



Spring Fling May 14-15, 2010, at Trayfoot Mountain

by Jim Crosby with photographs by Marie Majarov

It was a dark and stormy Friday night with black clouds pierced by the jagged edges of lightning streaks peering through the dense canopy of leaves overhead. The innocents were circled around a table of venison stew cooked over an open fire.



An evening of fun making good memories and recalling past ones brought these VOWA members/spouses together at Trayfoot Mountain. L to r clockwise: Thurman Hensley (host), Terry Lewis, Patsy and Jim Crosby, and Frank Mundy.

©Marie Majarov

Pulling their biscuits off of hand cut twigs, they soaked up the juices of the stew with the hot, buttery bits of bread. The innocents' hunger had been whetted by an evening of never-ending conversation amid the smell of wood smoke and the flora of the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains. The mystery of the stew was revealed as the innocents poked through the mixture of chunks of venison, baby carrot sticks, cabbage leaves, and bits of celery. The compiler never revealed the composition of his broth.

The memorable evening began at the base of the bear infested Trayfoot Mountain – the site of the handcrafted home of the famous bear hunter/wrestler, Thurman Hensley, and his enabler, Jennifer, who is purported to be his life's home companion.

The air was warm but comfortable, promising an evening of good fun, food, and fellowship. The innocents consisted of those members [and spouses] of the Virginia Outdoor Writers Association, Inc. who failed to concoct a good and acceptable excuse for their absence.



Jennifer Hensley, hostess, showing displays of Korean Dogwood at their wildlife paradise. ©Marie Majarov



Frank (the big story teller who keeps guests in "stitches") and Linda Mundy, were the hard working planners and arrangers for this 2010 Spring Fling. ©Marie Majarov

Jennifer and Thurman [event hosts], Frank Mundy, the cuisine compiler, and his enabler, Linda set the stage by pulling the Hensley boat from its shelter and erecting tables under there, surrounded by chairs, and coolers of food and drink. Upon the arrival of the innocents, the fateful party started off with bowls of kibbles and bits washed down by beverages and dips. The revelers progressed through incessant conversations until hunger drove them to the fire pit to retrieve their mystery dinner for sustenance, which also included mountain man lollypops – that is corn on the cob roasted in the shucks over a wood fire. When ready, the shucks are pulled down to form a handle so the corn, dripping with butter, can be eaten like a lollypop.

The party went on until the thunder and light show from the heavens began to dominate the conversations. The threat of the impending weather finally split the innocents into a parade of cars scrambling through the night to get off the mountain and back on the main roads before its full fury flourished. Thus ended a dark and stormy night on Trayfoot Mountain with no rain actually falling on the party.

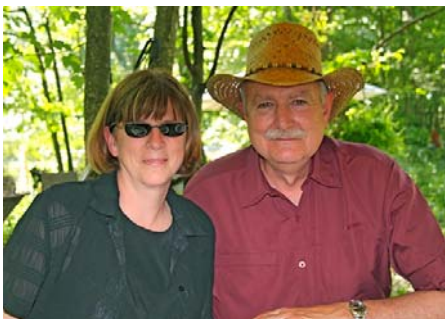
The gloriously warm sun and clear blue skies of Saturday morning drew the innocents back to Trayfoot Mountain like bears looking for a noon feeding. With the promise of a great day in the sun, the party moved from the

shelter of the previous night to the pond-side setting of picnic tables and chairs awaiting their fresh coverings to be provided by the backsides of the innocents.



Bears are the thing at the Hensley nature plot—whether live or statuary. This grouping of cubs “plays” among the flora on their property. ©Marie Majarov

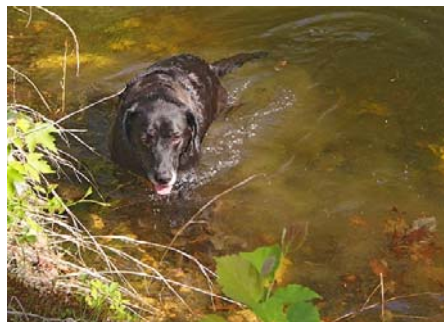
Absolutely no wildlife was spotted around the pond, apparently due to the robust and consistent laughter drawn from the innocents by the entertainment Frank and Company provided. The entertainment was so enthralling that hunger didn’t penetrate the innocents until 2:31 p.m. when they began the 50-yard march to the fire pit. Below the wood smoke, the innocents found a large tray of rump roasts that resulted from a rear-end collision between a deer and a steer. The table under the shelter adjacent to the fire pit contained palate pleasing plates and bowls of three-bean salad, black bean salad, corn pudding, macaroni salad, cakes, cookies, and a rhubarb pie that became the taste treat of the day that no one could deny.



End of the prior column, Mary Ann and Terry (VOWA President) Lewis cooling in the abundant grove of trees. ©Marie Majarov

The co-compilers, Terry and Mary Ann, explained that the rhubarb pie is their favorite and they grow it, the plant and not the pie, at home and at their mountain cabin. Terry expounded on the fact it is a pretty plant that has a tart taste. The innocents agreed that while most rhubarb pie comes across too sweet, this one was just right and, therefore, delicious.

The dining and entertainment led to hiking and napping. The hikers left the pond-side setting for an hour’s walk about Trayfoot Mountain.



Zeke enjoyed a dip in one of the ponds along the trek around the Hensley property. Wonder how many of the humans on the trail wanted to join him! ©Marie Majarov

The remainders were left scattered across the lounge chairs like hibernating bears. Hibernation ended with the arrival of the returning hikers.

This marvelous 2010 edition of the VOWA Spring Fling of May 14 and 15 ended with the unabashed attack upon trays of steamed crabs that led to an eating frenzy that would have made the local bears blush.

Shortly after nightfall, the innocents once again formed a caravan of vehicles, descending

Trayfoot Mountain with the over-stuffed minds and bodies of the occupants heading home.



Thurman Hensley showing bear clawing found while hiking Trayfoot Mountain. ©Marie Majarov



Hikers on the trail are left to right: Terry and Mary Ann and Zeke Lewis; Milan Majarov, Thurman Hensley, and Patsy Crosby. ©Marie Majarov



Picture at end of last column: Hikers at one of ponds on the Hensley “estate;”left to right: Mary Ann Lewis, Thurman Hensley, and Milan Majarov. ©Marie Majarov



Drizzling and digging in on the steamed crabs and “man-made lollipops” are (left clockwise to right) Frank Mundy, Milan Majarov, Mary Ann and Terry Lewis, along with Patsy and Jim Crosby. ©Marie Majarov

Editor’s Note: Our appreciation to VOWA Board Members Jim Crosby and Marie Majarov for their literary and the difficult task for pictorial contributions to this article. Also to Frank and Linda Mundy (Frank is Vice President) who slaved so graciously to plan and carry out this event, which we hope will be come an annual affair—even at other locations around Virginia as future plans develop. Thurman and Jennifer (former board member) Hensley graciously hosted the event and we are grateful to them for their generosity.

Jennifer Hensley says: “One of the things I enjoyed most about the outing was that we had no formal plans or schedules to follow. No articles to plan for [except Jim Crosby], no pressure to get the right shot (except for Marie) and no rush. We just did what ‘normal’ people do on a

picnic: get together; we ate, we talked, we laughed, and then we ate again!”



Wherever we go there are always camera shutters clicking. Marie Majarov catches Patsy Crosby photographing the event. ©Marie Majarov



Milan Majarov enjoying the evening near Grottoes, Virginia. ©Marie Majarov



Terry Lewis enjoys the cool shade as his constant companion, Zeke enjoys the tender scratching while they both relax among friends at the Spring Fling. ©Marie Majarov

Plan to join us in 2011:

Hoping to have fewer clashes with scheduled events, the date for the 2011 Spring Fling is May 21. Mark your calendar and plan to join your fellow members and spouses/significant others at another relaxing and “memory making” event on Trayfoot Mountain. Think about categories and eligible individuals who could/would join our association to its strength and make contributions to the field of outdoor writing and/or photography. Invite them to make new friends and memories among our friendly and supportive membership.