

# Highland Sojourner

Volume IV, Issue III

Newsletter of the Pine Mountain Trail Conference, Inc.

June 2003

[www.pinemountaintrail.com](http://www.pinemountaintrail.com)

## **Bulletin Board**

---

### **Update Your E-Mail**

Please send us your new e-mail address. We will be purging and updating our list in July and after that time, you will no longer receive e-mails from the PMTC unless we receive an updated address by July 16<sup>th</sup>.

### **Volunteer Vacations**

June 22 – 28, 2003

Sept. 14 – 20, 2003

Oct. 12 – 18, 2003

(Contact Shirley Hearn at the American Hiking Society (301) 565-6704 or at [www.americanhiking.org](http://www.americanhiking.org) The PMTC can waive the fee for those volunteering directly thru the PMTC.)

### **Weekend Getaways**

June 20 & 21, 2003

July 25 & 26, 2003

September 12 & 13, 2003

*(Weekend Getaways are designed for those who work a full time job. Volunteers come in on Friday evening; camp at a site we have prepared, work on Saturday, and return home on Sunday. For more information, contact the PMTC, P.O. Box 784, Whitesburg, KY 41858. \*There is no fee and food is provided.)*

### **Pine Mountain Trail Conference Meeting**

July 23rd at 1 PM at the Pine Mountain State Park. The group will be taking a hike before the meeting. Meet at the front of the lodge at 10 AM if you intend to go.



*Pink Lady's Slipper*

## **Words From the Woods** by Shad Baker

---

Spring rain has fallen on Pine Mountain with a frequency that would alarm Noah. Every ravine has a trickle of glistening water and the mountain is as verdant as it has ever been. Be it by weather or other cause, more butterflies are fluttering around this mountain this year than any in memory. The frost-less spring and frequent watering has brought a heavy load of young mast to the trees, meaning this fall figures to be a boon to the wildlife.

All the rain brought unexpected events to trail builders as well. On a rainy Saturday, Chuck Hogan, master trail builder and 'union organizer' joined me for some pre-volunteer trail work which was to include improvements to a very steep, clay-choked access road. Unfortunately, the road won, and we nearly lost my truck over the mountain. The following Tuesday, Jeremy Williams, Harlan County Agriculture Agent and one of our PMTC board members, attempted to join the volunteers by driving up the road. He wasn't so fortunate. His truck sports a dent from a saving tree, and his dad's truck enjoys 'character marks' left by the gate. Rain is rough!

The trail building went well though and we wish to extend deep thanks to the volunteers: Chuck Hogan for his constant smile and thick hide, Ray Mullen for his wit and work-ethic, Bill Riecken for his easy manner and cherry flavored pipe tobacco, Richard 'Bud' and Betty Stoner for their candor and charm, and Gilford Bush for his entertaining stories, and stories, and stories.

## **High Rock (Part One)** by Roy Crawford

---

One summer afternoon a dozen or more years ago, I was attending a little league game in Whitesburg, Kentucky, in which my youngest son Beau and his cousin, Scott McCracken, were playing. During the game they informed me that they would like to spend the night at High Rock. "Great! When?" I asked. "Tonight!" they answered. I pointed out that by the time the game was over, we drove them home and packed for the camping from scratch, and drove to the trailhead, it would be well after dark, implying perhaps it would be more prudent to plan ahead a little for a later date. "We don't mind." They said, so I agreed to take them. I figured that if the trip worked out to be a disaster, they would learn a lesson about being rash.

My only real concern was the possibility of running into snakes in the woods after dark with youngsters. As it turned out, the hike was very nice in several ways. The temperature was much more comfortable than it would have been during the daytime, and since we could only see what our flashlights illuminated, it was more like caving than hiking in the woods. We didn't see any snakes, thank goodness. And, when we arrived at High Rock with its wonderful nighttime scenic view, it was late and the boys were tired enough after their game and hike that they went to sleep without their normal rambunctious-ness. I have enjoyed night hikes ever since.

High Rock is the large cliff at the top of Pine Mountain visible from the Whitesburg to Mayking area. The Pine Mountain Trail will undoubtedly come right across or very near it. Many people will get to enjoy the place where I spent numerous nights as a kid. Unhappy at home, I took off for High Rock with my friends as often as possible, and probably the best parts of the trips were the long philosophical discussions we held around the campfire, deep into the nights; discussions that formed many of my early values, most of which lasted into adulthood. That was a fairly fast crowd; a future physician and two future PhD's in physics were included.

A couple of things I noticed during those trips were that food seemed to taste better after having been hauled up the mountain and cooked on a campfire, and I woke up early and completely refreshed each morning even after the late discussions (This for a kid who loved sleeping late as much as anything).

We never took tents to High Rock. We did not want to haul that much extra weight that far uphill, especially when we preferred to sleep under the stars anyway. If rain came, we just moved under the overhang of a nearby cliff. I have slept with all my other gear in the bottom of my sleeping bag so that I could make a fast getaway in case a storm hit.

Speaking of stars, Austin Napier, one of the afore mentioned PhD's, would name the constellations for us as we lay on our backs looking up. He was the only member of our group who could manage strange things like staying clean the whole trip, and even bothered to wash his face and hands and to brush his teeth while out in the woods, something we thought totally unnecessary while camping. Austin later attended MIT and is now a professor at Tufts University in Boston.

Sometimes we would spend the night of the Fourth of July at High Rock to watch the local fireworks from that unique vantage point. They appeared away off in the distance and well below us, looking more like tiny sparklers. After a burst, we would count the seconds until we could hear it, the sound finally reaching us with a very soft "poof". I have done this again as an adult and recommend it for everyone who wants a different experience.

Next time: Laddie and the hammock, skillet technology, B-52's, the Pathfinders, and the morning view.

### **Boy Scouts on the Trail** by Dennis Crowley

---

*During the weekend of April 25-27<sup>th</sup>, Boy Scout Troop 998, led by Scoutmaster Steve Ostling, made his second visit to the Pine Mountain Trail. Last year, the troop stayed at the new Pink Flamingo Shelter. On that visit, the scouts and leaders waterproofed the shelter, dug out and pulled stumps and started a path from the shelter to the water source nearby. (Troop 998 is sponsored by Harrods Creek Baptist Church in Brownsboro, KY. The scouts and their families live throughout Oldham County in the north central part of the state near the Ohio River. The troop is in the Dan Boone District of Lincoln Heritage Council, Boy Scouts of America.)*

**Friday, April 25<sup>th</sup>** - Four scouts ranging in age from eleven to fifteen, met at the church in Brownsboro with four scout leaders to start out on the weekend adventure. All had backpacks filled with 'necessary' gear. Everyone brought along some tools, 'just in case' we needed them. There were axes and machetes and a variety of other tools. Scouts do love to chop and cut wood. All of this was carefully placed in three vehicles for the trip to Letcher County. A four-wheel drive vehicle was also brought in case we were able to get closer to the work site.

It has been a stormy day in the Louisville area, but it was not raining anymore. Everyone was enthusiastic and eager to start. Scouts earn a special patch for completing this activity and scouts do love to collect patches.

My son, Matt and I had been active with the troop from its beginning about six years ago. At age 21, he is now an assistant scoutmaster with the troop. I came along as the host for the Pine Mountain Trail Conference and to instruct the scouts in trail construction methods. It had been a while since I'd done any backpacking, but I was looking forward to the opportunity to get out on the trail again.

As our caravan traveled across the state, we drove in and out of showers, so we were alternately hopeful and discouraged about the prospects for the weekend weather. After a stop in Stanton for dinner, we drove down Highway 15 through Jackson and Hazard and finally through

Whitesburg. We reached the Sunoco station in Pound Gap about 11 PM. Everyone piled out of the cars and into the store to look for snacks and restrooms.

Once we regrouped outside, we considered the obvious questions: Should we try to hike in the dark? I had good directions from Shad Baker, but I had never been on this part of the trail before, so we talked about it for a while. The mountain was engulfed in a cloud.

The weather was still uncertain. Finally, we left the packs in the cars and took only flashlights to scout out the trail to see how easily we could find it. The steps were obvious, no problem there. The flat area above the steps showed a trail easy enough to follow. So we crossed it into the woods. There we found the Pine Mountain Trail sign and the 'sign-in' box. Just then, the sky lit up brightly and thunder cracked very loudly. Our night exploration ended there. We retreated to our cars just ahead of the storm and slept dryly, if not comfortably, until early morning.

**Saturday, April 26<sup>th</sup>** – The new day came early. I was awakened at 6:30 AM to one last call for breakfast. The rain was gone. All of the scouts were up and eating, ready for the day's adventure. I grabbed a few quick bites then headed into Jenkins to pick up the tools from Shad's house. WE had pre-arranged to pick up the tools, even though he was out on the Appalachian Trail doing some backpacking of his own. When I arrived, I was surprised to find Shad at home. He filled me in on the details of how his backpacking partners had out-voted him and they had come home early because of strong thunderstorms. He appeared to have been sleeping soundly until I arrived and woke him up.

Back at the Sunoco, the scouts had packs ready and before long we started up the trail, tools in hand. The mountain was still very much in a cloud, but we had no trouble finding the trail. We soon wished that we hadn't found it so steep. We stopped often to help the new scouts adjust their packs, so they would be comfortable. Next, we started to spread out along the trail. So we stopped often to let the stragglers catch up. Soon, we were just stopping often. It had been a long time since I'd carried a full backpack.

We eventually reached a flat area, which Shad had told me about in his instruction. I repeated Shad's story about how it had come to be called 'Heaving Gap'. I was told that that was probably more than they needed to know. Being a story of Shad's personal experiences as a scout, I thought it was relevant. Besides, they weren't to the top yet.

We followed the road to the right then it started uphill, more steeply than ever! I missed the turn toward the bog and the site where we intended to camp. We went all the way to the top of the mountain where the towers are. That was when I realized that we were not where we were supposed to be. I broke the bad news as gently as I could, then hurried down the hill with Steve Powell to find the trail, while the scouts rested and recovered from the bad news that they had carried heavy packs uphill to the highest point for no good reason.

Back at Heaving Gap, Steve and I went to the left and followed the trail down what appeared to be an old logging road. Where the trail left the road, we found a suitable place to camp. We continued on to the end of the trail and found a water source nearby. It was a small pool fed by a spring and had an abundance of tadpoles in it. Returning to Heaving Gap, we found the scouts waiting with their packs. We all went down the trail and set up camp. It was time for lunch. The menu varied from peanut butter to ramen noodles. We were all hungry. It tasted good.

As we finished lunch, we looked up in surprise to see a hiker coming up the trail. It was Shad. He walked out to the end of the trail with us and talked to the scouts. With full bellies and a rest from the climb up the trail, we were ready to start work. There were flags marking where the trail was supposed to go, so we had plenty of opportunity in front of us.

After a brief review of how to use the tools safely and how to build trail on side-hill, everyone chose a tool and began to work. Soon, the first few yards of trail took shape. Shortly after, the conversation turned competitive, with comments like: “Do you want me to dig that stump out for you?” and “No, I’ve dug out five stumps already. That makes me an ace!” Scouts are competitive at times. We continued to work the afternoon away in the refreshing cool mist of a perpetual cloud. It never really rained on us and it never really quit. It just hung around us all afternoon. We got used to it.

One of my favorite experiences is walking out at the end of a trail building day over new trail that wasn’t there at the beginning of the day, looking at both the quality and quantity of work. I was rewarded at the end of this day with a surprisingly long section of new trail. It made me smile with joy. I don’t know if you have ever experienced this feeling, but everyone should be blessed with the opportunity.

## **Crossing Paths** by Dwain Stevens

---

It was the beginning of a normal day for me as I went to work and began my regular routine. Normal duties, occasional surprises and personal interactions with others were the groove my life’s needle followed five to six times a week. However, one encounter I experienced with a close friend and business partner would set up the climatic event of this would-be “normal day”.

During a discussion we had, he asks if I was busy this evening. I replied, “No, not really...what did you have in mind?” “Well,” he said, “I am planning a scouting trip for the hike I am doing for the Pine Mountain Trail Conference and wondered if you would like to go.”

With nothing really important on my mental notepad, I agreed to go. Needing to get away and see the beauty of nature appealed to me more than things on my lists, so moving the request to the top was justifiable. Later that evening, we made the commute to the Kentucky-Virginia border. This would be the beginning of our estimated two-hour hike for wildflowers as well as some trail running for exercise. After signing the trail ledger, we began our run, with plans to locate the plant life on our way back.

My being out of shape caused me to stop and rest several times, resulting in the separation of Phil and myself. After reaching the ridge-top, I decided to enjoy the quiet serenity of the mountain and clear the mind. The occasional breeze under the overcast sky was so refreshing; I nearly drifted off to sleep. The constant sound of raindrops gently tapping the leaves, along with mosquitoes and random wet spots quickly brought me back to consciousness. *But wait! What was that?*

It sounded like a squirrel in a distant tree. I decided to investigate using the long dormant technique of “slipping up on the prey”. Although no gun was near (not desiring it anyway), I planned to watch nature as I relaxed. Movements likened to that of my wife’s cat as it inched closer to an unaware bird or mouse took me closer to the disturbance.

As I stood quietly looking in the direction of the noise, I noticed that it was getting louder. Realizing it was moving in my direction with more disturbance than a squirrel, other scenarios began running through my mind. Remembering the friendly pet dogs from our previous winter trip momentarily led me to believe they were back. But dogs would not cause tree limbs to shake and loud sounds of footsteps. It was Phil, I thought, off the trail for an unknown reason. *But that was more than one set of footsteps*, I thought. The noise was now just beyond some undergrowth about thirty feet away. As my adrenaline was rising, it hit me. My discernment came seconds before the unanswered question revealed itself. **BEAR!**



My fears had come true. What would I do? My mind was asking as I looked at a large black bear not thirty feet away.

Moving backwards down the trail, I thought, *don't run without knowing where it would run*. So I stopped turned, and to my surprise, the bear had not seen me. I realized I must overcome the wooded camouflage and let the creature know I am here. As the bear looked at me, thoughts of a chase flooded my head, so I began looking for a tree to climb. After locating a tree, I turned once again to see my predator. As we stood staring at each other, I lifted my hand to begin my ascent to safety. It noticed the movement, so I moved and waved my hands more. To my delight, it turned and ran away like a scared cat, only more violently. *It's gone*, I thought as my blood pressure began to decline...*Snap! What was that?* I wondered.

The sound of moving branches and an occasional familiar thud brought a terrifying revelation; *it's not over!* Cubs, I assumed, following their mother. This could be trouble. Trouble was right, but not in the form of a cub or an angry mother. It was the daddy (for lack of a better title). The level of my anxiety shot through the roof to say the least. Standing at what I estimate three and a half feet tall and five or six feet from nose to tail, it was much larger than its predecessor. But to my appreciation, the previous actions taken with its partner worked just as well with him. Only his retreat took a different direction.

I don't claim to possess the ability to distinguish males from females; all I know is they were big and so were my eyes. A friend of mine once said he heard a bear on this Pine Mountain Trail, and I would like to say to him, "Snoring Bear(s) lives!"

The next time you think another same-ole, same-ole day, think again. Your destiny may allow you to cross paths with someone or something that could change your life.

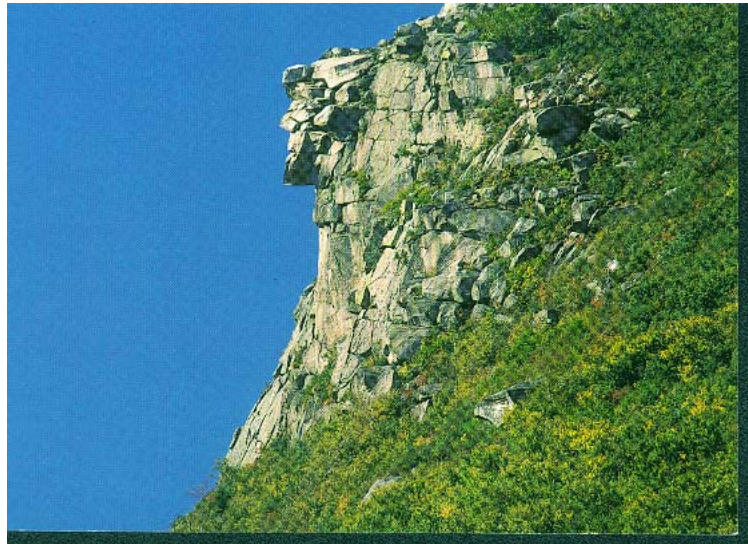
## **The Old Man of the Mountain Can't Save Face** by Dolores Roberts

*Occasionally we report events that effect our sister trails. The Appalachian Trail goes near the Old Man of the Mountain. If ever there was a reason to avoid putting too much significance on a single feature, this is it!*

The Old Man of the Mountain is a natural rock formation in Franconia, NH. It is a stone profile that looks like a rugged human face. Or should I say, it was a face. It exists no more. On May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2003, after two days of being in the clouds, it was missing.

The Old Man symbolized New Hampshire. He appeared on their state quarter, license plates, road signs and souvenirs. Millions of tourists have visited New Hampshire to see the profile, located 1200 feet above Interstate 93 on Cannon Mountain.

The same forces that created the face have been working for centuries to destroy it. Rev. Guy Roberts and quarryman Edward Geddes began preservation of the "Great Stone Face". In 1965, Niels Nielsen, was given the responsibility of caring for the profile. Today, his son David is the official caretaker. Work included using turnbuckles, cables, and epoxy to hold the face together, regular inspections, painting, and cleaning away debris. Ultimately, the work was for naught. All will miss the Old Man of the Mountain.



*The Old Man of the Mountain is No More*

### **Closing Thoughts**

Some folks go above and beyond to help their communities and the Pine Mountain Trail. We wish to take this time to extend a very special thank you to the following:

**The Whitesburg Rotary Club:**

A \$1,200 donation to be used towards the construction of our next shelter

**The Letcher County Farm Bureau Federation:** A \$1,000 donation to be used towards feeding this year's volunteers

**Elkhorn Stone:**

A donation of gravel to repair an important access road to the trail

## Membership

<b>Volunteer Class</b>	\$0, at least one day spent doing trail work
<b>Individual Class</b>	\$25-49
<b>Trailblazer Class</b>	\$50-99, free cap
<b>Highlander Class</b>	\$100-499, cap and fleece jacket
<b>Pinnacle Class</b>	\$500-999, cap, fleece jacket, & button-up shirt
<b>Legacy Class</b>	\$1,000-4,999, 2 caps, 2 jackets, & 2 shirts
<b>Foundation Class</b>	\$5,000+

\*Membership entitles you to a one- year subscription to the *Highland Sojourner*, the bimonthly newsletter of the Pine Mountain Trail Conference, Inc. and an embroidered patch.

Please *circle* the membership class you are requesting.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

## Ordering Merchandise

Please allow 2-3 weeks delivery for items in stock. Out of stock items require 4 weeks. **Please specify size and color!**

Item	Price	Qty.	Color	Size	Total
Trail Guide	\$10.00		N/A		
Map	\$9.95		N/A		
Long Sleeve T-Shirt	\$22.00		Navy		
T-Shirt	\$16.00		Gray/Green		
Button-Up Shirt	\$30.00		Dk. Green		
Fleece Jacket	\$75.00		Gray		
Cap	\$12.00		Tan/Gray		
Patch	\$4.00		N/A		

SHIPPING: (Please add 9% for shipping costs).....\$ \_\_\_\_\_

TAX: (Please add 6% for sales tax).....\$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Total \$** \_\_\_\_\_





**Make checks payable to:  
Pine Mountain Trail Conference, Inc.  
P.O. Box 784, Whitesburg, KY 41858  
(606) 633-2362**