

## Meet One of Our Newest Member Clubs: HIKE for Mental Health

### Sometimes Less Is More.

HIKE for Mental Health sponsored many hikes in 2012, ranging from seven-day section hikes of the A.T. in New Jersey to summit scrambles up Mount Washington in New Hampshire. Among all these hikes, however, the shortest—a two-mile Veterans' Day walk on the Pochuck Boardwalk—stands out.

Participants on that hike donated a self-help book about mental health to the behavioral ward of a V.A. hospital caring for returning service men and women.

As the hospital's nurse who requested the books said, "Our ward is strictly behavioral health and all our patients are active duty. Most carry their battle scars on the inside and we have the fleeting opportunity to care for them in their crisis time. If you could provide any of the listed literature, I promise I will ensure it reaches the right hands. If even one is helped, it would be magnificent."

While the hike itself was great—a clear autumn day with golden marshland surrounding us—the real reward came weeks later when thank-you notes from the hospital began to arrive to participating organizations.

One note read, "Each day I am at work exceeds the previous day in amazement at you and your wonderful volunteers! Today I lost count of the many boxes of goods for our heroes. Thank you all!"

Another said, "You are touching hearts and minds! They look in awe as the many gifts arrive and see that they are cherished and remembered. This is such a morale booster as well as an opportunity to change mind sets."

In 2013, HIKE for Mental Health will again sponsor many amazing hikes. And again, hikers will be awestruck by what a difference something as simple as a walk in the woods can make in the lives of others.

**About us:** A 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, **HIKE for Mental Health** sponsors fundraising hikes to increase awareness of and raise funds to research causes, treatments and cures for mental illness. A fifth of the money raised goes to preserve hiking trails. In January, we awarded the Trail Conference \$1,500 to support its mission. There is no fee to join our hikes. For more information, visit [www.hikeformentalhealth.org](http://www.hikeformentalhealth.org) or email [inquiries@hikeformentalhealth.org](mailto:inquiries@hikeformentalhealth.org).

—By Leo Walker



## Hydration for Hikers

By Howard E. Friedman, DPM



Item #1 on the Trail Conference's list of 10 Hiking Essentials ([nynjtc.org/content/10-hiking-essentials](http://nynjtc.org/content/10-hiking-essentials)) is Water—generally, "two quarts per day per person in every season."

"Fluid loss is heightened in winter as well as summer," the advice continues. "Don't put yourself in the position of having to end your hike early because you have run out of water."

I would add health and safety considerations to this advice. Under-hydrate and risk weakness, muscle cramps, increased cardiovascular strain and, in severe cases, the need for intravenous fluids or worse. Over-hydrate and risk headache, vomiting, fatigue, confusion, and in the worst case, death. Runners have died in both the Boston and London Marathons from over-hydration.

Yet experts disagree on the best indicators for staying properly hydrated. One leading sports physician group advises endurance athletes to calculate their fluid needs and schedule hydration methodically. Another group advises reliance on our built-in thirst mechanism to signal the need to hydrate. No specific guidelines exist for hikers, but many of the principles outlined for runners can be applied to a long day of hiking.

### What the Experts Say

The Institute of Medicine of the National Academies suggests that total water intake for men is about 3.7 liters/day while

women need about 2.7 liters, with more required during prolonged physical activity. (One liter is equal to about one quart.) Total water includes all beverages, water, and water contained in food. Several physician associations have published hydration guidelines specifically for marathon runners.

The American College of Sports Medicine downplays the role of thirst and recommends that marathon runners estimate the amount of fluid they will need and drink measured doses throughout the day. They note that thirst is a late sign indicating the body is already dehydrated.

To calculate hourly fluid loss, experts recommend weighing oneself first thing in the morning naked and after urinating, running (after dressing) at race speed for one hour, weighing oneself afterward while naked, and adding in the amount of fluid consumed during the run. The difference in weight can be used to calculate a "sweat rate," the approximate volume of water one will need to replace each hour.

The International Marathon Medical Director's Association (IMMDA), on the other hand, states emphatically that thirst is the best way of knowing when to drink. The IMMDA feels that turning off the thirst mechanism by drinking consistently, even at pre-measured amounts, can lead to dangerous over-hydration.

### Fluid Loss

Sweating is the primary mechanism by which our bodies prevent overheating during physical activity. As sweat evaporates from the skin it creates a cooling effect. People can lose between one half to two liters of sweat per hour during intense exercise, with a loss of one liter per hour common for runners.

Athletes are advised to stay within their "hydration zone," losing no more than about 2% of their body weight from fluid loss. Sweating one liter equals losing about two pounds of body weight. A 150-pound person running for four hours could lose 6% of body weight if she does not replenish any fluids, resulting in severe dehydration.

Determining if one is well hydrated is not readily obvious, and one might not know how much fluid is lost while running or hiking. A normal color of urine, neither too dark nor too clear, is an indicator of proper hydration. And thirst is a clear indi-

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## Member Club News

Find links to all Trail Conference member groups online under the Community tab at [www.nynjtc.org](http://www.nynjtc.org). Member groups: submit your news and photos for *Trail Walker* and the website via email: [tw@nynjtc.org](mailto:tw@nynjtc.org).

### Union County Hiking Club Celebrates 75th Anniversary

The Union County Hiking Club (UCHC) traces its origins to the 1930s, when the Union County Park Commission sponsored nature walks in county parks. Eight people subsequently took these walks a step further, meeting to organize longer, more strenuous hikes. By 1939, a year after its founding, the club's schedule listed 21 events. In 1949 there were 38. Our 75th Anniversary schedule this year, from January to June 2013, contains 200 events. Not bad for a club of 620 members!

In 1942, having grown to 25 members, UCHC joined the Trail Conference. We were assigned eight miles of the Appalachian Trail to maintain in the Bearfort Ridge area, plus two miles of connecting trails. Today, the club continues to maintain more than 8 miles of the AT in two sections, in Wawayanda State Park and in Orange County, NY.

Hikes, walks, and trail maintenance eventually led to other activities—weekends became popular events and children often participated: hiking/swimming at a 4H camp in Stokes State Forest, an annual fall foliage weekend in Connecticut, canoeing on New Jersey's serpentine rivers, skiing in Vermont, bicycling near and far, square dancing.

At first, club hikes were held only on Saturdays; then we branched out to include Sundays as well. A significant UCHC expansion occurred in 2004, when the Frost Valley Trail Walkers dissolved and their leaders, members, and weekday schedules were blended with UCHC's. Another group, the Kittatinny Trailwalkers, also joined Union County, adding alternate Thursdays to the club schedule, which now covers six days a week, with Fridays off to allow members a day to get out and scout new hikes (a little joke).

Through the years, Union County Hiking Club has maintained a friendly, helpful, "family" setting for people to enjoy the outdoors. The combined experience and knowledge of club members is really amazing. It's a wonderful club! Come and join us, and help us gather even more happy memories.

—by Nancy Wolff, with material from notes by the late Bill Myles

### MidHudson ADK Hits 65th Year

The Mid-Hudson Chapter of the Adirondack Mountain Club celebrated its 65th anniversary at its annual holiday party in December. One hundred of the chapter's 750 members enjoyed live music by the "Lost in the Woods" ensemble of Poughkeepsie, dinner, a slide show of recent outings, and recognition of several long-time members.

Among the latter was Jane Geisler, who joined the club in 1949, two years after its founding, and went on to become its legendary Trails Chair: "I heard that there were weekend hikes offered by this group over at Vassar College," Jane reminisced. "I've been active with the club ever since." When asked why a person might join the Mid-Hudson chapter today, Jane exclaimed, "Well, you get to see every notable place on both sides of the Hudson River! You meet the most interesting people from all professions," and, perhaps with pun intended, she added, "and all walks of life!"

In 1947, a nucleus of people, mostly Vassar College faculty members and close friends known as the Dutchess County Trail Club, enjoyed weekend walks and tea hikes. Spearheaded by Ed Nixon, then director of the Roosevelt Presidential Library in Hyde Park and an ADK Club President, the group applied for and was chartered as the Mid-Hudson Chapter of ADK on November 15. Then, as today, participants hiked in all seasons throughout the Hudson Valley and in the Shawangunk, Catskill, Taconic, and Adirondack Mountains. Early traditions included Palm Sunday services at St. John's in the Wilderness in Harriman Park, New Year's Day party, the post-hike tea, and the "three-decker" outing which included a hike, terrace dancing, and supper. During the 1950's the chapter expanded outings to include backpacking, camping, and canoe trips.

Today, Mid-Hudson ADK offers a multitude of activities at all skill levels—hiking, biking, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, kayaking, canoeing, backpacking, camping, and trail maintenance (Appalachian Trail in Dutchess, Long Path in Ulster, Finger Lakes Trail in Sullivan, and at Locust Grove historic site in Poughkeepsie).

Check out the list of upcoming activities on the chapter's website, [MidHudsonADK.org](http://MidHudsonADK.org), or join the MeetUp site at [www.meetup.com/Hudson-River-Valley-ADK-Outdoors-Recreation-Conservation](http://www.meetup.com/Hudson-River-Valley-ADK-Outdoors-Recreation-Conservation). As 60-year member, Adrienne Wiese, enthused at the 65th anniversary dinner, "It keeps you young!"

—by Skip Doyle, MHADK publicity chair

### We welcome these five new member groups!

**Friends of the Hackensack River Greenway in Teaneck, NJ**  
Currently maintains 3.5 miles of greenway in Teaneck.

**Korean Hiking Club of Flushing, NY**  
Weekly hikes for members, mostly in Harriman State Park.

**Quality Parks of Port Jefferson, NY**  
Group restores and rehabilitates trails, mostly on Long Island.

**Salt Shakers Trail Running Club of Andover, NJ**  
Club organizes runs, including fund-raising events, and trail work.

**Sullivan County Audubon Society, Loch Sheldrake, NY**  
Club offers nature walks and lectures to the public.

### Does Your Group Support Trails in Our Region?

Find out how your organization can join the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference. Call Joanne at 201.512.9348, ext. 26.