

TRAIL BLAZER

NEWSLETTER OF THE ROANOKE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CLUB

Summer 2010

The Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club is a recreational hiking association of volunteers who preserve and improve the Appalachian Trail as the nation's premier, continuous, long-distance footpath.

CALENDAR OF CLUB ACTIVITIES

Cornboil
Saturday August 7th, 6-9 PM
Green Hill Park, page13

WORK HIKES

Saturday/Sunday, July 3 & 4 - 8:00 AM
Bluff City Relo. – Konnarock Crew

Saturday/Sunday, August 7 & 8 - 8:00 AM
Bluff City Relo. – Konnarock Crew

Sunday, September 19 - 8:00 AM
Bluff City Relocation

Hike Scheduling

Contact Mike Vaughn
992-1350 – mikeva999@yahoo.com

BOARD MEETINGS

(All members are always welcome.
Please let the host know you plan to attend.)

Monday, August 2, 7:30 p.m.
Hosted by *Mike & Sheila Vaughn*

Monday, September 13, 7:30 p.m.
Hosted by *Liz & Bill Lamson*

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Editor's Note

Are your dues overdue? Look at your label.

Please send me photos. Email is great, or you can send me your camera card or put them on a flash drive and I will return-mail them . I can also scan and return prints. Shots with 1 - 3 people are best.

The Blazer is always available on-line at www.ratc.org under Newsletter. It goes on line when it is sent to the printer, 2 or 3 weeks before it is delivered. The on-line version is also in color.

Email me if you would like to save trees and only receive the on-line version.

If you didn't hear about Mac McDaniel or Don Nulph, we don't have your email address. Please!

Bob Peckman

Welcome New Members

The Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club welcomes the following new members:

Diane Christenson

Duncan Hollar & Lorrie Sprague

Holly Sacra

Julie Cochran

Amit & Laura Hajra

Joe & Connie Vaughn

Sally Evans

Wayne & Liz Hunt

Roberta Young

And we thank you *Betty Young, Amit & Laura Hajra and Joe & Connie Vaughn* for making donations. We look forward to meeting you soon: hiking on the trail, at work, social event, or a board meeting.

Bob Blankenbaker

Trail Supervisor's Report

I want to mention several issues. First of all a brief summary of the status of my health:
 Wegener's Disease: Much Better.
 Heart Problems: Seem to be under control.
 Stroke Related Issues: Problems persist. Probably the most serious is dizziness when I get up to start walking. It may hit me only 10% of the time, but when it does, it is either sit down or fall down. Once I am down it goes away very quickly.
 Obviously, I need to get this corrected before I get back on the trail.

I want to thank the RATC board and the Virginia Regional Partnership Committee for giving me their annual volunteer award. I was able to go to the luncheon at Mountain Lake in April to receive the award. I appreciate the recognition. The irony of the situation is that I would not have received the award had I not gotten sick. Pete Irvine of the Forest Service in Roanoke received the agency award.

The Konnarock crew will be with us July 1-5 and August 5-9 to work on the Bluff City relocation. Five days working with the crew will get you a T-shirt. Unless things change, I probably will not get one this year. I am hoping that I will be able to spend a day out there in August.

Harry Thomas, an Indian who used to hike the trail, died on Dec. 20. He was 79. I first met him

in 1973 and saw him several times on the trail.

I attended the club overseers' meeting in April and was very impressed with the attendance and the enthusiasm of those present. Certainly, the overseers do a lot of work and we would not be able to keep the trail maintained without them. Right now, I may be the weak link in the system, but I hope that will be corrected before the year is over. I also want to thank David Jones for stepping up to the plate as Assistant Trail Supervisor, leading the meeting, and all the work hikes. The club is very lucky to find someone like David to fill in for me.

Finally, I want to recognize the trail workers for the period Oct. 1, 2008-Sept. 30, 2009 who earned hats and T-shirts. It is 4 days for a hat, 7 days for a T-shirt and 9 days for both. Hats: Bill Floyd, Brian Kelley, Dallas St. Clair, Dick Clark, Hal Cantrill, Joe Kelley, Matt Gentry, Maurice Turner and Mike Vaughn; T-shirts: Roger Holnback; Both: Blanche Brower, Charles Parry, Dana Helsley, Frank Haranzo, Homer Witcher, Kenny Garrett, Kris Peckman, Mervin Brower and Therese Witcher. These were given out at the annual banquet. If you did not get yours, contact Dick Clark or me and we will arrange to get them to you.

Charles Parry

Hikemaster's Report

If you went to our annual meeting in March you were treated to a presentation by long-time RATC member (and five-time thru-hiker) Leonard Adkins about the history of the Appalachian Trail in Virginia. Leonard's presentation included many photographs from different periods throughout the 80-year history of the Trail. Many of these photographs are included in his recently published book "Along Virginia's Appalachian Trail".

The A.T. is over 75 years old. The early history of the trail was dominated by two very different figures, Benton MacKaye and Myron Avery. MacKaye, born in Connecticut, was the visionary who first proposed the construction of the A.T. Avery, from Washington D.C., was a practical, no-nonsense lawyer who did much of the legwork to turn the vision of a two-thousand mile trail along the crest of the Appalachian Mountains into a reality. He was one of the founders of the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club and held several other posts in the ATC. He was an intense man who is perhaps best remembered for scouting out and pushing his measuring wheel along practically the entire length of the A.T. He also evaluated and approved the design of the two-inch by six-inch white blazes that mark the A.T. from Georgia to Maine. His tireless work ensured that the original trail was constructed in just eight years.

Given their different temperaments, it was not

surprising that MacKaye and Avery had a falling-out over plans and uses for the trail, and by the time the trail was completed they were no longer on speaking terms. MacKaye later helped found the Wilderness Society and was involved in environmental projects in the West. When asked why there was a need for a trail he said: "The ultimate purpose? There are three things:

1. To walk
2. To see
3. To *see* what you see. "

There is an interesting 63-page document called "Trail Years" available on the Appalachian Trail Conservancy's web site that discusses in more detail the entire history of the trail. Another resource for further reading about the history of the trail and the trail itself is the book "Guide to the Appalachian Trail". It is available on the backpacker.com web site. The Appalachian Trail Museum, the first museum dedicated to the A.T., opened on June 5. It is located in a 200-year-old gristmill at Pine Grove Furnace State Park, along the trail in Pennsylvania. The museum includes exhibits on Earl Shaffer, the first person to ever thru-hike the trail, and Emma "Grandma" Gatewood, the first woman to hike the entire Appalachian Trail alone. Gatewood was 67 years old and a mother of 11 children and grandmother of 23 when she first hiked the trail in 1955, wearing sneakers and carrying a knapsack over her shoulder.

Mike Vaughn

ATC Invasive Species Survey

The Southwest and Central Virginia office of ATC is hosting a summer intern. Stephen Perkins is volunteering his time for 10 weeks this summer to help ATC survey invasive species along the trail corridor, and will be engaging other volunteers and training sessions to learn more about the issues on invasive plants. Stephen will be a sophomore at Virginia Tech in the fall. His studies are focused in the Wildlife Management Department. He approached ATC about an internship to learn more about environmental monitoring and resource management issues.

We have prioritized Stephen's survey work to Wilderness Areas that the A.T. traverses. ATC's southern offices received a grant from the National Forest Foundation last year to conduct surveys using the EDDmaps system (see: <http://www.eddmaps.org>) The approach of Early Detection and Distribution mapping system is a useful tool to understand where there are relatively new occurrences of invasive species along the trail. We hope by raising awareness of invasive species that we can do a better job ensuring that

these unwanted plants do not settle in remote areas like Wilderness Areas. We are happy to share occurrence data with land managing partners and appreciate the sensitivity of management actions in Wilderness Areas. Based on our surveys in the Mt. Rogers area last year, we are not seeing occurrences of problematic weeds in Wilderness Areas in this area. We have detected occurrences at parking areas, however, and hope that by engaging more hikers in this important issue we can raise awareness about spreading plants from one area to another.

Stephen is very interested in visiting A.T. clubs or having additional volunteers join him for his survey work. If you might be interested in learning more and helping out, please contact Stephen at: sperkins@appalachiantrail.org. He can also be reached by phone at ATC's direct line: 540-953-3564. Stephen will also follow-up to let folks know how his survey schedule is shaping up.

Laura Belleville

Biennial Conference

The next Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) Biennial Conference, called Virginia Journeys 2011, will be held on July 1 - 8, 2011 at Emory and Henry College, near Abingdon, Virginia. The conference will be hosted by several ATC clubs in Virginia, including the RATC. Our club is responsible for planning and scheduling all of the non-hike excursions for the conference. These include activities such as whitewater rafting, horseback riding, and biking. We are looking for volunteers to serve on the excursion planning committee. If you are interested, please contact the committee chairman, John Miller, at 375-3250.

These activities include:

- Kayak/Canoe trips on the New River
- Bike riding on the Virginia Creeper and New River trails
- Barter Theater shows and tours
- Pottery Painting
- Whitewater rafting on the Nolichucky River
- Wine tasting and tours

- Gray Fossil site tour
- Bristol Speedway tours
- Bristol Caverns tours
- Museum of the Middle Appalachians tour
- A visit to Mabry Mill
- A visit to the Lincoln Theatre
- Horseback riding
- Paddle boating and canoeing on the lake at Hungry Mother

Our club is also being called upon to provide leaders and co-leaders for these activities as well as volunteers to man the Excursions Desk in the registration area and meet Excursion leaders at the departure area. If you are interested in helping out in any of these areas or have questions, please contact John Miller at:

Phone: 375-3250

e-mail: John.Miller591@comcast.net

mail: 340 Pennsylvania Ave, Salem, VA 24153

John Miller

Hike Reports

Sunday, March 7, 2010 8:00AM Trout Creek (RT 620) to Dragon's Tooth Parking, 113 Mile Hike #6

Gary Bible and Fred Walters (leaders), H.R. Blankenship, Sandra Cothran, Carl Cornett, Maya Bohler, John Merkwon, Lois Smith, Larry Austin, Bob & Kristin Peckman, Mike & Sheila Vaughn

We departed from the Orange Market and dropped a vehicle at the Dragon's Tooth parking lot, then headed to Trout Creek in two vehicles to start our hike. It was a beautiful sunny day for hiking. Snow covered much of the trail. Some of the ridgelines that we traversed still had drifts over a foot deep. It took almost 4 hours to cover the first 5 miles. We stopped at a nice rock out-cropping just before Dragon's Tooth to enjoy our lunches, good conversation, and abundant sunshine. Once we began our descent, we passed many hikers coming up the shorter route from the Dragon's Tooth parking lot. There was less snow on this side of the mountain but it was more treacherous due to the steeper descent and ice melt. A good time was had by all.

Sunday, March 21, 2010 8:00AM Big Horse Gap Work Hike

David Jones, Kelly Dunn, Elisabeth Dunn, Adam Walker, Matt Gentry, Michael Lasech, Neville Harris, Kris Peckman, Steve Burt

Winter had been hard on the trail. As early as December there were reports of ice storm damage, and in early March, Michael and Neville at Wood's Hole Hostel said that hikers were having difficulty finding the trail. In addition to a rough winter, this would be the first spring clean up without Charles Parry leading the efforts.

Setting out for this workhike there seemed to be a background mantra repeating: lots of work, leaderless, oh my. And then, Matt Gentry's energy, smile and doughnuts entered the picture. His enthusiasm and suggestions hinted of a possible yellow brick road of success.

Gathering at Pandapas Pond, the deliberations began: who goes where taking what tools to finish when and ride home how....Simple. Matt brought out the doughnuts and things looked up. Soon, or

rather in good time, we were on our way.

One third of the party went to Angel's Rest, working south toward Doc's Knob. The remainder of the group drove to Wood's Hole Hostel. Having thoroughly discussed logistics at Pandapas Pond, upon arriving at Wood's Hole it seemed only reasonable to rehash and thoroughly rediscuss everything again.

Finally, everyone was moving to the trail with the second group heading to Black Horse Gap to work north, and the third going to Doc's Knob Shelter to intercept the first group coming across Pearis Mountain.

The two Pearis Mountain groups met a little past four o'clock, one having started on the trail at ten and the other around eleven. Backtracking to the cars, when we arrived rain began to fall. Leaving the Doc's Knob parking spot, it was six o'clock. The last group was somewhere between Sugar Run Gap and Doc's Knob. With day turning to dusk, everyone regrouped at Wood's Hole, tired, a little wet, but full of accomplishment at having cleared 12 miles of trail.

As a tribute to our friend and inspiration, it was noted that we left the woods in the dark with it raining: We miss you Charles; we look forward to your recuperation and return to the trail!

Sunday, March 21, 2010 1:00PM A.T., Harvey's Knob to Boblett's Gap Beginners Hike

Zetta Campbell, (leader), Rita Krasnow, Sharon Probst, Pat Cousins, dog

The leader was unavoidably slightly late, but found three smiling hikers patiently waiting, ready to go. Weather is always important to hikers and today it was very nice although clouds were overhead and rain was promised later. We took Route 43 up from Buchanan to the Parkway, came to Boblett's Gap Overlook first, left Rita's van there and went on to Harvey's Knob in my car to begin the hike. The leader led from the rear, as is her weird custom, and the group stretched out some, having been told that the trail did not go into the overlook, but went on just below. Other than that, all we did was follow

the white blazes. When Pat and I caught up to the other two, they were waiting where the trail leads down to the Boblett's Gap Shelter. That meant we had completed the hike and all we had to do was go a few steps back and take the very short path up to the overlook. There we packed into Rita's van, four humans and Rita's dog. Back to Harvey's Knob where my car was waiting. Rita chose to drive onto Route 460 as that would put her closer to her house. The rest of us went back to take Route 43 down from the Parkway and here the leader automatically took a right turn and drove on down. After awhile, we realized this did not look like the road to Buchanan. Oh, it wasn't too bad. We had ended up in Montvale. Sharon helped us get to 460 because she was familiar with that road. All we had to do was go straight ahead. On 460 it was easy to get back to Daleville. Even with that, we all had a good time. It was so good to get on the trail in the mountains in the woods and enjoy the nice views. Oh yes, when we got to Harvey's Knob after finishing the hike, we felt the first few drops of rain. Well timed.

Sunday, March 28, 2010 8:00AM
Catawba Mountain (311) to Trout Creek (620)

Linda King & Chase Davidson (leaders), Carl Cornett

The day was very cold and rainy. We decided to shorten the hike and hike from 311 to the Dragon's Tooth parking lot. Along the way we encountered several hikers who reported that Dragon's Tooth was very icy and foggy. We decided to skip hiking the mountain and make our way to the parking lot by way of the Boy Scout trail. We all agreed that it was good to get out and walk in the woods a bit.

Sunday, March 28, 2010 1:00PM
Belfast Trail to the Devil's Marbleyard

Cancelled due to heavy cold March rain with forecast of thunderstorms.

Sunday, April 4, 2010 8:00AM
Hoop Hole, Upper Loop

Kris (leader) & Bob Peckman, Carl Cornett, Sally Evans, Maurice Turner

April at last! What a change from one month ago, when we were hiking in deep snow. Temperatures today were in the 70s, and wildflowers have begun to bloom.

We met in Daleville at 9:00, which had the

advantage of allowing one participant to attend the Easter sunrise service on Mill Mountain before coming on the hike.

Immediately on starting up the trail, we were greeted by a carpet of bluets, followed by purple and halberd-leaved yellow violets, bloodroot, and leatherleaf. On the way down we saw serviceberry, round-lobed hepatica, pussytoes, and one blooming trillium.

The high point, both literally and figuratively, was the spectacular 180-degree view from a rock cliff which we reached by bushwhacking up a ridge and then scaling the cliff. We could have continued bushwhacking along the ridge to Montgomery Knob and back, but we didn't think anything could beat the view from our cliff. Beneath us was the Craig Creek Valley, all newly green. Closer in, among the not-yet-green trees, was a reddish haze of new maple buds. Further away, we picked out the cut in the mountain where the James River passes Eagle Rock. In the distance we could see the Peaks of Otter and House Mountain near Lexington. While we were lurching and gazing, a deer passed by, paused a few moments and then went on her way. Some gnats and sweat bees made their presence known, too. The vultures were soaring above and beneath us. We asked for a ride, but they said we exceeded the weight limit.

It was a perfect day for Sally's first hike with the club, and we hope she will join us on many future hikes.

Sunday, April 11, 2010 8:30AM
Bearwallow Gap Loop

Larry Austin (leader), H. R. Blankenship, Carl Cornett, Kris & Bob Peckman, John Merkwon, Paul Jones, Hugh Hall and his dog Rascal.

Several times a year we have the perfect weather day and this was one of them. Crystal blue skies with high temperatures around 70. This hike encompassing a number of trails along with an off-trail adventure near the end provided different views and terrain. We observed a number of wildflowers in bloom including violets, pussy-toes, bird-on-the-wing, chickweed, bellwort, wood vetch and clusters of bleeding heart near one of the rock outcroppings. We stopped for lunch at an overlook near the Cove Mountain Shelter where we met two thru-hikers. We encountered another thru-hiker near Bearwallow

Gap. We had some stunning views from two rock outcroppings along the way. All appeared to have a good day including Rascal who was the most well-behaved pet I've seen. (Rascal added to our pleasure ...ed.)

**Sunday, April 11, 2010 11:00AM
Catawba Mountain (Rt 311) to McAfee Knob**

Sue Scanlin (leader), Mary Gilbert with Sonny, Sue Bass, and Michael Stacey

As we were waiting at Hanging Rock OM for another caller to show up, Mary and Sonny went ahead to the parking lot at the trail. Turns out the other person didn't show up at all and when we got to the parking lot, Mary was nowhere to be seen, but her car was there. So we knew we'd see her on the trail later.

Sue Bass and Michael Stacey are not (yet?) RATC members and had never before been to McAfee Knob. They were in for a treat as the weather was gorgeous and visibility was great, too.

Not surprisingly, we met lots of people along the trail on the way up, at the top, and on the way down along the fireroad. In addition, we had encounters with two lizards, a black snake, and bugs. I hadn't expected them to be waiting for me this early in the spring; they got me good. As to the flora, Mountain Laurels just had tiny buds on them, but one solitary Dwarf Iris was seen in full bloom besides some other, much smaller and less spectacular flowers along the way.

What a splendid hike to do for the first time and again and again!

**Sunday, April 18, 2010 8:00AM
Fuller Rocks, Big Rocky Row**

Dan (Leader) and Kathy Phlegar along with Sage (Dog), Fred Meyer (Co-Leader), Kris Peckman, Bob Blankenbaker, & H.R. Blankenship

On a scale 0 to 10 for weather this was a ten with plenty of sunshine and crystal clear skies and cool temperatures. We met at the Daleville Park-N-Ride and traveled to Snowden in Amherst County. The hike started at the old slate mine at the end of Hercules Road. Dan gave a brief lecture on the geology of the area and showed several old pictures of the manufacturing plant that was once there for making lightweight aggregate. We started the hike

through the old reclaimed mine site and made a side trip to the old "Blue Hole" that was used by locals for a swimming hole for years. Years ago the "Blue Hole" was nearer the AT, and Leonard Adkins mentioned it in his slide show at the last RATC banquet. On a small bushwhack out of the "Blue Hole" we encountered an unusual tree with very long thorns coming out of the bark, and this had everybody cautious. Once at the top of a ridge with a beautiful view looking to the west we encountered two young boys jogging through the woods and running along the top of a rocky cliff, which was a surprise to everyone. The hike continued to the junction of the AT and Salt Log Gap, which is near the Punch Bowl area. After a break for lunch we traveled south on the AT along the ridge overlooking the James River. There are several overlooks with many panoramic views along this area of the AT. Throughout the hike the wildflowers were abundant with at least 15 different varieties. H.R. Blankenship made it back to the trailhead first where he encountered much excitement. There were fire trucks, ambulance, and police cars going up the road and we were told that a man had fallen off the rocks, which we all thought it was one of the two boys we saw running earlier. This was not the case: a Forest Service law enforcement officer told us it was a mistake and they were supposed to have gone to the James River near Glasgow.

**Sunday, April 18, 2010 1:00PM
Daleville (Rt 220) to Hay Rock**

Mervin & Blanche Brower (leaders), Clayton Cabiness, Sherry Kessel, Jeanne Duddy, Rod Liebl, Mary Gilbert and Maya Bohler.

The hike started from Daleville commuter parking lot. The day was in the 60s and sunny which was good for hiking. We left the parking lot at about 1:00 PM and returned at 5:30. The air was very clear and we had a good view of the valley toward Daleville. Carvin's Cove was very pretty from the view points. The leaves on the trees were just coming out with the different shades of green. We saw one green snake.

**Sunday, April 25, 2010 8:00AM
~~Bluff City Relocation~~
Sinking Creek Work Hike**

David Jones, Matt Gentry, Lori Jones, Maurice Turner, Duncan Hollar, Teresa Hollar, Alan Simpson, Walter Shroyer

Rain, no rain, rain, no rain, rain, no rain? After consulting all the many radars, charts and folk forecasts of the world wide web we decided to chance going to work on Sinking Creek Mountain.

We headed to the Route 621 parking lot from two fronts, Roanoke and Blacksburg. Maurice was the sole person coming from the first; the rest came from Blacksburg. Duncan and his daughter Teresa get a pulaski salute for driving the longest distance, coming from Lewisburg, WV. Unfortunately, a plan change at the end of the week did not get communicated to Alan and Walter who showed up at the original time, oops...an hour later than the new meeting time. So they too get a pulaski salute for persevering after finding the group gone, and heading out on their own to put in half a day's work.

After meeting on 621 we split into two groups. Maurice and Matt headed south on the AT to climb Sinking Creek Mountain. Lori, David, Duncan and Teresa headed off to the top of Lee Road to hike the stealth trail to the AT. On the AT, this second group worked to the ridge then backtracked.

Mid afternoon the groups reunited just north of the junction with the stealth trail. This was a perfect opportunity to lounge on the ground enjoying the uncannily wise decision to ignore the weather forecast of rain. Everyone soaked in the sun and the seasonal view of Craig Creek valley through the yet to leaf out trees.

Several large blowdowns as well as additional small trees were cleared. The laurel and greenbrier at the top of the mountain were trimmed. All making for a successful spring trail cleaning work hike.

**Sunday, May 2, 2010 8:00AM
Mill Creek, Pearis Mountain**

Dan (Leader) & Kathy Phlegar along with Sage (Dog), Kris (assistant) & Bob Peckman, Bob Blankenbaker, Maya Bohler, Carl Cornett, Mike & Sheila Vaughn

Everyone met at the Orange Market in Salem and proceeded to Giles County to start the hike at Narrows. Dan took his fly rod for a short distance to show the group a native trout from Mill Creek. On the hike up along Mill Creek we stopped to show everyone what a wild ramp looked like. Maya was ready for this because she brought bags and a small digging tool with her to dig ramps. A ramp is a like

a wild onion or wild garlic and it is great to cook with and season foods. Carl stayed behind to help with the digging of ramps and we waited for them at the area where there are many man made rock structures created by visiting hikers.



After a brief stream crossing that resulted in a few wet feet for some, we continued up the Mill Creek gorge, which overlooks many cascading waterfalls. A local native from Narrows has cleared and is currently maintaining many trails in the Mill Creek area and has named each trail with signs. The trail we used coming up out of the gorge was the Catwalk. We turned right onto the Piney Road trail and crossed Mill Creek and then started our ascent up Wolf Creek Mountain on another trail called the Shortcut. We took the Grassy Road trail to the top of Sentinel Point where we ate lunch and had the panoramic view of the New River, Narrows, and views looking into West Virginia. The temperature was very warm and unusual for this time of the year. We backtracked down the mountain to cross Mill Creek again, where we took the trail named Afterthought to ascend Pearis Mountain. We decided not to go to the top of Pearis Mountain

because of the heat, but Carl elected to go up for a quick look over the mountain. The trail back to Narrows is the Weezer and it crosses a small stream called Mercy Branch. This is where we took a break and waited for Carl near the intersection of the trails Eyeball and Little Knarly. Crazy Carl decided to go swimming in a small pool with a water temperature around 50 degrees. The descent to Narrows on the Weezer trail offers many views. Our ramp diggers stopped again near the end to get a few more ramps and to harvest a mess of stinging nettles. Everyone seemed to enjoy the area because of its remoteness and wilderness.

Sunday, May 2, 2010 1:00PM
Belfast Trail to the Devil's Marbleyard

John Miller and Sue Scanlin (co-leaders), Russ Kayser, Mary Gilbert and her dog Son.

It was hot for an early May weekend and there was a threat of showers for the afternoon. We made good time to the rock yard but only had one hiker interested in scrambling on the boulders. The rest of us sat at the bottom in the shade. We chatted with each other and others that were at the site and enjoyed the breeze. This was Russ's first hike with the club. We hope he will come out for more. We all enjoyed the hike and the fellowship.

Sunday, May 9, 2010 8:00AM
Old Hotel Trail/Cold Mountain/Mt. Pleasant

John Merkwon (leader), Carl Cornett (assistant), Mike & Sheila Vaughn.

This hike included both trails within the Mount Pleasant National Scenic Area. Since the two trails formed a bow tie we parked the cars at the knot, allowing hikers to opt for a shorter version. Armed with the latest in technology, Carl measured the Mount Pleasant trail with side jaunts to the viewing peaks at 5.76 miles. The Old Hotel/Cold Mountain loop measured at 5.9 so 11.66 miles of hiking pleasure for the two loops. A perfect day for long-range views, but a cool brisk wind drove us off Mt. Pleasant, which was not perfectly pleasant. A lot of spring flowers along the trail, many of which I have let to learn the names. It was interesting to note that the trees had not yet fully leafed out along the trails due to the elevation (over 4,000 feet) which delays the warming spring temperatures. Hiking pressure on the trails was light this Sunday as many mothers may have opted for other activities on this Mother's Day.

Sunday, May 9, 2010 1:00PM
Jennings Creek (Rt 614) to Bryant Ridge Shelter

Mervin & Blanche Brower (leaders), Kathy Brown, Les Brown, Jimbo Harshfield, Mary Harshfield, Maya Bohler, Caryl Connolly, Sarah Cuthbertson

The hike started from Daleville commuter parking lot where we carpoled in two cars to our starting location shortly after one o'clock. The air was very clear on our hike, and the temperature was in the 60's. We saw some flowers out and were interested in the Turkey Beard of which we saw several. At the shelter we met two through hikers and one hiker doing half trail from Harpers Ferry south. The through hikers complained about the cold night they had just spent. Three people went back early to get a head start up the hill. The rest of us left about 20 minutes later but did not catch up with them. We finished the hike at about 5:30.

Sunday, May 16, 2010 8:00AM
A.T., Ribble Trail to New River
113 Mile Hikes 11 and 12

Cancelled due to death in the family.

Sunday, May 16, 2010 1:00PM
Andy Layne Trail to Tinker Cliffs

Steve Tomaziefski (leader), Maya Bohler and Sarah Cuthbertson

The sky was overcast and there was a threat of rain most of the day. The temperature was in the lower 70's but there was a lot of humidity in the air. At the beginning of the hike the Andy Layne Trail wove through a wooded area that was lined with green plants and trees that provided a natural canopy. As we continued on, the trail opened up into a pasture area and the scent of wild roses was in the air.

As we traversed the Andy Layne trail to Tinker Cliffs, the trail in some parts seemed to be a straight upwards trudge. During the hike Maya Bohler pointed out many wildflowers such as star grass. She also spotted the green tubes of the jack-in-the-pulpit plant.

We hiked at a steady but non-stop pace, so when we reached Tinker Cliffs we were ready for a well-deserved break. The view of the valley below was very impressive, and as we were looking for a place to sit we came up on a snake who was trying to warm himself on the rocks of Tinker Cliffs. In the

sky we saw a hawk soaring in a circular motion on the updrafts high above the valley.

The hike back down Andy Layne Trail went much faster, but unfortunately not fast enough because the rain did come during the last mile of this hike. However, it was a great afternoon to go hiking.

**Sunday, May 23, 2010 8:00AM
Rock Castle Gorge**

Linda King & Mike Vaughn (leaders), Jerry Cecil, Maya Bohler, Jason Austin, Mark Taylor, Matt Bail

Mike took over as leader because I, the original leader, was recovering from foot surgery and my pace and hiking ability were unpredictable. The group included a marathoner/ultra runner, an iron man competitor, a mountain biker, and two marathoners, and two ladies who were content to bring up the rear at a much slower pace. The views, the wildflowers, the cows in the field and, of course, the creek were, as always, most enjoyable.

Pictures and a story of this hike appeared on the Outdoors page of the Roanoke Times on Friday, May 28.

**Sunday, May 23, 2010 1:00PM
Mill Mountain Star Trail**

Dave Sutton (leader) Linda Sutton, Sheila Vaughn, Sherry Kessell.

We hit the trail fifteen minutes after waiting for other hikers to join us, as we were eager to get to the top of Mill Mountain. We took the Monument trail at the junction, as it was more level. As we approached the Mill Mtn. Discovery Center, Sheila was attacked by a biting winged insect. It took several swats to knock it off, and she was OK afterwards. While we gazed at the panoramic Roanoke Valley from the platform, rain fell upon us, so we retreated to the picnic shelter. A good hike was enjoyed by all.

**Sunday, May 30, 2010 8:00AM
A.T., Wind Rock to Sinking Creek (Rt 630)**

Kris Peckman (leader), Pat Guzik (assistant), Matt Bail, Maya Bohler, Carl Cornett, John Merkwan

The star feature of today's hike was the mountain laurel filling the woods with their white blooms almost the entire length of the hike. Pat said it felt like being in a wedding all day long.

We drove past Mountain Lake and started hiking from the parking lot at Wind Rock, where we met David Jones and a small crew starting out on a work hike. We kept a brisk pace and stayed pretty much together till lunch at the Warspur Shelter, where we met three thru-hikers, one named Peace Pipe and one named Moped (never learned the third one's name). The long uphill climb after we crossed Johns Creek separated the men from the girls, and we never saw the men again until John was waiting for us at the stile where the trail leaves the woods and enters the pasture near Route 42. While waiting, John had time to notice that the wire fence goes right through the middle of the tree next to that stile. I guess that fence has been there a long time! While we finished hiking across 42 and up to the parking lot at 630, Carl and Matt decided they hadn't had enough and hiked almost to the top of Sinking Creek Mountain and back, giving Matt a chance to see the Keffer Oak for the first time.

The day was hot and humid, making the hike a lot tougher than it might have been otherwise, and the car shuttle was a lot longer than the leader had anticipated, so we didn't get home till after 9:00 pm (apologies to affected spouses).

Some participants are calling this hike the Amnesia hike, but you'll have to ask them why...I'm not telling.

**Sunday, May 29/30, 2010 8:00AM
Mountain Lake, Stony Creek Work Hike**

David Jones, Alan Simpson, Hal Cantrill

May 29. Everyone was enjoying the holiday; no one called to participate in the Saturday work hike. David decided to go out and work from Pine Swamp shelter to the road crossing at the bridge over Stony Creek. This two-mile section needed a bit of rhododendron trimming and a large blowdown was reported.

The thru-hikers are in the area. Not to neglect this resource, I requested a passing hiker's opinion about a small, marginal blowdown: should it be moved or should it be left for the next work hike? It was only partially fallen, and it really was not blocking the trail...."AM" and "PM" blowdowns were discussed: an AM tree is one that you find in the morning when you are fresh, strong and optimistic; this tree is cut without hesitation. A PM tree is encountered in the

afternoon when you dream of dinner, you wonder when this new climb was added to the trail, and you realize that this log is easily stepped over and really one could not build a better water bar if you had worked all day on it—this blowdown is not cut.

It was about noon so the designation of this tree was really a toss-up. “Bismark,” hailing from North Dakota was not much help. He dutifully listened to the AM/PM discussion and asked if I knew where “Captain’s” cabin was. It seems there was a “hiker feed” going on there.

But, the trap was set and the trigger only took a moment to set. After walking thirty yards ahead, Bismark yelled back, “Hey, do you want help with that tree?” We picked it up and dragged it off the trail. As he put his pack back on Bismark suggested that trail maintainers are also invited to hiker feeds....

The large blowdown was there as reported. Since the top of the tree was on the trail and not the main trunk it could be cut with a hand saw, but a little saw and lots of large limbs makes for much cutting. Cut, cut, cut, sweat, sweat, sweat, talk to thru hikers going to Captain’s, drink a bit of water and do it again. On the last large limb, Puma, from Steamboat Springs, CO stopped, took off his pack, grabbed the saw and completed the job. He also suggested that maintainers can participate in hiker feeds.

Shortly, Sadie the dog and David the trail maintainer had forded Stony Creek and were milling among fifty or so hikers and local residents enjoying music, sun and food. For the briefest moment, David considered calling his wife and telling her to pick him up at Katahdin in September, that he was heading north with the thru hikers—but when the day was done, he was in his bed in Blacksburg.

May 30. Today the worker numbers tripled. Alan, Hal and David met at the Pandapas Pond parking lot. Pulling into this parking area David saw many people from the RATC and thought, “I don’t have enough tools.” But, as a coincidence, the all day hike used the same meeting place.

The work hike folks drove to Stony Creek to leave a car then went up the mountain to the Wind Rock parking area. Alan, our newest chainsaw certified member, was fitted with the chainsaw pack and saw. And we were off.

Numerous small blowdowns were cut and the shrubby undergrowth trimmed. Alan did a fine job using the chainsaw to slice quickly and easily through the logs. The rocks of this section wore on our mental and physical condition. However, lunch was eaten on a nice large boulder in a beautifully lush forest setting. The thru hikers came by, some moving slowly having partaken fully of the hospitality of Captain. All expressed gratitude for our work. Puma and Bismark again passed by and pleasantries were shared—the trail experience is a grand and wonderful thing

Though we drove up the mountain so as to walk all downhill, the hot day sapped our energy. At the Bailey Gap Shelter we were tired. But, from here it truly was all down hill. Three blowdowns remained. On one steep section of trail, tired minds and gravity combined to get the chainsaw pinched. Fortunately a big limb lever arm and a rock fulcrum allowed the momentary reversal of gravity’s pull, and the chainsaw was released.

Soon, we were at the car drinking cold soft drinks and relishing in the accomplishment of clearing another five miles of trail.

Sunday, June 6, 2010 8:00AM
Lee Hollow Rt 621 To Trout Creek Rt 620
113 Mile Hike #7

John Miller & Gary Bible (co-leaders), Bob & Kris Peckman, Carl Cornett, H.R. Blankenship and John Merkwan

D-Day turned out to be a great day for this hike that has normally been on the schedule for Veterans Day. The morning was sunny and breezy with temperatures in the mid 70's. We all enjoyed the stroll through the valley while approaching the mountain. As we began the steady climb to the access road on the ridge top, we were grateful for the stiff breeze that kept us cooler than we normally would be. We had lunch at the Audie Murphy memorial, which was sporting several wreaths and a fresh flag. On our way to the end of the hike we encountered blooming Mountain Laurel and many different kinds of butterflies. The hike was finished in the early afternoon and seemed to be enjoyed by all.

Hike Schedule

Going on a group hike can fulfill a number of worthwhile purposes. These include such things as physical conditioning, social interaction, the enjoyment of nature, and the thrill of reaching a spectacular viewpoint. The Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club consistently tries to provide a wide range of hiking opportunities for people of all ages, interests and abilities. Guests are always welcome to join us.

For the most part, we rate our hikes as follows:

Easy – 3 to 5 miles; good trails or old roads; modest elevation changes.

Moderate – 5 to 8 miles; steeper trails which may be rough in places.

Strenuous – 8 miles and up; long hikes with extensive climbs and possible rough trails or bushwhacking.

Hikes which do not fall neatly into one of these categories may be rated **easy-moderate** or **moderate-strenuous**.

You may drive your own car to the trailhead if you wish. However, carpooling is encouraged to save gasoline and because trailhead parking may be limited. The hike leader is responsible for arranging such carpooling as may be required. While there is no fee to hike with the club, the indicated amount is to defray automobile expenses and should be given to the driver of your carpool.

You will need to call the leader to find out where the hiking group will be meeting. If you are new to hiking, the leader can also give advice about clothing, footwear, and equipment. If you are unfamiliar with the hike, the leader will be glad to answer your questions and help you evaluate whether or not it is suitable for you.

The club is always looking for experienced hikers to help lead club hikes. If you know of someone that you think would be a good hike leader, or wish to nominate yourself, please contact Mike Vaughn at 540-992-1350 or email mikeva999@yahoo.com.

**Saturday & Sunday, July 3 & 4, 2010
8:00AM
Bluff City Relocation Work Hike**

0.5 miles, Moderate, \$6.00 carpool fee
60 miles from Roanoke

We will be working with the Konnarock Crew on relocating a section of trail near Pearisburg in Bland County.

Dave Jones..... 540-552-3058
Sat. - Blanche and Merv Brower.....387-9732
Sun. - Kris Peckman.....366-7780

**Sunday, July 11, 2010 8:00AM
Sinking Creek to Lee Hollow
113 Mile Hike #8**

10.4 miles, Strenuous, \$3.00 carpool fee
18 miles from Roanoke
Located in Craig County, the hike climbs up Sinking Creek Mountain, then follows the ridge

where rock piles and old apple trees remain from the days when even the top of the mountain was farms. Several slanted rocks offer views of Craig Creek Valley and the mountains beyond.

John Merkwan.....904-2299
Maya Bohler.....344-6588

**Sunday, July 11, 2010 1:00PM
Apple Orchard Falls, Cornelius Creek Loop**

5.7 miles, Moderate, \$2.50 carpool fee
26 miles from Roanoke

This is a popular hike located in the North Creek camping area, near Arcadia. A blue-blazed trail, steep in places, leads uphill to Apple Orchard Falls. The falls are impressive and the trail has been greatly improved in recent years. Beyond the falls, a crossover path leads to the Cornelius Creek Trail which follows the creek downhill - back to the parking lot.

Mervin & Blanche Brower387-9732

**Saturday/Sunday, July 17/18, 2010 9:00AM
Mount Rogers Overnight Backpack**

11.0 miles, Strenuous, \$10.00 carpool fee
102 miles from Roanoke

Join us for one of the premiere hikes in the U.S. and one that the club does not often offer. Most of this hike will be on trails at over 5,000 feet of elevation. This hike will start at Massie Gap in Grayson Highlands State Park. The trail will follow the open mountain bald of Wilburn Ridge to the heavily wooded summit of Mount Rogers, at 5,729 feet, the highest point in Virginia. There are many semi-wild ponies in the open meadows along the trail. We will camp near the trail in the Rhododendron Gap area.

Mike Vaughn.....992-1350

**Saturday, July 24, 2010 11:00AM
Catawba Mountain (Rt 311) to McAfee Knob
Beginner Hike**

7.4 miles, Moderate, \$0.50 carpool fee
6 miles from Roanoke

Located west of Salem in Roanoke County, the hike follows the Appalachian Trail up and back. Extensive cliffs at the top afford unparalleled views of both the Catawba Valley and the city of Roanoke.

Zetta Campbell366-8165

Diana Christopulos.....387-0930

**Sunday, August 1, 2010 8:00AM
Catawba Mountain (Rt. 311) to Andy Layne
Trail (Rt. 779) 113-Mile Hike #4**

12.8 miles, Strenuous, \$1.00 carpool fee
10 miles from Roanoke

This hike offers the opportunity to see two of the prime vistas of the Appalachian trail in one day! The hike first climbs gradually to McAfee's Knob, then follows the AT on the ridgeline to Tinker Cliffs before dropping down to Rt. 779 on the Andy Layne Trail.

Steve Tomaziefski563-0445

Diana Christopulos.....387-0930

**Saturday & Sunday, August 7 & 8, 2010
8:00AM**

Bluff City Relocation Work Hike

0.5 miles, Moderate, \$6.00 carpool fee
60 miles from Roanoke

We will be working with the Konnarock Crew on relocating a section of trail near Pearisburg in Bland County.

Dave Jones..... 540-552-3058

Blanche and Merv Brower.....387-9732

**Saturday, August 7, 2010 6 to 9 PM
Annual Cornboil – Green Hill Park**

The Club will provide pork BBQ, Corn, fixings, beverage and table service. Members bring a covered dish (big enough for the Konnarock Crew)

Directions to 2501 Parkside Rd, Salem, VA 24153
I-81 Exit 137 & Right on US-11/460/W Main
Pass Old Virginia Brick
Left at next light on Diuguids Lane.
Cross the bridge and right on Parkside.
Picnic shelter #2 in back.

**Sunday, August 8, 2010 1:00PM
Cascades**

4.0 miles, Easy, \$5.00 carpool fee
54 miles from Roanoke

Located in Giles County near Pembroke, the hike uses trails which run along both sides of Little Stony Creek, which ends near the Cascades – an impressive waterfall. Usually the hike will go up one side of the creek and come back on the other. The Forest Service charges a nominal fee (\$3.00) to park at the trailhead.

Chuck Walz.....774-3596

Karen Callahan..... 540-961-0640

**Sunday, August 15, 2010 1:00PM
Bennett Springs Loop**

6.0 miles, Moderate, \$.25 carpool fee
3 miles from Roanoke

This hike begins at Carvins Cove Parking Lot (off Rt. 311, Not Williamson Rd.) The one-mile ascent to the top of Brushy Mountain is quite steep, while the rest is moderate. Good views of McAfee's Knob and the valley are beautiful, while on the descent we will cross a stream several times.

Fred Walters977-1430

Rushdat Hale.....309-7263

**Sunday, August 22, 2010 8:00AM
Catawba Mtn. Rt. 311 to Trout Creek Rt. 620**

12.9 miles, Strenuous, \$2.00 carpool fee
6 miles from Roanoke

Located in Roanoke and Craig County, the hike follows the roller coaster Sawtooth Ridge, with views of Fort Lewis Mountain on the left and Cove Mountain and North Mountain on the right. The hike continues over Sandstone Ridge and then you begin the climb to Dragon's Tooth.

Linda King342-2411
Fred Meyer 304-744-9219

**Sunday, August 22, 2010 1:00PM
Flat Top Mountain**

4.3 miles, Moderate , \$2.50 carpool fee
27 miles from Roanoke

Located at the very scenic Peaks of Otter along the Blue Ridge Parkway in Botetourt County. At one point a side trail descends a short distance to an unusual formation known as Cross Rock. At the summit of Flat Top nice views may be obtained by easy scrambles onto projecting rocks.

Mervin & Blanche Brower387-9732

**Sunday, August 29, 2010 8:00AM
Hoop Hole, Upper Loop**

9.1 miles, Moderate, \$2.50 carpool fee
28 miles from Roanoke

The hike is located in Botetourt County between Eagle Rock and Oriskany – some 45 minutes from Roanoke. This hike uses part of the lower loop to get to the upper loop which includes a steep climb to the top of Montgomery Knob in the Jefferson National Forest.

Steve Tomaziefski563-0445
Rushdat Hale.....309-7263

**Saturday, September 4, 2010 11:00AM
Seven Mile Mountain Beginner Hike**

5.1 miles, Moderate, \$3.00 carpool fee
34 miles from Roanoke

Located in Craig County on Forest Service land, this hike is a nice ridge walk.

Zetta Campbell366-8165

**Sunday, September 12, 2010 8:00AM
Salt Log Gap to Sheeley/Woodworth Shelter
via Livingston Spring Trail**

10.5 miles, Strenuous, \$5.00 carpool fee
57 miles from Roanoke

This is a lozenge-shaped lollipop hike. Only one steep section with many level stretches and moderate ups and downs. Most of the hike is wooded with glimpses of the next ridgeline through the trees. There is an outstanding scenic view from the top of an unnamed hill on the trail. A "top ten" tree oddity is on this hike, there is a mature tree perched on a 15' high boulder.

John Merkwan904-2299
Maya Bohler.....344-6588

**Sunday, September 12, 2010 1:00PM
Andy Layne Trail to Tinker Cliffs**

7.2 miles, Moderate , \$1.00 carpool fee
9 miles from Roanoke

Located in Botetourt County, the trailhead for this hike is on Route 779 roughly halfway between Catawba and Daleville. In 2001, this trail was dedicated to Andy Layne – a prominent member of RATC who passed away in 1991. The hike crosses meadows and Catawba Creek and then starts the ascent to Scorched Earth Gap where it continues on the AT to Tinker Cliffs. Many spots along the cliffs offer excellent views of McAfee Knob and the Catawba Valley.

Fred Walters977-1430
Rushdat Hale.....309-7263

**Saturday & Sunday, September 18/19, 2010 8:00AM
Catawba Mtn. (Rt. 311) to Daleville (Rt. 220)
113-Mile Hikes 3 & 4
Overnight Backpack**

19.3 miles, Strenuous, \$1.00 carpool fee
9 miles from Roanoke

Join us for this overnight backpack on one of the most scenic sections of the A.T. in Virginia.— only 20 minutes from downtown Roanoke. Starts from the 311 parking lot on Catawba Mountain. This will be a challenging hike and it is recommended only for those in excellent physical condition. The trail leads over varied terrain with several steep climbs and tricky footing in places. Highlights include McAfee Knob, Tinker Cliffs and Hay Rock. There are also numerous unnamed overlooks providing nice views of both the Catawba Valley and Carvin’s Cove.

Sheila Vaughn992-1350

**Sunday, September 19, 2010 8:00AM
Bluff City Relocation Work Hike**

0.5 miles, Moderate, \$6.00 carpool fee
60 miles from Roanoke

We will be working on relocating a section of trail near Pearisburg in Bland County.

Dave Jones..... 540-552-3058
Dick Clark989-7053

**Sunday, September 19, 2010 1:00PM
Curry Gap (BRP) to Fullhardt Knob**

7.3 miles, Moderate, \$1.00 carpool fee
9 miles from Roanoke

The hike starts at Curry Gap on the Blue Ridge Parkway. It follows Salt Pond Road to the intersection with the A.T., then goes up the A.T. to Fullhardt Knob. There are limited views along the trail and at the summit of Fullhardt Knob.

Dave Sutton774-0648

**Roanoke Appalachian
Trail Club Application
New & Renewal**

- If accepted for membership, I agree to:
1. Support the objectives of the Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club
 2. Abide by the rules of the National and State Parks and Forests
 3. Respect the interests of the owner when on private property
 4. Keep trails and woodlands free of litter and
 5. Abide by instructions of the leader on group hikes and trips

Name(s) _____ New Member Packet fee \$5.00 _____

Address _____ Indiv. # of years _____ x \$10.00 _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ - _____ Family # of years _____ x \$15.00 _____

Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____ Individual life membership \$250.00 _____

Email _____ Family life membership \$300.00 _____

Year you joined RATC (make a guess!) _____ Donation \$ _____

Make checks payable to RATC, PO Box 12282, Roanoke, 24024-2282 Amount Enclosed \$ _____

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Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club
PO BOX 12282
ROANOKE VA 24024-2282



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The Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club is an affiliate of
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