



Expanding Horizons

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The newsletter for friends of Adventures for Women

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear Adventurous Women,

I'd like to put in a good word or two about winter hiking. AFW has many enthusiastic warm weather hikers, but as soon as the leaves fall and days grow short, they put their boots and hiking poles away until the first nice days of spring. What a shame. Winter hiking is wonderful. First of all, you can see for miles across valleys to the distant mountains and deep into the forest because there's no foliage in the way. Secondly, winter sky colors are beautiful. The soft shades of gray and blue and pink and white are very different from the vibrant colors of spring, summer and fall. And thirdly, it's quiet, so very, very quiet. When hiking on snow-covered ground, things change, sounds are muffled and there's a magical feel to it all.

There are obvious downsides to winter hiking that can be minimized. Most notably - it's cold, sometimes really, really cold. The secret to keeping warm is to dress in layers, the same as other times of year, and don't wear cotton. Wear a hat and gloves, and if you're prone to cold hands and feet, invest in disposable hand and/or foot warmers. I have found that one hand warmer switched back and forth from one gloved hand to the other is more than sufficient to keep my hands toasty warm. The other deterrent to winter hiking is slippery terrain. For this too, there's an easy fix - Yak-Traks, Get-a-Grips, and Stablicers, to name just three. All are types of slip-over-your-boot traction devices that range in price from about \$20 to \$40 and are invaluable to the winter hiker.

So, have I convinced you yet? I hope so. At least give hiking a try this winter. I think you'll be surprised at how quickly you'll warm up, and how beautiful and rewarding winter hiking can be. Just remember, no bugs, no snakes, no bears!

enjoy the journey ... Pissilla



Atop Storm King Mountain

Fall Weekday Quickie Hikes

We are resuming the successful Spring Weekday Quickies in the Fall when the weather cools down. The hikes start promptly at 11AM and end between 1:30PM and 2PM. They will be on Tuesday or Thursday on weeks when another AFW hike is not scheduled and will be announced by email on Sunday for the following week. If you're already on the Spring email list, you'll continue to receive the announcements. If you aren't and are interested, please register at www.adventuresforwomen.org to be on the email list.

We've Come a Long Way! (PART 2)

... continuing our look at AFW, past and present.

The Adventures for Women experience – solace, friendship and revitalization of mind and body in the midst of life's daily stresses. Betsy Thomason, the founder of AFW and an outdoorswoman, believes that women should learn to be comfortable and competent in the outdoors and, at the same time, learn about our needs, aspirations and what we can become. Along the way, AFW has grown wider and deeper as our members add to its vibrancy ... both in enthusiastic numbers and new ideas. Yet its mission has stayed constant.

Weekend Trips ... AFW's first overnight was a car camping weekend in 1983 at the Delaware Water Gap. It wasn't until 1989 that AFW headed up to the Adirondacks, or what Betsy fondly refers to as "AFW's playground." That summer she led six women on a backpacking trip up Mount Marcy and Gothics Mountain. Marty D., a member since AFW's inception, recalls the "raw blisters, headaches and bruised toes" and the immense sense of accomplishment and camaraderie on that trip. (Read her account in our Fall 2006 newsletter). There were many subsequent weekend and week-long trips – Adirondacks Cross Country Skiing, Walking the Adirondack Lake Country, Hiking the Adirondacks High Peaks and Paddling the Adirondack Lake Country. Some trips combined different activities. She also led a few trips to the Catskills.

The "Contemplation Weekends" started in January 1996. These weekends combined physical activities with book discussions and once even knitting instruction. The first book discussed was "Women Who Run with the Wolves" by Clarissa Pinkola Estes.

Today, we continue the very popular weekend trips. Starting in August 1995, Priscilla and Lynne co-led our annual Hiking and Literature weekend in the Adirondacks. We have also expanded AFW's playground to the Catskills and the Shawangunk Mountains with our annual weekends there led by Dagi. And in 2009, Judy M. led us to the Pennsylvania's Grand Canyon and Ricketts Glen!



Back porch of Mountain Meadow B&B in the Adirondacks, 1998

Paddling ... Canoeing and kayaking have always been a part of AFW's activities. Betsy started with two paddling workshop series in the early 1980s. In the early days, participants practiced their paddling skills at Mill Pond in Park Ridge, NJ, in the two canoes Betsy owned. They also canoed along the D&R Canal and Millstone River, Kearny Marsh, Cedar Creek in the Pine Barrens, the Hudson River at Piermont Pier, the Navasink River in NJ, and other waterways, either bringing their own canoes or renting from outfitters.

In more recent years, AFW members kayaked on the Lehigh River in Bethlehem, PA and the Hackensack River in Secaucus, NJ.

Bike Rides ... In the late 1990s, when Nancy M. joined AFW, she took an AFW friend, Kathy C. on a bike ride around one of her favorite biking spots ... bucolic Allamuchy, NJ. From that enjoyable ride, the two of them came up with the idea of starting a biking program for AFW. Around 2000, Nancy organized and led her first official AFW bike ride, a 20-mile loop to Ghost Lake (in Allamuchy, of course!), stopping for water and snacks at a couple of cemeteries along the way. A subsequent ride took them to the Buttermilk Falls in Sussex County and back. Several other rides in and around Allamuchy followed ranging from a leisurely to moderate pace, all on paved country roads with hills governing how the ride was rated.

Things got a little more serious when Mary S. came on the AFW biking scene! In April, 2002, she held a Bike Workshop in Saddle River Park in Bergen County where she taught about 10 AFW bikers how to adjust the fit of their bikes, fix a flat, remove the wheels and reseal a chain. She then led them on a ride around the park so they could practice shifting gears. Mary has led many bike rides since then, either on paved country roads or trails with hard packed gravel, for beginners and those with a little more biking experience under their belt. We have followed Mary's lead along the Columbia Trail in High Bridge, the Delaware Canal Trail on both the NJ and the Pennsylvania sides, and Hunterdon County trails and roads.

Both Nancy and Mary lead these bike rides because they love to ride, want to share the fun and expand AFWers' experiences beyond hiking.

Where We're Heading ... AFW continues to be an energetic and fun group *because* of its members. To carry on at this level, we count on our members to not only join our scheduled activities but also to share their ideas for new adventures and perhaps even co-lead some events. So, let us hear from you.

(... more in our next issue.)

Fun Facts on Harriman-Bear Mountain Park (PART 2)

...continuing with Georgette's* article in our Spring issue

Old Ruins and Graveyards

You may notice the remains of old stone foundations and stone walls as you hike. The walls were old property lines. The foundations belonged to various inhabitants through the years; many were farm houses. Stop and explore these and wonder who once lived and worked there. For example:

- The Orak ruins on the Suffern-Bear Mt trail south of Rte. 106 was once the mansion of George Briggs Buchanan. He built it in 1923 with the dining room resembling a ship's cabin with a floor designed to move like the motion of a rocking ship. Windows shaped like portholes are still there in the remaining wall. He was VP of Corn Products Refining Co, makers of Karo syrup, and he named his home Orak (Karo spelled backwards).
- The "Dutch Doctor" Shelter, near the intersection of the White Bar Trail and the Tuxedo-Mt Ivy Trail, was named after John Frederick Helms, known as the "Old Dutch Doctor" who lived in the area in the 1800s. He also grew and sold medicinal herbs. Today, all that remains of his nearby cabin is its cellar hole with a large tree growing from it.
- Doodletown, just south of Bear Mountain and north of Dunderberg Mountain, was once a hamlet inhabited from the 1760's until 1965. Many of the foundations remain along with the cemeteries. Today, there are interpretive signs telling its story.



You'll also pass by several graveyards from days gone by. The next time you're on the Beech Trail, look for the tombstone of Timothy Youmans who died in 1865 while serving in the Civil War.

Characters From the Past

There was once a gang of thieves who roamed the area robbing the local farms and hijacking trains. Claudius Smith Rock was named after their leader. His mother warned him that he would die a violent death by telling him he'd die with his shoes on. To prove his mother

wrong, he removed his shoes before being hung in the Goshen jail in 1779. Tom Jones Mountain and Shelter and Parker Cabin Mountain were named after two members of Smith's gang. Jones shot Parker in his cabin in Parker Cabin Hollow.

More Recent Happenings

The Park has been the site of two plane crashes. In 1974 a jet on its way to Buffalo to pick up the Baltimore Colts football team went down off the Long Path. The three crew members died. In 1967 a single engine plane went down on Dunderberg Mountain killing the pilot. Parts of this wreckage can still be seen.

Now you know some of the stories of the Park. The next time you're out in Harriman, think of Claudius or some other forgotten inhabitant. Obviously AFW is not the only group in Harriman looking for adventure.

**Georgette loves to explore every trail and woods road, marked and unmarked, in Harriman, study its Trail Maps and read about its history. Amazingly, she files all this information in her brain and so is always ready with an answer to questions from her fellow hikers. Our favorite response when we don't have the answer? "Ask Georgette."*

So any questions you have about Harriman or any of the other places we hike just let us know and we'll see if we can find the answer, or "Stump Georgette", in our next issue.



Hanging bear bags on beginners' backpacking trip in Harriman State Park

Learning from Other AFWers

At one time or another, many of us have uttered these words, "Wish I had known!" Well, AFW is here to help ... at least, on hiking matters. Here are two experiences that Jackie and Judy went through and would like to share with us. If you've had a hiking experience from which we could learn, do share it with us.

Eating My "Compass" Words! ... BY JACKIE R.

I never carry a compass. Why should I? After all, a compass doesn't tell you where you are, just what direction you're going in. Besides, I can read a map.

Well, on a recent backpack trip, Leslie and I were on a trail I had been on many times, talking, when I realized that nothing around me looked familiar. Five minutes later, it still didn't look familiar. So out came the map. We weren't actually "lost"; we knew what trail we were on but we weren't sure if we had passed and missed our cutoff to a side trail or whether it was still ahead. It was then I realized that if I had a compass I would be able to tell the direction we were going and compare that to the map. Fortunately, Leslie had hers and we were able to tell that yes, we were going in the wrong direction. So back we went, found another landmark to compare to the map and then found the side trail.

I figure we hiked an extra 15 minutes each way, next to a swamp, in the heat and bugs. So now I'm "snacking on my words" and you'll never find me hiking without a compass again!

Ow, My Aching Feet!!! ... BY JUDY M.

Beginning last summer my toes began to hurt. Long, strenuous hikes, which I love, became extremely difficult. By late summer I could not wear sandals or most regular shoes. Over the next 6 months I saw a podiatrist, neurologist, orthopedic surgeon, had an MRI, nerve tests and nerve biopsy – still no answers. So I decided to take it easy over the winter.

In the spring I remembered what I had heard in the gym; if you have pain in your feet, knees or hips, look to your sneakers. Perhaps it was my boots! I retrieved an old pair of boots that I really liked but retired because they were heavy and started wearing them. They were wonderful, no more problems or, at the most, minor ones, since nerve damages takes a long time to heal. I can even wear sandals again!

So if you are having foot/leg problems look to your boots first. They may seem fine but may no longer be providing the support you need or adding pressure at the wrong points. I have now ordered a second pair of my now old favorites. Sometimes the solution to a problem is the simplest one.

Save Your Spot

Our weekend trips are popular and often have a waiting list. Sending in your deposit by the required date is the only way to guarantee your registration. Without payment, AFW will have to release your spot to the next person on the waiting list.



McEvoy Trail clean-up crew ... and collected trash!!!

Membership Privacy

AFW does not allow the use of its membership list for anything other than AFW business. For more information on how we protect our membership directory, please see our Privacy Statement on the "Join Us" page of AFW's website.

Updates and Alerts

Be sure to check the Home Page of our website regularly for changes and additions to the Adventure Schedule.

Sign-ups & Cancellations

To sign up for an event, go to the "Sign-up" page on our website. To cancel out of an event, please send an email to contactus@adventuresforwomen.org, call 973-644-3592, or contact the leader of the event.

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