

# Assemblyman survives Black Rock bear scare

By **JASON KAPLAN**

Bright and early Saturday morning, Assemblyman Colin Schmitt embarked on a hike with his wife, Nikki, and their dog, Quincy. It was a trek they had taken before, but this time they would come within 20 feet of a bear.

The trio arrived at Black Rock Forest and hiked up their usual trail. They crossed Mailey's Mill Bridge and up toward Aleck Meadow, and past the repeater tower.

The assemblyman was leading the way, walking Quincy who was lagging behind. Schmitt turned a corner and was shocked to see a six-foot bear about 20 feet away. He guessed the bear was a juvenile, but was still large in size.

Luckily, the bear was walk-

ing in the same direction the hikers were heading.

"My understanding is they walk into the wind so they can smell," said Schmitt, who speculated the bear had just made the turn and didn't catch the party's scent, more specifically the dog.

The bear snapped its head back and glanced at Schmitt, seemingly more startled than the state legislator, who

quickly told his wife to stop and turn back.

At that point, the animal hadn't been provoked and Schmitt especially didn't want Quincy to catch sight of the bear.

They turned around and expeditiously made their way back to the car, making sure to speak loudly to deter the bear from following them.