



Carolina Mountain Club

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February 2023

Save THE Date 

SPRING SOCIAL
Pot Luck

SATURDAY, MAY 13, 2023
11 am - 2 pm at Lake Julian Pavillion #6



Monday Crew Honors Its Longtime Leader John Whitehouse

By Mike Williams

CMC's Monday Crew recently honored their much-admired, longtime Crew Chief John Whitehouse and his wife Sandy for providing more than a decade of selfless service, inspiring leadership, good humor and hard work at the group's helm.

"Most of us show up on Mondays and work a few hours on the trails, but have little idea about how much effort John puts into planning and assembling tools for these work days and then reporting the results to the land-use agencies," said longtime crew member Dennis Smith. "He's done a tremendous service improving the trails of the Black Mountains, at the Black Mountain Campground, and at Mt. Mitchell State Park, not to mention the A.T. and the MST."

On their first work day of 2023, 15 crew members presented John with an engraved trail sign that reads: "John Whitehouse: Teacher, Leader, Mentor, Friend - With Our Deepest Gratitude, the Monday Trail Crew." CMC President Tom Weaver made the sign, which features the logos for the Appalachian Trail, the Mountains-to-Sea Trail, Carolina

Mountain Club and NC High Peaks, the Burnsville-based club Whitehouse co-founded in 2010.

The group also gave John an REI gift card and a couple of luxury consumable items they hope he will enjoy with Sandy – in moderation, of course. Sandy often bakes the group brownies and other treats, and for years has been the chef and hostess for an elaborate gourmet meal the couple lays out for the Crew’s annual Luncheon.

In his 20 years on CMC crews, John has compiled three years of full-time work (6,000 hours), much of that as Monday Crew Chief, a position he has overseen for more than a decade. In addition to the long hours that job requires, he served as president of NC High Peaks for more than a decade, shepherding several high-profile projects in the group’s role as the official Friends of Mt. Mitchell State Park organization.



With help from CMC Monday Crew members, High Peaks also maintains the steep, challenging trails of the Black Mountains, a job that can require hauling weed-eaters and chainsaws up 2,000 to 3,000 feet over 2 to 3 miles of trail just to reach the work site. Since the crew began this work, several veteran hikers have sent kudos for the dramatic improvement in trail conditions on the Black Mountain Crest Trail in particular. With no regular maintenance, the track had grown shut in places with thick brambles, rhododendron and laurel.

Other notable accomplishments under John’s leadership include building a 27-foot-long log bridge over Neal’s Creek on the Mountains-to-Sea Trail near Black Mountain Campground. A retired Phd nuclear engineer, Dr. Whitehouse designed the structure and came up with an elaborate system of overhead pulleys that enabled the crew to hoist the 1,200-pound logs over the span of the creek and into place.

Crew member Rocko Smucker made a video about the project that can be found at: [CMC & NC High Peaks-MST Neal's Creek Bridge Project-2 - YouTube](#) (Hit “Ctrl + Click”).

At Mt. Mitchell State Park, Whitehouse and High Peaks co-founder Alan Orovitz installed live web cams to show the spectacular views from the tallest mountain in the Eastern United States. Asheville’s WLOS TV often features the shots during their weather reports. John also directed the purchase (with donated park funds) and installation of a low-watt Traveler Information Radio Station, which broadcasts helpful information to park visitors on the AM band.

He also obtained grants to rebuild the over-used Balsam Nature Trail near the summit, work done by a hired contract crew and Monday Crew.

In 2019, NC High Peaks was honored with the Gov. Locke Craig Award from the North Carolina Division of State Parks for these and other projects at Mt. Mitchell.

Whitehouse has also worked closely with High Peaks co-founder and CMC member Jake Blood in obtaining more than \$100,000 in NC state trails grants to hire professional trail-building crews to rehab and relocate badly eroded sections of the Mt. Mitchell Trail, an MST section that CMC maintains. The trail is the primary route hikers use to climb Mt. Mitchell and is one of the most heavily-hiked in the region.



But for all of John's hard work, vision and commitment, crew members say the best thing about their Chief is that he's just so pleasant to be around – always positive, patient and prepared.

“John's leadership and easy-going manner have made working on this crew a real pleasure,” said Joe Lappin, another longtime Monday Crew member. “I would actually pay to get to do this, but a large part of the reason I'm so enthusiastic is because of John.”

Trees in Winter

with UNCA botanist Dr. Irene Rossell
Friday, February 24, 11am-2pm
by Jeff Wilcox

We still have a few spots available for our event with Dr. Irene Rossell, a botanist in the Environmental Science Department at UNC Asheville. Dr. Rossell will explain how woody plants adapt to life in winter and how to identify native trees by their twigs, bark, and other features.

The group will meet at the Botanical Gardens parking lot at 11:00am on Friday, February 24th at 11am for a walk through the gardens and the UNCA campus. The group will then move indoors (~12:00-12:30pm depending on weather) for a restroom break and about an hour of hands-on instruction in an Environmental Science lab.

Bring a water bottle and snacks/light lunch. Limited to 20 participants--reserve your spot via email to jwilcox@unca.edu.

Great Smoky Mountains National Park Parking Tag Required Beginning March 1, 2023

For information on the new Parking Tag Required Beginning March 1, 2023

Click here.

<https://www.nps.gov/grsm/planyourvisit/fees.htm>

Honoring Walt Weber

Tribute by Les Love

CMC lost one of our giants last week with the passing of Walt Weber. He was not just a dedicated hiker and trail maintainer, he was the author of the Trail Profiles of the MST book, a bible for any dedicated MST hiker in Western North Carolina. Les Love, a friend and trail colleague offers this remembrance:

I first met Walt in 1999 at the CMC Annual Meeting when I bought his first edition of the Trail Profiles of the MST book. I was awed by Walt and by the book. I had no idea how one person could gather that much information on a trail and put it in such a useful form for a book, not to mention all the history of the area and our club. I immediately volunteered to help sell the book, which was an easy sell for me since I was so passionate about it.



In the meantime, as CMC kept building the MST west, Walt kept measuring with his wheel and GPS. At the time, I knew a book publisher, Grateful Steps, and mentioned to her Walt's interest in writing a second edition to his book to include additional portions of the MST. When I showed her his first edition she said that would fit nicely with the kinds of books she was looking to publish plus she could do this one in color. That really got Walt excited! I remember us presenting this to the CMC Council and one response was, "should we be putting all our eggs in this one publisher's basket, without getting further bids." Walt's quick response was "I don't care who we go with, I just want all my eggs to be in color." We did the book with Grateful Steps and it was a huge success, coming out in 2009, mapping all the trail to Fork Ridge Overlook just below Water Rock Knob.

It would take several years for the club to build the trail over Water Rock Knob and during that time Walt and I started talking about a third edition and how nice it would be for his book to start at Clingmans Dome, where the MST starts. Walt had the vision, but his legs would not allow him to do the work. So we formed "The Gang" (me, Stu English, Bob Beach and Rich Evans) to measure and GPS those additional miles and feed that information to Walt.



Meanwhile the decision had not been finalized on whether the trail would continue along the Parkway to enter the Smokies at Oconaluftee and this continued for several years. Walt would say, "OK, I'm in my late eighties now, but I've got everything set up so that if I don't wake up one day, you fellas can

put the missing pieces in and complete the book." We all knew that was impossible as Walt was the master-mind and would need to be there to see the book in print.

The route was finally approved, the additional information was gathered and Walt was at the 2018 annual meeting, exactly 19 years after his first, to personally sign, along with his "gang," his third edition of what will forever be known in CMC as "Walt's book."

Thanks to Les and "The Gang" Walt's final book will be here for years to come and will serve as a living memorial to the man and his work. We join Les and other CMC members in honoring Walt for his contribution to Western North Carolina hikers and to the Mountains-to-Sea Trail.

Carolina Mountain Club in the 1960s

by Danny Bernstein

Continuing an excerpt from the forthcoming book, *Carolina Mountain Club: One Hundred Years ...*

The 1960s were an active time for public lands. In western North Carolina, several developments occurred on the federal level which expanded the scope of CMC hiking.

Never underestimate the power of a letter. In 1962, Dr. Edgar Lyngholm, president of CMC, wrote to Dr. Richard E. McArdle, the head of US Forest Service in Washington asking him to "... establish a small counterpart of the Wilderness Areas of the West in the heart of the Southern Appalachians to serve the thickly populated eastern states."

In 1964 Congress passed the Wilderness Act which established the National Wilderness Preservation System. It said in part. "A wilderness ... is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain. It's an area of undeveloped Federal land retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural conditions ..."

Shining Rock and Linville Gorge became two of the first formally declared wilderness areas. These areas did not meet the literal definition of "untrammelled by man." In the eastern United States, most land had been logged, farmed, or burned and had certainly been impacted. If these rules had been used literally, no eastern land would have qualified. Congress recognized this by passing the Eastern Wilderness Act of 1975 which stated that wilderness lands would be untrammelled in the future. Marci Spencer in her book, *Pisgah National Forest*, credits CMC for "its passionate campaign to save Shining Rock and make it a wilderness area."

In July 1964, under Arch Nichols' leadership, CMC succeeded in having Ivestor Top renamed Tennent Mountain to honor Dr. Gaillard Stoney Tennent, (1872-1953), the first president of CMC and a lifelong active member. Tennent was on the CMC council and

editor of the newsletter for many years. The effort to rename a mountain for Tennent started almost right after his death.

Not all outdoor events were positive. In 1967, the National Park Service proposed a transmountain highway through the Smokies. CMC demonstrated against the proposal along with other outdoor clubs in the South. Over five hundred nature lovers took a walk to "Save our Smokies." The hike, sponsored by the (then) six outdoor clubs which maintain the southern portion of the A.T., began at Clingmans Dome, the highest point in the park and in the state of Tennessee and ended in Elkmont, 17 miles away.

Rufus Morgan, 81 years old, and founder of Nantahala Hiking Club, was one of the 178 hikers who walked the whole way. Harvey Broome, president of the Wilderness Society, said, "All that lies west of us in this park is wilderness. It should be kept that way... To have wilderness in the future we must halt encroachment in the present."

In the same year, CMC received the *Holiday Magazine* award, a national travel magazine, for conservation efforts and for contributing to a more beautiful America. It stated that the club was chosen "for devising constructive alternatives to the proposed transmountain highway across the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, thus preventing the bulldozer from ever intruding into wilderness beauty."

Four years after the Wilderness Act was approved, Congress passed the National Trails System Act on October 2, 1968. This law made the A.T. a national scenic trail under federal protection. The act promotes the enjoyment and appreciation of trails while encouraging greater public access. National scenic trails are to be continuous, extended routes of outdoor recreation within protected corridors. The first two established under the National Trails System Act were the Appalachian and the Pacific Crest trails. These trails wind through some of the nation's most striking natural beauty. The A.T. became part of the National Park Service as the Appalachian National Scenic Trail; the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) manages the trail day-to-day. Though the A.T. has existed since the 1920s and was declared completed in 1937, it is only recently that the trail is all on public land.

In 1968, Bernard Elias created the first edition of *100 Favorite Trails of the Great Smokies and the Carolina Blue Ridge* which sold for one dollar. The map was printed by The Stephens Press, owned by George Stephens, who had been president of CMC in 1931.

During World War II, Elias became a Navy photographer, which led to a career with Kodak, first in Hollywood and later in Rochester. He worked on the first edition and edited the map almost yearly until 1987; it is now a valuable keepsake of CMC history.

The map was advertised in the CMC *Let's Go* as "an ideal stocking stuffer." It was available from the club secretary



Elias Bernard

for one dollar plus ten cents for mailing. By the 1970s, some 12,000 copies were printed annually, and all were sold before the end of the year.

From the club's inception, CMC newsletters included the names of new members. I remember that my husband and I were welcomed in 2001 in *Let's Go*; this practice stopped once most new members joined online.

That's how we know that Art Loeb, an experienced hiker and leading industrialist, joined CMC in 1964. He died much too young in 1968. The Art Loeb Trail was dedicated only a few months after Art Loeb's death. Months? Now, creating a trail on public land would take years, how did this official dedication happen so quickly?

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

To join Carolina Mountain Club go to : www.carolinamountainclub.org. Click on "Join CMC" on the right side. Follow the instructions. For all address and email changes, log in, select "Modify Profile", make changes and click on "Update Member" or email Dennis Bass at dbass3607@gmail.com. Your email changes will be automatically reflected in eNews delivery.

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