

PATH



WAYS

Piedmont Appalachian Trail Hikers

Fall 2008

Annual Meeting Scheduled for Saturday, November 22nd

The PATH Annual Meeting will be held at the Breckenridge Clubhouse in Winston-Salem as it has been for several years. The agenda will include a Board Meeting, General Membership Meeting and potluck lunch. The Board Meeting will begin at 10:00 AM, to be followed by lunch at noon and then the Membership Meeting.

Breckenridge is located off Peacehaven Road on the western edge of Winston-Salem. Take 421 North from the divide with Interstate 40 and proceed to the Peacehaven Road exit. At the top of the ramp, turn right and follow Peacehaven to the Breckenridge development at Ridgehaven Drive. Turn left and the clubhouse will be the first building you see, immediately on the right.

Sara at Sea...

Sara Andreatta is the licensed Chief Mate of the 90 foot length on deck gaff-rigged schooner Mary Day, sailing out of Camden, Maine. Her mother recently returned from a cruise on the Mary Day, and sent this description of Sara's duties:

“She worked hard from 6:30 in the morning

until dark or later---sometimes her watch lasted until 11:00pm. She got everyone organized when it was time to raise or lower a sail. She called out the orders. The passengers had to help with raising and furling the sails. The sails plus the huge trunks of wood that they were attached to were HEAVY. We sailed with 25 passengers and six crew. Sara has been working on the Mary Day since March. She will come home in Late October.”



Sara Andreatta at the helm of the Mary Day

--Susan Andreatta photo

Smoke Over Brushy Mountain

You won't be awakened by the train traffic while sleeping in the pods at Sugar Grove today, but there once was a time it could have happened.

As a matter of fact, a railroad line went right past the site of the work camp, log trains steaming up into the mountains to find timber for the Sugar Grove Lumber Co. And that line wasn't the only one in the area. They were all over the place.

The main line, the Marion & Rye Valley, connected Sugar Grove with Marion, Va., by way of a switchbacked route over Brushy Mountain. A mile or so of the Appalachian Trail follows that right-of-way today. And yet another railroad, the Virginia

Southern, ran south to the metropolis of Troutdale, following today's Va. 16. That line took logs from the forests and brought merchandise for Troutdale's stores, customers for its three hotels and even movies for its theater, which opened 99 years ago this year.

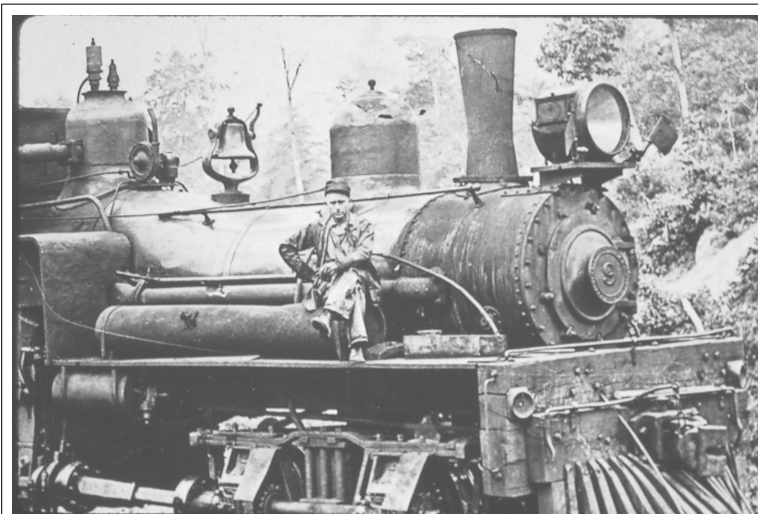
Not many of us think about the railroad history of the mountains where the Appalachian Trail runs, but it was real. Gary Price of Marion documented the

history of the Marion & Rye Valley for a small booklet, "The Switchback Scenic Route," now out of print. Thomas Feters included it in his new survey of Blue Ridge and Smoky Mountain logging railroads, published last year. And Tom Blevins, an employee of the U.S. Forest Service in Sugar Grove, has made it part of his work to find the routes of those old roads. He's tramped all over the mountains locating them, and he's added them to the topographic maps he keeps on file. He

hopes one day to put it all in a book, and he says it's a good story. It was the logging that in reality cleared off so much of the crest zone on Pine Mountain and some of the other peaks in the region, Blevins says. He admits the turn of the 20th century was a less environmentally sensitive time than today is, but he

says, "You can't judge 100 years ago by today. This wouldn't be a National Recreation Area had it not been for this railroad. It wouldn't be so open."

The Marion & Rye Valley Railroad is mentioned in the Appalachian Trail guidebook only where the trail follows its route just north of the South Fork of the Holston River. But there were many more crossings. Blevins said he wouldn't be



An engineer perches on the side of Shay No. 9. This engine was wrecked not much later on the grades of Pine Mountain. (From the "Switchback Scenic Route" by Gary Price, courtesy of Tom Blevins.)

surprised if the trail doesn't cross an abandoned railroad route 25 times between Damascus, Va., and Interstate 81. If you suspect your part of the trail may include an old railroad route or crossing, there are several ways to find out. First, Blevins advises looking for long, straight stretches of trail, with no sharp turns and no steep climbs. Even narrow-gauge trains couldn't handle those. (The Marion & Rye Valley was standard gauge, for the record.) Next, take a metal detector and go see if you can find some spikes. If you hit a place that's good and wet, Blevins says, the old railroad ties may still be there. Beyond that, you might go to the public library in Marion and read Price's booklet, the name of which came from the old railroad route up Pine Mountain.

Before it closed down during the Great Depression, the railroad tried to lure people onto weekend excursion trains. At any rate, next time you bed down at Sugar Grove, think a little bit about the past. You won't hear trains today, but boy, will you hear echoes.

--Tom Dillon

PATH Gets Mail

What does it take to keep a club going? For one thing, someone must frequently visit the Greensboro Post Office and check for mail. Karl Kunkel has handled this task for PATH for many years. A few months ago, he found the following card in our box:

19 June 2008

Mr. Boudman and Club Members,

With grateful appreciation we acknowledge

your very generous \$600 check to Settlers Museum of Southwest Virginia. What a wonderfully unexpected surprise! You can be sure the museum will use the money wisely. Thank you.

*D. House, Director – Settlers Museum
Irene Queen, Volunteer*

Vounteer Hours for FY2008

PATH had a big year in the field and in the office in 2008. We reported 4,881 field hours, 1,483 administrative hours and 1,268 travel hours for a total of 7,632 volunteer hours. This is up from 6,230 reported in 2007.

PATH Officers

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Vice President

Chris Bracknell
Ivanhoe, VA
276-621-5528

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Salisbury, NC 28147-8752

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4421 Whitfield Road
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Trail Supervisor

Bill Boudman
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Fairwood, a long-gone logging town, was west of Troutdale on the route of today's Va. 603. Not even a historical marker remembers it today.

-- Tom Dillon (Courtesy of Tom Blevins)

Piedmont Appalachian Trail Hikers, Inc.

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