

Outdoor Club of South Jersey Newsletter

November, 2020

The city of Philadelphia has placed new restrictions on activities.

Parks, trails, playgrounds, and athletic fields will remain open for individual use only. (No group sports.)

This includes our bike rides and hikes in Philadelphia-Wissahickon

Spotlight on Diane Mason

By Vera C. Stek



When members of the Outdoor Club step onto many of the trails we regularly enjoy, we don't often think too much about how we don't have to worry about missing mile markers, cat briar grabbing at our legs, giant holes created by eager beavers or rotten and broken bridges.

That's all thanks primarily, in recent years, to two sisters who have taken on the task of keeping the entire length of the Batona Trail in good shape, as well as working on improving any other trails they are asked to maintain.

Rosemarie and Diane Mason have worked as eagerly as the beavers who damage the trails to keep them safe and comfortable for hikers. Diane was recruited some 20 years ago by sister Ro just to hike; when she retired, Ro signed her up to help head up the Trail Crew.

It's a never-ending job and they have been successful in recruiting loyal volunteers who show up to lug around sand bags, cinder blocks, sections of wooden bridges or clippers to trim back the constant incursion of shrub, trees and weeds. But more help means the work gets done faster and there's more time to hike.

So, the next time you find yourself with a free Tuesday, think about joining the Trail Crew. If it weren't for the few, the many wouldn't have such good places to hike.

Here's Diane's story:

Q. Tell us about yourself.

DIANE: I am 58 years old and I live with my husband, Bob, in Absecon, which is right outside of Atlantic City. I retired in 2017 after working with the Atlantic County Criminal Court for 37 years.

Q. When and why did you first join the Outdoor Club? What activities do you participate in? What benefits have you gotten by being a member of the club?

DIANE: You can blame my sister, Ro, for getting me involved with the OCSJ over 20 years ago. She said, "Come out for a hike this Saturday! You'll have fun!" she claimed. So, off we set, with me in a pair of faux leather high top sneakers from Payless. Twelve miles and two huge blisters later, I was unable to go to work, but had discovered a great group of people to hike with.

In the cooler months I spend time on the trails, in the warmer months I love to paddle. Just this past year, I've participated in a couple of the more leisurely biking events (my favorite speed is peddle-peddle-glide), and recently Ro and I have started to co-lead bike rides for the more casual rider.

I have gained some really terrific friends over the years who have shared their knowledge of the Pines with me.

Q. You have been doing a fabulous job with the Batona Trail maintenance. Why did you get involved with that, what does it entail, and how can other hikers help?

DIANE: Again, you have to thank my sister, Ro, for getting me involved with trail maintenance. When I retired she asked me to come out and join the Trail Crew for Trail Work Tuesdays. About that same time, the Trail Crew discovered it needed somebody to make the mile markers and signs you find along the trail. I have a small woodshop at home, and while I'm not a fine carpenter, I can manage "rustic." It took a little research, but I now use the same paint brand/colors and font style as the NJ State Park system, so I do my best to create signs that closely match those of other parks.

The main work of the Trail Crew is clearing trails so they are passable. This is a lot of clipping, but it is also instant gratification when you look backward at your work and see a clear path.

What is the reward for spending a morning of hard physical labor maintaining trails? Cookies, hot chocolate, and great camaraderie at Camper Pat's tailgate kitchen. I invite others to join the Trail Crew. You can find us on Meet Up under the hiking calendar

Most people don't know that the BATONA trail, which means **BAck TO NA**ture, was created by the Batona Hiking Club out of Philadelphia in the early 1960s. It was expanded in sections to its current length of about 53 miles running from Bass River State Forest in the south to Ong's Hat in Brendan T. Byrne State Forest in the north. Since the Batona Hiking Club also has the responsibility of maintaining a section of the AT and their members (like many of us) have "matured," the OCSJ has taken over maintaining the entire length of the trail. Members of the Batona Hiking Club do come out at least once a year to help with the northern section.

Running through Brenden T. Byrne, Wharton, and Bass River State Forests, along with the Franklin Parker Preserve, you can just imagine the countless streams, ponds, and swampy areas the trail traverses.

With the recent increase in beaver activity, water levels along the trail have been rising, and we find ourselves not just building and raising bridges, but the Crew has spent many, many man-hours reinforcing the berm, which the trail runs atop, near Evans Bridge. The higher water levels created by beaver dams have scoured out holes beneath the trail bed. This work involved lots of sandbagging, digging, and moving materials from the road to the site. The work has eliminated most of the holes I call "ankle breakers."

Working with the superintendents of the State Forests and the land steward of the FPP, the trail crew uses donated, scrounged, or materials harvested on site to build the numerous foot bridges you cross along the trail, often moving materials by hand a mile or more into the woods. (Ro and I call ourselves the Scavenger Sisters because we are constantly on the look out for bridge building materials.) The OCSJ also helps with expenses. When the Trail Crew realized that the trail could use North/South directional markers, because people were becoming turned around on the trail, the OCSJ generously paid for the markers, which were installed last season by the Crew.

Q. You've also worked on maintaining other trails. Tell us a little about that.

DIANE: We also make time to help maintain other Pine Barrens trails our members enjoy. We trim the blue blazed Lake Trail at Harrisville Pond and volunteer when Bass River needs help with their trail system.

Last season we spent a lot of time on the Yellow Mullica River trail in Wharton. After languishing for a few years for lack of manpower, the new bridge on the Yellow trail was installed by the Trail Crew, and the trail was rerouted back to its original path. The entire Yellow trail from Atsion to Batsto, along with the connecting green and purple trails have been trimmed. We respond to comments on reported trail conditions from State Park superintendents, hikers, and groups outside of our club. The Crew represents OCSJ when we join in with the Pineland Preservation Alliance (PPA) on their clean ups.

The Trail Crew was recognized by the NJ State Park System at their last volunteer recognition ceremony, and Ro and I were recently included in a State Park

volunteer round table. Independent of the OCSJ, I also volunteer on PPA and State Park projects.

Trail Maintenance has lead into other related efforts. Ro and I have presented a class at the Pinelands Short Course for the past several years. We created a Power Point presentation which is a virtual hike of the Batona. (It must not be too bad because we were invited back a second year, and asked to show the presentation as a webinar this year.) We have given this presentation to various outside hiking and running clubs, twice for REI Marlton, and it has become part of Bass River's yearly summer presentation schedule. At the end of the presentations, we hand out OCSJ member sign up info in hopes of getting more people involved.

Q. How do you fit in your own hiking/kayaking in your week? Do you have any goals, such as a certain number of miles per year?

DIANE: I have no yearly mileage goals; I just try to get out whenever I can. To be honest, I enjoy shorter hikes, those under eight miles, and try to lead four or five milers. I do have two personal guidelines I try to follow: 1) Hike when there are no chiggers, and 2) Paddle when there are chiggers.

Q. Do you take active vacations? Where have you been?

DIANE: Most of my time away is spent visiting my grandkids in North Carolina. Exploring the Great Dismal Swamp, near their home, on a bicycle was very interesting, especially when I came across bear prints. And, I have introduced my grandkids to backpacking, which they enjoy.

I do most of my hiking locally, although I manage to get out and about to nearby states. My favorite adventure was backpacking in Rocky Mountain National Park. There were still feet of snow on the ground, and it continued to fall. The views were breathtaking, and the utter silence was renewing to my spirit. Although, I have to admit, the herd of elk that came through our campsite during the middle of the night was a bit startling.

Q. What are some of your favorite spots in the Pine Barrens?

DIANE: I don't know if I can pick a favorite spot, they are all so beautiful. I can tell you my favorite hike; it is the 4.5 mile Martha loop starting at Harrisville Pond. It contains a sampling of the best the Pine Barrens has to offer. It is immersed in history and includes water crossings, a river, a pond, cedar swamps, woods, old sand roads and sandy beaches.

Q. What other interests do you have?

DIANE: I'm going to sound like a boring woman, but I enjoy crocheting, and reading (the reading is of the fluffy variety).

Q. What's something about yourself that might surprise others to know?

DIANE: I love Disney World!! Bob, and I will be making our fifth trip next year.

Q. Anything else you'd like to say about anything?

DIANE: The OCSJ is a wonderful organization, and I am glad to see its membership and variety of events expanding.

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DONATIONS

The OCSJ Board of Directors has decided to support local non-profit organizations with the following donations. Many non-profits are struggling during these difficult times. This is our way of supporting their efforts.

<p>OCSJ MAKES DONATION TO BLACK RUN PRESERVE</p> 	<p>OCSJ MAKES DONATION TO WHITESBOG PRESERVATION TRUST</p> 
<p>OCSJ Biker Mike Engel made the presentation to the Black Run Preserve.</p> <p>Friends of the Black Run Preserve gratefully received a much needed \$1500 donation from OCSJ. They will use it to create and expand outdoor recreational opportunities</p>	<p>OCSJ Hiker Millie Moore made the presentation to the Whitesbog Preservation Trust.</p>

President's Message



The election is over. No not that one. Moreover, I will not be replaced until next year by presumably our solid vice president Barbara Berman. The vote is in and by a vote of 50 to 51 our newly elected membership secretary is John Del Vacchio. He is well qualified for the challenge of maintaining our membership database and related duties. The Nancy Mirfin, the runner up candidate was equally well qualified too as reflected by the extremely close vote. I hope we can find a position for her also.

Our club has met many of the challenges of this very unusual year. The hiking and biking sections have been very busy offering many events to keep our active members busy.

I continue to urge our members to follow health safety guidelines, including mask wearing and social distancing. Last month, in an effort to reach my cycling goal of 4,000 this year, I did a bit of out-of-bounds cycling. Many of our hikers are trying to reach their mileage goals by yearend too. The photo above, including my thumb, is of Point State Park in Pittsburgh PA. My trusty steed is resting overlooking, yes, a floating bar at the confluence of rivers. Maybe when I retire, I will lead a trip from there along the Great Appalachians Passage and C & O Canal Towpath to Georgetown in Washington D.C., about 310 miles. I rode the length a few years back over 6 days, 5 would have been doable. In conclusion, I hope everyone keeps themselves safe and healthy enjoying the great outdoors.

The Election Results

Fran Horn - Treasurer.

Eloise Williams - Recording Secretary.

John Del Vacchio - Membership Secretary.

Joe Fabian

President (President@OCSJ.org)

Vice President's Message

The Outdoor Club has been a saving grace for me and for many others, especially during this pandemic. All of the articles you read these days talk about taking advantage of what the outdoors and nature have to offer. Nature really soothes the soul and can help you throughout your day. An added bonus is meeting some very nice and welcoming people. I have a whole new set of friends as a result of biking and hiking and am hoping to meet the kayaking members next year.



The club is always actively looking for members to become more involved with our operation. If you are interested in volunteering and getting more involved, please

contact me at vp@ocsj.org. We welcome your suggestions on how to make it even better than it already is.

We meet the 2nd Thursday of every month. We used to meet in person at the Cherry Hill Public Library, but because of Covid-19, we are currently meeting on Zoom. An email is sent to the membership the afternoon of the meeting, and we welcome you to join us. At this time, we decided to limit the participation to the first 10 members who respond.

This is your club. Please take advantage of everything it has to offer.

Barbara Berman

Vice President (vp@ocsj.org)

PHOTO CONTEST

Our annual photo contest is about to begin.

Although it has been a trying year for all of us, hopefully you still have been going out, enjoying the outdoors and taking great pictures of your adventures.

Due to the continuing virus situation, we are going to do something different this year. We will not be printing the calendar, but it will be available on line for all to view. And, all submissions will be displayed in a slide show on our website.

There will be the twelve monthly winners plus the overall best picture for the cover. These thirteen selected will then receive a mounted canvas print of their photograph. So, save your best photographs and keep them in their original format. If yours is selected to be printed on canvas we will need as large a file as possible.

Contest rules and method of submission will be available shortly.

Mike Engel ikemengel@hotmail.com

Message from the Activity Chair:

Frank Pearce

The Covid-19 pandemic has introduced a new dimension of risk to our community, one that must be clearly understood and carefully evaluated. Everyone should follow local, state and CDC recommended guidelines: hand hygiene, face coverings, social distancing, surface cleaning especially of shared equipment, prolonged close contact should be avoided. We suggest all participants consider wearing face coverings while on land. Windows down when in vehicles with non-family members.

Do you have a favorite canoe/kayak, hiking, biking trip that is not being offered?

Are you getting placed on a wait list?

We have a solution - that offers a benefit to both you and the club. **BECOME A LEADER.**

If this appeals to you contact the Activity Chair and learn how to become a leader. We will arrange for you to act as a co-leader to start. We will train you on the use of meetup and the handling of needed documents such as sign-in waiver.

Would you like more information? Try these Forms for Leaders links:

[Guidelines for Leaders](#)

[Meetup Instructions](#)

[Leader Award Policy](#)

[Sign-in Waiver Policy](#)

[INCIDENT REPORT](#) [Incident Report Instructions](#)

Our Constitution, By Laws, Policies and Forms are on [Policy/Forms](#)

OCSJ MEMBERSHIP

There are several ways you can join or renew your OCSJ membership.

1. Go to **OCSJ.wildapricot.org**. Then, click on the "Join OCSJ Here" button and follow the prompts.

2. Download the Wild Apricot app to your phone. Then, click on the "Join OCSJ" button and follow the prompts.

You have the option of paying on-line or mailing a check. If you are mailing a check, make it out to Outdoor Club of South Jersey. Our mailing address is OCSJ, PO Box 46, Atco NJ 08004

Our annual membership rates are:

Individual - \$20

Family - \$25

Because of the Covid-19, we are extending our memberships by three (3) months to all who have paid or will pay in 2020.

Membership Questions: Please contact OCSJ at membership@ocsj.org

OCSJ PARTICIPATION POLICY

1. OCSJ is a member organization. Membership funds pay for insurance and other Club overhead. However, prospective members and guests of OCSJ members may try one regular activity from each of our activity sections without joining. Thereafter they must join to be eligible for the hundreds of activities and events available every year.

2. Participants on trips which charge money must be members of OCSJ, except where the trip is a joint trip with another club and the participant is a member of that club. If there is space available, members of OCSJ may bring guests on a day trip charging money. Participants on overnight trips charging money must always be an OCSJ member.

***NOTE - PRIORITY ON ACTIVITY PARTICIPATION WILL BE GIVEN TO PAID MEMBERS AT THIS TIME.**

Any comments please Contact Joseph Fabian (president@ocsj.org)

MEETUP

To receive up-to-date club information, we encourage everyone to go to our website and to join our Meet-up groups. Our activities are listed on the following Meetup sites.

Click Links Below to Join and View

[* Hiking/Camping/Backpacking Events Link](#)

[* Biking Cross Country Skiing Events Link](#)

***Kayak Events Link**

Note: You must join each meetup group separately

If you are planning to attend an event, do not forget to RSVP. This is important information for the leader. And of course, if your plans change, please cancel your RSVP. Meetup will automatically send you an email if the activity is cancelled by the leader.

TREKKER

The new printed Trekker is available quarterly from Board Members and Leaders. The printed Trekker is also available at The Print Shop, White Horse Pike in Stratford, NJ. Contact Doug Hillebrecht at 856-309-8817 if you need more information.

Like us on Facebook

Outdoor Club of South Jersey

www.facebook.com/ocsj.org

BIKING

www.meetup.com/Outdoor-Club-of-South-Jersey/

**Message from the
Cycling chair:
Neil Kornhauser**



Message from the cycling chair:

If a day of the week ends in the letter "Y" you can be assured that OCSJ has a bike ride (or multiple rides) on that day. October has seen 45 bike rides; November will come in about the same. As the weather gets cooler we are seeing more trail rides on towpaths and in the woods. Watch our calendar for our beginning trail rides and continued road rides. Roadies generally cut back mileage as the temperatures dip; watch for rides ranging from 20 miles to 40 miles.

If you haven't broken out your mountain bike yet, please make sure it is in proper working condition. If you have hydraulic disc brakes pay attention to the brake levers. Any sponginess means that it is possibly time to replace the brake fluid.

If you have ideas for rides, please step up and lead a ride! If you have been on our rides please give back to your club and become a leader. It is easy and you will have plenty of help along the way. We have approximately 700 routes in our RIDE WITH GPS club account to draw from. Email the cycling chairman and see how easy it is to get started. Co-leading with an experienced leader is a great way to get started.

Monthly DIY Tip

Before going out on any bike ride you should be checking key components on your bike EVERY TIME YOU GO OUT. Here is a checklist of some of the things you need to do:

1. Maintain proper tire pressure. The minimum and maximum psi is written on all tire sidewalls.
2. Make sure your wheels are locked into position. If your bike has quick releases (skewers) make sure they are locked. If you have through axles do the same.
3. Check to see that your brakes are centered and locked. There is nothing more frustrating than having your brakes rubbing on your wheel or rotor slowing you down the whole ride! If you have disc brakes, give both wheels a spin making sure the brake pads are centered.
4. Make sure all bags are properly secured and you have no hanging straps that could get caught in the spokes.
5. Turn on all lights, yes even during the day!
6. ALWAYS BE AWARE THAT AS SOON AS YOU GET ON A BICYCLE YOU ARE AT RISK OF INJURY OR DEATH. DO NOT LET YOUR GUARD DOWN, BE ALERT, WATCH OUT FOR OTHER CYCLISTS, PEDESTRIANS AND VEHICLES. ACCIDENTS HAPPEN IN A SPLIT SECOND.
7. Provided that I have not scared you away from cycling, get on your bike and have fun!

As always, thank you and see you on the road and trails!

Neil Kornhauser (cycling chairman)

nkornhauser@gmail.com

TRAIL MAINTENANCE

www.meetup.com/Outdoor-Club-of-South-Jersey-Hiking/

**Message from the Trail
Maintenance Chair:**

Ro Mason



Trail Work Tuesdays are back!

The OCSJ trail crew is currently trimming and re blazing the Batona Trail in Brendan T Bryne State Forest approx 10 miles. This section of the Batona is the responsibility of the Batona Club but the majority of the members live in PA so we are assisting them this year. Many of our club members hike and bike in the BTB SF. We should have this section completed before the annual OCSJ Holiday hike and bike event on Sat, Dec 19.

Pictured is the crew honoring our vets on Nov 10. Crew member Vince K created the American Flag in the picture which is all hand cut wood.

Ro Mason is our Trail Representative. Every Tuesday, she will be organizing work days for the BATONA Trail. To volunteer, please contact Ro at romason@comcast.net

HIKING

www.meetup.com/Outdoor-Club-of-South-Jersey-Hiking/

Message from the Hiking Chair:

Evelyn Minutolo



So many great hikes in the Fall, the colors have been stupendous and I love the smell of the leaves and the crunch underfoot, temperatures have been fantastic. We have hikes in south and central NJ often, as well as northern NJ and PA and MD less frequently. In the old days, we used to organize carpools to save gas but with Covid we are not encouraging carpools. We do ask you to bring a mask and follow social distancing guidelines as well for the safety of everyone.

Featured hike: If you are new to hiking and want a nice easy introduction try this: Nov 22, Sunday at 2pm Burlington Towne Center Riverline Town Walk, 3 miles easy to moderate pace, leader is David Bicking.

Temperatures are starting to drop so the November tip is check the weather before you leave home, wear synthetic layers, avoid cotton. Carry plenty of water, you won't be as thirsty as the summer but you still need to hydrate. A light rain jacket is always nice just in case or as a windbreaker!

See you on the trails.

So if this seems like something you'd love to do, come out and hike with us, make new friends and go on adventures together!

**If you do not see hikes that fit your pace or distance then it is time to step up and lead a hike yourself!

IT COULD NOT BE ANY EASIER!!!

More leaders = more hikes! If you need help setting up a hike or have questions or if you are interested in leading, email Evelyn Minutolo at sunsetwaterfall@aol.com

Thank you and see you on the trails.

Evelyn

SunsetWaterfall@aol.com

Backpacking/Camping Trips

www.meetup.com/Outdoor-Club-of-South-Jersey-Hiking/

**Message from the
Backpacking/Camping Chair:**

Kevin Drevik



Well, its November and the backpacking season is winding down. Typically we don't go plan trips from Dec - Mar, due to weather here in the Northeast being

too unpredictable. Most of our folks also don't have the cold weather gear to camp in sub-freezing temperatures.

We did have a trip in October in New Hampshire, where five of us hiked from the NH/VT border about 18 miles in, right before the Presidential Range started. Plans next year include at least one long-weekend and one full week in New Hampshire, a long-weekend in VT, and several long-weekends in Virginia. We'll also have a beginner's hike in May in Pennsylvania - where we can hopefully have a campfire and Smores!

Schedule for 2nd qtr 2021 for me is currently looking like this:

Month	Date	Start	End	Timeline	Map	Dist
Apr	11-13	VA56	Salt Log Gap	3 day Wknd	VA 17-18	16.9
May	15-16	PA309	Bake Oven Knob	Wknd	PA 20-21	9.3 Beginner
June	12-14	VT9	North Adams MA	3 day Wknd	VT 9	19.3

Thanks!

Kevin

See you on the trail!

Kevin

If you would like to organize a trip or for backpacking information, contact Kevin at **KDrevik@aol.com**

Cross Country Ski and Snowshoe Trips
www.meetup.com/Outdoor-Club-of-South-Jersey/

Message from the Ski chair:

Eileen Greve

It's sad that because of the coronavirus and COVID restrictions we cannot have our annual Apres Ski party this year. However there are X/C ski trips being planned, and I feel certain that the leaders will do all in their power to ensure the safety of their participants.

Barbara Brandt (bbrandt46@gmail.com) and Jim and Virginia Magee (mageejv@verizon.net) will hold their trip to North Conway, NH Jan 29 to Feb 5, and are currently filled and taking names on a waitlist.

Fran Horn (franhorn@aol.com) will be leading the trip to Stowe, VT this year, Jan 24 to 29. We will stay at the Commodores Inn, in Stowe Vt. The trip is from Sunday thru Friday. Breakfast is included. Lunch and dinner are the responsibility of the participants. Everyone can RSVP to Meetup and then make their reservations and credit card payments directly with the INN. We will cross country ski, snow shoe or hike everyday.

More information will be available later in the fall. Of course, everything is dependent on the Vermont COVID-19 restrictions.

New Leader is Fran Horn, Phone: 856-786-0048, Email franhorn@aol.com

I will not be leading the trip to Pulaski, NY this year and am looking for a leader willing to take this over. The 1880 House is available for us over the President's weekend which is prime time. Although Hugh has sold Osceola X/C, I've talked to the owner of the new place, Osceola Ski and Sport, Justin Hite, and it sounds great. Sue Wills (rishirani@msn.com) is still nailing down the details of her trip to Boonville, NY, with dates tbd.

Eileen Greve, X/C ski chair

EGreve212@gmail.com

Please note:

To confirm your place on the trip, you must contact the leader by phone or email. All payments are non-refundable without finding a replacement.

KAYAKING

www.meetup.com/Outdoor-Club-of-South-Jersey-Canoeing/

**Message from the kayaking chair:
Frank Pearce**

It is obvious that the paddling season like everything else is not normal. The number of trips offered and leaders offering them are down. We are one of the few

organizations that are still offering group paddling. If you go on an outing, do not forget to thank the leader. The only way we can continue to offer activities is by everyone being safe. Follow the recommendations of experts. The whole goal is to get us back to normal as quickly as we can.

Everyone must sign the sign-in sheets.

- - PFD's must be worn when on the water.
 - Winter Kayaking rules apply after November 1

Leaders have final say on participation based on safety concerns. Examples would be bringing small children or pets. Some will ask about limits on trip size. This might be set by safety concerns or limited parking. If you have a question, please contact the leader first.

Enjoy the season but stay safe.

Happy Paddling

If you would like to organize a trip, contact Frank at

HORN71@VERIZON.NET

OCSJ SOCIAL COMMITTEE

Our social committee activities have been difficult to plan and execute due to the pandemic.

John Kerney - Social Committee Coordinator - crewkern@live.com

Leaders Banquet

Our Banquet will be at the Ramblewood Country Club. The date is TBD. Leaders who lead the required number of trips in 2020 will be notified by email.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Board of Trustees - Interested in joining the OCSJ Board. Come out to a couple of meetings or contact the OCSJ President at President@ocsj.org

Publicity - We would like to have the OCSJ name appear in more places both in print and online. Contact Fran at franhorn@aol.com if you have ideas and would like to help.

Social Committee - If you would like to help with the 2021 Planning, contact the John Kerney at crewkern@live.com

Website/Computer - We could use some help from people with computer or website experience. Contact the OCSJ President at president@ocsj.org



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