SEVEN ISLANDS STATE PARK
January 1 – Monday

Start 2018 with a easy leisurely 5 mile hike over the rolling hills at Seven Islands State Birding Park that boarders the French Broad River. Will we see any hawks? beavers? old barns? Bring lunch and family. We will meet at the Seven Islands parking lot <see list> at 10:00 AM so you can sleep in after a night of celebrating.

Leaders: Adele Soucy, 865-306-0358, fthom4141@aol.com; and Beth Eades, 865-705-8624, eadesbr@comcast.net.

WEDNESDAY HIKE: LAUREL FALLS/COVE MOUNTAIN
January 3 – Wednesday

We will hike the Laurel Falls trail to Cove Mountain trail to Sugarlands VC. Hike: 12.6 miles; moderate to top of Cove Mountain, long but easy down to SVC. Meet at Alcoa Food City <see list> at 8:00 am or Sugarlands VC at 9:00 am. Drive: 75 miles RT (@4¢ = $3). Car shuttle or key swap required.

Leader: Thomas J. Welch, coast5588@yahoo.com, 224-944-3333.

FINLEY CANE/LEAD COVE
January 6 – Saturday

We’ll begin hiking on Lead Cove, past former crop land and the Tipton Cabin site, and then ascend about 1200’ over 1.8 miles to warm up on this winter morning. Once we reach Bole Mountain, we will follow the ridge downhill, with some views of Thunderhead Mountain on our right. We’ll continue on Finley Cane Trail which passes through a mature hardwood forest with some large tulip poplar, oaks, hickory and hemlock trees with a couple of (usually easy) rock hop stream crossings. Hike: 7.1 miles, rated moderate due to elevation gain of 1,200 feet in the first 1.8 miles. Meet at Alcoa Food City <see list> at 8:30 AM. Drive: 45 miles RT (@4¢ = $2). Icy roads and/or closed GSMNP will cancel hike.

Leaders: Claudia Dean, claudiadean0@gmail.com, 865-206-0145; and Jean Gauger, jengauger@yahoo.com.

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***

NORTH OLD MAC/SOUTH OLD MAC AT FROZENHEAD STATE PARK
January 13 – Saturday

It is always a pleasure to hike in Frozen Head in the winter, where bare branches allow more expansive views of ridge and ravine contours, while giving an invigorating and moderate climb. North Old Mac is a climb of 1580 ft. to the junction of the Lookout Tower Trail and the Panther Gap Rockhouse Spur. If desired, we can hike up to the Lookout Tower, before returning down Old South Mac. Hike: without Lookout Tower about 7.2 miles, with Lookout Tower about 8.5 miles. Rated moderate. Meet at Oak Ridge Books-A-Million/Gold’s Gym <see list> at 8:00 am. Drive: 50 miles RT (@4¢ = $2).

Leaders: Diane Petrilla, petrillad@gmail.com, 931-224-5149 and Pete Berntsen, peteberntsen@gmail.com.

EASY HIKE: OLD SUGARLANDS TRAIL
January 13 – Saturday

We will hike part of the Old Sugarlands Trail with a side trip to the Sugarlands Cemetery. Meet at Sugarlands Visitor Center at 10:00 am. Hike is about 5 miles.

Leader: Charles Hurst, charlesbh@charter.net, 865-803-4010.

LUMBER RIDGE TRAIL/SPRUCE FLATS BRANCH MANWAY EASY OFF-TRAIL
January 20 – Saturday

Last year this outing was rerouted due to a winter storm that closed down the roads leading into Tremont. So this year we will give it another try. Our hike will begin near the Tremont Visitors Center. We will access the Lumber Ridge Trail and follow it about 4 miles to the Meigs Creek Trail junction. This intersection is also where we will go off-trail (so to speak) and follow the Spruce Flats Branch Manway back down to beautiful Spruce Flats Falls. Along the way we will take a short side trip to admire other falls as well. This manway is considered easy as far off-trail adventures go and the complete loop hike is rated moderate. Hike: about 8 miles. Meet at the Alcoa Food City <see list> ready to leave by 8:00 am. Drive: 46 miles RT (@4¢ = $2). And let’s hope to avoid another winter snow storm.

Leaders: Billy Heaton, bheaton8@yahoo.com, 865-924-5149; and Ron Blessinger, rblessinger@msn.com, 865-465-7117.

Visit our Website: www.smhclub.org

SMHC Newsletter Editor: Don Dunning 865-705-2154
Send hike write-ups & photos to: dedz1@aol.com.
Please include preferred contact method (email, phone).
WEDNESDAY HIKE: CHESTNUT TOPS
January 24 – Wednesday

We will hike Chestnut Tops to the picnic table and back. Hike: 9 miles. Meet at Alcoa Food City <see list> at 8:00 am. Drive: 42 miles RT {@4¢ = $1.70}. Leader: Thomas J. Welch, coast5588@yahoo.com, 224-944-3333.

ABRAMS FALLS VIA ABRAMS CREEK RANGER STATION
January 27 – Saturday

Many of us have hiked from Cades Cove to Abram’s Falls. This is an opportunity for those interested to hike to the Falls using a different route. This hike will start at the Abrams Creek Ranger Station (accessed from Happy Valley) and travel via Little Bottom’s Trail to the Falls and back. From Abrams Creek campground, the hike is 5.1 miles to the Falls (10.2 round trip). Hike is considered strenuous due to distance and possible cold weather. If rain or snow is predicted for this date we will reschedule the hike. Meet at the Alcoa Food City <see list> ready to leave by 8:00 am, or at the Abrams Creek Ranger Station hikers parking area (across from Ranger Station) by 9:00 am. Drive: 80 miles RT {@4¢ = $3.20}. Leader: Steve Dunkin, jsdunkin@roaneschools.com, 865-202-3286.

MEETING PLACES: Alcoa Food City = On right between 3rd & 4th stoplight (on Hall Rd., TN 35), a block before Big Lots Map Link. Oak Ridge Books-a-Million = 310 South Illinois Avenue (same lot as Golds Gym) 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. Seven Islands State Park: Exit 402 from I-40, south on Midway Rd. left onto Kodak Rd, right onto Kelly Lane; meet at Park parking lot. Map Link.

COMING EVENTS – February 2018

3 Saturday Leaders Choice
10 Saturday Meigs Mountain/Lumber Ridge
17 Saturday Panther Creek State Park
24 Saturday Timothy Creek Off-Trail
25 Sunday Little River – Cucumber Gap Loop

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Patricia & Beck Bryant, roadrun810@bellsouth.net, 205-532-3444, 2514 Wilkinson Pike, Maryville, TN 37803
Allen D. Dickens, Allen.Dickens@gmail.com, 317-437-5056, 10254 Devonshire Lake Drive, Tampa, FL 33467
Rosemary Lenaghan, rlenaghan4972@gmail.com, 217-691-4972, 3309 Robbins Road, #203, Springfield, IL 62704
Marc Mangold, mangoldmarc@hotmail.com, 865-556-4761, 1115 Chilhowee Drive, Knoxville, TN 37914
Nu Yu, nuyu2009@gmail.com, 865-777-5268, 534 Mapletree Drive, Knoxville, TN 37934

FOR THE RECORD

Laurel Falls and Cove Mountain 11/5/17

Twelve members and 2 visitors enjoyed a spectacular 13-mile hike with leaf color at its peak! The challenging climb to the Cove Mountain summit and tower was rewarded by an 8.5-mile descent into a valley of unrelenting color. We finished at Cataract Falls which offered an impressive show. A great day! Cindy Spangler and Ramsay Roth

Hanging Valley Near Noland Creek Off-Trail 11/19/17

The caravan of Tennesseans arrived promptly at the trailhead on the Road to Nowhere for a hike up to the Hanging Valley while the Carolinians were found loitering in a Bryson City coffee shop. In spite of the bleak forecast for the day and dire predictions from earlier in the week, the hike finally got underway and the rain held off all day. Temperatures were moderate, and we even spotted a few bright rays of sunshine. Ten of us had a blast, in a sort of “old home week”. Several folks in the group had hiked together frequently in the past but had not seen one another in a while. We perused around the old homestead at the head of Canebrake Branch and looked for any leftover bottles of shine. None were found, but we did finally manage to lead the group successfully to the Hanging Valley. Climbing a short distance out of the Hanging Valley and over a gap to descend into the Peachtree Creek drainage, we then picked our way along a good grade. We found evidence of several old homes along Peachtree, including the ruins of a chimney residing on a steep slope. None of us thought it was a good place to build, but the chimney remains tell a different story. Working our way back to the road, we practiced excellent rhodo-avoidance. The leader spent most of the day leading from the rear – something called age! When we arrived at the road, no one was ready to go home. We sat for a long stretch on one of the log railings at the roadside, posing for group photos and enjoying one another’s company.

Clyde Austin III & Cindy McJunkin
Bird Mountain Loop at Frozen Head SP  11/24/17

It was Black Friday and the temps were sub-freezing as six members took to the trail and opted to "go outside". All had hiked with one another at some point before and the small group made for some good conversation and a relaxing outing in the woods. The day warmed up rapidly as the sun came out and we all enjoyed the geographical features of the Cumberland Mountains that are so visible this time of year. And... we burned off some pumpkin pie in the process.

Billy Heaton

Elkmont to Tremont (or Tremont to Elkmont)  11/29/17

What a beautiful day for a hike! Well, the temperature was about 29 degrees to start. But the sky was clear and blue, the wind was calm, and the forest and mountains beckoned. There were 20 of us who gathered while I tried to describe the intricacies of the key-swap we needed to set up. From the looks on most faces (ranging from blank stares to deer-in-the-headlights), I wasn't doing a very good job of it. It didn't help that I couldn't keep straight what was East versus West. But we finally got everything set, and 5 of us stayed behind at Tremont while everyone else took our vehicles to Elkmont. Now, if the 5 of us had been nice, we would have hung back for a while to give the rest of the group time to get started on their end. But we weren't nice, we were COLD!! So, as soon as the last car was out of sight, we headed up Lumber Ridge, trying to generate some heat. Which didn't take long since the first 2.4 miles is all uphill. Once we reached the high point, we enjoyed the rest of the hike as we caught glimpses of distant mountains and the Foothills Parkway through the now-bare trees. We had a successful transfer of keys when we met the rest of the group (yea!), so when we reached Elkmont we all had a way to get home. What a beautiful day for a hike!

Pat Watts

Buck Bald Sunset/Moonrise Hike  12/1/17

It was a wonderful afternoon with only a few worrying clouds hanging over and a bit of a drive. Eleven hikers including 5 visitors came out. We made it to the Bald a few minutes before sundown and took some nice pictures and also pictures the nearly full moon rising in the east. The weather was pleasant and scenery wonderful with mountains all around. A group of campers from TN Wesleyan was there and had setup a campfire that everyone enjoyed for a few minutes. On the way down, the moon provided plenty of light and even moonshadows so no headlamps were needed. The drive back, for one car anyway, was slowed considerably by the Christmas Parade in Sweetwater which blocked the Main Street for nearly an hour but was fun to watch.

Tim Bigelow

SMHC ANNUAL INSTALLATION BANQUET  12/9/17

More than 100 SMHC members and guests enjoyed a wonderful evening of food, fun and fellowship at the Fox Den Country Club, including a delicious meal, wonderful programs and great fellowship. The fun included musical entertainment by the Oak Ridge High School String Quartet and the Rudy Ryan Dulcimer Band. The featured speaker for the evening was author David Brill, who gave a fascinating presentation about tragic and near-tragic events that have occurred in the GSMNP, based on his latest book, Into the Mist: Tales of Death and Disaster, Mishaps and Misdeeds, Misfortune and Mayhem in Great Smoky Mountains National Park. The business meeting included introductions of the members of the SMHC 2018 Board of Directors and presentation of the Harvey Broome Distinguished Service Award to Cindy Spangler. Special thanks to the Social Committee for all of their hard work to plan and execute this wonderful event.

In Memoriam: Joan Perry Murphy, 1926-2017

We are saddened to report the passing of Edith Joan (Perry) Murphy, age 91, on November 28, in Winter Haven, FL. She was born in Pennsylvania, and moved to Knoxville as a young child. She graduated from Knoxville High School in 1944 and attended the University of Tennessee; throughout high school and college, she was active in the hiking clubs, thespians, and ROTC. In 1947, she married Alvin Murphy, and the family moved to Winter Haven, FL. She would often return to spend summers in Knoxville to visit friends and family, and after retirement, the couple maintained a summer residence in Blowing Rock, NC. We extend our sincere condolences to the family, and thank them for designating SMHC for memorial donations.
Please return this form with your 2018 dues payment to note any changes in contact information. (It is not necessary to return the form with your check if there are no changes to your current information.)

Mail check to: SMHC, P.O. Box 51592, Knoxville TN 37950-1592

Check box beside membership category:

___ Regular Membership ($20.00). Additional family members living in the same household and at least 16 years of age may become Family Members of the Club by dues payment of $2.00 each. Family members will be listed in the handbook, but will not receive a separate copy of the handbook. Number of family members: ___ (x $2 each).

IF adding or removing family members, please indicate below:

___ Supporting Membership ($30.00 or higher as you choose). Family Members, as defined above, are included without additional dues. Dues in excess of $20.00 (regular membership) are tax deductible, and help to support various Conservation efforts of the Club, including Appalachian Trail maintenance.

Please indicate changes in address, phone number, or email below, if any. Leave blank if there are no changes.

If you receive the newsletter by USPS mail, would you like to switch to the electronic PDF version? If so, please specify email address:

You can also pay your dues online at the SMHC website (http://www.smhclub.org/membership.htm) if you prefer.

Thank you for your support of the Smoky Mountains Hiking Club!