

Talking with Becky Smucker, our new CMC President - 12/05/07

Danny Bernstein

There hasn't been a CMC female president for over ten years. In fact, Becky is only the fifth woman president since 1931, when CMC first started keeping records.



How did you join CMC?

“My first hiking experience here was an overnight trip up to LeConte Lodge with Asheville Parks and Recreation. One of the leaders told me about CMC. Now I hike regularly on weekends. It’s important to me as R&R and exercise.” Becky explains that she had had knee surgery and needed to get away from asphalt sports – tennis, running... - away from hard court sports. “That first hike was so good that I came back.”

Becky and her husband Rocko moved here in 1979 from Northern Indiana, where she had taught music. Her first job in Asheville was as a manager for the French Broad Co-op. One of the attractions of this area was hiking. They raised a daughter and son in Asheville.

Favorite Hike

The Tanawha trail. It’s a good long one with terrific variety - it’s open and wooded with a mixture of improved and undisturbed land. It has the Linn Cove viaduct, a boardwalk, a rocky section, and lovely woods.

You finished the South Beyond 6000?

I keep a log of hikes. That’s when I discovered I had done 22 out of 40 SB6K (South Beyond 6000). The challenge obsessed me. I received my patch in 2006.

Where would you take a friend who had never been to this area, independent of distance or difficulty?

It would have to be a view spot. Hemphill Bald or Charlie Bunion in the Smokies.

Becky as Student

Becky retired from selling real estate. In fact, she helped us sell and buy a house in Asheville. Now, she is a student at UNCA, working on a post-baccalaureate degree in Biology.

“I’m starting from scratch in the Natural Sciences. Biology is such a dynamic field now; it’s reflected in the dynamic faculty. I enjoy hiking to identify and learn about plant habitats. For example on the Palmetto Trail

recently, I saw Lycopodium, commonly known as ground cedar or turkey foot; it's a seedless vascular plant. The sporangia were ripening and there was a cloud of pollen. Then on Monday, I went to class and looked at the spores under a microscope."

A few years after she joined CMC, Becky became treasurer for CMC for three years. The position sounded interesting to her. After she left the council for a couple of years, she was asked to be Vice President.

What do you feel is your Challenge as President?

"My challenge is to broaden the base of active members, to attract different ages, lifestyles, and type of participants, including episodic participants, i.e. activities for those who can only participate once in a while."

For example, Becky mentioned families with children who would benefit from being on the trail. "Not all activities should be physically strenuous. We should have activities for those who don't have time to stay in shape for 10 to 12 miles but who can benefit from challenges. There should be more variety in hikes, maintenance, and social activities."

But she stressed that "I have the greatest respect for what has been done over the years. I don't want to lose that. We need to keep our core activities. CMC has a terrific group of people. I'm looking forward to a good, challenging couple of years. I'm following in sound footsteps. The organization is in good condition and I'm building on strength."