

Fall 2011



# The Happy Hiker

The Official Newsletter of the Allentown Hiking Club

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

### HAPPY 80<sup>th</sup> AHC

As I sit here in a field in Central West Virginia gazing across a field of tents, I realize that this event I am attending, a gathering of cavers that occurs every Labor Day weekend, has a lot in common with the Allentown Hiking Club. Enjoying any outdoor activity is fun, but it is even better when you can share it with other outdoor minded friends. For 80 years the AHC has connected many people together in the pursuit of hiking and other outdoor activities. Thanks to all who have enriched my life by being my hiking friends in the AHC in the almost 30 years I have belonged, and I look forward to getting to know many new members in the coming years. It is an honor to be President of the AHC as we approach the club's 80th anniversary in December.

Thank you to all who have given their time to the internal workings of this organization so that we all can enjoy the outdoors together, and to those who have consistently welcomed new members into our club. The club's ability to welcome new people has always been one of its greatest strengths - one I hope we never lose.

A special thank you goes out to Marty Larson who has volunteered to take over the editor duties of "The Happy Hiker," our club newsletter, from Bill Geiger who has tirelessly performed this duty for many years. Big thanks also go out to Carl Griffin, who stepped up to take over the duties of treasurer from Sue Ritter, who faithfully kept the club finances for many years. With Marty taking over the newsletter, his former duties as hiking schedule coordinator are looking for someone new to step up and take them over. This job entails gathering the hike forms created by members at the quarterly scheduling meeting and organizing them into a document with the hikes listed chronologically and formatted in a consistent manner. It is a great opportunity for someone new to the club to become more involved with the organization. Anyone interested can contact me for more details.

With fall approaching, some of the best hiking weather of the season is upon us, but remember that fall also brings hunting season. Be sure to wear blaze orange, and use common sense while hiking during hunting season to protect yourself. Also remember that dressing in layers is an important part of enjoying fall hikes. Wearing several light layers allows you to easily add and subtract from your insulating layer to maintain a comfortable body temperature. Polypropylene and similar material undergarments wick away sweat, keeping your body dry and preventing hypothermia from occurring due to becoming wet. Footwear also needs a mention here. Shoes with a good lugged sole help with traction in the loose leaves that fall brings and it is essential that you have shoes that are properly treated to make them waterproof. Wet feet are cold feet, not to mention the blistering that can occur from hiking with wet feet. Polypropylene sock liners are always a good idea any time of year.

Looking ahead toward the winter season, it is not too early to start thinking about what you are going to schedule for the winter quarter at the December meeting. Besides the usual winter hikes and cross-country-skiing, some winter activities that have been scheduled in previous years that were popular were trips to museums which can yield a whole day of walking without the winter hazards of ice and snow, but they take some pre-planning to organize so start thinking about them now.

December brings the 80th anniversary of the forming of the Allentown Hiking club which we will celebrate at the December meeting with the annual holiday pot luck dinner. I hope to see many new faces this year at the dinner, and I urge everyone to attend and help celebrate the club's 80th birthday, it is going to be a party to remember!

Mike "Sparky" Wuerstle  
AHC President

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Check the club web site, [www.allentownhikingclub.org](http://www.allentownhikingclub.org), for changes in the hiking schedule and current news.

## Allentown Hiking Club

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Sponsored by City of Allentown Department of Parks and Recreation

[www.allentownhikingclub.org](http://www.allentownhikingclub.org)

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### Deadlines for the Winter 2012 Newsletter & Schedule

Happy Hiker Newsletter  
Activity Schedule

Wednesday, Nov. 30, 2011  
Wednesday, Dec 7, 2011

Please forward all club related articles, thoughts, and items to the editor by mail or, preferably, by email. Send all hiking schedule activities to the schedule coordinator.

### Upcoming Programs at the AHC Meetings

In addition to the normal business meeting there is also generally a program which is related in some way to the club's activities. The following is a preview of the upcoming programs:

- Oct 5<sup>th</sup>** The presentation will be a slide show by Dick Saul. The show will be about biking in the Northwest.  
**November 2<sup>nd</sup>** The presentation will be by Cheryl Kunkle. This will be a slide show about hiking Mt. Rainier.  
**December 7<sup>th</sup>** Scheduling night for hikes over the next three months.

### WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS - Spring 2011

Cara Larson	Macungie	PA
Chris Larson	Macungie	PA
Jan Larson	Macungie	PA
Linda Dreisbach Ferrol	Allentown	PA
Linda Boston	Lehighton	PA
Richard Boston	Lehighton	PA
Karen Gradel	Quakertown	PA
Patricia Leith	Bethlehem	PA

### Allentown Hiking Club Administration Positions

The two open club administration positions that were noted in the last Happy Hiker addition were filled at the August hiking club meeting.

Carl Griffin will be replacing Susan Ritter as the club treasurer.

Marty Larson volunteered to be the next editor of the Happy Hiker and will take over that position in January 2012. Bill Geiger will stay as editor through the remainder of this year.



## Hiking Basics

Bill Geiger

As noted in the last Happy Hiker issue, Summer 2011, I started a series of articles which should help address some questions concerning hiking and backpacking in particular. In that issue, hiking trails in Pa. were presented along with a short discussion of clothing and gear. All of the topics in these articles are cut down versions of articles on the Appalachian Trail Conservancy website [www.appalachiantrail.org](http://www.appalachiantrail.org), and additional information is also available there.

### Camping and Shelters

If you've planned something longer than a day-hike, now is the time to anticipate where you might spend the night once you're on the trail. On most sections of the AT and on some of the other trails in Pa. you have two basic choices: staying in a shelter or pitching a tent. Shelter locations, if available, are noted in the maps and trail guidebooks. For the AT, the Appalachian Trail Data Book, and the Appalachian Trail Thru-Hikers' Companion, are both available through the Ultimate A.T. Store of the ATC.

#### What's the downside of shelters?

Shelters can be grimy and rodent-infested when hikers don't clean up after themselves, and they may be crowded. You or your camping partners must carry tents, in case a shelter is not available. Remember that shelters require considerable volunteer effort to build and maintain. The Allentown Hiking Club maintains two shelters along the AT; the Allentown and Outerbridge Shelters.

#### So, why stay at a shelter?



First, shelters are the best places to stay dry in wet weather; they fill up fast when it rains. Second, they are often a good place to meet and talk with other hikers, and most have privies and water sources nearby. But, third and more importantly, staying at shelters reduces hiker impact on the trail environment and is a good Leave No Trace practice. It concentrates use in a relatively small area. A shelter site may seem trampled and overused, but, since the vegetation is already gone, the site will not deteriorate much more, no matter how many people use it. Meanwhile, nearby areas stay pristine. To encourage others to use shelters, please be considerate: Keep the grounds litter-free, don't cut down trees, and don't vandalize the structures.

#### Should I pitch a tent?

Using a tent generally gives you more privacy. You can usually pitch a tent near a shelter, but your trail guidebooks will also indicate the locations of designated campsites at intervals along the trails. Those usually have flat, cleared places to pitch tents and may be near a water source. As with shelters, designated campsites reduce hiker impact on the Trail environment and are a good Leave No Trace practice. Can I find my own campsite? In some areas, particularly the national forests of the Virginias and the southern Appalachians, and along many of the Pa. forest trails, "dispersed camping" is allowed. Dispersed camping means you can choose your own place to camp, but it carries with it a special responsibility of leaving no trace. You must be more careful to minimize your impact in pristine areas. Choose a site with no sign of previous use. Avoid places that show the beginnings of frequent use—those still have a chance to recover if left alone. Set up tents on durable surfaces, such as dead leaves or grass, well apart from each other and at least 200 feet from water. Avoid trampling plants and seedlings.

#### Should I build a fire?

Campfires create the worst visual and ecological impact of any backcountry camping practice. Building fire rings pockmarks pristine woodlands with blackened rocks, piles of ash and charcoal, blackened cans, and unburned wood. Vegetation disappears and soil packs down around the fire ring. Soil becomes sterile, which retards plant recovery. Hikers trample vegetation while looking for wood, and, when they find it, remove woody debris critical to a healthy ecosystem. Leave No Trace principles encourage you to go without a fire. Use a backpacking stove instead. If you do intend to build a fire, check your guidebooks for fire restrictions along the trail; some areas do not permit fires at all. Keep in mind that forest fires are always a potential hazard, especially during early spring, summer, and fall.

Where fires are permitted, build them only in established fire rings. Don't add rocks to an existing ring. Keep fires small. Burn only dead and downed wood that can be broken by hand—leave saws and axes at home. Never leave a fire unattended, and never build a fire on a windy day.

Erase your campfire when you leave. Drown it with water and then stir the ashes. Feel for heat with your hand to ensure it is out. Remove unburned foil and plastic and pack them out. If you used an existing fire ring, scatter the ashes and camouflage the burned area with organic matter. Finally, scatter unused firewood you gathered in the forest.



## Do you know what the purple, triangular boxes are that are hanging in trees?



This is a question that has intrigued me for some time and until last June I still didn't know the answer. At that time, an article appeared in the Morning Call explaining what they were.

They are, in fact, bug traps, set to catch the invasive emerald ash borer, an insect native to Asia with an appetite for ash trees. The bugs are attracted to the color and to an oil bait applied to traps, which have returned to our region this year as part of the systematic testing program. Ash widely is used for product packaging and shipping crates, which probably explains how the bugs got to North America.

First detected in Michigan in 2002, the flying insects have been spreading ever since and were detected in our fair state in 2007. Restrictions on the movement of firewood may have helped slow the beetles' progress, but Sven Spichiger, entomology program manager for the state Department of Agriculture, said the bugs basically are unstoppable at this point; it's not a matter of if, but when the green insects will arrive in the Lehigh Valley region.

The eastern third of Pennsylvania represents a space virtually surrounded by areas where the borer has been found, Spichiger said. Since spreading in our direction from Michigan, insects are now as far east as Union, Lycoming and Cumberland counties, having covered "basically the western two-thirds of the state," he said. "There have been many positives in Maryland and upstate New York" as well, he added, concluding, "You're surrounded."

## More than 12,000 hikes of legendary trail reported to Appalachian Trail Conservancy

**Harpers Ferry, WV (August 25, 2011)** – The Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) is pleased to announce that it has received over 12,000 reported 2,000 mile hikers applications. Each year, thousands of hikers attempt to thru-hike the Appalachian Trail (A.T.) but only about one in four make it all the way. To qualify as a 2,000 miler, hikers must walk the entire estimated 2,180 miles of the A.T. This journey travels through fourteen states ranging from the southern terminus at Springer Mountain, Georgia, to the Trail's northern terminus at Katahdin, Maine.

"The Appalachian Trail Conservancy is excited to have reached this milestone," said Laurie Potteiger, Information Services Manager at the ATC. "Walking the entire Appalachian Trail is an extraordinary, unforgettable adventure. We are glad all these people have been able to experience the beauty and majesty of the diverse landscapes protected by the Appalachian Trail."

Hikers predominately complete the Trail one of two ways. Thru-hikers walk the entire Trail in one trip. They represent more than 80 percent of all 2,000 milers. The majority of thru-hikers start their journey in Springer Mountain, Georgia in late February/early March and end in Katahdin, Maine. Section hikers walk the entire Trail over the span of multiple trips, some taking a few years and others taking decades. Section hikers represent close to 20 percent of 2,000 milers. The remaining 2,000 milers are known as "flip-floppers". These hikers complete the hike in a 12 month span but do not take the traditional route from Georgia to Maine but instead hike part northward and the other part southward.

Completing the entire A.T. requires a great deal of mental discipline and determination. Becoming a "2,000-miler" is a feat that can be accomplished by anyone who can walk, although sections in almost every state require some scrambling up and down steep, rocky slopes. Successful 2,000-milers include hikers aged 6 to 86, from all 50 states and more than 30 other countries, and with challenges they brought with them, such as blindness and muscular dystrophy requiring hiking with crutches. Female hikers comprise slightly more than 20 percent of 2,000-milers.

The number of people hiking the entire Trail has also risen dramatically over the years. From 1936 to 1969, only 61 completions are recorded. In 1970 ten people completed the Trail, including Ed Garvey, whose thru-hike was well-publicized. The trend was further fueled by the release of Garvey's popular book, "Appalachian Hiker: Adventure of a Lifetime". By 1980, the total number of 2,000-milers had increased more than ten-fold. The total had doubled by 1990 and again by 2000. More hike completions were reported for the year 2000 alone than in the first 40 years combined. The 10,000<sup>th</sup> hike completion was recorded in 2008.



Jamie Richard of New Brunswick, Canada, is the ATC's 12,000th recorded 2,000 mile hiker.



## Virginia AT 2011 Journeys

Jim Gabovitz

It is difficult for me to believe that this is the eighth Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) conference that I have attended. It seems like only yesterday that former Allentown Hiking Club president, Mike Benyo, talked at a meeting encouraging attending a conference. Going to Harrisonburg, Virginia was a revelation to me. It was really exciting to see and meet all the people that just liked to hike and get outdoors. Leap forward to 2011 and Emory, Virginia. The conferences are more than hikes. There is meeting old friends (Bernie and Edna), making new friends. My roommate and new friend and I tasted a variety of activities including biking the Virginia Creeper trail and canoeing the New River. We had nightly entertainment with lectures, travel presentations and music. The music was phenomenal with Wayne Henderson and Jeff Little on Saturday night. Tuesday and Wednesday evening we were regaled with Blue Grass/Gospel music. I didn't even know I liked Gospel music. During the day I stayed mostly with hiking but particularly enjoyed an AT hike in Tennessee, and a hike in the Grayson Highlands that took me to the Pinnacles with stunning panoramic views. One thing that I really wanted to do is get a tour of The American Chestnut Foundation's research farm only a few miles from Emory, where the conference took place. The tour of the farm and facilities was rewarding and enlightening, but the highlight of the tour was eating watermelon on the laboratory porch with Dr. Fred Hebard and his staff. It's really all about people.

See you on the trail,.

## 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: Paula Uhrin :: 283 Ridgeview Drive, Alburtis Pa. 18011**

NAME(S):

ADDRESS:

CITY:

STATE:

ZIP: —

PHONE:

RENEWAL

NEW

EMAIL:

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

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

SML MED LRG XLG

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

SML MED LRG XLG

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

<input type="checkbox"/>
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CHECKS PAYABLE TO "ALLENTOWN HIKING CLUB"

QTY

TOTAL ENCLOSED \_\_\_\_\_

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

