



MIAMI VALLEY OUTDOOR CLUB

November 2007

Appalachian Adventure at November 6 Meeting

5,500 Miles on a 2,200 Mile Trail -

Lessons Learned from an Appalachian Trail Long Distance Hiker

“Captain Blue” aka Andy Niekamp of Kettering and member of the Miami Valley Outdoor Club, will speak at the MVOC November 6 meeting about his adventures hiking the 2,200-mile Appalachian Trail two and a half times. Andy’s program will begin at 7:00 at Wegerzyn Garden Center 1301 E. Siebenthaler Ave., Dayton. Come at 6:00 for socializing and trip planning, followed by a short business meeting at 6:30. The program is free and open to the public.

Since 1994 Andy Niekamp has hiked 5,500 miles on the Appalachian Trail (AT), a continuous footpath that runs through fourteen states from Spring Mountain in Georgia to Mount Katahdin in Maine. He has been awarded two “2,000 miler” certificates by the Appalachian Trail Conservancy which is conferred on hikers who have completed the entire AT and he is a Life Member of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy.

Andy first became interested in backpacking in Boy Scouts, took his first solo hike on the AT in 1989, and since then has hiked the trail in sections end-to-end two and a half times. His average hike on the trail is 15 miles per day but he has walked up to 26 miles in one day. In the last few years he has averaged 500-600 miles per section and his longest hike was 840 miles in 1998. He finds each successive end-to-end hike gets easier and more enjoyable and his favorite areas of the trail are the southern Appalachians, New Hampshire and Maine.

Most of Andy’s AT hiking is solo, but occasionally he has friends join him for short sections and he has met many interesting people along the way. Almost all of his hiking has been in the summer months when the
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Wildcat Hollow Trail Maintenance Crew, Oct. 20.
(top from left) Dwight Gehring, Barbara McCray, Ralph Weiss, Bob Kelley; (bottom from left) park ranger & Donna Gehring. See story on page 2.

November Activities

Membership Meeting, Tuesday, Nov. 6

"5,500 Miles on a 2,200 Mile Trail - Lessons Learned from an Appalachian Trail Long Distance Hiker" by MVOC member Andy Niekamp will be the topic of our program. Andy's talk will begin at 7:00 p.m. 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.

Board Meeting, Thursday, Nov. 15

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.

Historic Canal Trek, Sunday, Nov. 18

Interested in learning about and exploring a bit of Ohio's history? This is a day trip to explore and learn about the Miami Erie Canal. We'll visit the canal towns of Minster, New Bremen and Saint Mary's in Auglaize County. We'll take several short hikes along the canal tow path on the Miami Erie Scenic Trail to explore what remains of the canal, locks and aqueducts. Our trip will include a visit to a canal museum. The Miami Erie Canal has a fascinating history. It was completed in 1845 and was dug entirely by hand, mostly by immigrant labor. The canals boats carried both freight and people into the Ohio wilderness in the era before railroads. Come hike along the canal tow path and imagine you were there during its heyday. The itinerary for this trip is still being finalized. You will need to arrange your own transportation to Minster but from there we'll board a large passenger van for our tour. If you are interested please contact Andy Niekamp at andyniekamp@gmail.com or 937-296-0245. Limit 12 people. Visit www.mvoc.net/canaltrek/ for more information.

Trip Reports

Germantown MetroPark

Evening/Night Hike, October 18

By Andy Niekamp

MVOCers Andy Niekamp, Lisa LaRichie, Gary Smith, Luisa Guardione and Yvonne Wurstner participated in a recent Germantown MetroPark Evening/Night Hike. The hike began promptly at

6:30 p.m. The temperature was unseasonably warm and mother nature gave us mostly clear skies and no rain. A third of the hike was during daylight hours, a third during dusk and third was in the dark. We completed the 3 mile hike at 8:00 p.m using flashlights and headlamps. Everyone had a great time so we decided to keep on hiking. We hiked next on the Silver Trail where we laid in an open meadow to enjoy the warm weather and watch the night sky.

Gear Fest, Saturday, Oct. 6

By Lindy McDonough

We had plenty of help at our MVOC table on this beautiful fall day in downtown Dayton. Mike Nelson, Lindy McDonough, Connie Steele, Shari Christy, Andy Niekamp, Ella Himes, Bob Kelley, and Bridget Malone all showed up to work. We handed out more than 175 past issues of the newsletter and over 100 membership forms and there was lots of interest in our activities. The event was bigger than ever with clubs and retailers from all over the Miami Valley and even from as far as away as Detroit, Michigan. It's not known how much shopping our members did during the event, but Bridget Malone did get a bit wet trying her hand at kayaking in the big temporary pond set up for various water sports.

Trail Maintenance, October 20

By Ralph Weiss

Five outdoor club members arrived Friday and on Saturday two more members showed up at Burr Oak. Once again we worked the trailhead and built a seed reservoir at the boot brush. We also had great fun advising hunters to brush their boots before entering the forest. This was greeted with some "Are you crazy?" looks. Most understood about invasive species and sort of joined in the laugh. After work, Stan, our rec.tec., took us on a hike up the hollow where we studied possible trail relocation. Saturday was sunny followed by a cool evening campout. On Sunday, which was sunny as well, some of us hiked the lake trail, others tended the fire - a very important job.

Into the Wild Movie Outing, October 28

By Lindy McDonough

Five MVOCers, Dale Bockhorst, Jim and Pat Nies, Mike Nelson and Lindy McDonough turned out for the new film **Into the Wild** at the Neon Movies. The movie, a true story about a conflicted young man who cuts his ties to family and friends to penetrate the Alaskan wilderness in a search for

the meaning of life. The thought-provoking story with its beautiful outdoor photography and exciting action scenes was enjoyed by all. Following the movie we all met at Dewey's Pizza off Brown Street, where we shared travel and camping adventures. In fact, Pat and Jim have spent time in Winner, South Dakota, one of the towns featured in the film, because of relatives living there.

Niekamp on the Appalachian Trail

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long periods of sunlight make it easier to hike more miles. Bears, moose, deer, bobcats and rattlesnakes are some of the wildlife he has encountered on his AT adventures and he really enjoys seeing azaleas, rhododendron and mountain laurel in bloom. A bird called the Veery whose song sounds like a bird whistling down a tube is his favorite AT animal.

Cold weather, rain, hail, lightning, wind, heat and drought conditions are no strangers to Andy. At night he sleeps in the shelters along the AT if they are not crowded or in a one-person tent that he carries. About once a week he hitchhikes into town to resupply his food, take a shower and wash his clothes.

Andy says "the physical and mental demands of long distance hiking are a great way to recharge one's internal batteries and get a fresh look on life." Long distance hiking is the closest thing Andy has found to a "fountain of youth."

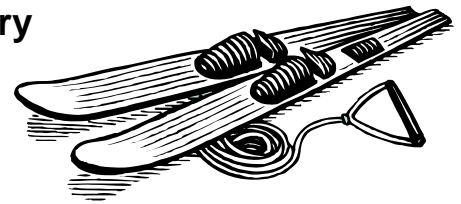
Andy is grateful to his employer, Electronic Data Systems, where he is a systems analyst, for letting him take extended time off work for hiking. Andy stays in shape when not hiking long distance by taking many walks and hikes in and around Dayton. He also enjoys camping and caving. Currently he serves as chairman of the Rockcastle Karst Conservancy which owns the Great Saltpetre Cave and is a member and past officer of the caving organization, Dayton Underground Grotto.

Other

Get That Stuff Ready for the Auction!

It's time to dig through your closets, basements, garages and attics for all that outdoor equipment, apparel, maps and books that you think you can bear to part with. Our annual Holiday Feast and Auction is coming up and we need lots of gear, so we can make lots of money for some deserving nature center or preserve. And some of us might get some real bargains in the process.

Cross Country Ski Trip to Michigan, Feb. 9-15



This year we are going to try a trip to Paradise, MI. Paradise is located in the Upper Peninsula on Lake Superior at Whitefish Point. It is the closest community to Tahquamenon Falls at which we will be able to ski. We will begin the weekend in Sault Ste. Marie trying out some night cross country skiing. From there we will travel to Paradise for some snowshoeing and cross country skiing. Last year there was lots of snow! Cabin accommodations will allow us to do some of our own food preparation, but we are also close enough to walk into town to restaurants. For more information, look up Paradise on www.exploringthenorth.com/Paradise/ or Harmonsbirchwoodresort.com or just call David or Virginia Wood, 937-426-9875 for the itinerary and to sign up. After October 26th call Jeanne Boeke 299-4102. Costs: \$25-40 per night per person for accommodations, plus food and transportation. Deposit for the cabins in Paradise is \$40 per person if received no later than November 30th. After that date the deposit will be \$60. We will make motel reservations in January. Those not able to confirm immediately may still join the trip, although you may not be in the same cluster of cabins as the larger group. Join us for the weekend in Sault St. Marie or midweek in Paradise. Not a skier? Bring a book along. All cabins have lounges and VCRs. Snowshoe and ski rental can be arranged. A final planning meeting will be scheduled for early January. We already have eleven people planning to go!!

Coming Up

- Nov. 6..... Membership Meeting, Andy Niekamp, "Lessons Learned From an Appalachian Trail Section Hiker"
- Nov. 15 Board Meeting, Marions Pizza
- Nov. 17 Newsletter Deadline
- Nov. 18 Historic Canal Trek
- Dec. 4..... Annual Holiday Feast & Auction
- Dec. 8 "Ohio Above and Below" - outing to Ohio and Zane Caverns and Ohio's highest point - Campbell Hill
- Dec. 15 Christmas Light Hike, Clifton Gorge
- Dec. 13..... Board Meeting, Marion's Pizza
- Feb. 7-9.... Miami Valley Adventure Summit, WSU
- Feb. 9-15.. Michigan Cross Country Ski Trip

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

President:	Sandy Todd	698-5046	saza3@hotmail.com
Vice President:	Gary Mount	367-6702	glmount@yahoo.com
Secretary/Treasurer:	Dale Bockhorst	433-5533	dalebockhorst@yahoo.com
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