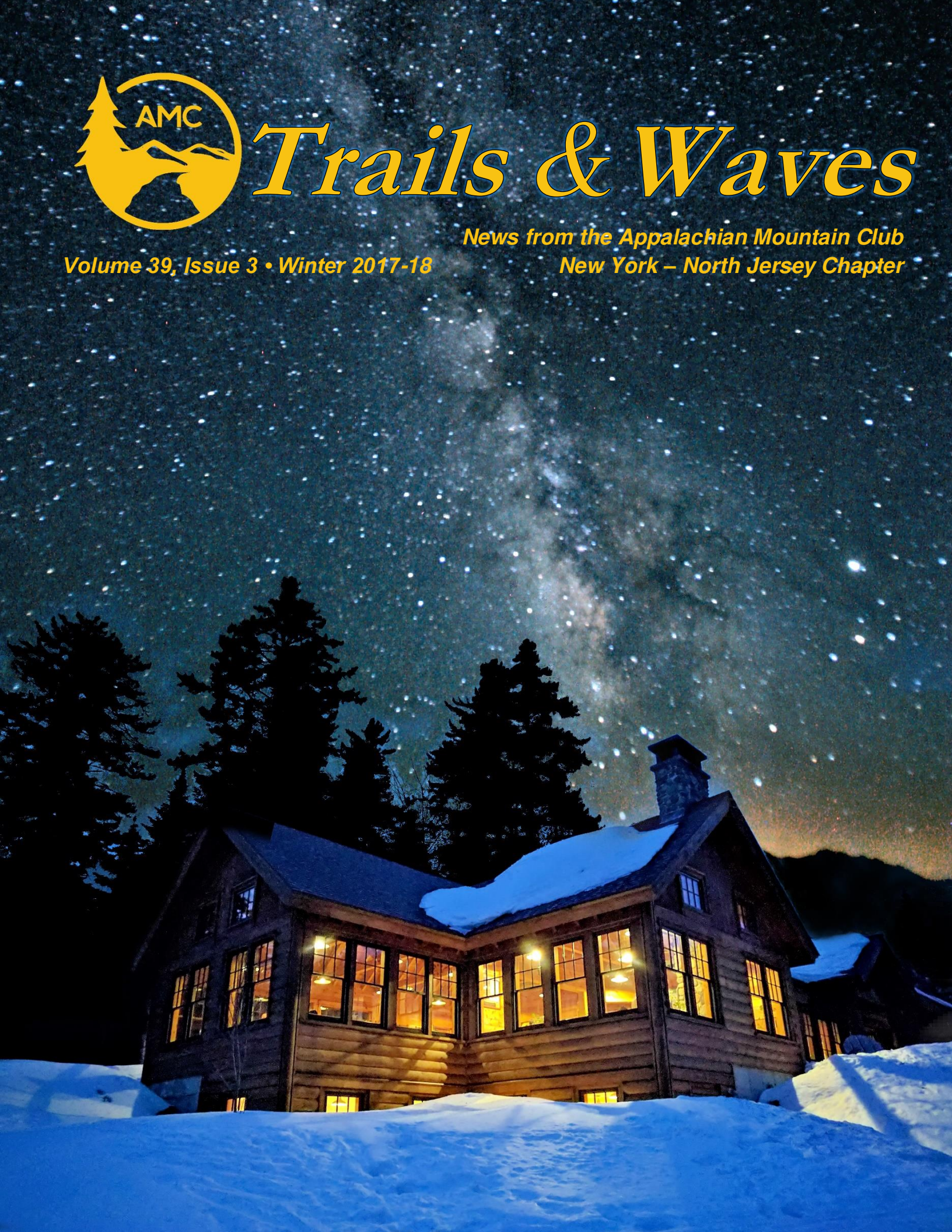




# *Trails & Waves*

Volume 39, Issue 3 • Winter 2017-18

News from the Appalachian Mountain Club  
New York – North Jersey Chapter





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## *Trails & Waves*

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Read Trails & Waves on the [Chapter’s website](#)

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AMC’s Gorman Chairback Lodge  
by Marty Plante; Milky Way by Wikipedia.



# Message

from  
the

# Chair

**M**y two years as Chapter Chair have flown by so fast. My term started off with goals of promoting community, communication and leadership within the Chapter. Because of amazing work by our volunteers. We accomplished all of this while supporting the opening of the Corman Harriman Outdoor Center (CHOC) and contributing to the initial ideas for using the camp.

There are many people to thank for their contributions to meeting the goals proposed by the Executive Committee. The Young Members Committee chaired by Silja Tobin staffed our picnic committee. Melissa Marine volunteered to be picnic chair, working with Silja. Melissa did such a great job we promoted her to Hospitality Chair. We had 175 people for the day and 120 for the night. It was so much fun that we decided to do it again in 2018.

Silja Tobin has served as the Young Members Committee Chair for the last two years. She helped develop a strong core group into a large community. Under her direction, trips to NH and the ADKS have been organized, Fire Island and CHOC weekends were extremely popular, and most importantly, we have a new group of leaders. We are very sorry to see her leave us; but Portland, Oregon beckons. We cannot thank her enough.



**The CHOC** served as the center for many Chapter Programs over the last two years. Eileen Yin, our former Chapter Chair, has worked endlessly on developing hosts and organizing programs that sell out. She spent most of last summer and this summer in camp working with volunteers to help get them familiar with the facilities and organizing programs ranging from the very popular Yoga weekends, beginner



backpacking, learn to paddle, Dark Skies, and of course hiking. Both members and non-members alike were introduced to the outdoors in the beautiful setting of Breakneck Pond. Next year we plan over 20 weekends, so be sure to sign up.

**Our communications team** headed by Lee Hoffman published monthly e-blasts advertising our events. Trails and Waves has come out 3 times a year edited by Ron Gonzalez with layout design by Marty Plante. Tat Yuen never fails to respond to requests for website updates, usually replying within an hour! There have been monthly Open Houses to allow new and prospective members a chance to ask questions. Our Facebook page now has over 3,200 Followers. The Meetup Page reaches almost 9,000 people and helps bring in new members. In addition, we've been able to start up our Speaker Program series through the hard work of Carrie Ho. Many of these events have attracted over 75 people.

The Leadership Committee under the direction of Ed Sobin has worked endlessly developing the Chapter Path to Leadership. Henry Schreiber has devoted several Saturdays to teaching a shortened leader training class ensuring that all leaders have a minimum level of knowledge. In addition, the leadership committee held a weekend long class and trained 20 Leaders in Training. The training is already paying off with new names in the schedule.

It hasn't always been easy to get all of this done, but I, along with the rest of the Executive Committee and our many volunteers who went above and beyond, sure had a lot of fun. Nathan, I wish you the best. You will make a great Chapter Chair. I'm looking forward to seeing what comes next.

*Cynthia Tollo Falls*

Chair, NY-NoJ Chapter

**You're invited!**

# **AMC's 142<sup>nd</sup> Annual Summit**

**Sat, Jan 27, 2018  
Norwood, MA**



# ***What exactly is*** **BACKCOUNTRY** **SKIING?**

by **RON GONZALEZ**,  
T&W Editor

Before the introduction of motorized ski lifts, all ski setups had the ability to ‘go cross country.’ Skiers had to climb the mountain to get their turns going down. Skis were long (over six feet!), made of wood, and the boots were made of thick leather. The boot heels could come up off the skis, while the toes were secured. There was no division between ‘downhill’ and ‘cross country’ skiing. What was simply ‘skiing’ in 1930 we now call ‘backcountry skiing.’ It’s basically the same thing—only the gear has changed.

A skier ‘goes cross country’ in the French Alps, ca. 1935







Nordic backcountry skiing on a classic cross country setup, Tug Hill, NY. Photo by Ron Gonzalez.

As a Ski Committee leader, I'm often asked about 'backcountry ski' outings. This sounds like a straightforward question, but there are widely differing definitions of what 'backcountry skiing' is. Here is an overview of the various forms skiing takes in our Northeastern backcountry.

### ***NORDIC BACKCOUNTRY***

What the majority of AMC members refer to as backcountry skiing is what I call nordic backcountry. This is where you take your cross country skis, go off the groomed ski tracks, and ski out into

the forest. You may be skiing moderate hiking trails or old woods roads. The snow is usually packed by previous skiers and/or hikers. Nordic backcountry skiing is most enjoyable on

gently rolling terrain, since lightweight, skinny skis don't offer much control on steep slopes, especially if the snow is hard or refrozen. The advantage of 'skinny skis' is that they offer the quickest, most efficient way to travel on snow from point A to point B. The long, narrow skis track well in a straight line, so you can 'kick and glide' all day long. Metal-edged skis are only necessary when the snow is hard-packed or icy.

Note that 'freestyle' or 'skate' ski technique is not useful for off-trail skiing. In this article, 'cross country' skiing assumes 'classic' kick-and-glide (diagonal stride) technique.



### ***XCD (CROSS COUNTRY-DOWNHILL)***

Some of us like to ‘bushwhack’ on skis, going off the trails and out into hilly terrain. When the snow is soft and deep, and you need to negotiate your way up, down and around boulders and trees, you’ll find that a bigger, more supportive setup works better. You may not go as far in a day, but you’ll be able to ski through tougher terrain. Bigger, stiffer boots provide better control and ankle support. The skis have metal edges for added control, are wider for better flotation and more ‘shaped’ for easier turning, but still narrow and lightweight enough for efficient travel from point A to point B. This kind of skiing has been popular in the Northeastern backwoods for many years, and is now called ‘XCD’ or ‘Cross Country Downhill’ skiing.

### ***TELEMARK AND ALPINE TOURING (A.T.)***

Finally, there is the most ‘extreme’ form of backcountry skiing, like you’ll see in the movies at the Banff Film Festival, or in Mount Washington’s Tuckerman Ravine. This is downhill skiing with the added ability to climb uphill on the skis. The goal is to go ski touring—to climb up the big mountain for the long run down. There are two schools within this category. Telemark requires the use of the telemark turn, where the heels are always free from the binding (using ‘nordic’ technique). Alpine Touring (‘AT’ or Randonnée) uses a lighter version of the typical alpine ski boot with a curved and treaded sole for easier hiking. The AT binding locks the heel down for downhill skiing (‘alpine’ technique) but can be switched to free the heel for skiing uphill with climbing skins (‘skinning up’). The skis are wide, shaped, and relatively heavy, similar to the type downhill skiers ride at lift-assisted resorts, but lighter.



The author descends the Wright Peak Ski Trail on an ‘XCD’ setup, Adirondack Park. Photo by Martin Egan.





Marty Plante ascending Hillman's Highway on Mt. Washington using telemark skis.

### ***WHERE TO SKI WITH THE AMC***

Look for ski outings listed in AMC Activities on Outdoors.org or on the NY-NoJ Chapter [Meetup page](#), or join the [amcski Yahoo Group](#).

Nordic Backcountry - We have lots of great places to 'go with the snow.' Van Cortlandt Park, Central Park, and Prospect Park see a lot of skiers when there's a big snowstorm in the city. Fahnestock State Park, Minnewaska State Park, High Point State Park (NJ), Ward Pound Ridge, and Harriman State Park are all popular destinations. Farther from home, there are great ski trails in western Massachusetts, Vermont, in New York State's Catskill Park and Adirondack Park, and on the Tug Hill.

XCD (Cross Country Downhill) - More members than ever want to ski off-trail into the snowy woods. Popular destinations for XCD skiing include many Catskill Park hiking trails, trails in the Adirondack Park's Siamese Ponds Wilderness Area, and the Bolton Valley Nordic Backcountry trails. Those with some downhill skiing experience will enjoy these ski tours.

[Note: If you'd like to ski this kind of terrain, but are afraid your skills aren't quite up to it, look for our upcoming Skills For Hills Workshops, offered by the chapter Ski Committee.]

Telemark and Alpine Touring - From March through April, it's usually possible to ski steep terrain like the Adirondack slides and Tuckerman Ravine in the White Mountains. Some young members have expressed interest in outings to these more demanding destinations. These ski tours often require long approaches on heavier gear, as well as advanced downhill skiing skills. Basic avalanche awareness skills are also required. An avalanche beacon, probe, and shovel should be carried by every member in the group, and all should know how to use them. In some cases, full crampons and an ice ax may be necessary to climb the mountain.

No matter what kind of backcountry skiing you do, you should always go with a group of at least three and have basic survival gear with you. Along with your ski gear, you should carry all the winter hiking essentials, and basic repair items for those inevitable gear failures.

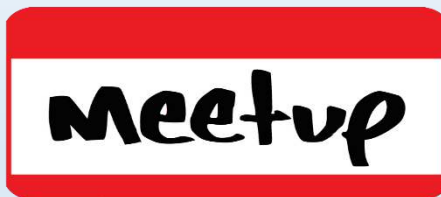
Now that you've prepared yourself, let it snow, and see you out there!



# Stay in the Loop !



Click a button to join our Yahoo Group or Meetup page. You'll get emails of our Short Notice Outings whenever a fortuitous snowstorm provides us with skiing opportunities.



## Presidents Day Long Weekend

**Sun-Wed, Feb 16-19, 2018**

Stay in a historic inn located in Brandon, VT (near Killington). Close to spectacular XC ski centers (Rikert and Mountain Top) appropriate for all skill levels. \$330 pp (+tax, tip) includes lodging, breakfasts, suppers, social hours. Registration required.

## MLK Weekend at Tug Hill

**Fri-Mon, Jan 12-15, 2018**

Ski state forest trails or a great nordic center in the snowy Tug Hill region of north-central NY State. Stay in comfortable lodgings with fully equipped eat-in kitchen, bedding provided, etc. Pot luck dinners. \$150 pp (+tax), includes lodging, breakfast.



## Ski Vermont with Mirimar

**Fri-Mon, Jan 19-21, 2018**

Two full days of downhill skiing/riding or XC skiing with Miramar Ski Club, staying at their lodge in Waitsfield, VT. Close to Mad River Glen, Sugarbush, Trapp Family Lodge, Stowe. \$300 includes lodging, bus from LI/Manhattan/NJ.

## Weekday Cross Country Skiing Activities at Mohonk Preserve

Marty Carp is back to lead a new series of cross country ski activities at Mohonk.

- **Cross Country Ski the Mohonk Preserve**  
Tuesdays & Fridays, Dec. 26, 2017 thru Mar. 23, 2018 - Int/Adv - 15 mi.  
Meet 10 AM at the Mohonk Preserve's Spring Farm parking lot. Bring lunch, snacks, hot drink, and a spare pair of gloves (be prepared for any weather conditions).
- **FREE Beginner Ski Lessons for AMC Members**  
Mondays, Jan. 8, 15, 22, and 29, 2018  
Marty was a downhill instructor at Belleayre and taught skiing for AMC and the Sierra Club. Call for details with your AMC membership number.

Please call [845-303-3764](tel:845-303-3764) or [email](#) the night before the event. Marty will be checking conditions to make sure the parking lot is plowed, the trails are groomed, and the roads are safe.

## Young Members Interchapter Weekend at Lake Placid

**Fri-Mon, Jan 12-15, 2018**

Stay in a historic inn located in Brandon, VT (near Killington). Close to spectacular XC ski centers (Rikert and Mountain Top) appropriate for all skill levels. \$330 per person (+tax, tip) includes lodging, breakfasts, suppers, social hours. Registration required.



# A Love Letter TO ICE CLIMBING



**T**he return of the fall season portends the winter to come. Crowds thin out. Our woods and mountains quiet down. As the nights flirt with freezing temperatures and we wake to the hint of frost, excitement stirs in the hearts of that small number of fiercely dedicated ice climbers amongst our membership. We reach into our closets and gear sheds to pull out our tools and ice screws. We will sharpen them while we patiently wait for the magic of warm (enough) days and cold nights to create the chandeliers, mushrooms, smears and daggers we ascend in our autumn daydreams.

Unlike rock routes that can remain unchanged over a lifetime, an ice climb constantly evolves. The flow can change by the time you've brought up your partner and prepare to switch leads. Your projects can disappear overnight. You go wherever the water takes you. It is a dance of both brute strength and grace. Some climbs offer only a thin veneer of ice, requiring gentle placements of picks and crampons. Other climbs, though 'fat' in spots,







believe the surge of roaring water flowing just beneath the ice sheet, demanding thoughtful but swift movement despite the deafening thunder of water falling all around.

When the wind howls and the temperatures plummet, everything hurts. Eyelashes, eyebrows and hair turn white with frost. You are at the mercy of the elements on those 'full value' days. But you return time and time again, because there is no better feeling than to be out on a calm winter day, warmed by sunshine, your picks sticking in firm ice. The entire world seems to slow down. Climbing becomes something of a walking meditation. We focus intensely on the integrity of the ice, our gear placements, our breath. Topping out, we look out through the trees laid bare by the cold season, no longer obscuring the view across the valley floor. All you hear are the birds and your partners' picks hitting the ice. The sun fills you with warmth while the crisp air paints your cheeks pink.

Our season is shorter nowadays, getting more brief with each passing year. Ice flows once guaranteed to come in early and stay late now tease before fully committing. Accessible roadside climbing is becoming increasingly rare,

causing us to venture further north. Some seasons we make do with ice hidden in deep ravines, tucked away from the sun. But each year we return to the mountains, to hunt for the ice.

When we are blessed with bluebird winter days we will climb well into the night, rappelling down into the dark, the light of our headlamps reflecting off falling snowflakes. We savor the hike out, taking in the sound of the frozen pond and river water crunching below our feet, standing in awe at the spray of stars above us on a crystal clear night. We walk out awash in gratitude—grateful for the day, for our partners, and for our safe return. As Mark Twight would say, in those moments “we flew the time warp between where we’d been and the rest of the world.”





# Walk on the Wild Side

by RON GONZALEZ

## Winter Day Hiking Basics



**W**inter is a fantastic season for hiking. The bugs and summer crowds have vanished. You have the trails to yourself, surrounded by winter's austere beauty.

For some, the cold, ice and snow can be intimidating. With the proper clothing and gear, hiking in winter can be no riskier than summer hiking. Here's a quick list of what you'll need for cold weather hiking.

### ***THE ESSENTIALS***

Don't hike alone. However, your group may be the only one on the trail. You and your hiking partner(s) will need to know where you are, where you're going, and how to get there safely. In winter, days are short, and temperatures plummet when the sun goes down. Get an early start, and leave extra time to get back to the trailhead before dark.





Carry a map and a compass, and know how to use them. Check your map at regular intervals. Always know where you are. You don't want to make a wrong turn and find yourself backtracking in the dark. Pack a headlamp with extra batteries, just in case.

Even if you don't feel thirsty, dehydration is every bit as likely in winter as in summer. Carry a minimum of two quarts of water, and

drink it. Bring high energy trail snacks and lunch. Consider packing a thermos with a warm, sweet beverage (no caffeine or alcohol, though).

Carry a basic first aid kit. Duct tape is often useful. Bring basic toiletries too.

Carry an emergency bivy sack. It can save a life.

Sunglasses and sunscreen are often necessary. Never underestimate the power of the sun reflecting off the snow. Goggles help in times of high wind and blowing snow.

### ***CLOTHING***

Keep yourself dry. Your body creates a lot of heat while you're climbing. You want to stay warm, but you don't want to overheat and get soaked with sweat by dressing too warmly. Avoid wearing an overly heavy insulated ski jacket or puffy down while you're climbing. These are usually too warm for strenuous hiking.

### ***NO COTTON!***

Cotton absorbs water but loses its insulating properties when wet, and is very slow to dry. Have you ever wondered why bath towels are always made of cotton and not wool or synthetics? Modern synthetic fabrics don't absorb moisture, are breathable, insulate well even if moist, and dry quickly. Merino wool performs well and is also popular.

## ***DRESS IN LAYERS***

I wear a three-layer ‘system’ consisting of a lightweight, breathable base layer next to my skin, a breathable mid-layer (synthetic fleece or wool), and a wind and water resistant hardshell outer layer. This works for all parts of your body, your torso, your legs, your hands and feet, and even your head.

**Pants:** I often wear nylon hiking pants over a lightweight base layer. Unless it’s wet or very windy, this combination will work down to surprisingly cold temperatures. Waterproof rain outer pants can work as an outer layer, for when it’s extremely windy or cold out. Waterproof rain pants don’t breathe very well, so make sure the pants have vents so you don’t get overheated. There are breathable Gore-Tex or softshell pants made for winter sports. These are more expensive, but perform well in a wider range of temperatures and conditions.

**Gloves:** I use a three layer glove and overmitt system much like I use for clothing. The base layer is a pair of lightweight liner gloves, either synthetic or wool. Over that I’ll wear a pair of warm, midweight gloves. When it gets really cold, overmitts cover the liners and gloves. Make sure all layers are large enough to leave room for your hands to move and ‘breathe.’ Gloves that are too tight will restrict

blood flow in your hands, making your fingers cold. Always carry extra pairs of gloves for when your first pair gets wet (which always seems to happen).

**Headwear:** A wool beanie or toque will be your most useful head covering. I often wear a wool Peruvian cap with ear flaps. A balaclava to cover your face is necessary in very cold and windy conditions.

**Down vest or jacket:** You’ll cool off quickly whenever you stop. A down vest or jacket will keep you warm while you’re resting or eating. Keep your ‘puffy down’ dry. When wet, down loses its ability to insulate.

## ***FOOTWEAR***

**Boots:** Try to choose the best type of boot for the conditions you’ll encounter. For low snow conditions on packed trails, a sturdy pair of Gore-Tex lined backpacking boots worn with wool socks and gaiters is usually adequate. For deep snow and extreme cold, there are insulated boots that are comfortable, waterproof and warm, but your feet may sweat a lot in these if the temperature





goes above 30 degrees. If you're backpacking in very deep snow and cold conditions, consider a pair of 'double' pac boots with a removable inner liner. The liner can be removed when you're in camp so you can dry them out. For big hikes up steep, snowy mountains, step up to mountaineering boots with stiff, crampon-compatible soles. These are like lightweight ski boots meant for hiking, but are only useful when you know you'll be in steep terrain and on snow or ice all day.

*Socks:* I like wool socks. A thin, synthetic liner sock under the wool sock can add warmth. Make sure your boots are large enough to fit comfortably with heavy socks. Your toes may freeze if your boots are too tight and restrict blood flow to your feet. For boots that fit tightly, wear thinner wool socks, even in winter.

*Gaiters:* Gaiters go over your boots, keep snow off your socks, and keep your legs warm and dry.

### **BASIC GEAR**

*Hiking Poles:* I like adjustable poles with a flick-lock mechanism, rather than the twist-lock type (the twist-type

poles always seem to jam up). Powder baskets are helpful in deep snow.

*Backpack:* Your daypack must be large enough to carry the extra clothing, food, and water you'll need for winter. If you'll be strapping snowshoes to your daypack, make sure it has the necessary attachment points.



*Traction Aids:* Often the problem isn't deep snow, it's ice. Kahtoola MICROspikes are the favorite traction aid among local hikers, although many prefer the similar Hillsound Trail Crampons.

Both have small spikes with a stretchy harness that grips the boot well. They're perfect for hiking icy trails with hard-packed or patchy snow. Most peaks in the Catskills and Adirondacks can be climbed with MICROspikes. Full crampons and even an ice ax may become necessary in extremely steep terrain and icy conditions.

*Snowshoes:* In deep snow, you don't want to 'post-hole' up to your knees with every step. Snowshoes are the answer. You can pay a lot for fancy snowshoes, but there are inexpensive



SKIS OR SNOWSHOES REQUIRE

## **POST NO HOLES!**

“About six months” said the emergency room physician. Half a year for a bruise to heal? I thought he was exaggerating. He wasn’t.

Postholes are the bane of backcountry skiers, as I found from personal experience on the Adirondacks’ Raymond Brook Ski Trail. I easily negotiated the trail—a 1400 foot vertical drop that’s 4.2 miles long and often as narrow as a bowling alley lane—only to have a ski tip get caught in a posthole within sight of my car. I landed on a rock, causing a huge hematoma on my thigh that lasted throughout the summer.

Postholes are caused when someone hikes without snowshoes on a powder-covered trail, creating hundreds of traps waiting to injure those that follow. The tracks left behind look like the holes dug for installing fence posts, ruining the trail for skiers unless a heavy snowfall erases the damage.

What can you do? Carry snowshoes, even if there is only a dusting of snow at the trailhead. Your route may take you to an area with deeper snow. And if the trail has already been broken out by skiers, walk to one side of the trail, not in the ski track.

- *Marty Plante*

models that work well on packed trails. Avoid the ‘hinge action’ bindings that snap the snowshoe’s tail up with every step, as these throw loose snow up your back. You won’t need very large or long snowshoes for packed trails, but you will want bigger ones if you’re going off-trail into deep, unpacked snow. Ask a trip leader for advice on choosing the best size for your needs.

*Closed Cell Foam Pad:* Carry a cut-down sleeping pad to sit or stand on during breaks. An insulating layer between you and the frozen ground makes a surprisingly big difference.



# Watch out for **HYPOTHERMIA**



## Cold facts about the chill that kills

**B**y far the biggest risk for winter hikers and skiers is hypothermia. If you become dehydrated and wet with sweat, you can become extremely cold. If your internal temperature drops, your body begins to divert blood flow away from your extremities to your internal organs. You may start to shiver uncontrollably. As your body gets even colder, your brain loses adequate blood flow and oxygen, resulting in confusion and stumbling. Further chilling can make you too weak to shiver. Finally, you may become so weak that you are unable to maintain consciousness. You may stumble and fall, drifting into sleep. Eventually your heart slows until it stops... and you die.

**1** *Stay warm and stay dry. Dress in layers.*

*Don't overdress. **Don't get wet** from sweat.*

**5 WAYS**  
to  
avoid  
**hypothermia**

**4** *Eat enough **food** to keep your blood sugar levels up.*

**No cotton!**

It absorbs water, loses its insulating properties when wet, and dries

**2**

*Drink enough water to stay well **hydrated**.*

**3**

Hike in a **group**.

If one member begins to show signs of confusion, fumbling, shivering, dizziness, or is stumbling around, **stop** and take steps to warm him/her up.

**5**

# **treating** HYPOTHERMIA **on the trail**



**MOVE** the **VICTIM** into a sheltered location, out of the wind, as warm as possible.

Have one group member make a **FIRE**

Remove **WET CLOTHING**

from the victim & replace with **dry** clothes.

Carry an emergency **BIVY SACK** to warm the victim.

Hug the victim to provide **BODY HEAT.**

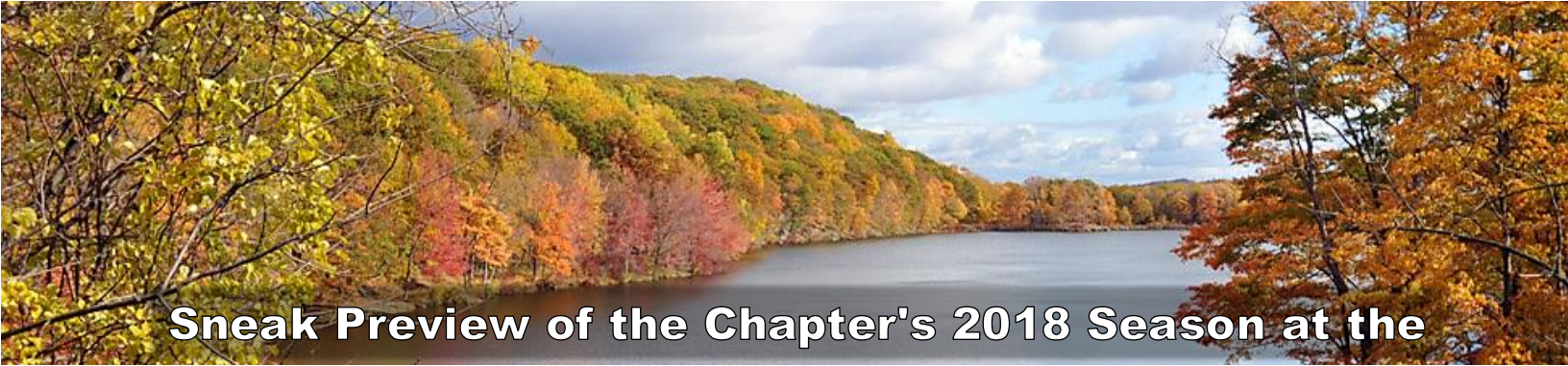


The victim should **DRINK FLUIDS** and eat sugary, high calorie food, especially warm, sweet fluids **WITHOUT ALCOHOL** or caffeine



**Advanced hypothermia** requires treatment in a **HOSPITAL.** Don't ever let things get to that point!





# Sneak Preview of the Chapter's 2018 Season at the **Corman AMC Harriman Outdoor Center**

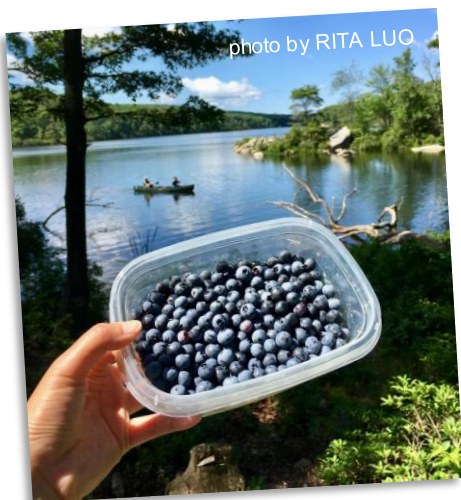
The New York-North Jersey Chapter will host a record 25 Events in the coming year! Our volunteer-led programs at The Corman AMC Harriman Outdoor Center start Opening Weekend May 18-20 and continue with a wide variety of offerings almost every week until Closing Weekend, Oct 14, 2018.

The chapter's Harriman Program Committee, along with 17 new and experienced leaders, bring you a wide spectrum of social, instruction and activity-based events to ensure you have a fabulous outdoors experience.

Events. Popular returning programs include Bird-watching, Yoga, Ladies' Canoe & Kayak, New Members Sampler, Family Midweek, Hike-Swim-Camp, Fine Dining, Trail Maintenance, and Wilderness First Aid Events.

The Executive Committee will host the 4th Annual Chapter Picnic (& Pig Roast!), as well as the Leadership Weekend, at The Corman AMC Harriman Outdoor Center.

Most events will offer a mix of cabin and tenting accommodations with scaled pricing.



New programs include Road Cycling, Photography, Wilderness Skills, Writing, LGBT, and Inter-Chapter

Many events sold out this year. So keep your eyes open in early spring when the full 2018 HPC Program Schedule is published online ... and register early!

See you in 2018.

**Email [harriman@amc-ny.org](mailto:harriman@amc-ny.org) to volunteer with the Harriman Program Committee (HPC).**



# Breakneck Ridge Trail

**CLOSED**

this winter for improvements

Over the last few years, increasing numbers of hikers flocking to the Breakneck Ridge Trail have caused dangerous congestion along NY Route 9D just north of Cold Spring, NY, on the east side of the Hudson River. The Breakneck Ridge Trail is the most popular hiking trail in New York State. On any nice weekend day, both sides of NY-9D have been choked with parked cars and hikers, causing a dangerous situation for both pedestrians and motorists. Indeed, a member of a Cold Spring fire company was injured in October 2016 when he was struck by a vehicle while assisting in the rescue of a hiker. Local residents driving on 9D often feel overwhelmed by the weekend crowds, creating a tense situation.

Since the summer of 2013, volunteers from the [New York-New Jersey Trail Conference](#) have acted as [trail stewards on Breakneck Ridge](#). The [Hudson Highlands Fjord Trail organization](#) and [Scenic Hudson](#) have designed a new trailhead welcome center and a separate pedestrian path along route 9D between the Metro-North pedestrian bridge and the Breakneck Ridge Trailhead. Construction is due to begin this autumn. Starting in the spring of 2018, TC volunteers will be manning the new Breakneck Ridge Welcome Center. The trailhead parking lot will be paved and enlarged. Designated parallel parking zones and reserved parking for emergency vehicles will be added, and No Parking zones will be posted on the east side of 9D. The speed limit in this area will be reduced to 40 mph from the current 55 mph. These and other improvements are expected to help



relieve the now-notorious congestion around the trailhead, greatly increasing safety for hikers, bicyclists and drivers.

The New York-New Jersey Trail Conference announced that due to work on these improvements, the [Breakneck Ridge trailhead will be closed during early 2018](#). There are also plans to close the trail itself for repairs, which has suffered extensive damage from overuse and erosion. Starting January 1, 2018, New York State will be [closing the trail and its parking areas](#), for an undetermined period of time.



Hopefully the trail won't remain closed for too long. If you visit the area around Breakneck Ridge while this work is in progress, please show your appreciation to the volunteers who are giving their time and energy to make these much needed improvements.

photo of Breakneck Ridge courtesy of Wikipedia



# Update from the Membership Chair

by CARRIE HO

Dear fellow members,

Guess where I was headed while I was writing this article for *Trails & Waves*—I was boarding a train for New Hampshire, to attend the annual AMC Fall Gathering. The AMC Fall Gathering is an annual event hosted by a different AMC Chapter each year. This year's host was the New Hampshire Chapter. I attended the club-wide Membership Committee meeting on behalf of NY-NJ Chapter. It was exciting to collaborate with the other Chapters and see my old AMC friends again.

## *AMC Adventures*

I mentioned in the last issue that I joined a hiking trip to Colorado organized by [AMC Adventure Travel](#). I am very pleased to tell you that I enjoyed the trip very much. The scenes are still vivid in my mind. (Gene: thank you for your cheer-up



during the trip and your suggestion to me that I should write and share this amazing hiking trip in *Trail & Waves*).

I could write thousands of words about this trip, but here are some highlights.

*Experienced and well-organized leaders.* What makes a trip enjoyable? Scenery is important, but a well-planned itinerary is equally essential. Good company? Great! Yes, I got that too! I was very fortunate to join leaders Carl Rosenthal and Dan Stone, who are among the most exceptional leaders I have ever met. Carl has led the Colorado Rockies trip for many years. The first rule he gave us was



“Be punctual.” No one on the trip was even one minute late. It helped us spend more time in the mountains without wasting time on nonsense. Carl knew where to have good food, and gave us enough time to recover from the “high-altitude” hike every day. Dan is an amateur photographer who climbs 200 mountains a year. When we were on the summit of Mt. Evans, I asked him, “Do you think of your wife when we see this breathtaking view?” These spectacular views really got me. He said to me, “I always miss my wife.” He headed to Africa for a trip with his wife the following Friday.

- **Colorado Rockies.** Enjoy the magnificent environment and grapple with the altitude. These views leave you speechless! If I could use words to describe them, I would say they are spectacular, magnificent, grand, splendid, gorgeous, breathtaking and beautiful. At 14,130 feet on the summit of Mount Evans, my thought was: Believe in yourself, as there is no limit in life. *We can push ourselves to do it, just be prepared with the right gear.*
- **Wildflowers & Wildlife.** Looking at the wildflowers and wildlife on the mountain tops, you can see they are adaptive and tough. We are too!

Check out the [AMC Adventure Travel page on Outdoors.org](#), where you can sign up for the AMC Adventure Travel newsletter. There is something (and somewhere) for everybody.

## Upcoming Trips in 2018

Thank you to all who joined me in the New Members' weekends in Harriman and Mohican. You all Rock! We had so many laughs and so much fun! Let's keep up the momentum.

Here are the trips scheduled so far:

- Catskills Memorial Weekend
- New Members Weekend, Harriman Outdoor Center, July 20-22
- New Members Family Weekend, Harriman Outdoor Center, August 3-5
- New Members Weekend, Mohican Outdoor Center, September 7-9
- Medawisla Lodge and Cabins, Maine, July Fourth Weekend \*\*\* (the Lodge newly opened in 2017) *I've reserved the cabins, but I will see how many folks are strongly determined to make this trip, as it's a LONG drive both ways! However, I'm sure this will be rewarding.*

### *Membership Speakers Series*

Yes, your favorite Speakers Series will be returning in January 2018. I have received requests from adventure speakers who want to share their journeys with you. I will have Benno Rawlinson to kick off the event. Benno will share his inspirational adventures with us. He has spoken to schools, and organizations. From his words, "Sharing my stories of exploring the globe, from rowing across the Atlantic Ocean, running across the Sahara Desert to the likes of my Baffin Island arctic expedition".

Can't wait? Stay tuned.

The chapter's Executive Committee and Committee Chairs are always looking for new activities for you to enjoy. Please write to me if there is anything you have in mind and want us to organize. I will be more than happy to work with you to make it happen.

Best wishes for your 2018!

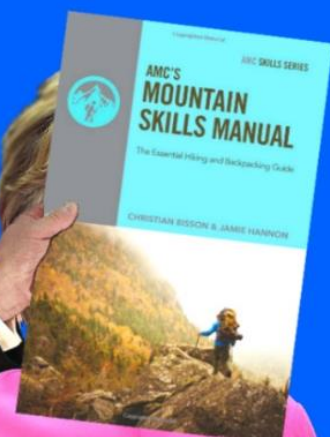
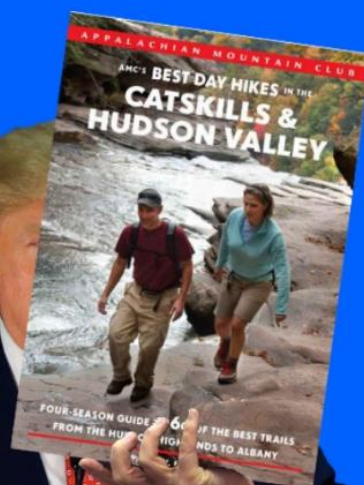
*Carrie Ho*

Membership Chair  
[membership@amc-ny.org](mailto:membership@amc-ny.org)

*Something everyone can agree on....*

## **AMC Books Make Hiking Great. Again!**

**Click to see  
what's new**



**TRUMP**



NOT

# A Snow Bunny

## Climbing the Learning Curve of Downhill Skiing

story and photos by YELENA UDLER

**W**hen a skier thinks of a ‘snow bunny,’ the image of a cute, diminutive girl comes to mind, gracefully cutting lines down the slope in a puffy pink snowsuit, with ponytails swinging. Well let me tell you, I felt more like a bear than a bunny when I started skiing. My boyfriend and I were at a ski resort at the start of the season. While he was off conquering the ‘big mountain’ slopes, I was taking my beginner lessons. As the only adult on that ‘bunny slope’ crowded with kids, all of us practicing our ‘pizzas’ and ‘french fries,’ I felt completely out of my element.

Riding the lift at Gore

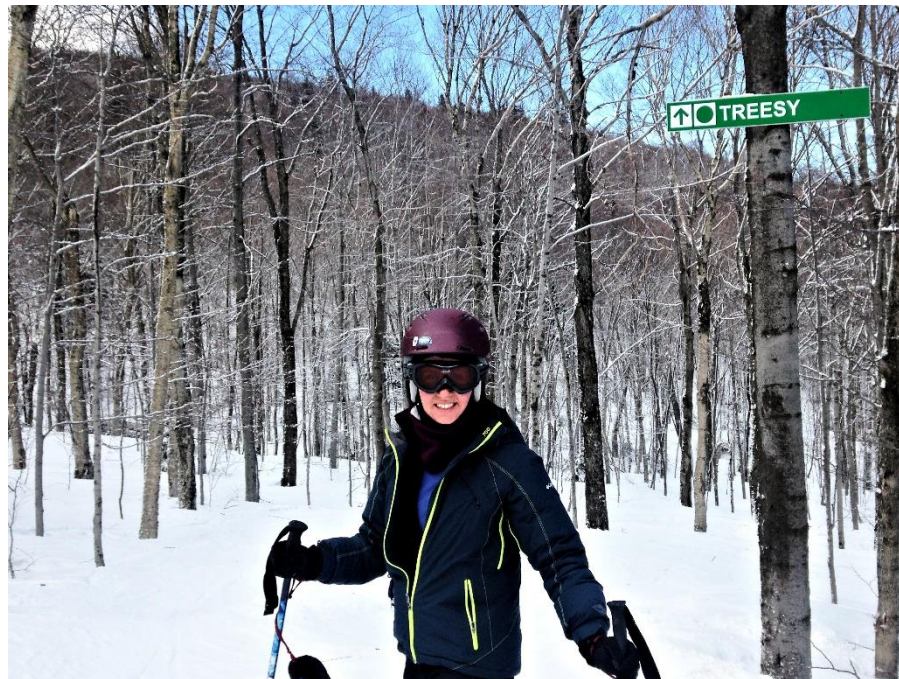


My fascination with downhill skiing began at the end of the prior season. For one of our first dates, my then-boyfriend took me to Hunter Mountain for a day of spring skiing. We rented skis at a shop on the way, arriving mid-morning at the nearly empty resort. He showed me the basic moves, how to put on the boots, get on and off the lift, and avoid face plants. I spent the day on the beginner slopes—practicing over and over, and over again. But I didn't notice the repetitiveness of the task, nor the sloppy conditions with tufts of grass poking through the melting snow. I just saw the majestic-looking peaks around us, still covered in white, and pictured myself ripping down those slopes someday. Unfortunately, it being the end of the season, my ambitions had to be tabled until the following winter.

**As an adult**, learning a sport, or any new skill for that matter, is much more challenging than when we were young. As kids we never thought about cost, gear, or embarrassing moments. But as self-conscious adults all these factors take on weighty significance. Had my first skiing experience been on a crowded peak-season weekend with long lift lines, crowded slopes, overpriced lift tickets, and

spectators watching my every mistake, I likely would have panicked, hated it, and never gone skiing again. Instead, my first experience was fun, the company great, and the setting tranquil. If you're trying a new sport, try to minimize the things that make you uncomfortable (crowds, in my case). For your first attempt at skiing, perhaps pick a small local resort, or go mid-week when it's least crowded. Should you decide you want to become a better skier, the key to success (as with most things in life) is dedication and practice. To cement my commitment to the sport, I purchased a beginner ski package (skis, boots, poles), wrangled a nice helmet as an early birthday present (always play it safe!), and purchased discount ski passes.

Yelena at her favorite Killington run.





Ski gear is expensive, so assess how dedicated you will be to the sport, and spend accordingly. If you're going to ski less than five times during the season, it's probably best to rent your gear at the resort. If you know you'll be skiing a few days more than that, a seasonal rental becomes more cost-effective. After renting for a while you'll know better what features to look for when you purchase your first ski setup. If you know you're hooked, and you're stoked to get to the hill every day you can, you may want to get your own setup. Personally, my thought process went like this: Assuming I'd pay \$30 every day I rented ski gear, I'd break even after 20 ski days if I spent \$600 on a ski package. I got that setup, so getting in those twenty ski days became my goal for the season.

**Once you have the desire** and the gear, what's next? Ski lessons get pricey, but an initial lesson is vital for learning the basics. Try an all-day personal lesson or maybe a handful of group lessons. After that, bribe friends, colleagues, and significant others to show you the do's and don'ts. People are generally flattered when you ask for advice. You can find instructional videos online, while meetup groups

## RESORT SKIING FOR CHEAPSKATES

Skiing urbanites can find discount lift tickets and transportation from the metro New York City area to ski destinations in upstate New York, western Massachusetts, and Vermont.

Our chapter's Ski Committee has a Yahoo Group named "[amcski](#)." Group members and AMC leaders put together short notice outings to hit the white stuff right after it falls. While mostly geared towards cross country skiing, a growing number of members have expressed interest in getting together for day trips to nearby ski areas.

This year we're renewing our relationship with [Miramar Ski Club](#) and listing a few of their trips. The big advantage of Miramar trips is the bus pickup from LI/Manhattan/ NJ. Miramar's trips mostly go to lift served ski areas, but they also get you close to cross country ski centers. The club offers a Novice Downhill Ski Program that's open to snowboarders as well as skiers. Miramar's lodge in Waitsfield, Vermont is next door to the Mad River Glen and Sugarbush ski areas, and is close to Stowe, Bolton Valley, Smugglers Notch, and the Trapp Family Lodge.

[I SKI NY](#) helps you find discount lift tickets for local ski hills in New York State. Don't underestimate NY skiing! Besides the well-known big hills like Whiteface, Gore, and Hunter, there are sweet locals' ski hills in the Taconics, Catskills, and the foothills of the Adirondacks. These smaller ski hills can provide a wonderful experience, with low prices, small town hospitality and—if you time it right—fantastic snow conditions.

[Liftopia](#) is a popular resource for finding cut-rate lift tickets. Discounted passes are available for almost all of the popular ski resorts in the Northeast.

Let's put together some ski trips and get to the snow this winter!

or other social clubs make it easier to find like-minded individuals with whom to practice.

Having found ski buddies and the necessary gear, you'll now need lift tickets. Skiing is called the 'rich man's sport' for a reason—lift passes at east coast ski resorts can run over \$100 a day! But don't worry, there are plenty of less costly alternatives. Websites like Liftopia.com offer discount day passes. If you reside in New York City and don't own a car, numerous companies exist (such as Miramar) that provide roundtrip bus transportation and one day lift tickets to resorts in upstate New York and Vermont. If you do own a vehicle and have a flexible schedule, consider skiing mid-week, when there are fewer people and rates are more reasonable. Some mountains, like Hunter, offer cheaper restricted tickets with access only to the lower mountain (which is all you'd need as a beginner anyway) or beginner packages complete with gear rental and lessons. If you live reasonably close to a resort, you could also invest in a season pass, provided you use it often enough to break even on the

cost. Armed with your ski gear and lift tickets, you should have everything you need for the season.

**My own experience** with learning to ski was magnificent. For the winter of 2014-15, I found myself living in Rockland County, working from home with a flexible schedule. For us on the

East Coast, that winter was one of the gnarliest in recent history. It seemed like the heavens just kept dumping snow non-stop. I took ski lessons and organized weekend getaways for our group of friends, while guiltily my more experienced buddies into doing a few runs with me each ski day. I cajoled a gym buddy with a generous

vacation schedule into getting a seasonal gear rental so he could take off mid-week with me and check out the local resorts around New York and New Jersey. I begged and pleaded with my boyfriend to sacrifice precious ice climbing days to teaching me how to ski. By the end of the season I had experienced 19 ski days at eight different resorts, and graduated from the bunny slopes to

“  
**For your first attempt at skiing, perhaps pick a small local resort...**  
”



easy blacks. There were bruises along the way, sure, and more than a few hours spent in Sunday night traffic. But I gained that whole season of unparalleled memories and shared experiences. There was the time Stan and I went to Belleayre Mountain midweek, warming up on ice-crusting morning snow, staring at the never ending view of mountains under a 'bluebird' sky. Or the time with Christina when an unexpected snowfall extended our Adirondack weekend, so we headed over to Gore Mountain for a powder day. Driving through nearly white out conditions we arrived to find a winter wonderland, where it kept snowing all

through the day. It was my first time cutting lines on fresh powder. Or the time my climbing friends and I spent a late-season weekend in Killington, expecting pretty crummy conditions, when instead a freak snowstorm blew in, depositing so much snow that my snowboarder friend had trouble getting enough momentum to propel himself down the hill. Each trip was special in its own way, but I'll stop filling your mind with my memories. Wait for the first snow, and make some memories of your own this winter. It's never too late to learn, and you don't have to look perfect doing it.

Late in the season at Killington.





# Adirondack Park HAMLET to HUT system on the horizon

The possibility of a hut-to-hut system in the Adirondack Park took a step closer to reality when a \$20,000 grant was awarded by the Cloudsplitter Foundation of Saranac Lake to the [Adirondack Hamlets to Huts, Inc.](#) (AHH). The grant is expected to help the non-profit AHH create its first hut-to-hut route, the North Creek-Indian Lake Circuit.

The North Creek-Indian Lake Circuit is expected to consist of a 3-day hike in the south-central Adirondacks, with a return by raft down the Hudson River. Overnight lodging is expected to be located near the starting point in North Creek, and at Garnet Hill. After the first day's hike out of North Creek, the route continues across the Siamese Ponds Wilderness Area, then

proceeds from Kings Flow to the village of Indian Lake, finishing up with a one-day rafting trip back to the beginning of the trek at North Creek.

Some have expressed interest in a hut-to-hut system for skiers and snowshoers in winter. No plans have been submitted for this as yet.

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (the DEC) has published a [Concept Plan for a Hut-to-Hut Destination-based Trail System](#) in the Adirondack Park, including some proposed routes with maps.

If this hut system initiative succeeds, it could make for some interesting new outings in New York State's Adirondack Park.



The Siamese Ponds Wilderness, part of the proposed Hamlet-to-Hut System. Photo by Marty Plante







## ***LEADERSHIP TRAINING***

**Our chapter's Leadership Training was held the weekend of June 16-18, 2017. Twenty new leaders were trained in group dynamics and management, trip planning, basic first aid, and practice scenarios. Many are already out on the trail.**





## Let's Remember A Passed Friend and Superlative Appie

# Bob Susser

AMC has lost one of its treasured members.

Bob Susser passed away on November 14, at the age of 84. He was an active AMC hike leader for over 40 years, and organized the chapter Thanksgiving dinners, annual chapter dinners, and weekend group trips to Mohonk and other destinations.

Bob was born in Vienna, Austria and came to the United States as a child, fleeing the Nazis prior to the Holocaust. He graduated from Cornell University and had various careers over the years, most recently as a psychologist at Rikers Island. Bob attended law school in his late fifties, graduating with the highest Law Boards in New York State. He later became involved with various hiking clubs including the AMC, the Sierra Club, the Outdoors Club, Adirondack Mountain Club, and Urban Trails, leading hikes and in more recent years, city walks. AMC recognized Bob's work for the club by naming him Appie of the Year.

Bob had many interests and hobbies, including contra dancing. He loved to attend classical music events, including opera.

Bob visited Europe frequently and always enjoyed the opportunity to speak to others in his original tongue. In later years, Bob became well known for his walks in New York City, visiting the Botanical Gardens, Central Park, Fort Tryon Park and the West Side of Manhattan.

Bob will be missed for his hikes and walks, keen intellect, and sharp wit.

May you rest in peace Mr. Susser, and take that walking stick with you to help you on your journey.







# The 105<sup>th</sup> Annual AMC NY-NoJ Chapter Dinner & Meeting

Saturday, Jan 6, 2018  
Dinosaur Bar-B-Que  
700 W. 125th Street  
Harlem, NYC



This annual event is a time to show off all the good work AMC does. It includes:

- Election of the 2018 Executive Committee
- Annual Report
- Recognition Awards
- Guest Speaker
- Raffle & More

Guest Speaker Mr. [Derick Lugo](#) (a.k.a. Mr. Fabulous) tells his story of becoming an ‘unlikely thru-hiker’ and his journey on the Appalachian Trail. His story is filled with plenty of humor and hardships, and the one-of-a-kind experiences that New Yorkers looking for their first thru-hike adventure can certainly relate to and learn from. Derick is a hiker, writer and blogger. He is currently working on the final edits for his book *An Unlikely Thru-Hiker*, a humorous account of his unusual and life-changing AT thru-hike. Derick may reside in New York City, but his heart lives wherever the AT takes him.

[Dinosaur Bar-B-Que](#) is a famous Harlem eatery with consistently high reviews for its food and atmosphere. [EventBrite Registration](#) required.

Adult: \$55 member / \$66 non-member

\*Your ticket gives you access to the AMC NY-NoJ Annual Meeting and Dinner, including appetizers, buffet dinner, Chapter awards, guest speaker and more! Cash Bar.

# NEWS from the CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

## Land and Water Conservation Fund

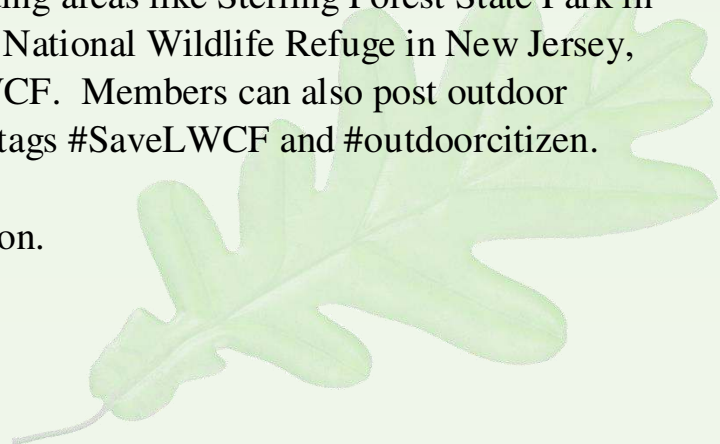
The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) is a visionary and bipartisan federal funding program for protecting our nation's most special places. From Gore Mountain in the Adirondack Park, to White Cap Mountain in Maine, to the Appalachian National Scenic Trail, LWCF has funded the protection of some of our most iconic landscapes and trails in the Northeast.



In December of 2015, after briefly allowing the LWCF to expire, The U.S. Congress reauthorized the Land and Water Conservation Fund for three years. The clock is ticking down once more, with just a year to go until LWCF expires in September 2018. As a leader within the nationwide LWCF Coalition, AMC is calling on our elected officials to permanently reauthorize LWCF and provide full and permanent funding to unleash the true promise of this critically important conservation and recreation program.

The Chapter is encouraging our volunteers to lead trips to the places that have benefited from LWCF funding, including areas like Sterling Forest State Park in New York and the Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge in New Jersey, and to share the importance of the LWCF. Members can also post outdoor adventure photos online with the hashtags #SaveLWCF and #outdoorcitizen.

Click [here](#) to learn more and take action.





# Events & Getting Involved

Your Conservation Committee is working on setting up engaging and meaningful events for the Chapter. Keep an eye out for upcoming ‘postcard parties’ to write to your representatives, conservation-focused speakers, and Leave No Trace Awareness Workshops. All events will be posted on the AMC’s [activities page](#), where you can narrow your search by changing the activity search choice to “Conservation.”

The NY-NoJ Conservation Committee is also looking for new Committee Members! Email Brittany Gollins at [conservation@amc-ny.org](mailto:conservation@amc-ny.org) to get involved.

A graphic with a black background and gold Art Deco patterns. The text is centered and reads: AMC Membership, Holiday Party, December 11, 2017, 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM, THE WINSLOW, 243 East 14th Street · NYC, and Click here for details.

AMC Membership

## Holiday Party

December 11, 2017  
6:30 PM to 8:30 PM

THE WINSLOW  
243 East 14th Street · NYC

[Click here for details](#)



# LASTING IMAGE

## SKI RUNS AND TOW SET UP FOR PUBLIC

Interstate Park to Offer New Winter Sports Facilities at Bear Mountain.

### UPHILL RIDE IS PROVIDED

Ropes Pulled by Motor to Take Labor Out of Sliding at 'Old Silver Mine' Center.

Two ski runs and a ski tow will be Winter sports features this season in the Bear Mountain section of Palisades Interstate Park of

**Silver Mine Ski Area** in Harriman State Park introduced many NYC residents to downhill skiing. Opening during the Great Depression with only a tow rope and a 290 foot vertical drop, it was one of the few locations in the area for the nascent sport of downhill skiing. By the 1960s, it featured snow-making facilities and a cozy lodge. The '70s saw the addition of a T-bar, J-bar and two more tow ropes, but inconsistent snow caused it to be shut down in the 1980s.

THE NEW YORK TIMES, THURSDAY, JANUARY 5, 1978



The Palisades Interstate Park's only T-bar being used at the Silver Mine ski area at Bear Mountain, N.Y. There are plans to replace the popular center, which was first used in the late 1930's with a rope tow providing uphill lift.



Madame Pierre Gauthier  
Metropolitan Museum of Art

1 PM  
New York, N.Y.

Argent

Arts  
New York, N.Y.

