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Appalachian Trailway News

The November/December edition of Appalachian Trailway News featured an article entitled “Return to Blue Mountain,” with a subtitle, “After decades of zinc contamination, plans to bring a barren section of the Trail in Pennsylvania back to life raise as many questions as they answer.” In addition to presenting a very informative history of the Palmerton Superfund site, that article also featured the views of all of the principal concerned parties involved in the issue except those of the responsible maintaining club, the Philadelphia Trail Club. Volunteers from our club have worked on this section of the Appalachian Trail since 1960, as well as having maintained another Trail section since the 1930s. We were surprised and a little upset that the article’s author didn’t interview our A.T. managers and present some of the club’s important concerns.

As the on-site maintaining club, we have long been involved in the issues that the article mentions. Our club has very definite concerns about the proposed solutions, which we have documented with the Appalachian Trail Conference and the National Park Service.

We also thought another article that was featured in the same ATN issue, entitled “Are volunteers being marginalized?” was most timely. There have been times when we felt we had been marginalized. For example, in attempting to deal with the problems of maintaining this Trail section, inclusive of the Superfund site issue, we as Trail managers have been less than satisfied with the degree and quality of attention given to specific aspects of our work on the Trail by both NPS and ATC representatives. Specifically, while the Superfund site issue is currently causing certain, needed jobs to be on hold, these jobs had been allowed to languish even before the present impasse with the Superfund issue. And, secondly, after years of questions relative to health concerns about our maintainers working within the Superfund site, we still don’t know if there is a true threat that we should be seriously concerned with.

Paul Schubert and David Scheid
Philadelphia Trail Club

Don Owen, of the Appalachian Trail Park Office, responds:

The National Park Service and the Appalachian Trail Conference share many of the same concerns and frustrations regarding the Palmerton Zinc Superfund Site as the Philadelphia Trail Club. We have asked the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for additional information and definitive answers to many of the same questions raised by the club and have met with EPA representatives on a number of occasions in hope of receiving answers to those questions. We have not yet received a detailed response, but we remain optimistic that EPA is working to provide the information that we requested. We also recognize that a number of Trail-construction projects within the Superfund site have been put on hold pending remediation of the site, but we believe it prudent to delay projects that involve building trail treadway, parking lots, or other facilities within the boundaries of the Palmerton site until more definitive information is available about the potential health risks associated with these activities. We do not want volunteers to be at risk any more than the club does. Palmerton is...
an extremely complex issue, and we have been doing our best to deal with it in a professional and responsible manner. We regret that some members of the Philadelphia Trail Club are feeling less than satisfied with our attention to this matter. It is perhaps intrinsic to the nature and dynamics of our cooperative management system that any given partner can feel less than satisfied with another partner’s contribution at any given time on any given issue. It is certainly not a one-way street, but the strength of the system lies in keeping a constructive dialogue going.

Correction. The photographs that accompanied the article should have been credited to Dick (pages 18 and 21) and Paul Schubert (page 20).

Trail advertising

Please do not change the way the Trail advertising is done at present. It is very helpful to hikers to know where certain services are and the fact that they welcome hikers.

Tom Mantooth
Garland, Texas

Let’s not have out-of-touch bureaucrats dictate a completely artificial and sterile Trail. I would rather get information from the cards and notes left by the people who took the trouble to put them there than be forced to use a guidebook that may not even list some of them. I appreciate those notes, do not consider them litter or offensive, and do not need the illusion that I am in a spotless, government-controlled (restricted) wilderness. I’ve been hiking the Trail all my life (many years), which means that I’ve hiked it back when it was mostly easements over private land. I’ve encountered landowners (loaded with information), farm yards with cattle and electric fences, hunters (most are careful, decent people), shooting ranges (designed so that bullets

Continued on page 6

Volunteers

Steve Clark’s essay in the last issue of the Appalachian Trailway News asked if volunteers were being marginalized. Well, are they? We should regularly ask ourselves that, and we hope that Steve’s article leads to a vigorous exchange of views. We thought we’d share our perspective on the issue.

Although ATC’s staff has grown considerably in the last several years, our commitment to the tradition of volunteer leadership and involvement has never wavered. In fact, strengthening the volunteer element of A.T. management has been a central part of our planning discussions for the last several years. We touched on this issue in our last column, where we described a vision for the future of the A.T.

Management of the A.T. is a partnership, not only of government agencies, ATC, and Trail-maintaining clubs, but of volunteers and staff. Given the complexity and magnitude of A.T. stewardship, neither group can function well without the other. Our success, or failure, will rest on balancing the roles of the two groups. However, our bias should be toward volunteers.

A dedicated corps of volunteers works at ATC headquarters in Harpers Ferry, and we annually recruit hundreds more for ATC- and club-sponsored seasonal Trail-crew programs. The volunteer Board of Managers provides leadership, with the assistance of additional volunteers who serve on or chair several Board committees.

But, the cooperative management system relies on the local (i.e., club) volunteers to accomplish most of the work on the ground: Trail and shelter construction and maintenance, corridor monitoring, resource management, and other tasks. Much of our staff growth has occurred in our regional offices, where much of the work is supporting the work of volunteers and serving as a catalyst for volunteer efforts.

Those efforts produce amazing results. You can’t pick up a Trail publication or attend a meeting without learning about the accomplishments of A.T. volunteers.

They span all aspects of Trail management from designing and constructing relocations and shelters to responding to threats such as powerlines, towers, and development proposals that threaten the Trail. Unlike traditional Trail maintenance, where you’re working outdoors and it’s easy to see the results of your labor, dealing with threats usually involves attending numerous meetings and hearings, preparing testimony, and other chores that people don’t normally take on because they’re just not much fun. A couple of examples come to mind. Volunteers from the Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club have spent more than a decade working to ensure that a proposed 765,000-volt powerline is designed so that its impact on the A.T. is minimized and properly mitigated. As a result of their efforts, the project has been redesigned and its impacts on the Trail greatly reduced. In another example, volunteers from the Delaware Valley Chapter of the Appalachian Mountain Club are working with local residents concerned about the impacts of a “racetrack resort” proposed near the Trail in northeastern Pennsylvania.

Does the ATC staff play an important role in these projects? Absolutely! But, that role does not diminish the importance of volunteers.

There is much work to be done to fulfill our role as stewards of the Appalachian Trail, and we must further emphasize efforts to recruit and nurture volunteers. We also must find ways to help clubs identify and develop future leaders. This is likely to be our highest priority in volunteer development over the next few years.

Brian T. Fitzgerald is chair of ATC; Dave Startzell is executive director.
can't cross the Trail), town dumps (not a real problem, just something to talk about), and industry next to the Trail (they usually have picnic tables that they let you use). All of it has simply made an interesting experience. I rather prefer to be allowed to extend my Trail and off-Trail experiences by being notified along the Trail of anything someone would care to post (within reason).

John Burbank
Ridgefield, Connecticut

I have just recently returned home from a northbound thru-hike and have noticed quite a bit of advertising along the Trail. But, none of it is as annoying as the advertising that your organization itself sponsors. It seems that there is hardly a shelter, stream, spring, or sign board without a sign warning of untreated water. ATC and PUR bring those signs to us. Now, I don't have any problem with PUR or its products; in fact, I own a PUR water filter myself. But, what I do object to is the double standard that ATC seems to be adopting. Make no mistake about it: You must decide to either allow limited advertising or ban all of it. If not, your organization is headed down a dark road.

Brent Hunter
Severn Park, Maryland

EDITOR'S NOTE: Please see related story, page 9.

Volunteers

Steve Clark's article about volunteers (ATN, November–December, 2001) is indeed a wake-up call to ATC and its clubs. I find his comments particularly interesting because ATC's draft mission statement refers to the organization being volunteer-based. While I agree with the sentiments expressed in the article, A.T. members and maintaining clubs should know that there is at least one club that has written statements attesting to its commitment to volunteers. New York–New Jersey Trail Conference's (NY–NJ TC) mission statement refers to being a “volunteer-directed public-service organization,” while its vision statement states that it will “sustain a high level of quality volunteer participation.” On the list of its core values, the first statement is “a partnership of volunteers and paid staff who have shared responsibility to achieve the Trail Conference’s mission.”

Last year, in the search for an executive director, the search committee disregarded any applicants who had not worked with volunteers. Interview questions were designed to shed light on managing volunteers. The view about being volunteer-driven is not just held by board members; people active in the organization questioned why we were hiring a person to recruit and manage volunteer projects. Although the Trail Conference has routinely rejected proposals for establishing a paid trail crew, we do contribute to ATC's mid-Atlantic crew and Adirondack Mountain Club's Catskill crew.

Based on Steve’s comments, it is my hope that all maintaining clubs will examine their situation and put down in writing how their programs will be run.

Jane Daniels
Mohoegn Lake, New York
The author is president of the board of directors of the New York–New Jersey Trail Conference and a former member of the ATC Board of Managers.

Saddleback

LIVING IN both Maine and northern New Hampshire, I have closely followed your reporting on the National Park Service and U.S. Interior Department's negotiations to protect the Trail corridor over Saddleback Mountain in Maine. After many years of wrangling with the owners of the Saddleback Ski Area, the taxpayers finally paid an exorbitant fee for an easement that provided less than desired protection for the A.T. through the Saddleback area. The Breen family had argued for years that their small ski resort required access across the Trail and much more of the Saddleback area, including Saddleback Lake, for needed expansion of their ski slopes. Supporters for increased Trail protection had argued that the existing ski facility was already underutilized and that the proposed expansion need was contrived to thwart protection efforts.

Less than a year after the easement, readers might be interested to know that the owners have listed the 8,373 acres around Saddleback Mountain with Sotheby's International Realty for sale for the sum of $12 million. Rather than being marketed as a ski resort, the tract is now listed as “The Saddleback Lake and Mountain Preserve” and is marketed toward “kingdom buyers” or developers. It remains to be seen whether the little ski resort will even remain in operation.

The Breens’ asking price is twice what recent “kingdom buyers” have paid for even larger chunks of Maine's forest resources, which are already grossly inflated over timber resource values. The state of Maine may be interested in purchasing portions of the land for the public in the future, but, based on the Breens’ past negotiation tactics, I would expect that you will soon see plans for new development around Saddleback and the A.T. corridor.

Larry Ely
Falmouth, Maine

Hiking elitism

I write this in true admiration and understanding of Mr. Chace's frustration (ATN November–December 2001). I myself have only hiked about twenty miles of the Appalachian Trail here in Georgia and North Carolina. Maybe I've hiked another thirty miles of side trails. Most of these same trails I've hiked several times, either alone or with my daughter.

I, too, have felt “inferior” to the antics and adventures of those with a “deeper knowledge of wilderness lore.” However, having watched smugness look down its long nose at me among hikers, I should say that I've also observed it in my church and on my job. But, I've never thought of giving up on my religion or my job because of those “blue bloods,” nor would I quit the ATC.

This is only a guess, Mr. Chace, but I have a sneaking suspicion that the vast
We felt we had the first aid under control, after hiking ten miles to find us. Afternoon, and that evening several locals appeared. The group comprised Craig County EMS volunteers, U.S. Forest Service workers, and the local A.T. volunteer group out of Roanoke, Virginia. With brute strength, along with the help of an ATV and a backboard, the rescue was successful.

To all those involved in the rescue, we say thanks a hundred times over. The goals from our planned hike certainly changed, but what we gained from our unexpected experience was just as rewarding. We made new friends who went out of their way to help us over and above the rescue.

Kathy Roush
Noblesville, Indiana

Honest hike is too hard

The Appalachian Trail was a once-in-a-lifetime experience for me. I want to thank all those responsible for keeping it in existence. The politics in running this Trail must be enormous. I can only imagine what it takes to keep the Trail going.

I would like to see more hikers have the opportunity to make an honest thru-hike. In many areas, the Trail is just too difficult. It hardly becomes a scenic trail when you’re constantly looking down for your footing or going over mountains with no payoff. I am one of the few hikers I know who walked all of the white blazes from Georgia. I was labeled as a “purist” and a “slave to the white blazes.”

You can’t imagine the number of times the campfire conversation was, “What the heck is the ATC doing? Are they trying to kill us or just maim us?” We felt like the clubs were competing for having difficult sections. I’m thinking you can still have a mountain wilderness trail that allows more people to do an honest thru-hike.

Thank you for your hard work. Give me some time to heal, and I’m sure I’ll forget most of the pain and remember this hike differently. Man, oh, man, this was hard.

Chris Lazzari (Smokey)
Downers Grove, Illinois

Bananas of Shippensburg

Day 1. The bananas run out. Food service orders more.
Day 2. Hikers who want one banana take two bananas. The bananas run out. Food service orders more.
Day 3. Hikers who ate one banana and have one banana left take three bananas. The bananas run out. Food service doubles the banana order.
Day 4. Hikers who ate one banana and have three bananas left take three bananas. The bananas run out. Food service triples the banana order.
Day 5. Hikers who ate one banana and traded one banana for cookies and have four bananas left take two bananas. The bananas almost run out. Food service goes with the double order.
Day 6. Hikers who ate one banana and gave three bananas to thru-hikers and have two bananas left take three bananas. The bananas run out. Food service goes with the triple.
Day 7. Hikers who ate one banana and packed four bananas for the drive home.
Day 8. Baseball-camp kids don’t like banana cream pie, either.

Doris Gove
Knoxville, Tennessee

Marching to a different drummer

I hiked the Appalachian Trail from Georgia to Maine during 1982, ’83, and ’84. Although I met and walked with many different hikers during that time, I spent a good bit of the time hiking by myself. During those solo periods, I developed a habit of pacing along in time to any one of several marches that would come to my mind. Because of my World War II background, I would swing along in time to the marches of the Marine...
Board cuts budget by $500,000, debates future programs

The economic recession's effect on gifts and product sales, all down in 2001, led the Appalachian Trail Conference Board of Managers to approve cuts to programs and staff during budget deliberations in November. The board adopted a $3.5-million budget for 2002, down more than $500,000 from 2001. The staff was directed to cut another $200,000 by April.

In addition, the Board unanimously passed resolutions opposing the Alpine Rose Resort, a $12-million development that includes a potentially intrusive 3.2-mile automobile road course within several hundred feet of the A.T. at Smith Gap in northeastern Pennsylvania. The board also opposed the placement of twenty-six wind turbines in sight of the A.T. in western Maine and passed resolutions affecting advertising and development along the Trail.

The Board also approved a long-range interpretive-education project, to be undertaken with the National Park Service, starting in 2003.

Executive Director Dave Startzell told the Board that, with revenue down, operations at ATC were eating into the Conference's operating reserve—its money in the bank—at an alarming rate that would soon become critical unless the Conference slashed its expenses.

For the first time in more than two decades, ATC was forced to reduce its staff, and other programs were scaled back during a budget-cutting process in which, Startzell said, "everything was on the table."

In the end, three full-time employees in the land trust, development, and sales-fulfillment departments lost their jobs. Publication was cut back on several membership newsletters, including Inside ATC (eliminated entirely) and Trail Lands (circulation reduced and cut back to once per year), and The Register (circulation reduced). Staffing of ATC's information office was reduced. A wide range of Trail management projects, such as programs to burn or mow overgrown mountaintop meadows, were cut back. ATC also looked into closing its Bears Den hostel and an apartment used to house volunteers in Harpers Ferry but was able to find short-term funding to keep them open for 2002.

Treasurer Ken Honick attributed the budget difficulties to the "double whammy" of a recession and the September 11 attack, which affected donations across a wide spectrum of nonprofit organizations and charities.

Honick attributed the budget difficulties to the "double whammy" of a recession and the September 11 attack, which affected donations across a wide spectrum of nonprofit organizations and charities.

Assistant Secretary Arthur Foley said that, despite the downturn, an advisory committee recommended that ATC go ahead with plans to renovate offices and the parking lot at Conference headquarters. The Board voted to authorize seeking a $150,000 line of credit to help pay for the improvements.

The budget cuts came after a wide-ranging discussion of ATC's future direction and the relationship between the Conference, the Board, and the Trail-maintaining clubs.

Chair Emeritus Dave Field opened the discussion by reminding Board members of a statement by another former chair, Raymond Hunt, that "the business of the Appalachian Trail Conference is the Appalachian Trail."

"Is that still true? Or is ATC prepared to get involved in issues such as air pollution that extend well beyond the care of the footpath?" he said.

"How much do we want ATC to expand, and what do we want to look like? If we do go off in distinct directions from our history, will we like what we look like?"

Board members weighed in with a range of opinions, but the discussion soon focused on the relationship between the Conference's membership at large and the Trail-maintaining clubs responsible for upkeep and monitoring of the footpath and corridor. Should the Board be more like a corporate board of directors, one member wondered, focusing on fund-raising and finances, and get "out of the business of doing Trail work," leaving that to the clubs?

"Traditionally, the focus of the A.T. community has been the Trail," Southern Vice Chair Marianne Skeen replied. "I don't want to lose that. We need to realize that a lot of clubs need more help than others do, and we need to be a resource for them. But, if all we focus on is the treadway, and we are walking through subdivisions and polluted air, then we haven't accomplished what we want. We need to move toward really protecting that Trail experience, with educational initiatives, and look into environmental concerns. What's most important to hikers? We've got to focus on something broader than just making sure you can walk from Georgia to Maine on a relatively clear footpath."

"Yes, but who are 'we?'" Board member Paul Burkholder responded. "It's like the twelve tribes of Israel. We have to define who likes what and what they can contribute."

"The Board of Managers represents the membership," Field said. "We don't exactly represent the clubs. We set
policy; we have certain obligations to fulfill. What we ‘look like’ comes down to a decision by the Board in behalf of the larger A.T. community.”

“It’s nice to say we should broaden our scope,” Skeen said, “but does that mean a bigger headquarters building, triple the staff?”

“Or, correlatively, how small can we be and still accomplish what we need to do?” Foley said.

Several Board members suggested that ATC consider making membership in ATC automatic for people who join local Trail clubs. This could both increase the membership base and improve communications between clubs and the Conference.

Board member Glenn Scherer suggested that one option to expanding the ATC staff might be building new partnerships and expanding the volunteer base to embrace parts of the scientific community—”Maybe we should bring in some people other than those of us who like to paint marks on trees,” he said.

Several members resisted the suggestion that the Board should be more involved in fund-raising, a role that boards commonly fill in other non-profit organizations. “The idea of getting on the phone and hustling money is not what I want to do,” Field said.

“The other side of the coin, though, is that it takes money to accomplish what we want,” Board member Sandi Marra said. “If that doesn’t come from executive-level fund-raising, where do we get money from? From the federal government? Do we become more of an adjunct of the Appalachian Trail Park Office?”

Pam Underhill, manager of the National Park Service’s A.T. Park Office, responded that ATC is already working closely with the Park Service. “That joining is there, and I don’t think it’s going away,” she said. Her sense, she said, was that federal funding to the Conference to take care of the Trail will, if anything, continue to increase. “When I think of how few paid federal employees there are dealing with that land, it makes me quake in my boots. But, more federal money doesn’t necessarily mean a larger federal presence,” Underhill said.

She said that, as ATC examines its role, it might be worth bringing in a consultant specializing in organizational effectiveness.

Fitzgerald said that ATC and the clubs would examine the issue further at the next meeting of club presidents.

### Advertising ban endorsed

The Appalachian Trail Conference in November lent its support to an existing federal regulation prohibiting commercial advertisements in the A.T. corridor. The Board of Managers voted 17-7 to adopt a much-debated policy about advertising along the Trail. The federal ban on ads on federal lands already served to guide rangers and government personnel; the new policy mostly serves as a guide to Trail maintainers when they encounter fliers and signs placed along the path by businesses and individuals.

What prompted the policy was a trend in recent years toward more and more—and more conspicuous—signs at Trailheads and road crossings promoting various services to hikers. And, in at least two cases, illegal side trails were cut from the Trail directly to a business. The policy argues that such signs and fliers degrade the Trail’s sense of remoteness and undeveloped character, a factor outweighing the benefit to Trail users.

The policy defines advertising as “posting materials, such as signs, notes, or business cards, or distributing flyers, brochures, or similar materials designed to call specific services, both commercial and noncommercial, to the attention of hikers.” It exempts materials that promote membership in ATC or Trail-maintaining clubs or participation in volunteer Trail-management activities and materials that recognize the donations of commercial or noncommercial entities for the A.T.

Board members Ken Honick and Andy Petersen, both 2,000-milers, argued the two

*Continued on page 10*
Corridor Countdown

It was the hope of Congress, the federal administration, and the Trail community that the Appalachian Trail could be pronounced “fully protected” by the end of the century on December 31, 2000. Now, it appears that the National Park Service portion of the protection program could be completed in 2002 or 2003, with the Forest Service finishing its portion in 2004. Footpath tracts are completely acquired in four of the fourteen A.T. states, but many acres of protective corridor remain privately held. Here is where the federal and state agencies stood as of January 2002 in terms of footpath miles (0.8 of one percent) and adjoining acreage (4.3 percent) left to acquire:

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<th>States</th>
<th>Map Miles</th>
<th>Acres</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maine</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Hampshire</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>Vermont</td>
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<td>42</td>
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<tr>
<td>Massachusetts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Connecticut</td>
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<tr>
<td>New York</td>
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<td>207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Jersey</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryland</td>
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<td>680</td>
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<tr>
<td>Virginia</td>
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<tr>
<td>West Virginia/Va.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>513</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>16.7</strong></td>
<td><strong>8,348</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ATC adopts policy on development along Trail

The ATC Board of Managers in November unanimously adopted a policy guiding the Conference when considering the impact of development within the A.T. corridor and adjacent to it. The policy instructs ATC to work “to avoid, minimize, or eliminate the visual and aural impacts upon those resources caused by development” and to “support any and all measures that do so.”

“Developments that are considered incompatible with the purposes and scenic values of the Appalachian Trail and covered by this policy include ski lifts and trails, all buildings, observation towers, golf courses, subdivisions, and mineral or gravel extraction operations, etc.”

The policy seeks to make sure that development causes “no net loss” in the “recreational and conservation values or the quality of the recreation experience” of the Trail and puts ATC on record as opposing development on mountaintops, ridgelines, and other visible areas in the foreground and middle-distance zones as seen from the A.T.

Chair Brian T. Fitzgerald said that the policy was meant as a guide but would not force the Board to vote on every development issue that comes up.

Advertising...

Continued from page 9

different sides of the issue. Honick said that the policy was inflexible and that long-distance hikers would be particularly affected by it in areas where it wasn’t clear which route to take from the Trail to nearby services. Petersen agreed that ATC shouldn’t make things tougher on long-distance hikers but argued that it wouldn’t affect them appreciably. “When you are a thru-hiker or long-distance hiker, you find out about those things through conversation and notes in the registers.”

Other Board members argued that guidebooks and other publications are the proper places to draw hikers’ attention to businesses, including hostels. The Appalachian Long Distance Hikers Association’s Appalachian Trail Thru-Hikers’ Companion, published and distributed by ATC, would be such a publication.

Appalachian Trail Park Office Manager Pam Underhill said that the federal guidelines also make a distinction about generic signs pointing to nearby services and signs posted for advertising purposes.
In an issue that threatens to pit ATC against environmental groups that usually play on the same “team,” ATC’s Board of Managers voted in November to oppose plans for an extensive “wind farm” project in western Maine.

The Board voted to oppose Endless Energy Company’s proposal to build twenty-eight 390-foot-tall windmills on the Redington Pond range and Black Nubble Mountain near the A.T. in western Maine. The resolution, passed 18-1, with six abstentions, said the towers would “radically” change the area’s scenic nature, damage plant and animal habitats, and hurt future chances to conserve land in the western Maine mountains.

Several Board members said they had mixed feelings in opposing the project, because wind farms are normally seen as an “environmentally friendly” alternative to power plants fueled by coal, oil, gas, and nuclear energy.

J.T. Horn, ATC’s New England regional representative, explained that the biggest objection to the windmills is their size, which would make them visible from at least twenty miles of the A.T. At night, he said, they would be lighted by strobe beacons to warn airplanes of their presence.

“The A.T. corridor wraps around the area,” Horn said. “You’d be looking at the wind farm for three to four days as you hiked through Maine. It’s important to note that Northern Forest Alliance [an environmental coalition of which ATC is a member] has targeted this area as one of five areas in Maine likely to have large conservation projects. This large industrial facility is smack-dab in the middle of the area in which they’d like to see some land conservation take place.”

ATC’s opposition to the wind farm project is likely to pit it against other groups that have traditionally been the Conference’s allies in battles to conserve and protect land, Horn said. He said that proponents of the plan claim it will generate electricity to power 33,000 homes.

“It sounds good from a global perspective,” said Chair emeritus Dave Field, a Maine native, “but anything produced by this wind farm is not to the benefit of Maine.” Field said that the electricity would be produced for out-of-state customers.

Executive Director Dave Starzell said he supported the resolution but warned the Board that it could be getting involved in an expensive fight. “If we go to the mat on this, it will mean we’ll need to be represented by counsel, pay legal fees, bring in experts, and maybe commission our own simulations. We could be looking at fairly significant outlays—not only in terms of time, but in dollars, too. Our budget does not anticipate that kind of outlay.”

The Appalachian Mountain Club and the Maine A.T. Club recently joined ATC in expressing opposition to the project, but Horn said the issue is likely to go to Maine’s Land Use Regulation Commission before the next Board of Managers meeting. “This is a big deal, and it will be a major political battle in Maine, and it will have a major impact on the Trail,” Horn said.
Near the A.T., a hidden city

By Dennis B. Roddy, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

WAYNESBORO, Pa.—Three hours after Osama bin Laden turned the Pentagon into a broken rectangle, five helicopters touched down a few hundred yards from Hal Neill’s house at the base of Raven Rock Mountain along the Pennsylvania-Maryland border.

Within minutes, a convoy of SUVs with black-tinted windows zoomed up Harbaugh Valley Road, turned left, and deposited the weight of the free world inside Site R, the inexplicably named city-in-a-mountain from which the Pentagon has operated and, from all indications, Vice President Cheney has directed his office in the days since the Sept. 11 attacks.

Site R, with its six stories of underground offices, subterranean water reservoir, and banks of mysterious antennas, dishes and massive, steel doors, has been a designated backup command center since it was hewn out of the mountain in 1951.

All America knows about Camp David, ten miles to the south, and Three Mile Island, several geiger-counter clicks to the north. Conspiracy theorists and UFO cultists even know about the mysterious Area 51 in Nevada.

For decades, though, Site R’s presence was a village secret, barely acknowledged to outsiders and attracting little outside interest in turn.

“I can go to Gettysburg and say, ‘Site R,’ and they won’t know what I’m talking about,” said Neill, who has spent all of his thirty-nine years living next to the entrance, about thirty miles from Gettysburg. His father worked there and told him little of the place’s operations.

“There are four entrances, but I’ve only ever been able to find three of them,” said Neill, as he stood in his back yard, looking over at the guard station next to two oversized metal doors in the hillside. Six military men in sweatsuits jogged their way down the driveway and back up again.

“They weren’t doing that before the attacks,” Neill said.

“Now they’re working out.”

In 1992, the federal government cut back on staff at Site R, thinking the end of the Cold War spelled less need for underground bunkers that could accommodate 3,000 people.

“In the Cold War, people felt compelled to work beyond my own expectations. I was encouraged to change jobs with someone else if I felt the need. Our days had a routine, which was strictly followed: Crew members prepared breakfast and dinner each day—we each signed up for these duties ahead of time, so that the tasks were shared between different people every day. Everyone was always on laugher, jokes, and snacking. One of the very enjoyable moments for me was interacting with the endless stream of A.T. hikers who passed our work site. I could not resist conversing with them.

During my weeks of volunteering at the Rainbow Ledges, we had excellent weather, delicious hot meals, refreshing swims, and great camaraderie. The trail work was extremely rewarding to me. I learned so much and felt so good in the serene woods of Maine. I recommend everyone sign up for a Trail crew. It is more fun than sweat.

—Allmuth “Curly” Perzel

Join an ATC volunteer Trail-maintaining crew today! For more information, see ATC’s Web site, <www.appalachiantrail.com>, or contact ATC at (304) 535-6331.
thought they’d live underground for months waiting for the nuclear fallout to wear off,” said Chris Hellman, a budget analyst at the Center for Defense Information. “The idea was to live as normally as possible.” That would explain the barbershop planted hundreds of feet below the mountain next to Hal Neill’s house.

After the terrorist attacks six months ago, Site R’s proximity to Camp David, Three Mile Island, and the Letterkenny Army Depot has given it an uncomfortably public profile and its neighbors an earful.

The tidy equilibrium of rural life has been upended. No one is surprised to hear jets over lower Manhattan, where the World Trade Center stood. Above the Main Line Hobby Shop in Blue Ridge Summit, Pa., it makes for strangenights.

“Day and night, you hear the airplanes,” said Bonnie Wolfe, whose model railroad shop sits below the flight path of the military jets and helicopters that intermittently pass by, usually unseen, inevitably heard.

Wolfe said a friend who works at the site informed her that the airplanes are likely to become more numerous. Among presidents, the younger Bush rivals Eisenhower in his fondness for weekends at Camp David. The result, coupled with hair-trigger security, has made the area the scene of occasional aerial circuses.

Several weeks ago, Stephen Hersh left his house in Chambersburg and took a hike along the nearby Appalachian Trail. He noticed a small, white, private jet overhead. Suddenly, he said, a duo of fighter jets roared by, buzzed the errant plane, then departed.

“The little jet was rocking,” Hersh said. That nervous bit of airborne security led Hersh to conclude—correctly—that President Bush was staying at Camp David.

Forty years earlier, Hersh was a counselor at a summer camp adjacent to Camp David. Some prankster told the counselors there was an exclusive girls camp nearby. An hour later, they were being held by Marine guards who wanted to know how they’d wandered into Camp David.

“Today they’d probably shoot us,” Hersh said.

Misunderstandings—mere suspicions—have become common around Harbaugh Valley Road. Eight days after the Pentagon attack, Neill got a phone call at work from his wife. “She said, ‘Honey, you can’t come home. They’ve got the road blocked off,’” he said. “My sister was at home and the cops evacuated her.”

A truck, hauling furniture to accommodate the influx of bureaucrats, pulled up to the gate of Site R and promptly set off a chemical detector that was looking for explosives.

Rumors ran wild. Some said a van loaded with dynamite had tried to crash the gate. Others said the drivers fled the scene and were finally caught.

The Department of Defense kept mum. Nobody heard any more about it. Just the sound of jets roaring.

EDITOR’S NOTE: The article above originally appeared in the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette and is reprinted with permission. Copyright ©2001 by the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette; all rights reserved.
Vernon Vernier admits to being a little compulsive about getting things right. “I love generating data and planning experiments,” says the retired Delaware physician, a former director of pharmacology and research for DuPont who goes by the Trail name of “Del Doc.” “And, I feel compelled to improve on what I’ve done.”

Starting in March and continuing into fall 2002, Vernier will be doing just that. He will begin his fourth thru-hike of the Appalachian Trail and his second attempt at recording computer coordinates for the entire route using global positioning system (GPS) equipment.

Beginning at Springer Mountain (or 34.62656N/-84.19398W, as the GPS unit expresses it in degrees of latitude and longitude) and ending at Baxter Peak on Katahdin (45.90429N/-68.92178W), Vernier intends to walk every mile of the Trail, recording its every zig and zag, rise and fall, and feed the information into a detailed database of information.

Vernier’s first hike of the Trail with a GPS unit strapped to his backpack in 1999 did not measure up to his exacting standards, although it provided an electronic “centerline” of the Trail that ATC has used extensively in its Trail-protection efforts. Vernier says there were several problems with the data.

For one thing, the Green Mountain Club and Appalachian Mountain Club had already recorded GPS data for 350 miles of the Trail that they maintain, and they had used different equipment and different methods—it wasn’t consistent with what he did for the rest of the Trail. “A lot of the detail is missing,” he says.

For another, his GPS unit and setup wasn’t good enough. GPS units work by “reading” signals sent out by a constellation of satellites in orbit around the Earth and comparing the various readings to establish precise latitude and longitude coordinates. To work accurately, a GPS unit must be able to “see” several of the satellites at the same time. Inexpensive consumer models of GPS systems are available for a couple of hundred dollars, but their reception isn’t reliable or precise enough for detailed mapping, and they were not able to record the massive amounts of data Vernier needed. The one he used was good, for its time, and recorded his position every five seconds, but there were a lot of places where it couldn’t “see” enough satellites to get an accurate fix on his location on the Trail. The resulting data had “holes” in it, he said.

This time, Vernier purchased two $11,000 state-of-the-art Trimble Pro XRS GPS units, to be used in conjunction with each other, so that the data from the unit he’s carrying can be checked against the position of a second unit, at a fixed “base station.” The unit he carries will weigh twelve pounds.

And, finally, the data from Vernier’s first attempt was mostly “two-dimensional.” If the GPS unit “sees” enough satellites, it can compute not only the latitude and longitude of its position, but also how high it is above sea level. “One of these days, I want to see the map sets, all eleven of them, with nice, clean, accurate elevation profiles,” Vernier says. “When I did this before, every thru-hiker who talked to me about what I was doing asked if we were going to get accurate profiles out of this.”

With his new system, Vernier will be able to record data with “submeter” accuracy—so that, when the unit calculates its position, it will be accurate to within thirty centimeters (compared to twenty to thirty meters on the old system). It will do this once per second, and, by stringing to-
You might notice a white blaze or two lurking in the background of the Battle of Fredericksburg, if film editors and touch-up artists in a forthcoming movie aren’t careful.

Hollywood crossed paths with the Appalachian Trail last November, when filming of the Civil War epic “Gods and Generals” came to Harpers Ferry for two weeks. Working under a special permit from the National Park Service, the production covered the national historical park’s town streets, including those that the Appalachian Trail crosses, with bark mulch, to resemble the way they might have appeared in the mid-nineteenth century. They constructed a row of facades along the Trail on Shenandoah Street to serve as a background for a large cast of movie actors and amateur war reenactors.

Banks of powerful lights were erected over the town streets to permit filming at night, and special-effects teams scattered feathers to simulate snow as the cameras rolled. Groups of amateur Civil War reenactors were recruited for the shooting to provide the masses of infantry and cavalry in the film’s battle scenes and processions.

Harpers Ferry stores remained open for business during the filming, and the A.T. route was not officially closed, although film crews kept interlopers out of the frame when the cameras were rolling. The crews’ zealousness led some Harpers Ferry merchants to stage a protest, claiming disruptions from the week-long location “shoot” had caused a severe drop-off in business and demanding compensation.

The Turner Pictures film, to be distributed by Warner Brothers, is the “prequel” to the 1993 hit, “Gettysburg.” Its budget was reported to be $51 million. The story of “Gods and Generals,” directed by Ron Maxwell and based on a novel by Jeff Shaara, takes place in the early years of the war, reaching its climax with the death of Confederate Gen. Thomas “Stonewall” Jackson at Chancellorville. It stars Robert DuVall as Gen. Robert E. Lee, Bruce Boxleitner as Lt. Gen. James Longstreet, Billy Campbell, Jeff Daniels as Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain, C. Thomas Howell as Tom Chamberlain, Stephen Lang as Jackson, Malachy McCourt, and Mira Sorvino as Fanny Chamberlain.

“Gods and Generals” is scheduled to be released in September 2002, in close conjunction with the 140th anniversary of the Battle of Antietam. Additional filming was done at Sharpsburg, Maryland, Lexington, Virginia, and other locations in Virginia, West Virginia, and Maryland. One of the film’s premieres will be in Hagerstown, Maryland, near the Antietam battlefield.

Smoke and feathers—Simulating snowfall and troop movements at movie set in Harpers Ferry.

Photos: Robert Rubin, Marsha Starkey, James Wassel
Deep trouble: Cavers cited for digging on A.T.

Here’s a riddle: The more you take away, the bigger it gets. What is it?
Answer: “A hole.”

And, in the case of four Connecticut cavers, there’s another answer: “Trouble.”

The four men were ticketed for digging a big hole close to the Appalachian Trail in Connecticut. They hoped to discover a cave. What they found was a mess.

Cave-digging, a subset of the worldwide hobby of caving (or spelunking), attracts cavers who prize the discovery and exploration of unknown caverns. Web sites such as <www.cavediggers.com> and magazines such as the National Speleological Society’s Digger’s Gazette feature articles and photos and discussions of the topic. Many articles and accounts of diggers posted on the Internet involve detective work in historical records and scouting for likely cave locations, where water may have hollowed out underground caverns, and explorations of heretofore undiscovered grottos.

Often this means going onto private property or public lands, where permission of the landowner is required.

The four men in Connecticut cut were caught in June when a state park ranger found them excavating a twenty-foot-deep hole along the Appalachian Trail near Lime- stone Spring Shelter, south of the town of Salisbury.

The diggers later told officials that they suspected there was a cave underneath the A.T. because of the features of rock in the area. They began the excavation in late 2000, and it continued through the winter and early spring of 2001 before they were stopped.

Robert Gray, chief ranger for the Appalachian National Scenic Trail, reported that Appalachian Trail ridgerunner Matt Chen came upon the site on June 9 and alerted state park authorities. They had been using hand shovels, five-gallon buckets, and a rope-pulley system, Gray reported. The site was located within the boundaries of the federal Appalachian Trail corridor.

According to the New York Times, the men told officials that they were with a caving club, and that they had tried to get a permit from the Park Service to dig there but had gotten no response and went ahead with the dig anyway.

In December, charges against the men were dropped after each of the men agreed to pay fines of $150 and to fill in the hole.

Deaths

John L. Oliphant

John Larner Oliphant, former president of the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club, died December 29 in Washington of cancer and an aortic aneurysm. He was 78.

Mr. Oliphant, an editor and publisher with Oliphant Washington News Service, was elected an honorary life member of the Potomac A.T. Club in 1975. He had been active in the club’s work, supporting proposals to make the A.T. a national scenic trail in 1968, and reported for the club on the signing ceremonies of the National Trails Systems Act. In the 1970s, he worked to get federal funding for the Trail.

Oreste V. Unti

Oreste Vincent Unti, former president of the Batona Hiking Club, died October 21 in Philadelphia. He was 81.

Mr. Unti, a Philadelphia wine broker, was diagnosed with heart disease in his fifties and took up hiking as a way of battling it. He was a life member of ATC and was active with the Allentown Hiking Club, Chester County Trail Club, and Philadelphia Trail Club. He worked as a Trail maintainer on the A.T., Batona, and Horseshoe trails, and, in 1993, he became an A.T. 2,000-miler, completing the Trail after fourteen years of section-hikes and after undergoing a bypass operation on his heart.

Anthrax suspect was on A.T.

A fugitive wanted by the FBI, suspected of sending hundreds of fake anthrax letters to abortion clinics in September and October, told an Ohio newspaper that he had been hiding out on the Appalachian Trail in Pennsylvania for part of the time, the Associated Press reported in December.

Clayton Lee Waagner, already wanted on charges of escaping from prison, was on the FBI’s “10 Most Wanted” list in connection with several hundred letters sent to abortion clinics after September 11. The envelopes included white powder and claimed to contain anthrax spores.

Waagner had been jailed on firearms charges before he escaped in early 2001. He told the newspaper that he was hiding out on the A.T. in Pennsylvania when the September 11 attacks occurred. He reportedly left the Trail after nearly being caught, due to increased security patrols near the Camp David area in northern Maryland. He claimed that the September attacks convinced him to send fake letters rather than use lethal methods to disrupt abortion clinics, the newspaper said.

MARCH-APRIL 2002
Hiking the great indoors
Fourth-graders explore a miniature A.T.

By John Buchheit

Remember fourth-grade gym class in 1981? Like Army boot camp, you did jumping-jacks, ran, did push-ups—and, if you were like me, you followed orders like a good little soldier. It was definitely a workout, and the emphasis was on work.

Now, fast-forward twenty years to a physical-education class at Manchester Elementary School along the Maryland-Pennsylvania border and near the A.T. My, but how things have changed!

The classroom is the Appalachian Trail in miniature.

During the final week of October 2001, Bob Cooke, phys-ed teacher at Manchester Elementary, introduced “The Appalachian Trail Trek” to his students. He built a phys-ed curriculum for kids around the idea of a trip along the Trail. When students arrived in the gym, instead of volleyball nets and padded mats, they found a room filled with tents, backpacks, bog bridges, mock-ups of A.T. shelters, Leave No Trace signs, maps, hiking sticks, mail-drop packages, and a mock-up of the Kennebec Ferry.

Cooke said that he wanted to provide his students with an outdoor learning experience indoors.” His mini-A.T. offered activity stations based around each of the states that the Trail passes through. Those stations were linked together along the gym floor with a meandering line of white blazes that the students followed from state to state. Each state’s activity was off the main trail on a blue-blaze route. Students “hiking” through Virginia were treated to the “Backpack Balance,” where they shouldered a pack and walked a route along bog bridges and obstacles. The Maine station offered a “Water Walk.” In Tennessee and North Carolina, students signed a Trail register and took a break to read A.T. books and wildlife magazines while staying in the mock shelter.

Cooke was inspired to create this learning event while on a bicycle trip in nearby Michaux State Forest in Pennsylvania.” While biking along the roads of the Michaux last year, I met some hikers at an A.T. crossing and thought that hiking and the A.T. would be a great way to bring fitness alive for these kids.”

Volunteers are important to the Trail, and Cooke made sure that they were part of his miniature version, as well. He put out the call to the students’ parents to staff the state stations and was pleasantly overwhelmed by more than forty volunteers during the course of the week. At each station, those volunteers explained the activity and told the students stories about the special Trail features of that state. “[The volunteers] keep coming back because they’re having such a good time,” he said.

Perhaps the biggest difference in this class from the old model is that it’s not all about the physical anymore. Cooke has found a way to integrate math, reading, geography, and science skills together with a healthy workout, all using the A.T. as the central theme. In “West Virginia,” students tested their coordination and math when they tossed bean-bags with dollar values printed on them into a ring to add up to the postage they needed to mail packages home. In “Massachusetts,” they learned about the furry creatures of the Trail while scooting along through the “Wildlife Cave.”

Wherever you went in the room, the fourth graders were fascinated. Nick was excited because he “got to put one foot in Pennsylvania, and, if you stretch you can have your other foot in Maryland!” Jeannie said she liked it because “it gives you ideas about the Appalachian Mountains and the Trail. It’s cool.” Each student prepared for the event...
Temperatures Rising

Climate change and the Appalachian Trail

By Glenn Scherer
The tiny island nation of Tuvalu near New Zealand is half a world away from the Appalachian Trail. And, to an A.T. maintainer, repainting white blazes on a chilly spring day, it’s easy enough to pretend the two places have nothing in common.

But, last summer, a calamity befell Tuvalu with implications that could impact us all. Global warming caused the waters of the Pacific Ocean to rise, drowning the country’s nine coral atolls and making its 11,000 people flee their homeland forever.

The first ripples from the disaster at Tuvalu are already being felt in the Appalachian Mountains and on the Trail. Bigger waves may be headed our way next.

The A.T., too, is an island—or more aptly, a 2,168-mile-long archipelago, a string of island wildlands: mountaintop forests separated and surrounded by towns and suburbs, pastures and cornfields.

And, as the world’s climate alters in coming decades, some experts suggest that the A.T.’s “wild atolls” also will absorb some nasty shocks from global warming. But, they say, the A.T. and its wild places shouldn’t disappear like Tuvalu—not, at least, if we prepare now for the changes ahead.

The first indication that something had gone terribly wrong came, not from warmer weather, but when salt from rising seas fouled drinking water and killed crops. If the world warms significantly in this century, then water troubles could be the first clear sign that climate change has come to the high, dry Appalachian ridgetops.

The most extreme climate model—the one projecting a ten-degree rise in global temperatures—foresees a Southeast that will get 20 percent less annual precipitation than it does today. Should that analysis be correct, the forests of the Great Smoky Mountains—one of America’s most biologically rich regions—could be transformed into scrubby savanna, not unlike that of central Texas, by 2100.

While another, less severe climate model forecasts just a six-degree Fahrenheit rise in temperature, along with a moderate precipitation increase for the Appalachians, that isn’t necessarily good news. While more rain might fall, it could come far less frequently, and with devastating consequences when it arrives. Global warming may bring extended drought punctuated by extreme storms.

“Hotter temperatures mean a greater rate of evaporation, which leads to drier soils,” explains David Easterling of the National Climatic Data Center in Asheville, North Carolina. That could mean reduced ground water and surface water—bad news for A.T. wells, springs, streams, and parched thru-hikers, plants, and animals.

The trend toward longer dry spells may already have begun. Georgia has seen almost continuous drought since the mid-1980s. In the mid-Atlantic states, the drought of 1999 forced A.T. hikers to walk in hundred-degree heat from dry well to dry spring to dry stream. Trail maintainers in some places came to the rescue, caching five-gallon water cubes at played-out water sources between Pennsylvania and New York.

In planning for a drier future, Trail managers may need to more carefully evaluate A.T. water sources, no longer relying on small seeps, but drilling wells deeper and eventually placing water tanks at Trailheads and shelters or constructing cisterns, as is done on trails in the arid West.

Drought brings with it another danger: fire. This autumn’s dry spell in the Appalachians caused the National Park Ser-
vice to close the entire A.T. to all fires and smoking for the first time. Meanwhile, a wildfire burned 200 acres of A.T. corridor land in Connecticut, and another (started by arson) incinerated Vermont’s Lost Pond Shelter. In 2000, wildfires torched more than a million southeastern acres, including 16,000 acres in Shenandoah National Park.

In preparing for future fire risks, Trail managers may need to construct fire breaks around A.T. shelters, boardwalks, and bridges. Maintainers may also need to work with park managers to do prescribed burns to reduce accumulations of dry brush that can serve as fuels.

Fire brings with it a fiscal difficulty. In recent years, when wildfires were many, USDA Forest Service monies earmarked for land acquisition were rerouted to fire suppression. This trend could be intensified by climate change.

When a long drought comes to an end, it is likely to be with a bang, not a whimper, according to most climate models. Fierce “hundred-year storms” may occur every fifty years or every few years instead—the reason being that global warming adds heat to weather systems, energizing them like a bubbling tea pot.

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A plague of plagues

An increase in such extreme events is already apparent. Intense U.S. storms dumping two inches of rain in twenty-four hours are 30 percent more likely today than a century ago. In the 1990s—the hottest decade on record—such storms severely affected trails. In 1996, a massive deluge flooded the White Mountains’ Pemigewasset Wilderness, eroding footpaths. The 1998 New England ice storm—called a 200- or 500-year event—closed 1,100 miles of trails and roads in the Green Mountain and White Mountain national forests. In 1999, Hurricane Floyd did $1.2 billion in damage in North Carolina before sweeping through the Appalachians. In its aftermath, a mile-long stretch of the Trail in New Jersey could be canoed, and maintainers spent months clearing blowdowns.

With frequent severe storms, trail erosion control could become increasingly more challenging. Bridges may need to be overengineered to handle bigger storm surges and also be better protected against hazard trees.

Unfortunately, many insect pests will benefit from global warming. The New England Regional Assessment of climate change (available at http://www.nacc.usgcrp.gov/) says that hemlock woolly adelgid—a voracious insect that devastates hemlock forests—is likely to survive milder northeastern winters and extend its range north from Massachusetts. Without hemlocks to create cool, moist microclimates, streams may run dry, adding to A.T. water shortages.

Lyme disease-causing ticks may be another climate-change beneficiary, at least in the short run. They, too, may extend their range northward along the Trail, although, if temperatures rise too much, the ticks could succumb to the heat.

A University of New Hampshire scientist, Dr. Barry Rock, has identified a troubling link among global warming, air pollution, and human and forest health. “We looked at high-temperature years and high ozone days on Mount Moolikaue and found a one-to-one match,” says Rock. That’s because nitrogen oxide emitted from power...
Take action against the heat

What role can Trail managers play in preparing for global warming? Picture yourself as Noah: During climate change, trail corridors like the A.T. could become arks, the tenuous path of least resistance by which heat-stressed animals and plants slip around the walls of urban centers on their exodus north.

Of course, to do this job well, trail corridors will need to bridge many human-imposed obstacles, such as interstate highways. They can do so along “green bridges,” covered in trees and shrubbery. While this might sound farfetched, green bridges have been built on the Florida Trail and in Canada’s Banff National Park. But, considering the speed with which global warming is progressing, now is the time to get such major A.T. projects underway.

Climate change also gives Trail managers another good reason to push for land protection. Forests may slow climate change; they could act as “carbon sinks,” removing greenhouse gases from the air.

The A.T. community could also consider political action. Last year, the Appalachian Trail Conference joined Hikers for Clean Air (HFCA), a hiker group advocating against air pollution.

Finally, each of us can act. When we drive fuel-inefficient SUVs, we’re part of the problem; when we buy a 50- to 70-mile-per-gallon Toyota Prius or Honda Insight, we’re part of the solution (check new-car fuel economy ratings at <www.fueleconomy.gov>). Little steps add up: Every incandescent light bulb replaced with a compact fluorescent bulb cuts greenhouse emissions.

— G.S.

Can we handle the heat?

The changes to come—the biggest shift in climate and ecosystems in 10,000 years and since civilization began, according to the U.N. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change—will likely bring other, and possibly larger, shocks. If many scientists are right, weather uncertainty never witnessed in modern times could become part of daily life around the world, in America, and on the Appalachian Trail.

Glenn Scherer is a frequent contributor to this magazine. He is a member of the ATC Board of Managers and a founding member of Hikers for Clean Air.
**Wild Things**

In Maurice Sendak’s classic children’s story, *Where the Wild Things Are*, the rambunctious young hero, Max, journeys from a temper tantrum into the wild and wonderful forests of a dark corner of his bedroom—a jungle world where he is king of the wild things, the wildest of them all, in fact—and returns just in time for supper. The dark forests of the Appalachian Trail are full of things that growl and howl and quicken the pulse, too. And, not all of them are creatures of our imagination.

**King of the porkies**

Wayne F. Burke

It was pitch black. I awoke to a disconcerting sound. Something was gnawing on the lean-to, a creature of some sort seemingly eating its way through the shelter floor below me. What kind of creature could it be?

Earlier that evening, I had stumbled into the shelter site on the north side of Mount Greylock, a peak in the Berkshire mountain range of Massachusetts. Beat from the day’s hike, I’d unrolled my sleeping bag on the floor of the sturdy wooden lean-to. I had the place to myself. Except for whatever was gnawing at the shelter.

The sound ceased, and I returned to sleep, only to wake sometime later—still pitch black—to more gnawing, along with strange-sounding moans, low falsetto-pitched cries, and assorted yipping and yapping during pauses in the gnawing.

I turned my flashlight on and cast its beam into the darkness. In the cleared area before the lean-to, thick as bathers on an overcrowded beach, was a congress of porcupines, lolling about and feasting on the garbage that had been strewn throughout the campsite. Had I decided to step off the edge of the lean-to floor, it seemed like I could have walked for fifty yards, without touching the ground, on the backs of the creatures.

Some of the creatures were on top of the shelter, their heads visible—their faces those of dirty, errant children, hanging over the lip of the lean-to roof. They stared at me, a dozen or so pairs of round eyes unblinkingly focused, like living gargoyles.

I slapped my three-foot-long walking stick down on the shelter floor. The heads withdrew.

In a situation like mine, Daniel Boone would have had a gun. I had my walking stick and a flashlight. Sleep seemed out of the question. I’d have to remain awake and defend my territory. Would my flashlight batteries last until morning? Would the porcupines be so bold as to venture onto the shelter floor? Would they storm the shelter en masse? Would I be able to beat them off? Or, would I be stuck through with quills like a pin cushion? Regiments of porcupines marched through my dreams, shoulder ing tiny rifles, marching in solemn step, rank upon rank.

I woke again. My flashlight lay at my side on the floor. The light revealed the silhouette of a porcupine moving along the lip of the shelter floor. The creature strolled nonchalantly, the heap of stiff arrows on its back rattling as it stepped. I whacked the stick down on the floor. The porcupine stepped off the lip and out of sight.

Just how carnivorous are porcupines anyway? I shined my light into the blackness. A porcupine standing on its hind legs barked shrilly, like a dog. I listened to the creatures crawling over the shelter, on the roof, and over the sides, their feet scratching the wood. The scratching grew faint, the barks of the congregation out front dwindled in the distance, as if at the opposite end of a long tunnel.

I woke again. At the foot of my sleeping bag was a large, round object. A porcupine! Its surface was like a mat, with a design of concentric circles on it, back turned toward me. If
the creature toppled backward, it would be in my lap. I bolted up, screaming and slapping the floor with my stick. The porcupine failed to acknowledge me. I slapped the stick down beside him. He turned his head toward me, as if condescending to give me a glance. Should I strike the creature? If I did strike him, would he (could he?) dart his quills at me? Would my striking him bring the wrath of the porcupine community at hand upon me?

I shouted in the creature’s ear. It worked. He slowly moved away from me, walking lazily, as if he were out for a Sunday-afternoon stroll. He dropped off in a kind of awed stupor at his feet and about him.

“M'fellow porcupines,” I heard him say. Or maybe he said, “Let’s get him, boys!”

Not enough sleep, I guess, or maybe it was the freeze-dried fettuccini Alfredo I ate for lunch. Or, maybe it was the light beginning to brighten things that was troubling me. The porcupines hauled away the garbage into the woods like mamalian garbage men. Some seemed to be wearing backpacks. Others clutched trail guidebooks in their paws. A bunch of them were quite hungry after hiking twenty-six miles in one day. Disgusted, I could not see their faces clearly, but the voices were those of young men—big boys actually, with strong legs, powerful lungs, and, as I would find out before night’s end, underpowered brains. As they arrived in the shelter, they beamed their big flashlights toward our sleeping bags.

“Bummer, dude, there’s already someone here at the shelter,” one of them announced. The other one started laughing as he beamed his light toward our backpacks hanging above us.

“Whoa, man. Look at all those mice crawling in and out of those backpacks. Lots of good it did to hang those packs. I guess the mice rule here, dudes.” More laughter. I was beginning to get the impression that these guys were delirious and thought they had just arrived at a local tavern.

Feeling myself getting annoyed, I sat up and abruptly said, “Is it bedtime yet?” The boys seemed genuinely surprised to hear my voice and promptly shone their flashlights on my face as if to confirm my actual presence.

“Oh, sorry, dude. Didn’t mean to wake you. Mind if we eat?” So, at 9:30 p.m., they started dinner, complaining that they were quite hungry after hiking twenty-six miles in one day. They began rummaging through their packs for their food and cooking equipment. Finally, they found their cooking stove, and, with the flashlights fully illuminated, one began reading the directions for the stove operation, while the other kept trying to get his cigarette lighter to turn on.

“Says here you gotta prime it first.”

“What does that mean?”

“Let some fuel into the cup. There. That’s enough… I think that’s enough, dude.” A flash of light. A fireball the size of a basketball ascending toward the ceiling of the shelter. “Whoa, man, easy. Turn that thing down.”

“How do I do that?”

“Turn the valve clockwise—no, wait! Counterclockwise! It’s counterclockwise, dude!” After a couple of precarious min-

Wayne F. Burke lives in Montpelier, Vermont. His porcupine adventure occurred on his way north to hike the Long Trail.

Reflections

Robert I. Cantu

Last May, at age 43, I set off on my maiden backpacking voyage with a friend. Our plan was to walk from Amicalola Falls State Park to Tesnatee Gap in about five days—a noble goal, considering I was carrying way too much pack weight and too much body weight and was significantly out of condition. Four days later, I arrived with my partner at the Woods Hole Shelter in the midafternoon, weary and paying the price for my lack of conditioning. We decided to have dinner and retire early. Since it looked like we would have the shelter to ourselves, I was looking forward to a pleasant night’s sleep. We followed proper protocol, hung our food at least 100 feet from the shelter off a high branch, and got ready for bed. We were snoozing by dusk.

About 9:30, I was awakened from what was beginning to be a very thick, comfortable sleep by noises in the distance. What was that? Could it be a bear smelling the Ramen noodles I spilled on my leg earlier at dinner? I had heard all the bear stories. I immediately became very alert and paranoid. My friend looked up, mumbled something that sounded like an obscenity, and seemed to settle back into a fitful sleep.

There was some moonlight, and I was straining to see what the noise was, since it appeared to be getting closer to the shelter. I saw some light coming from the noise and finally realized it was three hikers, hiking by flashlight and approaching the shelter. I was immediately relieved, but became quickly annoyed at how loudly they were talking and how full of energy they seemed to be at this late hour. As it turns out, they had started at Springer early that morning and had hiked the twenty-six miles to Woods Hole Shelter in one day! Disturbing! I could not see their faces clearly, but the voices were those of young men—big boys actually, with strong legs, powerful lungs, and, as I would find out before night’s end, underpowered brains. As they arrived in the shelter, they beamed their big flashlights toward our sleeping bags.

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“Whoa, man. Look at all those mice crawling in and out of those backpacks. Lots of good it did to hang those packs. I guess the mice rule here, dudes.” More laughter. I was beginning to get the impression that these guys were delirious and thought they had just arrived at a local tavern.

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utes, and much to my relief, the stove began operating with its usual and customary blue flame. One of the boys, who I had noticed during the light of the fireball had a nose ring, was vigorously rummaging through his food bag looking for his dinner. Finally, and quite triumphantly, he pulled out a box and very loudly proclaimed,

“Sweet! I found the Rice-a-Roni, dudes. Let me read you dudes the directions for cooking this.” They proceeded to prepare their dinner in a very disorganized fashion. Suddenly, there was an “ouch,” followed by a short scream.

“Damn, I just spilled half the Rice-a-Roni on the floor. Oh, man. Bummer!” This seemed to dampen their spirits somewhat, so it got a bit quieter at the shelter. What was troubling to me was the fact that there was now a heap of cheese Rice-a-Roni on the floor a few feet from where we were sleeping. I had read the books, and I just knew a bear would come sniffing around soon. They finished their dinner, and, for the three minutes they were eating, it was relatively quiet at the shelter. When they finished eating, they began to get ready for bed.

“Hey, dudes, do you really think we need to hang these food bags?” the one with the nose ring said.

“It’s really late, and I’m tired. I don’t think anything will happen.”

One of the others said, “Hey, why don’t you hang the food over there next to that guy’s backpack?” At that moment, responding to a squirt of adrenaline, I sat up in my sleeping bag, beamed my flashlight at the boy and shouted emphatically: “You are not hanging any food anywhere near this shelter. Are you guys crazy? Do you have a death wish, or are you just stupid? Maybe you don’t care, but I have a family that expects me back home in the next day or two!”

My shoulder-length, gray hair was standing up like a shrub by now, and, for the first time in the evening, the boys genuinely looked like they sensed danger.

“Okay, dude. Chill out, man. We’ll go hang our food outside. What’s with him?” They backpedaled out of the shelter, grumbling about how they were going to hang their food in the dark. I watched them closely—they were not easy to miss with the moon and three big flashlights fully illuminated. They chose a tree about fifteen feet from the shelter and hung their food from a branch that could not have been more than eight feet high. By the time their food was hanging, it could not have been more than six or seven feet high. Too tired and annoyed to protest, I kept quiet, settled back into my sleeping bag and tried hard to find that peaceful sleep I had encountered earlier in the evening.

About twenty minutes later, still wired and wide-awake, I heard footsteps in the woods. As I listened carefully, I felt a second surge of adrenaline as I realized that the footsteps did not appear to be those of a biped organism, but of a quadruped. And judging by the pace and rhythm of the gait pattern, it was not a small quadruped organism. I sat up in my sleeping bag and squinted hard into the woods. I could vaguely make out the silhouette of what I was sure was a black bear. Then the boys, who chose to sleep right outside the shelter (near the Rice-a-Roni), began to stir.

“Dudes, I think there’s a bear out there!”

“Awesome! Let’s go check it out.” Two of the boys got up, turned on their big flashlights and started walking toward the bear. The bear was startled, and I could hear it run a short distance into the woods. The boys gave chase for a short while, and I assume that, fearing they would get lost, came back to the shelter.

“Did you see that mother?”

“Yeah. Let’s find some rocks to throw at it if it comes back.”

“If it gets real close, I’ll try to punch it in the nose.” The boys had not been settled in their sleeping bags more than five minutes when I heard the familiar quadruped gait once again approaching the shelter. I squinted again to see, but a cloud obscured the moon, and it was suddenly very dark. The boys got up, turned on their flashlights, and started throwing rocks into the woods. I heard the animal take a few paces back, then heard what sounded like a low-level snarl coming from that area of the woods. Finally, the bear again scurried a short distance into the woods. At this point, my sphincter muscle had had about enough.

I got out of my sleeping bag, got in the boys’ faces, and told them they had to hang their food farther away from the shelter and, unless they wanted to go hungry for the rest of their hike, needed to find a higher branch. I believed at that moment the boys were more afraid of me and what I might do than of the bear and what it might do. They obediently submitted to my request and took the next twenty minutes to find an appropriate tree that met my approval. After hanging their food under my supervision, we all settled in for the night. The bear came back once more, but, having firm instructions from me, the boys stayed quiet. The bear never approached the shelter but paced around the woods in the area where the food was hanging. After about ten minutes, it wandered off into the woods, never to return. (I know this for a fact because I did not sleep a wink the rest of the night.) When dawn finally came, I was the first out of my sleeping bag. My partner was asleep, and I decided to let him be, since he was probably just as exhausted as I was from the proceedings of the previous evening.

As the boys awoke, I could see that they were in their late teens—young enough to be my children—so I proceeded to sternly lecture them in fatherly fashion about their indiscretions and lack of trail etiquette and responsibility—putting others in danger, making noise at the shelter, and so forth. The boys were very apologetic and appeared to be genuinely sorry for the trouble they had caused. An hour (and three cups of coffee) later, we were all on friendlier terms, making idle chatter about the weather and trail conditions. Finally, my partner awoke and began to emerge from his sleeping bag.

“Can you believe all that happened last night?” I asked incredulously. My partner stretched his upper body, yawned, and...
looked at me with a bleary-eyed frown.  
“What happened last night?”

Robert I. Cantu lives in White, Georgia

Full-pack 440

Arden Poling

The climb in the Massachusetts Berkshires during my 1996 thru-hike was hot, typical for an August afternoon on that section of Trail—rocky, with swarms of blood-drawing mosquitoes and a contingent of suicidal gnats to remove from my eyes or occasionally inhale and swallow. Earlier that summer, I had gagged and spit like a baseball player during the playoffs when I first swallowed a gnat. By now, I had learned to consider them a source of protein. Hikers are always hungry.

As I topped the mountain, I noticed a stump in the middle of the Trail, with the path splitting to pass it on either side. I passed on the right-hand side, without breaking stride, and suddenly something slammed into my left calf with a hot, searing pain. I slapped immediately and saw a hornet fall to the ground. Then, in what seemed like nanoseconds, black streaks were buzzing around my head. My “flight-or-fight” response was to immediately select flight, full flight! My fifty-year-old body went from zero to full speed in what seemed like one leap. It’s impressive what industrial-strength adrenaline can accomplish.

The roar of what sounded like an angry horde of critters bent on inflicting pain and suffering did not dissipate with distance, speed, or swatting. I ran for what seemed an eternity, with no cessation in the roaring of wings. Finally, knowing that I could go no farther, with no help in sight, and no body of water in which to jump, I stopped, threw my backpack off in one wild motion, and prepared to do battle. I was determined to go down fighting. As I began swatting, I became aware that, despite the roar of what sounded like thousands of bees, I could not see any. Out of desperation and confusion, I tore off the sweatband, which I wore on most hot summer days to keep rivulets of salty sweat from running into my eyes, and immediately saw the problem.

Two hornets had gotten stuck in the headband, one directly over each ear. Their legs were entangled in the fibers, and they were flapping their wings like two prop planes doing a pre-flight run-up.

It was my fastest quarter-mile on the entire Appalachian Trail.

Arden Poling (“Wanderlust”) thru-hiked the Appalachian Trail after semiretiring from private practice as a hearing-instrument specialist in Nashville, Tennessee. He is a member of the Appalachian Trail Conference, Appalachian Long Distance Hikers Association, and the Tennessee Trails Association.

Submissions for 2004 A.T. Calendar due by May 31

The deadline for submissions of slides and other transparencies for the 2004 Appalachian Trail Conference wall calendar is Friday, May 31.

The ATC calendar features a mix of photographers, most of whom are Conference members and hikers who don’t make their livings as professional photographers. The 2003 calendar will be available for sale by late May of this year. The rules are simple:

- ATC will accept duplicate 35mm slides or other-sized transparencies for the selection process but may need the original for reproduction. Color prints, however beautiful, cannot be used and will be returned immediately.
- Each photographer is limited to 36 submissions.
- The image must be horizontal.
- The scene should show the footpath or be shot from the footpath or, if taken from a distance, be of a recognizable landmark in the Trail corridor or management zone. Please identify the scene’s location as specifically as possible and the month of shooting on the slide mount. Lack of sufficient identification could disqualify a submission immediately, as would a submission of a scene clearly outside the Trail corridor.
- The transparency must meet the technical production standards of our copublisher, Graphic Arts Center in Portland, Oregon.

A letter with the submissions should state that they are for the 2004 calendar and provide the name, address, and daytime telephone number of the photographer; the identities of any persons shown; and a detailed description of each scene submitted, including its location and the month of the year it was taken.

The package should be sent to: Calendar Editor, Appalachian Trail Conference, P.O. Box 807 (799 Washington Street for non-USPS submissions), Harpers Ferry, WV 25425-0807.

Photographers whose slides are selected will be paid $200 per image—after signing release forms and obtaining releases from any identifiable persons in the shots—and the photographer of the cover picture will be paid an additional $50. Selected slides will be held until the calendar is printed in the spring of 2003.
We are confronted with insurmountable opportunities,” Pogo the Possum once said in Walt Kelly’s timeless comic strip, Pogo. He could have been talking about the Conference’s land programs. Land costs money—sometimes a lot of money. A lot of it along the A.T. is worth protecting. Identifying it, planning for it, and working on deals to protect it takes money, too.

Fortunately, many Conference members believe that money spent protecting the Trail, its corridor, its views, and the experience of hiking through the eastern high country is money well spent. But, when you’ve decided to write that tax-deductible check to ATC, how do you specify that you want your money to go toward protecting Trail lands?

You have three options:
1. Specify the “Land Acquisition Fund.”
2. Specify the “Appalachian Trail Conference Land Trust.”
3. Don’t specify how ATC should use your gift.

Help ATC manage your donations, directing your gifts to the projects where you want them used: Please give us clear instructions, Designate any restrictions in correspondence or on your contribution, or leave the gift unrestricted to help wherever the funds are most needed.

The Land Acquisition Fund is just that—a restricted fund, assets that the Conference keeps separate from what’s raised for other ATC programs. It is used to buy land or acquire protective easements or “leverage” the efforts of other people and organizations buying land or easements for the Trail. When you give money to the Land Acquisition Fund, it can only be spent on land.

The Appalachian Trail Conference Land Trust is the ATC program that makes the deals and promotes land conservation along the Trail. It was first created in 1982 as the “Trust for Appalachian Trail Lands,” but it’s not a separate organization. When you give money to the ATC Land Trust, you help pay for the organizational work, coordination, initiatives, and personnel whose job it is to promote land conservation along the A.T.

There is so much to do. Now that most of the corridor is on public land, the Trust is working with landowners, volunteers, and other nonprofit organizations to protect views and the wild areas along the Trail that make the experience of hiking it worthwhile.

ATC picks projects judiciously, seeking to leverage money in the Land Acquisition Fund by seeking donations or bargain sales. Sometimes, we can’t act. But, often we do. Your donations can replenish the fund and keep us from losing ground and opportunities when they present themselves.

If your goal is general support for ATC, no designation is needed. If you want your gift to support the general operations of the Land Trust, helping state coordinators identify properties and promoting such tools as the Conservation Buyers’ Program to help find buyers to protect the properties, write ATC Land Trust on the reference line of your check to ATC. If you aim to reserve your contribution for purchasing land, please designate the Land Acquisition Fund, and know your dollars will be used for buying land.

So many opportunities! Help us surmount them.

For more information, feel free to call Christina L. Auch, director of development for the Appalachian Trail Conference. She can be reached by email at <cauch@appalachiantrail.org>, by phone at (304) 535-6331, or by writing her at Appalachian Trail Conference, P.O. Box 807, Harpers Ferry, WV 25425.
day, then will take both GPS units to the place I’ll be staying the next night. I’ll download the data from the units to a laptop computer and spend two to three hours editing the data. Then, I’ll go to sleep and do it all over again the next day.”

Recording data for the entire A.T. will take him between 180 and 210 days, Vernier estimates.

Why go to all this trouble? When asked that question, Vernier just laughs. “I just like to thru-hike,” he says. “And, the third time I did it, I found I was getting a little bored, and then I got the idea of digitizing the whole Trail.”

He says he’s not worried that compiling such a detailed record of the route will take the mystery and joy out of hiking. “Absolutely not! It won’t take it from the Trail, and it doesn’t take it from my life, either. When I hear that GPS unit beeping, I’m still looking at the birds and hoping I don’t trip over that next rock.”

Robert Rubin is editor of Appalachian Trailway News

Memorial gifts

September 1 – December 31, 2001

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

Tommy Bennett—By Mountain High Hikers
Cynthia Clarke—By Ann Hooker
Daniel Couch—By Allison F. Williams
David Decker—By the Morse High School Class of 1969
Chris Deffler—By Mr. and Mrs. Edwin Deffler
Robert Detweiler—By Barbara P. Zimmerman
Edward Fill—By Mrs. Jean Fill
Viola Germon—By the Georgia Appalachian Trail Club, Jim and Marianne Skeen
Dottie Goodman—By Sara Davis and Dwayne Stutzman, Renee Goodman
Sara Grayson—By Laura Rosenthal
Carl Greenberg—By Irene and Morton Lowenbraun
James Henry Hughes—By Kimberly Conlon, Dorothy Hankinson, Les and Sharon Hankinson, Gerald G. Thompson, Thompson, Greenspan and Co.
Robert Lee Ingram for the Robert Lee Ingram Memorial Fund—By Mr. and Mrs. John W. Ingram, Jr.
Stephen Klein—By Angelina C. Thomas
John Loehner—By Elaine Loehner
Kenneth Morgan—By Dr. Betty Farmer; Fiber Maintenance Department of International Paper; Nell D. Landrum; Dr. James Manning and Quinn, Solutia, Inc.; students of Western North Carolina’s intercultural communications class; Swimmer Insurance Agency
Jim Park—By Greta S. Morris
Scott Riddick for the Riddick Memorial Shelter—By Edith S. Mosher
Margaret Scott—By Georgia Appalachian Trail Club
Bob Silva—By Alfred B. Rosenstein, M.D., Candace Skurnik
Searcy B. Slack—By Arlene Slack
Warren Grayndler Smith—By Fred and Mary Emrick
Pete Suoboda—By Susan Bietsch
Jean Woodruff Thompson—By Mary Lou and John Zell Eaton
Oreste Unti (for the Trail-crew program)—By Alice Allegrini, Amos and Rose Allegrini, Albert Bartolai, Bruce and Bella Berman, Mary L. Bleecker, Natalie and Eugenio Bonini, Sara Dean, Louis and Frances Furlan, Enzo and Carla Fusaro, Albert Galves, Rose Gonnella, George R. Horishige, Bette Jane Irwin, Arthur Judson II, Florence L. Jung, Judith Kirsner, Helga Martynowych, Al and Carol Messenger, Anne and Matthew Michlinski, Daniel B. Miller, Pennsylvania School for the Deaf, Sante and Marie Romano, Bonnie Schuman, Enyo Valenti and Alberto Guadagnini
Bruce Van Hine—By American Legion Post No. 1443, Marion Banta, Kenneth Bower, Daniel Campagna, Kathryn P. Ciurczak, James R. Clark III, Delys Dezaaen, First Data Corporation, Mary and Richard Jones, Beverly LaRocque, Philip W. Mueller, Carole Po holek, Darlene and Thomas Shoppe, Ans VanDerVeen
Nathan Wisneski—By Devin L. Friedman
Holly Wyatt—By Mountain High Hikers

Honorary gifts

Since September 1, 2001, donations to the Appalachian Trail Conference have been made in honor of:

Wedding Guests of Kevin S. Haldeman and Erica Leptio—By Kevin S. Haldeman and Erica Leptio
Teresa Martinez—By Edward Gralla
Eagle Scout James P. Nangeroni—By John and Lois Hartstein, Anthony and Florence Kruzas, John and Cynthia Long, Mr. and Mrs. George H. Mill, Albina K. Nangeroni, Lawrence and Susan Ough, Marion Parkinson and Margaret Szczurek, Joanne and Gary Smith
Marianne Skeen (for the Land Acquisition Fund)—By Yasmin K. Ali, Jeremy and Valerie Boss, Guy and Tanya Cassingham, Richard and Marian Comans, Margaret Damerow, Timothy and Susan Davis, Susan A. Eckert, Brian and Kristine Evavold, Molly Freeman, Linda R. Gooding, John and Sonja Harrast, Ken and Elizabeth Hixon, Michael Huerkamp, Darleen Jarman, Joe and Barbara Patterson, John and June Scott, Jerry and Patricia Seabolt, Igor Stojiljkovic and Suzana Anic, Guang-Jer and Mei-Whey Wu
Corps, Air Corps, infantry, or field artillery. I wouldn’t hum the tunes aloud, but I could definitely feel the music and had no trouble hiking along in time to it. Time would pass more quickly, and I could keep a more regular pace.

Just north of the Roan Highlands Shelter, on a beautiful day in late May, I suddenly realized that I had been swinging along to the tune of “Scotland The Brave.” At first, I was convinced that I was hallucinating and that I must be in need of a day or two away from the Trail in the company of other human beings. As I continued along, the music became louder, and I knew for sure that I was actually hearing a piper.

Where the Trail intersected a country road, a young man marched along, playing the pipes as though on parade. His name was John Shell from Roan Mountain, Tennessee. He normally played with the Grandfather Mountain Highlanders but was getting in a little extra practice. John asked if I had any favorites, and I listened while he played the most beautiful rendition of “Amazing Grace” that I have ever heard.

Carl R. Frieberg (Marathon Man)
Fairfax, Virginia

**Ghosts of Sarver**

In June 2000, five friends and I hiked a section of the Appalachian Trail over Sinking Creek Mountain.

The day before we finished our hike, we stayed at the site of Sarver Cabin. Reading the guidebook for that section, we discovered that the site was rumored to be haunted. Sightings of Mr. Sarver himself, roaming the area around the ruins, had been reported, it said.

Of course, we took photographs, and my friend, Kathy, took one of me leaning against the old Sarver Cabin. A few weeks later, Kathy sent me a copy of the photo (above) she took of the cabin, with me leaning against the side. She included a note: “Looks like Mr. Sarver came to visit after all!”

There was nothing there while I posed. What could it be? Processing error? Strange camera film? Mr. Sarver? We vote for the latter—and thank Mr. Sarver for allowing us to stay at his homestead!

Alice Lane Davis
Blacksburg, Virginia

**“Flyin’ Brian”**

When I first read the account of Brian Robinson’s 7,400-mile odyssey over the three major trails in the U.S.A. in the same year, my first reaction was disbelief, my second was anger, and my third was sadness. Disbelief because I wonder why anyone would want to do such a thing, anger because I don’t want trails turned into ultramarathon training tracks, and sadness because, apparently, Brian doesn’t understand why we have trails.

His athletic feat is indeed an accomplishment, but I can imagine a world-class distance runner doing the same distance in about three months, given the right incentives. “Speed-hiking” the mileage he was covering is actually disguised distance running. I have seen many so-called minimalist backpackers who claim to have everything they need. They seldom do, unless they are being assisted by a helper shuttling what is needed at the time and taking what is not needed.

No one traveling that fast can see very much other than the trail just in front of his next footstrike. Did he stop to take in breathtaking views or take a blue-blazed trail to an overlook? Did Brian enjoy any of the wonderful experiences normally associated with backpacking, like standing under a waterfall, or relaxing in a natural pool? His obsession for speed and a record was so great that he actually spent $10,000 and a year of his life to see basically nothing.

Recently, I met a woman who completed the walk from Georgia to Maine and confessed to doing at most a mile an hour. Before sunrise, she would be on her way, only to be passed in the morning by those whom she had earlier left behind,

**Shelter Register**

Continued from page 7
as they sped north. Just as they would turn in for the night, she would come walking through the woods (sometimes after dark) and start “clanging and banging,” preparing her evening meal. I don’t think I’ve ever met a more interesting and informed thru-hiker in my life! She stopped to look at every plant, flower, rock, insect—you name it!—having the time of her life.

How interesting would Brian Robinson be to chat with? After talking about caloric intake, carbing up, endorphins, hiking highs, and ultralight packs, what more would he have to offer?

Chris David
Raleigh, North Carolina

Great indoors ...

Continued from page 16

by researching the A.T. on the Internet in computer class and picking a “Trail name.” Josie, who signed the register with her Trail name, “Cobweb,” wrote, “If I went to this Trail I would like to hike on it.”

Cooke first contacted ATC when he was planning the event. The Conference donated copies of The A.T. Fun Book for each student, as well as maps, brochures, pictures, and lesson ideas to support the A.T. he was setting up in the school gym.

The conclusion seems to be that the A.T. is not only a great place to hike, it’s also a great place to learn. Different teachers from schools all over the country have taken the initiative to use the Trail to teach about topics ranging from science to social studies. To help them, ATC is developing an educational program to, in part, help teachers use the Trail and its stories to get students excited about learning.

No jumping-jacks are required.

John Buchheit is developing ATC’s education plan. If you would like more information about teaching with the Appalachian Trail or helping with that effort, please contact him at (304) 535-6331.

Twin towers

At the very soul of the Appalachian Trail experience and backcountry travel are common bonds of emotional and spiritual renewal. Glenn Scherer’s article, “The View No More” (ATN, November–December 2001), captured the Trail’s significance as a place of reflection and healing, apart but not entirely insulated from civilization’s pressing concerns. Like Scherer, I sought solitude and restoration on the Trail immediately after the terrorist attacks. Nature’s peace was a powerful tonic. With space for contemplation and escape from traumatic media images, the remote Trail seemed like the safest place to be.

Waking up in New Hampshire’s White Mountains with the morning sun twinkling through birch and balsam branches above, I silently watched a distant white jet trail steadily track across the cloudless sky. It told me all I really needed to know about the world nearby: Aircraft were no longer grounded, which meant that the country, forever changed and reeling from shock, was getting back to the business of living.

Scherer’s perceptive article pointed to the hope that the A.T. symbolizes. Many of us seek the Trail’s wild places to put life into perspective. Benton MacKaye called it a “new solution to the problem of living.” In the wake of tragedy, a step on the Trail is a step toward healing.

Thanks for the insightful article.

Gloria Updyke
Front Royal, Virginia

APPALACHIAN TRAILWAY NEWS

29
Hiking partners wanted

**Section-hiker.** Male, 46, married, experienced hiker and in excellent condition, great cook and conversationist, seeking partner(s) for 3-7 day hikes along A.T. Prefer Smoky Mtns./Tennessee area, but will consider any section in the southern part. Looking for trip in spring 2002. Contact Tom M Cmackin, 24064 Van Wedding Rd, Sunman, IN 47041. E-mail: <thomaskennedyus@yahoo.com>.

**Section-hiker.** Seeking hiker with car to hike in Pa. Using the two-car system. Have day-hiked 1,700 miles on the A.T., 66 years old. Write Frank Sargent, P.O. Box 31744, Raleigh, NC 27622-1744; call, (919) 781-5888; e-mail, <frank@sargent.com>.

**Section-hiker.** Seeking companion or companions to hike from Hot Springs, N.C., north, 200-plus miles. Early spring 2002. I like to hike at least 12-plus miles per day. Possibly switch vehicles at each point. E-mail, <joen_1999@ymail.com>.

**Section-hiker.** Seeking partner for Shenendoah National Park, areas north of Stormville, N.Y. to Monson, Maine (excluding Crawford Notch to Gorman), Age 67, hike 10-15 miles a day. Allan Schilling, P.O. Box 476, LaCrosse, WI 54602; phone, (608) 788-1912; e-mail, <daschil@centurytel.net>.

**Section-hiker.** Seeking experienced backpacking partners for 2002 finish to my 9-year section hike. I am 70 and hike at a slow pace. Hike north from Andover, Maine, 256 miles to Katahdin, plus the 8-mile Mahoosuc Notch stretch that somehow I missed. (Long story!) Starting mid-July (after black flies) and continuing until finished. Contact Emily Kimbal (Tooth), (804) 358-5536; e-mail, <etkimball@aol.com>.

**Thru-hiker.** Female, 31, seeking another female to start April 1, hike 15 miles/day with some stops along the way. Michelle, (781) 395-2061.

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**Public notices**

are published free for members of the Appalachian Trail Conference. We cannot vouch for any of the advertised items. Ads must pertain to the A.T. or related hiking/conservation matters. Send ads to PUBLIC NOTICES, Appalachian Trail Conference, P.O. Box 807, Harpers Ferry, WV 25425. Deadline for the July 2002 issue is May 15.

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**For sale**

**Boots.** Merrell, mid-weight, all-leather, Italian-made, #1092, 13-N. A few toe scuffs, otherwise almost like new. Buyer pays for shipping and a contribution to ATC. Larry, (313) 885-0134.

**Boots.** Danner (men's), size 8 1/2 EE, approximately 300 miles of wear, $110 (includes postage in U.S.). J.F. Jackson, 202 Grigsby Avenue, Easley, SC 29640; e-mail, <jackson66@msn.com>.

**Sleeping bag, boots.** Women's Sierra Design Lullaby (Polargard 3D), rated 35 degrees, 2 lbs. 3 oz., stretch construction, fits up to 5’5”. Used once, still has tags, $100. Women's Technica Cirrus Mid TCY lightweight hiking boots, waterproof/breathable, size 7 1/2 medium. Barely used, $50. L. Mack-Drinkard, (804) 230-4407; e-mail, <creaksong@vcu.edu>.

**Gear.** Western Mountaineering Antelope SMF, 5-degree sleeping bag, 6 ft. right zip, 2 lbs. 13 oz, $225. Moonstone UltraLite, 25-to-40 degree sleeping bag, 6 ft, 1 lb. 12 oz., $175. The North Face Mountain Light Gore-Tex coat, green, medium, $150. Adventure 16 Dog backpack, large, $20. Dog sleeping bag with carrying sack, $20. Cascade Designs, 3/4 Thermarest chair kit, $15. All prices include shipping. Contact Mike: phone (865) 300-4950; e-mail, <hippyhiker@aol.com>.

**Free.** Appalachian Trailway News and The Register. Most issues from January 1989 to present. Contact Chuck Rinaldi, (561) 641-7909; e-mail, <chuckrinaldi.clear@yahoo.com>. You pay shipping.

**Books.** Appalachian Trail guides, books, complete set; complete set of A.T. topo maps; Appalachian Trail wall map (9.5” by 36”); Appalachian Trail Data Book 2000; Appalachian Trail Thru-Hikers Companion 2000; Appalachian Trail Thru-Hikers’ Companion 2001; Appalachian Trail Workbook for Planning Thru-hikes, by Christopher Whalen; The Appalachian Trail—How to Prepare for and Hike It, by Jan D. Curran; The Appalachian Trail Backpacker, by Victoria and Frank Logue; A Hiker’s Companion, by Cindy Ross and Todd Gladfelter; The Thru-Hiker’s Handbook, Eleventh Edition; Trail Safe, by Michael Bane; Don’t Die on the Mountain, by Dan H. Allen; Long Distance Hiking—Lessons from the Appalachian Trail, by Roland Mueller; Backpacking the Keitly Way, by Nena Kelty and Steve Boga; Walking the Appalachian Trail, by Larry Luxenberg. Illness prevented my trip. Asking $150.00 for the set. New price is well over $350.00. Rick Garlick, (952) 898-9673; e-mail, <minn1998@aol.com>.

**Boots.** Limmer men’s 11 1/2 medium and 12 medium, both pairs in like-new condition, brand-new soles. Best offer takes. Dick Wolf, 125 Gates Ave-14, Montclair NJ 07042; e-mail, <wolffindex@aol.com>.

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**For your information**

**Hiking trips.** Join us for spectacular fall hiking in the Great Smokies and Blue Ridge Mountains of Tennessee and North Carolina. Spring brings wonderful wildflowers with each altitude level displaying a different array of flowers and bushes. In the fall, enjoy moderate temperatures and fantastic color. High activity, low-budget day-hiking trips. Contact Danny Bernstein at Hiker to Hiker: (828) 225-0766; <www.hikertohiker.org>.

**Hiking in England.** Rambling along the North Downs Way and the Cotswold Way starting June 8, 2002. Noncommercial trip led by experienced U.K. walker (since1986)and “2,000-miler” for Outdoor Club of South Jersey. Leisurely pace with daypack while enjoying local history and culture. For details, send SASE to Richard Greene, 115 Dawn Dr., Mt. Holly, NJ 08060.
“Have you seen Nightingale?” he asked, as he rushed through the door.

“Try the post office,” I offered. I went back to watching my polypropylene shirts spin around, warm enough to dry but not hot enough to melt.

“The test came back. I need to tell her,” he said, as he went out as quickly as he’d entered.

What kind of test? I wondered. It was probably best if I didn’t know. I’d never heard of Nightingale and had never seen the guy looking for her before. Why did he think I’d know where she was?

After a while, the spinning clothes had a hypnotic effect, and I went to sleep with my eyes open. When my fifty cents were up and the spinning stopped, I woke to a dryer-full of warm, clean clothes. They felt good as I put them into my sleeping bag stuff sack. “I need some better socks,” I thought, looking at my worn-out Thorlos.

I don’t know how long I was in the laundromat, but it was long enough for my legs and feet to get stiff. And, long enough to get hungry. I guess, in Trail life, neither of those things takes very long. I couldn’t do much about the stiffness, but I hobbled across the street to the diner to take care of the hunger.

The waitress had just set my root beer on the table when the guy who was looking for Nightingale and a girl I guessed to be Nightingale entered the diner. They saw me sitting alone in the booth and took that as an invitation to join me.

“Whaddya get?” he asked, picking up a menu as he sat down.

“Burger and fries. I see you found her,” I said, moving my maps and laundry to make room.

“Yeah, she was at the grocery store.”

“Burger and fries. I see you found her,” I said, moving my maps and laundry to make room.

“Yeah, she was at the grocery store.”

“So, how’d the test come back?” I asked her. The bag of laundry was still warm as I put my hand on it.

She gave me a look as if to say, “How do you know about the test?” As she started to answer, she also started to reach for a menu. That was an unfortunate combination, because she knocked my root beer over.

Corn syrup and ice rushed across the table and dripped onto my wrist and into my laundry bag. The root beer that didn’t make it into the bag made it to the seat and to my shorts.

The waitress, whose nametag read “Cookie,” took a towel and cleaned up the root beer that stayed on the table and wiped the seat off. Ice cubes were melting on the floor. Most of the rest of the mess seemed to have found its way deep into my bag of clothes.

“I’m so sorry,” Nightingale said with a voice not nearly as old as she was.

“That’s all right. They were just clean and dry,” I said, smiling.

“What can I get you guys?” Cookie asked as she put her towel on the counter.

They both ordered things I’d never heard of, so I figured they were vegetarians. They looked like vegetarians, too, I guess. “Yours’ll be ready in a minute,” she said to me as she walked away.

“Where’d you guys stay last night?” I asked, trying to figure out if I should know who these people were, but trying to not sound like I didn’t.

“I stayed with her,” he said, like that told me something.

“Yeah, we stayed together,” she confirmed.

“Oh, right,” I said. Information wasn’t as forthcoming as I’d hoped.

Cookie walked by and set my cheeseburger and fries down without even slowing down. She’d done this a time or two before, I could tell.

“When are you guys leaving town?” I asked and took the first bite of an incredible cheeseburger.

“Soon as our ride gets here,” he said, taking one of my fries. “Ride? Were they even hikers? What was this test all about? I took another bite of that incredible cheeseburger.

I was in the middle of, “So, how’d the test come back?” again when a short, heavy man opened the door and yelled, “Hey, Nightingale! You guys ready?”

They got up and headed to the door, saying their good-byes and see-ya-laters on the way.

As the door shut, Cookie set two plates of grain and grass on the table. I don’t know what it was, but I ate it.

Later, as clothes spinning around in the dryer hypnotized me again, I started wondering: Did the past two hours really even happen?

Felix J. McGillicuddy has recently been hiking in New Jersey, where grain and grass are sometimes on the menu.
Red-headed woodpecker (ATC file photo)