

AUDIO AND YELLOW NOTEBOOK NOTES
APPALACHIAN TRAIL, SPRING 2013
Springer Mountain GA to Erwin TN
John B. Egger

MONDAY, MARCH 11, 2013

Arise 3:15 AM, leave home 4:28 AM, waiting at Gate C-10 at 5:15 AM! Very smooth. Landed in Atlanta 8:05 AM, got to Baggage Claim 8:47 (walked most of the way; didn't know about the train); 10:50 AM waiting for Ron Brown at Door N-2. Discovered I've lost the clip for the water hose, and one cap for a Platypus bag. 11:48 Ron picked me up at airport. 2:30 leave parking lot. 3:15 Springer, 4:06 back at lot; 5:15 Stover!

Date	Time	Nr	Note
2013-03-11	1430	01	Dropped off at Springer Mountain parking area. I'll put my pack on and head south toward the mountain!
2013-03-11	1530	02	Arrived summit Springer Mountain 3:15 PM; SPOT message sent; photo in mist, leave 3:30 PM
2013-03-11	1606	03	Back at parking area
2013-03-11	1715	04	Arrive Stover Creek Shelter. Ron Brown picked me up at the Atlanta Airport 1148; we reached the parking area at 1430 after stops at post office and gas station.

TUESDAY, MARCH 12, 2013

Date	Time	Nr	Note
2013-03-12	0845	05	Out of Stover Creek Shelter. Cold last night, probably below freezing.
2013-03-12	0927	06	Walking north out of Stover Creek Shelter. No rain this morning but full rain gear for warmth. Chilly; mittens and wind hat. Walking nice so far.
2013-03-12	0946	07	A little confusion after crossing road; trail marked Benton McKay Trail and AT, but BMT markers more clear and frequent. Backtracked to Forest Service road; looks OK. Wish I had maps but they're in flap pocket under rain cover, too much trouble to get to.
2013-03-12	1014	08	Long Green Falls Trail
2013-03-12	1040	09	Beautiful country, thin pines, deciduous trees have no leaves yet, smooth walking at almost a normal pace.
2013-03-12	1050	10	Sun's coming out; I can see my shadow. Just gave glasses I'd found at Stover, left by the man who'd slept on my left, to the man who'd slept on my right (Herb), to return them at Gooch.
2013-03-12	1053	11	Very pleasant here now, maybe top of Hawk Mountain. Wooded path, sun coming through; higher land to my right but trail is very nice.
2013-03-12	1058	12	Crossed Shed Cemetery Road
2013-03-12	1123	13	Photo just heading down the trail, maybe toward Hawk Mountain Shelter. Earlier photo was at Three Forks.
2013-03-12	1156	14	Hawk Mountain Shelter, finished the Chana Masala from last night's dinner. Photo of Herb and me.
2013-03-12	1242	15	Leave the lunch stop
2013-03-12	1310	16	Stopped at Hightower Gap to put the strap on my hat; it's very windy
2013-03-12	1327	17	Seem to have ended a long climb up out of Hightower Gap; relatively level up here on the top
2013-03-12	1328	18	What do they call it — "a height of land"
2013-03-12	1330	19	For some reason the wind isn't blowing here on the top; sunny, very pleasant
2013-03-12	1428	20	Horse Gap
2013-03-12	1507	21	Pretty much up out of Horse Gap now. Trail level, clear of rocks, seem to be at top of a "height of land"

Date	Time	Nr	Note
2013-03-12	1601	22	Cooper Gap. 2L of fresh bottled water from an unopened jug near the road! Trail magic!
2013-03-12	1622	23	Photo from Justus Mountain. Quite a few HAWKS; I got some in the shot, I think.
2013-03-12	1633	24	Starting to head down off Justus Mountain
2013-03-12	1705	25	Descending off Justus, nice trail, smooth, not rocky. ETA Gooch 6:30 PM. [Arr. 6:12 PM!]
2013-03-12	1727	26	Just crossed Justus Creek, where Herb is going to camp tonight. About another mile to Gooch. [Herb went on to Gooch and shared it with me and Ol Man (another Stover 3/11 person).]

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 13, 2013

Date	Time	Nr	Note
2013-03-13	0853	27	Out of Gooch Mountain Shelter. Arose at 7:18 AM. At least I did some ablutions this morning, though I did not stretch (as I did on arrival last night).
2013-03-13	0854	28	Looks like a beautiful sunny day; ascent up over Gooch Mountain. Trail smooth, level now. Cool. Somewhat fitful night, rolling side to side. Felt warm for a few minutes, then cool off until roll again. Think I slept some.
2013-03-13	0913	29	Shots looking back south, along trail, of me by another hiker, to show nature of trail. Pleasant, sunny morning.
2013-03-13	0937	30	Gooch Gap
2013-03-13	0950	31	Shot of trail ahead; very pleasant, sunny morning
2013-03-13	1025	32	Walking north on path on west side of ridge; little sun, breeze is cool. Glad I didn't shuck my rain jacket and wind hat. Pleasant walking.
2013-03-13	1044	33	Nice photo to East; hikers sitting there also
2013-03-13	1103	34	Nice shot from an overlook, due South
2013-03-13	1133	35	Finished the last of my prepared 500c snack; Doritos were good!
2013-03-13	1200	36	Arrived Woody Gap (time approx); no cell phone service. Will have a tortilla/PB-N sandwich to see how they go
2013-03-13	1215	37	Out of Woody Gap; sign says 10.6 mi to Neel Gap
2013-03-13	1257	38	Photo at a nice overlook coming up out of Woody; met the nice couple I'd seen at Woody — their dog has panniers.
2013-03-13	1305	39	OK, now I think I'm at the top of the climb out of Woody Gap. Stiff wind, almost sorry I took jacket off 5 minutes ago!
2013-03-13	1313	40	Pleasant section of trail. I'm all alone again, usually have been, seldom anyone around.
2013-03-13	1356	41	Dickery Lake Trail
2013-03-13	1406	42	Lance Creek
2013-03-13	1505	43	One hour out of Lance; expected to be at Jarrard Gap by now. Should pay more attention to mileage.
2013-03-13	1506	44	OK — it's 2½ miles from Lance to Jarrard. I was at Lance at 2:06 so 3:30 maybe.
2013-03-13	1520	45	At 45-minute miles, it's more like 4:00
2013-03-13	1540	46	Jarrard Gap! "Camping ban" sign (re. Firewood, etc) but NO mention of bear canister requirement! I'm moving along...
2013-03-13	1600	47	Pleasant walking up out of Jarrard Gap; smooth, descending, few rocks... but wind is really stiff and cold.

2013-03-13	1601	48	Yesterday I met a fellow Bill (“All Small Stuff”), a former GE power-systems salesman, coming down to Cooper Gap. On my first day, at Springer I met 74-year-old “Ol Man” and shared Stover and Gooch shelters with him. Don’t know his real name, but heard people say he was in an AT video (“Roger”?). He’s now “slackpacking,” not pushing on to Neel.
2013-03-13	1647	49	Arrive Woods Hole Shelter, long way off trail. Small notice about bear canister requirement; I’ll have a snack and head back out.
2013-03-13	1651	50	Leave the deserted Woods Hole Shelter
2013-03-13	1702	51	Back at the AT; turning L to head N
2013-03-13	1721	52	Slaughter Creek Trail
2013-03-13	1741	53	Duncan Ridge Trail
2013-03-13	1802	54	Blood Mountain Shelter; large stone building right on the summit. I have to find the AT!
2013-03-13	1810	55	Self-photo as I’m beginning to head down off the bald summit of Blood Mountain
2013-03-13	1826	56	Down off the bald stuff, thank goodness; from shelter, it’s 2.4 miles (all downhill) to Neel Gap
2013-03-13	1849	57	Lost the trail coming down off Blood Mountain. Backtracked and found a blaze, have to find the next one. Sure aren’t very plentiful and these rocks are hard to walk on.
2013-03-13	1852	58	Ekasavich (?) heading downhill
2013-03-13	1922	59	Freeman and Byron Reese Trails
2013-03-13	1942	60	See highway down below
2013-03-13	1946	61	Neel Gap! Got to find the hostel!

THURSDAY, MARCH 14, 2013

Date	Time	Nr	Note
2013-03-14	1005	62	Leave Neel Gap
2013-03-14	1018	63	Water hose is freezing up, ice on trail. I wondered what the white stuff was on the tarp and why the pack cover was hard to fold up — ICE!
2013-03-14	1019	64	Got into Neel 7:42 last night, trying to figure out what to do, man told me cabins were full and to set up in the picnic area. Later (this morning), learned there was a HOSTEL next door!
2013-03-14	1100	65	PS My water hose finally seems to be clear of ice.
2013-03-14	1101	66	Nil
2013-03-14	1127	67	Photo of ICE along the trail
2013-03-14	1207	68	Blue-marked side trail, don’t know what it is, could be that first shelter [north of Neel]
2013-03-14	1208	69	Naw, that Whitley Shelter is at 38 mi (7 mi from Neel), off to E, don’t know what this blue blaze is. My destination is 11.6 mi from Neel.
2013-03-14	1257	70	Very pleasant walking, smooth, not rocky, lightly descending, the kind of trail I like!
2013-03-14	1334	71	Spectacular bald overlook to W, a family group there [Woman with Down’s Syndrome kids?]
2013-03-14	1409	72	Tesnatee Gap, sign says 5.5 mi from Neel Gap, so I’ve done 5.5 miles in 4 hours.
2013-03-14	1410	73	5.5 mi to Low Gap Shelter (another 5.5!)
2013-03-14	1451	74	Couple of nice photos looking S after rise coming up out of T. Gap
2013-03-14	1458	75	Turn to Whitley Gap Shelter, 1.2 mi; I’m not going there!
2013-03-14	1500	76	Met nice young woman, Wild Rain; she passed me near the top of an ascent
2013-03-14	1509	77	Hogpen Gap

2013-03-14	1540	78	Smooth, level trail, what the AT should always be like!
2013-03-14	1702	79	I think I'm on the peak of Poor Mountain
2013-03-14	1720	80	Another significant ascent; may be Poor Mountain but there's another hill ahead, hope I don't have to go over it.
2013-03-14	1727	81	I did.
2013-03-14	1800	82	Arrived Low Gap Shelter; full; tarping tonight.

End of March 15, 2013 transcription of #01 to #82 Memorex audio notes, Low Gap Shelter, 10:20 AM! Zero today, or move on to Blue Mountain?

FRIDAY, MARCH 15, 2013

Date	Time	Nr	Note
2013-03-15	1228	01	Back at AT. Transcribed 82 audio notes from last 3 days, left shelter 12:22 after moving a burning log down to the stream. Back at AT 12:28 PM.
2013-03-15	1318	02	Hot, sunny day. I could be in my shorts! Met Chino, on his way to Low Gap Shelter from Neel today!
2013-03-15	1340	03	Very pleasant trail, fairly smooth, woods very pretty, deciduous trees with leaves not out, occasional fir tree. Fair amount of ascent but very gradual. Can see through the woods a long way. No photo — better shots in picture books.
2013-03-15	1347	04	Cool breeze feels good in bright sun. Trail smooth, gently ascending. Hat off (cord around neck) lying on top of the pack
2013-03-15	1410	05	Two self-photos just to show an idea of the trail ahead
2013-03-15	1422	06	Shot of the trail ahead; hope I got the pine
2013-03-15	1509	07	Chattahoochee Gap, Jack Jeff Trail to left, water to right. I'm staying on the AT
2013-03-15	1510	08	Another 2.3 mi. to shelter from C. Gap
2013-03-15	1604	09	Just met a nice couple on the trail — dog Action Jackson, man Sourdough (class of '06), woman Kimberly. Very encouraging, nice chat. [Told me to see the 10 hints for success, at next shelter.]
2013-03-15	1648	10	Beautiful spring beside trail; filled 2L, now carrying those 2L + 1L treated
2013-03-15	1657	11	Arrived Blue Mountain Shelter

Chino is sleeping beside me here in Blue Mountain Shelter. The University of Georgia natural-resource economist is here too (he was at Low Gap). There's a blue tarp hung across the sleeping area — guidebook says the shelter is known for wind. Some hikers told me it was 14F at Neel Gap Wednesday, with 60-70 mph wind gusts! Woah! No wonder I couldn't zip up my sleeping bag after a venture outside. The cabin place WAS packing people in, on floors — one couple [I met (Bottle Cap and Fun Size)] was renting one of them.

Wild West Chili tonight (full 2-person serving). People say Haven picks up at Winding Stair and there is no pickup at Deep Gap (there might not even be one!). No T-Mobile service here, though Verizon and AT&T do work. Sent a SPOT message when I got here, success. Several others have SPOTs, at relatives' insistence. I've seen 2 other REI Flash 62's and one other pair of Vasque Breeze boots (All Small Stuff).

Hope I handle that chili OK! I have NOT been eating enough — the tortilla/PB-N sandwiches are NOT tolerable.

Wild Rain, the group here reports, is moving along. They've seen her, moving fast. [7:09 PM]

SATURDAY, MARCH 16, 2013

Date	Time	Nr	Note
2013-03-16	0821	01	Out of Blue Mountain Shelter 8:21 AM. Met Duct Tape, Blackhawk Bob, Bottle Cap, Fun Size (she and Bottle are a couple), and Brian. Wild Rain passed by at 1:20 PM yesterday.

Date	Time	Nr	Note
2013-03-16	0851	02	Top of a hill. Met Pilgrim, Slow but Sure, Because of Her (Slow's husband), couple of others passed; one had Flash 62 pack. SBS took a photo of me an Pilgrim [with my camera, but it didn't work].
2013-03-16	0944	03	Stopped to shuck shirt and legs. These pants have no bottom zippers so I have to remove my boots to zip off the legs.
2013-03-16	1000	04	Unicoi Gap. Bottle Cap and Fun Size are here.
2013-03-16	1015	05	Ready to pull out of Unicoi Gap Trail Magic site (Dave, Bob, and Andrew). Hot dogs, fruit, beer, soft drinks. I had 2 hot-dog rolls with relish. Still no cell-phone coverage.
2013-03-16	1036	06	Steep rise out of Unicoi Gap. I should have left my four tortilla/PB-N ridiculously heavy sandwiches in the trash.
2013-03-16	1107	07	Intersection with Rocky Mountain Trail. I'm staying on the AT but am still not all the way out of Unicoi Gap.
2013-03-16	1116	08	Trail is leveling out and becoming smoother and less rocky, but I do see a rise ahead so I'm not counting any chickens
2013-03-16	1124	09	I may have reached the peak. Met 3 fellows who said it's all downhill and cold drinks at the bottom!
2013-03-16	1133	10	Self-photo looking W, I think. Vast overlook, mountains in distance.
2013-03-16	1140	11	Good shot of view to the west
2013-03-16	1142	12	There's a highway winding up the hillside across the way
2013-03-16	1209	13	Nice self-photo along nice level section, heading down off the peak
2013-03-16	1223	14	Arrive Indian Grave Gap Trail Magic site!
2013-03-16	1318	15	Out at 1:18 PM; Glenlock Baptist Church stop, Indian Grave Gap
2013-03-16	1415	16	Pretty much up out of Indian Grave Gap, still ascending but slope has abated
2013-03-16	1420	17	OK, pretty sure I'm now on the top. Smooth, pleasant trail
2013-03-16	1455	18	Arrive Tray Gap (more trail magic!) 2:28 PM, leave 2:55 PM.
2013-03-16	1555	19	Arrive Tray Mountain Shelter.

The above notes, from Blue to Tray Mountain Shelters, were transcribed at the Tray Mountain Shelter, 5:30 PM March 16, 2013.

SUNDAY, MARCH 17, 2013

Date	Time	Nr	Note
2013-03-17	0846	01	Out of Tray Mountain Shelter. Arose 7:11, brushed teeth and took vitamins, aspirin, and what I think is my Meloxicam.
2013-03-17	0916	02	Beautiful morning; cool, sunny, light breeze. Walking north along the west side of a ridge. Trail is very pleasant. I know how quickly that can change, but I'm enjoying it while I have it.
2013-03-17	0925	03	Two self-photos looking N along trail. One is too light, I think.
2013-03-17	1000	04	Saw a little newt or salamander, 3-4" long, brown, narrow, going down through sunny leaves. There's a spider, too. I've seen maybe 3 squirrels on this trip, and a dozen birds (not counting the hawks).
2013-03-17	1030	05	Shucked shirt and zip-off legs
2013-03-17	1051	06	Certainly do have a feeling of solitude here. Three boys passed a bit ago, moving fast, and 2 or 3

Date	Time	Nr	Note
			passed an hour ago, but generally I've been walking alone. It's very nice, from my perspective.
2013-03-17	1053	07	Just passed a "SWAG of the Blue Ridge" sign. Wonder what that means.
2013-03-17	1134	08	Just passed Fun Size, Bottle Cap, and Moonshiner who'd been at Tray Mountain Shelter last night, resting on a log. Ten minutes earlier I'd passed Pilgrim on the trail. He has the Flash 62 pack (Large) that doesn't fit and has to stop often to rest his shoulders.
2013-03-17	1135	09	[Shopping list when I get to a town or outfitter's:] Toilet paper, hand sanitizer...
2013-03-17	1136	10	Better ball-point pen, rubber Leki tips
2013-03-17	1156	11	Very pleasant walking. I'm whistling "The Pearls," sunny and cool, smooth slightly descending trail, leafless deciduous woods with an occasional pine like the one on my left right now, very nice Sunday morning.
2013-03-17	1200	12	Just left Tray Mountain Wilderness Area. Addis Gap sign. Swallow Creek WMA. Sign right to water, ahead Dicks Creek Gap 5.3 miles. There's a Nalgene water bottle left in the middle of the trail.
2013-03-17	1201	13	It looks like water; I'm leaving it there. Nice camping site to the left.
2013-03-17	1202	14	Addis Gap is 64.2 miles, so it's only 1.8 miles to Deep Gap Shelter — it's only noon, so I don't think I'll stop there.
2013-03-17	1203	15	At my usual 45-minute/mile pace my ETA at Deep Gap Shelter is 1:30 PM.
2013-03-17	1233	16	Switched H ₂ O bottles, took a landscape shot SW to give an idea of the view, some body of water down there (river?)
2013-03-17	1245	17	Finished a long ascent, came out on brow of a hill, looks as if I'm heading down
2013-03-17	1246	18	PS: Just before I stopped for the photo, a young couple passed. Woman was blond with black tights, man had day-glo running shoes — I've seen those shoes before, but don't recall where.
2013-03-17	1300	19	Fellow just passed me, black braided hair, using Flash 62 pack. He likes it. {He passed me again just south of Dicks Creek Gap; he'd spent 20 minutes or so at the Deep Gap Shelter.} [This was my first meeting of BACKTRACK.]
2013-03-17	1315	20	Deep Gap Shelter — I'm plugging ahead
2013-03-17	1316	21	3.6 miles to Dicks Creek Gap, 8.1 to Plumorchard Gap Shelter. So 3.6 and 8.1... I'll figure that out!
2013-03-17	1317	22	Still ETA 4:00 Dicks Creek Gap
2013-03-17	1318	23	Shelter 6 hours from now... 7:00 PM? Let's go for it.
2013-03-17	1319	24	Recalc: It's a 3:45 PM ETA for Dicks Creek Gap
2013-03-17	1405	25	Spent ~10 minutes here. I was 1 minute past sign when I decided to backtrack. 2 self-photos, 1 without self. Big body of water. North GA or south NC — couldn't be the reservoir I camped beside on motorcycle trip; that was northern NC.
2013-03-17	1410	26	Back on trail to where I backtracked, so the Vista took 15 minutes. NE, I think. Glad I did it — it's the kind of thing that's on Sourdough's list of 10 things for a great hike!
2013-03-17	1411	27	Another water sack!
2013-03-17	1524	28	Dicks Creek Gap
2013-03-17	1547	29	Out of Dicks Creek Gap. Braided-hair fellow was there (Backtrack); gave me 2L of freshly filtered (Sawyer ceramic) water! Blackhawk Bob arrived; he's getting a ride with Backtrack and his girlfriend (BT's) to Hiwassee
2013-03-17	1624	30	Camping and water signs

Date	Time	Nr	Note
2013-03-17	1649	31	Cowert Gap 6:49, some campers here
2013-03-17	1650	32	4:49 PM, that is...
2013-03-17	1651	33	From Cowert it's only 2.7 miles to the shelter... 2.8 miles → 2.1 hours, so that's around 7 PM again
2013-03-17	1709	34	Think I've finally finished climbing out of Cowert Gap — a long one!
2013-03-17	1736	35	May have stopped climbing finally, just crossed a bald rock knob; there's another peak ahead but maybe I don't have to go over that. Another hour or 1½ hours to my destination.
2013-03-17	1755	36	Another crest
2013-03-17	1826	37	Plumorchard Gap — on to the shelter!
2013-03-17	1832	38	Arrive Plumorchard Gap Shelter

7:05 PM, Sunday March 17, 2013: Woah, what a day! 15.5 miles in 9 hrs. 46 mins. — Tray Mountain Shelter to Plumorchard Gap Shelter, through Dicks Creek Gap. Rooster (and his dog Bangarang) and Josh are here, each using a hammock; so far, I'm alone in this 16-person 3-level shelter!

At Tray Mountain Shelter, I slept between Ridgerunner and 14-year-old Alfalfa. Also there was Triple-Step, a spry 70-year-old from Connecticut. Blackhawk Bob, Bottle Cap and Fun Size, and Pilgrim were there too, and Duct Tape, and Alfalfa's dad... quite a crew. We had 6 in the 7-person shelter and there were probably 10 tents around.

It's now 9:21 PM at Plumorchard; I'm going to turn in. May have had too much coffee! Only 4.5 miles to the North Carolina state line!

MONDAY, MARCH 18, 2013

Date	Time	Nr	Note
2013-03-18	0955	01	Out of Plumorchard Gap Shelter.
2013-03-18	1005	02	Back at the AT. Glad I checked compass! In a gap, trail ascends in both directions and I could easily have walked SOUTH. Red compass needle clearly points to my right.
2013-03-18	1037	03	Misty, overcast. Oh, here come two guys headed south toward me...
2013-03-18	1038	04	Visibility about 100 yards, full rain gear on. Overcast, but it may just be dripping, not raining. First people I've seen since leaving Josh and Rooster at Plumorchard.
2013-03-18	1056	05	Blue Ridge Gap, ele 3020. Dicks Creek Gap 5.3 mi — back the way I've come, thank the Lord!
2013-03-18	1059	06	Entering Southern Nantahala Wilderness, in Chattahoochee National Forest
2013-03-18	1121	07	Stopped to shuck the rain gear; woman just passed me heading north; a short time earlier, 2 backpacking men heading south
2013-03-18	1136	08	Very pleasant walking along here; cool, very overcast, think it's dripping, not raining. I'm whistling "The Pearls."
2013-03-18	1137	09	Blustery cold wind; I wish I had my jacket on!
2013-03-18	1138	10	Actually, that is SLEET
2013-03-18	1220	11	Fuel canisters... Pleasant young day-hiking couple just passed me. Now on level or slightly descending section of trail; most welcome!
2013-03-18	1250	12	Nil
2013-03-18	1251	13	State line! GA/NC. Two photos, but couldn't get flash to work.
2013-03-18	1259	14	Bly Gap. Still sleeting, blowing cold blustery wind. Still don't have rain gear on.
2013-03-18	1322	15	Nice little sheltered area, book says shelter is only 1.6 miles from Courthouse Bald summit. Of course, I'm not at the summit yet! This is pretty tough: sleet, cold, windy, rainy.

Date	Time	Nr	Note
2013-03-18	1327	16	Maybe that wasn't Courthouse Bald. Trail is now descending. There's a higher elevation to the east, but guidebook says summit of CB is WEST of the AT.
2013-03-18	1328	17	Trail is on east side of ridge, sheltered by trees with long narrow leaves. Met man with bushy gray beard and red poncho, coming down as I was ascending.
2013-03-18	1421	18	Sassafrass Gap; going to check my map.
2013-03-18	1422	19	OK, it's 0.9 miles to the shelter, and 0.3 miles to a piped spring.
2013-03-18	1450	20	It seems almost dry along here, descending, sun was actually out for a little bit, saw my shadow.
2013-03-18	1454	21	Raven Rocks Trail
2013-03-18	1455	22	Arrive Muskrat Creek Shelter

End transcribing, Muskrat Creek Shelter, 6:10 PM. It's raining hard and cold!

Planning: Original was Plumorchard Gap Shelter → (16.6 mi) Beech Tent → (15.3 mi) Rock Gap Shelter. Now, Plumorchard → (7.3 mi) Muskrat Creek → (12.5 mi) Carter Gap Shelters → (12.1 mi) Rock Gap Shelter. So tomorrow it's 12.5 miles, then 12.1 miles. Forecast is clearing but cold (in the 20s at night; hope I get shelter space!). Maybe I started too early, or did not prepare for cold sufficiently. Outfitters in Franklin. Dinners: Monday 3/11 (Stover) Chana Masala (½; finished for lunch at Hawk Mountain Shelter); Tuesday 3/12 (Gooch) Zucchini Lasagne (½; finished for dinner at Low Gap); Wednesday 3/13 (Neel Gap) NO DINNER; Thursday 3/14 (Low Gap) ½ Zucchini Lasagne; Friday 3/15 (Blue) Wild West Chili; Saturday 3/16 (Tray) 3-cheese lasagne; Sunday 3/17 (Plumorchard) Spaghetti; Monday 3/18 (Muskrat) Spicy Thai Peanut. Wednesday 3/13 ate two Tortilla/PB-Nutella pre-made's for lunch and late afternoon snack (at Woods Hole) and NOT good — too rich, affected digestion (too much fat). Threw out 4 pre-made's at Saturday's trail magic.

This is TOUGH! I can see why 20% drop out at Neel Gap! Incessant climbing and descending — yesterday was a great exception, until Dicks Creek Gap. Plenty of ascent, but on a smooth dirt path and not too steep. Blackhawk Bob was impressed, as was Backtrack! I'm proud that I stopped at the VISTA — just what (as notes indicate) Sourdough advised! (I wish I'd chosen a less revealing T-shirt! Or had bought one of Seinfeld's Bro/Mansierre's! Well, I'm not alone among men my age with that issue...)

6:46 PM — there are now ~8 or more in and around the shelter. Bags are tight. Many of them walked up from Dicks Creek Gap today, having spent yesterday in Hiawasse, some at Budget, others at Blueberry (they raved about it). Well, I can't experience everything in one hike. Several beside me are headed for Franklin in a couple of days. I'm sitting in my sleeping bag with my back against the shelter rear wall, still cold! No bear cables here; my food is a PCT hang (pretty successful) along the path to the shelter.

Rooster, at Plumorchard, said Herb is still moving along and doing well, but Ol Man dropped out with knee trouble.

TUESDAY, MARCH 19, 2013

Date	Time	Nr	Note
2013-03-19	0833	01	Out of Muskrat Creek Shelter
2013-03-19	0900	02	White Oak Stamp
2013-03-19	0910	03	Chunky Gal Trail; fingers are so cold I can hardly work this Memorex recorder
2013-03-19	0933	04	Water Oak Gap; little bit of sun now.
2013-03-19	0951	05	Sandals just passed, partway up a hill... [inaudible]
2013-03-19	1016	16	Path on west side of ridge, ascending. Atlas and Scott passed, moving fast; they gave no sign of recognizing me. Also at Muskrat Creek last night: Mozyin (an older man with homes in MO and IN, who says he hikes slowly) [Note numbers jumped here; may have switched files mistakenly]
2013-03-19	1025	17	Shucked rain jacket, mittens, and wind hat
2013-03-19	1047	18	Self-photo coming down the trail
2013-03-19	1100	19	Deep Gap; a little parking area here. Going to check the mileage...

Date	Time	Nr	Note
2013-03-19	1101	20	81.4 to 85.4, so 4 miles in 2½ hours. Only another 0.9 miles to Standing Indian Shelter
2013-03-19	1122	21	Photo of trail behind me. Sunny and cool.
2013-03-19	1126	22	Entering Southern Nantahala Wilderness, in Nantahala National Forest.
2013-03-19	1138	23	Standing Indian Shelter
2013-03-19	1143	24	Pleasant walking, still quite cool, bright blue sky; cool without jacket but would be too hot with it. Up from Standing Indian Shelter.
2013-03-19	1230	25	A self-photo of my short lunch stop, swap H ₂ O bottles, in bright NC sunshine
2013-03-19	1236	26	Path has certainly ascended a lot but some is an old road, not difficult walking, getting up really high, cold breeze
2013-03-19	1238	27	Lower Ridge Trail
2013-03-19	1240	28	I'm on Standing Indian Mountain, ele 5498'! Lower Ridge Trail to west; 6.1 to my destination.
2013-03-19	1250	29	Passed Sandals, enjoying a snack by the side of the trail, a 50-60-ish man.
2013-03-19	1354	30	Very pleasant walking in bright sun. Bit of a headache, maybe due to no coffee this morning. I'm concerned about running out of fuel; need enough for dinners!
2013-03-19	1400	31	Just passed Sandals, sitting on a log working on his feet. Guess that guy I passed earlier isn't Sandals.
2013-03-19	1401	32	Beech Gap
2013-03-19	1527	33	Timber Ridge Trail
2013-03-19	1538	34	Arrive Carter Gap Shelter

The above transcriptions were begun at 6:28 and completed at 6:53 PM, at the Carter Gap Shelter, March 19, 2013.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 20, 2013

Date	Time	Nr	Note
2013-03-20	0855	01	Leave Carter Gap Shelter
2013-03-20	0953	02	Shot of spectacular overlook to E, town; just a landscape shot
2013-03-20	0954	03	Nice to have this recorder working again. This morning it was FULL (99 zero-length messages on Register C). I put it in my shirt pocket to warm it, removed batteries to reset it, and was able to erase all 99.
2013-03-20	1028	04	Pretty tough night last night. Mozyin and I had the shelter to ourselves. Nice young man, PHOENIX, came in but set up his tent nearby. Mozyin and I turned in early. I tossed and turned trying to find position both comfortable and warm. (Phoenix said the same; sleep in 10 or 20-minute pieces.) Ice on water when we arose. I have one trail snack and one dinner left.
2013-03-20	1044	05	There are little ice crystals along the trail, like stalagmites, little vertical cylinders of ice in clumps. Nice to have the recorder working again.
2013-03-20	1045	06	Ice in my water hose
2013-03-20	1046		Memorex recorder stopped working some time after note #06.
2013-03-20	1229		Left Fishin' Fred's trail magic site near Albert Mountain summit
2013-03-20	1305		Arrived Albert Mountain fire tower; photos of, and by, Phoenix (young man who tented at Carter Gap Shelter last night). The 100-mile point!
2013-03-20	1320		Leave fire tower (SPOT message sent; lunch; photos S, E, N, W, and others)

Date	Time	Nr	Note
2013-03-20	1344		Bear cables on left but no shelter sign and no shelter seen
2013-03-20	1435		Shelter (the 102 mile one)
2013-03-20	1503		Glassmine Gap, Long Branch Trail
2013-03-20	1620		Arrive Rock Gap Shelter

Notes 01-06 above, the only remaining Register C trail notes, were transcribed March 22, 2013 at the Budget Inn in Franklin NC.

THURSDAY, MARCH 21, 2013

Caught Ron Havens' 9AM shuttle from the Rock Gap parking area (0.1 mi from the shelter, ~9:25 AM) to his Budget Inn in Franklin NC (~10:30 AM). Spent 2 days there.

FRIDAY, MARCH 22, 2013

7:34 AM: Rats! The van to the free AYCE pancake breakfast was at 7:15, not 7:30. I missed it! I'll meet it at its 8:20 return and see if they'll take me. Stupid! I was sure it was 7:30.

3:40 PM: Just met Blackhawk Bob and Herb, as I returned from errands! Both had gone to Hiawassee and are staying here tomorrow. I finished a 23-page writeup of my AT so far, and mailed it to Helen (78¢); bought food at Dollar General, sub at Subway. Visited Outdoor 76 again, but nothing I need. This morning I walked to Sunset Restaurant, good pancakes, used my \$10 Outdoor 76 coupon to get the \$8.70 meal free. Now working on my pack. The new bag liner fits inside bag, and both fit (tightly) into the sleeping-bag stuff sack.

Called Fontana Lodge; 28th looks OK. Also, Budget says shuttle to Rock Gap leaves ~9 to 9:30 AM, after the 7AM free pancake breakfast!).

Plan: 3/23 (8.0 mi) Siler Bald Shelter; 3/24 (11.6 mi) Cold Spring Shelter; 3/25 (10.7 mi) Rufus Morgan Shelter; 3/26 (7.7 mi) Sassafrass Gap Shelter; 3/27 (9.1 mi) Brown Fork Shelter; 3/28 (11.5 mi) Fontana Lodge. [This plan was labeled "A," but "there is no Plan B!"] I have 4 dinners, 4 breakfasts, 4 lunches, 5 trail snacks, and some store food. The store food will have to make up the slack.

SATURDAY, MARCH 23, 2013

8:20 AM: Back from First Baptist Church free pancake breakfast. Pilgrim was there — he has a new Osprey pack but is pulling out with back trouble from the REI pack he'd ordered online. Herb was there, Banter (a new acquaintance), and "Slow but Sure" and "Because of Her." A worker lady's family is from Timonium MD and kids went to Towson State University! They will mail a photo to Helen.

I'm leaving 4 rolls of toilet paper, about 4 oz of hand sanitizer, most of a writing tablet, and 6 ballpoint pens in the hikers' box at Budget Inn. Dollar General sizes are too large for me!

Date	Time	Nr	Note
2013-03-23	0950	01	Leave Rock Gap parking area
2013-03-23	1151	02	Arrived Winding Stair Gap parking area; just passing across the road. Picked up 2 oranges from a trail magic box when descending to the Gap.
2013-03-23	1152	03	ETA Siler Bald Shelter 3:15 PM; it's 4.2 miles from here
2013-03-23	1200	04	Oh, and it's noon, so ¾ mile per hour means we're looking at 3.15 hours
2013-03-23	1250	05	Continuing the steady rise from Winding Stair Gap. Long climb, wonder how high we're getting. Winding Stair was at 3800'.
2013-03-23	1251		Memorex recorder kaput again
2013-03-23	1313		Panther Gap
2013-03-23	1405		Turn to Siler Bald Shelter. Met Floater (a section hiker) at the turn, waiting for his daughter. They're headed for the shelter.
2013-03-23	1420		Arrived Siler Bald Shelter; I got spot #7 out of 8.

This group at Siler Bald Shelter seems tight and not especially open to outsiders (e.g., me!). Well, I'm not sorry I didn't push on for another ~5 miles. I sent a SPOT message about 3:30 PM, and had two hot-dog rolls with pimento cheese spread for lunch — pretty good! Short mileage today, but according to "Plan A"!

My hike so far: 3/11 → Stover Creek, 3/12 → Gooch Mountain, 3/13 → Neel Gap, 3/14 → Low Gap, 3/15 → Blue Mountain, 3/16 → Tray Mountain, 3/17 → Plumorchard Gap, 3/18 → Muskrat Creek, 3/19 → Carter Gap, 3/20 → Rock Gap, 3/21 → Budget Inn in Franklin and 3/22 Budget Inn; 3/23 → Siler Bald Shelter.

SUNDAY, MARCH 24, 2013

Date	Time	Nr	Note
2013-03-24	0835		Out of Siler Bald Shelter
2013-03-24	0853		Back at the AT
2013-03-24	0915		A Siler Bald Shelter sign! Other end of the loop. Photo of Cinnamon @ Siler Bald, in mist.
2013-03-24	1006		Cross a dirt road, go straight ahead.
2013-03-24	1013		Wayah Gap (paved road crossing)
2013-03-24	1102		Wilson Lick Trail
2013-03-24	1124		Road (USFS)
2013-03-24	1147		Sign: Wayah Bald 1.8, to Sawmill Gap 2.2, Nan Lowe [?] 5.7 mi
2013-03-24	1240		Crossed dirt road
2013-03-24	1250		Fire tower
2013-03-24	1315		Leave fire tower. Photos, one with Cinnamon
2013-03-24	1343		Sign to Wayah Bald Shelter; ETA Cold Spring Shelter 5:15 PM.
2013-03-24	1403		Leave Wayah Bald Shelter! (What was that first sign? Confusing!)
2013-03-24	1445		Dicklog Gap
2013-03-24	1507		Nice trail now; cool but no rain, trail smooth, padded, descending!
2013-03-24	1550		Burningtown Gap (1.2 miles to shelter)
2013-03-24	1633		Cold Spring Shelter... FULL [the six-person 20's-ish group who'd almost filled Siler Bald]

MONDAY, MARCH 25, 2013

Date	Time	Nr	Note
2013-03-25	0715		Arise [tarp on ridge east of trail, just north of Cold Spring Shelter]
2013-03-25	0910		Leave Cold Spring Shelter area
2013-03-25	1130		Road, electric towers
2013-03-25	1300		Arrive shelter, lunch stop
2013-03-25	1340		Leave lunch stop
2013-03-25	1630		Arrive A. Rufus Morgan Shelter
2013-03-25	1642		Leave the shelter; it was empty and I considered staying, but decided to NOC it tonight!
2013-03-25	1704		Arrive Nantahala Outdoor Center (NOC), Bryson City
2013-03-25	1733		In Overload #2 building, bunkroom. Ready for a warm, dry night!

Tough day! Several inches of snow last night; knots frozen, afraid couldn't get bear bag down or tent ropes untied from

trees. Left with only $\frac{2}{3}$ L of water, fresh from spring, but couldn't use hose (iced up). Shelter kids out early, headed for NOC. I followed their prints in the snow. Peepah, the New York Long Island man, whipped by with his group of about 4, encouraging me to stop at a shelter if NOC seemed uncomfortable. (Later, at River's End restaurant, he came over, shook my hand, and said he was worried about me on the afternoon's steep, icy rock descent off the ridge! I had wondered if he was thinking of me! Nice fellow.) Well, Brad and Condor are now snoozing, at 9:25 PM — guess I should be too!

TUESDAY, MARCH 26, 2013

8:00 AM: Brad and Condor are down at the kitchen. They did Wayah Bald Shelter to here yesterday, and have a 16-mile day (to Brown Fork) planned today! It's HOT in this 4-person bunkroom but nearly everything dried. I had some CRAMPS in my right hamstring last night — did stretches this morning before Brad and Condor arose. It's SNOWING outside — ugh! Nice chat with Helen last night — AT&T coverage.

8:50 AM: Left Bryson City Nantahala Outdoor Center (NOC). When trudging up out of the river valley I was overtaken by Tenderfoot, who stayed with me because he liked my pacing.

[No notes taken today; with no recorder and stiff winter conditions it would have been tough. When I arrived at the Sassafras Gap Shelter it was totally full (~14), but Tallulah (one of the Stover Creek, March 11, Maine boys!) persuaded people to let me squeeze in at their feet. Brad, Condor, and Tenderfoot set up their tents in several inches of snow.]

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 27, 2013

Date	Time	Nr	Note
2013-03-27	0850		Leave Sassafras Gap Shelter
2013-03-27	1215		Simp Gap
2013-03-27	1254		Lunch at trailside with Tenderfoot, 12:24 – 12:54 PM., two photos of us.
2013-03-27	1400		Stecoah Gap; Crossed a major highway here
2013-03-27	1542		Arrive Brown Fork Gap Shelter. Only Tallulah was here but it soon filled up. Cold night!

6:30 PM at Brown Fork Gap Shelter: Yesterday, NOC to Sassafras Gap Shelter, today Sassafras to Brown Fork Gap Shelter. Morning: snow drifts to knee height, blazes nonexistent or hidden by snow, glad AT was broken by earlier departers (Tallulah and fellow Mainer!).

THURSDAY, MARCH 28, 2013

No notes; Brown Fork Gap Shelter to Fontana Lodge, Fontana Dam NC. Immediately called Helen to request her to send my Microspikes by overnight shipping!

FRIDAY, MARCH 29, 2013

8:00 AM, Fontana Lodge restaurant: I'm really worried about my right knee. Hobbled around, pain in soft tissue below kneecap. Wish...

Man in restaurant gave me a black neoprene knee sleeve (with a hole for the kneecap). I offered \$ but he declined. He also says that if I want to bail, Knoxville is the closest airport, and suggested talking to the Lodge shuttle person for the possibility of a ride. I'll call Dr. Jeff in a few minutes (it's 8:55 AM).

SATURDAY, MARCH 30, 2013

Woah! I just looked at my Fontana drop box and Great Smoky Mountains plan — I cannot do 15-mile days! 4 x BSLD is way too little food! I'd like to have 8 or 10. Well, still time to rectify the shortcoming. Jeff and Andrea's box will help a lot. [Microspikes arrived!]

Date	Time	Nr	Note
2013-03-30	0800	01	Test recording with new Olympus recorder, sent by Helen to Fontana Lodge! I sent the old Memorex home; maybe I can repair it.
2013-03-30	1053	02	Shuttle dropoff at Fontana Dam Visitors' Center, headed SOUTH to Route 28 where I'll call

Date	Time	Nr	Note
			again for shuttle back to the Lodge. This is to do the 1½ mile stretch between the highway and the dam, so I can start northbound at the dam tomorrow.
2013-03-30	1126	03	Walked down to the Fontana Hilton, had a nice chat with FLIPPER, an aspiring farmer who I met at a shelter a few days ago. Also met Camel and Pumpkin King, both headed north. Camel recognized me and called me by name, and said a woman named MeeMaw had trail magic for thru-hikers at the Route 28 parking lot.

[The above audio notes, from my new Olympus recorder, were transcribed Tuesday, April 2, 2013 at the Double Spring Gap Shelter, 4:30 PM.]

SUNDAY, MARCH 31, 2013

7:42 AM, in the restaurant: Spring at 3.3 miles...

Date	Time	Nr	Note
2013-03-31	0851	05	Lodge shuttle dropped me at Dam; heading north across it!
2013-03-31	0926	06	Deposited permit in box. Took morning pills; missed eye drop last night. Shelter is 9.9 miles; I'm heading in!
2013-03-31	0946	07	Plodding up steep, long ascent from dam to ridge. Very muggy and warm today, and overcast. Considered T-shirt and shorts but at higher elevation may want more clothes. Definitely sweating, but it's a nice day for hiking.
2013-03-31	0947	08	At breakfast I met Slow But Sure and Because Of Her — they invited me to sit with them but I begged off, hopefully with no hurt feelings. Also met Blackhawk Bob, taking a second zero for a respiratory ailment.
2013-03-31	1009	09	Self-photo with a view of Fontana Lake
2013-03-31	1103	10	Throne-shaped tree; 4.1 mile mark on map
2013-03-31	1127	11	Met Hammer, a nice young fellow stopped at a stream coming off the hill. I don't believe it's the map's "spring." I don't believe I'm at the boulder jumble and throne-shaped tree yet. [It was a throne-ROCK anyway!]
2013-03-31	1149	12	Trail took turn to left; a path went straight, maybe to fire tower. I'm not going to it.
2013-03-31	1150	13	I see the tower up through the trees, not far above me.
2013-03-31	1200	14	Stopped for lunch at a Benton McKay Trail intersection, sent SPOT message; 3.7 mi back to Fontana Dam trailhead. I figure it's 6 miles to the shelter from here.
2013-03-31	1210	15	Leave lunch stop
2013-03-31	1240	16	Sign to Birch Spring Gap Campground, 0.1 mi west; not going there. Gregory Bald Trail is 2.2 miles ahead.
2013-03-31	1301	17	Nice section of trail, leaf duff, smooth, couple of people just passed me; slightly descending, but I see a rise ahead.
2013-03-31	1330	18	It's brightening up, bit of sun, but can't see shadow yet. 15 minutes ago a Ridgerunner asked about permits, tall gray-bearded slender man in shorts, headed south. Said Mollie empty, next two easy.
2013-03-31	1400	19	Gregory Bald Trail; Mollie Ridge Shelter 3.1 miles
2013-03-31	1410	20	Just saw my shadow on the ground! Goodonya! Few patches of snow around, just a few square feet each, nothing serious on the trail
2013-03-31	1422	21	Photo of trail ahead, very pleasant now, headed north along east side of a ridge; sun's been out, very dry

Date	Time	Nr	Note
2013-03-31	1545	22	Arrive Mollie Ridge Shelter.

MONDAY, APRIL 1, 2013

Date	Time	Nr	Note
2013-04-01	0813	01	Out of Mollie Ridge Shelter
2013-04-01	0830	02	Good night last night at Mollie Ridge. Pretty warm; actually took liner out and did not wear rain gear. Turtletracks, Backtrack, Two Sticks (Herb), and DB Cooper/girl [NOT DB!] were all there. I had NO snoring problem — that may have been a weird thing due to cold.
2013-04-01	0913	03	Very pleasant walking, north with bright sun, nice shadow, cool (maybe 50-ish), rain and temp may have taken out the snow. Some SOBOs said first time they'd seen NO snow was Mollie!
2013-04-01	0919	04	Photo along trail, pleasant section, looking back the way I came
2013-04-01	1005	05	Russell Field Shelter; not bad, less than 2 hours. It's 2.7 miles.
2013-04-01	1225	06	Arrived Spence Field Shelter 11:48, 10 minutes for water. Had some lunch, send SPOT message, pulling out at 12:25. It's 6.3 miles to next shelter. I should be able to make that.
2013-04-01	1330	07	Couple of photos on Thunderhead Mountain, pretty impressive but I'm looking forward to getting down off it. We're at 19.3, to 23.8 = 4.5 miles.
2013-04-01	1347	08	That might have just been the rocky outcropping, not the mountain. I came to a somewhat higher outcropping 10 minutes later, 1:45, I'm now descending, I hope off T-head Mtn
2013-04-01	1356	09	OK — geodesic marker, finally at top of Thunderhead 5527 ft., bronze marker, PHOTO
2013-04-01	1428	10	Maybe have come to a gap, water sign pointing left but no GAP sign; maybe Starkey Gap, now ascending again
2013-04-01	1435	11	Geodesic marker 5,040 ft. Trail ascending, not nearly as rocky, pretty nice. Those rocky descents are tough on right knee.
2013-04-01	1552	12	Here's a gap. I'm heading up. By the map there's a 400 foot rise and just over the peak is the shelter. My ETA was 5:00 PM
2013-04-01	1624	13	Sugartree Gap, ele. 4435. Going to check map. Shelter should be at the top of the next rise.
2013-04-01	1625	14	Well, it's a mile and 500' elevation rise, so let's get cracking.
2013-04-01	1703	15	Roll into the shelter. Backtrack is here, Two Socks and Turtletracks are still out on the trail. I got a lower space.
2013-04-02	1005	16	Out of Derrick Knob Shelter
2013-04-02	1027	17	Beautiful morning, pretty cold. Fairly cold in shelter last night but water did not freeze in bottle inside shelter (covered with tarps). There was ice on the path to the water source. So far it's been nice today; hope it warms up.
2013-04-02	1150	18	Miry Ridge Trail intersection. Sign back Derrick Knob Shelter 2.7 miles, ahead Siler Bald Shelter 2.9 mi.
2013-04-02	1219	19	Noon, stopped for lunch at what I think is Buckeye Gap, couple of photos (one of myself), SPOT message sent, out at 12:19 PM.
2013-04-02	1256	20	Beautiful day, cool but nice when sun is on me. Cool breeze right now. Not a cloud in the sky.
2013-04-02	1410	21	Siler Bald Shelter 2:00 to 2:10 PM. Snack and switch water bottles. Pop-pop and Tina were enjoying the sun.
2013-04-02	1428	22	Welch Ridge Trail

Date	Time	Nr	Note
2013-04-02	1445	23	Two photos, south and north respectively. S shows bodies of water. N fir trees on hillsides. Young couple asked if I was "15," I said "no."
2013-04-02	1515		Arrived Double Spring Gap Shelter.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 3, 2013

Date	Time	Nr	Note
2013-04-03	0845	01	Out of Double Spring Gap Shelter. Two PHOTOS.
2013-04-03	1100	02	Top of Clingman's Dome Fire Tower! 10:24 Parking lot trail; Tina arrived 11:06. Original Olympus battery failed ~9:15 AM when I tried to record a note; replaced with Helen's spare on the fire tower.)
2013-04-03	1328	03	Photo of fire tower, small from here! Ascending now on trail to Mt. Collins Shelter.
2013-04-03	1411	04	Turn to Mt. Collins Shelter 0.5 mi; Clingman's Dome back the way I've come 3.4 mi. Just took photo, looking back the way I've come, to show the ICY TRAIL.
2013-04-03	1425	05	Arrive Mt. Collins Shelter. Nobody here! Two Sticks made it here yesterday, left a note for DB, Pop-pop, Two Socks, and me, hoping we made it over the icy mountain! I think they were all heading for Gatlinburg.

It's now 5:50 PM and the shelter is now pretty much FULL, mostly 20-30-year-olds. Wonder what happened to Tina? I last saw her on the descent from Clingman's Dome; she was having trouble on the ice. Tomorrow: Rain? Plan is Icewater Shelter (7.5 miles), then Tricorner Knob (12.6 mi) and Davenport Gap (14.8 mi??). The Davenport run is almost all downhill. Alternative: Ice →Pecks (7.4) →Cosby (12.9)→ Daven (7.1). I have 5 dinners left...

Tough day again today! Ice was treacherous but the Microspikes helped a lot. I wonder what happened to Tina — but I'm not responsible for her. Beautiful weather — mostly I did NOT wear the rain jacket. Bright sun, beautiful 360° views from fire tower. Tina and I tried my monocular, but we couldn't identify anything. Several people at the fire tower asked about our thru-hike (Tina's in for 5 weeks only), were very polite and interested. One woman said her husband started a few days ago and was at Neel's Gap. Several said the 13° and 18° were unusual! Cheoah Bald was mentioned on the S view board but no way could I recognize it from the snowy morning I photographed myself there. Tina looked for the little fire tower 5.5 miles in from Fontana Dam, but couldn't find it either. (She's 62, retired, husband a retired firefighter, not in shape for such a hike.)

Down from Clingman's Dome, I met a SOBO day-hiking group including a boy with a "Hereford Cross Country" T-shirt. I asked; it was Maryland! I told him XC was a great sport. They had no or little packs, and were headed for the fire tower. I'd been 1 ½ hours down from there, I told them.

There was a SOBO man at Double Spring Gap Shelter when I left; he told me of the ice, and said I'd be very glad I had the Microspikes.

THURSDAY, APRIL 4, 2013

Big Daddy's Pizzeria, Gatlinburg TN: Whew, what a morning! I decided last night to head for a pharmacy and/or clinic facility, rather than tackle the next sections with little/no professional medical care for my knee. Up at 6:15 AM, out at 7:35 AM for the 4.4 mile (plus ½ mile out to the AT) hike to US 441 for the 10:30 shuttle! Several others whipped past me — by my 45 min/mi calculations it would be close, but doable!

The trail was mostly solid ice; the Microspikes were again invaluable. I got to a fog-shrouded parking area at 10:20 AM... but no other hikers were there! I thought perhaps the 441 crossing was a bit farther along, and started up the AT-marked walkway.

[5:20 PM: Back at Room 114 of Motel 6, Gatlinburg, from Smoky Mountain Urgent Care in Sevierville.]

FRIDAY, APRIL 5, 2013

5:20 AM: I'm pretty discouraged. My doctor seems to think I should pull out, because of this overuse injury. He seemed surprised that the Urgentcare doctor didn't advise it. I have used my new Walgreen's ice pack twice, and kept the knee brace on last night.

9:51 AM: Discount Taxi Service \$80 to Knoxville Airport. Call him Sunday night 865-755-5143.

Naproxen #1 4/4 PM; 4/5 #1 AM, #2 PM

Back stretch 4:15 to 4:15 PM. Trolley to Subway on Historic Nature Trail, walked to Walgreen's (for groceries) and back to Red Roof Inn (Motel 6), Met Slow But Sure and Because Of Her at the Walgreen's (they have Yaktracks) and chatted with DB Cooper, the bearded man hiking with the gray-bearded Two Socks (age 55, says DB), at the Gran Prix.

Nice talks with Dasher and Andrea last night (and Helen, of course... though she bawled me out for not offering \$ to Greg, the driver to Urgentcare yesterday!).

The thought of dropping out is abhorrent to me. Maybe I'll try the 3 miles to Icewater, and back out the next day if it doesn't go well. It's wrenching to look at those future shelter names and to think I won't see them.

SATURDAY, APRIL 6, 2013

Naprox #1, 6:15 AM. 8:10 AM: Think I'll try walking a bit today. Knee still tweaks when I walk to the bathroom. Yikes, I'm really worried — maybe I shouldn't try for Icewater on Monday. Today I'll stretch, work on my pack, inventory food, and walk to the NOC. Mail story to Helen. Just checked these notes: They have no mention of knee trouble until Fontana.

11:50 AM: Back from slow walk to NOC and Walgreen's. Mailed \$10 to Audrey/Greg at Smoky Mountain Urgentcare and my story of the Fontana-Gatlinburg hike to Helen. Met Backtrack at the NOC about 10AM and we had a nice chat. He's back on the trail, caught today's shuttle. On my return visit to NOC (after Walgreen's) I bought an Eno Pro Nest hammock \$65 and Atlas strap system \$30. Now — to learn how to use them! Maybe Dasher has an Eno. Enjoying ice on knee and an iced Pepsi — almost time for my Subway sub!

Naprox #2 5:15 PM. I did a back stretch (all moves OK, even right leg-over that was troublesome yesterday), washed hiking clothes (except pants and briefs), took a nap. Wonder if I should have bought an enclosed Hennessey instead. This Eno will take a tarp cover, the mosquito net (eventually), and a pad or other bottom-warmth device. The Sunny's hammock was cold in Scotland.

If things go well, I'll get out of the Smokies in 4 days.

5:48 – 5:56 PM: Walk to Big Daddy's Pizzeria, River Street: 8 minutes! Herbivore 10" and coffee again. I like my new Foster Grant \$30 Titanium 2.50 reading glasses — threw out the tape-repaired originals and retired the frameless to backup status again.

Sure was nice to see Backtrack this morning. He reiterated DB's tale of the young man with a badly infected heel, "septic," I think DB said — would have called for amputation if not treated when it was. The boy's doctor said "Drop," but he said "No." Wonder where Blackhawk Bob is — probably everyone's ahead of me now — everyone I've hiked with, that is. HYOH ("Hike Your Own Hike"), as they say!

If I really feel good Monday, perhaps I could do Pecks (10 mi), Cosby (12.9), and Davenport (7.1). I have a morning box pickup planned at Standing Bear Farm, just beyond Davenport.

9:23 PM: I forgot to include, in my story of this section's hike, one nice item. Hustling toward Newfound Gap from the Mount Collins Shelter Thursday morning, I was passed by a nice young man with an Osprey pack/cover who asked if I was bound for Gatlinburg. I said "Yes, but it's going to be tight." I passed him as he removed a layer of clothes, then him me again. The next time I saw him was at the Gran Prix Motel, about 11:15 AM. I wouldn't have recognized him, but he welcomed me with a delighted "You made it!" He said "Lisa," a trail magic [??], had hot coffee and a ride available when he and others arrived at 441. He told her I was coming, and she said she'd come back for me! I hope she didn't, since I must have arrived in Gatlinburg shortly after they did. (He'd had a problem with his Osprey pack cover, and was helped at the NOC.) I don't know the young man's name. There was also a young couple, the man red-bearded, who welcomed me with pleasure; I believe they'd been at Mt. Collins too... but I may have mentioned them in earlier writing.

Returning from the dinner pizza place (Big Daddy's), I was greeted by a man sitting on his pickup's tailgate in the Gran Prix parking lot. We had a nice chat for 10 minutes or so — he was encouraging, telling me of a hiker who began 2 weeks after knee surgery!

SUNDAY, APRIL 7, 2013

8:10 AM: Naprox #1

9:33 AM: Getting pack organized, room cleaned up. Need to go out for some trail snacks and Scotchgard spray for pack (?), and AAA's (regular or LT?). Trim toenails today! Did back stretches 8:30 – 9:00 AM with no problems.

1:05 PM: Cooked and ate Denver Omelet (good — used less water than 1 cup!), trimmed toenails; walked to Walgreen's (cheese, snacks, AAA's), no Scotchgard @ Walgreen's or NOC or Bob's General Store. Nervous about tomorrow but maybe I'll be OK once I get on the trail.

5:50 PM: Naprox #2.

8:00 PM: I ate Andrea and Jeff's 4-serving blueberry cheesecake for dinner (good!) and now have only some milk, 4 doughnuts, some potato chips, sliced swiss cheese, butter, and Metamucil wafers left. The cheese/butter → lunches,

wafers discarded, rest eaten or discarded. DON'T FORGET THE ICE PACK! Coffee also goes into food bag.

MONDAY, APRIL 8, 2013

6:10 AM: Naprox #1.

6:40 AM: Food and clothes packed, one Pop-Tart pack for breakfast (all other non-refrig food was eaten last night). Donning my hiking clothes has actually made me eager to hit the trail again! After all, that's my business at present. Actually, my knee was hurting before the Bryson City NOC — I remember hobbling over to the restaurant with Condor and Brad. NOC to NOC... why not farther?

8:25 AM: Pretty much ready to go. Pack feels OK, so does knee. Have had lots of my own coffee. Sent Ron Brown a "progress" text message, got instant reply.

9:35 AM: Checked out, waiting at NOC for ~10AM shuttle. Some knee twinges; keep right foot straight, not pointed outward. Beautiful warm/hot day. Should be 2¼ hrs. to Icewater after Newfound Gap dropoff. I left \$20 for the Red Roof/Motel 6 housekeeping staff. Need to get more \$ from the pouch one of these days.

Date	Time	Nr	Note
2013-04-08	1050	01	Leave the Newfound Gap parking area
2013-03-17	1205	02	Seem to have reached some sort of a peak. Passing through pleasant woods on a smooth somewhat descending trail. Only been a little over an hour so I can't be anywhere near the shelter.
2013-03-17	1206	03	Some kind of cubical wire cage off to my right, maybe 3' on a side.
2013-03-17	1310	04	Arrive Icewater Shelter

2:52 PM, at Icewater Shelter: From shelter register — Wild Rain (passing through) 3/31; Triple-step, Pumpkin King, and Camel 4/2; Mallette 4/4; Pop-pop, Great Legs, Blackhawk Bob, and Turtletracks 4/5; DB Cooper 4/6. Waffles's today note is partly directed to Bottle Cap and Fun Size. A young woman here at Icewater is Candy Pants, who started 3/11 and was at Stover Creek with Two Sticks, Ol Man, Tallulah, and me on our first night out! Time for my coffee — nice to have a relaxed afternoon.

Candy Pants says Fun Size and Bottle Cap spent a week off the trail in Franklin (Fun Size's grandmother died) but should be along soon. I'm sitting in the bright sun on the rock wall in front of the shelter — very pleasant.

[The transcription of the above notes began at 4:40 PM]

TUESDAY, APRIL 9, 2013

7:30 AM: Naprox #1.

Date	Time	Nr	Note
2013-04-09	0825	01	Out of Icewater Shelter.
2013-04-09	0853	02	Pleasant section of trail, very warm, sweating. Had Microspikes on, took off, had some ice coming down from Icewater. Fairly level now, walking along eastern slope of a ridge.
2013-04-09	0900	03	Spectacular views to west now — see a long distance, town...
2013-04-09	0908	04	Southern end of Charlie's Bunion — sign says "Closely Control Children." AT takes a right — I'm takin' a right!
2013-04-09	0921	05	Self-photo looking back the way I've come, pleasant section of trail, on E side of ridge now
2013-04-09	0958	06	Beautiful day, spectacular view to west, town/city over there, trail is very nice, smooth and padded. Only fly in the ointment is the knee, and it's not giving me too much trouble.
2013-04-09	1117	07	View to W, big city over there, far left horizon, can't see too much
2013-04-09	1131	08	Spectacular view off to the right, though it's just of tree-covered mountains. Spectacular Smokies!
2013-04-09	1210	09	Stopped at a view, maybe the "view" on the map. Bulldog (tall, lanky man @ Icewater with the hearty laugh) and Hankman (short, stocky, looked like Turtletracks) were here, but they packed

Date	Time	Nr	Note
			up and left shortly after I depacked! Lunch, photo E, shiny stuff maybe a house, mostly blue rolling mountains
2013-04-09	1217	10	Lunch stop to 12:17, headed toward Peck's, still hoping to make Tri-Corner today
2013-04-09	1218	11	PS: I sent a SPOT message from this "view" location
2013-04-09	1245	12	What a beautiful day for walking, path is relatively level and smooth, bright sun from right casting shadow on trail to my left, beautiful day for this
2013-04-09	1248	13	Now smooth, wide (~ 3') slightly ascending path, shaded by balsam firs, very pleasant
2013-04-09	1336	14	Trail to Peck's Corner Shelter 0.4 mi E. I'm not going there; it's only 1:37 — cool!
2013-04-09	1338	15	Nice balsam smell along the trail — very pleasant!
2013-04-09	1414	16	Spectacular overlook to west, no cities but deep valley, water running down below. Rising up to another peak now
2013-04-09	1415	17	Geodesic marker (1963): ele 5,849'
2013-04-09	1705	18	Arrive Tri-Corner Knob Shelter, totally full, young kids, somebody has a guitar. Setting up tarp in woods; somebody has a hammock nearby. I'd like to try that but afraid it may be too cold.

6:10 PM: Naprox #2.

6:41 PM: Whew — a good day, and the knee did well. I had some twinges, but often was able to stride along (not normal pace, though — slower) with no knee pain. Now... to my Wild West Chili!

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 10, 2013

Date	Time	Nr	Note
2013-04-10	0800	19	Back on AT at exactly 8:00 AM; arose 6:00 AM.
2013-04-10	0801	20	Good night last night. My spot was level side-to-side but downhill to feet. I had to dig out some dirt under my back. Shelter very crowded, probably 10-15 tents around. Kids were laughing and making noise, but suddenly stopped around 8 to 8:30 PM: the place just went dead! Starry night; I had a 4:27 AM call of nature. Very pleasant.
2013-04-10	0802	21	Nice older lady, Tracy McG (named by her husband after Dick Tracy and MacGyver) [I think she was at Icewater, on the hill behind the shelter]; grandmotherly type, looks like Frances Barnes, hiking alone, headed for Davenport also. Very nice lady.
2013-04-10	0830	22	Encountering a fair amount of SNOW and ICE on the west side of this mountain; put Microspikes on 10-15 minutes ago, very helpful.
2013-04-10	0935	23	Rounded turn to right, began descent; spectacular view to left, roads, farms, buildings (nice view)
2013-04-10	0936	24	PS: I shucked the Microspikes maybe 15 minutes ago
2013-04-10	0953	25	Just crossed an open grassy field, views to E. Couple of concrete (maybe) strips, maybe 1' wide, in ground, wonder what they were for.
2013-04-10	0958	26	Nice section of trail along here, much better than the rocky stuff of the last half hour or so. E side of ridge, ascending but gradually, sun's beating down. Quite pleasant.
2013-04-10	1000	27	Yesterday was the first day I saw a flying insect! Again today, house flies. Sign of Spring! Certainly didn't see them in Georgia's snowstorms!
2013-04-10	1001	28	By the way, at Icewater I heard a woman say her group of 8 tried to stop at Woods Hole without canisters. A ranger caught them, and they persuaded her to give them a warning, but they had to go back to Lance. They went over Blood to Neels instead, hitchhiked to Dalonegha.

Date	Time	Nr	Note
2013-04-10	1026	29	Snake Den Ridge Trail, ahead Cosby Knob 3.9, back to Tri-Corner Knob 3.7, Mt. Cuyot back 1.9. [I missed the plane wreckage.]
2013-04-10	1102	30	It's so nice to be out here walking on this beautiful warm day. It's such a privilege to be able to do this. I'm still taking it pretty easy. Trail is descending but a fair amount of it is rocky so I can't really stride along.
2013-04-10	1112	31	Shot of a nice section of trail ahead; my poles should be visible.
2013-04-10	1150	32	Sign to Camel Gap Trail, ahead Low Gap 2.4, back Snake Den Ridge 2.3 mi.
2013-04-10	1235	33	Lunch stop 12:17 – 12:35. SPOT but no cell coverage.
2013-04-10	1308	34	Turn to Cosby Knob Shelter; not going there, but stopping to remove outer shirt and pant legs.
2013-04-10	1315	35	Back on the trail, in shorts and T-shirt!
2013-04-10	1337	36	Self-photo with knee brace
2013-04-10	1348	37	Low Gap
2013-04-10	1415	38	May finally have ended the 800' climb out of Low Gap (a young woman who passed me, Tumbleweed, told me about the elevation rise). On the other hand, we're coming to a corner — oh good, it goes down.
2013-04-10	1420	39	Well, that didn't last long — we're climbing again.
2013-04-10	1427	40	A man walking SOBO said I was the 59 th person he'd met (NOBO, I presume) on the trail today!
2013-04-10	1431	41	Shot to west, development, maybe a farm, good view
2013-04-10	1443	42	Another elevation maximum — local or global?
2013-04-10	1503	43	I think I've finally reached the top; I met the young woman (Tumbleweed) resting with a young man (Dennis).
2013-04-10	1515	44	Intersection with Mt. Camerer Trail; Davenport Gap 5.2 mi
2013-04-10	1540	45	From 3:27 to 3:40; obtained and treated water from a flow off hillside. Ice cold — hard to wait the 15 to 30 minutes the Aquamira requires!
2013-04-10	1600	46	Ten more minutes until I can drink this water! I'm getting kind of tired. But we're on the E side of a ridge, fair foliage so sun is not beating down as earlier. Finishing last of my day's trail mix.
2013-04-10	1626	47	Met Dennis and Tumbleweed. She and I have leapfrogged today. A bit ago I met Chicago (at Low Gap, then at Mt. Camerer — he urged me to go for the view but it was 0.6 mi... I said nix! Nice young man.) Earlier, was passed by "Better Man," his wife's name, he said somewhat apologetically!
2013-04-10	1643	48	Shot of trail ahead, curling around a slope, mildly descending, leaf duff, quite pleasant here.
2013-04-10	1650	49	Lower Mount Camerer Trail. Davenport Gap 2.9 ahead.
2013-04-10	1722	50	Chestnut Branch Trail; Davenport Gap 1.9 miles
2013-04-10	1742	51	Rounded a corner, can hear I-40 traffic noise (I think). Tumbleweed and Dennis passed me 5 minutes ago.
2013-04-10	1755	52	Turn to Davenport Gap Shelter. [Arrived there about 2 minutes later]

8:45 PM, Davenport Gap Shelter, tarp behind it: Tough, long day (10 hrs, 14.8 mi). A lot of ascending, especially up out of Low Gap. Beautiful summer weather, ~70°F, bright sun. Ate too little (~1500c) for BSL; when I got here, wolfed a Snickers, Swiss cheese, then a 2-person Lasagne dinner! Could barely finish it.

THURSDAY, APRIL 11, 2013

Date	Time	Nr	Note
2013-04-11	0755	53	Back on AT; out of Davenport Gap Shelter 7:53 AM. It's April 11, so I've been out a month!
2013-04-11	0827	54	Deposit Permit box, photos by and of Chicago (and his companion Private Snowball). I'm OUT OF THE SMOKIES!
2013-04-11	0828	55	Last night at Davenport Tracy McG arrived ½ hr after me — she'd stopped for an hour at Cosby Knob. I was also greeted very warmly by Salsa, another gray-haired lady who's traveling with her daughter Twix. She was very pleased to see me and asked about my knee. Very pleasant woman. I've met her before, but can't remember exactly where. Appears to be much younger than Tracy McG.
2013-04-11	0900	56	Two self-photos crossing the Pigeon River
2013-04-11	1014	57	Green Corner Road, taking a left (following Chicago and Private Snowball) to Standing Bear Farm
2013-04-11	1050	58	Leave Standing Bear Farm, no cell phone signal, need to let Helen know to send next box to Hot Springs
2013-04-11	1112	59	No success at reaching Alpine Court Motel — disconnected or bad number. Don't understand the problem.
2013-04-11	1122	60	Back on AT headed north. Very frustrating with that Alpine Court phone number
2013-04-11	1307	61	Lunch 12:45 to 1:07 PM. SPOT and lunch at trailside. There's a 2,600' elevation gain from Green Corner Road to the top — no wonder it keeps going up, we're nowhere near the top!
2013-04-11	1510	62	Arrived Snowbird Mountain FAA fire tower — all "No Trespassing," nothing to sit on; going to spend my 10 minutes here and clear out
2013-04-11	1516	63	Ah... got an incipient CRAMP in my left abdomen, maybe due to hip belt. Had them last night when I was partly sitting up in the tent. Bad business. I'm walking around, trying to get rid of the cramp. I'll walk all the way around this facility.
2013-04-11	1517	64	BTW, Tracy McG was just leaving here as I approached — we waved to each other. Aristotle arrived shortly after me.
2013-04-11	1523	65	Leave fire tower. Few photos W, S, one showing Aristotle headed N on the AT
2013-04-11	1533	66	My, it's nice to be descending on a pleasant trail, sure glad we got that climb and summit behind. Pleasant young man just down W of summit black beard; I asked if I could take photo of him enjoying the view. That's what the photo is!
2013-04-11	1650	67	Arrive Groundhog Creek Shelter, full of course. Found fairly decent place to set up tarp. Getting water now.
2013-04-11	2343	68	Huge thunderstorm here at Groundhog Creek Shelter, under the tarp. Pulled Questie in a little, scootched down a bit, pulled Arc'Teryx hood over my head to protect face from splashes. Lightning and thunder, heavy storm.
2013-04-11	2345	69	Early in evening, a young man in nearby tent asked if this was all I had, expressed concern due to upcoming big storm! He invited me to share his big nearby Kelty tent. Very nice... but so far, so good!
2013-04-11	2346	70	Wonder why this recorder has so much noise — electricity, or just rain on the tarp?

6:55 PM on my one-month anniversary! I'm tarping at Groundhog Creek Shelter, capacity 6! It's wall to wall tents, almost — I need to start wild-camping at non-shelter locations. Tracy McG is here; she arrived shortly after me. I need to make Walnut Mountain (13.1 mi) tomorrow, then 10.9 mi to Deer Park Mountain Shelter on Saturday. Sunday, 4/14/13, it'll be a short drop (3.2 mi) to my hotel (Iron Horse) in Hot Springs!

7:45 PM: Tough day! Huge climb from Pigeon River (1400') to Snowbird Mountain (4263') in hot sun. At times, I feared not making it — out of water, left hamstring hinting of a cramp, steps barely one boot length long, probably a 40+ lb.

Pack (after the SBF resupply). I thought I could stop and camp, then resume tomorrow. But a 2:00 to 2:10 PM stop helped, and when my planned 3-3:10 PM stop arrived I was virtually within sight of the Snowbird bald. I went on, and arrived there about 3:10 PM, just as Tracy McG was leaving (we waved to each other).

FRIDAY, APRIL 12, 2013

Date	Time	Nr	Note
2013-04-12	0815	71	Back on AT; out of Groundhog Creek Shelter 8:06 AM. Pretty good start, considering last night's heavy rain. I arose at 6:00 AM, nixing the use of rain as an excuse to start late. PHOTO of the dry leaves under my tarp site after I'd packed it up.
2013-04-12	0831	72	Top of a rise out of the Groundhog Creek area. Very misty, humid. Not all that warm, but I wish I hadn't started with legs and hiking shirt on.
2013-04-12	0843	73	Trail is very pleasant, though ascending. About 2½' wide, few roots or rocks, the kind of trail one likes to walk on. It'd be better if it were level!
2013-04-12	0844	74	Good night last night — lightning and thunder were exciting! Like it better than a shelter. Very nice of young man to make tent invitation!
2013-04-12	0845	75	I seem to have picked up a new group of folks who know me. Leaving Standing Bear Farm, a couple of fellows yelled out "Werdigo! You moving on?" Trim beards, 20s-ish. [Dyno-DNA and/or Dennis?] I didn't know who they were. A young woman with a great tarp pitch, Wooden Spoon, was at the site before Tri-Corner, waved to me — young men... I know Dennis and Tumbleweed, Dennis wished me a good hike today. When I got in last night someone at the picnic table yelled "Werdigo! You got here!" [Perhaps Dyno-DNA] Kind of nice. I don't know where my main cohort is: DB, Two Sticks, Blackhawk Bob — ahead, no doubt.
2013-04-12	0846	76	The young man who invited me to his Kelty started on March 2! He took a 10-day break due to SNOW.
2013-04-12	0949	77	Rube Rock Trail
2013-04-12	1008	78	Boy, this is certainly nice walking today — few rocks and roots but generally just very nice. Kind of trail I've always liked, smooth, padded dirt.
2013-04-12	1027	79	Brown's Gap trail magic by Apple, 10:10 – 10:27 AM. He's been here 4 days; does this full time (4 trails: CDT, Florida, AT, and ??). Said he heard people talking about Werdigo earlier. Photo with him.
2013-04-12	1115	80	East side of ridge, beautiful section of trail, very pleasant, easy walking, reminds me of why I love the woods; Vermont, and my bicycle trip from Cornell to the Adirondacks. Fairly long climb out of Brown's Gap, nothing like yesterday, though! Sun's been shining; shadow on trail.
2013-04-12	1137	81	Most of the morning I thought rain just blowing off trees — then light rain, now I realize it's SLEET. Another man, passing, mentioned the sleet.
2013-04-12	1205	82	Cherry Creek Trail. Sleet has abated a bit — that's nice!
2013-04-12	1212	83	Crossed Max Patch Road
2013-04-12	1234	84	Came out on grassy, very windy bald, guess it's Max Patch. Can barely see the next AT post in the mist.
2013-04-12	1242	85	Summit of Max Patch, send SPOT message, then get down off this viewless, windy place. Two photos by a man who was here.
2013-04-12	1250	86	Left summit. Wooden Spoon is there, waiting for Better Man and Smothers (his wife).
2013-04-12	1305	87	Nice to get down off chilly, wind-whipping bald. Moving N along E side of ridge. It's not sleeting, not raining, sun isn't exactly out but much improved conditions over the last few hours
2013-04-12	1344	88	Turn to Roaring Fork Shelter, 0.1 mi, maybe I'll go down there.

Date	Time	Nr	Note
2013-04-12	1405	89	Back on AT after lunch at Roaring Fork. Finished last night's lasagne, last tortilla of pre-Standing Bear Farm resupply. 4.9 mi to next shelter. Bunch of young people there.
2013-04-12	1434	90	Sun is out now, very nice afternoon, trail's pretty nice, North Carolina woods, still fairly cool, no precipitation.
2013-04-12	1510	91	Nice trail, dirt padded, 2 ½ to 3' wide, gently descending, few roots/rocks
2013-04-12	1603	92	Lemon Gap, ele. 3550'
2013-04-12	1611	93	Trail magic at Lemon Gap by some thru-hikers. Arrived Walnut Mountain Shelter 4:58 PM.

7:10 PM, tarp near Walnut Mountain Shelter: I don't think I oriented the tarp well; it was hard to detect the wind direction. Nice hiking day but for light SLEET until about 11:00 AM. Very overcast; no view from Max Patch. Nice trails — dirt, few rocks/roots. Time for dinner...

Set up tarp on windy ridge, think I oriented it wrong, very windy and chilly. Used sleeping-bag liner. MOONSHINER was here, from long time ago. I remembered and mentioned his boot problem, and he told me about it.

SATURDAY, APRIL 13, 2013

Date	Time	Nr	Note
2013-04-13	0823	94	Out of tarp site at Walnut Mountain Shelter 7:53 AM. Now at a little gap, beautiful pine trees, fire ring, great place to have camped last night! Wish I'd followed my idea of going a bit beyond shelters to camp! Met Crazy Horse, an older (~60) man.
2013-04-13	0930	95	Brief break for a second breakfast (first was just Pop-Tarts). Dyno-DNA passed, greeted me by name. I've seen him many times before and he's always known my name.
2013-04-13	1015	96	Stopped to fill Platypus bag #2 at marked spring — no pipe but nice clear flow. Someone had written on the wooden "Spring" sign "excellent." No trouble filling the bottle and I'm not going to treat it.
2013-04-13	1027	97	What a beautiful section here — there's NO understory, just leafless deciduous trees like a PARK, can see a long way up and down hill. Overhead clear blue sky, few clouds, very pleasant day. Trail is wide, padded, smooth. Moderately cool but sun is out.
2013-04-13	1112	98	Beautiful quiet slow walk this morning, under no pressure since only going 10 miles today — others have disappeared into the distance, hurrying to Hot Springs. Green ground cover, left small needle-like short plants, right taller (~1') plants. Walking alone, as usual. I think Aristotle is still behind me. Ground cover is all green. Not an evergreen in sight, azure blue sky, just cruising along.
2013-04-13	1200	99	Little pines now, nice to see, and ahead a balsam fir or two. Nice to see them!
2013-04-13	1222	100	Garenflo Gap. Hot Springs 6.6 mi, Deer Park Shelter 3.4 mi. Just had a chat with two pleasant men doing chain-saw work on AT blowdowns. Very pleasant men.
2013-04-13	1427	101	Depacked behind Deer Park Shelter — going to tarp it tonight!

5:05 PM in hammock (Eno) behind Deer Park Shelter (photos, one of me by Twix, Salsa's daughter). [Aristotle's Nichomachean Ethics story... 2007, starting fire...] Great hiking day after cool (mittens, wind hat, rain parka) start. With only 10 miles to cover, I took it easy. The trail was almost always packed dirt, 2 to 3 feet wide, largely free of rocks and roots — a trail runner's dream! Carolina woods were nice — still no deciduous leaves, so one could see down and up (the trail usually cuts across long hills, partway up) hundreds of feet. Brown dead leaves covered the ground. Well, time for some transcribing — several days! [(01) 4/9/13 "Out of Icewater..." to (28) 4/10/13 "Yesterday was the first..."]

SUNDAY, APRIL 14, 2013

Date	Time	Nr	Note
2013-04-14	0752	102	Arose 6:06 AM (no alarm), left site 7:48 AM, back on AT 7:52 AM. Is this Olympus recorder's memory really about full? Supposed to be using the 2G SIM card! I'll check it out in town.
2013-04-14	0753	103	Need to get calcium, renew Petzl batteries
2013-04-14	0902	104	Wooden Spoon and her dog, Guya, passed. Dog had panniers. Just rounded a corner and see Hot Springs and river down there. Looking forward to town!
2013-04-14	0903	105	May need new watch battery; alarm hasn't been working for two mornings now.
2013-04-14	0940	106	Left Pisgah National Forest, 2 photos by a nice young woman. Headed down Serpentine Avenue by mistake but was corrected by some AT'ers on the lawn of a big hostel. Down steps to correct street.
2013-04-14	0957	107	Seated at DINER! [Three-pancake breakfast, with orange juice and coffee!]

12:30 PM, Iron Horse Restaurant: Aieeee! No TV in the rooms! Salsa (the gray-haired mother of Twix) chose Alpine Court because of that! (I walked past it, and it didn't look so bad. Salsa wasn't impressed but valued the TV highly!) The Iron Horse is an old-fashioned hotel. My room (210) is barely larger than the double bed, though it is "en suite," complete with shower. For ventilation the TRANSOM opens with a lever! There is a TV lounge nearby, with refrigerator (put my ICE PACK into it!) and microwave. The pleasant hostess moved me from a large \$95 room to this \$55 one (neither has TV)... then, later, said I'd been charged only \$65 for the big one! (I wonder if that oversight was deliberate.)

5:00 PM: I asked for the original room and was instantly returned to it! (201, vs. the small 210). Goodonya, Beverly! Now am watching Fox News Channel in the lounge. Trip to Dollar General — milk, nuts, potato chips, Calcium, writing tablet, TP... there is a microwave here, but NO refrigerator. I got ice from the bartender and have my milk in the ice bucket. Think I'll retire to my room (next door to the lounge!). Tired, full of nuts and milk! What for dinner?

6:56 PM, Room 201, Iron Horse Station, Hot Springs NC: End of transcriptions. Going to leave messages on recorder to see what happens. Maybe I can upload them via USB to computer.

[THIS IS THE END OF NOTES WRITTEN IN YELLOW TRAIL NOTEBOOK #1 (starting when I left home March 11)]

MONDAY, APRIL 15, 2013

Food inventory, Iron Horse Station Hotel, Hot Springs NC:

Breakfasts: 5 (@~500c, including Pop Tarts)

Snacks: 5 (@~500-700c)

Lunches: 8 (Tortilla/PB-N separates)

Dinners: 6

Coffee: Lots of it!

How about night stops at: (4/16) Rich Mountain lookout tower, 8.2 miles; (4/17) Jones Meadow, 13.5 miles; (4/18) Spring 1.2 miles past Flint Mountain Shelter, 11.8 miles; (4/19) Meadow 1.7 mi beyond Sam's Gap [no water there!], 11.8 miles; (4/20) Spivey Gap, 11.7 miles; (4/21) Box at Uncle Johnny's, move on to 344.9 mi campsite (14.1 mile day) or Holiday Inn Express in Erwin (1.1 mi up River Road from Uncle Johnny's).

TUESDAY, APRIL 16, 2013

Date	Time	Nr	Note
2013-04-16	0804	01	Out of Iron Horse
2013-04-16	0842	02	Photo across French Broad River to Hot Springs. Nice river; I can see why it's popular for rafting.
2013-04-16	0912	03	Bunch of photos of HS over the FB River, can see my room window, see bridge clearly. Tried a x2.8 photo. Met a 70-year-old woman, Vagabond; she's hiked Springer to PA in a previous year. She took my photo, and I hers.
2013-04-16	0937	04	Temporary hiatus in climb; pleasant trail, 2 ½' wide, padded dirt, pines, deciduous, bushes with green leaves, moss at side. Sweating but wind cooling me off. Photo of Vagabond.

Date	Time	Nr	Note
2013-04-16	0956	05	Beautiful morning for hiking, a few rocks and roots but not many, like a walk in the park. Not too hot yet, high on ridge but haven't finished ascending.
2013-04-16	1003	06	Self-photo to show trail; it's been 2 hours out, pleasant trail, a little rocky
2013-04-16	1022	07	What a pleasant morning! I'm hiking alone, birds are tweeting, sun is out, Vagabond is way back (I think), winding around W side of a ridge. Lots of mountain laurel, so pretty well shaded, not as wide as before (1½').
2013-04-16	1057	08	Collected 1L H ₂ O without depacking, from great trailside spring
2013-04-16	1140	09	I'd come out on a POND, with a bench, when Little Brother and Big Brother appeared. They have Long Trail patches (2001 to 2006, they said). Photo of Little Brother
2013-04-16	1153	10	Sitting on a second bench, lunch (T/PB-N). Snap-top containers work well. Brothers couldn't find the "boxed spring." Sent SPOT message. Fish in pond (bass, BB said). Don't have far to go, so I can relax.
2013-04-16	1203	11	Out of lunch stop; 3 miles to Rich Mountain → 2 hrs, so 2:00 ETA
2013-04-16	1210	12	Walking north along dirt road; civilization for sure! 3 pickup trucks parked, boxes at a turnout (trash or hiker? I didn't check; probably former). Big sign...
2013-04-16	1211	13	"Fields known as Mill Ridge... habitat management..." etc.
2013-04-16	1222	14	Back on AT — Mill Ridge turn was kind of confusing; I went up to Mill Ridge Trail first, then checked compass and backtracked
2013-04-16	1225	15	Passed a few pieces of automotive sheet metal! Reminded me of the Hudson in "Deliverance," and the equipment near High Falls in the Adirondacks
2013-04-16	1238	16	Trail parallels a dirt road; SUV just passed, definitely out of the Smokies!
2013-04-16	1239	17	Road about 30' below trail
2013-04-16	1243	18	Came out on dirt, now paved, road; bridge over 4-lane highway; don't see route marker [US 25/70]
2013-04-16	1356	19	2L H ₂ O @ piped spring, 1 mile to Rich Mountain tower. Passed Brothers lunching in glade a little bit ago [Time wrong? Or note 20's time wrong?]
2013-04-16	1420	20	Roundtop Ridge Trail — another ½ mile and 400' elevation to Ridge [Rich] [Time was recorded as 1320 but think that was wrong]
2013-04-16	1440	21	Rest stop 2:30 – 2:40. T-shirt and shorts. Good climb Hot Springs to Ridge [Rich]!
2013-04-16	1503	22	Turn to fire tower 2:56, top of tower 3:03. See Hot Springs. Down road are picnic tables; doubt if camping is allowed.
2013-04-16	1521	23	Back on AT, headed N, looking for campsites. [Photos of Brothers, self, in tower]
2013-04-16	1549	24	Depacked 3:26 at tent site. Now 3:49; have tarp set up but not organized yet. [END OF TRANSCRIPTIONS: 6:22 PM]

[4:30 PM] I'm at the camping area just beyond the fire tower, but there seems to be a bunch of middle-aged yahoos set up here. I don't think they're thru-hikers. Well, my night's die is cast — the tarp is up, and I'm swinging in the hammock drinking coffee.

Tomorrow looks tough — another day of ascent: 2383' at Log Cabin Drive to 4750' — like today's 1326' to 3600'! And 13.5 miles, not today's 8.2. Oh well — it has to be done. Hope it doesn't rain tonight. Wonder where Vagabond is (and Tracy McG and Tina!). Well, time for dinner... Cheese Enchilada Ranchero!

Now have 5B, 4S, 7L, 5D. It's 6:56 PM... Woah, at Log Cabin Drive (8.1 miles), Hemlock Hollow Inn sounds nice! Single heated cabin \$25. Better than 13.5 miles and camping! Something to think about... After Erwin, my next drop is a B&B just past the old Apple House Shelter site (last item on my pocket map set!). ~ 392 miles. Erwin is ~342 mi. I'm now at 282 miles. Hemlock — that would be tomorrow night? I've only been out 1 night since Nero/Zero at Hot Springs! Better

to consider Holiday Inn Express at Erwin. It's getting cold in this hammock. Maybe I'll retire to the tarp. (I have to disassemble this pen and BLOW the ink down occasionally. The first Dollar General pen, used up in Hot Springs, worked perfectly.)

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 17, 2013

Date	Time	Nr	Note
2013-04-17	0815	25	Back on the AT; storms, lightning started around 5AM; delayed my start a bit, pleased to be getting out as soon as I am
2013-04-17	0816	26	Cool, windy, very overcast morning; sun will probably come out; if it stays like this it will be a nice day for hiking; cool, moderate breeze, no hot sun, no precipitation
2013-04-17	0820	27	This morning, because of the abrasions the knee brace caused to my leg yesterday (which I photographed this morning), I wrapped the Ace bandage around my thigh and calf before applying the knee brace. I hope that helps, and that the brace doesn't slip.
2013-04-17	0821	28	I've been drinking untreated spring water yesterday and, so far, today. The spring at this campsite is called a boxed spring; there's a board across the opening where the spring comes out of the ground, but there's a leak under the board so no pool has formed. I was able to get my bags up into the flow where it first comes out of the ground, and I'm pretty confident about it.
2013-04-17	0837	29	I've come down off the hill here, not so much breeze here, kind of hot. I'm not carrying enough calories in my breakfasts and snacks. I should double both of them.
2013-04-17	0842	30	Crossed a dirt road
2013-04-17	0849	31	Now we're crossing Hurricane Gap Road, Greene County Tennessee, according to the street signs here. Exiting Cherokee Wildlife Management Area, Cherokee National Forest and Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency
2013-04-17	0853	32	Photo of gravestone that's in the guidebook. Rex Paulford, 1920-1983.
2013-04-17	0900	33	Another gravestone, nice new polished marble. Jaelyn Mae Kelly-Morris, died in 1990. This one's on the east side of the trail. Wonder how one gets to be buried in this area?
2013-04-17	0935	34	Sure pleasant walking. Some ascending, which I'm taking very slowly. It's cool, very overcast, light breeze, trail is very nice, packed dirt, very few roots and rocks. Things have improved very much since the early few weeks.
2013-04-17	0956	35	Rain gear on; 1006 arrived at the shelter
2013-04-17	1037	36	Just left the shelter. There was a big container of peanut butter there. I ate two tortillas slathered with peanut butter; that'll be my lunch. Salsa and Twix were here yesterday --- they camped last night just beyond the shelter.
2013-04-17	1143	37	Little Plain Creek Trail, down in a kind of gap. I don't think it's Deep Gap yet.
2013-04-17	1144	38	Actually, yes it is! My ETA was noon, and it's 11:45. Two miles to a road... 2/3 of 2 would be 1 1/3 ... about 12:45 plus... 1:10 ETA the road.
2013-04-17	1233	39	It had been raining a little while, put my rain jacket on about 15 minutes ago. I'm descending, probably toward this road. ETA at some road is 1:05; I'll send a SPOT message from there.
2013-04-17	1306	40	Crossed the highway, right on my ETA! Stopped for a minute to read an ad for Hemlock Hollows Hostel but I'm going to pass it.
2013-04-17	1343	41	Sun's out a little bit, actually saw my shadow. Shucked my rain gear about 5 minutes ago. When I was coming up the hill from the road there were 3 men sitting on a log chatting. They said the virus is moving north, toward Damascus, probably carried by NOBOs.
2013-04-17	1404	42	I think I've come to Log Cabin Drive. The trail doesn't cross it and I don't see any more of those signs (they said mile marker 288.1). This thing says 290.2; oh well...I'm proceeding along, weather's pleasant, rain gear is off, feel pretty good.

Date	Time	Nr	Note
2013-04-17	1405	43	Just a few minutes ago as I was coming down to this tangency with the road, I saw my first red eft on the trail.
2013-04-17	1425	44	Crossed a dirt road. I don't know what it is, but to my right looks like a private home in there.
2013-04-17	1538	45	I'm getting a little tired. But it's very nice. I've been walking alone all day. A few people passed, not many. The trail is very nice, I'm cruising along at my usual 40-minute-mile pace, just taking it easy. I think I'm almost out of water, but there will be some soon at the shelter. I benefited from food left at that first shelter, almost full jar of creamy peanut butter; took some oatmeal packs that were left, and slathered a lot of peanut butter on my lunch tortillas.
2013-04-17	1640	46	Arrived Laurel Shelter, got water (twice!), leave 1710, got 3L water with me. 2.1 mi to Jones Meadow. [I quickly dumped 2 of those 3 L's.]
2013-04-17	1817	47	Trail to fire tower; I'm not going to it! 0.8 miles to go, I think!
2013-04-17	1817	48	At least I'm descending... boy, that was some climb! Well, the fellows who stayed at the shelter will have to do it tomorrow morning, and I won't.
2013-04-17	1853	49	Have 3L water from a spring marked with the blue "W" sign. Now I have to find out where these campsites are.
2013-04-17	1906	50	A little bit ago I came out on a road, with a big grassy field across it. Maybe that's Jones Meadow. Nobody else around; this is a blue-marked trail but I don't like the looks of it. I'm going back to the AT and camp near where the spring is.

8:45PM, tarp beside AT at the Blue trail to Jones Meadow. Rough long day! Lot of climbing. Enjoyed myself until I left Laurel Shelter — climb from there was tough, 5:10 to 7:10 PM, roughly. I hear voices, back at the spring, and sounds outside!

THURSDAY, APRIL 18, 2013

Date	Time	Nr	Note
2013-04-18	0728	51	Out of my informal site; I arose at 5:40 AM and turned off the 6:00 alarm
2013-04-18	0729	52	It's very misty and windy this morning. The mist rolled in in the middle of the night. Until about 1 or 2AM it was clear, very bright starry night, fairly warm. No precipitation. The little stream beside my tent stopped running some time in the night. I heard some people come in, after dark; I guess they're camping down near the spring.
2013-04-18	0800	53	It's getting a little more sunny, but the wind is still blowing quite strongly in the trees. There's a roaring sound up above. No precip that I've noticed. Been a long time since I've seen a blaze; wish they'd do a little more of that along here.
2013-04-18	0809	54	Whiterock Cliff overlook; I'm not going to it. A man who camped at the Laurel Shelter last night (trim silver beard; considered Jones Meadow but wasn't sure he could find it!) just passed me.
2013-04-18	0813	55	Blue-blazed trail, fairly heavily used, to the left; no sign on it. Must be the one to the Meadow. Finally, a white blaze on the trail, going straight ahead.
2013-04-18	0814	56	Another unidentified blue-blazed trail off to the left. Maybe it's the bad-weather cutoff to avoid the "rocky strenuous section."
2013-04-18	0816	57	Trail left to Blackstack Cliffs; not going there.
2013-04-18	0824	58	Jerry Miller Trail off to the right. "More difficult." I'm not taking it. There's a board nailed to a tree, it just says "NMSD..." Anyway, I'm heading along the AT.
2013-04-18	0826	59	Here's the left blue-marked bad-weather turn. Sign ahead says "Exposed ridgeline trail." There are wind gusts, but the sun is out and the sky is clear. I'm taking the ridgeline trail.
2013-04-18	0849	60	It's very windy up here, sun's out... hope we don't get any rain. Haven't really come to much

Date	Time	Nr	Note
			exposed ridgeline yet. I suppose it's just ahead.
2013-04-18	0850	61	BTW, D. B. Cooper wrote his name with a Sharpie or something on one of the stone steps up to here.
2013-04-18	0905	62	I'm descending; there might be another rise ahead of me. Boy, at 9:02 or so I almost got blown over. I wouldn't have fallen down the cliff or anything but would have fallen onto my side. Took a photo from one of the overlooks. Young bearded man went bopping past, suggested I keep the camera out because this was a great section. Glad for the occasional groves of mountain laurel that provide some shelter from the wind.
2013-04-18	0918	63	Sign, blue-marked, off to my left says "To bad weather trail." Offering another opportunity!
2013-04-18	0941	64	Some relatively level ground, leaf duff, dirt path, still a lot of rocks around. Imagine we still have some descending to do. Haven't come to the north end of the bad-weather bypass yet. It's nice to be on relatively normal trail again.
2013-04-18	0952	65	Just came to the north end of the bad-weather trail. It's funny; as I approached it, I saw a hiker striding rapidly maybe 30' to my left, and wondered if perhaps he were on the bad-weather trail!
2013-04-18	0953	66	I'm glad I didn't take the bad-weather trail, but that was a thrill and a half up there. Wind gusts, narrow ridge, it was a challenge. Of course now that it's over and I'm safe I'm glad I did it!
2013-04-18	1000	67	Now I have some serious descent into one of those bowl-shaped areas, with the trail curling along the west side of the ridge. Nice trail, occasional rock or root, sun out brightly now although there are some clouds. Going to have a bit of a snack.
2013-04-18	1001	68	By the way, this was the morning of my "grits and bacon" misadventure!
2013-04-18	1021	69	[Inaudible; wind noise?]
2013-04-18	1035	70	Path here; I think we're getting close to the Jerry Cabin Shelter. Wide, smooth, almost wheel-chair accessible. Wind is still blowing pretty hard, west side of a ridge. Jerry is 300 miles; I'm excited about that.
2013-04-18	1052	71	Into JCS at 1052, out at 1141. Two tortillas for lunch (PB, N). Knight Rider on trail and here at shelter; I told him what KITT stands for. He started March 24, likes to do 20-mile days!
2013-04-18	1226	72	Very pleasant walking here; wind is gusting, but trail is padded. Just came to Sarvis Cove Trail. [Much wind noise!] Controlled burn area; I've seen a lot of that along here.
2013-04-18	1251	73	Unsigned blue-marked trail going off to left; sky ahead is looking pretty dark
2013-04-18	1300	74	Just finished rough and confusing boulder section. As I was coming up out of it I met a nice group of clean and fresh day hikers. They were very nice to me. I've now come to an intersection with a dirt road. At some point I take a right and walk on the road, and I'll be glad to do it! Sky is a little more clear, sun is out, pretty bright.
2013-04-18	1307	75	Certainly nice walking along here. The road is now dirt padded with pine needles, huge tall pines on both sides, slightly descending, cool breeze, hard to think what else one could ask for.
2013-04-18	1346	76	Leaving the road, on the west (left) side.
2013-04-18	1348	77	Oops, 2 minutes later, back on the road. Guess that was just a diversion to get around some mud.
2013-04-18	1350	78	Got to Shelton Gravesite; there were a couple of women there. One took a photo of me, and I took a photo of one of them taking a photo of another of them. Departed at 1352.
2013-04-18	1401	79	Green Ridge Trail, yellow blazed.
2013-04-18	1455	80	Just finished a hugely long descent. I think we lose 900' elevation between the graves and the shelter. I'm in a little gap here; the trail begins to ascend out of the gap. I'm going to take a little bit of a break. People have camped here, but it's too soon for me to camp.
2013-04-18	1456	81	This must be Flint Gap; it's 0.7 miles to the shelter, 120' elevation rise, that's not much. I'm

Date	Time	Nr	Note
			planning to go 1.2 miles past the shelter; 48 min, my ETA for the shelter was 3:30 so 4:20 to the spring where the camping is.
2013-04-18	1527	82	Arrived at Flint Mountain Shelter.

6:17 PM, campsite 1.2 mi. N of Flint Mountain Shelter. In the register at Jerry Cabin Shelter: Salsa/Twix 4/17 (last night), Turtletracks 4/14, Blackhawk Bob 4/14, Thunderfoot 4/13, Pop Pop 4/12, Great Legs 4/12. Didn't see Two Sticks or Backtrack.

Overall, good hiking day! Got up at 5:40 and out ~ 7AM (check Olympus). Cool mist but no rain. Excitement of the day was the Big Firescald Knob ridge trail in a very gusty wind! A thrill and a half! At times I was afraid to move, needing all 4 support points (2 feet, 2 poles) to stand erect! (I never felt the need to get down on hands and knees, though.) The mist cleared before I reached the ridge, and the sun was out, but the wind gusts were severe. [END of entry written at the "Flint+1.2mi" wild campsite]

FRIDAY, APRIL 19, 2013

Date	Time	Nr	Note
2013-04-19	0718	83	Out of my wild camp near the spring, 1.2 miles N of Flint Mountain Shelter. I arose about 5:30 AM.
2013-04-19	0719	84	Good night last night. I got in early enough to set up the hammock and enjoyed coffee and my Wild West Chili while sitting in it. Getting water from the little spring down the hill was a bit of a chore but I used the cup and pans to collect it and it went OK. I treated it, after seeing a salamander go into the water just upstream from my collection point. I'm worried about my knee; funny pains out of it yesterday, maybe arising from that ridge climb on Firescald or whatever that mountain was. I still have 30-some miles to go before I get to Erwin.
2013-04-19	0732	85	Lots of little rivulets running across the trail this morning, maybe the effect of the little rain we had last night. I sure didn't see any water between Flint and the spring where I camped. The meadow where I plan to camp tonight is 4 miles beyond the Hogback Shelter and there's no water shown there or anywhere else between Hogback and the meadow; maybe I'll just have to carry a couple of liters from Hogback.
2013-04-19	0802	86	Just crossed Route 212. Picked up a couple of cards for Appalachian Transport Service, "Your ride can be ready in just minutes.! Kind of tempting; little tweak out of my knee again when I stopped to get that card out of its plastic bag.
2013-04-19	0823	87	Crossed another road; now going over a footbridge over a beautiful little stream.
2013-04-19	0846	88	Came to what I think is "The Cascade" in the book; water flowing over broad sheets of rock, to my left.
2013-04-19	0916	89	Still ascending; we may be beyond the Cascade now. It's starting to rain but I haven't put my rain gear and pack cover on yet.
2013-04-19	0957	90	Seem to have reached some kind of at least local maximum. That was a long ascent. Couple of young fellows just passed me, seems like German accents. Very friendly.
2013-04-19	0958	91	Put my rain jacket on about 10 minutes ago.
2013-04-19	1000	92	A white-tailed deer just bounded across the trail, left to right. I also saw two bunnies as I descended to the Jones Meadow trail; really the only wildlife I've seen.
2013-04-19	1028	93	Just switched water bottles; urinated, quite yellow. Some juicy farts — have to cut back on (or out of) that Wild West Chili.
2013-04-19	1029	94	BTW, I figure 2 ½ to 3 hours to the shelter.
2013-04-19	1038	95	Man, I'm beginning to think this thing violates my principle that nothing can ascend forever. It just keeps going up and up. I'm really tired — feel as if I could go to sleep.

Date	Time	Nr	Note
2013-04-19	1056	96	Another (at least local) maximum; there's a fellow setting up a tarp on this windswept ridge.

SATURDAY, APRIL 20, 2013

Date	Time	Nr	Note
2013-04-20	0940	97	Arrived at turn to shelter 1300 exactly, yesterday afternoon, depacked there about 1303. Rough night, cold, felt awful. Stayed at shelter this morning and got out late. Back on AT headed north at 9:40AM.
2013-04-20	1015	98	Well, things look and feel a little better this morning. Man, I sure was down yesterday. Soaking wet, freezing, shivering, cramps, headache... I didn't even think I could make it to Erwin, or even to the road crossing for a shuttle or pickup. It's cold, 26F this morning, one person reported. Still have my wind hat, mittens, and rain jacket on. But trail's pleasant along here, flat dirt, bright sun, so I'm feeling a little bit better.
2013-04-20	1116	99	Sam's Gap after picking up some Trail Magic food (two oranges, an apple, some dental floss). Discovered I left my rain pants hanging on the shelter logs; guess I'll have to pick up some more in Erwin.
2013-04-20	1142	100	It's turned into a beautiful day for hiking. I ascended up out of Sam's Gap and am descending on a fairly nice dirt path, woods all around, still no deciduous leaves out. Bummer about my Campmor pants but they were sort of on their way out anyway. Helen must have bought them for me when I weighed 230 lbs. Tears in legs... I don't regret it all that much.
2013-04-20	1235	101	Took a little break at the top of a climb 12:30-:35. This might be the meadow where I planned to camp last night. Based on time it's taken me to get here; lots of camping sites, relatively flat. I had an orange and sent a SPOT message here. Bomber passed me just before we got to the top; nice fellow.
2013-04-20	1249	102	Photos of Big Bald, where I'm going, and (off to the right) buildings on the side of a hill. Maybe a vacation area or something.
2013-04-20	1430	103	Still ascending Big Bald. Wiki just passed me, the young man who invited me to have a beer with him and his friends at Hot Springs. He contracted the virus and had to go into Erwin for medical attention and is just now getting back to the trail.
2013-04-20	1607	104	Reached the summit of this bald about 3:45 and left it about 4:00. Medicine Man and Poof were there, and took my photo. I took a few photos, and then Wander Woman and Clark Kent arrived (they'd been tenting at the shelter last night) and I took their photo. Took some other photos, including the cabins I'd photographed about 1250. Spectacular views; WW said better than Max Patch (of course I got no view at all there!). This was spectacular in all directions.
2013-04-20	1620	105	Two photos looking back toward the bald, due W. Wind might have bumped the first one.
2013-04-20	1626	106	Pretty nice walking along here. There are Medicine Man and Poof ahead. Walking across a high-elevation field, not much below the level of the bald. Grassy field, path very sunny and pleasant, easy walking. Windy and cold, but otherwise very pleasant walking.
2013-04-20	1645	107	Turn to the shelter; I'm not going down to it.
2013-04-20	1733	108	Summit of Little Bald.
2013-04-20	1735	109	Shot looking N from just north of the Little Bald summit.
2013-04-20	1855	110	Depack at Whistler's Gap.

SUNDAY, APRIL 21, 2013

Date	Time	Nr	Note
2013-04-21	0748	111	Out of my Whistler's Gap site

Date	Time	Nr	Note
2013-04-21	0838	112	Over High Rock; left site again 8:00 after getting 2L water from a nice spring. Said goodbye to Wander Woman, real nice lady. Met a nice man (Aquaman); he passed me as we were heading up to High Rock.
2013-04-21	0903	113	Last night was a good night at Whistler's Gap. It was cold --- I actually slept in my rain jacket (and bag liner, of course). But it was a bright starry night; I could see the stars outside of the tarp. My head was slightly downhill from my feet, but that didn't cause any problem. Of course I rolled over many times, but didn't actually wake up until about 5:40 AM. I didn't have any dinner last night, or any lunch yesterday --- just didn't feel like it. I did finish up some trail snacks, inside the tent.
2013-04-21	0904	114	I hung the food bags again, as I had at the site beyond Flint Mountain, just about 4' above the ground, hanging from a little tree just to keep ground animals from them. No problem. I even had some little bags of trail snacks inside the tarp --- peanuts, chocolate --- on the ground, with no problem. I finished them up.
2013-04-21	0905	115	By the way, apart from my head being slightly lower than my feet when the tarp was oriented properly with respect to the wind, that was pretty much an ideal campsite. Clear, flat ground (with the previous exception), underneath some kind of big fir tree, a log that was comfortable to sit on if I'd wanted to (except that I was so cold when I got in that I just crawled into the bag); very nice site. Water source was not too far away and looked good (I'm not going to treat it).
2013-04-21	0933	116	I've come to a big grassy area on my left; looks like residential-lawn grass. Wonder what it is.
2013-04-21	0940	117	Spivey Gap sign, elevation 3200'. I can hear the road a short distance away; a car just went by.
2013-04-21	1025	118	Think I've finished the climb up out of Spivey Gap. Nice path along here. Just as I reached the top there was a small stone beside a tree, a foot high and 8" wide, looked like a small gravestone, at the base of a tree. Somebody had written on it, with a Sharpie, "Here lies Norovirus."
2013-04-21	1048	119	Crossed the dirt road. My ETA at No Business Knob Shelter is 1:00 PM
2013-04-21	1112	120	I've seen 2 people on the trail this morning, since I left Whistler's Gap about 3 hours ago. Aquaman, and one other who passed me.
2013-04-21	1243	121	Arrived No Business Knob Shelter. I'm going to make a little lunch and send a SPOT message, then head out. [Two young women passed me around noon, separately. I passed one of them, working on her pack at trailside, just south of No Business. Never saw her again and don't know where she went.]
2013-04-21	1300	122	From the No Business Knob Shelter register: Mozyin 4/10 (staying the night before hike to Erwin), Backtrack 4/16 (stopping by but going to outskirts of town); that's all except for very recent ones I've met. Hikerboy and Chicago (today, 4/21/13).
2013-04-21	1312	123	Out of the No Business Knob Shelter. There were a lot of references in the register to vomiting; I guess the virus was especially bad here. I left a little note explaining that I was bailing at Erwin.
2013-04-21	1412	124	A photo of what might be Erwin, down through the trees. N by the compass.
2013-04-21	1514	125	Man, another ascent here. This thing just finds every single knob to rise over! I thought we were going down into Erwin. Still no cell coverage; Emergency Calls Only.
2013-04-21	1630	126	Photo looking east of the Nolichucky River, and a railroad bridge.
2013-04-21	1702	127	Came out on River Road near Uncle Johnny's. Now I have to figure out how to get to that Holiday Inn Express. I think I maybe should have turned right instead of left.
2013-04-21	1720	128	Back at Uncle Johnny's. I went up the wrong road, Ukasa Hill Road or something, and then called Tim at Holiday Inn. Back at River Road, I think I'm going in the right direction now.

MONDAY, APRIL 22, 2013

Date	Time	Nr	Note
2013-04-22	0750	129	Just ran into Chicago and Private Snowball at the Holiday Inn Express. Of course they're continuing their hike, while I'm bagging it. We said our goodbye's and farewells. Nice young fellows.