

Tidewater Appalachian Trail Club

Appalachian Hiker

www.tidewateratc.com



December 2011 - January 2012

Prez Sez

The Sugar Maples have been stunning this year along with the golds of the Tulip Poplars. But the colors never last long as late November storms send most of the leaves fluttering to the ground leaving branches bare and ready for winter. Late Fall hiking is particularly enjoyable as the views are spectacularly unimpeded and the temperatures are usually still fairly mild. If you were able to attend our Fall Maintenance at Sherando this past October, then you enjoyed some fine weather and hopefully some great hiking as well. We had a superb turnout of trail maintainers and many thanks to Mark, John and Bruce for organizing the event and to Dottie for a great Saturday evening meal. Our trail is in excellent shape and now is the time to get out and enjoy the scenery.

Sometimes it's easy to forget that we are merely caretakers of the land, as our love for and involvement in the Three Ridges and St. Mary's Wilderness makes us feel more like landowners than stewards. We maintain our section of the AT as well as many other trails in central Virginia (and locally too) in cooperation with many other agencies: the National Park Service (after all, the AT is a National Park!), the Forest Service (our section is in the George Washington National Forest), the Blue Ridge Parkway (also part of the NPS) and the Appalachian Trail Conservancy. The ATC helps to bring everything together by coordinating all of the local trail-maintaining clubs, integrating our efforts with those of federal, state and local agencies. One excellent example of this cooperative effort is the AT Trail Community Program for which Nelson County has just recently begun the application process. I am constantly in awe of the company we keep!

I am, however, more in awe of TATCers! I never have to look far for folks willing to help out with trail projects, volunteer for committees or planning an event. Just ahead is the December Holiday Party and that committee has a fun evening planned for all of us. The potluck party is December 10th at WHRO. Look for the flyer in this newsletter or check out the TATC website for more info.

(Continued in next column)

(banner photo by Mark Ferguson)

Hopefully you have already received your "Save the Date" postcard for the upcoming TATC 40th Anniversary Celebration to be held on Saturday March 24, 2012 from 7pm to 11pm at Grand Affairs in Virginia Beach. This is a not to be missed event as we commemorate a major milestone for our club with an evening of food, fun and memories. Plan to share stories, renew old friendships and recall 40 years of club history. See the invitation in this newsletter (or visit the TATC website www.tidewateratc.com) and send in your reservation now! Enjoy the Fall weather. Get out there and walk some trail!!

Be safe! Have fun!

Phyllis Neumann
 president@tidewateratc.com

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Membership

Welcome to the following new and returning members: James Larkin, Carol Mansyur, Nancy Carothers, Gene Monroe, Paul & Mellody Liples, Amy Vozka, and Bob Anderson.

A new, improved membership form will be included with the February/March newsletter as it will be time to re-new your membership. Your card states "Expires last day of February, 2012". The membership renewal period is March and April.

Mary Hormell
Membership Committee Chair
membership@tidewateratc.com

January Election Campaign

The Slate of Officers for the January 2012 elections is as follows:

President: Jim Newman
Vice President: Scott Hilton
Treasurer: Bob Safford
Secretary: Diana Ramsey
Counselor: Carl Allen

As required by TATC's By-Laws, the floor will be opened for additional nominations at the January 11th club meeting. Elections will take place at this meeting.

Although the above listed slate of officers contains only one candidate for each elective office, there is no intention to exclude anyone who would like to run for any of the offices. All that you have to do is come to the January 11th meeting, get nominated from the floor, or you can nominate yourself. You can also call one of the election committee members prior to the meeting to let us know you are interested. Job descriptions for each position are readily available. If you plan to nominate someone, please make sure they agree to fulfill the position, if elected.

If you have any questions or comments about this information, please contact one of the committee members:

Mary Hormell, Chair
Nancy Rinkenberger
Ann Smith
Dewey Phelps
Bill Rogers

TATC Holiday Party

Ho! Ho! Ho! Yes, that time is rapidly approaching us again. Be sure to mark Saturday, December 10, on your calendar for our annual seasonal celebration! It will be held at WHRO, 5200 Hampton Blvd, Norfolk from 6-10pm. We will begin the festivities with a social "hour" from 6-6:45pm. This time will be dedicated to getting everyone "warmed up" for the remaining evening. Next, we'll have a pot luck dinner so bring a dish: entrée, appetizer, salad, side dish or dessert. Drinks and paper products will be supplied by the club. Then, we will have a DJ to entertain us so bring your dancing shoes! \$5 per person at the door. Put this Holiday Party on your calendar!

Backpacks for the Homeless

Susan Gail Arey is collecting old backpacks and daypacks to donate to a homeless shelter which will give them to the homeless. At this time of year, old parkas, fleece jackets, knit hats and gloves, and socks are welcome too. Please bring them to the January meeting, or since I plan to be at the Holiday Party, I will accept them there too, if that is more convenient. This is your chance to clean out the closet, while helping someone else.



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TATC Holiday Party

Join the fun at the annual TATC Holiday party!

DATE: Saturday December 10, 2011
TIME: 6 pm - 10 pm
PLACE: WHRO
5200 Hampton Blvd, Norfolk, VA

BRING: Potluck dish to share: entree, appetizer, salad or dessert
\$5 per person

Your dancing shoes because entertainment will be provided by:

'AFFORDABLE DJs'



Contact: Phyllis Neumann (phyllisneumann@hughes.net) for more information.



A.T. Maintaining Clubs

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) works with 31 Trail maintaining clubs to manage the Appalachian Trail (A.T.). Volunteers from those clubs are responsible for most of the day-to-day work of keeping the A.T. open. In addition to trail maintenance, club volunteers build and repair shelters and other structures, monitor and protect the Trail corridor, monitor and manage rare plants and invasive species, develop management plans for their Trail sections, and participate in the ATC's regional partnership committees. Club volunteers participate in and support the ATC outreach and education programs: Appalachian Trail Communities and Trail to Every Classroom. The ATC supports the Trail clubs by providing Trail and land-management programs, funding, and training.

Maine Appalachian Trail Club

Active in Maine

The Augusta, Maine-based Maine Appalachian Trail Club maintains 266.8 miles of the A.T. in Maine, from Katahdin in Baxter State Park to Graf-ton Notch at Maine 26.

Appalachian Mountain Club

Active in Maine and New Hampshire

Founded in 1876, the Appalachian Mountain Club is America's oldest nonprofit conservation and recreation organization. They promote the protection, enjoyment, and wise use of the mountains, rivers, and trails of the Appalachian region.

Randolph Mountain Club

Active in New Hampshire

The Randolph Mountain Club mission is to promote enjoyment of the Randolph, New Hampshire area through hiking, trail development, upkeep of camps and shelters, and sharing the collective knowledge of its members.

Dartmouth Outing Club

Active in New Hampshire and Vermont

The Dartmouth Outing Club is a mix of Dartmouth students and local community members around Hanover, New Hampshire. DOC maintains 75.3 miles of the A.T. from Kinsman Notch at New Hampshire 112 near Woodstock, New Hampshire to Vermont 12 in Woodstock, Vermont.

Green Mountain Club

Active in Vermont

Based in Waterbury Center, Vermont, GMC maintains 127.9 miles of the A.T. from Vermont 12 in Woodstock to the Vermont/Massachusetts border near North Adams, Massachusetts. The Trail coincides with the Long Trail for 105 miles through southern Vermont.

AMC Berkshire

Active in Massachusetts

The Berkshire Chapter alone has over 3400 members throughout Western Massachusetts. The Chapter's AT Management Committee is responsible for maintaining and managing the 90 miles of AT between CT and VT.

AMC - Connecticut Chapter

Active in Connecticut

The AMC-Connecticut Chapter Trails Committee maintains the 52.3 miles of the A.T. through the Nutmeg State. The committee meets the first Tuesday evening of the month except during the summer.

New York-New Jersey Trail Conference

Active in New York and New Jersey

Since 1920, the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference has partnered with parks to create, protect, and promote a network of over 1,700 miles of public trails in the New York-New Jersey metropolitan region.

Wilmington Trail Club

Active in Pennsylvania

The Wilmington Trail Club, based in Delaware, maintains 7.2 miles of the A.T. from the Delaware River at the New Jersey/Pennsylvania border to Fox Gap at Pennsylvania 191.

Batona Hiking Club

Active in Pennsylvania

The Batona Hiking Club of Philadelphia maintains 8.6 A.T. miles from Fox Gap at Pennsylvania 191 to Wind Gap at Pennsylvania 33.

AMC - Delaware Valley Chapter

Active in Pennsylvania

The Delaware Valley Chapter of AMC offers day hiking, backpacking, canoeing, kayaking, bicycling, cross country skiing, snow-shoeing, winter mountaineering, trail maintenance, conservation cleanups, educational workshops, meetings and programs throughout the year.

Philadelphia Trail Club

Active in Pennsylvania

Based in the Delaware Valley of southeastern Pennsylvania, the Philadelphia Trail Club maintains 10.3 miles of the A.T. from Little Gap, near Danielsville to Lehigh Furnace Gap near Ashfield, Pennsylvania.

Blue Mountain Eagle Climbing Club

Active in Pennsylvania

The Reading, Pennsylvania-based Blue Mountain Eagle Climbing Club maintains 65 miles of the A.T. in two pieces, from Lehigh Furnace Gap to Bake Oven Knob Road and from Tri-County Corner to Rausch Gap Shelter, south of I-81 near Pennsylvania 443.

Allentown Hiking Club

Active in Pennsylvania

Based in Allentown, Pennsylvania, AHC maintains 10.3 miles of the Trail, from Bake Oven Knob Road near Pennsylvania 309 (about 30 miles northwest of Allentown) to Tri County Corner. Meetings are held on the first Wednesday of every month.

Susquehanna Appalachian Trail Club

Active in Pennsylvania

The Susquehanna Appalachian Trail Club maintains 20 miles of the A.T. from Rausch Gap Shelter west of Pennsylvania 443 to Pennsylvania 225 north of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. SATC holds four meetings per year.

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York Hiking Club

Active in Pennsylvania

The York Hiking Club is an incorporated, non-profit, all volunteer organization with one or two activities most weeks of the year. The Club maintains a section of the Appalachian Trail and participates in the Mason-Dixon Trail System.

Cumberland Valley Appalachian Trail Club

Active in Pennsylvania

CVATC builds, maintains, and manages the Appalachian Trail in the Cumberland Valley of Central Pennsylvania.

Mountain Club of Maryland

Active in Pennsylvania and Maryland

MCM maintains two A.T. sections in Pennsylvania: 12.7 miles south of the Susquehanna River to the Darlington/Tuscarora trails crossing and 16.4 miles from Center Point Knob to Pine Grove Furnace State Park at Pennsylvania 233. MCM also maintains the most northern 10 miles of the A.T. in Maryland.

Potomac Appalachian Trail Club

Active in Pennsylvania, Maryland, West Virginia and northern Virginia

The Potomac Appalachian Trail Club (PATC), based in Northern Virginia, maintains 239.8 miles of the A.T. from Pine Grove Furnace State Park in Pennsylvania to Rockfish Gap near I-64 at Waynesboro, Virginia.

Old Dominion Appalachian Trail Club

Active in Virginia

The Old Dominion Appalachian Trail Club maintains 19.1 miles of the A.T. from Rockfish Gap at the southern end of Shenandoah National Park (near I-64) to Reeds Gap at Virginia 664.

Tidewater Appalachian Trail Club

Active in Virginia

The Tidewater Appalachian Trail Club (TATC) is an energetic group, open to individuals and families, whose primary purpose is to maintain an 11+ mile section of the Appalachian Trail (AT) in Central Virginia.

Natural Bridge Appalachian Trail Club

Active in Virginia

NBATC maintains ninety miles of the Appalachian Trail in Nelson, Amherst, Rockbridge, Botetourt, and Bedford counties, from Tye River to Black Horse Gap.

Outdoor Club of Virginia Tech

Active in Virginia

The Outdoor Club at Virginia Tech, based in Blacksburg, Virginia, maintains 27.3 miles of the A.T. divided into two sections: Pine Swamp Branch Shelter to U.S. 460 at the New River, and Virginia 611 to Interstate 77

Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club

Active in Virginia

The Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club maintains about 121.2 miles of the A.T. from Blackhorse Gap on the Blue Ridge Parkway south to Pine Swamp Branch Shelter and from Pearisburg at the New River south to Virginia 611 in Bland County.

Piedmont Appalachian Trail Hikers

Active in Virginia

PATH maintains 70 miles of the A.T. from Interstate 77 near Bland, Virginia to the South Fork of the Holston River at VA- 670, near Sugar Grove, Virginia.

Mount Rogers Appalachian Trail Club

Active in Virginia

The Mount Rogers Appalachian Trail Club maintains 55.9 miles of the A.T. from Virginia 670 near Sugar Grove to the town of Damascus, Virginia near the Tennessee line.

Tennessee Eastman Hiking and Canoeing Club

Active in Tennessee

Based in Kingsport, Tennessee, TEHCC maintains 134 miles of the Trail between Damascus, Virginia and U.S. 19W at Spivey Gap, North Carolina, about 20 miles south of Erwin, Tennessee.

Carolina Mountain Club

Active in North Carolina

Based in Asheville, North Carolina, CMC maintains about 93 miles of the A.T. from Spivey Gap, North Carolina to Davenport Gap, near the Tennessee border on Interstate 40.

Smoky Mountains Hiking Club

Active in North Carolina

The Appalachian Trail Maintainers Committee of SMHC maintains 102.3 miles of the A.T. from Davenport Gap, through the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, to the community of Wesser, North Carolina, on the Nantahala River.

Nantahala Hiking Club

Active in North Carolina

Franklin, North Carolina-based NHC maintains 58.5 miles of the A.T. from the Nantahala River at Wesser and U.S. 19 to Bly Gap just north of the North Carolina/Georgia border.

Georgia Appalachian Trail Club

Active in Georgia

The Georgia Appalachian Trail Club, based in Atlanta, maintains the southernmost 75.4 miles of the A.T. from Bly Gap just north of the North Carolina line to Springer Mountain in Georgia, plus the 8.8-mile approach trail from Amicalola Falls State Park.

Trail Closed
(Part 2)
By Bob Adkisson

It was 1980 and, finally, I was able to devote an entire hiking season to the Pacific Crest Trail, trying to back-pack the best sections, at what the guidebook said was the ideal time of year. I hiked a couple of diverse segments in northern and southern California, most of the trail in Oregon, then all of the trail in Washington (except for a 100 mile stretch immediately downwind of Mt St Helens, which had erupted in May, covering the landscape with several inches of ash).

Saving the best for last, on Labor Day weekend I returned to California and started hiking south from Lake Tahoe; this, the longest single section of the PCT I was to attempt (almost 500 miles), would take me thru the rugged, isolated, and beautiful Sierra Nevada's, thru 3 national parks and one national monument.

The timing, indeed, proved to be perfect: I had no problems with mosquitoes or bears; there was no snow left over from the previous winter, and no daily summer thunderstorms; daytime temperatures were mild; and, perhaps best of all, I very nearly had the whole mountain range to myself. Incredible!

Even better: I don't remember having to get any permits, and I never met any backcountry rangers.

Not everything was ideal, of course: as I passed thru the three parks (Yosemite, Kings Canyon, Sequoia), visibility in John Muir's "Range of Light" was hazy, the air tarnished by several forest fires (the fires were, I understood, several weeks old, many miles from the trail, caused by lightning, and being allowed to burn themselves out naturally; other than slightly compromising the views, they weren't a worry to me, had no effect on my hike).

The main difficulty of this section of the trail: the distance between roads and towns, between places to replenish my food supply. This meant a heavier than usual pack, a couple of extra days and many extra miles between R & R stops.

After spending a very cold night atop Mt. Whitney (at 14,498 ft., I was the highest person in the lower 48 states that night), I dropped thousands of feet down the east side of the range, to the Whitney Portal trailhead. I hitched into the small town of Lone Pine and spent two nights at a cheap motel. The nearly non-stop mariachi music that filled the hallways and seeped thru the walls was free.

After making the arduous climb back up to the PCT and resuming my southward trek, too soon I reached Siberian Pass, the southern boundary of Sequoia Park. After the green meadows and soaring granite spires of the Sierra's, below Siberian Pass the trail immediately began to decline-- decline in every way, not just in elevation: the national forest thru which it passed was parched and dusty; large parts of the woods were burned over, and the colors gray and brown, like the dust, nearly overwhelmed me; water was scarce, and free grazing cows made it questionable.

Two days later, at the gravel road in Kennedy Meadows, I decided I'd had enough-- skipping the last 45 miles of trail I'd intended to hike, I accepted a ride down to the 'town' of Weldon-- the place with the famous KOA campground (in the spring, some north-bound PCT thru-hikers lay up there for weeks on end, waiting for the heavy snow-pack in the Sierra's to melt); I went there mainly to get a shower, and pick up my mail at the shoe-box sized post office.

It was now mid-October, the hiking season, and my trip, drawing near their end. But, on the spur of the moment, before jumping south to the mountains around Los Angeles and hiking two short, final sections of the PCT, I decided to explore the Sierra's a bit more, and in a way the PCT hadn't allowed me: I would hike from east to west **across** the range, and take time along the way to relax and enjoy.

I hitched up Owens Valley, re-supplied in Bishop, then headed to the Dusy Basin trailhead, about 20 miles to the west. Here I met my first snag: getting to the trailhead, via thumb, doesn't work so well when there are no cars!

One short ride got me to a fork in the road, and a nice spot to camp for the night. Next day, there were still no cars, and I was finally forced to walk the last 10 miles to the trailhead.

Altogether, I spent (or lost) a whole day just trying to get there!

The next morning I hiked over the high pass (entering Kings Canyon Park) and into Dusy Basin, an area of granite outcrops, numerous alpine lakes, and clumps of weather stunted evergreens. Here, I treated myself-- settled down for 3 nights at the same campsite.

It was bliss. I read, rested, day-dreamed; I inspected clouds, sunsets, stars; I counted meteors and satellites.

When my food supply said it was time to move on, I descended to the west, briefly re-hiked 2 miles of the PCT; when that trail cut left, climbing into the Palisades basin, I continued to follow a fork of the Kings River downstream. I camped beside the river. Next day I reached a trail junction, where I turned south; this trail, over 10,866 ft Granite Pass, would take me to the road in Kings Canyon and the end of my hike.

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I'd chosen this particular trail to finish on for a couple of reasons: there weren't that many trails in the area to choose from was one thing; just as important, this trail was the shortest route to the road in Kings Canyon, and from there I could easily hitch to nearby Sequoia Park—to the lower, western section, where the big trees grew. One other reason this trail appealed to me was poetic: it passed by Lake of the Fallen Moon. Who could resist camping beside a lake with a name like that?

But the climb proved to be long and exhausting, as much as 4,000 foot of ascent.

Stopping to catch my breath, I peered thru the trees and saw a lake slightly downhill of where I stood, about half a mile off. I pulled out my map and was disappointed to discover that it was Lake of the Fallen Moon-- disappointed because I had wanted to sleep on its shore, but my lousy map hadn't shown how far off and downhill of the trail it was.

I was simply too beat, and not enough of a poet, to give up any of my hard won elevation, or to walk half mile out of my way. I was content to collapse right there, in a friendly clump of trees, 2 miles shy of Granite Pass.

I was aware that snow storms could hit the Sierra's at any time. Indeed, 3 weeks earlier, just as I'd reached the northern boundary of Yosemite, I'd caught the edge of a storm-- at dusk, in a light rain, I'd burrowed into my sleeping bag, pulling my plastic ground sheet over it for protection; next morning I found myself covered by 5 inches of snow! I was not used to these mountains and I was wary of getting caught in a major blizzard, of getting snowed-in deep in the high country.

And so, when I awoke the next morning, about 12 miles from the road in Kings Canyon, and it suddenly began to snow, I panicked. In record time I was packed and all but running to get over Granite Pass.

But it was an instant white-out, a heavy, wind whipped snow that quickly covered everything. The unmarked trail was hard to follow, especially with the snow stinging my eyes.

My panic deepened, and with good reason; this was serious stuff.

Only then, nearly as fast as it had sprung up, the storm fizzled away. By the time I reached the pass and started down into the hazy depths of Kings Canyon, the sun was burning thru the clouds, the snow was quickly melting.

After that scare, I felt home free-- **nothing can stop me now!**

And so, once again, imagine my surprise and disbelief when, a few miles, and maybe 1,500 ft below Granite Pass, I rounded a turn in the trail and found myself staring at another handmade sign that read, "**TRAIL CLOSED**".

Again, I got out my map, checked my options. If this trail were indeed closed, my only recourse was to u-turn, climb back over Granite Pass, drop the 4,000 feet down to the river, follow it downstream.... it was out of the question, would take two days to accomplish, and more energy than I had left (plus, I was nearly out of food).

I could always just bushwhack of course, straight down the steep slope.

Before I attempted that, though, **it made all the sense in the world to simply ignore the sign.**

As in Yellowstone, the sign was unsigned, with not a hint of why it was there or who placed it.

What would you have done?

Passing the sign, I soon enough discovered why the trail was 'closed': there ahead of me was a single tree stump on fire. The flames were all of 6 inches high! Several other stumps in the area were smoldering.

But, the thing is, this hillside had been scoured by fire years ago—in every direction, there was hardly anything left to burn.

A little bit of smoke, a smoldering stump or two—I simply had too much downhill momentum to be bothered! I was too near the road, too near the end of the hike, to be turned back now.

I do confess that I stopped beside the burning trailside stump and, presaging my later career as a fire fighter, extinguished it while simultaneously answering a call of nature. As any 12 year old boy would be, I was quite proud of myself (on long hikes, you have to take your entertainment where you can find it!)

Alas, before I could walk away, the heat inside the stump's recesses built back up, and the fire rekindled.

Oh well: if the Park Service had adopted a let-burn policy, I would just have to do the same.

It was smooth sailing down the switchbacks to the road, and the first car that came along gave me a ride to Sequoia. I spent the next day in awe, wandering among the big trees. I also saw my 6th bear of the trip.

As I was leaving the park late in the afternoon (having secured a ride in a Winnebago with a friendly 30-something couple), a heavy, season ending snow began to fall. This was no squall-- this was a major storm. For an hour or two we crept down the road at 15 mph, winding our way out of the mountains and into the Central Valley.

Seems I'd gotten out of the high country just in time.

If I'd obeyed the sign that said 'TRAIL CLOSED', if I'd made a u-turn and tried to find another trail out, I'd probably still be up there, nothing left but a rag, a bone, and a hank of hair.

Reflections on a Fall Hike with Kids and Dogs

By Nancy Rinkenberger

Early this summer, I blew out my knee. Hiking was out of the question. A Tidewater summer with its heat, humidity and mosquitoes is practically unbearable. In previous summers, a week here and there on the AT or in Saint Mary's Wilderness had given me the respite I needed to stay sane. So you can understand why I told my doctor to **Fix It!** ... And in time for me to attend Fall Maintenance at Sherando Lake. So mid-September I go in for surgery on a Thursday and begin physical therapy on the following Monday. That gave me four weeks to get in shape for the trail. I knew I couldn't do any long distance or serious elevation gains so I call Mark Connolly, our Trail Supervisor, and asked if I could lead a crew to the Harper's Creek Shelter and do the maintenance work there and at adjacent camp sites. That would allow me to drive into the cow pasture and take the old AT which intersects our section of the AT just South of Harper's Creek Shelter. I've hiked this route many times and felt certain I was physically up to it. An added benefit of this shorter hike was that it would allow me to bring my six-year-old grandson, Nolan. I had been promising him his first backpacking trip all summer but my knee just wouldn't cooperate.

This is how I found myself leading a family hike during Fall Maintenance. Our crew consisted of three grandmothers (Marcia Rinkenberger, Melody Liples and myself), two kids (my grandson, Nolan Hassenfratz and Melody's grandson, Cameron Harding) and two dogs (Rat, a 20 pound rat terrier and Astro Jet, a golden retriever named after that famous space dog we all remember from Saturday morning cartoons). The trip down Campbells Mountain Road to the cow pasture was uneventful ... except Marcia's white knuckle grip as we descended this winding gravel road. We arrived at the cow pasture. I drive a minivan so we didn't make it to the top of the pasture. Instead we bottomed out. We left the van about half way up, gathered our tools, had our trail head talk and started climbing. We started out with the dogs on leash but it became obvious quickly that carrying tools, holding a leash and watching your footsteps as you carefully climb upward was a recipe for disaster and I wasn't about to risk further injury to my knee. So the dogs were let off leash. I was a bit worried about Rat as he goes brain-dead and loses his hearing at the sight of a squirrel or rabbit but he surprised me and stayed right with us. Astro would run ahead a dozen or more yard then turn and come racing back, stopping on a dime right in front of us. It's a wonder we didn't trip over him. We did have one bit of animal drama. As we made our first stream crossing, Astro had a seizure. What can you do except take a break and chill? The kids did great with the crossing. Not a wet shoe or sock in the bunch.

Other than this little break, our trek to Harper's Creek was uneventful. Of course, we had to stop as the kids set foot on the AT and take pictures beneath their first white blaze. Who knows, they could be famous trekkers some day and the picture of their first time on the AT might make the cover of their biographies. Our stream crossing at Harper's wasn't quite as perfect as our earlier one. On the very last rock, Nolan's foot went into the drink. Fortunately there were a couple of backpackers just leaving the shelter and the remains of their fire helped us to dry out socks and shoes.

Our time at Harper's Creek was low keyed but fun. We cleaned the privy, surprising a mouse nesting on an upper support beam. We cleaned fire rings and swept the shelter. The boys really got into busting up an unauthorized fire ring as it meant they had a legitimate reason for throwing rocks. After lunch, we worked the opposite side of the creek and headed back toward the cow pasture. The kids were great hiking companions. No whining or complaining. Just that pure joy of running through the woods I remember from my own childhood.

Back at the cow pasture, we changed out of wet boots, stowed our tools, checked for ticks and prepared to head back to Sherando Lake. Suddenly I realized I hadn't seen Rat in a while. Practically at that same moment, I heard a long, low 'Moo.ooo.ooo' followed quickly by a yapping dog. I looked up in shock only to see the same horrified expression on Marcia's face. Rat was herding cows! Especially mind boggling as a) he was bred to hunt small animals and b) he had never seen a cow before in his life. Marcia runs down the hill after Rat. Never mind that she is deathly afraid of cows. Something to do with a cow-tipping prank gone horribly wrong back in her days as a Scout. She's running down the hill. Rat is nipping at the heels of the cows and herding as if he's done it all his life. The cows are heading for the far corner of the pasture. And I'm petrified that the farmer who so graciously allows us to use his cow pasture as access to the AT, will hear all the commotion and banish us for life.

Once all the cows are in a far corner of the pasture, Marcia is able to capture Rat. He is muddy from head to toe (what did we ever do before baby wipes?) and exhausted. Of course he's exhausted. He's a 13+ year old dog with an enlarged heart. I'm amazed it didn't simply explode in his chest.

Segue forward twelve days and I wake up to find Rat has died in the night. He simply went to sleep and passed over. I know this is where you are supposed to cry and be upset, right? All I could think of was, 'If a dog has a bucket list, herding cows must be on it! And now Rat's gone to that great cow pasture in the sky.'

You never know what memories a day will bring you. I started this hike happy to be in the woods and simply hoping I was up to the physical challenge. I look back on it now and I see it as a special gift. I got to be a part of Nolan and Cameron's first hike on the AT and I took the last hike I'll ever take with Rat. Kids, dogs, grandmas and cow herding. What a **special** day!

Hiking The Old Hotel/A.T. Loop

By Mal Higgins

The Sherando maintenance weekend, October 15-16, 2012, offered perfect weather for a great day of work Saturday and a fine day hike Sunday. Saturday, I was part of a crew led by Ned Kuhns and Scott Hilton that walked up via Fitzgerald's Orchard to intersect the A.T. and hike up Three Ridges. We cut about six or seven blow downs that day and rebuilt a trail edge near one of the blow downs. Great views from Flat Rock and some color in the trees made the day fly by.

Wanting to extract the most from the weekend, on Sunday a group of us hiked in the Mt. Pleasant Scenic Area (technically on PATC Map 13 known as the Mt. Pleasant Special Management Area), some 10 miles south of the Tye River/Route 56. Hiking were Bruce and Margaret Julian, John and Jane Oakes, and Svetlana Kononov and me.

This area is accessible from Irish Gap (MP 37.5) on the Blue Ridge Parkway, via a series of connecting county roads. But I missed the unmarked turn-off there, and our caravan reached the trail head via Route 60 past Forks of Buffalo and a well marked turn off on Route 51. At the trail head at Hog Camp Gap are two terrific loops, both of which make a leisurely day hike and if combined would make a great two day weekend hike with camping in the George Washington National Forest near the trail heads. One loop takes the hiker over Mt. Pleasant and Mt. Pompey (4032). We chose the other loop known as the Old Hotel/Appalachian Trail loop, a distance of something less than six miles.

Bruce maneuvered his tool trailer and pickup truck like an 18 wheeler up the gravel, rough road and we found adequate parking on the side of the road, as the parking lot was full. A few protruding rocks in the road menaced my oil pan. The parking at Hog Camp Gap has a kiosk and map, but no privies.

Hiking southbound on the blue blazed Old Hotel Trail out of Hog Camp Gap, we followed an abandoned road covered in pine needles through a loblolly pine forest and moved gently up hill for several miles. We reached the Cow Camp Gap shelter, (which we found in great shape, maintained by the Natural Bridge club), stopping for a snack and conversation with another older couple who were day hiking, too. Jane shared her "manly" beef sticks with us, and, fortified, we moved on. We intersected the nearby A.T. and moved northbound on the trail to reach the stunning beauty of the grassy bald on Cole (Cold) Mountain. Cole Mountain is just south of Tar Jacket Ridge.

The grassy bald is apparently cut during the summer months, as cutting tracks were visible. At the lower edge were a number of bush/trees with bright red berries, perhaps spicebush. A few interesting rock formations lie along the top of the bald. With the sun shining down and gorgeous views from atop Cole Mountain, Svetlana just had to lie down in the meadow for a quick nap. We spent as much time on top as we could. John kept us informed of our location with his GPS. The bald extends perhaps a mile, before the trail reenters the woods. We walked out down a gentle slope and reluctantly reached the cars with the sun still shining on a wonderful day in the woods.



Visit our website at
www.tidewateratc.com



You are cordially invited to attend the

40th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION of the TIDEWATER APPALACHIAN TRAIL CLUB

SATURDAY MARCH 24, 2012 7PM-11PM
GRAND AFFAIRS, 2036 PLEASURE HOUSE RD, VIRGINIA BEACH, VA
www.grandaffairscatering.com

Social Hour, Dinner, Speakers, Commemorative Gifts, Award Presentations, Installation of Club Officers

Cost: \$25/person (if received by February 8, 2012)
 \$30/person (if received after February 8, 2012)

MENU

Fruit, Cheese, Crackers, Chocolate Fountain w/Amaretto Whipped Cream
 Tossed salad (assorted dressings on the side)
 Chicken Piccata or Broiled Seafood Stuffed Tilapia or Vegetarian Pasta Primavera
 (Entrees served with Roasted potatoes, Vegetable Trilogy, Stuffed Tomato, fresh rolls and butter)
 Signature Gourmet TATC Dessert
 Cash Bar

Don't miss this opportunity to share memories with your fellow trail club members and celebrate this milestone event!

*Make your dinner selection below and return bottom portion of page with your check made payable to "TATC". Mail to Rosanne Scott, 1383 Hammond Ct, Norfolk, VA 23503. More than one name may be used per form. Confirmation will be e-mailed (preferred) or phoned to contact information provided below. **ALL RESERVATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED NO LATER THAN MARCH 12, 2012!***

<u>Name(s)</u>	<u>Dinner Choice</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>before 2/8/12</u>	<u>after 2/8/12</u>	<u>Total</u>
_____	Chicken Piccata	_____	X \$25	X \$30	_____
_____	Seafood Stuffed Tilapia	_____	X \$25	X \$30	_____
_____	Vegetarian Pasta Primavera	_____	X \$25	X \$30	_____

Contact Name: _____

E-mail (preferred): _____

Telephone: _____

*****CASUAL ATTIRE*****

TATC 40th Anniversary Celebration

Did you know that TATC turns 40 next year? We plan to celebrate with a BIG party at Grand Affairs, 2036 Pleasure House Road, Virginia Beach, VA (www.grandaffairscatering.com) on Saturday, March 24, 2012, 7pm-11pm. Great food! Great fun! Time to celebrate and share memories! Look for your invitation in this newsletter or go to www.tidewateratc.com and download a copy from our website!

The 40th Committee is in the process of gathering information in order to recognize certain individuals during the event. Are you a 2000 miler? Are you a "Met and Married" (M&M)? Are you in contact with any former members-specifically those involved in the club's early years? If you fit into any of the above categories then please contact Phyllis Neumann phyllisneumann@hughes.net

TATC 40th Anniversary T-Shirt Design Contest

TATC turns 40 next year and to commemorate this event, we are holding a T-Shirt design contest! The design must be original, must be designed by a club member and must incorporate the 40th Anniversary club logo. The logo is available on the TATC website as a .bmp image. Go to the home page (www.tidewateratc.com) and click on the link on the left hand side of the page. The theme is the 40th Anniversary of TATC (1972-2012) and must somehow include this milestone in the design as well. The winner will be announced at the 40TH Anniversary Gala to be held Saturday, March 24, 2012 at Grand Affairs (www.grandaffairscatering.com) in Virginia Beach.

TATC E-Mail Roster

We are attempting to establish a master e-mail list of our membership. This list will be used for official club business only, will never be shared with any other organization or individuals and will be used only to notify TATC members of important changes in scheduling or to notify members when the newsletter is available on the website for viewing. It will **not** be used to notify members of routine events or activities. This is completely voluntary but we urge all members to help us establish as complete a list as possible.

Long time TATC member, Steve Ralph, will be compiling the data into a spreadsheet and making it available to the Board of Directors. You may forward your e-mail address to him at ralphs44@cox.net. **Please include "TATC" and your name in the subject line.**

If you have any questions please contact Phyllis Neumann president@tidewateratc.com

TATC Social Media Sites

www.MeetUp.com/Tidewater-ATC-MeetUp

Join the group in order to see full information about and post comments on listed activities

Facebook.com

Search: Tidewater Appalachian Trail Club

By clicking "Like It" on a particular item, more people learn of our club

Activities Schedule

PLEASE NOTE: Most hikes are limited in the number of participants. The hike leader will take reservations on a first-come, first-served basis. You can include your name on the sign up sheets available at each meeting or call the hike leader. If you sign up for an activity and then decide not to participate, please contact the leader in advance.

December 6, 2011, Tuesday TATC BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

Phyllis Neumann, 566-4584

7:00PM, Pretlow Library, 111 West Ocean View Avenue, Norfolk.

Open to all members.

December 10, 2011, Saturday TATC HOLIDAY PARTY AT WHRO

Phyllis Neumann, 566-4584

Plan to attend our annual seasonal celebration at WHRO, 5200 Hampton Blvd, Norfolk, from 6-10PM. This will be a potluck affair so bring a covered dish: entree, appetizer, salad, side dish or dessert. Drinks and paper products will be supplied by the club. We will have a DJ to entertain us so bring your dancing shoes! \$5/person at the door.

January 1, 2012, Sunday NEW YEAR'S DAY HIKE

Bill Rogers, 484-6001

Start the New Year by joining in on the 30th Annual New Year's Day Hike. Begin the year with a resolution to get outdoors more often, to stretch your legs, and get regular exercise. Bring lunch, beverage, and clothing suitable for the day's weather. Sleep late, we'll not meet until eight-thirty. Call Bill – others will. Limited.

January 11, 2012, Wednesday TATC GENERAL MEETING

Phyllis Neumann, 566-4584

Business meeting & recognition of new members and guest. Introduction of new slate of officers, open nominations from the floor, brief speeches followed by election. Also, local trail awards presented by Bill Buck

January 28, 2012, Saturday WINTER WILDLIFE FESTIVAL

Jane Oaks, 467-9633

The City of Virginia Beach and the Virginia Dept. of Game & Inland Fisheries are hosting this event at Princess Anne Recreation Center, 1400 Nimmo Parkway. TATC will have a table in the exhibit hall. Information about our club and the AT will be provided for the interested. Contact Jane if you would like to help.

February 2-6, 2012, Thur-Mon ADIRONDACK WINTER ADVENTURE HIKE

Mal Higgins, 473-2231

Freezeree, The Thrill is Back! Once again, Mal Higgins leads this wintertime undertaking. Contact Mal for details, sign-up, gathering place & time. Here's the deal: Viciously C.O.L.D.[Count On Low Degrees] and major snow backpacking and overnight camping (2 nights outdoors) in the Eastern High Peaks Region of the Adirondack Park. Likely below zero F. Car travel Thursday to Lake George, N.Y.; motel that night. Complete the drive early Friday a.m. and backpack on snowshoes into Marcy Dam area. Day hike vicinity (Phelps Mt. or Whale's Tail) to stay warm. Tent Friday night. Possible lean-to shelter. Saturday, attempt summit of Mt. Marcy (5344 feet, highest peak in N.Y.) via Van Hoevenberg Trail. Tent Saturday night. Sunday (if not frozen) hike out. If frozen, await Spring. Optional Sunday afternoon visit to Lake Placid or cross country skiing half day. Sunday night start home; motel that night. Monday, all day drive home. Snowshoe rental available at The Mountaineer, Keene Valley, NY. Winter gear and past experience essential. Group limit is 8 per Park rules.

Continued on Page 15 ...

Activities Schedule

Continued from Page 14 ...

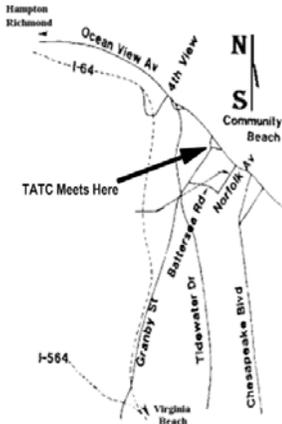
February 8, 2012, Wednesday	TATC GENERAL MEETING
Phyllis Neumann, 566-4584 Business meeting & recognition of new members and guest. Program features Bill Rogers, Mark Conolly and John Davis on an aspect of trail maintenance: <i>TOOLS, common and not so common.</i>	
March 7, 2012, Wednesday	TATC GENERAL MEETING
Business meeting & recognition of new members and guest. Program features Bill Rogers, Mark Conolly and John Davis on another aspect of trail maintenance: <i>Common Tasks & Practices.</i>	
March 24, 2012, Saturday	TATC 40th ANNIVERSARY EVENT
Phyllis Neumann, 566-4584 Planning is being completed for this milestone celebration at Grand Affairs in Virginia Beach. Out-of-town guests and members from afar will be in attendance for this sit-down dinner. \$25 per person with the club picking up additional expenses. Presentations will include winner of commemorative T-shirt design contest.	
April 11, 2012, Wednesday	TATC GENERAL MEETING
Business meeting & recognition of new members and guest. Program features Kevin DuBois: <i>John Muir Trail from Yosemite's Tuolumne Meadows to Devil's Postpile.</i>	
Informational Notes	
Old Dominion Appalachian Trail Club. We work closely with our neighbor club in Richmond. Please go to the following website for some of their offerings: www.odatc.net	
Weekday Activity Group: If you would like to receive e-mail notifications of local hikes, bicycle rides, and paddles taking place during the week (usually on Tuesdays) please send e-mail to Ellis Malabad malabad2@gmail.com requesting to be added to the "Tuesday Group" e-mail distribution list.	
The TATC/Douglas Lee Putman Memorial Cabin is available for rent. You must be a member and first attend an orientation / work weekend in order to rent. The cabin can be reserved 8 weeks (56 days) in advance. Please call Bob Adkisson at 627-5514 if you have any questions, or want to check on availability, or want to make reservations.	
Local Trails Maintenance Opportunities: If you would like to receive E-mail notification about TATC Local Trails Maintenance activities, please send an E-mail to Bill Buck at LocalTrails@tidewateratc.com requesting to be added to the Local Trails E-mail distribution list. Trail maintenance may include weed cutting, brush and tree trimming, removal of small blown down trees, painting of trail blazes, repairing walkways and creating trails. Other special projects may be performed, such as building water bars to prevent erosion, building and repairing foot bridges, as well as building benches and other structures. Skills used in these efforts are also useful for Appalachian Trail maintenance.	
Information for Hike & Activities Schedule, TATC website listings and MeetUp postings are collected and edited by the hikemaster. Contact Jim Newman at 757 867-6688 or jimnewman55@cox.net with information for publication.	
Planning a hike or activity. If you have hike or activities information for a trip you'd like to lead, please call Hikemaster Jim Newman at 867-6688 to leave a message or e-mail at Hikemaster@TidewaterATC.com with all information to be inserted or updated. ALL ADDITIONS OR CHANGES TO THIS SCHEDULE ROUTE THROUGH THE HIKEMASTER WHO FORWARDS SUCH TO THE WEBMASTER FOR WEBSITE UPDATES. If you e-mail these items, be sure to identify yourself by full name and mention that this is a TATC event. Blank Sign-up sheets can be printed from the TATC website. After the event, please return completed sign-up sheets to the Hikemaster, so they can be retrieved from file for a period of several years. You may take sign-up sheets to the board or general meeting following the event, or mail them to the Hikemaster: Jim Newman, 102 N. Fern Cove Court, Yorktown, VA 23693	
Visit our website for updated schedules at www.tidewateratc.com	



Tidewater Appalachian
Trail Club
P. O. Box 8246
Norfolk, VA 23503-0246

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TATC Meetings are held at the Pretlow Library, 111 West Ocean View Ave, Norfolk, VA

From Peninsula: Take 64 East to 4th View Exit 273. At bottom of ramp, turn left at stop sign, turn right onto Ocean View Ave and follow over Tidewater Drive to Granby St. Take right onto Granby St., take next right onto A View Ave, and then immediately turn right onto Portview Ave., bear right around the Library into the Library parking lot, meeting is held in Meeting Room #2

From Norfolk and Virginia Beach: Take 64 West toward Hampton/Richmond. Take the Chesapeake Blvd. exit. Go to end of Chesapeake Blvd., then turn left onto Ocean View Ave. and take left onto Granby St., take next right onto A View Ave, and then immediately turn right onto Portview Ave., bear right around the Library into the Library parking lot, meeting is held in Meeting Room # 2

