



AMC BERKSHIRE CHAPTER NEWS & EVENTS

BERKSHIRE EXCHANGE

FROM *the* CHAIR

Excitement Builds

This past winter and spring saw a great deal of volunteer effort from many chapter members. The chapter has reached a high point, where success in many areas has come to fruition. These accomplishments have gone largely unrecognized. As we embark upon our summer vacations, hikes, and other outdoor activities, we should take a moment to thank all of the volunteers who have worked so hard to accomplish so much in this past year.

We can also look forward to exciting events and AMC functions this Fall. The Appalachian Trail Committee of the Berkshire Chapter, Appalachian Mountain Club, Appalachian Trail Conference, Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management, and National Park Service (NPS) will be signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that has been in draft form for many years. This memorandum describes the specific working relationships among the parties that will lead to a well-managed and well-maintained trail.

The Appalachian Trail was completed in 1937 and, with the passage of the National Trails System Act in 1968, was designated a National Scenic Trail. The NPS completed a Comprehensive Plan for the Appalachian Trail in 1981 that established the framework for a unique partnership arrangement between public and private groups. The Comprehensive Plan is supplemented by local management plans, which provide specific policy and program direction for each section of the Appalachian Trail, and by Memorandums of Understanding, which spell out the roles and responsibilities of each management partner.

In April 1998, Chapter Chair Kathryn Leary signed an MOU for the 90.2 miles of the AT that the Berkshire Chapter manages. This coming fall a celebration will take place as the final article is signed, thus creating a management tool for each of the parties.

On another subject, Noble View has embarked on its building program. In May, a foundation was blasted into rock for the Double Cottage updates. Now the framing, roofing, and sheetrock work is underway. The Noble View Committee has been hard at work completing a 200-page Long Range Plan. This plan has received the highest acclaim to date from the AMC Facilities Committee and the staff.

During the summer and into the fall Noble View will offer many new programs and workshops. Please visit, volunteer, and sign up for a volunteer day or a program. Noble View is the local AMC activity, education, and lodging facility in the Berkshires.

One of the high points each spring is the AMC Mountain Leadership School in the White Mountains. This year the chapter has signed up three candidates for the five days of intensive training in New Hampshire, two of them from the Young Members Committee. All of these volunteers have taken time out from their jobs and their personal lives for this training.

The Young Members had their first organizational meeting this spring. Many members have stepped forward for leadership training and as activity leaders. This group has had an amazing start. After the first meeting, a list-serve was formed for communication. The group has planned eight activities for the months of June, July, and August. These Young Members will be present as activity leaders at the Fall Gathering this October.

The AMC club-wide Fall Gathering, October 25-26—hosted by the Berkshire Chapter—will be the highlight of the year. Excitement leading to this event is rising. Many activities are planned for Saturday and Sunday. The highlight of Saturday will be the speaker programs and the evening's music. Please be sure to attend this event, as the chapter is host only every six years.

October will be filled with excitement with the Appalachian Trail MOU celebration and the Fall Gathering. Leave the dates open on your calendar and join in the festivities with other members. Be sure to review this issue of the *Exchange* as well as the Fall issue for more detail on the events. I do not want you to miss the excitement.

The finale will be the Chapter's Annual Banquet on November 1. A dinner, a guest speaker with an outstanding show, and the election of officers will close the chapter books for the year.

As I am finishing up my second year as Chair, the chapter is seeking members to step forward as Chair and Vice Chair for 2004 and 2005. If this should appeal to you and you want to be on the front lines of the excitement for 2004, when the chapter celebrates its 75th anniversary, please call for further details. The chapter by-laws state that a member is elected for only one 2-year term as chair. The challenge is yours.

Respectfully,
Gary Forish
Berkshire Chapter Chair

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Volunteer Opportunities!

General Opportunities

- Appalachian Trail work crews
- Education Workshop Coordinator, Program Director, and leaders
- Noble View volunteers
- Noble View trail maintainers
- Noble View work party leaders/co-leaders
- Skilled & unskilled construction craftsmen for Noble View
- Trail sign makers
- Grant writers

Committees

- Berkshire Chapter Chair
- Berkshire Chapter Vice Chair
- Leadership Training and Education Coordinator Chair
- Monthly outing coordinators and event leaders
- Conservation Committee members
- Club-wide Fall Meeting Committee for 2003 – hosted by the chapter

Join with other like-minded members in making your Berkshire Chapter a **MODEL Chapter**. Contact: Gary L. Forish, Berkshire Chapter Chair, at 413-562-6792 or email forgary@attbi.com.

FROM *the* EDITOR



I WANT
YOUR
PHOTOS!
for the
BERKSHIRE
EXCHANGE

If you've got any Berkshire/Pioneer Valley outdoor photos that you think would look nice in the *Exchange*, please send high-resolution **digital files** (on a floppy disk, Zip100 or CD-ROM), or color or black-and-white **glossy prints** (no larger than 8"x10"), to the *Berkshire Exchange*, 29 Atwater Street, Westfield, MA 01085. Be sure to include all contact information, a brief description of each photo, and the name(s) of the photographer(s). If you would like items returned to you, please include an SASE with adequate postage.

I've got a few western Massachusetts photos in my own collection. But as Berkshire Chapter members, the *Exchange* is **your** newsletter, and therefore should reflect **your** experiences.

Many thanks,

Jon Hanauer



Berkshire Chapter Executive Committee

• 2003 •

Chapter Officers

Chairman: Gary Forish
Vice Chair: vacant
Treasurer: Kevin Costa
Secretary: Ann Wood

Committee Chairs

AT Chairman: Cosmo Catalano
Berkshire County Rep.:
Vicky Singer
Canoe & Kayak Committee:
Charlie Camp
Computer & Website Committee:
Ian Beatty
Conservation Committee:
Cinda H. Jones
Leadership Training: vacant
Membership Committee:
John Berndtson
Mountaineering Committee:
Kevin Costa & Jim VanNatta
Noble View Committee: Elvery Veal
Nominating Committee: Chris Ryan
Outings Committee:
Sabine Dietrich
Programs: June Hoerle
Special Events: Andrea Kallfa
Trails: Pat Fletcher
Regional Director: Norm Sims
SE Trails Office: Ted Weber

BERKSHIRE EXCHANGE

– June 2003 –

Editor: Jon Hanauer
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Charlie Camp, Cosmo Catalano,
Sabine Dietrich, Gary Dolgoff,
June Hoerle, Gloria LaFlamme,
Helen Symons, Elvery Veal

Title photo:



Tree on Mt. Greylock,
by Amy Gallagher

Contact information on all
Executive Committee members can
be found in *AMC Outdoors* and
www.amcberkshire.org.

The Kirkpatrick Clan—An Appreciation

Donald Kirkpatrick, honored for his more than 75 years of service at the AMC Berkshire Chapter Annual Meeting in 2002, passed on in March 2003. He leaves behind a long and active history with the Club; many memories shared by family, friends, and colleagues; and a lasting legacy for our AMC membership.

Donald came from a family whose involvement with the AMC spanned several generations and more than 80 years. His parents, Maude and Arthur, first joined the AMC in the 1920s. It was a different era then, when the Club sponsored gala week-long activities such as an annual winter trip to Jackson, NH. Maude and Arthur were regular participants on these trips, remembers their oldest son Charles. They boarded a special train in Boston, with an orchestra aboard, and went to Glen, NH where they took over the Eagle Mountain House in nearby Jackson for a week of night-dancing and all sorts of special events.

In 1925, the Kirkpatricks brought their four children—Priscilla, Gordon, Charles, and Donald—into the Club. At the time, two letters of recommendation were required for each prospective member. “As I heard the story,” remembers Charles, “our sponsors wrote recommending all four children in the same letter, causing the membership people to scratch their heads before approving us en bloc. However, we made it.”

And made it they did. Both Donald and Charles were actively involved in the AMC throughout their lives—and for Charles it still goes on. When they were young, the family spent summers at Cold River Camp and Echo Lake where the brothers waited on tables and worked in the Echo Lake kitchen. The experience was an early training ground for Donald, who later volunteered his kitchen expertise to work as a mess cook for his Army outfit during World War II. It also initiated Charles into a life-long relationship with Echo Lake and service to the Berkshire Chapter.

The Kirkpatricks also formed ties to Noble View in Russell, MA. When Donald and Charles were raising their own families, they made Noble View their “summer home.” Donald came in from Pittsfield and Charles from South Hadley. Charles’ daughter,

Janice, who currently lives near Danbury, CT, has fond memories of flying kites in the field between the cottages and the farmhouse. For many years after, Charles participated in the development of Noble View and helped with the Camp’s transition from kerosene to gas lights in the 1960s.

While living in South Hadley for more than 50 years, Charles also pursued his affiliation with Echo Lake and love of the outdoors through service to the Berkshire Chapter. He served on Echo Lake’s Camp Committee, becoming its chair for two sessions in the 1950s and 1960s. He also took a turn on several other Chapter committees and became the Chapter Chair in 1967-68. With an eye on the Club’s future leadership, Charles was one of the first to recognize the importance of younger members and was instrumental in exploring ways to attract young adults in their 20s and 30s and sustain their involvement.

Now 91 and living in Florida and New Hampshire, Charles still values his Club connections. In September 2002, he co-led the Club’s biennial excursion to Mount Desert Island, an excursion he himself started and has kept running since the early 1960s. This September, he and his wife, Joan, are looking forward to the annual AMC Fall Hiking Week.

“To me, there’s nothing like the AMC,” said Charles, noting that it has been a great resource for him throughout his life and continues to be for younger members of the Kirkpatrick family. Charles’ sons, Richard and Dana, carry on the AMC family traditions in the greater Boston area as does his grandson, Jeffrey Galloway, 34, from his home base in Winsted, CT.

The AMC—and particularly the Berkshire Chapter—greatly appreciates the legacy of the Kirkpatrick family. “They were the backbone of the early years,” said Gary Forish, AMC Berkshire Chapter Chair. “The present AMC has a legacy to carry on thanks to the strong men like Donald and Charles Kirkpatrick who gave their time, commitment, and talents to create the solid foundation that serves us so well today. Their spirit will be with us for generations to come.”

Chapter Trail Initiatives

The chapter is developing a plan to add 100 miles of trails to the current trail base. This plan will be in line with the Vision 2010 for the club to engage the membership in having 2000 miles of trails under AMC management. We are fortunate to have the open space available for recreation. Scenic and unique areas abound in Western Massachusetts that are accessible only by trails through ecologically sensitive areas.

An exciting major trail/riverway opportunity exists with the Westfield River watershed Community. A partnership has formed including the Trustees of Reservations, Nature Conservancy, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, Commonwealth of Massachusetts, National Park Service, Westfield River Watershed Association and nine towns in the upper watershed area.

In 1993, the upper reaches of the Westfield River were designated as a National Wild and Scenic River. The area is one of the largest roadless wild spaces remaining in Massachusetts, and its features include historic villages, unique geological features, rare and endangered species, and bio-diverse habitats. A trail network for four-season use is being developed. You still have the opportunity to become part of the excitement.

It’s also not too late to be a partner on the Tully Trail. This is

an 18-mile trail loop connecting several significant scenic areas within the North Quabbin area. The management partners are Trustees of Reservations, Mount Grace Land Conservation Fund, and Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection. This remarkable area includes 55,000 acres of open space being protected through a bioserve concept, containing diverse habitats, unfragmented forests, exceptional biological areas, and premier outdoor recreation potential.

A much smaller area bordering the towns of Granville, Southwick, and Westfield, Drake Mountain, has a trail in the planning stages. The Sodom-Drake Trail will have many outstanding viewpoints on the ridgeline. It will cross a diverse habitat with many rare and endangered species. A trail linking up with Noble View could be added.

The chapter has been challenged to collaborate on these trail opportunities. The challenge goes to the chapter membership to become involved on these ground floor opportunities. You can work with many exciting people in achieving the Club’s mission by taking on the stewardship of a trail. It is a privilege and an important responsibility that the trails be maintained properly.

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2003 Deerfield River Festival

Slated for August 2-3

Come out and join us for a weekend of great paddling, exciting competitions, live entertainment, and an infamous chicken barbecue. The 2003 Deerfield River Festival, hosted by American Whitewater, is scheduled for Aug 2-3, on Rt. 2 in Charlemont, MA.

The event, started in 1994 by American Whitewater and F.L.O.W., celebrates the successful dam relicensing process that took place in 1993 in partnership with AMC.

The Festival focuses on bringing people to the area to enjoy a weekend of outdoor activities, while showcasing whitewater paddlesports and raising funds and membership for American Whitewater. The main activities take place on Saturday afternoon/evening and provide entertainment for both paddlesport and non-paddlesport enthusiasts young and old.

The Festival site will be bustling with activity and will include a whitewater marketplace, live entertainment, and a silent auction with awesome outdoor gear. The Deerfield River Festival is an important fundraiser for American Whitewater and is one of the Berkshire Chapter's premiere events. **Do not forget to visit the AMC table and say hello.**

All proceeds from the festival support American Whitewater's conservation and access work throughout the Northeast.

AT Maintainers needed

The AT Committee has four maintaining positions open in Berkshire County:

- Notch Rd. to Mt. Greylock Summit (3+ miles, fairly rugged terrain).
- Outlook Ave. to Furnace Hill Rd. (2+ miles, Trail Signboard in town, mostly open fields with some woods).
- Rt. 23 to Lake Buel Rd. (1+ miles, moderate to easy terrain, lots of brush, some open woods, Trail Signboard at parking area).
- Summit of Mt. Everett to Summit of Mt. Race (Less than 2 miles, rugged terrain, long access route).

Volunteers interested in taking on these sections or who would like more info should contact the AT Committee Chair, Cosmo Catalano, 413-597-2590 (days), or ccatalan@williams.edu, or visit the Committee web page at:

<http://friends.backcountry.net/MassAT/GetInvolved.html>.

Leaders! Leaders! Leaders!

Attention Outings Leaders!

As the almost brand spankin' new Outings Committee Chair, I'd like to meet everyone who has led outings for the AMC Berkshire Chapter, along with those who would like to try it! We can talk about the new Leadership Guidelines and any issues or concerns you may have about that or anything else. I'd like to hear suggestions for future directions, procedures, and fun events. I'm reserving Friday night, September 19, for this. I'm open to the location and would suggest either Noble View or the Friendly's in Westfield or Greenfield. Please call me to discuss and vote for your preferred place—even if it's not on the list. See you then! Sabine Dietrich, Outings Committee Chair, 413-949-3914, pioneerplanner1@yahoo.com.

Hike Leaders wanted for
Appalachian Trail Day

Fourteen different hikes will be offered on AT Day, Saturday, Oct. 4, 2003, followed by a dinner in Pittsfield. Several different levels of hiking are available, including one or two shorter hikes

that start out in the early afternoon. Any interested leaders can contact Cosmo Catalano, Massachusetts Appalachian Trail Committee, 413-458-5349, ccatalano@williams.edu, or Sabine Dietrich, Outings Committee Chair, 413-949-3914, pioneerplanner1@yahoo.com.

Singles group formed to enjoy common interests—volunteers needed

The singles group of the Berkshire AMC, "Singles and Sociables," is off and running. The group had their first organizational meeting at the Peking Garden in March. About 32 people from all over western Massachusetts attended. Many of them were new to the AMC or were interested in becoming members. They enthusiastically agreed that finding a way to share common interests and activities was needed. On May 18 the group followed up with a brunch at Noble View, a location which many had never visited before.

Helen Symons and Gary Dolgoff have volunteered to co-chair this new group. They can use your help! For openers, we must gather together **hike leaders** and **co-leaders**. The group is open to events on the 'social side,' as well as hike-leads, and perhaps a hike coupled with a museum visit, or movie, etc. It feels good to volunteer to lead, and the club appreciates it! We will focus on our main activity, which is hiking, but will also hold more social events, etc., to broaden our horizons. If you would like to suggest further activities or be on the e-mail list, please call Gary at 413-584-8564 or Helen at 413-268-8322.

Two young women to attend AMC Teen Wilderness Adventures program

The Berkshire Chapter has the honor of sending two young women to the AMC Teen Wilderness Adventures program this summer. Leah Visconti, 14, from Ludlow, and Stephanie Klebes, 16, from Feeding Hills, will participate in the program's eight-day canoe and rock climb, July 25 to August 1.

"The program is a great way to encourage and nurture the youth of today—and help them mature into the leaders of tomorrow," said Chairperson Gary Forish. "Both young women see this program as a great opportunity for accomplishing goals—and having fun."

Leah, who has always loved the outdoors, says Teen Wilderness Adventures was just what she was looking for. "From this experience I hope to become a stronger and more athletic person all around. I also wish to learn more about the environment. I have already learned a lot, but I'm always wanting to learn more!" she said.

Leah also hopes the trip will enhance her abilities so she can become part of the new generation of hikers and explorers. "Most of all I hope to have a lot of fun! Thank you for inviting me to this once-in-a-lifetime exploration."

Stephanie also has set goals for her summer adventure. "I hope to overcome my fear of heights," Stephanie said. "I have always wanted to try rock climbing and now I have the chance. I also want to improve my canoeing skills," she said, and is looking forward to learning all she can from the program's guides. "I hope to meet many new people with similar interests and make many new friends," she added.

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AMC

Fall Gathering

Get-A-Way

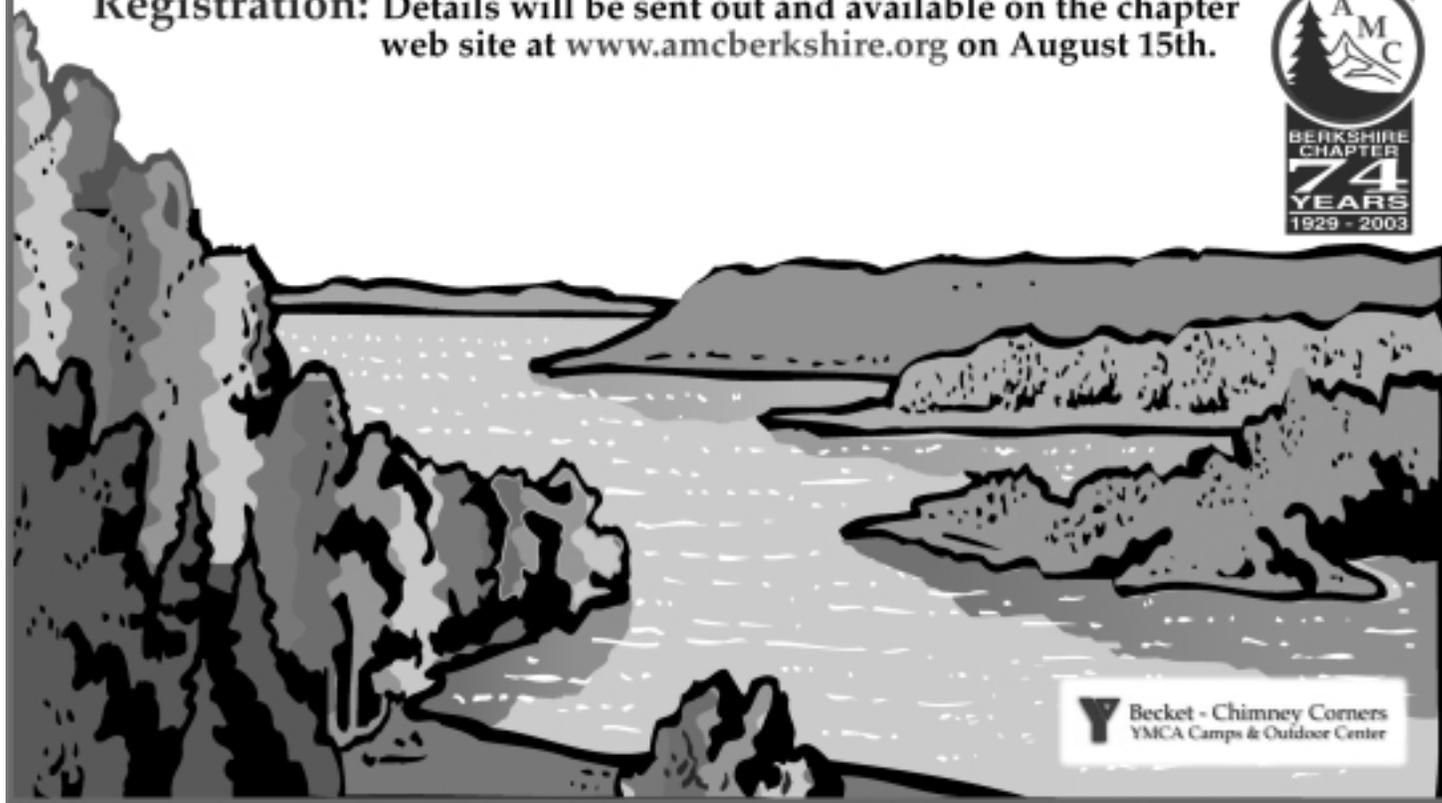
October 25 and 26, 2003

Hosted by the Berkshire Chapter

- In the scenic center of the Berkshires
- Conference, networking, planning and play
- Saturday evening country dancing to live music
- Beautiful fall color • Hiking • Biking • Canoeing
- Close to Lenox & Stockbridge cultural events and crafts
- Easily accessible from the Massachusetts Turnpike

Location: Becket-Chimney Corners YMCA Outdoor Center, Becket, MA.

Registration: Details will be sent out and available on the chapter web site at www.amcberkshire.org on August 15th.



 Becket - Chimney Corners
YMCA Camps & Outdoor Center

Berkshire Fall Gathering

A C T I V I T I E S

Goose Pond AT Hike – Hike to the Goose Pond shelter on the AT. This scenic location includes 684 acres surrounding Upper Goose Pond, one of the last undeveloped bodies of water in Berkshire County. This parcel was transferred to the National Park Service in July 1982 by the Mohhekenuck Club (trout fishing club) and a contribution made to the AMC Berkshire Chapter AT Committee as a management fund. It is one of two volunteer-managed facilities of the Berkshire Chapter.

Finerty Pond AT Hike – Hike in from Route 23 over Becket Mountain and Walling Mountain to Finerty Pond. View recent beaver activity at this glacial pond.

Hike to the Keystone Bridges – Explore these area marvels. The 10 dry-laid arches, built in 1839-40, are considered one of America's wonders. They are the first keystone bridges built for railroad use. The spans are laid over the Westfield River, with the tracks following the river to obtain the lowest altitude crossing of the Berkshire Hills, at a height of 1,458 feet. It was the highest railroad in the world at that time. The engineer was Major George Washington Whistler (Whistler's father). The cuts were made with pick and shovel.

Race Mountain Hike – Hike up Race Brook Trail along Race Brook with five cascading waterfalls, one nearly 100 ft. high, along the AT to Race Mountain (2,400') to give us a 3-state view and many breathtaking vistas. Descend through Sages Ravine to the Paradise Lane Trail and over the state line into Connecticut.

Sunday Visit to Noble View – As in 1931, when the Berkshire Chapter first purchased the property, the Club membership is invited to come, inspect, and enjoy their estate. Day hiking abounds with many scenic vistas available for a moment of meditation. Sit on the porch of the newly renovated Double Cottage and gaze across the miles, taking in the view as the "Noble" men and women have done in years past.

Local Rock Climbing – The Mountaineering Committee of the Berkshire Chapter invite all interested to enjoy a day of top rope climbing at Chapel Falls in Ashfield, a nice local crag. We will set up climbs of various levels of difficulty. Beginners are welcome. No equipment is required, but bring it if you have it.

Chimney Corners Climbing Wall – Join the Berkshire Chapter Young Members for a day of climbing on a 55-foot wall with different height platform areas on site. Includes a 2-person element for belay cooperative activity. Rope course will accommodate various skill levels from beginner to advanced.

Saturday Flat Water Paddle on the Housatonic – From Ashley Falls just above the Connecticut line to Falls Village. Suitable for canoe or sea kayaks. This is a favorite trip of Chapter members.

Sunday Flat Water Paddle on the Housatonic – A leisurely paddle through a scenic river mud plain area with possible wild life viewing in the Lenox area. Suitable for canoe or sea kayaks. After paddling, enjoy the artists and artisans in Lenox.

White Water Paddle, Class II-IV – Paddle the Farmington River at Otis on Route 8. This is a favorite location and the only wild water this time of year. Put in on Route 8 in Tolland at the State Forest Bridge. The run consists of continuing turbulence and maneuvering, with the toughest rapids along the first two miles. Just above New Boston is the area of two drops, the second featuring notorious crosscurrents known as the corkscrew.

500 Million Years of Geohistory in the Connecticut River Valley – Presenting a multimedia program of animations, dinosaurs, rift valleys, drifting continents, armored mud balls, and ice ages, your host, geologist-educator Professor Richard Little, takes you on a geological tour of amazing events in the last 500 million years of western New England's exciting geological heritage. Professor Little shows why the Connecticut River valley is the best place to study geology in the world.

A Nature Photographer's Year in New England: A Slide Presentation – David Middleton is a full-time professional nature photographer, writer and naturalist. He photographs whatever he finds attractive, which includes subjects as disparate as harbors, wildflower meadows, large mammals, small birds, forests, quaint villages, indigenous markets and mountain streams. More than an outdoor photographer and naturalist, David is a gifted and enthusiastic teacher who truly enjoys sharing his experiences and expertise.

Evening Entertainment of Song and Dance – Rani Arbo & daisy mayhem is a harmonious, melodious, delicious string band with deep grooves and spine-chilling vocals. With fiddle, guitar and bass, and Arbo's soaring, gymnastic alto and great melodies, this band mines American musical idioms in the service of a delightful and surprising gumbo. "Neo old-timey with cosmopolitan splashes of contemporary pop and jazz!" proclaims the Boston Globe.

Noble View Project Moves into High Gear

Encouraged by approvals from AMC management and its Facilities Committee, the Noble View Committee and other volunteers have launched a major initiative aimed at upgrading the property that has become known as “the jewel of the AMC’s Berkshire Chapter.”

Led by Chapter Chair Gary Forish, a small army of volunteers—AMC members and independent contractors who have agreed to volunteer time and materials—have been hard at work rebuilding the double cottage. The project, necessitated by serious code violations, has a goal as ambitious as the project itself: reopening the double cottage by July 1.

The rebuilding process began officially with the development of the Noble View Long-Range Plan, which was submitted to AMC leadership in April. The staged plan outlines a schedule for upgrading the facility through the year 2005, thus achieving the vision of creating a world-class natural retreat—at a breathtaking, mountaintop location—that provides opportunities for hiking, whitewater kayaking, cross-country skiing and nature study. The vision includes collaborating with other conservation and land preservation organizations to provide year-round educational and conservation programs.

AMC management and the Facilities Committee validated the vision in a meeting on April 23 with Noble View Committee members. The Facilities Committee:

- Approved the plan for the double cottage, at a cost not to exceed \$25,000;
- Authorized the additional expenditure of \$16,000 for additional design and development work;
- Approved the scope of work for the overall project.

Work began in earnest immediately following the meeting, with excavation for the Double Cottage’s new foundation and stripping of interior walls. Approximately 20 students from the Westover Job Corps Center in Chicopee have participated in spring clean-up activities, and AMC volunteers have performed trail maintenance.

Already, the project has generated an enthusiasm that is becoming contagious and was exhibited by participants in a leadership training program on May 4. “The enthusiasm was very affirming,” said Noble View Committee member Donna Crabtree. “I felt a real commitment to Noble View!”

If you haven’t visited the facility lately, make it a point to see for yourself. Visitors are welcome. Come have a look around or check our scheduled activities. Let us know if you’re available to volunteer—or just provide feedback.

Elvery Veal
Noble View Chair
413-665-3010

Noble View Workshops & Programs

A Rare Look at Our New England Habitats and Animals
July 23; 6-9 pm

Wildlife researcher, author, and photographer John Foster will present a talk and slide show highlighting moose, black bear, and fisher cat in New England. He will also talk about unique local habitat types and plants and animals that live there. Question and answer period to follow. His presentations are a tour of knowledge and entertainment, not to be missed. This presentation is also an introduction to the new Noble View Field Studies course also led by Foster (See below). Registration FEE: \$25.00 includes refreshments. For more information or to register, call Michael Ripa, 413-572-4501.

Noble View Field Studies Course
Aug. 3, Aug. 24, Sept. 7, Sept. 13, & Sept. 28; 9-1 pm

The dictionary defines a naturalist as someone who studies nature by direct observation. This course is designed to introduce you to the skills and information needed to begin that journey.

Noble View Field Studies is a 5-part course that will help you understand the basics of ecology, botany, and mammal study. Using the extraordinary habitats of the Noble View property, we will study forest ecology, botany, fungi, the larger New England mammals, introductory forestry, and stream ecology. We will also develop observational skills with a focus on how to read and understand the many signs and clues of the environment, from studying animal tracks and signs, to analyzing the type of indicator species that inhabit an area. The course is designed to allow students to learn at their own pace and is suitable for beginners and the more advanced. The class will meet five times from July to September at the Noble View AMC retreat property and will feature a mixture of field lectures with examination of natural artifacts and exploratory hikes.

The instructor, John Foster, has taught nature programs throughout New England and conducts wildlife research and staff training for conservation organizations. He is known for his witty, relaxed teaching style, and deep understanding of nature. He is a Commonwealth Awards nominee for excellence and leadership as a naturalist as well as an author and the founder of the New England Naturalist Training Center, based in Northfield, MA. Registration FEE: \$350.00 payable in two equal payments. For more information or to register, call Michael Ripa, 413-572-4501.

Beginner Backpacking
Sept. 20 -21

Noble View backpacking Level I & II is part of a continuing series of our beginner backpack offerings. Experience the woods at

night and sleep under the stars. Easy hiking. If you've always wanted to try backpacking but were not sure how or do not have the equipment, come join us. Equipment, including packs, sleeping bags, and tents, is available for a nominal fee. Group food preparation and Leave No Trace principles will be emphasized. FEE: \$60.00 includes food and supplies. For more information or to register, call Michael Ripa, 413-572-4501.

Creative Nature Writing Workshop

Sept. 27; 9:30 am - 3:30 pm

Honor what delights you about the outdoors by writing about the world of nature. A morning hike provides inspiration for an informal afternoon writing workshop. The hike will take us down Pitcher Brook Trail and return past long-abandoned stone farmhouse foundations. We will view nature as it begins its early preparation for the long winter ahead. View a babbling brook, ferns as they go to spore, and the trees dropping nuts for the animals to harvest. The afternoon's workshop will take place at the Double Cottage, where you can gaze across the valley below for further inspiration. Writer and NPR Commentator Anna Viadero will lead the workshop, which will enable writers of all abilities to reflect on the "solitary places, where we taste the pleasures of believing what we see as boundless, as we wish our souls to be" (Percy Bysshe Shelley). Anna will offer writing ideas to help you shape and preserve your connections to the natural world on paper. Warm-up, longer writing time, and reading for supportive critique will be included. Bring paper and pen. Registration FEE: \$25.00 includes refreshments. For more information or to register, call Michael Ripa, 413-572-4501.

Creative Nature Writing Workshop

Oct. 18; 9:30 am - 3:30 pm

Hike and enjoy the final days of the foliage season and gain inspiration for an afternoon writing workshop. A trek will lead us down long-forgotten County Road. We will pass old stone farmhouse foundations and stop at several lookouts over the valley. The destination will be a brick kiln that was used for gunpowder manufacturing or possibly for producing heating fuel for the well-to-do. Let your thoughts wander as you return to Noble View. The afternoon's workshop will take place at the Double Cottage with its inspirational view of the valley below. Leading the workshop will be writer and NPR Commentator Anna Viadero, who encourages writers of all abilities to reflect on the "solitary places, where we taste the pleasures of believing what we see as boundless, as we wish our souls to be" (Percy Bysshe Shelley). Anna will offer writing ideas to help you shape and preserve your connections to the natural world on paper. Warm-up, longer writing time, and reading for supportive critique will be included. Bring paper and pen. Registration FEE: \$25.00 includes refreshments. For more information or to register, call Michael Ripa, 413-572-4501.

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SOLO Wilderness First Aid

Nov. 15 - 16

Standard first aid practices are generally based on the assumption that help will arrive shortly, and that the patient will be out of your hands and at the hospital in under an hour. Wilderness First Aid training prepares you for the medical situation that arises when there is no ambulance, no roof or walls to provide shelter from the elements, supplies are few, the wait for help is unknown and moving the patient a short distance might take hours. The SOLO Wilderness First Aid course is an intense yet fun journey through the world of wilderness emergency care and is recommended for all outdoors people. It covers the full range of situations, from scrapes and blisters to life-threatening emergencies. In addition to wilderness medical care, it teaches accident scene management and effective communication with an outside world that may be days away. While much of the material is standard emergency care information, the backcountry emphasis on long-term care and evacuation complications makes this course unique. Registration FEE: \$140.00 includes lodging. For more information or to register, call Michael Ripa, 413-572-4501.

Leave No Trace

Nov. 22; 9:00 am - 5:00 pm

Learn how to enjoy the outdoors while protecting the land you love. The Leave No Trace course is designed for people with an interest in outdoor recreation and a desire to protect wilderness resources. It emphasizes low-impact camping skills, wildland ethics, and teaching techniques. As our presence in the wildlands increases, so does the evidence of our visits, resulting in such problems as water pollution, displaced wildlife, trampled vegetation, and eroded soil. To help us create harmony between the land and ourselves, the national Leave No Trace program offers seven easy principles that can offset our impact and make responsible recreation an ingrained part of our outdoor experience. These principles, coupled with a respectful attitude and awareness, contribute to the development of "wildland ethics," which recognize the intrinsic value of wildlands and our need to protect them. Registration FEE: \$35.00 includes refreshments. For more information or to register, call Michael Ripa, 413-572-4501.

THE DOUBLE BLAZE

Chapter 5: Preserving the AT Experience

by Cosmo Catalano, Appalachian Trail Chair

Sometime this summer come on out to my neck of the woods (the real “western” Massachusetts). Take a hike on the AT. Stop at a shelter or trailhead and ask those who come along to tell you what the “AT Experience” is. I have no doubt you will get a wide number of answers, varying from the rhapsodic to the incomprehensible. Just how does one define something as intangible as one’s experience in the outdoors?

Despite the different responses, I think we can all come to some similar conclusions about what makes a positive outdoor experience. It might include interesting geological features, unique or undisturbed habitats, an absence of the trappings and reminders of “civilization,” or a trail that is appropriate to the terrain it crosses. Others might add that the experience is also highly dependent upon one’s hiking companions or people one might meet on the trail. Here in New England at least, we also often want a trail that “takes us someplace”—to a summit, waterfall, glen, or other destination.

As we hike, we don’t usually think about these qualities—unless something comes along to disturb them. Do we need to define this experience on the AT? Thirty years ago, when the Federal government decided to purchase land to protect the AT, the enabling legislation couldn’t just say, “buy the land that surrounds the AT.” The government needed to know about the AT: whether the Trail was in its optimum location, how much land was needed, and where the land lay. So here is some really great prose from “Definition and Purpose of the AT” that was worked out between the National Park Service, Appalachian Trail Conference, and the maintaining clubs. “The Appalachian Trail is a way, continuous from Maine to Georgia, for travel on foot through the wild, scenic, wooded, pastoral, and culturally significant lands of the Appalachian Mountains. It is a means of sojourning among these lands, such that visitors may experience them by their own unaided efforts.”

So here we have the official description of what the AT encompasses: It describes the landscape (wild, scenic, wooded, pastoral), the means of visiting these lands (own unaided sojourning), and the method (continuous foot travel). All the efforts of the managing partners are directed toward establishing and preserving this ideal.

The 89 miles of Trail in Massachusetts that the Berkshire Chapter’s AT Committee is responsible for represents a little more than 4% of the Trail’s total mileage. And, because of the stated description of the AT’s purpose and the trail-wide effort that supports it, the AT experience in Massachusetts is similar to that in most other states. Certainly there are regional differences, and the terrain and ecologies along the Trail vary, but the experience is remarkably consistent from Springer to Katahdin.

At a recent ATC meeting, participants were asked to define the “ideal” AT experience ten years into the future. Comments were wide ranging, but words like “Primitive,” “Solitude,” “Quiet,” “Natural,” “Continuous,” “Challenging,” “Good Views,” and “Safe” (from other humans) were frequently used.



Some of these desired attributes are achieved by routing the trail onto appropriate lands and providing a wide corridor of protected property. Since nearly 100% of trail corridor lands are now legally protected against inappropriate use, I think the prospects are good for retaining and improving the attributes we can physically manage. We are finding, however, that air pollution and unwanted sound are becoming an increasing threat and have no respect for boundary lines.

Some change is beyond our direct control.

There was a time when Chestnut trees dominated much of the woods the Trail passes through. There will probably be a time in the future when the Hemlock that characterize so much of the AT in our state will no longer exist. Elements such as these are pretty much beyond our ability to manage. However, we can make choices and efforts to preserve the physical Trail. Our actions can range from cleaning waterbars keeping the Trail from eroding, to vigorously patrolling the land the AT traverses and reporting any misuse. We can also act to mitigate adverse regional effects by using fewer fossil fuels in our everyday activities.

Other attributes of the Trail listed at our recent meeting are not directly a part of the physical space through which the Trail moves. They are connected directly to the personal conduct of people using the Trail. I’m talking about what teachers of my generation called “Department.” I know you are reading this and saying, “it’s not me, it’s those other idiots out there.” Pause a minute and reflect on your last two or three hikes:

- Did you plan your route and bring appropriate clothing and equipment?
- Were there less than 10 of you, including leaders?
- Did your group yield to oncoming hikers?
- Did you carpool to and from the trailhead?
- Were you quiet on the trail and in camp?
- Did you camp or take breaks on durable or already disturbed surfaces?
- Did you build a fire?
- Did you burn your trash in the fire ring?
- Did you put anything into the privy that you didn’t eat or drink first (other than toilet paper)?

I’d like to believe, readers, that you truthfully answered “yes” to the first six and “no” to the last three. Why is this so important? Any of you who have hiked on “our” AT know large numbers of people use it. Trail-wide the estimated numbers are in the millions. Even in unpleasant conditions it is rare not to meet at least another hiker or two every day—and many more when the weather is benign. Hikers can have the greatest negative impact on the Trail, and it’s not just the physical results of thousands of tramping feet, hundreds of tents and sleeping pads, and uncounted gallons of human waste, either. The idea of sojourning in wild and scenic lands is put to the test when one is regularly confronted with one’s fellow human beings and their actions. Even if you are alone on the trail, your actions will affect the experience

continued from previous page

of others who come after you.

A couple of years ago the ATC decided to adopt "Leave No Trace" (LNT) as an official policy of trail use and personal conduct. LNT is a series of principles to guide, inform and inspire responsible outdoor use. The non-profit Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics has developed these principles and offers courses to outdoor users, trip leaders, and LNT trainers. (See information on Leave No Trace course at Noble View, page 8.)

There are seven basic principles that go a bit beyond the "Leave nothing but footprints, take nothing but pictures" and the "Carry in, carry out" messages we are used to hearing. Although we seem to be beset with an ever increasing proliferation of rules and regulations for backcountry use, the ones developed by the LNT folks make a good deal of sense, and I encourage you to take them to heart:

- Plan Ahead and Prepare
- Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces
- Dispose of Waste Properly
- Leave What You Find
- Minimize Campfire Impacts

Readers...

You may have noticed that this episode is a bit more rambling than previous ones. Not that I couldn't talk about the AT for any number of pages, but I'm finding it difficult to come up with one-topic ideas. So send in your suggestions or questions to me either through the AT Committee web page, or email to appalachiantrail@amcberkshire.org or ccatalan@williams.edu. I look forward to your participation.

Teen Wilderness Adventures, *continued from page 4*

Stephanie's father, John, thanked the chapter for all our help in making it possible for his daughter to attend. "Stephanie is a very active hiker and camper and excels at new challenges. This is an excellent opportunity to encourage her enthusiasm and help her gain the leadership and confidence skills that will serve her well as a maturing young adult."

Winding River Land Trust helping to protect local trails and future additions

Winding River Land Conservancy, Inc., founded just five short years ago, is creating an impressive track record in the area of land protection. The mission of the Conservancy is to "Preserve, Conserve, and Protect the natural character of Westfield and Surrounding Communities for present and future generations."

Perhaps the most exciting land project for AMC members is the recent anonymous gift of 10 acres of land on East Mountain in West Springfield. The Metacomet-Monadnock Trail traverses this property. We are very grateful to the donors for their foresight in protecting this valuable resource for future generations.

The Loupinski property—66 acres located in the richest amphibian area in the Commonwealth, on Honey Pot Road—was a real challenge. A total of \$675,000 was raised through a true cooperative effort. The Sodom-Drake Mountain Greenway Trail will soon be developed as an AMC partnership.

In a related project, Winding River Land Conservancy played an advisory and supporting role in the protection of the 127-acre Sofinowski property on Mort Vining Road in Southwick. Another local trail project is currently in the building phase.

Visit the Trust online at www.windingriverlandconservancy.org.

Tuesday hikes

Let's talk about the new things first! We have adopted a trail. John Murphy and Hank Warchol are the architects of the Unkarnit.

- Respect Wildlife
- Be Considerate of Other Visitors

If the majority of AT users follow these principles, we all can have a positive experience on the trail. Without them, I believe we will find hiking the AT to be more and more like being in town and less and less like wild and scenic sojourning.

If you are interested in finding out more about this subject, or want to volunteer on the Trail, please visit our web page: <http://friends.backcountry.net/MassAT/ATCommHome.html> or contact me directly at ccatalan@williams.edu, (413-458-5349).

Next chapter: *A Brief History of the AT*

It starts at the M-M Trail in Westfield and ends near the AT in Washington (approximately 45 miles). Our trail is a piece of it. John chose the section known as "Turtle Bend." Our first trail clearing day took place on April 29. Seventeen enthusiastic hikers showed up. We not only cleared the trail in short order, we did some re-routing under John's capable leadership. A great time was had by all!

We are also planning on starting the AT (Mass.) this year. We'll be doing a section every other week. Some people are quite excited! We'll be starting the first Tuesday in June and stop when the weather interferes. We'll pick up again next spring.

This past winter a lot of fun was had at Al and Marian's after a combination ski and snowshoe. Al demonstrated the techniques needed to turn and stop in deep powder, use the poles to slow down on steep terrain, and manage a narrow trail in the woods.

Also this past winter, Al Shane led a snowshoe at Mohawk Trail State Forest in Charlemont. While there we checked out the cabins—they're so cute that we will be staying there for two nights this fall. We'll arrive on Monday, Oct. 27 and leave on the 29th. We'll be concocting a crockpot meal and a savory soup. For people not staying overnight, the Tuesday activity will take place there. Al knows the area quite well and said that he would lead a hike each day.

The cabins sleep three to five and cost \$25 to \$35. They have electricity and a wood stove. There are bunk beds in each, and a heated comfort station nearby with showers. Drinking water is also nearby. I will be making reservations mid-May. When you read this, if you are interested, call me (413-586-9028). Most likely there still will be room.

Tuesday hikes are now on the web at www.amcberkshire.org/hiking. Dave Conley (dconley@attbi.com, 413-562-9352) did not hesitate when asked if he would be willing to take on that responsibility. This new information link will be in very capable hands. Thank you, Dave, for your generous support.

That's it for now!

Gloria LaFlamme,
Tuesday Coordinator

Chapter Trail Initiatives, *continued from page 3*

Trail Maintainers and adopters are needed, and maybe we need to think about reorganizing the present chapter Trails Committee.

For further information on these ground floor opportunities and to become involved, please contact the chair, Gary Forish.

Thursday, July 3

Annual

Fireworks Viewing & Chicken Barbecue
at Noble View

Gates open at 4:00 PM. Dinner served at 7:00 PM. Cost is \$8. Bring a dish to share for 4; cold drinks and chicken will be provided. Or come just for the fireworks display. Fireworks will be viewed at dark, launched from Stanley Park, Westfield, 3 miles in front of us. Bring lawn chairs or blankets for the viewing activities and a flashlight. To RSVP, call Gary Forish (562-6792). More details in the June AMC Outdoors.



Beaver pond,
October
Mountain
State Forest.

Photo by
Amy Gallagher.

- In -
Passing

Remembering those
departed who have left
a legacy to follow.

Ira Bender

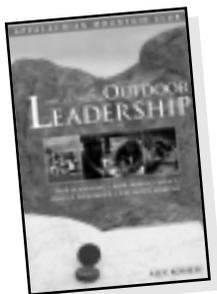
Of Stockbridge. Member since 1992, he was actively involved with bringing his children up to enjoy the outdoors while hiking the AMC huts in the White Mountains. An avid volunteer on the AT near his home. Believed very strongly in the AMC mission and principles. A memorial gift has been received in his memory.

Donald Kirkpatrick

Of Pittsfield. Life member of the Berkshire Chapter since 1925. A memorial gift has been received in his memory. See additional article, "The Kirkpatrick Clan—An Appreciation," on page 3.

Doug Woodford

Life member since June, 1963. A Noble View supporter who believed Noble View was the center of the Berkshire Chapter.



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We've made every effort to include all the volunteers' names. If you believe we missed somebody, please contact the Editor.

Summer 2003

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