

# Community Conversations



Two weeks ago, local Boy Scout Troup 95 out of Hot Springs completed a five-day trek along the Appalachian Trail, getting a chance to practice their outdoor skills and enjoy some peace and quiet in the woods. Scoutmaster Doug Miller says seven scouts went on the trip with four chaperones in tow.

The group hiked 36 miles of the Appalachian Trail in Virginia from Reed's Gap (along the Blue Ridge Parkway south of Waynesboro) to U.S. 60 east of Buena Vista. Miller says they hiked an average of 8 miles per day, camping in the woods for four nights. "We've never done the Appalachian Trail before," he says. "We did overnight trips to Lake Moomaw and Laurel Fork this year to prepare for this trip."

Miller says the boys learned a lot from those shorter hikes. "We learned the lighter the load, the better," he notes with a laugh. "If you don't need it, don't bring it."

The troop put in long days of hiking, starting each day about 8:30 and then setting up camp at 5:00. "It was hard work," says Miller, "A lot of up and down. But the kids were leading the pack." Among the challenges along the way were a hike up Priest Mountain, requiring an ascent on foot of about 3,000 feet.

Miller says the five-day trip gave the boys the opportunity to practice fire building, "leave no trace" camping, as well as cooking skills. "Our goal is to do another part of the trail next year and eventually do the whole Appalachian Trail in Virginia," Miller says.

### *Personal Profile: Alex Cauley*



Alex Cauley is a name that many Bath County sports enthusiasts should recognize. Alex has spent three years with the Chargers Football team as a receiver and defensive back and as the goalie for the High School's Soccer team. This fall Alex will be entering his senior year at Bath County High School after having been involved in the county's school system since kindergarten. This summer Alex is working as part of the property management team for Homestead Preserve on projects such as clearing excess brush, opening up the views from the property and overall beautification and maintenance of the land, a similar role to what he did last summer at Camp Mont Shenandoah. Although it is hard work Alex says that he enjoys the group of guys that he gets to work with and the satisfaction of seeing the improvements on the property that he has been a part of. Alex lives with his mom, Betty, in Hot Springs and spends most of his time outside of work with his friends or at the lake.

### *Activities Update:*

The application of the stone facing on the retaining wall at the Old Dairy is progressing smoothly. Work is expected to be completed by the middle of next week, weather permitting. Installation of the waterline along Old Germantown road continues with an expected completion towards the end of this month. Water tanks in both the Sheep Meadow and Old Dairy neighborhoods are to be installed by the end of the week. Landscaping around the Sheep Meadow pond continues and permanent seeding should begin next week.



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