

# PATHWAYS

## Of the Piedmont Appalachian Trail Hikers

PATH Year 55, No. 1

Spring, 2019

This is a newsletter for the Piedmont Appalachian Trail Hikers, a trail work club that maintains approximately 70 miles of the Appalachian Trail in Southwest Virginia. This newsletter comes out four times a year, as long as we have enough material and contributions. It is sent by email to the PATH List and others, or by U.S. Mail to members who don't have email. Feel free to print and post in your local outdoor store. SUMMER NEWSLETTER DEADLINE June 1, 2019. Web site: [www.path-at.org](http://www.path-at.org). Or for info: [PiedmontATHikers@gmail.com](mailto:PiedmontATHikers@gmail.com).

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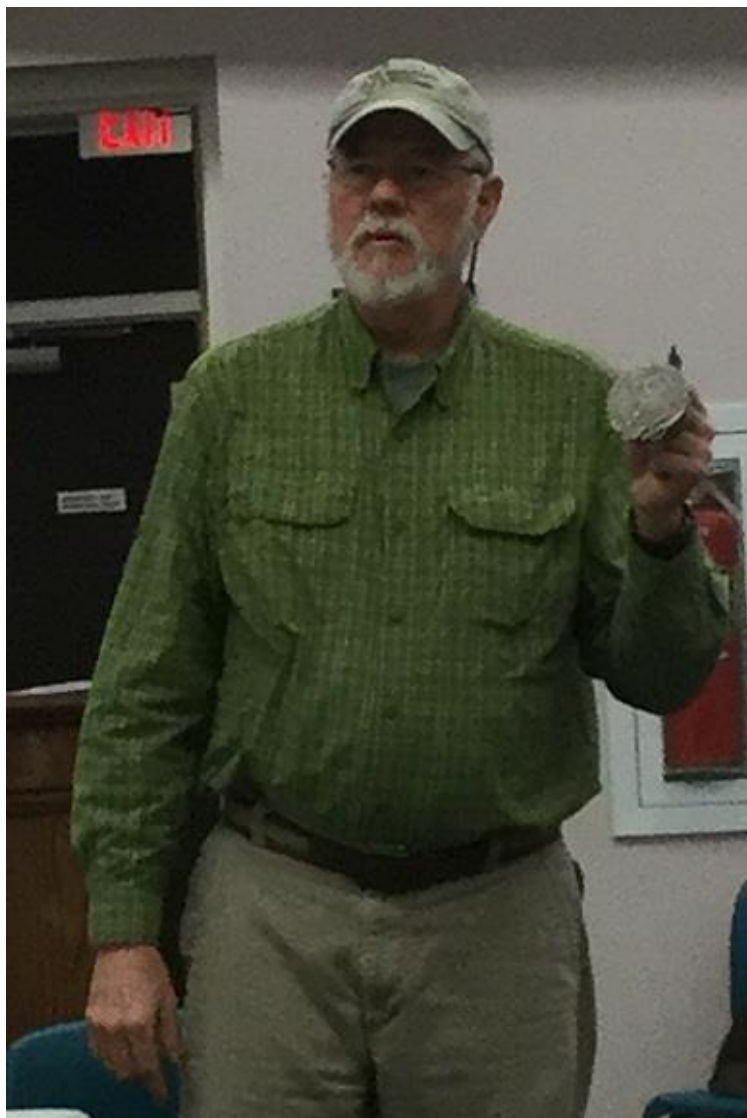
"Frank and Ernest," from the Newspaper Enterprise Association

## Jim Takes Another Turn as Our President

Former president and longtime trail master Jim Houck agreed to another term as at least interim president of the Piedmont Appalachian Trail Hikers at our annual meeting, which was finally held March 2 at the Reynolda Manor Branch Library in Winston-Salem, N.C.

The election sets the stage for the beginning of our 2019 trail work season on the Appalachian Trail in southwest Virginia. We'll start March 15 with the regular third-weekend-of-the-month trail work projects. Other work projects, as well as other dates and events important to us, are in the calendar elsewhere in this newsletter. So is information about how to get involved.

Other officers will stay the same: Steve Yonts as vice president, Hunt McKinnon as secretary and David Faucette as treasurer. Contact information for these folks is found on Page 7



of the newsletter. New board members will be Herb MacDonald, David Atkinson and Tom Dillon.

Jim takes over from Jeff Brown, who had previously announced he would be stepping down. It's Jim's second go-round following a good number of years previously. However, he and others stressed the need for getting more people, and younger people, involved in the club. His term will run for one year. We did welcome new members Rich and Sue Freeman of Winston-Salem.

The annual meeting had originally been scheduled in November, but was postponed because of a conflict with the memorial service for longtime club member David Emrey. It was postponed again a month later because of an impending snowstorm.

Besides the reorganization, most of the meeting was taken up with Greg Weaver's report on the successful conclusion of the five-year boundary monitoring effort and with reports on plans for the year. Again, see the calendar.

The boundary monitoring program began in 2014 as an effort to identify and watch out for encroachments on some 22 miles of public land boundaries. As Vice President Steve Yonts put it, "There's a tremendous amount of land we don't know anything about unless you get out and walk the boundary." Greg has been nominated for volunteer of the year, Jeff said.

Greg's final report shows a total of 63 volunteer days put in by 16 PATH members. That does not include 36 volunteer days put in by employees of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy and 17 volunteer days put in by others, including students from Mooresville, N.C., High School. All told, 116 volunteer days went into the project.

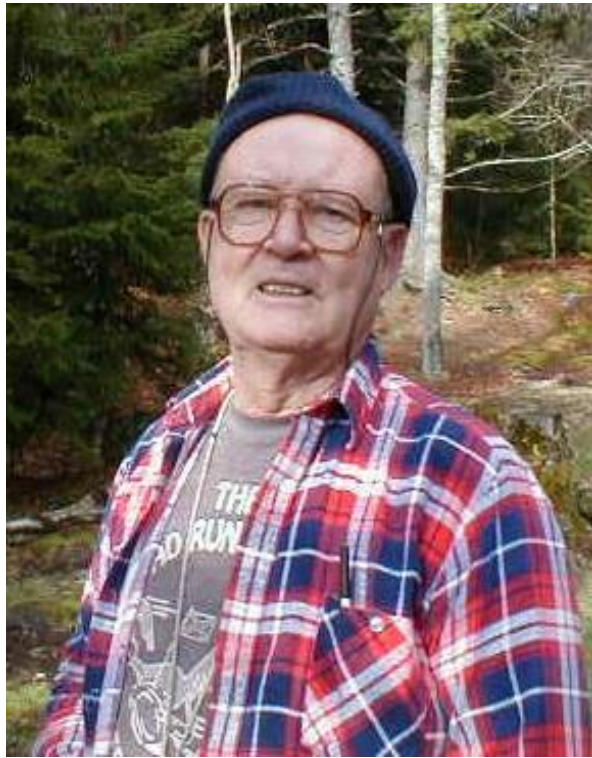
Karl Kunkel's picture on this page shows Greg with the remains of one of the damaged survey markers that were found during the work. Of a total of 239 markers, 190 were in good condition, Greg said. Seven (like this one) were damaged beyond repair, and 43 others were listed as not found or missing. That means anything from buried too deep to find, to vandalized, to destroyed by snowplows or farm machinery.

The work is something that will have to go on, Greg told the 20-some members at the annual meeting. It's hoped that future boundary monitoring will be easier to accomplish.

# Flowers of the Forest

From Ed Clayton:

Some PATH members likely knew **Dean Sims** at the Sugar Grove volunteer camp and a few years back on the Konnarock Crew. Dean died Tuesday morning, Jan. 29, in Florida. One of his daughters called Mississippi (Ross Sherman), who called me. Dean was 93 or so. For a year



he had been in a memory unit of a retirement center. Dean, no doubt, holds the record for the most nights spent in the Pine Mountain Cabin and probably the record for the most hours of any Mount Rogers volunteer.

The stories that Dean told and the stories about Dean are legends. Ross and I spent time with Dean in the Pine Mountain Cabin and other time with him in the Volunteer Camp, so we have heard many of them. Once I started staying with Ross and Dean in the cabin, Ross and I had to watch the food leftovers. If we had oatmeal for breakfast, Dean would put the leftovers in soup. So, we made certain to quickly throw away the leftovers.

Dean was an accomplished celestial navigator. When he worked for Western Union, he was the key person on a ship doing repairs to undersea communication cables.

In later years, Dean always showed up for camp clean up week, sharpened tools, and was a wiz at winch repairs.

The “pipe bomb” story was a classic. Dean was on the way to Mount Rogers in his old station wagon with one door that did not match the paint on the rest of the vehicle (it was cheaper that way). At the time, we kept a FS radio on overnight in the cabin. (We thought that there might be an emergency that would demand action by us.) Dean had fabricated a holder for 8 D-cells to provide power for the radio. The holder was made from two-inch white PVC pipe with wires sticking out each end. Dean had the battery holder on top of other stuff in the back of the station wagon. He stopped at a shopping center to make some purchases. When he came back to the station wagon, it was surrounded by police. Someone had walked by and seen the “pipe bomb” and called 911. Dean explained that it was just a battery holder and eventually continued his trip to Mount Rogers.

A more serious story was the “wreck.” Somewhere on the way between Florida and Mount Rogers, Dean was involved in a wreck (we never learned who was at fault). Dean's old station wagon was totaled. He found a motel where he could spend the night, located a used



pickup truck which he purchased, and continued the trip, arriving at Mount Rogers a day late. He was probably driving that truck the last time that he came to Mount Rogers. As I recall, the truck has something fancier than steel rims for the 4 tires on the ground but the spare had just a steel rim. Dean rotated all 5 tires and so there were 3 tires on the ground with nice rims and the 4th with just a steel rim.

For you who are getting a digital version of this newsletter, an ATC memorial page can be found [HERE](#). “Memories of Dean” document is [HERE](#). For those getting a print edition, we’ll try to run a story or two in later issues.

## 2019 Calendar

*Here is trail master Jim Houck’s rough schedule for 2019, along with other events. More events will be added as we know about them. All trailwork weekends are subject to cancellation if there is another government shutdown; contact us if you’re not sure. Other events should take place as scheduled.*

**March 8-10                      Southern Partnership Meeting                      Black Mountain, N.C.**  
A yearly gathering of the 12 trail clubs, agency partners, AT communities and regional staff who manage and coordinate work on the AT between Springer Mountain, Ga., and Rockfish Gap, Va.  
Email [kcozza@appalachiantrail.org](mailto:kcozza@appalachiantrail.org) or call (828) 357-4847.

**March 15-17                      March Volunteer Weekend                      Sugar Grove, Va.**  
Working out of the Forest Service trail volunteer camp at Sugar Grove. We’ll be doing trail assessment after the winter & some light trail maintenance. Pot-luck meal Saturday evening.  
Note: ATC Sugar Grove Camp cleanup will take place immediately after this, March 19-22.

**April 9-10                      Crosscut Saw Certification                      Sugar Grove, Va.**  
Crosscut saw certification and recertification. Participants wanting to stay the night are free to set up a tent or stay in a pod next door at the Volunteer Trail Camp. Bathhouses, kitchen, and pavilion will be available as well. Email [jkloehn@appalachiantrail.org](mailto:jkloehn@appalachiantrail.org) or call (540) 904-4391.

**April 12-14                      Wilderness First Aid                      Sugar Grove, Va.**  
Wilderness First Aid and CPR Training at no cost to you; it’s free. (PATH pays.) This is a top-notch course that will leave you more confident about handling emergencies and injuries in the woods. Email [jkloehn@appalachiantrail.org](mailto:jkloehn@appalachiantrail.org) or call (540) 904-4391.

**April 19-21                      April Volunteer Weekend                      Sugar Grove, Va.**  
We’ll base Camp at Sugar Grove, doing general trail maintenance and sidehill rehab on Garden Mountain, Va. 623 to Jenkins Shelter, with a pot-luck meal Saturday evening.

**April 27-28                      Chainsaw Certification                      Sugar Grove, Va.**  
Chainsaw certification and recertification. Participants wanting to stay the night are free to set up a tent or stay in a pod next door at the Volunteer Trail Camp. Bathhouses, kitchen, and pavilion will be available as well. Email [jkloehn@appalachiantrail.org](mailto:jkloehn@appalachiantrail.org) or call (540) 904-4391.



Blue Ridge Discovery Center

Yes, Burke's Garden is a great place for birding. Birders from the Blue Ridge Discovery Center glimpsed this great horned owl in the garden on Feb. 9. Birding is one of many field trips scheduled as part of the 45<sup>th</sup> annual Mount Rogers Naturalist Rally on Friday and Saturday of Mother's Day weekend. See the contact information in the calendar below.

**May 10-12                      Mount Rogers Naturalist Rally                      Konnarock, Va.**

Operated by the Blue Ridge Discovery Center, this is the premier naturalist rally in the region. Includes dinner and a talk Friday evening by Lara Call Gastinger, botanical artist, followed by a wide selection of field trips on Saturday. (276) 293-1232 or [www.blueridgediscoverycenter.org/mnrn/](http://www.blueridgediscoverycenter.org/mnrn/)

**May 17-19                      May Volunteer Weekend                      Stony Fork, Va.**

Base Camp probably at the U.S. Forest Service Stony Fork Campground off U.S. 52 north of Wytheville, Va. General trail maintenance and sidehill rehab, Va. 615 to Jenkins Shelter, with a pot-luck meal Saturday evening.

**May 17-19                      33<sup>rd</sup> Trail Days Festival                      Damascus, Va.**

Trail Days calls itself "the ultimate yearly gathering of hikers and AT enthusiasts of all stripes." It takes place in the Damascus Town Park. Camping is available at \$5 for the weekend. Weekend parking costs \$20. Call (540) 904-4393 or visit [traildays.us](http://traildays.us). That's [www.traildays.us](http://www.traildays.us).

**May 20-28                      Wilderness Skills Institute                      Brevard, N.C.**

This is two one-week courses in wilderness skills, a partnership between the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, the U.S. Forest Service and the Southern Appalachian Wilderness Stewards. \$50 gas allowance for PATH members. Visit [www.wildernessskillsinstitute.org](http://www.wildernessskillsinstitute.org).

**June 11-17                      Summerfest XVIII                      Davis Valley, Va.**

We'll be car camping at a new location in Davis Valley just north of Interstate 81. We'll be building a boardwalk along Dry Run.

**July 19-21                      July Volunteer Weekend                      Stony Fork, Va.**

Base Camp probably at Stony Fork, but work will be centered on trail maintenance on Garden Mountain, with a pot-luck meal Saturday evening.

**August 16-18                      Mt Rogers Summer Naturalist Rally                      Konnarock, Va.**

Operated by the Blue Ridge Discovery Center, this is the summer version of the long-running spring naturalist rally. (276) 293-1232 or [www.blueridgediscoverycenter.org/mrn/](http://www.blueridgediscoverycenter.org/mrn/)

**August 16-18                      August Volunteer Weekend                      Stony Fork, Va.**

Base Camp probably at the U.S. Stony Fork Campground off U.S. 52 north of Wytheville, Va. General trail maintenance, with a pot-luck meal Saturday evening.

**September 20-22                      September Volunteer Weekend                      Stony Fork, Va.**

Base Camp probably at the Stony Fork Campground off U.S. 52 north of Wytheville, Va. General trail maintenance, with a pot-luck meal Saturday evening.

**October 18-20                      October Volunteer Weekend                      Sugar Grove, Va.**

Base Camp probably back at the Forest Service Volunteer Work Camp at Sugar Grove. General trail maintenance, with a pot-luck meal Saturday evening.

**November 16                      PATH Annual Meeting                      TBA**

To revisit our year and what we've accomplished. The meeting will be held somewhere in the PATH membership area in Virginia or North Carolina. Hopefully it will be on time this year.

**July 31-Aug. 3, 2020                      AT Vista 2020                      Ramapo College, N.J.**

Hikes, workshops and excursions, hosted by the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference. More info is at [www.atvista.org](http://www.atvista.org). Volunteer and preregistration are open now. This sounds like it is the successor to the late lamented biennials. Don't know if it is annual or biennial.

## Bits and Pieces

■ **Spring turkey season in Virginia** is set for April 13-May 18, so wear blaze orange if you think you may be working in turkey territory. Most of our sections of the Appalachian Trail are on National Forest land, which is open to hunting. Check the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries for details. That web site is [www.dgif.virginia.gov](http://www.dgif.virginia.gov).

■ And now, some news about 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 were hoping for a good report at the annual meeting and board meeting, but it looks like final approval is still pending. We will advise people through Pathways and the Path List when the new Web site is up and running. Keep your fingers crossed.

■ If you're staying at Sugar Grove, remember there is no cell phone service there. Some people have been able to get out at the Mount Rogers NRA headquarters at the top of the mountain. **The EMERGENCY number for Sugar Grove is (276) 677-4055**. This number is for emergencies only and not friendly chatter. Limit calls to less than 10 minutes and do not take phone to your pod. The Trail Maintenance Coordinator may also receive calls notifying him of cancellations or changes in individual plans. The USFS and ATC have been gracious enough to provide this phone and also internet access 365 days of the year.

■ **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). Or see contact information below.

■ 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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# Want to Join?

We have a lot of trail work scheduled on the Appalachian Trail in 2019, and this is the time to get enrolled. 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 work weekends and join or 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 enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

Piedmont Appalachian Trail Hikers  
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Address correction requested

