

CAROLINA CHAPTER
Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation
Vol. 5, Number 5 August 18, 2011

President's Note

Clara and I attended the annual meeting in Omaha, Nebraska (July 31 - Aug. 3) returning on August 12th after some travel in Nebraska and Colorado. Also in attendance were chapter members Bob Cline, John Lipscomb, Helen Swanson, and Lorna Hainesworth. It was a wonderful meeting. The conference hotel was in downtown Omaha near the Old Market area and proved to be an ideal meeting venue. We had very good programs (i.e., Clay Jenkenson at the Joslyn Museum, Kira Gale on Nebraska Lewis and Clark history) and visited sites such as "first encounter" at Fort Atchinson, Sergeant Floyd's grave, Ponca State Park and Spirit Mound (near Vermillion, S.D.). We also saw first-hand the continuing negative effects of the great flood of 2011. It was also a pleasure to see and visit with Lewis and Clark friends whom we have made through the years.

On a less positive note, we also sat through a very negatively charged business meeting that had to do with proposed changes in our Foundation. I will share my opinion concerning these proposed changes below.

On a more positive note, the Carolina Chapter Boy Scout Patch is being produced and we should soon have it in hand. Bryant Boswell who has headed up this project at the national level stated that our patch is the prettiest of all. The guidelines are completed and will be made available to all members. Please begin sharing with local Boy Scout troops and councils that the patch will be available very soon. Also, members are encouraged to offer to be a resource for Boy Scouts interested in earning the patch. This project may do more "to tell the story" than anything our chapter has ever done. Many thanks to Bob Cline and John Lipscomb for their good work on this project.

Trent Strickland, president

Welcome New Members

Welcome to Bob Nixon of Danville, Vermont, and Ann Tufts of Ivy, Virginia. Both joined at the Omaha meeting and the Carolina Chapter is honored to have them as members.

Next Meeting

Our next meeting will be on Saturday, November 5, in Greensboro beginning at 11:00 am. The meeting will not be held at the Libby Hill Restaurant on Randleman Road as earlier announced. The meeting site will be shared in the fall newsletter. Mark your calendars!

The Foundation's Future (Trent's thoughts and opinions)

Even though the Omaha meeting was informative and highly enjoyable, I came away from it with the feeling that the national organization is troubled and at a crisis point. The Foundation has been in a financial crisis for at least the past two years. During the bicentennial, membership remained at a high level and we had sufficient operating funds to employ an adequate staff to carry out the work of the Foundation.

But all this changed with the end of the bicentennial and the recession that began in 2008. Membership dropped and the interest and dividend income the Foundation counted on went way down. We simply do not have sufficient yearly operating funds to support We Proceeded On and employ a staff that is needed for a national organization. For the past two years we have had one full-time position and part-time and volunteer clerical help. At present we have one part-time clerical worker at the national office. For the past year or so the only full-time employee has been the Executive Director who resigned recently. At the Omaha meeting the proposed budget for 2012 was presented and it was announced that \$25,000.00 more revenues/income must be found to meet the budget.

All of the above news is dire to say the least. I have been aware of the financial problems since attending the national meetings in Olive Branch, Miss., in 2009 and Lewiston, Idaho, in 2010. Chapters in Mississippi and Idaho (and this year in Nebraska) organized outstanding annual meetings but it was clear to me that at the national level we were in a crisis due to lack of operating funds to employ a staff.

But there is good and encouraging news that was announced at the Cumberland Gap Regional Meeting in November of 2010. It was announced that a long time Foundation member and potential donor, Tom Johnson, wanted to help our organization. He offered to pay for an advisory team to assist the Foundation in moving forward to make the necessary changes that would allow us to become a nationally relevant, non-profit foundation. The Board followed up on his offer and met with Dr. Dan Jordan, President Emeritus of the Thomas Jefferson Foundation and Dr. Charlie Bryan, President Emeritus of the Virginia Historical Society. Both organizations are very prestigious and successful non-profits.

After meeting with Drs. Johnson and Jordan and much discussion, the Foundation Board accepted numerous recommendations for change that included three main components of an expanded vision and mission - Expansion of Educational Efforts, Expansion of Trail Preservation and Stewardship, and Relocation of the National Office. Details of the proposed changes were shared in mailings in April, May and July of this year.

To me the proposed changes seem reasonable and critically needed. However, some members of the Board are strongly opposed and their opposition was apparent in the business meeting on Monday, August 1. The Board members opposed to the changes had already mailed out a letter outlining their position prior to the annual meeting.

I understand that all members will be given the opportunity to share their opinions concerning the proposed changes in September. I share the above to update Foundation members and non-

Foundation members so that all of us can be involved in these important decisions.

My hope is that there is a majority of Board members committed to the proposed changes. Otherwise I am not confident of the Foundation's long term future. Without the recommended changes, I believe our national organization will slowly decline and eventually go out of business or, at the very least, become irrelevant.

I urge all chapter members who are also members of the Foundation to let our President, Stephenie Ambrose Tubbs, and President-elect, Bryant Boswell, know how you feel about the changes that they are working to bring about. Stephenie's email address and phone number are atinc@mt.net (406) 449-2724 and Bryant's are mtcreeklodge@aol.com (601) 845-7994.

I urge all chapter members who are not members of the Foundation to consider joining for the next year. The national organization has never needed your support more than at the present.

Please share your thoughts and opinions on the above with me and I will pass them on to our chapter members.

Trent Strickland, president

Clara Strickland, Newsletter Editor
Carolina Chapter