

# The Conway Daily Sun WEEKENDERS

## Walking with the New Hampshire Rebellion

On Thursday, Jan. 16, I walked for a while with New Hampshire Rebellion. Rebellion is the brain child of Harvard professor Lawrence Lessig. Its intention is to follow in the foot steps of Granny D, who, in her 80s, walked across the country for campaign finance reform.

The 185 mile walk began in rain and on icy roads on Jan. 11 in Dixville Notch, where the first in the nation elections are held. It was the same day that Aaron Swartz died — a young fighter for Internet freedom and Lessig's friend.

Yesterday, Jan. 24, the walk ended in Nashua on Granny D's birthday. It was a short walk of only six miles, compared to the 10 to 20 miles the rest of the walk, and ended with a birthday celebration and final gathering.

The walk across New Hampshire was only the beginning of a series of actions that Lessig and many others believe will begin to uproot a sense of helplessness in the public about corruption in Washington and how money primarily determines elections. In the 2016 primaries, all candidates who visit New Hampshire will be frequently asked by Rebellion



**Hiking**  
**Ed Parsons**

folks: "How are you going to end the system of corruption in Washington?" Notice that question does not blame the candidates or anyone else for the corruption, it simply states the systemic nature of it.

Then, just before the next election, a reverse Rebellion walk will take place, arriving in Dixville Notch on the eve of the election.

The media coverage and Internet presence of Rebellion is comprehensive. Lessig even wrote an article about it in the French newspaper *La Monde*.

I am usually a hiking columnist in this newspaper. How did I end up writing about New Hampshire Rebellion? (A friend's immediate reaction the other day to my writing this article was: don't get into politics). Naturally, it's because it was a walk. But it was more than that — a walk with a sincere intention of improving our world, and with a strong esprit de corps along the way.

Back just before the George W. Bush war in Iraq, a group of us walked with peace signs from Conway to Barnet, Vt., and from Conway to Portland, Maine. We finished at the ocean just



Beverly Woods and Lawrence Lessig walking over Page Hill with New Hampshire Rebellion. (ED PARSONS PHOTO)

before the invasion, and the reactions towards us by motorists and pedestrians was definitely mixed.

The reaction to the Rebellion walk along the way was 95 percent positive, even in conservative northern New Hampshire. There is much bipartisan agreement about corruption. In 1999, John McCain lamented it in the New

Hampshire primaries.

Back to my involvement on Jan. 16, I did two sections of the walk — from the Eastern Slope Inn in North Conway to the Conway Library, and later in the day from Runnels Halls in Chocorua to the Unitarian Church in Tamworth.

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\* Days may change, check with us.

from preceding page

It was interesting to meet others in front of the Eastern Slope Inn at 8:30 a.m. There were walkers from all over the east coast. There were quite a few from Vermont. Some had come from the west coast for the walk, and even an Anchorage couple had traveled to be part of it. Laurence Lessig walked through the group, welcoming those who had decided to walk for the day. The core group, who were walking the whole 185 miles, were 17 individuals.

Dick Pollock, of Conway, was there as part of the support staff for the entire walk. He had been responsible for successfully finding many families in the valley who had hosted walkers the night before in their homes, and Lessig led a cheer of appreciation for him.

It was the sixth day of the walk, and some of the hikers were feeling it. Their rented RV arrived, essential for occasional rests and lunch on such a long grueling winter walk on asphalt. With a long 20 mile day ahead to Tamworth, Lessig soon indicated it was time to go. We walked across the street, and facing traffic, headed south.

Many walkers wore foot traction as we negotiated the icy roadside and sidewalks. Most carried signs, and many cars honked and waved. They knew who we were. Dick Pollock drove ahead in his van and stopped to take pictures of us, committed to a comprehensive slide show of the entire walk, now available on the website nhrebellion.org.

The line stretched out, then those in front would wait so it would come back together. If you paused, the line would move on and you would find yourself with someone different. For a while I walked with Joe Bagshaw of Center Conway. He had joined the walk north

of town the day before, and was also walking to the Conway Library that day. He was a retired molecular biologist who had taught at Worcester Tech for many years. He was active locally with "We The People MWV," and was working with the group "New Hampshire For Democracy" to get towns to produce articles on town warrants to get the state legislature to pass a constitutional amendment that would clarify that people have the right to regulate campaign spending.

On the chilly North Conway strip, we talked about hiking, and Watson and Crick.

Friend and school board member John Skelton of Conway joined the group south of the strip, and found much to talk about with walkers. In Conway, I thanked Lessig and said I hoped to join them later in the day.

South of Conway, the group turned onto Route 113 into Madison to avoid the dangerous walking on NH 16. They would also do this later to avoid NH 25. There was obviously less exposure of their message to the public on back roads, but with their global exposure on the Web, it was insignificant and safety played a major role in the walk. That morning along the strip on NH16, anyone seen moving across the white line out into the road was immediately called back with a friendly voice.

Later in the afternoon by Runnels Hall in Chocorua, I waited with Beverly Woods for the group to appear on top of the hill, heading our way. Woods ran for the New Hampshire senate in 2010, and for state representative in 2008 and 2012. She is an accomplished professional musician. A knowledgeable activist with advanced computer skills, she could help get more word of NH Rebellion out on the Net. But she was also looking forward to the simple act of walking with them.

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DAVID EASTMAN

## Country Ecology: Long-tailed duck

Walking along northern Puget Sound shorelines in winter, which is mostly what we could find to do in that cold, drizzly climate, one could hear and see the chatty old-squaw ducks out there on the waves as they foraged for food. The kids scrambled along the gravelly beach, while my significant other and I strolled along seeking a chance to get out of the house on a weekend. The waterfowl overwintering in Puget Sound and its bays were quite significant in numbers, and an ever present phenomenon. Must have been a lot of small fish and crustaceans under that saltwater surface.

We are not forced to our seacoast environs out of sheer boredom like those times in the seventies when I resided in Bellingham, Wash. Hampton and Rye beaches are there, but we enjoy them in other seasons it seems. The oldsquaw and harlequin ducks entertained us then, and their noisy squawking sounds, almost like a distant kennel of yelping hounds, reminded us of that gregarious flock's presence just off Bellingham bay's beaches. The garrulous duck's Latin name means "winter noise." Males have a musical yodeling call ow, ow, owl-ow.

Somewhere along the way with political correctness overwhelming all things, their common name was changed so that no one would think we were sexist identifying that little wintertime duck bobbing in the water. But more so, there were negative connotations of the word squaw in English usage. Some biologists have also feared that this name would be offensive to some Native American tribes involved in the conservation effort. The American Ornithologists' Union stated that "political correctness" was not sufficient to change the name, but "to conform with English usage in other parts of the world" it officially adopted the name Long-tailed Duck.

Boldly patterned, they are mostly whitish in their plumage—our only sea duck with so much, displaying solid black wings in flight, and that ridiculous long plume of a tail. Unlike most ducks, which molt twice per year, the long-tailed duck has three distinct plumages each year, achieved in a complex series of overlapping partial molts. The "definitive basic plumage" is never worn in its entirety, as portions of alternate colors are retained



David Eastman

through the summer and elements of the supplemental are acquired before all of basic plumage is obtained, so says Cornell. Therefore change in plumage seems continuous from April to October. Unlike other waterfowl, the long-tailed duck wears its "breeding" or alternate plumage only in the winter. It gets its "nonbreeding" or basic plumage in the spring and wears it for the breeding season. We would not recognize on its Arctic tundra nest. The males are mostly dark brown, and the females do not change much at all.

In midwinter, long-tailed ducks begin courtship displays. Several males gather around a single female and utter their mellow, barking, far-carrying call. Although courtship lasts until after these circumpolar birds have returned to their nesting grounds, most birds are paired when they arrive in the North. They prefer to breed in habitats that provide both an aquatic and terrestrial environment in close proximity, like the marshy grass tundra of the Arctic. Deltas, promontories, coastal inlets and offshore islands are all suitable. Habitat mosaics with damp depressions such as bogs and pools of standing water are popular.

The nest is located on dry ground in those Arctic wetlands; it is built using vegetation and lined with down. Located in low vegetation or among rocks, five to 11 cream-colored eggs are usually laid. The incubation is 23 to 25 days, by the female only. When nesting these ducks switch to roots, buds, and seeds; the ducklings will feed mainly on insect larvae. The downy young leave the nest soon after hatching and can fly in five weeks. They winter along the eastern and western coasts of North America, on the Great Lakes, coastal northern Europe and Asia, with stragglers even to the Black Sea. However, the most important wintering area is the Baltic Sea, where a total of about 4.5 million gather.

Of all diving ducks, the long-tailed duck spends the most time under water relative to time on the surface. When it is foraging for mollusks and crustaceans, it is submerged three to four times as much as it is on top of the water. This elegant species is one of the deepest diving ducks, and can dive as deep as 200 feet to obtain its

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Dick Pollock arrived ahead of the group in his van, and took out his camera. Soon they appeared and slowly came downhill toward us. Then we merged, and the group kept walking across NH 16 and up Page Hill. It had been a long day, yet many had walked the whole way. Lessig himself had committed to walking every step of the 185 miles.

As we climbed Page Hill, Lessig and Woods walked together. A few days

later, Woods commented on the walk, saying that it was this kind of determination in the spirit of Granny D that would take our government back from its current state of corruption.

At the bottom of Page Hill, it started intensely snowing soft white pellets, making for a perfect atmosphere for the last quarter mile to the Unitarian Church, where Dick Pollock's wife Ellin had laid out a spread of hot coffee, cookies and cake. From there, walkers who would continue the next day dispersed to hosts and a motel.

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