



# Bootprints

The Bimonthly Newsletter of the  
Pioneer Valley Hiking Club

## Nature Helps Us Focus

by Sandy Sego

On days when you are finding yourself easily distracted, nature can help. A study by Berman, Jonides, and Kaplan (2008), found that going for a walk in a park or even looking at photos of nature for about ten minutes was able to help people focus their attention on complex tasks.

Attention is a complex thing. Psychologists have divided attention into two components. The first is involuntary attention. When a loud noise sounds, such as a fire alarm, it captures our attention. The second type of attention is voluntary or directed attention. When we study tracks trying to identify the animal that walked through the woods, we are using voluntary attention. Voluntary attention is under your control and you use some mental effort to manage it.

*See Nature continued on page 4*

## Hiking in ... Palm Springs?

by Cindy Dolgoff

Palm Springs, California, is known for The Rat Pack, its most famous mayor, Sonny Bono, and the place where Elvis and Priscilla Presley had their honeymoon. But – hiking?

Gary and I first went to Palm Springs in February, 2015. We were planning a last-minute, winter getaway and couldn't decide where to go. Palm Springs had the warmest temperature on the *USA Today* weather map. Sold. So we packed our bags, including our hiking boots, and flew out West.

This winter, Gary and I returned to Palm Springs for our third visit. In our three magical trips, we discovered a myriad of special trails in the area.

*See Palm Springs continued on page 5*

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## Featured Club Member:

### Jeanne Kaiser

by Jeanne Kaiser

*"...I never suspected that the club would become such an integral part of my life."*

*~ Jeanne Kaiser*

When I did my first hike with the Pioneer Valley Hiking Club in June, 2003, I never suspected that the club would become such an integral part of my life. I was then a casual hiker, but my husband had moved on to golf and my kids had moved on to not wanting to hang out with me, so I rarely had anyone to hike with. After getting lost a few times on Mt. Tom by myself, I decided I should find out if there was a hiking group in the area. So I googled "hiking and Pioneer Valley," and came up with the Pioneer Valley Hiking Club. I met the group at Rite Aid on Route 5 for my first hike and we went to Mt. Tom – the site of my aimless wandering. I was very impressed when we left for the hike even though it looked like it was about to begin pouring rain. We traversed the ridge to Whiting Peak in a gray fog. I thought it was fantastic.

*See Jeanne Kaiser on page 7*

Smurfy advice for the trail...

## Trail Awareness

by John "PaPa Smurf" Klebes

*"So grab your begging spoon and relax for our first installment of PaPa Smurf's advice for the trail.... Enjoy."*

*~ John "PaPa Smurf" Klebes*

Dick Forrest asked me if I could come up with a hiking advice column for *Bootprints*. So grab your begging spoon and relax for our first installment of PaPa Smurf's advice for the trail.... Enjoy.

Let's start off with some well-used trail navigation tricks that just might keep you from losing your way on trails. Let's call it, "Trail Awareness." Have you ever wondered did I miss a turn, take the wrong way, or accidentally detour off your planned way without knowing it? At some point we all have or will. But with good "trail awareness," you will quickly realize your misstep and be able to make quick work of getting back on track.

*See Trail Awareness on page 9*

## The Adventures of Peakbagger: Hiking in the Catskills

by Peakbagger

Several PVHC members are currently trying to complete the requirements for joining the Catskill 3500 Club. (The Catskill Mountains are a range of mountains in southern New York, approximately 100 to 150 miles north of New York City.) In order to become a member of the Catskill 3500 Club, you must climb 35 high peaks in the Catskills, most of which have an elevation between 3500 feet to 4000 feet, with the exception of Slide Mt. and Hunter Mt., which are just over 4000 feet in elevation. (Both Mts. Slide and Hunter are also included on the list.) You must also climb 4 more, designated peaks of the same 35 high peaks during the winter season (December 21 to March 21), taking the total to 39 high peaks, to become a member of that club.

The trails in the Catskills, like those in the New York Adirondacks, are well-marked with different, color-coded, circular metal blazes. And there are also signs at major trail junctions which tell you mileage distances to various landmarks/summits. To become a Catskill 35er, you must bushwhack (go off-trail), for about a third of the 39 required peaks in order to reach their off-trail summits. On those bushwhack summits, you will find canisters on trees that have notebooks and pencils/pens inside of them for registering your name and date climbed, so that others will be able to verify that you have actually summited a specific peak on the specific date that you say that you did, from the information which you submit to join the Catskill 3500 Club.

In doing online research for hiking in the Catskills, Peakbagger came across some words of wisdom, which he would like to share, by a person who has been hiking in the Catskills. His name is Stephen Wood, and his website is CTMQ.org. Stephen writes:

See *Peakbagger* on page 12

*"To become a Catskill 35er, you must bushwhack (go off-trail), for about a third of the 39 required peaks in order to reach their off-trail summits."*

*~ Peakbagger*



*"The researchers found that mood improved when students walked in nature, compared with walking downtown."  
~ Sandy Seago*

**Nature** continued from page 1

Attention restoration theory (ART) suggests voluntary attention is restored by interactions with nature. The theory suggests that environments rich with inherently fascinating stimuli, such as a sunrise, invoke involuntary attention modestly, allowing voluntary attention mechanisms a chance to replenish.

To test out their ideas, the researchers conducted a study using college students. The researchers measured the moods of the students and had the students complete a task designed to measure voluntary attention – they were given sequences of digits which the students had to repeat backwards in order. To create even more mental fatigue, students were then given a memory test.

Next, students were randomly assigned to take a walk in an arboretum or in a downtown area. The students were given instructions on the path to take in either place, making the walks a little under three miles.

After the walks, students completed the assessment of their moods and the measure of voluntary attention (repeating the list of digits backwards, in order). A week later, the students returned to the lab and did the whole thing again, walking in the other location.

The researchers found that mood improved when students walked in nature, compared with walking downtown. They also found that students did reliably better on the test of voluntary attention after walking in nature, but not after walking downtown.

In a second experiment, the same researchers tested the idea of nature restoring our voluntary attention by looking at photos of nature. They recruited another group of college students and measured their moods. They again did the test of voluntary attention, repeating a list of digits backwards. They also completed another attention task, where they had to respond to the direction of an arrow presented on a computer screen. After this, the students were shown photos of nature or an urban area for about ten minutes. After viewing the photos, they did all the tests a second time.

See *Nature* continued on page 5

**Nature** continued from page 4

Again, researchers found that people did better on the voluntary attention task when they had viewed photos of nature, but not when they saw photos of an urban environment. While looking at the photos did not improve mood, students did rate the photos of nature as more refreshing.

These experiments demonstrate the restorative value of nature to improve cognitive functioning. There are other interventions that can positively affect voluntary attention, such as raising blood sugar levels (perhaps by eating ice cream), sleep, and meditation. This study suggests another free and relatively quick way for us to re-focus: experience nature!

-- Sandy Segó

**Palm Springs** continued from page 1

The closest trailheads were within walking distance from our hotel. They are the North and South Lykken Trails and the Palm Springs Desert Museum Trail. Each of these trails begins from the road, proceeding steeply up a desert mountain. You don't have to hike far before you can gaze out at the city for a fine aerial view.

A short drive down the main thoroughfare leads to the Indian Canyons, located on the Agua Caliente Indian Reservation. This park included several hikes over varied terrain. Our favorite was the Murray Canyon Trail. To hike the trail, it was necessary to crisscross a stream multiple times. There was a rare rainstorm the night before and the stream had swelled, increasing the challenge of crossing. The trail passes through high canyon country and affords views of soaring cliffs.

No visit to this area would be complete without a trip to the Joshua Tree National Park, located about an hour drive from Palm Springs. Our experience was that this park was a lesser-visited national park. It was not crowded and we did not encounter the road traffic that we've seen at other national parks. Our favorite hikes were Ryan Mountain, which offered views of the extensive surrounding valleys, and Lost Horse Mine Loop, a long desert trail over cliffs and ravines with breath-taking desert mountain vistas.

See *Palm Springs* continued on page 6

*"These experiments demonstrate the restorative value of nature to improve cognitive functioning."*

~ Sandy Segó

*"No visit to this area would be complete without a trip to the Joshua Tree National Park, located about an hour drive from Palm Springs."*

~ Cindy Dolgoff



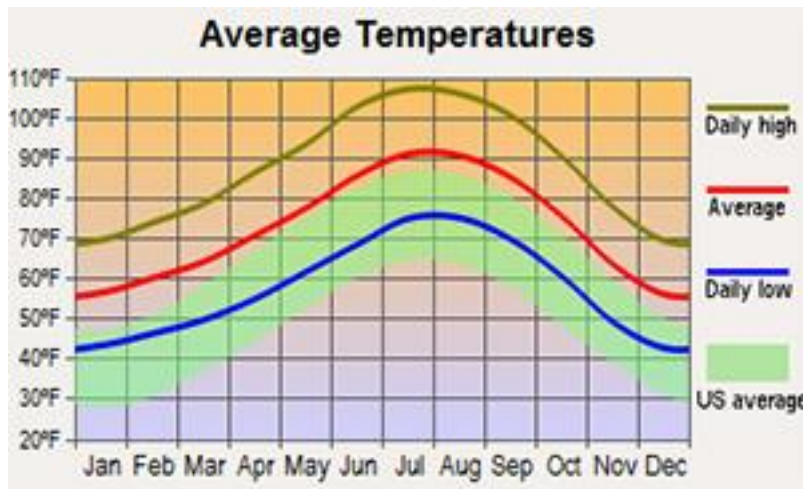
**Palm Springs** continued from page 6

The Pacific Crest Trail loops through the Coachella Valley. We hiked on two separate sections of that trail. One of the hikes was along the San Jacinto Mountain ridgeline. The car ride to this trailhead, the Pines to Palms Highway, is windy and scenic. We finished our day with a side trip to nearby Idyllwild, a touristy mountain town. Our second PCT hike was in the Whitewater River Canyon Preserves. This was possibly our favorite hike. Again, it was necessary to repeatedly crisscross a mountain stream. After that, we climbed a steep trail that provided views of the surrounding mountains and river valleys.

*"140 Great Hikes in and Near Palm Springs," by Philip Ferranti and Hank Koenig...proved to be an excellent guide to the area's trails."  
~ Cindy Dolgoff*

A local recommended a book to us. It is called "140 Great Hikes in and Near Palm Springs," by Philip Ferranti and Hank Koenig. It proved to be an excellent guide to the area's trails.

Besides hiking, there are many other activities in Palm Springs – museums, golf, shopping, dining, bicycling and more. The weather in the winter is delightful. We encountered daytime temperatures of 60s and 70s, with cooler weather in the evening. Annual rainfall is typically five inches. Summer temperatures can reach 120 degrees and hiking is not recommended during the May-October time frame.



Average Temperatures for Palm Springs, California

If you are looking for a different hiking experience, I would heartily recommend visiting Palm Springs, California.

-- Cindy Dolgoff

**Jeanne Kaiser** continued from page 2

Even so, my integration of the club into my life was fairly slow. Every six weeks or so, I would do one of the six-mile moderate hikes, and I always disappeared for the winter. But in 2009, my participation took a sharp turn upwards when Rob Schechtman and Lisa Frigo led a backpack to Greenleaf Hut, and said beginners were welcome. I thought “they asked for it,” and took them up on the offer. We ended up hiking to the top of Mt. Lafayette in a hail storm. I couldn’t see a thing at the top. That was my first 4,000 foot mountain in the White Mountains. In October, 2016, I hiked my 35<sup>th</sup>.



Along the way, I have done a lot of things I always wanted to do, but thought were out of my reach. For instance, I also had wanted to section hike the Appalachian Trail in Massachusetts, but didn’t think I could figure out the logistics. Now, I’ve section hiked the AT in Massachusetts *and* Connecticut – and learned to figure out the logistics through co-leading. I had a fantasy of walking Manhattan from one end to another, but didn’t think I could get anyone to go with me. Turns out, I got fifteen other people to come along on that adventure. I’ve also done some things I never particularly wanted to do: e.g., hiking in winter (turns out I like that); hiking the Knife’s Edge on Mt. Katahdin (did not like that, at all).

See *Jeanne Kaiser* continued on page 8

*“Along the way, I have done a lot of things I always wanted to do, but thought were out of my reach.”*

*~ Jeanne Kaiser*



**Jeanne Kaiser** continued from page 7



*"In short, the hiking adventures have been wonderful and life-changing, and I've seen beautiful sights I could never see without walking there on my own two feet."*  
 ~ Jeanne Kaiser

In short, the hiking adventures have been wonderful and life-changing, and I've seen beautiful sights I could never see without walking there on my own two feet. But nothing about the hiking compares to the people I've met and the relationships I've formed while on those hikes. I've concluded the surest way to bond with people is to take very long car rides with them, and then hike up a mountain in weather, fair and foul, and deal with every rock, root, confusing trail, false summit, ache and pain, and glorious view together. The surpassing beauty I've seen is wonderful, but the kicker is that I've seen those sights with wonderful people, some of whom are now among my closest friends. And I am always heartened by the generosity and kindness of my hiking mentors who have helped me overcome my fears and equipment failures and laughed me through some trying moments on the trail.

When I joined the hiking club in 2003, hiking was an occasional hobby, now it is a passion. The hiking club has changed my life, and, in every way, for the positive.

-- Jeanne Kaiser





**Trail Awareness** *continued from page 2*

The key to trail awareness is to always have a mental picture of your last definite landmark, your progress from that location, and where you expect to be next. The second critical part is knowing how fast you hike and observing if you are making the progress you expect to make.

Let's start with hiking speed. There are formulas and methods published by many organizations, but they all boil down to figuring out your average pace on a mostly flat, easy trail and adjusting that average for changes in elevation, terrain difficulty, weather conditions, fatigue, pack weight, and stops and breaks. Take a nice walk around your neighborhood and figure out how long it takes you to hike a mile. For example, I hike about 3 miles an hour so a mile is about 20 minutes. For a paved road, I might be quicker; for a bumpy trail, slower. When I climb in elevation, it slows me down and I might take 30 minutes for that same mile. Hiking a really steep trail in the White Mountains? Maybe double that again for 1 hour per mile. So for me a mile can take anywhere from 20 minutes to 60 minutes, depending on terrain and elevation gain/loss.

One of the best trail awareness skills to perfect is the ability to guesstimate how fast you hike as the conditions change. Try it. Next time you come to a sign that says it's 1.20 miles to a trail junction or summit, guess how long it will take you to hike it and then compare it to your actual time. For me, I would guess about 25 minutes, but if I found that I was hiking slower, stopping for pictures, or gaining altitude, then as I hike I might adjust the estimate upward to say 45 minutes. When I get to the junction, I look to see how close I am to the time estimate.

When I first started estimating my hiking time, I put a cheap watch on a carabiner clipped to my pack's shoulder strap so I could check my progress. Over time, you get better and better at estimating how long "YOU" take to hike under varying conditions.

Wearing a backpack with a few days of food, I add 50%; off-trail in hard terrain, it drops to ½ mile an hour. A group of 2-3 hikers will move faster than a large group, so adjust your estimate. Snowshoe in  
See *Trail Awareness continued on page 10*



PaPa Smurf

*"One of the best trail awareness skills to perfect is the ability to guesstimate how fast you hike as the conditions change."*

*~ PaPa Smurf*



*"You should always have a good idea of your last definite landmark."*

*~ PaPa Smurf*

**Trail Awareness** continued from page 9

deep snow is similar to off-trail, and breaking trail in snow even slower. Hiking in the rain is faster for me because I don't take breaks, but others might find you hike slower because you are more careful on the slippery rocks. Toward the end of the day I always find my estimates a little low because I get tired.

The ability to estimating your hiking speed under various conditions will not only help you gauge your progress, but better plan your hikes, and let you know when you might have missed a turn.

Now let's combine your new skills in hiking speed estimation with a mental picture of your last definite landmark, your progress from that location, and where you expect to be next. You should always have a good idea of your last definite landmark. This could be the trailhead, a trail junction, summit, river crossing, geographic feature, scenic spot, etc. Anything that you are sure you can correctly place yourself on a map. When you leave this spot you should pick where you need to make your next decision or can confirm a new landmark. What is the next trail junction, summit, scenic spot, river crossing, etc. Then estimate the time it will take to hike to this spot. The amount of time that passes as you hike between these two landmarks will help judge your progress.

If you have not come to the next landmark within your estimated hiking time, don't panic. It's easy to be a little off in the estimate, but you should start to be more observant to the trail knowing you should be close to the next landmark, and you can use this knowledge to become aware that you may not be where you thought you should be long before you have invested too much time on an unplanned side adventure.

Keep in mind the time estimate works the other direction, as well. Did you come to an unmarked trail junction or stream crossing much sooner than you thought? It's unlikely the river or trail has moved, so perhaps you need to make a more careful assessment if this is the real trail junction, river crossing or landmark you think it is. If it doesn't  
See *Trail Awareness* continued on page 11



**Trail Awareness** continued from page 10

match your mental trail awareness picture, then question and double check your progress.

For example: Starting from a known trail junction, you look at a map and it's 2 miles to a river crossing . Make note of the time, estimate your hiking speed to the river in 2 miles, and head out. As you approach your estimated time see if you are right? If you are hiking well past your expected time, you may have gotten off on the wrong trail, and you can always hike backward to your last known landmark and figure out where you might have gotten off track. This goes the same for arriving at a river crossing much too early. This could be a different river crossing that is too small for the scale of your map, or perhaps, you got off on a wrong side trail and you are not where you thought you should be. Whenever your estimated time and the landmarks vary by a large amount, you should take special efforts to be sure you are where you planned to be.

Here's another trick that will make this even easier. With the advances in digital cameras and cell phones, one of the best ways to easily keep track of landmarks and times is to take a quick picture of trail junction signs, summits, and trail landmarks and features as you hike. It's not only a great way to capture memories of your hike, but it acts as a time stamp of when you were at that landmark. Wondering if you missed the trail junction? Look at the picture of the last trail sign that might even say how many miles away the next junction is and at the time stamp of when you took the picture. You now have all you need to estimate when you should reach that next trail junction.

Next time you are hiking give it a try. At each trail junction or feature, estimate how long it will take to get to the next landmark and see if you are right. The more you do this, the better you will get and the more trail aware you will be.

~ PaPa Smurf

{Hope you liked this first installment of the PaPa Smurf Column. If you have a suggestion for future topics or a hike related question you would like covered in the column, send a note to [john.klebes@gmail.com](mailto:john.klebes@gmail.com)}

*"...one of the best ways to easily keep track of landmarks and times is to take a quick picture of trail junction signs, summits, and trail landmarks and features as you hike."*

*~ PaPa Smurf*



*"And just to be clear – bushwhacking up mountains is kind of dumb..."*  
 ~ Stephen Wood

**Peakbagger** continued from page 3

And just to be clear – bushwhacking up mountains is kind of dumb...Don't do it unless you a) really know what you're doing, b) have good navigational skills, c) have a very clear plan and someone with whom you've left those plans, and d) confidence.

This is sensible advice. As far as bushwhacking being "kind of dumb," there must be a good reason that the Catskill 3500 Club wants you to bushwhack up so many peaks. Presumably, it is to improve your personal navigation skills. As far as when you should bushwhack goes, Peakbagger prefers to bushwhack after the deciduous leaves have fallen in the fall and before the new leaves have sprouted on the trees in the spring. Why? When the leaves are down, he can see the general direction of the peaks and their summits, which he's seeking, the slope of the terrain, and the overall lay of the land better. He also doesn't have to contend with leaves on branches hitting him in the face, pricklers and stinging nettles, as well as a variety of flying insects.

Stephen Wood has another interesting take on hiking in the Catskills:

...the climb up follows the traditional Catskill formula:

Moderate uphill

Steep uphill

Rocky uphill

Cliffs

Moderate uphill

Steep uphill

Rocky uphill

Cliffs

Repeat 10 times or so.

See Peakbagger continued on page 13



**Peakbagger** continued from page 12

These cliff bands are present on most of the mountains in the Cats, when you are hiking up a trail, some trails are nice and try to skirt them. Others like to go straight up them sometimes.

Stephen Wood's words above, describing the "traditional Catskill formula," accurately and humorously tell you generally what it's like to hike in the Cats. Another detail of Catskill hiking that Peakbagger would like you to know about is the abundance of small rocks/stones everywhere on the trails, which you tend to trip over and/or kick, and often slightly turn your ankles on. In winter, when snow and ice are on the ground, you don't have to contend with these small stones as much.

Oh, what fun it is hike in the Cats! And, yes, it's definitely a challenge.

-- Peakbagger

*"Oh, what fun it is  
hike in the Cats!  
And, yes, it's definitely  
a challenge."*

*~ Peakbagger*

## Important Membership Renewal Notices

The following memberships are up for renewal:

### March Renewals

Meg Allard  
Debbie Bombard & Cheryl Stevens  
Stephanie & Santiago Bustos  
Kay Byington  
Patty Carmody  
Mike & Gail Carrier  
Norma Casillas  
Maureen Davis  
Howard Eldridge  
Alan Goodhind  
Bill Grygiel  
John Klebes  
Keli Kuklewicz  
Pete Ledoux  
Donna Mages  
Nancy Mangari  
Edmund Marrone  
Richard Perreault  
Lorraine Plasse  
Linda Quesnel  
Susan Wills  
Kevin & Robin Withers  
Maryann Zak

### April Renewals

Jacki Barden  
Tracy Benoit  
Luci Bolduc  
Virginia Brown  
Dianne Carey  
Thomas Eaton & Donna Crabtree  
Robin M. Fasoli  
Jane Glushik  
Bryan Goodwin & Joan DelPlato  
Thomas E. Hanson  
Dan Harriington  
Laura Hinton  
Eunice Jones  
Susan, Kevin & Brenda McGurk  
Lori McMahon  
Robert Morgan  
Bea Robinson  
Albert Shane  
Lynne Shapiro  
Jacqueline Sheehan  
Ed Watson  
Scott Williams  
Susan Young  
Kathy Zeiben

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)

### Pioneer Valley Hiking Club Officers

Chip Pray, President  
Lori Tisdell, Vice President  
Paul Kozikowski, Treasurer  
Gina Geck, Secretary  
Ray Tibbetts, Founder

### Standing Committee Chairs

Hike Schedule: Jeanne Kaiser & Chip Pray  
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: Chip Pray  
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

#### January

J. Danusia Lokii-Braese  
Barnard M. Marshall, PhD  
Heather Oliphant

#### February

Tonya Binga  
Peter Haas



**UPCOMING EVENTS AND THE USUALS**

- Every Mon. (MA) Mornings w/ Chip
- Every Thurs. (MA) Mornings w/ Harry
- Every Thurs. (MA) Ashley Reservoir evenings w/ Erin
- Mar. 12 (MA) Wendell State Forest
- Mar. 18 (CT) People's State Forest
- Mar. 25 (MA) Notch area
- Apr. 1 (MA) Alander/Bash Bish Falls
- Apr. 9 (MA) Leverett Peace Pagoda/Rattlesnake Gutter
- Apr. 15 (CT) Sec. 14 of the CT NET
- Apr. 23 (NH) Mt. Monadnock
- Apr. 29 (MA) Trail Maintenance on Section 2 of the MA NET
- May 6 (CT) AT and Mohawk Trail

# IMPORTANT NOTICES

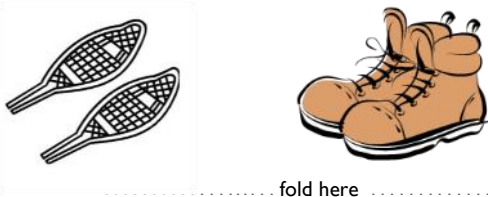
Next Club Meetings:  
 March 7, 2017, 7 pm at **FBC**  
 April 4, 2017, 7 pm at **FBC**

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

Deadline for submissions to the next *Footprints* is April 20, 2017

**\*\* 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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