



Winter 2009

The Happy Hiker

The Official Newsletter of the Allentown Hiking Club

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Here we are, the last Happy Hiker for the year. This year slipped by very quickly for your rookie president. The learning curve was very steep, challenging and rewarding.

The mission of the AHC, "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 sections of the Appalachian Trail; and to stimulate public interests in every phase of nature and the outdoors through programs and lectures." I included our mission in my first president's message and here I am repeating it in my last message. I do this because I think this is what we are about, why AHC was formed and why we exist after 77 years. We are about HIKING, and other outdoor activities, maintaining our section of the AT and supporting, the Lehigh Gap Nature Center and the Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor. The following monthly highlights will review 2008.

In January we had to deal with changing our meeting date for March because of St Timothy's Lenten schedule. This is an inconvenience for us but we want Wednesday meetings and each Lenten season we need to deal with it. Bill Geiger presented a program on hiking in the White Mountains.

In February our program presenter called me early in the morning saying it would be impossible for her to be there because of the weather and the forecast. At 9:30 AM it seemed to me that it may become unsafe for people to be traveling 12 hours later so I cancelled the meeting. In March we did scheduling and set our maintenance hike date for June 1. Anne Griffin gave us a report of highlights from the ATC Mid-Atlantic Regional Partnership meeting that she attended. In April we approved \$680 for the Fort Franklin Road parking area from our treasury. We had a program from Greg Weitzel, Allentown Parks Director. He indicated that the city would resume printing our newsletter, which had stopped in January 2005.

In May we had a program from Dan Kunkle, LGNC.. We regretfully accepted Ginny Musser's resignation as our KTA representative. We provided an information booth at the Boy Scout Jamboree at Kutztown University in May. June was a scheduling meeting Ed Ritter volunteered to be our KTA representative. Ed Ritter reported that we accomplished a lot of work on our June 1 maintenance hike. July was our picnic meeting at Franco Park and was well attended. A covered dish meeting with hot dogs and beverages works well for us. We had a brief business meeting primarily to discuss PPL's proposals for power transmission lines and the effect on the AT.

In August we had a program from Tom Gettings on the Wildlands Conservancy. We discussed Act 24 and formed a committee to determine the natural, scenic, historic, and esthetic values of our section of the AT that should be maintained. September was a scheduling meeting. We were able to get our Fall Happy Hiker printed by the city of Allentown. In October we had a program on birds of the Bake Oven Knob area by Jen Detweiler. November's program presenter had to cancel due to illness. We learned that the Fort Franklin Road parking lot was completed. Our Act 24 committee came up with 10 items of value to be preserved for our section of the AT. AHC completed 1450 volunteer hours for last year.

We have had diversity of hikes offered and in most cases well attended during the year. We have added a couple new hike leaders and continue to look for more.

We have a core of very dedicated people that have made my job easy. Easy? Well, interesting and personally satisfying. Thanks for your help. I think it has been a typical year for the AHC and I look forward to our 2009 officers continuing us on our mission.

Bernie Harris

Check the club web site www.allentownhikingclub.org for changes in the hiking schedule and current news.



Allentown Hiking Club



P.O.Box 1542 — Allentown, Pa 18105-1542

Sponsored by City of Allentown Department of Parks and Recreation

www.allentownhikingclub.org

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 Spring 2009 Newsletter & Schedule

Happy Hiker Newsletter
Activity Schedule

Wednesday, March 25, 2009
Wednesday, April 1, 2009

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, hike update information, or item of interest. If you have email, please consider sending Edna Himmler, membership@allentownhikingclub.org, an email asking to be added to the AHC Forum.

MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE DUE FOR 2009!

Yes, once again it is time to renew your annual dues to the club. Dues are still a bargain @ \$10.00/individual or \$15.00/household per calendar year. Just fill out the form on page 5 and mail it to the membership secretary, or pay in person at a club meeting. The cutoff date will be **January 31, 2009**. Please renew by this date or you will be removed from the membership database.

Club dues help cover the publication and mailing of the newsletter/schedule, library books and video purchases, Appalachian Trail maintenance, misc. dues, etc.

You can also prepay your dues years in advance if you don't want to be bothered on a yearly basis!



Dec. 3, 2008 AHC Meeting Notes

AHC Club Officer Election Results

President	- Ed Vatz
Vice President	- John Hubka
Secretary	- Dick Fink
Treasurer	- Maryann Wagner

NEW HONORARY MEMBER

Nick Rosato, a member of the Allentown Hiking Club since the 1970's, was elected to honorary membership at the December annual meeting. Over the past 30 some odd years, Nick has been highly involved with the club as a hike leader, both day and backpacking, along with club maintenance of both the Appalachian Trail and the trail shelters. In 2005, Nick completed his goal of hiking the entire Appalachian Trail. Currently, Nick in addition to the club maintenance projects is also a member of the club's AT corridor monitoring group .

Congratulations Nick.

Upcoming ATC Biennial Conference.

Bernie Harris

It is not too early for people to get the ATC Biennial Conference on their 2009 calendar. Vermont's Green Mountain Club hosts the 2009 Appalachian Trail Conservancy Biennial Conference at Castleton State College, Castleton VT, July 17-24, 2009. This is a week of celebrating and learning about the 2,170-mile Appalachian Trail. Castleton State College is a small liberal arts college located off U.S. Route 4 west of Rutland. The campus overlooks a classic Vermont village of white clapboard houses and shady streets. The web site for the event is

PA AT Act Update

Barb Wiemann

The PA AT Act now requires local municipalities which contain the trail route to protect the AT experience with appropriate zoning. Many of the 58 affected municipalities do not have the personnel and experience to prepare appropriate zoning ordinances. Therefore, the legislation provides for the employment of a contractor to develop model ordinances that the municipalities can adopt or adapt as they wish. From the 17 firms that applied, one has been selected and hired to do this important work. In order to properly develop ordinances to protect the 229 miles of trail and corridor in the state, the firm needs to know about the features along the trail, and the views from the trail that need protection.

To assist the contractor, the Allentown Hiking Club prepared and submitted a computer disc with information and photos about the important cultural, historic, scenic, and natural features on the section of trail that we maintain.

Thanks to Janet Goloub, Anne Griffin, Carl Griffin, Edna Himmler, Ed Ritter, and Barb Wiemann for selecting features and hiking the trail to take photos so that AHC could fulfill this AT obligation.



Common Buckthorn: A Pesky Invasive

Common buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*) is a troublesome invasive exotic species. Buckthorns are small trees reaching 20-25 feet in height and 10 inches in diameter. Most often they grow in a large shrub form, having a few to several stems from the base, with spreading, loosely-branched crowns. Their bark is gray to brown with prominent, often elongate, lighter-colored lenticels. Cutting a branch exposes the yellow sapwood and a pinkish to orange heartwood.

The leaves are one inch to two and a half inches in size, broadly elliptical, finely wavy-toothed, and may be arranged both alternately and oppositely on the same branch. In the fall, leaves remain green and attached after most other species have lost theirs. The fruits are about five-sixteenth inches in diameter (similar in structure to a cherry), containing more than one seed, very dark colored, and numerous. The seeds can remain viable on the forest floor for several years.

The fruits are eagerly eaten by songbirds, and so the seeds are spread widely. Since the fruit of buckthorn causes a severe laxative effect (hence the species name *cathartica*), the birds quickly pass the seeds in their droppings. When the trees reach maturity, they produce abundant fruit and within a few years there are commonly thousands of seedlings around the base of each mature tree. Cut stumps will sprout vigorously.

Common buckthorn grows in extremely dense thickets that all but eliminate any chance for native vegetation to reproduce on the forest floor. It can be described literally as a "plague" on the landscape, since its rate of spread is truly unprecedented and unequaled.

Young buckthorn trees five-feet or smaller can be pulled out of the ground roots and all. But cutting them down will only encourage accelerated growth from the cut stump.



PA's Water Trails

Pennsylvania has 21 water trails (totaling more than 2,000 miles) that have been mapped or are under development. Water trails are boat routes suitable for canoes, kayaks and small motorized watercraft. Like conventional trails, water trails are recreational corridors between specific locations. Water trails include access points, boat launches, day use sites, and, in some cases, overnight camping areas.

The Commonwealth is one of the leading states in water trail development. The Fish & Boat Commission, DCNR, the National Parks Service, the Pennsylvania Environmental Council, and local agencies are the partners responsible for the growing network. For more information on water trails, visit www.fish.state.pa.us/watertrails.

Water Bottle Update

Nalgene Outdoor Products has responded to the increasing concerns of hikers about the possible adverse health effects of bisphenol A (BPA), a chemical used in plastics such as Lexan.

The company has replaced all of their water bottles with a BPA free plastic known as Triton. For more information about the BSA safety debate, see the National Institutes of Health web site at www.niehs.nih.gov/news/media/questions/syabpa.cfm.



2009 State Parks Calendar

DCNR is again selling a Pennsylvania state parks calendar. Proceeds will benefit the state park system. In addition to full color photographs, the calendar notes significant environmental observances, provides outdoor recreational facts, tips, and guidelines, and highlights state park information and activities.

Photographs in the calendar may be viewed at www.dcnr.pa.us; select "State Parks". The calendar is \$8.49, plus tax and \$1.95 for postage. It can be purchased at 28 participating parks or by calling 1-888-PAPARKS.



ATC & AHC WORKING TOGETHER TO PROTECT THE AT

I am sure many of you have heard bits and pieces about Act 24. This legislation was passed in June 2007 and requires municipalities and townships located along the AT to enact zoning laws to protect the AT within the next year.

The ATC approached each of the maintaining clubs to provide a list of historic, natural, cultural, and scenic points of interest along the section of trail they maintain. The AHC formed a committee to do this. The committee came up with 10 points of interest. The committee then had to provide a written description of each location, why it is worth protecting, what township or municipality it is located in and photos of each of the 10 points of interest. The local maintaining clubs were under a tight deadline to accomplish this task. The AHC provided the requested information within the allocated time frame.

While the local clubs were busy working on their assignment, the ATC was setting up interviews with attorneys. They will select an attorney to review the current zoning laws in place. They will then draft sample legislation for reoccurring themes, such as protecting areas around springs. This sample legislation will then be shared with the local clubs as well as what communities currently have strong zoning laws in place to protect the AT and what communities need assistance. At some point in the future the ATC will then determine what each of the individual maintaining clubs will be requested to do.

Our section of the trail is located in West Penn Township, Lynn Township, East Penn Township and Heidelberg Township. . Some clubs may be asked to have members who are local residences approach their municipal or township zoning boards, to make sure they understand that members of the community find the AT a valuable resource and assist in getting favorable legislation in place.

We don't know for sure what our future role will be in all this. Anyone living in West Penn Township, Lynn Township, East Penn Township or Heidelberg Township who would like to become more involved should contact me at 610-760-0479 or griffins2@enter.net

Anne M Griffin

AHC Mid-Atlantic Regional Partnership Representative

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

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QTY

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

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

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

CHECKS PAYABLE TO "ALLENTOWN HIKING CLUB"

TOTAL ENCLOSED

Yes :: Please sign me up for the Allentown Hiking Club's email list --- the AHC Forum

