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Trail Maintenance During COVID Times

by Paul Curtin

A trail crew is hiking down the trail (socially distanced) and encounters a tree hanging over the trail. It's hung up in other trees and under a lot of pressure and the sawyer can't be sure what will happen if the tree is cut. It's too risky to take down, and the hikers can get under it pretty easily. They walk on and leave that "widow-maker" to fall to the ground on its own good time.

Trail maintenance is both physical and mental. There's a lot to learn to do the work safely, properly, and sustainably. Luckily, we have lots of experienced and well-trained leaders who can instruct. Each situation encountered on the trail is different and requires a tailored approach. The crew often comes upon a tricky repair and we convene to discuss the best approach. Sometimes the first attempt doesn't work well and we discuss and try again. Getting a rock step just right so it will stay in place for decades is a master class activity. We have had many such discussions in rebuilding the MST between the Craggy Visitor Center and Greybeard Overlook. Check out that section sometime if you want to see some fine rock work. The club has been reworking that section for four years and expects to finish it this year.



. . . . Many hikers want to give back by maintaining trails. What a noble sentiment! But what they find out is that they get back so much more from the camaraderie of working with the crews and satisfaction from improving the trails. You get instant gratification when you have improved the trail. That is what keeps them coming back. Put that in your life! Please contact me, Ron Navik, or Les Love if you are available to contribute and give back in this way. You will not regret it!

Call for Award Nominations

by Randy Fluharty

Each year an awards committee considers nominations for two club awards. The first is the Award of Appreciation. This is given to any club member who, during the current year prior to the Annual Meeting, has rendered such exceptional service to the operations of the club that its goals were significantly advanced.

The second award is the Distinguished Service Award, which can be given to a member who, during his or her membership, has made consistent and cumulatively extraordinary contributions to the operation of the club and to the achievement of its goals.

Please consider these two awards and send any nominations with a brief reason for the nomination to Randy Fluharty, the committee chair, at rfluharty54@gmail.com

"Breaking" News! Les Love's Big Adventure

By Bobbi Powers

In a nutshell, Les Love, super hiker and trail maintainer, broke his leg on Saturday, June 27 while weed-whacking a little-used trail in Shelton Laurel.

But there is quite a story to what Les refers to as his "fun adventure." I wish I could duplicate Les's east Tennessee drawl to embellish this tale, so use your imagination if you know Les....

Les and his maintaining buddy John Beaudet learned that the 3.6-mile Green Ridge Trail which goes up to the A.T. was about to be de-commissioned, so the two men adopted it. On that fateful Saturday, with John out of town, Les arrived at the trailhead alone at 10:30 AM and at 2:30 was just about to turn around and whack the other side, when the right side of the trail collapsed with about 200 pounds of Les, pack, and weed-whacker going down. Les said, "I heard the bones snap over the sound of the weed-whacker. I passed out briefly, came to and hauled myself back up on the trail."

He noticed his left foot was at a 45-degree angle from his leg, and he could hear the bones crunching. He brilliantly surmised, "I don't think I can walk out from here." Amazingly, he was able to get a cell signal and called in this order: his wife Catherine, Paul Curlin, Shawn Riley, and finally 911. At Catherine's suggestion, he removed his sweaty shirt and put on his rain jacket. Catherine arrived at Les' side three hours later, 15 minutes ahead of Shawn. Paul and his wife Allison came later and drove Les's car home. Shawn hauled Les's gear. The 12-member Laurel Valley Fire Department Rescue Squad had trouble finding the trail and eventually found Les 5 ½ hours after the accident. They immediately inserted an IV with pain killers and splinted his leg. Because of the terrain, the squad could not get a 4-wheeler up the narrow trail, so Les put his arm around one rescuer's shoulder, used his good leg, and a stout stick in the other hand as a hiking pole, and in this manner the rescuers walked him down the mountain 2 ½ miles to within one mile of the trail head where a 4-wheeler awaited. This "walk" took 2 ½



hours during which the darkness fell and the rescuers' giant flashlights came on, with one rescuer back pedaling down the trail with his light in front of Les and his helpers, pointing out rocks and holes that could trip them up. On his morphine high, Les learned everyone's name, chatted, and had fun on the way down. An ambulance awaited the 4-wheeler and got Les to Mission Hospital at midnight. When I spoke to Les eight days after his adventure, he was still euphoric about what most would consider an ordeal. He praised his wife, his rescuers, and his doctors to the hilt. With a new titanium rod screwed into the bone during a next-day surgery, he was told the following day to walk – with a walker – and put weight on the leg. He credits his high hiking boots saving him from breaking his ankle which would have been worse. As it was, the break did not quite puncture the skin, as you can see on the x-ray. As Supervisor for the Secondary Trails which stresses not going out alone for maintenance, Les emphasizes that his going out into the wilds alone was not his most shining moment. He admitted that "the accident served as a wake-up call for me, that working alone can be very dangerous. It was divine intervention the way it all played out." I thought that was the end of the story until Les called me July 7 to say his sutures had been removed and proceeded to tell me a hilarious story about an attempted catheterization while he was in the hospital and about the size of his bladder. (TMI?!) That's a story for Les to tell his friends; it really needs his drawl for full effect.

Passing of George Oldham

George Oldham, past president of CMC 1982-1983 has passed at the age of 98.

Growing up a Forest Service Brat

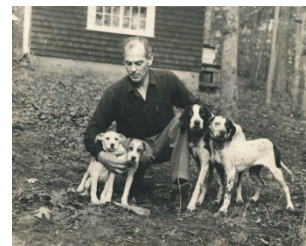
By Stuart English

Bobbi Powers sent me this article and it brought back memories. From the July 24 issue of AVL Today:

What is an Experimental Forest?

<https://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/bentcreek/>

My father, Ed English, was Superintendent of Bent Creek Experimental Forest from 1945-1963. We lived there. Every work day, my father would take crews out in the 6000 acre area to collect items for the various research buildings located in a semi-circle and studied everything from trees, insects, plants, etc that dealt with forest ecological management. During fire season, a crew would be there 24/7 waiting for a radio call that would send them to fight a fire. They would play horse shoes on a ridge near our house.



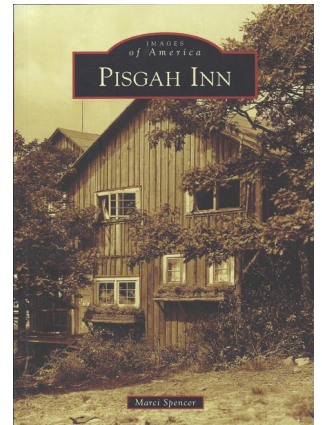
My father, Ed English, was Superintendent of Bent Creek Experimental Forest from 1945-1963. We lived there. Every work day, my father would take crews out in the 6000 acre area to collect items for the various research buildings located in a semi-circle and studied everything from trees, insects, plants, etc that dealt with forest ecological management. During fire season, a crew would be there 24/7 waiting for a radio call that would send them to fight a fire. They would play horse shoes on a ridge near our house. It was a great place to grow up. Being an only child, I would walk in the woods alone, read a lot, and ride my bicycle up the gravel road Blue Ridge Parkway and check on the progress of its building. Sometimes I would hear blasting in the distance ahead of me. It was around this time I discovered old movies on our first TV in 1955. Nothing else on TV interested me. My elementary school was Venable located approximately where the 191 angles is now. Across 191 was a gate into the Biltmore estate. 191 was a two lane road in the 50s. There were a couple of country stores with one gas pump. There were open fields and modest houses. It was in the country. We can't escape our youth and it can be a gift to remember and revisit. But like Clementine in the song, it is "lost and gone forever."

Pisgah Inn by Marci Spencer

Reviewed by Danny Bernstein

The Pisgah Inn on the Blue Ridge Parkway (Milepost 408) in Pisgah National Forest has been around for a long time. Hikers and nature lovers pass it on their way to a hike or to climb Mount Pisgah and view it as a landmark. The Mountains-to-Sea Trail goes right past the Inn as it traverses the state.

Now we have a new book by Marci Spencer, a Carolina Mountain Club member, which explains the history of the Inn. It starts with George Vanderbilt buying land in Western North Carolina to build his chateau, Biltmore House and Estate, in the late 1880s.



The eNews is published on the first Friday of each month. Articles are due on the last Friday of the previous month. Send your news to eNews@carolinamountainclub.org. Please limit articles to no more than 1,000 words. You may send up to two photos as jpg attachments.

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