



# THE HAPPY HIKER

The Official Newsletter of the Allentown Hiking Club

MEMBER OF THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CONSERVANCY AND THE KEYSTONE TRAILS ASSOCIATION

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

### Message from Your Outgoing President

It has once again been a pleasure to serve as President of the Allentown Hiking Club for the last two years just like it was back in the 1980s\* when I filled those shoes in a much younger body. Many things have changed over the years such as saying goodbye to members that have moved away, retired from the hiking community or passed on to the great trail in the sky, as well as welcoming many new members. However, much remains a constant to the credit of this great organization. The club still has one of the best maintained sections of the Appalachian Trail, thanks to the many dedicated individuals who maintain and monitor the AHC section of the trail and mentor new volunteers. The club continues to create an active outing schedule of varied hiking and outdoor events, the original mission of this organization when it was formed 80+ years ago. I am always impressed with the ability of the AHC club members to work together toward common goals for so many years without the internal strife that occurs in so many other organizations. Having great members makes being your President easy!

I know that you will support our new President Lucy Cantwell and Vice President Karen Gradel, and I am excited that these officers are assuming roles of greater responsibility to the club from their previous positions. I have always felt that regular change in leadership helps keep an organization healthy by introducing different points of view.

I want to thank the club for making me an AHC Honorary Member at the December meeting. It was a surprise and an honor to be selected. I have every intention to stay active in the club in other roles, including leading hikes which I love to do. I also look forward to being able to participate in more club activities and maintenance work as some of my other obligations wind down in the next year.

Happy Hiking!

Mike "Sparky" Wuerstle  
Outgoing AHC President

\*Editor's note: Mike Wuerstle served as president of The Allentown Hiking Club for four years from 1988 to 1991 and then again for two years from 2011 to 2012.

## Allentown Hiking Club

P.O.Box 1542 — Allentown, Pa 18105-1542

Sponsored by City of Allentown Department of Parks and Recreation

[www.allentownhikingclub.org](http://www.allentownhikingclub.org)

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### Deadlines for the Spring 2013 Newsletter & Schedule

Happy Hiker Newsletter

Wednesday February 27, 2013

Activity Schedule

Wednesday, March 6, 2013

Please forward all club related articles, thoughts, and items to the Newsletter Editor by mail or, preferably, by email. Send all hiking schedule activities to the Hiking Schedule Coordinator.

### Upcoming Programs at the AHC Meetings

In addition to the normal business meeting there is also generally a program which is related in some way to the club's activities. The following is a preview of the upcoming programs:

**January 2<sup>nd</sup>** Ron Kieffer and Mercedes Jurkiewicz will present a slide presentation on their trip to the Adirondacks.

**February 6<sup>th</sup>** Charlie Root, EPA Manager for the Palmerton Superfund site, will speak on the restoration project on the Blue Mountain east of Lehigh Gap.

**March 6<sup>th</sup>** Business meeting and scheduling night for April, May and June activities for the Spring Happy Hiker.

### Welcome to Our New Members! - Sept-Nov 2012

Bill Ashley and family-Telford, PA

Barbara Beatrice-Schwenksville, PA

Jeffrey Fritzinger-Newtown, PA

Kerry Snyder-Orefield, PA

Joy & Tom Thiel-Allentown, PA

Jay Titmas-Breinigsville, PA

Gary Walther-Perkiomenville, PA

### MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE DUE FOR 2013!

Yes, once again it is time to renew your annual dues to the club. Dues are still a bargain @ \$10.00/individual or \$15.00/household per calendar year. Just fill out the form on page 5 and mail it to the membership secretary, or pay in person at a club meeting. The cutoff date will be **January 31, 2013**. Please renew by this date or you will be removed from the membership database.

Club dues help cover the publication and mailing of the newsletter/schedule, library books, and video purchases, Appalachian Trail maintenance, misc. dues, etc.

You can also prepay your dues years in advance if you don't want to be bothered on a yearly basis!



### Would you like to lead a hike?

The Allentown Hiking Club is always looking for club members to lead hikes and other outdoor events. In order to lead a hike, you must be an active member who has participated in at least 3 club activities, such as meetings, hikes and picnics or maintenance projects. At least one of these must be acting as co-leader on a hike. Just find a hike that interests you and contact the leader. Let him/her know that you are interested in leading a hike at some point in the future and would like to co-lead on their hike. We ask that you be familiar with the destination and area of the hike and you must be over 21 years of age. See you on the trails!



## TIPS FOR FALL AND WINTER HIKING DURING HUNTING SEASON

Fall and winter can be fun time for a hike; summer heat is gone. The air is crisp and filled with the smell of leaves and the burning of wood fires; insects are in hibernation; the trails are less crowded. With the leaves off the trees, mountain trails can offer spectacular views. But it's also hunting season in the Pennsylvania woods, and it is good to take heed and prepare before venturing outdoors.

### Know local hunting seasons

Specific dates for hunting seasons vary year to year and also by type of game hunted and weapon used. Small-game seasons (turkey, rabbit) stretch from fall through the end of May; large-game seasons (deer, bear, moose) generally occur October through January. Learn the regulations and hunting seasons for the areas where you will be hiking before you go. Hunting on Sundays is prohibited in some states. See Appalachian Trail Conservancy's 2012-2013 Hunting Season Guide by State ([www.appalachiantrail.org](http://www.appalachiantrail.org)) for hunting seasons along the Appalachian Trail including Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Maryland and Virginia, among others. For more details on our Pennsylvania Hunting Season, see the Pennsylvania Game Commission website ([www.pgc.state.pa.us/](http://www.pgc.state.pa.us/)).

### Wear blaze orange

Wear a blaze orange hat and vest (and pack cover or large bandana if backpacking), or hooded outerwear that can be seen from all angles when hiking in fall, winter and spring. If you hike with a dog, it should also wear blaze orange vest, collar, leash or bandana so it is visible from all sides. The ATC recommends that pets be leashed at all times while hiking.

On state game lands in Pennsylvania, all hunters and non-hunters are required to wear at least 250 square inches of fluorescent orange material on the head, chest and back combined, or a fluorescent orange hat, from Nov. 15–Dec. 15 (except on Sundays). The orange material must be visible from all angles (360 degrees). Many hiking paths including parts of the Appalachian Trail use state game lands.

Avoid wearing colors that could be mistaken for game animals. Avoid any brown, tan, earth tones and especially white - you do not want to look like the flash of deer's tail. During turkey season avoid red, blue, black and white. These are the head colors of a male wild turkey. Avoid wearing blue jeans or carrying a red or blue handkerchief.

Be heard. Make sure you are heard before you are seen by whistling, singing, talking, etc., while on a hike. Bells can also be worn on your packs or by your canine companions.

### Be Aware

Use extra caution especially at dawn and dusk. Hunting activity may increase at dawn and dusk, when animals are feeding and visibility is poor. Hike during broad daylight when hunters can more easily identify you. Be especially cautious within 1/2-mile of road crossings, trailheads and in valley areas.

Avoid the most popular hunting days, like opening weekend. In Pennsylvania that would be the Monday after Thanksgiving and extending into the first two weekends of December. When you do go, choose trails that are off-limits to or unpopular with hunters. Stick to established, marked trails. Skip the bushwhacking during hunting season. Hunters are more likely to expect hikers on trails. Consider hiking on Sundays. In Pennsylvania, hunting is not allowed on Sundays.



Club member, Jim Gabovitz, dons orange blaze in preparation for a fall hike.

Choose clothing with large amounts of orange even if you have to put a vest or t-shirt over your jacket.





### New Honorees

Carl Griffin and Mike "Sparky" Wuerstle were presented with certificates as new Honorary Members of the Allentown Hiking Club. They were selected for 2012 by the selection committee of past recipients, headed this year by Barbara Wiemann. Pictured here with past recipients are Jim Gabovitz, Nick Rosato, Ed Ritter, Dick Snyder, Barbara Wiemann, Carl Griffin, Mike Wuerstle, Janet Goloub, Ginny Musser and Gene Scharle.

### December Potluck Holiday Dinner Enjoyed by All!



### Oh Christmas Fern, Oh Christmas Fern

The Christmas fern is an evergreen fern native to eastern North America and found throughout Pennsylvania. It is one of our most common ferns and is found in a wide variety of habitats but most commonly on shady hillsides and wooded stream banks. It is also cultivated as an ornamental for gardens and natural landscaping because it is hardy. While it prefers partial shade, under trees and rocky areas, it also tolerates direct sun if the soil is kept damp. It is also resistant to pests and diseases and not a preferred food for deer. It can even survive periods of drought.

Its name is derived from the fact that its glossy, leathery fronds stay green right through the holiday season. Early colonists used its fronds for wreath making and other yuletide decorations. Also, its leaflets (pinna) are said to resemble a Christmas stocking, Santa's boot or a winter sleigh.

The Christmas fern was used by several Indian tribes for medicinal purposes. The root was made into a tea to treat chills and fever and to induce vomiting as a treatment for stomach aches. A poultice was made from the roots to treat rheumatism.

Its fronds are semi-erect until the first hard frost, after which they recline to be flat on the ground. On steep slopes clusters of these ferns accumulate leaf litter to form a dense mass that helps stabilize the underlying soil and prevent erosion. It also generates a protective, concealing habitat for a number of native ground-feeding and ground-nesting bird species such as the wild turkey and ruffed grouse.

Growth of new fronds (fiddleheads) begins in early spring, as soon as the winter snow melts, sometimes even growing as early as mayapples, trilliums and other wildflowers and to the sounds of spring peepers.



Christmas fern (*Polystichum acrostichoides*) also known as canker brake, dagger fern and wood fern was widely used as a Christmas decoration. Its pinna are said to resemble tiny stockings.







Ed Ritter, Ginny Musser, Ed Kehs, Gene Scharle and Nick Rosato journey to the Allentown Shelter to install the new fire ring. Ed carries the new fire ring on a backpack frame rigged by Nick to support the 42 lb, 36 inch by 8 inch fire ring.

## This has a Nice Ring to It

A new 42-pound fire ring was carried 2 miles in to the Allentown Shelter by Ed Ritter and company this fall. Carl Griffin welded anchor feet to the ring and 4 holes were drilled into the concrete pad to secure the ring with reinforcement rod. The ring was secured in place to prevent it from being removed from the shelter. If this holds up to the rigors of the trail, plans are to install a similar fire ring at the Outerbridge Shelter.



"In the depth of winter I finally learned that there was in me an invincible summer." - Albert Camus

# MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION



INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE \$10.00 PER CALENDAR YEAR FROM JANUARY TO DECEMBER, AND RENEWALS MUST BE MADE BEFORE JANUARY 31ST TO STAY ON THE CLUB'S MEMBERSHIP ROLLS. DUES CAN BE PAID AT THE MONTHLY MEETING OR MAILED TO THE CLUB MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY. HOUSEHOLD DUES (MORE THAN ONE MEMBER PER ADDRESS) ARE \$15.00.

**MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY:** Paula Uhrin: 283 Ridgeview Drive, Alburtis Pa. 18011

NAME(S):

ADDRESS:

CITY:

STATE:

ZIP:

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PHONE:

RENEWAL

NEW

EMAIL:

\_\_\_\_\_ Dues @\$10.00 / \$15.00 Household

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\_\_\_\_\_ Club T-shirt @ \$6.00 + \$3.50 shipping ea.

\_\_\_\_\_ Club golf shirt @ \$12.00 + \$3.50 shipping ea.

\_\_\_\_\_ Club Embroidered patch @ \$1.50 + \$.75 shipping ea.

\_\_\_\_\_ Club window decal @ \$2.50 + \$.75 shipping ea

\_\_\_\_\_ Club window cling decal @ \$2.50 + \$.75 shipping ea

Checks payable to "Allentown hiking Club"

Total enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Yes - Please sign me up for the Allentown Hiking Club's email list --- the AHC Forum

