

BOOTPRINTS

VOLUME 16 - ISSUE 2

MARCH 2011

SNOW

Flames of smoke, rising, blown across, upward,
sweeping the hillside.
The snow escapes the laden trees.
White out... forbids the eye.....enhances the blind.

I thought I was alone, leaving tracks behind me.
Then from the Hemlocks white apron.....a runway of
bounding tracks....a burrow of comfort.

Sunlight reaches the day,
spreading blue shadows through the woods.

Snow sparkles the rainbow spectrum....
drifting,
melting,
shading,
colliding,
Snow, the earths down blanket,
the whitest white there is....
to nourish the breath.

Janice Doubleday

Proper use of your Gear

by Lori Tisdell & Lori McMahon

It's always exciting when you get some cool new hiking gear. The first time you use it can be such an interesting experience. Adjustments are made until the perfect fit is established and then off you go! It fits well and you think you have it right. Let me state that again. You think you have it right. But sometimes even when it feels right, it's wrong.

Here's a case in point. On the recent Monadnock hike led by Dick and Sue Forrest, some of us were using our brand-spanking new crampons for the first time. By the way, these are really cool pieces of equipment. Well, as long as you don't sever the artery in your ankle, as Tom Pederson told us. Yeah, that would sure ruin your day, caught on top of a mountain, in winter, no airlift possible, with a severed artery. Yep, hell of a bad day happening! Thanks for that vivid image, Tom.

So, we two Loris were fresh to these absolutely rockin' new crampons. We got them strapped tightly to our boots and were ready to go. Those suckers didn't move when placed into the ice and snow. yay! As we hiked along, more and more people asked Lori M if she had her crampons on correctly. The rubber part that goes around the back of her boots was sticking out on

the sides. Huh. But she said, yes. She was told that's how they went on, and they were tight and nothing slipping. OK. After awhile though Lori T noticed the straps were around Lori M's ankles not her boots! She must have cold feet as it seemed the straps would be cutting the circulation off to her feet. But no, her feet were fine and the crampons still tight and working very well. How about that?

We eventually stopped to adjust the crampons so they were really properly attached to Lori's boots just to be on the safe side. And she continued on with her crampons performing just the same as they had when improperly attached. We thought it was quite a testament to Camp's that Lori got at least 2/3rds of the way up Monadnock with absolutely no problem or slipping. She made it past the chute with the rope climb as well as up and over all the steep, icy, rocky areas of the White Dot Trail with nary a problem.

Lori has decided she will write to Camps to tell them how pleased she was with the performance of her gear. Even attached improperly they never slipped and performed admirably. Next time she may even try using them without the straps at all! Well, maybe not.

Though we may have been a bit slap happy, we Loris had a hysterical 5 minutes of tear-inducing laughter in the car on the way home imagining the letter to Camp's. Dear Camp's, I just wanted to let you know how great your crampons performed on a recent hike. Even though they were attached improperly, they were amazing. The straps were around my ankles instead of my boots, and they didn't cut off my circulation and performed astonishingly well on the icy slopes of Monadnock. Your product is outstanding. I highly recommend these Crampons to everyone. Even when not used properly, they get the job done! Thanks again for a super product. Lori McMahon.+

Adventure on the Metacomet Trail

by Lee Dawn Daniel

Those of you who attended the January 2011 meeting may recall a brief vignette that I relayed regarding the ominous beginnings of section hiking the beautiful Metacomet Trail (part of the New England Scenic Trail), which commences at the hamlet of Rising Corner in Suffield, CT, and terminates at the shores of the Long Island Sound near the town of Berlin in the Hanging Hills. For those who did not hear our tale of woe, and for those who just can't stop shaking their heads thinking about our folly in beginning this trail on the too early morning of December 12th (following the *See page 2 Metacomet for continuation*

Our New Board Members

By Marie Babbitt

If you were not casting your vote and eating cake to celebrate the club's 20th Anniversary with us at our March meeting, here is the up to date scoop on our newly elected board members. Chip Pray is our new club President, by unanimous decision and Cindy Hibert and Cindy Dolgoff are our club's new Co-Secretaries. As was noted it is taking two people to replace our beloved Gail Carrier. Our vice president remains Marcia Kelly and our treasurer remains Deb Gebo.

Thank you, both Ann Marie and Gail for your generosity of heart in volunteering your time and energy to support our club over the years. And thanks to Marcia and Deb for your openness to say yes, once again and support our club in the coming year.

Welcome aboard Chip, Cindy and Cindy and thank you for volunteering your time..

Metacomet from page 1

very late night of the annual club holiday party the evening before), I will recount the following: Approximately six brave souls met our leader, the Hon. Chip Pray, at the Feeding Hills parking lot, in a wintry mix of pouring rain, freezing rain, cold rain, a literal downpour, and more rain (did I mention the rain?) to drive to Section 1. We should have known that we were in for big trouble as Norm Plante, Chip, Brenda Doucette, Lori Tisdell, and myself were met in the parking lot by John Klebes, who was standing in a puddle wearing nothing more than socks, Crocs, and a cheesy nylon hiking shirt despite water, water everywhere. Ann Marie Visconti caught up with us nearby and after John made himself decent we drove to the steep beginnings of the trail which had already iced over. I learned from two veteran hikers, John and Norm, that you can indeed comply with the Club creed, "Be Prepared", for a 5 plus mile hike in the pouring December rain wearing nothing waterproof, so long as you come equipped with a broken umbrella. I will always treasure the image forever seared into my brain of these two experienced hikers (one who recently completed the AT and the other who has hiked all over the world) slogging one behind the other; John jauntily holding high his limp black umbrella, which canopied barely half his frame, followed by Norm, whose bright green umbrella was collapsed on both sides so that he might as well have held a Baggie overhead for cover. Naturally, one of these two gentlemen complained the most about the conditions of this "death march." All were assured by Chip as we walked along the ridgeline for several miles that "the views are really beautiful when you can see them!" Brenda, apparently the only one with common sense, double-timed it to the end of the trail, to cut short her misery, so we barely saw her. I had great company in Lori and Ann Marie, who were in good cheer despite the conditions, and we all agreed that the trail was indeed through pretty woods and that it would be nice to return to see the alleged views in reasonable weather. After the hike, many of us barged in on Gail and Mike

Carrier's home, eating a great chicken soup while we dried out our clothes. Thank goodness that John was a gracious guest and didn't take his pants off for a second time that day or we could not have endured it. By the time we polished off the whole pecan pie that Ann Marie had rescued from the holiday party the night before, it almost seemed like it was a great day!

Sections 2 and 3 made up for Section 1, as we had glorious snowshoeing weather on both hikes. About a dozen of us enjoyed a pristine, deep snowfall on Section 2, which commenced in Bloomfield and ended in E. Granby, and the trail through very, very pretty woods with a couple nice views (especially looking over the Farmington River) was a good work-out, on account of not only the snow but the several climbs and descents along the way. Afterwards we all went to a great casual restaurant, Gio's in E. Granby, for hearty portions of Italian classics to replenish the calories that we had expended, and vowed that we would eat there again. Similarly, hiking Section 3, beginning at Penwood State Forest in Simsbury and ending in Tariffville, was a great day with bright sun, fresh powder, and a spectacular panoramic view looking east across Simsbury, Avon and Bloomfield (the Farmington Valley, see photo) and south to the Heublein Tower. More than a dozen of us enjoyed this amazing section of the trail, which followed along ridgeline for much of the way, and then finished in deep woods littered with critter tracks ranging from bear to deer to turkey. Chip did a fantastic job on each of these three hikes and we are very grateful that he is continuing on this trail, which has been very impressive so far for the views, varied character of the woods, and the rolling terrain providing decent exercise. Seeing Heublein Tower and the Farmington Valley view from Section 3 has gotten me excited to do Section 4 on February 19th and I hope to report on that hike at a later date. The repeat hike of Section 1 in better weather was scheduled for February 26th. Thanks again Chip, and to all my friends on the trail, for making each of these hikes so enjoyable!

Mt Monadnock: The Continuing Saga

By Lori Tisdell

The time was coming once again for Dick and Sue Forrest's annual New Year's Monadnock hike. Last year's hike had been a little hairy with snow-covered ice, bitter cold at the summit and high winds that actually knocked people over, and a newbie having a panic attack that stalled her at the ice-covered "hute." There'd been a drive up in a snow storm as well to start the day right. "natch! I'd been that newbie last year and was determined to be as completely prepared as possible so I'd make it to the top this year. I invested in 10-point Petzl crampons and all the proper gear. You'd have thought I was headed to Everest with all the preparations and thought put into this four-mile hike!

A snow storm the night before this year's hike made for an interesting drive. Lori McMahon, Dave Vibber, and
See page 3 Saga for continuation

Saga continued from page 2

I car-pooled, following Dick and Sue the entire way. We saw many others on the road heading north for a fun-in-the-snow weekend. We all arrived safe and eager to head up the mountain. I felt so much more confident in my crampons as they solidly bit into the ice. The beginning part of the trail is not too bad and we made our way up it pretty quickly. Then the steep hiking started. Layers were shed and gear adjusted, and we settled into a steady rhythm of climbing. Then the first good view appeared as we passed icy, snow covered trees and came out on a rocky promontory. Spectacular.

Not long after, we arrived at the chute+ and there were Bob and Tom with a rope set up to help us all up this tricky section. This had been my nemesis the year before and now it was a piece of cake! Thank you Bob for bringing the rope, I felt completely safe, and it was fun too! Then there was more climbing, a little descent into a shelter of trees for a snack, and back up for the final push. The trees fell behind and we were on icy windswept rocky ledges. Soon we saw the summit just above us, and before we knew it we were there. Wow, what an awesome feeling.

There were four winter Monadnock virgins+ this time out, celebrating their first winter summit. I'm quite sure it was the only virgin thing about any of us! A short rest for refueling and we were on our way back down. I was so inspired by the sight of the line of hikers on those ledges making their way down. Looking at the valley so far below gave me an incredible sense of my own strength and grateful appreciation for how far I've come in the last year.

On the way up I occasionally wondered how I was going to get back down some of those steep sections. In fact, Lori and I talked about that. But as we approached each section none seemed horrible or even scary. This was amazing to me! We arrived once more for the second rope trick.+ I felt so confident I stopped part way down and made Lori take my picture. What a wonderful feeling, when what was once scary becomes fun.

Eventually, the way down began to feel like an endless exercise of icy rock-stepping, down and down and more down. We spent a good bit of it with Tom and Eva chatting away. It helped to distract me from my feet begging me to take those heaven sent crampons off! Near the end we met up with a ranger who, upon hearing part of a conversation about the last Monadnock hike, that involved a ride on the tailgate of a pick-up, exclaimed, "What was you?+ What are the odds?+ Apparently there is still talk about Anne's, Heather's and

Then the first good view appeared as we passed icy, snow covered trees and came out on a rocky promontory.

my wild ride after Anne's ankle sprain in October. We're famous!

We all arrived safely back at the parking lot, though some of us had bruises from various falls along the way. Then onto our reward for a well hiked day to J.P. Stevens for dinner! What a fun time full of laughs, good cheer, good food, and toasts. And you know you're at a hiker's dinner when hair-raising tales of previous hiking adventures are laughingly related and crampons are passed around the table for everyone's inspection and perusal!

Everyone summited the mount or came within a few hundred feet, so they may as well have. I know summiting isn't the most important thing about the hike but it was really nice that everyone got up there this year and saw how beautiful the top of the mountain was with the snow, ice and rock.

Thank you Sue and Dick for leading another great Monadnock hike!

Snowshoes and Solitude

By Lee Dawn Daniel

Until I joined the Club in August 2010, I usually snowshoed alone, mostly by choice and not chance. Sure, I got my teenagers the cutest little Tubbs shoes when they were in grade school and would take them tromping in the woods, a thermos of hot chocolate and some cookies in hand, but when the big snow came and I awoke to my hayfields and woods deeply covered in white, I knew that I had to get out there alone.

I enjoyed the slow motion of everything thick with snow the day after a big storm . me in a state of near hibernation from too little sunlight, my deliberate plodding through deep powder, the wind pushing through groaning tree limbs heavy with wet snow and ice. With no discernable trail through my pine woods, I took the time to really look at where I was going, the snow mounded in giant cotton balls over rocks, the black water of that stretch of the Manhan which I arrogantly call "maine" eating away at the white, the muffled trickling water suppressed by a seal of thick ice. The crust has stored the memory of all the critters biding their time as I pass through what is really their domain, imprints now fossilized in ice looking so haphazard, although very little in nature is other than deliberate instinct.

So, how could I possibly break out of this dreamy solitude to snowshoe with others, as this winter came and came? The thought of new territories lured me in . Mike Reed's hike on the Ashburnham

See page 4 Solitude for continuation



Solitude continued from page 3

section of the Midstate Trail and another around Fitzgerald Lake, both on days of strong sun and fresh snow, Carol Vanderheiden and Arline Ely, Noblevue snowshoes, again on perfect, bright, windless days --- but the shared appreciation for what we were seeing kept me coming back to be with others. Everyone was

But when the trail commands my greater attention, I remember that the journey is everything

quieter on the trail as we plowed through deep woods and entered a secret world made intimate by the snow. My companions halted

by the streambeds at the Pitcher Brook Falls at Noblevue to stand side by side for a while in silence to watch the water and stalactites of ice. Near Blueberry and Hungry Hills on the Midstate Trail, some stopped in the regiments of majestic pine forests to lift their heads, pause, and listen to the wind pass high overhead. Sometimes when the going is easy, I can get confused into thinking that the destination is the goal. But when the trail commands my greater attention, I remember that the journey is everything, and that despite our genetic imperative as social creatures to remain with the pack and finish the trail, I have to drop back a little into solitude, lift up my eyes, and succumb to the magic.

New members

December

Norah Lusignan
Dennis Ramstein

January

Henry & Carla Lafleur
Richard McMahon

Pioneer Valley Hiking Club Officers & Committees

Chip Pray, President
Marcia Kelly, Vice President
Cindy Hibert, Co Secretary
& Cindy Dolgoff, Co Secretary
Deb Gebo, Treasurer
Scott Cook, Wilderness Experiences Unlimited
Ray Tibbetts, Founder

Standing Committee Chairs

Hike Plan:	<i>Sue Forest & Ann Marie Visconti</i>
Backpacking Coordinator:	<i>Rick Briggs</i>
Trail Maintenance:	<i>Chip Pray & Rob Schechtman</i>
Web Page Editor:	<i>Ron Morrisette</i>
Non-Member E-Mail Coordinator:	<i>Rob Schechtman</i>
Club E-mail Coordinator:	<i>Mike Reed</i>
Quartermaster:	<i>Mike Carrier</i>
Bootprints Editors:	<i>Marie Babbitt and Mike Reed</i>

Bootprints is a publication of the Pioneer Valley Hiking Club. Send your story contributions to the editor at: marie_babbitt@hotmail.com



Important Notice

The following memberships are up for renewal:

March Renewals:

Alan Goodhind
John Klebes
Suzanne Carey
Kay Byington
Mike & Gail Carrier
Sean Dugre
Norma Casillas
Susan DeMaria
Michele Lloyd
Howard Eldridge
Denise Matthews
Peggy Sullivan
Kathleen Boyce
Eunice Marcelina
Richard Perreault
Lorraine Plasse
Dianne Provost
Linda Quesnel
William Shea
Kevin & Robin Withers
John Gorey

April Renewals:

Bryan Goodwin & Joan DelPlata
Mike Gross
Jane Glushik
Robert Morgan
Lynne Shapiro
Jacki Barden
Jacqueline Sheehan
Virginia Brown
Arline Ely
Lois Christenson
Lori McMahon
Ed Watson
Richard Barre
Donna Crabtree
Frank Grabinski
Darlene Harvey
Barbara Lebida
Diane Noyes
Margeret Pegoraro
Bea Robinson
Albert Shane
Susan McGurk
Mike Rattelle

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
c/o Deb Gebo
81 Roseland Terrace
Longmeadow, MA 01106

(Dues are \$25 for individuals, \$40 for families, and \$15 for students)

Looking for greeters

By Marie Babbitt

It was mentioned at our last club meeting that we would like to have greeters sit at the table to welcome new and old members to the monthly club meeting. We used to do this and it is nice opportunity to meet new people. The details were not worked out but if you would like to do this please don't be shy.

Quabbin Hike

By Marie Babbitt

I have not hiked a lot in Quabbin and Karen was offering a snowshoe there and I thought it would be nice to do. The day was on the cool side and there were six of us. I would like to mention that this was Al Roman's first hike since having his operation and Karen and I were a bit concerned since as we all know a snowshoe is a little bit more effort than a walk.

As fortune would have it, it snowed the night before and after passing the trail head well once anyways, we finally arrived to a fresh blanket of snow at the trailhead and beyond. As we all geared up with snowshoes and poles Karen was taking heavy items out of Al's pack so he had a lighter load to carry. I would say Al was in good form as he was his usual chatter bug.

A light snow began to fall and Karen led the way in the freshly fallen snow. The trees were holding the snow as only trees can. My thinking this year while out enjoying the snow on trees is it is like living in a cartoon. The snow is draped on the trees as I remember the snow shown on the cartoons I used to watch as a kid.

We stopped at a brook and listened to the babbling water and looked at the icicles hanging from the snow above the brook. As we continued down the trail we stopped now and again investigating the tracks we saw in the snow, mostly bunny tracks and to take in the view of the freshly fallen snow. It was beautiful.

We arrived at the reservoir laid out before us stretching right and left to the walls of trees surrounding it. So quiet and peaceful, two of the great gifts of winter hiking. We sat down to have a snack and rest. We could see the sun quite a ways away across the reservoir. None of us knew if this area was visible from the tower at the top of Quabbin.

I wondered out loud if it was safe to walk on the water and none of us knew. I always like a chance at walking on the water... Well only if Bert tells me it is safe. So we all stayed ashore.

We took our time heading back up the trail and stopped now and then to all catch up. I find it nice to go at a slower pace since I have a chance of looking around more and seeing things from the opposite direction can be fascinating, plus I just see things I often miss going in the opposite direction.

The sun broke through the clouds a couple of times and the bright blue sky was wonderful to see. We stopped in one sunny spot and I did a little sun dance.

We arrived back at our cars all in good health and grateful for the days hike.

Thank you Karen for leading the hike it was a wonderful day.

HAPPY 20TH
ANNIVERSARY PVHC



PVHC Merchandise

To show your club spirit we offer a small selection of t-shirts, patches, and decals with the club logo. This is a courtesy and goodwill gesture and not a fundraiser. Short sleeve performance shirts are available for \$20.00, \$22 for long sleeves. Patches are available for \$2.00 and a limited supply of car window decals for \$1.00. They can be purchased before and after club meetings.





UPCOMING ACTIVITIES & THE USUALS

- Mar 19 -Bear Hole Watershed
- Mar 26 to 27 . (VT) Stratton Pond Backpack / Lean-to
- April 2 -Hamilton Falls, Jamaica, VT
- April 16 -AT in MA series
- April 21 to 30 . Ireland
- May 7 -Mt. Washington State Forest
- May 26 . Rome - Amalfi Coast
- July 15 to 17 . Adirondack Camping Trip
- Aug 20 to 22 or to 27th - (NY) Taughanock Falls Park / Cabins, Finger Lakes area
- Sept 10 -20th Anniversary Club Party
- Sept 16 to 18 . Adirondack Johns Brook Lodge Backpacking Trip
- Every Monday . Morning hikes, various locations
- Every Wednesday . Evening walks
- Every Thursday . Afternoon hikes

IMPORTANT NOTICES

Next Club Meetings:

- April 5, 2011, 7pm at **FBC**
- May 3, 2011, 7pm at **FBC**

Note: The submission deadline for the next Bootprints is April 20, 2011.

FBC . First Baptist Church, West Springfield

***** Check out our web page at:**

www.pioneervalleyhikingclub.org.

Members may join the PVHC e-mail list by sending a message to:

pvhc.hikingclub@gmail.com

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