

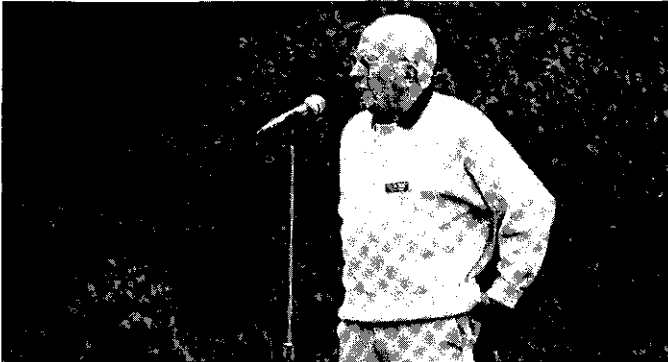
The Steep Rock VISTA

The Newsletter of the Steep Rock Association

Summer 1996

Changes on the Board of Trustees

George Ward Retires from Presidency Elected Chairman of the Board



George Ward at Steep Rock's 1995 Picnic

George Ward recently retired as President of the Steep Rock Association, a position he held for eleven years. Immediately after he retired, the Trustees elected him Chairman of the Board of Trustees. As Chairman, he can remain active on, and continue to provide guidance to the Board.

While he was President, his leadership resulted in a remarkable list of achievements for Steep Rock.

One of his first big projects was the replacement of the footbridge in Hidden Valley.

Shortly after that came the opportunity to build a bridge in Steep Rock that would make some of the trails further into the preserve more accessible. The Hauser Foundation agreed to fund one-half the cost of the bridge if Steep Rock could raise the rest of the money needed. The result was the beautiful Hauser Bridge, a suspension bridge that spans the Shepaug River near the tunnel and the avenue of the pines.

George's engineering background was helpful a third time, when Steep Rock replaced the footbridge at the Bee Brook entrance to Hidden Valley.

Steep Rock preserved several parcels of land while George was president. Here's a partial list:

- A gift of key land behind Steep Rock itself, from the Daniel Carew family
- The West Mountain area - gifts of land from donors Rita and Gus Hauser, Kenneth Grief, Jayne Bentzen, Benedict Silverman and Peter and Brooke Hayward Duchin.

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John Millington Elected President

John A. Millington was elected President of Steep Rock at the Annual Meeting in May of this year. He has been a Trustee of the Association for four years.

John is Vice President for Planning and Development at the Council on Foreign Relations, and he chaired Governor Lowell Weicker's Council on Environmental Quality. He was also active on the Connecticut Greenways Committee.

John assumes his Presidency at a time when the Steep Rock Reservations are experiencing a dramatic increase in usage.

Land management and stewardship issues are two of John's main interests. He plans to create a stewardship program for Steep Rock based in large part on updating the recommendations made to Steep Rock by Caroline Norden in her 1986 publication Management Recommendations for the Steep Rock Reservation. The program will accommodate the increased use while keeping trails in good condition; encourage wildlife, perhaps by reclaiming overgrown fields; and continue to retain some natural areas with no trails. To that end, Steep Rock has submitted a proposal to the Ct. Forest Stewardship Program, which will grant us, if approved, funds on a cost sharing basis to implement these plans.

As a first project, John, along with Trails Committee Chairman Elaine Luckey, will have two trails in each reservation blazed, and have available free handout maps of each of these trails which will describe their length, difficulty and points of interest along the way.



Steep Rock President John Millington, center, with Bob deCourcy and Susan Branson.

Steep Rock in the Community

Shepaug's Sixth Grade Study Includes Steep Rock

Ms. Debbie Weik's sixth grade class at Shepaug Middle School participated in a three town (Washington, Roxbury, Bridgewater) study that included learning about Steep Rock. The students made a list of more than 50 questions about Steep Rock. They invited Executive Director Susan Branson to visit them at the school talk to about Steep Rock and answer as many of their questions as she could.

One goal of the project was to develop an understanding of how important each individual is to the improvement of the quality of life for all in the community. The students learned that each of us is responsible for protecting the environment and contributing to the community in productive ways.

The culmination of the study project was an evening presentation to the community, modeled in the manner of a community marketplace, where friends and neighbors come together to exchange information and talk about community issues.

Some of the student knew about Steep Rock and were familiar with the trails and the different recreational uses there are in the Reservations. The majority of them, however, were unaware of Steep Rock's existence. Thanks to this project, they learned something about their community's commitment to conservation.

Gunnery Work Day

These Gunnery students spent their annual April workday clearing and cleaning the parking areas and the Harwood Bird Walk trail.



Instructors Liz Calore, left, and Terry Clark, second from right, with students Ben Erickson, Chris Nagasawa, Carrie DeBisschop, Matt Bernard, Paul Suzuka, Meg McMacken, Stephanie Miles and John DeSouza.

4th of July Run/Walk Road Race in Steep Rock

Washington's Parks and Recreation Commission held its annual 4th of July road race in the Steep Rock Reservation this year. The 5K run/walk race began at the horse ring. The course followed Tunnel Road along the Shepaug River as far as the Hauser Suspension Bridge and back.

Ninety five (!) participants entered the race, which had been run for the last several years along Bee Brook Road. Runners were delighted with the Steep Rock location.



Runners at the 5K road race on the 4th of July.

Summer Intern

AnnMarie Reich is Steep Rock's summer intern for 1996. AnnMarie, who has lived in Washington almost all her life, graduated from Shepaug High School in 1995. She just finished her first year at Princeton University where she plans to major in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology.

AnnMarie is an avid hiker and runs in Steep Rock every day.

She's already hard at work clipping and marking trails, and helping in the office, too.

Shepaug Senior Project

1995 Shepaug graduate and Roxbury resident Jaimie Rooney participated in the Honors Senior Project program last year. Her project was to organize and conduct a horseback riding event called a Combined Test. The event had two levels of difficulty - elementary and novice and seven participants entered the event. Washington Parks and Recreation commission sponsored Jaimie, Steep Rock provided the location, and the Bridgewater EMT's were there for emergency backup.

Jaimie received an honorable mention for her project and realized a \$100 profit which she donated to Steep Rock. We congratulate, you Jaimie, for a job well done.

Three New Trustees Elected

The May annual meeting not only produced a new President and a new Chairman of the Board (see front page), but also saw three new Trustees elected to the Board.

William C. Bader was born in Washington Depot and has lived here all his life. He says "I've roamed in Steep Rock since I was a boy." He is well known as a naturalist, a lecturer, and as Washington's "unofficial" historian. His lectures are often accompanied by examples from his extensive collection of historic and nature photographs.

Bill was educated in Washington Schools, and at Columbia, and Cornell. He graduated from the University of Bridgeport and Northwestern Community College, interned in Forestry and Arboriculture at Nichols Forestry College, and is now a professional and consulting arborist.

"Nature is my whole life," Bill says. "From meteorology to geology - all the natural sciences have always interested me."

Hedda W. vonGoeben writes: "I am delighted to be elected to be a Steep Rock Trustee for the second time. Since moving to Washington in 1951, I have ridden and hiked the trails with unequalled joy. Early in the 1950's with the permission and approval of the Board of Trustees and President Edward Pinney, the Washington Horse Show moved to its present site at the Steep Rock riding ring. I worked hard to see the show prosper then, and since it was revived six years ago and now is run to benefit Steep Rock, I've been working just as hard!

I consider myself a second generation benefactor of Steep Rock, continuing in the tradition established by my parents, who loved and generously supported the Association."

Edmund J. White is Executive Vice President of the Robinson Company, an employee benefit consulting firm.

Since moving to Washington, Ed has made a special commitment to civic activities. Locally, he is Vice Chairman of the Washington Zoning Board of Appeals and a Trustee of the Gunn Memorial Library.

Ed is also a Trustee of the Waterbury Foundation, a member of the Teikyo Post University President's Advisory Board and Chairman of the Post College Foundation.



1995's Picnic Crew: Ken Williams, Sheila Anson, Vinnie Forese, Cyndi Brissett, Bill Fairbairn (about to operate on a burger?), and Allie Chapin.

George Ward Retires from Presidency

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- The Carter Preserve, totalling more than 160 acres, donated by Litchfield County resident Arthur Carter. It was the single largest donation of land since Adrian vanSinderen gave the 700 acres that make up most of Hidden Valley.
- The Woodruff property - a purchase of land that preserves and protects a significant part of the ridgeline southwest of the Steep Rock overlook. This ridgeline comprises more than one third of the view from the top of Steep Rock.
- Land Swap with the Town of Washington - Steep Rock protected a long stretch of the Shepaug River by deeding land near the new town garage to the town in return for land and a conservation easement from the town along Bee Brook Road next to the river.

Conservation Easements are another tool for protecting land and George saw to it that Steep Rock embraced this form of preservation. Steep Rock now holds over three hundred acres of Conservation Easements - agreements that preserve and protect land while it remains privately owned.

George Ward was a member of the state Greenways Committee, and during that time, Steep Rock established the Shepaug Greenway Committee whose long term goal is a Greenway trail that will extend from the confluence of the Shepaug and Housatonic Rivers north to the Mohawk and Appalachian Trail systems.

Last year Steep Rock established the Shepaug River Association whose main purposes are (1) to increase the amount of water released into the Shepaug River from Waterbury Water Company's Shepaug Reservoirs and (2) to obtain public access, for recreation and conservation (for the Shepaug Greenway), to the 4000 acres of watershed land. George is one of the founding directors and current Secretary of the Association.

See related article on last page.

To promote diversity and create a Board of Trustees that would represent a broad cross section of the community, George oversaw the rewriting of the Certificate of Incorporation. Before the changes, Trustees were elected for life! The amended document established rotating terms. Currently, Trustees serve for not more than two three year terms.

Another change to the Certificate of Incorporation made Steep Rock a membership organization. Here again, the purpose was to create a broad base of representation and support from the community and those who use the Reservations.

George has been an extraordinary President. The Trustees are pleased and relieved that he will continue to serve the Board as its Chairman.

Shepaug River...

River Task Force Legislation Signed by Governor Rowland

Governor Rowland recently signed into law a bill to establish an 11 member task force to study the Shepaug River issue. The City of Waterbury owns two water supply reservoirs on the Shepaug River. The Waterbury Water Company operates under the terms of a 1921 agreement with the town of Washington. Representative Arthur O'Neill introduced the legislation. Section 23 (a) of Senate Bill #57 states: "...a task force (shall) study the implementation of the agreement between the town of Washington and the city of Waterbury regarding water supply and the diversion of the Shepaug River. The task force shall study the responsibilities of the towns under the agreement and the effects of diversion of the Shepaug River." The Task Force's final report is due in the General Assembly no later than January 1, 1997. Washington's First Selectman Alan Chapin will represent the town on the Task Force. Washington resident

Wendy R. Federer has also been appointed. Wendy, an attorney, is a Director of the Roxbury Land Trust, a Trustee of the Steep Rock Association and a member of the Shepaug River Association.

FOUNDER

Ehrick K. Rossiter

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Susan F. Payne, *Vice President*

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William C. Bader

Cynthia Brissett

Alan J. Chapin

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Wendy R. Federer

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Edmund J. White

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FORESTER

Vincent L. Forese

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

&

VISTA EDITOR

Susan Branson

WASHINGTON HORSE SHOW

On SUNDAY, AUGUST 4, 1996 at 8 a.m., rain or shine, the sixth annual Washington Horse Show to Benefit Steep Rock will begin. No matter what the weather is, a loyal group of hard working volunteers will do their best to make the show run smoothly.

Since its revival, this horse show has earned a reputation as one of the best local shows in the state of Connecticut.

The Horse Show Committee, led by Ruth Eren, Fran Evans, Nancy Saggese, Hedda vonGoeben and Susan Branson, recently announced that in the last five years, it has contributed more than ten thousand dollars to Steep Rock.

STEEP ROCK PICNIC

This year's picnic will be held on SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 1996 at noon (with a downpour date of Sunday, September 8).

The weather for the last few picnics has been lovely, the food is always good, more than 300 people usually attend. In short - it's a great time and we hope to see you there.

Steep Rock Association
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