

BERKSHIRE EXCHANGE

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outdoors.org



Spring 2014

APPALACHIAN MOUNTAIN CLUB

BERKSHIRE CHAPTER NEWS & EVENTS

VIEW from the CHAIR Animal Tracking and Spring Planning

Greetings to all members in the Berkshires and Pioneer Valley. As I write this, the temperature outside is hovering in the teens, which is balmy compared with some recent weather! Time is drawing near to the deep, cold calm of mid-winter, time to reflect and prepare for the coming year.

We had a very successful and fun Annual Meeting at the beginning of November. The food was delicious and the atmosphere at Willits-Hallowell, part of Mt.

Holyoke College, was perfect for sharing our stories and learning more about the wildlife around us from Sue Morse, founder of Keeping Track, an organization that trains professional biologists and citizen scientists in wildlife monitoring skills. Animals around us, like bobcats, rabbits, and skunks, leave many clues about their daily habits, especially in the winter. We were fortunate to be able to follow up with some hands-on tracking training on February 22 at Noble View. Frank Grindrod of Earthworks Programs will offer a tracking workshop that's free because of the AMC's Special Projects Fund. These funds support Chapter conservation initiatives and supplies and equipment to the Berkshire Trails and AT Committees.

At our Annual Meeting, we were also able to appreciate the many leaders and other volunteers who have given freely of their time and energy. We gave out over 50 patches and hats to these deserving individuals. If you haven't gotten yours yet, please let me know!

We have several new people on the Executive Committee, ready with some new ideas and plans. Keep watch for quarterly planning meetings with free dinner for Outings Committee leaders, and

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A Death Near the Appalachian Trail

by Cosmo Catalano, Massachusetts Appalachian Trail Committee

These ramblings do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Massachusetts AT Committee, the AMC, the ATC, or any sponsoring partners.

We had a hiker fall to his death on a side trail (which our Club maintains) to the AT last summer and there were other fatalities elsewhere on the AT in 2013 that can be attributed to its physical challenges. These incidents bring to my mind that what we do is not without risk. Our local story (in brief) occurred when two brothers decided to hike down from Race Brook Falls campsite to "go check out the falls." They followed the blue-blazed trail down towards the road, and at some point (most likely where the trail turns left, away from the stream) went off-trail, past a line of large boulders and a double blaze placed to direct hikers to the left, and found themselves 50 yards later at the top of the waterfall. From here, we as trail volunteers do not know what specifically happened next—we only know that one of the hikers fell down to the bottom of the upper waterfall. Other hikers and local rescue personnel came to the scene, but were not able to save the man's life.

So, this presents to us a moment to think about some things: As volunteer stewards we engage in many different aspects of trail management. As well as physical maintenance of the trail, we write and edit the text in the ATC's guidebook, edit official maps, create and install trail signage, build bridges, and construct shelters and privies at overnight sites. What we can't do, of course, is get inside the head of trail visitors—we can only supply as much external information as we can—while keeping the hiking experience as "wild" as it can be. As our AT Management Plan puts it:

"[Trail facilities]...should be constructed when appropriate to protect the resource or provide a minimum level of public safety. Design and construction of these facilities should reflect an awareness of, and harmony with, the Trail's primitive qualities."

Just what is our *personal* risk in "providing a minimum level of public safety?" AT volunteers are protected from Tort by the Volunteers in Parks program run by the NPS. Club volunteers

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ANNUAL POTLUCK – Saturday, March 29

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VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

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OUTDOOR EDUCATION

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August Camp 2014

MOUNT RAINIER NATIONAL PARK

Hike in the shadows of majestic Mount Rainier!

In 2014 August Camp experiences the incredible beauty of Mount Rainier National Park. Marvel at spectacular scenery while walking among towering hemlocks. Re-live the drama of Mt. Saint Helens, and hike on the shoulder of one of the tallest peaks in the lower 48. Camp will be set up in the small former lumbering town of Packwood adjacent to the park.

After a day of the activity of your choice, relax around the nightly campfire. This will be the time to listen to ranger talks, hear reports from the day's hikes, learn about the next day's activities, and enjoy singing and conversation.

This full service tent village for 64 campers per week offers home-cooked meals, daily hikes at all levels, nightly campfires, and wonderful camaraderie.



photo by Rob Robertson

The designated airport is Seattle-Tacoma International, and the camp's fleet of vans provides transportation between camp and Sea-Tac each Saturday.

The Application and Camper information forms, as well as detailed Camp information, can be found on the August Camp website at www.augustcamp.org. Plan your one or two week adventure now and be part of one of the AMC's oldest traditions.

Applications are now being accepted.

Week 1: July 19 - July 26
Week 2: July 26 - Aug 2
Week 3: Aug 2 - Aug. 9
Week 4: Aug. 9 - Aug. 16

Questions about August Camp? Contact Delaware Valley Chapter member and August Camp leader Lennie Steinmetz at steinmetz.lennie@gmail.com or 610-694-8677.

Berkshire Chapter Executive Committee

– 2014 –

CHAPTER OFFICERS

Chair: Sabine Prather
(chapterchair@amcberkshire.org; 413-949-3914)

Vice Chair: vacant

Treasurer: Sonja Goodwin
(treasurer@amcberkshire.org; 413-534-4049)

Secretaries:

Roger Beer
(rbeer4@comcast.net; 413-437-7542)
Grace Ferrante
(mgferrante@yahoo.com; 413-588-6698)

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Appalachian Trail Committee:

Jim Pelletier
(at@amcberkshire.org; 413-454-4773)

Berkshire County Representative: vacant

Berkshire Exchange Committee:

Jon Hanauer (newsletter@amcberkshire.org)

Conservation Committee: Peter Thieme

(valley1111@comcast.net; 413-536-6235)

Family Programs: Heather Wyman

(SquareRoot123@gmail.com; 413-454-8424)

Membership Welcoming Committee:

Steph Burton Harris
(sburton8a@gmail.com; 413-429-1947)

Mountaineering Committee:

Sarah Long
(mountaineering@amcberkshire.org; 845-235-3127)
Ingrid Nelson
(ingridln@gmail.com; 617-308-6503)

Noble View Committee: Frank Evans

(FEvans6568@aol.com)

Nominating Committee: vacant

Outings Committee: Jim Helems

(amcoutings@gmail.com; 413-246-6506)

Paddling Committee: Connie Peterson

(paddling@amcberkshire.org)

Past Chair: David Sauriol

(past-chair@amcberkshire.org)

Public Relations Committee: vacant

Trails Committee: Patrick Fletcher

(hiker6@comcast.net; 413-562-9863)

Training and Education Committee:

Wayne Rodrigues
(leadershiptraining@amcberkshire.org; 413-244-7376)

Website Committee:

Bob Bergstrom (webmaster@amcberkshire.org)

Young Members Committee: vacant



BERKSHIRE EXCHANGE

– March 2014 –

All issues of the Berkshire Exchange (back to 2003) can be downloaded at <http://amcberkshire.org/berkex/archives>

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Other Helpful Contacts

Chapter Trips Approver: Jon Hanauer
(approver@amcberkshire.org)

Membership in a Bottle: Chris Ryan
(geolopes@comcast.net; 413-549-4124)

Regional Director: Sharon Foster
(regionaldirector@amcberkshire.org)

New England Trail Planner: Joshua Surette
(jsurette@outdoors.org; 413-835-0410)

Tuesday Hiking: Lewis Popper
(lewis.popper@gmail.com; 413-727-8016)

Save the Date! All Are Welcome!

AMC Berkshire Chapter Annual Potluck Dinner

Saturday, March 29, 6:00 p.m.

Genesis Conference Center, 53 Mill Street, Westfield, MA

Welcome spring and join us at the **Genesis Spiritual Life & Conference Center** in Westfield! Situated on the former Crane estate, Genesis is known for its holistic approach to mind, body and spirit, its environmentally friendly grounds, and its serene atmosphere.

Committee Chairs will be on hand to give members and visitors alike advice on where to get out on the trails, rivers, lakes, and mountains around us, and also how to protect and maintain the trails and land.

Please bring a dish to share with 6–8 people. We are *requesting* you bring a dish as follows (but feel free to bring whatever you want):

Last name A–K, main dish

Last name L–R, dessert

Last name S–Z, appetizer

Please register with Sabine Prather so we know how many tables to set up!

Contact Sabine Prather at 413-949-3914 or chapterchair@amcberkshire.org.

It's a wonderful event for everybody!

Trees, Paddlers, and Wildlife – Ecology of Our Waterways

After enjoying our potluck, which will include some foraged goodies from Russ Cohen, he will do his presentation. Cohen is a Rivers Advocate with the Massachusetts Division of Ecological Restoration's Riverways Program, as well as a teacher and writer for the foraging of wild edibles.

What should be done about trees lying in a river? Should they be removed, pruned, relocated, or left undisturbed? What are the safety considerations? What is the appropriate balance between the competing desires of anglers, canoeists, kayakers, and other boaters who seek easy access; the interests of property owners concerned about flood drainage and a "tidy" appearance; and the needs of fish, mammals, amphibians, insects, and birds for adequate food, nesting, and cover? What is "large woody debris" in rivers, and how does it improve water quality and control flooding downstream?

Russ will answer these questions as well as share some information about native species that are suitable for planting in riparian areas.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

— VOLUNTEER FOR THE BERKSHIRE CHAPTER EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE —

If you'd like to be part of the top level of Berkshire Chapter leadership and you're interested in one of these exciting positions, or would like to know more, please contact Sabine Prather at 413-949-3914 or chapterchair@amcberkshire.org.

Chapter Vice Chair

The Chapter Vice Chair works with the Chapter Chair to develop goals and establish benchmarks to achieve these goals. The Vice Chair attends (and represents our Chapter in the Chair's absence) the AMC-wide Chapters Committee meetings. The Vice Chair would be nominated to become Chapter Chair at the end of the current Chapter Chair's two-year term. Please contact Sabine Prather.

Berkshire Exchange Publisher

For details, please contact Jon Hanauer at 413-388-0354 or newsletter@amcberkshire.org.

Nominating Committee Chair

We are looking for someone to assist our Chapter's committees in identifying and mentoring qualified individuals for leadership roles in the Berkshire Chapter. This position is vital to the continuity of Chapter leadership. We need someone who has, or is willing to develop, a broad knowledge of our Chapter and its members, and who would enjoy helping to identify talented members and leaders and encouraging them to become more involved. Please contact Sabine Prather.

Young Members Committee Chair

Young Members activities target adults in their 20s, 30s, and 40s, but are always open to everyone. Please contact Sabine Prather.

— VOLUNTEER FOR NOBLE VIEW OUTDOOR CENTER —

Please contact Gary Forish at 413-572-4501 or forgary@comcast.net.

Website Editor

Someone to edit and manage the website at nobleviewoutdoorcenter.org is needed. Keeping the site updated with images, event schedules, and general information will be the main responsibilities.

Gear Available to Rent or Borrow

Did you know that the Berkshire Chapter has gear available to borrow for AMC trips? If you're a leader, or just going on an AMC trip, we have some equipment you can use. Also, there are several canoes and kayaks available to rent for all members, including those not going on an AMC trip. AMC trips get priority, but if you're able to get to South Amherst and load a boat on your car, you can rent most for as little as only \$10 per day. See <http://amcberkshire.org/boat-rental> for more information.

Other available equipment includes a two-burner standalone stove, a tabletop stove, snowshoes, crampons, zero-degree sleeping bags, and a canoe cart.

For more information, contact Sabine Prather at 413-949-3914 or chapterchair@amcberkshire.org.

Wounded Warriors are planning a stop at Noble View

During their trek north on the Appalachian Trail in mid-July, the Wounded Warriors will pay a visit to Noble View Outdoor Center. The exact date and time will be announced on the Chapter website. Come celebrate, and hear about their inspiring journey to "walk off the war." Learn more about these men and women at warriorhike.com. For more information, please contact Gary Forish at 413-519-3251.

2014 Adventure Travel Trips

Adventure Travel has many exciting adventures lined up for 2014! Are you interested in hiking Big Bend, backpacking in Death Valley, or maybe fly fishing in Montana? If international travel is more enticing,

consider cycling in Tuscany or trekking in Peru. The adventures take our participants all over the globe in a dynamic and active group setting. Visit www.outdoors.org/adventuretravel to learn more about our programs and view our trip listings.

Appalachian Trail Committee Held Annual Volunteer Gathering

On February 1, 80 new and old Appalachian Trail volunteers attended our 12th Annual Volunteer Gathering. Participants heard Massachusetts AT Committee Chair Jim Pelletier speak about the past season's accomplishments and challenges. AT Volunteers (including teens on the AMC's Volunteer Trail Crew) contributed over 9,000 hours to the AT last season. While traditional activities such as treadway and shelter maintenance were strong, gains in areas such as open space management, invasive mitigation, and rare plant monitoring were notable—and are areas where the Committee will continue to direct its efforts.

Maintainers, Corridor and Natural Heritage Monitors, Upper Goose Pond Caretakers, and Volunteer Ridgerunners met in breakout sessions to review the season in detail, and discuss projects for the upcoming year. On February 10, the Committee will meet to create a preliminary project schedule, with the aim of a final schedule ready by March 3.

Saturday's Gathering was also attended by interested folks from two groups, the Berkshire County Hiking Group and the new AT Volunteer Project Group. Attendees from both groups were impressed with the AT Committee's record of stewardship, its partnerships with the DCR and the NPS, and how much fun we were all having. The Committee looks forward to working with new volunteers from both of these groups.

– MEET OUR NEW COMMITTEE CHAIRS! –

Steph Burton Harris: Membership Committee Chair

I grew up in the Hudson valley, exploring the Catskill and Adirondack mountain ranges. I developed a deep respect for the natural world and an affinity for adventure. This led to many backpacking trips, travel in Europe, and endless meanderings in the forest.

I eventually landed in the Berkshires and have lived in western Massachusetts for 13 years now. I have a B.A. in Environmental Studies and plan on attending graduate school at Antioch next fall. My husband and I have a homestead in the hinterlands and we do our best to live gently.

With the AMC Berkshire Chapter, I hope to focus my efforts on growing the membership base by providing folks with the opportunity to connect with and experience the abundant wonders of our region. I bring a “can do” attitude to all my endeavors. See you on the trail!

Heather Wyman: Family Programs Chair

I have been a member and active leader for the Pioneer Valley Hiking Club and the AMC for around 15 years. I have hiked to Baxter Peak in Maine, and as far afield as Mt. Whitney and volcanoes in Hawaii. I finished my New Hampshire 48 4,000-footers in the fall of 2013 on a backpack to the Bonds.

Besides hiking I am actively involved in scouting as the Westfield Pack’s 108 Committee Chair and Westfield High School BOPS member (Band Parents group). I have led family hikes in the past, and with an active group of available co-leaders, which is mandatory with kids, I was able to start again.

A recent AMC hike I led was a “Public Lands” themed hike to Goat Peak on Mt. Tom. We celebrated a birthday of 5-year old Eden, who was accompanied by her grandmother, and they both completed the hike with no complaints! Both kids and adults practiced “flagpoles” (holding on to a bar or a tree and sticking legs out parallel to the ground) on the tower, followed by a handstand competition. We have had several older adults without kids join us looking for an easier paced hike, and the blend has been quite fun.

So I’m really enjoying leading these AMC family activities for the Berkshire Chapter. We schedule an event on the last Sunday of each month. Watch the event listings online or email me at SquareRoot123@gmail.com. Come join us!



photos by Heather Wyman



- OUTDOOR EDUCATION -

Leadership Training, Berkshire/Worcester Chapters

Noble View Outdoor Center, Russell, MA

Saturday–Sunday, March 22–23

Whether you'd like to become a Chapter leader or just want to improve your outdoor skills, you're invited to attend. Training emphasizes group dynamics, leaders' responsibilities, trip planning and management, weather emergencies, incident/accident scene control, leader awareness, and decision-making. Fee of \$40 includes day training and materials. Overnight lodging available for \$20/night. Advance payment requested. Existing leaders attend at no charge.

Leader: Wayne Rodrigues (laughingwildwolf@yahoo.com; 413-244-7376)

Registrar: Deb Herlihy (debora_herlihy@yahoo.com; 508-380-1193)

SOLO Wilderness First Aid Training

Noble View Outdoor Center, Russell, MA

Saturday–Sunday, April 12–13

or Saturday–Sunday, May 17–18

Improve your skills and increase your confidence. Learn accident scene management and patient care at western Massachusetts' Noble View Outdoor Center (nobleviewoutdoorcenter.org). Standard first aid practices are generally based on the assumption that help will arrive soon and the patient will be out of your hands and at the hospital in under an hour. Accidents can and do happen, and all too often members of a group are not capable of dealing with the emergency. Not only does this lead to improper care of the patient, but it also endangers the entire group. WFA addresses the medical and logistical issues that arise where there is no ambulance, no shelter from the elements, your supplies are few, and the length of your wait for help is unknown. Lectures and discussions are supplemented by hands-on scenarios. An emphasis on long-term care and evacuation complications in the backcountry make this course unique. Fee of \$150 with optional lodging available. Subsidy available for active Berkshire Chapter leaders. All are welcome: AMC members as well as members of the general public.

Contact Gary Forish (413-519-3251 before 8 PM; forgary@comcast.net)

***Hey!* Are You Still Receiving the BERKSHIRE EXCHANGE in the U.S. Mail?**

Berkshire Exchange Online!!

If you're a Berkshire Chapter member, you have the unique opportunity to contribute to conservation, and our budget, by signing up to receive the *Berkshire Exchange* electronically! Just go to www.outdoors.org/membercenter, sign in and update your Chapter Newsletter Preferences. It's that easy!

Also, you'll get your *Berkshire Exchange* up to 2 weeks earlier.

What are you waiting for? Do it now!

Don't forget to check in at home...

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• In Memoriam •

MARY L. CONLEY, 1939–2013

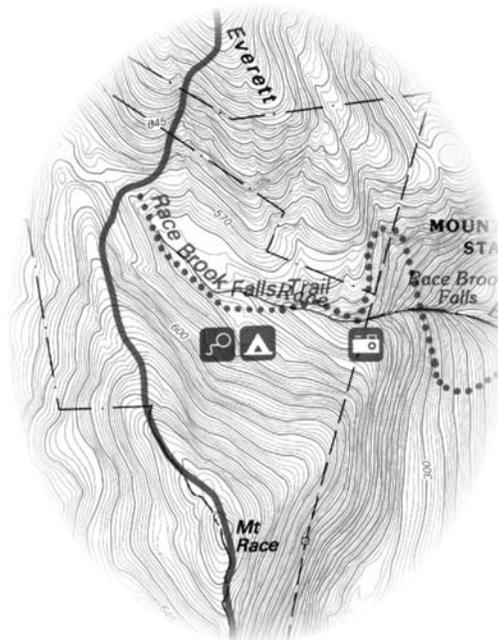
Mary L. (Bent) Conley, 74, died suddenly Tuesday, December 31, 2013 in Deerfield, MA during a hiking trip on the Mahican-Mohawk Trail with the AMC Berkshire Chapter's Tuesday Hikers. Mary, the daughter of the late Joseph John and Catherine Anna (Salisbury) Bent, was born in Boston. She graduated from Walpole High School in Walpole and was a communicant of St. John the Evangelist Church in Agawam. Mary was employed as a bookkeeper for a total of thirty-five years. Since retiring in 1999, she was a volunteer at Noble Hospital and Saint Mary's Church in Westfield, and at St. John the Evangelist Church. In 1985 Mary and her husband David fulfilled her dream of visiting Bryce Canyon National Park in Utah which she had seen images of in a Viewmaster when she was a small child. They went in the subsequent years to explore most of the western National Parks as well as many interesting state parks. In recent years, Mary had been an active member in the Berkshire Chapter of the Appalachian Mountain Club, serving as treasurer for the Noble View Committee and going on many hikes with the Tuesday Hikers. She was also a member of the Friends of Robinson State Park in Agawam. Many of her favorite moments were when she was cooking and baking for others and tending to her flower gardens. She leaves her beloved husband of fifty years, David Charles Conley, her son David William Conley and his wife Teresa Ann Conley of Columbia, SC, her daughter Elizabeth Anne Parker and her husband Charles Noble Parker of Los Angeles, CA, and her sisters, Joan Ann MacGray of Largo, FL and Katherine Linda Beyer and her partner, Peter Mignone, of Newport, VT. She also leaves many beloved cousins, nephews and nieces. In addition to her parents, she was predeceased by a brother, Joseph John Bent, Jr. who had resided in Nobleboro, ME. In lieu of flowers, any memorial donations may be made to The National Shrine of the Divine Mercy Eden Hill, Stockbridge, MA 01262, or to the charity of one's choice.

A Death Near the Appalachian Trail, *continued from page 1*

are considered "government employees", and as such can't be sued by hikers for injury, inconvenience, lost time, etc., as long as they are working within their job descriptions (part of which is reflected in the Management Plan quoted above).

While we are protected, it does not remove our responsibility to do things the right way—follow design standards and maintain the physical condition of the trail as required by ATC. We do all those things (and do them well), and still a hiker dies of his injuries. Should/could we do more? Would railings or fences built to keep hikers on the trail or away from cliffs be in harmony with the trail experience? Should we build ATV-accessible "rescue routes" from nearby roads to the AT, put mile markers on the blazes, and clear helicopter access openings in areas where there are higher numbers of hiker injuries and/or rescues? We get these requests from local responders often when there is an incident on the Trail, but so far have not needed to provide them as they are not part of the standard we are required to follow.

A hiker takes on a level of personal risk by choosing to hike the Trail. But I think, sadly, they are not always aware of that assumption. Ultimately, they are responsible for their own actions. There are going to be slippery rocks, muddy trails, unsigned road crossings or trail intersections, unprotected cliffs, even a scarcity of blazes. When a hiker steps out of the parking lot and onto the AT he or she immediately enters a world where the "golden hour" that EMT's value so much (the time between injury and the hospital) does not exist. For some of us, that is part of the appeal of the Trail—the breaking of bonds between the protective shell of the "real" world and the freedom of the trail world. I believe we should continue to avoid pressure to make the AT a "walk in the park," to diminish the sense of remoteness and distance from the built world. But, are we really ready for the consequences? I think we did everything right regarding the physical condition and management actions on the Race Brook Falls Trail, but I am thankful that it was not my son laying at the bottom of Race Brook Falls.



From the Chair, *continued from page 1*

more new information on the Chapter website, just to name a few.

Leadership Training weekend will be March 22–23 at Noble View (see page 6). It's a great way to hone your leadership and trip planning skills, and the cost is affordable—and will be reimbursed for new leaders once you lead some trips!

The Chapter Potluck will be Saturday, March 29, at the Genesis Conference Center, near Noble Hospital in Westfield (see page 3). We look forward to bringing in Russ Cohen, Massachusetts Riverways advocate and master forager. His talk will focus on the importance of natural obstacles in waterways and dealing with paddling conflicts. But feel free to also ask him about delicious things to eat in the wild!

As some of us are planning and waiting for warmer weather, others are out enjoying the snow, skiing, snowshoeing, hiking, ice skating, and ice climbing. You can always check activities.outdoors.org to see what's happening. I recommend putting in the activity you like, and seeing what all the chapters have to offer.

Finally, I have some sad news. Mary Conley, Dave Conley's wife of 50 years, died while hiking with Tuesday Hikers on New Years Eve. She and Dave enjoyed many outdoor pursuits together, in New England and out west, and she has served as treasurer for Noble View. They've both been active with Friends of Robinson State Park and their local church, St. John the Evangelist in Agawam. Many AMC members attended her funeral and shared stories about her and Dave at the luncheon afterward. Our condolences go out to Dave.

Respectfully,
Sabine Prather
Berkshire Chapter Chair
chapterchair@amcberkshire.org

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Spring 2014



**Stratton Pond Shelter,
Long Trail, Vermont.**
photo by Wayne Rodrigues