

TRAIL BLAZER

NEWSLETTER OF THE ROANOKE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CLUB



Winter 2006

The Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club is a recreational hiking association of volunteers who preserve and improve the Appalachian Trail as the nation's premier, continuous, long-distance footpath.



Devil's Marbleyard

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TRAIL BLAZER
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Welcome New Members

The Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club welcomes the following new members:

Hugh Hall
Sally Sizer
Emory B. Richardson
Twila T. Briscoe
Yvonne Hodgkins

Jennifer K. Juul & Jim Walke
Greg, JoAnn & Haile Edwards
George & Diane Golder
Sharlyn & Jeff Underwood

We look forward to meeting you soon--hiking on the trail, at work, social event, or a board meeting.

Mervin Brower

President's Message

We are a club of very social people. We are always fun to be around when we hike. And no one can say we have too many meetings. If we had one less per year, we wouldn't have any at all, which would suit many of you. If you combine the Christmas holiday potluck and the corn boil, that makes a total of three events per year, and only two when we are not wearing hiking boots. The most important way to serve the club is to come out on work hikes. Second is to serve on the board. But coming to the annual meeting and banquet is a way to connect with the workings of the club for just a few seconds, and to connect with the other members of the club. And even if you work and/or serve on the board, the club would work better if other folks could connect with you. At the banquet, the club business has always been short. The food has always been tasty. The program has always been informative and/or

entertaining. Please come out to the banquet this year.

We had a couple of family-member deaths this last quarter where folks might have used a kind word or a helping hand. Many of you have email, but will not share it with the club. There is always important news that does not time well with the Blazer. Postcards are expensive. I can not ask you strongly enough to please share your email address with the club. Due to technical difficulties, sharing it with www.ratc.org does not share it with the board. Please send an email to: bob@peckmanjazz.com as I will continue to be the data clerk after my presidential term expires. I will keep your email address away from harm's way in an off-line spreadsheet. If you do not have email, you do not know what you are missing!

Bob Peckman

Trail Supervisor's Report

During the period Oct. 1, 2004 to Sept. 30, 2005, RATC had 99 people work 3365 hours on the trail. Each year we give awards to trail workers who work a certain number of days on the trail. To get a hat you need to work at least 4 days and come on at least 2 work hikes. This year's winners are: Laurie Adkins, Suzanne Barnett, Malcolm Black, Dick Clark, Chase Davidson, Kenny Garrett, Ralph Hart and Bob Peckman. To get a T-shirt you need to work at least 7 days and come on at least 4 work hikes. This year's winners are: Bill Floyd, Bob Stimson, Maurice Turner, Mike Vaughn and Therese Witcher. To get both a hat and a T-shirt you need to work at least 9 days and come on at least 5 work

hikes. This year's winners are: Blanche Brower, Mervin Brower, Fred Coughlan, Bill Gordge, Dana Helsley, David Hicks, Jerry Kyle, Charles Parry, Kris Peckman, Greg Still and Homer Witcher. I wish to extend my personal congratulations to all the winners as well as all the other trail workers.

Our Konnarock crew visits next summer will be June 8-12 to finish the Pearis Mountain relocation and June 29-July 3, July 20-24 on Angel's Rest or Gap. At this point I expect it will be Angel's Rest as the land ownership for the Angel's Gap relocation has not yet been settled.

Charles Parry

National Park Service Awards

A couple of years ago the National Park Service started a volunteer recognition award program. As this applies to RATC, these hours are cumulative until you reach 1000 hours, then you start over again. For 40 hours you get a pin, for 125 hours a second pin, for 250 hours you get a patch, for 500 hours you get a hat and for 1000 hours you get a vest. All types of work count including: trail work, hike leading and assisting, attending meetings, helping with the club social events, and duties as a board member. This year we had 24 winners, 11 of whom are

on their first cycle and 13 on the second cycle. The pin winners were: Linda Akers, Gary Bible, Malcolm Black, Dick Clark, Chase Davidson, Bill Floyd, Georgia Gallaher, Bill Gordge, Ralph Hart, Jim Hutchings, Joe Kelley, Jerry Kyle, Don Nulph, Charles Parry, Bob Peckman, Kris Peckman, Bob Stimson, David Sutton, Greg Tinaglia, Mike Vaughn, Homer Witcher and Therese Witcher. Blanche Brower and Charles Parry both won patches while Mervin Brower won a hat.

Charles Parry

The Annual Banquet & Business Meeting

Roanoke Appalachian Trail club
Annual Banquet and Business Meeting

Christ Lutheran Church, Corner of Grandin and Brandon
6:00 PM Saturday, March 11, 2004
Dinner served promptly at 6:30 PM

Menu: seafood casserole, chicken, spinach salad, veggies, desserts, and beverages

Speaker: To be announced.

Please RSVP by March 1 using the reservation form on page 15.

Hike Reports

Sunday, September 11, 2005 8:30AM Sinking Creek(RT 630) to Lee Hollow (RT 621) 113-Mile Hike # 8

Kris Peckman (leader), Mike Vaughn (assistant leader), Laura Neale (NBATC leader), Nancy Anthony (NBATC), Carl Cornett, Doug DeJarnette (NBATC), Meg Green, Shelley Himel, Charlie Scharnberg, Little Ann (Laura's Jack Russell terrier)

A beautiful sunny day, with comfortable temperatures and low humidity: a great day to show off Sinking Creek Mountain to our NBATC counterparts. We shuttled over the Hall Rd. (not in good shape!) and hiked from 630 (Sinking Creek Valley) to 621 (Craig Creek Valley). It took four sets of outstretched arms to go around the trunk of the Keffer Oak. We met three southbound thru-hikers there, all of them with amazingly small packs. Around noon we hiked down to the Sarver shelter and the spring. At lunch, on the log at the top of the Sarver trail, Nancy showed us the new software on her Palm Pilot that shows pictures of birds and plays their call. In real life, we heard (but didn't see) a Scarlet Tanager. Nancy and Laura were intrigued by some purple fruits hanging from a tree which, after some discussion, they identified as a fringe tree. We saw bottle gentian in front of the Sarver shelter, Southern harebells along the rocks at the top of the ridge, and Indian pipes in a number of places. A fallen, rotten tree sported a bodacious orange mushroom. The only fauna were some turkeys flushed by two Weimeraners on the Hall Road, but perky Little Ann enlivened our day with her enthusiasm. The only down side to this hike are the long car shuttles (Hall Road and 460, which we chose for the post-hike shuttle, each took 40 minutes one way); maybe this hike should be done as a key switch.

Sunday, September 11, 2005 1:00PM Chessie Nature Trail

Mervin & Blanche Brower (leaders), Georgia Gallaher (assistant leader), Mary Gaminde, Emory Richardson, Mark Packett, Diana Christopulos, Mark McClain & Chet Chandler

We took three cars down to Buena Vista where we dropped one car off. We continued on route 608 and 631 to Lexington where we started our hike just before route 11. It was nice walking on the shady trail. All went well until we got to the South River and found that the bridge was out there. We walked out to route 608 and across the river there. Then we went through a hay field to get back onto the trail. Blanche, Mary, Chet and Emory met a farmer who was looking at his garden. Blanche ended up with a cantaloupe and the rest were complaining about not getting a watermelon. The rest of the hike went smoothly.

Sunday, September 18, 2005 8:00AM Johns Creek (Rt. 632) to Sinking Creek (Rt. 630) 113-Mile Hike # 9

Kenny Garrett (leader), H.R. Blankenship, Diana Christopulos, Shelley Himmel, Laura Montague, John Miller, Fred Meyer & Jeff Crooke

The ride up was through heavy fog, but the sky cleared up nicely for a great Sunday stroll. The hike started uphill, as they tend to do in this part of the state. We learned through our climb how Rocky Gap earned its name. As we approached the fire road, we found where a "trail angel" had set out a cooler with drinks and snacks. The sad part was the trash that inconsiderate hikers had left in the area. We then took a short break to enjoy the views at Kelly's Knob. The valley below was breathtaking. We all decided to continue on to Laurel Creek Shelter for our lunch break. After lunch, we continued down the mountain and took a break to explore the two story farm house still standing near the trail in the middle of the forest. A good leader would've known the history of the old house, but I didn't. We then enjoyed a very peaceful and scenic stroll through woodland and across beautiful fields and pastures. The day was spectacular and fun was had by all, including the car switch ride in the back of the truck.

Sunday, September 18, 2005 1:00PM
Poverty Creek-Jacob's Ladder-Horse Nettle
Trails

Dave Sutton (leader), Gary Bible (assistant leader), Bill and Lynn Jacoby & Hooper, Mark Packett, Rebecca Reiff, Maurice Turner, Janie and John Bible

We began our hike down Poverty Creek (jokingly we could easily see how it got its name, it was virtually dry--poor example of a creek) through a canopy of deciduous trees. John came across a box turtle residing here so we let it be. Upon reaching the Jacob's Ladder trail intersection, Hooper (retriever) decided it was time to take a quick dip in a somewhat stagnant water hole to cool off and have a drink. After reaching the hilltop, we came across a partially built domicile (fixer-upper). If the Forest Service allowed, it would be a great site for a vacation home. Horse Nettle trail took us back to the pond where Hooper really showed off his swimming skills. It was a nice hike with great fellow hikers and a good way to wind down the summer.

Sunday, September 25, 2005 8:30 AM
Sawtooth Work Hike

Charles Parry (leader), Maurice Turner (assistant leader), Dana Helsley & Fred Coughlan

We worked on the south end of Sawtooth Ridge, just above where the AT enters the woods. At the corner of the first switchback there had been several log steps that had rotted out. Maurice brought enough locust posts to make 10 steps. Six were used there. As the trail was quite steep where it entered the woods we put in a new switchback there using the rest of the locust in one spot and some treated timbers that I had brought in another. We put in a total of 16 steps. We dug about 200 feet of new trail. Before leaving, we went up to scout out the work for our October trip. Up near the top of a tooth, we plan to put in several rock steps in a steep section of trail.

Sunday, September 25, 2005 1:00PM
Bottom Creek Gorge

Bobbie Stitcher (leader), Georgia Gallaher (assistant leader), Mark Packett, Diana

Christopulos, Mark McClain, Sherry Kessel, Jonathan Lancaster & Lorrie Huffman

There was a mist falling over the Roanoke Valley this Sunday morning. But it was almost gone by the time we met for the hike. There was no mist or rain as we hiked, but the trail was wet. We passed by the beaver pond, went down to the water and rocks at Bottom Creek and then to the waterfall. We visited the old cemetery and saw ruins of old cabins. Jonathan showed us a spider with spots of yellow that hid at the top of his web attached to a bush. Just as we finished the rain started. It was a very nice hike.

Sunday, October 2, 2005 8:00AM
Forge Mountain

Charles Musgrove (leader), Charlie Scharnberg (assistant leader), Bud Hofield, Jeff Cooke, Jen Schaeffer & M.J. Vaughn.

A persistent fog dueled with the early morning sun for dominance on Forge Mountain as we made our way past Lexington and on toward beautiful Goshen Pass. Fortunately the rising sun won and skies cleared giving us clear views from the rather long extent of rocky cliffs along the highest parts of the ridge.

The main problem with these high, scenic rocky places is getting there. The trail, beginning just across the highway from the swinging footbridge in Goshen Pass, becomes very steep after about 15 minutes of climbing. Even though the footpath is good there are places where, as old mountaineers have said, you can stand up and bite the ground.

The stronger hikers found themselves waiting on the cliffs for around half an hour while two of their older fellow hikers struggled to reach the heights and reconnect.

This hike was scheduled as an 8 AM all day hike. Even in winter's shortest days we could have departed Roanoke at 10 or 10:30 AM and had plenty of time to finish the hike before dark

Perhaps this is the first time for the RATC on Forge Mountain. It can, as mentioned above, start at 10 or 10:30 AM in winter if the entire 6-8 mile

loop is done; or it would make a good afternoon hike when days are longer if taken only from highway 39 up to the cliffs (and 5 or so minutes farther to visit some interesting rock formations.)

**Sunday, October 9, 2005 7:30AM
Pine Swamp (Rt.635) to Johns Creek
(Rt. 632) 113-Mile Hike # 10**

Diana Christopulos (leader), Homer & Therese Witcher (assistant leaders), Jen Schaeffer, Meg Green, Bennett & Taylor Witcher, Morgan & Taylen McEntire, Wesley & Austin Hance and Katie Buskirk.

We really had three separate hikes. All were blessed with cool weather and light fog that cleared by the time we reached the crest of Big Mountain. We had only a few light sprinkles of rain.

Jen, Meg and I did the whole hike, including a nice wade across Stony Creek, where Hurricane Jeanne blew out the bridge last year. The water was barely ankle-deep. The recent rains started some color change, mostly limited to immature chestnuts and other under story trees. We saw a nice orange salamander and tall ferns turning brown and yellow. In addition, we met a southbound thru-hiker, a section hiking couple who were going from Caledonia State Park (PA) to Springer Mountain (almost exactly half the AT), and a solo guy doing a shorter section. We were surprised to find many complaints in the Bailey Gap Shelter register about the difficulty of the trail on top of Big Mountain. Lots of whining from south bounders about the rocky tread way. Pretty wimpy, we thought. Or maybe someone was in a bad mood during the rain. The good Sunday weather brought out many family groups at Wind Rock, since they could park less than half a mile away. Despite our lollygagging and a 10:30 hike start, we finished the 13.2 miles by about 5 p.m.

Meanwhile the rest of the group drove the first 2.1 miles to avoid the wading. They waited for us at Wind Rock, enjoying good views and lunch – but not enjoying the nasty biting flies that infested the sunny rocks! They took off down the trail as we settled in for lunch – and fly bites.

Homer had a special version of the hike. He hiked up to Wind Rock with Therese and the group, then back to Rt. 635 to get the van. This was very helpful, as it meant we avoided a lengthy reverse shuttle. Homer, Therese, and the seven youth finished a little before we did, according to a nearby camper.

**Sunday, October 9, 2005 1:00PM
Daleville (Rt. 220) to Hay Rock**

Mervin & Blanche Brower (leaders), Emory Richardson, Mark Packett, Maurice Turner, Jonathan Lancaster, Zetta Campbell & Chet Chandler

The day was in the 60's and cloudy and still. We left the parking lot at about 1:10 PM and returned at 6:15. Blanche and Zetta made it to within ½ mile of Hay Rock. We had a good time socializing. We did not meet anyone else on the trail. The leaves had just started to turn at the top of the mountain.

**Sunday, October 16, 2005 7:00AM
Old Rag**

Kenny Garrett (leader), Linda King (assistant leader), Kirk McGuire, Carl Cornett, Beige Jenks & Ishmael Jenks

The day started off a little cool, as is typical in mid-October. After the long car ride though, the weather turned beautiful and warm. The climb up Old Rag Mountain is typical of many trail climbs in Virginia. What makes the hike so spectacular is the great rock scrambling across the ridge. The wind picked up as we crossed the rocks, but the clouds were scarce and the sun bright.

We climbed, scrambled, laughed. And thoroughly made our way across the mountain, past the old shelters and returned to the parking area by way of Weakley Hollow fire road. The entire hike was 7.2 enjoyable miles.

We could not resist a dinner break at the Pink Cadillac diner on our way back to Roanoke. Great fun was had by all, and Carl has the pictures to prove it!

Hike Schedule

Going on a group hike can fulfill a number of worthwhile purposes. These include such things as physical conditioning, social interaction, the enjoyment of nature, and the thrill of reaching a spectacular viewpoint. The Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club consistently tries to provide a wide range of hiking opportunities for people of all ages, interests and abilities. Guests are always welcome to join us.

For the most part, we rate our hikes as follows:

Easy – 3 to 5 miles; good trails or old roads; modest elevation changes.

Moderate – 5 to 8 miles; steeper trails which may be rough in places.

Strenuous – 8 miles and up; long hikes with extensive climbs and possible rough trails or bushwhacking.

Hikes which do not fall neatly into one of these categories may be rated **easy-moderate** or **moderate-strenuous**.

You may drive your own car to the trailhead if you wish. However, carpooling is encouraged to save gasoline and because trailhead parking may be limited. The hike leader is responsible for arranging such carpooling as may be required. While there is no fee to hike with the club, the indicated amount is to defray automobile expenses and should be given to the driver of your carpool.

You will need to call the leader to find out where the hiking group will be meeting. If you are new to hiking, the leader can also give advice about clothing, footwear, and equipment. If you are unfamiliar with the hike, the leader will be glad to answer your questions and help you evaluate whether or not it is suitable for you.

Sunday, January 1, 2006 9:00AM Catawba Mountain (Rt. 311) to McAfee Knob and Lunch

7.4 miles, Moderate, \$0.50 carpool fee
6 miles from Roanoke

Located west of Salem in Roanoke County, the hike follows the Appalachian Trail up and back. Extensive cliffs at the top afford unparalleled views of both the Catawba Valley and the city of Roanoke. We will hike from 311 to McAfee's

Knob and have a picnic lunch in the Devil's Kitchen. Bring anything devilish you can think of for a potluck picnic. Please call the leaders as early as possible so we can be sure we have enough supplies.

Kris Peckman 366-7780
Maya Bohler 344-6588

Sunday, January 1, 2006 1:00PM Mill Mountain Star Trail

3.4 miles, Easy-Moderate, \$0.00 carpool fee
0 miles from Roanoke

This hike starts off Riverland Road just below the water tower. Passing mostly through woods, it climbs over 800 feet from just above the Roanoke River to the top of Mill Mountain, once crossing the J.B. Fishburn Parkway. The return to the Star Trail parking lot follows the same route.

Sue Scanlin 989-0497
John R. Miller 375-3250

Sunday, January 8, 2006 9:00AM Bobbles Gap-Hammond Hollow Loop

5.8 miles, Moderate, \$2.00 carpool fee
23 miles from Roanoke

This hike is located in Botetourt County and uses the AT, Hammond Hollow Trail and Glenwood Horse Trail to form a loop.

Larry Austin 254-2092
Mike Ferguson 344-8525

Sunday, January 8, 2006 1:00PM Catawba Mountain (Rt. 311) to McAfee Knob

7.4 miles, Moderate, \$0.50 carpool fee
6 miles from Roanoke

Located west of Salem in Roanoke County, the hike follows the Appalachian Trail up and back. Extensive cliffs at the top afford unparalleled views of both the Catawba Valley and the city of Roanoke.

Ed Wallace 540-774-0175
Bobbie Stitcher 397-2760

Sunday, January 15, 2006 9:00AM
Johns Creek (Rt. 632) to Johns Creek Mountain
Trail (Rt. 658)

5.9 miles, Moderate, \$4.50 carpool fee
 40 miles from Roanoke

The hike is located in Craig County.

Kenny Garrett 537-5347
David Wickersham 774-0439

Sunday, January 15, 2006 1:00PM
Dragon's Tooth Parking Lot to Dragon's Tooth

5.2 miles, Moderate, \$1.00 carpool fee
 9 miles from Roanoke

Located on Cove Mountain near the Craig and Roanoke County line, the hike to Dragon's Tooth ascends steep, rugged outcrops of quartzite which form the spine of Cove Mountain. A difficult hike, Dragon's Tooth summit offers magnificent views of nearby and distant peaks year-round.

Sue Scanlin 989-0497
Jean Warren 384-6229

Sunday, January 22, 2006 8:30AM
Tinker Ridge Work Hike

Some miles, Moderate, \$0.50 carpool fee
 5 miles from Roanoke

Will do the part of the relocation that is north of Angel's Gap, (a very small part of the whole thing).

Charles Parry 540-951-1402
Michael J. Vaughn 992-1350

Sunday, January 22, 2006 1:00PM
Carvin's Cove Boat Launch to Cemetery

4.0 miles, Easy, \$0.00 carpool fee
 0 miles from Roanoke

The City of Roanoke's reservoir. There is a fee of \$1.00 for Roanoke City residents and \$2.00 for everyone else.

Georgia Gallaher 345-8700
Carl Cornett 540-342-3950

Sunday, January 29, 2006 9:00AM
Lee Hollow (Rt. 621) to Trout Creek (Rt. 620) 113-
Mile Hike # 7

8.8 miles, Moderate, \$1.50 carpool fee
 15 miles from Roanoke

AT hike located in Craig and a little bit of Roanoke County, the hike on Brush Mt. includes the Audie Murphy Monument, a tribute to the most decorated soldier of WWII, who died in a plane crash on this

very mountain. This hike has a mile of road walk added because the bridge may be out on Rt. 620.

Maurice Turner 334-2128
Charlie Scharnberg 540-342-3104

Sunday, January 29, 2006 1:00PM
Lipes Branch Trail

4.6 miles, Moderate-Strenuous, \$4.00 carpool fee
 44 miles from Roanoke

The trail for the hike is located in the Potts Mountain area of Craig County in Barbours Creek Wilderness. The trail ascends Potts Mountain along Lipes Branch and provides both hikers and horseback riders access into the heart of Barbours Creek Wilderness. The first .5 mile climbs gently up the southeastern lower slope of Potts Mountain, and then it becomes steeper, using switchbacks to reach a partially cleared area at the summit with views into Alleghany County and the George Washington National Forest to the northwest.

David Wickersham 774-0439
Dick Moran 389-3744

Sunday, February 5, 2006 8:00AM
Jenny Knob (Rt.611) to Kimberling Creek (Rt. 606)

9.5 miles, Strenuous, \$6.50 carpool fee
 66 miles or about 92 Minutes from Roanoke

Located in Bland County, the hike from Rt 611 to Rt 606(Kimberling Creek) has one blue blaze trail with great views, and a great footbridge.

Gary Bible 977-2954
Karen Coon 540-989-2041

Sunday, February 5, 2006 1:00PM
Cascades

4.0 miles, Easy-Moderate, \$5.00 carpool fee
 54 miles from Roanoke

Located in Giles County near Pembroke, the hike uses trails which run along both sides of Little Stony Creek, which ends near the Cascades – an impressive waterfall. Usually the hike will go up one side of the creek and come back on the other. The Forest Service charges a nominal fee (\$2.00) to park at the trailhead.

Kenny Garrett 537-5347
Bobbie Stitcher 397-2760

Sunday, February 12, 2006 9:00AM
Buchanan Trail-AT-Horse Trail loop

8.8 miles, Moderate, \$2.00 carpool fee
 23 miles from Roanoke

This hike, located in Botetourt County in the Arcadia/Buchanan area, utilizes the AT from Jennings Creek to the Buchanan Trail and a portion of the Buchanan Trail, and then heads north on the Glenwood Horse Trail to form a loop. It will use some of the Cove Mountain Trail as well and will repeat a small section of the Buchanan Trail which also doubles as a section of the Horse Trail.

Larry Austin 254-2092
Mike Ferguson 344-8525

Sunday, February 12, 2006 1:00PM
Price Mountain, Sulphur Ridge Loop

4.9 miles, Moderate, \$1.50 carpool fee
 15 miles from Roanoke

Located along the border of Craig and Botetourt County, about 15 miles north of Roanoke, this loop hike offers a great sense of isolation for being so close to Roanoke. The trailhead begins on VA 606 and descends for one mile into a quiet valley. After a creek crossing, the route climbs to the top of Price Mountain on the Sulphur Ridge Trail. At the crest of the mountain, the route turns right onto the Price Mountain Trail. The trail then descends along the ridgeline, with views into the Craig Creek valley, to return to the trailhead.

Michael J. Vaughn 992-1350
Charles Musgrove 345-7969

Sunday, February 19, 2006 8:30AM
Sawtooth Work Hike

Some miles, Moderate, \$0.50 carpool fee
 6 miles from Roanoke

Will work on steps, waterbars, etc near the south end of the ridge.

Charles Parry 540-951-1402
Maurice Turner 334-2128

Sunday, February 19, 2006 1:00PM
Daleville (Rt. 220) to Mountain Pass Road (Rt. 652)

4.6 miles, Easy-Moderate, \$0.00 carpool fee
 0 miles from Roanoke

The hike is located in Botetourt County.

Mervin & Blanche Brower 387-9732
Georgia Gallaher 345-8700

Sunday, February 26, 2006 8:00AM
Lee Hollow (Rt. 621) to Sarver Hollow

8.4 miles, Moderate-Strenuous, \$2.50 carpool fee
 18 miles from Roanoke

Kenny Garrett 537-5347
Charlie Scharnberg 540-342-3104

Sunday, February 26, 2006 1:00PM
Bennett Springs Loop Hike # 2

6.0 miles, Moderate, \$0.00 carpool fee
 0 miles from Roanoke

Come join us on a new hike that begins at Carvin's Cove Parking Lot (off Rt. 311, NOT Williamson Rd.). It's a pretty loop trail.

Jean Warren 384-6229
Dick Clark 989-7053

Sunday, March 5, 2006 8:00AM
Catawba Valley Trail-Stone Coal Gap-Lick Branch Trail

10.7 miles, Moderate-Strenuous, \$2.50 carpool fee
 9 miles from Roanoke

The hike starts at Rt. 779 and follows the Catawba Valley Trail to the top of North Mountain with vistas to the north and south. It then descends into Stone Coal Gap where you cross the road and climb Broad Mountain and then descend to Lick Branch where it follows the creek with numerous crossings.

Homer & Therese Witcher 992-3932
Kris Peckman 366-7780

Sunday, March 5, 2006 1:00PM
Roaring Run

2.0 miles, Easy, \$2.50 carpool fee
 27 miles from Roanoke

Located in Botetourt County, the hike visits a cascading stream and scenic waterfalls, and a standing pre-civil war iron ore furnace, used for making iron ingots, stoves, and other iron products for the building of America.

Sue Scanlin 989-0497
Georgia Gallaher 345-8700

Sunday, March 12, 2006 8:00AM
Trout Creek (RT 620) to Dragon's Tooth
Parking Lot 113 Mile Hike # 6

7.0 miles, Strenuous, \$1.50 carpool fee
 9 miles from Roanoke

The hike is in Craig and Roanoke County west of Salem. After crossing Trout Creek, we will ascend through a fire recovery area, pass by the Pickle Branch shelter, then ascend to the ridge, which we will follow around the crescent-shaped top of Cove Mountain to Dragon's Tooth with its great views and rock-scrambling opportunities. We will descend on the A.T. over Rawie's Rest (more rocks and great views) to the intersection with the blue-blazed Boy Scout Trail which will take us to the Dragon's Tooth parking lot.

Kris Peckman 366-7780
Charlie Scharnberg 342-3104

Sunday, March 12, 2006 1:00PM
Montebello Fish Hatchery to Spy Rock

4.0 miles, Moderate, \$6.00 carpool fee
 65 miles from Roanoke

The hike starts at the state fish hatchery on Route 56 in Nelson County. After a steady climb, hikers are rewarded with a 360-degree view from Spy Rock, a granite dome with some unusual vegetation on it. Legend has it that Spy Rock was used by Confederate scouts during the Civil War to track Union troop movements into the Shenandoah Valley.

Michael J. Vaughn 992-1350
David Sutton 774-0648

Sunday, March 19, 2006 8:30AM
Sawtooth Work Hike

Some miles, Moderate, \$0.50 carpool fee
 6 miles from Roanoke

Will work on steps, waterbars, etc near the south end of the ridge.

Charles Parry 540-951-1402
Maurice Turner 334-2128

Sunday, March 19, 2006 1:00PM
Seven Mile Mountain

5.1 miles, Moderate, \$3.00 carpool fee
 34 miles from Roanoke

Located in Craig County on Forest Service land, this hike is a nice ridge walk.

Dick Moran 389-3744
Gary Bible 977-2954

Sunday, March 26, 2006 9:00AM
Bearwallow Creek Hollow Exploratory

6.5 miles, Strenuous, \$2.00 carpool fee
 21 miles from Roanoke

This hike will be mostly bushwhacking but will also include a small portion of the AT at Bearwallow Gap and a small portion of the Glenwood Horse Trail near the beginning and at the end. This hike will basically follow Bearwallow Creek to Bearwallow Gap where we will head south on the AT to the top of the mountain and then back into the woods where there is no trail. Bearwallow Creek is very beautiful with a little known waterfalls. We will go where few have trodden before. We will also be able to sit on a rock outcropping looking to the north and west that very few people even know about. You must be able to ascend and descend some very steep areas where trees will have to be used for support. You may want to bring a pair of gloves if you have tender hands. There will be a number of creek crossings as well.

Larry Austin 254-2092
Carl Cornett 342-3950

Sunday, March 26, 2006 1:00PM
Belfast Trail to Devil's Marbleyard

2.9 miles, Moderate, \$3.00 carpool fee
 35 miles from Roanoke

Located a few miles beyond Natural Bridge Station, this popular hike starts about an hour's drive from Roanoke. The route follows the Belfast Trail in the Jefferson National Forest and heads steeply uphill for a little over two miles. At this point the Devil's Marbleyard appears just to the left of the trail. This is an eight-acre field of quartzite boulders which affords endless scrambling opportunities (watch out for snakes, though) and great views. The return is along the same route.

Kenny Garrett 537-5347
Bobbie Stitcher 397-2760

Hike Reports (Continued)

Sunday, October 16, 2005 1:00PM

Apple Orchard Falls/Cornelius Creek Loop

Linda Akers (leader), Bobbie Sticher (assistant leader), Mary Gilbert, Marianne Demkó, Lorrie Huffman, Sue Scanlin, Madeleine Taylor, H. R. Blankenship, Chet Chandler, Jean Warren, Evelio Contreras, Lynne & Bill Jacoby & Hooper, Ted Crooke, Pat Cousins, Rachael Lotts, Jonathan Lancaster & Rudy, & Gracie Hart.

Fall must officially be here -- eighteen people turned out on a perfect hiking day! ...Blue skies with a few wispy clouds, colorful leaves crunching underfoot, and a little briskness in the breeze. People just kept showing up after we thought rides were lined up for all. We hiked counter-clockwise - which turned out to be the best route. Our first view of the falls, spectacular from recent rains, was more impressive from below than coming in from above. We had fast, moderate, and slow hikers, but no one seemed to mind being a bit spread out. Rudy and Hooper were our two canine escorts. It was good to have Mary Gilbert (now living in Alabama) home to hike with us again. We had great fellowship and a most enjoyable hike.

Sunday, October 23, 2005 8:00AM

Montebello Fish Hatchery to Long Mountain (Rt. 60)

Larry Austin (leader), Carl Cornett, Georgia Shaurette, Jen Schaeffer, Mike Vaughn, Kris Peckman, Bob Peckman & Meg Green

Laura Montague was unable to help lead the hike due to being under the weather during the week. We thank Mike and Georgia for driving their vehicles to the trailhead. The weather for this 16.3-mile hike was sunny and cool. We left Daleville around 8:05 and arrived at the Montebello Fish Hatchery parking area for the AT around 10:00 a.m. We had dropped off a car at the Long Mountain Wayside on Route 60 (our finish point) to shuttle the drivers back to Fish Hatchery Road to get the cars. We had no time to waste since this was a lengthy hike and darkness was now arriving just after 6:30. It was a beautiful day for hiking. The trail between the Fish Hatchery

Road and the beginning of Tar Jacket Ridge does not contain much uphill, so we were able to move along fairly quickly. We stopped on Tar Jacket Ridge in a meadow with a terrific view and had lunch. Cold Mountain, as usual, provided another scenic view due to its open meadows. When we reached the Old Hotel Trail, there was only about 3.8 miles left to go but we had to climb up Bald Knob and that was not very welcome after having walked nearly 13 miles. Our exit from the woods was at intervals between 5:00 and 6:30 with everyone beating the darkness. We were glad to have Georgia Shaurette join us. She moved to the Roanoke Valley from Georgia about a year ago. Hopefully, she will be out with us some more.

Although it was a long day, everyone seemed to enjoy the hike, the weather and the views.

Sunday, October 23, 2005 1:00PM

Bearwallow Gap to Jennings Creek

Dave Sutton (leader), Ed Wallace (assistant leader), Marianne Demkó, Bill and Lynn Jacoby, Hooper, Charles Musgrove, Maurice Turner, Madelene Taylor, Bobbie Sticher & Chet Chandler.

It was a beautiful day for a hike on the AT. To avoid the long car switch and shuttle, we will have to thank Ed and Maurice for volunteering to hike uphill going south on the AT from Jennings Creek to Bear Wallow while the rest of us hiked 80% downhill. As we hiked, among the plants we saw were: spotted wintergreen, maple, oak, horse chestnut and witch hazel (in bloom). We stopped for a break at the shelter on the AT for a snack, and enjoyed the clean cool air. Bill carried all of Hooper's water as there were few streams until we reached Jennings Creek. It was a great hike with some awesome ridge views on this section of the AT.

Sunday, October 30, 2005 8:00AM

Sawtooth Ridge Work Hike

Charles Parry (leader), Maurice Turner, Jerry Kyle, Mike Vaughn, Kris Peckman, Fred Coughlan, Dana Helsley, Blanche Brower, Mervin Brower

I met Jerry and the Roanoke people at the farm gate off the Blacksburg – Catawba Road. We drove two trucks up to the edge of the woods and hiked in to the work site. The job for the day was to build some rock steps. Kris said that she was not good at rockwork and wanted to know if there was something else that she could do. On the way in I had noticed a few sections of trail that could use re-grading, so I sent her back to do that. Blanche joined her in the afternoon. The rest of us split into two groups and worked on two sets of steps that were about 100 feet apart. We had lots of good useable rock close by and the work went quite well. Our group had one problem, in that we kept hitting bedrock not too deep. Consequently, we had to work over it, so it required a bit of extra fitting. A couple of our workers had to leave in mid-afternoon, but Merv arrived before they left, so we had replacements. Toward the end of the day, we were trying to get a rock out right on top of the ridge that was in end ways. We got it so we could move it back and forth an inch or two, but it didn't want to come out. We finally hooked the come-along onto it and had two people pry on it with bars and out it popped. We installed that as our top step and filled the hole, which was in the middle of the trail. We had put in 24 steps for the day, 14 and 10 in each of the two sets. Also, on the way out I had a chance to inspect the work Kris and Blanche did and found their work to be excellent. We have more rockwork to do in the area, so will schedule two more work hikes out there for winter.

Sunday, October 30, 2005 1:00PM

Curry Gap (BRP) to Fullhardt Knob Shelter

Homer Witcher (leader), Sue Scanlin (assistant leader), Kim Buskirk, Mark Packett, Charles Musgrove, Marianne Demkó, Emory Richardson & Aaron Eanes

This was another good day for a hike, as most are. The trek is relatively easy with no particular flora or fauna to observe. So to make it a little more interesting, most of the hikers continued south, after a brief stop at Fullhardt Knob shelter. I had called and asked Therese to meet them at Mountain Pass Road, except for Mark who decided to hike back to Route 220, where his car was. Kim and I hiked back to the starting point of our hike, where we had left our transport vehicle.

It was a congenial group of hikers, which made a non-descript hike more pleasurable.

Sunday, November 6, 2005 8:00AM

Sprouts Run and Wilson Mountain Trails

Larry Austin (leader), Maurice Turner (assistant leader), H. R. Blankenship, Mark Packett, Charlie Scharnberg, Shelley Himel, Maya Bohler, John Lynham, Kirk McGuire, Ishmael Jenks, Beige Jenks and Kristin Peckman

The weather for this hike was warm and partly cloudy with some wind blowing on Wilson Mountain. To reach these trails, one has to go through private property for about 1/2 mile. However, the Forest Service has public access through this property. Sprouts Run Trail takes you along the very beautiful Sprouts Run with nearly 20 creek crossings. It wanders through a gorge and up to Hoop Pole Gap. There are several cascading waterfalls, some very large trees, particularly beechnut, white pine, oak and a few large hemlock trees. The fall colors were quite good on Sprouts Run Trail. After reaching Hoop Pole Gap, we had to walk on a Forest Service Road for about one mile before reaching the Wilson Mountain Trail. We had a nice climb to the summit of Wilson Mountain where we broke for lunch. The leaves were still on the trees so that partially blocked an otherwise good view of the James River and surrounding valley. You could still see through the leaves enough to appreciate the view. The balance of the hike, except for one minor climb, was either ridge walking or descending the mountain back to our starting point. We escaped any thunderstorms which the weather service had forecasted. Hopefully, everyone enjoyed this new circuit hike and will do it again some day.

Sunday, November 6, 2005 1:00PM

Petites Gap to Thunder Ridge Overlook

Kenny Garrett (leader), Bobbie Stitcher (assistant leader), Jesse Garrett, Chet Chandler, Lynne & Bill Jacoby and Hooper, Zetta Campbell, Dawn Simkins & Brittany Peters

It was a beautiful fall afternoon for a walk along the Parkway. We decided to do this hike in three different ways. Several of us walked north bound, several hiked south bound, and Bobbie

hiked it first south bound, then returned north bound. We were blessed with great weather, pretty foliage, and lots of laughs along the way. The fallen leaves on the trail were a little slippery in the steep places. We were also lucky to have Hooper (K9) and a couple guests join us on the stroll. I am looking forward to many more hikes with the great group of people that I shared the afternoon with.

Sunday, November 13, 2005 8:30AM
Brush Mountain Work Hike

Charles Parry (leader), Kris Peckman (assistant leader), Frank Dieter, Bev Linn, Fred Coughlan, Dana Helsley, Blanche Brower, Mervin Brower, Sue Scanlin, Suzanne Barnett
 Roanoke College: Brian Chisom, Mohamad Gl Charla, Dan Zapf, Mason Williams, Harding Stowe, Sam Jordan, Storall Knight

The primary work for the day was to re-blaze the AT on Brush Mountain. As we wanted to start at both ends and provide an opportunity for Roanoke College, the project required a bit of planning. Also, we wanted to avoid long car switches. The plan was that the morning group, which consisted of 6 people, would start at Trout Creek and Craig Creek. Bev, Frank and I started at Trout Creek while Kris, Fred and Dana started at Craig Creek. The afternoon group, which consisted of 4 people, drove to the top with 2 cars to transport us back. My truck would be left at Trout Creek, so the Roanoke College group would have access to tools. They were to clip up towards Pickle Branch Shelter in an area where a forest fire had burned a few years ago and was quite brushy. Our group got to the top and met the after-nooners around 2 o'clock. On the way up I noticed that we passed some areas that could use re-grading. As we had 3 pulaskis with us, Merv, Sue and I hiked back to Trout Creek to do that. Suzanne would shuttle Frank and Bev back to their vehicle at Trout Creek and Blanche would walk down to meet the Craig Creek group and shuttle them back to Trout Creek. When Merv, Sue and I got back to Trout Creek about 5 o'clock, no one was there. As the other vehicle was gone, we knew Suzanne had been there. We waited about half an hour and no one showed up. After a bit of discussion we decided that I would drive to Craig Creek to see if Dana's truck was still there, but Merv and Sue

would stay at Trout Creek, in case they showed up. Well, the truck was still there and when I got back the others had arrived. I took Dana and Fred over to get the truck while the others headed back to Roanoke.

Sunday, November 13, 2005 1:00PM
Fenwick Mines Trails

Dave Sutton (leader), Liz Wicks (assistant leader), Mary Lou Gaminde, Georgia Gallaher, Marianne Demkó, Paul Blaiklock, Ed Spence, Sherry Kessel & Charles Musgrove.

It was an absolutely beautiful day to go in search of the Fenwick Mines. We knew where the nature trail was (for the most part, many downed trees and branches and no maintenance from the Forest Service made this an obstacle course and almost obscured the trail) and read each of the narrative signs. Among the trees and plants we saw were Tulip Poplar, Greenbrier, Witch Hazel, American Beech, and Galax. Boardwalks took us over two large ponds, the sites of former open-pit mines. It was evident beavers had enhanced the impoundments, creating a shallow wetland, complete with cattails, and small fish. There is even a vending machine where for a quarter fish pellets will come out, so we fed the fish that were not even hungry! The pathway continued through a hardwood forest where we did find a much larger pit mine (filled with water) with little vegetation around it. The cliffs surrounding it were too steep to move closer. As we walked along the returning road, we could see orange stains on the rocks of the creek which was evidence of deposits of ore probably still present underground.

Sunday, November 20, 2005 8:00AM
Andy Layne Trail (Rt. 779) to
North Mountain Trail (Rt. 311)

Kris Peckman (leader), Charles Musgrove (assistant leader), H.R. Blankenship, Maya Bohler, Carl Cornett, Kirk McGuire & Georgia Shaurette

The trick to starting this hike is finding the exact spot where the Catawba Valley Trail leaves the old road. However, once you reach the point where the old road is completely blocked by fallen trees, you can see the yellow blazes off to the left and bushwhack to them. The Catawba Valley

Trail is well graded, but it does go up, we noticed.

The North Mountain Trail itself is like the AT of 25 years ago. It rarely leaves the top of the ridge, so we spent all day going up and down the countless knolls that form the ridge. There is no grading, and the rocks and branches and roots hidden under the leaves kept tripping us up. On the plus side, the views on both sides were great. You could measure your progress by what was visible on the well-known Catawba Mountain side: Tinker Cliffs and cement plant, McAfee's Knob, Catawba Hospital (we're almost there!).

There are almost no yellow blazes left on the central part of the North Mountain Trail, and we never saw any of the side trails (Turkey, Grouse, or Deer). Closer to the 311 end, the trail was blazed with yellow Posted signs, but we had no personal encounter with the unfriendly landowner.

The weather was chilly and sunny, making for a beautiful hiking day. The Hares (Carl, Kirk, and HR) finished about 1/2 hour before the Tortoises, but both groups claimed to have had a great hike.

Sunday, November 20, 2005 1:00PM
Deer Trail (FSR 224) to
North Mountain Trail (Rt. 311)

Mike Ferguson (leader), Emory Richardson, Chet Chandler, Alice Gallagher, Micah Dance, Tina & Baron Gibson & Skye, Tanner, Brandon & Dan Glass, Lora & Jonathan Eakin, Wane & Daniel When, Alex Robison, Montana Vest, Seth Gilmer & Billy Ferguson

This hike was originally Deer Trail to Route 311, but due to changing circumstances it became Dragon's Tooth via Rawies Rest joint hike with Cub Scout pack 18 and members of the Roanoke Bird Club. The Cub Scouts were completing achievements toward their World Conservation and Leave No Trace badges. As part of their conservation badge, the scouts carried garbage bags and picked up trash along the trail. Another requirement was identifying birds and Tina and Baron Gibson agreed to come along and help with the bird watching. The weather was perfect, the kids had a great time and Tina & Baron gave a very informative introduction to bird watching.

Sunday, November 27, 2005 1:00PM
Daleville (Rt. 220) to Mountain Pass Road
(Rt. 652)

Homer & Therese Witcher (leaders), Sharlyn Underwood & Senna (dog)

Due to the holidays, we only had one hiker and her dog show up. Sharlyn is a new RATC member and we enjoyed conversation throughout the hike. The day was overcast and drizzly with temperatures in the low 40's.

Sunday, December 4, 2005 8:00AM
Douthat State Park (Hike 3)

Larry Austin (leader), Maurice Turner (assistant leader), Carl Cornett, Kris Peckman & Lois Smith

After a night of rain with the forecast for more Sunday, the day turned out quite beautiful. We began our hike on the Herron Run Trail which goes around the western side of the lake. The sun there was very warm. We headed up Backway Hollow Trail to reach Salt Stump Trail which ascends Middle Mountain. The walk along the Middle Mountain Trail which traverses the ridge of the mountain was quite nice, although wind was blowing in from the west. We then took the Tuscarora Overlook Trail to the Tuscarora Overlook where we had lunch. The scenery from there was very beautiful. We had a great view of the lake and mountains to the north, east and south, all were very inspiring. We headed back on the Blue Suck Falls Trail where the falls had a great flow of water. It offered some great photo ops as well. At the conclusion of the hike around 2:00 p.m., we enjoyed some fellowship and goodies under a covered pavilion very near our parking area.

Sunday, December 4, 2005 1:00PM
Brushy Mountain at Carvins Cove Parking Lot

Jean Warren (leader), Sue Scanlin (assistant leader), Marianne Demkó, Madeleine Taylor, Bobby Stitcher & Jasmine (a very sweet 12 year old canine)

The weather report was gloomy, cold and rainy, but not on this hike! It was beautiful! The five women trekked up Brushy Mountain, some even in short sleeves! It was windy on the ridge and on the descent, but otherwise a perfect day. Even though we didn't see any wildlife, we did meet some muscular men on their mountain bikes.

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Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club Annual Dinner and Business Meeting

Reservation Form (Must be received by April 30th)

Mail to:

Carolyn McPeak
71 Viewmont Trail
Hardy, VA 24101

Please reserve _____ places at the RATC Annual Dinner Meeting

PLEASE! What is your email address? _____

What year (PLEASE make a guess!) did you join RATC? _____

Please make nametags as follows:

Enclosed is a check for \$ _____ (\$14.00 per person). Please make checks **payable to RATC**

Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club Application New & Renewal

- If accepted for membership, I agree to:
1. Support the objectives of the Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club
 2. Abide by the rules of the National and State Parks and Forests
 3. Respect the interests of the owner when on private property
 4. Keep trails and woodlands free of litter and
 5. Abide by instructions of the leader on group hikes and trips

Names(s) _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____ - _____

Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____

Email _____ Amount Enclosed \$ _____

- | | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|
| Family Membership | <input type="checkbox"/> New 1 year \$20 | <input type="checkbox"/> New 2 year \$35 | <input type="checkbox"/> Renew 1 year \$15 | <input type="checkbox"/> Renew 2 year \$30 |
| Individual Member | <input type="checkbox"/> New 1 year \$15 | <input type="checkbox"/> New 2 year \$25 | <input type="checkbox"/> Renew 1 year \$10 | <input type="checkbox"/> Renew 2 year \$20 |
| Make checks payable to RATC, PO Box 12282, Roanoke, 24024-2282 | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> Life \$500 |

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CALENDAR OF CLUB ACTIVITIES**Annual Banquet****Saturday, March 11****WORK HIKES****Sunday, January 22 - 8:30 AM
Tinker Ridge****Sunday, February 19 - 8:30 AM
Sawtooth Ridge****Sunday, March 19 - 8:30 AM
Sawtooth Ridge****Hike Scheduling****Contact Don Nulph
774-8618 – Nulph-d@cox.net****BOARD MEETINGS****(All members are always welcome.
Please let the host know you plan to attend.)****Monday, January 9 - 7:30 p.m.
Hosted by *Homer & Therese Witcher*****Monday, February 13, 7:30 p.m.
Hosted by *Don Nulph*****Monday, March 20, 7:30 p.m.
Hosted by *Western VA Land Trust***

**The Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club is an affiliate of
The Appalachian Trail Conservancy
and a member of The Nature Conservancy**