Chapter Chair’s Corner: Staying Engaged while Staying at Home

By Cindy Crosby

The coronavirus pandemic has us all sheltering in place—and thinking of new ways to stay engaged with outdoor activities and conservation advocacy. Public restrictions are easing up gradually, yet we may feel it’s not fast enough. Here are a few possible suggestions to keep engaged:

Get Outdoors Daily
Getting outside to explore your neighborhood provides a healthy outlet in which to channel energy and maintain fitness. Dress according to the weather, bring your face covering, and get outdoors by yourself, with your family, or with a friend! It will change your attitude.

Exercise Regularly
Carve out a location indoors to exercise and make it your oasis to escape. Recreate locally in compliance with state and national stay-at-home guidance. A pandemic is not the time to seek high mountain peaks or white-water rapids far from home, putting you and others at risk. Take this opportunity to discover local parks, beaches, reservations, lakes, and streams. Here are a few short trips I’ve done recently:

• Watch the sunset atop Big Blue ski slope at Blue Hills Reservation.
• Hike the trails at Great Esker Park at low and high tides.

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• Observe and photograph local water birds—seagulls, egrets, osprey, and herons.
• Explore local parks such as Wompatuck State Park, Thayer-Whitney Woods, or Jacobs Pond.

Reduce Landfill Impact
With busy lives, we often opt for convenience over planning. Purchasing a water bottle along with a sandwich at the lunch counter is easier than remembering to bring a reusable bottle; drive-thru coffee when you’re late for work is simpler than a coffee-filled thermos from home.

In this slower-paced, stay-at-home lifestyle, planning is easier and new behaviors are more readily adopted. Here are some easy changes to make:

• Use reusable washable silicon bags instead of plastic baggies for snacks, leftovers, lunches, and travel.
• Don’t use throw-away utensils, cups, and plates.
• Switch from store-bought drinks to reusable beverage bottles.
• Cut down on food waste. USDA estimates that 30-40% of our food goes to waste, the #1 product in landfills. Toss all leftovers and food past its prime in the freezer.
• Buy whole, not precut, vegetables, refrigerating or freezing if necessary.

• Purchase local produce, reducing the carbon footprint involved in transportation.
• Ditch cleaning products and replace with vinegar and bleach.
• Use bar, not liquid, soap.

Read Books to Educate, Entertain, and Dream
Feel the need to update your trail-building or other outdoor skills? Now’s the time to read those AMC skill-building books that collect dust on your bookshelf, or treat yourself to a new book about the history of the White Mountains. Want to be entertained or dream of a future trip? Open up a book that transports you along the Pacific Crest Trail or follows a dog on the Appalachian Trail. Here are a few suggestions:

• Cheryl Strayed, Wild
• Tom Ryan, Following Atticus
• Ryan Harvey, AMC’s Complete Guide to Trail Building and Maintenance
• Nicholas S. Howe, Not Without Peril
• John Fiske, AMC River Guide – New Hampshire/Vermont

Whatever you decide works best for you, the important thing is to stay strong, healthy, and engaged during this trying time.

AMC STARTING TO REOPEN

In response to COVID-19—and the need to prioritize our health, safety, and mission—AMC’s new safety requirements may prohibit some of our normal activities this summer and maybe even into the fall. AMC is committed to upholding best safety practices, and looks ahead to when these precautions are no longer necessary and can expand its offerings again.

Some long-standing traditions will not happen, such as activities that don’t allow for appropriate social distancing and/or are inappropriate for wearing face coverings. The huts, along with many volunteer-led camps and cabins, will remain closed. Some Adventure Travel and other events may be cancelled.

However, there’s some good news! As summer approaches, AMC is opening up activities where participants can implement appropriate safety measures. These decisions are based on current information, which can change. To keep up to date, read your AMC emails or visit AMC’s COVID 19 Update.

Relaunch In-Person Opportunities

In-person volunteer activities resumes in two phases:

• Phase One—Trail work and other stewardship activities: Adopt trails and maintain structures,
Have a Story or Photos to Share?
We’re always interested in hearing about your AMC adventures, experiences, and outdoor tips.


For more information or to submit an article, contact the Mud editor at edex.edit@verizon.net.

Join the INTRO Committee
Do you appreciate the outdoors at a comfortable pace, and want to enjoy this experience with likeminded folks?

INTRO Committee trips are at the beginner to intermediate levels, and offer a broad range of activities, such as walks, hikes, biking, canoeing, snowshoeing, and cross-country skiing. Activities often include a social component—a meal, theater, concert, museum, or historical walk. Both day and weekend trips are offered.

We encourage people who want to try something new, and are open to new ideas. If you’d like to get involved as a leader, co-leader or planner, contact Ed McManmon, epmcmanmon@nii.net or Helen Palmer, hpalmer.fournature@verizon.net.
Executive Committee Seeks Volunteers

Are you interested in getting more involved with the Boston chapter? Want to help move the chapter forward toward the club’s 150th anniversary goals, and better serve our members and leaders?

If so, we have several vacancies, to be elected at our annual meeting in November.

• **Assistant Treasurer:** Works with the Treasurer to manage the chapter’s finances and bank accounts, prepare the budget collaboratively with the individual committees, and assist with income and expense transactions. Will be trained and supervised by the Treasurer, with the intent of becoming the next Treasurer.

• **Communications Coordinator:** Delivers the chapter’s digital and printed communications in alignment with AMC’s mission/guidelines and chapter goals. We seek an organized, creative, and enthusiastic member with excellent written and digital communications skills.

• **Two At-Large Members:** Performs a variety of roles and special projects, such as leadership standardization. At-large members typically have a background in areas other than activity committees, to provide a diversity of experience and interests.

If you’re interested in any of these positions, or want to learn more, contact Mike Barry, mikebarry657@mac.com or Brooks Sherman, rbsherman123@gmail.com.

The following activity committees also seek a chair successor. For information, contact:

• **Biking:** Karen Hall, bikeamc812@gmail.com
• **Conservation:** Mike Barry, mikebarry657@mac.com or Brooks Sherman, rbsherman123@gmail.com
• **INTRO:** Ed McManmon, epmcmanmon@nii.net or Helen Palmer, Hpalmer.fournature@verizon.net
• **Trails:** Mal Crawford, K1MC-Mal@earthlink.net

All positions serve one-year terms with a maximum of three terms.

Jeff Carlson Receives Distinguished Service Award

The Distinguished Service Award recognizes AMC volunteers who’ve contributed outstanding efforts to the club’s mission. It recognizes long-term commitment to enhancing and sustaining our conservation, education, and recreation values.

Jeff Carlson has served as an AMC volunteer since the early 2000s when he became a leader for the Hiking and Backpacking committee. In 2012 he stepped up as Vice Chair and in 2013 began a three-year term as Chair. As Chair, Jeff updated chapter practices and developed a growing sense of connection and cooperation within both the chapter and AMC. Following his successful time as Chair, Jeff took on the Treasurer position, where helped the chapter create a more robust financial policy to heighten transparency and participation in the annual budget process.

In addition, Jeff has served as a chapter representative to the Outdoor Leadership Development Committee, representing chapters’ interests and needs regarding leadership and risk management. Jeff also serves on AMC’s development committee, a tireless advocate, facilitator, and guiding voice for the organization.
April 22, 2020 marked the 50th anniversary of Earth Day. The Conservation Committee had planned several events to celebrate the occasion, which unfortunately were cancelled due to the coronavirus. However, the group connected online:

- An “Earth Month” in April, called Earth Day 2020 Boston and co-sponsored with other Massachusetts organizations, became a virtual rally on April 18 via Facebook Live. Heather Clish, AMC’s Director of Conservation and Recreation Policy, spoke about the importance of public outdoor spaces especially in challenging times, and detailed ways to help protect these spaces.

- With the Young Members committee, hosted a series of Sunday night watch parties of Our Planet using the Netflix Party extension. The Conservation Committee is now planning more virtual viewings. If you’ve any suggestions for movies or TV shows to watch together, contact Katie Blair, conservation@amcboston.org.

As we face this immediate crisis, it’s important to stay conscious of climate change as well, and the need for AMC’s conservation work.

- AMC staff host Wednesday lunchtime presentations about the organization’s research and ways to get involved.

- Young Members leader Michele Grzenda hosts weekly naturalist sessions about New England species that you might see on a socially distant walk in the woods.

It’s been great to see so much interest in these programs. Stay tuned for more conservation programming coming soon!

WordPress Developer Needed

The Boston Chapter is rebuilding its website, http://amcboston.org, and seeks a WordPress developer. This paid position offers “enthusiasm for the outdoors” rates.

The Boston Chapter supports AMC’s mission by leading trips, offering outdoor skills and leadership training courses, and creating opportunities for conservation action and stewardship at the local level.

**Job Requirements**

The developer will perform both back- and front-end development, including creating WordPress themes and plug-ins.

**This position requires:**

- Programming skills to integrate AMC’s activities database with the chapter’s calendar, so all events—including maps—can be viewed in a list and on mobile devices via subscription.


- Competence in creating social media plug-ins for two-way exchange of posts with various channels.

If interested in this position, or know someone who might be, contact Rami Haddad, mcccxxv@gmail.com.
Local Walks and Hikes Committee Stays Active Even During Shutdown

by Lisa Fleischman, Local Walks and Hikes Chair

The Local Walks and Hikes Committee is busy working to make the Local Walks and Hikes experience better than ever once AMC activities resume! We’re currently undertaking the following specific projects:

- **Marc Hurwitz, Bob Tagelaar, and Judith Watson**: Reviewing our records and compiling an up-to-date list of leaders, and ensuring that new leaders complete an AMC membership profile.
- **Mary Wisbach**: Distributed the annual recognition gifts to our top leaders. This year, we gave Amazon credit, which is all virtual—so no need for anyone to even wash their hands!
- **Julia Hsia**: Designed a contact information card for leaders to distribute on walks and hikes that includes key AMC websites and leader’s contact information. Anyone interested in learning more about AMC and/or our group can now easily follow up on the web and with trip leaders.
- **Elizabeth (Betty) Bailey-Masullo**: Planning a leaders’ summer Zoom session – part meeting, part learning, part social.
- **Nancy Olsen and Robin Doyle** (our newest committee members): Nancy will organize the next Local Walks and Hikes Annual Leaders’ Recognition Hike and Luncheon, as soon as it’s safe to gather together. Robin will be responsible for onboarding new leaders. Welcome Nancy and Robin!

**Photo Contest**

*Despite our current activity restrictions, we can still get outside and enjoy nature!*

While outdoors, do you enjoy taking pictures of nature’s beauty in all its forms? If so, the Boston Chapter is sponsoring a photo contest, and everyone is encouraged to enter. Top-place winners will be honored by having their pictures published in the Fall newsletter.

To participate, submit your photo(s) to edex.edit@verizon.net by August 1, and include your name, and where the photo was taken. Pictures of all locations, activities, and seasons welcome!

Any questions? Contact Susan Gilbert, edex.edit@verizon.net.
The Young Members Committee is staying active during quarantine. AMC members in their 20’s and 30’s are enjoying the following activities:

- Watch outdoor documentaries (e.g., Free Solo) with Netflix Party (https://www.netflixparty.com/)
- Enjoy presentations of previous trips and vacations from our leaders. Participants have learned about trekking the Tour Du Mont Blanc, hiking the Alta Via 1 through the Italian Dolomites, and touring Barcelona, Spain.
- Play games with https://www.jackboxgames.com/
- Have unstructured “campfire talks.” Once a week, everyone meets in a Zoom or Google Hangout and talks about whatever they want to share.
- Sponsor photo contests. These include “AMC Outdoors Indoors,” where members are encouraged to set up a tent in their living room and submit a picture. To see some examples, go to: https://www.instagram.com/explore/tags/amcoutdoorsindoors/