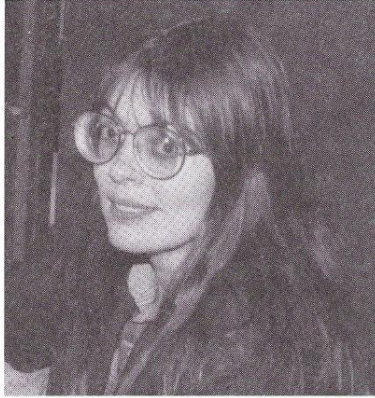


THE EDITOR'S CORNER

photo by John Macek



STICKING TOGETHER

By
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Ridgelines, The Quarterly Newsletter of the Mohonk Preserve, No. 118, p 4, Winter 1999.

Recently I saw a poster showing a photograph of a massive snow-covered tree, its bark-brown limbs wrapped in a crystalline shawl. One word below the photograph captured the scene's wintery essence: teamwork.

I asked, "What could teamwork possibly have to do with a snowy landscape?"

The fine print replied, "Snowflakes are one of nature's most fragile things, but just look at what they can do when they stick together."*

Sticking together is our theme this issue. What things or creatures in nature besides snow stick together? Some species of birds, such as swans, mate for life. Most species stick together to increase their chances of survival. Look around in the Shawangunks and you'll see flocks of turkeys and herds of deer. You may hear packs of coyotes howling on a cold winter's night.

Look even deeper to learn about lichen, that rock-hugging, symbiotic species composed of a fungus and an alga. The fungus provides the alga with water and minerals; the alga returns the favor by manufacturing carbohydrates for the fungus.

By sticking together, we humans can achieve astounding things. The next time you follow along a stretch of carriage road, imagine the creativity, skill, and effort that went into building it. Because of this human vision, millions have access to preserved lands. By sticking together, we can help each other up whatever mountains we strive to climb.

On a more personal note, I underwent cataract surgery three months ago. At the hospital (where I saw that teamwork poster),

a surgical team assisted my ophthalmologist in separate operations two weeks apart. My doctor removed my cataracts and replaced them with new lenses.

Remember my bottle-bottom glasses? They're gone, recycled, history. My new lens implants have corrected my vision so that I only need reading glasses. My husband and I, along with our families and friends, are grateful beyond measure to my doctor and his team for giving me a new way of seeing.

I can once again see snow in its true whiteness. The cataracts had changed white objects to dingy yogurt-colored ones. Now I can see birds high in the sky. Before I would ask, "Where? Where?" I also see figures in their full size. The extreme convexity of my glasses made what I saw smaller and further away.

My metamorphosis complete, I celebrate the spirit that is within all creatures, with our enormous capacity to stick together and provide for each other.

*quoted from a *Follow Your Dreams* poster @ Successories of Illinois