

TRAIL BLAZER

NEWSLETTER OF THE ROANOKE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CLUB

Spring 2016

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

Cornboil – July 30

WORK HIKES

Monday, April 4 - 8:30 AM

Monday, April 18 - 8:30 AM

Monday, May 2 - 8:30 AM

Monday, May 16 - 8:30 AM

Monday, May 30 - 8:30 AM

Monday, June 13 - 8:30 AM

Monday, June 27 - 8:30 AM

Trail Supervisor

Jim Webb

562-8896 – startover14@peoplepc.com

Hike Scheduling

Contact Bob Peckman

540-366-7780 – hikemaster@ratc.org

BOARD MEETINGS

(All members are always welcome.)

Monday, April 11 7:00 PM

Hollins Branch Library

Monday, May 9, 7:00 PM

Location TBD

Monday, June 6, 7:00 PM

Location TBD

What's Inside...

Remembering Mervin 2

New Members 3

Troutville Trail Days 3

Grand Opening! 4

Hikemaster's Report..... 4

Hike Reports 5

Hike Schedule 17

Overseers Meeting 23

Membership Renewal..... 23

Contacting the RATC Back

There will be a casual memorial get together for Jimmie & Malcolm Black at the Bent Mountain Fire House (across from the Bistro) on April 16th from 1 to 4. They'll have food--bring stories and laughs. Responding to Kevin at kblackyak@yahoo.com would be helpful to plan food.

Remembering Mervin W. Brower 1938-2016

Our RATC family was deeply saddened by the loss of Mervin Brower on February 20, 2016.

Merv came to Salem, Virginia in 1991 as a General Electric engineer. His 40+ year career with GE Canada, General Electric and TMEIC was studded with accomplishments: he received several patents in the steel industry, presented technical papers to the IEEE, taught and developed courses for steel and aluminum process industries, was an author of several technical papers, was a recipient of several management awards for individual creativity and achievement, was a lifetime senior member of IEEE, and traveled throughout North America and around the world serving customers.

One of the other Canadians who came to GE in Salem married a woman from this area, and she introduced her friend, Blanche Hale, to Merv. Blanche became his loving and devoted wife as well as his best friend. The rest of us knew him as a steady, friendly, long-time leader and worker on the Appalachian Trail and on the Mid-week Crew that builds trails all over the region. Merv joined RATC in the year of his arrival (1991). During his 25 years as an RATC member, Mervin served in many roles including President, New Members Coordinator, Counselor and



Photo by Timo Grüneberg

Regional Partnership Committee Representative. He and Blanche frequently led hikes together, and they also maintained a stretch of the AT.

Bill Gordge, longtime leader of the Midweek Crew, summed up the thoughts of many in the RATC community:

The Mid-week Crew has lost one of its staunchest members. For almost ten years Mervin Brower rarely missed a work day, leaving his mark as we created at least 23 new trails across the Valley and the five adjoining counties. A quiet, gentle man, with a hint of steel, he was a friend to us all. It was always good to stop and lean on your pulaski and chat with Merv. He epitomized the spirit and camaraderie that characterizes the MWC. It will be hard to accept that he has really gone and that this is goodbye. To his dear wife Blanche, we offer our heart-felt sympathy.

Memorial contributions may be made to The Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club, PO Box 12282, Roanoke, VA 24024 or online at <http://www.ratc.org/memorial-donation/>. Donations can also be made to Path Finders for the Greenways, 1206 Kessler Mill Rd., Salem, VA 24153 and First United Methodist Church, 125 W. Main ST., Salem, VA 24153

To allow better travel conditions for his Canadian family members, Merv's memorial service will be held Wednesday, April 20th, 2016 beginning at 11 a.m. at First United Methodist Church, 125 Main Street, Salem, VA.

Welcome New Members

The Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club welcomes the following new members:

Robert Beightol

Peter Irvine

Dave and Peggy Agnor

Kristen Herman

Gwendolyn Spangler

William Adams

Jerry Anderson

Jonathan Eagle

Kevin Hegg

Edgar Kyle

Silas Richardson

Benjamin Vestal

Peter Whiteis

The following made a donation to RATC:

Kristen Herman

Liz Belcher

Margarita Cubas &

David Bowers

Shannon Palmer

The following donated to RATC in memory of Jimmie and Malcolm Black:

Cindy Hansen

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

Brendle Wolfe

Troutville Trail Days

Troutville Trail Days is expanding! Presented by Outdoor Trails, this year's festival will celebrate the AT and other outdoor opportunities found in our area. It will be June 6-8, with different activities for the public and AT thru-hikers. The festival will kick off Friday, June 6 with a picnic for thru-hikers at Troutville Park. With free hiker camping, showers, and laundry, Troutville Park remains the "heart and soul" of the event. Hikers can spend a zero day or two relaxing and "catching up," or they can take advantage of the free hiker shuttles to visit the other activities. The Bear Bait 5K will start

Saturday, June 7 at 9 a.m. on the cross country course at Greenfield Park. Once again, thru-hikers race free!

Retail and craft vendors, informational booths, food, thru-hiker gear repair, clinics, and music will be located at Daleville Town Center on Saturday from 10-5 and Sunday 12-6. Event Zone will present a "Party in the Park" style concert Saturday evening, starting at 6. Sunday will also feature some cool dog events at Daleville Town Center. We hope to see you there! Find out more at troutvilletraildays.com

Pearisburg Relo Now Open

On March 18th there was a ribbon-cutting ceremony to open an approximately 1-mile relocated section of the Appalachian Trail (A.T.) near Pearisburg. We don't usually open relocations with ribbon-cuttings, but this project, which took more than 15 years to complete, represents thousands of volunteer hours from the RATC and the ATC's Konnarock Trail Crew. Even with fifteen years, we are amazed that it is actually done as it seemed like mission impossible.



The new route will significantly improve the hiking experience for Trail users. It eliminates two road crossings, is no

longer in close proximity to private homes, and hikers can enjoy a gently graded woodland walk between Cross Avenue and Route 100. The Trail was carved from the solid rock face of the stone wall of Bluff City and that was the mission-impossible part. Now the steep terrain, thriving forest, and views of the New River provide a rich and scenic hiking experience along the new route.

Some who finished it never knew Charles Parry who did not live to see this come to completion.

Hikemaster's Report

We have a nice hike schedule this time but only one assistant leader as we go to press. Volunteer any time to the leader or to me. Do the same for Meetup hikes, and volunteer to assist or ask for an assistant if you are leading and make hikes safer.

I enjoy being hikemaster more every day. I am creating a library of hikes, modifying the ones on RATC.org, searching facts from hike submissions, the data book and guide books, using Google maps and paper maps, books, and everything I can get my hands on. In a way it helps that I know so little because the descriptions have to be good if even I can understand them.

Please help me in this effort. If you measure the length of a hike with your gps, please share the information. If you see that a hike description has errors, please tell me.

My hike collection can be found at <http://peckmanjazz.com/HIKES.HTM> which is a page on my own website. It can be handy for selecting hikes to lead as each name begins with the number of miles but clicking on the names brings you to a document of information.

I cannot be a good hikemaster while editing the Blazer at the same time. Editing the Blazer does not require a whole lot of skills. I am still using the basic framework from Ralph Burgio. Both Therese Witcher (my sub) and I will train, advise and assist you, and I will take it back if you change your mind.

The stars of this story are the hike leaders. The following led or assisted on 1 to 3 hikes: Linda Akers, Brian Batteiger, Maya Bohler, Maria Bowling, Merv & Blanche Brower, Karen Callahan, Linda Conner, Rupert Cutler, Greg Edwards, Georgia Gallaher, Mary Harshfield, Jimbo Harshfield, Mike Hopkins, Carina Hughes, David Jones, Richard Kurshan, Chris Means, Jeff Monroe, Dan Phlegar, Sue Scanlin, Dave Socky, Mike Vaughn, Fred Walters, Jean Warren, Homer & Therese Witcher, Brendle Wolfe, & David Youmans. Leading 4-6 hikes earned a hat for Hugh Hall, Fred Meyer, Dave Sutton, & Kris Peckman, leading 7 hikes earned John Merkwon a shirt and leading 9 hikes earned Dave Horst a hat and a shirt.

Bob Peckman

Hike Reports

Wednesday, October 14, 2015 8:30 AM Terrapin Mt - Reeds Creek Loop

Dave Horst (leader – and I use that term loosely), Steve Bowles and Jeff Edwards (assistant leaders), Mike Vaughn, Ken Myers, Madeleine Taylor with Sassy, Jeff Monroe with Gracie, Kris Peckman, Bob Peckman, and Lois Smith

Despite having hiked this area a couple of weeks prior with Steve and Jeff, we managed to miss a couple of turns which resulted in us missing the east-facing overlook and Fat Man's Revenge. So this is on my list for the spring to make up for missing one of the best parts of the hike.

Beginning at the trailhead on Terrapin Mountain Rd in Bedford County, we climbed steadily steeper and rocky terrain for the first 3 miles, the gradient reaching 25% at one point. I was concerned about everyone being able to complete this hike but everyone did a great job and I heard no complaints. The first stop was a west-facing outcropping at about 2 miles. The view was wonderful, but we were catching a cold, brisk west wind, so we stopped just to take pics and moved on. After going over 4 false summits and blowing by and missing Fat Man, we came to a sign that if followed would put you over the side of the mountain. The FS needs to correct that one. Continuing on, we reached Camping Gap where some of the group stopped for lunch. The fastest hikers continued on down to Reeds Creek and finished up taking the Terrapin Mt Trail back to the parking. It was a cool but really great day to hike and we had a very experienced and fun group. Another hike seemingly forgotten by the club, but well worth the trip.

Wednesday, October 21, 2015 8:30 AM Rattlin Run - AT - Sawmill Branch Loop

Dave Horst (leader), Steve Bowles, Jeff Edwards, Julie Petruska, Joanne Derryberry, Madeleine Taylor with Sassy, Lois Smith, Christine Yates, Maya Bohler, Linda Conner, Georgia Shaurette

This is another hike newly created by our Wednesday exploration crew. Beginning at Bennett Springs Parking in Carvins Cove, we connected the CC trail system with the AT. Ascending Rattlin Run trail past the power line, we went off trail straight up Tinker Mountain for about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile to intersect the AT about 1 mile north of Campbell Shelter. Heading north on the AT, we stopped for a break on a bald rock slant and to

take in the views of the reservoir below. Continuing on to Brickeys Gap, we left the AT on Brickey Gap trail and headed over to Lambert Meadow campsite. This blue blazed trail is difficult to follow at times because of blowdowns, so a little bushwhacking brought us eventually back onto the trail to the campsite. Picking up the AT and heading north, we picked up the unmarked Sawmill Branch trail and headed back down to the CC system. A few of us added some miles by taking Arrowhead and Rattlin Run back to the parking while the rest took Happy Valley back. Great group and another hike with some steep and challenging terrain.

Wednesday, November 4, 11, 2015 8:00 AM Goshen Pass - Jump Rock Loop

Dave Horst (leader), Mike Vaughn (assistant), Steve Bowles, Jeff Edwards, Julie Petruska, Val Dymond, Lois Smith, Jimbo and Mary Harshfield, Joanne Derryberry, Maya Bohler, Madeleine Taylor, Brian Boggs, Kris and Bob Peckman, and Peggy and Dave Agnor

Despite my warnings about the difficulty of this hike, both because of terrain and the poor markings at some points, we had 17 warriors/hikers show up. We split into two groups because of the number of hikers. But the beauty of the area is well worth the effort, beginning with the drive in through the pass along the Maury River and adding some spectacular views along the trail. The hike begins by crossing over a suspect footbridge that accommodates no more than three hikers at a time. After a leisurely $\frac{3}{4}$ mile along the river, the trail heads steeply up for the next 3 miles, passing a waterfall that Maya said she managed to miss....probably anoxia from the climb. This Little Peaks trail passes a couple of great view points looking over the pass before eventually descending into a saddle to pick up the Jump Rock trail. The descent to the saddle is poorly marked and difficult to find for first timers. Some of the following group got off the intended route at this point and bushwhacked back to the trail before ascending to Jump Rock. The north-facing views here were wonderful despite the warmth of the sun bringing out some gnats. Backtracking to the saddle we picked up the Tuscarora trail along the ridge and followed it over to View Point Rock, with great views of Lake Merriweather below. The final descent and back to the parking passes Camp Bowman, one of several Boy Scout camps in the area. I remember Bob

commenting to me during a break about 3.5 miles into the hike that it was so far as advertised. I wasn't sure whether he was talking about the difficulty or the beauty...hopefully a little of both. Jimbo had his GPS tracking at 10.5 miles. I had about 11.3, but did Jump Rock trail twice to bring the groups back together. Steve, Jeff, Julie, and Val may have had more as they went ahead and got the unintended experience of exploring the myriad of trails in the last third of the hike. Eventually all made it back for the crossing of the swinging bridge once more. Beautiful day, amazing scenery, and a really great group.

WednesdayFriday, December 2- 4, 2015 9:00 AM

Sprouts Run - Pine Mountain Loop

Dave Horst (leader), Maria Bowling with Sumner, Steve Bowles, Jeff Edwards, Mary Harshfield, Maya Bohler, Madeleine Taylor, Nancy Reid, Bob Peckman.

Another hike seldom done as a result of previous exploration of an area by the Wednesday crew. Our exploration was made much easier as we met Larry Austin by coincidence on the trail several weeks before. He showed us several routes in the area up the ridge before leaving us after several miles and getting lost himself. Originally scheduled for a Wednesday, we lost a few hikers due to the date change and threat of high water in Sprouts Run due to recent rains. We decided since the temperatures were hovering in the high 20's to low 30's at the start, we would do Pine Ridge first and end up with Sprouts Run since we were bound to get our feet wet in the high rushing water. A car drop at Sprouts Run enabled us to add some distance to the hike in the middle. Ascending Pine Ridge is about a 3-4 mile moderate climb up an old unmaintained forest road littered with blowdowns. Hiking along the ridge at the top, the James River can be seen below at several points. However the views can be missed doing the hike in this direction as they are always behind us. As with most of my hikes, the groups separated into fast and not so fast hikers. This resulted in Bob and Mary wandering off at one point down a trail that required machetes and a Kevlar suit to navigate. Bob thought this seemed a better route than the 6-foot wide grassy trail that led in the correct direction. (Bob - you are not allowed to edit this out) (Bob wouldn't think of editing your reports! Ed.) Shortly after that Steve led a few fast hikers past our turn up to Thomas Mt. and added about 2 miles to their hike. Eventually we did manage to regroup at the top and descend together. A short bushwhack

down to Sprouts Run and 14 wet crossings later ended the hike. These crossings again separated the group, but still everyone finished without someone getting totally wet in the cold water. Jeff even managed to do all crossings without ever getting the bottom of his shoes wet, using a branch as a pole vault on the last one. I will say that Pine Ridge is not my favorite hike. Although I love the trail less traveled, this ridge and Thomas Mt. are really not attractive. Still we had a great group of hikers that endured through many cold, wet stream crossings. Thank goodness Bob suggested doing it last!

Saturday, December 5, 2015 8:30 AM
Dismal Falls

Maria Bowling (leader), Sarah Ulrich, Richard Kurshan, and Eileen ____, plus 5 more

About eight folks turned out for this easy hike to Dismal Falls from the AT crossing at VA 606, many of them new to the Meetup group. The temperatures warmed to the comfortable upper 40s, and hike leader Maria Bowling provided instant cocoa as we climbed around the falls.

Sunday, December 6, 2015 1:00 PM
Chestnut Ridge Trail

David Sutton (leader), Linda Sutton, HR Blankenship, Maurice Turner, Carol S. & Daisy, Susanne Thornalillie & Ellie

Great December day for a hike. It was good to hike this popular oval shaped trail of approximately 6 miles. Various connecting trails can easily shorten or lengthen the hike. Maurice and the crew he worked with years ago worked on this trail helping to make it what it is today... great!

Monday, December 7, 2015
Workhike - Pearisburg

John Miller, Mike Vaughn, Dave Horst, Jonathan Ely, Travis Stanley, Dan Phlegar, Chad Feghali, Jim Webb

We managed to get in about five hours of work before the 30% forecast of rain became a reality. Working on the Bluff City relocation again is very slow now since all the loose easily removed rock is gone. What is left is really hard limestone which makes the digging very slow. With the rest of the 1-mile relocation completed, we are now concentrating on the last 40 feet of trail.

**Wednesday, Nov. 18 December 9, 2015 8:00AM
Little and Big House Mountain**

Dave Horst (leader), Mike Vaughn, Steve Bowles, Maria Bowling with Sumner, Julie Petruska, Jeff Edwards, Madeleine Taylor with Sassy, Bob and Kris Peckman, Lois Smith, Maya Bohler and Peggy and Dave Agnor



Madeleine Taylor

Originally scheduled in November, it was rescheduled due to cold, mist, and fog that would have made the whole point of the hike moot. And this is one of my favorite day hikes in Virginia. So we began the hike (and ended) with 13 on a really gorgeous day to be at the top of a mountain. The 2-mile hike into the saddle is along a service road adjacent to private land and houses. About midway, a small bench has been placed by a landowner that beckons you to sit and marvel at the view back toward Lexington. On this day the sun and fog created a mystical landscape back toward the east.

After reaching the saddle we took on Little House first. The two trails up their respective mountains are unique experiences. Little House trail follows multiple switchbacks up to a ridge where it meanders through rhododendrons and passages through large boulders eventually leading you to a multi-tiered outcropping with 270-degree views to the east, north and west. After the descent back to the saddle and a break for lunch, we trekked up the straight, rocky and steep Big House trail. Fortunately, it is only about a mile long before we leave it for the blue-blazed "Goat Trail" to the top. Again we are rewarded with another outcropping affording great views.

A side trip along the top on a newly constructed and blazed trail leads to the unusual Table Top Rock. The agile can shimmy up and stand on the top of the "table". For the first time leading this hike over the past three years, everyone on the hike experienced both peaks

before the descent back to the saddle and the parking area. Great weather, great hikers, great company!



Table Rock

Peckman

**Saturday, December 12, 2015 8:00 AM
Hay Rock**

Hugh Hall (Leader), Brendle Wolfe (Co - Leader), Jimbo Harshfield, Karen Callahan, Val Dymond, Dee Case, Chris Yates, Melanie Fitzgerald, Fred Meyer, Georgia Shaurette, Jim Constantin

Our group of eleven hikers set out on an unseasonably warm December day. The temperature was in the 70's. The graffiti on Hay Rock has been painted over since the last time I was there. Lord Botetourt High School was visible along the way. The large electrical tower stands out like a sore thumb. We finished in just over five hours after enjoying lunch and the view from Hay Rock.

**Sunday, December 13, 2015 8:00 AM
Guillotine/Apple Orchard Falls/Cornelius Creek**

Fred Meyer (leader), David Jones (assistant), Carol Rowlett, Maria Bowling, Dee Case, Carina Hughes, Jean Breuer

Everyone had a good time on this warm sunny day for winter. Starting at Thunder Ridge Overlook, we proceeded south on the AT. After stopping at Thunder Ridge Shelter for a snack, we passed Apple Orchard Mountain and then took a picture of the group at the Guillotine. By the time we reached Apple Orchard Falls, it was lunch time. To complete the loop, we followed the Cornelius Creek Trail and AT and returned to our destination at Apple Orchard Overlook. Everyone was tired after this 10-mile hike which has a significant drop in elevation and then you climb back up to reach the Blue Ridge Parkway.



Apple Orchard Falls

Hughes

Tuesday, December 15, 2015 Workhike – Pearisburg

Dave Horst, Mike Vaughn, Travis Stanley, Jeff Edwards, Chad Feghali & Jim Webb

For the last workhike of 2015 and hopefully the last on this section, we drove down to Pearisburg to work on the last few feet of the relocation coming down from Pearis Mountain. This workhike included clearing some blowdowns from some of the trail built in the past couple of years and of course breaking rock to widen the trail on "The Bluff".

Wednesday, December 16, 2016 8:00 AM Tar Jacket Ridge, Cold Mountain-Old Hotel Trail loop

Mike Vaughn (leader), Kris & Bob Peckman, Joanne Derryberry, Nancy Reid, Madeleine Taylor, Linda & Bill Conner, Dave & Peggy Agnor, Jeff Edwards, David Horst, Sassy & Kent

This was 11 miles of fun. Thank you, Mike, for leading a first-class hike. This was not a Blazer-scheduled hike but unscheduled Meetup hikes are much appreciated like all RATC hikes, and with this write-up, Mike gets his due credit for leading a hike. For a hike this good he

should get credit for 1½ ! I had a photo and I had the memories so I had to find the date on Meetup history and write this up – Bob



The whole group except

Taylor

Saturday, December 26, 2015 Carvins Cove Loop

Carina Hughes (leader), Nancy, Julie, Sandie, Todd and his dog Ace

We started at Bennett Springs, to Happy Valley, Riley's Loop, Enchanted Forest, Songbird, Rattlin' Run to Bennett Springs loop. Lots of waterfalls, streams and beautiful weather. Great group!



The Crew

Hughes

**Sunday, December 27, 2015 8:00 am
Fuller Rocks/Big Rocky Row**

Kris Peckman (leader), Elvir Berbic, Lori Booker, Val and Molly Dymond, Todd Gloede and Ace, Carina Hughes, Carol Rowlett, Jim Webb

Cabin fever from the rains and holiday festivities, combined with winter breaks, made for a good group coming out two days after Christmas. New and familiar faces merged beautifully for a wonderful day.

The hike begins alongside beautiful Rocky Row Run. Then, after crossing Hercules Road, the unrelenting climb begins: 2800 vertical feet in 3 miles. This speedy group wasted no time, with Jim Webb (round of applause, please), only 11 weeks from open heart surgery, in the lead for the first half of it. Lori Booker, on her first RATC hike, booked up the mountain. When we reached the ridge, the fog broke just a little, revealing the big carpet factory in Glasgow, but nothing yet to the north. We continued hiking, looking for the overlooks, but the fog made them less impressive than I had remembered them, so we kept on walking. After a while, we were going down for too long, and deeper into woods and fog, so we turned around, climbing again until we found an overlook with sunshine! The fog never lifted while we ate our lunch, but later it did, so we had splendid views of the James River and surrounding mountains both at the Rocky Row overlook and on the way down.

On our climb up, we met a German woman on her way down, who said when she reached the river, she would have completed her thru-hike. Not only that, but she was hiking with one leg a prosthesis below the knee. When we finished the hike, and after visiting the James River Foot Bridge, we found her with friends on the back of a pickup, enjoying a beer after having jumped off the bridge to take a swim in the river. It turns out she had hiked the PCT before the accident that caused the loss of her leg (only a year ago). She said she is the first woman to hike the AT on one leg.

**Thursday, December 31, 2015 8:00
Last Chance Hike-Surprise Location**

Greg Edwards (leader, substitute for David Horst), Jim Beeson, Jeff Edwards, Joe Berney, Michael Lee, Carol Rowlett, Madeleine Taylor, Dee Case, Carina Hughes, Brendle Wolfe, Lois Smith, Dave Agnor, Peggy Agnor, Becca Agnor.

It was a great day for the last opportunity of 2015 to get outside and enjoy a hike and making it a surprise location added some fun suspense. Fourteen people showed up at the park anxious to find out where we were going. We drove north toward the Botetourt and Craig

County line where the surprise was revealed, Price Mountain & Sulphur Spring, one of my favorite hikes.



It was a beautiful, dry, partly cloudy day. The temperature was a comfortable 50-52 degrees with a light breeze. The Price Mountain trail is marked by red blazes. The first 1.1 miles is a steady ascent of 682', after that it is mostly a ridge-top trail with vast views of the Craig Creek Valley and the Potts Mountain range. At 1.4 miles, the trail intersects the Sulphur Spring Trail which is marked by a trail sign. We continued on the Price Mountain Trail past the intersection another 1.25 miles and found a knob with nice views for lunch. From there we could hear the bear dogs in the hollow. They were most likely from the two trucks we have seen at the trailhead. On our way back to the Sulphur Spring Trail we met the two hunters and their 8 four-legged athletes, beautiful hounds. The Sulphur Spring Trail descends moderately for about a mile, then continues gradually down the ridgeline with amazing views on both sides. It is marked by yellow blazes. 5.8 miles into the hike, the trail descends more sharply through a series of switchbacks until it reaches the creek a few hundred yards upstream of where the Sulphur Spring is marked on maps, although I have never found the actual spring. The first creek crossing is on an old wooden bridge that is best crossed one at a time due to its poor condition. From there the trail uses an old wagon road to return to the starting point one mile up the hill. There are three more creek crossings that require rock hopping. The creek was flowing well due to the recent heavy rains, but staying dry while crossing was no problem. The hike finishes with a heart-pounding 0.8-mile climb to return to the trailhead of the Price Mountain Trail. We arrived back at the cars at 2:00pm after covering 7.8 miles and climbing 1979'. What a great way to spend the last day of 2015, beautiful scenery and great company. This one certainly makes the top of my list because of scenery, consistently good trail conditions and moderate level of difficulty.

Friday, January 1, 2016, 9:00 AM McAfee/Devil's Kitchen Potluck

Kris Peckman (leader), Ana Anderson, Jerry ("Coach") Anderson, Maya Bohler, Karen Callahan, Dee Case, Greg and Halle Edwards, Mary and Jimbo Harshfield, Kirsten and Rhett Herman, Carol McPeak, Nancy Reid

After a tropical Christmas, the New Year turned out with more normal temperatures, cloudy but no rain—yea! This very congenial group walked briskly but stayed mostly together on the way up to the Knob, engaging in conversation on a wide variety of topics. After introducing two or three first-timers to the views, we retreated from the breeze to the Devil's Kitchen, where we enjoyed a feast of breads, salads, spreads, crackers, cheese, fruit, nuts, soup, hot chocolate, and even Deviled Dates (in keeping with the location).



Mangia mangia

Edwards

Going in, we met a group who had enjoyed the sunrise from the Knob (early risers!). Going out, we leapfrogged a thru-hiker on a 42-mile day. He will hike past Dragon's Tooth after dark (gulp). Many groups were on their way up to the Knob. The only downer of the day was the heap of trash we found at John's Spring shelter and carried out.

Sunday, January 3, 2016 1:30PM Lick Run Greenway Valley View to Market & Back

Barbara Duerk (leader) Dee Case, Erin and Michael Contour, Carl Cornett, Gary Duerk, Caralee Eicher, Greg Edwards, Jimbo and Mary Harshfield, Pam Keebler, Karen Major, Larry Metayer, David Robinson and Debbie Williamson

Bathrooms, Starbucks and a deli are available inside Target for amenities before and after the hike. Hikers were able to experience the newly completed bike/walk bridge over I-581. (Notice McAfee's knob in the group photo taken from the bridge.)

This 6.8-mile urban hike on the paved Lick Run Greenway provided participants a view of the Valley View commercial area stormwater retention pond near the headwaters of Lick Run. Lick Run has been cleaned up. We saw where water removed a NW neighborhood bridge to the Greenway, and discovered Osage orange, a non-edible fruit. We saw the foundation of a building from the Watt's homesteads, saw the year 1929 embedded in the 10th street bridge over Lick Run, and remembered Mrs. Brown and Mrs. Robinson who lost their lives in their homes along Shadeland, now called Shadeland Park, during the 1985 flood. We noticed how the Greenway provides neighborhood connectivity to Lincoln Terrace elementary school and Addison Middle School. Posted informational signs talked about the landscaping project in Washington Park.



Duerk

We passed commemorative chestnut trees planted in honor of the Cutlers and one of two locations for Roanoke City public pools. The park used to be a landfill. Lick Run is contained through the landfill, but openly flows in the bottom of Washington Park. At the corner of Burrell St and Orange Avenue, Lick Run goes under the road. The group was able to continue following Lick Run between I-581 and the back of Holiday Inn Express. A connector route to the Berglund Civic Center is accessible by motor vehicle when not

gated. Lick Run goes back underground near Wells Avenue before resurfacing again adjacent to Campbell/Norfolk Avenue and flowing into Tinker Creek. The group continued toward Hotel Roanoke to take the Market Walkway ("Windows 95" because it was built in 95 and has lots of windows) to cross the tracks. There is an elevator from Shenandoah Ave. Bathrooms are available in several public places in downtown Roanoke. The Market building bathrooms were accessible by using the doors on the west side of the building, even though the vendors were closed. Some of the group enjoyed soup and sandwiches at the Cornerstone before returning to their vehicles.

Next time: I would suggest detouring west on Wells Avenue to showcase the Gainsboro bronze plaques in the WALL then take a left on 1st street past the Martin Luther King, Jr. memorial. Excerpts from his speeches are available for listening.

**Saturday, January 9, 2016 9:00 AM
Carvins Cove Trough-Gauntlet Loop**

Maya Bohler (leader), Joe Berney, John Boatwright, Chris Means, Georgia Shaurette, Crystal Wright

The weather was quite miserable the night before and the morning of the hike, with heavy drizzle and fog. Since the weather forecast did not call for heavy rain until the evening, and there was no long drive involved, we went ahead with the hike. Out of the 17 people who had originally signed up, only 6 showed up at the Orange Market.



Bohler

We carpooled to the parking lot on Timberview Rd. Starting out on the Horse Pen Trail for a very short distance, we took the Trough Trail up to Brushy Mountain, a moderate climb of a little more than an

hour. It was still misty and wet but not cold, and hiking in less than perfect weather always has its charms. Once on the ridge of Brushy Mountain, we followed the Fire Road for a while, heading east. Then we took the Gauntlet Trail back down. On the way the leader spotted a large stand of grass-like clumps that looked like Turkey Beard and made a mental note to come back in May/June to see them in bloom.

The Gauntlet ends at the very end of Carvins Cove lake and intersects with the Horse Pen Trail which took us back to the parking lot.

Despite the less than perfect weather, we all had a good time and were happy to be out in the woods.

**Sunday, January 10, 2016 8:00 AM
Broad Run Mountain Loop**

John Merkwan (leader), Todd Gloede, Josiah Leonard, Lori Booker, Kris Peckman, Elvir Berbic & Adam Wood



Lori Booker, Kris Peckman, Elvir Berbic, Adam Wood, Josiah Leonard, Todd Gloede & Ace Merkwan

This hike was part ridge walk/bushwhack (4.7 miles) along the top of Broad Run Mountain and part abandoned forest service road (4 miles) plus a few other odds and ends making a 10.3-mile loop. As always, winter hikes are a roll of the dice as far as what the weather will be. In this case, we got a lucky seven with temps in the lower 40's and forecasted wind that was not a factor except for a couple of gusts that came through to initiate a look toward the heavens and a firm hand on the chapeau. The leaf-off views were spectacular and the brush was minimal during the bushwhack which made

for a very enjoyable day out in the woods. Further evidence that the weather was uncharacteristic for January was the box turtle we saw on the top of the ridge line trail. I didn't have the will to determine if he was alive but I hoped for the best. We also flushed a covey of quail that caused a start to those hikers near the front.

Sunday, January 10, 2016 1:30 PM
Lick Run Greenway
Valley View to Market & Back

Barbara Duerk (leader), Loretta and Raf Bedia, Dee Case, Gary Duerk, Darlene Gearheart
 Please see the description of the January 3, 2016 hike.

Monday, January 11, 2016
Workhike – McAfee's Knob

Mike Vaughn, Dave Horst, Travis Stanley, Jim Beeson, John Miller & Jim Webb

With the temperature hovering in the mid 20's, we started up the trail toward McAfee's Knob. Our mission was to close some social trails and fix some erosion problems. Splitting into two groups we worked our way up to the power lines putting in stepping stones across a couple of springs that cross the trail and brushing in places where hikers were going off trail.

Wednesday, January 13, 2016 8:00 AM
Potts Arm - Cove Branch Loop

Dave Horst (leader – some of the time), Steve Bowles, Mike Vaughn, Bob and Kris Peckman, Dave and Peggy Agnor, Jeff Edwards, Jim Beeson.

There is a 1½-mile section of this hike that is really the most difficult trail to follow, if not hike, that I have ever done on a day hike. Despite hiking it 5 times, and having it done it a week previous with Maria, Larry, and Jeff, we got off trail at multiple points. The trail was originally built by the mid week crew many years ago. But the Forest Service abandoned it about 15 years ago and the derecho a few years back added more chaos. The only thing that keeps me coming back to this area is the solitude and the stunning beauty of the branch. We began this hike at an alternate trailhead as a forest service road was closed for the winter that leads to our usual starting point. A quick ¾ mile along a blazed trail leads to Cove Branch. Crossing a small footbridge, we followed the branch with its cascading white water and multiple pools. The trail quickly turns into boulder fields with seas of blow downs. It alternates between creek sides and climbs up the ridge. The years-old, faint yellow blazes are a welcome sight...if you can find them. Eventually we left the branch and meandered through the woods to a nice lunch spot.

Shortly we followed the branch again on a much easier trail to pick up the Potts Arm trail. A moderate climb for ¾ mile took us up to the ridge. And we only got off trail once on the ascent!! A couple of miles along the ridge and we would descend back to Cove Branch where we started. Peggy fell in one of the boulder fields during the descent. Some minor first aid and a knee brace supplied by Bob provided her support for the duration. Back at the parking area, we bandaged her increasingly swollen knee. I really admire anyone that attempts and finishes this hike. I think I will have patches made up for finishers in the future! We originally planned to add in Hanging Rock to the middle of this hike. But there wasn't enough energy or daylight left! So Hanging Rock by itself at the end of March...and without the crazy section in the middle!

Sunday, January 17, 2016 8:00 AM
Daleville (220) to Andy Layne Trail (779)
113-Mile Hike #3 plus Tinker Cliffs

Snowed out.

Sunday, January 17, 2016 1:00 PM
Fallingwater Cascades

Cancelled, Parkway Closed

Thursday, January 21, 2016 8:30AM
James River Face Wilderness Loop

Jeff Monroe & Mike Vaughn (leaders) and dogs Gracie and Kent, Jim Beeson, Jerry Anderson, Greg Edwards, Mary Harshfield, Nancy Reid, Richard Kurshan, John Boatwright, Nancy Chapin, Madeleine Taylor and dog Sassy, Kris & Bob Peckman, David Lachniet, and Susanna Williams.



Gracie (the professional hiker) & Bob Monroe

The group included 10 RATC members, one PATC member, and a hike leader who is a member of both

organizations. Susanna Williams and Jeff Monroe drove down from Charlottesville and joined 14 Roanoke-based hikers in a midweek hike of the James River Face Wilderness on the eve of the big 2016 snowstorm. The group was large, and due to wilderness regulations, split into two groups with one hiking the loop clockwise, and the other in the opposite direction. Both groups met for lunch at the site of the former Marble Spring Shelter before continuing on their respective loops. A dusting of snow meant that old trails showed up on the hillside, and Kris Peckman and Jeff Monroe followed an old trail during lunch to see where it went. Everyone ended up hiking the Sulphur Springs Trail, the Appalachian Trail, the Sulphur Ridge Trail (not found on current trail maps) and the Petite's Gap Road. All agreed that this is a spectacular hiking loop. Total length: 7.8 miles, with 1368 feet total ascent.

**Sunday, January 24, 2016 9:30 AM
Rock Castle Gorge**

Cancelled for weather.

**Sunday, January 24, 2016 1:30 PM
Murray Run Greenway + Fishburn Park**

Cancelled for weather.

**Monday, January 25, 2016
Workhike**

Canceled because of Snow!

**Monday, January 25, 2016 8:00 AM
Apple Orchard Falls, Cornelius Creek Loop**

Cancelled for weather.

**Sunday, January 31, 2016 8:00 AM
Pine Swamp (635) to Johns Creek (632)
113-Mile Hike # 10
Stony Creek to Wind Rock**

David Socky (Leader), David Jones (Assistant Leader), Bob Alderson, Jim Webb, Elvir Berbic, Silas Richardson, and Jeff Edwards

We were supposed to do a shuttle hike from Johns Creek to Stony Creek, but it was decided that the roads would be too icy and snow-covered getting to Johns Creek, plus the snow was potentially too deep and no one had pre-tromped the trail so the going could be really slow. Consequently, everyone agreed to just do an 'out and back' from Stony Creek up to Wind Rock and then back. This was estimated to be 12 miles, so it was not far off from what we had planned anyway.



Edwards

It was a beautiful day, with the sun shining, though it was little cold out. We hiked up to the Bailey's Gap Shelter, and then got on a forest service road which had been traveled, so we didn't have to 'make steps'. There was enough snow to make the going slow. We essentially followed the road all the way to Wind Rock, where we had lunch.

Going back, we got onto the AT itself, but found that it was nearly impossible to stay on the trail. The snow was deep enough that you couldn't tell where the trail was and the white trail blazes were few and far between and so old that they were hard to see. We got off track a number of times. Half the time we found the trail by noting places where trees and/or deadfall had been cut. After we had gotten a bit over half way back to the cross trail for the Bailey's Gap Shelter, we decided to go back up to the road, which was just a little over to the left. David Jones stayed below - he enjoyed the challenge of trying to find the trail. He made it ok, meeting up with the rest of us at the shelter. He admitted to 'hoofing' it pretty fast. We got back to the cars about 4pm. It was a good hike in spite of the change in plans. (Plan-B is a great plan! Ed.)

**Sunday, January 31, 2016 8:00 AM
Troutville (Rt 11) to Fullhardt Knob**

Cancelled

**Saturday, February 6, 2016 8:00 AM
North Mountain Trail**

Cancelled

**Sunday, February 7, 2016 8:00 AM
Lee Hollow (621) to Trout Creek (620)**

Richard Kurshan (leader), Ana Anderson, Cynthia Perkins, Robin Knapmayer, Rebecca Terrill, David Lachniet

Six of us hiked the Brush Mountain East Wilderness on the AT from Rt 621 to Rt 620 in Miller Cove. The predictions were for sunshine and mild conditions; this turned out to be mostly correct. Mild, but not much sunshine. We encountered no other hikers and no wildlife. Enjoyed the company and the views. A very enjoyable February hike.

**Sunday, February 7, 2016 1:00 PM
Mill Mountain Trails**

David Sutton (leader), Michael Contour, Erin Contour, Rita Krasnow, and Bruce Sellars

We first headed up the Thrush Trail and enjoyed hiking along the replenished streams from the recent snow melt running alongside us. Crossing over Mill Mtn Parkway, we were able to connect to the Ridgeline Trail. From this junction we were led to the newly created trail (no name yet) and up to the Star. It was pretty easy from this point as it was mostly down hill. A great walk before the start of Superbowl 50!

**Sunday, February 7, 2016 8:00 AM
Sinking Creek to Lee Hollow
113 Mile Hike #8**

Therese and Homer Witcher (leaders), Peggy & Dave Agnor, Lisa Walkiewicz, Lori Booker, Val Dymond, Susan Terwilliger, Karen Callahan, Jen & Pete Whiteis, and Rick & Andie Armstrong

We started our hike at Sinking Creek and paused for some pictures at the Keffer Oak (the largest oak tree on the southern part of the AT). Val Dymond led the pack and Therese was sweep. Along the ridge line, we walked thru patches of snow that were still crusted over since it was below freezing. We had some magnificent views of Sinking Creek and Craig Creek valleys. We ate lunch on the south side of some rocks so that we could be out of the wind. As we headed down the ridge, the air temperature was higher and the ground was no longer frozen. When we arrived at Niday Shelter, Homer was already there with a Hostess cake that he had bought to share with Andie & Rick Armstrong since it was their anniversary. We also sang "Happy Birthday" to Homer and Andie since they were both celebrating birthdays that week. Great company and very pleasant conversations. I would like to wish the best of luck to Lisa Walkiewicz as she embarks on her thru-hike on March 23.



Keffer Oak

Dave Agnor.

**Monday, February 8, 2016
Workhike**

Canceled because of rain

**Sunday, February 14, 2016 1:00 PM
Bottom Creek Gorge**

Snowed out.

**Sunday, February 14, 2016 1:00 PM
Lick Run Greenway Best Part**

Snowed out.

**Thursday, February 18, 2016 8:00 AM
White Rock Tower Trail**

Jeff Monroe (leader), Bob & Kris Peckman, Katia Fiorentino, Dave & Peggy Agnor, Susan Powell, John Brandt, Gracie the Ultimate Hiking Dog



Monroe

A cool day saw the group hike up through some mud into the snow to the site of the old White Rock Fire Tower, now on the edge of the Rich Hole Wilderness. After lunch at the tower site, the group attempted to continue along the ridge, but potentially icy conditions had the group turn around a little earlier than planned. Better to be safe!



Icy on the shady side

Monroe

**Sunday, February 21, 2016 8:00 AM
Patterson/Price Mountains**

John Merkwán (leader), Kris Peckman, Rebecca Terrill, Carina Hughes and David Lachniet



Kris, Rebecca & Carina test them

Merkwan

We had a heavy snow fall on the Monday before the hike but by Sunday the snow had almost completely melted! I think we stepped in a couple of piles on Price Mountain; however, snow was not the problem, it was the rain. The forecast was for showers to begin around noon and that is what happened. Half the hike was dry but the last half was in light rain. Did you know the rain

accentuates the green and turquoise colors of the lichens? This hike was on two mountain ridges but we did have to cross Patterson Creek. I knew it was going to be high so I found some boot covers on-line (see photo) and enlisted some volunteers to test them crossing the creek. Test results were great - dry feet! Well, dry for a little while as the rain started shortly after our creek crossing. The hike logged in at 9 miles and it took us a little under 6 hours. (Note: Even if these booties get a small leak, they will not fill with water over your boot-tops before you get across. Ed.)

**Sunday, February 21, 2016
Buffalo Mountain**

Cancelled

**Monday, February 22, 2016
Workhike – McAfee Knob**

John Miller, Jim Beeson, Dave Horst & Jim Webb

On a foggy morning and with a forecast of rain for later in the day we walked up the service road to the worksite. As it had been raining the previous day, it was an excellent time to check for erosion along the trail. Finding water flowing on the trail in a couple of places we followed it up to the source, usually a spring on the uphill side of the trail. Digging a path for the water to follow off the trail and placing a couple of large stepping stones on either side of the spring usually takes care of the problem.

**Saturday, February 27, 2016 8:00 AM
Sinking Creek Valley to John's Creek Mtn Trail**

Fred Meyer (leader), Bruce Agnew, Carol Rowlett, Alan Dickerson, Rebecca Dickerson, Val Dymond

It started as a cool cloudy day when we took the AT south from 42 with a view of John's Creek Mtn. The first part of the hike is through open pasture and gently rolling hills. On the way to Kelly Knob we stopped at Laurel Creek Shelter and made two stream crossings. There was a very modest layer of snow as we went up hill. By the time we arrived at Kelly Knob, the sun had come out and the view was stunning. On the way back we stopped at Laurel Creek Shelter for a snack. Just before we ended the hike we spent some time clearing the path where a tree had fallen across the path.

**Saturday, February 27, 2016 1:00 PM
Carvins Cove Hi-Dee-Hoe/Four Gorges Trails**

Jean Warren (leader), Julie Janoff

This hike is titled, "The Twilight Zone." There were 8 people signed up with additional phone calls on how to get to the carpool area (Orange Market). At 1:00 pm Julie showed up and we waited quite awhile for others to

come. Perhaps they're at the Bennett Springs parking lot? No can do - only two cars were there (usually packed by this time of day). Here comes the music - shhhh-of the Twilight Zone. Did we miss a tornado warning or something? It was eerie!

ANYWAY, it was an absolutely beautiful day of 50 degrees, clear blue sky, with a gentle breeze. Due to the recent heavy rains but lots of wind to dry it out, the trail was only soft in some areas. It was beautiful to see the dry creeks running, with mini waterfalls along the way. We managed to talk the whole way, saw a few bikers, and eight horses. Another glorious hike in the woods!

**Sunday, February 28, 2016 1:30 PM
Roanoke River Greenway West
Bridge Street to Crystal Spring**

Cancelled

**Tuesday, March 1, 2016 8:00 AM
Dody Ridge**

David Horst (leader), David Lachniet, Chase Davidson, Jeff Edwards, Jerry Anderson, Madeleine Taylor, Nancy Reid, Maya Bohler, Peggy and Dave Agnor.

On an absolutely perfect day nearing the end of winter, the group headed downhill on Black Horse Gap trail from the Blue Ridge Parkway. The trail is an old stagecoach route and passes the site of a 19th century tavern marked by a fading Park Service sign. The spring-fed livestock pond still exists. We continued down and went off trail for a short distance down to Day Creek. A short walk along the creek west brought us to the beginning of the Dody Ridge trail, which is part of the orange-blazed Glenwood Horse Trail. The trail is rocky and steep in parts leading up to the nice views along the ridge. Leaving the ridge after a couple of miles, we took a very steep but short trail up to the Great Valley Overlook, stopping along the way at a south-facing rocky outcrop. We ate our lunch in the sun at the overlook and then headed north along the Parkway. Another short bushwhack brought us to the AT where we headed north back to Black Horse Gap. A great day with a fun group!

**Sunday, March 6, 2016 1:00 PM
Daleville (220) to Mountain Pass Rd (652)**

Cancelled



Clouds Above and Clouds Below

Hughes 12/13/15

Hike Schedule

<http://www.meetup.com/Roanoke-Appalachian-Trail-Club/#calendar>

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.

Hikes in this schedule are rated by length and terrain so hikers can evaluate them based on their individual strengths.

Easy terrain – Greenways or old roads

Moderate terrain – steeper trails such as McAfee's

Strenuous terrain – long climbs and rough trails

Challenging – neglected trails and bushwhacking

Driving miles are from Roanoke unless otherwise stated. Shuttle lengths are included to calculate carpool fees. 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. Hike leaders should recommend that you don't come if you are not prepared with equipment or condition.

The club is always looking for experienced hikers to help lead club hikes. Uncle Bob Needs You! Please lead or assist for one or two hikes on the next schedule. Contact Bob Peckman at hikemaster@ratc.org. For Blazer matters blazer@ratc.org

Saturday, April 2, 2016 8:00 AM Read Mountain - Short

4.5 miles, moderate terrain

8 miles from Daleville Park & Ride, \$1.00 carpool fee

The trailhead is at 6101 Crumpacker Dr, Roanoke 24012. Join us for a hike up the trail to the summit of Read Mountain. The trail was built by the mid-week work crew and connects into a very old trail at the ridgeline. There are good views of McAfee Knob from Buzzard Rocks.

Bruce Agnew540-846-6180
..... csc236inf@gmail.com

Sunday, April 3, 2016 8:00 AM Whetstone Ridge

12 miles, strenuous terrain

65 miles from Daleville, 15-mile shuttle, \$8.00 carpool fee

This hike begins on the BRP near MP 29 and Montebello. Primarily a ridge walk along Whetstone Ridge, but the South Mountain section has a series of hilltops in its section. Trail comes out onto Irish Creek Road (SR 603).

Kris & Bob Peckman366-7780
..... bob@peckmanjazz.com

Wednesday, April 6, 2016 8:00 AM Fuller Rocks, Big Rocky Row – Easy Way

About 10 miles, strenuous terrain

39 miles from Roanoke, \$4.00 carpool fee

We will hike to the intersection with the AT and to Fuller Rocks using Little Rocky Row Run. This eliminates the steep uphill on the AT from the footbridge. Hikers will then be given a choice on continuing up steeply north on the AT to Big Rocky Row or descending the AT south down to the footbridge. Those continuing on north will descend Saddle Gap trail down to Hercules Road. A short car drop will eliminate any road walking. Great views along the trail include Glasgow to the northwest, the James River below to the south and the James Face Wilderness to the southeast.

David Horst horstde@aol.com
..... 804-852-7653

**Saturday, April 9, 2016 8:00 AM
Tinker Cliffs**

10.0 miles, strenuous terrain
12 miles from Daleville, \$1.00 carpool fee

Located in Botetourt County, the trailhead for this hike is on Route 779 roughly halfway between Catawba and Daleville. The hike crosses meadows and Catawba Creek and then starts the ascent to Scorched Earth Gap where it continues on the AT to Tinker Cliffs. Several spots along the cliffs offer excellent views of McAfee Knob and the Catawba Valley.

Mark Milberger526-6303
.....amilberger@jeffcenter.org

**Sunday, April 10, 2016, 1:30 PM
Mason Creek Greenway out & back**

3.5 miles, easy terrain
No carpool, meet at the trailhead.

Meet at the Hanging Rock Battlefield Trail southern trailhead parking area on 475 Kessler Mill Road in Salem. We'll hike north on a mostly level gravel trail somewhat parallel to Kessler Mill Rd. Near Route 311 the trail goes to the right, in front of the Orange Market. Continue on the trail bridge over Mason Creek. On the other side we will head left to the northern trailhead parking lot and memorial. On the way back, some of us will stop for a beverage and/or bite to eat at Parkway Brewing Company.

Cheryl Crowell581-4966
.....crowellcheryl@yahoo.com

**Saturday, April 16, 2016 8:00 AM
Audie Murphy Memorial**

7.6 miles, strenuous terrain, \$2.00 carpool fee
16 miles from Orange Market, 4.5-mile shuttle

Starting at the AT crossing on VA-621, we will cross a low bridge, a high bridge over Craig Creek into Brush Mountain East Wilderness, and then a series of five low bridges. After a mile we will start the ascent of Brush Mountain. At 3.2 miles the AT starts to follow an old grassy road along the ridgecrest. At 3.8 miles we will take the blue-blaze about 50 yards to the Audie Murphy memorial. The AT continues on the ridgecrest and starts descending towards VA-620 at 4.6 miles. There will be some nice vistas on the way down. At 7.6 miles we will finish at VA-620 and Trout Creek.

Richard (Butch) Kelly
butch2410@msn.com540-384-7429

**Sunday, April 17, 2016 1:00 PM
Carvins Cove-Hi-Dee-Hoe/Buck/Hotel Trails**

6 miles, moderate terrain
No carpool fee, \$2/person use fee.

Please phone Jean before we carpool from Orange Market to Bennett Springs Parking. We begin walking the Hi-Dee-Hoe trail about a mile to the fire road on the Brushy Mountain ridge line. We turn right to go SW on the fire road and go a little over 2 miles to the Buck Trail. (We pass the Trough Trail on our left.) We turn right and go down the Buck Trail about a mile and a half to the Hotel Trail on the right and follow it for another mile back to the parking lot.

Jean Warren384-6229

**Wednesday, April 20, 2016 8:00 AM
Big Horse Gap-Ribble Trail Loop**

About 10 miles, strenuous terrain
70 miles from Orange Market, \$7.00 carpool fee

The hike begins on Sugar Run Mt. at the gap. We quickly pick up the Ribble trail for a steep 2.5 mile descent. Another 0.4 miles brings us back to the AT heading north. Crossing over Dismal Creek several times and passing Wapiti Shelter, we climb up to the ridge of Sugar Run Mt. Nice views of the valley below are found at about 7.5 miles into the hike. The trail continues on the ridge back to our parking area.

David Horst horstde@aol.com
..... 804-852-7653

**Saturday, April 23, 2016 8:00 AM
Huckleberry Loop**

8 miles, moderate terrain
50 miles from Orange Market, \$5.00 carpool fee

Roanokers meet 8:00 at the Orange Market.
A loop trail near Pembroke, VA with several stream crossings and 1,000 feet elevation gain.

Fred Meyerwfmeyer@suddenlink.net
..... 304-744-9219

**Saturday, April 23, 2016 8:30, 8:00 AM
Dragons Tooth from Trout Creek (VA-620)**

7 or 8 miles, strenuous terrain, 7-mile shuttle
9.5 miles from Exit-140 Park&Ride, \$2.00 carpool fee
20 miles from 1413 N. Main, B'burg \$3.00 carpool fee

We will start at VA-620, crossing the bridge over Trout Creek and heading north on the AT. We will pass the Pickle Branch Shelter after a mile and then ascend to the ridge. We will follow the horse-shoe bend of Cove Mountain around to Dragons Tooth at 5 ½ miles. After visiting the Tooth we will head down the rock-face trail to Lost Spectacles Gap at 6 ½ miles. From the gap

we can turn left and follow the Blue-Blaze down to the Dragons Tooth Parking Lot. Or we can continue straight across the gap as the AT starts to climb through some nice Rhododendron. At mile 7 you will be on Rawies Rest, the beautiful views that are totally ignored. In another half mile you will come to the Boy Scout Trail which is blazed yellow. Turn left on the Boy Scout Trail and finish at the Dragons Tooth Parking Lot in less than a mile.

Maria Bowling540-239-2583
..... maria.bowling@gmail.com

**Sunday, April 24, 2016 1:00 PM
Buffalo Mountain**

4.3 miles, moderate terrain
44 miles from Orange Market, \$4.00 carpool fee

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.

Carolyn McPeakmcpeakcr@aol.com
.....890-2855

**Wednesday, April 27, 2016 8:00 AM
Sugar Run Gap to New River (Rt 460)**

11 miles, strenuous terrain, \$7.00 carpool fee
60 miles from Roanoke + 10-mile shuttle

We begin at Sugar Run Gap, VA-663, near Woods Hole, 3696 Sugar Run Road, Pearisburg 24134, heading north on the AT. The trail follows along the ridge of Pearis Mt, passing Docs Knob shelter with great views along the way, including Angels Rest. We will be using the newly relocated trail worked on over the past 15 years by RATC and Konnarock Crew.

David Horsthorstde@aol.com
.....804-852-7653

**Sunday, May 1, 2016 8:00 AM
Rock Castle Gorge**

11.0 miles, strenuous terrain
57-mile drive, no shuttle, \$6.00 carpool fee

Meet at Back Creek Elementary School on Rt. 221 at 8:00 am. Located 12 miles SW of Floyd on Blue Ridge Parkway land, this moderately strenuous 11-mile loop has excellent views in good weather. Abundant spring wildflowers. Bear and turkey not uncommon. Approximately 75-minute drive from meeting point to the trail head and typically 4½ to 5½ hours of hiking. 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. Trail washout and downed trees from this winter's snow and floods still an issue in places so hike may take longer than usual. Experienced hikers in good condition only please. No children. Dogs not recommended. Bring lunch, snacks, water, and layered clothing appropriate to weather forecasts. Recommend a change of dry clothes (left in car at trail head) for a more comfortable ride home.

Gary Oberlender529-7566
.....gob3255@cox.net
Karen Callahan..... 540-961-0640

**Sunday, May 1, 2016 1:00 PM
Murray Run Greenway**

3 or 4 miles, gentle terrain, No carpool

We'll meet at the Murray Run Trailhead on Grandin Road (just past the new library & tennis courts) then proceed through the woods, cross Brambleton Ave. and continue through Fishburn Park and maybe on to VWCC arboretum and circle back (basically same route) to beginning point. Can be shortened at any point depending on the group. About 3-4 miles of fairly gentle terrain with no long steep uphill.

Linda Akers.....774-4391
.....lakers4350@mail.com

**Wednesday, May 4, 2016 8:30 AM
Johns Creek Mountain North**

About 9 miles, Not too strenuous, \$4.00 carpool fee
22.5 miles from Orange Market + 17-mile shuttle

The hike begins at the top of Johns Creek Mt. on SR 658 in Craig County and heads northeast. We follow the ridge at about 3200 ft with some undulations for about 8.5 miles before dropping down to Little Mt Rd.

David Horsthorstde@aol.com
.....804-852-7653

**Saturday, May 7, 2016 8:00 AM
Hay Rock**

8.0 miles, moderate
No carpool fee

We will start walking from the Commuter Parking Lot in Daleville on trail that used to be the AT. We will join the AT shortly and follow it up to Hay Rock. There are several good overlooks along the way, but the best one is 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. Finally we will return to the Daleville Park & Ride taking care not to follow the AT when it turns left after crossing Tinker Creek.

Mangala Kumar389-0026
.....mangalakumar@aol.com

Sunday, May 8, 2016 8:00 AM
Longdale North Mountain Trail

11.2 miles, strenuous terrain
 42 miles from Roanoke, \$4.00 carpool fee

This is an out-and-back hike. The first two miles are on an old forest service road track with gentle terrain. The trail then follows a stream for 1 mile up the hollow followed by 1/2 mile of long switchbacks to get to the top of the ridge. After that it is relatively flat until we get to our destination which are outcroppings with excellent valley views.

John Merkwan.....540-904-2299
 jkmerk@cox.net

Saturday, May 14, 2016 10:00 AM
Falls Ridge

5.0 miles, moderate terrain
 30 miles from Roanoke, \$3.00 carpool fee

The hike is located in Montgomery County, southeast of Blacksburg in Falls Ridge Preserve. Part of a steep, rugged ridge that rises from the valley of the North Fork of the Roanoke River, Falls Ridge Preserve boasts a spring-fed travertine waterfall approximately 80 feet in height. Salem Fault runs through the preserve, dividing it into two different rock types: Precambrian limestone and shale/sandstone. The corresponding difference in soil types generates a diversity of vegetation, particularly wildflowers and smaller flora. Dogs are not permitted on this hike, in compliance with Nature Conservancy policy. We will hike the loop trail around the Falls and then take a trail that gradually climbs up the mountain. We will stop for lunch or snack on top of the ridge.

Jimbo & Mary Harshfield344-4341
 harsh803@gmail.com

Sunday, May 15, 2016 8:00 AM
Pandapas Pond

8 miles, easy to moderate terrain
 35 miles from Orange Market, \$3.00 carpool fee

We will explore the many trails at Pandapas Pond just west of Blacksburg, VA.

Fred Meyer.....wfmeyer@suddenlink.net
304-744-9219

Sunday, May 15, 2016 1:00 PM
Wolf Creek Greenway

2 or 4 miles, Flat terrain
 No carpool

We will start from Hardy Rd parking, 1390 Hardy Rd, 24179. Wolf Creek Greenway offers a 2-mile cinder surface trail along Wolf Creek. Large trees line the creek bed, providing cover for songbirds. 2 miles with a car shuttle, 4 miles out and back, depending on the group.

Georgia Gallaher345-8700

Wednesday, May 18, 2016 8:00 AM
Your Father's Punchbowl to the James River

10.5 miles, strenuous terrain, \$7.00 carpool fee
 54 miles from Daleville + 13-mile shuttle

Start at Punchbowl crossing and quickly pass the Punchbowl Shelter, Bluff Mountain, the Ottie Powell Memorial, and Fullers Rocks with a spectacular view of the James River. The A.T. then descends steeply to the Hercules Road, where the current trail heads south to the James River Footbridge. We will hike east instead, using the old A.T. alignment, superseded in 2000 and no longer found on maps, to vehicles that have been dropped at the parking area near where U.S. 501 crosses the James River.

Jeff Monroe monrojeff@gmail.com

Sunday, May 22, 2016 9:00 AM
Boy Scout Loop

4 miles, moderate terrain
 9-mile drive, \$1.00 carpool fee

Starting at the Dragon's Tooth Parking lot, we will take the Blue Blaze to the saddle and the AT intersection. Then we will go left on the AT, over Rawie's Rest to the Boy Scout Trail which is blazed yellow. We will follow the Boy Scout trail back to the Blue Blaze near the parking lot and back to the cars.

Jean Warren384-6229

Sunday, May 22, 2016 8:00 AM
Sawtooth Ridge to Dragon's Tooth Parking
113-Mile Hike # 5

8.9 or 10.9 miles, strenuous terrain, \$1.00 carpool fee
 6 miles from Roanoke, 4-mile shuttle

The hike begins at the McAfee parking lot and goes south on the AT away from McAfee. The many humps of Catawba Mountain are called Sawtooth Ridge. The AT drops down to the open fields of Beckner's Gap. Between Routes 785 and 624, the trail crosses Sandstone Ridge. Beyond 624 the trail heads uphill

past the Boy Scout Trail. It then reaches Rawie's Rest, a knife-like rocky outcrop, with good views. Continue on to Lost Spectacles Gap, where a blue-blazed trail on right leads down to the Dragon's Tooth parking lot. At this point you can choose whether to continue up the AT and visit Dragon's Tooth before descending to the Dragons Tooth Parking Lot.

Dave Socky540-989-7693

..... sockyDR@cox.net

Wednesday May 25, 2016 9:00 AM
Mill Mountain Woodthrush, Ridgeline,
Monument & Star Trails

4 or 5 miles, moderate terrain, No carpool

As the name implies, this hike will be Wood Thrush to Ridgeline to Monument to Star back to the Parking lot off Riverland Rd.

Linda King Conner387-9528

.....JennelleKing@gmail.com

Sunday, May 29, 2016 7:00, & 7:45 AM
Garden Mountain, VA-623 to VA-615

8.9 miles, moderate terrain, 17½-mile shuttle

85 miles from the Orange Market, \$10 carpool

44 miles from the Dublin McDonalds, \$6 carpool

This is an AT hike alongside Burkes Garden, that little haven that the Civil War never touched. It goes north from VA-623, Burkes Garden Rd for 8.9 miles. The best view into Burkes Garden is at 0.3 miles. At 0.8 miles a blue-blaze leads west to Davis Farm Campsite. At 1.3 mi start a 1,599 foot climb, leaving the Tennesse Valley watershed and entering the New River watershed. At 3.1 cross an unreliable stream continuing down to the Jenkins Shelter at 3.8. At 3.9 cross Hunting Camp Creek and start ascending Brushy Mountain. At 5.2 continue on the old road bed on a relo that used to be a blue-blaze called the High Water Trail. At 8.8 we begin the descent to Laurel Creek. At 8.9 come to VA-615 and the shuttle cars.

Maria Bowling540-239-2583

..... maria.bowling@gmail.com

Wednesday, June 1, 2016 8:30
North Mountain - Grouse & Deer Trail Loop

11 miles, strenuous terrain

10 miles from Orange Market, \$1 carpool fee

This balloon route begins across from Dragons Tooth Parking where we will steeply ascend the North Mountain trail for about 1.5 miles before reaching the ridge. After some moderate ridge hiking, we will descend the Grouse Trail down to a forest service road. A short walk later will bring us to a steep ascent up the

Deer Trail back to the ridge for our descent back to the parking area

David Horst horstde@aol.com

..... 804-852-7653

Sunday, June 5, 2016 8:00 AM
Salt Log Gap to Sheeley/Woodworth Shelter
via Livingston Spring Trail

10.5 miles, strenuous terrain

57 miles from Roanoke, \$6.00 carpool fee

This is a lozenge-shaped lollipop hike. Only one steep section with many level stretches and moderate ups and downs. Most of the hike is wooded with glimpses of the next ridge line through the trees. There is an outstanding scenic view from the top of an unnamed hill on the trail. A "top ten" tree oddity is on this hike, there is a mature tree perched on a 15' high boulder.

John Merkwan 540-904-2299

..... jkmerk@cox.net

Tuesday, June 7, 2016 10:00 AM
Poor Mountain Nature Preserve

5.0 miles, moderate terrain

10 miles from Roanoke, \$1.00 carpool fee

This will be a hike on Poor Mountain. It consists of the Overlook Trail, Canyon and Cascades Trails. There are nice view points on the Overlook Trail affording views to the west encompassing Ft. Lewis Mtn. There are over 130 rock steps on the Overlook Trail, then the descent down the Canyon Trail and a climb back on the Cascade Trail.

Jimbo & Mary Harshfield344-4341

..... harsh803@gmail.com

Wednesday, June 8, 2016 7:00 AM
Mau-Har Trail and Three Ridges Loop

13.5 miles, strenuous terrain

70 miles from Roanoke, \$7.00 carpool fee

Located in Virginia's newest Wilderness Area, the hike takes us on trails built and maintained by the Tidewater AT Club. It's a "balloon hike", starting and ending where the AT crosses Route 56 and the Tye River. After 1.7 miles on the A.T., we branch off onto the Mau-Har Trail, which takes us past a lovely waterfall and along a creek up to the Maupin Fields Shelter. Then we continue climbing on the A.T. to the summit of Three Ridges, with lots of great views, then down past the Harpers Creek shelter, up to the ridge, and back down to the Tye River.

David Horst horstde@aol.com

..... 804-852-7653

Saturday, June 11, 2016 7:30 AM
Bearwallow Gap (Rt 43) to Troutville (Rt 11)

19.5 miles, strenuous
 27 miles from Roanoke, \$3.00 carpool fee

We will be doing a long hike south on the A.T. from Bearwallow Gap, near the town of Buchanan in Botetourt County to Route 11 in Troutville. This will be mainly level ridgeline hiking with one long ascent of Fullhardt Knob, near the end of the hike.

Linda King Conner387-9528
.....JennelleKing@gmail.com

Sunday, June 12, 2016, 1:00 PM
Mill Mountain – Woodthrush Trail

3.2 miles, easy terrain
 No Carpool Fee

Meet at the Star Trail Parking lot, 1208 Riverland Road, Roanoke. Hike is out and back.

Georgia Gallaher345-8700

Sunday, June 12, 2016 1:00 PM
Pickle Branch Shelter

3 miles, moderate terrain
 16 miles from Orange Market, \$2.00 carpool fee

Starting at the AT trailhead on Route 620, we will cross the bridge over Trout Creek, climb a little and then come down to the Blue-Blaze to the Pickle Branch Shelter. Out & Back

David Sutton774-0648
.....dsutton24018@yahoo.com

Sunday, June 19, 2016 8:00 AM
Crabtree Falls, the Priest & Spy Rock

9.5 miles, strenuous terrain
 70 miles from Daleville, short shuttle, \$7.00 carpool

The hike is located in Nelson County, and follows Crabtree Creek, with scenic overlooks at the five major cascades, which have a total fall of 1,200 feet. After reaching the top of the falls, we will take a side trail, following the stream, out to a trailhead and primitive road, which we will follow until it connects with the AT. We then turn left going north on the AT and start the climb to The Priest which is ½ mile past the shelter. Turning around, going south, we will cross the Crabtree Falls road/trail, and in three miles come to Spy Rock. From there it is less than a mile to Montebello, home of the fish hatchery.

Mike Morris798-3418
.....michael@morristax.com

Saturday, June 25, 2016 8:00 AM
Johns Creek to Sinking Creek
113-Mile Hike # 9

8.3 miles, strenuous terrain
 50 miles from Exit-140 Park & ride + 12-mile shuttle,
 \$6.00 carpool fee

The hike is located in Craig and Giles counties, starting at the AT-VA-632/USFS-156 crossing to the AT-VA-630 crossing. From Johns Creek Valley, the trail climbs steeply. At 2.0 miles it crosses route 601 at Rocky Gap. At 3.8 miles a blue blazed trail on the right leads to White Rock, with great views of the New River Valley. The trail then descends, passing Laurel Creek Shelter at 5.1 miles. At 7.5 miles the trail crosses VA-42 in Sinking Creek Valley and at 8.3 we arrive at VA-630.

Mark Milberger526-6303
.....amilberger@jeffcenter.org

Sunday, June 26, 2016 8:00 AM
Old Hotel Trail/Cold Mountain/Mt. Pleasant

12.6 miles, strenuous terrain
 57 miles from Daleville, \$6.00 carpool fee

The hike is located in the Mount Pleasant scenic area near US-60 in Amherst County. This double 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 US-60 on a dirt and gravel road. The trail climbs 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. Back at the trail head we will then go to the summit of Mount Pleasant via the Henry Lanum Trail. There are sweeping views to the east and west from two rock outcrops at the summit. The hike will return to the starting point via the Pompey Trail.

Dave Socky540-989-7693
.....sockyDR@cox.net



The best part of the Bill Bryson presentation was seeing Edward & Chris Wilson along with Jennifer Pfister and Barbara Duerk.

Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club Application New and 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 the instructions of the leader on group hikes and trips.

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

Address _____ Indiv. # of years _____ x \$15.00 _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ - _____ Family # of years _____ x \$20.00 _____

Home Phone _____ Second Phone _____ Individual Life membership \$250.00 _____

Email _____ Family life membership \$300.00 _____

Dues are payable in January of each year. Make checks payable to RATC.

Please send dues and any questions about money or membership to our

treasurer, Blanche Brower, PO Box 12282, Roanoke, VA 24024,

treasurer@ratc.org (540)387-9732. You can also use PayPal at ratc.org.

Donation \$ _____

Amount Enclosed \$ _____

There will be an overseers meeting on Tuesday, April 5th, 6:00 PM at the Catawba Community Center. If you maintain a section or would like to maintain a section, please be a part of this meeting.

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



CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
ROANOKE, VA
PERMIT 509

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President, Diana Christopulos
387-0930**dianak16@earthlink.net**
Vice President, Roger Holnback
556-2919 **rholnback@gmail.com**
Secretary, David Jones
540-552-3058**dhjones@together.net**
Treasurer, Blanche Brower
387-9732 **treasurer@ratc.org**
Conservation Supervisor, Butch Kelly
540-384-7429 **butch2410@msn.com**
Land Management Supervisor, Bruce Davidson
384-6760 **catawbamtn@verizon.net**
Trail Supervisor, Jim Webb
562-8896**startover14@peoplepc.com**
Shelter Supervisors, Homer & Therese Witcher
540-266-4849 **witchers4@juno.com**
Hikemaster, Bob Peckman
540-366-7780**hikemaster@ratc.org**
Newsletter Editor, Bob Peckman
540-366-7780 **blazer@ratc.org**
Membership Coordinator, Brendle Wolfe
540-992-6621 **blwolfe@mail.roanoke.edu**
Regional Partnership Committee Rep., David Youmans
302-528-1776 **db2@hotmail.com**

Counselor, Bruce Agnew
40-846-6180 **csc236inf@gmail.com**

Counselor, Carina Hughes
588-0433 **carinawanderwoman@gmail.com**

Counselor, Sandie Meyers
.....

ANCILLARIES

Social Chairman, Linda Akers
400-8117 **lakers4350@mail.com**

Webmaster, Jonathan Eagle
540-776-1144 **webmaster@ratc.org**

OTHER

Southwest & Central VA Regional Director, Andrew Downs
540-904-4354 **adowns@appalachiantrail.org**

ATC Regional Representative, Open
.....

Regional Partnership Committee Alternate, John Miller
375-3250 **john.miller591@comcast.net**

The Mid-week Crew, Bill Gorge
774-3016 **bgordge@cox.net**

Roanoke Valley Greenways Liaison, Roger Holnback
556-2919 **rholnback@gmail.com**

Sir Speedy Printer
344-8550 **info@sspeedy.net**

The Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club is an affiliate of
The Appalachian Trail Conservancy
and a member of The Nature Conservancy and the Blue Ridge Land Conservancy