

ALDHA *Blaze*

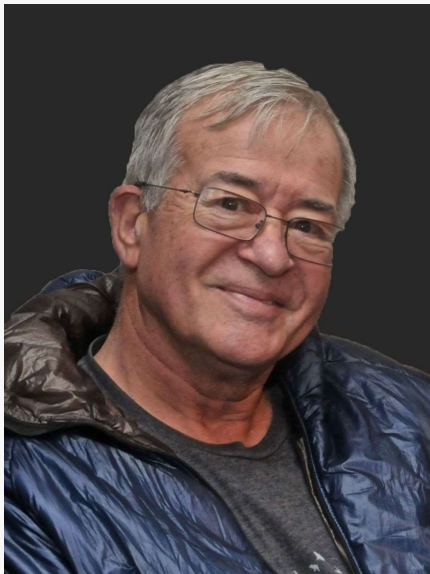
May 2023
Volume 47



Monthly Updates for ALDHA Members

Check out the UPCOMING ACTIVITIES section below for the * which highlights newly added events. Also, check out the complete listing of events and volunteer to help:

<https://www.aldha.org/events>



COORDINATOR'S CORNER

May 2023

I'm just returning from the Flip Flop Festival where about 25 hikers set off on their journeys. About 15 headed North after the ATC staff led them on a walking historical tour of Harpers Ferry through Storer College, The Cemetery, the old historical town, and John Brown's Rebellion location. This picture was taken for the departees, and we all cheered them on. What a great event and so well done. The new Trail Town of Brunswick hosted a dinner for us all and introduced us to their Mayor, a Council Member, and members of the Trail Town Committee.

Touring Harpers Ferry on their way to the start of a life-changing NOBO Flip Flop Hike!



New NOBO hikers leave Harpers Ferry after the Flip Flop Festival.

The next outreach will be at Low Gap. Which One, you say? Well, we'll be at the one that is on US 431 out of Bristol approximately 15 trail miles south of Damascus. We will be there on the 16th and 17th of May spending time with the hikers who are slowing down, burning time so they don't get into Damascus before the campground opens on Friday. This is a time in the hiking season when many hikers are moving toward one place and is a great time to introduce the current class of hikers to ALDHA. We were with 40 hikers one day for several hours and about 25 the next day last month. So many great stories were heard.

The next event on our Calendar after Low Gap is Trail Days in Damascus, VA. We will arrive on Thursday the 17th to set up and make sure that all the details are in place to have a great time. We will be in our traditional location next to the ATC near the food vendors and the pavilion. Possibly 9 of our 12 Board Members will be in attendance so come by and see us. We always have so much fun during these events while we create lifetime friendships and create a stronger spirit of camaraderie.

All trails in May lead towards Trail Days, come spend some time with us and the Class of 2023. See you there.

See you down the trail,

Dennis Newton
Trail Pilgrim
ALDHA Coordinator

ALDHA PUBLICATIONS

Don't forget that the next Newsletter in June will no longer be a printed Newsletter. The Long Distance Hiker will be available via email and/or on the website in PDF format for printing by members.

We are in need of writers, editors and photographers

to assist with the production of this quarterly newsletter starting in June of 2023! The Newsletter will, from now on, arrive as **The Blaze - Long Distance Hikers Edition** and will have a different look than the monthly Blaze and be available only to ALDHA members. Going forward there will be 8 public Blazes and 4 for ALDHA members only, Blaze/Newsletter combos. Please contact, blaze@aldha.org for more information and to volunteer.



41st ANNUAL GATHERING UPDATE

Great news for all of us this month....WE HAVE A CAMPING AREA! Many thanks go to our Abingdon Chamber rep, Tanya Triplett, for working so hard to find us a spot. We will be camping just north of the SWVHEC at the end of the road in a spot that everyone calls, The Incubator. At the end of the road which runs in front of the Center is a cul-de-sac and a really good camping area. We will be there this fall. Pictures and more to come on this most likely in the June newsletter. (Blaze - Long Distance Hikers Edition, now) Good news is...it will be free for us to rent it this year.

Don't forget our Keynote Speaker, is:

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Scott Benerofe aka Aquaman, AT '19 & '22 , will be our Keynote Saturday night speaker. His life-changing 2022 Southbound Thru-Hike brought him snow, cold, and solitude through the northern sections of the AT. In early May of 2022, Scott completed his dangerous and inspiring hike. We will



learn through his words and video about the how's and whys behind his journey at Saturday night's event on Oct 7, 2023.

SUNDAY EVENING PROGRAM

This year we will be doing something different. Instead of having a speaker we will have a musical presentation. One of our own, David Chandler, is a musician and will be singing and playing his guitar.

(he played at the Pinhoti Trail Fest) Then, he says, he will be inviting our highly talented ALDHA members to join him for a jam or a talent show. Get ready to wax up your bows and tune your guitars, polish your flute/recorder/tambourine as we prepare for some excellent music. Consider it a warmup for the campfire. More to come....

HOTEL INFO

The Clarion Pointe Hotel, as our Gathering hotel. Those of us who stayed there in 2021 know to what lengths they went to host us through the unplanned construction delays they experienced. Now, fully renovated they will welcome us back to Abingdon in October. Links on our webpage to our 'deal' will be on the website soon as will their address, phone number and a map to the location. (I hope). If you call to make a reservation, please refer to our group name which is ALDHA Gathering.

TEAM UPDATES

Now that we have a campground, it would be great if there was someone who wanted to take on the organization and set up of this area. I would be happy to install an official **Campground Coordinator**. Please contact, Vera at gathering@aldha.org for further information about this important and fun volunteer position.

GATHERING REGISTRATION UPDATES

Right now we have about 30 Early Birds registered for the Gathering. As always, you have until Sept 25th to be an 'official' early bird Gathering registrant and be entered into our yearly early bird drawing. Fabulous prizes will be available to those lucky winners.

HIKER FAIR VENDORS AND WORKSHOP PRESENTORS

The Workshop Presenter and Hiker Fair forms have been live on the webpage for about a month. It is time to think about presenting and ask your favorite vendor if they'd like to attend. We'll have some news a little later from our Education Coordinator, Penny Vann concerning our ALDHA U program. We will be at Trail Days talking to many vendors and potential

speakers about coming to the Gathering in the fall. Sign up now to secure your spot!

MEALS, ETC

Meals have become a marginal concern as the Abingdon area is still experiencing a problem finding employees for their restaurants. Watch this space for more details.

GRATITUDE

Let me reiterate how grateful I am for all the volunteers who have shown up, worked tirelessly, laughed and cried (ME!), and gotten tired and dirty performing duties as assigned at the last 2 Gatherings...YOU are ALDHA and the spirit which was the dream of the planners of that very first Gathering...thank you and may this new year be kind to us all bringing us once again together in October of 2023 for our annual get-together.

Vera Hurst

41st Annual Gathering Coordinator
gathering@aldha.org

Rush Williamson

Hiker Fair Coordinator
hikerfair@aldha.org

Mark Hudson

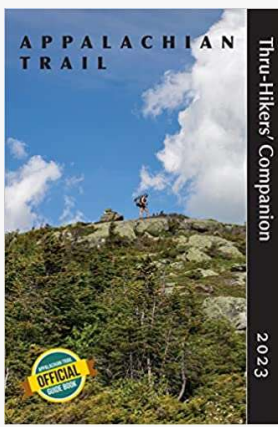
Facilities Coordinator
gathering@aldha.org

Open - add your name here

Campground Coordinator

Volunteers Needed to Edit Sections of the *Appalachian Trail Thru-Hiker's Companion.*

Our ALDHA Companion is a group effort that requires members to help update the trail, town, hostel, restaurant, other pertinent information for all sections of the AT to assure that all the information in the Companion is up-to-date and factual. ALDHA Companion Editors have loyally continued to provide this information but every year we have some who retire.



This year, our second year of having the Companion published by Mountaineers, we are asking those who might be interested in this job to come forward. Your section data will become the "local gossip" on what is good and recommended by those who live in the trail towns and will help hikers find what they need. The Companion's unique approach to "recommended by local ALDHA members" is what sets our Companion apart from all the others.

What does this involve: From now until the end of July we will be looking around the communities to see what is new compared to the information in the current Companion guide. You decide if the descriptions are accurate and if you would recommend other businesses and services to hikers coming into town. Take a hike on the AT yourself to see that the conditions are as described. Is the mileage in the book different from what you know? Talk to hikers about the water sources and what the conditions are in the shelters in your section. And above all take the time to enjoy the trail and the other hikers.

When turning in your report, we use Microsoft Word with tracking of changes turned on. Dennis will provide you with a document that has the current year's text and you alter it using the tracking feature. When you have completed the section you send it to Dennis. He will work with Mountaineers, our publisher, to get it into the proper final formats.

A Section Editor needs to be a current member of ALDHA and willing to follow the format to guarantee consistency within the document. After the 2024 Thru Hiker's Companion is printed you will receive a copy with your name listed on the Thanks Page. This is a chance to gain some experience working with a team writing project and contributing to a published work.

The most important reason we do this is that hikers need to know what to expect while on trail. They need to have a factual guide that will help while planning and then after transitioning to the trail, information for the day-to-day logistics needed during their hike. We all know what questions they are asking and want to help.

Sections in need of an editor(s):

Fontana Dam to Spivey Gap (2 sections)

North of Troutville to Rockfish Gap

Front Royal to Harper's Ferry

Vermont

Grafton Notch to NH border

Maine

If you are interested contact:

Dennis Newton

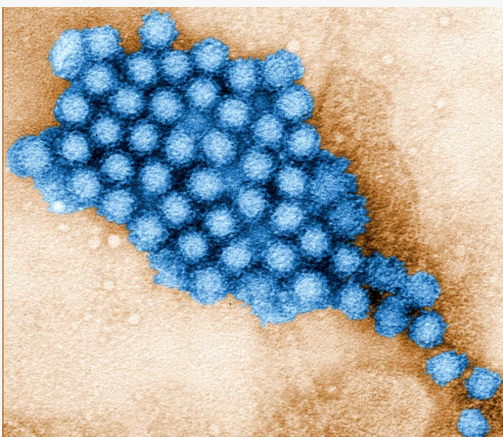
Text: **334-465-5079** so I know you are from ALDHA

Coordinator@aldha.org



As we all know ... vehicles require constant maintenance and so too does our hardworking trailer need repairs, periodically. Here, Sherpa gets new shoes.

Sherpa is also, now sporting the new 2023 Companion logo.



Stop Noro!

Norovirus runs (pun intended) its way up the trail faster than a speed hiker can walk. It seems to attack hikers at will, causing its victims to take zeros and feel miserable instead of having fun. Make no mistake, Norovirus, or vomiting and the runs for 1 to 3 days, is never any fun. In the backcountry, the virus can become dangerous as dehydration is a serious possibility.

Besides the dangers of dehydration, this virus is highly contagious. It can stay alive on surfaces for weeks just waiting for an unsuspecting hiker. In locations where someone is actively sick, this virus can be spread through the air. The person who seems to be over the symptoms is still contagious for another 3 days to 2 weeks (CDC). Yikes!



The most common way of transmission is by putting contaminated hands, food, and water into our mouths. According to Healthline, washing our hands with soap and water for 30 seconds is an effective preventative measure (NBC). Soap and water works, but hand sanitizers or alcohol do not. Also, not putting our hands to our mouths no matter how clean we think they are, helps.

Other ways to keep healthy are by:

1. Not putting our hands into other people's food. This is hard as we like to share. We may fist bump but we will happily share a bag of chips with someone. Pouring the food out of the bag is better than sticking your hand in it.
2. Not eating dinner on the shelter floor, or a bare picnic table. Both can hold the virus and then contaminate our dishes.
3. Not sleeping in crowded places while Noro is making the rounds.
4. Use purified water for hand washing and drinking.
5. AND if you appear to be healthy, you might consider hiking through areas that have an active outbreak.

If you do catch it. Stay hydrated and ISOLATE yourself as quickly as possible, stay in your tent rather than the shelter even after your symptoms are gone. If, however, you begin to show the symptoms of dehydration or have bloody stools or vomit, get help as soon as possible. Hike, if you can, with a friend to the nearest place to seek medical attention.

After it passes, Wash everything including clothes. Also please practice LNT principles so that others will not catch it from you. Lastly, please do not sit on top of picnic tables as you can contaminate others. Noro is one thing we don't mind if you selfishly keep it to yourself. By the way you can catch it more than once.

Wishing you good health,
Penny Vann

Pictured from left to right are the ALDHA Care on the Trail Crew who helped build the bunks at Lost & Found Hostel:

Doug Waterman, Pete Bowman, Chris Lorge and Dave Chandler



ALDHA Care: On the Trail

by *Dave Chandler*

Pete and Mary Bowman bought their retirement home at Greenwood Lake, New York, with one mission in mind... to create an AT hostel that felt like home. They knew they would have to build and renovate in order to have a successful hostel. A hiker hostel for Appalachian Trail hikers needs a couple of things: Bunk-beds, to begin with. They called ALDHA Care for some help.



When "Hard Way" and I arrived that Saturday morning, Pete had a pile of lumber, pictures of a bunk bed, a host of handy friends, and a dream. It was the last installment of just the first phase that The Lost and Found Hostel must pass thru on their way to surely becoming a "trail-staple" for AT hikers. Pete and Mary needed a hand or two with the bunks, so ALDHA Care was there to help.

After the handymen arrived, lunch was served to us in Mary's exquisite kitchen. Then came the sounds of spinning saw blades while hammers rose and fell. It's no wonder that it only took Pete roughly four months to hike the AT in 2021. At well over six feet tall, Lost and Found (his trail name) had a bunk-bed vision that rivaled his stride on the trail. The mammoth bunk design can comfortably fit the tallest of hikers with room to spare.

Funny, warm and friendly, Pete and Mary are creating an atmosphere that any hiker would be relieved to enter after a long day on the job. Carving the trail miles off the western edge of Greenwood Lake are challenging and rewarding, leaving any hiker weary. The hospitality that the Bowman's offer

is an enticing stop on a beautiful stretch of the AT that needs more options for respite. "We want to create a cozy vibe where hikers can rest and eat good food with us. They can also go the half-mile to town for a pint, or just pull the curtains on the bunk and have some privacy," says Pete. "Here at The Lost and Found Hostel, a hiker can have just about any type of respectful visit they want. Hungry hikers can enjoy some of Mary's good cooking too, if they choose."

After a productive day on the round saws and drills, Mary's pasta and Pete's homemade bread rolls (OMG) were served to us family-style as we sat around the dinner table and traded trail stories. I felt like I was back on the trail again. "This is what it's all about," my thought bubbles rose between laughs—Giving back to the trail community that so fully supports an Appalachian adventure. And this is what ALDHA is all about: Supporting hikers and supporting those who support hikers.

The next morning brought a few more nails and screws over a pot of Columbian brew, as the bunk was assembled. And it's a beauty. "Wow, Pete! Nice going...great vision! Sturdy as the Dover Oak!" "Thank you all so much for your help," Pete pours on us, "That was a team effort." "Our pleasure, Pete. This is what ALDHA does."

The Lost and Found Hostel 1128 State Route 17a Greenwood Lake, NY 10925 (610)322-9561 - call first for reservation (limited shuttle service from Greenwood Lake trailhead available)



More Boundary Work From Bob

Bob has been busy this last month of April at Blackburn Trail Center and planning for future trail work.

During the week of April 3 in northern Virginia the ALDHA Trail Crew used Blackburn trail center as their basecamp for boundary work in that area. Ryan Seltzer of the ATC says, "Thanks again for pulling together a great work week! It was a lot of fun and well executed. In

total, over 3.3 miles of boundary was maintained and 39 survey monuments were located. Including a long lost missing monument which Amanda Rameriz found! She has a knack for locating our missing monuments!!" Trail Boss Chris would like us to schedule another week there starting December 4th, so get your winter woolies ready for another week at Blackburn.

Also scheduled as of this edition:

After Gathering Trail work on Monday, October 9, 2023.

Our usual collaboration between ALDHA, MRATC, and the Forest Service. Plans are to work at the same shelter that ALDHA helped with in 2021. During that time we painted, stained, and provided graphetti remediation.

This year, they would like us to continue our work there at Straight Branch Shelter near Skulls Gap. Right now they are thinking, a new metal roof but it is still in the approval process. So, those of you who are skilled at roofing ... please plan on staying Monday. Bring your hammers and other equipment. More info coming in the future. Number of ALDHA participants will be limited to ten (flexible limit).

Also, like in 2021 we will work with the city of Abingdon to find a project for those who want to give back and stay Monday but are not quite as technically skilled as needed for the MRATC project. More to come.

Written/edited by:

Vera Hurst, Blaze Editor

Boots Off - Outreach Event #3

Photo Credit: Marlene Simpson





2023 ALDHA Outreach Schedule

1. Mar 3-5, Amicalola, GA
2. Mar 21-22, Sams Gap, TN
3. Mar 23-25, Boots Off, Hampton, TN
4. May 16-17, Low Gap, NC (Newton-John)
5. May 19-20, "Trail Days," Damascus, VA (Aldha Board)
6. Jun 12-14, Rockfish Gap, VA (Jill)
7. Jun 24-25, Pen-Mar, MD (Eric)
8. Jul 5-6, Pine Grove Furnace area, PA (TBD)
9. Jul 7, Palmerton, PA Trail Head (Beth)
10. July 16-17, Fahnestock Park, NY (Andy Boyes)
11. Aug 2-3, Caratunk, ME (Fig Newton)
12. Aug 24-25, Gifford Woods, VT (Mad Hatter)
13. SoBound Outreach Flex October Damascus Gathering time frame

A Note from the Membership Secretary's Desk:

As of May 1st we have 1,549 active members with 217 new members signed up in 2023 and another 125 who renewed their membership. If your membership recently expired, please consider renewing now to help ALDHA continue to provide support to the long-distance hiking community.

[JOIN](#)

[RENEW](#)

Upcoming Activities

Volunteer Sign-up for Events is now LIVE on the website on the calendar page! Go there NOW to sign up.

Are you looking for an activity to motivate you to stay in shape? Are you missing trail family? Would you like to give back to the trail? Here is the latest info on upcoming activities. * Indicates that this event is a new addition to calendar.

Outreach

***May 16 & 17, 2023**

Low Gap, NC

Join Dennis & John (& possibly Joe) at this pre-Trail Days Outreach event. See above article for directions to the correct "Low Gap".

For more information, contact:

coordinator@aldha.org

***June 12 - 14, 2023**

Rockfish Gap

Jill Byrd and friends will host this Outreach event. For more information, contact:

coordinator@aldha.org or check the website for event volunteer registration. (available very soon)

***For more information about Outreach or Volunteering, contact coordinator@aldha.org**

Trail Boundary Work Crew

For current listing of Work Crew activities, click:

[Trail Crew](#)

Work Crew Info

July 9 - 13, 2023

**ALDHA, MATC, ATC Collaborative Trail Crew
Rangeley Lakes State Park**

ALDHA Events

May 19-21, 2023

Trail Days

Damascus, VA

Annual celebration of hikers in Damascus, VA. ALDHA will have a booth and be hosting the Annual Hiker Feed at the Rock School. We will present at least 1 educational program. Come by the booth and say hello!

October 6-9, 2023

41st Annual Gathering

**REGISTRATION FOR ALL AREAS, ATTENDEES, HIKER FAIR
VENDORS & WORKSHOP PRESENTERS IS LIVE!**

Watch the Blaze for more information.

Registration <https://aldha.org/gathering>

