

Welcome Cheryl Hadrych

Cheryl Hadrych's tent is a Big Agnes Copper Spur UL2 and her shoes are Merrell Moab Ventilators. She carries a journal and a camera when backpacking. Cell phone cameras are not for Cheryl as photography is more than a shot at been-there-done-that. And her point of view has paid off with the ATC selecting four of her images for book covers and calendars! You go girl!

Cheryl's trek from her hometown of Buffalo, NY to Virginia is a story we all share about our lives: part straight forward and part convoluted. When she began her Thru-Hike adventure at Springer Mountain though she did it with a spreadsheet in hand that spelled out miles and goals. It probably comes as no surprise that it didn't work out as planned and she is delighted that it didn't.

Serendipitous encounters with kind people are a hallmark of the AT and Cheryl's experiences have been right on. But she also liked the anonymity within the Thru-Hiker community: you are your trail name with no expectation to be more than that. One surprise about the AT was how it fed her growing curiosity for the history associated with this long and winding path. Who knew that she would meet a man who went to high school with her father or meet a former astronaut, and who was Nick Grindstaff of Iron Mountain anyway?

Taking a break during her 2014 trek to join a trail maintenance team in Tennessee and annual participation in Hard Core & ALDHA work trips has fostered a deep appreciation for this special volunteer effort. Now that she has settled in Virginia Cheryl's plans as an ODATC member include those monthly heave-hoes.

I don't know if Cheryl still has the purple T-shirt she found at J.C. Penny emblazed with *Now, Not Tomorrow* across its front. It is good advice that will get her back on the trail to finish her hike. In the meantime, you will find her following her creative spirit as a volunteer at ATC's Flip-Flop Weekend in April and exhibiting AT related artwork in Richmond & Northern Virginia.

Miles hiked on the AT: 980

Backpack: Osprey Aura 65

Advice to Women Hiking Solo: Trust your intuition. Be friendly without divulging too much information. It is OK to be aloof. Always know your location. Always have a backup plan. Take your time and don't be afraid to *look up*.

Lisa Bagby, 01/31/17