

## Susquehannock Trail Club News – 12-29-2022

By Bill Boyd

After reading the story of Gerry Margay (again) getting lost along the Appalachian Trail, and eventually dying in the Maine woods, I can't help but wonder why these things happen in the first place. And they really shouldn't happen, by using some common sense. It seems that she stepped off the trail for a BR break, and couldn't find the way back to the trail. It probably wasn't very far - usually the first batch of brush or a big tree will work for privacy. And did she go uphill, downhill, level, past big trees, brush, anything noticeable? Not only that, but if she would have stayed still for a while, some hikers would have surely passed by - maybe call out every minute or so or blow a whistle. Unlike our STS, the AT is usually quite a busy thoroughfare.

According to the map she was in about a 15-mile square, bounded on four sides with highways. Her husband was waiting for her at Rt. 27, not far from Bigelow. The map also shows two streams - one goes NE to Bigelow, the other SW to Madrid. In a few miles either would have taken her to a road. She didn't have cell signal, so what did she do - began climbing higher to get a signal - just the opposite of what she should have done. That is "go downhill, and downstream." Or a \$2 compass would have saved the day - if you go off trail to the east, by going west you should be back to the trail. She loved woods walks and supposedly was trail wise.

Anyway, she wandered all over the place until she was hopelessly lost. When she didn't show up the following day, her husband sounded an alarm and soon there were search parties out - for days they looked, unfortunately coming near to where she was, but never could find her. Here again, a good smokey fire draws a lot of attention, as does a loud whistle or one of the tiny air-horns. The searchers finally had to give up. In the meantime, she actually pitched her tent and made camp - and literally just stayed there until she died. I believe it was loggers or some woods workers who found her a couple of years later. Sad, but true - and completely unnecessary. This was in 2013 - even since then there are so many using the AT it sounds like they would need someone directing traffic. In contrast there are a few who have hiked the entire 84-mile STS and never saw another hiker.

HAPPY NEW YEAR, from all of us here at the Susquehannock Trail Club. Live long and enjoy!