



Carolina Mountain Club

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MST Gathering of Friends

by Marcia Bromberg

Announcing the Friends of the Mountains-to-Sea Trail annual Gathering of Friends March 26th-29th in Surf City, NC. Have you ever wondered about what the MST looks like when it leaves the mountains? Are you ready for a mini-vacation at the shore? Then the 2020 Gathering of Friends is where you need to be!

Every year FMST member from across the state gather to renew friendships, swap trail tales, learn about what's new with the MST and, of course, hike. Surf City is part of the new Coastal Crescent portion of trail that takes hikers through fascinating forests filled with exotic carnivorous plants and native long leaf pines as well as a section right on the beach.



The annual meeting portion of the gathering includes interesting speakers and an update on trail activities. But most of the weekend is for fun--hikes, paddles, excursions, entertainment and visits to local points of interest. To learn more about the Friends go to <https://mountaintoseatrail.org/> and click on the link for the Gathering.

See you in Surf City (where it's "two to one")!

CMC Members - Albeit Wearing Other Hats - Win Top Honor from NC State Parks

By Mike Williams

John Whitehouse, Jake Blood and the Burnsville hiking club they formed 10 years ago to maintain neglected trails in the Black Mountains have received the 2019 Locke Craig Award for work at Mt. Mitchell State Park. The cited work includes a major rehab project on the CMC's MST section of the Mt. Mitchell Trail.



When Burnsville residents Jake Blood, a retired Air Force Lt. Col. who worked as an intelligence officer, and John Whitehouse, a retired nuclear engineer (Phd), joined CMC in the mid-2000s, they quickly became active members of the club's trail crews, work they truly enjoyed. So much so that Whitehouse went on to become the Monday Crew Chief, while Blood served a term on the Board of the Friends of the MST.

As much as they enjoyed that work, however, both were frustrated that CMC did not maintain most of the trail network that covers the Black Mountains, the tallest mountain chain in the Eastern U.S. Far afield and very rugged, the Blacks require a huge investment of time and energy when it comes to trail work. Simply hauling tools to the Crest can require a 3-hour hike and a brutal climb of 3,000 feet.

But as Burnsville residents, Whitehouse and Blood quickly fell in love with the Black Mountain Crest Trail. The 26-mile-long track runs from Cane River Gap above the Big Ivy to Bolen's Creek near Burnsville, along the way taking hikers over a dozen peaks topping 6,000 feet. The path offers spectacular rock formations, stunning views to as far away as the Charlotte skyline and an immersion in verdant high-altitude spruce/fir forests akin to those of Canada. For all its unique beauty, though, the Black Mountain Crest Trail in 2010 was in terrible shape, largely neglected by the US Forest Service due to staffing shortages. Some sections were so overgrown that hikers could not see their feet; in other places trekkers had to use their arms to part 10-foot-tall curtains of briars. To remedy this situation, Whitehouse and Blood eventually joined with another Burnsville hiker, Alan Orovitz, and formed a Burnsville-based hiking club, the NC High Peaks Trail Association. Now, a decade later, the club has 150 members – many of whom also belong to, hike with, and do volunteer trail work for CMC. Best of all, longtime hikers will tell you the trails of the Black Mountains are in the best shape they have seen in decades.

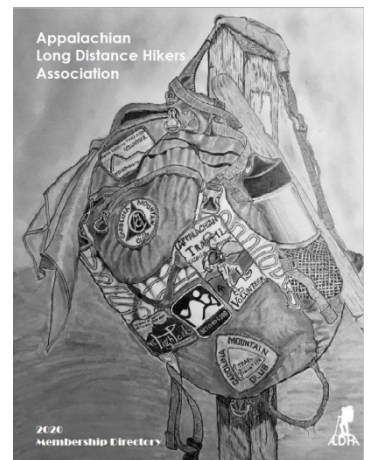
Congratulations to Rocko Smucker

The Appalachian Long Distance Hikers Association (ALDHA) has used a Rocko Smucker drawing for the cover of its 2020 Membership Directory. More information about the ALDHA (1800 members) can be found at aldha.org.

From the Membership Directory:

THE FRONT COVER

Many thanks to Rocko Smucker for the use of his artwork. Rocko has been a trail maintainer with the Carolina Mountain Club for sixteen years. The CMC is responsible for 94 miles of the A.T., from Davenport Gap, TN to Spivey Gap, NC. The drawing is a scene of his backpack resting on an A.T. post while he widened narrow-tread in a meadow on his A.T. section from Sam's Gap to Street Gap.



A.T. VOLUNTEER NEWSLETTER & SPECIAL OFFER

by Alivia Acosta

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy started publishing "[The Register](#)" newsletter and blog again for A.T. volunteers. The Register serves as a platform for sharing A.T. management information, reminders for A.T. maintainers, a support mechanism for sharing information between volunteers, and a notification system for upcoming volunteer training events.

In the current issue of the newsletter, A.T. volunteers will find an opportunity to get the [A.T. Guthook Guide](#) smartphone app for free when they sign up before February 14. The Guthook guide is like having a map, a streamlined guidebook, and a place to find crowd-sourced information on the Trail. ATC Regional Director Morgan Somerville says of the app, "it's an asset that volunteers will find useful." People with interest in getting the bi-monthly The Register newsletter sent to their inbox in the future can use the subscribe button in the upper left corner of the current issue.

Call for New Hike Leaders!

by Brenda Worley

Have you ever thought about becoming a hike leader? If so, contact me, Brenda Worley at bjdworley@gmail.com or Bruce Bente at bbente@bellsouth.net. Either of us will get you started. You will receive lots of support and much appreciation. Almost all of our hike leaders want to continue leading after their first experience. It is a great way to give to the community and your hiking club!

Rotary Clubs in Western North Carolina are Planning an A.T. Hiking Day

by Steve Pierce

The Rotary Clubs in Western North Carolina are planning an A.T. hiking day on Saturday, April 18. Their plan is to have Rotarians hike sections of the A.T. in NC and along the NC/TN border on the same day. The Rotarians planning the event are reaching out to hiking clubs in WNC that might be interested in hiking a section of the A.T. on that day.

If you are a CMC member AND a member of a Rotary Club, please contact Steve Pierce at stevepierce50@gmail.com to talk about the project. You will likely have heard about the A.T. Day through your club.

If you are a CMC member, NOT a member of a Rotary Club and you would like to hike that day, contact Steve Pierce at stevepierce50@gmail.com for more information.

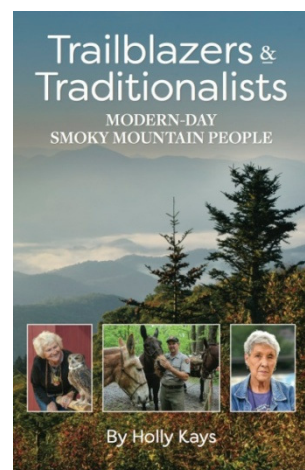
Thanks for your interest and I hope to see some CMC members on the A.T. Saturday, April 18.

Book Review

Trailblazers & Traditionalists: Modern-day Smoky Mountain People by Holly Kays
Published by The Smoky Mountain News, 192 pages, \$15.95
Reviewed by Danny Bernstein

Holly Kays is one of the best outdoor writers I know. She writes for the Smoky Mountain News, www.smokymountainnews.com, the weekly paper which covers all the news west of Asheville. Although Kays is an all-around journalist of a small-town newspaper, she covers and loves the outdoors. As part of her beat, she interviews many people in the Smokies area. And now, she's chosen and compiled 33 feature stories in a book.

The book divides the interviews from The First People, modern Cherokees who've done so much for their community, to people specializing in trails, water and plants. Just a look at the table of contents told me that I must know some of these selected. I started with Jennifer Pharr Davis, who held the record for the fastest person on the Appalachian Trail from 2011 to 2015. Instead of replaying Davis' accomplishment on the A.T., Kays focuses on her Mountains-to-Sea Trail hike in 2017. It's more recent and more relevant to Davis' life now with two young children. Next, I read about Mary Ellen Hammond and Jim Parham, the publishers of my first two guidebooks and the founders and owners of Milestone Press. The chapter on them emphasizes how they work together on putting out biking and hiking books. Parham has written several biking books while Hammond focused on the editing and production side of things. Since Kays wrote these profiles over several years, she recently contacted her respondents while putting the book together to see what had changed in their lives. Hammond and Parham sold Milestone Press (and the rights to publish my books) to the University of Georgia Press. It remains an imprint of UGA Press. Then I went on to read about people whom I know but probably don't know me. About 18 years ago, I met Jerry Wolfe of the Qualla boundary at the Museum of the Cherokee Indian. At the time, Wolfe gathered museum visitors and gave them an introductory lecture about his life as a tribal member, his time at the federally run Cherokee Boarding School, his army service, his craft as a stonemason and his work as an instructor at the Oconaluftee Job Corps Conservation Center in Cherokee. All of this came back to me when I read Kays' interview with Wolfe. She captured his life so beautifully less than a year before Wolfe died at age 93. If you only read one interview, Wolfe's story is the one.



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

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reflected in eNews delivery.

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