

**Berkshire Chapter
Appalachian Mountain Club**

**2007
ANNUAL REPORT**



Report of the Chapter Chair

What a wonderful AMC chapter we have here, with a fantastic community of volunteers and members! As we roll over from 2007 to 2008, it's important to recognize many of our recent successes and look forward to upcoming events.

The year 2007 was a great one for the Berkshire Chapter. We maintained a count of 3,000 members. To welcome new and prospective members, Deborah Levine got our monthly potluck series rolling. We also got our Family Programs Committee started with Bob Wallner. Our many activity leaders regularly brought folks together, both outdoors and indoors, for hiking, paddling, climbing, bicycling, and social events in the woods, on the mountains and rivers, and at Noble View Camp.

Deborah Levine, early in 2007, also accepted the position of Chapter Vice Chair. This is terrific news for the Chapter and the AMC. Her devotion and brilliant ideas are fantastic. Also, as Vice Chair, she will become Chapter Chair for 2009–2010; succession of leadership is very important.

In 2007 we held two Leadership Training weekends, with about 40 participants attending. For organizing, thanks to Christine Fogarty, Donna Walters, and Rob Robertson. Thanks also to the Berkshire and Worcester Chapter volunteers who contributed as trainers or by otherwise helping out, and to many of our own Chapter leaders who showed up to offer support to the newly trained folks.

Our Big Berkshire Bash and Annual Meeting (BBB) on November 3 was a great success, well-attended with 80 people. This year we tried something a little different—we hired a band instead of a speaker. The band, Victory, played classic songs from yesteryear, and folks had a wonderful time dancing or otherwise enjoying the music. Also, we were honored to have Bill Cushwa, Chapter Chair 1975–1976, as one of our guests.

On our Executive Committee, I want to thank those Committee Chairs who have stepped down after years of great service: Alice Hodgdon (Mountaineering), Dave Koerber (Outings), Donna Walters (Training & Education), and Ian Beatty (Website). Thanks and welcome to our newest Committee Chairs: Bob Wallner (Family Programs), Bill Fogel (Mountaineering), and Christine Fogarty (Training & Education). Thanks to Bob Bergstrom—previously Deputy Webmaster—for moving up to the position of Website Committee Chair and taking over as Ian steps down. Those continuing in their positions on our Executive Committee for 2008 are Deborah Levine (Chapter Vice Chair; Membership Chair), Patricia Stevenson (Secretary), Kelly Druzisky (Treasurer), Cosmo Catalano and Jim Pelletier (Appalachian Trail), Jon Hanauer (Berkshire Exchange), Charlie Camp and Connie Peterson (Canoe &

Kayak), Patricia Lukas (Conservation), Jim Van Natta (Mountaineering), Rob Robertson (Noble View; Nominating; Past Chair), Bob Napolitano (Outings), Bess Dillman (Public Relations), Patrick Fletcher (Trails), and Steve Beauregard (acting Young Members Chair).

Thanks to Diane Furtek for continuing to find time during her busy schedule to contribute to the Berkshire Chapter and Noble View Camp; Cynthia Martin-Thompson, for helping out with the leadership of the Mountaineering Committee; Chris Ryan, who continues to handle our Membership in a Bottle program; Gloria LaFlamme, who has been our Tuesday Hike coordinator for so long (she'll be stepping down in April, but will continue to stay involved afterwards); Dave Conley, who's doing a fantastic job as our Tuesday Hike Email Postmaster; Nancy Gonter-Weld, our Website Editor-in-Chief, for continually getting valuable information posted at amcberkshire.org; and Dale Geslien, for her support as our Regional Director.

The Berkshire Exchange Committee is still the same happy trio, and I continue to enjoy working with Editor Maureen Flanagan and Assistant Editor Gail Blackhall. Many thanks to both of you.

A very special, posthumous tribute goes to Rosmarie O'Conner, who passed away in the summer of 2007. Rosmarie was the Email Postmaster for the Tuesday hikers. Although she will be greatly missed, those of us who knew her are very thankful for the fond memories she left behind—she was a great friend to so many people.

Actually, hundreds of volunteers serve the Chapter in many different areas and I'm sorry space does not permit me to name all of you. Each and every one of you is an important part of the Berkshire Chapter and I thank you all.

In fact, even if you're a Berkshire Chapter member, regardless of whether you do any volunteering, you are supporting us just by being a member. Without a doubt, this is also greatly appreciated.

Please join me in looking forward to another great year in 2008. We continue to have so much to offer. Watch for recreational, educational, and conservation-oriented activities, Leadership Training and other workshops, family events, volunteer opportunities, and much more. Be sure to save the date for our Annual Members' Potluck on March 29. Keep up-to-date on all these great offerings by checking in with trips.outdoors.org, *AMC Outdoors* magazine, and the *Berkshire Exchange*. Members and non-members are always welcome.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jon Hanauer
Berkshire Chapter Chair

Appalachian Trail Committee

The AT Committee had another great year with approximately 8,800 volunteer hours reported to the National Park Service. In addition to our usual trail maintenance, monitoring, and Upper Goose Pond Cabin caretaking activities, the following accomplishments are particularly worthy of note:

- A new shelter was constructed at the Wilcox South overnight site, significantly improving the capacity of this site.
- New mattresses were purchased for Upper Goose Pond cabin, replacing old unsanitary mattresses. Clearly this improvement was a big hit with hikers.
- Reinvigoration of the Corridor Monitoring program continued with significant action on reestablishment of boundaries, posting and barricading access points against illegal use and action on Special Use Permits in non-compliance.
- Conversion of additional privies from the pit type to moldering type.

Our volunteer efforts continued to be supported by the Appalachian Trail Conservancy with placement of Adam Brown in the Southern New England office at the Kellogg Conservation Center (KCC); by the AMC with the AMC Regional Trails Coordinator at the KCC; and by the MA Department of Conservation and Recreation with their project and Ridge Runner support.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jim Pelletier
Appalachian Trail Vice Chair

Canoe & Kayak Committee

The Canoe & Kayak Committee (“Paddling Committee”) is completing another year with many successful boating trips. Our major activities include quiet water trips and whitewater trips for both open boats and closed boats. We also offer a smaller number of rafting trips and sea kayaking trips.

Our quiet water program is coordinated by Rudy Julian and he reports that the group had another successful season with trips from mid-April to mid-October, ranging from the Concord River in Eastern Mass. to the wilds of the Adirondacks. During most weekends there was a day trip, generally on nearby rivers and lakes, including the Connecticut River, Lake Rohunta, the Quinneboag River, Highland Lakes, the Hoosatic, and many more. There were also two overnight trips—one to the North Shore to paddle the Essex and Parker Rivers and marshes, and the other to the Adirondacks to explore several pristine paddling areas. We are looking forward to another successful upcoming season in 2008.

The whitewater schedule is coordinated by Tad Jackson, and is busiest from mid-March through early May. These trips include many of the tributaries of the Connecticut River. The summer program offers fewer trips, primarily on sections of the Deerfield River. Our rafting offerings are coordinated by Al Howcroft with the support of a number of raft guides. Our sea kayaking program is coordinated by Rich Hamilton and Mike Zabre.

Our Committee organized a significant clean-up project below Monroe Bridge on the Deerfield River in June, and a number of our paddlers supported the Connecticut River clean-up day.

We have a fleet of rental boats that are stored in South Amherst. There are canoes and kayaks available for quiet water and whitewater, as well as some sea kayaks and rafts. Sea kayak rentals have been especially busy during the past summer.

We provide a paddling newsletter, *Ferry Tales*, at the start of each paddling season, edited by Norma Roche. The schedule for our season is published in the newsletter and on the Berkshire Chapter website. Email lists are supported, including one for quiet water paddlers, one for whitewater paddlers, and one for sea kayakers.

Our Committee maintains contact with other paddling groups in the AMC through the Inter-Chapter Paddling Committee. Connie Peterson serves as our Representative to this group, which deals with paddling issues of concern to many chapters.

Respectfully Submitted,
Charles Camp and Connie Peterson
Canoe & Kayak Committee Chairs

Conservation Committee

The Conservation Committee sponsored its first activity in April, with the AMC's Doug Weihrauch introducing the Wildflower Watch program.

In June, we had a mountaintop cleanup on Shatterack Mountain in the town of Montgomery, Mass., in cooperation with the state Division of Fisheries and Wildlife. Tony Gola, biologist with the Western Wildlife District, helped us in this effort.

July found us out on the Connecticut River, learning about Combined Sewer Overflows (CSO) in the Holyoke and Springfield areas with Andrea Donlon, Connecticut River Watershed Council River Steward.

A new member potluck in September was the venue for a presentation on wild edibles from Russ Cohen, professional environmentalist and wild foods enthusiast. The Committee's initiative to encourage those who attend potlucks

to bring their own place settings, rather than using disposable dishes, has been a continuing success.

Also in September, we helped the Holyoke Friends of the River with the Source-to-Sea Connecticut River cleanup.

In November we sponsored another potluck with Hawk Metheny, AMC's Backcountry Management Specialist, presenting the Climate Project slide show.

Three out of four Conservation Committee members have taken the Berkshire Chapter Leadership Training and the fourth is planning on completing the training this year.

Our Committee looks forward to another year devoted to our mission of conservation, renewal, and protection of our beautiful western Massachusetts environment.

Respectfully Submitted,
Patricia Lukas
Conservation Committee Chair

Membership Committee

This has been a busy year for the Membership Committee, aided by many hard-working and enthusiastic volunteers. The Chapter membership is currently at about 3,000.

The Membership Committee seeks to provide opportunities to promote the AMC and the Berkshire Chapter to people who are interested in joining. The Committee also makes certain there are events that welcome new members and promote ongoing participation in the Chapter.

Chris Mangano continued to mail welcome packets to all new members. Her hard work and commitment to the Chapter are very much appreciated. Beginning in November, 2007, these welcome packets began coming directly from the AMC, but with customized features for members of each chapter.

A renewed effort in this past year has been the monthly potluck social and new member orientation events. Attendance has been growing and each potluck has featured interesting speakers and programs.

The Annual Members' Potluck to welcome new members, held every year in March, was a big success. Speaker Gary Pfisterer entertained the group with phenomenal slides and descriptions of his mountaineering adventure on K2.

The Berkshire Chapter participated at the Springfield RV and Camping show with an exhibit table staffed by many willing volunteers for three days. A great deal of interest was expressed in the AMC and our Chapter by visitors to the show.

Intro/Social gatherings continued throughout our Chapter's region during the past year. These small, informal programs were held in Greenfield, Lenox, and Agawam, and are designed to give people throughout our area the opportunity to speak with Chapter representatives about what the Berkshire Chapter has to offer.

The Membership Committee looks forward to another year of promoting the Berkshire Chapter and welcoming new members.

Respectfully Submitted,
Deborah Levine
Membership Committee Chair and Chapter Vice Chair

Mountaineering Committee

The view from the rock cliff is always good. We had a great rock climbing season with our weekend trips to the "Gunks;" Rumney, New Hampshire; and Acadia National Park. Our spring and summer Wednesday evening sessions at Chapel Ledges in Ashfield and Rose Ledge in Northfield gave many a chance to further develop their skills, from basic techniques to expert moves. Day trips took us to Ragged Mountain in Connecticut and Crow Hill in Leominster. We did some moonlight skiing and ice climbing as winter conditions permitted.

Training and other learning experiences are ongoing as people exchange experiences and ideas on technique and safety. We have offered weekend courses in Introduction to Rock Climbing and Intermediate Rock Climbing. These were well-attended and of great benefit to all.

As a group, the Mountaineering Committee teamed up with The Trustees of Reservations for the annual spring work day at Chapel Ledges. Erosion control was the goal of this year's efforts, and we spread a truckload of wood chips on the access trails.

I wish to thank all of the trip leaders, Co-Chairs, Committee officers, and others who volunteered their time and effort in making this season such a great success.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jim Van Natta
Mountaineering Committee Chair

Noble View Committee

PROGRAMS AND RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

We conducted the following recreational activities:

- George Washington Valley Forge Picnic and Winter Activities Day, February 17, 2007
- Fireworks Viewing and Chicken Barbecue, Tuesday, July 3, 2007
- Laurel Day Feast at Noble View Camp, June 23, 2007
- Berkshire Chapter Potluck, August 14, 2007

We offered the following educational programs and workshops:

- Leadership Training, March 10–11, 2007 and October 27–28, 2007
- SOLO Wilderness First Aid, May 19–20, 2007 and November 3–4, 2007
- SOLO Advanced Wilderness First Aid, June 2–3, 2007 and December 8–9, 2007
- Leave No Trace Workshop, June 3, 2007

Efforts to address on-site conservation issues such as recycling, composting, etc.:

We are a self-service facility, and ask our guests to remove everything they brought to the property from the property. We have no means of on-site trash disposal or recycling.

Potential for expansion of educational, conservation, or recreational programs:

There are significant opportunities for developing cooperative educational partnerships with the Russell School District, Student Conservation Association Massachusetts Corps Program (AmeriCorps), and Westfield State College. This year, we met with AmeriCorps and Westfield State College. Our Education Committee Chair, Laura Stinnette, will open discussions with Russell School District in 2008. An operational bath house is a necessary precondition to developing cooperative educational partnerships that will offer on-site naturalist and conservation education to the children of local school districts.

PHYSICAL PLANT

Major repairs needed and capital replacement requirements for the next five years:

- We hope to complete construction of the bathhouse in late 2008 or early 2009.
- The North Cottage was not open during 2007, and will not be open in 2008. Window sashes and jambs have deteriorated to the point that replacement of all the windows is necessary. Window replacement will trigger a building permit application, which would require the

building to be updated to the present building, fire, safety, and health codes. We hope to begin work on the complete renovation of the North Cottage in 2009.

- The Farm House may require closing for repairs within the next two years. Many windows are inoperable and require replacement. Short-term repairs to the kitchen floor were made this year.
- We plan to renovate the barn for use as a training and education center.

Accessibility and compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act:

The Double Cottage and northwest three-seater outhouse are ADA-compliant. No other buildings are ADA compliant.

Fire, safety, and health code compliance and any shortfalls:

- The Double Cottage is in full compliance, with a Certificate of Occupancy issued 12/30/06.
- The North Cottage and Farmhouse will require significant upgrades to come into compliance with current codes.

The drinking water system and status of required tests and results:

No potable water is provided for guests. When the bathhouse comes on line, water testing will be done at the required intervals.

The method of human waste disposal and any issues related thereto:

Outhouses are presently available for guests' comfort. When the bathhouse comes on line, human waste and gray water will be disposed of via a state-of-the-art sewage treatment system.

Planned investment in composting systems, solar energy equipment, the use of renewable resources, or other alternative supplies or equipment.

We will use solar hot air heat in the bathhouse. The proposed 19.5 square meters of panels will displace approximately 4 tons of carbon dioxide emissions annually, generating carbon credits we can sell. We will submit the finished building for LEED certification.

Respectfully Submitted,
Rob Robertson
Noble View Committee Chair

Outings Committee

First of all, I want to thank all the monthly coordinators and hike leaders for their volunteer services to the Berkshire Chapter. There is no way one individual can perform this task; the club and all participants owe them a big round of applause. A special thanks, too, to my Co-Chair, Dave Koerber, who unfortunately has had to step down to follow family and business activities. We

owe our success in part to him—as I said, I couldn't do this effectively alone. Thank you, Dave.

While I sincerely appreciate the wonderful support we've been getting, the need continues for planning, organizing, and implementing our monthly activities. Specifically, we're calling for volunteers in the following areas:

- Monthly (or quarterly) coordinators to cover June, July, November, and December 2008.
- Activity leaders to co-lead one or more events so new leaders can get three co-leads under their belts.
- Special Event coordinators for National Trails Day, Earth Day, Annual Potluck Dinner day hikes, Annual Meeting day hikes, and third Saturday of the month work parties (“give back to the trails”).
- Some one to set up and manage an email list-serve.

The Outings Committee has had a busy year so far in 2007. For those who like numbers, there have been 80 hikes with 1121 participants during the first nine months. This is based on the returned signup sheets; I suspect there are more, but all the sheets may not have been returned to me yet. Leaders, please send them to Bob Napolitano, PO Box 650, Granby, MA 01033. Additional forms may be obtained by contacting me, or on the web at <http://www.amcberkshire.org/lead/docs>.

I hope members continue to enjoy our Chapter outings, and look forward to what we have in store. And please remember to contact me if you want to use your personal talents and volunteer to help. You can phone me at 413-534-8955 (please call before 8 p.m.), or send an email to nappyofma@comcast.net.

Respectfully Submitted,
Bob Napolitano
Outings Committee Chair

Training & Education Committee

First, thanks to Donna Walters for doing a great job volunteering as the T&E Chair these past two years. I know that she spent a considerable amount of time modeling and developing the leader training program we have in place today, and for that I am thankful for her hard work.

When I was approached by Donna, Jon Hanauer, and Rob Robertson to be the T&E Chair, I wasn't sure if I would be able to fill Donna's shoes! I'm excited about the opportunity to teach, and to learn from, Chapter members. I have a lot of ideas about where I'd like to see the Berkshire Chapter in the future

and I will do my best to continue the work that Donna began, bringing new programs and educational opportunities to the Chapter.

This year, 31 new leaders were trained, with Leadership Training offered in March and October. For the first time ever, the March training was held at the newly renovated Double Cottage at Noble View, with food and lodging provided; and we had the largest turnout ever, with 21 participants honing their leadership skills in an atmosphere that fostered team building and camaraderie.

At our October training we had 10 participants from as far as the Boston and Southeastern Massachusetts Chapters. The Training and Education Committee opted to reduce the cost of the training to \$25 and offered lodging separately for a nominal \$15. The Committee felt that the reduction in cost would lower the financial barriers for all Chapter members, and we were successful in achieving that.

The Berkshire Chapter leadership criteria was tightened this past year. In addition to leader training, the new guidelines also require that a new leader demonstrate competency by completing three co-leads with existing Berkshire Chapter leaders. In order to facilitate an opportunity to network for co-leads, we invited current leaders to participate in the Leadership Training weekends. Their involvement created opportunities to share meaningful experiences with new leaders. We hope to keep the momentum going and increase the number of trained leaders who share their experiences and expertise during the training weekends.

In addition, there have been changes to the risk management policies and generally accepted practices as mandated by the AMC's OLDC (Outdoor Leadership Development Committee). In 2008 we will be altering the existing leader criteria by instituting recertification trainings to keep our leaders up to speed with those changes and to open a dialog with those who may be out of touch with recent happenings.

We continue to focus on high-quality leadership training. We are proud of this history and believe it is what sets the AMC apart from other outdoor clubs. Our trip leaders have excellent training, and trip participants notice the difference. "Let's be safe and have fun" is our motto.

As we enter the new year, I'd love to hear from all Chapter members about the types of trainings, gear days, family education programs, and hikes you'd like to see listed in the future. This is your Chapter—let's make it the best!

Respectfully Submitted,
Christine Fogarty
Training & Education Committee Chair
(Donna Walters also contributed to this report.)

Website Committee

2007 was a relatively quiet year for the AMC-Berkshire Website Committee, and in the world of technology and Internet services, “quiet” is usually a good thing. Unlike in previous years, we had no major crises to resolve.

The only significant problem encountered was a recurring issue where people with Comcast-hosted email accounts fail to receive email sent from Chapter email lists or email aliases. The problem comes and goes. It results from Comcast’s overzealous anti-spam measures; every so often they “blacklist” all email coming from Dreamhost mail servers. Dreamhost is the company hosting our web operations, as well as web operations for many thousands of other customers. Perhaps some other customer was in fact violating Dreamhost’s strict anti-spam policies. Whatever the cause, Dreamhost and our Chapter are powerless to resolve the problem; only Comcast can remove the blacklisting, and they do so in their own good time. (AMC-Berkshire members who are Comcast customers might consider complaining to Comcast customer support, asserting that perfectly valid email from a reputable organization is repeatedly being blocked by Comcast’s blacklist.)

Over the course of 2007, our outgoing Webmaster and committee Chair (Ian Beatty) gradually relinquished control and duties to the two people who are replacing him, Bob Bergstrom (Webmaster and incoming Committee Chair) and Nancy Gonter-Weld (Website Editor-in-Chief). Towards the end of 2007 they organized an ad-hoc committee for considering improvements to and future directions for the Chapter's web operations, and held the first meeting of that committee. We can anticipate improvements and new ideas in 2008.

The Website Committee’s total budget for 2007 was \$0, since license fees for our domain names (amcberkshire.org, amcberkshire.net, and amcberkshire.com) have been previously paid for multiple years, and since Dreamhost offers free web hosting to certified nonprofit organizations.

Respectfully Submitted,
Ian Beatty
Website Committee Chair

Past Chairs of the Berkshire Chapter

1929-30	Edward K Allen	1965-66	Garrison Householder
1931	Joseph F Partenheimer	1967-68	Charles L Kirkpatrick
1932	Edwin W Gantt	1969-70	Norman E Aubrey
1933	Donald E Temple	1971-72	Forrest E House
1934	Howard M Buffinton	1973-74	Margaret Rose
1935	Malcolm B Ross	1975-76	William T Cushwa
1936	Donald McClench	1977-78	Walter L Haynes
1936-37	John Dickson	1979-80	John D Shuttleworth
1938	Horace E Allen	1981-82	Kathryn E Burnett
1939	William K Buxton	1983-84	S Alberta Stutsman
1940	Eugene E Durst	1985	John Pritchard
1941	Maynard O Saunders	1986	Florence Mertz
1942-43	Parke W Farrar	1986-87	Edward N Lewis
1944-45	Warner B Sturtevant	1988-89	Paul Evans
1946-47	Carl O Chauncy	1990-91	Sue Lewis
1948-49	Harold T Daugherty	1992	Jean Armitage
1950	Heinz J Sherbow	1993	William Kopel
1951-52	Ellis H Pritchard	1994-95	Thomas J Leary
1953-54	Byron Chauncy	1996-97	Christopher J Ryan
1955-56	George W Alderman	1998-99	Kathryn B Leary
1957-58	John A Saunders	2000-01	Thomas Senuta
1959-60	Sidney F Law	2002-04	Gary L Forish
1961-62	Phyllis M Sears	2005-06	Rob Robertson
1963-64	Edith M Libby		

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