

# PATH



# WAYS

Piedmont Appalachian Trail Hikers

December 2005

## **Gordon Burgess Leaves Legacy of Service to PATH**

Gordon Burgess, 84, died on August 24, 2005 at Arbor Acres, his Winston-Salem, N.C., home. He is survived by Peggy Hartle, his widow.

Gordon served in World War II in the North African theater and returned to a career with AT&T. He hiked extensively on the Appalachian Trail during the 1970s and was active with the ATC.

Gordon joined PATH in 1982 and soon started a long collaboration with fellow members Henry Ford and Ken Rose. These three formed the core of PATH work crews all through the 1980s and early 1990s. Gordon developed a network of friends along the trail corridor in southwest Virginia, and his famous blue Volkswagen Beetle became a familiar sight, scooting around the hillsides of western Virginia on his frequent visits.

As Trail Supervisor, Gordon determined what needed to be done and assigned crews to see that it was done. It all seemed like organized chaos on Saturday mornings at Stony Fork, but as if by magic the crews would each be dispatched to the proper place. For many of us Gordon was the very first representative of PATH we met as we pulled into Stony Fork or Sugar Grove for our first worktrips.

In 2004, Gordon received the "Call to Service Award" from the President of the United States in recognition of his many thousands of hours of service for the preservation of the Appalachian Trail.

Vaughn Thomas, who won one of the highly coveted framed photos of the AT by Gordon during the November annual meeting, wrote, "What a dear and generous friend Gordon was. I have the picture of Gordon beside the newly finished Davis Path Shelter hanging in a special place."

Following Gordon's passing, several of us wrote our remembrances of him. Bill Boudman wrote: "Gordon pulled me into the club sometime in the late 80s. With Gordon, one day on the trail was not enough. He insisted I come up in the middle of the week. He was recognized by all, far and wide and up and down the East Coast, as the man in the blue Bug. I would come up in the summer as soon as school was out for several days, and he and I would cruise around in the blue Bug at unknown speeds and do odd jobs and check out work sites."

Gene Greer wrote: "May he have as much fun and bring as much joy on his next adventure as he did with all of us."

*(continued on page 2)*

Tony Roberts, now living in Minnesota, wrote: "I was fortunate to have joined PATH when Gordon was still active and lucky to have learned a trick or two from him."

Marcia Cope, coordinator of Dawg Days, wrote: "I thought of him often this summer and prayed for his peace and comfort. Gordon led the very first worktrip I ever went on... at a grueling pace. No place is really too far or too steep for the one who desires to go there. Gordon desired to go and he went. I rejoice that he went as far as he was able, as fast as he was able and for as long as he was able. He enjoyed it immensely. He who makes a mark on people's hearts is never forgotten."

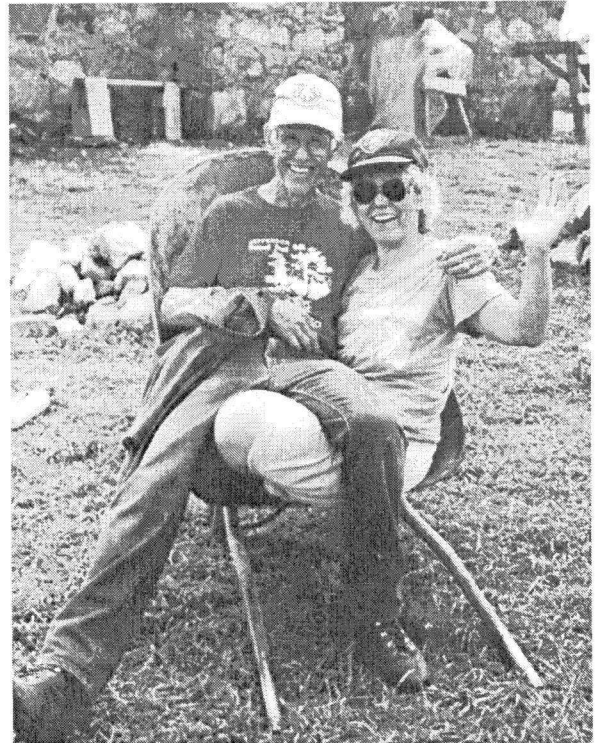
You certainly did make your mark, Gordon, and we all thank you for it.

## Late Breaking News...

PATH members were overwhelmed to receive the sum of \$56,656.44 from the Gordon Burgess estate for the club following his death. Gordon, a longtime PATH member, had set up a Charitable Remainder Trust and upon his death several different charities became entitled to a percentage of the assets.

"For those of you that were fortunate enough to have known Gordon, I know this will touch your hearts," wrote PATH treasurer Renee Clark in a Nov. 22 email, notifying the membership. "For those that did not know him, it is safe to say that he was one of the sweetest, kindest, happiest and, obviously, one of the most giving

people that has ever graced this world that we call home. He will forever live in our hearts."



*Gordon Burgess and Trudy Whitney at Partnership Shelter Renovation, Summer 1994*

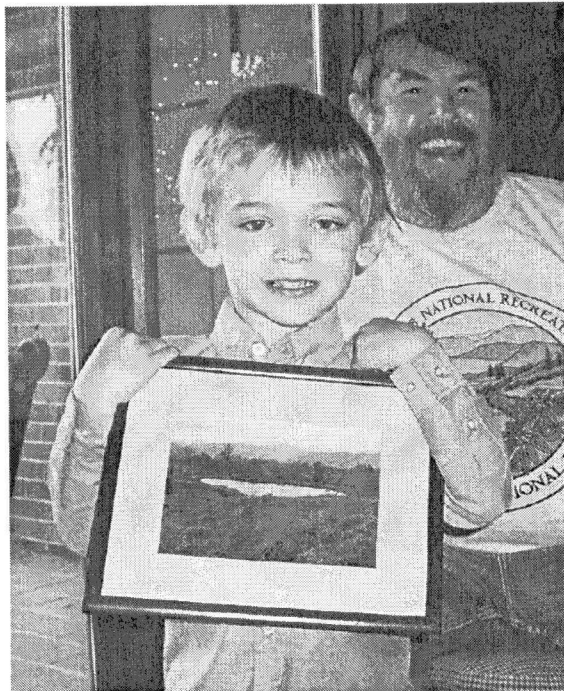


*Ken Rose, Jim Morris and Gordon Burgess on the trail in 1984.*

# 2005 Annual Meeting

by Paul Clayton

PATH's 2005 Annual Meeting was held in Winston-Salem on November 20. Doc and Vaughn were able to arrange the meeting place at their development on short notice, and the surroundings were decidedly plush. The Board met early and took care of club business, leaving plenty of time for the membership to partake of a substantial feast. Afterward, Gene Greer's grandson Kevin provided entertainment as we raffled off ten beautiful photographs donated to the club by Peggy Burgess.



Gene's grandson Kevin

Board elections were held. Keith Morgan will take the Vice-President

position that Linda Robinson is vacating, and Will Burke, Elliot Haag and Ken Pugh join the board. Jeff Tysinger is taking another term, and all other members continue their current positions:

Paul Haag – President  
John Hartpence – Secretary  
Renee Clark – Treasurer

Board Members – Unexpired Terms  
Valerie Hurt  
Steve Yonts  
Chris Bracknell  
Dean Kanipe  
Steve Coombs  
Walt Davis

## "Outside" Writer Visits PATH

by Karl Kunkel

Look for a stretch of PATH's section of the Appalachian Trail to be in a national magazine this spring.

Kate Siber, a freelance writer for "Outside" magazine, visited Burke's Garden in mid-November for possible inclusion of it in an article on day hikes along the AT. She is concentrating on the trail from Hot Springs, N.C., to Harpers Ferry, W.Va. After she contacted PATH, a small group of us took her on a day hike from Walker Gap in Burke's Garden to the top of Chestnut Ridge for lunch at the shelter. Present on the hike were PATH member Paul Clayton, ATC employee Dave Schilling and me. The

*(continued on page 6)*

# Dawg Days 2005

by Paul M. Clayton

Marcia Cope generously made her country home available for our annual Dawg Days event. She has sponsored this weekend of work and fun for eight years now. This year we worked on the Trail Boss alternate route which had become badly overgrown with rhododendron. We cut it way back and grubbed out lots of roots and stumps. It should be good for several years now. Afterward we went down to the creek for a good soaking.

Back at Marcia's we had our customary feast and then a bonfire. The kids roasted marshmallows while the adults partook of something stronger.

Attending were Paul Clayton, Betsy Truscott, Amy Roberts, Phil Soper, Marie Minor, Katie Floyd, Alex Burton, Brian, Jim Houck, Margaret Wainwright, Valerie Cope and Grace.



# Book Reviews by Tom Dillon

**Blue Ridge Music Trails: Finding a Place in the Circle**, by Fred C. Fussell. Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2003. 253 pages, \$15.95 paperback.



*Phil Soper grubbs out a root as Margaret Wainwright lends moral support.*

**A Hot-Bed of Musicians: Traditional Music in the Upper New River Valley Whitetop Region**, by Paula Hathaway Anderson-Green. Knoxville, University of Tennessee Press, 2002. 252 pages, \$14.

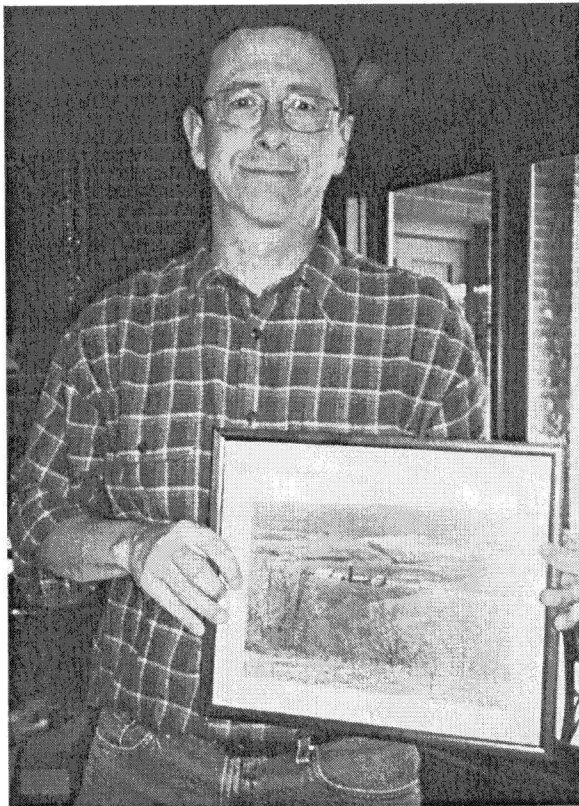
Any Saturday evening in the summer, take a drive up Interstate 77 to the Blue Ridge Parkway. Follow the Parkway south to the new Blue Ridge Music Center, and you'll be treated to a piece of your heritage.

The center opened two years ago to give visitors to the region, as well as residents, an introduction to the music of their lives. It's featured musicians ranging from Ricky Skaggs to the finest backwoods fiddler you never heard of, and its accompanying museum, newly opened, should become a great place.

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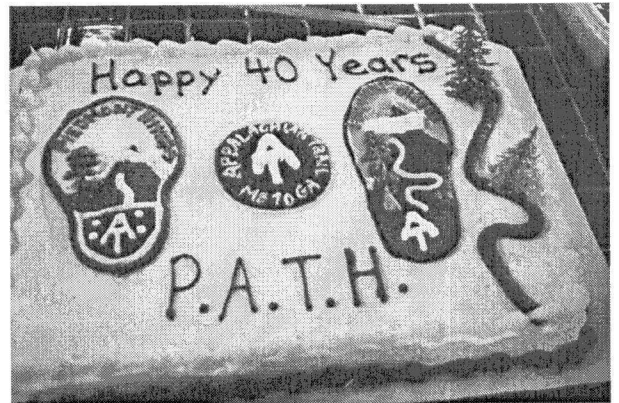
## More Pics From the Annual Meeting...



*Happy Raffle Winner Dwight Levi*



*Swell Digs at Breckenridge*



*Birthday Cake*

*All Pictures by Karl Kunkel*

## Message From the President...

This is my hardest job in being the President of PATH. Karl asks me every newsletter to put down some words of wisdom and encouragement. Putting words on paper is not my strong suit. Give me workgloves and a pick and I am happy. It will be hard to beat 2005 with the amount of work we accomplished. But...looking at the items we have on our 'to do'list for 2006, it will keep us busy and out of trouble. There should be something for everyone, from digging in the dirt ( my favorite) , staining , building bridges and possibly a new storage shed. So, clean your work clothes and boots, sharpen your tools and, most importantly, enjoy the next couple months with family and friends. If you are like me. when February comes around you are itching to get to our 70 miles of the AT and help keep it one of the best sections of the trail. Make sure you tell your friends and family the fun you are having. We like to share. See you in Virginia.

*...Paul Haag, president, PATH*

## **"Outside" Writer**

(continued from page 3)

scenic vista of the garden from the ridge, however, was hidden by a thick fog. The day was also rainy, cold and windy. So, we'll have to wait and see what kind of impression it made on her. The following day Dave took her on a hike to McAfee's Knob near Roanoke. Much of her article will focus on amenities a pampered hiker might encounter on these day hikes, it seems, with mention of bed-and-breakfasts and spas.

## **What I Did This Summer...**

Linda Robinson...

"I've been a no show at most PATH events this year, but have had some fun in other places. I sing with an R&B Gospel choir and we again did some travel and singing in Europe. This trip included Tavistock, England. With my hosts there, I did a lot of walking in the moors. It reminded me so much of Grayson Highlands, including the ponies. The tour also included Paris where we stayed in a youth hostel (NOT recommended) and another wonderful visit with our friends in Cologne-Pesch, Germany. We did concerts in all the places we visited. It's really amazing the doors this choir can open. We're looking forward to another tour in Europe in 2007."



The Grayson Highlands of Europe...

Richard Bostic...

I did not make it to a PATH work trip this year, but I did help the AT by working on a trail crew in Vermont. I worked September 15 -19 with the Vermont Long Trail Patrol closing a washed out section of trail and building a relocation in the Green Mountain National Forest. This picture was taken when we reached the Green Mountain Club van after our hike from the base camp.



Bostic in Vermont

# More Summer Fun

Paul D. Haag...

"This summer I took Elliot and one of his friends to the Vans Warp tour at the Charlotte amphitheatre. Nine solid hours of music, sun, rain and people dancing and or stepping on your feet. I felt old but I had a great time and I will go back again. With or without Elliot."

## Book Reviews...

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But the music center is only for introductions. Almost anywhere in the mountains, and across many other parts of the South, you can find de- facto musical jams going on monthly or weekly or even more often in some cases.

There's a barbershop in Drexel, outside Morganton, where the barbers play music after closing. At the old theaters in Sparta, N.C., and Galax, Va., old-time music and dance are offered at least weekly. At Flat Ridge, Va., just up the road from the Forest Service station at Sugar Grove, there's music nearly every Saturday. Just ask Dave and Martha Emery, who've become regulars.

As a fan from Pittsburgh put it his first time at the Galax Fiddlers Convention (early August each year), "are there really this many old-time and bluegrass pickers and fans willing to brave the summer heat and storms and infamous Galax red mud that sucks the shoes off your feet after a hard rain?"

The answer is yes, and giving you directions to some of these events, and some background about how it all came about, is the purpose of these two books. But they go about it in different ways.

**Blue Ridge Music Trails** is more of a directory, highlighting offerings in counties along the Blue Ridge Parkway from the Asheville area north into central Virginia. It covers a lot of ground, and consequently can't go into a lot of detail. But it includes a fine short history of the region's music. That's by Joseph Wilson, the organizer behind the Blue Ridge Music Center, and Wayne Martin, director of the folklife section of the North Carolina Arts Council. Both of them know their stuff.

There also are short individual sections on the Blue Ridge Music Center, the Blue Ridge Institute and Museum at Virginia's Ferrum College, Wilkes County's Merlefest and more than a dozen other attractions in the area. I found a couple of errors, mostly in addresses or highway designators, that hopefully will be corrected in later versions. But they were easy to correct and didn't subtract from the usefulness of the book. I'm likely to use it traveling for months to come.

**A Hot-Bed of Musicians** covers a far smaller area, only the New River and Whitetop Mountain region of Virginia and North Carolina, including the counties of Ashe and Alleghany in North Carolina and Grayson and Carroll in Virginia. But this focus lets

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## Book Reviews...

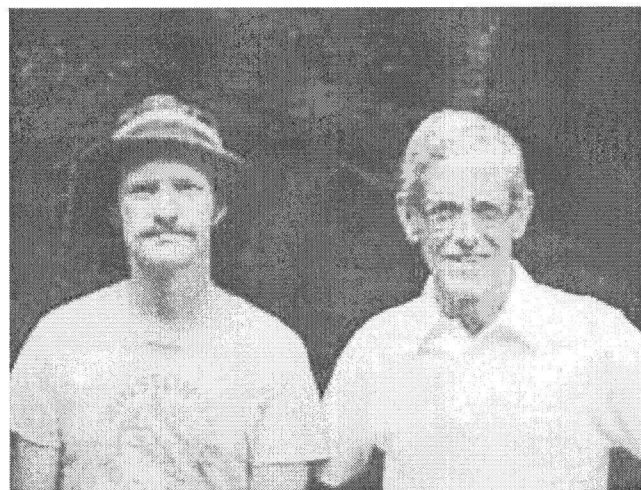
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Anderson-Green go into a lot more detail. She follows the lives and careers of some half-a-dozen musicians well-known in the region, and has index descriptions of more than 200 others. Compiling that was much work. Her chapters on Ola Belle Campbell Reed, the late Albert Hash and the Sturgill family of Alleghany County are effective history, as well as thought-provoking. All these people, you've probably never heard of. But an argument can be made that they've been indispensable to music far beyond the mountains.

The book will make you work harder to find the venues than is the case with **Music Trails**. It does not include directions or telephone numbers. It is also hampered by a term-paper-like structure that includes footnotes and credits within the copy. That's a hallmark of too much book learning, probably a result of that newfangled social science called ethnomusicology. All those footnotes should have been put in an index at the back of the book. But this is still a good resource for learning about mountain music and musicians. And it's good reading, despite the footnotes. As Ola Belle Reed told Anderson-Green, "When I came out of them mountains, so help me God, I didn't know people didn't like each other." How she found out is a good story. Elsewhere, she says that until she moved away from Ashe County, "I never knew what it was to worry." How many people

today can say that?

Those used to downloading music from the Internet might view all this as hokey, but there are some people in the world making music the same way their ancestors did, as well as thinking the same way their ancestors did. To me, that's a hopeful sign for the future - as well as a great way to spend a Saturday night.



*Tom Dillon and Gordon Burgess in 1983*

### Dues are Due

Time to pay PATH dues for 2006.

Send to:

Renee Clark

PATH Treasurer

400 Merrifield Way

Winston-Salem, NC 27127

Dues are \$15.00 for individuals, \$17.50 for families and \$10.00 for students.



# PATH Workdates, 2006

March 17-19 Sugar Grove  
April 14-16 Sugar Grove  
May 19-22 Sugar Grove  
June 13-19 : Summerfest - on site  
July 11-17 W/ Konarock- On site  
August 18-20: Stony Fork  
Campground  
September 15-17 Stony Fork  
Campground  
October 20-22: Sugar Grove

From Paul Haag:

"Questions came up regarding Easter Sunday falling on a work weekend. We [the board] decided to leave our work weekend on Easter Sunday to minimize confusion on our set 3rd Saturday of the month schedule. We also have our biannual USFS meetings scheduled that weekend along with some heavy machinery work planned behind Partnership Shelter. Sorry to those who cannot make it, but we understand that family and beliefs should come first."

## Even More Summer Fun...

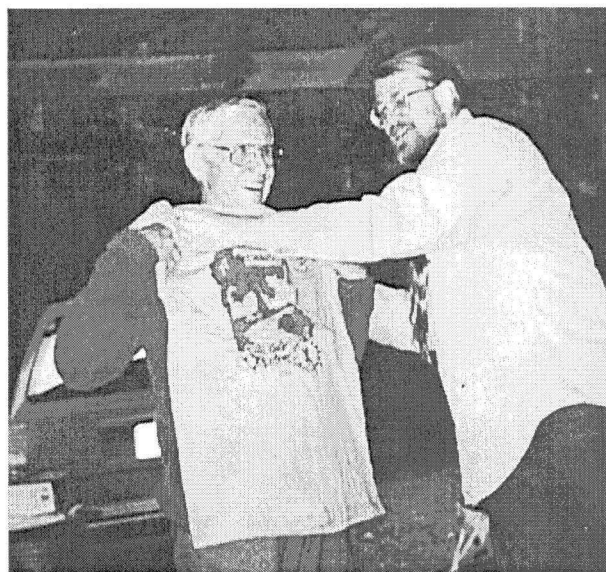
*From Vaughn Thomas*

"Doc finished the A.T. in September when we hiked in the Smokies from Newfound Gap to about a mile beyond I-40 at the NC/TN line. We began our trek in 1998. Doc hiked about two-thirds of the Trail that year, and I walked about half of it. In 2003 we

hiked from Springer Mountain to Path's section. I had not hiked from Springer to Fontana, so that closed a 'gap' for me. I completed my last section in the south when we hiked from Sam's Gap to Devil Fork Gap in November."



*Gordon and Peggy Burgess*



*Mike Dawson presents Gordon with his Konnarock T-shirt at the 1996 Trail Neighbors Picnic.*

This newsletter was edited by Karl Kunkel. Paul Clayton did the layout.



**Piedmont  
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Trail  
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