

TRAIL BLAZER

NEWSLETTER OF THE ROANOKE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CLUB

WINTER 2003

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.

Hike Leaders Meeting

The Board of RATC is sponsoring an informal get-together at Roanoke College on February 6 to discuss and clarify the new protocol for club hikes and hike leaders (see article on page 6).

Hike leaders (past, present and future) and other interested club members are cordially invited to attend. We'll get under way about 7:30 PM in the Patterson Meeting Room located in the Colket Student Center near the center of campus. (Park in the lot across High St. from Olin Hall and ask a student for directions to Colket Student Center.) Refreshments will be served.

Call Dick Clark at 989-7053 if you need directions.

What's Inside...

Hike Schedule	2 & 15
Annual Banquet/Business	3
New Members	3
Membership Renewal	4
Volunteer Recognition	5
Hike Policy	6
President's Message	7
Trail Supervisor's Report	7
Hikemaster's Report	7
Hike Reports	8-13
Ken Fitzgerald	14
Club Activities	16
Contacting the RATC	16

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CALENDAR OF CLUB ACTIVITIES**Saturday, March 8, 6:00 PM****Banquet & Business Meeting****WORK HIKES****Sunday, January 5 - 8:30 AM****Andy Layne Trail****Sunday, February 9, 8:30 AM & 1:00 PM****Catawba Mountain****Sunday, March 16, 8:30 AM & 1:00 PM****Catawba Mountain****Hike Scheduling****Tuesday, February 4, 7:00 PM****Hosted by Suzanne Barnett****BOARD MEETINGS****(All members are always welcome.****Please let the host know you plan to attend.)****Thursday, January 9, 7:30 p.m.****Hosted by Kris & Bob Peckman****Thursday, February 13, 7:30 p.m.****Host Stephanie Kent at Roanoke College****Thursday, March 13, 7:30 p.m.****Hosted by Ron McCorkle**

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

Hike Schedule

Guests Visitors are always welcome. Come dressed for hiking. You are expected to follow the directions of the hike leaders.

Transportation You may drive your own car if you wish; however, the hike leader is responsible for arranging transportation and all will follow his/her directions. The carpool fee to help defray car expenses is noted on the schedule and should be given to the driver.

Meeting Place The point of departure is at the discretion of the hike leader, so always check with the leader when planning to attend.

Wednesday, January 1, 2003, 9:00 AM Douthat State Park

Start off the New Year right!
8 miles, moderately strenuous, \$3.50 carpool fee + park entrance fee
Bob and Kris Peckman 366-7780

Sunday, January 5, 2003, 8:30 AM Workhike - Andy Layne Trail

\$1.50 carpool fee
Charles Parry 540-951-1402
Kris Peckman 366-7780

Sunday, January 5, 2003, 1:00 PM RT. 620 to Pickle Branch Shelter

2 miles, moderate, \$2.50 carpool fee
Ed Wallace 774-0175
Linda Akers 776-1969

Sunday, January 12, 2003, 8:30 AM 621 and Niday Shelter to Sarvers Cabin

9 miles, strenuous, \$3.00 carpool fee
Dave Cheslow 389-7791
Kenny Garrett 890-8946

Sunday, January 12, 2003, 1:00 PM Star Trail and Mill Mountain Loop

5 miles, moderate, \$1.50 carpool fee
Dave Sutton 774-0648
Suzanne Barnett 772-4273

Sunday, January 19, 2003, 10:00 AM McAfee's Knob

7 miles, strenuous, \$1.50 carpool fee
Bobbie Stitcher 890-2140
Linda Akers 776-1969

Sunday, January 19, 2003, 1:30 PM Murray Run Greenway

4 miles, easy, no carpool fee
Lynn Bryant 343-2084
Dave Sutton 774-0648

Sunday, January 26, 2003, 8:00 AM Circuit Hike-Bearwallow Gap to RT 614 Return by Little Cove Mtn. Trail

11 miles, moderately strenuous, \$3.00 carpool fee
Laura Montague 725-3682
Lois Smith 992-3701

Sunday, January 26, 2003, 11:00 AM Douthat State Park, Blue Suck Falls

5 miles, moderate with rocky area near falls, \$3.50 carpool fee + park fee
John Lynham 336-292-7637
Maurice Turner 334-2128

Sunday, February 2, 2003, 10:00 AM Cascades

4 miles, moderate, may be icy,
\$3.50 carpool fee + park fee
Dave Sutton 774-0648
Jerry Austin 540-921-1792

Sunday, February 2, 2003, 1:00 PM Smartview Loop

3 miles, easy, \$3.00 carpool fee
Ed Wallace 774-0175
Sue Scanlin 989-0497

Tuesday, February 4, 2003, 7:00 PM Scheduling of Spring Hikes

Suzanne Barnett 772-4273

The Annual Banquet & Business Meeting

Roanoke Appalachian Trail club
Annual Banquet and Business Meeting

Christ Lutheran Church, Corner of Grandin and Brandon
6 p.m. Saturday, March 8, 2003

Menu: Spinach Salad, Ham, Sweet Potatoes, Seafood Casserole, Rice, Green Beans, Mixed Medley of Vegetables, Fruit Salad, Variety of Desserts, Tea, Coffee.

Speaker: Leonard Adkins, sharing about his hike in the Pyrenees Mts. in Europe.

Reservation Form Mail to:

Dave and Lucy Downs, 5209 Catawba Valley Dr., Catawba, VA 24070

Must be received by March 1st

Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club Annual Dinner and Business Meeting

Please reserve _____ places at the RATC Annual Dinner Meeting

What year (approximately) did you join RATC? _____

Please make name tags as follows:

Enclosed is a check for \$_____ (\$13.50 per person) Please make checks **payable to RATC**

Welcome New Members

The Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club welcomes the following new members:

Jimbo & Mary Harshfield

(Welcome back!)

Kevin Bowlby

Karen Coon

Will & William Dixon

Frankie Hicks

Dorothy Hoskins

Terrence May

Suzanne Osborne

Joe & Angela Parrish

Karen Sheffler

Paul Yeatts

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

Mervin Brower

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 ☐ New 1 year \$20 ☐ New 2 year \$35 ☐ Renew 1 year \$15 ☐ Renew 2 year \$30

Individual Member ☐ New 1 year \$15 ☐ New 2 year \$25 ☐ Renew 1 year \$10 ☐ Renew 2 year \$20

Make checks payable to **RATC, PO Box 12282, Roanoke, 24024-2282** ☐ Life \$500



The Witcher family – Relaxing after a long walk

New ATPO Volunteer Recognition Program

The Appalachian Trail Park Office (ATPO) has recently begun a program to recognize trail volunteers in all of the maintaining clubs from Maine to Georgia.

Here's how it works: volunteers completing the specified number of hours will be awarded the indicated premium:

40 hours --- multicolored **PIN** with "Appalachian Trail Volunteer" logo

125 hours --- a second **PIN**

250 hours --- multicolored **PATCH** with embroidered logo

500 hours --- khaki **CAP** with embroidered logo

1001 hours --- black fleece **VEST** with embroidered logo

The logo is actually a replica of the plaque that marks the southern terminus of the trail at Springer Mountain, Georgia.

There are two important aspects to keep in mind. First, the hours are cumulative. So, for example, after receiving your patch you need only an *additional* 250 hours to get a cap – not 500. Also, this program works in parallel with, but does not replace, the current RATC program, which makes awards to trail workers and hike leaders. If you go on a work hike, for instance, you will get credit for both programs: RATC and ATPO.

Hours for any activities in service to the club may be counted. In many cases, these will consist of doing trail work and / or leading or assisting scheduled hikes. But there are lots of other ways to pitch in. For example, you could help Dave and Lucy Downs with the Cornboil or the Annual Meeting. Or, give Suzanne Barnett a hand when she's working up the new hike schedule.

Logging and reporting volunteer hours will be done strictly on the basis of an honor system. The

emphasis is on the concept of "service" and here you must use your best judgment. Obviously, such activities as attending a club social event or simply going along on a pleasure hike (even if it was 18 miles and it rained all day) should not count.

Here are the mechanics; we tried to keep them simple:

1 - Do not record the hours you spend on any *scheduled* work-hike or on any trail or shelter project where either Charles Parry or Ron McCorkle is present. These will be recorded for you automatically and added into your total.

2 - Record all of your other service hours as soon as you complete them; driving time may be included. Simply keep a running total; you do not need to break out separate categories.

3 - Keep your hours on the basis of our "fiscal" year: October 1 – September 30. If you can make a reasonable guess as to your number of hours since the first of October of this year, feel free to put them down.

4 - Starting in 2003, mail your year's total of hours (along with your name and address) to:

ATPO Volunteer Program
Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club
P.O. Box # 12282
Roanoke, Virginia 24024

All reports *must* be mailed so as to arrive between October 1 and October 31. If you miss the deadline, simply hold your hours and add them to those for the following year.

5 - Awards will be made annually at the Holiday Pot Luck Dinner starting in 2003.

That's it. Obviously, it will take a while to get a vest. But, if you hustle, you could qualify for a pin in a matter of months or even weeks.

Your Input Please – New Hike Policy in Progress

In response to incidents and problems that have occurred in recent years, the RATC Board appointed Laurie Adkins, Leonard Adkins, Suzanne Barnett, Dick Clark, and Don Nulph to a committee to explore ways to improve and increase participation in club hikes. The committee discussed problems with hikers getting lost and left behind while on RATC hikes. Both fast and slow hikers have become lost by taking wrong turns. Some hikers have been left behind at the finishing trailhead when faster hikers drove away before everyone was accounted for. It was noted that fewer new people are attending RATC hikes. People have told some committee members that they had attended hikes with the Club only to be left alone behind the group. They were so discouraged they never attended another Club hike.

The committee agreed that RATC hikes should provide a safe, convenient way for people to meet and socialize on walks and hikes. An important part of the hikes is the socializing and camaraderie that develops by shared experiences. Most important of all was hiker safety.

With these things in mind, and after studying how other AT maintaining clubs operate their hikes, the committee developed a set of guidelines to be used on all RATC hikes.

PLEASE NOTE: At this time, the guidelines presented below are still in the draft stage. The committee and the board are interested in hearing comments and suggestions from all RATC members. If there are situations that you have experienced that you feel need to be discussed, additional rules you think should be implemented, or you have a comment on anything in the proposed guidelines, please let us hear from you. You may make your voice heard by e-mailing Leonard Adkins at habitualhiker.va@netzero.net or writing RATC at P. O. Box 12282, Roanoke, VA 24024-2282. We will be having a Hike Leader training meeting in early February (look for the notice on the front cover). All comments must be received by January 31, 2003.

GUIDELINES FOR RATC HIKES

In the Blazer: Each entry in the HIKE SCHEDULE will contain a 2-3 sentence description listing distance, difficulty, features and/or obstacles, driving distance, where the hike is, and if it is on the AT. As a few of examples:

The Cascades: 4 miles, moderately easy. Located a few miles west of Blacksburg near Pembroke, 45-

minute drive from Roanoke. One of the best waterfalls in the area; trail is gently sloping with rocks underfoot.

Patterson and Price Mountains: 10 miles, strenuous. Southwest of Fincastle; about 30 minutes from Roanoke. Follows a series of forest service trails on two isolated ridgelines with good winter views; some steep and/or long ascents and two stream fords.

Hay Rock: 8 miles, moderate. On the AT from US 220 and back, near Daleville, about 15 minutes from Roanoke. Good views of the Great Valley of Virginia and Carvins Cove. Trail is well graded, but gains 800 feet in less than 1.5 miles.

On the Hikes: The hike leader is in charge.

Before the hike, the leader will give an overview of the hike route and outline the RATC hike rules to those attending. A copy of the rules will be distributed. A sketch map (which the hike leader has the option of making and copying) may also be distributed.

When car shuttles are required, clear instructions will be given to all drivers, including exact route and destination. Cars should try to stay together and behind the leader. A designated regrouping place should be agreed upon for long or complicated drives.

The leader and assistant leader will decide who will lead and who will provide sweep. All hikers must stay behind the lead hiker and the sweep will bring up the rear. The lead hiker and the sweep may be experienced hikers appointed by the leader.

The lead hiker will stop at all intersections, hazards, or landmarks—or at least every 30 minutes--and everyone will wait for those following to catch up. Slower hikers should be permitted to rest for a reasonable length of time before the hike resumes.

At the end of the hike: No one drives away until all hikers are present and accounted for.

Criteria for Hike Leader

Hike leaders and their assistants must be RATC members.

Hike leaders will carry first-aid supplies and RATC brochures. These will be supplied by RATC.

Hike leaders will have hiked the hike they are leading (preferably within the last year) and should scout the route and parking areas beforehand.

Hike leaders will make it a point to welcome new people and interact with them throughout the hike.

REMEMBER: The committee and the board want and need your input. Let us hear from you by **January 31, 2003.**

President's Message

Three years have elapsed and it's time for me to pass the torch. During my term of office I have come to appreciate even more the remarkable treasure that we all have in the Appalachian Trail.

As president, I've had the opportunity of meeting many people from Maine to Georgia who selflessly devote time and energy to making the trail even better. Among them, our own club has some of the

best – hands down.

In particular, I have had a very satisfactory working relationship with the RATC Board. This is a group that gets things done and I'm humbled by the confidence that you placed in me to take the helm for a little while.

Thanks to all, best wishes and ... happy trails.

Dick Clark

Trail Supervisor's Report

It is time to announce the worker awards for the 2001 – 2002 year. Four days with at least two work hikes will win you an RATC hat, seven days with at least four work hikes will win you an RATC T-shirt and nine days with at least five work hikes will win you both. Those who won a hat are: Leonard Adkins, Hal Cantrill, Brian Chisom, Bill Gordge, Stephanie Kent, Jim Overholzer and Maurice Turner. Those who won a T-shirt are: Laurie Adkins, Suzanne Barnett, Dave Cheslow, Bill Floyd, Kenny Garrett, Jim Hutchings, Linda Hutchings, Ron McCorkle and Bob Peckman. Those who won both are: Malcolm Black, Fred Coughlan, Dana Helsley, Charles Parry, Kris Peckman and Greg Still. I want to congratulate all these winners who will receive their awards at the annual banquet. Let me acknowledge that our

record keeping is not perfect, so if I missed anyone who qualified, please let me know.

Next year's Konnarock schedule is now available. Here are the dates when the crew will be working on RATC trail: May 22-26, June 12-16 Sarver Shelter access trail and July 31-August 4 Catawba Mountain Trail rehabilitation. The first project involves construction of a better access trail from the AT to the Sarver Shelter. The second project is a continuation of something the club began working on this past winter. The area we will be concentrating on next summer is between the Boy Scout Shelter and the Catawba Mountain Shelter. We should finish the rehabilitation work south of the Boy Scout Shelter this winter and perhaps begin some work north of the shelter.

Charles Parry

Hikemaster's Report

Kenny Garrett and Laura Montague have earned their 113-mile patch and will receive them at the March Banquet. If you have completed the 113-

mile distance, please write me at 5031 Bruceton Road, SW, Roanoke, VA 24018.

Suzanne Barnett 772-4273

Please contribute your stories, color or B&W photos, and letters to the editor to help make the Blazer better. The deadlines for submission are the 25th of February, May, August, and November. But send them anytime you like and I will include them the next time they will fit. The

Blazer is 12 or 16 or 20 pages due to the 18 x 11 paper, so sometimes I have too much and sometimes I am begging for material to keep the right number of pages.

Bob Peckman

Hike Reports

Sunday, August 25, 2002, 1:00 PM Smartview Loop on Parkway

Suzanne Barnett (leader), Paul Blaiklock, and Sherry Kessel

We left Cave Spring Corners and drove up Rt. 221 to the Bent Mtn. Parkway entrance, and then on to the Smartview trail. We enjoyed the hike even though it was warm and humid with overcast skies.

Sat. September 7, 2002, 8:30 AM Rt. 460 to Rice Fields, Peters Mtn.

Zetta Campbell (leader), Jerry Austin, Doug Hibshman

How do you cure the common cold? Take a hike! At least it helps. The leader started coughing, sneezing, and running at the nose a couple of days before the hike. During that pull up Peters Mountain, the symptoms almost disappeared and, from then on, the leader was on the mend. If she had been hiking every week, she probably wouldn't have caught it in the first place!

Although it was a pleasant Saturday, only three hikers showed up. Doug and Zetta sped down I-81 and Route 460 from Hanging Rock to meet with Jerry at Wades Foods near Pearisburg. Meanwhile, assistant Suzanne Barnett kindly assisted by staying with the leader's mother who can't be left alone anymore. While there she did some much-needed yard work – a double blessing!

Jerry, who had been up the trail many times, was the real leader. He led us to the best place to park. It is quite a pull up that mountain, but it gets easy on top. Jerry said there were five rockslides on the trail and, indeed, there seemed to be. We stopped for lunch at a nice camping area near Stillhouse Springs, which is right on the trail. There we filled our canteens. On top, the ferns were brown, whether from drought, cold or frost, we could only conjecture. We didn't get quite to Rice Fields. Doug wanted to get home in time for supper; the leader needed to get back to Mom; and, each one had a (ahem!) different pace. We probably got within a mile of the Fields. We weren't the only ones on the mountain. We counted about 16

others. Jerry said he usually encounters two. Maybe it was a last fling for college students.

Sunday, September 8, 2002, 1 PM Bottom Creek Gorge

Sue Scanlin and Jean Warren – No report yet.

Sunday, September 15, 8:00 AM Mt. Rogers

Cancelled due to rain.

Sunday September 15, 2002, 1:00 PM Jennings Creek to Bryant Shelter Loop

Merivn Brower (leader), Blanche Brower (assistant), Mark Ingram

The hike started from Daleville commuter parking lot. We went in one car to the start of the hike. The weather was cloudy when we left and raining when leaving the parking lot. When we got to Jennings Creek the rain had stopped. We hiked until we reached Bryant shelter when it started to rain again. We encountered two turtles on the trail. It quit raining until we got to the top of Fork Mountain. We were slightly damp by the time we got back to the car.

Sunday, September 22, 2002, 8:30 AM Catawba Mountain Workhike

Charles Parry (leader), Laurie Adkins (assistant), Fred Coughlan, Greg Still, Brian Chisom, Kate Collins, Sarah King, D. W. Has, Zac Thomas, Charles Lampeper

When I arrived at the parking lot only Laurie and Fred were there. As we wanted to re-blaze the trail from Catawba Mt. Shelter to 311, it was decided that I would drive them out on the fire-road and that they would blaze their way back. When I got back I decided to put in a small bridge on the north side of 311. That took me about 15 minutes. The next task was to grade the new trail around the side of the new parking lot. Fortunately, reinforcements arrived as I began the job. Greg and the Roanoke College group arrived within a few minutes of each other. This job kept us occupied for about 3 hours and the Roanoke College Group left as we finished. The next job

was to do a short relocation on the north side of 311 that would use the newly constructed bridge across the ditch. This short relocation provides for better sight distance when crossing the highway. Laurie and Fred arrived about the time we got this 100-foot relocation brushed out. It had looked a bit like rain all day and I was hoping that it would hold off long enough for the blazes to set. It drizzled a bit while we were doing this, but didn't amount to much. We finished this job and left for home around 4 o'clock. It started raining fairly hard about the time I reached the Montgomery County line, but I thought the paint should be reasonably dry by that time. I felt we got a good bit done for the size crew that we had.

**Sunday, September 22, 2002, 1:00 PM
Dragon's Tooth**

Linda Akers and Kenny Garrett – No report yet.

**Sunday, September 29, 2002, 8:00 AM
Rockfish Gap to Jarman Gap,
Shenandoah National Park**

Bobbie Stichter (leader), H.R. Blankenship (assistant), Larry Austin, Doug Hibshman, Don Hoke, Laura Montague, Mark Packett

Seven hikers drove north on I-81 to I-64. After Waynesboro we turned at the entrance to the Skyline Drive at Rockfish Gap where we left a car. Then we entered the Shenandoah National Park and drove to Jarman Gap to begin the hike. On this 8-mile hike we hiked through pines, locust trees and open areas with staghorn sumac. We crossed the Skyline Drive in Beagle Gap and walked up the open slopes of Bear Den Mountain to find chairs that were made from old tractor seats. Again we crossed the Skyline Drive in McCormick Gap. We passed through three gates and eventually crossed the bridge over I-64 to finish the hike in Rockfish Gap. It was a great day for hiking. With this hike Bobbie and H.R. have now finished all of the sections in the Shenandoah National Park

**Sunday, September 29, 2002, 1:00 PM
Cascades**

Sue Scanlin (leader), Terri McClure (assistant), Georgia Gallaher, Gary Adams, Paul Blaiklock, Sherry Kessel, Jerry Austin, Stephanie Scanlin

Seven of us took off from Hanging Rock shortly after 1 pm to meet Gary at the Cascades parking lot. By the time we got there, the sun had come out and it promised to be a beautiful afternoon for a hike. Some of us had never been to the Cascades while others hadn't been there since reconstruction of the trail was completed. What a great job they had done! No more slipping and sliding up muddy inclines required! And no matter how hard it may rain in the future, the new bridges should definitely be high and strong enough not to get washed away again.

We saw some fat trout in the creek and some chipmunks by the side of the trail. Below the falls, there was one young man and his dog in the water. The dog didn't look like he really wanted to go for a swim in the cold water but couldn't resist the coaxing from his master. None of us joined them. A large group of Mennonite youngsters - the term "teenagers" just doesn't seem to fit them - had a grand old time on the rocks around the pool. After a lengthy lunch/snack rest, we headed back to the parking lot on the upper trail and arrived back at Hanging Rock around 5:45. Couldn't have wished for a more pleasant afternoon!

**Sunday, October 6, 2002, 8:00 AM
Montebello Fish Hatchery to Hog Camp
Gap-Amherst County**

Laura Montague (leader), Bobbie Stichter (assistant), Gary Hale, Lois Smith, Eric Smith

Our hike started off perfectly with explicit driving directions provided by Mary Jane Layne, a member of the Natural Bridge Trail Club. We had one guest, Eric Smith, who is a law enforcement officer with the Forest Service. He was not hiking in any official capacity and since we all behaved, he did not have to step back into his work role. The weather was great and the leaves were starting to turn. An apple tree on top of Tar Jacket provided a nice afternoon snack for some as the hike was finished. Eric entertained us throughout the hike with stories of all the illegal things he has seen people do in the National Forest. We were all amazed!

Sunday, October 6, 2002, 1:00 PM
Carvins Cove Boat Launch to Cemetery

Members: Sue Scanlin (leader), Jean Warren (assistant), Georgia Gallaher, Zetta Campbell, Ann Rogers, Gary Adams, Maurice Turner, Paul Blaiklock

Guests: Stephanie Scanlin, Karen Coon, Mark Peterson, Marianne Demkó, Charliece Daniel

Several telephone calls to Roanoke City to get information on the "land use fee" at Carvins Cove in advance brought no results other than getting connected from one department to the next. Nobody seemed to know how much the fee for a daily permit is and if it is assessed per person or per vehicle. So we met at the boat ramp and found out then: it is assessed per person and amounts to \$1 for a City resident, \$2 for a County resident. For those who plan to go to Carvins Cove frequently, there is an annual permit available. And now that I know exactly what number to call for (more) information, here it is: 563-9170.

The Cove was a sorry sight: since our spring hike there, the water level had receded a lot further. Where there had been a "beach", there now was dried up vegetation. And the water was way down in the distance, almost like a puddle.

Our group of 13 hikers didn't stay together for long. As a matter of fact, after the initial meeting at the start we never again were all together the rest of the afternoon. Some wanted to walk extra slowly, someone else continued on the gravel road past the cemetery to look for what were believed to be co-hikers who had missed the turn (they were at the cove itself just below the cemetery), then two of us went to retrieve this hiker while the others started on their way back, etc. In any case, several of us saw two, some three, deer near the road and Marianne found lots of mushrooms of various kinds. Some of them even went home with her for dinner!

Shortly after 4 p.m., eleven of us had arrived back at the boat ramp. No sign of the remaining two. A note was left on their car and a later telephone call confirmed that they got home safely. All is well that ends well, especially on a beautiful fall afternoon like this.

Sunday, October 13, 2002, 8:30 AM
Douthat State Park

John Lynham (leader), Maurice Turner (assistant), Larry Austin, H.R. Blankenship

An enjoyable, fast-paced hike. The weather was threatening, but we stayed dry, and we even saw the sun once in a while. Several small chestnut trees were observed, biding their time until the blight gets them. Reference was made to a tree named after a character in a famous movie—the Scarlet Oak Hara. That's all folks!

Sunday, October 13, 2002, 1:00 PM
Andy Layne Trail to Tinker Cliffs

Kenny Garrett (leader), Lance Garrett, Carol Broderson, Mark Packett, Merv and Blanche Brower, Dana Helsley, Sue and Stephanie Scanlin, Marianne Demkó, Paul Yeatts, Dorothy Hoskins

What a great walk, a nice day, cloudy but warm. We had a wonderful group of people that decided to get together for a nice stroll to Tinker Cliffs. The walk up was a lot of fun, though a little muddy and slippery in one or two places. I believe the wildlife sightings were restricted to numerous birds, squirrels, and a box turtle. There were several types of flowers and many mushrooms out. The wind was blowing a little out on the rocks of Tinker Cliffs, and the view was spectacular. I consider this a great fall hike, made all the better by the wonderful people that ignored the weatherman.

Sunday, October 20, 2002, 8:30 AM
Workhike—Catawba Mountain

Charles Parry (leader), Kris Peckman, Fred Coughlan, Greg Still, Dana Helsley, Mervin Brower, Blanche Brower

Our job for the day was to install steps on the AT going down toward the Boy Scout Shelter. In the morning we had five people and worked on two sets of wooden steps as well as closing off a trail that bypassed a good set of rock steps. Greg left us at lunchtime, but Merv and Blanche joined us a short time later. By mid afternoon, we were running out of lumber, so switched to building rock steps. We felt that we had made a significant improvement by quitting time.

**Sunday, October 20, 2002, 1:00 PM
McAfee's Knob**

Dave Sutton (leader) Suzanne Barnett (assistant), Amanda Pauley, Skip Abercrombie, Cindy Bowles, Dave Schoendorfer, Mervin and Blanche Brower.

The forecast called for late afternoon rain but it never materialized. We left on time and met the work hike crew 30 minutes later up the AT, at which time Mervin and Blanche joined them in progress. We followed the AT past the two shelters and arrived at the "knob" about 3:20. What a spectacular view! We could even see a quarter-full Carvin's Cove in the distance. We normally would be viewing leaves at their peak color, but because of the drought we concluded the trees were still hanging on to their late summer-looking green leaves. Our view atop the 3201-foot summit was shared with twenty or more weekend hikers. We heard one ruffed grouse (on take-off). Descending we took the fire road and again met the trail work hike crew, a well-appreciated crew, whose work on the trail is never finished. We all had a satisfying hike!

**Sunday, October 27, 2002
Workhike—Catawba Mountain**

Charles Parry, Brian Chisom, Sarah King, Katherine Falconi, Emma Jones, Lisa Mueller, Kari Jennsen, Matt McGaley, Dara Lundregan

Roanoke College had been on fall break the previous week, so we scheduled a special session for them. The job for the day was to install some more of our wooden steps in the vicinity of bulletin board. I got there a bit early and had three separate sets of steps started by the time my helpers arrived. All went well and we got over 20 steps installed. We ran out of re-bar just as we were ready to quit, so the final step was only held in with two spikes.

**Sunday, October 27, 2002, 8:00 AM
113-mile hike #4, Rt. 311 to Rt. 779**

Bobbie Stitche (leader), Laura Montague (assistant), H.R. Blankenship, Gary Hale, Fred Meyer, Blake Mitnick, Bob and Kris Peckman, Lois Smith

After leaving a car in the parking lot of Va.779 Laura and Bobbie drove to the Orange Market to meet the hikers. We then went to the new parking

lot on Va.311 to begin the hike. We stopped at McAfee Knob to view the beautiful fall trees in the Catawba valley. As we continued the hike we found the writings of the Nomads done in 1932, we ate lunch on the rocks overlooking a dry Carvins Cove and we stopped at Tinker Cliffs to view the beautiful fall trees again and the area we had just hiked. We then began the descent to Scorched Earth Gap and the Andy Layne Trail. At the rock wall and the stream on the Andy Layne Trail we found many osage oranges that have a wonderful spicy smell. The weather was absolutely perfect for hiking on this fall day.

**Sunday, October 27, 2002, 1:00 PM
Flat Top**

Linda Akers (leader), Suzanne Barnett (assistant), Zetta Campbell, Marianne Demkó, Sharon Harrison & Luke, Dana Helsley, Charlotte Lomax, Betty Mathews, Debbie Robbins, Dave Schoendorfer, Christy Straight, Maurice Turner, Jean Warren, Jenny Wright

Most of us met at Market Square East and headed for the Peaks. Trees were at their peak of color, just fantastic. After the usual break at the Visitors Center, we headed on to the parking area for Flat Top, where we had two more hikers waiting. It was nice and crunchy hiking with the leaves underfoot. Feels like fall is here! Several of us reached the top just as the sun went behind a cloud and the mist rolled in. The faster hikers say they got a fantastic view! Met up with a few who had turned back before reaching the top. Lucky they did, because they just made it out at dark. Discovered a number of "pickle trees" about halfway down the mountain. No kidding! There were green "pickles" hanging down all over the trees. (Actually, Marianne confirmed that they were Dutchman's Pipe seedpods.) Sure looked like pickles to me!

All in all, it was a wonderful day to be out on the trail. Weather was cool enough to be hiking. Everyone had a good time.

**Sunday, November 3, 2002, 8:30 AM
Hoop Hole**

John Lynham (leader), Kenny Garrett (assistant), H.R. Blankenship, Jesse Garrett, Gary Hale, Kris Peckman, Homer Witcher, David and Daniel Dalton

What a great area for hiking. Two streams and their gorges, along with some great rock formations and a stunning overlook on a side trail, courtesy of Homer, who knows this area so well. Trail maintenance is sketchy, with a number of blowdowns and hit and miss blazing. Kenny and David's sons (Jesse and Daniel) had more energy at the end of the hike than the adults did at the beginning. We also saw a variety of old iron parts that may have come from the sawmill that operated in the area many years ago. We did not see any trace of a rumored side trail to the site of the sawmill. Oh yes, it was great seeing the streams full of water. That has been an unusual sight the past few years.

**Sunday, November 3, 2002, 1:00 PM
Daleville to Hay Rock**

Mervin Brower (leader), Blanche Brower (assistant), Bill Mistele, Paul Blaiklock, Betty Matthews, Charlotte Lomax, Gary Adams, Jennifer Pfister, Marianne Russell and Delores Locke

Partway: Sharon and Heather Harrison with Luke.
Late due to 81 accident: Zetta Campbell and Sharon Rippee

The hike started from Daleville commuter parking lot. There was an accident on 81 so the hike leaders and several other people spent about an hour coming down 81. We left the parking lot about 1:30. The weather was in the 40s and clear. The leaves were changing and made gorgeous views from the top of the ridge. We did not stay long at Hay Rock, as we wanted to be down the mountain before it was dark. We met Sharon and Zetta on our way down the mountain.

**Saturday, November 9, 2002, 7:00 AM
Fox Creek to Massie Gap**

Jimmy Whitney (leader), Don Hoke, Laura Montague

What a gorgeous day to visit Grayson Highlands State Park. This was the first trip for me and being in the upper 50's in November down there was perfect. We started off from the parking lot on the approach trail to the AT, crested the hill and could see over a dozen wild ponies just past where the AT passed. Of course, we had to go check them out-some had pretty good potbellies on them.

We were able to get close to pet one and Don even got a picture with Laura and me beside it. We were good and didn't feed it.

At this point, Don proceeded south on the AT as he had been north recently. He headed to Rhododendron Gap and followed Pine Mtn trail back to the AT and eventually met us at the car. He ended up seeing quite a few cowboys rustling some cows. Don did bring 2-way radios that we were able to keep in contact with. Laura and I proceeded down the trail running into lots of hikers, dogs, and horses (not on the AT). Snow was even visible in some areas along the AT. Checked out the recently built Wise Shelter and managed to pet another pony on Stone Mtn. Enjoyed lunch at Scales, watching wild ponies in the distance and hikers with their dogs. Got up to Pine Mountain and waited for Don for a short time-then finding his business card attached to the AT sign in the woods to say he'd been there. As Laura and I neared the end, the AT wasn't marked so well and we spent 5 minutes trying to find the next blaze after the trail veered sharp left with no warning. We got back to the other car shortly after 4PM and enjoyed a nice dinner at Ona's Kitchen after making the car switch.

**Saturday & Sunday, November 9 & 10, 2002
Leave No Trace Trainer Course
War Spur Area**

Jody Bickel and Deno Contos (Trainers), Jerry Austin (RATC), Maggie Beal, Ben Nelson, Sally Walker, Chris Galvan (OCVT), Andrew Mitchell, Kim Wall (PATH)

Course Description:

The two-day weekend Leave No Trace Trainer course emphasizes three components: low impact camping skills, wildland ethics, and teaching techniques. LNT courses are informative, practical, hands-on and fun. Participants in an LNT course must have a strong interest in outdoor recreation, a commitment to training others and have a desire to protect wilderness resources.

ATC will be offering two LNT Trainer courses (in the Central and Southwest Virginia Region) and one Master Educator course in 2003. The 2003 Trail Skills brochure was not available in time for the Winter 2003 Blazer, but it will be posted on

the RATC web site as well as LNT's website at <www.lnt.org>

The group of nine, LNT instructors and students, hiked 9 miles over a two-day period with numerous teaching and learning break sessions. Overnight camp in tents was conducted at the War Spur Shelter. The group hiked the AT from Rt 601 to Rt 613, part of which is through the Mountain Lake Wilderness, and all of this section is maintained by RATC. The AT was in good shape, the Wind Rock overlook was breathtaking, and the parking area and informational sign display at Rt 613 for the Wind Rock overlook were also in great shape.

**Sunday, November 10, 2002, 8:30 AM
Workhike- Catawba Mountain**

Charles Parry (leader), Kris Peckman, Michael Wray, Kevin Wray, Brian Chisom, Sarah King, Mason Vines, Peter Cooney, Josh Barklow, Brendan Nappier, Mervin Brower, Blanche Brower, Suzanne Barnett, Sue Scanlon, Stephanie Scanlin, Karen Coon

At first it was just Kris and I. We decided where to unload the truck and had unloaded a few things when Michael and Kevin arrived. We were building more of our wooden steps on the first steep hill across 311 from the parking lot. We had just gotten a couple of sets started when the Roanoke College group arrived. By the time they left, several steps had been installed. We had just about finished lunch when Merv and Blanche arrived. Shortly thereafter, the GE trio arrived, followed by four afternoons. I assigned the afternoon group a section of trail that needed regrading. I realized that we were going to run out of lumber to build wooden steps with, so as soon as I had the lumber cut and drilled I took a few people down the hill to build some rock steps. By quitting time we had installed 32 wooden steps, 3 or 4 large rock steps and had regraded a couple hundred feet of trail. It had threatened rain in the morning, but it was just a cloudy day.

**Sunday, November 17, 2002, 9:00 AM
113-miles, hike #5, Sawtooth Ridge to
Dragon's Tooth Parking Lot**

7-miles, moderate, \$2.50 carpool fee
Bobbie Stitcher 890-2140, Linda Akers 776-1969
Cancelled because of rain!!!!

**Sunday, November 17, 2002, 1:00 PM
Harkening Hills**

Dave Sutton (leader), Sue Scanlin (assistant), Stephanie Scanlin.

After waiting at the parking area until 1:10pm it was agreed the hike be canceled because of continuous cold rain.

**Sunday, November 24, 2002, 9:00 AM
Shelter Workhike—Laurel Creek**

Fred Coughlan, Dana Helsley, Ron McCorkle, Charles Parry, Kevin Wray, and Michael Wray

It was a beautiful fall day.

The original hike was planned to move the Laurel Creek Shelter privy. That project was changed because a new moldering privy will be built instead. So, we thought of some other projects that could be done between Rt. 311, and Catawba Mountain.

We started by roofing the bulletin board. This went pretty quickly with six workers. We then went to the Pig Farm near the Catawba Shelter and ate lunch. We wanted to look at the water source to see what was available. I think what we found was very nice. It seems whoever worked that land had built a holding tank for the spring water, and had a pipe running the water closer to their home. This pipe is where the signs led hikers for water. Well, the spring water holding tank looked like a better place to get water, but the metal tank was unserviceable. We removed the tank to reveal a concrete lined hole 2 feet deep. It holds a lot of spring water, fresh from the ground. There are even stone filters to keep sediment out.

Charles then wanted to fill in a large hole that was dug possibly as another source of water, or for overflow. Whatever it was for, it seemed to only hold stagnant water. This was a large hole, but with six workers, we filled it in a couple hours. We also did a little cosmetic work in the area. We changed some of the signs, and rehung others.

On the way back down the mountain, I wanted to see the water source near the Boy Scout Shelter. Charles led us on the ½ mile hike down the old road and showed us a great spring. He said it used to be the water source for a house, before the house was torn down. This is a terrific spring providing a lot of water. We cleaned out a large hole at the source, and bushwhacked back up the mountain to the road.

As we neared the end of our day, we put in two pieces of rebar on the steps Charles has been working on, picked up about 20 bags of garbage that had been filled, and took them down for the Forest Service to dispose of.

It turned out to be a very productive day.

**Sunday, November 24, 2002, 1:00 PM
Chestnut Ridge Trail**

Dave Sutton (leader), Jean Warren (assistant), Bill Mistele, Maurice Turner, Bobbie Stitcher, Linda Akers, Marianne Russell, Sir Madison, Linda Sutton, Matthew Sutton, Justin Robinson, Ray Lawson

It was a very pleasing day for a hike with perfect weather that allowed perfect hiking conditions. Temperature highs were near 60 degrees. Within the first half hour, six horses (with riders) and two dogs passed us on the trail. Next, we came across

This is a clipping from Fall 1994, sent by Mrs. K. P. (Mildred) Fitzgerald. She wanted us to know that, just as Ken meant a great deal to us, that we, and this honor, also meant a great deal to Ken and his family. All of us who have been around for a while have stories about Ken that we share and fond memories of his dedication and enthusiasm and of what great fun he was just to be around. Ken died May 26, 2002 at 86 years of age, but his memory is still alive in this club.

KEN FITZGERALD MADE HONORARY LIFE MEMBER

At its August 26th meeting, the RATC Board voted to confer honorary life membership on Ken Fitzgerald in recognition of his faithful service and many contributions to the RATC.

Ken joined the Club in 1959, and for over twenty-five years worked tirelessly on its behalf. He was Club President four times.

A powerful hiker and hard worker, Ken was a strong advocate of regularly scheduled work hikes - something we take for granted today. He served on the hike committee for fifteen years.

Back in the less formal days of the 60's and 70's, the trail crossed over private land in many places, and was dependent on the good will of the landowners for its existence. Ken knew most of these people personally, and he was a key player in maintaining friendly relationships with them. When a problem arose, a common reaction was, "Send Ken out to deal with it!"

The same friendly manner and low-key approach encouraged many new people to join the club, and enabled RATC to function in a smooth, harmonious manner.

Ken is part of an army of unsung heroes passing now largely unnoticed by the present generation of AT workers. Because of people like Ken Fitzgerald, the Trail is what it is today, and the Board is pleased to recognize him for his efforts.

Congratulations!

RATC TRAIL BLAZER \ FALL 1994

2



Bennett Witcher on a bed of roses

Hike Schedule (Cont.)

Sunday, February 9, 2003, 8:30 AM Workhike - Catawba Mountain

\$1.50 carpool fee
Charles Parry 540-951-1402
Leonard and Laurie Adkins 384-7485

Sunday, February 9, 2003, 1:00 PM Workhike - Catawba Mountain

\$1.50 carpool fee
Suzanne Barnett 772-4273

Sunday, February 16, 2003, 9:00 AM Grassy Hill Reserve, Natural Area

5-miles, moderate, \$3:00 carpool fee
Mike Leahy & Carol Davie 989-0224 W/265-5234

Sunday, February 16, 2003, 1:00 PM Sharp Top

3 miles, moderate, \$3.00 carpool fee
Mervin and Blanche Brower 387-9732

Sunday, February 23, 2003, 8:00 AM I-77 to Lickskillet Hollow

12 miles, strenuous, \$4.00 carpool fee
Kenny Garrett 890-8946

Sunday, February 23, 2003, 1:00 PM Devil's Marble Yard

4 miles, moderately strenuous, \$3.00 carpool fee
Rusty and Laura Schundler 966-0105

Sunday, March 2, 2003, 8:30 AM Douthat State Park - Beards Smart Mtn. Trails

9.5 miles, strenuous, \$3.50 carpool fee + park fee
John Lynham 336-292-7637
Maurice Turner 334-2128

Sunday, March 2, 2003, 1:00 PM Dragon's Tooth

5 miles, strenuous, \$2.50 carpool fee
Mervin and Blanche Brower 387-9732

Saturday, March 8, 2003, 6:00 PM Annual Banquet & Business Meeting

Use form on page 3.

Sunday, March 9, 2003, 8:00 AM Punch Bowl Mtn. to James River

11.5 miles, strenuous, \$4.00 carpool fee
Laura Montague 725-3682
Lois Smith 992-3701

Sunday, March 9, 2003, 1:00 PM 113 mile hike # 5 Sawtooth Ridge to Dragon's Tooth Parking Lot

7 miles, moderate, \$2.50 carpool fee
Kenny Garrett 890-8946
Maurice Turner 334-2128

Sunday, March 16, 2003, 8:30 AM Workhike - Catawba Mountain

\$1.50 carpool fee
Charles Parry 540-951-1402
Leonard and Laurie Adkins 384-7485

Sunday, March 16, 1:00 PM Workhike - Catawba Mountain

\$1.50 carpool fee
Suzanne Barnett 772-4273

Sunday, March 23, 2003, 10:00 AM Angel's Rest

4 miles, strenuous, \$3.50 carpool fee
Jerry Austin 540-921-1792
Terri McClure 375-2650

Sunday, March 23, 2003, 1:00 PM Pedlar Hill Natural Area

4-miles, moderately strenuous, \$3.00 carpool fee
Mike Leahy & Carol Davie 989-0024 W/265-5234

Sunday, March 30, 2002, 10:00 AM James River Foot Bridge

5 miles, moderate, \$3.50 carpool fee
Bobbie Stitcher 890-2140
Lois Smith 992-3701

Sunday, March 30, 2003, 1:00 PM Daleville to Rt. 652

4 miles, easy, no car fee
Mervin and Blanche Brower 387-9732