



**Carolina Mountain Club**

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May 2021

## **Meet Rich Evans, the Nanny who became a Trail Maintainer Extraordinaire**

By Bobbi Powers

Rich and I sat at a picnic table at the BRP Visitor Center for this interview, and for 1 ½ hours I listened to his stories. This is a man whose life cannot be summed up in one word or even a few paragraphs. He told me his “life was a blur before joining CMC in 2012.” However, as we talked, he mentioned many diverse aspects of his pre-CMC life which I found fascinating.

In a nutshell, here is his life pre-CMC: He was drafted into the Army and later became a recruiter for the Army Reserve and Army National Guard. He graduated from college with a degree in elementary education; his teaching career lasted one year. He worked in an architectural firm and later in pest control in Tucson, Arizona, for 11 years until his wife died, at which point his step-daughter asked him to come to Charlotte to be nanny for his 6-month-old granddaughter Sarah. He was her full-time nanny until she entered pre-school at 2 ½ years. He was 62 and decided to retire.



In 2007, during his time as a nanny, he had a physical which was a wake-up call. He was diagnosed as “morbidly obese” (his words), borderline diabetic, had high blood pressure, and an EKG determined he had had a heart attack. He started walking, starting with one block and working up to 8 miles. When Sarah started pre-school, he moved to Wisconsin and stayed with his sister and got serious about changing his life. He started walking in the neighborhood in the summer of 2008. He decided to walk the Appalachian Trail. He said, “I had no clue about the A.T. until I read a book about hiking.” He got a backpack and started adding weight to it. While wearing the heavy pack, he was often asked if he were training for something. His standard reply was, “Yes, I’m training for old age; it’s not for sissies.” In March of 2009 he started his hike and met Bob on his first day, a trail buddy who hiked with him the whole trail and quite literally kept Rich from quitting innumerable times, finishing in October 2009. Then Rich (trail name Pacer) hiked it all the next year, cutting a month off his time!

While on the A.T. he learned about Trail Days in Damascus, Virginia, attended three years in a row and was hooked on trail maintaining. He said, “I moved down here in 2012 just to do this.” He read books and learned much from his first volunteer job with the Waynesville Crew under Larry Sobil. Rich admires Larry for his dedication to the trail and for his mentoring. “Larry made me realize I had a home with CMC.” As Rich’s knowledge grew, so did his realization that more crews were needed. He co-created the Remote Overnight Crew and Secondary Trail Maintainer Program. He created the Art Loeb Crew, Wilderness Response Team, and Section Rovers Crew. He does trail maintenance Monday through Friday and often a weekend day. He’s out there about 30 hours each week and interacts with about 45 – 60 maintainers on the various crews each week. In 2016 he was awarded the BRP Volunteer of the Year, a VERY big deal. He says, “Trail work is my thing. I am happy being a crew member, or mentoring, or leading if needed.”

This admitted introvert and minimalist lives in a one-room apartment with no computer or microwave and recently gave up his big-tube tv in favor of a lightweight flat screen, but he does have a smart phone. He drinks coffee with protein powder for breakfast and eats an apple for lunch on the trail. Dinner is usually a humongous salad, and occasionally a frozen pizza. His one vice: popcorn with ½ stick of butter most evenings.

He does all this while combatting prostate cancer. In 2020 he had surgery and did nothing for 8 weeks during recovery. (This coincided with the pandemic shutdown of all trail work.) When the trails re-opened, Rich was back out there. Last fall while undergoing an 8-week round of radiation, he made sure the appointments were early morning so he could get to his beloved trail maintaining. The radiation and medications he’s on cause fatigue. He says, “I’m starting over again and working hard to build my strength.”

He is much loved by those with whom he maintains trails. They rave about his patience, knowledge, mentoring, and humor.

Rich Evans is a man on a mission. Go, Rich, go!

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## Hikers: Beware of Blue Ridge Parkway, Mountains-to-Sea Trail I-40 tunnel, dangers

Karen Chávez

Asheville Citizen Times April 20, 2021



Trail maintainers on the Mountains-to-Sea Trail along the Blue Ridge Parkway are warning hikers about a possible danger in a tunnel that runs under I-40 on the trail in East Asheville.

“This is a public safety issue,” said Les Love, of Weaverville. He is the section crew leader of the MST along this section of the parkway for the Carolina Mountain Club.

He said the large tunnel, which is on a highly popular section of the MST between the Folk Art Center at Milepost 382 and the Parkway Visitor Center and Headquarters building at MP 384, has not only become unsightly with offensive graffiti and mounds of trash, but he believes it’s a safety hazard.



“There has been a lot of trash dumped there, along with drug paraphernalia,” he said, adding that trail maintainers have seen drug use and sometimes people sleeping in their cars.

“It has caused people to not want to go through there, and this is one of the most popular places on the trail,” said Love, who has been a volunteer trail maintainer with the CMC for more than 20 years.

The section of trail is well-used since it is easy to access from the Parkway Visitor Center. It starts on the MST trail that is also a TRACK Trail, one designed for children with self-guided brochures to help them explore and understand the natural world.

After starting on this loop trail to the left, it enters a small tunnel under the parkway, and then comes to an intersection, Love said. By continuing to the right, the trail leads back to the visitor center for a 1-mile loop.

But turning left at this junction to the Folk Art Center will soon lead to the larger tunnel, which has become an illegal garbage dump, often filled with bags of trash and discarded furniture.



After emerging from the I-40 tunnel he said, the MST crosses Azalea Road, then railroad tracks, before entering a field with cows, and through a fence – once on entering the field, once on leaving.

Love said this section of the MST – an 1,100-mile-long trail that cuts across North Carolina, starting at Clingmans Dome in Great Smoky Mountains National Park, crisscrossing the Blue Ridge Parkway, and ends at the coast at Jockey’s Ridge State Park – is very popular since it offers tourists a quick hike and glimpse of the forest after the shop for crafts or use of the bathrooms at one of the two visitor centers.

But it is an area at the crossroads of several jurisdictions – the parkway, N.C. State Parks and the nonprofit Friends of the Mountains-to-Sea Trail, Asheville city,

Buncombe County, the railroad and the N.C. Department of Transportation, which makes patrolling the area a sticky situation. The trail also crosses private property and abuts Camp Cedar Cliff.

Leesa Brandon, spokeswoman with the parkway, said the tunnel is on National Park Service property. After an inquiry from the Citizen Times about the possible dangers in the I-40 tunnel around Azalea Road and Hardesty Lane, Brandon said a ranger inspected the area but did not find a “homeless camp.”

Rangers do not routinely patrol the area.

NCDOT officials also investigated the area in late March and found no “active homeless camps within our right of way,” said spokesman David Uchiyama.

“The trash found during our review is located outside the NCDOT right of way, as well. If folks feel threatened, endangered or witness criminal activity, they should always contact local law enforcement,” he said.

Love said the county does pick up garbage there, but it quickly returns. Polly McDaniel, city spokeswoman, said the area in question is not within city limits. Buncombe County Sheriff’s Office is responsible for law enforcement on the county roads.

### **Rerouting MST an ‘easy fix?’**

Love and other trail managers, including Kate Dixon, executive director of the nonprofit Friends of the Mountains-to-Sea Trail, believe that keeping hikers safe should be a top priority and that a seemingly easy solution would be to reroute the MST for 130 feet away from the tunnel and up to the parkway bridge.

Victor Mariano, of South Asheville, a section maintainer for the Friends of the MST and a member of CMC, oversees trail maintenance surrounding the I-40 tunnel.

“When I first took over, there was no graffiti,” said Mariano, referring to three years ago.

But things quickly worsened, he said. People began tagging the tunnel, inside and out, dumping garbage, and vandalized or ripped up signs at the entrance to the privately owned field saying to keep dogs on leash, and more people began routinely living out of their cars, parked on Hardesty Lane.

There are other issues with the tunnel, he said.

“It’s isolated, dark, wet and muddy and you don’t know what to expect on either side. There is an issue with waste water coming off the road that crosses the trail, and I have had to fix the broken handrail several times,” he said.

The parkway is the most visited unit of the National Park Service. Last year the 469-mile roadway that starts in Virginia and ends in Cherokee, drew 14.1 million visitors, even though services were strictly curtailed due to the COVID-19 pandemic shutdowns, bathrooms and campgrounds were closed, and seasonal staffing was cut back.

And the Pisgah District, which includes the Asheville area, is the most popular section of the parkway.

During the crowds searching for an outdoor getaway last year, Mariano rehabilitated the MST from the visitor center to the I-40 tunnel, cleaning it, removing discarded hypodermic needles and replacing signs.

“I was there every day in the fall for at least month. You see different things happening,” he said.

Tim Brady, Camp Cedar Cliff director, who leads cleanups in the area, had also alerted Dixon to the increase in discarded needles and possible dangers. Dixon contacted the Carolina Mountain Club.

“Our proposal was to get the trail out of there. Take the trail down off the hill onto the parkway, about 150 feet from the trail. Then people could cross over I-40 on the parkway bridge. The trail can then rejoin the trail on the north side of the farmer’s field. We could eliminate multiple issues by using the parkway,” Mariano said.

“It’s something the CMC could do within a couple of days with our crew,” he said. There is already a “walking path,” on the parkway, similar to others like the French Broad River crossing, where hikers must walk along a parkway bridge for .2 of a mile before getting back onto the MST.

“We care very deeply about the hiker experience on the MST,” Dixon said, adding that the MST Friends group is in favor of the reroute, but would need direct authority and resources from the parkway before taking on the project.

However, since the trail sits on federal land, a NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) review is required before any land is disturbed, a process that can take a couple of years.

Brandon, of the parkway, said she understands the concerns for hiker safety and “will look into the issue with CMC in upcoming work planning discussions,” adding that “any conversations regarding potential reroutes would ultimately be initiated and led by state MST officials.”

Mariano said he doesn’t recommend people stop hiking in the area, but just to use caution, as when hiking anywhere.



“Being aware of parked cars, be aware of people loitering or hanging out. Use caution when crossing the railroad tracks. Use caution when crossing Azalea Road,” Mariano said.

“I don’t want to scare people, but you just never know. I want people to be aware.”

## More CMC Saturday Trail Work

by Les Love

THANK YOU to everyone who came on Saturday April 3rd to Big Bald for the Quarterly Work Day. We had 62 people and it was a gorgeous day. We will continue with that project June 5th, National Trails Day.

Several people asked if you could do more Saturday work days than quarterly. Yes you can. Rich Evans and Jan Onan have started the Section Rovers Crew that meets either on a Tuesday or a Saturday each week for the purpose of Section Maintainers (MST, AT or Secondary Trails) to get to know each other and learn how to correct issues on their sections of trail. If you would like to be on their email list, let me know. The next Saturdays they will be working are April 17th and May 8th.

Also, if you have an interest in adopting a Secondary Trail Section, we have a few openings as shown on the attached spreadsheet.

Trail #	Mgr.	Trail Name	Map #	Miles	Assigned Maint Crew	Description	Sect. Maintainer(s)	Maintainer Email
2950	PRD	Art Loeb Trail	146	3.9	Art Loeb Crew	Daniel Boone Scout Cmp - Deep Gap (N)	Rich Evans	richard.erman.evans@gmail.com
2960	PRD	Art Loeb Trail	146	2.9	Art Loeb Crew	Deep Gap (N) to Shining Rock Gap	Robin Kane	rknmtns@yahoo.com
2970	PRD	Art Loeb Trail	146	2.0	Art Loeb Crew	Shining Rock Gap to Ivestor Gap		
2980	PRD	Art Loeb Trail	146	2.6	Art Loeb Crew	Ivestor Gap to Black Balsam Rd 816	Susan Hutson (Observer)	picassue48@gmail.com
						End of 816 parking area to Art Loeb Trail	Robert Bolt Susan Hutson (Observer)	otherob@inbox.com
2990	PRD	Art Loeb Trail Spur	108	0.6	Art Loeb Crew			picassue48@gmail.com
3000	PRD	Art Loeb Trail	146	0.4	Art Loeb Crew	Silver Mine on MST to BRP	Ross Akin (Observer)	rossakin@bellsouth.net
							Ross Akin (Observer)	rossakin@bellsouth.net;
3005	PRD	Art Loeb Trail	146	1.4	Art Loeb Crew	BRP to Farlow Gap	Rich Bowerman	pcdbowerman@hotmail.com
3010	PRD	Art Loeb Trail	146	1.4	Art Loeb Crew	Farlow Gap to Deep Gap (S)		
							John, Anne & Thomas Barrington	john.barrington@furnman.edu
3015	PRD	Art Loeb Trail	146	2.5	Art Loeb Crew	Deep Gap (S) to Gloucester Gap		
							Paul Brickell, Daisy Karasek & Karen Lachow (Observers)	pabrickell@gmail.com daisytk@yahoo.com
3020	PRD	Art Loeb Trail	146	3.5	Art Loeb Crew	Gloucester Gap to Butter Gap		heyk127@hotmail.com
3025	PRD	Art Loeb Trail	146	2.4	Art Loeb Crew	Butter Gap to Cat Gap	Bill & Pat Miller	patnbill@morrisbb.net
3030	PRD	Art Loeb Trail	146	2.9	Art Loeb Crew	Cat Gap to Neil Gap	Phil McCullough	phil_mccul@msn.com
						Neil Gap to Davidson River Campground		
3035	PRD	Art Loeb Trail	146	3.4	Art Loeb Crew		Jim Grecni	jgrecni@gmail.com
3100	PRD	Bad Fork	323	2.0	Thursday	Wash Creek Rd. to Bent Creek Gap	Brenda Worley	bjdworley@gmail.com
3110	PRD	Barnett Branch	618	3.1	Pisgah Friday	Black Mtn. Tr. to MST	Jennifer Heaslip	jen_fence@hotmail.com
3140	PRD	Buck Spring Lodge	440	0.1	Pisgah Friday	House Site	Jim & Sharon Spicer	js15@earthlink.net
3150	PRD	Buck Spring	104	0.8	Pisgah Friday	US-276 to MST	Jennifer Heaslip	jen_fence@hotmail.com
3160	PRD	Case Camp Ridge	119	1.7	Pisgah Friday	BRP to Seniard Ridge Tr.	Eleanor Mockridge	edmockri@gmail.com
3170	PRD	Cat Gap Bypass	120A	0.4	Pisgah Friday	Shortens Cat Gap Loop	Donna Lanning	dblanning@bellsouth.net
						Frying Pan Tower Trail to BRP Ent.		
3215	PRD			1.8	Pisgah Friday	MT. Pisgah Campground to Fire Tower	Brandon Altamose	baltemose@brpfoundation.org
3225	PRD	Bridges Camp Gap Trail	607	1.0	Wilderness	Greasy Cove Tr. to MST	Tom & Linda Lucha	luchat@bellsouth.net
								lmluchanc@gmail.com
3230	PRD	Graveyard Ridge Connector	356A	0.4	Thursday	Graveyard Fields Loop to MST		
3233	PRD	Graveyard Fields Loop	358	2.0	Thursday	BRP to Upper Falls Tr. to BRP	Kit Ogburn & Ron Walther	kioggi@aol.com rown22@aol.com
3235	PRD	Upper Falls	358A	0.8	Thursday	Graveyard Fields Loop to Upper Falls	Kit Ogburn & Ron Walther	kioggi@aol.com rown22@aol.com
3237	PRD	MST Access Trls.	358B	0.2	Thursday	MST to Graveyard Fields Loop		
3240	PRD	Graveyard Ridge	356	3.4	Pisgah Friday	MST Dark Prong to MST (South Only)	Brendon Voelker	brendon.voelker@outlook.com
						Loop within Cat Gap Loop to John Rock		ilenearonson@yahoo.com
3250	PRD	John Rock	365	1.8	Pisgah Friday		Ilene & Johnathan Aronson	aronson@aronsonlawfirm.com
3260	PRD	Laurel Mountain Connector	110	0.3	Thursday	Pilot Rock Tr to Laurel Mtn Tr	Hugh Hensleigh	hchensleigh@gmail.com
3270	PRD	Laurel Mountain	121	1.4	Thursday	MST to Laurel Mtn Connector Tr	Hugh Hensleigh	hchensleigh@gmail.com
						Fish Hatchery Parking to Butter Gap Tr.		
3280	PRD	Cat Gap Loop	120	4.4	Pisgah Friday		Jan & Kevin Onan	janonan59@gmail.com
3290	PRD	Moore Cove	318	0.7	Pisgah Friday	US-276 to Moore Cove Falls	Rene Roberge	peanutroberge@yahoo.com

3296	PRD	MST Access at Bearpen Gap	442	0.6	Art Loeb Crew	BRP at Bearpen Gap to MST at Rough Butt	Carolyn Pilgrim	crpilgm@gmail.com
3300	PRD	Mt. Pisgah	355	1.3	Thursday	Mt. Pisgah Parking to Mt. Pisgah	John Busse	jfbusse@hotmail.com
3340	PRD	Pilot Rock	321	1.2	Thursday	MST at Pisgah Inn to Thompson Crk Tr.	Till Dohse	till.dohse@gmail.com
3370	PRD	Sam Knob	617	1.4	Pisgah Friday	FS 816 parking to Flat Laurel Creek Trail	Mike & Kim Honer	honebone@earthlink.net
3370A	PRD	Sam Knob Summit	617A	0.7	Pisgah Friday	Sam Knob Trail to Sam Knob	John Turley	johnsturleygeo@gmail.com
3380	PRD	Seniard Ridge	609	3.5	Thursday	Case Ridge Gap to BRP	Sallye Sanders & Adrianne Chang	sallye_sanders@yahoo.com acjp9349@yahoo.com
3385	PRD	Sleepy Gap	339	0.9	Thursday	MST to FS Rd 479M	Victor Mariano	mke1vxm@gmail.com
3400	PRD	Thompson Creek	602	2.4	Thursday	Yellow Gap Rd. to Pilot Rock Tr.	Aaron Saft	runningpains@gmail.com
3610	PRD	Big East Fork	357	3.4	Wilderness	Big East Fork Parking to Greasy Cove Tr.	Vance & Ginny Waggener	vance.waggener@yahoo.com gbwagg@gmail.com
3615	PRD	Cold Mountain	141	1.4	Art Loeb Crew	Deep Gap (N) to top of Cold Mountain		
3620	PRD	Fork Mountain	109	6.0	Wilderness	Hwy. 215 to Ivestor Gap Tr.	Michael & Jan Ramos	52miramos@gmail.com
3625	PRD	Greasy Cove	362	3.2	Wilderness	Bridges Camp Tr. to Art Loeb Tr.	Vance & Ginny Waggener	vance.waggener@yahoo.com gbwagg@gmail.com
3640	PRD	Old Butt Knob	332	3.6	Wilderness	Shining Creek Tr. to Shining Rock Gap	Sarah Broughton	sarahebroughton@icloud.com
3645	PRD	Shining Creek	363	3.4	Wilderness	Big East Fork Parking to Shining Rck Gap	Tom Hudson	tomhud21@gmail.com
3705	PRD	Buckeye Gap	126	3.1	Waynesville	MST to Haywood Gap Tr.	Steven Kuni	mffi184@aol.com
3710	PRD	Green Mountain	113	5.0	Waynesville	MST to Hwy 215 at Sunburst Campground		
3715	PRD	Haywood Gap	142	6.0	Waynesville	MST at Haywood Gap to FS Rd. 97	Clayton Cathey	walkersvcenter@yahoo.com

4007	ARD	Big Butt: Walker Knob O/L	161	5.6	Monday	NC197 at Cane River Gap to Walker Knob O/L	John & Sandy Whitehouse	johnwhitehouse@icloud.com sandywhitehouse@ccvn.com
4009	ARD	Firescald Ridge Bypass Trail		1.5	Thursday	Foul weather ridge top bypass trail	Bill Sanderson	recurvearcher57@charter.net
4013	ARD	Douglass Falls Tr.	162	2.5	Friday	MST to Douglas Falls to USFS Rd. 74		
4019	ARD	Fork Ridge Tr. in Shelton Laurel	285	2.0	Monday	FS Rd. 111 to AT		
4022	ARD	Green Ridge Tr in Shelton Laurel	287	3.6	Monday	FS Rd 111 to AT	John Beaudet & Les Love	bodaciousat@gmail.com leslove55@gmail.com
4028	ARD	Hickey Fork Tr. in Shelton Laurel	292	2.3	Monday	FS Rd. 465 to Pounding Mill Tr.	Abbey Malk	abeyrd2@comcast.com
4037	ARD	Jerry Miller Tr. in Shelton Laurel	286	4.5	Monday	FS Rd. 111 to AT at Bear Wallow Gap		
4040	ARD	Lovers Leap Loop: Silver Mine at Hot Springs	308	0.5	Hot Springs	AT to Silver Mine Trailhead	Michael Phiiips	mike@eventecsales.com
4041	ARD	Laurel River Tr.	310	3.6	Thursday	US 25-70 & NC 208 intrscn to French Broad River	Tom Belt	tombelt@icloud.com
4043	ARD	Pounding Mill Tr. in Shelton Laurel	297	2.3	Monday	AT at Camp Creek Bald to Hickey Fork Tr.		
4050	ARD	Pump Gap Loop at Silver Mine & Hot Springs	309	4.2	Hot Springs	From Lovers Leap Trail and return	Mel Skiles	ssskiles@gmail.com
4056	ARD	Round Top Ridge	295	3.1	Asheville Fri	AT to Reservoir Road	Sarah Jones Decker	sarahjonesdecker@gmail.com
4065	ARD	Snowball Tr.	170	3.7	Asheville Fri	Bee Tree Gap to Fire Tower Site	Les Love	leslove55@gmail.com
4068	ARD	Spring Creek Nature Tr. in Hot Springs Park	312	1.2	Hot Springs	Rocky Bluff Picnic Area North	Hot Springs Hiking Club	mary2rob@gmail.com
4071	ARD	Van Cliff Tr. in Hot Springs Park	313	2.6	Hot Springs	Rocky Bluff Picnic Area South	Hot Springs Hiking Club	mary2rob@gmail.com
4074	ARD	White Oak Tr. in Shelton Laurel	293	2.3	Monday	FS Rd. 465 to Pounding Mill Tr.		
3219	BRP	Grassy Knob		0.4	Thursday	Sleepy Gap parking to Grassy Knob summit	Victor Mariano	mke1vxm@gmail.com
3314	BRP	Mt Pisgah Campground to Mt Pisgah Trail		1.6	Thursday	Mt Pisgah Campground to Mt Pisgah Tr	Ken Hummel	kenhummel60@gmail.com
4010	BRP	Craggy Pinnacle Tr.		0.7	Asheville Fri		Michael Phiiips	mike@eventecsales.com
4016	BRP	Folk Art Center		0.3	Thursday		Marianne Newman (Observer) Richard Figura	mariannewman12@gmail.com rafigura107@gmail.com
4047	BRP	BRP Visitor Center Nature Trail Loop East Side		0.3	Thursday	Visitor Center east thru tunnel to MST	Joann Tulip	tulipinn@aol.com
4048	BRP	BRP Visitor Center Nature Trail Loop West side		0.5	Thursday	Visitor Center west to MST @74A	Ross Akin (observer) Richard Figura	rossakin@bellsouth.net rafigura107@gmail.com
4053	BRP	Rattlesnake Lodge Access at Tanbark Tunnel		1.0	Free Rangr		John Busse & David Hyde	jfbusse@hotmail.com djhyde777@gmail.com
4072	BRP	Waterrock Knob Tr.		0.5	Waynesville		Richard Figura	rafigura107@gmail.com

If you want to get on one of the email lists of the CMC crews that go out Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, let me know and I'll get you connected with them.

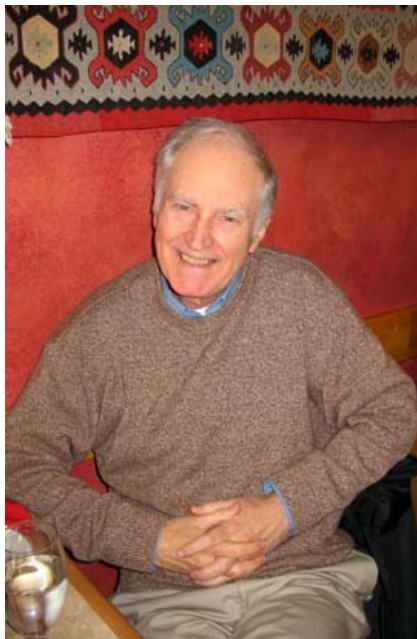


There's lots of work to be done and we want to give you every opportunity to get involved.

Thanks so much!  
Les

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## **Gerry McNabb in Memoriam**



Gerry McNabb, past CMC president – twice - and accomplished photographer, passed away April 30, 2021.

If you go to the IMDB (Internet Movie Data Base) website and check out *Being There* with Peter Sellers and go all the way down the cast list, you will see Gerry's name. The movie was filmed at the Biltmore Estate in the late 70s.

Gerry was born in Dallas, a seventh generation Texan. After graduating from Dartmouth in 1956, he went into the Navy. Instead of traveling all over the world on a ship, as he had hoped, he spent his two years at the Pentagon. "Sometimes I would take a mail pouch to the White House. That was the extent of my traveling." Gerry worked in advertising and the creative arts his whole career. He always said that he learned a lot about photography from Bernard Elias.

Gerry joined CMC in 1963 and became president in 1971. He remembers that at that time, the club did the quarterly schedule at board meetings. "We could fill up most of the three months of hikes with people right in the room," Gerry recalls. He instituted Wednesday hikes to incorporate a group of hikers from Hendersonville.

The club also had slide shows every quarter. Members would bring a few slides of their vacations and it was another chance for people to get together. Serious photographers like Bernard Elias, Bill Kirkman and Gerry were the highlight of these shows.

Gerry moved to Austin, Texas in 1980 and eventually found his way to the Sierra Club. He was quite taken by Paula, the Chapter president, and they married in 1994.

When Gerry and Paula retired in 2000, they moved to Asheville and joined CMC again. Gerry was elected CMC president for the second time in 2005. Gerry and Paula became Honorary life members, the highest award that CMC bestows on its members.

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## 100 Favorite Trails Challenge

The 100 Favorite Trails Challenge is “live” on the CMC website. Check out this newest challenge based on the CMC/GMSA *100 Favorite Trails of the Smokies and the Carolina Blue Ridge* map.

Here is the direct link to the challenge: [100 Favorite Trails Challenge](https://www.carolinamountainclub.org/index.cfm/do/pages.view/id/397/page/100-Favorite-Trails-Challenge). You will find complete details, instructions and a hike recording template. Download the hike template for easy recording of completed tracks. Get started today for an adventure in hiking.

<https://www.carolinamountainclub.org/index.cfm/do/pages.view/id/397/page/100-Favorite-Trails-Challenge>

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## CMC Turns 100 in Two Years

by Danny Bernstein

On July 16, 2023, Carolina Mountain Club turns 100 years old. Put that date down on your calendar.



*1Piet's Bench on the MST*

I have taken on the challenge to write the 100-year history of CMC, and no, I am not starting too early. But I’m not starting this endeavor with a blank screen. I am standing on the shoulders of other CMC histories. The most-up-to-date version, written by Peter Steurer, covers the 80 years from 1923 to 2003. I plan to use and expand on his work, and also to write about the last, and most recent twenty years. I am so lucky that Peter is still in the area, active, involved, and supportive of this new history project.

From its shaky start as a chapter of the Appalachian Mountain Club, our story is of its merger with the Carolina Appalachian Trail Conference to the present day where we were voted the Best Hiking Club of WNC by Mountain Xpress. At the beginning, the club offered one hike each week; now we have at least four to six hikes of various levels a week.

The club survived downturns in membership, a shutdown during World War II, and untimely deaths of some of its famous leaders such as Horace Kephart, George Masa and Art Loeb. In the

1930s, CMC had a membership of about 60; now we're up to over a thousand – probably way over a thousand.

In many ways, the history of CMC is the history of hiking and land protection in Western North Carolina. We protected Max Patch from development in the 1980s and spoke out against building the North Shore Road through the most pristine part of Great Smoky Mountains National Park in the 2000s.

We built most of the Appalachian Trail in the South in the 1920s and 1930s. Myron Avery, Chairman of the Board of the Appalachian Trail Conference in the 1930s, came down several times to inspect our section of the A.T., and CMC wanted to make a good impression.

We started building much of the Mountains-to-Sea Trail through the WNC mountains in the 1980s. We are still maintaining and protecting both trails now with trail crews and section maintainers. We have a great story to tell.

### **Why am I taking on this CMC 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary project?**

“We [CMC] succeed because of the mountains we want to enjoy and to protect,” Peter says.

We also succeed because of the people who lead CMC and those who follow: hikers, trail maintainers, and those who work in conservation, education, outreach, and communication, as well as those who document these efforts. This project will be fun, challenging, intriguing and a heck of a lot of work. It has a real deadline – July 16, 2023.

### **How am I writing the CMC history?**

At present, I am going through the CMC *Let's Go* collection available at the North Carolina Room of the Buncombe County Pack Library. It's not easy to get into the NC Room right now. The old newsletters are so fascinating that I am reading every single one of them. At this rate, I may not be finished until the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary!



*2Masa's Grave. Photo by Barbara Morgan*

CMC also has a repository of material at the Special Collections section of the UNC-Asheville library. It is even more difficult to access these materials during the pandemic restrictions, but I hope they loosen up soon.

The book will be published, printed, and distributed in the same manner as the *Mountains-to-Sea Trail Profiles and Maps* Edition 3. The MST book was written by Walter Weber with the help of “the gang”. For the CMC100 project, the gang consists of Peter Steurer, Barbara Morgan, Bruce Bente, and me.

### **It takes a Village (or a Hiking Club)**

Most people that I have approached to ask for their help on this project have been so generous with their time, memories, and artifacts – documents, photos, and other stuff. I can go through library documents all by myself. However this project will only be successful if members come through with photos, documents, recollections, and stories.

But the CMC story is not just the “old stuff” from old timers; I’m interested in your recollection of your first CMC hike or maintenance work and the first time you led a hike, no matter how recently this occurred. Just a paragraph or two is all I need.

Though I can’t promise all these reminiscences will get into the printed book, they will be used in some way. Send me your recollections to me via email.

### **Learning from the Pandemic**

*“This past year has reaffirmed my love of hiking and CMC. The club's rules to ensure everyone's safety were reasonable and didn't keep me from going outdoors in smaller groups on my own. I hiked more of the MST than in previous years because it was closer to home, but also ventured out to the Smokies after those trails opened. I missed the spontaneity of just showing up for a CMC hike on Sunday morning, and keeping track of hikers who signed up for our hikes was an extra chore, but I worked around it and made it work. I'm thankful for our trails and our club more than ever before.”*

Kathy Kyle

*“Due to the pandemic, I chose to hike on less-well-travelled trails. After some thought, I landed on the P400 challenge, which would get me on every trail in the Pisgah Ranger District that I hadn't already been on. I came up with this genius idea right after the pandemic hit, and finished the challenge within one year (given that I was unemployed for most of that time). I thoroughly enjoyed visiting some of the more obscure treasures that Pisgah has to offer. I also hiked a lot in the rain since fewer people are on trail when the weather is less than ideal, and because of that I saw many salamanders and several turtles.”*

Christine Martens

*“The Pandemic has taken us out of the trivialities of our own lives. Because of a chronic back issue, I have almost given up one of my favorite things in life, hiking. But I have adjusted and can still walk, breathe, swim, and be thankful. I think of the people in India*

*now dying as I write this. We could all be affected. I think of what a 17<sup>th</sup> century poet, John Donne said, '...never ask for whom the bell tolls, it tolls for thee.'* ”  
Stuart English

Carolina Mountain Club eNews is published on the first Friday of each month. Send your news to [eNews@carolinamountainclub.org](mailto: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](http://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](mailto:dbass3607@gmail.com). Your email changes will be automatically reflected in eNews delivery.

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