

Q&A

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diabetic and stuck out overnight without any of his medication. We were able to run it up and get it to him first thing in the morning.

Q: When it comes to learning about wilderness navigation, what do you suggest people start with? What's a good foundation?

B.C.: What's ideal is taking a class with somebody. I know of a couple of different organizations that [offer classes]. But if you're not able to take a class, probably the most important thing is, if you're going out with a map, really look at the map beforehand. Follow the route you're going to take and make note of what you're going to see along the way. Then, when you're on the trail, really keep track of where you are as you go. [For example,] know that you're somewhere between the trailhead and the first trail junction, and as you cross that, know you're somewhere between the first junction and a stream crossing. And know about how long it's going to take you to get from one feature to another. It's situational awareness, knowing where you are at all times.

Pleasant

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plores Pleasant Mountain is 1.7 miles long and spans between Mt. Pleasant Farm off Pleasant Mountain Extension. In Union and Mt. Pleasant Street in Rockport.

Most people hike Pleasant Mountain by starting at the trailhead at Mt. Pleasant Farm, which was a bit overgrown in September.

The trail begins right at the parking area to the left of the kiosk. Follow the blue blazes to the gravel road, turn left, and follow the road to the farm, which used to be an equestrian rescue facility. In this section, the trail is marked with a few posts topped with blue paint or signs that read GHP (Georges Highland Path). You'll pass through a metal fence and cross a pasture to cross through another metal fence. You'll then wade through grass and weeds as you follow the narrow footpath to the right and into the woods. There is a blue blaze on a tree where the trail enters the woods.

Once the trail enters the woods, it's much easier to follow. Just be sure to follow the blue blazes on the trees. The trail follows an old woods road, then turns and becomes narrow as it plunges into a sea of ferns. The forest is made up almost entirely of deciduous trees — birch, red oak, beech and maple.

For a while, the trail follows what appears to be an old streambed, then turns again and climbs gradually to an old blueberry field, which still produces plenty of wild blueberries. From the field, you can see over the trees to distant hills. In the fall, I imagine this would be a beautiful, colorful sight.

Cairns — small rock piles — mark the trail as it travels through the field and back into the forest. The trail then visits a clearing, which offers an even better view of the region. From there, it continues gradually uphill and through a forest to small clearing with exposed bedrock. This is the highest point the trail reaches on Pleasant Mountain, between 700 and 800 feet above sea level. From this clearing, hikers can enjoy a partial view past a tall white pine tree.

The trail does not travel all the way to the mountain's summit, which is just over 1,000 feet above sea level.

After the clearing, the trail heads into a shaded woods and travels northwest through an evergreen forest, gradually descending the mountain to reach Mt. Pleasant Street.

This trail, and the rest of the Georges Highland Path, is maintained by the Georg-

Q: A lot of people nowadays use handheld GPS (Global Positioning System) devices to navigate in the wilderness. Are GPS devices intuitive, or do you need some training to use them?

B.C.: I would say yes and no. The ones that have the maps in them, once they're loaded, will show you a little dot where you are in relation to the map. In that regard, it's kind of easy to use. But they also need to be set up properly. By default, most GPS devices give you true bearings, not magnetic bearings, but you need to use the GPS with magnetic bearings if you're going to be using a compass ... there's a whole bunch of settings on GPS devices that need to be set up so you can use it efficiently. Out of the box, most of them have default settings that aren't optimal ... As a tool, it's great. But you don't want to ever rely on it because it has battery life, electronics break, screens go bad and are affected by the cold. The newer ones are better, but they're still electronic devices that can fail at the most inopportune moment — or you can lose it.

Q: What should a person do if they lose their GPS?

B.C.: Again, you should have a map. And typically, before you go into the wilderness, you should have established an escape bearing, some major land feature — we call

them handrails — so that if everything goes south and you've totally lost direction, you can head in a direction and know that you'll hit that landmark. It's something you cannot cross without knowing it — like a road or railroad or stream.

Q: I've been told there are several different types of satellite tracking devices that could have prevented some of the recent lost-person scenarios, but those devices can be pricey. Are they worth it?

B.C.: I think they are worth it, and they're getting better all the time. The one I have experience with is the Delorme inReach ... [With it,] I can send a text message, and the person who gets it can reply. Not only does the person get the message, they also get GPS coordinates of where I am. And there's a mode, where if I turned it on, it would send off a little signal every 5 minutes or hour or wherever I choose, and so anyone you authorize to look at that info can track exactly where you are. They can be helpful, but again, they have to be turned on, batteries need to be charged. I have one because a lot of times, I'm out in remote places and have no cellphone coverage, so it's just one more thing in the toolbox to use. It's a piece of technology, and like a GPS, it can fail. It's not something to rely on. If it works, great, if it doesn't, I can deal.



AISLINN SARNACKI | BDN

A cairn marks the Georges Highland Path as it travels through an old blueberry field on Pleasant Mountain near Rockport.

es River Land Trust, a nonprofit organization with the mission to conserve the ecosystems and traditional heritage of the Georges River watershed region.

The Georges Highland Path is made possible by the participation of private landowners who have given permission for the public to cross their land. Visitors to this path should make an effort to stay on trail and respect the land. Dogs are permitted if leashed.

For information, visit GRLT.org or call 594-5166.

Personal note: When we found ourselves in a standoff with a cow, I knew we were in for an adventure. It was at the very beginning of the trail up Pleasant Mountain on Sept. 2, and I'd brought my mother, Joyce, along for the hike. The trail began by passing through an old farm, where two men were in the process of corralling four young cows into a trailer to move to another pasture. As we watched the men chase the cows along

the fence, one rebellious cow broke through a gate and sprinted out into the adjacent pasture — the pasture we needed to pass through to get to our hiking trail. In fact, the brown and white cow decided to stand right beside the post marking the trail, stomped its foot and let out a long moo.

We waited, baking in the sun. The temperature had risen to 90 degrees Fahrenheit, and we were eager to get into the woods. So it wasn't long before we gave in and decided to find a way around the cow, crossing a muddy ditch and skirting an old apple tree, to reach the other side of the pasture. We then passed through another gate, waded through grass, brambles and wildflowers, located a blue blaze on a tree and followed it into the woods.

For more of Aislinn Sarnacki's adventures, visit her blog at actoutwithaislinn.bangordailynews.com. Follow her on Twitter: @1minhikegirl.

as they danced across the walls of the camp during breakfast.

I remember spending days on end without ever putting on a pair of shoes.

And the ducks.

Once, all of those things were new. Now they're not.

Thankfully, my stepson's friend helped me realize even the familiar scenes ought to be appreciated for what they are.

They're all special things and times, in a special place, not to be taken for granted.

John Holyoke can be reached at jholyoke@bangordailynews.com or 990-8214. Follow him on Twitter: @JohnHolyoke

Things to Do Outdoors

BANGOR — Penobscot County Conservation Association's 38th annual Bangor Gun Show, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 12, and 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 13, at Cross Insurance Center, 515 Main St. Admission is \$8, and \$7 for current members of law enforcement, military and National Rifle Association with current identification. Children 12 and under free with an adult. Join the NRA at the show and get free admission. Proceeds will fund college scholarships for wildlife conservation and wildlife law enforcement students at University of Maine and Unity College. Call Charlie Rumsey at 941-8575 for table information.

BAR HARBOR — Seventh annual Night Sky Festival, 9 a.m.-9 p.m. Sept. 10-14, Acadia National Park. Stargaze atop Cadillac Mountain with astronomers, take a nighttime boat cruise while listening to Wabanaki folklore, participate in night sky photography workshops and night hikes. Visit AcadiaNightSkyFestival.org for updates and a complete schedule of events.

BAR HARBOR — The National Park Service invites all fourth-grade students to visit Acadia National Park for free as part of the White House's new Every Kid in a Park initiative, which began Sept. 1. Fourth-grade students can go to EveryKidInAPark.gov to complete an activity and obtain a free entry pass to more than 2,000 federal recreation areas, including national parks. Events at Acadia include: Explore the Bar, times vary depending on low tide, Bar Island; Hawk Watch, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., Cadillac Mountain summit; Fire Tower Open House, 1-3 p.m., Beech Mountain summit; and Stars Over Sand Beach, 8-9 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays through Sept. 24. For information, visit EveryKidInAPark.gov or call John Kelly, management specialist, at 288-8703.

BATH — Kennebec Estuary Land Trust welcomes novice geologists to meet 10 a.m.-noon Sunday, Sept. 13, at the preserve trail kiosk at the north end of High Street to explore the geologic wonders of Thorne Head Preserve with Maine Master Naturalist Volunteer Denise Bluhm. Light rain or shine event. This event is free and open to adults and children age 10 and older. To register, visit KennebecEstuary.org/ Kelts-Summertime-Scene or call 442-8400.

BRUNSWICK — Brunswick-Topsham Land Trust will celebrate 30 years of building community and the completion of its \$7 million campaign with an evening of activities, 4-7 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 19, at Farmers Market Green at Crystal Spring Farm, 277 Pleasant Hill Road. The supper will include pulled pork and chicken, corn on the cob, coleslaw, salads, cornbread and dessert. Bring a picnic blanket or table and chairs. Meal tickets are \$10 for adults, \$5 for children and free for children under 4. Visit BTLT.org/Events for details and to purchase tickets.

FOREST CITY — Pomologist John Bunker of Palermo discusses the history of apples in Maine and their importance to self-sufficient farms in Maine, 7:30-9:30 p.m. Friday, Sept. 11, Woodie Wheaton Land Trust, 2 Grove Road. The group will tour old orchards, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 12, in Orient, Weston and Brookton. The group will meet at the land trust building. Bring any varieties you wish and Bunker will try to identify them for you. Bring a pack lunch. Donations are accepted and appreciated. Pre-register with the office at 448-3250.

ORONO — 12th annual yard sale to benefit Orono Bog Boardwalk, 8 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 12, 139 Main St. Rain date Sunday, Sept. 13. If you have items to donate, call Jim Bird at 866-2578.

For a complete listing of calendar items or to submit your event, visit www.bangordailynews.com.

Holyoke

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too. My nephews and niece loved it, as did my parents. And I was right there beside them, tossing bread to the ducks, as other lake-dwellers surely had been doing.

(I know, I know: My colleague, Aislinn Sarnacki, has told me to stop feeding bread to ducks ... so I have ... as far as you know).

But after many summers of waddling (the ducks, not me, though both would be accurate), I've become accustomed to our regular visitors. When they show up, I don't

say, "Wow!" Instead, I'm more apt to say, "The ducks are here again. I was wondering when they'd show up."

Over 50 summers or so, we've seen a lot of things at our lakeside camp. The moments remain vivid, but that wide-eyed wonder has faded over the years.

I remember that we caught hundreds of tadpoles — polliwogs, to us — until the bass were introduced and ate them all.

And I can recall the time I nearly jumped out of the boat one hot afternoon when I was interrupted during a slow troll by an irate beaver who slapped his tail at me.

I remember waking up as a child, amazed at the reflection off the shimmering waves

Festival

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cluding a "Sips & Paint" event in which participants can drink wine or tea while painting their version of the Acadia night sky with the festival's 2015 poster artist, Katherine Noble Churchill.

Also on tap are nightly space-themed movies at Reel Pizza in Bar Harbor, presentations at the Jackson Lab and Jesup Memorial Library and star photography workshops.

For those looking for a little outdoor adventure, there will be a guided kayak tour under the stars, 7-9:30 p.m. Friday, Sept. 11, to find bioluminescent algae, which glows in the water. And the following day, local astronomers will be leading a solar viewing party 11 a.m.-2 p.m. at the Jackson Laboratory.

For a complete schedule and description of activities, visit cadiaNightSkyFestival.org.

org. Several activities require pre-registration, and most are low cost or free. Festival organizers can be reached at 801-2566 or by

email at acadianightskyfestival@gmail.com. To ask specifically about the Cadillac Mountain star party, call 200-1536.

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