



Spring 2008

# The Happy Hiker

The Official Newsletter of the Allentown Hiking Club

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Why should I lead a hike? There are always hikes on our schedule to do and I can just select one that fits my schedule and there is no problem.

You know, I did think that some time I just might like to lead a hike for a change but that does generate some headaches. There are a lot of unknowns about leading a hike. How many people would I have to deal with? I guess 3 or 4 would not be too bad, but suppose it was 30? You just know that some of those people that call and say they will be coming will not show. You can also bet that someone will always be late getting there and how long do you wait for them? Of course we could wait a few minutes but not too long, after all it is not fair to the folks that showed up on time. Another thing is just what type of people will these folks be? I have met some neat people on hikes and then once in awhile I have met a person that was a little annoying and just didn't seem to mix well with the group. The weather, how about that for a headache. It just could rain the whole time or it might just be cold.

Are any of the headaches legitimate? Are any of these things any reason for not leading a hike? Hardly! I personally can tell you that the satisfaction that comes from leading a hike is well worth dealing with any of the unknowns.

Our club needs some additional hike leaders. I'm not saying replacements for our present hike leaders, but additional hike leaders.

What is the AHC mission? "The aspiration of the Allentown Hiking Club is to escape the crowded city, to walk, hike, and climb for the enjoyment and exercise with nature loving companions; to maintain its section of the Appalachian Trail; and to stimulate public interest in every phase of nature and the outdoors through programs and activities." I would think that our mission has not changed much in 76 years. Maybe some of us are not escaping the "crowded city" but definitely we all do want to hike.

We want to have many different hiking options available to us. It becomes obvious that we need more leaders. What is involved in leading a hike? One of the most difficult things for me is fitting it into my schedule 3 or 4 months in advance. Of course you need to decide what hike you would like to share with others. You need to consider the logistics, can it be a loop hike, or maybe a key swap, or an in and out, or a vehicle shuttle. Is it a day hike or backpack? The access points to the trail and the parking areas have to be considered. How much do you need to check it out before putting it on the schedule? Maybe you are more comfortable in completing the hike before leading it, actually hiking it twice. None of these things are overwhelming.

I think you will find that most of this is just good old common sense. Also this is something that you are sharing with folks that have a common interest, again back to our mission.

**You can lead a hike!** Think about it and kick it around with any of the present leaders. If you look at our hike leader requirements, I think you will find out that they are reasonable. A sincere "thank you" from a very tired hiker is a nice thing. Let's SPRING forward with some additional hike leaders in the AHC.

Bernie Harris



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The Happy Hiker is published quarterly by the Allentown Hiking Club, Inc. The opinions expressed in signed articles are not necessarily those of the AHC, but of the authors.

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### Deadlines for the Summer 2008 Newsletter & Schedule

**Happy Hiker Newsletter**  
**Activity Schedule**

**Wednesday, May 28, 2008**  
**Wednesday, June 4, 2008**

Please forward all Club related articles, thoughts, and items to the editor by mail or, preferably, by email or disk using MS Word. Send all hiking schedule activities to the schedule coordinator. You do not have to use the hike schedule form found on the club web site and in this newsletter, but if you choose not to, please include all the listed fields in your description of the activity.

### The AHC Forum

The AHC Forum is an opportunity for email communication within our hiking club. This is an ideal method for contacting all members that use email with a COMMON club message or item of interest. If you have email please consider sending Edna Himmler, [membership@allentownhikingclub.org](mailto:membership@allentownhikingclub.org), an email asking to be added to the AHC Forum.

### Protection of the Appalachian Trail in PA

Jack Paul

As you may know, the Appalachian Trail has very little protection against encroaching development. The buffer zone around the Trail is very narrow, only a few hundred feet if my memory serves me correctly. About seven years ago, a race track project was begun in Eldred Township very close to the Appalachian Trail. This is a development for owners of high-end cars to race them on this track. If you have ever been to Eldred Township, or traversed the Trail near there, you know it's a pristine setting in a lovely valley. This racetrack project promises to alter that forever. Not only will it bring air, noise, and site pollution, but also water pollution from gasoline and oil runoff, as there is a creek running either through, or near, the property. Conservation groups, including the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, the Sierra Club, the Lehigh Gap Nature Center, and the Blue Mountain, have spent over \$150,000 trying to stop this project during the past seven years. Despite all efforts, the racetrack will almost certainly become a reality.

This sad saga indicates how difficult it is to protect the Trail. Representative Bob Freeman has introduced a bill, H1281 that will require municipalities throughout Pennsylvania to enact zoning and land use ordinances along the Appalachian Trail. This bill would afford much needed protection to the Trail, at least in Pennsylvania. To view the Bill, go to <http://www.legis.state.pa.us> and type in H1281. You can also find your senator on this website. Please contact your senator and urge him or her to pass this important piece of legislation. Please also get your friends to help pass this bill by contacting their senators.



**KATAHDIN, MAINE - MARCH 2<sup>nd</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> 2007****Part 1 of 2**

John Wargo

The road trip northward started on a rainy Friday morning. As I proceeded east on route 78 into New Jersey, I had the first thoughts of what this drive might be like, slow and wet. After fighting rain that changed to snow around the New Hampshire/Maine border, then finally to a moderate to heavy snow that covered the road north of Portland, ME, I realized I needed to stop short of the destination. Thirteen hours after starting out I ended up in a motel in Bangor, Maine ready for some rest. After speaking to Szu-ting and Yaroslav who were coming from the west via New Hampshire, Alex, Heather and Pasha who were several hours behind me, we decided it best for all of us to stop when we had enough of the terrible driving. We would meet the next day in Millinocket, Maine.

Saturday, March 3<sup>rd</sup> The day dawned sunny and breezy, a much better day to continue northward. Arriving in Millinocket mid-morning it would be several hours till the others arrived and thus, time to try and get in touch with Baxter State Park rangers and let them know of the change in plans. Well no luck, it seems impossible to get in touch with them any time except normal business hours. Winter hours are M-F 8-4. After the others arrived, we checked into the Pamola Motel and made plans for the upcoming trek. We all enjoyed a meal at the Appalachian Café. Pasha especially enjoyed the selection of jelly. Returning to the motel after stopping at the local Hannaford's it was time to separate group gear and pack the sleds. The hallway of the Pamola was ideal for sled packing. After a briefing of details by our leader Szu-ting about safety, the route, avalanche beacons, and such, it was time for bed.

Sunday, March 4<sup>th</sup> Alarm's going off about 5am; it was finally time to head to Baxter State Park. Temperatures were not bad, around 20 degrees and the sky overcast. The 12-mile sled pull into Roaring Brook was going to be a challenge. Our first encounter with the rangers came about 2 hours into the trek. We explained to him why we were a day late and thought there would not be a place for us in the bunkhouse. He radioed ahead and informed us the bunkhouse was full for that evening but we could stay in one of the shelters nearby, just what we figured on. At the Tongue Pond Gatehouse (four miles into the trek) it was time for a short break. The temps were rising and the snow getting a little sticky. While on our break, a group of Canadians on skis also stopped where we were. Little did we know that they would become sort of a lifeline for us later at Chimney Pond. After a mostly uneventful 8 more miles, passing groups going out, and reviewing their many types of sled contraptions, we arrived at Roaring Brook late afternoon. Tired and hungry we needed to find water, shelter and set up camp for the evening. A brief look around, we found what we needed. The area was beautiful, covered in about two feet of snow, an ideal winter setting. We decided we would all fit in the shelter. After we covered the entrance with tarps from the sleds, camp was set. Before dark we had a visit by another ranger. He gave us some details of the pending addition to the park; potential visits by a local pine marten and of course the ominous weather forecast. The plan was to get a good night's rest after a long day and for the next day's 3.3-mile uphill trek to Chimney Pond.

Monday, March 5<sup>th</sup> With some tough steep sections the sled pull was hard work. Fortunately it was only a short distance. Soon through the snow and clouds, we would get veiled glimpses of what we came for, Katahdin, not one peak but a series of peaks (Baxter, Pamola and Hamlin) connected by ridges. Katahdin rises from the surrounding tableland that creates an awe-inspiring scene. It has been described as the premier Alpine playground in the Eastern US. We arrived at the bunkhouse and were greeted by one of the Canadians occupying it. She invited us in for a warm-up. We decided we needed to find our shelter. The ranger told us the evening before to take one of the shelters to the left side of the trail leading to the ranger station. They are further into the woods and more protected from the elements. Temperatures were already falling and the snow blowing. The winds were already picking up. We were debating about fitting all of us into the shelter. It was smaller than the one at Roaring Brook. We thought it would be warmer if we all stayed in one shelter and we set up one tent as a gear tent. The ranger from the previous evening came by and advised us of the forecast. Along with the fact that the wind direction would change and come from the NE, temperatures would be falling into the negative teens with 30-35 mph winds and higher gusts. He suggested we erect a wind wall for some protection from the wind, which we did. He also gave us some options for other climbs if we were not able to go above tree line. Szu-ting and Yaroslav went to find water where the water source was in the frozen pond. The rangers keep an area of the pond open. Heather, Alex, Pasha and I started construction of the wall and made warm drinks.

We were all cold and tired at this point. There was also a mountain rescue unit staying at the crew cabin for the week doing training exercises. After we had the shelter set up and ate some food, it was toward evening and we went to visit the Canadians staying in the bunkhouse. After getting to know them and enjoying the warmth and hospitality, we went for a visit to the Mountain Rescue Team. They gave us much information about which trails we could potentially use for our climb, and also the avalanche danger and weather. They considered the avalanche danger to be high. There had been no slides this year and with 18 inches of new snow since Saturday, severe wind loading possible from the northeast winds and an unstable layer of depth hoar.... High Danger. One of the guys said he would go to the ranger station later, get us an updated forecast, stop by the shelter, and let us know of any changes. We retreated back to the shelter and settled in for the brutal night ahead. Our tracks from the shelter to the bunkhouse and cabin were already covered with drifting snow. Later that evening, the rescue team member came by and gave us the forecast. Same as before, negative teens, 30-40 mph wind, blowing and drifting snow, and this was to continue until Wednesday morning. It proved to be a very accurate forecast. He also told us of the Canadian's planned to follow the Cathedral trail to the top, go over the knife edge, and down Pamola. Our thoughts were to follow them. With more people in the group and the proper equipment (avalanche transceivers, shovels, probes, ropes) we would be able to make a good decision about the danger when we got to the suspect terrain. So, that was the plan...follow the Canadians.



## Allentown Hiking Club - Corridor Monitoring Report – 2007

Barbara Wiemann – Monitor Coordinator

Here are some highlights from the report submitted to ATC for the 2007 monitoring season.

Eight club members, including five new volunteers, participated in eight monitoring trips, putting in 64 field hours and 24½ travel hours. Club volunteers monitored 9.33 miles of exterior corridor boundary. Since the boundary lines in our section have been consistently monitored every year, things are generally in good shape.

We are noticing, however, that as a result of the devastating ice storm several years ago, witness and boundary line trees are falling. As a result, undergrowth is flourishing on the south side of the ridge. This will require more line clearing, especially west of PA 309 and east of Fort Franklin Rd. Other tasks this year will be to install plastic NPS boundary markers and refresh witness tree and line blazes.

My thanks to long-time monitors **Jim Gabovitz** and **Ed Ritter** and new volunteers **Anne Griffin**, **Carl Griffin**, **Bernie Harris**, **Edna Himmler**, and **Nick Rosato**. With your help, AHC has again met its responsibilities to ATC and NPS as part of our cooperative management system.

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### DCNR Grants to Help Hiking Trails

**Appalachian Trail** - \$76,900 grant to help fund the AT Ridgerunner program in the state ; ridgerunners are trained seasonal employees who hike designated sections of trail, educating and assisting trail users and performing routine trail maintenance.

**Black Forest Trail** - \$150,000 grant to cover the costs to design, purchase, and install a 300-foot cable-type pedestrian suspension bridge over Slate Run.

**Horse-Shoe Trail** – \$25,000 grant to prepare a feasibility study and strategic plan for the preservation of an existing 29-mile section of the Horse-Shoe Trail in Berks County. The feasibility study will determine the best way to move the H-ST off roads in the target area. H-STC will use the consulting services of the Nonprofit Center of LaSalle College to develop its strategic plan.

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### Spotlight on the Allentown Hiking Club

2008 Winter-Spring ATC - The register

At its organizational meeting in 1931, an enthusiastic group of hikers voted the Allentown Hiking Club (AHC) of Pennsylvania into existence, elected officers, set the annual dues at \$1.00, appointed a committee to write by-laws, agreed to accept responsibility for maintaining seven and one-half miles of the Appalachian Trail, decided on a plan to hold three hikes and a business meeting each month, and scheduled the first month's hikes.

Today the all-volunteer club, now with 300 active members, continues its mission to “escape the crowded city; to walk, hike, and climb for the enjoyment and exercise with nature-loving companions; to maintain its section of the Appalachian Trail; and to stimulate public interest in every phase of nature and the outdoors through programs and lectures.”

The club maintains 10.3 miles of the A.T. in eastern Pennsylvania on state game commission and NPS-acquired lands from Bake Oven Knob Road to Tri-County Corner. Overnight sites include the Allentown Shelter and the G.W. Outerbridge Shelter.

Under the guidance of Trails Chair, Ed Ritter, who has served in that appointed position since 1992, individual trail maintainers perform basic trail work, while special projects, such as shelter maintenance and parking lot construction, are tackled during the club's annual maintenance trip/picnic and on periodic club work trips.

The club has an active corridor-boundary monitoring program coordinated by Barb Wiemann, who also represents the club on ATC's Mid-Atlantic Regional Partnership Committee (RPC) and serves as RPC secretary. In federal fiscal year 2007, AHC reported that 23 club volunteers contributed 1,223 hours to the A.T., which could be valued at nearly \$23,000 using the most recent value of volunteer time from Independent Sector.

AHC has an extensive, easy-to-navigate [Web site](#) with considerable information on the club, its history, scheduled events (which are open to the public) and more, including an impressive brochure for new members with valuable information on hiking and backpacking. Also noteworthy are Web pages on scouting resources, the Regional Partnership Committee, hike-leader requirements and resources, and a form for reporting volunteer hours.



## Increased Fees for State Park Facilities

For the first time since 2001, fees for overnight accommodations, boating, and picnic pavilions have been increased to help maintain the quality of State Parks and support their operation and maintenance. The price changes took effect on January 1.

In general, prices have increased about ten percent, with the exception of camping, where the base price has increased by \$3 per night. In 2009, prices will increase about 10 percent over the 2008 prices with a camping base increase of \$2 per night.

No entrance fees will be charged to visit a state park.

## Pennsylvania Leads Nation in Deer-Car Collisions

Pennsylvania leads all other states in the number of insurance claims submitted as a result of deer-car collisions and the most overall collisions, 98,313 in 2006, according to State Farm Insurance.

Based upon claims information collected and analyzed by Erie Insurance since 1999, about one in every 100 drivers in the state is likely to have a collision with a deer. The first two weeks in November have more claims than any other two-week period during the year.

According to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety there are an estimated 1.5 million deer-vehicle collisions annually in the United States, causing more than 150 fatalities and \$1.1 billion in property damage. Property damage attributed to collisions in Pennsylvania is over \$78 million.

According to Melissa Miles, senior research analyst for State Farm, "Undoubtedly, the best way to avoid deer-vehicle collisions is through attentive driving behavior."

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION



INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE \$10.00 PER CALENDAR YEAR FROM JANUARY TO DECEMBER, AND RENEWALS MUST BE MADE BEFORE JANUARY 31ST TO STAY ON THE CLUB'S MEMBERSHIP ROLLS. DUES CAN BE PAID AT THE MONTHLY MEETING OR MAILED TO THE CLUB MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY. HOUSEHOLD DUES (MORE THAN ONE MEMBER PER ADDRESS) ARE \$15.00.

**MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY: Edna Himmler > 1754 South Albert St., Allentown, Pa. 18103**

NAME(S):

ADDRESS:

CITY:

STATE:

ZIP: —

PHONE: (      )

RENEWAL

NEW

EMAIL:

Dues @\$10.00 / \$15.00 Household \_\_\_\_\_

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SML	MED	LRG	XLG

CLUB T-SHIRTS @ \$6.00 + \$3.50 SHIPPING EA \_\_\_\_\_

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SML	MED	LRG	XLG

CLUB GOLF SHIRTS @ \$12.00 + \$3.50 SHIPPING EA \_\_\_\_\_

<input type="checkbox"/>
QTY

CLUB PATCH @ \$1.50 + \$.75 SHIPPING EA \_\_\_\_\_

ALL CHECKS PAYABLE TO "ALLENTOWN HIKING CLUB" TOTAL ENCLOSED \_\_\_\_\_

