



Spring 2009

The Happy Hiker

The Official Newsletter of the Allentown Hiking Club

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Whose Club is this anyway?

by
Ed Vatza

This is my first column as President of the Allentown Hiking Club. What makes this interesting is that I am a relative newcomer to the club having only been a member for several years. Furthermore, I am a relative newcomer to the world of hiking. My wife, Barbara, and I only began hiking about six years ago. We're not the "hard core" type of hikers that you might find along the Appalachian Trail. We're much more likely to be found along a canal towpath, a rail-trail or wandering about Jacobsburg State Park.

So why bring this up? Well if you are receiving this newsletter, it means you've paid your 2009 dues to the Allentown Hiking Club. It means you are a member of the Allentown Hiking Club. And it means that the answer to my question in the title is that this is YOUR club.

Each and every one of us will get out of this club what we put into it. And that's ok. We all want different things. And that's ok, too. But whether we get what we want out of the club is a different question. I do know that there are many more members of the Allentown Hiking Club than show up at our monthly meetings, our annual picnic, our Christmas potluck dinner, or out on our many scheduled hikes.

I also know that each and every year we lose members from the previous year and acquire new members during the current year. All clubs to which I have ever belonged suffer the same fate – attrition.

And yes, I have even been that person who chose not to renew. Why? Because the club was not meeting my needs. So please let us know what your needs are. What is it you are looking for from the Allentown Hiking Club? You can certainly come to a meeting and voice your opinion. But if that will not work, drop me a line at "president@allentownhikingclub.org" and let me know what you are looking for from the club. Only then can we see what we can do to better meet those needs.

In the meantime, we are working on some changes that will hopefully shorten the business meetings, add to our programs and make the club a better one for all of us – including YOU!



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.

President	Ed Vatz - (610) 838-7890 email: president@allentownhikingclub.org	Outerbridge Shelter Chair.....	Carl Griffin - (610) 760-0479
Vice-President.....	John Hubka - (570) 807-7777 email: jhub7777@yahoo.com	KTA Representative.....	Ed Ritter - (610) 261-1847 email: critter3@peoplepc.com
Secretary.....	Dick Fink - (610) 865-3925	Program Committee Chair.....	Jim Gabovitz - (610) 262-3578 email: gabby@enter.net
Treasurer.....	Maryann Wagner - (610) 262-4313 email: munchkinhiker@aol.com	Library.....	Holly Vogler - (610) 820-0162
Membership.....	Edna Himmler - (610) 797-5182 email: membership@allentownhikingclub.org	Publicity	Gene Scharle - (610) 432-5652 Anne Griffin - (610) 760-0479
New Member Greeter.....	Edna Harris - (610) 767-0562 email: bernedna@verizon.net	Webmaster.....	Hal Wright - (215) 860-9732 email: webmaster@allentownhikingclub.org
Appalachian Trail Chair.....	Ed Ritter - (610) 261-1847 email: critter3@peoplepc.com	Newsletter Editor.....	Bill Geiger - (610) 398-2601 email: newsletter@allentownhikingclub.org
A.T. Monitor Coordinator.....	Barbara Wiemann - (610) 262-6977 email: bwiemann@verizon.net	Hiking Schedule Coordinator...	Bernie Harris - (610) 767-0562 email: bernedna@verizon.net

Deadlines for the Summer 2009 Newsletter & Schedule

Happy Hiker Newsletter
Activity Schedule

Wednesday, May 27, 2009
Wednesday, June 3, 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.

UPCOMING ATC BIENNIAL CONFERENCE

Join the Green Mountain Club in scenic Vermont for Appalachian Trail Festival 2009, the 37th biennial meeting of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, July 17-24, 2009 at Castleton State College, Castleton, VT. This is a week of celebrating and learning about the 2,175 mile Appalachian Trail. Register until April 30, 2009 for early registration discount. Castleton State College is a small liberal arts college located off U.S. Route 4 west of Rutland. June 30, 2009 is the last day to mail paper registration and receive a written confirmation. July 17, 2009 on-site reservations begin at 2:00 PM. www.vermont2009.org

Upcoming Programs at the AHC Meetings

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

April - Betty Kelly will give a presentation on hiking the Appalachian Trail.

May - Cheryl Kunkle will give a presentation on hiking the Canyons in Utah. Dan Kunkle will give a quick update on the activities at Lehigh Gap Nature Center.

June - Scheduling night for summer hikes.

July - Annual picnic meeting night.

August - Scott Everett will give a slide presentation on the Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Corridor and update us on their progress.

September - Scheduling night for fall hikes.

October - Betsy Lyman will give a presentation on invasive species.



Fire on Bake Oven Knob Road, 2008

Jim Gabovitz

April 2008 had a dry spell which left the woods tinder dry. It also happened that Dick Snyder enlisted me to help him monitor his section of the Appalachian Trail (AT) during this dry spell. We were going in 2 cars so we could set up to do the complete section. The plan was to leave one car at the Bake Oven Knob (BOK) parking lot. Then the both of us would get into the other car and drive to Route 309 to start our monitoring. At the bottom of the mountain, just short of BOK road, we saw smoke coming from the mountain in the general area we were to drive by. We stopped our cars and had a powwow before continuing. Sure enough, about half way up BOK road there was a significant brush fire. We stopped the cars to look over the situation. When we stopped our cars we ended up parked about 100 yards apart. My van was parked above the fire and Dick's car about even with the fire. Shortly after stopping we made a 911 call on my cell phone. Within 5 minutes of my phone call, a DCNR pickup truck equipped with fire fighting gear arrived. Out jumped a DCNR employee in full fire fighting gear. He did a very quick interview of us and started talking on his radio. By this time Dick and I were pretty excited and wanted to help! In another 5 minutes an airplane showed up and made a recognizance pass. As the airplane circled I realized what was about to happen and started to run to close the doors and windows of my van. Sure enough the airplane started its run and dumped water on the fire. The pilot was very good because the water fell on the fire and not on me or the van. Another pass and the fire was pretty well doused.

The airplane left, but there was still work to be done. We still wanted to help so the DCNR employee let us pull hose while he started hosing down the hot spots. A short time later the local fire company arrived to do the mopping up and the detail work. The time between the initial phone call and the arrival of the fire company was about 20 minutes.

After all this took place, we found out the reason for the rapid response of the DCNR and the airplane, was that they were on their way to fight another fire. The DCNR employee actually showed up before the 911 call could be activated. There was strong evidence that the fire was intentional as there were 3 similar fires nearby. The total size of the fire Dick and I assisted in fighting was about 4 acres.

The adventure is not over. Dick's car was now parked in with firefighting equipment and emergency vehicles. Dick is a determined young man and suggested an abbreviated monitoring project and do an in and out to the knife edge. So we used my van to continue on to the BOK parking lot. In the parking lot was the usual conflagration of garbage and beer cans. One bunch of cans was obviously quite new. I started to tip them on end to drain any remnants. I then commented that these we would pick up at the end of monitoring. Dick found the remaining unopened cans of beer and put them into the van. After we had done our monitoring and returned to the van the empty beer cans were neatly stacked by the door of the van with a business card from the local police department, the insinuation being that I had dumped the cans.

Enough adventure for one day!

After Thoughts

There are several reasons why the fire had not become a serious problem. One is the day was very still with no discernable breeze. The other was the rapid response of the DCNR and the local fire company.

The fireman from DCNR could use a new pickup truck. The thing was used when it was new. This truck had obviously seen better days and the DCNR logo was over laying some other organization's logo.

One of the fire trucks that the fire company came with was obviously lovingly cared for. But it had a manufacturing plate of 1943 and was probably war surplus as the color inside the cab was olive green. The next time someone is throwing money around maybe both of these outfits could get a new and improved truck. They deserve it for the work they do.



Notes From the PA A.T. Advisory Committee Meeting, 1/8/09

Janet Goloub

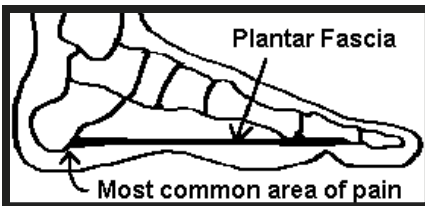
The January meeting of the PA A.T. Advisory Committee included several items of general interest as well as those pertinent to the A.T. only. The Forestry Bureau has produced an ATV etiquette brochure which will soon be at all district offices, ATV dealerships, and given to new ATV registrants. The Bureau is producing new maps; Delaware Forest in our area is finished. Recently, a natural gas lease sale on 75,500 acres of forest yielded \$170,000,000 meant for improvements in the State Forests; now short falls in the state's budget will probably require the money's transferal to the general budget. After a devastating year for gypsy moth in 2008, 173,000 acres of forests are scheduled for spraying this year; however, next year's funds will probably be greatly reduced. The Game Commission will continue spraying as scheduled.

It was reported that Cherry Valley, a large area in Monroe County, had recently been designated a Federal Wildlife Refuge. This is an unusual accomplishment, as it was the first successful grassroots effort in 8 years. It was pointed out that although land ideally would be bought up for protection, the Game Commission hasn't such funds.

Regarding the A.T. specifically, the National Parks Service was ready to fill the field ranger position for the A.T., and that person would be located in Boiling Springs. Since the 1/8 meeting, Eric Barron has been named to the vacant NPS field ranger position. The final rule for carrying concealed firearms on NPS lands, including the A.T., went into effect 1/9. (This rule is Title 36, code of Federal Regulations 2.4[h].) The Bureau of Recreation and Conservation and the Dept. of Environmental Protection are meeting with Karen Lutz, A.T. Mid-Atlantic office, on implementation of the PA A.T. Act. The Lehigh Valley was cited as especially prepared, nearly every municipality bordering the A.T. having plans or ordinances naming it as green area. A consulting firm will develop a detailed piece to take to municipalities to help in their follow-up with the Act. And, as everywhere, the A.T.C. is in a budget crunch.

New Treatment for Plantar Fasciitis

Combining an ultrasound-guided technique with steroid injection is 95 percent effective at relieving the common and painful foot problem called plantar fasciitis, according to a study presented at the annual meeting of the Radiological Society of North America .



Plantar fasciitis, the most common cause of heel pain, is an inflammation of the connective tissue called the plantar fascia that runs along the bottom of the foot, from the heel to the ball of the foot. Conservative treatments, which may take up to a year to be effective, include rest, exercises to stretch the fascia, night splints and arch supports.

After injection of a small amount of anesthesia, the anesthetic needle is used to repeatedly puncture the site where the patient feels the pain. This technique, known as dry-needling, creates a small amount of local bleeding that helps to heal the fasciitis. Then a steroid is injected around the fascia to eliminate the inflammation and pain. The technique is performed with ultrasound guidance to improve accuracy and to avoid injecting the steroids directly into the plantar fascia, which could result in rupture.

After the 15-minute procedure, symptoms disappeared for 42 of the study's 44 patients (95 percent) within three weeks.

KTA TO HOST SUSQUEHANNA SUPER HIKE



The Keystone Trails Association is organizing the first annual **Susquehanna Super Hike**, to be held September 12 along both sides of the Susquehanna River in York and Lancaster Counties. This daunting 25 mile hike on the Mason Dixon and Conestoga Trails alternates breathtaking vistas with steep descents into dark, scenic hollows followed by strenuous climbs to the next vista.

Interested hikers can find a link to registration and more detailed information about the event and the route on the KTA website (www.kta-hike.org).



Thoughts on Mountain Top Removal

Al Schwartz

For the last six years I led an unconventional life. I've taken a hike almost every weekend. For anyone counting that's about 300 hikes. Along the way I've made more friends than I ever imagined I could have. Hiking and friendship seem to go hand in hand for all of us hikers. Besides hiking my lovely home state of Pennsylvania, I've hiked in Maine, Florida, Arizona, Wyoming and lot in between. The one thing that I loved above all else, are the mountains. Mountains are awesome. Does not matter if they are 2000' high or 13,000' high. The beauty of the forests and streams yielding to a stunning overlook makes most appreciate the gift of the land that God has given us. After hiking these six years I feel the need to repay the mountains for what they have given me and my fellow hikers.

Mountain Top Removal is a process where the tops of mountains are blown off until coal is found. A strip mining process then ensues and the coal is extracted. When the process is complete, the mountain is gone. With little top soil left, the area will be a scared moonscape. In West Virginia, 30% of coal removal is by Mountain Top Removal. 2,200 square miles (5,700 sq. km) of Appalachian forests will be cleared for MTR sites by the year 2012. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountaintop_removal is my source)

At 640 acres per square mile, that is a sad 1,408,000 acres of destroyed forests, streams and wildlife habitat.

There is a remarkable group of people in West Virginia fighting to save a mountain. Their group is Coal River Wind. Please take a minute to check out their website at <http://www.coalriverwind.org/>. Google "Coal River Mountain" and you see more about this wonderful group, including you tube videos.

My primary reason in distributing this article is to publicize the fact that Mountain Top Removal is taking place on a large scale now. I do have another reason. I've had the good fortune to speak with the two leaders of this group, Lorelei Scarboro and Rory McIlmoil. They have allocated time the second weekend in May for a visit of hikers from Pennsylvania. Lorelei will speak at our Saturday dinner and someone, possibly Rory, will hike with us as we experience a first hand education in Mountain Top Removal. If you are interested in attending a 4-day event May 7th through May 10th, please e-mail me at al-schwartz@fast.net or call me at 610-258-0959.

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

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

SML MED LRG XLG

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

SML MED LRG XLG

<input type="checkbox"/>

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

