

State of the Club - 2007

It is traditional for CMC Presidents to start the annual meeting with a "State of the Club" report, and I want to begin by telling you that the state of our Club is very good.

Our Club is 10 percent larger than it was this time last year. We have nearly 900 members. Either next year or the year after, we will pass the thousand member mark. We scheduled 185 hikes this year, which attracted over 2300 participants. In the 12 months ending on September 30, 258 individuals put in a total of 13,444 hours on trail maintenance. That's an average of more than 50 hours per individual, which shows how dedicated our trail maintainers are. The Blue Ridge Parkway Headquarter Division recognized that dedication by naming CMC its volunteer of the year.

92 people attend our Second Annual Spring Picnic this year and enjoyed walks in the Arboretum, barbeque and Paula and Gerry McNabb's excellent slide show on hiking in Europe. This event has now become a fixture on CMC's calendar.

Our conservation efforts, along with those of many other organizations dedicated to preserving our natural heritage, had great success this year. Chimney Rock was saved and will become part of a new state park. The National Park Service will come out in favor of a cash settlement with Swain County. Hopefully this will finally close the book on the proposed North Shore Road. Ruth Hartzler and the Conservation Committee took the lead in these effort, but many of you helped by going to public meetings and writing letters.

Our Membership Committee, now chaired by Ashok Kudva, has instituted a program of contacting new members about six months after they join to help them get more integrated into the Club and its activities..

We became part of the Land-of-Sky Regional Council's Retired and Senior Volunteer Program, which will give our trail crew members additional insurance coverage and a chance to get theatre tickets and other benefits. If you are a trail crew member and don't know about this program, talk to Don Walton.

After almost 11 years, Howard McDonald has stepped down from his position as A.T. Supervisor and will become the first holder of a new position, Manager of Trail Facilities. Don Walton has replaced Howard as A.T. Supervisor. Howard will be responsible for managing the major construction jobs on all of the trails we maintain: building bridges, shelters, etc. His first project will be installing bear cables at all of the shelters on our section of the AT, so that the hikers staying there can store their food out of the reach of bears and other animals. And those of you who bought AT license plates will be happy to hear that some of your money will be going to fund thus project. This is our second grant from the fund. Earlier this year we received a grant for over \$1300 from the AT License Plate Fund to buy tools for trail maintenance.

We reorganized the Club's Committee structure in 2005 and 2006 to get more people involved in the running of the Club, and we're now seeing the benefits of those changes. Five of the nominees for next year's Council will be new to the Council. They will new ideas and new talents to the management of our Club.

Let me end on a personal note. My two year term as CMC President ends on December 31, It has been my honor to serve as your President, and it's also been a lot of fun. It has been a particular pleasure to work with all the members of the Council for the past two years. They didn't always agree with me, but I was always certain they had the best interest of the Club at heart. I intend to stay active in CMC and serve the Club in whatever role makes most sense.

Lenny Bernstein