

TRAIL BLAZER

NEWSLETTER OF THE ROANOKE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CLUB

WINTER 2004

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.

John's Spring Shelter Dedication

Come help us celebrate the completion of the John's Spring Shelter. We are going to assemble at the 311 parking lot on Saturday, March 13th, 1:00 p.m. The shelter was built during the summer of 2003 with the help of 6 high school students and their adult leaders as part of the National Park Services Public Land Corps program. With the help of Joe Kelley and Frank Haranzo, these young people worked to build this new shelter at the site of the old "boy scout shelter", which Randy Slusher had removed as the major part of his Eagle Scout Project. The new shelter accommodates 6 people and was made possible by a memorial donation in honor of John Haranzo, of Roanoke. John was a thru-hiker and former Catawba Ridgerunner. Please come join us and then continue on to the RATC Annual banquet! For questions, please call me at: 540-961-5551.

Teresa Ana Martinez

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TRAIL BLAZER
Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club
PO BOX 12282
ROANOKE VA 24024-2282

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President, Bob Peckman
366-7780 bob@peckmanjazz.com

Vice President, Roger B. Holnback
556-2919 rholnback@westernvirginalandtrust.org

Secretary, Laurie Adkins
966-2811 habitualhiker.va@netzero.net

Treasurer & Historian, Stephanie Kent
966-6475 skent@rev.net

Land Mgmt. Supervisor, Jim Hutchings
427-4536 JimHutchings@worldnet.att.net

Conservation. Supervisor, Liz Belcher
345-3603 lbelcher@co.roanoke.va.us

Trail Supervisor, Charles Parry
951-1402 parrycj@math.vt.edu

Shelter Supervisor, David Cheslow & Jonathan Reed
389-7791 dcheslow@rev.net
265-4782 squeeksreed@yahoo.com

Hikemaster, Don Nulph
774-8618 nulph-d@cox.net

Newsletter Editors, Therese & Homer Witcher
992-3932 witchers4@juno.com

Membership Coordinator, Mervin Brower
387-9732 mervin@brower.cc

Counselor, Leonard Adkins
966-2811 habitualhiker.va@netzero.net

Counselor, Dick Clark
989-7053 artscoun@roanoke.infi.net

ANCILLARIES

Social Chairman, Carolyn McPeak
(540)890-2855

Phone Tree Chairman, Liz Lamson
774-8981 blueridge@prodigy.net

Hike Reports Editor, Kris Peckman
366-7780 kris@peckmanjazz.com

Newsletter Distribution, Bobbie Stitche
890-2140 rb_bobbie@rbnet.com

Webmaster, David A. Cheslow
389-7791 dcheslow@rev.net

Roanoke College Rep., Brian Chisom
389-7393 (H), 375-7393 (W) chisom@roanoke.edu

Mid-week Workhikes, Bill Gordge
774-3016 bgordge@cox.net

OTHER

ATC Board of Managers – Mac (McKinney) Taylor
(804)264-1255 jant1@comcast.net

**ATC-LT Coordinator - James River to New River and
Director Western Virginia Land Trust, Roger B. Holnback**
556-2919 rholnback@westernvirginalandtrust.org

ATC Trail & Land Management Committee-Hal Cantrill
387-2347 hacantrill@worldnet.att.net

ATC Regional Rep., Teresa Martinez
540-961-5551 tmartinez@atconf.org

ATC-LT Coord. New River to Damascus, Steve Reisinger
504-951-7580 sre38@hotmail.com

Roanoke Valley Greenways Liaison, Don Nulph
774-8618 nulph-d@cox.net

Sir Speedy Printer
344-8550 robbiey@rbnet.com

CALENDAR OF CLUB ACTIVITIES

_____11_____

John's Creek Shelter dedication
Saturday, March 13 – 1:00 PM

Annual Banquet & Business Meeting
Saturday, March 13 – 6:00 PM

WORK HIKES

Sunday, January 25 - 8:00 AM
Catawba Mountain

Sunday, February 22 - 8:00 AM
Catawba Mountain

Sunday, March 28 - 8:30 AM
Catawba Mountain

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 12, 7:30 p.m.
Hosted by Stephanie Kent & David Cheslow
at Roanoke College (Patterson Room)

Monday, February 23, 7:30 p.m.
Hosted by Dick Clark

Monday, March 29, 7:30 p.m.
Hosted by Bob Peckman

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

Welcome New Members

The Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club welcomes the following new members:

Marvin Robinson Amanda Hartley Jon Ferrell
David & Lori Jones Christy Straight

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

Mervin Brower

President's Message

Red Crone gave a very spiffy party at his cabin after the October 25th work hike. We need more creative ideas like that. Thank you Red.

Dave & Lucy Downs retired, but are still working! I think they will retire for sure at the end of the year and I will miss working with them if they really do.

I have email addresses for only 1/3 of the membership. I keep them in an excel file along with addresses and phone numbers. So far the

database has not been filled in with email addresses from the web site. We do not use the web site to email the membership. Instead I cut and paste from the excel sheet. So please, pretty please, email me at bob@peckmanjazz.com and include your name in the message. Your email address will be stored only in that Excel file. I do not keep anything where hackers and viruses look. So please, send me an email message with your name so that I can put your email address into the database.

Bob Peckman

Trail Supervisor's Report

For the 2002-2003 fiscal year the club had 140 people work 3196 hours. On National Park Service land, we had 69 people work 2893 hours with an additional 303 hours spent at meetings. On National Forest Service lands, we had 92 people work 2337 with an additional 304 hours spent at meetings. Each year we give service awards of a hat to people, who work at least 4 days on the trail, including at least 2 work hikes. This year's winners are: Suzanne Barnett, Blanche Brower, Mervin Brower, David Cheslow, Bob Foutz, Linda Hutchings, Ron McCorkle, Jim Overholser, Maurice Turner, Homer Witcher and Therese Witcher. We give a T-shirt to people who work 7 days with at least 4 work hikes. This year's winners are: Laurie Adkins, Malcolm Black and Greg Still. We give both a hat and a

T-shirt to people who work 9 days with at least 9 work hikes. This year's winners are: Fred Coughlan, Dana Helsley, Jim Hutchings, Charles Parry and Kris Peckman.

For those who plan ahead, we will be working 3 days on Catawba Mountain this winter. Our first priority is to finish the short relocation that we started in November. Our next priorities are to install more steps, just north of 311 and continue rehab work between John's Spring Shelter and the Catawba Mountain Shelter. This summer we will be working on a major relocation between Catawba Mountain Shelter and McAfee's Knob with the Konnarock Crew. The dates for this work are: June 17 – 21, July 8 – 12 and July 29 – Aug. 2.

Charles Parry

Hikemaster's Report

It is a long time until spring but my last chance to ask for help. I need help selecting hikes for spring flowers. Need to know where and when it is a good time to hike to see the spring flowers. Let me know any time, but before February 2004.

Should we have a get together for hike leaders and others interested in the club's hiking activities? Maybe some time this spring.

Don Nulph

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 13, 2003
Dinner served promptly at 6:30 PM

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

Speaker: To be announced.

Reservation Form Mail to:

Carolyn McPeak, 71 Viewmont Trail, Hardy, VA 24101

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 nametags as follows:

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

Hike Reports

Sunday, September 14, 2003, 8:30 AM
Work hike – Catawba Mountain

Charles Parry (leader), Malcolm Black, Fred Coughlan, Dana Helsley, Bill Gordge, Homer Witcher, Therese Witcher, Taylor Witcher, & Bennett Witcher

Since the upstream side from the bridge of Tinker Creek was filled with debris, we decided to get it out while the weather was still warm. I also knew that the AT from Angel's Gap back towards Tinker Creek needed clipping. Consequently, I took Fred and Malcolm over to the tunnel and showed them the way to Angel's Gap. They were to clip and remove what blowdowns they could with a handsaw on their way back. When I got back, Bill and I headed down to the creek to start work. Clearing the bridge requires a combination of chainsaw work and pulling logs through the bridge with a fire rake. Bill and I had just got started when Dana arrived. By early afternoon when we were perhaps half done the Witcher family arrived. Therese made a quick trip to my truck for more rakes. By around 4, we had the bridge cleaned out. We spent a bit more time trying to get out logs that were partially buried in the sand and had limited success. We went up to my truck, put away the tools, had a cold soft drink and everyone left but me. I decided to walk in to meet Malcolm and Fred. I got just beyond the bulletin board before meeting them. They had found plenty of clipping and several blowdowns, some of which were too big for the handsaw. I felt like we had a pretty productive day.

Sunday, September 14, 2003, 1:00 PM
Catawba Mountain to McAfee Knob

Mary Lou Gaminde (co-leader), Sharon Harrison (co-leader) & Luke, Mervin & Blanche Brower, Gary Hale, Marianne Demkó, Nita Austin, Lori Engel, Emory Richardson, Carolyn McPeak, & Bobbie Sticher

Five of the hikers met in the parking lot at the Hanging Rock Orange Market. We met four more hikers in the McAfee Knob parking lot. The group consisted of hikers of different hiking abilities so

some of the group made it to the top while some others only made it to the fire road. It was a humid day so I believe that made hiking more difficult. Even Luke looked like he could use a shower and something cold to drink. We all made it back to our cars, some by the fire road, and others by the trail.

Sunday, September 21, 2003, 7:30 AM
Catawba Mountain to Daleville

Kenny Garrett (co-leader), Lois Smith (co-leader), Gary Bible, Betty Field, Gary Hale, Linda King, Laura Montague, Carl Bagby, Carol McPeak, Homer, Therese, Taylor & Bennett Witcher, Jerry Kyle, & Sara Emmerich

What a beautiful day for a Sunday stroll. This hike was listed as "Strenuous", but should be relabeled as "Character builder". I was pleasantly surprised at having fifteen motivated people arrive for a long hike. The morning started off foggy/hazy, and the day remained slightly overcast. The first stop at McAfee's Knob was short, due to a swarm of gnats. We then continued on to Tinker Cliffs, where we enjoyed a relaxing lunch. We were treated to two deer north of Lambert's Meadow. Along the way, we observed numerous brown toads, small lizards, a turtle, and a black snake. The views of Carvin's Cove were magnificent, especially seeing it full of water this year. The Witchers were the only ones with the strength to climb up Hay Rock. Bennett "Rockslide" Witcher was the Honorary Leader, as he was running ahead most of the time. This wonderful group consisted of friends from age 9 to age 70, and goes to show that there is no age limit when one wants to have fun. This walk was for the young, and the young at heart, and everyone finished close together and enjoyed the afterglow of the accomplishment. I look forward to hiking with each member of this group in the future.

**Sunday, September 21, 2003, 1:00 PM
Bottom Creek Gorge**

David Sutton (leader), Mervin and Blanche Brower, & Paul Blaiklock

Atop Bent Mountain in Montgomery County lies the 1,657-acre nature preserve known as Bottom Creek Gorge. When we arrived at the Nature Conservancy sign we noticed the road had been somewhat eroded, perhaps by recent Hurricane Isabel, so we parked at the edge of the paved road. We followed the blue trail to the red, then the yellow. We were taken back in time by looking closer at the cabin remnants that still exist close to the trail. How simple life must have been then, 150 years ago. From the overlook, Bent Mountain Falls were spectacular. As we headed uphill from the beaver pond, we then stopped at the interpretive kiosk, reviewing this interesting area. Returning to the entrance road we picked a few tart apples on land outside the Nature Conservancy Property.

**Sunday, September 28, 2003, 8:30 AM
Big Horse Gap to Bluff City**

No calls received. Hike cancelled.

**Sunday, September 28, 2003, 1:00 PM
Petites Gap to Sunset Field**

Mervin & Blanche Brower (co-leaders), Cynthia Bowles (co-leader), Fred Meyer, Neil McKinney, Paul Blaiklock, Herb Whitley, Laura Effel, Neil & Debbie Fitzpatrick, Garry Bible, Bobbie Sticher, Homer & Therese Witcher, & Warren Showes

The hike started from Market Square East on route 460. We organized the car switch at the parking lot to leave one car at Sunset Field and then drive on to Petites Gap. This meant that no one had to wait for the car to be taken to the parking lot. The climb up from Petites Gap is fairly long but gives one a good work out. We stopped a couple of times for every one to catch up. We stopped for a break at Thunder Ridge shelter. Every one came out together as we came off the trail. The weather was nice and sunny but a little on the cool side at about 52 degrees. Those of us who had not worn jackets found it very cool waiting for the cars to get back from the car switch.

**Saturday, October 4, 2003, 8:00 AM
Andy Layne Trail to Daleville Park & Ride
113-Mile Hike #3**

Ed Wallace (leader), Maurice Turner (assistant leader)

Hike report lost in cyberspace.

**Sunday, October 5, 2003, 1:00 PM
Sunset Field to Apple Orchard Falls**

Sue Scanlin (co-leader), Dick Moran (co-leader), Margaret Moran, Neil McKinney, Georgia Gallaher, Lorrie Huffman, Marianne Demkó, Sharon Harrison with Luke

Equipped with one of these fantastic new hike descriptions, etc. from Don - wow! -, the hike leader did all the formalities at Market Square East, set up 3 car pool groups, and off we went. The sun tried to come out and even though not consistently successful, it promised to be a beautiful afternoon. The views from the Parkway sure were beautiful!

On the trail down to the falls, our group got spread out but reassembled at the falls. Several of us had never before seen the new construction across the bottom of the falls and were duly impressed. Alas, there was someone there who wasn't a friend of dogs - even nice ones like Luke - and let it be known. So, Sharon and Luke headed back early while the others had a leisurely rest, finding some interesting rock samples, taking pictures and chatting. Then the trek back up began, with a considerable amount of huffing and puffing. Needless to say, Marianne spotted a number of mushrooms along the way, only one of which she could not identify on the spot. Several people were still on their way down while we were returning to our cars and before too long to Market Square East. A good time was had by all. Hiking is so good for the body, mind, and soul!

**Sunday, October 12, 2003, 6:00 AM
Old Rag**

Linda Akers (leader), Kenny Garrett (assistant leader), John Read, Sharon Harrison, Marianne Demkó, Terri McClure & Mike Vaughn

The group met at 6:00 a.m. at the Daleville commuter lot and soon got underway with two carloads. All went well until Linda overshot the

desired exit, and then Mike took the foggy lead and got us to the trailhead in plenty of time to get a parking spot. With Kenny in the lead we headed up the mountain on this beautiful fall day. The sky was a deep cloudless blue, breezy enough to keep us comfortable as we climbed. Trees were showing beautiful fall colors -- an all around, class 1 day!

Took a break at the first large rock outcropping with the beautiful vistas, and then moved on into the more challenging rock scrambling. Marianne, unfortunately, never got to the top of Old Rag. After slipping and breaking her upper arm, she had to slowly make her way back down the trail she had just climbed, and spent the evening in the emergency room back in Roanoke. Fortunately, our other four hikers were able to complete the trail to the top, and actually caught up with us as we approached Roanoke. A long day for all of us, but Old Rag is definitely worth the effort.

Sunday, October 12, 2003, 1:00 PM
Trout Creek to Pickle Branch

Mervin Brower (leader), Paul Blaiklock (assistant leader), Blanch Brower (sweep), Mary Lou Gaminde, Sandy Baun, Jean Warren, Michael & Maria Lindell, Pat Cousins, Jenny Wright, Erin Baratta, JoAnn Edmunds, Zetta Campbell

We left the parking lot at 1:00 and drove to the start of the trail on 620. The day was about 70° and sunny which was ideal for hiking. We saw several sinks. The Teaberries were ripe along the trail. We kept everyone together by stopping and looking at the fall leaves that had turned. We stopped at the shelter for a rest and then went back up the trail to the car park

Sunday, October 19, 2003, 8:30 AM
Douthat State Park

John A. Lynham (co-leader), Maurice Turner (co-leader), Shelley Himel, Charles Scharnberg, Diana Christopulos, Lois Smith and Gene Downs

A very compatible group and near-perfect weather made for a great day of hiking. The Stony Run and Blue Suck Creek waterfalls – though modest in size – had great flows, and Tuscarora Overlook provided a great lunchtime view. There were a number of mountain bikers out, including members of the Eastern Virginia Mountain Bikers Club, who joined us at the overlook. It was nice

having newer RATC members Diana, Shelley and Charlie along. Many thanks to Gene for “volunteering” to buy ice cream for the group after the hike. Congratulations to Maurice, who completed section hiking the AT this past summer, and thanks to Lois for providing descriptions of the various “hollows” and “glens” that are a part of this hike.

Sunday, October 19, 2003, 1:00 PM
Catawba Mountain (311) to Sawtooth (785)

Bobbie Stitcher (leader), Linda Akers, Carolyn Baratta, Erin Baratta, Blanche Brower, Mervin Brower, Georgia Gallaher, Mary Lou Gaminde, Marjorie Griffith, Jo Jo Gin, Sharon Harrison and Luke, Maria Lindell, Michael Lindell, John Read, Sue Scanlin, Liliann Vuong and Jenny Wright

On a beautiful fall Sunday afternoon, 17 hikers met at the Orange Market to hike "Sawtooth Mountain". We drove to the parking lot on Rt. 311, which was very full but we made a middle row to park. Then Bobbie and Linda drove to Rt. 785 to leave one car in the small parking space, then back to begin the hike.

We had spectacular views of Fort Lewis Mountain on the left and the Homeplace restaurant on the right. We came out into the meadows at Beckner Gap with views of Dragons tooth. There were cows with babies in the field after crossing the bridge. At the end the drivers went to get all of the cars and came back to pick up the hikers. It was a perfect fall day for a wonderful hike.



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 4, 2004 1:00 PM Catawba Mountain (Rt. 311) to Sandstone Ridge (Rt. 624)

5.9 miles, moderate, \$1.00 carpool fee
9 miles from Roanoke

The hike is in Roanoke County, west of Salem. It follows Sawtooth Ridge with, as the name implies, lots of ups and downs, then winds through open meadows across Catawba Valley, to a final climb over Sandstone Ridge and down to Route 624.

Maurice Turner

334-2128

Saturday, January 10, 2004 8:00 AM Jenny Knob Shelter Maintenance Hike

65 miles from Roanoke, \$4.00 carpool fee

David Cheslow

389-7791

Jonathan Reed

265-4782

Sunday, January 11, 2004 7:00 AM Ferrier - Lick Branch - Price Mountain. Exploratory

15 miles, Strenuous, \$2.00 carpool fee

28 miles from Roanoke

Located in Craig County east of New Castle on the border of Botetourt County, the hike will follow the Ferrier Trail to Lick Branch Trail, then follow Lick Branch trail to top of Broad Run Mountain, following the ridge to Route 606. Since this is a strenuous hike in mid-winter conditions, participants need to be in excellent condition. Carry extra warm clothing in case of emergency or to contend with icy winds on the ridge.

David L. Wickersham

774-0439

Maurice Turner

334-2128

Sunday, January 11, 2004 1:00PM Spec Mines Trail

5.6 miles, Moderate, \$1.00 carpool fee

15 miles from Roanoke

Located in Botetourt County. Trail descends 1,400 feet through mixed hardwood forest. Good views near top, especially in winter. Old open mines in area.

David Sutton

774-0648

A. Larry Austin

254-2092

Sunday, January 18, 2004 8:00 AM Trout Creek (RT 620) to Lee Hollow (RT 621) 113-Mile Hike #7

7.6 miles, Moderate, \$1.50 carpool fee

15 miles from Roanoke

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

Kenny Garrett

890-8946

Linda R. King

342-2411

Sunday, January 18, 2004 1:00 PM
Cascades

3.8 miles, Easy-Moderate, \$3.50 carpool fee
 54 miles from Roanoke

A classic walk located near Pembroke – about an hour from Roanoke. Trails run along both sides of Little Stony Creek and terminate near the Cascades – an impressive waterfall. Usually the hike will go up one side of the creek and come back on the other. Footing can be tricky in places where the trail is wet. The Forest Service charges a nominal fee (\$2.00) to park at the trailhead.

Sue Scanlin 989-0497
Jean Warren 384-6229

Sunday, January 25, 2004 8:00 AM
Work Hike on Catawba Mountain

9 miles from Roanoke

We will finish the short relocation started in November, install some additional steps, just to the north of the highway 311 and do other rehabilitation on the AT between John's Spring and the Catawba Mountain Shelter. That is the ordering of priorities, so we move to the next on completion of the previous. Work not finished today will be continued on next work hike, February 22, 2004.

Charles Parry 540-951-1402
Laurie Adkins 966-2811

Sunday, January 25, 2004 1:00 PM
Catawba Mountain (Rt. 311)
to McAfee Knob

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

Located west of Salem in Roanoke County, the hike starts from Rt. 311 parking lot on Catawba Mountain. This is a very popular hike. It is up-and-back along the Appalachian Trail. For the first two miles, the trail generally follows the ridgeline of Catawba Mountain to the Catawba Shelter. The last mile and a half of trail passes a number of unusual rock formations as it climbs to the summit of the knob. Extensive cliffs at the top afford unparalleled views of both the Catawba Valley and the city of Roanoke.

Dick Moran 389-3744
Blanche Brower 387-9732

Sunday, February 1, 2004 8:00 AM
Jenny Knob (Rt.611) to
Kimberling Creek (Rt. 606)

9.5 miles, Strenuous, \$4.50 carpool fee
 66 miles 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.

Kenny Garrett 890-8946
Maurice Turner 334-2128

Sunday, February 1, 2004 1:00 PM
Bottom Creek Gorge

5.3 miles, Easy-Moderate, \$1.00 carpool fee
 15 miles from Roanoke

Hidden away at the corner of Montgomery, Roanoke, and Floyd counties is the Bottom Creek Gorge Preserve on top of Bent Mountain. The Nature Conservancy has developed a network of trails that pass ponds, streams and meadows and follow tunnels of rhododendron that lead you around and down to the Bottom Creek Gorge, then up to a vantage point to see Bent Mountain Falls flow from a mountain side.

Lynn G. Bryant 343-2084
Mary Lou Gaminde 344-1637

Sunday, February 8, 2004 8:00 AM
Dragon's Tooth Parking to Trout Creek
(Rt. 620) by way of Boy Scout Trail
113-Mile Hike # 6

7.2 miles, Strenuous, \$1.00 carpool fee
 10 miles from Roanoke

The hike is in Craig and Roanoke County west of Salem. The hike starts on a blue-blazed trail (known as the Boy Scout trail) leading to the AT and almost to Rt. 624. It then follows the AT to Dragon's Tooth with great views, descending Cove Mountain, passing by Pickle Branch Shelter and over Trout Creek ending at Rt. 620.

Kris Peckman 366-7780
Gary Adams 540-552-0892

Sunday, February 8, 2004 1:00 PM
Stiles Falls

3 miles, Easy, \$1.50 carpool fee
 25 miles from Roanoke

Located at Camp Alta Mons in Montgomery County, the hike is in a scenic valley ending at a very nice waterfall.

Mary Lou Gaminde 344-1637
Georgina M. Gallaher 345-8700

Saturday, February 14, 2004 8:00 AM
Wapiti Shelter Maintenance Hike

60 miles from Roanoke, \$4.00 carpool fee

David Cheslow 389-7791
Jonathan Reed 265-4782

Sunday, February 15, 2004 8:00 AM
Petites Gap to James River (Rt.501)

8.6 miles, Moderate, \$3.00 carpool fee
 39 miles from Roanoke

The hike is in the James River Face Wilderness located in Bedford and Rockbridge County. It roughly parallels the Blue Ridge Parkway. After a stiff climb to Highcock Knob (3073') it's a pleasant downward trending hike to James River (678') with occasional views to the west and grand finale on the James River Foot Bridge, longest foot-travel-only bridge on the AT. Some steep, rough and rocky trail.

Laura H. Montague 725-3682
Lois C. Smith 992-3701

Sunday, February 15, 2004 1:00 PM
Dragon's Tooth Parking to Dragon's Tooth

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

The Tooth is located on Cove Mountain near Craig & Roanoke County line. The Tooth consists of spires of Tuscarora quartzite, which outcrop on the top of Cove Mountain. The tallest "tooth" projects roughly 35 feet above the surrounding rock. The trail 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, February 22, 2004 8:00 AM
Work Hike on Catawba Mountain

9 miles from Roanoke

See January 25, 2004 for description of work to be done. Work not finished today will be continued on next work hike, March 28, 2004.

Charles Parry 540-951-1402
Laurie Adkins 966-2811

Sunday, February 22, 2004 1:00 PM
Rock Castle Creek

6.4 miles, Easy-Moderate, \$3.00 carpool fee
 45 miles from Roanoke

Located in Patrick County, the trailhead is just off of Route 8 about 10 miles east of the town of Floyd. This hike is actually a relatively easy part of the much longer and more strenuous Rock Castle Gorge loop. The route follows an old Forest Service road along Rock Castle Creek – a beautiful stream that is bordered by a profusion of rhododendron and mountain laurel. There are several creek crossings (on bridges) and at one point the trail passes an old mountain homestead, which is still used in the summer. Much of the route is relatively level, but it does steepen near the end. The return route is the same.

David Sutton 774-0648
Bobbie Sticher 890-2140

Sunday, February 29, 2004 8:00 AM
Tar Jacket Ridge, Cole Mt. –
Old Hotel Trail loop

10.0 miles, Strenuous, \$3.50 carpool fee
 57 miles from Roanoke

Located in Amherst County some 20 miles northeast of Buena Vista, this loop hike offers some of the most outstanding views anywhere in the area. The trailhead is on the Appalachian Trail at Salt Log Gap roughly 8 miles from route 60 on a dirt and gravel road.

Following the A.T. south, the route climbs Tar Jacket Ridge and then Cole (a.k.a. Cold) Mountain. Both of these summits are open and offer extraordinary views in all directions – Cole Mountain especially. Less than a mile south of Cole, the route turns left onto the Old Hotel Trail at Cow Camp Gap (during the stagecoach days there was an inn in this area, but nothing remains of it today). After passing a shelter, the trail climbs a hill and then passes some old rock fences on its way to a beautiful, open park-like area (a great camp site). The last part of the hike is along a Forest Service road back to Salt Log Gap.

A. Larry Austin 254-2092
Kris Peckman 366-7780

Sunday, February 29, 2004 1:00 PM
Seven Mile Mountain

5 miles, Moderate, \$3.00 carpool fee
 38 miles from Roanoke

Located in Craig County on Forest Service land.

David Sutton 774-0648
Lynn G. Bryant 343-2084

Sunday, March 7, 2004 10:00 AM
Kimberling Creek (Rt. 606) to
Ribble Trail (South End)

5 miles, Easy, \$4.50 carpool fee

66 miles from Roanoke

Located in Giles County, the hike from Rt. 606 to the southern end of the Ribble Trail is a nice short stroll, with a great side trail to the Dismal Falls.

Kenny Garrett 890-8946

Greg Foster 389-5351

Sunday, March 7, 2004 1:00 PM
Daleville (Rt. 220) to Hay Rock

8 miles, Moderate, \$0.00 carpool fee

Except for a short feeder trail (old A.T.), the route follows the Appalachian Trail to Hay Rock and back again. There are several good overlooks along the way, but the best one is at Hay Rock. This overhanging chunk of sandstone provides shelter on one side and great views on the other – for those willing to scramble to the top.

Mervin & Blanche Brower 387-9732

Mary Lou Gaminde 344-1637

Saturday, March 13, 2004 10:00 AM
Doc's Knob Shelter Maintenance Hike

65 miles from Roanoke, \$4.00 carpool fee

David Cheslow 389-7791

Jonathan Reed 265-4782

Sunday, March 14, 2004 10:00 AM
Fort Lewis Mountain

6 miles, Moderate, \$1.50 carpool fee

Ed Wallace 774-0175

Greg Foster 389-5351

Sunday, March 14, 2004 1:00 PM
Mill Mountain Greenway

5 miles, Easy, \$0.00 carpool fee

0 miles from Roanoke

The name of this walk is something of a misnomer, since it is basically a route rather than a greenway. While the route runs from downtown Roanoke to the top of Mill Mountain, only the section along Williamson Road is a dedicated greenway – the rest is on sidewalks and along roads. The route starts at the fountain on Church Ave. near the old firehouse. It then proceeds through Elmwood Park and along Williamson Road to the Walnut Street Bridge. After crossing the bridge, the route follows the river for a while before returning to Walnut Street. The last (and steepest) part of the walk is along the old Mill Mountain road up to the star.

Bobbie Stitcher 890-2140

Jimmy Whitney 344-4117

Sunday, March 21, 2004 8:30
House Mountains, Big and Little

9 miles, Strenuous, \$3.50 carpool fee

54 miles from Roanoke

Located in Rockbridge County west of Lexington.

Purchased for preservation by the Rockbridge Area Conservation Council (RACC) in 1989, the 800+ acres including the tops of Big House and Little House Mountain, and the saddle between them, contain numerous species of plants and provide views of the Rockbridge County countryside. We will follow the 2-mile woods road to the saddle, hike another mile to the cliffs of Big House Mountain, and then return to the saddle to explore for the harder-to-find trail to the top of Little House Mountain. (6-9 miles with possibly some bushwhacking)

Kris Peckman 366-7780

Don Hoke 563-2902

Sunday, March 21, 2004 1:00PM
Wolf Creek Greenway

3 miles, Easy, \$0.00 carpool fee

0 miles from Vinton

Located in Vinton.

Jean Warren 384-6229

Sue Scanlin 989-0497

Sunday, March 28, 2004 8:00 AM
Work Hike on Catawba Mountain

9 miles from Roanoke

See January 25, 2004 work hike for description of work to be done.

Work not finished today will be continued on future work hikes.

Charles Parry 540-951-1402

Laurie Adkins 966-2811

Sunday, March 28, 2004 1:00 PM
Woods Creek Trail

5 miles, Easy, \$2.50 carpool fee

41 miles from Roanoke

Located in Lexington.

Patricia Mankin 992-2716

Jimmy Whitney 344-4117

Hike Reports (Continued)

Saturday, October 25, 2003, 8:30 AM

Work Hike followed by social Sarver Hollow

Charles Parry (leader), Mervin Brower (assistant leader), Blanche Brower, Fred Coughlan, Laurie Adkins, Gloria Parry, Bill Gordge, Dana Helsley, Bob Foutz, Dave Cheslow, Sally Spangler, Bill Floyd, Brian Kelley, Liz Belcher, Roger Holnback, Brian Chisom, Sarah King, Kari Jessen, Eric Johnston, Will Perkins, Kara Alexander, Chris Miller, Charles Lampeter, Mary Shannon Teague, Laura Cassels, Amy Fuller, Claiborne Koehler, Anna Edwards, Jonathan Freedom, Whitney Sorge, Lora Greene, Matt Rose, Undine Peeples, Hillary Peeples, Jim Ed Wills, & Ben Viemgisser

The logistics were a bit of a nightmare. I had to leave my truck at the 621 crossing, so the Roanoke College group could get tools. Dave and Sally had driven to the end of the Lee Road and headed up the mountain. The rest of us divided into two groups, both of which were headed for Sinking Creek Valley, but vehicles also had to be left at the end of the Sarver Trail. On the way to Sinking Creek Valley, we picked up Bob at the Pandapas Pond parking area. We all met again at the parking area near Sinking Creek. One group consisting of Bill G., Fred, Laurie and Mervin headed up Sinking Creek Mountain. The rest of us (Bob, Dana, Gloria, Blanche and I) took all the cars, leaving two at the 42 crossing and going to Rocky Gap in Dana's truck. Every crew was clipping, the Sinking Creek group and ours carried chainsaws and our crew blazed. So that I wouldn't be totally useless between blow downs, I scraped for Dana, who painted, while the others clipped. Just before lunch, we cut a large blow down out of the trail. When we got ready to go again, I could not find my scraper. We combed the area sifting through the leaves. Fortunately, the handle had a spot of orange paint on it that one of us spotted under the leaves. You would think, I would have learned a lesson, but about an hour later I lost it again. This time we found it quicker, but again only because of the orange spot. In late afternoon, we met Bill F. and Brian about a mile south of 42. They had started at Sinking Creek, after lunch and had blazed the trail across the open fields and into

the forest. When we got back to 42, I had to take Bill and Brian back to Sinking Creek to their cars and then Dana back to Rocky Gap. I was driving Laurie's old car and none of Dana, Gloria or I could figure out how to turn the lights on. We did manage to get the parking lights on. We decided to head for 621 as fast as we could while there was still some daylight. When we got there, Leonard, Laurie and Mac were waiting for us. We went on up to Red's for the dinner. The Roanoke College group (21 people) had arrived later and clipped and removed blow downs on the trail up past Niday Shelter. Roger and Liz also arrived later and had hiked up to Sarver Shelter, meeting the two groups coming down.

Sunday, October 26, 2003, 1:00 PM
Chessie Nature Trail

Ralph Hart (leader), Don Hoke (co-leader), Diana Christopulos, H.R. Blankenship, Mike Lindell, Maria Lindell, Anita Austin, Caryl Connolly

Even though Daylight Savings time ended earlier this day, the sky was dark and cloudy and rain was forecast for later in the day, we still experienced an enjoyable hike. The weather conditions were bad enough to discourage some individuals from joining us on the hike. The rain did start just as we finished the hike and it was dark by the time we returned to Roanoke. We did encounter a short detour away from the trail near milepost 3½. One end of the former railroad bridge used for crossing a stream just prior to flowing into the Maury River is now lying in the water. It is necessary to walk to the nearby roadway, which is Stuartsburg Road (Route 608), and go approximately ¼ mile to a gravel road that leads back into the trail. The Chessie Nature Trail is a very popular walking trail and we met several other people, both young and older, who were out enjoying the walk despite the undesirable weather conditions.

Sunday, November 2, 2003, 8:00 AM
Route 52 near I-77 to Lickskillet Hollow

Bobbie Stitcher (co-leader), John Lynham (co-leader), H.R. Blankenship, Gary Hale, Shelly & Charles Himel and Jerry Kyle

Five hikers met at the Orange Market on a beautiful fall Sunday morning. We picked up Gary at Ironto, and then continued south on I-81 to Rt. 100 to Rt. 42. We left a car at Licksillet Hollow and drove to the parking lot near Rt.52. There we were met by Jerry who drove from West Virginia to hike with us. The beginning of the hike is a climb but most of it is ridge walking. Since most of the leaves were off the trees we had wonderful views on each side of the trail. The temperature was near 80 °. We ate lunch and finally hiked down to our car, went to get the other car and then drove back to Roanoke. It was a beautiful hike in unusually warm weather for the beginning of November.

**Sunday, November 2, 2003, 1:00 PM
Harkening Hill**

Dave Sutton (leader), Sue Scanlin (assistant leader), Jean Warren, Nita Austin, Neil McKinney, Caryl Connolly, Phil Michaels, Irina Michaels, Mary Lou Gaminde, Beth Ryan, Zetta Campbell, & Sharon Rippee

The visitor's center parking area was full and some drivers had to park ¼ mile further on the south side of the parkway. The hike was underway by 2 PM. We hiked the steepest part of the loop first heading north. The view on the summit at 3300 ft was breathtaking. We hiked down to "Balanced Rock" where some hikers actually climbed atop it (at their own risk). It was kind of like surf'n. This rock is really balanced! The tour of Johnson Farm showed us how the family lived during the 1920's. Descending the trail it was good to finally see Zetta and Sharon who were ascending due to a later start. It was a terrific fall day for a hike and we all made it back without incident.

**Sunday, November 9, 2003, 8:30 AM
Work Hike Catawba Mountain**

Charles Parry (leader), Laurie Adkins (assistant leader), Bob Foutz, Fred Coughlan, Malcolm Black, Greg Still, Dana Helsley, Kris Peckman, Brian Chisom, & Sarah King

We met at the 311 parking area and decided to remove a blow down south of 311 first thing. It was a large tree, but two cuts made short work of it. Next, we drove in the fire road about 1.5 miles

with Dana's and my trucks and Laurie's old car. We planned to begin a short relocation, about 1/2 mile south of Catawba Mountain Shelter, around a badly eroded area. I had previously flagged it, but had decided to shorten it. We never found any old flags. Kris and I flagged the new route while the others began work. Unfortunately, we had to put in a switchback, but otherwise the route came out great. By lunchtime, we rounded the switchback and headed down the straightaway. We got around 500 feet of new trail built. We should finish this improvement sometime this winter.

**Sunday, November 9, 2003, 1:00 PM
Carvins Cove Boat Launch to Cemetery**

Georgia Gallaher (leader), Dick Moran (assistant leader), Erin Moran, Margaret Moran, Paul Blaiklock, P.W. Bryant, Jean Warren, Patty Allen, Brenda Tatum, Beverley Manning, Sherry Kessel, Zetta Campbell, Marianne Russell, Marjorie Griffith, Neil McKinney, & Charliece Daniel.

The weather was just perfect for our hike. It was a clear day, not too cold or too hot. We all met at the boat launch area at the Roanoke City's reservoir. There was a small fee per person of \$1 for city residents and \$2 for all others. The hike was on an out and back trail with a total distance traveled of approximately 5 miles. The group stopped at the cemetery for a break to rest and eat a snack. Some of the hikers explored the cemetery looking at the very old grave markers there. We then walked a short distance to the edge of the cove. The sunlight sparkled on the water while a fisherman drifted in his boat. It was quite a change in scenery from this time a year ago when the drought was upon us. Our group then hiked back to the boat launch area. We got back in plenty of time before it started to get dark or cold.

**Sunday, November 16, 2003, 7:30 AM
Greenbrier State Forest**

John A. Lynham (leader), Maurice Turner (assistant leader), Lois Smith, Larry Austin, Charlie Scharnberg, Shelley Himel, & Jerry Kyle

Yes, we all got a little wet, but not too much, and yes we got cold, but only when we stopped for lunch, and yes Jerry was only with us toward the end of the hike, but we were happy he caught up with us, and yes we're glad we went because it's a

pretty spot and all the little streams had plenty of water and the conversation was good and we returned safely. All this and you want sunshine too?

Sunday, November 16, 2003, 1:00 PM

Catawba Mountain (311) to McAfee Knob (AT)

Hike cancelled due to rain.

Sunday, November 16, 2003

Work Hike Catawba Mountain

Charles Parry, Terri McClure, Scott Ikard, Lindsey King, Jenn Cicia, & Susan Chasteen

Scott and the three girls are students at James Madison University. Scott is also Terri's son. Scott had called me awhile back about doing a service project for Alpha Phi Omega, which is a national college service fraternity. Terri had called me earlier in the week and we decided to work on this relocation. Terri and I met at the 311 parking lot around 9:30 and had to wait a little while for the students. Unfortunately, it was a drizzly day. We drove out the fire road in Terri's and my trucks. When we got to the work site, we discovered that we needed to clear some more trail. I got two of the girls raking leaves, one clipping, Terri and Scott digging, while I used the chainsaw. I soon finished the saw work and joined the diggers. Terri offered to buy us all lunch at the Homeplace, if we worked until 1 o'clock. We took her up on the offer. We got about 100 feet more of new trail dug and quite a bit more cleared and raked.

Sunday, November 23, 2003, 8:00 AM

**Black Horse Gap to Salt Pond Road
Via the 1930 AT**

Kris Peckman (1934 Trail Guide reader), Gary Bible (co-leader), Fred Coughlan (co-leader), Dana Helsley (co-leader), Caryl Connolly, Jim Folger, Kenny Garrett, Lance Garrett, Harry Neumann, & Bob Peckman

Abundant sunshine and temperatures in the 60's provided the backdrop for a late-morning start from Black Horse Gap for ten hikers attempting to follow the original AT routing by using the 1934 Trail Guide. With able assistance provided by the reader of directions, the co-leaders managed to not get lost and succeeded in negotiating the entire track with only minor variances from the

Guide, primarily on account of a desire to avoid blowdowns and briar patches. Even with these best efforts, the briars did succeed in drawing some blood from the occasional unwary hiker. On the positive side, the cooperative weather generally provided very good views from several points along the track, but haze in the Roanoke area restricted views to the southwest and into the city.

As did last time, considerable controversy again erupted among the hikers about what should be done regarding the broken trail maintainer's tool found just below the summit of Blue Knob. Speculation on its origin and current condition has now expanded to two theories - the first being that it belongs to Dr. Parry and should be returned to him such that he may again attempt to repair it, and the second that the trail maintainer who broke it was so afraid of returning it in that state that he purposely left it behind. Admittedly, the second theory has little credence as it is highly unlikely that any of RATC's tools would ever come up missing at the end of a workhike.

The narrow ridge off Washington Knob has a steep slope as it descends into Curry Creek ravine, and that circumstance coupled with a heavy concentration of blowdowns slowed the hikers some, but they continued to press on to the unimproved section of Curry Creek trail. They eventually found it at a point about a quarter mile south of where it junctions with the current AT. Per the appropriate guidance offered by the reader of directions, an upstream turn while proceeding downstream, and then an ascent into a gap with trails coming in from the right and left, and the short day's bushwhacking experience was over all too soon. As the tired group emerged into Curry Gap, the co-leaders were finally able to attain a reasonable accounting of all the hikers and found that they had not lost a single one - and, a good time was reportedly had by all of them on this successful hike.

Sunday, November 23, 2003, 1:00 PM
Mill Mountain Loop

Georgia Gallaher (leader), Paul Blaiklock (assistant leader), Diana Christopulos, Mark McClain, Mary Russell & Madison, Mary Lou Gaminde, John Read, Sue Scanlin, Linda Akers, Creg Bradley, David Bowers, David Sutton, & Linda Sutton.

This turned out to be another perfect and beautiful day for hiking. Everyone in our group was trying to squeeze in as much outdoor time as possible before winter weather forces us inside. Our hike group included three hikers that are new to the area. They have just recently moved here from other states. Members of our hiking group who have spent most if not all of their lives in the Roanoke area shared stories of area history and present items of interest with the newcomers. When we reached the top of Mill Mountain the Visitor Center provided more information about the mountain and the zoo. The hike went very well. On some parts of the trail we had to plow through deep piles of leaves. Three deer were spotted on the mountain.

**Sunday, November 30, 2003, 1:00 PM
Daleville to Hay Rock**

Dave Sutton (co leader), Don Hoke (co leader), Bobbie Stitcher (co leader), Maurice Turner, Joyce Fisher, Lois Smith, Larry Austin, P.W. Bryant, Diana Christopulos, Gene Downs, Linda Akers, John Read, Georgia Gallaher, Jean Warren, Dale & Soc Robertson, Madeline Taylor & Mike, & Zetta Campbell

The day brought us a clear sky and cool temps. It was great to see a wonderful group of hikers and even the dogs they brought. From the park and ride lot, the short feeder trail (old A.T.) brought us to the present A.T. During the first quarter mile,

Georgia tripped and fell. She hit her head on something, so she and Peggy turned around to insure her well-being. She is O.K. now. There were several terrific views of Carvin's Cove along the trail. When we finally reached Hay Rock (which is a massive overhanging chunk of sandstone) hikers began cautiously creeping to the top for even better views. Later, coming down the trail, deer were seen. It turned dark just as we returned to the park and ride lot.

**Sunday, December 7, 2003, 1:00 PM
Bearwallow Gap to Jennings Creek (AT)**

Kenny Garrett (leader), Lois Smith, Laura Montague, Bobbie Stitcher, Linda Akers, John Read, Gary Bible, & Madeline Taylor

We elected to take an alternate hike from Daleville lot north on the A.T. to Rt. 652 and back due to the snow and ice from Thursday. The original stroll was scheduled to begin at Bearwallow Gap, which we felt still would have plenty of snow and ice. The 8 of us enjoyed the bright sunshine as we walked over the snow across the rolling hills. The temperature remained in the low 30's, with a light breeze. We laughed at each other as we crossed several slippery sections, but no one fell in the snow. The view from the hilltop above Rt. 652 was amazing. I believe everyone really enjoyed the afternoon walk through the crisp winter day.

**If you plan to be away,
please let us know and
we will put a first-class
stamp on your Blazer.**

**That is cheaper and easier than
paying for the notice that your
Blazer went into the trash! –**

Therese



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

Calling Artistic RATC Hikers

The RATC t-shirt needs a new design. You have the opportunity to show us your talents. A T-shirt design competition will take place at the Annual Banquet on March 13. RATC members attending the banquet will select 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners to be announced at the banquet. Each winner will receive a prize and will have their design on a future RATC shirt. Please limit your designs to using up to three different colors.

If you are interested in participating, please send your submissions with name, address, phone number and e-mail by February 28, 2004 to: Stephanie Kent, 6357 Breckinridge Mill Rd, Fincastle VA 24090. If you have any questions, e-mail Stephanie at skent65@hotmail.com or call 540-966-6475.

Stephanie Kent

THANKS

I would like to thank RATC for the lovely flower and plant arrangement you sent during my recuperation from the snakebite. Everyone's interest and concern were greatly appreciated. I hope no one else in the Club ever gets to have the same experience. It's a testament to the rarity and relative docility of rattlesnakes that this hasn't happened

more often. I hiked up to McAfee Knob doing some maintenance on Saturday, so I really feel this is behind me. Thanks again. The plants are still green and cheerful.

Cheers! Take a Hike! Be careful in tall grass!

Laurie Adkins