



Smoky Mountains Hiking Club Newsletter

Exploring the Smokies Since 1924

PO Box 51592
Knoxville, TN 37950-1592

December 2023

SMHC Dues changes beginning in 2024 and Constitution and Bylaws Changes For Membership Review

The last time the SMHC changed dues was 10 years ago, in 2014. As you know, inflation has impacted everyone's cost of living. For the Club, costs for printing, website support, postage, mailing, liability coverage, have all increased in the last 10 years (these are just some of our Club's expenses). In 2022 we had a net negative loss of approximately \$1.42 per membership, and we project over double that going into 2024. The BOD voted unanimously on October 2, 2023 to have our new dues structure as of January 1, 2024 be:

- Individual Membership: \$30
- Each additional family member (for family at the same household, same address): \$2
- Supporting Membership (for maximum 2 people at the same household, same address): \$40
- Life Membership (for one person): \$1000

These rates are still very comparable, and in some cases lower than Clubs similar to us.

For current Supporting members who list more than 2 people, and current Life members who list more than 1 person, those memberships will not change; they will be grandfathered in. However, the website will no longer allow registration of more than 1 additional Supporting family member, or more than 1 Life member for new members choosing those categories. Of course, others in the family may join, as separate memberships.

As a result of these changes, a change in the Constitution and Bylaws is required, as well as a vote by the membership. We have posted a copy of these changes (including some other clarifying changes) at:

[https://www.smhclub.org/resources/Documents/constitution and bylaws for review.pdf](https://www.smhclub.org/resources/Documents/constitution%20and%20bylaws%20for%20review.pdf)

We will have a vote by the membership at the Christmas banquet on Saturday December 9. Kindly review the changes before the banquet. For any additional questions, please contact any member of the BOD. The SMHC appreciates your membership!

Board of Directors, SMHC

Smoky Mountains Hiking Club Installation Dinner

Saturday, December 9, 2023, 5:00-9:00 p.m.

Fox Den Country Club

12284 N. Fox Den Drive, Knoxville, TN 37934
865-966-9771

We are pleased to be able to return to the beautiful Fox Den Country Club for this year's SMHC Installation Dinner!!

5:00-6:00 p.m.—Reception: Oak Ridge High School Quartet, Cash Bar, and Cider/Fruit Punch

6:00-7:00 p.m.—Welcome, Dinner, and Fellowship

7:00-7:30 p.m.—Business Meeting to Vote on Changes to Constitution and Bylaws, Plans for Upcoming Centennial Year Celebrations, and Introduction and Installation of 2024 Officers

7:30-8:15 p.m.—Guest Speaker: Lucas Coe-Starr, Oak Ridge Birdman

8:15-9:00 p.m.—ATMC Awards and 2024 Handbook Distribution

Guest Speaker: Lucas Coe-Starr, the Oak Ridge Bird Man, *Islands in the Sky*

Lucas is an Oak Ridge native who has spent two decades studying birds both at home and abroad in places as far away as the Middle East, Central Asia, India, and Madagascar. He will share the unique habitats of the Smokies that make it possible to find birds here that are otherwise only found hundreds of miles to the north.

Reservations are required and due no later than December 4, 2023. Dinner is \$35 per person.
Cancellations are required no later than December 5, 2023.

Name: _____ Phone number: _____

Email: _____

Choose one entrée*:

Chicken Marsala, Whipped Parmesan Potatoes, Seasonal Vegetable Medley

Poached Atlantic Salmon, Rice Pilaf, Seasonal Vegetable Medley

Vegetarian Delight (Italian Spinach Stuffed Portobello Mushroom Drizzled with Balsamic Glaze),
Rice Pilaf, Roasted Seasonable Vegetables

**All dinners served with salad, rolls, coffee, tea, and water.*

Choose one dessert: Cheesecake w/Strawberries Chocolate Fudge Cake

.....

Register and pay online at smhclub.org. Should you encounter problems registering on the website, please email Jeannette Gilbert at corsicaintn@gmail.com, or call Adele Soucy at 865-352-9156 to register. Those who cannot register on the SMHC website can mail a check along with this registration form to Jeannette Gilbert, 111 Newton Lane, Oak Ridge, TN 37830, or pay at the door (registration is required). Cancellations need to be received by Tuesday, December 5th. If cancellations are received later than December 5th, meals cannot be refunded. Thank you for your understanding. Contact Priscilla Clayton at 865-966-4142 for questions.

We look forward to seeing you!!
SMHC Social Committee

SMHC CENTENNIAL BEER LAUNCH PARTY

Albright Grove Brewing

2924 Sutherland Ave

Thursday, November 30, 2023

6:00 p.m.



Come join us for the launch party for a beer specially brewed to celebrate SMHC's Centennial! The beer can will feature the SMHC logo and will honor SMHC with a summary of the Club's purpose and history. A portion of the proceeds from the sale of the beer at Albright Grove Brewing will be donated to the Club.

As for the beer's name (insert drum roll here) - it's "The Lost Hiker" - a name submitted by a club member and picked by the proprietor of Albright Grove Brewing. We appreciate the suggestions for the name, and it was a tough decision, but we were influenced by the guy who knows how to sell beer!

The beer will be available through the year, and Albright Grove Brewing will also offer beer glasses for sale with the logo, again with a portion of the proceeds donated to the Club.



The label stating the club's purpose and history:

"In 1924, a group of hikers formed the Smoky Mountains Hiking Club to introduce hiking in the Smokies to a wider audience. The SMHC actively worked to make the Great Smoky Mountains National Park a reality. Since 1924, SMHC has led hikes and has, as far back as 1930, maintained the A.T. through the Smokies and part of the Nantahala National Forest. Contrary to the name of this beer, the Club has never lost a hiker. See SMHClub.org for our hikes, including those designated for the Centennial celebration.

All are welcome to join us in celebrating our Centennial! "

Upcoming Hikes

Pre-registration at SMHClub.org is required for all hikes unless stated in description.
Please contact the leader if you are not sure of when and where to meet.

Please review [How We Rate Outings](#) and [Hiker Responsibilities](#) found on SMHClub.org as you consider a hike

December 2 - Saturday Hornet Treetop, Off-Trail

Hornet Treetop is the last prominence on Defeat Ridge as it declines northeast to the middle fork of the Little River. It is best done in cool weather to avoid hornets and to provide views through the mixed hardwood canopy. The route begins at the end of the Tremont road, crosses Thunderhead Prong on the I-beam bridge, and then, after a short distance along a well-trodden railroad grade, ascends Long Branch to Hornet Treetop. Here we could make a short day of it by descending a ridge that runs due east back down to the valley floor. But we will probably be more ambitious and follow the crest of Defeat Ridge on up to an old CCC trail known to some as the Defeat Ridge Manway. Depending on how we feel about our progress at that point we may continue upward a short while to explore the Chimney Rocks. Regardless, we will complete this off-trail loop by following the old trace down to Thunderhead Prong, crossing at the stone bridge abutment, which may involve wet feet depending on recent rains. The manway leads through a short length of dense rhododendron to the upper terminus of the Thunderhead Prong railroad grade, which we will follow back down the valley toward the cars. Rated moderately difficult (off-trail); total distance ~7.5 mi, total climb ~2200 ft.

Registration for this off-trail hike is required – please contact trip leaders to get details, including meeting time and place.

Leaders: Steve Dickinson (winston.fob@comcast.net) and Mike Harrington (mike_harr@bellsouth.net)

December 2, Saturday Dudley Creek History Hike, Off-trail

In the early years of the hiking club, outings were frequently scheduled in the Dudley Creek area, but since the early 1960's this area has been a horseback riding concession. Since the pandemic of 2020, there has been no horse use in the area, and a lot of the ecological damage caused by horses has healed making it a more desirable area for hiking. On this hike we will explore some of the history of this culturally rich area and of the people who lived here. Hike around 8 miles rated difficult due to some off-trail parts. To carpool, meet at the Cracker Barrel at Strawberry Plains exit 398 of I-40 (1510 Cracker Barrel Lane), ready to leave at 8:00 am or at the Gatlinburg Community Center (157 Mills Park Road, Gatlinburg) at 9:00am. Drive 68 miles RT @ \$0.07 per mile = \$4.75. The leader will meet the group at the community center, not the carpool site.

Register at smhclub.org.

Leader: Ed Fleming, edwrdfm@aol.com, (865) 548-2489

December 16, Saturday Middle Prong History Hike

This hike into the Tremont area of the Smokies begins at the parking lot at the Middle Prong trailhead. We will explore a few sites of the early settlers, logging and CCC camps, and a few railroad company settlements. Walking up the road, we will point out some of the interesting old trails and points of natural interest. The hike will cover about 8 miles of easy walking. Rated moderate due to distance.

Meet at Kroger in Alcoa, 244 S. Hall Rd., at the SE end of the building, near the old KARM store, and park around the side of the building at 8:00 am. Alternatively, meet at the trailhead at 8:30 am. Drive 30 miles at \$0.70 per mile = \$2.80 to carpool.

Register on the club website. Leader will meet at the trailhead.

Leader: Brian Worley, baw2222@aol.com or 865-207-2625

**December 20- Wednesday
Frozen Head State Park--Spicewood Trail to Mart Field or Chimney Top**

This hike enjoys winter views and optional fire tower climb. Begin on Old Mac trail (0.3 mi) to start Spicewood Trail. Hike Spicewood (2.55 mi) to end at the Chimney Top trail. Turn south (right) (0.95 mi) to Mart Field (a campsite) and a snack break. Return north on Chimney Top (2.00 mi) to the lunch spot at Tub Springs campsite and the junction with both the Frozen Head Tower and North Old Mac Trails. Hikers may hike out and back (0.8 mi, 0.4 mi one way) to climb the Frozen Head tower. Continue north on Chimney Tops Trail (0.25 mi) to turn west, (left) on North Old Mac trail (3.55 mi) and west (right) on Old Mac Trail (0.15 mi) to the parking lot. Total mileage: 10.8 miles, 2,000 feet elevation gain. Rated difficult. To join the carpool, meet at Books A Million in Oak Ridge ready to leave at 8:00 a.m. or, alternatively, meet at Shelter C, Old Mac trailhead at 8:45. Riders pay drivers \$3.50 mileage, (\$0.07 / mi X 50 miles total).

Register at smhclub.org.

Leader: Larry Johnson, larryj11320@gmail.com or text 865-776-6434.

**December 23, Saturday
North Ridge Trail, Oak Ridge**

The North Ridge Trail in Oak Ridge was orchestrated by the TCWP group in 1970 and is maintained by TCWP volunteers. The trail follows the side of the ridge in a greenbelt area along most of Oak Ridge. We'll hike the entire length of the trail from East Drive to Mississippi Ave. on the west side as a car shuttle. Hike about 7.4 miles with about 1500 ft elevation gain up and down. Meet at Books a Million parking lot near Salsarita's at 9:00 am to arrange for car shuttles. Rated moderate. Register at smhclub.org.

Tim Bigelow, Bigelowt2@mindspring.com, 865-607-6781

**December 27, Wednesday
Cumberland Trail--Rock Creek Gorge**

This subsection of the Three Gorges Segment of the Cumberland Trail will be hiked from south to north, starting at the Retro-Hughes trailhead. After walking on the plateau for about 1.5 miles, we descend into Rock Creek Gorge, passing mossy sandstone bluffs. We will cross Rock Creek on a beautiful 80 ft. bridge and make several other branch crossings on bridges. Our turn-around point will be the Legget Point Overlook for a total hike of about 11.5 miles. Rated difficult. Meet at the Lowes in Harriman, (1800 Roane State Hwy. off of 1-40 Midtown, exit 350). Plan to leave Lowes at 7:45 am for a 1 hr 20 minute drive to the trailhead. Or, meet at the Retro Hughes trailhead ready to hike at 9:15 am. Carpool riders plan to pay drivers \$8.70 (\$0.07 X 124 mi).

Register at smhclub.org.

Leader: Larry Johnson, larryj11320@gmail.com or text mobile 865-776-6434

**December 30, Saturday
Fort Dickerson**

Part of the Legacy Parks Foundation /Knoxville Urban Wilderness, hiking in this area takes in Ft Dickerson Quarry Lake, as well as Fort Dickerson. The latter is an earthworks fortification (still existing) built in 1863-64 by the Union Army during the Civil War, and which withstood the Battle of Knoxville. We will meander among the trails near the quarry and the Fort, for a total of about 4-5 miles, discussing the history of this area. Rated Easy. Fort Dickerson is located at 3000 Ft Dickerson Rd., Knoxville, TN. Meet at the parking area at the top of Ft Dickerson Rd., near the earthen fort at 9 am.

Register at smhclub.org.

Leaders: Eric Keller, eric.keller@live.com and Diane Petrilla, petrillad@gmail.com

For the Record

September 30
Hemphill Bald

On a near perfect early autumn day, 15 hikers made the Hemphill Bald Loop. Eleven members and four visitors started at Polls Gap and made their way on Hemphill Bald Trail under lightly clouded skies. One visitor had recently moved from Southern California and had never hiked in the Smokies before Saturday. Several were veteran Smoky Mountain hikers, one of which completed a second map on this hike. All the hikers were happy for the low humidity and a light breeze. Along the way we followed the fenced boundary between the National Park and The Cataloochee Ranch. The cows were not impressed by the troop of hikers that passed. At Hemphill Bald we took a break for snacks and pictures of a fog shrouded Maggie Valley and Cataloochee Ski Resort across the way. Just before we left, a small string of horseback riders came by on their three-hour tour. At Double Gap we turned left and went downhill to connect with Caldwell Fork. After a bridged crossing, we stopped for lunch at Campsite 41. Shortly after leaving the campsite many of the group made the side trip to visit the Big Poplar tree. Then came the big climb up Rough Fork to complete the loop. After about one mile the grade became less steep and became more apparent that it was an old railroad grade. As the forest gradually changed to more birch and fir trees and more level we knew we were near the completion of the 13.7 mile loop.

Many thanks to Larry Johnson for co-leading and setting up the hiker tunnel at the end.

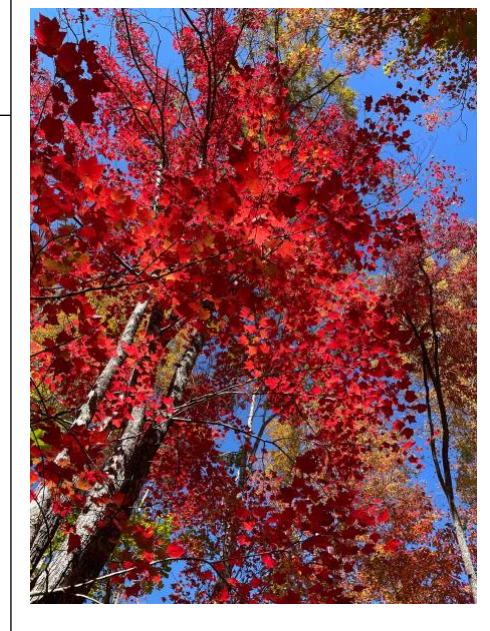
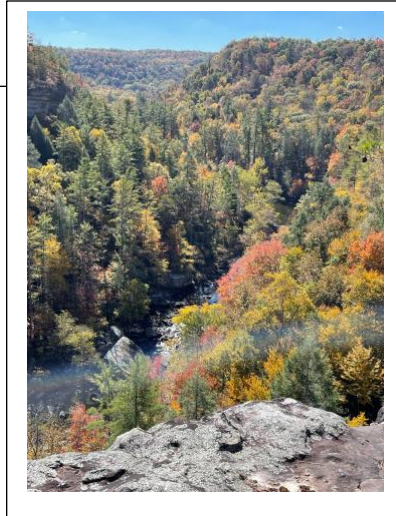
-Randy Mitchell



**October 18
Devil's Breakfast Table**

Twenty-four of us were blessed with a perfect fall day to explore this rather remote section of the Cumberland Trail. The challenges began right away with ascertaining ahead of time that there would be no hunting in the Catoosa Wildlife Management Area while we were there. Then an efficient way to drive to the DBT as well our second trailhead on Peavine Rd., setting up a car shuttle with all of our hikers had to be figured out! One hiker did a shorter version of this hike. From the beginning, including the drive in, we had brilliant fall colors against bright blue skies. Our walk eventually led us past huge sandstone formations, as is common on the plateau. We had a short break at the campsite midway through but went onto the first major overlook of Daddy's Creek for lunch. The turnoff was not marked well, and the leader hadn't remembered that, so at least one person walked by it! But we retrieved her, and enjoyed a spectacular view of the gorge while we had lunch. As usual, hikers were quizzed on factoids, some giving answers before a question was even asked! We sang a very loud Happy Birthday to the hike sweep who patiently kept our last hikers on course throughout the day. There were 2 more overlooks to enjoy, then a steep descent into the gorge on incredibly engineered stone steps (CTC volunteers). Up and down a few more times, then we reached a short road walk to cross the bridge at Daddy's Creek back to our cars. The bridge is not fit for vehicular traffic, but we were OK. The brilliant colors on this hike will be in my mind's eye for a long time. Thank you all.

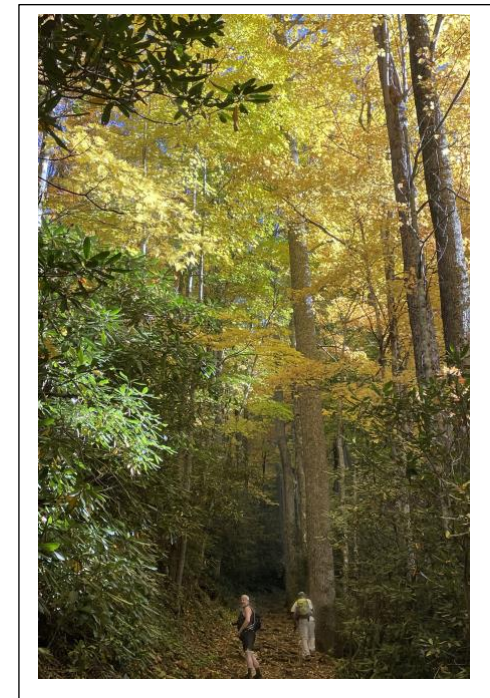
-Diane Petrilla and Dan Feller



**October 25
Low Gap to Mt Cammerer**

Thirty hikers (yes, thirty) turned out on this absolutely perfect fall day for our annual Wednesday hike to Mt Cammerer. In the years I have been leading this hike, I have never seen the colors so beautiful and the sky so blue and sun-filled! The temperature was cool but pleasant. Two of our group did a shorter hike, and two others were focused on filming our activity as part of the Centennial Film project. (Thank you Ann and Kathy!). Low Gap proved to be its usual challenging climb, but this group made short work of it. There was luminescent yellow light on the trail reflected from the tree color. At the junction of Low Gap with the A.T. the leader was delighted to have "Happy Birthday" sung to her. (It's fun to have a Halloween birthday!) The views on the A.T. towards Cammerer and out at the tower showed carpets of color all around us. Everyone hiked out at their own pace, enjoying this magnificent day!

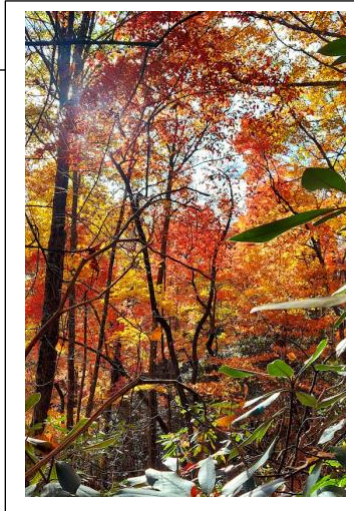
-Diane Petrilla



October 28
Mt. Cammerer via Chestnut Branch

There were 4 of us who met (one a visitor) for this hike to the Mt. Cammerer Fire Tower. It was a colorful day. There was a display of bright blue lobelia at the parking area that matched the blueness of the sky. Along the trails, we enjoyed the lingering fall colors, and the mass of leaves under our feet were almost as colorful as those on the trees over our heads. It was also a challenging day. The first 5 miles were a continuous uphill pull, requiring frequent stops to rest and take photos. On the AT, we marveled at the manpower required to create the steps that help with erosion control. But we also cursed them since they made you feel you were on a stair-stepper the entire way. Then we arrived at the very crowded fire tower. There were many different groups at the tower enjoying the historic structure and the vast views (only somewhat hazy) that we were treated to. After a late lunch, we headed back down the mountain, carefully making our way down the steps and slipping and sliding on the steeper sections of leaf covered trails. All-in-all, it was a good hike with a good group of people.

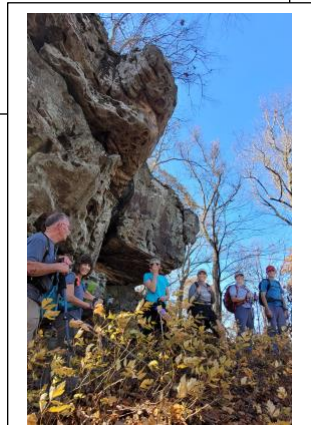
-Pat Watts (with thanks to Eric for helping to sweep!)



November 8
North Old Mac and Chimney Tops-Frozen Head

There were 18 hikers (2 of which were guests) who met at Frozen Head for the hike on the North Old Mac and Chimney Tops trails. What a beautiful day it was! Temps reached into the 70's, and the sky was sunny and bright. Two hikers planned a shorter version of the hike. We started the climb up North Old Mac, knowing it would be an uphill pull the entire way. The leaf covered trail was very slick in spots, and one unfortunate hiker slipped off the side of the trail when the dirt underneath gave way! After landing on a knee that had sustained prior injuries, that hiker reversed course and headed back to the cars. The rest of us scrambled up the very steep section of trail to the top, where it felt that a ladder would have been helpful. We passed the South Old Mac trailhead, where one hiker decided to take that route back to the cars. The mile to the Spicewood trailhead was punctuated with leaf slides down a steep portion, and another 5 hikers decided to head back to the cars on that trail. Now there were only 9 of us to continue on the Chimney Top Trail. We had a very enjoyable lunch at the Mart Field campsite - the scenery was relaxing and the breeze kept us cool - before continuing our journey. As we made our way, slipping and sliding, up and down the steep, and sometimes rocky sections of trail, I'm sure some were wondering why they hadn't gone with the others down Spicewood. As covered with leaves as it was, the trail was oftentimes difficult to find - thank you, Michael, for leading us through all that. On the ridgelines, the breeze kept us comfortable even when climbing. But, as we descended into valleys, the sun made it feel like a hot summer day. The final descent was through a series of switchbacks that didn't take away from the slickness of some sections. All returned safely to the cars with only a couple of minor scrapes and bruises and some of us saying, "Where were the chimneys?!"

-Pat Watts



Smoky Mountains Hiking Club Officers and Directors

- President: Ken Wise kwise@utk.edu
- Vice President: Steve Dunkin jsdunkin1302@gmail.com
- Recording Secretary: Kristi Knight kcsknight@charter.net
- Treasurer: Diane Petrilla petrillad@gmail.com
- Trust Liaison: Jean Gauger jeanguager@yahoo.com
- Membership Secretary: Scott Walker swalker.dev@gmail.com
- Communications Director: Randy Mitchell mitchell1982@tds.net
- Historian: Brian Worley baw2222@aol.com
- Director: Tim Bigelow bigelowt2@mindspring.com
- Director: Pat Watts watts_at_home@yahoo.com
- Director: Will Skelton whshome@bellsouth.net
- Code of Conduct Coordinator: Taylor Weatherbee tweatherbe@aol.com

CONSIDER GOING GREEN!!!

If you receive this newsletter by US Mail, please consider changing to the digital version distributed by email. To change from print to digital, just send an email to swalker.dev@gmail.com. Not only is the online version much easier to read, changing will help us save considerable time and will also cut the cost of printing and mailing.



KROGER'S COMMUNITY AWARDS PROGRAM

YOU have the power to raise money for the Smoky Mountains Hiking Club! Follow these steps and help us:

- Create and login into your Kroger account.
- Select **My Account** and use the menu to choose **Community Rewards**.
- **Enter MV194** and hit **Save**.

By doing so, you will help support trail maintenance and other club projects. You can check each quarter to see how much money your spending at Kroger resulted in a donation to the club.

Post Hike Write-Ups

Post-hike write-ups and photos should be submitted to SMHC Newsletter editors, Connie and John Tatgenhorst at newsletter@smhclub.org and Betsy Bohannon, betsybo1964@gmail.com, Facebook manager. For your write-up, please include the following: Hike name and date, total number of members and visitors, and description of hike.

SMOKY MOUNTAINS HIKING CLUB
KNOXVILLE, TENNESSEE
"The Great Smoky Mountains City"

Date.....

I hereby make application for membership in the SMOKY MOUNTAINS HIKING CLUB for the year 19..... I hereby remit the dues of \$3.00 for the year, and agree to abide by rules and regulation of the Club, and particularly do I agree to the following:

- 1—Not to break shrubs or pull or destroy wild flowers.
- 2—Not to throw papers, cans or rubbish of any character along the trails or at camp sites.
- 3—To be careful not to start forest fires.
- 4—To do everything I can to increase interest in hiking and love for our mountains by giving information and by taking beginners on hikes.
- 5—To give officers of the Club all possible information or suggestions for the interest of the Club.
- 6—To maintain the high standards of the Club to the end that the enjoyment of others shall be more complete.

SIGNED

- Business Address Phones.....
- Home Address Phones.....

(PLEASE CHECK ADDRESS TO WHICH MAIL SHOULD BE SENT)

Sponsored by

**75 years ago
Application for
Membership**