



Tennessee rails

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Hit the Dusty Trail

- By Dot Fowler -

Many of you find humor in the fact that your TTA editor does not hike. Repeatedly I'm asked, "Why are you in a hiking club if you don't hike?" I always respond, "I like the people in TTA." Besides, there's more to TTA than just hiking. In keeping with the recent influx of humorous stories from fellow TTA members on their hiking experiences, I submit this offering which a few of you may recognize.

I'm a real tenderfoot, a greenhorn. From the top of my head to the soles of my feet, I reek of "controlled, environmental living". In case you are unfamiliar with the latter term, it simply refers to someone who prefers the indoors with its central heat and air, plumbing, and modern appliances to *life in the elements*.

The current rage, however, is to get out and run, hike, backpack — all that healthy stuff. I personally find sprained ankles, heat stroke, bugs, and — dare I say it — *snakes*, totally unhealthy. On the other hand, I have been known on occasion to go camping. The pre-requisites have always been:

- I could drive directly to the campsite;
- Modern, reasonably clean bath-houses stood nearby
- It was during a period of moderate weather — no extremes in temperature or precipitation.

With these facts in mind, I will now relate the experiences of a trip I

made one Labor Day weekend with my friend, Rhonda.

Rhonda had recently taken up the sport of backpacking and was terribly enthusiastic. She had been after me for some time to go camping with her and for some reason, unknown to me now, I finally agreed when she suggested a weekend at Fall Creek Falls. Other, non-hiking friends of mine had been to Fall Creek Falls so I figured it must be a relatively tame place to go.

There was one part of the plan which left me a bit leery, however. We were going to backpack in and out. Being a thoroughly spoiled, modern, city lady, the thought of using my back as a pack horse did not particularly appeal to me. Nevertheless, I agreed when Rhonda said I'd be using the lighter weight daypack. We were so naive!

The morning of our adventure dawned clear and beautiful, though a bit warm. We drove the two or so hours to the park, checked in at the Ranger's Station and received our map of the trails. Being new at this sport, we didn't realize we were heading out on the roughest stretch of trails in the park. Also being new to the sport, we didn't understand that daypacks were never meant to carry a rolled sleeping bag on the bottom nor the weight mine had in it.

And we were off! The initial terrain was easy enough with its gentle up and down slopes. But, being more of a thinker than a doer, I soon felt

my chest heaving with the unaccustomed exertion. Within minutes, we were sweating freely and with that sweat, gnats descended in swarms, invading our eyes, noses, and mouths.

We kept a rather brisk pace, partly due to inexperience, partly to ignorance of what lay ahead. My short legs were doing double-time keeping up with Rhonda's 5'11" frame. I soothed myself by visualizing all the fat on my sedentary body melting away, replaced by rippling, sinuous muscle. I really did know better, but believe me, I needed all the mental encouragement I could get!

After completing the first leg of our journey (a mere 2 miles or so), we stopped for lunch and a brief rest. The lopsided, overweight daypack had caused some large, sensitive red spots to appear on my heels. During our rest, I gingerly applied moleskin to those areas in the hopes of stopping blisters from forming. By now I realized I was in for one of the longest days of my life.

We decided against filling our canteens at the present campsite since we did not want to carry any additional weight. Within minutes of resuming our trek, the trail led sharply downward. I use the word *trail* loosely, since it was actually no more than boulders and loose rocks. My nerves were considerably frayed by this time and to add to the madness of gnats, heat and an irrational fear that snakes were going to eat me for lunch, huge hornets ap-

peared and made dive-bombing runs at us as I lost what little sanity I had left.

Just as I thought I'd pitch forward to my death, the trail turned upwards again. This was far worse since by this time my legs were composed of Jell-O, shaking with every step. This up and down routine continued on and on.

While I prayed for a quick and painless death, Rhonda continued to put more and more distance between us. I encouraged her to go on, to keep her own pace, in the hopes that she might bump into a pair of sturdy mountain men to come back for me. I was consuming fluids at a rapid rate, which I would come to regret later.

Just as I reached a vertical wall with logs embedded as steps and I thought I could go no farther, Rhonda's head appeared above me

and yelled, "You're almost there, Dot! Just a little farther!" Sure enough, it wasn't much farther to our campsite. There I collapsed for the night despite learning the well was dry and our water was limited. That was a problem for another day. I just kept telling myself that I would survive somehow to tell this tale.

The next day, we both moved much slower. Every muscle in my body was screaming obscenities at me and my feet were one large blister. We had yet to see a waterfall so when we finally did, we sat and stared at it for a long time. Thinking we were still miles from our destination, we were surprised to see a couple, dressed leisurely in jeans and sandals, come into view.

I'm sure we were a pathetic sight, smelling of sweat and bug spray, covered with grime, and limping in obvious pain. We told the folks our

sad plight, and bless them, they offered us a ride to our car. I was so grateful that I almost cried as I thanked them repeatedly.

Thus ends the tale of my first, and probably last, backpacking experience. Rhonda recovered from the ordeal and has since traversed many of Tennessee's trails. I, on the other hand, am of the school which believes, "If at first you don't succeed, give up — why be hard-headed?"

To those of you who thrive on outdoors life, my admiration and respect go out to you. It just doesn't seem to set right with me unless taken in very small doses. But, who knows? I may yet find pleasure in this form of recreation. I have a feeling the transformation will come suddenly — perhaps during a full moon. Stranger things have been known to happen!

Cumberland Trail News

Trip Report

Work/Play Weekend, Sept. 17-18

Although our rock climbing and rappelling session was rained out Saturday morning, Bob Barnett and I used the free time to visit the Museum of Appalachia and to call on Charles (Boomer) Winfrey, historian, publisher of the *Appalachian Observer News*, and operator of Clinch River Outdoors canoe and fishing livery. When the rain broke that afternoon, we hiked the C.T. to Eagle Bluff.

Pat Anderson, Linda Bowman, and Vic Canada arrived at our Norris Dam Cabin that evening and Jon McClimon from Hendersonville joined us the next morning for the re-scheduled mountaineering class. After most of us rappelled, climbed, and rode the Telpher Line, we hiked from Laurel Grove Road to Campsite 4 on C.T. Section 2. No trailwork got done, but it turned out to be a most enjoyable weekend despite the rain. We also canceled the Section 1 backpack scheduled for the following weekend for lack of interest. — Bob Brown

Trip Report

Grand Canyon of the Tennessee C.T. Section 9, Oct. 1

Because of heavy rain just then hitting Nashville and moving east at 10mph as we met on Signal Point, we decided to cancel the overnight hike. After a short talk by Ken Dubke, Signal Point National Park ranger, about the real possibility that Golden Eagles and Peregrine Falcons nest along the rimrock of the gorge, Graham Hawks led off on the day hike with 22 hikers from Chattanooga, Murfreesboro, McMinnville, and Nashville.

Ruth Ann Henry and I lagged behind with Bob Campbell, State Forestry's district ranger. Bob supervised C.T. trail work in Prentice Cooper State Forest and the replacement of the Suck Creek suspension bridge. We were trying to identify every plant and tree and were puzzled by several. One was a profusely blooming composite which Graham later told us was the rare *Polymnia laevigata*.

Another plant blooming in large patches on a couple of bluff tops he thought might be *Slender Gerardia*. Sweetshrub was abundant and two fruiting shrubs we saw several times were probably Red Haw and Mountain Winterberry. Ruth Ann spotted one red-fruited Ginseng plant. Also, a red-tailed hawk circled below us over Middle Creek, and a smaller hawk, probably a Sharpshinned, shot out of Middle Creek gorge with folded wings and swept by above us on Edwards Point.

As advertised, it was a great hike with unforgettable views from Signal and Edwards Points, excellent birding and botanizing, and plenty of good fellowship. Our youngest "hiker", one-year-old Sasha Pfothauer, first enjoyed the scenery and finally, enjoyed a long nap while being toted papoose-style by both Mom and Dad.

We're now looking forward to a snow hike with Graham in January on this section. More about that next month. — Bob Brown

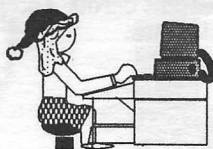
p.m. until whenever (last year it was after 2 a.m. for some).

Bring a dish to share (either for dinner or for munching later), your own drinks, and an inexpensive gag gift (wrapped). We will also be collecting dog and cat food for the Humane Society again this year. Participation in the latter is optional.

Marilyn lives at 3943 Moss Rose Drive (226-4663). Take I-65N to Briley Parkway. Go east on Briley to the South Gallatin Road exit. Go right onto Gallatin Road. Look for the firehall sign just before the third or fourth light and turn left on Riverwood. Follow Riverwood to the stop sign. Turn right on Brush Hill and go to the 4-way stop. Go straight across McGavock Pk. where Brush Hill becomes Riverwood again. Turn on Claypool, which is the first street on your left (sign partially obscured by trees). Turn right on Moss Rose, which is the first street on your right, and go to the second block. Marilyn's house is

the 5th on the right in the second block.

Editor's Tidbits



- By Dot Fowler -

Happy Holidays, TTA friends! We're closing down another year and gearing up for 1989. Sometimes in the hustle and bustle of this season, we lose our inner balance and let stress take over. If you find yourself saying "Bah, Humbug!" more often than "Merry Christmas!" perhaps you have fallen victim to the stress of the season. If so, why not do yourself (and your family) a favor and take a *Walden Break*?

What is a Walden Break, you ask? It is simply retreating for a few minutes from the Rat Race to any place where you can tune out stress

and tune in peace. Whether this place is a physical locale, such as Nashville's Radnor Lake or Memphis' Shelby Forest, or just a retreat into your mind through music, yoga, or meditation, doesn't really matter. All that does matter is that you do it often.

In this season when we expend so much energy, money and time thinking of others, let's not forget ourselves. Give yourself a gift of peace and contentment this Christmas. Perhaps it will be contagious and will spread to the rest of the world. Wouldn't that be a lovely way to end the year? As the song says, "Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me."

Thank you all for a year rich in friendship and learning. Best wishes to you and yours.

Dot ✕  (Pepper)

News From Our Parks

South Cumberland Recreation Area 615-924-2980

12/3 Big Creek Loop — Meet at 10:00 a.m. at Stone Door Ranger Station. 10 miles, very strenuous

12/4 Laurel Creek — Meet at 10:00 a.m. at Stone Door Ranger Station. 1/2 mile, easy

12/4 Laurel Gulf Rock Hop — Meet at 1:00 p.m. at Stone Door Ranger Station. 1 mile, strenuous

12/10 Greeter Falls Excursion — Meet at 1:00 p.m. at the Stone

Door Ranger Station. 1 mile, moderate

12/17-18 Dinky Line Overnight Hike — Meet at the Savage Gulf Ranger Station at 10:00 a.m. Participants supply own gear and food and must pre-register by 12/16. 8 miles, easy

NOTICE! It's Time To Renew Your Membership.



Please register me as a member for the calendar year 1989 (Jan.- Dec.) with the type membership checked below:

<input type="checkbox"/> Student (fulltime undergraduate & high school)	\$ 3.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual	\$ 8.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Family dependent (resides with an individual member)	\$ 3.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Supporting	\$ 15.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Life	\$ 150.00

MAIL DUES TO:
Tennessee Trails Assn.
P.O. Box 4913
Chattanooga, TN 37405

Students do not have voting privileges. Supporting members may be organizations or individuals. Each organization should designate a representative to cast its vote and up to three addresses to receive the newsletter. Family dependent members do not receive a separate newsletter.

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

HOME PHONE: _____ WORK PHONE: _____



Fall Creek Falls

615-881-3708

12/16 Christmas on the Mountain
— A night of Yuletide fun and
food, Christmas carols, and gifts
for the little ones.



Upcoming Hikes

MEMPHIS CHAPTER

12/10 Village Creek State Park —
details this issue

12/15 Christmas Party — details
this issue

MURFREESBORO CHAPTER

12/3 Percy Priest Lake Canoe Float
— CANCELLED



NASHVILLE CHAPTER

12/1 Nashville Chapter/Audubon
Society Joint Party — details this
issue

12/10 Nashville Chapter Christmas
Party — details this issue

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Come Hike With Us!
Tennessee Trails Association
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