

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

Asheville Civitan Foundation, Inc.
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Mountain Musings



Asheville Civitan Club
Officers and Directors, 2003-2004
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Treasurer - Frank Holby

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Larry Knees

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Asheville Civitan Club,
Inc.
Builders of Good Citizenship
84th Year of Service
Mountain Musings is the
official weekly bulletin of
The Asheville Civitan Club
and
The Asheville Civitan
Foundation

Asheville Civitan Foundation
Officers and Board Members,
2003-2004

Officers:
President - Mark Mathews
Vice President - Wayne Rumble
Secretary - Britt Hudson
Treasurer - Robert Welch

Directors:
Larry Knees, Dennis Michele,
Ex officio: Frank Holby, Mason Wilson

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

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www.ashevillecivitan.org

TODAY'S PROGRAM

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 2003

TRINITY EPISCOPAL CHURCH, 12:00 NOON

PROGRAM

As of press time, the program for the week had not been confirmed. Please check the web site (ashevillecivitan.org) for an update. The information will be posted there as soon as it is available.

ROBERT HILLMANN will give the invocation.

TRACY McFARLAN will be the greeter.

MENU FOR TUESDAY: Fettuccine Alfredo * Salad * Bread
Fruit Bowl * Assorted Desserts * Beverages

HOLIDAY DINNER/DANCE

TUCK GUDGER and **DON FOX** will be taking reservations for the annual Holiday Dinner/Dance beginning November 25. The menu, as previously announced, will be a choice of

Filet Mignon or Salmon. The date is December 12, the location, The Country Club of Asheville.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Our thoughts are with **JOHN GILE, DOT PEEKE** and **ERNIE SEIDERMAN** as they battle serious health problems.

The meeting of the **Club** on December 9 will be in the Undercroft at Trinity as Tuton Hall will be in use by *Room at the Inn*, a shelter program for homeless women.

President WILSON reminds members of the new starting time of 12:15 p.m. for meetings. The caterer begins serving at 11:30 a.m.. Ending by 1:15 hopefully will encourage business people to attend more regularly.

A letter from District West asks if any of the Asheville members have contacts in Mars Hill who might be interested in forming a new **Civitan** club there. Pass names along to **Pres. WILSON**.

ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY

WAYNE RUMBLE, Chair of the *Adopt-a-Highway* team, reports the good news that the entire 2 ½ mile stretch of Riceville Road for which the **Club** is responsible, was cleaned on November 8. Along with **WAYNE, ROGER HILL, FRANK HOLBY** and **JOHN JOHNSTON** were joined by a group of **Junior Civitans** from A.C. Reynolds High School, led by their faculty advisor, **KATHY BONYON**. Her crew consisted of **Mae Beeler, Amanda Bergeron, Tiffany Burnett, Andrew Gorman, Virginia Hunter, Eric Johnson** and **Rebecca Ratner**. Their help was most appreciated and the hope is that this can be an on-going project for them.

“WILDFIRES AND FOREST HEALTH”

Dr. RICHARD “DICK” BURY, who spent his career as a forester with the U. S. Forest Service and in academia gave an interesting and fact-filled talk on wildfires, past and present, and possible solutions to the devastation they cause. Staggering amounts of money are spent on this problem: the Forest Service’s 2004 budget is 1.9 billion dollars; 301 million has been added to the current budget to cope with the California conflagrations; and the Bureau of Land Management has a 99 million dollar budget.

Although the California fires this year caused massive losses of timber and property, in general there are no more fires now than in the past. There were massive blazes in 1910, but immediate and aggressive response tactics were adopted and the incidence dropped, with occasional “spikes”(as in the Yellowstone fire of 1988). Recently, however, a wet-dry cycle has caused a fuel buildup and consequent dangerous conditions. The wet cycle produced more growth than usual, so that there was more fuel per acre for a fire to feed on. Also contributing to the supply of fuel were harvesting restrictions (from 12 billion board feet per year not long ago to only 3 ½ billion board feet today) and the rapid suppression of fires by the Forest Service.

Now we are in a dry cycle. Fuel moisture is low, there is more fuel per acre and “fuel ladders,” that is, smaller trees under a higher canopy, make conditions ripe for large fires. Another contributing factor, especially in containing fires once they have started, is the growing practice of building homes that are surrounded by forest on, perhaps, five acre plots. In these cases, starting back fires or doing controlled burns are not options so close to expensive homes..

Solutions, according to **Dr. BURY**, are not simple and must be “site specific,” that is, what may work in certain kinds of terrain or with certain species of trees may not work in others. Some cutting and “prescribed fire” are both necessary to clear underbrush and eliminate “fire ladders.” Old growth can best be protected by proper spacing which can only be accomplished by selective cutting. Companies who might be loath to cutting immature and non-commercial growth, could possibly be enticed to do so by allowing them to do some selective cutting of mature trees rather than relying on outright government subsidies. “Fire-wise” building in wooded areas with proper fire breaks around homes should be encouraged. But, most importantly, density must be thinned.

There are two constants in regard to forests: 1. They do regenerate; they are a renewable resource; 2. They are always changing. In managing our forests we must find a common-sense middle ground between the extremes of the timber industry on the one hand and the strictest of the environmentalists on the other. Only in this way can we enjoy healthy forests for recreational and aesthetic purposes and at the same time lessen our growing dependence on foreign timber.