



Smoky Mountains Hiking Club Newsletter

Exploring the Smokies Since 1924

November 2020

George Ritter October 10, 1929 – September 27, 2020



It is with great sadness that the passing of one of our directors George Ritter occurred recently. George was one of those giants behind the scenes that many are never aware of. He was very active helping with the administrative side of Smoky Mountains Hiking Club going. George was a member of our club for many years and was a recipient of the Harvey Broome Distinguished Service Award in 2009 and the Marshall Wilson Presidential Citation in 2007 and again in 2013. For years George put together the Handbook that many of you use for information about our club, kept up with the membership of the club, created and maintained various databases for our club. George was the father of Club President Diane Petrilla. While George was not able to continue to hike as he once did with several members he was very active with assisting on the administrative operation of the club and assisting those that needed information about the club or a hike.

On a backpacking trip to Dark Canyon 2000, Roger Jenkins noted the following: I sat on my pack, listening to the wind whistle through the small juniper that was providing me shade, looking at the remaining half-pint of water in my water bottle. While the wind improved the comfort level, I knew it was also sucking the moisture from my body. There was no water - at all - at the spot we had planned to camp. The pool in the stream bed that provided us sustenance 17 years ago was as dry as the desert - which this was, and the spring, which was supposed to be our backup, was gone. The prospect of hiking 6 miles through sand and rock to the next known water supply on the remaining drops was pretty daunting. As George hoisted his pack and girded himself for the inevitable fun, we would all enjoy that afternoon, he looked at me, and in his characteristic low voice, said "Don't worry, it'll be OK. Now, it's just your average desert forced march."



Will Skelton noted that George had many talents and interests. He enjoyed backpacking trips out west and serving on the SMHC Board at least the last ten years with him. On one memorable backpacking trip was George frequently going to his tent before everyone else at night (often commenting, "it's probably dark inside my tent") but then sometimes participating in the campfire conversations from his tent. Another backpack in the Gila Wilderness, George's bringing along the latest gadget, a cutting-edge "BakePacker," and, to everyone's surprise, it worked and we all enjoyed some fresh baked cornbread, while listening to mourning doves, whippoorwills and the Gila River. George was meticulous with organization as a board member always on top of everything membership-wise and trail maintenance activities.

George was appointed to West Point from Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. On graduation, George went in the Armor Corps. His first assignment was with the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment then with the 6th Infantry Regiment. In 1954, he accepted a position in manufacturing management with Procter and Gamble. From 1956 to 1974, he served with Westinghouse Electric Corporation's Bettis Atomic Power Laboratory. He worked on the Shippingport Project (the first commercial nuclear power reactor) and several submarine reactor core programs. In 1969, he had a key role in the manufacture and delivery of the advanced design replacement reactor cores for the Enterprise aircraft carrier. From 1974 to 1983, George was at Westinghouse's Advanced Reactor Division, working on the Clinch River Breeder Reactor Plant Program. From 1983 until 1987, he was Vice President and General Manager of the Maxima Corporation's Systems Technology and Support Group headquartered in Oak Ridge, Tenn. From 1987 to 1993, George was President, Co-founder and Chief Operating Officer of Performance Development Corporation, an engineering services company. He retired in 1993 but continued to consult.

George loved the outdoors. It is not possible to share all that George accomplished in his lifetime professionally and his enjoyment of the outdoors. His friendship and talents will be missed by many people. Donations in his honor can be made to the Smoky Mountains Hiking Club, PO Box 51592, Knoxville, TN. 37950-1592 or to the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, 799 Washington St., Harper's Ferry, WV 25425-0807.

~~ Contributors Roger Jenkins, Will Skelton, and Oakridger

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 with in 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.

Digital Newsletter Option

Thanks to those who changed from the print version to the digital newsletter. If you have not switched considering going switching. The Board of Directors is reviewing areas where changes can be made that will allow the club to save money and be more efficient. Going all digital with the club newsletter is one area that can save money and time. 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. Email smhcnewsletter@gmail.com to make the change.

Does Your Name, Address, Email Need Updating

If your name, e-mail address, home address, or phone number requires any change or correction from what is currently listed, in the handbook please contact Betty Glenn glennbj@roanestate.edu

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.

A.T. Work Day

Saturday — November 7

Trail Maintenance that will involve cleaning water bars from Clingman's Dome to the Goshen Prong Trailhead (1.9 miles). If you are interested in spending the day clearing water bars meet Steve Dunkin in the Clingman's Dome Parking Lot at 9:00 am. on Saturday, November 7th. Please bring a shovel and gloves along with appropriate clothing for anticipated weather that day. If the weather calls for rain, snow, sleet or cold below 32 degrees on top of the mountain the trip will be canceled. Plan on eating lunch at Double Springs Gap shelter. *Pre-registration with the leader is required.*

Leader: Steve Dunkin, jsdunkin1302@gmail.com, 865-202-3286

Black Mountain Crest Loop EASY HIKE

Saturday — November 7

We usually hike Black Mountain in the spring to catch its plentiful wildflowers, but fall is a wonderful time to enjoy this rock escarpment and hard-wood forest. We will meet at the Justin P. Wilson Cumberland Trail State Park at 10 am EST. To reach the trailhead, take I-40 to Crab Orchard Exit 329, turn south on Bat Town Rd, turn left at Black Mountain Road, and drive to the paved parking lot on the right at the top of the mountain. Adhering to CDC Guidelines (mask/distancing) we will hike west to the map kiosk, then continue west on the loop trail to the Southern Overlook with its amazing view of the valley below. From there we will continue west to the Gateway stone stairs and descend the bluff on the Cumberland Trail to a campground where we will stop for lunch. We will return and go back up the stairs and go north on the loop trail, which soon turns east, and follow in around back to the kiosk where we return to the parking lot. Total hike about 3.5 miles. Rated easy. Bring hiking sticks, ankle-supporting shoes, water, snacks, hand sanitizer, and a mask. *Pre-registration with the leader is required.*

Leader: Betty Glenn glennbj@roanestate.edu 865 307 3436

Homesite Hike in The Copeland Creek Area OFF-TRAIL

Sunday — November 8

This hike will be going off the Old Settlers Trail following some old roads, trails, and off-trail routes to visit some homesites, cemeteries, school, and church sites. We will be on two branches of Copeland Creek, Snake Feeder Branch, Soak Ash Creek, and Evens Creek. Hike around 8 miles. Rated moderately difficult. *Pre-registration with the leader is required.*

Leaders: Hiram Rogers, 865-584-7310, hiramrogers@yahoo.com Ed Fleming, edwrdflm@aol.com 865-548-2489

Lead Cove to Spence Field Wednesday — November 11

This challenging hike will start at the Lead Cove trailhead. After 1.8 miles on Lead Cove, we will pick up Bote Mountain for 2.9 miles and finish climbing the 3,220 ft. to reach Spence Field and the AT. Return the same way. Hike: 10.1 miles RT, rated difficult. *As a side trip, we can continue up (and I do mean UP) the AT for 1.2 more miles to reach Rocky Top, for a total of 11.65 miles RT and elevation gain of 3703 ft. (just 1.208 miles RT and 238 ft. elevation to go on to Thunderhead 12.858 miles total).* **If you plan to go to Rocky Top, let Ron know when you pre-register so that the groups can be setup accordingly.** Meet at the Lead Cove trailhead. Group #1, 8:30am (Pat); Group #2, 9:00am (Ron). Pre-registration with the leader is required.
Leaders: Pat Watts, 901-487-7941, watts_at_home@yahoo.com, Ron Brandenburg ronb86@comcast.net text 865-898-7602

Greenbriar Manway Saturday — November 14

For those who may recall, there was once a fire tower atop Greenbriar Pinnacle and at that time one could drive to a turnaround and walk on the trail to the fire tower. But the road to the turnaround was closed in the seventies and is now a 1.5-mile walk on the old roadbed as part of the hike to Ramsay Cascades. Our hike will take this old trail, now really a manway, to the tower with many scenic views back into the Greenbriar and beyond. We will return by the same route. The total hiking distance is about 9 miles with an elevation gain of 2500 feet. Pre-registration with the leader is required.
Leader: Brian Worley, 865-207-2625 (recommend texting) baw2222@aol.com

Lakeshore Trail to Campsite 90 Wednesday — November 18

Starting at Fontana Dam, we will hike 5.66 miles to Campsite 90. There will be LOTS of rolling hills along the way, several small stream crossings (one that could be very wet if there has been recent rains), views of Fontana Lake, and interesting artifacts (including at least 3 car bodies). After lunch at the campsite, we will return the same way. Hike: 11.3 miles with elevation gain of 1,907 ft., rated Moderate. Meet at the Lakeshore Trail trailhead at Fontana Dam. Group # 1, 9:00am (Pat); Group # 2, 9:30am (Ron). Pre-registration with the leader is required.
Leaders: Pat Watts, 901-487-7941, watts_at_home@yahoo.com, Ron Brandenburg ronb86@comcast.net text 865-898-7602

Pogue Creek Canyon Saturday — November 21

This hike is in the Pogue Creek Canyon State Natural Area, near Pickett State Park. Starting with one arm of the Overlook Loop, we will visit the Pogue Canyon Overlook, then hike the trail down off the plateau, where we will ascend and descend small gorges, and hike under fabulous sandstone bluffs with unusual geologic formations including a unique arch. Then we will hike on to a beautiful overlook at the terminus of this in and out hike. On our return, we will close the second half of the Overlook Loop. There are ladders and steep steps involved on this trail. Hike approximately 8 miles rated moderate. Meet at Pogue Creek Canyon State Natural Area parking lot at 9am EST. Pre-registration with the leader is required.
Leader: Diane Petrilla, petrillad@gmail.com, 931-224-5149.

Big Ridge State Park Saturday — November 28

Big Ridge State Park comprises historic cemeteries, a haunted house, the site of an eighteenth-century fort, a CCC dam, and many other traces of nineteenth and early twentieth century inhabitants. The park forests have suffered a lot of pine beetle damage which may affect accessibility and conditions of the trails. We hope to make a loop including the Lake Trail, Ghost House Trail, Big Valley Trail, and Indian Rock Loop. Hike 8-9 miles, rated moderate, however, there may be some very steep sections. Meet at the Park Office, 1015 Big Ridge Park Road at 9:00 am.
Pre-registration with the leader is required.
Leaders: Randy Mitchell mitchell1982@tds.net, 865-922-7149, Cindy Spangler spangler@utk.edu, 865-776-1301

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>



Welcome SMHC New Members

Melinda Bryan, Stefanie Gose, Rick Hughes, Ronna Johnson, Jim Kimball, David Liles, Julie Martin, Jeanette Miller, Ryan Miller, Marlys Staudt, RJ Wall, Anthony Wall, John R. Whitford, Garrett Whitford

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?

Rabbit Creek to Hannah Mountain

September 2

7 hikers in group 1 gathered at Abrams Creek ranger station on a foggy/cloudy morning. Although the Creek looked completely passable, sometimes you really cannot tell until you are out in it. It was about knee deep on most of us, but the current was fairly strong. We all cautiously crossed without incident and changed into our boots ready to take on the considerable elevation gain of Rabbit Creek. The humidity felt like it was higher than 100%. The group made short work of the climb and took a well-deserved break at Scott Gap and the intersection with Hannah Mt. trail. The hike up Hannah Mt. was pleasant with rolling hills. It seemed like the wildflowers were replaced with a variety of fungi, nearly the entire length of the trail to campsite 14. After a nice cool breeze during lunch, we started our way back. It would be mostly sunny the entire way. Even the best of us slowed a step or two, motivated by the nice cool water of Abrams Creek to cool us down to end the hike. It sure would be nice to end most summertime hikes this way.

Group 2 started with 4 hikers, but one dropped out. The heat and humidity made the hike more difficult than it would normally be. Despite everything it was a good hike.

~~ Michael Zielinski, Ron Brandenburg



A near perfect morning to start a hike. Cool temps, but it still warms up quick even on easy trails. It may have been a little humid. We gained one last minute hiker but later would lose three. "Hiker Math"? Cucumber Gap Trail is a nice hike but is well traveled. You will run into a few other hikers. It is part of a popular loop. Goshen Prong was the special trail on this hike. You will pass many small waterfalls and cascades. Some more visible in the Spring and Fall/Winter. And there is moderate elevation gain at best. Other than the occasional rocky creek crossing the trail is good. It also helped that it was recently "maintained". Making it a pleasant hike even in Summer in my opinion. The increase in elevation does not really start until after campsite 23.

Six hikers gathered for group 2 on a cool but humid morning at the Jakes Creek parking area to hike up Jakes Creek to Cucumber Gap to Little River and Goshen Prong. The destination was campsite 23, but that made a 15.2- mile hike. The consensus was to go as far as we wanted then eat lunch and return. One hiker went slower and chose a shorter route. At the Cucumber Gap-Little River intersection two more hikers chose to go back on Little River because of a prior commitment. That left just three of us to continue the hike. We continued along Little River and then up Goshen Prong. Goshen Prong is not a very steep up but just a gentle slope. There are many cascades and falls along Goshen Prong. Unfortunately, most are obscured by foliage and you can only get a glimpse of them. Eventually we decided we had gone far enough and found some logs to sit on to eat lunch. As we were eating two members of group 1 came by as they were returning. They had gone farther than us but still not all the way. They went on and we finished lunch and followed them on down. By the time we were on Cucumber Gap, the rest of group 1 caught up and we hiked the rest of the way together. The day never got uncomfortably hot but remained somewhat humid.

~~Michael Zielinski, Ron Brandenburg



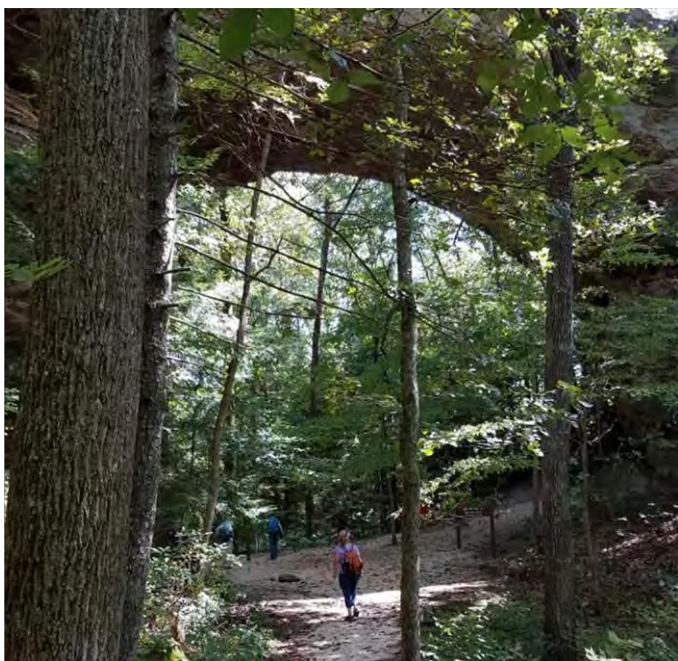
"Of all the paths you take in life, make sure a few of them are dirt."

~John Muir

Slave Falls, Charit Creek Lodge

September 19

Nine Club members gathered on this gorgeous day at the Sawmill TH in BSF. The starting temperature was 51 degrees! But with brisk walking and eventual sun, the hiking weather was perfect! There were plenty of healthy and majestic hemlocks in the first mile or so. We did the short spur to Slave Falls, which drops 60ft. over the lip of a huge rock house. The story is that slaves were hidden there during the Civil War in their journey towards freedom. We hiked next to slender Needle Arch and talked about sandstone and erosion. The Connector trail to the Charit Creek area challenged us with a yellow jacket nest, but fortunately there was only one sting in the group. We marked the location for the trip back! We hiked the Charit Creek Loop clockwise, climbing up to the top of the plateau, under breathtaking bluffs with honeycombed rock. Every curve in the trail brought us to another view! Then of course the Twin Arches were at the top, always magnificent. We hiked down to Charit Creek Lodge, eating lunch near a creek down there. Completing the loop, we hiked back the way we had come. Clear sunny skies, a cool day, stunning scenery, and good company made this a wonderful hike! ~~ Diane Petrilla, Amanda Beal



Roaring Fork Women Led Off-Trail

September 26



The mountains stubbornly decided to be cloudy and drizzly despite a promised forecast for sunshine as five women set out to lead twelve enthusiastic off-trail hikers up Roaring Fork. Separated into two groups, the first led by Sarah and Cindy and the second herded occasionally by Kindel, Kamrin, and Kinsey, we scrambled up the slick rocks and sloshed through the freezing cold pools joyfully. The water was flowing higher than usual, so one might say it was “roaring” down the mountainside. Most people venture up Roaring Fork to visit Twin Falls and Dome Falls, but the stream boasts many other equally beautiful waterfalls and cascades that don’t seem to get quite as much attention as their famous neighbors, so we made sure to give them all an equal amount of love and appreciation. No one dared to question whether the five women could lead the eleven boys and one girl up Roaring Fork, and, as expected, the trip was a huge success! Not a single person did not enjoy the damp, foggy climb up the steep North side of Le Conte, not even the leader whose M&M’s were callously stolen by a famous author! (You know who!) The sun was kind enough to come out at the top, making the misty forest look even more like a fairyland than it did before, and all 17 hikers skipped down the Trillium Gap Trail in good spirits, happy to have had another grand off-trail adventure in the Great Smoky Mountains.

~~ Leaders Cindy McJunkin and Karmin Page



Whistle Do You Carry One?

Many of you carry a whistle, but have you ever used it on a hike. Do you know how to use it if needed? Recently, one of our members happened to hear a whistle while hiking in the Smokies. Steve Dickinson proceeded toward where the sound was coming from. Steve found a hiker that had gotten off trail and disoriented. The hiker proceeded to use the whistle to get the attention of another hiker they were hiking with. Steve was able to assist them and get them back on the trail they needed.

While many of you may carry a whistle, do you know that when you are hiking in areas like the Smokies you should carry a United States Coast Guard approved whistle. Why a US Coast Guard approved whistle? A US Coast Guard approved whistle is super loud so they can be heard over the roar of the wind and at a distance.

What about the whistle refs use? Having used the Fox 40 as a football official it is one of the best. If you have been close to the football field, you may have heard the refs yelling "Stop on the whistle" to players. That is because while that whistle may be loud it is not always heard over other noise.

If you are not carrying a whistle you need to add one to your gear you take with you when you hike. Make sure it is a US Coast Guard approved whistle, so you have the loudest whistle in the event you need someone to hear you when you need assistance in the woods. Thanks to Steve Dickinson for being able to assist the hiker.

~~Dale Potter

PLEASE CONSIDER GOING GREEN!!!

If you receive this newsletter by US Mail, please consider changing to the digital PDF version distributed by email for bonus content. Contact Newsletter Editor smhcnewsletter@gmail.com to change or GlennBJ@roanestate.edu

December Banquet Canceled For 2020

The Smoky Mountains Hiking Club Annual December Banquet for 2020 has been canceled due to COVID-19. The Board of Directors are considering possible options for early 2021 once the restrictions of COVID-19 are lifted that will allow having a larger group size either indoors or outdoors safely. One option being considered is having a spring picnic.

The Board looks forward to being able to have the Annual Banquet in December in 2021.

Smoky Mountains Hiking Club Officers and Directors

President: Diane Petrilla petrillad@gmail.com
Vice President: Ken Wise kwise@utk.edu
Recording Secretary: Steve Dunkin jsdunkin1302@gmail.com
Treasurer: Tim Bigelow bigelowt2@mindspring.com
Trust Liaison: Jean Gauger jeanguaerr@yahoo.com
Membership Secretary:
Communications Director: Cindy Spangler spangler@utk.edu
Historian: Brian Worley baw2222@aol.com
Director: Amanda Beal amandaw455@gmail.com
Director: Dale Potter dalepotter55@gmail.com
Director: Will Skelton whshome@bellsouth.net
Director: Taylor Weatherbee tweatherbe@aol.com

SMHC Conservation Contributions in 2020

SMHC membership dollars continue to support maintenance of 100 miles of the AT through the Smokies--Davenport Gap at I-40 to the Nantahala Outdoor Center near Franklin, NC.

Financial support was also provided to the following advocacy groups:

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy (www.appalachiantrail.org). The ATC's mission is to preserve and manage the Appalachian Trail, ensuring that its vast natural beauty and priceless cultural heritage can be shared and enjoyed today, tomorrow, and for centuries to come.

Cherokee Forest Voices (<http://cherokeeforestvoices.org>). Cherokee Forest Voice's mission is the restoration and preservation of biodiversity, improved protection of fish, wildlife, plants, soil and water resources, an increase in the size of existing Wilderness Areas, designation of additional Wilderness Areas, increased availability of nature-oriented recreation and the protection of scenic values.

Tenn Green Land Conservancy (<https://tenngreen.org/>). Tenn Green Land Conservancy (formerly the TN Parks & Greenways Foundation) empowers landowners and communities to protect land, connect natural areas that support diversity of life, inspire appreciation of nature, and spark action to protect the water we drink, the air we breathe, and the land that sustains us all.

Legacy Parks Foundation (<https://legacyparks.org/>). Legacy Parks works to preserve our area's extraordinary natural resources and to expand parks, create trails, and increase access to our rivers to assure that our region enjoys exceptional recreational opportunities for generations to come.

Foothills Land Conservancy (<http://foothillslsland.org>). Foothills is dedicated to protecting, preserving, and enhancing the lands and environments of the Southern Appalachian region and promoting the character of the land for the benefit of the public, now and in the future.

Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy (<https://appalachian.org>). Since 1974, this Asheville-based organization has over 70,000 acres of unique plant and animal habitat, clean water, farmland, and scenic beauty of the mountains of North Carolina and Tennessee.

Visit our Website: www.smhclub.org

"The man who goes afoot, prepared to camp anywhere and in any weather, is the most independent fellow on earth."

~Horace Kephart