

Our Cabin

By Bob Adkisson

[This is a TATC Newsletter article from March / April, 1999. By then cabin champion Jeanne Everitt had moved away, to Northern Virginia. Cabin Committee Chairman Bill Newsom had moved to Florida. As head (or co-head) of the Cabin Committee, Bob Adkisson stepped into the role of cabin promoter. Some of what follows has of course been covered before, but with the turnover rate of members in the club, it is necessary to sometimes cover the same ground again]

January, 1999 was the 20th anniversary of the start of construction on the TATC Douglas Putman Memorial Cabin. Twenty years ago, about a dozen club members hiked 3 miles through snow to the Club's newly acquired 15 acres of land (the Blue Ridge Parkway, our main access route, was closed that weekend). They began the work of clearing both camping sites, and a site on which to build a cabin. They were back a month later. Again the Parkway was closed, covered with snow. Again they carried in tools and packs, 3 miles. Lumber for the out-house too.

Talk about hard work and dedication, commitment and camaraderie—the building of the cabin epitomizes it.

Starting in the winter of 1979, there was a cabin work weekend once a month, once a month to build a family's and a club's dream. Jacque Jenkins recruited workers and cooked meals for them. Otey Shelton and Harold Crate directed the work. Hundreds of club members, skilled and unskilled alike, pitched in. It was a labor of love, an achievement that proved to be its own reward.

By the spring of 1980 the foundation was in and the foot-thick stone walls had begun to rise.

By the spring of 1981 the walls topped out on the front and back of the cabin, and black locust logs were cut, moved, shaped and readied; that autumn, the rock work on both ends of the cabin (including the chimney) was completed, the ridgepole put in place, and the heavy rafters started to go up.

In the spring of 1982 there were extra work trips to get the roof on and the cabin ready for a Dedication Ceremony, attended by the Putman family. The Putmans (of northern Virginia) had generously given our club the funds to construct the cabin and to buy the land on which it sits.

By the fall of 1982 a wood burning cook stove was installed, and the security doors and shutters were put into place—for the first time the cabin could be locked up.

By the summer of 1983 the cabin was completed to the point where rental began.

There followed several years of finishing touches (all of the work documented in two 'Golden Books')-- some interior stone work and plastering; a floor; bunks, benches, and a table were built, cabinets donated; interior doors, glass windows, and screens were installed; a front porch was added; an outdoor cooking area painstakingly pieced together (mostly by Harold Crate); much landscaping work done, including moving boulders and removing stumps.

This year, on March 13th, at the TATC Banquet, Margaret Crate (former club historian, tireless cabin worker, and great photographer) gave a slide show to commemorate the 20th anniversary of our treasure, our cabin. It was rewarding to reminisce, to see the faces of those who gave so much—to appreciate all their efforts, to celebrate with them.

Building the cabin was so much fun!

For the next generation of club members, your reward and duty is to both maintain it and enjoy it.

[The article continues for a few paragraphs—the annual Cabin Report, detailing usage and income for that fiscal year; also, mention is made of how two ATV's had trespassed up the mountainside and onto club property that winter. The article closes with this:]

Susan Fourney of Springfield, Va., the youngest sister of the late Douglas Putman, stayed at the cabin in November [1998], with her daughters scout troop. I believe it was her first overnight visit. She is very appreciative of our club's fine work and continued dedication to the cabin, and she promised to send a photo of Doug to hang there.

[A few months later we received a collage of 3 photographs of Douglas; we hung them in the cabin]