



The Long Distance Hiker

The Newsletter of the Appalachian Long Distance Hikers Association

Volume 13, Number 1

“ALDHA News That’s Fit to Print Since 1983”

Spring 2002

Saving the Last Historic AT Cistern by David A. Cheslow, PhD.

Rainwater collection systems, called cisterns, were once common along the Appalachian Trail. Many shelters were built on sites where fire towers stood. While the fire towers were abandoned, the shelters remained— along with the rain cisterns. Cistern design is simple. Water drains off the roof of the shelter, passes through a sand filter and collects in a large tank, often made of concrete. A spigot near the bottom of the tank provides access to the water stored within. Cisterns collect and hold water, but do not treat it in any way— it should be boiled or chemically treated before drinking.

Rain cisterns are a cantankerous lot, prone to contamination from many sources and limited by the amount of rain that falls. Many cisterns along the AT could not be maintained satisfactorily without a firespotter on site year-around. One by one, the cisterns have been removed or replaced, some at great expense by wells that require nearly as much maintenance but which provide a more reliable supply of water. When other cisterns were removed, the shelters moved into valleys— or worse, made “dry.”

Only one historic rain cistern remains along the AT, at a shelter just north of Roanoke, Virginia called Fullhardt Knob, the first shelter northbound after the AT crosses Interstate 81 in Daleville, Virginia. Daleville is a popular resupply and resting spot with motels, restaurants, laundry mats and shopping malls all within walking distance of the Trail. So it’s with heavy packs that many thru-hikers march back up to the top of the Blue Ridge Mountains by way of Fullhardt Knob to continue their trek toward Maine.

Although reliable records have not been found, the cistern on Fullhardt Knob may have been built by the CCC during the 1930s, when the AT was relocated to to make way for the Blue Ridge Parkway. Fullhardt Knob’s cistern is the only semi-reliable water source between the highway and Curry Creek, four and a half miles further north. Nearly seventy years of continuous service took its toll on the cistern. Sometime during 2001, the



RATC Volunteer Bob Athey, ready to climb into the cistern collection tank.

concrete lids to the collection box both cracked and allowed debris to clog the cistern. In January 2002, volunteers with the Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club, the U.S. Forest Service and local business joined together to save the cistern at Fullhardt Knob, a process that would take nearly three months to complete.

Finding information about how to clean and maintain a cistern is no easy matter in these days when most people don’t even know what one is. On the surface, the project might seem straightforward - just scrub it out and rinse it well – but the remote location, safety concerns, the uniqueness of the project and difficult winter weather all conspired to slow the project down.

The first step was to bail out and clean the cistern. The stagnant water in the cistern was just plain gross, not only smelly, but icy cold. Insulated rubber boots and disposable coveralls became the attire of the day, an odd sight to see for hikers passing by on a sunny January Saturday. Once the cistern was bailed out, it was scrubbed with baking soda and washed with bleach. But how can you rinse a cistern when the cistern is the only source of water in the area?

The US Forest Service lent a helping hand by delivering 100 gallons of water to the shelter site in flexible orange tanks called “pumpkins” used to fight fires. The FS also helped by hauling in (and out) the manhole ventilator and a water pump, each of which weighs about 60 pounds. A Trail Club volunteer climbed into the

collection tank, buckets of water were passed down, followed by much splashing and scrubbing, and then the water was pumped out... rinse and repeat!

With the cistern clean, the only remaining task was replacing the two lids (one for the sand filter and one for the collection box). Needless to say, rain cistern lids are not a “stock item” anywhere.

Precision Steel Corporation of Roanoke volunteered to construct stainless steel lids for the project. Designed and built to fit the exact openings on the Fullhardt Knob cistern, these lids will seal the cistern much more tightly than the concrete lids ever did and they will last for decades. Precision Steel has a history of supporting the AT and the RATC. In 2000, they donated custom designed and fabricated fire grates for the shelters in the Roanoke area.



RATC Vice President Lucien Metayer and Mike Amos of Precision Steel Corporation with the new cistern lids.

The Fullhardt Knob “save the cistern” project is a model for how volunteers, government and business can work cooperatively to protect a unique and historically important feature of the AT experience for future generations of hikers. Each group provided an important component which the others could not: time and effort from the Trail Club, machinery and expertise from the Government, and specialized skills and materials from Industry.

Now, if it would just rain....

You are invited to visit the Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club website at <http://www.ratc.org>



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The Long Distance Hiker
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Coordinator's Report

Already buds of green are protruding from illusive branches reaching determinately towards the sparsely shrouded sky of blue. The chill has become more subtle, the blood flows with a yearning of the Trail. The dreamers anxiously begin while the remainder of us simply reminisce.



ALDHA has continued its Gathering momentum of action. Your Board proceeds with discovery, interpretation and decisions which impact the Trail community. Twice a year the elected members meet formally to handle issues of business. Technology, and email in particular, insures a more regular contact and banter of proposals and actions for involvement between those business meetings. My hats off to Kurt, Scott, John O, Rich, Model T, Karen, Skeeter, Noel and Wayne who volunteer hours for ALDHA.

Events continue to permeate our association. The Ed Garvey Pavilion has been built. ALDHA has supported the North Country Trail, as well as the Fullhardt Shelter cistern movement. There is evidence of an interest to promote positive Trail interactions for Trail Days and other "captive" audiences.

So much to be involved in. So many ways to become active...read on to learn where ALDHA needs your help.

Happy Trails!
Stacy



2002 Trail Days

Trails Days is just around the corner and at this 18th Annual event, ALDHA will once again be presenting an "All About ALDHA" discussion. The time has been set, Saturday, May 18 at 4:00 p.m. in Rock School.

ALDHA needs membership assistance to present the diversity and depth of our organization at this Trail celebration themed "Arts of the Trail".

Contact Stacy at findsimp@aol.com or at 603/837-9605.

Meet the New Editor

Hello,
everyone! I'm
Sandra Friend,
aka Navigator,
your new
newsletter
editor. I joined
ALDHA in
1996. Since
then, I've hiked



more than a thousand miles, most of it in Florida. I'm a freelance writer and author with eight books behind me, most recently "50 Hikes in Central Florida," which will appear in bookstores this fall. When I'm not writing, I'm hiking or traveling. This is my third stint as a volunteer editor for a nonprofit newsletter / magazine, and I hope I serve you well.

I encourage you to send news from and about ALL trails you hike, not just the Appalachian Trail. I'd like to have a regular feature each issue spotlighting a particular trail. I'd also like to see articles on topics such as hiking with kids, hiking with a spouse, leaving family behind, financial planning for long distance hiking, etc.. and don't forget humor and trail-related fiction! Of course, updates to the ALDHA Companion and your Member News are entirely appropriate, too. Send your info to: Sandra Friend, 9201 SW 34th PL, Ocala FL 34481 ... or better yet, email me at atnavi@aol.com.

2002 Companion

The 2002 *Appalachian Trail Thru-Hikers' Companion* is now available. This year's ninth ALDHA edition incorporates new ideas in an effort to make the *Companion* more hiker friendly. At the end of the text, note a new "Bird Call" section as well as a section describing "Mammal Tracks and Signs." Additionally, section summaries were created as a precursor of what an hiker could expect when hiking either north or south along the Appalachian Trail.

Do you have any thoughts on the *Companion*? Any additions or revisions for the 2003 version? Contact John at johno@monmouth.com or 732/295-8267.

2002 SPRING STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

Saturday March 23, 2002
New Ringgold, Pennsylvania

Meeting results in next issue

Membership Happenings

I'm writing this two hours after the dust has settled. The dust in question resulted from having turned my one bedroom apartment into an ALDHA Directory processing center. A thousand directories came in the door on Valentine's Day and within 24 hours they were at the post office on their way to over 950 members in the US, Canada, New Zealand and South Africa.

I've learned a lot since the surprise of becoming Membership Secretary at the Gathering. Besides the obvious fact that there is a lot to this job, I've learned that all I need to do is ask, and an ALDHA member will come to the rescue. Need a creative professional cover for the Directory? Zip! There's Suzanne Goulet! Need help learning the software and creating the Directory layout? Zap! There's Bill O'Brien, Mr. Can Do! Likewise for Jim Owen, Scott Beavers, Stacy Mikkalsen, Sandra Friend and the helpful folks at Gunter Printing in Longwood, Florida. Thanks team!

I've also learned that trying to decipher the handwriting of some members is my biggest challenge! No doubt there are mistakes in the Directory, so please bring them to my attention. I'd also like to keep the database as current as possible. It's not always possible with the nomadic tribe that we are, but if you could send in an update when your address, phone or email changes, I'll be able to keep your Directories and newsletters coming. Sadly, we've lost touch with six members who are entitled to member services, but we have no way to reach them. Please don't let this happen to you!

Please contact me if you can help me locate any of these members:

Deanne Shapiro	Tempe, AZ
Todd Montgomery	Asheville, NC
Ed Norman	Grand Rapids, MI
Kevin Kalthoff	Topeka, KS
Michelle Curtis	Lynchburg, VA
Ken Martin	Harpers Ferry, WV

And finally, a note to those who have become life members since the Gathering. I have received the software to produce your laminated membership cards. Now that the Directories have been mailed, I'll finally be able to get those out to you. Thank you for your patience. As always, you may reach me at **407-579-9330** or by email at toktaadn@aol.com.

Happy trails,
Solar Bear



E-mail Request

Since ALDHA operates on a very lean budget and a dues structure that hasn't increased in a decade, we don't have the luxury of mailing renewal statements or other personalized communications. In that regard, it is extremely helpful to have an accurate email address for each member in our database. The last time I checked, about 59% of the membership had email. Since I can communicate with you by email at no cost to ALDHA, it would be helpful if those of you who have email, but haven't included it on your registration forms, send it to me for inclusion in the database. Just send me an email at toktaadn@aol.com and include ALDHA in the subject line. Of course, you may also email any address or phone changes as well. Thanks so much.

Happy trails,
Solar Bear
Membership Secretary



Member News

Who's on the Trail?

Paul "Mags" Magnanti is headed for a PCT thru-hike Apr 26. Follow his trail journal at friends.backcountry.net/pmags.

Cin "Mrs. Gorp" Miller starts her 25th anniversary AT thru on Mar 1, with a journal at trailjournals.com/mrsgorp.

Tom "Datto" Griffiths plans hikes in New Zealand, Scotland, and on the AT this spring. Karen "POG" Sousa is also headed for a tromp around Scotland.

Robert "Slyman" Sylvester plans a CDT thru-hike starting in late April from New Mexico, hiking to the Colorado border and flipping to Canada to head southbound, hoping to finish early Oct.

Perennial AT thru-hiker "Baltimore Jack" Tarlin heads for Georgia in April. Reverend Martin "Rusty" Fors heads for Springer Mar 21, and Furtrapper gives it another go on Mar 2. Carol "Rambunny" Barnes hits the AT Mar 3 with yo-yo plans, intending to set a new consecutive women's thru-hike record. Stray Cat starts an AT thru-hike on March 11, properly "tuckerized" at the PA Ruck. She'll have an online journal at www.trailjournals.com/straycat. FreightTrain heads south from Abol Bridge "sometime after May 10th."

Tom "Sloetoe" McGinnis and sons Cole and Connor will hit the Colorado Trail in August. They'll be eight. The boys have new trail names - the Firestarter Bros., Flint and Steel, thanks to the

Gathering and the Ruck - they're learning flint and steel firestarting right now! (They get to work it into school science projects! And Scout credit! Cool, eh?). Tom and the boys completed the Long Trail last July.

On Feb 10, Fiddlehead and Pieps finished the first leg of their Triple Crown hike at Springer. Follow their adventures at www.triplecrownoneyear.com.

Nancy "Magellan" Gowler and Jolene "Jojosmiley" Koby have completed the Florida Trail and are on their way to the AT...Magellan will rejoin JoJo on the IAT as both ladies complete an ECT hike. Beth "Bombshell" Lawson just finished the northern part of the Florida Trail and heads south to Key West in March to become the first woman to complete an ECT hike.

After completing the Appalachian Mountain Trail last fall - the full range of the Appalachians, from Flagg Mountain, Alabama some 3800 miles to Belle Isle on the northern tip of Newfoundland - M.J. "Nimblewill Nomad" Eberhart takes to the trail this year with a different twist. Like Peter Jenkins, he's going for a walk across America, from Cape Hatteras, North Carolina to Southern California.

Nina "Waterfall" Baxley joins Dan "Sheltowee" Rogers for a hike of the PCT this spring. Says Dan: "I am currently hiking across America. I started last August in Ohio and have done parts of the North Country trail and Buckeye Trail. I did all of the Sheltowee Trace and Natchez Trace. I am in Texas right now and plan to hike to Campo...the journey is going great. I plan to be at Trail Days in May..." Read about Dan's hike at www.sheltoweehikes.com.

Hiker Doin's

Pat "Give Me Chocolate" Villeneuve and Tom, "Blaze," AT 2000, tied the knot in February out West.

Cory "Cross Country" Lampert and Aaron "Pack Mule" Wielselman will celebrate their 3rd anniversary by hiking the PCT. They met in 1999 on the AT.

Don't miss the...
21st Annual Gathering
October 11, 12, 13, 2002
Pipestem, WV

Check your ALDHA
directory for details!



Trail News

Updates on Trail Conditions on the AT and beyond

DROUGHT BRINGS ACUTE WATER SHORTAGE TO AT

On February 12, Pennsylvania governor Mark Schweiker declared a drought emergency in 24 eastern and southern counties. This is the latest in a string of drought-related events along the eastern seaboard this year. According to the National Weather Service, most of the East Coast is now experiencing moderate to extreme levels of drought. For the full scoop from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, visit www.drought.noaa.gov. As water supplies dwindle, hikers -- day hikers, section hikers, and thru-hikers alike -- must take special precautions to avoid being caught without water.

Baltimore Jack posted the following helpful information to hikers on AT Basecamp <http://at.plangraphics.org/> (Forums -> General Discussion folder) in early February:

Be prepared, and EXPECT dry areas this year—lots of 'em. This especially means Maryland, Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, and southern New England, all the way to just south of the White Mountains.

Have adequate means to carry extra water—a sufficiently sized water bag, extra Nalgene or soda bottles, etc. Have sufficient means to treat your water this year, as you may well be drinking sketchy, skanky, awful stuff that you wouldn't usually go near.

Always be aware of how much you're carrying, how far you need to go with it, and where you hope to head up. ALWAYS fill up when you can and drink more than you usually do. NEVER assume that there will be water where you intend to stop for the day, never arrive there bone-dry. If you have to continue a few more miles, you'll be in real trouble.

Take responsibility for YOURSELF, and avoid cadging water from others unless it's a true emergency.

Make it easier on yourself: Take a BIG drink early in the day so your body starts out extra-hydrated. Leave as early as you can, so you make your "daily" miles, or most of em, before it gets too hot.

Consider taking a long break or siesta at mid-day. Consider stopping early, eating a light dinner, and then continuing on later (after 5-6) when it's cooled down

a bit. Consider doing some night-hiking.

Pay attention to others—if you meet up with Southbounders or maintainers, ask them about likely conditions ahead of you. Be aware that weekenders and day-trippers are notoriously unreliable about accurately passing on this sort of information. Never make a life-or-death decision or anything close to it based on what a weekender tells you. Maintainers and Ridgerunners, on the other hand, are VERY knowledgeable about their sections, so if they tell you something, it's probably reliable, and if they leave a warning sign, it'd be very foolish to ignore it.

Be helpful to others—leave water information in shelter registers to help Southbounders, who should do the same. Let folks know what they're likely to find ahead of them. In extreme cases, such as an important source being unexpectedly dry, or a pump not working, consider leaving a note on the Trail or Trailhead, especially when you discover that an expected source is dry. If you KNOW a source is dry, leave a note for the folks behind you, with date and time, so they can judge whether the situation may have changed by the time they get to your note.

There are places where kind local folks, true Trail angels, put out gallon jugs of water for thirsty hikers. If you are lucky enough to discover something like this, take what you need, but remember, take only what you need, and remember the folks behind you are thirsty, too. And also, there's usually a register left with the water. Make sure you thank these good folks and let em know how much their thoughtfulness meant to you—this is not only a nice thing to do, but it helps ensure they keep doing it, or they may encourage others to do likewise!

Be careful with fires—there will undoubtedly be places at great risk, or where fires are banned. Be aware of all regulations, obey them, and use extra diligence with campfires, while smoking, etc.

After a lengthy dry spell, don't let you guard down after a rainfall or thunderstorm—it takes a good while, and it takes a lot of precipitation for this stuff to get thru the ground and replenish springs, streams, ponds, so don't assume your troubles are completely over merely because you've seen some rain.

Be brutal with your attention to your pack weight during hot periods—don't get caught carrying extra food, clothing or gear that you don't absolutely need. At 2 pounds per quart, that extra water weight

will add up in a hurry. Be prepared to haul water this summer, and try to lighten your pack as much as possible in order to make up for the extra weight.

Check the ALDHA (www.aldha.org) and the ATC (www.atconf.org) websites periodically. On the ATC website, click on "Hike the Trail" from the main page for a new section with Trail Conditions and updates, with info on drought conditions.

WATER IN MD

As of Feb 18, AT hiker Pittsburgh reports a "good flowing stream at the trail crossing with MD route 491" that is not mentioned in the 2002 AT Data Book.

MOUNT ROGERS OUTFITTERS

The zip code for Mt. Rogers Outfitters (MRO) in Damascus, Virginia is incorrect. The correct zip code is 24236.

DARTMOUTH CO-OP CLOSED

While the Dartmouth Co-op Outfitters in Hanover has now closed, it appears very probable that a new sporting goods/outdoor store may be open in town by hiking season. Right now, the closest outfitter is the EMS in nearby West Lebanon, easily accessible from Hanover by free shuttle bus service.

THE ALABAMA TRAIL

Now under development, the 150-mile Alabama Trail provides the missing link in the ECT, connecting the Florida National Scenic Trail to the Pinhoti National Recreation Trail in Talladega National Forest. In Feb, the first 15 miles were blazed through the Conecuh National Forest. Learn more about the Alabama Trail at www.alabamatrail.org

FLORIDA TRAIL THRU-HIKER KITS AVAILABLE

Thanks to many inquiries by potential ECT hikers, the Florida Trail Association now offers thru-hiker kits for the Florida Trail. The Thru-Hikers Map Packet costs \$79.95 and includes all maps, hiking guide, and list of "trail angels" along the FT. The Complete Packet costs \$120.95 and includes the above plus an FTA membership (necessary for access to certain private lands) and the book "From Here to There on the Florida Trail." Contact the FTA Office at 1-800-343-1882 for more information.



www.aldha.org
your web resource!

The Ed Garvey Pavilion

From the time that PATC bought the Blackburn Trail Center in 1979 Ed Garvey was one of its biggest supporters and spent much time there. It was in fact, the last place on the trail that Ed visited when Dave Sherman drove him up there a few weeks before his death. It is for this reason especially that we are pleased to announce the completion of the Ed Garvey Memorial Pavilion, constructed to support hikers staying at the Blackburn Hiker Hostel.

As most know, after Ed's death PATC decided to build a new shelter in Maryland and name it The Ed Garvey Memorial Shelter. The Club's original plan was to build a two-story shelter together with a picnic pavilion and a pit privy. After the Maryland Management Committee, the committee that oversees management of the trail in Maryland, reviewed the plans PATC was informed that construction of the pavilion would not be allowed at the shelter site. While the Shelter itself is certainly a great memorial to Ed, many who knew him knew that he strongly supported having pavilions on shelter sites. He liked having that separate meeting area to commune with his fellow hikers and also appreciated a place where he could write his notes into the night, without bothering those hikers already asleep. In addition, as donations for a pavilion had already been collected, it was determined an alternative location should be found. The Blackburn Committee had been discussing for a while the need for a covered cooking area in front of the Hiker Hostel, so it was a simple decision to offer this site for the construction of the pavilion. After conferring with Sharon Garvey this site was accepted by both PATC and ATC.



A PATC member, Bobby Lowery of Round Hill VA, offered to head up the project. Bobby owns and operates a sawmill and milled all of the lumber required for the job. Just as we were planning the project we were approached by a Boy Scout troop from Annandale, VA who had two boys looking for Eagle Scout project. We decided that because of the amount of work we would divide the job into two parts, the first being the site preparation and the second construction of the pavilion. Then we put the boys to work!

Daniel Mai of Falls Church, VA undertook the site preparation work. It took him and his fellow Scouts three days to finish the work which, because of the steepness of the land, involved first building a retaining wall then moving and leveling a LOT of dirt and rocks. Once the area was level the boys had to dig holes for the four support posts in order to finish their part of the project.

Joe Bertini of Annandale, VA then took on the construction end of the job. This included setting the four large vertical posts, the horizontal supports, rafters, joists, gable ends and installing a metal roof. Two tons of gravel were moved in wheelbarrows and spread under the new roof. Joe's group also put in 3 days worth of work. All together both boys and their 30 crewmembers put in approximately 600 volunteer hours.

Bobby Lowery coordinated the job from start to finish and worked with both groups of Boy Scouts. Several other PATC members also worked on this project on different days. This winter we will build a new picnic table and when the warm weather arrives we will give the pavilion a protective coat of wood sealer. Sharon Garvey is making a sign along the lines of the one that she made for the shelter and we are planning a small dedication sometime in the early summer.



(Print neatly!) **2002-2003 Membership Registration Form** (Write **Same** if no changes)

Name(s) _____ Date _____ Current ALDHA member? Yes No

Address _____ City, State, Zip _____

Phone (with area code) _____ E-mail _____

Trail Name(s) _____ Home Page _____

Trails completed and the years they were hiked _____

Areas of expertise for the 2003 Directory _____

I owe for the current 2001-02 year, so enclosed is \$7 for my ALDHA dues (memberships expired in October)

I wish to pay now for the 2002 Gathering and dues for my 2002-03 membership in ALDHA, so here is \$17 (\$27 for couples)

I wish to become a life member of ALDHA; enclosed is \$150 for my perpetual dues. (Gathering fee of \$10 per person NOT included)

I wish to donate to the Appalachian Trail Museum; enclosed is _____ for that purpose.

Hostel Intentions

DARTMOUTH OPTIONS DROP

The Tabard fraternity house on the Dartmouth campus will NOT be taking in hikers as overnight guests this upcoming year. For many years, Tabard was famous as the best place to stay while in Hanover, as the kids who lived in the house during the summer bent over backwards to make hikers feel welcome. This is a great loss.

As of this writing, there are two other Dartmouth dorms that take in hikers, Panarchy and Alpha Theta. However, the loss of Tabard means that if a frat house takes in hikers, it will be incredibly congested and crowded, as there are going to be at least one-third fewer "bunks" available at the college for hikers; I expect that the houses that take in hikers will adopt VERY strict and stringent rules on the number of nightly guests, length of stay, etc.

One idea for folks who can't get into a frat house: If you follow the Trail north out of town, several minutes after leaving Main Street, you'll pass the Football stadium, high school, and Co-op Supermarket. Immediately after, the Trail turns sharply left, and goes along the edge of a soccer field before entering the woods. There ARE campsites in the woods here, less than a five minute walk to downtown. Hikers could stay here in the evening, and then backtrack back to town the next day to do their town stuff. Or, you could continue a bit further down the Trail to Velvet Rocks shelter, which also has campsites. However:

- Don't camp ON the soccer field as you'll be visible from the road, and may be visited by the police
- If you set up in the woods at the edge of the field, DO NOT leave your stuff unattended all day, as this area gets a good bit of foot traffic
- Velvet Rocks is frequently dry in mid to late summer; if you plan to stay there, you'd best bring water from town.

These changes will lead to a real hiker housing crunch in Hanover this summer, that may magnify if the other dorms either decide against taking in hiker guests, or drastically reduce their services. Hikers should be aware of this before getting to town, especially if they were planning a lengthy break here---you might have a real problem finding a bunk, as there's no inexpensive lodging right in town.

- Baltimore Jack

NEW WALASI-YI HOSTEL OPENS FOR SEASON

Walesi Yi hostel is open! We went to see it yesterday and it looked great, small and co-ed, clean showers etc. Of course there are still laundry facilities too. The first Thru Hiker who stayed there was named EasyHiker and he had never been on a mountain in his life, never hiked at all! He said there were three hikers ahead of him so far.

-Hummingbird & Dutch Treat

UPDATE ON BLUE BEAR B&B

The Blue Bear B&B (Smithville, MD) is very nice and accomodating to hikers. There are a few changes from the description in the ALDHA companion. The continental breakfast is actually a full breakfast. The single rates are \$50 for double bed and tub w/shower, and \$55 for whirlpool bath with separate shower. Double bed in each. Double occupancy has increased (book says \$65), but didn't get the price. You can use their laundry, tv, kitchen and phone. A ride back to the trail is included, plus, they were willing to run me wherever for supper (there are no businesses nearby), and come back and get me. They can no longer accomodate hikers tenting in their yard. they were never zoned for that sort of thing, and they got busted. Call them in advance if possible or be prepared to be turned away, they only have the two rooms.

-Pittsburgh (from the AT)

NEW HOSTEL OPENS IN ERWIN

Erwin's favorite trail angel has opened a "bunk & breakfast": Miss Janet's House. See the article on the Erwin Ruck for details.

phone: 423-743-1932

email: missjanetshouse@yahoo.com

www.geocities.com/missjanetshouse

BEAR'S DEN REOPENS WITH NEW CARETAKERS

Bear's Den has two new caretakers for the 2002 season: Dusty and Skipper, who thru-hiked the AT in 2001.



The Long Distance Hiker is published four times each year. To join ALDHA, send in a membership form plus \$7 (check or money order) payable to ALDHA, 10 Bennington St., PMB 224, West Lebanon, NH 03784.

Visit our website at www.aldha.org



Earl Shaffer and Bart Smith

128 pages, 142 photos

\$39.95

Westcliffe Publishers

From the publisher:

"Earl's narrative chronicles his 2,160 mile anniversary trip, while his charming and heartfelt poetry captures subtle sentiments inspired by his life experiences as well as his enduring love of the Appalachian Trail. Bart Smith's dramatic color photographs showcase the trail in all its wild glory and establish him as one of the country's most talented nature photographers."

News from John Shaffer, Earl's brother, is that Earl's new book, *The Appalachian Trail: Calling Me Back to the Hills*, is now available from Westcliffe Publishers. John is setting up a website <www.earlshaffer.com>, from which folks can order autographed copies. Says John "We have started a non profit organization called "The Earl Shaffer Foundation" to distribute autographed copies of his books and publish his other manuscripts and poetry. The profits from this venture will be awarded to various hiking and environmental projects according to Earl's wishes.

We expect to have both Earl and Bart Smith at Damascus Trail Days for a book signing, predicated on Earl's health."



NEWSLETTER DEADLINES

The deadlines for the next four newsletters are:

May 15, 2002

August 15, 2002

November 15, 2002

February 15, 2003

Please contribute!

PA Ruck 2002 By K7


Maybe January isn't the most popular month for hiking, but it sure is a popular month for hikers to get together. At least, that's the way it seemed when 130 hikers hit the Iron Master's Mansion Hostel in Pine Grove Furnace State Park near Carlisle, PA for yet another outstanding PaRuck. Starting around noon on Friday, Rucksters started showing up at the Mansion, heavy laden with food and gear and picture albums. Do you know how hard it is to hug a friend when you are both carrying a crock pot? But hugs abounded as old hiking friends got caught up and new cyber friends got a chance to put faces to the names they had come to know via the Internet hiking forums. All hands gathered for the Welcome Rucksters Pasta dinner, including Earl Shaffer, who surprised us with his prowess with the guitar and as always, with his Trail Tales. A special treat, Earl brought along the galleys of his new book. The after dinner entertainment continued with Simply Seeking's PCT slides, Skeeter's Colorado Trail slides and Weary's slides from his AT hike and wrapped up, late night, at the campfires in the campground.

Favored by this winter's warmer than usual weather, Rucksters split their Saturday between checking out each other's photo albums or gabbing indoors and checking out each other's gear or hiking outdoors. If you have never visited The Mansion, the AT passes directly in front of the hostel and lots of folks took advantage of the spectacular weather to hike. For a standing room only crowd, John O and Michael Connick proved that they do, indeed, own every piece of lightweight gear imaginable. As always, the PaRuck is a great place to check out the newest "alternative gear". Moonbow Gear displayed their ingenious pack system and the Hikelite stove was getting almost as much attention as the Hennessy Hammocks on display.

This year's PaRuck included some efforts to raise money for the Maine Rose Fund which benefits the Maine Appalachian Trail Club by selling excess gear, a soup lunch and by the generous donation, by Kurt Russell of Wanderlust Gear, of the newest Nomad tent for raffle. Special thanks to Jim and Ginny Owen for coming up with the gear sale idea, Springfever and Aloha Ann for sponsoring the Soup Sale as well as to Ready and Spur who served as Soup Nazis and made sure all those yogging hikers paid for their AYCE Soup Lunch. Rucksters kicked in big time and we raised a total of \$954.00 for MATC. A

really grand thank you to POG and crew who organized all the goodies for the Saturday Pot Luck supper. Can you believe they fed 130 people and cleaned up in 75 minutes? This is a big improvement over last year when rumors spread of people dying of starvation in the supper line. More slide shows followed the meal with the Owens' PCT and CDT thru hike slides making all the assembled dream of the western trails.

The one problem with this year's Ruck, other than the usual lack of sleep, was that no one could find the group campfire at "Site F", which seemed harder to locate than Area 57. Despite the wandering, folks did find campfires and singing, well into the night. The morning brought a Sunday surprise as the original Friar Tuck stopped in to check out a typical Ruck Tuckerization but few victims could be found. Maybe AT-L and Backpacking Light forums are doing too good a job of helping people pare their pack weight!! Someone said that Tucking a 30lb pack was sort of like kissing your sister.


With hugs and sad goodbyes, the weekend ended way too soon as hikers packed up and headed home with plans to meet on the Trail or at Traildays. Another great PaRuck in the middle of winter on the middle of the Appalachian Trail. 

Georgia Ruck By OrangeBug

The GA RUCK is the RUCK held in Georgia, now in its third year (2002). This is a gathering of hikers typically associated with AT-L, although others have attended via word of mouth and coincidence. The first GA RUCK in 2000 was brief and nearly rained out at the Lake Winfield Scott National Park near Suches. Activities included folks shivering, dodging rain drops, eating a big dinner and meeting one another. Crowd estimates were about a dozen. The 2001 GA RUCK was a bit more organized and held at Goose Creek Campgrounds between Neels Gap and Blairsville, GA. Even more attended with more food, fun and shared experiences of section and long distance hiking. It was scheduled the same weekend as the PA RUCK in hope of drawing some of the attendance and work down from the harried volunteers up north. The throng peaked in the 20's. The 2002 GA RUCK was held at Amicolola Falls State Park at the beginning of the access trail to Springer. It rained and was as dreary as the first GA RUCK, but relatively warm weather allowed a broad group of hikers as well as those who

stayed in cabins and the Lodge. Informal workshops developed including how to make pot cozys, alcohol stoves, use of hammocks, displays of tents and tarps and other skills were shared. Of course, food and companionship were the prime features of the event. There were population estimates of about half a hundred.

Current plans are to repeat the GA RUCK on MLK weekends at Amicolola Falls Park. Depending on the numbers interested, we may devote a cabin to courses and fellowship, much as the Mansion appears used in PA. Conference rooms are available at the Lodge, but hiking and sitting in rows of chairs doesn't seem that compatible to some RUCKsters. The ethic of the GA RUCK has been to share knowledge and fellowship in a decidedly Southern low stress and low organized fashion. Thus far the RUCK has been free of registration and other formalities, although this may change if a community space is needed. It is loosely organized by the usual suspects, who typically sit back in amazement that someone showed up and appeared to have fun! Controlled Anarchy appears to be the goal achieved to date. At this point, there are no plans for more formality or uncontrolled growth like a Trail Days or similar event.

For more information on the GA RUCK, follow the AT-L or email our President and Dictator For Life OrangeBug74@Yahoo.com. Complaints will result in assignment to the organizing committee as the new Supreme Leader. 

Erwin Ruck By Miss Janet

To celebrate Miss Janet's birthday AND to help her get her new Hiker Bunk & Breakfast in order, hikers descended on Erwin in mid-February for a weekend's worth of fun and camaraderie. It all started on Thursday Feb 15th with a Ryder truck full of mattresses and bed linens, courtesy of Flasher, Cowboy and Yurtman. On Friday, more folks joined in to work on the house and make it hiker-worthy. Says Miss Janet "after last minute design changes we went shopping for lumber to build the bunk beds and barely made it back in time for dinner at the famous Erwin Burrito. Mark and Beth really took care of all of us! At dinner were Miss Janet, Jessica, Autumn, Camo and Never Again, Flasher, Cowboy, Yurtman, Gnome, Lucky Dog, Slingblade, Cornbread and his lady, Papparazzi and Detour. After a wonderful meal we took

the short walking tour of Erwin back to the House. We spent several hours looking at pictures, sharing stories, laughing and talking. Lucky Dog of the infamous Thru Hicks of 2000, showed us the video he had made of his hike." Hopeful and Hefe' showed up as well.

On Saturday, the day started out early with a HUGE hiker breakfast ...Never Again and Gnome made great kitchen partners! Plodder and his son came by. As soon as they ate the "Contractors" set right to work on a dozen different projects at once! There were saws buzzing constantly, lumber flying all over the place, leaves piling up, dishes getting washed... It was exhausting! I have never seen so many people work so hard and so well together! By the time the day wound down I had the best bunk beds on the AT, new lighting fixtures, light switches that work, swinging doors that swing, a new WALL, a clean yard, an outdoor sink and much more...including memories I will cherish forever...it isn't everyday when Baltimore Jack asks a girl to be his Valentine! Surprise phone calls from friends like Honey and Bear and Best Wishes emails from dozens of hiker friends would make anyone tear up! After a big spaghetti dinner with all the

trimmings and a nice little merlot we settled down to watch The 13th Warrior. Later we got a surprise visit from DaRedhead just in time to sing Happy Birthday to me. I thought that cake with it's 29 candles looked awesome! Ok, so maybe a few candles fell off ... who's counting anyway! It was the best and you all are the best for being so supportive of what I am creating here. I look forward to seeing many more of you at Miss Janet's Birthday Ruck 2003!"



Gathering Critiques

The following are some of the many comments made by ALDHA members on their critiques of the 2001 Gathering:

"Bill O'Brien – you can never be thanked enough for the great job you did on the Gathering, so, again, THANK YOU!" (Linda)

"Why is the Gathering so cheap? I paid more for dinner than for the weekend. This should be the biggest money-maker for ALDHA. ALDHA should have more respect for itself." (Erie, PA)

"Separate the workshops into more hours so we can attend more of them e.g. – run later, run during meals, run during

business meeting." (Waltham, MA)

"Henry Edwards' IAT presentation gave us the incentive and desire to leave right away." (NH)

"Baltimore Jack's AT workshop was amazingly informative. No wonder, after 5 hikes!" (Brooklyn, NY)

"The opening night testimonials have been better and longer. Need to intersperse people you know are good with first-timers. Having 7 people for 2-3 minutes is better than having 3 people talk for 7 minutes." (Woodland Park, CO)

"Brian Robinson's Triple Crown presentation was this year's best! Truly inspirational. What a presence Brian makes as an individual!!" (Methuen, Ma)

"Warren Doyle' choice of poems was inappropriate for this beautiful gathering of people" (Salisbury, CT)

"Walkin' Jim's concert was one of the best experiences in my 65 years. It was just wonderful." (Lyndon, Ctr, VT)

"I packed my tent and went home, but came back because I was determined to not allow Doyle's political commentary ruin the weekend."

"Mike Henderson's AT slide show was so moving to watch. Almost cried several times. Most excellent!" (Philadelphia, PA)



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