



Friends of Mount Arab 2011 Newsletter

Directors

Chairman

Richard Bentley

Secretary

Donna Waltz

Treasurer

Bruce Lewis

Robert Acker

Peter Bartoszek

Gordon Batson

Gary Caudle

Michael Frenette

Chiprle Mecklenburg

Carrie Snye

Liaisons

SUNY Potsdam
Environmental Studies
Program

Bill Brown

DEC

NYS Department of
Environmental
Conservation

Will Benzel

John Wood

AFTA

Adirondack Fire Tower
Association

AARCH

Adirondack
Architectural Heritage

YCC

St. Lawrence County
Youth Bureau, Youth
Conservation Corps

Joanne Sevick

CONTACT:

FOMA
PO Box 185
Piercefield, NY 12973

518-359-9300

bentley@northnet.org

VANDALISM follow-up

Recovery is underway. Under FOMA direction, a team of volunteers boarded up the broken windows for winter, righted the outhouse and removed broken glass and debris. Work will continue in the Spring when the windows will be repaired, interior furnishings spruced up, broken items repaired or replaced, and new lockable, solid wood shutters affixed over all six windows. The spray painted window in the tower will be replaced and the sprayed horizon displays will either be cleaned, or coverings replaced if that is not possible. (continued back page)

Raymond 'Buzz' Dumas (1929-2011)

This past summer FOMA founding board member, and board member to the end, 'Buzz' Dumas passed away.

We shall all remember Buzz who through his efforts on the St. Lawrence County Environmental Management Council initiated the restoration of summit facilities at the Arab Mountain Fire Observation Station resulting in the formation of FOMA and the improvements you enjoy today.

A plaque commemorating his service to this effort was presented to his wife Joan, and will hang in the cabin on the summit.

Two New Board Members

We wish to welcome to the FOMA Board Chiprle Mecklenburg, a participant in the railroad station reconstruction project in Tupper Lake, and also Michael Frenette, master carpenter from Tupper Lake, who has nearly single handedly led the Adirondack Great Camp Santanoni restoration effort, and who teaches a woodworking course for the St. Lawrence University Adirondack semester program.

AFTA Status

SUNY Potsdam Foundation is no longer hosting AFTA which is now looking for a new home. AARCH is willing but there

appears to be a bureaucratic delay at DEC which we hope will soon be resolved.

Further, Michael Wilson has retired from the SUNY Potsdam Environmental Studies Program. FOMA thanks him for his many years in this capacity and all the assistance he has extended to our efforts on Mount Arab. Bill Brown, biologist at SUNY Potsdam, has taken over that job.

YCC

Joanne Sevick tells us that the YCC is teetering on the edge. Funding for 2012 was first cut from the budget, then put back in by the St. Lawrence County Legislature, but at a meager level. With state money tight, that is the foreseeable future. When 2012 funding was first cut from the budget, Joanne sent FOMA a letter stating that YCC would no longer be assisting us with payroll for our summer interns. For the past 2 years YCC has had no funds for our intern's wages – that now depends on contributions – and even for handling payroll, Joanne suggests that we look to the Town of Piercefield.

FOMA payroll

Town of Piercefield has stepped up to assist us in that capacity, and has already done so this past August when we hired the semi-retired Tom Cullen to take on the job of Summit Steward. So, we heartily thank the Town Board of Piercefield, and especially Linda Pickering who does the town books and who took on this extra load for FOMA.

'**HORIZON DISPLAYS**', long awaited, have finally been mounted above the windows in the tower cab. They make it easy to identify sites of interest around Mount Arab. If you haven't seen them, this is your excuse to take yet another climb up our mountain. They looked great up until the day of the vandalism. They are now marred by spray paint, but the Plexiglas coverings will be replaced in the spring which should restore them as good as new.



Janelle Hoh
July Summit Steward

When my time on Mt. Arab expired, I realized Mt. Arab is the one place in the Adirondacks where I have spent the most time. Needless to say,

spending that much time working outside was a new experience for me. The month of July produced well over 1,000 hikers. A lot of them blurred into one image in my memory but a few individuals stand out.

There was the couple who hiked up the mountain on a day when no one else did and got engaged. Another day I watched a young boy rescue a caterpillar from his brother's stomping foot. I met people who grew up in the town next to mine and I met people who lived hundreds of miles away. One man said he'd been hiking the mountain for over 30 years. One flip-flop clad couple struggled up the mountain and one man ran up and started back down before I even got half way.

All these people expressed different sentiments toward the mountain. Some cursed the terrain for its demanding nature. Some welcomed fresh air. And some seemed to not care about anything but returning to their respective homes and having a beer. Even though people saw the mountain in different lights, once they got by the first landing on the tower, everyone seemed to feel the same emotion. The sublime beauty of the surrounding landscape awed everyone, even those who had seen it many times before. When the sunlight hits Mt. Arab Lake's shining waters or the distant High Peaks in the right way, something magical happens. I'm glad I wasn't the only one who noticed that. Before hikers started arriving for the day, I'd climb up the tower and just stare out into the wild, as the fire tower observers did in years past. They had a purpose though; I was just looking.

It was an unreal experience being consumed by the splendor surrounding Mt. Arab. I struggle to find words that accurately describe it. But there is a certain peacefulness I found at the top of Mt. Arab I've never been able to find anywhere else. It seemed like many other hikers felt the same way. Time seemed to stand still when on top of the mountain. Perhaps it actually did.



Thomas Cullen,
August and Fall
Summit Steward

It was my pleasure to serve as the second Summit Steward for Mount Arab during the 2011 summer season. I started out by volunteering to serve as Steward in July during my predecessor's days off. This led to full time employment

in August right on up to Labor Day and then sporadically right up to the busy Columbus Day Weekend.

My Newfoundland Dog Toby (and later his little'!' brother Apollo) greeted thousands of visitors this year and I explained the special history, biology, ecology, and geology of this area to the public. As a biologist and naturalist I initiated a formal natural history of the summit by beginning to key out and tabulate the species of insects, mammals, birds, and plants living with me on the summit, with special emphasis on dragonflies, bats, and hummingbirds.

I can envision increased outreach for FOMA in the future, as well as work being done to make our mountain a sanctuary for dragonflies, bats and hummingbirds by providing habitat and shelter as well as informational displays to educate the public on these creatures.

As a field biologist and licensed teacher I was very much at home on this beautiful mountain, and I was told that my enthusiasm for the job was contagious. I look forward to a long association with the Friends of Mount Arab, and wish to once again thank the Board and Town of Piercefield for having the confidence in me to do this job.

Tom Cullen also responded to the vandalism, voluntarily going up the mountain for a full day shortly after the break-in to clean up and pick up much of the disorder in the ranger cabin. GREAT JOB, Tom!

Mount Arab Vandalism – Update

Following the 16 October break-in and destruction on the summit of Mount Arab committed by 2 local youths, Dick Bentley, FOMA chair, and Michael Frenette, FOMA board, made a damage assessment.



On Friday and Saturday (Oct 28 and 29) cleanup and temporary repairs were made to protect the cabin. Windows were removed for repair, to be reinstalled in the spring, and plywood was fastened over the window openings to protect the interior from weather damage over the winter.



The woodstove was repaired and repositioned. The outhouse was cleaned, righted and screwed back onto its base after the base was repositioned. Glass and other broken materials were removed and delivered to the dump. The damaged lock was cut off and a new lock installed. A spray painted sign was removed and will be restored. The biggest part of this was hauling material and tools up and down the mountain.

We had volunteers from Pennsylvania, New York and Connecticut: David Wollman from Launghorne, PA, Aria Vakili, Tom Argentieri & Paul Stringer all from Yardley, PA, Lawrence Lee & Carol Dimond from Raquette Flow, Piercefield, NY, and Jim Coveney from Plainville, CT. We also had a great assist from the Saint Lawrence Cross Country Ski Team who were training on Saturday. They carried most of the broken glass and wood back down the mountain.

We truly thank all those who volunteered their time to assist us in this effort.



Work will continue in the spring when the windows will be repaired, interior furnishings spruced up, broken furniture, picture frames, and displays repaired or replaced, and new lockable, solid wood shutters affixed over all six windows. The spray painted window in the tower will be replaced and the sprayed horizon displays will either be cleaned, or coverings replaced if that is not possible.

Last, but certainly NOT least, we wish to extend a ***Great Big THANK YOU to those of you who have sent generous donations to FOMA*** in our hour of need. The response has been heart warming, and it will all be put to good use to make your Mount Arab experience the best ever!

We are working with the county District Attorney who be prosecuting the juveniles responsible for the vandalism in Family Court in Canton, NY. We have provided him with a list of damages and associated costs to repair or replace broken or defaced items, cabin walls, signs and windows. Pictures of the damages have been submitted by the NYS Police investigator, and FOMA has provided additional photos. The prosecution is dealing with minors (14 year old boys) so the matter must go to Family Court where FOMA is not allowed to testify in person. We have posed the request to have the juveniles aid in the cleanup and repair but this does not appear to be likely, and in any case would be unlikely to produce a satisfactory outcome. We were told that one juvenile who has a lengthy record of misdeeds was removed from his home and placed in a juvenile group facility until the hearing has taken place.

Again thank you to all who have helped us start the recovery from this senseless action.

NEW Interpretive Trail Brochure

Visitors to the registration area at the trailhead will now find the new FOMA Trail Guide, the key to our newly developed Interpretive Trail. The trail and Guide were developed by our recent year summit guides, Katelin Isaacson, Michelle Davis and Crystal Decker, with guidance from Dr. Michael Wilson, a faculty member at SUNY Potsdam. Assistance was also provided by Peter O'Shea, Naturalist, and John Wood, DEC, under coordination by the FOMA board.

The Guide discusses the history of the fire tower, the Adirondack Park, answers to 'Frequently Asked Questions', and explains the interesting aspects to be found at the numbered trail markers you will find as you hike to the summit. The Guide also describes the natural flora to be found at the summit along with a discussion of the wildlife that call Mount Arab home.

We hope you will enjoy the Interpretive Trail Guide and find it useful on your next visit to Mount Arab.

Don't forget to take advantage of our new 'IRON RANGER' for donations at the trailhead. Leaving your wallet in the car is no longer a problem because the 'Iron Ranger' donation box is right across from the parking lot, alongside the trail. With a big sign above it, you cannot possibly miss it. Installed last fall under the direction of FOMA, we hope this convenience will help close FOMA's budget shortfall.



A SIGN directing hiking traffic to the Mt. Arab trailhead was placed at the beginning of the Mt. Arab road in late 2010. This joint project between FOMA and the Memorial Committee of the Mount Arab Preserve Association was erected by one of their members – Peter Erickson

HISTORY of FOMA

On Earth Day 1997 a small group of citizens and DEC officials gathered at the summit of Mount Arab. With the common desire to save and to share this historical facility and its magnificent views with future generations, they resolved to restore and maintain the sadly decaying fire tower and fire observer's cabin located there.

Beginning with the incorporation of 'Friends of Mount Arab' (FOMA), a non-profit organization in partnership with DEC, and now affiliated with the Adirondack Fire Tower Association, this small group has progressed steadily toward their goal. Restoration of the tower is well underway, and the fire observer's cabin is nearly complete. FOMA has created an exhibit of text and photos summarizing fire tower history and highlighting the restoration effort. Additionally, there has been extensive trail work assisted greatly by AmeriCorps work crews.

**A 'FRIENDS OF MOUNT ARAB' T-SHIRT OR HAT MAKES A GREAT CHRISTMAS GIFT!
SO... AS YOU ARE MAKING UP YOUR CHRISTMAS LIST DO NOT FORGET TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF OUR
GREAT OFFERINGS THAT WILL PUT SMILES ON THE FACES OF ALL THE ADIRONDACK MOUNTAIN HIKERS IN YOUR FAMILY.
(PSST... THEY WILL ENJOY A SHIRT OR HAT - OR BOTH - EVEN IF THEY DON'T CLIMB THE MOUNTAIN.)**

----- CHRISTMAS 2012 - ITS NEVER TOO EARLY -----

Yes! I want to become a friend of Mount Arab, to help save and maintain the tower and ranger cabin, improve the trail, and interpret the natural and cultural history of Mount Arab.

- Enclosed is my tax-deductible contribution for: _____ \$10 _____ \$25 _____ \$50 _____ Other.
- I would like to order _____ caps at \$15 each plus \$1 postage per order.
- I would like to order _____ shirts at \$15 each plus \$2 postage per order. Specify sizes:
- I would like to order _____ patches at \$5 each plus \$1 postage per order.

Medium _____ Large _____ X-Large _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____ Email: _____

Please make checks payable to: FRIENDS OF MOUNT ARAB

Mail to: Friends of Mount Arab, PO Box 185, Piercefield, NY 12973

Creatures of the Mountain - Inge Sapp

This time I would like to talk about all the creatures that inhabit the mountain. We are just guests, the observers if we are lucky enough to get a glimpse of them. The first creatures we encounter in spring - they are actually waiting for us - are the black flies. These little blood sucking insects that can't get enough of us. We cover ourselves with nets and insect sprays to keep them away. They emerge at the time of the spring flowers when the sun still filters through the leafless trees. They provide food for the returning migratory birds and the bats. So do not feel too bad when you scratch your bug bites. Mosquitoes emerge, hunted by dragonflies, damselflies and birds. I am always touched when I see the birds return, the huge geese, the loons, multiple ducks, robins, swallows, the red winged blackbirds, woodpeckers and many other species all eagerly nest hunting to raise the new brood. Chickadees, nuthatches, finches, cardinals and blue jays as well as crows and ravens, hawks and eagles stay with us all winter to delight us and add color and some sound to the white winter days. I have to mention the wild turkeys. Their population exploded and we can watch the mothers educate the youngsters about crossing roads as we approach the trailhead. Toads, salamanders and snakes test the warming rays of the sun and we can watch them jump or wiggle away as the days get longer. Mice, raccoons, foxes, weasels, rabbits and hares make their homes in crevices and holes. Squirrels, red and grey, joyfully explore the routes in the tree tops and raise their young in nests. I watched a mother squirrel lead her four youngsters through the treetops and abandon them the next day. "Kids, you are on your own!" Then we have the vegetarians. The graceful deer, rabbits, and porcupines surviving during the winter on meager rations of grass, branches of evergreens and

whatever they can find. Coyotes hunt in groups and we can hear their howls at night. They make their presence known. The king of them all is the black bear who gives birth during her winter sleep and roams the woods and meadows and fattens up before going into hibernation.

Animals do not hunt and kill each other for killings sake - they hunt to survive. Unfortunately it is Man who is destructive without purpose.

A few more photos



Volunteer Crew Preparing to head up



Volunteers after boarding up cabin and righting outhouse.



Friends of Mount Arab
PO Box 185
Piercefield, NY 12973