



# Yankee Hosteler

Quarterly Newsletter of Hostelling International USA, Yankee Council  
Serving CONNECTICUT, WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS, and VERMONT

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## Passing of BILL and RUTH NELSON, May, 2010



HI-USA NATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING, 2006: Ruth and Bill Nelson are seated at the Alexandria, VA Annual Meeting of HI-USA where Ruth was awarded the Isabel and Monroe Smith Award for excellence in HI-USA leadership. (Photo: Lem Manchester)

Although we are all sad at the passing of Bill and Ruth Nelson, we can be grateful for all the good that these dear leaders expressed and accomplished while they were with us. They both expressed exemplary character and motivation to help all hostellers and their fellow citizens.

Bill Nelson joined the summer, 1934 European tour which was organized by AYH founder, Monroe Smith. Bill was a 17 year-old college student who was enthralled by the opportunity of European travel with a group led by the enthusiastic leadership of Monroe. After their return to America, Monroe and Isabel chartered AYH in Hartford, CT., then moved their office to Northfield and opened their first hostel in town as well. Shortly after, in 1937, Monroe invited Bill to attend a Leadership Training Course (for which Bill had to pay). He then offered a staff job to Bill, who eagerly accepted and dropped out of Washington University in St. Louis to join the Northfield staff. A few years later, in 1940, Ruth

## FALL POTLUCK and TRAVEL SHOW

Friday, October 22, 6 PM sharp to 9 PM at the L.P. Wilson Community Center, 599 Matianuck Ave., Windsor, CT. **(PLEASE NOTE RETURN TO FORMER LOCATION!)** Gather around superb food and enjoy the following activities (the public is invited).

- Potluck Dinner
- Retrospective show of Yankee Council Activities
- Travel Slide Show

DIRECTIONS to L.P. WILSON CC: I-91 to Exit 35B. WEST on CT 218 ¼ mile to traffic light. Right onto Matianuck Ave. for 1/3 mi. and left into L.P. Wilson parking lot.

*Bring a dish to share: A-E Veggies, F-L Main Dish, M-R Desserts, and S-Z. Salad. Call Diane Cecere to help in the kitchen.*

Kimball took a summer job at the Northfield AYH office, where Bill and Ruth met.

During the Second World War, Bill served in the U.S. Army. However, Bill and Ruth were married in 1945 while Bill was still in the Army and Ruth was a student nurse. This started a life-long partnership which contributed to the successful development of the young AYH and its spread across America.

In the decades since, Bill and Ruth have been some of the most active supporters of AYH. After leaving military service in the early 1950's, Bill became the AYH Travel Director, which function he led until his retirement. Bill was responsible for holding National Leadership Training Courses for hundreds of AYH leaders, organizing yearly Travel Program Tours and the publishing of an Annual Tour Catalog. Probably thousands of AYH trippers have benefitted from his guidance and thoughtful leadership.

*Continued on Page 2*

Another crucial element in the plans for AYH by Monroe Smith was the development of a hostel network, starting in the Northeast, radiating out from Northfield, so that trippers could travel between hostels in a day's journey, "under their own steam," by biking, or hiking, or horseback. This required a closely-spaced network of small rural hostels. Bill and Ruth played major roles in the organization and then the operation of this effort. One significant hostel in this effort was the Bantam Lake Hostel in Morris (Lakeside), CT. There was a colonial inn, called, "Apple Hill Inn," near Bantam Lake. Monroe Smith commissioned Bill to organize a hostel at that site. The inn was located within a nature preserve owned by the White Memorial Foundation. The Foundation's deed allowed the lease of buildings within the preserve. However ownership of land and buildings remained with the Foundation. A lease was arranged for AYH to occupy the Inn with little or no rent on condition of AYH maintaining the property and associated expenses.

Bill and Ruth initially opened the Bantam Lake Hostel. Work parties from the then "Hartford Council" assisted in maintenance and cleaning. As Bill was needed at the National office when it moved to New York and later Washington, DC, Ruth was left to manage the hostel during weekdays, from 1955-1970. During this period Ruth raised four daughters and hosted many local and overseas hostel VIPS and visitors. Later, Ruth, "provided leadership to the Alumni Committee and has inspired them to volunteer their time and donate their money to our organization," says John Lukes, AYH Trip Leader.

Ruth and Bill have also played key roles in the development of Yankee Council. Ruth hosted many Council meetings and overnights when she was manager of the Bantam Lake Hostel. Likewise, when Yankee Council scheduled their own leadership training courses, Bill contributed by conducting portions of the course. After retirement from the National office, Bill and Ruth built a new home next door (on their own property) next to the former Bantam Lake Hostel. This facilitated the participation of Bill and Ruth in Yankee Council activities. Among these was the six-year term of Bill as a member of Yankee's Board.



**NORTHFIELD, MA, August 26, 2009: L to R, HI-USA Board Chair, Mark Skender, longtime HI-USA worker and Nat. Board member, Bill Nelson, and Executive Director Russ Hedge at the dedication of a marker for the First AYH Hostel in Northfield.**

(PHOTO: Lem Manchester)

The accomplishments of Ruth and Bill Nelson have been recognized by American Youth Hostels, Inc. (now HI-USA). In 1983 Ruth and Bill were the first to be given an award which was established in their honor, The Ruth & Bill Nelson Award to recognize excellence in extended hostel management (Bantam Lake Hostel, CT). HI-USA's highest honor, The Isabel & Monroe Smith Award, for lifetime achievement of influencing hostelling at the local, regional and national levels, was given to Bill in 1983 and Ruth in 2006. Also, The Open Door Award for achievement in the establishment of new hostels was given to Ruth and Bill in 1983.

Perhaps the most outstanding attribute of both Bill and Ruth was that in addition to their dedication to, and contributions toward, their esteemed HI-USA organization, was their exemplary character. They were "nice people to be with." The love and support of Ruth and the skillful teaching and master story telling of Bill were magnificent. They will long be remembered and missed by all whose lives they touched.

*Reference: The Hostelling Letter, by HI-USA Executive Director Russ Hedge, 2010; Yankee Council newsletters; "Fifty Years Young, Yankee Council 1934-1984" by Anne E. Grant and Lois Macomber; "Young at Any Age", by Bacil B. Warren, 1985.*

## HI-USA Membership Application & Merchandise Order Form

**ORDER DIRECTLY FROM NATIONAL AT [WWW.HIUSA.ORG](http://WWW.HIUSA.ORG) OR BY SENDING THIS FORM TO YANKEE COUNCIL**

Name:  
Address:  
City:  
State:                      Zip:  
Phone: (     )

**MEMBERSHIPS**  
Adult (18-54)            \$28 \_\_\_\_  
Sr. Citizen (55&>) \$18 \_\_\_\_  
Youth (under 18)      Free \_\_\_\_

**HANDBOOKS and SHEET SACKS**  
U.S. Handbook Free \_\_\_\_  
Sheet Sack \$14.00 \_\_\_\_

Birthdate:  
Email:

Life Memberships cost \$250  
Non-profit members are free  
*For either send information to:*  
HI-USA  
8401 Colesville Rd., Suite 600  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

CONTACT ME I'd like to help with:  
\_\_\_\_ *Skiing*                      \_\_\_\_ *Social Events*  
\_\_\_\_ *Canoeing*                  \_\_\_\_ *Blind Service Pr*  
\_\_\_\_ *Hiking*                      \_\_\_\_ *Writing/Publicity*  
\_\_\_\_ *Cycling*                    \_\_\_\_ *Weekend Trips*  
\_\_\_\_ *Other* \_\_\_\_\_

**CONTRIBUTION (TAX DEDUCTIBLE)**  
Hostel Development \_\_\_\_\_  
Anne Grant Leadership Fund \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail completed application with your check to:**  
**HI-USA, Yankee Council, P.O. Box 87, Windsor, CT 06095**

### YANKEE COUNCIL OFFICE AND STORE: 37 Maple Ave., Windsor, CT 06095

**Open** Tuesday 9 am - noon and Thursday 1 - 4 pm  
860/ 683-2847

#### WEB SITES:

Yankee Council <http://www.yankeehostels.org>  
HI USA <http://www.hiusa.org>

#### HOSTELS IN THE YANKEE COUNCIL DISTRICT:

HI- Greenwood Lodge, Woodford VT 802/442-2547  
Open dates: May 18-Oct 21  
HI-White River Junction, Hartford, VT  
802/295-3118 Open dates: all year

#### RECREATIONAL DESCRIPTIONS

Yankee Council programs and activities are open to all. Participants under 18 might need parental consent. Contact the leader with questions. People wanting to lead an activity should contact the Council Office or the coordinator listed in the Newsletter.

**A. WTB: Outings-with-the-Blind** For over 40 years, the Yankee Council has enjoyed the company of our blind friends at a variety of functions. Volunteers are always needed to develop new programs, to provide transportation and to help others accommodate unfamiliar activities and locations

**B. Hikes:** Wear sturdy, cleated walking boots; bring snow or rainwear, layered clothing, as appropriate for season and wide range of temperatures, lunch, and water.

**Codes for Difficulty: (1)-easy trail, 5-8 miles, (2)-moderate ups and downs, 6-9 miles, (3)-rugged terrain, 7-12+ miles.**

**C. Bike Rides:** Helmets required. Bring water, lunch, spare tube and cash for phone calls. Have a front map holder to view route directions while riding. Slowest rider determines the pace of these short-to-medium length rides.

**D. Canoe/ Kayak Trips:** Bring life jacket, spare paddle, poncho, and 50ft of 1/4" clothesline, waterproof container for valuables, spare clothes, lunch, water and sunscreen. Unless otherwise specified, all trips are on lakes or low difficulty rivers. Rental canoes available from Yankee Council office 860/ 683-2847.

**E. Family and Senior Bike Path Cycling:** These easy bike tours, mostly on former scenic rail rights of way, are scheduled for many Thursdays and Saturdays.

### Your Council Cherishes Volunteers

Yankee Council is completely volunteer run. It relies on you to provide the programs and services that you cherish from Hostelling International. Consider volunteering to assist leaders of programming, including service programs with-the-Blind. Call the office at 860/683-2847 or email [hiayhyankee@snet.net](mailto:hiayhyankee@snet.net)

Make volunteering with Yankee Council your 2010 service to the community and to yourself.

## CALENDAR & SPECIAL NOTICES

### William (Bill) and Ruth Nelson

Yankee Council expresses Sympathy to the family and many friends of Bill and Ruth Nelson. Bill passed away on May 6, 2010 and his wife, Ruth, on May 10, 2010.

Bill and Ruth were both founding members of AYH, now marketed as HI-USA. Bill was hired by founders, Isabel and Monroe Smith, after joining Monroe's European hostelling trip in 1934. Ruth was hired shortly later by the Smiths for work in the Northfield, MA headquarters office. Both Bill and Ruth served AYH and HI\_USA for their entire careers. Bill filled many leadership roles, including a member of the National Board, National Travel Director, Manager of National Leadership Training, as well as a member of Yankee Council's Board. Ruth later managed the Bantam Lake Hostel for many years while Bill commuted to his work at the AYH National office.

The National hostel management award is named in honor of both Bill and Ruth as The Bill and Ruth Nelson Award. Both Bill and Ruth have been awarded The Isabel & Monroe Smith Award for lifetime achievement for influencing hostelling at local, regional and national levels, as well as The Open Door Award for achievement in establishing new hostels. We will miss you, Bill and Ruth.

*(Also please see article on Pages 1 and 2)*

## SEPTEMBER

**11 Sat> (WTB) Annual Fall Outing.** NOTE NEW LOCATION. Meet at 10:30 AM in the parking lot at Wadsworth Falls State Park in Middletown, CT. Bring lunch, folding chairs, walking shoes, and swim gear, musical

**18 Sat> Canoe / Kayak Mashapaug Lake at Big Hollow State Park, Union, CT:** (Clear water lake with islands) Wear swim suit for possible swim. Meet 10:30 AM> Call leader, Mary Ann Thomas, 860-872-2176 for details and directions.

**24-26 Fri-Sun> VT Bike Weekend:** Enjoy a scenic early fall tour and culture of Bennington / Arlington, VT & MA Berkshire trails. Gracious managers, Ed and Anne Shea, will host our two night stay at their

comfortable, Wi-Fi equipped, HI-Greenwood Lodge in Woodford, VT. In addition to biking on an easy trail this year, or hiking, other options in Bennington are art and covered bridge museums, Robert Frost home & museum and more. Cost of \$80 includes 2 hostel over-nights, 2 breakfasts and 2 lunches and bed linen rental. For reservations, send full payment check made out to, "Yankee Council-AYH", to Yankee Council, PO Box 87, Windsor, CT 06095. Share carpooling cost. Call leader Lem Manchester, 860/683-0404.

## OCTOBER

**1-3 Fri-Sun> Eastern & Southern Regional Meeting:** Hyannis, MA.

**5 Tue> Board Meeting:** Council Office, 37 Maple Ave. (rear), Windsor, CT, 7:00 PM.

**10 Sun> Walk Old Wethersfield (WTB):** Meet 1:30 PM at Cove Park (North end of Main St.). Directions :a) I-91 South to Exit 26, right at end of exit, left on Marsh St., right at Main St. to end and parking lot at Cove Park. Or, b) I-91 North to exit 26, left at end of exit, left again at stop sign (under I-91), at the T go left on marsh St., then as above. Leaders: Kevin & Katie Sullivan 860-721-1767.

**11 Mon> Newsletter Deadline,** send all materials to Council office.

**17 Sun> Hike, Holcomb Farm, W. Granby, CT:** 3 mi., some ups & downs. Meet 10 AM at farm, 113 Simsbury Rd, West Granby. From intersect. With CT Rtes. 10/202, take CT Rte. 20 West 2.5 mi.; turn left onto Day St. South to stop sign & intersection with Simsbury Rd. Farm is in front of you. Bring lunch & Bev. Call leaders for weather issues: Dave and Karen Wells, 413-789-1097.

**16 Sat> Canoe/Kayak Congamond Lake, MA:** From CT Rtes. 10 & 202, North into MA. At intersection with Route 168, meet in "Big Y" parking lot at 10:00 AM. Bring lunch and beverage. Rain cancels. Leaders Bob and Jane Chang 413-569-0473.

**22 Fri> Fall Potluck & Travel Show:** 6 PM sharp to 9:00 PM, at L.P. Wilson Community Center, 599 Matianuck Ave., Windsor, CT (**Please note return to former location**) (See details on Page 4.

# NOVEMBER

**2 Tue> Board Meeting:** Council Office, 37 Maple Ave. (rear), Windsor, CT, 7:00 PM.

**14 Sun> Hike Granby Land Trust – Godard Preserve & Mary Edwards Mountain Prop. In North Granby, CT.:** 3-4 mi., some ups & downs. Meet 10:00 AM in N. Granby P.O. parking lot on CT Rte. 189 at intersect. Of Mountain Rd. & East St. (blinker Lt. at Intersect. Bring lunch and Bev. Call Leaders on weather issues, Dave and Karen Wells, 413-789-1097.

**19-21 Fri-> National Council Meeting (NCM):** Austin, TX.

**21 Sun> Walk Buckland Mall (WTB) Manchester, CT:** Shopping possible. Meet 1:30 PM at inside Barnes & Noble book store entrance .For details call leader, Cathy Sardinha, 860-563-2252.

**26 Fri> Bulletin Bee** 7 pm at the Yankee Council office. Help get the newsletter ready for mailing. Great way to catch up or meet people and serve the Council.

# DECEMBER

**7 Tue> Board Meeting:** Council Office, 37 Maple Ave. (rear), Windsor, CT, 6:30 Social, 7:00 Mtg.

**12 Sun> Walk Farmington Ave. MDC Reservoir, West Hartford, CT (WTB):** Last hike of the season! Meet 1:30 PM, parking area near entrance gate, 2.4 mi. west of town green. From I-84 take Exit 39, Rte. 4, Farmington, from ramp turn right (East) to reservoir entrance. Heavy rain cancels. Leader: Susan Kaehrle, 860-313-0345.

**12 Sun> Hike Fenton Ruby Conserve. Area, Willington, CT:** 3-4 mi., some ups & downs. Meet 10 AM at area entrance. Dir.: From Willington take CT Rte. 74 East to & turn left onto Moose Meadow Rd. (with blinker Lts.) for 2 mi. & area on right. Bring lunch & Bev. Call Leaders on weather issues, 413-789-1097.

**HAPPY HOLIDAYS!**



## FARMINGTON CANAL, LOCK 12, Cheshire, CT.

TOP PHOTO: Canal Museum Manager, Joseph King, demonstrates the use of a warning horn used by canal boat captains to warn the canal lock keeper of their approach to the lock.

BOTTOM PHOTO: Yankee Council Leader, Bob Lougee ,at left, watches Joseph King (Canal Museum Site Manager) operate a lock water release gate for a group of Yankee Council "rail trail" bikers at the Lock 12 historic site. The canal ran from New Haven, CT to Northampton, MA in 1838, was superseded by railroad in 1848, which closed in 1982. The route is being replaced by a Bike Rail-Trail. Yankee Council leaders regularly try to incorporate an appreciation and understanding of our natural and cultural environment in their scheduled activities. This implements our "Mission" and enhances our enjoyment of each activity.

(PHOTOS: Lem Manchester)



**HOSTELLING INTERNATIONAL USA**  
**HIUSA.ORG**

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<http://www.yankeehostels.org>

Editor: John Craggs

**CHANGES OF ADDRESS:** If you change your address, please send us your membership card number with your address change so that it can be recorded at our National Office.

**YANKEE COUNCIL DIRECTORY**

**OFFICERS:** President: David Daniels  
Vice Pres.: Bob Hirbour

Secretary: Margaret Korhonen  
Treasurer: Lem Manchester

**DIRECTORS:** Paul Hammer, Lois Macomber, Katie Mayer, and above Officers

**PROGRAM CHAIRPERSON:** Katie Mayer, 182 Old Farm Rd., Meriden, CT 06450 PH: 203/237-8015

**PROGRAM & ACTIVITY COORDINATORS:**

Bicycling	Margaret Korhonen	860/651-8487
Blind Service Programs-Chair	Bob Hirbour	860/953-0508
Hiking, X-C Ski, Snowshoe	(Call Office)	860/683-2847
Canoeing & Kayaking	Cathy Sardinha	860/563-2252
Newsletter Consultant	John Craggs	860/295-9887
Northern VT Activities	Nancy Schulz	802/223-7035
Pot Luck Suppers	Diane Cecere	860/688-9249
Publicity	Bob Hirbour	860/953-0508
Slide/Travel Shows	Katie Mayer	203/237-8015
Weekend Trips	Lem Manchester	860/683-0404
World Travel 101	David Daniels	860/886-7005

**MISSION OF AYH**

**To help all, especially the young, gain a greater understanding of the world and its people through hostelling.**