

March 2022

*Newsletter of the*  
**MASON-DIXON TRAIL**



**SYSTEM, INC.**

## Your “Newly-Inaugurated Presidents” Message

### Dogs and Pepper Spray

That’s all you need to hike, right? Well, basically that’s what a couple of off-duty law enforcement officers told me when we crossed paths in a state park recently. They, too, hiked with a Catahoula so of course we talked dogs. And, yes, I do carry pepper spray. But, no, I am not a fearful hiker.

That being said, the longest running thread on a hiker’s forum was “Creepy Guys on the Trail”. There was discussion of carrying guns. Which, in my humble opinion, opens up another set of problems. Not to mention the legality of carrying concealed on public lands. Hey did you know that bear spray is illegal to carry on trails in California? Yup, it’s considered a weapon. Well, umm...yeah...

Anyways, one woman on this forum insisted on hiking armed. The banter went back and forth. Finally, another woman wrote: “If you are THAT scared that you have to bring your gun into the woods: stay home! We are afraid of you!”

Nuff said.

A few years ago, my family figured out that I was telling little white lies. “Who are you going hiking and camping with?” my hubby would say. “Oh I asked Sandy.” I would answer. I have two Sandy friends so technically I would ask one or the other. But in the end I enjoy my adventures solo. So they laid down the law: “You will have to carry a handgun!”

Oh please! Well, no one in my family goes beyond shotguns and rifles, which we have a few. So I was admonished to seek handgun instruction elsewhere. One of my clients when I was in veterinary practice is a retired state trooper. So Dave took me under his wing one day. By the end of the afternoon, I was OK shooting a nice pink-handled piece but there was one problem. I looked at my instructor and said: “Dave, I just can’t shoot a person. I just can’t pull that trigger.” He looked at me quizzically. So I added, truthfully, “I’d rather CUT them!” Yup, he’s seen me do aggressive surgery. So his reply was, also truthfully as only a law enforcement officer could be, “You knife people SCARE me!”



So there you have it. When you meet me on the trail, it will not be just Ruthie you see. It will be the dynamic duo Ruthie-n-Targa. Probably Targa first. She's friendly, but don't pop out from behind trees like a furtive trail runner! She's trail-savvy, can track back with her internal gps, waits at the top of a switchback for all seven hikers to ascend, and with her strong doggy "pack instinct", has all our backs as we backpack into the wilderness. No hiker left behind. No varmints allowed in the campsite.

Best of all, I can hike my own hike every time. She allows me to go at my own rambling leisurely pace.

How did she get such a weird name? Targa. It's a handgun.

We both hope to meet you and your dogs on the trail!

Happy hiking!



*Walkway completed on the new trail by Vulcan*

All are invited to the next meeting of the Mason Dixon Trail System!

Sunday March 13<sup>th</sup>. Meet at 9:30am at the Havre de Grace Ambulance Corps. 1601 Level Road, Havre de Grace, MD.

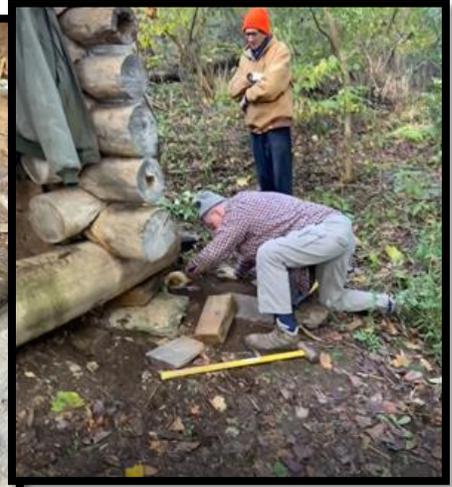
We will then hike the new Vulcan Quarry section of our trail.

At 11:30, we will enjoy lunch courtesy of Vulcan Quarry.

The business meeting will be conducted as we eat lunch.

This is the day we "spring forward" so be sure to set your clocks ahead!

**Men at work** The boy scout shelter in York County was in grave disrepair. Not to worry: our fearless crew plunged into the project and did an amazing makeover: floor, foundation support, roof. From the parking lot uphill from Lock 12 follow the white blazed trail.



Entirely new floor!  
Entirely new roof!



On an old but cozy shelter.

The hardworking put  
Finishing touches...



## Trail Updates Eastern Sector

The Eastern Section of the M-DT has continued to benefit from the dedicated efforts of our own volunteers and of other trail groups. We thank these folks and organizations for making the M-DT a great place to hit the trails!

- Jake and Dave Landon have been doing frequent upkeep on trail sections between Elkton and Newark (Iron Hill).
- Reece Tippett and Pete McLaughlin recently did a short re-route, reblazing, and trimming in Perryville Community Park.
- Volunteers from the Wilmington Trail Club, in coordination with the City of Newark Adopt-a-Trail, have continued their high level of activity maintaining the M-DT through the parks and woodlands of Newark. A total of 130 hours of time was reported by this group for 2021.
- The Chester County Trail Club confirmed in January that they have been maintaining and will continue to maintain the easternmost portion of the M-DT between Cossart Road and the trail's eastern terminus.
- And, an encouraging new development: the M-DTS has recently had discussions with Kennett Township and the Land Conservancy for Southern Chester County to move a section of the trail off Burnt Mill Road and onto trails in newly adjacent woodlands and fields that have recently been placed in preservation. We hope to finalize this arrangement and move the trail in 2022.



Jake Landon and his leafblower clearing the path in Iron Hill.



Mike Hall, doing what he does best: slaying trees in the Maryland sector.





*Roxanne loves the boulder field near Loch Haven*

## Hiking With Osteoarthritis

Have you ever told yourself:

“I’m too old/arthritis/stiff to keep hiking.

No! No! No!

As a matter of fact, arthritis sufferers who continue to hike reap amazing health benefits. This is according to Dr. Alyssa Kuhn, a specialist in osteoarthritis. First of all, walking on



*Arne needs balance down in Oakland Run*

uneven terrain is more

beneficial to your joints than walking on a flat surface. This was proven in studies where arthritis sufferers are made to walk on a cobblestone mat for an hour three times a week. The reason is this: when you walk on a flat predictable surface, you are stressing the same parts of your ankle, knee, hip and spine. This leads to fatigue and pain. The researchers also found out that these people on the cobblestone mat significantly improved their balance as they used more muscles in this effort. In addition, their blood pressure lowered down nearer to normal as compared to the folks who walked on flat surfaces.

Dr. Kuhn described the legs of a hiker as a team of muscles. When on uneven ground, you are using different muscles as you navigate roots, boulders, blowdowns. Eventually, your muscles become stronger and you become more balanced. What’s that mean? Your joints are healthier!

Another side benefit can be weight loss. You may be interested to know that the inflammatory substances in your body are found in adipose tissue. Less fat, less pain. This is obviously beneficial to arthritis sufferers. When hiking on uneven terrain, your body uses 28% more energy than when on flat land. Hips work 60% more and knees work 25% more when on natural terrain vs flat surfaces. If you are experiencing joint pain while hiking on rough trails, you may need to strengthen your muscles.



*Gary enjoys Hotdog Hollow, down in the Cuffs Run ravine This is arguably the most challenging terrain on the MDT.*

Pain is not purely physical. The nervous system is highly in tune with our emotional well-being. Negative emotions can increase levels of inflammation which in turn increases levels of pain. Nature has healing properties on many conditions including depression and anxiety. So another benefit to hiking is the pure joy of being outdoors. Stress and anxiety dissipate as does some pain.

So you see, there are three ways hiking benefits the arthritis sufferer: improving balance, burning energy, and raising your spirits. As Roxanne, our trailrunner here says: "I can be stiff when I get up but as I go out and hike/ run on trail it all goes away . Endorphins kick in 😊"  
No excuses; get out and hike!



*Roxanne likes to climb via the rebars. Targa eschews them. Peavine Island*

This monologue was inspired by an article in the eleventh issue of Senior Hiker by Alyssa Kuhn

#### OFFICERS

President: Ruthie Franczek  
6827 Underwoods Cr Rd  
Smyrna, DE 19977  
3029632-0150  
[ruthiefranczek@Hotmail.com](mailto:ruthiefranczek@Hotmail.com)

Vice President  
Volunteer Needed  
[vicepresident@mason-dixontrail.org](mailto:vicepresident@mason-dixontrail.org)

Treasurer  
Volunteer needed  
[treasurer@mason-dixontrail.org](mailto:treasurer@mason-dixontrail.org)

Website Coordinator  
John Beatty  
[Jbeatty@gmail.com](mailto:Jbeatty@gmail.com)

Newsletter Secretary  
Ruthie Franczek  
[ruthiefranczek@hotmail.com](mailto:ruthiefranczek@hotmail.com)

Director – Pennsylvania  
Jim Hooper  
[j.e.hooper@ieee.org](mailto:j.e.hooper@ieee.org)

Director – Maryland  
Mike Hall  
[mddirector@mason-dixontrail.org](mailto:mddirector@mason-dixontrail.org)

Director – Delaware  
Mike Ott  
[mikeott52@aol.com](mailto:mikeott52@aol.com)

Membership Secretary  
Linda Lambert  
[ljlmdts@gmail.com](mailto:ljlmdts@gmail.com)

Trail Coordinator – Western Section  
Roxanne Strine  
[riverdawgmd@gmail.com](mailto:riverdawgmd@gmail.com)

Trail Coordinator – Central Section  
Mike Hall  
[centralcoordinator@mason-dixontrail.org](mailto:centralcoordinator@mason-dixontrail.org)

Trail Coordinator – Eastern Section  
Peter McLaughlin  
[easterncoordinator@mason-dixontrail.org](mailto:easterncoordinator@mason-dixontrail.org)



Extra news just for fun:  
Nineteen year old Gavin Druck has been hard at work training on the M-DT for an epic adventure. He will soon begin journeying north on the Appalachian Trail. Stay tuned!