ON THE COVER

VIEWPOINTS
SHELTER REGISTER  Letters  4
FROM THE CHAIR  David B. Field  5
REFLECTIONS  20
MINISTRY OF FUNNY WALKS  31
BOOKS  29

WHITE BLAZES
PAPER TRAIL  News from Harpers Ferry  8
TREELINE  News from along the Appalachian Trail  10
NOMINATIONS SOUGHT FOR A.T. BOARD OF MANAGERS  23

BLUE BLAZES
HOW WE USE THE TRAIL  A special report  12
75 WHO KEEP THE DREAM ALIVE  An honor roll of A.T. volunteers, part two  17
ON THE SIDE OF THE HILL, NOT OVER IT  An week with the “Over-50 Crew”  25

TREADWAY
MEMORIAL GIFTS  9
NOTABLE GIFTS  11
TRAIL GIVING  24
PUBLIC NOTICES  30
First thru-hikers?

It was with great interest and surprise I read in the May-June 2000 issue of Appalachian Trailway News that a trio of Boy Scouts are being credited as the first to complete a single season hike, twelve years before Earl Shaffer’s renowned 1948 thru-hike.

Curiosity spurred, I resolved to examine how such a monumental effort, the scouting equivalent of climbing Mt. Everest, could have been overlooked for so long. The friendly staff at ATC referred me to a 1994 article in the ATN. It was an interview with a gentleman by the name of Max Gordon, one of six Boy Scouts from Troop 257 in the Bronx, New York, who, according to the article, walked from Mt. Katahdin to Mt. Oglethorpe in 1936.

“At the time we really didn’t know what a feat this had been,” Mr. Gordon is quoted as saying. Mr. Gordon went on to admit, “it is difficult to remember many details so many years ago.” This acknowledgement could explain how, as Mr. Gordon recollected, it took only two weeks to hike the Maine portion of the Trail (which in 1936 comprised approximately 260 miles, more or less) at a time he further recalled, “there was snow most of the way through Maine.”

It is understandable how at the time the scouts could have easily overlooked contacting the ATC to report their incredible journey: the Conference was still a fledgling organization. Yet, knowing of its affinity for merit recognition, I contacted the Boy Scouts of America via the World Wide Web and U.S. Mail. On their website, there is a link to a decade-by-decade history. No acknowledgment of a thru-hike is to be found. Follow-up correspondence to the Greater New York Scouting Council has likewise yielded no evidence.

In a 1946 article published in Outdoor Life, entitled “The Long Trail’s Challenge,” it was reported that no one had yet hiked the entire Trail in a single season. In part, this article served as inspiration for Earl Shaffer’s documented solo thru-hike. Additionally, in May 1948, Appalachian Trailway News published an article that claimed no one had yet completed a single-season hike; doubt was expressed that such a feat would ever be accomplished. In a few short months that notion would be dispelled forever.

In the ATC’s archives, there exists correspondence from Myron Avery to Mr. Shaffer. These too verify Mr. Avery’s belief that Earl Shaffer was the first to accomplish the feat. Anyone familiar with Myron Avery’s role as chairman realizes nothing escaped the Captain’s attention. He was a meticulous note-taker and correspondent. He also was on the Trail in 1936, measuring and maintaining various sections, and if nothing else would certainly have been keenly interested in learning more about the scouts’ trip, as he was with Mr. Shaffer’s in 1948. Mr. Avery, from all available records, had no knowledge of any such hike by the scouts.

Certainly if these six lads did hike the entire Trail in 1936, then all credit and recognition is due them, even after the passage of so much time. However, in light of all evidence I have seen to date, theirs is, and in all probability will remain, an unsubstantiated, alleged thru-hike.

David Donaldson
Arlington, Virginia
Fight User Fees

Hikers on the Appalachian Trail have long been confounded by fees that the Appalachian Mountain Club and Green Mountain Club have levied on hikers for shelter stays in New England. These clubs argue that the monies go towards several impact-reduction programs, such as waste management and caretakers. As these programs are a necessary aspect of human interaction with the wilderness, I know of no objection to them. My objection is to charging the end user. If the AMC and GMC wanted to improve their image, they would rearrange their budget to stop the user fees they charge—fees that are not charged on the rest of the Appalachian Trail for shelter stays.

The problem goes much deeper than that, I’m afraid. There is a movement in congress to privatize National Forests. The theory is that the market economy, in the guise of a coalition of outdoor-recreation businesses, can better manage our National Forests than the Forest Service, which is embroiled in an endless spiral of government cutbacks and bureaucracy. In essence, Congress is thinking about selling our National Forests.

If this alarms you, then I have a couple of suggestions. Visit the <freeourforests.org> or <wildwilderness.org> Web sites for complete details, write your congressman or senator with your objections, and if you’re feeling a bit bold, exercise a little of the civil disobedience of Henry David Thoreau and refuse to pay the user fees. The user fee (or adventure pass) is currently an experimental test of the user fees. The user fee (or adventure pass) is currently an experimental test of whether the Forest Service needs to be revamped, not disbanded. Let Congress know that you will not be charged for walking in the woods.

Davy Ray
Eugene, Oregon

From the Chair
David B. Field

During the past five years, I’ve asked for your advice on a number of Appalachian Trail issues. I have great difficulty keeping up with correspondence, and apologize for the length of time that it takes me to respond to letters. Please understand, however, that what you tell me finds its way into Board policy discussions and shapes my own thinking on Appalachian Trail issues.

I remain convinced that the greatest challenge facing the volunteer stewards of the Appalachian Trail is that of managing human use. “Obvious,” you may well say, but the devil remains in the details. I’ve read back over my Appalachian Trailway News essays that have discussed this topic since 1996: “Loving the Trail to Death,” “Communications,” “Walking With Spring,” “Goals and Values,” “The Social Trail,” “Winds of Change,” “The Tread,” and “Sign Language.” I’ve also read your letters to ATN and to me, studied the minutes of the seminars at Conference 97 in Maine, and looked through the records of the commercial use task force that I convened for the National Park Service and ATC in 1998.

The task force exemplified the difficulties surrounding the use question. I charged the group not only with debating this issue but also considering the consequences of alternative solutions. If, for example, outfitters and for-profit summer camps were allowed to use the Trail, would they be required to obtain a permit? Would permit holders be likely to behave as if they, because of the permit, had priority in the use of overnight camping facilities? Would allowing commercial use lead to a significant increase in the use of the A.T.? Would this increased use be qualitatively different from the other increased uses that we expect? Would there be an opportunity, through the permitting process, to more easily and effectively educate large numbers of Trail users regarding behavior that is sensitive both to natural resource impacts and to impacts on other users?

The Task Force focused on three issues: 1) Park Service, Forest Service, and ATC policies oppose commercial use of the Appalachian Trail, but enforcement of existing regulations is not uniform along the Trail. 2) Is it fair for anyone to profit financially from the efforts of the volunteers who keep the A.T. available for public use? (Web sites now feature offers, priced in thousands of dollars, of guided or logistically supported hikes, or both, on the A.T.) 3) If commercial use is to be restricted or denied, how is it to be defined and how will rules and regulations against it be enforced? The group met several times and found itself deeply divided over these questions. After early recognition that negative impacts on both the physical Trail and the social Trail may well be greater from a large group of any kind than from a small party in the care of a conscientious, experienced commercial guide, the Task Force changed its focus from commercial use to group use. After reflecting on the harm and disturbance that can be caused by a few irresponsible people, compared with the impacts of a large but well-informed and well-led large group, the Task Force changed again to dealing simply with use problems. Like the ATC Board’s Trail and Landscape Management Committee, which had struggled with these questions for many years, the Task Force finally concluded that it was not likely to find answers soon and disbanded. However, I am now being encouraged to re-visit the topic.

One Task Force conclusion was that we needed much better information on just how A.T. users feel about some of the issues we had been discussing. Luckily, an effort was already under way. In 1998, the National Park Service, with the coopera-
From the chair...

Continued from page 5

tion of the U.S. Forest Service and ATC, decided to survey attitudes of Appalachian Trail visitors. The survey was designed and administered by Dr. Robert Manning of the University of Vermont, supported by Dr. Alan Grafe from the Pennsylvania State University, and conducted in 1999 with help from local ATC clubs. The final report is pending, but preliminary results, reflecting the attitudes of 1,879 respondents, bear on the use issue. (Mindful of the publication prerogatives of fellow academicians, the following summary highlights only a few of the many findings that bear on the Trail use issue.)

About a quarter of visitors found on-the-Trail contacts with volunteers and paid ridgerunners/caretakers/rangers to be the most useful sources of information on rules and regulations. Responses to most, but not all questions dealing with minimum impact practices and backcountry behavior indicated a good level of awareness of proper behavior. Many respondents indicated that their actual experiences on the A.T. exceeded their expectations, but thru-hikers expressed a level of importance for experiencing solitude that exceeded what they found. Thru-hikers were also more sensitive to encounters with large groups than were other visitors. New England hikers felt greater negative impacts from meeting other hikers on Trail. Mid-Atlantic hikers were least concerned about hiker numbers. However, slightly more than half of the respondents (with especially strong sentiments coming from the mid-Atlantic region) opposed limits to public use of the Trail. Congestion-related problems were regarded as less severe in the deep South than in other regions. Most respondents (80 percent) rated the number of parties camping within sight and sound of them to be acceptable. All visitors expressed strong support for management strategies that would provide more information to hikers about appropriate uses of the Trail.

Trail-use issues remain controversial. Is there really a problem? If so, what can we do? Where use levels threaten the physical integrity of the Trail and Trail facilities, use levels can perhaps be reduced through education and persuasion. Alternatively (or jointly), carrying capacity can be increased through Trail reconstruction and hardening, providing alternative routes (also a philosophical problem—what is the “real” AT?), and expanding overnight facilities. We have traditionally focused on the management of the physical conditions of the Trail, but social carrying capacity is often reached before physical carrying capacity. Where use levels threaten the social carrying capacity of the Trail, they can be reduced or carrying capacity can be increased, primarily by increasing the size or number of overnight facilities, or both. But, there are only so many sites on the AT that are suitable for overnight use and reducing use is both a questionable policy and a practical difficulty. In “Loving the Trail to Death,” I stated that rationing access to the Appalachian Trail will not be a viable option for dealing with use problems. Respondents to the survey clearly agree with that position, but do support improved information on Trail conditions and use level trends. (As an example of one of numerous efforts, the Maine Appalachian Trail Club provides an information service on group hiking schedules that allows participating organizations to avoid meeting each other at overnight sites.)

I welcome your help as the ATC Board of Managers continues to consider these questions. Because so much has already been said, I encourage you to review past issues of ATN as you prepare your suggestions. If you would like to write to me, please do not use the ATC address. Letters are forwarded from there to me only periodically. My home address is 191 Emerson Mill Road, Hampden ME 04444; e-mail is meeser2@aol.com.

Marty Lawthers, president of the Green Mountain Club, responds to Davy Ray: A s a 1986 thru-hiker and current president of the Green Mountain Club, I understand that it can be surprising to be asked to pay a fee to spend the night at a shelter site. We have been staffing and charging fees at three fragile pond sites in southern Vermont since the early 1970s to help support our efforts to manage the resource impacts of heavy use by generations of hikers. Major successes of the caretaker program include shoreline revegetation, more effective and hospitable privy systems, reduction of average hiking group size in Vermont, and, thanks largely to the efforts of our many volunteers in southern Vermont, a better-maintained Appalachian and Long Trail.

GMC is committed to protecting and managing the trails and facilities of the Long Trail System, which includes one hundred miles of the Appalachian Trail. Our caretaker program couldn’t work without the active cooperation of the Green Mountain National Forest, which does not charge separate user fees. Their ability to work with non-profit trail organizations and volunteers, and work cooperatively with our field staff, has allowed us to do a lot of work in a cost-effective manner.

In a perfect world, campsite fees would not be necessary. The recent A.T. user survey noted that only 20 percent of trail hikers support the work of A.T.-maintaining clubs by paying membership dues. Campsite fees help us reach the hikers who directly use the resource, whether or not they are a member of a maintaining club. Providing quality overnight areas that balance the needs of the hiker with the needs of the environment costs money. Our limited financial resources are already fully committed to trail education and management. Without supplementing the federal and state dollars available, the Trail would wither on the vine.

Long-distance hikers should see that caretaker programs preserve the very resources and the Trail experience they cherish, and support them in every way possible. We encourage the writer to work
actively in support of increased financial commitment to our management efforts. In so doing, they help those less fortunate in terms of time and experience, and make the Appalachian Trail a better place for everyone.

Marty Lawthers
Peru, N.Y.

75 Who Keep the Dream Alive

The September-October ATN arrived today and, in reading it, I observe “Trail-worker biographies” of thirty-seven of seventy-five Trail volunteers honored by the Conference. The remaining thirty-eight will have biographies in the November-December issue.

I believe, on the basis of a rather unclear letter, that I am probably one of those so honored. What “Trail biography” the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club (PATC) gave me I do not know, but I am certain that the present officers of PATC would never think of including the one element that makes me unique among the seventy-five Trail volunteers listed.

While I joined PATC in 1956, and was their editor 1959-1960, I took a job in upstate New York in 1960. There I was one of the founders and organizers of the Finger Lakes Trail and Finger Lakes Trail Conference in 1961-1962. I was also the first editor of the Finger Lakes Trail News, and second president of the Finger Lakes Trail Conference, 1963-1965. (Incidentally, the FLTC constitution is modeled on ATC’s.) I maintained membership in both PATC and ATC during the years 1960-1968 but was unable to be very active with either for that time.

Though ATC prefers to ignore other long-distance trails, I mention this because I believed then, and still believe, there is room and need for as many long-distance foot trails as we can build and maintain, and that cooperation between these trails is essential for their continued existence.

Paula M. Strain
Rockville, Maryland

Although Chris Brunton is the chair of the Blackburn Standing Committee of the Potomac A.T. Club, credit for the splendid transformation of the Blackburn Trail Center is due Bruce Clendaniel and his dedicated volunteer workers. Their thousands of hours’ work should not go unrecognized.

Don Youngblood
Knoxville, Maryland

I want to thank PATC and ATC for including me in the honor roll of Trail volunteers.

I am indeed most honored to find my name in such distinguished company. However, I have to say that, while I am the Manager of the Blackburn Trail Center, I can not take complete credit for the transformation of the building from its condition as an old rustic summer home to the modern Trail Center and Hikers Hostel that we have today. The real credit goes to the planner and construction coordinator, Bruce Clendaniel, and the many dedicated volunteers who have put in thousands of hours over the last four years. The same must be said for the work done by the dedicated Trail overseers that maintain the thirty-two miles of Appalachian Trail in my district. My wholehearted thanks goes out to all of them.

Chris Brunton
Falls Church, Virginia

EDITOR’S NOTE—Please see the correction published with the second part of “75 Who Keep The Dream Alive,” on page 19 of this issue.

Hostel Closes to Hikers

Since the 1960s, the Jesuit House of Prayer in Hot Springs, N.C., has offered hospitality to hikers from the A.T. Even before the hostel was built, the priests provided ways for the hikers to obtain food, offered spiritual guidance, and permitted hikers to sleep on the porch.

Since there was major renovation on the main House from January to May 2000, we were not able to serve hikers; as we thought about our resources and limits, the Advisory Board, with the approval of the Jesuit Board of Directors, decided to close the hostel to hikers and to focus more on the retreat work which has been our primary focus since 1978, even as we continued to do pastoral and social services ministry in other ways.

There are more places for hikers to stay in the town of Hot Springs than five years ago, and it seems fitting that the town have the opportunity to welcome the hikers. We will continue to welcome hikers who seek time for spiritual reflection or time to meet with a director for sharing reflections.

Sister Peggy Verstege
Hot Springs, North Carolina

Thanks, from The Place

On behalf of the Damascus United Methodist Church and its hostel committee, I would like to thank the A.T. hikers for the generous contributions made to our repairs of “The Place.”

Our contributions were in excess of $20,000. Being involved in this project has renewed my faith in people. During this time we have met some wonderful people! Thank you again for your interest in the hostel project.

Mary Hayes
Damascus, Virginia
$4-million Saddleback proposal protects 1,435 acres

The last major “missing link” in the Appalachian Trail corridor—a 3.2-mile protected Trail route over Maine’s privately owned Saddleback Mountain—would be closed in a deal proposed by U.S. government negotiators October 19, and approved in principle by the landowner.

Under the proposal, the owner agreed to convey 1,435 acres to the National Park Service (NPS) in a $4-million deal brokered by Maine’s leading Democrats, the Interior Department, and Maine’s congressional delegation. At press time, the deal had not yet been signed, reportedly due to last-minute adjustments to the proposed property lines.

The proposal came after more than fifteen years of on-again, off-again negotiations for Saddleback reached a fever pitch this year after a NPS environmental assessment. The final outline was pushed through by a top official in the U.S. Department of the Interior on his last day in office, and was to be paid for out of a special fund. Appalachian Trail Conference Executive Director Dave Startzell noted that it provided less protection than the Conference had hoped for, but was not without its positive aspects.

Under the October 19 proposal, the Park Service would get 1,115 acres along the ridge of Saddleback, including all of the land the ski area owns southeast of the Trail, a substantial area surrounding Eddy Pond, and a corridor of varying width bordering the Appalachian Trail along the ridgecrest between Saddleback peak and the peak of the Horn on the northern side of the mountain. A scenic easement on another 320 acres in the “bowl” of the Horn, on the northwest side of the mountain, was donated by the Breen family, owners of Saddleback and its ski area since the early 1980s.

The strength of the proposal, Startzell said, was that it protected the core Trail corridor there (which has crossed Saddleback for sixty-five years), prevented future development by the Saddleback ski area from crossing the Trail, protected 90 percent of the “viewshed” around the mountain, kept the ski area from using scenic Eddy Pond as a source of water for snow-making, and preserved 95 percent of the mountain’s alpine areas. But, he said, it did not automatically stop future development of the ski area in some areas that would be visible from the Trail, and certain areas, particularly in the bowl and high on the peak of Saddleback, were particularly vulnerable. The Conference in the future will be fully involved in state development-permit processes to limit such development, he said.

Conference Chair Dave Field, a Saddleback-area native with a Trail-maintenance section there, noted that the big price tag, far above appraised value, was a precedent that could be troublesome for future land negotiations, but also could be justified.

“We all have a tendency to look at the natural resource values involved in the Saddleback situation and characterize them as ‘priceless,’ then expect to obtain protection for those resources at ‘current-use’ values,” Field said. “My friends in the appraisal profession tell me that appraisers are beginning to take a harder look at aesthetic values and conservation values in judging such properties. In Maine, swamp and bog lands that previously have been considered ‘worthless’ to local property appraisers are beginning to be valued at prices paid for conservation purposes by Maine Audubon, the Nature Conservancy, etc. This may seem ominous for future conservation efforts, but it’s becoming more difficult to argue that these ‘priceless’ re-
sources have little or no value."

Despite ATC’s reservations about the deal, Startzell said, he did not foresee any sort of appeal or legal action by the Conference.

ATC had been directly involved in the negotiations between the property owners and the Park Service until July, when it appeared that they were at an impasse and legal action was possible. The landowners mustered considerable political support from Maine’s congressional delegation, whose Republican members opposed the threat of eminent domain action by the Park Service, and said they were fighting for the Rangeley area’s economic needs. At that point, Startzell said, the Conference withdrew from the negotiations to let the two parties hash it out. But, instead of the negotiations continuing, he said, the Department of the Interior stepped in and took over, led by Assistant Secretary of the Interior John Berry, who left that position the day the deal was set.

Where the Park Service’s rules and acquisition budget limited it to paying only the appraised value for the land, Berry was able to draw on the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund to help complete the sale. The Breen family hired a top Democratic lawyer in the state as their negotiator, and he brought in former Maine Senator George Mitchell in October to take their case directly to Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt. Babbitt ignored a last-minute appeal from ATC and other conservation groups to be similarly heard on the issues.

A major question remaining is whether the ski resort will actually develop new slopes in the areas near the Trail or at all. Until now, Saddleback has been unable to compete successfully with major Maine ski resorts because it lacked “expert” slopes. The Breenes have failed to invest in the facilities since the 1980s, despite receiving in 1990 conditional state permission for more expansion. The deal clears the way for developers to build expert slopes on part of the mountain, but Startzell said that it is unclear whether the $4 million sale will be used to provide the capital that the owners would need to do so, or whether the property might be sold to other developers who can make the needed improvements. The Breenes put the 12,000 acres on the market in 1997 and reportedly rejected two $5 million bids for the whole property.

By way of comparison, Startzell said, an independent appraiser in 1998 had valued a similar 1,700-acre portion of the mountain at less than $1 million. “To the best of our knowledge, the $4 million figure is not based on any fair-market-value appraisal,” Startzell said. In fact, he said, the per-acre price was far higher even than the final price indicated, because the property owners were technically selling less than half of the 1,115 acres. The balance of the land was to be conveyed as a donation to the Park Service.

The proposed deal nets more acres for the A.T. than the compromise 893-acre “Alternative 2” proposal supported in 2000 by ATC and the Park Service, but much of the land is in areas away from the threatened ridgecrest. Two opposing alternatives, “Alternative 1” (which protected a much larger area) and “Alternative 3” (which permitted more ski-area development), were supported by about equal numbers of public comments after the Park Service’s environmental assessment.

Special legislation enabling funding for the October 19 deal was in the works for the proposed 2000 federal budget, which at press time Congress had not yet passed.

Memorial Gifts

Since our last edition, donations to the Appalachian Trail Conference were made in memory of:

ION E BARNES, beloved mother of Gordon “Nogrog” Barnes—By Joanne “Peg Leg” Renn
DAVID M. BASKIN—By Dianne and George Baskin
CHRIS DEFFLER—By Mr. and Mrs. Edwin C. Deffler, Mr. and Mrs. Jack Wolf
BILL “THE HAPPY FEET” FOOT—By Tidewater Appalachian Trail Club, Phillip A. Hanood, Jr., Tom and Gretchen Morgan, Virginia Musser, Wesley J. Schulze and Susan A. Miller, Edna W. Williams
ED GARVEY—By David C. Marsh
JOHN HARMON—By Marcia and Dick Aunspaugh, Nita and Waymon Bennett, Benton MacKaye Trail Association, Woodrow J. Bergeron, Jr. and Cheryl E. McRae-Bergeron, Alice and Joe Bradford, Howard and Alice Duryea, Michelle Hiskey and Ben Smith III, Holle and Skip Hull, Mr. and Mrs. William C. Jones, Peter Kirby, Mrs. Lee A. Kintzel, Raymond and Barbara Marley, Capt. Joe McDonough, Murphy and Susan Miller, Katherine Rountree, Mr. and Mrs. Bert Schwarz, John and Pamela Starn, Jane Berry Thompson, Milton F. Webb, Jr., Sophie T. Williams
ROBERT LEE INGRAM—By John Ingram, Emma Marrun, Margo A. Palmer, Allison and Paul Stansbery, John D. and Margaret A. Williams
JOHN RAE “DUFFBUSTER” LOCKE, JR.—By Gordon and Lorraine Burgess, Cynthia Cress and family, Sallie Mae Dunn, Mr. and Mrs. Wade Dupree, Mr. and Mrs. J.C. Faw, Rev. Randy Green, Sherry Gore and Linda Hokershaw, Mr. and Mrs. Ted M. Hall, Tommy and Alison Huskey, Gary and Sue “Bucky and Becharmer” Kanoy, Mr. and Mrs. John Rae Locke III, Mann Travel and Cruises, Gordon F. Ogilvie, Sr., Piano and Organ Distributors and Subsidiaries
RON POWELL—By Robert and Diane Fritz, Jeff and Claire Powell and family, Anthony, Nichole, Nick and Peggy Vlamis
“SAM”—By Ed Loudermilk
BARBARA “SMOKEY” SCHLAM—By Marjorie V. Barondes, Eric A. Schlam
JOHN W. SCHNELLER, PH.D.—By Catherine M. Voorhees
DOUGLAS F. THOMPSON—By Cynthia S. Thompson
Get out the blaze-orange hat—it’s hunting season in the hills

By Valerie Schrader

Fall hiking offers many enticements; as crisp air and fewer insects weren’t enough, leaf-off season also reveals vistas that are hidden during the summer. Hikers must exercise caution during this glorious time, however, because hunting seasons open all along the Appalachian Trail.

Hunting regulations are complex and vary from state to state, and then often vary from county to county within each individual state. Most states are divided into wildlife management areas (WMAs), with rules specific to each unit; for example, New Jersey has sixty-seven different WMAs for deer. Some states have different seasons for private and public lands. Thus, the nuances of the seasons have been difficult to convey in a general guide such as the one that follows, but hunting regulations and seasons are now available online for each of the fourteen Trail states.

These electronic guides (in most cases, the same document that is available in print) can be scrutinized carefully to determine precisely how rules apply to a particular part of the Trail.

Most of the hunting guides are Portable Document Format (PDF) files and require Adobe Acrobat Reader to be viewed. (Acrobat Reader is available free of charge at <www.adobe.com>.) The guides generally have short download times.

As always, the Conference recommends that hikers wear blaze- or hunter-orange colors while hiking during the fall; a blaze-orange pack cover is available from the Conference’s Ultimate Appalachian Trail Store. Most Trail states require that hunters wear some form of blaze orange, generally a hat and, when hunting for big game, an upper body garment.

In addition to wearing blaze orange, A.T. visitors can also safeguard themselves by hiking in national parks, where no hunting is allowed. (Note: though much of the A.T. corridor is on National Park Service (NPS) land, in many places the corridor is quite narrow, and is surrounded by game lands where hunters may not even realize they’re near park property; be careful even on those NPS lands.) Most state parks have no-hunting areas, or limited areas available to hunters. But, most state and national forests are open to hunting. Most Trail states do not allow public hunting on Sunday, but Conference field staff warn that hikers should continue to exercise caution while hiking in these states on Sunday—particularly during deer season. The following states do allow hunting on Sunday: Georgia, Tennessee, New York (with some local exceptions), New Hampshire and Vermont.

Lastly, A.T. hikers should be aware that small game seasons can begin as early as August, and big game seasons in the northern states begin in September. Fall is not the only time to be wary of hunting; many states have spring turkey seasons as well. Consult the online guides or contact state authorities for complete information on hunting seasons. The phone numbers and web site addresses for each state are contained in the general guide to big game hunting below; seasons apply only to areas near the Appalachian Trail.

State-by-state listing of hunting seasons along the Appalachian Trail for Fall 2000

Maine—Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife—(207)287-8000; <www.janus.state.me.us/ifw/hunt/huntlaws2000.htm>


New Hampshire—New Hampshire Fish and Game Dept.—(603) 271-3211; <www.wildlife.state.nh.us/hunting.html>

• Private land must be posted against hunting. Seasons: Deer by bow, Sept. 15–Dec. 15; deer by firearms, Nov. 8–Dec. 3; deer by muzzleloader, Oct. 28–Nov. 7; bear, Sept. 1–Dec. 3.

Vermont—Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department—(802) 241-3701; <www.anr.state.vt.us/fw/fwhome/index.htm>

• Blaze orange is optional for hunters in Vermont. Seasons: Deer by bow, Oct. 7–Nov. 19 and Dec. 13–17; deer by firearms—youth hunt, Nov. 5; deer by firearms, Nov. 11–Nov. 26; deer by muzzleloader or bow only, Dec. 2–Dec. 10; bear, Sept. 1–Nov. 15.

Massachusetts—Massachusetts Wildlife Recreation—(508)792-7270; <www.state.ma.us/dfwele/dfw/recre.htm>

• No Sunday hunting. Hunting permitted in most state parks and forests. Seasons: Deer by bow, Nov. 6–Nov. 25; deer by firearms, Nov. 27–Dec. 9; deer by muzzleloader, Dec. 11–16; bear, Sept. 5–23 and Nov. 20–25.

Connecticut—Connecticut Wildlife Division—(860) 424-3011; <www.dep.state.ct.us/burnatr/wildlife/fguide/fg00/fg00indx.htm#TOP>


New Jersey—New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife—(609) 292-2965; <www.state.nj.us/dep/fgw/hunting.htm>
• No Sunday hunting. Although the New Jersey Fish and Game Council planned a bear hunt for 2000, it was canceled at the request of Gov. Christine Whitman. Hunting is allowed in Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area and High Point State Park. Seasons: Deer by bow (varies according to zone, fall), Sept. 11-Oct. 27, Oct. 28-Nov. 25 and Oct. 28-Dec. 30; deer by bow (winter), Jan 1-31, 2001; deer by firearms, Dec. 4-9; deer by shotgun, various days by zone between Nov. 20 and Jan. 27, 2001; deer by muzzleloader, various days by zone between Nov. 27 and Jan. 5, 2001; deer by muzzleloader, High Point State Park, Nov. 6-9 and Nov. 13-16.

Pennsylvania—Pennsylvania Game Commission—(717) 787-4250; <www.state.pa.us/PA-Exec/PGC/digest/INDEX.HTM>

Maryland—Maryland Wildlife and Heritage Division—(410) 260-8540 <www.dnr.state.md.us/huntersguide>

West Virginia—West Virginia Wildlife Resources—(304) 822-3551; <www.dnr.state.wv.us/wvhunting/default.htm>
• No Sunday hunting. Hunting is illegal in state parks and in Harpers Ferry National Historical Park. Deer is the only big game hunted near the A.T. Seasons: Deer by bow, Oct. 14-Dec. 30; deer by firearms, youth hunt—Oct. 28; deer by firearms, Nov. 20-Dec. 2 and Dec. 4-9; deer by muzzleloaders, Dec. 11-16.

Virginia—Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries—(804) 367-1000; <www.dgif.state.va.us/hunting/hunting_regs.html>
• No Sunday hunting, except in licensed shooting preserves. ATC field staff urge hikers to exercise caution, however, even while hiking on Sunday on public lands. Seasons: Deer by bow, Oct. 7-Nov. 18 and Dec. 4-Jan. 6, 2001; deer by firearms, Nov. 20-Dec. 22; deer by muzzleloader, Nov. 13-18 and Dec. 18-Jan. 6, 2001; bear by bow, Oct. 14-Nov. 11; bear by firearms, Nov. 27-Jan. 6, 2001.

Tennessee—Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency—(615) 781-5272; <www.state.tn.us/twra/huntmain.html>
• Feral hogs are considered big game in Tennessee; the hunting season runs concurrently with deer season. Seasons: Deer by bow, many of the days between Sept. 23 and Jan 1, 2001; deer by firearms—youth hunt, Nov. 4-5 and Jan. 13-14, 2001; deer by firearms, Nov. 18-26 and Dec. 16-1 Jan. 1, 2001; deer by muzzleloader, many of the days between Nov. 6 and Jan. 1, 2001; bear (varies by county), Sept. 23-29, Oct. 14-22, Nov. 30-Dec. 13; feral hogs, see deer seasons, above.

North Carolina—North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission—(919) 662-4381; <www.wildlife.state.nc.us/LawEnforcement/digest>
• No Sunday hunting. Bear hunting is prohibited in several sanctuaries near the Trail, but hunting for other species is allowed. Seasons: Deer by bow, Sept. 11-Oct. 7 and Oct. 16-Nov. 18; deer by firearms, Nov. 20-Dec. 9; deer by muzzleloader, Oct. 9-14; bear, Oct. 16-Nov. 18 and Dec. 11-Jan. 1, 2001; boar, Oct. 16-Nov. 18 and Dec. 11-Jan. 1, 2001.

Georgia—Georgia Wildlife Resources Division—(770)918-6416; <www.state.ga.us/dnr/wild/huntingregs>
• Seasons listed below are statewide; some variations occur within individual WMAs. Consult the regulations for complete information. Seasons: Deer by bow, Sept. 16-Oct. 20; deer by primitive archery, Oct. 21-27; deer by firearms, Oct. 28-Jan. 1, 2001; deer by muzzle loader, Oct. 21-27; bear by bow, Sept. 16-Oct. 27; bear by firearms, Nov. 4-Dec. 3; feral hogs, by deer seasons with some local exceptions.

Valerie Schrader is assistant regional representative for ATC’s southern office.

Notable club, supporting organization, corporate & foundation gifts
(From July 18 through September 15, 2000)

$10,000 and above
Deer Park Spring Water—General support and biennial club presidents’ meeting
Potomac Appalachian Trail Club—Land acquisition fund (West Virginia Buzzard Rocks)

$5,000 to $9,999
Evenor Armington Fund—Volunteer Trail-crew program (Maine Trail crew)
BP Amoco—Volunteer Trail-crew program (Rocky Top crew) and ridgerunner-caretaker program (Great Smoky Mountains)
John Sage Foundation—Land-acquisition fund (Western Maine high-mountain protection program)

$1,000 to $4,999
Appalachian Mountain Club—Land-acquisition fund (Buzzard Rocks protection program)
Berry, Dunn, McNeil and Parker—General support Garden Homes Management Corporation—General support M&M/Mars—Volunteer Trail-crew program Mascoma Savings Bank—Upper Valley Trails Alliance National Park Service—Upper Valley Trails Alliance Upper Valley Community Foundation—Upper Valley Trails Alliance Virginia Power—Loudoun Heights Protection Project

$500 to $999
Batona Hiking Club—Ridgerunner-caretaker program Birkenstock—General support Cascade Designs—General support Eagle’s Nest Foundation—General support Land Trust of Eastern Panhandle—Land acquisition fund (Buzzard Rocks protection program) Lipstein Family Foundation—Land acquisition fund (Western Maine high-mountain protection program) Patagonia—Volunteer Trail-crew program Schwab Fund for Charitable Giving—General support
Who are we? Why do we hike the Appalachian Trail? And, what do we do when we’re there?

If those seem like fairly basic questions—questions that each of us might answer differently—consider what would happen if you asked them to a large group of hikers. What patterns would show up?

That’s exactly what a recent study has done. The patterns that emerge, it turns out, reveal quite a lot about how we use the Trail, and how we feel about it.

It turns out that most of us say we go to the Trail for simple reasons: we enjoy the views, we enjoy being close to nature, we enjoy getting exercise, relaxing, and reducing stress, and we enjoy achieving a goal we’ve set out to reach. Sometimes we simply go there simply because it’s the A.T., a trail we know and love.

And, just as there are reasons that motivate us to go to the A.T., there are also reasons that don’t. By and large, as hikers (unlike, say, rock climbers) we don’t go to the mountains because we enjoy taking risks. We don’t hike the A.T. simply to show others we can do it. Nor do most of us go there to meet new people, or practice creative arts such as sketching, painting, and photography, or to get away from our families, or to share our skills with others.
resembling a political poll, that presents a "snapshot" sample of almost two thousand hikers up and down the Trail who were contacted while hiking there in 1999, and who agreed to answer a detailed series of questions about their A.T. experiences when they returned home. What makes the study significant is that it's the first large-scale systematic attempt to question users along the entire length of the Trail. Robert Manning, a professor in the School of Natural Resources at the University of Vermont, directed it, and it was conducted by researchers from the University of Vermont and Penn State University, at the request of the Appalachian Trail Conference (ATC), the National Park Service, and the U.S. Forest Service. The questions ranged from general queries about what we like and don’t like about the Trail, to specific queries about what we found there.

The Conference and its management partners, along with the researchers who conducted the study, are still analyzing the data. The inferences they are drawing from the survey data touch on everything from how we hike and why we hike to who we are and what we do when we're not hiking. But some patterns have already begun to emerge.

According to Jim Bacon, a graduate student who helped Manning conduct the study, the primary method consisted of a survey of randomly selected users along the Appalachian Trail in the summer and fall of 1999. Hikers were approached and asked if they would be willing to complete a mail-back questionnaire. A total of 2,847 A.T. users agreed to participate and were mailed a questionnaire. Nearly 2,000 questionnaires were completed and returned.

The sample was designed to be as representative as possible of all users of the A.T. older than eighteen, Bacon reported, and included hikers and walkers, campers, picnickers, and anglers. The questionnaire asked respondents about the characteristics of their trips, their preparedness, recreation experience, expenditures, previous experience and involvement in hiking, and demographic information. For purposes of sampling, the Trail was divided into twenty-two sections within the four major geographic regions served by ATC’s regional offices—New England, the mid-Atlantic, southwest Virginia, and the deep South.

For the purposes of the study, researchers also made a distinction between thru-hikers—the hikers attempting to complete the whole Trail in one uninterrupted hike—and more casual users, including day-hikers, weekend backpackers, and section-hikers. Often the opinions and responses of thru-hikers differed strongly from those of other hikers.

The ATC Board of Managers got an early look at the study during its spring meeting, and subsequently other preliminary presentations have been made to club presidents and other groups. Only preliminary versions of the study had been released, though, and they do not contain firm conclusions about how the data should be interpreted. The following summary of the raw data is not complete, and represents only one non-scientific reading of some of it. Manning's full report, with the conclusions of the researchers, should be available to the public next year.

Who are we?

According to the survey, on a typical day 37 percent of us are day-hikers, 32 percent are overnight hikers on short backpacking trips, 16 percent are thru-hikers, and 15 percent are section hikers. Sixty-nine percent of non-thru-hikers are men, and 18 percent of thru-hikers are women.

We're 96 percent white, 2 percent black, and 2 percent Hispanic or Latino. Our average age is thirty-eight. Forty-five percent of us, not including thru-hikers, are between age twenty and thirty-nine, 40 percent are between age forty and fifty-nine.

Among thru-hikers (whose average age is thirty-three), the largest group (67 percent), is between age twenty and thirty-nine, with the over-forty crowd making up 30 percent. If we're thru-hikers, we're most likely single (58 percent); if we're not thru-hikers, we're probably married (51 percent). Nineteen percent of us are divorced. Most of us have no children, particularly if we're thru-hikers.

By and large we're not urbanites. About half of us grew up in a town or small city, and only 13 percent grew up in major cities. Today, most of us still live in a town or small city, and 16 percent live in major cities. About 45 percent of us would agree with the statement, "Hiking says a lot about who I am."

What do we do when we're not hiking?

Ninety percent of us have at least some college education—33 percent of us graduated college and 27 percent have a postgraduate or professional degree. Among thru-hikers, 37 percent of us are unemployed, compared to 3 percent of non-thru-hikers. All told, about 66 percent of us work, 9 percent are unemployed, 10 percent are retired, 1 percent are full-time homemakers, and 15 percent are students.

If we're among the hikers with jobs, and you meet us on a hike, our off-Trail jobs are likely to be in technical fields (16 percent), in education and training (14 percent), in management or business (11 percent), in healthcare (9 percent), in trades (9 percent), or in the arts (6 percent). Those of us who aren't thru-hikers will probably be taking some of the two-to-three weeks of vacation we typically get each year.

How much money do we make?

We're mostly middle-class. Fifty percent of us make between $20,000 and $79,000 during the year, with the biggest group (20 percent) in the $40,000-to-$59,000 range. This, of course, isn't true of thru-
hikers, among whom thirty-six percent make $20,000 or less. Interestingly, however, slightly more than one out of every ten thru-hikers (and 17 percent of non-thru-hikers) makes over $100,000 annually, so don’t be fooled by the grimy gear. Those of us with an income level of between $80,000 and $99,000 are the least likely to be out on the Trail.

How experienced are we?
While only 13 percent of non-thru-hikers are first-timers, a full 30 percent of thru-hikers have never been on the A.T. before beginning the long walk. Typically, we put in about 100 miles on the A.T. in a given year, and 131 miles on other trails (thru-hikers average a good deal more, in both categories). Most of us (excluding thru-hikers) have never been hiking for longer than six days at a time.

Most of us don’t belong to hiking clubs, and only about one-fifth belong to Trail-maintaining groups. Most of us who are thru-hiking consider ourselves advanced or expert hikers; about one-quarter of the non-thru-hikers among us consider ourselves novices.

How much money do we spend?
Gear manufacturers, listen up! About 51 percent of us have spent between $100 and $1,000 on our hiking gear. Twelve percent have spent between $2,000 and $4,999, and 2 percent have spent more than $5,000. The thru-hikers among us are most likely to spend more than $1,000 a year on hiking gear, even though our incomes are the lowest. Forty-six percent of us who aren’t thru-hikers estimate having spent between $100 and $499 on hiking expenses in the last twelve months, while 43 percent of thru-hikers estimate having spent between $2,000 and $4,999.

Most thru-hikers pay only their own expenses, but many non-thru-hikers pay for others to hike with them. The biggest cost for non-thru-hikers is equipment for the trip, with packaged food and beverages coming next, followed by restaurant food, lodging, and the cost of gasoline. Thru-hiker expenses follow about the same order, but are significantly higher.

The average thru-hiker spends about $148 in communities along the Trail, compared to about $95 for non-thru-hikers.

The most expensive place for restaurants, lodging, and camping is New England, but over all, mid-Atlantic hikers spend the most money to go hiking. Hikers in southwest Virginia spend the least.

How many days do we spend on the Trail, and how many miles have we hiked?
Most of us surveyed spent two days on the Trail and hiked an average of thirteen miles on the hike during which we were contacted. Thru-hikers averaged 167 days for their 2,160 miles. On the day we were surveyed, most of us who aren’t thru-hikers averaged nine miles; thru-hikers averaged fifteen miles. Our highest average daily mileage is in the mid-Atlantic, where we cover ten miles per day.

On average, those of us who aren’t thru-hikers have spent sixteen days on the Trail in the last twelve months. Most of us first visited the A.T. sometime during the last twenty years, and our favorite time to hike is fall (45 percent), followed by spring and fall (19 percent).

What do we do when we’re on the Trail?
If we’re not thru-hiking, we view scenery (82 percent), day-hike (62 percent), or backpack (57 percent). If we’re thru-hiking, we like to take photos (75 percent) more than if we’re not thru-hiking (45 percent). If we’re in New England, 4 percent of us like to go fishing along the Trail (compared to less than 1 percent elsewhere). Twenty percent of the non-thru-hikers among us go swimming on our hikes, while 36 percent of the thru-hikers do so.

Typically, those of us who are thru-hiking have not done any Trail-maintenance on our hike, though eighteen percent of the rest of us have. We’re particularly likely to have done Trail-maintenance on our hike if we’re in the deep South. We’re least likely to be camping out if we’re in Southwest Virginia (21 percent), compared to the mid-Atlantic (56 percent), New England (58 percent), and the deep South (49 percent).

How well-informed are we about reducing impact on resources?
Most of us (77 percent) show either intermediate or advanced understanding of Leave No Trace (LNT) principles. While we generally know that in places that get heavy use we should follow the LNT practice of concentrating our use in already-disturbed areas, we are less sure about what to do in undisturbed areas—many think it okay to concentrate use there, too, which it isn’t. Most of us (with the exception of thru-hikers) don’t realize that different parts of the Trail have different rules.

How safe do we feel?
Mostly pretty safe. In the survey, 65 percent of us (and 74 percent of thru-hikers) felt very secure on the Trail, 33 percent (24 percent of thru-hikers) felt reasonably secure, and 2 percent felt only “somewhat secure” or insecure. The region we’re most nervous about is the mid-Atlantic, where 5 percent of us feel either insecure or only somewhat secure.
Thru-hikers are more likely to feel insecure or only somewhat secure when they’re going to town, and most (67 percent) feel only “reasonably secure” when in town. Most of us are satisfied with Trailhead security, with southwest Virginia being the place where 12 percent feel unsatisfied or somewhat unsatisfied—particularly about security in parking areas.

More than 90 percent of us feel satisfied with the level of help we get from rangers and ridgerunners; few want more of an official presence on the Trail. When we’re thru-hiking, 41 percent of us hike and camp together for security; only 15 percent of non-thru-hikers do so.

How safe are we?
Fairly safe, but there’s some reason for caution, the survey suggests. Two percent of non-thru-hikers and 14 percent of thru-hikers have experienced a Trail-security problem in the last twelve months. Hikers in the deep South are least likely to have encountered such problems. Of the 2 percent who report problems, typically, the trouble is a threat or attack (15 percent) or vandalism or theft (7 percent for non-thru-hikers who had problems, 27 percent of thru-hikers who had problems). Alarming, even if we’ve encountered a problem, only 17 percent of us (and 38 percent of thru-hikers) report it. Most of us don’t know about the Appalachian Trail Conference’s security guidelines.

What do we look for— and get—from the Trail?
One interesting thing that the survey suggests is that we get more from the Trail than we expect. For instance, when we headed out, we rated “getting exercise” as 4.4 out of 5 on the scale of importance, but when we considered what we’d attained, we gave it a 4.6 rating. Similarly, we might have thought that reducing built-up tension was moderately important (3.7 out of 5), but when we rated our attainment, we gave it a 4.0 rating. In general, what we found on the Trail was more than what we sought.

New England hikers weren’t as likely to find the solitude they were looking for. Mid-Atlantic hikers were more likely to want to be on their own. Southwest Virginia hikers didn’t want to be on their own, and didn’t want to meet new people, but they did want to be with members of their group and reach specific destinations. Deep South hikers were more likely than others simply to want to experience an A.T. hike, which was also especially important to thru-hikers.

What are the biggest problems we find with the Trail?
Most of us had no problems—complaints from thru-hikers rarely totaled more than 1 percent of thru-hikers surveyed, and the thru-hikers among us were likely to be more critical than anyone else. Our biggest concerns include damage to soil and vegetation, too many other hikers, litter on the Trail, too much development on the Trail, not enough water available, crowded shelters and campsites, Trail erosion, heavily impacted campsites, and rodent problems.

The problems we worry least about are not meeting enough people, seeing too many rangers, encountering too many campsites and shelters, encountering bears, and theft. If we aren’t thru-hiking, we tend to want more informational items along the way. Thru-hikers are especially critical of issues including damage to soil and vegetation, large groups, congestion, trail erosion, evidence of human waste, problems with rodents, and are more likely to consider the trail poorly marked.

Those of us in New England think damage and congestion are big problems, but litter isn’t. In the mid-Atlantic we are more worried about water and encroachment by development, but not about Trail congestion. Not enough parking is a problem in southwest Virginia, and rodents and human waste are problems in the deep South.

How do conditions affect our experience?
We don’t like it when we encounter inconsiderate people, when we don’t see wildlife, when we see litter, when we run short of food or water, when we don’t wear the right clothes, or when we see soil or vegetation damage. We like it when we don’t see litter, when we don’t see soil or vegetation damage, when we see wildlife, and when we don’t encounter inconsiderate people.

The thru-hikers among us are more likely to have regrets about not seeing more wildlife and not knowing more about the natural and cultural history of the areas the Trail passes through.

Where do we spend our Trail nights?
Most of us (43 percent) stay at shelters, or (26 percent) at designated campsites. Nine percent of us find our own spaces, 10 percent stay at huts, and 11 percent camp near shelters. We use shelters most frequently in the deep South, and few of us use designated campsites there—perhaps because so much of that area is national forest that permits unrestricted camping, and lacks developed campsites.

The typical camper stays within sight of four or fewer other campers or groups, and about half of those surveyed think this is the right number. About one-third of hikers and thru-hikers would prefer fewer neighbors. About 30 percent of us find the current level of crowding very acceptable, while only 3 percent find it very unacceptable. Most of us (82 percent) are either neutral on the issue of crowding, or find the current level acceptable.

We are most likely to feel crowded camping in New England. Among the minority of us who feel that use of the Trail should be limited, most would prefer to see no more than three parties camped within sight or sound of them,
would accept about six, and would tolerate as many as eight.

**How crowded is the Trail?**

We report having seen an average of twenty-two people on the day we were surveyed, except for thru-hikers, who had to think back after their hike was over and reported only an average of seventeen. About one-fourth of hikers in both groups typically see fewer than ten people. Hikers in New England see the most (an average of twenty-nine per day), and those in the mid-Atlantic see the fewest (an average of fourteen). In general, most of us find this level acceptable, with about one-fourth finding it unacceptable (especially those of us in New England and southwest Virginia).

About half of us encounters the number of people we expect, with those of us who are thru-hiking more likely to be surprised by more people than we’d expected. Few of us say we didn’t know what to expect.

Our reaction to crowds is pretty well balanced: 43 percent of us see too many people, 44 percent see enough or too few people, and 13 percent don’t care. New Englanders are more likely to see more people than they prefer. Most of us feel that public use of the A.T. should not be limited; among those of us who want limits, we’d accept seeing 28 to 30 people per day, but would prefer seeing only 10 to 12; the maximum tolerable number is between 49 and 58 people each day.

**Do we want to limit how people use the Trail?**

In some specific cases, yes, but generally, no. A large percentage of those surveyed (65 percent) oppose limits on the number of people using the A.T. We do want the size of groups limited, however, and we want use of the Trail by commercial groups limited, too. We are about evenly split about whether commercial use should be allowed. Eighty percent of us want radio and cell phone towers prohibited, but we’re about evenly split on the question of whether to restrict radio or cell phone use on the Trail.

While most of us support the idea of leashing dogs, we aren’t opposed to dogs on the Trail (26 percent of non-thru-hikers oppose leash restrictions, and 20 percent favor prohibiting dogs; about 21 percent could go either way on the two issues). We want to keep horses off the Trail. We don’t want campfires banned, though: 71 percent oppose complete campfire bans, and we are about evenly split about whether to restrict campfires to shelter areas (thru-hikers are somewhat more opposed to this restriction).

We want toilets at popular day-use sites, we prefer bridges to fords at stream crossings, and we like tables at shelters. The thru-hikers among us show the strongest opposition to the idea of charging fees to use the Trail or camp along it. The most support for campfire restrictions is in New England, and the greatest opposition to dogs is in the deep South.

**Do we enjoy ourselves?**

Emphatically, yes. Ninety-seven percent of us report enjoying our time on the Trail, and most of us think the money we spend on our trips is worth it.

Eighty-six percent of us like the way the Trail is being managed, and most of us think the Trail and its surroundings are in good condition. We mostly feel it isn’t too crowded, and in fact we find ourselves using it more often than we once did. The thru-hikers among us are more likely to be disappointed with some part of our trips, and more likely to complain about how many people are out there hiking the Trail. Those of us in southwest Virginia are most likely to be critical of Trail management and to complain that there isn’t enough good Trailhead parking.

On a scale of ten, 36 percent of thru-hikers and 25 percent of non-thru-hikers give their experience a “ten.”

**Finally, how do we feel about the Appalachian Trail?**

Eighty-three percent of us have fond memories of the A.T., and 48 percent say we are very attached to it. But, it’s not an obsession: most disagree with the statement, “I wouldn’t substitute any other trail for the type of recreation I do here.”

Forty-four percent of us identify strongly with the A.T., although we’re neutral when it comes to ranking it above other trails or other types of recreation. We do want other people to experience it: 72 percent of us think that everyone should be able to hike the A.T., although most of us (88 percent) think that people shouldn’t be able to do whatever they want when they’re on it.

Why? Maybe because, according to the survey, we have deep, personal feelings about the A.T. Seventy-nine percent of us would agree with the statement, “this trail means a lot to me.”

Robert Rubin is editor of Appalachian Trailway News and a 1997 thru-hiker.
An honor roll of Trail volunteers, Part Two

Since 1921, it has been volunteers who have kept the Appalachian Trail open and who keep alive Benton MacKaye’s vision of a Georgia-to-Maine footpath. In the early days of the Trail, the work was done by a dedicated few. Today, thousands pitch in. In 1999 alone, more than 4,400 volunteers contributed 181,000 hours of labor along the Trail, in all manner of activities and projects.

Myron Avery, the Conference’s third chairman and the driving spirit behind completion of the Trail in 1937, once wrote that, “instead of ‘Appalachian Trail,’ [the A.T. might well] have been termed, ‘the Anonymous Trail,’ in recognition of the fact that many, many people...have labored on [it]. They have asked for no return nor recognition nor reward.”

Today’s volunteers may not have asked for it either, but, seventy-five years after MacKaye founded ATC when he convened the 1925 Appalachian Trail conference in Washington, D.C., as part of ATC’s anniversary celebration, we asked our clubs to nominate a seventy-five-person “honor roll” of present-day volunteers to represent the thousands of willing hands who make the A.T. America’s premier long-distance hiking trail.

The Honor Roll of Volunteers was sponsored in part by L.L. Bean, American Express, and Backpacker magazine. Members were selected by their fellow volunteers according to several criteria—the number of hours they volunteered on and off the Trail, their willingness to serve as mentors and examples for new members, and their abilities as leaders.

Here, then, in alphabetical order, are thirty-eight of seventy-five people you should know—representatives of the thousands of volunteers who make the A.T. what it is today and keep the dream alive. The previous thirty-seven members of the honor roll were profiled in the September–October ATN.

Dick Ketelle. A member of the Smoky Mountain Hiking Club, this Oak Ridge, Tennessee resident has volunteered an estimated four thousand hours since 1982. He has served as vice-chair of the club’s A.T. committee, among other offices, with overall responsibility for management of the club’s one hundred miles of Trail.

John Killam. Hailing from Tuscaloosa, Alabama, Killam has donated more than 1,900 hours with ATC’s volunteer trail crews and at ATC’s headquarters since 1988. Most recently, he spent several months of his time and thousands of miles on his car serving as shuttle and support crew for Dr. Vernon Vernier’s attempt to record computerized GPS mapping data for the length of the Trail.

Ralph Kinter. Since 1954, Kinter has donated 10,000 volunteer hours to the Susquehanna Appalachian Trail Club and has held various club leadership positions. He was a founding member, the club’s first president, the first president of the Keystone Trails Association, and editor of the Bushwhack Bulletin for fifteen years. He worked with Earl Shaffer on the sixty-nine-mile relocation of the Trail from Blue Mountain to Manada Gap, and worked with other clubs to help eliminate the long valley roadwalk through Cumberland County. He lives in Harrisonburg, Pennsylvania.

Fran Leckie. Leckie first began volunteering with the Old Dominion A.T. Club in 1993, and has served on its board and as director of Trail maintenance. Not only has she devoted many hours to the Trail, but also to projects such as working with the club to help restore an old, overgrown African-American cemetary. She lives in Richmond, Virginia.

Bob Marchand. Though Marchand lives in Fall River, Massachusetts, he was recognized particularly for his work on ATC’s Konnarock Trail Crew, on which he’s served as a volunteer since 1988. A fellow volunteer wrote that Marchand was nicknamed “Hagar the Horrible” after he was seen “wielding a makeshift batteringram (a six-foot locust log) to help splice a handrail into a bridge’s dovetail joint. It has stuck ever since!”

Andy McClay. McClay has been a volunteer with the Blue Mountain Eagle Climbing Club for thirty-three years, serving as the club’s director and on many of its committees. His work was instrumental in the mapping and acquisition of Trail lands in Pennsylvania. He lives in Collegeville, Pennsylvania.

John Morgan. Volunteer editor of The Register, and a four-term member of ATC’s Board of Directors, Morgan has been a member of the Maine A.T. Club for thirty-one years. His thousands of volunteer hours include time spent as president of the Maine club, as overseer of its White Cap and Bald Pate districts, and as chair of numerous committees. He lives in Hollis, Maine.

Darrol Nickels. As structures coordinator for the Tennessee Eastman Hiking Club, Nickels spearheaded a major rehabilitation effort for the club’s shelters in the early 1990s, and led the repair efforts on when floods washed out a major bridge...
in Laurel Gorge in 1998. He first began work with the club in 1968, and has contributed an estimated 7,500 hours of volunteer time. He lives in Kingsport, Tennessee.

**Frank Oglesby.** Oglesby first began volunteer work on the Trail in 1946, during the first push to reopen the Trail after World War II. He was a founder of the Tennessee Eastman Hiking Club, a member of the ATC Board of Managers, first chair of the club’s steering committee, and a longtime member of the club’s A.T. committee. With Stan Murray, Oglesby led the effort to relocate the Trail over the Roan Highlands. He led the club’s first hike to Clark Creek Falls in 1946, and led hikes back to the falls in 1986 and 1996 to celebrate the club’s fortieth and fiftieth anniversaries. He lives in Kingsport, Tennessee.

**Ed Oliver.** A fellow volunteer with the Tennessee Eastman Hiking Club called Ed Oliver “the most dedicated worker in our club—his annual hours exceed six hundred.” This resident of Kingsport has coordinated many of the club’s special projects, and has been a member for several decades.

**Charles Parry.** Parry first began volunteering with the Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club in 1976, and in the years since has been its Trail overseer, Trail supervisor, and land-acquisition coordinator, and has served on a number of committees. One of his major accomplishments was working with fellow club members and the Konnarock Crew to get some twenty miles of Trail off roads and onto the current ridge-and-valley route. He lives in Blacksburg, Virginia.

**Robert Raines.** A resident of Willow Grove, Pennsylvania, Raines has been an active member of the Batona Hiking Club for twenty years. In that time, he has served as the club’s president, trail chair, and organized the club’s A.T. boundary maintenance. A fellow volunteer estimated that he has contributed more than three thousand hours of Trail work.

**Peter Rentz.** A radiologist from Pittsfield, Massachusetts, Rentz also serves as chairman of the Massachusetts A.T. Committee of the Appalachian Mountain Club’s Berkshire Chapter. He has volunteered an estimated 10,000 hours toward maintaining and protecting his club’s section of the Appalachian Trail.

**Peter Richardson.** Since the 1950s, Richardson has worked with the Appalachian Mountain Club, serving as its vice president for north country operations, and with the Green Mountain Club, serving with its Long Trail protection committee. Not only was he a member of ATC’s Board of Managers from 1987 to 1997, he has also worked as a volunteer with many conservation-oriented not-for-profit groups. He has spent an estimated 20,000 hours of his time supporting and maintaining the A.T., and has been instrumental in establishing good relations with landowners whose property borders the Trail. He lives in Norwich, Vermont.

**Hunter Riesberg.** Riesberg is coordinator of the Dartmouth Outing Club’s “Trail Adopter” program. He lives in White River Junction, Vermont.

**Sam Ripley.** When more than eighty-eight miles of Trail were blocked by fallen trees following a major Virginia ice storm, it was Sam Ripley who organized and led the counterattack for the Natural Bridge A.T. Club. Since 1982 he has been a regular volunteer, donating an estimated five thousand hours of his time to Trail work. He is currently the Trail supervisor and a council member for the club, coordinating its work with the U.S. Forest Service. He lives in Lynchburg, Virginia.

**William Rogers.** Rogers first began volunteering with the Tidewater A.T. Club in 1977, and ever since has been closely involved with club and Trail activities. He has written articles and guides, taught, served as the club’s president, and on its board of directors, continues to serve as a section leader. He is currently a member of the ATC Board of Managers, and lives in Suffolk, Virginia.

**Ronald Rosen.** “We wish we could clone Ron,” a fellow volunteer with the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference wrote. “He is as capable at public land stewardship as a professional, yet he brings the added personal zeal of a volunteer.” Rosen has been volunteering on the Trail since 1978, coordinating work trips, chairing and serving on management committees in Dutchess County, and working closely with the land-acquisition process for the Trail corridor. He lives in Poughkeepsie, New York.

**Warren Sharp.** Since 1975, Sharp has been a member of the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club. He is currently the club’s general secretary, and is a past president of the club. He has worked with PATC on shelter construction, overseen a five-mile section of Trail in Northern Virginia, and rewrote PATC’s local-management plan. He lives in Annandale, Virginia, and volunteered an estimated 750 hours of his time in 1999.

**Otey Shelton.** A former president of the Tidewater A.T. club, Shelton has been active in a wide variety of club activities since he first began volunteering in 1974, but a special emphasis has been construction and maintenance of the Mau-Har Trail, near Three Ridges. He lives in Hampton, Virginia.

**George Shollenberger.** Since 1970, Shollenberger has served as a shelter maintainer, a vice president with the Blue Mountain Eagle Climbing Club, and an active Trail builder. A fellow volunteer called him “an outspoken advocate for the Trail and its environmental issues.” He lives in Bethel, Pennsylvania.

**Howard Simpkins.** A member of the Brandywine Valley Outing Club since 1976, Simpkins has donated an estimated 1,800 hours of his time to help maintain the Appalachian Trail. He lives in Wilmington, Delaware.

**Kimball Simpson.** Since 1980, Simpson has sat on the Green Mountain Club’s board of directors, and is a past member of its executive committee. He chairs the club’s land-protection committee, and has worked as a volunteer on the Long Trail every year since 1980. He is a Long Trail end-to-end, and was a leader both in trail protection and in acquiring a permanent office for the club. He lives in Westboro, Massachusetts.

**Norm Sills.** A retired farmer from Salisbury, Connecticut, Sills co-edits the
Who keep the dream alive

Massachusetts-Connecticut A.T. guidebook. Over the past thirty-four years, he has donated more than 2,500 hours of his time to help protect and maintain his club’s section of the Appalachian Trail. One of his major accomplishments was flagging and mapping the “western route” (now the current A.T.) of the Trail, west of the Housatonic River in Connecticut. He is also an expert in local history.

Dean Sims. For sixteen years, Sims has come north from Goulds, Florida, to work on ATC’s Konnorock crew. He was instrumental in establishing the “culture” of the Trail crew, and has worked on every major Konnorock project, in addition to projects with the mid-Atlantic crew, the Maine Trail Crew (formerly FORCE), the Vermont Long Trail Patrol, and the C&O Canal crew.

Marianne Skees. Presently serving as secretary of the ATC Board of Managers, and chair of the Conference’s publications committee, Skees has long been active with the Georgia A.T. Club, and has been its president. She was responsible for organizing a biennial ATC meeting sponsored by the “Deep South” clubs, and has been an active section maintainer. She lives in Decatur, Georgia.

Phillip Smith. This Candler, North Carolina resident first began volunteering with the Carolina Mountain Club in 1990, and for a number of years led the club’s eastern crew. He now directs its A.T. work, as well as other regional trails.

Richard Snyder. “Dick doesn’t seek the limelight,” a fellow volunteer with the Allentown Hiking Club wrote. “He is the quiet, dedicated local volunteer who maintains his club’s section of the A.T., is willing to take responsibility for projects, and provides leadership and guidance to other club members.” He has been a club member since 1965, served as club president, and has been a leader in shelter construction along the club’s section of the A.T.

Edward Sohl. When the Wilmington Trail Club first took on the responsibility of maintaining part of the A.T. in Pennsylvania, it asked Sohl to be Trail supervisor for the section. Since then, he has logged many hundreds of hours organizing volunteers, training club members, designing relocations, and monitoring the A.T. He lives in Wilmington, Delaware.

Paula Strain. Anyone who has read the Potomac A.T. Club’s publications, or the book, The Blue Hills of Maryland, knows Paula Strain’s name. For years, this resident of Rockville, Maryland has maintained club archives, catalogued records, written books and articles, raised funds, and led a variety of club activities. She became involved with the Trail in 1956, and in the years since has volunteered in many ways, including serving as PATC president and supervisor of trails, and serving on the ATC Board of Managers.

Bill Steinmetz. Presently a member of the ATC Board of Managers, Steinmetz has played many roles in the AMC—both club-wide and within the Delaware chapter. He is currently vice-chair of the club-wide trails committee, and is a former member of the board of directors. He lives in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

Sylvia Swain. As a volunteer on ATC’s mid-Atlantic crew since 1993, with additional time spent on the Konnorock and Rocky Top crews, Swain has become an important teacher and mentor to crew newcomers. She lives in Fayetteville, North Carolina.

David and Nerine Thomses. The Thomases, of Abington, Virginia, have been active members of the Mt. Rogers Appalachian Trail Club since they co-founded it 1960. Now in their eighties, both have held many offices with the club. Mr. Thomas is a past president, director, and longtime Trail supervisor; Mrs. Thomas has worked with him as editor of the club newsletter, and in many other capacities. Over the last forty years, the couple has participated in ninety percent of all scheduled maintenance activities.

Rosalind Van Landingham. This Tucker, Georgia, resident served in most of the offices in the Georgia A.T. Club. But, a fellow maintainer writes, “perhaps Rosalind’s most significant and lasting contribution to the club was her negotiation of the GATC’s first financial involvement in a land purchase that protects a viewpoint on the Georgia Trail. This project may not seem extraordinary, however it required changing the mindset of a very traditional club. Only a convincing person such as Rosalind could have made a success of the project, protection of a lovely viewshed.”

Jean Weiser. A Blue Mountain Eagle Climbing Club member, Weiser has donated an estimated one thousand volunteer hours to her club’s Trail-related maintenance and protection efforts since 1976, many of them spent working alongside her husband, Mort. She has served as a maintainer and monitor since 1966, served as club director, led hikes, and worked on numerous club committees. She lives in Reading, Pennsylvania.

Christine Wolfe. Prior to her retirement, this Freeport, Maine resident was a marketing official at L.L. Bean, and continues to organize an L.L. Bean employee group that maintains a section of the A.T. in Maine. She has volunteered an estimated 12,000 hours over the last twenty-three years with the Maine Appalachian Trail Club, chaired ATC’s development and membership committee since 1997, and is a member of the ATC Board of Managers.

Greg Walter. Known to his fellow hikers as “The Weathercarrot,” Walter, who originally hailed from Pennsylvania but now essentially lives on America’s trails, not only completed an A.T. thru-hike in 1992 and a Pacific Crest Trail thru-hike in 2000, but since 1993 has been an active member of ATC’s Mid-Atlantic Trail Crew, volunteering approximately six thousand hours of crew work over the course of the past seven years.

Correction: An editing error in Part One of this story implied that Chris Brunton was named to the Honor Roll for his work in renovating the Potomac A.T. Club’s Blackburn Trail Center. Mr. Brunton’s nomination by PATC cited his work on the Trail and his management of the center. The renovation project was led by other club volunteers (See page 7). ATN regrets the mistake.
"The race is not to the swift,” said the preacher (Ecclesiastes 9:11), “nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all.” The preacher never hiked the A.T., but he was certainly on to something. There’s a lot to be said for just taking your time, which is lucky, because hiking makes you take it. Even the fastest reported “speed-hike” of the Trail, at a little under forty-nine days, was snail-slow compared to a trip by airplane or automobile. But, there’s slow, and then there’s s-l-o-w....

One hiker’s winter

Don Youngblood

To hike the Appalachian Trail had been my retirement dream for years—decades, even. In my office, I kept copies of the Thru-Hikers Handbook and Thoreau’s Walden, and spent many lunch breaks at my desk contemplating Thoreau’s words: “Let the noon find thee by other lakes, and the night overtake thee everywhere at home,” imagining what “home” would be like at any one of the magical-sounding A.T. shelters, Trail towns, or beauty spots. Choosing to hike southbound due to my retirement date, I set out from Katalidin June 27, 1996, feeling “free at last” and dead-set against making plans for food-drops, finish dates, or anything smacking of a schedule. I was out there to enjoy myself, to taste what Trail life had to offer, and to “finish when I finish.” I did, however, have the vague assumption that I’d reach Springer before winter, and I had some ideas for life after the Trail.

It was glorious! Despite several days of physical and mental clumsiness (I wasn’t prepared for my mind’s insistence on continuing to be a city planner) I soon adapted, and daily found the Trail experience different—and better—than any previous imaginings: so much so, in fact, that I was taking every adventurous detour or invitation of companions to “take a break.” So involved was I in this happy leisure—even stopping for afternoon naps—that I took thirty-nine days to reach my first state line, that of Maine—New Hampshire. In this vagabond spirit, I was, some four months later (December 9), approaching a rural grocery in southwestern Virginia to resupply. Finding that country store closed, my food sack empty, and the hour late, I thumbed a ride into Newport and inquired at the ATC Regional Office as to food sources and overnight accommoda-

Send us your Reflections

Reflections is where we ask you to consider the Trail, and tell stories about subjects close to it, and you. The list below notes upcoming topics, and the deadlines for submissions. We look for sincerity, thoughtfulness, humor, sensitivity to the privacy of others, and factual accuracy. Because of space limitations, we can’t print everything we receive. We may edit your article—perhaps heavily—to fit our format. Submissions must be typed and double-spaced, or submitted via electronic mail (editor@atconf.org) to be considered. If you’d like your submission back, please enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

We must wait until the last minute to make our final selections, so we cannot answer questions regarding the status of submissions, or provide criticism. If your work is going to appear, you’ll hear from us.

We invite you to write on the following topics. Submission deadlines are:

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<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tr>
<td>November 2000</td>
<td>Taking it slow</td>
<td>September 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 2001</td>
<td>Parent and child</td>
<td>December 15</td>
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<td>May 2001</td>
<td>Hard weather</td>
<td>March 1</td>
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<td>July 2001</td>
<td>First aid</td>
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<td>September 2001</td>
<td>Katahdin</td>
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<td>Wild things</td>
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where or sometime that I have to be.” So, after another day’s
restaurant meals and the warm motel bed, I began using the
classified ads of the newspaper and discovered a variety of
rental accommodations, part-time employment, and social
activities. With appointments arranged by telephone, I
hitched a ride from Blacksburg to Roanoke, having decided,
“So what if I’m stretching the trail axiom, ‘Hike your own
hike’; it is, after all, my hike.”

My Roanoke sojourn was just as delightful, in totally
different ways, as my hike from Katahdin and the subse-
quent trek to Springer. I rented a room in an inner-city
home—one of three being renovated by a young couple as
part of the city’s Downtown Redevelopment Plan. This
couple, and all who welcomed this strangely-dressed, long-
haired outsider, called to mind the old Will Rogers quote
that “Strangers are just friends you haven’t met yet.” I
moved in on Thursday, and on notice of a newspaper ad,
went to a contra dance on Saturday, which opened the door
to a rich social life for my 144 days in Roanoke (and
Blacksburg and Christiansburg). The next week I began
working short-term assignments through the local Man-
power Temporary Services agency and enjoyed using my
trail-honed fitness in a variety of labors. These included
scrubbing pots in hospital kitchens, production-line work
in optical lens manufacture, stacking supermarket soft-drink
displays, cleaning project sites after building construction,and varied jobs in hot tub manufacture—to name a few.

It was a real joy to be actually laboring after years of
paper work, which I’d earned the opportunity to do by pay-
ing college expenses with just such work. Part of the joy, of
course, lay in the knowledge that I didn’t have to do it, and
that each job’s duration was of only days or weeks. Another
part of the joy was sharing my hiking adventures with my
new cohorts—workers and supervisors alike (although I sus-
pect that more than a few questioned my sincerity, or sanity,
or both). At the Jacuzzi plant, my last assignment, I gave
each of my workstation team members a Snickers bar as a
farewell and as a celebration of our camaraderie and good
production record. I especially remember their shocked ex-
pressions and wonderment that I wanted to leave a good job
like this and go back to “drifting.” Though they were small-
town folks, some living very close to the land, I think they
took the natural beauty and rural solitude for granted—per-
haps not appreciating how much those gifts meant—or at
least how much they could mean when experienced as the
particular beauty of the Appalachian Trail, on foot, and for
days and weeks on end.

It was April 5, 1997. As the needle silhouette of winter
trees on the ridges were filling with Spring, I bade my friends
farewell. One of my contra-dance friends gave me a lift
through the faint green of still-bare Sinking Creek Valley,
where I regained the Trail on the South shoulder of Va. 42. I
was lugging my backpack, a bundle of firewood (to celebrate
my first night out), and the remains of a gallon of Coleman
fuel, to leave for fellow hikers in the first shelter. At the top
of the knoll overlooking the road, I took a break to pick a
tick off my pants. Gazing at the fresh fields nestled in the
budding hills, I caught my breath as bright windowpanes
winking in the late afternoon sun-washed farmhouses.
Blurry-eyed, I thanked the Goodness of Life that had con-
ﬁrmed my dreams along the Trail, had brought me joy and
friendship during the winter, and promised to see me through
to Springer. Re-shouldering my welcome load, I said goodbye
to “city life” again, and thought that—just maybe—this had
been the very best way possible to have “hiked” the winter
of 96-97.

Don Youngblood (“Youngblood”), worked as a volunteer at
Conference headquarters during the summer and fall of
1997, was Caretaker at Blackburn Trail Center in the winter of
1997, manager of Bears Den Hostel in spring of 1998; a
Peace Corps Volunteer in Africa 1998-2000, and is presently
manager of the ATC’s hostel near Harpers Ferry.

Physical or metaphysical?

Stuart Thompson

The singularly excellent July-August anniversa-
ye of Appalachian Trailway News noted a con-
tention between Benton MacKaye and Myron Avery re-
garding the ultimate purpose of the A.T., with
MacKaye seeing the footpath as a means to a meta-
physical end, and Avery seeing the trail as the here-and-now
end in itself. For anyone spending more than a few days—
perhaps even a few hours—on the Trail, this would seem to
be a pointless contention. The Appalachian Trail is, of
course, both. The Trail is a physically demanding entity: it
cares not how young or old you are, what your gender or
religious preference might be, nor does it care that you can’t
stand the sight of mac-and-cheese any more. The Trail de-
mands the same of all and beats everyone up without dis-
 crimination. Here, hiker and partner can consciously de-
termine a pace: they can move slowly, so as to savor the mo-
tent, move quickly for whatever reasons, or move in rhyth-
mic cycles as weather, energy, or lust for ice cream dictate.

But, the Trail is also, and decidedly, a metaphysical
end. And, here the hiker probably cannot consciously de-
termine a pace. Here, the hiker must almost certainly “take
it slow.” More accurately, the hiker, given enough days on
the Trail—from my own experience something in excess of
seven—will semi-consciously establish a metaphysical pace,
with its own time structure, quite apart from sidereal time.
Here, taking it slow finds the hiker, and not the other way
around.

The A.T., for my partner Mike (“Luckless”) and me, is a
work in progress; we have section-hiked nine hundred and fifty miles of the A.T. in three walks. We are somewhat random in our approach. For example, while usually walking south-to-north, one year we determined to do all of Pennsylvania north-to-south, so as to continuously encounter the bulk of the northbound thru-hikers. Sometimes we take it slow, sometimes we don’t.

The price of years as a karate instructor for Mike has occasioned a rather severe problem of the vertebrae and hip: he has probably hiked his last distance-hike. I’ll most likely get back on the Trail again somewhere. And, after the customary first week of heavy dues, my body will no doubt again find its own pace. I suspect, though, that, without Mike, my pace spiritually, metaphysically, will be a bit slower.

Not miles, but time

Daniel Parulis and Janet Schomas

Our hikes on the A.T. usually begin in the gray Mid-west wintry months of January and February, when it’s dark as you leave for work and dark as you return that evening. When the snow flies, we’re pouring over books and maps that we’ve accumulated along the way to plan our next A.T. adventure for the coming hiking season. For one, sometimes two weeks each year, we take it slow on the Appalachian Trail.

We have four or five months to choose an area of the country, make arrangements, and of course, make reservations. Make reservations for the A.T. you ask? As divine providence would have it, we met each other in our middle years, and to our mutual delight, discovered we both love hiking the A.T., but hate, positively hate, camping. Instead we find charming B&Bs where we stay from two to five days. There’s something about hot showers and clean sheets at the end of each day.

After getting a huge breakfast and a packed lunch from the very accommodating innkeepers, we head out to a Trailhead for a six- to ten-hour adventure. Usually we measure not miles but time. We hike out on the Trail as far as we want and then head back along the same path. And, contrary to what we first expected, hiking back on a trail reveals different views, different sounds, and a different light.

The advantage of taking it slow is the ability to stand, holding hands, and allow the forest to slowly envelop us and take us into another realm. Or, to stand and watch a butterfly dry its wings for a brief moment before resuming flight. Or, to rest on the hot summer rocks on a lookout and watch two ravens glide on the thermals. Or, to come across the last of the firepinks, which should have been out of season the month before. Or, to wait for the sunlight to be “just so” for the perfect shot of the mountain laurel.

Occasionally, we come across a section-hiker or a thru-hiker. In fact we often plan to coincide with the point in the Trail where the hikers are most likely to be at that time. Usually the conversations are brief because they are on an Trail that consists of a certain number of miles to make in a day, shelters to get to, heavy backpacks, and town stops to make before dark. We are always happy to meet them, offer them a word of encouragement, a sip of water, or an energy bar. We have also learned to stand upwind.

As we watch the forest take them away, we know that it’s not long until we will be back at the B & B, showered and looking for dinner and another small-town adventure. And of course, we look forward to the next day when, after a great night’s sleep, we get to take it slow on another A.T. adventure.

Daniel Parulis (“Homey”) and Janet Schomas (“Sweetbug”) are presently plotting their next week on the Trail amid the snows of central Illinois.

Turtle pace to Katahdin

Mary Ann Church

In The Snow Leopard, Peter Matthiessen speaks of forever getting ready for a life instead of living each day. Hiking the Appalachian Trail afforded me an opportunity to savor the fullness of every moment of each day, from the time I hoisted my pack in early morning light until I crawled wearily into my sleeping bag at evening dusk.

I left Springer Mountain in February and didn’t reach Duncannon, Pennsylvania until June—one of the slowest hikers on the Trail. This year, when I left Duncannon in late March and reached Katahdin in August, I was traveling even slower.

In fact, from Springer to Katahdin I was so slow that though hundreds passed me along the way, I never passed another hiker. Or, almost. One morning, heading out of Franconia Notch in New Hampshire for Liberty Spring Campsite, I spied a woman in front of me moving at a snail’s pace up the mountain. She carried a light water-pack and was carefully balancing with her trekking poles. As the minutes wore by and I began to gain ground, I became outright ecstatic, thinking I might actually overtake her. I was getting closer and closer. Then, in a moment of personal triumph, just as I ready to overtake her, she turned around and started back down the mountain.

Even so, hiking the A.T. was too much of a life-changing experience to be daunted by my turtle-like pace. Even though I hiked 80 percent of the Trail alone, and spent close...
to 50 percent of the time in empty shelters, or tenting “out there.” I seldom felt afraid or lonely. There was just too much beauty and majesty. Of course, as any honest thru-hiker or long-distance section-hiker will confirm, there isn’t time for much else besides deciding on the next step, the next water source, or the next meal. But, oh the memories!

How can I forget the wonderful views of Georgia? The spectacular blizzards in and around the Smokies that kept me moving forward inch by inch, even slower than usual? The lifelong long friendships acquired, and marvelous camaraderie both on the Trail and within the shelters of Virginia? Signing the register at the ATC Headquarters in Harpers Ferry was a special moment in time; I enjoyed the luxury of the Dahlgren Backpack Campground in Maryland, but not the boot-eating rocks of Pennsylvania. By the time I reached New York and was crossing the Bear Mountain Bridge over the Hudson, I doubted I could prevail; the wonderful people I met in Connecticut more than compensated.

In Massachusetts, it seemed as if I was hiking entirely under water (perceptions are the norm on the Trail, and reality is often stretched). Vermont, the Green Mountain State, lived up to its reputation, and I dream of a day when I can return to hike the Long Trail. I was over my head (and often on my head when I fell) hiking in the “White Mountains, but being pampered and built back up by many of the outstanding “croo” members at the huts did wonders for the spirit. Finally, there was Maine, even more grand than envisioned. As a Northwesterner, I never thought ponds and lakes could compete with our views, but they did in Maine. (Of course, the Maine insects won hands down, and I won’t miss them.) As so many before me have said, standing on Baxter Peak at Katahdin, on a clear, warm afternoon in early August, was the ultimate experience.

Prior to hiking the A.T., I had only carried a pack for one night of my entire life, and I had never walked at any one time for more than eight miles on a trail. Now, even though I had some gaps in my hike, I could say I had traveled from Georgia to Maine by foot on the Appalachian Trail. Yes, I was the slowest one out there, and perhaps one of the oldest women (sixty-three and counting) traveling alone.

The most important thing was that I actually did it. [Peter Matthiessen also says, “We cling to such extreme moments in which we seem to die yet are born.”] Hiking the A.T. was an extreme moment in my life. Nothing I have ever done or can imagine doing in the future will begin to compare with it. I am not the same person I was when I left. None of us who completes the Trail ever is.

TRAIL GIVING

By Ken Honick

The Appalachian Trail Conference has assets of nearly $10 million and an annual operating budget approaching $3 million. It doesn’t need money, right? The Federal government pays for the Trail, right? Wrong and double wrong! But, you already knew that.

ATC is well managed and a good steward of its resources, but the needs of the Trail exceed available funds and probably always will. Even though the A.T. corridor is nearly all protected, the Conference remains active in protecting the surrounding lands that directly impact a hiker’s Trail experience. The number of visitors to the Trail increases annually. Funds are needed to educate our visitors about hiker safety, Leave No Trace principles, and the environmental and cultural resources of the Trail. And, funds are needed to strengthen and maintain our miraculous cooperative management system and to provide training and support to the maintaining clubs.

Outright lifetime gifts

Support from the U.S. Forest Service and the National Park Service in calendar year 1999 totaled $668,000, less than 25 percent of our operating budget. Membership dues provided another 25 percent. The profits from the Ultimate Appalachian Trail Store and our publications add another 13 percent. The single largest source of funds is contributions from our members, corporate sponsors, and foundations—nearly $1,000,000 for our operating budget, $600,000 for the Land Acquisition Fund, and $160,000 for the Stewardship Fund. Your support is appreciated and is essential.

Gifts to the Appalachian Trail Conference can be outright lifetime gifts or arrangements for future gifts. Both are great, but lifetime gifts provide needed funds now.

Cash gifts—The most common form of charitable giving is writing a check, but there are alternatives that can be more cost-effective for the donor.

Long-term appreciated and readily marketable property—Transfers of shares of common stock to ATC’s account are the most common alternative to cash gifts. Not only does the donor get a charitable deduction for the fair market value of the stock, but also the tax on the capital gain is completely avoided. The donated stock is valued as the average of the high and low trading prices on the date the stock is transferred from your account.

Non-marketable, closely-held stock—A minority block of nonmarketable, closely-held stock can make a very economical gift. The stock can be redeemed by the corporation at a discounted value, although the donation cannot be conditional on a redemption. If the stock is redeemed, the remaining outstanding shares gain in value. An independent appraisal is necessary if a deduction of more than $10,000 will be claimed.

Life insurance policies with cash surrender value—Some people may have paid-up life insurance policies, such as small burial policies, that are no longer needed. By donating the policy to ATC, the insured donor receives an income tax donation for the surrender value (or lower of cost), avoids any additional premium payments, and removes death benefits from a possibly taxable estate.

Charitable lead trust—Would you like to make an annual gift to ATC for a number of years and then have the assets transferred to your children or other beneficiaries? A charitable lead trust may be the answer. Assets are placed in an irrevocable trust and annual distributions are made to ATC for a specified number of years, after which the remaining assets are transferred to your beneficiary. The future gifts to beneficiaries are discounted for gift or estate tax purposes and can result in great tax savings. The charitable deduction can be structured in a number of ways to fit your individual circumstances.

These are examples of some of the ways to make a current gift to ATC. Feel free to call ATC’s Development Office to discuss these and other techniques of gifting. There is no obligation and perhaps we can help you to match a giving method to your unique motives and situation.

Ken Honick, CPA, is a principal in the firm of Eaton Honick Pellegrino & McFarland, P.A., 1800 Second St, Suite 810, Sarasota, FL 34236. E-mail: ken@ehpcpa.com. Ken is Treasurer of the ATC Board of Managers.

Appalachian Trail Maintaining Clubs

Maine A.T. Club
Appalachian Mountain Club
Dartmouth Outing Club
Green Mountain Club
AMC Berkshire Chapter
AMC Connecticut Chapter
New York–New Jersey Trail Conference
Wilmington Trail Club
Batona Hiking Club
AMC Delaware Valley Chapter
Philadelphia Trail Club
Blue Mountain Eagle Climbing Club
Allentown Hiking Club
Brandywine Valley Outing Club
Susquehanna A.T. Club
York Hiking Club
Cumberland Valley A.T.
Management Association
Mountain Club of Maryland
Potomac A.T. Club
Old Dominion A.T. Club
Tidewater A.T. Club
Natural Bridge A.T. Club
Roanoke A.T. Club
Outdoor Club at Virginia Tech
Piedmont A.T. Hikers
Mount Rogers A.T. Club
Tennessee Eastman Hiking Club
Carolina Mountain Club
Smoky Mountains Hiking Club
Nantahala Hiking Club
Georgia A.T. Club
On the side of the hill, not over it

A week with the “Over-50” Crew

EDITOR’S NOTE: Retired teacher Helen Hamilton worked with the “Over-50” Konnarock Crew during a rainy week this past summer, but it did not dampen her enthusiasm for the ATC volunteer crew program. She sent these unsolicited comments—edited for space considerations—to the attention of crew staff.

By Helen Hamilton

Sometmast in February, while weeding the cactus garden at Cabo Rojo National Wildlife Refuge in Puerto Rico (another volunteer job), the opportunity to build Trail in the mountains on an ATC crew presented a nice contrast to the surrounding subtropical habitat.

I had selected the “Over-50” crew, assuming we would be assigned small cleanup-type chores—nothing really strenuous for a geriatric work group. But the welcome letter and information packet warned that the work is “demanding, perhaps the hardest physical labor you will ever perform.” My daughter was appalled: “But, Mom, what can you do, make sandwiches for the men?”

Not exactly.

Not knowing quite what to expect, I drove southeast from Marion, Virginia, Wednesday afternoon to arrive at Sugar Grove base camp. A few gray heads were circulating and I got my cabin assignment; the work crew postings told me we were a group of eight men and two women.

Dinner was at six, and Janet Gibbons, the camp coordinator, fed us a sumptuous supper of salad and eggplant parmesan, with pans of banana pudding for dessert. We introduced ourselves, and heard a “welcome-safety talk” by Andrew Moores, our twenty-four-year-old crew leader, after which we were issued whatever equipment we did not have—tent, sleeping bag, day pack, water bottles. We would need four quarts per day at the work site, he said.

As the week progressed, it would become obvious that the work assigned to this crew was not at all different from that of any other group—age was not a factor. Actually, Andrew later told us that this was one of the most difficult sessions, because of the walk to and from the work site. But, we didn’t know it that first night.

“Lights out” came early, because breakfast was at seven the next morning. After another full meal of pancakes, English muffins, fruit, cereal, sausage, juice, and coffee, we stuffed equipment and personal gear into a large van and headed out. Andrew drove us very carefully, mostly on gravel, passing road signs like Blackjack, Horne Hollow, Brushy Mountain, Flat Ridge, and up Crawfish Road to our campsite.

And there we found...rain. It was 2.25 miles from the campsite to the work site on the A.T. After a flat, grassy area, the path narrowed and climbed—we were now on the Appalachian Trail. Another half hour of switchbacks and we reached the relocation site; here the Trail had been heavily eroded by stream flow from a hillside spring. Earlier crews had begun constructing a new route below, carving a treadway from the mountainside, forming a “bench” which would encourage water to flow off the trail and down the mountain. This was sidehill trail, a section of which we completed on our last day.

Farther up, near the location of the spring along the Trail, was where we worked most of the week, installing permanent water bars and building check dams. Andrew positioned three or four of us at various locations and gave instructions as to the type of Trail work needed. I fell in with fellow volunteers Ron and Charles, and a member of the local club, Piedmont A.T. Hikers, and we set to, digging an enormous trench to receive a humongous stone. The goal was to create a sturdy rock waterbar that would direct water from the Trail off the mountainside.

We hacked away with pulaskis and shovels; thankfully, the rain stopped. I felt I transferred a thimbleful of soil compared with the work of the men, but I was encouraged in my effort. Throughout the week, we all worked to the best of our abilities; there was no criticism, or discouragement of any attempt at honest.
So that was the pattern of our five days’ work. Start up the trail by eight in the morning, begin work by nine-thirty, lunch break at noon, break for the day around four, cook dinner around six, retire by nine o’clock that night. We all worked at our own pace, taking frequent water and snack breaks. Andrew circulated among the various crews, answering questions and directing the work.

Rain visited us several times each day and night, usually short showers, so the term “dry” became a relative word, like “clean.” Fortunately, the Piedmont A.T. Hikers anticipated this, and on Saturday afternoon we left work at two-thirty and Andrew drove us to the nearby U.S. Forest Service campground at Stony Fork where the restrooms had hot showers and soap in the dispensers. Then we were treated to a dinner at a Mexican restaurant in the nearby town of Wytheville. Driving back to camp, we felt somewhat like Cinderella in her pumpkin coach; all too soon we would be hacking at the mountain with our pulaskis and trudging through the mud, after a night in soggy sleeping bags.

While I had been counting the days (even hours) until our last day, Monday, of course, was bright and sunny, and we finished early and lunched early. It all seemed to be appreciated.

I would choose an “Over-50” crew, but if such were not available, I would sign on for a mixed ages group, with renewed confidence in my abilities.

You have to be the kind of person who can put up a tent in the rain, cook in the rain, sleep in the rain, hike in the rain, and work in the rain to join this crew. If you are, then the whole experience is an adventure, even fun! Which is what it was for me, and my fellow crew members.

Back at base camp, we were free to leave by five that afternoon. Most of the group elected to stay for another of Janet’s tasty suppers, but I left, beginning a long drive on scenic Interstate 81. I noticed that I did not want radio or tapes to break the silence; the mountain beauty surrounded the roadside and my senses were still in the woods.

Overall, Konnarock was a life-changing experience, providing me new confidence in the abilities of an aging body. The average age of our crew members was sixty-five, ranging from fifty-seven to seventy-four. Perhaps Andrew was only being kind, but he said he was pleased with our work, and reported that we constructed sixty-three feet of sidehill, nine rock steps, seventy square feet of crush-and-fill, nineteen waterbars, one grade dip, and eighty cubic feet of scree along one-quarter mile of the Appalachian Trail.

I have been a volunteer on a lot of work groups, most often with young people, who were all competent and enthusiastic. It’s always amazing to me that total strangers can bond instantly and accomplish the task at hand with no problems. The “Over-50” crew worked, cooked, and hiked together exceptionally well. While a mix of ages and capabilities is a valuable experience for all and I enjoyed working with kids, it was refreshing for me to be with people my own age.

Alternatively, if I am impressed by the physical abilities of older men and women, I think young people would benefit from seeing that grandfathers do not just putter about but can haul rock and sling sledges along with them. Personally, I enjoyed working with kids, it was refreshing for me to be with people my own age.

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# 2001 ATC TRAIL CREWS APPLICATION

Please answer all questions thoroughly and legibly. Applications are considered throughout the work season, but positions fill quickly, so mail your application back as soon as possible.

| Name: |
| Permanent Address: |
| Date of Birth: |
| City: | State: | ZIP Code: |
| Mailing Address (if different from above): |
| Use mailing address until: |
| Telephone (days): | (evenings): |
| Telephone at which to leave message: |
| T-shirt size (adult, circle one): XXL XL L M |

Are you a member of ATC? ______ Member #: ______ If club member, which club? ______

A crew alumnus(ae)? ______ Which crew(s), year(s)? ______

Please describe any contact you have had with the A.T. or ATC; mention names and places: ______

Would you like more information about ATC? ______

**We welcome donations to help ATC offset the costs of recruitment and administration of its Trail-crew programs.**

- $20
- $25
- $50
- Other ______

**Contribution Payment Methods:**

- Check
- Charge to (check one):
  - MasterCard
  - Visa
  - American Express

Signature: ___________________________ Acct. Exp. Date ___________________

Outline your hiking and backpacking experiences:

- ___________________________
- ___________________________
- ___________________________
- ___________________________

Please state your current occupation, and outline your employment experience:

- ___________________________
- ___________________________
- ___________________________
- ___________________________

Have you worked as a volunteer in group situations before? In group outdoor activities, such as a trail crew or other hard manual labor? Please explain:

- ___________________________
- ___________________________
- ___________________________
- ___________________________

What are your reasons for seeking volunteer work on the A.T.? ______

- ___________________________
- ___________________________
- ___________________________
- ___________________________
What skills, experiences, and interests do you have that you feel would be beneficial to the success of the crew program and the group? ________________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________________

Where did you hear about ATC crews? (Please be specific.) ________________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________________

Are you trained in first aid, mountain leadership, trail work, etc.? ________________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________________

Do you have any limiting physical conditions, such as allergies, that may affect your ability to perform hard manual labor such as crew work? If so, please explain. ________________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________________

PLEASE CIRCLE THE WEEK(S) YOU WISH TO WORK (six-week maximum)
Indicate 1st, 2nd and 3rd choices as we cannot guarantee your choice of only one preferred week

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Konnarock (Southern) Crew (Thursday–Monday)</th>
<th>Mid–Atlantic Crew (Thursday–Monday)</th>
<th>Long Trail Patrol (Vermont) (Monday–Friday)</th>
<th>Maine Trail Crew (Maine) (Saturday–Wednesday)</th>
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<tr>
<td>May 24–May 28</td>
<td>Sept. 6–Sept. 10</td>
<td>July 23–July 27</td>
<td>June 16–June 20</td>
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<td>May 31–June 4</td>
<td>Sept. 13–Sept. 17</td>
<td>July 30–Aug. 3</td>
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<td>June 7–June 11</td>
<td>Sept. 20–Sept. 24</td>
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<td>Aug. 16–Aug. 20</td>
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<tr>
<th>Rocky Top Crew (Eight-day sessions)</th>
<th>Note specialty crew dates:</th>
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<th>Two crews operate after the break, beginning July 7.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 7–Sept. 14</td>
<td>*Over-50 Crew</td>
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<td>Sept. 18–Sept. 25</td>
<td>**Women-Only Crew</td>
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<td>Sept. 29–Oct. 6</td>
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<td>Oct. 21–Oct. 28</td>
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Your signature: __________________________ Date __________________________

To complete the application process:

(1) Two references are required, preferably employers or teachers rather than friends or relatives. (If you have at least two weeks of previous ATC crew experience, references ARE NOT required.) Upon receiving your application, we will send you two reference forms. Print your name in the first blank, and give one half to each reference to complete and return to us. WE CANNOT PROCESS YOUR APPLICATION UNTIL WE RECEIVE THOSE FORMS FROM YOUR REFERENCES.

(2) Remove this completed application form, place it in an envelope, and mail it to: Appalachian Trail Conference, P.O. Box 10, Newport, VA 24128.

We will notify you as soon as possible of the decision on your application.
Books
Publications of interest to A.T. hikers

Armchair hiking for the winter

As snowdrifts shut down Katahdin to all but experienced winter backpackers and campers, and short days and cold rains drive weekend hikers and Trail maintainers inside, there remains an alternative to spending the winter season browsing at gear stores—curling up with a good hiking book. Here are six books that offer fuel for winter dreaming of long hikes on the Appalachian Trail.

The titles mentioned here are by no means the only hiking books published recently—or even the only books published about the Appalachian Trail. As more and more people discover the Trail, the ranks of books by thru-hikers written about their experiences has grown rapidly. Several other titles are available through the Conference’s Ultimate Appalachian Trail Store (see the catalogue in this issue).

These six books were published in 2000, or will be published in early 2001. Several are self-published, or distributed by small publishers, and are not readily available in bookstores; those should be ordered directly from the authors, from ATC (all except for Walking North, which will not be available until early 2001), or from Internet bookstores such as barnesandnoble.com or amazon.com.

• A Journey North: 1 Woman’s Story of Hiking the Appalachian Trail, by Adrienne Hall. AMC Books, hardcover, $00.00. Hall, author of several how-to backpacking books, including one aimed particularly at women, tells the story of her 1998 A.T. Georgia-to-Maine thru-hike, undertaken along with her boyfriend. In addition to the usual thru-hike issues of rain, pain, and Maine, Hall pays particular attention to environmental issues, as seen from the perspective of a hiker in the vanishing eastern wild country.

• On the Beaten Path: An Appalachian Pilgrimage, by Robert Alden Rubin Lyons Press, hardcover, $24.95. Full disclosure: This is my own book, so I won’t pretend to review it here. It’s the story of a 1997 solo Georgia-Maine thru-hike by a 38-year-old man who’s just quit his job, with a particular emphasis on portraying the community of thru-hikers northbound that year, and on the search for healing and purpose on the Trail.

• A Walk for Sunshine: A 2,160 mile expedition for charity on the Appalachian Trail, by Jeff Alt. Self-published, softcover, $14.95. Part of the inspiration for Alt’s 1998 thru-hike was to raise money for the Sunshine Home, an Ohio institution where his brother, born with cerebral palsy, was a resident. In addition to the day-by-day experiences of the hike, the author emphasizes the inspirational quality of the journey, and the importance of pursuing dreams.

• Women & Thru-Hiking on the Appalachian Trail, by Beverly “Maine Rose” Hugo. Insight Publishers, softcover, $00.00. Hugo, like the other authors here, thru-hiked the A.T. (finishing in 1995), but her book attempts to combine her own experience with advice from dozens of other women who have hiked the Trail in a practical guide that focuses on the particular issues facing women hikers.

• Walking North, by Mic Lowther. Self-published, softcover, $00.00. This has long been an “underground classic” in A.T. circles—only twenty-five copies appeared when it was first published in 1990, and they have circulated from hand-to-hand since then. The new edition will be available in early 2001. Lowther thru-hiked the Trail in the late 1980s with the unusual complication of trying to make it the entire way with his wife and ten-year-old daughter hiking alongside him.

• Walking the Dream, by Ellen Wolfe. Self-published, softcover, $15.00. The book tells the story of Wolfe’s 1997 solo northbound thru-hike. The author is a teacher and motivational speaker, and her book has a strong motivational emphasis, as she tells the story of discovering in herself unsuspected abilities and strengths that led her to be one of the first northbound finishers that year.

By Robert Rubin
Lost and Found

Lost: While ascending Katahdin on A.T. Sept. 3, I stashed my Lekis in a crevice, intending to retrieve them on the way down. When I returned, they were gone. Fred Kirch, 1817 Gilpin Ave., Wilmington, DE 19806; (302) 658-3007.


Found: Hiking staff at Wildcat Shelter, probably lost on the morning of July 25, 2000. Call Bob at 908-647-8510 and describe.

Hiking Partners Wanted

Section-hiker seeks partner for one-month hike in Spring 2001, beginning at Springer Mountain, hiking average 10 miles per day. Rodney Watts (423) 949-8048; HC71, Box 143D, Graysville, TN 37396.

Section-hiker, experienced, age 50, seeks other female hikers for 6-8 weeks in September 2001. Beth Abel, 9828 Weir Loop, Austin, TX 78736; <bethedenabel@worldnet.att.net>.

Section-hiker, age 41, seeks partner(s) for continuation of A.T. hike in New Hampshire, heading south from Crawford Notch, late March through mid-November. I am a thru-hiker beginning March 1, 2001. Tom Fuller, 72b Schofield Place, West Point, NY 10996; (845) 446-3021.

Thru-hiker: male (age 28) seeks interesting partners for northbound hike, leaving Springer in March 2001. Carlton Stewart, P.O. Box 463, Bellport, NY 11713; <carltonstewart@hotmail.com>.

Thru-hiker, retired Army officer (age 51) seeking m/f partner(s) to thru-hike northbound beginning March 1, 2001. Tom Fuller, 72b Schofield Place, West Point, NY 10996; (845) 446-3021.

Public notices

For Sale

Sleeping Bag: Marmot Arroyo 775 fill down bag, 1 pound 12 ounces, 30-degree mummy bag, 62” x 58” x 40.” Slight in cost. Once $250, will sell for $195. Liner also available for $25. Lee Barnes, (828) 254-7283; <barese@unca.edu>.

Gear: Danner “Mt. Lite” hiking boots, all-leather with GoreTex liner. Size 12. Good condition; $100. Peak 1 external flex-frame pack; holds 4,900 cubic inches; like new condition; $75. Steven Davis (404) 296-2674; <smdavis36@netscape.net>.

Gear: L.L. Bean Stowaway rainpants (olive), man’s tall/medium, used one week but in pristine condition; paid $139, asking $79. Kelty Brisbane ruck sack/weekend pack (green), approximately 2,000-2,500 cubic inches, used once for one night; paid $80, asking $35. Michael Wollenberg (860) 584-0587; <mwollen1@warthmore.edu>.

Boots: Vasque Sundowner’s, man’s size 9, used twice. Great backpacking boots: leather, waterproof Gore-Tex; $125 or best offer. Paul Wright, 103 Kenning Hall Rd., Goose Creek, SC 29445; (843) 572-3009; <pwright7807@aol.com>.

Help Wanted

Lodge crew: Now taking applications for crew positions at LeConte Lodge, a backcountry hiking lodge in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Salaries, room and board, tips, season-end bonus. Season runs from mid-March through mid-September. Great opportunity for individuals or couples. For application, contact Tim Line (865) 429-5704; 250 Apple Valley Road, Sevierville, TN 37862; <tleine@aol.com>.

Volunteers: Positive responses to A.T.C. calls to help us plan our conservation-trail exhibit at the National Scout Jamboree have encouraged us to move forward on this project. To staff the exhibit next July, we will need volunteers who can connect with boys age 12-18, are team players, and are committed to teaching Scouts to learn how to use the Trail in sustainable ways. Volunteers must have a recent involvement with Scouting or backpacking experience on the A.T. We will be able to cover some expenses of those chosen to participate; ideally, volunteers will attend the entire 10-day event (July 23-August 1) at Fort A. P. Hill near Fredericksburg, Virginia. To receive a volunteer application, send name and address to Laurie Potteiger, ATC, P.O. Box 807, Harpers Ferry, WV 25425; <lpotteiger@appalachiantrail.org>.

For Your Information

Photos available. To the mother and son I met hiking at Low Gap (U.S. 421) on July 10, the photos came out well. If you want copies, contact: D.C. Ikelman, Apt. R14, 136 Peachtree Memorial Drive, Atlanta, GA 30309; (404) 351-4341.

Trailfest. Trail festival in Hot Springs, Va., May 1. For information, please visit at: <www.hotspringsnc.org/trailfest>.

Exhibits at Shippensburg. In case you did not receive information regarding how to arrange for a display or exhibit at the 2001 A.T. conference in Shippensburg, contact the Exhibits Chair, Thursdton Griggs, by mid-March; (410) 242-8465; <gtgriggs@umbc.edu>. There is no charge, but there are some limitations as to space, and that is our absolute deadline.


Hike abroad. Moderate hiking in Italy (Tuscany and the Cinque Terre) with Dick Wolff, AMC leader for more than 30 years. Two weeks in May, $2,285 for everything (air included). Send SASE to 125 Gates Ave.–15, Montclair, NJ 07042.

PUBLIC NOTICES

NOVEMBER–DECEMBER 2000
I sat up in the corner of the shelter, still in my sleeping bag. The rain hitting the roof was soothing. Watching it drip from the overhang to the ground made the sleeping bag seem more and more like the place to be.

“Hey! You getting up?” I asked J-Rod. He lifted his head and looked at the rain, then at me. He rolled over to face the wall opposite me and pulled his bag over his shoulders and head. “I said, are you getting up?”

“What do you think?” he said into his bag.

“Well, it’s almost eight-thirty. Are we hiking today, or not?”

“I’m not going anywhere if it’s raining.”

Exactly what I wanted him to say. When the breeze blew just right, the cold, damp air found its way to my corner. I slid back into the depths of my sleeping bag and snuggled up against the spider webs on the wall. My legs, feet and back ached, the kind of ache that reminded you of what you had done but that didn’t hurt badly enough to keep you from doing it again. I laid my head on a Harlequin romance novel I found on the shelf and closed my eyes. The shelter smelled of damp dirt, old fires and someone else’s feet.

“So, where were you born?” I said to the spider webs, hoping it would bounce over to J-Rod.

“Southern Illinois” he said, and paused for a few seconds.

“Well, southern Missouri.”

“How can you not know where you were born?”

He ignored this. Or, maybe it hadn’t bounced over to him. That was all right, though, since I was now reading the Harlequin novel. The best way to read a Harlequin novel is to read the middle chapter, and only the middle chapter.

“Hey, do you think those triangle hats will ever come back in style?” I said. It didn’t really seem like a bad question. I liked that style. At least, I thought I would.

“Why? Why would that hat come back in style? It was ugly when it was around the first time. Why would you care if it came back? Leave me alone.”

“I was just wondering. Didn’t mean to make you mad,” I said.

I stared at the ceiling for a while. I wondered if Peggy ever found out that Steve loved her enough to carve it into the ceiling. I also tried to picture the scene when the person stuffed the Snickers wrapper into the crack between the rafter and the tin. He must have had a good reason.

“Hey, do you think that birds really die of old age, and cats bring them to humans for a proper burial?” I said.

Apparently J-Rod had given this some thought, too, or he wouldn’t have gotten so angry so quickly. “Will you shut up? I’m trying to sleep. Listen to the rain for a while, or something.” he said, this time directly at me.

I reached up and pulled the Snickers wrapper from its rafter perch. I’d read Snickers wrappers many times before. I read it again. Everything seemed to be pretty much in order and quite right. Not wanting to cheat someone else out of wondering about the Snickers wrapper, I put it back in the crack. It seemed to be at home there.

“Hey, do you know Larry Hollerback?” I asked after a while.

“No. Who’s that?”

“Some kid I went to school with. I haven’t seen him in years. I wonder what happened to him.” I said.

“Now, how the hell would I know a kid you went to school with?” he said. He was getting more talkative, I thought.

“Guess you wouldn’t. Hey, how’d you get your Trail name?” I asked, trying to keep the conversation going.

“What do you mean?”

“I don’t know. ‘J-Rod’ just seems like a strange Trail name.”

“It’s not a Trail name. It’s my real name. Jay Rod Johnson.”

He sounded pretty angry.

“Oh.”

I found a penny that had fallen into a crack between the floor and the wall of the shelter. Someone had let candle wax drip into the crack around the penny. I wondered if they had done it on purpose. I tried to get that penny out of that wax, and crack, for over an hour. I finally stopped when I realized that I didn’t want the penny anyway.

Raindrops danced on the picnic table before they jumped to the ground. Water fell from the overhang in a steady stream now. The tin of the roof was now rumbling. This was definitely a good day to stay in the sleeping bag.

“So,” he said. “Where were you born?”

--Felix J. McGillicuddy writes and hikes from the wilds of southern Indiana. A selection of what’s in his head can be found on his Internet home page <http://members.tripod.com/~Felixhikes/>. --
The thirty-third Biennial Meeting of the Appalachian Trail Conference will be held at Shippensburg University, Pennsylvania July 13–20, 2001. Host for the event is the Susquehanna Appalachian Trail Club. Co-hosts are the Allentown Hiking Club, Appalachian Mountain Club Delaware Valley Chapter, Batona Hiking Club, Cumberland Valley Appalachian Trail Club, Mountain Club of Maryland, and York Hiking Club.

The opening ceremony and general meeting will be held Saturday, July 14; the ATC business meeting will be held on Monday, July 16.

July's meeting will be the fifth time that Pennsylvania has hosted a biennial A.T. conference, and the second at Shippensburg University. The University is located on two hundred acres of rolling land in the Great Appalachian Valley of Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, and is convenient both to hikers on the Appalachian Trail and to nearby historic areas, including Gettysburg. With an enrollment of about 5,500 undergraduates and 1,000 graduate students, Shippensburg is a co-educational public university.

Housing for the conference will be in campus dormitories, or in tent camping and RV areas close to the Field House, near the center of all activities. Motels are available within one to three miles of the campus. All-you-can-eat meals will be served cafeteria-style in the dining hall, with a variety of ice cream every evening. Trail lunches will also be available.

Excursions currently being planned include the Johnstown Flood Museum and National Memorial, Altoona Railroad Museum and Horseshoe Curve, Gettysburg Battlefield, Hawk Mt. Sanctuary, Historic Hershey, Lancaster Amish areas, Pioneer Mining Tunnel, Broad Top Railroad Historic Area, bicycling in historic areas and canoeing on the Susquehanna River, and horseback riding and visits to cultural areas in the nearby riverside capital city, Harrisburg.

Workshops will be held on Trail maintenance and activities, conservation, wildlife, hiking, flora and fauna, map and compass, photography, geology, geology, survival, geology, orienteering, first aid and club issues.

Featured entertainment includes Irish singer and comedian Sheamus Kennedy, and 1995 U.S. National Scottish Fiddle Champion Elke Baker. Contra and folk dancing, musical events and slide shows will take place every evening. Hiking and Backpacking trips of various challenges will be led on the A.T. in southern and central Pennsylvania and Maryland, and popular local area trails will also be included.

Registration information will be available in the March issue of the Appalachian Trailway News, the ATC Web site and on A.T. club web sites.

Shippensburg is located three miles from Interstate 81 Exits 9 and 10, and from the Pennsylvania Turnpike Exit 15 (Blue Mountain). Washington County Regional Airport is thirty-five minutes away, in Hagerstown, Maryland. Harrisburg International Airport is one hour and fifteen minutes from campus.

Chair of the conference is Thyra Sperry, vice-chair for ATC’s mid-Atlantic region.