



# Gazette



Holiday 2019



## *President's Letter Holiday Season 2019*

From the Officers and Board of Directors at Large, happy holidays.

At this year's General Membership Meeting, there were some changes made to our organization's staffing. Anne "Kimchi" Hildebrand, was elected as Secretary, replacing Kate "Drop-n-Roll" Hoch. Mary "Fireweed" Kwart and Theodore "Blis" Davis, were elected as Board Members at Large, replacing Craig "Pisco" Gully and Jeff "Siddhartha" Kish. I was elected as President, replacing Whitney "Allgood" LaRuffa. Please join me in wishing the new Board members all the best in their new positions and endeavors. They make sacrifices of their time and energy to keep the organization running.

Some really exciting news I have to share is to let you know that, with the permission given at the General Membership Meeting, we have hired an Event Coordinator. Brandon "Pajamas" Lampley has accepted the position and is quickly coming up to speed on our Ruck planning efforts. Please welcome Brandon and give him your support as he takes on this critical position.

Since the Gathering, the Board has been very active. Ruck dates have been established; local committees are being organized. We are coordinating with our partner organizations for two of the rucks, the PNTA for the Washington ruck, and, the CDTC for the Rockies ruck. Dates and event details for the rucks are either on the website or are under construction. Registration is open, so register soon to ensure your spot.

There are many things I wish to say and many thanks to give, but I want to keep this note short. Here are two things which you may be interested in:

- We are looking for a Gazette Editor. If you are interested, please contact a member of the Board to let them know of your interest, and we will get back to you on this exciting opportunity.
- The Board has approved the issuance of five (5) Gathering raffle tickets for each article published, which you submit to the Gazette. Please submit your articles to [editor@aldhawest.org](mailto:editor@aldhawest.org)

Wishing you and yours a happy holiday season and may you find peace in every footstep,

Charles "Cephas" Baker  
President

*Cephas*

## *Allgood's Gathering Speech - 2019*



Since it's been said that "I could talk a dog off a meat truck" and I am known for having the gift of gab I ask that you all have to listen to me one more time before my time here comes to an end. The past few weeks have been a bit of an emotional roller coaster for me, I sort of feel like a parent sending their kid off to college, sure they will enjoy the peace and quiet in their new found life, but they know deep down inside they will miss the companionship at home. For me saying good to this role means more time for myself to go hiking, skiing, or whatever else I decide to do with my time, but I am also left with a feeling of losing a part of who have been for the past 7 years.

7 Years, that sure is a long-time to serve on a board, in fact some of you here getting your triple crown tonight were probably in high school or just starting college when I came on to the board of ALDHA-West.

We sure have come a long way since my early days on the board, back then we had one event The Gathering, and if we got ourselves together, we might do some trail magic once a year on the PCT. We were disorganized, had under 100 members, and frankly we were a dying organization. 6 years ago in this very spot I was elected President and afterwards "Scout" grabbed me and we had a heart to heart about the future of ALDHA-West, he told me basically that unless things changed with the organization we would cease to exist in few years-time, and if I ever needed help to just ask for it. I have never been good at asking for help because of my headstrong personality and frankly my ego can get in the way at times. I did however I take his words to heart and I pulled together our board to help make the changes happen to ensure future.

Together over the next 6 years we worked hard as board to implement new systems to run more efficiently, we started holding board retreats so we could focus on the future as 1 year, 3 year and 5-year plan. Mostly though we all decided that while having a social event like the gathering was fun, we needed to do more and from there the Rucks were born.



I fondly remember our first Ruck in Cascade Locks, on a rainy day in February we packed 85 people in a space meant for 50 served up chili and salad and hobbled along a program for the day that would become the framework for these events in the future. (Side note on the way down to the Gathering Drop N Roll told me that in true ALDHA-West fashion she sat upstairs during the morning programming putting together her CDT presentation for that afternoon). With a dedicated focus on educating new long-distance hikers something else happened along the way, we came together as a community, breathed new life into ALDHA-West and became to me and many others a family, well a dysfunctional one, but none less a family I am happy to have. We also had a blast at our events and many of us forged friendships that will last lifetime.

There are a few people I would like to thank for all their help to get us where we are today. First let me start with our current board, every single one of you has brought a passion to the organization the past couple of years that has helped move things forward, and also with each of you stepping up has provided me with more time for myself and instilled me with the confidence that you will all carry our mission forward. I would also like to thank the following people who served with me in a on official or unofficial capacity over the past 6 years. Marmot, Ravensong, Josie, SoFar, Freefall, Bearclaw, Tatu-Jo, Tomato and Twinkle all of you brought a special skill set which helped us sort out the future of the organization.

A big thanks goes to the advisors who helped me strike the best course when we had some sort of drama in the hiking world to deal with, let's face it every winter between January or February hikers get cabin fever, go crazy and take the inter-webs to stir the pot) or who lent their advice to help us grow and flourish. A special thanks Greg in Wild, Brice may he RIP, Beaker, No Where Man, and Steve Queen, your help was more important to me then you every realized.

To Shroomer, man what can I say besides being one hell of chef and feedings so many of us at the Rucks over the years, you and Why Not have always stepped up when asked to help and have made a meaningful and wonderful Triple Crown ceremony at the Gathering.

Lastly to 3 very important woman in my life, Snorkel, Drop n Roll, and The Punisher. You not only went above and beyond what was required of you in your roles at ALDHA-West, you have also been some of my closest friends and confidants over the past so many years, and to that I thank you all.

And let me not forget the woman only some of you know, but who has been instrumental in helping me keep a level head and pushed me to keep going, my dear wife Suzy, without her support I never could have done this job.

If I forgot to mention your name, it's only by accident but each of you should know that you have made a difference not only in my life but also in the future of ALDHA-West.

But with all the good that has happened, our futures as long-distance hikers is at risk. We currently have an administration hell bent on reducing our public lands and looking to profit from them to the highest bidder, whether it's a timber company, mining firm, or concessionaire. Unless we all speak up the future of our lands is at a danger of not being here for future generations to enjoy as we all have.

There is also a risk to your access to hiking in the future, we have seen in the past few years more and more regulation in place by issuing permits to limit the use of the resource, that each and every taxpayer owns. This artificial limiting is done under the guise of protecting one's "wilderness experience", while the fact is that once a trail is built, we have scared the land in a way that has removed that wildness and wilderness to its core.

But we cannot sit on the sidelines and just whining and moaning about what is happening, we must get engaged as hikers to make our voices heard. I encourage you to write or call the USFS, NPS, and Trail Organizations. Let them know how you feel and tell them that you feel your inherent right to access what is rightfully yours is at stake and change must happen.

We cannot stop the growth of use on our trails and wilderness by hikers and other recreationist, but is increased use really the worse thing? Have not each of us benefited greatly from a long walk in the woods where we discovered so much about ourselves and what we hold important? Would we not encourage another person who is dreaming of a long-distance hike, to take the plunge, leave their job and go walk living each day in the rhythm of the earth. I truly believe the world would be a better a place if everyone that could took a long distance hike at least once in their lifetime, and I would much rather see more hikers enjoying the woods than a strip mine removing them because no-one used them and cared to protect them.

My challenge to each of you is to step up and do more, whether that is volunteering with ALDHA-West, a trail organization, or a non-profit of your choosing. Only by you spending time to help out can we create the change that you want to happen.

In closing though I would like to say thank you to every one of you for providing me the opportunity to serve you all these years as your President. I am proud of where we have come from but more importantly, I am proud of the direction of where this organization I hold so dearly is going.

As hikers I leave you all with these words by the very first thru-hiker, Earl Shaffer

*Go ye out to the mountains*

*Far far from a town*

*Stretch yourself on the clean forest floor*

*Gaze aloft through the canopy*

*To frown and remember your troubles no more*



## *Wildlife Encounter of the Domesticated Kind on the AT*

Mary "Fireweed" Kwart

Everyone who hikes long distance perpetually gets questioned by non-hikers about dangerous wildlife encounters involving snakes, bears or mountain lions. The only kind of dangerous wildlife encounters I have experienced on the trail has involved domesticated animals—dogs, cows, horses. The most dramatic encounter just happened last spring when I was hiking a section of the Appalachian Trail in Carter County Tennessee.



I was camped on a forested ridge in April above the AT with my hiking partner Pegleg. As it got dark, I heard a pack of howling dogs in the distance. I was familiar with the practice of bear hunting using dogs (“Hounding”) with radio collars—the dogs chase the bear to exhaustion, tree it, and the hunter follows and shoots the bear out of the tree. Bear hunting this way is legal in 27 states, including Tennessee.

I was comfortable with sharing the woods with a pack of howling dogs, but I wasn’t counting on a panicked bear dog running into our camp and smashing my tent with me inside. About 10:30 that night I heard a renegade bear hunting dog howling menacingly, coming closer. I thought a bear was headed our way, followed by a pack of aggressive hounds—if we wouldn’t get wiped out by one, it would be by the other. After reaching our camp the dog desperately paced around my tent like it was looking for a way to get inside. The panicked dog’s radio collar light flashed red. The dog stopped pacing and started to jump on my tent, crashing through the lightweight nylon and

snapping tent poles on top of my face as I lay upright. I yelled repeatedly for it to get away and then the dog ran over to Pegleg’s tent and started jumping on it, ripping the rainfly. Pegleg woke up to my yelling and speedily crawled out of her tent brandishing her hiking poles, yelling threateningly. The dog returned to my tent and continued wreaking havoc. My tent totally collapsed around me. Since the dog wasn’t trying to bite me through the collapsed tent, I realized the dog wasn’t in the attack mode but just freaked out. I slithered out of the collapsed tent. The dog immediately plopped down on top of the remains of my tent, panting heavily. It was not attacking—it was terrified, and I think it wanted to get inside the “safety” of my tent! I petted it and talked to it in a soothing voice to calm it. I knew from finding lost bear dogs while doing fieldwork for the US Forest Service the owner’s name and phone number would be on its collar. The two phone numbers did not work. About an hour later, we saw headlamps coming down the trail—two guys and a kid. The stressed dog eagerly bolted down to meet them. Pegleg and I also walked down, and I explained what the dog did. They were incredulous at first, but reluctantly agreed to come up to see the tent, probably thinking that somehow, they could fix it on the spot. They saw the tent was broken beyond repair and started walking away.



Now it was my turn to be incredulous. I said: “I need compensation for a new tent”. The dog owner said, “You have my phone number” and continued down the trail. I moved my gear over to Pegleg’s tent and spent the night jammed into it with her.

After we hiked down to the Black Bear Hostel the next afternoon for our re-supply, I called the Carter County sheriff, who came out to take the incident report. I checked on the internet and it was not bear hunting season in Carter County. The hunters were probably out “practicing”. I called REI and ordered a new tent. We got back on the trail within two days after the tent was delivered. I sent the receipt for my tent purchase to the dog’s

owner, but it was never acknowledged. Another surprise backpacking adventure!!

\*Photo credits to Peggy “Pegleg” Rice