

Spring 2012



THE HAPPY HIKER

The Official Newsletter of the Allentown Hiking Club

MEMBER OF THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CONSERVANCY AND THE KEYSTONE TRAILS ASSOCIATION

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Spring Has Sprung

This is the time of year when my excitement level starts to rise as the summer weather approaches and I anticipate spending a lot of time outside. With the prime hiking season on the horizon, now is a good time to look over your gear and access what may need cleaning, repair or replacement if your gear has been dormant for a few months. Do it now, before you wake up on a Saturday morning and decide I am going out hiking today only to find that you have equipment problems. Pay particular attention to the condition of your hiking boots, as nothing will ruin an outing faster than a pair of disintegrating hiking boots. I know of multiple people who have had stitching fail or soles delaminate on a hike causing them to have to finish the outing with their boots wrapped in duct tape. A new coat of waterproofer on your boots will help keep out the spring wetness. Look over the straps and seams on your pack for wear, and take a few minutes to disinfect your water bottles and hydration systems. A solution of bleach water left to soak in them followed by a good rinsing will kill any "critters" that may be lurking inside. Check the batteries on your emergency flashlight, and check your first aid kit for expired and missing items. If you are a backpacker, a new coat of seam sealer on the tent, and a test firing of the stove are also good ideas to start off the season.

Also, before the busy days of summer arrive, take a few minutes to contact your legislators and the Governor asking them to give more oversight and regulation on the natural gas fracking industry. The "wild west" way that the industry is being allowed to operate now is negatively affecting Pennsylvania's trail systems as well as wild places and water resources in the northern part of the state. All stakeholders, including the trail community, should have more input in the granting of well sites and pipeline routes to protect trail systems and sensitive environmental areas and minimize the impact this industry has on the quality of life in the areas affected. There are many things that can be done but our governor has been unwilling to listen to the people he works for, the people of Pennsylvania. We need to keep the pressure on. I plan to lead a weekend outing to hike a trail in a fracking-affected area so we can see the effects first hand.

Finally, as the hiking season approaches, plan to do your part in giving back to the activity that has given so much to you. With a few exceptions, most of Pennsylvania's hiking trails are maintained by volunteers. This summer, plan to dedicate an afternoon or more to one of the trail projects the Allentown Hiking Club is involved in, such as maintenance on the Appalachian Trail, our lock-maintaining project on the D&L trail, or trail work at the Lehigh Gap Nature Center. If you are feeling a little more ambitious, the KTA trail care projects run throughout the spring-summer-fall season and give not only an opportunity to give back to hiking, but also meet new people and learn new skills, all while spending a day or more on some of Pennsylvania's greatest trails. I have participated in KTA trailcare projects in previous years, and they were always a rewarding experience for me.

So here's to a great summer of hiking, backpacking, water activities and biking with AHC friends!

Mike "Sparky" Wuerstle
AHC President

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

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Deadlines for the Summer 2012 Newsletter & Schedule

Happy Hiker Newsletter
Activity Schedule

Wednesday, May. 30, 2012
Wednesday, June 6, 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 Hiking 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:

- April 4th** Michael Nonemacher will give a presentation about the Switchback Railroad and trail near Jim Thorpe.
May 2nd Club member, Janet Goloub will give a presentation on her trip to Costa Rica.
June 6th Scheduling night for events for July, August and September in the Summer Happy Hiker

Welcome to Our New Members! - Spring 2012

Edward Attanese - Allentown, PA	Joseph Cummings - Allentown, PA	Ralph Minchin - Allentown, PA
Jennifer Berlin - Souderton, PA	Bob & Karen Elward - Kempton, PA	Ron & Libby Notvest - Lederach, PA
Nancy Bruch - Alburtis, PA	Steven Everett - Zion Grove, PA	Edward Orr - Clifton Heights, PA
Cindy Colitas - Bethlehem, PA	Vanessa Hamilton - Allentown, PA	Vance Rowe - Bethlehem, PA

Happy Hiker Gets a New Look!

The Happy Hiker has a new look in the form of a refreshed title page. Feeling that the HH font was showing its age, I challenged graphic artist, Terry Stout to come up with a new design. Terry volunteered some of his time and talent to come up with a new mast-head that looks, for the lack of a better word, happy! The new happy font with mountains, stream and sunshine reflects the outdoor activities of our club. I retained the AHC logo, which was hand drawn in the early '90s by graphic artist Hope Uhl as a favor for then newsletter editor, Sparky Wuerstle. Also a new hike and event form reflects the format of our website, something that former Hiking Schedule Coordinator, Bernie Harris, always desired. I wish to thank outgoing Editor, Bill Geiger for his 8 years of dedication and his smooth transition of responsibilities. Looking forward, I hope to maintain the same high quality, informative newsletter for which Bill has become known. Marty Larson, Happy Hiker Editor

National Trails Day

Saturday June 2, 2012 marks the 20th anniversary of National Trails Day. Celebrated each year since 1993, the first Saturday in June is a day to celebrate America's 200,000 miles of trails by getting out on them either by hiking, biking, horseback riding or with some other outdoor activity. The theme for this year's National Trails Day is, "America's Largest Trailgating Party". Outdoor groups, including hiking clubs, are encouraged to schedule events on this weekend and register the event with the American Hiking Society. For more information and a list of this year's events, check out www.AmericanHiking.org.



The Adventures of MaryAnn and Janet on the Mid State Trail Part I

By Janet Goloub

This a story of uncooperative weather, deprivation, unpleasant trail challenges, miscommunication, embarrassment, misleading directions, fear, injury, and failures – as well as scarce water.

MaryAnn Nissley, known to many AHC members, has wanted to hike the MidState Trail here in PA for years, and decided 2010 was the year. We've done some backpacking together, and Mary Ann (MA) has hiked all over the U.S. with friends and alone. I said I'd go with her in May, 2010; we'd hike 1½ weeks and get about 60 miles up the trail. The MST goes from the MD border to the NY one, a little east of center; it winds a lot and goes quite close to State College, in case anyone looks at a map. It's around 225 miles long. The forecast was for 4 days of rain after our travel day.

After a 3½ hr. drive for each of us, we were to meet in Water Street, a town on the map but not exactly on the ground. We passed a sort of weekend flea market site a few times, "an emporium of shoppes" as one direction told us, before a man in a diner told us that was Water Street. He also told us how to get to the trailhead, the only person we met who knew what the MidState Trail was.

We parked 1 car there, and drove south to the approximate start of the trail without trouble, but couldn't find the start no matter what. MA had the current guidebook plus latest updates. Nothing helped. I had an e-mail from the manager of that part of the trail, and her directions indicated something different from MA's information, but we couldn't find that either. We decided to start at a big sign on the road saying MST, which wasn't at the border, but was in the e-mail. Apparently there had been a relocation that hadn't been included in the updates. Where to put the car? A Mennonite man across the street, a woodworking place, said sure. Finally we could start hiking! It was mid-afternoon by then, it took so long to find a trailhead.

A beautiful day, we followed the road's orange blazes, and soon got into woods. We hiked only about an hour, stopping at a nice campsite; no shelters on the MST. In the night it started to rain, so we started out in the morning with wet gear. MA gets up early, is ready to hike by 7:00 if not earlier. I'm slower getting started, so she went on ahead. I hike a little faster, so caught up with her in a couple of hours. The relocation finally caught up with the guidebook and it plus blazes kept us on the trail, but there were several times we weren't certain about it. Except for persistent rain, it wasn't really hard hiking.

A diversion in the day was after a steep climb up a powerline cut, MA had to divest herself of undigested solids. She found a place for "separation." Returning to me, she said a man in a pick-up drove up the road, stopped and watched her the whole time. The only person we saw all day. This steep climb up went past a few buildings and a tower and down again – we do not know what the thrills were supposed to be at the top, but are pretty sure they weren't supposed to be MA. I managed to slip and fall in mud a couple of times on the way down. By the time we were ready to pitch our tents, we were pretty wet.

MS has a routine that includes comfort; a largish tent, treats, etc. I had my almost bivvy tent, and hadn't used it in quite awhile. Everything fits in it, and I love it; the only problem is getting dressed in the morning before my body wants to bend in the positions necessary to dress while lying down. It rained all night long, and in the morning at about 5:30, MA came over and said her tent had leaked, soaking her down sleeping bag, and she hadn't slept all night. We talked about it some. Her sleeping bag wasn't going to dry out, and if it was to continue to rain there was no way she could deal with it, not being able to sleep well. We bagged it, hiking 3 miles to a highway the trail crossed to thumb a ride to our cars, MA starting before me.

This trail is described as having few water sources. MA said the guidebook had us crossing a creek 9 times on the way to the highway. I counted 5 as I started, then the trail went away from the creek. A climb up a hill and down again along another stream, and MA said that this was the one with 9 crossings. This day we crossed it 11 or 12 times plus 2½ strolls in streams caused by yesterday's rain. It wasn't raining this day, just very damp.

Reaching the highway, I dropped my bag for relief; MA kept hers on for effect, and after awhile a man in a pick-up took us all the way to our car. On the way we saw orange blazes that had nothing to do with the trail we'd been on, but agreed with items in the guidebook. Yes, said our driver, he had rescued hikers 3 times that spring who were lost because of those blazes and they not knowing about the relocation. Weird. At our cars, we drove up to Water Street, and headed to our respective homes.

MA was going to make another pass at it in June; I couldn't join her then, and she went with her grandson, starting at the point where we got off. The trail became full of brambles almost immediately. MA says they fought their way through brambles until their arms were dripping with blood. The trail was so poorly maintained they bagged it after 3 days, and her grandson said he'd never set foot on the MST again.



The Great Girl Scout Hike

The Girl Scouts of America are celebrating their organization's 100th birthday in 2012 by hiking the entire Appalachian Trail. Between March 12 and October 31, 2012 they are looking for Girl Scout Troops to pick a section on the Trail to hike in honor of the celebration. Their goal is to complete the entire trail "in bits and pieces" jointly by Girl Scouts across the nation. The ATC is supporting their efforts by offering the resources of local hiking clubs all along the trail. The Allentown Hiking Club is offering any support needed to the local Girl Scout Troops. Please contact Ed Ritter at 610-261-1847 / critter888@verizon.net or Gene Scharle 610-432-5652 for more information.

2011 Corridor Monitoring Report

Beginning in the late 1970s, the National Park Service began purchasing land and acquiring easements on land near the Appalachian Trail to protect the Trail from development. Each hiking club that maintains a section of the Appalachian Trail is also responsible for monitoring the land located along their section of trail.

The Allentown Hiking Club is responsible for 34 tracts of land, containing about 600 acres, with over 15¼ miles of exterior boundary line. Club volunteers walk the boundary lines of these tracts, checking that there are no encroachments (such as trees cut down, structures, litter, trespassers), clearing the boundary lines, maintaining the boundary paint blazing, checking the surveyors' monuments, and affixing signs to identify NPS land.

In 2011, twelve volunteers contributed 71 1/2 hours of field time and 28 1/2 hours of travel time performing this monitoring. Thanks to Dan Ahren, Mike Benyo, Jim Gabovitz, Karen Gradel, Anne Griffin, Carl Griffin, Ed Ritter, Dave Rohlfig, Nick Rosato, and Dave Rose.

Pennsylvania A.T. Advisory Committee, January 5th 2012 Meeting Report - Janet Goloub

The Forestry Bureau and PennDOT reminded maintaining clubs about the route required for getting new A.T. signs placed at highway trailheads. A request goes to the Bureau of Forestry, where the sign is made in 6-8 weeks; they turn it over to PennDOT, in charge of removing and replacing the sign.

It was noted that www.americantrails.org is a good site for what's happening regarding trails in the U.S.

Representatives from the Game Commission and ATC reported that the Alpine Rose Racetrack may be going ahead.

Karen Lutz informed the committee of the appointment of Mark Wenger to replace Dave Startzell as Executive Director of the ATC. After 34 years at ATC, Startzell retired at the end of January. She also reported the upcoming retirement of John Luthy as the office manager at the Mid-Atlantic office of ATC in Boiling Springs. Luthy will retire in May.

KTA Trail Work Opportunities

Keystone Trails Association (KTA) is the statewide organization dedicated to providing, preserving, protecting and promoting recreational hiking trails and hiking opportunities in Pennsylvania, and representing and advocating the interests and concerns of the Pennsylvania hiking community. As part of its mission, KTA sponsors trail work trips on trail around the state and invites hikers to join its work crews. Nearby spring one-day work events include Thunder Swamp Trail on April 14 and French Creek State Park on May 12. To see the entire 2012 schedule, go to www.kta-hike.org, click on "On the Trails" and then "Trail Care and Trail Crew".

State Forest Road and Trail Advisory

In recent activity there has been a marked increase in natural gas activity in state forests in north central Pennsylvania. Visitor experience and road usage can be impacted by this activity. If you plan to hike in Loyalsock, Moshannon, Sproul, Susquehannock or Tiadaghton State Forests, check with Pennsylvania DCNR at www.dcnr.state.pa.us for current road conditions and closings.

Empty Boots

Emma Ward, 90, died January 13. Emma joined the club in 1965 and quickly became an active member. She served as club secretary 1967-1969 and was a hike leader. She led or co-led litter cleanup trips to the Allentown Shelter and enjoyed hiking many miles on the Appalachian Trail in the Mid-Atlantic region.

Ruth Dauscher, 96, died February 12. Ruth was an active member and hike leader during the 1970s and 1980s. She loved the outdoors and led "afternoon" hikes (always scheduled for Sunday at 1 PM) to such places as Hickory Run, Beltzville, Hawk Mountain, canal towpaths, and of course, Allentown parks.



Honey Locust Tree at
Trexler Nature Preserve

Thorny Solution



Photo by Paula Uhrin

11,000 years ago giant herbivores such as woolly mammoths and mastadons roamed our area in search of delectable plants. In response to this browsing, plants developed defense mechanisms to avoid predation. The honey locust tree evolved sharp thorns to protect itself. Now, thousands of years after these grazing animals have gone extinct, the honey locust has not lost this adaptation and still retains its menacing thorns.

The honey locust (*Gleditsia triacanthos*) is a member of the legume (pod) family and develops seeds encased in giant reddish-brown pods in the fall. The name "honey" is derived from the sweet taste of the green gummy goo that surrounds the peas in their pod. This green pulp is protein-packed, sweet-tasting and quite edible, unlike the pods of the black locust which are quite toxic. The spines of the honey locust are 1 to 4 inches long with some reaching up to 8 inches. They can puncture a tire and have been used as nails and as pins to mend clothing during the Civil War. At first the thorns are soft and green. They turn reddish and hard when mature and turn gray and become brittle as they age.

AHC Archives

The Allentown Hiking Club maintains a club archive that contains copies of the Happy Hiker and hiking schedules, meeting minutes, annual audits, newspaper articles, correspondence, awards, shelter logbooks, and photos of club events. The archives are fairly complete, except for 1954-1962.

Any club member can contribute trip write-ups and photos of club events to the archives. All photos must include the names of all persons in the photo, the date taken, and the club event. Bring items to club meetings or contact Barb Wiemann at 610-262-6977 or blwiemann@gmail.com.

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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SML MED LRG XLG

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QTY

_____ Club T-shirt @ \$6.00 + \$3.50 shipping ea.

_____ Club golf shirt @ \$12.00 + \$3.50 shipping ea.

_____ Club Embroidered patch @ \$1.50 + \$.75 shipping ea.

_____ Club window decal @ \$2.50 + \$.75 shipping ea

_____ Club window cling decal @ \$2.50 + \$.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

