

The Editor's Corner



photo by John Macek

rites of passage By Robi Josephson

My introduction to the ridge came without any lofty desire to seek out nature. In truth, I had no choice. It was mid-September 1969 when, with several hundred other New Paltz freshmen, I was dropped off at the Mohonk Gatehouse for yet another college orientation exercise.

We peeked into the alluring darkness of Glen Anna's hemlock forest; then, like a brood of turkey chicks, we followed our counselors along North Lookout Road. Reaching the lake, we thought it a glorious place to rest, but arms herded us toward a strange place of huge stone blocks. Not wanting to show fear, we forged ahead. Up boulders and rustic ladders, we huffed, we puffed, we yanked each other through the Lemon Squeeze.

Evoking the long-ago ascent of those teens, initiation is the theme of our summer newsletter. Each year, adult birds and animals teach their young to survive. This year, the Preserve has launched a ridge-wide facilities plan. This summer, I am flying solo as editor, grateful to work with the creative design team of Patty Murphy and Ilka List. These paths toward independence parallel, with the



Shawangunks a training ground for our collective rites of passage.

With this issue, we also debut a slightly new format. **The Editor's Corner** and **Vantage Points** from the Executive Director now sit side-by-side on pages 2 and 3. A new center section, titled **Realizing the Vision**, will relate progress with our new interpretive center/headquarters and the capital campaign. Improvements at the Spring Farm and Coxing Trailheads, the Van Leuven Cabin, and the carriage road and trail network also will be highlighted as they occur. These changes will help focus the Preserve's work for our members and volunteers. For in truth, it is only with your backbone -- your strength and support holding up the Preserve -- that these plans can take wing and soar.

Looking back to that late summer of long ago, I have no memories of climbing Sky Top tower, of gazing around at my new world (by the way, the freshman orientation hike up the Labyrinth ended soon after). Those scenes of twenty-eight years ago have faded, like wispy clouds, into the horizon. I do remember, though, helping each other -- each of us clutching a ready hand offered from our classmate ahead while offering a steady hand for the one behind. That is, perhaps, what truly counted the most, the fellowship that got us through the rubble to the top.

