



Katahdin from the A. T. on Abol Bridge

SPECIAL HOLIDAY SUPPLEMENT
APPALACHIAN TRAIL MUSEUM UPDATES
WITH MUSEUM MANAGER VOLUTEER NEWS
&
NEW HIKANATION EXHIBIT AND NEWSPAPER ARTICLE



APPALACHIAN TRAIL MUSEUM UPDATES, May 28, 2021

~ by Robert "RED WOLF o'da SMOKY'S" Croyle - Membership Secretary – Editor - Board Member
~ photos contributed by many in the hiker-community

The Appalachian Trail Museum

We thank you for your volunteer and financial support of our A. T. Museum. The Appalachian Trail Museum has seen one tremendous success after another, all that together helps to fulfill our mission as the Museum of the Appalachian Trail. Your generous help makes this possible.

Our plans going into the immediate future will require your continued, ongoing support for our Museum's future success ~and with your help, we will be able to confidently accomplish all we have in the plans for this 2021 A. T. Museum season and beyond.

"Your vital support is appreciated", the Appalachian Trail Museum.

F.Y.I. ~ to view our mission statement, click on, [**MISSION STATEMENT**](#).

F.Y.I. ~ to receive our newsletter, click on & write name and email only, [**SUBSCRIBE**](#).



MUSEUM HOURS: OPEN THIS SATURDAY THRU MONDAY FOR MEMORIAL DAY AND BEGIN OUR WEDNESDAY-SUNDAY SCHEDULE WEDNESDAY, JUNE 2nd.

ALL OPEN HOURS ARE  9am to  4pm EACH DAY !

WEEKLY VOLUNTEER NEWS *(May 26, 2021)* :

All, I had the pleasure of opening the museum this evening for a group of high school young women who are doing a section of the A.T. as part of their senior project! It was wonderful to see such excitement and enthusiasm for the trail from a group so young. If you ever want to open the museum on a day when we are not typically open for a group or just because you're in the area and have some free time, please just send me an email. We're always happy to make accommodations when we can to let folks see the museum!

A reminder that we are open this Monday for Memorial Day and begin our Wednesday-Sunday from 9am-4pm schedule on June 2nd.

We are in need of docents for **Saturday morning** and all day on **Monday**.

We could also use a second docent on **Sunday afternoon**.

Please [sign up here](#) if you have any availability this weekend, as it would be much appreciated. Currently, **Saturday morning** is our biggest need, followed by **Monday**.

Best, Julie Queen - A.T. Museum Manager – email: manager@atmuseum.org

~ Julie took the wild flower photos below while hiking in Virginia last week:



A Painted Trillium



A Wake Robin Trillium



A SHOWY ORCHID

A HikaNation Exhibit was Opened at the Appalachian Trail Museum in May 2019 !



William Kemsley, founder of *Backpacker* magazine

The Appalachian Trail Museum is America's only museum dedicated to hiking. The A.T. museum is situated at the halfway point of the Appalachian Trail in Pine Grove Furnace State Park, Gardners, Pennsylvania.

The museum unveiled five new exhibits in May 2019. High among them was the HikaNation exhibit. It chronicles the 500-mile section of the A.T. hiked by the cross-America hikers.

HikaNation was a 14-month group-trek in 1980-1981. The group hiked from San Francisco, California, to Cape Henlopen State Park, Delaware. The ocean-to-ocean hike was sponsored by *Backpacker* magazine, the U.S. Department of Interior and the American Hiking Society. Thousands of hikers joined the hike along the way. But only a core group of 40 backpacked the entire 4000-mile distance.

The HikaNation trek led to the creation of the American Discovery Trail 10 years later.

At the HikaNation Dedication, Organizers Jim Kern, founder of the Florida Trail and Bill Kemsley, *Backpacker* magazine founder, were on hand for the exhibit opening.

Paul Pritchard retired Deputy Director of the U.S. Department of Interior, also attended. He unofficially represented the Department of the Interior, which was one of HikaNation's sponsors.



Appalachian
Trail Museum™





1120 Pine Grove Road • Gardners, PA 17324 • 717-486-8126 • www.atmuseum.org

NEWS RELEASE
April 14, 2019

Join Us On May 5 As The A.T. Museum Dedicates Five Exciting New Exhibits!!

GARDNERS, PA. – The Appalachian Trail Museum invites everyone to its **FREE** Hall of Fame Festival on Sunday, May 5, 2019. During the Festival, five new exhibits will be dedicated. The Museum is located at beautiful Pine Grove Furnace State Park, located at **1100 Pine Grove Road, Pine Grove Furnace State Park, Gardners, PA 17324**. If it's been a while since your last visit, come see how the Museum has grown!

- **Arrive at 10:00 AM** for a **Meet and Greet** with coffee, tea, and juice.
- **Enjoy our** dedication program at **10:30 AM** with expert speakers to introduce each exhibit.
- **Stay** for a **picnic lunch** and an **afternoon** filled with music and activities.

Our New Exhibits!

1. **"A Night on the Trail"**: A multi-media exhibit to give children a sense of what it's like to spend a night on the Appalachian Trail.

2. "**Blazing the Trail in Maine**", featuring photos showing how the Appalachian Trail was established in Maine and featuring the folding kayak (Folbot) used by Appalachian Trail pioneer, Myron Avery.
3. "**Walkin' Jim Stoltz**"; An exhibit dedicated to the late Jim Stoltz, renowned long distance hiker, songwriter, artist, poet, photographer, author, entertainer, and environmental activist.
4. "**Hikanation**": Celebrating the groundbreaking, 1980-81, Pacific-to-Atlantic Hike organized by the American Hiking Society.
5. "**Our National Scenic Trails**": An exhibit celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the National Scenic Trails System established by Act of Congress in 1968.

Additional Media Information and Background

- During the morning program on May 5th, 2019, guest speakers will introduce each of the new exhibits with personal reflections and, in some cases, song.

Join Us On May 5 As The A.T. Museum Dedicates Five Exciting New Exhibits!!

page 2

- There will be a picnic lunch to enjoy at noon. Some food will be provided, and attendees are invited to also bring food of their own and/or make a donation.
- After lunch, attendees will tour the new exhibits, and the morning speakers or Museum volunteers will be on hand to answer questions. At the open air Pavilion, music will be provided and there will be an “open mike” for everyone to share songs and experiences.

EVENT CONTACT INFORMATION

Dan Shaffer

daniel.shaffer@gmail.com.

Text or call: (480) 215-7558

The Sunday Hall of Fame Festival is part of the Museum’s Hall of Fame Weekend. The Museum’s Ninth Hall of Fame Banquet will be Saturday, May 4 at the Army Heritage & Education Center in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Complete information and tickets are available at

<https://2019athalloffamebanquet.eventbrite.com>

About the Appalachian Trail Museum Society

The Appalachian Trail Museum Society, a 501-C-3 not-for-profit organization formed in 2002, organizes programs, exhibits, volunteers and fundraising nationwide for the Appalachian Trail Museum. The museum opened on June 5, 2010, as a tribute to the thousands of men, women and families who have hiked and maintained the approximately 2,190 mile long hiking trail that passes through 14 states from Maine to Georgia. Located in the Pine Grove Furnace State Park in Gardners, Pennsylvania, the museum is conveniently near Carlisle, Gettysburg and Chambersburg, Pennsylvania. Additional information is available at www.atmuseum.org.



GENERAL MUSEUM CONTACT INFORMATION

Appalachian Trail Museum Society

717-486-8126

info@atmuseum.org

www.atmuseum.org





**Standing: Paul Pritchard, Bill Kemsley, Jim Kern, Cindy Burke
Kneeling: Terry Ernst, Paula Guerrein-Klice**



Standing: Larry Luxenberg, Paula Guerrein-Klice, Cindy Burke, Terry Ernst (left to right)
Sitting: Bill Kemsley, Jim Kern (left to right)



Jim Kern, Cindy Burke, Bill Kemsley



Paula Guerrein-Klice



Paul Pritchard, Bill Kemsley, Jim Kern



Picnic lunch after the dedication - Pine Grove Furnace State Park

~ HikaNation ~

FROM *THE WASHINGTON POST* (May 25, 2021):

I crossed the U.S. on foot with a group of strangers 40 years ago.

It was one of the best decisions of my life. By Stacey Waring



Stacey Waring in 1981 in VA as part of the Hikanation trek across the United States. (Reese Lukei Jr.)

A small write-up hidden on the back pages of a Newsweek magazine led me to the town of Las Animas, Colo., in the fall of 1980. As a hiking enthusiast from Springfield, Va., I was elated when I read that a group of backpackers had just left San Francisco and planned to [cross America together on foot](#). I immediately made plans to join them three months later in this small town near the Kansas border.

I really didn't know what I was getting into, of course. Yet 40 years later, I realize this decision was one of the most consequential of my life.

Conceived by [Jim Kern](#), creator of the Florida Trail, and [Bill Kemsley](#), founder of Backpacker magazine, the trek was designed to attract support for hiking trails and a transcontinental East-West path. Called [HikaNation](#), the journey would take around 14 months and 4,200 miles to complete. A "pathfinder" in each state was responsible for charting the route and determining campsites. The adventure had the support of the [American Hiking Society](#) and other organizations. But as the group left California on April 12, 1980, much was in doubt. Would there be calamities or death? What if some got lost? Would the hikers get along? Could this trek really succeed?



Hikers resupply and study maps near Roanoke. (Reese Lukei Jr.)

The reality soon became clear. We hiked about 12 to 15 miles a day with packs on our backs weighing close to 50 pounds. The trip tested us as we walked our way through scorching heat in Nevada, icy streams in Arkansas, below-zero winter days in Kentucky and knee-deep snow in Virginia. Along the way, hikers left, returned, and were joined by new members such as myself. We went through the highways, byways and trails of America, crossing 14 states and D.C., where we were met at the U.S. Capitol by a phalanx of flags and a congressional delegation before heading into Anacostia and eastward.



Hikanation trekkers arrive at the U.S. Capitol on May 13, 1981. (Stacey Waring)

Finally, on May 27, 1981, there were no more steps to take as we threw ourselves into the Atlantic surf at Cape Henlopen, Del., hugging and crying, stunned at what we had accomplished over the thousands of miles. Of the 80 who began with the intent of completing the trip, 37 hiked the entire nation, while many more, like myself, had done a significant part of the journey.



On May 27, 1981, the HikaNation group finally reached the shores of the Atlantic Ocean at Cape Henlopen, Del. They had hiked about 4,200 miles over 14 months. (Reese Lukei Jr.)

Today HikaNation remains one of the largest groups to ever complete such a feat. It was not just a physical endeavor but a social experiment. Keeping peace and harmony among people who, by nature, are independent fell mostly to the parental figure of the trip, Monty Montgomery, a retired Air Force colonel who was part Enforcer-of-Few-Rules and part hugging grandfather. Monty drove a beat-up Airstream trailer parallel along our route and met the group when roads allowed, providing water, mail and great morning coffee. He was the glue that kept us together.



Monty Montgomery, logistics man and father figure, in April 1981 in Virginia. (Stacey Waring)

Not surprisingly, the hike attracted adventurous young dreamers who mingled with retirees and those disenchanted with their careers, as well as a few leaving bad marriages. Adolescents befriended grandparents, while small-town hikers debated politics with urbanites.



The group set up camp in Dodge City, Kan., in October 1980. (William Ewart)

A few were asked to leave by the group for causing problems, but later returned with more wisdom. The youngest participant, Jiamie Pyles, born months before the trip's start, was pushed across the entire country by her father, first in a stroller, then in a rig concocted of PVC pipe.



Jiamie Pyles being pushed by father "Gomer" Pyles on May 13, '81, in D.C. (Reese Lukei Jr.)

John Stout, the oldest hiker at 69, was a retired machinist who perfected the daily nap, then would bypass us 20-somethings on the trail.



John Stout raises the U.S. flag in celebration before a cheering crowd at the U.S. Capitol on May 13,'81.

Hikanation worked because at the core was a deep concern for each other and a shared mission. Mothers on the hike routinely cared for a young man who rarely spoke a word for months. We gave generous amounts of food and supplies to each other. And when one hiker nearly died deep in a Utah canyon, others came together to carry him out and to a hospital.

We respected both our autonomy and interdependence, giving each other not only support but distance. I frequently changed hiking partners to gain a new outlook, hear gossip or chat about political news (always delayed, we did not know Reagan was shot until two days afterward). In winter, tent-sharing became a necessity to stay warm as much as an amorous experience, but one marriage did come out of the trip as did many relationships.

We also came to embrace a country of which most of us had only read. Growing up in the Virginia suburbs, I had never seen Kansas, Oklahoma or Kentucky. But at age 26, as I spent months crossing these states by foot, I came to better understand the complexity of our nation. People we met were universally friendly and proud of their towns. Church groups provided dinners, while locals would drive by with hands extended offering soda or water.



One of many small-town stops in the fall of 1980 (Stacey Waring)

A shopkeeper in Arkansas opened his shoe store for us one cold night. A pizza restaurant provided "all you can eat" status to us until they ran out of food. A woman in Oklahoma made a herculean effort to return my lost camera without even knowing me. And when I went to pay for a coat that was cleaned in Kansas, the clerk refused my money, tearfully noting that, "this is my way of going with you."



**Hikers take a break in the snow on the Appalachian Trail in March 1981.
From left are Jeannie Harmon, Rob Burns, Cindy Bain and Phil Atkins.**

After the journey's end, I assumed that our group would disperse and return to our prior lives, rarely meeting again. Rob Burns, our youngest hiker at age 14, went back to high school (his school had given him permission for the trip), while John Stout ran a marathon. Though some struggled to find purpose, most found career paths, emboldened by new confidence. After living out of a tent for nearly a year, my prior stressors did not seem as difficult. I no longer minded cold or wet weather and realized I did not need a TV.

I became a clinical psychologist and spent 36 years working in the community-mental-health field in Northern Virginia, where my husband and I raised two sons.



Hikers celebrate at a 10-year reunion at Cape Henlopen in May 1991. (Tim Geoghegan)

But I missed many of my comrades immensely. After the first year, we held a reunion in Arkansas, and another at five years — then 10 years, 20, 30. All the gatherings found us clamoring to reconnect. While we briefly heard about babies born and jobs lost, most of the conversations held were about the hike itself, as if we needed to relive it one more time.



Thirty-five-year anniversary of the hike, in Estes Park, Colo., in September 2015. (S Waring)

Of those who hiked at least part of the trip, at least 25 have passed away. Most of us who hiked in our 20s are now retired, and the irony that we are nearing John Stout's Hikanation age is not lost on anyone as we are humbled by knee and hip replacements. Some still regularly hike, albeit shorter distances, and a few of us come together for alumni treks each summer.



Stacey Waring during a 2019 HikaNation alumni trek on John Muir Trail in California. (Tim Geoghegan)

On May 27, I'll again remember the bonds that have kept most of us together for four decades when I return to stand at Cape Henlopen's shores with a few others. What good fortune I had to have once I picked up a magazine that led me to this "family on foot." I learned that sometimes it's okay to take a leap of faith on humanity and yourself. It might be one of the best decisions you ever make.



Here is some background on HikaNation:

How about a Coast to Coast Hiking Trail?

Some years ago a few of us got together and had an idea that a hiking trail across America would provide an unequalled opportunity to slowly see our great nation in all its glory. We got serious and put together a plan for a major event that would both publicize the idea and scout a route. We gave it the name Hikanation.

I had a magazine in which we could get the attention of hikers to see if we could interest enough of them to want to give it a try. We had already founded a national hiking organization, AHS, the American Hiking Society.

We proposed the idea to the board and received overwhelming support. And we got just as resounding interest from my Backpacker magazine readers.

Thus, on April 12, 1980 a large group of hikers got together with us in a downtown church basement in San Francisco to get started on this 4200-mile adventure.

Off with a bang.

Our enthusiastic hikers met still other local hikers at the shore of the Pacific Ocean, dipped their boots in the water, turned east, and headed out.

My good friend, Jim Kern, agreed to head up this undertaking. He managed to get assistance from a great number of influential people. Among the first, he enlisted Nobel Laureate, Glenn Seaborg, to organize things in California and map out a route across that state.

But, there was a huge obstacle to us on the second day of the hike. How do you get across San Francisco Bay?

While there is the long Oakland Bay Bridge connecting San Francisco to Oakland, it is designed to only carry motorized traffic. Well, Glenn and his chief lieutenant, Mike Reynolds, had to ask the State of California's legislature to pass a bill to enable the closing of one lane of the bridge to allow our hikers to cross it on foot.

That got so much publicity that the second day of Hikanation attracted 7000 more hikers to cross the bridge on foot with us. Our first goal was thus already surpassed, for the event hit the front pages of newspapers, news magazines, and television programs from coast to coast.

The Long Hike

Now the more tedious part, keeping the 87 hikers committed to hike together for the next 13 months, across 14 states to dip their boots into the Atlantic Ocean at Cape Henlopen, Delaware. I mean how do you keep them out of each other's hair, keep peace among them, and handle all the logistics of resupplying them and caring for emergencies they would encounter along the way?



7,000 hikers crossing Oakland-Bay Bridge

Jim is a marvel of organization skills and developed a loosely knit organization of coordinators in each state to help with the route.

He found a retired gentleman, Monty Montgomery, to bring mail to the hikers, resupply their food and supplies, and handle emergencies. Monty followed the hikers along their route, on adjacent highways, hauling his Airstream trailer. Monty became more than simply a supporting arm of the hike; he became a comforter, confidant, nurse and mother to the hikers.

The 87 hikers who began the hike winnowed down substantially along the way for one reason or another. One developed a serious bowel condition and had to leave for an operation, but returned to the hike as soon as he regained his strength.

The hikers were of all ages. The oldest was 69-year-old John Stout. Marcie Guerrein, just under sixty, was the hike's oldest woman. The youngest was a baby in arms, Jaimie, the daughter of Gomer and Gayle Rainbow Pyle. Jaimie began the adventure in a baby carriage pushed along the route by Gomer. She learned to walk while her parents trudged the happy road, and ended up on her own legs at the finish. Jaimie may have set some sort of Guinness World Record as the youngest to cross America with parents on foot, if you exclude of course those babes who grew up in covered wagons during the migration west.



Marcie Guerrein



John Stout



Jaimie(L) & Gayle Rainbow Pyle

Thirty-five Years Later (*written in Sept. 2015*):

Last week the Hikanation group and their descendants met in Rocky Mountain National Park for their thirty-fifth annual reunion.

It was an emotional event with tears of both joy as well as sadness over the loss of so many of their fellow hikers over the years. Jaimie was there, now a beautiful woman with a lovely singing voice.



Jaimie Pyle, Gomer Pyle, Jim Kern, Gudy Gaskill

Hikanation is significant for setting in motion the drive to establish a fixed footpath across America, which finally came into being as the federally designated American Discovery Trail in 2000.

There are a number of videos on YouTube about Hikanation including one of this year's reunion.

The special one for me is a slide show that "Kelty Mike" set up. (That's Mike Collins' trail name.)

It has nostalgic scenes of all the events that took place on the entire hike from the boot-dipping in the Pacific to the first night's camp on a paved parking lot beneath the Oakland-Bay Bridge, the hike across the bridge and the hundreds of other events along the way.

Check it out at, <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCbSdzB8PHnTNg7zz2drmVJw>

There are other interesting sites on

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/AmericanHiking/posts/10152062462628108>

Then there is Hikanation's website: <http://hikanation.com>

And the one I liked most has film clips of the entire hike, with a lot of focus on baby hiker, Jaimie Pyle, as she grows up to walk the final steps of the route.

Click on, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C3dhi0S6Xqo>

THE AMERICAN HIKING
SOCIETY
1980 HIKANATION 1981







Marce's HikaNation Slideshow 1980-1981 – 46 min.

Marce Guerrein's HikaNation Slideshow - A slideshow of HikaNation; a cross-country backpacking trip, traveling through 14 states, from April 1980 through May 1981.

Click on, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hRMWfnIKIPk>



The Mississippi River Crossing