

# Mountain

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

Asheville Civitan Club  
Officers and Directors, 2002-2003

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# Musings

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

Asheville Civitan Foundation

Officers and Board Members for 2002-2003

Officers:

President - Ahmad Amara (00)  
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Past Governor NC District West:  
William M. Pomeroy, Jr.

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

Asheville Civitan Club, Inc.  
Builders of Good Citizenship  
82<sup>nd</sup> Year of Service  
Mountain Musings is the official  
weekly bulletin of The Asheville  
Civitan Club  
and  
The Asheville Civitan Foundation  
[www.ashevillecivitan.org](http://www.ashevillecivitan.org)

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**TUESDAY, June 24, 2003**

**TRINITY EPISCOPAL CHURCH, 12:00 NOON**

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## **SAFETY ISSUES IN THE SCHOOLS**

**DR. STEPHEN PAGE**, Associate Superintendent of **Buncombe County Schools**, will speak on safety issues in the schools, particularly as they are related to federally mandated programs like **“No Child Left Behind.”** Are Buncombe County Schools in compliance?

**TUCK GUDGER** will give the invocation.

**Dr. ROBERT WEAST** will be the greeter.

**MENU FOR TUESDAY:** Pasta with Corn and Tomatoes \* Salad \* Fruit Bowl  
Crusty Bread \* Assorted Desserts \* Beverages

## **NEXT MEETING**

For one meeting only, the **Club** will meet in the Undercroft at Trinity Episcopal on June 24, 2003. Tutin Hall will be the scene of a Children’s Fair as part of a summer program at the church. Entrance for the day should be made from the Church Street side.

## **NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE**

The Nominations Committee, headed by **Immediate Past-president CARLA SUTHERLAND**, has nearly filled its 2003-2004 slate of officers and board members. An announcement will likely be forthcoming at the next meeting.

## **“NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND”**

**CYNTHIA LOPEZ AND SUZANNE SWANGER**, assisted by projectionist **GERRY KOVACH**, gave an illustrated talk explaining the many provisions and challenges of the federally-mandated program **“No Child Left Behind” (NCLB)**. This act, passed in 2002, envisions that all children must attain proficiency in reading and mathematics by the school year 2013-2014. Every school in the nation must show **“adequate yearly progress” (AYP)** in order to avoid being deemed **“inadequate.”** Penalties can be imposed on schools not meeting goals extending to the transfer of students to other schools and even closing them down.

**Ms. SWANGER**, who began the presentation, pointed out that North Carolina's *ABC* program, which has been in effect for several years, is similar in its goals to the federal program, namely to improve student scores on standardized tests. The main difference is that the federal program is an absolute model, applying the same standards to all students, while the state program is aimed more at the individual student. Fortunately, the *ABC* program has already begun to show results and test scores in both reading and math have trended slowly upward across the state. And Buncombe county schools have been consistently higher than state averages in both categories.

Although the *ABC* program has given North Carolina a leg up on the rest of the country, there are challenges in the new program which have to be dealt with. The major problem with *NCLB* is the division of the school's population into sub-groups, all of which must be monitored and all of which must meet the "adequate yearly progress" requirement. These ten sub-groups are as follows: 1. All students 2. Asian students 3. Black students 4. White students 5. Spanish students 6. Indonesian students 7. Mixed race students 8. Students in poverty 9. Special needs students 10. Students lacking English skills. If any category is deemed inadequate, the whole school is deemed so. This places a tremendous burden on those teachers who deal with special needs or non-English speaking students. And, too, on the finances of the school system which must find ways to fund extra teachers in these areas so that more individual attention can be given them. In actuality, only 9 schools in North Carolina meet the numbers criterion (40) for all ten sub-groups.

One of the areas that will be a particular challenge for Buncombe County schools is non-English speaking students. A startling 42 languages are represented in county schools and all these non-natives speakers must meet federal standards in ten years. But plans for meeting the *AYP* have already been submitted and testing for grades 3-8 and 10-12 is being administered. Science testing will begin by 2007-08. The North Carolina plan calls for gradual increments leading up to the 100% 2013-14 goal. Something called "Safe Harbor" gives a school a two year grace period to achieve grade-level skills, although to qualify the sub-group deemed inadequate must show at least a 10% yearly improvement. At the present time, only 27% of North Carolina schools meet the *AYP* standards, but they have two years to conform. There are some financial incentives for teachers involved. Bonuses are given to those whose students show improvement and those bonuses continue if progress is maintained.

**CYNTHIA LOPEZ, Personnel Director** for the Buncombe County School System, spoke of the mandate for all teachers in the state to become "highly qualified" by June of 2006. This means that not only must they be licensed by the State Board of Education, but they must pass competency tests in their teaching specialities. Reports on the results must be made available to the parents and to the public. Buncombe County is in good shape in this regard as far as its full-time teachers are concerned. Even the teaching assistants must meet new standards as to the number of college credits they must have. Only 7% of the county assistants do not, as yet, meet the new standards.

Eighteen schools out of the 39 in Buncombe County qualify for Title I monies. This means that a certain portion of the school population has income below the poverty level and is entitled to federal funding for free lunches and extra instructional help. However, these entitlements can be lost if the school does not meet *AYP* standards, a tough row to hoe for poorly motivated students. Fortunately, 1% of Title I money is dedicated to parent involvement, something that both speakers agreed was vital to the success of "**No Child Left Behind.**"