



Friends of Mount Arab 2012 Newsletter

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FOMA comings and goings

Donna Waltz, our very dedicated and highly proficient secretary for many, many years, retired from her position and from the board this past summer. She was an outstanding secretary and contributor to the FOMA effort. Donna helped us to recruit Chiprle Mecklenburg to the FOMA board, then stayed with us long enough to bring Chiprle up to speed as our new secretary.

All of us on the FOMA board wish to give a big round of applause to Donna for her many years of dedicated service to FOMA's progress.

Two other board members also retired this year. We wish to thank Carrie Snye and Gary 'Griz' Caudle for their service to the FOMA board.

Bruce Lewis retired from his position as Treasurer, but remains on the board. New board member Lawrence Lee has taken the position of Treasurer.

In addition to Chiprle Mecklenburg and Lawrence Lee, we also wish to welcome Thomas Cullen - entomologist, school teacher and FOMA summit steward - and Kirklyn Denis - auxiliary summit steward and currently a student at Paul Smiths College - to the FOMA board.

The Mountain by Cooper Ross, Saranac Lake HS student

My hand grips the rock; its rough surface scrapes my palm.

*The mountainside brings the rhino's skin to my mind,
gray, uneven and thick.*

The wind is a harsh whistle pounding at my ears.

*I step from one firm spot to the next, my hands sore,
my mouth bitter and dry.*

My spirits warm with satisfaction at the top.

*Distant mountains like moss-covered rocks in my eyes,
my hardship was repaid.*

I can still feel the dirt and cold air on my tongue.

*My hands gain rest as I run them along the soil;
they, at least, are grateful.*

I catch the distinctive scent of the pine trees nearby.

*Nothing artificial can compare to such life,
for this is born, not made.*

The wind's shrill cries are gone, replaced by rustling leaves.

My soles forsake the rock, knowing only soft earth.

Summit in Summer



Acknowledgements

Friends of Mt. Arab would like to sincerely thank the Town of Piercefield, and in particular Linda Pickering who actually did the work, for administering the summit steward payroll.

Corporate donor:

- Rayonier Grant - \$500

Other Major donors:

-AUG 2012 - \$1000

Paul, Jane & Michelle Quinn in memory of their son, David P. Quinn who loved to climb Mt. Arab.

-DEC 2012 - \$500

Pamela M. Fiaccone - In memory of mother, Lola Merrill and father, Gordon Merrill.

-JAN 2012 - \$250

Jim Clifford - For the Clifford Family Trust.

-DEC 2012 - \$250

Linda L. Lawson

-DEC 2012 - \$250

grant from an anonyms donor via Adirondack Community Trust, Lake Placid.

-JAN 2012 - \$200

ADK Schenectady Chapter

-AUG 2012 - \$200

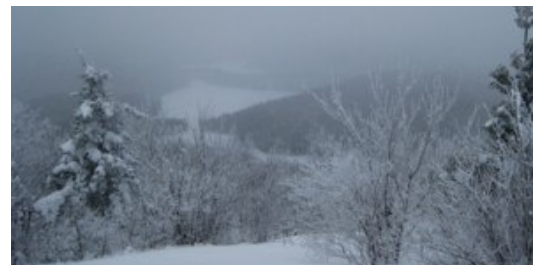
Peter C. Galloway

We have had supporters in previous years who have donated at this level also, but have not been recognized in this manner. Please be assured. Your donations have not gone without notice and we do thank you.

While we have made note of the larger donations, MOST of our funding has come from a large base of steady contributions of smaller denomination, often from folks who give steadily every year making the FOMA effort possible. We thank you all most heartily and hope we earn your continued support.

The FOMA Board

Summit in Winter





NEWS FROM THE TOP

By Thomas P. Cullen,
Summit Steward



For a second year it was my pleasure to serve as Summit Steward and Naturalist atop beautiful Mount Arab. Four months went by so fast! My two Newfoundland 'Beasts' and I met thousands of hikers and were constantly photographed. I liked to say the dogs were doing all the work and I only assisted them!

The invigorating morning climb up the mountain was a great way to start my day and keep both man and beast in shape. I usually entered a silent enchanting forest trail doing minor maintenance on the way up. At the summit I set up brochures, hung artwork and maps, cleaned the cabin, and tended the outhouse, all before our first visitors arrived!

We are slowly recovering from the mindless vandalism of a year ago. Most of the graffiti has been removed, the outhouse has been repaired, debris and broken glass swept up, and windows replaced. The Loughran Family Memorial Bench has been repaired and repositioned on the western rock shelf.

The Adirondack Mountain Club Trail Crew made major improvements to the trail this past summer building a wooden staircase in a steep, eroded portion of the trail to encourage hikers not to stray and cause more erosion (*see photos*). The crews camped out at the old summit campsite.

Two of my three planned natural history projects came to fruition. Three or four families of hummingbirds were raised near the summit to the endless delight of our visitors. These miniature jewels were a constant joy to behold as they hovered at the feeders and around hiker's heads all summer and fall. It was great to witness the females teaching their young to feed from the feeders I had widely spaced around the summit.

Next year, in addition to continuing my current projects, I plan to hang a bat house to provide habitat and help foster populations of Little Brown and Big Brown Bats which are being driven to near extinction in NY State and elsewhere by a fungal disease called White Nose Syndrome. I also plan on setting up a Northern Oriole feeding station in hopes of attracting these beautiful songbirds to our summit, as well as initiate a concerted attempt to do more educational outreach to schools in my role as a Substitute Teacher and encourage them to 'adopt' our mountain or do research here.

Hundreds of youngsters and adults marveled at the huge daily populations of large dragonflies endlessly patrolling the summit in a display called hill topping. One can find these Odonate assemblages at just about any Adirondack peak during summer and early fall sunny days. I would carefully net a dragon each morning, identify it to species, and place it in a large mesh cage so folks could observe and handle it under my supervision. Of course the dragons were safely released at days end to continue their adult lives. Countless kids handled their first dragonfly at the top of Mount Arab and most will treasure that memory forever. Kids and dragonflies seem to have a spiritual bond.

During the summer I updated and repositioned some of our nature trail guide signage adding additional signage visible while descending. If you missed the nature station on the way up you had a chance to re-experience it on the way down. Roger Hall, my friend and Wildlife Artist, also donated many works of Adirondack wildlife art and prints which I exhibited at the cabin museum. More Adirondack art is promised for next summer.

It was great to see so many school groups come up and listen to their Professors conducting lectures at the base of the fire tower. Clearly our mountain is becoming a model showcase to bridge the gap between human fire tower history of the Adirondacks and the natural history surrounding us in the Park. There is a place for both in the Adirondacks. All of this is only possible with the generous financial support of our climbers and patrons, and I want to personally thank all who contributed to our efforts. Mount Arab continues to be a place of peace, tranquility, and serenity for people to experience.

My dogs and I hope to return next spring, summer and autumn to provide stewardship and environmental education to our climbers atop Mount Arab. Thank you for this opportunity.



ADK TRAIL WORK

This past summer the trail to the summit of Mount Arab was the recipient of a couple of weeks of outstanding trail work by the ADK's professional trail crew, coordinated by Andrew Hamlin. FOMA (your donations) purchased the wood and other supplies for a badly eroded portion on a steep section of trail where the crew installed a wood stairway. On other trail sections, the crew fixed existing water bars and installed additional water bars. FOMA, and all of our great number of visitors, wish to say a tremendous THANK YOU to the ADK and its trail crew!

BEFORE



AFTER



CABIN WINDOW SHUTTER TRANSPORT

On November 11, 2012 a number of hardy volunteers carried shutters and construction material up to the summit of Mt. Arab. The shutters were designed by Mike Frenette (FOMA Board member). They will cover the windows when the steward is off-duty to prevent break-ins like the one we experienced last year. One shutter was installed in early summer. Mike has been working on installing the remaining shutters. Volunteers were Lawrence Lee & Carol Dimond from Raquette Flow, Piercefield, NY, Joseph Englert, Aria Vakili & Paul Stringer from Yardley, PA, Mike Frenette of Tupper Lake, NY and Lindsay Putnam-Kunz from Norwich Vt.



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.

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**

CABIN SHUTTER INSTALLATION

After the work crew transported three of the shutters plus materials to the summit back in November, Michael Frenette has installed them. Since that time he has transported and installed the final two shutters. As you can see below, conditions at the top of the mountain were less than ideal.



Michael says that he still has a bit of work to do in the spring to make those last two shutters fully functional. But, at this point the cabin is secure for the remainder of the winter and the shutters are all in place.

TOWER REPAIRS PLANNED FOR 2013

A few of the steel diagonals in the tower frame are showing signs of corrosion, some of the bolts need replacing, and the cement footers at

the tower base need to be repaired.

FOMA has met with David Vana, a specialist in fire tower construction and repair from Bloomingdale, NY, right here in the Adirondacks. David has had extensive experience with towers identical to the tower on Mount Arab. He can repair or fabricate replacement parts for any part of the structure, and has erected towers at points around the US but mostly in NY State. FOMA is making plans to hire him and his crew this spring to make the repairs outlined above. The work will likely cost between \$7000 and \$8000.

Additionally, we have new Plexiglas windows for the tower cab. They have already been transported to the summit and stored in the cabin awaiting installation in the spring. Also at that time we plan to install new Plexiglas covers over the two horizon displays that were sprayed by the vandals last year.



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