



BooTpriNts

The Bimonthly Newsletter of the
Pioneer Valley Hiking Club

President's Corner:

Looking Forward to a Great Year

by President Erin Squires

My first few months as President has been a great adventure. The E-Board has met three times and we have decided that our mission is to increase attendance at the monthly PVHC meetings and to look for ways to save the club money.

The attendance at the April hike planning meeting saw an increase by 10 members. Thank you to those who attended. Not only did we have hike planning but Ed Marrone did a mini-bike clinic. Then we ended the meeting with a surprise raffle.

We are planning more fun activities for future meetings. For a sneak peak - Tom Ricardi will be bringing his Birds of Prey to our September meeting.

If anyone has any ideas for clinics you would like to see please send me an email.

I am looking forward to a great year as your President.

--Erin Squires

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May, 2025

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The Occasional Hiker

A Day in New York City

by Jacqueline Sheehan

“This year, our organizers Jeanne Kaiser and Lori Tisdell, assisted by Gary Dolgoff,....”
~ Jacqueline Sheehan

The New York City trip with PVHC had been on my radar for months and I was eager to attend. Few places are farther from my day-to-day life than Manhattan, which is what made this expedition so exciting. This year, our organizers Jeanne Kaiser and Lori Tisdell, assisted by Gary Dolgoff, elected to carpool to Union Station in New Haven from Enfield Park and Ride. From New Haven, Metro North runs right into Grand Central Station.

Union Station was built in 1920, designed by the Architect Cass Gilbert. While I sipped a much-needed coffee in the station, I happened to look up. The ceiling was ornate and sparkled with chandeliers. The thick walls were made of limestone. The tunnel leading us to all of the platforms was brightly lit stainless steel. Sometimes when we’re traveling, rushing and anxious, it is well worth it to take a breath and look up at our surroundings.

Our 8:02 AM train was an express and my seatmate, Isaac, offered me a running narrative of the towns that we rumbled past. His observations were tinged with nostalgia. He was a small child, living in New York when the Twin Towers were attacked on 9/11. His parents decided to pack up the family and ultimately made their way to Western Massachusetts. But the city had left its thumb print on him the way our hometowns always do.

“The date of our trip turned out to be a perfect storm that resulted in a massive number of people in the city.”

~ Jacqueline Sheehan

The date of our trip turned out to be a perfect storm that resulted in a massive number of people in the city. I mean, shoulder to shoulder everywhere. It was the day before Easter, the start of spring break for many schools and colleges, and lastly (this could not have been predicted) it was the second in a series of protest marches against the Trump administration.

A Day in NYC continued on page 3

A Day in NYC continued from page 2

All twenty-two of us collected under the famous clock in Grand Central Station where so many lovers have met, school children rounded up and counted, and people from all over the world said, "Meet you at the clock." We divided into two main groups, one going to Roosevelt Island and the other smaller group opting for a 5th Avenue and Central Park trip. Marty and Meg Schoene-mann had their heart set on the 9/11 museum and Peggy MacMellon bravely set off on her solo adventure to the Historical Museum of New York City. No matter which direction we chose,



Meet at the clock and don't be late!

"We divided into two main groups, one going to Roosevelt Island and the other smaller group opting for a 5th Avenue and Central Park trip."

~ Jacqueline Sheehan



Our leaders gave us firm instructions.

our leaders adamantly warned us, "Meet here at the clock at 7:30 tonight. These are group tickets. If you're not here, you will be without a ticket."

I had been to Roosevelt Island, so I chose Jeanne's 5th Avenue group. Jeanne's group, just six of us, decided we wanted to check out the protest rally first and I'm glad we did. The rally had already spilled from Bryant Park to the steps of the NYC library. The protest signs were colorful,

with crystal clear intent, and clever. Our

small group offered its solidarity.

As we headed off, it was impossible to miss the clouds of marijuana smoke that billowed along the streets. Recreational weed is legal in New York. I wondered if we were getting a contact high. Was all of the city getting a contact high?

A Day in NYC continued on page 4

"As we headed off, it was impossible to miss the clouds of marijuana smoke that billowed along the streets."

~ Jacqueline Sheehan



“The rest of our day was spent largely in Central Park, which was fine with me because it is the true jewel of the city,....”

~ Jacqueline Sheehan

A Day in NYC continued from page 3

Since it was the day before Easter, we stepped into St. Patrick’s Cathedral. There were flowers overflowing from every nook and the smell was intoxicating. For some of the tourists it was a time of spiritual reflection, for others it was a moment of quiet reprieve from the hubbub of a people-packed city. We left and wandered along 5th Avenue, the absolute epicenter of Capitalism, especially for the 1%. We gawked at Prada, Tiffany’s, Cartier, and even Trump Tower. Suddenly a window display caught our attention; a necklace and matching watch, chock full of diamonds, and complete with (of all things) a tiny emerald-eyed alligator on both. We oohed and aahed at the sparkly thing and I wondered again about the effect of a contact high.



Even the Buddha is bejeweled on 5th Ave.

The rest of our day was spent largely in Central Park, which was fine with me because it is the true jewel of the city, constructed at a moment in time that would be unthinkable now. Frederick Law Olmstead knew exactly what he was doing when he designed the park. It is not only the heart of the city, but the lungs as well, filled with trees and water, open spaces, ball fields, and constantly blooming flowers. And everyone in the city wanted to be in the park that day, the first truly warm day of the year.

As I watched families and dogs, strollers and bikers, there was not one cross word spoken, no rude behavior, not even a crying child. This is what people want, no matter where they come from or what language they speak, just a chance to be outside with family and friends, sharing food, laughing, listening to music. This is how we are all the same, one lineage, one people right in one humongous park in the center of Manhattan.

Both PVHC groups logged about eight miles of walking, which is so much harder on concrete than on the soft trails in our local woods. And no one dared miss the appointed meeting time by the famous clock in Grand Central. Thank you dear leaders for a day in New York City.

--Jacqueline Sheehan

Smurfy advice for the trail...

Gear Trade-offs

by John "PaPa Smurf" Klebes

There is no such thing as the "best gear." Hiking gear is a series of trade-offs. You can't have it all. I recently did some research on my next pair of hiking shoes. My ideal pair of hiking shoes would be super light on my feet. But I also wished they were waterproof to keep my feet dry. But, sometimes my feet sweat too much so I really want a pair of shoes that breathe. And even the best waterproof shoes eventually wet out in severe conditions so I want my shoe to dry quickly. I also wanted shoes that were super durable. I do some difficult hikes so I wanted a super grip on steep slopes, slippery wet rocks, roots, and ice and snow. But I also want the soles to be resistant to high wear and super durability. I really want them to last. Oh, and I want a really good price!

Did I find a pair that met all these features? Of course not. Because to optimize any one design feature means you likely have to give up something somewhere else. Everything is a trade-off. You can have high performance, durability, light weight, waterproof or breathable, or perhaps low cost but you can't have them all at once.

Good grip on rocks and wet surfaces likely means a sticky sole material that wears down quickly so has poor durability. High quality materials hold up and last longer but cost more money and weigh more. Waterproof materials keep in moisture and make it hard to dry out once wet. Breathable materials leak and allow moisture in. A gear decision means we have to prioritize conflicting features and pick what works best overall for our type of hiking and budget. And to make it even harder, every brand optimizes their products for different things.

So how do you balance out these trade-offs and find the product that best meets your hiking needs?

Gear Trade-offs continued on page 6

"Did I find a pair that met all these features?"

Of course not."

~ PaPa Smurf



“For my hiking shoe decision I picked my top three priorities:....”

~ PaPa Smurf

Gear Trade-offs continued from page 5

For my hiking shoe decision I picked my top three priorities:

For safety, I put good traction on steep slopes, slippery rocks, and mud as my highest priority.

Light weight, as I’ve found I can hike longer and more comfortably with lighter footwear

And durability.

Having been in some sketchy situations I put good traction highest on my list. For comfort, mostly because of hiking long distance, I pushed light weight as my second priority. And because I’m frugal I wanted good durability. So when I went to research the best hiking shoe to meet my needs I focused on good traction. From my list of shoes with the best traction, mostly from user reviews, I then sorted them by light weight and durability. Because these two attributes usually conflict with each other I had to make some compromises. I didn’t pick the lightest or the most durable. But searched for something that had some of both features. A compromise because the ideal does not exist.

With the few shoes left on my list I moved to some of my secondary priorities. I chose breathability over waterproof. This was a trade-off between lighter and cheaper versus heavier and difficult to dry out if they get wet. And finally cost and sale prices.

Many of you might be surprised that I didn’t put cost up higher but I’ve found comfort and performance a better trade off than cost. My third priority of durability is my attempt to balance up-front cost against long-term cost even though it’s in conflict with light weight characteristics. Your priorities may be different. Perhaps cost is more important over performance for a less aggressive hiker. Or durability over light weight is a better value? Or waterproof is more important than breathability. You might even put style and looks much higher on the list.

Gear Trade-offs continued on page 7

“Your priorities may be different.”

~ PaPa Smurf

Gear Trade-offs *continued from page 6*

Another good example of gear trade-offs is a hiking flashlight. You may need a super bright flashlight that has 250 lumen beam to cut 100's of meters ahead of you to follow an obscure trail in the dark. That light is probably heavy, costly, and need lots of battery. Perhaps a less bright flashlight is good enough. Or something smaller and lighter would fit your needs and be easier to carry. Rechargeable batteries versus disposable batteries? Or perhaps a tiny key chain light that weighs less then 1/3 ounce and costs under \$15. It takes up no space or weight but it only puts out 6 lumen of light. It might be the perfect choice for an emergency when you don't normally plan on needing a flashlight. Why carry extra weight and bulk? As with the shoes, each of us needs to evaluate our priorities of weight, cost, function, durability, and features.

Hopefully these examples help you prioritize how your own unique priorities can be used to make an informed gear decision.

You can apply these trade-offs to all of our hiking gear decisions from clothing, tents, hiking poles, backpacks, etc. So the next time you shop for gear don't just buy because something looks cool, is in style, or is on sale. Think about the features, costs, and functional trade-offs and make a decision that keeps you happy for years to come. It's all about trade-offs that meet your unique needs.

--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)



PaPa Smurf

*"Hopefully these examples help you prioritize how your own unique priorities can be used to make an informed gear decision."
~ PaPa Smurf*



Book Review by Dick Forrest:

Just Passin' Thru: A Vintage Store, the Appa-
lachian Trail, and a Cast of
Unforgettable Characters

by Winton Porter

I have read a number of books or journals about people who have done the Appalachian Trail (AT). This is not one of the them – it's about a person who owns a business that happens to be on the AT and about some of his experiences dealing with people who are just passin' thru on their way north or south on the AT. (This book was published in 2010 so it's been around awhile. If you go to the business website, the new or current owners of Mountain Crossings are Georgeanna and Logan Seamon. The website says that they (Mountain Crossings) are the premier outdoor outfitter on the AT in North Georgia with backpacking gear, expert trail advice, and even gifts, as well as a hostel.)

Winton Porter, the author, owns Mountain Crossings, a retail business in Neel Gap, Georgia, close to Blairsville, a city on the northern border of Georgia, just north of Springer Mountain, which is the site of the southern terminus of the AT, the place where most people start their AT journeys. What's interesting about Mountain Crossings is that it's the only place on the AT that has a roof that the trail crosses under. It's also at the base of Blood Mountain, which is the tallest mountain on the AT in Georgia (elev. 4,458').

Since Mountain Crossings is close to the place where most people start their AT journeys, the business has a valuable service of providing "shakedown" for hikers who initially are carrying way too much food and gear. A shakedown by one of the employees at the store would advise a thru-hiker what you need and what you don't need to carry in your backpack. Oftentimes, many people send the extra amounts of food and gear home via UPS.

Everyone likes a good story. So this book, as the subtitle says, is replete with various anecdotes about the various characters that Winton meets who are either doing the AT, many of whom are called by their AT names, or who he employs at Mountain Crossings. The vignettes are very interesting, and on top of that, Winton writes very well.

This book is a light and easy read. Winton Porter bought the business in 2001. He has an interesting life as an AT business owner with his wife, Margie, two young girls and a dog. He says in the Preface in August, 2009:

I share these stories because they were never mine. Like all life's blessings they are borrowed. It is my hope that I've honored the many owners – the dreamers, the wanderers, my neighbors in the wilderness, my friends, my family, and the late great Sky Dog (i.e., his family dog) – by passing them on.

--Dick Forrest

PVHC Trail Maintenance

by Rob Schechtman

On Friday, April 25 2025, nine club members gathered for trail maintenance on Section 2 (in MA) of the New England Trail. The club had built steps up a very steep section many years ago, and some wood needed replacement. I was the leader for the day and had already put in volunteer time for planning and shopping for the supplies needed that day. There was a lot of heavy wood and tools to bring to the site. I knew I could count on the Pioneer Valley Hiking Club to get the volunteers out needed carry all this stuff. Hikers seem to enjoy giving back to the trails by improving the trail for other hikers for years to follow.



Team members are shown on the new steps going up is: Beth, Linda, Dave , Joe, Jack, and Dick. Lisa was our photographer and Rick was our master carpenter who cut out the new pieces to fit just right. Everyone carried a little bit into and out of the site and worked to remove the old steps and get in the new step.

PVHC Trail Maintenance continued on page 10

**PVHC Trail Maintenance** *continued from page 9*

Working on a steep slope was more easily accomplished with a human chain to pass tools and the wood. We had to pry out old steps and we used a battery-operated saw to cut out the step side support. We had enough wood to replace the weak sections that were no longer any good. We cut-to-size new supports and drilled and bolted them in place. New steps were hammered into place with nails. We were able to finish in about 2 1/2 hours.

Although our first call for trail maintenance this year on April 5 had to be canceled due to weather, Chip Pray had led a trail maintenance walk-through of this section on April 12. We plan to continue trail maintenance for sections one and two of the New England Trail all year long. We will typically call a day in the summer to trim back over-growth and a day in the fall for a final clean-up and marking before the winter. Anyone with suggestions for trail improvement on these sections should contact Chip Pray or me.

--Rob Schechtman



Future Club Events

2025

May 18 - (MA) Spring Kick-Off organized by Erin Squires, Ed Marrone, Judy Alfano & Brenda Doucette

May 23-25 - (NH) White Mt. annual hut trip to Lonesome Lake organized by Karen Markham

June 20-22 - (NH) White Mountain Sampler organized by Jeanne Kaiser & Lori Tisdell

June 30-July 5 - (VT) White Cap Campground Camping Trip organized by Karen Markham

August 10 - (MA) Club Picnic organized by Gary Dolgoff and Lori Tisdell

August 31-Sept 5 - (ME) Lily Bay State Park Maine Camping Trip organized by Karen Markham

September 18-21 - (NY) Johns Brook Lodge Backpack organized by Karen Markham

October 20-24 - (MA) Cape Cod Trip organized by Cheryl Stevens & Debbie Bombard

December 6 - (MA) Holiday Party organized by Karen Markham, Al Roman & Lani Giguere

PVHC 2025-2026 Executive Board



Left to Right: Brenda Doucette, Secretary; Judy Alfano, Treasurer;
Erin Squires, President; Ed Marrone, Vice President

Important Membership Renewal Notices

The following memberships are up for renewal:

May Renewals

Jill Abrahamsen
James & Diane Brown
Renee Brown
Brenda Cortese
Steven & Amy Dane
Joshua DeLand
Nora Dryjowicz
Debi Garlick
Ruth & Michael Harper
Steve & Judi Harvester
Marsha Hertel
Tom Lake
Phyllis Levenson
Lisa Martial
Peggy McLennan
Carol & Tom Permar
Michael Reed & Deb Gebo,
Leslie Reed
Susan Reeder
Elsa Rosenak
Karen Savoy
Erin & Peter Squires & family
Melissa Stello
Robert Trombley
Janice & Buddy Webb
Alison Wondriska

June Renewals

Judy Alfano
Karen Brown
Bill Burgart
Robert Duclos
Gina Geck
Richard Harrington
Marie Holmes & Dan Ingram
Richard Howitt
Wendy Katz
Mike Kurowski
Stefanie Laituri
Peter & Beth Ouellette
Ed Page
Jim & Peggy Tibbitt
Anna Viadero
Whitney Wilson

Please renew early, and renew by mail. (Make checks payable to Pioneer Valley Hiking Club (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 01089
(Dues are: \$25 individual member, \$40 family, and \$15 for students)

Pioneer Valley Hiking Club Officers

Erin Squires, President
Ed Marrone, Vice President
Judy Alfano, Treasurer
Brenda Doucette, 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
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

March

Donna Campora
Brian & Ann Marie Gilmore
Catherine (Kate) Hegarty
Michelle Jacques
Jon Metz
Sharon & William Paterwic
Cindy Schulz
Doug Ward
Lisa Weremeichik

April

Yvonne Bourdillon
Nicole Coyer
Wendy Kosloski
Brian Moriarty
Kristen Schoonover
Coryne Tasca
Ed Vazquez



UPCOMING EVENTS AND THE USUALS

Mondays	Morning hike
Tuesdays	Morning bike ride & Evening hike
Wednesdays	Morning hike
Thursdays	Morning hikes (2)
Fridays	Occasional hike
Saturdays	Morning hike
Sundays	Morning hike
May 6	Club Meeting
June 3	Club Meeting
PVHC	https://teamup.com/kszb8qkbizhndt3qjt7
Schedule of Events	

IMPORTANT NOTICES

Next Club Meetings

May 6, 2025, 7 p.m. at **ROC**

June 3, 7 p.m. at **ROC**

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

Deadline for submissions to the next *Bootprints* is June 20, 2025

**** 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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