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September 2015

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A Walk In The Woods

Movie Review by Susan Canale

For a movie about hiking, *A Walk In The Woods* had very little of it. Except for a few scenes with spectacular panoramas, Bill Bryson (Robert Redford) and his old chum Steven Katz (Nick Nolte) apparently walked the Appalachian Trail from Springer Mountain in Georgia to a point somewhere in Virginia, with only about five days of hiking. The movie spent more time in towns than on the trail.

The movie began with Bryson as an older gentleman strolling from the driveway of his home in New Hampshire to reflect on life after attending the funeral of a friend. Coming upon the A.T. where a sign pointed to Mt. Katahdin to the north and Springer Mountain to the south, the empty, well-groomed trail stretching endlessly in each direction, an idea was born. After a little online research into the trail, Bryson calls everyone he knows to find a hiking companion and ends up with an old high school friend whom he hadn't seen in years. The contrast between the trim and fit Bryson and the overweight, laboring Katz was supposed to be comedic, but instead it seemed implausible that Katz would have made it through the first day of hiking. ...

! The book by the same name written by Bryson made it very clear that a thru-hike on the A.T. meant hardship and tedium as well as joy and total submersion in the natural world, with no sign of the human-built environment in evidence as far as the eye could see. However, instead of the daily plodding, one foot after the other, day after day after day, the movie portrays the hike as a gentle stroll, the kind one takes to walk off a heavy lunch. Packs appear almost weightless when flung around as though stuffed with crumpled newspaper, hiking poles strapped to their packs are never used, the serious business of hauling food and finding water is ignored, and a scene where bears invade the camp one night, instead of dramatic or terrifying, is downright silly!! Unlike the movie *Wild*, based a book by Cheryl Strayed about her hike of the Pacific Crest Trail which clearly illustrates the unpreparedness of the novice hiker, *A Walk In The Woods* neglects to show how ill-prepared Bryson and Katz were at the beginning of their hike, which would have acted as a warning to any viewers who entertain the idea of a thru-hike based on the feel-good vibes portrayed in this movie. Instead of hiking, the movie focused on the rekindling of friendship between these two men and the contrast in the paths their lives took. *A Walk In The Woods* is not a movie about the Appalachian Trail as much as it is about the bonding of these two great characters!! If you're looking for a charming movie that depicts the re-awakening of an old friendship of two senior guys, their self-examination of their lives, with a few wacky adventures thrown in, you might enjoy this movie. But if you're expecting a movie that accurately illustrates an attempt at a thru-hike of the A.T. as Bryson's book did, you'll be sorely disappointed.

WARNING: Yellow Jackets from Great Smoky Mountains Association

Those of you who have lived in the area for a while know that September means football, fall colors in the high country, and yellow jacket wasps. In spring and early summer, most yellow jackets are too busy being larvae or working hard to feed their colony's larvae to bother people. But by September, yellow jacket populations are at their peak, and food in the form of flower nectar is getting scarce. For reasons not entirely understood, yellow jackets respond to this stress by stinging people. ...

Along Smoky Mountain trails, most yellow jackets build their nests in the ground or sometimes in dead trees. If you notice lots of recent digging activity along the side of a trail, this can be good news and bad news. The good news is a black bear or skunk has probably dug up a yellow jacket nest and feasted on the larvae. The bad news is the



wasps that the predator didn't kill are mad as hell. If the digging is very recent and you see yellow jackets buzzing about, the best thing you can do is walk very slowly and gently in the opposite direction. Wasps are aggravated by ground vibrations, sudden movements, perfumes, and brightly colored clothing. If it has been several days or more since the home invasion, the former residents have likely permanently vacated the premises.

But even without the help of bruins or skunks, yellow jackets can act aggressively toward autumn hikers. This is not the best time of year to hike off trail. Yellow jacket nests are plentiful in the Smokies, and if you go bushwhacking you're likely to run into some of them. During fall, a single nest may contain 500 or more yellow jackets.

By sticking to trails you are treading where others have trod before you. If there are trailside nests, they have likely become acclimated to hikers or moved away. (This is a rule of thumb, not an absolute.) If you are stung, protect your face and try to move somewhat calmly away from the nest. Not only are yellow jacket stings remarkably painful, they also carry a chemical marker that basically says "sting me" to all other yellow jackets, near and far, kin or not. Squashing a yellow jacket also releases the chemical.

And it pays to be alert. Yellow jackets are brightly colored and easy to see. If you see some flying into or out of a hole in the ground, you have been forewarned.



GPS Tracks Are Requested

CMC is requesting help in getting GPS tracks of CMC hikes for the hike database. Only about half of the hikes in the database have tracks, maps and profiles. Many hikers including folks from outside our area find the maps and profiles very helpful. CMC is currently training a few people in making the maps and profiles from the GPS tracks. We would like those that have GPSs to make tracks when they hike CMC hikes particularly to those that don't yet have maps or profiles. If you already have suitable tracks, you may submit those as well. GPS track submissions and questions about how to help should be directed to maps@carolinamountainclub.org.

Have you made your Reservation for the CMC Annual Dinner?

Date: Friday, October 30, 2015

Place: Mountain View Room, Sherrill Center, UNCA

5:30 - Social Hour

6.30 - Dinner

7:30 - Business Meeting

Deadlines: October 14 for dinner reservation by mail - [form](#)

October 21 for on-line reservations

No payment needed if attending business meeting only.

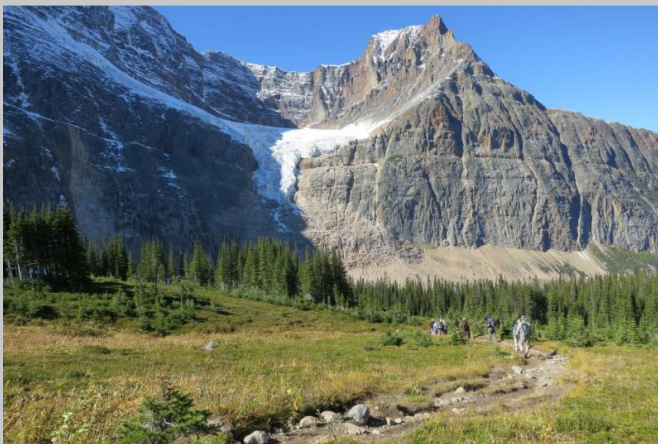


WARRIOR HIKE

“WALK OFF THE WAR”



The MST Has Been Added to Warrior Hike Program.
Celebration & Fundraiser on October 3



Angel Glacier (Photo by Bruce Bente)

In the Blue Canadian Rockies

By Stuart English

In early September a group of 12 friends went on a hiking trip to the Canadian national parks of Banff, Yoho, and Jasper. We stayed for several days in Lake Louise Village and finished the trip in Jasper. In Banff and Yoho, the weather was cold and wet with some snow. We often woke to temperatures of 1 degree Celsius. Fleeces, rain jackets, gloves, and warm hats were often needed.

Every bit of this trip was spectacular! Views of snow-covered mountains, glaciers, lakes, rivers, and narrow canyons with cascading waters impressed us every day. Virtually every hike we walked involved steep climbs with high points reaching between 7,000 and 8,000 feet from an average starting altitude of around 5,000 feet. In Banff, we encountered signs forbidding us to hike in groups of less than 4 because of grizzly bear aThe drive between Lake Louise Village and Jasper was a spectacular one. Although Jasper is

about 150 miles north, it is a good bit lower than the Banff National Park and temperatures were warmer and the weather was nice and sunny. We rewarded ourselves after tough hiking with great meals in some fine Canadian restaurants. Some of us soaked in the natural hot springs in Banff. Highlights on this trip were a climb from the beautiful Moraine Lake in Banff up a steep mountain trail into a snow storm and then back down, a hike to a set of Twin Falls (one of them frozen at the top) and hot chocolate at a “Tea House” near the falls, and a walk that viewed the beautiful Mount Edith Cavell in Jasper, with a glacier lake below. Here we constantly heard the sound of ice breaking off the mountain wall and falling into the lake. This is some of the most spectacular country I have ever seen. These glaciers are slowly becoming smaller and smaller. But they are still there. Go see them!! You owe it to yourself.



Moraine Lake (Photo by Bruce Bente)

Every Kid in a Park Program

New National Program Encourages Families and Classes to Visit National Parks
Great Smoky Mountains National Park

Great Smoky Mountains National Park invites all 4th grade students to visit the park as part of the White House's new Every Kid in a Park program. The park offers a variety of activities that fourth graders and their family can enjoy, including guided discovery hikes, educational programs, and self-guided junior ranger activities. Special events, like the upcoming Mountain Life Festival and Stargazing events also offer great opportunities for kids to experience the Smokies in a fun and educational way.

"Great Smoky Mountains National Park offers incredible opportunities for all to learn and explore the beauty and wonder of the Smokies," said Park Superintendent Cassius Cash. "We hope this program will lead more teachers and families to take advantage of these opportunities and use their free passes for fourth graders to explore more of our national treasures, places where they can run and play, explore and learn."



Students in the 4th grade can now go to www.everykidinapark.gov and complete an activity to obtain a free annual entry pass to more than 2,000 federal recreation areas, including national parks. Fourth graders and their families can then use this pass for free entry national parks and other federal public lands and waters across the country from September 1, 2015 through August 31, 2016. The website also includes fun and engaging learning activities aligned to educational standards, trip planning tools, safety and packing tips and other important and helpful information for educators and parents. ! In addition to providing every fourth grader in America a free entry pass for national parks and federal public lands and waters, fourth grade educators, youth group leaders and their students across the country will also participate in the program through field trips and other learning experiences. Teachers interested in these opportunities in the Smokies can visit <http://www.nps.gov/grsm/learn/education/index.htm> to find field trip information and curriculum based education materials specific to the Smokies. ! The goal of the Every Kid in a Park program is to connect 4th graders with the great outdoors and inspire them to become future environmental stewards, ready to preserve and protect national parks and other public lands for years to come. The program is an important part of the National Park Service's centennial celebration in 2016, which encourages everyone to Find Your Park. ! Every Kid in a Park is an administrative-wide effort, launched by President Obama, and supported by eight federal agencies, including the National Park Service, the Army Corps of Engineers, Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation, Department of Education, Fish and Wildlife Service, Forest Service, and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. -NPS- www.nps.gov/grsm [www.Facebook.com/GreatSmokyMountainsNPS](https://www.facebook.com/GreatSmokyMountainsNPS) [www.Twitter.com/GreatSmokyNPS](https://www.twitter.com/GreatSmokyNPS) [www.Instagram.com/GreatSmokyNPS](https://www.instagram.com/GreatSmokyNPS)

A True Story - with a Punch Line!

By Bobbi Powers



Earlier this summer, I was hiking along the MST with four CMC hiking buddies, all of us "of a certain age." We came upon a family - a mom, dad, 4-year old daughter - coming toward us. They got off the trail and stopped. As we passed, the little girl said, "Mommy, why are they all so old?"

As the mom quickly shushed the girl, one of our quick-witted members said in passing, "Because we're lucky!"

This would make a good joke, but it's all true, and we chuckled all the way back to the car.

FALL CAMPOREE: October 2 - 4 Wilson Creek Wilderness Area

SPECIAL NOTE from Ted Snyder, Camporee Coordinator:
In the event of a government shutdown, the October camporee WILL NOT BE CANCELLED. We have planned for an alternate camping facility at Mortimer, and the event and all the hikes will be on schedule. Details will be sent in the Departure Bulletin to persons who have registered .

Ted can be reached at tedsnyderjr@bellsouth.net

For information about Mortimer Campground and the hikes planned for the weekend, go to the club website, select the Hiking menu and click on Camporee.



FROM THE CMC ARCHIVES: Factual? Elitist?

By Rocko Smucker, CMC Historian/Archivist

On November 21, 1950, a Miss Catherine Sloan sent an inquiry to the Carolina Mountain Club requesting materials concerning the Appalachian Trail, and advice on equipment and accommodations. She and a friend were planning a two-week spring hike along the AT and were referred to CMC by the North Carolina Department of Conservation and Development.

She also requested any additional information "...which you think would be very useful to two greenhorns on the trail."

Notice the letter was not signed.



Park Closes Area Near Caves to Protect Declining Bat Populations

Great Smoky Mountains National Park officials announced the closure of the Whiteoak Sink area effective now through March 31, 2016 to limit human disturbance to bat hibernacula and help

hikers avoid interactions with bats. Park biologists will be monitoring the site throughout the winter collecting population, ecological, and behavioral data that will inform resource managers developing a long-term protection plan. An extended closure through late spring may be recommended if the winter data suggests such an action would increase the chances for survival of a significant number of bats.

The Whiteoak Sink area is primarily accessed from the Schoolhouse Gap Trail between Townsend and Cades Cove. This closure includes the area bounded by Schoolhouse Gap Trail and Turkeypen Ridge Trail west to the park boundary. The Schoolhouse Gap and Turkeypen Ridge trails will remain open.



Send eNews articles to eNews@carolinamountainclub.org

The newsletter will go out the last Friday of every month. The deadline to submit news is the Friday before it goes out.

The next issue will come out on Friday, October 30, so send your news by Friday evening at 9 P.M. before the newsletter comes out, that is, by Friday evening, October 23, to eNews@carolinamountainclub.org. Include your email address at the end of your story. Thank you.

Westgate parking - Park in the northernmost part of the lot - past EarthFare, in the last row of parking spaces.

To join Carolina Mountain Club go to: www.carolinamountainclub.org. Click on "Join CMC" on the right side. Follow the instructions. Send all address and email changes to Gale O'Neal at gogalemail@gmail.com. Do not resubscribe yourself to the eNews. That will be done automatically. If you are a non-member subscriber, you need to go back to the eNews and make the change yourself.

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