



The Walker

The Newsletter of the Old Dominion Appalachian Trail Club

Volume 21, Issue 3

May/June 2013

The President's Message

Happy spring!!

Well at least I think spring has arrived! My intro to this edition of the Walker could be identical to the last with another beautiful but cool blustery day outside. I really should stop with these weather updates as I'll be wishing for this kind of weather come late July and August! Speaking of late July, heading off to the mountains of western North Carolina to attend Cullowhee 2013, the ATC biennial conference, would be a great place to escape the heat. Registration is now open. You can access more information via the ATC or ODATC websites.

March and April were busy months up on our section of the Appalachian Trail. The boundary monitors were finally able to get out in the woods to check for encroachments and the condition of the boundaries. Seems most every trip planned in January or February was done in by snow. There are some potentially treacherous sections with monuments located on cliff edges. Not a place to be when there is ice all around, although the pictures are quite amazing and worthy of checking out. The maintenance crews were equally busy first repairing the fire damage at the shelter, which thank goodness was not as extensive as it certainly could have been. The first official maintenance trip of the year was held on April 20 with quite a bit accomplished. For more information and to see the results of the crews' hard labors, be sure to check out the Rockfish to Reeds blog. Pictures do indeed tell the story.

The biggest news in the Appalachian Trail Community has been staff changes. Starting with Wendy Janssen, the new superintendent at the Appalachian Trail Park Office, replacing Pam Underhill who retired from the National Park Service with 33 years; the majority of those years working to protect and preserve the AT. At the Appalachian Trail Conservancy's Southwest and Central Virginia Regional Office (VARO), Andrew Downs has accepted the position as regional director. He is moving north from the Deep South regional office where he has worked since 2007 as the regional trail resources manager. Josh Kloehn is the new Field Assistant at VARO. For those who have worked with Konnarock in the past, you may remember Josh who has been a Konnarock crew leader for the past 3 years. We are looking forward to introducing Andy and Josh to our trail section.

Don't forget May 21st is our annual club potluck and member slide show. Festivities get underway around 6:30. Look for more information in the Walker. This will be our last club meeting until September. So come on out to see what friends and members are planning for the summer. Of course the summer is a big time for maintenance; be sure to volunteer on the 3rd Saturday of each month. Also, hiking season is still in full swing so check out the hiking opportunities in the activity section.

See you at the potluck!! Happy Trails!

Theresa Duffey

ODATC Hike Rating Codes

Hiking boots are strongly recommended for all hikes. Hikers must be properly equipped, aware of their limitations & hike within their ability. In the interest of safety, activity coordinators may refuse to allow participation by club members or their guests.

Terrain
 1 = Very Strenuous
 2 = Strenuous
 3 = Moderate
 4 = Easy

Distance
 A = More than 13 miles
 B = 9 to 13 miles
 C = 5 to 9 miles
 D = Under 5 miles

CARPOOLING Please honor the following suggested donation to your driver when carpooling to and from hikes: \$10 per rider for travel to and around the Charlottesville area (60-70 miles approx.) \$15+ per rider for travel beyond Charlottesville (over 75 miles).

Trips, Treks, and Talks – Jenni Pendergrass, Contributor

These activities made the deadline for the newsletter. Please remember to check the website calendar frequently for new events and any updates to the activities shown below. Comments and/or pictures from your activities can be posted to the club Facebook page. What is your favorite hike? Found a new trail snack? What is the best food you've eaten while backpacking? Share it with others through our Facebook page!!

May/June Activities

May 1 (Wednesday) Pocahontas State Park - Chesterfield (C/3)

Jeff Samuels (796-7949 or jefflsamuels@yahoo.com) Hike 5.5 miles on two of the park's most popular trails - Forest Exploration and Beaver Lake. Wide, mostly shaded trails, with many short steep hills. Restrooms. The park entrance is on Beach Road (Rt. 655) 4 miles west of Rt. 10 (Ironbridge Rd). Nominal parking fee without park pass. Meet in the big parking lot near the pool/picnic area at **8:50 AM**.

May 4 (Saturday) South River Falls - SNP (B/3)

Bill Tennant (282-0590 or Willyten10@aol.com) This 10 mile circuit hike with 1,800 ft. elevation change, is in PATC's *Circuit Hikes in Shenandoah National Park*. The hike features the third largest waterfall, Kites Deadening and an old cemetery in Shenandoah National Park. The spring flowers should be at their peak this time of the year. National Park fee without pass. Contact Bill for time and meeting place.

May 6 (Monday) Lake Anna State Park, Gold Mine Hike– Spotsylvania County (B/3)

Jim Hunt (730-2364 or hikerjimhunt@hotmail.com) Meet at the Oilville Park and Ride I-64 West Exit 167 to carpool, as there is a car parking fee, or meet at the swimming beach at Lake Anna. The park is about one hour northwest of Oilville. Bring a state park pass if you have one and lunch. We'll do a 12 mile hike to see the old gold mines. Call or e-mail Jim for meeting time.

May 8 (Wednesday) University of Richmond, its Surrounds and a Social - RVA (C/4)

Bill Tennant (282-0590 or Willyten10@aol.com) Meet and park around the circle in front of Bill's house at 71 West Drive Circle. DO NOT PARK ON THE NEIGHBORS' LAWNS. From the West End's Forest Ave. turn on Lindsay Dr. at the Tuckahoe Elementary School to the first right. Enjoy a 5-6 mile walk around the trails and lake at the University of Richmond. Also see Civil War defenses, a City of Richmond park, the highest point in Richmond, Country Club of Virginia and surrounding neighborhoods. BRING A LUNCH AS SOFT DRINKS AND BEER WILL BE PROVIDED AT BILL'S HOME AFTER THE HIKE Meet at 9:50 AM.

May 12 (Sunday), Deep Run Park, D/4

Harman (804-347-3744 or hharman8@verizon.net.) Park is off Ridgefield Pkwy., about 1/4 mile west of Gaskins Road. Meet at 2:30 at first parking lot on right. Hike will be about 1 3/4 miles around lake and inner loop trail.

May 13 (Monday) Flower Hike - 12 miles on the AT starting at Reed's Gap (B/3)

Jim Hunt (730-2364 or hikerjimhunt@hotmail.com) The flowers on our section of the AT should be at their peak. Meet at the Oilville Park and Ride I-64 West Exit 167 to carpool. Bring lunch and water. Call or e-mail Jim for meeting time.

May 15 (Wednesday) James River Park and Belle Isle - RVA (D/4)

Martha James (883-6252 or marthajames@yahoo.com). We will wander for two hours in the James River Park and maybe Belle Isle and show you Hollywood rapid that paddlers like. Meet at the James River Park-Reedy Creek Access parking lot at 4001 Riverside Dr. (don't cross the tracks). Optional lunch at O'Toole's on Forest Hill Ave. at 48th St. Meet at 9:50 AM.

May 18 (Saturday) Maintenance Trip

Monthly work trip on the ODATC section of the AT. This is an all-day event. Bring water, lunch and work gloves. Dress for weather. Contact Lori (804-397-5306), Fran (804-270-6908) or send an email to odatc.trailmaint@gmail.com to register and for additional information. Please respond by May 15th if interested.

May 21 (Tuesday, 6:30 PM) ODATC Annual Club Night

Each year we kick off our summer break with an incredible buffet dinner and spectacular slideshow, both provided by our members. We ask everyone to bring a dish (salad, entrée or dessert) to share with other members. Trail maintainers are not picky eaters so feel free to be creative! Our Club will provide drinks, plates, napkins and eating utensil. As for the slideshow, we're asking you to submit up to 5 digital photos of anything you think your fellow club members will find interesting or amusing. We'll show your photos and ask you to provide a brief description. Email your photos, preferably under 1MB, to Randy at randy.wendell@verizon.net by May 17. The meeting will be at our regular meeting location - Trinity Lutheran Church (2315 N. Parham Rd.)

May 22 (Wednesday) Westmoreland State Park – not your typical Wednesday hike – Westmoreland County (C/3)

Jim Sturgill and Ted McGarry (218-1238) Timed to catch the Mountain Laurel blossoms which surround a spring fed pond built by the CCC and avoid a holiday weekend, this is an all-day lollygag through upland forest, steep inclines to access a tidal marsh with stops at an observation tower for birding, and a Potomac River sandy beach for shark teeth fossil hunting. Carpool northeast from Ashland 1 ¼ hrs. Bring lunch, snacks and park pass if you have one. You may call me starting Thursday May 16 and must be a current ODATC member, as the hike is limited

to 10 hikers who want to take the time to smell the flowers and observe nature along the way.
www.dcr.virginia.gov/state_parks/wes.shtml

May 29 (Wednesday) The Avenues of Libbie and Grove – RVA (D/4)

Bill Tennant (willyten10@aol.com or 282-0590). Meet in the parking lot behind the Westhampton Theater on Grove near Libbie in the City's West End with optional lunch on "the Avenues". Hike a 5 mile loop through this residential community and explore the campuses of Episcopal and Catholic Schools, Protestant and Catholic Churches and The Country Club of Va. All within walking distance of this traditional neighborhood retail center. Meet at 9:50 AM.

June 1 (Saturday) Nelson County A.T. Community Trail Days

As part of their Appalachian Trail Community program, Nelson Co. along with ODATC, the Tidewater ATC, the Natural Bridge ATC, and Devils Backbone Brewery will be hosting an event for National Trails Day (June 1) on the grounds of Devils Backbone Brewery. The clubs will be providing shuttles to and from the AT, leading hikes and offering exhibits along with other outdoor organizations. Please contact David Grimes (odatc.outreach@gmail.com) if you are interested in volunteering to lead a hike, man a booth or shuttle hikers for this event.

Sunday, June 2, Willis River Trail in Cumberland County, D/4

Hank Harman, (804-347-3744 or hharman8@verizon.net) This 1.7 mile hike will touch the Willis River and the Rock Quarry Natural Area. It will also be a Memorial Hike for Chuck Stanley, former Forest Supervisor who laid out the Trail. He died this past January 29 and his widow, Joann, plans to hike with us. Some of us will eat in Cumberland after the hike. Meet at Bear Creek Market at 3:00 PM. Since it is about 60 miles from Richmond, contact Hank for carpooling information.

June 5 (Wednesday) Buttermilk Trail West – RVA (D/3)

Jim Hunt (730-2364). Hike the Buttermilk Trail west for this 5 mile walk in the woods and along the James River. Meet at the old stone house in Forest Hill Park on 41st St. at 9:50 AM.

June 8 (Saturday) Trayfoot Mountain-Paine Run- SNP (B/2)

Bill Tennant (282-0590 or Willyten10@aol.com) This 9.6 mile hike is in PATC's *Circuit Hikes in Shenandoah National Park*. It has 2200 ft. of elevation change but it is spread out through the hike so no section is very steep. It offers spectacular views from Blackrock, Trayfoot Mountain summit, both East and West views from Trayfoot Mountain Trail and a few creek crossings to cool us off. National Park fee without pass. Contact Bill for time and meeting place.

June 12 (Wednesday) Season Finale @ Lake Anna State Park – Spotsylvania County (D/4)

Jim Hunt (730-2364). Meet at the Oilville Park and Ride I-64 West Exit 167 to carpool, as the Park is about one hour northwest of Oilville and there is a car parking fee. Hike 5 miles or two hours in a mostly hardwood forest with views of the coves around Lake Anna and the park's interior. Bring a state park pass if you have one, lunch and a bathing suit. After the hike, we will eat and swim at the beach/picnic/concession area. There is a nominal beach fee. Meet at 9:30 AM.

June 15 (Saturday) Maintenance Trip

Monthly work trip on the ODATC section of the AT. This is an all-day event. Bring water, lunch and work gloves. Dress for weather. Contact Lori (804-397-5306), Fran (804-270-6908) or send

an email to odatc.trailmaint@gmail.com to register and for additional information. Please respond by June 12th if interested.

Welcome to the following new members as of April, 2013

Barbara Ann Wiederkehr
William P. Walling
Chuck & Jo Lee Kenney
Bill & Betty Thompson

Jack Rabbit Slim Where Are You? *Reprinted with permission from the Reeds to Rockbridge Blog (<http://rockfishtoreeds.blogspot.com>)*

Some years ago, back in the late 90's, there was a hiker with the trail name "Jack Rabbit Slim". He was hiking the AT and was likely a thru-hiker, starting in Georgia early in the year and making his way north through North Carolina, Tennessee and part of Virginia. Where his hike actually ended or if he finally did make it all the way to Katahdin in Maine, I don't know. A chance discovery on the trail made me aware of Jack Rabbit Slim's hike, but I have never met him in person. The little I do know about him comes from his hiking stick..... the one that was left on the rugged west side of the AT, just north of the Three Ridges Overlook.

My journal for that time period with the exact details is packed away somewhere, but I'm fairly certain that I found Jack Rabbit Slim's hiking stick on a trail maintenance work trip. I remember it was a sunny, late spring/early summer day and other people were on the trail with me. We stopped for someone to take a 'break' off trail and while we waited, I was looking around at the woods and enjoying the scenery. A dead sapling caught my eye - no bark, gleaming a little starkly among other darker, live saplings. My glance moved on..... and then came back to that dead sapling. Something about it wasn't quite right and I stepped closer to take another look. It was then that I saw the carving on it and I knew this was someone's hiking stick. It was jammed into the ground deep enough to hold it upright and it wasn't that

far off the trail - after maybe two more steps, I held it in my hands.

The first obvious details were the rings carved around the stick along with the states: GA, NC, TN, VA, and I immediately thought 'thru-hiker'. The next thing I saw was the AT symbol at the top of the stick and carved underneath was "Jack Rabbit Slim". A name! I had a name so maybe I could find the person who left their stick on our section of AT. During the rest of the day, I hiked with Jack Rabbit Slim's stick, excited about finding it, curious about why such a unique and special stick had been left beside the trail, and thinking that he might still be in the area and I could return the stick to him.

My favorite hiking stick is one that a friend made for me as a present. He cut a hickory sapling, then removed the bark and let it cure before sanding and staining it. He finished it off by drilling a hole in the top and adding a leather loop. Because of its dark, natural appearance.... and having 'lost' it more than once in the leaves when I temporarily put it down, I added a strip of 'hot pink' duct tape for visibility. Aside from the fact that it was a present, this particular stick is near and dear to my heart because it's been with me for hundreds of miles on the trail and it's a tangible reminder of the many memories and adventures associated with those miles. There have been times when I've gone to some trouble not to lose it. On one still vividly memorable occasion, I even

risked 'life and limb' to retrieve this stick after I slipped and fell on an icy switchback. It was a major fall and it took me over the trail edge and a good way down a steep, icy slope on my back before I could grab a bush and stop the slide with a jolt so hard it felt like my arm was going to be ripped off. My stick, which had not been attached by that leather loop around my wrist at the time, continued on down the slope and I could barely see a spot of pink duct tape where it was snagged on a bush.

Despite the 'advice' of my hiking companion (loose translation with expletives deleted: *Don't Do It !!*), I slid farther down the mountainside from bush to bush and tree to tree, all the while trying to dig my boot heels into the ice in an attempt to keep my rate of descent somewhat under control. Finally, I made my way down close enough to the stick to make a grab for it. I could see it was barely snagged and if I didn't get it on the first try, it was likely to dislodge and continue sliding down an even steeper, icy slope that was below. This would put it at a much greater distance than I either could or would be willing to risk to get it back. Fortunately, I got it on the first attempt, put the leather loop around my wrist and between grabbing bushes and kicking toe-holds in the ice, managed to make it the long, difficult way back up to the trail. Once the adrenaline wore off and reason returned, I could admit rescuing the stick was an overly risky thing to do; however, it also rather dramatically made clear just how strong my feelings were for that hiking stick and to what extent I valued it. With such feelings about my own stick, I could readily imagine Jack Rabbit Slim's 'dismay', to put it mildly, at somehow becoming separated from what should be a prized keepsake of his already significant journey from Georgia and finding him to return his hiking stick became a mission.

Over the next several months, I made numerous inquiries in the trail community, trying to find Jack Rabbit Slim, but no one knew him or had heard of him. The following year, I read the ATC's published list of thru-hikers who had completed their hikes the year I found the stick, thinking maybe I would see his name; however, despite these efforts, I had no success locating Jack Rabbit Slim. I must have

spent some hours over the following years, wondering what happened. Initially, I thought the stick was left by accident along the AT, but that particular section of AT is very rocky and if accustomed to hiking with a stick, you wouldn't go very far before you realized you were 'missing something'..... certainly not so far that you wouldn't turn around and go back for it. Perhaps Jack Rabbit Slim really didn't need a stick and the novelty of carrying one wore off and he left it, but

I'm not sure I'm buying this scenario either. Care was taken in choosing this particular stick, time was taken to carve the hard wood, and effort was made to carry it over hundreds of miles and crossing three and a half states..... abandonment as a mere inconvenience doesn't seem likely.

One last theory, admittedly a stretch and mostly a romantic notion, is that so close to the trail head and a bailout point, Jack Rabbit Slim's thru-hike may have ended and that is where he left his stick in disappointment and frustration. Possibly, with the knowledge he would never return to his thru-hike, the stick was left close to the trail in the hope that some other hiker would spot it and carry it on. This could explain why no one had heard of him farther up the AT and why his name was not on the list of hikers who completed a thru-hike that year. At the time, I only looked for him with hikers and the trail community 'north'.... perhaps if I had thought to look 'south' as well, I would have found some mention of this particular trail

name. Still, every minute of the time I've spent wondering what happened is pure speculation and I hope that no matter why the stick was accidentally left or intentionally abandoned, Jack Rabbit Slim was able to stay on the trail and finish his hike, whether all the way to Maine or a shorter section of the AT.

A decade and a half later, somewhere 'out there', is or was a hiker who went by the name Jack Rabbit Slim and despite the time that has passed, I still find myself keeping an eye and ear out for some trace of him. Maintainers on the trail encounter a variety of situations, have memorable meetings with all sorts of people, and occasionally find strange things and this hiking stick is the most unusual hiker item I've ever found. "Trail magic" has more than one meaning in my personal dictionary. Generally, it centers around kindness to others in some form or fashion..... perhaps leaving a cooler of drinks and snacks at a trail

crossing, driving a hiker down the mountain to Waynesboro, giving a bottle of water to someone who has none left and is miles from the next water source, or sharing a map with a hiker who needs directions. At times though, I have found that trail magic, emphasis on the 'magic,' is something entirely different and the only apparent way to describe an experience that occurs on the trail for which there is no logical explanation other than coincidence, fate, perchance even the intervention of the supernatural. After all these years, I believe it's going to take the influence of this kind of 'magic' to reunite Jack Rabbit Slim and his hiking stick, but who knows? It can be a very small world and stranger things have happened. In the meanwhile, until reclaimed by Jack Rabbit Slim, his hiking stick has a home with mine and I treasure them both.

~ Merlo

Looking Ahead...

...mark it on your calendar NOW!

KAMP OUT FOR KIDS (D4) JULY 12-14

Sue Kropp (276-0070) (Freshair82@comcast.net) Parents or Grandparents, give your elementary/middle school kids an opportunity to experience nature up close and personal. Join us for a kids-centered weekend of camping, hiking, swimming, and kayaking. We may even hunt for sharks teeth on the beach. We have 3 sites reserved at Westmoreland State Park in Westmoreland County on the Potomac River's Northern Neck, so space will be limited. Six people per site. Adults without kids are welcomed, but adults with kids will get first preference. Contact Sue Kropp by July 4 for more details.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 17 - ODATC GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING - Hiking the Long Trail, presented by Bob Nelson, ODATC Member

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 19 - ODATC GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING - Program to be Determined

National Trail Day, June 1

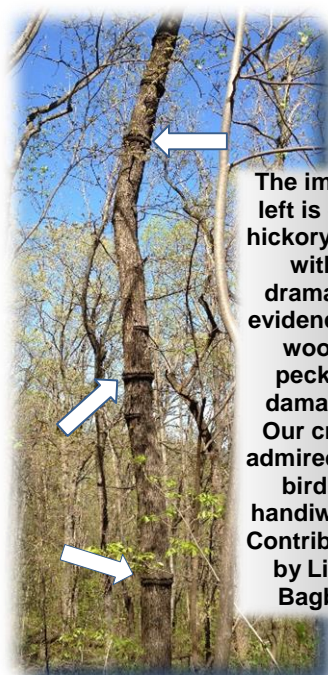
Outreach - David Grimes

Currently, ODATC and two other AT clubs are actively partnering with the Nelson County ATC Community Program. The county is working on plans for their first community trail education event to be held on the grounds of the Devil's Backbone Brewery on **National Trail Day, June 1, 2013. Volunteers are needed to help with ODATC's contributions** to this event, which includes leading hikes, an ODATC / AT information booth, and backpacking demonstration / information. Please contact [David Grimes @ odatc.outreach@gmail.com](mailto:David.Grimes@odtc.outreach@gmail.com) if you can help!

2013 ODATC Board of Directors

(Area Code 804)

President	Theresa Duffey	500-0955	odatc.president@gmail.com
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The image left is of a hickory tree with dramatic evidence of wood pecker damage. Our crew admired the bird's handiwork. Contributed by Lisa Bagby



Emily Kimball (left) mastered The Orange Blossom Special, a 7 day tour via Bike Florida.

Out and About!

Urban Hikers (below) made the Richmond loop trekking the James River flood walls and Belle Isle. Of course Legends was "trail's end"!

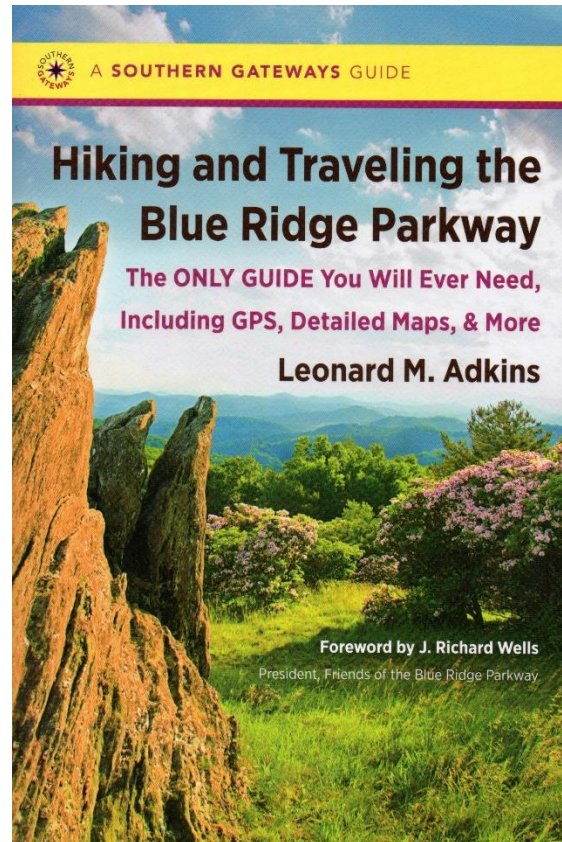


The University of North Carolina Press announces the release of the 17th book by ODATC member Leonard M. Adkins.

Hiking and Traveling the Blue Ridge Parkway: The Only Guide You Will Ever Need Including GPS, Maps, and More is the *only* guidebook to provide a detailed description of every official National Park Service trail along the parkway. Maps are provided for easy navigation, and official parkway trailheads have GPS coordinates. Included are the scores of miles of the Appalachian Trail that parallel the parkway, and points where the Mountains to Sea Trail comes in contact with the roadway.

However, true to its title, the book is more than just trails. Descriptions are given for every overlook, including elevation. There's an elevation change chart for bicyclists, minimum tunnel heights for RV travelers, and sightseeing information for nearby towns. In addition, there are details about developed and backcountry campsites, rest rooms, water fountains, dining and lodging, picnic areas, a roadside bloom calendar, parkway mile points, history of the Blue Ridge Mountains and Parkway, advice and precautions, and an overview of regulations and ranger offices.

The book is available from local and online bookstores, but if you purchase it through Leonard's website, www.habitualhiker.com, he will donate a portion of the proceeds to the FRIENDS of the Blue Ridge Parkway, which assists in maintaining and enhancing the beauty of the scenic roadway.



May 21 (Tuesday, 6:30 PM) ODATC Annual Club Night

Each year we kick off our summer break with an incredible buffet dinner and spectacular slideshow. Of course it's you, our members, who provide both the dinner and the slide show. That is, we ask everyone to bring a dish (salad, entrée, or dessert) to share with other members. And don't worry, trail maintainers and hikers aren't known for being picky eaters, so feel free to be creative here. Our Club will provide drinks, paper plates, napkins, and eating utensils – you just bring the grub! We'd also like you to bring a canned good to donate to the church's food bank.

As for the slideshow, we're asking you to submit up to 5 digital photos of anything that you think your fellow Club members will find interesting or amusing. We'll show your photos and ask you to provide a very brief explanation. Email up to 5 photos, preferably under 1MB, to Randy at randy.wendell@verizon.net by 17 May.

The meeting will be held at the Trinity Lutheran Church (2315 N. Parham Rd).