

Beth Ransom - Swimming, boating and hiking April 2015
by Danny Bernstein



Sometimes a child leads a parent to a good thing. Beth Ransom wouldn't have discovered CMC if it wasn't her son, Garrett. And all the way from Tampa, where they live with husband, John and younger son, Watson.

Beth Ransom, born in Meridian, Mississippi, grew in Biloxi and Gulfport. If you google *August 17, 1969*, you'll get two prominent events: Woodstock and Hurricane Camille. To Beth who was eight years old at the time, Hurricane Camille will always be the most important experience. The family lived without running water or electricity for two to three weeks. Since they didn't have radio or TV, Woodstock never registered as an epic event.

Beth is proud to be a native Mississippian but she's always liked change. When her father, who worked for a power company, was transferred to Birmingham when she was in high

school, she welcomed the move. In fact, she drove her mum and brother to their new home. They were broken up about having to move, but not her.

Her father took young Beth to a coal powered plant and it made a real impression on her. She loved chemistry in high school, partly because of a great teacher. When she started college at Ole Miss, she declared Chem Eng as her major. Not surprisingly, she was one of only four women in the class and in 1983, three women graduated in the major.

Beth knew she didn't want to spend her days at a desk. Armed with a valuable degree, Beth started working in paper mills and traveled a great deal for her company. She married and moved to Charlotte where her two children were born. Charlotte is a corporate town with good childcare and support for working professional women. When the Ransom family moved to Tampa, the atmosphere wasn't as welcoming to professional women or to engineers looking to work in large manufacturing plants. She decided that working outside the home didn't make sense anymore and became active in several charitable organizations.

Beth's active life in Tampa and North Carolina



In high school, she played tennis and kept it up until about seven years ago. When she worked, she ran at 5:30 am and rode bikes. Now in Tampa, she sails and races in a sailing league. She's entered Triathlons. She loves open-water swimming. In Tampa, you can swim in the gulf from end of March to October.

But as much as she loves her outdoor life in Tampa, she's always looked lovingly at the North Carolina mountains. Her boys went to summer camp here. After she'd dropped them off for the summer,

"I would dread going back to hot Tampa." She took them to Grandfather Mountain. "I really liked being out in the mountains."

However, it wasn't until Garrett needed to do some community service that the family discovered CMC. Garrett started going with the Friday trail crew. "They gave Garrett, still in high school, life stories. And they stopped in Hot Springs for pie." Let's not forget the pies. "They always said to come by when he was in town." While working with the Friday crew, Garrett met Wayne Steinmetz, who specializes in rock building. It turns out that Wayne was one of the authors of Garrett's college chemistry book.

By this time, the family had a second home in Biltmore Lake, which allowed them to come up quite often. Beth started hiking with CMC. Beth and Garrett joined the Saturday Wilderness crew. They did the SB6K, and recently finished the Pisgah 400. In addition, she finished the AT90. "My younger son is not that interested in hiking," Beth says.

What is the one hike you would take a visitor to WNC, if you knew they could keep up with you? It would have to be Black Balsam to Shining Rock. Black Balsam is a little busy but then you lose the crowds. You can watch the rain from Tennent Mountain while enjoying just a little mist around you. In the fall, there's a sea of blueberries.

"I certainly appreciate learning about trail maintenance. As I hike, I can hear Becky Smucker, saying 'stay on the high side of the trail.' But mostly, I appreciate the friendships I made in CMC."