

Tidewater Appalachian Trail Club

Appalachian Hiker

www.tidewateratc.com



February 2014 - March 2014

Prez Sez

This being my last Prez Sez (Mark Wenger becomes TATC President on March 1st), I wish to share some of my special experiences with the club over the years. Although I was not a founding member and did not participate in the building of the cabin, both regrets, I was fortunate to have met many of the early-year members after joining the club in 1986: Otey Shelton, Dewey Phelps, Harold & Margaret Crate, Bob Adkisson, Mal Higgins, Herb Coleman & Reese Lukei come to mind. Early experiences included numerous cold weather cabin rentals (my 43-year old son's 16th birthday party was celebrated there), backpacks, trail maintenance trips, a Bill Rogers New Years Day hike and the 1987 biennial at Lynchburg, discovery of Old Rag Mountain, Mt. Katahdin, and the Presidential Range—all positive, wonderful and indelible memories: thank you Rick Hancock for bringing me into TATC!

Although maintaining my membership since joining, other pursuits caused an eighteen-year lapse in active participation. Coming to my senses in 2008, I returned to rejoin exceptional people engaged in a worthy cause. My four years as Vice President and President were fun years as you were a good audience for my humor, both appropriate and questionable! More importantly, I treasure having met additional quality people during this latest stint of active membership. You have enriched my knowledge and outlook on life. You will not be forgotten.

Lest this trip down memory lane seem a swan song, I assure you it is not as I have many exciting plans for my "membership-to-the-end years." Things such as being available to future boards for outreach activities becoming an expert at crosscut saw sharpening, actively maintaining my 0.4 miles of the AT (flat rock to chimney rock), signing up for more backpacking trips beginning with Mal Higgins' 2014 Freezeree adventure and visiting places like Linville Gorge, Springer Mountain and future biennial locations. Oh yes, I will be happy to plan another great Holiday Party!

My memories are fond. My outlook is bright. Our friendship is solid. Farewell from one capacity; hello to what follows!

Jim Newman
TATC President

Time to Renew - Time to Renew

Your membership card is dated February 28, 2014. The membership renewal period is March and April of each year. A membership form must be completed. Find it elsewhere in this newsletter or on the Web. Renewal rates are \$15 for returning single members and \$23 for returning family members.

Welcome to the following new and returning members: Cheryl Crabtree, Susan Betz, Mark & Deborah Ripka, Bob Mooney, James & Beth Stephenson, Jack Shepherd, Melinda Brown, Mark & Jean Brzozowoki.

Mary Hormell
Membership Chair
membership@tidewateratc.com

Table of Contents

Prez Sez	1
Time to Renew	1
TATC Club Officers and Committees	2
Fly Fishing 101 Free Workshops	3
TATC Elections Results	3
BRMS Ad	4
Donate Your Used Gear!	5
Animal Encounters	6-7
GreenLife Adventure Sports Ad	8
Chocolate Hike	8
A Paragraph for Maintenance	9
The Cabin in Winter	10-11
Additional Trail Opportunities	12
Subscribe to VARO E-Newsletter	12
Free Entrance Days in the National Parks	13
Appalachian Trail Volunteers	13
Activities Schedule	14-15
Photo - Portsmouth Island Church	16



Visit our website at
www.tidewateratc.com

TATC Club Officers

President	Jim Newman	president@tidewateratc.com	867-6688
Vice President	Christine Woods	vicepres@tidewateratc.com	850-7567
Treasurer	Joe Turlo	treasurer@tidewateratc.com	855-9650
Secretary	Diana Ramsey	secretary@tidewateratc.com	619-0540
Trail Supervisor	Mark Connolly	trailsupervisor@tidewateratc.com	623-0764
Assistant Trail Supervisor	Ken Lancaster	assistantts@tidewateratc.com	589-1402

TATC Counselors

Counselor	Carl Allen	counselor@tidewateratc.com	301-8856
Counselor	Chris Sexton	counselor@tidewateratc.com	484-2827
Counselor	Greg Seid	counselor@tidewateratc.com	636-3877

ATC RPC Representatives

ATC RPC Rep	Ned Kuhns	rpcrep@tidewateratc.com	552-0292
ATC RPC Rep	Phyllis Neumann	rpcrep@tidewateratc.com	566-4584

TATC Committee Chairs

Cabin	Bob Adkisson	cabin@tidewateratc.com	627-5514
Cabin	Greg Hodges	cabin@tidewateratc.com	439-1552
Calendar	Kevin DuBois	calendar@tidewateratc.com	621-2564
Calendar	Tony Phelps	calendar@tidewateratc.com	703-297-1594
Education	Bill Rogers	education@tidewateratc.com	484-6001
Hikemaster	Christine Woods	hikemaster@tidewateratc.com	850-7567
Historical	Bob Adkisson	historical@tidewateratc.com	627-5514
Land Management	Bob Giffin	landmgt@tidewateratc.com	495-7002
Local Trails	Bill Buck	localtrails@tidewateratc.com	846-1125
Membership	Mary Hormell	membership@tidewateratc.com	627-2392
Merchandise	Margaret & Bruce Julian	merchandise@tidewateratc.com	484-0975
Newsletter	Jim Sexton	newsletter@tidewateratc.com	484-2827
Outreach	Rosanne Cary	outreach@tidewateratc.com	773-0859
Past President	Phyllis Neumann	pastprez@tidewateratc.com	566-4584
Programs	Dottie Abbott	programs@tidewateratc.com	363-9562
Timekeeper	John and Jane Oakes	timekeeper@tidewateratc.com	467-9633
Tool Boss	Bruce Julian	toolboss@tidewateratc.com	484-0975
Webmaster	Jim Sexton	webmaster@tidewateratc.com	484-2827

Publication Information

Title: Tidewater Appalachian Trail Club Appalachian Hiker

Issue Date: February 2014 - March 2014

Frequency: Bimonthly

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

40th Edition, 1st Issue

Price: Free

Fly Fishing 101 Free Workshops

Kevin Du Bois

Everywhere you backpack, you're always planning for sources of water to cook and drink with. More often than not, that water source is a creek or stream, river or lake. So it's no coincidence that backpacking and fly fishing go together like peanut butter and jelly. In fact, if you can reliably catch your food, fly fishing skills could lead to lower pack weight on extended trips.

So, if you want to learn how to fly fish and broaden your backpacking experience, there will be four excellent opportunities to get the basics, Fly Fishing 101 training, for free. The Bill Wills Southeast Virginia Chapter of Trout Unlimited based in Virginia Beach will be offering fly fishing workshops on 2/1/2014 and 3/1/2014 at the Northwest River Park in Chesapeake at 10:00 am in the Activities Building. There is no advance registration necessary and no equipment is required (although if you have it you can bring it). At each workshop, participants will:

- learn to tie a fly and take it home
- learn to cast a fly rod,
- and learn how to pick equipment (rod, reel, line, terminal tackle, accessories, etc) and match it for a better fly fishing experience.

For more information or directions, contact Northwest River Park at [757-421-7151](tel:757-421-7151), or visit their website: www.chesapeake.va.us/services/depart/park-rec/nwrp/index.shtml, or contact the instructors, Bill Campbell at flytyer53@hotmail.com or John Kelly at beachkelly@verizon.net.



January 2014 - TATC Election Results

Congratulations to the Newly Elected Officers and Counselors for the 2014 TATC Board.

The following members will serve as your 2014 TATC Board - please join them as we enter our 42nd year of fulfilling our ATC commitment by giving them your support and involvement.

President: Mark Wenger
Vice-President: Juliet Stephenson
Treasurer: Joe Turlo
Secretary: Diana Ramsey
Trail Supervisor: Mark Connolly
Assistant Trail Supervisor: Ken Lancaster
Counselor: Carl Allen, Greg Seid , Michael Horrell

TATC Nomination Committee:

Marti Malabad - Chair
Sandra Canepa
Mark Connolly
Christine Woods
Diana Ramsey





BLUE RIDGE

mountain sports • brms.com

Be kind, have fun & do the right thing.



Travel Like a Pro

Shop By Appointment

Preparation for a trip is essential, but time to prep can be hard to come by. Before you travel abroad or hike the trail for a couple of days, call your local Blue Ridge shop and schedule an appointment with one of our knowledgeable staff members.

- ★ Let us outfit you for your international trip
- ★ Take time to be properly fitted for boots
- ★ Need to gear up for that thru-hike? Give us a call.

Hilltop North Shopping Center, VA Beach • 757-422-2201

patagonia



Chaco



KEEN

Donate Your Used Gear!

By Svetlana Kononov

A year ago I learned about a non-profit organization, StandUp For Kids (SUFK). We have a local Tidewater chapter that is run entirely by volunteers. It works with homeless, at-risk, and underprivileged youth up to the age of 24. SUFK counselors walk the streets to find the youths and let them know that there is a place where they can come to get some food and socialize in a safe environment. Every Tuesday and Saturday evening a drop-in center at the Virginia Beach Oceanfront, known as Crow's Nest, opens its doors. SUFK's partner, Seton Youth Shelters, provides counseling sessions there. SUFK volunteers serve a hot meal that different churches and groups bring in, and talk to the youths ("the kids") about their current problems and needs. The kids fill out request forms for things they need (clothes, food packs, hygiene items, etc.); volunteers make a run to the storage, and come back to distribute the goods. The help is not limited to just food and clothes.

Here are some of the other things SUFK does:

- Pay for hotel rooms
- Put the kid on a bus to reunite with the family
- Pay for GED tests and preparation materials
- Help kids get I.D. cards and find jobs
- Provide transportation to medical appointments, job interviews, etc.
- Organize field trips

One of the SUFK counselors, Debbie, happens to be my co-worker (I learned about the organization from her). No matter where she is or what time of the day, Debbie is always looking for an opportunity to help the kids and their families. Here is one of her typical days. Debbie had learned that the family of one of the kids was living in a house with no heat, and the temperature dropped into the 30s the night before. She dug out a kerosene heater from her garage and brought it to work with her. During her lunch break she ran to Home Depot and bought some kerosene. After work she drove from Virginia Beach to Norfolk to deliver the heater. That day happened to be Tuesday, so Debbie drove back to Virginia Beach, picked up a couple of young mothers each of them with a baby, and brought them to Crow's Nest by 7 pm. There she got the clothes requests filled out, drove to the storage, collected the goods with the help of a few volunteers, and by 9 pm was back at Crows 'Nest where she distributed the goods to the kids.

My personal involvement with SUFK has been limited to helping Debbie with Tuesday storage runs so far, but I am trying to find ways to do more.

If you think this is a worthy cause and are asking yourself "How can I help?" I have a suggestion. Look in your garage for that piece of gear that was replaced by a newer model and has been collecting dust ever since! SUFK will gratefully accept gently used (and clean) tents, sleeping pads and tarps, sleeping bags and blankets, backpacks, bicycles. If you have any questions or have a donation to make, please contact Svetlana Kononov at svetazk@yahoo.com or (757) 667-8697.

You can learn more about SUFK at [http://www.standupforkids.org/Hampton Roads](http://www.standupforkids.org/Hampton_Roads).



Animal Encounters: Un-Encountered

By Bob Adkisson

One of the main reasons I am attracted to hiking and canoeing is the chance to meet wild animals, to be in their presence, to feel that connection to the natural world, to see what happens.

A few years ago, idly wondering, I counted up the number of bears I'd seen over the years. This wasn't hard to do, as encountering a bear tends to leave a vivid impression. At that time I was up to about 2 dozen (all black bears). But I couldn't help remember that other time, that other occasion, paddling the Tye River with a friend....

Terry and I had just launched our boats-- me first, in my canoe, then Terry, in his kayak. We actually put-in beside a small bridge over Rucker's Run, a creek that almost immediately joined the lower Tye, about 2 miles above where it intersected the James River. It was to be an overnight trip, about 30 miles altogether. I paddled the 50 yards to the Tye River, turned downstream, and, as is usual when first starting out, paused to get things in my boat arranged better. The river was flat, there was no wind or rocks, and for maybe a minute 90% of my attention was focused inside the boat. Terry was about 25 yards behind me, floating down the river, getting himself situated too.

Just then, behind me and to my right, I heard a scuffle of leaves, then the sound of something running up the steep, wooded hillside. I immediately turned, but the slope was dense and dark with rhododendron, and my view was blocked. I glanced at Terry, who turned to look at me, wide eyed and in shock. Not 2 minutes from launching our boats, not 40 feet from him, he'd just seen a bear!

I was jealous of my friend, a novice to the out of doors-- for all the time I'd spent in Nelson County, Virginia (over a year of my life) I'd yet to see a bear there, and now I had just passed within about 40 feet of one, and *missed* it. I had floated right by and not heard or noticed it in the shadows of the rhododendron; it apparently hadn't heard (or smelled) me either. Perhaps it was the peculiar odor kayakers exude that alerted the bear, caused it to flee as if on fire.

As observant as I try to be, it made me wonder, again, how many times had I passed right by and not seen the bear, the rattlesnake, the eagle, or the mountain lion? In other words, how many beavers, deer, or otters had stood silently and watched me, added me to *their* list, while I trudged by without a clue?

It is so easy to do, not see animals that are right there. While at the A.T. Biennial Meeting in Ramapo, on a hike with half dozen others at the edge of N.Y.'s Hudson Highlands, I was 2nd in line, about 10 feet behind the lead hiker. The trail came out from beneath the trees, crossed a large, undulating expanse of bedrock. Here and there were low spots where water and dirt collected, where moss, ferns, and some low bushes had taken root. I shadowed the leader as he followed the blazes painted on the rock, passing close by the lower edge of one such natural garden. Suddenly I realized that the lead hiker had just missed stepping on a snake and, unless I immediately veered to the right, I was in danger too.

Sure enough, when we gathered around, it turned out to be a rather lethargic rattlesnake—the 2nd rattler I'd seen within about 40 miles of Times Square. Perhaps lost in thought, the lead hiker stepped within a foot of the snake and hadn't noticed, even though it was in plain view, on the rock, next to the little island of plants. I had almost done the same.

Another time, paddling alone near the mouth of the Chowan River, I stepped ashore to stretch my legs. It was a warm day in October and I was just a little paranoid about stepping on a water moccasin. There was a 30 foot high bluff, with a large oak tree and a clearing on top, and I decided to make my way up the eroded slope to get a view. Picking my way thru some tangled tree roots, branches, and briars, I was concentrating almost all my attention on where I was placing my feet, looking for both snakes and trip hazards. Using my right hand to push aside a small branch, carefully stepping over a fallen tree, suddenly a chill run down my spine: something-- **a snake!**-- was sliding across the top of my hand and up my arm! The harmless green snake that found my arm so warm and convenient took about a month off my life, but that seemed like a fair trade, considering the alternatives.

I recently paddled the Yellowstone River across eastern Montana. Late one day, with the sun low in the trees behind me, with shadows stretching across the water and the brown, brushy river banks, I noticed a single deer moving in the distance. This deer also demonstrated the same, simple truism about animals, how it is they can easily go unnoticed. The deer was over 100 yards away and probably not aware of my quiet approach. Paddling along, I watched it leave the water's edge and walk to some brown vegetation near the base of the river bank. Given the distance and the shadowy light conditions, it was a bit hard to see, but then, when it paused for a few seconds, it **completely disappeared!** It was incredible how it blended in with the background so perfectly that it was truly, utterly invisible. I stared right at it and couldn't see it. After maybe 5 seconds, it moved again, came back into view; as long as it moved, my eyes could follow its form, its outline, against the reeds and river bank. Even though I was getting closer, when it stopped a 2nd time, it disappeared again.

(Continued on Page 7 ...)

(Continued from Page 6 ...)

And so, I had to wonder: how many other deer were standing along that stretch of riverbank, motionless, watching me? How many coyotes? In the fading light, tawny and lithe, how many longed for but never seen mountain lions?

Had I traveled all this way for nothing, only to pass them by, clueless and unaware?

We travel for the possibility of being moved, of seeing and being touched by what we seek. It is ironic, and unknowable, how often and how close we come, how many times we fail to see what is right in front of us.

Another canoe trip, a few years earlier— I was paddling easily and swiftly down a deserted stretch of the Susquehanna River one April morning. The wide river was sweeping along the foot of a steep, heavily wooded ridge, making a long turn to the left. The current, and the deepest water, was right up against the right hand shore, and I paddled there, maybe 25 feet from the bank, making perhaps 6 to 7 mph. But, as the river kept turning to the left, for a couple of miles, I found all my attention was fixated on the far left shore, where the banks were low, and I could see thru a line of trees (just beginning to leaf out) to some open land beyond. I was, as always, looking for animals or things of interest, and though it was nearly 100 yards away, the low left shore seemed to hold all the possibilities.

The right hand shore rose nearly straight up from the river's edge, perhaps 200 or 300 feet to the top of the ridge-line. If you were looking to camp, or just go ashore and take a break, the right side wasn't the place, and, for a couple of miles, it stayed like that. Eventually the river would get tired of turning to the left, would find its way around the end of the ridge and make a sharp bend to the right; at that point, the current and deep water would shift to the left side, and it would be the right bank that was low and accessible (if you canoe enough rivers, a certain number of miles, you begin to think you could teach a course in hydrology, all of it learned first-hand).

After paddling about 2 miles down the right hand side of the river, with almost all of my attention concentrated on the far left shore (looking for animals and seeing nothing), I finally became aware of what I was doing. I thought surely the hillside to my right deserved at least a cursory glance, and I shifted a bit in the seat, craned my neck back, and gave it a look.

Our eyes are naturally drawn to movement; that is how we usually spot an animal against the background of forest or rocks, moving among the waves or thru the grass. The other way we fix on an animal (or in searching for Waldo on a page of a thousand objects) is when its shape or color stands out against the background. And so it was that, as my eyes swept up the wooded slope, they *immediately* discovered themselves staring into the eyes of a beautiful red fox, about 50 feet up the hillside.

Framed by two large trees, the fox stood as still as a stone, staring down at me from a narrow animal trail that threaded thru the rocks and ferns. It was serendipity-- I would have passed right by, completely oblivious, had I not looked up that very second.

The silent fox had seen me coming, had paused to watch as I passed below, some strange thing floating on the water, something fate had sent along its path that morning.

Our eyes locked on each other, the reason we were both there; two fellow travelers acknowledging each other with a simple glance. It occurred to me, of course, to reach for my camera, to try and get a photograph. But I knew it was hopeless— the current was hurrying me along, the moment was passing; no matter how much each of might have wished it were different, time wouldn't stand still; both wonder and life are fleeting.

A few seconds, then the river carried us away from each other; the spell broken, we returned to lives magically interrupted.

Back to the trip down the Yellowstone River last September, and an encounter the opposite of the others: a few days before seeing the deer disappear in plain sight, I had another brief encounter with an animal. It was the same time of day, almost sunset, with the wide river in shadow as it approached a sharp turn to the left. On the low point of land where the river turned, I spied a coyote near the water's edge, perhaps 100 yards away. It got a drink, trotted back 50 feet across the cobblestones, then put back its head and howled. Another coyote, unseen, answered back. About then the coyote spotted me as I maneuvered thru the shallows along the left shore. It didn't automatically run off, like most coyotes do, just looked for a few seconds then carried on with its business. As I drew opposite it, maybe 50 yards away, the coyote stopped again and looked at me, then did something so human, so unexpected, that it took me aback, touched me.

Rather than hide, or ignore me, this coyote paused again, then sat down, stared, gave me its full, curious attention. It was wondrous-- personal and intimate.

If I pulled the canoe ashore and called to it, would the coyote run over, jump into the bow, go with me toward the sunset? For a moment there I had no doubts that it would, that it was considering that very thing.

GreenLife
Adventure Sports
Your professional outdoor outfitter

- Apparel & Footwear
- Equipment
- Rentals & Trips
- Friendly Expert Staff

717 West 21st Street
Norfolk VA, 23517
757-228-1953
www.greenlifeadventuresports.com

facebook

Chocolate Hike 2014

Phyllis Neumann

Plan to join a grand TATC tradition with this year's "Chocolate Hike" to be held Sunday February 16th at the Mariner's Museum in Newport News. We'll meet in the parking lot at 9:30AM for the pre-hike festivities and then walk the trail. In case you are new to the club and have no idea what this is all about, let me explain.

After joining TATC in 2000, I quickly became involved in many of the club's diverse activities. I was eager to participate more and knew that I wanted to do something special. I had never led an activity before but was familiar with the Noland Trail and so offered to lead a hike there. How difficult could it be? I chose February because of the often dismal weather and dearth of club activities that month. Just to give it a theme, I decided to call it a "Pre-Valentine's Day Hike" (it was the Saturday before the holiday) and invited participants to bring and share their favorite Valentine's Day sweet. As an incentive, I promised an award for the most unique treat. Maybe a dozen or so showed up for the hike and we had a great time. That was in 2002 and since then the hike has become an opportunity for aspiring pastry chefs to exercise their baking skills. As well as a chance for non-bakers to get out, hike and eat other people's chocolate creations! We usually get a few more than a couple dozen attendees these days and the competition can be fierce, but it is always fun. Yes, there are awards at the end of the hike but everyone is a winner because it is mostly all about getting outside and sharing the day with friends, new and old.

A simple desire to contribute something to TATC and get out and walk with friends was my motivation for what eventually became the "Chocolate Hike". It's success and momentum is driven by those who attend and participate. I just set the date and eat some of the chocolate.

Are you intrigued at the thought of leading your own hike? Maybe coming up with your own theme? Or just willing to share a favorite local trail with fellow club members? It couldn't be easier than picking your location, a date and getting it into the hike schedule.

Go for it. It's as easy as pie...chocolate pie, that is!

A Minute or Two for a Paragraph or Two on Trail Maintenance

Although May seems like a long way off right now in our sometimes-cold winter, I hope that you'll think about going out for either our "Spring Walk-Through" on May 3rd, or our "TATC Spring Maintenance Weekend" on the weekend of May 16-18. Our base camp is Sherando Lake U.S.F.S. Recreation Area, about 20 miles south of Waynesboro, VA. The map schematic for getting to Sherando from Hampton Roads is featured at the TATC website <www.tidewateratc.com> on the drop-down menu under the tab for Trail Maintenance.

Our Spring Walk-Through comes up first, and we'll use the CCC Kitchen area near the upper lake's dam as our base camp on Sherando. It's an opportunity to have some small reconnaissance teams----in sum, only about a dozen or slightly more people-----go out to walk our assigned trail(s) and make notes on what deficiencies exist as a result of the winter's wind and weather on our trail. They'll note the location, size, and number of trees that have blocked the trail in some way, and perhaps any washed-out trail, or maybe sidehill tread surface that needs adjustment. As a result of our Fall Maintenance Weekend, we know of at least one tree that has fallen diagonally across the trail in the northern half of the Mau-Har Trail in a way that required more work. When the small teams return to Sherando, they'll pool their information, so that we can plan what tools we'll need for our Spring Maintenance Weekend. And, for those who stay overnight at the tenting area at the CCC Kitchen, a pancake and sausage breakfast will be provided on-site for those attendees.

A couple weeks later, we have our Spring Maintenance Weekend on May 16-18th. Some people like to arrive some time on Friday at the Williams Branch Picnic Area to get a favorite car-camping site with picnic table; maybe one that's at the rear of the area, or one that's close to the flush-toilet bathrooms and the dining shelter, or maybe one that nearer the entrance to the area. Team rosters will be put out on clipboards in the dining shelter for a time on Friday and early Saturday morning to allow attendees to choose which work team they'll join, based on difficulty of mission or distance to hike with tools. We'll gather our teams on Saturday morning at about 7:30AM, get a safety briefing, arrange our carpools, and pick up our teams' assigned tools to put into the vehicles, and head out for the several trailheads. When we get back on Saturday afternoon, there'll be a period of schmoozing around with snacks in anticipation of our club-sponsored dinner for all attendees, to possibly include some hikers we meet out on the trail. We expect that The Devil's Backbone, the brewery-pub downhill of Wintergreen, will again offer to support our dinner with BBQ and either beans or slaw, which our club will supplement with veggie chili or another dish, and salad. Our desserts will be potluck, an assortment of brownies, pies, cakes, cookies to provide calories to defend against any cold during Saturday night. Please make note of our scheduled date and consider participating in this, one of the two major events a year that justify the existence of the Tidewater Appalachian Trail Club.

Mark Connolly,

TATC Trail Supervisor

trailsupervisor@tidewateratc.com



The Cabin in Winter

By Bob Adkisson

Back in the mid-1970's, members of the recently formed TATC rented a couple of the primitive, hike-in cabins in Shenandoah Nat'l Park, operated by PATC. Using the cabins as a comfortable base of operations, they took hikes on nearby trails, and thoroughly enjoyed themselves. This stirred in them the desire for our club to have its own cabin.

The road to having our own club cabin was long and involved, full of potholes and false starts, debate and consensus, generous donors and hard work, not to mention a lot of dedicated workers, who labored for many years, to bring the Douglas Putman Memorial Cabin into being. Much of the history of this effort can be found on the club's website, under the **CABIN** tab. The website also features 138 photographs, with updated captions, detailing the cabin's construction, with a few more recent pictures as well, showing some of the later additions and improvements. A few more photos will be added soon.

In a way, winter-time inspired the idea of the cabin—having a sturdy, weather proof place to stay while enjoying this most challenging of seasons. Over the years, winter rental has almost always surpassed summer rental, this in spite of the added distance and difficulty often experienced in simply getting to the cabin (because the Blue Ridge Parkway, the closest access road, is often closed due to ice and snow, which sometimes lingers for weeks). This article is about winter usage of the cabin, some of the special challenges and rewards.

Before the cabin project came along, I hardly ever went hiking or camping in the winter—it just seemed like a good season to stay at home. Then I got involved in helping to build the cabin and, with work trips scheduled once a month, 12 months a year, I discovered that, even without a roof to sleep beneath, or a tent, it wasn't that bad. The cold motivated you to keep moving, keep working! I found I liked, even preferred, the 6 months of the year when the leaves were off the trees—the visibility and views were unsurpassed, the woods felt so open and accessible, there were no bugs, poison ivy, or poisonous snakes to be worried about, and there were fewer people on the trails as well.

In the late 1990's (with cabin construction work long completed) we scheduled one maintenance trip every January, hosting new club members, instructing them on what they needed to know to rent the cabin on their own. Then trip leader Steve Babor, hiking the icy Parkway one night, fell and broke his leg. Fortunately there were 4 others walking in with him, and, by use of a car that was already inside the Parkway gates, we got him to a hospital within 2 hours (this was by far the most serious accident that I can recall ever happening to any club member, on any club trip).

The following January we tried again. I arrived at Rockfish Gap a day early and, that afternoon, attempted to take a hike. I found that the 6 inches of snow on the ground had a frozen surface and was hard as a rock—it was like trying to walk on a slanted ice skating rink. I fell several times and, not wanting a repeat of the previous year, I called home and asked my wife to phone everyone and tell them the maintenance trip was cancelled. Since I was already so close, I went ahead, drove the valley roads to the community of Love, and hiked the 3 miles to the cabin. The Parkway was closed of course, but the ice wasn't as thick or as bad as it had been just 15 miles north, in the Rockfish Gap area. It was easy to 2nd guess my decision, but it was probably the right call.

Perfect timing-- I reached the cabin right at sunset. As I pulled my keys out of a pocket I noticed how the pink sky and clouds were reflected in a half inch of ice that covered the cabin's stone walls. It was beautiful, and something I'd never seen before, in all my many trips there. I identified the cabin key on my ring and tried to insert it into the lock. It wouldn't go in. I turned the key around and tried again. Nothing. I held up the key in the fading light and made sure it was the right one, and tried a 2nd time. Still nothing. What was going on here? Grumbling, I took off my pack, rummaged thru it, found my flashlight, and attempted the whole operation a 3rd time—correct key, find the slot, insert..... But the key still wouldn't go in. With the flashlight I finally figured it out-- the key hole was full of ice!

So, how to get the ice out so that I could get the key in? Lucky for me I had a pad of matches in my pack. It took 3 or 4 of them, held to the bottom of the lock, to melt the ice. I removed the lock and pulled the top half of the door open, then reached in and unlocked the bottom half. But, when I tried to open the bottom half of the door, it was blocked by a mound of ice I hadn't noticed. Nothing to do but climb over the door, reach back and pull my pack in after me; the next day I used a sledge hammer to break up the ice and get the door fully operational. I had to do the same thing for the front door.

The misadventures continued the following night (Friday) when I started a fire in the fireplace, planning to cook my meal there. At first, everything was fine—a one match fire caught and seemed to be burning well. I turned my back on it to get my dinner ready. Suddenly the cabin was filling with thick smoke, smoke rolling out of the fireplace opening. I had no choice but to open some windows and both doors, letting the cold wind blow thru and clear the air. It took several minutes, but, just as suddenly, the smoke started going up the chimney again. I closed the windows and doors and had dinner, not sure what had happened.

Saturday afternoon another club member arrived to spend the night. I told him about the fireplace fiasco the evening before and, rather than take a chance of a repeat, I decided to use the cook-stove instead for that night's meal. Only..... the same thing happened with it: smoke filled the cabin, and never did draw or go up the chimney. The best I could do was to get half of it to go out the small door at the back of the chimney. I finally had to give up and remove the wood, and again air the place out, freezing in the process—a 45 minute fiasco.

Sunday the two of us put the extension ladder against the cook-stove chimney and I climbed up, expecting to find a squirrel's nest or something blocking the flue. Instead I found a wire mesh screen attached to the opening (to prevent squirrels from entering—and which I didn't know had ever been installed). The screen had an inch of ice across it, forming an air tight seal. No wonder it didn't draw! The ladder wasn't long enough to reach the top of the fireplace chimney, but I could just make out that it too had a screen across the top, and surmised that the more direct heat from the fire Friday night had, in about 20 minutes time, melted the ice there. Mystery solved, but 2 dinnertimes ruined.

(Continued from Page 10 ...)

A few years later we attached a protective metal hood over the top of the cook-stove chimney, to help keep ice from forming on the screen. I've never had it happen to me again, and have no reports from others, but if ice can form inside the keyhole of the lock, and snow can drift under the picnic shelter, and beneath the table there, covering them 18 inches deep, then it can happen again.

After that, we stopped scheduling maintenance trips in the winter.

Another instructive trip: one January weekend, Dewey Phelps, his nephew, and I hiked the 3 miles from route 814 (the community of Love) along the snowy Parkway to the cabin. The snow was about 10 inches deep, but powdery and dry-- no problem at all for walking. We arrived at the cabin about 2 p.m., and were dismayed to find ATV tracks all around the cabin. After unlocking the door and dropping my pack, I set out to follow them, down the mountainside, past the cemetery, to the bottom of the valley and the small community of White Rock; there I lost the tracks on the gravel county road. The next day the 3 of us bushwhacked up behind the cabin and over Entry Mtn., crossed the Parkway at about milepost 17.9, then followed a ridge crest all the way down to the lower lake at Sherando; a great walk, best taken in the winter. The entire lake was frozen, and there were people out on it, at the far end by the spillway (Dewey dared me to be as crazy as them, but I wouldn't, or only a little bit).

The 3 of us took the White Rock Gap Trail back up to the Parkway, with the sky turning gray and a few raindrops starting to fall. That night the temperatures dropped below freezing again. Sunday morning Dewey and his nephew packed and left early, leaving me on my own for a few days; I would walk out and take the bus back home Wednesday. By Sunday afternoon the condition of the snow on the ground had changed completely—with a bit of thawing, then a light rain, then temperatures in the teens, the dry, powdery snow had glazed over and now had a treacherous, rock hard surface. I was concerned about hiking out, back down the trail thru Sherando, with nothing but hiking boots. Falling seemed likely, and sliding out of control down the icy slopes a real danger.

I made it out safely, without falling, but this was a lesson and an example of how benign conditions can change radically in just 24 hours.

Last March (2013) I scheduled a maintenance trip but, with few people signed up, and a mid-week storm dumping a lot of snow, I decided to cancel it. I went on my own instead. Once again I fell into the trap of judging the weather and conditions in the mountains by what had we had here on the coast, and didn't take either snowshoes or spikes for my boots. I added to that by arriving in Love about an hour before sunset. I got permission to leave my car at the Royal Oaks property, but spent half an hour talking to the owners, and then hiked 200 yards down the Parkway before realizing I'd left my camera in the car, and had to return for it. The storm had indeed piled up a lot of snow—it was knee deep, exhausting to walk thru. I got about a mile and the sun went down. I went a 2nd mile, fell face first into the snow, and broke a shoulder strap on my heavy pack. I hoped the steep descent past mile marker 18 would be easier, but the snow seemed to be drifted higher there, over my knees. I hoped the snow would be less once in the woods, the half mile to the cabin, but it was just as deep. I was glad I was carrying an axe—having a 3rd leg really helped in that tiring, thick snow. I was also glad I knew the way so well because, in the dark, as exhausted as I was, the woods nearly looked all the same, the trail nonexistent. I contemplated giving up and camping out—there was no wind, it wasn't that cold, and the sky was clear. But I pressed on, in spite of having to take over a dozen short breaks that final half mile. At the cabin, I was barely able to force the lower half of the door open. I was so tired I could hardly stand, and was ready to go right to bed. First though, I had to change out of wet socks and all but frozen, snow encrusted jeans. The sleeping bag couldn't have been any warmer or more welcoming.

I spent 4 nights, had clear weather, and was perfectly satisfied to stay in the immediate vicinity of the cabin. The wind-drifted, pure and untrammelled snow around the cabin was absolutely beautiful; it alone was worth the trouble of getting there. What a treasure the cabin is, especially on an extended weekend like this (on other winter-time trips, the White Rock Falls Trail (just across the hollow from the cabin) has proven to be a great hike, with impressive ice formations around the falls; it is my favorite time of year to hike this trail).

I wasn't looking forward to the hike out—though sunny all weekend, the snow hadn't melted much. As I neared the Parkway though I heard a lovely noise that I couldn't quite believe-- the road was being plowed, something I hadn't known the Park Service to do in years. And so the walk back to the car proved to be a breeze, taking only an hour, instead of the 3 hours I'd spent hiking in.

Another consideration when visiting the cabin in the winter months is that sometimes, when you arrive, the Parkway might be open, but while you are staying there a storm might cause the Park Service to close that section. This hasn't happened to me in many years now, but the rangers used to leave a note on my car with instructions on how to exit the Parkway (*if* the road isn't impassable that is—one group of renters got snowed in for 2 extra nights at the cabin itself, and had to leave their cars in White Rock Gap for an extra 10 days or so). The way to exit the Parkway if you are locked in is to drive south to milepost 25.5, turn left onto county road 686; this small gravel road will eventually take you to route 56 (by one of 3 different routes-- that is why it is helpful to have PATC hiking map # 12, and / or DeLorme's Virginia Gazetteer Map Book, or, if you must, a GPS device).

There is an automated **road condition / closure number** to call for the Parkway: **828 298 0398**. The Parkway can be closed off in sections, depending on the snow / ice conditions. Our section runs from milepost 16 to milepost 27 (from route 814 at Love to route 56 at Tye River Gap). Right at milepost 18, where Steve fell and broke his leg, there is a short section of the road that never gets any direct sunlight, is often icy, and is the reason that whole 11 mile section might be closed. Many times I've arrived at the intersection of route 814 and the Parkway and found it gated, and walked in along a perfectly clear road, only to find a stubborn patch of ice at milepost 18.

With the cook-stove keeping the cabin warm, with the wide-open feel of the winter woods inviting you to walk wherever you want, with the night sky sharing an incredible array of stars, and sometimes a bright-as-day full moon, the cabin is a great cold weather destination; any difficulty reaching it will be rewarded many times over. You do need to be prepared for the various weather and hiking conditions you might encounter (especially the footing), but that is part of what the club, and the out of doors, offers - a challenge.

PLEASE NOTE: The first of 4 cabin maintenance / orientation trips scheduled for 2014 will be the weekend of April 11-- 13th. Please let me know if you are interested.

Additional Trail Opportunities

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 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 AT maintenance.

Information for Hike & Activities Schedule, TATC website listings and Meetup postings are collected & edited by the Hikemaster. Contact Christine Woods at 757 850-7567 or hikemaster@tidewateratc.com w/info for publication.

Subscribe to ATC's Virginia Regional Office (VARO) E-Newsletter

Want to keep informed as to what is happening on the Appalachian Trail in Central and Southwest Virginia? Want to know what the seven AT maintaining clubs in the Virginia region are doing? Then register to receive the bi-monthly e-newsletter published by ATC's Virginia Regional Office (VARO) in Blacksburg, VA. It is a concise, easily read, interesting and informative newsletter with photos and schedules of upcoming activities in our region.

The easiest way to sign up to receive the e-newsletter is to go to <http://www.appalachiantrail.org/get-involved/enewsletter> and enter your mail address in the second slot, "Central and Southwest Virginia Regional Newsletter". Of course, you can also sign up by emailing Kathryn Herndon, the Education and Outreach Coordinator in ATC's

Virginia Regional office at kherndon@appalachiantrail.org.

I assure you that you won't be disappointed in the e-newsletter's content and certainly will be kept better informed of ATC items of local interest to TATC members.

Ned Kuhns
Virginia RPC Representative
rcrep@tidewateratc.com

Free Entrance Days in the National Parks

America's Best Idea - the National Parks - is even better when it's free!

Mark your calendar for these entrance fee-free dates in 2014:

February 15-17
Presidents Day weekend

April 19-20
opening weekend of National Park Week

August 25
National Park Service Birthday

September 27
National Public Lands Day

November 11
Veterans Day

More information is available at <http://www.nps.gov/findapark/feefreeparks.htm>

Appalachian Trail Volunteers

Over 6000 volunteers contribute more than 200,000 hours each year keeping the Appalachian Trail (A.T.) available for all to use. Volunteers are active in all aspects of Trail work, from basic maintenance to major projects such as building bridges and shelters and building new sections of the A.T.

Click on this link: <http://www.appalachiantrail.org/get-involved/volunteer>

Though Trail maintainers are perhaps the most visible, volunteers also participate in many other activities, from outreach to trail management.

Volunteers:

- Maintain and monitor the Trail corridor, making sure the land surrounding the footpath is protected
 - Monitor and remove invasive species
 - Support teachers in the Trail to Every Classroom program
 - Provide support and leadership to towns near the Trail participating in the Appalachian Trail Communities program
- Are active partners in the management of the A.T., participating in local, regional and Trail-wide management efforts

Thirty Trail maintaining clubs, assisted by ATC volunteers, do the important work that has kept the Appalachian Trail open and in good repair for more than 80 years. Volunteer opportunities for Trail maintenance, boundary monitoring, water-quality sampling, and monitoring rare species - among other opportunities - are available. Learn more about a club or ATC program in your area!



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.

FREEZEREE HIKE NEW HAMPSHIRE

January 30 - February 4, 2014, Thursday - Tuesday

Mal Higgins. 757-905-9150

Presidential Range of New Hampshire

Cold weather and snow! Ice and high winds! Frostbite and fatigue! The Presidential Range of New Hampshire! This is a severely strenuous backpacking adventure. Limited to 8 winter experienced participants. Snowshoes and micro-spikes required. Early departure and drive to NH Jan. 30 and stay in motel. General plan is to backpack to Gray Knob Cabin (operated by Randolph Mountain Club) Jan. 31, and then day hike part of Gulfside (A.T.) Trail that afternoon. Attempt day hike summit of Mt. Jefferson (Presidentials 2nd highest peak) Feb. 1, returning for second night at Gray Knob. Backpack Feb. 2, using different trail, out to cars and stay possibly at Joe Dodge Lodge (AMC Club). Feb. 3, day hike another Presidential, possibly Jackson or Eisenhower. Option to cross-X ski Feb. 3 at Bretton Woods Nordic Center. Drive home Feb. 4. Several participants may stay extra days. Contact Mal Higgins. 757-905-9150.

TATC Board Meeting

February 4, 2014, Tuesday, 7:00 - 8:30 PM

Jim Newman, 867-6688 jimnewman55@cox.net

Tidewater Appalachian Trail Club (TATC) Board Meeting - All Welcome!
Held at Pretlow Library, 111 West Ocean View Ave., Norfolk VA 23503

False Cape State Park Fun & Work

February 9-13, 2014, Sunday - Thursday

Bruce Julian, (757) 604-3099

We will meet at little Island City Park at 3:00 P.M. on Sunday Feb. 9, 2014. Bring a sleeping bag, towel, wash cloth, what ever you want to drink, your own lunches, (which you can take out to the work place) warm clothes and a roll of paper towels. Bruce will provide breakfast for each day. We will be back to our cars by 2:30 P.M. on Thursday Feb. 13, 2014. Further info regarding work details will be forthcoming. Contact Bruce to sign up & for further info.

TATC General Meeting

February 12, 2014, Wednesday, 7:00 - 8:30 PM

Jim Newman, 687-6688 jimnewman55@cox.net

Pretlow Library, 111 West Ocean View Ave., Norfolk VA 23503

TATC General Membership Meeting 7-8:30pm. Guests Are Always Welcome! Come a little early to socialize, purchase new TATC merchandise, and buy your 50/50 raffle tickets! We'll have General Business, information on upcoming TATC activities, and an interesting program on Bill Roger's trip to Mt. Whitley!

Annual Chocolate Hike

February 16, 2014, Sunday

Phyllis Neumann, (757) 566-4584

Is it a hike? Is it a chocolate extravaganza? Is it a culinary challenge? It's all three! Join your fellow TATCers in this sweetheart event, challenge your pastry skills and compete for fame and fortune Here's how it works: Meet at the Mariner's Museum (100 Museum Drive, Newport News, VA - www.marinersmuseum.org) at 9:30 am. Bring a chocolate confection (that you have created) for the Judge (that would be Phyllis) and your fellow hikers to sample. Then we'll hike the Noland trail (~ 3 miles) taking multiple breaks along the way to continue sampling the entries. At the conclusion of the hike, prizes will be awarded for the tastiest and most unique creation. Contact: Phyllis Neumann 757-566-4584

TATC Activity Leader Seminar

February 22, 2014, Saturday

Bill Rogers 484-6001

Bill Rogers has developed a new comprehensive program to prepare interested TATC Members to become excellent Activity Leaders! Don't miss this opportunity to lead our Club safely and well-prepared out into the great outdoors!! Location to be announced.

Activities Schedule

Okefenokee Swamp Paddle/Camping Trip**February 27 - March 3, 2014, Thursday - Monday****Richard Tarr, 857-7751**

Three day/two night paddle and camp in The Okefenokee - one of the largest, most primitive swamps in America and covering approximately 680 sq mi in southeast Georgia. It features dry islands, prairies, hammocks and lakes and includes flora and fauna such as: Yellow fringed orchid, fly catcher, bladderwort, sun dew - and alligators, otters, red-bellied turtles, sandhill cranes. This is a three-day paddle, totally approximately 23 miles, with two nights of tent camping at platforms that have a roof over the area, picnic tables and an outhouse. (Temps have been 70's during the day and 50's at night) Paddle/Camp reservations have been made starting Friday, Feb. 28, for this 3 day 2 night paddle, costing \$10 per night per person. We'll leave Thursday morning and motel in Folkston Ga. which is near the starting point - also hotel there before driving back. Only 4 spots left. (Richard can trailer up to four canoes/kayaks down there and back.) For additional info contact Richard Tarr at 857-7751 or rpt@cox.net

TATC Board Meeting**March 4, 2014, Tuesday, 7:00 - 8:30 PM****Jim Newman, 687-6688 jimnewman55@cox.net**

Tidewater Appalachian Trail Club (TATC) Board Meeting - All Welcome!
Held at Pretlow Library, 111 West Ocean View Ave., Norfolk VA 23503

TATC General Meeting**March 12, 2014, Wednesday, 7:00 - 8:30 PM****Jim Newman, 687-6688 jimnewman55@cox.net****Pretlow Library, 111 West Ocean View Ave., Norfolk VA 23503**

TATC General Membership Meeting 7-8:30pm. Guests Are Always Welcome! Come a little early to socialize, purchase new TATC merchandise, and buy your 50/50 raffle tickets! General Business and information on upcoming TATC activities.

Eat Out at the Belmont House of Smoke**March 20, 2014, Thursday, 6:00 - 8:00 pm****Jim or Chris Sexton, 484-2827**

Calling all TATERs (Tidewater Appalachian Trail Eatery Reviewers) - Eat out at the Belmont House of Smoke, starting at 6:00 pm, on Thursday, April 20, 2014. Great Kansas Style BBQ Platters, priced reasonably. Located at 2117 Colonial Ave. in Ghent. Sign-up at a TATC meeting or contact Jim or Chris Sexton, 484-2827.

Hike/Backpack Seminar**March 22, 2014, Saturday****Bill Rogers 484-6001**

Join Bill for this comprehensive training seminars - everything you need to know (and some fun stuff you didn't know you needed to know!) This is a "must attend" if you have limited (or dated) hiking and backpacking experience - all about equipment, boots, safety, and having FUN! (Limited space for this seminar, contact Bill to sign-up)

New Quarter Park Local Trail Maintenance**April 6, 2014, Sunday****Phyllis Neumann, (757) 566-4584**

Meet at 9:30am at the inner parking lot of New Quarter Park for some light maintenance on trails built by TATC. Bring water, gloves and snacks. Tools will be provided. Plan to eat lunch afterwards at a local restaurant. No experience necessary! Contact Phyllis to sign up: phyllisneumann@hughes.net or 757-566-4584.

Cabin Maintenance / Orientation Weekend**April 11-13, 2014, Friday - Sunday****Bob Adkisson, 627- 5514 cabin@tidewateratc.com**

Come join us at the TATC cabin, half mile walk off of the Blue Ridge Parkway, in Nelson County, Va.; possibly some chainsaw work will be done, cutting firewood, and some work on the access roadway (digging and moving dirt). The cabin sleeps 12, but you are welcome to camp out. Come for all or part of the weekend. Possible community meal Saturday night; all other meals on your own. Time for a short hike on Sunday in the area. New members can, by attending, qualify to rent the cabin on their own. Call with questions or for directions.

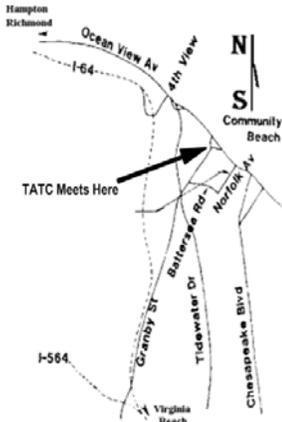
Information for Hike & Activities Schedule, TATC website listings and Meetup postings are collected & edited by the Hikemaster. Contact Christine Woods at 757 850-7567 or hikemaster@tidewateratc.com w/info for publication.



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

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

NON-PROFIT
US POSTAGE
PAID
NORFOLK,
VA
PERMIT NO.
2135



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



Portsmouth Island Church