



Bootprints

The Bimonthly Newsletter of the
Pioneer Valley Hiking Club

President's Corner:

I've Made Amazing Friendships in PVHC

by President Erin Squires

I have been with PVHC since May, 2015. Over the years I have made amazing friendships. Deb Bombard was my first friend in the club. We met on Lori's Tuesday night hikes. Deb was so helpful with suggesting gear and to avoid focusing on how slow I felt on the trail. Deb and I crafted our perfect job. One where we worked once a week so we could hike almost every day. Of course, we wanted to make the same money as we were currently making.

Lori Tisdell and I became fast friends, as well. Lori would sweep me up in her adventures in the White Mountains and I was enthralled. That was until I did a 4000-footer in the Whites and realized Lori might have overestimated my abilities. But hey, Lori helped me to fall in love with the boulders, the endless climbs and the never ending downhill.

Sandy Segó was another great friendship I made. On my first 4000-footer Sandy greeted me at the summit with so much enthusiasm that it was hard not to be excited for the amazing view on Mt. Moosilauke. With the help of Sandy and Lori I finished my 48 4000-footers in 2024. It was these friendships that helped get me up those summits!

One friendship I made in the club came at the most opportune time in my life. It was 2020 and the hiking club went on a pause due to COVID. Club members created a bubble and hiked in those bubbles. I worked in a hospital, in the Emergency Department. No one wanted me in their bubble
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except for Gary Dolgoff. Gary and I hiked so many miles together. At the time Gary was going through a huge life change. We spend hours talking about Gary 2.0 and what does Gary want for his new future. It meant so much to me to have someone to hike with and to talk to about something besides COVID. I will be forever grateful to Gary for reaching out to me to hike and trusting me to be his friend.

Best,

Erin



Smurfy advice for the trail...

Beyond the 10 Essentials

by John "PaPa Smurf" Klebes

I recently read the book *The Lions of Winter* by Ty Gagne, a sobering survival story that serves as a powerful reminder to take the White Mountains seriously. This book, along with several recent deaths from exposure in the New England mountains, was at the forefront of my mind while selecting a topic for this article.

Hopefully, everyone in our club is aware of the 10 essentials and brings some set of them along on hikes with exposure risks. If you are not familiar with the list there is a copy in the back of the club's membership directory. The list checks all the boxes for shelter, clothing, food, water, and other essentials. But under certain conditions, such as above tree line, in harsh weather, and under snow hazards, will it be always enough?

One common theme in mountain incidents is an unexpected night out in exposed conditions. I believe the best way to acknowledge this risk is to assess your ability to survive a night out under severe exposure. What would you do if you had an illness, accident, equipment failure, or navigation error that went beyond your ability to keep moving and stay warm? Take an honest look at your supply of 10 essentials with a forced overnight in mind.

I have hiked many winter hikes, both solo and in groups, and almost never hike in winter without at least some thought of how I would survive if I had to spend a night out. Even in the best of conditions, if something happens, you can expect to wait hours for help to arrive. You don't have to be comfy but you have to have at least the minimum to make it through the night.

Reevaluate your 10 essentials with an honest view of how you would use them to spend a night out under severe weather conditions while injured. Don't believe it could never happen to you? Think again.

See *Beyond the 10 Essentials continued on page 4*

"One common theme in mountain incidents is an unexpected night out in exposed conditions."

~ PaPa Smurf

"Reevaluate your 10 essentials with an honest view of how you would use them...."

~ PaPa Smurf

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In winter I always bring at least a minimalist space blanket, bivy shelter or tarp. You will not be comfortable but it might be your only shelter. I also consider a lightweight sleeping bag when traveling solo, and plan at least one sleeping bag when leading a group. Since it's not a planned overnight it might be okay to bring an underrated bag to save weight. You are aiming for a safety net, not comfort.

In addition, everyone should have a base layer and spare socks stored in a waterproof bag. I can not stress this enough. It is the number one way to quickly warm up when your clothing is wet from sweat or exposure. Strip all of your clothes off and put your emergency dry base layer on against the skin. You can then layer your wet clothing over the dry layer to add insulation. It is the fastest way to stop conductive heat loss. Chemical hand or feet warmers are also a great addition to your survival kit.

Should you find yourself in trouble remember the STOP protocol (Stop, Think, Observe, Plan)

- **Stop:** Stop moving and calm down. Don't make the situation worse by getting more lost, compounding injuries, or exasperating exposure.
- **Think:** Take stock of your situation and assess your options.
- **Observe:** Examine your surroundings for signs of natural features that can help you shelter.
- **Plan:** Decide on a course of action to organize shelter, preserve warmth, and make yourself visible while waiting for rescue or conditions to change.

When seeking shelter, look for spots protected from the wind and elements, such as rock crags, tree wells, logs, or trees. You could try to dig a trench in the snow or snow shelter in a sheltered tree well (the hollowed out spot created by branches under a spruce tree). Anything to minimize the wind and provide ground warmth. Build up
See *Beyond the 10 Essentials* continued on page 5



PaPa Smurf

*“Should you find yourself in trouble remember the STOP protocol (Stop, Think, Observe, Plan)”
~ PaPa Smurf*



*“By staying resourceful
and calm, you will
significantly increase
your chances of
surviving an unexpected
night in the mountains.”
~ PaPa Smurf*

Beyond the 10 Essentials continued from page 4

your sheltered area with leaves, fir branches, or other debris to provide insulation. Use your backpack as a sitting pad to insulate you from the ground. And be sure to place items to increase your visibility, such as flagging tape, colored duct tape, or a bright piece of fabric or gear. Leave your hiking poles pointing toward your shelter to aid visibility to where you are sheltering. Remember to keep snacking and staying hydrated; your body needs fuel to generate heat.

By staying resourceful and calm, you will significantly increase your chances of surviving an unexpected night in the mountains. Stay safe out there.

--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)

“See You in the Wild Places, My Friends!”

by Dick Forrest

PVHC member Cheryl Stevens gave me an article from the *Town Reminder*, a Turley Publications Inc. newspaper out of Palmer, Massachusetts. The article is entitled, “A final hike of 2025” and is written by Julie Midura. Julie wrote in the last line of the article: “See you in the wild places, my friends!” The article is about Julie and her husband, Tom, who are avid hikers. They took up hiking in their 50’s, Julie was 51 years old and Tom was 59 years old. Julie pushed Tom to get out and hike before it was too late – before any of a myriad of excuses or circumstances prevented them from getting out on the trails.

What’s impressed me about Tom and Julie, like some of our PVHC club members, is that they have completed the entire 4,000 footer list of the White Mountains of New Hampshire in summer and in winter. And repeated many favorite hikes over a half a dozen times. They’ve backpacked 800 miles of the Appalachian Trail, completing 8 of the 14 states. They’ve also completed Mt. Elbert in Colorado (14,400 ft. in elevation), the second highest peak in the continental United States.

This article talks about their final hike in 2025. They are climbing Mt. Jackson in the White Mountains of New Hampshire, before sunrise, and get up to a plateau which overlooks the horizon where they can view the sun coming up. They are snuggling together in a double-wide sleeping bag on the snow and are sipping hot apple cider to stay warm while awaiting the sun to appear. They are celebrating the fact that Tom, who has devoted 50 years of his working life to his job, and is now retiring on the last day of 2025.

The article states that Tom and Julie have walked thousands of miles. This is the quote from the article that really stands out to me: “Every mile has been a journey of adventure, self-discovery, courage, humility, resilience, contentment and gratitude.” Julie says, referring to their hiking experiences, that “Tom and I have lived life to the absolute fullest over the past ten years.”

“See you in the wild places, my friends!”

--Dick Forrest

“Every mile has been a journey of adventure, self-discovery, courage, humility, resilience, contentment and gratitude.”

~ Julie Midura



Future Club Events

2026

March 27-28 - Stratton Pond Shelter (VT) Fondue Hike organized by Karen Markham and Al Roman

May 29-31 - Mizpah Hut Trip (NH) organized by Karen Markham

June 19-21 - White Mountain Sampler (NH) organized by Jeanne Kaiser and Lori Tisdell

October 19-23 - Cape Cod Trip (MA) 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:

March Renewals

Kathleen Bishop
 Debbie Bombard & Cheryl Stevens
 Kay Byington
 Donna Campora
 Mike & Gail Carrier
 Theresa Corey
 Brian & Ann Marie Gilmore
 Catherine (Kate) Hegarty
 Nancy Hoople
 Michelle Jacques & Steven Tremblay
 David King
 John Klebes
 Edmund Marrone
 Jon Metz
 Karen Normand
 Heidi Ostendarp
 Sharon & William Paterwic
 Lorraine Plasse
 Thomas Pospisil
 Linda Quesnel
 Debra Roberts
 Joyce Samet
 Cindy Schulz
 Steve Sussman
 Charles Vanasse
 Doug Ward
 Dave Wells
 Lisa Weremeichik
 Susan Wills
 Kevin & Robin Withers

April Renewals

Jacki Barden
 Marianne Baush
 James Bouchard
 Yvonne Bourdillon
 Bernice & Elbert Bowler
 Norma Casillas
 Nicole Coyer
 Peter Haas
 Barbara Havlicek
 Holly Keith
 Christine King
 Wendy Kosloski
 Susan McGurk
 Patricia Michalski
 Robert Morgan
 Brian Moriarty
 Asa & Per Nilsson
 Barbara Pearson
 Tom Pedersen
 Kristen Schoonover
 Albert Shane
 Jacqueline Sheehan
 Coryne Tasca
 Ed Vazquez
 David Weinberg
 Susan Young
 Kathy Zeiben

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

January

Lynne Alexander & Christian Bratina
 Chris Bowen
 Barbara & Eric Decker
 Ellen Donnelly
 Dennis & Maureen Fournier
 Nathaniel Green
 Donna Harvey

February

Amy & David Alton
 Harriet Barnes
 Scott Hughes
 Alexander Lak
 Pam Landry
 Jennifer Murray
 Jeffrey Pollock
 Mary Randall
 Carolyn & Neal Sadler
 Melinda Shaw



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
- April 7 Club Meeting
- May 5 Club Meeting

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

IMPORTANT NOTICES

Next Club Meetings

April 7, 2026 7 p.m. at **ROC**
 May 5, 2026, 7 p.m. at **ROC**

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

Deadline for submissions to the next April Fool's *Footprints* is March 20, 2026

Deadline for submissions to the next *Bootprints* is April 20, 2026

**** 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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