



Bootprints

The Bimonthly Newsletter of the
Pioneer Valley Hiking Club

President's Corner:

Completing the 48-4000 Footers in New Hampshire

by President Erin Squires

There are many members in this club who have completed New Hampshire 48-4000 footers. This is no easy accomplishment. The 48-4000 footers are 48 mountains in New Hampshire that are over 4000 feet in elevation. The most famous mountain is Mount Washington.

Every June the club plans a trip to the White Mountains. A weekend filled with hiking 4000 footers, the beautiful 52 With a View, or a scenic waterfall hike. Getting caught up in the 48-4000 footer challenge can be exciting. A fun-filled day of climbing up and over rocks and slabs with the reward of a beautiful view very few people see. Another bonus is lunch on top of the world, and if you are lucky enough you may see the grey jays.

There are quite a few members counting down to their big finish. On October 19th one club member completed the 48-4000 footers on Mount Mariah! Congrats to Maria Davis!

--Erin

Volume 29, Issue 6

Nov, 2025

Inside this issue:

Important Renewal and Member- 15

Upcoming Events And The Usuals 16

Important Notices 16

Special points of interest:

- Erin Squires' President's Corner article on page 1
- Jacqueline Sheehan's article on page 2
- PaPa Smurf's article on page 7
- Shari Cox's *Reminder* article on page 10
- Dick Forrest's book review on page 11
- Future Events on page 13

Notes from an Occasional Hiker

The 2026 Cape Cod Trip

by Jacqueline Sheehan

It has been two years since I last attended the Cape Cod trip that Deb Bombard and Cheryl Stevens organized. Last year at this time I was happily hiking the Camino along the coast of Portugal. I had been eagerly looking forward to being with the hearty people of the Pioneer Valley Hiking Club on the Cape Cod during the off-season.

Driving to the Cape on Monday turned out to be the most harrowing part of the trip. I drove three hours in a heavy rainstorm, the windshield wipers on high, through a continuous rain tunnel of trucks, drivers who lacked the common sense to slow down, with me afraid to take my eyes off the road for one split second. By the time I arrived at my nephew's little cottage in Dennis Port, my short-circuited nerves surrendered to an epic migraine. Not a great way to start a hiking trip.

By morning, I was miraculously migraine-free, and the sun was shining. The sky was clear, brilliantly blue and scrubbed clean by the previous day of rain.

At the parking lot of the Cove Motel in Orleans, thirteen of us circled up for the hike that Deb and Cheryl had prepared for us. Day packs on, water bottles gurgling, our feet were ready to go. Then Cheryl said, "We have an announcement. We won't be leading the Cape Cod trip next year."

My heart plummeted. This had become my favorite hiking trip and now this was going to be the last time. Had the planning process simply exhausted them? Was it the text messages, the burden of responsibility, recruiting hike leaders, and all the details that had to take places months before we stood in our hiking circle? Of course they needed a break, I thought grudgingly. But I knew the feeling; I was just two days out from a writing conference that had taken over my life for months with the planning minutia. Which was one reason that I had anticipated the therapeutic value of the Cape trip.

See *2026 Cape Cod Trip* continued on page 3

*"The sky was clear,
brilliantly blue and
scrubbed clean by the
previous day of rain."
~ Jacqueline Sheehan*

*"This had become my
favorite hiking trip and
now this was going to
be the last time."
~ Jacqueline Sheehan*



“We stopped to examine a mushroom, a nut that was plentiful on the trail, a white eastern cedar, and of course we marveled at the ocean when we arrived at the light house.”

~ Jacqueline Sheehan

2026 Cape Cod Trip *continued from page 2*

I don't know what our facial expressions looked like to our mighty trip planners but it was somewhere between dejected and sympathetic. More on the dejected side.

We piled into several cars and headed to the Cape Cod National Seashore in Eastham where we explored the Salt Pond and the Coast-Guard Beach. As soon as I stepped on the sandy trail, my shoulders dropped away from my ears, I took a deep breath, and I was home again on a woodsy path. We all have our reasons for hiking, and one compelling reason is that our other lives slip away, our work lives, volunteering, paying bills, a crisis in the family, cringing at the news and all of that is replaced not only a kind of athleticism, but a primary connection to the now. We stopped to examine a mushroom, a nut that was plentiful on the trail, a white eastern cedar, and of course we marveled at the ocean when we arrived at the light house. I wondered if, as an occasional hiker, that the impact of the connection with nature is proportionally greater on me, but when I looked around at the faces as we gazed at the ocean, we were all equally humbled and grateful.

Even when the hike concluded and we returned to the cars, I had the feeling that my brain and spirit have been laundered with spring rain and the plaque of my overly organized life has been rebooted. The part of me who grew up with the woods as my playground was back again and I welcomed her like an old pal.

During a very late lunch at the Pub across from the Cove, Cheryl said, “Well, maybe we might consider returning in two years.” It was the first evidence of a crack in their resolve and it ignited a flicker of hope. Deb said nothing.

Day Two. Twenty-three of us joined Ron for one of my favorite hikes on the Great Island Trail. As we circled up in the parking lot of the motel, Marie Bienvenue shared shocking news; her partner Al had been out fishing hours earlier at Baker's Pond when he was surrounded by six coyotes. Coyotes are opportunistic foragers for fish and fish bait looked like an easy breakfast. But Al wasn't interested in their aggressive dining behavior and ended the whole encounter by clobbering the lead coyote with a stick, sending the pack scattering. You never know what to expect with PVHC.

See 2026 Cape Cod Trip continued on page 4

2026 Cape Cod Trip continued from page 3

Four of us carpooled together, and for some reason, the topic of peeing in the woods started and it kept us laughing for the thirty minute drive to Wellfleet. Ron said, "Little boys are thrilled when they learn they can pee outside."



Indeed, my grandson Finn was euphoric when he learned that he could legitimately pee outside and before long he began to mark the outdoors at every chance. On a tree, over a bridge railing, leaving messages in a snow bank. But wait, for women the story line was different. The women in the car were also ardent fans of peeing outdoors, but it was less of a festive event. And we all knew women who would never in this lifetime pee in the woods.

Part of the PVHC culture is the "separation break", which means that men go off in one direction to pee, while women go in another. During this hike and on others, I have heard murmurings of, "Not for me thanks, I will never pee in the woods." That night, I took a dive into the internet and found that this is a frequently addressed topic in the hiking and backpacking world. Men, if this is of no interest to you, just skip to the next paragraph. To my hiking sisters, I offer you, <https://exploringwild.com/ways-to-pee-outside-women/>, 14 Ways for Women to Pee Outdoors. There are even videos that demonstrates the fine art, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gbkxgzS6wvc>. I can summarize all of the information by saying, some of us are good at squatting and some aren't, some have knee replacements, and some of us have tight hamstrings, but all of us, men included, can empty our bladders in an average of 21 seconds. Those 21 seconds are just way more complicated for women.

Welcome back men. The Great Island Trail can feel more arduous because several miles of it is sand which requires different leg muscles. I haven't figured out which leg muscles, but clearly they are underused. See *2026 Cape Cod Trip* continued on page 5

"Part of the PVHC culture is the 'separation break', which means that men go off in one direction to pee, while women go in another."

~ Jacqueline Sheehan



“We passed through gorgeous pine woods with orange and white tufted Amanita mushrooms, and as one hiker said, the woods looked like the backdrop for Tolkien’s book, The Hobbit.”
 ~ Jacqueline Sheehan

2026 Cape Cod Trip continued from page 4

We passed through gorgeous pine woods with orange and white tufted Amanita mushrooms, and as one hiker said, the woods looked like the backdrop for Tolkien’s book, The Hobbit. At every turn we had vistas of Wellfleet topped by perfectly sculpted clouds. For longer treks along the beach, our group spread out with



long gaps between each other and may have even looked like hobbits on an adventure. For our snack break, we sat with our backs against a dune with the ocean just twenty feet in front of us. I think none of us wanted to move, but there was always the tide to contend with so we headed back, making this about six miles long and perfectly wonderful.

We returned to the car park and emptied the sand from our shoes. But then disaster struck. Dick Forrest discovered that he had lost his wallet. Each of us recognized the distraught look on his face that meant the loss of his license, credit cards, cash and what it would require to replace all those things. He emptied out his pockets, his pack. We gathered around him and helped search the floor of his car. He called Sue back at the Cove, but his wallet was gone. His happy day was ruined. He, along with the three other hikers in his car, set off for the local police department to report the loss.

Six of us met in Orleans for a very late lunch at Land Ho! and we continued to strategize about Dick’s dilemma (as well as recounting all of our own misadventures with losing keys or wallets). Finally Ron gallantly offered to return to the Great Island Trail the next day with Dick and retrace their steps. Eleanor’s phone dinged. It was Dick, back in his room and he had found his wallet! Disaster had been averted. It was a
 See *2026 Cape Cod Trip* continued on page 6

2026 Cape Cod Trip *continued from page 5***Here's all of us!**

happy ending to the story of the day. If only we could convince Deb and Cheryl to organize this trip again next year.

I returned back to my little borrowed cottage and there, waiting on my phone was a message from Cheryl. They agreed to offer the Cape Cod trip next year. Now that truly was a perfect end to the story. See you next year.

--Jacqueline Sheehan

PVHC member and Author
Co-founder Straw Dog Writers Guild
<https://www.jacquelinesheehan.com>



Smurfy advice for the trail...

Find Your True North Without a Compass

by John "PaPa Smurf" Klebes

Telling direction without a compass is a handy skill. I still travel with a compass but with the advent of GPS and smartphones few people now carry one. It's just so darn easy to follow along on a map on your cellphone with a bright big dot showing where on the map you are. That's all well and good until the unavoidable happens: either you lose cell tower coverage and forgot to download an off-line map, or you drop and damage your phone, or the battery goes dead.

If you need to get out of trouble knowing your direction of travel is vital, it's almost impossible to hike in a straight line without some sort of compass or navigation tool. Here's a few nifty tricks for finding your north without a compass.

The Sun

If the sun is visible it's a sure bet that it will rise in the east and set in the west. Since we, in the USA, are north of the Tropic of Cancer, the sun will always be south of you during midday. So, at solar noon, shadows point due north for our area of the world.

You can approximate direction by using the solar watch method. If you know the time you can point the hour hand of a watch at the sun. (If you don't have an analog watch you can just imagine one or draw one on the ground.) Then "draw" an imaginary line between the hour hand and the 12 o'clock position on the watch face. This lines runs approximately north to south.

See *Find Your True North* continued on page 8

*"Here's a few nifty
tricks for finding
your north without a
compass."*

~ PaPa Smurf

Find Your True North *continued from page 7*

Note that using the sun is not exact. Accuracy depends on daylight savings, the difference between noon and solar noon on a given day, geographic location and other factors, but it gives a reliable approximation.

Another similar technique, that works without knowing the time, is to place a stick vertically in the ground and mark the tip of its shadow. Wait 10 minutes and mark the new position of the sticks shadow. Draw a line between the two points. The first point will be west of the second point because the sun moves east to west. So you have a west-to-east line on the ground. If you place your feet on the end points you will be facing north.

Flora

Because the sun is always south of us at midday in New England, more dry-tolerant, sun-loving plants grow on south-facing slopes, and water and shade loving plants grow better on the north-facing slopes. North-facing slopes may be covered in dense fir and spruce forests and rocks covered in moss. And snow will be deeper and linger longer on the north-facing slopes.

On south-facing slopes you may see larger trees that can handle lots of sun, sandier soil, and snow will melt off quicker.

Even an isolated tree can give clues about direction as the tree will try to get the most sunshine. Trees in the open will have thicker, larger, and more robust branches on the their south side.

Moss nearly always grows on the north side of a tree because that is the shaded and moist side in the USA. If you face the mossy side of the tree you are probably looking south. See *Find Your True North continued on page 9*



PaPa Smurf

“North-facing slopes may be covered in dense fir and spruce forests and rocks covered in moss.”

~ PaPa Smurf



“The tops of fir and hemlock trees are flexible and have a tendency to flip leeward (downwind) making them sort of point eastward.”
~ PaPa Smurf

“None of these tricks are foolproof. But be observant and use nature to help keep you walking straight and not in circles.”
~ PaPa Smurf

Find Your True North continued from page 8

Weather

Wind moves generally from west to east in the U.S. You may notice when hiking along ridgelines, especially up in the New York Adirondack high peaks, Vermont Green Mountains, and New Hampshire White Mountains that trees at the very top are often lacking branches on the windward (west) side. The tops of fir and hemlock trees are flexible and have a tendency to flip leeward (downwind) making them sort of point eastward. And snow drifts, wavelets, and cornices tend to also point east on open areas due to this west-to-east wind. While not perfect these clues can help you keep a straight path without a compass.

Stars

On a clear night you can find the north star to get a bearing. If you can find the Big Dipper use the two stars that make up the scoop's farthest edge. Following the direction of these stars up and the first star you come to is Polaris (the North Star). If you walk in the direction of this star you will eventually reach the north pole. Say hello to Santa for me if you go. Polaris always points north.

None of these tricks are foolproof. But be observant and use nature to help keep you walking straight and not in circles. If you can't figure out which way leads to safety, Stop! Do not continue due to darkness, storms, or visibility or if you have no idea whether you are going in a good direction. Wait until you have better conditions or a reasonably safe plan before moving. Hiking burns up a lot of calories and you may be best off waiting for help or better daylight or weather conditions before moving on if lost.

--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)

Summary of an Early Article About Ray Tibbetts, PVHC Founder

Saved and Found by Shari Cox

(from an article written by Carla Valentine in the *Reminder*, September 25, 1995, entitled "On the right trail: Orienteering Skills are finding a wider audience beyond the hiking crowd")

Our hiking club founder, Ray Tibbetts, was a Marine who served two tours of duty in Vietnam. He learned map and compass skills in the Marine Corps. To help his business Backpacking Etc., which was located at the time on Memorial Drive in West Springfield, he would give orienteering classes throughout the Pioneer Valley. His classes were at a time before phone apps and GPS. Pioneer Valley Hiking Club was founded by Ray in February of 1991.

Here's a short summary of the article:

The article points out that Ray "teaches children and adults how *not* to get lost." Ray says that all of us get lost from time to time, "on the highway, in the forests, or in life in general." And that learning map and compass, orienteering skills, help to build self-confidence and self-esteem. And if you have a lot of those qualities you won't turn to "stealing, drugs, and other harmful things." And having an abundance of those qualities can be applied to anything you do in life.

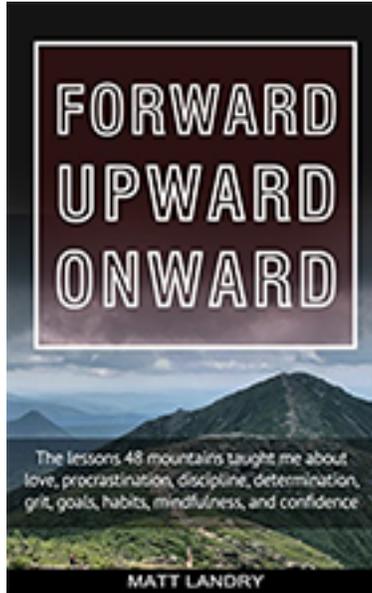
Ray is also quoted about why people get lost. Ray mentions that people have a dominant side. For example, if you are right-handed you tend to go to the right when you reach a road block. Also, people don't use common sense. People believe old wives' tales which steer them wrong when it comes to finding your way when you are lost.

The article has a picture of Ray holding a compass. The end of the article mentions where to call for more information on orienteering classes, hiking programs, and for Pioneer Valley Hiking Club, which meets the first Tuesday of every month at 7 p.m. at Ray's store, Backpacking Etc.

--Dick Forrest

"Ray says that all of us get lost from time to time, "on the highway, in the forests, or in life in general."

~ from a Reminder article written by Carla Valentine, saved and found by Shari Cox



“The book’s title is, of course, reminiscent of the original Olympic motto: “Citius, Altius, Fortius,” translated from Latin meaning, “Faster, Higher, Stronger.”
~ Dick Forrest

Book review by Dick Forrest:

Forward Upward Onward: Life lessons from 48 mountains about love, discipline, determination, goals, habits, mindfulness, character and confidence.

by Matt Landry

In this book the author, Matt Landry, starts with a goal to climb all 48 high peaks (4,000-footers) in the White Mountains of New Hampshire. Self-published in 2017, this book is about all of his climbs, the motivations behind them, his feelings, his emotions, and his philosophies. He’s introspective, intelligent, and psychologically minded in writing about his climbs to achieve his goal of summiting all 48 high peaks in the Whites.

The book’s title is, of course, reminiscent of the original Olympic motto: “Citius, Altius, Fortius,” translated from Latin meaning, “Faster, Higher, Stronger.” He starts off each short chapter with the name of the mountain or mountains climbed, the date climbed, and a pithy quote from a famous person. And ends each chapter with a “Takeaway” from each climb, what he learned from doing it.

Matt Landry’s first peak in the book which he climbed was Mt. Garfield. He joined a group doing the “Flags on the 48,” where on one day each summer the American flag is simultaneously raised on all 48 high peaks in the Whites. The last of the 48 peaks which he climbed was Owl’s Head. On the first attempt Matt was going to do this one alone but he aborted his climb. The second time with a couple of friends he was successful. He tended to either hike alone or with a friend or two on many of the peaks.

Here’s some of Matt Landry’s disparate thoughts, especially as they relate to my own life experiences: One of his book’s chapters is entitled, *See Forward Upward Onward continued on page 12*

Forward Upward Onward *continued from page 11*

“Find Your Own Tribe.” I was on a trip at Baxter State Park in Maine where Erin Squires, our current PVHC president, who was new to the club at the time, said, “I think I found my people.”; One of Matt’s hiking companions, Amy, when they climbed Mt. Isolation said, “It’s not raining, it’s sunny, we are happy, we are in good company, and we are alive. What else would we rather be doing?” Matt wrote that it’s important to have a mantra like that; Matt wrote: “I realized how grateful I was. Grateful for the help of others...I was grateful about the past, and I was excited for the future.”; What Matt learned, “One of the biggest (lessons) is the act of self-discipline and having the correct mindset of forward, onward, and upward. Simply put, keep moving forward, and keep climbing.”; One of Matt’s pithy quotes at the beginning of a chapter entitled “Slow Down” was from Duke Kahanamoku, a Hawaiian surfing legend who I saw on the beach at Waikiki in Honolulu as a young boy when I lived in Hawaii, “Just take your time – wave comes. Let the other guys go, catch another one.”; In that same chapter, he talks about meeting a young boy from Ukraine on the trail, who was given money from his grandmother to visit the United States, who wanted Matt to slow down and talk with him, which he did.; After Matt’s final climb up Owl’s Head completing the 48 he wrote, “It was only the next day, out of the blue, when I wept uncontrollably and joyfully.”; “My (Matt’s) most important lessons learned? 1. Fear is the number one killer of dreams. 2. Every goal or challenge in life must be approached one small step at a time, always moving in a forward, upward, and onward direction.”

Personally, as a hiker, I couldn’t imagine writing a book about feelings or thoughts in relation to a mountain climbing goal. I suppose that, as a writer, Matt Landry had to write down his thoughts after each climb. Both climbing and writing about climbing are ambitious goals. And I have to say that the topic interests me since I’ve also achieved summiting all 48 high peaks in the Whites, and wondered what the author had to say about his climbing accomplishments. Since the chapters were short the book was much easier to read in small chunks. The book was interesting, well thought out, and overall, an enjoyable read. Matt Landry should be proud of both of his peak bagging and book writing skills.

--Dick Forrest

“My most important lessons learned? 1. Fear is the number one killer of dreams. 2. Every goal or challenge in life must be approached one small step at a time, always moving in a forward, upward, and onward direction.”

~ Matt Landry



Future Club Events

2025

November 22-23 - (MA) Greylock Backpack organized by Karen Markham

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

2026

October 19-23 - Cape Cod Trip organized by Debbie Bombard and Cheryl Stevens

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:

November Renewals

Marie Babbitt
Joanne Campbell
Terry Champiney
Kate Crogan
Barbara Davis
Lynn Gebo
Christine Giguere
Joel Gordon
Richard Harris
Mary Heaner
Rebecca Hegstetter
Sandy Lemanski
Delycia & Hamilton Salsich
Vearle Sayer
Chuck Serafin
Barbara Veale & Mark L. Smith
Carolyn Smith
Martha Spiro
Mary & Max Talley
Lori Tisdell & Jos Brannon
Paul Weaver
Warren Wilkinson

December Renewals

Melanie Denver
Sheila Gilroy
Christine Hunter
Jean Lynch
Thomas Martin
Mary & Kate Moriarty
Ann Van Dyke
Steve & Michele Wolf
Jean Zimmer

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 Brannon & 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

September

Theresa Dahlquist
Wendy Donovan
Judith Hansen
Gail and William Howe
Bill & Jan Martin
Joseph & Terry McNeill
James St Peter
Linda & Gary Surprenant
Earl & Donna Uprichard
Ann Walaszek

October

Karen Atkinson
Julie & Nick Huanca
Barbara Kowal
Rebecca Laramie
Jennifer Leahy
Susan Lewin Opitz



UPCOMING EVENTS AND THE USUALS

- Mondays Morning hike
- Tuesdays Evening hike
- Wednesdays Morning hike
- Thursdays Morning hike
- Fridays Occasional hike
- Saturdays Morning hike
- Sundays Morning hike
- Dec 2 Club Meeting
- Jan 6 Club Meeting

- PVHC <https://teamup.com/ksz8qkbizhndt3qjt7>
- Schedule of Events

IMPORTANT NOTICES

Next Club Meetings

December 2, 2025 7 p.m. at **ROC**
 January 6, 2026, 7 p.m. at **ROC**

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

Deadline for submissions to the next *Footprints* is December 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



----- fold here -----

A publication of the
Pioneer Valley Hiking Club
P.O. Box 225
West Springfield, MA 01090-0225

