



Smoky Mountains Hiking Club

P O Box 51592 Knoxville, TN 37950-1592

Exploring the Smokies Since 1924

December 2017

BUCK BALD SUNSET/MOONRISE HIKE December 1 - Friday

Start your weekend off with a nice short hike to enjoy the sunset from a fabulous nearly 360 degree view. We'll hike up a gravel road to Buck Bald (south of Tellico Plains) and arrive just before sunset. Hopefully we will have a clear late fall evening. We may setup a campfire depending on the mood. As the sun sets, the full moon will already be rising in the east and should provide ample light to illuminate the trail back down (bring headlamps just in case). Hike: 4 miles RT, rated Easy. Meet at **Lenoir City Ruby Tuesday <see list>** at 3:00 pm just off I-75 at Exit 81 (leave time for I-40 traffic). Drive: 120 miles RT {@4¢ = \$4.80}.
Leader: Tim Bigelow bigelowt2@mindspring.com 865-607-6781.

SMHC INSTALLATION DINNER FOX DEN COUNTRY CLUB December 9 – Saturday

Don't miss the SMHC annual banquet from 5:00 to 9:00 PM at the Fox Den Country Club, 12284 N. Fox Den Drive, Knoxville, TN 37934 ([Map Link](#)). The program will include author David Brill as our special guest speaker, outstanding music, and a delicious meal, along with the installation of the 2018 Board and presentation of awards. Cost: \$25. Please register and pay online at the SMHC website (www.smhclub.org) or by contacting SMHC Social Committee members Priscilla Clayton (865-966-4142, sigmtngirl@earthlink.net), Beth Eades (865-609-8311, eadesb@comcast.net), or Jeannette Gilbert (865-483-8774, corsica111@att.net). For general questions about the banquet or special requests, contact Social Committee Chair Debbie Goddard (865-382-3047, debbiegoddard@bellsouth.net). Reservations deadline is December 4, and cancellation deadline is December 6. (See page 4 for additional information.)

HOUSE MOUNTAIN December 10 - Sunday

Come walk off the calories from the Installation Banquet the night before by visiting the highest point in Knox County, House Mountain. We will hike up the East Overlook Trail, visit the east overlook, then walk the ridge to the west overlook, and then back down. This will be a more leisurely walk than most, about 5 miles, but do not underestimate this old piece of rock. The trails are rocky, eroded, and steep, in spots. Unfortunately, this hike also offers a great example of the damage that over-use and misuse (cutting switchbacks) can do to a trail. Meet at **Comcast on Asheville Hwy <see list>** at 9:30 am or at the trailhead at 10:00 am. Drive 25 miles RT from Comcast {@4¢ = \$1}.
Leader: Brad Reese, bradktn@gmail.com, 865-599-1708.

Visit our website: www.smhclub.org

WEDNESDAY HIKE: OLD MAC AT FROZENHEAD December 13 - Wednesday

This hike will take the North Old Mac trail, to the Lookout Tower if desired, and return on the South Old Mac trail. Hike: 7 miles without the Lookout Tower, or 8 miles with the tower, rated Moderate. Meet at **Oak Ridge Books-a-Million/Gold's Gym <see list>** at 8:00 am. Drive 50 miles RT {@4¢ = \$2}.
Leader: Michael Zielinski, kf4yws@comcast.net, 865-363-6527.

ROARING FORK RAMBLE OFF-TRAIL December 16 - Saturday

Our Route will begin at the historic Ely's Mill in Gatlinburg where the Roaring Fork Motor Nature Trail ends. We will start out hiking up the closed Nature Trail road, but soon leave it to explore old roads, home sites, and cemeteries. Our ramble will pass the Houser cemetery, the Jasper Mellinger home and cemetery, the Sherman Clabo place, and many other sites of interest. There will be some stream crossings and off-trail portions. Hike: around 8 miles, rated moderately difficult due to the off-trail portions and stream crossings. Drive: 90 miles RT {@4¢ = \$4}. **Preregistration for this off-trail hike is required – please contact the leader for meeting time and place.**
Leader: Ed Fleming, edwrdfm@aol.com, 865-548-2489.

RICH MOUNTAIN LOOP December 23 - Saturday

Winter is a great time to enjoy the wonderful views of Cades Cove from atop of Rich Mountain. The temps are nice and cool and the view-blocking foliage has gone away for the season. We will do this popular loop hike in a counter clockwise manner starting out in the parking area at the entrance to the Cades Cove Loop Road. Beginning on the Rich Mountain Loop Trail the group will soon access the Crooked Arm Ridge and Indian Grave Gap Trails that will lead us to the top of Rich Mountain. After lunch it is "all downhill", so to speak, to complete our walk in the woods. Besides the beautiful views of Cades Cove, other highlights include the 25-ft. Crooked Arm Falls, lunch at the old Rich Mountain Fire Tower site and a visit to the John Oliver Cabin which dates back to the 1820s. The route is 8.5 miles and rated moderate. Meet at **the Alcoa Food City parking lot <see list>** ready to leave by 8:00 am, or at the Loop Road entrance parking area by 9:00 am. Drive 56 miles RT {@4¢ = \$2.24}.
Leader: Billy Heaton, bheaton8@yahoo.com, 865-924-0095.

SMHC Newsletter Editor: Don Dunning 865-705-2154

Send hike write-ups & photos to: dudz1@aol.com.

Please include preferred contact method (email, phone).

WEDNESDAY HIKE: RICH MOUNTAIN TRAIL/ROAD
December 27 - Wednesday

This hike will follow the Rich Mountain trail to the Rich Mountain Loop, down to the Indian Grave Gap trail; from there, back to Rich Mountain road and return to the cars Hike: 8.2 miles with a 1540 ft elevation gain in the first 2.3 miles; rated Moderate for the first 2.3 miles, Easy after that. Meet at **Alcoa Food City <see list>** at 8:00 am. Drive: 50 miles RT {@4¢ = \$2}. Leader: Ron Brandenburg, ronb86@comcast.net, 865-482-5078.

MEETING PLACES: **Alcoa Food City** = On right between 3rd & 4th stoplight (on Hall Rd., TN 35), a block before Big Lots. [Map Link](#). **Comcast on Asheville Hwy** = From Exit 394 ramp off I-40 go left (east) on Asheville Hwy, US-11E/25W/70, to signal light at top of hill; turn right, down into Comcast lot, 5720 Asheville Hwy; park to left of entry, about 2 lanes over toward the exit end of lot. [Map Link](#). **Fox Den Country Club** = From I-40 Exit 373 take N. Campbell Station Road, turn right on Kingston Pike 2 miles, turn right on Fox Den Blvd, then left onto N. Fox Den Drive to 12284 N. Fox Den Drive. [Map Link](#). **Lenoir City Ruby Tuesday** = At I-75 Exit 81, immediately to the west of I-75, at 120 Interchange Park Lane, Lenoir City, TN. [Map Link](#). **Oak Ridge Books-a-Million/Gold's Gym** = 310 South Illinois Avenue 3-1/2 traffic lights in, on left coming from Knoxville, opposite Walmart. Meet next to Illinois Ave. in front of Books-a-Million. [Map Link](#).

COMING EVENTS – January 2018

1 Monday	Seven Islands State Park
6 Saturday	Finley Cane/Lead Cove
13 Saturday	North Old Mac/South Old Mac Loop at Frozen Head State Park
20 Saturday	Abrams Falls via Abrams Ranger Sta.
27 Saturday	Lumber Ridge/Spruce Flats Easy OT

NEWCOMER TO HIKING WITH SMHC?

Some hints: Our 'difficulty ratings' are gauged to SMHC members with some experience with our hikes, not to the general public, nor to sometime or flatland hikers who are all likely to find our 'easy, moderate, or difficult' seem to under-rate the difficulty. Always be prepared for worse weather (wetter, colder) than expected. Wear adequate boots. Bring rainwear, water, spare food. Each carpool rider should reimburse driver about 4¢ per mile. Doubts? Call a leader.

And please note: No dogs or firearms are permitted on any Club hikes, whether inside or outside of GSMNP

FOR THE RECORD

Clingmans Dome and Goshen Prong Trail 10/1/2017

Three hikers started out on a cool morning at Clingmans Dome and walked up to the observatory tower to check out progress on the repairs. We then headed downhill on the AT which was in very good shape. There were some nice views but the fall colors hadn't really arrived yet even in the high country. We met up with a backcountry ranger and had a nice chat at the Goshen Prong Trail. The temperature warmed rapidly. The Goshen Prong Trail was a nice downhill hike without too much to see except a small cave and some sparse views. We broke for lunch at Campsite 23 and then continued on to the Little River trail junction. At Elkmont, we checked out the Troll Bridge which is still intact and saw the remnant chimneys from the recently removed cabins.

Tim Bigelow



Yahoo Falls and Sheltoewe Trace 10/14/2017

On this beautiful and slightly cooler October day, 12 members gathered at the Yahoo Falls Trailhead in Big South Fork, near Whitley City, KY. We had views of the bluffs above Big South Fork river right away, then descended a small gorge to see Yahoo Falls, the tallest waterfall in Kentucky, dropping 113 ft. The falls are slender and delicate, but drop over the edge of a massive sandstone rockhouse that is stunning. As we hiked on, we passed Yahoo Arch, Markers Arch, as well as bluffs and ship-like boulders. It was also a pleasure to see a relatively healthy hemlock population in the forest! After picking up Sheltoewe Trace (the Shawnee name for the "Big Turtle" Daniel Boone), we hiked more along the river, then looped back to climb a set of steps to the top of the gorge. It was pretty warm by then, so almost every hiker stopped for an ice cream treat in Whitley City on the way home!

Diane Petrilla and Lynda Bryan



Hangover from Big Fat Gap**10/21/2017**

Only five hikers showed up for one of the best Fall hikes there is. Hangover has 360' views including much of the Great Smoky Mountains and six lakes: Santeetlah, Fontana, Cheoah, Calderwood, Chilhowee & Tellico. Color was not peak but we had the hangover to ourselves.

David Smith and Debra Barton

**Mt. Cammerer On-Trail and Off-Trail****10/28/2017**

The stalwart hike leaders for the on- and off-trail hikes to Mt. Cammerer awaited the arrival of hikers at Comcast on a cold and rainy Saturday morning, but alas, no hikers arrived. To make the best of the situation, the three leaders at Comcast decided to go to breakfast instead, where they regaled each other with stories of past hikes and watched the rain come down, along with the temperature. One optimistic and eager hiker did make it to Cosby from Bryson City for the off-trail hike, only to have the hopes of hiking dashed by the continuing downpour.

Elise Eustace, Ed Fleming, Jon Richey, and Rebekah Young.

Low Gap Trail to Mt. Cammerer**11/1/2017**

We had 17 hearty folks show up for our hike to Mount Cammerer. I want to say "fools" rather than "folks" – it was only after I set up this hike that Ron warned me that Low Gap is the second steepest trail in the Smokies (following Chimney Tops) – 819 ft per mile for a little more than 2 miles. But we trudged our way up the inclines of Low Gap and the AT without too many problems.... other than one person thinking they lost their phone, and another person definitely losing their watch! The phone person turned around after over a mile and went back to the cars, to find the phone there, then hiked all the way to the fire tower, adding over 2 miles to her hike while the rest of us were enjoying beautiful glimpses of fall color in the trees and distant mountains. Three of the smarter folks enjoyed a lunch at the AT intersection before making their way back down the mountain. At the fire tower, it looked like a bus load of tourists had been deposited there, it was so crowded. But everyone enjoyed the views from the tower and lunch lounging on the rocks in the warm sun. A handful of folks left the tower early to hunt down the lost watch. Amazingly, they found it! As the rest of us made our way back to the cars, we all agreed it was a beautiful day for a hike in the Smokies. The 11.2 miles we covered had an elevation gain of 3,336 feet – wow!

Pat Watts

**WEEKDAY CLOSURES OF RAINBOW FALLS TRAIL
FOR REHABILITATION WORK OVER FOR 2017**

The Trails Forever project for improvements to the Rainbow Falls Trail completed the 2017 season on November 16. Until the work resumes in Spring 2018, the trail will no longer be closed weekdays (7:30 am Monday morning through 5:30 pm Thursday evening each week). Be sure to get out to see the great work completed during the 2017 season.

**Middle Prong/Lynn Camp Prong/Miry Ridge/Panther Creek Loop****11/11/17**

Seven members and one visitor gathered at the Middle Prong TH on a chilly but sunny November morning to begin this 14.9 mile loop. The Middle Prong itself was full and gushing, as were all of its tributaries, making for beautiful sunlit waterfalls over large boulders. Although most of the leaves were down, there were splashes of yellow and red, as well as always verdant rhododendron and laurel. We lunched on Miry Ridge, then had many creek crossings on the way back down Panther Creek. The bottom crossing itself was knee-high and quite chilly, but everyone was game for it, and prepared! This leader very much enjoyed this group and our hike!

Diane Petrilla

**PARKING AT SUGARLANDS VISITOR CENTER**

Hikers meeting at Sugarlands Visitor Center are requested to park any vehicles left at SVC throughout the day in the small parking area northwest of the main parking area or in the bus parking area southwest of the Visitor Center building. Short-term parking in the main parking area is, of course, still acceptable. Thank you very much for your consideration of other visitors at SVC.

NOTE TO HIKE LEADERS: PLEASE DO NOT PUBLISH LOCATIONS OF WILDFLOWERS IN GSMNP

Sadly, theft of wild flowers is a significant problem in Great Smoky Mountains National Park. While we know that SMHC hikers would never be guilty of such vandalism, the Park has asked that the specific location of wild flowers should never be published or posted to social media. Apparently, individuals troll social media, discover specific locations of flowers and go dig them up. It's sad that we are no longer able to share this information so freely.

2018 SMHC MEMBERSHIP DUES

Please remember that your 2018 membership dues (\$20 for regular membership; \$30+ for supporting membership) are due and payable at the start of the new year. Please watch for complete information in the January newsletter.

Smoky Mountains Hiking Club Installation Dinner
Saturday, December 9, 2017
5:00 pm - 9:00 pm
Fox Den Country Club, 12284 N. Fox Den Drive, Knoxville, TN 37934
(in Fox Den Subdivision, off Kingston Pike, in Farragut, 865-966-9771, [Map Link](#))

Reception – 5:00 pm - 6:00 pm

Oak Ridge High School String Quartet
Punch, Cider, Hors d'oeuvres
Cash Bar
Handbook Distribution (at check-in)

Dinner and Program – 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm

Guest Speaker: Author David Brill, *Into the Mist: Tales of Death and Disaster, Mishaps and Misdeeds, Misfortune and Mayhem in Great Smoky Mountains National Park* (see below*)

Music: Rudy Ryan Appalachian Dulcimer Band (“The Tuesday Group That Plays on Monday”)

Business Meeting: Installation of 2018 Board, Reports, and Awards

Plated Dinner: Choice of Entrée (pick one) - Poached Atlantic Salmon Crowned with Blue Lump Crab Imperial Cream, Rosemary Roasted Pork Tenderloin Topped with a Red Onion and Cranberry Chutney, Sauteed Chicken Breast with Marsala Mushroom, or Vegetarian Lasagna
All dinners are accompanied by a house salad pre-dressed with balsamic vinaigrette, club rolls and butter, french petite green beans with a julienne of red onions and carrots, whipped potatoes, coffee and tea service, and dessert.
Choice of Dessert (pick one) - Chocolate Layer Cake, Cheesecake, Apple Cobbler with Vanilla Bean Ice Cream

Reservation Deadline: Monday, December 4, 2017 (no cancellations after Wednesday, December 6, 2017)

Cost: \$25.00 (no charge for 50+ year SMHC members)

If you do not cancel by the cancellation deadline or are a no-show, you will need to pay for your dinner – otherwise the club will have to absorb the cost. Prepayment is appreciated but you can also pay at the door.

Please register and pay on the SMHC website (www.smhclub.org/forms/banquet), or call or email one of the following with your meal/dessert choice:

Priscilla Clayton, 865-966-4142, sigmtngirl@earthlink.net
Beth Eades, 865-609-8311, eadesb@comcast.net
Jeannette Gilbert, 865-483-8774, corsica111@att.net

For general questions about the banquet or special requests, contact Debbie Goddard, SMHC Social Committee Chair, 865-382-3047, debbiegoddard@bellsouth.net.

SMHC Merchandise will be available for purchase, including patches (\$3), shirts (\$15), and caps (\$15).

**Into the Mist: Tales of Death and Disaster, Mishaps and Misdeeds, Misfortune and Mayhem in Great Smoky Mountains National Park:* Between 1931 and 2013, 468 persons lost their lives in Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Author David Brill's new book, *Into the Mist*, chronicles some of those tragedies, as well as several epic storm events and heroic rescues. At the SMHC annual banquet, Brill will discuss the book and read from its 13 chapters, which depict men and women in extreme situations, struggling to survive against brutal and often deadly adversity.

Autographed copies of *Into the Mist* and Brill's first book, *As Far as the Eye Can See: Reflections of an Appalachian Trail Hiker*, will be available at the banquet. *As Far as the Eye Can See*, originally published in 1990, is now in its 7th printing, 4th edition and includes three bonus chapters.