Fellow Appies,

This is my last message to you as your Chapter Chair. I can honestly tell you that it has been an honor and privilege to be a member of the Executive Committee for the past several years.

I took the Chair position because the AMC has a mission that truly reflects my values of the outdoors. My biggest fear was if I was going to be able to keep the momentum of volunteerism going. Apparently you share my values. We are truly a club of volunteers from the Executive Committee who often time’s fire up their pc’s after a long day of work to take care of “AMC business” to those individuals who fold up the tables and chairs after a Third Wednesday social. In addition to leading outdoor activities, providing educational workshops, promoting conservation efforts and performing trail maintenance both locally and up country you have sent hundreds of children to Mountain Classroom to learn about our mission. These kids would never have this opportunity without your support. You also helped maintain and preserve the MidState Trail, helped rebuild the Madison Hut, provided snowshoes to boy scouts, provided outdoor gear and educational opportunities to school kids and provided sweat equity in the Maine Wilderness. I can certainly continue but I need to limit this to one page. To all of you and for all that you have done… THANK YOU!

A couple of last minutes administrative duties…. It is time to provide your nomination for “Appie of the Year”, the Chapter’s highest honor which recognizes a volunteer who has made a significant contribution to the chapter over the past years. It is awarded to an individual who contributions to the chapter and/or club have made a difference. If you know someone who is deserving of this recognition please consider nominating them by sending me a short note by October 21st with your nominee and why you think they should be considered for this honor. Finally, join us for our annual meeting at The Manor on November 12 at which time we will recognize individuals, celebrate our success and party into the night with live music and contra dancing! Details and registration can be found at the Worcester Chapter website.

I can now hand the “Red Crusher” over to Pat Lambert, our new Chapter Chair with confidence and a smile knowing that you will continue to support our mission. In the meantime….I am just going to celebrate and keep my feet moving. I welcome you to do the same!

Steve
Last week I had the wonderful opportunity to hike up the Zealand Trail to Zealand Falls. I enjoyed the canopy of trees overhead and the flow of water next to me as I gently climbed to the hut. During my hike I was teaching a group of middle school students about the Zealand Railroad. We had a hard time believing that only a 100 years ago this land was a mountain of destruction. How did the Zealand Valley go from a waste land of stripped hill sides, forests fires, and clogged rivers to the beautiful trail and valley with a canopy of trees above?

In the 1830s the White Mountains were starting to be discovered by tourists and by hotel proprietors. After the Civil War, with many farmers moving west, the loggers discovered the area as well. During this time Zealand Valley was so booming that they had a town to support their logging area. Instead of sustainable harvesting as the AMC and other organizations try to promote today, the logging companies cut everything down. What they did not want, they left on the hillsides. Forest fires were inevitable and there were two prominent fires in the Zealand Valley; one in 1896 and 1897.

Imagine being a tourist during this time period and spending the money and time to get to the White Mountains. You climb, take train ride or horse ride to the peak anticipating the wonderful vista. You are rewarded with a valley of clear-cut for as far as the eye can see, or worse -- forest fire. How would you feel? The tourist at the time knew something must be done but the Federal Government did not have the right to buy private land, the majority of land in the White Mountains was privately owned. The idea had been hatched for a National Forrest.

Gilford Pinchot was at this time trying to pass a law through congress to protect the Southern Appalachians with no success. He was told to try to get the “Yankees” on board but his resistance meant the bill was stalled in Congress once more. Along came John W Weeks who was a Massachusetts senator and a New Hampshire native. Weeks with the help of AMC president Phillip Ayers, promoted the bill and helped to rewrite the bill to include the protection of watersheds and fire control. With Weeks’ support the bill was finally passed in 1911.

The act authorized the Federal Government to purchase lands for forest and water protection. It created the White Mountain National Forrest. 50 years after the bill was passed, more than 20 million acres had been purchased or exchanged for protection and 26 states had created their own National Forests.

So as I walked through the Zealand Valley last week I said thanks to Weeks, Pinchot and Ayers for helping to preserve my forest so I can past the joy of hiking and conservation to another generation. I also hoped that the students I was teaching would also be inspired and would find their own special place to fight for -- to preserve, so that we can all enjoy nature now and always.
Our chapter trip brought together a group of great kids and parents to gather at Highland Center in Crawford Notch NH where we had great accommodations and plentiful family friendly activities. With children ranging in age from 4-13 all hands were on deck as we encouraged and applauded them through the 3 mile round trip hike over steep and challenging terrain. With AMC staffer Cindy Martell expertly taking the lead, we climbed 2000 feet to behold every cascading inch of Arethusa Falls (200 ft.) where we had a leisurely lunch before making the descent and heading to Lower Ammanoosoc Falls to frolic and swim.

The new Kids Club program at Highland Center did not disappoint. The kids could be checked in at 4:30 and they were fed and entertained through 7:30 with in/out contact with parents as either desired. Dedicated Kids Club staff played capture the flag, organized scavenger hunts, and toasted marshmallows. On our first night, we were treated to a rainbow spanning the sky and mountains. It was spectacular but even more spectacular was our encounter with a butterfly den basking in the sunlight on our descent from Arethusa. Each of the children were tickled by butterflies landing on them and each learned how to delicately allow them to crossover to their fingers where they held them to the light for awe-filled inspection. In AMC style, we parted having made new friends and summer memories that our children will cherish.
Worcester Chapter Trip with a Purpose

by Steve Crowe

There were 9 Folks from Worcester who traveled to the White Mountains for a weekend of volunteering and Flags on the 48. Hurricane Irene changed our plans, as Cowboy Brook overflowed and undermined the bridge to the North Country Volunteer Center at Camp Dodge. Parking was a challenge and we had to walk our gear up the hill to the bunk houses for our overnight.

Saturday morning started with the rest of the crew arriving and getting settled into the Adams bunkhouse, rearranging bunks to accommodate everyone. Then we headed up the Mount Washington Auto Road to the trailhead for the Madison Gulf Trail. We discussed how to carry tools safely and watch out for others circle of danger when swing a tool about. There are many waterbars for drainage on the way up to Lowe’s Bald Spot, some made from rock and also from native timber logs, all in various conditions of disrepair. We worked on one waterbar that had undermined several years ago, reinforcing it with rocks and sculpting the drain so the water ran 6-8 inches in front of the new rocks and would have less of a chance to undermine the log again.

When I work with folks doing trail work for the first it is not unusually to hear this kind of comment that Charlie Arsenault sent after the weekend.

“Plus, please spread the word to folks on how much fun and rewarding trail work is. With our crew busy for a single day on the Madison Gulf Trail, we managed to clear many water bars, cut away blow downs, and redirect a raging brook away from a trail.”

Since we were working on the Appalachian Trail, where many thru hikers use hiking poles, we were also able to identify some damage from their use. With the increased use of hiking poles in the last 10 years trails are getting wider, because the sharp tips loosen the moss and soil on the sides of the trail and frost and water contribute to cause additional erosion making the trails 3-4 feet wide.

That night we attended the North Country Volunteer Appreciation BBQ, and enjoyed some delicious ribs and desserts. After the awards portion of the program our team faired quite well in the raffle for Door Prizes and we also received T-Shirts for toiling in the White Mountains.

Since the Worcester Chapter has committed to adopting and maintaining the Henderson Brook Trail in Maine, there will be more opportunities to volunteer for trail maintenance. You could join us next year for the Second annual Flags on the 48 and trail maintenance weekend. You could join the fun in Maine or help with the Mid-State Trail. We need members to step up and join the Trails Committee, we need help publicizing the events on the website, recruiting volunteers, organizing events and joining the crew out on the trails.

Our next trip is: Saturday November 5
and Sunday November 6

We will using the mechanical advantage of a grip hoist and highline system to move rocks, set steps and stabilize the trail treadway. We will be celebrating the end of our 10th season reconstructing the Pine Hill Trail at Wachusett Mountain.

Tools and training are available. Bring lunch, water, and work gloves. Meet at the Wachusett Mountain Visitor’s Center, 8:30am-4:00pm. Register with Steve Crowe steve@SunshineLandscapingCo.com
Gem
Appalachian Mountain Club

The Appalachian Mountain Club earns Emerging Horizons gem status for their inclusive attitude on their recent renovation project at Noble View Outdoor Center in Russell, Massachusetts. As a result of their efforts, accessible and affordable overnight accommodations are now available at this hilltop Berkshire retreat. The volunteer-led project included the addition of access features to Double Cottage, North Cottage and the bath house.

Double Cottage and North Cottage each include wide doorways, an accessible veranda and one wheelchair-accessible bedroom. The cabins have shared public areas — including kitchen and dining areas — and an accessible pathway to the nearby bath house. Access upgrades to the bath house include wide doorways, an accessible family restroom, and a roll-in shower with a hand-held showerhead, grab bars and a shower seat.

North Cottage can accommodate groups of up to 10 people, while the eight bedrooms in Double Cottage can be booked on an individual basis. Nightly room rates at Double Cottage start at just $40, while the entire North Cottage can be rented for $175 per night. Weekly rates are also available, and a two-night minimum is required.

Although there are technically no accessible trails at the Noble View Outdoor Center, many are relatively flat and less than a half-mile in length. The good news is, the Appalachian Mountain Club is currently adding a wheelchair-accessible nature trail there, which should be completed by late 2012.

Kudos to the Appalachian Mountain Club for going that extra mile and making the great outdoors accessible to everyone. For more information on accessible offerings at Noble View Outdoor Center, visit www.nobleviewoutdoorcenter.org or call (413) 572-4501.
Very few of us, maybe, escaped those dreaded words, “Don’t be fresh!” while expressing some youthful opinion in the presence of a parent. What is strange, is this: How did freshness, in any form, develop a bad reputation, when so many things are best when enjoyed at their freshest?

Wouldn’t you trade a “bad banana with a greasy black peel” for a ripe yellow one?

Markets sell “fresh” products of all kinds, but still there are different levels of fresh: fresh, locally-grown fresh, and back-yard fresh. The freshest items are the ones that are the most local, produced right outside the back door or right up the street. And best of all, no time is spent wandering through those soulless fluorescent-lit super-store aisles for the really good stuff to be found.

Some friends live in coastal Maine, and in their back yard grow everything from artichokes to zucchini. They are both master gardeners, and so are mostly successful with their gardens. I, however, bear no resemblance to a master gardener, and when luck and the weather are on my side and the veggies do come in, the local fauna often gets to my vegetable garden flora just before I do. Chipmunks eat the tomatoes, red squirrels run away with the walnuts, birds feast on the blueberries, and on it goes.

Irene downed a maple tree in the yard, and the master gardener friends suggested using the hardwood to grow fresh shiitake mushrooms. “Shiitake” just means “oak mushroom”, and they can be grown in some other hardwoods as well. A drill, a hammer, some melted paraffin, and a paint brush are all the tools needed, aside from a saw. I am now hoping the wildlife behaves well, and leaves the fresh mushrooms to me when these appear in a few months.
Things have changed and for the better. No longer is wool heavy and scratchy. The New Wool is supple, warm, wind blocking and wonderful next to the skin.

However, the old images of wool still prevail in the broader community. It is time to dispel those images and evaluate this new wool with a cool eye.

First a definition of the new wool, it is very fine Merino Wool that comes in a number of thicknesses and forms to fit just about any activity from nature walks to a sweaty winter hike up Mt Lafayette. Ask your biking friends about the joy of wool on a cool day’s bike ride.

What does the new wool bring to the outdoors community? It brings a lot of the old values that have made it the pre-eminent fabric for millennium.

The New Wool is

- A natural fabric and recyclable
- Cozy next to the skin. The lightweight wool filaments are 4 times thinner than the human hair.
- Has a wider temperature comfort range than fleece. A light weight wool top is comfortable at 20 degrees and at 60 degrees.
- Has good fire and spark resistant properties. Remember your fleece jacket that got too close to the camp fire?
- Naturally odor resistant. It has natural odor killing properties. This is why friends on long multi day backpacking and canoe trips stay friends. It also means you do not have to pack as many pieces of clothing and can travel lighter.
- Has better wind blocking properties than fleece and yet it is breathable
- Warmer than fleece by weight
- Warm even when wet
- Wicks moisture away from the skin
- Comes in a wide range of fabric choices that make it good for a range of activities. (felted wool for hats, mitts, and socks, Knitted or woven wool for underwear, and mid layers and Boiled wool or Melton for outerwear)
- Wool lasts forever. You do not need to replace it every few years or so. Good quality wool clothing is generational. You may pass it along to the next generation of hikers in your family.
- But the initial cost of wool is greater than fleece. However, please re-read the previous point.
- The care and washing of wool is more fastidious

With all outdoor activities layering is a key consideration and layering wool with fleece is not unheard of—I do it. I especially do not like plastic (polypro and fleece) next to my skin. I highly recommend a very fine merino wool first layer with a mid layer of fleece on cool days.

What is old is new again; it is not your Grandfather’s wool shirt any more.
Volunteers of the Month

Pat Lambert, Vice Chair

The Volunteer of the Month (VOM) is a non-Executive Committee member who has gone above and beyond the call to duty in supporting our Chapter. A big thank you and congratulations to the following winners:

March  Neil Schutzman
April  Gary Fitzgerald
May  Debi Garlick
June  Pete and Laura Lane
July  Walt Lazarz
August  David Greenslit

VOM’s will be entered to win a prize at the Chapter’s annual meeting in November. In the past, we have given away a free stay at an AMC destination. If you know of a volunteer (who is not a member of the Executive Committee) who you would like to recognize for their contributions to the Chapter, please e-mail Pat Lambert (plambert119@yahoo.com) by the 25th of the month. Winners are selected at our monthly Executive Committee meeting. Thanks!

Worcester Chapter Raises the Flag at Annual September 11th Memorial Hike

by Charlie Arsenault

On the Saturday after the attacks on September 11th 2001, a group of six hikers spontaneously completed a memorial hike to the summit of Mount Liberty. The group raised a large America flag to memorialize those impacted by the tragic and horrific events. Since that first informal group raised a flag on Mount Liberty, hundreds of participants have adopted one of the forty eight 4,000+ foot peaks in New Hampshire. For the last 10 years, on the weekend closest to September 11th, peak adopters have hiked to their peak and raised the America flag as a determined and dedicated tribute.

The Worcester chapter has been honored to participate in this annual event for the last several years. This year a group organized by Steve Ciras, and lead by Charlie Arsenault and Deb Herlihy, adopted the peak at South Carter Mountain. The group completed the memorial hike on Sunday, Sept 11th 2011 in conditions that allowed views of flags being raised on neighboring peaks.

The event is truly special. All who participate come together in a shared experience across a great and beautiful wilderness area. For more info on the Flags on the 48 Memorial event, check out http://www.flagsonthe48.org/
Where:
The Manor
42 West Boylston Street
West Boylston, MA
www.ourmanor.com

Schedule of Events Starts at 6:00
– Happy Hour/Cash Bar
– Dinner
– Business Meeting, Amendment to Chapter By Laws (Article IV, Section 1) & Elections
– Live Music and Contra Dancing

Featured Entertainment: Music and Contra Dancing provided by Roaring Jelly! If you haven’t contra danced before, no worries most of us haven’t either. The caller will take you through the steps and the next thing you know you will be laughing and dancing like a pro.

To register and other details, go to www.amcworcester.org/ and follow the links to our Annual Meeting

Space is limited. Please reserve early! Deadline for dinner reservations is November 2nd.

No refunds after deadline.

Please detach and return. Must be received by November 2.

Names: 1) __________________________ 2) __________________________
3) __________________________ 4) __________________________

Cost: $25 (members) x _____ = $______
$35 (non-members) x _____ = $______

Total: $______

Make Checks Payable to: AMC Worcester Chapter
Send To: Bill Zahavi, 30 Haskell Street, Westboro, MA 01581

A special Thanks to Barbara Dyer our out going Newsletter Editor, for all her hard work over the years. I’m pleased to welcome our new Editor Nancy Cahn.

Editor, Nancy Cahn. All newsletter submissions should be sent to njcahn@charter.net. We reserve the right to edit for length and content. All contributions are welcome. Winter deadline December 15th.

Newsletter Design, Bob DesRosiers. Graphic designer/photographer. Questions/comments about design services, photographs or the newsletter to bob@1uniquestudio.com or visit my web sites www.1uniquestudio.com or www.robertdesrosiersphotography.com. Photo inlay by Bob DesRosiers.