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BMTA Officers 2014-2015

President:	Bob Ruby
Vice President:	Tom Keene
Secretary:	Joy Forehand
Treasurer:	Margaret Evans
GA M/C:	Barry Allen
TN/NC M/C:	Tracy Sheffield
Smokies Coord:	Dick Evans
Hiking Director:	Ralph Heller
Membership/Store:	Ken Cissna
Publicity:	George Owen
Conservation:	Steve Bayliss
Past President:	David Blount
State Rep GA:	Mark Yost
State Rep TN/NC:	Rick Harris



BMTA Headquarters

Benton MacKaye Trail Association



VOLUME 32, ISSUE 1

JANUARY 31, 2015

BMTA President's Column - Bob Ruby

Policy on Sympathy Expressions by BMTA



I was going to write my monthly column encouraging you all to get out on the trail during the crisp, beautiful days of late winter and early spring, and that is still worth doing.

But I feel another subject also needs to be shared. BMTA has recently learned of a number of surgeries, injuries, illnesses and deaths of BMTA members or their immediate families. A lot of this is just the natural result of aging by many of us, and our increasing awareness of such instances is the result of better communications over the web. My guess is that we will have 10-20 of these unfortunate situations each year.

Regardless of the cause, when we hear about it occurring, the question arises as to whether BMTA should send flowers or a plant or whether we should instead send a get-well or condolence card. We have done both at times in the past. At the January Board meeting we discussed this question again. While I can buy nice flowers at Costco for \$15, by the time we have them delivered by a florist the cost rises to at least \$60. That would bring the annual budget of this category to something like \$1000.

People vary on their feelings about the importance of such demonstrations of caring. Some feel it is essential to recognize hospitalizations, etc., with flowers, while others don't and would rather the funds go to an appropriate non-profit. The policy decided by the Board is that BMTA should express its sympathy and caring by sending a card. When people join or donate to BMTA, we believe they primarily want their funds to be used to support the trail, and we think most of those to whom we might send flowers or a plant feel the same. Of course we may make exceptions at times, an example being BMTA's participation in funding the memorial bench in memory of long-time member and past-President Betty Petty after her tragic death in a car accident in 2013.

We don't have a BMTA blog, but if you want to express your feelings on this subject or any other subject, I would like to hear from you. You can e-mail me at [feedback\(at\)bmta\(dot\)org](mailto:feedback(at)bmta(dot)org).

P.S. While discussing this column with Past President David Blount, he suggested that we might send a BMT greeting card, if we had one. If you are a photographer/artist and would be interested in working on this project, please let me know. A quick Google search shows these cards are available for many trails.

It's Time To Renew ...

If you are a Life Member or joined (or renewed) in the last month or two, you can ignore this message. Your membership is current. Thank you.

The rest of you: It is time to renew. As you know, memberships in BMTA are for an entire calendar year, so everyone's membership ends on December 31. You can pay via PayPal using your credit card or send a check to the BMTA. Either way, you start by clicking here: <http://www.bmta.org/Membership.php>

Your membership is tax deductible in just a few months if you pay between now and the end of the year. Please also consider adding a tax deductible donation to BMTA before year end. BMTA has no paid staff, and all donations go to support the trail. Donations via check may be made using the printed membership form or via credit card or PayPal by clicking the Donate button on the [bmta.org](http://www.bmta.org) home page. Thanks for your support!

If you have any questions about your membership, please contact Ken Cissna, Membership Director, at kcissna@usf.edu. Thank you for your support of the Benton MacKaye Trail Association.

Bob Ruby
President, BMTA

Ken Cissna
Membership Director and Store Manager, BMTA

Upcoming Hikes ... by Ralph Heller-Hiking Director

Friday February 6 – Cloudland Canyon (Rim Trail)

Length: Approximately 7 miles – strenuous/moderate

Hike Description: An exceptionally beautiful hike with two waterfalls in one of Georgia's nicest state parks. Consider renting a park cabin the night before or after the hike. Cloudland Canyon entails an almost 2-hour drive from Ellijay, but the hike will be worth it. Pack a lunch and have plenty of water.

There is an entrance fee.

To register for the hike and get meeting time and location, contact Hike Leader Mike Pilvinsky, email oldsoldier AT [gmail.com](mailto:oldsoldier@gmail.com) or phone (706)889-5254.

Monday February 23 – Overnight hike to Hike Inn

Length: 5.5 miles each way – easy/moderate

Hike Description: Undulating trail with small total elevation gain. Reward is a night's stay in one of only a small number of walk in lodges in the country. This is arguably one of the most popular hikes of the year.

There is a 50% discount off the normal rates of \$150 double occupancy and \$107 single occupancy, plus tax. This includes an evening meal and breakfast served family style. Sheets, bath towels and blankets supplied. You make up your own bed. We have 14 rooms reserved out of 20. That would allow a maximum of 28 folks with two per room if folks double up. This is a great opportunity to get to know some of your fellow BMTA members better. **Let's fill those rooms up!**

To register for your room call Beryl Ann at Hike Inn Reservations, Phone: 1-800-581-8032 and let her know you are with the BMTA. Then email me rshbmta AT [gmail.com](mailto:rshbmta@gmail.com) or call 770-235-9760 to let me know you are registered. On the 23rd we will meet at the Hike Inn parking lot at the top of Amicalola Falls at 10 am. You must sign in first at the visitor center before you start the hike. The park entrance fee is included when you register for the Hike Inn and you will be given a card to place in the car window.

Note: Reservations is often difficult to contact. Be persistent or leave Beryl a callback number. If you have any questions, call me at 770-235-9760.

Continued on next page

Upcoming Hikes ... by Ralph Heller-Hiking Director

Friday March 6 – Blood Mountain

Length: 4.6 miles – moderate/strenuous

Hike Description: Blood Mountain is the highest point on the Appalachian Trail in Georgia and is the most hiked section of the AT in GA. This is the time of year when thru hikers start their journey, so there will probably be some of them on the trail. The view from the top of Blood Mountain is spectacular in several directions.

To register for the hike and get meeting time and location, contact Hike leader Larry Dumas, email [ldumas AT tds.net](mailto:ldumas@tds.net) or call 706-455-6235. Larry has thru-hiked the AT.

April 12-16 – Spring Hike Week at Fontana Village

Numerous hikes offered during the week. Check www.fontanavillage.com/events/ for updated information

April 17, 2015 - Grassy Mountain fire Tower, Songbird Loop and Lake Conasauga Loop Trail

Length: approx. 6 miles – moderate

Hike Description: A good tour of the remote Lake Conasauga area adjacent to the southern boundary of the Cohutta wilderness. Afterward, a picnic at the Lake Conasauga Pavilion.

To register for the hike and get meeting time and location, contact Hike Leader Mike Pilvinsky, email oldsoldier AT [gmail.com](mailto:oldsoldier@gmail.com) or phone (706)889-5254.

Upcoming Hikes ... by Ralph Heller-Hiking Director

Friday May 1 – Lady Slipper Hike

Length: 6.2 miles – moderate/difficult

Hike Description: This hike starts at the Fall Branch Falls trailhead and finishes at the trail head on Weaver Creek Road. The first half is mostly uphill and the last half is all downhill. That time of year there should be a large lady slipper display for several miles on the second half of the hike. Also there should be many wild azaleas in bloom.

To register for the hike and get meeting time and location contact Hike Leader Joy Forehand, jwfbarga AT [gmail.com](mailto:jwfbarga@gmail.com) or call 706-946-0336.

ATKO 2015

"Appalachian Trail Kickoff"

Amicalola Falls State Park, Dawsonville GA

Friday March 6 – Sunday March 8

<http://www.atko.info/>

January 23 Hike

By Ralph Heller – Hiking Director

On Saturday January 23, sixteen folks gathered at BMTA headquarters for the 3.5 mile hike from the pavilion in Cherry Log Mountain to Boardtown Road. Early in the week the weather forecast had been dire, with a prediction of rain the night before and mixed rain and snow during the hike period. But we got lucky. The front moved more quickly than predicted, and by the time the hike started, the



sun started shining. By the time the hike was over, there was hardly a cloud in the sky. It turned out to be a great day for a hike. This hike was advertised and conducted as an Easy Trek outing. Ken Cissna joined us at the pavilion, which then gave us a turnout of seventeen hikers, ten of which were guests.

The hike went through the new reroute on Patterson Mountain, so we had the chance to show off our new work and explain some of the things we do during trail maintenance. On Patterson Mountain we left the trail for a short while to walk up the road in the newly opened section of the Sisson development. At the top of the mountain there was a spectacular view of the mountains to the east which included Rich Mountain and Rocky Mountain in one large panorama, one of the best view locations in Gilmer County.

After the hike many in the group finished up with lunch at the Pink Pig. There were a number of comments that this was a great hike.

January 23 Hike

By Ralph Heller – Hiking Director



Hike Inn Overnight – Monday Feb. 23

By Ralph Heller – Hiking Director

One of the most enjoyable BMTA hiking events of the year is just around the corner. There are still rooms available, but don't miss out by waiting too late and finding that the rooms are all booked. You must register by booking your reservation with the Hike Inn. Details for registering can be found in the Upcoming Hikes section of this newsletter or in the Activities Section of the web site.

Don't Delay!



Georgia Work Trip Report, January 2015

Submitted by George Owen ... **Cold with problems**

The main body of a dozen workers for this trip were assigned to finish the half-mile relocation on the Sisson property begun last month. George Owen and Tom Keene were in charge, with Darcy Douglas instructing any "newbies." We met an hour later (9 a.m.) than usual for breakfast at the Village Restaurant in Blue Ridge because of the extreme cold.

To explain the problem the work crew faced when arriving on site about 10 a.m., I go back to a Christmas carol written in early 20th century by Christina Rossetti and set to music by famed British composer Gustav Holst, entitled "In the Bleak Midwinter" - with the first two lines opening thus:

In the bleak midwinter,
frosty wind made moan,
earth stood hard as iron,
water like a stone...

Now that line "earth stood hard as iron," - well, we certainly experienced what that was all about in the first half-hour of attempting to dig the new trail (note the "attempting"!). We made little better progress than someone trying to chop into a concrete sidewalk with a Pulaski! The earth was just frozen through for some inches after three days of sub-freezing weather. Hack, hack, hack - useless! So after about 35-40 minutes we gave up with little progress made.

So after conferring with GA Maintenance Director Barry Allen by cellphone - he was with a chainsaw crew on far-away Wilscot Mountain, we were relieved of our primary duty and spent the rest of the morning just walking and trimming little limbs on the BMT all the way down to Boardtown Road then hiking back up to our vehicles on Patterson Mtn. and calling it a day by sometime in the noon hour. Six went home, and six traveled to the Pink Pig for late lunch.

We especially wish to note two people's presence: Brand-new member Bob Cowdrick came for his first work trip, and guest Charlie Fehnel attended for a repeat work trip.

MEMBERS: Claire Broadwell, Bob Cowdrick, Ken Cissna, Darcy Douglas, Frank Forehand, Debra Guhl, Phil Guhl, Tom Keene, Jack Kennedy, George Owen, Bob Sloane

GUEST: Charlie Fehnel

HOURS: Total hours worked - 36

Total hours traveled - 29

Georgia Work Trip Report, January 2015

Submitted by Barry Allen

Our January work trip was split into two work groups – a format that worked well for us on that cold January day. One group of three worked to clear Section 4 of blowdowns; the other group worked to finish a reroute on section 7c. More on 7c later.....

One group of three, Mark Yost, Paul Brame and Barry Allen, set out at 10:00 on a cold Saturday morning, 17 degrees by my thermometer. The job was a through walk of Section 4, south bound, Wilscot Gap to Skeenah Gap, to clear blowdowns scattered evenly throughout the section. The cold was not a problem at all; in fact we were pulling layers off within an hour or so. The work was steady, taking about 5.5 hours to walk the 5.2 mile section and remove all blowdowns. The day turned into a bright, sunny day with beautiful views throughout the hike, and the temperature a perfect 49 degrees as we jumped off the trail at 3:30. The three of us worked a total of 16.5 hours, removed 15 blowdowns, picked up a full bag of trash and cleaned two campsites. I'd love to repeat these split crews in the future; there is certainly plenty of work. Hope to see you next month!!!



Georgia ...February Work-Trip Announcement

FEBRUARY WORK TRIP ANNOUNCEMENT

It's a real Valentine's Day treat!! Yes that's right; bring your honey to **Falls Branch Falls** as we begin a reroute on a much used, but beautiful feature, of our trail. Saturday, February 14th is Valentine's Day, but it is also our regular monthly workday. So bring your wife/husband, girlfriend/boyfriend, or just bring a friend to help out for a couple of hours at the Falls. We'll plan on a little shorter day than normal – finished by 1:30 or 2:00, so you can enjoy a little stroll with your partner, or go home and get ready for a night on the town. We'll meet for a good breakfast at 8:00 at the Village Restaurant in Blue Ridge, leaving the restaurant promptly at 8:40. Or you can meet us in the parking area for Falls Branch Falls at 9:00. A call or e-mail to let us know you are coming is always most welcome (it helps us plan for the right tools and safety equipment), but is certainly not required. Trip leaders for the day are Darcy Douglas or Barry Allen (770-294-7384) or barry.w.allen@att.net

First-timers are most welcome! For what to expect, what to wear, what to bring, go to <http://www.bmta.org/pdfs/WorktripsWhatToExpect-revSep2011.pdf>

WEATHER POSTPONEMENT: If weather forces a change of plans, the trip will NOT be cancelled in most cases. Instead we will simply postpone the trip for one week. Because of the changeable nature of North Georgia weather we wait as long as possible before postponing. Usually the decision is made early Friday evening and circulated immediately by email.

Section Maintainer's Corner ...

'There comes an hour of sadness with the setting of the sun, not for sins committed, but for things I have not done.' Author: anonymous

January tip of the month: When installing steps on a section of trail, always work from the bottom up versus the top down. The bottom, or low point, on the run of steps is the most critical, since failure at the bottom leads to quick erosion on the balance of the steps.

Installing or repairing steps can be a tough job, and one which should be done as part of a work trip. Section Maintainers' generally have their hands full without this type of project, so the first thing to do is let the maintenance director know if steps are needed or need to be redone. But if you just can't wait to get the project going, please keep the following in mind:

- 1) Use the longest lasting material that makes sense on the job. First choice, use stones where available; second choice, use treated wood when hauling to job is possible; third choice, use logs cut on site. The best natural logs are black locust and sassafras, so take care in choosing a longer lasting naturally rot resistant wood.
- 2) Start at the bottom of the slope, extending the step 6" to 12" into the grade on either side of the step. Backfill with small rocks or gravel collected or made on site. Then pack tightly as needed with dirt.
- 3) Give the step a very slight, negative slope. In other words, tilt it very slightly into the rise of the slope. Why? As water picks up speed, it erodes surfaces quicker. So slow the water down with a slight negative slope in the tread. Or better yet, get it completely off the tread (as possible). And remember, to make the steps long lasting, give special attention to the first steps at the bottom of the slope.

Barry Allen

Georgia Maintenance Director, Benton MacKaye Trail Association

Cheoah Ranger District "Trail-A-Thon"

Save the Dates!

April 19-24, 2015, attend the first Cheoah Ranger District "Trail-A-Thon" trail maintenance week. We will have free camping at the Rattler Ford Group Camp Area, right beside the Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest in Graham County, North Carolina, and breakfasts and suppers provided by the Benton MacKaye Trail Association.

Starting on Monday, April 20th, we will split into groups and work sections of the BMT between the Cheoah River and Fontana Dam, starting with chainsaw work first and then brush cutting and tread work. On Friday, we will join the Partners of the Joyce Kilmer Slickrock Wilderness in a clearing of the trails in the Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest, with lunch provided by that group.

Come for one day or the full week. Plenty of tent sites, and there are a handful of sites for self-contained RVs or campers. We will do group cooking for the breakfasts and suppers, so you only have to bring your lunches. Great chance to join your friends for a great camping and trail work experience.

Dick and Margaret Evans are coordinating this event, so contact them at "bmta@frontier.com" or 828-479-2503 for further details and to sign up. We need to know how many are coming to get the food right.

Leave No Trace ~ Trainer Course

SOUTHEASTERN FOOT TRAILS COALITION

Presents

Leave No Trace ~ Trainer Course

April 10 – 12, 2015

News Release



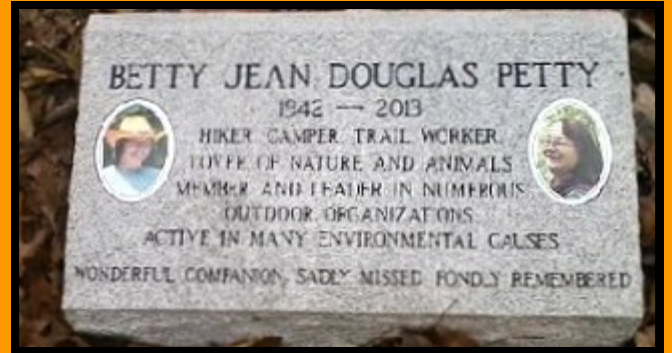
The Southeastern Foot Trails Coalition will be conducting a Leave No Trace Trainer Course for those seeking to learn the seven principles of outdoor ethics for personal enrichment or to teach others. The course features a short backpack and overnight campout in the Chattahoochee National Forest. The course fee includes food and educational materials.

The Trainer Course is a vital component of the nationwide Leave No Trace program, to help recreationalists minimize their ecological impact while enjoying the outdoors. The Trainer Course assists the participants in learning more about the seven principles of Leave No Trace and techniques for disseminating these low impact skills to others.

The goals for this Trainer Course are to prepare the attendees so they will understand and be able to teach the value of minimal impact on the environment and the Leave No Trace Ethics.

Date: April 10 – 12, 2015 (soft start on Friday)
Time: 9:00 am Saturday to 4:00pm Sunday
Cost: \$85.00/ including materials
Place: Chattahoochee National Forest
Presenter: Jay M Dement, Leave No Trace Master Educator
More information: <http://southeastfoottrails.org/SEFTC-LNT-Workshop.htm>
jay@jayDphotos.com, 404/731-1901

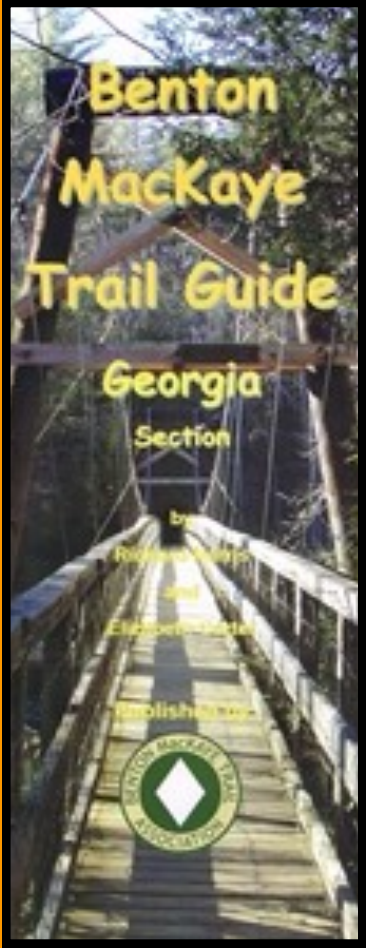
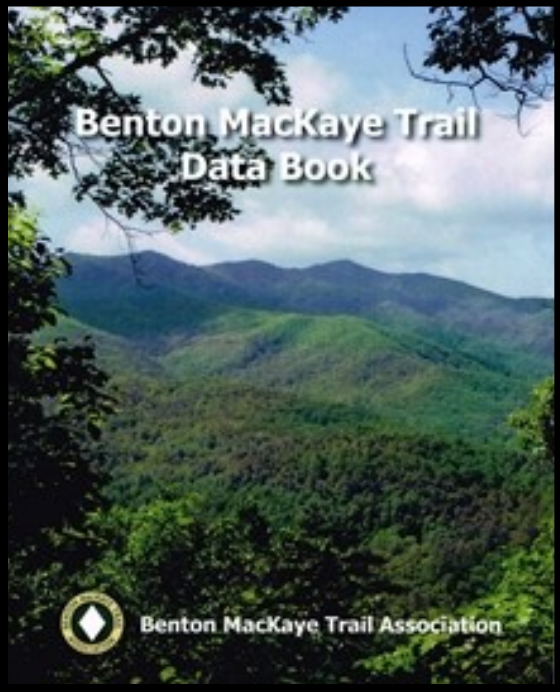
Bench and Marker Given In Memory of Betty Petty. Trail Maintainer and BMTA Past President.



"Hiker, camper, trail worker. Lover of nature and animals. Member and leader in numerous outdoor organizations. Active in many environmental causes. Wonderful companion, sadly missed, fondly remembered."

Revised Publications for the Benton MacKaye

The BMTA Databook and the BMTA Georgia Guide have just been released and are available thru the BMTA Store on the Website. The Tennessee/North Carolina Guide will be available shortly, so update your library!



DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE
February 25, 2015
SUBMIT ANY ARTICLE AND/OR
PHOTOS TO
gnix (at) Ellijay (dot) com

"Forest Service Activities in the Trail Corridor"

The Forest service has a prescribed burn scheduled on section 4, in the Payne Gap area. The burn was originally scheduled for late fall 2014, but due to weather conditions, has been postponed until the first part of 2015. Please check the Forest Service website for updates on the burn before hiking the area.

The Forest Service has a timber thinning operation in progress along FS 816. This operation should stay close to the FS road, and should not be visible from the trail. But be aware of logging truck traffic from GA 60 to the parking area for the Swinging Bridge.

Designation of Fontana Village as Appalachian Trail Town.

The town of Fontana Village, smallest in North Carolina, has been designated by the Appalachian Trail Conservancy as a "Trail Town" in recognition of its long years of service to the AT hiking community. The designation ceremony will take place at Noon at the Fontana Lodge on March 26th, followed by a luncheon, hikes and other activities. Dignitaries from the United States Forest Service, National Park Service, ATC and other groups will be in attendance. The public is welcome to attend.

New Home for North Georgia Mountain Outfitters

North Georgia Mountain Outfitters, owned by long-time members and big-time supporters of the BMTA, Travis and Shirley Crouch, has just moved to a new location. This new location, just past mile marker 14, on Highway 515/US76, is in a small commercial center several miles north of Ellijay and 7.5 miles south of where the BMT crosses the highway in Gilmer County. Situated on the right side of the highway going north, the new 3,500 square foot store will have great visibility for folks passing by on this gateway to the mountains.

Travis and Shirley stock top lines of products for backpackers and hikers such as North Face and Patagonia and a large selection of packs, tents, sleeping bags and hammocks. The new expanded store has a large selection of hiking shoes and boots complete with expert advice on getting a proper fit. All the BMT guidebooks are stocked, as well as National Geographic maps of the area which show the track of the BMT. Travis also stocks the Geological Survey 7.5 Minute Series topo maps. Travis and Shirley both are avid hikers when they have time away from their store, and Travis has almost finished hiking the Appalachian Trail. They both are a wealth of information on area trails and proper equipment for a pleasant outdoor experience. If you have a chance, stop by and check out their new location.



A Walk in the Woods A must see ...

Rather like a fun, geriatric version of *Wild*, this long-adorned film version of **Bill Bryson's** enormously genial 1998 book *A Walk in the Woods* is a jolly good time, sparking dozens of chuckles and a few strong laughs. Nothing special cinematically, it still provides a welcome showcase for star **Robert Redford**, who also produced, and **Nick Nolte** as two



oldsters who attempt to hike the 2,100-mile Appalachian Trail from Georgia to Maine. With smart handling, this breezy entertainment should become one of those occasional films that draws a significant older audience out of their homes and into cinemas.

Reprinted from the *Hollywood Reporter*: @ <http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/review/a-walk-woods-sundance-review-766367>

Can You Name That Mushroom

Keith Truppi, who maintains Section 11c (Fork Ridge Trail >> Rough Creek Trail), ran across this mushroom in his section that he could not identify in his mushroom reference book or online. It is about 3/4" tall and is black with white specs.

Presumably, it's toxic. Are there mushroom experts out there?



If you can ID send info to [rhsbmta AT gmail.com](mailto:rhsbmta@gmail.com). Your ID will be posted in the next newslet-

BMTA Membership Report

Benton MacKaye Trail Association

Membership Report

January 7, 2015

Member Types

Numbers of Members

	<u>Dec 2013</u>	<u>April 2014</u>	<u>July 2014</u>	<u>Oct 2014</u>	<u>Jan 2015</u>
Life	53	54	54	54	53
Individual	112	86	96	102	109
Family	80	55	65	70	73
Senior/Student	41	37	40	41	48
Corporate	4	5	6	6	6
Total Memberships	290	237	261	273	289
Total Members (Est.) (Based on Family x 2)	370	292	326	343	362

Memberships by Year (Year-End Unless Otherwise Indicated)

2006	226*
2007	250*
2008	232*
2009	206*
2010	275*
2011	265*
2012	269*
2013	290
2014	289

* Month of Report Not Known