



# Trails & Waves

News from the New York – North Jersey Chapter of the Appalachian Mountain Club  
Volume 34, Issue 1 ♦ Spring 2012



For me, it all started with taking one of the paddling instructionals offered by our Chapter. Taking the instructional not only provided an entry into the sport of whitewater kayaking, but it provided a glimpse into the culture and fellowship that was so rooted in this part of our club. Paddling was not something that came natural to me, and to be honest, it's not the primary reason I kept coming back – I kept coming back because of the people. Everyone was warm, friendly, and grounded; they created a culture of learning that was ideal and balanced. (Butch was tough and direct; Michelle supportive and patient.)

## **Paddling: It's All The Wave!**

By Carin Tinney, Canoe & Kayak Chair

Four years ago if someone had asked me about kayaking I probably would have told them about the great deal I got on a trip to Florida through their website. But today looking for adventure on kayak.com is a foreign concept to me; all I was ever looking for could be found at our very own Chapter website: [www.amc-ny.org/recreational-activities/canoe](http://www.amc-ny.org/recreational-activities/canoe) (click on 'Canoe Kayak Trip Schedule' to see all the great trips we have coming up).

With the AMC, I have paddled in the deep recesses of the Appalachian Mountains in West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Vermont, New York, Connecticut, and Maryland. This year, I hope to add a few more states and another country (Canada) as our brave trip leaders make plans to organize a week-long Southern Rivers trip and a back-country Canadian trip.

Today, three years (four paddling seasons) later, I am the new Chair of the Canoe & Kayak Committee. I am honored to hold this position because I get to talk almost daily about my love for our club and committee, the camaraderie, and of course – the paddling!

If you want "in" on this wonderful world of paddling, please keep checking our website. Our dedicated leaders offer courses and trips on quiet water, tidal water, and whitewater in both canoes and kayaks. In fact, we have already scheduled one of the Whitewater Kayak instructionals; it will be held on the Lehigh River in Pennsylvania on the weekend of June 8-10.

The BEST part about our instructionals (besides the campfires and good company) is that you do not need to own your own boat. Our Chapter has a large fleet of boats and gear – all included in the low cost of instructionals. Courses fill quickly so please register early at [www.amc-ny.org](http://www.amc-ny.org).

Please join us! If you have general questions about paddling with the NY-NoJ Chapter, feel free to reach out to me at [CanoeKayak\[at\]amc-ny\[dot\]org](mailto:CanoeKayak[at]amc-ny[dot]org).

## Trails & Waves

Vol. 34, Issue 1 Spring 2012  
Nancy Tollefson, Editor

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Contributions of articles and photos (high resolution jpg) are welcome. Articles may be edited for style, clarity, length and possible legal complications. The newsletter assumes no responsibility for lost material. **Submission deadlines are April 25 for Summer issue (comes out in early June), July 25 for Fall (comes out in early Sept.), October 25 for Winter (comes out in early Dec.), and January 25 for Spring (comes out in early March).**

### Guidelines for Newsletter Submissions

- ◇ Email preferred; typed or neatly printed written material accepted.
- ◇ All submissions should be clearly labeled that they are intended for publication in the newsletter.
- ◇ Photos are preferred as color jpeg files attached to email (must be high resolution, at least 180 dpi).

### Classifieds Policy and Rates

- ◇ Advertising rates for classifieds are \$1 per word. Please contact editor for display ad rates.
- ◇ Payment must be included with the ad (check payable to AMC NY-NoJ Chapter).
- ◇ We do not provide proofs/checking copies. We have no liability for errors, other than the cost of the ad.

Recent issues of *Trails & Waves* are available on the Chapter's website, [www.amc-ny.org](http://www.amc-ny.org).

**Send all submissions and requests for advertising to:**  
**trailswaves[at]amc-ny[dot]org**

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**SUBMISSION DEADLINE FOR  
SUMMER ISSUE IS APRIL 25**

## FROM THE CHAIR

By Richard Barcia

I will be the Chair of our Chapter's Executive Committee for 2012. The state of our Chapter is financially stable, due in large part to the cost savings instituted by the committee in 2011 led by Carson Tang. This year I hope to see growth in our Chapter's membership and greater use of the wonderful volunteer resources provided by our talented leaders.

The NY-NoJ Chapter sponsors an extensive number of activities: a hike in Harriman or the Hudson Highlands; an urban walk on Chelsea's High Line or to a museum in Hoboken; paddling on one of our nearby river or lakes; a memorable weekend at Fire Island Cabin or Mohican; a Sunday morning playing softball in Central Park; perhaps your first backpack; a trail work outing; and a rock climbing workshop. These are but a few of the trips offered. Please look in the Schedule and get on the email lists for short notice trips (see Schedule page 2). And if you have an idea for a different outing, we want to hear about it – you can be a leader of a trip you design. I encourage you to contact one of our Committee Chairs and get involved as a leader – we need you!

We also need you to get involved as a Committee member. Please contact the Committee Chair to offer your help; you can find their contact information in the front of the Schedule or online at [www.amc-ny.org](http://www.amc-ny.org) (see "About Us"). Sara Hart, our dedicated Conservation Chair, would like you to bring your interests to this important committee. Bicycle Chair Susan Wallen would love to have your help in planning trips. And if you would like to share your love of the outdoors with children, as someone encouraged you in the past, I hope you will get in touch with Harold Petzold, Chair of our Chapter Youth Program.

I hope that during my time as Chair our membership can become even more diverse and inclusive. Do you speak Spanish or Chinese? I encourage you to contact a Committee Chair about leading outings. We plan to promote more young members' trips and young leaders, taking us all on adventures with a new viewpoint.

Your Executive Committee wants your ideas – our first 100 years were good; this next 100 years will be even greater, with your energy and leadership.



Photo by Robert Matson

*Ingrid shows off her ride*

## Multi-Day Bike Trips From Central Park

By Robert Matson, Bike Leader

**A**s surprising as it may be, there are many very nice two-day, one-night bike trips in the New York area, starting from Central Park. And there are many more if you begin your trip by taking public transit. There are two ways to start a bike trip from the city. Load up your bike and ride right from your door, or travel with your bike on a train (or bus/car) and begin riding from a town close to your overnight destination.

For me, there is nothing like the satisfaction of cycling right from my front door in Brooklyn to a campsite upstate. However, be cautioned: this is a significant undertaking. While there are several nice destinations within a good day's ride, the biggest hurdle is the first 40 miles. (Generally, this is the shortest distance you can ride before reaching a designated campsite.) And those 40 miles may be tough, hilly and with traffic. Of course, you can always stay closer to home and head for Floyd Bennett Field (Gateway Recreation Area), which offers "urban camping" and is only 22 miles from Central Park.

An alternative to biking from the city is to use public transit for the first leg. This way, one can start biking in

Cold Spring, Port Jervis, Net Cong, or Brewster, to name a few towns that border on beautiful regions. Naturally, there are regulations about taking your bike on public transit; a permit may be required and you may be limited to non-rush hour times. These rules, designed to let passengers get on and off quickly and safely, are detailed on the agencies' websites; for information about taking your bike on Metro North trains go to: [www.mta.info/bike/](http://www.mta.info/bike/).

Here is a short list of destinations for two-day/one-night bike trips leaving from Central Park. These can help you get started with planning your own trips.

Mileage from Central Park to camping at:

- Floyd Bennett Field (Brooklyn): 22 miles
- Lake Sebago, Harriman State Park: 40 miles
- Canopus Lake, Fahnestock: 62 miles
- AMC Mohican Outdoor Center, Delaware Water Gap: 85 miles
- Creek View Campsites, Rosendale, NY: 100 miles
- Hither Hills State Park, Montauk: 135 miles

Once you have tried a few two-day/one-night trips, consider expanding your ambitions. For example, why not take a nice three-day/two-night trip from Central Park to Lake Sebago in Harriman (40 miles), from there to Canopus Lake in Fahnestock (34 miles), and then from there back to Central Park (61 miles)?

This summer, I plan to lead two trips for AMC cyclists who would like to try multi-day touring. For strong, experienced cyclists who would like a three-day trip (with camping), we will ride the route described earlier, from Central Park to Lake Sebago, to Canopus Lake, and then back home (June 8-10, "Cycling the Parks," 150 miles, 3 days). For strong "first-timers," we will ride from Manhattan to Harriman State Park, where we'll spend the night at the Adirondack Mountain Club's private camp, Nawakwa, on Lake Sebago and then ride back to New York (September 15-16, "Biking Central Park to Harriman and Back," 100 miles, 2 days).

There are also several one-day AMC bike outings scheduled for late April, to get you warmed up. For more information, visit our club's on-line schedule at [www.amc-ny.org](http://www.amc-ny.org) or contact me directly at RMatson[at]TheInnovationWorks[dot]com.

# Chapter Annual Dinner

By Richard Barcia

This year's annual dinner, held January 21, was a success; 135 AMC members got together on the only snowy night in January at La Mela Ristorante in Little Italy. Being an Italian American and a New Yorker, I have avoided Little Italy for many years but was pleasantly surprised by the good quality of the food and service. (This was a rare group event where there were no complaints about the quality of the food!)

There were several highlights of the evening. Frank Bamberger, famous for his Gourmet Hikes, was honored as Appie of the Year (see story on page 6). As incoming Chapter Chair, it was my privilege to award pins to our Chapter's 25-year and 50-year members. [I'd like to once again congratulate the following people on their 50-year anniversary with the AMC:](#)

George and Claire Barth  
Roland Ellis  
Frank Firestone  
Josephine Giarratano  
Mary Hallenbeck  
Mary Hassay  
Jerome Mayer  
Arthur Newell  
Eva Paul  
Yako Yafet

We were honored to have both Andy Falender, retiring after 23 years as AMC's President, and Laurie Gabriel, Chair of the AMC's Board of Directors, in attendance. In both of their talks, they emphasized the importance to the Club of our vibrant Chapter.

I was also able to attend Andy Falender's farewell celebration on January 28, 2012, at the Kennedy Presidential Library in Boston. I was joined by several members of our Chapter and 500 other attendees. There is no way to include here all of the AMC's accomplishments under Andy Falender's leadership, but the following come to mind: the over threefold growth in membership, the protection of 66,500 acres in Maine's 100-Mile Wilderness region, and the Club's greater influence in regional conservation issues. I had the opportunity to speak with our new President, John Judge, who expressed his determination to help us grow the NY-NoJ Chapter.

At the dinner, the **2012 Chapter Executive Committee** was elected. Thank you to these members for volunteering their time to help lead our Chapter:

Chair	Richard Barcia
Vice Chair	Debbie Melita
Secretary	Lisa Madden*
Treasurer	Barry Wolfe**
Activities	Ellen Blumenkrantz*
Facilities/Services	Jonathan Silver
Public Services	Elissa Nemerofsky*

\*Continuing for a second year in their current position.

\*\*Continuing for his third year as Treasurer.

## Richard Barcia, Chapter Chair



Richard has been an AMC member since 1995. He has been a volunteer leader, host and committee member with the Chapter's Fire Island Cabin Committee. He served on the Executive Committee during 2004-2005. He has also led rollerblading trips and is a regular

hiker in Harriman and the Hudson Highlands. He has acted as the coordinator of the Chapter Youth Program, and has also served as vice chair of the Conservation Committee.

Richard has three daughters and works as a Financial Consultant, with an emphasis on socially responsible investing. He is an active yoga teacher at the Integral Yoga Institute in Manhattan.

## Debbie Melita, Vice Chair



Debbie has been an AMC member for over 9 years. She is a former Backpack Committee Chair and is currently a leader for the Backpack, Hiking, and Young Members Committees. She is also an Outdoor Leadership Training instructor and graduate of AMC's Mountain Leadership School.

Outside of AMC, Debbie is a volunteer trail maintainer of a 2-mile section of the Appalachian Trail in New York and often enjoys doing trail work around the country on week-long volunteer vacations. She does a

lot of long-distance backpacking trips and has completed over 1,500 miles of the AT in sections. She is a volunteer Field Editor for the *Appalachian Trail Thru-hikers' Companion*. In addition to 4-season hiking, she enjoys kayaking, canoeing, bicycling, softball, and dancing. She also has an extensive knowledge and love of anything related to baseball and can still name the starting lineup batting order (including field positions) of the 1977 Yankees.



**Lisa Madden, Secretary**

Lisa has been an AMC member for over nine years. She went from being an attendee on many hikes to leading hikes and also led a few backpacks. She served on the Hiking Committee and helps to moderate the group, hikeamc@yahoo.com. Lisa

enjoys fast-paced hikes, the longer the better. She also runs trail races, rock climbs, and skis. She works as a Project Manager in an architectural firm in Manhattan.

friendships she has formed since she started leading hikes, and the friendships that others who hike with regularly have formed with each other,.

Ellen grew up spending summers in the Catskills, which involved lots of running off into the woods to pick berries. When she went to college at New Paltz, she enjoyed hiking at Minnewaska State Park. Now, she loves that she lives within 30 minutes of Harriman State Park, which she considers her second home. She works in Direct Marketing.

**Jonathan Silver, Facilities/Services**



Jonathan has been an AMC member since 1989. He's led hikes and backpacks for the Chapter.

Jonathan set up the Chapter Wilderness First Aid Committee in 1996 and served as its chair, co-chair and instructor. He is a member of the National Ski Patrol and is a NJ state EMT. Jonathan is a self-employed software developer.

**Barry Wolfe, Treasurer**



Barry has been an AMC member for seven years and participates in the Chapter's hiking and backpacking programs. He also enjoys nature photography and his work has been recognized by several prominent camera clubs and photographic

organizations. Barry is a CPA and is employed in corporate financial management.

**Elissa Nemerofsky, Public Services**



Elissa has been a member of AMC for more than 12 years and attended AMC August Camp several times. She is thankful for meeting great friends and taking great hikes with AMC, and especially enjoys fall and winter hiking in

Harriman State Park.

Elissa is a former financial systems technology business analyst and volunteers doing IT work at several NYC museums. She is passionate about the outdoors and enjoys skiing, cycling, kayaking, and skating. She recently returned from several months trekking in the Nepal Himalayas and independent travel through India and Tibet.

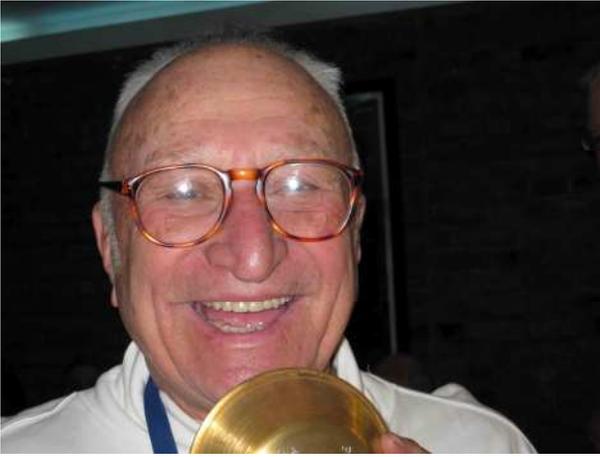
**Ellen Blumenkranz, Activities**



Ellen joined the AMC over 16 years ago, and has been a hike leader for about 11 years. She loves sharing her favorite outdoor places with others. Most of her hikes are at a moderate pace, so people can enjoy the woods and whatever

is special about that hike. She likes to lead smaller groups of 10-15 hikers. She greatly enjoys all the

Thank you to the Nominating Committee for their work: Don Getzin (Chair), David Lamb, Dorothy Lourdou, Debbie Melita, and Barry Skura.



## Congratulations to Frank Bamberger, Appie of the Year!

[Here is John Bradley's introduction, given at the Chapter annual dinner on January 21, 2012:]

It gives me great pleasure to present the Appie of the Year Award. Each year since 1979, our Chapter's Advisory Committee chooses the Appie of the Year. The Appie of the Year is an individual who gives selflessly of him/herself for the good of the Club. They

work tirelessly, often behind the scenes, organizing, leading in fact and by example. The Appie has served in this manner for several years and exemplifies the volunteer ethic that makes the AMC so special.

This year our Appie is an AMC life member who has been a member for over thirty years, since 1977. During this time, our Appie has led innumerable hikes and walks. The first hike they led was titled "Gourmet Gathering with Waltz Music." Since then our Appie's hikes have included many other popular "Gourmet Hikes." Our Appie has served on the Chapter Executive Committee, supervising the Facilities and Services Committees. Our Appie was the Program Committee Chair for several years. In addition, our Appie has been active on the Fire Island Committee for more than fifteen years. Throughout the years our Appie has been unfailingly cheerful, friendly, and helpful – eager to pitch in wherever needed. Not long ago, our Appie was on a hike when the leader became injured. Our Appie took over the hike, led the hikers out of the woods then returned to pick up the hike leader and take him home. Lastly, our Appie is an enthusiastic photographer.

## AMC BACKPACKING 101

By Christine Benton, Backpack & Hike Leader

### ~ LEAVING CAMP ON TIME ~

One of the challenges of leading a backpack trip is to convince others of the importance of leaving camp on time each morning. Here are the main reasons why this is important:

1. **IT'S THE LEADER'S CHOICE.** The leader has planned the trip and knows how long it will take to do that day's mileage. Extra time will have been factored in to possibly search for a suitable campsite or water source and to cope with any unforeseen incidents. It's the obligation of the participant to do his/her best to be ready on time.
2. **THERE'S NO GOOD REASON NOT TO BE READY ON TIME.** When people normally are in their sleeping bags by 9:30 or 10pm (or even earlier in colder weather), this gives plenty of time for eight hours of sleep and early rising by, say, 6 or 6:30am.

3. **THERE'S NO SUBSTITUTE FOR AN EARLY START.** It allows plenty of time for rest stops, enjoying the trail, and extra daylight in case of an injury. It avoids searching for the next camping spot in the dark. On the last day of the trip, it gets people off the trail at a reasonable time, which is especially important when we all have a long drive home.

Most people appear to need about two hours in order to pack up and have breakfast. If you need more time, then you should wake earlier and prepare what you can, such as filtering water, the evening before.

Having my own **PACK-UP ROUTINE** really helps me. First, I set water to boil for tea and go get the food bags down. While my tea is brewing, I begin packing up. Then I relax and go down to the creek (or view) to drink my tea and eat my cookie. If I'm having oatmeal I boil more water, put my dried fruit in to hydrate and then add the oatmeal, and continue packing. I relax again down by the creek and enjoy my breakfast. By this time I am almost entirely packed up and I have had tea and breakfast...and others are sitting around chatting, with their tents still up and their gear spread all around! Ahh!!!

# Great Piece Meadow, Passaic River Paddle

By Maria Menico Sifniades

The pungent aroma hit me as soon as we put in. The still swollen Passaic flowed softly on the bright Saturday morning, its serenity belying the force it is capable of unleashing. On that October 8, 2011, it was over a month since Hurricane Irene struck in late August. The river was brown, muddy, musty, and gentle. I liked it.

We were six boats, seven folks, led by AMC leader Nathan Baker. We paddled north from our starting point at a warehouse along the river in Fairfield, NJ. My husband and I car-topped our tandem canoe. Our party also included two kayaks, cutting slender silhouettes in blue and yellow, and three single canoes. I was impressed by the gear the others brought: water booties, paddling gloves, watertight bags, and fancy slanted paddles. By the end of the trip I wished that I'd had each of them as my feet slid in the mud, my hands developed hot spots, and my lunch nearly got mired in mud.

Twelve miles, Nathan wrote in his email responding to my query before the trip. I didn't know what to expect when we left the house that morning. I had paddled on lakes many times and my husband and I had canoed down the Yukon River. We did the Pine Barrens one spring years ago. But we'd never paddled the Passaic River, this fabled New Jersey body of water that snakes through urban, sometimes industrial, areas and has often wreaked havoc on the communities it traverses.

Nathan set a leisurely pace and we followed along, as his able sweep Jeff kept to the rear to keep an eye out for anyone needing assistance. It took a few minutes before my husband and I got a good paddling rhythm going, and while not always perfectly coordinated we managed to keep up with the others. I liked the size of the group, enough for social interaction but not so many as to disrupt the tranquility of the setting.

Even though the trees along the banks were not yet in their full autumn expression, faint hints of yellows and reds broke the monotony of green and reflected joyously in the calm water. It was easy to see that Irene had been a recent visitor: there was a ten-foot high mud mark across all the trees along the banks. As I sat at water level I tried to imagine the roaring gush along the

riverbed; the wild, angry, brown water carrying belongings stolen from homes and yards. Along the way, there was scattered evidence of what this river was capable of: a dumpster on its side, a blue and white cooler on an island of plastic, a laundry basket caught on low lying branches. As we paddled under Route 80 we witnessed tree trunks perched over ten feet above us, wedged into the underside of the bridge. The most vivid image was of a car, still covered entirely in mud, in the backyard of a riverfront house.

I didn't expect to eat my lunch perched on a muddy log on a muddy river bank, but I did and it was satisfying and delicious, the way food always is when you've been exercising. The first six miles seemed like a breeze, but after lunch I felt as if the current had changed and I was paddling upstream. No, my husband said, you must be getting tired. We spotted groups of deer leaping through the muddy woods, many flocks of ducks and geese, a pileated woodpecker, and Nathan startled what he thought might have been a white owl.

By mid-afternoon we began to again hear the sounds of civilization and soon we saw homes and the bridge that signaled the end of our trip. We disembarked on yet another muddy bank and I was grateful for the help we received in getting our boat securely back on top of the car (Nathan had set up the trip so most of the cars were at our ending point). On the drive home I was filled with the sweet tiredness that comes from a day well spent. I was glad that I had been able to experience those twelve miles of the Passaic River under my own (and, importantly, my husband's) steam.

## STORE ADOPTERS WANTED

Please help more people find out about all the great outdoor activities and trips offered by the AMC.

We need Store Adopters for two stores in Manhattan: EMS on the Upper West Side and Tent & Trails downtown near City Hall. An adopter collects a supply of Chapter brochures from the Chapter office on Park Ave. South, near 27th St., and visits his/her store every month or so to be sure the brochure holder on the club display table is stocked. If you live or work near either store, this would take very little time and it would be a big help. If you can help with this, please email [membership\[at\]amc-ny\[dot\]org](mailto:membership[at]amc-ny[dot]org).



Photos by Vladimir Kotlyarevsky

***Wayne Huebner with his ultralight kit on John Muir Trail***

## **Lightweight Backpacking Expo** **April 7, Sterling Forest Visitor Center**

**B**ackpackers far and wide are discovering the benefits that lightweight and ultralight gear can bring to the outdoor experience. But how does one begin the process of lightening the load? One way is to join experienced NY-NoJ Chapter backpackers as they display and talk about their lightweight gear at the Lightweight/Ultralight Backpacking Gear Expo on Saturday, April 7 (10am-3pm) at the Sterling Forest Visitor Center. The Lightweight Gear Expo, which also includes a short hike to try out the lightweight gear, is open to all (registration required; \$5 fee). You can even get there on the bus!

Still need to be convinced of the benefits of finding your way to the light side? Here are some testimonials from converts to lightweight backpacking:

### **Wayne Huebner**

"I have always been a strong backpacker, and I would typically carry 50 pounds or more in winter. About a year and a half ago I joined a group planning a 220-mile John Muir Trail summer backpack with an estimated duration of 15 days, with about 15 miles per day and a total of 45,000 ft. in elevation gain. With limited long-distance backpacking experience and not sure how we would hold up over that length of time, we decided to outfit ourselves with ultralight gear with a 12-lb. base

weight target, including a bear canister. To make a long story short, we completed the JMT on time, having carried a maximum of 28 pounds including food, water and fuel during a 7-day leg. Even though we experienced temperatures ranging from the mid 20s to the low 90s (and a couple of inches of hail), we were comfortable at all times. We had by far the lightest gear and moved farther and faster than anyone else on the trail. The ultralight gear allowed us to focus more on enjoying ourselves and the surrounding vistas.

Closer to home, using ultralight gear adds a new dimension of enjoyment to a typical 2 or 3 day Northeast backpack. While I can get down to the 12-lb. base weight, adding a few pounds of luxuries and even pushing my weight back up to 20 lbs., I can not only make the hike easier on my body, but I can carry all those little "nice-to-have" things that make camping a great, relaxing experience. The lesson here is that it is always easier to start light and add luxury items, than to start with a heavy pack and try to then remove non-essentials. So get down to the bare minimum with a smart selection of lightweight gear and then add those items you'd rather not do without."

### **Maria Nobles**

"Being relatively new to backpacking, I went to the local outdoor store and bought all of my gear. The salesperson's advice seemed helpful at the time, but I realized on the first climb of a trip – my legs shaking, lungs burning under a 35-lb. pack – that just because experts say you can carry up to 20% of your body weight doesn't mean you actually want to. While the experience didn't turn me off from backpacking, it did inspire me to drop some weight from my pack.

I began thinking of my hiking clothes as a system. Instead of bringing a bulky extra fleece that weighs well over a pound, I bring a down sweater (7 ounces) and use my raingear, which I need any way, as another layer to block out the wind. Shocked when my overnight trip food bag weighed close to 5 lbs., I switched to more compact and calorie-dense trail snacks.

While cutting back on clothes and food was fairly straightforward, switching over to lightweight gear was a bit trickier. Lighter backpacks, tents, and sleeping bags are tougher to gauge for durability and comfort. Luckily, there is a multitude of small companies that make super

lightweight and functional gear, as well as many online resources. With some research and testing, I was able to replace my heavy gear with lighter-weight alternatives.

So why lighten up? For me, it is about comfort. I can go on longer trips, explore more challenging peaks, and still have everything I need to be comfortable and safe, without my pack weighing me down.”

### **Debbie Melita**

Debbie, a long-distance backpacker (former Backpack Chair and current Chapter Vice Chair), has been progressively lightening her pack while taking on longer and more strenuous trips. On her first solo trip, a 2-day backpack on the AT in New York in 1999, her 40-lb. pack limited her to six long miles, even though she was in good shape. In July 2010, Debbie knew she had reached a milestone when she was able to carry 9 days worth of food and gear on an 8-day, 122-mile backpack through Maine’s 100 Mile Wilderness and over Mt. Katahdin. Her total pack weight for that trip, including food and water, was 34 lbs. Debbie’s advice:

“What I now recommend is that your total pack with food and water weigh around 25 lbs. for a weekend trip. Your four main pieces of gear (pack, tent, sleeping bag, sleeping pad) should have a combined weight of no more than 10 lbs. The total combined weight of my four main pieces is 6 lbs., 13 oz., and none of those items is ‘minimal.’ My pack is 40 oz. and the sleeping bag is 22 oz. My Tarptent Rainbow tent (34 oz.) is wider, longer, and taller than my old one-person tent that weighed twice as much, and it fits 2 people, if necessary. My air pad (13 oz.) is over three times as thick as a standard foam pad – I have never slept better since I purchased it.

One concern many people have about ultralight backpacking is that they won’t be comfortable. I find the exact opposite to be true. I have invested in good quality, lightweight gear that still provides plenty of comfort and, because I’m carrying much less weight, I’m more comfortable while hiking.

Another issue is cost. But I’ve found that many lightweight pieces cost about the same as their heavier counterparts, sometimes less. This is especially true of packs and tents. Of course, the most important part of buying a backpack is that it fits you correctly, so make sure that you don’t sacrifice proper fit for less weight.”

The common thread here is that, regardless of experience level, carrying a lighter load is less stressful on the body, enabling backpackers to go farther and faster and to see more of the outdoors. If you’re a backpacker or outdoor adventurer who is finding yourself thinking the same way as these folks, then you owe it to yourself to join us at the Lightweight/Ultralight Backpacking Gear Expo on Saturday, April 7 (10am-3 pm) at Sterling Forest Visitors’ Center. Leaders from the Backpacking Committee will showcase their lightweight gear, a wide array of items such as: shelters (tents, tarps, hammocks); sleeping gear (sleeping bags, quilts, sleeping pads); packs; footwear & clothing, including insulated jackets; and cooking systems. Participants will be able to see all of the gear in one place and discuss lightweight philosophy and techniques with the leaders. There will also be opportunities to see how to pack a light load and then carry it on a short hike. Also available will be information on manufacturers of lightweight gear, many of which are only accessible online.

The Expo is open to anyone who is looking for ways to incorporate lightweight gear into outdoor activities. Beginning backpackers who want to start out ‘light’ are especially encouraged to attend. You can register online for the Expo at:

<http://activities.outdoors.org/search/index.cfm/action/details/id/57881>

We hope to see you there!



***Backpack Chair Fred Mader (far R) describes lightweight gear at last year’s Expo***

# ***Seen on the Trail by AMC Hikers***

Photographs by Katya Hanson (flora) and Irvin Schonfeld (fauna)



***Silver-Bordered Fritillary***



***Painted Trillium (uncommon, with four petals)***



***Pink Lady's Slipper***



***Fowler's Toad***

## Would You Like To Be a Naturalist at Mohican?

By Sara Hart, Conservation Chair

**Y**ou may have participated in naturalist programs at AMC's North Country destinations. Now you have the same opportunity at AMC's southernmost destination, Mohican Outdoor Center in the Delaware Water Gap.

Last summer our Chapter's Conservation Committee initiated a naturalist program at Mohican, which is near Blirstown, NJ, and even nearer to the AT (1/4 mile). As Conservation Chair, I participated in AMC's annual springtime naturalist training and last summer I led several naturalist hikes at Mohican.

This program will continue in 2012. And we are looking for volunteers – come and help us grow the naturalist program!

How? First and foremost, bring your love for the woods, waters, and wildlife of our mid-Atlantic Highlands region. Add to that your knowledge about local ecology, geology, or human history. For example, on my interpretive hikes I cover such topics as the natural changes vs. threats to the mid-Atlantic deciduous forest, biodiversity (e.g. the seven native oak species), local wildlife habitat, native endangered snakes, bear safety, Leave No Trace principles, and various questions the participants may bring up. You can bring your own personal interests – they can be as specific as fungi, mosses, or songbirds, or as broad as climate change.

You would also need a desire to be at Mohican and to share your knowledge with fellow AMC members and other visitors. If you haven't been to Mohican, you'll see, once you come out, you will want to be back.

Finally, you are encouraged (but not required) to take AMC's 3-day naturalist trainer course so you can learn how to keep your audience interested, and to make contacts with fellow AMC naturalists who can help you develop your programs. This training is usually a long weekend in May, held in New Hampshire. Find out more at: [www.outdoors.org/volunteers/information/information-naturalist.cfm](http://www.outdoors.org/volunteers/information/information-naturalist.cfm).

Don't hesitate to contact me with any questions at [conservation\[at\]amc-ny\[dot\]org](mailto:conservation[at]amc-ny[dot]org). I would be happy to help you get started!



## Leave No Trace Trainer Course at Mohican, April 13-15

**T**here will be a Leave No Trace (LNT) Trainer course at Mohican Outdoor Center the weekend of April 13-15. All outdoor activity leaders, and anyone serious about embracing the ethics of LNT, are encouraged to sign up for this workshop. Participants receive introductory training in LNT skills and ethics in a condensed two-day format. They are trained to teach and pass on LNT ethics to others.

Workshop topics include the seven LNT principles:

1. Plan Ahead and Prepare
2. Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces
3. Dispose of Waste Properly
4. Leave What You Find
5. Minimize Campfire Impacts
6. Respect Wildlife
7. Be Considerate of Other Visitors

To register, contact AMC Reservations at 603-466-2727 or [amclodging@outdoors.org](mailto:amclodging@outdoors.org). To learn more about Mohican, go to [www.outdoors.org/lodging/mohican](http://www.outdoors.org/lodging/mohican). For questions about this particular workshop, contact the leader, Sara Hart ([conservation\[at\]amc-ny\[dot\]org](mailto:conservation[at]amc-ny[dot]org)).

### Chapter Youth Program

There will be a Chapter Youth Program Leader Training at the Chapter NYC office on **Saturday, March 3**, from 10-4 pm. All those interested in sharing their outdoors knowledge with local groups of children are encouraged to attend. Space is limited. Fee is \$30 to partially cover cost of training, background check and first aid training. If you have questions or would like to register for the training, please contact Harold Petzold, CYP Chair, at [chapteryouthprogram\[at\]amc-ny\[dot\]org](mailto:chapteryouthprogram[at]amc-ny[dot]org).

Donations of outdoors equipment for use with this program are greatly appreciated. Please contact Harold to make arrangements. Thank you.



*Co-Leader Kim Pecher near the summit of Mt. Colden with Iroquois, Boundary and Algonquin in the background*

## Backpacking in the Adirondack High Peaks with Yellow Yellow

By Debbie Melita

Last July I led a group of six AMC hikers on a backpack/base camp trip in the High Peaks of the Adirondacks. In two and a half days we climbed Wright, Algonquin, Boundary, Iroquois, Colden, Table Top, and Phelps.

At the start of our trip, some camped the night before at the DEC sites on South Meadow Road, where we met on Saturday morning. We car pooled a few miles over to the High Peaks Information Center near the Loj, then off we went into the wild brown yonder, heading south. The morning was quite comfortable, even a bit cool for July – but we still received numerous reminders from local insects that this was their turf and we were just visitors.

There were lots of people on the trail that weekend; many of them turned towards Marcy Dam at the junction, but there were still plenty sharing the trail with us up to Wright and Algonquin. We encountered all kinds of energetic hiking dogs taking their owners for a walk, as well as an impressive 11-year-old peak bagger who was on her 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> summits. The side trail to Wright was wet and slippery in places, but not too bad. On the top of Wright, we met two very informative summit stewards,

who reminded us to stay off the fragile alpine vegetation and told us about the short trees growing there. The summit had been misty when we arrived, but we did get some moments where it cleared enough that we had a nice view of Heart Lake and the shoulder of big Al.

When we got back on the main trail and started up Algonquin, the temperature turned noticeably cooler. The peak was surrounded by a mist as grey as the bald rocks beneath our feet, and it was quite windy, so we only spent a few minutes there. One highlight was when the summit steward (pretty impressive that she stays up there in that weather all day) showed us some photos comparing what the top of the peak looked like 40 years ago (dead grass, litter; just depressing) compared to now (lush green vegetation and beautiful stone paths). Hooray for the protected alpine zone!

From the summit of Algonquin we headed down toward the col on the way to Boundary and Iroquois peaks. After just a few minutes, we were suddenly surrounded by a crystal clear blue sky and temperatures as warm as fresh baked cookies. We were so caught up with the sudden weather change and panoramic views, we first missed the trail to Iroquois and started down the steep trail to Lake Colden. Luckily, one of our hikers noticed quickly and we only had to backtrack a short way up. By the time we got to Boundary, it had become one

of the best days I've ever had in the mountains, weather-wise: vividly clear, endless 360-degree vistas. We had up close and personal views of Mt. Colden, Marcy and most of the Great Range as well as dozens of high peaks, from Whiteface to Dix. We had more of the same on top of Iroquois later that afternoon. Hiker Heaven!

We re-traced our steps back to the col and descended (correctly this time) down to Lake Colden. At first, every lean-to and campsite we went to was full. Of course, what else would we expect on one of the nicest weekends ever in the mountains? Luckily, the assistant ranger showed us the last two available DEC tent sites along the Opalescent River; we chose one which miraculously held all of our tents and turned out to be a really lovely spot. We set up camp, made dinner, stashed our bear canisters and said goodnight.

On Sunday we rose early and began our loop to Colden, Table Top, Phelps, and Avalanche Pass. Since we left camp set up, we could carry lighter day packs that day. We practically ran up the mountain with great enthusiasm, enjoying not having to haul a full pack. The climb up the steep side of Colden was one of our absolute favorites. The large slabs of rock were dry and we hiked strong and sure-footed. What a gift! The air was clean, the sun was bright and even at 7:30am there was neither a trace of mist nor a cloud in the sky. We followed the beautiful path through the lush green plants to the summit, with huge smiles and more energy than when we began. (Everyone should try a day hike in the middle of their backpack trip – you feel like you're cheating and it's okay!) We practically strolled down the trail to Lake Arnold and then took a quick detour to enjoy Indian Falls. By the time we started up Table Top, the sun was truly hot and it felt good to get under cover of the trees again. Once on top, it was too early for lunch so we only took a quick break and then continued west. After cooling off and refilling water at delicious Phelps Brook, we turned up the side trail to climb Phelps with thoughts of lunch propelling us onward through the heat. The fantastic views from the summit made it all worthwhile. We then headed to Marcy Dam and started on the "home stretch" south through Avalanche Pass. The day had already been full of spectacular scenery, but this was by far some of the best: enormous, steep rock walls (we spotted two adventurous rock climbers halfway up the face), an obstacle course full of massive

boulders, and the lovely lake. It was a perfect way to end a perfect day on the trail.

We returned to camp with enough time to enjoy the rejuvenating powers of the Opalescent River. After dinner, just as we had finished packing and stashing our bear cans, we spotted a local celebrity walking across the river and down the trail: the black bear known as "Yellow Yellow." As many of you have probably heard, this bear has developed a well-deserved reputation for stealing camper's food over the years, and has even figured out how to get into Bear Vault brand canisters. The ranger had told us the day before that Yellow Yellow would probably make the rounds, so she wasn't a surprise. But a bear in camp is never a low-key event.

Before she made it to our area, we gave a few good shouts of "GO AWAY BEAR!" and she ran off toward the adjacent campsite. As we double-checked our site to make sure everything was properly stored, we could hear the shouts of our neighbors as she passed each campsite. The noise grew more distant and eventually stopped altogether. We soon got in our tents, feeling fairly relaxed and confident that our food was safe, should she return.

Sure enough, an hour later, I heard a large animal breaking branches as it moved steadily closer. My tent fly was open and the moon was bright enough to illuminate the bear as I spotted her through the mesh door – I watched her stroll by less than 10 feet away. She was beautiful and I wished I could enjoy the moment longer, yet I knew we needed to chase her out of camp as quickly as possible. She was already moving away and didn't even pause to sniff around (a fact of which I am proud, as it testifies to our bear safety efforts), but I gave a few shouts and the others immediately chimed in just to be sure she stayed away. Our neighbors weren't so lucky; we heard them shouting at her for some time, but finally there was silence and the rest of the night passed undisturbed.

Monday morning we packed up and re-traced our steps north through Avalanche Pass, savoring a second look at this spectacularly rugged place. We soon reached Marcy Dam and from there we followed the soft brown path back to our cars, where we celebrated the end of a great trip with a cool swim in Heart Lake.

# COMMITTEE NOTICES

## ***Play Softball in Central Park***

AMC Softball season is nearly here! We play two games every Sunday from April to September – everyone is welcome. Don't worry if you feel rusty, or if you have never played before. We encourage a fun, not overly competitive game where everyone can participate. We even supply the equipment!

See the Sunday schedule for meeting time and details. All AMC members and friends (invited as guests, accompanied by the member) are welcome to play one or both games. Join us for brunch after the games!

## **NY-NoJ Chapter Receives Support from the Club and from Members for Post-Hurricane Irene Trail Work**

Thanks to the work of Kate Whitney-Bukofzer, Chapter Trails Chair, and Jill Arbuckle, New Jersey Trails Supervisor, our Chapter received two matching grants from the Club for post-Hurricane Irene trail repair. These funds will be used to replace a bridge and repair trails that were damaged in the storm last summer.

In addition, we received \$4,000 from the Club for local trail repair. This amount represents post-Hurricane Irene contributions by the generous members of our Chapter. Thank you.

## **Appalachian Trail Vacancy**

Adopt your very own section of the Appalachian Trail!

A 1.5 mile section in Wantage Township, NJ, is now available. The previous maintainer took good care of the trail, but had to give it up for adoption because of work pressure. No previous experience with trail work is necessary. The job involves cutting back brush, trimming grass and weeds, sawing small blow downs (chainsaw specialists do the big stuff!), and usually requires four visits a year. This is one of the prettiest sections of the local AT, through mature woods and partly through open fields, with a fine view from the ridgeline. If you might be interested, email me for a full job description. Then we'll walk the trail together and talk about the work involved. Please contact Jill Arbuckle, AMC NJ Trails Supervisor, at [jhgarbuckle\[at\]gmail\[dot\]com](mailto:jhgarbuckle[at]gmail[dot]com).

## **TRAIL MAINTAINER OPENINGS FOR STONETOWN CIRCULAR TRAIL**

Our Chapter is responsible for maintaining the Stonetown Circular Trail in Passaic Co. (northern New Jersey), working with the NY-NJ Trail Conference. We currently have two volunteer opportunities for maintainers on this trail, which borders the Wanaque and Monksville Reservoirs, approximately one hour from NYC. Both trail sections are about 1.5 miles long. Spectacular views and opportunities to pick wild berries in the summer! On the job training offered; no experience needed. **Contact Trail Supervisor Bill Hansen at [wjhansen\[at\]optonline\[dot\]net](mailto:wjhansen[at]optonline[dot]net) or 201-658-4163.**

## **Help Us Celebrate Our 100<sup>th</sup> Year!**

This fall, the NY-NoJ Chapter will host the annual AMC Fall Gathering, in honor of our Chapter's 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary (time flies when you're having fun!). AMC members from all the different chapters will be invited for a weekend of outdoor activities, workshops, club-wide committee meetings, and socializing. Help is needed now to plan this event – please contact Chapter Chair Richard Barcia, [chair\[at\]amc-ny\[dot\]org](mailto:chair[at]amc-ny[dot]org).

## **New Websites with Maps & Directions**

Do you need explanations of the "Trans. Codes" that are part of most Chapter hike descriptions? Need driving directions to the hike meeting place? A new website provides all the answers:

<https://sites.google.com/site/amctranscodes/>

This site contains the same descriptions of the Transportation Codes as the Chapter website and the printed Schedule, and a map with driving instructions for EACH meeting place.

Another new website provides maps and directions to all known hike meeting locations in the metropolitan area:

<https://sites.google.com/site/newyorkareahikemeetingplaces/>

Together, these sites replace the AMCMAPS Yahoo group ([groups.yahoo.com/group/amcmaps](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/amcmaps)), which will be discontinued. Thank you to Ed Goldstein for developing these sites and helping to keep us all from getting lost! Please send any corrections to Ed at [amc.leader\[at\]gmail\[dot\]com](mailto:amc.leader[at]gmail[dot]com).

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### EMPLOYEE RIGHTS LAWYER

My name is Bruce Bernstein and I am an AMC hike leader and an attorney who is committed to advancing and protecting the rights of employees. I practice in NJ and NY, and I represent employees in matters concerning wrongful discharge, discrimination, sexual harassment, whistle-blowing and severance package negotiations. For more information please go to: [www.bbernstein-law.com](http://www.bbernstein-law.com). Free phone consultation is available at 201-634-1999.

### CUSTOM MADE HIKING BOOTS

[www.johncaldenboots.com](http://www.johncaldenboots.com)

**Hiking Partner Wanted for Hut to Hut Trip This Summer.** Ken West, longtime NY-NoJ Chapter Walks Leader and Supervisor for urban-suburban trails, seeks a hiking partner for a one-week trip to the AMC huts in the White Mountains. July 28 to August 4; must have a good backpack and suitable fitness level/experience. Contact Ken by early April at [siwanoyken\[at\]aol\[dot\]com](mailto:siwanoyken[at]aol[dot]com).

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#### **Suffern, NY (Rockland County)**

February 29, 2012, at 7:00pm

**Lafayette Theater**, 97 Lafayette St. (Rt. 59).

Tickets in advance at *Ramsey Outdoor* (Paramus, Ramsey & Succasunna, NJ), [www.ramseyoutdoor.com](http://www.ramseyoutdoor.com)

For additional info, film list and directions visit:

[www.chestnutmtnproductions.com](http://www.chestnutmtnproductions.com)



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## Fourth Annual Spring Fling – Mohican Outdoor Center, April 27-29

Spring will soon be upon us as well as the upcoming AMC Spring Fling, to be held at the Mohican Outdoor Center for a fourth consecutive year. Building on the success of past years, Spring Fling continues to get better every year. Join your fellow AMC members from near and far for a fun-filled weekend. Take a hike on many of the scenic trails that meander past waterfalls, through beautiful hemlock forests, rhododendron ravines and historic foundations from long ago. Or hike the nearby Appalachian Trail along the Kittatinny Ridge. You could also bring your bicycle and enjoy some of the park's quiet roads and rail-trails.

All these opportunities are located within the 67,000 acres of the beautiful Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, only a 90-minute drive from NYC. Take some time to visit the Lakota Wolf Preserve, an experience for kids of all ages. Be sure to bring your camera. Spend some time fishing or paddling around Catfish Pond where kayaks, canoes and all the gear are provided. Join guided evening hikes to the ridge to view

the night sky and vast valley below. Snuggle up Saturday evening around the campfire while making S'mores. Bring your favorite musical instrument and join Mohican's own band. Or, hear Environmental Educator Brian Hardiman present "The World of Snakes," with a slideshow and a live snake (and you can even touch it).

Dedicated AMC volunteers will lead a variety of guided activities for individuals and families throughout the weekend: hiking, biking, geo-caching, and paddling trips. All meals and two social hours are included. Spring Fling is open to all AMC members and non-members. This will be an opportunity to come together to relax and have some fun – no meetings or business agendas!

Register early as each year this event sells out quickly. You can rent a bunk in a cabin or camp in the wide-open spaces, falling asleep to the night sounds of the whip-poor-wills. Rates vary depending on whether you are tenting, staying in a cabin with full bathrooms in-house, or in a cabin with bathrooms in a separate building. Register by contacting AMC reservations at [amclodging@outdoors.org](mailto:amclodging@outdoors.org) or 603-466-2727, Mon.-Sat. 9am-5pm. We hope you can make it!