

JULIANNA DOHERTY FUND HIKE

APPALACHIAN TRAIL 2004

From Dick's Creek Gap, GA to Fontana Dam, NC. 94.9 trail miles. Seven Days.

In 2004, we continued our mission of raising money and increasing awareness in the Julianna Doherty Fund. It is critical to Denise and me that Julianna's spirit of loving is continued and in a small way this undertaking gives us a means to do just that. We would like to thank you for helping us.



2004 HIKE GOALS



1. Finish this portion of the Appalachian Trail in North Carolina/Georgia and make it to Fontana Dam in one piece.

WE DID IT.

2. Raise more money than we did last year through our fundraising on the hike.

WE DID IT.

3. Use this money to help people and organizations, who are trying to make a positive difference in the lives of children.

WE DID IT.

SHARING THE GIFTS

The money we raise each year will benefit children who are struggling in life - physically, emotionally or financially. I have focused much of our funds on grieving children, since Denise and I understand the burden of this pain. However, our mission will adjust as we find situations or causes where we think we can help people who need it. This year was such a year. In 2004, **The Julianna Doherty Fund** donated to the organizations below.



CENTER FOR GRIEVING CHILDREN

For the second year in a row, we are funding the Center for Grieving Children, Teen's and Families, located on the grounds of St. Christopher's hospital in North Philly. They are unaffiliated with the Hospital and are privately funded. The money we donated this year will help fund their most active program, the after school program. The funds will primarily be used to purchase art supplies and pay grief counselors. Most of the cities public schools send kids to this organization, however, no public money is provided. This organization needs financial support and even with our help they had a \$30,000 operating deficit in 2004. The center provides support for children or young adults who have experienced a loss of a loved one. This environment 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 2004, Janice Keyser, co-director this program, lost her battle with cancer. Janice's family is in our prayers and our support this year has extra meaning.

FUNDRAISING RESULTS

As we try to do better on the trail each year, we are trying to better in our fundraising each year as well. This year we did so and had **86 sponsors** for our hike, who donated slightly *more than* **\$25,000**.

SPIRIT TO HEAL CHARITABLE TRUST

This trust will begin to serve people in 2005 and will be led by Dr. Veruschka Biddle and Dr. Michael Torosian, a qualified team composed of an internationally board-certified psychotherapist and a renowned surgical oncologist, respectively, with years of clinical experience treating patients with cancer and other serious illnesses. The mission of the Spirit to Heal Charitable Fund ("SHCF") is to promote healing by integrating spirituality into medical practice through education and research for all who suffer from illness worldwide. This non-denominational, charitable organization is particularly committed to bringing this message of hope to all people, independent of religious belief, geographic location, financial status, or other worldly resources. I have been asked and will be honored to serve on the Board of this Trust to assist in its mission. If you are aware of anyone who could use the service of this charitable trust, please let me know and I will get you in contact with the people at this organization.

ST. MARY'S RESPITE

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. The specter of HIV is quite stressful on children and parent alike.

ST BARTHOLOMEW OUTREACH PROGRAM

This year I was introduced to Sister Pat Denny, who has an outreach program at this Northern Philadelphia Church. After meeting with her, I would identify her as a missionary in the City of Philadelphia. I had met with Sister Pat to see if there was any way I could help her program. She told me of a family, whose father is legally blind and whose two oldest daughters 1st and 2nd grade (They have 5 children) have severe vision problems as well. This family was in financial crises and was unable to pay for the tuition at St. Bartholomew's, and soon would likely have to go into the Philadelphia Public school system, which in this part of the city could be very detrimental for two small girls with poor vision. Through the fund we are able to pay tuition for this family for the rest of this school year and all of next school year (for three school age kids). I have met with this family at their home and can assure you they are deserving of this gift. I will not easily forget the relief and genuine happiness this one act gave to this entire family and Sister Pat. We look forward to reaching out to families like this in the future.

THE HIKE

We hiked the Appalachian Trail for seven days from August 28 to September 3. For those of you who may recount last year's hike, it is a surprise that all four hikers showed up this year, much less surpass last year's distance by nearly 30 miles. The reduced weight in our packs and that some of the hikers actually trained this year made a huge difference. In all, we completed 94.9 miles of beautiful and challenging terrain in the North Carolina and Georgia Mountains. This year's peaks and valleys were experienced in very wet conditions adding a new element to our hiking experience.

We all converged at the Atlanta Airport to continue the quest to hike the entire 2,100 mile Appalachian Trail to support the Julianna Doherty Fund. We were betting even money that the last arrival to the airport, Barfy, would actually get off the plane from Toronto. Well - he finally showed up looking in the same peak condition that he did last year with a pack on his back and a smile on his face. At the airport, for the second straight year, we were dutifully picked up by our 82 year-old driver and former fighter pilot instructor, Gene Hamilton, who scared the heck out of us last year with his lead foot and tendency to drive off the side of the road. Even Barfy looked forward to hiking after driving in Gene's 1985 Bravada with bald tires. Adding to our anxiety this year, Gene was wearing a patch over one eye (he looked like a pirate) and continued his habit of driving 60 miles an hour whether it was on the highway or some back mountain dirt road. After three hours of white knuckle driving we arrived in the Georgia Mountains late in the evening. Before our early morning departure, we made last minute preparations, which were primarily limited to getting rid of any excess weight in our packs. Redundant and useless items like soap were tossed.

Day 1 Saturday August 28

Early this morning we savored our last moments in civilization and began our passage to the trail. We made it to Dick's Creek Gap prior to our estimated 8:30 am departure. This was a good start. However, with this crew it could not last. As we approached our starting point in the deep Georgia Mountains the skies began to look ominous which frightened the nameless two hikers on our seasoned team who failed to bring raingear. At this point, without driving an hour, our only option was the Hiwassee Gun store. As luck would have it they sold guns, knives, camouflage gear, Georgia Bulldogs sweatshirts and fortunately \$0.99 rain ponchos.

We finally arrived at Dick's Creek Gap just before 9 am. Everyone had butterflies recognizing the extreme struggle we were about to face. Barfy's look of dread was most noticeable at this location, when just one-year prior this same place gave him a look of total elation when we finished last year's journey.



In the morning mist at 8:55 am, we started our second hike and departed Dick's Creek Gap (elevation 2,675 feet) and headed straight up the Georgia Mountains with our short term goal the State of North Carolina.

When you hike with backpacks the first thing that strikes you is the weight on your back. (Being out of breath is a close second). We had all decided that we would pack lighter this year. Nonetheless, after one hour of hiking the first body part to feel the strain of the hike was our shoulders. After the second hour our back muscles began to pound. Consequently, after the third hour of hiking my shoulders and upper back were aching unbelievably. At this point I was constantly redistributing weight from my hip to my shoulders to even out the

stresses. This would be the first of many challenges we would face over the coming week.

Our pace this morning was torrid as we were attempting to go 16.5 miles on our first day. A feat we did not come close to reaching last year. My logic was simple, we would try to go as far as possible when we were freshest and before anyone threatened to quit. After 4 hours of hiking and one 15 minute break, we knew we were getting close to North Carolina. Everyone was pumped to get one state under our belt, (especially one that hurt us all so badly). As we trudged through dense woods, we suddenly noticed a tiny little non-descript wood sign which had carved in it - NC/GA. We stopped and stared. Elated but unimpressed. We sat down to appreciate the moment, and Barfy's comments echoed all our thoughts. "This is all we get for making it to North Carolina. For the effort I put in to get to this point - The entire North Carolina Tar Heel cheerleading team should be here greeting us". We laughed hard and moved on to a more hospitable resting spot at the famous gnarled oak tree at Bly Gap (elev. 3,880



ft). We took off our packs and I noticed everyone was overly enthused to prepare lunch. Everyone was already trying to shed any weight they were carrying. At this point Streek was the most pained, as his extra weight (heaviest bag this year- lightest bag last year) took an early toll on his body as he experienced intense

cramping. This was disappointing to all of us. Streek was designated MVP hiker of the 2003 hike (by himself of course) and now appeared out of the running for the 2004 distinction quite early in the week. We sat under the gnarled oak and ate peanut butter and jelly on pita bread sandwiches, a recipe learned from last years hike. This was Barfy's biggest 2003 contribution.



As we rested for fifteen minutes or so, the threatening clouds opened up into a complete downpour. The \$.99 ponchos were pulled out and put on. One of them ripped wide open leading one savvy hiker to comment that this rain gear was worth every penny. We did not realize it at this time, but this short break led to a change in the 2004 hiking strategy. We no longer took long lunch breaks, because it was easier to stay loose if we did not stop and rest for several hours. It also gave us more time to hike, which we would need for a nearly 100 mile goal. The rain continued to pour for nearly two hours. We were all soaked from our heads down to our socks. Our boots had to be 2-3 lbs heavier. We slopped along in our soggy socks. You soon realize wetness can be undone. However, the blisters created by hiking in wet footgear cannot be undone. We had not seen rain on the trail to date. Although, the arrival of the rain was refreshing it presented a new set of challenges. Clothes are heavier, blisters form more easily, and mud and rocks on the trail

Day 2 Sunday August 29

We awoke late at 8:00 am or so. Barfy scared us all by telling us a bear had been in our tent last night. We asked "why do you say that"? He responded "there had to be a bear in the tent because my mouth tastes like a bear's rear end".

We laughed and Streek responded "that this was quite a coincidence since my rear end felt really clean this morning". Our laughing helped ease the pain we were all feeling as we prepared for today's march with sore bodies and very wet clothing. We departed Standing Indian Shelter at 9:40 am. Sleep last night was miserable. We had all packed light, but this trade off between practicality and pack weight has certain disadvantages. I had no sleeping bag or sweatshirt or sweatpants to keep me warm in the cold night air. I slept on the end of the tent next to skinny Giggles and shivered all night. My eyes turned to Barfy who would provide greater warmth in the coming nights. On this day and for the rest of the trip getting ourselves going in the morning would prove quite difficult. Filling water jugs

are as slick as ice. As we progressed on the trail, wet conditions persisted and caused a fairly severe ankle and knee injury to two of our hikers.

The rain continued for some time as we passed landmarks like Sassafras Gap and Chunky Gal Trail. The name "Chunky Gal Trail" was derived from an old Cherokee fable about a large Indian woman who was ridiculed so often by another squaw she fled into the woods on this trail and never returned. We all thought of Barfy and resolved to ease up on our insults.

We pushed hard all afternoon through awesome scenery including many rhododendron groves that seem to go on forever. We would not stop until we reached our destination, Standing Indian Shelter (elev. 4,760 ft). We reached the shelter at 7:15 pm as the sun was setting. It gets darker early under the dense tree canopy. After figuring out how to set up our new 4 man tent, we cleaned up, hung our wet clothes and prepared our meals, which we ate at 9:00 pm. In all, despite the blisters forming, bee's swarming (Streek was stung four times today) and our shoulder, neck, back and leg regions aching, it was a great first day finishing 16.5 miles in 10 hr 20 min for 1.60 miles per hour average. This shelter was packed with a group of hikers from the Georgia AT Club. They were amused with our camping skills.

"Before we end, we will have made a positive difference to the people we help through our fundraising. We also will better understand each other and our role in the world."

from the stream, repacking gear and tent all took time. Preparing breakfast was also time-consuming even though our breakfast menu for the entire week was limited to oatmeal and breakfast bars.

As usual we started today going up, as we were heading to the top of Standing Indian Mountain (elev. 5,498 ft). This was the first time we hiked above 5,000 ft. on the trail. We moved upward and passed our first hiker, a thru hiker named Flatlander, who had started in Maine in May and was now 8 days away from the southern end of the trail. Last year he had hiked the Pacific Trail to honor his wife who passed away. This year he was completing the Appalachian Trail. I understood this man and thought of Julianna and all of us honoring her in a similar way.

Thanks Jeff, Murph and Dave, I am glad I am not taking this journey alone like Flatlander.



Today was like yesterday, rainy with lots of inclines and declines. We also crossed a very cool log bridge. The incline was epitomized by Albert Mountain (elev. 5,220

ft), which elevated more than 1,000 ft in 0.2 miles. This

was not hiking this was rock climbing. Albert Mountain, not only proved to be our biggest challenge to date but also our most rewarding. We pushed and pulled ourselves up shear rock and at the top enjoyed incredible views from a fire tower, put there as lookout for forest rangers. Before we got to the top Streek said we would see a rainbow at the top, and wouldn't you know it Streek the geek called it – a beautiful rainbow.

We reached our destination at Big Spring Shelter at 6:27 pm finishing 14.4 miles in 8 hrs 47 min – a 1.64 mile per hour average.

Day 3 Monday August 30

We had just gone 30 miles in two days. We were all quite happy with our effort. At this point we all started to believe we could make our goal of Fontana Dam by Saturday. Of course our bodies were beginning to show major wear and tear. We once again woke late and as usual Giggles was our latest sleeper.

Today was the day we needed to do major foot preparation before departing. We applied moleskin to our feet to prevent excess friction to our many blisters. The moleskin covers the area around the blister and the application is time consuming since you want to do it right. Doing it wrong could lead to more blisters. We finally departed Big Spring Shelter at 9:45 am and headed for Glassmine Gap. This part of the trail was the prettiest to date. We went thru enormous evergreen and magnificent Rhododendron groves as we walked on this section of trail. The Rhody's were so dense they had a tunnel effect around the trail. As usual Giggles was keeping us all entertained with his lousy singing voice. No matter how good or bad our situation was, Giggles was always happy. His positive nature was a constant and was greatly appreciated.

We stopped for a break at Wallace Gap (elev. 3,750 ft) when Barfy started telling me that he had to be the MVP hiker this year and he was unquestionably the most improved. In fact, Barfy was the most improved, not only because he had no place to go but up, but also because he was eager and tough in 2004. However, I have to critique his unique hiking style. At the bottom of every mountain, Barfy would choose to lead on the way up and he would proceed at a very rapid pace. By the time I would get to him he would be huffing and puffing out of breath. I would pass him as he would catch his breath. This was repeated over and over. Sprinting – Stopping – Sprinting – Stopping. God Bless Him, but the dude could not pace himself.

Next we passed Winding Stair Gap (elev. 3,750 ft), which Spanish Explorer Hernando De Soto reportedly passed on his way to Mississippi River in 1540.

We finally made our destination at the Siler Bald shelter at just before 6:00 pm. The shelter was a pit and was in a very inhospitable site at the bottom of this mountain. After assessing the site and reading about the beautiful vistas at the top of this mountain, I told the fellas we were going up despite some resistance. As my punishment for this idea I carried the five-gallon water container, which we had just filled. This turned out to be the hardest 0.8 miles I had ever traveled. I was ahead of the others as I approached the apex. Seeing nothing but trees, I grew nervous that the boys would be upset that we took this extra credit hike for nothing. However, when I made it to the top I was rewarded with spectacular mountain views in all directions for miles, including the Nantahala River Valley. I remember being so relieved. I was running and yelling down to my co-hikers. "It's worth it, it's worth it". At 6:35 pm our third day's hike had come to an end.



We savored a beautiful sunset at this special location on Siler Bald (elev. 4,950 ft). This was definitely the best spot we had been on the Trail yet. Today, we went 13.3 miles in 8 hrs and 51 minutes – a 1.50 mile per hour average.

Day 4 Tuesday August 31

For the third night in a row I froze, especially on top of this mountain. I woke early to see the sunrise and coaxed the other three hikers out of the tent. The boys came out looked at the sunrise for 30 seconds and promptly went back to bed under their blankets. So much for appreciating nature's beauty. We all eventually enjoyed nice hot oatmeal and admired the clouds, which had formed below us in the valley.



At 9:53 am (later than yesterday) we proceeded straight down this mountain to Wayah Gap (elev. 4,150 ft.) and then right back up again. We were getting tired of the

routine. At just after 1:00 pm, we made it to Wayah Bald (elev. 5,340 ft). This location had a nice wall to rest on and gave us very cool views of last night's location at Siler Bald. Bald's are tops of mountains that are devoid of trees and look like big bald spots in a sea of trees.

Day 5 Wednesday September 1

Today we had motivation to start early. In 9.3 miles was a little village on the Nantahala River, where we could get a meal and take a shower. At 8:08 am, a motivated group departed our campsite and headed for a cold can of Coke. There was no stopping this group as we marched on. We talked about food the entire journey. We ended up at the Nantahala River (elev. 1,750 ft.) at 12:35 pm, traveling 9.3 miles in 4 hrs and 27 minutes for a speedy 2.09 miles per hour average.

We were all ecstatic with our accomplishment to date and earned this half-day of rest. To put our effort into perspective, we had already exceeded last years hiking total (67.3 miles versus 66.8 miles) in less time (4.5 days versus 6.5 days). Heck, we may even be able to call ourselves hikers now.

The setting in this river gorge village was beautiful. Apparently, city folk frequent this spot to fish and whitewater raft. It looked like a destination we would like to return to someday. We were happy as we cleaned our bodies, our clothes, and ate a good meal. What more

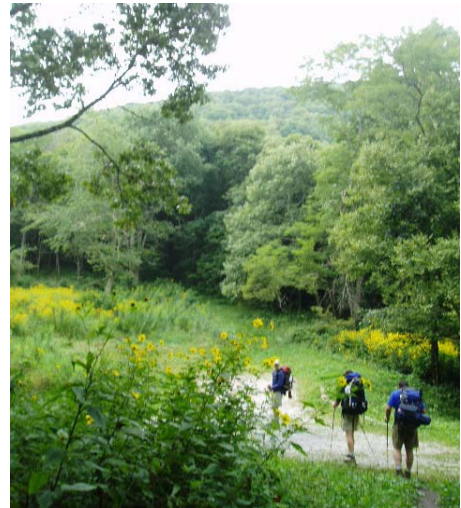
Day 6 Thursday September 2

We were welcomed back to the trail with more rain and the prospects of a 3,400 ft ascent that would cover 8 miles. Barfy wants to go AWOL, but doesn't and we depart at 10:00 am. We were energized by our little break and grind our way up the mountain. Conditions were wet making our footing uncertain and the reminder of our challenge quickly returned. At our first break, after 2 hours 20 minutes we were at Sassafras Gap (elev. 4,330 ft.), which was 6.9 miles from the Nantahala River. That is 2.95 miles per hour, while elevating 2,580 ft. I guess the break helped. Immediately after this performance Streek boasted "I just ate up that trail for breakfast, what's for lunch"?



This afternoon was brutal. Our bodies were breaking down and our feet were swelling up. Everyone was tense, even Giggles. We began to think it could not get any worse. Then it started to rain. We pushed on and passed Licklog Gap and Burningtown Gap (ele: 4,240 ft) before we ended up at our destination at an unnamed campsite at 4,950 ft. at 6:00 pm. Barfy, true to his name, was feeling nauseous and went immediately to sleep. We were fortunate today with our timing as it began to pour for the entire night at 8:48 PM. Our tent was perched on a hill and we half expected the water to roar down the mountain and flood our tent. Today was another good day. We went 13.8 miles in 8 hrs and 7 minutes -- a 1.70 mile per hour average.

could we want? However, we needed to move on and if it were up to me we would have done so after lunch.



However, his joy was short-lived as the last mile of this ascent was the steepest and our tanks were all ready starting to empty. We passed Cheoh Bald (elev. 5,020 ft) and descended over treacherous and slippery rock terrain until we reached Stecoah Gap (elev. 3,250 ft). It was on this stretch when Giggles injured his knee and Streek hurt his ankle. Streek fell with such force that his hiking pole severely bent as he slipped. At this point we were spent and injured. However, we were not at our destination and had to move on.

Barfy and I lead as Streek and Giggles paced slowly behind us. We were heading uphill which did not stress their injuries as much as when trekking downhill. Barfy and I were paired up in the lead. We passed Sweetwater Gap and faced a new adversary. A mountain face,

threatening us with a 60-degree incline, stood before us. We took 50 paces caught our breath and tried not to fall backward. We did this same routine again and again, until we reached about half way up the mountain. At this point Barfy looked up at me as he is huffing and puffing with hands on his knees and said, "I can't go any further". I responded with my usual sympathy and told him his MVP award was on the line. As he caught his breath some more, Barfy looked back at me and said "If

we stop right here right now I'll settle for co-MVP". Even under duress he is hysterical.

We all finally made it up this mountain and reached our destination of Brown Fork Gap at 7:36 pm. This day epitomized the Trail from glory – to misery – back to glory again. We covered 16 miles today in 9 hrs and 36 minutes, which translated into 1.67 miles per hour, which was commendable considering the injuries to Streek and Giggles.

Day 7 Friday September 3

Our last day on the Trail. Although our original plans had scheduled a Saturday finish, we were actually ahead of schedule. The pace we had all week was great, but the costs were high. Today, everyone was in intense pain – Giggles' knee (wrapped with an ace bandage) and Streek's ankle (wrapped with duct tape) were toast. Barfy's knee had also begun to swell and his feet were covered in blisters. We tended to our blisters and injuries and shoved off at a respectable time of 8:25 am. Before departure we blessed our journey as we had every morning. We thanked God and Julianna for looking over us.

At the Fontana Dam, there was a private pool club. We asked to take a dip and they foolishly allowed us. We were to stay in Fontana Dam at a motel this evening. However, when the guys learned that this town was in a dry county, they quickly changed their minds and we hitched a ride some 60 miles so we could properly celebrate our hike.

We spent the last day pushing as hard as we could, just as we have done for the entire week. This final stretch crushed our bodies, but we persevered to Brown Fork Gap (elev. 3,700 ft) and down again to Yellow Creek Gap (elev. 2,970 ft.). Both Streek and Giggles hobbled gingerly down each mountain. However, all of my buddies are tough and will not give up until the goal is achieved. In this week, we have gelled as a group and our collective determination is quite evident. Julianna has lifted us and will be proud of the effort we all put forth.



Today, our last day on this section of the trail we hiked 11.3 miles and ended at 3:00 pm for a 1.71 mile per hour average.

This was a great week. We saw breathtaking scenery, which will never be forgotten. More importantly, we challenged ourselves, which in the end made us all stronger. I know we will continue to get stronger each and every year. Before we end, we will have made a positive difference to the people we help through our fundraising. We also will better understand each other and our role in the world.

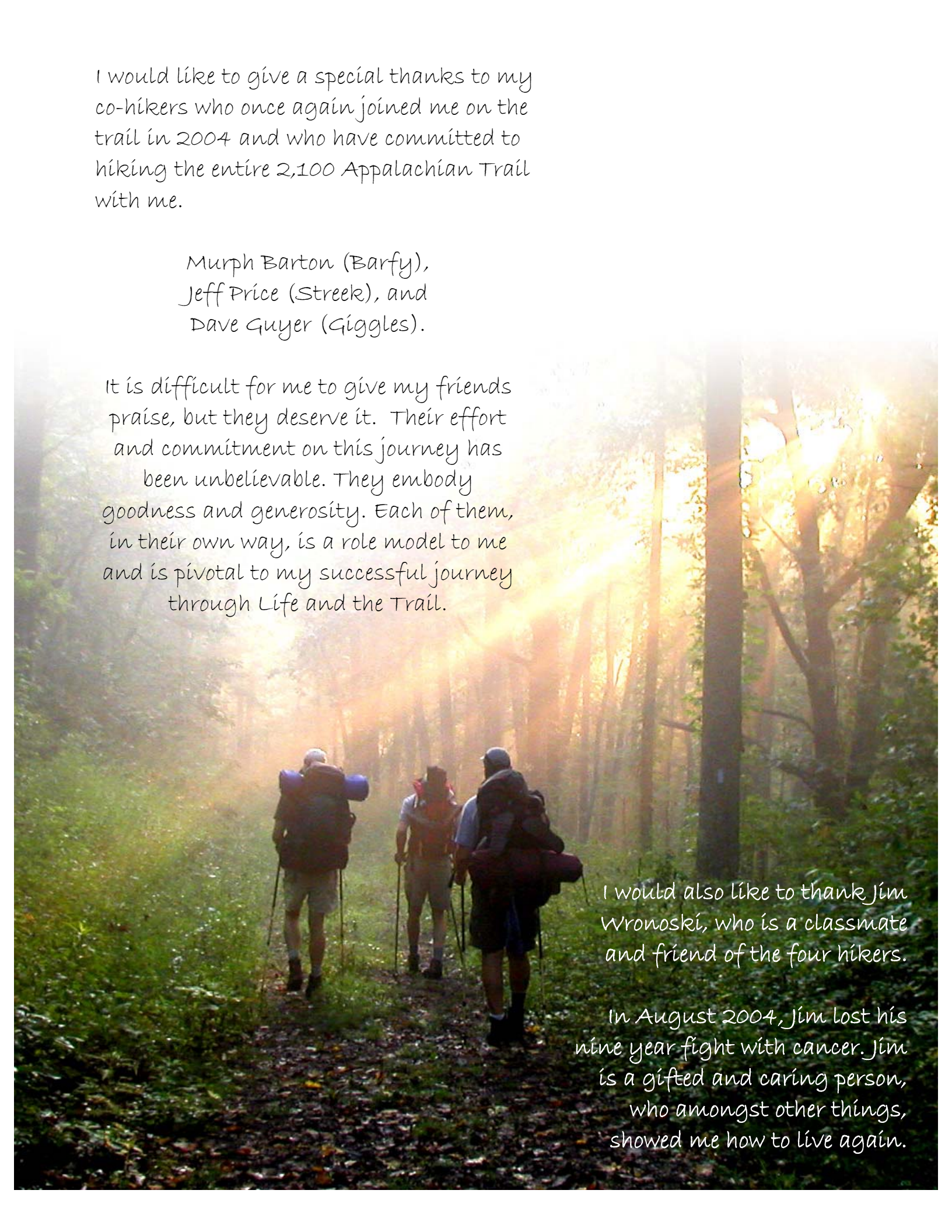
**Next Stop
'05...
Hiking the
Great
Smoky
Mountains**



I would like to give a special thanks to my co-hikers who once again joined me on the trail in 2004 and who have committed to hiking the entire 2,100 Appalachian Trail with me.

Murph Barton (Barfy),
Jeff Price (Streek), and
Dave Guyer (Giggles).

It is difficult for me to give my friends praise, but they deserve it. Their effort and commitment on this journey has been unbelievable. They embody goodness and generosity. Each of them, in their own way, is a role model to me and is pivotal to my successful journey through Life and the Trail.

A photograph of three hikers with large backpacks walking away on a forest trail. The scene is bathed in the warm, golden light of a sunrise or sunset, with sunlight filtering through the trees and creating a hazy, atmospheric effect. The hikers are in the lower third of the frame, moving away from the viewer into the distance.

I would also like to thank Jim Wronoski, who is a classmate and friend of the four hikers.

In August 2004, Jim lost his nine year fight with cancer. Jim is a gifted and caring person, who amongst other things, showed me how to live again.