakes, Greenleaf

and Madison summer and fall '05-'06.

Got one of the dues billing forms we leave at the Cabin with dues from Katie Mygatt, 'Pah '03 and Madhaus '04. She enjoyed last summer's hike to Carter over the Dome using the Cabin as base ops.

Tim Jursak and Thom Davis helped out on an Obs Edu-Trip last January, also using the Cabin as base ops.

Porky Curwen remembers his years in the hills working for Joe Dodge as the best time of his life—"a common bond of grunting and groaning, as we have struggled up one more incredibly steep pitch with a huge load on our back...with the ability to get to the far end and take the load off." He shared a memory on the phone with us this past spring: while on spring break from medical school, he and another strapping young man went to Lakes to open the hut and surprised a group of intruders who had broken in. Instead of making it a confrontation—that Porky and his big pal probably would have won—they enlisted the help of the trespassers and cleaned up the hut in record time for the summer business. Porky is battling cancer. He enjoys hearing from **Sleazy Dalton and Roger Smith**. We all wish you well, Porky.

Doug and Caroline George are building a lovely home in Franconia with a view of their beloved Lafayette and the Franconia Range.

Da Coach Paxton has turned 60, reminding us that he shares a birthday with the other coach, Penn State's Joe Paterno. Thanks for the something extra for the Cabin.

Barbara Hadlock has supported the OHA for many years as an "avid Porky Gulcher" and has asked to be taken off our mail list since she will be giving up her dues payments. No way, Barbara, you're staying on the mail list. Enjoy the *Resuscitator* and reading about your old and new friends.

Such as **Polly Smith Lit**, who has hit the ninety mark and is **Andy McLane's** mother.

Dave Fonseca likes our new shirts, but would feel a bit more relaxed if we could come up with an XXL that would allow his 48 to 50 inch chest a bit of expansion room. He suggests we come up with a Porky Gulch design shirt.

Just the opposite of Dave, **Ana Roy** would like us to go the other way size-wise. She will be holding out her order until we come up with a small size for those OH under thirty whom we all envy for their petite size.

Since summer has come and gone, some OH visiting the huts might have run into several legacies: **Nancy Bazilchuk's** daughter and **Mike and Sally Schnitzer's** son Tom at Mizpah. We think Betsy Cook, Naturalist, at Lonesome is **Andy Cook's**

daughter.

Mark Hitchcock, according to **Stroker**, has been flying choppers for oil rigs in LA and just might find himself back in these parts soon.

Mike Waddell managed some interesting help in finishing the Gorham Town Hall. His CC days and Hut Manager days gave him the valuable experience for overseeing convict laborers.

Stroker had a nice email from **Ranger Ted Miller** who worked in the late '70s to '80, after which he worked in the pulp mill in Berlin until it closed in '01. He went onto Titusville, FL, for schooling in water and wastewater treatment, which brought him right back to Berlin as a chemist working for the Berlin Pollution Control. He remembers the indelible impressions his hut mountain friendships have made, has been married for 25 years, and from base ops in Berlin visits Montreal or drives down to Logan for flights to Florida and Aruba.

Ned Baldwin is working towards his Masters in Mental Health Counseling at Plymouth State University. (It's a small university, but there are those who love it.)

The July/August issue of *AMC Outdoors* credited **Bill Putnam** for starting the mountain leadership course fifty years ago. At that time, he enlisted the late OH Special Member **Brad Swan** to help him devise a multi-day training session to teach mountain leadership skills. Now called Mountain Leadership School, the successful program will celebrate its 50th anniversary at the Highland Center on October 3rd. Bill plans to be there from his Lowell Observatory in Arizona. Maybe we can get him to stop by Oktoberfest October 4 to say hi.

Oops, sometimes we find letters tucked away. One from **Fred Richardson** dated 2006 reminded us that Boston's Yankee Network WNAC operated a radio station next to the old Obs and that **Paul Uncas Gerhard**, then a radio engineer, worked there. Fred enclosed his picture from the *Boston Herald* walking a picket line during a strike.

Mac McLellen remembered that Uncas in his hut days was a strapping 6 feet 4 inches and held the early record load to Lakes—287 pounds.

Stan Caulkins wrote us in January that he returned from his WWII stint with the 8th Air Force to work as a floater in '46 and '47 and also cook at Pinkham. He had started at Madison in '42 with **Pete Richardson**, and then returned in '43 to work with **Brookie Dodge** (and others). His brothers **Tom and Roger**, all from Leesburg, VA, worked in the huts.

Honorary Member **George Hamilton** is living in a nursing home near Bow, NH,

THE ENDURING NATURE OF FOLK WISDOM

by Larry Eldredge (Madison '49-'50; Lakes '51-'53)

Back then we asked the same questions hutmen have always asked since time out of mind. Like "Why doesn't it stop raining?" and "Why don't the goofers learn how to fold a blanket?" or "Why doesn't Joe send up matches that aren't fire-proof?" The legendary Willy Hastings always had an answer to these, an answer in the form of another question. "Why," he would say, "don't chickens piss?"

I confess that my curiosity up to that point in my life had not led me to consider the excretory nature of chickens, and I didn't know that they don't actually urinate. I found later that kidneys and bowels cooperate in all species of birds and send all superfluous matter out through a single orifice. But Willy's query, always given in response to some idle speculation on the inevitable nature of things, struck all of us as very useful, and soon enough just about everyone in the mountains was using it.

After leaving the mountains for good (well, very nearly for good) in 1953, I don't reckon I ever gave the matter much thought again—or ever again used the rhetorical question. But just the other day, I was reading through a series of questions, dating from around AD1200, that formed the basis for scientific inquiry at the time, and lo! I found Willy's query almost as he had it, though in another language:

Queritur, it said, *quare aves non mingant?* That is, "One may ask why birds don't urinate?"

What is more, I found the question again in another treatise from around the same date, this one by Adelard of Bath, whose nephew is asking him questions: *Nunc vero illud dissolvas volo*, asks the nephew, *cur non omnia que potant mingunt?* or as one might say in English, "Now I want you to solve another one: why don't all the creatures that drink also urinate?" The question is further elaborated, and Adelard provides an answer, one based on reasoning rather than actual evidence, saying nothing about the anatomy of birds.

But these two passages pulled me back some 50 or so years to Willy, and, of course, I had to speculate on just what sorts of channels of transmission there might have been between a series of scientific questions compiled around 1200 and the folk wisdom of rural Maine, for Willy came from Bethel, Maine, in the mid-twentieth century. I had to admit that I couldn't for a moment reconstruct such devious channels with any assurance of being right, but there was the tantalizing evidence of the questions. One might speculate that the questions arose independently some 750 years apart, but it was more fascinating to think that there might have been some sort of connection. The medieval equivalent of a Little Old Lady in Tennis Shoes, eavesdropping on a group of learned clerics, hears someone translate the query into English, and she thinks the absurdity of it makes it worth repeating to her husband. He repeats it to his friends down at the pub, just to show what time-wasters all those clerics are, but one of his friends realizes what a gem he has discovered: a rhetorical question that will silence all those silly speculative questions that lead nowhere. And thereby hangs (or might possibly hang, if you make about a thousand allowances for fantasy), a tale.

(Anyone interested can find the question in Brian Lawn, ed., *The Prose Salernitan Questions* [London: British Academy, 1979], question # 265, p. 128. And Adelard's version is in *Adelard of Bath, Questiones naturales*, ed. Charles Burnett, Cambridge Medieval Classics 9 [Cambridge, 1998], question 10, p. 108.)

Continued on page 28

but is happy to hear from OH. Just email **Helen** at helen.hamilton@comcast.net.

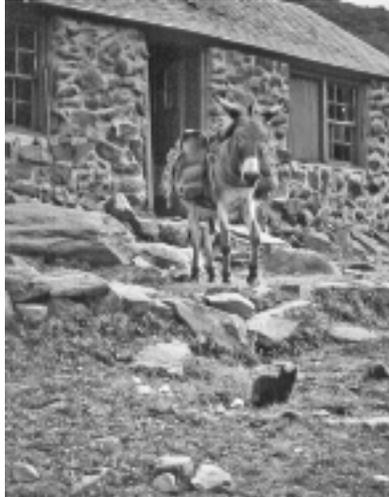
Alan Davisson asked us to consider forgiving him his dues which we will, but will keep mailing the *Resuscitator*.

Andy Cook sent plenty of extra for Cabin maintenance. Thanks.

Robin Snyder has a new address and a new job in Economic Development as a Natural Resource Program Coordinator at the Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council in Redmond, OR. Any OH going west can stay in her western-theme guest room on her 80-acre ranch near Bend.

Peggy Dillon has moved from Salem to Gloucester and is now a tenure-track communication professor at Salem State College. Check her email on our website; it's the same one.

Just finished looking over the Fall issue of the *Journal of the New England Ski Museum* written by its director, **Jeff Leich**. Kudos to Jeff, who has consistently delivered another first-rate glimpse of New England ski history, much of it in our Whites. \$35 gets you an individual membership, \$50 for families—well worth it. Visit the museum located at the Cannon Mountain Tramway parking lot or check out his website: www.skimuseum.org.



Kirk Sibson sent this 1958 photo of Madcat and an unnamed donk at Madison. The photo has been shown around to identify the donk. Anybody recognize him?

Bill Meserve took a stab at it and wrote: "I remember Tex, Rocky, Trigger and Paesan (sic). It certainly was not Pizon; it's Italian (at least I always thought it was — an abbreviation of *paesano*). There were other names as well. **Larry Kilham** would know them

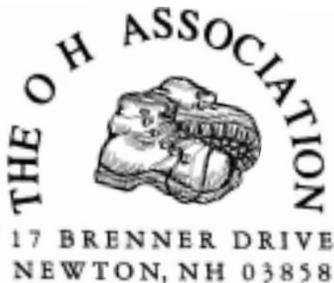
all — at least from the years he was donk skinner. Horny buggers — the lot of them. Paesan was a runt and ding-toed as well. He could barely make it up the Valley Way, even without a load, so he packed about 40 pounds. There was also Ulla or Ula, who gave her name to Ulla's rock on the Valley Way. She fell off it on the way up a year or two before I was at Madison. I'm told they just left her there (dead, of course), and the smell was apparently horrendous for several weeks. People moved through that section of the trail rather quickly!"

OH T-shirts still available

Long-sleeved shirt with
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