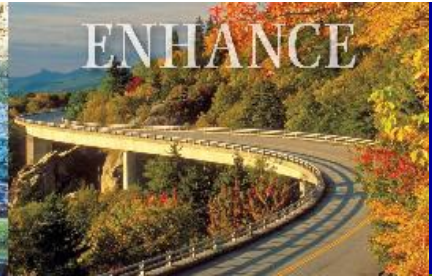




FRIENDS of the Blue Ridge Parkway, Inc.



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November 2008

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

December 9, 2008
Roanoke Valley Chapter Meeting
to be held at Roanoke County Library
Headquarters on Route 419
at 7:00 PM

Dear Phyllis,

Thanksgiving - a time for giving thanks...

THANK YOU! to all the volunteers who have given of their time on the Parkway, and to all the members who have provided financial support over the past year.

THANK YOU! to all the State Workers who remembered FRIENDS in their State's donor campaign.

Remember - Holiday Gift Memberships

A FRIENDS gift membership for the Parkway lovers on your holiday gift list will include a gift notification, subscription to the semi-annual newsletter *High Vistas* and all other regular membership benefits. Plus, you will receive a tax-deduction! Gift recipients will be reminded of your generosity with each arrival of their eNewsletter.

Email us at staff@friendsBRP.org or call 800-288-PARK (7275) and we are happy to assist you with your holiday subscriptions.

Message from Leesa Sutton Brandon Executive Director, Blue Ridge Parkway 75th, Inc.



exciting year in 2010." Houck Medford, the Executive Director of the Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation, is pictured above at the Blue Ridge Parkway 75th, Inc., press conference kick-off as Franklin D. Roosevelt.

"Wanted to share a news story that aired over the weekend on Virginia Tech public radio, WVTF. I heard it as I was driving home Friday afternoon and thought it really captured what we rolled out during the pair of events in Roanoke. No doubt it features and leads with the mystical visit from FDR....

Thanks again to all of you who helped in so, so many ways at the 75th Anniversary Kick-off. What fun to see the interest and excitement during the symposium and announcement events. Our job now is to keep that momentum alive and engage as many individuals, communities, organizations, and businesses up and down the Parkway in planning and preparing for what is sure to be an

National News

Congress Renews IRA Gift Opportunity

You are probably aware that on October 3 President Bush signed into law the historic \$700 billion rescue plan. The legislation implementing the plan contains important provisions relating to charitable giving. The Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008, the main feature of which is the bailout package, also extends certain portions of the Pension Protection Act of 2006 that expired on 12-31-07.

This law provides that, in each of the years 2008 and 2009, an owner of a traditional or Roth IRA may instruct the trustee to distribute directly to a public charity up to \$100,000 without the distribution being included as taxable income and that distribution will count toward the IRA owner's withdrawal amount.

To qualify for IRA rollover treatment, the donor must direct the IRA manager to transfer funds directly to a charity. A withdrawal followed by a contribution will still have to be reported as income. The donor must be at least 70 ½ and the donee must be a tax-exempt organization to which deductible contributions can be made. Donor advised funds and supporting organizations are not eligible. The gift must be outright; rollovers to a planned gift, such as a gift annuity or a charitable remainder trust, do not qualify. Neither does outright distributions to charity from employer-sponsored retirement plans, such as Simple IRAs, 401(k)s, and 403(b)s. Also note that IRA rollovers may be includable in a donor's income for state and local tax purposes and may not earn an offsetting charitable deduction, depending on state and local law.

The new legislation offers a welcome incentive to donors who want to use the money in the IRAs to make charitable gifts to public charities such as FRIENDS of the Blue Ridge Parkway.

FRIENDS Board President Passes the Gavel

Outgoing FRIENDS of the Blue Ridge Parkway President J. Richard Wells (pictured on the right) passed the gavel to the new president, Gregory N. Brown at the October 2009 FRIENDS board meeting held at the beautiful Chetola Resort at Blowing Rock, North Carolina. Richard Wells was voted in as the Treasurer, Gretchen Weinnig was voted in as the Vice President of Administration, Broadus Fitzpatrick was voted in as Secretary, and Beth Siegel was voted in as Assistant Secretary.



Take Pride in America

Washington, D.C. - Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne today signed an order extending the authorization of Take Pride in America within the Department of the Interior through the year 2010. The program, designed to encourage volunteerism on public lands, had been set to expire on November 1, 2008. The secretarial order further solidifies three strategic Take Pride in America priorities: engaging youth in service, promoting voluntourism (for more information on voluntourism, [click here](#)), and supporting beautification as an economic development strategy.



Take Pride in America® is a national partnership program authorized by Congress and administered within the Department of the Interior to promote the appreciation and stewardship of public lands, including parks, forests, historic sites, and schools. Take Pride is active in all fifty states, has partnerships with public, private, and nonprofit organizations, and features Clint Eastwood as national spokesman. Citizen stewards know and count on Take Pride for the most comprehensive online portal www.TakePride.gov of public lands volunteer opportunities and for showcasing the most outstanding public lands stewardship activities through the annual national award ceremony.



Partnering to Increase Volunteers for the Parkway: The Blue Ridge Parkway and FRIENDS of the Blue Ridge Parkway

We all know that FRIENDS raises funds to support Blue Ridge Parkway programs and projects such as planting trees to restore Parkway views, supporting Parkway events, removing non-native invasive plants, providing research information on endangered species, adopting abandoned cemeteries, developing programs to engage the next generation in nature and outdoor activities, restoring and cleaning historic buildings along the Parkway and the list goes on...

BUT the latest news is that FRIENDS has increased its Parkway volunteers. This year FRIENDS increased not only the number of volunteers (by 24.7%) but also the hours of

volunteer service (by 8%) providing over \$1,016,100 of volunteer service to the Blue Ridge Parkway. FRIENDS has provided over \$1.3 million of services to the Blue Ridge Parkway including program and project services and donations, in-kind contributions and 52,081 volunteer hours!

Many businesses support FRIENDS through their participation in the Joint Membership Program. For more information on the Joint Membership Program [click here](#). Thank you, FRIENDS, for a job well done!

DONATE

Stories of Interest Along the Parkway

Hazel Mathis from Elkin, NC passed away on October 16 at 93 years of age. After she and husband, Fleet Mathis, raised their four children, she went to work at Brinegar Cabin for a few years before becoming the co-manager with Grace Laffoon and retiring in 1986. She was known for her cross stitch pillows and her skill at weaving the rugs on the old loom at the Cabin. Her sister, Ruth Southard, also worked there many years in the pottery/basket cabin. They often shared many adventures of their years working there. Celebrities who stopped by there included Frances Bavier (she played the character of Aunt Bea on the sitcom *The Andy Griffith Show*), Amy Carter, Frank Borman (former astronaut), Prince Ranier and Princess Grace. Hazel was born in Winston-Salem, NC and was one of nine children. She had a sweet smile and could always tell a funny story and will always be remembered for that. Submitted by her daughter, Sara Carter, Elkin, NC



Volunteer News

The Gordons Are Honored

FRIENDS' volunteers Dean and Betty Gordon (on the left in the picture) receive their Plateau District Volunteer of the Year Award from Mindy DeCesar (to the right) of the National Park Service at the Plateau VIP Dinner.

FRIENDS Pursues Blue Ridge Parkway Specialty License Plate

The Blue Ridge Parkway Association is partnering with FRIENDS to sponsor a Blue Ridge Parkway specialty license plate in Virginia. Virginia has the largest number of specialty plates of any state and potential revenues are minor but FRIENDS hopes this license plate will bring attention to the Blue Ridge Parkway in Virginia. In addition, if this plate becomes a reality FRIENDS wishes to donate the income in 2009 and 2010 to the Blue Ridge Parkway's 75th Anniversary celebration.



To make this a reality, if you or anyone you know would like to purchase the specialty tag please contact: staff@FriendsBRP.org or call 800-288Park(7275) to receive an application form!



469 Mile Award

FRIENDS board member, Bill Hackworth (left) received the very first 469 mile award from Vickie Valentino, FRIENDS Director of Marketing and Programs, for his bike trip on the entire Blue Ridge Parkway. FRIENDS of the Blue Ridge Parkway sponsors this award for people who have traveled the entire 469 miles. The miles do not have to be traveled in one trip, they can be cumulative. The FRIENDS office staff have received almost one hundred applications to date. The award packages will be mailed in December. If you think you might qualify or just want more information on how to apply you can [click here](#).

Chapter News

Appalachian State University Chapter

The Appalachian State University Chapter of FRIENDS of the Blue Ridge Parkway met at Sims Creek Saturday, Nov. 8, to help the National Park Service remove debris from a dismantled dam. Chapter members Gwyn O'Leary, Kayoua Lee, Lindsay Steinmann, Whitney Crossen, Nathaniel Smathers, Connor Rice, Nate Warren, Tim Hefflinger, Tyler Laminack, Jackson Miller, and Heather Paige Preston spent three hours removing buckets of concrete chips and larger pieces of the dam in a volunteer effort that saved the National Park Service approximately \$5,000.

"It was the hardest work we've completed," said Appalachian FRIENDS President Nathaniel Smathers, "but it was certainly worth it." Debris from the dam, a structure thought by Park Service personnel to be built by the Sims family more than 50 years ago, was carried out by hand and wheelbarrow along the trail bordering Sims Pond at Blue Ridge Parkway Milepost 296. If you are interested in volunteering for upcoming projects please contact Heather Paige Preston at prestonhp@appstate.edu.

Rocky Knob Chapter

The Rocky Knob Chapter met in October to hear Rick Baker, Facilities Manager of the Plateau District, speak about his history with the Parkway. As a result of his presentation, this group decided to start a recycling project for plastics and aluminum. The Plateau District will buy two containers for recycling and place one at the Rocky Knob Camp Ground and one at Ground Hog Mountain Picnic area. FRIENDS chapter members will pick up the recycled products and take them to recycling centers. The aluminum will be sold and proceeds used by FRIENDS of the Blue Ridge Parkway to further Parkway projects.

Rocky Knob Chapter picked up trash along the Parkway during one weekend in October and will continue to pick up trash during the fall and winter months. Happily there was very little trash to collect. People do respect the Parkway property. Collections from the Iron Ranger Donations Box at Mabry Mill have already amounted to over \$1700.00 for the 2008 season. All the park benches along the Rock Castle Gorge Trail have been replaced by the Boy Scouts of America and Rocky Knob Chapter. Plans are to complete the benches along Smart View Trail during October. The Rocky Knob Chapter has invited 10 members of the American Hiking Association to come to our area to help with trail rebuilding at Smart View in June of 2009. If you are interested in participating in any upcoming projects, please contact Gloria Hilton at: gjhilton1@yahoo.com or by phone at (540) 593-3081.

Roanoke Valley Chapter

The Roanoke Valley Chapter will hold a planning meeting on December 9, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. in the Roanoke County Public Library Headquarters Conference Room on Route 419. If you are interested in participating in any upcoming projects, please [click here](#) to contact the FRIENDS office.

Fisher Peak Chapter



The Fisher Peak Chapter of FRIENDS of the Blue Ridge Parkway hosted 12 students from the University of Notre Dame, in South Bend, Indiana, the week of October 19-25, 2008.

As part of their "Appalachia Studies Seminar" students must participate in an immersion week in an area of Appalachia. These students chose Fisher Peak because of their interest in the environment and their love of the outdoors. They received quite a surprise when they arrived and found out they were not in coal fields, but in one of the most beautiful spots in America.

During the week the students worked with FRIENDS volunteers to clear and blaze trails, repair rail fences at the Blue Ridge Music Center, and build five benches which were then placed on the trails. A total of 393 work hours were logged that week.

In addition to trail work, Fisher Peak volunteers made potluck dinners for the students, helped them participate at a local food bank, provided interaction with community leaders, introduced them to the music of the area through jams, old-time dance lessons, and a live band performance at the Rex Theater in Galax, Virginia....and the Fisher Peak chapter members totally fell in love with this energetic group. The students left with a deeper appreciation of the Blue Ridge Parkway and all that Southwest Virginia has to offer. One student summed it up by saying, "I'm going to tell my parents that they have to retire in the Blue Ridge Mountains."

If you are interested in helping the Fisher Peak Chapter please contact [Dottie Bramley at pdbramley@v.alink.com](mailto:pdbramley@v.alink.com)



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