

A JOURNEYS

THE MAGAZINE OF THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CONSERVANCY

November – December 2014



A Strategic Plan is More Than Words
Successful Partnership | Savvy A.T. Communities

A JOURNEYS

THE MAGAZINE OF THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CONSERVANCY

Volume 10, Number 6
November – December 2014

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The Appalachian Trail Conservancy's mission is to preserve and manage the Appalachian Trail — ensuring that its vast natural beauty and priceless cultural heritage can be shared and enjoyed today, tomorrow, and for centuries to come.

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Observations, conclusions, opinions, and product endorsements expressed in *A.T. Journeys* are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of members of the board or staff of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy.

Advertising

A.T. Journeys is published six times per year. Advertising revenues directly support the publication and production of the magazine, and help meet Appalachian Trail Conservancy objectives. For more information and advertising rates, visit: appalachiantrail.org/advertising.

A.T. Journeys is published on Sterling Matte paper that is manufactured by NewPage Corporation, responsibly sourced, using allocated chain-of-custody certified fiber. It is printed with SoySeal certified ink in the U.S.A. by Dartmouth Printing Company, Hanover, New Hampshire.



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For membership questions or to become a member, call (304) 535-6331, ext. 119, or e-mail membership@appalachiantrail.org.



On the Cover:

"I'd only planned on hiking 27 miles in three days, from Delaware Water Gap to Culver Gap," says cover photographer and 2013 thru-hiker Garrett "Shepherd" Fondoules. "But I discovered I was enjoying the hike too much, not minding the cold, and walked until midnight to reach High Point after only one day and two nights of hiking. The last stretch from Sunrise Mountain to High Point was very icy." (Worth the Weight, page 30)

A.T. Journeys (ISSN 1556-2751) is published bimonthly for \$15 a year by the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, 799 Washington Street, Harpers Ferry, WV 25425, (304) 535-6331. Bulk-rate postage paid at Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, and other offices.

Postmaster: Send change-of-address Form 3575 to *A.T. Journeys*, P.O. Box 807, Harpers Ferry, WV 25425.

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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR |

OUR FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN, WHICH WAS APPROVED BY THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL

Conservancy (ATC) Board in August, has as one of its five stated goals that "ATC advocates for broader protection of the natural and cultural resources within the A.T. corridor and adjacent landscapes." This goal is titled "Proactive Protection" and includes two outcomes, one of which is that "high priority threats to the natural and cultural resources along the A.T. and within the A.T. corridor and adjacent landscapes." are effectively mitigated or prevented."

This is not a new agenda for the ATC. Since the Trail was designated a National Scenic Trail in the 1968 National Trails System Act, and especially after Congress gave the federal government a clear mandate to permanently protect the A.T. corridor in 1978, the National Park Service, the U.S. Forest Service, Trail states and the ATC have confronted many different threats to the Trail's integrity and enjoyment.

When I thru-hiked the A.T. in 1978, adjacent land development was the big threat to the A.T. in places like central and northern Virginia, the Cumberland Valley in Pennsylvania, and around ski developments in northern New England. Long sections of the Trail were on public roads and the A.T. corridor was extremely narrow in much of the Mid-Atlantic region. Today we have almost the entire Trail in public ownership with a permanently protected corridor.

Yet we face many major threats to our Trail, which we are dealing with every day. The list is a familiar one: communications towers, high voltage transmission lines, wind turbines, wider highways, new petroleum pipelines, and commercial development. However, what is different today is the size and the number of these threats. Here are several current examples:

- A proposed \$1.5 billion casino resort development less than one-and-a-half miles from the A.T. near the Sterling Forest State Park in southern New York is proposed for approval by the state Gaming Commission and would include at least 1,000 rooms and more than 7,000 parking spaces.
- There are as many as 10 natural gas pipelines under consideration by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission that would cross the Trail between Pennsylvania and southern Virginia that would require rights-of-way up to 500 feet wide.
- The Department of Defense Missile Defense Agency is studying four potential sites for a massive new missile defense system. One of these is located near Rangeley, Maine on a Naval training base that includes a remote section of the A.T. visible from Saddleback Mountain and other prominent high elevation areas of the Trail.

The ATC, our volunteer clubs, and conservation partners are prepared to address these and other threats to the integrity and the enjoyment of the Appalachian Trail. We need your help. Through this magazine, our regional newsletters, and our mailings and electronic communications, we will keep you informed about these issues, and let you know what you can do to help us protect our Trail. We are fortunate that decision makers understand the importance of preserving the A.T. experience for future generations. ▲

Ronald J. Tipton | *Executive Director/CEO*

Follow Ron on Twitter at: twitter.com/Ron_Tipton

Night hike of the A.T. — Hump Mountain and the Milky Way, North Carolina/Tennessee border — by Garrett Fondoules

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photo by Ashley Bradford

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HEATHER LANEY’S ARTICLE, “My Beautiful Distraction” (September/October) was just absolutely superb — such a heartwarming and surprisingly personal story. First, I sincerely thank Tom for his service to our country (four deployments, no less!). And I thank Heather just as enthusiastically for her support of her husband under what has to be difficult circumstances (four deployments!). And I also thank Heather for sharing her writing talents with us. She very clearly described her deep emotions in a way so that we could all understand and appreciate her personal story. I am not a “weepee” person, but it brought very happy tears to my eyes. I wish all the very best for Heather and Tom.

Pat Russell
GAINESVILLE, VIRGINIA

SO BY NOW I HAVE READ A STACK of about two feet of A.T. books. Most are linear, Georgia to Maine or Maine to Georgia. I don’t care who the author is, I have enjoyed them all and much to my wife’s chagrin, I usually blow through them in about two nights. When I read the [story] of “Whirled Peas” thru-hike (“My Beautiful Distraction” September/October), I still had tears coming down my cheeks. My wife only watches movies and reads stories with happy endings. This one fits that description. I am happy for both Whirled Peas and her returning warrior, “Carrots.”

“JASH of the A.T.”
DELAWARE WATER GAP, PENNSYLVANIA

THE “DYNAMIC FELLOWSHIP” article (July/August) brought back fond memories as I grew up near Waynesboro, Pennsylvania — in Pen Mar to be exact. The A.T. crossed through Pen Mar about a mile from my home so I remember many times my father stopped to give a hiker a ride. He was an avid hiker and introduced me to overnight backpacking trips when I was six, with much of our hiking completed around Caledonia and Old Forge. I left home at 17 to join the Navy and have returned to Waynesboro only a few times as my family has moved away. My father passed away this past December but a memorial service was not able to be held

until April. After the service, I returned to Waynesboro and made a short hike in his honor from Old Forge Park to Chimney Rocks where I scattered part of his ashes. He loved every moment he spent hiking on the A.T. and now he will rest forever on the mountain he loved.

Michele (McFerren) Hancock
OKINAWA, JAPAN

DUE TO THE VOLUNTEER opportunities, I have been able to work on the Konnarock Trail Crew for the past three years. It is time I give back in another way, by giving monetary support. The experiences and lessons learned during the weeks working on the A.T. have given me such valuable knowledge and an advantage when working on my trail in Missouri — the Ozark Trail — as well as being able to pass along what I have learned to our Ozark Trail Association volunteers. I may never hike the A.T., but I love to be able to help continue to make it an epic trail.

Kathie Brenna
CAPE GIRARDEAU, MISSOURI

AFTER READING THE SEPTEMBER/October article “The Viewshed is Supreme” I respectively had to comment. I see two points that were missed to your readers: private property rights and government funding. The land owner of the condo complex (and any other landowner) has every right to do what he or she wants to do with their land as long as the landowner (and/or their land) does not physically harm another individual. I will be the first to admit that I hate to see a big ugly building while hiking on the A.T. but I also know that “views” are subjective and the building mentioned is not doing anyone any physical harm ... The A.T. has untold thousands of neighbors that touch or are near it. If you were a landowner, would you want to be told what you can and can’t do to your land? As the population increases and thus more individuals come in contact with the A.T., being a good neighbor is a better use of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy’s (ATC) time and resources to ensure that it survives, not the views from the A.T., which are subjective to begin with.

Grant Bryant
FLORENCE, KENTUCKY

Response from the ATC:

While we agree with our reader that it is not feasible to prevent any new development near the Trail that affects the A.T. viewshed, the ATC and its Trail maintaining clubs have a strong interest in preventing incompatible development such as the proposed casino complex in the Sterling Forest in southern New York, which would degrade natural and cultural resources and the Trail experience. We will focus our attention on the most serious threats, and we will look to identify opportunities to give greater protection to important landscapes and vistas along the Trail corridor.

FACEBOOK COMMENTS

Thanks for another great issue of A.T. Journeys! I love the online version and read it cover to cover as soon as it pops up in my email.”

Andy Zaayenga

I’ve only hiked briefly on the A.T. a couple of times and those were in Vermont and Maine. My favorite time was when I was solo hiking in Maine and unknowingly missed my turn for the trail system I was supposed to be on. Just when I began to get nervous that I did not really know where I was I saw an A.T. blaze (I can still picture that exact tree in my mind) and was able to figure out where the A.T. was on my maps. That day was made harder by the pouring rain but it was still a fantastic hike. I wish I was back there now, rain and bugs and all.

Olivia Tribble

A.T. Journeys welcomes your comments. The editors are committed to providing balanced and objective perspectives. Not all letters received may be published. Letters may be edited for clarity and length.

Please send them to:
E-mail: editor@appalachiantrail.org

Letters to the Editor
Appalachian Trail Conservancy
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WHEN WE TALK ABOUT THE COOPERATIVE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM WE usually refer to it as the three-legged stool. One leg represents our federal, state and local government partners; one leg is the Appalachian Trail Conservancy's (ATC) staff; and, one leg represents the volunteers. For the first two legs, we know them when we see them. That third leg though is as varied as the Trail itself; yet it is the heart and soul of the A.T. experience.

Within the volunteer moniker, Trail maintaining clubs and their overseers stand out. It is these 31 clubs that make sure the Trail is open and maintained. They build the shelters and paint the blazes and are the first line of defense against encroachments. All these roles are critical to the Trail. But there are other roles that people voluntarily take on that are just as critical even if their work does not lead to muddy boots.

There are the membership chairs that make sure that renewal notices are sent out on time and treasurers that ensure Trail clubs' incomes remain healthy. There are the IT professionals that spend their evenings and weekends working on club websites. There are the map makers and guide book writers. There are the folks that clean and store all the tools. And there are club chairs who, through their skills in "herding cats," somehow keep these varied and energetic volunteers all moving in the same direction.

All these people make up that third leg, which is needed to keep the stool standing. But these types of positions are some of the hardest to fill. I've been pondering this as the Appalachian Trail Conservancy prepares to put together its 2015-2017 slate of Board members. We have the same challenges as the clubs do in finding individuals willing to spend time in the meeting room instead of on the Trail. But without those types of volunteers we would not have

the structure necessary to carry out all of our responsibilities.

You will see a call for ATC Board candidates in this issue. We are looking for individuals who can commit their skill, time, and financial resources to supporting the organization. Experience in strategic nonprofit management, IT and financial systems, fundraising, and communications are all needed. In addition, as I shared with you before, we are committed to increasing diversity from the top down. Finding individuals who have experience in youth and diversity outreach is a key charge to the nominating committee.

In addition to thinking about potential ATC Board candidates I'd also like to take this opportunity to ask you to consider what roles you could take on at your local level. I know that the maintaining clubs are in great need of individuals willing to take on more leadership roles. Some will definitely be in the areas discussed above. They also need individuals willing to lead hikes and outdoor activities that help draw younger and more diverse audiences to their clubs. And for the dedicated Trail worker, most clubs need folks to plan projects and lead work crews. All that experience can then be passed on to new volunteers and we can continue to support this most valuable Trail for future generations. 🏔️

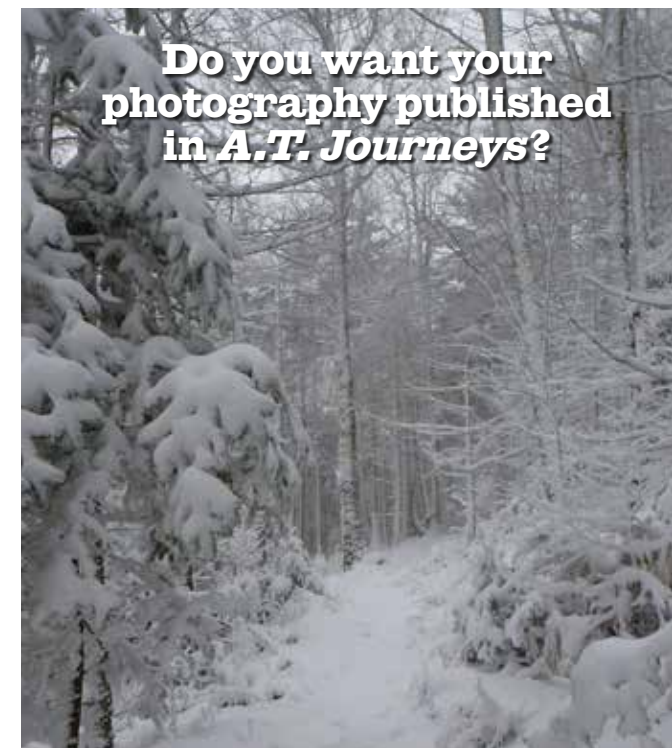
Sandra Marra | Chair

To find out more about the ATC's maintaining clubs visit: appalachiantrail.org/volunteer

The Georgia Appalachian Trail Club takes more than 1,500 students out on the A.T. and other trails each year through its Community Outreach Program. One of the most important goals of the program is for students to connect with nature, be comfortable with it, and value and care for it. Photo courtesy of the Georgia Appalachian Trail Club



Do you want your photography published in *A.T. Journeys*?



Send photos (2MB or larger) of hikers, shelters, campsites, and scenic shots from Maine to Georgia to: editor@appalachiantrail.org.


A.T. — VIRGINIA HIGHLANDS — BY EDWARD NEUWIRTH

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Annual Holiday



OPEN HOUSE Dec 6th

Celebrate the holiday season with the ATC! Enjoy homemade refreshments and meet with the ATC staff and volunteers. This event is also the perfect opportunity to shop for Appalachian Trail-themed merchandise for the hiker on your list.




MORE THAN WORDS

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF A FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

**HERE IS WHERE THE PLANNING
COMES, FOR A PLAYGROUND AND
A LIVING GROUND — WELL
EQUIPPED, WELL CARED FOR,
AND WELL USED.**

— Benton MacKaye

Since its conception, those who have worked on the planning and building of the Appalachian Trail have taken on the task undauntedly, with the energy, intellect, and drive of those who rise above the rest and dare to make their vision reality. And just as the complexity of constructing this unusual stretch of recreational land required a capacity to visualize and a strategy to constantly move forward, so does its current and future protection, maintenance, and promotion. The continued success of the A.T. depends on a thoughtful vision and strategy. ►



**THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL DERIVES
MUCH OF ITS STRENGTH AND APPEAL
FROM ITS UNINTERRUPTED AND
PRACTICALLY ENDLESS CHARACTER.
THIS IS AN ATTRIBUTE WHICH MUST BE
PRESERVED. I VIEW THE EXISTENCE OF
THIS PATHWAY AND THE OPPORTUNITY
TO TRAVEL IT, DAY AFTER DAY WITHOUT
INTERRUPTION, AS A DISTINCT ASPECT
OF OUR AMERICAN LIFE.**

— *Myron Avery*

To appreciate the importance of this plan you must see behind its words and understand the people, like yourselves, who care deeply for the Appalachian Trail, both on a personal level and on a serious professional level. The Five-Year Strategic Plan — beginning in 2015 and running through 2019 — took almost two years to create. The spark came when, in 2013, Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) Board chair Sandi Marra and her fellow board member Mary Higley decided that it was time to take a fresh look at the current needs of the A.T. — what did it need to remain relevant and flourish far into the future? For those two years, the ATC's senior staff — including executive director Ron Tipton, four regional directors, the director of conservation, and the directors of Finance, Membership and Development, and Marketing and Communications — carefully researched and drafted the new plan under Mary's direction.

The plan is based on the solid foundation of success the ATC has had for almost 90 years in helping to build the original A.T.; in improving the route, the treadway and overall maintenance; and in leading the critical effort to provide permanent protection to the Trail corridor. It is also the first Strategic Plan to be created and put into action since the Appalachian Trail Conference became the Appalachian Trail Conservancy in 2005. It is about building out toward success and a bright future so that all of the Trail's visitors can enjoy it at multiple levels — from short family outings to overnight trips to exploring the entire length of the A.T. The opportunity for an A.T. experience varies as much as the terrain of the Trail and is one that is accessible to many.

This plan also embraces important new initiatives, including protecting the landscape surrounding the Trail, involving more young and diverse people in hiking on the A.T. and becoming active Trail volunteers; and in strengthening and expanding the ATC's network of both governmental and non-governmental partners. And this is where the ATC's members and supporters are vital — they

Previous page: Eastern Pinnacles, New York with Cat Rocks in the distance; This page: hiking across the I-80 bridge, Pennsylvania/New Jersey — photos by Garrett Fondoules



Above: Blue Mountain, Pennsylvania; Right: A.T. near US Route 522 in Virginia — photos by Garrett Fondoules

are a huge part of this partnership through their desire to experience the Trail and support it as well — and they are from cities and towns across the U.S. and beyond.

To that end, it is critical that the ATC increases funding from major donors, foundations, and other private sources so that we have the resources to make significant progress during the next five years to achieve the goals of the plan. Increasing the ATC membership and contributions is vital; it is our goal to grow our annual budget significantly during the next several years.

Step outside and onto a section of the Trail and you will see that this new Strategic Plan is more than words — it is dedicated to all those who created the A.T. and the thousands of people who offer their physical, intellectual, and necessary monetary support to keep the Trail in its best state. It is this clear and concise message, and the plans and actions behind it, that will shape a very positive future for the Trail. And for the ATC. ⬆

For more information visit: appalachiantrail.org/strategicplan



I WANT TO SEE WHAT'S ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE HILL — THEN WHAT'S BEYOND THAT.

— Emma “Grandma” Gatewood

I TRAILHEAD I

Call for 2,000-MILER Applications



Nora "Unicoi Zoom" Curiel — by Patrick Cochrane

Section-hikers and thru-hikers who complete the A.T. are encouraged to report their journey to the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) by filling out an Appalachian Trail 2,000-miler application. Hikers who report their hike of the entire Trail will be added to the ATC's roster of 2,000-milers, have their names posted in the 2,000-miler list in the March/April issue of *A.T. Journeys*, and will receive a certificate of recognition and a 2,000-miler rocker and A.T. patch. Applications for the 2014 2,000-miler roster must be submitted by December 31, 2014.

To fill out an application visit:
appalachiantrail.org/ATcompletion

The ATC Recognized in 100 Best Places to Work in U.S.

THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CONSERVANCY (ATC) HAS BEEN SELECTED as one of *OUTSIDE* magazine's Best Places to Work 2014. Each year, *OUTSIDE* recognizes the top 100 companies in the United States that help their employees strike the ideal balance between work and play. These companies encourage employees to lead an active lifestyle, are eco-conscious, and prioritize giving back to the community.

"The Appalachian Trail Conservancy is full of enthusiastic and passionate individuals who work to maintain and protect the Appalachian Trail," says Javier Folgar, the ATC's director of marketing and communications. "This recognition is a huge honor to not only our staff, but also our supporters, partners, and volunteers."

For almost 90 years, the ATC has upheld the highest standards for the protection and management of the 2,180-mile-long A.T. to ensure that it can be shared and enjoyed well into the future. The organization accomplishes its mission through Trail management and support, conservation initiatives, and youth engagement, all while increasing its outreach to a diverse audience. The ATC works cooperatively with the federal government, 31 Trail maintaining clubs, and a volunteer force of more than 6,000 people.

To find the best places to work in the United States, *OUTSIDE* conducted a rigorous eight-month vetting process in partnership with the Best Companies Group to assess the policies, practices, and demographics of hundreds of companies, and went straight to the employees to hear about factors like role satisfaction, work environment, and overall employee engagement. The Best Places to Work list represents the cream of the crop: companies that cultivate a comfortable and collaborative workplace, enable their employees to enjoy the great outdoors, and take pride in their roles in the community and the environment.

"If you're considering a career change or searching for your dream job, *OUTSIDE*'s Best Places to Work list is the first place to look," said *OUTSIDE* executive editor Michael Roberts. "These companies set the standard for workplaces that really value their employees and offer an experience that's fulfilling inside and outside the office."

The complete list of Best Places to Work winners is featured at: outsideonline.com/dreamjobs

A.T. — ROAN MOUNTAIN — BY MIKE WILLIAMS

ATC Staff Members Receive Wilderness Legacy Award

THIS PAST SEPTEMBER, ROANOKE'S WEEKEND FOR WILDERNESS

was hosted by the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) and other partners in Roanoke, Virginia to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act. In 1964, the Wilderness Act ensured that America's wild places would be preserved for future generations. Roanoke, Virginia nestled among numerous federally designated Wilderness Areas, was the perfect setting to celebrate the great achievements of the Wilderness Act 50 years after it was signed into law.

At the center of the events, the Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club (RATC) and the Southern Appalachian Wilderness Stewards (SAWS) led a variety of excursions to explore and volunteer in some of the region's most beautiful wild places. The weekend concluded with a presentation by author and Roanoke native Dr. James Turner, and a presentation titled "Wilderness and the Myths of American Environmentalism," was held with an interactive panel discussion featuring Ron Tipton, executive director of the ATC; Tom Speaks, forest supervisor for the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests; and other national leaders in conservation. At the end of the evening, Tom Speaks and U.S. Forest Service (USFS) program manager Pete Irvine presented a U.S. Forest Service Wilderness Legacy Award to the ATC's Southwest and Central Virginia Regional Office staff: Josh Kloehn, Kathryn Herndon, and Andrew Downs, for their dedication and contributions to Wilderness Stewardship.

"They are very deserving of this award for being ever mindful of wilderness and wilderness stewardship in their daily work on the Appalachian National Scenic Trail," says Irvine. "Wilderness and the A.T. are intertwined in this area more than anywhere else along the length of the Trail." The awards are a nationwide effort of the USFS and the Job Corps program. The event was hosted in partnership with the Eagles Nest Outfitters, Walkabout Outfitters, Outdoor Trails, Parkway Brewery, Roanoke College, Taubman Theater, Roanoke City and County, the City of Salem, the Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club, the Natural Bridge Appalachian Trail Club, the Wilderness Society, the Southern Appalachian Wilderness Stewards, and the USFS.

Nominations Open for 2015 to 2017 ATC Board of Directors

NOMINATIONS ARE NOW OPEN FOR THE POSITIONS OF FOUR OFFICERS and 11 directors who would serve as the Appalachian Trail Conservancy's (ATC) governing body until July 2017 after elections by members attending the July 2015 Biennial Conference at Meeting in Winchester, Virginia.

A diverse range of skills and experiences suitable for national nonprofit governance is being sought among nominees, and the ATC's members are invited to engage in the process. Desirable qualifications include a passion for the A.T. and commitment to its partnership network, as well as various skill sets. The board, representing all of the ATC members, focuses on strategic directions for the ATC, financial stability, and operations in a broad sense. All nominations should include both the nominee's and the nominator's name, address, telephone number, and e-mail address, with a description of the person's relevant experience, skills, and attributes. Additional materials, such as a résumé, are welcome. The committee's slate will be announced in *A.T. Journeys* in May.

Nominations should be sent by December 15, 2015 to: Boardrecommendations@appalachiantrail.org or by mail to Bob Almand, Nominating Committee, Appalachian Trail Conservancy, P.O. Box 807, Harpers Ferry, WV 25425

For more information visit:
appalachiantrail.org/Leadership and
appalachiantrail.org/bodnoms2015

RECORD NUMBER of Alternative Thru-Hikers



Alternative thru-hiker Eric "Wordly" Thomas

A record number of trailblazing thru-hikers this year have chosen an itinerary other than the better-known northbound or southbound-all-the-way variation. Some chose a start point somewhere in the middle of the Trail to avoid the crowds in Georgia. Some started in the middle because a college semester or job ended too late for them to start in Georgia, but they didn't want to wait until June to hike south from Katahdin, only to get their "Trail legs" in the exceptionally rugged terrain of Maine during the peak of black fly season. Quite a few started out in Georgia with the intention of hiking northbound, but found themselves behind schedule or tired of the crowds and decided to jump ahead, returning to the skipped section at the end of their hikes. A few have designed itineraries that are being tried for the first time. So far, 111 thru-hikers have been photographed at the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) Visitor Center and headquarters in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia this year in the "alternative-itinerary" category. This is the first time triple digits have been recorded in one year.

The ATC seeks to highlight and encourage these trailblazers who "hike their own hike," especially those who intentionally plan their itineraries so they do not add to the crowded conditions on the southern end of the Trail in March and April.

For more information and suggestions about alternative thru-hikes visit:
appalachiantrail.org/thru-start

Stand by Me



The Cooperative Agreement between the Appalachian Trail Conservancy and the National Park Service affirms one of the most successful public-private partnerships in the nation.



WITH VERY LITTLE FANFARE, THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CONSERVANCY

and the National Park Service recently renewed a very significant agreement, our Cooperative Agreement. There should have been a party to celebrate 30 years of an ever-evolving cooperative relationship — one that former A.T. superintendent Pam Underhill would describe as a “marriage.”

And so it is with longtime relationships. Ours began in 1984, when the National Park Service (NPS) entered into an unprecedented agreement, delegating most responsibilities for management of NPS lands along the Trail to the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC). This cooperative agreement serves as the cornerstone of the decentralized, volunteer-based management approach. “The Cooperative Agreement between the Appalachian Trail Conservancy and the National Park Service affirms one of the most successful public-private partnerships in the nation,” explains Don Owen, former NPS Appalachian Trail staff and current ATC Stewardship Council member. “The agreement provides the basis for a unique partnership that has existed since the first Appalachian Trail Conference was held in 1925. The tenets of the Cooperative Agreement are relatively simple: the Appalachian Trail Conservancy coordinates the maintenance and management efforts of 31 Trail clubs and thousands of volunteers and serves as the ‘guarantor’ of their work to the National Park Service; and the National Park Service fulfills the basic governmental functions of Trail management that cannot be delegated: land ownership, survey, law enforcement, and compliance with federal laws, regulations, and policies.”

In 1984, a government solicitor noted: “We are unaware of any other unit of the national park system that has such a broad statement of authority ...to transfer operation, development, or maintenance of an NPS area to nonfederal control.” That delegation stemmed from 1968 National Trails System Act provisions, sought by volunteer leaders who at the time recognized that the government was best positioned to support the necessary land acquisition for the Trail, but the longstanding volunteers who built the Trail were best positioned to continue to manage it. Indeed, a marriage made not quite in heaven (rather in Washington D.C.) and an amazing example of what an engaged citizenry can accomplish.

The philosophy of our relationship was articulated

in a Memorandum of Understanding that accompanied the Cooperative Agreement — basically an outline of the values we hold and the approach we will take to ensure a strong relationship. Our vows, if you will, and a few ground rules. We will honor and respect the complexity of a cooperative management system with all its strengths and flaws. We will strive to communicate effectively. And above all else, we will appreciate the critical role of volunteers, without whom there would be no Trail.

Off we went in many ways down a path of the unknown, leaders for what will become a growing network of National Scenic and Historic Trails. In fact, as many past articles in this magazine have showcased, the unique cooperative management system of

BY LAURA BELLEVILLE / ILLUSTRATIONS BY KATIE EBERTS



the Appalachian National Scenic Trail is a model that trails around the world have admired and emulated. However, it is a challenge to point to a trail partnership as wedded as the A.T. Park Office and the ATC.

Every ten years since 1984, the ATC and NPS have renewed our Cooperative Agreement. Theoretically, this agreement is the mechanism by which the Park Service transfers funds to the ATC to support programs and projects that improve Trail conditions and ensure protection of a significant public investment. NPS provides funding primarily to support Trail rehabilitation and construction, corridor monitoring and management work, volunteer training, natural resource management, and education and outreach programs. In recent years, NPS has transferred approximately \$1 to \$1.5 million each year to the ATC. These funds are matched by additional private dollars that also support Trail projects, as well as the ATC's lands management and advocacy. The ATC's annual conservation department budget is roughly \$3 million. While having a funding mechanism is essential, staff members of both NPS and the ATC have always viewed the agreement as more than a means to fund projects. We rely on the guidance it provides to ensure continued clarity about what we collectively promise to work on.

The most recent renewal continues to be comprehensive in defining the roles and responsibilities of each partner. Staff at the A.T. Park Office and the ATC worked to ensure that the agreement also embodies our management philosophy. Most notable for this recent renewal is the movement away from the word "delegation," and more emphasis on language that reflects collaboration in program development and implementation. Many felt that the word delegation implied that there was not regular collaboration on a number of management decisions. There has always been significant collaboration and we felt it was time to move away from language that does not reflect the true nature of our day-to-day work. This new agreement merged the earlier Memorandum of Understanding with new language in the 2014 Cooperative Agreement. The merged language highlights the historical context of the long-standing relationship between the ATC and the Park Service. As the ATC's executive director, Ron Tipton points out: "The recent 10-year Cooperative Agreement signed this year by the ATC and the Park Service builds upon an extraordinarily successful partnership for Trail management and protection between the NPS, the U.S. Forest Service and state agencies, the ATC, and the 31 affiliated Trail maintaining clubs. There is no better example in this country of collaboration among government agencies and non-profit organizations."

The cooperative management relationship between the ATC and NPS A.T. Park Office is certainly mature. "The Cooperative

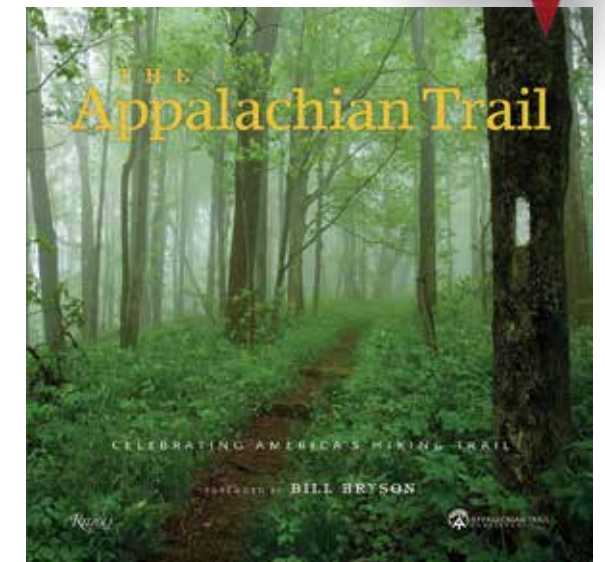
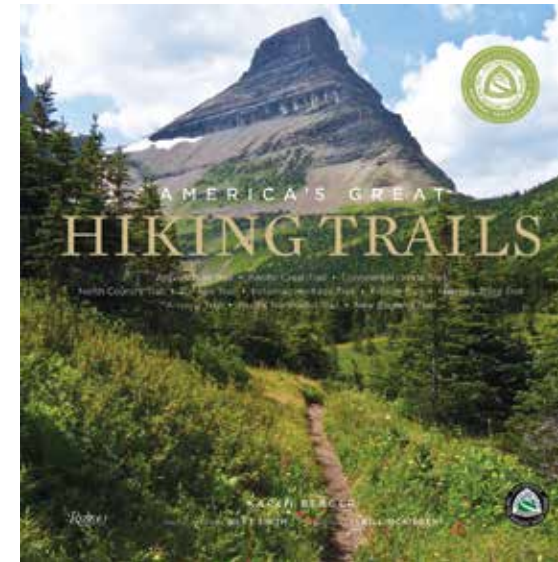
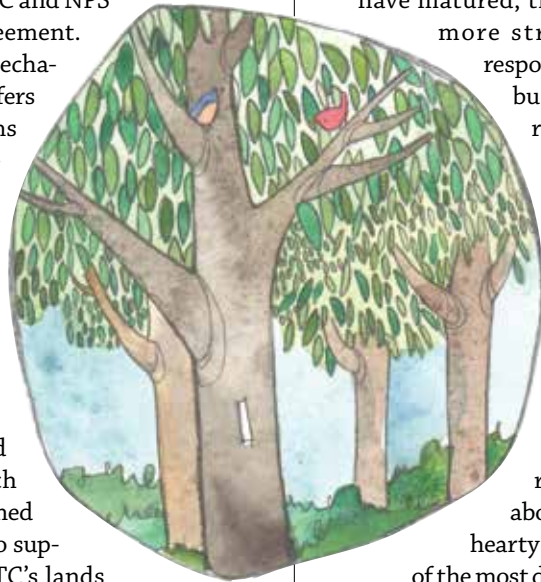
Agreement between the ATC and the NPS has evolved through the eras of construction, protection, and now management," says Rita Hennessy, assistant A.T. Park Office superintendent and primary author of the new agreement. "Just as the organizations have matured, the partnership itself has become much more strategic in leveraging our roles and responsibilities to protect and promote the A.T., building its relevancy as a premier national resource. Renewing this agreement in the midst of development of the NPS Foundation Document and the ATC's Strategic Plan lays the groundwork for our collaborative visions of the Trail for the next five to ten years."

We've stood the test of time some would say. Staff, and specifically leadership, has changed but the essence of effective Trail management remains the same. "Old timers" in each office will reflect on good times and bad. Reminiscing about the land acquisition days often elicits a hearty laugh, even if the projects presented some of the most difficult challenges. But the dedicated staff, volunteers, and agency partners stuck together and today the e-mails and Facebook messages come in highlighting praise for the A.T. in places like the Cumberland Valley and other areas where we thought a permanent Trail corridor might not be attainable. Other challenges over the years are more systemic, as national leadership shifts agency priorities; or there are pains of a non-profit organization as it grows from a very small staff twenty years ago to fifty strong today.

ABOVE ALL ELSE, WE WILL APPRECIATE THE CRITICAL ROLE OF VOLUNTEERS, WITHOUT WHOM THERE WOULD BE NO TRAIL.

A 30-year anniversary — who said it couldn't work? We've come so far in developing the Appalachian National Scenic Trail through both structured agreements, policies and, well, a good dose of passion. Those who have been around long enough, and there are plenty, might be wondering about the next 20 years. It's good to know that when times get tough we do have the guidance of thoughtful agreements. These important documents, along with highly dedicated leaders, both professional and volunteer, are legacies that sustain the cooperative management system. 🏡

Laura Belleville is the ATC's director of conservation.



A Holiday Special for ATC Members...

Just published in September, *America's Great Hiking Trails* begins, of course, with the Appalachian Trail as it presents 336 pages of images of all the national scenic trails by Bart Smith, who has hiked all 11. The background text is supplied by longtime trails author and Triple Crown Karen Berger. It's an ideal coffee table companion to *The Appalachian Trail: Celebrating America's Hiking Trail*, co-published two years ago by The Appalachian Trail Conservancy and Rizzoli International.

For a limited time — from November 26 through December 5 — ATC members can get both books as a set for \$75 (25% off the retail price). Just ask for "GFT-2" if calling by phone or find this special in the "Exploring the A.T." section of the Ultimate A.T. Store.

America's Great Hiking Trails is just one of more than a dozen new gift possibilities at the Ultimate A.T. Store — just take a look through the catalogue you just received or peruse online. And, of course, the 2015 editions of the *Appalachian Trail Data Book* and the *Appalachian Trail Thru-Hikers' Companion* will be on the shelves by mid-December.

atctrailstore.org
or call toll-free: (888) 287.8673



Visit: atctrailstore.org call toll-free 888-287-8673 weekdays between 9 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. EST

Millennial ZEAL

COMPILED BY STEPHANIE D’ULISSE

When interns are treated like team members instead of coffee-fetchers, when they are respected, coached, and motivated by their superiors, amazing things happen. Interns who feel valued set a higher standard for young adults. The 2014 summer interns at the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) developed and executed a wide array of projects to better the ATC and the Appalachian Trail. Meet the group that turns the lazy millennial stereotype on its head.

From left: Vincent Juarez, Stephanie D’Ulisse, ATC’s full time graphic designer John Csordas, Jessica Williams, ATC’s full time marketing assistant Anne Baker, ATC’s director of marketing Javier Folgar, and Kelly Perkins



Vincent Juarez, a graphic design intern from Shenandoah Junction, West Virginia, is majoring in Communication and New Media and minoring in Graphic Design at Shepherd University.

■ **Typical ATC Work Day:** Assisting the ATC’s graphic designer John Csordas in creating all the graphic work — everything from the website to printed materials to license plates. Our days consisted of brainstorming, lots of graphic work followed by lots of editing before our work goes live.

■ **Favorite part about interning with the ATC:** “The environment is the best; everyone, from the staff to the hikers, are so cool and they made coming in everyday fun and interesting — also doing work I love and I actually getting to see it produced.”

■ **Proudest accomplishment:** “Probably seeing my six-foot fund-tracking banner in real life after it came back from the printer.”

■ **How would you explain the A.T. to someone who has never heard of it?** “As a getaway from the stresses of life and a chance to see the natural beauty of America that I guarantee will change their lives.”

Brian “Mister Frodo” Livingston, a land resources intern from Marietta, Georgia, graduated from Clemson University with a degree in History, and is in his first year of law school at Washington and Lee School of Law.



■ **Typical ATC Work Day:** One day a week scanning old documents related to the ATC’s countless conservation easements; [then I] labeled them and marked their existence in a spreadsheet.

■ **Why did you want to intern at the ATC?** “I thru-hiked last year and wanted to continue to stay involved with the A.T. I also needed to balance out the karma after all the generosity I received during the hike.”

■ **Biggest takeaway:** “How much I took for granted while I was hiking the Trail ... there is a tremendous amount of work that goes into protecting the A.T., which largely goes unnoticed by the hikers. I would have never thought about all the office and field work required just to protect the views and sight lines.”

Amy McMinn, an economic development intern from Asheville, North Carolina, graduated from Guilford College with a double major in History and Political Science and a minor in Education Studies. She is currently earning a M.A. in Political Science with a concentration on European Studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, supplemented by classes at Charles University in Prague.



■ **Typical ATC Work Day:** “It is difficult to generalize. [Among other projects,] we worked to engage local communities to utilize the Trail and to live more active, healthy lifestyles. I also worked on a grant to promote tourism in Virginia by adding 11 A.T. Communities to a mobile app.”

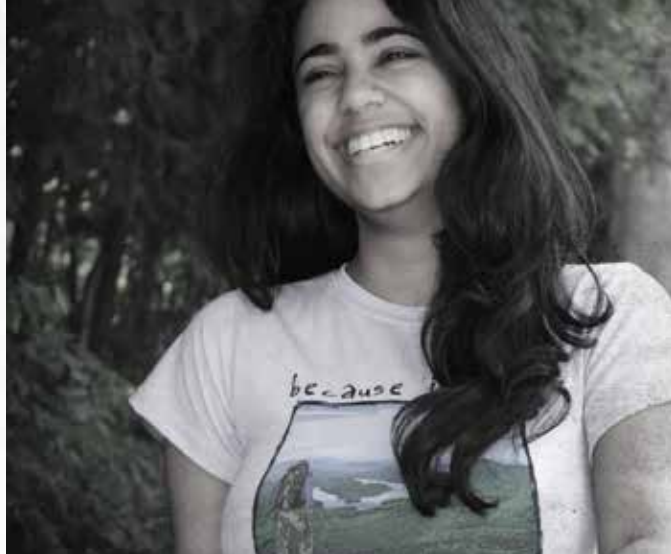
■ **Biggest takeaway:** “The importance of balancing the wants and needs of both the city officials and the actual citizens. I have found it really interesting to see how the local politics work in such a small town, and to meet so many of the local people. I think the ATC is a great resource to help balance some of these relationships, especially within Damascus — [where I was based].”

Jessica Williams, a public relations intern, was born in Namibia and raised in Nigeria and Pretoria, South Africa, now lives in the Eastern panhandle of West Virginia. She is an English major with minors in Education, Psychology, and Sustainability Studies at Davis and Elkins College.

■ **Typical ATC Work Day:** “Helping to draft press releases, update the thousands of names and numbers in the media contacts lists, and brainstorming various ways to liven up and improve old media kits and hiking descriptions.”

■ **Biggest takeaway:** “Honestly, I’ve learned more about myself and what I am capable of; and I’ve figured out that I need to work in conservation and environmental studies or else I’ll go nuts. I’ve learned so many things about educating the public about our beautiful world and its wildlife — a field I want to pursue.”

■ **Unique Contribution to the ATC:** “I think its 20-year-old zeal. I’m enthusiastic to promote such a beautiful Trail, amazing community, and outstanding organization.”



Sri Vidya Bulusu, a market research intern from Hyderabad, India is currently earning a M.A. in Engineering Management at Duke University.

■ **Typical ATC Work Day:** “Preliminary research for the ATC to help work towards one of their goals in their Five-Year Strategic Plan — days included but were not limited to: phone-interviewing people, online research, typing up reports, coming up with strategies, and gaining some hands-on experience on the Trail.”

■ **How did your internship at the ATC differ from prior work experiences?** “It was the difference between working in the corporate sector, and the non-profit sector. At the ATC the organizational structure is more transparent and the employees, no matter what position they hold, are willing to help you out and invite you to ask questions. You can understand the clear distinction between working for something you care about, and working for a paycheck.”

Kelly Perkins, a database developer from Boone, North Carolina, graduated from Appalachian State University as a Statistics major and Sustainable Development minor.

■ **Typical ATC Work Day:** “Check e-mail, ask the ATC’s direct mail/data base manager Mark Saari for project work concerning the donor database, complete that work, eat lunch, ask Mark for more work, repeat until 5 p.m., then head home. It was a lot more exciting than it sounds.”

■ **Biggest takeaway:** “I’ve learned that everyone has a story and you just have to be patient enough to let them tell it. Working for a relatively small nonprofit like the ATC you feel like you matter personally.”

■ **How would explain the A.T. to someone who has never heard of it?** “The mountains don’t care who you are because they were here first and will be still standing when humans are gone. You step into unfamiliar territory when you hike, away from technology and all the amenities humans have become accustomed to. It’s a great feeling to come out of the woods and realize it is indeed possible to survive an hour, afternoon, or day without the internet.”

Stephanie D’Ulisse, a marketing assistant intern from Byram, New Jersey, is a senior at Syracuse University earning a B.S. in Public Relations with a minor in Art History.

■ **Typical ATC Work Day:** “Handling the ATC’s social media efforts, including Facebook, Twitter, and Google+. Aside from posting about news and events, I started a campaign called “Humans of the A.T.,” which has been a huge success. I also spent plenty of time researching venues up and down the country for the ATC’s 2014 membership drive.”

■ **Biggest takeaway:** “The people and the atmosphere — I am blown away by the passion that the staff has for the A.T. I’ve never met such a large group of genuine, kind, well-meaning people.”

Olivia Divish, an events intern from Manhattan, Kansas, Kansas State University, is a senior majoring in Hotel and Restaurant Management and Event Planning.



Typical ATC Work Day: “Planning the ATC’s various 2014 educational summer events, [days could include] tasks for three separate events at a time — making schedules for the events, designing room layouts, decorating, talking to vendors and volunteers, and doing crafts.”

Chad Capobianco, an economic development intern in Damascus, Virginia from Athens, Georgia is a Business Administration major and Criminal Justice minor at Mars Hill University.

■ **Typical ATC Work Day:** “The two main projects that I worked on during a typical day included the Community Pathway Project, and the Healthy Living Initiative. For the most part, I developed marketing material for each project. I would say that most of the work was community-oriented — focusing on getting younger kids and families out on the Appalachian Trail.”

■ **Best part about the internship:** “The best part about being in Damascus was being able to walk to work. I love being in the mountains, and working with the local Trail clubs to help maintain the A.T.” ⚡

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A.T. Southbounders by Brian Gonyar

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View from Schaghticoke Mountain, Connecticut — by Michael Adamovic

A.T. Journeys is the official magazine of the A.T. and the membership magazine of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy — a national not-for-profit corporation with more than 43,000 members from all 50 U.S. states and more than 15 other countries. Our readers are adventurous, eco-friendly outdoor enthusiasts who understand the value in the protection and maintenance of the Trail and its surrounding communities.

For more information about advertising opportunities visit: appalachiantrail.org/ATJadvertising

BRiCK BY BRiCK

BY
JULIE
JUDKINS

DAMASCUS, VIRGINIA BECAME A DESIGNATED Appalachian Trail Community in 2011, but this community has been supporting and fostering a unique Trail experience since the completion of the A.T. in 1937. Also known as “Trail Town, USA,” Damascus proudly hosts one of the largest hiking festivals in the country. This multi-day festival, “Trail Days,” attracts approximately 4,000 hikers and about 20,000 other visitors to Damascus each year. The community caters to its visitors with special events including hiker workshops, hiker services, food, gear vendors, and tons of entertainment.

In an attempt to further protect and promote the Trail, The Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC), in cooperation with the A.T. Community of Damascus, has launched the Community Pathway Project. This special project enables

of Damascus, the ATC, and the Mount Rogers Appalachian Trail Club (MRATC).

The project was developed by Brady Adcock, serving as the U.S. Department of Interior Volunteer in Service to America (DOI/VISTA) in Damascus. He began working in with the Appalachian Trail Community program in March, with goals of promoting economic growth through outdoor recreation, and building capacity in local Trail clubs. “This exciting opportunity is designed to highlight the Appalachian Trail as a resource and asset in the community while providing direct support to the partners, including the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, that protect and promote this famous and well-used stretch of Trail,” says Adcock, who will serve as the project manager.

This new sidewalk will continue to demonstrate the beautiful relationship between A.T. users and the town of Damascus. The historic A.T. logo will mark the path with proportionally spaced arrays (brick mosaic) and will remind visitors that they are treading on the premier footpath that runs from Maine to Georgia. One block of the proposed route hosts the Damascus Friendship Path, discontinued in 2003. This section of the walkway will remain as the historic arts section. Created by the local artist, Nancy Lamb, these bricks will be realigned to their original position for long-term sustainability and to meet ADA requirements. Several A.T. arrays will be added to this historic section to incorporate the design and ease the transition.

Phase one of the Community Pathway Project will only offer 2,180 engraved bricks, a number that equals the approximate distance of the Trail. A minimum donation of \$100 will provide donors with the opportunity to leave their mark of support, and \$1,000 premium sponsorships with a custom logo are also available. Orders will be accepted through the year or until the limit of 2,180 is reached. All proceeds from the brick donation program are tax deductible through the ATC.

With projects ranging from economic development in Damascus, to maintenance and conservation projects in the

THE HISTORIC A.T. LOGO WILL MARK THE PATH AND WILL REMIND VISITORS THAT THEY ARE TREADING ON THE PREMIER FOOTPATH THAT RUNS FROM MAINE TO GEORGIA.

individuals to purchase engraved bricks that will repave the sidewalks along the Appalachian Trail’s route through downtown Damascus. “The sidewalks have fallen into disrepair over the years,” says Damascus’ Mayor, Jack McCrady. “The town is excited to be getting a beautiful *new* sidewalk.” In May, the town council unanimously approved the Community Pathway Project, confirming that the project would frame their downtown section of Trail as a community resource and asset. In addition, all the funds raised will benefit organizations who dedicate time and resources to promote, protect, and improve the A.T., including the town



Clockwise from above: Entering Damascus; Hikers and town members enjoy the annual Damascus Trail Days parade – photo by Dan Innamorato; An official A.T. white blaze marks the Trail where it runs through Damascus; A demo image of the projected new sidewalk

surrounding 60-mile A.T. corridor, the Community Pathway Project’s impact will be profound. Everyone is invited to buy a brick, for yourself, someone else, to commemorate special occasions, or to honor and remember someone. With the holiday season approaching, this could be the perfect way to give a gift that supports our Appalachian Trail Communities. You can help us build a stronger A.T. Community brick by brick. 🏡

For more information or to place an order visit: appalachiantrail.org/pathway

ViRTUAL iNSPiRATiON

Unicoi County's Virtual Walk initiative is a shining example of the kinds of partnerships and outcomes the A.T. Community program strives for.

BY BRENT SHARP

COMMUNITY MEMBERS LIVING IN UNICOI COUNTY, Tennessee are fortunate to be surrounded by so much scenic beauty. More than half the county is protected by public lands from the Cherokee National Forest, providing an abundance of outdoor recreation opportunities in our local area. And while most of our community members have heard of the Appalachian Trail, many of our county residents have not actually taken the time to enjoy our pristine trails. Due to our close proximity to the A.T. and the interest to encourage our friends and neighbors to enjoy the beautiful outdoors and to lead more active lifestyles, Unicoi County's University of Tennessee Extension office teamed up with our local YMCA and the Clinchfield Senior Center to bring "Appalachian Trail Virtual Walk" to our community.

Appalachian Trail Virtual Walk is an eight-week-long walking program in which teams of eight people get together to have a friendly competition to see which team could log the most miles walking. Team members did not have to walk together and did not actually have to walk along the Appalachian Trail. Their miles were tracked along maps of the A.T. with each team beginning in Georgia and walking north toward Maine, and passing through Unicoi County along the way.

Though the team members were not required to walk along the A.T., a goal of the program is to highlight and encourage hiking of the five major Trail sections that pass through our county to the teams and partner organizations. This is an extension of numerous projects that have been designed to promote Unicoi County as an official Appalachian Trail Community and its natural beauty to visitors and neighbors. By using maps of the Appalachian Trail for the competition in conjunction with special brochures designed by the Unicoi County 4-H GPS Team, we hope that individuals will be encouraged to continue walking when the competition concludes and that they will be delighted to actually hike along our local trails. This special brochure contains useful information about the local section of the Trail that runs through Unicoi County. The brochure includes a cutout of our A.T. map, driving directions to the trailheads, and basic descriptions of each of the five local Trail sections. The Trail descriptions

include distance, recommended direction for a day hike, difficulty, scenic features, elevation range, and highlights of each section.

The results of the program have been very encouraging so far — with 17 teams actively participating. The combined mileage was well over 16,000 miles. Nine of the teams got past Maryland, six made it into Pennsylvania, and three travelled past New York. The first place team logged an impressive 2,003 miles. With that much mileage, they walked all the way up to Monson, Maine, nearly completing the entire Appalachian Trail. Due to some generous donations from businesses in our local area, we were able to give out prizes at a closing ceremony to the winning teams. The "losing" teams, however, still took home a winning habit — walking for fitness.

Unicoi County's Virtual Walk initiative is a shining example of the kinds of partnerships and outcomes the A.T. Community program strives for," says the Appalachian Trail Conservancy's community program manager Julie Judkins. "Finding ways to celebrate the Trail, encourage physical activity, and build fun ways for people of all ages to experience the A.T. are all win-win outcomes for the Trail, its future hikers, and the communities that protect it. We hope that Unicoi County's example will be modeled up and down the Trail."

We have been pleased so far with the results of the first year of the Appalachian Trail Virtual Walk. The friendly competition has motivated many people in our community to walk and enjoy being outside. We feel very strongly that many of our fellow community members will be encouraged to walk along the Appalachian Trail. And we hope that this inspires other communities along the Trail to connect with health and fitness organizations and other partners to create programs for healthy living. We are proud of our community's efforts to get fit while taking in the scenic beauty along the Appalachian Trail. ⬆

An A.T. map is used to track the progress of participants (who often created virtual Trail names for themselves) in the Virtual Walk program — photo by Ty Petty

Brent Sharp is the 4-H program assistant of Agriculture and 4-H Extension at the University of Tennessee Extension — Unicoi County.

THE RESULTS HAVE BEEN VERY ENCOURAGING SO FAR ... THE COMBINED MILEAGE OF THE RECENT COMMUNITY WALK WAS WELL OVER 16,000 MILES.



worth the weight

"Walking 2,000 miles is hardly an ordinary experience, though my own experience on the Appalachian Trail was perhaps stranger than many," explains Garrett "Shepherd" Fondoules. During his 2013 thru-hike, Garrett became interested in contra dancing events and made many side trips to catch as many as he could along the Trail. Through all of this, he carried very heavy camera equipment in his backpack. "To keep up with my fellow hikers, in spite of my 'extracurricular' activities, I often hiked long days and well into the night," he says. "Once I walked the last miles of my thru-hike, I kept going — I kept section hiking for another thousand miles. Ultimately it was worth the weight and helped me capture difficult photos, whether I was seeking great detail, trying to see in the dark, or looking for anything in between. I hope to show people some of my adventure, so that they may find inspiration to pursue adventures of their own."



Night mist, Lehigh Gap, Pennsylvania



INHERENT DEVOTION

Bill near his home in Washington Crossing, Pennsylvania — photo by historian and author Peter Osborne

LIKE SO MANY A.T. ENTHUSIASTS AND supporters, William (Bill) Farkas has had hiking the A.T. on his bucket list since he discovered the book *Appalachian Trail* by Ronald Fisher in a collection of items he inherited from his grandmother. And while he enjoys being outside as much as possible, his age and health keep him from being able to walk or hike very much these days. So despite the fact that he has never set foot on the Appalachian Trail, Bill has been a member of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy

(ATC) since 1990. His support and generosity for the ATC was epitomized in 2001 when he informed us that he we had been included in his estate plans — and it did not stop there. Bill also became an ATC Life Member in 2004; and in 2013 he joined the Leadership Circle of Annual Fund donors.

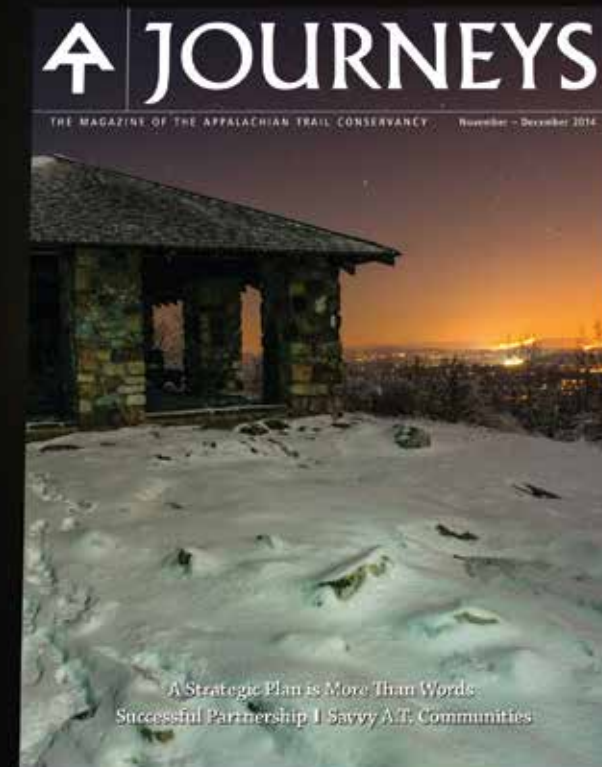
Bill spent his entire career as an accountant for U.S. Steel after a stint in the Army. One of his professional relocations was to Hudson, New York where new friends invited him to the Berkshires

and he fell in love with Monument Mountain in Great Barrington, Massachusetts. When asked what the Berkshires mean to him, Bill explains that “the landscape is just magical to me... to paraphrase a favorite Norman Rockwell quote: ‘Stockbridge represents the very best in New England and the very best in America.’” He loves the great cultural diversity of the Berkshires from the classical music of Tanglewood (summer home of the Boston Symphony) and the folk music of Arlo Guthrie (a well-known and beloved Stockbridge resident) to the art of Norman Rockwell. Though he has never lived in the Berkshires, he says “my heart is there always.”

Bill’s other interests include the two state parks (one in New Jersey and one in Pennsylvania) dedicated to interpreting and preserving George Washington’s famous crossing of the Delaware River — both of which are named Washington Crossing Historic Park. His home, in Washington Crossing, Pennsylvania, gives him easy access to these two parks. His desire to have the history of the parks be told led to his own financing of the research and publication of two books by renowned historian, Peter Osborne. The first book, *Where Washington Once Led: A History of New Jersey’s Washington Crossing State Park*, was about the history of the New Jersey park; and the second, *No Spot in This Far Land Is More Immortalized: A History of Pennsylvania’s Washington Crossing Historic Park*, published this year, focuses on the Pennsylvania park. Bill did this to get the message out and hopefully encourage more visitors to the parks and thus encourage increased support of both. Finally, Bill is also a train enthusiast and wants to have one more book published on the Train Museum in Syracuse, New York.

Bill says he wishes he had the resources to protect the whole of the Appalachian Trail but hopes that his story will inspire others to make up the difference. He’s concerned with the dwindling amount of land available to save for open space, especially in the eastern United States. He thinks our growing partnerships with Appalachian Trail Communities is a great way to engage a broader population in the benefits of protecting the landscape and teaching the next generation to appreciate the beauty of nature.

When asked if he had a message he would like to send to his fellow Appalachian Trail Conservancy members, he said, “Realize what a treasure you have — you will find it increasingly under attack. You have to actively protect it both personally and financially. You’ve done a marvelous job of protecting the Trail but you have to keep up the work of stewardship.”



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A Trail UNBROKEN

All three girls — Katie, Caroline, and Marjorie — on a section of the International Appalachian Trail in Gaspesie National Park in Quebec

THERE WAS A TIME WHEN I'D NEVER HEARD of the Appalachian Trail. It seems long ago now, but my ignorance lasted a good while, maybe 35 years. I grew up across an ocean from it, and then lived continents away from its sinuous line. Even when I first came to the United States to live, and my first daughter was born just 60 miles from Delaware Water Gap, I am not sure that knowledge of the Trail made it through the haze of new parenthood. This spring, nearly 21 years on, that first daughter and I drove down to the Great Smoky Mountains to hike. As we drove, we pointed out where the A.T. was — on that ridge between us and Gettysburg, crossing the Potomac River well downstream of I-81, right beside

us as we detoured through Shenandoah National Park. And it struck me on that drive that it was our very good fortune that the A.T. grew into our family life just when Katie, and the sisters who came after her, were growing up.

We went overseas again soon after Katie was born, but by the time we settled in Connecticut 15 years ago, the A.T. was on our radar. I don't remember exactly how it got there, but it predated *A Walk in the Woods*. Anyway, we were delighted to discover that the Trail entered Connecticut from New York less than an hour from our new family home. This proximity did not make us thru-hikers, or even regular section backpackers, but from then

THE A.T. WAS OUT THERE — AN ESCAPE, AN INSPIRATION, A REMINDER THAT SUBURBAN LIFE WAS NOT THE BE-ALL AND END-ALL.

on the A.T. was out there — an escape, an inspiration, a reminder that suburban life was not the be-all and end-all.

We got acquainted gradually. I remember taking the older girls to Baxter State Park soon after their sister was born. They were seven and five then, and I thought Katahdin would be too much. So we climbed a lesser peak, looked out over ponds and woods to the hazy summit of “the Greatest Mountain” of the Penobscot, and talked about the unimaginably long Trail that ended there. Two years later, the whole family dropped me off near the Massachusetts line, and I climbed alone to Sages Ravine to begin the 52.3 miles of Connecticut A.T. I had only some of the right gear, not including the right socks. I walked too far on my first full day out. It poured incessantly. The next day, my knees ached on steep downhill and my feet had blisters. When my family came to pick me up, short of the New York line, daddy “smelled like a horse.” But he had stories.

In the years that followed, our visits to the A.T. multiplied. There were hikes up Connecticut's Bear Mountain and the surrounding Taconic summits (the girls, quiet on the climbs, were transformed at the tops, wowed by the views, their achievement — and relief). Once, on a camping trip a stone's throw from the Trail, at a time when our middle daughter was learning to play Doris Gazda's *Appalachian Sunrise* on her violin, we rose before dawn to see the sun come up (haze, foliage, and the enclosing hills made it less than dramatic). Then, years later, we came across the International A.T. up in Quebec, and followed it all the way to alpine tundra on a rainy mountain called Pic du Brulé.

At one level, it is obvious why all this was such good fortune. Wild, beautiful places to exercise and unwind are, even in our relatively uncrowded country, not easily accessed by all. But the A.T. is more than scenery; by its very nature, it challenges. The fact of 2,180 miles of unbroken Trail, and of the thousands who set out to hike it all, challenges us to make our own adventures a little more, well, adventurous. And then we find so much of value out on the Trail — autonomy, perspective, peace — that

we challenge the assumptions of our everyday lives, and perhaps make them more adventurous too. Maybe this is just fancy, but as Katie and I looked out over the Smokies, I could not help but be glad that the A.T. had grown into our lives. ⚡



From top: Katie at Gregory Bald above Cades Cove just off the A.T. in the Smokies; Katie and Caroline on Bear Mountain in Connecticut





double-crested cormorant (*phalacrocorax auritus*)

ONE OF FRANK SINATRA'S NICKNAMES WAS "Ol' Blue Eyes." The nickname could also apply to double-crested cormorants. If you are hiking next to a body of water and get a close look at one of them, either swimming or perched, you might see their lovely blue eyes.

There are close to 40 cormorant species in the world and six in North America. Double-crested cormorants are by far the most common cormorant species in the eastern United States. They can be seen along all of the Appalachian Trail in almost any area near water. In fact, one of their migration routes runs parallel and a little east of the Trail. During the breeding season, you might see two tufts of feathers sticking up on their head, which is the basis for the "double-crested" name. Most of their diet consists of fish less than six inches long. They typically dive in shallow water and often

swallow their prey before resurfacing. They have a long, hooked bill, which assists them in holding what they catch. They are not fussy eaters and consume a broad range of fish species. Their long bodies and webbed feet have evolved to allow them to swim and maneuver quickly underwater, but they do not walk well on land.

As with other cormorant species, the double-crested does not have waterproof feathers, which might seem strange for a bird whose diet consists mostly of fish caught underwater. Waterproof feathers would make cormorants more buoyant, inhibiting their ability to dive. Their water-soaked feathers serve a similar purpose to a scuba diver's weight belt. The soaking of cormorant feathers was familiar to the ancient Greeks, as is reflected in a passage from the *Odyssey* in which Homer describes the god Mercury: "... he swooped down through the

firmament till he reached the level of the sea, whose waves he skimmed like a cormorant that flies fishing every hole and corner of the ocean, and drenching its thick plumage in the spray." When cormorants leave the water, they typically perch with outstretched wings to allow their feathers to dry.

Double-crested cormorants sit low in the water, sometimes partially submerged. They point their bill upward at an angle, which can reveal the bare yellow skin on their throat. The skin is a brighter yellow on birds in breeding plumage. They are about the same size as some geese and loons, and the upward tilting of the bill can be an important field mark in identifying a swimming cormorant at a distance or in poor light. Flying cormorants have a lead-butt appearance, with their back end lower than their head, and they show a kink in their neck. When alone or in a small group, they often fly low over the water. Cormorants typically need to run along the water for a short distance to get adequate lift to become airborne.

Flocks of double-crested cormorants sometimes fly in a V-formation like geese. When doing this, all but the lead bird can use less energy when flapping. Geese often honk in flight, while cormorants are silent. The silence of cormorants was the subject of a Native American tale recounted in Ernest Ingersoll's *Birds in Legend, Fable and Folklore*, in which a raven invited a cormorant to go fishing. The cormorant caught many fish, while the raven caught none. The jealous raven told the cormorant to stick out his tongue because there was something on it. The raven grabbed the cormorant's tongue and yanked it out, which resulted in the cormorant being silent. In real life, cormorants can vocalize, but you seldom hear them.

The name "cormorant" means "sea crow," because the adults of many cormorant species are all black, although some are black and white. Adult double-crested cormorants have mostly black feathers, but immature birds have brown or gray plumage. Males and females look alike, but the males are slightly larger. Adults are almost three feet long, and they typically weigh four to five pounds. Their wingspan is 52 inches, about the same as a great egret's.

Double-crested cormorants have had a long history of being persecuted. Some of the persecution now is being done with government sanction. For more than two decades, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) has allowed some states to permit the killing of double-crested cormorants if they are thought to adversely affect fish, wildlife, plants, and habitats. Most complaints have come from owners of fish hatcheries and sport fishing operations who claim that their livelihood is adversely affected by

cormorants eating too many fish. Others complain about the significant accumulation of droppings at cormorant roosts. The guano (excrement) of some cormorant species off the coasts of Africa and South America has been part of a lucrative business; it is harvested and sold as fertilizer, because it is rich in nitrogen. Double-crested cormorant guano is typically regarded merely as an unsightly nuisance that kills vegetation.

The FWS places restrictions on who can kill cormorants and the conditions under which it can be done, but this has not been sufficient to prevent a great many birds from being killed. In some instances, people have ignored the regulations and taken matters into their own hands. In 1998, a group of men were arrested for slaughtering more than a thousand double-crested cormorants in the

Cormorants fly low over the water, showing their long wingspan; Many are unaware of the cormorant's striking blue eyes



New York portion of Lake Ontario. The men believed that cormorants were responsible for a decline in the number of fish in sport-fishing areas.

Various conservation groups have protested the killing of cormorants. In 2009, the American Bird Conservancy, the National Audubon Society, and Defenders of Wildlife sent a joint letter to the FWS opposing an extension of the rule to allow the blanket killing of double-crested cormorants at aquaculture facilities and recreational fishing sites, saying that each case should be scientifically evaluated to establish that the cormorants were



THEY CAN BE SEEN ALONG ALL OF THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL IN ALMOST ANY AREA NEAR WATER.

Double-crested cormorants sit low in the water and can dive easily for fish due to their non-waterproof feathers

actually causing harm. The signatories believed that while there were individual cases of cormorants depleting fish stocks, cormorants were being unfairly blamed for other serious environmental problems affecting fish populations, including water pollution, dredging, non-native species, unsustainable commercial fish takes, development, erosion, loss of wetlands, and climate change.

During the second half of the 20th century, the double-crested cormorant population declined sharply because of DDT, which caused a thinning of their eggshells. After DDT was banned in the U.S. in 1972, the population rebounded. Nesting cormorants lay one to seven eggs per clutch and raise one or two clutches per year, so in areas where there is adequate food, cormorants can rapidly proliferate. Because they roost and nest in large colonies, they can be very noticeable in areas where there is human settlement. The fact that they are black does not help

their image. Many other dark birds who roost in large flocks have been persecuted, including vultures, crows, blackbirds, and starlings. Cormorants have little value as a human food source, because their diet makes their flesh taste very fishy. They are killed purely to reduce their numbers.

Despite all the controversy, double-crested cormorants continue to show great resilience, as they have over the last two centuries. Since 1991, I have been the coordinator in the National Audubon Society's annual Christmas Bird Count for a stretch of the Potomac River in the Washington, D.C. area. From 2011 to 2013, my group has counted more double-crested cormorants in each year than we had counted in the previous twenty years combined. Nobody kills cormorants in this area, and a colony seems to have established a safe winter residence. When I look at these birds through a telescope, I can sometimes see their blue eyes looking back at me. ♡

William Young is the author of *The Fascination of Birds: From the Albatross to the Yellowthroat*, published by Dover in 2014. The book features essays about 99 types of birds and their role in both nature and human culture. He lives in Arlington, Virginia. Ashley Bradford is a photographer and visual designer from Alexandria, Virginia.

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Wednesday July 31, 2019

To Laura Belleville, Director of Conservation

Subject RE: 2020 Budget Surplus

Laura,

As you know we have recently surpassed the fundraising and membership goals of the 2015 to 2019 Strategic Plan. Membership now stands at more than 75,000 and our yearly operating revenue has exceeded \$10,000,000 since 2018. Our Stewardship endowment has in excess of \$12,000,000.

Our members, donors, corporate, and foundation partners are seeking more and deeper ways to engage in our programs and activities. I’m asking you to go back to your staff and find ways to expand our reach and broaden the goals of your programs in order to use the additional one \$1 million in anticipated funding already pledged for the coming fiscal year.

I realize this is almost the same email I sent at this time last year but once again I need to ask you to expand your budget for the coming year.

Royce

Send

🔗 Tt B I A ☰ ☰ ☰ 🔗 😊 abc ⏪

IN ABOUT 55 MONTHS I WANT TO SEND THE ABOVE EMAIL.
You can make it so.

Embarking on a Strategic Plan for the next five years is both exhilarating and frightening. Anytime you do something you have never done before there is an element of fear – hopefully overbalanced by the excitement of doing it. As I embark on my ninth year leading this department, I am excited to be part of a growing organization with forward-thinking leaders and co-workers.

By now you should have received our year-end update in the mail. Our goal is to raise \$900,000 before December 31 to both meet our expenses for 2014 and position us to begin achieving the goals of our Five-Year Strategic Plan in 2015. Your contributions towards those dual goals are important and appreciated.

Our Strategic Plan has five broad goals: Effective Stewardship, Proactive Protection, Broader Relevancy, Engaged Partners, and Strengthened Capacity and Operational Excellence. The first four goals are holistic, high-minded, and heroic. The fifth is where the rubber meets the road. Simply, your financial support means all the goals are achieved.

If I’m “preaching to the choir,” I apologize. In my years of asking for your support you have never let me or the Appalachian Trail Conservancy down. I know I can count on you. 📍

Thank you and have a wonderful Thanksgiving,
Royce W. Gibson | *Director of Membership & Development*



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Membership dues and additional donations are tax-deductible as a charitable contribution. The ATC is a Section 501(c)(3) educational organization. To make a contribution or renew your membership, call (304) 535-6331 ext 119, or visit: appalachiantrail.org/donate

Lost and Found

Lost: Around August 2, 2014: an **Olympus TG 850 waterproof digital camera** near the Big Wilson Stream Ford and Wilson Valley Leanto in the 100 Mile Wilderness — mile 2080. A northbound hiker found it and gave it to a southbound hiker telling them to turn it in at Lakeshore House in Monson, Maine. It has not arrived there. Has photos on it from my 300-mile section hike. Camera and charger were in plastic bag. Please return to Harold Helm 94

Monte Cresta Ave, Pleasant Hill, CA 94523. I will gladly pay shipping COD. Contact: (925)300-3634 or slomosey@iglou.com.

Found: Toyota car key from Sunrise Toyota in Islip/Oakdale, New York. Found September 2014 at Stratton Pond shelter on the Long Trail/A.T. in Vermont. Contact "Woodstalker" at: btlyman1@gmail.com.

For Your Information
Hunting Season Safety on the Trail.
Hunting regulations vary

widely along the Appalachian Trail.

Although the A.T. is a unit of the National Park System, it traverses a patchwork quilt of public lands managed for many different purposes. Hunting is permitted within close proximity of some parts of the A.T. in every Trail state. Many segments of the A.T. in Pennsylvania north of the Cumberland Valley and a few miles of the A.T. through the G. Richard Thompson Wildlife Management area in northern Virginia are game lands managed primarily for hunting. Both hikers and hunters are advised to "know before you go."

■ Consult a current official A.T. map to learn which agencies own and regulate the land.

■ Know local hunting seasons.

■ Wear a blaze-orange hat, clothing, or gear visible from 360 degrees.

■ Avoid deer firearm season (usually October through January) by hiking in one of these national parks: C & O Canal National Historical Park, Maryland; Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, West Virginia; Shenandoah National Park, Virginia; Blue Ridge Parkway, Virginia; Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Tennessee and North Carolina. For more information and to see the ATC's "2014-2015 Hunting Season Guide by State" visit: appalachiantrail.org/hunting

Noted author to speak at the Appalachian Trail Conservancy's December Open House. Karen Berger, outdoor writer, A.T. thru-hiker, and author of numerous books on hiking will sign her new book, *America's Great Hiking Trails* at the Holiday Open House at the ATC Headquarters in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia December 6 (see ad

on page 8). America's Great Hiking Trails is available at the Ultimate A.T. Store: atctrailstore.org.

ATC's Harpers Ferry Visitor Center is open year-round, 7 days a week, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., closed only Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day. Members get a discount on everything, including all the new items from our Ultimate Trail Store. More information is available at: appalachiantrail.org/locations.

Did you complete hiking the A.T. this year? Send in your 2,000-miler application by December 31, and your name will be listed in the March/April issue of *A.T. Journeys*. Applications are available at: appalachiantrail.org/ATcompletion.

The **Appalachian Trail Conservancy is recruiting for several internship positions in 2015** including: Public Relations, Marketing Assistant, Event Planning, Visitor Services, Development Database, Development Events, and Lands Stewardship. For position descriptions, more information, and to apply visit: appalachiantrail.org/jobs. ⬆

Public Notices may be edited for clarity and length. Please send them to: **editor@appalachiantrail.org**
Public Notices
P.O. Box 807
Harpers Ferry, WV 25425-0807

AS I SIT HERE FINISHING ANOTHER ISSUE

of *A.T. Journeys*, I can't help but wonder what it was that created a NOBO (northbound) thru-hiker. Was it her birth to Army veterans or her participation in 4-H and Girl Scouts? Was it her hearing that we all die, just so long as we don't die stupidly, or was it hearing that we were rich in the things that mattered? What was it that gave a young woman the strength to face the task of hiking 2000-plus miles without her fiancé, her family, or her friends to keep her company?

With each delivery of the magazine, I sit quietly and read through the adventures of those still able to make the hike from Georgia to Maine in nature's allotted time of six months. I know that physically I'm not able to do it, but I'm thrilled for those who can. This is not about my own life though, so much as it is about the other side of the coin. Oh Brave NOBOs and SOBOs, do you even realize what your cheerleaders go through back at home? Do you know how many hours we put into praying for you, checking the weather, and watching the news once we know that you're on the Trail?

Grace ("Stearman") began her hike in north Georgia in May 2011 and completed her hike in Maine in late October that year — and I do mean late. Okay, so if it wasn't nerve wracking enough in the first place knowing that she was hiking alone, it became doubly so after meeting up with her for her first "Zero Days" (where she took a short break) in Helen, Georgia. We asked her if she was eating; she said "of course!" Then she told us what and how much. We asked about her travels to and from the Trail into towns and how she would stay hydrated. "Well, I'll filter the water when I need to," she explained.

Okay, so this is where the mother in me, who can't replace this precious young woman, wants to stuff her and her gear into the car and promptly drive her back home to my house and lock her in her old room until she comes to her senses. Unfortunately, I couldn't do that because that's not how her Dad and I raised her. We did our best not to instill our fears into her and she heard sermon after sermon from me growing up that as a female she wasn't limited in what she could dream. Naturally, practicing what we had preached wasn't always the easiest of things to do and I was about to get a six-month lesson in learning to eat my words.

Stearman's Dad and I dropped her back off at the gap, hugged and kissed her, and watched as she set off with yet another of the many "strangers" who would become part of her life and her memories. The van was so quiet that you could have heard a pin drop. There was absolutely nothing that my husband and I could say to each other that wouldn't go against everything we had ever told her about succeeding.


We learned the Trail route from the computers in our living room. We stopped the world any time she called. We made her grandmother Schluter's Fruit Bread, later rechristened "summit bread," with twice the carbohydrates, and put it in the mail to places unknown. We tracked her through her fiancé. We held our breath through the sections where her cell phone did not get reception. We encouraged her and expressed to her — with apprehension we kept to ourselves — that we knew she could do it. We sat helplessly as Tropical Storm Irene washed out covered bridges and as sections of the Trail were declared impassable. We waited with her in spirit from more than 2,000 miles away (in the case of her little sister, who lives in Colorado, even farther) at the base of Katahdin for the snow to melt off enough for her to ascend; and we cried at the video she made during her descent from the summit. Oh how blessed we were to be able to share her adventure along the way; and here she thought that the Trail had only changed her. ⬆



Grace in the Roan Highlands, North Carolina in 2011

Anita Marie Schluter Brayley — the proud mother of Grace "Stearman" Brayley Childress — lives in Hinesville, Georgia.

"As I See It" is a monthly column from guest contributors representing the full range of ATC partners, members, and volunteers. To submit a column (700 words or under) for consideration, please email **journeys@appalachiantrail.org** or write to Editor/As I See It, Appalachian Trail Conservancy, P.O. Box 807, Harpers Ferry, WV 25425.




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
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
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A.T. NEAR WHITETOP MOUNTAIN IN VIRGINIA BY JOE CIEZKOWSKI