

# North Wind

January – February – March 2026

## First, a Word (Plus 374 more) from our Chair by Tom Wheeler

As we come to the end of the year, we will lose two members from our Executive Committee. David Katz, our secretary for the past four years, is term-limited. He has served diligently in this position. Moreover, we have depended on him as our computer and internet expert. Fortunately, he has agreed to continue to provide these services for the coming years as a volunteer. David dealt with the changes brought about by the efforts (some of them unsuccessful) of ADK to modernize its information systems. We have been very fortunate to have someone with his background.

Brenda Curley has been our education chair for the past two years. She has brought excellent insights to Executive Committee discussions. It has been a pleasure to have her working with us.

The nominating committee (Blair Madore, John Barron, and Anne Csete) found excellent candidates for our open offices. New faces we welcome are Kim Baxter as Education Chair, Debra Mitchell as Secretary, and David Trithart as Alternate Advisory Council Trustee. Ellie Menz, our treasurer, and I will continue in our positions. Thank you to those of you who cast a vote.

Judging from what I see out my window, we should have lots of snow this winter for our outdoor activities. Please be prepared in the backcountry. Here are some reminders:

- Snowshoe or ski with others, especially in the backcountry and the High Peaks. An injury can be more difficult to deal with and may have more serious consequences in the winter. Extraction from a spruce trap by yourself is difficult and exhausting.
- Pack extra socks and gloves. Changing into dry gloves can make a huge difference in your comfort on longer outings.
- When camping, it is best to put your boots in your sleeping bag at night so they don't freeze.
- Wear layers and change to regulate your temperature and avoid becoming too hot or too cold.
- Let others know where you are going.
- Bring a map and compass. If you rely on a cell phone, bring extra battery power but be aware that much of the backcountry lacks cell service.

Have a great winter! We are lucky to live in an area with real snow and millions of acres of recreational opportunity.

## 2025 Photo Contest Winners

Photo contest judges Jean Giblin, Jeanna Matthews, and Tom Ortmeyer faced the daunting task of choosing among 119 entries from 17 photographers to select the following winners.

Visit [adklaurentian.org](http://adklaurentian.org) for full-sized photos and more contest results.



Landscape: Canoeing at Wilson Hill  
Blair Madore



Nature: Laying Her Eggs  
Holly Woodworth



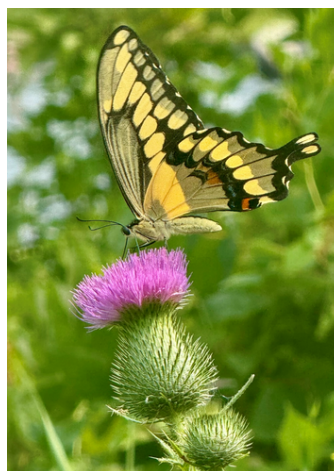
Action: Night Skiing at Higley Flow  
Jeff Miller



People: Whiteface 7/16/25  
Jim Bullard



Artistic: Wolf's Milk and Coral Slime Mold  
Jeff Miller



Grand Prize: Swallowtail on Thistle  
Bob Platte



*The Editor's Rambles*

*Neal Burdick,  
Editor*

## *Defining "Great"*

We glorify the originators of the famed Adirondack Great Camps of the late 1800s. Great the camps may have been; their owners, not always. They were the winners in the Gilded Age, which may have gilded them with unimaginable volumes of money, but did not the vast majority. For good reason were they called Robber Barons, ruthless in pursuit of wealth, brutal toward competitors or anyone else who got in their way, obsessed with power and ostentation.

Not that they lacked all virtue. William Seward Webb applied advanced forestry practices at his vast Nehasane estate, now Forest Preserve land, and scientific farming at his equally lavish holding in Vermont. But when his chief guide and Nehasane woodlands manager, FitzGreen Hallock, retired, Webb offered him a couple of acres on which to live out his days hunting, fishing, relaxing, and remembering. But the penurious Webb made him pay for the parcel -- Hallock had to buy his retirement gift.

And we have the Vanderbilts of Sagamore renown. They owned the astonishingly profitable New York Central Railroad, which reached Grand Central Terminal in Manhattan via a tunnel running lengthwise under Park Avenue. They ignored health and safety suggestions while steam locomotives choked the tunnel with acrid, blinding coal smoke. "There's going to be an accident," people said; "why not electrify that line?" To which one of the Vanderbilts replied, in the *New York Times*, "The public be damned. (It's) silly nonsense to work for anybody's good but our own." The prophets were right: In 1902, an engineer, unable to see through the Vanderbilts' smoke, telescoped a train stopped ahead of him, killing 15. The Vanderbilts still didn't spend a cent to make the tunnel safer. But they had enough money to run -- and run to -- Sagamore, which they had purchased the year before.

The Great Camps are an important part of Adirondack history. But let's not portray their makers as more than they were.

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This newsletter is the work of several chapter members, both contributors and producers. Design and production have normally been handled quickly, quietly, and efficiently by Marianne Hebert. In her absence this time, Secretary David Katz has kindly taken on that additional task, and Tom Ortmeyer will coordinate her signature Weekly Walks. They and others deserve a thank-you from all of us.



## About Our Chapter Officers

## Nominating Committee Report - 2025

The Nominating Committee (Blair Madore, John Barron, Anne Csete) presented the following nominations for this fall's elections. Voting closed on December 19; we provide this report so you can get to know a bit about your new officers.

For **Chair** – Tom Wheeler

For **Vice Chair, Education** – Kim Baxter

For **Alternate Advisory Council Trustee** – David Trithart

For **Secretary** – Debra Mitchell

For **Treasurer** – Ellie Menz

Who Are These ADKers?

**Tom Wheeler:** Tom is current chair of the chapter and is seeking a second term. He has extensive experience in many different roles, up to and including serving a term as president of the Adirondack Mountain Club. Tom lives in Canton.

**Kim Baxter:** “I am a native of the North Country, attended SUNY Potsdam and SUNY Canton, and raised my family here. After 36 years, last March I retired from St. Lawrence Gas/Liberty Utilities as Senior Manager, Rates and Regulatory Affairs of the natural gas distribution company in Massena and the water company on Long Island. My family and I have enjoyed the Adirondacks and the foothills for many decades, hiking, kayaking, snowshoeing, and cross-country skiing.”

**David Trithart:** “I’ve been in the North Country since 1973, and have been involved with ADK and the Laurentian Chapter most of that time. I live in Potsdam, and am retired since 2012.”

**Debra Mitchell:** “I first spent time in the Adirondacks in my mid-20s -- on my honeymoon! The Adirondacks have always felt like home, and this feeling has never left me over decades of hiking, paddling, camping, cross-country skiing, and snowshoeing. I moved to the North Country to be closer to these mountains and waters, and in 2003 became an ADK member. I see being secretary of the Laurentian Chapter as a chance to give back to nature and the land. I have been a trip leader, having gone through the Chapter’s Leadership, Map and Compass, Leave No Trace, and First Aid courses, and have also led some local Forest Bathing hikes through the Chapter.”

**Ellie Menz:** Eleanor (Ellie) Menz is the current chapter Treasurer. She enjoys hiking, biking, and skiing. Ellie is a CPA and a longtime member of the Colton community.



## Seeking Treasurer

The Laurentian Chapter is seeking a member who would like to take over the role of chapter treasurer. Incumbent Ellie Menz has served two consecutive terms, and when we were unable to find a candidate to succeed her in time for the elections in the fall of 2024, she agreed to continue in the role on an appointed basis for the remainder of the current term. We're looking for someone who could act as her understudy with a view toward standing for election to succeed her next fall.

The treasurer is the signing authority on the chapter's bank accounts, makes payments for expenses, receives and records revenues, and maintains accurate and up-to-date financial statements. The treasurer compiles the annual budget using a template that is submitted to ADK. Year-end reporting is submitted to ADK according to their prescribed guidelines. We keep our general ledger on QuickBooks.

If you are interested, contact Ellie at [elmenz@gmail.com](mailto:elmenz@gmail.com) or 315-262-2040, or Chapter Chair Tom Wheeler at [northflow@gmail.com](mailto:northflow@gmail.com) or 315-386-2482.



## ADK Laurentian

### Executive Committee

Tom Wheeler - Chair  
[northflow@gmail.com](mailto:northflow@gmail.com)

Dana Chudzinski - Vice-Chair, Outings  
[chudski63@yahoo.com](mailto:chudski63@yahoo.com)

Kim Baxter - Vice Chair, Education  
[baxrush00@gmail.com](mailto:baxrush00@gmail.com)

Tom Van de Water - Vice-Chair, Conservation  
[tblaisdellvandewater@gmail.com](mailto:tblaisdellvandewater@gmail.com)

Debra Mitchell - Secretary, Webmaster  
[dmitchell317@twcny.rr.com](mailto:dmitchell317@twcny.rr.com)

Ellie Menz - Treasurer

Tom Ortmeyer - Advisory Council Trustee  
[tortmeyer@gmail.com](mailto:tortmeyer@gmail.com)

David Trithart - Advisory Council Alternate  
[davidtrithart@gmail.com](mailto:davidtrithart@gmail.com)

### Appointed Positions

Marg Madore - Hospitality Coordinator  
[mmadore@stlawu.edu](mailto:mmadore@stlawu.edu)

John Barron - Publicity Coordinator  
[johnbarron@sympatico.ca](mailto:johnbarron@sympatico.ca)

Blair Madore - Red Sandstone Trail Coordinator  
[madorebf@potssdam.edu](mailto:madorebf@potssdam.edu)

Mark Simon - Stone Valley Trail Coordinator  
[bearsars18@gmail.com](mailto:bearsars18@gmail.com)

Jeff Miller - Outdoors Indoors Program  
[Jeff@stlawu.edu](mailto:Jeff@stlawu.edu)

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Archivist  
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David Katz - Webmaster  
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# Outings and Events

## January - March 2026

*Dana Chudzinski*  
*Vice Chair, Outings*

3	A+	Very Strenuous	4,000	10	10
3	A	Strenuous	3,000	5 to 10	8 to 10
2	B+	Moderately Strenuous	2,000	5 to 10	6 to 8
2	B	Moderate	1,000	5 to 10	5 to 7
1	C+	Fairly Easy	1,000	5 to 8	4 to 6
1	C	Easy	Under 1,000	< 5	< 5

\*Check for last minute updates: [www.adklaurentian.org](http://www.adklaurentian.org)

\*Please contact the leader at least one day before trip.

\*Car pooling makes sense—so does sharing the cost of gas.

## Outdoors - Indoors Program, Winter 2026

This year's schedule includes 4 presentations:

- February 15: Hiking the Highlands, David Katz
- February 22: Deciphering the Geological History of the Barren Lands One Rock at a Time, Jeff Chiarenzelli
- March 8: Adirondack Architectural Heritage (AARCH): A Gateway into North Country Histories, Tom French
- April 26: SCUBA, Jungle Treks, Bathing Elephants, Bangkok Wats, and Fabulous Food, Danielle Jerry and Bob Platte

See the events schedule below for details. All presentations are Sundays at 7:00 p.m. in the Potsdam Civic Center Community Room.

- Jeff Miller, Coordinator

## Adirondack Discussion Group

Tom Wheeler and Tom Van de Water host two discussions this winter:

- Wed Jan 14 (**Note date change!**) - the environmental issues and the writings of Bill McKibben, George Perkins Marsh, and others
- Wed, Feb 11 - the impact of naming (peaks) and classifying (land) in the Adirondacks

See the events schedule below for details.



# Outings and Events

January - March 2026

**New Year's Day: Laurentian Chapter Annual New Year Outing at Higley Flow State Park** 1-4 pm. Ski, snowshoe or hike at the park to kick off the new year in nature. At 3:00 we'll gather at the Lodge for a potluck finger-food social. Bring a snack to share. The lodge will be open; weather permitting, we will have a bonfire. Joint outing with Friends of Higley Flow State Park.

**Thursday, Jan. 8, 15, 22, 29: Red Sandstone Access Roads.** 7:30am. We will walk the dirt access roads for approximately 2 miles, 1-hour round trip. If the roads are icy, traction devices such as microspikes are recommended. Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the Red Sandstone trailhead, north entrance parking lot off Back Hannawa Road (CR59) between Potsdam and Hannawa Falls. From Potsdam, at the intersection of Rt. 11 and Clarkson Ave (CR59), drive south for 2.5 miles. The access road is on the left just past Sweeney Road. A brown "trail parking" sign marks the entrance. Leaders for each week will vary. Contact Tom Ortmeyer, [tortmeyer@gmail.com](mailto:tortmeyer@gmail.com), 315-244-3707. Level C.

**Saturday, Jan. 10: Winter tracking at Indian Creek Nature Center,** beginning at 10 a.m. Snowshoes will be provided if needed. We'll wrap up by noon and could share lunch around a campfire if people are interested. Level C. Contact Tom Van de Water at 315-261-1723.

**Wednesday, Jan. 14: Adirondack Discussion Group** At this month's discussion we will discuss environmental issues and the writings of Bill McKibben, George Perkins Marsh, and others. While some of the materials are easily accessible, we will also provide others which are less accessible or even rare. Contact Tom Wheeler ([northflow@gmail.com](mailto:northflow@gmail.com), 315-244-9958) or Tom Van de Water ([tblaisdellvandewater@gmail.com](mailto:tblaisdellvandewater@gmail.com), 315-261-1723) for details and location.

**Saturday, Jan. 24: Massawepie Scout Camp XC Ski/Snowshoe** This is a Black River Chapter event. About a 5-mile RT leisurely paced trip. Level C. For more information please contact Linda Burns at [lindaburns1008@gmail.com](mailto:lindaburns1008@gmail.com) or [blackriveradk@gmail.com](mailto:blackriveradk@gmail.com).

**Saturday, Jan. 31: Slush Pond Ski** We will ski the Slush Pond Road, near Paul Smiths. Slush Pond is associated with the kettle ponds created at the end of the last Ice Age. Six miles round trip, with minor elevation change. Contact Tom Ortmeyer, 315-244-3707 or [tortmeyer@gmail.com](mailto:tortmeyer@gmail.com). Level B.

## Outings and Events, January - March 2026, continued

**Thursday, Feb. 5, 12, 19, 26: Red Sandstone Access Roads** We will walk the dirt access roads for approximately 2 miles, 1-hour round trip. If the roads are icy, traction devices such as microspikes are recommended. Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the Red Sandstone trailhead, north entrance parking lot off Back Hannawa Road (CR59) between Potsdam and Hannawa Falls. From Potsdam, at the intersection of Rt. 11 and Clarkson Ave (CR59), drive south for 2.5 miles. The access road is on the left just past Sweeney Road. A brown "trail parking" sign marks the entrance. Leaders for each week will vary. Contact Tom Ortmeyer, [tortmeyer@gmail.com](mailto:tortmeyer@gmail.com), 315-244-3707. Level C.

**Saturday, Feb. 14: Summerstown Trails** Near Cornwall, Ontario, about 15 miles from the international bridge. There is an extensive network of groomed trails for both cross-country skiing and snowshoeing, and our trip will accommodate either. About 5-10 miles round trip, very adjustable. Level C, suitable for beginners. Equipment for either skiing or snowshoeing is available for rental on site. Contact John Barron, 613-828-2296 or [johnbarron@sympatico.ca](mailto:johnbarron@sympatico.ca).

**Sunday, Feb. 15: Outdoors - Indoors: Hiking the Highlands**, David Katz. Two weeks in June 2025 walking in the Edinburgh, Glencoe, and Inverness regions of Scotland, with a side trip to the Inner Hebrides.

**Saturday, Feb. 21: Snowshoe to Lost Pond** Near Cranberry Lake, a joint outing with North Woods Chapter. Impressive rock formations, lots of beaver activity, attractive pond. Photo opportunities. 2.5 miles RT, generally level; we'll probably be breaking trail. Level C. Limit 10. Must be chapter member. Leader: John Omohundro, [Omohunjt@northnet.org](mailto:Omohunjt@northnet.org).

**Sunday, Feb. 22: Outdoors - Indoors: Deciphering the Geological History of the Barren Lands One Rock at a Time**, Jeff Chiarenzelli. In two consecutive nine-month canoe trips in 1893 and 1894 the Tyrrell brothers, under the direction of the Geological Survey of Canada crossed the Barren Lands filling in what was essentially a blank spot on the map of northern Canada. So little was known about the geography of the area west of Hudson Bay that where their trips down the Thelon, then Kazan rivers, would end was unknown. On these trips, accompanied by three expert Mohawk canoe men (the French brothers from Quebec), they encountered people (Caribou Inuit) who had never seen a person of European ancestry before. By the 1950's the area was depopulated, and survivors of widespread starvation were relocated to communities near or on Hudson Bay. In this talk we will explore this remote and unique area through the eyes of a geologist.

## Outings and Events, January - March 2026, continued

**Thursday, Mar. 5, 12, 19, 26: Red Sandstone Access Roads.** We will walk the dirt access roads for approximately 2 miles, 1-hour round trip. If the roads are icy, traction devices such as microspikes are recommended. Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the Red Sandstone trailhead, north entrance parking lot off Back Hannawa Road (CR59) between Potsdam and Hannawa Falls. From Potsdam, at the intersection of Rt. 11 and Clarkson Ave (CR59), drive south for 2.5 miles. The access road is on the left just past Sweeney Road. A brown "trail parking" sign marks the entrance. Leaders for each week will vary. Contact Tom Ortmeyer, [tortmeyer@gmail.com](mailto:tortmeyer@gmail.com), 315-244-3707. Level C.

**Saturday, Mar. 7: Jacques Cartier State Park** This late winter hike/ski is a Black River Chapter event. More information available at [blackriveradk@gmail.com](mailto:blackriveradk@gmail.com) with detailed description and mileage.

**Sunday, Mar. 8: Outdoors - Indoors: Adirondack Architectural Heritage (AARCH): A Gateway into North Country Histories** Tom French, a regular contributor to *Adirondack Explorer* and AARCH board member, will discuss the preservation work of AARCH and highlight the dozens of opportunities every summer to tour historic properties.

**Saturday, Mar. 14: Snowshoe at Cranberry Lake** We will start at the Brandy Brook Flow Trailhead and end up somewhere along the shores of the flow. This will be a 5-6-mile RT snowshoe. Level C+. For information contact Dana Chudzinski, 315-244-5345 or [chudski63@yahoo.com](mailto:chudski63@yahoo.com).

**Sunday, Apr. 26: Outdoors - Indoors: SCUBA, Jungle Treks, Bathing Elephants, Bangkok Wats, and Fabulous Food** Danielle Jerry and Bob Platte. Relive two weeks in April 2024 in Ko Tao with our SCUBA instructor son, boating, trekking, and wildlife viewing in Khao Sok National Park, and touring and eating our way through Bangkok, Thailand.

# Backtracks

Reports on a few trips from  
October - December 2025  
(“TL” indicates Trip Leader)



**Saturday, Oct. 4: St. Regis Mt. Hike.** It was a warm day, and the trail was dry in places that are usually wet and muddy. The hike was relatively moderate for the first two miles until a creek with a bridge. There it became steeper for the rest of the way. The fall foliage from the summit and the fire tower was bright. Many ladybugs (unfortunately the invasive kind) were swarming and landing on us, and a flea-sized flying insect was biting. We had a nice discussion with Aubrey the summit steward as we were trying (inconclusively) to figure out if Cascade was visible in front of Giant, using PeakFinder. On the hike back, several of us took off our shoes to cool our feet at the bridge.

Left to right, Jane Khondker (TL), Rui Suzuki, Rike Droescher, Clemente Ecke, Wolfgang Gunther, Tom Ortmeyer

**Saturday, Oct. 11: Robert G. Wehle State Park.** We had sunny, pleasant fall weather for our exploration of this scenic and historic park on the shore of Lake Ontario. The property was formerly owned by the late Robert Wehle, of the wealthy family that founded Genesee Brewing Company. That gave Wehle the financial means to devote many years to breeding pointer-type hunting dogs there. It was also used earlier as a training camp by the US Army before and during World War II. Now as a park it has a fine network of trails and other amenities.

Left to right, Jane Khondker, Ellie Menz, John Barron (TL). Photo by Jane Khondker



# Backtracks October – December 2025

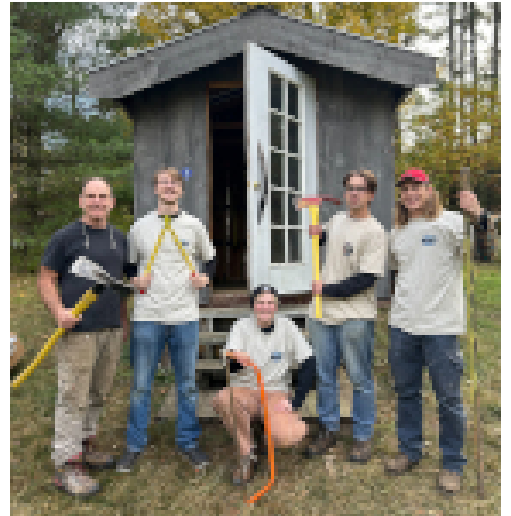
## Friday, Oct. 17: Stone Valley Trail Work and Tool Maintenance, SUNY Potsdam “Wild Ed” Students

The Chapter has received the following letter from SUNY Potsdam student Garrett O’Hara:

Greetings Laurentian ADK,

I am reaching out to share the trail work that was done on the Stone Valley Trail last fall.

I (Garrett), Hailey, and Eliza worked with Mark Simon to create a list of what needed to be done. On October 17, 2025, with the help of about five more classmates we were able to completely inventory the Tool Shed and sharpen, paint and repair the tools. We also put up stronger shelves to hold the tools and fixed the steps to the shed. Mark took a team out to the one of the bog bridges, where they replaced rotted boards and secured the chicken wire.



## Saturday, Oct. 18: Birding on the Munter Trail

We were a small but dedicated group who met on a beautiful fall morning to look for migrating and permanent resident birds. We were not disappointed: we saw 130 individuals, and 18 species. The highlight of the day was a bald eagle who passed directly overhead. We also spotted two mallards, a common merganser, a pied-billed grebe, a northern cardinal, several dark-eyed juncos, two white-throated sparrows, four cedar waxwings and three white-breasted nuthatches. We identified many common species: blue jays, black-capped chickadees, 12

American goldfinches, 30 ring-billed gulls, and of course many Canada geese.

Participants: Harold Ellingsen, Bradley Mathews, Marianne Hebert (TL).

## Huckleberry Lake Hike, Nov. 11, 2025

Participants: Jon Montan, Nancy Alessi, Anne Csete, John Barron, TL Dana Chudzinski.

