

Beth Banks: BC's 'Rosie the Riveter' 'Prince Avalanche'

By Gabby Smith
Copy Editor

Beth Banks is no doubt a familiar face here on campus. With her long hair and a tattoo of a kayaker on her ankle, Banks is really recognizable. She's been hanging out in MS for a while; in fact, she's been in there for 16 years. Therefore, it was only appropriate that this is where we met up to talk about her life here at BC.

Born in Huntersville, near Lake Norman, Banks came to BC to start her own college adventure, much like most of us. Banks college years are the stuff of legend, literally, as she was one of the only three women to go BC's first ever immersion trip, and the only one to actually complete the 21-day trip. She also graduated from BC the same year that they moved from being a two-year college to a four-year college.

After graduating Brevard, Banks went on to receive her Bachelors in Outdoor and Environmental Education at Northland College in Wisconsin. Afterwards, she immediately came back to Brevard. "I have a strong sense of place and view this as my home," she says with a faint smile as she tells me about her experience here on campus.

Banks, who once taught Biology Lab, is now the Lab Coordinator and Administrative Assistant to the Math and Science Division. "I am very happy with my new position" she tells me. This change spurs from the fact that last year when faculty changes were being made, it was decided that instead of having one teacher for lecture and one for lab, it would be easier to have one person fill both positions. This being said, Banks has made her transition flawlessly, kind of like Beyoncé.

As we sit talking I can't help but get the feeling that I'm only getting a glimpse of how deeply imbedded into this community Banks actually is. She explains to me that she is not only attached to the BC community, but to the people she works with here in general. For example, she's babysat Wallace's kids, and now those kids have children of their own, and she's taught alongside her one time mentor, former instructor Bob Gleesner.

One of Banks's biggest contributions to this campus has been the introduction of EarthFest. Banks originally organized the festival during her time here as a student with one other student. "We used to plant trees on campus every year for the festival" she says, as she begins to explain her own environmental ethic. "Biology kind of fell into my lap, but Environmental Education is what I'm passionate about. I really want students to develop their own environmental ethic."

This, of course, is reaffirmed by the fact that in 2012, Banks won the Environmental Achievement Award, alongside former faculty member Ralphene Rathbone. Banks grins proudly as she shows me her framed award.



Banks is so attached to this place, she even got married here. In 2008 she met her husband, Oliver, at EarthFest while he was hanging out with some of his buddies who were that night's entertainment. Banks said she pointed him out to a friend, who later on gave him her number, and the rest as they say is history. Two years to the day they married on the Porter Center steps with J.R officiating the ceremony.

As I listen to Banks tell me about her life at BC and everything in between ranging from her duty as a Girl Scouts' leader to her ability to organize recycling for 5,000 people at one of the local festivals, I am truly impressed with her love of service. She explains to me that being in Brevard and being surrounded by the environment here really shaped her service, and that the required service work she did as an undergrad instilled the need within her to serve others. That being said, it was only fitting that at the conclusion of our interview she immediately went to help train one of her students for recycling duty at the upcoming festival.

Local

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Also, Pisgah National Forest is right down the road. Right on the main road is Looking Glass falls, an incredible waterfall with easy access. If you want to go for a chilly dip in the creek, then try Coontree picnic area or Sliding Rock.

DuPont State Forest is also a short drive away, and also offers a lot in the way of outdoor activity.

Hooker Falls, Triple falls, and High Falls all have fantastic views and easy gravel trails to access them. DuPont also has miles of mountain bike trails for those seeking a thrill.

There are so many things to do in and around Brevard, so next time you're free, get out and go explore!

'Prince Avalanche'

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was surprising for fans of both of these actors.

"Prince" is built on sentimental little moments and unspectacular yet fascinating characters. One of these characters is an older woman who is shifting about her burned down house for her pilot's license. Originally, her character didn't exist in the script. But while filming some nature shots they found an older woman actually looking around at her burnt house. Her name was Joyce Payne and she was a real life survivor of a Texas Wildfire. She was looking at her real life home that had burned down near where they were filming the movie. Director David Gordon Green asked her to share her story and be in the film. This was a special moment in the film and stays with me to this day. It goes to show how attached we are to our possessions and how easily and cruelly they are taken away.

"Prince" is a small movie that wasn't largely seen, and it was made in a short span of time with a low budget. But it is original, emotional, and has a quirky sense of humor. Thanks to strong performances and beautiful cinematography, "Prince Avalanche" is a must watch.

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