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The West Highland Way

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2015 ATC Biennial
Conference Planning
Underway

Christmas Gift Ideas

Special Interest

Friday, December 6th

"Windtalker" Native American
flute performance
Frederick Coffee Company
& Cafe
Frederick, MD
8:00pm-10:00pm
www.fredcoffeeco.com

Friday, December 13th

"Windtalker" Native American
flute performance
The Music Cafe
Damascus, MD
8:00pm-11:00pm
www.the-music-cafe.com

Saturday, March 8th

"Windtalker" Native American
flute performance
Frederick Coffee Company
& Cafe
Frederick, MD
8:00pm-10:00pm
www.fredcoffeeco.com

Friday, June 6th

"Windtalker" Native American
flute performance
A.T. Hall of Fame Banquet
Allenberry Resort
Boiling Springs, PA
6:00pm-7:00pm
<http://www.atmuseum.org>

Saturday, December 13th

"Windtalker" Native American
flute performance
Frederick Coffee Company
& Cafe
Frederick, MD
8:00pm-10:00pm
www.fredcoffeeco.com

Dream It!
Plan It!
Live It!

RMGHAdventures

Inn-to-Inn Hiking the West Highland Way

We recently returned from a two-month adventure in Europe where we hiked The West Highland Way in Scotland, The Coast-to-Coast Path in England, part of the Pembrokeshire Coast Path in Wales, and the Camino Ingles in Spain. To say it was an amazing adventure would be an understatement. Over the next several newsletters we will summarize our experiences on each trail and will provide you with information that will be helpful should you decide to hike one of these trails yourself. You can read the details of this hike at <http://www.trailjournals.com/entry.cfm?trailname=15648>.

The West Highland Trail is 95.5 miles long, stretching from the town of Milngavie (pronounced Milguy) to the lakeside city of Fort William, is Scotland's first and most famous long-distance trail. Rather than camp along the way or stay at hostels, we did our trek as an inn-to-inn hike, enlisting the services of The Sherpa Van Project to make our hotel/inn reservations and to transport our duffle bags of supplies and extra clothing to and from to each location. <http://www.sherpavan.com>. It was wonderful to hike with only a day pack and arrive each night to a soft bed, a hot shower, and a restaurant or pub for dinner and breakfast the following morning. Depending on your hiking speed, this trail can be completed in 5 to 8 days. We did it in 8 and found this to be a very relaxing schedule with time to enjoy the trail's other sights and rich history. To keep us on track, we used The West Highland Way Guide by Jacquetta Megarry, published by Rucksack Readers, as well as the latest edition of the Official West Highland Way Guide by Bob Aitken and Roger Smith. Using both provided us with all the information necessary. <http://www.west-highland-way.co.uk>

We chose to hike in mid-August to miss some of the crowds, but we did pay a price for this decision because it was not the best time, weather-wise, to be on the WHW. Most days were cloudy and drizzly or the threat of rain was ever-present. The West Highland Way is very well marked with its "thistle" blazes and signs strategically located the entire way. The variety of terrain we traveled through made for a very memorable adventure. We traveled through town parks and soft lowlands, where pastures of sheep and cows, encircled by stone walls dating back thousands of years, extended as far as the eye could see. There were numerous enchanted forests of stately ancient pine, hardwoods, and huge ferns that blanketed the forest floor. In contrast were the hillsides stripped bare by years of "timbering," with only ash gray stumps lining the landscape like headstones in a cemetery. There were also steep climbs, like that up Conic Hill (1,184') at the edge of Loch Lomand, the largest inland stretch of water in Great Britain by surface area. A long stretch of the WHW is on the edge of, or very close to, Loch Lomand and it was our constant companion for several days, along with the "midges" that required healthy doses of DEET to keep them at bay.

Most of the hiking on the WHW is very straightforward, along tracks, drover's (cattle herders) paths and sections of a 240-mile network of old military roads dating back to the 1700's. But, there are sections along Loch Lomand that are narrow, steep, muddy, and strewn with roots and boulders. Along the way are moors (boggy areas), amazing waterfalls, and ruins of farms and homes from bygone eras. Everywhere we looked, and every area we passed through, provided a glimpse into the storied past and rich history of Scotland; its proud people, religions, clan wars, and battles with England. We stayed in, or passed through quaint villages with buildings dating back to the 16th and 17th century; each one preserved in its original state, with only minor modifications and minimal 21st century upgrades.

For more details or questions about this hike, email us at

harris.motz@verizon.net



2015 ATC Biennial Conference Planning Underway – Volunteers Needed!



Mark your calendars **NOW**, for the 2015 Appalachian Trail Conservancy Biennial Conference, July 17-24, 2015 at Shenandoah University in Winchester, Virginia. The theme for this conference is “Hiking Through History,” and will be hosted by the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club and the Mountain Club of Maryland. This weeklong event will bring together thousands of people to attend the ATC annual meeting, participate in informative workshops, hike the A.T. and other area trails, and go on excursions to wineries, state and national parks, and historic battlefields. There will also be raft, canoe, kayaking and biking trips, as well as inspiring evening presentations and stellar entertainment.

An event of this magnitude requires the efforts of hundreds of people to make it a success. The 2015 Biennial Steering Committee is looking for people who are interested in planning, organizing, and participating as a volunteer in the following areas:

- Finance
- Hospitality
- Hikes
- Registration
- Facilities
- Workshops
- Excursions
- Entertainment
- Marketing
- Signs
- Youth Programs

To receive information on the specific areas of need for a committee you are interested in, and to sign-up to help, contact:

Tom Johnson, Volunteer Coordinator: Volunteers2015@patc.net

If you would like to conduct a workshop at the biennial, please visit the following website and fill out the form.

http://surveymonkey.com/s/ATC2015_workshops

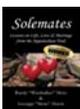
For details on the 2015 ATC Biennial Conference, check back at

<http://appalachiantrail.org/who-we-are/events/2013/08/08/2015-atc-biennial-conference-hiking-through-history>

PUT YOUR PASSION FOR THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL TO WORK AND VOLUNTEER FOR THE 2015 BIENNIAL

CHRISTMAS GIFT IDEAS FOR FAMILY & FRIENDS

It is hard to believe, but another year is almost over and Christmas is fast approaching. Soon it will be time to think about getting unique gifts for your family and special friends who love the outdoors. Here are some ideas we hope you will consider when doing your Christmas shopping.



“Solemates – Lessons on Life, Love & Marriage from the Appalachian Trail”

Available from the Appalachian Trail Conservancy or at Amazon.com (also available for Kindle and all other eBook formats)



“The Walk – Reflections on Life & Faith from the Appalachian Trail”

Available from the Appalachian Trail Conservancy or at Amazon.com (also available for Kindle and all other eBook formats)



“Exploring the Appalachian Trail by RV, Sort Of...” - Available at Amazon.com



“Appalachian Trail Reflections” DVD - Available at Amazon.com



“Windtalker – Native SoundScapes” Native American Flute CD - Available at Amazon.com & CDBaby as a complete CD or as downloads



“Canyon Whispers” Native American Flute CD - Available at Amazon.com & CDBaby as complete CD or as a downloads