



## Asian Outdoors Newsletter Summer/Fall 2011

### AO Member Profile: Herb Chong

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Dear AO members,

Happy trails to you. Hope the beautiful summer and fall weather had you enjoying the great outdoors. During this time, AO executed four sleepover trips and a host of one day activities. If you didn't get a chance to join us and miss out on the laughter, it's not too late. AO is now set up as a Meetup Group to convenient the technical sophisticated. Check us out.

This issue, we introduce Herb Chong, an avid hiker and photographer.

Karen Chan, Co-Editor  
Kimberly Chan, Co-Editor

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I joined Asian Outdoor ten years ago on a hike in to the Gunks in the Fall. We had a very cold day but there were still some leaves on the trees. Since then, I have had years when I have been very active with AO and years when I have been quiet. For a number of years, I led hikes all over the Mid-Hudson Valley for AO and other organizations. When I am not busy hiking, I am busy photographing many things. Some of my work has been published in the Catskill Region Guide Magazine. I've had a few gallery shows but the economy these days makes it hard for an artist to get traction.

I moved here from Canada after finishing grad school in Waterloo, Ontario to work for IBM Research in Yorktown Heights, NY. It was supposed to be a temporary job but as it turned out, I have lived in Westchester County for 25 years, most of it working for IBM. The rest of my family is still in Canada and I go back often to visit.

These days, I work in Manhattan for Bloomberg LP as a software engineer and that keeps me busy. Though I work for a financial services company, I don't do any financial programming. Most of the time,



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Herb Chong continue...

I am working on real-time text analysis of news stories, extracting content and meaning from news articles as they stream from content providers to Bloomberg Professional Service users. It's a very specialized skill with few people having the training to do it. We find this out all the time when we try to hire someone to help with the work. It's been over eight years since I have been at Bloomberg.

Most of my vacation and recreational activities involve my photography. I have gone to New Zealand twice on photography and hiking trips but mostly I travel in the US and Canada for my vacation trips. Every summer I make one or two trips to the Adirondacks with friends to get away from it all. In between all this and the commuting to and from work, there isn't much time for anything else. AO has allowed me to connect to people in the Chinese community interested in outdoor activities. I've gained a number of important friends in my time as part of the club, several of which I do things with outside of AO. That's harder than it sounds because few AO members live in my direction.

AO CINCIP  
Karen Chan

Our summer picnic on June 4 kicked off our outdoor season to a wonderful start with over 60 participants. It was a beautiful day, no bugs and a large picnic area including a baseball field was restricted just to us. We enjoyed a feast of hamburgers, hotdogs, and fried chickens. We even had a birthday cake for dessert. After lunch, the group played baseball, volleyball, badminton and other sports. We all have a fun time, as you can see by the attached pictures below.



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## Memories of our Picnic



### Memories of our Picnic





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### Chenango Valley State Park Camping

Karen Chan

Camping near the NYS Finger Lakes region permits us access to many scenic lakes, ponds and waterfalls. During our three day trip to Chenango State Park on July 8-10, we hiked the trail around Chenango Lake, and along Butternut Falls. The good thing about hiking alongside a water body is that we can't get lost and if you know our members, we are always talking and laughing, and not paying attention to where we are going!





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### WHETSTONE GULF STATE PARK CAMPING TRIP

Shuk Lui

After a drive of approximately 6 hours we arrived at our home for the next 4 days in August: Whetstone Gulf State Park campground in northern NYS. Whetstone is built in and around a three-mile-long gorge – one of the reasons I was willing to give up 2 vacation days for this trip since I love gorges!

We arrived in good time to set up the tents and then enjoy our pasta dinner while there was still daylight. One unexpected challenge was Man vs Equipment as several folks struggled to put up a shelter. It was a new shelter and, combined with unclear instructions and befuddling joints, it took more time and effort than the 5 tents combined! The forecast called for some rain through the weekend so the shelter will provide protection from the rain, as well as provide shade from the sun.



Day Two's forecast was better than the following day so it was decided to spend that day touring the Thousand Islands area. First stop was the Snell Lock. The Snell Lock was constructed in the 1950s and was part of an international cooperative effort to build the Saint Lawrence Seaway. We arrived a few minutes before an oil tanker was scheduled to approach, thus we had just a short time on the observation deck before we had to go indoors to watch through the glass windows due to security measures. We marveled over this feat of human ingenuity and engineering as the tanker glided into the lock, was lowered and then glided out. Gashes on the walls of the lock were evidence to events that were not as smooth as the one we saw!

The next stop was the Thousand Islands! Courtesy of Wikipedia: "The Thousand Islands is the name of an archipelago of islands that straddle the Canada-US border in the St Lawrence River ... The islands, which number 1,793 in all, range in size from over 40 square miles to smaller islands occupied by a single residence, to even smaller uninhabited outcroppings of rocks ..."

Some of us opted to take a boat ride tour and others wanted to tour the quaint town on foot. The abbreviated boat tour was on the section called Millionaire's Row – it was the Fifth Avenue section of the Thousand Islands. The stately mansions were impressive. On seeing a tiny island with a house not much smaller than the island, Roger asked the cost of the island and was told approximately \$70K. I asked our group to check our pockets to see if we could make a bid but, sadly, saw no movement to do so.

Day Three was local – we explored Whetstone State Park. After breakfast, we took a short walk along the bottom of the gorge. After lunch, some folks wanted to relax in the nearby man-made swimming area. Others undertook a hike of the gorge. The hilarious and outrageous conversations made the hours fly as we walked the tree-covered section above the gorge.

***Continues...***



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### WHETSTONE GULF STATE PARK CAMPING TRIP – continues...

Shuk Lui

We enjoyed a delicious steak dinner that night. This is not a group that associates camping with roughing it when it comes to food. Whether it's almond milk or whole wheat pasta or avocado with our salad or a grilled steak, our group ate healthy and well thanks to all the hard work by the folks who did the planning, shopping, preparing and cooking.

For the third night in a row, we relaxed before a campfire. Thanks to the generosity of other campers who donated the camp wood that supplemented our supply, we had a fire going past 2am. As a small group of diehards gazed into the amber city of embers, we simply enjoyed the peace and camaraderie.

At the beginning of this article, I mentioned that one reason that I was willing to give up two precious vacation days for the trip was because I love gorges. In addition, I had been to Thousand Islands before and loved the scenic area. But it turned out that it was the people on this camping trip who made the trip so enjoyable. Until next time, Don, Mary, Bell, Karen, Kenneth, Lilly, Roger, Fiona, Minh & Jason!

### WHETSTONE GULF STATE PARK CAMPING TRIP

Don Chen

We had a small but vocal group of campers. A number of people inquired about this trip but because the long driving distance they could not take Thursday off. Friday was another fairly long trip to watch a fuel ship going thru a lock and dam and a boat tour of the Thousand Island. We discussed about everything under the sun. We had discussions that lasted on Saturday till 4 AM! With that amount of talking, we knew each other and became a very close knit group. We had everybody helping in the preparation and cleanup of the meals and setting up and dismantling of tents and canopies. This camping trip had more conversations than I can remember. I truly enjoyed this camping trip.



#### NANTUCKET

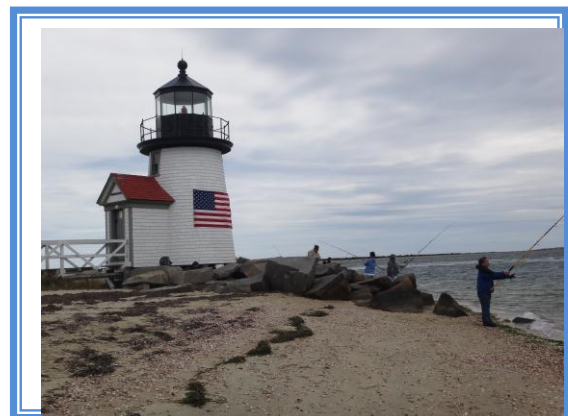
Don Chen

This year AO decided to visit Nantucket for a week. Nine of us left on 17<sup>th</sup> of September for a week of relaxation. The weather was always threatening with rain, but for the most part, it did not rain heavy. When it did rain heavy, it was during the night. The main attractions are biking, fishing and crabbing. We managed to do all of the above. If the weather was warmer, lying on various beaches would have been another attraction.

There were extensive bike paths away from car lanes covering most of the island. Being two weeks after Labor Day, the bikers encountered little vehicle traffic.

I and those who choose not to bike, were able to go crabbing and fishing. We caught enough porgies for two meals. With King's ingredients, we had fish in different ways. As for the crabs, these crabs are the largest we've ever caught anywhere!! They were monsters, far larger than any crabs in Chinatown. Unfortunately being late in the season, these were all males. We spend two days of crabbing. The second time, Bell Yee, Ken Chan and I hit the road at 4:30 am! It was total darkness with lots of deers and rabbits on the road (to the side of me and on the road itself). I had to drive less than 30 MPH to avoid hitting them. I made a mistake - in our rush to get back around 8 am, I left my tackle box with all the equipment for fishing and crabbing. We did take one day and order from a seafood place with most of us having lobsters for dinner.

At the end of the trip, all the luggage was piled into my van for the 2 ½ hour ferry ride to mainland and a five hour drive home.



### Memories from Nantucket





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### Post Thanksgiving Walk/Hike

Bell Yee

November 26, 2011

On a unseasonably warm morning of the Saturday after Thanksgiving, the handful of us met up at McDonald's in Dover Plains, NY some eighty miles north of midtown Manhattan. After a quick breakfast we drove fifteen more miles to the north to reach a parking lot on the Harlem Valley Rail Trail. For those of you unfamiliar with a Rail Trail; it is a linear park that is ten feet wide and many miles long. The pathway was a former railroad Right-Of-Way with the rails and the wooden ties removed. Some Rail Trails are merely cinder paths but the Harlem Valley is paved with asphalt.

From the parking lot we started to walk north on the HVRT; myself, Judy S., Carol N., Becky L., and John. At first it was a stroll as we casually enjoyed looking at scenery around us. And all along the way, bikers were whizzing by us in either direction. Then about fifteen minutes into the walk; Judy and Carol picked up the pace as I found myself lagging behind. Of course when they stopped to take pictures of the scenic countryside I had the chance to catch up. For the most part; the scenery were fields and farm buildings.

Meanwhile, Becky and John were even further back.

About an hour into the walk/hike we reached the outskirts of our destination; the village of Millerton. Becky then caught up but John was much further back. Upon reaching Main Street in Millerton we stopped and waited. It wasn't too long that we asked a jogger about John and determined that he had turned back. So now the four of us went to the new Oakhurst Diner for lunch. The Oakhurst is where the Millerton Diner was but now has a new name and a new paint job. In years past; Asian Outdoors always had weekend camping trip to nearby Rudd Pond and we ate the first dinner at the Diner and the places was always deserted. But now the Oakhurst is packed with customers and has a new menu including organic food but I thought that my can of Diet Coke was way overpriced at \$2.99!

So I had a bowl of soup and the Coke. The ladies had their lunches and ordered a take out Veggie dish for John. Then the puzzle came together; John is a vegetarian but he had been up for over 48 hours straight doing the Black Friday thing. He was suffering from sleep deprivation; that's why he turned back. So since I am usually the slower pace one, I volunteered to bring the Take Out item back while Judy, Carol and Becky were to take some time to explore the picturesque village of Millerton.

I got back and found John zonked out in his car. But he was a light sleeper as I was moving stuff in my car, he woke up. I gave him his lunch and then noticed Judy, Carol and Becky returning. I had been back only ten minutes earlier and they caught up. Later, I learnt they didn't see much of Millerton as they spent 40 minutes sampling tea in a tea shop. It was now a hour from sunset so I left, and wondered whether John was in shape to drive back to the city. Then again all three girls could drive if he was incapacitated.