



THE NIAGARA EXPLORER

Newsletter of the Adirondack Mountain Club – Niagara Frontier Chapter

Racism in America, Where does ADK-NFC stand?

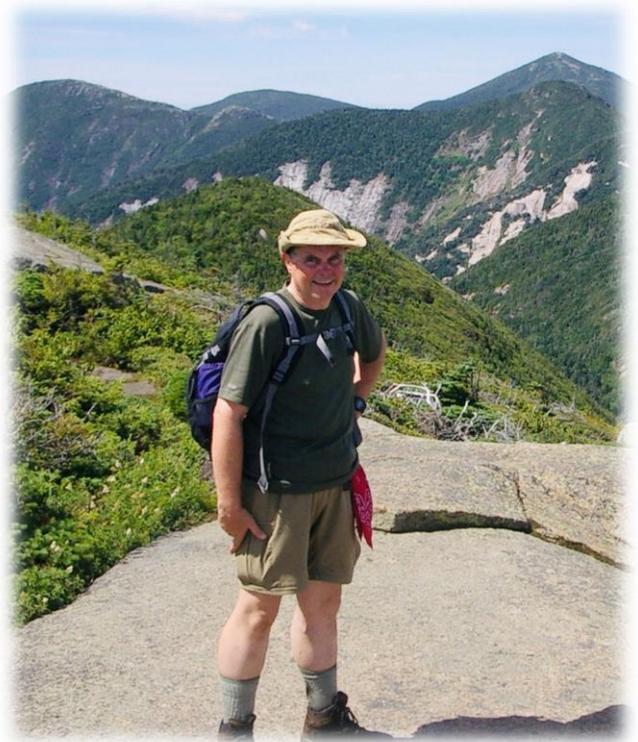
A Special Message from the Chair – July 2020

In the first edition of his pamphlet series, *The American Crisis*, published during the darkest days of the American Revolution, Thomas Paine famously lamented that “these are the times that try men’s souls”. In coining that phrase, he might have also been providing a prescient warning to our generation. These are indeed times that try our souls.

We have been battling a global pandemic that has infected millions, and killed over 116,000 of our fellow citizens, with no end in sight. The accompanying economic disruption has resulted in the closure of many businesses and losses of trillions of dollars. It has led to record unemployment, second only to the Great Depression.

The effects of the pandemic have not been shared equally. The burden has fallen disproportionately on members of already marginalized minority communities. This has exposed long overlooked problems, such as lack of affordable housing and job opportunities, food insecurity, and inadequate education and health care.

Compounding these inequities is the fact that many of the most essential service jobs are held by members of these same communities. At a time when public health experts were advising everyone to remain home, these people headed out to work, performing the roles which were critical to maintaining a functioning society. Some of these workers paid for their efforts with their lives. Many of them were, no doubt, motivated by a desire to serve in time of need. Others simply had no option. Employed in low wage occupations, they lacked the resiliency enjoyed by more fortunate individuals, who could either work from home, or live off of their savings. For them, it was a stark choice between certain homelessness and hunger, or possible illness and death.



If this were not already burden enough, on Memorial Day we watched in horror as members of the Minneapolis police department murdered George Floyd, a black man arrested for the minor offense of allegedly passing a

counterfeit bill. This event occurred in broad daylight, and in full view of the public, while being recorded on a video that has been watched by millions of people across the globe. In response to Mr. Floyd's death, protest movements have sprung up in big cities and small towns alike, and spread to many other countries. These have been mostly peaceful, with sporadic episodes of violence and destruction of property.

These inequities, and the resultant injustices, have many complex causes. However, there is a common thread that runs through them all. It is the systemic racism that is endemic to American society. This is a cancer which is eating away at the soul of our nation. We will never achieve our full potential as a society until it is eradicated, root and branch.

Some ADK members, while sharing my concern, may ask what this has to do with our organization. We are, after all, just an outdoor club. Surely, they might argue, we have no role to play in addressing these issues. Those members would be wrong. This is a pivotal moment in history. All organizations, from the largest corporation to the smallest social club, must take a public stand on the great issue of our time. There is no neutral ground. Either systemic racism is acceptable in our society, or it is not. To remain silent is to be complicit.

However, speeches without deeds are just empty words. Therefore, I am proposing a **FOUR -POINT PLAN** to respond. I am beginning by using the "bully pulpit" of the chapter chair to issue a **CALL TO ACTION**. Members who might oppose my message are right in one respect. Our chapter is ill-equipped to take on many of these issues in a significant way. However, we have hundreds of members. Each of us can do something.

Make a commitment to be anti-racist. It is not enough to avoid overt racism yourself. Whenever possible, challenge it when you witness others engaging in it. Do your homework. Taking action without understanding the situation often leads to ineffective and wasted effort. There are numerous sources of information available, if you are interested. When you are ready, take action in the ways that seem to be the best use of your time, talent, and resources. Learn, speak, write, vote, join, donate, march, volunteer... As the old saying goes, you may not be able to change the world, but you can change your little corner of it.

Next, I propose that our chapter issue a **STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES**, which clearly articulates our beliefs in equality, diversity, and inclusion. A draft document is presented in another section of this newsletter. I will ask the executive committee to review, discuss, debate, edit, and ultimately approve a version of the statement. We will then present it to the chapter as a whole and ask the membership for their endorsement. Once the process is completed, the statement can be posted on our website, in our newsletter, on our Facebook page, and at our meetings and other activities.

ADK already has a Diversity Policy Statement (Policy A-6) which reads "ADK encourages the involvement of all people in its mission and activities; its goal is to be a community that is comfortable, inviting, and accessible". That's fine, as far as it goes. However, I believe that it is insufficient for the moment. Therefore, the third part of my plan is to have **ADK REPLACE THAT POLICY WITH A NEW STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES**. Our region was home to the Niagara Movement, a civil rights organization led by prominent African American leaders. In 1905, they held their first meeting across the border in Fort Erie, Ontario. Later, members of this group helped found the NAACP. It seems appropriate that the Niagara Frontier chapter follow their example and lead this effort.

After I was elected chapter chair, I established a goal of **REACHING OUT TO UNDERSERVED GROUPS**. We have had some success, most notably with our presentation last spring to Buffalo Prep. Yet, when I look around at our meetings and during our activities, the faces I see are almost all older and white. Our executive committee has already discussed creating a team of ambassadors who could promote ADK to these underserved groups. Unfortunately, the current pandemic has prevented us from developing the idea any further. Once it is safe to do so, this effort must resume.

History will record how individuals and organizations responded to this great issue and time of crisis. I believe our four-point plan will be viewed as a respectable effort to do our part. I thank you for your attention and ask you for your support.

-Paul M. Gannon

STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

Draft Proposal

We, the members of the Niagara Frontier Chapter of the Adirondack Mountain Club, 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.

We invite members of our community who share our goals to join us in our efforts. This invitation is extended to all, regardless of age, race, skin color, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital or relationship status, national origin, ethnicity, cultural practices, religious or philosophical beliefs, disability, political affiliation, or choice of legal outdoor recreational activities.

We pledge to provide a safe and welcoming environment, where each member has an equal opportunity to contribute their time and talents to our collective efforts.

Virtual Education Workshop: Early Summer Wild Flowers

Can You Identify These Spring & Early Summer Flowers?

The next time you take your daily quarantine stroll, take note of the flowers and buds showing their heads!

- Submitted by Lynn Kenney
Answers can be found on Page 6!



Chicory

Bee Balm

Trout Lily

Painted Trillium

Jack-in-the-pulpit

May Apple

Bunch Berry

Columbine

Coltsfoot

Dame's Rocket

Great spurred violet

Forget-Me-Not



Announcements

As we have already reported, our chapter faces a significant financial shortfall. As a result of the state club's loss of revenue, they are unable to send us our usual share of the dues. At our June executive committee meeting, we adopted an austerity budget.

As part of that budget, we are suspending the distribution of paper copies of our monthly newsletter, until further notice. Printing and mailing the paper copies would consume a substantial amount of the available funds. This will begin with the August newsletter.

If this decision will cause a hardship for any member that lacks access to the electronic version, we ask you to contact someone on the executive committee. We will see if a special accommodation can be arranged. Several members of the committee have offered to print single copies and mail them at their own expense, if necessary.

We apologize for any inconvenience and thank you for your understanding.

ADK – NFC Picnic and Annual Meeting 2020

The annual meeting and picnic, originally scheduled for June, has been rescheduled for Sunday, August 30, at Ellicott Creek Park. In the event that the in-person meeting cannot be held, a Zoom video meeting will be scheduled in its place. The final decision will be made at the executive committee meeting in early August.

If we are able to hold the in-person gathering, a number of changes to our usual format will be required. The hike, paddle, and bike ride will most likely take place as usual. Afterwards, we will need to gather in family groups, while maintaining appropriate social distancing from other households. Masks will probably be required until the groups are seated. We plan on asking people to bring their own lawn chairs, beverages, and food, and not share any of these things with people outside of your household group.

A program will be offered, followed by the business meeting and election. Please note that these are just the preliminary plans. The details will need to be finalized as the date approaches. Pencil in the date on your calendar and stay tuned for further information.

ADK - NFC 2020 ELECTION

The Nominating Committee has assembled the slate of candidates for our 2020 election. Members will be voting on candidates for three offices. The election will be held at our annual meeting, during the picnic, which is currently scheduled for Sunday, August 30, at Ellicott Creek Park. In the event that the in-person meeting cannot be held, a Zoom video meeting will be scheduled in its place. The final decision will be made at the executive committee meeting in early August.

Greg Germaine was appointed to replace Victoria Rowley as First Vice-chair / Outings, after she resigned last fall. Members need to approve his appointment and his completing the remainder of Victoria's term, which ends on August 31, 2021.

Bob Van Hise is running for another term as Second Vice-chair / Conservation.

Maureen Rowley is running for another term as Third Vice-chair / Programs.

INFORMATION ON CORONAVIRUS

As Western New York prepares to enter Phase 4 of our reopening, we have received a formal notification from Michael Barrett, Executive Director of ADK, that our chapter may resume in-person gatherings and outings, provided that the state and club recommendations be followed.

The executive committee will develop a plan to resume outings as soon as possible. Stay tuned for more information!

The state club has also begun the process of reopening their facilities and resuming activities. Due to the complexity of their reopening process, please visit the main club website to view their most up-to-date information.

<https://www.adk.org/adk-property-closures-extend-new-york-forward/>

1.Bee Balm, 2.Bunchberry, 3.Chicory, 4.Columbine, 5.Dame's Rocket, 6.Forget-Me-Not, 7.Indian Cucumber-Root, 8.Orange Hawkweed, 9.Starflower, 10.Toothwort, Cut-leaved, 11.Wild Geranium, 12.Herb-Robert

Our Executive Committee

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