As the Berkshire Chapter celebrates its 75th anniversary, the volunteer efforts of our Chapter members are foremost in our thoughts. Volunteerism has been a cornerstone of the AMC since its founding in 1876. Now as we recognize and honor our 75 years as an AMC Chapter, we are also honoring 75 years of the volunteerism that continues to serve as our legacy. This tradition has endured—from the days of AMC outdoor adventurers wearing heavy wool skirts or jackets and ties, to today’s enthusiasts in lightweight, wind- and water-proof tech clothing. Our volunteers make a great contribution to the membership and to the public as well, in areas that include conservation, outings, mountaineering, kayaking, and canoeing.

As the Chapter moves forward, volunteers are needed more than ever to carry out the Chapter’s many and varied tasks. And this is where we ask for your help. Giving your time can be a wonderful way to become part of the larger AMC community. Spend an hour a week or take a few hours a month to help with special events or lead an outing. Give a few hours a quarter in a trail project. The list of jobs is long, the projects are varied, and every task is important; pick one that fits your life. Become a volunteer and you will be rewarded with a sense of accomplishment and the joy of giving to the organization that you have joined. I know that you can fit in somewhere. Please review the volunteer opportunities listed on page 3. If you do not see something that fits, call me and I am sure I can find you the perfect opportunity.

The past year has ended on a high note for the Chapter, with a Young Member Chair being elected at the Annual Meeting and a Vice Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer being added at their committee meetings. In many of the past year’s Annual Reports, it was evident that Young Members have much to contribute to the workings of the Berkshire Chapter. And now with a Young Members Committee, the Chapter can finally celebrate.

The celebration, however, may be short-lived by a referendum to consider a petition to abolish young members’ groups. The ballot on this referendum appears on page 63 of the December AMC Outdoors and requires your vote. Please return this ballot by December 31, 2003 to 5 Joy Street with a NO vote. The AMC Board of Directors, Chapters Committee and Berkshire Chapter Executive Committee oppose the petition to abolish young members’ groups and we encourage members to vote against the petition. We need to stress once again that the age reference to Young Members’ events that are listed in the AMC Outdoors activity section is intended not to age discriminate but to encourage age participation. As I have said in the past, young members must be supported and nurtured—they are tomorrow’s leaders.

Again I seek a volunteer to step forward as Vice Chair for 2004 and to assume the position of Chapter Chair for 2005 and 2006 if you are interested, I invite you to attend the Chapter’s Executive meetings to see what it is all about. I will not continue as Chair in 2005. Please give the position some thought. It is a great way to serve the Club and Chapter.

At the Chapter’s Annual Meeting, four members joined the ranks of the Executive Committee: Mary Norton as secretary, Lisa Bozzuto as Membership Committee Chair, Cathy Wickens as Leadership and Training Coordinator, and Melissa Zeitz as Young Members Chair. Please welcome these individuals aboard.

The Fall Gathering hosted this year by the Berkshire Chapter has received outstanding reviews by all who were present. The event was attended by more than 170 members who joined in outdoor activities, meetings and presentations. The high point was Saturday evening’s band, Rani Arbo & Daisy Mayhem. Of course this event could not have been held without the many volunteers who gave their time for the weekend. Of those volunteers, over 25 strong, special thanks must be given to Fall Gathering Chair Barbara Veal for the outstanding organization and coordination of this important event.

As we enjoy the winter activities in the next several months, please thank all of the volunteers you meet for jobs well done. And keep thinking about how you, too, can join the ranks of these dynamic members.

Thank you for your support for again electing me as your chairperson and best wishes for a joyous holiday season.

Respectfully,
Gary Forish
Berkshire Chapter Chair
The Chapter’s website has been completely redesigned! In addition to looking better (of course), it’s now a more useful resource, bringing together news and announcements, trip and event schedules, contact information, and other useful bits. Select an activity category like “Hiking” or “Mountaineering” or “Young Members,” and you’ll see information relevant to that activity. Or, go to the section for the Metacomet-Monadnock Trail. (There’s even an interactive schedule: enter the kinds of events you’re interested in and a date range, and a customized list will be created for you.)

It’s brand new, so there may be a few rough edges. If you find any, please inform our webmaster—you’ll find his email address on every web page. (If you use Netscape version 4.x, you won’t see any formatting at all, just an ugly but functional site.

This site is designed to be a resource that you come back to often. So please, send us suggestions about how to make it even better! We’ve got some ideas for more features.

There’s even an interactive schedule: enter the kinds of events you’re interested in and a date range, and a customized list will be created for you.

Our webmaster—you’ll find his email address on every web page. (If you use Netscape version 4.x, you won’t see any formatting at all, just an ugly but functional site. Upgrading to a later Netscape version is recommended.)

This site is designed to be a resource that you come back to often. So please, send us suggestions about how to make it even better! We’ve got some ideas for more features to add, but we’d like to hear yours.

As always, you can find the website at http://amcberkshire.org.

Cheers,
Ian Beatty
AMC-Berkshire Webmaster
Berkshire Chapter

EDUCATIONAL WORKSHOPS at Noble View

Winter Backpacking Workshop
January 24 to 25. February 21 to 22. Designed to introduce families and/or singles to the great outdoors in winter. An opportunity for children and their guardians to share an experience invaluable to most. A heated cabin and cleared parking area near the tent sites allow for safe exit, should the need arise, from an otherwise wilderness setting. Review of gear, terrain and winter basics will precede the setting up of campsites, followed by two- to three-hour hikes at a pace suited to the slowest of the group.

Children should be at least 10 years old, although exceptions are possible. Camp chores will be shared except for Saturday lunch, which each person should provide. Snowshoes (limited), stoves, pots, pans, etc., will be provided. Each person or family will need specific gear and clothing, a list of which will be forwarded to participants in advance. Fee: $75 to Registrars Michael Rips at 413-572-4501.

Poetry and Writing Workshop
January 31: Join writers of all levels who love the outdoors. A half-mile hike brings us to the rustic hilltop farmhouse for hot drinks by the woodstove, followed by a guided hike (on foot or snowshoe) to overlooks and frozen waterfalls. We will pause for observation and reflection, and then return to the farmhouse for writing time indoors. The facilitator, Tamara Coffin, is a naturalist committed to fully inhabiting the natural world through sensory, imaginative and artistic “teaching.” Her work appears in The Berkshire Review, Appalachian Journal and a book by Friends of Acadia. Workshop will be repeated in the spring (data TBA). Fee: $25. From 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. For further information, call Registrar Michael Rips at 413-572-4501.

Leadership Training Weekend
April 3 to 4. Annual Chapter training with professional staff will be held at Noble View. New leaders, group leaders, and family unit leaders are encouraged to participate. There will be an emphasis on group-led activities, leaders’ responsibilities, trip planning/management, special needs requirements, weather emergencies, principles of emergency first aid in the backcountry, and leader awareness/decision making. A two-day workshop with refreshments. Bring your own lunch, liquids and a daypack with the usual contents. Fee $15. For further information, call Cathy Wickers at 413-268-7340 or e-mail cathywick3@yahoo.com.

Wilderness First Responder
April 17 to 18, 2013. Training is for outdoor leaders, guides, and rangers with the knowledge and skills needed to deal with crisis in remote settings. This 80-hour certification course meets DOT National Standards for First Responder with additional protocols for extended-care situations. All SOLO programs, the emphasis of the WFR is on prevention and decision making. The intensive 80-hour curriculum will take place over four weekends. A typical day consists of a mixture of hands-on practical skill work and instructive sessions, complemented with a variety of mock scenarios and simulations. The program is fast-paced and both intellectually and physically demanding. Fee $550. For further information, call Cathy Wickers at 413-268-7340 or e-mail cathywick3@yahoo.com.

Berkshire Chapter
cmcf@amcinfo.org

THE REFERENDUM BALLOT FOR YOUNG MEMBERS’ GROUPS

This ballot appears on page 63 of your December AMC OUTDOORS. The Chapter Executive Committee, AMC Chapters Committee, and the Board of Directors oppose the petition to abolish Young Members’ groups within AMC, and encourages members to vote FAST AND NO VOTE AGAINST THE PETITION.

Respectfully,
Gary Forsih

Reference Ballot
A referendum petition has been submitted to the Secretary. In accordance with AMC’s bylaws, a referendum petition is to provide advisory, non-binding guidance to the Board of Directors.

Summary of the vote: A vote for (“Yes”) would eliminate all reference to AMC’s Young Members’ groups. A vote against (“No”) would allow AMC to continue to describe in its marketing efforts activities and programs aimed at certain groups. There would be no change in AMC’s discrimination policy, which provides that all activities and programs are open to all members and the public.

Petition Submitted: Whether the AMC should pursue a policy of non-discrimination on the basis of age, sex, national or ethnic origin, race, color, or religion, in the administration of its programs, access to its facilities, employment policies, or any other AMC sponsored activities; that admission to such activities be limited only by the member’s ability to satisfactorily complete the activity in question; and, in particular, that so-called Young Members Groups be abolished, and that henceforth no indication should be given, formally or informally, express or implied, in plain language or by innuendo, that older persons would not be as welcome in any activity as younger persons, or that younger persons would be especially welcome.

AMC Position: AMC’s Board of Directors strongly opposes the petition to abolish Young Members’ groups within AMC, and encourages members to vote against the petition. AMC’s long-standing, published position is that all activities are open to any and all members and the public (subject to physical and skill qualifications for the activity), and that all are welcome to participate. The term Young Members is merely a descriptive term that is not intended to exclude and, in fact, is not exclusionary in any way based on age criteria. The descriptive term is used to identify activities that may be more appealing to certain AMC members, including the young at heart. AMC actively supports and has taken many steps to encourage diversity for all in its membership; staff and volunteers.

AMC’s Board of Directors opposes the petition to abolish Young Members’ groups within AMC, and encourages members to vote against the petition.
The Berkshire Chapter thanks you for your many years of support and volunteer efforts.

• 2003 •

**ANNIVERSARIES**

**50-year Members**
Emma J. Carlson  
Donald S. Pickik  
Mary E. Parker

**25-year Members**
Pliny Norscross, Ill  
Carol Anne Eldridge  
Walter J. Jarkowski  
Susan Mary Peterson  
Stuart A. Dalheim  
Zoe Dalheim  
Dr. H. Douglas Barnshaw  
Libby Barnshaw  
Jack Gill  
Geri Kennedy  
Jeremy P. Schrauf  
Damon Reed  
Elizabeth Neyland  
Mark A. Israel  
Richard Mayer  
Joan Spalding  
John N.E. Bidgeway  
Edward P. Smith  
David B. Godek  
Neil Sutton  
G. Grant Bowman  
Nancy Hazard  
Mr. & Mrs. Thomas N. Hazen  
Edward W. Edder  
Albert Shane

**Correction for 2002**
Chris Ryan – 25 years

If any information is incorrect, please notify Chapter Chair Gary Fortish at 413-562-6792.

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**A Mahican-Mohawk Day**
by Alan Doty

The day was warm and sunny, about 82 degrees. I was very pleased to have four others come on this hike, though that number was rather small compared to the usual turnout—the hike was a very popular one!

During the hike I introduced Leave No Trace outdoor ethics to the group. This trail provided many teachable moments. There were illegal campsites and fire rings, social trails that created erosion, and trash. In one case where the trail bordered private property, the landowner had been forced to post ugly “No Trespassing” signs because the area had been overly abused. With all the rain we had had in previous weeks, we had an opportunity to see many different types of mushrooms and fungi.

The river crossing at the intersection of the South River and the Deerfield River provided a welcome opportunity to wade in the water to cool off and practice proper ways to cross a river safely. Overall, this hike turned out great. I look forward to leading more!

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**Give a Green Light to Green Energy: Renewable Electricity Choice in Massachusetts**

Members of the Appalachian Mountain Club may be happy to learn that the AMC has agreed to promote a 100% Green-e certified renewable energy product, GreenerWatts New England. Through a partnership with the Center for Ecological Technology (CET), a western Massachusetts-based nonprofit, the AMC will receive ten dollars for each person who mentions the AMC as their referral source when enrolling. (To learn about Green-e and the Green-e logo visit their website at http://green-e.org.)

Thanks to an innovative program launched this fall, residential, non-profit, or small business customers served by Massachusetts Electric Company (MEOC) now have an opportunity to “GreenUp” the electricity they use. It will cost just a few pennies a day. Almost all of the electricity that comes into our houses today is generated by coal, oil, and nuclear facilities or large-scale hydropower. GreenUp will ultimately increase the supply of renewable energy.

In contrast to what currently comes through the electric lines, GreenerWatts New England uses solar power and landfill gas in eastern Massachusetts, low-impact hydropower from Putnam, Connecticut, and wind power from Searsburg, Vermont.

This is how it works: For a small premium paid through the monthly electric bill (about $6 to $12 per month depending on actual electricity consumption), participants can enjoy the advantages of reliable electricity from the utility company and, at the same time, support the growth of environmentally responsible energy production in New England. Massachusetts Electric Company does not profit from the GreenUp program; in fact, the majority of the revenue goes directly to the renewable energy suppliers. This helps them expand current facilities and be more competitive with fossil fuel and nuclear plants.

At the time of this writing, the 2003 Energy Bill is nearing passage in Congress. It continues to provide large subsidies to fuel industries, leaving a greater burden on private individuals to support renewable energy initiatives like this one. Furthermore, adding new local wind, solar, and landfill production facilities to GreenerWatts over time will increase the amount of energy dollars that stay in our communities.

Joining the GreenUp program is a simple and direct action that everyone who enjoys the outdoors can take to benefit the mountains, rivers and streams of the Appalachian region.

Massachusetts Electric Customers wishing to obtain an enrollment form for GreenerWatts New England may send an email request to energyhome@yahoo.com or call CET at 800-238-1221. Or learn more and enroll online at www.GreenerWattsNewEngland.com. Remember, to support the Berkshire Chapter, mention the AMC when you enroll!

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**Send In Your Outdoor Photos!**

If you’ve got any Berkshire/Pioneer Valley outdoor photos (of scenery and/or people involved in outdoor activities) that you’d like to see in the Exchange, please send them in! Be sure to include all contact info and name(s) of all photographer(s).

**US Mail**
**DIGITAL FILES:** High-resolution files (on a floppy disk, Zip100, or CD-ROM). **FILM PRINTS:** Color or black-and-white glossy prints (with a maximum size of 8”x10”). Send items to: Berkshire Exchange, 29 Atwater Street, Westfield, MA 01085-1541

You may e-mail digital files, but please keep the total size of your message—including all attached photos—smaller than 1 megabyte. Send files (or questions) to newsletter@amcberkshire.org

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**E-Mail**

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**Chapter Outings Chair Sabine Dietrich enjoying the White Mountains.**

*Photo by Richard Gassan*
Buy a Bandanamap of the Connecticut River and help support land conservation! That’s the gist of the fundraising effort currently under way by the Berkshire Chapter’s Conservation Committee.

The bandanas feature the design of a recreation guide to the Connecticut River and a paddling motif. The vibrant colors will complement any outfit.

The bandanas are being sold for $10 retail or $8 wholesale (to anyone who buys 12 or more). Of the $10 purchase price, $5 will be earmarked for land conservation efforts, such as conservation easements, in western Massachusetts.

Every sports enthusiast knows bandanas make great fashion statements—as sweat wipers, slings, goodie-holders, mosquito swatters, and tourniquets. And this one can help you find your way on the Connecticut River! Don’t leave home without one.

To order, send $10 to AMC Berkshire, c/o CH Jones, PO Box 9303, North Amherst, MA 01059. Shipping and handling are included.

TO ALL INTERESTED IN LEADING (OR ALREADY LEADING) OUTINGS

We’re having a meeting/potluck on January 9 at Elbert Bowler’s house in Holyoke. It’s just a stone’s throw from Mt. Tom! We’ll be coming together with our ideas and dates for hikes, backpacks, ski trips, contra dancing, family trips, etc. The Berkshire Chapter is looking forward to having more diverse events where people can mingle and have fun! Please join us with your ideas. Call Sabine at 949-5914 for more information and Elbert at 532-4464 for directions.

HELP WANTED:
Manager for AMC Swans Falls Campground, Fryeburg, Maine, 2004 season. This campground operates in a beautiful riverside location (with housing provided) from April to October. Priority is to provide excellent customer service to Saco River visitors. Duties also include housekeeping, basic maintenance and employee supervision. Please send your resume with cover letter to Peter Madeira, Appalachian Mountain Club, 5 Joy Street, Boston, MA 02108 (or e-mail to pmadeira@amcinfo.org). This position will remain open until a suitable candidate is found. Check out the Appalachian Mountain Club’s website, www.outdoors.org, for employee benefits and additional information.