



Fall 2025 Message from our President

The First lady and I just returned from the Welcome Back Hike and Picnic at Lake Ouachita State Park. We had a good turnout for the hike - more than twenty people with several new members. Kelly Johnson did a great job organizing the event as well as leading the hike (with the First lady as sweep!). It was humid but there was a breeze as we ate our ample potluck lunch.

Vanessa Edgar has come out of semi-retirement to take the reins as our new Hike Chair. We have an almost full schedule of hikes with hike leaders through the first of 2026! Much thanks to Vanessa and to our hike leaders. In addition, we have two overnights planned so far for the fall, including the OT Section 2, and a tentative trip to Oklahoma in the new year. Check the website for details.

If you click the link on the OMH homepage (<https://omhikers.club/>) entitled "Recent Hikes, Pics, and Reports" (catchy!), you will find the details of the more than 40 hikes the Club completed in the spring of this year. Clearly we are doing well! You will notice on the page links to lots of photos. Spend some time with these to relive our great hiking moments. Thanks to Bill Lammers who put this page together and who does a great job with the hike flash and the website, regardless of where in the Northern Hemisphere he and Christina may be. You can also view lots of photos and other Club info on our Facebook page, entitled simply "Ouachita Mountain Hikers." Thanks to Christina Lammers for moderating this private group.

Christina tells us that we have had 36 new members in 2024-25, which is great! As of the end of August, we had 212 members, of which 123 were life members.

Kelly Johnson has hit the ground running with our social events. The Welcome Back potluck was a great success as noted above. Plans are in the works for the Halloweenie Roast and a Holiday party.

Sue Espinal and Kathy Wilcox have taken charge of our trail maintenance program. They have partnered with FoOT to align our activities with FoOT guidelines, and have received a renewed pledge from FoOT to provide the maintenance tools we need. Maintenance dates are on the calendar.

Those of you who have had to listen to me at Club functions are aware of the esteem I have for our Club officers, most of whom I have mentioned above. I also want to thank our secretary Sharon Henry for keeping the Club records and keeping me straight!

Last time I wrote, I challenged all of our members with the phrase "**JUST ONE**". I think the challenge is worth repeating!



Trail Maintenance - JUST ONE

Remember that the Club continues monthly **trail maintenance** on the Ouachita Trail to keep our portion of the trail in good shape *and* to give our members an opportunity to give something back. There is a dedicated group of trail maintainers who regularly assist our Trail Maintenance Co-chairs with this work. Our website contains a great, thorough description of our trail maintenance program under the *Hiker's Reference* tab.

I had not been a trail maintainer in recent years, something else always seemed to come up when trail maintenance was on the schedule. For the winter of 2025, I decided I would step up. I said to myself, my goal this winter is to participate in **JUST ONE** trail maintenance day. **JUST ONE**. I may or may not become a regular, but for sure, I can do **JUST ONE**. *This seemed like a good catch phrase!*

P.S. I did it!

Hike Leadership - JUST ONE

Again, as always, I would like to thank the **hike leaders**. The Club continues to offer twice weekly organized hikes because of the hiker leaders. We encourage all of our members to consider stepping up their involvement with the Club by becoming a hike leader.

The first lady and I have been hike leaders for many years. This is in many ways an organizational task, and the steps are explained fully on the website under the Hiker's Reference tab. It is fun to pre-hike a trail with one or more experienced hikers and then let everyone else in on the fun by leading the hike on hike day. If you are not yet a hike leader, why don't you contact Vanessa and volunteer to lead **JUST ONE** hike. She will pair you with an experienced hike leader and provide any assistance you may need.

Let's continue to support our Club and get out there and hike! See you on the Trails**!

Tom Calhoun, President

** I am scheduled for a hip replacement this fall, so you may not see me for a while!