

TRAIL BLAZER

NEWSLETTER OF THE ROANOKE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CLUB

Spring 2009

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.

CALENDAR OF CLUB ACTIVITIES

**Annual Cornboil
Saturday August 8**

WORK HIKES

**Sunday, April 26 - 8:30 AM & 1:00 PM
Tinker Ridge relocation**

**Saturday & Sunday, May 23 & 24 - 8:00 AM
Mountain Lake, Stony Creek**

**Saturday & Sunday, June 13/14 - 8:00 AM
Bluff City Relocation**

Hike Scheduling

**Contact Mike Vaughn
992-1350 – mikeva999@yahoo.com**

BOARD MEETINGS

(All members are always welcome.
Please let the host know you plan to attend.)

**Monday, April 14, 7:30 p.m.
Hosted by Roger Holnback**

**Monday, June 1, 7:30 p.m.
Hosted by Charles Parry**

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Taylor Witcher at Springer Mt.

Taylor Witcher started her thru-hike on the Appalachian Trail on March 7. She has a web page where you can follow her hike. It is www.trailjournals.com/cascade. It can get lonely by yourself, so feel free to send some encouragement her way.

Welcome New Members

The Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club welcomes the following new members:

Denise Brandt
Les & Kathy Brown
Dianne Ford
Jennifer Holman

Neal Jones
Mike Marinos
Teruyo Mercer
Ron Nush

Alan Simpson
Jeffery Wechowski
David Wilson

And we thank the following for their donations:

Katrina Cometa
Kim Ferguson
Alice Gallagher

Ursula & Siegfried Kolmstetter
Diane F. McVaney
Daniel & Marjorie Petry

Robert Rich
Jennifer Holman & Alan Simpson
Rich & Sue Terrell

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

Mervin Brower

Trail Supervisor's Report

Spring is here and it is time to tidy up the trail again. From what I have seen and heard, it does not appear that the winter caused too much damage, which is good. The Konnarock Crews will be here June 11 – 15 and August 6 -10. We will be working on the Bluff City relocation in the Pearisburg area. We have 2 weeks scheduled here for both this year and next. Everyone is welcome to come and join us for a day or more. Remember that 5 days will get you a Konnarock T-shirt.

Hat & T-shirt Awards

Each year we give out hat and T-shirt awards to trail

workers. To get a hat you must work 4 days, for a T-shirt you must work 7 days and to get both you must work 9 days. The year of record is Oct. 1, 2007 – Sept. 30, 2008. The awards are given out at the annual banquet. This year's winners for a hat are: Bill Floyd, Blanche Brower, Frank Haranzo, Fred Coughlan, Fred Meyer, Joe Kelley, Kris Peckman, Maurice Turner, Mervin Brower, Mike Rielly, Mike Vaughn, Ron Sloan, Steve Burt, Virginia Rielly. The T-shirt winners are: Chase Davidson, Dick Clark, Mike Smith, Ron McCorkle. Those who won both are: Charles Parry, Dana Helsley, Hal Cantrill, Homer Witcher, Jerry Kyle, Kenny Garrett, Ralph Hart, Therese Witcher. Congratulations to everyone.

Charles Parry

Land Management Supervisor Carvins Cove Trail Plan

The City of Roanoke is developing a Trail Plan and a Recreation Plan for Carvins Cove Natural Reserve. There are approximately 15 miles of the AT that are on City land, protected by an easement bought by the National Park Service. Sawmill Branch Trail provides access to the AT from the Cove and is open to hikers only. Pathfinders for

Greenways and the Greenway Commission are assisting the City by coordinating trail assessments of existing trails and compiling input from users. Anyone wishing to comment on existing trails, trail management, or needs should e-mail Liz Belcher by April 15 at lbelcher@roanokecountyva.gov, Subject: Carvins Cove Comments.

Liz Belcher

RATC Overseer Assignments Spring 2009

VA 611	Jonathan McGlumphy	VA 621	Mervin and Blanche Brower
VA 608	Jerry Kyle & John Lynham	VA 620	Bob & Kris Peckman
VA 606	Mike & Virginia Reilly, Mike Sowder	VA 624	Maurice Turner, Mac McDaniel & Ralph Hart
Dismal Creek	Bill Floyd & Leslie Kay	VA 311	Frank Haranzo & Wes Barnes
Ribble Trail (north end)	Matt Gentry	Campbell Shelter	Ron McCorkle
Powerline	Charles & Gloria Parry	Brickey's Gap	Homer & Therese Witcher
US 460 Bridge	-----	Ditch Trail	Dick Clark
Pine Swamp Shelter	David Jones	Angel's Gap	Mike Ferguson
Bailey Gap Shelter	Hal Cantrill, Bob Foutz	US 220	Homer & Therese Witcher
War Spur Trail	Bob Stimson	VA 652	Mike Vaughn
Rocky Gap	Joe, Brian & Leigh Anne Kelly	Salt Pond Road	Dana Helsley, Fred Coughlan & Gary Bible
Sinking Creek	Chase Davidson & Linda King	Blackhorse Gap	
Niday Trail	Mike & Betty Smith	Andy Layne Trail:	RATC
VA 621			

Hikemaster's Report

Spring is a favorite time of the year for many hikers. It is great to be out on a trail after being indoors during the winter. Watching the forest come back to life over the Spring season is one of life's simple pleasures. While I enjoy going out on hikes on my own, I also equally enjoy going out on club hikes. The camaraderie of sharing the outdoors with others makes hiking even more enjoyable. As you can see from the hike reports in the Trailblazer, the hikes are usually great fun. So get out and enjoy the many trails in our area, whether on your own or on a club hike.

At our March banquet several hike leaders received hats and club T-shirts for leading

multiple hikes over the past year. Hats for leading 4 - 6 hikes went to Gary Bible, Maya Bohler, Zetta Campbell, Hugh Hall, Linda King, Dave Sutton, Maurice Turner, Mike Vaughn and Ed Wallace. T-shirts for leading 7 - 8 hikes went to Kenny Garrett and Jean Warren. John Miller and Kris Peckman received both a hat and T-shirt for leading nine or more hikes. Both John and Kris led nine or more hikes last year as well. Thanks to all of the hike leaders for helping the club over the past year!

Nicolas Hinze, a local hiker, has created a great new web site, www.trailheadfinder.com. He has added maps, hike descriptions and trail head

directions for many hikes in our area. Trails listed on the site include Angel's Rest, Sawtooth Ridge, and Apple Orchard Falls. He plans on adding many more hikes and trails throughout Virginia, as well as other states. Please contact him at the web site if you are interested in helping add trail descriptions to the trailhead database. We have added a link to the site on the club's web site, www.RATC.org.

RATC.org is adding a list of hikes for the 113 miles of the A.T. that the club maintains. There are a total of 14 hikes listed. There are descriptions of the hikes, directions to the trailhead, as well as maps for most of the hikes.

Please print out the document to help you keep track of your hikes on our section of trail. Let me know when you complete all 113 miles and I will send you one of the RATC "113 mile club" patches.

Did you know that the club sends out an email to members every two weeks, listing upcoming hikes? This is a convenient way of finding out about our hikes. Please email me at mikeva999@yahoo.com if you wish to be added to the distribution list for future emails.

Mike Vaughn

Hike Reports

Sunday, September 7, 2008 1:30PM Hoop Hole, Lower Loop – Beginner Hike

Zetta Campbell, Leader, Steve (last name?), Sherry Kessel, Dena Goldberg, Fred Walters, Connie Walters

It was a beautiful sunny day and, while we had had some rain, the stream did not have a lot of water in it to make crossings difficult. Yet the boulders make them rather tricky. On the last half of the hike, Connie ran back up the trail screaming "BEES!" We hikers had disturbed a nest of yellow jackets. Sherry, in front, evidently stirred them up, but went on in time to avoid being stung, while the rest came on in time to get it, all but the leader in the rear (Where else would she be?). One of the fellows found a way to circumvent their nest and led the leader around it. This is a beautiful area with little elevation change but, because of the stream crossings, I would not rate it as a beginner hike, but as low moderate.

Saturday, November 22, 2008 10:00AM Seven Mile Mountain Beginner Hike

Changed to Carvin's Cove; editor lost report.
Zetta Campbell (leader)

Sunday, December 7, 2008 8:00AM Tinker Ridge Work Hike

Charles Parry, Dick Clark, Kevin Jordan, Doug Buchanan, Orion Birch, Adam Cox, Wes Barnes, Chris Rose, Nick Hinze, Marie Hernandez, Shannon Lellingner, Jonathan McGlumphy, Homer Witcher, Therese Witcher

Thanks to Kevin, we were joined by the Roanoke Outdoor and Social Club, which gave a big boost to our attendance. When we got to the site, we discovered that Homer and Therese had done some work since the last time we were there. However, there was still plenty of work left. After awhile Homer and Therese arrived and wanted to know if they could blaze the second segment of the relocation. I said sure as we were mainly working on the third part. The day was sunny and a bit cool, but it would be hard to get much better working conditions in December. In the afternoon, we started running into some rocks and places that needed steps. We managed to get in a couple of steps, but with no rock-bars, moving rocks was quite difficult. I made a note to take up rock-bars next time. Around 3:00 the crew began showing signs of fatigue, so we quit and headed out. We had a good day, having dug about 500 feet of new trail. We hope we can have more opportunities to work with our friends from ROSC.

Sunday, December 7, 2008 10:00AM A.T., Lee Hollow (Rt 621) to Audie Murphy Monument

Jean Warren (leader), Bob Peckman (report loser)

Sunday, December 14, 2008 8:00AM A.T., Elk Garden (Rt 600) to Rt 58

John Miller (leader), Kris Peckman (co-leader), Carl Cornett, Pat Guzik, Carol Broderson, Fred Walters, Mia Copeland, and Alan Raflo

Thanks to Carol, who agreed to meet us at the trail head and help with the car switch, we only had to take two vehicles from Salem. We picked several hikers up on the way and by the time we started hiking the temperature was in the low 40's. We started out on the north slope and had some snow on the trail and ice on some rocks which made us pay close attention to where our feet were.



They do call it Buzzard's Rock

During the hike we saw a red squirrel and three deer as well as many different species of trees. Several of the hikers tried to identify the trees based on the bark. We had planned to have lunch at Buzzard Rock but found the wind to be too strong and cold to be enjoyable so we descended the southern slope where the wind was not as high. The views from Buzzard Rock were great though.



View at Buzzard's Rock

We finished the hike with temperatures in the lower 50's and well before dark but it was after

dark by the time we got back to Salem. The hike leader would like to do this hike again in warmer weather so more time could be spent enjoying the views from the balds and rocks.

**Sunday, December 14, 2008 1:00PM
Trout Creek (Rt. 620) to Pickle Branch Shelter**

Kenny Garrett (leader), Dena Goldberg, Mary Gilbert & K-9 Son

I was really surprised at such a small group on such a pretty December afternoon. We drove to the trailhead (thru the creek) in my trusty ol' truck. We had a beautiful stroll on this easy out and back hike along the AT. The temps held in the low 40's, with a slight breeze. The sun was mixed with a few clouds and provided nice views of the valley and surrounding mountains. Pickle Branch Shelter was found to be in great shape and the small hamlet where it sits was as peaceful as ever. K-9 Son had fun running to and fro, getting his exercise without losing sight of Mary. This was a wonderful pre-holiday leg stretcher.

**Sunday, December 21, 2008 8:30AM
War Spur Trail/A.T. Loop**

Mike Vaughn (leader), Mike Marinos, Pat Guzik, Gary Bible, Fred Meyer

The weather forecast called for cold and windy weather. We arrived at the trail head in the Mountain Lake wilderness area, near Blacksburg, at about 9:30. At nearly 4,000 feet, the weather in the wilderness area was particularly bad, with wind gusts up to 30 MPH and an air temperature that did not go above 30 degrees all day. It was snowing when we started out on the trail. We soon arrived at a stand of mature hemlocks along a scenic stream on the Chestnut Trail. Moving on, we turned right on the War Spur Trail. We passed the source of a small stream that was bubbling up from the ground. After another mile, we reached the A.T. and headed south. Soon after, we stopped for lunch at a campsite along the trail. We did not linger long due to the low temperatures and wind. Several of us noted that our hands quickly got numb when our gloves were off. We next stopped at Wind Rock, the highlight of the hike. It certainly lived up to its name today. The views

were great looking across to the mountains in West Virginia. We then hiked the last couple of miles to complete the loop back at the car. On the way out, we stopped and had a look at Mountain Lake. Well over 90% of the lake has dried up. There is a small pool left at the far end of the lake, away from the lodge. The water level there has dropped about 40 feet.

**Sunday, December 21, 2008 1:00PM
Tinker Cliffs via Andy Layne Trail**

Sue Scanlin (leader), H.R. Blankenship, Steven Tomaziefski, Mary Gilbert and Sonny

A few days before Christmas, hiking doesn't seem to be high on people's activity lists, even if it's sunny. The four of us left Hanging Rock OM shortly after 1PM and were on the trail by 1:30 PM. In no time the three fast hikers were out of sight and Sue followed at her own pace.

Along the creek the trail was quite muddy and slippery and to the side, lots of bright yellow osage oranges were lying around, some with definite chew marks on them. Maybe they are edible to some critters after all?

As we got higher, the wind picked up considerably and made the trees 'sing'; I heard two distinct sounds coming from the trees: one was a lamenting kind of a groan, the other a high pitched squeal. By the time I took a break at the intersection with the AT, Mary and Sonny were coming back down already. So I just turned around right there and also went back down. Mary was long gone by the time I arrived at the parking lot and I didn't need to wait long before H.R. and Steven appeared there, too. On the drive back to Hanging Rock OM, the sun going down behind the mountains ahead of us bathed the entire valley in a red glow; a beautiful ending to a good afternoon.

**Sunday, January 4, 2009 8:00AM
Mountain Lake Loop**

Carl Cornett (leader), Gary Bible (co-leader), Karen Callahan, Pat Guzik, John Merkwon, Bob Peckman, Kris Peckman

By the time our seven hikers left the Mountain Lake Conservancy parking lot at 9:15 a.m., the

rain had stopped, and the sun had broken out. We followed the Middle Jungle Trail, turned onto White Pine Road, crossed Rt. 613, and stopped to admire the cottage/old boat house. Turning onto the Indian Trail as it follows the east shoreline of the lake, a stop at the Garden of the Gods was in order. This area is rightly named for it has massive boulders covered with lush ferns and moss. Some opted to crawl through a tunnel in the rocks. We stopped for laughs and picture taking on a pontoon boat in the middle of the dry lake. Arriving at the famous Mountain Lake Gazebo, we reenacted a scene from the movie, Dirty Dancing.

Proceeding up the mountain, the group arrived at our lunch break, Bear Cliffs, and watched a young man scramble over slick rocks among the many deep crevices below us. After some exploring ourselves, the hike continued back on the same trail to the junction with a trail leading to the UVA Biological Station Campus. Unfortunately this trail was confusing, looking the same as our incoming path and even having the same wide yellow blazes.

Kris took a rest break at this point and the rest of us moved ahead, but stopped a short time later when Kris had not caught up with us. After walking back to where we last saw her and wondering where she might be, a plan was agreed upon: we would split into two teams. Team A (Bob, Pat, and Carl) would take the Biological Campus Trail and go down to the road. Team B (Gary, Karen, and John) would continue in the direction we had been going. Cell phone numbers were exchanged, but it turned out that we had cellphone service at the Cliffs, but nowhere else.

Team A found Kris not too far down the Biological Trail coming towards us. She had booked to catch up and booked back when she hit the road and realized what she had done. Instead of doing what we said we would do, we thought we could catch up with the others. When we got to the Hotel, Team B was not there. Pat and Bob waited while Kris and Carl checked the Bald Knob road and trail. When that didn't work, Bob and Pat walked Rt. 613 to the cars where Karen and John told them that Gary was waiting at the road where the A team should have come out. When

we all got together again at the hotel, we had some great laughs sorting the whole escapade out while eating cookies.

**Sunday, January 4, 2009 1:00PM
Daleville (Rt 220) to Mountain Pass Rd (Rt 652)**

Dave Sutton (leader), Linda Sutton (assistant), Dena Goldberg, Mary Gilbert, Son (canine), Caryl Connolly, Scott & Laurie Spangler, Mark Packett, Bill & Carlin Krause, Robin Hinricks, Brad, Vicki, Luke, and Mark McClean.

The rain never materialized so we had a really nice day. We shuttled to Mountain Pass Rd and parked parallel with the road. As we hiked up the cow pasture south we saw evidence of cows, but no cows. We had a high barbed wire fence to cross over and we all made it with ease. Linda lost her hiking stick and Laurie lost her sunglasses. After the hike we went back and found them, both. We all had a lot of fun and will return someday.

**Sunday, January 11, 2009 8:00AM
Curry Creek Trail to Troutville (Rt 11)**

Dave Wickersham (leader), Maya Bohler (assistant), Carl Cornett, Pat Guzik and Kris Peckman.

The Curry Creek Trail begins in the Jefferson National Forest near Camp Bethel and connects to the AT. The plan was to hike the Curry Creek trail up to the AT, turn south on the AT and finish at Route 11, a distance of about 9 miles.

We dropped a car at the Route 11 junction with the AT and proceeded to the Curry Creek trailhead. The only problem was that the hike leader, yours truly, could not find the Curry Creek trail. In my defense I should mention that the trail, in its lower reaches, is not maintained or blazed and is rarely used.

I knew that we were parked at the right trailhead and I knew that hiking up any of the drainages in the area would eventually lead us to the AT. We set out following what I thought might be the right one but after seeing no familiar landmarks we had a quick meeting and decided to just keep bushwhacking up the drainage we were in rather

than go back to the start and scout around for the actual trail.

Luckily there were no troublesome thickets, blow-downs or other obstacles, and we arrived at the AT almost as fast as if we had been on the trail. We turned south on the AT not knowing whether we were already south of the Curry Creek Trail – AT junction or whether we would pass it on our way. After about a half mile we had our answer as we came upon the junction.

As we continued south the wind picked up on the ridges and it got bitter cold. We arrived at Fulhardt Knob right at noon so we stopped at the shelter there for lunch.

After lunch the trail began descending to Route 11. It was amazing how dramatically warmer it was at the lower elevations.

It was a great hike, with great company and, lucky for me, the group surprisingly enjoyed the adventuresome bushwhack at the beginning even more than if we had known exactly where we were.

When we shuttled back to pick up the vehicle we spent some time searching for the start of the Curry Creek Trail but to no avail.

UPDATE – On January 18 I returned to find the Curry Creek trailhead by hiking down trail from the AT. I started down the Salt Pond Road from the Blue Ridge Parkway. I turned north when I intersected the AT and shortly dropped into the Curry Creek drainage where I turned onto the Curry Creek Trail. After a couple of miles I arrived at Forest Service Route 643. After a little scouting around it became obvious why I missed the trailhead the previous week. Route 643 washed out and the forest service elected not to repair it. The “Road Ends 200 Feet” sign I used to use as a landmark is now about 3/4 mile up the road from where it used to be.

For anyone wishing to hike the Curry Creek Trail, go to the washed out bridge on Route 643. Walk about 3/4 mile further down the road to where it makes a sharp right turn while heading down hill. Watch on the outside of the turn for the trail.

There is no sign but there is a brown post where a sign used to be.

For anyone just wishing to connect to the AT from Route 643 you could do what we did on the club hike. Just park near the wash out and walk up that drainage. It's about the same distance to the AT as it is from the Curry Creek Trailhead and you avoid the ½ mile of road walking.

**Sunday, January 11, 2009 1:00PM
Star Trail**

Maurice Turner (leader), Zetta Campbell, Caryl Connolly, David Bower & Catcher, Margarita Cubas, Mary Gilbert and Rita Krasnow.

Because of the time, some hikers decided to just do the Star Trail. I led other hikers onto the Thrush Trail that starts at the water tank and ends at the Parkway Spur to Mill Mtn. We then crossed over to the Ridgeline Trail to the top and took the Riser Trail to Big Sunny that emptied onto the old road that led us to the Watchtower Trail and then back to the Star Trail. There is approximately ten or more miles of trails in the Mill Mtn trail system, and trail maps can be obtained at the Discovery Center.

**Sunday, January 18, 2009 8:30AM
Tinker Ridge Work Hike**

Cancelled

**Sunday, January 25, 2009 8:00AM
Cascades to Butt Mountain**

Linda King & Kris Peckman (leaders), Maya Bohler, H.R. Blankenship, Carl Cornett, Charles Davidson, Fred Walters, Mia Copeland, Mike Marinos & Karen Callahan

We had a perfect day for this hike. The sky was clear, the air a bit nippy, lots of ice on the creek and the falls were frozen. Gentle reader, if you haven't hiked the Cascades, do so. If you haven't seen the falls frozen, hike it in winter. If you haven't hiked to Barney's Wall, and to Butt Mountain lookout, do so because it is worth every wind-sucking step of the way! We had such a great day we wanted to turn around and do it all over again!

**Sunday, January 25, 2009 1:00PM
Stony Creek (Rt 635) to Bailey Gap Shelter**

Kenny Garrett & Sue Scanlin (leaders)
We decided not to go with just the two of us.

**Sunday, February 1, 2009 8:00AM
Montebello Fish Hatchery to Crabtree Falls**

Mike Vaughn & John Miller (co-leaders), Hugh Hall, Fred Meyer, Larry Austin, Lois Smith, Paul Jones, Jen Shaeffer, Gary Bible

It was a bright, sunny day as we started out on the gravel road from the Montebello Fish Hatchery. After a steady climb we reached the A.T. and headed north into the Priest Wilderness Area. After about a half mile we reached the first noteworthy landmark on our hike, Spy Rock. This is an impressive granite dome that offers a tremendous 360 degree view of the surrounding mountains. After some rock scrambling we reached the top of the rock. From the summit we could see Apple Orchard Mountain, some 25 miles south of us, as well as Three Ridges Mountain to the north. There was a steady, strong wind so we did not linger long in the open.

We resumed our hike north. There were several blowdowns across the trail from recent winter storms. We stopped for lunch at Crabtree Meadows. Here we were out of the wind and the warm sunshine was very welcome. We left the A.T. here and took the trail to the top of Crabtree Falls. The falls were spectacular, with great columns of ice on each cascade. Unfortunately, the trail down from the mountain was mostly covered with a slick layer of ice. The falls are in a north-facing ravine that does not get any direct sun in the winter. We had to bushwhack down the side of the mountain. This was a steep, 1,200 foot descent. Luckily the ground away from the trail was mainly free of ice. Still it was slow going. In several places we had to slide down. Luckily, we all made it down safely. The trip back to Roanoke was uneventful.

**Sunday, February 1, 2009 1:00PM
Cascades National Scenic Trail**

Sue Scanlin & Pat Guzik (co-leaders), Rita Krasnow with Lola, Rhonda Chewning, Dena Goldberg, Mary Gilbert with Sonny and guests:

Sepp Scanlin, Chris Bryant with his dog, Ruth Dickerson, Neil McKinney, Helen Young, Angie Gunther, and Birley Prince

The actual meeting time of 12 noon for the Roanoke group was a compromise of the 11 AM that the leader had signed up for and the 1 PM that was given in the Blazer. The Christiansburg group, led by Pat, met the Roanoke group at the Cascades parking area around 1 PM.

It was a balmy, sunny day. In fact, it was gorgeous and quite atypical for February. On the way up, we wondered if the Cascades would be frozen solid or not. Along Little Stony Creek, there was plenty of ice and pretty icicles could be seen above the water and along the sides of the valley, but the trail itself was dry and - except for a few iced-over rocks - free of ice. The majority of our group had never been to the Cascades before and their 'Oohs' and 'Aahs' at the beauty of the scenery just kept coming as we progressed up the trail. The falls themselves were only frozen around the lower sides. In the pool below, a huge circular icefloe kept making its rounds and shedding off pieces every once in a while which then 'escaped' down the creek. The forward group split into two subgroups on the way back down, one retracing their steps along the creek, the other taking the fire road. Pat, the sweep, and the rear group weren't too far behind everyone else at the end, and thus a beautiful day's experience came to an end.



Little Stony Creek - Sue Scanlin

**Sunday, February 8, 2009 8:00AM
Cahas Mountain**

Maurice Turner (leader); Dick Moran (co-leader),

Carl Cornett, Gary Bible, David Wickersham, John Merkwan, Larry Austin, Maya Bohler, David Wilson, Kris & Bob Peckman, David Bowers, Margarita Cubas, Carol McPeak, Jen Schaeffer, Chris Lynch, and Alex Bier.

We started our hike on the south side of Cahas, parking our vehicles along a gravel road next to a grape vineyard. We appreciate the Garst family for allowing us to hike the mountain.

The gravel road to the tower was very steep most of the way giving us a good workout at the outset. Cahas is 3,553 feet above sea level. The weather was warm with the temperature around 60 with the sky partly cloudy, and the views were somewhat hazy at a distance.

We took a break at the tower, allowing everyone else to catch up, and afterward we retraced our hike back to the gap to hike the other side of the mountain, bushwhacking our way to large rock outcroppings where we took our lunch break. At the first location, you could get views of the south and southwest and at the other most popular rock, views of northern Franklin Co. and into Roanoke Valley including the mountains to the north. Everyone seemed to enjoy the hike and made it back to the vehicles passing a grape vineyard on the way.

**Sunday, February 8, 2009 1:00PM
Daleville (Rt 220) to Hay Rock**

Mervin & Blanche Brower (leaders).
Karen Callahan, Pat Guzik, Carol Siler, Steve Tomaziefsky, Fred Walters, Jo Jo Gin, Bob Blankenbaker, Mary Gilbert, Les Brown, Kathy Brown, Scott Spangler, Laurie Spangler and Sally Sizer.

The hike started from Daleville commuter parking lot. The day was in the 60s, some clouds with sunny patches... We left the parking lot at about 1:10 PM and returned at 5:30. There were some muddy spots on the trail going up the mountain. On top the trail was dry and clear. The air was very clear and we had a good view of the valley toward Daleville. Carvins Cove was very pretty from the viewpoints and could be seen from a large part of the trail due to no leaves on the trees. It was an excellent turnout and a great day for hiking.

Sunday, February 15, 2009 8:30AM
Tinker Ridge Work Hike

Charles Parry, Dick Clark, Neal Jones, Wes Barnes, Dana Helsley, Homer & Therese Witcher, Sharon Gatens, Blanche & Mervin Brower

The weather was good, but the walk in had not gotten any shorter. Therese showed me another switchback, below the remainder of the relocation that she and Homer had flagged. I told them it looked fine to me, but Kerry Wood should look at it before we put it in.

Homer and Therese had been working on the relocation several days since our last work hike and had the third switchback almost ready to open. We finished and opened that and got started on the final one. There were quite a few rocks, so progress was a bit slow. However, we got a good start on it.

Saturday, February 21, 2009 9:00AM
Lee Hollow (Rt 621) to Sarver's Cabin Trail

Kenny Garrett & Hugh Hall (coleaders), K-9 Rascal, Dean Meador, Carl Cornett, John Merkwan, Steve Tanner, Mike Marinos, & Guest-Stacy LaBare and K-9

This was a beautiful day for a Saturday hike. Actually, it was the best day of the week weather wise. We all enjoyed the short walk to the Niday Shelter. Then I promised everyone that we wouldn't have anymore of those troublesome flat walks until we reached the ridge. True to my word, we walked steadily uphill for the next section until we reached the ridge. There was a nice wooden sign at the point identifying the Eastern Continental Divide. We had passed the remnants of a recent forest fire about half way up the ridge. Once on the top, we picked a good flat rock with nice views for our lunch spot. We then continued along the ridge until we arrived at the blue-blazed trail for the Sarver Cabin Shelter. We had observed a couple of deer along the trail to the top of Sinking Creek Mountain. We had also observed the past work of someone cutting the briars back along the trail. We greatly appreciated their efforts. We then took the trail down to the shelter for a quick break before continuing down the mountain to the parking area. We had two trail dogs along for the hike and they both seemed to enjoy the walk and the company.

Sunday, February 22, 2009 11:00AM
Catawba Mt. (Rt. 311) to Sawtooth (Rt. 785)

Jean Warren (leader), Mike Ferguson (assistant), Bob Peckman (report loser)

Sunday, March 1, 2009 1:00PM
Stony Creek (Rt 635) to Pine Swamp Shelter

Cancelled.

Sunday, March 8, 2009 8:00AM
Douthat State Park

Kris Peckman (leader), Mike Vaughn (assistant), H.R. Blankenship, Denise Brandt, Karen Callahan, Pat Guzik, John Merkwan, Sheila Vaughn, Fred Walters

Hard to believe that a week ago we woke up to snow! Today's temperatures went up into the 80s. We had a congenial group of hikers for our little tour of some of the trails on the west side of Douthat State Park. First we walked the Heron Run trail alongside the clear emerald lake (never saw a heron, though). We then huffed and puffed up the Backway Hollow and Salt Stump trails. At the top, "Doctor" Fred, with his professional first aid kit, fixed two hikers' blisters. He said he takes Visa, Blue Cross and Blue Shield. We walked the ridge top on the Middle Mountain trail, then swung around to have lunch at the Tuscarora Overlook, with its stone-floored log cabin and its magnificent view of the lake and across layers of blue mountains to the east. We descended on the Blue Suck Falls trail (with a stop to admire the falls, the origin of whose name remains a mystery to us) to return to the cars.

Sunday, March 8, 2009 1:00PM
Seven Mile Mountain Beginner Hike

Zetta Campbell and Ed Wallace (leaders), Debbie Smith, Pat Cousins, David Sutton, Mary Gilbert, Son (dog), Matt Sutton, Lisa deVries

To think only a few days ago we had had the only decent snowfall of the winter. This winter day was a good day for shorts. This trail, a few miles north of New Castle, was opened up years ago by Bill Gordge and his midweek crew. I had done a little work on it. Right away the group split into two, the fast and the-er-not so fast. At first there are

minor ups and downs and then you come to the final ascent to the top of the ridge. Some of us had to rest a couple of times here although it is really not very long. Once on the ridge it was easy walking, just keep the blazes in sight, and they were good. There were nice views of neighboring ridges. The ridge eventually descended. When we crossed the old dirt road, I knew the end was near (Gulp!). We came upon a sign in the middle of undergrowth. We searched for and found the blazes that marked the trail but, since we could see

the road and the car, we knew the end was indeed near. Rather than take the leaf-covered steps down to the road, two of us slid down the leaves in a sitting position. The sun was still up in the sky. After I got home I checked to make sure the fast group had made it and they had. I also called Bill about the last part of the trail. They have a couple other projects they're working on but, after that, they'll see about cleaning it up.

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.

The club is always looking for experienced hikers to help lead club hikes. If you know of someone that you think would be a good hike leader, or wish to nominate yourself, please contact Mike Vaughn at 540-992-1350 or email mikeva999@yahoo.com.

Sunday, April 5, 2009 7:00AM Daleville to Dragon's Tooth Parking

28.4 miles, Very strenuous, \$2.00 carpool fee
10 miles from Roanoke

Be prepared for a long day of walking on this hike! It will feature nearly 4,000 feet of elevation gain and will offer great views at several places along the trail. You will visit two of the prime vistas of the Appalachian trail in one day. The hike first climbs on the A.T. up Tinker Mountain and then follows the ridge south, with a gradual elevation gain to Tinker Cliffs. It will then continue along the

ridge line to McAfee Knob. The hike will continue south on the A.T., crossing Virginia Route 311 and descending off the A.T. at Lost Spectacles Gap. It will finish at the Dragon's Tooth parking lot. There will be a car shuttle on this hike.

Linda King342-2411
Kenny Garrett.....293-7967

**Sunday, April 5, 2009 1:00PM
Sharp Top**

3.6 miles, Moderate, \$3.00 carpool fee
29 miles from Roanoke

This hike will climb to the 4,000 foot pinnacle of Sharp Top, one of the Peaks of Otter in Bedford. There is a spectacular 360 view from the rocky summit. The Peaks of Otter are rich in history. They were first measured by Thomas Jefferson, who thought they were among the highest mountains in North America.

Sue Scanlin989-0497

**Sunday, April 12, 2009 8:00AM
Garden Mountain (Rt 623) to Chestnut Knob
Shelter**

7.5 miles, Moderate, \$.00 carpool fee
81 miles from Roanoke

We will be starting out at the A.T. crossing on the top of Garden Mountain in scenic Burkes Garden, Tazewell County (elevation 4,000 feet). The hike will go south on the A.T. for 6.2 miles to Chestnut Knob shelter. It will then backtrack to Walker's Gap. There are good views of Burkes Garden along the trail. There will be an option to drive through Burkes Garden on the way home, which is a very beautiful part of the state.

There is 1,000 feet of elevation gain on this hike.

Jim Walke 540-674-0851

Pat Guzik..... 540-808-9708

**Sunday, April 19, 2009 8:00AM
Sinking Creek (Rt 42) to John's Creek (Rt 632)**

7.4 miles, Moderate, \$4.00 carpool fee
41 miles from Roanoke

This hike is located in Craig County. Starting in Sinking Creek Valley it will head south on the A.T., climbing John's Creek Mountain to Kelly Knob. It will pass Laurel Creek shelter along the way. There are great views of the New River Valley from the top of Kelly Knob. It will descend the mountain into scenic John's Creek Valley. There is 1,600 feet of elevation gain on this hike.

John Miller 375-3250

Dick Moran 389-3744

**Sunday, April 19, 2009 1:00PM
Chestnut Ridge/ Mill Mountain**

5.4 miles, Moderate, \$.00 carpool fee
0 miles from Roanoke

The hike is located 4 miles from Roanoke and 1 mile from the Blue Ridge Parkway. It is a 5.4-mile figure-eight course around the Roanoke Campground behind Mill Mountain. The trail is well graded and surrounded by woods.

Maurice Turner 540-334-2128

**Sunday, April 26, 2009 8:30AM & 1:00PM
Tinker Ridge Work Hike**

0.5 miles, Moderate, \$.00 carpool fee
0 miles from Roanoke

We will relocate a short section of worn-out trail and continue to work on the larger Tinker Ridge relocation.

Morning:

Charles Parry..... 540-951-1402

Dick Clark 989-7053

Afternoon:

Mervin & Blanche Brower 387-9732



**Sunday, April 26, 2009 1:00PM
Brushy Mountain**

6.0 miles, Moderate, \$.50 carpool fee
5 miles from Roanoke

This is a 6-mile loop hike near Hanging Rock, at the end of Timberview Road. The two mile ascent to Brushy Mountain is rather steep but the reward comes on the return. The hike offers glimpses of Carvin's Cove Reservoir, McAfee's Knob, and is just something a little different.

Jean Warren 384-6229

Hugh Hall 725-8874

Sunday, May 3, 2009 8:30AM
Sprouts Run/Wilson Mountain Loop

8.0 miles, Moderate, \$2.25 carpool fee
 24 miles from Roanoke

This loop hike starts on Solitude Road near Arcadia. The Sprouts Run Trail follows Sprouts Run for about 3.4 miles and in the Spring offers a nice variety of wildflowers, including scores of Showy Orchis, Bird-on-the-Wing and the rare White-haired Leather Flower. We will visit a Shale Barren community which harbors the White-haired Leather Flower and other "Hot Zone" plants. This trail also reveals several cascading waterfalls and some very large trees including the Beechnut, White Pine and the slowly disappearing Hemlock. The Wilson Mountain Trail is mostly a ridge walk with views of distant mountains, valleys and the James River.

Larry Austin254-2092
Kris Peckman.....366-7780

Sunday, May 3, 2009 1:00PM
Bottom Creek Gorge

5.3 miles, Moderate, \$1.50 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 George, then up to a vantage point to see Bent Mountain Falls flow from a mountain side.

Sue Scanlin989-0497
Karen Callahan..... 540-961-0640

Friday, May 8, 2009 6:00PM
Moonlight Hike to McAfee Knob

7.6 miles, Moderate, \$.50 carpool fee
 6 miles from Roanoke

Join us for a moonlight hike up to McAfee Knob, one of the most scenic spots on the entire 2,000 mile length of the Appalachian Trail. There will be a full moon on the 8th. Located west of Salem in

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

Maya Bohler.....344-6588
Hugh Hall.....725-8874

Sunday, May 10, 2009 1:00PM
Flat Top Mountain, Trillium Hike

4.3 miles, Moderate, \$.00 carpool fee
 27 miles from Roanoke

Located at the very scenic Peaks of Otter in Botetourt County, this hike is scheduled to optimize the chances of catching the many trilliums along the trail at their peak. At one point a side trail descends a short distance to an unusual formation known as Cross Rock. At the summit of Flat Top, nice views may be obtained by easy scrambles onto projecting rocks.

Dave Sutton774-0648
Dick Moran389-3744

Sunday, May 17, 2009 8:00AM
Rock Castle Gorge

11.0 miles, Strenuous, \$5.00 carpool fee
 57 miles from Roanoke

Located in Patrick County, on Blue Ridge Parkway land. After a steep 2,000-foot ascent, the hike parallels the Parkway – passing alternately through woods and open fields with extraordinary views. On the descent down the other side of the gorge, the hike passes some old cabin sites and a series of interesting rock formations. The last few miles are along Rock Castle Creek – a wild stream with many cataracts.

Mike Vaughn.....992-1350
Maya Bohler.....344-6588

Saturday & Sunday, May 23 & 24, 2009 8:00AM
Mountain Lake, Stony Creek Work Hike

Some miles, Moderate, \$5.00 carpool fee
 50 miles from Roanoke

We will be doing clipping, blazing, and blow-down removal in the Mountain Lake area. We will do annual maintenance on the AT between Pine Swamp Shelter and War Spur Trail.

Charles Parry..... 540-951-1402
Hal Cantrill387-2347

Sunday, May 31, 2009 7:00AM
A.T., U S 58 to Damascus

16.6 miles, Strenuous , \$7.00 carpool fee
 81 miles from Roanoke

This hike will be in the Mount Rogers Scenic Area, near the Tennessee state line. Parts of the trail will be along Whitetop Laurel Creek. The A.T. combines with the Virginia Creeper Trail for a short stretch of the hike. The hike will end in Damascus, Virginia which is known as the friendliest town along the A.T. The A.T. goes right down the main street through town.

John Miller375-3250
Kenny Garrett.....293-7967

Sunday, May 31, 2009 1:00PM
Curry Gap (BRP) to Fullhardt Knob
Beginner's Hike

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

The hike starts on Curry Gap on the Blue Ridge Parkway. It follows Salt Pond Road to the intersection with the A.T., then goes up the A.T. to Fullhardt Knob. There are limited views along the trail and at the summit of Fullhardt Knob.

Zetta Campbell366-8165
Linda King342-2411

Sunday, June 7, 2009 8:00AM
Old Hotel Trail, Cold Mountain Loop

6.2 miles, Moderate, \$7.50 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 Old Hotel Trail trailhead is at Hog Camp Gap, roughly 8 miles from route 60 on a dirt and gravel road. The trail climb steadily through woods and an open area, passing an A.T. shelter (during the stagecoach days there was an inn in this area, but nothing remains of it today). The trail intersects the A.T. at Cow Camp Gap. Following the A.T. north, the route climbs Cold Mountain. The summit of Cold Mountain is an open mountain bald and offers extraordinary views in all directions.

Gary Bible977-2954
John Merkwon904-2299

Sunday, June 7, 2009 1:00PM
Spesard Knob Loop

5.0 miles, Strenuous, \$2.00 carpool fee
 20 miles from Roanoke

The route will be entirely off trail. We will start by climbing Spesard Knob. Then we will explore the ridge lines of the southern end of Broad Run Mountain , tracing a loop that will involve only about a half mile of backtracking at the end. Cumulative elevation gain should be roughly 2,300 feet.

Dave Wickersham.....774-0439

Saturday & Sunday, June 13 & 14, 2009 8:00AM
Bluff City Relocation Work Hike

0.5 miles, Moderate, \$5.00 carpool fee
 60 miles from Roanoke

We will work with the Konnarock Crew on the Bluff City relocating a section of trail near Pearisburg in Bland County.

Charles Parry..... 540-951-1402
Dana Helsley977-4154

Sunday, June 21, 2009 8:00AM
Punchbowl (BRP) to James River (Rt 501)

10.9 miles, Strenuous, \$4.00 carpool fee
 45 miles from Roanoke

We will start this hike on an A.T. crossing on the Blue Ridge Parkway. Heading south, we will climb Punch Bowl Mountain. We will then climb to the summit of Big Rocky Row, which offers great views of the James River. We will also pass Fuller's Rocks, before descending to Route 501, along the James River.

Kris Peckman.....366-7780
Carl Cornett.....342-3950

Sunday, June 21, 2009 1:00PM
Thunder Ridge Overlook to Sunset Fields Overlook

4.2 miles, Easy, \$2.25 carpool fee
 23 miles from Roanoke

Located in Bedford County, this hike has wonderful views from Thunder Ridge Overlook and Apple Orchard Mountain, which has a large grassy bald at it's summit. This route is also known for the Guillotine, an interesting rock formation, where the trail passes under a suspended rock. There are also

a beautiful series of over 100 rock steps installed by the Natural Bridge Appalachian Trail Club along the trail immediately past the Guillotine.

Kenny Garrett.....892-5786
Zetta Campbell366-8165

Sunday, June 28, 2009 7:00AM
Fox Creek (Rt 603) to Elk Garden (Rt 600)

16.8 miles, Strenuous, \$7.00 carpool fee

71 miles from Roanoke

Join us a long hike on one of the most scenic parts of the entire A.T. We will be hiking in the high country of the Mount Rogers Scenic Area. Much of this hike will be in open meadows at over 5,000 feet. The trail will pass near the wooded summit of Mount Rogers, at 5,729 feet, the highest point in Virginia. There are many semi-wild ponies in the open meadows along the trail. In addition, a profusion of rhododendron can also be seen. These should be in bloom in June. There will be about 2,000 feet of elevation gain on this hike.

John Miller.....375-3250
Linda King342-2411

Sunday, June 28, 2009 1:00PM
Buffalo Mountain

4.3 miles, Moderate, \$4.00 carpool fee

44 miles from Roanoke

Located in Floyd County in the vicinity of Mabry Mill, the hike goes to the summit of Buffalo Mountain with extraordinary views in all directions. The distinctive shape of Pilot Mountain in North Carolina is visible in the distance on a clear day. A network of unofficial trails lead to various points on the edge of the mountain's massive rock face.

Blake Mitnick..... 540-745-8733
Sue Scanlin989-0497

Saturday, August 8, 2009
Annual Cornboil – Green Hill Park

Save the date!

Details in the Summer Blazer

**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

Name(s) _____ New Member Packet fee \$5.00 _____

Address _____ Indiv. # of years _____ x \$10.00 _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ - _____ Family # of years _____ x \$15.00 _____

Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____ Individual life membership \$250.00 _____

Email _____ Family life membership \$300.00 _____

Year you joined RATC (make a guess!) _____ Donation \$ _____

Make checks payable to RATC, PO Box 12282, Roanoke, 24024-2282 Amount Enclosed \$ _____

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