Screening Goes Both Ways
Finding the trips and trip leaders that fit you and your needs
By Keely Norton

How many potential participants pick up the phone to call a trip leader, but hesitate? The feeling of anxiety starts creeping in and apprehension fills their thoughts. The “what if” thinking starts. “What if I can’t keep up?” “What if I’m the slowest person and I hold everyone up?” “What if I don’t fit in?” They may talk themselves right out of calling in a matter of seconds. I know — I’ve been there myself. My advice: screen your trip leader.

Your trip leader will screen you before you go on a trip with them. When you make that call, they will ask you several questions about your hiking ability, your equipment, what hikes have you done recently and so on.

Notes from the Chair
By Eric L. Savage

As I introduce myself and briefly describe my involvement in the club over the years, I hope you will begin to understand what the AMC means to me and why I am so pleased to be able to give back to the Club, and the New Hampshire Chapter in particular, in many roles, including the one I now undertake.

I grew up in New Hampshire and with the AMC. My father is a member and we did many hikes with the Club when I was younger. Many fond childhood memories involve getting up well before sunrise to head north for an early morning trailhead rendezvous. My father is more interested in botany than peakbagging, but hearing from fellow hikers about these lists apparently made an impact on my impressionable young mind. Upon graduation from high school, I set out to do the four-thousand footers, and have been an incurable peakbagger ever since. It was the exhortation by the Four Thousand Footer Committee, to take part in supporting the preservation of the places I enjoy, that nudged me to purchase my own AMC membership 20 years ago.

Ten years ago, I returned from academic wanderings to once again live full-time in New Hampshire, and within a year I was training to become a hike leader for our Excursions Committee. When I completed the training, I was the youngest hike leader on the roster and began to think about how we could encourage...
Notes from the Chair

Continued from page 1

more young people to get involved. In 2002, when the chapter inaugurated a Young Members Group, I naturally volunteered to help with its development and served for five years as a Co-chair until I was called to take the position of Vice Chair.

And now I am honored and excited to take the next step. I am also very grateful for the wonderful volunteers who will serve with me on the Executive Committee. These are some of the many people who make the New Hampshire Chapter work so well and make the job of the Chair so much easier. But while we will be working hard to support and organize the activities, events and programs that are the backbone of the Chapter, we hope that each of you, if you don’t already, will consider helping out in some small way to make things even better as we go forward. Please contact any of us to find out how you can.

Here’s to a great year in the making!

Eric L. Savage
NH Chapter Chair

Screening Goes Both Ways

Continued from page 1

of your own. Where do you go from here? I bet you may even think of calling and canceling at the last minute with any number of excuses — you’ve fallen ill, hurt your back or knee, or maybe your car broke down. I’m sure the trip leaders have heard them all. Perhaps you can ease your anxiety and apprehension by learning to screen for what you need.

Every trip is different — every trip leader and every group. There could be three hikes going up to the same summit, how do you know which one is for you? There are fast groups and slow groups. There are leaders who like to linger at the top and others who want to move it along. Some groups are more apt to chat and take pictures, while others reach for a second peak. Find what you need by looking inside yourself first. Find what is important to you and you’ll be able to ask the right questions to find the trip that works best for you.

For instance, by letting the trip leader know that you like slow and steady hikes with frequent breaks they may say “Great! This hike’s for you” or they may say “You may have trouble keeping up with our group, but there is another trip that you would probably enjoy more . . .” If you are able to ask for what you want and need, you will find your trips fulfilling and enjoyable. The trip leader wants you to have a good time and get everything you can out of your trip. So be sure to screen; it may be the cure for your anxiety and apprehension.

Continued on next page
Screening Goes Both Ways, continued from page 2

I feel that if you know a little bit about your trip leader you may feel more confident and it may be easier to find the trips and trip leaders that work for you. The more you know, the more apt you are to make that call. So I am ending this article with my own profile on how I would respond to certain questions that may come from potential participants.

Meeting Your Match — 6 Questions for Your Trip Leader

Keely Norton AMC-NH Trip Leader since September 2009; AMC member since 2004. Nickname: Mud girl

Q: What kind of hikes do you like to lead?

A: I prefer to lead WaSH (Walks and Short Hikes) for beginner groups, out of shape hikers, those that are just getting back into it after several years off or those that just like a slower pace. My groups usually go by the name “Turtle Clan” because we’re slow and steady.

Q: What do you hope these hikers take with them from your hikes?

A: I hope to motivate and inspire. I would like to see them leave with improved self-esteem, confidence in their abilities and a better awareness of themselves and what they want. I hope they also gain new friends with similar goals and help motivate each other for better health and wellness.

Q: What do you not want to see on your hike?

A: What I really don’t like is the hiker that doesn’t stay with the group. That is a big no-no for me. I feel that if you sign up for a hike and know what is asked of you and what you are getting into you should feel obligated to stay to the end. That hiker has taken the place of someone else that really wanted to be with the group but it was full. I feel very responsible for the welfare of every hiker that is with me. I always tell my participants that if you want to run up to the summit, let me know and I’ll take you off my list — no hard feelings.

Q: What’s a “must have” for your hike?

A: PATIENCE

Q: What is some of your own advice that you do not follow?

A: My worst bad habit would be that I do not do any exercise during the week. I don’t make it a priority and I know I should. I am that “weekend warrior.”

Q: What hikes do you have coming up?

A: I do not have any more hikes scheduled this year and I do not lead winter hikes, but keep your eye open for the spring. I am looking forward to starting up a “Walking for Wellness” series and a “Hiking for Health” series. I also like to make the walks and hikes fun and enjoyable. I feel that if the participants are having a pleasurable experience they will stick with it and improve their overall health. What could be better than that?

I hope you have enjoyed these questions and that it may help you on your own journey. We are all unique but we all need to fit in to our own groups. If you have questions of your own that you would like to be answered by a trip leader or several trip leaders, please email your questions to me at membership@amc-nh.org. If I get some good questions from you and some good answers from our leaders I’ll post them in the next newsletter. Please remember to list your first name and town or city that you’re from. Stay tuned for some more profiles in the future and I hope you find the trip leaders that fit you and your needs.
2010 Winter Workshops

A. Introduction to Winter Wilderness Travel: Instruction in general mountain safety, clothing, and equipment, nutrition, risk management and trip planning. Includes introduction to snowshoeing and map and compass. Intended for individuals with limited experience who would like to start winter activities safely. Anticipate hiking as much as three miles at a slow pace with occasional uphill grades.

B. Intermediate Winter Wilderness Travel: Instruction in snowshoeing, route finding (map and compass) as well as general mountain safety, clothing and equipment, nutrition, risk management and trip planning. Intended for individuals with extensive three-season experience in the outdoors, but with limited winter experience. Anticipate hiking/snowshoeing up to 5 miles at a mod/slow pace with sustained uphill grades.

C. Advanced Winter Wilderness Travel: Instruction is offered in winter travel on steep terrain and above tree line. Subjects covered include snowshoeing on mountain terrain, use of crampons, dressing for extreme weather conditions, off-trail navigation and risk management. Intended for individuals with winter experience in the outdoors who are interested in climbing New England’s tallest mountains safely. Anticipate hiking 6+ miles at a mod/fast pace, steep terrain, and significant exposure to wind.

D. Introduction To Backcountry Skiing: Instruction in basic backcountry skiing techniques, including use of equipment, trail travel (safety and some map and compass), gliding, stopping and turning. Participants will spend about three to four hours a day outside on skis. Trips will be on ungroomed backcountry trails and vary in length from two to four miles. Small elevation gains, with frequent small ups and downs. Be prepared to ski with day packs on. This class will only be offered for Workshop # 1.

E. Intermediate Backcountry Skiing: Instruction in skiing technique, map and compass, general backcountry safety, clothing and equipment. Participants should be able to herringbone (to climb) and wedge to a stop, ready to learn wedge turns and possibly telemark turns. Trips will be three to four miles on fairly narrow, ungroomed backcountry trails with 500’ elevation gain/loss. We will be outdoors three to four hours per day.

F. Advanced Backcountry Skiing: Instruction in free-heel skiing techniques, with an emphasis on telemark turns, and necessary snow skills. Participants should be able to do wedge, step or basic tele turns. The majority of time will be spent outdoors with instruction on telemark turns, followed by two to three mile tours on backcountry trails. We will search for powder skiing in open trees.

G. Mountain Touring: Instruction in general backcountry safety, clothing, equipment, navigation, and trip planning. Review of ski techniques for radical backcountry terrain. Participants should be able to do wedge and parallel or tele turns. We will tour 5-6 miles with an elevation gain of 2000’. Conditions will include narrow trails, open tree skiing, bushwhacking, and some above-timberline windslab. This class will only be offered for Workshop # 2.

H. Leadership and Mountain Skills: This section is for those who have mastered the basics of winter hiking and or BC skiing. Exercises in planning, organizing, and expediting a trip. Emphasizing leadership techniques and group dynamics. A review of the basics, accident scene management, medical considerations and off trail navigation. This class is also for people with potential and desire to become trip leaders for the NH Chapter Excursions or Ski Committees. Proficiency on snowshoes is a prerequisite.

I. Introduction to Winter Backpacking: For those that have mastered the basics of three-season backpacking skills. Instruction in general winter mountain safety, snowshoeing, equipment, proper camp site selection and set up, cooking, trail finding, map and compass, off trail navigation, weather, trip planning, nutrition, emergency situations. Students will need winter clothing, a 20” below zero or lower sleeping bag, and foam pad. Tents can be provided if needed. This group will participate in indoor lectures and evening programs, sleeping outside Fri. and Sat. night. Prepare one meal outdoors. This class will only be offered for Workshop # 1.

J. Intermediate Winter Backpacking: Same as Introduction to Winter Backpacking except this group will be spending more time outdoors. Students will sleep outside both Fri. and Sat. night and prepare 2 meals outdoors. This class will only be offered for Workshop # 2.

These workshop will begin promptly at 7:30 p.m. Friday evening and ends Sunday afternoon at 4 p.m. Cost $120 (AMC members), $135 (nonmembers), includes lodging, excellent meals, materials, and instruction.

For further information, go to our website (amc-nh.org). To register online go to AMC_registration.ccnc.org or send a business size self addressed stamped envelope to the Registrar: Lynda Caine, 64 South Bow Rd., Hooksett, NH 03106. Send check or money with completed application or pay online. You must be 18 years or older to attend. For more information please contact Directors Rick Silverberg (603-225-5921, 7-10:30 p.m.) or Bob Humphrey (603-456-3708, 7 - 9 p.m. only) or bobh@mcttelecom.com).
Spectacular scenery is one of the most obvious reasons so many of us are drawn to hiking the White Mountains. You reach a summit — I’m thinking Mt. Liberty, for example — and you gaze in awe across the vast panorama. You snap a gazillion photos hoping for just that perfect one so you can show your friends the breathtaking views.

If you’re like me, inevitably, it’s disappointing when viewing the photos online or printed. It’s never quite the same as the real thing. They seem to lack the vibrance you experienced when the landscape lay before you. So, I’ve decided to focus the next year on improving my photography skills.

One of the best ways to get better landscape photos is to avoid camera shake by using a tripod.

On the other hand, packing light has become increasingly more important to me the older I get. Yes, there are Gorillpods, those small, flexible tripods. But, at 11.5 oz for point and shoot cameras, or 1.75 pounds for one that will hold a digital SLR, that’s more weight than I want. Besides, I had a Gorillapod that broke two days into a seven day mountain biking trip in the Colorado mountains. Bummer.

Then, there are the light carbon fiber or titanium ones — great, but real budget killers. I found another option, albeit not perfect, but you can’t beat its weight and price.

I learned about this tripod trick from a Tips from the Top Floor podcast episode 323 produced by Chris Marquardt, photographer, videographer, photography instructor, and podcast host based in Tübingen, Germany. Although Chris refers to this tool as a “Poor Man’s Tripod” due to its simplicity — it costs less than $3 to make — when I heard his podcast, I knew this could work for lite-hikers like me. I added a few modifications to make it even better for our needs and it still weighs in at less than 2 ounces. I dubbed it “the Hiker’s Tripod.”

Next, pass the loop through the eyebolt and loop it through itself as shown in the inset photo. Screw the eyebolt into the tripod socket of your camera.

To use the tripod, stand inside the loop with both feet on top of the string. Pull the camera up into position so that the cord forms a triangle with your feet and the camera as the points. You can adjust your stance so the cord is taut when the camera is at eye level. The tautness of the cord holds the camera fairly stable.

For those of you who can control the settings on your camera, this extra stability means you have at least 2x more exposure time, and perhaps 3x or 4x, according to Marquardt, so you can stop down the aperture even further, which means you get a greater depth of field — or more of the landscape in focus between you and the farthest point.

The Hiker’s Tripod gives you some of the same features that a standard tripod does; like reducing camera shake, especially to the left and right, but without the weight and for a minimal cost. When you’ve got a great view to remember and share with family and friends, make it a fantastic shot with the little bit of extra stability using your Hiker’s Tripod.

Wonderful as our photos can be, there’s nothing like the real thing. Anyone up for hiking Mt. Liberty?

Here’s how it’s done:

You’ll need a piece of cord cut to a length about double your height; a nut; an 1/4 inch eyebolt (or whatever size will screw into the tripod socket on the bottom of your camera); and a Velcro® strap to hold your tripod together neatly when it’s in your pack.

First, thread the nut onto the cord, then tie the cord in a loop — a square knot is fine. I suggest the nut because it acts as a kind of sinker so that when you’re on a summit or anywhere in high wind, the cord won’t blow around so much.

Members who are receiving Mountain Passages electronically can click here to see more tips from Chris Marquardt or sign up for Tips from the Top Floor podcasts.
Audubon Christmas Bird Count
Dec. 19 — Highland Center, Crawford Notch

Birders and Nature Enthusiasts are invited to take part.

The Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC) invites outdoors enthusiasts to participate in the National Audubon Society’s 110-year-old winter tradition, the Annual Christmas Bird Count (CBC), to be held on Sat., Dec. 19 at the Highland Center in Crawford Notch.

The CBC provides a way to get out and have fun birding and contribute important data that will affect bird and nature conservation. A holiday season tradition, the event is open to birders of all skill levels.

Participants can make a weekend of it and enjoy the hospitality, activities, and learning opportunities provided at the Highland Center. AMC has created a special lodging and events package for event participants.

The CBC began over a century ago when 27 conservationists in 25 localities, led by scientist and writer Frank Chapman, changed the course of ornithological history. On Christmas Day 1890, the small group posed an alternative to the “side hunt,” a Christmas Day activity in which teams competed to see who could shoot the most birds and small mammals. Instead Chapman proposed to identify, count, and record all the birds they saw, founding what is now considered to be the world’s most significant citizen-based conservation effort and a more than century old institution.

CBC participants will have the opportunity to start the day at the Highland Center with a warm and hearty breakfast, spend the day in the field with friends and fellow birders, and enjoy a post-event reception, dinner and a night’s stay. CBC participants can choose to take advantage of any or all of those options.

CBC produces valuable scientific data that is vital in monitoring the status of resident and migratory bird populations across the Western Hemisphere. The data have become a crucial part of the U.S. government’s natural history monitoring database.

Data submitted, for example, has helped ornithologists understand the magnitude of the effects of the West Nile Virus on regional bird populations. (Count results from past years are available at audubon.org/bird/cbc.)

National Audubon’s CBC director Geoff LeBaron states, “Backed with over a century of participation and collected data... the CBC has evolved into a powerful and important tool, one probably inconceivable to any of the 27 participants on the first Christmas Bird Count.”

For more information, or to make reservations, please call the AMC Reservations Line at 603-466-2727 (Mon-Sat, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.). The Highland Center will offer discounted rates on both private room and shared bunk room lodging for all bird count participants. Shared bunk rooms are $54 per person per night; beds in Shapleigh Bunk House are $54 per person per night; private room accommodations are $103.68 per person per night; and child rates are $43.20 per child per night. Two-night minimum (Fri/Sat or Sat/Sun) includes dinner and breakfast both days plus free use of L.L. Bean equipment.
Membership in a Bottle
Pre-Holiday Sale!!!

In addition to a one-year membership, you will receive:
A Nalgene* water bottle * A $10 gift certificate good for AMC books, lodging, and workshops * An AMC window decal * A subscription to AMC Outdoors * Our Chapter newsletter, Mountain Passages * A new member packet with a welcome letter, information brochure, and member ID card

Membership in a Bottle Makes a Great Gift!

Please select the membership category:

___ Individual Membership in a Bottle Kits ($40 each - a 20% new member discount!)
___ Family Membership in a Bottle Kits ($60 each - 20% new member discount!)
___ Senior Membership in a Bottle Kits ($25 each, age 69 and over). Your age: _____
___ Young Member Membership in a Bottle Kits ($25 each, up to age 30). Your age: _____

Membership in a Bottle is available to new AMC members only, not for AMC membership renewals.

Membership in a Bottle will be sent to the address below, and the membership will be recorded in that name, unless you indicate otherwise.

New member’s name:____________________________________________________________________
Street:_________________________________________________________________________________
City, State, Zip: ________________________________________________________________________
Phone: __________________________ Email: ________________________@__________________________

Is this a gift membership? Yes ____      No ____

Please mail the completed form with check (payable to AMC-NH Chapter) to: Keely Norton, 151 Pond Hill Road, Barrington, NH 03825. Questions? Contact Keely at 603-630-5270 or membership@amc-nh.org.

Limited “Membership in a Bottle” kits available! Order yours now before they run out!

AMC Member Center

Use the Member Center to get Mountain Passages electronically, renew your membership, or update your member profile.

NEW! Get a weekly digest of upcoming AMC-NH activities sent to your email inbox!

Go to www.outdoors.org/membercenter. Use your member number to confirm your member information on the Member Validation page if you don’t already have a username and password.
Avalanche Class
Dec. 19-20
Pinkham Notch

The Mountaineering Committee of the AMC-NH Chapter is offering its sixth annual December ‘avy’ workshop at Pinkham Notch.

This workshop, taught by experienced Mountaineering Committee instructors, is basically a Level-one Course and provides insight into safe travel in avalanche country. Participants will learn to recognize avy terrain and learn why the snow slides.

The course covers route-finding, rescue, and human factors that affect decision making. It is an ideal course for those new to travel in avalanche terrain and a great review for anyone who has some experience or prior training. Participants will engage in both classroom activities at Pinkham and extensive field instruction on a hike into Tuckerman Ravine.

Knowledge of snow stability and route finding are obviously essential in achieving safe winter travel in the mountains. Therefore, this course is highly recommended for all winter climbers, hikers, skiers, riders, snowmobilers, and arctic hunters.

Course participants are eligible for group rates and are encouraged to stay at Pinkham. To guarantee availability, Pinkham reservations must be made by Sat., Nov 14. Cost is $75 and includes avy equipment use, but not bed and meals at Pinkham.

For more information contact Jed Eliades (603-643-4556, before 8:30 p.m.).

AMC 2010 Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting will take place on Jan. 30, 2010, at the Sheraton Ferncroft Resort in Danvers, MA. Join us for a full day of AMC workshops, business meetings, and volunteer awards. Wrap up the day with dinner and keynote speaker Jonathan Waterman. Jon is mostly known for his time exploring the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, of which he has written many books. He also has written and starred in TV documentaries on challenges in the North. Details about the Annual Meeting are available on outdoors.org.

Get AMC-NH Chapter Activities Sent to Inbox!

AMC’s new online activity digest allows members to sign up for a weekly, bi-monthly, or monthly email summary of upcoming chapter activities and advance notice trips. Members can sign up for as many as three digests, and select chapters, committees, activities, and regions of interest. Members can sign up through the AMC Member Center at outdoors.org/membercenter.
A Day on the Long Trail
By David Ross

The crisp days of autumn are some of our favorite times to hike. The insects are mostly dormant, and the hazy, humid and hot days of summer are just a memory. Fewer hours of daylight are a reminder of the winter season to come, and give an urgency and immediacy to the daily routine.

An early start to the hike helps to ensure that we are fat on time, so we have the chance to hang out on a summit, or take a spur trail to an overlook. We don’t have to hurry on the trail, so our knees and ankles take less of a beating on the rocky, root-filled terrain.

The other day I headed to Vermont to do a section of the Long Trail (LT) that I had missed. I am working on becoming an “End to Ender,” or doing the entire length of the state on the trail. So far, I have completed the southern three divisions, running from the Massachusetts border to a highway east of Manchester.

Two years ago, on a solo backpack, I became distracted while unsuccessfully looking for a geocache. (We’ve written in past issues about the sport of geocaching; www.geocaching.com). I wound up omitting five miles of the LT in favor of a road walk. Anyone who has hiked the LT knows that it can be a challenge to stay on the trail.

After my search, I headed down an old logging road, spacing out just long enough to lose a few hundred feet of elevation before realizing I wasn’t on the trail!

Eating is always a favorite part of hiking for me, so on the drive north I stopped at a local place in the village of Newfane for their version of an egg/sausage/cheese sandwich. What an improvement on the product of the golden arches!

My sandwich consumed, and the fat calories starting to warm me up (and possibly harden my arteries), it was time to look for some good coffee. Three villages up Route 30, in Jamaica, there is a nice little coffee and pastry shop, where I could quench my thirst.

By 8:15 I was on the trail, with the promise of a beautiful day. No bugs, a minimum of mud and flat terrain made for easy going. I passed a northbound end-to-ender who had been on the trail for four days and was planning to get off for a day in Manchester to do laundry and buy a smaller pack.

My early start meant that I had plenty of time to look for another geocache, this one on Spruce Peak, and write my name in the logbook. By 11 I had reached the end of my five mile section, and it was time to look for my nemesis of two years ago, Vermont’s first cache, the 86th in the world, the one requiring a downhill walk of a mile or more.

This time I scored, and retraced my steps uphill to Prospect Rock, for a broad view of Mt. Equinox and Manchester’s valley. I shared the rock with a couple of end-to-enders from Montréal, college-aged guys who had been on the trail several days and admitted they were making slower than expected progress. We commiserated about the fact that the LT can be deceiving — the profile of the hike doesn’t look intimidating, but the constant up and down and the often challenging terrain can really beat you up.

On the return trip back to the car, I met several groups of hikers, young children with parents who were out for the day, just enjoying the weather and the chance to be in the woods. I had plenty of time to drive back to central New Hampshire in daylight, and even managed to visit that coffee shop in Jamaica for another hit on my way home!
Inside this Issue... (Members who are receiving Mountain Passages electronically can simply click on any topic to go straight to the article.)

Screening Your Trip Leaders.....................................................................................................................................1
Trip leader Keely Norton gives her advice on making sure you and your potential trip leader are a good match.

2010 AMC-NH Winter Workshops.............................................................................................................................1
Enjoy winter in the mountains! Sign up for workshops on back-country travel and safety.

Notes from the Chair.................................................................................................................................................1
Introducing Eric Savage, AMC-NH Chapter Chair

AMC-NH Executive Committee Contacts................................................................................................................2

Hiker’s Tripod............................................................................................................................................................5
A tip for taking better photos

Audubon Bird Count.................................................................................................................................................6
Outdoor enthusiasts are welcome to participate!

Membership Information..........................................................................................................................................7

Upcoming Events......................................................................................................................................................8

Avalanche Class........................................................................................................................................................8
Gain insight into safe travel in avalanche country

AMC 2010 Annual Meeting........................................................................................................................................8
Register now!

AMC-NH Chapter Activities......................................................................................................................................8
Get advance notice of Chapter activities and trips sent to your inbox.

A Day on the Long Trail............................................................................................................................................9