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For the Hearty Hiker:

Welcome to the Longshanks Club

By Cliff Bekkedahl

You don't dare write an article about anything these days without first googling the subject! So let's address that issue straightaway—*Longshanks*, the symphonic rock band was formed in October of 1987 (in Delft, the Netherlands) as a studio project to record one "Rush-like" song. I'm guessing now but it seems logical that Richard Lupoletti who as everyone knows has a thing for "Rush-like" music picked up on the name and reserved it in case we ever needed a catchy title for a series of hikes. Responding to an inquiry for this article Richard said, "hey, they never hit the top of the charts but they deserve to be remembered somehow."

With that out of the way let's dig deeper into the Longshanks hiking phenomenon that is sweeping Eastern Long Island—how did it all begin, who's involved, and where is it going? In the beginning there was Richard (whom I will designate Richard I for reasons you'll soon learn about) and me. About two years ago we were reminiscing about the good old days and he mentioned that perhaps ten to twelve years earlier, EHTPS had organized a series of hikes along the entire East Hampton portion of the Paumanok trail. The comment had hardly slipped clear of his lips when in chorus we said, "why don't we do it again?" So we did. We divided the forty-eight mile course into four segments and announced that we would do each segment at one month intervals during the fall of 2006 and winter 2007. At the rendezvous for the first segment Richard I and I stood there with trepidation and our fingers crossed as the appointed hour of commencement approached. But lo and behold the cars appeared and voila, eleven people launched off on the first leg of the long trail. Subsequent segments were similarly attended



Longshanks hikers gather near Cedar Point Park

and perhaps as many as a dozen hikers received a certificate of completion. (One such certificate is available on eBay but that's another story.)

Well duh! We were on to something, a niche group of folks, many from up-island, who wanted a more vigorous challenge than the typical Wed./Sat. morning hikes that we were offering. Jack Hitner, an up-islander who has made every Longshanks hike to date spelled it out clearly when he said, "it's not worth driving all the way out here for just a 3-4 mile walk in the woods." Jack, a Longshanks enthusiast, has vowed to shave his fulsome beard when he celebrates joining the Longshanks Century Club, those who have completed 100 miles of Longshanks hiking.

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New Members November 2007 - April 2008

Peter Lee, East Northport, NY; **Elaine Cassimatis**, Freeport, NY; **Andrew and Jennifer Gaites**, East Hampton; **Leonida Karpik**, East Hampton; **Bob Allen and Annette Jernick**, Greenport, NY; **Suzzane Fokine**, Bridgehampton; **Paul Yager**, Wainscott; **Ilene Hochman and Karen Golden**, East Hampton; **Maryl and Gene Vassel**, East Hampton; **Debra Slavutin**, East Hampton; **Irwin T. Levy**, Great Neck; **Diana Walker and Paul Nicholls**, Amagansett; **Kristy Eberhart**, East Hampton; **Bill Hall**, East Hampton; **Jack Hitner**, Syosett; **Robert Tepe**, Amagansett; **Rita O'Connor**, Amagansett; **Christine Finn**, Manorville; **Rita and Harvey Magier**, New York City; **Evonne Shaternik**, East Hampton;

Sinead FitzGibbons and Dennis Loebs, Sag Harbor (lifetime membership); **Louann N. Sylvia**, Eastport; **Vicki Umans**, East Hampton; **Tony Mavroniolar**, New York City; **Kathy and Terry Orioroan**, Amagansett; **Patricia M. Smyth**, Montauk; **John Larsen**, Sag Harbor; **Lynn Martell and Ira Bezoza**, East Hampton; **Don Crillo and Carole Campolo**, East Hampton; **Val Schaffner**, East Hampton; **Virginia McCaffrey**, East Hampton; **Fran Donovan**, East Hampton; **the Belhumeur Family**, East Hampton; **Victoria Von Frank**, East Hampton; **Jeremiah T. Mulligan**, New York City; **Mary Joyce Bochrach**, East Hampton; **Charlene Jacobs**, East Hampton; **Terri Thomson**, Flushing, NY; **Stan Sherwood**, East Hampton; **Joan Levy**, Fort Lee, NJ; **Chet Kaplan**, Brooklyn, NY; **Thomas Milne & Helene Delaney**, Montauk; and **Benjamin Gillikin**, East Hampton.

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

The Bad...

They're big, they're powerful, they're noisy, and they're likely to show up at any time along the trails in our serene woodlands. Their two or four wheels spin and dig into the dirt, cutting ruts that gradually degrade a trail until it's no longer usable.

"They," of course, are motorized dirt bikes and quads, illegal on public land. They've been spotted on East Hampton trails for years, but currently we've noticed increased activity in certain areas. Last winter, member Bill Good saw quad tracks in the snow as he was walking in his neighborhood in Springs. He followed them through the woods and along the roads, right to the driveway of a private house. He filed a report with the police, but was informed that not much could be done since the law requires the rider to be caught in the act before fines can be imposed and/or the vehicle impounded. Another member, Sinead FitzGibbons, who runs and bikes in the Miller's Ground area, has been encountering dirt bike riders on a regular basis. Her rational attempts to educate the young riders about the law they're breaking have met with indifference and even a few threatening gestures.

Hike leader Richard Lupoletti and other hikers who frequent Miller's Ground are alarmed at the damage that has occurred over the past few months. What will the trails be like six months from now under the continuing assault of the invading machines?

The time for action is now. A committee is working on a plan for mitigating ATV damage to be presented to town officials. The plan may call for volunteers to police any barriers that may be erected; count me in!

...and the Beautiful

Hither Woods...Stony Hill Preserve...the Grace Estate...Barcelona Neck...Accabonac Preserve...Jacob's Farm...Culloden Preserve... Miller's Ground, and [your favorite place to walk]. Let's take measures now to see no man-made beasts corrupt their beauty.




Longshanks hikers on the trail with leader, Ken Kindler

Longshanks (continued from page 1)

It takes a lot more than just an idea to get something like Longshanks rolling and while he was a powerful force behind the scenes, Richard I felt that another person should take his baton and help bring this program into being. Enter Richard II. Richard [Rich] Poveromo, known to all of us on the maintenance squad and to many on weekend walks on the Rick Whalen Trail of Tears, series was the ideal candidate to step in and grab the baton. He's a stand up guy and a certifiable mensch! So it's Richard II and me and we organize, schedule, drum up leaders, help layout courses, keep the records, answer the phone and empty wastebaskets at Longshanks Headquarters and respond politely to comments like, "I thought you said it would be ten miles and its eleven already!"

As for the program—still a work in progress—but for sure we schedule a Longshanks hike at least once each month (except August) and we try to schedule it for the first Saturday of the month. We've conducted four such hikes so far this year and we will continue doing so. Consult your mailed schedule and/or the website, both of which will provide the details for each hike. What do we want or need? Your attendance and new leaders. If you would like to join the elite corps of Longshanks leaders give us a call. Hey, give us a call for any reason: Cliff at 631-267-7646 or Richard II at 631-283-4591.

Ah, the piece de resistance! Recognition! Blessed be the EHTPS Board of Directors that has agreed to award the prestigious EHTPS ball cap with appropriate notation embroidered thereupon to everyone who completes 100 miles of hiking with Longshanks in a time frame of two years beginning at the date of a hiker's first hike with the program. Several folks are 40% down that path as we go to press.

When Jeri, our editor, said she wanted an article about Longshanks I demurred and tried to explain that here at the nursing home, it's hard to get time on the computer but she wasn't having any of that. Indeed she said, "you will write an article and try to make some of it funny." So, this hiker walks into a bar and he sees up on the counter a miniature grand piano and seated at it a tiny fellow not more than a foot tall playing a Rachmaninoff concerto in E flat. So he sez to the bartender... *Editor's note: we've run out of space allotted for this article—if you want to hear the remainder of this story ask Cliff or Richard II on the next Longshanks hike.*

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