

# PATHWAYS

Of the Piedmont Appalachian Trail Hikers

PATH Year 54, No. 4

Holidays, 2018

## An AT Christmas Poem

'Twas the night before Christmas and all through the shelter,  
not a creature was stirring except for the mice.  
The food bags were hung on the bear cables with care,  
in hopes that the mice would not go up there.  
The hiker was nestled all snug in his sack,  
while the mice crept around, seeking a snack.  
When out by the privy there arose such a clatter,  
I sprang from my pad to see what was the matter.  
Away to the fire pit I tripped once or twice,  
I tried not to step on those doggone old mice.  
Turned out it was nothing but a tree in the wind,  
making noise in the dark like the world turned on end.  
Wearily back to the shelter I came,  
and waved at the mice and hollered at them by name.  
"Now Hoover, now Dyson, now Dust Care and Snark!  
On Bissell, on Fuller, Dirt Devil and Shark!  
Find your crumbs elsewhere, there's none in my gear.  
You can vacuum tomorrow when I am not here.  
Now get off of the porch and get out of the wall,  
let me rest a bit for tomorrow's long haul!"  
The mice took their flight at my gnashing of teeth,  
and fled from the shelter to hide underneath.  
Such is the night for a hiker on the trail,  
occupying the quiet with a Christmas mouse tale.



Merry Christmas.  
See you on the high ground.

Old Goat, 2017

*Old Goat is an Appalachian Trail hiker who describes himself as a "recovering infantryman," not unusual on the trail. This sort of experience will also be known to others, given warm enough weather. We wish a Merry Christmas to all reading this; come work on the trail with us! Find us on the Web at [www.path-at.org](http://www.path-at.org). Or write to the address on the flip side.*

# What We Did in 2018

Here are the PATH accomplishments for the Forest Service fiscal year Oct. 1, 2017, through Sept. 30, 2018, as listed in October by Trail Supervisor Jim Houck. This was part of a notice to the Forest Service and Appalachian Trail Conservancy. Jim's comment: "It's always good working with our Partners."

General trail maintenance was performed over the 65.4 miles of the PATH section. This included: Footbridge maintenance, Shelter & Privy maintenance, Maintaining blazes & signs, Removing blow downs, Tread rehab, Maintaining water bars, check dams and other drainage features.

Other projects included:

## **Mount Rogers National Recreation Area**

*31.9 miles of the Appalachian Trail, from VA-670 near Teas, VA. to VA-42 near Ceres, VA.*

- 1) Completed the north & south Tilson Appalachian Trail relocations in Rich Valley & up Walker Mountain, on the old Turnpike. Opened for hikers on April 21, 2018.
- 2) Mowed open areas in the I-81 area & Tilson Farmstead areas.

## **Eastern Divide Ranger District**

*33.5 miles of the Appalachian Trail, from VA-42 near Ceres, VA. to US-52 near Bland, VA.*

- 1) Boundary Maintenance/Monitoring on Garden Mountain continues (and was completed in November, according to leader Greg Weaver).



- 2) Picnic table at Knot Maul Shelter was replaced with a refurbished Forest Service-donated 800# table. Hauled in & assembled by 20 PATH members.

- 3) Mowed Chestnut Ridge Meadows (open areas).

- 4) In-depth inspection of the Lick Creek Footbridge was completed on April 20, 2018.

The inspection was conducted by Stephen Hmurciak(USDA-FS, MRNRA).

The Bridge was rated as, generally fair. Recommend re-inspection in 5 years.

A list of short term repairs was given to PATH & work continues on completing that list.

- 5) Worked with Virginia Department of Transportation as it graveled & graded the parking area at US-52 @ the Trail.

Three picnic tables were placed in an area adjacent to the parking by Virginia DOT.

# Warbler Work with Blue Ridge Discovery Center

*(From the Blue Ridge Discovery Center News. The tract is the new land that was the focus of our PATH Summerfest work last summer. Vice President Steve Yonts has been responsible for much of the PATH involvement with this work.)*



During the last week in September, the Blue Ridge Discovery Center teamed up with the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, Piedmont Appalachian Trail Hikers, AmeriCorps NCCC, the Quarter Way Inn and the US Forest Service to maintain and enhance golden-winged warbler habitat along the Appalachian Trail in northern Smyth County.

The ecologically valuable tract of old field and shrubby habitat is one of the few areas with known breeding golden-winged warblers in the county. These habitat specialists require just the right mix of vegetative structure for a successful breeding season. The old field habitat that is currently found throughout the tract is in various stages of succession. If allowed to progress through succession, much of the area will revert back to forest and the diversity of wildlife that is found within the tract will decline. Habitat loss though natural and unnatural means is thought to be one of the leading causes of the drastic decline in golden-winged warbler populations across their range.

While the warblers are headed to Central and South America for the winter, this yearly maintenance of strategic brush hogging and non-native invasive plant control can safely be completed to maintain the correct ratio of structure across the tract.

Not all of the work was done with machinery. AmeriCorps NCCC crew members and a few folks from Celanese Corporation provided much of the enthusiasm and energy to tackle the invasive plants across patches of the tract. All of the hard work that was accomplished this fall will assure that the golden-winged warblers will find the habitat that they need next spring.

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## Who We Are and What This Is

This is a newsletter for the Piedmont Appalachian Trail Hikers, a trail work group that maintains approximately 70 miles of the Appalachian Trail in Southwest Virginia. This newsletter is currently coming out two or three times a year with plans to increase to four times a year, given enough material and contributions. It is sent by email to the PATH List, or by U.S. Mail to members who don't have email. Feel free to print and post in your local outdoor store or elsewhere. SPRING NEWSLETTER DEADLINE: March 1, 2019. Web site: [www.path-at.org](http://www.path-at.org).

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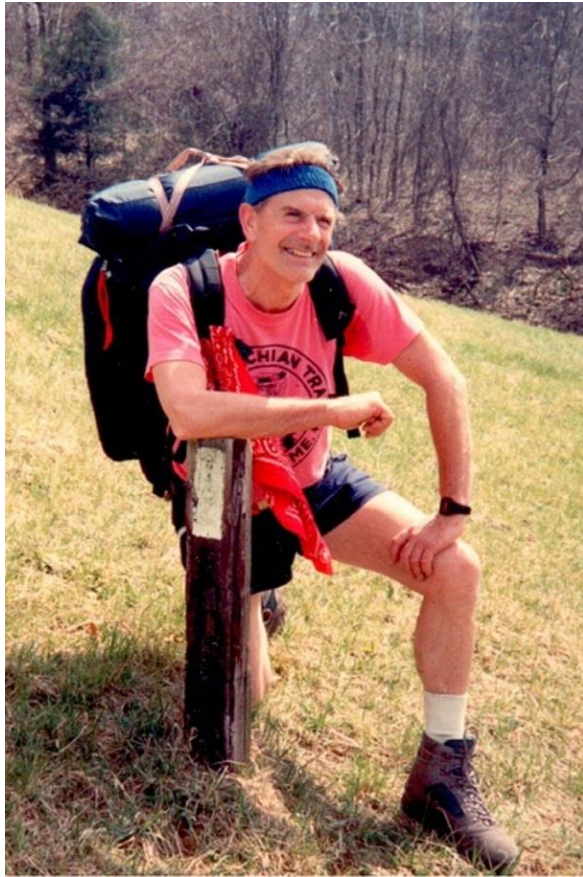
Pictures courtesy of Martha Emrey

## Flowers of the Forest

■ We are sad to report the passing of long-time PATH worker **David Emrey** on Oct. 23 in Greensboro, his home town. He was 86 years old and had suffered from cancer, according to his wife of 21 years, Martha Emrey. David and Martha have been particularly known for keeping in touch with many trail neighbors along our nearly 70 miles of trail – and for dance moves to many bluegrass and old time bands in southwestern Virginia. A work trip with David and Martha inevitably meant either a dance or a concert on Saturday night somewhere in southwestern Virginia, along with hiking or work during the day. David recorded more than 1,000 miles on the AT. The picture shows David playing washtub bass with a father and son who were hiking the trail near Ceres, Va., a few years ago.

David was born in Pottstown, Pa., raised in Wilson Borough Easton, Pa., and after serving in the Army monitoring A-bomb tests and in Korea, moved after discharge and marriage to Youngstown, Ohio. Trained as a healthcare community organizer, he was a member of the Mahoning County Board of Health and served on Ohio Gov. John Gilligan's 1973 Healthcare Task Force. In later years, he was a machinery designer, salesman and in 1982 founded the Hi-Tec Equipment Co., a supplier of industrial equipment. Recently, he had been team honcho for a group of skilled persons making and selling accident-preventing industrial safety barriers. He began AT work after moving to Greensboro in 1979, accumulating 40 years of work.





David engaged in a variety of educational opportunities over his lifetime and became a mystical religious humanist with membership in the Unitarian Universalist Church of Greensboro. High Point University helped the family with end-of-life arrangements, and a Service of Remembrance took place Nov. 17 at the Presbyterian Church of the Covenant. Many PATHers attended.

For those who weren't there, here is the chorus of a hymn we sang, particularly appropriate to David's life:

"Let it be a dance we do. May I have this dance with you?

Through the good times and the bad times, too, Let it be a dance."

David is survived by Martha; sons Curtis, of Greensboro, and Raul (Tiffany), of Easton, Pa.; their mother, Mercedes, of Bethlehem, Pa.;

grandchildren Taylor Simmons of Pensacola., Fla., Abby Emrey of Reston, Va., and Lynn, Emily and Erica Emrey of Easton, Pa.; mother-in-law Betsy Winkvist of West Bend, Wisc.; brother Donald W. (Alayne) of Bethlehem; several in-laws, nieces and nephews, and lots of trail friends. Memorials can go either to PATH or to the Hospice and Palliative Care of Greensboro, 2500 Summit Ave., Greensboro, N.C. 27405.

■ We also offer condolences to Karl Kunkel on the passing of his mother, **Edna Gadowski Kunkel**, 94, on Aug. 31 in Burlington, N.C. Mrs. Kunkel was a native of Greenfield, Mass., and a veteran of World War II, serving as a 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant at the hospital in Udine, Italy. It was there she met her future husband, Capt. Charles E. "Ed" Kunkel. She is survived by sons Karl and Conrad, daughter-in-law Carol, her sister Amelia Irby of Newberry, S.C., and many nieces and nephews. Services were Sept. 11 in Burlington. Memorials go to the National Multiple Sclerosis Society.

■ Other deaths we have been told about include **Mike Bell** of Tazewell, Va., who with his wife Donna maintained the trash barrel and the crossing of Va. 623 (on the mountain south of Burke's Garden) during thru-hiker season. We also note the passing of longtime AT leader **Bob Proudman**. A memorial service took place Dec. 8 at Shepherdstown Presbyterian Church in Shepherdstown, W.Va.

# Bits and pieces

■ Remember that **fall hunting seasons** continue in our part of Virginia, so **wear blaze orange** in the woods; our trail is largely on national forest land and open for hunting. **Bear season and deer season continue through Jan. 5, turkey season** through Dec. 29 and Jan. 12-26 and in the spring, April 13-May 18. Check the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries for details. That web site is [www.dgif.virginia.gov](http://www.dgif.virginia.gov).



Photo by Jim Houck

PATH work sessions aren't necessarily all work. Doing a bit of jamming during last summer's Summerfest are, from left, Kristianne, Brett, Jon and Tom. PATH's Summerfests normally take place in June somewhere along our nearly 70 miles of trail. This one was near the Tilson Farmstead in the Rich Valley. Our 2019 schedule, including Summerfest, will be out in March.

■ Oh! Bah! Humbug! First the **PATH annual meeting** was postponed because of a conflict with David's services (See above), then because of an impending snowstorm. Now we're talking about it for sometime in January, and your editor has gotten tired of waiting for something to happen (plus he's in love with that poem on Page 1). So we're going ahead with the Holiday

newsletter even though we can't report on doings at the annual meeting. The meeting will be reported on in the Spring issue of Pathways, which should come out in March.

Major orders of business for the annual meeting include election of officers and the updating of the PATH web site, located at [www.path-at.org](http://www.path-at.org). The site has been a vital part of the club for years now, but it's being maintained by **Tony Roberts**, a club member who long ago moved out of the region and is continuing the work out of the goodness of his heart. Problems with it are illustrated by the fact that we currently can't upload pictures to it. We are hoping for a good report on the Web site's future, and we will also have more to say about that in March.

■ There's been a lot of talk about how to reserve the cabin at **Stony Fork Campground** for PATH work weekends during the summer and fall. Here's how to do it: Go the Web site at [www.recreation.gov](http://www.recreation.gov) and enter "Stony Fork Cabin" in the search line. Click availability, and you'll be able to put in your preferred dates. Costs are \$65 per night or \$410 weekly. You can also call (800) 628-7202.

■ If you don't have email and want this newsletter mailed to you, you'll have to get this information second-hand, of course, but please let someone know. You can contact the editor at the addresses at the top of the letter, or contact one of the officers through the PATH Web Page at [www.path-at.org](http://www.path-at.org).

■ To send information to all members via the PATH List, send your email messages to [path-list@path-at.org](mailto:path-list@path-at.org). To subscribe to the PATH List, see the directions on the Web page at Inside PATH, which will require an ID and password to enter. Subscribing to the list will increase the amount of email you receive, but it's a quick way to get informed and involved about PATH work. **It will pay you to sign up for the PATH List.**

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## PATH Officers

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# Time to renew

It's fall, and time to renew your PATH membership for the coming year of 2019. You may join PATH (or renew) at our Web site, [www.path-at.org](http://www.path-at.org), with PayPal, or print and mail this form with check or money order. You can also attend the annual meeting in January and renew there. Please, don't mail cash!



Name (s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Annual membership dues are \$20 for an individual \_\_\_\_\_, \$25 for a family \_\_\_\_\_ or \$15 for a student \_\_\_\_\_. Donations are also accepted. Donation total \_\_\_\_\_

Send payment to PATH Treasurer, P.O. Box 4423, Greensboro, North Carolina

27404. Total amount of money enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

Piedmont Appalachian Trail Hikers *Merry Christmas*

P.O. Box 4423

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Address correction requested

