



Bootprints

The Bimonthly Newsletter of the
Pioneer Valley Hiking Club

President's Corner:

An Abundance of Multiday Trips

by President Lori Tisdell

I was looking at the PVHC Teamup calendar the other day. It's nice to see so many multiday trips on the calendar this year. One of the biggest differences from years past is more club members leading these trips. We still have the annual ones on the schedule, and many thanks, but there are lots of new ones too.

Not many months seem to go by without a multiday trip planned out by a PVHC member. So far this year we have had a Merck Forest Fondue Backpack in March led by Rick and Karen. In April Jim Brown organized a 52 WAV weekend. May saw the usual May White Mt. Hut Trip led by Karen. In June was the ever-popular White Mt Sampler led by Al. In July Dick and Sue Forrest led the ADK Heart Lake trip.

August saw a new organizer – Susan Young. Susan organized a 4-day trip to her family cottage on Lake Winnepesaukee. Jim Brown has another 52 WAV trip next week. September has a 5-day trip to Acadia National Park led by Erin and me, a week-long trip to Lily Bay on Moosehead Lake led by Karen followed by JBL/ADK led by Karen, as well. October will see the last of the multiday trips...maybe. Jim Brown has organized another Bike Trip to New York. And Cheryl and Debbie are leading 5 days on Cape Cod.

I am so pleased to see more club members organizing these trips. There is something special about spending days with other members doing what we all love so much and what has brought us together as a group. The bonding experience is different than that which you have on day hikes.

What I'm especially excited about is the different kinds of trips that have been organized. And that many of them have different levels of ability built
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“We have lots of members who love to hike, but not backpack or even car camp.”

~ President Lori Tisdell

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into them. Often many of the multiday trips required backpacking and overnighiting in tents, shelter, or cabins. Not that there’s anything wrong with that! I have enjoyed a number of these trips myself over the years. But it’s also really wonderful to see trips in which all members can participate.

We have lots of members who love to hike, but not backpack or even car camp. Members who want a bit more luxury – you know, like a hot shower and a soft bed at the end of the day. I know I appreciate that more and more as I get older. I like the option of choosing to do something easier or something more moderate or difficult. As it seems a good number of other members do too, judging from how many have signed up for some of these trips!

Many thanks to all the PVHC members who have organized multiday trips this year. You are all adding so much to our club and are giving other members new opportunities and experiences...and fun time together!

--President Lori Tisdell

Editor's Note: The next three *Bootprints* contributors have all hiked Mt. Van Hoevenberg in the New York Adirondack Mountains. The first article, **Con**, (is not a fan of the sustainable trail on Mt. Van Hoevenberg) is written by Sandy Segó; the second article, **Pro**, (is in favor of sustainable trails in general) is written by Rick Giguere; and the last article in this set of articles, **Compare & Contrast**, is written by Jeanne Kaiser. Jeanne compares a sustainable trail, Mt. Van Hoevenberg, to a traditional trail, Mt. Jo.

Con:

The Staircase to Mt. Van Hoevenberg

by Sandy Segó

In the Adirondacks are home to many amazing mountains and trails. One of the newest is a sustainable trail that was created for Mt. Van Hoevenberg. The New York Department of Environmental Conservation began work on the trail in 2018 and utilized a different approach to building trails than most of us are used to seeing in more remote areas.

While most trails often run straight up the mountain, they become water channels for rain, and suffer a great deal of erosion. This often makes them expensive and difficult to maintain. This new sustainable trail is a narrow contour trail that cuts into the mountainside based on a slow, steady gradient. The trail has a smooth trail surface of compacted mineral soils, where roots and rocks are removed. Contour trails are designed for heavy use and to prevent erosion. The trail is built with lots of rock and should be drier and less steep than most trails in the area. It goes up at about a 10% grade, which allows the trail to shed water. When the grade is over 15%, there is more risk of erosion due to the water runoff. When the trail becomes steeper, there are staircases using large rocks filled with mineral soils on top of a crushed rock base or stone slabs. The trail is designed for hikers to be single file. See *Staircase to Mt. Van Hoevenberg* continued on page 4

"One of the newest is a sustainable trail that was created for Mt. Van Hoevenberg."

~ Sandy Segó

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“But it was not the trail for me.”

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Staircase to Mt. Van Hoevenberg *continued from page 3*

Undoubtedly, it took several years and plenty of hard labor to dig out rocks from the surrounding area to use in this trail. There must have been a lot of disruption to the local area to harvest the rock and dig out the trail to place the rocks. Many trees were cut to create this trail, so there were significant changes to the landscape when the trail was being developed.

I fully support the need for sustainable efforts in hiking and conservation. I am appalled at the lack of maintenance on so many trails, the lack of water bars, the erosion of the trail, the way the trail drops inches or feet below the surrounding land. While many areas make sure the blazes are visible and trim back some bushes, there is often little or nothing done to the land itself to ensure that the trail stays in good condition.

So, what did I think of the new sustainable trail at Mt. Van Hoevenberg? I did not like it. My impression was that the trail was over-engineered and felt like a man-made sidewalk up the mountain. The trail begins at the Mount Van Hoevenberg Winter Olympic Sports Complex. You literally walk up a staircase. You go past the old bobsled track, and climb steps created by endless rocks placed by people to create the trail. I did not feel that I was out in the wilderness; instead, I felt that I was walking on a sidewalk in a park. While the view at the top of the mountain was wonderful, I did not feel that I was hiking.

I suspect that the hard surface of the trail would be hard for people with foot, ankle, or knee issues. The design may make the trail more accessible for people who don't hike much, and if it gets more people into hiking, that can be a good thing. I appreciate that this trail will require less maintenance, although I suspect it took more work to create than many older, non-sustainable trails. But it was not the trail for me. If you are looking for a sense of being away from civilization, this trail will not give it to you. It is clearly an artificial creation. It is an impressive feat, but not one I could enjoy.

I was very disappointed to find that I disliked the trail so much. I do value the idea of sustainable trails and support conservation efforts. But I did not enjoy the artificial staircase to Mt. Van Hoevenberg.

--Sandy Segó

Pro:**The Case for Sustainable Trails**

by Rick Giguere

Before any discussion of the pros or cons of sustainable trails can take place, one needs to know exactly what a sustainable trail is. A sustainable trail could be described as one where the design and construction minimizes the impact on the natural surroundings, avoids wet or sensitive areas, follows the natural contours of the land, and prevents soil erosion and natural water runoff. Everyone agrees that trails need maintenance, even simple trails on flat terrain with little variability in the weather. It's been said that nature abhors a vacuum. Where trails are not used, they get overrun by grasses, shrubs, and eventually disappear. Even when they are used there is still the need to maintain them by trimming overgrowth, removing fallen trees and the like. The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (MDCR) describes it this way. "The core elements of a sustainable trail are that it:

- Protects the environment,
- Meets user needs and expectations,
- Requires little maintenance" ⁽¹⁾

So what makes a trail sustainable? It really gets down to its construction.

Rocks are a key component in constructing a sustainable trail for a number of reasons. Erosion of soil from rainfall is a constant concern in trail maintenance, particularly when trails are in the direction of the slope. The use of rocks can mitigate the erosive impact of water. The use of rocks in areas that are prone to being wet, helps protect the

See Sustainable Trails continued on page 6

"...one needs to know exactly what a sustainable trail is."

~ Rick Giguere

"The core elements of a sustainable trail are..."

~ Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, quoted by Rick Giguere



"There are specific criteria regarding sustainable contour trails as noted by the MDCR, which include:"

~ Rick Giguere

"Sustainable trails come in all shapes and sizes and there are varying degrees of sustainability."

~ Rick Giguere

Sustainable Trails *continued from page 5*

trail, keeping the user from going off trail to avoid the muck. Rocks are an excellent and more permanent means to channel water off the trail, minimizing trail erosion. Fortunately, there is no shortage of rocks here in New England and the use of them on trails is beneficial to the environment and provides a sense of permanence. The big benefit here is reduced maintenance time and energy, not to mention cost.

Trails that follow the contour of the hill or perpendicular to the slope are a more sustainable approach by allowing the water to flow off downhill instead of channeling down those trails that follow the direction of the slope, or with flat trails that would tend to collect water. There are specific criteria regarding sustainable contour trails as noted by the MDCR, which include:

- **Outslope:** the trail tread should be sloped away from the hillside by 5% to allow for drainage downslope instead of down the trail (channeling).
- **Grade Reversals:** Reversing the grade often which reduces water from collecting and running down the trail.
- **Half rule:** A trails grade should not be any greater than half the grade of the hillside that it contours. Allows water to flow across the trail and continue down the slope.
- **10 % average grade and maximum sustainable grade** both deal with gradients taking into consideration other factors, such as soil, rainfall, difficulty levels and number of users. ²

Sustainable trails come in all shapes and sizes and there are varying degrees of sustainability. There are those that may prefer a more natural or primitive approach to hiking with less human influence. There are plenty of trails that fall into that category, but they tend to be trails that don't require much in the way of maintenance. Some level of sustainable trail becomes important where erosion is a real concern, the natural habitat is potentially affected and where the safety of See *Sustainable Trails continued on page 7*

Sustainable Trails *continued from page 6*

the hiker is a risk. The initial effort to establish a sustainable trail is higher, but in the longer term, generations will benefit.

In summary, sustainable trails are good for the environment by lessening the impact to sensitive areas, good for the trail by lessening the degree of maintenance required and reducing erosion of trails, and good for the hiker enjoying a safer hiking environment.

1 & 2, The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation web site

--Rick Giguere

“In summary, sustainable trails are good for the environment...good for the trail...and good for the hiker...”

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“The ranger told us it was constructed to avoid the effects of erosion and overuse on the trails in the region.”

~ Jeanne Kaiser

“This new trail is nothing like any trail I have ever hiked in the Adirondacks.”

~ Jeanne Kaiser

Compare & Contrast:

The Sustainable vs. the Traditional Trail

by Jeanne Kaiser

On the recent PVHC camping trip to Heart Lake in the Adirondacks, we had the opportunity to find out what a “sustainable” trail looks like. There is a newly built sustainable trail to the top of Mt. Van Hoevenberg near Lake Placid. This trail came highly recommended by the staff at the High Peaks information center in the campground. The ranger told us it was constructed to avoid the effects of erosion and overuse on the trails in the region. Both these factors are big concerns. The trails are subject to erosion because they were constructed with little concern about water runoff or frequent use. Instead, the trail makers tended to follow the most direct route up the mountain. As the number of hikers has increased exponentially over recent years, so has the damage to the trails.

A number of us were intrigued to find out what a sustainable trail was all about. I especially wanted to see it because I knew that the trails in the Adirondack area were in rough shape after weeks of torrential rain. So, on Saturday morning, eight of us headed off to Lake Placid to try out the trail. Our hike elicited strong reactions on both the pro and con side of the new trail. I think I was the only one of us who gave it a mixed review.

Why the strong reactions? This new trail is nothing like any trail I have ever hiked in the Adirondacks. It is very engineered—in fact, my word for it was over-engineered. Much of the trail consists of stone steps up the mountain. The sides of the trail were lined with stones to prevent water run-off. In between the sets of stairs were a few more natural and flatter sections, but even those felt more like a walk in a public park than an Adirondack hiking trail.

See Sustainable vs. Traditional continued on page 9

Sustainable vs. Traditional *continued from page 8*

The things the naysayers hated about the trail were the same things that its proponents liked. While hiking, it was easy to focus more on the effort and expertise it took to make the trail, rather than the natural environment. There was never any doubt about where to find the next blaze, or how to navigate up a steep section, or where to put your feet. As long as you could walk uphill for two miles, this hike was easy to complete. And despite the weeks of rain, we all emerged from the hike without a bit of mud on our boots. There was only one aspect of the hike we all agreed on – the view at the top was magnificent.

Later in the day, four of us went over to Mt. Jo, a short hike that leaves right from the campground. Reportedly, this trail is in the process of being made more sustainable. But it certainly hasn't happened yet. Instead, there were all the things we have come to know and both love and hate about hiking in places like the Adirondacks. There was mud and plenty of it. There were rock slabs, and roots and some tricky sections, especially on the way down. There were even ladders. Again, the hike culminated in a magnificent view.

My feelings about the contrast? At this point in my hiking life, I admit I enjoyed the climb up Mt. Jo more than the climb up Mt. Van Hoevenberg. I like both the physical and mental challenge of working my way up and down a mountain. However, I can imagine a day when I will be very grateful for the sure footing that would allow me to continue to see the views I love. I also can see how the sustainable trail could be a gateway drug to hiking for families and new hikers.

But most of all, I applaud the movement towards sustainability. This hot and tempestuous summer is a constant reminder that we all are going to have to make some changes to help sustain the planet. That means everything can't always be exactly the way we want it. I am not sure a trail has to be quite as engineered as the Mt. Van Hoevenberg trail to be sustainable. I look forward to trying out and supporting new ones as they are developed.

--Jeanne Kaiser

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Smurfy advice for the trail...

Cloudy with a Chance of Poop

by John "PaPa Smurf" Klebes

"...I am surprised that in all this time I never covered going to the bathroom in the woods."

~ PaPa Smurf

Looking back over the past six and a half years of Smurfy advice columns for something I have not covered, I am surprised that in all this time I never covered going to the bathroom in the woods. Thinking about the topic I smile a little at the first time our club had a clinic on the topic. Scott Cook, from Wilderness Experiences Unlimited, put up his first slide showing a roll of duct tape and something about how it so useful for "almost" everything, except as a substitute for toilet paper.

If you have been hiking with our club for any length of time I'm sure you are experienced in peeing in the woods. But most day hikers go way out of their comfort zone to avoid a poop in the woods. And for backpackers it's almost a necessity. Sometimes nature calls. And you can't always wait for the next outhouse, privy, or bathroom.

Trail Awareness

Because most people avoid having to do their business in the woods until the last minute it can be the cause of great anxiety. A quick drop of your pack, grab some toilet paper, and run into the woods till you are far enough from the trail that no one can see you. Sounds so simple but in my experience it's the number one likely cause of getting lost. We are so focused at the urgency of the moment that we don't pay attention.

After cleaning up, both you and the spot you pooped in, you need to get back to the trail. But in your hurry you don't remember which way that was. To make matters worse you left all your gear at the trail and don't even have an emergency whistle. You purposely hiked far enough from the trail that no one would see you so now you can't see the trail either. There have been many documented cases of people wandering around in the wrong direction for hours because they couldn't easily find there way back to the trail.

See Cloudy with a Chance of Poop continued on page 11

"Sounds so simple but in my experience it's the number one likely cause of getting lost."

~ PaPa Smurf

Cloudy with a Chance of Poop continued from page 10

If you only retain one thing from this article I hope it's that you pay attention and don't get lost after a poop. Perhaps carry your pack with you part way and leave it in sight to indicate the way back to the trail. This way you have all your ten essentials with you should you get lost. Or my favorite method is to lay my hiking poles down pointing in the direction of the trail when I stop to poop. Try to make it a habit so you always can follow your pointer back the way you came.

If you do find yourself disoriented, stay calm. Mark the ground where you are with some sticks or stones, a piece of clothing, or anything that you can easily recognize. Then do short walks out from this spot like spokes on a wheel. Only go as far as you think you came from the trail and count your steps. If you don't find the trail retrace your steps backward to your starting point and try a different direction. Don't wander too far from the spot you marked. You will eventually find the right path.

Picking a Spot

No one likes to unexpectedly uncover someone else's poop spot. It's surprisingly common as most people end up stopping at the easiest spot to get to that is close by but secluded. And it's usually at a common stopping spot, such as a scenic outlook, trail junction, or camping spot. Because we all like to take the path of least resistance it's more than likely that someone else had the exact idea as you and picked the same spot.

My theory, is to always try to pick a spot that others would not think to go. First, I try to avoid spots near scenic outlooks, trail junctions, points of interest, and camping spots. Hiking just a quarter mile from such spots will almost always guarantee no one else has pooped there. Second, I try to look at the terrain and pick an out of the way spot. Don't just follow an easy game trail or head behind a large rock. That's exactly what everyone else does. Pick a less likely spot, such as uphill, into thicker brush, or in just an unlikely and uninteresting spot that others would be unlikely to end up at.

See *Cloudy with a Chance of Poop* continued on page 12

"If you do find yourself disoriented, stay calm."

~ PaPa Smurf

"No one likes to unexpectedly uncover someone else's poop spot."

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*"We all know that proper disposal of human waste is important to avoid pollution of water sources and minimize spreading diseases."
~ PaPa Smurf*

Cloudy with a Chance of Poop continued from page 11

Digging a Cat Hole

We all know that proper disposal of human waste is important to avoid pollution of water sources and minimize spreading diseases. But let's admit it, the most important reason is that it's just plain gross to come across someone's human feces and pieces of used toilet paper.

Toilet paper takes one to three years to decompose under the best condition, which is unlikely in poor soil areas and in alpine zones. And even if you don't use toilet paper the poop stays around or will be dug up by animals. If you don't place your feces and paper in a deep enough hole then animals dig it up and spread it all around in a giant mess. For all these reasons the hiking community has concluded that a cat hole and a few guidelines are accepted as best practice.

Pick a location that is at least 200 feet from water sources, trails, or campsites. Pick a less traveled spot near thick undergrowth, downed timber, or on a hillside. Look for a site with dark rich soil, if possible, and out of the way of water drainages.

Once you pick your spot dig a cat hole. Using a backpacking trowel, tent stake, stick, or side of your shoe, dig a cat hole 6-8 inches deep and 4-6 inches in diameter. When you are finished, fill the hole back in with the dirt you dug out and disguise it with a handful of rocks or dead vegetation.

Doing your Business

Everyone, over time, comes up with their own personalized technique but here are a few suggestions:

Squatting – Place your feet apart, pants down to your knees and squat down with your bottom pushed back. Use your hand to pull your pants forward to keep them free from the discharge.

See *Cloudy with a Chance of Poop* continued on page 13

Cloudy with a Chance of Poop continued from page 12

Hanging – Some like to look for a downed tree or large rock and place there cat hole close to the edge. This way you can rest your thighs on the log or rock and hang your bottom over the edge, hovering over your hole.

Assisted – Grab hold of a tree and lean backward as you squat making a tripod with your legs and the tree. This will allow you to take some of the strain of squatting off your legs.

Toilet Paper and Alternatives

Most of us prefer a nice toilet paper for cleanup. The latest environmental trends tend toward packing it out or even using natural materials to avoid using hard to decompose paper products. Either way, I'm happy if we can all just do a good job of keeping poop and toilet paper out of sight. Use that method that works best for you and your ethics.

Toilet paper should be used sparingly and kept to a plain, white, non-perfumed, and easily biodegradable toilet paper. It's easy to pack out used paper if you keep a resealable plastic bag handy with your kit. Alternatively, you can use natural toilet paper, such as leaves, smooth rocks, or snow.

Your Toilet Kit

I like to always keep a simple kit containing a small amount of toilet paper and hand sanitizer handy in my pocket, daypack, or backpack. Keep it really handy as you might need it without a lot of notice. Throw in a zip-lock bag or two for packing out TP. If you are going on longer hikes and overnights I keep a larger amount of toilet paper inside my backpack to replenish my small kit, and depending on the trip, add a trowel for digging a cat hole.

What About Urine?

Human urine is much less dangerous than fecal matter. Just keep it away from water sources and don't pee on vegetation (i.e., animals See *Cloudy with a Chance of Poop* continued on page 14



PaPa Smurf

“The latest environmental trends tend toward packing it out or even using natural materials to avoid using hard to decompose paper products.”

~ PaPa Smurf



Cloudy with a Chance of Poop continued from page 13

craving the salt will destroy the plants). Because it's unlikely you will want to dig a cat hole just to pee, I suggest if you need it, that you use a pack-it-out toilet paper zip-lock bag or a pee rag, instead. For a pee rag try a simple bandanna or something like the popular Kula antimicrobial pee cloth. Check out: <https://kulacloth.com/pages/faqs> - if you want to know more about pee rags.

We all love the outdoors so please help keep our wilderness pristine and free from toilet paper flowers.

--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)

Book Review by Dick Forrest:

Left for Dead: My Journey Home from Everest

by Beck Weathers with Stephen B. Michaud

I read this book and found the title to be disingenuous. I was expecting to read about Beck Weathers' miraculous waking up and saving himself on Mt. Everest after being "left for dead" on the mountain. Beck Weathers was one of the climbers in John Krakauer's famous book, Into Thin Air, who was a member of the tragic Mt. Everest expedition of 1996. Well, this book starts off great, but instead, turns into a tell-all about Beck's nonexistent family life. Only at the end of the book do we read about Weathers' other expeditions and a little about his Mt. Everest experience.

I was hoping to read a lot more about Weathers' Mt. Everest demise on the mountain, being left for dead, and his subsequent, miraculous self-rescue from the death zone. You may have seen an image of Beck with a black nose and one of his hands initially all white, which will turn black or necrotic from the effects of frostbite damage, and eventually fall off. Beck Weathers said to an expedition doctor on the mountain at Camp III, Dr. Ken Kamler, that he got lost in a storm, was unable to move, was given up for dead by passing climbers, was in some sort of catatonic state (Dr. Kamler's words), and lay there on the ground for a day, a night, and another day. But somehow his brain, with a superhuman will to live, despite being severely hypothermic, allowed him to get up off the snow/ice and find his way down the mountain alone to Camp III. From there, he was rescued by helicopter at 21,000 feet (the highest rescue ever by helicopter) and lived. Here's a link to a TED talk, entitled *Medical Miracle on Everest*, by Dr. Kenneth Kamler, (the medical miracle was the survival of Beck Weathers): https://www.ted.com/talks/ken_kamler_medical_miracle_on_everest

This book is cowritten by Stephen G. Michaud. It's obvious that Michaud's interviews of Beck, Beck's wife, children, and friends take
See *Left for Dead* continued on page 16



"Well, this book starts off great, but instead, turns into a tell-all about Beck's nonexistent family life."

~ Dick Forrest

"But somehow his brain, with a superhuman will to live, despite being severely hypothermic, allowed him to get up off the snow/ice and find his way down the mountain alone to Camp III."

~ Dick Forrest



Left for Dead continued from page 15

up the bulk of the book. Beck Weathers is a pathologist who lives and works in the Dallas, Texas, area and climbs 8,000 meter mountains to deal with his depression. In fact, his goal was to climb all of the Seven Summits. Well, this goal created great tension in the Weathers' family – they felt abandoned. Beck's wife, Peach (hence, a person from Georgia living in Texas), threatened to leave Beck but didn't for the sake of their two children. The two children also felt shortchanged as they were growing up without a father around.

I get it – Beck is depressed and climbs big mountains to help deal with his depression. Peach rightfully bitches about him never being around for the family. In a sense, Beck's injuries on Everest put an end to that self-centered chapter of his life. (One of Beck's hands had to be amputated and Beck had partial use of his other hand. I don't know if he has an artificial nose. And he was able to continue work as a pathologist in a Dallas area hospital, with some limitations.)

At the end of the book the family comes together over the dying and death of Peach's brother, Howard (Howie). Howie had been the surrogate father to Beck and Peach's children in Beck's absence from the family. Howie developed a hepatoma, a cancerous tumor of the liver, and died fairly quickly. Beck got thoroughly involved in Howie's healthcare, to Peach's surprise. She discovered that they both loved Howie very much.

It's an interesting book but I have a problem with the disingenuous title. It might have been titled: "What Happened to me after Everest". There wasn't much about being "left for dead." And I have another complaint about reading about Peach's disappointment with her husband abandoning the family for mountaineering. The coauthor, Stephen Michaud, puts too much emphasis on Peach's bitching about her husband. I'm sure that it was justifiable but it a little too much. Beck came off as clueless as to why he didn't spend much time with his family while pursuing his Seven Summits goal. Perhaps overcoming depression is a possible explanation for his behavior. But it's also a wonder why Beck's wife and children didn't give him more support. I suspect that Beck, thinking that he was a sufficiently good provider, didn't include them in any decision-making about his mountaineering expeditions.

-- Dick Forrest

"In a sense, Beck's injuries on Everest put an end to that self-centered chapter of his life."

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"Beck came off as clueless as to why he didn't spend much time with his family while pursuing his Seven Summits goal."

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Book Review by Dick Forrest:

**In the Shadow of the Mountain: A
Memoir of Courage**

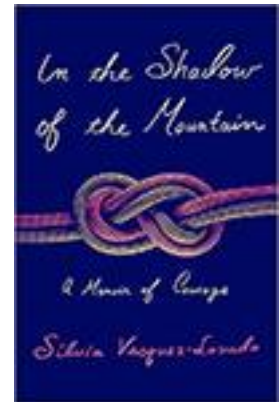
by Silvia Vasquez-Lavado

Perhaps I'm naive but a memoir, by definition, I suppose, talks about a person's whole life. Well, I'm primarily interested in an aspect of a person's life when I read a memoir. In this case, Silvia Vasquez-Lavado is a mountaineer and I'm interested in that aspect of her life. She's a talented writer and has a captivating life story but I was a little disappointed when I got more than I bargained for in reading about her whole life. Why? Because lives are complicated and messy – there's nothing simple about an individual's life. I'm more interested in what motivates a person to attempt and achieve, as Vasquez-Lavado has done, her climbing all of the Seven Summits.

Memoirs, I've come to understand, are courageous tell-alls. And this book is no different. Silvia Vasquez-Lavado grew up in Lima, Peru. She was sexually abused by a male housekeeper from the age of six to the age of ten. At one point due to her religious teaching she had the courage to say no to her abuser. This whole episode could have destroyed her life but children are often resilient in overcoming adversity. This was an act of courage just to write about this heinous misfortune.

Sylvia's father was a hard working accountant in Lima. Perhaps that gave Sylvia the idea to go into accounting/finance. She moved to San Francisco from Lima and landed a job working for a successful vodka company called SKYY. Being part of a liquor company necessitated having a lifestyle centered around alcohol. In this period of her life, she became a bad drunk as she would hop into bed, as a lesbian, with different women every night. At one point, she had a close friend, whom she loved, who wasn't living with her at the time, who jumped off the Golden Gate Bridge to her death. Yes, lives are complicated and messy - a courageous tell-all. Later, she successfully climbed the corporate ladder and eventually landed a job in finance working for eBay.

See *In the Shadow of the Mountain* continued on page 18



"In this case, Silvia Vasquez-Lavado is a mountaineer and I'm interested in that aspect of her life."

~ Dick Forrest



*"This book was published in 2022, and in 2014, Sylvia started a nonprofit called Courageous Girls."
~ Dick Forrest*

In the Shadow of the Mountain continued from page 17

This book was published in 2022, and in 2014, Sylvia started a nonprofit called Courageous Girls. Courageous Girls currently has projects in Nepal, India, the United States, and Peru. The nonprofit (from the book jacket) "helps survivors of sexual abuse and trafficking find their inner strength and cultivate their voices by demonstrating their physical strength." This is a disturbing and chilling sentence from the book: "Every year, between twelve thousand and fifteen thousand Nepali girls between the ages of six and sixteen are trafficked to India, where they work off their family's debts one customer at a time." Sylvia is combating evil for the betterment of the world. Yes, talk about courage.....

Much of the book is devoted to helping five young women who were sexually abused and trafficked, as part of their healing, make it to Everest Base Camp. After successfully taking these young women to Everest Base Camp, on the same trip, Sylvia joined an expedition to climb to the top of Mt. Everest. At this point, before climbing Mt. Everest, she had climbed five of the Seven Summits.

The last part is my favorite portion of the book because it centers on my interest in knowing about the process of climbing Mt. Everest. Sylvia's description of the climb is fascinating and it's wonderful that she was successful. I am still not clear what motivated her to climb the Seven Summits but I have better idea from some of the writing in this book. I am, however, disappointed that not more of the book was devoted to the description of actual mountain climbing. But I realize that every life has challenges and opportunities and that this book is a memoir.

--Dick Forrest

*"I am, however, disappointed that not more of the book was devoted to the description of actual mountain climbing."
~ Dick Forrest*



Cheesecake! A blast from the past!





Future Events in 2023

August 25-27 - (NH) 52 WAV weekend - organized by Jim Brown

September 11-15 - (ME) Acadia National Park - led by Erin Squires and Lori Tisdell

September 19 - 25 - (ME) Maine Camping Trip, Lily Bay State Park - organized by Karen Markham

September 23 - (NY) NYC Trip - led by Jeanne Kaiser and Gary Dolgoff

September 29- October 1 - (NY) Johns Brook Lodge (JBL) - led by Karen Markham

October 3-4 - (NY) Biking Trip - overnight Millerton, NY - organized by Jim Brown

October 16-20 - (MA) Cape Cod Trip - led by Cheryl Stevens and Deb Bombard (Closed)

December 9 - (MA) PVHC Annual Holiday Party - organized by Karen Markham, Al Roman, Lani Giguere

PVHC 2022-2023 Executive Board



Left to Right: Lori Tisdell, President; Erin Squires, Vice President; Peggy Tibbitt, Treasurer; Lani Giguere, Secretary

Important Membership Renewal Notices

The following memberships are up for renewal:

Sept Renewals

- Rekha Bains
- Jane Benerakis
- Lars Brown
- Rika Clement
- Shari Cox
- Nicole Forish
- JoAnne Gebski
- Chris Giguere
- Lani & Rick Giguere
- Lisa Golob
- Karen Hoffman
- Carolyn Keeffe
- Jill Leavenworth
- Jane Lefkowitz
- Laurie Mahoney
- Stacey Munro & family
- Victoria Rosati
- Marty & Meg Schoenemann
- Lynn Schwartz
- Susan & Taylor Seybolt
- Brian Sullivan
- Carl Todd
- Vance Von Jarowski

Oct Renewals

- Donna Beck
- Marjorie Crogan
- Paul Curtis
- Sallie Czepiel
- Joanne Fortin
- John & Regina Fortune
- Barbara Graf
- Betty Lempke
- Michael Lillpopp
- Helen MacMellon
- Karen Markham
- Jettie McCollough
- Maria Rocco
- Al Roman
- Celeste Rosselli

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:

Peggy Tibbitt
413 South Gulf Rd.
Belchertown, MA 01007
(Dues are: \$20 individual member, \$35 family, and \$10 for students)

Pioneer Valley Hiking Club Officers

- Lori Tisdell, President
- Erin Squires, Vice President
- Peggy Tibbitt, Treasurer
- Lani Giguere, Secretary
- Ray Tibbetts, Founder

Standing Committee Chairs

- Hike Schedule: Jos Brannan & Lori Tisdell
- Backpacking Advisor: Rick Briggs
- Trail Maintenance: Chip Pray & Rob Schechtman
- Club Website Editor: Dick Forrest
- Non-Member E-mail Coordinator: Rob Schechtman
- Club E-mail Coordinator: Lori Tisdell
- 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

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

July

- Krystyna Galipeau & family
- Erin Holman
- Wendy & Jerry Long
- Eddie Mientka
- Jeffrey & Marian Parentela
- Garrett Westcott
- Linda Wolff & Landon Redmon

Aug

- Deidre Doherty
- Brian Stimson



UPCOMING EVENTS AND THE USUALS

- Mondays Morning hike
- Tuesdays Morning bike, evening hike
- Wednesdays Morning hike
- Thursdays Morning hike
- Fridays
- Saturdays Morning hike
- Sundays Morning hike
- Sept 5 (MA) Club Meeting
- Oct 3 (MA) Club Meeting
- PVHC <https://teamup.com/ksz8qkbizhndt3qjt7>
- Schedule of Events

IMPORTANT NOTICES

Next Club Meetings

Sept 5, 7 p.m. at **ROC**
 Oct 3, 7 p.m. at **ROC**

ROC - Red Oak Church, 337 Piper Road, West Springfield

Deadline for submissions to the next *Footprints* is October 20, 2023

**** Check out our club website at:**
www.pioneervalleyhikingclub.org

Members may join the PVHC Email List by sending a message to:
pvhc.hikingclub@gmail.com



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