



AMC BERKSHIRE CHAPTER NEWS & EVENTS

Spring 2004

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FROM *the* CHAIR

Seasons of Change

The changing of the seasons is upon us, bringing thoughts of spring and all the outdoor activities we love that come with it. This season also brings some changes to the Club's operation procedures and policy. The first relates to the leaders who will guide you on Club activities. The Outdoor Leadership Development Committee (OLDC) has set forth new guidelines for leaders. Their updated policy further clarifies a leader's specific responsibilities, in order to ensure a safe outdoor experience on AMC-sponsored events. If you would like a copy of the Leadership Requirements and Guidelines, please contact me at 562-6792 or chapterchair@amcberkshire.org. Current Chapter leaders will automatically receive a copy by U.S. mail.

While we're on the topic, I would also like to thank our present leaders for a job well done. These accomplished individuals have received the training necessary to ensure an enjoyable and safe adventure. Make sure you thank them as you join in an activity.

At the Annual Meeting on January 31 in Waltham, in recognition of the special safety and risk management considerations involved in working with youths, the Chapter Committee members established a task force to review and recommend criteria for Chapter youth programs. In meeting the Berkshire Chapter's youth leadership needs, Denise Fontaine-Pincince has been appointed Chapter representative to the task force dealing with youth programs. I welcome Denise in this important endeavor.

Another development at January's Annual Meeting was the vote to increase membership dues. The last dues increase was in 1987, and since that time the consumer price index has increased by 70%. Individual and family membership levels have increased by \$10.00, with junior and senior memberships remaining at \$25.00. This increase takes effect as your membership comes up for renewal. The result will be an increase in programs and direct benefits for the Chapter membership, such as programs and training. Priority will be given to small chapters like ours for basic operations and for training and retention programs such as volunteer recognition.

The Berkshire Chapter is the third smallest chapter and will receive a larger share of available funds from the dues increase. In the past couple of years, the Chapter has had a large deficit.

Spring also brings Earth Day on April 22. Thirty four years ago, on April 22, 1970, the first Earth Day was held, later recognized as one of the most noteworthy milestones in the history of grassroots conservation. This yearly event has successfully promoted environmental education, action, and change. Earth Day activities offer important ways to address worldwide ecological concerns, as well as opportunities for individuals and communities to focus on their local environmental problems.

Another event on the eve of the summer season is National Trails Day, June 5, 2004. This year's theme is "Trails and Health – a

Natural Connection." National Trails Day raises awareness of trails, including their many pleasures and health benefits. Join the action by forming part of a trail maintenance crew, taking a hike, providing support for the trail crews, or just giving the volunteers a thank you. Trail users do not realize how many volunteer hours are required to create and maintain trails. When they do, many become enthusiastic volunteers. One dedicated volunteer said: "I have no right to set foot on any trail that someone else worked and sweated over unless I am willing to work and sweat over a trail myself."

Our youths need healthy opportunities, too, and trails are a great way to get them active. Encourage them to get out on a trail and hike with their parents. You can download a fact sheet about trails, health, and hiking with kids at:

<http://www.americanhiking.org/news/pdfs/family.pdf>.

Join an activity and celebrate spring. While on that activity, ask how you could volunteer. This issue of the *Exchange* has information about training programs and volunteer opportunities. To truly enjoy and be fulfilled by volunteering, first identify how you could help. No matter what is most important to you, you'll find many personal benefits in volunteering. Volunteering aids both the receiver and the giver. In fact, many who volunteer say that they get back much more than they give. Some of the benefits they mention are meeting new friends, learning new skills, enhancing self esteem, making a difference, and improving the quality of life.

Respectfully,

Gary Forish
Berkshire Chapter Chair

Writing and Drawing	Pages 2 & 6
Volunteer News	Page 3
Workshops	Page 4
Noble View	Page 5
Young Members Referendum Update	Page 5
Appalachian Trail Committee	Page 6
Tuesday Hikers	Page 7
ATVs in the WMNF	Page 7
New Books	Page 7

WRITING AT NOBLE VIEW *by Tammis Coffin*

"Oh...wow..." That's what most people seem to say when they stand at the brink of Pitcher Brook Falls for the first time. My first visit to Noble View and Pitcher Brook was in October, for an AMC writing workshop with Anna Viadero. Four of us toured the land with Michael Ripa as our guide. Later we wrote in the Farmhouse, remembering "a time when nature healed us." I chose that day and that place and quickly began writing.

*Spell of ledges, water pooling;
convergence of two streams;
place of my joy, ascending.*

"There's an embrace here of some sort, a power center if you will," Michael had remarked as we approached the overlook. I was paying attention to my feet, noticing details of a ledge only lightly trodden, knobbed rock laced with pine needles, patches of snake skin; shavings of moss and new-fallen leaves. Hiking on, I kept asking myself, "Why does this forest feel so different from any place I've ever been?" In my notebook, I jotted a few lines.

*Low laurel, hemlock,
open to light;
sound of running water.*

I was hooked. After that, I returned to Noble View almost weekly as the seasons swiftly changed. Though it kept getting colder, the land felt so alive and there was so much to see and write about.

*Stop at the tall birches,
all the leaves releasing;
silent meteor shower.*

There, in the rush and splash of water falling steeply, quartz and garnet ledges, the long views and old trees, I found a remoteness, an untouched feeling, and a quality that seemed to invite a deep response from each new person who came along.

It's been easy to find a happy feeling walking the trails at Noble View. At times, lines from the land almost sing themselves onto the page. There is a "wow" found at Pitcher Brook and a spell that brings us to other parts of the land, writing, drawing and moving slowly, awakening to beauty in almost every direction.

Join Tammis and others for informal sketching and writing hikes at Noble View through the seasons. For further information please see page 6.

The EXCHANGE wants your **OUTDOOR PHOTOS!**

If you've got any Berkshire, Pioneer Valley, or other New England 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, Zip 100, or CD-ROM).
FILM PRINTS: Color or black-and-white **glossy prints** (maximum size 8"x10").
Send items to:
Berkshire Exchange, 29 Atwater Street, Westfield, MA 01085-1541

E-Mail

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

– Many thanks to all those who have contributed photos –

David Cody; Sabine Dietrich; Amy Gallagher; Richard Gassan; Tony Maniscalco; Donna Scott; Jodie Scott; Helen Staiger; Alan Stoppel; Jerry Weinstein

Berkshire Chapter Executive Committee

• **2004** •

Chapter Officers

Chairman: Gary Forish
Vice Chair: *vacant*
Treasurer: Kevin Costa
Secretary: Mary Norton

Committee Chairs

Appalachian Trail Committee:
Cosmo Catalano
Berkshire County Representative:
Vicky Singer
Canoe & Kayak Committee:
Charlie Camp
Conservation Committee:
Cinda H. Jones
Leadership Training: Cathy Wickens
Membership Committee:
Lisa Bozzuto
Mountaineering Committee:
Jim VanNatta
Noble View Committee: Elvery Veal
Nominating Committee: Chris Ryan
Outings Committee: Sabine Dietrich
Programs: June Hoerle
Special Events: *vacant*
Trails Committee: Pat Fletcher
Webmaster: Ian Beatty
Young Members Committee:
Melissa Zeitz

BERKSHIRE EXCHANGE

– March 2004 –

newsletter@amcberkshire.org

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Gloria LaFlamme, Faith Salter,
Elvery Veal, Bryan Wentzel
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Big Pond, Otis.
Photo by
David Cody

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

Chapter Volunteers Receive Awards

Seven Berkshire Chapter volunteers were honored with AMC Stewardship Society awards for their distinguished service to the Club during 2003. Congratulations to **Cosmo Catalano** and **Marvin Swartz**, recipients of the Warren Hart Award, and to **Gary Forish**, **David Koerber**, **Frank Morrison**, **Dean Smith**, **Jim Pelletier**, and **Debra Weisenstein**, who were presented with the Marian Pychowska award. The awards were presented at the AMC Annual Meeting on January 31, 2004.

The Stewardship Society was established by the AMC to recognize and encourage volunteers who contribute to public service activities with the Club's Conservation, Education, and Trails programs. These programs all work toward the protection, enjoyment, and wise use of public lands.

This past year the Society honored a total of 100 AMC volunteers whose combined efforts represented nearly 16,000 hours of public service.

The Warren Hart Award, presented to Catalano and Swartz, rec-

ognizes volunteers who give more than 224 hours of annual service. Warren Hart was the AMC Councilor of Improvements, responsible for trails, from 1908-1910 and was a leader in creating the spirit of volunteerism that built many of the trails we still use today. In 1908, he spent 28 days creating trails in the Great Gulf Wilderness area, and by 1910 he was leading "working sections" of 40 people in summer trail-building expeditions.

The Marian Pychowska Award, given to six of our Berkshire Chapter members, is presented to volunteers who give 96 to 224 hours toward conservation, education, and trails activities. In the 1880s Pychowska helped build trails, created a trail map of the Northern Presidentials, discovered the Pinnacle at Huntington Ravine, and may have been the first AMCer to examine the impact of recreation.

The 2003 recipients of Stewardship Society awards are the leaders of the AMC's volunteer spirit today, inspiring many more members to give a day or even a week's worth of time to care or advocate for the outdoor treasures of the Northeast.

Hiker Attacks Bear

It is that time of year again when we go about our normal routines and look forward to great weather and outdoor activities. Yet every day AMC members are carrying out the AMC mission. That "bear" is the work being accomplished by volunteers. Please join us in attacking the jobs at hand while enjoying a great outdoor experience. Review the **volunteer opportunities** list to see where you might fit in for a short, one-time-only project or take on a larger, more satisfying role within the Chapter. Call the Chair, Gary Forish, at 413-562-6792 for further information and to ask, "I will volunteer; where can I best fit?"

Volunteer Opportunities!

Join many like-minded individuals in serving the Berkshire Chapter. Many areas of expertise are required to fulfill chapter needs. Join us for a one time, short event, and/or limited event. All that is required is to have FUN. Contact Gary Forish, Berkshire Chapter Chair; phone 413-562-6792 or e-mail forgary@comcast.net.

General Opportunities

- Appalachian Trail work crews
- Education Workshop Coordinator, Program Director, and leaders
- Trails Committee Co-Chair
- Chapter trail maintainers
- Noble View volunteers
- Noble View trail maintainers
- Noble View work party leaders/co-leaders
- Skilled & unskilled construction craftsmen for Noble View
- Special Events volunteers

Committees

- Berkshire Chapter Chair
- Berkshire Chapter Vice Chair
- Monthly Outing Coordinators and event leaders for 2004 and 2005
- Conservation Committee members
- Special Events Committee Chair

SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE

The chapter has limited funding available for educational opportunities, workshops and teen programs. Scholarships are available to those who wish to start up a program or those who have financial or educational needs in the following areas:

- Teen Wilderness Adventure Program at Pinkham Notch
- SOLO Wilderness First Aid Training
- Canoe & Kayak Safety/Leadership Training
- Mountain Leadership School at Pinkham Notch
- Leadership Training
- Mountaineering Safety/Leadership Training

For further information or an application contact Cathy Wickens at learning@amcberkshire.org or 413-268-7340.

EDUCATIONAL WORKSHOPS *at Noble View*

Wilderness First Responder

April 16–18; April 23–25; May 14–16: Friday evening classes will be held from 6:00 p.m. until 9:00 p.m. Created to provide outdoor leaders, guides, and rangers with the knowledge needed to deal with crises in remote settings, this 80-hour certification course meets DOT National Standards for First Responder with additional protocols for extended-care situations. Like all SOLO programs, the emphasis of the WFR is on prevention and decision making. The intensive 80-hour curriculum will take place over three 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 Wickens at 413-268-7340 or e-mail cathywick3@yahoo.com.

Noble View Trails Weekend

April 17–18: Come help reconstruct the hiking trails at AMC's Noble View camp. There are over 12 miles of hiking and ski trails that meander through the surrounding landscape at Noble View. Many are in need of erosion control, brushing, and tread hardening. Come learn the basics of trail maintenance, share your own trail knowledge and experience, or simply lend a hand. Work may include rock and log water bar construction, large rock step construction, grade dips, clipping and clearing brush, and general tread hardening. Participants must be 15 or older. Bring sturdy boots, long pants, lunch, and plenty of water. Tools and instruction will be provided. Work for one day or camp out for the entire weekend. All trail workers get free camping in a beautiful setting with views, nearby paddling, and hiking. The event is FREE with no-cost lodging if required, but pre-registration is mandatory. For more information or to register, please contact the AMC Berkshire Trails Office at 413-528-6333 or tweber@amcinfo.org.

Learn Ancient Survival Skills

May 2: This one-day workshop (9 a.m. to 5 p.m.) teaches basic elements of survival using only what nature provides: shelter, water, fire by friction, wild edibles and ancient hunting techniques. By the end of the workshop, participants will understand how to build a debris hut and bow drill kit (fire by friction method), purify water, and use some basic foods available in the wilderness. Please bring a non-folding sheath knife and lunch. Fee: \$15 includes refreshments. Rain or shine. For further information call Registrar Michael Ripa at 413-572-4501 or e-mail rastamiko@comcast.net.

SOLO – Wilderness First Aid

May 8–9: 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 intends to prepare you for the medical situation that arises where there is no ambulance, roof or walls to provide shelter from the elements, your 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 appears to be standard emergency care information, the backcountry emphasis on long-term care and evacuation complications make this course unique. Fee \$140. For further information, call Cathy Wickens at 413-268-7340.

Leadership Training Weekend

May 22–23: 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 Wickens at 413-268-7340 or e-mail cathywick3@yahoo.com.

AMC 2004 MOUNTAIN LEADERSHIP SCHOOL

June 16–20, 2004, AMC Highland Center; **August 18–22, 2004**, AMC Highland Center; **October 12–17, 2004**, AMC Mohican Outdoor Center

Mountain Leadership School (MLS) is a five-day wilderness leadership training program designed to prepare outdoor leaders to guide groups safely and with minimal impact in the backcountry. Now in its 46th year, MLS is staffed by senior AMC volunteers who have a wide variety of backcountry knowledge and experience.

MLS is designed for AMC volunteer trip leaders, camp counselors, youth group leaders, and avid outdoors aficionados ready to take their skills to the next level. Topics covered include leadership styles, Leave-No-Trace ethics, time management, decision making, kitchen safety, accident scene management, group dynamics, group life cycles, trip planning, navigation, and map-and-compass activities. MLS is a physically rigorous program that includes a four-day backpacking adventure! Participants backpack over some of the roughest terrain in the East, taking turns leading their group through the mountains in a series of adventures and scenarios designed to augment and test their leadership skills. Hard and soft skills are developed, critiqued, and improved upon; lifelong friendships are forged; and adventure abounds!

The Berkshire Chapter is offering open scholarships for Chapter members interested in participating in MLS. Join in the adventure and training experience of a lifetime. Contact the Chair Gary Forish at 413-562-6792.

Noble View Update *by Elvery Veal, Noble View Chair*

The year 2003 was most remarkable. Solid progress was made on the refurbishing of Noble View Camp, with many volunteers available for all the work that was required. By far the largest project was the reconstruction of the Double Cottage. The old "kitchen" section has been completely rebuilt and enlarged, and renovation of the cottages is in progress. The building is completely enclosed at this time. This spring the new windows, doors and roof shingles will be installed and renovations will continue as funds permit.

The existing water well was re-drilled down to 440 feet. The water that had been pumped out of that well over the years was rusty. After extensive testing it was determined that the water was ground water and not subterranean. The new well is being tested at this time to ensure it meets Massachusetts Public Water requirements and will then be licensed as a public water supply. This past fall a percolation test and sanitary system design was completed for the proposed bathhouse. In the coming spring months a fire buffer and field expansion will be completed along with the expansion and widening of the cross-country ski trail.

As always, many volunteers are required for the proposed work schedule. The trails require extensive work to meet the demands of Noble View's increasing usage. A trail committee and chair need to step forward for the ambitious schedule at hand in 2004.

Several large grants have been applied for as part of Phase 2 funding. The completion of the Double Cottage, renovation of the North Cottage and the Farmhouse, and required infrastructure work can be completed only as funding is obtained. Tammis Coffin has singlehandedly taken on the grant application process. Be sure to come to her

writing workshops for a sense of Noble View's spellbinding beauty in almost every direction.

A "Thank You" to each of the volunteers for 2003 is listed below; the most notable is Fred Hoekstra, who volunteered over 250 hours of his time. And special thanks are owed to Gary Forish, who has spent uncountable hours on this project:

Francis LaPlante
Stacey Stobierski
Ceclia MacDonald
Donald Rickson
Laura Stinette
Sandra Macomber
Frank Morrison
Bill Crawford
Kevin Costa
Steve Jablonski
Mark Damon
Wayne Rodrigues
AnnMarie Visconti
Tammis Coffin
Gerald Charette
Kathy Frontera
Laura Bogs
Norm Sims
Mike Philbrook
Boy Scout Troop #821

Robert Stobierski
David MacDonald
Connie Kasparian
Mary Andrews
Merrit Andrews
David Wallis
Wayne Crouch
Mike Glail
Cynthia Hartegen
Gail Palmer
Jim VanNatta
Marty Bannish
David Barlar
Donna Crabtree
Mark Hellstein
John Purbrick
Moriase Salaman
Iris Gingras
Michael Ripa

Noble View Receives Trails Grant *by Gary Forish*

On February 23, 2004, Noble View received notice that the facility had been awarded a grant through the Student Conservation Association Massachusetts Corps Program (formerly SCA Massachusetts Forests and Parks AmeriCorps). This grant provides for a seven- person crew for ten days of trail work.

The grant was applied for by Ted Weber, AMC Staff at the Southern New England Trails Office.

As the fastest growing segment of SCA programming, the Conservation Corps addresses urgent environmental challenges all across the US. Working in collaboration with public and/or nonprofit partners, these "special project" teams, who are supervised by SCA

staff, receive precise training and demonstrate great initiative to meet their objectives.

SCA Conservation Corps offer unparalleled hands-on experience in wildfire education and risk reduction, wilderness restoration, invasive plant removal/native plant propagation, environmental education, and natural resource management.

These tuition-free positions range from three to twelve months in length, and most corps share a common living environment, resulting in a unique and rewarding community experience. All SCA Corps members bring to life an ethic of conservation service and community responsibility.

Update on Young Members Referendum

by Kevin Breunig, AMC's Director of Communication

Our membership has voted overwhelmingly to defeat a referendum that would have eliminated the Young Member committees in the chapters. At the same time, the Board of Directors has voted to reaffirm our commitment to Young Members and our non-discrimination policy, which clearly states that all of our activities are open to everyone.

Reaching out to younger members is critical to our organization's ability to grow and thrive. Young members bring new energy and passion for the outdoors that we all share. As we reach out to new young members, we are committed to creating an environment where all are welcome.

The AMC Board of Directors reaffirms its strong support of young people in the AMC. Young Member groups are a way to facili-

tate activities appealing to the young, the young at heart, and all other members, and to further the engagement and commitment of all members of the AMC family.

The AMC encourages involvement in its mission and activities through its membership, programs, policies, and procedures. Our goal is to be a community that is comfortable, inviting, and accessible for people of any age, gender, race, religion, ethnicity, ability, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic status.

Some AMC programs are designed for a certain age range of members or for a special activity or topic. However, any person who meets the minimum qualifications (skills, experience, fitness) established by the trip leader(s) for an activity is eligible to attend, if space is available.

AT Committee Activities

This winter, the 4th Annual Massachusetts Appalachian Trail Maintainers Gathering was held at the Mt. Greylock Visitors Center. This meeting brought current maintainers together to socialize, eat pizza, get updates on trailwide issues, and plan projects for the upcoming maintenance season. The AT Committee Chair also delivered a short “State of the Trail” address to the assembled multitude. The text of this address can be found on the AT section of the Chapter web page (see below). About 40 people attended the event and we had many good discussions ranging from chainsaw use to beavers.

About two weeks after the Gathering, AT managers met to begin creating the schedule for this season’s work parties. Although generally the AT is in excellent shape, thanks to nearly 2,000 hours of volunteer work this past year, we have several places where resident beavers have decided to make a home. Surprisingly, these critters are more interested in safe and efficient ways to get at their food supply than they are at keeping “a way, continuous from Maine to Georgia,” open and available for non-amphibious bipeds.

Two major trail projects are planned for early in the season. One, near Shay’s Rebellion Monument in Sheffield, is the installation of nearly 400 feet of bog bridging through a field being inundated by a beaver dam about 500 feet downstream on Hubbard Brook. A second project is the installation of about 200 feet of boardwalk through a perennially swampy area just west of Rte. 7 in Sheffield. The water was so high in this area last season that hikers were re-routed onto adjacent roads for weeks at a time.

Although trapping and relocating the beaver might seem to be the best choice, it is illegal in Massachusetts to trap and relocate wildlife. Moreover, studies show that if a particular habitat is favored by beaver, another family will move into an abandoned area fairly quickly, necessitating repeated rounds of removal. There are physical means to lower the water level behind a beaver dam without triggering increased construction and we are investigating this possibility as a long-term solution at the Hubbard Brook site. But for now, our immediate goal must be to keep the trail passable.

Our third beaver-created project will involve a permanent relocation of about 1,000 feet of the footpath in Pittsfield watershed lands south of Blotz Road, much to the relief of hikers northbound toward Kay Wood shelter.

The complete schedule of trail events will be published on the AT portion of the Chapter’s web page (see below), and I ask that you search your soul and find some time to give back to the trails you love.

My last two announcements are about communications. Through the hard work of Ian Beatty, our tireless volunteer webmaster, the AT Committee’s web page has been transferred from its old home on backcountry.net to its new location at amcberkshire.org. Look for us under the “Trails” tab at the top of the page. With this transfer, the AT Committee becomes a full-status member of the Chapter, and avails itself of the useful news and calendar features of the web site. Thanks to Ian for a terrific effort!

Last, but far from least, an old friend is back. “Mountain to Mountain,” a newsletter for AT Maintainers, is resuming publication. Rick Wagner of the AT Committee has revived this valuable resource for anyone interested in the inner workings of the AT in Massachusetts. Copies are available by “snail mail” or e-mail, and issues will also be available at amcberkshire.org. To be added to the mailing list, contact Rick at mtn2mtn@amcberkshire.org, or Rick Wagner, 105 Windigo Rd., Cummington, MA 01026.

That’s it for this issue. The long-heralded AT History will appear soon. Stay tuned. As always, thanks for reading, and know that there is a place for anyone to volunteer in this Chapter, be it on the AT, M&M, Nobel View, or as a hike or outing leader. None of them would exist without volunteers—like you—to support them.

Cosmo Catalano
AT Committee Chair
appalachiantrail@amcberkshire.org
www.amcberkshire.org/hiking/at

Writing and Drawing in Nature

Engage creatively with the natural world.

Join writers and artists of all levels to write and draw at beautiful natural areas.

Sunday, April 25, 2 p.m. to 5 p.m.

WALKING AND WRITING AT THE QUABBIN

Walk wooded trails adjacent to the Quabbin wilderness, pause for observation and contemplation and return indoors to do some writing. Prompts will be offered to help the writing flow and there will be an optional sharing afterwards. Starts at Sirius Community Center, Shutesbury, MA.

Saturday, May 8, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. • Saturday, June 16, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

WRITING AND DRAWING AT WATERFALLS

Join artists and writers for a hike to a beautiful series of waterfalls for field sketching and writing, returning indoors where we will continue writing and art projects, sharing works-in-progress. The hike covers two miles of rugged terrain at Noble View, an Appalachian Mountain Club camp near Westfield, MA.

Writing and Drawing in Nature workshops are led by author and naturalist, Tammis Coffin.

Programs blend creative and contemplative practices that help us find our own natural paths toward inspiration, connection and meaning, allowing us to write and draw with greater freedom and joy. A small donation is requested from workshop participants. For further information call Tammis at 413-259-1254 or asktammis@yahoo.com.

Hike for Humanity

Saturday May 22 or Sunday May 23

“Take a Hike for Humanity” is a regional fundraiser for local Habitat for Humanity affiliates. This hike-a-thon has been held at Mount Monadnock (the most climbed mountain in the world) in Jaffrey, New Hampshire since the event was created in 1996.

Hike as a team (up to 10 hikers who register and hike together):

- Raise \$600 as a team and get t-shirts with the team name.
- Raise \$1000 as a team and get deluxe t-shirts with the team name.

Not part of a team? You can still hike and receive a t-shirt!

Call 413-586-5430 to request information and registration materials or visit www.amcberkshire.org and click on upcoming events.

Tuesdays' Imprints in the Snow

by Gloria LaFlamme

This winter was one of many contrasts, but what we did was meaningful and fun (and at times arduous). Ten hardy snowshoers, under the tutelage of Al Shane, explored the Totem Trail. That challenging trail, which is across the road from the Mohawk Trail State Forest, was very steep and led to a ridge. Another memorable snowshoe was when Debra Schey had us bush-whacking near the Mahican-Mohawk Trail, an area very close to her back yard—literally. We came to an area where there were signs of much activity; hemlock branches were strewn all over the place. Al Shane said that porcupines were responsible, and he pointed out their den, which was fascinating to see.

Later, I went to the library and learned that porcupines gather in dens and come out when the weather is dry to make a short foray for bark, their winter food.

Our winter excursions reminded me of this poem:

*The woods were made for the hunter of dreams,
The brooks for the fisher of song.
To the hunters who hunt for the gunless game,
The streams and the woods belong.*

—Sam Walter Foss

Now, news about the AT. We will be starting up again the first part of June; there are not too many unvisited sections left. The last section we hiked ended at Route 23 (Monterey-Great Barrington line). The leaders were Dona Burdick and Phyllis Freeman. Dona generously had everybody over to her place for a potluck meal afterwards. She is planning another potluck when the hikes resume.



TUESDAY HIKERS take a lunch break on the Westfield River. Photo by Jerry Weinstein

Future of ATVs and Wilderness in the White Mountains to Be Decided

by Bryan Wentzell, AMC Conservation Outreach Coordinator

The US Forest Service will soon be asking important questions about the future of the White Mountain National Forest (WMNF) and is looking to you for answers.

- Should more lands in the WMNF be protected as Wilderness?
- Should all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) be allowed in the Forest?
- How should the Forest Service manage public land as the number of visitors continues to rise?

The answers to these questions will be key in revising the Forest Management Plan, which will guide many of the decisions made in the WMNF over the next 15 years.

Public comment and participation are an important part of updating the management plan. "The Forest Service takes comments from the public very seriously and takes all opinions into consideration as they work through this process," said Tom Wagner, White Mountain National Forest Supervisor.

The next and final opportunity to have a voice in the future of the White Mountains will begin in April 2004 when the Forest Service accepts public comments on a Draft Environmental Impact Statement on the new Forest Plan. This is your chance to advocate for potential Wilderness and to discourage the introduction of off-road vehicle use in the Forest. Public hearings will be held for those who wish to speak in person, or you can write your own personal comments by mail or e-mail.

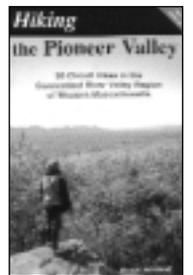
Keep up to date on the latest information through AMC's Conservation Action Network (CAN) at www.outdoors.org/conservation, or contact me at bwentzell@amcinfo.org or (617) 523-0655, ext. 386. AMC volunteers are actively planning events throughout the AMC's region to raise awareness and help people prepare their comments. If you want to organize such an event, please contact me for help. For the sake of the Forest, speak up and get involved!

BOOKS

For many years New England Cartographics has been to outdoor enthusiasts a well-known source of reliable maps and informative guidebooks. These two fresh, new titles are sure to keep that tradition going.

Hiking the Pioneer Valley by Bruce Scofield

This new, third edition is completely revised and updated. It includes 30 circuit hikes in the Valley (that's 5 more than the second edition). Each selection has a topo map, and information on difficulty, elevations, distance and time, directions, history, geology, and much more. ISBN 1-889787-09-4; \$14.95.



Birding Western Massachusetts

written and illustrated by Robert Tougias



It's a bit like a hiking guide for bird watchers. Featuring more than 26 great sites from the Berkshires to the Quabbin, each site includes a trail map, location, methods of birding (such as hiking, biking, skiing, car, etc.), birds of particular interest, and what birds can be seen during different seasons. Tougias' illustrations assist in identification. An abundance of other information is also included with each site. No birding enthusiast will want to be without this book. ISBN 1-889787-08-6; \$16.95.

Contact New England Cartographics,
PO Box 9369, North Amherst, MA 01059.

E-mail: geolopes@crocker.com.

Visit their website at www.necartographics.com.

**Outings
Committee
Dinner
Friday, June 4!**

All monthly coordinators, trip leaders, and aspiring trip leaders are welcome to come to Bill Burgart's house in Easthampton for a fun cook-out! We'll begin at about 6 p.m. and celebrate our history of volunteerism and great trips, and perhaps plan some more. The Berkshire Chapter is providing the main dishes for the cookout, but please feel free to bring side dishes or dessert. Bill's yard faces a lovely conservation area and is across the street from the cliffs of Mt. Tom. RSVP to Sabine Dietrich, Outings Committee Chair, at 949-3914.

Order Your Bandanamaps!

Sales to Enable Land Conservation

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.

Keystone Arch Bridges Trail Grand Opening, Saturday, May 22, 2004

A cross-cultural event with exhibits for all those who love the area. Environmental displays, hiking, music, food, art, stonecutting, blacksmithing, Civil War re-enactors, fly fishing, kayak demos, model railroads. Visit <http://home.att.net/~rickarbour/Index2.htm> for more information.

Spring 2004

BERKSHIRE EXCHANGE



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