Report of the Chapter Chair

It’s been another exciting year.

The Executive Committee established goals for the year: 1) Executive Leadership (Identify Vice Chairperson for 2018; Fill open positions; Volunteer and leader recognition; Choose the Appie of the Year; Succession Planning); and 2) Training (Leadership training; Train trainers; Leadership training completion).

We were successful in several of these areas. Unfortunately, we did not identify a Vice-Chair yet. But we did fill several of the open positions. We moved forward in Volunteer and leader recognition and chose an Appie of the Year. We had leadership training with Worcester Chapter. More importantly, we had many people go through trainings to become trainers. We have a strong training committee and expect to have our only training next year without having to rely on Worcester Chapter. We are also more successful this year in mentoring new leaders so that they are now prepared to lead activities.

But most importantly, we offered many activities for our members. During the year we offered 104 hikes, backpacks and snowshoe hikes; there were 6000 hours of trail work on the AT and the NET; our Mountaineering Committee offered 61 climbing activities; our new bicycling committee had 2 activities; Paddling had 3 activities; Young Members had more than 13; Family Programs had 3, and 46 conservation activities. We also had a leadership training workshop, plus there were several Wilderness First Aid and other types of trainings.

In addition to our Annual Meeting (the Bash), we had several potlucks. And we had our second annual Outdoor Festival at Noble View Outdoor Center. At that event, we were able to recruit new volunteers for both the chapter and for Noble View, but more importantly, everyone who came had a great day outdoors. At all of these events we had dynamic speakers that educated and entertained us. We learned about trail work and land conservation in the Berkshires, large and old growth trees in our area, conservation activities of the AMC, and learned a lot about snakes.

The Outdoor Festival again was a huge success. There was a large turnout. We offered several hikes, a scavenger hunt, a big barbecue, a campfire and had a great presenter who taught us a lot about snakes. Plus we had a ukelele orchestra..

We awarded numerous scholarships for trainings.
Mike Zlogar was awarded the Appi of the Year for all of his good work on the New England Trail.

We financed, out of our reserves, a new primitive campsite in Northampton on the Connecticut River.

Jan Alicia Nettler
Berkshire Chapter Chair, 2017

**AT Committee**

The AT Committee had another active and productive year with approximately 260 volunteers contributing approximately 7,700 volunteer hours in 2016. Volunteer hours for 2017 are currently being collected. Below is some information on the major areas of our activities.

**Trail Maintenance:** A near full roster of volunteers was maintained throughout the year. The usual assortment of bog bridge, step stone, stone stairs and the like projects were accomplished. AMC Teen and Pro crews completed 2 more switchbacks on the north side of Mt Prospect and made good progress on Day Mtn. Greenagers returned to the south side of Mt Everett completing installation of wood steps anchored to the steep rock faces and installing a stone patio in front of the Hemlocks shelter.

**Trail Lands Monitoring:** Roughly 20% of the boundaries were maintained consistent with our 5 year maintenance program. The inventory of missing monuments created for the National Park Service’s use and long range planning was actually reduced this year by diligent efforts to locate missing monuments. We initiated a more formal process for documenting and followup on encroachments.

**Trail Facilities:** A number of small shelter, campsite and privy repairs were made over the course of the season. A 3rd bin was added to the Wilbur Clearing privy to accommodate the slow mouldering at this site. A tent platform was added at Tom Leonard and a new coat of stain applied the shelter and privy. Kay Wood shelter and privy received similar attention. Hemlocks Shelter received a new roof. Identification and removal of hazard trees remained a focus this year.

**Natural Resources:** Our efforts in this area remained robust with: natural heritage monitoring, open area management, invasive plant management, and phenology monitoring efforts all active. In addition, a
pilot Cultural Resources program was initiated in concert with our NPS and ATC partners.

**Upper Goose Pond:** The cabin was opened in mid May and closed in late October with no interruptions in Caretaker coverage. Overnight stays were essentially even (with 1 week of data yet to be recorded) from last year’s number of 2419. Vandalism of the sign at the entrance to the channel to Upper Goose Pond remained a problem. We are consulting with AMC pro-bono lawyers to resolve some management questions. The dock at the former George cabin site was disassembled on cabin closure and will be replaced with a new dock in the spring.

**Visitor Use Management:** Use of our Group Use Notification system continued to expanded this year with over 200 group overnight site stays managed by our Coordinator. Many overnight groups continued to use the AT without using our notification system and outreach to these groups continues. The DCR and AMC seasonal Ridge Runner programs and our second year of volunteer Overnight Site Caretakers enhanced the effectiveness of our outreach to hikers on the trail, preventing and resolving many problems. We are considering expanding this program next season. For the first time ever we collected hiker use data continuously over the course of the season at a spot on the AT. Approximately 3,200 hikers used this section of the AT (2,600 backpackers + 410 Day Hikers + 210 in Groups).

**Management:** Our Committee continued to be robust. Our partnerships with AMC, DCR and ATC remain strong. Our relationship with the AT Communities of Great Barrington, North Adams and Dalton remain sound and we have initiated a relationship with the Cheshire community. We abandoned efforts on renewal of our Memorandum of Understanding with the Commonwealth and NPS, and shifted our efforts to update of our Local Management Plan in coordination with these partners. The Committee is seeking a Social Media Coordinator to work in collaboration with the Volunteer Coordinator to enhance the Committee’s outreach. We look forward to another exciting year in 2018 which we will kick off with our 16 Annual Trail Volunteer Gathering early next year.

Respectfully Submitted for the AT Committee:
Jim Pelletier, Chair

**Berkshire Exchange Committee**
Bicycling Committee

In December 2016, my wife and I proposed to the Chapter’s Executive Committee that a new Bicycling Committee be formed within the Chapter, and that we be approved as co-chairs. Both of us have been avid cyclists for many years, and Janine was an approved Bicycling Trip Leader for the Boston Chapter since the late 1990s, with many successful trips behind her. The Executive Committee gave its blessing in January 2017. Soon thereafter we had a webpage on the Chapter’s website, and had begun planning a series of monthly rides for the period May through October.

We were able to run two monthly rides, one in May and another in June. We had 7 riders participate in May, and 3 in June. The main factor limiting the number of rides in 2017 was that we initially had only one trained and approved Bicycling Trip Leader—Janine. I completed the mandatory AMC Leadership Training in March, and completed my two mandatory co-leads in May and June. As a result, by July, the Bicycling Committee had doubled its bench of approved leaders—to 2!

Unfortunately, our personal circumstances changed in May: we had to find a new place to live by the end of July (our rented house was being sold from underneath us). As a result, we had to put all our volunteer activities on hold until we could get resettled, and no further rides were held.

With all that behind us, we are looking forward to 2018 with lots of enthusiasm and excitement. We plan to run rides at least once every month, and have already identified several existing members who are interested in becoming Bicycling Trip leaders. In addition, we have created a Bicycling Committee-specific email list with 25 members, and hope to grow that membership in the months to come.

Brant Cheikes & Janine Papesh
Bicycling Committee Co-Chairs

Communications

My predecessor resigned as Communications Coordinator effective November 2016, due to his relocation from the Berkshire Chapter service area. I stepped into the role in December 2016 on an acting basis, given that my primary volunteer responsibility was to launch the Chapter’s new Bicycling Committee (discussed above). As an Information Technology professional, I felt it would be relatively easy for me to learn the key AMC
systems involved in disseminating e-mail updates and newsletter notices to Chapter members.

In January 2017 I came up to speed on the Communications role and learned how to create e-mail “blasts” and newsletter notifications using the AMC-supported Blackbaud Sphere system. I wrote my first e-mail blast in early February, and it went out to the membership on February 10th. Over the course of 2017, I created and sent 10 such e-mail blasts, as well as 4 separate messages announcing new issues of the Berkshire Exchange, the Chapter’s periodic newsletter.

E-mail blast content varied widely, but in general, the blasts promoted chapter-wide events such as potlucks and leadership training opportunities. Blasts were also used to promote and send reminders about the Chapter’s two “signature” events—the Outdoor Festival at Noble View (August) and the Berkshire Bash (November). I received lots of helpful support along the way from the AMC’s volunteer assistant, Lisa Robbins. Lisa did a fabulous job reviewing my draft emails and suggesting changes that made the messages pithier and more impactful.

As the year progressed, I organized the Chapter’s communications team, which included our Membership/Social Chair (who also manages the Chapter’s Facebook presence), our Newsletter Editor, and our Webmaster. To support our work, we created an e-mail distribution list that made it easy for us to coordinate our activities, and for members of the Chapter’s Executive Committee to send items for communication to our members using whatever venue(s) made the most sense.

The chapter held chapter-wide events nearly every month in 2017. These events were marketed using all the tools at our disposal: e-mail blasts, Facebook, MeetUp, and even the Newsletter (when appropriate and timely).

In 2017, we managed to publish our Chapter’s newsletter, the Berkshire Exchange, on a near-quarterly schedule. The newsletter was distributed electronically as well as in printed form to a distribution list that had been maintained within the Chapter for some time. During the Summer, I led an effort to compare and contrast the members receiving newsletters electronically with those receiving paper copies. After some review and deliberation, the Executive Committee voted to phase out paper copies of the Newsletter, providing fair notice to those members who historically received their newsletters in the US mail.

our chapter newsletter. Prior to this, we had not sent a newsletter in roughly two years. We also conducted a survey of chapter members, to
find out their interests and preferences. The information collected will inform planning for 2017.

In October, the AMC announced that the Sphere communications management system was being replaced with Salesforce Marketing Cloud. I participated in two training webinars in November, and worked with the new AMC volunteer support team to prepare and distribute the Chapter’s December e-mail blast using the new system.

As 2017 comes to a close, I am moderately satisfied with how Communications were handled within our Chapter this year. The periodic effort involved in preparing monthly e-mail blasts and quarterly newsletter alerts was not particularly burdensome, and I was able to carry out these duties in addition to my role in the Bicycling Committee. Still, as we move into 2018, the Chapter should consider increasing its efforts to formally fill the Communications Coordinator role, as more could be done if a volunteer were able to fully dedicate themselves to filling that role.

Brant Cheikes

Family Programs Committee

Berkshire Family Programs has been active this year with numerous trips, activities and trainings. There has been a lot of collaboration between AMC Chapters to create an engaging array of opportunity for families, and broaden our base of experience. Although there are a limited number of Family Program Leaders within the Berkshire Chapter, we have drawn upon fellow Leaders from sister chapters, and from various committee’s to create well received trips, outings and events. Those include:

- Indoor Rock Climbing at the Rock Gym in S. Hadley (January): Berkshire Mountaineering Committee and Family Programs. Indoor rock climbing & pizza party.
- Barton Cove Camping & Paddling Weekend (July): Berkshire, Worcester and Boston Chapters; Family Programs and Paddling
Committees; Tent camping, outdoor cooking, paddling & night hiking.

- Noble View Outdoor Festival (August): All Berkshire AMC committees. Scavenger Hunt and hiking.
- Paddling Day in Vermont on the CT River (October): Berkshire Family Programs & Worcester Paddling Committee. 10-mile paddle in southern Vermont/ Day Trip.
- The Berkshire Bash! Acknowledged the accomplishments of a new Leader (Dee Dice) for her commitment with completing the Leadership Requirements for becoming not only a Family Programs Leader, but also a Worcester Chapter Paddling Leader. Dee is also in the process of becoming a Berkshire Paddling Leader.

Another Leader (Margo Chapski) has been actively engaged in the Training and Education Committee and has been awarded Faculty Status with AMC to instruct Leadership Trainings.

- Leadership Trainings: Noble View in March 2017
- Harriman, NY in September 2017 (Hiking Track)
- Prindle Pond, MA in October 2017 (Leadership Track)

Another participant is currently engaged in earning Leader status for Hiking & Family Programs, as well. AND... another Family Programs Leader is currently involved as Co-Chair for the NET Committee. We certainly do have a diversified group of leaders! For 2018, another participant has also expressed an interest in pursuing the Leadership Training, WFA and becoming a Family Programs Leader. Very exciting!

Summary of Goals for Family Programs, 2017 (developed in December of 2016):
2018: Current goals remain consistent and on-going from 2017, as follows:

1. **Design & implement Leadership Training specific for Family Programs:** on-going.

2. **Certify 2-4 FP Leaders in 2017:** (2) Leaders have completed the Leadership Training. One has completed Family Programs Leadership and Paddling Leadership for Worcester Chapter; the other will be completing Family Programs Leadership mentoring in 2018; (1) new trainee for 2018!

3. **2-3 Cyber meetings vs. face-to-face meetings, as needed:** Meetings are challenging, to say the least. 2 face-to-face meetings were held for education purposes on “How to Plan a Trip” and all the processes that go into that; another for Activity, Event & Trip Planning for 2018.
4. **Plan 2-4 trips for 2017; 3-6 trips for 2018**: Goal met for 2017: (1) Indoor Rock Climbing, (3) Noble View trips, (1) Barton Cove/ camping & paddling trip, (1) CT. River Paddling Day trip. Looking ahead for 2018: The January tradition of Indoor Rock Climbing continues; Winter Weekend at Noble View scheduled for February; 2 day hikes planned for early spring; planning for a ‘water hike’ series is in the works; camping & paddling is being planned again at Barton Cove for July; other paddling day trips and camping trips are being discussed, as well.

5. **Continue to grow Family Programs within Berkshire Chapter**: With more Leaders comes more trips! (1) *new* trainee has expressed interest and is pursuing FP Leadership status. Cross collaboration with sister chapters has worked very well with both Boston Chapter and Worcester Chapter.

6. **Continue to submit Family Program documents for Ex-Comm approval**: The Training & Education Committee has the Berkshire Family Programs Leadership Guidelines. On-going.

7. **Collaborate with other Committees to bring Family Programs into their activities**: In process with Hiking, Paddling, and Mountaineering. On-going.

8. **Continue to keep the lines of communication open**: On-going... email, emails, emails!

9. **Continue to provide support/guidance for new FP Leaders and FP Committee**: On-going. I will be hosting a “How to Post a Trip” lesson for FP Leaders and anyone else who is interested in winter 2018.

Family Programs was able to purchase camping equipment this year, and it was utilized at Barton Cove, The Outdoor Festival and Noble View. Currently, the equipment is stored in the Berkshire AMC Storage Unit in Northampton. If anyone would like to borrow/use any of it, please contact the Chair: familyprograms@amcberkshire.org. An equipment list is available through the FP Chair.

**2018 Equipment Goal**: Explore purchasing/acquiring:
- spikes, stabilizers, &/or grippers for FP use on winter hikes and trips
- snowshoes in varying sizes for winter hikes & trips
- hiking poles

As above, if this equipment is acquired by FP, FP would be willing to let others borrow/use. A Policy & Procedure will be written & submitted to Ex-Comm for approval.

Respectfully submitted, January 8th, 2018,
Margø Chapski
AMC Berkshire Family Program Chair

Mountaineering Committee

Yet again, this was another eventful year in mountaineering having offered 71 climbing related events.

We offered skiing, indoor gym climbing, winter hiking, and ice climbing trips during the winter months.

Our spring events began with our annual Skills Review for Mountaineering trip leaders. The following weekend we held our annual trail work party at Chapel Ledges in Ashfield in partnership with the Trustees of Reservations. Over the next few weeks we ran courses for beginner and intermediate climbers (our Introduction to Rock Climbing and Intermediate Rock Climbing courses).

Later in the spring and throughout the summer we ran weekly Wednesday evening climbing trips to Chapel Ledges in Ashfield, Sunbowl in Sunderland, and Farley Ledges in Erving. Throughout the spring, summer, and fall we had weekend trips to the "Gunks" on the Mohonk Preserve in New York State and to local climbing areas in Western Massachusetts. We also offered a Women's Climbing Day in May, which was open to everyone, but geared towards women.

In the fall, we held an Anchor Building course in October. We continued climbing on Wednesday evenings indoors at the Central Rock Gym in Hadley.

We had a mid summer Pot Luck which drew many of our core group. We celebrated the holidays with a potluck party in early December.

We wish to welcome and thank Marvin Davenport for his commitment to coming on as Co-Chair along with Jim VanNatta. Deborah Cohen thankfully continued on as the permanent and enthusiastic Secretary. Bill Kopek deserves thanks for stepping up to be our Treasurer. We wish to thank all of the trip leaders, Committee Officers, and others who generously volunteered their time and effort in making this year's season such a great success.

Respectfully submitted by: Jim VanNatta and Marvin Davenport,
Mountaineering Co---Chairs

Outings Committee

It has been a very busy first year as Outings Chair! We have had 52 Tuesday hikes, 50 general day hikes and 7 backpack trips. We have been co-leading many hikes with Connecticut and Worcester Leaders, and providing hikes through our Family and Young Members Programs making it difficult to know exactly how many hikes we have actually had! Currently we have 60 individuals listed as Hike Leaders through the Berkshire Chapter and a subset of 23 Leaders in the Tuesday Hiking Group.

Several Leaders lead hike series over the year: Bess Dillman lead the summer AT hike series, Jan Nettler lead two hike series, River Hikes and Easy Hikes in Northampton and Joe Gelinas and Roxanne Suprina lead a beginning hiking series in the Berkshires. Several Leaders participated by leading hikes at our Annual Family Outing at Noble View. Jan Nettler will be acknowledged at our Annual Meeting as the MVP Hike Leader of 2017. Thanks to all.

Congratulations to our new hike leaders: Mike April, Nicole Dewberry, Dee Dice, Kathy Martin Kari Amick, Burchie Green and Fred Riotte. Currently we have the following individuals in our Hike Leader in Training Program: Deena Gilbert, Patricia Watson, Greg Wolf, Diane Jones, and Charles Edson. I hope we will be honoring these individuals as new Leaders at our next annual meeting.

In another capacity, I have attended and/or assisted in three two-day Leader Trainings and spent two weekends in training to be a Train the Trainer. One of the Train the Trainer workshops covered Hiking Skills while the other covered Leader Training skills. I plan to continue my training by attending both Boston’s and New Hampshire’s Leader Training. Along with other Berkshire Leaders who have completed the Leadership training through our newly activated Training and Education Committee, we will be hosting for the first time in several years, Berkshire sponsored Leader Training in the spring of 2018. I want to thank the Worcester Chapter for helping us this year with co-training between the two chapters. Without Worcester chapter members Chris Fogarty and Debora Herlihy, we would have not been able to move forward in training, mentoring and co-leads. A huge thank you to Chris, Deb and the other Worcester folks. Chris and Deb also helped me revamp our training materials and our forms and advised me on how to tracking mechanisms for Leaders.
The Tuesday Hikers have had some changes over the last year. Lynn Binder and Sandy Wallis have both retired from their respective positions of Leader Coordinator and Hike Poster. Another long time Hike Poster Lewis Popper is taking a break. I want to thank them for their years of service. We welcome new Hike Poster David Whitney and Leader Coordinator Deb Shea. A huge thank you to our primary Hike Poster Mary Moriarty, and our other Leader Coordinators Jeannie Jones, Peggy McLennan and Kathy Martin.

Looking forward to next year, I hope we can see our Leaders In Training (LIT) become fully qualified leaders while attracting new LIT’s. I hope we can increase our hike offerings and develop new hiking series. I would also like to have more training offerings such as first aid and hiking skills.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kathryn Martin, AMC Berkshire Outings Chair

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**Social/Membership Committee**

This year we had three well-attended potluck dinners with speakers, two in Northampton and one in Lee.

In August we held the Second Annual Outdoor Festival at Noble View Outdoor Center. About 120 attended and participated in hikes, a scavenger hunt and camping skills workshops. Attendees enjoyed the AEIOUkelele band, barbecued chicken and salads for lunch and a captivating presentation by Herpetologist Thomas Tyning, Professor of Environmental Science at Berkshire Community College and author of Snakes in Western Massachusetts. All this was provided by the chapter, through the help of many volunteers, for free!

The annual meeting in November, the Berkshire Bash, was held at the Summit view House in Holyoke with about 100 attendees. The event began with a social hour with music by a wonderful jazz band from the Unitarian Society followed by dinner. The speaker was Susan Arnold, Vice President of Conservation of the Appalachian Mountain Club.

Outstanding members were recognized. Mike Zlogar was given the Appie of the Year Award for his many years of work on the New England Scenic Trail. The officers and committee chairs were elected for 2018. Outgoing Chair, Jan Nettler, was recognized for the energizing effect her two-year
stint as chapter chair brought to the chapter. Dee Dice was recognized for her contributions to the Family Programs and Martin Davenport for efforts on behalf of the mountaineering committee.

I look forward to seeing you at an event in 2018 or out on the trail!

Bess Dillman
Social Membership Chair
AMC Berkshire Chapter

New England Trail Committee

Training and Education

Young Members

Training: This year I attended the AMC-wide Young Members Leaders Retreat, the Berkshire Chapter’s Leadership Training, SOLO Wilderness First Aid and CPR training, and Winter Hiking Training in New Hampshire. Two Young Members from the Berkshire Chapter, Charles Edson and Kari Amick, attended the annual AMC-wide Young Members leadership training during the fall. Kari completed both co-leads and Charles is planning to schedule his second co-lead. Charles completed the SOLO Wilderness First Responder course.

Activities: I began the year with hosting a couple of Young Members socials, and during the latter half of the year (following my leadership training and co-leads), I hosted one activity per month. I lead hikes on my own, with a stop afterward at a local restaurant or brewery. I also lead activities in cooperation with Alison Terjek, the Young Members Chair in Connecticut. Alison leads an advanced hike and I lead a moderate hike on the same day, and afterward both groups get together for an early dinner. During this month of December I am helping to organize Maine Brewery’s Tap Takeover as a fundraiser for AMC’s conservation work.

Advertising: Since the group of Young Members within our chapter is still quite small, I continue to advertise activities in several ways. I create
posters and social media listings on Canva.com. About once per season I send out an email to those on my list about upcoming Young Members activities and chapter activities. I appreciate help from everyone on the Executive Committee who lists my activities on Facebook, Meetup, Connecticut Chapter’s Meetup, the chapter website, email blasts, and the chapter newsletter. I submit information to online and paper publications located in the area of an upcoming activity. Evan created a Young Members page on the chapter website.

Respectfully Submitted,
Nicole Dewberry, Young Members (20s/30s) Chair

Website Committee

2017 Website Committee Annual Report

- Managed amcberkshire.org using the Drupal 7 content management system. Performed backups and updates to Drupal core files. Renewed hosting and domains. Added improved user interface modules for content managers.
- Built posts, pages and image galleries corresponding to AMC chapter communications/events. Expanded Photo Album page with thumbnail galleries and image light boxes. Continued archive of the Berkshire Exchange Newsletter.
- Set up blogs for individual activity groups of the chapter located on their site homepages. Updated post subject tagging for activities and trails.
- Set up email accounts for various committee members. Managed email distribution lists.

Goals

- Increase participation in AMC activities by keeping current and relevant content on the website.
- Increase the amount of photo galleries on the site.

Evan Yeadon
AMC Berkshire Chapter Webmaster
### Past Chairs of the Berkshire Chapter

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2014-15 shared by 4 members of the Executive Committee: Roger Beer, Wayne Rodrigues, Grace Ferrante, Patrick Fletcher
2015-16 Jan Alicia Nettler
2016-17 Jan Alicia Nettler