

## ***M. R. Hyker's Latest Adventure***



**05-30 to 06-01-09 - Car Camping/Rocky Mount Day Hike: Three weeks ago strong winds wrecked our car camping trip, depositing first our picnic canopy and then our 10X10 Kelty tent upside down into the woods behind our campsite. Wisely MRSHyker and I bailed out w/o doing the scheduled hike but returned three weeks later for a "do over". We had severe thunder storms the night before but the hike day was pretty nice although the initial high humidity made the views a bit hazy and the climbs a little harder. P-Hyker and I were on the trail before 9:00. Although the views are probably clearer in the winter, during this time of the year the Mountain Laurel is in its prime. There has to be a near perpetual tunnel of them for 1.5 out of the 2.2 mile out-and-back part of the circuit. Since P-Hyker (our dog) was with me we didn't climb up on the cliffs for the real spectacular views but still caught a nice panorama of the surrounding mountains and the Shenandoah valley. We caught some more views during our descent to Gap Run. I made the first crossing w/o getting my boots wet. P-Hyker didn't mind and really enjoyed laying in the cool water at every crossing. As a matter of fact She seemed to want to walk up or down the stream instead of the trail. Since I didn't bring my trekking poles I elected to just wade across the rest of the crossings for safety sake. I learned how to be happy hiking in wet boots a long time ago. Most of them were over my boot tops anyway.**

**At one point we lost the trail at stream's edge. It was flooded by higher than usual water levels. The final climb out of the drainage was pretty steep but short. After a recovery break at the Rocky Mount Trail junction and**

**another more gradual climb we finished the hike with a nice casual stroll back through the Mountain Laurel tunnels. The steaks and wine tasted exceptionally good that night. As of this last trip I can say that I've hiked every hike (save 2 nature hikes) in the PATC "Circuit Hikes in Shenandoah National Park" plus several of my own design. It's time to find some other unexplored hiking adventures!**