

TRAIL BLAZER

NEWSLETTER OF THE ROANOKE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CLUB

Winter 2018

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 Meeting & Potluck
March 3, 6:00 PM
Christ Lutheran Church

First Saturday Work Hikes
Bruce Agnew
540-846-6180 - csc236inf@gmail.com

Monday Work Hikes
Monday, March 5- 8:30 AM
Monday, March 19 - 8:30 AM
Monday, April 2 - 8:30 AM
Monday, April 16 - 8:30 AM
Monday, April 30 - 8:30 AM

Trail Supervisor
Jim Webb
540-266-8537 – startover14@peoplepc.com

BOARD MEETINGS
Glenvar Public Library
3917 Daugherty Rd, Salem 24153
(All members are always welcome.)

Monday, January 8, 7:00 PM
Monday, February 5, 7:00 PM

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Beckah, Ellie & Derrick Quirin
will present their 2017 thru-hike March 3rd

Member News

We are happy to welcome the following new members:

Ken Anderson
Mark Armstrong
Allison Bouslog
Kristen Cole
Ernest Correale
Robert Day
Ruth T Dickerson
Troy Dickson
Mary Kathryn Early
Pearl Gearhart
Danielle Girard
Jeff & Family Hill
Allan Jerome

Chasity Graham
Dale & Penny Hall
Alan Henry
Ryan King
Jeremy Kitchen
Phillip & Judy
Lochbrunner
Preston Long
Richard Lovegrove
Alison Masson
Theresa McDaniel
Lexie Mellis
Alexandra Nagurney

Michael & Sue Nussbaum
Read Parker
Derrick & Bekah Quirin
Kathleen Riordan
James Schaal
Christina Smith
Paul & Family Tillinghast
Steven Urbaniak
Angela Vitale
Terri Wright Whitby
Thomas Yambrick

Donations to RATC

Peggy Bryant
Rob Crittenden
Dr. Pauline Merry

Siegfried Kolmstetter
Preserve Giles Co.

Roanoke Outdoor
Adventure Group

113-Mile Patch

Peter & Jennifer White
Michael Lee
Joe Berney

Tim Lion
Judy Repass
Sissy Logan

Colleen Gentry
Matt Gentry
David & Peggy Agnor

Editorial

While we were enjoying our holiday potluck, Maya Bohler and Nancy Wallace were in Richmond protesting the pipeline and I thank them. We have lost another battle but it is not over. As expected, we will now be using our private funds against the advocates of private profit makers who are funded by our taxes. FERC has broken many rules and left us many opportunities for lawsuits and now we need to open our wallets to organizations such as Appalachian Mountain Advocates and defend ourselves (<http://www.appalmad.org/get-involved/>).

And with this challenge not yet finished, we have a new one to work on. H.R.1349 has just moved out of committee to be considered. This bill amends the Wilderness Act to declare that

provisions of such Act prohibiting the use of motorized vehicles, aircraft, or other forms of mechanical transport shall not prohibit the use of motorized wheelchairs, non-motorized wheelchairs, non-motorized bicycles, strollers, wheelbarrows, survey wheels, or game carts within any wilderness areas. The claim is that they are "restoring the Wilderness Act to its original intent". This is opposed by the International Mountain Biking Association. For now keep informed at <https://wildernesswatch.org/congress>.

When you sign the hike sign-up sheet, please be kind to me and print your name clearly. If you are the leader, please ask folks to print it again so that this poor guy can read it.

Bob Peckman

REPORTER DUNCAN ADAMS SAYS FAREWELL TO THE ROANOKE VALLEY

Those who have been following the Mountain Valley Pipeline story know that Duncan Adams has provided extraordinary coverage for over 3 years in the Roanoke Times. He has asked hard questions, shining light on a story that many outlets ignored or glossed over. Recently, Duncan accepted a long-sought offer to edit a newspaper in Butte,

Montana, and his last day at the Roanoke Times was November 11, 2107 (two excellent reporters – Laurence Hammack and Jeff

Sturgeon – will now cover the story).



Duncan is centered in red check shirt

Cutler

Like me, Duncan has the West in his bones, and the call is strong. We wish him all the best and hope Montanans know what a great gift they are receiving.

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy and the Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club honored Duncan for his in-depth reporting at the ATC office in Roanoke on November 13. He responded by reading the hand-written note below, which he has allowed us to share with RATC members:

The rain started after my brother dropped me at the Dragon's Tooth trailhead. On that April morning in 1978, I was 23 years old and a backpacking novice.

I walked into the woods woefully unprepared. I had not been a Boy Scout. My parents weren't

campers. I had stuffed the flimsy, exterior frame backpack, bought on the cheap from a discount retailer, with way too much stuff, including – incredibly – an array of books.

I toted a thin sleeping bag and a tube tent, a plastic shelter open on both ends.

As it turned out, my trail maps were outdated. That first night, as the rain intensified, I searched in vain for the shelter in which I'd planned to

sleep. The rain gleefully sluiced in through both ends of the tube tent.

It was a long night. The next day it snowed. A few days later, I hitchhiked into Blacksburg, where I bought a decent jacket and mailed home the books.

By the time I reached Damascus I felt like a seasoned outdoorsman. I felt stronger, leaner, less fearful.

Like many people who hit the trail, I sought healing and solace on that first outing. I found just enough of both to initiate a love of hiking.

I am grateful to the Appalachian Trail Conservancy for your stewardship of this remarkable resource. And I am also grateful, and deeply honored, by this award. Thank you.

Diana Christopulos

T-Shirts

RATC is pleased to announce a partnership with two organizations to provide an updated approach to market and sell RATC and AT items, such as shirts, hats and patches.

Press Press Merch (www.presspressmerch.com) is a Roanoke based company that specializes in high end custom screen printing and embroidery as well as other promotional products. They have an outstanding reputation in the community and include clients such as Elizabeth Arden, Advance Auto Parts, FloydFest, YMCA and Blue Ridge Land Conservancy among others.

Press Press Merch will serve as the “fulfillment center” for items, i.e., shirts, hats, stickers, patches, etc. ordered via the RATC website, thus handling inventory, shipment and payment collection for us.

Press Press Merch will utilize Recover Brands (www.recoverbrands.com) from Charlotte, NC as our clothing supplier. They recycle plastic bottles and cotton into yarn that is used to manufacture the fabric for their clothing. Read more about their story at www.recoverbrands.com and how eight (8) plastic bottles make one (1) shirt. Their mission is “To create the best, most environmentally friendly and socially responsible products possible; and to educate and inspire those around us to live and work for a sustainable tomorrow.”

Our plan is to have a trial opening via the **RATC** website in early February 2018 that will allow individuals to review and order **RATC** merchandise. This will allow us to have a trial run with new website link and **Press Press Merch** order fulfillment.

Jim Beeson

RATC's McAfee Knob Task Force - August 24, 2017

With support from the Appalachian Trail Conservancy and the National Park Service, the Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club created the McAfee Knob Task Force in May of 2015 to address management challenges surrounding the beloved landmark of McAfee Knob.

The primary function of the Task Force has been to organize and support a cadre of Volunteer Ridgerunners. Each trained volunteer patrols the parking lots and trails around McAfee Knob or Dragons Tooth at least one weekend day each month April through October, educating the public about how to hike safely and minimize their impact on the area. They also perform minor trail maintenance, monitor conditions, submit reports and serve as a friendly, knowledgeable management presence. ATC's full-time Catawba Mountain Ridgerunner, Dave Youmans, facilitated training and communication for the group in addition to his regular patrol duties.

2017 by the Numbers

65 priority patrol days since April 1, every Friday/Saturday/Sunday, plus a few holidays

Only 4 days had no Volunteer Ridgerunner on patrol.
Task Force presence 94% of the time

140 patrols completed in 2017 by 32 Volunteer Ridgerunners

13,392 visitors seen, compared with 8,661 at this time last year

9,713 visitors contacted, compared with 3,886 at this time last year

829 miles hiked

432 gallons of litter removed

36 illegal fire rings removed

Kathryn Herndon-Powell

Hikemaster Report

The weather outside has gotten a little chilly, but it is still a fine time to go hiking. Many thanks to the Hike Leaders who have led so many great hikes this fall and have planned hikes over the winter. Keep up the good work planning a wide variety of hikes for all of our members. I want to welcome new Hike Leader Nancy Reid, and welcome back Hike Leader David Wickersham.

When planning winter hikes, don't forget to check the weather and trail conditions for where you are hiking. I always make sure and carry the 10

essentials, especially during the winter, when it's possible to get caught after dark with the shorter days. Those 10 essentials are: Illumination (headlamp/light source), Insulation (layers (non-cotton)), Multi-tool, First Aid Kit, Food/Snacks, Water and a way to treat it, Lightweight shelter or emergency blanket, Sun protection/sunscreen (you can still get sunburnt in the winter!), Map/compass or GPS unit, and Fire Building supplies. Stay warm out there and happy trails!

Susan Herndon-Powell

Two-day Wilderness First Aid with CPR - Landmark Learning

This 16- to 20-hour Wilderness First Aid (WFA) course is designed to introduce outdoor enthusiasts and individuals working in remote locations to wilderness medicine principles. Learn how to improvise equipment, deal with challenging environments, and act with confidence. Classroom lectures and demonstrations are combined with realistic scenarios where mock patients will help you integrate your learning.

Cost:

AT Volunteers: WFA & CPR - \$50

AT Volunteers: WFA - \$38

Non-Volunteers: WFA & CPR - \$195

Non-Volunteers: WFA - \$147

Space is limited to 25 open spots. Registration is open to AT/Club volunteers until late January. After that it will open to the general public.

Date & Time:

CPR: Friday, April 13, 6-9pm

WFA: Saturday & Sunday, April 14/15, 8am-5pm.

Course Address:

Volunteer Trail Camp, MRNRA Work Center,

609 Flat Ridge Rd, Sugar Grove, VA 24375

Course Logistics:

Meals: Prepare your own food in the camp kitchen for lunch and dinner or have dinner in local restaurants.

Lodging: Share one of the uninsulated, and unheated rustic structures that have electricity and light or bring your own tent. There are also motels 20 minutes away.

Bathhouses: Two bathhouses, one male, one female, have laundry, toilets, and showers.

Pavilion: When not used for classes, the pavilion will be available including the pool table, ping-pong table, WIFI, comfy hangout space, woodstove, and TV with DVD's.

Participants who don't bring their mother will clean up after themselves.

Registration or Questions: Contact Josh Kloehn
jkloehn@appalachiantrail.org or 540-904-4391

Doc's Knob Deck Project

October 19, 21, 22 & November 15

Homer & Therese Witcher (leaders), Kevin Black, Jim Webb, Tim Ligon, Matt Gentry, Laura Puckett, Kevin Witcher, Ernest Correale, Barry Morton, Bruce Agnew, Jim Beeson, Mike Vaughn, Adam Day, Brent Scott, Corinne & Kevin Guimont, Ray Marsh, Taylor & Nathan Peterson, and Meredith Simmons



Kevin Black who has given so much to RATC

RATC has completed building a 16 x 16-foot deck onto Doc's Knob shelter. The Demeree family made a sizeable donation to RATC in memory of Malcolm & Jimmie Black, and part of the generous donation was used to buy building materials for the deck. Malcolm & Jimmie were very active members of RATC for many years. Malcolm was known for his meticulous trail work, and Jimmie was best known for her cobblers and cookies. Many thanks go to their son, Kevin, who provided outstanding supervision and instruction to the construction crew. We would also like to thank everyone who came out and worked on the deck. Without them, the deck would not have been built.

On October 19, we brought all of the building materials to the shelter. This task was made easier with the use of a 4 wheeler and trailer belonging to Taylor & Nathan Peterson. The need for the deck

was exemplified when the holes were dug for the footers. With each new hole, water came up from the ground, making a muddy mess at the construction site. We ended the day by mixing concrete and pouring it into the holes while scooping out as much water as possible.



Corinne & Kevin Guimont, new member workers

October 20, we had only 8 people, but we were able to build the frame and get most of the joists in place. Jim Webb proved to be the master sawyer and spent most of the day taking instructions on the length of boards needed.

October 21, we had 15 people show up to assist with the build. The joists and decking were completed. A second crew worked on building nice stone steps on the side towards the water trail. We then placed a railing around the deck, except for an eight-foot stretch on either side for the steps. Since the steps on the trail side were not completed, we put up a temporary railing so that hikers would not take a fall.

November 15, we wrapped the deck with boards and built the steps on the trail side. We ended by building 2 benches on the sides of the deck so that hikers would have somewhere to sit.

Homer & Therese Witcher

My Hiking Story

Hi! My name is Michael Lee. I am 12 years old and I live in Snowville, Pulaski County, VA. I began hiking with my Grand Dad when I was 5 years old. I hiked up to the Cascades and fell in love with it right from the start.

We hiked up to Dragons Tooth once and I had such a good time. Another time, we hiked to McAfee's Knob and I loved it. It was then that we started hiking different sections of the Appalachian Trail. My Grand Dad was a member of the Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club, so when I turned 11, I joined also. After I got my backpack, we started out to complete the RATC entire section. I am now a member of the 113-miler club, even though I actually hiked 122 miles, not counting repeats of some I had already done. I also help maintain the shelter at Laurel Creek and I am looking forward to helping with the boundary maintenance.

I just want to share some of my experiences with you in hopes of seeing more kids my age out hiking with the club. Here are some of my favorite hikes, places, views and hiking partners. To begin with, my favorite hike is McAfee's Knob. I have been up a lot of times. The last time was on a 3-day backpacking trip from Daleville (more about that in a few minutes). I have even hiked it at nighttime and that was awesome. Once, due to new boots and blisters, I hiked from the fire road up bare-footed. Dragon's Tooth is also fun. I have taken two different friends up there with me at times.

My least favorite hike was hiking from John's Creek north up John's Creek mountain. The trail is steep and uneven. No views and it was cold with a lot of water frozen along the way. Also, the hike up Sinking Creek Mountain from Keffer oak, which is an awesome giant tree, gets really steep. I've done it twice. The Sarver Hollow shelter is

nice, but it's too far off the trail and the hike back up to the trail, ain't nice at all!

My favorite shelter is one you can't sleep in; Pine Swamp. It is so cool. It's made of stone, has bunkbeds and a fire place. It's closed because of all the rotten trees makes it dangerous.

My favorite place to camp is Lambert's Meadow campground. It's along a creek and the ground is covered in moss. There is a fire pit and picnic table. It has a bear box. There were bears there. When they came into the camp that night, I slept through it.

I want to talk about some hiking partners. When we spent the night at Lambert's Meadow, we met two section hikers. One girl was from Connecticut, and one was from New Hampshire. They both ran the Boston Marathon every year and had become friends. We started the next morning at the same time and wound up spending the next 3 days with them. They were fun. One was a teacher and made me do math problems in my head and I liked that. The one named Speedy Squirrel made me keep up with her and she about killed me. The other one was Iron Foot and she followed behind me. They left the trail and had to go back home. They invited me to come up some time and hike the White Mountains of New Hampshire with them. I hope to some day.

My favorite people to hike with from the club are Mrs. Judy Repass, her dog Bennett and Mrs. Sissy Logan. We hiked a lot of the trail together. They're really nice and taught me a lot. Mrs. Sissy knows a lot about birds. I always look forward to hiking with them.

I enjoyed working with Mr. & Mrs. Witcher on Laurel Creek shelter. I stained the shelter and chopped trees. We go up there about once a month and clean up. Last time we put hanging

cables in the shelter for backpacks. We stayed the night and I brought my friend Cameron with me. He loved hiking too. I met three guys that were thru-hiking and one of them taught me a fun word game. We also hiked there once with another guy and cut trees that had fallen across the trail. That was fun. Every hike I go on, if I find trash, I pick it up and carry it out.

My favorite view is from the Rice Fields at sunset. I took my friend Cameron with me there too. We had a real good time. We also ate breakfast sitting on a rock trying to watch the sunrise.

The scariest hike I did was out in Patrick County at a place called Rock Castle Gorge. We set out on a day hike and along the way, decided to do the whole thing. It was over 11 miles and it got dark the last 3 miles. It was the hard part, along rock ledges and narrow trails. It was really dark and you couldn't see anything past your headlamp light. But, it was exciting and made me want to actually plan a night hike afterwards.

We hiked up to Audie Murphy monument for Memorial Day and my Grand Dad told me all about him and who he was. My little sister went with us. Later we went back and I took Cameron, Mom, my little sister and her friend. We hiked all the way down to Trout Creek.

I went to trail days in Troutville this summer. We had hiked from Fulhardt Knob shelter that morning. We got a ride from a previous thru hiker from the trail into town, but had to walk back to the trail. I didn't like Trail days very much actually or hiking along the highway.

At Fulhardt Knob shelter, the airport runway is close, the planes came right over the top of my tent, just above the treetops, and that was exciting to see. I had a lighted fidget spinner and a thru-hiker there had never seen one, so he played with mine for awhile. He also had a guitar and sang that night around the fire.

The first shelter I ever slept in was Jenny's Knob. It was crowded and noisy. I couldn't move around much without making noise. From then on, I preferred sleeping in my own tent. My favorite thing to do after setting up camp is to start a fire. I like to do it using flint & steel. Once on top of Peter's Mountain, it was too wet to start a fire and nothing I tried worked. It was not as fun.

I met a thru-hiker at Jenny's Knob and she was funny. Two weeks later, by chance, I saw her again at a different part of the trail. I have met a lot of thru hikers and they are really cool. I can't wait until I get the chance to do it. My next goal is to complete all of VA. I can only do more than overnight or day hikes during the summer when I am out of school.

I guess I should also mention food. My trail name is Sir Eatsalot. I like Mountain House meals and Chipotle Tuna, Ramen and oatmeal. I learned how to roast Snickers bars from a thru-hiking couple. I tried roasted walnuts from another hiker once. They tasted like butter. I eat Cliff bars along the trail.

I invite all kids to come join me sometime hiking with the club. It's a fun experience!

Michael Lee

Hiking Guidelines

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

Both hikers and leaders, please go to <https://www.ratc.org/regional-hiking-resources/> and click on Bob Peckman's Regional Hike List to consult the hike descriptions at <http://peckmanjazz.com/HIKERATC.HTM> Tell me how to make the descriptions better. Try to use the name and description when posting a hike on Meetup, or maybe suggest changes or new hikes.

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. Make requests if we don't fill your needs.

Hikes are rated by length and terrain so hikers can evaluate them based on their individual strengths.
Easy terrain – Greenways or old roads
Moderate terrain – Typical AT
Strenuous terrain – long climbs and rough trails
Challenging – neglected trails and bushwhacking

Shuttle lengths are included to calculate carpool fees. Carpooling is encouraged to save gasoline and because trailhead parking may be limited. The hike leader is responsible for arranging the carpool. While there is no fee to hike with the club, the carpool fee is for the driving expenses.

If you are new to hiking or unfamiliar with the hike, contact the leader who will be glad to help you evaluate whether the hike is appropriate for you and also if you are properly equipped. 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. RATC needs you! Get on Meetup and lead a hike or contact the leader on a hike and offer to assist. Come out for the next hike-leader training. Contact Susan Herndon-Powell, hikemaster@ratc.org.

Hike Reports

Sunday, September 17, 2017 8:30 AM Jackson River Scenic Trail

Fred Meyer and Kris Peckman (co-leaders), Madeleine Taylor, Dee Case, Caralee Eicher, Laura Legere and Bob Peckman

The trail is approximately an 11-mile hike from Intervale to Natural Wells. We drove 2 cars to Intervale and then dropped one of the cars at Natural Wells. You can hike shorter distances by leaving a car at Petticoat Junction or Smith Bridge. The trail is built on an old railroad bed that has excellent views of the river along the way. One person enjoyed the trip so much that they were going to ride it in the future on a bicycle. Toward the end of the hike one person had a minor fall and scraped their arm but since we had a first aid kit, everything was fine. The weather was sunny and everyone had a good time even though it was a long walk.

Sunday, September 17, 2017 10:00 AM Garst Mill Stream Cleanup

Chris Means (leader), Chasity Graham, Carol Rowlett, David Rayher, Jennifer Frye, Jeanine & Robert Bomber, Paige Lucas, David Jermana, Brenda Boyce and Sarah Cavney plus George Devlin with DEQ

A big thank you to all the members of the RATC and ROAG who came out and helped with the stream clean yesterday. All in all I'd guess we removed and properly disposed of over 100 lbs of debris from the creek. Good work, nice weather and great people !! Be well peeps !!

Monday, September 18, 2017 8:00 AM
Workhike 1 mile north of Rte 624

Bill Neilan, Jim Beeson, Randy Pennington, Jill Pennington, Brent Scott, Dave Horst, Therese & Homer Witcher, Kevin Witcher, John Hvozdoivic & Jim Webb



The morning mist had burned off by the time we had got all the lumber for the bridge deck onto the site. It was cooler up here at the bridge site than down at the road. A very pleasant work environment.

Dave Horst had taken all the lumber needed for the bridge and had cut them all to size beforehand so there was little extra cutting to do. Assembly went very smoothly as everyone divided the tasks and went full speed ahead. In a little over 2-1/2 hours we were cleaning up the worksite and heading out.

Saturday, September 23, 2017 9:00 AM
Devil's Marbleyard Long Loop

Josiah Leonard (leader), Dave Horst, Julie Petruska, Wilma Vargas, and Nancy Wallace

We had a small but very speedy group on this beautiful, early-fall day. Special thanks to Nancy for "borrowing" her daughter's car for the carpool to Locher Tract.

We met Dave at the parking area, then got hiking. There was talk of a mutiny early on as I led the group straight into a blackberry patch while trying to cut a corner off-trail, but we eventually reached the terminus of the Glenwood Horse Trail and made our way to the Belfast Trail. We stormed up

to the Marbleyard, making great time to the base of the rocks.

Things turned a bit hot as we climbed the rocks, but everyone seemed to have a good time. Nancy earned the trail name "Spider Monkey" as she

scaled the rocks, and Wilma seemed to especially enjoy her first visit to the Marbleyard. We re-grouped for lunch on the Belfast Trail and were treated to some of Julie's trail mix. We finished the hike with a climb to the Appalachian Trail, then a descent along the Balcony Falls Trail back to Locher Tract. The views were quite nice along the ridge, and we were surprised by the superb condition of the trail. The trail and nearby land had been part of a prescribed burn in

the early summer, but had been restored to great condition since the time of my scouting hike. Thanks to the group for a great hike!

Saturday, September 30, 2017 10:00 AM
Peters Mountain, Rice Field

Kathryn Herndon-Powell (leader) and Barry Morton

Monday, October 2, 2017 8:00 AM
Workhike

David Horst, Bill Neilan, Jim Webb

This is one of the last hikes needed to install more log steps on the steep part of the Andy Layne trail. The logs had already been cut to size on previous hikes so putting them in place was very smooth. This trail is very slippery in wet or snowy weather so these steps will help.

Tuesday, October 3, 2017 6:00 PM
McAfee Knob Sunset Hike

Brendle Wolfe (leader), Trina Nicholson

It was a sunset hike up to McAfee's; however, with the daylight shortening with the season's change we missed the sunset and cut it a little short making it to the fire road crossing and back. It was nice and cool outside and we didn't see anyone else on the trail.

**Sunday, October 8, 2017 9:30 AM
Mason Creek Stream Cleanup**

Chris Means (leader), Charles Collins, Jennifer Frye, Robert Bomber, Jeanine Bomber & Scribble

Several members of the RATC and ROAG combined to participate in the Clean Valley Council's "Fall Waterways Cleanup" event. After speaking with George Devlin from the DEQ, Mason Creek was selected as our cleanup site. By group estimates we guess at least 400 pounds of trash came out of the creek that afternoon. A big thank you to all who came to assist with this event.

**Sunday, October 8, 2017 1:30 PM
Read Mountain**

Chris Means (leader), Justin Bayerter

Read Mountain never lets me down; the logistical advantage to having this gem 7 miles from downtown Roanoke can't be understated. Though our headcount was small, as only 2 of us made the hike, the fellowship was large as Jason and I made our way around the 5-mile loop, with a stop at Buzzards Rock for snacks and water. The breeze on the ridgeline was refreshing as always and the rain held off for us. Great day for a nice medium length hike not too far from home.

**Tuesday, October 17, 2017 8:00 AM
Dragon's Tooth parking - Trout Creek VA620
RATC Section #6**

Susan Herndon-Powell (leader), Jim Beeson (assistant), Clare Weaver, Dee Case, Ken Myers, Jill & Randy Pennington, Robert Finken

It was a chilly morning when 8 hikers met at Dragon's Tooth Trailhead to first shuttle our cars to the end of the hike at Trout Creek. We were on the trail by 8:40 am and, by the time we had climbed up to Lost Spectacles Gap, we were nice and warm! We enjoyed the view from several rocky viewpoints on our way up Dragon's Tooth. Several brave souls climbed up on Dragon's Tooth, while several others enjoyed the view from the base. Views of the Catawba valley through many leafless trees made for a fine hiking experience as we followed the ridge top toward Pickle Branch Shelter. We enjoyed lunch at the

last view point before descending towards Trout Creek. Eight miles today and lots of smiles.



**Wednesday, October 25, 2017 8:00 AM
The Cliffs of Rich Patch Mountain**

David Horst (leader), Josiah Leonard (the real leader), Jim Beeson, Terry Shipley, Mary Psiaki, Jill and Randy Pennington, Ken Myers, Kathy Arrington, Julie Petruska, Nancy Wallace, Wilma Vargas, Carol Rowlett, newby Paul Winter, and Madeleine Taylor.

The cliffs of Rich Patch are a seldom-done hike for RATC, and we took it a little further going out to Montgomery Knob at 4000 ft. On a crisp October day, 15 hikers began at Roaring Run and took the Iron Ore Trail to join up with upper Hoop Hole. About 4.5 miles into the hike we went off trail along the ridge of Pine Mountain. This was to make Jim happy as he is always disappointed on my hikes if there isn't some bushwhacking. The off trail consists of some boulder scrambling and a final push up through a break in the cliffs. The views in the summer time are very limited. But the leaf-off views in the fall and winter are spectacular. A half-mile trek along the ridge of Rich Patch leads through some very cool rock canyons out to nice view points at Montgomery Knob. After lunch and taking in the fall colors, we began back to the drop off point down to Pine Ridge. I led down, stopped with Jim and Ken to count the hikers as Josiah led the rest on. But alas, we were 5 hikers short! Some whistles, a couple of phone calls and texts, and a 20-minute search by me back up on Rich Patch found Terry, Madeleine, Nancy, Carol, and Mary wandering aimlessly. The short loss of hikers was somewhat

disappointing as I really try to keep losses on my hike to 10% and this exceeded that. Soon we were back together and finished the hike without incident. We skipped the waterfall at the end as everyone was tired from the grueling terrain at the top (except for Josiah who I think did another out and back after we left).

All in all, a really nice day with great people and weather. And Madeleine survived another of my hikes!

**Thursday, October 26, 2017 8:30 AM
Workhike - AT to McAfee Knob**

David Horst, John Hvozdovic, Jim Webb

Over the summer one of the bridges across slanted rocks on the trail to McAfee's Knob, rotted away and made the trip across a precarious one. We headed up the fire road to look for suitable replacement material. Having found a stand of white oak and dead black locust, we soon had enough to replace the whole bridge. We trucked these back to the fire road just above the bridge.



**Monday, October 30, 2017 8:30 AM
Workhike - AT to McAfee Knob**

David Horst, Jim Webb

We dragged the logs that we had cut on Thursday down the hill to the worksite. The old bridge had to be completely removed before we could install the new wood. The trail then had to be filled with rock and dirt. Looking good!

**Tuesday, October 31, 2017 5:15 PM
Tinker Cliffs – Halloween Sunset**

Josiah Leonard (leader) and Julie Petruska

It was a picture-perfect Halloween, and Julie and I took full advantage with our climb to Tinker Cliffs. It was a shame that we were not joined by more club and Meetup members! We met a few minutes early and were able to make it to the cliffs a few minutes before sunset after a steady climb along the Andy Layne Trail and the AT. Our encounter with the bold rocks was the perfect end to the day. But, our adventure was just beginning. Julie and I decided to take the long way back by following the AT southbound to Brickey Gap, then following the old "Bad Weather Trail" to Lamberts Meadow. Julie proved to be quite the trooper and I failed my land navigation test as I misled us not once, but twice along the old trail. We walked in the same general direction of the trail for quite a distance in the dark before finally re-crossing the trail. Luckily, the rest of the night hike went off without a hitch, and we slipped quietly through the woods on the spookiest of nights without any further mis-directions. This turned out to be one of the most enjoyable and memorable hikes I have taken in quite some time, and it was shared with the very best company! Thanks for hanging in there, Julie!

**Sunday, November 5, 2017, 10:00 AM
The Channels Natural Area Preserve**



L to R, Back Row: Son of George, George Self, Chris Means (leader), Justin Bayerter, Tim Pfeiffer, Jennifer Frye, and Andrew McDonald, Front Row: KJ, Marty, Chasity Graham, Bev Johansson, and Anne Pfeiffer
On the ground: David Hartzig

Three Roanoke based hiking groups converged for a headcount of 13 and one beloved pooch, Hannah the trail dog. Through cross posting in Meet Up the RATC, ROAG and ROSC all had members show up for this hike, which is located near Emory College in Hayters Gap, VA. It was a bit wet from drenching rains occurring the previous day but the weather was wonderful for our event. As a group we left the parking area around 11:15 and were up at the fire tower on Clinch Mountain by 1pm. After snacks and beverages we converged into the labyrinth of passages using the time tested buddy system and 45 mins later, when all were accounted for, the group started back down the hill. This is a place to put on your list for southern Virginia. Although a bit out of the way for the Roanoke crowd I've yet to lead any individual that wasn't taken by the uniqueness of this particular preserve location. A great group and an exceptional hike, doesn't get much better....

**Monday, November 11, 2017 8:30 AM
Workhike - Andy Layne trail**

Mike Vaughn, Dave Horst, Bill Neilan, Brent Scott & Jim Webb

Another trip up the Andy Layne trail. This time we were to install some wooden steps along the

trail just after the bridge over Catawba Creek. The logs had been cut some weeks prior to this hike so the installation went pretty smoothly. We were interrupted mid morning by a couple of hikers coming down the hill who were doing the triple crown hike. They informed us of a nasty blowdown up the hill just before Scorched Earth Gap. Since things were going so smoothly, Mike and Bill hiked up to clear the blowdown while we finished the steps. We finished the day with 19 steps and 1 waterbar installed.

**Sunday, November 19, 2017 9:30 AM
Floyd Field to Jennings Creek**

Chris Means (leader), Jim Beeson, Kris Peckman, Gwen Spangler, Laurie Spangler, Ken Myers, Andrew McDonald, Anne & Tim Pfeiffer, Josiah Leonard, Buford #ubes, and Chasity Graham



Today three Roanoke, VA based groups came together and laid down a 9+ miler on the Appalachian Trail, not too far from the Peaks of Otter Lodge and Conference Center. It was a bit windy and the temp probably didn't get over 42 or so, but a good time was had. We did a car drop on the AT crossing on Jennings Creek, Arcadia VA and then carpooled up to Floyd Field where today's hike originated. We bushwhacked into the AT from our parking spot on the Blue Ridge Parkway and hit the trail southbound (SOBO). After the 5 mile walk to Bryants Ridge Shelter it was time for some snacks and some fellowship. We wrapped up with the snacks with a group pic taken by our new friend, Big Texas, a SOBO thru hiker we mingle hiked with most of the day. Following the departure from the two story deluxe Bryants Shelter we hit our biggest ascent of the

day gaining around 1200 ft., then dropped back down onto Jennings Creek and our shuttle vehicles. Just another one of many days running in these Virginia Blue Ridge Mountains. Be well peeps and ... Get Your Outside On !!

**Sunday, November 26, 2017 9:30 AM
Camp Bethel/Blackhorse and Spec Mines**

Chris Means (leader), Chasity Graham, Nancy Wallace, Shawn Buck, Ken Myers, Jennifer Frye, Madeleine Taylor, Nancy Reid, Josiah Leonard



Today two Roanoke-based hiking clubs converged near the Blue Ridge Parkway. As we gained a respectable 2000-ft. elevation in this 9ish-mile hike, it was made clear to me the excellent outdoor opportunity afforded to all people living in this area. The sun was shining, the fellowship was ample and the winds for the most part stayed calm. Starting at the end of Camp Bethel Rd we hiked up to the Parkway by way of Blackhorse Gap Road. We jumped on the AT heading NOBO (northbound) taking in some fantastic long range views as the AT snakes along very closely, and periodically crosses the Parkway. After a lunch break at the Montvale Overlook we hiked down the Parkway a quarter mile to pick up Spec Mines Trail, which we descended to FR634 which eventually led us back to the vehicles. Just another blessed day running around in these Virginia Blue Ridge Mountains.

**Tuesday, November 28, 2017 9:00 AM
VA620-VA-621 RATC Section #7**

Susan Herndon-Powell (leader), Nancy Reid (assistant), Chase Davidson, Ken Myers, Jim Beeson, Dee Case, Maya Bohler, Clare Weaver, Madeleine Taylor, Joanne Derryberry. Guests: Elizabeth Hill



We lucked out in the weather department for this end of November hike on RATC Section #7 from VA 621 (Upper Craigs Creek) to VA 620 (Trout Creek). It was a chilly start, but we warmed up nicely on the 1500-foot climb up to the ridge. By the time we reached the Audie Murphy monument for lunch, it was in the high 50s and beautifully sunny. We enjoyed the view on the side trail below Audie Murphy and then continued on along the ridge, before descending to Trout Creek. RATC Hike Master Susan Herndon-Powell led the hike and Nancy Reid was Assistant Hike Leader. She is now trained and ready to lead hikes on her own!

**Wednesday, December 6, 2017 9:00 AM
Twin Creeks**

David Horst (leader), Josiah Leonard (leader), Mike Vaughn, Jim Beeson, Bob Peckman, Julie Petruska, Nancy Wallace, William Stegmayer, and Wilma Vargas

A well known area, but a different route with a little off trail. Due to the parkway closure on hike day, we began the hike in Josiah's back yard off of Houston Mines Road. Picking him up at his house, we took the vehicles up Salt Pond Rd to the forestry gate where we hopped on the AT heading north. Passing over Curry Gap, we descended to Curry Creek and took the trail by the same name to the forestry road and headed toward Wilson Creek. But alas, we needed some off trail so Bill, myself, Josiah, and Wilma headed directly over a steep knob to take the short cut. The rest

(including Jim, who usually loves bushwhacking), followed the road around the knob. We picked up the trail along Wilson Creek which passes through a nice campsite which was the location of the old AT. This seems like a much better site right on the creek than the elevated current site of the shelter. At this point the trail ends and we followed the creek to the AT crossing. A short lunch in the middle of the low creek and we headed south on the AT. The multiple steep climbs back up out of the Wilson and Curry Creek areas separated the group somewhat but we regrouped at Curry Gap. A couple of miles on Salt Pond Road with nice leaf-off views ended the hike. Cloudy and cool, but great people and a great workout!



Just what I needed today, a refreshing walk in the woods with 10 friends. Members from the RATC, ROAG and the ROSC meet up on this crisp December morning for a 4-trail/8-mile hike at Carvins Cove Natural Reserve, Roanoke, VA. The rain was moving in as we were coming out :^) I'm thinking some good ole hiker karma kept the wet stuff at bay, or possibly the weatherman just actually nailed it for once !! Either way another excellent day was had spending time with other outdoor enthusiasts.

Be well peeps and Get Your Outside On !!

Sunday, December 17, 2017 10:00 AM
Carvin's Cove Four Trails
HiDeeHo, Brushy, Jacobs Drop & Four Gorge

Chris Means (leader), Chasity Graham, Jennifer Frye, Andrew McDonald, Jim Beeson, Carol Rowlett, Ken Myers, Chase Davidson, Nancy Reid, Madeleine Taylor and Bob Peckman

**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.

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