

Andres Sarre, Our Member from Mexico City

By Stuart English and Susan Canale

Andres Sarre lives in Mexico City with his wife Reyna Lazcano for most of the year, making Asheville their second home. He is a dedicated hiker, trail maintainer, and cartouche maker! Although the mountains around Mexico City are higher and more spectacular than the Appalachians, Andres finds our local mountains equally beautiful and gets great joy from hiking in them.



Mexico City is nestled in a highland plateau in central Mexico with 25 million people surrounded by mountains and volcanoes. Andres has loved those mountains since he was a child and vowed to some day summit them.

At 18, Andres joined the Alpine Rescue Unit and after several months of training, was able to reach the summit of *Popocatepetl*, at 17,800 feet. That was just the beginning. As a solo climber, he climbed “Popo” 102 times, *Iztaccíhuatl* 22 times, and *Citlaltepetl*, the highest mountain in Mexico at 18,400 feet, three times. His favorite mountain, the dormant volcano Nevada de Toluca or *Xinantecatl*, is the fourth highest mountain in Mexico at 15,200 feet which contains two lakes inside its crater.

After more climbs and more summits of many more majestic mountains, he became a high mountain guide, leading people through lava fields and dormant volcanoes.

Andres has carried his love of hiking around the world to hike in Peru, Chile, Argentina, Italy and Alaska’s Mount Denali. Asheville became his second home in 1985 where he found CMC and began doing our AA hikes and sometimes helping with trail maintenance.

While hiking in Cinqueterre in Liguria, Italy, he and Reyna became lost because one of the trail blazes was missing and their hiking adventure turned into an overnight stay in the mountains!

On returning to Asheville, they decided to check out the round white blazes of the Mountains to Sea Trail (MST) and the rectangular blazes of the Art Loeb Trail (ALT). Starting at the Folk Art Center, they hiked west all the way to Bear Pen Gap access and found that in some places, the blazes were missing. This sparked the idea to design the new MST and ALT logos and make wooden cartouches.

His woodcarving company in Mexico City has a CNC, a computer-aided machine, making it easy to carve out the designs. Each time they or a friend flew from Mexico City to North Carolina, they would bring 10 or 20 of the wooden plaques, getting smiles from customs agents who were hikers.

When asked about his most memorable experiences in trail maintenance and hiking with CMC, Andres mentions the friends he has made, including Ashok Kudva, Barth Brooker, John Soldati, Stuart English, Jorge Munoz among others. He also acknowledges the help of wife Reyna, who “is always at my side, with a big heart, carrying tools and happiness to the trail.”

Andres philosophizes that each hike is a wonderful and different experience. “Each trail curve gives us a surprise, a flower, a root, an animal, a lake, a creek, or another hiker for a chat.” And he appreciates the thousands of hours the volunteers spend maintaining our trails and their willingness to share their expert knowledge of the plants, trees, and minerals of the area.

The greatest reward of trail maintenance, Andres says, comes from long-distance hikers, who “with much happiness, give us a big loud ‘*Thank you so much*.’”

And we give a big “*Thank you so much*” to Andres for all that he has contributed to CMC.