

## Meet Daisy Teng Karasek - November 2015

### By Danny Bernstein



Daisy is the only person I know who's driven the entire Blue Ridge Parkway in one shot. It took her seven days, going from Shenandoah National Park to the Smokies, stopping at Crabtree Falls, Moses Cone, and Linville Falls.

Daisy Teng Karasek has been active in CMC from the moment she landed in Asheville, less than three years ago.

Born and raised in Hong Kong, Daisy went to a Catholic girl's school.

"I had one physical education class a week," she recalls. "Sometimes it was just folk dancing."

But she joined the Girl Guides, the British version of the Girl Scouts and hiked with them. She always liked to walk. Contrary to the popular picture of Hong Kong, there are mountains and hills around the city.

"There's a beautifully rural world within a hiking boots throw of Hong Kong's downtown," a Hong Kong tourist website states.

"Many of the trails are paved in Hong Kong," Daisy says. "They feel that reduces the erosion."

After getting a degree in English from Hong Kong University, Daisy came to graduate school in Wisconsin. She met her second husband, Ed Karasek, in Indiana, where she worked in student services at a college. Eventually, they moved to the LA area.

"Then I wanted to leave academia for the real world," Daisy says.

Like many career switchers, she read *What Color is your Parachute?* And she listened to what the book told her.

"I was told that systems analysis would be a good career," Daisy says. She enrolled in a certificate program, where she met her future boss. She spent a big part of her career working in the Health Care sector. By the way, here's a clear definition of systems analysis,

*Systems Analyst work with clients to determine their business needs. They then transform these needs into information technology system requirements. They analyze business processes and write system process specification.*

After she got divorced, she moved to northern California to live with her sister.

“So much of who I am is because of my twenty-year marriage to Ed Karasek,” she says. “So I’m not dropping his name.”

After she retired, she went on a seven-month road trip. Her focus was to attend the graduation of her two nephews in Halifax, but she also wanted to check out several other places that she might move to. Chattanooga was attractive. Portland, Maine was lovely but too cold.

At the end of her Blue Ridge Parkway drive, she spent two nights in Asheville, staying at Airbnb lodging.

“This was October 2012 and downtown AVL was hopping,” Daisy says. She realized that the city was right for her. Daisy is a decisive person and it didn’t take her long to find her perfect house in West Asheville. She wanted to travel so she bought a place that she could rent out while she was away.

She found CMC on the web and somehow contacted Sawako Jaeger. She was on the trail with CMC two weeks after she arrived here, starting with Barth Brooker’s group.

“I didn’t know if I could do all-day hikes,” she says. In California, she had hiked with a local Sierra Club but here she was in new territory.

Soon, Daisy started leading hikes. She considers herself a generalist when it comes to leading hikes. She chooses a date and gets suggestions from Bruce Bente.

“There are regular Wednesday hikers and there are regular Sunday hikers. But I go on both consistently. I should get a badge for hiking the most,” she jokes.

“CMC has such a good hike schedule. As a newcomer, I could just show up and let others lead the way. I wouldn’t go on my own.”

### **Her big trip**

However, she did walk the Camino de Santiago on her own, though no one is really on their own on the Camino. The Camino from St. Jean Pied de Port in France to Santiago, Spain was the focus of her six-month European trip in 2014. She also toured Italy, Spain, and France, meeting up with her three sisters here and there along the way.

Daisy is an expert in travel planning. “I start by reading Lonely Planet,” she says. She highlights the interesting bits and pieces them together. She creates a spreadsheet with dates and plops in her itinerary and lodging.

“By the time I go away, I have all my reservations made. Since I’m on a budget, I don’t want any surprises with prices.”

This coming year, she’ll be focusing on hiking in Scotland. “There’s so much to do there.”

### **Back to CMC**

Daisy is now one of the eNews editors, sharing this responsibility with Kathy Kyle. Daisy did the A.T. challenge, inspired by Jan Onan.

Her favorite hike for visitors is a version of hike #526: Haywood Gap on the MST.

“Basically, it goes on the MST for a short distance to get to the Buckeye Gap Trail, which descends steeply down to the river. That area is in the Middle Prong Wilderness Area. I didn't realize the clearing by the river used to be an old logging camp until I read the descriptions just now. Then, we come up on Haywood Gap Trail, following a nice creek. The section of the MST between Haywood Gap and Buckeye Gap is a particularly lush section.

She recommends Craggy Gardens for an easy hike to great views.

Daisy goes to the gym at the “Y” when not hiking. Around her physical endeavors, the important stuff, she also takes courses at OLLI

“I strive for a healthy mind, body, and spirit,”

I'd say that she's achieving her goals.