



Appalachian Footnotes

Delaware Valley Chapter • Appalachian Mountain Club
Fall 2014 • Volume 52 • Number 4



**Building the Ringing Rocks Trail • Gathering Chestnuts for the Future
Phil Ritchie, a Great Teacher • August Camp 2014 • Summer Photos
Annual Meeting & Dinner, and much more.**



Appalachian Footnotes

the magazine of the
Delaware Valley Chapter
Appalachian Mountain Club
published using recycled electrons.

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They all work!

Click on the bookmark icon  and you will get a clickable index!

Chapter Leaders' Hotline: stay in touch

Communication with our Chapter leaders is very important. The main source for communicating with our leaders is our DV Leaders Hotline through Yahoo Groups.

If you are a DV Chapter leader and feel you are not currently receiving e-mails sent out over our Leaders Hotline it is possible we do not have a current e-mail address for you. If you have changed your e-mail address within the past few years and have never notified us about it we need your current e-mail address.

Please contact our Communications Chair, Rich Wells at communication@amcdv.org with your current e-mail address and he will send you an "invite" to join our DV Leaders Yahoo Group. You must accept this invite to begin receiving e-mails through our Leaders Hotline. We cannot simply edit your e-mail address due to spam considerations. Please help us to keep the lines of communication working by staying current with your contact information.

Membership Information

Moving? Please remember to change your address and desired chapter affiliation by going to the AMC Member Center at www.outdoors.org/membercenter or calling AMC Member Services at 800-372-1758. This will correct your address for AMC Outdoors and for Footnotes. Address corrections cannot be made by the newsletter editor.

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Delaware Valley Chapter Web Site: amcdv.org

DV Paddler's Web Site: paddlenow.com

Chapter e-mail: info@amcdv.org

E-mail Hotline: hotline-requests@amcdv.org

AMC General Web Site: outdoors.org

Chapter Ombudsman

Questions, complaints, concerns or comments about the Delaware Valley Chapter of AMC should be directed to Chapter Ombudsman, Bill Steinmetz, 610-694-8677, or ombudsman@amcdv.org.



Cover: The AMC professional trail crew at work building the Ringing Rocks Trail, part of the Pennsylvania Highlands Trail Network. Story on page 3.

John Brunner photo.

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AMC Trail Crew builds the Ringing Rocks Trail

Story and photos by John Brunner

The AMC Professional Trail Crew came from their Pinkham Notch, New Hampshire, base to Ringing Rocks County Park on August 1 for a week-long project to build a 1.3 mile stretch of the Ringing Rocks Trail.

When completed, the Ringing Rocks Trail will be part of the Pennsylvania Highlands Trail Network, and will connect the extremely popular Ringing Rocks County Park with the D&L Trail in Delaware Canal State Park.

The trail is located mostly on the alignment of an old logging path, long ago abandoned and blocked by deadfalls and regrowth, plus many trees downed by Hurricane Sandy. A badly eroded slope on the old path was abandoned and left covered with downed trees, and a new, more erosion-resistant section built.

The Crew also worked for a day with volunteers from the Friends of Nockamixon State Park to clear a portion of the Mink Trail along Lake Nockamixon.



Work at Ringing Rocks

Much of the Trail Crew's work involved removing scores of blown-down trees that obliterated what had previously been the clear footprint of an historic logging path. In some areas it appeared that the fallen trees had been neatly laid out in a row, but where the logging path climbed up along the north slope of High Falls Creek there were impenetrable entanglements of hardwood trees, precariously and randomly piled in heaps like so many piles of Pick-up Sticks. The Trail Crew worked carefully and methodically through the hazardous sections of blow-downs.

The Crew also rerouted a section of the trail around the serious erosion found on the crest of the slope overlooking the High Falls Creek ravine. They left the blow-downs and root-balls where they had fallen so that the eroded areas would not be used by hikers.

Yet to do

The next tasks to be completed before the Ringing Rocks Trail can be open to the public include developing a "Footpath Crossing Agreement" that is required by PennDOT to cross River Road (Rt. 32); identifying how to connect the main parking lot to the section of trail that the Trail Crew restored; and blazing and signing the Ringing Rocks Trail.

Another potential project for Ringing Rocks Park is to identify, mark and map a trail loop system within the park, particularly between the boulder field and the water fall.

A confusing maze of highly eroded, random trails currently exists, and many of these have seen significant degradation from heavy foot traffic and water erosion.

Thanks to the excellent work of AMC's Pro Trail Crew, an obscure, historic logging path is well on its way to becoming one of the premier hiking trails in Bucks County, with the added value of providing a new connection between the iconic Ringing Rocks Park and the D&L Trail, a National Recreational Trail in Delaware Canal State Park.



Help harvest American chestnuts for breeding program aimed at producing blight-resistant chestnut trees

By Mike Manes

In April of this year, five members of our chapter assisted several other conservation-minded groups to plant approximately 1,000 American chestnut seeds at Milford Experimental Forest in Milford, PA.

This was the first activity by our club to help revitalize a tree that once dominated the east coast of the United State. Another activity will be run in late September of this year to further aid this conservation project. The September work will be the harvesting of chestnuts at an orchard near Hockessin, Delaware.

Prior to 1904, the American chestnut dominated the woods of Appalachia from Georgia to Maine. In the Delaware Valley, about 25 percent of deciduous trees were chestnut, more than one fourth of the wood found in structures that predate 1904 is chestnut. The wood has few knots, is lighter than oak, and highly resistant to rot. The nuts were consumed by humans, livestock and wildlife.

In 1904 it was discovered that a number of the chestnuts trees at the Bronx Zoo in New York City were infected by a fungus that is referred to as "chestnut blight." The blight spread rapidly destroying all the mature trees on the east coast, reaching southern Georgia in the early 1940s.

Now several groups are trying to revive the American chestnut, one of these groups is The American Chestnut Foundation (TACF). AMC Delaware Valley is a member of the PA/NJ chapter of TACF.

TACF is using a selective breeding process to create a chestnut that is resistant to the blight. Currently they are breeding a 15/16 American and 1/16 Chinese seed called the Restoration Chestnut 1.0.

The most recent chestnut harvesting in Delaware occurred between September 26 and 29 in 2013. I plan to lead this activity two or more times this year. A problem is that we do not know exactly when the nuts are ready to be harvested.

Ideally I would like to have one harvesting date on a weekday and one on a weekend. I am listing two dates, September 26, a Friday, and September 27, Saturday. But I need flexibility since we cannot guarantee that the chestnuts and the weather will be cooperative. I believe the date will likely be later this year than last year.

The chestnuts we harvest will be forwarded to Penn State Department of Agriculture where they will be winterized and later used in breeding programs in 2015. Participants should bring leather gloves since the chestnut burs have extremely vicious spikes. You can get more information and register for this activity on our chapter web site, or by [clicking here](#).



Above: Tom Sherwood planting a chestnut at Milford Experimental Forest on April 19, 2014. Mike Manes photo. Below: historic photo of old growth American chestnut trees, once the giants of the eastern forest. Left: Chestnut seed burr and leaf.



Phil Ritchie taught many people to paddle

including me. When he took over and led our chapters' paddling instruction program, he took it to a new level. He taught canoeing — that's what he knew and loved — tandem and solo open canoe, whitewater and flatwater, to hundreds of people. He proudly and rightfully pointed out that you could spot those who took our courses because they were better and safer paddlers.

Phil was an amazing guy: he built satellites and space probes and could repair almost anything. He could be frugal to the extreme and wonderfully generous. He once opened his home to 27 out-of-town paddlers (plus his family) when he felt it was too cold and rainy to camp at the Tohickon. He could be stubborn and cranky, yet had a great sense of humor. He was, in the words of a fellow paddler, "the nicest pain in the ass I ever met."

Phil died suddenly last winter of a stomach problem, four days shy of his 75th birthday. He took his final wilderness canoe trip the summer before with his grandsons and a longtime friend, Bob Lindquist. It was one of many wilderness trips he had taken, including



two down the Grand Canyon in open canoes, one solo and one tandem, and trips down remote rivers including the Nahanni in the Northwest Territories and the Winisk, which flows into Polar Bear Provincial Park on Hudson Bay.

Phil and his identical twin brother were born on a farm in Kentucky. His parents moved to another farm in Indiana, where he grew up with another brother and a sister. Phil graduated from the University of Indiana with a degree in physics, and spent most of his working career at General Electric Aerospace in King of Prussia. There he worked hands-on many projects, including the Galileo probe that orbited and was later deliberately crashed into Jupiter. Phil is survived by his wife Pat, two sons and five grandchildren,

Joins AMC

Phil started paddling with AMC very early in the 1980s, and by 1983 led the chapter's first week-long southern rivers trip. By the time I met him in 1985, he was leading a whitewater training program that involved a classroom session, a swimming pool session and two consecutive weekends on the water, all with up to 20 students, more than 20 volunteer experienced paddlers. Oh, and more than 20 boats!



Phil in bow and Bob Lindquist in stern were one of the first tandem open canoe teams to descend the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon.

He was not only a logistical organizer, he was loud (he was somewhat hard of hearing) and outspoken instructor with huge reserves of patience and the ability to get the message across. He cajoled, he encouraged, he made you do it over and you learned.

He explained to more advanced paddlers, "There's really only paddle stroke. Put the blade in the water where you want the boat to go, and pull.

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Outdoor leadership course set for November

If you are interested in becoming an AMC activity leader, and you don't want to wait until next April to take our weekend Outdoor Leadership Training course, you can take it this November.

The DV Chapter has established a reciprocal arrangement with the Connecticut Chapter so that our Chapter members may attend their leadership training course in the fall.

The course this year will be offered on the weekend of November 14-16 in Litchfield, Connecticut, in the western part of the state. We will try to coordinate carpools for our Chapter members traveling to Connecticut for the course (about 3½ hours from Philadelphia).

The November course, like the DV Chapter's spring course, covers many aspects of being a trip leader such as group dynamics, leadership styles and accident scene management, and is led by AMC volunteers and staff.

DV Chapter members completing this course will be certified as trip leaders upon completion of two successful co-leads on DV Chapter trips.

The cost for the weekend is \$60 for members, \$75 for non-members, including instruction, handouts, lodging and meals. For those leading at least two hikes for the DV Chapter within a year of the course, 50 percent of the course cost will be reimbursed.

For additional information on this course or on other leadership training opportunities available through the AMC, contact Leadership Chair Lennie Steinmetz at leadership@amcdv.org or phone her at 610-694-8677.

2014 AMC Delaware Valley Chapter Annual Meeting & Dinner

Upper Gwynned Firehouse Banquet Hall.

Saturday, November 8, 5 to 9 PM

BYOB happy hour with tasty hors d'oeuvres

Guest speaker: Cindy Ross

A night full of socializing, recognition and great food! As always, plenty of delicious desserts that will surely satisfy every sweet tooth.

The annual meeting will include recognition of 25 and 50 year members, election of executive committee members, and presentation of the Appie and Golden Appie awards.

The guest speaker is Cindy Ross, renowned writer and photographer, who has written several books and many articles inspired by her 30 plus years of finding peace and happiness in the outdoors. She is also the co-founder of River House, which helps veterans and others heal through experiences in nature.

The cost is \$25. Registration and more information will be posted on our chapter web site, amcdv.org, by October 1.

Questions? Contact, Geri Chmiel, social@amcdv.org or call 609-914-1540 before 9 PM.

Participate in AMC's

Conservation Action Network

Click here for more information.

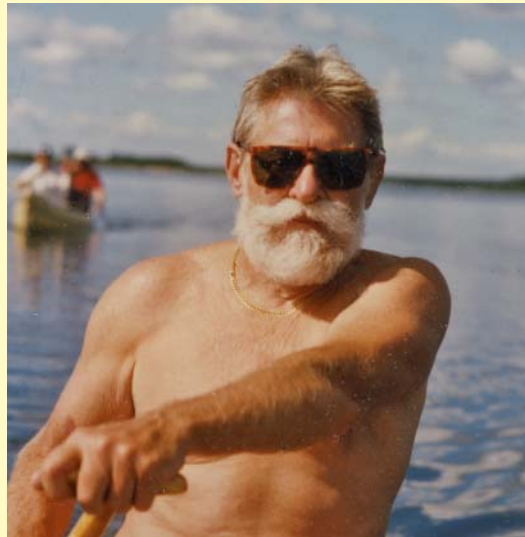
Phil Ritchie, continued from page 5.

Actually, there's a second one. Put your blade in the water where you don't want the boat to go, and push."

Week after week, from early spring to late fall, and even into winter, Phil would paddle on AMC trips, often leading them. For years Phil took movies of our whitewater trips, at first on Super 8 movie film, then later on video tape, with a camera secured in a waterproof box clipped to his boat. He edited these and presented them at the annual potluck dinners we used to hold each February.



Teacher Phil, in the bow, works hard trying to get the canoe into the eddy after the student almost missed the turn. Phil had the patience to work with students one-on-one until they eventually got it right.



December 24, 1938 — December 20, 2013

Beyond paddling, Phil was a great friend to many, often willing to help with everything from life's complexities to deep personal problems. I know, he helped me with mine.

Phil Ritchie was quite a character. An excellent paddler, knowledgeable about nature and a thousand other things. Always with strong opinions, and always willing to share them. Always willing to pitch in or help out or take the lead.

After a day of paddling, back at a cabin or campsite, Phil would often play a tune or two on his harmonica. I can still hear those tunes.

— Eric Pavlak

Annual picnic draws 100+ to Ft. Washington State Park

Perfect summer weather and a nice location were the winning combination to bring out record crowds of over 100 people and one well-behaved dog for our annual DV Chapter picnic. The day started with a moderately paced six mile hike led by Cliff and Nancy Hence through the trails of Fort Washington State Park. Thirty one people arrived early to join the hike.

As these folks were working up their appetites and enjoying the birds and wildflowers throughout the park, Social Chair Geri Chmiel and her committee got to work preparing the pavilion making it look festive for the picnic.

Volunteers fired up the grills to prepare the free hamburgers, veggie burgers and hotdogs. There were large selections of all types of delicious salads, fruit, side dishes and desserts brought by everyone in attendance. With so much food no one went home hungry.

Throughout the day people visited with old and new friends, played badminton, horseshoes, and quoits or joined in a game of pickle ball with instructor Don Garrido.

Something new this year was an optional tour of the nearby historic Clifton house which was enjoyed by all who went on the tour. Built in 1801, the Clifton House houses a historical museum and local library for the Fort Washington Historical Society. A good day was had by all and many are looking forward to next year's picnic and lots of good food.

Story and photo by Joan Aichele



Leaders' Social camp-out a hit

The Super Moon was not the only thing happening on Saturday, July 12. Many of our chapter leaders gathered together at Tohickon Valley County Park for our annual Leaders Social. It was an opportunity for the leaders to just kick back, relax and have fun and network with other leaders about past and future trips and adventures.

The weekend started with a hike led by Pete Jarrett to Ralph Stover Park and back. A new twist to the Social this year was the opportunity to camp out. About half of the leaders chose to do so. It was interesting to see the many different styles of tents, including John Garner's huge "Tent Mahal" with its very own doggie door.

We were please to have AMC Staff join us for a short presentation about the new AMC rebranding and present to the leaders Nalgene water bottles with the new AMC logo.

As the evening went on, we were treated to a spectacular super moon as it rose over the trees of the park. Many folks just lined up their chairs and enjoyed the moon, while a group of over eaters headed out for a nighttime stroll to work off all of the food.

Chef Jim Catozzi prepared a delicious dinner of burgers, grilled veggies and homemade strawberry pies for dinner, then blueberry pancakes and sausage for breakfast. No one went home hungry, and everyone managed to get packed up and on the road before the rain started. It was a perfect end to a fun-filled event.

Story and photos by Joan Aichele



August Camp 2014

Mountains of fun!



Story and photos by Lennie Steinmetz

AMC's August Camp took place this year at Mt. Rainier National Park. Although it's called August Camp, the camp actually runs for four one week sessions during the last two weeks of July and the first two weeks of August. The location changes each year, and this year's participants were delighted to enjoy the magnificent scenery in the Mt. Rainier area.

Most campers flew to Seattle, where they were picked up by the camp vans and driven to the camp on Saturday afternoon.

After a great dinner prepared by the August Camp crew, the campers gathered at campfire to hear about activities for the week. These included five to six hikes of different levels of difficulty to be offered each day in Mt. Rainier National Park, and other locations in the South Cascades. There were also visits to the Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument, whitewater rafting trips, overnight camping trips, historic train excursions, and more. The only problem facing campers was trying to decide which of the many options to choose each day.

As one camper commented "I love the fact that all I have to do is get myself to the airport, then everything else is taken care of for me and I can just relax and enjoy a great week with everyone here!"

There are about 60 campers at each one-week session of August Camp. The DV Chapter was particularly well-represented during week two when 12 of the campers were from the DV Chapter, although there were DV members at all four sessions.

Continued on next page



August Camp 2014 Mt. Rainier National Park



For some, it was their first time at August Camp, while others were returning for another chance to explore a new area with old and new AMC friends. One thing that they all liked was the opportunity to choose how long and difficult a hike they wanted to do each day, and to be able to get back together with other campers at night and compare notes on their experiences.

Another favorite for all was the excellent food (including options for vegetarians, gluten and lactose intolerant eaters) that was prepared by the eight member crew of personable college students.

Some participants listed the early morning swim as one of their favorites, while others liked the evening fireside sing-alongs, the freedom to take a day off to do their own thing, the amazing wildflowers, the friendly and open nature of the campers and leaders, etc. Whatever favorites they selected, everyone seemed to agree that it was a wonderful way to explore a part of the country they might not have seen otherwise.

August Camp 2015 will take place in the Three Sisters Wilderness area in Oregon in the Central Cascades, southwest of Portland. The hiking in this area is supposed to be terrific, and many of this year's campers are already making plans for next year's trip.

Applications for August Camp 2015 will be available in December 2014 on the August Camp web site www.augustcamp.org.





AMC's 20th Annual Photo Contest now open

AMC's Photo Contest began on August 4 and will remain open until October 1. This year's Grand Prize winner will receive a spot in an upcoming photography workshop and an accompanying stay at an AMC destination. Winners of the "Kids, Families, and Adults Outdoors," "Scenics and Nature," "AMC in Action," and "People's Choice" categories will receive great outdoor gear prizes from Deuter, Forty Below, LEKI, and Outdoor Research.

For complete rules and entry instructions, visit www.outdoors.org/photocontest. Entries will be accepted until October 1, with the winners appearing in a 2014 issue of AMC Outdoors.

Left: 2013 Grand Prize Winner, Water Jewels by Ashok Boghani

The Appalachian Long Distance Hikers Association (ALDHA) is having their annual Gathering October 10-12 this year at Williamstown, Mass.

If you are interested in learning more about backpacking, some of the best backpackers in the world will be there. There will be movies, slide shows, and even dancing, but most importantly, many seminars that you can attend. And you can enjoy just talking to those that hike all over the globe.

The Appalachian Trail and Mt. Greylock are nearby, and there will be a great place to camp if you want to tent.

Event site: www.aldha.org. Contact Carl Rush, 484 464 8318, pct59hiker@yahoo.com, for rideshareing and more information.

Wildflower web



From the American Lotus with flowers bigger than your head to the Small Forget-me-not with blooms an eight inch across, we are trying to help you identify them all. Check out What's In Bloom on our chapter's web site, amcdv.org, link at bottom of the home page. Organized by months and bloom times. Or volunteer to be a flower spotter!



AMC adventure travel trip that climbed Kilimanjaro

AMC Adventure Travel Leadership Training set for November 14-16 in Litchfield, Conn.

Visit some of the most exciting places in the world as the leader of an AMC Adventure Travel trip! This workshop provides important training to people who have AMC chapter leadership experience (no beginners) to transition from leading weekend chapter activities to more complex and longer trips, domestically and overseas.

Previous outdoor leadership training is necessary. Emphasis is on planning, cost estimating, marketing, trip management, people skills, risk management, and reporting. Includes procedures and guidelines for researching, proposing, and leading AMC Adventure Travel trips.

Exchange ideas, problems, and solutions with some of AMC's most experienced and skilled leaders. Small group size assures abundant discussion and access to instructors.

The cost is \$75 includes two nights lodging, two breakfasts, two lunches and Saturday dinner at White Memorial Conservation Center in Litchfield, CT. Download registration package at: snebulos.mit.edu/majorexursions/training. Please register by October 25. For details contact Registrar Merri Fox, merri.fox@pw.utc.com.



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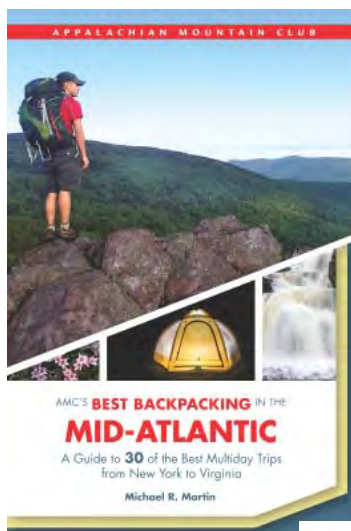
By Susan Charkes
Our chapter's
Conservation Chair

Member Price: \$15.16

Outdoors with Kids Philadelphia is the latest addition to the AMC's Outdoors with Kids series. Providing comprehensive guides to low-cost adventure, the book includes destination and trip information for locations in and around Philadelphia. It focuses on the "pay-off" for children of each age group while specifying which locations are good for hiking, swimming, paddling, biking, etc. It features safety tips and a "Plan B" for each destination.

AMC Books are available wherever books are sold, or order directly from AMC at outdoors.org/amcstore or by calling 800-262-4455.

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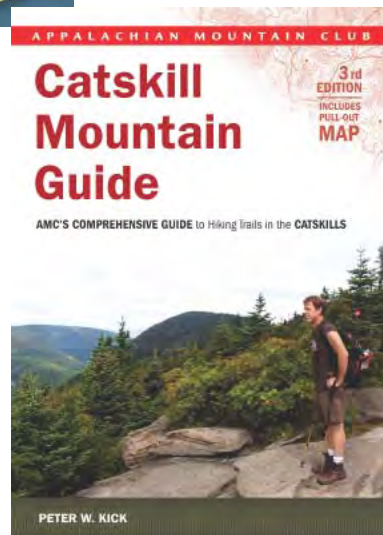


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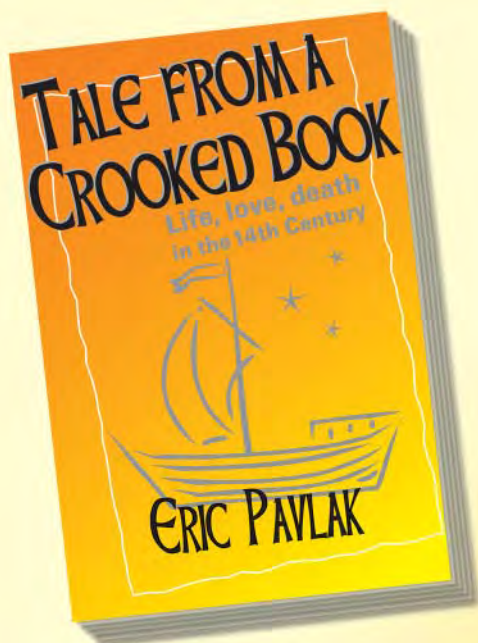
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