

# BOOTPRINTS

Volume 18, Issue 1

January 2014

## PVHC Holiday Party 2013

By Lori Tisdell

It was time again to celebrate the holiday season with hiking friends! We gathered at the Pueblo, our usual place. The early birds arrived to set up the dining room, decorate, and make sure everything was ready for the party. Lots of work went into the set-up: rolling tables, carrying chairs, and moving furniture. Many thanks to all the people who came early to help set up. The reward for coming early . scoring rock star parking!

As members started arriving, the party began, and within a short time it was in full swing. We all gathered around the appetizer tables enjoying the delicious food our club members made. I looked out over the crowd a few times and saw so many people smiling, laughing, and having a wonderful time. It's the perfect time to be a social butterfly and catch up with people you may not have seen in awhile. And of course to sample the appetizers.

Before we knew it, it was time for the dinner portion of the evening. The caterer did a great job once again and there was a nice variety, with something for everyone. And then, dessert! Goodness, we had to continue eating? Three whole tables of desserts awaited us. It was hard to do them all justice but most of us did try to taste several, even if only just a bite or two.

It's the perfect time to be a social butterfly



The awards followed with many members recognized for their contributions to the club during 2013. Chip Pray, Marcia Kelly, Shari Cox, and Cindy Hibert received awards for leading hikes, with honorable mentions going to Harry Allen, Carol Vanderheiden, Lori Tisdell, Ruth Preston, Cindy and Gary Dolgoff, and Paul Kozikowski. The highlight was the Volunteer of the Year award going to Marie Babbitt. Though Marie couldn't be present at the holiday party, some of us were present when club President, Chip Pray, presented the award to Marie at Ann Mundy's holiday party. Thank you Marie for all you do for the club. Your contributions are invaluable. Year after year, six times a year in fact, Marie ensures that Bootprints is issued with articles, photos, and information, with nary a complaint and few realizing the work involved. Many thanks, Marie!

The slide show followed; the club's yearly retrospective of hikes and events. As always we had many amazing, spectacular, and lovely photos, all taken by our members, to choose from for our viewing pleasure! We are lucky to have so many talented photographers in our club. A personal thanks for the warm reception and lovely comments. Also, there were a number of milestones this year, with club members completing their 46¢, 48¢, 67¢, and 100¢ lists. I'd like to take a moment to recognize John Klebes and his Triple Crown+ achievement of completing the Continental Divide Trail in 2013, after completing the Appalachian and Pacific Crest Trails in previous years. Way to go John!

And finally to end the evening . music and dancing! A number of us wore our dancing shoes, spending the remainder of the evening on the dance floor, with Gary Dolgoff, as always, leading the way!

A big thank you to Chip Pray, Brenda Doucette, and Marie Bienvenue, once again, for spearheading the holiday party. You all did a wonderful job planning and organizing the party, and it showed in how smoothly everything went. A great time was had by all!

## -Christmas in Vermont

By -Al Goodhind

Old Man Winter and the weatherman definitely played a role in this year's trip. With snow in the forecast, what started out with 20 on the list, ended up with 12 hearty souls for the weekend. The weekend began with a tour of the Bennington Museum. The museum houses impressive collections of Early American furniture and art, including a 1925 Martin-Wasp touring car, one of only 20 produced. Our docent guided us through several galleries, which were decorated with Christmas trees for their annual Festival of Trees fundraiser. Also located at the museum is the largest public collection of Grandma Moses paintings in the world.

Following the museum tour we met Cindy and Gary, and Brenda and Chip, at the Arlington Inn to begin the Inn Tour. This annual event allows guests to visit the unique lodgings dressed up for the holidays, while enjoying light refreshments. There were 15 properties on the tour this year. Tickets were good for the first two Saturdays. We were able to see seven of the eight inns I was hoping to visit. We worked our way up Rte. 7A toward Manchester.

Our first stop was the Arlington Inn. This classic, Greek Revival inn was built in 1847 as the private home of Martin Chester Deming. We met the innkeeper, Elizabeth Berger, who offered delicious hot chocolate and fresh-from-the-oven chocolate chip cookies. With the threat of snowy weather keeping the crowds down, we had the run of the inn to check out the guest rooms, living room, and dining rooms. It's a quaint New England inn with plenty of charm.

Next stop was The Ira Allen House. The home was built by none other than Ethan Allen and his brother Ira. Original beams and wide-plank floors highlight this early American gem. The innkeeper, Michael Garvey, told us the history of the *See Vermont on page 2 for continuation*

*Vermont continued from page 1*

home and provided great refreshments. When asked what it was like maintaining an inn he said, "something is breaking as we speak." I seems you also need a sense of humor to run an inn!

Wending our way up Rte. 7A we next came to The Inn at Ormsby Hill. Recent owners Yoshio and Diane Endo, were gracious hosts. Due to their full occupancy we were unable to see any of the guest rooms, although the dining room was beautiful, with terrific views. Plus, the refreshments were great. Crostini, dip, great cookies, and other treats were displayed on a large dining table. The holiday punch was delicious. Friends of the owners were selling their home-made hot fudge sauce. And we bought some - of course!

I shared my hot fudge sundae .



Just off Rte. 7A, down River Road, is the Wilburton Inn. Built in 1902 by Albert M. Gilbert, a Chicago industrialist, this vast gentlemen's estate sits on a knoll high above the road. Later the property was sold to James Wilbur, a self-made millionaire. Although the innkeepers were out of town, our group was serenaded by their daughter, a musician and songwriter. We got to tour all three floors of rooms. The dining room boasts spectacular views. Sculptures adorn the grounds of this palatial estate. A truly unique property.

The Equinox Resort is the premier inn of the area. We were met by Richard, the concierge, who showed us around the last time we visited. One could see why it was so expensive to stay here. It is a beautiful property. I wish I could talk about the refreshments...but there were none! What a disappointment. I reported this feedback to the Chamber of Commerce. Still, it is an elegant resort with a spa and many other amenities.

The Reluctant Panther, our next stop, brands itself as Southern Vermont's finest small luxury hotel. And they were right! The 20 rooms and suites are luxurious. We counted 12 pillows on the beds (really!). The rooms feature sophisticated designs, with antique furnishings, fireplaces, marble baths and original, museum quality artwork. Their restaurant offers contemporary American fare. I know; I have actually stayed here.

Frank and Julie Hanes moved up from the south looking for an inn to purchase. One night's stay at The Inn at Manchester convinced them that they had to buy it. The Inn and Carriage House are both on the National Register of historic places. Celebrating their 10th anniversary as owners, Frank gave us a brief tutorial of what it is like to own an inn. They serve a hearty traditional breakfast, cooked to order. Also on the property is a fully licensed pub. The inn was fully booked. That should tell you something.

After the tour we made a stop at Mother Myrick's Confectionery to use our coupons. They are known for their buttercrunch. They also have artisan chocolates and "awesome pastries."

Dinner was at Ye Olde Tavern in Manchester. This 1790 inn looked beautiful, dimly lit, with a lightly falling snow. There were twelve of us in the Hearth Room, at two tables, which became one after we did some arranging. The fireplace and wide-planked floors provided great ambience and history. The menu offered several excellent choices; something for everyone. I shared a NY steak and lobster mac and cheese entrée, so I could sample both. I shared my hot fudge sundae with the five of us at my table. By the time we left two hours later that lightly falling snow became a heavy windblown storm. Our motel was only a few miles away and everyone made it back safely.

Waking up to a winter wonderland, the group enjoyed a fine continental breakfast which included lemon poppyseed muffins and tangerines along with the normal breakfast foods. Then it was off to Hildene, the home of Robert Todd Lincoln, Abraham's son. Home to the Lincoln family for 70 years, Hildene sits on a promontory, with breathtaking views of the valley and surrounding mountains. Our docent gave us a splendid tour, with many anecdotes which added to the experience. Upstairs is one of only three Lincoln stovepipe hats known to exist. Also on the property is The Sunbeam, a 1903 Pullman Palace railroad car. It was purchased about two years ago after a million dollar restoration. Robert Todd was president of the Pullman Company. You should see the formal gardens in June; truly spectacular.

We had hoped to include a chocolate tasting at The Chocolatorium but everyone wanted to get home to shovel out. I did, however, stop to say hello to the owners, Judy and Nick Monte. They appreciated our interest and hoped to see us in the future. It is worth a visit if you are in East Arlington. Yes, I bought some chocolate.

It was a great trip. What a great way to bring in the holidays. I could do this every year. I love the historic properties. Hopefully I will see the ones I missed sometime. Thanks to those who braved the elements to enjoy this with me. Hope you have some great memories of the weekend.

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## Hiking 101: Cold Weather Hydration

Reprinted with permission from the American Hiking Society

The American Hiking Society constantly reminds hikers across the country to hydrate regularly during their hikes. Serious dehydration is dangerous, and even very mild dehydration can ruin the fun of a good hike. In the warmer months, remembering to hydrate is easy. The weather is warm; we sweat and water tastes good. But in the colder months, it's harder to remember to hydrate, and even when we do, we risk trying to sip from a water bottle that is slushy or even a block of ice.

Despite the fact that sweating isn't as obvious in the winter, hydration can be more important in the colder months than the warmer months. Cold, dry air strips the water from our bodies faster than warm humid air, necessitating the consumption of more water during a winter hike.

To keep water from freezing, try using an insulated water bottle, and filling it with warm water instead of cold. If you have a non-insulated water bottle, be sure it is tightly sealed and keep it on the inside of your jacket to prevent freezing.



## Connecticut Mohawk Trail Section Hike

By Paul Kozikowski

The start of the late November day at the Southwick Rite Aid parking lot was very windy and bitterly cold, as nine hikers gathered for a car-spotting hike of the section of the Connecticut Mohawk Trail in Cornwall. Thoughts of my grandmother came to mind, as she would always comment on how nice rosy-colored cheeks looked, and I felt all the hikers would have them by the time we ended our hike that day. However, as good fortune would have it, the winds were calm and the sun was shining brightly as we arrived at the start of the hike at the Cornwall Bridge. It was still a bit chilly but everyone warmed up nicely during the first seven-tenths of a mile, ascending 440 feet on Dark Entry Road. This caused hikers to either shed a top layer or to open their jackets before we entered into the woods. It's a wonder, with the few people that live on this road, how they manage winter travel, or how it is even maintained by the town.



The blue-blazed Connecticut Mohawk Trail dates back to the 1920s or 1930s, and was part of the Appalachian Trail until 1988 when the AT was moved to the western side of the Housatonic River. The trail is just over 23 miles in length, starting at a junction with the AT in Sharon, looping to the east and north through Cornwall, then turning west to reconnect with the AT in Canaan. The just less than 7-mile section hike set for this day is closed from October 22 through November 5, as it passes through property owned by the Dark Entry Forest Association.

Typical of New England, cobble-sized rocks fill the trail at the start. Being very observant of animal activity, as usual, Chip pointed out that a deer had been dragged down the trail. Progressing in elevation we crossed Bonney Brook, where the trail then hugged the flowing stream and became rockier, slowing the pace. As we neared the top of the ridge, exploring the remnants of an old dam made for interesting speculation as to why the dam had been breached and what purpose it had served in the past. Of special interest, this section of the Mohawk Trail passes near Connecticut's ghost town called Dudleytown. Now the town itself is speculated to have been nothing more than a few houses where cellar holes are the only remnants. According to legend, the residents of the area went crazy, which may have been caused by the relatively high lead content in the drinking water. Unfortunately, we were not able to visit the cellar holes because they are on private property and permission was denied to do so. One thing was sure, we all agreed that the location seemed to have been unusually quiet.

Ascending up to the ridge again, with the trees being bare of leaves, the ridge offered views of the adjacent rolling hills. Stone walls were plentiful, which always amazes me on the effort required to build them. There were a few locations which had unobstructed views into the valley and adjacent hill to the east, where sporadic houses could be observed. Finding an inviting arrangement of large boulders with a sunny exposure proved to be too tempting to pass up for lunch.

Initially the decline from the ridge was gradual, until we reached the fifth mile into the hike, at which point the descent became very steep, dropping 330 feet in less than a third of a mile. With the trail littered with a thick layer of oak leaves, this made for a cautious and very slow descent. Thankfully, with the trail having dried from the previous day's rain, the slips were kept to a minimum. Starting this section hike would be

some of the group found the temptation to try some spelunking

much safer from this eastern end, if conditions were worse. The

descent is more gradual after this, and some of the group found the temptation to try some spelunking at a huge rock fall too great to pass up. There is reported to be two other caves near this section of the trail, the locations of which are no longer well known; namely, Baldwin Cave, which was supposedly filled in by a previous owner, and Coltsfoot Mountain Ice Cave, which reportedly keeps its ice and snow cover until early summer.

The last half mile of the hike was a road walk through Cornwall Village, a quaint New England town with a spectacular view of the surrounding hills where we had just hiked.

This section hike ended at the beginning of the Cathedral Pines Nature Conservancy, which has been designated as a National Natural Landmark by the United States Department of the Interior. This property has New England's largest stand of old-growth white pine and hemlock trees. This will be a great place to start another section hike of this trail leading up to the summit of Mohawk Mountain, with its spectacular views to the south and north.

I'm truly delighted that all members of this hike enjoyed the day sharing laughs and stories as we walked on a trail that has so much charm and history. None of my pictures showed any strange ghostly images within them. I wonder if others that took pictures that day are void of ghostly images also.



## Book Review: Touch the Top of the World: A Blind Man's Journey to Climb Farther Than the Eye Can See, (first published in 2001) by Erik Weihenmayer

By Dick Forrest

Imagine being blind, and then imagine climbing Mt. Everest as a blind person. Well then, think of Erik Weihenmayer. Eric Weihenmayer, around the age of thirteen, lost his eyesight to a degenerative eye disorder called retinosis. In this disorder, two major layers of the retina split - it usually affects both eyes - and occurs in about 1% of the population, often occurring as a condition of aging.

Obviously, blindness did not stop Erik from living life to its fullest. Eric first got exposed to rock climbing in North Conway, New Hampshire. And from those beginnings, he went on to climb the Seven Summits. He certainly didn't do it alone - he was always part of a team of climbers. But that doesn't diminish any of his myriad accomplishments.

The first part of the memoir/book talks about the period when Erik lost his eyesight. Shortly after he lost his eyesight, Erik tragically lost his mother in an automobile accident. Somewhere around that time, Erik acquired a seeing-eye dog from the Fidelco Guide Dog Foundation of Hartford, Connecticut. Erik's first guide dog, Wizard, a German shepherd, became his constant companion. Erik earned a degree from Boston College, and then found a job teaching 5th grade English and Math at Phoenix Country Day in Phoenix, Arizona. And that's where he met his wife.

From the book jacket: Erik Weihenmayer is a world-class athlete; acrobatic skydiver, long distance biker and marathon runner, skier, mountaineer, ice climber and rock climber. Erik was the first blind man to summit McKinley, scale the infamous 3,300-foot rock wall of El Capitan, and then Argentina's Aconcagua. He was married to his longtime sweetheart at 13,000 feet on Kilimanjaro. He is on a course to reach all Seven Summits (reviewer's note: it was accomplished after this writing), the highest peak on each continent. He lives in Colorado with his wife and daughter.

The second part of the book speaks primarily about his mountaineering experiences on Mt. McKinley (Denali) in Alaska (the highest point in North America), Mt. Kilimanjaro (the highest point in Africa), El Capitan in Yosemite National Park, California, and Mt. Aconcagua in Argentina.

Erik writes beautifully. There's a lot of humor and positive, funny experiences in Erik's memoir. Erik has done more without sight than most people with sight will ever accomplish in their lifetimes.

### WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

<u>November</u>	<u>December</u>
Norah Lusignan	Craig Stevens
Dan O'Brien	Calla Harrington
Claire DesRochers	Linda Shapras
Sheila Coy	Michael Sullivan
Renny Merritt & Janet Taft	
Ed Laroche and Mimi	
Watroba/Laroche	

### Pioneer Valley Hiking Club Officers & Committees

Chip Pray, President  
 Marcia Kelly, Vice President  
 Lori Tisdell, Secretary  
 Carol Vanderheiden, Treasurer  
 Scott Cook, Wilderness Experiences  
 Ray Tibbetts, Founder

#### Standing Committee Chairs

**Hike Schedule:** Sue Forest & Chip Pray  
**Backpacking Coordinator:** Rick Briggs  
**Trail Maintenance:** Chip Pray & Rob Schechtman  
**Web Page Editor:** Dick Forrest  
**Non-Member Email Coordinator:** Rob Schechtman  
**Club E-mail Coordinator:** Chip Pray  
**Quartermaster:** Mike Carrier  
**Bootprints Editors:** Marie Babbitt & Mike Reed

*Bootprints is a publication of the Pioneer Valley Hiking Club. Send your story/event contributions to the editor at: [marie\\_babbitt@hotmail.com](mailto:marie_babbitt@hotmail.com).*

### Important Notice

The following memberships are up for renewal:

<u>January Renewals:</u>	<u>February Renewals:</u>
Diane Crowell	Amy Cohen
Kathy Damon	Steve Daly
Cindy & Gary Dolgoff	Misa Dargie
Carole DuPont	Richard Harrington
Michael Falcetti	Jeannie Jones
Tom Harrington	Pat Jorczak
Janet Howard	Daniel Koehne
Ted Jarowski	Paul Kozikowski
Bryan McGrath	Paul & Maxine Lessard
Diane Moriarty	J. Danusia Lokii-Braese
Barbara Pasternak	James Morris
Chip Pray	Ed Paquette &
Elaine Tryjankowski	Christopher Catania
Christa Winter	Paul Plasse
Ann Wood	Lewis Popper
Jenna Krzanik	Carol Vanderheiden

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) Morning Hike . various locations
- Every Tues (MA) Tuesday evening hikes with Carol
- Every Wed. (MA) Wednesday evening hikes with Marcia
- Every Thurs (MA) Morning hike
- Jan 11 (NH) Mt Monadnock
- Jan. 12 (MA) Quabbin Gate 28
- Jan. 18 (MA) Goshen
- Jan. 19 (CT) Tunis Trail . Barkhamsted
- Jan. 26 (MA) Quabbin
- Feb. 1 (MA) MassMoca/National Bridge State Park
- Feb. 8 (MA) Dunbar Brook
- Feb. 16 (CT) Bear Mtn/Lions Head
- Feb. 22 (CT) Bear Mtn (foot traction needed)
- Mar. 2 (MA) Ashfield Pancake Breakfast/DAR
- Mar. 8 (MA) Mt. Greylock/Maple lunch
- Mar. 15-17 (VT) Stratton Pond Fondue Backpack
- May 16-17 (NH) Galehead Backpack
- June 20-22 (NH) White Mt. Sampler



### IMPORTANT NOTICES

- ❑ Next Club Meetings:  
February 4, 2014, 7 pm at **FBC**  
March 4, 2014, 7 pm at **FBC**
- ❑ Deadline for submissions to the next BootPrints is February 20th, 2014

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

**\*\* Check out our web page 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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