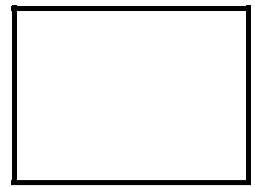


Asheville Civitan Club, Inc.
PO Box 1755, Asheville, NC 28802

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



Mountain Musings



Asheville Civitan Club
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89th Year of Service
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The Asheville Civitan Club
and
The Asheville Civitan
Foundation

Asheville Civitan Foundation
Officers and Board Members,
2009-2010

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Past Lt. Governors NC District West:
Robert Gray, 1998-1999, 2008-2009
Ralph Scarritt, 1995-1996

Mountain Musings



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TUESDAY, AUGUST 3, 2010

TRINITY EPISCOPAL CHURCH, 12:00 NOON

ASHEVILLE ANTIQUES FAIR

Our own **JOHN SHERMAN**, Fair Director, and **SUZANNE HAGEMAN**, of the *Vetust Study Club*, which is the fair's sponsor, will fill us in on the goings on there during its upcoming August 6, 7, 8, 2010 run. An Asheville *Antiques Road Show* and even a little more?

ROB NELSON will give the invocation.

ROBERT FLETCHER will be the greeter.

MENU FOR TUESDAY: Tacos * Chips * Salad * Fruit Bowl
Assorted Desserts * Beverages

SPECIAL GUEST

Phillip Francis, Superintendent of the *Blue Ridge Parkway*, was a **Club** guest. The speaker facetiously remarked that he was there to monitor his talk and correct any mistakes. He was actually there, of course, to support a long-time friend.

NATIONAL PARKS CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION

DON BARGER, Senior Director of the *National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA)*, accompanied by **Chris Watson, Program Manager** for the Southeast Regional Office, spoke about their organization, what it is and what it does. **Mr. BARGER**, an 18-year veteran with the *NPCA*, made it clear from the start that his is a non-profit that works to support and enhance the entire National Park System, but is not a part of that system. Even so, it was founded in 1919, only three years after the initiation of the park system. There had been individual parks dedicated before that, *Yellowstone* being the first in 1872, but the incorporation of all of them into a single system occurred in 1916. So all of the park people and *NPCA* itself are pointing to the centennial year of 2016 .

Although most of the early park designations were preserved for their great beauty, unmatched views and unique topographical formations like the Grand Canyon, Bryce, Zion and Yosemite. The philosophy has been extended beyond just the “pretty” and now is concerned with preservation and sustainability. It includes the natural and historic objects as well as the wildlife living there. It strives to leave the parks “unimpaired” for the enjoyment of future generations. Much of this philosophy can be seen in the ten designated parks right here in North Carolina. The scenic views can be enjoyed in the Great Smokies National Park, on the Blue Ridge Parkway and on the Appalachian Trail. The historic is preserved in the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse and the cultural is in evidence at the Carl Sandburg House.

As a testimony to the uniqueness of the National Parks System, **Mr. BARGER** displayed a book by Patricia Shultz called *A Thousand Places to See Before You Die*. She has traveled all over the world in search of sightseeing wonders and declares in no uncertain terms that nothing on earth compares to the National Park System in the United States. In fact, she had to leave out so many places in America to keep the book viable, that she has written a sequel called *A Thousand Places to See in North America Before You Die*.

The speaker moved on to discuss the enormous job it is to try to maintain a park so it may be passed on “unimpaired” to future generations. He focused on the *Blue Ridge Parkway* as a good example of the multiple problems such a job entails. Its 469 mile length and its several hundred yard width can be likened to managing a small city, like Asheville. Maintenance, of course, is an ever present concern. So is crowd control, so is budgeting, so is personnel. A more recent concern is the encroachment of developments nearby which can spoil views. And there are still land questions to be dealt with. Some farmers’ holdings were split by the parkway and a number of access roads still exist which cross the parkway. Solving this problem by bridges and other means is an area in which the *NPCA* has become involved. Some 70 of these access roads exist just in North Carolina and an equal number in Virginia.

An extensive study was made by MBA candidates at parks across the country to determine how viable financially they were given government appropriations, income from contributors, fees, etc., versus the expenditures necessary to keep them going. Nearly all of them found a 30 to 35 per cent shortfall in funding. The goal of the *NPCA* is to develop a sustainable funding model for the national parks. It will encourage legislators to increase core national park operations funding by at least \$100 million per year and make available a minimum of \$125 million a year for acquisition of private lands within park boundaries. As a concrete example of a shortfall within our purview, **Superintendent Francis** was asked how many positions on the Parkway are being left unfilled because of budget restrictions. “About a third,” he replied.

The economic value of parks is enormous. The *Parkway* generates about 2 billion dollars a year. Nationwide, parks return about 4 dollars for every dollar that is invested. Off the *Parkway* in Asheville, it’s probably quadruple that. So adequate funding is not just a “feel good” issue, it is an economic necessity.

Mr. BARGER ended by extolling the bounties of Western North Carolina, its biological diversity being nearly unparalleled. And much is yet to be discovered and will have, as he put it, “values as yet uncaptured by language.” The *NPCA* will be a vital part of the struggle to clean our air and water, and to generally preserve our natural, historic and cultural resources for us and for future generations.