

**SPECIAL REPORT**

**WHAT IS AN ATHLETIC SCHOLARSHIP WORTH?**

# CENTRAL NEW YORK **Sports** MAGAZINE

# NO. 1

## ON BASEBALL FANS' **BUCKET LIST** THE NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME

**CNY'S RUSS BRANDON  
RUNS THE BUFFALO BILLS**  
**10 Qs 4 BOBBY COX**  
**SU FOOTBALL BREAKS  
A SPRING SWEAT**

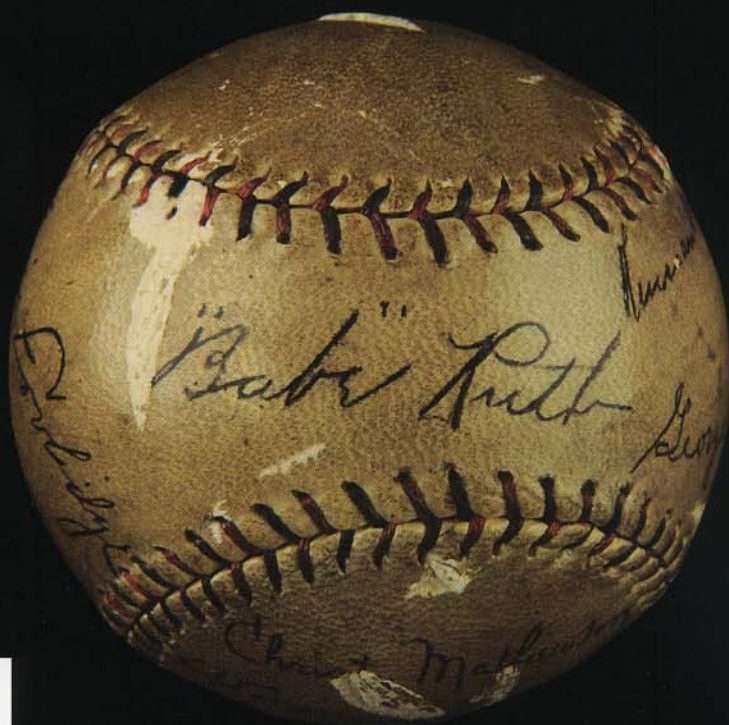


**"TEX"  
SIMONE**  
50 YEARS  
OF BASEBALL

**REGAN  
SMITH**  
LIFE IN  
NASCAR'S  
FAST LANE

**THE NATS**  
WHEN  
SYRACUSE  
RULED  
THE NBA

**SU HOOPS**  
LOOKING FOR  
THE RIGHT  
MIX - AGAIN?



**WHY BASEBALL MATTERS**

SUMMER 2010

\$4.95

03



0 74470 25579 6

# 46 PEAKS 35 YEARS

BY MARK OBBIE

I'm descending Dix Mountain, New York's sixth-highest peak, where I enjoyed spectacular views atop a remote corner of the largest wilderness area in the East. It's my fifth Adirondack High Peak of the day. And I'm miserable. Bloodied, bruised, stumbling-tired, out of drinking water. I shield my eyes from the spruce boughs that jab at my face as I lurch down the trail. My knees compete to see which one can make me whimper first. My hiking buddies are so far ahead of me that I no longer hear them laughing at what a sweaty, cursing mess I am. When I catch up with them, they'll be the first to hear the news: I quit. I've been on a years-long mission to join the Adirondack 46ers — a club with the steepest entrance requirements of any I've ever tried to join: climbing each and every one of the 46 tallest mountains in New York.

But why put myself through this? How could it be worth it?

After cooling myself and refilling my water bottles in a frigid stream, the pain fades. ▶

Mark Obbie is an assistant professor of magazine journalism at Syracuse University's S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications. Obbie is formerly the executive editor of *The American Lawyer* and an official member of the Adirondack 46ers.

PHOTO COURTESY OF MARK OBBIE



**It's Grilling Time!**



**CHARCOAL GRILLS**



**RA-LIN**  
The Original Discount!



**OPEN**  
SUN 11-4  
M-TH 9:30-6  
FRI 9:30-7  
SAT 9:30-6

**SPORTING GOODS**  
625 Burnet Ave • Syracuse  
472-7874

## To Get Here

- Over 2,000 All League Athletes.
- Over 175 Division one Athletes.
- Over 75 Professional Athletes in Football, LaCrosse, Baseball, Soccer, Hockey, Basketball, and Mixed Martial Arts.
- Over 10 New York State Players of the Year.
- Three Gatorade NYS Athletes of the Year.
- Seven NFL Draft Picks.

**It Starts Here.**



Come train with the best.  
Summer session starts 6/21/10  
[www.strengthinmotion.com](http://www.strengthinmotion.com)  
492-0289



**The summit of Algonquin Mountain.** With an elevation of 5,114 feet, this is the second highest peak in the Adirondacks. This is one of 46 mountain peaks that must be climbed to join the Adirondack Forty-Sixers.

PHOTO BY DICK BLUME

### THE UNDERWEAR HIKER

On a late September, 2008, trip, temperatures were surprisingly mild, even at high elevations. One of my buddies was overheating in his heavy pants. So he stripped to his tights-whiteys. He didn't care about the stares he got from men and women (and, unfortunately, one adolescent girl) along the trail, giving a jaunty "hello" and wave as we passed by countless wide-eyed hikers.

Within a few days, I will have knocked off four more. Eighteen to go! I'd come too far to stop. I'd been telling myself that since I had 35 to go. So now I'm back on my self-assigned quest: to be an Adirondack 46er, the obsessive-compulsives of Adirondack mountain climbing.

Stubbornness, amnesia or a personality disorder fail to answer the questions that taunted me on the way down Dix. Throughout my 46er quest, I tested the proposition that a barely fit, middle-aged desk jockey should even attempt such a feat. To meet the physical challenge, I followed the hiker's credo: Just put one foot in front of the other. Prosaic, yes, but it works. The obvious payoffs — stunning views and wilderness solitude — compensated for the pain. But I would have to finish the list to find answers to the deeper questions.

By other regions' standards, New York's peaks, topping out on Mount Marcy at 5,344 feet above sea level, are mere bumps. But as any hiker knows, what makes a hike strenuous is elevation gain, not just sheer height. Add distance, trail, weather conditions and a hiker's general fitness, and you'll know



whether you'll have a good day. Just to bag one peak in a day I've racked up about 6,000 feet of cumulative elevation over a 14-mile round trip, and I know I earned myself a cold one. Or three.

Even marked, well-maintained trails in the Adirondacks can pose a challenge. They're never death-defying technical climbs. Instead, a seemingly endless, steep incline can be a boulder-strewn, root-covered, muck-hole-filled obstacle course. Even worse are the so-called trail-less peaks, the 20 ascents on unmarked paths. They get less use, so they offer thicker brush and downed trees to make the walk more sporting. A few miles can feel like an eternity.

That's the bad news. The good news is that more than 100,000 hikers signed in at High Peaks trailheads in 2008, the most recent figures from the state Department of Environmental Conservation. Even the crazies who manage to climb all 46 peaks look more Everyman than Ironman (and more than one in four is an Everywoman). The median age of a newly minted 46er was 41, says Adirondack 46er historian Tony Solomon. Septuagenarians do it. Some 5-year-olds have done it. In all, ►



After 35 years of climbing, Mark Obbie became 46er No. 6,513 last August, three months after he turned 50, when he climbed to the peak of Whiteface Mountain. His wife, Nancy, drove to the top to celebrate with him.

PHOTO COURTESY OF MARK OBBIE

## If you're thinking of **HIKING** in New York:

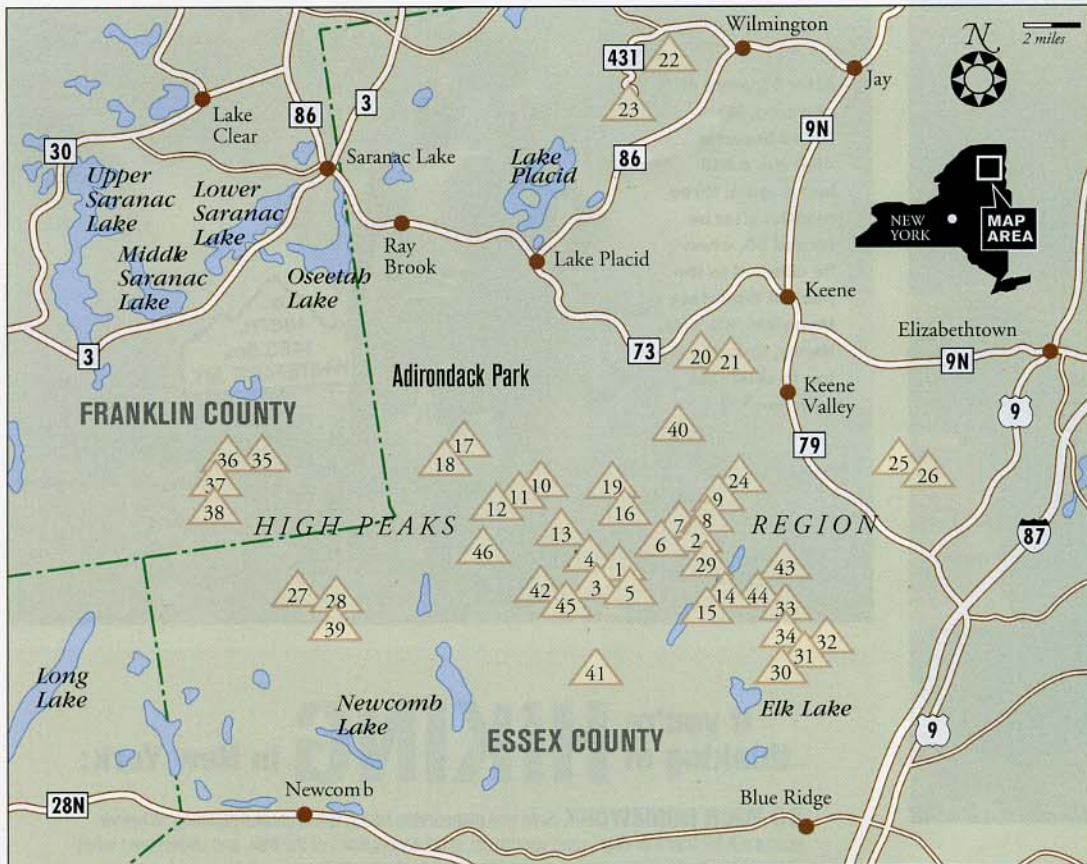
**DO YOUR HOMEWORK** Safe and pleasurable hiking takes careful planning. Whether you're out for hours or days, map your route, read descriptions of the trail, and understand what kind of time and distance you're committing to. Count on both the up and down taking much longer than a flatland hike (a good guidebook will provide estimates). Carry a map and compass or GPS, pay attention to colored trail markers, and carry enough water and the proper gear for whatever the weather might do. Proper gear means no cotton clothes, sturdy boots, rain cover and a headlamp for those times when your planning fails and you must hike out in the dark.

**KNOW YOUR OVERNIGHT OPTIONS** Most Adirondack peaks can be done as a day hike. For those of us who fall shy of marathon-runner fitness, many are much more enjoyable if you backpack to a base camp, stay one or more nights and day-hike from there. Backpacking raises the planning stakes. It's not at all like car-camping. And don't count on finding one of the lean-tos that dot the trails empty and waiting for you. If they're full, you'll need a tent. Throughout the High Peaks, and in particular the eastern region, DEC regulations prohibit campfires and require bear-proof food canisters, among other rules that you must know. Unless you find yourself at a crowded trail hub, you'll revel in the quiet and beauty of a wilderness overnight. And you can't beat the price for campsites: Free.

**EXPLORE BEYOND THE HIGH PEAKS** New York offers much more than the 46 highest peaks. In fact, your desire for solitude or for a shorter hike should send you to the many lesser-used trails in the Adirondacks and Central New York. You can split the travel distance and find wonderful lowland hikes in the southwestern Adirondacks, barely 90 minutes from downtown Syracuse. Whether you're after a great view or just a walk in the woods, remember there's more to hiking than joining the hordes on Mount Marcy.

**PICK A GOOD TIME** Adirondack mud season and bug season — from snow melt through at least late June — can take the fun out of a hike, especially for beginners. Mid-July through late-September are ideal times, though by late August the nights can get a little nippy. The more you hike, the more you'll appreciate that there is no bad time of year. Any experienced winter hiker will tell you: The views can be especially spectacular and ... no bugs!

**RESPECT NATURE** There are no trashcans out there — and there's remarkably little trash, because good hikers treasure the outdoors too much to treat it as a landfill. Though you might carry a cell phone for safety reasons, leave it off. And never, ever disrupt the solemnity of a summit with "guess where I'm calling from?" Respect also means understanding the risks of hiking many miles from the nearest road. Sign in and out at trail registers, to leave a record of where you are and a contact number back home. Especially at higher elevations, don't take chances, hike in a group, and always have a backup plan. If you do it right, you'll get what you came for: a chance to unplug from your hectic life and soak up the majesty of our very own wilderness.



The members of the Adirondack 46ers are hikers who have climbed to the summits of the 46 major Adirondack peaks. A recent survey indicated a few are less than 4,000 feet, but the Adirondack 46ers use the original list. The 46ers are not part of the Adirondack Mountain Club, through many climbers belong to both groups. Only a climber who has recorded his or her ascent of all 46 mountains is entitled to wear the "ADK 46-R" patch or emblem.

PEAK	ELEVATION (ft)	PEAK	ELEVATION (ft)	PEAK	ELEVATION (ft)	PEAK	ELEVATION (ft)
1 Marcy	5,344	13 Colden	4,714	25 Giant of the Valley	4,627	37 Donaldson	4,140
2 Gothics	4,736	14 Colvin	4,057	26 Rocky Peak Ridge	4,420	38 Emmons	4,040
3 Skylight	4,926	15 Blake	3,960	27 Couchsachraga	3,820	39 Santanoni	4,607
4 Gray Peak	4,840	16 Tabletop	4,427	28 Panther	4,442	40 Big Slide	4,240
5 Haystack	4,960	17 Nye	3,895	29 Sawteeth	4,100	41 Allen	4,340
6 Basin	4,827	18 Street	4,166	30 Macomb	4,405	42 Cliff	3,960
7 Saddleback	4,515	19 Phelps	4,161	31 South Dix	4,060	43 Dial	4,040
8 Armstrong	4,400	20 Cascade	4,098	32 East Dix	4,012	44 Nippletop	4,620
9 Upper Wolf Jaw	4,185	21 Porter	4,059	33 Dix	4,857	45 Redfield	4,606
10 Wright	4,580	22 Esther	4,240	34 Hough	4,400	46 Marshall	4,360
11 Algonquin	5,114	23 Whiteface	4,867	35 Seymour	4,120		
12 Iroquois	4,840	24 Lower Wolf Jaw	4,175	36 Seward	4,361		

nearly 6,700 men, women, and children have touched the summits of all 46 High Peaks in the decades since the list's creation — including 295 in 2009, the largest annual class ever. The Adirondack Mountain Club's John Million says heavier use of New York's wilderness is a good thing in these times.

"The last two years, we've seen it start to uptick again. I think that's more a factor of the economy and people going back to some less expensive vacations closer to home — and getting back into outdoor recreation."

The challenge is so manageable for

some that 450 have done them all in winter. A handful hit all 46 in each season, some in every month of the year. A few zealots shoot for speed records: The latest stands at under four days, with a support team.

Me? I did it in a leisurely 35 years. To be fair, I took a 25-year High Peaks hiatus between my first peaks and when I picked the habit up again. Even when I resumed hiking, I only had time to grab one or two peaks some years. And my support team was my younger brother Todd, who completed the list with his teenaged son but then generously doubled

up on many of the peaks to show me the way. He's in much better shape than I am and tolerated my moaning and groaning. Thanks to him, I saw a side of New York's breathtaking natural beauty that I never would have seen otherwise.

But there's only one 46th peak (at least for me). And I decided to hike it solo. Sort of. Last August, three months after I turned 50, I set out from the Wilmington valley at daybreak for the summit of Whiteface Mountain, with a detour to my 45th peak along the way, Esther Mountain. Whiteface consistently ranks as a favorite 46th peak

for the same reason I chose it: a spouse and friends can drive up to join the celebration. But a real 46er walks it, both up and down. And it's a lot of both: a round trip of more than 10 miles and more than 4,000 feet of cumulative gain.

Ordinarily a hike such as that would consume a long day for me. But when I reached Esther's summit, I realized with shock that I was way ahead of schedule. Had I miscalculated? Then it hit me: I was so enthused about reaching my goal, I hadn't felt all those steps upward. I was practically running up the mountains.

The stone tower atop Whiteface and the distinctive rock wall along the highway loomed ahead. Four hours after I started putting one foot in front of the other, I reached the summit. I had 90 minutes to wait for my wife, Nancy, her brother, and his wife, who were driving up with a bottle of champagne and cameras. While I waited, I avoided stepping up to the summit sign, so that my wife could join me for the big moment.

A funny thing happens on Whiteface, where most people drive, but a few stand out for having climbed. We climbers know each other by sight: the dark mud stains — our Adirondack

tattoos — heavy-duty footwear, lots of sweat. One volunteered that this was his 20th peak and asked me for my total. When I told him, he loudly exclaimed, and a small crowd gathered to congratulate me and talk about the 46er experience. I glowed. So this is what it's like to master a major physical endurance test. Never into team athletics, I'd taken up a solitary sport, and I like it that way. But at that moment, I felt a new sensation: an immense sense of athletic accomplishment and pride. It was, I'll admit, an ego-boosting high, one I hadn't expected or thought I craved.

Once my party arrived, Nancy and I stepped up to the famous black-on-white summit sign. As my brother-in-law snapped the photo, he called out, "How many peaks do you have?" I said it loud and proud: "Forty-six!" Clapping and "bravos" all around. I now was 46er No. 6,513, one of 295 new ones for the year, and one of four to finish that day.

The reward, I'd figured out, was in overcoming the challenges and discouragement. Those moments were essential to the triumph. I had earned that top-of-the-world feeling you get on a summit. ■

## TO LEARN MORE

### ■ Adirondack Mountain Club (ADK): [adk.org](http://adk.org)

Guidebooks, maps, gear advice, and tons of detailed hike suggestions. ADK operates a lodge, campground, and information center at Heart Lake, near Lake Placid, which serves as the main gateway to the High Peaks. ADK's Onondaga Chapter provides educational programs and guided outings, including many closer to home: [www.adk-on.org](http://www.adk-on.org)

■ Adirondack Explorer: [www.adirondackexplorer.org](http://www.adirondackexplorer.org)  
A bimonthly newspaper with hike suggestions and guidebooks.

■ Views From the Top: [www.viewsfromthetop.com](http://www.viewsfromthetop.com)  
Up-to-the minute trail conditions and advice from fellow hikers.

■ Adirondack Journey: [www.adirondackjourney.com](http://www.adirondackjourney.com)  
A detailed High Peaks trail guide.

# You'll Hit a Home Run with



**ONLY \$99**

**SUMMER AIR CONDITIONING TUNE-UP SPECIAL**  
Reg. \$168

**CHARLES ONE HOUR HEATING & AIR CONDITIONING**  
Always On Time Or You Don't Pay A Dime!  
LIVERPOOL WEST  
457-6911 488-4444

With this coupon. Please present coupon at time of service. Cannot be used in conjunction with other offers or coupons. Offers expires 6/07/10.

**10% OFF**

**AIR DUCT CLEANING**

**CHARLES ONE HOUR HEATING & AIR CONDITIONING**  
Always On Time Or You Don't Pay A Dime!  
LIVERPOOL WEST  
457-6911 488-4444

With this coupon. Please present coupon at time of service. Cannot be used in conjunction with other offers or coupons. Offers expires 6/07/10.

## CHARLES ONE HOUR HEATING & AIR CONDITIONING

Always On Time Or You Don't Pay A Dime!™

LIVERPOOL WEST  
**457-6911 488-4444** Licensed & Insured - Trained Professionals



Mike Charles - Owner

We Fix The Problem Right The First Time And Provide Our Customers With 100% Satisfaction Guaranteed

ASK YOUR NEIGHBORS, ASK YOUR FRIENDS & GIVE US A CALL!

**BUY GREEN, SAVE GREEN NOW!**

**WOW! Save Up To \$3,000!**

**WOW! Stimulus Package is Up to \$1500 - Federal Tax Credits on Energy Star Equipment!**

Lennox™ Up To **\$1500 REBATE**  
When You Install a Qualified Furnace & Air Conditioning Package  
Ends 5-27-10



**BOILER EXPERTS**  
We Install Boilers



**FREE ESTIMATES**



**A/C & Furnace Installations**  
2 Years' Satisfaction Guaranteed  
**OR YOUR MONEY BACK**

**NEW! Be the First on Your Block!**  
Buy a Lennox™ Solar Assisted Dual Fuel Pump Available Now!  
30% Tax Credit On Solar Panels