

Genesee Valley Hiking Club Newsletter



Turning Point Park Hike (Nov 29, 2025)
Hike Lead: Dave L; Photos: Courtesy of Lisa S

Executive Committee

Elected Officers:

President: Larry O'Heron
Vice President: Tom Kolankiewicz
Secretary: Patty Mangarelli
Treasurer: Nina Tracy

Immediate Past President: Ann Bayley

Committee Chairs:

Membership: Larry Powell
Hike Schedule: Joan Jakubowski

Trails Maintenance: Ryan Bean

Social: Iris Raiman

Info Tech: Larry O'Heron

Historian: (vacant)

At-Large: Ruth Teitel

At-Large: Alicia Collins

Assistants:

Hike Schedule: Darla Cornell

Social: Ruth Teitel

Membership: Linda Sardisco

Message from the President:

Annual Billing for Membership Dues

Many of you who paid your annual dues around this time last year, will be prompted from [Meetup.com](https://www.meetup.com) soon for their annual GVHC dues renewal, which are \$10/year.

Assuming your credit card is still valid, including date of expiration, no further action is necessary on your part.

If you no longer desire to be part of GVHC, you must remove yourself from GVHC to prevent the charge.

If your card has been cancelled or is past the expiration date, you should get a notification that the dues could not be charged, and to verify your credit card information.

If your card is no longer valid, you will be moved to the "Awaiting Dues" category, and

- 1) will not be able to RSVP for events.
- 2) will be removed from the Meetup group within approx 60 days by the membership team.

If Meetup can not process the charge and you have verified that the card is valid, you will need to contact Meetup support directly. We don't have access to their backend systems for security reasons.

You can find a direct link to their tech support at <https://gvhchikes.org>. Use the Billing option.

If you are billed for any greater amount, then you have contracted for one of their other services, e.g. Meetup+.

These other services are not necessary for GVHC membership. If you have signed up for other services and want to continue, go for it.

If you don't remember signing up for these other services, then don't pay the bill under the impression that it is for GVHC.

I suggest that each of us review our profile in detail. Click on your Meetup Avatar and go to Settings. Review anything related to subscriptions or Billing.

Event Schedule Changes:

We are getting into the winter months.

The county may issue traffic alerts.

Stay on top of hiking conditions by:

- 1) Checking your hike event on Meetup the day of the hike by logging into [Meetup.com](https://www.meetup.com) and navigating to the comments section of the hike, or,
- 2) Sign-up to receive real-time emails from [Meetup.com](https://www.meetup.com) by enabling this feature in your meetup account. You can choose to accept as few emails as you desire.

Most relevant would be comments posted to your event of interest.

To turn on emails, we have published step-by-step instructions in the May and July issues of the GVHC Newsletter, available at <https://www.gvhchikes.org>

Billing Issues:

Only occasionally now are we hearing of people from whom Meetup will not or can not charge their credit card for the annual dues.

It generally seems these folks have used multiple ways of logging into Meetup (email / google / facebook) and have either expired and/or multiple credit cards on file.

Billing Payment issues are time consuming and frustrating. Unfortunately, we don't have the back end system permissions to resolve these issues.

Please contact Meetup directly by filling out the Help Request Form available at this link:

<https://help.meetup.com/hc/en-us/requests/new>

Help with Meetup Features:

We have several Meetup help articles, available at our [GVHC website](#) on the homepage.

- Submit a Tech Support Request
- Turn on Email Announcements
- Awaiting Dues Status

Newsletter Availability

Find this newsletter and earlier editions at: <https://gvhchikes.org/Newsletters.html>.

Thank you for your continued support. It is a pleasure to meet everyone out on the trails.

R/
Larry OHeron, GVHC President

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In this issue:

- Ellie Mahler and Her Effect on GVHC (Cynthia H)
- GVHC Winter Get-together
- GVHC Officer Elections
- A Year of Changes
- Annual Members Get-together
- A Good Winter Hiking Boot

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Ellie Mahler and Her Effect on GVHC

Written by Cynthia Howk



Ellie Mahler

Ellie was such a major “force” in the hiking club, going on both day hikes and “special summer trips” (i.e. to Europe) over the years. It’s impossible to count the many Executive Committee meetings she hosted at her lovely Irondequoit home in “White

City,” near the lake – which, during those years (1980s – early 2000s), was preceded by a “potluck” supper, to which everyone brought a “dish.”



Ellie Mahler

Without doubt, however, as to her “contribution” to the club was the selfless assistance she provided over several years, to help former GVHC president, Ellsworth Stein, a club member since the 1940s, make the transition from his life-long home near Kodak Park, to assisted living.

Ellsworth lived alone, and had no close relatives. Ellsworth was stubbornly independent and resisted help from outsiders – a trait shown frequently over the years (despite the fact he was always offering help, quietly, to other members of the club). Be sure to read Ellsworth’s remarkable story in his [obituary](#).



Ellsworth Stein

Ellie’s nursing skills – both medical & diplomatic/gently applied, with great patience - convinced Ellsworth he needed to move to a location that provided “assistance” for daily activities. This was especially important as Ellsworth no longer drove & couldn’t shop/run errands/etc., for himself. Ellie achieved the near impossible, with equally important assistance from GVHC member Bruce Butler: the many-month process of getting Ellsworth to write a will/organize his finances, while Ellie & Bruce sorted/cleaned out a house full of “stuff” and successfully moved Ellsworth to safe, secure & pleasant accommodations at Park/Unity (then St. Ann’s) campus, where he settled in quite nicely, gained new friends, and was comfortably cared for ‘til the end of his life, at age 96 (1916-2012).

Ellie’s example is typical of GVHC members helping each other, outside of regular club activities. Over the years, it’s been observed that a number of our club members were “cut from similar cloth.” They were often single, stubbornly independent individuals who had few, if any, close family members to help them, when

they reached their “senior years.” When health situations changed – especially physical and or medical conditions - and they needed help, they were reluctant to ask for it. That’s when their “chosen family” – members of the hiking club who they’d known for years – stepped in & offered the critical assistance that was required. While hiking, enjoying the outdoors, and socialization are the more obvious benefits of club membership, assistance with personal challenges (whether a medical or “elder care” situation) has also been a hallmark of the club’s generous & caring members, over many years.

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GVHC Winter Get-together

On Sunday, February 15, from 12:00-1:30, join fellow GVHC Hikers for a Warm Winter Get Together by the fire in Stewart Lodge, Mendon Ponds Park.

PLEASE bring a dish to pass to this “POT LUCK” lunch. The Club will supply a variety of hot and cold drinks and paper products. Make sure to RSVP by February 11 on Meetup!

Feb. 11 is the LAST day to RSVP for the GVHC Winter Get Together !

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Club Officer Elections

Elections were held at the Annual Fall Get-Together.

The following people (two-year terms) were elected:

- Secretary: Patty Mangarelli
- Treasurer: Nina Tracy
- Vice-President: Tom Kolankiewicz
- President: Larry OHeron

You can read up on the terms of office, responsibilities and other information related to the elections on our website at <https://www.gvhchikes.org> on the Resources tab. Look for the current by-laws item.

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A Year of Changes

2025 has been a year of changes:

- Move to paid dues via Meetup
- New Membership Chair
- New Hike Scheduler Chair
- Failpoints

Dues via Meetup

On Jan 1, 2025, GVHC changed from a paper-based/Paypal © based system of dues collection to Meetup ©.

By the end of the year, we eliminated multiple failpoints in the way the club conducted operations:

- Dues via cash / paper check
- Dues handed in via hike leader / club officer
- Manually maintained email & contact lists

- No standard method of communication
- Club data on individual personal computers

Using Meetup to collect dues, we have:

- gone from approximately 150 to just under 500 paid members,
- eliminated multiple email & contact lists.
- Improved the reliability of membership data, and
- streamlined data analysis for trends.

Membership

It was back in 2024 that Michelle B, Membership Chair at the time, provided a well-reasoned, well-thought-out point paper to the Executive Committee on the regular issues she faced. After much research by a dedicated team of Tom K, Michelle B and Nina T, they recommended to the Exec Cmte that GVHC switch to Meetup.

The results have been outstanding.

(Note: there is a direct link to Meetup at the beginning of the newsletter for those few folks whose Meetup accounts have underlying data issues. It has been painful for them - we realize.)

Hike Scheduler

Derek P, having been a backbone of the club for years - decades, expressed his desire to move on.

We welcome Joan J and Darla C and greatly appreciate their coming forward to fill Derek's role.

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Failpoints

The move to Meetup afforded us one other opportunity.

The club had multiple fail points based on our reliance on paper and archaic electronic ways of doing business.

In general, various club officers are looking at ways to move club business from personal computers to a shared cloud drive with two principal goals in mind.

- Simplify planned transitions and ease the growth pains of new volunteers
- Recover quickly in the unexpected loss of a key person.

Membership was a key failpoint. Despite best efforts, there were too many ways for accurate membership counts to fall apart.

The return rate of hike leader sign-in sheets has ranged from poor to abysmal. Tom K has been working with the club officers, chairpersons and a dedicated team of hike leaders (all who volunteered) to find an appropriate way to electronically submit the hike leader sign-in sheets, as opposed to the old reliance on snail mail.

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Annual Members Get-Together

2025 Fall Gathering.

- Nov. 23rd, 2025 (Sunday). Stewart Lodge. 12:00 - 1:30
- GVHC provided drinks and desserts





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What Makes a Good Winter Hiking Boot?

(ChatGPT Assisted)

That's a great question. Choosing good winter hiking boots is really important, because winter conditions are more demanding: cold, snow, ice, slush, wetness. Here are the key factors that make a winter hiking boot good.

1. Waterproofing

- Winter means snow, melting slush, and possibly wet ground. A good winter boot should have a *waterproof membrane* (like Gore-Tex or proprietary waterproof liners) to keep moisture out.
- Sealed seams are very helpful to prevent water from sneaking in.
- A gusseted tongue (the tongue of the boot is attached on the sides) helps stop snow and water from coming in over the top.

2. Insulation / Warmth

- Insulated boots keep your feet warm in cold temps. Insulation is often measured in grams (e.g., 200 g PrimaLoft).

- The amount of insulation you need depends on how cold it gets and how long you're staying out. For milder winter hikes, 200 g might suffice, but for really cold or prolonged exposure, more insulation is better.
- Some boots also have thermal-reflective lining (like Omni-Heat) to reflect your body heat.

3. Traction / Outsole

- The outsole (the bottom of the boot) needs to grip on snow, ice, and packed snow. Look for lugs (the raised tread) that are aggressive enough to dig in.
- Some winter boots use special rubber compounds that stay grippy even in cold temperatures, because regular rubber can harden and lose grip.
- Depending on how icy your hikes are, you may want boots that are compatible with microspikes or traction devices.

4. Height / Ankle Support

- A higher shaft (mid-cut or above) helps keep snow out and offers more ankle support.

- But taller boots are heavier, so there's a trade-off.

5. Durability / Construction

- Leather or synthetic uppers should be durable and reinforced, especially around the toe and heel.
- Good stitching, quality materials, and strong eyelets (for laces) matter for longevity.
- A removable liner is nice: it can be taken out to dry, which helps after a wet hike.

6. Comfort / Fit

- Fit is always super important. In winter, you might wear thicker wool or synthetic socks, so account for that when sizing.
- A boot with good cushioning and a supportive insole / midsole will help on long hikes.
- Break-in: Some boots need to be broken in so they're comfortable for serious hikes.

7. Weight vs. Warmth Trade-off

- Heavier boots tend to offer more insulation and protection, but they're less agile.

- Lighter winter hiking boots (less insulation) are great for less intense winter hikes.

8. Breathability

- Even though you want waterproofing, breathability is still important so sweat doesn't build up inside and make things cold or damp.

9. Special Features

- Gaiter compatibility (hooks or rings to attach gaiters) is useful if you're hiking in deep snow.
- Removable footbeds or liners are helpful for drying or replacing.
- Reinforced toe caps add protection from rocks or ice.

End of Newsletter