

# BOOTPRINTS

Volume 9 Issue 2

March 2005



## Merck Forest

*By Rick Briggs*

On January 22, five brave souls ventured out in a Vermont snowstorm in the 3000 acre Merck Forest to a former sugar shack converted to a cabin.

John Klebes led the hike, as he did last year, as it proved to be a popular overnight hike. This year however with the threat of a blizzard, people dropped from his hiking list until only five of us were left. No Problem – we were all looking forward to spending a night in a cabin with a roaring fire and snow falling outside.

The hike in to the cabin is about two miles and even though the trail was packed we snowshoed in while Ann Marie skied. As soon as we arrived I lit a fire in the woodstove and

John soon had hotdogs cooking on his gas grill for lunch. By this time snow was falling and the wind was picking up. I decided I would not be sleeping outside as I did last year.



After lunch we all decided to hike up to another cabin located on a ridge top above us. {continued on page 2}

## Mt. Mansfield Backpacking Trip

*By Sybille Nickel*

I am not a writer (and not at all in English), but still will give it a try to give you all a little impression of our two day adventure to the Green Mountains on February 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>, 2005.

A cold weekend was expected and like with other winter trips we have been only a small group. Rick, his brother Greg, and myself started our trip from Southwick on Saturday early morning. It was a 4-hour drive to the Stevensville Road parking lot in Underhill where we met our last group member Jeff – Rick's brother from New Hampshire. During our ride up we had beautiful views of Camel's Hump and the whole Green Mountain Range.

The Butler Lodge Trail starts .3 miles from the parking lot and ascends for 1.8 miles to Butler lodge.

## PVHC 2005 Election Results

### PRESIDENT

*Ann Marie Visconti*

### VICE-PRESIDENT

*John Klebes*

### SECRETARY

*Monica Gross*

### TREASURER

*Mike Gross*





**Butler Lodge, Vermont**

The trail was well used and the packed snow made it relatively easy besides our heavy packs to get to the Lodge on snowshoes. On the way up my thought went ahead to a very cold night and I thought that someone should have brought a little gas heater.

My wishes have been heard – arriving at the lodge we met two guys who just had dug out of the snow two big gas containers and had carried up a gas heater – much to Rick's disappointment. He was afraid it would not be cold enough in the lodge.

We settled in into the lodge, made hot drinks and than started our hike to the forehead of Mt. Mansfield. We took the Wallace Cutoff to the Long Trail. We passed through the Needle's Eye, an opening created by two large boulders, to the south end of

the Forehead By-Pass, the bad weather route to the summit. We checked the direct route up to the Forehead but couldn't make out where the trail was. Knowing that that trail would be very steep and will require the use of ladders, which can be hardly done with snowshoes, we decided to use the By-Pass.

After a short time following the By-Pass we lost the trail. We started to traverse to find a way up, 4 feet of snow, spruce traps, and steep sections made it a very exhausting ascent. I was almost ready to give up. But seeing the summit kept me going and after more than 2.5 hours we had made it up to the Forehead – a trail that was supposed to be just 1 mile. The summit was very cold and windy. We only took a short break, covered our faces and descended on the same trail that we had broken in.

With lots of hot tea and plenty of food our bodies recovered soon and we spent a nice evening chatting with the other hikers in the lodge. During the night it was probably 10 degree in the lodge and below zero outside. Sunday morning all our efforts have been rewarded with the most beautiful winter weather you can imagine. The view from the lodge of the Champlain Valley and Adirondacks was gorgeous.

We got a late start for our second

day hike. This time we tried the direct route on the Long Trail to the Forehead using crampons first and later snowshoes. It was a steep and rough climb over rocks and ledges, using ladders in some places. At one point we had to take the packs off and crawl up between rocks. We switched with other hikers to break trail and arrived at the summit after 1.5 hour. This time we had the most incredible views from the summit. We even could see the snow covered summits of the White Mountains.

From the summit we proceeded north, passing the north end of the Forehead By-Pass, taking the TV Road south to the north slope of the Nose and its television buildings from where we enjoyed more views of the Green Mountains and its ski areas. For the descent we chose again the trail that we had made the day before and have been down to the lodge in no time. In respect of the advanced time we just got our packs ready and headed down to the cars.

Hungry like wolves we had to stop in Richmond for an amazingly delicious dinner, which set the exclamation point to an unforgettable trip. Thanks to Rick the hike leader who encouraged us to go along.

## Merck Forest

{continued from page 1}

*By Rick Briggs*

A half-hour later John, Sybille and I were on the ridge in a howling snowstorm while Ann Marie and Mike (Turtle) decide our cabin was a better place to be. We trudged on through the storm and snowdrifts and soon found the other cabin. We ducked inside as no one was there; although the stove was still warm. Ten minutes later as we headed back to our cabin we noticed our tracks were completely filled in on the ridge.

Back at our Sugarshack it was dinnertime and Ann Marie and Mike had begun preparing it. John fired up his gas grill to cook burgers and veggie burgers and soon the place filled with thick smoke as a grease fire was in progress. We had to open the doors and let the wind clear it out.

Dessert was carrot cake, which I brought, and then we settled in for a



**Winter in Vermont - Mt. Mansfield** *(photo's by Sybille Nickel)*



few games of "Cosmic Wimp-out" before retiring to the sound of the wind outside and a chorus of snoring noises coming from the loft.

In the morning the storm was over and the sun was shining though it was cold. We found it somewhat difficult breaking trail uphill but soon we were back on a packed trail and out to the car.

## Breadloaf Wilderness Backpack

*By Rick Briggs*

**T**he Breadloaf Wilderness is located in Central Vermont along the crest of the Green Mountains and contains Mt. Grant, Mt. Cleveland, Mt. Roosevelt, Mt. Wilson and Breadloaf Mtn. We attempted this loop in mid January just after a drenching rainstorm in southern New England. The rain turned to snow in the mountains and dropped about six inches of wet snow that stuck to every tree branch making for a beautiful sight.

As we headed up the Cooley Glen trail in mid afternoon we quickly realized this was not going to be an easy three-mile walk to the shelter. The rain had created runoff streams everywhere and soon we were just walking through them with our snowshoes on. One stream was really moving fast so I took off the snowshoes and waded across – water made it over the top of my boots and my feet were damp. Snow sticking to our snowshoes was a constant problem and made it extra hard going uphill.

We reached the Cooley Glen Shelter well after dark, cooked a quick dinner and went to bed. It was around zero in the morning under clear skies and we got a 9 am start on the trail which is good for winter. We had six miles of trail ahead of us to reach Emily Proctor Shelter and Mt. Cleveland, Roosevelt and Wilson standing in the way. Even though the trail was unbroken I thought we could make it.

Soon after we went over Mt. Cleveland the trail seemed to disappear. The white markers we had been following were very faded and all

we had to follow was a Moose Trail. We spent nearly an hour searching before we located another marker and we were on our way. We lost the trail several more times during the day and as the afternoon wore on I began to wonder if we'd make it.

We climbed over Mt. Wilson as the sun set and I knew we had less than a mile to go and the trail seemed to be better marked.

All of a sudden there was no more trail. We were standing in an open area with no clear sense of where the trail went. Tom went searching in one direction and I went another and another and another. Each time the trail went cold. I wandered down to where Tom went – he came back in a few minutes frustrated. I was convinced we were going to spend the night right where we were – sleeping on the snow with our space blankets.

I broke out my headlight and Tom did the same – he wandered off to look some more where I had been so I decided to look where he had been. I followed what seemed to be a trail that just ended. I turned around and my headlamp picked up a white marker on the tree. I shouted to Tom and we were on our way again now in the dark. A half hour later the shelter came into view – no sleeping on the snow tonight.

The next day we had an easy four-mile hike down hill to the car. To complete our thirteen-mile hike our last obstacle was crossing the river on a snow-covered log, which looked impossible, but we put our crampons on and went right across – no problem!

Next year I hope to try Lincoln Gap to Appalachia Gap – In winter of course!

- Rick Briggs

## Bring Back the "Sharp As a Tack" Award, Please!

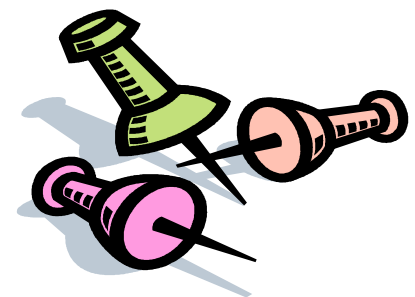
**O**n Saturday, February 5, 2005, Dave Rotondo led a hike to Heublein Tower in Connecticut. When all of us got to the meeting place for the hike, there was no Dave Rotondo. Instead of parking at his usual parking spot before a hike at Wilderness Experiences Unlimited

(WEU), he decided to throw us a curveball and park on the other side of the building. He was inside the building and wanted to know where "we" were... That should have been an omen for things to come!

We decided to carpool, and some of us, including Norm Plante, jumped in the back of Sheila Croteau's SUV. So we got into the SUV, following Dave in his truck down the road south to Heublein Tower, and were a few miles away from WEU, and Norm says, "I can't find my glasses." Well, these were Norm's good glasses, and he wasn't sure where he left them. So as we got further down the road, all the while driving behind Dave's truck, Norm was worrying about his glasses, and wanted Sheila to turn around so that he could go back and find them. So Sheila obligingly turned her SUV around and went back to WEU. At the parking lot Norm immediately checked his car for the glasses. No glasses. Then, for the next few minutes, all five of us in the SUV searched the parking lot and the adjacent roadway for Norm's glasses. Norm believed that he left them on the hood of Sheila's car, and that they might still be in the parking lot. All of a sudden: "Eureka." Norm found his glasses on the hood of Sheila's SUV, right where he thought he left them, but wrapped around the antenna. Talk about dumb luck! One nomination for the "Sharp As A Tack" award, please.

The rest of the day was uneventful, but fun and rewarding. It was nice day to hike up to Heublein Tower. The snow pack was minimal, but perfect for making snowballs. The sun was out, and it was a great day for a hike. We did a little sunbathing at the top, had lunch, and walked down. Then we drove back to WEU. Heublein Tower, with a magnificent, old building/tower at the summit, is a great, easy to moderate hike with nice views, that can be hiked at any time of year.

-- Dick Forrest



## Zealand Hut

by John Klebes

Winter adventures in the White Mountains of New Hampshire are always fantastic but with perfect snow conditions Ann Marie's February trip to Zealand Hut was incredible. Eight of us drove up Friday night and shared two hotel rooms in the Twin Mountains to get an early start. Rick & Sybille and Ann Marie and I rode up in one car, Mike, Turtle, John, and Bill in other. In the morning we meet up with Ed and Wendy – who were busy down hill skiing in Maine on Friday - and the ten of us starting up the snow covered road toward Zealand trail.

In the winter the trip to Zealand is longer because they close the access road and you need to hike in six miles. Half of us went on skis and the other half on snowshoes. We had beautiful crisp weather and fine views of the frozen streams and snow covered trees. The road had at least a foot of new snow and we definitely needed the skis and snowshoes.



The conditions were great for skiing. Not to fast, for us beginners who don't know how to stop or turn! And not so soft and wet that it stuck to your skis like the last time I tried this trip. On the down hills the skiers enjoyed the lead but on the up hills the snowshoe hikers would catch up as we passed each other on the trail.

Wish I had my camera when Mike Carrier, always the gentleman, stepped to the side of the trail to let another skier pass. Poor Mike was not really on the trail but on snow covered bridge! When he stepped to



the side he actually stepped off the bridge and found himself deep in a snowdrift! We all got a laugh but unfortunately no picture for Ann Marie's slideshow.

We reached the hut enjoyed a rewarding rest - some of us made soup or tea and just enjoyed laying back while others took a nap. Was that snoring I heard? Who says these trips are all hard work?

Dinner was our usual feast! We started with crackers and cheese, followed by Tortilla Soup with sour cream & hot sauce. Salad, hot baked buttered garlic bread, teriyaki chicken, mushroom rice, and pecan squares for desert. As always we eat like Kings & Queens and had leftovers. We invited the caretaker to join us for dinner and Rick and Sybille even took leftover chicken up Mt. Hale in the morning. It was the least we could do since my choice of desert turned out to be a very involved construction project for Rick & Sybille. Very tasty but not recommended for tired hikers looking for easy deserts to make.

After dinner we had our "Now Famous" traditional game of "Cosmic Wimp-out". I think we had over eight people in the game this time. The caretaker lit the woodstove and between that and using the two ovens to cook chicken, bread and desert we were down to t-shirts in the hut.

During the night we had another four inches of fresh snow. Ann Marie did miracles in the kitchen cooking egg, ham & cheese English muffins while dancing around all the people bumping into her in the cramped kitchen.

Rick & Sybille headed up Mt. Hale on snowshoes as I graciously offered to pack out their ski's down to the cross trail where the Mt. Hale trail meets Zealand road. Boy was this an act of love! Trying to ski with two extra pairs of skis on your back that hit every tree limb and try to tip you over is an interesting experience. But it was worth it when I hit the Zealand road and glided down three miles of perfect snow.

It was a great weather, great scenery, and great company in our winter in New Hampshire trip. Thanks Ann Marie!





## Up Coming Hikes & Activities

### **Sunday May 8th Mothers Day Canoe/Kayak**

Canoe/kayak the Farmington River - outfitter "Huck Finn Adventures" will rent & shuttle the canoes for those who do not have their own -approx \$55 for a large canoe (maybe a discount if we have a certain number of rentals & also because we are an outdoors club) They will also shuttle for a small fee those who bring their own boats. He is right on the river in Avon, Conn. where we park the cars. We paddle north down stream 9 miles at our own pace (easy no white water) although the water is high & swifter in May. Their van picks us up in Curtis Park, Simsbury & brings us back to our cars. Sheila Croteau 732-7254

### **Sunday, April 24th Henhawk Trail & High Ledge**

Michael Reed will be offering a hike up the Henhawk Trail that runs from Williamsburg into the Conway State Forest. It would be 5 to 8 miles, moderate, depending on what loops we do. There are a number of interesting sites along the way: lots of gurgling brooks, a balancing rock, and, with the owners expected permission, a lunch spot with a killer view of the valley, or so I hear. I'll be planning this with Gwen Blodgett, my partner-in-climb from the Burgy Trails Committee.

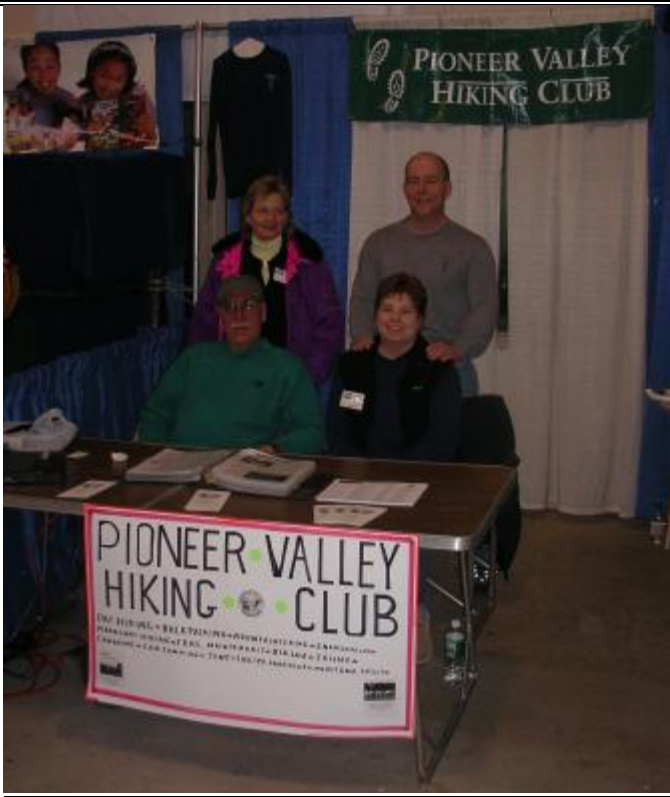
## **RAYS OF HOPE BENEFIT DANCE**

**SAT APRIL 2ND 8:00 til 11:00**

Anyone interested in attending please call Frank @ 568 0859. Tickets are \$12.00 per person. Last year about 20 club people attended. I will reserve tables so we can sit together as a group. It will be held at K of C on Granby Road in Chicopee, MA.

Frank Kamlowski

***"Life is either a daring adventure  
or nothing" - Helen Keller***



## **2005 Camping & Outdoor Show**

*by John Klebes*

On February 18-21<sup>st</sup> twelve club volunteers helped out staffing our annual PVHC Booth at the Springfield Camping & Outdoor Show. I'd like to thank each of you for helping out this year. I think everyone had a great time meeting new people and sharing the spirit of our club with potential new members.

We decorated our booth with the clubs banner and t-shirts and Dave Rotondo made us a nice sign. We provided a taste of the clubs hikes and activities by way of an encore presentation of Ann Marie's Holiday Slideshow displayed on a laptop. At least when Norm Plante wasn't too busy watching the slideshow himself.

Thank you to David Rotondo, Stephanie Bustos JJ Bustos, Sheila Croteau, Mike Rattelle, Mary Walters, Mike & Gail Carrier, Bryarly Lehmann, Norm Plante, Stefanie Capite, Marsha Kelly, Carol Vanderheiden, and Connie Fogarty.

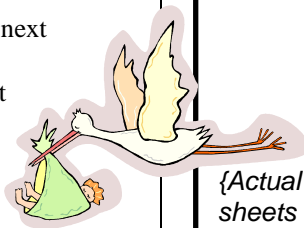
- John Klebes

## PVHC SUMMARY OF JAN. 4, 2005 MEETING

- Nominations were made for election of club officers.
- **President:** John Klebes or Ann Marie Visconti they may switch roles
- **Vice President:** Ann Marie Visconti or John Klebes
- **Treasurer:** Stephanie Butos
- **Secretary:** Monica Gross
- Absentee Ballot question was voted down unless specifically requested by a member.
- Membership is asked to contribute articles for "Bootprints" to help make it better and more meaningful. It will go away without your contributions.
- Members are asked to submit photos for slide show throughout the year to help decrease the work and time near the holidays to put show together.
- Discussion took place regarding decrease in hike leaders of 30% in the last year. A few are holding up too much this may be stressful and cause burnout.
- Membership renewals need to be made in a timely manner. We need these funds to run the club. Hike leaders need to have their dues paid up if they wish to lead.

## PVHC SUMMARY OF FEB. 1, 2005 MEETING

- Elections were held. Additional nomination of Michael Gross as Treasurer was made and accepted by Mike. Stephanie Butos rescinded her previous offer to run for the office of Treasurer. Since no other members were nominated the Secretary cast her vote for all the nominees. **Results:** President: Ann Marie Visconti, Vice President: John Klebes, Treasurer: Michael Gross, Secretary: Monica Gross
- Reviewed information about winter layering, eating and drinking needs during cold season hiking.
- Hike planning meeting scheduled for Feb. 8, 2005 for Mar – May. For those e-mailing hikes please send in hikes as soon as possible before the meeting.
- April 16<sup>th</sup> is date for workday at Bartholomew Cobble. Mark your calendar. Lunch is provided.
- Scott from WEU is a Wilderness First Aid Instructor and will do a course if there is an interest. Course would take 18 hours. There would be a fee.
- Club does have a Scholarship program of \$25.00 for any members who take programs or classes related to hiking. Contact Board if interested.
- Rick and Celeste to handle refreshments at next meeting.
- Gail will be taking over raffle ticket sales at meetings.
- Good luck and **THANKS** to Kim Stevens for her two years as our Treasurer. Enjoy your new role as new Mom.

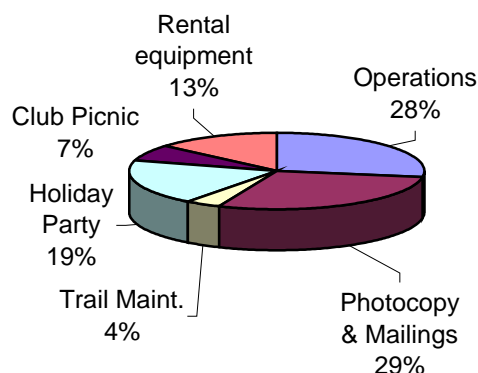


## Where your PVHC Dues went in 2004

For the year 2004 the Pioneer Valley Hiking Club had an average membership of 190 members with each of you supporting the club through annual dues.

The attached pie chart represents a summary of how your dues contributed to the many activities that the club supported in 2004. The club provides our members with a subsidized summer picnic, holiday party, and liability insurance to hike leaders each year. In addition we have an active trail maintenance program that promotes conservation and land stewardship. Your dues also make it possible for you to receive new activity schedules by mail, if you cannot attend a meeting, and provide for publishing our club newsletter "Bootprints". Volunteers run all the executive board positions and the clubs activities.

**Where PVHC Dues Go  
(Jan to Dec 2004)**



|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| Operations:           | Liability insurance, meeting expenses, office equipment & supplies, guest speaker gratuity T-shirts, web site maintenance, special awards, leadership training, scholarships, and membership goodwill. |
| Photocopy & Mailings: | Meeting agendas, schedules, newsletters, club brochures, membership kits, labels, postage, etc.  |
| Trail Maintenance:    | Support for trail maintenance, purchasing trail maps & Guide books, etc.   |
| Holiday Party:        | Includes food, hall rental, door prizes, & entertainment   |
| Club Picnic:          | Includes food & misc. expenses   |
| Equipment             | Purchase of basic hiking equipment for use by beginner members, nominal rental fees offset depreciation of equipment. 2004 purchases included a new PA system and several pairs of crampons.           |

### On Hikers' Observations to the Forest Service:

- Found a smoldering cigarette left by a horse.
- The places where trails do not exist are not well marked.
- Too many rocks in the mountains.
- Need more signs to keep area pristine.

*{Actual comments left on Forest Service registration sheets and comment cards by hikers completing wilderness camping trips} –contributed by Monica Gross*

## Important Notice

Last Chance: We want you to remain members and will be sorry to see you go:

| <u>Past Members</u>             | <u>Expiration Date</u> |
|---------------------------------|------------------------|
| Harriette Block & Karlton Sweet | 200412                 |
| David Vibber                    | 200412                 |
| Donna Walters                   | 200412                 |
| Jan Barlow                      | 200501                 |
| Richard Loomis                  | 200501                 |
| Theresa Marshall & Family       | 200501                 |
| Scott Rainville & Family        | 200501                 |
| Karen Savoy                     | 200501                 |
| Larisa Altman                   | 200502                 |
| Linda M. Benoit                 | 200502                 |
| Donna Delisle-Mitchell & Family | 200502                 |
| James Hastings                  | 200502                 |
| Kenneth Hrycay                  | 200502                 |
| Catherine Poudrier              | 200502                 |
| Norma Roche                     | 200502                 |
| Patricia Stevenson              | 200502                 |
| Edmund Sullivan                 | 200502                 |
| Glen Young                      | 200502                 |

The following memberships are up for renewal:

### March Renewals:

Samuel Armstrong  
 Stephen Beauregard  
 Kay Byington  
 Dianne Carey  
 Mike & Gail Carrier  
 Lisa Edson  
 Lisa Frigo  
 Alan Goodhind  
 Lynne Hartwell  
 John Klebes & Family  
 Linda Krasnow & Doug Dollar  
 Arlene Lawler  
 Donna Lessard  
 Rose Murphy  
 Terry Murphy  
 Michael Ripa  
 Bea Robinson  
 Jennifer Sagan  
 Mary Walters

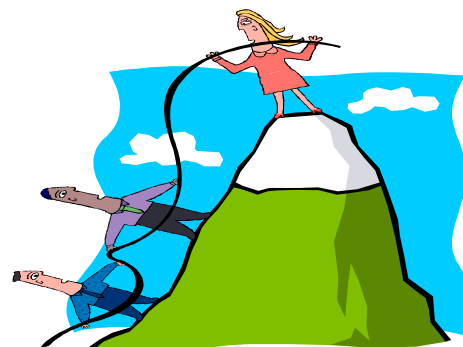
### April Renewals:

Scott Aschenbach  
 Jacki Barden  
 Bill Bartsch  
 Nancy Bigos  
 Luann Bousquet  
 Dianne Chiba  
 John Choinere  
 Parker Cleveland  
 Brian Craig  
 Jane Glushik  
 Bryan Goodwin  
 Mike & Monica Gross  
 Debora Guiel  
 Scott Hall  
 Charlotte Lee  
 Susan McCarthy  
 Susan McGurk  
 Robert Merriman  
 Robert Morgan  
 Sybille Nickel  
 Ron & Esther Nunley  
 Rosmarie & Terry O'Conner  
 Mike & Karen Rattelle  
 Warner Robinson  
 Carolyn Smith  
 Jonathan & Kimberly Stevens  
 Carolyn Stewart  
 Judy Treu  
 Charles Williams

Please renew early, and renew by mail. (Make checks payable to PVHC) Mail your renewal with your name and any address or phone number changes to:

Pioneer Valley Hiking Club  
 c/o Wilderness Experiences  
 P.O. Box 265  
 Southwick, MA 01077

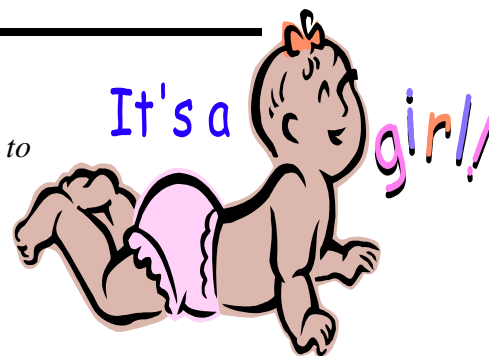
(Dues are \$25 member, \$40 family, and \$15 for students)



## TRIP LEADER GUIDELINES

1. Set definite deadlines and stick to them.
2. Leaders need to obtain full financial details for larger trips before booking and/ or putting down deposits.
3. Disclose these financial details clearly to participants. Preferably in writing.
4. Set a deadline and make it clear there will be no refunds after that date.
5. Avoid taking cash. Encourage checks. You have the option of having the checks made out to PVHC and submitting them to the treasurer who will then cut one check to the booking party for the trip from the club account.
6. Give participants some type of receipt for deposits with balance due and when balance is due. Also, when they are paid in full.
7. If you have a problem with any member defer to the Executive board members.
8. If you have questions about the best way to handle the paperwork talk with the treasurer or other board members.

Congratulations to  
 Kim & Jonathan  
 on the birth of  
 their daughter



## **Catherine Boone Stevens**

February 24, 2005 – 9:45 pm  
 (7 lbs - 7 oz, 20-1/4 inches)

## Pioneer Valley Hiking Club Officers & Committees

Ann Marie Visconti, President (413) 547-2729  
 John Klebes, Vice President (413) 519-1859  
 Monica Gross, Secretary (413) 536-6611  
 Mike Gross, Treasurer (413) 536-6611  
 Scott Cook, *Wilderness Experiences Unlimited*  
 Ray Tibbetts, Founder

### Standing Committee Chairs

Hike Planning Coordinator: *Sue Forest & AnnMarie Visconti*  
 Backpacking Coordinator: *Ed Laroche & Mike Rattelle*  
 Trail Maintenance: *Ed Laroche & Rob Schechtman*  
 Web Page Editor: *Dick Forrest*  
 Email Correspondent: *Rob Schechtman*  
 Email List: *John Klebes*  
 Quartermaster: *Jack Leary*  
 Bootprints Editor: *John Klebes*

***Bootprints is a publication of the Pioneer Valley Hiking Club. Send your story contributions to the editor at: j.klebes@ieee.org (Email) or by USmail to John Klebes, P.O. Box 51385, Indian Orchard, MA 01151.***

## IMPORTANT NOTICES

- ❑ Next Club Meetings:  
 April 5, 2005, 7pm at **FBC**  
 May 3, 2005, 7pm at **FBC**
- ❑ Next Hike Planning Meeting:  
 April 12, 2005, 7pm at **WEU**
- ❑ Deadline for Submissions for next BootPrints is: April 19, 2005

**FBC** – First Baptist Church, West Springfield  
**WEU** – Wilderness Experiences Unlimited

\*\*\* Check out our web page at:  
<http://www.geocities.com/pvhcweb>

Join the PVHC Email List by sending a message to: [pvhc2000@hotmail.com](mailto:pvhc2000@hotmail.com)

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