

# The Trailblazer

LOUISIANA HIKING CLUB NEWSLETTER

SUMMER/FALL 2021



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## A Message from the President

*By Katherine Gividen*

2021 has been a challenging year for our organization, but I am pleased with our ability to roll with the punches and avoid getting beaten down by Covid. We have adapted, and along the way, grown from our circumstances. The library finally reopened the meeting rooms, and we were able to gather with our friends again (while maintaining social distancing guidelines of course). I still haven't mastered zooming our meetings while simultaneously meeting in person, but every time I learn a little more, and hopefully am doing better.

I want to give a shout out to the members and others who helped keep the organization moving forward this year. Special thanks to Patti Cameron, Caroline Leung, John Engelsman (aka Pickle), Raymond Johnson, Neva Warren, Brian Chriceol, and Karla Coreil for volunteering to present at our monthly membership meetings.

Tom Rogers and Debbie Hodge managed to pull off a virtual CampFest! The Backpacker, Ranger Becky Larkins, Linda Auld, and Lauren Hemard gave informative presentations.

Tom Rogers, Kirk Aymond and Snookie Miller volunteered their time to recruit members at The Backpacker - both locations - in March.

Corinne Duplan published several issues of her amazing newsletter allowing members to share their stories within the pages to keep us all engaged. I also want to recognize her (and Troy Crowder) for the update on our website. Also JB Broussard and Debbie Hodge for keeping Facebook current, and handling club correspondence. They both have helped me immensely on performing my job duties by their gentle reminders.

Second Saturday Hikes have started back up. Thank you John Engelsman for heading this committee. Thanks JB Broussard for leading the Port Hudson hike. Thanks to all the others who led pop up hikes for our members. Caroline Leung led at trip to Great Basin National Park. If you get a chance to join one of the club trips she organizes, don't let the opportunity pass.

There are so many others who have helped in so many ways, but I fear I could take up the whole newsletter with accolades, so I will leave things as is. When I look at all this volunteer organization has achieved this year, I am very proud to be its president. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for all you do.

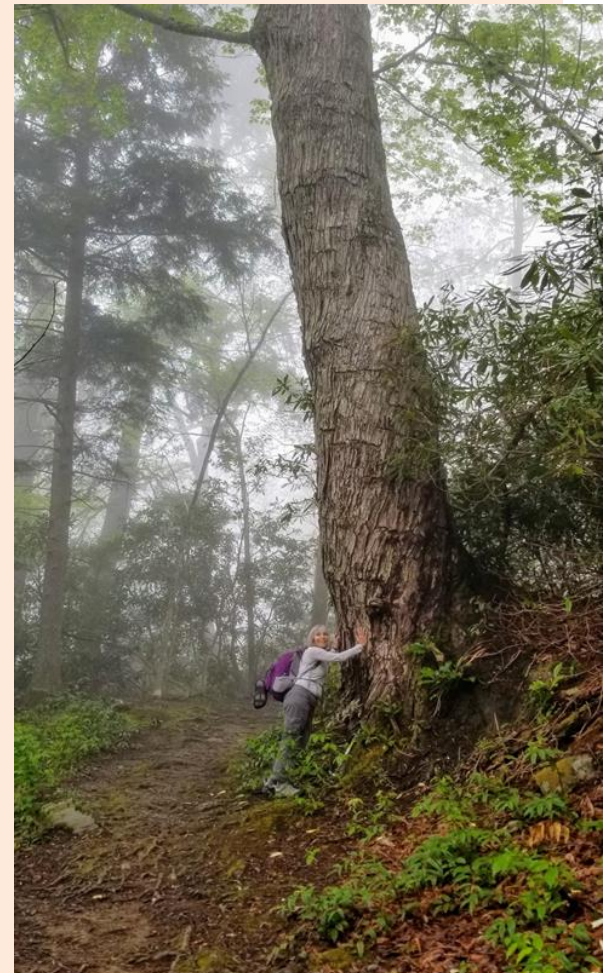
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## A Night on Mount LeConte

*By Emelise Cormier*

Early on the chilly, foggy morning of May 11th, Mooi Lee and I put our packs on our backs and started up the Trillium Gap trail in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, heading up to the top of Mount LeConte to spend a night at the Mount LeConte Lodge. Mount LeConte is 6,593 feet above sea level, and the lodge is only accessible via foot trails. There are five trails which lead to the top of LeConte: Alum Cave, The Boulevard, Bullhead, Rainbow Falls, and Trillium Gap. The Trillium Gap trail is approximately 7 miles in length and climbs 3,300 feet. It is the trail used for supply transport via llamas to Mount LeConte Lodge; the llamas make 3 trips per week up to the lodge.

Spring had not fully sprung when we made our hike up the mountain. There were not many wildflowers blooming, except for a few trillium, and at the higher elevation trees were just beginning to leaf out. In fact, on the Friday preceding our hike, the morning temperature at the top was in the 20s. On the Sunday, May 9, Mother's Day, strong storms blew down trees across the road where the trailhead is and across the trail as well.



Trail maintenance workers actually headed up the trail just ahead of us, and by the time we reached the point where trees had fallen, they had already cut them and cleared the trail. We were in the clouds (or fog) most of the way up. As we neared the top, we finally saw bits of blue sky, and we were looking down at the clouds. Along the route we gazed up at many large, old hemlock trees, and we crossed a few creeks, one of which is Roaring Fork Creek, one of the steepest streams in the park. At mile 1.5, the trail passes behind Grotto Falls, where many visitors turn and return to their cars. Beyond the falls, we didn't encounter many hikers other than a few who had spent the previous night at the lodge.

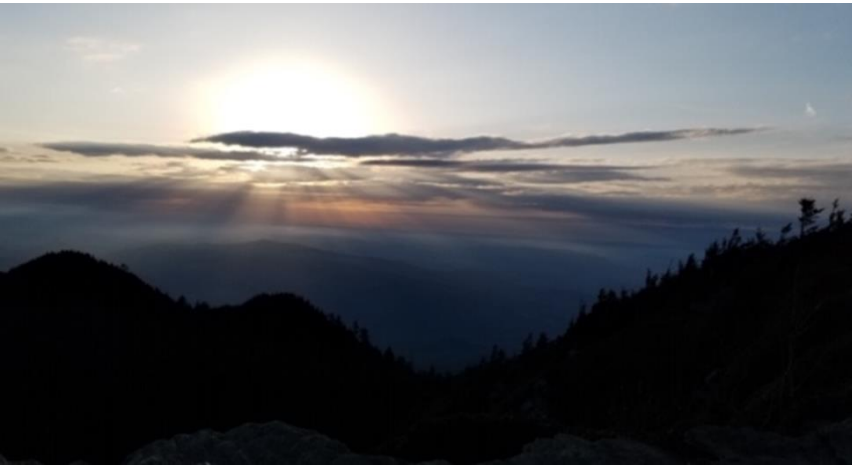
As we climbed, we paused frequently to take a breather or examine a plant or flower. Our breaks were brief because we had to check in at the lodge by 5:00. About halfway up, we met the llama train. We happily stepped off the trail to let them pass us. They were so cute, looking like they were smiling! We were smiling too, tickled to have seen them.



After hiking six and a half hours, we arrived at the lodge at 3:00 p.m. Following check-in, a staffer showed us to our little log cabin and provided us with a clean galvanized bucket for our water.

There are two pumps for potable water and a spigot with warm water for a "bird bath". The cabins have a bunk bed with pillows, linens, and two warm, wool blankets; two chairs; a small table with a kerosene lantern and a wash basin; and a gas wall heater. The heater was an unexpected luxury. Another luxury was access to flush toilets, only available to overnight guests.

After setting our packs down, we went to the dining hall to get some hot chocolate and lemonade, also only available to overnight guests. Then we relaxed on our little porch, rocking in the rocking chairs as we sipped our beverages and chatted with our neighbors. Dinner was delivered to our cabin at 6:00 because, due to the coronavirus, dinner is not being served in the dining hall. Our meal consisted of beef stew, mashed potatoes, green beans, cooked apples, half of a canned peach, a big piece of cornbread, and a chocolate chip cookie. The food tasted good, and it was warm - just what we needed after burning up a lot of calories climbing 3,300 feet over 7 miles! After finishing our meal, we hiked another half mile to the "cliffs" to take in the view of the Smoky Mountains and watch the sunset. Although there were still a lot of clouds, it was a beautiful view.



We slept comfortably in our cozy little cabin, and we awoke to the sound of rain falling on the roof. Promptly at 8:00 a.m., the breakfast bell rang, and a staffer knocked on our door soon thereafter, delivering our hearty breakfast. Breakfast included scrambled eggs, grits, a slice of Canadian bacon, two pancakes, and a biscuit. We ate, put on our hiking boots and rain jackets, donned our packs, and departed from our cabin, facing the chilly wet air but leaving with warm memories.

We learned later that the temperature was in the 30s that morning at the top of Mount LeConte. The hike down the mountain was very wet, but we made it to the trailhead in 4 hours. We thoroughly enjoyed our trek up and down Mount LeConte. We left the parking area, feeling accomplished and fulfilled, like we had done something we had dreamed of doing. We hope to hike Mount LeConte again someday.



## Hike with us!

**Website:** <https://www.louisianahikingclub.org/>

**Email:** [louisianahikingclub@googlegroups.com](mailto:louisianahikingclub@googlegroups.com)

**Facebook:** "Like" us @ The Louisiana Hiking Club



**Meetings:** 1st Thursday of every month at 7:00 pm at the Baton Rouge Bluebonnet Library (and on Zoom)

# Culinary Corner

By Katherine Gividen

Back in 2015 I went to the Backpacker Get Out More Tour at Massey's in New Orleans, and was introduced to Good To-Go backpacking meals. I remember how fresh the broccoli tasted in the Thai Curry that I sampled. At that time I think the company offered three different meals; Thai Curry, Smoked Three Bean Chili, and Herbed Mushroom Risotto.

Since then, Good To-Go's product line has expanded to 15 different varieties, including breakfast. Their meals allow you to taste a trip around the world; Cuban Rice Bowl, Mexican Quinoa Bowl, BIBIMBAP (Korean), Pad Thai, and Chicken Pho (Vietnam) are some of the flavors they offer. Two products from the Good To-Go line have won Backpacker magazine's Editors' Choice award; Thai Curry (2014) and Oatmeal (2017).



Good To-Go was founded by Jennifer Scism. Jennifer is an accomplished chef who beat Mario Batali on the Food Network's Iron Chef program. She has studied regional foods in over 20 countries and the knowledge she gained through her travels has, as you can see, inspired her product line.

I wanted to feature Good To-Go in this month's Culinary Corner, so I went to our local outfitter, The Backpacker, and found they had in stock Good To-Go Indian Korma.

## Upcoming Events

### **October 23, 2021**

Pack & Paddle Outdoor Gear  
Garage Sale  
Lafayette, LA

### **October 30, 2021**

Backpacker Annual Winter  
Adventure Sale  
Baton Rouge, LA  
Lafayette, LA

### **November 4, 2021**

LHC Monthly Membership  
Meeting  
Bluebonnet Library  
Grayson Highlands State Park  
presented by Patti Cameron  
7:00 PM

### **November 13, 2021**

LHC 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday Hike

### **December 3, 2021**

LHC Holiday Party  
Hilltop Arboretum  
7:00 PM

### **December 11, 2021**

LHC 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday Hike

### **January 1, 2022**

New Year's Day Hike  
Driskill Mountain – highest  
natural summit in Louisiana

### **January 6, 2022**

LHC Monthly Membership  
Meeting  
Bluebonnet Library  
Raymond Johnson

### **March 4-6, 2022**

LHC Annual CampFest  
Chicot State Park

I've never had Indian Korma before. Actually, I never heard of it before, but was willing to give it a try for the sake of this article. Good To-Go describes their korma as a mild spiced, creamy curry typically made with yogurt and tomatoes thickened with nuts or seeds. It is a traditional Indian Korma with whole toasted and ground spices, walnuts and coconut. It is gluten-free and vegetarian.



I followed the instructions on the package, using my Jetboil to prepare the water since that is what I would use if I was backpacking. The instructions called for “a little more than one cup of boiling water”. I used 1¼ cup. When the orange indicator on the stove let me know the water was boiling, I tried to remove the lid, and promptly burned my finger from the escaping steam. (The sacrifices I make for the hiking club!) Then, when adding the water to the package the bag got too hot, and I had to put it down quickly. Make sure you have the package sitting securely in a pot or cozy when you pour the boiling water in it on the trail.

After adding water, I stirred the contents, sealed the package, and “[hung] out for 20 minutes and [thought] about how big the universe is” as the package suggested. In case you were wondering, it's about 93 billion light-years. (Thank you Google!)

After 20 minutes, I opened the package and was greeted with the most lovely aroma of spices; cardamom, cinnamon, cloves, coriander, cumin, and turmeric. The korma was bursting with flavor, however it did have a crunchiness to it. Walnuts are listed in the ingredients, but I am pretty sure the culprit may have been the chick peas. Next time I will let it sit for an additional 5 minutes before opening the package. Other ingredients included: carrots, parsnips, green beans, onions, peas, grapeseed oil, ginger, garlic, kosher salt, poppy seeds, fennel seed, and dried Thai chilies. All in all it was a very good meal.

If you would like to try Good To-Go, The Backpacker in both Baton Rouge, and Lafayette carry the product line; as well as Pack and Paddle in Lafayette. We will be giving away Good To-Go meals (Thai Curry and Mushroom Risotto) for door prizes at our November membership meeting. Hope to see you there!

# Gear Guide

By Katherine Gividen



The newest addition to the Louisiana Hiking Club gear closet is the Therm-a-Rest Hyperion™ 32F / 0C 900 Fill Down Sleeping Bag. The Hyperion (Long) is ultralight, weighing in at only 1 pound 2 ounces. Down is coveted for its compressibility, as well as its insulation abilities without the bulkiness of synthetic fill. Whereas down's downside used to be its lack of water resistant abilities, you can now buy sleeping bags filled with hydrophobic down. Hydrophobic down is down that has been treated with a durable water repellent (DWR). The down in the Hyperion has been treated with Nikwax.

Technically, the down fill number indicates how many cubic inches of loft one ounce of that down fill produces. The higher the number, the greater the loft and insulating power. With the Hyperion's 900-fill down, a boxed baffled construction, and zoned insulation, you can be sure to have a warm and cozy night's sleep under the right conditions. While the sleeping bag is rated at 32°F, it is important to know that bag temperature ratings are based on the user wearing a hat, thermal underwear, and having a 1 inch closed-cell foam sleeping pad under the bag. It is also important to take into account whether or not you are a warm sleeper or cold sleeper. The Hyperion has an EN Comfort rating of 41°F, a Transition rating of 32°F and a Risk rating of 5°F. A Comfort rating indicates the air temperature at which an average female/cold sleeper can sleep comfortably through the night. The Transition rating indicates the air temperature at which a standard male/warm sleeper can sleep for eight hours without waking. The Risk rating indicates the temperature at which a standard female can remain for six hours without risk of death from hypothermia. Always check the weather first before planning an overnight trip, and bring the appropriately rated sleeping bag.

The Hyperion is a mummy sleeping bag. The shell and lining are made with ripstop nylon. The bag (Long) fits people up to 78". If you are short like me (60"), this is not the right size for you. The regular model fits up to 72". The small fits up to 66". I would need a small sleeping bag. You want to pick a bag that is closest to your height.

The Therm-a-Rest Hyperion™ 32F / 0C 900 Fill Down Sleeping Bag (Long) is Responsible Down Standard (RDS) certified; meaning the down was not harvested from live geese. It retails for \$389.95.



# Autumn Adventure: The Trans Catalina Trail

In late September/early October, a group of 20 went backpacking on Catalina Island. This channel island off the coast of California is home to the Trans Catalina Trail, a 38-mile trek from one end of the island to the other. It has amazing views of the Pacific Ocean, and is rated as strenuous. Below is the itinerary and details of the trip, shared by LHC member Caroline Leung.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Itinerary</b>	<b>Mileage</b>	<b>Lodging / Campground</b>
<b>Friday, September 24</b>	Travel to San Pedro, CA Some take 5:45pm ferry to Avalon		San Pedro / Avalon
<b>Saturday, September 25</b>	<b>10:50am/1pm ferry from San Pedro to Avalon, day hike some side trails south of island</b>	2	Hermit Gulch
<b>Sunday, September 26</b>	Backpacking to Black Jack	10.5	Black Jack
<b>Monday, September 27</b>	Backpacking to Little Harbor	8.5	Little Harbor
<b>Tuesday, September 28</b>	Backpacking to Two Harbors	5.5	Two Harbors
<b>Wednesday, September 29</b>	Backpacking via Silver Peak Trail	7	Parsons Landing
<b>Thursday, September 30</b>	Day hike to Starlight Beach (the west terminal of TCT)	10	Parsons Landing
<b>Friday, October 1</b>	Backpacking to Two Harbors via West End Road. Some take 2:30pm ferry from Two Harbor back to San Pedro. Others stay at Two Harbor for 31st Annual Buccaneer's Weekend	7.5	Two Harbors
<b>Saturday, October 2</b>	<b>11am Ferry from Two Harbors to San Pedro</b>		Home



TRANS CATALINA TRAIL  
CONTINUED...



# JULY IN GREAT BASIN NATIONAL PARK

On July 3-10<sup>th</sup>, several LHC club members took a trip to Great Basin National Park in east Nevada. On the trip, they enjoyed hiking, backpacking, train rides, cave tours, and more.



The drive to Great Basin NP



Cave Lake



Ready for July 4<sup>th</sup> fireworks!



A group pic from July 5<sup>th</sup> South Fork Baker Creek Trail



The group hiked the 6-mile Bristlecone to Glacier & Alpine Lakes Loop trail (among many other trails!) on the trip