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Catskill Summer Things



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Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Pete Senterman’s book shows that he’s well acquainted with the area’s peaks, trails, rivers and lakes, and he shares that knowledge with the reader wishing to sample the Catskills experience. It serves as a good quality introduction to what the Catskills has to offer the outdoorsman. There are plenty of activities here to keep somebody busy for at least one or two summer seasons.The book covers a good variety of venues, ranging from family walks, day hikes and bicycling excursions to adventures on the water. There are succinct black and white, pen and ink maps that show the roads, trails, streams and lakes discussed in the book. Most of the activity descriptions offer good road directions and information on parking. Mr. Senterman also suggests additional reading for those who want additional details and adventures.I just bought the book a month ago, and used it last week on my seventh week-long summer trip to the area. We did the Red Hill hike, located NE of Grahamsville near the Rondout Reservoir, to enjoy the view from the fire tower. Mr. Senterman classified this as a good hike for a family. I only had my two oldest boys with me (16 and 15), and we all agreed that this would not be a hike appropriate for smaller children. The trail to Red Hill is nearly all uphill, quite rocky/"rooty", and in a couple of places quite steep, not really suited to young kids unless you want to wind up carrying them. Also, it would have been helpful to indicate that the parking area was at the bottom of the hill along the steep dirt approach road, and that it’s an official NYS parking lot. We wound up parking at the split of the public and private roads, at the top of the hill.My one other complaint about the book is the lack of an overall Catskills area map to give geographic context to the suggested activities. I had to constantly look up where each hike was

located on another map to figure out how far away they were from where we were staying, nearing Wurtsboro.Overall, this is a very good book, that could use some improvement by adding a regional map and some refinement to the directions and parking area descriptions. I'll be using it many times.

In Sullivan County, you will find the Stagedoor Manor where would-be singers and dancers converge for the annual summer camp. Out of a large group of talented teens, only thirty or forty will perform in the cabaret, a professional gig at a local hotel. There used to be 1,000 resort hotels in the Catskills where many of today's and yesterday's stars got their big break. Eddie Cantor discovered Eddie Fisher at one in the Forties.At this special camp, they have three weeks to learn enough so as not to end up as a chorus girl forever. There were boys as well, and the older kids paired up. On the bus, a kissing game became a tug of war with inappropriate behavior for a public forum. They were to the most part misfits in their schools at home and ridiculed because they are different. As many as seventy percent of the men in show business are not straight, and they learned to do things no one knew about in the old days. Nowadays, that is no longer possible.A documentary was filmed about one particular class which highlight five of the most talented students with Doug Quinn and Jeff Murray as the tutors and strict taskmasters. After the final performance, which was a great success, they were told they owe a debt of gratitude to the teachers, director of the school, and their leaders. They had learned that in camp they could do things which were not acceptable in the real world. But, they were led to believe that the only thing which matters is their performance as everyone's a star (at Tennessee Theatre, no one was a star, we were equal); a place had been found for each of them to shine. As a result, they created a monster. They were legally allowed to do bad things they would not have gotten away with at home. People applaud you for being bad, when you're in the theater -- no stigma attached.This is a beautiful area of New York where the stars still go for rest and recreation. Many got their start there at the Stagedoor Camp. One girl Maddy Weinstein was there for her third year, while Randi Kleiner was present for her seventh year having started at age ten. These were the big stars to show the younger novices exactly how to perform before an audience.

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