



MIAMI VALLEY OUTDOOR CLUB

September 2007

September 4 Membership Meeting: “Biking 4,000 Miles to the Arctic Circle”

When our September guest speaker Allen Johnson was growing up, he dreamed of traveling through the wilderness of Alaska and hunting bear, moose and mule deer. Recently Allen and his grandson, Paul, set off on an adventure of his dreams. The two bicycled 4,000 miles from Dayton, Ohio to Alaska, following the Alaskan Highway up to the Arctic Circle.

They rode 100 miles a day for eight weeks, starting each day at dawn. Along the way they encountered moose, deer, bears, lynx, fox, wolves, buffalo and beavers - all unfazed by people on bicycles. The pair crossed two mountain ranges and a mountain pass with five-inches of snow.

Paul loves fishing, so grandfather and grandson stopped at every stream and lake they passed, catching northern pike, trout, sturgeon, bass and a bunch of pan fish.

The scenery was spectacular, the snow-covered Canadian Rocky Mountains were in view for four weeks, and the Yukon wilderness stretched unbroken for hundreds of miles without a road, cabin, mail box or telephone pole to be seen.

Allen Johnson's program will begin at 7:00 p.m. Tuesday, September 4, preceded by the business meeting at 6:30 p.m. Come at 6:00 p.m. for socializing and trip planning. The meeting will be at Wegerzyn Garden Center, 1301 E. Siebenthaler Ave., Dayton. (*Read more about Allen Johnson, page 2.*)



Kayaking at Kiser Lake State Park, June 18-19

*Jeanne Boeke and Bonnie Sptizkeit enjoy the quiet waters of Kiser Lake where motor boats are not permitted.
(photo by Donna Gehring)*

September Activities

All About Allen Johnson, September 4 Guest Speaker

Born in the small southern Illinois town of Lawrenceville in 1935, Allen Johnson grew up leading a quiet life of sandlot baseball, fishing, camping out, delivering the evening paper and day-dreaming of wilderness adventures - dreams that have since come true. In the past 40 years Allen has flown over five million miles including circling the globe five times, driven nearly one million miles and flown over the Antarctic and the North Pole.

Allen met and married his wife, Gloria of Chester, Illinois, while studying electrical engineering at the University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana. After he graduated, they lived in Boston where he worked at the Bell Telephone Laboratory designing microwave radio systems. After two years they and their two children, Donald and Judy, moved to Dayton, Ohio where Allen worked in an Air Force research laboratory designing and flight testing aircraft radios. After 37 years in the same job, Allen retired in 1996.

Allen's work with the Air Force provided the opportunity to travel extensively. Taking advantage of his professional and personal travel he has chased polar bears across the Canadian Arctic, ridden camels across the Australian Outback, bicycled across Sweden, Canada and the US, kayaked the 40-foot high tides in the Bay of Fundy, skied on the Arctic Ocean in Greenland, swam with sharks in Mexico, jogged the Great Wall of China, climbed volcanoes in Hawaii, hiked the remote mountains of Argentina's Terre del Fuego, driven elephants through the streets of New Delhi, India, and biked 4,000 miles from Ohio to Alaska.

Mr. Johnson chronicles his adventures in articles in the *Chicago Tribune*, *Boston Globe*, *Sumner Press*, *Outdoor Indiana Magazine*, *American Airline's Magazine* and numerous special interest journals. Allen has also written twelve books.

Board Meeting, Thursday, Sept. 13

This month's board meeting will be at Marion's Pizza Restaurant, 3443 N. Dixie Dr., 6:00 p.m. All club members are welcome.

Windsurfing, Eastwood Lake, Wednesday, September 19

This is your last chance to try windsurfing this season. Join Virginia and David Wood at Eastwood Lake (south of SR4 off of Woodman Dr.) 5 - 8 p.m. Kayaks and canoes are welcome too. Someone usually goes for food around 6 p.m. Since sunset will be earlier than last month, try to arrive as early as possible. Call 426-9875 if you are unsure about the weather.

Trip Reports

Hueston Woods Group Campout July 21-22

by Donna Gehring

My husband Dwight and I, Jenny and Mike McConnell, Dale Bockhorst, Dan and Nancy Haas, Kathy Hemmerick and Julie Webb turned out for camping. Luisa Guardione and Sheryl Faulkner joined us for the day and brought their Key Lime Pie as a contribution to the evening meal. The drought this summer left that portion of the lake next to our campsite murky, muddy, and slimey. Either the water level was lower or the mud level was higher. Although the campsite was great, we elected not to put our watercraft into the lake at the campsite. After setting up camp we started our day's activities. While Dan, Nancy, Sheryl, and Luisa hiked trails, the rest of us biked our way around the park. On the uphill sections I cheered the cyclists on with a chant, "Key Lime Pie, Key Lime Pie, Key Lime Pie!" It worked. We made it back to camp. Next we took a dip in the lake at the beach and stopped at the nature center to discover that it was closed until Sunday morning. Back at the campsite we started preparing dinner as our hikers drifted into camp. Luisa and Sheryl decided they were done for the day and took their *Key Lime Pie* and went home. Oh well! We had a campfire and turned in for the night. Next morning we put the kayak into the water at the marina and paddled around the lake to the beach and back. Some of us visited the nature center while Julie and Kathy took a turn at the kayak. We looked for Dan and Nancy to take a turn at the kayak but could not find them. We said our good-byes and left for home. Three days later I made a run to the grocery store for none other than *Key Lime Pie*.



Taking a Break. Mad River floaters (from left) Bridget Maline, Cindy Goubeaux, Bonnie Spitzkeit, Jeanne Boeke, Linda Clevenger, Lindy McDonough and Dwight Gehring. (photo by Donna Gehring)

Mad River Float Trip Part II Saturday, August 11

by Lindy McDonough

On this glorious summer afternoon, eight MVOcers enjoyed a cool and lazy float down the Mad River near Tremont City. Dwight Gehring, Lindy McDonough, Jeanne Boeke, Bonnie Spitzkeit, Cindy Goubeaux, Linda Clevenger, and Bridget Maline took to the water, while Donna Gehring chose to stay on land this time around, but was still an integral part of the outing. She made organizing the parked cars much less complicated and was our official photographer, meeting us at various bridges and getting some good aerial shots of the floaters. She also took the opportunity to visit some local garage sales between photo sessions and found some of great bargains.

The spring-fed river was especially clear for the outing. We could easily see the moss covered rocks below the surface, fallen branches, floating leaves and an occasional burst of bright green vegetation growing under the river bottom.

Canoeists were out in force that day with more than a dozen bright red canoes gliding past our slowly bobbing inner tubes - some of the boaters wishing they were in inner tubes instead so they wouldn't have to work so hard rowing down the river.

At one sharp bend in the river, where the water was deep and fast moving, Bonnie Spitzkeit was headed straight for a fallen tree. Getting

instructions from both Dwight Gehring to stay in her inner tube and a canoeist who yelled for her to jump out, Bonnie opted to bail, and then had a time catching the inner tube and getting back into it. Shortly after that, Dwight had an unexpected mishap. On another fast moving bend in the river, racing past some large flat rocks along the shoreline, Dwight's tube was flipped over and Dwight got a good dunking, but he managed to recover quickly. We all had a good laugh.

Kiser Lake Group Campout August 18

by Donna Gehring

My husband Dwight and I, Lindy McDonough and Jeanne Boeke were the first to arrive and set up camp at this lovely park in Logan County. Jeanne and Dwight started their five-mile bicycle ride to Davey Woods Nature Preserve at about 2:00 p.m. while Lindy and I traveled by van. We checked out the marina/camp store before we left the park to join the riders at the nature preserve. They arrived before we did. We hiked the trails and were pleasantly surprised to find some seriously huge trees and other stuff. It was a very nice nature preserve. Dwight and Jeanne cycled back to the park while Lindy and I checked out a roadside lake in Millerstown that I had discovered on a map. We found it. I still don't know if it was a private or public lake. There was a gravel road leading to it that ran between two private residences but there were no signs - not even a "No

Trespassing" sign. We joined up with Dwight and Jeanne at the center of Millerstown, followed them a short way and took pictures. We were going to try to run interference with some bicycle hating dogs they had encountered on the way. The first two dogs were called back by their owners. The last dog was confused and distracted by two bicycles, a van and a truck all at once and he just stopped in his tracks and stared. Back at camp we prepared to attend a potluck dinner planned by the state park staff. The park supplied turkey and we supplied covered dishes to share. The event was the end-of-season awards banquet to recognize the efforts of the volunteers. It was humbling to find out that most of the park activities are only there because of volunteers. Marcy Weiner, Linda Hahn and Emma Pleasant joined us for the awards dinner and later for a campfire talk. The weekend provided many photo opportunities. I got pictures of two does with two baby deer and an antlered buck, as well as some buzzards roosting atop a tree after a storm with wings spread out to dry. I also got shots of yellow and black butterflies feasting on 15 ft tall teasels. I missed a chance to get pictures of about 15 wild turkeys crossing the road that led to the restroom facility. We had to stop the van to let them by. Next morning Jim and Connie Steele and Barbara McCray left on their 20-mile ride to a favorite ice cream store in DeGraff. While they rode, the rest of us prepared to paddle the lake, but it started to rain very hard. We hung out in the marina/store, drank cocoa, bought stuff and waited for an SOS call from our cyclists. Bonnie Spitzkeit joined us for the day around this time. Finally, after no call from our cyclists, we decided to head for DeGraff hoping to meet the riders at the ice cream store. Two vehicles with campers set out on the bicycle route. Bonnie stayed behind and hiked a trail. On our way to DeGraff the cell phone rang. The cyclists had had enough of the rain storm. I told them we were halfway there. When we arrived the three bicycles and cyclists were collected. We were all disappointed to learn that Orphan Annies Yummy Treats didn't open



Cycling near Kiser Lake, August 18-19

Above from left: Dwight Gehring and Jeanne Boeke reach the top of a long hill.

Below from left: Water-logged cyclists Jeanne Boeke, Barbara McCray and Jim Steele wait in DeGraff to be rescued from the stormy weather. (photos by Donna Gehring)



until noon on Sundays, so we proceeded back to the campsite and had a wonderful lunch. Afterwards, Jim went home to catch up on his sleep and Connie stayed with us for an hour of lake paddling. Lindy headed back to Dayton to see an afternoon film with her movie group. Barbara rented a kayak, Jeanne and Bonnie went out on a double kayak and Connie kayaked with Dwight while I sat on shore and took pictures. After we finally got some ice cream at the marina, the rest of us headed home.



**Zaleski State Forest
Backpackers,
June 16-17**

From left: Dave Todd, Connie Steele, Andy Niekamp and Sandy Todd. Also on the trip but not pictured were Jenny and Max McConnell, Walt Fenstermacher, Dwight and Donna Gehring, and Barbara McCray (photographer).

A Message from the Appalachian Trail

MVOCer Andy Niekamp sends greetings from Waynesboro, VA. He is spending his summer hiking part of the Appalachian Trail. As of Aug. 17, 2007 he was in Shenandoah National Park in Virginia and had completed 373 miles of a 575 mile hike. He plans to finish his adventure in early September. Come hear his talk titled "5,000 Miles on a 2,200 Mile Trail - Lessons Learned From an Appalachian Trail Section Hiker" at the November MVOC meeting.

**2nd Annual Junction Trail Festival,
Milford, OH, Sept. 7-9**

Although it's not an official MVOC outing, you might want to help celebrate the convergence of over 22,000 miles of long distance hiking, cycling and paddling trails at Milford, OH. Outdoors people and vendors from the southeastern Ohio region will be on hand for hiking, biking, canoeing, camping, sharing their experiences in the wild, the newest outdoor gear, and information on many outdoor organizations. It's only about 1.5 hours from Dayton and is bound to be a fun day. For detailed information on the festival check out their website at www.thejunctiontrailfest.org.

Memberships now half price!

Starting July 1, the yearly memberships were reduced to half price. For the remainder of the year, dues are: Singles \$8, Families \$12. All memberships end December 31.

Coming Up

- Sept.. 4.....Membership Meeting, Allen Johnson on Biking to the Arctic Circle
- Sept. 7-9..... Junction Trail Festival, Milford, OH
- Sept. 13.....MVOC Board Meeting at Marions
- Sept. 17.....Deadline for Oct. newsletter
- Oct. 2..... Membership Meeting, Rubin Battino on Tramping and Touring in New Zealand.
- Oct. 6..... Outdoor GearFest at 2nd St. Market
- Nov. 6..... Membership Meeting, Andy Niekamp, "5,000 Miles On a 2,200 Mile Trail - Lessons Learned From an Appalachian Trail Section Hiker"
- Dec. 4.....Annual Holiday Feast & Auction
- Feb. 7-9.....Miami Valley Adventure Summit, Wright State University

Membership Response Form

Annual dues are \$16 for singles or \$24 for families. New members joining after July 1 may pay half a year's dues.

Name _____ I'd like to join _____ I'd like to renew _____

Address _____ I'd like more information _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone # _____

Email address _____ Amount Enclosed: \$ _____

Please circle one: (Include) (Do not include) my name and information on the annual roster sent to all MVOC members.

I hereby declare that I am at least 18 years of age and agree to abide by the rules and regulations of the Miami Valley Outdoor Club. I do hereby relieve the Miami Valley Outdoor Club and/or its officers and members from all responsibility and liability regarding any loss, injury, or accidents incurred at, or related to, any club activity or function.

Signature _____ Date _____

MVOC Officers

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