

For release, February 18, 2011

# OVER THE HILL HIKERS

*And How They Grew and Grew and Grew*

By Shirley Elder Lyons

- Well-told tale of the “Crazy Hikers” of Sandwich, NH
- Twenty years of hiking
- Great group dynamics - a team building case study
- Get inspired by a love of the mountains
- Bag all 48 4000 footers, celebrate “52 With a View”
- Interests: hiking, group development, social capital

*Over the Hill Hikers* takes readers by the hand and heads out on the trail with a group of zany, passionate hikers and nature lovers. These folks learned a love of hiking, or maybe they just loved hiking with the group’s “Den Mother”, Elizabeth “Lib” MacGregor Bates. Her father, Red Mac, was one of the AMC’s first hut masters. He carried Lib on her first hike as a toddler. Lib’s mom set an example of service and leadership her lively daughter instinctively understood. Lib loves to hike and organize and the group was a natural outlet for both.

Lib provided the group with a casual style that offered weekly hikes on Tuesdays. Over 16 years it was Lib’s example that carried the communal energy and the fun. This group loves its celebrations and they are still hiking – bagging peaks - each week in Sandwich, NH!

After years of hiking this title became the vision of Lib’s friend and author, Shirley Elder Lyons. Shirley won a badge as a Party Person not a hiker, but her husband Dick Lyons was an early member of the group. Through her own remembrances, interviews with Lib and by Lib, extensive records of the group’s activities as well as a large photo archive, Lyons crafted this wonderful tale of retirees hiking happily week after week year after year. She has captured the milestones, the emergencies and the mountain views. This is a story for those who love the group, but it’s also for those who love the mountains.

## Advance praise for *Over the Hill Hikers* . . .

“(T)he huge stock of social capital the group built gave joy and purpose to their retirement years. This **graceful, warm book is a great read** about the power of hiking to build these enduring, life sustaining and enriching connections.” —*Lew Feldstein*, president of the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation, author, lecturer on the concept of social capital and community development

“*Over the Hill Hikers* is **witty, inspirational and instructive** . . . It relates the fascinating tale of the growth and vitality of an organization without officers, rules, dues or the other accoutrements considered necessary for groups to function . . . The book is centered on one remarkable woman, my mother, Lib Crooker Bates.” —*Constance Emerson Crooker*, lawyer, author, *Melanoma Mama, the Story of a Miraculous Second Chance*

“Journalist Shirley Elder Lyons **brings her superb reporting skills to this tale**. I’ve hiked with the OTHH since 1992, and she captures perfectly the easygoing nature of the group (even when the going is hard), the companionship that develops on the trail, and the shared satisfaction of reaching a summit.” —*Ruth Doan MacDougall* of Sandwich, coauthor of *50 Hikes in the White Mountains, 50 More Hikes in New Hampshire*

## About the Author

Veteran political reporter Shirley Elder Lyons has covered Congress for the *Washington Star* and New Hampshire politics for the *Boston Globe*. She also has co-written two books, a profile of House Speaker Thomas P. “Tip” O’Neill and a case study on Capitol Hill lobbying, and edited a book on Sandwich (N.H.) history.

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