

TRAIL BLAZER

NEWSLETTER OF THE ROANOKE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CLUB



SUMMER 2003

The Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club is a recreational hiking association of volunteers who preserve and improve the Appalachian Trail as the nation's premier, continuous, long-distance footpath.



Photo of Dragon's Tooth courtesy of Jerry Austin

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CALENDAR OF CLUB ACTIVITIES**Saturday, August 2 – 4-9 PM**
Corn Boil**WORK HIKES****Sunday, July 13 - 8:30 AM**
Brushy Mountain**Sat. & Sun, August 2-3 - 8:30 AM**
Konnarock – Catawba Mountain**Sunday, September 14 - 8:30 AM**
Catawba Mountain**Hike Scheduling****Contact *Don Nulph***
774-8618 – Nulph-d@cox.net**BOARD MEETINGS****(All members are always welcome.**
Please let the host know you plan to attend.)**Thursday, July 24, 7:30 p.m.**
Hosted by Laurie & Leonard Adkins**August: No board meeting****Thursday, September 11, 7:30 p.m.**
Hosted by *Bob & Kris Peckman***The Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club is an affiliate of**
The Appalachian Trail Conference
and a member of The Nature Conservancy

Welcome New Members

The Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club welcomes the following new members:

Laura Effel

Rob, Kay & April Saul

Diana Quinn

Michael & Maria Lindell

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

Mervin Brower

President's Message

It is de ja vu all over again. I am a recycled president, and again, I am finding out what is happening. Our club is a complex affair. We do all the things that a club like the bicycle club, or our club in the early days, would do. But we also are responsible for the care of the Appalachian Trail. And that means working hand and hand with local landowners, the Appalachian Trail Conference, the National Forest Service and the National Park Service. We have to be diplomatic yet firm, informed, and very cooperative.

RATC has what first seemed to me like a very strange way of selecting officers for the board. The good ol' boys on the board select a nominating committee. The nominating committee selects a slate of one candidate for each position. At the annual meeting, there is never a nomination from the floor, and yes, the good ol' boys are elected again. The president is the only office with term limits. Some of our officers are like institutions! When you get on the inside, then you see how difficult it is for the nominating committee to find

that one qualified person willing to fill an empty seat.

I think the founders of our club were quite clever. If the good ol' boys need to go, there is a procedure for sweeping them out. Get organized, nominate a different slate at the meeting and turn the whole thing over. And if things are working the way they are, then we elect the selection of the nominating committee, as we have done since anyone can remember.

But the board always needs new blood. It is very difficult for the board to fill vacancies. That is why the board meetings are advertised on the back of every Blazer. You are always welcome to come to a board meeting. If have something to say, we will listen. If you want to see what we do and how we do it, please come. We might bore you to death, or you might get involved and be selected by the nominating committee next year!

Bob Peckman

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Volunteers are still needed to lead hikes and excursions and to head up the children program for Multi-club 2003.

If interested, please contact

Lucien Metayer

Home: (540) 344-1877

Bus: (540) 890-7520

Email: metayer@infionline.net

Trail Supervisor's Report

Two people who I have known for about a quarter of century, both of whom made substantial contributions to the Appalachian Trail have died recently. They were Skeeter Lamb and Dave Richie. Skeeter and his wife, Elizabeth, have been members RATC since the 1950's. When I joined the club board in 1979, Skeeter was club treasurer and he previously served as trail supervisor. The Lambs served as trail maintainers, first for the Tinker Ridge section and later for the Fulhardt Knob section. They were both active work hike participants and hike leaders during my early years of club membership. Since Skeeter's involvement with the club began more than twenty years before mine, I am sure my list of his accomplishments is incomplete. Skeeter was 87. Elizabeth survives him.

Dave Richie worked in the National Park Service and became involved with the Appalachian Trail in 1974. He became director of the Appalachian Trail Project Office in 1977. After the passage of the act authorizing purchase of an Appalachian Trail corridor in 1978, his office had the responsibility for planning the acquisition. I first met him in the spring of 1979 at a Botetourt County Board of Supervisor's meeting. Larry Wood, who was a club officer also living in Blacksburg at that time, and I drove over to Fincastle that evening and had dinner with Dave and Tom Knox, who worked in AT land acquisition, at a restaurant near the courthouse. We were expecting vocal opposition at the meeting that evening and got some from a man at the next table, who overheard our conversation and followed us to the meeting. There was also plenty of opposition from other citizen's and

members of the board, particularly the chairman. Dave did most of the talking from our side of the fence and I was very impressed with how calm and well prepared he was. He outlined the route that we wanted the trail to take across the valley. When someone asked if he had walked it he said yes, and gave enough detail to convince everyone that he had. He and his staff took steps that eventually defused most of the opposition. Over the course of the next 8 or 10 years I saw Dave perhaps once a year and talked with him on the phone occasionally. I think it was in the spring of 1984 that I got a call from Dave at my office and he wanted to know if I had a few minutes to chat. He had been backpacking down in our area and wanted to give me his impressions of what he had seen. Among other things he really liked the new Sinking Creek Valley crossing and he suggested that we move the trail from the side of Brush Mountain to the top. This was done a few years later. I was most impressed that he would call me. Dave thoroughly believed in the volunteer management of the Appalachian Trail. I have never met a finer person and consider myself fortunate to have known him personally. Unfortunately, he was only 70 when he died in December. If you wish to learn more about his life, I refer you to the March – April issue of the ATN.

In closing let me mention that the Konnarock Crew will be doing trail improvements just north of the Boy Scout Shelter, which incidentally will be replaced this summer.

Charles Parry

Hikemaster Report

I would like to know what you would like to see on the hike schedule. Send me an email with your suggestions.

Do we have members who think our easy hikes may not be easy and like to see something on the schedule that is a nice walk (slower pace and shorter distance than our normal hikes)? Please let me know who you are. Email is best way. There are two "hikes" on the schedule that are really walks, good as a starter hike or to get back in shape for hiking.

The committee thanks everyone who took the time to respond to our proposed hike leader protocol – by sending in your comments and / or

attending the Hike Leaders meeting in April. We are still evaluating your concerns and plan to have the procedures in final form for the fall *Blazer*.

However, you will notice that the hike schedule in this issue looks quite different. In the first place, we have expanded the introductory paragraphs to delineate more clearly certain aspects of our hiking program. Also, the individual hikes now come with capsule descriptions that should provide more information for those considering a given hike.

I would appreciate your comments on this new format, and I hope to see many of you on the trail.

Don Nulph

Multi-club 2003

The Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club is proud to host the annual Multi-Club Meet 2003 Labor Day Weekend. This Multi-Club Meet will be located in the mountains of Virginia at Camp Alta Mons (www.altamons.com) in Shawsville, VA. Camp Alta Mons is a camping and conference facility located east of Shawsville, Virginia. It is owned and operated by the Roanoke District of the United Methodist Church. The property, which was a mountain resort in the early 1900's, contains about 1200 acres of ridge and valley terrain in a community called Crockett Springs.

Some of the activities planned for weekend include hikes on the Appalachian Trail and other popular areas, excursions to nearby places of interest, guided canoeing trips on the New River, entertainment in the evenings and a Saturday night cookout. Also, there will be activities for the children, including swimming (\$3.00 per day), fishing, hiking and crafting, all supervised by

RATC volunteers to make this weekend truly a family event. (**Volunteers needed to lead hikes and excursions and to head up the children's program**).

Register early, we only have a limited amount of RV sites and bunkhouse spaces.

Registration forms will be available on our web site at www.ratc.org.

Come and enjoy the beautiful mountains of Virginia at Multi-Club Meet - 2003.

See you there!

Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club
Multi-Club Meet 2003 Committee

Lucien Metayer

Hike Reports

Saturday-Sunday, March 8 -9, 2003 Laurel Creek Privy Work hike

Charles Parry (leader), Duncan Hall, Bob Stimson, Jack Phelps, Richard Fredrick, Dustin Rettig, David Rettig, Andrew Squires, Peter Rogers, Sammy Cook, Rick Fredrick, Mark Smith, Karl Wedin, Marila Ramish, Kirk Smith, Bill Cook, Fred Coughlan, Chris Hall, Dana Helsley, Ron McCorkle, Dave Cheslow, Stephanie Kent, Homer Witcher, Therese Witcher, Margaret Rose, Lisa Jansen, Zach Patiz

Duncan Hall's Eagle Scout project was to convert the privy at Laurel Creek Shelter to a moldering privy. Actually, work on the project began two weeks earlier, when Duncan, his father, some scouts and I met at my shed and pre-assembled the base for the privy. On Mar. 8, we met at the Forest Service road at the top of John's Creek Mountain and drove to within half a mile of the shelter. We had to remove one blow down across the fire road on the way in. Fortunately, I brought a chainsaw along. We remarked how lucky we were with the weather as this was the first nice weekend since fall. The first job consisted of carrying the lumber to the site. We had 9 five-foot pieces of treated 6x6 s and 6 eight-foot 6x6 s, along with some step lumber and a number of tools. Everything went quite well and we had everything in well before lunchtime. I wanted to get the privy on the base before we left on Sat., because I knew we would have much less help on Sunday. One group began assembling the base while a second group tore the siding off the privy. Everything went fairly well and by early afternoon we were ready to move the privy. A combination of brute force, ignorance and some basic principles of physics eventually got it moved and elevated onto the base. As the club banquet was that evening, some of us wanted to leave early. A group of the scouts stayed overnight at the shelter.

The next morning I went back and met the scouts at the end of the road. We carried in some more tools. Among the tools we took in was a short ladder as the privy was now about 10 feet high. Then, we proceeded to line the hole that would be used first with birdcage wire. When that was done

we moved, the privy into place, secured it and began putting the siding back on. We also had to build a set of steps to provide access to the privy. We were done shortly after noon and headed back to the vehicles for lunch. It was a good project and this will give us a first hand opportunity to see how well moldering privies really work.

Sunday, March 16, 2003 Craig Creek Bridge Work Hike

Charles Parry (leader), Laurie Adkins (assistant), Susan Dickerson, Shelby Dickerson, Homer Witcher, Therese Witcher, Bennett Witcher, Fred Coughlan, Dana Helsley, Merve Brower, Blanche Brower

A small bridge across a high water channel of Craig Creek had washed out during the late Feb. flood. Laurie discovered it shortly after the flood, so Gloria and I went out and scouted it the following Sunday. It was decided to move the bridge downstream about 50 feet from the old location. This gave us considerably higher ground on the south end of the bridge. I wanted to build a new pier on the north end using treated 6x6 s. The first problem was to get the lumber transported out there. I first called the Forest Service, but struck out there. I then called a former neighbor who had a trailer. He loaned it to me and I went out to Lowes with it and purchased the lumber on Saturday. As we would be transporting lumber out there I decided to include another job in the project. We had a small bridge across a dry, but deep, little hollow up the trail a bit that was built using native oak stringers. I knew they were rotting out so decided to replace the stringers with treated 6x6 s. I wasn't sure of the exact length, but 16 feet is the longest you can purchase, so decided to go with that. As I had to drive a bit slower than usual with the trailer, the others were waiting when I arrived. The weather was not as good as the week before and it looked like it might rain anytime, but never did. First we floated the 16 footers across the creek and left them. We would eventually carry them up a short cut to their site.

The next job was to get the material and tools to the site of the bridge that had washed out.

We also had to get most of the material across the stream, as that was where the new pier was going. We had one group tearing apart the bridge while others of us were assembling the new pier. It was after lunch before that was done. We still had to build a small support on the south end and were running low on material. We finally got it together and began to move the stringers. I had brought plenty of rope and they floated upstream quite well. The hard part was lifting them onto the piers. They were old phone poles and well soaked with water. We used the same combination that we had used to move the privy and eventually got them into place. Fortunately, Dana had brought waders and was able to work in the stream. Once that was done, we left Homer, Therese and Blanche to deck the bridge while the rest of us went to move the 16 footers. We had three people on each one and got them carried to the site with several rest stops along the way. As it was too late to put them in we laid them just up the hill from the bridge, but not before we tried one for length. It was a perfect fit. The bridge was just about decked when we got back. As it was getting late we decided the rail would have to wait. Fred and I carried the material up on a little hill in case of another flood before we got back. I only had one taillight working on the trailer so was anxious to get home. Unfortunately, it got dark, but I made it ok. I waited until the next morning to return the trailer, as I had to drive through town.

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

Jerry Austin (leader), Gary Adams

Terri McClure, assistant hike leader, called several times from Roanoke prior to the hike and said she had no calls regarding the hike. She showed up at the meeting place for the Roanoke area and no one showed up. As agreed, she called and told me that no one had showed up so we both agreed that there was no pressing reason for her to drive down to Pearisburg for the hike since we were not going to have a lot of hikers.

I met Gary, an RATC member who lives close by in the Blacksburg area, at the trailhead at 11:30 AM and we took off up the mountain, which

soon got our hearts pumping well. It was a beautiful sunny day with the temperature being about 60 degrees Fahrenheit at the trailhead and somewhat cooler on the top of Pearis Mountain.

We saw 15 other hikers, all in groups of two except for one group of three hikers. All of them except for two thru hikers or section hikers were day hikers, some of them carrying daypacks with little or no hiking gear. We saw another member of the RATC, who was day hiking the mountain with her mom, and we chatted awhile about the club and about various hikes and hiking in general.

The two thru hikers or section hikers with full backpacks, tents and sleeping bags were just starting down from the summit as we approached it. We hear a goat make a "baah" goat sound and they evidently had seen the goat and said there is a goat on the trail. We also heard the bell which it was wearing. These goats are famous and I've heard of many people encountering them on Pearis Mountain. One thru hiker wrote about seeing a big black one on the mountain and at first thought it was a bear. There is a farm near the trailhead, which has lots of goats so I suppose they just jump the fence and roam all over the mountain or perhaps some got loose and have been loose for years and roaming the mountain.

From the Angel's Rest overlook rock, we had a tremendous view of Pearisburg, the Celenese Plant, and New River as it winds its way down through the county and past Pearisburg, Bluff City and the Celenese Plant. From the lookout, we saw a small plane and also a helicopter, which were far below us in elevation flying at around 500 feet or so above the valley floor, yet we were at least 1000 feet or so above them.

After spending some time at the lookout, viewing the area from the lookout, and having a little snack; we headed back down the mountain meeting several groups of day hikers ascending the mountain. We arrived back at the vehicles at 2:30 PM making the total hike time about three hours, which is normal for this hike. The trail was in very good shape and the work done by Konnarock Trail Crew and members of the RATC on the Angel's Rest trail last year has held up very nicely and looks really good.

Hike Schedule

Going on a group hike can fulfill a number of worthwhile purposes. These include such things as physical conditioning, social interaction, the enjoyment of nature, and the thrill of reaching a spectacular viewpoint. The Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club consistently tries to provide a wide range of hiking opportunities for people of all ages, interests and abilities. Guests are always welcome to join us.

For the most part, we rate our hikes as follows:

Easy – 3 to 5 miles; good trails or old roads; modest elevation changes.

Moderate – 5 to 8 miles; steeper trails which may be rough in places.

Strenuous – 8 miles and up; long hikes with extensive climbs and possible rough trails or bushwhacking.

Hikes, which do not fall, neatly into one of these categories may be rated **easy-moderate** or **moderate-strenuous**.

You may drive your own car to the trailhead if you wish. However, carpooling is encouraged to save gasoline and because trailhead parking may be limited. The hike leader is responsible for arranging such carpooling as may be required. While there is no fee to hike with the club, the indicated amount is to defray automobile expenses and should be given to the driver of your carpool.

You will need to call the leader to find out where the hiking group will be meeting. If you are new to hiking, the leader can also give advice about clothing, footwear, and equipment. If you are unfamiliar with the hike, the leader will be glad to answer your questions and help you evaluate whether or not it is suitable for you.

Sunday, July 6, 2003, 8:00 AM Stillhouse Branch to Rice Field

9 miles, strenuous, \$3.00 carpool fee

Jerry Austin (540)921-1792

Maurice Turner 334-2128

Located near Pearisburg (Giles County) – about an hour and 20 minutes from Roanoke. This is an up-and-back hike along the Appalachian Trail. The trail climbs to the crest of Peters Mountain and then continues, with little change in elevation, to Rice Field. Rice Field is a large, open grassy area that affords nice views while the hiker enjoys a lunch break.

Sunday, July 6, 2003, 1:00 PM Fenwick Mines Trail

2 miles, easy (Great for beginners or those a little out of shape), \$2.00 carpool fee

Donald Nulph 774-8618

Sharon Harrison 427-0834

Craig County, approximately 7 miles northeast of New Castle on VA 685. Open pit mines & foundations of old mining structures, nature trail, & wetlands created by beaver.

Sunday, July 13, 2003, 8:00 AM Work hike – Brushy Mountain

Charles Parry 540-951-1402

Kenny Garrett 890-8946

Sunday, July 13, 2003, 1:00 PM Catawba Mountain to Dragon's Tooth Parking 113-mile, hike #5

6.5 miles, moderate, \$1.00 carpool fee

Bobbie Stitche 890-2140

Paul Yeatts 293-0066

The hike begins at the 311 parking lot – just 15 minutes from Roanoke. The Appalachian Trail is followed south over the many humps of Catawba Mountain before dropping down to the open fields of Buckner's Gap. Between Routes 785 and 624, the trail crosses Sandstone Ridge. Beyond 624 the trail heads uphill past the Boy Scout Trail and continues to Lost Spectacles Gap where a blue-blazed trail leads down to the Dragon's Tooth parking lot.

Sunday, July 20, 2003, 9:00 AM

Apple Orchard Falls Cornelius Creek Loop

5.5 miles, moderate, \$2.00 carpool fee

Jerry Austin (540)921-1792

Maurice Turner 334-2128

This is a popular hike located in the North Creek camping area, near Arcadia, and about 45 minutes from Roanoke. A blue-blazed trail, steep in places, leads uphill to Apple Orchard Falls. The falls are impressive and the trail has been greatly improved in recent years. Beyond the falls, a crossover path leads to the Cornelius Creek Trail which follows the creek downhill – back to the parking area.

Sunday, July 20, 2003, 1:00 PM

Belfast Trail to Devil's Marbleyard

3 miles, easy, \$2.00 carpool fee

Mervin & Blanche Brower 387-9732

Paul Blaiklock 985-6220

Located a few miles beyond Natural Bridge Station, this popular hike starts about an hour's drive from Roanoke. The route follows the Belfast Trail in the Jefferson National Forest and heads steeply uphill for a little over two miles. At this point the Devil's Marbleyard appears just to the left of the trail. This is an eight-acre field of quartzite boulders which affords endless scrambling opportunities (watch out for snakes, though) and great views. The return is along the same route.

Sunday, July 27, 2003, 9:00 AM

Daleville to Hay Rock

7 miles, moderate, no carpool fee

Ed Wallace 774-0175, Lois Smith 992-3701

No driving for this one – the trail starts directly from the Daleville commuter lot. Except for a short feeder trail (old A.T.); the route follows the Appalachian Trail to Hay Rock and back again. There are several overlooks along the way, but the best one is at Hay Rock. This overhanging chunk of sandstone provides shelter on one side and great views on the other – for those willing to scramble to the top.

Sunday, July 27, 2003, 1:00 PM

Pandapas Pond

2 miles, easy (Great for beginners or those a little out of shape), \$2.00 carpool fee

Brush Mountain, Montgomery County, North of Blacksburg. 8 acre pond on edge of Eastern

Continental Divide, surrounded by Appalachian hardwoods & pines, wetland north east of pond & beaver wetlands on Poverty Creek plus other trails extending from the pond trail.

Saturday, August 2-3, 2003, 8:30 AM

Work hike, Catawba Mountain – Konnarock

Charles Parry (540)951-1402

Laurie Adkins 966-2811

Sunday, August 3, 2003, 1:00 PM

Falls Ridge

3 miles, moderate, \$1.00 carpool fee

Bobbie Stitche 890-2140,

Maurice Turner 334-2128

Montgomery County, southeast of Blacksburg. 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.

Sunday, August 10, 2003, 8:00 AM

Montebello – Fish Hatchery to Crabtree Falls

7 miles, moderate, \$3.00 carpool fee

Jimmy Whitney 344-4117, Lois Smith 992-3701

This hike is located in the George Washington National Forest near Montebello - 90 minutes from Roanoke. An old woods road leads to the Appalachian Trail and Spy Rock – a scramble to the top of which offers excellent panoramic views. After following the A.T. north for several miles, another woods road leads to the Crabtree Falls Trail. This path follows Crabtree Creek as it passes over a sequence of seven spectacular waterfalls. Footing can be tricky in places when the trail is wet.

Sunday, August 10, 2003, 1:00 PM

Blackhorse Gap to Bearwallow Gap

7 miles, moderate, \$2.00 carpool fee

Kenny Garrett 890-8946, Gene Downs 473-2326

Located just off of the Blue Ridge Parkway – about 30 minutes northeast of Roanoke. This is a ridge walk along the Appalachian Trail which is very close to the parkway and crosses it several times. Virtually the entire trail is wooded and there is little change in elevation.

Sunday, August 17, 2003, 8:30 AM
Hoop Hole – Upper & Lower in Figure 8

10 miles, strenuous, \$2.00 carpool fee

Terry McClure 375-2650, Paul Yeatts 293-0066

This hike is a figure eight that includes a steep climb to the top of Montgomery Knob in the Jefferson National Forest. The lower loop (which is frequently done separately as an afternoon hike) follows two different streams with many picturesque cascades and pools. There are a number of stream crossings and the footing is tricky in places.

Sunday, August 17, 2003, 1:00 PM
War Spur & Loop Hike

4 miles, easy, \$3.00 carpool fee

David Sutton 774-0648

Lynn Bryant 343-2084

Salt Pond Mountain, Giles County, Mountain Lake Wilderness. You hike to War Spur overlook and the AT, you return from the overlook through a virgin hemlock, fir and spruce stand. Buffet before hike at Mountain lake Lodge if possible.

Sunday, August 24, 2003, 8:30 AM
Johns Creek Mountain Trail to Level Green
113-mile hike #9

7.5 miles, moderate, \$2.00 carpool fee

Bob & Kris Peckman 366-7780

Johns Creek Mountain, Craig County. This hike is a combination of the AT & Johns Creek Mountain Trail.

Sunday, August 24, 2003, 1:00 PM
Cascades

4 miles, easy-moderate, \$3.00 carpool fee

Jerry Austin (540)921-1792

Mary Lou Gaminde 344-1637

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

Saturday - Sunday, August 30-31, 2003
Multi-Club Meeting

1. McAfee Knob (7 miles)

This great overlook is one of the most popular and photographed hikes in all of Virginia. It is an overhanging rock ledge with spectacular views of Catawba and the Roanoke valley.

2. Dragon's Tooth (6 miles)

You will ascend the Dragon's Tooth trail and AT

to the Tooth. You can climb to its sharp crown by way of a crack. On the top you have outstanding views of the Catawba Valley, McAfee Knob and Big Tinker Mountain.

3. Craig Creek, Va. 621 to Trout Creek, Va. 620 (7 miles)

This hike climbs Brush Mountain to the Audie Murphy plane crash monument. This is the site of the 1971 plane crash that killed Audie Murphy, the most decorated U.S. soldier of World War II. There is a scenic overlook behind the monument that has excellent views of Sinking Creek Mountain and the upper Craig Creek Valley. You will do some ridge walking and then descend to Trout Creek.

4. Cascades (4 miles)

An easy round trip trail to one of Virginia's most impressive waterfalls at 66 ft tall. You can swim in the water below the falls.

5. Bottom Creek Gorge (5 miles)

This is a rugged gorge with a bold mountain stream with white water, deep pools and a 200 ft high waterfall, Virginia's second largest waterfall. You will explore cabins and cemeteries left by a community of deserters from the war of 1812 and the Civil War. You will see groves of old oaks and return by a trail that skirts Bottom Creek, passing by a beaver's dam.

6. Va. 311 to Va. 779 (13 miles)

This is a long tough hike that traverses the often-photographed McAfee Knob (3,197 ft.) and Tinker Cliffs (3,000 ft.) which are a half mile long rock wall overlooking the Catawba Valley. You can see the 1930's writings of the Nomad on a rock formation as you hike between McAfee Knob and Tinker Cliffs. There are two shelters Catawba Mountain shelter and the Campbell Shelter on this hike. At Scorched Earth Gap you begin the descent on the Andy Layne Trail to Va. 779.

7. Va 311 to Trout Creek, Va 620 (13 miles)

This hike follows the roller coaster Sawtooth Ridge, with views of Fort Lewis Mountain on the left and Cove Mountain and North Mountain on the right. As you enter open meadows you have good views of Cove Mountain, Dragon's Tooth and Beckner Gap. As you hike through the open meadows crossing Sandstone Ridge you begin the climb to Dragon's Tooth. This is a spectacular monolith with views of the Catawba Valley, McAfee Knob and Big Tinker Mountain. On a clear day the Peaks of Otter are visible to the east. The rest of the hike is mostly descending Cove Mountain. There is one shelter in this area, the Pickle Branch Shelter.

**Sunday, September 7, 2003, 8:30 AM
Stone Coal Gap to Andy Lane Trail (779)**

4 miles, easy, \$1.00 carpool fee
Maurice Turner 334-2128
Mike Ferguson 344-8525
North end of North Mountain about 10 miles from Daleville. Hikes Part of the ridge of North Mountain ending at 779 where the Andy Lane Trail begins.

**Sunday, September 7, 2003, 1:00 PM
Chestnut Ridge Trail**

5.5 miles, easy, no carpool fee
Lynn Bryant 343-2084
Paul Yeatts 293-0066
4 miles from Roanoke & 1 mile from the Blue Ridge Parkway. The trail is a 5.4 mile figure-eight course around the Roanoke Campground behind Mill Mountain. The trail is well-graded and surrounded by woods.

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

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

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

7 miles, moderate, no carpool fee
Mary Lou Gaminde 344-1637
Sharon Harrison 427-0834
This very popular hike starts from the 311 parking lot on Catawba Mountain – only 15 minutes from Roanoke. It is an up-and-back outing along the Appalachian Trail. For the first two miles, the trail generally follows the ridge line of Catawba Mountain to the Catawba Shelter. The last mile and a half of trail passes a number of unusual rock formations as it climbs to the summit of the knob. Extensive cliffs at the top afford unparalleled views of both the Catawba Valley and the city of Roanoke.

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

19.5 miles, strenuous, \$1.00 carpool fee
Kenny Garrett 890-8946
Lois Smith 992-3701
Starts from the 311 parking lot on Catawba Mountain – only 15 minutes from Roanoke. Certainly one of our most challenging hikes and it

is recommended only for those in excellent physical condition. Almost 20 miles of the Appalachian Trail leads over varied terrain with several steep climbs and tricky footing in places. Highlights include McAfee Knob, Tinker Cliffs and Hay Rock. There are also numerous unnamed overlooks providing nice views of both the Catawba Valley and Carvins Cove.

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

5 miles, easy, \$1.00 carpool fee
David Sutton 774-0648
David Cheslow 389-7791
Hidden away at corner of Montgomery, Roanoke, and Floyd counties is the Bottom Creek Gorge Preserve on top of Bent Mountain. The conservancy has developed a network of trails that pass ponds, streams and meadows and follow tunnels of rhododendron that lead you around and down to the Bottom Creek George, then up to a vantage point to see Bent Mountain Falls flow from a mountain side.

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

12 miles, strenuous, \$3.00 carpool fee
Jerry Austin (540)921-1792
Jimmy Whitney 344-4117
This is a hike on the AT in Jefferson National Forest located in Giles County south of Pearisburg. The hike is over Pearis Mountain with a stop at Angels Rest.

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

6.5 miles, moderate, \$2.00 carpool fee
Mervin & Blanche Brower 387-9732
Cynthia Bowles 345-6586
Parallels the Blue Ridge Parkway a few miles north of the Peak of Otter with the starting point about an hour and 15 minutes northeast of Roanoke. The hike is mostly wooded and is entirely on the Appalachian Trail. The steepest section is the 1300-foot climb from Petites Gap, while the highlight of the walk is the large grassy area at the summit of Apple Orchard Mountain (4225 feet) which offers excellent views.

Hike Reports (Cont.)

Sunday, April 6, 2003

Craig Creek, Catawba Mountain Work Hike

Charles Parry (leader), Laurie Adkins (assistant), Bob Foutz, Fred Coughlan, Dana Helsley, David Schoendorfer, Jason Nantz, Charlie Lampeter, Malcolm Black, Mervin Brower, Blanche Brower, Suzanne Barnett

As I wished to finish the bridge job that was started three weeks earlier, I decided to work in two locations. Only the first 5 people listed were at the bridge sites. Unfortunately, the rail took longer than I hoped and it was about 11 by the time we got the decking removed from the native stringer bridge. The starter cord pulled off my chainsaw as I going to cut the old stringers. We moved them without difficulty and I left, Bob, Dana and Fred to finish the job while I headed for Catawba Mountain. I later learned that I had unfortunately missed some of the Roanoke College group. However, David and two Roanoke College students pulled in the parking lot in separate vehicles right behind me. We took my truck up the fire road a bit and I got the others started carrying step material up the hill, while I took the chainsaw apart. I was easily able to fix it and one of the students helped me burn the cord, so it would not untie again.

Malcolm showed up just as we were getting started with the steps. Soon Mervin and Blanche arrived followed by the bridge builders and then Suzanne. We had step building in three locations, as well as some rock removal further up the trail. We put in about 30 steps by quitting time. I did have a little lumber left in the truck to take home. Not a bad day's work.

**Sunday, April 6, 2003, 1:00 PM
Otter Creek**

Kenny Garrett (co-leader), Sue Scanlin (co-leader), Jesse Garrett, Lance Garrett, Anita Austin, Carolyn Baratta, Marianne Demkó, Debbie Robbins, Warren Shows, Suzanne Shows, Brice Moon, Laura Effel, Erin Baratta

We departed Market Square East shortly after 1:00. (Hikemaster Note: the sign for Market Square East was down and the Food Lion was no

longer there for landmark purposes) We drove approximately 52 miles to the trail parking area at Otter Creek Campground and Resturaunt. We then began our stroll back southbound to our final destination of the Parkway-James River Visitors Center. Our first creek crossing proved too deep, and we backtracked and re-routed near the campground. We criss-crossed the parkway via a couple tunnels and made numerous creek crossings. The young and the young at heart seemed to really enjoy the creek crossings which was evident by the laughter and smiles all around. The weather was warm and sunny with very few clouds. The hemlocks were vibrant, along with redbud, ferns, and pines. Marianne found numerous wild flowers along the way. Before reaching the Visitors Center, we enjoyed the beautiful walk around the Otter Lake Loop Trail. Upon reaching our destination, many enjoyed the walkway underneath the James River Bridge/BRP. There was also the short, educational Trail of Trees adjacent to the Visitor's Center. Each member of the group stated that they really enjoyed the walk, and all agreed that the hike should be rated "Easy", but well worth the drive.

**Sunday, April 13, 2003, 8:00 AM
Mau-Har Trail- 3 Ridges Loop**

Kris Peckman (leader), Laura Montague (assistant), Jennifer Pfister, Gary Hale

On a perfect spring day, we set forth from the Tye River suspension bridge and up the AT to the Mau-Har Trail, which was built in the 1980s by the Tidewater AT Club. The name apparently comes from the two shelters which the trail links: Maupin Field and Harpers Creek. The Mau-Har Trail crosses a couple of small ridges before dropping down to Campbell Creek, and on those ridges, after scrambling over a number of blow downs, we began to observe that almost all of the hardwood trees (mostly oak, we think) were dead or dying. What is the cause, we wonder? Campbell Creek has a number of pretty little cascades, and this year it was especially beautiful. When the trail first reaches the creek, there is a nice waterfall and a veritable trillium farm. We were pleasantly surprised to find the trillium

already in full bloom. There also were a lot of Dutchman's breeches in bloom along the creek. Other flowers we saw were bloodroot, cut-leaved toothwort, star chickweed, and many violets of all colors.

After the Mau-Har Trail leaves the creek, it is a dry, hot climb to the Maupin Field shelter, which is in a much-used open area with many campsites newly marked. We lingered there only long enough to read the register, and then climbed up to the first rock overlook on the AT going south, where we stopped for lunch. The valley was a beautiful shade of spring green. We kept staring at a large area with rows of some kind of vegetation, wondering whether it was a Christmas tree farm, an orchard, or a vineyard.

After lunch we finished climbing to the summit of Three Ridges, and then began the long, sometimes steep descent. We had many more opportunities to study the mystery vegetation as we got lower and closer to it, but still we vacillated: one minute we were sure it was a Christmas tree farm, the next minute a vineyard, then an orchard.

By the time we were getting close to Harpers Creek, our feet were beginning to beg for relief. This creek crossing, too, was beautiful, and gave us energy to begin the little climb up from the Harpers Creek valley back to the intersection with the Mau-Har Trail and the last 1.7 miles back to the Tye River. In the last mile, we came so close to our mystery vegetation (some 50 feet from the trail) that we finally had no doubt: it was an apple orchard in fragrant bloom! We hadn't even noticed it on our way up at the start of our hike.

The Montebello store was just about to close as we drove by, so we were lucky to get some much-needed refreshment there. It was a long, beautiful day.

Sunday, April 13, 2003, 1:00 PM
Rt. 621 to Niday Shelter

No hike report submitted.

Saturday, April 19, 2003, 10:00 AM
Black Horse Gap to Salt Pond Rd via 1930 AT

Larry Austin (Trail Guide reader and point), Gary Bible (co-leader), Fred Coughlan (co-leader), Dana Helsley (co-leader)

Low clouds over the Blue Ridge kept the hikers in a fog for most of this trip, as they traced the route of the original Appalachian Trail pathway between Black Horse Gap and Curry Gap. While the trail maintenance crew had not been over this section recently (actually in over 55 years), the original path could still be found in different places, along with no less than five "AT diamond" trail markers. Also found just below the summit of Blue Knob was a broken maintainer's tool (we considered returning it to Dr. Parry but decided to take some photos instead). All the hikers commented that the views off of Blue Knob and Washington Knob were of some of the most interesting shades of gray they had ever seen - visibility was less than 100 feet during most of the hike. This bushwhack lived up to its advertisement as the hikers endured significant blow downs along the ridge line between Washington Knob and Curry Creek ravine. The leaders also attempted to circumnavigate significant thickets of Mountain Laurel that have overgrown the trail in several places, after learning that after two days of rain, the thickets were very efficient in transferring all that excess water to the already-soaked clothing worn by the hikers - it was a good thing it wasn't much colder. Scouting for wildflowers in this remote setting helped pass some of the walking time, but their occasional sightings were considerably outnumbered by the various members of the briar family that were encountered by the hikers as they pressed on regardless. Four-and-a-half miles of bushwhacking completed in two-and-a-half hours is not exactly fast-moving, but it felt like we had done a ten mile trail hike when finished.

Sunday, April 27, 2003, 7:00 AM
Hog Camp Gap in Amherst Co. to Punch Bowl Mt. and crossing at Blue Ridge Parkway

No hike report submitted.

**Sunday, April 27, 2009, 1:00 PM
McAfee's Knob**

No hike report submitted.

**Sunday, May 4, 2003, 10:00 AM
Salt Pond Road to Fulhardt Knob**

Hike cancelled due to rain.

**Sunday, May 4, 2003, 1:00 PM
Fire Pink Hike- Rock Castle Creek**

No hike report submitted.

**Saturday, May 10, 2003, 10:00 AM
Stiles Falls**

Mary Lou Gaminde (co-leader), Jean Warren (co-leader), Phyllis Hicks, Martha Crockett, Linda Polhamus, & Carolyn Baretta.

We met at the Orange Market, Hanging Rock for our hike to Stiles Falls. It was a nice leisurely hike on a beautiful day with temperature in the 70's. The first creek crossing got a little tricky for the hike leader and I showed them how not to cross a creek. The waterfall was very beautiful with plenty of water flowing over. We also enjoyed seeing some wildflowers along the trail. It was the first time three of the ladies had hiked with the club. Everyone agreed it was a very pretty and scenic hike.

**Sunday, May 11, 2003, 08:30 AM
Crabtree Falls & The Priest**

No calls, no hike. The leaders worked on their trail section instead.

**Sunday, May 18, 2003, 8:00 AM
North Mtn, Andy Layne to 311**

Hike cancelled on account of the weather.

**Sunday, May 18, 2003, 1:00 PM
Hay Rock**

No hike report submitted.

**Saturday & Sunday, May 22–26, 2003, 8:30 AM
Work hike – Sarver's Cabin – Konnarock Crew**

Charles Parry (co-leader), Jim Hutchings (co-leader), Linda Hutchings, Suzanne Barnett, Maurice Turner, Mervin Brower, Blanche Brower, Laurie Adkins, Jim Overholser, Malcolm Black, Kris Peckman, Dana Helsley, Dave Hardlicka, Charlie Quesenberry, Kelly Haulsee, Lindsay Holliday, Luisa Li, Jody Bickel
Konnarock Crew; Bobby the crew leader, Barbara Sloss, Ben Nelson, Maggie Beal, Cole Sigmon, Brenda Thompson, George Thompson, William Houk, Franklin Klein, Tracy Brown, Jackie Brown, Nolan Hisey, David Tompkins

The Konnarock Crew arrived on Thurs., but due to my summer teaching schedule, I was not able to get out there until Sat. Jim Hutchings, severing as acting co-leader, was able to be out there all five days. On Thurs. most of the time was spent setting up camp and packing tools up the mountain. On Friday, they got down to the serious business of digging new trail and closing the old trail. When I arrived on Sat. morning, quite a bit of work had been done and we did a lot more work, both on Sat. and Sun. They had skipped several of the switchback corners, and I started work on one Sat. afternoon that I finished on Sun. No rock-bars and been brought up the mountain, and we decided it was a serious handicap, so 5 came up Sunday morning. Each day several hikers passed through going down to the shelter or to the spring. We also saw people coming up the awful yellow blazed trail on two days. Unfortunately, on Sunday afternoon George separated a muscle from the bone in his arm and had to be taken to the hospital. Dana and I spent much of the day, putting rock steps and had others help us move a big one in place just before quitting time. It was a good thing that we got it in place, because when I got to the parking area Monday morning, Bobbie was there and told me they were packing out. The rock would not have gotten moved with out bars. Five club volunteers went up and put in several more steps and graded one leg of a switchback. Also, Blanche scrapped off the old blazes and blazed the new trail. I want to give special thanks to Jim for working all five days and subbing as co-leader.

**Sunday, June 1, 2003, 1:00 PM
Thunder Ridge to Cornelius Creek Shelter
Rhododendron Hike**

Mervin & Blanche Brower (leaders)
Gene Downs, Bobbie Sticher, Charlotte Lomax,
Betty Mathews, Linda Akers, Rebecca Reiff and
Joyce Fisher,

We organized the car switch at the parking lot to
leave one car Cornelius Creek shelter and then
drove on to Thunder Ridge. The day was windy

and sunny and the temperature was about 65° F.
The Rhododendron were out on the trail with
especially the last mile before the shelter they
were giving a very impressive display. We also
saw two bunches of yellow lady slippers. We
managed to keep all the hikers together by
stopping every half hour. So we all got to the
shelter at the same time. So to talk to the thru
hikers before leaving and coming home.

Hi, I'm a first year RATC member and
I've just lost my regular hiking partner.

I'd trying to locate other RATC members who'd like to hike
on days/at times other than the group outings on Sunday.
I'm looking for just 1 (or 2) person to do something like moderate 4 - 9 miles jaunts.

Gloria Elliott
Gloria Elliott & Associates
@ P 540-774-3037 & F 774-4611

Corn Boil

Saturday, Aug. 2, 2003, 6-9 PM
Catawba Community Center

Calling all Hungry, Fashionable and Musical RATC Members

Dig out your Official "AT" Apparel
and wear them to the Corn Boil. The
Club will provide hamburgers,
hotdogs, corn, fixings, beverage and
table service. Members will provide a
dish to pass, musical instruments to
jam after dinner and lawn chairs. No
need to RSVP for this event.

Directions: Route 311 north to
Catawba. Take first right at Catawba
Valley General Store. Then immediate
right onto Route 779, pass post office.
Turn right into Community Center on
right (Old School Building, across
from Methodist Church). Questions?
Call Dave and Lucy Downs -384-7219

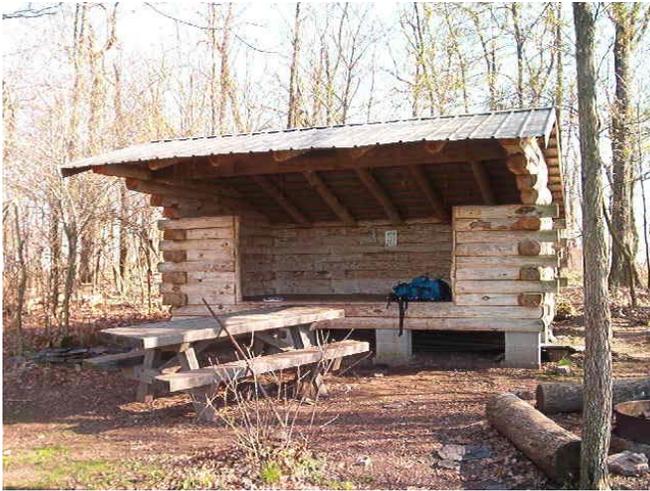


Photo of Rice Field's Shelter courtesy of Jerry Austin



Guess who??

If anyone has pictures or articles for the fall blazer, please submit to Homer & Therese Witcher at witchers4@juno.com by September 1.

Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club Application New & Renewal

- If accepted for membership, I agree to:
1. Support the objectives of the Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club
 2. Abide by the rules of the National and State Parks and Forests
 3. Respect the interests of the owner when on private property
 4. Keep trails and woodlands free of litter and
 5. Abide by instructions of the leader on group hikes and trips

Names(s) _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____ - _____

Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____

Email _____ Amount Enclosed \$ _____

Family Membership New 1 year \$20 New 2 year \$35 Renew 1 year \$15 Renew 2 year \$30
 Individual Member New 1 year \$15 New 2 year \$25 Renew 1 year \$10 Renew 2 year \$20
 Make checks payable to **RATC, PO Box 12282, Roanoke, 24024-2282** Life \$500