Greeting Appies,

As I write this it is still winter but I can feel the temperatures starting to warm and I just listed my first bike rides a true sign of spring. I hope that you have enjoyed the good snow we have had this winter and are ready to get out and enjoy the warmer weather.

As we move forward into a new year I would like to update our members on what we have planned for the coming year.

The Executive Committee met in January for our annual planning session, one of the key objectives of this meeting is to set some goals for the chapter for the coming year. Some of the key items we identified for this year are; contributing more “sweat equity” in our backyard, re-engaging inactive members, and increasing our virtual presence.

In this issue I would like to expand on one of these items, contributing more sweat equity. Our trails need continuous maintenance in order to keep them safe and fun for outdoor recreation, and this year more than ever. The December ice storm caused significant damage to the local trails including the Mid-State Trail which the chapter maintains. We will be organizing work days as well as partnering with other local organizations to clean up the trails and we need your help. No special skills are needed for most of the work required, just a little sweat. Watch for notices in Outdoors and on the website for upcoming opportunities or sign up for our trails mail-list to receive notices of upcoming events.

As for other activities, we have a full range of activities planned for the upcoming year for all skill levels. We will again be offering our Intro to 3 Season Hiking Series this year, as well as an Intro to Backpacking Program. Tues/Thurs Night Bike Rides will kick off again in May and we also have a number of paddling trips planned, social activities and family activities. Most of the activities we offer are low cost or free. We look forward to seeing you out there.

Sharon Foster
sharon_foster2@yahoo.com
Changes in Store for AMC Outdoors and Member E-Communications

In an effort to reduce expenses and AMC’s carbon footprint, AMC Outdoors will be published six times per year, beginning with the September issue. The magazine will also begin running abbreviated activity listings beginning with the May issue. At the same time, AMC is stepping up its efforts in member e-communications and social networking.

Full listings will continue to be available online at trips.outdoors.org, and well as through a new e-mail based activity alert available through the AMC Member Center (www.outdoors.org/membercenter) at the end of January 2009. Members can also sign up for e-delivery of chapter newsletters and activities listing on the Member Center. www.outdoors.org/member-center

Trip leaders will see new word count limits for magazine listings on the Online Trip Listing system submission forms starting February 15 for trips submitted for the May issue. A complete Q&A for trip leaders will be distributed through chapter chairs, published in the March

“In Memorium - Roy Johnson, Worcester Chapter Chair from 1986-1988. Roy left a measurable impression on our chapter, starting the 3rd Wednesday Potluck Socials with nearly 100 people in attendance at the old lodge and the annual Thanksgiving Zealand Hut Trips that still exist today. Roy was also the initiator of the weekly bike series we still have today. He put the Worcester Chapter on the map for his involvement in getting people together to enjoy his many parties and the great outdoors. Roy will be remembered for all his achievements in getting the Worcester Chapter where it is today. He will be greatly missed by many members of the AMC.”

Free Weekend in the Berkshires?

Did I catch your attention? In October 2010 we will be hosting the Club-wide Fall Gathering. Members from all the clubs chapters attend to participate in meetings, activities and social events. We are looking for a detail-orientated person or couple with good project skills that would be interested in coordinating the event for the Chapter. What does this have to do with a weekend in the Berkshires? We will send whoever takes on this opportunity to this years Fall Gathering hosted by the Berkshire Chapter. Interested? Contact Sharon Foster (sharon_foster2@yahoo.com; 978-562-4494 evenings 7-9P) for more details.
Hi, my name is Isaiah Goss and this summer I attended the JUMP program. We went on a three-day mountain trek! It was a blast, I met new people and learned a bunch of new things. The group we had was of mixed ages, I wasn’t too happy about that. When I get there and met the people I would be with for 3 days in the woods I was a little bummed. The first night at the lodge, before we even started the hike, all that changed. Throughout the hike the next day the age difference became less of a problem. By the time we got to the top of the mountain we were all joking around and having a good time. That night we stayed on top of the mountain, the cabin sounded like a bunch of brothers. By the time the trip was over we had inside jokes, nicknames, and a bunch of “long stories”. That 3 day hike is something I will always remember!

(JUMP) a non-profit formed in 2007 to teach youth about outdoor leadership, was fortunate enough to receive a training grant in the amount of $1,640 from the Worcester Chapter of the Appalachian Mountain Club. JUMP was able to invest $110 of that grant to get training and certification of two adult leaders in CPR and First Aid. Additionally, the grant enabled JUMP to invest $270 to send two adult leaders to Outdoor Leadership Training through the AMC’s Youth Opportunities Program (YOP). With the YOP training, these two adult leaders qualify for equipment privileges from YOP’s equipment room. Previously, the founder of JUMP, Bill Spacciaoli, was the only JUMP leader with YOP equipment privileges.

The members of the Worcester Chapter should be proud of their support for efforts such as this training. JUMP served 18 youth and young adults in 2008. Populations served included typical teenagers, young adults from Shriver Job Corps (many with no previous hiking experience) youth with emotional/behavioral issues, and young adults in the autism spectrum. Three hundred and eighty dollars may not sound like a lot of money, but it meant a lot to those eighteen participants!
Kids Rock
“No Child Left Inside”
By Barbara Dyer

The “No Child Left Behind Act” has a new environmental initiative following close behind titled appropriately “No Child Left Inside”.

Families who play together stay together! In this issue are some examples of how our children are making a difference in the green initiative. Take the time to listen to our youth to understand how important it is that we work together on the mission of the AMC to promote and protect our environment together. Our chapter is always looking for families’ leaders, chapter youth program leaders, grants to provide mountain classroom opportunities, and those interested in being part of our AMC families. If your New Years resolution is to get outside more with your family, then plan it in your calendar today and invite your child to join you on a nature based weekend. You’ll be surprised at the enthusiasm as you plan your event together and share special memories that will last forever.

There are many ways to “Get Out There” with children. Although not easy at times, it is important to my family to make time to explore daily the natural world with walks in local conservation lands and state parks with our dog, to family vacations in National Parks, long weekends camping, hut hikes in the Whites, reading together adventure stories such as Three Cups of Tea, or activity filled AMC families weekends to connect with like-minded outdoor families. As a middle/high school teacher, I find myself connecting with my students through A Mountain Classroom and Natures Classroom trips. These opportunities open up the wild world of nature exploration for our youth. Below is an interview from Ariana Silva, a student at Ayer High School who makes a difference with protecting the environment and shares her passion for rock climbing.

I don’t wear makeup; I hate wearing shoes. My hair tends to be unbrushed; curly, fruity, and crazy. My nails are stubby and fingers overworked, constant chalk reminisces at the quick. The skin on my feet is hardened and thick with the elements, and I wouldn’t have it any other way. My muscles ache with the need to be pushed. They throb and plead to be worked. Yes, I sweat. My palms are rigid and callused. My forearms tremble, and my tendons strain. My mind tunes to a channel of simplicity. My eyes dart, and my senses heighten. A foot follows a hand. My heel finds a hold. Shoulder blades burn, and my chest heaves. My mind floods with a passion, distributing the toxin throughout my body. My name is Ariana, and rock climbing is my passion.

What interests you most about being in the great outdoors?

I love to feel free. I love everything about our environment and what inhabits it. The feel of the warm sun on my skin, and the smell of clean air, the crunch of leaves, snap of twigs, and the sound of a calm rain. Being free of judgment and normality, I take a deep breath and melt into my surroundings. I love to learn, and appreciate and experience all I can in the world; starting with the things we take most for granted – the great outdoors.

What is your favorite activity?

My favorite thing to do is rock climb. I take yoga classes and enjoy hiking and drawing or photography; however rock climbing is what I thrive on.

What is the one thing you do for the sake of conservation?

I enjoy staying involved in the community and I have attended the first recycling meeting through the town hall with intentions of returning every third Monday. In our house we recycle everything we can, minimize our water usage, use energy efficient bulbs, and try to purchase only organic or US made products. Though this is only the beginning I hope to become more involved throughout this Green Revolution.
The French River extends 26 miles from its source in Leicester MA to its confluence with the Quinebaug in Thompson CT. Once heavily polluted, the river has had decades to recover, but remains a mostly inaccessible and forgotten resource. In 2005, the non-profit French River Connection was formed with a vision: for the French River and its shoreline to become a resource that is used, enjoyed, and treasured by residents and visitors to the French River region. The river’s natural and cultural heritage will be appreciated and protected, recreational activities and gatherings along the river will be encouraged, and the economic benefits of a healthy, active riverfront will be realized. Fifty members have joined in the vision.

Most of the riverbank is in private hands, and there are no public paddling access points between Hodges Village in Oxford and the Connecticut state line. Those who manage to find their way to the river are surprised and delighted by the peace, natural beauty, and wildlife, and disappointed that there is so little access. The French River Connection’s strategy is to work with landowners to open sections of the French River Greenway, first proposed in 1990, with a companion blue way for paddlers. When enough sections are in place, there will be a high demand to close the gap. In 2008, the first half-mile greenway section was opened at Perryville on the Connecticut border, and a riverside park is being designed for downtown Webster. Working with the Dudley Conservation Land Trust and Oxford citizens, we have begun fundraising to buy a unique four acre parcel in Oxford that could serve as both a trailhead and boat launch. More about this opportunity to increase the recreational resources available in southern Worcester County can be found at http://www.frenchriverconnection.org/Leovich_ landing.pdf. To learn more about the French River Connection, visit our website, or contact Ken Parker at (508) 943-2698 or email ken.parker@charter.net

Midstate Trail Cleanup

The Midstate Trail was severely impacted by the ice storm in December 2008. The northern region experienced serious damage from the storm. Many volunteers are needed to clear damaged sections and help to re-blaze the trail. Most of the cleanup efforts will begin in spring when the snow is off the trail. Let us know if you can help out and contact Don Hoffses at rockypond@charter.net or call 617-413-5820. Thanks for your help.

3rd Earth Day Urban Park Cleanup

AUGUST 22, 2009

We need your helping hands as we The Worcester AMC Chapter and The Regional Environment Council Unite For The 3rd year to help clean up an Urban Park in the Worcester Area.

Contact Mary MacDonald at mmacdona@comcast.net for more details.
**“Explore Your Inner Winter Hiker” Series Deemed a Huge Success**

by Claude Guerlain

Worcester Chapter’s Hiking Chair, Pat Lambert, instituted a new Winter Hiking Series this season, called “Explore Your Inner Winter Hiker.” The purpose is to expose hikers to the joys of getting out in winter comfortably and safely. Pat wants to encourage these folks to add a fourth season to their hiking schedule by offering a series of activities of increasing challenge.

The series kicked off with a November show-and-tell presentation. Pat, Skiing Chair Charlie Arsenault and Young Members Chair Jen Eaton did an overview of the special challenges of winter hiking vs. three-season hiking. They reviewed safety requirements, preparing, caring for and fueling one’s body, and a gear options. Pat was hoping for a turnout of about 20 people. She ended up with a room filled to capacity and a long wait-list, so this event will be repeated in November ’09 by popular demand.

To get workshop participants out in winter, Pat and Leadership Chair Deb Herlihy convinced trained leaders to develop a graduated series of hikes of increasing challenge. These were sorted between an “Easier to Moderate Track” and a “Moderate to Advanced Track.” Each hike, snowshoe or X-country ski event is limited as to number of participants, so preference is given to workshop attendees. In addition to the graduated series activities posted under the name of “Explore Your Inner Winter Hiker,” other leaders continue to offer local and backcountry winter activities.

Northborough – Claude Guerlain (in white) and Scott Karpuk (standing in middle) lead a group snowshoeing in December on an as-yet-unnamed new trail, which traverses the Algonquin Regional High School property. Participants include (front) Claude and her son John Karpuk, and (back) new member Karen Moriarty, Jim Stein, Scott, Andy Wojcikowski and Joan Gallagher. [photo by Joan Gallagher]
Boy Scouts is a very fun and rewarding experience, but less than 5% of Scouts attain the rank of Eagle. It is a long and difficult endeavor but it is well worth it. For many Scouts the big hold up is their Eagle project. It required much work and planning. My project was to add boardwalks to one of the trails in Northboro, making crossing the wetland area which floods out in the spring, and some old irrigation canals easier. That is where the AMC came in. I needed money to get materials for my project. Mr. Bradley suggested the AMC could help fund my project and recommended I talk with Claude. I then went to an AMC meeting where the members in attendance voted to fund my project. So I would like to thank you all at the AMC very much. Without your support I might not have been able to attain this great honor of Eagle Scout. Again thank you all.

~ Ethan Langer, Northboro, MA

Congratulations AMC Greenway Challenge Team!

Worcester AMC athletes reach new heights at 2008 Greenway Challenge. The Worcester Chapter of the AMC was represented by two teams in this year’s Greenway Challenge biking, paddling and running 58 miles through the Blackstone River Valley to promote and support the efforts to reclaim the river and associated greenways. The “Victorious Secrets”, led by Shirley Cote, Team Captain, placed 2nd in their division, bringing home a trophy and bragging rights. Jerry Burke led the chapter’s namesake team “Worcester AMC” which placed a respectable 19th in the recreational division. The fun adventure left us all smiling.

Lower (L to R) Cees van Eijk, Mary MacDonald, Pat Lambert
Upper (L to R) Tricia Kelly, Sharon Foster, Rob Guilmette, Angela Smith, Bill Zahavi, Shirley Cote, Jerry Burke, Joan Collins, Jim Hutchinson, and Jan Henderson.
Editor, Barbara Dyer. All newsletter submissions should be sent to barbaradyer@hotmail.com. We reserve the right to edit for length and content. All contributions are welcome. Summer deadline May 15th.

Newsletter Design, Bob Desrosiers. Graphic designer/photographer. Questions/comments about design services or the newsletter to desrosiers_1@charter.net. Inlay photos by Bob DesRosiers