

Taking stock of special Maine moments

Each summer, family and friends have gathered at Beech Hill Pond in Otis, where we've basked in the sun, splashed in the water, and made memories that are still vivid, even as time rushes onward.

My family and I appreciate those days. Cherish them, even.

At least, I'd like to think we do.

But not as much as we could.

That's what I learned a couple of weeks ago, when a couple of young guests accompanied my stepchildren to camp for a day.

One of those 12-year-olds didn't grow up on a lake in Maine. His family's from India, and he lived in Australia before moving to Maine a few years back.

As we arrived at camp, as if on cue, I heard a familiar sound from across the lake.

"Did you hear that?" I asked. "Loon."

"Loon?" he asked, confused.

I chuckled, walked with him to the side of the camp, and showed him the loon-themed thermometer. "That's a loon. It's a big bird, and we just heard its call."

Again, on cue, the loon spoke up, and my stepson's friend smiled.

Later in the day, in another regular occurrence, we had visitors paddle by for a visit: A mother duck and a half dozen or so good-sized offspring looked ashore curiously, wondering if we'd throw them a snack.

"Ducks!" our visitor exclaimed, his eyes wide. Then, bashfully, he admitted something I'd never heard anyone say before. "Ducks are my favorite animal. This is great."

When the ducks showed up, it made his day. When they marched ashore and surrounded him, it made his year.

As I sat there, watching the duck parade, I began to think and I haven't stopped since.

Through the eyes of a 12-year-old who hasn't spent every summer of his life on a Maine lake, that day was not only special, it was new.

So, how much had I been missing? Or, at the very least, how much have I begun to take for granted?

The first time the ducks showed up — certainly more than a decade ago, maybe more like 25 years — it was a big deal to me, *See Holyoke, Page C2*



JOHN HOLYOKE



The Wilderness Rescue Team, a group of volunteer search-and-rescue experts, searches North Brother Mountain on Aug. 30 for John Lyon, who went missing while hiking a trail between the nearby Mount Coe and South Brother Mountain on Aug. 27. Lyon was found alive and well about 2 miles from the OJI-Coe-Marston trail loop on Aug. 30.

Search-and-rescue expert talks about what you can do to stay safe

How to hike responsibly

BY AISLINN SARNACKI
BDN STAFF

When 78-year-old John Lyon went missing in the mountains of Baxter State Park on Aug. 27, volunteers traveled across the state of Maine to join park rangers in searching for the lost hiker. Three days later, he was found alive and well, walking along a brook several miles away from the trail he'd originally been hiking.

"He will be the first to tell you that he will never hike again without a map," wrote the Baxter State Authority in an update on its official Facebook page after the rescue.

Lyon's 72-hour stint in the wilderness has stirred conversation on the Internet about the wilderness navigation and survival, as well as hiker responsibility.

Bill Courtois, president of Pine Tree Search and Rescue, recently spoke with the Bangor Daily News about personal navigation, and the importance of hiking prepared. His organization was one of many volunteer groups that helped search for Lyon.

Q: If you're hiking and discover you've lost the trail, what's the best thing to do?

Bryan Courtois: Initially, I'd say you might try to backtrack a little bit, and if you don't find the trail, the best thing to do is just sit right where you are. A prime example of this is the hiker that just got lost for three days in Baxter State Park. If the moment he realized he was off the trail he'd just stayed where he was, he would have likely been in yelling distance of the trail ... Most people don't want to admit



COURTESY OF BRIAN COURTOIS

The Wilderness Rescue Team, an all-volunteer, nonprofit corporation in Maine that aids in wilderness search and rescues, practices high-angle rescue on ledges in Gray last winter.

they're lost, so they move around more than they should and get themselves further lost. There's a book called "Lost Person Behavior" that warden use that has a lot of statistical behavior about what people usually do when lost. It's an interesting book. They kind of break it down by if someone's a hiker, hunter, fisherman or berry picker — all based on what these people have done in the past.

Q: What are some essentials to have in your backpack while hiking in a place like Baxter State Park?

B.C.: I'd say everything you'd normally bring on a day hike — your food and water. I always have a raincoat in my pack, and rain pants. I always have a fleece, hat, gloves and some way of purify-

ing water, some way of starting a fire, and a map and compass, obviously, the map being more important than the compass because even with just a map, you can get an idea of where you are by orienting yourself based on your surroundings. Pack having a vision of, if you had to spend the night, could you? It's not going to be the most comfortable night in the woods, but you'll get up in the morning with all your fingers and toes and [you'll be] mentally aware enough to aid in your rescue. One other really important thing is if someone had personal medication they need to take, they should have a couple days' supply of that. In Baxter this past weekend, there was a gentleman who was *See Q&A, Page C2*

7th annual Acadia festival to celebrate the night sky

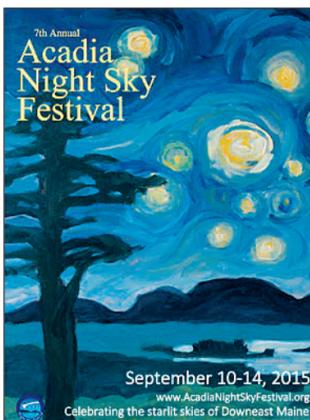
BY AISLINN SARNACKI
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The seventh annual Acadia Night Sky Festival, planned for Sept. 10-14, will feature more than 30 celestial-themed programs at locations throughout Mount Desert Island, including star parties atop Cadillac Mountain and at Seawall in Acadia National Park, presentations by astronaut Dan Barry, and nighttime paddling trips and cruises.

The festival drew more than 4,000 attendees last year and is a community celebration to promote the protection and enjoyment of Maine's night sky as a valuable natural resource through education, science and the arts.

"The biggest goal that we've really achieved this year is having a really diverse schedule of both indoor and outdoor activities," said Alf Anderson, member of the Acadia Night Sky Festival steering committee and director of membership sales and marketing for the Bar Harbor Chamber of Commerce. "There's something for everyone — children and adults, experienced astronomers and total novices."

An annual highlight of the celebration is the star party atop Cadillac Mountain, scheduled from 8 to 11 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 12, with a free "Shuttle to the Stars" departing from Mount Desert Island High School. The public is invited to drop in at any time during the



program to learn from volunteer astronomers who will point out constellations and other night sky features visible with the naked eye, binoculars and telescopes.

"Last year, we counted just over 2,000 people at that star party, and this year's weather is looking OK for Saturday night ... we're expecting a big turnout," Anderson said.

During the event, the road to the top of the mountain will be closed to all traffic (except those who need parking for persons with disabilities), so visitors must use the shuttle to attend. Dogs and other pets are not allowed.

In addition to the popular stargazing events in Acadia National Park, the festival will feature a variety of indoor activities, *See Festival, Page C2*

1-Minute Hike: Pleasant Mountain

Difficulty: Moderate. The trail was a bit overgrown this month. It climbs Pleasant Mountain gradually, reaching viewpoints on the mountain's slope less than 1 mile into the hike.

How to get there: There are two trailheads to choose from for hiking Pleasant Mountain because the Georges Highland Path travels over the mountain and leads to a road on both sides.

The western trailhead is at Mt. Pleasant Farm. From Route 17 in Hope, take Harts Mill Road south for 0.25 mile and bear left onto Fogler Road. Travel for about 1.2 miles and bear left where the main road continues to the right. The parking area (which was overgrown with grass but recently mowed) is 100 feet ahead on the left, just before the farm. (On Google Maps, this road is known as Mt. Pleasant Extension, and is located at the edge of Union). A kiosk and sign marks the parking area.

There is only an informal parking area for the east trailhead, which is located on Mt. Pleasant Street, about 1 mile from its intersection with Fogler Road. The vehicle pull-out area is on the left shoulder of the road, and you will want to start the trail on the right to head toward Pleasant Mountain.

Information: Pleasant Mountain rises just over 1,000 feet



AISLINN SARNACKI | BDN

A kiosk marks the westernmost trailhead of the Georges Highland Path near Rockport. From there, the trail heads up the slope of Pleasant Mountain.

Watch the video
bangordailynews.com

above sea level and is one of several mountains traversed by the Georges Highland Path, a growing network of footpaths on the mid-coast that currently consists of about 50 miles of trails. The Georges Highland Path is

made up of several sections. Pleasant Mountain is in the section called the Ragged Mountain Area, which contains more than 10 miles of continuous trails that traverse Pleasant Mountain, Spruce Mountain, Ragged Mountain and Bald Mountain.

The section of trail that ex- *See Pleasant, Page C2*