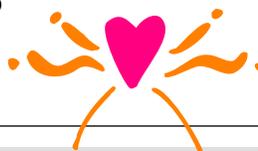




The Potomac Appalachian

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

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 February 2006



PATC: We are Kids and Adults Alike

Trail Kids

On a cold day in the fall of 2005, a trail crew made its way up the southern end of Robertson Mountain in SNP. Their objective was to provide a little extra help for Robertson Mountain Trail Overseer Andy Rivers by working on a 24-inch blowdown that a hiker had reported earlier. The ascent took longer than expected because recent winds had left numerous smaller blowdowns that needed to be cleared along the way. A late lunch stop coincided with the removal of blowdown No. 18, a 10-incher. With limited daylight remaining the crew pressed on, finally reaching No. 19, their main objective. Crosscut saws buzzed, and soon, with the help of a rock bar, a section of the large tree was rolled out of the treadway, leaving an opening for hikers. Then the crew hastened homeward, racing ahead of the fast-approaching darkness.

See Kids, page 8



Photo by Mel Ellis

Simeon, Matthew, and Micah Koranek (left to right) after having removed a section of a large blowdown. Corbin Mountain is in the background.



PATC Presents:

A Traditional Tools Workshop

April 22-23

Pinnacles Research Station, SNP

The traditional tools workshop is intended to familiarize overseers with proper crosscut saw and axe techniques. Instruction will be provided on how to size up and safely clear a blowdown with hand tools and when and how to use a wedge, swing an axe, and perform a single underbuck. The workshop leader will discuss situations you'll likely encounter on the trail and conduct field exercises demonstrating the various tools used to tackle these challenges. Note that this is a workshop only and will not result in a certification. Cost is \$20.00 to cover course materials, Saturday dinner, and Sunday breakfast.

Further INFO: Dan Dueweke 703/266-3248 or danjan3@cox.net

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Council Fire

President Tom Johnson chaired the regularly scheduled Potomac Appalachian Trail Club (PATC) council meeting on Dec. 13, 2005, at Club Headquarters.

Tom presented Bob Williams, who is retiring as ATC coordinator for the Land Trust, with a Certificate of Appreciation. Bob has worked with PATC with preservation of the AT. During his acceptance of the award, Bob provided some background on the history of the ATC/PATC cooperation.

Tom announced that he had spent four days in a lodge north of Atlanta with the Southeastern Foot Trails Coalition developing a strategic plan for the new Great Eastern Trail. He asked that we start planning events for National Trails Day, June 3, 2006. Secretary Alan Day announced that Amy Pridemore had been appointed archivist/librarian; Amy succeeds Carol Niedzialek, who is retiring from this position. Alan thanked Carol for her service to PATC. Carol will continue to support Highacre. Director of Administration Wilson Riley reported that he had participated in a *Washington Post* Web site chat in November about the AT and said it had been a positive experience. He also announced the death of Shirley Strong, a long-time PATC member, and spoke highly of her contributions to PATC activities.

The Cumberland Valley Athletic Club has donated \$1,000 to PATC to maintain the AT,

a part of which is being used as a part of the JFK 50-mile event. As of the Council meeting, the PATC fund drive had received \$3,505 from 29 donors. Due to the treasurer's absence, the proposed 2006 budget was to be presented at the January 2006 Council meeting; council approved a continuing resolution and a staff Christmas bonus.

Supervisor of Membership Georgeann Smale reported that ExCom had concluded that an increase in PATC dues is needed — the last increase was in 1988. The By-Laws provide for a member-comments period for proposed dues increases prior to Council taking up the required motion. Additional details will be announced later. Georgeann has a three-person committee working on this issue.

Trails and Lands

Vice President for Operations Bruce Glendening announced that Steve Sharp had become chair of the Information Services Committee. Bruce also asked that someone volunteer as PATC Web master. The Meadows easement tax credit sale was expected to be completed before the end of 2005 and resulted in a cash payoff in excess of \$100K.

Facilities

Council authorized Mid State Trail Association and Link Trail Association to use Dawson and Silberman cabins at no charge for trail crews working on the Mid State and Link trails up to three times per year as long

as these periods did not interfere with PATC's use of this facility. Supervisor of Facilities Mel Merritt announced the headquarters roof replacement is completed, Council meeting area has a new carpet, John's Rest is completed, and Myron Glaser Cabin has a new roof. Bears Den: Gerhard Salinger said ATC was advancing \$5K and Blue Ridge \$5K for a kitty; the business plan is almost completed.

Other Activities

ExCom has approved a Mountaineering Section winter excursion to Mt. Katahdin — the leader and all of the participants are very experienced winter climbers. Family weekend at Bears Den is scheduled for May 6-7, 2006. PATC has its first digitized map images and planned a meeting with James Madison University in January to discuss their possible support to the mapping program. The Nicholson cabin has been appraised at \$250K. Tuscarora hikers reportedly have harassed local property owners on their own land, and PATC plans to have signs posted admonishing hikers to respect any private property they hike on. Tuscarora Trail is critically dependent on the cooperation of local property owners. NPS has asked that blazes be repainted every three years. SMRG reports it had several false-start searches and held training at Blackburn.

Hope you had a happy holiday season. □

—Alan Day, Secretary

HOW TO CONTACT US: HEADQUARTERS, SALES, CABIN RESERVATIONS, AND MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

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

Phone #: 703/242-0315

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

To receive an information packet: Extension 10

Club President (leave a message), Tom Johnson: Extension 40

Hours: Monday through Thursday, 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
and Thursday and Friday 12 noon to 2 p.m.

Facsimile #: 703/242-0968

Club e-mail: info@patc.net

World Wide Web URL: www.patc.net

STAFF: DURING REGULAR BUSINESS HOURS

Director of Administration: Wilson Riley (Ext. 11) e-mail: Wriley@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

Potomac Appalachian

Chief Editor: Linda Shannon-Beaver, PA@patc.net

Features Editor: Joanne Erickson

Forecast Editor: Vince Ferrari, PA-Forecast@patc.net

Club Officers and chairs contact info:

www.patc.net/about/contact.html

or call the main club phone number.

Contact list published twice annually in the *PA*.

Tom's Trail Talk – So What Do You Have to Say Mr. (or Ms.) Ambassador?

Someone sticks a microphone in your face and asks you about PATC. The cameras are rolling, and you are expected to say something profound. Quick, what do you say? Here is a modest suggestion to get you started. I use some of these words during our monthly new members meeting.

PATC is a 6,500-member club whose purpose is to build and maintain trails in the Mid-Atlantic region. We were founded to maintain a 240-mile stretch of the Appalachian Trail (AT) from Rock Fish Gap (the southern terminus of Shenandoah National Park) to Pine Grove Furnace in Pennsylvania. We are one of 30 maintaining clubs from Maine to Georgia.

We maintain many other trails; in fact, our total trail mileage is over 1,000 miles in four states – Virginia, West Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania – plus the District of Columbia. If you have done any hiking in the Metropolitan region you have probably been on a PATC-maintained trail. Have you ever hiked Sugarloaf, Little Bennett, Cabin John, the Billy Goat, Rock Creek Park, Potomac Heritage, Bull Run-Occoquan, Spotsylvania, White Oak Canyon, Old Rag, Nicholson Hollow, Jeremy's Run, Massanutten East, Mill Mountain, or Half Moon Lookout? The list goes on and on.

At 250 miles, the Tuscarora is our longest trail. It branches off from the AT at Overall Run in the north district of SNP and works its way west to Great North Mountain. It then proceeds north along ridge lines bordering Virginia and West Virginia into Pennsylvania, where it takes Tuscarora Mountain until it rejoins the AT at Darlington Shelter, south of Duncannon, Pa.

PATC also acquires corridor lands to protect trails that previously ran through private property, and it has a program for monitoring the health of those lands. The club has a volunteer naturalist who heads an active program monitoring rare and endangered species, water quality, and running environmental education programs, and foresters who categorize and evaluate forest health.

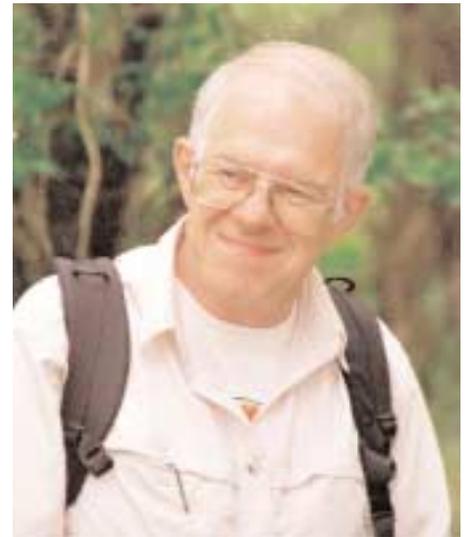
PATC also has a recreational purpose. We promote hiking and run a full program of hikes. A special favorite is our family hiking program that provides hiking experiences for children of all ages, and once a year the club has a Family Weekend (see page 7). Many

retirees like to get together and hike during the week, and the club runs three levels of hikes, depending on physical ability. We also run weekend hikes and training classes for hike leaders and backpackers.

Over the years PATC has built cabins for work crews and vacationers. We now have 33 rental cabins spread out over our four-state area. They vary in style from the small stone Sugar Knob Cabin in a remote section of Virginia's Great North Mountain to a Victorian house in the historic district of Harpers Ferry, with all the amenities that one would expect in a bed and breakfast. Thirteen cabins can be rented by the general public, while 20 of them are available only to club members, and many people join PATC principally to be able to rent those cabins. The club's signature cabin is Blackburn Trail Center, in northern Virginia. It has a big kitchen to feed a large crew and sleeps about 20 people inside the cabin plus facilities for more in tent sites outside. These cabins can be rented by calling the club in the evenings Monday through Thursday from 7:00 – 9:00 p.m., or Thursday and Friday from 12 noon to 2:00 p.m. Call 703/242-0315 and ask for the cabins desk.

Organizationally the club is very diverse. It has five geographic chapters for members located some distance from the headquarters in Vienna, Va. For cross-country skiers there is the Ski Touring Section; for climbers, the Mountaineering Section; and a search and rescue group, Shenandoah Mountain Rescue Group. Our Trail Patrol serves as ambassadors on the trail to help hikers and give advice.

Our communications media consist of a newsletter, called the *Potomac Appalachian*,



that comes out monthly, and a Web site at www.patc.net.

The club was founded in 1927 by the legendary trail builder Myron Avery and has been here for 78 years. It has long been a leader in the trails movement and is one of the largest trail clubs in the East. PATC is governed by a Council that meets once a month and an executive committee that executes the decisions of the Council. It has a budget of half a million dollars a year and an endowment that is used to acquire and protect trail land, cabin lands, and the cabins themselves. Nine-tenths of its revenue comes from members in the form of membership dues, publication and sale of maps and guidebooks, donations, and cabin rentals. Aside from a small paid staff of five, it is entirely a volunteer effort and in 2004 officially logged over 84,000 hours of volunteer service. PATC is a nonprofit 501 (c)(3) organization, and donations are tax-deductible.

All right. The cameras are rolling, and the microphone is in your face. Go ahead and say your piece. □

—Tom Johnson

Your Opinion Matters

Do you use PATC's online newsletter (www.patc.net)? Drop us a line and tell us why. Is there anything you particularly like about this format or wish we did differently? Would you recommend it to other members? Would you be willing to give up the print copy to save the club printing and mailing costs, if given the option? Please write to me at PA@PATC.net about your preferences. Your comments will be an important part of our decision making as we look at ways to deliver the news to you faster, in color, and for a lower cost. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Linda Shannon-Beaver

The Signature of All Things: Of Toothworts, Liverworts, and Maidenheads

There is something uncommon about the common names of things. Each plant or animal name seemingly has an etymology that is rarely logical and hardly ever obvious. Some names entered the lexicon of English botany from other languages, like the dandelion, which comes from the French “Dents du Lion,” meaning teeth of the lion in reference to the serrated leaves. Others are mythological, like the iris, whose vibrant colors evoke the Greek goddess of the rainbow. But the most esoteric of the lot are those that are named after body parts, like toothworts, liverworts, and maidenheads.

In the shrouded mists of prehistory, when the flat earth was borne by a turtle swimming in an endless ocean at the center of the universe, science gave way to superstition, and the gods of nature reigned supreme. Over eons of time, mankind gradually came to understand the workings of the world through a process of trial and error, hypotheses posed and observations noted. The first elements were Aristotle’s earth, air, water, and fire, and the atomism of Democritus was largely ignored. It was not until the 19th century that Baron Ernest Rutherford posited the existence of the nucleus and Dmitri Ivanovitch Mendeleev organized the periodic table that the true nature of matter became manifest.

Of all the unknowns, the operation of the human body and its malfunction were among the most compelling and confusing. Blood-letting was a purported panacea, as the bad humours that were alleged to be responsible for all maladies were encouraged to flow out. In light of this prevailing ignorance of the causes of disease, coupled with the profound belief in the supernatural that defined medieval society, a theory that plants were put on earth by divine intent with a “signature” appearance is not all that preposterous. And it is this notion – that we know as the Doctrine of Signatures – that every living thing is marked with a sign and that this signature gives an indication as to its intended use. The doctrine has an interesting history.

Though there is evidence that the ancient Chinese and the Romans may have correlated a plant’s appearance to its potential medicinal properties, the story of the Doctrine of Signatures does not really begin until after the Dark Ages in the 16th century. Phillipus Aureolus was born in Einsiedeln, Switzerland, in 1493 and went to Austria as a youth where he learned the art and science of metal ore smelting as a student at the Bergschule, an institution established to train analysts for mining operations. Taking the name Theophrastus Bombastus Von Hohenheim, he received a baccalaureate in medicine from the University of Vienna in 1510, where he reached the then radical conclusion that the prevailing medical view of the human body as being governed by astrology was specious. For the next 10 years, he traveled throughout Europe and North Africa in to seek out “... old wives, gypsies, sorcerers, wandering tribes, old robbers, and such outlaws and take lessons from them” to learn the true nature of human health. He adopted the name Paracelsus (by which he is known historically) from “paracelsus,” beyond Celsus, the noted 1st century Roman physician, to suggest the egotistical view that he was the greater of the two.

The theory that he evolved and for which he is justly considered the Martin Luther of medicine was that the healing power of nature could be brought to bear in the treatment of disease. Among his many medical achievements, he developed the first viable clinical description of syphilis and devised a treatment regime that incorporated the administration of small doses of mercury. He explained the so-called “miner’s



The cutleaf toothwort has tooth-like knobs along its length, an obvious signature for a toothache.

disease (silicosis)” as due to the inhalation of metal vapors, and not due to the sins of the miner, as had been the prevailing belief. He treated plague patients by giving them pills containing minute amounts of their own excrement. He is considered the father of homeopathy, the field of medicine in which small doses of what would cause a disease are used to treat it. In broad terms, Paracelsus believed that natural magic existed in all things and that the power imparted to the plant or animal came directly from God.

Jacob Boehme (1575-1624) was an autodidact German cobbler with no formal education. In 1600, he had a religious vision that inspired a series of philosophical treatises on the nature of God. He had a profound effect on both contemporary Protestantism (his Behmenist followers merged with the Quakers) and on German Romanticism through the writings of Hegel and von Schelling. Influenced by the works of Paracelsus, he believed that God must have revealed himself in the things that he created on earth since this was the only way that he could have any knowledge of His true being. He published his ideas in “De Signatura Rerum, the Signature of All Things,” establishing therein that “the greatest understanding lies in the signature, wherein man ... may learn to know the essence of all essences; for by the external form of all creatures ... the hidden spirit is known; for nature has given to everything its language according to its essence and form.”

In the 17th century, the doctrine of signatures suggested by Paracelsus and codified by Boehme gripped the imagination of early apothecaries and herbalists, resulting in provocative declarations as to the medicinal efficacy of likely looking plants. William Cole was perhaps the strongest exponent of the doctrine in the books “The Art of Simpling” (1656) and “Adam in Eden” (1657). He proposed that a decoction made from the twigs of the thorny hawthorn tree could be used “so that the thorn gives medicine to its own prickling” and that the lily of the valley “cureth apoplexy by Signature; for as that disease is caused by a drooping of humours into the principal ventricles of the brain: so the flowers of this lily hanging on the plants as if they were drops, are of wonderful use herein.” Not surprisingly, he found that walnuts were a perfect signature of the head: “The Kernel hath the very figure of the Brain, and therefore it is very profitable for the Brain, and resists poysons; for if the Kernel be bruised, and moystned with quintessence of Wine, and laid

See Signature, page 18

PATC Trail Patrol Presents
**Hike Leader
Training Course**
March 25 and 26, 2006

This weekend course will be conducted at the PATC Headquarters building in Vienna and is designed to prepare you to lead hikes. The two-day course uses classroom and outdoor instruction to prepare participants with skills to lead safe and enjoyable hikes with minimal environmental impact.

Topics covered include medical emergencies, personal equipment, Leave No Trace, leadership, planning, standard procedures and navigation. Scenario exercises will also be used emphasize hike leadership skills.

Cost*: \$20 for PATC members, \$35 for non-members

Registration: Send payments to PATC, HLT Course, 118 Park Street, SE, Vienna, VA 22180-4609. Pre-registration is required.

Information: Eric VanNortwick (TPHLT@patc.net) 571/264-9513

* Join PATC at the time of registration and get the members' price!

Conservancy Job Opening

The Potomac Conservancy is seeking candidates to fill the position of Recreation Program Coordinator. This agency works with the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail Office, National Park Service. Go to www.potomac.org/about/jobs.html for more information about this and other job openings. □

—Donald E. Briggs, Superintendent
(Trail Administrator), Potomac Heritage
National Scenic Trail, National Park
Service

PATC Trail Patrol Presents Backpacking 101

An Introductory Backpacking Course

Expand your enjoyment of the outdoors through the practice of backpacking. 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. Includes an overnight backpacking trip accompanied by experienced backpacking instructors. Designed for persons 18 years and older who have no prior backpacking experience, as well as former backpackers seeking to update their skills.

Introduction Night

Mon., April 3, 7:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.
Headquarters, 118 Park Street, SE, Vienna, Va.

Instructional Weekend

April 8 & 9, 8:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m. (Sat.), 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. (Sun.),
Prince William Forest Park, Triangle, Va.
(Sat. overnight car camping in campground encouraged but not required)

Overnight Backpacking Trip

April 29 & 30 (Sat.– Sun.), Trip destination and times TBD

Fee: \$75.00 for PATC Members; \$95.00 for Non-Members

For more information, see www.patc.net/volunteer/trailpatrol/Outreach/BP101.htm or contact John Bridges (TPBackpack@patc.net) 703/726-0188. □

Potomac Appalachian Trail Club Trail Patrol Presents

Leave No Trace Trainers Course

April 2006

This combination indoor classroom and outdoor field course is designed to enhance your understanding of Leave No Trace practices and ethics and to develop your confidence in teaching others about Leave No Trace. Through activities, field/classroom experience, and both formal and informal discussions, you will be challenged to develop your LNT skills and ethics. This is a fun class where all have a part in demonstrating the choices that can be made to minimize our impact on the land and our resources. It is hoped that graduates of this class will be willing to make LNT presentations to community groups when and if their schedules permit.

Classroom: Mon., April 17 - 7:30 p.m., PATC Headquarters, Vienna, Va.

Weekend Field Program: Sat. - Sun., April 22 & 23, SNP

Cost: \$35.00 for PATC Members, \$50.00 for Non-Members
(Join PATC at the time of registration and get the member price!)

Registration: Registration forms are available on-line through the Trail Patrol/LNT page of the PATC Web site at www.patc.net or call Mark Holland at 540/636-3639 (mornings only). Send payment with registration form to: PATC, LNT Trainers Course, 118 Park Street, SE, Vienna, VA 22180-4609. Please include your e-mail address on the check.

Information: Mark Holland (TPLNT@patc.net) 540/636-3639 (mornings only). □

Are the Cabins Booked at the Holidays? PATC's Forum Pulled Out This Tale(?)

One of my most memorable New Year's was an outdoor experience. My friends, Dick and Nick, and I had rented Pocosin Cabin in the Central Section of SNP from Dec. 31 to Jan. 2, one winter long ago. Dec. 31 was a work day, and Dick and Nick had to work a regular schedule, so they elected to leave at the end of the work day and drive together. I was able to get out a little earlier, so I drove alone from the DC area. I was in more of a rush to get "out there," as light snow was predicted to arrive that evening, and my car was rear-wheel drive and not good in snow. Dick had a high-clearance, front-wheel-drive car that I had witnessed being able to plow through just about anything, so I was not worried about him. The ground was bare when I left D.C.

I made it to Stanardsville with no problems other than a very light snowfall and decided to refuel my gas tank there (this turned out to be an excellent decision). As I left Stanardsville, a heavy snowfall began suddenly. Traveling west up Rte. 33 toward Swift Run Gap, the road was quickly covered in 2" of snow, and my car was fishtailing wildly as it attempted to ascend to the Skyline Drive. At one point I was going to turn around and give up, but a snowplow appeared from behind; I let him pass, and the abrasives spreading before my car did the trick. I made it to Swift Run Gap and continued north on the drive to the Pocosin parking area.

As we had pre-arranged, at sunset I set a lit lantern on the porch at Pocosin, put the sparkling wine outside to chill for midnight, and waited for Dick and Nick.

6:00 p.m. ... 7:00 p.m. ... not too surprised they are not here yet ... 8:00 p.m. ... should be here any minute ... 9:00 p.m. ... hmmm ... 10:00 p.m., starting to worry a little ... 11:00 p.m., getting very worried, guess I'll open a bottle ... 12:00, Happy New Year, 12:30, that bubbly is pretty good ... 1:00 a.m. having a good old time, that schtuff is pretty tasty ... I wonder if this other bottle is any good ... 1:30. It's a Grand Old Flag It's a High-Flying Flag HIC It's schtill schnowing I wonder what happened to old whasisname HIC ... THUD ZZZZZZZZZZZZ

Woke up at dawn, no Dick or Nick, went outside, omigosh, about 18" of snow on the ground! This was NOT predicted!!!

I decided that Dick and Nick had spun off the drive at some dangerous spot and had tumbled down the mountain and were dead. Dick NEVER wimped out of anything. I'd better go and look for them.

Hiked 0.2 mile back to the car, dug it out, and spent the next hour trying to figure out how to put on these crazy chains that I bought years ago and never used before. After many attempts I got them on snugly and they worked GREAT. The drive had not been plowed but I was blasting right through it, albeit at 20 m.p.h. No sign of any other traffic, which struck me oddly.

Rounded a corner about two miles from Swift Run Gap, and EUREKA, there are Dick and Nick, *HIKING* up the drive. "What the heck are you guys doing hiking?" I asked. "The drive is closed!!!" Dick replied. "We were gambling that you made it to Pocosin ... it's too long a hike to go both ways in case you weren't there." Yes, I possessed the cabin key. "Let's drive back to our car and get the rest of the stuff we couldn't backpack."



At Swift Run Gap, there was a gate across the drive. I was locked in. Everyone else was locked out. There were about 10 other car-fulls of people standing around looking upset that they couldn't get in. When they saw me drive up, they rushed up and begged "Can you take me to Big Meadows? Can you take me to Bearfence Parking? Can you take me to Milam Gap? Can you take me to Skyland? ..." After dropping off Dick and Nick at Pocosin, I spent the rest of the day shuttling people to various locations in the Central Section. I met a lot of really nice people!

On New Year's night, with a pot of barley stew bubbling on the Pocosin wood stove, Dick and Nick remarked, "I wonder if those nurses will be here tonight?" I asked what they were talking about. What had happened to them was that they had made it to Swift Run Gap very soon after me, but the park had closed the gate minutes after I drove through. Not knowing what to do, they drove to Charlottesville and partied the evening away in a local bar. Despite the fact that they decided to use the conical party hats that were being distributed as beaks, putting them over their mouths and noses and strutting around like chickens, they had caught the eyes of two nurses from the university hospital. Not really being quite sure where Pocosin Cabin was, and being well-lubricated at the time, Dick drew a completely wrong map of how to get to the cabin and invited the nurses to join them the next evening. Dick sighed when he realized that he had told the nurses to drive SOUTH from Swift Run Gap, and that the cabin was on the WEST side of the drive, about two miles from Swift Run Gap ... I shook my head and said, "There is ABSOLUTELY NO WAY that those nurses will EVER find you here!" About 30 seconds later there was a knock on the door. It was the nurses.

We had a very proper and mannerly gathering that evening and bid the nurses adieu after a delightful intelligent conversation after dinner. One of the nurses, Teresa, invited Dick to visit her the following weekend in Charlottesville.

Twenty-five years later, Dick and Teresa are living very happily in Vermont and have three wonderful grown-up children. Nick is a physician somewhere, to my best knowledge. I'm still hanging around Pocosin Cabin on occasion.

This story is COMPLETELY true. I even wrote a song about the incident and played and sang it at Dick and Teresa's wedding. I will spare you the song lyrics here ... ☐

—Jim Tomlin PATC Overseer, Mill Mountain Trail, GWNF

Annual Family Weekend - This Year at Bears Den

As mentioned in Tom's Trail Talk on page 3, each year PATC invites all members, especially those with children, to this fun-filled weekend outing. Individuals and families with children of all ages are invited to enjoy the outdoors for this exciting event.

Location

Bears Den Trail Center, Bluemont, Va. About an hour's drive from D.C.

Date

May 6-7, 2006. Activities will be scheduled from noon Saturday to noon Sunday. Allow an hour or two on either end if you would like to hike in to the center from Rte. 7. Shuttles will be available for gear.

Activities

The fun will include kid-friendly hikes, nature crafts, games, and special guests giving presentations on outdoor safety, hiking with kids, regional wildlife, and more.

Lodging

Three lodging options are available, based on your preferences, on a first-come, first-served basis.

There is the lodge option with bunks in communal rooms, with electricity and flush toilets. Alternately, there are bunks and beds available in the cottage, just a short hike from the lodge, with electricity and privy access. Finally, you may opt for the camping area, just outside the lodge, which comes with privy access. You must bring your own gear for this option.

Cost

Fee includes meals (lunch, dinner, and snacks Saturday, breakfast Sunday), lodging and activities, except for T-shirts, which are \$5 additional. (People who lead activities may be eligible for a \$10 discount, contact Anne Regan for information.)

Fees for: Lodge, Cottage, Camping, Saturday only: Adults (18+) \$30, \$25, \$20, and \$10. Kids (4-17) \$20, \$15, \$10, and \$5. Kids under four, Free Free Free Free.

Volunteers Needed

We are still looking for volunteers to lead games, crafts, and hikes and to manage the kitchen. Everyone is encouraged to pitch in with meal preparation and general cleanup.

Questions

Contact Anne Regan at anne.c.regan@verizon.net or 703/689-3883.

Registration

To register please fill out the form below and send to: Anne Regan at 1016 Charlton Place, Herndon, VA 20170.

Enclose check made out to Anne Regan. (If your lodging choices are no longer available at the time your check is received she will contact you and adjust your rate, or you may cancel your reservation for a refund if the available options are not suitable.)

Bears Den Family Weekend 2006 Registration Form

Name _____ Phone _____

Home address _____

E-mail address _____

Lodging Preference (Cabin, Cottage, Camping, or Saturday only) _____

Weekend Fee: (See chart above for fees based on lodging options)

_____ Adults @ \$ _____ each Adult total \$ _____

_____ Kids 4-17 @ \$ _____ each Kid total \$ _____

_____ Kids under 4 (free, but let us know they are coming)

T-shirt # _____ @ \$5 each T-shirt total\$ _____

Family grand total \$ _____

T-shirt sizes (please indicate sizes needed below: Adult S, M, L, XL; Youth S (6-8), M (10-12), L (14-16); Toddler 2T, 3T, 4T)

Mail completed form along with check for above total to: Anne Regan at 1016 Charlton Place, Herndon, VA 20170.

John's Rest Cabin Now Open for Your Outdoor Recreation Pleasure

On Saturday, Feb. 4, we finally opened the door (or lock) to our newest cabin in our rental system. John's Rest is a reconstructed rustic log cabin located near the beautiful Pocosin Mission site in Greene County, Va. Only 98 miles from Washington, D.C., the PATC property where the cabin sits adjoins the SNP to the north and the Rapidan Wildlife Management Area to the west. It is near the Pocosin Hollow and Pocosin Fire Road Trail area, so there is a lot of hiking opportunity close by. The Entry Run (river) is only a few hundred feet from the cabin, giving the renter a great opportunity for fishing, exploring, or listening to the sound of rushing water.

The cabin was funded by John Fischbach's family in 1998 in his memory and placed on a PATC tract of property in the area where John loved to hike and camp. A dedication ceremony was held in his honor in November of 2001.

John's Rest is a MEMBER'S ONLY cabin. It costs only \$35 Thursday, Friday, or Saturday nights and \$25 Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, or Wednesday nights. The cabin sleeps up to six persons. There is a 1/2-mile hike in from the parking area. The overseers are Bob Edmonds and Linda Bender of Front Royal, Va. Joel Anderson will be assisting as co-overseer when asked to step in as needed. He and Robert Humphrey supervised the reconstruction of the cabin and put on the finishing touches.



Photo by Charlie Graf, Cabins Construction Chairman

Reservations can be made up to TWO calendar months in advance by calling Monday through Thursday, 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. and a Thursday and Friday 12 noon to 2:00 p.m. at 703/242-0693, and a volunteer will assist you at those times. Only walk-ins and phone calls will be taken during those times. Phone messages left at other times will be returned

ONLY if time allows. PATC is closed most federal holidays. Reservations will be pre-paid by VISA or MasterCard over the phone only, or by cash, charge, or check at PATC Headquarters. □

—Patricia Fankhauser, Membership and Cabins Coordinator

Kids, from page 1

So, what is special about all this? It sounds like a normal workday for a trail-maintenance crew. But, three of the four crew members were youngsters: Matthew, Micah, and Simeon Koranek, ages 15, 13, and 10, respectively. Despite their ages, the boys, who live on a farm at Aylor in Madison County, have about 10 years of trail-maintenance experience among them. They have been helping their uncle, Mel Ellis, one of the PATC district managers in SNP, who accompanied them on Robertson Mountain. Mel also claims to be young, but only because Young is his middle name.

Simeon began only two years ago at age eight. His sister, Elizabeth, 6, is eager to join the group, which often works on the Corbin Hollow Trail. Older siblings Kristina and Daniel belong to the crew, but their participation is now limited by their attending colleges out of state. Matthew recently became one of PATC's newest junior members and thinks about the possibility of becoming an overseer some day. Although he has trail skills, he needs a few more years and maybe a driver's license so he can get there.

Some of us have cited the need for younger trail personnel. There is interest out there. Whenever possible, we should involve the young-



Photo by Mel Ellis

Matthew Koranek waiting for the photographer to get back on the other handle of the crosscut saw.

sters. Start slowly and stress safety, but a little encouragement can lead to a new crop of overseers with more energy than that possessed by some of us senior citizens. □

—Mel Ellis

A Recent PATC Event (Near You?)

Hike Harpers Ferry Event a Big Success

Sept. 24 was an overcast day, but plenty of people came to visit Harpers Ferry. Main Street Harpers Ferry had arranged for organizations to have displays on the green in the historic district, and PATC had a prominent spot in the front of the tent. Many people stopped by to find out more about us and trails; several were from other parts of the country, but we were still able to give them information about hiking and encouraged them to look for local clubs near their home.

With a Union soldier providing information about the Civil War, Bob Pickett led a natural history hike to Maryland Heights, and later in the day Susan Bly and Cindy Majewski led a hike to Loudoun Heights.

Because of our participation, we were asked to help a local elementary school by teaching hike leader training to their teachers. Katrina Hedlesky instructed them with hopes of getting their students out on the trails.

Many thanks to: Katrina Hedlesky, Bob Pickett, John Hedrick, John Luck, Robert Kim, Cindy Majewski, Tom Johnson, Susan Bly, and Jane Thompson for their help with this event!



Katrina Hedlesky talks to visitors at the Hike Harpers Ferry event.

Long Branch Balloon and Wine Festival - Oct. 15 & 16

Around the country hot air balloon festivals are becoming quite popular. Several PATC members went to enjoy a local one held near Berryville, Va., while helping with our display.

Unfortunately this year the wind was just too much for the balloons so they were not able to launch them Saturday or Sunday, but the

crowds of people still came to enjoy the wine, displays, and music. Our display had to be tied down well to keep from blowing away, but it was still quite visible, bringing many PATC members and visitors to talk to us.

This is the first event where we had our volunteers sell merchandise, which was a big attraction. As the only organization that had long-sleeved T-shirts for sale, the chilly weather brought in customers – even non hikers – and several were sold.

Thanks to Lee Sheaffer, Kurt Neumiller, Pat Fankhauser, Richard and Sybille Stromberg, Patrick Stark and Janet, Bob Edmonds, Linda Bender, Bob Pickett, and Jane Thompson this was a successful weekend!

REI Outdoors Extravaganza at Bailey's Crossroads

On October 22 REI had an AT Through-Hiker Symposium and invited us to have a display. Barb Nash and Bill Ryan talked to participants during their breaks, as well as store customers, answering questions and giving them information about hiking trails, maintaining them, and any other information they requested about trails and PATC.

Mark Nelson is a wonderful supporter of PATC, and we appreciate his inviting us to his store! We look forward to more hiker outreach with REI! ☐



Bob Pickett's natural history hike under a Union soldier's command. Note the trash bags – they were given out by NPS, and anyone bringing back trash was given a free day pass to any national park!



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 south and central districts of SNP, 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 Nancy Hammond (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) 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@innet.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 Betsy Fowler (efowler@shentel.com).

Southern Shenandoah Valley Chapter

See 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 Mark Gatewood 540/248-0442.

West Chapter

The West 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 (westpatc@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) 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 Ozana Halik, (mrkayak1@verizon.net) 703/242-0177, or Mack Muir (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) and Wanderbirds (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.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/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.

Mountaineering Section – Second Wednesday

8:00 p.m. – We meet every month on the second Wednesday except for August, unless noted in the Forecast. INFO: Ozana Halik (mrkayak1@verizon.net) 703/242-0177 or our Web site: www.potomacmountainclub.org

Shenandoah Mountain Rescue Group

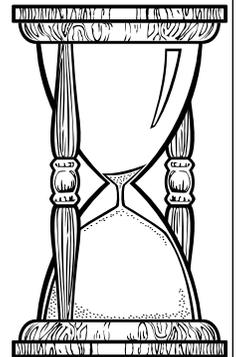
Business meeting - Last Tuesday of each month, 7:30 p.m. INFO: Doug Sigman (join@smrg.org), 703/255-5034, or www.smrg.org.

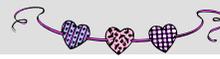
PATC Council – Second Tuesday

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) 703/242-0693 x11.

Trail Patrol – First Tuesday

7:30 p.m., except January. 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: Katrina Hedlesky (trailpatrol@patc.net) 703/533-3652, or see our section in PATC's Web site: www.patc.net/volunteer/trailpatrol.





February

1 (Wednesday)

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@earthlink.net. NOTE: Do not send photos or articles to headquarters. E-mail for address.

1 (Wednesday)

CLASS – Basic Map and Compass Skills (REI) Bailey's Crossroads, VA

7:30 p.m. Winter is a great time to be outdoors! With the leaves gone and clear Canadian air, the views from Appalachian ridges are spectacular. But with snow on the trails, your favorite places look a lot different. It's a great time to make sure your map and compass skills are up to standard. Join us for an evening of introduction and review of map reading and compass use skills. INFO: Mark Nelson (mnelson@rei.com) 703/379-9400.

1 (Wednesday)

HIKE – Easy Hikers Great Falls, VA

Four-mile round trip between Great Falls and Riverbend. Moderate climbs on upland trail, possible mud along river trail. Optional lunch at Three Pigs BBQ in McLean. Meet in Great Falls Parking lot at 10:15 a.m. From I-495 Beltway exit 13, go west on Georgetown Pike (VA 193) 4.1 miles to traffic light at Old Dominion Drive (VA 738). Turn right, go 1.1 miles to parking lot at visitor center. Parking fee \$5, usually not collected on weekdays. INFO: Paul Van Order 703/536-4378.

1 (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.

4 (Saturday)

HIKE – Snowshoeing Davis, WV

Come explore Timberline Ski Resort's backcountry, which abuts Dolly Sods Wilderness. We'll start at the top of the Timberline ski lift and snowshoe along the top of Cabin Mountain, approximately 5-7 moderate miles. For snowshoe rentals contact Whitegrass at www.whitegrass.com or 304/866-4114. If snow is unavailable, a hike along Cabin Mountain will take place. Approximately 400 feet elevation gain/loss. INFO: Susan Bly (sbly@shepherd.edu) 304/876-5177 (day) or 304/258-3319 (7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.).

4 – 5 (Saturday – Sunday)

CLASS – Wilderness First Aid (WSC) 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 \$160. More information and registration at: <http://wfa.net>. INFO: Christopher Tate 703/836-8905.

6 (Monday)

HIKE – Family Hike

Great Falls, VA

Bundle up and join us for a 2.5-mile jogging-stroller passable hike along the Paw Paw Passage Trail, then along the Potomac Heritage Trail along the river. We will warm up in their visitor center after the hike, where they have snakes and turtles, as well as some puzzles and coloring pages. INFO: Lauren Lang (at941@netzero.net) 571/242-3950.

7 (Tuesday)

CLASS – Backpacking 101 (REI) Fairfax, VA

7:30 p.m. Join us, as we take the mystery out of backpacking and share our knowledge and experience. We'll cover essential backpacking gear and skills, proper clothing, and understanding how to plan, prepare and enjoy your adventure while staying safe, warm and dry. INFO: Mark Nelson (mnelson@rei.com) 703/379-9400.

7 (Tuesday)

HIKE – Vigorous Hikers Central District, Shenandoah National Park, VA

Circuit hike of 18.5 miles with 4,000 ft climb, with option for 14 miles, goes up Sam's Ridge Trail, down between Hot and Short Mountains, then up Hannah Run to AT north to Meadow Spring and Hazel Mountain Trails. INFO: Chris Nolen (chrishiker@erols.com) 301/469-8931.

7 (Tuesday)

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

8 (Wednesday)

CLASS – Backpacking 101 (REI) College Park, MD

7:00 p.m. See February 7 listing for details. INFO: Mark Nelson (mnelson@rei.com) 703/379-9400.

8 (Wednesday)

CLASS – Backpacking 101 (REI) Rockville, MD

7:30 p.m. See February 7 listing for details. INFO: Mark Nelson (mnelson@rei.com) 703/379-9400.

8 (Wednesday)

HIKE – Easy Hikers Vienna, VA

About 4 easy miles on the W&OD Trail. 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. 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.

8 (Wednesday)

HIKE – Midweek Hikers Location to be determined

See February 1 event for more information.

8 (Wednesday)

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

8 (Wednesday)

SPECIAL EVENT – Spirit of the AT (REI) Baileys Crossroads, VA

7:30 p.m. Find out about the heart and soul of America's best-known long-distance hiking trail - the volunteers who build, maintain and monitor the 2,168-mile Appalachian Trail stretching from Maine to Georgia. Staff from the Appalachian Trail Conservancy will explain the role of the AT maintaining clubs and volunteer trail crews, and give you all the information you need to get in on the action! INFO: Mark Nelson (mnelson@rei.com) 703/379-9400.



9 (Thursday)

SPECIAL EVENT – Spirit of the AT (REI) College Park, MD

7:00 p.m. See above listing for details. INFO: Mark Nelson (mnelson@rei.com) 703/379-9400.

11 (Saturday)

CLASS – Couples Ultralight Backpacking (REI) Baileys Crossroads, VA

1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. Yes! You really can enjoy backcountry adventures together safely and comfortably and have more fun! Instructors Alan Dixon and Alison Simon of Backpacking Light Magazine believe most couples can travel the backcountry with 14-16 lb. packs for a 3-day trip and still be warm, comfortable and safe. Their techniques and light-gear discussions are valuable to all backpackers, especially to women, and couples wishing to start, continue or resume backcountry hiking adventures. Registration is necessary. The \$25 class includes the class and all course materials. INFO: Mark Nelson (mnelson@rei.com) 703/379-9400.

11 (Saturday)

HIKE – K9 Trailblazers Clarksburg, MD

We'll hike at a moderate pace for a 5-7 mile loop in the woods and meadows of Little Bennett Park. We'll travel on rocky trails and old forest roads, mostly unpaved, with a few short but fairly steep climbs (approx. 100 ft. elevation change) and a few stream crossings on wooden bridges. This is a joint hike with K9Trailblazers so well behaved dogs are welcome as long as you keep them on leash and scoop after them. Maps, chocolate, and dog biscuits provided at the trailhead. Bring snacks, and water for you and your dog. INFO: Pat Fuhrer (psfuhrer@k9trailblazers.org) 410/381-7408.

11 (Saturday)

HIKE – Strenuous North District, Shenandoah National Park, VA

Circuit Hike ascending either Little Devil Stairs or Keyser Run Road to the AT and proceeding south to either Thornton River or Hull School Trail (depending on snow conditions) for the return leg. An interesting winter hiking experience. Approximately 16 miles with an elevation gain of 3,000 feet. Moderate pace (about 2-2.5 mph). INFO: William Needham (Needham82@aol.com) 410/884-9127 or Jack Thorsen (Thorsen4@juno.com) 703/339-6716.

13 (Monday)

HIKE – Family Hike Burke, VA

Join families with young children for a hike in Burke Lake Park. The whole way around the lake is 5 miles, but we can do a shorter out-and-back stretch, around about 3 miles depending on weather and the group's preferences. The 5 miles is flat but can take a long time with little ones. The trail is jogging-stroller friendly with a few roots to go over. We'll stop and play at a playground near the end of the hike. INFO: Anne Regan (anne.c.regan@verizon.net) 703/689-3883.

14 (Tuesday)

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

15 (Wednesday)

CLASS – Winter Backpacking (REI) College Park, MD

7:00 p.m. Do you find yourself going to the same old place every year and the fun is getting a little stale? 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,

FORECAST

where to go, what gear to bring, and how to dress. Come hear some insights and experiences from a veteran winter camper. INFO: Mark Nelson (mnelson@rei.com) 703/379-9400.

15 (Wednesday)

👤 **HIKE – Midweek Hikers**

Location to be determined

See February 1 event for more information.

15 (Wednesday)

👤 **SPECIAL EVENT – Costa Rica Adventure (REI)**

Baileys Crossroads, VA

7:30 p.m. From beautiful beaches and rain forests teeming with birds, mammals and amphibians to arid highlands and volcanoes, Costa Rica has some of the richest and most diverse landscapes and ecosystems on the planet. Join Lee Schaeffer, Vice President of Volunteerism for the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club, for an evening's exploration of the wonders of Costa Rica, and learn how you can plan your own unforgettable adventures across the world, with REI Adventures. INFO: Mark Nelson (mnelson@rei.com) 703/379-9400.

16 - 20 (Thursday - Monday)

👤 **XC SKI TRIP - White Mountains**

White Mountains, New Hampshire

Join fellow cross-country skiers on a trip to one of the premier winter vacation regions in New England. Set against the backdrop of the White Mountains, the extensive Nordic trail systems offer scenic beauty unparalleled on the East Coast. This is one of the Section's most popular trips. 8 to 16 participants Please go to www.patc.net/chapters/ski/ for up-to-date information on this and all XC ski trips. INFO: Rob Swennes (robertswennes@hotmail.com) 703/532-6101.

17 - 20 (Friday - Monday)

👤 **XC SKI TRIP - Ski-Dance Weekend**

Jennerstown, PA

Camp Harmony has cross country skiing (downhill skiing available nearby), sledding, dancing (contra and square dancing; workshops, too), and music making. Please go to www.patc.net/chapters/ski/ for up-to-date information on this and all XC ski trips. INFO: Eliot Applestein (eliotapplestein@verizon.net) 301/984-6855.

17 - 21 (Friday - Tuesday)

👤 **XC SKI TRIP - Village Inn Chalet**

Canaan Valley, WV

We'll be staying close to Whitegrass and Timberline for President's Day. The Chalet sleeps 7-12 people and has a great room for après ski get-togethers, a fireplace, and a fully-equipped kitchen. Families can be accommodated. Bring acoustic musical instruments for a Saturday Evening jam session. Only 9 spaces available. Please go to www.patc.net/chapters/ski/ for up-to-date information on this and all XC ski trips. INFO: Elliot and Kathy Brumberger (ElliotBrum@comcast.net) 301/774-7412.

18 (Saturday)

👤 **HIKE – Waterfall and Wildflower Series**

Central District, Shenandoah National Park, VA

This will be a 15-mile circuit on the Slaughter, Appalachian, Bearfence, and Conway River Trails to include the Devil's Ditch Falls. Total elevation gain is approximately 3,400 feet. PATC Map 10. INFO: Jack Thorsen (thorsen4@Juno.com) 703/339-6716 or William Needham (Needham82@aol.com) 410/884-9127.



Members of the PATC Easy Hikers group pose in front of the U.S. Capitol Christmas tree in late December 2005. They also saw the White House Christmas tree during a 4.5 mile hike. Their route went from the Smithsonian Mall, to the Ellipse, to the base of the Lincoln Memorial, back to the World War II Memorial, up the mall to the Capitol and then to Union Station. Jim Flanigan was the hike leader.

19 (Sunday)

👤 **CLASS – GPS 202 (REI)**

College Park, MD

1:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. This class is for GPS owners who want to learn to use their GPS for hiking, geocaching, 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. Although concentrating on land navigation, the skills learned can also be used in water navigation, some water navigation terms are discussed. The class does not cover aviation specific navigation terms. It will cover definitions of navigation terms, using the UTM system, creating waypoints, 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 videotape 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. Call or stop in the store to register. FEE: \$40/\$55. INFO: Mark Nelson (mnelson@rei.com) 703/379-9400.

20 (Monday)

👤 **HIKE – Family Hike**

Comus, MD

Come on out for a President's Day hike to the top of Sugarloaf Mountain. This 1.5-mile circuit hike has some kid-sized rock scrambles, and good views from the top. The trail is rocky and steep in places. We will climb up to the summit via the Sunrise Trail, hike down the A.M. Thomas Trail, and Northern Peaks Trail to the Bill Lambert Overlook, then return to our cars via the Mountain Loop Trail. The trail is not jogging-stroller friendly. INFO: Lauren Lang (at94l@netzero.net) 571/242-3950.

21 (Tuesday)

👤 **CLASS – Intro to Orienteering (REI)**

Fairfax, VA

7:30 p.m. Take your puzzle-solving skills into the wild. Learn how to navigate through the woods and find precise locations based on your knowledge of the map and terrain. Presented by the Quantico

Orienteering Club. INFO: Mark Nelson (mnelson@rei.com) 703/379-9400.

21 (Tuesday)

👤 **HIKE – Vigorous Hikers**

Central District, Shenandoah National Park, VA

From Meadows Cabin parking climb to Doubletop for views, scramble up the rocks and descend to the Rapidan to tour reopened Hoover Camp. Then climb Mill Prong Trail to AT to enjoy Dark Hollow Falls, returning via Stony Man Trail. 16 miles 4,000 ft climb. INFO: Chris Nolen (chrishiker@erols.com) 301/469-8931.

22 (Wednesday)

👤 **CLASS – Intro to Orienteering (REI)**

Rockville, MD

7:30 p.m. See February 21 listing for details. INFO: Mark Nelson (mnelson@rei.com) 703/379-9400.

22 (Wednesday)

👤 **HIKE – Easy Hikers**

Bethesda, MD

The Easy Hikers will hike 4-5 easy miles on the Capital Crescent bike trail from Bethesda toward Silver Spring and return. Lunch will be at a restaurant in Bethesda on the return. Meet at 10:15 a.m. at the Bethesda Swimming Pool parking lot on Little Falls Parkway near Bradley Blvd. Directions: On River Rd. coming from I-495, turn left onto Little Falls Parkway just after the bike trail overpass. Little Falls Parkway can also be reached by turning right off Mass. Ave. 5 blocks beyond Westmoreland Circle. INFO: Shirley Rettig (shirley_rettig@yahoo.com) 703/836-0147

22 (Wednesday)

👤 **HIKE – Midweek Hikers**

Location to be determined

See February 1 event for more information.

23 (Thursday)

👤 **CLASS – Climb Like a Girl (REI)**

Fairfax, VA

6:30 p.m. An open climbing night for women, taught by our own women climbers. Mini-clinics, lessons, tips and stories throughout the evening.

Special guests from the local climbing community. Space is limited. Register at Customer Service. INFO: Mark Nelson (mnelson@rei.com) 703/379-9400.

23 (Thursday)
🔧 CLASS – GPS 101 (REI)
College Park, MD

7:00 p.m. Learn how GPS receivers work and what affects accuracy, as well as features, benefits and how to choose a model. We'll also include a brief overview of online resources and batteries, water and shock resistance and accessories. INFO: Mark Nelson (mnelson@rei.com) 703/379-9400.

23 (Thursday)
👤 HIKE – Family Hike
Harpers Ferry, WV

Join us for an after-school hike up to the Loudoun Heights overlook from Route 340. This short, but somewhat steep and rocky hike leads to a beautiful view of the town of Harpers Ferry. If trains are going by, we can watch them enter and exit a tunnel, and go across a bridge. This 1.5-mile out and back hike is designed for all ages, infant and up, but the trail is not jogging-stroller passable. This is designed as a family activity, so an adult must accompany children. INFO: Lauren Lang (at94l@netzero.net) 571/242-3950.

23 (Thursday)
🔧 SPECIAL EVENT – 2 Seas/2 Feet (REI)
Baileys Crossroads, VA

7:30 p.m. In July, 2005, 24-year-old Andrew Skurka became the first person to walk the entire 7,778 mile Transcontinental Sea-to-Sea route. Taking just over 11 months, Andy's trek took him from Cape Gaspe on the Atlantic Ocean to Cape Alava on the Pacific, passing through some of North America's most rugged and scenic backcountry and through communities large and small. Join Andy as he shares inspiring tales and highlights from his odyssey – the people, landscapes, and wildlife – while you learn the essence and skills of lightweight backpacking. Leave with a newfound appreciation for this continent's breathtaking wild lands, and a compulsion to start walking. Gear give-aways and Q & A will follow. Don't miss it! INFO: Mark Nelson (mnelson@rei.com) 703/379-9400.

24 - 27 (Friday - Monday)
👤 XC SKI TRIP - Elk River Lodge
Slatyfork, WV

Treat yourself to a trip that'll rock your skis. We'll be heading to the Elk River Touring Center, a 6-hour drive from DC, in the heart of the Monongahela National Forest. They have skiing right from the center, or you can ski in the Cranberry Wilderness or Snowshoe. Please go to www.patc.net/chapters/ski/ for up-to-date information on this and all XC ski trips. INFO: Steve Bergstrom (steveb@nih.gov) h 301/564-9696, w 301/496-3871.

25 (Saturday)
👤 HIKE – Natural/Cultural History Hike
North District, Shenandoah National Park, VA
 Join Steve Bair, Park Resource Management Specialist, and Bob Pickett, PATC Club Naturalist, on an off-trail bushwhack in the Thornton River watershed as we visit former homesites and other artifacts of the mountain residents who made this their home prior to the Park's establishment in 1935. This will be a moderately difficult 6-8 mile hike on terrain that may be wet, snowy or icy. Depending on local conditions (and Skyline Drive closings), an alternate hike may be chosen by the leaders. INFO: Bob Pickett 301/681-1511.

25 (Saturday)
🔧 MEETING – FS-PATC Meeting

Vienna, VA
 At 10:00 a.m. the Lee District Forest Service folks and the SOT and PATC DM's for trails in the Lee District will meet at Headquarters in Vienna for their annual meeting. Members may attend for information. INFO: Liles Creighton (kb3jmf@comcast.net).

26 (Sunday)
👤 HIKE – Sunday Hikers
Roslyn, VA

The Sunday Hikers are re-visiting the Potomac Heritage Trail, but this time we're doing the entire 10 miles from Roslyn to the Beltway. We'll share a cab ride back to our starting point at the end of the hike. Minimal elevation gain, but some rocky terrain and water crossings. Hike will be canceled in the event of icy trail conditions. INFO: Vince Ferrari (vincentferrari@gmail.com) 301/249-2210.

28 (Tuesday)
👤 HIKE – Vigorous Hikers
Central District, Shenandoah National Park, VA
 Climb Leading Ridge Trail to the AT south to lunch at Corbin Cabin. Then climb Indian Run Trail to return via Crusher Ridge. 18 miles with 4,000 ft climb. INFO: Chris Nolen (chrishiker@erols.com) 301/469-8931.

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

28 - March 5 (Tuesday - Sunday)
👤 XC SKI TRIP - White Mountains
Bryce Canyon, Utah
 Bryce Canyon National Park offers a long winter season with plenty of snow into the early spring. This will be the Ski Touring Section's first trip out to this popular Western area on the Colorado Plateau and offers plenty of contrast to skiing in the East. Please go to www.patc.net/chapters/ski/ for up-to-date information on this and all XC ski trips. INFO: Rob Swennes (robertswennes@hotmail.com) 703/532-6101.

March

1 (Wednesday)
DEADLINE – (April) 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@earthlink.net. NOTE: Do not send photos or articles to headquarters. E-mail for address.

1 (Wednesday)
👤 HIKE – Midweek Hikers
Location to be determined
 See February 1 event for more information.

2 (Thursday)
🔧 CLASS – Basic Wilderness Safety (REI)
Rockville, MD

7:30 p.m. Anyone playing in the outdoors should have a basic understanding of the most common outdoor health & safety problems. We'll review and offer preventative measures and some tried and true remedies. INFO: Mark Nelson (mnelson@rei.com) 703/379-9400.

4 – 5 (Saturday – Sunday)
🔧 CLASS – Wilderness First Aid (WSC)
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 \$160. More information and registration at: <http://wfpa.net>. INFO: Christopher Tate 703/836-8905.

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

8 (Wednesday)
👤 HIKE – Midweek Hikers
Location to be determined
 See February 1 event for more information.

11 – 12 (Saturday – Sunday)
🔧 CLASS – Land Navigation (REI)
Baileys Crossroads, VA

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 topographic 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. INFO: Mark Nelson (mnelson@rei.com) 703/379-9400.

11 – 12 (Saturday – Sunday)
👤 TRAIL WORK TRIP – Cadillac Crew
Shockeysville, VA

The Crew will continue building the new Millrace Trail that connects the Tuscarora Trail to the White Rocks Trail through Sleepy Creek WMA. The crew constructed one mile of trail last year and hopes to complete the project this year. Bring water and a lunch for Saturday noon. Community dinner on Saturday night. Overnight at Margie Knott's cabin. INFO: Jon or Katherine Rindt (jkrindt@adelphia.net) 540/635-6351.

13 (Monday)
👤 HIKE – Family Hike
Paris, VA

Please join us for a hike in Sky Meadows State Park. It is a beautiful park with gorgeous views. We will do one of two loops, either a 2-mile or a 3.7-mile kid-paced hike, depending on what the group would like to do. Not jogging-stroller passable. INFO: Anne Regan (anne.c.regan@verizon.net) 703/689-3883.

14 (Tuesday)
🔧 MEETING - PATC Council, 7:00 p.m.

15 (Wednesday)
👤 HIKE – Midweek Hikers
Location to be determined
 See February 1 event for more information.

15 (Wednesday)
🔧 MEETING - Mountaineering Section, 8:00 p.m.

15 (Wednesday)
🔧 MEETING - West Chapter, 7:00 p.m.
High Knob Day Area of Gambrell State Park, Frederick, MD

18 (Saturday)
👤 HIKE - Waterfall and Wildflower Series
North District, Shenandoah National Park, VA
 This will be a 16-mile 3800-foot elevation hike to Greasy and Sterdley Falls with a 4-mile car shuttle to include a one-mile bushwhack round trip to Sterdley Falls. There will be a scenic but very challenging 1-mile, 1900-foot climb over rocks up to Skyline Drive from Greasy Falls. If height bothers you don't consider coming. After the climb the hike will be on the AT and the Jenkins Gap Trail. A 10-mile option without the shuttle is possible. PATC Map 9. INFO: Jack Thorsen (thorsen4@Juno.com) 703/339-

FORECAST

6716 or William Needham
(Needham82@AOL.COM) 410/884-9127.

18 (Saturday)

HIKE – West Virginia Lost River, WV

Come discover another one of WV's secret places. We'll explore 11 miles worth of trails in the Trout Pond Recreation Area which borders the VA line. Moderate. Approximately 1100 foot elevation gain/loss. INFO: Susan Bly (sbly@shepherd.edu) 304/876-5177 (day) or 304/258-3319 (7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.).

19 (Sunday)

HIKE – Sunday Hikers Appalachian Trail, MD

Spring is a great time to be out on the AT in Maryland, and we'll be covering about 12 miles of it, from I-70 to Gathland State Park. Approx. 1300 feet elevation gain. Volunteers to position cars at either end will be needed for this one-way hike. PATC Maps 5 and 6. INFO: Vince Ferrari (vincentferrari@gmail.com) 301/249-2210.

22 (Wednesday)

HIKE – Midweek Hikers Location to be determined

See February 1 event for more information.

25 (Saturday)

HIKE – Natural/Cultural History Hike North District, Shenandoah National Park, VA

Join Len Wheat, noted PATC author on Park cultural resources, and Bob Pickett, PATC Naturalist, on a 6-8 mile bushwhacking adventure in the Frazier Hollow region of Shenandoah National Park. We will visit numerous home sites and cemeteries and talk about the lifestyles of the mountain residents that lived in these woods for over 150 years. Depending on local conditions (and Skyline Drive closings), an alternate hike may be chosen by the leaders. INFO: Bob Pickett 301/681-1511.

25 – 26 (Saturday – Sunday)

CLASS – Hike Leader Training Vienna, VA

This weekend course will be conducted at the PATC Headquarters building in Vienna and is designed to prepare you to lead hikes. The two-day course uses classroom and outdoor instruction to prepare participants with skills to lead safe and enjoyable hikes with minimal environmental impact. Topics covered include medical emergencies, personal equipment, Leave No Trace, leadership, planning, standard procedures and navigation. Scenario exercises will also be used emphasize hike leadership skills. Cost: \$20 for PATC members, \$35 for non-members. Registration: Send payments to PATC, HLT Course, 118 Park Street, SE, Vienna, VA 22180-4609. Pre-registration is required. See ad on page 5 of this issue for more information. INFO: Eric VanNortwick (TPHLT@patc.net) 571/264-9513.

25 – 26 (Saturday – Sunday)

SHELTER WORK TRIP-West Shelter Crew Hancock, MD

Help the West Shelter Crew kick off our building season at the beautiful Ruth Morris/Vos Tract located right off of I-70 in West Virginia. We're in the early stages of constructing a brand new shelter for the Tuscarora Trail. After work we'll enjoy home-cooked meals and overnight at Little Orleans Cabin. INFO: Henry Horn (athike@aol.com) 301/498-8254

25 – 26 (Saturday – Sunday)

TRAIL WORK TRIP – Cadillac Crew Martinsburg, WV

The Crew started an emergency Tuscarora Trail relocation at the north end of Sleepy Creek WMA in November last year. The trail relocation must be complete by June this year to comply with a new property owner who wants the current trail off his property. This is a challenging project to build the trail through a steep rock field. Bring water and a lunch for Saturday noon. Community dinner on

Saturday night. Overnight location to be determined. INFO: Jon or Katherine Rindt (jkrindt@adelphia.net) 540/635-6351.

28 (Tuesday)

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

29 (Wednesday)

HIKE – Midweek Hikers

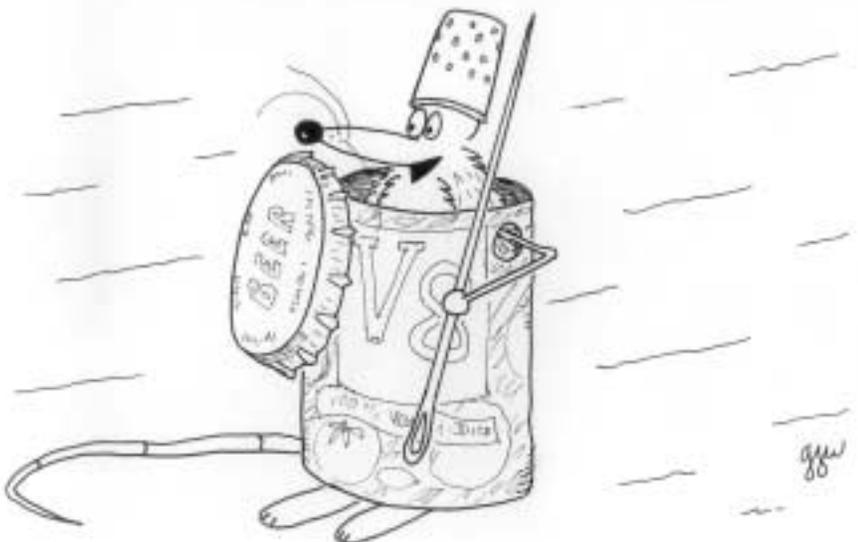
Location to be determined

See February 1 event for more information. □



TAILS FROM THE WOODS by George Walters

LOUIE PUTS ON ARMOR TO DO BATTLE IN THE CABIN



“TONIGHT WE TURN THE TABLES!”

Seasonal Trail Crews

A challenge, an opportunity.

PATC fills six trail crews in Shenandoah National Park (SNP) and four (the Massarock Crew) in the Lee District of the Forest Service. These crews work with rangers to put in five days of trail work on major projects. The work is challenging but fun, trail-building skills learned are valuable, while the fellowship is priceless. Are you up to and would you like to be on a seasonal crew? If so, go to our Web site and send an application to Trail Coordinator Heidi Forrest. The dates are: SNP Southern District: May 1-5 (four-day crew to avoid conflict with Mother's Day) and Aug. 14-19; Central District: May 8-12 and Aug. 21-25; North District: May 16-19 and Aug. 28-Sept. 1; Massarock Crew: Jun. 4-9; Jun. 11-15; Sept. 10-15; and Sept. 17-22. □

Bob Pickett's Appalachian Nature: Skunks

Admit it. Winter is not my favorite season for hiking. There just isn't much happening. Much of the flora and fauna of the forests is either gone, dormant, or dead. It's also cold, damp, and gets dark much too early. But, of course, each season has its unique conditions and events that can only be seen at that particular time of the year.

I love hiking in the snow, especially in a national park, where the more interesting mammals are likely to be found. I am always impressed by how many tracks one can find in SNP. Deer, of course, lead the list, along with the smaller rodents (squirrels, chipmunks, mice). Bobcats and fox are common, and the prints of coyotes are becoming more abundant. Even bear tracks can be found on many hikes. In our region, while most are sleeping in a dormant state under fallen tree stumps or hollow tree snags, quite a few will get out on fair weather days, while a few will remain active all winter long.

One track I look for in late February and March is that of our native striped skunk. The front tracks are 1" long and wide (hind feet 1.5" long and 1" wide) with five pointed toes on front and rear feet. The distance between sets of prints (stride) in this squatty, slow, flat-footed (plantigrade) creature, is only 4-6". Although not always the case, if you see the four foot prints in a line diagonal to the direction of the path, you've got a skunk.

The limited breeding period is in February and early March. During this period, you will have a better-than-normal chance of finding tracks, or even the carnivore itself, especially if you are taking an evening hike on a snow-covered area under the light of a full moon. Skunks tend to be most active in the morning and evening (crepuscular), like deer, or, less commonly, nocturnal.

But that's not to say you can't find them in the daytime. I had the good fortune to come across a skunk a few years ago on the Nicholson Hollow Trail. It was one of the first warm days of the season in early March. The skunk was lying prostrate in the middle of the trail, with all four legs and tail flat and spread out on the ground! I presumed it was dead, but on closer inspection, I was somewhat startled when it suddenly got up and started to walk away! Two thoughts instantly came to mind. First, I had read that, if you can pick up a skunk by its tail, it can't spray you. Second,



I realized here was probably the one chance in my lifetime to test that story. So, after stepping up and picking it up, I had my hiking companion, Kurt Rowan, take the picture you see above. My first attempt to scratch its head resulted in a three second flurry of teeth and claws. However, on my second attempt, a minute later, the skunk allowed me to pet it, which I continued to do for the next few minutes. Upon Kurt's inevitable question of 'What are you going to do with it now?' I figured that if the skunk could spray a distance of 15', I could throw it 16'! But, being the intrepid risk-taker that I am (did you say fool-hardy?), I simply set him down on the ground and watched him waddle away.

Looking at the photo, you may notice two things. First, there's no white on the skunk's back; just two white areas on top of the head. The second thing you might notice is that my white spot of hair on my chin makes me match the skunk quite nicely.

Striped skunks have a quite variable fur, or pelage, usually consisting of two white stripes of varying lengths and widths, but can be one stripe, large or very small. Albinism is known to occur, but no melanistic, or all black, skunks. The black and white coloration, also found in porcupines, seems to be a "flag" that can be easily seen, both day and night, warning potential predators to avoid confrontation.

The winter activity level of the skunk coincides with the prevailing weather. In our region, they will remain underground for a week or two in extreme weather conditions. In more northern climes, a skunk can spend long periods of winter in its den (from three weeks to 100 days in Canada), living off its fall-accumulated brown fat (fat can make up 30-50 percent of total weight in late fall). They are known to share winter burrows (but separate chambers) with opossums, woodchucks, and cottontail rabbits and other skunks. Some authors say they actually will curl up together to share warmth.

Females may den together in winter with one or two males in the northern limits of their range, but the males are more apt to be solitary in this Appalachian study area. A record of 20 skunks (19 females and one male!) has been observed in one winter den. Usually the average is one adult male and six females per den.

Skunks are the ultimate omnivore. Eating grubs, bees, and plants in summer, their winter diet is more focused on small rodents. They have even been known to prey on cats!

Despite the protection afforded by their famous musk glands, skunks are preyed upon by great-horned owls, who, although having terrific hearing and sight senses, suffer a bit in the olfactory sense. In fact, it has been record-

See Skunk, page 18

TRAILHEAD

Three snow/sleet/ice events in early December made a slow month for trail work even slower. Trails were covered in ice for a number of days, and Skyline Drive was closed for most of the month. With this “off duty” time, trail crews and overseers alike began thinking about the opportunities and challenges the coming season will present.

Reminders From the SOT

PATC provides six five-day crews to SNP and four five-day crews to the FS. Don't miss the opportunity to have a lot of fun and work hard with amazing people, and learn a lot. See the Web site for applications.

PATC also has nine district crews plus the Cadillac and Acme Treadway crews. These talented woodsmen work for a day or a weekend. Join them to meet and greet with the elite, while you learn trail work and how to have a good time. See crew schedules in Trailhead and the work trip schedule in the PA.

Now is the time to sharpen and fix tools, physically prepare bodies, and wish longingly for winter to go away so trail work can be done in comfort. As always, early spring is the time to assess each trail section to determine damage over the winter. In particular, reports showed that blazes in some areas needed touching up, so please check each trail segment. Overseers, man your McLeods! Forward into the New Year!



Dan Dueweke rests his pruning saw on a chestnut oak.

Photo by Patrick Wilson

Icy Trails No Problem

Skyline Drive was closed and, following December's ice storm, it was too slippery to walk up the AT. What's an overseer to do? Dan Dueweke and Patrick Wilson cinched up their crampons, left their cars at Panorama, and headed into the park with primitive tools where numerous blowdowns awaited them in the Hazel country wilderness. Carrying a crosscut saw and an axe, respectively, they ventured down Hazel Mountain Trail and soon found that the late morning sun had

made the icy crust most walkable, and the calm air was perfect for sawing and chopping.

About an hour down the trail it became obvious that they had Hazel country to themselves, and for a moment they felt sorry for all the day hikers who'd let the drive closure scare them off. Then it was back to work with renewed vigor and an acknowledgment that the short daylight of mid-December would limit their progress.

Walking out at an early twilight, Dan and Patrick stopped in at the Burger Barn in Sperryville for their famous Kobe beef burger and discovered with joy and wonder that the establishment had added a taproom to the restaurant, and that fresh Dominion Oak Barrell Stout was available by the pint. Oh Glory! As if the day couldn't get any better!

New DM for D.C. Trails

Mark Anderson, after nine years as the Rock Creek Park district manager, is turning over the reins of PATC's volunteer efforts on Washington, D.C., trails to Alex Sanders, an active overseer on Virginia's Potomac Heritage Trail. Mark and Alex will work together through the transition prior to Rock Creek Park's active work trip season, which runs from April to November. Prior to taking on the Rock Creek district manager job, Alex was active on the PHT, where among other things he has battled with invasive species as

See Trailhead, page 17

2006 Trails Schedule

Trail Leadership Team Meetings

6:00 p.m. at Club Headquarters:

March 22 (Spring)

September 20 (Fall)

Forest Service-PATC meeting

10:00 a.m. at Club headquarters

February 25

Seasonal Crews Weeks:

SNP Southern District at Schairer Trail Center

May 1-5 (4 day week)

August 14-19

SNP Central District at Pinnacles

May 8-12

August 21-25

SNP North District at Pinnacles

May 16-19

August 28 - September 1

Massarock Crew on Massanutten

Mountain

June 11-9

June 11-15

September 10-15

September 17-22

ATC Mid-Atlantic Crew at Pinnacles:

September 28 - October 2

SNP Trail Workshops:

June 3-4 - SNP Central District at

Pinnacles

September 16-17 - SNP North District at

Mathews Arm Campground

Chainsaw Certification Classes:

April 22-23 at Pinnacles

November 4-5 at

Greenbrier State Park, MD

Trailhead, from page 16

part of PATC's effort to revive the PHT along the Virginia shore of the Potomac River.

Alex will continue to oversee his PHT section, and Mark will continue to oversee a three-trail loop in Rock Creek Park that he and his wife have overseen for several years while attending an occasional work trip. Mark will also spend some of his new free time working on and writing about the many new trails in the Canaan Valley area of West Virginia.

PATC is very lucky in Rock Creek Park to work in tandem with ranger Ken Ferebee, who runs all the work trips in the park and works actively with the PATC's district manager in maintaining the roughly 25 miles of foot trails in Rock Creek Park and adjacent national park areas. Mark's work in Rock Creek has brought him great appreciation for Rock Creek Park, which he considers one of the region's greatest outdoor resources. With mature second-growth and small pockets of older-growth trees, the park is an amazing place to visit during the fall foliage season and any other time of year.

Stonewall Brigade Looking Forward to 2006

Great North Mountain trail activities have wound down for the winter with the onset of hunting seasons and inclement weather. Trail overseers and other volunteers are looking forward to the resumption of monthly Stonewall Brigade volunteer trail crew trips in March or April 2006, on the third Saturdays of the month. Keep an eye on the PA calendar as spring approaches!

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@adelphia.net. □



Simonds and Tuatahi visit Hazel Mountain: Tuatahi is a New Zealand firm that makes competition racing axes. They come with a six-pound head and a 30" handle. Patrick hones a microbevel on his that will really dry-shave your, er, bark. It's not a tool for the faint of heart or the average firewood splitter though as it is seriously HEAVY. The axe costs about \$300.00, or about as much as a decent chainsaw. Makes for interesting trail clearing when a wood chip the size of a dinner plate comes flying out of a seasoned red oak.

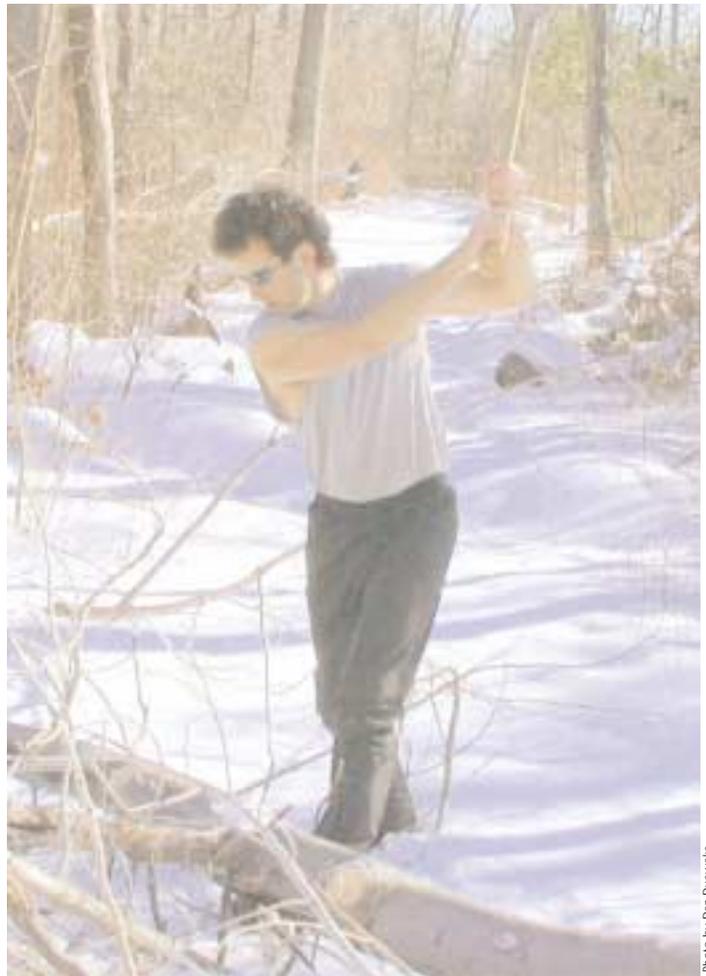


Photo by Dan Durewaka

Dan Simonds and Patrick Tuatahi skated down the Hazel Mountain Trail, dismissing blowdowns along the way. Braving frozen wood, Tuatahi steel persevered. This monster axe was swung throughout the day by Mr. Patrick Wilson, pictured above. After the mini-challenge, the mini-crew revived at the Burger Barn in Sperryville (Old Dominion Oak Barrell Stout on tap).

PATC 2006 Headquarters Closing Dates

New Year's Day	Mon., Jan 2
Martin Luther King Jr. Day	Mon., Jan. 16
Presidents Day	Mon., Feb. 20
Memorial Day	Mon., May 29
Independence Day	Tues., July 4
Labor Day	Mon., Sept. 4
Columbus Day	Mon., Oct. 9
Vienna Halloween Parade	Wed., Oct. 25
Veterans Day	Fri., Nov. 10
Thanksgiving Holiday	Thurs. & Fri., Nov. 23 & 24
Christmas/Winter Break	Monday, Dec. 25 - Monday Jan. 1

Skunk, from page 15

ed by researchers that practically all great-horned owls in the skunk's range smell of skunks, one of its main prey items. One owl nest had 57 skunk carcasses beneath it.

Speaking of its musk, did you know it is used as a perfume base (once the odor is removed)? The refined fluid has a great capacity to fix and retain aromas. The active ingredient is a sulphide called butylmercaptan.

Skunks make good pets if surgically descented by removal of the scent glands. In fact, skunks were popular as pets in the early 1900s, but sold under the name of "sachet kittens." Today, they are illegal in most states as pets, due to their susceptibility of transmitting rabies. About 50 percent of all confirmed cases of rabies in humans comes from skunks (the leading carrier in the United States, ahead of raccoons). Rabies found in skunks can be either the "furious" kind or the "dumb" kind, normally associated with bat rabies.

There are two skunk species in our Appalachian region. Besides the striped skunk, the spotted skunk is a southern Appalachian species, found as far north as the Big Meadows Swamp in SNP. They are the most primitive members of the carnivore order. □

Signature, from page 4

upon a Crown of the Head, it comforts the brain and head mightily." In modern parlance this might be to go soak your head in a wine vat full of walnuts.

Over time, general rules were established that provided a sort of field guide to the neophyte herbalist. Red and bitter indicated that a plant was good for the blood and the heart, yellow and sweet was good for the spleen and as a treatment for jaundice (jaune is French for yellow – the color of the skin and eyes when bile builds up in the blood), and black and salty was good for the lungs. Since it was believed by some that all things had a signature, the search for that sign eventually went beyond color and obvious external features to extend to the overall taxonomy of the plant. For example, the segmented, ivory-colored rhizome (horizontal underground stem) of the cutleaf toothwort has tooth-like knobs along its length, an obvious signature for a toothache (wort is derived from the Old English wurt, meaning root, its use evolving into a general suffix for any medicinal). The liverwort or hepatica (from the Greek hepar meaning liver) has three-lobed leaves that turn liver-colored in the fall (the flower ranges in color from lavender to blue) and was hence used to treat liver disorders. The maidenhair fern has fine, "maiden-like" hairs on its roots, an obvious sign for a baldness medication, or, as evinced by John Gerard, another 17th century English herbalist, "... it maketh the haire of the head and the beard to grow that is fallen and pulled off."

The healing power of natural plants is the purview of the modern herbalist, though the field lacks credence due to a paucity of rigorous scientific testing. However, there is compelling evidence that many plants are viable medicines, as ancient cultures were able to treat disease with apparent efficacy. Ginseng is a case in point. It has been used as an herbal tonic in China for millennia to treat a variety of mental and physical disorders. Human trials have been conducted that demonstrate its effectiveness in promoting antibodies in the blood that destroy invading microorganisms. It should be noted that there is some hyperbole in its healing properties; ginseng has been extolled as the panacean pharmaceutical for everything from deficient sexuality to a lack of vigor. Although the U. S. Food and Drug Administration lists ginseng only as a "generally recognized and safe food (GRAS)," it is regularly consumed by about 6 million Americans for its alleged curative powers. What is interesting from the Doctrine of Signatures standpoint is that ginseng is derived from the Chinese jen-shen, which means image of man. This is because ginseng has a homomorphic root, its wrinkled stubs calling to mind the arms and legs of the human body. So, maybe there is something to the doctrine after all. Now, all we have to figure out is what a watermelon looks like. □

—William Needham

Volunteers Appointed

Corridor Monitors Appointed in 2005

Harry Nogle	.....	Fox Gap
Irvin Dubinski & Robin Gerhart	.....	Keys Gap South
Jay Frankenfield	.....	Buzzard Rocks
John Haugh	.....	Shannondale
Paul Perez	.....	Bears Den Rocks
Ron & Barbara Perlik	.....	High Knob

District Managers Appointed in December

Alex Sanders	.....	DC Metro District
Bill Gallagher	.....	Co-Overseer, SNP Appalachian Trail – South

Trail Overseers Appointed in December

Tom Johnson	..	Co-Overseer, Tuscarora Trail – Yellow Springs to Capon Springs Road
Greg Hubley	.....	Co-Overseer, Appalachian Trail – VA 638 to the Denton Shelter
Oliver Pierson	...	Co-Overseer, Appalachian Trail – Beahms Gap Pass Mt. Hut Trail
Jonathan	...	Co-Overseers, Western Ridge Trail – Military Rd. to Boundary Bridge and Judy Knight
Don Looney & Elizabeth McGowen	...	Co-Overseers, Whittier, Holly, and Pine Trails

POTOMAC

APPALACHIAN

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VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Create PATC's New Web Site!

PATC's Web site is "ancient" and needs a facelift. Web Designer is wanted to lead significant effort in 2006 to bring PATC's online presence into the 21st century. Commitment – at least 4 hours per week. For more information contact Steve Sharp, IT Committee Chair, at SteveITPlanning@comcast.net.

PATC Tract Managers Needed

Volunteers needed to manage PATC-owned Lands. Several locations available. Properties are up and down the AT in Virginia and Maryland and along the Tuscarora In Virginia, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania. If interested please contact Chris Mangold at 301/898-7979 or e-mail at cs5749@yahoo.com.

Who's Minding the Store? You Can!!!

PATC is looking for a new Chair of the Sales Committee. Duties would include: advise and supervise paid and volunteer sales staff, help with inventory of all PATC publications, establish sales policy and publication pricing, work closely with publications and maps committees to target future updates and publications. Anyone interested in this position please contact: Lee Sheaffer, Vice President-Volunteerism (thumpers@visuallink.com) 540/955-0736.

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.) – 20%, 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%, The Outfitter at Harpers Ferry – 15%, and the sole source (Harrisonburg) – 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 and Ranger Surplus (excludes BSA merchandise). Be sure to have your membership ID or overseer ID ready when you shop.

FOR SALE: Mamiya 35mm camera lenses, attachments and filters. \$50 obo. Contact Susan Bly at sbly@shepherd.edu or 304/876/5177.

FOUND: MOTOROLA RADIO.

I found a Motorola radio on the Hannah Run Trail on Jan. 7. Please contact Jack (thorsen4@juno.com) 703/330-6717.



PATC Swap Meet

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. □

HIKING PARTNERSHIPS

WANTED: HIKING PARTNER. I live in the Baltimore area, retired school teacher and seeking a hiking partner(s) to share in car shuttle for section hiking the southern half of the AT. The outing could be up to 10 days at a time. Contact: Ron Bungay (ronbungay@comcast.net) or 410/242-4592

HIKING ENTHUSIAST SOUGHT for role as Scoutmaster of outdoors-focused Boy Scout Troop 97 in Silver Spring, Md. More info? Contact Jim Van Cott: (301/565-0486) CJPAVC@yahoo.com.

WANTED: HIKING/CAMPING PARTNER: I live in Gaithersburg, Md., and am looking for hiking and camping buddies within 120 miles of the DC area. I am 29 and willing to hike/camp anywhere. I also have a dual propane stove that I am giving away. Any takers? Contact Jeffrey Scott (knight_1_nu@yahoo.com) 301/466-3373.

Trail, Shelter, and Corridor Overseers / Monitors Wanted

CORRIDOR MONITOR OPENINGS

Tom Lupp, 301/271-7340

tlupp@erols.com

Wilson Gap, VA – PATC Map 7

Ashby Gap South, VA – PATC Map 8

**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR THE SHELTER
CREW IN MD**

**DICKS DOME SHELTER – NORTHERN VA –
MAP 8**

Henry Horn, 301/498-8254

ATHike@aol.com

**OPEN TRAILS – CONTACT THE DISTRICT
MANAGER FOR THE SECTION THAT
INTERESTS YOU**

PENNSYLVANIA MAPS 2-3, 4, 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

PA Tuscarora Trail [J] – Co-Overseer

Hemlock Road to Mountain Rd

(4.9 miles)

PA Tuscarora Trail [J] – Co-Overseer

PA 233 to Bill Miller Trail (3.9 miles)

PA Tuscarora Trail [J] – Co-Overseer

Bill Miller Trail to Cowpens Rd (4.7 miles)

PA Tuscarora Trail [J] – Co-Overseer

Cowans Gap State Park to US 30

(6.7 miles)

PA Tuscarora Trail [J] – Co-Overseer

US 30 to PA Rte. 16 (1.9 miles)

HARPERS FERRY / ASHBY GAP AT &

BLUE-BLAZED – MAP 7 & 8

Chris Brunton, 703/924-0406

trailbossbtc@msn.com

Appalachian Trail

Loudoun Heights Trail to Powerline

(2.3 miles)

ASHBY/POSSUMS AT & BLUE-BLAZED

[RTE. 50 TO SNP] – MAP 8, 9

Lloyd Parriott, 540/622-2743

laparriott@hotmail.com

Appalachian Trail

VA 55 to VA 638 (2.1 miles)

Barking Dog Trail

AT to Barking Dog Spring/Rte 604

(0.34 mile)

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.

SNP CENTRAL BLUE-BLAZED

[SOUTH END] – MAP 10

Steve Paull, stevepaull@yahoo.com

Entry Run Trail (lower)

John's Rest Access Road to Park Boundary

(1.7 miles)

Entry Run Trail (upper)

Park Boundary to Pocosin Fire Road

(0.8 miles)

White Oak Canyon Trail

Skyline Dr. to Waterfall viewpoint

(2.3 miles)

SNP SOUTH AT – MAP 11

Don White, 804/795-2914

trlbldr@comcast.net

Appalachian Trail – Co-Overseer

Frazier Discovery Trail to Loft Mt. Camp

Store (1.1 miles)

TUSCARORA CENTRAL – MAP L

Walt Smith, 540/678-1043

wsmith@visuallink.com

Tuscarora Trail

Southern Rockfield to Pinnacle Powerline

(2.3 miles)

MASSANUTTEN SOUTH – MAP H

Tate Heuer, 202/255-6055

tate@wth2.com

Massanutten Mt. South Trail

Pitt Spring to Morgan Run Trail

(1.4 m FR 65) (3.3 miles)

Massanutten Mt. South Trail

Morgan Run Trail (1.4 m FR 65) to

Fridley Gap (2.3 miles)

Massanutten Mt. South Trail

Fridley Gap to Boone Run Trail (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)

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA – MAP N

Alex Sanders, 703/465-8140

yargtac@yahoo.com

Dumbarton Oaks Trail

Whitehaven St. to Rock Creek Park

(1.0 miles)



The Potomac Appalachian

118 Park Street
Vienna, VA 22180-4609

Telephone: 703/242-0315

Mon.-Thurs. 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Thurs. & Fri. 12:00 noon - 2:00 p.m.

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