



# Expanding Horizons

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The newsletter for friends of Adventures for Women

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## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear Adventurous Women,

This edition of Expanding Horizons focuses on AFW's volunteer guides and includes some of their hiking tips and comments. Our guides are a diverse group from a variety of backgrounds who share one thing in common – a love of hiking and the outdoors. Their goal is to take members on some of their favorite trails, providing an atmosphere that's both nurturing and empowering. Nothing feels as good as climbing a hill, a mountain, or peak that you never thought you could. Then, standing at the top, looking down to where you started and saying, "Yes, I can. Yes, I **did!**" Through the years, AFW guides have inspired, encouraged and led many of us to the top of that hill, that mountain, that peak.

As you read through the tips and experiences that some of our guides are sharing in this newsletter, remember that most were novice hikers just a few years ago. They learned their craft by watching, asking questions, and yes, even attending AFW's workshops. If you're at that stage where you want to do more than just follow the feet in front of you, where you'd like to know what you should be carrying in your backpack, and if you'd like to know what to do in case you somehow did get separated from the group and were 'lost,' then you might want to consider attending Woodswoman 101 which is offered on Saturday, November 1st. (See the Adventure Menu write-up for more information, and be sure to sign up early as AFW events tend to fill quickly.)

I hope you'll find the tips in this newsletter useful. Be assured that your AFW guide will do her best to make your next hike a pleasant and rewarding one. Enjoying it is up to you!

*enjoy the journey ... Pisivilla*



*Kayaking on Sawmill Creek*

## AFW Members Love to Kayak

Indeed they do! Just one day after an unscheduled kayak trip was announced, all 22 available spots were filled. It was a warm sultry afternoon in June with temperatures hitting the 90s when we gathered at the Laurel Hill Park boat launch in Secaucus, eager to get our kayaks on the water and paddle through the marshes of the Sawmill Creek Wildlife Management Area. A Hackensack Riverkeeper Guide led the way through the creeks, between tall reeds and phragmites, against a distant backdrop of the NJ Turnpike and the city skyline. Along the way, we caught sight of two Great Blue Herons, two Great Egrets, and a Mute Swan in the water. What an amazing juxtaposition of natural tranquility and urban hub-bub. Some of us were in shorts and tank tops; others in long sleeves and pants; but all slathered on the sunscreen. A gentle breeze fanned us as we dipped our feet and hands in the water and splashed water on our arms and legs to cool off. It was a delightful way to spend a hot summer afternoon.

## MacEvoy Trail Fall Clean-Up

**We Need You.** AFW maintains the MacEvoy Trail in Ramapo Mt. State Forest twice a year. This fall, it's on Sunday, November 9, 2008. We welcome all AFW members and friends to attend this easy hike and help clean up the trail from 9:30 AM to 12:30 PM. Please wear hiking boots and bring a pair of gloves, garbage bags and water. Come out and have fun for a good cause!

## TLC IN YOUR ADVENTURE

**Y**ou sign up for an AFW event. You wake up that morning. It's a clear day ... you smile as you pack your lunch and water and drive to the meeting place. There you find your AFW guide waiting for the group to gather. And soon, you're all off for several hours of carefree fun and adventure. Later, you get back to your car, tired yet exhilarated, and drive home happy and looking forward to your next adventure. Pretty simple ... as it should be ... for you, the participant.

But have you ever stopped to wonder how it all comes together so smoothly? The short answer ... with a whole lot of planning and a large dash of TLC from our volunteer guides. The longer answer ... read on.



**PLANNING** ... It all starts many months in advance of the new season. Our guides, under Priscilla's leadership, put on their collective thinking and planning hats to come up with a good mix of different types of activities at different levels of difficulty. WHO is available WHEN to lead WHAT event to WHERE? This calls for each of them to juggle her personal schedule and set aside those days for the events she is committing to lead. If it's a weekend trip, she begins researching and booking suitable lodging. If it's a workshop, City Path, or kayaking trip that involves a non-AFW expert or guide, she checks on the availability of that person and looks into rentals, if needed. And if it's a hike or a bike ride she decides on a suitable trail. End result ... AFW's Adventure Schedule.



**SCOUTING** ... Now comes the leg work. Whether it's a hike, bike ride, kayaking trip or City Path excursion, our guides find and take the time to scout the route carefully, sometimes more than once, during the few weeks prior to the group outing. She maps out a route that meets the time duration and difficulty specified and has a few interesting spots and vistas (the "rewards").

She picks a "good" lunch spot along the hike route or a suitable restaurant on City Paths, and she notes the driving directions to a meeting place. Even if she's planning a repeat of a prior year's hike, she has to recheck the condition of the trail because things happen ... trees may have fallen down, trail markers disappear, bridges wash away, brooks flood making crossings impassable, parking lots close or become inaccessible. When these things happen, the guide has to come up with an alternative. End result ... a good Plan A and a backup Plan B.



**COORDINATING** ... The week of the event is when the guide makes sure everyone who's signed up for it knows where and when to meet and how to get there. This is also when she keeps an eye on and ear to the weather forecast and hopes for the best, or else she makes the tough call to cancel the event. End result...we just plan to show up.



**LEADING** ... That morning, the group is gathered and eager to start out. The guide makes sure everyone has her water and lunch/snacks and appropriate gear, and explains and provides a map of the route. She is prepared for emergency action with her first aid and CPR training. Even with the careful scouting, sometimes unexpected situations can arise that day that require quick on-the-spot thinking by her ... such as coming across an icy stretch on a winter hike that looks too slick to even step on, or a flooded stream crossing caused by heavy overnight rain. Or she may be involved in a conversation, "miss" a blazed turn (she is human!) and the group ends up on the "wrong" path. No problem because she or one of the hikers will notice that very shortly and the group ends up with an instant adventure, calmly retracing their steps and getting back on trail. And at the end of the hike, she checks that every participant is safely back at the meeting place. End result ... we follow, we chat, we get to know one another, we have a carefree time.



**Final words** ... Our volunteer guides put in a lot of effort to make it easy for the rest of us to have fun, to learn new skills, to develop confidence and gain new insights, to feel comfortable in the woods, and to push ourselves to new levels. And that, after all, is what AFW is all about. So, thanks, Betty, Dagi, Dara, Dolores, Judy, Linda, Mary, Nancy, and Priscilla for doing what you do so well!



*City Paths excursion to Branch Brook Park*



# LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCE

We all love “how to” tips ... they can make our lives easier and simpler and therefore, happier. So, here are some practical hiking tips from a few of our august group of guides who, among them, have amassed years and years of hiking know-how. We feel confident that as you read their articles, you'll come across moments when you'll say to yourself, “Of course. Why didn't I think of that?” May your hiking life be happier!

## Crate Expectations ... by Mary

Hiking, biking or kayaking. Which will I do this weekend? I want to be prepared for everything! Carrying everything in my car could lead to quite a clutter. A few years ago I came up with a way to keep my gear organized, contained, transportable and flexible. The solution to keeping my multi-sport life spontaneous and my car organized was milk crates.

I use four authentic milk crates, but the lidless plastic boxes available at office supply and discount stores will work just as well. The things I need for each sport are in their own crate. Some items – water bottles and snack bars, for instance – can be found in all of the boxes. The key is to keep each box stocked with the items needed to enjoy a sport without having to check the contents or transfer items from another box.

The fourth box serves as a cupboard and an emergency kit. It holds seasonal items and things that seem like a good idea to have. In the summer there are sneakers and shorts. In winter, a polar fleece vest, gloves, ear muffs and a blanket are on hand. Year-round the box holds filled water bottles, snack bars, sun-screen, ground cover, visor, brimmed hat, T-shirt, wind jacket, towel and a first aid kit. There are also several trash bags that have so many good uses, such as holding muddy boots.

As a bonus, the crates make packing the car for a trip a snap. If I'm going to the shore, the hiking box comes out. Is it the mountains? The kayaking box jumps out of the car and into the garage. With my boxes always ready, I'm always ready.

## Footgear Tips for Hikers ... by Dara

I am frequently asked for my opinion on hiking boots. Many new hikers don't know that the type of socks they wear is just as important as their boots. When you have the right socks and boots, you have comfortable feet. My condensed advice on footgear follows:

1. Wear good hiking boots or shoes that are sturdy with rugged, ridged soles. The definition of a good boot is comfort, support, and traction in slippery places. It is best not to wear boots that are new or that need to be “broken in.” Unless you bring a second pair of hiking boots with you on the trail, you'll find the only thing that will be broken in are your feet!
2. Wear socks that are wool/nylon/polypropylene blends. No 100% cotton! Socks are the secret friend of the hiker because the right ones can prevent blisters. Socks which are mostly a wool/nylon/poly blend absorb moisture and keep it from irritating the skin. Try this: sock liners under the socks. These are thin synthetic socks, usually nylon or poly-pro, which are

worn under heavier hiking socks, and give further protection from the sweat and friction that can damage feet.

3. Tend to blisters or pressure spots – no matter how minor – when you first notice them. Once it really starts to hurt, those spots are harder to soothe. Apply moleskin (a Dr. Scholl's product) over the area to remove the friction and pressure. If a blister has formed, cut a hole in the moleskin so it goes around the blister. Put on a pair of dry socks if you have them.
4. Leave a second pair of shoes and socks in your car so you can change after the hike. If your hiking boots are not waterproof, they are likely to be both wet and muddy after a day of hiking. You'll be much more comfortable on the ride home in dry footgear.

## Hiking In the Rain ... by Judy

Some people like hiking in the rain, while others cancel. Unfortunately, the latter are missing a wonderful experience.



Hiking in the rain is a very different adventure. You will rarely see anyone on the trail, resulting in a quieter, more reflective hike. The scenery can be beautiful, with the leaves and barks wet and the flowers upright and perky. Scents seem to be magnified. You might see more interesting animals since they are not hiding from the sun and you are less likely to see snakes since they usually come out to sun on the rocks. You can take pictures that appropriately capture the mood and can be much more interesting than on a sunny day. If you're lucky enough to be up high, it's amazing to see the rain clouds below you or the clouds swirling at your feet.

Of course, to enjoy a hike on a rainy day, you need to be prepared. Appropriate clothing is most important. It is much better to wear manmade materials, such as nylon or cool-max® since they dry quickly while cotton clothes tend to stay wet, absorbing heat from your body while wet. The same rules that apply to cotton and hypothermia during sunny weather apply to wet weather too, and even more so in a rain storm on a cool day.

Next is raingear because although I like hiking in the rain I don't like hiking wet. Personally, I do not like a poncho, although to have an inexpensive one in your pack for an unexpected shower is a good idea ... they can snag on branches on a narrow trail and blow around in the wind. However, many people love them for their venting properties. I prefer a good rain jacket with Gore Tex® or similar material that allows sweat to move out, but no rain to get in. Most come with underarm venting zippers for added comfort. Less frequently used but still of great value in heavy rain or cooler temps are rain pants that you wear over your hiking pants.

In New Jersey and New York, the rocks are usually rough, so hiking on them in the rain is no more of a problem than hiking on leaves in the fall. Hiking poles can be helpful especially if you come across some smooth rocks, mud or a flooded stream.

Of course, the most significant hazard is lightning and thunder. It is obviously preferable that you not be hiking when there is lightning in the area and most guides will cancel a hike if thunder

## LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCE CONTINUED

and lightening are predicted. However, sometimes this can not be avoided. So what should you do? Quickly find a low area or slope with short trees or shrubs. Avoid high or isolated trees, ridges, open fields, lakes, rivers or rocky overhangs. If you are with a group, try to spread out about 20 feet apart. Lay your sticks and also your pack if it has a metal frame about 20 feet away from you and the other hikers. Crouch down into a ball on the balls of your feet with your feet as close together as possible. Your goal is to be the smallest target possible with the least contact with the ground. If you have good balance, stand on one foot only ;) Do not allow your hands or any other part of your body to touch the ground. Why is it important to crouch down on the balls of your feet? The reason is that when lightning strikes an object, the electricity of the lightning discharge does not necessarily go straight down into the ground. Often the electricity will travel along the surface of the ground for a significant distance. This is known as a "side flash". Many people who are "struck" by lightning are not hit directly by the main lightning channel, but are affected by the side flash as it travels along the surface of the ground (this can be especially true if the ground is wet). By keeping the surface area of your body relative to the ground to a minimum (that is, keep your feet together and do not allow any other part of your body to contact the ground), you can reduce the threat of the electricity traveling across the ground from affecting you. Wait 30 minutes after the last lightning to resume your hike.

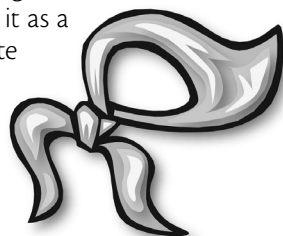
While these warnings can be scary, the likelihood of anything happening is low and the benefits of hiking in the rain can be wonderful. Probably one of the most important reasons to hike in the rain is that, in this area, trying to avoid rain would result in your missing many wonderful hikes. The day might start out sunny and beautiful, but with an unexpected mid-day rain. The day might start out drizzly but turn sunny and beautiful. It's hard to predict weather in this area. So, just go with the flow (pun intended) and enjoy it.

### The Many Uses of a Bandana ... by Linda

Bandanas are inexpensive, take up no room at all in your backpack, and can be handy in so many ways. So, always carry a supply in your backpack. Here are some uses I came up with; perhaps you can think of others to share with your fellow hikers.

Keep sun off back of your neck ... Wipe off your sweat ... Keep you cool - just wet and tie round your neck ... Keep ears warm when you don't have a hat ... Keep your head warm ... Keep your hair out of your face ... Protect your head from the sun ... It's a headband ... Cover your lap from sun while kayaking ... Tie extra stuff to your backpack ... Collect blueberries on a hike ... Carry your lunch ... It's a placemat ... It's a napkin ... It's a hankie ... Keep poles from clicking together ... Tie on a splint ... A bandage ... A first-aid tourniquet ... Serves as a sling ... Cleaning cloth ... Blow your nose ... Use it as a dust mask ... Shoo away bugs ... Decorate your backpack ... Bring color to your outfit during hunting season

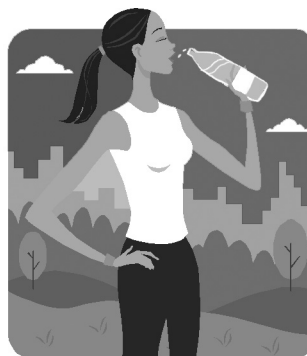
Or for nothing more than a fashion statement!



### Water Facts for Health and Safety ... by Nancy

For summer activities such as hiking, running, and biking, drinking enough water is very important. Think of water as fuel without which our bodies cannot run properly.

Although water contains no vitamins or caloric value, it is very important. Water helps the body regulate itself on a cellular level, carrying and transporting oxygen, nutrients and waste. It also helps control body temperature, cushion joints, and improve digestion. Without proper water intake, our bodies cannot perform at optimal level. It benefits us physiologically and is necessary for safe exercise.



How much water should we drink? Our body loses water daily through perspiration, exhalation, and urination. A minimum of 2 quarts of water per day is required. However, for activities, especially during hot weather, more water is needed, and for extreme temperatures and exercise, even more. Sports medicine expert, Lewis G. Maharam, MD, suggests prehydration, which is

drinking 16 oz. of water about 2 hours before exercising for extra fluid. And continue to drink water during and afterwards as well.

Do you feel this may be more water than you can consume? Packing fruits and vegetables can add to your water supply for a day's hike. Choose those which are more than 80% water such as apples, pears, grapes, strawberries, celery, tomatoes, and cucumbers. These alternate water sources are delicious, nutritious, and thirst quenching.

Another factor that helps measure fluid loss is to weigh yourself before and after exercising. This helps determine whether you've gained or lost weight and will tell you how much water you may need to replace.

What about sports drinks? If you are exercising for more than 40 minutes, you may want to add a sports drink that contains salt and sugar since they absorb the fluid going into your body. Sports drinks, either premixed or powdered that you add to your water as needed, act as a pump, getting water into the body faster than plain water. Choose one without caffeine, as its diuretic effect can cause fluid loss instead of fluid replacement.

If you fail to drink enough water while out on a hike, dehydration may occur. An early sign of dehydration is thirst, of course, but a more reliable marker is to check your urine which should be pale, clear and copious. Other early signs are headache and chapped lips. In the extreme, dizziness, weakness, inability to think clearly, nausea and vomiting may occur. Also, drinking enough water will help forestall those aching muscles at the end of a hike.

So drink water and drink plenty. Consider the temperature, the level of activity, the exertion and time spent outdoors to have a safe and enjoyable outdoor adventure.

## Expanding Our Horizons ... Beyond AFW

We continue this series of articles to share some of our members' passions and adventures outside of AFW. Last season, we read about "hut-to-hut" hiking in the White Mountains and biking across Iowa. This season, Linda introduces us to her world of Tae Kwan Do.

### PUSHING MY LIMITS By Linda

It happened 15 years ago when my son was taking Tae Kwan Do lessons. I was about to turn 35 and decided to take it on to get into better shape and improve my mental attitude. Back then, my goal was to have a Black Belt in 5 years but knee surgery and life ... job, kids, dog, laundry, cleaning, cooking, etc. ... kept getting in the way. Well, I've finally reached my goal. In 2005, I attained my 1st degree Black Belt status and three years later, this past May, I tested for and achieved my 2nd degree Black Belt.

#### The Many Levels of Tae Kwan Do

Starting with a White Belt, a student progresses to Gold, Green, Purple, Blue, Red, Brown, Senior Brown and finally Black by earning five stripes (for combinations of punches and kicks and for form or choreographed patterns of movements consisting of blocks, punches, kicks, etc) between each belt up to Brown, seven stripes (for combinations, for form, and for use of a weapon, such as a bo staff) to get the Senior Brown Belt and eight stripes to each of the 10 degrees of the Black Belt. This means that I have taken and passed a total of 51 tests to get to my current level, enduring a lot of sore tired muscles and resisting many urges to quit along the way!

#### Final Days in the Life of a 2nd Degree Black Belt Candidate

##### First Sunday Training

- Ran 10 miles
- Worked the stations (exercise equipment spaced intermittently along the running path), and did all the ups (chin ups, pull ups, sit ups, push ups)
- Did the Indian Run (The class jogs in a single file line, the last person in line sprints to the front, then the next person at the end of the line sprints to the front of the line, and this continues as the line continues to jogs). I had to stop after three quarters of the way when my thighs said to me, "If you sprint one more time, I won't let you walk for a week!"
- Practiced combinations, forms and 9-count kick (a kick in which you throw four different kicks without ever putting your leg down). Try that on tired, rubbery legs!

##### Monday

- It's painful to move. It's excruciating to go up and down stairs.

##### Tuesday Class

- Less leg work and more arm work, thank goodness! If I had to spar tonight, I would hope my opponent has weak ankles because I can't throw a kick to save myself.



##### Thursday Class

- More leg work. After class, I couldn't walk ... again.

##### The Following Two Weeks

- More workouts, but it seems to be getting a little easier. Amazing what my body can do when pushed to the limit...and beyond.

##### Test Day

- I'm standing there with my daughter and others who are testing with me. I note that I have 30 - 40 more years on many of them, yet I'm still there ... and I smile. I do my combinations and forms and weapons and sparring ... and I pass!!

#### Why I Do It

Over the years, my reasons have expanded. I still want to be in better shape and improve my mental attitude. Tae Kwan Do has been the best "exercise class" I have ever taken. Whereas I could cheat at almost everything else I have done, there is no cheating in this class. I love coming to class. No matter how badly the day has gone, I walk out of class feeling so much better...a lot more tired but so much better. I love being pushed further than I thought my body could go. I love the way I look and feel now. And best of all, I love it when I tell people my children's ages ... the look on their face is worth every ache and pain I've felt.

## Fun on Two Wheels

You should have seen us ... 10 AFW women pedaling along the Delaware and Raritan Canal Bike Path and looking quite "professional" with our safety helmets and biking shorts. We were a group with mixed skill levels ... from our leader, Mary, on her road bike who had biked across Iowa last summer to Sook who had not biked for decades on a bike she had borrowed. We were on a straight path with no turns that could get us lost so each of us biked at her own comfortable pace. Mary was all over ... one moment at the front with the speedy bikers, the next with the slower and more tired ones in the back. No pressure, just fun. We biked, we rested, we resumed, we stopped for a picnic lunch and we biked some more ... close to 19 miles in all! So, the next time AFW offers a bike ride, think about signing up for it. All you need are two wheels (AFW has a couple of loaner bikes) and a desire to feel the wind in your face. Simply delightful!





## Standing Room Only at AFW's City Paths

They continue to be a hit with our members! A unique niche of *Adventures for Women*, our City Paths program takes us to cultural, historical and natural attractions in our cities and suburbs. This past season saw record turnouts for the three events described below.

### Branch Brook Park

When you think of cherry blossom season, is your first thought Newark, NJ? Probably not and that would be a shame because Newark's Branch Brook Park has more species of cherry trees than Washington D.C. and is the first county park opened for public enjoyment in the US. It is on both the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places. After walking through the park's vast canopy of pink, white and rose-colored cherry blossoms, some framed by cascading yellow forsythia, greeting the first robins and watching families and their children enjoy this beautiful oasis on a Sunday in April, the 21 AFW members adjourned to a local restaurant for a relaxing lunch. Thank you to Priscilla for a very enjoyable outing.

### Harlem

Harlem is a NYC area rich in history and culture and home to the first black surgeon, Louis T. Wright, the poet Langston Hughes, great performers such as Eubie Blake and Florence Mills and The Cotton Club, to name a few. In April, 20 AFW members had a chance to experience part of its history first hand. After attending a service at the Abyssinian Baptist Church, the first African-American Church in New York, we strolled through Striver's Row with its unique architecture and reminders of the way things were, passing courtyard signs that read "Private Road - Walk Your Horses." Dagi then led us up a million steps to beautiful City College, built in gothic style to symbolize the quality of education available to the poor as well as the rich. Of course it was much easier going back down to the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture where we saw an exhibition of photographs commemorating the 200th anniversary of the Abyssinian Baptist Church and a collection of very colorful paintings depicting the Sufi Arts of Urban Senegal. Our day ended with a late lunch at a must-stop for tourists, Sylvia's Restaurant, where we enjoyed a lunch of southern down-home cooking and songs. Thanks to Dagi for organizing a very informative and rewarding trip.

### Wave Hill Garden and The Cloisters

Once the private home of William Lewis Morris and ultimately owned by J.P. Morgan and George W. Perkins, Wave Hill Gardens is now the public home to beautiful views of the Hudson River and The Palisades, rare trees such as the lace elm, shrubs and ever changing gardens that highlight the area's natural beauty. It even has a woods path dotted with rustic pavilions and benches, creating solitude and peacefulness within the hustle bustle of New York City. On the day of our visit, the lilacs were in bloom and their scent wafted through the air. We also saw an exhibit of unusual photographs capturing the risks to our global environment. After a leisurely lunch on the terrace, it was a quick ride to The Cloisters where we strolled through the medieval style museum and its collection of medieval art and tapestries. 24 grateful members have Lynne Greenfield to thank for a lovely day.

## In Memory Of ...

April brought the sad news of the sudden death of 78-year-old Filis Estrin, who died at home in her sleep. AFW hiker, City Paths walker, avid bike rider, founding member of the Wild Women Book Club: Filis knew how to have fun. She also gave much pleasure to others, as when she transformed herself into the clown known as Tic Toc to entertain children in hospitals. Filis had a great adventurous soul, but she was quiet about her adventures and accomplishments. For instance, after she had been away for awhile, upon her return someone asked her, "Traveling again, Filis?" "Yep, up North." Long pause. Big smile. "Dog-sledding." She will be sorely missed.

Donations in honor of Filis can be sent to the Women's Rights Information Center, 108 W. Palisade Ave., Englewood, NJ 07631 ([www.womensrights.org](http://www.womensrights.org))

— *Kathy Conniff Clines*



*Enjoying a rest in a pavilion at Wave Hill Gardens during City Paths excursion*

## 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

Registering for an event is easy ... just go to the "Event Sign-up" page on our website. To cancel out of an event, please either send an email to [contactus@adventuresforwomen.org](mailto:contactus@adventuresforwomen.org) or call 973-644-3592.

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