

Dream It!

Plan It!

Live It!

RMGHA Adventures Newsletter

News & Hiking Tips

from
"Windtalker
& Mom"

March 2010

Your Most Important Piece of Hiking Equipment

When we are asked what our most valuable piece of hiking equipment is, we always say, "Our feet!" It does not matter what other high-tech equipment you have with you, if your feet are blistered and sore, you won't get far and you will be miserable. Here are some tricks we use to keep our feet in good condition and blister free.

Hiking Shoes

First, buy a pair of boots that fit correctly. If they do not feel good in the store, chances are very good that they will not feel much better after they are broken in. A good-fitting pair of boots, however, will only get better as you wear them. When trying out boots, have the outfitter fill a backpack up with 30-35 lbs of weight and walk around the store with the pack on for 10-15 minutes. A pair of boots may feel great with no weight on your back but put a full backpack on and they can feel totally different.

Liner Socks & Foot Powder

We always use liner socks and try to get ones with no seams in the toe area. Seams can rub your feet raw. We also use a 50/50 mix of Blister Shield, available at most running stores, and Gold Bond Medicated Powder. Mix both in a Zip-Loc bag, turn your liner socks inside out, put them on over your hand and swish them around in the powder mix. Shake them off, turn them right-side out and put them on. We also recommend wiping your feet with alcohol pads. These pads are also useful if you need to start a campfire when wood is wet.

Food Rubs

We also give each other foot rubs each night, whether we are in our tent or in a shelter. For us, after 5-7 days on the A.T. without a shower, rubbing each other's feet was as close to being intimate as it got. Lay on your backs, side-by-side, facing opposite directions. Place one leg inside your partner's leg, as if you are going to "Indian leg wrestle." Now the fun part starts!

1. Pull on the toes to pop them back into place.
2. Using your fist, firmly rub up and down the bottom of the foot, from the ball to the heel, to loosen up the Plantar Fascia that runs the length of the bottom of the foot.
3. Using your thumbs, firmly massage the Achilles tendon on the heel on both sides.
4. Holding the foot in both hands, use both thumbs and press firmly on the area between the pad below the big toe and the pad below the rest of the toes and massage slowly.
5. Using the palm of your hand, place it on the bottoms of the toes and press on all of them, bending them backward toward the instep of the foot.
6. Again using the palm of your hand, place it on the top of all the toes, bending them slightly down toward the bottom of the foot.
7. Grasp the foot with both hands, place both thumbs between the pad below the big toe and the pad below the rest of the toes, and twist the foot from side to side.

We thru-hiked the entire Appalachian Trail without ever once getting a blister and we firmly believe that using these techniques will minimize, if not eliminate, the torment of hiking with blisters for you as well.

RELAX WITH A GOOD BOOK

In 2008, we published a book about our 2006 A.T. thru-hike entitled, "*Solemates—Lessons on Life Love & Marriage from the Appalachian Trail.*" It chronicles our journey from the perspective of what it is like to spend six months, 24/7, hiking with your spouse. Not a day-to-day journal of our adventure, this book is a candid, introspective, and oftentimes humorous, look at the challenges of taking on such a difficult and life-changing adventure and the range of emotions that surface because of it. It is a warmhearted journal depicting countless lessons in love, perseverance, courage, human nature, compassion, tolerance, understanding, and teamwork; lessons that everyone can adapt to their own lives and relationships. Woven through our stories, and those of other couples who were part of our thru-hiking family, are inspirational insights into the human spirit and refreshing perspectives on what is truly important in life. *Solemates* is available from us, at www.QualtechResourceGroup.Com or at Amazon.com. A complete listing of other locations where you can purchase this book is on Page 2 of this newsletter.

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Hiking Presentation and Book Signing Schedule

May 8th, 6:00 pm: Brookhill Wesleyan Church, Forest, VA—"*Spiritual Reflections from the Appalachian Trail*" and Book Signing

May 13th, 8:00—9:00pm: Trail Days, 1st Baptist Church, Damascus, VA —"*Spiritual Reflections from the Appalachian Trail*"

May 14th-16th, 9-6: Trail Days, Damascus, VA, Town Park, Vendor Booth and Book Signings

May 15th, 9:15-10:00 am: Trail Days, in front of Mt. Rogers Outfitters Hostel- "*Windtalker Performs Native American Flute Music*"

May 29th, 7:30 pm: Greenbrier State Park Visitor Center, Boonesboro, MD — "*Appalachian Trail Reflections, Windtalker & Mom's AT Thru-hike*"

June 5th, 10:00 am & 4:00 pm: National Trails Day, Big Meadows Campground, Shenandoah National Park, Byrd Visitor Center—"*Appalachian Trail Reflections, Windtalker & Mom's AT Thru-hike*" and Book Signings

August 7th, TBD: Long Trail Festival, Vermont State Fairgrounds, Rutland, VT— "*Windtalker Performs Native American Flute Music,*" Vendor Booth and Book Signings.

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RMGHAventures Newsletter

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If you have questions

Contact us at

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A NEW BOOK — available April 2010

Hiking the Appalachian Trail, from Georgia to Maine in one continuous hike, is a life changing adventure—a journey fraught with unimaginable obstacles, yet rich in unrivaled rewards. It is also a journey awash with spiritual significance.

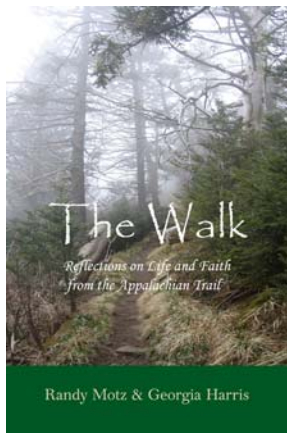
Spending six months in the wilderness, free from the rush of civilization, surrounded by the wonders and beauty of nature, provides numerous moments to reflect on life and faith. Using stories of our 2006 thru-hike, thoughtful use of scripture, inspirational quotes and words of wisdom from Native Americans, we, “Windtalker & Mom,” describe the many similarities between “walking the trail” and a “walk of faith.” In unique, insightful and relevant ways, we tell of the spiritual lessons that were part of daily trail life and how those lessons readily apply to a Christian life.

“...uniquely informative and inspirational... a must have for those who seek spiritual insight while in the wilderness. Windtalker and Mom share pictures of the peaks and valleys of their trail experiences as well as the wisdom they gained during their adventure. You will find treasures in every chapter.”

- **Craig and Suzy Miles** - Founders, Appalachian Trail Servants, Inc. & Authors of, *Seeker's Guide to the Spiritual Wilderness*

“...is an insightful book that weaves experiences on the Appalachian Trail, Native American wisdom, and scripture into an enjoyable, spiritual read...describes the challenge, beauty and wonder of the A.T. from Randy and Georgia's perspective as thru-hikers...inspires the reader by relating those footsteps to the challenges of our daily lives, and more specifically, to our walk of faith...I found a trail of tales and challenges, bits of wisdom, guiding scripture and devotionals that stopped me in my tracks and made me evaluate where I am in my walk...this book may lead you to Maine or Georgia, or somewhere in between to start your own walk.”

- **Nick Melnick**, worship leader and hiker



GEAR REVIEW

Over the years, in an attempt to combine light weight and comfort in a sleeping pad, we have tried the Therm-A-Rest closed cell pads as well as their Pro-Lite series. Now we believe we have found the ultimate in sleeping comfort and light weight, the Thermo-A-Rest NeoAir sleeping pad. Weighing in at a mere 13.6 ounces, for the regular length version, and inflating to a full 2” thick, the comfort to weight ratio is unmatched in any other pad. And, if you are a larger hiker, that 2” of air beneath you provides an excellent night’s sleep. The manufacturer claims that it can be rolled up small enough to fit into a large mouth Nalgene bottle, though we have yet to try this. The NeoAir is not self-inflating and is a bit noisy when you roll around on it. But, considering its weight and its comfort, both of these minor drawbacks are easy to overlook.

RETAIL OUTLETS

If you would like to purchase “Solemates,” here is a list of retailers that carry it.

BOOKSTORES

Barnes & Noble Bookstores

B. Dalton Bookstores

Books-A-Million

Bookstores.com

Powell's City of Books
1005 W Burnside
Portland, OR

Powell's Books at Cedar Hills Crossing
3415 SW Cedar Hills Blvd.
Beaverton, OR

Powell's Books on Hawthorne
3723 SE Hawthorne Blvd.
Portland, OR

Powell's Books at Portland Int'l Airport
7000 NE Airport Way, Suite 2250
Portland, OR

Whistlestop Bookshop
129 West High Street
Carlisle, PA 17013

Mountain Wanderer
Rt. 112
Lincoln, NH 03251

Belk Library
Appalachian State University
Boone, NC

TRAIL ORGANIZATIONS

The Potomac Appalachian Trail Club
118 Park Street, SE
Vienna, VA

Appalachian Trail Conservancy
799 Washington Street
Harpers Ferry, WV

Appalachian Mountain Club
Pinkham Notch Visitor Center
Gorham, NH

OUTFITTERS

Campmor, Inc.
400 Corporate Drive
Mahwah, NJ

Mt. Rogers Outfitters
110 Laurel Avenue
Damascus, VA

Mountain Crossings
9710 Gainesville Highway
Blairsville, GA

Mahoney's Outfitters
830 Sunset Drive
Johnson City, TN

True North Adventureware
96 Walkers Mill Road
Bethel, ME

Uncle Johnny's Nolichucky Hostel
151 River Road
Erwin, TN

NATIONAL PARKS & GIFT SHOPS

Shenandoah National Park Visitor Centers
Luray, VA

Peaks of Otter Gift Shop
Milepost 86- Blue Ridge Parkway
Bedford, Virginia

ONLINE

Amazon.com

www.alibris.com

www.betterworldbooks.com

http://hikingoutpost.com

www.textbookx.com

www.superbookdeals.com

www.textbooksrus.com

www.ecampus.com

www.biggerbooks.com

www.abebooks.com

JOURNALS

If you would like to read more about our adventures on the A.T. and The Long Trail, go to:

www.trailjournals.com/windtalkerandmom

For stories about our other adventures visit:

www.RMGHAventures.com