

Mountain Musings

Asheville Civitan Club, Inc.
PO Box 1755, Asheville, NC 28802

Asheville Civitan Foundation, Inc.
PO Box 1755, Asheville, NC 28802



Asheville Civitan Club
Officers and Directors, 2001-2002
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Pres. Elect. - Richard Richards
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Treasurer - Frank Holby

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Wilson, Bancroft Smith

Sgts-at-Arms: Don Fox, Lawrence
Wilson, Robert Potter, Larry Knees

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Publisher: SysAdmin Services, Inc.



Asheville Civitan Club,
Inc.
Builders of Good Citizenship
82nd Year of Service
Mountain Musings is the
official weekly bulletin of
The Asheville Civitan Club
and
The Asheville Civitan

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Officers and Directors, 2001-2002
Officers:
President - Gary Hannah
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Secretary - Richard Smith
Treasurer - Murray Hollyday

Directors:
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William M. Pomeroy, Jr.

Past Lt. Governors NC District West:
Robert Gray, 1998-1999
Ralph Scarritt, 1995-1996
Fred Rutledge, 1994-1995

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Foundation

www.ashevillecivitan.org

TUESDAY, JULY 30, 2002

TRINITY EPISCOPAL CHURCH, 12:00 NOON

“THE CHANGING COMMUNICATIONS MARKET”

LAVOY SPOONER, Area Director of Bell South–External Affairs, will speak on the changing telecommunications market and how it will affect our area. Before coming to Bell South, Mr. SPOONER worked for Bell Atlantic (now Verizon) for thirty years.

EUGENE CARR, Jr. will give the invocation.

GARY HANNAH will be the greeter.

MENU FOR TUESDAY: Summer Salads * Breads * Fruit Bowl
Assorted Desserts * Coffee * Tea * Milk

ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY CLEAN-UP

WAYNE RUMBLE, *Adopt-a-Highway Committee Chair*, advises that the next clean-up will be on Saturday, August 3, 2002. The team meets at 9:30 a.m. in the parking lot of the Grassy Branch Baptist Church on Riceville Road. WAYNE would like to see 15 good men on hand.

SOUTHERN APPALACHIAN RADIO MUSEUM

JOHN JOHNSTON introduced his friend, **John Travis**, who spoke briefly about a new radio museum which opened in the summer of 2001 on the campus of A/B Tech. Dedicated to early radio and amateur radio, the museum displays old radios, home-built equipment and various pieces of amateur apparatus. It also operates an amateur radio station. Its official visiting hours are 1-4 on Wednesday afternoons, but other times can be arranged by calling **Mr. Travis** at 828-298-1847. This may be the only such museum in all of the southeast!

PRESIDENT-ELECT RICHARDS RETURNS

PRESIDENT-ELECT DICK RICHARDS reported that his indoctrination cruise on the Caribbean as a new **Civitan** officer was both pleasurable and informative. He thanked the **Club** for its support in making the trip possible.

ASHEVILLE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

NORMA MESSER introduced **RICHARD LUTOVSKY, President** and **CEO** of the **Asheville Chamber of Commerce** since 2000. He has worked for **Chambers** in several cities beginning in 1978, most recently in Binghamton, NY. He began with the general observation that the *esprit de corps* within the chamber staff was especially high and that the usual hospitality seminars could focus entirely on dealing with visitors and business clients rather than employee morale. He also was amazed at the number of Floridians he encountered who have moved here.

Locally, the **Chamber** has 2000 members and 45 employees. It is the third largest in the state. There are six divisions administratively: 1. Public policy 2. Work force development 3. Economic development 4. Convention and business bureau 5. Membership 6. Finance and operations. About one-half million dollars each year is spent on advertising Asheville as a tourist attraction, funded by a special hotel/motel tax. Other statistics of interest are that Asheville ranks 282 out of 506 designated economic districts world-wide and its total gross national product of 9 billion dollars is larger than the GNP of ninety-three countries. Interestingly, only 1 to 1.2 billion of that total is generated by tourism. The rest is made up largely of medical services and business grosses.

Mr. LUTOVSKY sees the **Chambers** major foci as: 1. Economic development 2. Infrastructure and transportation 3. Quality of life. The first of these centers on retaining jobs, a serious matter in the area given the lay-offs and closings, particularly in the textile industry. Bringing new business, of a kind compatible with the region, is another goal, and finally, encouraging "entrepreneurialism," that is, stimulating small business growth. There is a council of 100 members working toward this end.

The **Chamber** is vitally interested in the plans for highway construction in the near future, especially as it will impact business and tourism in the area. About 55 million dollars in highway construction is in the works, with the all-important connector scheduled for completion in 2012. Will Asheville become another Raleigh with its traffic problems or will wiser heads prevail? With recent listings in national publications of Asheville as a great retirement city, the influx of new residents in the area seems assured and plans must be made to accommodate them. Another **Chamber** concern: will the roads, water and sewer systems be adequate?

Surprisingly, according to **Mr. LUTOVSKY**, many businesses looking to relocate are frequently more interested in quality-of-life issues than in tax breaks. Such things as walking and biking trails, cultural attractions and parks and recreation are important to many companies. Just the general look of the city—upkeep of buildings, flower gardens, etc.-- are carefully noted. In this regard, Asheville comes off well, especially in view of the downtown redevelopment going on.

Some of the worries challenging the **Chamber**, all of which are being worked on, are: the high cost of medical insurance in the area, the need for cheaper and more convenient air travel out of Asheville, and the possibility of train passenger service to Salisbury. On a positive note, plans for the new **Chamber** headquarters are nearing completion which, hopefully, will service more than twice as many visitors as is done at present.

The **Asheville Chamber** is hoping for a reclassification that will enlarge the metropolitan area to include Fletcher and parts of northern Henderson county. At the present time, only Madison County is included in Asheville's metropolitan area. Such a reclassification will attract businesses because the population base will jump from 250,000 to over 400,000.