

The Berkshire Exchange



Your Connection to the Outdoors

Fall 2017

Reflections from the Chair

By Jan Alicia Nettler, Chapter Chair
AMC Berkshire Chapter

Often people come up to me and say something indicating that it must be a terrible experience to be “saddled” with the “job” of Chair of the Berkshire Chapter. For me, it is just the opposite. It has been a great honor to serve you as Chair for the last two years. I stand taller when I say I am Chair. I am proud to be able to use my skills to lead the Executive Committee and give support to all of our very active committees. Yes, at times it is a lot of work (although not always), but it is good and fulfilling work. We are the oldest conservation group in the United States plus we offer so much in the way of outdoor activities and education. There is no question in my mind



Above: Jan Nettler, AMC Chair, takes a question at the 2016 Berkshire Bash
Photo by: Andrea Minoff

that being in a leadership position in the AMC has been an amazing experience and journey. In addition to being involved in our Chapter, I have had the opportunity to get to know and learn from people from all over the eastern U.S. I highly recommend taking on this role to anyone who has leadership skills.

I've also had the opportunity to work with so many dedicated hard working volunteers in our Chapter. We offer so much because of these people. I am looking forward to seeing where we go in the next year or two under Martin Mahoney, who is currently Co-Chair.

We are still looking for a new Co-Chair to work with Martin and eventually, hopefully, become Chair in a couple of years. This is a great opportunity for one of you. If you want to discuss the possibility, please write me at chair.amc.berkshire@gmail.com or write Martin at vice-chair@amcberkshire.org

I hope you are taking advantage of some of the many things we offer. I'm also a hiking leader. I've led about 8 hikes this year and have gotten to meet so many of you. I'm still practicing climbing and hope to join the Mountaineering Committee on one of their events soon. We do plenty of trail work, mostly on the Appalachian Trail and the New England (M&M) trail. And if you haven't heard, the AMC has established a few primitive campsites on the Connecticut River for paddlers. Very soon a new one will be completed in Northampton. And don't forget to join in one of our bicycling activities...

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BREWERY AFTERWARD

YOUNG MEMBERS
(20S/30S & YOUNG-AT-HEART)

When: Saturday, October 28, 2017, 9:15AM - 3:00PM

Where: 716-732 South Undermountain Rd,
Sheffield, MA 01257.

Free parking. Race Brook Falls Parking Area, located on
the west side of the road.

We'll begin with a look at Lower Race Brook Falls. Then we'll follow blue blazes along Race Brook Falls Trail. On our way up we'll cross over Race Brook on stepping-stones. There will be another, high crossing over a "bridge" of parallel logs. We'll pass by a campsite, then turn left (south) onto the Appalachian Trail. From there we'll follow the white blazes, past 100 year old head-high pitch pine, to the summit. There is one nice view that you'll see while on your feet, looking out over the vegetation. There is another just ahead where we will stop and sit to have a snack. Then we'll retrace our steps back down to our cars.

The total round trip of this hike is 7.2 miles, with an elevation gain of 1,625 feet. We will travel at an overall pace of 1.5 mph, for a total hike time of approximately 4.5 hours.

More than half of this hike is strenuous and steep. There are some stairs, and even more rock scrambles. We will include a few stops during our ascent to rest and drink water. Also, there are a couple of brief, very steep drop-offs where you will need sure footing.

Dogs are welcome if they ALWAYS get along well with all other dogs and all people. Dogs MUST be kept on a 10 ft. max leash at all times. Owners must carry proof of current rabies vaccination.

Afterward, everyone is invited to Big Elm Brewing which is less than a 10 minute drive down the road. We'll get takeout (maybe pizza?) elsewhere for our group and split the cost, so please bring cash. You can purchase beer in the taproom. The staff lead tours of their brewery too. The address is Big Elm Brewing, 65 Silver Street, Sheffield, MA 01257.

Chapter Officers

- **Chair:** Jan Alicia Nettler
(chair.amc.berkshire@gmail.com)
- **Vice Chair:** Martin Mahoney
(vicechair@amcberkshire.org)
- **Treasurer:** Jane Glushik
(treasurer@amcberkshire.org)
- **Secretary:** Roger Beer
(rbeer4@comcast.net)

Committee Chairs

- **Appalachian Trail Committee:**
Jim Pelletier (at@amcberkshire.org, 413.454.4773)
- **Berkshire Exchange Committee:**
Nate Szymanski (berkexeditor@amcberkshire.org)
- **Biking Committee:**
Brant Cheikes & Janine Papesh
(bicycling@amcberkshire.org)
- **Conservation Committee:** Robert Cherdack
(robertcherd@gmail.com)
- **Family Programs:** Margo Chapski
(familyprograms@amcberkshire.org)
- **Membership/Social Committee:**
Bess Dillman (membership@amcberkshire.org)
- **Mountaineering Committee:**
Jim Van Natta & Ingrid Nelson
(mountaineering@amcberkshire.org)
- **Noble View Committee:** Frank Evans
(fevans6568@aol.com)
- **Nominating Committee:** vacant
- **Outings Committee:**
Kathy Martin (hiking@amcberkshire.org)
- **Paddling Committee:**
Charles Murray (paddling@amcberkshire.org)
- **Communications Chair:** vacant
- **NE National Scenic Trails Committee:**
Heather Wyman (squareroot123@gmail.com)
& Dana Gronbeck (dgronbeck1@gmail.com)
- **Training and Education Committee:** vacant
- **Website Committee:**
Evan Yeadon (webmaster@amcberkshire.org)
- **Young Members Committee:**
Nicole Dewberry (youngmembers@amcberkshire.org)

Other

- **Chapter Trips Approver:**
Jon Hanauer (approver@amcberkshire.org)
- **Noble View Outdoor Center:**
Frank Evans (fevans6568@aol.com)
- **Regional Director:** Sharon Foster
(regionaldirector@amcberkshire.org)
- **New England Trail Coordinator:**
Bridget Likely (blikely@outdoors.org)
- **Tuesday Hiking:** Mary Moriarty
(mmoriarty@crocker.com)

Get Outdoors With Family Programs

Family Programs enjoys getting out into nature and exploring all that is around us. The joy of FAMILY Programs is that we get to bring the kids along for the fun in a well supported environment. Whether we're on a trail, camping overnight in a tent or cabin, biking or paddling... we are together with others as we enjoy similar things. Typically, the activities are not too strenuous, yet fulfilling and engaging. We have a lot of fun meeting new people, and the kids... well, the kids are incredible! They soak up ALL that is happening around them, get to try new things that they might not have done before; and the laughs, smiles and eager participation can't be beat! Even with older kids, they feel so empowered when they can show & share their skills to others. It is a win-win adventure!

As with many families, we don't all live in the same area. In the spirit of collaboration, mutual support and ongoing respect for all AMC offerings, Berkshire Family Programs enjoys sponsoring trips, activities and events with our sister chapters. Some of the events might be financially sponsored by other chapters but are OPEN TO ALL no matter where you live. We have a incredible resource for well-trained Leaders who can lead trips from day hikes to back country. To access what is available, visit outdoors.org and enter some key words for what you might be looking for. You'll be pleasantly surprised!

Accessing the Newsletter

Unfortunately going forward, The Berkshire Exchange will be ending the print edition of the Berkshire Exchange. The Executive Committee decided to exclusively release newsletter editions online based on the cost of production and to uphold AMC's conservation mission. Although the Berkshire Exchange will be moving online, we may print special editions in the future. You can find current and previous editions of the Berkshire Exchange at amcberkshire.org/berkex.

We understand that this presents an issue to member who have limited internet access and we are interested in developing a more effective solution of continuing communication with all of our members. If you have any comments or concerns please either e-mail amc.berkex@gmail.com or contact one of our executive committee members with your thoughts..

Thank you for your understanding.

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It was exciting to join with over 130 people at Noble View Outdoor Center for our second annual Outdoor Festival. We are using your dues money to create activities for all of you. The Outdoor Festival was family friendly. We had hikes at several levels, lots of good food, educational workshops and and fantastic presentation about snakes. Tom Tynning brought 3 kinds of snakes with him including a rattle snake!

Well I hope to see many of you at our annual meeting, the Bash, on Saturday, November 4. In addition to a good meal and a short business meeting, we will present the Appie of the Year Award and have a great speaker on conservation, plus there will be live music! Be sure to go to our website and register for this.

So get outdoors when you can. It's an fascinating world out there!

Meet Our *New* Conservation Chair...

Robert Cherdack

What is your background in Conservation?

I have been a nature lover/tree hugger as far back as I can remember. As a high school and college student and as a young professional I was very active in the Sierra Club's Atlantic Chapter. I worked on several campaigns including gathering signatures in support of creating a Redwoods National Park and working on issues such as maintaining the constitutional protection for New York State's Forest Preserve. Later on I worked with the AMC New York North Jersey Conservation Committee and the Highlands Coalition on natural lands preservation. I also worked as a scout leader hoping to promote a love of nature and the outdoors in the local youth.

What interested you about joining the AMC Berkshire Chapter?

My favorite activities are hiking and cycling, and I wanted to contribute to preserving the beauty of the area. The AMC seemed to be an organization that provides opportunities to pursue all these interests. Living in Ashfield, the Berkshire Chapter was the obvious choice for me, with programs and a presence in the local region.

As a member of the executive committee, do you have any goals?

My goals for my participation on the Chapter Executive Committee revolve around conservation. The Chapter represents a tremendous resource for identifying and responding to threats to the environment in Western Massachusetts. I hope to marshal the knowledge, awareness, and passion of the chapter membership in efforts to maintain the beauty, and health of our outdoor environment. I also hope to help our members become more effective supporters of the AMCs wider environmental campaigns.

What motivates you to be outdoors?

Scenic beauty of hills and mountains is the most powerful attraction of the outdoors for me. The beauty of forests, tall trees, flowers, mushrooms, birds and other wildlife are also important. The quiet of the forests, the sense of being in nature's realm rather than an artificial locale, all have a calming and regenerative effect.

Fall Hiking Tips With Kathy Martin

Cool, crisp days. Leaves of yellow, red and orange against a clear blue sky. No humidity, no bugs, and minimal mud. What could be better than Fall hiking? Nothing except, perhaps sharing that experience with a friend. Particularly if the friend isn't a hiker.

So whether you are hiking for the first time or the 1000th time. Whether you are hiking a mile or ten miles, in the local park or up Mt. Washington. Whether you are alone or with a group following are some tips that will make your hiking adventure more pleasant.

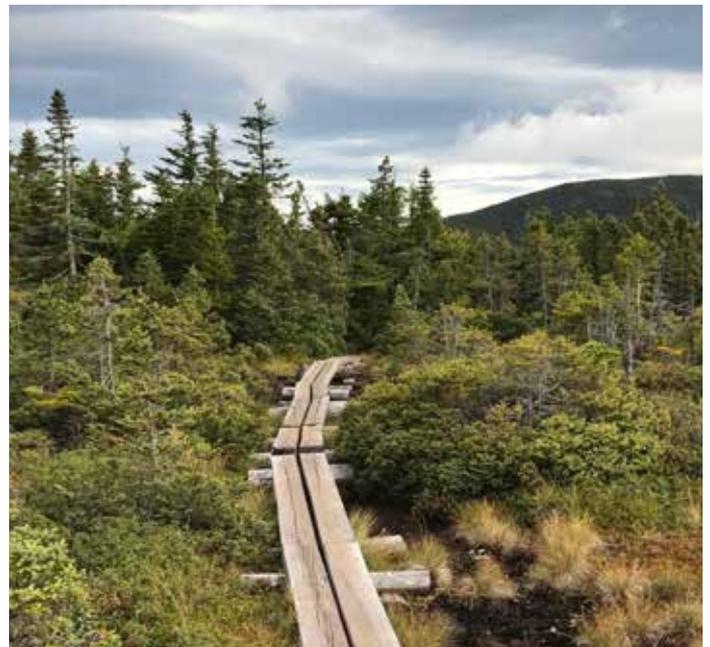


Photo by: Nate Szymanski

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Please join us at the Berkshire Bash,
AMC Berkshire Chapter's annual dinner meeting!
Saturday, Nov. 4, 5:15pm-9:30pm
Summit View Banquet House
555 Northampton St. (Rte 5)
Holyoke, MA

The speaker will be Susan Arnold, Vice President for Conservation of the Appalachian Mountain Club. She will speak about AMC's conservation mission and activities across the region and how we as a chapter and as individuals can become more involved.

The doors open at 5:15, live music will be from 5:45 to 6:45. Dinner is at 6:30; the business meeting and elections will be at 7:30; and the speaker will begin at 8pm.

Admission (\$20) includes a social hour with live jazz music, buffet dinner, a short business meeting with the election of our Executive Committee members for the coming year and a speaker. The buffet will include a vegetarian option. There is a cash bar.

Please make your reservation on our [Eventbrite page](#) before October 23, 2017



Above: Susan Arnold

Susan joined the AMC in May 2003. She is responsible for coordinating AMC's overall conservation mission and strategy across the AMC region from Maine to Washington, DC, and oversees the policy, research, and trails departments. Prior to working for the AMC, Susan was Director of Policy for Governor Jeanne Shaheen of New Hampshire for six years. Susan worked in Washington, DC for a US Senator, and then as a lobbyist on smoking and health issues. She also worked as an organizer, then Political Director, for NARAL Pro-Choice NH, a state affiliate of the national organization. Susan has a BA in English from Yale, and lives in New Hampshire.

Be Comfortable!!

Wear sturdy comfortable closed toed shoes with good grips. For hikes in your local wildlife sanctuary or on flat trails, athletic shoes are fine. For more aggressive hikes, invest in a good pair of hiking boots.

Dress in Layers!! You will find you are more comfortable in three or four layers rather than two because you can better adjust your body temperature. If you are hiking more aggressive terrain, such as Mt. Washington adhere to the **WISE** Layering System:

The clothing layer next to the skin should be a **Wicking** material made of wool or synthetic fabrics;

The next layer is an **Insulating** layer such as a fleece, wool, down or fiberfill

Followed by the **Sheltering** layer. The sheltering layer is worn on the outside of our clothes. Its purpose is to Keep rain and wind away while allowing body moisture to escape.

Finally, the E is for **Extra**: bring some clothes to change into if you have a clothing malfunction.

For short hikes with little elevation change and where you are close to your car, you may be comfortable in your gym clothes: running pants or yoga pants, exercise bra and top, fleece and rain coat. Adding a pair of silk or synthetic underwear is a good option. Have a set of clothes in your car in case you need or want to change. Do not wear your cotton jeans. Once cotton is wet from sweat or rain, it stays wet, it feels wet and it makes you feel miserable!

Don't forget your hat, sun screen, sun glasses and lip balm. Too much sun and chapped skin will make anyone uncomfortable

Take Care of the Basics!

Drink plenty of water...before your hike, and during your hike! Water regulates your body temperature and lubricates your joints. It helps transport nutrients to give you energy and keep you healthy. Your body depends on water to survive. Even if you are doing a short hike, make sure you bring a water bottle and if you are doing a challenging hike, then bring at least two liters to drink. For shorter hikes water is the best. There is no need for energy drinks or drinks with electrolytes. Save that expense for your more aggressive hikes.

Pack a few snacks. And if you'll be hiking a long time, then pack a lunch as well. The food you take hiking will help boost your energy level and keep you from tiring easily. While we should all eat healthy foods, a Snickers bar provides quick nutrition in a pinch!

Take a break when you are tired! This cuts back on accidents and helps you see the beauty around you!

Be Aware!

- Plan your **hike route** before you start your hike and then follow it. Be aware of where the route is and how it is marked. Watch for features that will make you feel comfortable that you are on the correct route.
- Allow enough **time** to complete your hike before darkness falls. In wooded areas, it can begin to get dark as early as 5 pm in late autumn. Start your hike early in the morning to avoid being caught in the woods after dark. Take a flashlight just in case.
- Watch the weather as well as the trees. You know the old saying about New England weather...it is variable and changes in the blink of an eye.
- Keep your eyes on the trail for **hiking hazards**. One hazard that you might not think of is wet leaves! When leaves are wet, they become slippery and you can easily fall.
- Know your hike details! Also tell someone where you are hiking. Let them know when you plan to be back. Always carry a cell phone. It can be shut off, so your hike won't be interrupted, but it will come in handy if an emergency arises. The signal from your cell phone alone could help others find you in an emergency. If you are doing an aggressive hike, make sure you take the ten hiking essentials in your backpack and that you know how to use your map and navigation tools.

Fall Bicycling in the

Pioneer Valley and Berkshires

By Brant Cheikes and
Janine Papesh

Fall is our favorite season for bicycling in the Berkshire chapter region. The air is cool and refreshing, and the colorful foliage creates panoramas of spectacular beauty. We have been regular visitors to the Berkshires for two decades, and bicycling is the featured attraction. Early on, we stayed at a quaint motel in Hancock, in the northeast corner of the state near the New York border. Rolling on quiet roads with breathtaking views, we would ride on RT-43N to RT-7N, then continue to a left on RT-2W. Here begins what we call the “Taconic Challenge,” a steady four-mile climb at an average 7% grade, reaching the summit on the MA-NY border. After taking in the views in all directions, we would zip down into NY, then loop back via RT-22S to RT-43N. This 43-mile journey earned us a delicious dinner—with guilt-free dessert—in Williamstown.

More recently, we have become regulars in Egremont, doing our rides from there. From an inn on RT-41, we ride a loop that we call “the most beautiful bike ride in the Berkshires.” We ride north on picturesque country roads to Alford, then on to West Stockbridge. This is a perfect mid-ride break, with public restrooms and several options for food. Since every good ride has a challenge, we spin up Lenox Road for two miles at an average 4% grade. Descending on Richmond Mountain Road, we stop at a scenic overlook with views of Stockbridge Bowl. After we complete the winding descent, a couple of quick turns puts us on West Hawthorne Road, where we skirt Tanglewood, then continue to Prospect Hill Road. Prospect climbs to rewarding views of the Berkshire hills, then drops into Stockbridge. After lunch in Stockbridge, we loop back via RT-183 through Housatonic, Van Deusenville Road, Division Street, Alford Road, and Hurlburt Road, ending by taking RT-71 to RT-41 to the inn. This loop covers 40 miles with 2400 feet of total elevation gain. Dinner in Great Barrington followed by ice cream at SoCo Creamery is our reward. (We admit it: we ride to eat.)

We moved to the Pioneer Valley only a year ago, so we are still climbing the learning curve, getting to know the area roads. We have discovered a beautiful and relatively flat loop that starts at the 5J Creamee farm stand, follows River Road north through Deerfield, crosses the Connecticut River on a rail trail bridge, then heads south via Greenfield Road, Meadow Road, and Falls Road, until it intersects with Route 47S into Sunderland. In Sunderland, we always marvel at the Buttonball Tree, an impressive sycamore at least 350 years old—which we first learned about from a speaker at one of our Chapter’s potluck dinners!

There is plenty to enjoy about cycling in Western Massachusetts after the summer is over. Check out bikenewengland.com for guides to hundreds of rides in our area and beyond. If you have a favorite ride in the Pioneer Valley or the Berkshires, or want more information about the rides described here, email us at bicycling@amcberkshire.org.

See you on the road!

Elections Are Coming!

The Berkshire Chapter Executive Committee is the top level of chapter leadership, representing all the committees that keep our chapter moving. We are currently seeking talented AMC members to help in improving the Berkshire Chapter.

Vice Chair

The Vice-Chair works with the Chair to develop chapter-wide goals and establish benchmarks to achieve these goals. The Vice-Chair assists the Chapter Chair when the Chair is not available to attend functions, meetings and activities where chapter leadership representation is needed. In conjunction with the Chair, works with Committee Chairs to assist in meeting stated goals and objectives. The Vice Chair would hopefully take on the roll of Chapter Chair as well.

Communications

The Communications Coordinator manages all communications of the Berkshire Chapter. Currently the chapter has people responsible for our website, newsletter, Facebook page and monthly emails. The Communications Coordinator will coordinate the work of these people.

Treasurer

The Treasurer is responsible for the financial affairs of the Chapter: receiving income, maintaining bank accounts, paying bills, reporting to the Executive Committee and submitting an annual report for audit by Club the Treasurer works with the Executive Committee to make and implement goals for the Chapter and to make decisions on all matters that affect the Chapter.

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