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Celebrating Connections: MST from Clingmans Dome to Stone Mountain

By Barbara Morgan

On October 3, there was an important ribbon cutting celebration of the completion of the tunnel by-pass trails on the MST. These trails finally completed the goal of a continuous 300 mile trail from Clingmans Dome to Stone Mountain State Park. Our own Les Love was instrumental in working with the Eastern Band of the Cherokees and with others named below to make it happen. Walt Weber included the new route in his just-released *Trail Profiles & Maps, From Clingmans Dome to Mount Mitchell and Beyond, Edition 3*. Les and Bob Beach, Rich Evans, and Stu English were affectionately known as "The Gang" by Walt for helping him with the book. We are greatly indebted to all for their great work.

About the new connection:

Finding a route through the difficult terrain east of the Great Smoky Mountains, around the tunneled sections of the Blue Ridge Parkway, and through the Qualla Boundary lands of the Eastern Band of the Cherokees proved to be a huge challenge for the Division of Parks and Recreation, the Friends of the Mountains-to-Sea State Trail, the Carolina Mountain Club, and other volunteers and conservation partners. In 2016, the Eastern Band of Cherokees agreed to host a section of the trail through reservation lands, removing a large barrier to the connector trail's completion. In June 2018, the Division of Parks and Recreation, the National Park Service's Blue Ridge Parkway and the Carolina Mountain Club collaborated to complete the final seven-mile section of this connection. The designation of this segment of the Mountains-to-Sea State Trail marks the long-awaited completion of a 300-mile continuous trail from Clingmans Dome in Great Smoky Mountains to Stone Mountain State Park.

Trail Maintainers' Picnic

by Marcia Bromberg

Saturday, September 15th, trail maintainers gathered to socialize, eat great food, drink a little and celebrate their accomplishments. The threat of Hurricane Florence kept down attendance, but those who braved the drizzly weather enjoyed a yummy spread topped off by Tim Carrigan's delicious barbecued pork. As usual the highlight of the get-together was the recognition and awards ceremony. Thirty-three maintainers were recognized for their many hours of work (over 50,000 hours in all!) with jackets, patches, rockers, vests and A.T. books. A list of all recipients follows this article.



Several long-time and dedicated maintainers received special recognition. Ann Hendrickson, returning from her new home in Arizona for the picnic and a chance to visit old friends, recognized Jack Fitzgerald (rumored to be retiring from the Friday Crew) with a special thank-you award which included his first bathing suit—and if you know Jack, you know what that means. On a more serious note she bestowed on Skip Sheldon CMC's highest award—Honorary Life Membership. This announcement was followed by a standing ovation by Skip's fellow maintainers. But then Ann had a surprise coming to her. Marcia Bromberg announced that Ann had been granted the Club's Distinguished Service Award for her years of dedicated service as a maintainer, maintenance committee member, and Council member. After the awards it was time to wrap up leftover food, say goodbye to old friends and think about the next week's trail work. CMC and all Western North Carolina hikers are fortunate to have this dedicated group of individuals working for us! Award Recipients 500 Hours: Samuel Clarke, Elrose Couric, Paul Curtin, David Galentine, Rick Harkin, Sue Hollinger, Eloise Kaeck, Joh F. Miller, Joseph Nutwell, Ervin Shepherd, Daniel Snyder, Vance Waggener, Tom Warden, Rick Zabor 1000 Hours: Ron Navik, Duke Rose, Bill Sanislow, Chris Werbylo 2000 Hours: Bob Beach, John Busse, Bill Otto, Dave Roberts, Larry Sobil 2500 Hours: Jeffrey Dektor, Ann Hendrickson, Mel Skiles, Tom Weaver, Mike Williams 3000 Hours: Alan Frank, Rocko Smucker, Tom Weaver 4000 Hours: Richard Evans, Bob Lindsey

Attention Hike Leaders and Trail Crew Leaders:

There are two seats left in the Wilderness First Aid Class scheduled for November 10th and 11th, 2018. Contact Brenda Worley at bjdworley@gmail.com if interested.

Jan Onan, Champion of Children on the Trail

By Danny Bernstein

Jan Onan is best known for her continued passion and work with children on the trail. She, Kay Shurtleff, and other CMC hikers developed the Youth Partnership Challenge to encourage children and their adults to discover the outdoor beauty of Western North Carolina. Now, Jan is also Education Chair for CMC.

Jan spent her childhood in Chicago and considers the city her hometown. She went to college at the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee and majored in special education with a concentration in sign language and interpreting.

She became a sign language interpreter and taught at the college level. Once she and her husband Kevin moved to Hendersonville, she worked as a sign language interpreter in schools on a one-to-one basis, from elementary school to university. She found the college courses most challenging with their specialized vocabulary. Jan has always been involved in education.

"Way before the internet, there were teletypes and deaf clubs which brought the deaf community together," Jan explains. "To have a language, like sign language, you must have a culture, and deafness is a culture." American Sign Language is considered a foreign language.



When Kevin and Jan moved to Hendersonville with their three children in 1998, Jan already had lots of family in the area. Her aunt had moved to Western North Carolina in 1971, followed by her mother and grandmother and others. Her mother showed her around the area.

Bruce Bente, a cousin by marriage, was already here as well and introduced her to CMC.

Jan's Hiking Start Jan started hiking with Bruce when he scouted hikes. On scouting hikes, Jan could bring a child or two and her dog. At the time, Les Love was the only other CMC member who might bring his children on a regular CMC hike.

"Bruce taught me how to be a leader," Jan says. When her children got older, she joined CMC in 2003. Children Outdoors Jan's passion is exposing children to the outdoors. "We need to show them that there's another world out there, a natural world. But in our program, they have to bring a responsible adult."

Jan, with two other CMC members, was sent to an Appalachian Trail Conservancy conference "Trails to every Classroom" in 2007, where they built an outdoor curriculum for children. CMC helped to defray some expenses.

CMC got a great return on its investments. Jan, with the help of her committee, created the Youth Partnership Challenge, modeled after the "White Squirrel Patch" of Conserving Carolina (www.conservingcarolina.org). The challenge consists of eleven hikes, carefully chosen from different land management areas. For example, the National Park Service is represented by a hike in Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site (www.nps.gov/carl). For the MST (<https://mountainstoseatrail.org/>), the hike goes to Buck Spring Lodge from the Pisgah Inn and explores the spring house.

Looking at this list, the first reaction would be that newcomers even without children would profit by doing these hikes; the hikes would help them understand their surroundings in WNC. To earn a patch, the child must do all eleven hikes. The accompanying adult gets a patch as well, if he or she does eight hikes.

Beyond Children's Programs Jan's children are grown and out of the house now. Theresa is a massage therapist in Asheville. Lucas, with a degree in Outdoor Recreational Management, is a seasonal forest ranger out west. Her youngest, Jake, is moving to Montana to climb mountains.

Jan has been retired for several years. She still prefers hiking mostly on CMC scouts and Meetups because she can bring her dog. She and her husband just came back from a trip to Colorado, where their challenge was climbing Mt. Elbert, the highest point in Colorado, at 14,433 ft.

"It was tough to breathe," Jan says.

The last question If you could take an out-of-town guest, who hikes as well as you do, on one hike to show off the area, where would you go?

"It would have to include water." The hike includes starting on the MST, going up to Black Balsam for the views, back on the MST to Skinny Dip Falls and Second Falls. It's a variation of a Graveyard Fields loop.



The eNews is published on the first Friday of each month. Articles are due on the last Friday of the previous month. send your news to eNews@carolinamountainclub.org. Please limit articles to no more than 1,000 words. You may send up to two photos as jpg attachments.

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Carolina Mountain Club | P.O. Box 68
Asheville, NC 28802





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