

# due north

Western Michigan Chapter

North Country Trail Association

Volume IX, Number 2

[www.northcountrytrail.org/wmi](http://www.northcountrytrail.org/wmi)

April 2006



## Moonlight Hiking

**F**ebruary temperatures in the teens didn't deter 31 pent-up hikers desperate for a hike in the woods. The fact that it was dark only made them more eager to hit the trail. At 6:30 p.m. February 11 an unexpectedly large group of hikers gathered at Stephanie Black's house to hike on the snow covered North Country Trail in the Rogue River State Game Area under the glow of the full moon. Under clear skies no artificial lights were needed to see the trail. After the brisk hike we indulged in warm just-out-of-the-oven cookies and cold beverages at Stephanie's house. This last minute event was a make up hike from the previous week when the planned half-moon hike at the annual snowshoe event was cancelled due to gathering inclement weather. There was better turnout for this simple but exotic hike than those that attended the snowshoe event at the schoolhouse the week before.



*Darkness didn't keep this photographer from plying his trade. The low level light makes for an interesting challenge to capture photos of the event. But the assistance of a small tripod and a blinding flash made short work of the daunting task.* PHOTOS BY

AARON PHIPPS





## Western Michigan Chapter Mission

The major purpose of the Western Michigan Chapter of the North Country Trail Association is to promote the North Country National Scenic Trail and to build and maintain the Trail in the counties of Kent and Newaygo in the State of Michigan.

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Materials for April edition due March 10, 2006. Please submit your news and dates in writing, limited to 400 words or less. Photo prints and electronic images are welcome. All material may be edited for content or space constraints.

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# Join West Michigan Walkers for Fun Hikes and Brunch

By Roger Meyer

In 1986, a group from Metropolitan Hospital's Wellness Center formed the West Michigan Walkers. The group is still walking and having fun. They originally met and walked in Palmer Park every month, but soon started meeting more often. They began hiking at least every Monday, Thursday and Saturday. At one time, they walked for about 3 miles five times a week. Now, between May and October, they walk every Tuesday night and on Saturday mornings.

One Tuesday night each month, they meet downtown by the Big Boy on Pearl street and walk along the Grand River, cross the river on Bridge Street, continue to the end of the park and return on the east side on the river to the Big Boy. On the other Tuesday nights during warm weather, they walk by Reeds Lake in East Grand Rapids; alternating clockwise and counterclockwise around the lake.

On their Saturday walks, they hike

between 5 and 8 miles. Hiking locations include mystery walks, local parks (Palmer, Riverside, near John Ball, Ken-o-sha, Johnson, Seidman, Ada, Comstock, Picaleral Lake, Amon) and other hiking spots (Yankee Springs, Lowell, Paul Henry Trail, Greenville Trail, Portland, Grand Haven, Rockford). They have participated in many Trails Day Hikes with the NCT. If the Saturday hike is far away, a local meeting spot is defined and then the members carpool.

After their Tuesday night walks they usually stop for ice cream, brunch after their Saturday events.

Usually sometime during the summer they go on a long weekend together. They've been to Beaver Island, the Shack, Hocking Hills in Ohio and Petosky. They have done the bridge walk together on Labor Day.

During the winter, they meet on Saturday mornings and walk either Centerpoint or Woodland Malls and then go for brunch. During the holidays, the group has a White Elephant party and a New Year's party. On New Years Day, the annual event is the Resolution Walk. They hike along the Paul Henry Trail. Guess where they go afterward? To brunch, of course.

The group consists of a large percentage of retired people, but has several younger members. Some of the group are, or were, members of the NCTA, International Walkers Association and other hiking groups. Membership is slowly declining in spite of it being a fun group. It seems that many people now feel they must belong to a health club to be fit. If you're interested in more information about the West Michigan Walkers, e-mail Roger Meyer at rogmey@aol.com or call 616-975-1937.

## Financial Balances

Western Michigan Chapter NCTA  
January through December 2005

### General Operations

|                 |            |
|-----------------|------------|
| Income.....     | \$4,501.30 |
| Expenses: ..... | \$2,057.07 |
| Surplus:.....   | \$2,444.23 |

### Schoolhouse Operations

|                 |            |
|-----------------|------------|
| Income:.....    | \$1,409.51 |
| Expenses: ..... | \$907.91   |
| Surplus:.....   | \$501.60   |

### Balances, Dec. 31, 2005

|                              |                    |
|------------------------------|--------------------|
| General Operations: .....    | \$8,445.85         |
| Schoolhouse Operations:..... | \$2,237.52         |
| Trails Day Fund: .....       | \$44.73            |
| Development Reserve:.....    | \$5,169.69         |
| <b>Total Assets.....</b>     | <b>\$15,897.79</b> |

### Schoolhouse Challenge Cost Share Maintenance and Reconstruction Grant

|                        |            |
|------------------------|------------|
| Project Amount: .....  | \$2,785.00 |
| Expenses in 2005:..... | \$1,083.60 |
| Balance:.....          | \$1,701.40 |

## School House News

Our on-going schoolhouse maintenance and repair projects return in May. Help is needed for building repair, painting, cleanup inside as well as the grounds around the building. Contact Len Baron to join the volunteers at (616) 677-3598.

# Events Calendar

The information listed in this calendar is our best assessment of what we hope to accomplish. Some of the details are yet to be determined and things may change as dates get closer. It is always best to check our website for updates or reach the contact person for each event for any last minute changes. E-mail updates will be sent out as each event approaches.

## April

**22** Trail-Wide Clean-Up Day. All Western Michigan Chapter trail adopters should plan on spending this day performing routine spring maintenance on their respective sections of trail in Kent and Newaygo Counties. At the end of the day, our Chapter Master Chef, Stephanie Black, will once again prepare a sumptuous meal for a post-work get together in the shelter house at Long Lake Park. Appetizers at 4pm, Dinner at 5pm. Contact Paul Haan at paulhaan@sbcglobal.net or (616) 363-3342 for further details.

**22** "Celebrating Family Life" Family Services Expo The 4th annual fun family event that showcases agency services in Newaygo County 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. White Cloud Upper Elementary School. The Western Michigan Chapter has been asked to have a booth at this Expo. If you would like to work at our booth please contact: Sharon Phipps ashipps11@yahoo.com (616) 897-0417

**30** NCT Lowell State Game Area Hike. Meet at the Fallasburg Park Covered Bridge at 1:30 p.m. This will be at least a 2 hour hike in hilly terrain. Please RSVP to Lisa Symons by Sunday morning in case meeting time or place is changed. The hike will be cancelled if heavy rain. Fallasburg Bridge is located in Fallasburg Park approximately 3.5 miles north of Lowell. Take Lincoln Highway north of town. From Lincoln take Briggs Ave NE follow the sign to Fallasburg Park. Then turn right on Covered Bridge Lane.

## May

**20** Camp Swampy Connector. Building new trail between the White Cloud School House and Camp Swampy. Training and tools provided. Work morning through mid-afternoon. Bring lunch, gloves, sturdy boots and clothing appropriate to the weather. Contact

Larry Meyer at lkmeier@iserv.net or (616) 636-8587 for more information.

## June

**3** National Trails Day will be held at the Schoolhouse again this year with a hike led by Roger Meyer thru the Coolbough Nature Area starting at 10:00 a.m., meet at the Schoolhouse. Contact Sharon Phipps, ashipps11@yahoo.com, (616) 897-0417 for more information. Those who would rather build trails than hike trails on National Trails Day can come help put the finishing touches on the new side trail through the Nature Conservancy's "Camp Swampy" property in Newaygo County. This work day will be structured especially for those new to trail work. No experience necessary. Training and tools provided. Bring gloves, sturdy boots and clothing appropriate to the weather. Contact Larry Meyer at lkmeier@iserv.net or (616) 636-8587 for meeting location and other details. Both groups will meet back at the schoolhouse for a picnic lunch at about 1:30 p.m.

**16-18** 4th Annual Sleeping Bear Dunes Camping/Hiking Trip. This year we're back on the mainland at the beautiful DH Day Group Campground. Join the Western Michigan Chapter for a relaxing weekend of camping, hiking, and dune climbing. We'll also have opportunities to kayak the Platte River, bike around the park, swim in Lake Michigan, and/or drive one of the many scenic routes along the lakeshore. This is not a backpacking trip. There are plenty of shady campground sites available for tents and RV camping is also available at the nearby DH Day family campground. Dinner Saturday will be provided, and the cost for two nights of tent camping will be around \$5 per person. Space at the group site is limited to 25 campers. Reservations will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. NCTA members will be given preference over other guests if the trip fills (the trip has filled up in past years). Last day to reserve a campsite is June 11. Call Matt Hahnfeld at (616) 363-0368 to reserve your spot or see the following web site for more details: [www.hahnfeld.org/sleepingbear/](http://www.hahnfeld.org/sleepingbear/)

## July

**8** Lowell Health Fair, we will have a booth again this year at the Health Fair. If you wish to join us by helping to staff the booth contact Sharon Phipps, ashipps11@yahoo.com, (616) 897-0417.

**8-9** Mowing & More Weekend #1. Camp

out with the trail crew from the Western Michigan Chapter in Newaygo County and help perform routine maintenance over two days. Relaxed pace, fun and fellowship. Time for work and time for play. Contact Paul Haan at paulhaan@sbcglobal.net or (616) 363-3342 for meeting location and other details.

**15-16** Mowing & More Weekend #2. Camp out with the trail crew from the Western Michigan Chapter in Newaygo County and help perform routine maintenance over two days. Relaxed pace, fun and fellowship. Time for work and time for play. Contact Larry Meyer at lkmeier@iserv.net or (616) 636-8587 for meeting location and other details.

## September

**30** Loda Lake Connector, Day One. Building new trail between Camp Swampy and Loda Lake. Training and tools provided. Work morning through mid-afternoon. Bring lunch, gloves, sturdy boots and clothing appropriate to the weather. Contact Larry Meyer at lkmeier@iserv.net or (616) 636-8587 for more details.

## October

**14** Loda Lake Connector, Day Two. Building new trail between Camp Swampy and Loda Lake. Training and tools provided. Work morning through mid-afternoon. Bring lunch, gloves, sturdy boots and clothing appropriate to the weather. Contact Larry Meyer at lkmeier@iserv.net or (616) 636-8587 for meeting location and other details.

**21** Fall Fun Day at the Schoolhouse, more details to be announced.

**28** Loda Lake Connector, Day Three. Building new trail on the new Loda Lake loop. Training and tools provided. Work morning through mid-afternoon. Bring lunch, gloves, sturdy boots and clothing appropriate to the weather. Contact Larry Meyer at lkmeier@iserv.net or (616) 636-8587 for meeting location and other details.

## November

**4** Annual membership meeting with election of board members. Chapter board meeting to follow.

## December

**2** Lowell Santa Parade

**5** Annual Holiday Party at Brann's Brass Button Catering Center, 4945 South Division, corner of 50th Street and Division Avenue in Wyoming. Gather 'round the fire and enjoy a fine meal together. Contact Sharon Phipps, ashipps11@yahoo.com, (616) 897-0417.



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## News in Brief

Stephanie Black has resigned her post as Membership Chair of the board. If you have an interest in filling the position please inform Chuck Vannette by phone at (616) 456-9725 or by email at cvann30643@aol.com The duties of the Membership Chair outlined in the bylaws are as follows: Responsible for maintaining membership rosters, assisting in the recruitment of new members and the retention of current members, encouraging attendance at chapter events, including regular meetings, keeping an attendance roster at Chapter events, handling requests for membership information, maintaining communications with members regarding meetings and special events and creating a yearly budget for funds needed to support these activities.

Max Boyd has also expressed a desire to end his position as chapter web master. If you have knowledge of how to prepare information for display on web pages and would like to contribute your services to the NCTA contact either Max Boyd at (616) 456-2756 or maxboyd@mac.com or Aaron Phipps at (616) 897-0417 ashipps11@yahoo.com.



*The chapter booth at the Lowell Expo saw heavy visitor traffic this year as a cool but partly sunny day brought people to the Expo in droves. There were so many people stopping by and picking up literature that Aaron Phipps went home to get more supplies to restock the booth. The Craisins were disappearing from the table about as fast as we set them out. At 12:55 p.m., what we thought was the last Craisin packet, pictured above, was whisked away. We later learned that Chuck still has a half a box left. We had a new member sign up at the show and we talked with a lot of people that had not heard of the trail before. This event continues to reach a lot of people.* PHOTO BY AARON PHIPPS