



Smoky Mountains Hiking Club Newsletter

Exploring the Smokies Since 1924

October 2020

The October newsletter brings change as Sarah Wimmer decided after



Sarah, for a job well done.

two years of volunteering as the newsletter editor to pass the torch. If you see Sarah out on the trails thank her for giving her time to the SMHC as the editor of the newsletter the last two years. Sarah is a native of Oak Ridge and a health educator with Humana in her everyday life. She is the proud mother of Jacob and Madeline Wimmer. Sarah enjoys hiking in the Smokies, paddle boarding, and visiting the National Parks when her schedule allows. Thanks,

December Holiday Banquet Update

Dear Members of SMHC,

I am sure all of you welcome Fall's approach, some cooler temperatures, and hikes with beautiful leaf colors! Conditions with COVID-19 in our area remain about the same, as do our Club hiking guidelines. North Carolina and Tennessee remain at # 9 and # 10 respectively in the United States for highest numbers of diagnosed COVID-19 cases. There may be some "flattening of the curve" for new cases, and we hear promising news about vaccine development, so those are bright spots. The Board of Directors met on Tuesday September 8. At this time, we feel conditions will not change appreciably by the date of our December 12th Holiday Banquet, and we were concerned about the safety of a large indoor gathering. We therefore made the difficult decision to cancel this year's event at Fox Den.

We want to be creative however! We are discussing ways of having an outdoor event next Spring (or later; COVID-conditions dependent) with music, a speaker and a nice boxed lunch. We would plan for social distancing and being outdoors, which is safer for all. We will remain flexible however, as we know all of you have, and which we greatly appreciate. In the meantime, stay safe, nurture those relationships with family, friends and Nature that give you joy, and please feel free to communicate with any of the Board of Directors with questions or concerns.

All my best,

Diane Petrilla M.D., President, SMHC

SMHC Hiking Guidelines During COVID

1. One hike leader will serve as pre-registration contact, with e-mail and phone # available in the write-up. Pre-registration is required for all hikes.
2. **No more than 10** total participants may be on a hike (including leader, co-leader). Registration will have to be halted when there are 10 participants.
3. All meetups will be at the trail head, so adjust meetup drive time accordingly.
4. No carpooling except for people in their trusted "bubble."
5. Hikes will be chosen to avoid crowded trailheads and crowded trails.
6. Events should be no more than a 2-hour drive from the Knoxville area.
7. Avoid hikes that will involve a key swap or shuttle.
8. Hikers must sign a release form, with accurate contact information.
9. Inform hikers if anyone becomes ill within a few days of the event, with symptoms concerning for COVID-19, to contact the hike leader immediately. (In addition to the usual pre-hike info). For regular pre-hike prep, see <http://www.smhclub.org/outingpreparation.htm>.
10. All participants must have a face mask, to use at trailhead meetup, and then if needed, when distancing on the trail from other hikers is not feasible.
11. Maintain 6 ft. of distance between hikers, and if possible 10-12 ft.
12. Stop at junctions to be sure group is all present, given the spacing out.
13. All participants should have hand sanitizer or wipes.
14. No sharing of food.
15. If leader(s) or any participant feels sick, please stay at home.
16. If leader(s) need to alter planned activity, please contact an SMHC Board member ASAP to discuss proposed changes.

UPDATE NEEDED FOR HANDBOOK **ASAP**

The SMHC is preparing the **2021** Handbook. If your name, e-mail address, home address, or phone number requires any change or correction from what is currently listed, please contact Betty Glenn at glennbj@roanestate.edu

Reminder for Members: Dues for 2020 are due. If you have not paid your dues for this year, please do so. Dues are important in the operation of the club. COVID has resulted in a delay in collecting dues for 2020. For information about membership and paying your dues visit <http://www.smhclub.org/membership.htm>

Consider Going Digital

As this year is ending the Board of Directors is reviewing areas where changes can be made that will allow the club to save money and be more efficient. One area that is being considered is going all digital with the club newsletter. This is something that many clubs have already switch to due to the increasing cost of postage, printing and the time required to prepare the newsletter for mail. If you are receiving the newsletter by mail, consider going digital. Check out and review the club digital club newsletter at <http://www.smhclub.org/index.htm> under Outings on the menu bar. If you have a printer you can print out a personal copy from the online pdf.



With the holidays approaching you will be spending more at the grocery store, you can help support the SMHC from your shopping by taking few minutes of your time . Kroger has a programs known as Community Rewards.

Log into your Kroger account online and select My Account. Under that menu select Community Rewards. Enter **MV194** for your reward sponsor. That will select the Smoky Mountains Hiking Club. Save it. Logout and then log back in to verify it saved your information.

This does not cost you anything, nor does it effect your fuel points.

Each quarter Kroger's will make a donation to the SMHC that will be used to help support trail maintenance and other projects by the club. If every member signed up and encouraged their family and friends to do the same, this would result in a substantial increase in the amount of money Kroger donates to our club.

Do not put it off until later. Take a few minutes right now and enter your information in your Kroger account online. If you put it off you will forget until the next time you see this message. You can check each quarter to see how much money your spending at Krogers resulted in a donation to the club. You will be glad you were able to help the SMHC and the Smokies.

Boat Shuttle Information

Many of you used the late Steve Claxton for a boat shuttle to access Hazel and Eagle Creek areas along with some of the trails along Lakeshore. The passing of Steve left a void for a boat shuttle due to the limit hours that Fontana Marina was available for shuttling. With the current situation using Fontana Marina has been uncertain at times.

Ronnie Parris has bought Steve's boats and picked up where Steve left off. Ronnie has received excellent reviews from hikers that have used his services this summer. He has picked up hikers left stranded by their shuttle. He has waited on hikers that were late getting to their meeting place.

Ronnie can be reached at cell 828.736.9471 and home 828.488.9711. He is out of Bryson City, North Carolina. He has been willing to work with hikers that wish to start early on hikes and hike late. He is working out of Cable Cove Campground boat ramp as Steve did. His website is <http://www.smokymountainoutdoorsunlimited.com/>

UPCOMING HIKES

Meeting Places

Pre-registration with leader is required by you for the hike and to ensure you know when and where to meet. We request that you cancel your registration ASAP if unable to hike to allow someone on the waiting list to take your spot. Please familiarize yourself with the following Club guidelines on the front page of this newsletter.

What is the A.T. Work Day

Have you seen the listing for A.T. Work Day in the newsletter or handbook and wondered what it is? Have you wondered who can participate? The SMHC maintains the 72 miles of A.T. trail in the National Park, and 30 miles in the Nantahala National Forest, and the shelters and privies on those 102 miles of trail.

There is a dedicated group of volunteers that do everything from clearing blowdowns with chainsaws, crosscuts saws, and handsaws, clearing waterbars, and trimming vegetation on the A.T. to prevent soil erosion and optimize the hikers' experience and safety. You should try using a crosscut saw and see how much work is involved with one.

Almost every month you will notice an A.T. Work Day. You are invited to volunteer to help and learn more about what the volunteers do. The work day is the outing that the SMHC publishes so that those interested can join and help work. The volunteers work year-round maintaining the areas they are responsible for in the park and national forest, but COVID has limited when they could enter the park this year. If you are interested in helping with the A.T. contact the leaders for the A.T. Work Day and lend a hand volunteering. You may find the work you assist with on the A.T. to be very satisfying.

A.T. Work Day

October 3 — Saturday

We will be refurbishing the A.T. section from Sweat Heifer to the Boulevard Trail and will need numerous workers as this section needs some real TLC! We plan to scout the most critical needs prior to the work day as to best utilize everyone's efforts on Oct. 3rd. Meet at Newfound Gap at 8:45 am for the Tailgate Safety meeting. *Pre-registration with the leader is required.*

Leaders: Mark and Janet Snyder, markandjanets@gmail.com, 865-448-1183

Cades Cove Loop Road Night Hike

Saturday — October 10

This hike was listed as a full moon hike in the handbook but will be a half moon hike and the moon will not be above the horizon when we walk. So much for a bright-night view of the surroundings on earth. But the stars should be bright if the night is clear. We will meet at the parking lot near the visitor center at 7 pm and start walking when the road is closed to traffic. The hike is 11 miles with easy footing! We will limit the hike to two groups of ten people, so please make reservations with the hike leader. *Pre-registration with the leader is required.*

Leader: Brian Worley, baw2222@aol.com. If your plans change, please text Brian at 865-207-2625.

Lumber Ridge/ Meigs Mountain to Curry Mountain

Wednesday — October 14

For this in and out hike, we'll climb the lovely Lumber Ridge Trail for 4.1 miles, connect with Meigs Mt. Trail, and travel an additional 1.9 miles to the junction with Curry Mt. Trail. There is a beautiful old cemetery near that junction, and hopefully we can have lunch at Campsite # 19. Rated Moderate. 12 miles, 1400 ft. Meet at Tremont Institute parking lot. **Group #1, 8:30am** (Diane Petrilla); **Group #2, 9:00am** (Ron Brandenburg). For those who may want a shorter hike, let Ron know, so you can be grouped together. *Pre-registration with the leader is required.*
Leader: Diane Petrilla, petrillad@gmail.com, 931-224-5149.
Ron Brandenburg ronb86@comcast.net or text 865-898-7602 to register

Panther Branch/North Old Mac/ Lookout Tower/ South Old Mac- FHSP

Saturday — October 17

This Leader was very much looking forward to the hike listed in the 2020 Handbook for this date, to Armes Gap with a visit to Brushy Mountain Prison. Alas, that will have to wait until next year, when we are hopefully less at risk from COVID-19. We will hike in Frozen Head SP, which is always a pleasure in the fall. After parking at the Panther Branch TH, we will hike past DeBord Falls, up Panther Branch, pick up North Old Mac to the Lookout Tower Trail, and the tower itself. We will descend via South Old Mac then along the Park road back to our cars for about .75 miles, for a comfortably moderate hike of about 8.5 miles. Meet at the Panther Branch TH at 8:30 am.

Pre-registration with the leader is required.

Leader: Diane Petrilla at petrillad@gmail.com or 931-224-5149.

Woodland Dolphin Trail and Stanley-Lippencott Park EASY HIKE

Sunday — October 18

This hike will be on lightly used trails not currently on any map. The Woodland Dolphin Loop was built over a period of 4 years by many volunteers from the community. We will visit an arboretum with over 50 species of trees and woody plants, and outdoor education venues used by the school. There is short spur to the historic Davenport Cemetery hidden in the forest that predates the Civil War. From there we will walk the Stanley-Lippencott Park trail that loops through a forest with many species of exceptionally large trees forming a high closed canopy. Fall leaf color should be great. All this is just 2 miles from downtown Knoxville.

Hike: about 4 miles, rated easy. Meet at Dogwood Elementary School, 705 Tipton Ave, in South Knoxville, 2:00pm. *Pre-registration with the leader is required.*

Leader: Mac Post, mpost3116@aol.com, 865-806-0980.

SMHC Newsletter Editor: Dale Potter

Send hike write-ups to smhcnewsletter@gmail.com. Please include both email and phone contact information. Please submit photos from your hike if available. **Suggestions welcome: What would you like to see in your newsletter?**

Mt Cammerer

Saturday — October 24

We will start this hike on the AT at Davenport Gap, passing by the Davenport Gap shelter, some impressive rock walls, and steep boulder fields on our way to the fire tower. The Mt. Cammerer fire tower is the only rock fire tower in the park and offers stunning views of the surrounding mountains and terrain. We also have a good chance for some impressive fall colors at this time of year, if the weather and timing agree with us. Bring all the water you will need - there aren't too many options to refill on the AT. This will be an out-and-back hike of about 12 miles roundtrip, rated difficult due to mileage. *Pre-registration with the leader is required.*

Leader: Amanda Beal, 865-207-1469,

amandaw455@gmail.com

Mt Cammerer via Rowdy Creek and The Miner's Stairs OFF TRAIL

Saturday — October 24

Do not be misled by the meager mileage of this all day, off-trail hike. From TN 32 we will follow the right fork of Groundhog Creek, then move to the upper reaches of Rowdy Creek. From the upper reaches of Rowdy we will traverse over to Leadmine Ridge at the base of the fabled Miner's Stairs. A precarious rock scramble through thick heath will deposit us at the Cammerer Tower amid the glorious vistas of (hopefully) peak fall foliage. We will return via the Groundhog Ridge Manway. Previous off trail hiking experience needed. Hike 5 miles. Rated difficult due to the steep climb up the exposed Miners Stairs. *Pre-registration with the leader is required.*

Leaders: Hiram Rogers, 865-584-7130 ,

hiramrogers@yahoo.com Ed Fleming, edwrdfilm@aol.com 865-548-2489

Mt Cammerer via Low Gap

Wednesday — October 28

This is our classic Fall hike, and hopefully there will be some color to see at Mt. Cammerer! The climb is a challenge, but Low Gap is distinguished by majestic trees, and the sound of Cosby Creek. The section of A.T. between Low Gap and the Mt. Cammerer side trail has lovely vistas. Of course, the Mt. Cammerer fire tower is iconic, as are the 360 degree views there. Rated moderately difficult. Hike is 11.2 miles, 2800 ft. Meet at the Cosby hiker parking Lot. **Group #1 9:00am** (Diane Petrilla); **Group #2 9:30am** (Ron Brandenburg). *Pre-registration with the leader is required.*

Leader: Diane Petrilla, petrillad@gmail.com, 931-224-5149.

Ron Brandenburg ronb86@comcast.net or text 865-898-7602 to register

Boogerman Loop

Saturday — October 31

Come join us for a leisurely hike on what some call the prettiest trail in Cataloochee. Perhaps we will learn something about the Boogerman himself. After an easy start we will climb through forest that were never logged. We will hike out the Fork Ridge Trail because bridges are out on Caldwell Fork. There is one minor creek crossing and a couple of long, hard climbs. Then we will walk through Cataloochee & hope to see some Elk. Hike is 10.5 miles rated moderately difficult. Meet at Caldwell Fork Trailhead just past the Campground on the left at 9:25 am. *Pre-registration with the leader is required.*

Leader: David Smith, dcsmith041@gmail.com 865-202-2074

Claudia Dean claudiadean0@gmail.com

For The Record

Bote Mtn/ Lead Cove/ Turkeypen

July 18

Three Club members made the ten-mile loop around Bote Mountain Trail to Lead Cove to Turkeypen Gap to Schoolhouse Gap. It was hot and humid but a pleasant day overall. We saw a lot of bear track on the Bote Mountain Trail, a lone, nonchalant doe on the Turkeypen Gap Trail and a juvenile bear cub on the Schoolhouse Gap Trail. A rewarding day to be in the Smokies. ~Jeff Cooper

Middle Prong to Indian Flats Falls

August 19

We started with two groups (Group 1 and Group 2) and added Group 3 because of popular demand. 15 women and 10 men in the three groups. The day started cool and never really got hot. It was cool sitting next to the falls eating lunch. The falls were good. There was plenty of water in the prong to make the falls and cascades along the trail very pretty. Of all the gorgeous trails in the park, this must be up there in the top few at least for the first couple of miles. Since this was a fairly short hike (7.8 miles) except for Group 3, we were ready to return home by 2:00. The third group for this hike, formed after some juggling by Ron and last-minute changes, consisted of 9 hikers. We assembled at the trailhead in our masks and boots in time for a well-distanced photo at the trail sign at 8:30 am. In delightful, cool weather we walked briskly up the wide, rocky, gently sloped trail. We followed Lynn Camp Prong, stopped for photos of the rusty Cadillac skeleton, took a break at the Panther Creek Trail junction, and arrived at the spur trail to Indian Flats Falls at 10am. Too early, we decided, for lunch. We continued (~0.5 mi., 300 ft. climb) to the end of the Middle Prong Trail. Two hikers went back to the Falls, and to their cars. The other 7 of us decided to continue along the relatively flat, beautiful Lynn Camp Prong Trail to Campsite #28 (~1.6 mi., 350 ft. climb). The soft trail-bed made for easy walking, and the campsite offered ample, widely spaced seating for lunch around a fire-site. On our way back, when we stopped at the Falls, we were happy to see members of the 9:30 group just leaving. The first and second groups had all arrived at the parking lot before most of the third group returned from our variation of the hike.

For access to the photographs

<https://michaelzielinski.smugmug.com/Middle-Prong--Lynn-Camp-Prong/n-HjTTK8/>

https://photos.google.com/share/AF1QipMxH7mTQDV3_NhD_DT_oEKe-1g1gXpa1gZsDcae7Snobc54biPlx9c6PAmYZwnAgVQ?key=U3NxbIA4VFNjM1Bwdki0bzdTcS11blFmSXJZRDRB

~~Leader Steve Vittatoe

Visit our Website: www.smhclub.org

Upper Hyatt Ridge Manway, Off-Trail

August 22

Inconsiderate weather forecasters intensely insistent on calling for rain the two days prior to the scheduled Raven Fork off-trail hike caused the stream to rise to levels too treacherous for safe hiking, thus forcing the leaders to cancel the trip, a contingency that necessitated the implementation of plan B. Per usual, the leaders did not have a plan B. However, they did manage to regain their composure and regroup, salvaging half of the original registrants for a foolhardy attempt to follow the obliterated trace of the abandoned Upper Hyatt Ridge manway. Early on the fourth Saturday in August, four of the Club's stalwarts and two visitors gathered at the million dollar bridge on Straight Fork Road for what became a full day of floundering amongst thickets of rhododendron while searching for faint traces of the manway, clambering over endless litanies of rain-slickened blowdowns, and visiting four forty-gallon galvanized garbage cans abandoned on the banks of Thicket Branch, all within a remote and indescribably superb Smoky Mountain wilderness. The day's adventure ended fourteen hours later in a headlamp procession down Balsam Mountain.

~~ Leaders Cindy McJunkin and Ken Wise



Hooper Bald and Huckleberry Knob

August 29

Hurricane Laura remnants came through overnight and resulted in terrible weather for a hike offering views. Five hikers made it to the trailhead and three went ahead and hiked into the clouds. After looking at the nice history display, we hiked on to Hooper Bald and saw some dates and names and dates carved on a rock at the viewpoint. We then walked downhill to the skyway and saw a memorial to seven aviators who died in a plane crash. One hiker had a new flag to place at the memorial. Across the skyway is the Huckleberry Knob trailhead. It was quite wet with flowing water on the trail and thick clouds. At the lower knob, the blueberry (huckleberry?) plants started appearing with a few berries left to try. On to the higher bald there were a few more Huckleberries and a side trail down to another, older plane wreckage memorial. A few wildflowers were seen on the trail. While walking back down the clouds began thinning but never cleared until the drive back. ~~Leader Tim Bigelow



A.T. Work Day

September 5

Seven magnificent mulch mules hauled 180 lbs. of mulch to the Icewater Shelter storage bins. The weather was beautiful, and there were many hikers, but we all used masks when needed. One bin is 90% full and the other is 70% full. Plans are for one more trip to Icewater Shelter this season and a trip to Double Springs Shelter.

If you are interested in a good work out and carrying about 20 lbs. of mulch in a backpack occasionally, please contact Diane at petrillad@gmail.com regarding these work trips.

~~Diane Petrilla



What is the most hiked trail in the Smokies?



If you enjoyed this you can find more from Boots check out her website <http://www.bootsmcfarland.com/> or her Facebook page. Her digital images are watermarked for her protection.

What is the most hiked trail in the Smokies?

The Bathroom Trail

Hike Leaders Your Help is Needed

As changes are being made with the newsletter hike leaders your help is needed in getting reports and photographs for the newsletter. It is important when you submit your reports that you list where the hike was and the date of the hike in your email. If that information is missing it makes your information useless.

You can type your information straight into the email without putting it in a word document. You can make your information funny or serious but try to put it a format that someone reading will know what you are describing.

It is not possible for me to chase down hike information For The Record so if you will take time to send me the information after a hike it will be greatly appreciated. smhcnewsletter@gmail.com Photographs need to be included in the email. You can submit as many as you wish and I will pick as many that I can use. If you include them in a link, it needs to be a dropbox type link where they are easily downloaded. It takes too much time to remember how to beat the system where it says right click does not work on your album.

As you can see the newsletter has expanded a couple of extra pages which is easy to do when the format is digital. These extra pages can be used to include pics from your hike with your hike report. Thanks for your help as we begin this journey.

Yellow Jacket Season

It is that time of year to be aware of the most dangerous thing in the Smokies. It is not the bears, wild hogs, copperheads, or rattlesnakes. Yes, the nasty little wasp like creature called the yellow jacket is the most dangerous threat to most hikers from mid-August until late October.

If you have not encountered the yellow jacket on the trail you may want to do some research on Google so you have an understanding of what they look like, what their holes look like on the trail, and how they will let the first hiker pass through and nail all the others in the group with their fierce stings. Many times, there is not an easy escape route.

You may have hiked that same trail all year and never saw them on the trail until this time of year and suddenly they come out of nowhere. They always have more than one entrance to their underground nest. You may want to carry Benadryl in your first aid kit, and some of you may need something stronger if you are allergic to them. Be prepared if you or your hiking buddy encounters their sting.

Smoky Mountains Hiking Club Officers and Directors

President: Diane Petrilla petrillad@gmail.com
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Director: Taylor Weatherbee tweatherbe@aol.com

Communications in the Backcountry

A lot of individuals hike to get away from the cellphones, the noise of the tv, the telephone ringing, the sound of traffic, and to recharge by the solitude of being in nature. While hiking solo should never be encouraged there are many that do it and think nothing about it, even in the Smokies backcountry. They enjoy seeing the bears, snakes, the wildflowers, the various fungi, and tackling the numerous spider webs on the trail all by themselves.

If you are one of those individuals then you should make sure that someone knows where you are hiking, when you expect to return and when to contact someone if they have not heard from you after a set time. You should have something on you, or in your pack that has your name, your emergency contact, and any medical information that is important should something happen to you. Many of us hike with individuals and never know their full name. Some of you may carry some type of SOS equipment that allows you to push a button and communicate with a satellite that you need help and it will send the GPS location of the signal to a monitoring location which relays it a local agency.

If you are serious about hiking solo, you lead trips in the backcountry, or you go on multiple day backpacks, you may want to consider using the Garmin inReach products. The advantage of these products is the ability to communicate by satellite using a phone app or the device by sending text messages. You can send preset messages or write your own. These units have an SOS button feature like others on the market that you can use if needed. The real advantage is you can communicate directly with your family or friends and they can with you. Having this option for some is very valuable.

These products, which have lots of other features, the ability to send a message letting someone know you are ok, in camp, or off the trail can be beneficial to those want to know you are ok. Should someone in your group need help or you come across someone else that needs help the inReach products provide that ability in the backcountry that cellphones cannot provide.

The recent situation involving the person near campsite 82 required the hikers to hike to a location with cellphone service to communicate with the rangers about the situation. With time being critical in some situations the Garmin inReach allows you to not only text your message to someone, it allows you to send your location with the message. It may take a few minutes to get to the satellite and then to the designated receiver but that time delay is much quicker than hiking out for help for someone, or waiting on someone to find you if you are the one in distress.

The key to using the inReach is making sure you turn it on and have satellite reception before you get into a dense canopy of trees. Make sure to send a test messages before you start your trip. These products are beneficial, but you must understand the instructions, know their limitations, keep the battery charged, and become familiar by using it not just carrying it. Do not wait until you need to use it to turn it on as you may be in an area that is too dense for initial connection.

There is a subscription fee depending on how often you will be using it. Garmin has several plans. That fee may be worth the peace of mind for your family or yourself.

For those of you that solo hike, or lead group hikes in the backcountry, you should consider researching the Garmin inReach and investing in one. You never know when having it available for use will be the best investment you ever made. Make sure you learn how to use it, have turned it on and have the battery charged.

~~ Dale Potter