

Spring 2013



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

The Circle of Life

Ahh, spring! You can smell it in the air, that thrilling time of rebirth when the dormant or hibernating flora and fauna reappear for another go-around in the circle of life. The hiking trails, at least those in our nearby mountains, begin the gradual transformation from wind-swept and leafless, to the gently budding branches, and finally to the brilliant green canopies of the forest trails. Interestingly, the coming spring coincides with my first newsletter as your club president, and the renewals of spring with my reentry into the hiking community.

When I joined the AHC about 25 years ago, I never would have imagined that I would ever be the president. In my mind, only the most experienced and charismatic members were suited for that. I could, however, contribute to the effort in other ways, for example, leading a hike, backpack, or canoe trip here or there, participating in trail maintenance projects, and doing whatever I could to further the cause of the outdoors. Eventually other interests and responsibilities curtailed my active participation, but I kept up my membership and trusted that the club was in good hands.

Fast forward to Nov. 2011, and an email appears on the forum with a plea from Mr. Sparky for someone to step up and run for Vice-President. Club by-laws require a full slate of officers, or, no club! On, no!!! Can't let that happen. So, like coming back into spring after a very long winter, I returned to the hiking community, and, well, you know the rest. A year later, with the club in need of a candidate for President, sure, I said, I'll give it my best.

So now, after a year as VP and three months as your "prez," I have to profess my amazement at the dedication and loyalty of so many good people who have kept the Allentown Hiking Club going for so many years, not just the last 25 of which I have been a part, but the entire 80-plus years since the club's inception in 1931. Whether leading hikes or other activities, representing the club in larger organizations such as the KTA or ATC, maintaining our section of the AT and our two designated shelters, arranging programs for meeting nights, publishing the Happy Hiker, and managing the membership, finances, social media, and all other resources of the club, many generous individuals have demonstrated sincere devotion to the club, to the hiking world, and thus, in the larger sphere, to the preservation of the trails for future generations.

I am truly honored to be leading the effort for this term, and grateful for the support you have shown. It is heartwarming to see the mix of older friends from my earlier days with the AHC and the newer members I am just getting to know. Had you asked me 25 years ago what I'd be doing in 2013, I would never have foreseen this. But you never know the impact your decisions will have long term, or how the people you meet and become close to will affect your life. So I ask you now, imagine yourself 25 years from now – will you still be an active participant, devoted to preserving the trails, and doing all you can to preserve this legacy for the next wave of outdoorsmen/women? Will you continue to enjoy your journey through the circle of life?

Lucy Cantwell
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 2013 Newsletter & Schedule

Happy Hiker Newsletter Wednesday May 29, 2013

Activity Schedule Wednesday June 5, 2013

Please forward all club related articles, thoughts, and items to the Newsletter 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 3rd Al Karp will present an Appalachian Trail Journal of One –1,200 miles from Springer Mountain to the Lehigh Valley.

May 1st Dave Levandusky Wildlife Photographer

June 5th Business meeting and scheduling night for June, July and August activities for the Summer Happy Hiker.

Welcome to Our New Members! - Jan-Feb 2013

Nancy Thatcher-Walnutport, PA	Robert Frederick-Center Valley, PA	Joseph C. Borowski-Emmaus, PA
Kimberly Gradel-Glenside,PA	David & Vikki Dunn-Allentown, PA	Tracy Henzel-Bethlehem, PA
Mike Nagle and family- Allentown, PA	Peter & Maryann Ciento and Family -Zionsville, PA	Rhonda Martin Lynch-Allentown,PA
	John McCarty-New Tripoli,PA	

Sign Up for Free Online Newsletter For AT Volunteers

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy publishes a free online newsletter, The Register, for Appalachian Trail volunteers. If you would like to have it delivered to your inbox, send an email with "Subscribe" in the subject line to theregister@appalachiantrail.org. You can see past issues on the Appalachian Trail Conservancy website; choose the "What We Do" tab, then "Trail Management and Support", then "Toolkit for Volunteers" and finally "The Register - ATC Stewardship Newsletter". (http://www.appalachiantrail.org/what-we-do/trail-management-support/volunteer_toolkit/the-register).

Invasive Plant Species on the Appalachian Trail

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) is willing to work with hiking clubs that are interested in identifying invasive plant species. They will assist local clubs in identification of invasives, provide training on proper removal and phenology. We need to contact Michele Miller, ATC's Regional Program Resources Manager, if our club has a strong interest.



The Adventures of Mary Ann on the MidState Trail¹

By Mary Ann Nissley

In June, 2011, I headed back to the MidState Trail again to hike the section from Lower Trail near Water Street to Ravensburg State Park, about 98 miles. Janet couldn't go with me this time, and, as you remember, my grandson won't because of the brambles that left him scratched and bleeding on his last trip, so I'll go it alone. That's nothing new for me. I parked my car at Lower Trail, an 11-mile section of rail trail where I hiked and ended in 2010, and got on my way up Tussy Mountain. It was steep, but marked well.

Hiking through the town of Barree, I saw a huge black snake, dead in the road. I could not find the spring mentioned in the guidebook, which is nothing unusual. I had filled up my bottles at a springhouse earlier. I camped slightly downhill on the side of the mountain, because I couldn't find the flat quarry mentioned in the guidebook, where I had planned to spend the night.

The next day, the rocks are bad but the blazes are good until I cross Colerain Road; then they were faded or nonexistent, and the trail is not maintained here. I saw a wet looking rattlesnake and wondered if he knew where a source of water might be, but I didn't want to ask him. There are many rockslides to cross and the trail is hard to find. I set up camp and ration water, in case I can't find any tomorrow.

The day after that, I saw a tent and heard voices. It was the man I had been trying to arrange a ride with back to my car when I finished hiking. I had called and e-mailed him, and he said to call him when I got to Ravensburg State Park, and he would shuttle me back to my car. He had his 8-year old son with him. I found a waterhole and filled my bottles after I chased a porcupine away. I am carrying 7 lbs. of water. I waited under a large pine tree while a fast moving but fierce thunderstorm pelted me with rain. I set up my camp among the rocks and slept well.

The next day started out very rocky, and I met a car camper and some day hikers. The trail became very good here and was well marked. I find a small spring and have a good campsite. The following day, I re-climb Tussy Mountain with many rocks again. I pass the Tom Thwaites memorial and take a rest on the nice bench there. (Editor's note: Tom Thwaites was instrumental in developing the MST, as well as the guidebook.)

Keith Spring, mentioned in the guidebook, is a long way down, but I fill up whenever I am near water. I am carrying 10 lbs. of water now. When I slipped on a rock, I could hardly get up again because of the weight. I make a nice camp under the pines, except for the bees, ants, and mosquitoes. I soon came to Roosevelt State Park, easy water; and I know that there are 2 more state parks coming up, and they'll have water.

When I got close to Ravensburg State Park, a man was sitting in his car, trying to use his cell phone. I asked him if he could get out, and he said no. Rats! How am I going to call the man for a ride back to my car? The man in his car offered to drive me, and I said it was over 60 miles, but he didn't care. Wow! He knew a lot of the people in the countryside, knew the road well, and took me right back to my car. He was only that woods road because there was a back-up on the main road, so he was taking this short cut. Some short cut for him! Some luck for me!

In September, I drove to Little Pine State Park and parked my car. Janet couldn't go again, so I am hiking solo once more. I couldn't get any ride lined up to get back to my car when I finish, so I'll have to wing it. The outfitter at Waterville no longer shuttles hikers, so I stopped at a restaurant to see if I could get a ride to Ravensburg State Park, where I'd ended in June. A young man said he was going that way and drove me to the park. I had to hike the section to the road where I stopped last time, and then retrace my steps back to Ravensburg.

The first few days are uneventful if you don't count hilly and rocky trail. There's plenty of water, but one steep downhill makes my knees scream. About 3 days in, there is a roadwalk into the town of Woolrich. There is a shelter in the park for hikers, and I was the main attraction, as many people stared and some came to talk. One man said he had been bitten by a rattlesnake and had the scar to prove it. It was nice to talk to people.

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MidState Trail
Continued from page 3

The next day I had a little trouble finding my way out of town according to the guidebook landmarks, because the pool is no longer there, and the school is now a retirement home. The trail is not too bad until I go down a toe-jamming, knee screaming mountain. I camped in a valley between two mountains. Of course, that means a climb in the morning. There's plenty of water.

It is misting when I start up, and everything is wet. I climb up and climb down, very steeply. I cross Bull Run Road and go down a cliff with its very wobbly steps, and come to a problem. There is a huge slippery rock in front of me, big bushes on one side and a cliff on the other. What to do? I try to sidle next to the cliff, when a jutting rock catches my pack and knocks me off balance. The next thing I know, I am rolling down the side of the mountain like a freight train, bouncing off the rocks.

I finally manage to grab a tree and jerk to a stop. Nothing seemed to be broken, and I started back up, when blood started gushing from my head. Uh! Oh! I still thought I could make it down the mountain to get help, but the blood poured into my eyes, making it impossible to see. I put my supply of toilet paper on the head and called 911.

After hours of searching, which included a helicopter, rescuers found me. Seven men, plus a woman who kept checking my vital signs, carried me down the mountain on a stretcher. They were slipping and sliding, and had to keep changing leaders. At one point, I asked them where we were, and they said I didn't want to know. We were crossing a ravine on 2 logs. They finally got to an ATV. Because of the steep terrain, sometimes they all had to get out except for the driver and me. Finally, we reached a road and an ambulance and, 5 hours after my fall, they transported me to Jersey Shore Hospital. I have a lot of admiration for those guys.

I thought they could stitch me up and I could finish the trail, but they were so alarmed when I said that, I agreed not to do it. After getting 14 stitches in my head, the ranger took me to my car where I spent the night. In the morning I drove home with 2 black eyes and a lot of cuts and bruises, but this trail will not beat me! I'll be back!

Editor's Note:

1. This is the stunning conclusion that follows a three part series entitled, "The Adventures of Mary Ann and Janet on the Midstate Trail," Parts I, II and III by Janet Goloub. These stories can be found in The Happy Hiker Spring, Summer and Fall 2012.

2012 Corridor Monitoring Report

Beginning in the late 1970s, the National Parks 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 and 105 surveyors' monuments. 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 2012, nine volunteers contributed 54 hours of field time and 16 hours of travel time performing this monitoring. Thanks to **Dan Ahren, Mike Benyo, Jim Gabovitz, Carl Griffin, Ed Ritter, Susan Ritter, Dave Rohlfling, Nick Rosato, and Barb Wiemann.**

Barb Wiemann
AHC Corridor Monitor Co-ordinator

This is for the Birds

"Bird the Ridge" is a project that is taking place on the Kittatinny Ridge. This is a group of agencies: ATC, Audubon, Kittatinny Coalition Group and others that are working together to protect the birds in the area. Some of the issues they have addressed are tower construction guidelines and lighting.



Night Vision

By Marty Larson

Whether you are hiking up a mountain trail to see a sunset or the moonrise, traversing a wooded hillside to hear the calls of elusive whip-poor-wills, or an owl's hoot, or paddling a canoe to view the full moon, a night time foray can be an exhilarating exploration with your senses.

There is a surprising amount of light from the stars and moon that you can adapt your eyes to with no need for a flashlight. As humans we have adapted to primarily using our sense of vision utilizing color which requires bright light. Your eyes must adapt to seeing in low light. It takes about 30 minutes of letting your eyes grow accustomed to low light. This time can serve as a meditation allowing your other senses to take over. Once you have grown accustomed to the dark, avoid all use of white light, i.e. flashlights. Each time you expose your eyes to light you have to wait 30 minutes to reacclimatize your eyes. If you must use a light to check a map or check for a trail blaze, use a light with a red filter.

We have structures called rods and cones in the back of the eye. Cones detect colors while rods only detect light (black and white). Rods are the source of true night vision for humans. There are more cones in the centers of our eyes and more rods on the periphery. In the dark, you will see the greatest details if, rather than looking directly at something, you look off to one side. You'll find that to your trained eyes, it never is completely black in the woods. The reward will be seeing the forest in a whole new light. Your other senses will be heightened. You will hear every rustle of leaves, each snapping of a stick; feel every breath of fresh air and sniff the fragrant plants and musty earth.

Hiking in the woods at night can open up a rewarding window into the nature you thought you knew from years of daytime hiking. It will also help you develop skills that may be useful while backpacking or camping in the woods. Just like exploring the backside of the moon or the bottom of the ocean, a whole new world is there to discover. Just do so safely.

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

_____ 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

