



# The Potomac Appalachian

The Newsletter of the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club  
118 Park Street, S.E., Vienna, VA 22180-4609  
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Happy New Year

## PATC Annual Dinner and Awards: A Time for Recognition

The club conducted its annual meeting on Nov. 9, 2004, at the Atrium in northern Virginia. The meeting was rather sparsely attended, but everyone seemed to enjoy the evening. The club elected its Executive Committee for the next two years. The only contested position, Supervisor of Facilities, was filled by Mel Merritt. The highlight of the event, in my opinion, was the recognition of the club's outstanding volunteers.

The winners of the Honorary Lifetime Membership Award were Gerhard Salinger and Bernie Stalman.

Gerhard was a member of our Executive Committee for a decade, and recently served as club treasurer. From my experience with Gerhard, I can tell you that he was always a voice of calm and reason in a group that can occasionally get contentious. In addition to his service on Excom, Gerhard was also a trail overseer.

Bernie, as many PATC Forum readers know, was district manager of side trails in the northern district of SNP. Bernie was a tireless trail worker, an excellent teacher, an inspiring crew leader, and great fun on a crew trip. My favorite memory of Bernie was awakening at the Meadows Cabin to find him wrestling with a huge wood rat, who was trying to abscond with one of his socks (the wood rat must've had some weird fetish). Bernie moved to Arizona in September with his wife Margie. His absence is a huge loss to the PATC trails program, but a boon to Arizona trails (he's already running Western crews).

Finally, the PATC Volunteers of the Year are Jon and Katherine Rindt. Jon is familiar to *PA* readers as the Trailhead Editor, but that is a tiny portion of Jon's volunteer contribution. He and Katherine head the PATC Cadillac Crew (a trail crew that schedules over 20 trips a year to a wide variety of trail, shelter, and cabin projects). Katherine has served on the

Computer Advisory Committee. Jon has served on Excom as supervisor of facilities. All of this, while maintaining the friendliest dispositions of any volunteers I've had the pleasure to work with.

Lee Sheaffer, president of the Northern Shenandoah Valley Chapter and now vice president of volunteers, had the honor of introducing the guest speaker for the evening, Scott Rimm-Hewitt, an AT thru-hiker who pulled off the hiking feat with a tuba in tow. His musical contribution was a bonus for the attendees, who might have been unlucky participants in past annual meetings where the audience doubled as the choir.

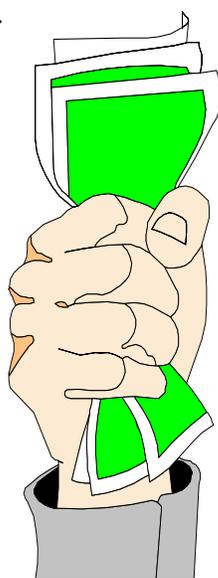
Congratulations to the new Excom, and to the recognized volunteers. □

—Kerry Snow

*See pages 2 and 4 for more on the meeting.*

## Like to Work With Money? Have Marketing, Public Affairs, Medical Skills? We Need You!

PATC needs a treasurer for 2005. The treasurer monitors the revenue and expenditures against an approved budget by signing checks, presents a monthly budget report to the council, manages the capital accounts, and is a member of the Endowment Committee. The treasurer is responsible for the annual audit and supervises preparation of the annual budget. The treasurer is a member of the Executive Committee and Council of PATC, which has two meetings per month to set policy. For more information, contact Tom Johnson ([president@patc.net](mailto:president@patc.net)).



Also needed is the chair of the Sales Committee to oversee the club's income streams of sales and cabin rentals.

Additionally, we have had vacancies in a number of important leadership roles, including: budget, public affairs, publications, and medical. Please consider giving of your time and talent to one of these vital club functions. Contact Lee Scheaffer ([thumpers@visuallink.com](mailto:thumpers@visuallink.com)) if you think you can help or would like more information about any of the listed positions. □

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## Jon and Katherine Rindt Selected as Volunteers of the Year

There is always a tingle of excitement when the top award is announced at the annual general membership meeting in November. The Volunteer of the Year Award, created in 1999, is selected by the Executive Committee, and it is given for extraordinary service to PATC. The criteria for the award, and the method of selection, make this award something special. Since there is only one such award per year, exclusivity increases its importance. And it is the only award that is kept absolutely secret until the moment of its announcement.

A hush fell over the room as the president, Tom Johnson, prepared to announce the name. But in this case it was not just one name, it was two. For the first time ever, the award was given to a husband and wife team.

Jon was nominated by retired President Walt Smith. There were eight other names in the running, but as the Executive Committee began discussing the nominations on Oct. 26, the accomplishments of the Cadillac Crew, and its leader, Jon Rindt, increasingly swayed the officers in that direction. That crew's extraordinary work ethic, and its major projects (which include work on the Ovoka relocation, Shockey's Knob, Billy Goat, Entry Run, Potomac Heritage, Northern Peaks, Massanutten, Vining Tract, Blackburn, and many others) have made the Cadillac Crew truly the Cadillac of trail crews. They have a reputation for tackling the toughest jobs in the club. But in discussing Jon's leadership, no one could remember Jon without Katherine. They had been the perfect team for years. It was so

hard to unravel their accomplishments that it seemed fitting to make a joint award. Each, of course, has a separate identity. Jon served for two years as the supervisor of facilities, while Katherine became the effective secretary of this year's Nominating Committee. But their example of togetherness on the trail is an inspiration to others.

They were asked to say a few words, but the award came as a complete surprise, and it took both of them a minute or two to recover. Eventually Jon took the microphone to say that he and Katherine felt honored to be in the company of such a distinguished list of people. Honored perhaps, but they should not feel overwhelmed. No one has given more to PATC than Jon and Katherine Rindt. □

—Tom Johnson

## Awards Presented at Annual Dinner

### Bud Hyland Award:

Mike Kennedy,

Chairman, Shenandoah Mountain Rescue Group

### Honorary Life Memberships:

Gerhard Salinger

Bernie Stalman

### Special Commendation Award:

James S. Smith,

District Forester, Buchanan State Forest

### 50-Year Members:

Betsy Abbe

John Christian

Gordon Fortney

Roger Jasperse

Robert King

Arthur Kriemelmeyer

Gerry Morgan

Thea Phinney

Theodore Schad

Virginia Webbert

Margaret Wettling

Charles Wettling

Edsel Worrell

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Contact list published twice annually in the PA.

## Tom's Trail Talk – The Year in Review – 2004

What's the number? Eighty-four thousand one hundred forty-one (84,141). That is the new number for 2004. The number for 2003 was 67,000.

"So what is all that?" I hear you asking. That is the number of hours reported by PATC volunteers last year. It represents our contribution to the community, to trails, to recreation. It also represents bragging rights, and can (if combined with a funding grant application) represent the "match" that an applicant is expected to provide to the funding organization. So it can be a very important number. It is the credibility of the club. It is what we do.

The National Park Service places a value of about \$16 per hour on unskilled volunteer labor. Granted that a lot of the hours represented skilled labor, just using the \$16 figure costs out the value of PATC's labor at \$1,346,256.

And so what did we do with all those hours? Almost half of it (35,653) was trail maintenance. Over 4,000 hours went to land management, almost 8,000 was expended by Trail Patrol, Charlie Graf reported more than 5,000 hours on cabins construction, Mel Merritt's cabins maintenance effort came to over 10,000, the Hiking Committee reported over 3,000 hours from their hike leaders. Those are some of the big numbers, and shows us where our efforts are concentrated.

Let's list the major accomplishments this past year. (I know I'll miss some things and apologize in advance if I miss your area of endeavor. It doesn't mean that I think it was unimportant, just that our newsletter editor has to place a limit on column length.)

1. A computerized cabins reservation system. We are still working out the kinks, but this promises to be a significant increase in efficiency and professionalism in the handling of what is essentially a professional task. It came about because of a huge commitment of time from Bill Steinhour, José Rojas, Shakun Ghare, and of course our staff member, Pat Fankhauser.

2. Along with this comes a new computer system that was installed at club Headquarters in December. Once again, José Rojas, the co-chair (with Steve Koeppen) of our new Information Systems Committee, made this happen. Hop Long, the vice president for operations, exercised senior leadership in that area.

3. PATC proceeded with a major land acquisition program in Pennsylvania to protect the Tuscarora Trail and to locate a cabin near that trail so that work crews have someplace to hang out. (Oh – it will also be rentable for recreation.) Jim Peterson headed this effort and spent the entire year arranging all those acquisitions.

4. Our newly appointed naturalist, Bob Pickett, has begun some major initiatives too numerous to enumerate. PATC is becoming significantly more environmentally conscious.

5. Another Tuscarora Trail initiative was the acquisition of the Hauvermale property that will protect a stretch of that trail and permit us to build a new shelter. Thanks to Tyler Williamson, Karen Brown, and many others for helping to secure this land and monitor the timber sale that was a landowner condition of the acquisition. Further south,

Walt Smith is working on acquiring walking rights to private lands that will take a mile of road walking off Rte. 50.

6. A new Leave No Trace trainers program was instituted by Georgeann Smale, our former secretary and now supervisor of membership.

7. Cabin and shelter construction has resulted in major additions to our collection of structures. Tulip Tree, Gypsy Spring, Andy Johnson, and Vining are all new to our cabins system. Rock Spring, which has been closed for renovation for several years, is now open, thanks to an \$80,000 National Park Service grant and an NPS crew that trained PATC volunteers in historic restoration on the rock work of that cabin. (It is a designated historic property.) Rosser Lamb and Johns Rest cabins continue to move toward completion and entry into the cabins reservation system. As for shelters, we added Shockey's Knob in Virginia and Big Mountain in Pennsylvania, and work is progressing on several others. Thanks to Charlie Graf's Cabins Construction Committee and to Frank Turk who heads the Shelter Committee.

8. In 2003 the National Park Service brought a large new tract into the AT corridor with the acquisition of the Ovoka property in Fauquier County, Virginia. In 2004 a PATC crew rerouted the AT onto the Ovoka tract to provide outstanding views to the east. Our volunteers of the year, Jon and Katherine Rindt, headed the trail relocation effort, and Lloyd Parriott was the district manager in charge.

9. PATC formed a new association with a Youth Conservation Corps group from the Anacostia area, through the auspices of an NPS ranger, Lavell Merritt. Liles Creighton has been working with this group on trail construction, and Chris Brunton hosted them for several days of trail building at Blackburn Trail Center.

PATC works with some wonderful government partners. In this respect, a good friend departed this year when Doug Morris, the superintendent of SNP, retired at the end of the year. However, he left behind a dedicated staff who are volunteer-friendly. □

—Tom Johnson

### CLUB 2005 CLOSING DATES

<i>Martin Luther King Jr. Day</i>	<i>Mon., 1/17</i>
<i>Presidents Day</i>	<i>Mon., 2/21</i>
<i>Memorial Day</i>	<i>Mon., 5/30</i>
<i>Independence Day</i>	<i>Mon., 7/04</i>
<i>Labor Day</i>	<i>Mon., 9/05</i>
<i>Columbus Day</i>	<i>Mon., 10/10</i>
<i>Vienna Halloween Parade</i>	<i>Wed., 10/26</i>
<i>Veterans Day</i>	<i>Fri., 11/11</i>
<i>Thanksgiving Holiday</i>	<i>Thurs.-Fri., 11/24-25</i>
<i>Christmas/Winter Break</i>	<i>Fri., 12/23-31</i>

## PATC 2004 Service Award Recipients

Jack Adams	Ric Francke	Kenneth Lyons	John Shannon
Bruce Agnew	Ray Galles	Lloyd MacAskill	Linda Shannon-Beaver
Terry Allen	Joe Gareri	Cindy Majewski	Kathy Sharp
Mark Anderson	Dave Garman	Chris Mangold	Steve Sharp
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Larry Baldwin	Bruce Glendening	Mickey McDermott	Walt M. Smith
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Nancy Batiste	Roger Guyett	Anniell Miller	Kerry Snow
Al Black	Frank Haas	Peter Muschamp	Bernie Stalman
Jeffrey Bolognese	James Hamlin	David Nebhut	James Stauch
Jim Booker	Nancy Hammond	Susan Nelson	William Steinhour
Jerry Bortner	Kisun Han	Carol Niedzialek	Carol Stielper
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Sarah Brion	John Hebbe	Rhett Orndorff	Sybille Stromberg
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Pete Brown	Harry Henkel	Lloyd Parriott	James Tomlin
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Chris Brunton	Andy Hiltz	Steve Paul	Frank Turk
John Buchheit	Mark Hingston	Richard (Dick) Peacock	Dave Vogel
Richard Canter	Renee Hoffman	Jeff Percy	George Walters
Laura Cheek Buchheit	Mark Holland	Steve Pebley	Thann Ward
Karen Crawford	Dan Holmes	William Pepelko	Jennifer Ward
Liles Creighton	Dave House	Sam Perdue	Heather Warren
Cathie Cummins	Greg Howell	James Peterson	Holly Wheeler
Dave Fellers	Tim Hupp	Robert W. Pickett	Don H. White
Stephen Dempsey	Christine Iffrig	David W. Pierce	David L. White
Lynn Dempsey	George Ivey	Catherine Pipan	Ron Wiley
Dennis DeSilvey	Tom R. Johnson	Rick Portal	Cliff Willey
S. V. Dove	Carl (Bill) Jones	Myrl Powell	Ken Williams
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Mal Fordham	Thomas Lupp	George Schubert	
Jenifer Foster	Alice Lynch	Clyde Seibert	

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 Ruth Blackburn  
 Bud Hyland  
 Harry Lawson  
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 Jack Pertsch  
 Bettyanne Rusen

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## **Membership/Cabins**

Patricia Fankhauser  
5696 Singletree Dr.  
Frederick, MD 21701  
(h): 301/631-0488  
(w): 703/242-0693 ext. 17  
pfankhauser@patc.net

## **PATC GENERAL**

### **FAX:**

703/242-0968

### **24-HOUR**

### **ACTIVITIES TAPE:**

703/242-0965

### **WEBSITE**

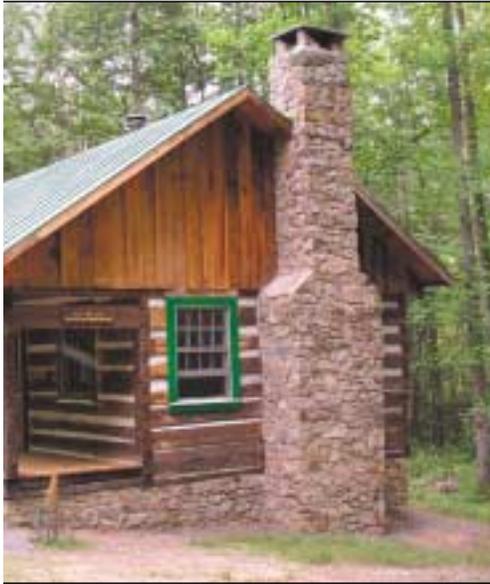
Patc.net

### **E-MAIL**

info@patc.net

## *Our Gift to you!*

Go to [www.patc.net/resources/pa/](http://www.patc.net/resources/pa/) for your Cabins calendar for 2005. This one-page calendar features color photos of many of our newest cabins in the rental system — along with a number of all-time favorites. You may download this calendar to use on your computer — or print a copy for reference. Or, take this file to your local printer for a one-of-a-kind, glossy color calendar.



## The Potomac Appalachian Trail Club's Cabins 2004

This handsome full-color book (a "first" for PATC) presents complete and up-to-date descriptions and rates for all the club's rental cabins in Pennsylvania, Maryland, West Virginia, and Virginia, including four cabins added to the rental system since the last published edition in 2001. Our system now includes 12 cabins available to the general public, and 20 that are rented only to club members. You'll find the history of each cabin and "things to do" at each site, as well as the latest rental procedures and policies. For an overview of the cabins please visit our cabin rental page on the Web at [www.patc.net/activities/cabins/](http://www.patc.net/activities/cabins/). For full details, order this attractive new edition of the guide and have it handy when making reservations. To purchase a copy of this guide call 703/242-0315 ext. 19, or go online at [www.patc.net/store/PC280.htm](http://www.patc.net/store/PC280.htm).

48 pages, Cost: \$5.20 (member price) \$6.50 (non-members)



THE POTOMAC APPALACHIAN TRAIL CLUB'S

### Cabins

2004

## Volunteers Appointed November and December

### Appointed in November

Emeline Otey . . . . . Tuscarora Trail - Doll Ridge to Rock Marker  
 Eugene Groshong . . . . . Co overseer - Corbin Mountain Trail  
 Jennifer & Joe Palaskey . . . . . Furnace Mountain Trail [upper]  
 Frank Maphis . . . . . Tuscarora Trail - US 522 to Gore  
 Steve Sharp & Walt Smith . . . . . Tuscarora Trail - Southern rock field to power line,  
 Frye Path, Laurel Path, Rock Cave and Overlook

### Appointed in December

Jim McManus (Co-overseer) . . . . . Shockey Knob Shelter  
 Jeff Seal (Co-overseer) . . . . . Shockey Knob Shelter  
 Rich McDonough . . . . . Jones Mt. Trail - between Bear Church and Cat Knob  
 Kisun Han . . . . . Mill Prong Trail  
 Debra & William Ritt . . . Bull Run-Occoquan Trail - Rte. 28 Parking to Little Rocky Run  
 Bill Tyler . . . . . Calf Mountain Shelter Trail  
 John Campagna . . . . . Potomac Heritage Trail  
 George Schubert . . . . . AT - Stony Man Overlook to Passamaquoddy Trail

### All New Trails

Steve Weiss . . . . . Boundary Trail  
 Dave Pugh . . . . . Conley-Morris Trail  
 Doug Ford . . . . . Vining Trail  
 Jim Denham . . . . . Boxwood Spring Trail  
 Amy Crumpton . . . . . Muttontop Trail  
 Ken Williams . . . . . Cliff Trail  
 Marilynn Stone . . . . . Chimney Trail  
 Steve & Kathy Sharp . . . . . Howze Camp Trail  
 Karen Brown . . . . . Spruce Pine Hollow Trail  
 George Schubert . . . . . Eagle Nest Mountain Trail

Richard Vetland . . . . . CCC Road  
 Eric Carlson . . . . . Conley-Wineberry Trail  
 Paul Roberts . . . . . Boxwood Trail  
 Lauren Lang . . . . . Mountain Laurel Trail  
 Karen Pugh . . . . . Elijah's Trail  
 Pam Williams . . . . . Meadow Trail  
 Andy Johnson . . . . . Andy's Overlook Trail  
 Leonard Keifer . . . . . Bartman Trail  
 George Schubert . . . . . White Knob Trail

## A New Wave Of Wilderness Proposals Part I

More wild lands in our region could receive permanent protection in the next couple of years. Citizen groups in Virginia, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania have developed a new round of wilderness proposals for roadless areas of the national forests. These volunteer groups welcome our interest and support, to help protect wild places we know and love.

The new wilderness proposals make a cheering counterpoint to recent news that the U.S. Department of Agriculture wants to repeal the Roadless Area Conservation Rule, a 2001 measure that bars logging and roads from roadless areas of the national forests. While temporary protective categories are in effect in parts of our nearby forests, we know from experience that administrative protections can be rescinded.

Decisions in the 1930s and 1940s repealing protection led conservation advocates such as Benton MacKaye, considered the father of the Appalachian Trail, to begin working for protection that would be more permanent. This led Congress to pass the Wilderness Act, whose 40th anniversary we celebrated in September.

When Congress designates an area as wilderness, agency officials no longer have the authority to allow logging or development, and they are strengthened in their role as guardians. We citizens who know wild places also have our role under the Wilderness Act. It is to educate our government officials about those areas that are still wild and deserving of protection as wilderness.

For further information: Friends of Allegheny Wilderness, [www.pawild.org](http://www.pawild.org) (E-mail to [kjohnson@pawild.org](mailto:kjohnson@pawild.org), postal mail to 220 Center Street, Warren, PA 16365) □

— George Alderson,  
[george7096@comcast.net](mailto:george7096@comcast.net)

*George Alderson participated in PATC's wilderness study of Shenandoah NP in 1966, leading field studies of the Pass Mountain – Thornton Hollow area. He is retired from a career with the US Bureau of Land Management and U.S. EPA.*

## A Weekend in the Park With Shenandoah Mountain Rescue Group

During the last three weekends of October, the Shenandoah Mountain Rescue Group (SMRG) was invited to support the ranger staff at SNP. When the park gets busy – as expected during prime leaf-viewing season – SMRG is able to provide rapid response for first aid, more serious medical incidents, backcountry rescues, and searches for missing hikers. These “Weekends in the Park” are part of SMRG’s ongoing effort to assist the park with hiker safety.

The first and third weekends had nice weather, with plenty of visitors out and about, so we responded to several incidents each weekend. The middle weekend was foggy and rainy except for a short break Saturday afternoon – the time we received our only call.

Our first Weekend in the park began early. On the morning of Oct. 16, SMRG members responded to treat a boy who had fallen down a rocky slope near the Big Meadows campground. The boy was treated for an apparent broken leg, and his evacuation required one belay – a technique using a rope attached to the litter (a backcountry stretcher of sorts) to provide safety while litter bearers carry the litter up or down slope. Next, SMRG and park resources were stretched thin to cover two simultaneous incidents facing the rangers. A woman had apparently fainted and fallen on the South River Falls Trail. A SMRG Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) provided first-response care, and the hiker was evacuated by ranger vehicle. At the same time, near Swift Run Gap, SMRG members helped treat a woman in cardiac arrest. She was delivered by ambulance to a Medevac helicopter waiting at Swift Run Gap. On Sunday, SMRG helped search for a missing girl separated from her parents on White Oak Canyon Trail. She was reunited with her parents before SMRG arrived. And the weekend ended with a short search for three missing foreign diplomats who had been caught out on Hawksbill Mountain Trail after dark without adequate equipment or warm clothing. A ranger-led team located the diplomats.

SMRG’s last weekend in the park – Halloween weekend – was beautiful and relatively calm. On Saturday morning, we responded to a report that a woman hiking the White Oak Canyon Trail had fallen and appeared to have broken her wrist. Two

SMRG members, one an EMT, drove down the Old Rag fire road to the base of the White Oak trailhead and started up the trail. A half-mile up the trail, the team reached the patient. She had made a sling of an old sweat-shirt and was bearing the pain well. The team helped to further stabilize the injury, provided cold packs, and escorted the hiker down to the parking lot. SMRG also treated a couple of minor ankle injuries in the Big Meadows and Skyland areas and helped the park rangers manage a few “bear jams” on Skyline Drive.

### Evacuation at Old Rag

The second weekend saw only one response, but it proved memorable. The length of the evacuation and its technical elements combined to make this the most challenging evacuation mission that most of us had ever experienced. Responding were 11 park personnel and nine SMRG members, who carried out a 10-hour evacuation off the Ridge Trail on Old Rag Mountain.

At 2:30 in the afternoon on Saturday, Oct. 23, we heard initial radio reports of an injured hiker on Old Rag. A 40-something woman hiking with her husband, son, and son’s friend had seriously injured her knee. A two-person ranger team, one of whom was an EMT, was responding. Anticipating a difficult backcountry evacuation, the Park Service initiated a full rescue effort, deploying our SMRG team to the trailhead of Old Rag. By 4:15 p.m., our team leader and an EMT carrying a small supply of medical gear headed up the hill quickly.

See SMRG, page 15

### ATC Name Change

On the Saturday before Thanksgiving, the Appalachian Trail Conference was voted out of existence by its Board of Managers!

Actually - the name is being changed to the Appalachian Trail Conservancy. The ATC is now more involved in land conservation than in trail building, and thus, has decided that a name change is in order. You can read more about this historic change at:

[www.appalachiantrail.org/about/namechange.html](http://www.appalachiantrail.org/about/namechange.html)

## 38 Degrees North, 77 Degrees West

The Savage Lakes sit above 12,000 feet, deep in Colorado's Roaring Fork Valley in the Hunter Frying Pan Wilderness. The hike into the first lake is only two miles but the trail gains elevation at a rate of 1,000 feet per mile, which makes it a great weekend hike or the perfect place for a base camp for exploring the upper lake and the peak ridge. Back home after my first year of college, I headed to the lakes with a friend for a long weekend in the backcountry.

On the night before the trip Rachel and I went grocery shopping and loaded up the panniers with our camping equipment. We got an early start the next day, pulling out of my driveway with the two intact llamas, Jackson and J.P., fighting and spitting and kicking in the bed of the truck, causing the '76 sidestep Chevy pickup to swing precariously back and forth as I drove it down our road. Once we got out of sight of the herd females, however, the two llamas in the back of the pickup settled down, their chests heaving from the exertion of trying to kill each other in such a confined space. Their mouths hung open as they panted, the remnants of green spit dripping from their bottom lips.

Once the fighting in the bed of the truck had stopped and Rachel and I didn't have to worry about the animals flipping the top-heavy pickup, we could enjoy the pristine views of the valley through the cab's windows. The road hugged the northern bank of the

Frying Pan River all the way to the trailhead, and the morning sun glinted off its water.

Everything went smoothly at the trailhead; we unloaded the llamas and gear and were on the trail before noon. We took the steep hike at a steady pace and made good time, not seeing another soul on the trail until we neared the lakes. A lone fisherman, having spent the day casting for trout, was on his way down with a basket full of fish. He stopped for a short chat and then headed out; we had the lake to ourselves for the entire weekend.

Rain clouds started gathering above the peaks; we tied out the llamas and set up camp with eyes on the sky. Fortunately, the rain held off and we were able to build a fire for dinner. After cleaning up the dishes, we boiled water for hot chocolate and sat on logs, staring into the fire and listening to it snap in the cool air. Rachel looked up from the fire at one point and I watched her eyes go wide as she stared at something over my left shoulder. I turned slowly and squinted into the dark. As my eyes adjusted to the night, a five-point elk appeared piece-by-piece not two yards from our fire. The fire's light turned his eyes a burning red. He stood calmly, watching us with unaffected curiosity, and Rachel and I stared back, transfixed at his size and the reach of his antlers. A few minutes passed as we watched each other, the fire popping and throwing shadows across his shape, and then

See *Alexa*, page 13



### Hiker's Notebook

**Common Name:** Sassafras (named in the 16th century by the Spanish botanist Nicholas Monardes as a corruption of saxifrage, from saxum, stone and frangere, fracture, a plant that is found in rock crevices.)

**Scientific Name:** *Sassafras albidum* (*species albidum* is Latin for whitish)

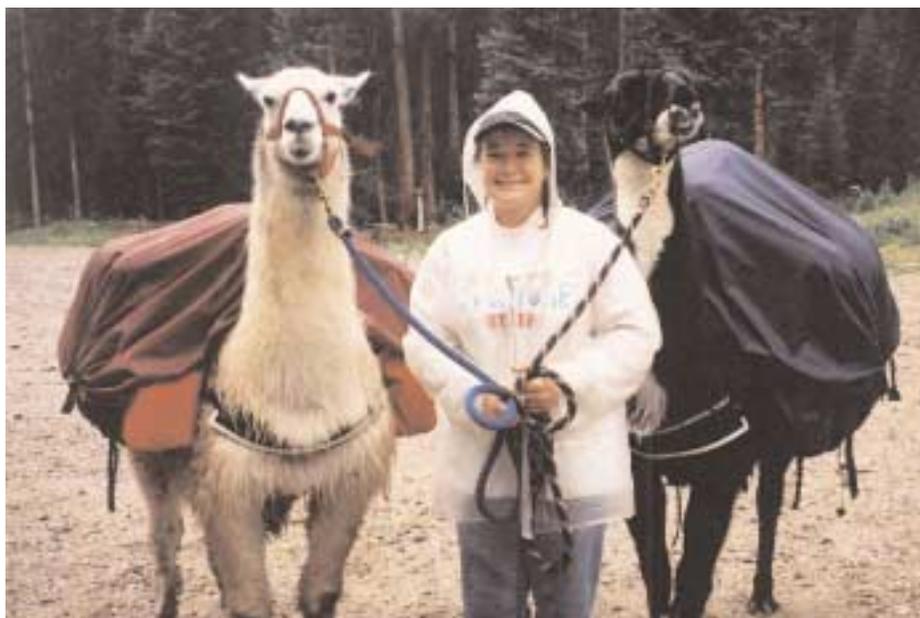
**Potpourri:** The root bark of sassafras was used by Native Americans in Florida to treat fever, rheumatism and as a general tonic. When the Spanish came to Florida, they mistook the fragrant sassafras for cinnamon (it is still sometimes called cinnamon tree) and learned of its reputed curative powers. It became a major export to Europe, second only to tobacco, and sassafras tea became a fashionable beverage. According to the doctrine of signatures, the phallic shape of the leaves suggested use as a treatment for syphilis. Consequently, it lost respectability and declined as an important export.

Sassafras bark and root produce a heavy, volatile oil called safrole which is the source of its pleasant taste and aroma. The oil has been used in the manufacture of perfume and soap for its aromatic properties and in the manufacture toothpaste and chewing gum for its taste. The original flavoring for root beer is the oil of the sassafras root. It was also employed for numerous medicinal purposes, particularly skin problems such as eczema.

Research conducted in the 1960s revealed that safrole caused cancer in laboratory rats. Accordingly, sassafras bark and oil were banned by the FDA for flavoring or food additives. Additional research revealed that, while safrole has some properties that reduce skin irritation, it has no other significant medicinal benefit. □

—William Needham

Visit the Hiker's Notebook Web site at:  
[www.mwrop.org/W\\_Needham/h\\_notebook.html](http://www.mwrop.org/W_Needham/h_notebook.html)



Jackson, Rachel, and J.P. stand in the rain after the hike out of the Savage Lakes in Colorado's Roaring Fork Valley.

## Chapters

### Charlottesville Chapter

The Charlottesville Chapter hikes every Saturday; summer, winter, and in between. Hikes are usually 8 to 10 miles. We usually maintain trails on the last Saturday of the month. Meet at Sprint parking lot, 2307 Hydraulic Road, at 9:00 a.m., with food and water for the day. The majority of hikes are in the southern and central districts of Shenandoah National Park, with some in the north district and in George Washington National Forest. Our Chapter hikes are posted at [www.patc.net/chapters/char/hikes.html](http://www.patc.net/chapters/char/hikes.html). INFO: Jere Bidwell 434/295-2143 or John Shannon 434/293-2953.

### North Chapter

The North Chapter of PATC conducts monthly trail work trips on the Maryland and Pennsylvania sections of the AT and on the Pennsylvania sections of the Tuscarora Trail. We also lead hikes on these and other trails. Maryland AT work trips are generally held on the first and third Saturdays – contact Nancy Hammond ([mdtrail@yahoo.com](mailto:mdtrail@yahoo.com)) 301/739-0442 for information. Pennsylvania work trips are generally held on the AT on the first Saturday and on the Tuscarora on the third Saturday – contact Pete Brown ([peter.brown4@worldnet.att.net](mailto:peter.brown4@worldnet.att.net)) 410/343-1140. Pennsylvania AT work trips also include an optional Saturday evening dinner at the Gypsy Spring cabin. For information on upcoming hikes, contact Chris Firme ([bncfirme@innernet.net](mailto:bncfirme@innernet.net)) 717/765-4833. For general chapter information, contact chapter president Pete Brown or visit the North Chapter [home page](http://www.patc.net/chapters/north/) ([www.patc.net/chapters/north/](http://www.patc.net/chapters/north/)).

### Northern Shenandoah Valley Chapter

The Northern Shenandoah Valley Chapter sponsors hikes in national and state parks and forests in the Shenandoah Valley vicinity, open to the public, on a monthly basis except during the winter. Hikes are posted in the Forecast. Other activities are in the NSV Chapter Newsletter. For further information contact Lee Sheaffer, ([thumpers@visuallink.com](mailto:thumpers@visuallink.com)) 540/955-0736.

### Southern Shenandoah Valley Chapter

See [www.ssvc.org](http://www.ssvc.org) or the one linked to the PATC Web site for descriptions of hikes and work trips. We usually hike in the southern and central districts of the SNP and in the GWNF. Contact the listed hike leader for information about a specific event, or contact Michael Seth 540/438-1301.

### West Virginia Chapter

The West Virginia Chapter meets twice a year in March and September. The Chapter maintains a section of the Black Locust circuit trail in Gambrill State Park near Frederick, Md. Work trips and hikes are usually scheduled monthly from March through December. We also lead overnight weekend trips for day hikes or backpacking. All activities are listed in the PA Forecast. For further information contact Dave Jordahl ([wvpatc@hotmail.com](mailto:wvpatc@hotmail.com)) 304/876-7062 (evenings) or 240/777-7741 (days).

### Ski Touring Section

The Ski Touring Section has served since 1974 to introduce Washington area residents to cross-country skiing and to provide cross-country skiing opportunities to experienced skiers. The Section sponsors winter weekend ski trips for all levels of skiers to nearby mountains in Maryland, West Virginia and Pennsylvania, as well as periodic social events year round. INFO: Bert Finkelstein ([bertf@erols.com](mailto:bertf@erols.com)) 703/715-8534.

### Mountaineering Section

We're a diverse group of local Washington, DC area climbers. Young and old, male and female, crag rat, sport climber, and alpinist, active and armchair types – we all enjoy climbing in its many varieties. We also share common interests in promoting safe climbing, conserving the outdoors, developing new climbers' skills, representing the Washington area climbing community, and having fun! We provide instruction for those wanting to learn the basics – we're not a school, but we can get you started. We go climbing, either locally or further afield, nearly every weekend. In the winter we organize trips to the Ice Festivals in the Adirondacks and the White Mountains for beginning and

advanced ice climbers. For further information contact Andy Britton, ([tallandyb@aol.com](mailto:tallandyb@aol.com)) 703/622-1920, or Mack Muir ([MackMuir@edisaurus.com](mailto:MackMuir@edisaurus.com)).

### PATC Hikes

PATC offers organized hikes appealing to the diverse interests of our members. There are K-9 Hikes, which invite you to bring your favorite dog; Family Hikes tailored to kids; Natural History Hikes stalking the fascinating but often elusive flora and fauna of the region; hikes featuring varying levels of difficulty with the Easy Hikers, In-Between Hikers, and Vigorous Hikers; Birding Hikes with experts to help sight and identify our avian neighbors; Historical Hikes tracking little-known structures in Shenandoah National Park; Series Hikes tracing the entire length of the Tuscarora Trail or the trails of Pennsylvania, section by section; Backpacking Hikes traversing the tracts of West Virginia and Southern Virginia; hikes scheduled for weekends; ones scheduled for weekdays; Geology Hikes led by experts from the Smithsonian focused on the unique stratigraphy of our area; Mushroom Hikes with mycologists; Waterfall Hikes to beat the summer heat; and Outreach Hikes to get together with the members of area groups like the Sierra Club or the Congressional Hikers. That is just to name a few. Check out the Forecast calendar and hear updates on the weekly tape (703/242-0965).

### Other Clubs' Hikes

Capital ([www.capitalhikingclub.org](http://www.capitalhikingclub.org)) and Wanderbirds ([www.wanderbirds.org](http://www.wanderbirds.org)) hike on Saturdays and Sundays, traveling by bus and leaving from downtown, with suburban stops as well. Center Club, Northern Virginia Hiking Club and Sierra Club hike on both Saturdays and Sundays using carpools, which often leave from a suburban Metro stop. Schedules are available at PATC Headquarters and are published in area newspapers on Fridays. The schedule of West Virginia Highland Conservancy outings in the Monongahela National Forest and surrounding areas is on their web site at [www.vvhighlands.org](http://www.vvhighlands.org).

## KEY to Forecast Activities

All events are marked for easy identification. Late changes or cancellations are listed on the weekly information tape (703/242-0965), which is updated on Sunday evening for the following seven days. The Forecast can also be found on PATC's Web site at [www.patc.net/activities/forecast.html](http://www.patc.net/activities/forecast.html).

-  Hiking Trips
-  Backpacking Trips
-  Trail Work Trips
-  Cabin/Shelter Work Trips
-  Ski Trips
-  Special Events
-  Meetings
-  Classes
-  K9 Trail Blazers (dogs permitted)

**Note to all hike leaders:** Please ask non-members on your hike if they would like to join PATC, then get names and addresses so a club volunteer can send them information packets. Thanks!

## Meetings

### Meetings

Meetings are held at PATC HQ, 118 Park Street, S.E., Vienna, Va., unless otherwise noted.

### New Members (PATC) – First Wednesday

7:30 p.m. Curious about the club? Want to learn more? The best way is to attend a New Members meeting (but you don't have to be new to qualify). Attend the meeting and find the mysteries of PATC revealed in full. Refreshments will be served. Directions to PATC: Take Rt. 123 into Vienna, Va., and turn east on Park St. (Rt.675) to 118 Park St. on your left. INFO: Jane Thompson 301/349-2496.

### Mountaineering Section – Second Wednesday

8:00 p.m. – We meet every month unless noted in the Forecast. INFO: Mack Muir ([MackMuir@edisaurus.com](mailto:MackMuir@edisaurus.com)) 703/960-1697 or PATC's Web site: [www.patc.net/chapters/mtn Sect](http://www.patc.net/chapters/mtn Sect).

### Shenandoah Mountain Rescue Group

Business meeting - Last Tuesday of each month, 7:30 p.m. INFO: Doug Sigman ([join@smrg.org](mailto:join@smrg.org)), 703/255-5034, or [www.smrg.org](http://www.smrg.org).

### PATC Council – Second Tuesday

The council meets at 7:00 p.m. sharp. The PATC Council meets every month to conduct business of the club and once a year for a dinner meeting. All members are always welcome. Come see how we make decisions about your club. INFO: Wilson Riley ([wriley@patc.net](mailto:wriley@patc.net)) 703/242-0693 x11.

### Trail Patrol – First Tuesday

7:30 p.m. Trail Patrol volunteers are PATC's goodwill trail ambassadors to the hiking public. They provide a visible, reassuring presence on the trails, and strive to educate the public on good hiking practices, minimum impact hiking, and camping ethics. Patrol members are trained in land navigation, emergency procedures, radio communications, and personal equipment. All Trail Patrol volunteers are also expected to become certified in a recognized basic first aid course. Some equipment and uniform items are provided upon completion of training. INFO: Holly Wheeler ([trailpatrol@patc.net](mailto:trailpatrol@patc.net)) 301/486-1598, or see our section in PATC's Web site: [www.patc.net/volunteer/trailpatrol](http://www.patc.net/volunteer/trailpatrol).

## JANUARY

**1 (Saturday)****DEADLINE - February Potomac Appalachian Material due to editors 5:00 p.m.**

All items for the next issue of the newsletter due. Send Forecast events to PA-Forecast@patc.net and all other articles to the editor at lindashannonb@mac.com. NOTE: Do not send photos or articles to headquarters. E-mail for address.

**4 (Tuesday)****HIKE - Family Hike  
Leesburg, VA**

Start the new year by getting out into nature, and come explore wildlife at the beautiful Rust Sanctuary. We will hike down to a pond, through the woods, and to an open meadow. This kid-paced circuit hike will be about 1.5 miles long. The trail is jogging-stroller passable. INFO: Lauren Lang (at94L@netzero.com) 571/242-3950.

**4 (Tuesday)****HIKE - Vigorous Hikers****North District, Shenandoah National Park, VA**

Ascend Jordan River to Mt. Marshall Trail, to Jenkins Gap, then AT south to Bluff Trail with a side trip down Big Devil's Stairs overlook, returning on Jordan River Trail. About 17 miles and 3000 ft. climb. INFO: Chris Nolen (chrishiker@erols.com) 301/469-8931.

**4 (Tuesday)****MEETING - Trail Patrol, 7:30 p.m.****5 (Wednesday)****CLASS - Winter Backpacking (REI)  
Bailey's Crossroads, VA**

7:30 p.m. Think about backpacking and warm weather usually comes to mind. Summer breezes, shorts and a light shirt, a smaller, lighter pack to carry. It's true, more gear and food are essential to stay warm and sheltered, but good planning and gear selection can reduce your load. And reducing your load can not only mean more fun, but an increase in safety and a decrease in fatigue as well. REI's resident AT thru-hiker, Brian Chenoweth, will share his experience gained from long-distance hiking and discuss and demonstrate ways and means to increase your winter skills and fun. INFO: Mark Nelson (mnelson@rei.com) 703/379-9400.

**5 (Wednesday)****HIKE - Easy Hikers  
Alexandria, VA**

Starting from the Belle Haven Picnic area south of Alexandria, the Easy Hikers will walk on the paved bicycle path, the Dyke Marsh nature trail, and visit the Jones Point lighthouse to get a very upclose view of the Wilson Bridge construction. Meet at 10:15 a.m. and bring lunch and water and binoculars for birding if you wish. To reach the picnic area, take the G. Washington parkway south through Alexandria. The picnic area is about 1/2 mile beyond Alexandria on the left. Or exit the Beltway (I-495) at Exit 1, take US 1 North to Franklin St, (first light) turn right to Washington St, turn right and go about 1 mile to picnic area on left. INFO: Shirley Rettig 703/836-0147.

**5 (Wednesday)****HIKE - Midweek Hikers****Location to be determined**

The PATC Midweek Hikers carpool each Wednesday from the Washington, DC area to various trailheads. Hikes are at a moderate pace and about 8 to 12 miles in length with varied elevations. Current information, including meeting place, time, leader's

name and phone number, and a detailed description of the hike are available on the PATC Activities Recording: 703/242-0965.

**5 (Wednesday)****MEETING - New Members (PATC), 7:30 p.m.****8 (Saturday)****HIKE - Natural History Hike****Central District, Shenandoah National Park, VA**

Bob Pickett leads a bushwhacking adventure along trails and former roads of Corbin and Thoroughfare Mountains in search of mountain residences. Participants will be given a copy of a 1928 USGS map as we scramble through this rough region. On the positive side, we will not have to cross Hughes River or Brokenback Creeks, thus making this a little more practical for winter exploration. This will be a moderately strenuous hike, largely dependent on soil and weather conditions of the day. Eight miles of hiking, with most of it off-trail are proposed. INFO: Bob Pickett 301/681-1511.

**11 (Tuesday)****CLASS - Intro to GPS (REI)****Fairfax, VA**

7:00 p.m. Join REI for an overview of the features and functions of GPS units, and how to choose a model based on your intended activities. INFO: Mark Nelson (mnelson@rei.com) 703/379-9400.

**11 (Tuesday)****HIKE - Vigorous Hikers****Triangle, VA**

Prince William Forest. This will be a 19-mile circuit hike in Prince William Forest, beside the streams and waterfalls of this National Park with just a scattering of ups and downs. Meet at the park Visitor Center at 8:30 a.m. or check with Chris Nolen (301/469-8931) for carpooling. INFO: Cliff Noyes 540/373-8267.

**11 (Tuesday)****MEETING - PATC Council, 7:00 p.m.****12 (Wednesday)****CLASS - Great Snowshoe Adventures (REI)****Bailey's Crossroads, VA**

7:30 p.m. Snowshoeing is the fastest growing winter sport, and you can find great snowshoeing within 4 hours of DC. Local photographer and musher, Ed Neville will reveal some of his favorite Appalachian snowshoe spots, and provide advice on stride, climbing, descending and turns. INFO: Mark Nelson (mnelson@rei.com) 703/379-9400.

**12 (Wednesday)****HIKE - Easy Hikers****Springfield, VA**

The Easy Hikers will hike a mostly level five-mile circuit hike around Lake Accotink. Meet at the first parking lot on left in Wakefield Park at 10:15 a.m. Bring water. Lunch will be at a local restaurant. Directions to Wakefield Park: Leave the Beltway (I-495) at Exit 54-A (Braddock Road). Go west on Braddock Road and turn right at the park entrance about 100 yards beyond the beltway. Hike canceled if Fairfax County schools are delayed or closed due to weather. INFO: Bill Burnett (burn2154@earthlink.net) 703/569-2154.

**12 (Wednesday)****HIKE - Midweek Hikers****Location to be determined**

See Jan. 5 event for more information.

**12 (Wednesday)****MEETING - Mountaineering Section, 8:00 p.m.****13 (Thursday)****CLASS - Intro to GPS (REI)****College Park, MD**

7:00 p.m. Join REI for an overview of the features and functions of GPS units, and how to choose a model based on your intended activities. We'll review the features, accuracy, batteries, water and shock resistance. We'll also discuss compatible mapping and waypoint management software. INFO: Mark Nelson (mnelson@rei.com) 703/379-9400.

**15 (Saturday)****HIKE - Waterfall and Wild Flower Series****Central District, Shenandoah National Park, VA**

Providing the weather has been cold enough to form ice we will do a ten or more mile circuit hike to include about a mile of bushwhacking up White Oak Canyon to get a close-up view of the falls and cascades in winter. Other trails could include the AT, Old Rag Fire Road, Cedar Run and Hawksbill depending on the time and weather. If the weather has been warm we may seek out another falls. PATC Map 10. Meet at the Oaktown Shopping Center parking lot at 7:30 a.m. INFO: Jack Thorsen (thorsen4@Juno.com) 703/339-6716 or William Needham (Needham82@AOL.COM) 410/884-9127.

**18 (Tuesday)****HIKE - Family Hike  
Sterling, VA**

Bundle up your children and come explore beautiful Claude Moore Park. We will hike the white-blazed Little Stony Mountain Trail. This circuit trail is 3 miles long, but can easily be shortened. We will meet in the Vestal's Gap Road Parking lot by the Visitor's Center. After the hike we will check out the turtles, puzzles, and learning activities in their great Visitor's Center. INFO: Lauren Lang (at94L@netzero.com) 571/242-3950.

**18 (Tuesday)****HIKE - Vigorous Hikers  
Front Royal, VA**

We'll hike on Massanutten Mountain, in George Washington National Forest, VA. Bring back memories of past Dogwood Events. Ascend Tuscarora Trail over Green Mountain, then down to Powell Ft. Camp and up Three Top Mountain to Signal Knob. About 15 miles and 3500 ft. climb. INFO: Chris Nolen (chrishiker@erols.com) 301/469-8931.

**19 (Wednesday)****CLASS - Down the Amazon (REI)****Bailey's Crossroads, VA**

7:30 p.m. From its source at the crest of the Andes, the Amazon gathers more volume on its course to the Atlantic than the Nile, Yangtze and Mississippi combined. The Amazon basin holds more biologic and hydrologic diversity than any other watershed on the planet. Join explorer Dr. Glenn Geelhoed, for an evening's eco-voyage among macaws, sloths, pink river dolphins, anacondas and howler monkeys. Learn the native cultures and the forces of change in Amazonia. INFO: Mark Nelson (mnelson@rei.com) 703/379-9400.

**19 (Wednesday)****CLASS - Snowshoeing 101 (REI)****College Park, MD**

7:00 p.m. For many people, snowshoes still bring to mind large wooden frames with rawhide decking, unwieldy objects that fit better over a fireplace than on one's feet. Today's snowshoes are lightweight and durable, strap securely to practically any boots, and allow you to hike on deep snow or climb steep

# FORECAST

slopes! And, snowshoeing is FUN! Bring your own snowshoes if you have them. We'll go over the basics and give you a chance to put them on and walk around. INFO: Mark Nelson (mnelson@rei.com) 703/379-9400.

## 19 (Wednesday) HIKE - Easy Hikers Vienna, VA

We'll hike about 4 miles along the W&OD Trail and in Tamarack Park. Meet at the Clarks Crossing Park parking lot at 10:15 a.m. Bring water. Lunch after the walk will be at a restaurant. Hike will be canceled if the Fairfax County Public Schools are closed due to inclement weather. INFO: Sue King 703/356-6659.

## 19 (Wednesday) HIKE - Midweek Hikers Location to be determined

See Jan. 5 event for more information.

## 20 (Thursday) CLASS - Snowshoeing 101 (REI) Rockville, MD

7:00 p.m. For many people, snowshoes still bring to mind large wooden frames with rawhide decking, unwieldy objects that fit better over a fireplace than on one's feet. Today's snowshoes are lightweight and durable, strap securely to practically any boots, and allow you to hike on deep snow or climb steep slopes! And, snowshoeing is FUN! Bring your own snowshoes if you have them. We'll go over the basics and give you a chance to put them on and walk around. At REI's new store. INFO: Mark Nelson (mnelson@rei.com) 703/379-9400.

## 22 - 23 (Saturday - Sunday) CLASS - CPR and First Aid Vienna, VA

The Trail Patrol is hosting a CPR and First Aid course. The two-day course covers American Heart Association Adult, Child, and Infant CPR and First Aid. The students will learn basic first aid skills with hands on time. Books and certifications are provided. The afternoon portion of the first aid class is designed with wilderness situations in mind. Time will be spent going over items in our first aid kits and packs. The students learn how to do basic splinting and bleeding control with supplies from their packs. The cost of each class is \$50 per day (\$100 for both days of CPR and 1st aid). The deadline to register for this class is Jan. 7, 2005. INFO: Ben Fernandez (TPTraining@patc.net) 703/327-9788.

## 25 (Tuesday) HIKE - Family Hike Bluement, VA

Come join us at the Bears Den Trail Center for a kid-friendly hike along the historic trail, out to the Bear Rocks Overlook, then along the Nature Trail. This circuit hike will be about 2 miles long. INFO: Lauren Lang (at94L@netzero.com) 571/242-3950.

## 25 (Tuesday) HIKE - Vigorous Hikers Central District, Shenandoah National Park, VA

From Stony Man to Hawksbill loop, about 14 miles and 2800 foot climb. Views from the two highest peaks in SNP. Hike AT and scenic upper Whiteoak Canyon Trail, and Passamaquoddy Trail. INFO: Chris Nolen (chrishiker@erols.com) 301/469-8931.

## 25 (Tuesday) MEETING - Shenandoah Mountain Rescue Group (Business meeting), 7:30 p.m.

# NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

## 26 (Wednesday) CLASS - Winter Backpacking (REI) College Park, MD

7:00 p.m. Are you looking for a new challenge? How about winter camping? Learn the basics for backpacking and camping in the winter. Learn some helpful tips and skills to get you through a cold winter's night in the bush. Tips include how to plan, where to go, what gear to bring, and how to dress. Come hear some insights, experiences and photos from a veteran winter camper. INFO: Mark Nelson (mnelson@rei.com) 703/379-9400.

## 26 (Wednesday) HIKE - Midweek Hikers Location to be determined

See Jan. 5 event for more information.

## 27 (Thursday) CLASS - Hiking the Appalachian Trail (REI) College Park, MD

7:00 p.m. Bob Phillips will discuss his 2001 North-bound thru-hike of the 2,168 mile AT. Bob will discuss the trail history, planning and preparation, cost, necessary gear, trail shelters, hostels, and all aspects of an AT thru-hike. He will also discuss many of the unique trail "traditions". INFO: Mark Nelson (mnelson@rei.com) 703/379-9400.

## 30 (Sunday) CLASS - GPS 202 (REI) College Park, MD

7:30 p.m. This class is for GPS owners who want to learn to use their GPS for hiking, geo-caching, or for getting "un-lost". It concentrates on using a GPS to find position and plot routes using the UTM coordinate system on USGS Topo Maps. Points covered include definition of navigation terms, using the UTM system, creating waypoints and routes, and following a route with the GPS. Participants should be familiar with the basic operation of their GPS including entering numbers and text and selecting fields to display. Try to review the video tape for your GPS before coming to the class. This class will build on that knowledge. Bring your GPS, fresh batteries, and your GPS owner's manual. Fee: \$25/\$40. INFO: Mark Nelson (mnelson@rei.com) 703/379-9400.

# FEBRUARY

## 1 (Tuesday) DEADLINE - March Potomac Appalachian Material due to editors 5:00 p.m.

All items for the next issue of the newsletter due. Send Forecast events to PA-Forecast@patc.net and all other articles to the editor at lindashannonb@mac.com. NOTE: Do not send photos or articles to headquarters. E-mail for address.

## 1 (Tuesday) CLASS - Southeast Asian Journeys (REI) Fairfax, VA

7:00 p.m. Join REI's adventure traveler and wilderness guide Ashby Robertson for a slideshow journey by raft, rock, and kayak through Southeast Asia. For the armchair traveler and those wanting to explore this part of the world. INFO: Mark Nelson (mnelson@rei.com) 703/379-9400.

## 1 (Tuesday) HIKE - Family Hike Leesburg, VA

Come join us for a wonderful kid-friendly hike in Balls Bluff Regional Park, near Leesburg. This 1.5-mile circuit trail is barely jogging-stroller passable. We will hike along the perimeter trail, with views of the Potomac River, and down to the smallest national cemetery. INFO: Lauren Lang (at94L@netzero.com) 571/242-3950.

## 1 (Tuesday) HIKE - Vigorous Hikers Luray, VA

In George Washington National Forest, VA, we'll hike the Camp Roosevelt Loop. Enjoy Kennedy Peak, loop back on Stephen's Trail to Duncan Knob rock scramble; 15 miles and 3300 ft climb. INFO: Chris Nolen (chrishiker@erols.com) 301/469-8931.

## 1 (Tuesday) MEETING - Trail Patrol, 7:30 p.m.

## 2 (Wednesday) CLASS - Map and Compass Basics (REI) Bailey's Crossroads, VA

7:30 p.m. Get the skills to stay found! This introduction to map and compass will cover interpretation of map data and symbols, compass function, orienting map and compass, declination adjustment, and reading terrain features. Participants are encouraged to bring their own compasses. INFO: Mark Nelson (mnelson@rei.com) 703/379-9400.

## 2 (Wednesday) HIKE - Midweek Hikers Location to be determined

See Jan. 5 event for more information.

## 2 (Wednesday) MEETING - New Members (PATC), 7:30 p.m.

## 5-6 (Saturday-Sunday) CLASS - Wilderness First Aid (WSC) Alexandria, VA

A program of the Wilderness Safety Council, this eighteen-hour class includes classroom study, hands-on practice, and results in a two-year certification. The cost is \$160. INFO: Christopher Tate (http://wfa.net) 703/836-8905.

## 8 (Tuesday) HIKE - Vigorous Hikers Great Falls, VA

Starting in Riverbend Park, we'll hike a 20-mile out and back along the Potomac Heritage Trail upstream of Riverbend Park. Meet at Riverbend Park Nature Center, or as close to it as the entry gates will allow, at 8:30 a.m. INFO: Cliff Noyes 540/373-8267.

## 8 (Tuesday) MEETING - PATC Council, 7:00 p.m.

## 9 (Wednesday) HIKE - Midweek Hikers Location to be determined

See Jan. 5 event for more information.

## 9 (Wednesday) MEETING - Mountaineering Section, 8:00 p.m.

## 15 (Tuesday) HIKE - Vigorous Hikers Central District, Shenandoah National Park, VA

Climb Cedar Run to Hawksbill then north to the Crescent Rock Trail to descend Whiteoak Canyon. 14 miles and 3500 ft climb. INFO: Chris Nolen (chrishiker@erols.com) 301/469-8931.

## FORECAST

**16 (Wednesday)**  
**HIKE – Easy Hikers**  
**Brandywine, MD**

A four-mile, easy circuit hike with optional two-mile extension in Cedarville State Forest. From beltway exit 7, south on MD route 5 (Branch Ave.) merging with US 301 after 10 miles. Then stay in left lane for 1.8 miles to traffic light, Cedarville Road. Turn left, and continue 2.4 miles to state forest sign at intersection with Bee Oak Road. Turn right, proceed 1 mile to meeting place outside forest office at 10:15 a.m. Entrance fee \$4.00 per car. Bring lunch and water. INFO: Paul Van Order 703/536-4378.

**16 (Wednesday)**  
**HIKE - Midweek Hikers**  
**Location to be determined**

See Jan. 5 event for more information.

**17 (Thursday)**  
**HIKE – In-Between Hikers**  
**Great Falls, VA**

A moderately-paced 10-mile hike with a 5-mile option. From I-495, exit 44W onto Georgetown Pike for 4 miles to Old Dominion Drive. Turn right to park entrance. Fee is \$5.00 per car or National Park pass. Meet in front of Visitor Center. Starting time is 10:00 a.m. The hike will be canceled if schools in Fairfax County are closed for inclement weather. INFO: Ellen Glynn (jeg314@aol.com) 703/698-8740.

**22 (Tuesday)**  
**HIKE – Vigorous Hikers**  
**Woodstock, VA**

We'll hike Great North Mountain, GW National Forest, WV and VA from Waites Run north on the County Line Trail to shelter, down to Wilson Cove Trail, looping around via Old Mail Path, Tuscarora Trail and Pond Run Trail. About 16 miles and 3600 ft. climb. INFO: Chris Nolen (chrishiker@erols.com) 301/469-8931.

**22 (Tuesday)**  
**MEETING - Shenandoah Mountain Rescue Group (Business meeting), 7:30 p.m.**

**23 (Wednesday)**  
**HIKE – Easy Hikers**  
**Clarksburg, MD**

Meet outside Little Bennett Regional Park, Montgomery County, MD, at 10:15 a.m. Directions: I-270 North past Germantown. Exit at Route 121, Clarksburg Rd. Turn right at the end of the ramp. Cross over Frederick Road (Route 355), and continue on Rt. 121. Turn right into the trail parking lot opposite a dirt road named Hyattstown Mill Rd. We'll have lunch at Jasper's in Germantown. INFO: Margaret Chapman (MargtChapm@aol.com) 301/977-8988 or 301/869-9291.

**23 (Wednesday)**  
**HIKE - Midweek Hikers**  
**Location to be determined**

See Jan. 5 event for more information.



## Ruth Washington is Thankful to be Doing Well

*Following is a short follow-up to the story concerning Ruth Washington.*

**H**al and Ruth Washington want to thank all of their PATC friends and well-wishers, for keeping Ruth in their thoughts and prayers, during Ruth's recent health problems.

Ruth recently received the kidney transplant that we'd all been hoping for. On Nov. 27, the Washingtons got the call from their surgeon, announcing that the University of Virginia Hospital, in Charlottesville, had found a compatible organ, "a beautiful kidney from a 40ish person from the Charlottesville area."

Ruth reports,

*The kidney started to function by the time I arrived in recovery and as of Tuesday's lab work it was still improving. We were, and still are, quite excited and at the same time sad for the loss the donor's family has suffered. We are sure they are grateful that because of their loved ones generosity others can live.*

*The surgery went smoothly and I am thankful to be doing extremely well. Doug stayed with me on Saturday night and said I kept repeating "WOW, I have a new kidney." On Monday, Nov. 28, I was up at 4:30 a.m. and walked around the fifth floor corridor four times. We arrived home Tuesday around 3:30 p.m. and need time to recuperate, heal, and get the soreness out. We are so thankful to all for their prayers and ask that you please continue praying for the donors family as well as for a successful life my new kidney.*

*With much love.*

*—Ruthie and Hal*

Hal and Ruth Washington are AT thru-hikers, long-time PATC members, and very active volunteers. The Washingtons served as Blackburn caretakers for two years, and currently maintain a section of the AT near Swift Run Gap, in SNP. □

*—Kerry Snow*

### *Alexa, from page 9*

he snorted softly and ambled right past us, right between our fire and our tent, and disappeared into the trees.

Rachel and I exhaled for the first time in what must have been minutes, then silently put out the fire and headed to the tent. Neither of us had ever been that close to such a big elk and we were a bit shaken at his brazenness.

A number of times during the night we thought we heard something outside our tent, but we couldn't tell if we were imagining things or if the big elk was making a reappearance. In the morning, however, we found a few piles of droppings scattered throughout our camp that could have come only from the elk; he had returned to check out the intruders and must have been marking his territory.

We spent the next day hiking up above the second lake until a high country thunderstorm forced us back down to camp. It rained that afternoon and through the night, and we were forced to pack up and hike out in the rain the next morning, which every camper knows is fairly miserable. As we made our way down the trail, we kept looking for signs of the elk, but we never saw him again.

The rain had quelled some of the tension between J.P. and Jackson, and we had no trouble loading them into the truck for the drive home. Despite being tired and wet, Rachel and I spent the entire drive home excitedly speculating about the elk and why he had been so fearless in our camp. The elk had been territorial or the llamas had masked our scent; either way, our evening visitor had definitely been a memorable sight. □

*—Alexa Hackbarth*

## Bob Pickett's Appalachian Nature: Winged Woodfellows

Birding in the winter is a case of feast or famine. It's not uncommon to hike most of the day and see practically no birds at all, then, suddenly, you may notice the trees and shrubs around you are alive with a mixed flock of many bird species. If you're in the woods, you will probably identify such species as Carolina chickadees, tufted titmice, golden-crowned kinglets, brown creepers, downy woodpeckers and white-breasted nuthatches.

If you watch closely, you will probably find that these winter flocks are led by either the chickadees or titmice. These two nuclear species within the mixed flock average six birds and form around a dominant pair, normally that mated the previous season in that general area. Other members of the population may be juveniles of the dominant pair or other stray adults and juveniles. They will remain within a general range throughout the winter that includes their breeding site as well as several good feeding sites that they will return to numerous times. In fact, some flocks will rotate among four or five favorite feeding sites on a daily basis. It is not uncommon for these chickadee and titmice flocks to return to the same roosting site every night during the winter season.

### Protection in Numbers

It has been suggested that the other species tag along with the chickadees and titmice because the vocalizations of these two species enable the others to maintain their small

*See Appalachian Nature, page 19*

Following are typical characteristics of some of our common winter flocking birds.

*Carolina chickadee* – Moths and their larvae and eggs, acorns, and poison-ivy berries are the most important animal and vegetable foods.

*Tufted titmouse* – The titmouse works twigs, buds, and bark for insect egg masses and pupae, also beechnut and acorn mast. They are permanent residents in their territory. Winter food is acorns, beechnuts, corn, and wild berries.

*Golden-crowned kinglets* – Smallest bird of the winter forest, kinglets migrate to our region and feed in coniferous trees, constantly communicating with a soft high-pitched trill note. They feed on insect eggs, larvae, and spiders and are very active feeders.

*Brown creeper* – This winter migrant is known for its characteristic foraging habit of alighting at the base of a tree and spiraling around it as it ascends, searching for insect eggs and larvae.

*Woodpeckers* – The yellow-bellied sapsucker is a winter migrant to our region, responsible for the horizontal series of small holes in trees. The pileated woodpecker's feeding habit results in large 6" x 8" deep rectangular holes it makes in search of insects.

*White-breasted nuthatch* – This is our only winter bird that climbs down a tree trunk in search of food, primarily nuts, acorns, beechnuts, hickory nuts, and cherry pits.

*Northern junco* – Flocks are usually small. In winter, juncos feed on the ground, taking weed seeds and wild fruit.

*Cardinals* – Form loose flocks of about a dozen. They spend their entire lives within a few miles of their birthplace. Cardinals are seed eaters.

*Robin* – Establishes large flocks, roosting at night in wooded swamps; feeds on fruits.

### Retraction

*Bob Pickett's article in the November issue (Bush Initiatives Destroy Environments) generated considerable heat among some members. No one disputed his facts, but some felt that there was a political message implied in the column. In rereading it, I agree that it could be interpreted that way. PATC tries not to take sides in the political process. We may individually have favorites, but we try to keep those views out of our publications. In this case we failed, and I apologize to members who felt that it was inappropriate. We will try to do better.*

*Bob's contributions in natural history (as well as those of William Needham) add a whole new dimension to PATC, which we welcome.*  
—Tom Johnson

## Book Review: 'Deep Survival: Who Lives, Who Dies, and Why'

*"Deep Survival: Who Lives, Who Dies, and Why" by Laurence Gonzales, WW Norton & Company, New York, 2003, hard cover, 301p, \$25.95.*

This book is a collection of vivid action narratives alternating with scientific discourse. The former are attention grabbers; the latter sometimes read as if the author had just copied his rough notes into the manuscript. This mix of styles exists throughout the book, although it's more jarring in the first half.

The first chapter starts with the author standing on an aircraft carrier, on a small platform 70 feet above the sea, with a 30 knot wind blowing and planes landing a few feet away; how could one help reading further? The survival stories are fascinating and some of the concepts (e.g., an "emotional bookmark" as a subconscious association of an experience with a strong feeling) are helpful in understanding actions that prompt a "What was he thinking?" question. On the other hand, the anterior cingulate is mentioned twice in the scientific discourse but we are never told what it is or why it has powerful connections to the amygdala.

Gonzales inserts his father's experiences into his book, since both have found themselves in survival situations. However, some sections seem merely self-indulgent.

That said, "Deep Survival" is an appealing read for those of us who may find ourselves in an unexpectedly dangerous situation. Gonzales makes a case that all of us will encounter such challenges, whether, as he puts it, we're dealing with "emotional survival, financial survival, or survival after breaking your leg at 19,000 feet on a Peruvian mountain." The book ends with an appendix, "The Rules of Adventure," that includes "suggestions, first for staying out of trouble, then for dealing with it when it comes" and 12 points summarizing "how survivors think and behave in the clutch of mortal danger."

Read this book for entertainment and to add to your armory of protective strategies. □

—Sue King

Shortly thereafter, the litter team followed. They hauled a heavy burden of gear: ropes and technical hardware, some sleeping bags and tarps to keep the patient warm and dry, and additional medical gear. All was loaded into the rescue litter, which was outfitted with a single wheel and pulled by a "mule." SMRG members alternated filling this grueling role with a dubious name.

About 5:00, we got an update on the patient. The patient was at roughly 2,800 feet, just below the "squeeze." She was resting, in some pain; her knee had been stabilized; and she had enough support on scene to stay warm. This last point was of particular concern. Though the late afternoon was clear and pleasant, a damp, cold night was rapidly approaching. The situation was complicated by the lack of direct radio communication with the incident site. Those on scene had used a cell phone to contact the park communications office who then radioed the information to responding teams.

Just after 5:30 p.m., SMRG members first arrived on scene. Our EMT assisted the patient, giving the first responders a moment of relief. Members of the Shenandoah Bartenders, a PATC trail crew working on the Ridge Trail that day, had been first to respond. Trained as an instructor in Wilderness First Aid, the crew leader knew just what to do: She wrapped and splinted the patient's knee and moved her to a reasonably comfortable resting place and used all available spare clothing to keep the patient warm. Once we arrived, with more gear and help just behind us, the Bartenders, who were starting to get cold, went down the hill to rendezvous with their crew. The patient's hiking companions were ill-prepared for a cold evening, so they too descended.

While the patient scenario was the best we could hope for – no signs of hypothermia, patient stabilized and in relatively good spirits – the evacuation plan was another matter. It was clear that the litter would require a belay-assisted descent, with rigging of anchor points to be done in the dark. And the evening was beginning to cool down rapidly. Members of the litter team, contacted via radio, rushed warming goods and ropes and belay gear to the scene.

The rigging team of three SMRG members and one ranger from the park's technical rescue team began selecting a series of likely belay points and set up the first of many belay anchors. Around 6:15 p.m., the litter arrived on scene. By now, stars were beginning to shine in the clear evening. The EMTs coordinated movement of the patient into the litter. This task included careful movement of the patient, but also significant attention to providing for the patient's warmth; safety, using various tie-



*At one of their monthly field trainings, SMRG members practice belaying a rescue litter.*



*SMRG members practicing litter carrying with rope belay.*

downs with webbing; and comfort, to the extent possible. Meanwhile, SMRG members worked to outfit the initial litter bearers with the safety gear we typically use to lower a litter on belay. Seat harnesses were tied with one-inch tubular webbing, short sections of cord secured bearers to the litter, helmets were put on, headlamps ready for action.

At 6:45 p.m., after a brief flirtation with falling body temperature, the patient was packaged in the litter, warm, and ready to move. The belay rope was attached, the entire system checked and rechecked twice for safety, and the team began its descent. Taking care to minimize jostling of the patient, getting used to working together on belay, integrating standard litter-carrying procedures used by the park and SMRG, and accommodating the difficult terrain, the initial going was slow.

At the end of the first length of rope (about 180 feet), the litter was transferred to the second belay line. And members of the rigging team leaptfrogged ahead to prepare the anchor point for the next belay.

And down the litter continued. Six people at a time carried the litter, all available others served as a reserve to swap in for tired bearers.

At narrow choke points along the trail, the litter bearers were unable to walk abreast carrying the litter. Then the litter bearers would reorganize into a "caterpillar," effectively a bucket brigade for the litter. In this configuration, the litter – still with the safety of a rope-belay – was handed down the line of stationary litter handlers.

With our medic continuing to monitor the patient and the litter bearers attending the grueling task of movement, the rigging team, safety officer, and team leader worked closely with the rangers to establish a safe route, well-protected by secure belay points. After five such belays, the group caught a short respite – a 200-yard section of trail that did not require a belay. Water, food, and energy reserves were already dwindling, and a long break could spell trouble. At 34 degrees, hypothermia was potentially a concern for ALL personnel. Two more belays and we reached the point where we could reattach the wheel to the litter. Litter bearers now kept the litter stable rather than lifting it.

Finally, the parking lot and the Madison County Rescue Squad's ambulance came into view! At 12:30 a.m., we were able to transfer our patient safely to the waiting ambulance. A satisfied but exhausted team settled in to meals the park had graciously sent along for us. Congratulations and thanks were shared all around for SMRG and park personnel (along with paperwork for the medicos).

And then the trek back to our campsite in Big Meadows. Just another evening in the park for SMRG. □

—Steve Weiss, SMRG Training Officer

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

### Volunteers Needed! Blood and Sweat Not Required

Have you seen the list of trail overseers needed? Ouch. Many other trail clubs have waiting lists for trails to become available. Not us. Show a little interest and you're in!

But, besides trail work - there are many other positions available.

We need people to help us run the club. Do you have the time and talent to help us keep going strong? Specific needs are:

Treasurer, Sales Committee Chairperson, Medical Chairperson, Publications Chairperson, Budget Chairperson, and Public Affairs Chairperson. Please give the gift of your time to this club you support. Contact Lee Sheaffer, vice president of volunteerism, at [thumpers@visuallink.com](mailto:thumpers@visuallink.com) for more information.



### TRAIL OVERSEER DISCOUNTS

**PATC OVERSEERS GET DISCOUNTS** from the following merchants who support our volunteer programs: Blue Ridge Mountain Sports (Charlottesville, Tidewater) – 20%, Hudson Trail Outfitters (Metro D.C.) – 15%, The Trail House (Frederick, Md.) – 15%, Casual Adventures (Arlington, Va.) – 10%, Campmor (mail order via PATC HQ) – 10%, Weasel Creek Outfitters in Front Royal – 10%, and The Outfitter at Harpers Ferry – 15%. Check the back page of the *PA* for the latest trail, cabin, and shelter overseer opportunities. All PATC members receive a 10% discount from Blue Ridge Mountain Sports. Be sure to have your membership ID or overseer ID ready when you shop.

### HIKING PARTNERSHIPS

#### LLAMA TREK IN WYOMING.

Anyone interested in participating in advance planning for a week-long hike in July or early August, 2005, into the Wind River Mountains west of Lander, WY, using Llamas to transport our trail gear, please contact Dave Appel ([dwappel@juno.com](mailto:dwappel@juno.com)). Lander Llamas will outfit the group with tents and sleeping bags, transport essential personal gear, and provide all trail meals, making this hike practical for PATC members flying to Lander.

#### LOOKING FOR SOME WOMEN TO HIKE WITH:

Are you interested in hiking sections of the AT – mostly by slackpacking, dayhiking, and occasional overnight? I've finished about half. Let's compare notes. INFO: Stacy ([dslabare@corlink.com](mailto:dslabare@corlink.com)) 304/358-3154.

## PATC Swap Meet

Need some boots? Have an extra tent? Looking for a hiking buddy? The Swap Meet might be just the place to start your search. Send your queries to [PA@PATC.net](mailto:PA@PATC.net).

Notices are published free of charge for PATC members only. PATC cannot vouch for any of the advertised items. No commercial advertisement or personal notices unrelated to hiking will be accepted. Deadline for inclusion is the first day of the month preceding issuance of the newsletter. Notices will be run for three months, at the discretion of the editor, unless we are otherwise advised. □

### FREE TO GOOD HOME

**FREE FIREWOOD** for the asking. A pickup truck full of cut and seasoned (by this fall) wood is available on a first-come, first-served basis. Kindling also available. Must get rid of it quickly. Please call Bernie Morgan at 301/864-1324.



### EQUIPMENT WANTED

**TARP TENT** for two or three. Floored version a bonus. Must be in relatively good condition. Please e-mail Linda ([lindashannonb@mac.com](mailto:lindashannonb@mac.com)) with good news.

## TRAILHEAD

Trail maintenance slows down for the winter season as the ground freezes and the vegetation stops growing. Drains and waterbars fill up with leaves so there is still work to be done for the resilient overseer. An efficient way to clear drains and waterbars is the combination of a leaf rake and McLeod. The leaf rake quickly removes the loose leaves and debris while the McLeod can be used to remove the heavier silt, rocks, and dirt and to rebuild the bar. Of course, big rocks rolled into the drains by pesky bears require additional effort.

### “Sword of Damocles” Finally Falls On Great North Mountain

A particularly nasty widow maker presented itself in mid-2003, directly over the intersection of the Big Schloss Cutoff Trail and Mill Mountain Trail on Great North Mountain. Attempts to remove it were by the Overseers of those two trails, Wil Kohlbrenner and Jim Tomlin. Although a rope was affixed to it (after some rope-tossing practice), despite all efforts the dangling 6"-diameter, 20-foot-long branch could not be broken loose. Wil quickly realized this was no ordinary trail problem, and gave it the name “Sword of Damocles” (from the famous myth about the ruling king and peasant who traded places at the peasant’s comment that being a king was easy, only to find that the royal throne was directly under a huge sword suspended by a thread).

Hurricanes and winter winds brought down many trees over the next year, but the Sword of Damocles remained. Each trudge up the mountain was accompanied by the thought that the Sword had to have fallen by now, only to have these hopes dashed when the mountaintop was reached — the mighty Sword still dangled, taunting the Overseers. Efforts continued throughout 2004 to remove the Sword, all embarrassingly futile and often ending in exhaustion.

One last attempt was planned for 2004, at the end of a blazing operation on Mill Mountain Trail. The two forlorn overseers met at the Sword at 2:00 p.m. on Sunday, Oct. 31, with rope in hand yet again. This time the luck was reversed by two backpackers from New Hampshire who happened upon the scene and paused to assist. After some preliminary pulls of the rope to swing the Sword to no avail, the rope was handed to one of the backpackers. On his first pull, the Sword crashed to the ground with a dull thud. Silence reigned for a brief period as the two overseers were frozen with disbelief at the culmination of their perpetually apparently fruitless efforts. An impromptu celebration then occurred, with the opening of a flask of spirits that had been carried an innumerable number of times two miles and 1,200 feet uphill to the Sword, only to be carried back down full all previous times. The Sword itself and the heroic backpacker received the first sips.

A future trip is planned to slice the fallen Sword into 1"-thick disks, to ornament the homes of the two feeble yet persistent overseers.

### AT Repair Near Big Meadows

The Blue and White Crew wrapped up their 2004 season in November, by starting a tread rehab project near the Big Meadows Campground. The crew was able to dig new sidehill, and install or repair numerous erosion control features on about 1/4 mile of the AT. The Big Meadows Campground hosts greeted the crew with a memorable show of hospitality, offering a wide variety of sideline suggestions. After work, John “HB” Hebbe, earned his recent appellation, by demonstrating some fancy hose-work at the crew tool cache. Sal’s pizzeria hosted the

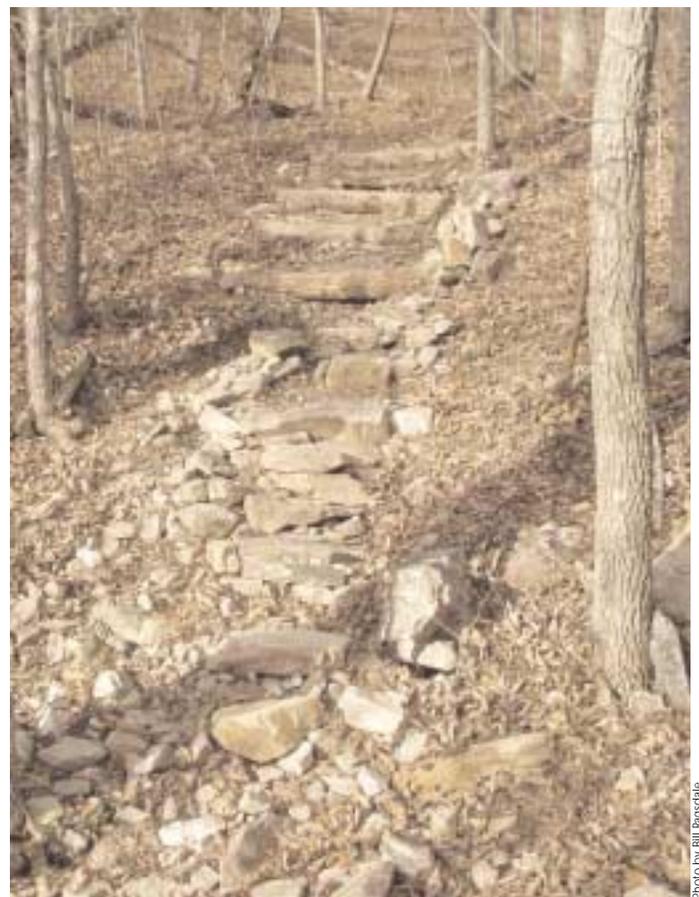


Photo by Bill Ragsdale

*SNP South District Blue Blazers added stone steps to Austin Mountain Trail.*

November B&W banquet (without incident). The crew then retired to the Mutton Top cabin, for solemn consideration of the 2004 season and reverent meditation on the crew season to come (aided by a fine selection of malted beverages). In addition to the B&W “regulars,” the November outing was joined by David Welker, president of the Matsumoto City Blue and White Chapter, and by Patrick Wilson’s pal, Eric. Patrick promises to bring an even larger contingent to crew trips in ’05.

The Blue and White Crew calendar is posted at [www.blueandwhite-crew.org](http://www.blueandwhite-crew.org). The crew is always looking for newcomers. Please consider joining us for a day or a weekend this season.

### Repair on Austin Mountain Trail

John Shannon, president of the Charlottesville PATC Chapter, reported a fairly hazardous steep section of treadway on the lower Austin Mountain Trail that badly needed repair. SNP Ranger Shawn Green and district manager Pete Gatje took a look at it, and Shawn asked Pete to try to get a crew to work on it. So Pete with highly underpaid Overseers Rhett Orndorff and Madison Brown helped Bill Ragsdale, Austin Mountain Trail overseer, repair the trail. Of course, similar to the Madison Run stream crossing project, Pete’s dog Nelly was assigned as Project Manager. The crew made eight steps from large stones and oak logs. Not only that but they repaired the existing waterbar and made another waterbar above the steps to eliminate the water erosion which was causing the problem. An added bonus was that, while work-

*See Trailhead, page 18*

## TRAILHEAD

*Trailhead, from page 17*

ing on the steps, they met Joe and Jennifer Palaskey who volunteered to take a vacant section of the Furnace Mountain Trail as co-verseers. Joe has returned recently from Iraq where he was training Iraqi security forces and is ready to join another elite group known as the SNP South District Blue Blazers.

### Central Tuscarora Scout Project

Encouraged by Walt Smith (their scoutmaster and district manager for Central Tuscarora), four 17-year-old Scouts from Winchester Troop 31 worked a steep section of the Tuscarora south of Pine Hollow Subdivision in West Virginia. It is part of Brandon Odum's Eagle Project. He designed the trail changes and is leading construction in three areas where they are putting in rock steps and otherwise improving the tread. Brandon and fellow Scouts helped with Jacob Braghini's Eagle Project last year to carry lumber and build a picnic table for the Shockeys Knob Shelter. While the Scouts worked on their project, Walt went on ahead to clear a view and some dead-fall from the trail, and then enjoyed sitting on a log at a distance and watching them work!

### Scout Project At Blackburn

District manager Chris Brunton and Blackburn Caretaker Bill Clements also had assistance from local scouts. This Eagle Scout Project involved building 24 locust log steps at the top of the south access trail from Blackburn to the AT. The scouts did a very fine job that was much appreciated by Chris and Bill.

### Distant Gunfire

On the way to the work site, the Cadillac Crew observed a hunter loading out a freshly killed buck. It was then they realized that this was the first day of deer-hunting season with firearms. Not to be deterred, the crew, donned appropriately colored garments, made noise, and kept the chainsaws going to announce their presence. Although there was some gunfire heard in the woods it was distant, and the crew, feeling relieved, managed to clear an old roadbed that provides access to the Myron Glaser Cabin. The roadbed, barely discernable, hadn't been used in years and was hidden by blowdowns, vines, and small trees. Mel Merritt, cabin operations chair, had asked the crew to clear the road so he could arrange for the cabin roof to be replaced, among other repairs. As a special treat, crew member Berry Freeman



Photo by Walt Smith

**Brandon Odum's Eagle Scout Project improves section of Tuscarora Trail - from left, Brandon, Devin Sunde, Jacob Braghini, and Chuck Richards.**

invited the crew over for Happy Hour at his recently built modern log home in remote Clarke County near the AT. The impressive home was constructed with hand-hewed logs and other unique features. By the way, the crew leader promised to pay more attention to the hunting schedule in the future!

Please send any interesting tale, technical advice, individual or group accomplishments, and trail maintenance questions to Trailhead, c/o Jon Rindt, 621 Skyline Forest Drive, Front Royal, VA 22630 or to [jkrindt@shentel.net](mailto:jkrindt@shentel.net). □

*Congratulations to Jon (and Katherine), on the well-deserved honor of Volunteer of the Year. See page 2 for more about this award.*

## PATC Trail Patrol

Presents

# American Heart Association CPR and First Aid

Jan. 22 and 23, 2005

The Trail Patrol is hosting a CPR and First Aid course on Jan. 22 and 23 at PATC Headquarters. The two-day course covers American Heart Association Adult, Child, and Infant CPR and First Aid. The students will learn basic First Aid skills with hands-on time. Books and certifications are provided. The afternoon portion of the First Aid class is designed with wilderness situations in mind. Time will be spent going over items in our First Aid kits and packs. The students learn how to do basic splinting and bleeding control with supplies from their packs.

The cost of each class is \$50 per day (\$100 for both days of CPR and First Aid). The deadline to register for this class is Jan. 7, 2005.

For more information, contact Ben Fernandez

([TPTraining@patc.net](mailto:TPTraining@patc.net)) 703/327-9788

*Appalachian Nature, from page 14*

groups. This is especially beneficial for the very small kinglets, which often can survive the winter cold only by huddling in tree cavities overnight. By staying together and by listening to the vociferous chickadees and titmice, they are assured of overnight companions. Also, the nuclear chickadees and titmice, being year-round residents, know the good feeding areas. Thus, the winter guests benefit from this knowledge.

Another benefit of winter flocks is that there is safety in large numbers. By having many eyes around, individual birds can spend more time eating and less time looking for predators. From the perspective of the nuthatch or downy woodpecker, flocking with the very alert and excitable chickadees and titmice increases their awareness of incoming predators and thus adds to their chances of winter survival.

### The Food Factor

Slightly less than half of our summer residential population of bird species remains in the Appalachian region throughout the winter season. While cold is certainly an issue, finding food is the primary limiting factor for bird survival. Three sources of food fuel the engines of our warm-blooded feathered friends: insects, seeds, and scavenged materials. Some species will remain obligated to being seed-eaters or insect eaters in the winter as they are in the summer season, while others will switch from summer insects to winter

seed-eaters. Scavengers, including crows, pigeons and gulls, will remain as generalists throughout the year, feeding on road kills and human dumps in the winter.

The forest mixed-flock described earlier is an insect-foraging flock, even though acorns and beechnuts are also consumed by some of these species. What makes the mixed species work, is that the various species have different feeding habits that allow them to exploit unique niches not used by the other species, allowing community feeding without direct competition.

Seed-eating species of mixed flocks are found in grassy fields where perennial broadleaf and grass seeds dominate. As opposed to the quick moving forest insect-gleaners, the field seed-eaters may spend days in a single field, until the seed resources are gone. Such mixed flocks will include finches, sparrows, mockingbirds and grosbeaks. More common on the piedmont and coastal plain are the extremely large winter flocks of common grackles, red-wing blackbirds, and cowbirds, foraging on the waste from agricultural operations, including corn, wheat, and soybeans.

Other winter bird species are true to the old saying, "Birds of a feather, flock together." Most of these same-species flocks will be seed-eaters. This is apparently due to the localized, but widely spaced food sources required by the selective feeders. Unlike the uniform distribution of insects available to the insect eaters, the specialized food sources of the seed eaters makes it more productive for any one

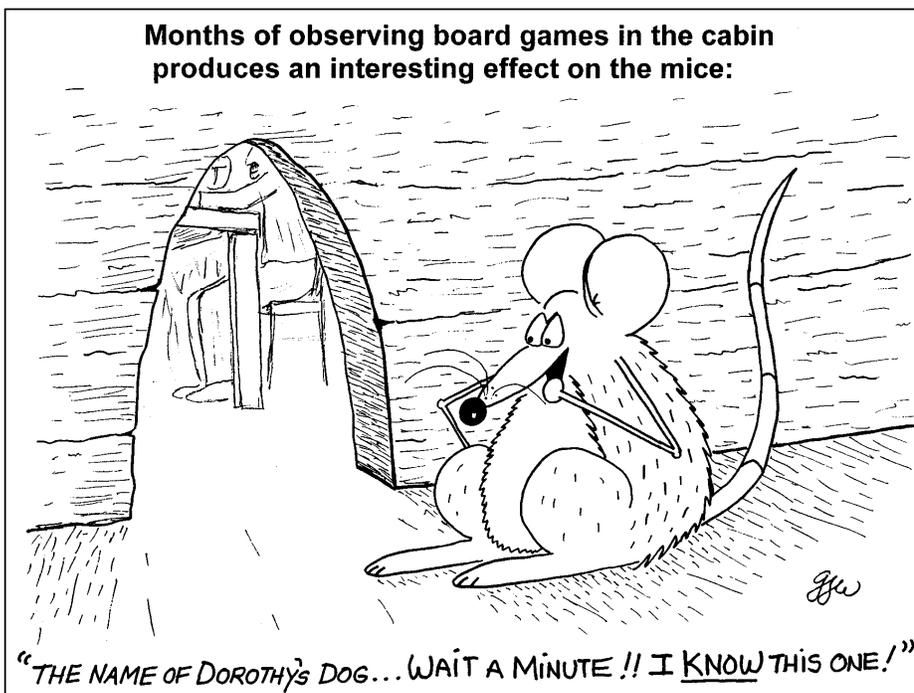
species to join up and travel with its own kind to find its special seed preferences. This strategy applies to robins, cardinals, northern juncos, grosbeaks, and goldfinches.

Winter bird flocks are fairly loosely organized, with individuals joining and leaving on a daily basis. Nor is it uncommon to find sparrows, finches, or grosbeaks in separate feeding flocks or in mixed flocks. Furthermore, seed eaters may accompany woodland insect eaters. These species will be found hunting among the forest leaf litter, including juncos, white-throated sparrows, and eastern towhees. In this scenario, the seed eaters specialize on their food resources without competing with the insect eaters, while benefiting from the group protection.

Regarding robins, it does appear that they migrate from this area, returning in the spring, but they actually are around all winter. True, the robin population shifts south by several hundred miles in winter, but we still have a winter population in our region that came from breeding sites in Pennsylvania or New York. The reason we don't tend to see them is that their winter food source is seeds and berries found in a more forested habitat. Only in spring, when the soil warms and thaws, enabling the worms' return to the surface, will we see the "return" of the robins to our yards. This normally occurs in March, when the full moon is known by the Native Americans as the "worm moon." □

—Bob Pickett

### Tails from the Woods by George Walters



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# Trail, Shelter, and Corridor Overseers / Monitors Wanted

## Corridor Monitor Openings

Tom Lupp, 301/271-7340  
tlupp@erols.com

Fox Gap - MD - PATC Map 5-6  
Keys Gap South - VA - PATC Map 7  
Buzzard Rocks - VA - PATC Map 7  
High Knob -VA - PATC Map 8

## Trail Overseer Openings.

Contact the District Manager for the section that interests you.

## Tuscarora Pennsylvania Maps J & K

Opportunity to work long hours with no pay or benefits. Generous allowance of blisters, stinging/biting insects, and poisonous plants. Special provision for rain and mud. Little or no supervision. Work hours optional. Location somewhere on the Tuscarora Trail in Pennsylvania. No certification from your doctor or hospital required.

Pete Brown, 410/343-1140  
peter.brown4@worldnet.att.net

## Ashby/Possums AT/BB [Rte. 50 to SNP] - Map 8, 9

Lloyd Parriott, 540/622-2743  
laparriott@hotmail.com

New AT trail sections being developed near Ashby Gap, Va., Hwy# 50. Some open meadow, some wooded. Available soon.

## Appalachian Trail

Dicks Dome Shelter Rd. to Parking lot #8 (0.43 miles)

## Barking Dog Trail

AT to Barking Dog Spring/Rte 604

## SNP North District Appalachian Trail— Map 9

John McCrea, 610/352-9287  
mccreajf@aol.com

## Appalachian Trail — Co-overseer

Jenkins Gap to Hogwallow Gap (1.7 miles)

## SNP North District Blue-Blazed — Map 9

Dick Dugan, 703/836-0391  
rdugan@bellatlantic.net

## Knob Mountain Cutoff Trail

Knob Mountain Trail to Jeremys Run Trail (0.5 miles)

## Dickey Ridge Trail

Front Royal Entrance Station to MP 2.1 (1.9 miles)

## SNP Central Blue-Blazed [north end]— Map 10

Dan Dueweke, 703/266-3248  
danjan3@cox.net

New overseer opportunities coming available soon. Choice trails rich in Shenandoah history.

Don't miss this rare opportunity to stake your claim.

## Roberts Mountain Trail

Old Rag Fireroad to Weakley Hollow Fireroad (2.4 miles)

## SNP South AT - Map 11

Dennis DeSilvey, 434/295-8825  
ddesilvey@pcvmed.com

## Appalachian Trail

Riprap Trail Parking Area to Hairpin Switchback (1.5 miles)

## SNP South Blue-Blazed — Map 11

Pete Gatje, 434/361-1309  
pjgatje@aol.com

## Wildcat Ridge Trail

Wildcat Ridge Parking Area to Riprap Trail (2.5 miles)

## Rocky Mt. Run Trail Co-overseer

Big Run Portal Trail to Rocky Mt.-Brown Mt. Trail (2.5 miles)

## Tuscarora Central — Map L

Walt Smith, 540/678-0423  
wsmith@visuallink.com

## Tuscarora Trail

Larrick Overlook to Lucus Woods (3.7 miles)

## Tuscarora Trail - [on road/blazing only]

C&O Canal to Ruth Morris Forest (3.9 miles)

## Tuscarora South — Map F, G, 9

Rick Rhoades, 540/477-3247  
rrhoades@shentel.net

## Tuscarora Trail

Fetzer Gap to Maurertown (5.7 miles)

## Tuscarora Trail

Cedar Creek to Ridge Crest (2.8 miles)

## Tuscarora Trail

Ridge Crest to Fetzer Gap (3.1 miles)

## Great North Mountain — Map F

Hop Long, 301/942-6177  
theFSLongs@comcast.net

## Gerhard Shelter Trail

Tuscarora Trail to Vances Cove (1.5 miles)

## Suburban Maryland — Map D

Liles Creighton, 410/573-0067  
lcrei@aol.com

## Gold Mine Trail

Tavern to Tavern Gap (3.2 miles)

## Ford Mine Trail

Maintenance Area to Mine (0.5 miles)

## Billy Goat Trail - B

Cropley to Carderock (2.2 miles)



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