



## Meet Gail Lamb By Bobbi Powers

Gail has been active member of CMC since 2003. This 4ø10ö, age 76 (Yes, she gave me permission to mention her age), garrulous, Energizer Bunny has led an adventurous life which is worthy of note and worth aspiring to for many of our younger members.

Gail currently is the hike scheduler, along with Lee Silver in data entry, for the Sunday 1/2-day hikes. It's no small task to cajole members into leading hikes and suggesting hikes for those who need assistance. Gail acts as a mentor for new hike leaders. She also leads one hike each quarter and hikes about twice a week.

Besides her volunteerism with CMC, she also volunteers at Habitat for Humanity at the ReStore in Asheville.

Gail's favorite hike to lead is Max Patch and her favorite hike to do is Roan Mountain. There are two infamous hike stories in CMC lore - The Bee Sting Hike and The Broken Leg Hike, and fortunately Gail, a physician, was on both hikes.

Her most memorable hike to lead is also one that many of us still chuckle about ó a hike up old US 70 along an old rail road with a famous RR trestle. Forty - yes 40! ó people showed up for this hike - new hikers, slow hikers, and those who immediately dashed ahead of the leader. Gail said, "It was like trying to herd cats." As far as I know, no one has led that hike since.

Another highlight hike was in Bent Creek in March 2005, memorable because she met Joe Burchfield who became her friend, dance partner, eventually life partner, and in 2010 they bought a home together.

But it's her earlier life that I find fascinating. One of her daughters wrote a paper about her mom titled, "This Woman Kept Reaching." Read on and you will understand the truth of this statement.

Gail graduated from Emory University with a BA in biology, got married and had two daughters and a son. Then at age 32 she decided to fulfill a life-long dream of becoming a physician. She started at Medical College of Georgia when her children were 3, 6, and 9.

Gail's specialty became Emergency Medicine. After five years as a full-time EM, Gail, as Medical Director, and her partners opened the second urgent care center in Georgia and one of the first nationwide. Her center was the focus of a local talk show, as well as tv and news articles.

This seven-year stint as a Medical Director and contracting with doctors for emergency rooms was a 24/7 job, and Gail learned the value of organization. She said, "I have a calendar in my head." Because of this background, she has not found her CMC hike scheduling job overly formidable.

Throughout her medical career she enjoyed locum tenens (place holder) or filling temporary physician positions. These short stints allowed her to practice in a variety of medical specialties (usually EM) and places, often choosing the place based on what adventures she could have on her days off. After selling the urgent care facility, Gail became a full-time locum tenens.

She practiced in six different states or Georgia, Colorado, California, Michigan, NC, and Wyoming - because they gave her the opportunities to have adventures. (I think she must have loved Dr. Seuss's Oh, the Places You'll Go!) She water, snow, and cross-country skied. She bicycled, scuba dived, white-water canoed, hiked, and back-packed. In Colorado she climbed fourteen 14,000-foot peaks and has been to the tops of many others. During these years she worked in more than 60 or yes, 60! or different positions in emergency medicine, urgent care, and general practice. She says she used to call herself "Have stethoscope, will travel."

In 1999, while still living in N. Georgia, Gail purchased a second home on Tybee Island, off the coast of Savannah, and found a new passion or rehabbing houses. Over the years she rehabbed five houses there, three of which she also moved to other locations on the island. She won the "Tybee Preservation Society Award" for two of them. She kept two adjoining properties which she rents out and also uses as a personal family get-away.

After her retirement in 2001, she started looking at Asheville as a permanent retirement destination and began looking for a project to rehab. In 2002 she bought the 5-story

building at 35 Patton Avenue (built in 1885) and over a 2-year period redid it into 9 residential condos - living in one for seven years -and 2 commercial stores. One houses a real estate office and The Lobster Trap occupies the other.

Her three children and five grandchildren are a close-knit bunch. In 2013 she took her 12-year-old grandson on an Intergenerational Road Scholar trip to the Grand Canyon. Last summer she took a granddaughter on a 3-day llama-packing adventure in Colorado and hopes to share adventures one-on-one with each grandchild.

Gail's energy level is almost super human. She has been known to return from a hike and head off with Joe for some zydeco, swing, clogging, or basic ballroom dancing. And let's not forget Pilates, yoga, gardening, book club, classes at OLLI, and managing her vacation rental. She says, "Right now the two most important pieces of my life are traveling with Joe (usually 2 major trips per year) and spending time with my family."

And guess what her maiden name was? **Little!** She may be little in stature, but there has been nothing little about her life. She is the personification of Carpe diem!