

MCM FIRST PERSON

GARY A. REINOEHL

I retired from Amtrak on January 6, 2009. Before I realized that I would be busier in retirement than when I was working, I began looking for things to do. As luck would have it, I picked up a Mountain Club of Maryland brochure, joined the club, and took my first hike on March 25, 2009. It was a 7-mile hike with Monica Fortner in Dickinson Park in Columbia. Quickly I realized how out of shape I was. Before too long, my wife, Justine, became a member and is still going strong.

I went on every hike that I could fit in my increasing busy schedule, became fit, and lost 10 pounds in about a month. Before the end of the year, I was leading all lengths of hikes. I soon came to realize that leading history hikes was my thing. I would research the history of an area, find their historic sites, develop a sound-bite script, and lead the hike with brief informative stops. Some of the most popular hikes were Ellicott City, Savage, Patapsco Valley, Oakland Manor, and Belmont Manor. In all I had about 45 historical hikes. Thanks to MCM I became a history enthusiast. I am still leading and hiking, mostly on Leisure hikes.

For me, the most enjoyable aspect of the club is the interaction with other hikers. Almost every hike produced a new friend and a story about a new place to travel. Justine and I have been to every state and 63 countries since joining the club, many of them locations that we found out about from fellow hikers. Some of the side benefits of the club were learning to maintain trails and to build shelters, privies, and trails. The Chesapeake Bay Environmental Center is currently benefiting from the skills that Justine and I learned.

MCM is also where we met paddlers and were welcomed into the Gunk Hole Gang, a kayak club that paddles in streams and rivers all over the region. In addition to hiking across the Bay Bridge numerous times, I got to paddle across the Chesapeake Bay and back.

Below are recollections submitted by mcm members as part of the 90th anniversary celebration. We hope you enjoy them.

To add your own recollections, send your write-up to trailsaunders@gmail.com. Write-ups should not exceed 1200 words in length. You are invited to include one photo.