



Winter 2012

The Happy Hiker

The Official Newsletter of the Allentown Hiking Club

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Mike "Sparky" Wuerstle
AHC President

Where Do We Go From Here?

Driving home from the December Allentown Hiking Club meeting, I had to ask myself – has the Hiking club become obsolete like the typewriter or phonograph record? A near crisis of not having a candidate for Vice President for December annual election was narrowly averted. I had posted on the Allentown Hiking Club Forum email list at 4:45 pm that unless someone stepped up to the plate and ran for the position of Vice President, I would have little choice other than to disband the Club because the bylaws require the four officers. About a half-hour later I received a call from Lucy Cantwell, replying to my post, saying that she would take on the position because she didn't want to see the Club come to an end. So the crisis is averted for another year, but I have little doubt that it will happen again the next time one of the existing officers no longer wants to serve, unless we make changes to how we proceed into the future.

So this brings me back to my original question: are we obsolete? The world has changed drastically in the 80 years since the Club was formed; however the Club still uses the model developed in the early days. In the business world, when a company doesn't react to changes in its environment, the eventual outcome is its going out of business. There is still strong interest in our product, which is hiking activities and trail work. However a much smaller percentage of the club membership is interested in maintaining a democratic process to govern the club's decisions.

But this phenomenon of having trouble filling officer positions is not unique to our club or even just hiking clubs but to many volunteer organizations.

So I am going to ask the tough questions. People usually don't like change – but change may soon be the only option. Is it time for us to change from yearly elected officers to a board of directors structure? Are monthly meetings too often? Should we be meeting electronically?

This is your chance to shape the future of your Club by offering your input on these questions and any other input you may have for increasing participation in and/or streamlining the management of our Club.

I also want to invite prospective candidates who think they may like to hold a club office, but are afraid to take the next step, to talk to me. I would be glad to mentor prospective candidates over the course of the year so that they would feel more comfortable taking the step come election time.

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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| Vice-President.....Lucy Cantwell | KTA Representative.....Ed Ritter - (610) 261-1847 email: critter888@verizon.net |
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Deadlines for the Spring 2012 Newsletter & Schedule

Happy Hiker Newsletter
Activity Schedule

Wednesday, Feb. 29, 2012
Wednesday, Mar. 7, 2012

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:

- January 4th** Charlie Root is with the EPA and is the Palmerton superfund Manager. His presentation will update us on the progress of the restoration of the Kittany ridge near Palmerton.
- February 1st** Tom Gettings from the Wildlands Conservancy. Tom will give a PowerPoint slideshow about the 100 years of the Trexler Game Preserve/Trexler Nature Preserve.
- March 7th** Scheduling night for hikes over the next three months.

WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS - Fall 2011

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|----------------------------|------------|----|---------------|--------------|----|
| Ronald Bet | Sciota, | PA | Rob Halstead | Allentown, | PA |
| John and Denise Fontana | Allentown, | PA | Steven Mack | Pennsburg, | PA |
| Terri German | Pennsburg, | PA | Stephen Mavin | Whitehall, | PA |
| Drew, Grace and Jim Graves | Wind Gap, | PA | David Rose | Coopersburg, | PA |

MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE DUE FOR 2012!

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, 2012**. 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!



Hiking Basics

Bill Geiger

As noted in the middle of last year, I started a series of articles which should help address some questions concerning hiking and backpacking in particular. In previous articles the items discussed were; hiking trails in Pa., clothing and gear, camping and shelters.

Food & Water

You should carry some kind of food and water on even the shortest Appalachian Trail hike, but anything longer than a short day-hike presents special considerations.

What sort of food should I take?

If you're out for the day or the weekend, you can probably pack whatever foods you like best—even fresh vegetables and fruits. But since these spoil quickly and are heavy, due to their high water content, they're not good for extended backpacking trips. Whatever food you choose, be sure to pack out all your garbage, including items such as apple cores and orange peels. Don't burn garbage in a campfire; it rarely burns completely and will produce harmful fumes.

Carry lots of snacks, including things you can stow in your pockets and nibble while you're walking. You'll have more energy than if you eat just a few big meals. Energy bars or a mix of dried fruit, nuts, and chocolate bits work well. Crackers and cheese, tuna and chicken in foil packets, pita bread or bagels, and peanut butter are popular lunch options. Instant oatmeal or grits, breakfast cereals that won't crush easily and powdered milk, and toaster pastries are quick favorites.

For dinners, backpackers generally carry dried foods such as pasta that they boil and prepare on portable stoves; tuna or chicken in foil packets can add protein. Some instant foods require only that you boil water. Ramen noodles are inexpensive and lightweight, and can either be cooked or eaten raw. Don't rely on building campfires. Not only are stoves more convenient and reliable in wet weather, their use minimizes your impact on the environment around you. In some areas, campfires are prohibited altogether.

How much food should I carry?

Backpacking burns a lot of energy. However, novice backpackers on the A.T. often make the mistake of carrying too much food. An overly heavy pack with excess food can take the fun out of backpacking. When deciding how much food to carry for your trip, keep these tips in mind:

1.5 to 2 lbs. per day is adequate in most circumstances, if your food is high in calories. Avoid canned foods or foods high in water weight. In cold weather, when you need more calories to stay warm, carry 2.5 lbs. per day. In winter or early spring, carry enough food for an extra day or two in case you are stranded by a snowstorm.

Many lightweight backpacking staples can be purchased at a grocery store—you need not rely on expensive, prepared “backpacking food” sold at camping stores, although these products can offer convenience and variety. Dehydrating your own food can provide you with nutritious and lightweight meals and snacks, but is labor- and time-intensive.

Where and how do I find water?

Water faucets, pumps, or spigots are rare on most trails. Reliable, natural water sources are listed in guidebooks, and springs and streams are marked on many trail maps. Most, but not all, shelters are near a reliable water source. Some springs and streams dry up during late summer and early fall, so plan carefully.

Is the water safe to drink?

Water in the backcountry may be clear, cold, and free-running and may look, smell, and taste good but can still be contaminated by microorganisms, including giardia lamblia and others that cause diarrhea or stomach problems. We recommend that you treat all water in one or more of the following ways:

Boiling. The most certain treatment to destroy Giardia and Cryptosporidium is to bring water to a rolling boil for at least one minute. Boiling will also destroy other organisms causing waterborne diseases. However, this method is time-consuming, requires additional fuel, and may affect the taste of water.

Portable water filters. A far less reliable treatment is the use of portable water filters. Some claim to remove Giardia cysts and Cryptosporidium oocysts, but test protocols are not uniform in the industry and many have not been tested in unbiased laboratories. Purchase only from reputable dealers, and check product literature to ensure that the filter is labeled according to filter manufacturing standards as at least an “Absolute” 1 micron filter, or is labeled as meeting American National Standards Institute (ANSI/NSF) (formerly the National Sanitation Foundation) International Standard #53 for “Cyst Removal.” No other filters are reliable for removing Giardia and Cryptosporidium.

Chemical treatments. Chemical disinfectants such as iodine or chlorine tablets or drops are not reliable for killing Giardia cysts and Cryptosporidium cysts. These disinfectants do work well against most disease causing waterborne bacteria and viruses that may not have been removed by filtration so water that has been filtered should be disinfected before consumption. Add 8 drops of liquid household bleach or 20 drops of tincture of iodine per gallon of water and let stand for 30 minutes. Double the concentration if the water is cloudy. Iodine and chlorine tablets are available in drug stores and camping or sporting stores. Be sure to use them according to directions.



AHC Club Officer Election Results

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|----------------|--------------------------|
| President | - Mike "Sparky" Wuerstle |
| Vice President | - Lucy Cantwell |
| Secretary | - Dick Fink |
| Treasurer | - Carl Griffin |

Welcome the New Happy Hiker Editor

Bill Geiger

Starting Jan 1, 2012, there will be a new editor of the Allentown Hiking Club's newsletter; the Happy Hiker. The new editor will be Marty Larson. Marty is moving from the scheduling coordinator's position to the editor of the Happy Hiker.

I assumed the role of editor in Jan 2004 and earlier this year made the decision it was time to pass on the honor and responsibility. It's been a good eight years, but it's time for a new editor with new ideas as to what should be in the newsletter. When I took over the position Janet Goloub was president, and since that time I have had the pleasure of serving with 6 other club presidents. In that time period we have also gone through printer changes but have survived with no problems. I welcome Marty and hope all of our members will continue to support the new editor and the club's newsletter with articles.

Brief Notes from the Oct. 22nd 2011 MARP Meeting

Anne Griffin

The Mid-Atlantic Partnership Committee meeting took place on Saturday, October 22, 2011, and each of the clubs gave a brief report on their activities since the last meeting.

Appalachian Trail Park Office update. Under land acquisitions, they acquired the 700-acre High Top Mt. tract adjacent to the Shenandoah NP and the Yankee Forest tract in VT. Under hurricane damage the AT sustained damage to 14 bridges. ATPO is working the Federal Highway Administration to evaluate those structures & potentially receive emergency repair funds. Under energy, the Susquehanna Roseland project is scheduled for public meetings in the Delaware Water Gap area sometime around the end of January. The report also mentions the Lehigh Gap, Palmerton projects, the slope stabilization project, major trail project once the stabilization project is completed and remediation activity to re-vegetate the mountain.

ATC report. This addressed staffing, conservation department highlights, hurricanes & floods, land stewardship, external threats, community outreach & education. Under land protection, it mentioned that the 172-acre parcel south of Lehigh Gap was recently acquired, and the PA Game Commission will soon take title to this land. The Palmerton/Lehigh Gap stabilization project is expected to end at the end of November. The AT design from the Winter Trail to Little Gap, which is expected to be done concurrently with the design of the Trail for Lehigh Furnace Gap to the Winter Trail by a professional trail designer, has been delayed but ATC hopes to engage the designer this winter into spring of 2012.

Paul Schubert from the Philadelphia Trail Club gave a brief overview of where he felt the Marcellus Shale development was headed. Paul sends daily updates on this topic to MARP committee members. He does not feel we will see a tax in PA, he feels the gas companies continue to act irresponsibly with regard to leaks and methane gas, at some point we may be looking at pipeline crossings at or near the AT and it will only continue. After we deal with Marcellus Shale we will be faced with Utica Shale.

The Girl Scouts are planning to hike the entire AT in celebration of their 100 year birthday. Activities will be conducted between March 12 and October 31, 2012. Local clubs are asked to assist if approached. Anyone willing to work with the Girl Scouts on this project please see me so I can give your contact information to the person who has taken the lead on this project.




Scenic Driving

Bill Geiger

Scenic driving is one of the largest recreational use of the PA State Forest lands. Most recreational users participate in this activity coming to and from the State Forest, but for many this is the sole purpose of their visit. Depending on what you are potentially planning to see, there are possibly some times of the year that are better than others to be there. For example, fall is best for viewing the autumn color change, but if you are interested in seeing deeper into the forests, winter offers the best possibilities. There is little to no foliage to obscure the view.

If its wildlife you are interested in, driving through the State Forest does offer a chance at seeing some. In many areas the wildlife are now somewhat familiar with sounds of cars and are thus not overly skittish. In particular I've never seen an elk while hiking in the forest, but have seen them while driving through the forest to get to a trail head, from a prescribed elk viewing areas, and/or along the side of the highway. I've definitely seen more bear while hiking, but I've also have seen some while driving. Deer, on the other hand, can generally be seen either while hiking in or driving through the forest.

There are many beautiful vistas in our PA State Forests. Look for the vista symbol  in your travels to take in some of the most picturesque views that State Forests have to offer. Detailed State Forest maps can be downloaded at the "Find a Forest" option on the PA Dept. of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) web site (<http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/forestry/stateforests/index.aspx>) or most if not all of these maps are also available from the Allentown Hiking Club Library.

Here are few tips for scenic driving from DCNR:

- Always let someone know where you are planning to go and when you expect to return.
- Pack an emergency kit that includes a blanket, flashlight, fresh water, and food items.
- Be aware that in many areas on state forest land cell phone reception may not be available.
- Never attempt to drive through standing or moving water.
- Check with the State Forest Office in the particular forest you plan to visit for current road conditions and closures.

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

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EMAIL:

Dues @\$10.00 / \$15.00 Household

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

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

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

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

