

Carolina Mountain Club

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In This Issue

[Solo Travel](#)

[Diamond Brand Vouchers](#)

[MST Sections Need Maintainers](#)

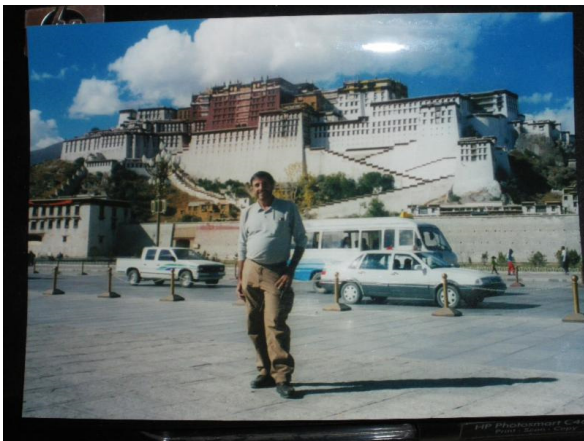
[TOPO Map Help](#)

[Let's Go Available On Website](#)

[Wild South Removing Invasive Plants](#)

[Hiking Pole Tips](#)

Jack Albright - Solo Travel Means No Negotiation



eNews is running a series of stories about solo travel. If you have a solo experience to share please send them to eNews@carolinamountainclub.org

By Jack Albright

I have had a number of trips around North America , the south Pacific and, the subject herein, around the world in which I traveled solo. Frankly, I find that I prefer solo travel. There is no negotiation on scheduling or destination, no discussion of what the daily itinerary will be, where or what to eat, what days are rest days, and what serendipity will be explored- or ignored.

My trip around the world started in New Hampshire in the Summer of 1997. I had my car and wended my way to the Little Rock area where my parents and two of my brothers lived. I 'hung out' there for two or so

months while I laid out my plans, sent for a passport, sold my car and 'girded my loins' in preparation for the trip. I originally planned to travel for three years staying in the Northern Hemisphere during its summer months and the Southern Hemisphere during the warmer months down there. Circumstances caused a change of plans.

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My itinerary basically consisted of a map of the world and time slots such as "late Nov. '97" drawn on the map near intended stops. As loose as this was I still needed some flexibility in some countries where I got off onto an enjoyable side track. I had to extend my stays in both China and Nepal. I shortened my stays in India and Bangladesh. I spent three months in Australia - and due to a bad case of the flu, overstayed my visa. I spent two minutes in North Korea where the peace negotiation room straddles the border between the two Koreas and you can walk to the far end of the table without applying for a visa.

I relied very heavily on the Lonely Planet guide books for my planning. I carried all my necessities on my back in an internal frame back pack. I applied for visas as they were needed- most countries would allow an American passport holder a twenty or thirty day Visitor visa upon arrival at the airport.. I relied almost exclusively on my ATM card for 'foreign' currency at my point of arrival. American dollars turned out to be "International Currency" in most countries and was even 'preferred' in some places. Languages were a challenge, but English was a great 'International' language. In Japan I had young volunteers to guide me to local sites and shrines in exchange for trying out their English on me. In VietNam the "south" vietnamese were eager to speak to me in English remembered from the days of the war. And at one point in my travels a German backpacker, heading home from his vacation, handed me a small picture book that showed the basics for travel (train, bus, taxi) and food (pig, fish, cow) and shelter (single bed, double bed, shower,) and other valuable needs.

I left Little Rock as a 'hired hand' on my brother's Big Rig. He dropped me off in downtown L.A.. The next day

I flew to Hawaii and spent the next two years 'heading west'. I visited some 47 different countries / territories (ie. Hong Kong, Tibet, Macau). I traveled by local transportation usually and got well off of the beaten path when Lonely Planet suggested it. I bought a motorcycle in Greece and toured the old East Bloc countries and got stopped for speeding three times. Paid two 'fines' on the spot and talked my way out of the third (cops were practicing their English!) While in Australia I bought a car and traveled from Cairns to Sydney to Adelaide to Perth and then to Darwin to sell the car and travel on through Indonesia. In China I traveled by bus to Leaping Tiger Gorge and hiked through it- and almost got killed twice- or was it three times.

In the late Fall of 1999 I was heading south from Scandinavia on my motorcycle for Greece to leave the bike

with a dealership that had befriended me. I was heading back to New Hampshire to spend the holidays with my friend- who had become my girlfriend. I was on a schedule because I had a non-refundable plane ticket from Rome to Boston. I had to push out of Austria in a driving rain up over the Alps for Italy. On the border the rain changed to a heavy, wet snow. I dropped both feet down for out-riggers and headed down into Italy. A car careening up the hill caused me to touch the front brake. Bam! I was down. No injuries or damage. Picked up the bike and continued for another three or four miles of snow. Eventually I came below the snow line and, it was the first and only time I have ever been happy to see rain while riding a motorcycle.

I dropped off the bike in Greece and made it back to Rome with a few days to spare. I arrived in New Hampshire in time for Thanksgiving. And then 'circumstances' happened. I got comfortable with Lois- and decided (if that's the correct word) to Fall in Love. My ship dropped anchor and we were married a year later.

But the wanderlust remains. Satiated but not completely at rest. My passport has expired- but I know how to get it renewed if the bug bites again.

I hope you enjoyed my little tale. I did.

Computer Glitch Causes Delay In Mailing Of Diamond Brand Vouchers

As the old saying goes, to err is human, but it takes a computer to really foul things up. We've just discovered a major glitch in our membership data base which resulted in a over 200 members not receiving the Diamond Brand vouchers they were entitled to. We're working with Diamond Brand to get additional vouchers and they will be in the mail as soon as the vouchers are received from Diamond Brand. Sorry about the inconvenience to our members.



Trail Crew Replaces Cat Gap Loop Bridges With Teamwork

By Stuart English

Recently, I was a small part in a couple of big efforts that epitomizes what our trail crews are all about. On two consecutive outings, the Pisgah Friday crew, led by Pete Petersen, rebuilt two bridges on the Cat Gap Loop trail near the Fish Hatchery. Large trees were cut down and then sawed to length and carried to the stream that they were to traverse. These were logs over 20 feet in length on both occasions as the pictures show required 8-10 men to carry them over rough terrain with several rest stops. They were carefully placed over the stream, (another tricky effort), held close together, and drilled through with a special drill bit. Then reinforcement steel bars were hammered into the holes to tie them together and if needed additional steps were put in place on each end. My first impression on starting this job was "How in the hell are we going to do this?" But being a small part of it and seeing the experience, knowledge, and skill of these veteran trail maintainers gave me a new appreciation for a part of our club, that I am just beginning to understand.

MST Sections Available To Be Maintained

The following section maintainer openings for the MST:

- Heintooga Road to Soco Gap
- Hornbuckle Valley to Waterrock Knob
- Richland Gap to Richland Balsam Access
- Richland Balsam Access to Cowee Overlook
- Cowee Overlook to Reinhart Gap
- Glassmine Overlook to Walker Knob Overlook

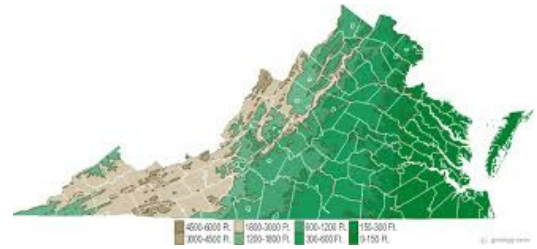
Walker Knob Overlook to Rainbow Gap
NC 128 to Buncombe Horse Gap

Contact John Whitehouse (johnwhitehouse@frontier.com) for more information if you are interested in becoming a Section Maintainer for one of these MST sections.

Renown Photographer Requests TOPO Map Help

We get letters and request for help. Tim Barnwell is a well-respected professional photographer in Western North Carolina. See www.barnwellphoto.com. He wrote the following to CMC:

I am working on a book on North Carolina and Virginia and am using National Geographic TOPO computer (not folding paper) maps to identify mountains from particular vistas, like those along Parkway overlooks. They produced a series where you bought individual states (or several together in some cases, like to NC/SC version I have).



I finished the North Carolina part of the project, after five years, and started on the VA section when I discovered that National Geographic has discontinued the series on maps as of a year ago. I have called every outfitting shop in VA and tried on-line, but can find no one that still has the Virginia maps (strangely many have the NC one). I wondered if you might ask members of your board or group if someone might have these. I would love to purchase, or at least borrow the Virginia TOPO computer maps for the purpose of completing the book. I'm sure someone, somewhere has these in their library, but don't know how to find them! I've checked ebay and the like.

I am sure someone has these sitting in their personal library somewhere but am at a loss of how to locate them. Any help you could provide or suggestions of whom to contact would be greatly appreciated. Thanks for your time and consideration.

Tim Barnwell
828-251-0040 barnwellphoto@hotmail.com
www.barnwellphoto.com

CMC Hike Leaders - Much More Than Showing Up Day Of Hike



By Danny Bernstein

Yesterday (Sunday December 8), both scheduled hikes on the Carolina Mountain Club schedule were cancelled. Or to be more specific, the leaders of each hike, after careful consideration of the weather forecast and the location of the hikes, decided to cancel. There's no central committee that decides if a hike should be canceled. I'm sure that it wasn't an easy decision for either of them.

A hike leader for any organization gives back to the group by offering to lead a group into the woods. There's much more than just showing up on the day of the hike.

Let's Go Available On CMC Website

If you have opted not to get the Let's Go newsletter by mail, you will find everything you need on the CMC website. You receive an email with the following link-

<http://www.carolinamountainclub.org/index.cfm/do/pages.view/id/46/page/Lets-Go>

that will take you directly to the newsletter. It is really just a reminder that the new Let's Go is there on the website waiting for you. You don't really need it. To find Let's Go on the web site you need to go to the drop down menu under News, click on Lets Go, then find the quarter you're interested in and click on that. And it is available to non-members as well as members. The pictures are in color!! Shortly before the new Let's Go appears on line, the hike schedules for the next quarter will also go on the website. You can find the hike

schedules on the website on the left side of the home page under Complete Hike Schedules or on the online newsletter itself. We really have a great website. Visit it, explore it, enjoy it! It's yours!



Wild South Removing Invasive Plants From Linville Gorge Area By Kayah Gadish

Here in Western North Carolina, we are fortunate to be surrounded by thousands of acres of National Forest and Wilderness. With so many beautiful wild places, and with endless opportunities to enjoy and appreciate these landscapes, outdoor enthusiasts have a lot to keep them busy here. Just as much fun there is to had out there, there is also a lot of work that goes into protecting these great places, (Ask any CMC trail maintainer and they can tell you.).

[Wild South](#) is a local nonprofit organization that is dedicated to the preservation, protection, and restoration of Wilderness areas, like the Linville Gorge Wilderness (LGW) area. Besides having several days worth of hiking trails and stunningly beautiful views, the LGW is home to several rare plant communities. One of Wild South's efforts currently underway is to protect the biodiversity in LGW by identifying and then removing the nonnative and invasive plants that have steadily been encroaching into the Wilderness. Plants such as the Princess Tree, Chinese Silver Grass, Butterfly Bush and more have all made their way into the LGW.

A day trip to remove the nonnative plants entails a beautiful hike to the plants which have already been identified, up to an hour of time removing the plants with hand tools, beautiful views and new friends. We are always excited about bringing new people out with us, and anyone interested can let Kayah Gaydish know at kayita79@gmail.com. And to learn more about Wild South, please visit the website at www.wildsouth.org

Tips For Using Hiking Poles



Compiled By Mike Knies

I see a lot of people using hiking poles. There are many uses from simply being fashionable to helping maintain balance to making a considerable difference in efficiently and safely traversing up down or across steep grades streams or other natural features. I notice that a great many of people using them appear to

be using them incorrectly or at least inefficiently. When that is the case other than keeping balance poles are extra weight and something else to forget in someone else's car at the end of the hike. I do a lot of off trail hiking and need both hands frequently to navigate through brush or hold on to roots and branches so poles at times are an encumbrance. At other times they are essential for getting across a fast flowing stream or allowing me to lean out when negotiating a steep side hill covered with dry leaves. The older I get with arthritic knees the more use they are going down steep rocky trails as well. Anyway the following article seems to be a pretty comprehensive guide to getting the most out of your poles



Send eNews articles to 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 31 so send your news by Friday evening at 9 P.M. before the newsletter comes out, that is, by Friday evening January 24 to Kathy Kyle at 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. 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. 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.

Kathy Kyle

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