



GIANT NEWS

Newsletter of the Sleeping Giant Park Association
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SUCCESS STORY: *Sharing Memories, Saving Luna Moths*

—by Tom Granucci with Julie Hulten

In early spring 2022, my 97-year-old mother-in-law and I were chatting about Luna moths. Over the years, seen in pictures, I had marveled at their beauty. I mentioned that, while I had recently found a dead, badly damaged Luna moth on the White Trail at Sleeping Giant, I had never seen a live one, though I hoped one day to see one. She said she hadn't seen one since she was a little girl but would also like to see one again.

While hiking at Sleeping Giant on May 17, I spotted a live but damaged Luna moth crawling near the Red Circle Trail on Tuttle Avenue. It was an exciting moment for me, and my wife and I thought it would be nice to show the moth to her mother.

Putting my finger down to the ground, I watched the moth crawl onto it and attach itself. I returned to my car, traversing the Giant from one end of the Red Circle trail (Tuttle Avenue) to the other (Chestnut Lane). Throughout the journey, the moth remained on my finger, clinging tightly. Upon returning home, I placed the Luna moth in a container, thinking that we'd bring the moth to my wife's mom. There was one

complication. When I looked into the container where I placed the moth, there were little eggs (smaller than a BB) sitting on the bottom. Not wanting to disturb the moth, we took pictures and shared them with Gail's mom instead. She was thrilled.

How does one raise a Luna moth? Everything is on the Internet, it seems. We learned that Luna moths like hickory leaves; we gathered these from a nearby tree. Luna moth caterpillars also need something to climb on and on which to make their chrysalis; we placed sticks into the plastic bin. Then it was watch and wait.

The eggs were deposited by the mother on May 17 and May 18. There were about 21 total eggs that hatched and several that did not. On May 28, caterpillars began to emerge. As the days went by, the caterpillars got bigger



Luna moth caterpillar, chrysalis, and moth
—Photos submitted by Tom Granucci

—continued on page 7

“Let the Giant Sleep!”

Keeping faith with Our Founders

—by Julie Hulten

Protecting and caring for the Giant has been the Sleeping Giant Park Association’s (SGPA) mission since its founding in 1924. This mandate has been accepted by its Officers and Directors and understood by the local and regional public. The legacy of stewardship and conservation continues to provide the impetus for SGPA’s volunteerism and activism.

When the first issue of the *Giant News* appeared in March 1984, SGPA was celebrating its 60th anniversary. In those first sixty years, this friends’ group acquired nearly 1500 acres of land through purchase or gift. As President Dag Pfeiffer expressed at that time, the SGPA raises funds to purchase land, which it then turns over to the State. In this unique and refreshing relationship, the SGPA gives rather than “asks for.”

During those first decades, the SGPA’s accomplishments included:

- establishment of the Sleeping Giant Trail System by Ned Greist and Richard Elliot.
- development of a Hiking (and Camping) Committee by Barbara and Irwin Beitch.
- creation of a Search and Rescue team by John Menta and David Thompson.
- organization of a Boy Scout Explorer Post by Doug Simmons and Herb Etter.
- formation of a Trails Committee, now called Trails Crew.

Included in those achievements was the publication of the first edition of *Born Among the Hills: The Sleeping Giant Story*. For that, we are indebted to Nancy Sachse, with considerable help from Gilbert Spencer, both holding the position of Park Historian in their time. Except for the Search and Rescue team, these initiatives, once developed, have been ongoing, and *Born Among the Hills* is in its third edition. [Note: The Hamden Fire Department developed a Mountain Rescue Team in 1976, under the direction of then Lieutenant (later Chief) John Tramontano and then Firefighter (later Battalion Chief) Bill Coppola, primarily due to ill-advised attempts to climb the Quarry face.]

In addition, some extraordinary circumstances have called upon SGPA’s commitment to stewardship and challenged the organization’s leadership. The most significant stewardship endeavor in SGPA history was saving the Giant’s Head from traprock quarrying in the 1930s. What efforts have characterized activities in the broader sense? How has the Association subsequently lived up to its legacy: the commitment to “Let the Giant sleep?”

By the 1940s, the SGPA Board of Directors wondered if they should disband. The organization had achieved its immediate goals: the Sleeping Giant State Park had been established, a trail from Mt. Carmel Avenue provided hikers with a path to the highest peak, and the fight to end the quarrying which had consumed SGPA’s energies between 1924 and 1934 was successful. Was their job done? They soon realized that awareness and continued vigilance were vital. Over the years, threats to the Giant’s peaceful slumber would arise, challenging the organization’s commitment to protect and preserve. There was still work to be done!

In 1947, the State Park and Forest Commission asked the Association’s advice regarding Gulf Oil Co.’s request for a pipeline across the Sleeping Giant. This incursion – an eight-inch diameter pipe, laid 30 inches belowground and bordered by a 20-foot-wide maintenance corridor, was scheduled to run from New Haven Harbor, over the Giant, through Wallingford and Southington, and on into Massachusetts. Officers and Directors of the SGPA declared that while they recognized the importance of pipelines in general, they were “unalterably opposed to any pipeline or power line across or through the Sleeping Giant State Park, which in [their] judgment would be extremely harmful from a park standpoint.” The pipeline was rerouted.

As television became more popular, demand for transmission towers increased. In 1969, Dr. Harmon C. Leonard, a Cheshire veterinarian, was moving out of state. He wished to sell a portion of his land adjacent to the Park to a local television company. The company required only four of the sixteen acres owned by Leonard. However, for the tower to be functional, the company would have had to run a power line through the Park to reach the structure. In the hopes of forestalling objections from SGPA, Leonard offered to gift the remaining acreage to the Park. The SGPA, not to be baited, rejected the proposal. The tower was never built. Showing that there were no hard feelings, Leonard subsequently donated the entire sixteen acres of his holdings, which were contiguous to the Park, to SGPA for ultimate inclusion in the Park.

The SGPA Board, having thwarted the incursion of television towers and power lines in 1969, remained vigilant. In April 1994, the organization encountered a situation, not unlike the television tower project pursued by Dr. Leonard. Again, SGPA banded together with Park

—continued on page 7

Julie + Giant

—by SGPA Board

You certainly aren't going to see a carving like that into a tree at Sleeping Giant, but the sentiment is real just the same. Julie Hulten loves the Giant and has worked tirelessly in many capacities over many years to ensure the Giant's well-being and improvement. She is the immediate past president of the SGPA's board of directors; she is a student of the history of the Giant and its indigenous and more recent residents; she has been a dedicated member of the Trails Crew for many years; and has led the effort, in collaboration with the State Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, to create a Welcome Center at the Giant. She is always willing – no, eager – to spend all day at a community event, such as Plant Science Day or the Brooksville Park festival, promoting the Giant and all it has to offer. Julie loves the Giant, and we love Julie.

Gail Cameron, who has served in many roles on the board of director, shares this reflection: "I have known Julie for many years now, since she joined our board. She

exemplifies the meaning of volunteerism, having devoted countless hours to the park and SGPA. Her focus on history, under the mentorship of Gil Spencer, blossomed into numerous outreach programs and investigations revealing so much about the Giant that we didn't know.

Public education about Sleeping Giant became one of her most valuable contributions. She has also volunteered in other ways including assisting with planting and tending the pollinator garden, working with Trails Crew and leading the ever-popular history hike each year.

After several years on the board, she became Secretary and then President, leading us with true devotion to our mission. Fortunately, she continues to volunteer in any way she can to promote the beauty and many gifts that the Sleeping Giant gives to us all."



Julie leading the annual SGPA board meeting in May 2022

—Photo submitted by Jeff Borne

Tom Granucci, Marathon Man

—by Melinda Tuhus, *Giant New Editor*



Tom Granucci
—Photo submitted by Melinda Tuhus

A goal without a plan is just a wish. Tom Granucci set himself escalating goals for hiking the Giant and achieved every one, because he had a plan – and a great love for our park.

In an interview – where else? – at Sleeping Giant, Tom says that love began early, when his family went to the Giant to picnic or hike the Tower Trail. As an adult, while teaching earth science at Meriden’s Maloney High School, he says, “Close to retirement things got stressful at my job so I came here to clear my brain, get some fresh air and hopefully see some wildlife. It was cathartic.” After 35 years, he retired in 2010. By then he had become a Giant Master, a 4-Season Giant Master, a 12-Month Giant Master, and, after he ran every trail in one day in 2009, he inspired creation of a new category: the Giant Master Marathoner.

However, a marathon is 26.2 miles, and the Giant has 32 miles of trails. But Tom points out that it’s hard to run all the trails at the Giant in less than 34 miles because

of the backtracking required to make connections between trails. And he did it when he was 57.

He says he learned about the Giant Master – hiking every trail in the park – from the *Giant News* and “since I’m hiking there all the time, I decided to start keeping track and have it as a goal. So, I did that, and then I saw they have another one – 4 seasons – and I’m hiking throughout the year anyway so I went for that one. I loved that so much and saw there was a third category that I could hike all the trails every single month. I started in March and got to February and that year it was snowy and icy and I got down to the last day or so and I still had the White Trail to do, and [the steep rocky part] was solid ice. I had spikes and I had a pole and took my time to get up it. So, I kind of squeaked that one out. I would say, especially in the winter months, try to get your hikes in early in the month.”

Tom says what led him to inadvertently create his own fourth category was, “I found that I was doing all the trails each month in about two days, going 16-17 miles each day. And I started to think, I wonder if I could do them all in one day. So, I started to plan and kept track of how long it took me to do every trail and crossover and found it took me about 12-15 hours to do them all.

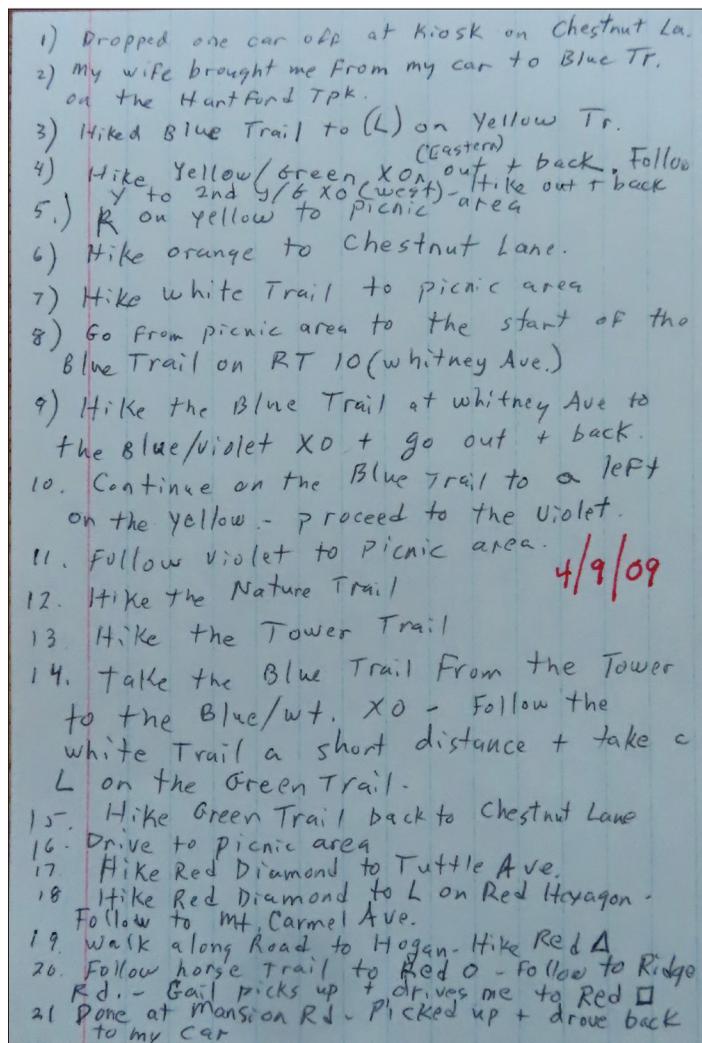
“I did it in April 2009 the first time, on spring vacation from school. I’d been training for a year, on the trails and at the gym, and I decided if I got a cool day I would give it a go. I estimated I did 34-35 miles [wasn’t wearing my GPS]. My wife helped me a few times. I’d say, meet me at a certain time, and she’d drive me to the next trailhead. It’s as much mental as it is physical. I was grinding it out at the end but I could see the finish line, and I just put one foot in front of the other.”

Tom carefully planned his route, marking distances on each of the trails. He started with the Blue Trail – the longest and most challenging. He kept two gallons of water in his car, along with a change of socks and shirt, and some energy bars, so when he passed that way he could recharge.

He turned all his data in to Barbara Beitch, who initiated the Giant Master program, “and she said, ‘Great, let’s start another category.’”

And, he did it again on a cool day in July, following the same route, in honor of his father. “It was my dad’s birthday on July 9, and he inspired me to hike.” He’s since shared his map with many others hoping to replicate his feat.

Tom says he thought for awhile he might want to do the marathon-plus in every season, but then decided against it. “It’s pretty grueling,” he quips in the understatement of this newsletter.



Trail Crew Report

—by Mike Miller, *Trail Maintenance Chair*

After a winter break, The Trail Crew started back in April and since then we’ve had 19 work parties (every Sunday 9:30-11:30 AM); 248 Volunteers have showed up and collectively contributed 529 hours to help The Giant.

Here’s what the Trail Crew has accomplished:

- Removed 27 blow downs from the trails
- Removed 218 lb. litter from the park, (that’s a lot of coffee cups and empty water bottles, etc.)
- Patrolled, brushed back and trimmed most of The Giant’s 32 miles of trails, some sections several times over
- Re-blazed the Red Diamond, Red Hex, Red Triangle, Red Circle and parts of Horse and Ski Trails
- Helped maintain the Butterfly Garden in support of the Environmental Stewardship Committee
- Repaired the Nature Trail
- Removed Graffiti from Upper and Lower Quarry, Chin, Head, Tower Path, Nature Trail Parking and Picnic area
- Installed and maintained waterbars for erosion control along the Blue Trail, Violet Trail, Red Square and Red Circle Trails.
- Conducted several River and Pond Clean Ups
- Road Clean Ups along Whitney Ave, Tuttle Ave., Hartford Turnpike and Mt. Carmel Ave.
- Parking Lot construction along Tuttle Road at the Red Circle Trailhead
- Bridge Repair and Bog Bridge Repair throughout the Park
- Invasive Removal in support of the Environmental Stewardship Committee
- Red Circle Repair, minor re-routing, installing trail sidelogs and trail treadway repair
- Trailhead Clearing

We will continue to remove blow downs, litter, graffiti and other issues as we find them. We plan on completing reblazing of all the Red Trails, the Ski Trails and Horse Trails this year as well as further minor trail reroutes to improve user safety, reduce erosion and help land restoration.

Join us!

Forest Bathing, *Anyone?*

—by Melinda Tuhus, *Giant News Editor*

If “forest bathing” still conjures up images of a bathtub in the woods, how about “mindful outdoor experience” to get at the concept of spending focused time in nature, using all your senses?

“Forest bathing” is the translation for this approach, which started in Japan. “Mindful outdoor experience” is what Chaucey Perreault teaches through her nonprofit, Grounded for Growth, that brings mindfulness to the community. Chaucey lives in Hamden, close to both Brooksville Park and Sleeping Giant State Park, and she spends time at both.

“Mindful outdoor experience is an attempt to give people an experience of nature rather than reading about it or learning about it in school,” she says. “It incorporates mindfulness, all the senses and learning a little bit about nature along the way; while folks are having a fun and light and felt experience, sneak a little information in, like how trees release phytoncides that help us relax.

There are many health and stress-reduction benefits of nature. Research on forest bathing shows that time in the forest brings cortisol levels down and has a relaxing effect on folks.”

Chaucey has led this experience at Sleeping Giant in the past, and plans to do so again on October 23. “We start in a field, wake up our senses through a little movement, taking in what’s around us; taking in the scent and maybe even taste. We go over to the Purple Trail by the river where we do a little meditation by the water. We might take a walk up into the woods and get

to know a tree without using our eyes. It’s literally tree hugging while blindfolded, then participants go back later and identify ‘their’ tree, based on smell or size or how the bark feels. Whether ‘kids’ are 8 or 68, it’s a nice way to interact.”

She adds, “It’s a unique thing and once you’ve done it – tried to experience nature in a sensory way, whether it’s listening to the water or walking silently and noticing what the birds are doing around you, or taking a moment to smell hemlock bristles – then you don’t need someone to guide you again.”

She notes there are great spots in the park, “but if you want to get to some of them, you have to walk uphill. We look for neat little spaces to have a water element, maybe a view and an open spot to look at different seasons, and a sit spot to meditate under a tree, and that’s been tricky to do and still have it be accessible so people aren’t panting when they arrive. We’re thinking of having two versions: one very gentle and accessible to anyone and the other for folks who

really enjoy hiking and have some experience so they feel comfortable on the trails.”

JP Barsky, former SGPA board member and current forester with the state Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, says he takes this approach while in the woods. “Everyone is in pursuit to climb a mountain or do a certain number of miles a day, but there’s another approach that is slower and allows you to see, and relax.”



SGPA members smelling hemlock needles
—Photo submitted by Chaucey Perreault

...Luna Moths continued from page 1

and bigger, and their appetites increased proportionately, sending us out every couple of days for another supply of hickory leaves. The first pupae/chrysalis were made on June 19.

While my wife and I were away on vacation for a few days, my youngest son took care of feeding and cleaning up after the caterpillars. On July 7, the first Luna moth emerged from its cocoon. Since my son didn't have a means of transportation, he brought the moth to a nearby park and released it. While we were away, five more moths emerged and were released. Following our return home, ten more Luna moths hatched. In all, we released 13 Luna moths back to the location in Sleeping Giant, where we first saw the female Luna moth crawling on the side of the trail. I just hope that, in the future, the odds will increase that more people will catch a glimpse of one of Nature's most beautiful creatures.

All in all, it has been a very educational experience watching the transformation of a Luna moth – from egg to caterpillar to chrysalis to beautiful

moth. Sleeping Giant State Park is full of surprises, and if you get out there and pay attention, there's no telling what you might discover!

Notes from Julie:

- I was privileged to experience one of the release events. What gorgeous creatures! Their color is a creamy green and gold with stunning markings and lower wings like a silken train. At first, the newly hatched moths were reluctant to venture forth. In the end, all were carefully transferred to branches or into leaf mold along the side of the trail. Some released moths may serve as food for birds or other predators. Still, we hope that some survive to continue populating the Giant.
- Tom Granucci is an avid hiker, Giant Master extraordinaire, and a frequent contributor of exquisite flora and fauna photos to the *Giant News* and to the SGPA Facebook page.
- Did you know? Thanks to the efforts of volunteer Danny Brass, 2,000 insects have been identified as living on the Giant. There is at least a partial list on the sgpa.org website.

...Giant Sleep continued from page 2

neighbors to stop the construction of a tower proposed by the Southern New England Telephone Company (SNET). This structure would have reached 150 feet into the sky with an additional 17-foot-high antenna, disrupting the Giant's signature profile.

At the April Board meeting that year, the Officers and Directors voted unanimously to oppose the construction of the tower and antenna. They contended that the proposed structure would break the pristine skyline of the Giant. Also, its construction would establish a precedent that would likely result in more and increasingly higher towers in the future. In an editorial published in the *Giant News*, board member Felicia Tencza asked that SNET display respect for the historical and esthetic aspects of the Giant long enjoyed by state residents and park visitors.

On April 13, the telephone company launched two large balloons, each three feet in diameter. A blue balloon climbed to 100 feet, and the other, a red balloon, rose 150 feet into the air. It became clear to viewers how the tower and antenna construction would adversely affect the skyline.

Even as SGPA President Dag Pfeiffer was preparing to testify at a hearing of the SNET Siting Committee, protests in support of the SGPA began. SGPA members and area residents joined together to strategize and wrote letters protesting the SNET proposal. Four local newspapers published editorials supporting the SGPA's

stance. In the face of such widespread opposition, SNET quickly began looking for another option, finally settling on a location in the Wharton Brook Industrial Park in North Haven. Pfeiffer found the telephone company sympathetic to local concerns, given their willingness to seek an alternative site. It is doubtful that the outcome would have been as satisfactory had SGPA not organized and spearheaded the opposition.

In the aftermath, Pfeiffer initiated discussions with the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection, now the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP). The goal was to jointly pursue better ways of protecting the Giant and preventing future commercial or other types of unrelated incursions into the Park. This collaboration, fostered by President Pfeiffer and pursued by each subsequent Board of Directors, characterizes and informs SGPA's relationship with the State and has enabled SGPA to grow. Since its inception, SGPA has purchased and continues to buy land – land purchases funded by membership fees and donations. All land so purchased is then gifted to the State. In addition, SGPA has sustained many of those early programs that maintain the trails, educate visitors, and enhance the Park experience. The Sleeping Giant Park Association continues to seek ways to protect the Giant from development and to educate and inform visitors. We have kept and will continue to keep faith with our founders.

Thanks to Danny Brass, former Chair of the Hiking Program, for his editing expertise.



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Wood duck
—photo submitted by Tom Granucci

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The *Giant News* is published three times a year by the Sleeping Giant Park Association, a nonprofit volunteer organization dedicated to the preservation, maintenance, and expansion of Sleeping Giant State Park.



Be sure to check our SGPA Facebook page or our SGPA website for updates on the Park's status. Feedback on the *Giant News* can be sent to giantnews@spga.org.



Milk snake
—photo submitted by Tom Granucci