



THE NIAGARA EXPLORER

Newsletter of the Adirondack Mountain Club – Niagara Frontier Chapter

Letter:

Don't believe doomsayers; we will get through this

In case you missed it, in the Buffalo News "Everybody's Column" a letter written by our Chair, Paul Gannon that spreads hope in this time of uncertainty. Thank you, Paul!

– Bob Van Hise

By Paul M. Gannon, RN (retired), West Seneca

May 4, 2020

Hollywood loves to portray the struggles of post-apocalyptic dystopian societies. Why? Is it because such stories are more exciting than real life?

Recently, this space published a letter predicting the imminent collapse of our society into a Darwinian nightmare, where desperate people battle for survival, as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. Survivalist-minded individuals may fear, and some perhaps even look forward to, this occurrence.

The historical record posits a much more likely scenario. Whether you refer to Londoners during the Blitz, New Yorkers on 9-11, or countless other examples – in trying times, the vast majority of citizens remain calm, and respond with grim determination and quiet resolve to carry on and assist others.

So, I will take the liberty of making my own predictions as to our future. The "95/5 rule" makes it clear that there will always be exceptions. Some panic buyers will continue to amass 46,238 rolls of toilet paper. There will be the occasional individual so terrified of catching the virus that he will gargle with drain cleaner because someone on YouTube told him to. A few clueless people will continue to violate physical distancing directives.

However, emergency personnel, health care workers, and essential service employees will continue to show up at their jobs – heroes all. Those that are able will continue to work from home. The unemployed will carefully husband their resources, while waiting for government assistance to arrive. Volunteers will continue to assist in myriad ways. Families, social groups and religious organizations will discover new ways to connect.

Finally, at the end of this pandemic, we will emerge a stronger, wiser, more united, and more compassionate society, with a deeper appreciation of each other and of what truly matters in life.

Waiting for Your Swag?!

Our chapter t-shirt sale, which ran May 1 through May 17 was such a great way to welcome back the much anticipated summer season!

If you ordered, please expect delivery during the first week of June. Thank you to all who participated!



INFORMATION ON CORONAVIRUS

We have been updated on the recommended chapter activities now that the state has started the phased reopening process. Further information will be provided about planning for July and August by early to mid-June.

ADK is postponing the reopening of its lodging facilities. All lodging reservations through May 31 are cancelled. All in-person programming is cancelled through June 30. Our Summer Naturalist Program, and all backcountry overnight programs are cancelled for the summer.

The trails programs and the Summit Stewardship Program will resume operating with limited staff once it is safe to do so. The Lake George Member Services Center will remain closed until further notice.

ADK has released recommendations to the public on safe and responsible recreation during this time, which includes bringing a face mask and sanitation on every hike. [You can read them here.](#)

We want to ensure that we are still with you ... virtually! Stay tuned to weekly updates and our Facebook page to enjoy fellow members' past treks and adventures found during these difficult times.

Until we see each other again, please enjoy our Education Workshop and Program from afar...

Virtual Education Workshop: *High Peaks Adventuring: Part II*

Even though we can't gather in person, we can meet virtually, and have a wonderful time being together! Join us for *High Peaks Adventuring: Part II* on Zoom: **Tuesday, June 9th at 6:30 PM.**

Recently minted Adirondack 46er and licensed outdoor guide Mike Radomski will share videos of his high peaks adventures, as well as detailed gear lists, hike descriptions, and more ways to prepare for hiking the Adirondack 46. We will also discuss some other hiking challenges in the Adirondacks including the Saranac 6.

Mike did an outstanding job with *Part I* last month. If you missed it, our outing chair Greg Germaine was kind enough to record it - Please visit the Education page of adk-nfc.org.

Thanks so much to Mike, to Greg for all of his technical help, and to Leslie Salathe for helping to make all of this possible. If anybody has questions for Mike, feel free to reach out via email, mike.radomski@gmail.com

-Teresa Corrigan, Education chair

Virtual Program:

"Getting high with my son – a hut to hut traverse of the Presidential Range"

In August 2011, I took my son Adam on a 4-day hike over the Presidential Range in the White Mountains, summiting a number of peaks, including Mount Washington. At 6288 feet, it is the highest peak in the northeast. Each night, we stayed in one of the Appalachian Mountain Club's huts, which are actually backcountry hotels, similar to our Adirondack Loj. The club maintains 8 huts along the Appalachian Trail in New Hampshire, each a day's hike from the next ...



We arrived at the Visitor Center, in Pinkham Notch, NH. First, we obtained a weather and trail condition report from the AMC staff, and rented some trekking poles for Adam. Then we enjoyed a fine meal in the attached restaurant.

Following dinner, we checked into Joe Dodge Lodge and enjoyed a restful night's sleep. The next morning, after a hearty breakfast, we took the AMC shuttle to Highland Center and the trailhead to Mt. Jackson.



The first day, it poured rain. As we summited Mt. Jackson, we were engulfed in cold fog and stiff winds. When we arrived at Mizpah Spring Hut, we found it full of wet, tired hikers. Every available surface was draped with damp clothing or gear.

The next morning dawned bright, sunny, and clear. We enjoyed three days of beautiful weather. It was cool and windy on the high mountain ridge, with temperatures in the 50s. The area around

Mount Washington has some of the worst weather in North America. Even in summer, hikers have been caught out in snowstorms and have suffered from hypothermia, so we felt very lucky. Still, we carried full layers of winter clothing and emergency shelter in our day packs.



Previously, I had ventured above the tree line for an hour or two, while climbing a High Peak in the Adirondacks. On this trip, we were above the tree line for 4 days. The prolonged exposure was awe-inspiring!



After a full day of hiking, we were in sight of the iconic Lakes of the Clouds hut and its two shallow glacial tarns, which lie in the col between Mt. Monroe and Mount Washington. I had studied photos of this scene for several years, and now I was finally there!



On the third afternoon, we reached the summit of Mt. Washington. It was a surreal experience to reach a high mountain summit and find a parking lot, train station, observatory, and visitor's center. As we approached, the tourists who had driven to the top stared at us as if we were aliens climbing out of a spaceship. We rested and had lunch in the cafe before resuming our hike.

After summiting Mt. Washington, we followed the railroad tracks down hill for a short distance before turning north and proceeding on our way. At the end of a long day of hiking along the rocky ridge line trail, we descended to Madison Spring Hut, situated just below the tree line. There we spent our final night of the hike, resting our sore feet.

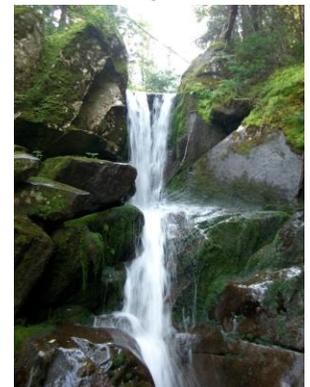


a fast flowing stream with plunging waterfalls. After spending 3 days among the dry dust and rocks of the ridge line, the cool, moist air was a delight.

The next day, we hiked the Valley Way Trail down to our pickup spot. The route passed through lush foliage alongside



At the end of the trail, we met our shuttle, which transported us back to Pinkham Notch. We enjoyed a hot shower, followed by a well-deserved and sumptuous meal, and a great night's sleep. The next day, we began our trip back home, with another memorable father and son adventure successfully completed.



- Submitted by Paul M. Gannon

Conservation Corner

Video Channels to check out!

At a recent exec meeting many ADK'ers were interested in videos that campground and High Peaks Info center volunteers saw recently, Kate Hacker reached out and received a reply from Bobby Clark from ADK (a WNY native) with some links to the sites where the videos came from.

<https://www.youtube.com/user/ADKmntclub/videos>

<https://www.youtube.com/user/LeaveNoTraceCenter>

How do you Earth Day every day?

Even though Earth day is noted but once a year, doesn't mean we limit our celebrations to that day! ADK's mission statement of "Conservation.Recreation.Education" shows that, us ADK'ers celebrate our earth every day of the year!

Some of our own ADK'ers chimed in with their own "Earth Day every day" habits:

- Over packaged or unnecessarily packaged products drive me bonkers! I attempt to refuse as much single-use plastic as possible. First step is buying fresh or dried. Second, being prepared prior to an outing or shopping by bringing reusable waterbottle/coffee cup/takeout container, buying in bulk with reusable containers, using reusable sachets for unwrapped produce, and of course reusable shopping bags!
 - Submitted by *Mary K. Noack*
- Ensuring plastic bags (bread, lettuce, and the rogue shopping bag alike) are separated from the rest of our recycling as they can be difficult for recycling streams to handle ... and there are plastic bag specific recycle bins at most grocery stores!
 - Submitted by *Joanne*
- It always bothered me to provide single use plastic plates and cups at family gatherings and parties. So, a number of years ago, I purchased sturdy plastic plates and cups. I now use them for every event where I would have previously used the disposable kind. After all this time, they are still in excellent condition. Whenever I use them, I think about all of the waste that didn't end up in some landfill. Following up on that success, I looked for cloth napkins to use as a substitute for paper. I found some inexpensive white cotton ones and now use them for all my meals.
 - Submitted by *Paul M. Gannon*



Message from the Chair

When my son was in high school, we spent a pleasant weekend hiking a short section of the Appalachian Trail through Virginia to Harper's Ferry. Along the way, we followed the official trail markers, like the one in the accompanying photo. I remember marveling that the same trail we were on began in Georgia and extended all the way to Maine. I have always enjoyed a day hike or a short backpack trip. However, the idea of spending six months walking 2200 miles is beyond me. I admire those who have been able to accomplish this feat. To complete such a journey requires both commitment and perseverance.

The same thing may be said about our current battle against this coronavirus pandemic. In some ways, living through the past several months has been the easier part. People can usually rally to deal with a short-term emergency. The more difficult part will be to adapt to a whole new way of behaving and functioning for the unknown future. This too will require both commitment and perseverance.



In a recent video conference, the executive committee listened to a presentation by our Executive Director Michael Barrett, and President Tom Andrews. Michael warned us that the state club faces a serious financial shortfall and will not be able to provide the chapters with their share of the dues for the foreseeable future. This will have a trickle-down effect on our chapter finances.

On top of that, we are unable to hold our usual in-person meetings or attend outings. No one knows how long these restrictions will last.

What to do, what to do? I think that the correct response begins with focusing on why ADK exists in the first place. We believe that people need to live in harmony with their environment. While not rejecting the modern world, we also believe that it is important to immerse ourselves in nature, from time to time, and experience its rejuvenating powers.

To accomplish these goals, we support an organization that encourages the protection and restoration of the environment, which promotes responsible outdoor recreation, and that teaches people the necessary skills to do so. This mission has not changed.

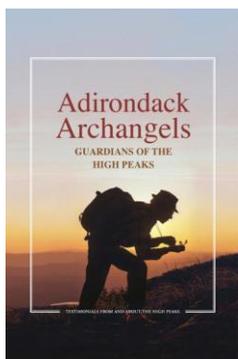
So, we must continue to develop new methods to accomplish the same goals. Our executive committee now conducts business through Zoom video conferences. Members have replaced group activities with individual outings and conservation efforts. They generously share reports of these activities with their fellow ADK'ers, using our weekly email and monthly newsletter. We continue to provide education sessions and programs using the same formats. On May 12, our chapter presented its first webinar, and I anticipate more such offerings in the future.

As long as I serve as your chair, the Niagara Frontier chapter will continue with our mission of conservation, education, and recreation. I welcome your input and thank you for your continued support. Take care, stay safe, and be healthy.

— *Paul M. Gannon*

Trip (and other) Reports

Trekking Along the Book Shelf: *Adirondack Archangels: Guardians of the High Peaks* – by Bill McKibben



This ADK collection of over 3 dozen essays describes the inspired efforts of passionate heroes who strive to balance Wilderness Protection and Human Activity. Author/Adirondack resident Bill McKibben writes in the Forward about the specialness of Alpine summits.... “Covered with rocks, lichen and tufted grass, a meeting place for people with peanut butter sandwiches who have fallen under the spell of these mountains”. Dr. Edwin H. Ketchledge (“Ketch”) is featured, starting as a budding young naturalist on forest walks with his mom and later a passionate botanist and charismatic professor at SUNY ESF. After observing trampled summit plants in the 1960s, he strived to catalog and protect fragile alpine plants, and developed the Summit Stewardship Program. Ketch describes 4 rewards for the perceptive hiker who reaches ADK summits: satisfaction of accomplishment, the dramatic experience of mountain views while standing on the sky/earth boundary, appreciation of history and the formation of the land masses before you, and inner peace as you reflect on the grandeur of the natural world.

Writer Phil Brown’s essay describes Bob Marshall, who with his brother George and guide Herb Clark were the first 46ers. Another essay describes a Troy NY church hiking group that climbed the highest ADK peaks. This group of parishioners included Grace Hudowalski, and became the founding members of the Adirondack Forty-Sixers. Also featured is affable and beloved Forest Ranger Peter Fish, who climbed Mt Marcy several hundred times and spent his career educating mountain hikers. Tony Goodwin is another archangel, who spent his childhood summers in Keene Valley, became a 46er at age 11, and has established the Gold Standard for accurate maps and guides for the High Peaks region. ADK Professional Trail crews are also featured, lauding their rock staircase artisan skills and arduous efforts.

Brilliant photographs including many by Carl Heilman II fill the pages, depicting wildflowers, wildlife, scenic views, and water wonders. The essays were compiled by Adirondack advocates Christine Bourgade and Alex Radmanovich, and all book proceeds support the ADK Summit Steward Program. The more I learn about the history, natural wonders, and people who have shaped Adirondack Park, the greater my appreciation for this National Treasure we are fortunate to have

in our very own state. Reading a couple of essays every evening is a perfect escape during these dark pandemic days... until the Park reopens and we can witness the splendor in person again.

- *Outdoor-themed book review submitted by Janet Kowalski*

05/03 – BIKE - Heritage Trail & Westwood Park Lancaster, NY

Sunday morning was bright and beautiful for a 10 mi loop on the Heritage Trail in Lancaster. The trail was not crowded and perfect for a socially distant ride. Exiting the bike path a short ride on the roads led to the bike path at Westwood Park. The ride looped back down Erie St.

- *Submitted by Mike Lex*



05/20 – HIKE – Reinstein Woods



On a perfect, sun-splashed Wednesday afternoon, Teresa and I ventured forth to enjoy some birdwatching and exercise at DEC's Reinstein Woods Nature Preserve in Cheektowaga, NY.

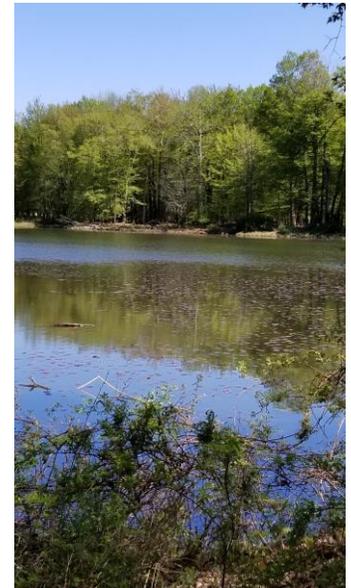
From the parking area, we entered the preserve via the "one-way" walking lanes, then headed west along the History Trail. This is a wide, semi-paved path that meanders along between some wetlands and side trails. We paused to enjoy chestnut-sided and yellow warblers gleaning insects from trailside trees. Continuing west, we were surprised and delighted by a gorgeous female Scarlet Tanager (unlike the crimson male, the female is a bright, cheery yellow). This was fun!

Continuing our hike at a good pace, we headed toward Hidden Pond and eventually West Pond (fittingly, at the Preserve's western border). It's easy to get up a nice head of steam when walking at Reinstein: the trails are mainly flat (though none are truly steep) and the footing is quite good, even on wet days.

We switched to the Beech Tree trail (named for an American Beech estimated to be over 250 years old) and proceeded south, then east. The birding got intense, with warblers abundant along the trail. We even picked up two new entries for our bird life lists (Swainson's and Gray-Cheeked thrushes).

A walk around Lily Pond Loop completed our outing. In the pond were hundreds of water lilies just about to bloom. It's an awesome sight when these flowers show off their full glory!

- *Submitted by Peter Corrigan*



05/13 – BIKE/HIKE – FLT near Hornell, NY

As avid hikers of the Finger Lakes Trail, our typical 10-12 mi. hikes are aided by car spotters to enable us to get as many miles under our boots without doing the dreaded 'out-and-back'. Without car spotters available due to pandemic restrictions and the guilt of taking 2 cars, we decided to use our bikes!

Driving our car, bikes in tow, to where we would end our hike, we then biked 7 mi. to our starting point. A road, properly named 'Turnpike Rd' led us up such hills we almost wore ourselves out too early! We found

our start, a random dirt farm road, and after procuring permission from the land owner, we locked our bikes to a farm post.

After leaving the farm land, our trek flitted us through gorgeous pine forests and hilltop farmlands. We had a wonderful conditions, we kept exclaiming what a beautiful day we had chosen! Back at the car, we promptly cheers'ed our homemade beef jerky to an adventure well done!

- Submitted by Mary K. Noack

**05/13/20 HIKE - Conservation Trail "There's no Place like Home"
CT 11-12, Hike #19 - Ellicott Creek Bike Path to Niawanda Park to Grand Island Bridge**



Sunny clear skies and we were off, this time on our bikes since we had walked this path numerous times and knew it like it was our other backyard. Took a small little detour up the old canal (Tonawanda Creek) to Ellicott Creek Island. This is the old boathouse on the island, which is now a dog park and sadly was closed off to us to explore. I always liked this section of Ellicott Creek Park because it was more wild and used to be a favorite hangout as a teen.

This bike trail then goes all the way to Albany up the Erie Canal Tow Path! Incredible how one can bike all the way from

TIFFT Nature Preserve all along our Niagara River, then into the Tonawandas up the river East towards Ellicott Creek then onwards along the Erie Canal into Amherst, Lockport, and on into Albany! But we meandered back towards home along a lovely bike path strewn with little gardens and home-made docks all along the way into Tonawanda Canal Park, then along the Niawanda Park bike path to Muddy Waters for our lunch stop. Along the way we saw the old turn-style bridge that seems to be trapped in the middle of the waters for eternity not going anywhere.



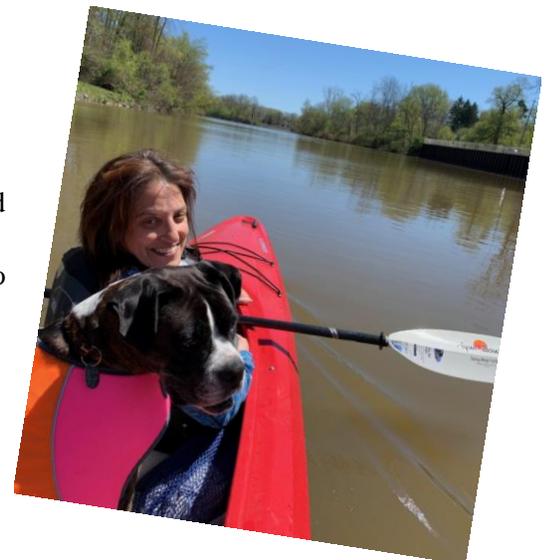
After a nice lunch stop along the Niagara River, we headed up towards the Grand Island Bridge, against the wind, but it was a good sunny day so we did not mind so much. Only 2 more days left to finish our "adventure". Here we come Grand Island and Niagara Falls!

- Submitted by Joanne Magavern

05/20 – PADDLE - Tonawanda Creek

An uncharacteristically late first-season paddle on May 20th! We decided to try out our double kayak and see if Mia would enjoy hanging out in the middle. She did! It was a warm, sunny, and calm day for a paddle. We've also been out in our singles since then and are looking forward to some day trips to nearby lakes and waterways!

- Submitted by Greg Germaine



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