

Giant News

March 1984
No. 1

Newsletter of The Sleeping Giant Park Association

Association Celebrates 60 Years of Caring

On the evening of Saturday, March 3rd, one hundred and sixty persons attended a dinner celebrating the sixtieth anniversary of the Sleeping Giant Park Association in the parish house hall of the Spring Glen Church on Whitney Avenue. Honored guests were Mayor Peter Villano of Hamden; North Haven First Selectman Walter Gawrych and his wife, Susan; Dr. Richard Terry, President, Quinnipiac College, and Mrs. Terry; Mr. Lawrence DeNardis; and Sleeping Giant Park Ranger Mark Rickert, and Mrs. Rickert. Messers Villano, Gawrych, and Terry addressed the banqueters.

Pfeiffer Recognizes Helpers -- Past & Present

Throughout the evening Dag Pfeiffer, our President, acted as master of ceremonies with great ability. Dag recognized with thanks the following individuals: Donald Steele, past Director and Treasurer, who served the Association for numerous years; Dick Elliott, former Director, who many years ago, worked closely with Ned Greist in planning and executing the Sleeping Giant Trail System; Mark Rickert and his staff who work long hours to keep the Giant in tip-top shape; George Heston, Anniversary Dinner Chairman, and Barbara Fields who assisted him in the preparations; Barbara Beitch and members of her Hiking and Camping Committee who organize and lead Giant hikes with much expertise; John Menta and David Thompson, Co-Chairmen of the new Search and Rescue Team, and the team members who will rush to the



Norman A. Greist, past president of the Association from 1962 to 1982, was recognized for his invaluable contributions to the Giant over the years. Dag Pfeiffer, current president, reads the citation conferring Honorary President on Ned, center, while Mrs. Greist looks on. See story on page 2.

mountain at any time to help those who are lost or in trouble; Doug Simmons and Herb Etter for organizing and putting into action a Boy Scout Explorer Post--an "Outdoor Development" post; Howard Sisson for his continuing contribution to the Association as Treasurer; Herb Etter for taking on the Chairmanship of the Outdoor Training Center; Mary Hallenbeck, the new Membership Chairman who sent you those notices lately about the 1984 dues being due; Harry Eldredge, new Board member and Director of Public Relations, for the articles and notices you may have read in area newspapers; John Menta, new Chairman of the Trails Committee, who with his crew removed nearly a hundred blow-downs last fall in the back woods of the

Giant; and Ray Milum for painting numerous trail markings. After recognizing

Nancy Sachse Praised

these individuals, the President then asked Nancy Sachse, also a new Director, to come forward and he praised her for her contribution in writing the history of the Sleeping Giant and the Association in her book, "Born Among the Hills--The Sleeping Giant Story."

Ned Greist Made Honorary President

A highlight of the gala evening occurred when Dag presented Ned Greist, former president of the Association, with a colorful scroll on which was written: "The Board of Directors of the Sleeping Giant Park Association proclaims with great satisfaction and gratitude that Norman A. Greist has made outstanding contributions to the success of this Association. Please note that: he has served as its sixth President from 1962 to 1982; he has guided and promoted the affairs of this Association with wisdom, courage, dedication, and total commitment; he has provided leadership that brought growth in membership; he has provided leadership that resulted in substantial land acquisitions on the Sleeping Giant; he has been instrumental in planning and creating a thirty mile trails system that caused the Park to be named a National Recreation Trail, the first so-named in Connecticut; because of this, the Sleeping Giant Park is rated today as one of the ten best hiking areas in the Northeast. Therefore, be it resolved that the Board of Directors recognizes his contributions and bestows upon him, for life, on this day of March 4, 1984, on the 60th Anniversary of the Association, the singular distinction and title of Honorary President." The declaration was signed by the officers and directors of the Association.

A further element in the Anniversary Dinner evening was provided by Russell Williams when he spoke to the guests about the object of the Capital Fund Drive of which he is the busy chairman.

Following speeches, presentations, and the awarding of raffle prizes, the Funky Butt Jazz Trio played music at which a number of the guests were unable to keep their seats. They rose and danced.

Harrison Eldredge

From the President---

As members of a 60 year old Association that can look back at its accomplishments with pride, we know how different and very special this Sleeping Giant Park Association really is.

You can be proud of being part of an organization that has over these 60 years acquired nearly 1500 acres of land that now forms the Sleeping Giant Park and attracts nearly 250,000 people a year.

It is important to think about this for a minute. In our times, what we are doing is quite extraordinary. We raise money to buy land, which we then turn over to the State. This is unique because in today's world, State and Federal Governments are taxed with so many demands. I believe it is refreshing to be part of an organization, the Sleeping Giant Park Association, that does the opposite. We can be proud of that. I am also glad you are part of it. It is also my sincere hope that you will be supportive of our efforts to raise enough money so we can buy the additional acreage on the Sleeping Giant. For this I thank you.

Dag Pfeiffer,
President

Maintaining the Trails

Since the fall of 1983, the Trails Maintenance Committee has undergone some reorganization. We have added five new members to our volunteer group and we would like to welcome them: Jim Calandriello, Mike Ferrucci, Ed Goldman, Elizabeth McArthur and Linda Olender.

Since October, our crew has been very active in removing numerous "blowdowns" (fallen trees) from the trails on the Giant. But trails work is a job that never ends and much remains to be done! As winter draws to a close, we will start "patrolling" the trails again to prepare for the busy spring hiking season.

As the weather gets warmer, we also plan to do some sorely needed work on the trail markings. If anyone would like to help us on this project, please come to our next trail maintenance meeting, Wednesday, April 25, 1984, 7:30 at the Ranger's Shed at Sleeping Giant State Park.

John Menta
Trails Chairman

Committee Formed for Capital Fund Campaign

The Association Aims To Raise \$250,000

First Report from Russ Williams, Chairman ---

Our many meetings and local committee activities are coming to fruition. Brochure and mailing preparations will probably permit us to reach out to all of our members early in April. There will be an initial output which will include a beautiful thirty inch color print of the Giant, some text and a pledge card. This will be followed by a second mailing to further get the attention of our members, and finally a telephone squad will add the finishing touches to a thorough procedure, which we trust, will culminate in substantial responses.

You, our membership, represent the strong base from which our success must spring. Your generous gifts and your efforts to urge nonmembers to contribute means the difference between a small climax and a large one.

During the entire campaign several of us will be calling on certain individuals who may be able to make substantial gifts to our cause. Others will be promoting our Drive via the various media that are available to us.

Until the next bulletin, keep thinking in a Giant way.

Ranger Mark Reports --

Mark Rickert reports that the Tower Trail renovation has been completed. The job became necessary after the Spring floods of '82. Financed by federal money workers had to rebuild much of the road. Eight to nine hundred yards of fill and gravel were brought in and spread.

A protective seal, Mark says, now covers walls of the Castle. The purpose of the seal is to make the removal of ugly graffiti much easier.

Though there are plans to eliminate camping at the Sleeping Giant, and to send campers instead to Quinnipiac River State Park, the campground at the Giant will still be in operation this summer.

The Lost Shall Be Found

Co-leaders of the new SGPA Search and Rescue Team, David Thompson and John Menta, are planning to conduct their second annual training exercise on the Sleeping Giant in April.

The Search and Rescue Team is a volunteer group that was formed last Spring to assist the Park Ranger and the Hamden Fire Department in search and rescue operations on the Giant.

Equipped with flashlights and portable radios, the team will again be required to find a "victim" lost somewhere on the Sleeping Giant - at night!

Team member Ed Goldman has graciously consented to play the role of the "victim". Co-leader Thompson has said that none of the team will have any clues to Ed's whereabouts, and that he has instructed Ed not to make it easy for his fellow members to find him!

The search and rescue exercise will be under the supervision of Park Ranger Mark Rickert. The team has enjoyed working with both Mark and Deputy Fire Chief John Tramontano. The close cooperation between the DEP, HFD and the SGPA greatly improves search and rescue operations at the park.

FLASH --

The ice storm of March 14, 1984 left the picnic area and the trails a shambles of blow-downs. It's a job the Trail Committee will tackle, but with limited manpower, the job will take a while.

The Committee invites anyone hiking on the mountain to help by throwing debris to the side, clearing the paths. The Committee will eventually get to the bigger jobs - sawing and moving the large trees. By the end of April, the trails should be in tip-top shape again.

es of the Giant

Have you ever wondered why the trees of the Sleeping Giant grow in the places they do? Two of the factors influencing their distribution are soil depth and amount of sunlight. At the top of the Giant we often find just a thin layer of soil covering the underlying rock while thicker layers exist as we proceed down the sides of the hills. Trees that do not need much soil-depth consequently populate the upper elevations, and representatives are chestnut oak, black oak, and cedar. Moving to thicker soil areas below, we find ourselves in a mixed hardwood forest with black birches, black cherries, ashes, hickories, maples, and white and red oaks.

Amount of sunlight is also acting as an influence on the distribution of trees. The ridge of the Sleeping Giant running East and West means that one whole side of the Park faces North and the other South. Clearly the south side receives more sunlight than the north. It is the hotter and drier side, and on it we find trees that thrive in such a climate: oaks and hickories, for instance. On the northern side are trees preferring a cooler and moister environ-

ment: maples and beeches. This does not mean a kind of tree found on one side cannot be found on the other. What it does mean, though, is that there is a predominance of kinds on either side.

There is one section of the Park where almost only one kind of tree is growing. It is a couple of acres off Chestnut Lane where Arthur Graves, once an employee of the Connecticut Agriculture Experiment Station, planted a grove of disease-resistant chestnut trees.

A "First"

The publication you have in your hands is the first edition of a newsletter to be sent to members of the Sleeping Giant Park Association at least four times a year. George Heston, who is on the board of directors of the Association, is editor. If you have items of interest relevant to the Association or the Park, and would care to share them, please send your comments to George at 98 Thornton Street, Hamden, Ct 06517.

It is hoped the newsletter will increase the membership's interest in, and enjoyment of, the Sleeping Giant.

Sleeping Giant Park Association

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