



The Potomac Appalachian

The Newsletter of the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club
118 Park Street, S.E., Vienna, VA 22180-4609
<http://www.patc.net>

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75 Years of Service



Is There a Reason Not to Hike the MT?



Photo by Robert Nelson

*MT blaze and tread descending from
Signal Knob (day 6).*

Not a typo, and no, the Massanutten Trail (MT) is not the AT. But the MT is an outstanding 71-mile circuit hike in the George Washington National Forest (GWNF), only 70 road miles from PATC's Vienna offices. Recently dedicated, the MT runs primarily north-south, 30 miles each way, along the 2,000-foot-elevation east and west ridges of the Massanutten. (The mountains that form the west ridge have various names.) The MT has views east toward Shenandoah National Park (SNP), west across the Shenandoah Valley, and into Fort Valley, between the two main ridges. The Massanutten lie between the two forks of the Shenandoah River, adding beauty to the overlooks along the trail.

No Excuses

I'd previously balked at hiking the Massanutten because of the relative lack of water and the limited opportunity for extended trips. With the completion of the MT, I'd run out of excuses. So armed with an annotated map (water, campsites, views)

for easy reference, the excellent PATC guidebook and Web supplement by Wil Kohlbrenner, the ability to carry four quarts of water and food for six days, I decided to hike the trail in late September. What follows are trip and trail facts, random musings, and general MT comments.

Starting Out

Starting the hike on a Tuesday under very dry conditions, I took the supplement's advice. I drove to two road crossings and cached gallons of water at MT mile points (MPs) 41 and 48. Having water near a trail is always better than hiking to it or, needless to say, doing without. The added driving was a small price to pay for convenience and peace of mind, and, as things turned out, these mile points were good choices.

I parked at the Signal Knob parking lot, and hiked clockwise up the ridge and south along Massanutten Mountain on a gorgeous day, with one fine view south and

See MT, page 7

PATC'S DOGWOOD HALF HUNDRED IS HISTORY

At its regular meeting on Dec. 10, 2002, PATC Council voted not to continue its sponsorship of the Dogwood Half Hundred hiking event held the past 17 years. Although the vote total was mixed for and against, the result was a strong vote to discontinue sponsorship. Concerns raised included difficulties obtaining appropriate insurance coverage, the effort required to plan and manage the event, and the low percentage of Club members participating. Other members pointed to the event's popularity with participants and its established tradition. However, some members questioned if such an event is in the primary focus of Club objectives, particularly in light of the competitive nature which the Dogwood has recently acquired. □

In This Issue . . .

Council Fire	2
Tom's Trail Talk	3
No Pets Allowed at Glass House . .	3
A Hike in Japan	4
Bob Pickett's Appalachian Nature . .	6
Backpacking 101	6
Forecast	8
South Mountaineers Need Help .	12
Notices	13
Trailhead	14
South Mountaineers' Crew Dates .	15
Volunteers Appointed	15
Help Wanted	16

Council Members, Chairs and PA Staff

Officers

President: Tom Johnson

Weekdays, Reston, Va, ph. 703/435-2755
Weekends, Front Royal, ph. 540/622-6422
e-mail, johnts3@juno.com

VP Volunteerism: Mickey McDermott

VP Operations: Fred "Hop" Long

Treasurer: Gerhard Salinger

Secretary: Georgeann Smale

Supervisor of Trails: Liles Creighton

Supervisor of Membership: Susan Nelson

Supervisor of Land Management: Chris Mangold

Supervisor of Facilities: Larry Marcoux

Supervisor of Education, Information, and Activities: Mal Fordham

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Maps: Dave Pierce

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Committee: Charlie Graf

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Shelters: Frank Turk

Trail Lands Acquisition: Phil Paschall

Trail Patrol: Kumait Jawdat

Tuscarora Trail Land Management:

Lloyd MacAskill

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Deputy Supervisor of Trails: Vacant

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Information/Sales Desks: Annetta DePompa

Medical: Vacant

Shelters, Cabins, & Cabins Land Fund: Larry Marcoux

SNP Boundary Trailheads Study Group:

Mark Holland

Tuscarora Trail Shenandoah Valley Project:

Phoebie Kilby & Larry Bradford

Potomac Appalachian

Chief Editor: Linda Shannon-Beaver

PA@patc.net

Features Editor: Joanne Erickson

Forecast Editor: Joan Hollen, Suzie Shannon

PA-Forecast@patc.net

Council Fire



At the last meeting of the PATC Council for 2002, held at Club Headquarters on Dec. 10, Vice President Mickey McDermott presented a gavel to retiring President Walt Smith in appreciation for his outstanding leadership over the past four years. Mr. Smith in turn thanked all of the volunteers and staff for their invaluable support and cooperation during his term of office. Incoming President Tom Johnson praised the Council and Executive Committee for what he termed their "harmonious and progressive" work.

Dogwood Half Hundred

The Council approved a motion by the Executive Committee to cease sponsorship of the Dogwood Half Hundred, an endurance event that the Club had organized each April for the past 17 years. The purpose of the motion was to recognize the Dogwood as a high-risk event and to minimize those risks that are not directly related to the Club's primary mission. There was also concern that the event was not consistent with the Leave No Trace principles advocated by PATC. (The vote to discontinue the Dogwood was 19 in favor, two opposed, and two abstentions.)

Budget

The Council approved the proposed budget for 2003, projecting total revenue and support of \$538,163 and total expenses of \$602,790. Treasurer Gerhard Salinger said the gap, if it materializes, could be made up with retained earnings from previous years

and application of a provision – not used this year – for requesting funds from the Endowment Fund for operating expenses. The Treasurer added that deficit funding cannot continue for long, and other sources of funding need to be examined to supplement income streams from dues, cabin rentals, and sales, which are reaching limits.

The monthly report for November showed year-to-date revenue exceeding expenditures by just over \$75,000. The Council approved transfer of \$5,840 between budget lines to meet unanticipated expenses of the audit and tax filing; transfer of a \$35,305.60 bequest from the operating account to the Trail Lands Fund and a \$10,000 bequest from the operating account to the Cabins, Shelters, and Cabins Land Fund for special projects to be designated by Council in the future; and transfer of \$1,000 donated in response to the special appeal for the 75th annual meeting in November to a restricted account in the Headquarters Repair Fund until the Council votes an appropriate use for it. Council also approved a year-end bonus for PATC staff.

Trails

The Council accepted an offer by member Richard Bilby to donate 20 acres adjoining the Tuscarora Trail in Frederick County, Va. This parcel will afford a wilderness buffer for the trail and road access for trail crews.

See Council Fire, page 3

HEADQUARTERS

HOW TO CONTACT US FOR CABIN RESERVATIONS, MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION, AND SALES

Address: 118 Park Street, S.E., Vienna, VA 22180

Hours: Monday through Thursday, 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.

and Thursday and Friday 12 noon to 2 p.m.

Phone #: 703/242-0315

24-hr. Activities Tape #: 703/242-0965

To receive an information packet: Extension 10

To leave a message for the Club President, Tom Johnson: Extension 40

Club e-mail: info@patc.net

Facsimile #: 703/242-0968

World Wide Web URL: http://www.patc.net

STAFF

DURING REGULAR BUSINESS HOURS

Director of Administration: Wilson Riley (Ext. 11) e-mail: W Riley@patc.net

Trails Management Coordinator: Heidi Forrest (Ext. 12) e-mail: hforrest@patc.net

Business Manager: Monica Clark (Ext. 15) e-mail: mclark@patc.net

Membership/Cabin Coordinator: Pat Fankhauser (Ext. 17) e-mail: pfankhauser@patc.net

Sales Coordinator: Maureen Estes (Ext. 19) e-mail: mestes@patc.net

Bus/Metro Directions to Headquarters: When taking Metro Orange line, get off at Dunn Loring station (not Vienna, the last stop). Outside the station, find the stop for Metrobus 2T westbound in the direction of Tyson's Corner. When the bus starts down Maple Avenue in Vienna, exit at the library just past Center St. Walk half a block in the same direction the bus travels, and turn right at Park St. PATC will be on the left only a few yards down from the corner. The fare is \$1.10, but you can ride for \$.25 if you remember to get a transfer ticket at your originating station.

Council Fire, from page 2

A fence will be installed to prevent vehicular traffic at Turners Gap in Maryland, with materials provided by the National Park Service and labor by Rick Canter and the South Mountaineers.

Shelters

The Council approved allocation of \$3,000 for the Shockey's Knob Shelter, to be built with donated logs on PATC's Brill tract in West Virginia where the Tuscarora Trail was recently relocated. The Council also approved allocation of \$6,000 for the Birch Run Shelter, to replace one of the few remaining old-style small twin shelters on the AT in southern Pennsylvania.

Trail Patrol

Trail Patrol reported it is considering sponsorship of a new PATC event to increase awareness of the Club and Leave No Trace principles. The new event might be held in a different location each year, with booths or stands for specific themes such as backpacking and Leave No Trace, and hikes for up to 10 members, perhaps in conjunction with National Trails Day in June. It would be an educational, family event in which the Club's principles are put into practice.

Membership

The combined Nov. 12/Dec. 10 membership report showed a total of 7,036 (an increase of one from the last report). Since the October report, 238 new members were entered into the database.

The December Council meeting was attended by 10 Club officers, 10 committee chairs, two chapter and section representatives each, five other members, and one staff person. □

—George Meek, Ex-Recording Secretary

New "No Pets" Policy for Glass House Cabin

At the Overseer's request, Chairman of Cabin Operations Mel Merritt has declared Glass House Cabin under the classification for the exclusion of pets. The list of rentable cabins now under this "No Pets" are Blackburn Trail Center, Catoctin, Cliff's House, Glass House, Highacre, Little Orleans, and Olive Green. This classification took place beginning Jan. 1, 2003. □

Pat Fankhauser
Cabin Coordinator

Tom's Trail Talk

It has become traditional for PATC Presidents to write a column in the *Potomac Appalachian* – a recitation of experiences, a few words of wisdom, a disquisition on current Club policies or controversies. Several people (not the least of whom is our editor Linda Shannon-Beaver) have asked me what I would call my own column. I couldn't call it "Walt's Notes," because my name isn't Walt. Well, I want to tell you, I went through a bushel basket of possible names. In the end I had 16 different possibilities, from "President's Corner" (not very original) to "Tom's Corner" (closer to the mark) to "Out on a Limb" (somewhat more descriptive of my situation). I still wasn't completely happy, so I took the list to a holiday party and asked people to vote. The first reader took one look at it and said "I don't like any of them! How about 'Tom's Trail Talk?'" Twelve people voted, and they all voted for Tom's Trail Talk.

And so it is. We will meet in this corner, you and I, once every month, and discuss the issues of the day. I hope it will not be a one-way conversation. I want to hear from you – anytime I strike a chord. I will try to answer you, but if I get snowed under by a blizzard of e-mails, it might take a while to get back to you. I will try my very best.

This is a big Club, and we do a lot. Do you know how big we are? Neither do I. Our

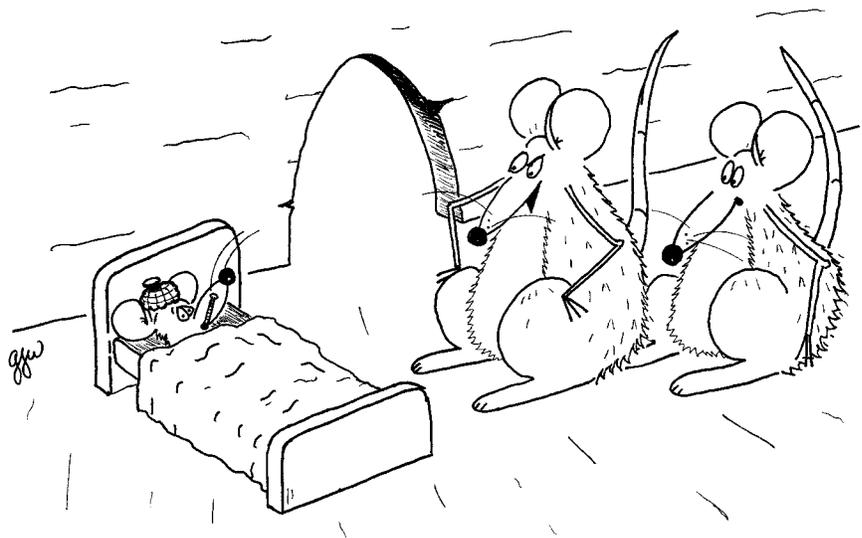
membership supervisor tells me the number is between 7,000 and 8,000, but no one is really sure. I have been told that when we ask for a number, the computer counts telephones, not people. If there is more than one person at a telephone, the computer still says one. But anyway, our size alone puts us in an elite group – there are not many local clubs that are larger. It is our very size that generates the almost limitless possibilities that PATC affords. Our horizon is as big as the Club, and as grand as its vision.



So we have a lot to talk about. Each month I will try to focus on something that will interest us both. We will discuss volunteerism, the tradition of the founders, the need for environmental preservation, land acquisition, modernization of our operations, relations with our government partners, membership, cabins, shelters, hiking, the need for new trails, and more. I will also address members' concerns. We have 24 months to talk. □

—Tom Johnson

Tails from the Woods by George Walters



"JUNIOR'S BEEN GNAWING A.T. PAINT BLAZES AGAIN!"

Japan: the Hiking Trip for the Adventurous

Paul Thoreau, the noted travel writer, makes a distinction between traveling and touring. Traveling is what the hobos did when they hopped freight cars during the Great Depression. Touring is what their more privileged brethren were doing on the Titanic.

This, I explained to a group of 15 rather mystified prospective travelers in September, was the difference between PATC's Japan trip and what they probably thought they had signed up for. We were going on this journey on our own, without assistance. In a word, we were going like the hobos and would hop trains to get around. We would make our own trip, on our own terms. There would be no tour guides, no buses, practically no up-front costs, and no promises. Japan has plenty of good public transportation, and we were going to use it. Japan has some pretty unusual foods, and we were going to try all of them. There would be times when they would not know for sure what they were eating. Moreover, we would operate on a flexible schedule. They would never know for sure until they woke up in the morning what was going to happen to them that day. Anybody want to back out? No takers.

So there was a lot of uncertainty as we piled aboard the United flight to Tokyo early on the morning of Oct. 30. None of us, least of all me, knew for sure how it would work out.

We had a pretty experienced group. Ten of the travelers had been on at least one of my trips, and six of them had already done earlier trips to Japan. That meant that they knew what to expect – nothing. No expectations, no disappointments. It also meant that the group might be more accommodating to the experiences of a culture as different from ours as Japan's.

It quickly became apparent that this was to be an adventurous group. They actually enjoyed the hour-long train ride from Narita to Tokyo. When they arrived at the hotel early in the evening, having been traveling for 19 hours, all of us wanted to go out and find a restaurant rather than collapse in our rooms. We found a restaurant in the complex of shops above the train station across the street from the hotel, and we all settled into eating Japanese food as if it were Burger King.



Photos by Tom Johnson

Mochi on a spit – a tempting morsel for the truly adventurous visitor.

Culinary Experiences

Food became a basic preoccupation. This was a group that took to raw fish instantly. Rather than wolf down the big American breakfast served up by our hotel every morning, they discovered tiny Japanese places that served cold fish, pickles, and rice with seaweed for breakfast. Their only compromise was the Starbucks down the street. In the morning I could count the number of early risers by the number of paper Starbucks cups in the trash.

As for tackling a traditional Japanese dinner, our big splurge was a kaiseki dinner in the Shinjuku district of Tokyo. The first course was raw sea urchin intestines on a bed of stringy, flavorless tofu. Well, folks, you haven't lived until you have tried raw sea urchin intestines. I wish I could adequately describe it. (And that was just the first course.) The plates went back clean, by the way. Yuck.

No matter what I put in front of them, they dove in. One Japanese delicacy that no American ever likes is sweetened bean paste nestled inside a ball of tasteless, gummy rice gluten called mochi. It is one of the great culinary experiences of Japan, I assured the group. Well, lo and behold, they all wanted to try it. Some even became addicted and found other ways to enjoy mochi. They discovered that you can live up mochi by painting the outside of the rice ball with soy sauce and roasting it on a grill. They also discovered yaki unagi, baby eels spit-roasted and roasted over a fire. I am perfectly content to pass on yaki unagi, but I was just about the only one in the group who didn't flip over it. It is also possible to find baby eel sashimi, tiny wormlike eels, nestled in a bowl with the ever-present horseradish sauce on the side. Raw, of course but, thankfully, very dead (I think).

Then there was the strange passion for onagiri. Onagiri, dear friends, is a triangle of sticky rice wrapped in seaweed. Sometimes it contains a tiny, salted, pickled plum in the center – sometimes some other delicacy like eel or another equally salty and disgusting morsel of raw fish. Onagiri simply has no takers among sane Westerners. Yet most of the group absolutely palpitated at the very thought of an onagiri meal. In convenience stores they would discuss the finer points. Did it have that salty little plum in the center? (Yum! Everyone's favorite.) And what was it called again? (Plum is ume in Japanese – now you know.) Was the seaweed properly briny? You wouldn't want one with a flavorless seaweed wrap now, would you? How many should we get? Let's see now. One for lunch, one for dinner, one for breakfast tomorrow, and three or four to eat on the train, or pass around to startled onlookers.

I did try to interest them in more classical repasts like tempura and yaki tori (chicken fried on a spit). But we always returned to the lowest common edible denominator. One day we chanced on a kaitenzushi – that is, conveyor belt sushi. You sit on lunch counter stools and watch the conveyor belt pass you with these delectable morsels of raw fish. Fish roe, raw shrimp, squid, and I suppose, raw sea urchin intestines. Now, I eat raw fish so as not to offend my Japanese hosts, and I assured everyone that they would not be required to do the same unless the future of Japanese-American relations was at stake. So I ate my very polite three plates and then popped round to see how they were doing on the opposite side of the conveyor belt. Mina and Larry had consumed 10 plates between them, but Carol and Randy had finished off 14 plates. Do you really like this stuff, or are you just being polite, I asked. The former, they assured me.

Everyone's favorite food was *okonomiyaki*, an unpronounceable repast that you cook yourself over a gas grill set into the center of your table. The waitress brings you a big bowl of eggy batter with vegetables sliced into it. You spread half the batter out over the grill as if making an omelette. Beside it you cook whatever goes into it – pork, beef, seafood, or just more vegetables. These are piled onto the middle of the omelette, which is then cooked until set, and the other half of the batter is placed on top. Flip it over (very carefully – it is big), cook some more, and you are ready to eat. We found an *okonomiyaki* place on the 38th floor of Ebisu Tower Building and returned more than once. It had a great view of the city, and the waitresses got to know us pretty well.

High dining is not expensive. The Japanese like to put their restaurants on the tops of buildings – there can be 15 or 20 in the same place. Each has a large window with plastic displays of food, some quite artfully done. Cruise the hallway, select the restaurant, and go in. When you want to order, you summon a waiter to the window and point to something. It is no more expensive than eating at ground level. In fact, it is generally cheaper than finding the small hole-in-the-wall places down below. Avoid the small quaint restaurant with the red paper lantern, decorated with mysterious Japanese characters, hanging outside. They don't speak English, they don't have a window display, and their prices are sky-high.

Tsukiji

Five a.m., time to get up. Today is Tsukiji day. Fifteen bleary-eyed travelers wash their faces and totter downstairs, muttering. What in the devil is all the fuss about this place?

Tsukiji is the world's largest fish market. It rides a wharf beside Tokyo Bay. The Japanese fishing boats chug into Tsukiji from all over the world and disgorge their catch at a time when right-thinking people are in bed. You have to get there early, because by 7 a.m. most of the action is over. Long plank tables overflowing with octopus, squid, sea cucumbers, wriggling eels, manta rays still in brine. Narrow aisles jammed with wholesalers pawing through the tubs of fish looking for the very best sashimi for their restaurants. Electric carts whiz by carrying enormous frozen tuna to the tuna auction.

The tuna auction is really the centerpiece of the market. Tuna is the absolute favorite sashimi dish in Japan. The auctioneer, his arm up, chants in sing-song Japanese while the men stand around waiting to bid on the tuna they have picked out as being just right for their shop or restaurant. If this isn't worth a trip across the Pacific, I don't know what is. After the auction we retreat to saner surroundings and catch some breakfast on the street – some *ebi tempura* udon perhaps, washed down with the ubiquitous green tea, along a sidewalk littered with fish wrappings. Tsukiji is chilly early on a November morn – you warm your hands over the steamy heat emanating from the noodle soup topped by the large tempura shrimp.

The Hike from Hell

Every trip has its downside. (Did you say you were still waiting for a high point?) Our first hike was a fully qualified disaster. Hike #1 has always been to the Okutama Gorge, a narrow defile in the mountains west of Tokyo where the Tama river lies at the bottom. Near Tokyo the Tama spreads out and meanders slowly to the Bay, but in the mountains it is a rushing torrent.

Along the south of the gorge is a ridge line whose center point is Mitakesan, a mountain with a famous Buddhist shrine on top. After a two-hour train ride to Mitake (pronounced mee-talk-kay) station, a cable car takes you up the face of the mountain. The trail from the cable car station to the shrine is lined with shops selling all manner of



Tsukiji – the tuna auction, 6:30 a.m.

Japanese delights – mochi, wasabi (horseradish), *sembee* (crackers coated with soy sauce – everyone got into the *sembee* craze), jars of pickled plums (*ume*), and religious trinkets. There are crowds of Japanese enjoying the magnificent fall weather and the view: From Mitakesan (*san* means mountain) you can see all the way back to Tokyo.

The hiking trail leaves Mitakesan in both directions – east along the ridge line toward Tokyo, and west toward Okutama, the town by the reservoir that provides much of Tokyo's drinking water. We had always before taken the gentle crest trail eastward. But I had so many repeat hikers that I wanted to give them a taste of something different. So this time, we headed west.

It got steep right away. I mean, really steep. Before half an hour was out it was hand-over-hand climbing. Then steeply down, then steeply up again. We were headed to Odakesan, the next mountain to the west and quite a bit higher than Mitakesan. The final half hour was an almost perpendicular assault. When we reached the top the sun was already beginning to lower on the western horizon. We could continue on the trail to Okutama – it appeared to be only three or four miles away according to the map – or we could abbreviate the hike and head straight for the nearest train station on a different trail. Everyone was tired, and a few were having trouble keeping up, but the worst appeared over. Let's go on, they all agreed. Okutama or bust. I reminded them, as we started out, that we would have to pick up the pace to get there before dark.

We almost busted. The trail was so steep in places that we could average only a little over a mile per hour. We kept encountering steep rock faces whose descent was almost a technical problem, and I was glad we had John Christian, an experienced rock climber, with us to help us down from these rocky spots. But all the while it was getting darker, and we had only five flashlights among 15 hikers.

We had descended the umpteenth rock face when it came time to turn on the flashlights. If we had any more descents like that one, we would probably have to go down one at a time with a flashlight crew posted along the descent. I could envision us getting to Okutama at midnight. But, thankfully, that was our last rock face. After that, hikers huddled three to a flashlight and continued on through dense forest. Eventually we began seeing the street lights of Okutama. It was over.

On the train ride back we made a new rule for the trip. No new trails. We would leave all untested trails alone. It might come to doing a hike that we had done in previous years, but that was better than doing another hike from hell. Every leader was allowed one mistake, and I was informed that I had just made mine. □

—Tom Johnson

Next Month: Japan Hiking Part II - The Japanese Mountains

Potomac Appalachian Trail Club
Trail Patrol

presents

BACKPACKING 101

An Introductory BACKPACKING Course

The BP101 class provides those persons, 18 years and older, who have moderate or no backpacking experience with the opportunity to expand their enjoyment of the outdoors through the practice of backpacking. The class provides basic instruction in equipment selection and use, information and techniques to enhance safety and comfort, and Leave No Trace methods to protect our fragile backcountry environment. It also provides more experienced backpackers an opportunity to hone or renew their skills and adapt their backpacking techniques to the Leave No Trace wilderness ethic. The students will then use their new skills on an overnight backpacking trip accompanied by experienced backpacking instructors.

INTRODUCTION NIGHT:

Monday, April 7, 2003,
7:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.

PATC Headquarters, Vienna, Va.

INSTRUCTIONAL WEEKEND:

April 12-13, 2003
Prince William Forest Park
Triangle, Va.

BACKPACKING TRIP:

May 3-4, 2003

Fee: \$60.00 for PATC Members;
75.00 for Non-Members

For more information, please contact:
John Browne, 703/425-5645,
e-mail: jbrown11@cox.net

Registration: Please return with check for the appropriate amount, payable to: Potomac Appalachian Trail Club
PATC Trail Patrol, 118 Park Street, SE,
Vienna, VA 22180

Name: _____

PATC Member? No Yes
(Member # _____)

Home Phone: _____

Work Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Mailing Address: _____

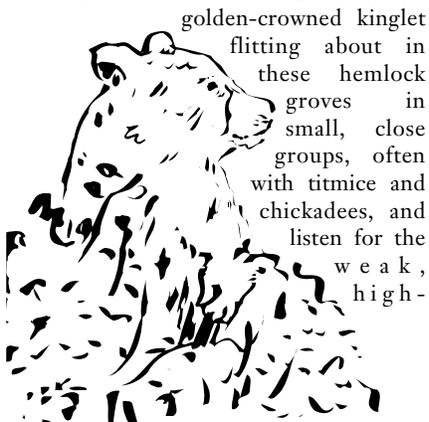
Backpacking experience/related outdoors experience: (hiking, camping, etc.)

What do you expect from this course?

Bob Pickett's Appalachian Nature: Winter

Winter provides the Shenandoah National Park the opportunity to be the host of many northern nesting birds. These seasonal guests include northern juncos, brown creepers, red-breasted nuthatches, golden-crowned kinglets, yellow-bellied sapsuckers, short-eared owls, pine siskins, purple finch, sparrows (white-throated, American tree, and fox), rough-legged hawks, and a few others. Many of these can be found breeding in the Appalachian plateaus of West Virginia and North Carolina, where it is higher and cooler, but not in our Park. Contrary to conventional thought, we do have robins in winter. There is a shift in robin populations in the fall, so that our winter robins have bred in New York and Pennsylvania while our breeding stock is sunning down in the Carolinas. If you spend much time in the woods, you will see them in large flocks in the treetops. Unlike most birds, they continue to call throughout the winter. Just don't look for them in your front yard until spring, when the worms have come back to the surface. In fact, the Indians call the March full moon the worm moon for this reason.

Of all the birds that reside in our winter forests, the golden-crowned kinglet must have the toughest life. To start with, it is our smallest winter bird, smaller than our summer warblers, weighing in at two ounces and having total head to tip of tail length of three inches. This large surface-area-to-volume ratio makes heat loss a major issue. To make things more difficult, the kinglet is a strict insectivore, passing over the available seed supply for the harder-to-find over-wintering insect eggs. If life for this tiny insectivore wasn't already hard enough, man now has introduced the hemlock woolly adelgid. This aphid-like insect has been killing the hemlock groves throughout the kinglet's wintering range, effectively eliminating its favorite habitat for both food and shelter. Look for the



golden-crowned kinglet flitting about in these hemlock groves in small, close groups, often with titmice and chickadees, and listen for the weak, high-

pitched trill these birds use to communicate amongst themselves.

Not all birds have it as bad as the golden-crowned kinglet. Surprisingly enough, great horned owls have been on their eggs since January, and the barred owl is mating at this time. Listen for its "who cooks for you, who cooks for you-all."

I always hope to hike in the SNP with a snow cover. Despite the lack of food and warmth, the great number and variety of animal tracks tells us how many animals do find a way of surviving these stressful winters. Small mammals, such as white-footed mice, voles, and shrews, are most common, along with the ubiquitous deer. But bobcat, fox, and coyote are also routinely found, and even bear tracks are often seen, a reminder that not all bear choose to spend the winter in hibernation (if one chooses to apply that term to bear).

Speaking of black bear, birthing is taking place now (late January or early February) with the cubs weighing only 6 to 10 ounces and about 8 inches long; helpless, hairless, and eyes closed. The good news for the sow is that she will often remain in deep sleep throughout the birth! The unusual thing about the black bear pregnancy is that after a summer mating (with the male and female together over a two-week period in late June or early July) and fertilization, the embryo undergoes an arrested state of development for five or six months. Known as delayed implantation, this enables the bear in the fall to concentrate its energy on fattening up on the available mast crop, instead of expending its energy on mating. Interestingly, if the mast crop fails and the sow fails to put on adequate brown fat before entering the winter dormancy, the embryo will abort. Thus, the delayed implantation prevents the sow from investing in a pregnancy before her food reserves are established. The actual gestation period of six to eight weeks begins in November or December. Delayed implantation occurs among many of the weasel family as well.

And, speaking of bobcats, if you're staying at one of our cabins in the woods at this time of the year, you might be lucky enough to hear the blood-curdling scream of what sounds like a wild banshee woman. If this sounds about right, then you've heard a male bobcat hollering for a female. February and March are the prime breeding months for bobcats. □

—Robert Pickett



Robert at Kennedy Peak (day 2).

MT, from page 1

east, the Shenandoah River South Fork winding below (MP 6.4). Refilled all water containers from the stream near Little Crease Shelter (MP 8.7) – next water Camp Roosevelt (MP 25). The trail was demanding in terms of elevation gain and loss and tread between here and Kennedy Peak (MP 21.7). In the afternoon I passed several unadvertised campsites along the ridge but decided to push on. Bad choice. By late afternoon, bivouacking near the Indian Grave Ridge Trail was my only option (MP 14.6). The site was barely adequate. Talk about “Leave No Trace” camping. In the morning, I got up and wasn’t sure I was there.

Day two’s early start was rewarded by a view down across Fort Valley to Opechee Peak on the west side, an MT bonus not promised in the guidebook or supplement. I lunched at Kennedy Peak’s summit (MP 21.7), high point on the MT’s eastern side, atop the wood deck platform with 150-degree views east, north, and south across to the high peaks in the northern and central sections of the SNP. There I met a couple day-hiking with their son, talked and exchanged cameras and photos, and then hiked down forest roads and good tread to Camp Roosevelt (self-registration camp-

sites, grills, covered picnic tables) where I watered up big time.

The weather was turning, so I pushed it along the stream up Duncan Hollow and first noticed the “white tepee” blazing, which indicates out-of-sight MT campsites, a classy logo for trail lodging. Going west now, I went over Middle Mountain, stopped late, and camped in a pleasant field off the Scothorn Gap Trail (MP 31).

Soul-Testing Days

The next day was a major “soul tester,” due to unexpected bad weather – so much for long-range forecasts. Hiking in a hurricane remnant, this day featured a steep climb up Waterfall Mountain, steady rain, and eventually wet boots, and the new MT tread on Kerns Mountain was quite rocky. I was reminded of the basic rule for bad-weather hiking: “Everything slows down, and you’d better, too.” I retrieved my first water cache, found the next tent symbol, and called it a day at 2 p.m. after 10 miles of point-to-point hiking (MP 41.1), pitched my tent, took a warm afternoon nap, cooked dinner in the vestibule, and only exited as necessary.

More rain overnight and early on day four, but I timed it right, leaving just before noon at rain’s end. Now on the MT’s west rim and heading north, there were clearing views on

Short Mountain across Fort Valley to Kennedy Peak, plus a fine afternoon view north up the spine of Powell Mountain (MP 47.4). After seven miles, I followed the tent symbol to a campsite near Edinburg Gap (MP 48.1), located my water cache (next water MP 62.6), and cooked and ate dinner before an evening thunderstorm arrived.

Trail Happy

Saturday dawned a great day for hiking. I missed the MT’s trail departure from the Peter’s Mill Run ORV Road. However, rather than retrace my steps, I decided to hike along the road and chatted with a passing ATVer. A major positive, if you “mis-step,” is that there are many side trails back to the MT; and the 7 Bar None Trail served that purpose well. I had lunch with the hang gliders near Woodstock Tower (MP 56.8), the bends of the Shenandoah River North Fork below and views west across the valley to Great North Mountain and the Virginia-West Virginia border. The multiple-use concept and greater freedom in national forests has always appealed to me, and I was constantly reminded of that in the GWNF.

Both the ATVer and the hang gliders looked at me and my pack and suggested I should adopt their outdoor preferences. I smiled and thought, “Thanks but not today.” The tread was superb, my pack was light, my feet were happy. Camping that evening was the best part; I dined by a stream and slept under the pines north of Powells Fort Camp (MP 62.8).

Sunday found me hiking past the Strasburg Reservoir (MP 64.8) and easily up the road to the Signal Knob overlook (MP 66.6). On the way I caught up with two ladies, day-hiking with three dogs who, they assured me, were not mean. Of course, I told them I

See MT, page 12



Photos by Robert Neilson

FORECAST

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 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. 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 Mark Mitchell (mdtrail@yahoo.com) 301/461-7048 for information. Pennsylvania work trips are generally held on the AT on the first Saturday and on the Tuscarora on the third Saturday – contact Charlie Irvin 301/447-2848 or Pete Brown (peter.brown4@worldnet.att.net) 410/343-1140. Pennsylvania AT work trips also include an optional Saturday night stay at the Gypsy Spring cabin. Dinner, breakfast, and camaraderie available. For information on upcoming hikes, contact Chris Firme (bnc-firme@innernet.net) 717/765-4833. For general chapter information, contact chapter president Pete Brown or visit the North Chapter home page (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 Gerry Boyd (gerryb@compuserve.com) 703/281-7216.

Southern Shenandoah Valley Chapter

See Forecast (or our link from PATC website) for work trips and hiking events sponsored by the Southern Shenandoah Valley Chapter. Hikers from the DC area should allow about 3 hours to get to our region. INFO: in Harrisonburg, call Alvin 540/434-6244 or Lynn 540/234-6273; in Waynesboro, call Michael 540/943-8695; in Staunton, call Doris 540/885-4526.

West Virginia Chapter

Chapter meetings at Highacre are on the second Wednesday of Feb., Apr., Jun., Aug., Oct., and Dec. See Forecast for upcoming activities. For information about the chapter or to receive the newsletter, contact Judy Smoot 540/667-2036 or e-mail wvpatc@hotmail.com.

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: Steve Brickel 301/946-2520 or sbrickel@erols.com.

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 Mack Muir 703/960-1697 (MackMuir@edisaurus.com).

PATC Midweek Hikes

PATC's Vigorous Group hikes 8-10 miles at a fast pace; and the Easy Hikers hike 5-8 miles on trails with little elevation change. See below for scheduled trips; check the weekly tape (703/242-0965) on Thursday or Friday for any changes or additions.

Other Clubs' Hikes

Capital and Wanderbirds hike on 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.wvhighlands.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.

-  Hiking Trips
-  Backpacking Trips
-  Trail Work Trips
-  Cabin/Shelter Work Trips
-  Special Events
-  Meetings
-  Skiing
-  Classes

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. 23 into Vienna, Va. and turn east on Park St. (Rt.675) to 118 Park St. on your left. INFO: Jane Thompson 301/565-6704 x208.

Mountaineering Section – Second Wednesday

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

Shenandoah Mountain Rescue Group

(Business meeting) – Last Tuesday, 7:30 p.m. INFO: Zeb Whitaker (zw@tdcarchitects.com) 703/255-5034, then press #5.

PATC Council – Second Tuesday

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 welcome. Come see how we make decisions about your Club. INFO: Wilson Riley (wirley@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, educating 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 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: Kumait Jawdat 202/328-8137 or see PATC's Web site: (www.patc.net/volunteer/trailpatrol).

FEBRUARY

1 (Saturday)

DEADLINE - March Potomac Appalachian Headquarters, Vienna, VA

By 5:00 p.m. all items for the next issue of the newsletter due to editors. Send all Forecast events to PA-Forecast@patc.net and all other articles to PA@patc.net.

1 (Saturday)

TRAIL WORK TRIP - Yankee Clippers Trail Crew Appalachian Trail, PA

Meet at the parking lot at the intersection of US 30 and PA 233 at Caledonia State Park. Departure at 9:00 a.m. sharp. If you would like to share supper with us afterwards, be sure to call a week ahead of time. INFO: Pete Brown (peter.brown4@worldnet.att.net) 410/343-1140.

1 (Saturday)

HIKE - Green Ridge State Forest Allegany County, MD

Located in central Maryland is a hidden gem in the state forest system. Join us for a moderate 10-mile hike along the upper portion of the Green Ridge Trail which connects to the Mid-State Trail. This trail follows streams which involves crossings and some hill climbing. Snow date for this trip is February 22. INFO: Susan Bly (sbly@shepherd.edu) 304/258-3319, between 7:00 and 9:00 p.m.

1 - 2 (Saturday - Sunday)

CLASS - Wilderness First Aid Alexandria, VA

A program of the Wilderness Safety Council, this 18-hour class includes classroom study and hands-on practice, and results in a two-year certification. The cost is \$140. Registration is limited to 25 people. More information and registration at: <http://wfa.net>. INFO: Christopher Tate 703/836-8905.

1 - 5 (Saturday - Wednesday)

XC SKI TRIP - Craftsbury (STS) Albany, VT

Northeast Kingdom Mini-week. Join us as we explore 85 km of groomed trails over rolling terrain. We stay at the Craftsbury Outdoor Center in Northeast, VT, in semi-private rooms. Estimated trip cost of approximately \$450 includes: round-trip airfare, share of van rental expenses, lodging, and meals. Initial down-payment of \$150 covers lodging and meals. Non-STS members add \$10. INFO: Howard or Debbie Cohn 410/381-2436.

3 (Monday)

HIKE - Family Hike McLean, VA

Difficult Run Trail, Colvin Run Mill. Come enjoy the crisp fresh air on this out-and-back hike. The trail is jogging-stroller friendly. We will hike about 3 miles. After the hike we will stop by the mill for a tour. Adults \$4, children free. INFO: Lauren Lang (LEvansAT94@aol.com) 703/631-9278.

4 (Tuesday)

HIKE - Vigorous Hikers Massanutten Mountain, VA

From VA 613 climb Massanutten Ridge on East Sherman Gap Trail, descend to Elizabeth Furnace for lunch, then climb over Shawl Gap returning to east side. About 12 miles and 2500 feet elevation gain. INFO: Chris Nolen (chrishiker@erols.com) 301/469-8931, before 9:30 p.m.

4 (Tuesday)

MEETING - Trail Patrol, 7:30 p.m.

5 (Wednesday)

CLASS - Crossing Latitudes in Norway REI, Bailey's Crossroads, VA

7:30 Join Tomas and Mya Dundzila as they share great paddling and hiking adventures and photography from the Land of the Midnight Sun - Scandinavia. INFO: Mark Nelson (mnelson@rei.com) 703/379-9400.

5 (Wednesday)

HIKE - Easy Hikers Vienna, VA

About 4 miles along W&OD Trail and Tamarack Park. Meet at the Clarks Crossing Park parking lot at 10:15 a.m. From Beltway, exit to RT 123 south. In 2.4 miles, turn right onto Beulah Road. After 1.6 miles, bear left onto Clarks Crossing Road. In 0.9 miles, park in the lot at the end of the road or on nearby streets. 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.

5 (Wednesday)

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

7 - 9 (Friday - Sunday)

XC SKI TRIP - Blackwater Falls (STS) Blackwater Falls State Park, WV

Weekend No. 4. Stay at Blackwater Falls State Park Lodge adjacent to Blackwater river and gorge, complete with dining room, indoor pool, and exercise room. Ski trails in the park, or nearby at Whitegrass, Blackwater Falls State Park, and Dolly Sods. Estimated cost \$90 per person. Non-STS members add \$10. INFO: Larry Doff (ldoff@juno.com) 703/615-3195.

7 - 9 (Friday - Sunday)

XC SKI TRIP - Learn-To-XC Ski (STS) Laurel Highlands, PA

Weekend No. 2. Catch XC ski fever with 12 other students and help of volunteer instructors. We stay at motel in downtown Somerset in between three favorite skiing areas. Estimated cost of \$65 per person covers lodging and instruction. Non-STS members add \$10. INFO: Greg Westernnik (westernnik@starpower.net) 703/866-4098.

8 (Saturday)

HIKE - North Chapter Cumberland Valley, PA

Appalachian Trail Hike I, Cumberland Valley section. Scott Farm to Boiling Springs, PA, ATC Mid-Atlantic Office. Easy 10.3 mile hike, elevation gain 200 feet. This section takes in the wonderfully constructed AT across the Cumberland Valley. Meet at 10:00 a.m. at the Scott Farm. INFO: Christopher Firme (bncfirme@innernet.net) 771/765-4833, after 6:00 p.m.

8 (Saturday)

TRAIL WORK TRIP - Massanutten Crew Massanutten Mountain, VA

Winter trail building, if we can find the ground, and it isn't frozen. No gnats allowed. Meet at 9:00 a.m. on the Massanutten. INFO: Wil Kohlbrenner (wmaxk@shentel.net) 540/477-2971.

8 - 9 (Saturday - Sunday)

CLASS - Land Navigation Class (REI) REI, Bailey's Crossroads, VA

Saturday 10:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and Sunday 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. This comprehensive two-day course teaches all skills necessary to use map and compass in an integrated land navigation system. The first day is spent in intensive classroom exercises concentrating on map reading

and interpretation, position plotting, compass fundamentals, declination, and azimuth. The second day is spent in Prince William Forest Park, primarily off-trail, engaging in practical navigation exercises of increasing complexity. The course fee is \$85 and includes workbook text, course materials, compass, map, grid reader, and lunch on Saturday. Registration required. INFO: Mark Nelson (mnelson@rei.com) 703/379-9400.

8 - 9 (Saturday - Sunday)

TRAIL WORK TRIP - Cadillac Crew Meadows Cabin, Madison, VA

The crew continues to remove brush and open views around the recently refurbished cabin. Local trails need attention as well. Bring a lunch and water for Saturday noon. Community dinner on Saturday night. Overnight at Meadows Cabin. INFO: Fran Keenan (outdoorsnow@cox.net) 703/938-3973 or Jon Rindt (jrindt@erols.com) 540/635-6351.

10 (Monday)

HIKE - Family Hike Centreville, VA

Ellanor Lawrence Park. Last time we hiked this park in the winter, we were hiking through beautiful snow showers. We will hike about 3 miles through the trails, along a stream, and down to the pond. After the hike, we'll warm up in the Visitor Center. It opens at noon. They have turtles, snakes, frogs, and a skink. They also have some nature books and puzzles. INFO: Lauren Lang (LEvansAT94@aol.com) 703/631-9278.

11 (Tuesday)

HIKE - Vigorous Hikers Appalachian Trail, MD

14-mile hike at a brisk pace along the AT in Maryland following the route of the JFK from Turner Gap (RT 40A) to Weverton. Expect a short detour to enjoy the expansive views in the area of Harpers Ferry from Weverton Cliffs. INFO: Cliff Noyes (cliff.noyes@juno.com) 703/451-5181.

11 (Tuesday)

MEETING - PATC Council, 7:00 p.m.

12 (Wednesday)

CLASS - Bull Run Mountain Natural Area REI, Bailey's Crossroads, VA

7:30 p.m. Speeding west on Interstate 66 we pass Bull Run Mountain without a glance. Yet this eastern outpost of the Blue Ridge is an intact area of amazing natural diversity, remarkable history, and geology. It is one of the most intensively studied natural areas in Virginia, and has been named a state natural area preserve. Michael Kieffer, Executive Director of the Friends of Bull Run, will introduce us to the unique botanical communities, the underlying geology, and the history of this intact natural area, including the Civil War Battle of Thoroughfare Gap. INFO: Mark Nelson (mnelson@rei.com) 703/379-9400.

12 (Wednesday)

HIKE - Easy Hikers Rock Creek Park, Washington, DC

The Easy Hikers will hike approximately 4 miles. From Pierce Mill we will hike south to the National Zoo. After passing through the Zoo we will have lunch at a restaurant on Connecticut Avenue before returning via the Melvin Hazen Trail. Meet at Pierce Mill at 10:15 a.m. From the beltway follow Connecticut Avenue inbound to Tilden Street NW. Turn left (east) on Tilden and go 0.5 miles to Mill parking area. Hike is canceled if DC Public Schools are closed due to inclement weather. INFO: Gary Abrecht (GAbrecht@AOL.com) 202/546-6089.

FORECAST

12 (Wednesday)

MEETING - Mountaineering Section, 8:00 p.m.

12 (Wednesday)

MEETING - WV Chapter Meeting

High Acre House, Harpers Ferry, WV

Presentation will cover trail maintenance and projects of the various circuit trails and the Catoctin Trail at Gambrill State Park, MD. The WV Chapter oversees the Black Locust Circuit Trail. One trail reroute project was completed by the Chapter last year. Two more projects are forthcoming, one of these projects will resume this spring. INFO: Dave Jordahl (dave.jordahl@askdep.com) 301/834-7729.

14 - 17 (Friday - Monday)

XC SKI TRIP - Blackwater Falls (STS)

Blackwater Falls State Park, WV

Weekend No. 5. Stay at Blackwater Falls State Park Lodge adjacent to Blackwater river and gorge, complete with its own dining room, indoor pool, and exercise room. Ski in the park, or nearby at Whitegrass, Blackwater Falls St.Park, and Dolly Sods. Estimated cost is \$135 per person. Non-STS members add \$10. INFO: Greg or Anna Westernik (westernik@starpower.net) 703/866-4098.

14 - 17 (Friday - Monday)

XC SKI & DANCE TRIP - Laurel Highlands

Laurel Highlands, PA

18th annual SKI-DANCE WEEKEND continues by popular demand at a new lodging location, Camp Harmony. Participants cross-country ski during the day and contra dance during the evening. Estimated trip cost is \$150 for adult members of Sierra Club, FSGW, and PATC/STS section, or \$165 for all others except children. Cost includes meals, lodging, ski instruction and live music. Visit <http://bestfouryears.com/Ski%20Dance.htm>. INFO: Jim Finucane (Jim.Finucane@eia.doe.gov) 301/365-3485.

14 - 17 (Friday - Monday)

XC SKI TRIP - Tug Hill Region (STS)

Pulaski, NY

Ski Mini-Week No.3. Join our group of intermediate skilled or better XC skiers as we enjoy the expected heavy lake-effect snowfall endemic to this area. We stay at the 1880 Lodge in Pulaski (close to Lake Ontario) in semi-private rooms with continental breakfasts. Options include joining a local ski race, and trails at Winona State Forest, Salmon Hills, and Osceola STCs. Suppers may be arranged at the Lodge for an additional fee, or we can eat out at local restaurants. Estimated cost \$130 per person for a 3-night stay. Non-STS members add \$10. INFO: Erma Cameron 703/273-4578.

15 (Saturday)

HIKE - Bull Run Mountain Natural Area (REI)

Bull Run Mountain Natural Area, VA

10:00 a.m. Join Michael Kieffer, Executive Director of the Friends of Bull Run, for a hike through the natural history, geology, and Civil War history of the Bull Run Mountain Natural Area. Registration is limited to those attending the February 12 program at REI Bailey's Crossroads. INFO: Mark Nelson (mnelson@rei.com) 703/379-9400.

15 (Saturday)

HIKE - Massanutten Mountain Series

Massanutten Mountain, VA

The 13th hike of the Massanutten Series will be a 17-mile circuit hike from Woodstock Gap to

Strasburg Reservoir on the Massanutten and Tuscarora Trails. Total elevation gain will be 1600 feet. PATC Map G. Meet at the Oakton Shopping Center parking lot at 7:30 a.m. Contact leaders for requirements and details. INFO: Jack Thorsen (thorsen4@juno.com) 703/339-6716 or William Needham (Needham82@AOL.com) 410/884-9127.

15 (Saturday)

TRAIL WORK TRIP - Stonewall Brigade

Shenandoah County, VA

Great North Mountain on the VA/WV state line. Join the Stonewall Brigade on Waites Run Road at 9:00 a.m. to get tools then work on the Capon Trail. This trail is near the road and several houses and not likely to be subject to hunting. RSVP by Wednesday evening if you plan to attend. Bring lunch, work gloves, water, seasonal clothing, and hiking shoes. INFO: Hop Long (mgrnmd@hotmail.com) 301/942-6177.

15 (Saturday)

TRAIL WORK TRIP - Yankee Clippers Trail Crew

Tuscarora Trail, PA

Enjoy the brisk mountain air and help clear winter storm damage. Meet at the Path Valley Family Restaurant in Spring Run, PA, ready to leave at 8:00 a.m. sharp. Be sure to call by Wednesday before the trip in case plans change. INFO: Pete Brown (peter.brown4@worldnet.att.net) 410/343-1140.

15 - 16 (Saturday - Sunday)

CLASS - Backpacking Class

REI, Bailey's Crossroads, VA

Our comprehensive two-day class teaches essential and advanced skills, proper gear use, selection and maintenance, and outdoor ethics. Instructor, Ted Fryberger, brings more than 30 years experience, backpacking all over North America. The class includes 80 page text, course materials, and two days of lecture, discussion, and demonstration. Class fee \$85. Call for times. INFO: Mark Nelson (mnelson@rei.com) 703/379-9400.

17 (Monday)

HIKE - Family Hike

Great Falls, VA

President's Day Hike. Difficult Run Trail. Join us for a jogging-stroller-passable hike along this beautiful stream. We will hike to the mouth of Difficult Run at the Potomac River, and return on the Ridge Trail in Great Falls Park. The hike will be about 3 miles long. INFO: Lauren Lang (LEvansAT94@aol.com) 703/631-9278.

17 (Monday)

HIKE - President's Day Hike

Appalachian Trail, VA

Northern Virginia. Second section of the Northern Virginia series hikes. Keys Gap to Snickers Gap, approximately 13.5 miles. Meet at 10:00 a.m. at Keys Gap along RT 7 to set up shuttles. INFO: Dave Jordahl (dave.jordahl@askdep.com) 301/834-7729.

18 (Tuesday)

HIKE - Vigorous Hikers

Central District, SNP, VA

Train for your favorite long hike. Up Rose River Fire Road to unmarked trail connecting to Rose River Loop Trail. Climb to AT, to the Lewis Fall Trail. Return via Rapidan Fire Road and Dark Hollow Falls Trail. 18 miles and 4300 feet elevation gain. INFO: Chris Nolen (chrishiker@erols.com) 301/469-8931, before 9:30 p.m.

19 (Wednesday)

HIKE - Easy Hike

Fort Hunt Park, VA

Fort Hunt Park to Mount Vernon. A February tribute to our country's first leader, George Washington, on President's Day holiday week. A 6 mile hike along the Potomac River. Meet at 10:15 a.m. in parking lot of Fort Hunt Park. Take George Washington Parkway south to Fort Hunt Park entrance. Turn right into park. Lunch will be in the fast food court at the Mount Vernon Inn. Group will return to starting point after lunch. No pets. INFO: Jim Flanigan (jflanigan@aol.com) 202/554-3775.

20 - 23 (Thursday - Sunday)

XC SKI TRIP - White Mountains (STS)

White Mountains, NH

New Hampshire Mini-Week. Join our group as we explore favorite ski venues like the Jackson Ski Touring Center, Bretton Woods Ski Center and the lovely trails adjacent to The Balsams resort. We stay in a rented townhouse with fireplace near Conway, NH. A relaxing late season getaway. Travel is via airline to and from Manchester, NH, and by shared vans. Estimated trip cost of approximately \$400 includes: round-trip airfare, share of van expenses, lodging, and meals. Non-STS members add \$10. INFO: Robert Swennes (robertswennes@hotmail.com) 703/532-6101.

21 - 23 (Friday - Sunday)

XC SKI TRIP - Blackwater Falls (STS)

Blackwater Falls State Park, WV

Weekend No. 6. Stay at Blackwater Falls State Park Lodge adjacent to Blackwater river and gorge, complete with dining room, indoor pool, and exercise room. Ski trails in the park, or nearby at Whitegrass, Blackwater Falls State Park, and Dolly Sods. Estimated cost \$90 per person. Non-STS members add \$10. INFO: Larry Doff (ldoff@juno.com) 703/615-3195.

22 (Saturday)

HIKE - Natural History Hike

North District, SNP, VA

Join Bob Pickett on an interesting historical hike as we visit some old home sites and a cemetery along the Fox Farm - Snead Farm loop trails near the Dickey Ridge Visitor Center. We will hike about 5 miles looking for artifacts and signs of our winter residents. At the conclusion of this loop trail, we may visit a nearby isolated series of waterfalls on Lands Run for an additional 1.6 mile adventure. Final plans will be dictated by weather and hiking conditions. Reservations required. INFO: Bob Pickett 301/681-1511.

22 - 23 (Saturday - Sunday)

TRAIL WORK TRIP - Cadillac Crew

Gainesboro, VA

Shockeys Knob, west of Winchester. Feeling like a bit of fresh air? Join the Cadillac Crew as we take a chance on the weather and locate the Brill Tract boundary. Opening a new trail from High Rocks in Sleepy Creek is high on the agenda. Community dinner on Saturday night. Overnight at Brill Cabin. INFO: Fran Keenan (outdoorsnow@cox.net) 703/938-3973 or Jon Rindt (jkrindt@erols.com) 540/635-6351.

24 (Monday)

HIKE - Family Hike

Sterling, VA

Claude Moore Park. We will hike about 3 miles on these interconnected trails. The trails are jogging-stroller passable. There are rocks, roots, and a few steep places. We will hike up to a beauti-

ful view of the suburbs. We will begin our hike on the red blazed Hickory Nut Trail which is a Native Tree Interpretive Trail (0.5 mile). Then we will follow the white blazed Little Stoney Mountain Trail, and then the Blue-blazed Scout Trail. After the hike, we'll warm up in the Visitor Center, where there are two turtles, some coloring pages, and puzzles. INFO: Lauren Lang (LEvansAT94@aol.com) 703/631-9278.

25 (Tuesday)

HIKE - Vigorous Hikers

Central District, SNP, VA

Train for your favorite long hike. Start on the Stanton River Trail, climb to Bear Church Rock, and Cat Knob, down Laurel Prong then up to views at Fork Mountain, returning for a total of 16 miles and 3800 feet elevation gain. INFO: Chris Nolen (chrishiker@erols.com) 301/469-8931, before 9:30 p.m.

25 (Tuesday)

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

26 (Wednesday)

CLASS - Increasing Backcountry Enjoyment REI, Bailey's Crossroads, VA

7:30 p.m. Going Light: Increasing Backcountry Enjoyment. AT through-hiker Brian Chenoweth believes in "going light." The first thing he does when planning a hike is ask, "What can I live/hike without?" Join Brian for an evening's exploration of "What do I really need to hike with?" Brian will cover gear to start with: stoves, hiking poles, boots, backpack, clothing, and sleeping bags. Brian will also cover water and food preparation, first aid, trail hygiene, and where and how to camp and re-supply. INFO: Mark Nelson (mnelson@rei.com) 703/379-9400.

26 (Wednesday)

HIKE - Easy Hikers

Arlington, VA

Mt. Vernon bike trail and Arlington Cemetery. The Easy Hikers will hike 3 to 4 easy miles on the Mt. Vernon bike trail and through Arlington Cemetery. Meet at the Theodore Roosevelt Island parking lot at 10:15 a.m. For those who would like to come by Metro, we will meet at the top of the escalator of the Arlington Cemetery stop at 10:30 a.m. The Roosevelt Island parking lot is accessible only from the westbound lanes of the GW Memorial Parkway. It can also be reached from DC by crossing the Roosevelt Bridge and turning right onto the parkway. For those who are interested, there will be a lunch stop in Rosslyn. INFO: Shirley Rettig 703/836-0147.

27 (Thursday)

HIKE - In-Between Hikers

Glen Echo, MD

Glen Echo, Cabin John Creek, and C&O Canal Towpath. Joint hike with Sierra Club, MWRP. A moderate-to-fast 9 miles over variable terrain. Bring water and lunch. Starts at 10:00 a.m. No pets. Rain or shine, but not if roads are icy. From the beltway (I-495) take exit 41. Follow Clara Barton Parkway east where it will merge into Cabin John Parkway, proceed to the Cabin John exit, left over the bridge, right onto MacArthur Blvd. and go about 1.5 miles to park entrance. INFO: Henri Comeau (henricomeau@aol.com) 703/451-7965.

MARCH

1 (Saturday)

DEADLINE - April Potomac Appalachian Headquarters, Vienna, VA

By 5:00 p.m. all items for the next issue of the newsletter due to editors. Send all Forecast events to PA-Forecast@patc.net and all other articles to PA@patc.net.

1 - 2 (Saturday - Sunday)

CLASS - Hike Leadership Training Course Prince William Forest Park, VA

The Trail Patrol is hosting a Hike Leadership Training Course at Prince William Forest Park. The two-day course uses classroom and hands-on instruction to teach participants the essential skills for leading safe, enjoyable hikes with minimal environmental impact. The topics to be covered include: medical emergencies, planning, personal equipment, Leave No Trace, leadership skills, standard procedures, emergency procedures, and navigation and map reading. Details at trailpatrol.patc.net. INFO: Ben Fernandez (bmf Fernandez99@earthlink.net).

1 - 2 (Saturday - Sunday)

CLASS - Wilderness First Aid Alexandria, VA

A program of the Wilderness Safety Council, this 18-hour class includes classroom study, hands-on practice, and results in a two-year certification. The cost is \$140. Registration is limited to 25 people. More information and registration at: <http://wfa.net>. INFO: Christopher Tate 703/836-8905.

3 (Monday)

HIKE - Family Hike Springfield, VA

Hidden Pond Nature Center. Out and back jogging-stroller-passable hike along Pohick Stream. We will hike about 3 miles in all. Meet on the playground right at the parking lot. INFO: Lauren Lang (LEvansAT94@aol.com) 703/631-9278.

4 (Tuesday)

MEETING - Trail Patrol, 7:30 p.m.

5 (Wednesday)

CLASS - Everest 50th Anniversary REI, Bailey's Crossroads, VA

7:30 p.m. In the spring of 1953, Sir Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay fought their way to the top of the world. Fifty years later, expeditions and climbing teams throng the mountain, often crowding camps, and forming bottlenecks at critical spots. Chris Warner, owner of Earth Treks Climbing Center, the first Marylander to summit Everest, and the first American to solo an 8,000 meter peak, presents a retrospective of his personal experiences on Everest and climbing in the Himalaya in celebration of the first summiting of Everest. Admission \$5.00 at the door. INFO: Mark Nelson (mnelson@rei.com) 703/379-9400.

5 (Wednesday)

HIKE - Easy Hikers Vienna, VA

WO&D Trail (paved and gravelled). Five miles of flat walking with a stop at end for lunch and tour of PATC office on Park Street. Meet at the Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry Street. Directions: from Beltway (I-495), west on I-66. Exit 62, Nutley Street (VA 243) north toward Vienna. Continue to 4th traffic light intersection. Right on Maple Avenue (RT 123). Right on Park Street then about 2 blocks to Community Center on right. No pets.

Rain or shine. Bring lunch and water. Starts at 10:15 a.m. INFO: Henri Comeau (henricomeau@aol.com) 703/451-7965.

5 (Wednesday)

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

8 (Saturday)

HIKE - North Chapter

Boiling Springs, PA

Appalachian Trail Hike II, Center Knob section. ATC Mid-Atlantic Office to PA RT 94. Moderate to difficult 8.8-mile hike, elevation gain 700 feet. This section takes in the Center Knob, which at one time was the midpoint of the AT. The Alec Kennedy shelter is found on this section of the AT. Meet at 10:00 a.m. in Boiling Springs, PA, at the ATC Mid-Atlantic Office. INFO: Christopher Firme (bnc-firme@inrnet.net) 771/765-4833, after 6:00 p.m.

8 (Saturday)

TRAIL WORK TRIP - Massanutten Crew

Massanutten Mountain, VA

Mid-winter work on a mountain is invigorating. Meet at 9:00 a.m. on the Massanutten. INFO: Will Kohlbrenner (wmax@shentel.net) 540/477-2971.

8 - 9 (Saturday - Sunday)

CLASS Land Navigation Class REI, Bailey's Crossroads, VA

Saturday 10:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and Sunday 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. This comprehensive two-day course teaches all skills necessary to use map and compass in an integrated land navigation system. The first day is spent in intensive classroom exercises concentrating on map reading and interpretation, position plotting, compass fundamentals, declination, and azimuth. The second day is spent in Prince William Forest Park, primarily off-trail, engaging in practical navigation exercises of increasing complexity. The course fee is \$85 and includes workbook text, course materials, compass, map, grid reader, and lunch on Saturday. Registration required. INFO: Mark Nelson (mnelson@rei.com) 703/379-9400.

8 - 9 (Saturday - Sunday)

TRAIL WORK TRIP - Cadillac Crew

Washington, DC

Potomac Heritage Trail (PHT). Join the Cadillac Crew for some inside-the-beltway trail work. The Crew plans to repair sections of the PHT to include steps and erosion control devices. Bring water and a lunch for Saturday noon. Community dinner on Saturday night. Overnight with local crewmembers. INFO: Fran Keenan (outdoorsnow@cox.net) 703/938-3973 or Jon Rindt (jkrindt@erols.com) 540/635-6351.

11 (Tuesday)

MEETING - PATC Council, 7:00 p.m.

12 (Wednesday)

MEETING - Mountaineering Section, 8:00 p.m.

15 (Saturday)

HIKE - Massanutten Series Massanutten Mountain, VA

The last hike of the Massanutten Series will be a 17-mile circuit hike on the Sherman Gap, Bear Wallow, Massanutten, Shawl Gap, and Tuscarora Trails. Total elevation gain will be 4600 feet. PATC Map G. Meet at the Oakton Shopping Center parking lot at 7:30 a.m. Contact leaders for requirements and details. INFO: Jack Thorsen (thorsen4@Juno.com) 703/339-6716 or William Needham (Needham82@AOL.com) 410/884-9127.

FORECAST

15 (Saturday)

✂ TRAIL WORK TRIP - Stonewall Brigade
Shenandoah County, VA

Great North Mountain on the VA/WV state line. Join the Stonewall Brigade at Wolf Gap Recreation Area at 9:00 a.m. to get tools then work on Little Stoney Creek Trail in the nearby area. RSVP by Wednesday evening if you plan to attend. Bring lunch, work gloves, water, seasonal clothing, and hiking shoes. INFO: Hop Long (mgrngmd@hotmail.com) 301/942-6177.

15 - 16 (Saturday - Sunday)

🏠 CABIN WORK TRIP - Vining Tract
Lydia, VA

The Vining Tract crew meets once a month to work on various cabin and land management projects on the beautiful Vining property. We are making progress on the new cabin (it has a roof), but there's a lot left to do (it still needs walls). We also do projects to keep Conley and Wineberry cabins and the surrounding property in tiptop condition. Come join us and raise a hammer, a paintbrush, or a log, as well as a beer or two, in the cause. Overnight at Conley and Wineberry. INFO: Larry Lang 703/631-9278 or Hugh Robinson 703/525-8726.

19 (Wednesday)

👤 HIKE - Easy Hikers
Seneca Creek Greenway, MD

10:15 a.m. Seneca Creek Greenway at RT 28. We will go to Fuddrucker's for a warm, dry lunch after the hike. Enjoy tall pines and visit the site of Black Rock Mill. Directions: From I-270 access lanes, exit west on RT 28 towards Darnestown. You will come to this exit just after the exit on 28 east to Rockville. Turn as necessary to stay on 28 past Black Rock Road. The trailhead parking lot is on the right hand side of 28, just before the bridge over Seneca Creek. INFO: Margaret Chapman 301/977-8988 or 301/869-9291 Ext. 3, Monday, Tuesday, or Thursday.

20 March (Thursday)

🏠 MEETING - Trails District Managers
PATC Headquarters, Vienna, VA

7:00 p.m. Semi-Annual District Managers meeting.

22 - 23 (Saturday - Sunday)

✂ TRAIL WORK TRIP - Cadillac Crew
Per Lee Tract, Madison, VA

Interested in how new trails happen? The crew will continue the trail building project on the Entry Run Trail on the Per Lee Tract with the ultimate goal to connect with the SNP trail system. Bring water and a lunch for Saturday noon. Community dinner on Saturday night. Overnight at PATC's Rosser Lamb Cabin. INFO: Fran Keenan (outdoorsnow@cox.net) 703/938-3973 or Jon Rindt (jkrindt@erols.com) 540/635-6351.

25 (Tuesday)

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

28 - 30 (Friday - Sunday)

👤 HIKE - Waterfall Photography Blitz
SNP, VA

Spend a little time getting up close and personal with the waterfalls of Shenandoah. The falls planned for both days are Cedar Run, White Oak Canyon, Lewis Mountain and a couple of others in the National Park system. So bring your camera and plenty of film as we take time to study water. Moderate hike. Optional overnight lodging in a cabin in or near SNP. INFO: Susan Bly (sbly@shepherd.edu) 304/258-3319, between 7:00 and 9:00 p.m. ☐

Annapolis Rock Project Forges Ahead, Volunteers Needed

The South Mountaineers continue working to provide a comfortable camping experience for all users at the overlook at Annapolis Rock, Md. This work involves the construction of natural tent pads, or campsites, along with trails leading to the spring trail and AT. Fencing, reforestation efforts, and backcountry education are also a part of the project.

You can join this crew now in late winter and make a difference during the construction phase. Contact Mark Mitchell at mdtrail@yahoo.com, 301/461-7048 or Rick Canter at southmountaineers@yahoo.com. ☐

—Rick Canter



MT, from page 7

wasn't either, joined them, and enjoyed their company until Signal Knob.

After Signal Knob there were plenty of day hikers and even mountain bikers on the trail. I contemplated the question: Why don't more people backpack? The gear's lighter, the trails are better, and there are solutions for every problem (two pads for sleeping, freeze-dried food, even the plastic water bottles now weigh close to nothing). Backpacking's a total body workout, getting one in great shape, and you savor mountains, forests, and streams while doing so. Of course, it's not for everyone, but the answer to "why not more backpackers" still eludes me.

Kudos, Thoughts

By now, I was back at the start. Final thoughts on this place of adventure:

☐ The MT merits more use. However, the MT's only shelter was too near my starting point and was built for the Tuscarora Trail on tread they share. In my view, it is unrealistic to expect most backpackers to tent five days (or more) on a 71-mile trail. A shelter midway on the west side of the MT would be a solid addition, and good locations are available between MP 40 and 42. There are intermittent springs and streams, caching water possibilities, and good road access for shelter builders and Overseers. A second shelter should definitely be considered for the MT.

☐ The MT's a very rewarding hike, and I certainly enjoyed it. It's particularly convenient to the Washington area and ideal for week-long adventures. The Massarock and other PATC crews, the Forest Service, and undoubtedly others worked long and hard over many years to create this trail. My thanks to all who are in that category and are reading this article! ☐

—Robert Nelson



View west across Shenandoah River and valley toward Great North Mountain, and Va./W.Va. border from hang glider launch site near Woodstock Tower (day 5).

Photo by Robert Nelson

NOTICES

NEW NOTICES

FOUND - MOTOROLA TALKABOUT T6220 on Pond Run Section, Tuscarora Trail. To claim, contact Glenn at 703/448-0140 or gpalatini@erols.com and provide unique identifying feature.

LOST AND FOUND

LOST - GLASSES, Sat. Nov. 9, bronze colored flexon frames with oval lenses having a rather strong prescription. Lost on the AT between Rt. 66 and 522 about 100 yards South of the gravel road passing High Knob. Lost at a recently fallen dead tree. Contact Kurt at kurtn@cybcon.com or 703/709-9306 ext 248.

DONATIONS WANTED

LAPTOP AND COMPUTER PROJECTOR NEEDED: The PATC Officers, Staff and Committee Chairpersons need a laptop computer and computer projector which can be used to make presentations at conferences, meetings, and community presentations. Projection at 1024 X 768 desired. If you work for a corporation which might make such a donation, contact Mike Sutherland at msutherland@cox.rr.com or 703/591-8330.

FOR SALE

SKIS AND TENT FOR SALE: Bonne 190 cm wood skis (made in Norway). Excellent bases (for purists who love wood skis) but also beautiful enough to use as indoor decor. Includes waxes & 3 pair med. size, over-the-knee wool Nordic socks. \$75. 2-person REI backpacking tent (yellow) with tan rain fly & 3 external, telescoping poles. From the 80's but hardly used; in excellent condition. \$35. Call Andrea at 703/573-2069 between 8:30 & 5, or 703/573-8032 between 5 & 9 p.m. Or e-mail at hhntylr@prodigy.net

FOR SALE: 5 acres, approximately 5 miles north of Waynesboro, Rt. 340 north. Crystal Springs subdivision. Joins SNP at base of Turk Mountain. Near Turk Mountain and Appalachian Trail. \$54,000. For information call Elton L. Fauber 757/566-4041.

WANT TO RENT. If anyone has a primitive cabin (four walls and a roof, some type of heat source, and water access) please contact me. I am interested in renting such a



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

EVENING DESK VOLUNTEERS NEEDED to work the Sales or Information desks once or twice a month 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. We will train you. Call Sales and Info Coordinator Annetta DePompa at 410/535-5171.

DAYTIME SALES DESK VOLUNTEERS BADLY NEEDED every Thursday and/or Friday at the PATC Headquarters between Noon and 2 p.m. We will train you. Once or twice per month. If interested call Pat Fankhauser at 703/242-0693, Ext. 17, or e-mail at pfankhauser@patc.net or Maureen Estes at Ext. 19, or at mestes@patc.net.

ALSO NEEDED:

COOKS/WORK CREWS, WEAVER CABIN - Contact Thomas Jorgensen at Hairtheart@aol.com or 540/248-7009 (w) 540/456-4760 (h) .

PROJECT LEADERS / CONSTRUCTION Foremen, for info call Charlie Graf at: 410/757-6053 or e-mail cagraf@aol.com.

MEDICAL CHAIR VACANCY: If interested please contact Mickey McDermott at patcvolunteer@patc.net.

NOT INTERESTED IN WORKING IN THE GREAT OUTDOORS?

It takes a lot more than trail workers to keep the Club going! INFO: Wilson Riley, Wriley@patc.net or 703/242-0693, ext.11.

THE SALES OFFICE NEEDS VOLUNTEERS please contact the Sales Coordinator, Maureen Estes, by either calling headquarters at 703/242-0693, ext. 19, or by e-mail at mestes@patc.net.

NEEDED: PEOPLE to help plan and conduct our Club events. If you are willing, please contact Susan Nelson, Supervisor of Membership 703/243-7867, warnelson@erols.com or Pat Fankhauser at Club headquarters - 703/242-0693, Ext. 17, pfankhauser@patc.net.

cabin for weekend use one or two times a year. Close proximity to the AT or other hiking/recreational areas would be ideal. Melody Blaney, 540/384-7023, info@wildsideadventures.com.

CONSERVATION OPPORTUNITIES

Do You Want to Be a Landowner along the AT? And have a home in the woods! Are you in a position to become a Conservation Buyer through the Appalachian Trail Conference Land Trust? Our program matches conservation buyers - people like you - with people who are selling land along the AT. You locate your home or cabin out of sight from the Trail. All we ask is that you donate a conservation easement on the rest of the property. A conservation easement "runs with the land;" that is, no present or future owner can develop it! AND, because an easement is an irrevocable gift of a property right, you get a nice income tax deduction equal to the value of the easement. Contact Bob Williams, Director of Land Trust Programs, at bwilliams@appalachiantrail.org, or at 304/535-6331, or write to P.O. Box 807, Harpers Ferry, WV 25425.

TRAIL OVERSEER OPPORTUNITIES

PATC Overseers get discounts from the following merchants who support our volunteer programs: Blue Ridge Mountain Sports (Charlottesville, Tidewater) - 20%, Hudson Trail Outfitters (Metro DC) - 15%, The Trailhouse (Frederick, Md.) - 15%, Casual Adventures (Arlington, Va.) - 10%, Campmor (mail order via PATC HQ) - 10%, and Weasel Creek Outfitters in Front Royal - 10%. 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.

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 3 months, at the discretion of the editor, unless we are otherwise advised. □

Trailhead

December greeted us with snow, ice, and weather cooler than last year. Due to the weather, limited access to trails along the Skyline Drive, and proliferation of hunters, trail maintainers saw limited action in December. That's not to say there isn't a need. Unlike the major ice storm of '98 that was very destructive above 2,000 feet, December's ice storm was less destructive but had impact over a much greater area. District Managers report many downed limbs and some fallen trees. Most trails can be cleared with hand-saws, loppers, and pruners. Overseers need to inspect and clear their trails and report problems that require chainsaws or additional manpower. North District's Pete Brown expects they will be working on the Tuscarora until spring just to recover from the October and December storms. What does the rest of winter have in store?

Bridge at Wolf Run

This is the story of a bridge that was "not too far" because of the magnificent help of several PATC members, the Virginia Happy Trails Running Club (VHTRC), a few family members, and the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority (NVRPA). Dave Fellers, District Manager, Bull Run Occoquan Trail (BROT), coordinated the project. The BROT is on land owned by NVRPA.

It all started a couple years ago when hikers on the BROT suggested to Overseer Bill Olson that it would be very nice if there were a bridge across the 30-foot-plus-wide Wolf Run at mile 3.5 of Fountain Head Park. High water meant wet feet or a decision to turn back.

Stepping stones were the temporary answer but not a solution to high water. Since the crossing is about a mile from the nearest road, heavy building materials were initially ruled out. Bill tried to dig holes for support posts in the middle of the stream to allow shorter crossing beams, but bedrock was too close to the surface. A Chinese documentary showed how an arch bridge had been built over a significant crossing with many short-length timbers, and for a while this was considered. Perhaps our timidity and then cost suggested another approach: donated, used telephone poles.

Northern Virginia Electrical Cooperative of Gainesville, Va., provided the poles via George Mason University. NVRPA provided a Jerry Dan (car carrier) to move the 30-foot poles to the Fountain Head Marina on the Occoquan Reservoir. This was done in September during the drought. We waited for rain. It came in abundance, and the reservoir level rose. A test showed the creosoted poles would barely float and would sink overnight. Dave and Bill launched the poles and towed them about a mile to the confluence of Wolf Run. More rain allowed the poles, which weighed about 700 pounds each, to be floated upstream to within about 250 yards of the now-completed bridge foundation engineered by Bill.

On a pleasant Nov. 9, 17 volunteers contributed the muscle power to carry the poles the last 250 yards and set them on the foundation. NVRPA and Bill had contributed planking and other lumber to complete the 52-foot bridge and a handrail. The bridge is in three sections: a 30-foot span over the stream, a second 12-foot span supported on six- by six-inch beams, and a 10-foot rock and dirt ramp. Dry-footed hikers were already crossing it late in the day.

Come to visit this little-known, 18-mile, great trail right here in suburban Fairfax County. VHTRC sponsors a 50-mile run, much of it on the BROT, in April.



Photo by Dave Fellers

Volunteers carry 700-pound telephone pole for bridge at Wolf Run.

New DM in SNP

Dick Dugan is replacing Bernie Stalman as the District Manager for Blue Blaze Trails in the SNP North District. You know Dick – he is the guy with the '60s VW van and the gray pony tail. Or he is the guy who is in every Hoodlums photo that ever appeared in the *PA*. Welcome aboard Dick, how did Bernie "talk" you into this? Bernie hasn't left PATC country yet, so expect to see him helping Dick and others on SNP trails.

From the Tool Locker

We are now in the winter season, getting ready for spring. District Managers and Overseers have been busy cleaning up from snow and ice storms and look forward to warmer weather. But caution: tools need to be made ready for use also. Please clean and sharpen them, or turn them in for sharpening. Put linseed oil on wooden parts. Clean off rust, and oil metal surfaces. Store tools inside, out of the weather. Check tool caches and note what will be needed when our friends, the weeds, start to grow. It takes a while to order and get the tools for your use. Also, don't neglect power tools. February is a good month to start them up and ensure they work properly. Do the things the tool manuals say to do – if a trip to the shop is needed, get it done before the tool will be heavily needed. Along with power tools, check safety equipment such as helmets, eye protection, chaps, and so forth. Personal protection equipment (PPE) must be worn, not just because we may lose the authority to use power equipment if our partners detect Club members operating without it, but because you may lose part of yourself. Yes, you don't need the PPE until you need it. But then it is too late.

—Liles Creighton, SOT

New Blazes for the PHT

As Potomac Heritage Trail (PHT) volunteers relaxed during the New Year holidays (and will continue relaxing for the winter), District Manager Bruce Glendening reblazed a number of confusing spots. The bright blue-painted blazes help hikers a bit more as they cross Gulf Branch and head up to the overlooking bluffs, find the new stone steps more easily near Chain Bridge, and cross VA 123, losing fewer people. (No, not to cars, but to missing a critical turn due to unclear blazing.) Since the PHT gets many new and casual hikers, the new blazing will be supplemented by proposed new trail signs to be erected before spring and after many months of Park Service review. Now that the leaves are off the trees, the PHT is even better in the winter!

See Trailhead, page 15

Tailhead, from page 14

Lighting the Lights

With the Christmas spirit in full swing, the Cadillac Crew set up decorations at Highacre as part of their annual party. It was a grand affair with more than 30 people enjoying the turkey and fixin's for Saturday dinner. In spite of the snow-covered ground, the crew managed to do some yard work and a number of clean-up tasks requested by the Highacre Committee, represented by Carol Niedzialek.

Meanwhile, some of the crew helped DM Chris Brunton on Mike Jenkins' major rework of the Keys Gap trailhead parking lot on Rte. 9. Working in the mud, slush, and snow, volunteers planted a number of eight-foot telephone poles and steel supports along the perimeter. Ask Kimberly Abruzzese about digging a three-foot-deep hole (that kept filling up with ground water) for a one-foot-diameter, 300-pound post. You have got to see Mike's project to believe it – the next truck or ATV that tries to knock down the steel cable fence will regret it.

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@erols.com. □

10 Years of South Mountaineers: More Work to Come in 2003

Maryland's South Mountaineers celebrate their 10th year of stewardship on the Appalachian and Catoctin Trails in 2003. This year's work events dates are:

March 15 & 29
April 5 & 12
May 3 & 17
June 7 (National Trails Day)
June 14 & 21
July 12 & 26
Aug. 16 & 30
Sept. 13 & 27
Oct. 4 & 18
Nov. 1 & 22
Dec. 7 & 14

There is no shortage of projects for this crew. This winter and spring, the campsites at Annapolis Rock will be installed and a 0.6-mile-long side trail will be built on Bartman Hill, south of the U.S. 40 trailhead.

Later in the year, the long-awaited MD 77 relocation is penciled in. This massive project, involving three miles of the AT, will be performed in cooperation with the Mountain Club of Maryland.



Photo by George Walters

O.K. – it's not the South Mountaineers – but we got your attention. Same work, different crew – here some boulders hop around on the White Oak Canyon Trail.

Most of the crew events begin on Saturdays at 9 a.m., somewhere in Frederick County, Md., usually in Myersville. This crew takes lunch on the trail and finishes up on Saturday afternoons.

If you are interested in joining the South Mountaineers, please contact Mark Mitchell, 301/461-7048, e-mail mdtrail@yahoo.com or Rick Canter at southmountaineers@yahoo.com. □

—Rick Canter

Volunteers Appointed – December

Shelter Overseers

Leah McLaughlin Bearfence Hut

Trail Overseers

John Moone AT - Route 50 to 2nd Logging Rd.
John Seeberger AT - Lewis Mountain Trail to Pocosin Fire Road
Rhett Orndorff Trayfoot Trail – Summit of Trayfoot Mt. To 2nd summit
Mary Margaret Sloan Massanutten Trail - Jawbone Gap Trail to Crisman Hollow Road
Jim Little Massanutten South Trail – Rte. 211 to New Market Picnic Area
George Schubert Massanutten Trail - Rte. 758 to 7-Bar-None Trail
 Great North Mountain - Stack Rock Trail to VA 720

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CORRIDOR MONITOR - SAND SPRING – VA/WV [JEFFERSON & CLARKE CO.]

Contact Tom Lupp, 301/271-7340
E-mail: tlupp@erols.com

SHELTER OVERSEERS

Call Frank Turk, 301/249-8243
E-mail: frankturk@aol.com

CO-OVERSEER FOR WAGON WHEEL SHELTER – PENNSYLVANIA TUSCARORA TRAIL

COWALL SHELTER – MD AT [SMITHSBURG-WOLFSVILLE ROAD]

Trail Overseer Openings. Contact the District Manager for the section that interests you.

HARPERS FERRY / ASHBY GAP AT & BB – MAP 7 & 8

Call Chris Brunton, 703/560-8070
E-mail: trailbossbtc@msn.com

Loudoun Heights Blue Trail [lower]

Loudoun Heights Orange Trail to Rte. 340 (2.6 miles)

Rod Hollow Shelter Trails

AT to Rod Hollow Shelter (0.2 mile)

ASHBY GAP / LINDEN AT & BB – MAP 8 (RTE. 50 TO RTE. 638)

Call Ed McKnew, 540/622-6004
E-mail: emcknew@aol.com

Dicks Dome Shelter Trail

AT to shelter (0.20 miles)

SNP NORTH DISTRICT APPALACHIAN TRAIL – MAP 9

Call John McCrea, 610/352-9287
E-mail: mcreajf@aol.com

CO-OVERSEERS NEEDED ON AT SECTIONS

SNP NORTH BB - MAP 9

Call Dick Dugan, 703/836-0391
E-mail: rdugan@bellatlantic.net

Snead Farm Loop Trail

Dickey Ridge Trail to Snead Farm Road (.7 mile)

SNP CENTRAL BLUE-BLAZED [NORTH END] – MAP 10

Call Dan Dueweke, 703/266-3248
E-mail: danjan@fcc.net

WILDERNESS OVERSEERS NEEDED- ADVENTURE GUARANTEED.

Catlett Mountain Trail

Hannah Run Trail to Hazel Mountain Trail (1.2 miles)

SNP SOUTH BLUE-BLAZED – MAP 11

Call Pete Gatje, 434/361-1309
E-mail: pjgatje@aol.com

Rockytop Trail – Co-Overseer [upper]

Big Run Loop Trail to Lewis Peak Trail (2.2 miles)

TUSCARORA SOUTH – MAP F, G, 9

Call Rick Rhoades, 540/477-3247
E-mail: Rrhoades@shentel.net

Tuscarora Trail

Rock marker to Massanutten Trail (1.5 miles)

MASSANUTTEN NORTH – MAP G

Call Ed Brimberge, 703/430-6481
E-mail: brimberg@cox.net

Massanutten Trail

Kennedy Peak Trail to Camp Roosevelt (3.3 miles)

Massanutten Trail

7-Bar-None Trail to Bear Trap Trail (2.7 miles)

Massanutten Trail

Bear Trap Trail to Peters Mill Run Trail (1.6 miles)

MASSANUTTEN SOUTH – MAP H

Call Don White, 804/795-2914
E-mail: whitedh@attbi.com

Massanutten Mt. South Trail

TV Tower to Pitt Spring (3.40 miles)

Massanutten Mt. South Trail

Pitt Spring to Morgan Run Trail (3.3 miles)

Morgan Run Trail

Cub Run Rd. to Massanutten Mt. South Trail (2.6 miles)

GREAT NORTH MOUNTAIN – MAP F

Call Hop Long, 301/942-6177
E-mail: theFSLongs@erols.com

Gerhard Shelter Trail

Tuscarora Trail to Vances Cove (1.5 miles)

SUBURBAN MARYLAND – MAP D

Call Liles Creighton, 410/573-0067
E-mail: lcrei@aol.com

Cabin John Trail

Tuckerman Lane to Goya Drive (1.5 miles)



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