

Hiking tales with Buffalo and Tough Cookie

BY ERIN PLUMMER

eplummer@salmonpress.com

From a day trip to starting their journey to the summits of all 48 of the state's 4,000 footers, Dan Szczesny and his friend Janelle shared stories from their many hikes with an audience at the Gilford Public Library.

Dan Szczesny has been a journalist for over two decades. He is the associate publisher of The Hippo Press and has written numerous books. In his book "Buffalo and Tough Cookie," Szczesny chronicled the hiking journeys he has taken with Janelle since she was nine-years-old.

Janelle lives in Manchester with her brother Aaron and grandmother next to Szczesny and his wife Mina. In 2011, the families converged following the death of Janelle's grandfather and Mina losing her job; the Szczesnys started spending time with nine-

year-old Janelle and her brother. Part of this time together included a short hike through the White Mountains.

"Janelle asked me if we could do that again," Szczesny said.

When it was found they would not have the time to do it with the whole family, he said Janelle replied, "Oh you can just take me."

At the time neither of them knew anything about hiking and did not have any proper gear. One of their first hikes was Mount Monadnock; he said he expected after doing that 2,000-foot mountain that that she would no longer be interested.

"She said, 'Dan, when are we going to climb a real mountain?'" Szczesny said.

Szczesny and his wife have climbed the state's 4,000 footers and was trained for those when they really started climb-

ing. Szczesny said some of those mountains, however, do not have the greatest views. Instead they found the "52 With a View" list, a list of scenic hikes compiled by Over the Hill Hikers of Sandwich. The list was a supplement to the 48 4,000-footers and comprises mountains that range from 2,500 feet to 4,000 feet.

Szczesny said he and Janelle agreed to do that list in a year's time. After sitting down with their families and figuring out the appropriate times, that left them with seven months to climb all 52 mountains.

The climbs came with guidelines. It would be okay to turn back for any reason, even if it was 300 feet down the trail with the principle that "the mountains are always going to be there." They did not go by the estimated times to completion listed in the guidebooks.

He said he did not want this to just be about reaching the summit, but about the journey to get there.

"It was more about Janelle and I learning about each other, her learning how to be a daughter and me learning how to be a dad, than it was about the summit," Szczesny said.

They ended up completing the 52 in a year and six months. The last mountain was Mount Stark, a mountain she chose because it was by Mount Waumbek, her first 4,000-footer.

Szczesny shared a slideshow of various photos taken along their journeys with some stories of what they encountered during each hike. They hiked in all kinds of weather, excluding thunder and lightning. Over time they learned more about what gear works best.

Szczesny said he has



ERIN PLUMMER
Dan Szczesny and his hiking partner Janelle talk about their many adventures during a presentation at the Gilford Library.

been asked if he just dragged her along with him, he said that was not possible.

"There has to be something inside, that passion that exists," he said.

"Buffalo" and "Tough Cookie" were names they acquired along the trail. Janelle said her brother hates hiking and will do anything he can to get out of it. He accompanied them on a hike up Welsh Dickey.

"He said to me, 'Oh you think you're such a tough cookie,'" Janelle said. The name stuck.

Janelle said Szczesny's name came from a hike where he saw a buffalo up the trail and then hid behind a tree.

Now 13, Janelle will aim for the 48 4,000-footers next, including a planned trip up Mount Washington this year. They have also gone hiking in Nepal.

Belmont farmer's market and Touch-a-Truck set for Sunday

BELMONT — Sunday, July 26 from 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. is the second in the series of monthly Farmer's Markets in Belmont. The end of June's

market day brought cold rain and gusty winds, so we are hoping for a much brighter day this month!

In conjunction with the Belmont Public Li-

brary, and the "Every Hero Has a Story" Summer Reading Program, we will have a Touch a Truck display. Bring the kids to the Belmont

Mill and Tioga Pavilion area on Mill Street, near the library to see the big trucks up close. This will be a wonderful addition to our July Farmer's Market and will be part of our monthly demonstrations.

Vegetables are coming in from the fields, and there will be a good

variety of locally-grown produce to choose from for your summer salads and barbecues. Enjoy a fresh, hot cup of coffee, along with a baked good, and stay for a while to listen to the live music or play a game of chess. We will have a nice variety of other vendors selling everything from air fresheners to maples

products and bird houses. It's a great way to spend a beautiful, summer morning! See you at the market on July 26.

Contact Gretta Olson-Wilder, Town of Belmont Special Events Coordinator, at 998-3525 or events@belmontnh.org, for more information about our series of summer Farmer's Markets.

Tilton Masons holding public breakfast & bake sale Saturday

TILTON — The Masons of Doric-Centre Lodge #20 are continuing their public break-

Northfield police log

NORTHFIELD — From July 13 – July 19, the Northfield Police Department responded to 113 calls for Service. Taken into Custody: Kyle Robb 19, of Franklin on a Bench Warrant and for Operating Without a Valid License. Edward Delucca, 29, of Northfield for Driving after Revocation/Suspension and Default/Breach of Bail Conditions.

Other Calls for Service: Sexual Assault, Robbery, Theft, Taking w/o Owner's Consent, Criminal Mischief, Issuing Bad Checks, Rubbish (Illegal Deposit), Harassing Communication and Suspicious Activity.

fasts and bake sales on the fourth Saturday of each month from 7 to 9:30 a.m. at the Masonic Building, located at 410 West Main St. (Route 3/11 West) in Tilton (where "The Ark" day care center is). Put it on your calendar and come socialize with friends each month.

This month's breakfast will be held on Sat-

urday, July 25. They serve a full breakfast, including eggs cooked to order, and the cost is \$8. Proceeds will benefit the various charities the Lodge supports. The Masonic Lodge will also be open for public tours and information. For more information about the breakfasts or about the Masons, contact Woody Fogg at 524-8268.

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