

**Appalachian Mountain Club
Berkshire Chapter**

**ANNUAL REPORT
2008**



Report of the Chapter Chair

While 2008 was an economically challenging year for nonprofit organizations in general, the AMC Berkshire Chapter still managed to pull off a year of successes. We maintained a membership base of nearly 3,000 people in 2,000 households and offered a full schedule of programs and activities for all ages and interests.

Chris Fogarty, our Training & Education Chair, continued to offer Leadership Training twice a year and added many new active leaders for our Chapter. Beginning in the fall, Chris also started a successful partnership with the Worcester Chapter for Leadership Training.

Diane Furtek, our new Membership Chair, continued to organize monthly potlucks with a variety of programs for new and prospective members. Diane also earned her wings and became an approved leader so she can now welcome our members on the trail too.

Conservation Committee Chair Pat Lukas and some of her volunteers offered programs to educate folks about the environment. Such activities included book discussions; a wind turbine tour; and river cleanups in cooperation with our Canoe & Kayak Chairs Connie Peterson and Charlie Camp and a few of their Committee's paddling leaders.

Our Family Programs Committee started offering family-oriented outdoor events. Praises to Nancy Weld for stepping up to the plate to be Chair of this committee, while also continuing as our Website Content Editor.

Our Appalachian Trail Management Committee, led by Cosmo Catalano and Jim Pelletier, continued to keep Massachusetts' 90 miles of the AT and Upper Goose Pond Cabin in shape and accessible. The annual Appalachian Day in October was well attended.

Pat Fletcher, our Trails Committee Chair, kept folks up-to-date about the Metacomet-Monadnock Trail. He also has been on top of the latest information about parts of the M-M Trail affected by private landowners.

At Noble View Camp, Committee Chair Rob Robertson's efforts have been nonstop through many challenges. Also, Gary Forish's hard work, knowledge, and construction expertise have been irreplaceable.

Our new Young Members Committee Chairs are Paxton Berardy and Wendy Barbour. They have given new energy and enthusiasm to this committee and its leaders.

Bob Napolitano continues his hard work as Outings Chair. Every month he and his coordinators round up our leaders to get activities scheduled and publicized.

Thanks to the editing skills of Maureen Flanagan and Gail Blackhall, I've continued to get a great Chapter newsletter out quarterly.

Now that my two-year tenure as Chapter Chair has ended, Vice Chair Deborah Levine has moved into the Chapter Chair role for 2009–2010. I look forward to continuing to work with her during her term. Her energy, creativity, and expertise will benefit the Chapter and the AMC greatly for the next two years and beyond.

My experience as Chapter Chair has been wonderful. I've met so many wonderful people and learned a great deal. It has been a rewarding venture I'd recommend to anyone who's up for such a challenge.

I'd like to thank *all* our Executive Committee members (not just those mentioned above): Deborah Levine, Pat Stevenson (Secretary), Kelly Druzisky (Treasurer), Cosmo Catalano and Jim Pelletier, Jim Wells (Berkshire County Representative), Charlie Camp and Connie Peterson, Pat Lukas, Nancy Weld, Diane Furtek, Bill Fogel and Jim Van Natta (Mountaineering), Rob Robertson, Bob Napolitano, Bess Dillman (Public Relations), Pat Fletcher, Chris Fogarty, Bob Bergstrom (Website Committee), and Wendy Barbour and Paxton Berardy.

I'd also like to thank past members of the Executive Committee who served during my 2007–2008 tenure: Bob Wallner, Alice Hodgdon, Donna Walters, Ian Beatty, Cynthia Martin-Thompson, and Dave Koerber.

There are too many to name (and that's a good thing), but thanks also to the many other key volunteers who contributed so much in making our Chapter great. This includes, but is not limited to, many dozens of event leaders and trail maintainers.

Also too many to name, I must not forget to thank all those AMC staff members for their unending support.

Now, 2009 promises great times for the Berkshire Chapter. Keep watching for the many recreational and volunteer opportunities. And don't forget, we'll be hosting the AMC Fall Gathering in October.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jon Hanauer
Berkshire Chapter Chair, 2007–2008

Appalachian Trail Committee

The AT Committee had another great year with approximately 85 volunteers reporting about 6,300 hours of service. The hours reported are less than in 2007 due to a change in how we account for Upper Goose Pond caretaker hours. In addition to our usual trail maintenance, monitoring, and Upper Goose Pond caretaking activities, the following items are worthy of note:

ATC/LLB Grants were used to purchase a new set of PFDs for use with the canoe at Upper Goose Pond, and to purchase a smaller, lighter mower for use on the trail.

Some of our longtime volunteers retired from their duties, particularly in our group of Upper Goose Pond caretakers. New volunteers joining our efforts continued strong. Late in the year our Committee leadership transitioned and new volunteers stepped forward to fill the long-vacant Shelters Coordinator and Tool Shed Coordinator spots. A new position of Exterior Boundary Maintenance Coordinator was created and filled.

Our reinvigorated Corridor Monitoring program continued to make good progress with additional fieldwork. This program was recognized mid-year in the AT Journeys magazine. At the fall New England Regional Planning meeting this program was noted as the only one in the region with 100% of its borders being monitored and maintained.

A significant update to the Upper Goose Pond Caretaker Guide was completed and put into use for the 2008 season. New caretakers were successfully brought into the program to replace retiring caretakers.

Donated timber was harvested and milled for the next shelter project.

Relocation of the Trail over the views on the Tyringham Cobble was completed.

New roofs were installed on the Kay Wood and October Mountain shelters, and additional privies were converted to the moldering type.

Our volunteer efforts continue to be supported by the ATC with Adam Brown in the Southern New England office at the Kellogg Conservation Center (KCC); by the AMC Regional Trails Coordinator, Matt Moore, at the KCC; and by the Mass. Department of Conservation and Recreation with their project and ridge runner support lead by Becky Barnes.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jim Pelletier
Mass. AT Management Committee Chair

Berkshire County Representative

I was able to participate in several hikes in Berkshire County, represented the AMC at the EMS Club Day, was interviewed for an article in the Berkshire Eagle on hikes in the County, and provided information for an upcoming AMC guide book. We are working on plans for a potluck in the spring and other activities to stimulate interest in the AMC within the County.

Respectfully Submitted,
James Wells
Berkshire County Representative

Canoe & Kayak Committee

The Canoe & Kayak Committee is finishing another year offering a variety of trips to folks paddling many different types of boats. We offer quiet water trips for canoes and a number of types of kayaks. The whitewater program offers class 2, 3, and 4 trips for kayaks and open canoes. The rafting trips are excellent opportunities at a very reasonable cost for folks with limited paddling experience, and sea kayaking trips offer special opportunities for experienced paddlers.

Our quiet water program is most successful in terms of the number of participants. The other areas are having trouble offering many trips as our leaders are aging, leaving us with fewer folks willing and able to lead trips.

Our most successful area of instruction is the Stroke and Rescue clinics offered by Marjorie Bannish and Tom Galvagni. These sessions are valuable for the increasing numbers of folks interested in Sea Kayaking. Our Committee continues to offer full financial support to leaders who are willing to take SOLO Wilderness First Aid.

A small team from our Committee and other paddlers conducted another cleanup activity on the Monroe Bridge section of the Deerfield River. The results were disappointing do to a lack of promised support and the very difficult terrain.

We continue to offer a fleet of rental boats stored at Andrew's Greenhouse in South Amherst. The most popular rental boats have been the sea kayaks, so the Committee purchased another one during this year. We

are very fortunate that Andrew Cowles has provided this space to us for a number of years.

We continue to cooperate with the larger AMC paddling community through the Inter-chapter paddling committee, on which Connie Peterson is an active participant representing us. That committee reports that the Army Core of Engineers is suddenly threatening to discontinue many water releases that have provided significant opportunities for our whitewater program.

Respectfully Submitted,
Charles Camp and Connie Peterson
Canoe & Kayak Committee Chairs

Membership Committee

This has been another busy year for the Membership Committee, aided by a number of hard-working and enthusiastic volunteers. The Chapter membership continues to be strong. The Berkshire Chapter and its Membership Committee were pleased to be recognized by the AMC as a chapter with significant increases in membership conversion rates. The Chapter was awarded a total of \$2000, which will be used to support membership activities across the Chapter.

This past year saw Diane Furtek taking on the role of Membership Committee Chair.

The Membership Committee seeks to promote the AMC and the Berkshire Chapter to people who are interested in joining. Member retention is an important focus as well. In addition to providing opportunities and events that welcome new members, the Membership Committee collaborates with other committees to support their work in creating a Chapter with multiple activities and programs that will appeal to a broad range of members and potential members.

During 2008, the tradition of monthly potluck/social events has continued. The potluck/socials provide a wonderful opportunity to orient and welcome new members throughout the year. Each potluck has featured a different interesting speaker and program.

The Annual Members Potluck to welcome new members, held every year in March, was once again a big success with well over 100 in attendance. Speaker Laurie Sanders, noted local naturalist, entertained and informed the group with a program highlighting "Special Natural Places in Western Massachusetts."

The Membership Committee looks forward to another year of promoting the Berkshire Chapter and welcoming new members.

Respectfully Submitted,
Deborah Levine
Membership Committee Chair and Chapter Vice Chair

Mountaineering Committee

We had another great year rock climbing. Our spring and summer Wednesday evening sessions at Chapel Ledges in Ashfield and Rose Ledge in Northfield gave many a chance to further develop their skills, whether it was basic techniques or expert moves. We had weekend trips to the “Gunks” on the Mohonk Preserve in New York State, “Dacks” in Adirondack State Park in New York, and “Rumney” in the White Mountain National Forest in New Hampshire. Day trips took us to climbing areas in Connecticut, and many closer to home in the western Massachusetts area. We saw a greater number of local trips due to the high fuel prices. We are fortunate to have quite a few excellent crags right near by. In the colder months we continued climbing on Wednesdays at the local climbing gym in Northampton. We also did some moonlight skiing and ice climbing as winter conditions permitted.

Training and learning experiences were ongoing as people exchanged experiences and ideas on technique and safety. We offered an advanced training in managing a top rope climbing site, which was taught by an instructor from the American Mountain Guides Association. Six of our trip leaders attended. It was made possible by cost sharing from an SDA, funds from our Committee treasury, and a participant fee. A number of our group took the Wilderness First Aid training at Noble View this fall. One member went on to take the advanced course. Our training offerings included weekend long courses to AMC members and general public in Introduction to Rock Climbing, and Intermediate Rock Climbing. We ran a new course this year to train people with gym climbing experience in the techniques and safety concerns of outdoor climbing, as well as a new workshop on self-rescue.

As a group, the Mountaineering Committee teamed up with the Trustees of Reservations for the annual spring work day at Chapel Ledges. Erosion control was the goal of this year’s efforts and we spread a truckload of wood chips on the access trails. We worked with the Western Mass. Climbers Coalition this fall to build a parking lot; and constructed, installed, and donated the signboard kiosk structure for their Farley Ledges climbing area.

I wish to thank all of the trip leaders, Committee Officers, trainers and helpers, and others who generously volunteered their time and effort in making this year’s season such a great success.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jim Van Natta and Bill Fogel
Mountaineering Committee Chairs

Outings Committee

The year 2008 was very active with 120 hikes and 1514 participants. Of these, 31% were the Tuesday hikers, and 8% the Young Members. This is based on the returned Release Forms (it's not just a sign up sheet); I suspect there are more but I may not have all the sheets returned to me.

I want to thank the all the monthly coordinators and hike leaders for their volunteer services to the Berkshire Chapter.

We need the following for planning, organizing, and implementing the monthly activities in 2009:

- Work party leaders to help repair the trails from the winter ice storms.
- Monthly coordinators for July and December.
- Experienced leaders willing to mentor new.
- Special event coordinators for National Trails Day, Earth Day, Members Potluck Dinner day hikes, Annual Meeting day hikes, Third Saturday of the month work parties (give back to the trails).

Please contact me (413-534-8955 before 8 PM; nappyofma@comcast.net) if you want to use your personal talents and volunteer to help with one of the above mentioned items.

Also, please send trip reports and Release Forms (one at a time or in bulk) to Bob Napolitano, PO Box 650, Granby, MA 01033. Additional forms may be obtained by contacting me, or on the web at <http://www.amcberkshire.org/lead/docs>.

Respectfully Submitted,
Bob Napolitano
Outings Committee Chair

Training & Education Committee

2008 – A year of firsts!

The year 2008 was great for the Training & Education Committee! This year, 30 new Berkshire Chapter leaders were trained in two trainings: one in April and another in October. Of those, six were existing leaders attending to recertify, nine completed their three co-leads and are now approved leaders, and ten are in the process of completing their co-leads. This is a 63% completion rate for new leaders. These numbers are

phenomenal! Congratulations to all our new leader trainees for their hard work in completing their co-leads and getting participants into the outdoors safely!

I'd also like to thank our active leaders who dedicated their time and talent to the Chapter in the following ways: mentoring new co-leaders, attending the training to sharpen their skills or present topics, or simply taking time out of their day to swing by and introduce themselves and the trips they like to lead. I feel that having an interpersonal connection between the active leaders and new leaders is the key to our high co-lead success rate.

Also, for the first time, the October training was a joint training with our friends at the Worcester Chapter. Their participants added eight more leaders trained for the Club. They also graciously offered to chef and provide meals for the weekend. As a result of this successful partnership, we are continuing to combine forces and share the costs (and benefits) of our leader trainings through 2009. Our dates and locations of leader training for 2009 are already scheduled. As always, we welcome participants interested in leadership, and leaders looking to refresh their skills or share their talent by teaching their skills to others.

We also saw the return of leader appreciation events in 2008. We held a Leader Appreciation Day in July, where 50 leaders attended. In December we held our first Leader Holiday Party, where 22 leaders attended. We are planning on holding those same events in 2009.

On a more serious note, the requirement of the three co-leads in the leadership process has demonstrated its effectiveness by the number of new leaders willing to complete co-leads to attain their leader status. We continue to receive good feedback from both mentoring leaders and candidates regarding its use. In a continued effort to improve the quality of our co-lead process, we are implementing a Potential Leader Evaluation form, to be completed during co-leads. The form is borrowed from the New Hampshire Chapter, and clearly outlines the co-leader's responsibility during every trip. We hope that the clarity will help co-leaders find leadership to be an attainable goal. All leaders in training will be responsible for submitting their completed form at the time of their petition for leadership status. The Outings Committee and the Training & Education Committee plan to roll this form out early in 2009.

In 2009 we will continue to work on the active leader criteria by instituting recertification trainings to keep our leaders up to speed with recent AMC policy changes. Also, we will continue to bring our Leader Qualification Guidelines in line with current AMC policy and practices.

We are proud of the goals achieved this year and continue to focus on high-quality leadership training. Our trip leaders have excellent training, and trip participants notice the difference.

I'm still interested in hearing from Chapter members about the types of trainings, gear days, family education programs, and hikes you'd like to see listed in the future. This is your Chapter – let's make it the best!

Respectfully Submitted,
Christine Fogarty
Training & Education Committee Chair

Website Committee

2008 has been a relatively quiet year for the Website Committee. Once again there have been no major crises to resolve. The only problem is an ongoing issue where people with Comcast-hosted email accounts fail to receive email sent from Chapter email lists or email aliases. The problem comes and goes. As stated by the previous Website Chair, "It results from Comcast's overzealous anti-spam measures; every so often they 'blacklist' all email coming from Dreamhost mail servers."

Over the course of 2008, only minor changes and updates were made to the website. Nancy Weld kept the news items up to date and made changes to the webpage content, as required. Bob Bergstrom modified the 'Join the AMC' page to include signup via the outdoors.org website and also modified the 'Schedule of Events' page to include a 'Berkshire Chapter Trips' lookup.

During 2008 the website ad-hoc committee met multiple times to discuss improvements to the Chapter's web presence. The direction and overall look has been determined and the website is in process of being overhauled with Bob Bergstrom creating the layout and Nancy Weld rewriting the content. We can anticipate the finished product to be in place sometime early in 2009.

The Website Committee's total budget for 2008 was again \$0, since license fees for our domain names (amcberkshire.org, amcberkshire.net, and amcberkshire.com) have been previously paid for multiple years, and since Dreamhost offers free web hosting to certified nonprofit organizations.

Respectfully Submitted,
Bob Bergstrom
Website Committee Chair

Young Members Committee

In June of 2008 we became Co-Chairs of the Young Members Committee. We are trying to increase the amount of activity within the Young Members group, increase the number of approved leaders, and have more inter-committee connections within the Berkshire Chapter. At this time there are eight active leaders within the group. Since becoming Co-Chairs, we have met our goal of having at least two monthly activities. We are hoping to re-energize the group and continue to increase the number of monthly trips offered for 2009.

Respectfully Submitted,
Wendy Barbour and Paxton Berardy
Young Members Committee Chairs

Past Chairs of the Berkshire Chapter

1929-30	Edward K Allen	1965-66	Garrison Householder
1931	Joseph F Partenheimer	1967-68	Charles L Kirkpatrick
1932	Edwin W Gantt	1969-70	Norman E Aubrey
1933	Donald E Temple	1971-72	Forrest E House
1934	Howard M Buffinton	1973-74	Margaret Rose
1935	Malcolm B Ross	1975-76	William T Cushwa
1936	Donald McClench	1977-78	Walter L Haynes
1936-37	John Dickson	1979-80	John D Shuttleworth
1938	Horace E Allen	1981-82	Kathryn E Burnett
1939	William K Buxton	1983-84	S Alberta Stutsman
1940	Eugene E Durst	1985	John Pritchard
1941	Maynard O Saunders	1986	Florence Mertz
1942-43	Parke W Farrar	1986-87	Edward N Lewis
1944-45	Warner B Sturtevant	1988-89	Paul Evans
1946-47	Carl O Chauncy	1990-91	Sue Lewis
1948-49	Harold T Daugherty	1992	Jean Armitage
1950	Heinz J Sherbow	1993	William Kopel
1951-52	Ellis H Pritchard	1994-95	Thomas J Leary
1953-54	Byron Chauncy	1996-97	Christopher J Ryan
1955-56	George W Alderman	1998-99	Kathryn B Leary
1957-58	John A Saunders	2000-01	Thomas Senuta
1959-60	Sidney F Law	2002-04	Gary L Forish
1961-62	Phyllis M Sears	2005-06	Rob Robertson
1963-64	Edith M Libby		