

Foot – Loose!

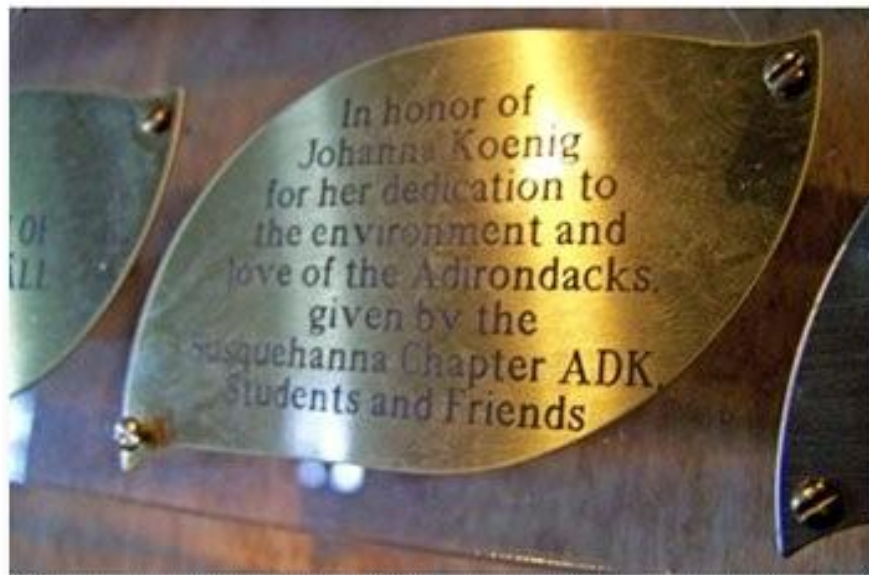
Newsletter of the Susquehanna Chapter of the Adirondack Mountain Club (ADK), published quarterly – January, April, July, October

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Dedicated to the Memory of Johanna Koenig

This special edition of Foot-Loose is dedicated to fond memories of Johanna Koenig, a founding member of the ADK's Susquehanna Chapter, who passed away on June 16, 2008. Recollections, photos and a sketch of activities with Jo appear below.



This leaf appears on the Tree of Giving at the Adirondack Loj and reflects contributions in Jo's honor to one of her very special causes, the Johns Brook Lodge Endowment Fund.

My memories of Jo Koenig are of playing tennis together, selling real estate as friendly competitors, enjoying lifelong learning experiences at CCAL (one of Jo's many projects), and always her wisdom and advice. Among my favorite times enjoyed with Jo are those spent outdoors – hiking, biking, canoeing, picnicking, camping at Salos' cabin, and relaxing at Koenigs' Arnold Lake camp. Everything Jo did, she did well and with great thought. She could organize anything; she had a genius for matching jobs needing to be done with

people to do them. She was a wonderful cook, baker, knitter, entertainer, homemaker, but most importantly, wife, mother, grandmother, sister, and aunt, to whom family was the center of her very busy life. My friend Jo Koenig not only showed her family and many friends how to live, but at the end of her life she showed us, with her grace and dignity, how to die. I feel very fortunate to have had Jo in my life – the best our human race has to offer.

Jean Seroka

When we joined ADK there were two Joe's and one Jo (Koenig). We soon came to appreciate Jo because of her love and knowledge of the natural world and its interconnectedness. She carried this in her whole being. We are grateful for her guiding light, her willingness to share her knowledge, and her use of the teachable moment. She accepted us as individuals and drew us into the ADK circle of friends.

Jo will be missed – but she lives in all of us who were fortunate to have known her through all the various ADK adventures.
Lovingly, Barb and Jack Meeks

Jo Koenig climbed the Adirondack High Peaks and from the tops she enjoyed the vistas of ever-changing beauty and solitude. Beside these physical mountains, she was challenged by Goals for the Club. We were personally confronted with a specific example when she sought to transfer the responsibility of the Chapter's website. The mountain she had had to climb included acquiring website software, seeking assistance in designing and launching the site, and then maintaining it. She did it! In the April 2005 Foot-Loose, Vol. 17(2), page 2, she said, "After thinking about it for at least two years and finally getting to work, we are now ON THE WEB. Yes, we did have a web site before this, but it was hosted and maintained through the ADK main club. With this change of control we hope to have a more attractive site with many local pictures, be able to make changes as quickly as they come along, and reach out both to fellow ADKers and other interested people." With this achievement, Jo Koenig reach a Mountain Top for the Club that thankfully we continue to enjoy today.

Currie Marr & Bob Thomas

Irv and I will always remember the time there was limited seating space on an outing using a pickup - and Jo, despite her diminutive size, was the first to hop into the back of the pickup forgoing her comfort for the benefit of others. We've always called her "Joey" and Joey she will always be in our hearts.

Irvin and Monica Peters

Bernie and I were new to the area 12 years ago and joined CCAL. One of the first courses we took was Cross Country Skiing, which was run by Jo and Barb Means. We met in the Rowe House for exercises and then by the third meeting we went out skiing. What a lovely group of people we met. This was our first encounter with Jo Koenig, and then she told us about ADK which we joined, and went on the Spring weekend to the Thompson House. We got to know her a little better that week end. We also took courses whenever she taught them, and always enjoyed her expertise in all fields. We will miss her.

Joan and Bernie Levit

I have wonderful memories of Jo which I will cherish forever and keep close to my heart.

Julie Smith

Liebe Johanna,
Wir haben durch Deine Initiative und Willenskraft viel von Dir gelernt.
Vielen Dank! You are an inspiration.
Wir werden immer an Dich denken.

Rest in peace – love, Horst & Astrid Neumann

Jo led a hike around Arnold Lake and invited hikers back to her camp to eat our lunch and take a swim in the lake. It was an interesting hike and we had a nice centerpiece of all of the wild mushrooms that had been identified along the way.

I was fairly new to ADK and Arnold Lake was a new place for me so I was excited about swimming since it had turned out to be such a nice summer day. After lunch everyone started to pack up for home and Jo said, "doesn't anyone want to swim?" I replied that she didn't have to ask me twice. So Jo and I went swimming. She thanked me for swimming with her, when I was the one that enjoyed the swim. There were three of us that day who had a wonderful swim and chat in the lake. I was so glad to have shared that hike and the lake with Jo and the other ADKers. This is just one of many hikes enjoyed with a friend along the path.
Ruth Schaeffer

When we purchased our bed and breakfast seven years ago, I noticed a number of ferns growing in the wooded areas that required identification. They were all quite different, and I wondered if anyone could help us identify them. On one of our ADK hikes, I found myself walking alongside Jo, telling her about my ferns. She quickly said that she could indeed help us, and on our next walk near Cooperstown, she'd stop by. Jo was always ready and willing to help when it came to anything related to the environment. Bob and I were impressed not only with her vast knowledge of flora and fauna, but with her willingness and joy in sharing this with others.

Rae and Bob Consigli

Jo Koenig was a dear friend. I will miss her strength and good counsel. She was a gifted teacher who worked her whole life to keep the environment healthy and available for us and for the generations to come. She shared her love of the Adirondacks with all of us. Be it a quiet conversation over a cup of tea or spending time in the wilderness going for hikes or cross-country skiing, that time was enjoyable. She was always ready to go for adventure. We rode our bicycles from the Susquehanna River boat launch to Cherry Valley and back again or to the Stamford Rail Trail or on the Cape Cod bike trail. She always had joy. I will miss her and remember how fortunate I was to share her friendship. She taught me so much.

"Come walk in rain with me,
that I might know your mind.

And I'll bring you hope when hope is hard to find, and I'll bring a song of love and a rose in the wintertime. " (from song words written by Carolyn McDade, [A Rose in the Winter](#))

Norma Lee Havens

We all have experiences in our lives that change us. Meeting Jo Koenig and Barbara Means for the first time was one of those experiences for me.

For a long time I had wanted to go hiking with the Susquehanna ADK, so one Saturday in April of 1993 or so, my friend Pam Haight and I joined Jo Koenig and Barbara Means for a hike to the top of Hunter Mountain in the Catskills. As we drove, it started to snow. No one even mentioned it. As the snow continued I said, "It's snowing. Are we still going to hike?" Oh yes, we were still going to hike. When we parked the car, there was about an inch of snow on the ground and snowing away. "Are we still going to hike?" I asked. "Oh yes, we are still going to hike," they said.

Two hours later, in about eight inches of snow and almost to the top, we stopped for lunch. I thought that Jo and Barb were crazy to keep going. After a discussion, it was decided to not go any farther that day. We would come back and try again.

Back in the car, I started telling Jo and Barb that I had never known women like them. "Where have you women been all my life?" I said. Jo always liked it when I told that story, especially the "Where have you women been all my life?" part.

From then on, my next outdoor adventure life started. So many experiences followed: local hikes, cross-country skiing, canoeing and kayaking, exploring, trips to the Adirondack High Peaks and the Catskills, backpacking into Johns Brook Lodge, weekends at the Loj at Heart Lake, almost always with Jo and Barb there, too. Jo was always sharing information and using that teachable moment.

A good memory is the weekend backpacking trip into Johns Brook Lodge with Jo Koenig leading. It was my first time going to Johns Brook. I brought my ten-year-old grandson, Kevin, with me. We carried everything in on our backs, and Kevin's pack was practically hitting the backs of his knees. Jo's rule was that no one went ahead of the leader. Kevin, who always wanted to be first, drove her crazy by walking directly behind her. He kept questioning her about the High Peaks and about how Johns Brook Lodge got its supplies in. On our way out, she finally let him go ahead of her, but only as far as he could be seen. Now, Kevin is seventeen years old and on Monday, June 30, 2008, he started his summer job at Heart Lake LOJ. Through Kevin and so many others whom Jo has inspired over the years, her love of nature will live on.

Jo was so sick at the end, but she never lost interest in our Susquehanna Chapter or our activities. The last time I saw her she wanted to talk about the recent Canoe Relay Race. She was amazing! If I may quote Jo's dear friend, Barbara Means, "Jo showed us how to live – and she showed us how to die." I loved her and am thankful for the wonderful times we had together.

Rita Salo

Jo often gave lessons in cross-country skiing when we first skied with ADK in the Adirondacks in 1970s. One of her techniques for controlling downhill speed was to place the ski poles between her legs and drag the basket. When questioned she did not have an alternative strategy for use by male skiers. As you can imagine we quickly came up with several alternatives. Jo being an open-minded woman applauded our efforts.

Jack Havens

Jo was my inspiration, my mentor, my teacher, my travel companion, and my friend. Jo was a leader and an innovator. Her network of friends was astounding, She was the glue that held so many diverse persons connected, and she could so easily gather us together for a cause, a project, a trip, a hike, a social event. I am privileged to have shared so many adventures with Jo:

--- Our back-packing trip to Smoky Mt. National Park and the lesson that hanging packs just makes it easier for squirrels to get our food.

--- Seven Wild Women in the West trip, where we learned that a golf cart was not a substitute for a backpack.

--- Northwestern Canada, where we hiked on the Athabasca Glacier and to the Burgess Shale.

--- A camping trip to Targhee National Forest and Jo's idea to visit a tourist attraction building in the shape of a giant potato where we got a real baked Idaho.

--- So many trips to the Loj, and to JBL, hiking in the summer and skiing in the winter.

--- I remember one especially fun outing with Jo's son, grandchildren, brother, nephew, and chapter friends, all enjoying their stay at JBL and hiking in the Adirondacks.

--- Bike trips and canoe trips. "Hey, how come Jo's the only one paddling in your canoe?"

--- Wildflower identification: Jo, always the teacher, "Stop, let's look it up."

Jo, adventurous and curious, wanted to explore new areas, and many of her local hiking trips were to find out "What's over that horizon or where does that new trail go?"

Jo was a versatile, strong participant, knowledgeable about all that she did. I always wondered, "Will I be able to do this activity when I am the age that Jo is now?"

Jo had a wonderful personality—intelligent, caring, good natured, and a great sense of humor. A group of friends were having lunch on the deck at the Autumn as Jo, her eyes sparkling as she tried to suppress her own giggles, proceeded to tell us a joke that was so funny in the telling that we all were doubled over with laughter. "Wait," cried Jo, "I haven't gotten to the punch line yet!"

Jo gave so much to so many. Our lives have been enriched in different ways and under many different circumstances by Jo's presence. I treasure the memories and extend my love to Johanna Koenig, a woman who made a difference in this world by a life well lived.

Aleda Koehn

My acquaintance with Jo began around 1999/2000 when my husband Fritz and I attended a science class Jo was giving for CCAL (Continuing Cooperative Adult Learning). She was immediately impressed to meet this formidable man who by his mere presence drew people to him. He died 2 years later and Jo began to introduce me to ADK, the German Reading group, a weekly luncheon gathering of women supporting each other, among others. It was astounding how quietly thoughtful she helped and supported me. Her energy was endless. I tried to learn from her, was grateful to her for including me in many adventures. Some of Charlie's relatives are members of my church congregation and neighbors. My life has been greatly enriched by having known Jo.

Erika Heinegg

My first thought was --the struggle is over. Now she can fly up Mt. Marcy and to all of her other favorite mountain hikes.

Jo was and still is our mentor, founder, and leader, both from up front or quietly behind the scenes. She kept in touch with all of us, making us an extended family for each other. Almost everywhere we went hiking, near or far, we ran into someone she knew. On Mt Graylock there were two of her former H. S. students, one at the top manning the refreshment stand and one hiking half way up. That was also the only time we met a cow on the trail. In the Tetons a couple she knew in an R.V. saved the day by providing us shelter in a downpour.

A favorite story? out of 29 years of hiking locally, in the Catskills, Adirondacks, Gunks, Berkshires, Tetons and "cultural trips" to the Hudson Valley and Tanglewood? However, she did have a favorite place near JBL that she took us once after everything we had carried the three miles in was stowed away. We walked a half-mile up Big Slide along the brook. There the stream left its banks and spread out 50 to 100 feet wide across a granite slope gentle enough to allow plants to grow in the cracks. We climbed the 100 yard or so up thru the water and sat on rocks to enjoy the view back across the Johns Brook valley to the Gothics. Never forget it---or another climb nearby when we were eating lunch on a peak and two fighter jets on training flights from Ft. Drum flew by at eye level and the pilots waved.

Wonderful memories.

Lucille Wiggin

What I remember about Johanna was her optimism and leadership. One of the outings I was on with Jo when I first joined the Susquehanna Chapter was a trip to Star Field in Cooperstown. We left the cars at the (then) Bassett Hospital animal unit and started east toward Star Field. We came to an unmarked fork in the trail and stood around as usual looking up and down. Jo pointed to the left fork and said, "This is the right way; I remember it." It was a dead end, and we had to return. I thought to myself, "This woman may not always know where she's going, but she doesn't stand still for long."

We have a picture of Johanna standing in the middle of an abandoned, overgrown road in the Blue Ridge Wilderness Area about 10 years ago. We had just adopted the Blue Ridge WA and were exploring and getting acquainted with it. There were many tasks to choose from, and I thought the "older folks" would stick to the marked trails while we "younger folks" beat the bushes. But not Jo; she picked the job that offered some adventure. Wherever she found herself, Jo was always a leader, and that's how I'll remember her.

Joe Hart

Jo came into my life in 1992 when she was chairperson of the Susquehanna Chapter and I was newly retired as school Library System Director. She was a constant friend since that first winter when she would ski with me nearly everyday. These things I loved:

--- hiking on rocky trails in the Adirondacks, getting the summits only to hear her say "Sorry, no views," as the tops were socked in. "Next time. . ."

--- hiking out west in Zion and Bryce;

--- meeting former students/people who knew her, from Rocky Mt. National Park to the streets of Montreal, Canada;

--- rooming or sharing a tent with Jo because my snoring was not

as loud as Charlie's;

--- her tireless devotion and promotion of ADK;

--- ski trips to Val David, Canada, first with Elderhostel then with local chapter members while encountering ice storms, medical emergencies, sleigh rides in the snow, and gales of laughter while playing Charades;

--- her boundless energy for worthwhile projects;

--- kayaking/canoeing in the Jersey Pine Barons and the Susquehanna River;

--- her joy in trips to Johns Brooks Lodge or Camp Peggy O'Brian in the Adirondacks.

Jo led by example and is a shining beacon for all who knew her. I miss her terribly.

Barb Means

This spring Johanna discovered she had a third form of cancer. Did she complain? Did she moan, "Why me?" Did she look for sympathy from friends and family? That was not Johanna's way. With grace she held together, she kept doing all the sensible and productive things she could, and, to my knowledge, never riled against any of the fates which gradually restricted, and then took, her life.

Always mentally sharp and exerting control, she remained cordial, friendly, responsive, interested in others, and able to create a good chuckle in spite of all. I never dreamed I'd see so much strength in one person, and it kept coming each day. Her capacity to find enjoyment in spite of her decreasing life was astounding. She'd throw her head back and say, "You don't know how much it means to me to be able to sit out here and enjoy my flower garden," when Sue Hartley and I weeded out the ever-spreading snow on the mountain from her lovingly constructed garden full of wild and domestic flowers. When she could still manage a shower she'd say. "It was just wonderful to feel the water running over my body."

In that same way, she enjoyed this earth. She delighted in all, the animals and insects, the plants, the sights, smells, and touch. With her large smile and intense interest, she drew us all in and we felt compelled to share in her delight. Her love of this world was contagious; her strength of will and determination was immense, and her adherence to the ordinary rituals of the life she lived, doing as much as she could possibly do for herself consistently amazed me. And all the while as her body was giving out, she reveled in what she still had – never bemoaning all she'd lost.

She took time to read each name off the list of those who donated to John's Brook Lodge and told me how she could remember hiking with each and every one of you. She took great comfort that in her name her beloved John's Brook Lodge would be supported. All your thoughts and concerns were noted; all your letters and notes were read, and reread. Your efforts on her behalf worked miracles for her happiness and peace of mind.

I hear stories from Jo's friends and family. They most often start, "I fell in love with her when she . . ." With some anecdote - or "I didn't believe it, but she showed me that I could do . . ." No question, for all of us whose lives she touched – she changed us – for the better. We saw an excellent example of how we could live. We saw her being courageous, frank and honest without hesitation. We were caught up in her fantastic love of all things on this earth. We marveled at her energy and drive. And we now have an example of how life should be lived. Without ever recognizing that her example and encouragements were gifts to us, she gave them all the same. She couldn't help but

give them, and we couldn't help but feel improved for that exposure.

And what would she say to us now? "Aw heck!", she'd say, "Quit feeling sorry for yourselves that you've lost me. Just go out there and enjoy the life you have while you have it. You are capable, learn and teach, drink it ALL in, share it with friends, and for heaven's sake do all you can to take care of and preserve this wonderful earth. You know what to do. I'm counting on you!"

When I finally get over feeling sorry for myself, I'll just have to do that. I'll hike to John's Brook Lodge and follow in her footsteps. Come with me and we'll share Johanna stories!

Barbara Dauria

My association with Jo Koenig began in the late 1960s as officials in the home track & field meets at Oneonta High School.

I realized we had something in common more than as teachers when Jo, Bill Swain, and their group did a presentation of their backpacking trip on the Appalachian Trail in North Carolina. Jo was trying to explain why a trowel is an essential piece of equipment for backpacking. To put it bluntly, one carries his or her outhouse in his or her pack.

Jo's leadership and thorough involvement with the Susquehanna Chapter of the ADK became patently clear to this lone hiker when he joined the club in 1995. From the inauguration of Rum Hill during the hosting of the ADK annual meeting at the Otesaga in 1995 to a number of hikes and a canoe trip I led (Jo was one of the five fearless ladies who put their trust in me on that trip down the Delaware), I came to realize that the growth and development of the Susquehanna Chapter was due in large measure to the intrepidity of Jo. To say that Jo will be missed understates the void that is left by her leaving us.

Joe Fodero



Jo addressing the fall 2007 30th anniversary meeting



David Diener, Rita Salo, Jo, & Heide Mahlke

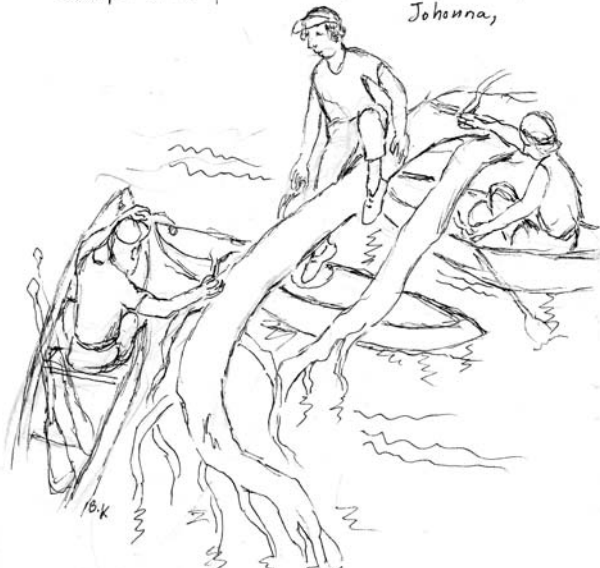


Jo, Nina Hart, and Norma Lee Havens



front: Rita Salo & Jo. rear: Nina & Joe Hart & John Salo

While the swirling waters of the Susquehanna
Swept the Kayaks beneath the fallen trees,
Johanna,



Shimming across a Log, managed to
retrieve her craft
With the help of Bill K.; and Barb got turned
around aft.

Betty and Bill Kratzenstein



Paddling 9 Mile Swamp



Canadian Ski Trip



Happy Faces = Happy Skiers



Stillwater Reservoir



Jo with Kathy Kenny & Charlie; Gerri Scheele, Bill and Molly Swain



Lake Kiawassa, 1993



Tanglewood



Northville – Placid Trail, 1997



Trail Maintenance: Ivan Gyori, Jo, Nina & Joe Hart



Rogers Environmental Center



Vroman's Nose overlooking Schoharie Valley

Foot-Loose!

Newsletter of the Susquehanna Chapter ADK

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c/o Rita Salo

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