



2006 Annual Hike Overview and Fundraising Newsletter

Make a Difference Everyday

The first year we were pathetic but learned. The second year we prepared and excelled. The third year we expected easy times and regressed. The fourth year

I realized it is not the goal that is important, it is the perspective gained each step in the day's journey and the ability to apply this knowledge to tomorrow.

This year I asked myself a question. Is it more important to reach a goal and learn nothing or miss a goal and learn everything? I chose to learn. Maybe I am rationalizing our own hiking futility as we have once again missed our hiking mileage target established prior to the hike. Truth be told, we have had ample opportunity to learn as we've missed our goals three times in four hiking attempts. Ironically, these are the same years in which Barfy has "barfed." Nonetheless, our struggles in 2006 were our greatest to date and in this struggle I believe and hope we learned the most.

"We learn wisdom from failure much more than from success; we often discover what we will do by finding out what we will not do, and probably he who never makes a mistake never made a discovery"

Samuel Smiles

Each hour of every day we all can make a difference and do something to make the world we live in a better place. Nearly every person reading this newsletter is blessed with family, friends, health, security and love.

Julianna's Hike - 2006

Max Patch Road to Indian Grave Gap on the Tennessee and North Carolina border. We hiked 96.8 miles in seven days ending on September 1, 2006.

I am convinced we all have a responsibility to use what we have accumulated in life, whether it's faith, knowledge or wealth, with others who do not have the blessings we enjoy.

"If you have a talent use it in every way possible. Do not hoard it. Do not dole it out like a miser. Spend it lavishly, like a millionaire going broke"

Brenda Francis

More than anything, I hope I can share with you my hard earned perspective - that you need to keep your life in its proper context and remember the only thing worth coveting in this life is a loving relationship with your family, your friends and God.

Each year the hike offers a new experience, a new perspective, but the common thread remains Julianna and the love she embodies.



Thank you for making this year's hike another success. Each year, the four hikers commit to do their very best and you have continued to reward this effort. Your support has been incredible. This year, you our sponsors, have helped us raise \$45,940 - by far our greatest amount yet. We have donated this money to organizations and people trying to make a difference.

In 2006, the money we raised benefited children who are struggling in life - physically, emotionally or financially. I am pleased to report we will distribute \$50,000 in total from the 2006 Hike and the Julianna Doherty Fund. Once again our largest beneficiary is the Center for Grieving Children. Our fundraising has given us the opportunity to make a difference and provide needed financial support to people we have gotten to know over the last few years. The Julianna Doherty Fund through the Philadelphia Foundation donated to the following organizations.

[CENTER FOR GRIEVING CHILDREN](http://www.grievingchildren.org) (www.grievingchildren.org)

For the fourth year, we are funding the Center for Grieving Children, Teen's and Families, located on the grounds of St. Christopher's Hospital in North Philadelphia. The funds will primarily be used to fund their after school program and to purchase art supplies and pay grief counselors. Most of the city's public schools continue to send kids to this organization even though no public money is provided. The center provides support for children or young adults who have experienced a loss of a loved one. This Center's program allows children to express themselves to others who have felt similar loss. Sharing the pain with those who understand the pain is a good way to start the healing process. In 2006, I was asked and now serve on the Board of Directors for the Center. **Special Note: This organization needs financial support each year. This year more than most. The center was just notified they will need to find another location since St. Christopher's is expanding into their existing space. CFGC Golf Outing will be held on June 18, 2007. Anyone interested in participating, please let me know.**

[Womens Christian Alliance](http://www.wcafamily.org) (www.wcafamily.org)

The WCA, located in North Philadelphia has helped Philadelphia inner city families and children since 1919. We have donated to the Family Services Division of the WCA, which will use this money to support programs and events for Foster Children. Many of these kids have never left their local neighborhoods. Our funding will provide these children an opportunity to participate in fun and culturally stimulating activities in the region, which they could not afford otherwise. In 2006, amongst other things, we funded a trip to the Black History Museum in Baltimore, the Circus and The Lion King Show at the Academy of Music.



[SAY YES TO EDUCATION, INC](http://www.sayyestoeducation.org) (www.sayyestoeducation.org)

This year I was introduced to a program, which provides inner city youth without financial means, an opportunity to go to college or trade schools free of cost. The Julianna Fund has committed to support and fund its afternoon activities during the summer where they hire Professional Crafters, Dancers, Martial Artists, etc to work with the children in this program. They also have tutors available to

work with the kids who are falling behind in their academic studies. During the summer, they will serve close to 200 students in grades K thru 9. Maisha Sullivan-Ongoza directs this program, which we hope to actively support in the years ahead.

[ST. MARY'S RESPITE](http://www.stmarysrespite.org) (www.stmarysrespite.org)

This retreat, located in West Philadelphia, offers support to small children ages 1 to 5 who are either infected by HIV or have someone in their immediate family who has contracted HIV. This respite provides young children with a happy and nurturing environment for one day a week. The goal of the Respite is two - fold. First, they provide a child a fun day to look forward to, and second, they give the child's care giver a break either to get medical treatment or just to enjoy some down time.

[BREATHING ROOM FOUNDATION.ORG](http://www.breathingroomfoundation.org)

This Foundation is an organization, which supports individuals and their families who are suffering from cancer. The Breathing Room provides breathing room to families who are dealing with the daily struggle of cancer, whether it is providing a meal for the holidays, cutting someone's lawn, baby sitting or providing financial assistance to pay utilities. In the last year, my co-workers and I have participated in Thanksgiving, Christmas/Hannukah and Easter Holiday programs. We do know first hand the heartfelt benefit this organization provides to families in dire need of support.

[ST BARTHOLOMEW OUTREACH PROGRAM](http://www.stbartholomew.org)

Several years ago I was introduced to Sister Pat Denny, who has an outreach program at this Northern Philadelphia Church. After meeting with her, I consider her a missionary in the City of Philadelphia. With Sister Pat's guidance, we have once again paid Catholic School tuition for a family, whose father is legally blind and whose two oldest daughters in the 3rd and 4th grade (they have 5 children) have severe vision problems as well. Public school is not a viable option for this family. This family continues to be in financial crises and unable to pay Catholic School tuition. Through the fund we are able to pay tuition for this family for the next school year for three of their school age children. Your gift has allowed this family to be educated in a christian school where they have learned and prospered.

[VARIETY CLUB](http://www.varietyphila.org) (www.varietyphila.org)

Each year the variety club sponsors an event for special needs children at Sesame Place. At the end of this special day the kids receive a medal of achievement for the days activities. In 2006, the Variety Club had no money available for medals. I was made aware of this and we immediately provided the money to purchase 2,500 Olympic style medals. The children loved them.



The Hike



“ A good plan today is better than a perfect plan tomorrow”

George S. Patton

Preparations are complete and the day of reckoning is upon us. When I made the hiking agenda in mid-summer, I realized we would have a daunting task this year, targeting a nearly unreachable goal of 107 miles. True to our mission, this year and every year we will push ourselves to our limits and when we finish, where ever it is, we will have a satisfying feeling of accomplishment. We all face challenges in our lives to overcome. I have learned that if you face your challenge with resolve - to never give up - and if you keep love in your heart, you will overcome and more importantly, you will make a positive difference everyday for yourself and those around you.

Last year we flew into Knoxville, Tenn. This year we continued our northward progression and flew into Asheville, NC on Friday August 25, 2006. Streek and Barfy flew in early this day and by the time I met them in Downtown Asheville, these two committed hikers were in the midst of pre-hike preparation at an outdoor bar. Barfy, as usual, greets me with his trademark cheshire cat smile (more pronounced when he has a beer in his hand) and gets right down to business. He very seriously asks, "I have something I need to talk about....How do I do lose this Barfy image?" I bust out laughing and tell him "no problem, just start training and stop puking." Barfy ignores me as a lightbulb goes off in his head and offers confidently a new trail name... "I am now TRAIN", as in choo choo and certainly not as in working out. I think to myself,



are you kidding me, you are now and will always be Barfy.

The night before our Hike begins everyone is preparing for the days ahead in their own unique way. I am trying to organize in a disorganized way and shed excess weight. I actually shed too much weight and make a strategic error that will not be felt for several days, but the effects will be debilitating. Barfy is sleeping and eventually will cram everything into his bag two minutes before we leave; Giggles is taking inventory for the fourteenth time and singing some goofy made up song; and Streek is asking me "You know this hike is pretty ambitious - Do you think I am better off starting the hike tomorrow with the Blue/khaki hiking gear combo or the red/tan colored combo?" Help!!!!

Day 1 - 20.6 miles Max Patch Road to Hot Springs, NC

“The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at moments of challenge and controversy”

Martin Luther King



At 8:30 am on the morning of August 26, 2006 we begin this year's quest in the mountains of North Carolina on the Appalachian Trail at Max Patch Road, at an elevation of 4629'.

We are dropped off by Bill Grace, a very steady man, unlike previous year's drivers, who retired to this incredibly beautiful area for summer months only about 8 years ago. At the trail head a note is left on a picket fence by Dave and Vicki who we met last year



on the hike. They were coincidentally hiking at the same time this year.

Max Patch turned out to be an ideal place to start. It offered generally flat terrain followed by a gentle incline to the Max Patch Mountain summit, which is a bald. The scenery was breathtaking. Although hazy we can see much of eastern Tennessee including the *Great Smoky Mountains, Black Mountains, Craggy Mountains and Pisgah Ledge*. Pictures cannot do justice to this inspiring scenery. One of the most interesting items we encounter on this section of the hike is the Roaring Fork Shelter. The shelter is nothing special, but how it was financed caught my attention in one of the guide books we used for preparation. Apparently there is a local organization called the "Marching Mountain Mama's" which funded the construction of this shelter from donations. At the moment we come upon the shelter I was thinking it would be interesting to meet these Mama's. I ponder briefly and realize we'd be

more likely to find the Mama's in the woods (I am thinking 60 year old - 250 pound Appalachian lady wearing a straw hat with two front teeth



missing) than the Female Swedish National Hiking team Barfy has been hoping to find on the trail since our hike commenced four years ago.

Our goal at the end of our first day is Hot Springs, which is a quaint one traffic light town directly on the AT - famous for their 100 degree + natural mineral hot

springs and stunning mountain setting. A 337 unit resort was opened in 1837 and rebuilt in 1886 after a fire destroyed the original. The replacement



building burned down in 1920. In its prime this destination was one of the most popular resort/spa locations in the country, but by 1917, the tourists stopped coming (think ocean) and the property was used as a prison camp for captured German soldiers in WWI. Today, there are only small reminders of its grandeur, like the foundation of a hotel, but the mystique of this place is still in the air.

A saying I learned this year, which offers a new perspective for me: **"You have to take what the trail gives you"**.

This day, the trail gave us the hot springs of Hot Springs and one nice Inn to stay in. Although this is not our proudest or manliest moment on the trail, it was awful nice. The comparisons for a night in Hot Springs versus the trail are as follows: *Washing up in rejuvenating, hot mineral spring water versus splashing cold muddy water on your face; Sleeping on comfy mattress versus dirt/wood floor; Eating grilled versus freeze dried chicken; Answering nature's call by hugging a tree versus sitting on a comfortable porcelain throne*. Ok, we were soft this first night but loved it. In some of the co-hikers minds, they felt they earned it after hiking our greatest single day distance in four years - 20.6 miles.



Day 2 - 19.6 miles Hot Springs, NC - Little Laurel Shelter

“You gain strength, experience, and confidence by every experience where you really stop and look fear in the face. You must do the things you cannot do”

Eleanor Roosevelt

This day begins unusually civilized with a hot shower and breakfast at the local Smoky Mountain Diner. If yesterday was our dream hike day... generally sloping downhill all day, light packs and ending in cushy accommodations... today is the make up day and a sense of dread prevails. Our obstacles are many and are as follows.

- *We are sore from yesterday’s 20 mile + hike.*
- *We have fully stocked back packs.*
- *We have 10 major inclines on a day we are elevating 2,300 ft.*
- *We recognize the harsh reality that we have never traveled more than 14 miles on a day of ascent.*
- *We are ending this long day on a major 4.9 mile incline, when in reality, we should be finishing at this point.*
- *We have limited access to good water sources on this part of AT according to our guides*
- *We are staying in decrepit shelters (worst we have stayed in on AT).*
- *We have two mutinous hikers (not the usual one) not happy with my hiking agenda.*
- *We start today with team discourse that gets only worse as the day transpires.*



Over breakfast, the guys look over the agenda (probably for first time) for the remaining six days. After the distance covered on Day 1 and resulting stiffness, Barfy concludes this agenda is not possible. At that moment he confirmed my belief that hot springs and fine dining make you soft. He obtained no

sympathy and looked elsewhere. The waitress was serving our food when Barfy cornered her with a question in his usual Barton subtleness, “It is not possible to make it to Iron Mountain Gap (our goal) is it?” In her pronounced southern drawl she says very practically, “Depeends.. Depeends how long you plan to take.” Barfy sensing an opening goes into an impassioned argument stating his case, which at this point I am ignoring but do recall him saying several times “six days, six days, this is not possible in six days” She remains neutral, laughs and goes back to the kitchen a few feet away, where she recounts the conversation with these city slicker AT hikers to her daughter, who is also the grill cook. The daughter, who cannot see us from the grill, asks one question as we are in ear shot but not eye shot.

“Mama, are they Wiiimps?”

We hear her comment and burst out laughing.



We begin our ascent on this difficult day fully loaded with water and provisions at an elevation of 1,325 feet at 8:35 am. The first hours take us straight up elevating 1,200 feet in the first 2 miles. We past Lovers Leap which looks down 500 feet to the French Broad River. *Lovers Leap Rock gets its name from a Cherokee Indian legend that tells of a maiden who threw herself from this steep cliff after learning her lover had been killed by a jealous beau.*

As we continue upward through deep Appalachian wilderness the packs get heavier and our pace slows as my ambitious goal begins to take its toll. We hike upward and downward into places whose names become meaningless as we struggle with each step. Although places like Hurricane Gap and Buzzards Roost Ridge do register in your mind as you pass them. When we reach the ten mile mark for the day the team begins to falter and memories of the pleasant respite of Hot Springs have completely faded. At approximately 4:30 pm and 14.7 miles into our day we reach Allen Gap which is situated on a quiet NC state road. We are completely out of water. Barfy goes out in search of water, but finds none. I have not confirmed this with

Barfy, but I think his eagerness to search for water was created by an old closed down gas station located down the street where he thought he could buy a can of Coke. (We were told later by Dave and Vicky that Barfy, in his quest, walked right past the water source). Upon his return, we have a strong disagreement on a prudent course of action for the group. We cannot stay on the road because it is not advised and we have no water. Our next water source on the trail is 4.9 miles away at the shelter and all uphill. We discuss our options and as usual I say, "hike on!" Giggles agrees with me and we proceed without majority. Barfy joins me in the lead and tells me this is a bad decision and that Streek's ankle is really hurting him. Lastly, he tells me I am putting everyone at risk. This had Barfy's desired effect and gave me pause. Barfy is a good salesman. I didn't let him know my hesitancy and I pondered this briefly. A few steps later I told Barfy we would stop when we found water. He agreed and we pushed on in search of a resting spot with water. Of course I didn't think we had a snow ball's chance of finding water until we reached the shelter and our day's objective. Around each corner and over each crest the team grumbled and suffered. Finally, at 8:00 pm, in the darkening evening we arrived at Little Laurel Shelter completing our most difficult day of hiking to date. Of course, water retrieval was difficult. It was dark and the water source was 200 feet down an extremely steep slope. I remember walking up this hill with Giggles and sliding backwards several times before grabbing onto a small branch or tree while balancing the water in the opposite hand. Bad end to brutal day. We ate dinner with headlamps on and went right to bed.

After two full days of hiking on some of the steepest mountains on the AT, we traveled an unbelievable 40.2 miles. Unfortunately for me, this was my last healthy day of the week. It was all down hill from here.

Day 3 - 12.6 miles Little Laurel Shelter to Flint Mountain Shelter

"Vision is not enough; it must be combined with venture. It is not enough to stare up the steps, we must walk up the steps"

Valclav Havel

I am an idiot. (Yes, the other three hikers would readily agree) Although traveling 40.2 miles in two days was a great accomplishment (Remember, we went 66.8 miles total in our



first year), the toll on our minds and bodies was extreme. As should be expected, Day 3 is when the problems really begin. Personally, this is the day I become the weakest link and when my fortitude is tested. On the first day of the hike I was inspired to shed weight and I made a fateful decision. Two of my co-hikers like to hike commando and I thought, "free flow hiking and less weight; How can I lose?" I did. The first day

felt great, but by the middle of the second day I had a rash between my legs which was excruciating. Any guy with a husky frame like me knows what I am talking about. At this time I can't believe I am being taken down by a lack of underwear. Needless to say, the the next five days of hiking were quite uncomfortable. We started very late today at an elevation of 3,620 feet at 10:15 am.

My original plan seemed logical. On our third day we were supposed to have an easy hiking day after two push days. On paper, I envisioned a leisurely day when we could truly savor the beautiful scenery and recharge our batteries on a cake walk 12.6 mile day. I did not anticipate White Rock Cliff, however.

We slept in, departing camp very late and immediately elevated 1,130 feet. This is always a bad way to start. We then descended about 800

feet and ran into a sign for White Rock Cliff. We had no clue what lay ahead, but when we began to ascend we found enormous rocks and ledges that required more rock climbing skills than hiking. At this point, my only problem was a rash and a left knee which kept popping but didn't hurt. In the middle of this climb my knee gave way and began to immediately swell. I kept my mouth shut and moved ahead using all arms and one leg. I was deflated both emotionally and physically as I thought to myself, I am now a gimp with major jock itch.

At the top of White Rocks Cliff there is a well earned destination called Black Stack Cliffs that provides more spectacular views of the Tennessee Mountains. We rest for a moment and enjoy the sun, scenery and an energy bar. We proceed forward into a meadow, make a wrong turn and get lost. We pass two young girls, one of who appears injured. They decline our offer to help as I am sure they feared the sight of four smelly hiking dorks. I have a pronounced limp as we continue down the mountain. At one point of my descent I remember thinking my knee hurts and it is difficult to bend, my groin is raw and killing me, I have just touched the seven minute itch plant and my legs are itching; what more can go wrong? Right about this moment a bee stings me and I laugh out loud. Talk about Murphy's Law.



We continue down the mountain. We pass a meadow with thousands of blooming mountain flowers and



about 10,000 bees buzzing around. Further ahead we find a big bear paw print in the mud which excites us, of course Giggles most of all. We crawl forward and pass another interesting landmark, the Shelton Grave site. This grave site marks the spot where confederate soldiers ambushed and killed two Union soldiers returning home to the Tennessee Mountains during the Civil War. After a final incline, we arrived at Flint Mountain Shelter at 7:20 pm completely demoralized.



Day 4 - 11.3 miles Flint Mountain Shelter to Sam's Gap

"Tough times never last, but tough people do"

Robert Schuller

We arise in poor spirits. It rained hard last night and the pitter patter of raindrops aided most of us in our efforts to

Black Stack on White Rock Cliff

Barfy, Giggles and Streek



sleep. Unfortunately for me, I had a miserable night. My knee swelled and ached while my other pain was on fire. Sometime during the night I recalled Barfy talking in his sleep. I could not comprehend him at first so I listened closer and closer. His words were faint and muffled but they eventually became clear to me. He repeated over and over again. "Are we done yet?, Are we done yet?" Unfortunately not.

As we were preparing to depart, Dave and Vicky appear out of nowhere with full hiking gear on. They had hiked all through the night with their head lamps on. They are insane. They passed over White Rocks Cliff at night and also made the same wrong turns we did after that arduous climb. I am now thinking hard... I am going to negotiate extra hard to make the Barfy for Vicky trade I proposed last year. Barfy complains and Vicky hikes at night. Done deal! At this point of the hike Barfy was visibly struggling physically and stopped eating. At this time I am reminded of Barfy's training philosophy, "Anybody can do this hike in shape" which endures again this year. To make matters worse for him, he developed major blisters and was required to do lengthy foot

preparation before departure. In much pain, we depart Flint Mountain Shelter at 8:45 am at an elevation of 3,570'.

We say a prayer each morning before we depart. On this day we pray to take life one step at a time and never stop taking those steps especially when we feel fear. As Mary Lou Barton always said, "We must walk through the fear."

Up to this point, we had met our hiking objectives each day. Today, we had an 18.2 mile target on extremely difficult terrain. We were in trouble from the start. Barfy kept falling behind and after a few miles told us he felt sick and needed to get off the trail. I said nothing and marched on. Minutes later Barfy said, "I am getting off the trail." I had heard this plea many times before and always ignored it. Shortly thereafter, Barfy again said he was getting sick and needed to get off the trail. I again ignored him. Finally Barfy said "I don't care what you guys do, you can go on but I am getting off this &@*\$ trail." He meant it.

This time I knew he was not bluffing. He was hurting. Also, at this point I started listening to him because I could not bend my left knee at all. I make the decision that we do not need endless suffering to make this hike a success. I am learning, a little at a time.

It is hit or miss on the AT, but I was able to get a signal on the cell phone and attempted to call the driver who was scheduled to pick us up in a few days. He was unable to snatch us from misery but referred us to Miss Janet, the owner of a local hostel who also offers hiker transport to supplement her income. She offered to pick us up at the next road 8 miles away. Barfy celebrates by barfing fifteen minutes later.

Miss Janet is late but eventually picks us up at Sam's Gap, well short of our day's objective. When she arrived, she was the picture of honky tonk. A large woman with a long pony tail driving a beat up messy van. We dump our gear in her junked up vehicle and ask her to stop at the closest convenience store. On the way to the store, about 1/2 mile from our pick up spot, the engine begins to smoke vigorously. A



realize the vehicle is Miss Janet's life line this time of year and critical to her financial survival. Our petty inconvenience is her meaningful financial burden. We all came to the conclusion this woman had a generous heart and was the sort of person who would instinctively help others without any personal agenda or gain. She enjoyed helping the hikers and made enough money to get by and she was happy. Miss Janet's friend picked us up about an hour later and brought us to The Holiday Inn Express in Erwin, Tenn about fifteen miles from Sam's Gap. The Holiday Inn was strategically located adjacent to an A & W Rootbeer Restaurant and my macho hiking team was on cloud nine.

I, on the other hand, was frustrated. This hike is about struggle and giving your all. Eating A & W Cheeseburgers with Rootbeer Floats and watching Starsky and Hutch, the Movie did not exactly qualify us for National Geographic. At this point I could not take it anymore and went into my annual rage mode. I asked each hiker if they wanted to do this hike anymore, because it sure doesn't seem like it. I received a less than enthusiastic response and assumed next year I will be making this hike alone with the possible exception of Giggles, who was far and away the hiker MVP this year. No offense to him but there was not a lot of competition. This night we mended our wounds.

Day 5 - 13.3 miles Sam's Gap to Spivey Gap



coolant hose has busted and the van overheats. I am quite bummed out as we are no longer hiking and we are stuck in a parking lot in the middle of nowhereville.

As we wait for an alternative ride we get to know Miss Janet and our perspective quickly changes. We begin to



"There are costs and risks to a program of action, but they are far less than the long range risk and costs of comfortable inaction"

John F. Kennedy

We are now rested and fed and ready to face the trail again. Miss Janet picks us up late and drops us off at the trail head

at Sam's Gap at 10:25 am. We say goodbye and promptly depart at an elevation of 3,820'.

This morning we pray for resolve and the ability to go on no matter how great the challenge we face.

The climb this morning is steep. We are heading straight up, hitting our highest point of the week at Big Bald, elevation 5,500 feet.

On mile 2 of this incline Barfy is already craving a Coke. I tell him to quit complaining, you just had one. He responds simply, "Yeah and you've seen how productive I've been." We march on and the trail begins to take its toll on our weakened bodies. I was hoping my knee would recover with the short reprieve in Erwin, but the pain returns quickly. I am limping with each step and after the first hour I cannot bend my knee once again.



The inclines, although hard on the lungs, are easier on the joints. In years past, the declines brought a sense of relief and the ability to think of Julianna and to process my life and purpose to it. This year, however, I had no such luxury as every step down required focus leaving no time for contemplative reflection.

Just after noon we left the deep woods and came to a clearing at Big Bald. We traveled up this long grassy slope and arrived at the pinnacle of this mountain. We are immediately rewarded with the most unbelievable

view you can imagine. The perspective of the entire mountain range and deep valleys was inspiring. We stopped and all relished the beauty of this location, which offered the



best view we have had on this trail to date. Hawks were soaring on mountain winds and diving into the deep valleys. Everyone was happy. In fact, the guys were so happy and giddy they did a reenactment of a scene



from Starsky and Hutch in which the two lead characters were acting like dragons. It was classic, and the funniest, most spontaneous, silly thing I ever saw these guys do sober.

We enjoyed this break and moved on. In this stretch Streek lived up to his name. We arrived at Spivey Gap at 4:30 pm. There was no shelter at this location so we were required to make one. Thankfully, Streek brought tarps to cover us, which were just big enough to cover him up.



I was looking forward to this experience of sleeping under the stars. I relished the idea of us really roughing it and we did. Shelters and tents be damned.

Day 6 - 11.4 miles Spivey Gap to Nolichucky River

“Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things you did not do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bow lines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover.”

Mark Twain

Of course, we slept miserably on inclined ground and woke before dusk.

Everyone wanted out of this damp creek side location,

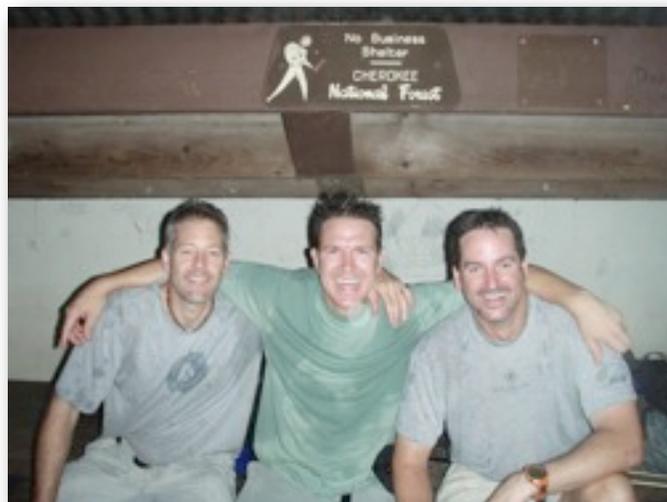
especially two of the hikers who failed to wash up before bed and itched all night. We began hiking in the predawn hour as we attached the lanterns to our heads and at an elevation of 3,250' shoved off at 6:50 am, which is still pitch dark in the deep woods.

We depart in the darkness and travel along a stream and cross a log bridge. Hiking with head lamps was a new experience made more challenging in the wet conditions but nonetheless quite enjoyable.

In this section of the trail we are generally in very wooded terrain as we pass a hemlock grove, numerous small streams and a place called Devils Creek Gap. The hiking experience today is positive yet wet as it rained



throughout the day. We have a short day and enjoy many beautiful mountain views along this section.



Today, we regain our camaraderie, and begin to talk about the purpose of the hike. Also, true to form, Barfy (definitely a tough person overcoming tough times) endured early hike hardships and starts leading the hike, while I limped all the way home in the rear.

At the end of this day we descend Temple Hill (3,710 feet) and pass exceptional views of the Nolichucky River Valley and the town of Erwin, Tenn which we will stay once again in the lap of luxury at the Holiday Inn Express.

As we exit the deep woods, we stop at Uncle Johnny's hostel and grab a soda. This is a famous destination on the trail, however, Uncle Johnny himself is a little gruff and apparently has a problem with Miss Janet (none of us like this) who I have surmised is his competition. Uncle Johnny drives us to Holiday Inn (\$2 per hiker) about one mile away. We have another root beer float and go to bed.



Julianna's Hike - 2006





Day 7 - 8.1 miles Nolichucky River, Tenn to Indian Grave Gap on Tenn/NC border

“Courage is not the absence of fear, but rather the judgement that something else is more important than fear”

Ambrose Redmoon

This day begins with unusual eagerness like all final days in years past. The guys are beat up, but want to finish this difficult week. Although we are traveling upward most of the day, this is a very short and manageable day. We are delivered to the edge of the Nolichucky River at an elevation of 1,700 feet and begin to ascend the next mountain at 7:45 am. This day will be a day of reflection about our blessings and our resolve to make a difference.

We travel upward in a light rain moving at a remarkable pace. We pass Beauty Spot, Deep Gap and traverse Unaka Mountain with an elevation of 5,180 feet.

This day is typical of our hike this week. It has dramatic elevation changes and provides great views at intermittent locations. This part of the AT has been quite scenic and despite the hardships, we have been fortunate to be in the midst of one of the most beautiful parts of this country.

We reach Cherry Gap Shelter well ahead of schedule and have time and energy to talk about the important things of life. We are grateful to be almost done and realize how important each member of the team is to each other both in our personal lives and on the trail each year.

Each of the hikers has a family, a career and a purpose. We have provided for our families, and in general, have been successful in our lives, yet we strive for more. I truly

believe we have not been put here to enrich ourselves, but to reach out to those in need. Similar to my three friends who reached out to me when they committed to this hike for me and Julianna.

We all can make a difference everyday. I firmly believe we all can make a difference if we try, if we put forth what is within us all. If we only give two or three hours each week we will make a positive difference in someone’s life. Also, I am certain in our giving we will gain the most. Do Something. Do Nothing. It is our choice. My final quote summarizes my belief and I hope the belief’s of my fellow hikers.

“If you bring forth what is within you, what you bring forth will save you. If you do not bring forth what is within you, what you do not bring forth will destroy you”

Jesus Christ

We finish the Hike at 12:45 pm at Indian Grave Gap on the North Carolina and Tennessee state border and head for home.

Our next hike will be big number five and who knows...maybe Virginia.

