



# Bootprints

The Bimonthly Newsletter of the  
Pioneer Valley Hiking Club

President's Corner:

## We're Back!

by Acting President Jeanne Kaiser

The last time I wrote this section of *Bootprints*, PVHC had paused its activities due to the Covid-19 pandemic. At that time, I wrote that when we began activities again, we would not be flinging the door open, but rather cracking it a bit. To continue the metaphor—the door is now ajar—and we are hoping to keep it that way.

With the input of our regular leaders, the board was able to develop a set of policies that we believe have allowed us to resume hiking safely. And we have. Chip is doing his Monday hikes again; Erin is leading her weekly walk at Ashley Reservoir, and Deb and Cheryl are out there on Wednesday mornings. In addition, we have a selection of weekday and weekend hikes on the local hiking trails. But it's not quite the same as the "Before Times." For one thing, we are no longer overwhelming other hikers and driving away the wildlife with our groups of 20+. We are not piling into cars to car-pool to points distant. I'm not sure that we've had a single ice cream stop.

Nonetheless, I feel particularly grateful to be a New England resident right now. If we have to be stuck some place, it's great to be stuck in a place with such abundant natural beauty and such a big selection of hiking trails. We are lucky to have the PVHC, too. Our hikes will have to be small and local for the foreseeable future. And hike leaders should start leading, and hikers should start hiking only when they feel completely comfortable. But we are back!

-- Jeanne Kaiser

Volume 24, Issue 4

July, 2020

### Inside this issue:

- Important Renewal and Membership Notices 15
- Upcoming Events And The Usuals 16
- Important Notices 16

### Special points of interest:

- Jeanne Kaiser's President's Corner article on page 1
- Eileen Wood's article on page 2
- Sandy Sego's article on page 3
- PaPa Smurf's article on page 5
- Dick Forrest's article on page 10



## My Favorite Hiking Experiences

by Eileen Wood

I love hiking with the Monday and Thursday PVHC groups as well as with other western MA groups I'm in. Although an avid solo hiker, I appreciate the dynamic of sharing joy of the woods with interesting people from all walks of life. Kindred spirits. Lots of new knowledge. Humorous stories. Good advice. Best of all, learning new places that may have been right under your nose. The critters of the Forest sure know you're coming when 30 people (or 60 boots!) tramp through their bailiwick.

It truly was heartbreaking when that had to end in March, but back to solo hiking or hiking with one or two others has its charms. When you are alone, you can be more meditative. I've been trying to walk in rhythm with breath counts inhaling and exhaling. It's surprisingly easy and comfortable when trail is somewhat level such as a logging road. Many times I'll just sit for 20 minutes and listen, counting how many different sounds one can hear if you take the time. The best thing about solo is if you get "turned around" (i.e., lost), you don't have to worry about including a whole group in your mistake (I think Chip et al. may remember my goof on the Black Blaze hike).

Just as enjoyable is hiking with one or two people you're acquainted with from a large group but have not gotten to know well. New tales and ideas. It's a quieter experience, too.

Also in this strange new time, I have made it a point to check off hikes that have been on my bucket list. My favorite has been doing the entire reroute of what I still call the M&M, which now winds its way from Cadwell Forest, along Rt. 202 vicinity and past Lake Wyola to Wendell State Park. It's mostly old logging roads cobbled together through quiet woodland.

Living in the moment is the best we can do and being thankful that we are still allowed out into all the gorgeous nature we are lucky to call home.

Eileen Wood  
Amherst

*"Living in the moment is the best we can do and being thankful that we are still allowed out into all the gorgeous nature we are lucky to call home."  
~ Eileen Wood*

## Dealing with Uncertainty

by Sandy Segó

Here is today's pop quiz: Who is going to win the Superbowl in 2025? What is the weather going to be like on July 15? What are you having for dinner in three days?

If you are like me, your answer to each question was "I don't know."

We always deal with uncertainty. There are things we just can't know about the future. Right now, it seems like there is nothing we know for certain. The pandemic has disrupted our lives and there is much about the virus and the future that is unknown. And that will probably continue for some time.

We have to accept that we can't know everything. Gambling as an industry would not exist if we knew what the next card out of the deck was, or what we would roll on the dice. Just like when we play games or watch sports, we have to accept that there is only so much we can do to control the things around us.

Uncertainty can create stress. It may make us more depressed and anxious. But we have to understand that it is always a part of our lives. We don't know when natural disasters will strike, accidents will happen, or surprises occur.

So here are some suggestions for dealing with uncertainty:

1. Get in touch with your feelings. Notice what is difficult and any silver linings that may occur. Even in the middle of a crisis, you can be aware of how you are feeling and how the crisis is impacting you. Keeping a journal may help. If you don't want to write, you could talk out loud and record your ideas on your phone. You could make a video. Drawing may be another way to express your feelings.

See *Dealing with Uncertainty* continued on page 4

*"We always deal with uncertainty. There are things we just can't know about the future."*  
~ Sandy Segó

*"Uncertainty can create stress. It may make us more depressed and anxious. But we have to understand that it is always a part of our lives.."*  
~ Sandy Segó



*“Avoid thinking about things you can’t control.”  
~ Sandy Segó*

*“Focus on what you can do now and be mindful in the activities you can engage in. Take pleasure in what you can and focus on the present. We never know what tomorrow brings.”  
~ Sandy Segó*

***Dealing with Uncertainty*** continued from page 3

2. Recognize that there is no one “right” way to deal with things. Maybe your friend has cleaned out the house and you have binge-watched television. Everyone processes stress in different ways. Don’t beat yourself up over things you “should” be doing. This isn’t a contest. Some people find cleaning therapeutic. I don’t.
3. Remember that you have overcome stressful events in the past. Try to remember what you may have done to cope in those situations. Build on the things that worked and attempt to avoid the things that were not helpful.
4. Avoid thinking about things you can’t control. When uncertainty strikes, many people immediately imagine worst-case scenarios. Get out of the habit of ruminating on negative events. Find a task that will distract you and focus your energy there.
5. Seek support from those you trust. Many people isolate themselves when they’re stressed or worried. It is important to connect with others who can lift you up. Talking to others reminds us that we are not the only one going through tough times.
6. Focus on things that you can control, even if it is deciding what’s for dinner or deciding what to wear the night before a stressful day. Try to establish some routines to give your week some structure. Set a time for exercise, sleep, and work.
7. Try to eat healthy meals, get some exercise, and plenty of sleep. These things help us be resilient and recharge ourselves each day. They allow us to have the resources to cope with the next challenge that comes our way.

You can make a Plan A for a situation. Then make a Plan B. And you can work your way through the alphabet. But surprises still occur. My best advice is to accept that we don’t know everything about the future. We don’t have to know everything. Life changes. We have to be able to adapt. Don’t focus on how things were six months ago and lament everything you can’t do. Focus on what you can do now and be mindful in the activities you can engage in. Take pleasure in what you can and focus on the present. We never know what tomorrow brings.  
-- Sandy Segó

Smurfy advice for the trail...

## Leaves of Three...

by John "PaPa Smurf" Klebes

With summer in full swing many of us are exploring new and less-traveled trails and paths in the countryside. If you have stuck to popular trails in the past you might not be very concerned about poisonous plants that abound and can cause skin rashes. That's because on popular trails the plants along the side of the trail are constantly being brushed by other animals and hikers. The oily resin that causes skin rashes is gradually wiped off trailside plants by dogs, wildlife and previous hikers making it much less likely that even if you brush against some poison ivy you will experience a large dose of this menace. But if you are heading on less-traveled trails, or pushing through overgrown or off-trail brush, you are much more likely to get a nice fresh dose of these poisonous plants. Believe me, you will not like the result.

As a kid I was always told: *Leaves of three – let it be.* This was the tried and true message that the big three (poison ivy, poison oak, and poison sumac) could be identified by the cluster of three leaflets. While not all plants with three leaves are poisonous it's a good strategy to assume that if they do have them, it's best to avoid them. As I gained more experience I found out that, while a good starting point, it's not always true. Still, it's not a bad place to start.

In the United States the most common rash-causing plants are poison ivy, poison oak, and poison sumac. A large percentage of the population can expect a severe rash when you come into contact with the resin from these big three. Even if you are one of the few that get a. See *Leaves of Three* continued on page 6

*"As a kid I was always told: Leaves of three – let it be."*

*~ PaPa Smurf*

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*“Past experience is not a guarantee of the effects of your next exposure.”*

*~ PaPa Smurf*

*“Poison ivy is the most common rash-causing plant in the eastern United States.”*

*~ PaPa Smurf*

**Leaves of Three** *continued from page 5*

mild or no reaction, keep in mind that you can either “grow into” or “grow out” of this reaction as you age. Past experience is not a guarantee of the effects of your next exposure. There are certainly others, such as giant hogweed, puddle dog bush, leadwort, ragweed, etc. Most of these are not as common in the East, and not everyone gets a reaction, but keep them in mind, too, if you are in an area where they are common. I’ll also add stinging nettles to the list. While not really poisonous, nettles have hairlike needles that easily transfer to bare skin and cause painful irritation to the exposed skin, much like a cactus, but the needles are so fine they really can’t be practically removed.

**Identification**

Leaves of three is a good starting point. Poison ivy, oak and sumac usually have the characteristic cluster of three leaflets. Poison sumac, however, has a row of paired leaves below the three leaf cluster. And while less common, poison ivy can have an additional two leaf row below the three leaf cluster.

Poison ivy is the most common rash-causing plant in the eastern United States. It grows as a vine or low shrub with pointed ivy-like leaves that can be shiny and smooth or with slightly notched edges.



Poison Ivy

See *Leaves of Three* continued on page 7

**Leaves of Three** *continued from page 6*

Poison oak, looks similar to ivy but with an oak-shaped leaf. Poison oak takes the form of a low shrub in the East but is more common in the West where it can be more likely to be a high shrub. Poison sumac takes the form of a tree or tall shrub. With all three the rash is caused by an oily resin called urushiol, that is found in the sap and can be transferred to the skin when the plant is brushed against, bruised, broken, crushed, or burned.

Urushiol is found in the sap of every part of the poison ivy plants: leaves, branches, flowers and roots. It is present year-round and can remain active on dead and dried plants for two to five years. It will become airborne if you burn it and will affect your airways and lungs if you happen to inhale it.

Recently I've been playing with an app called LeafSnap. It's a cellphone app that uses your camera to identify plants and can be very useful if you are unsure if you might have found a poisonous plant. Other apps are also available. I've actually had the best luck with "Google Lens," an app that came with the photo app on my Android smartphone. It's free from Google. For a given picture, Google Lens will search the internet for similar pictures. If you snap a picture of an unknown plant and ask Google Lens to find similar photos it will list a bunch of similar pictures - most likely from plant identification sites with the plant name labeled. By the way, this works for mountains, landmarks, buildings etc. It's a pretty powerful app. If you want something less dependent on the internet it might be a good investment to laminate a little picture card showing the poison plants. Google the plant photos at home and print them out on a small card to help you identify them in the field.

*See Leaves of Three continued on page 8*

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*~ PaPa Smurf*

*"Recently I've been playing with an app called LeafSnap....I've actually had the best luck with "Google Lens,"...."*

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*“The longer the oil is on your skin the worse the reaction, so simply washing with soap and water after a hike can avoid most problems.”*  
~ PaPa Smurf

*“Keep in mind it’s the oily resin called urushiol that causes the rash.”*  
~ PaPa Smurf

**Leaves of Three** continued from page 7

### **Defense**

The best way to avoid exposure is similar to your tick defense of using long pants with the cuffs tucked in and long shirts, which limit exposure to your skin. Wear gloves or be careful touching plants with your hands, especially the leaves of three bushes and vines. The severity of the rash is caused by exposure, over time, to the oily resin transferred from the plants. Time can be your best defense as it is possible to wash off the resin after exposure to minimize the effects. The longer the oil is on your skin the worse the reaction, so simply washing with soap and water after a hike can avoid most problems. Most people do not develop a rash if you wash well with soap and water within a half hour to an hour of exposure. You can also use baby wipes or hand sanitizer to some effect to limit the time exposure if you can’t properly wash up after a hike. If you are especially susceptible you may want to wash off within 5-10 minutes of exposure. Even water (think stream, lake, or washcloth) can help if applied soon enough but be sure to follow up with soap and water.

Keep in mind it’s the oily resin called urushiol that causes the rash. It’s usually colorless or hard to see but can be all over your shoes, pants, your dog’s fur, the ends of your hiking poles, etc. If you suspect you have been exposed to it you should carefully remove your clothes and assume they can re-expose you to the plant oils until they are washed. Put them right in the washer and wash your hands after removing them. Wipe down hiking poles and your shoes, too. Urushiol can stay active for weeks to years so it’s basically there till you rub, wear, or wash it off.

### **Symptoms/Treatment**

First comes the itching, then a red rash, then blisters. They appear  
See *Leaves of Three* continued on page 9

**Leaves of Three** *continued from page 8*

anytime from a few hours to several days after exposure to the plants oils. While the rash, blisters, and even the liquid in the blisters is not contagious, any remaining urushiol on the surface can continue to cause problems and is transferable to others. So be sure to wash with soap and water to make sure your rash doesn't worsen and that you don't contaminate other areas on yourself or others. Once clean, though, you can't pass it on to others. That assumes, of course, that you don't get re-exposed from any remaining oils that can be lurking on your hiking clothes, gear, poles, and shoes from the first exposure. So, be sure to do a cleaning of your shoes, clothes and gear, if you find a rash, to limit additional new exposure.

You can relieve the itching with cool showers, over-the-counter meds, like calamine lotion and others, or an oatmeal or baking soda solution. Avoid scratching the blisters open as this can cause bacterial infection. If you have a severe reaction you can try Benadryl or a doctor can prescribe cortisone.

The sting from stinging nettles usually subsides within an hour but you can help reduce the itch using soap and water.

**Here's wishing that you all have an *itch to hike* a grand adventure, and an *itch-free* experience!**

-- PaPa Smurf

(If you have a suggestion for future topics or a hike-related question you would like covered in this column, send a note to [john.klebes@gmail.com](mailto:john.klebes@gmail.com))



PaPa Smurf

*"You can relieve the itching with cool showers, over-the-counter meds, like calamine lotion and others, or an oatmeal or baking soda solution."*

*~ PaPa Smurf*



## New Hampshire's "52 With a View" Hiking List has been Changed/Updated

by Dick Forrest

In summary, here's the scoop. You can read about it on this page and here's the link: <https://bit.ly/37G0HH5>

In a nutshell, what the web page says is that the Over the Hill Hikers, the hiking group who created the 52 With a View (52WAV) hiking list in 1991, are updating their 52 peak list. They are "retiring" 5 peaks on the list and "adding" 5 peaks to replace the five peaks which they are retiring from the list. (This is not the first update that they have made to their list of peaks.)

*"They (the Over the Hill Hikers) are "retiring" 5 peaks on the (52WAV) list and "adding" 5 peaks to replace the five peaks which they are retiring from the list."*

*~ Dick Forrest*

5 Peaks Being <b>Retired</b> from 52WAV	5 Peaks Being <b>Added</b> to 52WAV
Black Mt. (Jackson)	Mt. Morgan (in Squam Range)
Iron Mt.	Mt. Percival (in Squam Range)
Square Ledge	Pine Mt. (from Gorham)
Mt. Hibbard	Roger's Ledge (Kilkenny Ridge Trail)
West Royce	Table Mt. (Attitash Trail)

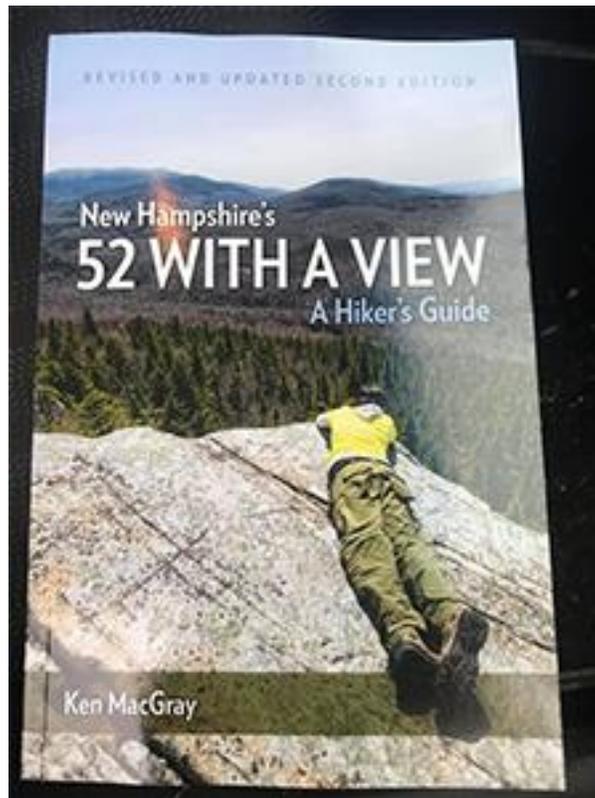
Another change to note: North and South Doublehead, like the loop on Mts. Welch and Dickey, has also been combined into a loop.

A big question arises: What if I have already climbed/completed all or some of the peaks that have been retired? No problem! You will still get credit for them as part of the 52 peaks on the list. But if you haven't completed all 5 that are being retired, then just replace those "retired" peaks that you haven't completed with some of those peaks "added" to the list. (The Over the Hill Hikers seem quite flexible in this matter.)

See 52WAV continued on page 11

**52WAV** continued from page 10

Author, 52WAV lover, and Facebook 52WAV group page moderator Ken MacGray, who Sue and I met on the trail coming down the trail from Mt. Resolution, and later, coming down from the summit of Mt. Stairs (when we were doing the 52WAV list), has recently written the second and updated edition of his book called *New Hampshire's 52 With A View – A Hiker's Guide*. I am positive that the most recent changes to the 52WAV list are in his second edition. If interested, here are ways to get a hold of Ken's book:



**Direct order (signed and personalized by the author, Ken MacGray):**

<http://www.kenmacgray.org/52/>

**Amazon:**

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/0578701766>

**Retail locations to find this book:**

<http://www.kenmacgray.org/52/retail.shtml>

-- Dick Forrest

## Fun Pin Awards for Completing Hikes

PVHC has started a new Fun Pin Award for participating in hikes with the club. There are three pins that members can earn:

1. **10 Hikes with PVHC**
2. **10 Mountains/Summits with PVHC**
3. **10 Trails with PVHC**

There is no double or triple dipping. One hike can be used for just one hike or summit or trail. You can count weekly hikes, summits or trails more than once if you do them on different dates. Examples - the Monday Morning hike can be used several times in the hikes log as long as you do them on different dates, Mt Holyoke can be listed several times as long as it is hiked on different dates, same with trails.

We hope you have fun hiking with PVHC and earning your Pins!

The logs for each pin are posted on the club website. Once completed you may turn it in at a club meeting for your pin award.

## Slide Show Photos

Please send all slide show photos for the 2020 PVHC Holiday Party multimedia slide show to the following email address:  
pvhcpictures@gmail.com

Acting President Jeanne Kaiser requested that members contribute to *Bootprints* by telling the club about their favorite hikes. Here's a member's response:

I found a trail not on the map of the Holyoke Range State Park. If you start from Harris Mt. Road and go over summit of Long Mt. on the Metacomet Trail then continue down toward Mt. Norwottuck and keep bearing to the right on all trail intersections, some are not marked, it will take you back to Harris Mt. Road within 50 or a 100 ft. from where you started. I think the loop is about 3 miles. I thought that this would a nice hike to add to our club's list of hikes. Thanks and happy trails.

- - Dan Harrington

## **Important PVHC Notice**

This is a copy of our club's release form as it relates to our Covid-19 pandemic. It's required of all members who wish to participate in club-sponsored activities. It must be **electronically sent (and signed)** to our treasurer, Erin Squires at [pvhctreasure@gmail.com](mailto:pvhctreasure@gmail.com), to be placed on file with her, before you can go on any club hikes. You can find an online copy at: <http://pioneervalleyhikingclub.org/blog/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/covid-agreement-final.pdf>

### **PIONEER VALLEY HIKING CLUB**

Post Office Box 225

West Springfield MA 01090-0225

### **THIS IS A RELEASE AND AGREEMENT. READ IT CAREFULLY BEFORE SIGNING.**

The Pioneer Valley Hiking Club ("PVHC") is a social and recreational club for people who enjoy participation in outdoor activities centered around hiking with others. Our officers and event leaders are enthusiastic amateurs who volunteer to serve without compensation. The event leader(s) will attempt to provide a good faith description of the event and its difficulty and will answer questions concerning it based on whatever level of personal knowledge the leader(s) may have. Leaders may deny the right to participate in the event to any person, including club members, if the leader has a good faith belief that the person's participation in the event will be unsafe or detract from the safety or enjoyment of other participants or the timely completion of the event or the person fails or refuses to sign this form. However, no representation is made that the PVHC or its members or leader (s)

have any particular level of knowledge, experience, training or ability with respect to this event or situations that may arise during it. Each participant in this and other PVHC events acknowledges his/her agreement with the statements made above and further acknowledges and agrees that each participant is responsible for his/her own safety, determination of fitness to participate in the event and determination of what food, water, clothing and equipment is necessary to safely participate in the event.

During the period of the Covid-19 pandemic, PVHC has imposed certain conditions upon individuals who wish to participate in club -sponsored activities. By signing this agreement, and participating in a PVHC sponsored event, individuals agree to adhere to the following rules:

-members will not participate in PVHC events if they know or believe they have an active covid-19 infection or symptoms of such an infection, or have been in recent contact with a person who has developed symptoms of, or

**Release Form** *continued from page 13*

-participants will adhere to social distancing guidelines during events when it's safely possible and not environmentally destructive to do so, including remaining a minimum of six feet from all other individuals; moving off the hiking trail when passing other groups and individuals; and avoiding all physical contact with non-household members at the event, except in an emergency.

-participants will bring a face mask to all events to use in the event social distancing is not reasonably possible;

-participants agree to notify the hike leader if after their participation in an event, they suffer symptoms of, or test positive, for Covid-19 or learn they have recently been in close contact with a person who has developed symptoms of, or tested positive for Covid-19.

-participants agree to permit hike leaders to provide their name, contact information, and the fact of their participation, to contract tracers from a department of public health seeking to track infections of Covid-19.

-participants will adhere to state and local government rules or recommendations for the area where the hike is taking place and all additional rules for individual events that may be imposed by the leader of the hike.

**In consideration for the services of the PVHC and the event leader(s) in organizing this event, each participant hereby releases the event leader(s), the PVHC, its members, officers, agents, servants, employees, volunteers and the other participants from any and all claims and liabilities, of every kind and nature, for bodily injury, personal injury, property damage or other form of loss or damage arising from or relating to any involvement in this event.**

**This agreement is valid for participation in all events between June 17, 2020 and December 31, 2020. \_\_\_\_\_**

## Important Membership Renewal Notices

The following memberships are up for renewal:

### July Renewals

Rick Briggs  
 Kathy Brown  
 Pam Chandler  
 Tina Garde  
 Mike Gross  
 Constance Janik  
 Jeanne Kaiser  
 Norm Plante  
 Barbara Werum Richard  
 Fred Riotte  
 Robert & Lisa (Frigo) Schechtman  
 Sandy Segó  
 Paul Tonelli and family  
 Heather Wardrop  
 Carol Wood  
 Carolyn Young  
 Heide Zajonc

### August Renewals

Harry Allen  
 Hedy Beaudry  
 Marie Bienvenue & Albert Gagliarducci Jr.  
 Stephen Ecrement  
 Dick & Sue Forrest  
 Albert Gordon  
 Gabriela Horvay  
 Charlotte Lee  
 William LePage  
 Ann Mundy  
 Laura and Austin Porter  
 Shari Scott-Smith  
 Helen Skerritt  
 Joe & Noel Stella  
 Gabriele (Gabi) Strauch  
 Heather Wyman  
 Carole Zambito

### Pioneer Valley Hiking Club Officers

Jeanne Kaiser, Acting President  
 Erin Squires, Treasurer  
 Gina Geck, Secretary  
 Ray Tibbetts, Founder

### Standing Committee Chairs

Hike Schedule: Chip Pray & Jeanne Kaiser  
 Backpacking Coordinator: Rick Briggs  
 Trail Maintenance: Chip Pray & Rob Schechtman  
 Club Website Editor: Dick Forrest  
 Non-Member E-mail Coordinator: Rob Schechtman  
 Club E-mail Coordinator: Jeanne Kaiser  
 Quartermaster: Mike Carrier  
*Bootprints* Newsletter Editor: Dick Forrest

*Bootprints* is a publication of the Pioneer Valley Hiking Club. Please email your story/event contributions to Dick Forrest at: [dforrest@charter.net](mailto:dforrest@charter.net)

### WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

#### June

No new members

#### July

No new members

Please renew early, and renew by mail. (Make checks payable to PVHC) Mail your renewal with your name and any address or phone number changes to:

Pioneer Valley Hiking Club  
 PO Box 225  
 West Springfield MA 01090-0225  
 (Dues are \$25 member, \$40 family, and \$15 for students)



**UPCOMING EVENTS AND THE USUALS**

- Every Mon. (MA) Mornings w/ Chip
- Every Tues. (MA) Evenings w/ Lori/Karen
- Every Wed. (MA) Mornings w/ Deb & Cheryl
- Every Thurs. (MA) Mornings w/ Harry  
(MA) Evenings w/ Erin
- Aug 4 (MA) Club Meeting  
(tentative)
- Sept 8 (MA) Club Meeting  
(tentative)
- Oct 6 (MA) Club Meeting  
(tentative)
- Nov 3 (MA) Club Meeting  
(tentative)
- Dec 1 (MA) Club Meeting  
(tentative)

## IMPORTANT NOTICES

Next Club Meetings:  
 August 4, 2020, 7 p.m. at **FBC**  
 September 8, 2020, 7 p.m. at **FBC**

***FBC - First Baptist Church, 337 Piper Road, West Springfield***

Deadline for submissions to the next *Footprints* is August 20, 2020

**\*\* Check out our club website at:**  
[www.pioneervalleyhikingclub.org](http://www.pioneervalleyhikingclub.org)

Members may join the PVHC Email List by sending a message to:  
[pvhc.hikingclub@gmail.com](mailto:pvhc.hikingclub@gmail.com)



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 P.O. Box 225  
 West Springfield, MA 01090-0225

