



Carolina Mountain Club

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December 2015

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**MEET YOUR NEW CMC  
PRESIDENT:  
BARBARA MORGAN**

***By Danny Bernstein***

Barbara is an Ashevillean, through and through. In 1948, before she was born, her family moved to the city when her father became the medical director of Highland Hospital, a private psychiatric sanatorium on Montford Avenue. This was after the famous fire, which killed Zelda Fitzgerald,

wife of the writer F. Scott Fitzgerald.

Barbara feels fortunate to be able to say she's a native. "I made the conscious decision to stay in Asheville."

Barbara, the youngest of four children, remembers that her family hiked and camped in the area frequently. She graduated high school in 1968, a historic time between voluntary school integration and forced integration. She wasn't involved in sports in school, but she always swam and worked at a summer camp as a lifeguard.

After a short stint at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville, she attended UNC-Asheville where she went on her first backpacking trip. UNCA at the time was a traditional college of liberal arts and sciences. The college didn't offer an education major, so Barbara majored in the humanities and took as many education courses as possible. She started her teaching career in a first grade classroom at a local school.

Barbara continued to hike as an adult. Her now ex-husband, a CMC member, introduced her to the club. She remembers hiking with Bernard Elias. "In the 1970s, the CMC hikers seemed so old." Even then, Barbara and her husband must have been one of the youngest on the trail.

Then caving got her attention and free time. She went to Tennessee and Southwest Virginia with caving groups. By this time, Barbara was teaching disabled children. "Caving allowed me to challenge myself physically and mentally." She says. "I could recover from a stressful week at school on weekends." Suddenly it seemed that "caving had run its course. I wanted to be out in the open." Barbara rediscovered CMC on the web. The club happened to be doing Looking Glass Rock, a hike that she remembered fondly from her childhood. "I went out and joined immediately." That was 2006. Barbara now is a regular Wednesday hiker. "It just works out for me." "After two years, I was approached to become a hike leader." She now leads a hike a quarter. She's led hikes all over the Southern Appalachians and doesn't consider that she specializes in any one area. I asked her my favorite question. "If you had a visitor who only had one day to hike with you, where would you take her?" That's always with the proviso that the friend hikes at the same level as Barbara. She didn't hesitate. "East Fork of the Pigeon River. The hike has water and sun on the water. It has ice formations in the winter. It's a nice mix of scenes and challenge. It makes you feel you've been out in nature." CMC involvement After a while, Barbara became involved in the inner workings of CMC. She succeeded Ashok Kudva in the membership chair and did that job for two years. "I like background stuff," she says. She enjoyed communicating with new members. She emailed them individually and asked what they thought about CMC. New members were very happy to provide input. "They talked about what we do right, and almost nothing about what we do wrong." Then she was elected Vice President. It seems that the only official duty of the VP is to organize the annual general meeting and dinner. However, you need to look and learn because the VP is expected to become the President after two years. ! ! 1

"We have a really good system of moving the VP up to president. You have two years to learn the job. I attended maintenance committee meetings to understand the issues." She was also bitten by the CMC hiking challenge bug. "When I went on an early CMC hike to Mt. Mitchell, the leader said that this hike would get me three SB6K mountains. So there were only 37 more to go." She got her SB6K patch. She also completed the MST challenge during CMC's 90th anniversary year. Barbara, along with Lee Silver and Mary Beth, maintains two miles of the MST around Mt. Mitchell. She works with the Saturday crew and Becky Smucker's wilderness crew. "But breaking my arm last year really set me back. I can't do a great deal of hammering and banging. The accident has colored the last twelve months. Recovery has been a lot of hard work." A couple of years ago, Barbara went to a leadership training course given by the Appalachian Trail Conservancy. The course emphasized the importance of trying to get youth and minority involved in the outdoors. "We need to strike a balance between trying to bring more diverse populations in the club and current CMC members getting what they need from the club. We don't want to turn this into work. Other organizations offer short hikes. Then they can feed more experienced hikers to us." And what does Barbara see as her role as CMC President? "I see my role as president as supporting the other council members and letting them do their jobs. The CMC volunteers are not doing it for the honor and glory. They're doing it because they love the club."

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## KAYAH GAYDISH

By Becky Smucker

Our hearts have been broken by the death of wilderness defender and dear friend, Kayah Gaydish. She died December 20 at the age of 36 in a fall during a rock-climbing outing with friends in the Mt. Rogers area of Virginia. Kayah's love of the outdoors, for her children, and for people of all ages was bone-deep and affected everyone that met her.

Kayah was active for several years as a trail maintainer with CMC's Asheville Friday Crew and as an A.T. section maintainer. In recent years, Kayah had been working part time for the Appalachian Trail Conservancy and for Wild South, and just this fall had accepted an offer from Wild South of a full-time position as their NC Conservation Coordinator.

She led many outings of volunteers on trails in WNC, often working to protect native habitats in the eradication of invasives, with a focus on Linville Gorge. Her gentle manner and gutsy, hard-working ways earned her the admiration and affection of folks all over our region. Her work with children and young adults, educating them in multiple facets of knowing, protecting, and enjoying the natural world, will leave an indelible legacy.

Kayah leaves two lovely teenagers -- daughter River, 14, and son Caleb, 17, who have been the light and main focus of her life. They frequently accompanied her on her outings with the CMC Asheville Friday Crew, and were co-maintainers with her of their AT section north of Max Patch. Caleb and River lost their father several years ago, and their grandmother, Kayah's mother, will be their guardian.

Please go to <https://www.youcaring.com/the-children-of-kayah-gaydish-490859> to make a much-needed contribution for their support and for Kayah's memorial.

# THE BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY

By Stuart English

If you have lived in Western North Carolina for a while, the Blue Ridge Parkway is an integral part of your life like the mountains themselves or the National Forests. We speak simply of "the forest" or "the parkway".

The building of the Blue Ridge Parkway started in 1935 as part of Franklin Roosevelt's plan to combat the great depression with work projects. The parkway is a unit of the National Park System. The land on either side is owned and maintained by the National Park Service and, in many cases, bordered by National Forests. Construction took over 52 years and the last link (near the Linn Cove Viaduct at Grandfather Mountain) opened in 1987. Super-Scenic Highway by Anne Mitchell Whisnant is the definitive book on the subject.



## The Parkway and me

Some of my earliest memories were going blueberry picking in Graveyard Fields with my mother and father in the 50s. We would go on weekends when work was stopped. But it was still a gravel road and heavy equipment was parked in many places. I thought for years that there were no snakes at that elevation - because my father had told us there were not. Now, I think that was a ploy by my father to get my mother to go out into Graveyard Fields for berries. At that time, it was really like the African Veldt there.

We lived at Bent Creek Experimental Forest and as soon as my mother would let me out of her sight, I would wander down to the parkway entrance off Highway 191 and walk or ride my bicycle up the wide gravel road. In the distance, I could hear the explosions from the blasting involved in building the tunnels. In my 20s, sometimes my friends and I would ride up to the parkway from Brevard in the middle of a clear night. It seemed we could see lights from Asheville all the way down to Greenville, SC. Then we would follow the parkway to Asheville and cap the night off at Dunkin Donuts.

Now, the parkway takes fellow CMC hikers and I to great summer hikes from Mount Mitchell and beyond to the north and Shining Rock and Middle Prong Wilderness areas to the South. The Asheville Corridor of the parkway is a way around Asheville avoiding interstate traffic. It is a way I usually take to the VA hospital. The parkway is one of the many wonderful things we have here. You can ride the whole 469 mile length of the parkway (like Daisy Karasek did). Or you can just leave all your troubles in the valley below and drive up there and just keep driving. If the light is just right and the air is clear, your mind will clear, your spirits will soar, and you will not want to stop.

(Editor's Note: This is the second in a series of articles featuring the six National Park units that will be celebrated at our Spring Social in April 2016.)

## JANUARY HIKES IN THE SMOKIES

The Southeast Foot Trails Coalition (SEFTC) has published their hike schedule for their conference to be held in Pigeon Forge at the end of January. Conference registration is required for signing up for the hikes..



### CMC History Archives

## CMC Council Minutes, 1938; AT Shelter Comments; Shining Rock Hike Report and Map, 1931

By Rocko Smucker

CMC History Briefs:

### From the minutes of the CMC Council, November 14, 1938

*"A suggestion was made by Mr. Haseltine that a Christmas gift be purchased, same (sic) not to exceed \$2.50 in cost, and presented to Mr. Allen Weaver, on whose land the opossum hunt is held each year. Mr. Weaver has been very kind in allowing the club members and their guests to hold several of these hunts on his property and it is the desire of the Club to express appreciation for this courtesy in the form of a Christmas gift. Gloves were suggested as an appropriate gift."*

### From the Appalachian Trail Big Bald Shelter Journal, June 21, 2014

*"Trail Magic. We took it all. Thanks for the low calorie Gatorade." AT R*

### From the Appalachian Trail Flint Gap Shelter Journal, November 4, 2013

*"Don't have much to say. We love the A.T. Its our home. Society don't fit us and we don't like society. Mtns all we know. Loners we are and ever will be. Tell Government quit looking for us. We are off the grid and plan on staying that way. You pray for us and we will be ok with each other." Long Shot and LT*



Shining Rock Wilderness Area

For this month's History Feature: 1931 Shining Rock Trip Report, go to: <http://rockocmchistory.blogspot.com/>



Send eNews articles to [eNews@carolinamountainclub.org](mailto:eNews@carolinamountainclub.org)

The newsletter will go out the last Friday of every month. The deadline to submit news is the Friday before it goes out.

The next issue will come out on Friday, January 29, so send your news by Friday, January 22, to [eNews@carolinamountainclub.org](mailto:eNews@carolinamountainclub.org). Include your email address at the end of your story. Thank you.

Westgate parking - Park in the northernmost part of the lot - past EarthFare, in the last row of parking spaces.

To join Carolina Mountain Club go to: [www.carolinamountainclub.org](http://www.carolinamountainclub.org). Click on "Join CMC" on the right side. Follow the instructions. Send all address and email changes to Gale O'Neal at [gogalemail@gmail.com](mailto:gogalemail@gmail.com). Do not resubscribe yourself to the eNews. That will be done automatically. If you are a non-member subscriber, you need to go back to the eNews and make the change yourself.

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