

The Transition

Of and For Former N.C. State Park Employees

February 2005

Issue No. 9

A lot has happened since the July issue. Our Second North Carolina State Parks Former Employee Reunion was a lot of fun and we shared much good fellowship. Although the crowd was small, we all found time to catch up with each other's lives and enjoy some of the finest cuisine possible! Read more about it later on in this issue.

Hurricanes Frances and Ivan affected a great many people across North Carolina. Ginger and I were directly affected in two ways. Our road was washed away (all repairs were completed about 6 weeks later) and a small cabin that Ginger had purchased in 1974 near the mouth of the Linville River was moved about 25 feet away from its foundation by the worst flood since 1917. It is not worth the cost of repair. We are working with the Lake James Fire Department to burn it down as part of their training program. We will then build a campsite for our travel trailer. By Golly, when the next flood comes we'll move our vacation place!

Please thank Kevin Burnett for the use of his web site to post The Transition. You may access it at <http://www.luggage-and-leather.com/transition.htm> . The photos are in color!

Please continue to review the list of former employees. Let me know of any corrections or additions.

Because the mailing list for The Transition has become so large (about 92 people) I can no longer make up the difference between donations and expenses. Therefore, after this issue, I will no longer mail a copy to those who have not made a donation to help with postage, paper, envelopes, and copies. Any alumnus who has made a donation at any time in the past will continue to receive a paper copy. Those who do not wish a copy may continue to read The Transition on the Internet.

Get in touch and stay in touch!

John L. Sharpe

News Updates:

Dateline: August 7, 2004



Former N.C. State Park employees and spouses gather at Falls Lake State Recreation Area to tell tall tales, eat good food, relive old times, and observe the aging process first hand.

Participants in the reunion were Leon and Annie Carter, Bill Nelms, John Sharpe, Phil and Barbara McCorkle, Myers and Gail Braxton, Judy Warren, Tommy Wagoner, Fred Hagenberger, Lauris Joyner, Claude Crews, and William Berry. Everyone enjoyed a great potluck lunch.

Our food editor was not present so a complete description of the cuisine is not readily available. However, Bill Nelms brought a seafood casserole that everyone thought was different and exceptionally delicious. Bill didn't have leftovers that night! [The recipe for the seafood casserole is included in this issue]

A contest was held for the best pronunciation of S.N.C.S.P.F.E.R. Tommy Wagoner, Judy Warren, and Myers Braxton entered with Fred Hagenberger and Phil McCorkle serving as judges. Myers Braxton won the contest, with some protest from Tommy Wagoner and Judy Warren, and received a baseball cap as a prize.

Tommy Wagoner brought very rare examples of early North Carolina State Park patches.



The first patch used by State Parks had no emblem and used only the words “State Parks N.C.”; State Parks was part of the N.C. Forest Service.



The second patch worn had the dogwood flower as an emblem and used the maroon color that would become very familiar in later years.

A few years later, sometime in the 1950's, Mr. T.C. Ellis had one of his employees, Mr. John Kibler, design the patch we know as the “football”.

Bob Ensley writes (9-27-04) that he and his wife Judy moved into his mother's house a year ago after his mother died. “Yes, Judy and I and my four sons have many fond and memorable memories of our life on Mount Mitchell 1964-1968 (John R. Wilson, Clyde Hopson). Compared to now days, we were roughing it and brag about our adventures often. Judy claims she was the first woman to live on the mountain with three sons--ages 1, 2, and 3 years old. Our family grew fast and that's why I left after four years. Two year after leaving our fourth son was born and we named him Mitchell. He is now 34 and frequently visits his mountain. Leaving Mt. Mitchell in 1968, I went to work for N.C. Dept. of Water & Air (as previously called) and continued working for the State until 1974 as a chemist in the western 29 counties. The love for Mt Mitchell remains as strong today as it did back in the sixties

Conley Moffet, then Chief Naturalist, had me rework the interpretive markers for the Balsam Trail. Originally, a drawing of named mountains seen from the tower was desired, however the drawing was never used. I spent about four years in accomplishing what is seen hanging in the [Mount Mitchell] restaurant lounge today. After remaining in my closet at home for 35 years, I gave it to Jack Bradley two years ago. I appreciate Jack for framing it and placing the drawing in the restaurant. I believe Jonathan Griffith was responsible for the display.

Oh...the good old days. I could go on and on talking about them however I'll not bore you with them. My writing hand is about to “peter-out” from old age I suspect.

Reading the Steward and Transition makes me very proud of State Parks. They (State Parks) have come a long way into excellence.

Due to my wife Judy's poor health I have very little time to pursue outside of home, contacts with dear friends of State Parks. I imagine there would be a wealth of history from all who have been employees of State Parks.

Best Regards,
Bob Ensley

(Thank you Bob for your letter and letting us all know about yourself. I know that you are right about there being a wealth of historical information in the minds and hearts of former employees.)

Cedric Squires writes (7-30-04) "Alas, the fates are bent on knocking me out of being able to attend this year's (S.N.C.S.P. F.E.R.). Also, I have improved my car riding range quite a bit and I had fully planned to attend. Then I learned my son & his future wife are moving in with me until his new home is completed.

His move down from PA is to take place August 6th. There is really no way I can not be here on August 7th. I guess I'll just have to hang on for another year.

It will be good to have Reid next door. He is building on land I'm giving him and his (to be) wife. Just next to my 161 year old, 9 room farm house-with and almost new full exterior-windows, siding, roof, and guttering. Only things I still have to paint is the front porch floor and turned porch parts. WHEE!

Couple of Funnies (kinder):

This lady & her husband got over a shouting bout and she said to him, "an older lady needs a man about like a fish needs a bicycle." After a short silence her husband retorted, "yeah, and an older man needs a woman about like a canary needs a shotgun!"

Two dogs were padding down the street when one turns to the other and said "wait here, I'll be right back." He then trotted across the street and spent a couple of minutes sniffing a fire hydrant. On returning the other dog inquired "what was that all about?" His K-9 friend said "Oh, I was just checking my messages!" [Cedric, our dog Journey spends a lot of time checking his pee-mail!"]

Two old friends met on the street and one said, "John, you look kinda stressed out. What seems to be the trouble"? His friend said "well, I'm afraid I have developed seen-us trouble". "You mean sinus trouble don't you"? His friend asked. John replied, "No I mean seen-us trouble. I was out with this nice lady last night and I'm afraid her husband seen-us"!

Back a few years ago I was out mowing my lawn when a lady in a big “Caddy” with Florida license plates on it pulled up, rolled down her window and motioned for me to come over. So I cut off my riding mower and walked over to her side of the car. She asked me how much I charged to mow a lawn. Guess I was a bit miffed so I told her “that depends on a number of circumstances. Like how big her lawn was. And I added “as a matter of fact - the lady who lives here lets me sleep with her”. First time I saw a middle aged woman “lay down rubber-getting away”!

An absolute true story! (Yeah!)

To celebrate my 80th birthday I decided I’d take a nice nature walk up beside a beautiful little stream in a mountain valley with blood root, trillium, wild orchid and Jack-in-the-pulpit growing along its banks. After walking for some while I looked ahead and saw a little frog sitting on the bank. As I drew nearer to him, he didn’t jump, just turned his head a bit and watched me as I drew near him. I was shocked almost speechless when the little frog plainly spoke, saying “If you pick me up and kiss me I will turn into a beautiful young maiden for you“. I thought over his proposal and said, “Mr. Frog, considering my age I believe I had rather have a talking frog“. After a brief silence, the frog said, “Now which of us is the greater liar”?

Have a good year! C.P.

After thought:

Adam called out to the Lord saying, “Lord I am a lonely man with little to give my life purpose; can you help me”? The Lord said, “I can make you a near perfect companion, she will be called woman and she will be cheerful, hard working, loyal, and supportive. She will run an ideal dwelling for you and serve you fine food and will love you forever”. Adam said, “Lord, I know such a fine companion will not come cheap. How much will such a wonderful mate cost me”? The Lord said, “You’re right, I guess such a splendid mate might cost you an arm and a leg”. Adam shook his head and said “I just don’t see how I could get by with just one arm and one leg left to me. Just what can I get for a rib”?

[Thanks Cedric for the great stories and info!]

Howard Stewart writes (7-30-04): “I seem to be busier now than when I was working. I am sorry but I will not be able to attend this years meeting. My Daughter will be celebrating her 25th anniversary on that date. I was looking forward to seeing some of the old and some of the new, but guess it will have to wait until next year. Tell all you see that Howard says hello. Regards, Howard.

Tommy Wagoner writes (2-6-05): “Not much to report from the Wagoner’s. I continue to enjoy my taxidermy and it is growing from a hobby to a business faster than I thought. But I will limit the work to have time for other things. Mary has spent the winter knitting scarves and has probably made about 100. She sold some and gave many as gifts at Christmas. She continues to work part time at Forsyth hospital. We are expecting our 3rd grandchild in April. Looking forward to spring and gardening again.”

Dave Lattimore reports (8-18-04): “Thanks for the photos! I actually recognized a few faces! Sorry I could not make it, August is a tough time to take off. I was on a fire just outside the park that week. Lots of activities here-12 major SAR incidents in 6 days. I IC’ed one over the weekend for a missing 8 year old autistic South Korean boy who got separated from his parents on a short day hike. We jumped on it quick with a couple of helicopters and about 125 folks. Found him a day later in good health stranded in a chimney leading over the rim of Yosemite Valley, just a few feet from a couple of thousand feet fall! Nice to have a save occasionally to balance out the ones who don’t make it. Cheers, Dave.”

Mike Cavin sends greetings from Kodiak Alaska (9-2-04): “I want to thank you for keeping me posted on the goings on with our former colleagues. I do miss the camaraderie of the NC State Parks crowd! Over a decade working with everyone makes us more like family than just co-workers. Since leaving NC, I still have not found a place that even comes close to what we had. To this day I still brag to people up here about NC State parks”!

“I went to visit Brownie this past spring, and we went to Cliffs of the Neuse. It was so good seeing everyone! I started there as a seasonal in 1985, and going back always brings back VERY fond memories.”

Jay Wild and family were looking forward to his retirement. Greeting visitors was going to be much easier with the help of the retirement gift!



Leon Carter reports:

(11-16-04). About 6 months ago Jim Stevens and his wife Fran moved into an assisted living home, The Brighton Gardens. Jim is wheelchair bound and Fran suffers from Alzheimer's disease. [Their new mailing address is included in the list of former employees] Jim was presented with a plaque today for his many years of dedicated service to North Carolina State Parks from Friends of State Parks. Jim has just finished his third term as President of Friends of State Parks. Former State Park employees attending the presentation ceremony were, Tom Ellis, Jim Hallsey, Cliff Phillips, Alan Eakes, and myself.

(11-22-04) I just found out that Krissy and Karl Kaylor received a new addition to their family on 3-28-04, --Joshua! [Congratulations from all of us, I'm sure!]



(1-24-05). I am very proud of the Baptist Men's Group that responds to emergency help after the hurricanes and other national catastrophes. A couple of our former employees (that I know of) were among these gentlemen. Of course, there are many organizations that do the same, but I knew none of those people personally.

News from Thomas Sutton. It seems that Thomas took misstep and broke the small leg bone just above his left ankle in December. His cast is supposed to be removed February 9. Thomas says that a big man should never try to walk on crutches!

(2-8-05). "Went by to see Mr. Ellis this afternoon. It's his 93rd birthday. Couldn't think of a gift that I could afford. And happened to remember he loves liver pudding, so I got him a pound. Don't think a gold watch would have made him any happier".

Sports Page by Leon Carter

Come One - Come All

Falls Lake Crappie Tournament is scheduled for Thurs. March 17. Start fishing at 8am or any time after that. Registration is \$8.00. Contact Eric Dousharm or Brian Hahn or send the fee to either at Falls Lake State Recreation Area, 13304 Creedmore Road, Wake Forest, NC 27587. Prizes are: One third of the pot for the biggest Crappie and one third for the heavies 5 Crappies. The other third goes toward the fish fry the next day. All former employees are invited to the fish out and the fish fry. If you don't fish, the fish fry will cost you \$5.00.

The Transition Cookbook

Seafood Casserole

(Cynthia Cole, Island of Lights Cookbook, Carolina & Kure Beach)

2 pounds shrimp, cooked & peeled
1 pound crabmeat
1 pound small scallops
2 cups celery, finely chopped
¾ cups onion, finely chopped
1 cup mayonnaise
1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
1 teaspoon black pepper
1-½ cups fine bread crumbs
½ stick butter

Toss shrimp, crabmeat, and scallops in large bowl. In a separate bowl, mix together celery, onion, mayonnaise, Worcestershire and pepper. Toss with seafood until well blended. Put in an 8x12 inch casserole dish. Mix the bread crumbs and melted butter. Sprinkle over casserole. Bake about 40 minutes at 350 degrees or until bread crumbs are lightly browned. Serves 8. Freezes well.

Those Who Will Be Missed

Mrs. Lorene Sutton, 85 years old, died Saturday, February 5. She was the mother of Thomas and Jane Sutton, and wife of Mr. George Sutton, who was, before his death, the Assistant Superintendent of State Parks. Our thoughts and prayers are with Thomas and Jane and all other family members.

Thomas and Jane would like to thank all of those who have expressed concern for all of their thoughts and prayers.

Larry Skinner, Robert Skinner's brother died September 15. Robert says that "Larry

had a small cell lung cancer and treatment gave him only about 1 year after its discovery. I visited him as much as possible. I usually saw him every time I went home. Most of the time he came by to eat with my Mother and me and other times I would get to Edenton early and find him at the store eating breakfast with his friends.”