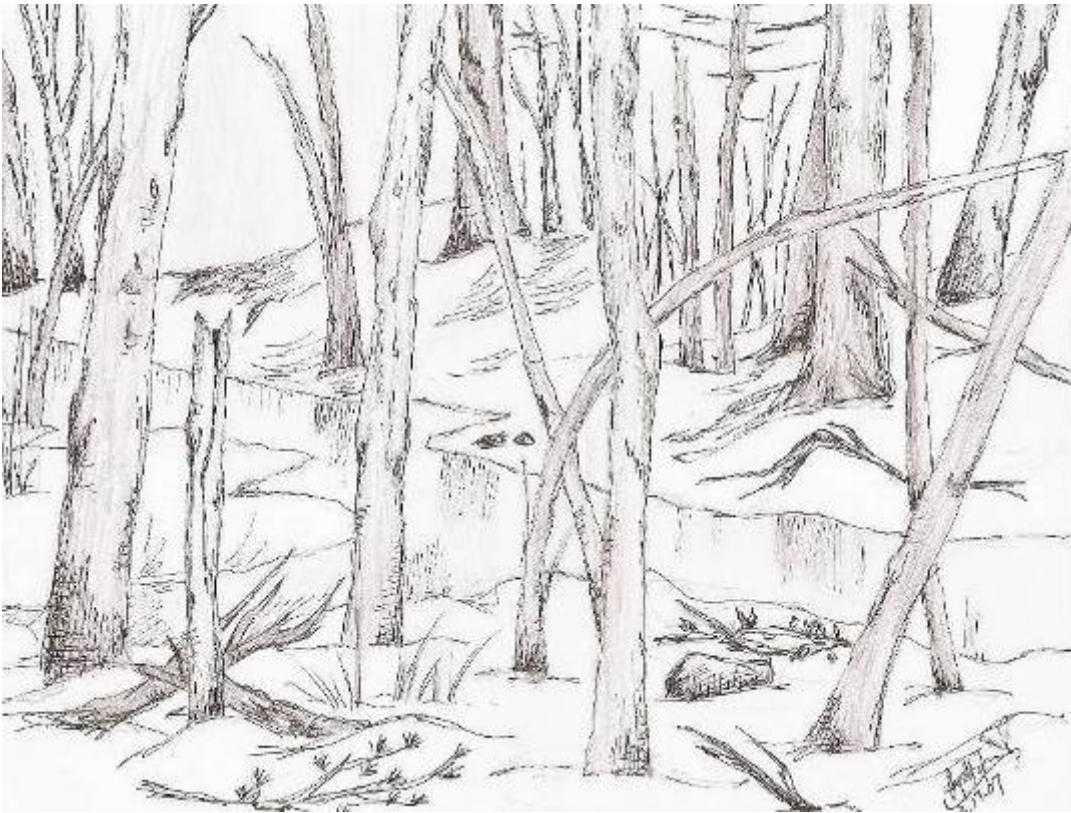


A Jolly Jericho Jaunt By Crystal Tzau



General information

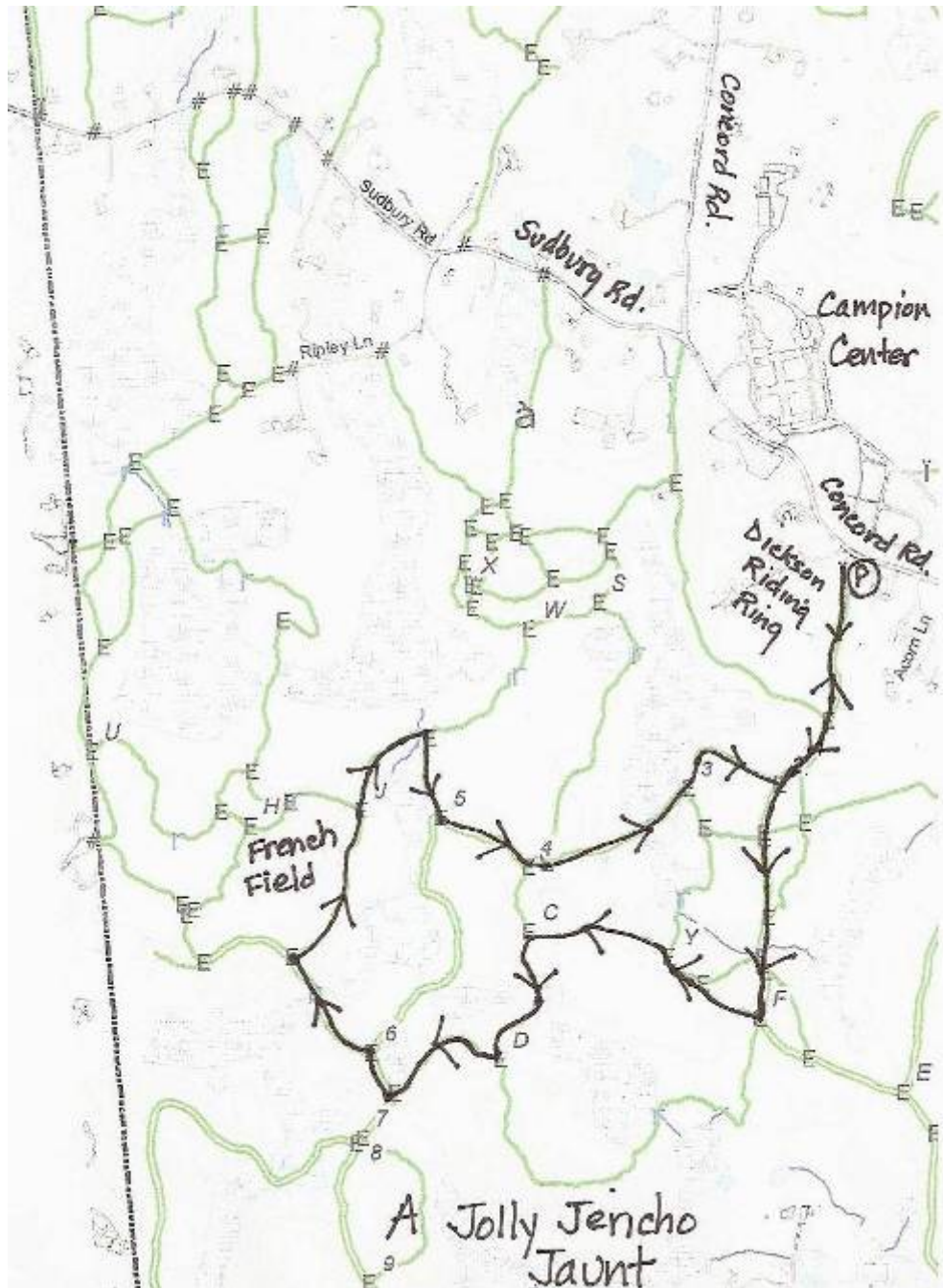
The Jericho Town Forest has over 500 acres of land and is the largest piece of conservation land in Weston. On Concord Road, just down the street from the Campion Center (towards the town center) the Ruth B. Dickson Riding Ring has a parking lot where this walk begins. Trails lead into the Jericho Town Forest from the Riding Ring. Most of the walk is fairly flat, although there are a few small hills. A variety of regions are included in the Town Forest, including swamp, rivers, woodsy areas and others! Throughout many parts of the hike, Cherry Brook flows through the woods and then joins Stony Brook. A Jolly Jericho Jaunt includes a large open field where you can do an assortment of activities such as frisbee, picnics or soccer. During wet periods of weather (rain and snow), the ground is very muddy and slushy at the beginning of the trail, and certain parts in the middle. You should

definitely wear good waterproof shoes during these conditions. Though it is a wonderful walk for all seasons, it is especially beautiful in the summer and springtime. There are many different flowers and trees that grow in the forest, and you can see more animals during the warmer seasons as well (you can find animal tracks in the winter snow!).



The area was named when names were commonly drawn from the bible. Some believe that it was named by men that looked at the Jericho ridge and were reminded of the walls of Jericho. This ridge was formed 13,000 years ago! Jericho means, "a place of retirement or concealment" or "a place far distant and out of the way". There is one story told by the Colonel Daniel S. Lamson, which tells of a British spy that sought safety in the Jericho swamp right before the Battle of Lexington and Concord. The Jericho Town Forest area was part of farms and estates in the beginning of the twentieth century. This is the reason for the many stone walls that are found in the woods throughout the hike. There were also many cranberry bogs in the area until the 1970's.

Recommended Hike



Length of Walk: 1 hour

You start by parking at the Dickson Riding Ring. Leave the parking lot and walk into the woods with the riding ring on your right. After you

enter the woods, you will pass several side trails, but stay on the carriage road. You will pass a marshy area and then reach intersection F. At this intersection is another carriage road where you turn right. Continue walking straight to intersection Y where you continue to the left. Keep going to intersection C where you turn left. Once you arrive at intersection D, turn right, and at the next unmarked intersection, turn right. As you walk, you can see the many different trees and plants including white pine, red maples, oaks, beech trees, and New York ferns. Continue to intersection 6 and turn left. You will cross over a stream as you walk up a small hill to French Field. This field is ideal for picnics, and games.



Then you turn right and walk along the right edge of the field. At the end of the field, you will pass through a stone wall back into the woods. After passing through the stone wall, you continue straight to intersection J where you turn right. After crossing a stream (it is fun to play in this stream!), you go to the next intersection (which is unmarked) where you turn right. Continue to intersection 5 and turn left onto a carriage road. Go straight past intersection 4 and go through a marshy area to intersection 3 keeping to the left. Then keep walking to intersection 2, where you turn sharply left to join the carriage road,

from which you came. Take this road back to the parking lot at the Dickson Riding Ring.

There are a variety of activities you can do on this walk, including running, walking your dog, mountain biking, cross- country skiing, or just strolling. It is a great cross- country run especially during the spring, and a wonderful trail to walk your dog all year round! During the winter, cross-country skiing is a great sport to do as well!

As mentioned before, there are many different plants and animals in the Jericho Town Forest. During the winter, there are not many animals that can be seen, though you may hear some birds high in the trees. Don't forget to walk softly. If you are lucky, you may spot some deer in the woods. Smaller animals like squirrels, and chipmunks are common sights during the warmer seasons.



One unique plant in the area is the Jack- in- the- Pulpit. This plant resembles a pastor preaching in his pulpit. The flower is in the "pulpit" or bowl of the plant and covered by a flap. In the fall, you may spot its berries, which are bright red and bitter tasting. It is also called an Indian Turnip, Wild Turnip, Swamp Turnip, and Dragon- Turnip. The root of the Jack- in- the- Pulpit plant is a bulb shaped like a turnip.



Simple Stroll

As the wind whistles sweet tunes of glee
The trees wave their branches and answer happily
The leaves rustle sighs of utter content
As squirrels and chipmunks chitter and rant.
As we take our walks in the great outdoors
Nature's bounty is shown and we eagerly explore.

A Fun Trail Snack

Trail Mix:

1. M&M's
2. Raisins
3. Sunflower Seeds
4. Peanuts
5. Craisens (dried cranberries)
6. White chocolate chips

About the Author

This section was written by Crystal Tzau. She is fourteen years old and is currently a freshman at Weston High School. When she is not knee deep in textbooks studying, Crystal likes to relax with her friends. In the spring she plays on her school's softball team and in the fall she plays field hockey. Crystal loves drawing and reading. Her favorite book is *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee.

