

# SUSQUEHANNOCK HIKER

Newsletter of the Susquehannock Trail Club

On Foot in Potter County.....God's Country

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The purposes of the STC are to build and maintain trails, aid in the conservation of wetlands and wildlife and promote good fellowship through the medium of hiking and nature study.

Spring 2024



Photo by Curt Weinhold

## Election Year

2024 is election year not only for the nation, but also for the STC! The success of any group, organization, or nation is highly dependent on energetic, wise, competent, and honest leadership. We believe much of the success of the STC has been a committed, hard-working, thoughtful, progressive leadership team.

In the past decade, our major achievements have included building half a dozen shelters and bridges, creating an excellent website, and getting the trail digitally mapped and available on the FarOut app. We've also invested in a tool trailer and an array of equipment, including chainsaws, several brushcutters, two trail mowers, and numerous other tools to equip our maintainers. Many new initiatives are in the works.

Leadership is service. Our volunteers, from loppers to sawyers, data managers to mappers, shuttle drivers to hike leaders, mail-answerers to event planners, and makers of brochures or to makers of tasty dishes for our monthly "eatin'-meetin's," put in hundreds of hours of time each year. In this issue, we introduce our leadership team, including some who have served for many years and others who are new nominees stepping up to give of themselves.

*-- For the trails, and those who hike on them!*

## President's Message

Wanda Shirk

Having “elections” with only one nominee for each office, as we have for the STC this year, may seem somewhat undemocratic, but we’ve put our collective heads together and concluded that the slate presented in this issue for our 2024-2026 leadership can hardly be improved upon – though we welcome write-ins (including *you*-reader!) so we know who might be good to tap in the future.

The unity of the slate brought to my mind words from a hymn of my youth, “Onward Christian Soldiers”: *“We are not divided. All one body, we! One in hope and doctrine, one in charity!”*

That last word leads to another story.

Ed McCrea, our speaker at a full-house “February Frolic” dinner at the Susquehannock Lodge, gave us an interesting presentation on a trip to Antarctica, complete with fascinating photos of various types of penguins (I had no idea there were so many different kinds!) and mountains of snow and ice. But Ed also spoke about EECG – his life mission, Environmental Education & Conservation Global. Among many projects involving the environment and conservation, there is also a humanitarian project: funding wheelchairs for victims of wars and accidents in Tanzania to enable recipients to be able to simply get around, to be mobile, to work and provide for their families. To live productively!

The three-wheeled wheelchairs are pedaled by hand and built on bicycle-sized wheels that can handle rugged terrain. Among the opportunities available to their users is training to become guides in the Serengeti National Park for wildlife tourism. Constructed locally in Tanzania, the wheelchairs cost \$350 each, although \$300 can cover the cost with economies of scale if five are ordered at one time.

The goal is to provide 100 wheelchairs. So far, 64 have been funded (including four by the Coudersport Rotary). The objective is to hit #70 in 2024. After the meeting, life members Ted Peet and Lee Wisel promptly contributed to fully fund a wheelchair. Ed Graczyk and Nancy Lounsbury, Janet Smith, Cindy Bower and I – and someone who handed me a \$20: in the busyness of the hour, I forgot to note who that was! – made donations to fully fund another.

At our March meeting, a motion was made and seconded that the STC donate \$100 for a wheelchair, and an amendment was quickly proposed to make it \$300. The question then raised was whether it was appropriate to spend money that folks donated to the

STS for trail maintenance and shelters to help a humanitarian cause on another continent, however worthy that cause might be, even related to conservation, the environment, and trails.

The solution: Upon suggestion by several members, a pass-the-hat collection was taken, and the 33 members present donated \$310, with a promise by one member – who doesn’t carry cash when he’s going for a ‘free lunch’ at our dish-to-share meeting – to mail in money to add to the collection.

On my financial notebook, I’ve written quotes like “A budget is a moral document,” “Giving should be joyful, intentional, and proportional,” and “Live simply so others can simply live. Eat simply so others can simply eat.” Our lives differ in income, health, and other challenges, but we are all so fortunate to be able to walk and to live where we do, free of war, famine, and abject poverty.

I was proud of our STC members at the March meeting. No money was taken from the club treasury, but a third wheelchair was funded by kind, generous donors.

*“All one body, we... One in charity.”*

To make a contribution for a wheelchair for the Serengeti, make check payable to EECG and send to Ed McCrea, 204 E. Locust St., Coudersport, PA 16915 – and mention that you are donating as a grateful member of the STC.





## Trail Report Spring 2024

By Bill Boyd

Here we are into a brand new year, for maintaining and enhancing the STS. 2023 was a very good year for our trail club, with lots of trail maintenance done, and a good deal of improvements made. We finished the season with nearly 2700 hours recorded, second only to 2020 when we had over 3000 hours. That was what we refer to as the "Covid" year - it seems as though a great many wanted to be out on the trails, in a virus-free atmosphere. We had about 60 volunteers that year, only to be surpassed in 2021 with around 90 volunteers. The only thing we can think of is maybe folks decided they liked being out there on the trails for the fresh (and safe) air, and doing their good deeds for the hiking community.

Going forward we have plenty of plans for the new year. Another trail shelter is being planned, and hopefully the Gravel Lick shelter will be rebuilt. Some readers may recall, due to sheer carelessness, that shelter burned to the ground. Seems a couple of campers (backpackers) built a campfire, not in the fire-ring which we supply, but apparently too close to the shelter. They then went to bed with the fire obviously not put out - upon awakening, they discovered that some of the shelter was on fire. Luckily they did call it in - and the Austin VFD responded - but by then the shelter was destroyed and an acre or so of the woods was scorched. This couple did own up to causing the fire, but as of yet have not offered any assistance for rebuilding. These shelters cost the club around \$1000 + or - and this is all from dues and donations. We are going to work on fire prevention and suppression in the future, first by posting notices: "Fires MUST be in the fire-ring" - "MUST be attended at all times" - "MUST be completely out when leaving or going to bed". Also we plan to include buckets to catch rain-water, rakes and shovels to keep the fire-ring area clear of combustibles. (If anyone has any of these items, still usable, they wish to donate, please let us know.)

Some new bridges are being planned, and the crews are working on some shorter loop hikes, for those who have a limited amount of time to do some hiking. More "benching" needs to be done - this is the widening of the trail where it has narrowed over the years from the hillside sloughing down.

So we're looking forward to another busy year on the STS and associated trails - maybe you would like to come along and enjoy some time in Penns-Woods, and the great Susquehannock State Forest.

## Bill Boyd

By Wanda Shirk

Introduction of the STC leadership team is absolutely incomplete if Bill Boyd is not included. Although he is not on the ballot for an elected office, the STC depends substantially on Bill for core elements of our mission.

Bill has been Trail Manager for years, organizing trail maintainers for 25 sections of the STS, arranging work crews and ordering materials for bridge and shelter building projects, keeping records of everyone's hours and work completed, and putting out calls for sawyers or other help as needed -- though just as often, he'll take his saw and clear a reported blowdown himself. His emails to "the team" are full of encouragement and often the BB sense of humor.

As Tool Manager, Bill makes sure all the saws, brushcutters, trail mowers and hand tools are ready to use, transported to work sites and that the tool trailer is clean and on site for workdays or local parades.

Bill has built eleven heavy-duty picnic tables for the club to donate to Ole Bull State Park in appreciation for hosting our annual August camporees.

In recent years Bill has honed the skill of making trail signs, taking over where Tom Fitzgerald left off to help hikers identify where they are and how far it is to the next water, road, or shelter.

For eighteen years Bill has written a weekly column of trail club news for the Potter Leader Enterprise

Over the past decade, Bill has also been STC treasurer. Bill is happily turning this task over to Steve Erway for the upcoming term.

Hmmm? Talk about "Big shoes to fill!"



# STC Leadership Team

## Officers Profiles

### Wanda Shirk - President

Wanda Shirk has been president of the STC since 2010, and over those past 14 years also did double duty by serving five years as vice president and three years as president of the statewide Keystone Trails Association. A retired Northern Potter high school English teacher, Wanda first backpacked the STS in 2000, and since then has gone on to hike 22 of Pennsylvania's 25 long-distance (over 20 miles) hiking trails, half of the Appalachian Trail, most of the Finger Lakes Trail, and six ADK high peaks, for a total of over 3500 trail miles. Doing trail maintenance is also one of her great joys and satisfactions. She has received the State Forest Hiking Trails Award and KTA's Lifetime Achievement Citation Award, but she says hours in the woods are about time to think and to enjoy peace, quiet, and the beauty of nature as well as to find challenge and adventure. Her goals: to *"love* (be kind), *learn* (read, think), *lead* (serve), *live* (hike, adventure!), and *leave a legacy*."



### John Zimmer – Vice President

John Zimmer, a former Baltimore firefighter and EMT, moved to Cross Fork when he retired and has been Vice President of the STC since 2014. Anchoring the



southern end of the trail for the club, John has been especially helpful in shuttling hikers and helping them spot cars for backpacking or hiking from Ole Bull or Patterson State Park to Cross Fork, but he also shuttles anywhere for STS or even Donut Hole Trail hikes. He's happy to get calls at 570-923-2052 or email at [johnzimmer1952@gmail.com](mailto:johnzimmer1952@gmail.com) to schedule shuttles. Several time a year John helps man STC tables at the Kettle Creek Outdoor Show and spring and fall festivals in Galeton and Coudersport. John has been a long-time maintainer for the Lieb Run Trail, from Shephard Rd. to Cross Fork, and he bought his own DR trail mower to assist in mowing other sections of the STS, especially south of the

Greenlick Rd. and Stony Run sections. "See you in the woods!" says John.

### Steve Erway - Treasurer

Steve Erway shares a multi-generational love of the STS. He was first introduced to the trail by his mother Dorothy Erway and two uncles Ray and Bob Buck in the 1970s. Becoming a life member of the STC was a way for Steve to honor her and the memories they made together on the trail. Always a runner, in 2020 Steve got a total re-immersion in the trail when his son Koloman recorded the first FKT - Fastest Known Time - for a supported circuit of the trail in 27 hrs., 22 min., with Steve jogging along with Kol through the post-midnight hours of the final 13 miles. Steve is well known in Coudersport for his service with the Lions Club, recycling work, Community Foundation (CFTT), Masonic work (Consistory Ambassador), and president of the Eulalia Cemetery. Extending a career in banking at Northwest, Steve is well-qualified to be treasurer of the STC.



### Lori Szymanik – Recording Secretary

Lori Szymanik grew up in Ulysses, PA. As a child, she spent time on the trail with the hiking groups that stayed at the Lodge her parents own. She moved away for college and later moved to Pittsburgh, PA. She ended up following her heart back to the mountains of Potter County in 2015 to pursue a special education teaching position. When she is not teaching, you will find her spending time with family, hiking with friends, cross country skiing, or volunteering at the PA Lumber Museum and Eliot Ness Museum. Lori enjoys hiking and doing trail maintenance on the STS. She has been the recording secretary for the STC for the past 4 years and helped with installing the mile markers around the STS when she completed her circuit hike in 2020. She is also the club’s circuit hiker chairman.



### Lois Morey - Corresponding Secretary

Lois Morey, a Potter County native, is a 55-year member of STC, having joined after hiking the newly formed STS with her parents in 1969. Lewis and Janette Baker with daughter Lois were the first family group to hike the entire Susquehannock Trail, thus earning Circuit Hiker #'s 1,2, & 3. She was STC treasurer 1970-1975, archivist 1983-2009, secretary 2010-2018, then corresponding secretary from 2018 to present day. Lois grew up on a small farm and always enjoyed the outdoors and nature, especially hiking and camping. A graduate of Olean (NY) Business Institute, she worked for the Bureau of Forestry, then at Lyman Run State Park as secretary, retiring in 2004.





## Advisory Board Profiles

### Curt Weinhold

Curt and Penny Weinhold moved to Potter County in 1973 and soon became members of the STC. Curt completed his first circuit hike in 1975 and measured the STS with a measuring wheel in 1985 to provide data for the first guidebook. Curt and Penny have been maintainers for decades of the Ridge Trail section, from mile 0 to Thompson Rd. A PA Wilds juried artisan, frequently found at the Artisan Center in Coudersport on Saturdays, Curt is best known for his nature and dark-skies photography, but he is also engaged in many civic activities. He is a board member of both the Pennsylvania Lumber Museum and Friends of Lyman Run SP, served a decade on the Potter County Planning Commission, and was for years a ski instructor on Denton Hill. Curt and Penny also enjoy traveling to visit their sons Keith in Alaska and Eric in Nevada.



### Larry Holtzapple

Larry A. Holtzapple, originally from York, Pa., moved to Wellsboro in 2014 and joined the Susquehannock Trail Club the same year. Larry and his wife Violetta started hiking sections of the STS in July 2013 and finished section hiking the 84 mile loop in April 2018, becoming circuit hikers #1159 and #1160. He has been a club adviser since 2020. A college graduate and Army veteran, Larry is a member of the Pennsylvania Lumber Museum, KTA, and Friends of Lyman Run. Larry is a trail maintainer-at-large and has been one of the club's top two maintainers every year since 2017, averaging over 200 hours a year, contributing to the construction of shelters and bridges on the trail, blazing, and general trail clearing. He enjoys all outdoor activities, but especially hiking about the Pennsylvania Wilds.



### Chad Rugh

Chad Rugh has been a Potter County resident since 2009, where he teaches history at a local school district. Chad has always had a deep appreciation of the history and natural beauty of Pennsylvania's forests. In 2019, Chad began maintaining a section of the STS from Sunken Branch Road to Denton Hill with his wife, April, and son, Henry. In the summer of 2022, Chad became Circuit Hiker #1268. In addition to serving on the advisory board, Chad helped create the club's Farout trail guide with Dave McMillan, and he also maintains the club website.



## Janifer "Jan" Halter

Jan Halter, from Hanover, Pa. moved to Gaines in 2015. A Boy Scout leader for 24 years, she and husband John were attracted to this area by the opportunities to participate in outdoor activities. The STS fit the bill for hiking and love for nature. Jan and John are section maintainers of the STS from Hungry Hollow Rd. to Ole Bull State Park. The couple are energetic volunteers with Friends of Lyman Run State Park, the Pennsylvania Lumber Museum, Tioga County Woodland Owners Association, and the Gaines Township recycling program, and they have enjoyed helping with hiker shuttles and sometimes feeding trail crews. Jan says the STC has been a way to meet wonderful people with common interests.



## Dave McMillan

Dave McMillan, a lifelong hiker and backpacker, joined the STC in 1997 along with wife Roxanne. The first 10 or so years were focused on trail care and backpacking, completing the STS circuit in 2000. In recent years his club involvement has been focused on support activities. Dave has been newsletter editor for 5 years and webmaster for 2 years, recently turning this over to Chad. Dave has also worked with Chad on digital mapping and setting up the FarOut digital trail guide. He's collaborated with Larry on mapping and publishing of loop trail maps and worked with Lois on the STC's membership database development and administration. For seven years Dave was a maintainer of the Hammersley trail section, and he also participated in 11 years of KTA weekend and weeklong trail care projects and was the STC's KTA rep for several years.



## Welcome New Members

### Regular Memberships:

- Paul & Courtney Fedalen, Coudersport, PA
- Susan Fulginiti, Mechanicsburg, PA
- Edward McCrea, Coudersport, PA
- Ken Wingo, Ulysses, PA
- Mary Jo Stuckey, Coudersport, PA

### New Life Memberships:

- Ilene Altenhein, Mina, PA
- David & Dwina Hajzus, Coudersport, PA
- Beth Lounsbury, Galeton, PA
- Thomas J. Lyon, Carlsbad, CA
- Kevin & Barbara Myer, Conestoga, PA
- Tom VanEtten, Schenectady, NY

## New Circuit Hiker Award Recipients

- 1307 Elliott Diamond, Latrobe, PA
- 1308 Thomas (Tim) Wright, Coudersport, PA
- 1309 Bonnie Wright, Coudersport, PA



Susquehannock Trail Club  
PO Box 643  
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## 2024 Event Schedule

**Monthly meetings start at noon with a dish to share meal followed by the club meeting, unless otherwise noted.**

Saturday, May 11	Monthly Meeting Dish to share meal followed by meeting.	PA Lumber Museum
Saturday June 1	God's Country Marathon, June 1 -- Marathon Mile 19 on Rt. 6, from 8:30 - 11 a.m. for a good time handing out water and Gatorade and cheering on runners.	
Saturday, June 8	Monthly Meeting Dish to share meal followed by meeting.	PA Lumber Museum
Saturday, July 6	Galeton Parade Post Parade Picnic	Meet at Galeton school at 10:30 Meet at Lois's, 996 US 6 W., Galeton
Saturday, July 13	Monthly Meeting Dish to share meal followed by meeting.	PA Lumber Museum
August 8 – 11	STC Camporee Campsites 51, 53, 54, 55, 60, and 61 - all with electricity	Ole Bull State Park
Saturday, August 10	Monthly Meeting Dish to share meal followed by meeting.	Ole Bull S.P. Pavilion