

PATH



WAYS

Piedmont Appalachian Trail Hikers

Spring 2009

Every Day Carries

A knife has to rank up there with a compass, matches and a water bottle as a trail necessity. There are so many things you can do with one - make shavings to start a fire, prepare and eat a meal, dig out a splinter, cut through a jammed knot, or just sit on a log and whittle. A good trail knife needs to be tough, big enough to do the job but not so large and heavy that it is a pain to carry. It shouldn't be so expensive that you're terrified of losing it, breaking it or scarring it up. And if your only tangible link with long-gone Grampa is an old well-used John Primble, that one should stay in the sock drawer. But even with all these qualifications, there are many great trail knives out there. I asked some PATH members for their opinions, and this is what I heard:

Mark Doty -

"With all the gizmos now available it is remarkable to me what I usually see on the trail. While many people own a multi-tool (Leatherman or the like) when it comes to backpacking most folks use a small pocketknife or one of the simpler Swiss Army units.

"In my own experience I have owned them all and am back to a single blade pocketknife (Benchmade ATS 34, left handed, a gift). I carry specialized tools if I'm with a group or doing trail work-

a Buck 106 sheath knife for splitting kindling, etc, and a folding saw. These and other special tools stay in a box in the trunk of my car.

"During my stint as a ranger at Shenandoah National Park last year I talked to a lot of people about gear. Most of the thru-hikers I talked to had mailed home their multi-tool by the time they reached Damascus. Most cited two things: weight and the fact that, while it might belong in a car kit, they had only used the pliers once and probably could have gotten around that at the time. And they carried a pocketknife of some variety anyway.

"I ran into one couple who were section hiking and they use one high quality steak knife with a combo blade for everything. They kept it in a heavy cardboard sheath in a long side pocket; readily accessible. I have seen machetes, Kabar Bayonets, and the smallest of folding pocket knives."

I'm looking forward to seeing that Benchmade, Mark. That company is on the leading edge of new tech knives made from carbon fiber and other exotic materials. Even the traditional material knives look rad. I'm a lefty too and I've never seen a knife specially made for "one of us".

Karl Kunkel -

"The first time I went on a work trip (circa April 1995) I brought along my brand-new Leatherman utility tool, an American-made Swiss knife-type instrument, which included a very sharp knife. I was able to keep the tool within easy reach by attaching it to my belt. One of the features of the Leatherman, a pair of needle-nose pliers, let me cut through some rusty old barbed wire that was behind the O'Lystery pavilion where PATH was constructing a little foot bridge. Lately, I've also been taking along a virtually weightless, small Spyderco knife with a serrated edge I can carry in my pocket."

All the Leatherman tools and knives are made in their plant in Portland OR. They are one of the last surviving American cutlery manufacturers. Spyderco is one of the new wave of knife companies. They specialize in serrated blade knives, which have some great applications for trail work.

Karl sent this picture of his blades.



Paul Haag -

"The Leatherman product to me has changed the knife industry. There are many different varieties and sizes to choose from. I carry one that includes a pliers along with the normal assortment of blades and saws. They are compact and can either be carried in a pack or pants pocket or the belt pouch that most come with. The nice thing is that the prices have come down since they were introduced and the variety of options has greatly increased."

Bill Sadler -

"Swiss Army Adventurer - I wanted a lockblade for safety, an important feature when in the wilderness by yourself. I like the mix of tools on this knife. Many Swiss Army Knives have more tools that add to the weight of the knife and that are seldom used. It is a simple and functional design that is great for camping, hiking and for everyday use. I like the feel of it and its usefulness. I have owned a number of knives in the past 50 years and this one rates up there as one of my favorites."

"Swiss Army Adventurer Features:

Large Locking Blade
Phillips Screwdriver
Can (Beer) Opener with Small Screwdriver
Bottle (Beer) Opener with Large Screwdriver and Wire Stripper
Reamer
Key Ring
Tweezers
Toothpick"

Keith Morgan -

"I carry a Victorinox Adventurer pocketknife most of the time - trail or daily use. It has a locking blade and a

minimal set of "gadget" blades. I've used every tool in it at least a time or two. As pocket knives go it's relatively cheap and it sharpens easily, holds an edge pretty well.

"It may be out of production, though - Victorinox tinkers with its lineup all the time and a quick look on a website that sells knives turned up only a similar model with a serrated blade (which I dislike)."

Victorinox is the manufacturer of Swiss Army Knives. Here is a picture from Keith:



And another from Bill:



Paul Clayton -

"I have long been partial to the smaller Gerber folding knives, which are light, easy to sharpen and cheap. On the other hand, I sometimes carry a Buck sheath knife that Marie gave me many years ago. It's good for bigger jobs, like cutting tent stakes or rooting out the stumps and rocks that sometimes seem to occupy the only flat spot to pitch a tent. And that brings up another point, trail knives tend to get used for things that would make the average knife collector cringe. They serve as screwdrivers and pry bars and digging tools, which argues in favor of solid, low-priced production knives as opposed to hand crafted collectibles or antique Cases.

"My current favorite EDC (that's 'Every Day Carry' in knifespeak) is a Bear & Son Workhorse - a 3 1/2 inch lockback single blade. It is solidly made from quality steel at a little plant in Jacksonville, Alabama. It has a tight action so I don't have to worry about it folding up on me at the wrong moment. And it is cheap enough so that if I lost or broke it, it would cause a few minutes of regret but not ruin my day. A disadvantage for some may be that it is a bit heavy - I have heard of long distance hikers pruning down the handles on their tooth brushes to save weight."

Keep 'em sharp, guys. A dull knife is like an empty wallet, no point in carrying it.



Club News

Bill Boudman is the ATC's newest Volunteer of the Month. There is a great write-up in the April issue of the AT Journeys magazine. Kerry Wood, ATC Trail Resource Manager describes Bill as "tireless force in maintaining the club's 65 miles of the A.T." I know we all would agree - except maybe the "tireless" part. No mention of hammocks.

Congratulations, Bill!



Bill, John, Aslan 1993

Events

The Green Mountain Club, Vermont (www.greenmountainclub.org) sent us a letter reminding us that the ATC is

holding its biennial conference on the campus of Castleton State College, Castleton, Vermont, July 17 - 24, 2009. About 1,000 hikers and conservation-minded people will attend.

James Smith, the AutoHarpMan from Al-La-Bam (www.autoharpman.com) is doing his Appal Trail Music Tour May 1 - 20 and Oct 1 -20, 2009. He specializes in fundraising events for AT clubs. The Web site has more detailed information on this old-time and traditional foot-stomping music.

Event news courtesy of Karl Kunkel.

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Greek Strongman

By Greg Weaver

In the depths of winter (well almost-spring anyway) all around the scattered and dispersed PATH members domiciles, I am sure you are all looking forward to spring with great anticipation -- that time of evolving PATH ATC projects, fellowship, food, fun, frolic, tent palaces with central heat and A/C, magic elixir and other "linaments", dump stew, gourmet food and communal meals, and many other PATH specialties and memorable moments.

So, to whet your unrequited and possibly flagging spirits due to a lack of backbreaking "work" during these winter months (unless you participated in this week's upcoming projects before seeing this), I thought I would share with you all some photos from last year (2008) of working with/for Deno Cantos and his "Appalachian Landscape Management" operation for a few months -- actually getting PAID to do what we love to do with PATH for free!!

I have been living in Beaufort SC for 3-1/2 years and, hence, haven't been able to make it up all the way to VA for many work weekends or weeks. I did, however, make it to last year's Konnarock Camp spring cleanup and had a great time helping with the re-wiring of some of the PODS cabins. Enjoy your lights and reliable outlets !!! Let me know when the other 1/2 of the pods are due for re-wiring and maybe I will make it back up for that. I had hoped that would happen at this year's spring cleanup, but that was canceled !!!

Sooooo, the reason for this message -- was to let me bring you up to speed on Deno Cantos' "evolution" since leaving

his full time ATC activities some 4+ (?) years ago and our PATH interactions with him on rock work projects, training weekends, and such. Some of you may be aware of some or all of this, but if not, read on.....

Deno Cantos is our favorite Greek strongman. Deno is a master of rock work and all-around expert in general trail skills like trail design, hand benching (a PATH specialty?), mechanized trail building, etc. I am sure he can out-do any two people on getting crush-and-fill busted up as well. (I speak from experience on that one!!) Believe it or not, he actually had someone working with him last year that could lift more and bigger rock than he can -- at least I think that may be true !!! Deno might disagree.....LOL

Soon after Deno left his ATC affiliation, I contacted him to see if he had any need for some help in his future endeavors. That led to a short time of employment with someone he put me in touch with from Asheville (Fredrica -- "Fred") working on the Pilot Mountain State Park (NC) Jomeoke Trail re-build. I helped out primarily as the Grip-Hoist operator, and did some rock foundation, stonework and railing work as well. I previously posted some photos of that project some time ago. That was a major rock work project with multiple retaining walls and stairways, utilizing about 150 loads of helicoptered-in stone via Air National Guard training missions.

During that time, Deno started a landscape company (ALM - Appalachian Landscape Management) out of the north Georgia area. Deno had an eventual goal of transitioning from landscape work into full-time trail design and building. He now has that operation going, in partnership with his fiance' Fiona, and is an established

member of the Professional Trailbuilders Association. His work has ended up lately (2008) being concentrated largely in the upstate and mid-state SC area (Greenville, Pickens, Caesar's Head, Whitmire/Clinton, etc.), as well as some jobs in West VA and Colorado most recently.

He has purchased some property near Traveler's Rest SC (NW of Greenville) and is in the process of getting established there long term since his SC work is where the action has been. He has a top-notch reputation with the USFS and SC State Park system now and gets work regularly from both of those sources, as well as from developers, foundations, etc. that have trail building needs. The firms does bridgework (wood & fiberglass, etc), stone work, mechanized/hand/combo built hiking/biking/dual-use trail design, building, rerouting -- you name it, they do it.

I contacted him early last year (2008) to inquire about the possibility of his needing some additional help, and I caught him at just the right time. So, I hired on with activity starting up on a rock work project in Table Rock State Park (most popular hiking park in SC near Pickens, adjacent to and joining the Foothills Trail terminus. That was the start of several projects including --

(1) Table Rock State Park SC - Rock work bridge landing & stairway/walls plus general trail rehab where in need of minor reroutes and rock work steps and retaining walls at a "sliding rock" high-use area.

(2) Palmetto Trail - Sumter National Forest SC - Raised boardwalk extension (~ 300 ft.) to prior project that included 2 walkway bridges. Basic structure was ledgers mounted on 6" X 6" treated

timber posts.

(3) Conastee Foundation (Greenville) Greenway Project - 4 sections (total about 1,500 ft.) of 6 ft. and 8 ft. wide bicycle/walking trails with raised boardwalks on drilled-in helical piers (PATH has used that system before.)

(4) Rainbow Falls - Ceasar's Head State Park (Upstate SC) -- I didn't participate in this one, but had a chance to hike the trail and it was some really fantastic all-around rock work that included about all the types you can think of, as well as several foot bridges, on a complete trail rework/upgrade of about 3 miles that ALM did over a period of several months in 2007. I hiked the trail and took quite a few photos, along with some I picked up from one of the crew that worked on it. and will include a sampling of them in the online slide show as well.

Living arrangements were: (1) Table Rock - park employee "barracks" dorm; (2) Campground cabin in RV park near Sumter National Forest; & (3) Conastee - combination of extended stay hotel & RV park.

PS - I finished up remodeling Joyce's house here in Beaufort SC and we sold it last fall (just in time before the market really cratered here), and are now living in an apartment that is in the lower level of an historic home -- Marshlands (located directly on north side of the Beaufort River which is the Intracoastal Waterway thru this area of SC. So, if you are gong to be stuck somewhere, it might as well be "paradise". We can sit at the kitchen table and look out at the river about 200 feet away. If anyone is through this area (Beaufort isn't on the way to anywhere!), we have access to a guest room for an overnight visit. Email me

and see if we will be around.

area from May 14-18 and May 21-25. I

Greg provided these links to people and places mentioned in his article:

Greg's pictures at shutterfly:

<http://share.shutterfly.com/share/received/welcome.sfly?fid=6beeaad3045457ec&sid=8Abs2bJi4atW>

Deno's company, Appalachian Landscape Management:

<http://www.appalachian-landscapes.com/default.html>

Professional Trailbuilders Association:

<http://www.trailbuilders.org/>

Marshlands:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marshlands_\(Beaufort,_South_Carolina](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marshlands_(Beaufort,_South_Carolina)



am open to ideas or individuals who would like to shuttle from Marcia's or possibly Amy's house to trail head. I do not know what dates people will show up or time of arrival. I do hope and expect that we will have PATH members present to work on this Konnarock and PATH project. I do not wish to have vehicles parked at the trail head for a week or several days at a time. A shuttle person would have a lonely and very quiet task.

As I said. I am open to ideas on how to handle this task. Do not fail me loyal PATH members.

Attila the planner

From Susan Daniels at ATC...

Congratulations! PATH's request for a grant to purchase a mower and trailer has been approved by the grants committee. A check to the club in the amount of \$2,500 will be mailed to Club Treasurer Jack Bookman in April. Additional information and an evaluation form will be sent to you at that time.

Konnarock Schedule

We will be working in Jenkins Shelter



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