

The Transition

Of and For Former N.C. State Park Employees

February, 2009

Issue No. 16

Greetings to all Former Employees:

I would like to dedicate this issue to the memory of Myers Braxton, former Superintendent of William B. Umstead State Park who died November 25, 2008.

I began my N.C.S.P. career at W.B.U. in June of 1971 as a seasonal park attendant. Myers was Superintendent and I was there with Cliff Phillips (Ranger), Howard Sorrell (Ranger), and Phil McCorkle (Ranger). Nelson Chadwick was the seasonal park naturalist. Later in the season Scott Daughtry and Bill Wooten joined us with Cliff moving to Mount Mitchell and Phil joining the Division maintenance crew. I'm sure that Myers did not know quite what to think of me-a Forestry major seasonal park attendant. It was a great place to begin a career and Myers was adamant in passing along the State Parks philosophy and traditions.

I spoke with Myers shortly before his death (he had called Phil McCorkle and expressed the desire to hear from some of the former park employees). Myers told me that he had counted 75 N.C. State Park employees who began their careers at W.B.U. while he was Superintendent. It was evident while speaking with Myers that he thought of the State Park employees that he had known as his greatest friends and that he had never lost his love for State Parks. May we all feel the same.

Get in Touch and Stay in Touch!

John L. Sharpe

The Seventh State Parks Former Employee Reunion

The Seventh North Carolina State Parks Former Employee Reunion was held at the picnic shelter at Reedy Creek State Park on Saturday, November 1, 2008. Old friends (no reflection on ages) and colleagues renewed acquaintance, reflected on past experiences, and told tall tales about each other and especially those of you who weren't there! We were all impressed with the new facilities at Reedy Creek and the obvious appreciation of the many park visitors. The reunion also reminded me, and I'm sure the other alumni, that we should continue to visit the state parks near us to keep up with improvements and changes to the staff.

In attendance were Ginger and myself, Scott and Janet Daughtry, Cliff and Sue Phillips (first timers), Lauris Joyner, Leon and Annie Laura Carter, Dan Smith, Larry and Mary Brenda Outz, and Fred Hagenberger.

This year we will try to have the Former Employee Reunion at Hanging Rock State Park on the second Saturday in November **so mark your calendars now!**









News Updates

Notes From Leon Carter

Nov. 1, 2008

For your Info,

Oren Hawkins
212 Spitfire Lane, Apt. N
Statesville, NC 28625

No home telephone:
Oren's cellular 704-450-2713

Lucy's cellular 704-450-2712

Have received a couple of letters from Lucy in the last couple of months. First letter stated Oren had fallen and broke his hip. The Doctors decided not to operate at that time, due to other health problems.

Oren & Lucy moved into a Handicap apartment in Statesville, above address. Oren has a n elect wheel chair, walker & crutches.

Letter I received yesterday sounds like they are getting ready to replace the hip. She said they wouldn't make the reunion today and asked, I tell everybody HI.

Also went down to Godwin within the last two weeks to Visit with Meyers Braxton. He's in Bad shape. He was operated on, lower abdomen for cancer, they didn't get it all, now its spread and with his other health problems is inoperable. Lost a lot of weight, looks bad.

Leon.

11-28-08

John, just realized I hadn't gotten this one to you.

Couple of weeks ago at John Graham's funeral, Ethel Vogel was there. Think Ethel was at Eno back in the 70s or 80s, I remember her. She's in Real Estate in Durham now. Will try to get a write-up on her.

Please add her to the mailing list and contact her how to bring up the Transition & mailing list.

She has been completely out of touch with Parks. She was asking about several, John Barnett and several more that have passed on. I just sent her my list of those to remember. Also the notice I sent out yesterday on Meyers.

Ethel Vogel
4100 Mt. Sinai Rd.
Durham, NC 27705

Tel. 919-317-4325
email: voge@hpw.com

2-10-09 Writing a family history

To help pass the time and keep the mind busy, back in 2003, I wrote an informal history of all ancestors of my and Annie Laura's families by request of 2 Grandchildren. Didn't do a lot of research, mostly what living members could remember. Of course ever since

then my oldest daughter, Nan and I have picked up various tidbits we hadn't been aware of.

This passed spring I made contact with a lady in Washington state who has been working on the Carter family for years. She put me in contact with another lady in New Mexico, who had also been working on the Carter's. The three of us started trading information, which led to all three of us doing more research. In September I rewrote the three pages on four generations of Carter's, 1750s-1900, with 77 pages.

Four days after I printed the new Carter history, I got an email from Bet in Aiken, SC wanting to know if I had any thing on Rebecca McGinney Morrall, my G.G.G. Grandmother on my mother's side. Had to tell her all I knew was the name. Bet's GG Grandmother was the sister of my GG Grandfather. We started trading information on the Morrall's. In January, I found an article about a piece of property north of Myrtle Beach that the Morrall's had sold in 1808. written by. Ben, a Research Specialist with the Coastal Carolina Univ. in SC. No kin, just a history buff. Ever since then Bet, Ben & I have been doing more research and passing it on to each other. I had nine pages in 2003 on six generations 1700-1950, last I counted there are thirty-two pages on them, and still going.

If you ever get bored with Retirement, get involved in your family history. You will get a lot of conflicting data, trying to pick which is the truth makes it even more interesting.

2-16-09 Roy and Betty Rogers

John, If you haven't wrapped up the next Transition, below was received this morning from Betty Jo, Roy Rodgers' wife.

Roy received his license to preach in the United Methodist Church the same day of Sid Shearin's retirement party. He is pastor of the Cypress Creek UMC near Kinston in Jones County, although they are still residing in Oriental.

Looks like Roy was on the ball to get the different denominations of churches in the Kinston area involved in this project. My hat off to one more of our Park Family. Leon.

Betty Jo Rogers writes:

Just thought you would like to see what's going on at our church.

Under local news, notice the article on the left. I am in the pink sweatshirt behind Keven Jones in the white. His wife Candi and daughter Mackenzi are across from us.

<http://www.kinston.com/>

The complete article is at

http://www.kinston.com/news/church_52947___article.html/meals_churches.html .

There is only one thing that was inaccurate. We packaged 10092 meals. If we had packaged 10,000 packets it would have been 60,000 meals.

God is good, all the time. All the time, God is good.

Jones County-based churches package meals for Afghanistan

February 14, 2009 - 7:39 PM

[Chris Lavender](#)

Staff Writer

TRENTON - Families living in Kabul, Afghanistan, will soon have something nutritious to eat thanks to several Jones County based churches. On Saturday, nearly 50 people from 11 churches met at Cypress Creek United Methodist Church where they assembled and packaged meals for those in need in a far-away land. The "Stop Hunger Now" initiative works constantly to help feed people who live in difficult places.

"Stop Hunger Now" operational director Rick Kearney said nearly 145,000 meals will be shipped to Afghanistan in March. The meals will be distributed by the "Trust in Education" organization.

"Hunger is a global problem that requires a global solution," Kearney said. "It's great that rural communities' congregations can come together for a good cause."

The church volunteers worked in groups to get the meals ready, which consisted of soy flour, vegetables, rice and multi-vitamin tablets.

Cypress Creek UMC pastor Roy Rodgers thanked everyone for participating in the event. Some local churches also provided financial donations for the cause.

"We wanted to get the whole community involved with this," Rodgers said. "It's been a blessing to see this happen."

His wife, Betty Jo Rodgers, was also encouraged by the local churches' support. During the event, 10,000 meals were prepared, which will feed about 60,000 people.

Cypress Creek UMC member David Andrews said he decided to help because he felt the need to give. Andrews is among the church's 50 current members.

Members from Agape Family Church, Tuckahoe Christian Church, Bethel Holiness Church, Shady Grove UMC, Lee's Chapel UMC, Pollocksville UMC, St. Mary's Holy Church, Friendship Original Free Will Baptist Church and Lanies Chapel Christian Church participated Saturday.

The cost to prepare the meal packages was about \$2,500. Each volunteer also had an opportunity to taste a sample of the packaged meals. Church members said they decided to volunteer their time on Valentine's Day to serve others.

"It's been great to meet people from other churches," Rodgers said.

Scott Daughtry reports (9-2-08): Note to James Sessoms and myself

Hello Old Friend,

Good to hear from you, James

Janet and I have worked at Red Springs Mission Camp for only 2 weeks, In fact we were supposed to be there this week running the kitchen but the teams canceled because of storms. So we went to SC to help our son with some things and spend the holiday with our grandchildren.

We've also had quite a mission summer. We took a team to Sri Lanka in late may (trip #4), worked on houses and did Bible School for 300. In July we went to the jungles of Nicaragua. To a place called the Miskito Coast. We built two complete houses in 5 days. This area was hit hard last year by Felix. The village had no electricity, no running water, (bath in the river), no cars, no roads, no lights, but lot's of sweet children. We had to take all food and tents for the team in on our backs. This was the best mission trip that I have ever been on. You may think that you know what the Lord was talking about when he said " unto the least of theses", but I have seen them first hand and I don't think may life will ever be the same. We finished off the summer with a mission trip to St. Johns Newfoundland in August. What a place. High each day 55, I loved it. Janet and I are doing a clown ministry, balloon animals for kids and other silly tricks just to see them laugh, and we helped the team with a softball camp. Trying to assist the local missionary start a new church. Saw a lot of Puffins and Whales. Our next project is the State Fair, come and see us in the village of yesteryear.

Say hello to all. Your Old Friend Scott

Betty Jo Rogers reports (9-4-08):

Hi John,

I am going to send you a copy of the newsletter that I sent out in July, and a recent picture of Roy and his church. You may be able to use some of it in the next transition. I wrote Scott Daughtry and told him how proud I was of all the mission work he has been doing. Knowing he and Roy back in the day, the Lord has sure used these old crusty rangers in a mighty way.

Be Blessed.

Betty Jo



Tom Wells writes (9-7-08):

John,

Well sir! I didn't know the SLACKASS NEWSLETTER, which I write just for fun from time-to-time would make the "Transition". Should I be embarrassed? I hope not but seriously, if anyone finds it offensive please let me know and I'll make amends somehow.

And by-the-way, nice job with the "transition".

TOM HOWARD I may need some help with a website. Are you available? Do you work cheap?

My good regards to all.

Tom

Tom Wells
Telephone: 919-234-9426
Cell Phone: 919-345-4575
e-address: twells15@nc.rr.com
website: www.wellsspoken.com

Robert Skinner writes (9-8-08):

Patsy and I just got back from Philadelphia on Sunday after visiting with her son and new grandbaby --Allison Jane, born on Wednesday. Sept. 3. Mother and baby are doing great. Patsy is on cloud nine. Now she has three grandchildren and I have 5. All are doing well. Robert

Mike Seigh updates us (9-8-08):

John, all is well here in eastern NC. Been working on getting the annual retired employee ncsp golf trip up and running in Myrtle Beach the first weekend in December., I want to send a check in for the state park license plate but am not sure who to make the check out to. Did you send in the application and payment and know the answer?? Any help is appreciated. Take care and again, thanks a bunch for all you do to keep the Transition up and running. I look forward to it. Mike

Jud Burns writes (10-7-08):

John,

As much as I would like to attend the upcoming reunion, Sandy and I will be attending Thomas and Kim Sutton's annual pig picking in Danbury on the first. Their event is always scheduled for the first Saturday in November.

Sandy and I remain near Raleigh. Once we sell our house, we will move to our retirement home beside the Lower Cascades. Buyers' interests have waned in the last two months due to a multitude of factors. Fortunately for us, we do not have to move, but countless others must move due to increased costs, loss of work and other unplanned factors.

I have been working on completing renovations to our Danbury home and helping family and friends with a variety of home repairs. It has been very satisfying making the repairs and improvements and I am grateful that so many state parks people took the time to teach me many of the trade skills that has made this possible.

Please pass along our regrets for being absent at the reunion. We were looking forward to seeing you all.

Thanks for your work with The Transition. If not for you and Mr. Carter, I am afraid that

I would basically loose touch with many of my state parks friends.
Jud

Nelson Chadwick writes (10-7-08):

The first email finally came through..... Don't understand why the second email got here first?

Oh well, the important thing is that I called Myers (Braxton) right after I got the e-mail (about his illness) and we talked for over an hour. He seemed in pretty good spirits considering the circumstances.

Never got the chance to talk to Howard Sorrel, Belvin Dillard or Willey Shaw and regret the lost opportunities, just to say hi again if you know what I mean.

I will always remember my days at Umstead Park; my friends, my critters, the old naturalist's shack that was pretty much my home, nature walks with the seasonal naturalists, fishing after hours, the wild mushrooms, navy beans, and ham lunches in the summer resident's kitchen: the beans reheated every day for several days till they were good and soupy.

Those were magical days that I will always remember. I've always loved Umstead Park, if I could choose where I will spend eternity after my days are over I think it would be there.

Regards,
Nelson

Robert Skinner with update (10-14-08):

Thanks John. Sorry to hear about (the illness of)Myers (Braxton). Patsy and I will miss the Parks reunion again this year. We were planning to be there but the Art Workshop Director at Myrtle Beach called and wanted us to come early on Saturday to help out. I will be picking up folks at the airport and helping with hauling their luggage to their rooms and about 45 minutes each night before dinner I will assist at the bar with simple drinks - beer, cokes, wine, and other not so complicated drinks. Patsy will serve as a monitor in her three classes (1 each week) assisting the art instructor with questions and helping solve problems of participating artists. For this we get free accommodations and Patsy gets to take art classes free for three weeks. Most of the day I am free to do whatever. Weekends will be the busiest transporting people back and forth to the airport.

Will miss seeing everyone. Give my best to all. Robert

Dan Smith writes (10-23-08):

Hey John,

Hope all is going well with you and staying busy I'm sure. Sorry for taking so long to get back with you on this, but I did hear back from Paul Hart a couple of days ago. He gave me his email address and so if you would contact him directly and see what he would prefer to be included in the contact listing. He also told me that Floyd Williams at

Merchants Millpond is retiring and that they apparently had a little gathering for him yesterday. Jay Greenwood let me know this morning that Floyd's official retirement date is at the end of this month, October 31. You may want to contact Floyd as well for his information, and to invite him to our gathering on November 1, since he will be officially retired. Paul told me that he would unfortunately not be able to make the reunion.

Paul Hart harttwins@charter.net

Floyd Williams floyd.k.williams@ncmail.net (through Oct. 31)

See you soon.

Dan

Paul Hart reports (10-23-08):

John:

My address is 163 Village Way, Lillington, NC 27546. My telephone number is 910-814-7631.

I just returned from Merchants Millpond today. I attended Floyd Williams' retirement dinner yesterday. He will retire on November 1. He and Signa have built a house on Honey Pot Road very close to the Millpond. I helped them move some furniture to their new house today. Signa's email address is swamp4me@gmail.com, if you would like to contact them for more information.

Hope you are doing well.

Best Regards,

Paul

Floyd Williams writes (10-24-08):

Hi John,

Good to hear from you. I'm not sure if we will be able to make it up to WIUM on Nov 1 but we will see what we can do. I'm actually having to close the park Oct 31 which is my last day so it may depend on how things go that night.

Our email is williams1980@embarqmail.com and our new home address will be

130 Honey Pot Rd.
Gatesville, NC 27938

Our new house is actually closer to the millpond than the one we live

in on the park. If you need to get something to Signa she still will have her state email at signa.williams@ncmail.net

Thanks for the info and congrats. Take care,
Floyd

(11-03-08)

John,

Believe it or not ,Signa and I made a feeble attempt at making it to the reunion but as luck and bad memory would have it we didn't. We did come to Raleigh Saturday to pick up a freezer our son had and the intent was to make a quick trip by WIUM to say hello. Signa and I both had to close on Friday and with the chaos of moving of things between houses upon us we got a late start that way. The trip went well until we got up around Knightdale on 64 where there was a major construction delay going on. We finally made it to WIUM about 2:00 and there is where my memory failed me. I forgot your email said it was at the Reedy Creek side. We asked a park attendant where the reunion was and he said Camp Lapihio. We proceeded there only to find some other big meeting going on with lots of state owned vehicles that was obviously not the one we were looking for. We asked a maintenance mechanic that was in that area about it and then is when we realized we were not even close. By this time it was approaching 3:00 and we had told our son we would meet him about 3:30 so we decided we had best get there. I hope you'all had a great time and we do hope to make it sometime. Thanks for the invite. Take care,
Floyd

[Floyd, We understand how things can go wrong. "The best laid plans of mice and men..."; we know how that can go. Check with Mike Seigh to find out how plans for attending the reunion can really get messed up!]

Sid Shearin writes (11-4-08):

Leon and John,

I am sorry about missing all the gatherings. It is funny how weekends get filled up when you retire. Anyway I did make the retirement lunch for Floyd Williams at MEMI. His information is the following:

Floyd Williams
130 Honey Pot Road
Gatesville, NC 27938
(252) 357-2408
williams1980@embarqmail.com

A few old timers were there like Dennis Helms, Martha Woods, Paul Hart, Leroy Barrow and of course me. Floyd built him and Signa a house within a quarter of a mile from the millpond.

Maybe I will be able to attend a few more park gatherings in the future.

Sid

[Scott and Janet Daughtry reported at the Alumni Reunion that they had had a chance to ride on an elephant while in Sri Lanka this past year. They don't seem scared at all!]



Floyd Williams updates us (11-5-08):

John,

If there is any possible way to make it to Hanging Rock next year we will try. I started my run with state parks there as a park attendant in June 1976....sometimes it only seems like yesterday!

Take care,

Kevin Burnett reports (11-9-08):

Hey John,

Thanks for the note and sorry I couldn't attend. I took a course in truck driving and got my CDL license about two weeks ago and I'm currently finishing training with a trucking company called Maverick. I'll soon be one of those big trucks that folks see traveling across the country. I'll be doing long haul trucking which means that I'll be on the road about 2 or 3 weeks, home for a few days, and back out again. It'll give me a chance to visit the country (and a little of Canada), if you consider pavement and white lines "visiting". I'll keep you posted when I get a chance, but if you see a big burgundy flatbed truck going by, it just might be me.

Kevan Burnett

Jo Anne Clendening reports (11-29-08):

Hi, Carter and John

I happened to see Etta Tillotson's obit in today's on-line version of Durham's newspaper, The Herald-Sun. Was not sure whether you or state parks folks knew about this.

Hope all is well with my friends, Carter and John!

Jo Anne

11-30-08

Hi, John—

Thanks for the note. I really missed being at the reunion this year. The same day, I think, was an WIUM event that I was to have participated in regarding original families of William B. Umstead State Park. While working there, I had been involved in a lot of the research regarding Umstead's past. I have not been able to get out of the house, as I am the primary caregiver for my father, Jim Neely. Five years ago, my husband Frank, built an addition to our house (bedroom and bath), for my parents to live in. They moved here in April 2004. For two years they remained independent—grocery shopping, driving, finances, etc. Then my mother's Parkinson's Disease progressed very quickly. She died in May 2007. My Dad's health began failing significantly about 3 months ago. He is now bedridden, incontinent, etc. I have him enrolled in a hospice program which is very helpful. Hospital equipment is provided and aides come several times a week to get him cleaned and fresh. I also have a secondary agency that provides an aide 10 hours a week.

I'm saying all of that to say that right now, I am basically housebound, as someone needs to be with Dad at all times. Frank travels out of state more weeks than not, so he is not here. I think that many of us "boomers" have similar responsibilities. It's tough but worthwhile. Having Dad at home enables him to see children, grandchildren and great

grandchildren often. Not only do I have 4 sons, I have 4 grandsons as well!!! The old Solomon crew does not know what it means to produce girls.

Glad you and Ginger are doing well. I haven't been out with State Parks folks since Susan's retirement last year.

Take care...

Jo Anne

[Jo Anne, We hope that you can continue your efforts to help your Dad and to maintain a loving home and family!]

Denise Williams(DPR) forwarded this to us (12-12-08):

DPR Family,

I spoke with Susan T. a few moments ago. She had a heart attack Sunday, December ,7 and has been released from the hospital to go home today. She is in good spirits and will have no long term damaging effects from it. She expressed her thanks for all of the cards, letters, and e-mails she has received since her mothers passing and wanted her Parks "Family" to know she is OK. If you would like to contact her her address is:

Susan Tillotson
116 Livingstone Drive
Cary, NC 27513
(H)535-8712
email address: susanrose@nc.rr.com

Denise Williams
Operations Section
[Thanks Denise for letting all of us know!]

Those Who Will Be Missed

Myers Braxton

Myers Griffin "Sonny" Braxton



Myers Griffin "Sonny" Braxton, 80, of Godwin, died Wednesday, November 25, 2008, in his home.

Mr. Braxton was an Army Veteran and former educator. He started the first athletic program at Linden schools, and he was a commissioner for the town of Godwin from 2003 to 2008. Mr. Griffin was a

1952 graduate of UNC-Chapel Hill and attended Michigan State University. He was a former member and elder of Western Boulevard Presbyterian Church in Raleigh and was a member of First Presbyterian Church in Fayetteville.

Mr. Griffin was a retired superintendent for N.C. State Parks Department of Environment and Natural

Resources. He was a retired employee of Groundwater Management, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, and the retired owner and operator of Braxton Landscape Management Company after 12 years.

Funeral service will be conducted at 3:00 p.m., Saturday, November 29, 2008, in Godwin Presbyterian Church, with Dr. Randall Bremer officiating. Burial will follow in Old Bluff Presbyterian Church cemetery.

The family will receive friends from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m., Friday, November 28, 2008, at Jemigan-Warren Funeral Home in Fayetteville.

Mr. Braxton is survived by his beloved wife of 50 years, Gayle Martin Braxton; son, John Tarleton

Braxton and wife, Michelle of Fuquay-Varina; daughter, Jeannine Braxton Lindsay of Fuquay-Varina

and Myra Hester Braxton of La Grange; sister, Mary Emily Royal and husband, Mack of Godwin; and

four grandchildren, Braxton Lindsay, Meredith Lindsay, Grant Braxton and William Braxton.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Tarleton Grant "T.G." Braxton and Miriam McLean Braxton.

In lieu of flowers memorials may be made to RHA/Howell Care Centers/Bear Creek, 5840 Greenwood

Avenue, LaGrange, NC 28551.

Services entrusted to Jemigan-Warren Funeral Home of Fayetteville.