

Chautauqua Network News

February 2004

P.O. Box 28, Chautauqua, N.Y. 14722

The Chautauqua Network is a group of organizations and individuals committed to the communication and implementation of the chautauqua concept of building community by supporting all persons in the development of their full potential intellectually, spiritually, emotionally and physically. The Chautauqua Network facilitates interaction and communication among its members to further their preservation, growth and development. Mission statement adopted July 12, 1999

Chautauqua Institution changes presidents

Thomas M. Becker, executive vice president of Chautauqua Institution and CEO of the Chautauqua Foundation, was elected president by Chautauqua's Board of Trustees on Nov. 8, 2003. Becker becomes the 17th president of the Institution. He succeeds Scott McVay, whose three-year commitment ended Dec. 31. McVay had come out of retirement in 2001 to serve as Chautauqua's 16th president.

Tom Becker joined Chautauqua in 1985 as a vice president of the Institution and of the Chautauqua Foundation. He has led the Foundation's efforts to raise more than \$100 million in support of the Institution's programs and projects.

A certified fundraising executive, Becker earned a degree in political science from Xavier University and a master's degree in public administration from Indiana University-South Bend. He is married to the former Jane Cleaver. The couple has three grown daughters. Tom and Jane Becker live in Lakewood, N.Y.

Disney's faux chautauqua morphs to a New York state spa

A chautauqua-like 16-acre learning-vacation village within the vast confines of Walt Disney World in Orlando, Fla. took shape in the 1980s and nineties as the brainchild of Michael Eisner, the now beleaguered chairman and CEO of the Walt Disney Co. The Disney Institute, as it was named, opened in February of 1996 and closed in the aftermath of Sept. 11, 2001. What happened? What went wrong?

Eisner, who is married to the former Jane Breckenridge of Jamestown, N.Y., first visited Chautauqua Institution in 1986 while staying in the area with his in-laws. Intrigued by the chautauqua idea made manifest, Eisner immediately saw the potential for a spin-off at Disney World. In subsequent seasons, he sent Disney personnel to the Chautauqua grounds to plan and develop the \$38 million project.
Continues on p. 3.

2004 Network Meeting Schedule is on p. 2; Registration Form, p. 3.

Bay View, Michigan Is Site of 2004 Network Meeting

Rod Slocum, executive director of the Bay View Association, has submitted the following tentative schedule of our 2004 meetings, July 29 - August 1. Rod may be reached at bvarod@freeway.net or 231-348-3329. General travel directions are below.

Thursday, July 29

10:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Registration

6:30 p.m. Welcome Dinner and
Program: Bay View History

Friday, July 30

8 - 9 a.m. Breakfast

9 - 10:30 a.m. Network meeting

10:45 a.m. - noon Chautauqua Campus
Tour

12:30 - 1:30 p.m. Victorian Lunch

1:45 - 3:45 p.m. Network meeting

4 p.m. Trolley Ride and Tour; Recital

6:30 p.m. Dinner

Saturday, July 31

8 - 9 a.m. Breakfast

9 a.m. - noon Network meeting

Noon - Box Lunch on Grounds;
Cottage Tours

6:30 p.m. Dinner on your own

8 p.m. Performance of *Fiddler on
the Roof*

Sunday, August 1

8 - 9 a.m. Breakfast

10 a.m. Holy Communion

10:45 a.m. Worship Service

11:45 a.m. - 1 p.m. Museum open for
conferees

Getting to Bay View:

By **automobile**, follow I-75 north to Gaylord, Mich. Take exit 282 west and follow M-32 west for eight miles to U.S. 131 north. Turn right and travel 22 miles north to Petoskey, Mich. Bay View is two miles past second traffic signal. By **airplane**, Northwest Airlinik offers service from Chicago and Detroit to Pellston Regional Airport, 10 miles north of Bay View. Car rental and taxi service are available at the airport.

Network Officers Elected in 2003

President: Frank Gwalthney, Ocean Park, Maine, gwalthney@prodigy.net

Vice President: George McCormick, Lakeside, Ohio, erie-@msn.com

Secretary/Treasurer: Betty Nelson, Chautauqua, N.Y., wcn837@hotmail.com

Volunteer Newsletter Editor: Suzon O. Kister, Thousand Island Park, N.Y., ksuzon@hotmail.com

Mail copy to the editor at 5816 Shannas Way, Durham, NC 27713 or call her at 919-544-2514.

Disney's faux chautauqua continued

When Richard Hutton, vice president and director of programming for the Disney Institute, spoke at Chautauqua Institution in 1995, he told *The Chautauquan Daily*, "The Disney Institute is not Chautauqua. No one can do Chautauqua. Chautauqua has 130 [sic] years of history, generations of families, a thriving arts tradition and a momentum that is pure Chautauqua--all that gives it personality and character that we cannot reproduce...Instead, we have done something in line with our strengths."

To which *The Daily* reporter added: "The trick was to combine the seriousness of Chautauqua with the playfulness of the Magic Kingdom, and to shape the product into a profit-making theme park."

The Disney Institute campus included a recital hall, program studios, an 18-hole golf course, an outdoor amphitheater and a sports and fitness center. Situated near a private lake, the "chautauqua wannabe" was a 457-room resort that could accommodate 1,400 people.

Playing to their strengths, the Disney Institute offered courses on animation, special effects, video production, rock climbing, computer storybooks, culinary arts, architecture and topiary.

Chautauqua Institution gave the Disney Institute its blessing. Dan Bratton, president of Chautauqua, wrote, "The Chautauqua Institution is pleased to have had the opportunity to provide assistance to Disney and wishes them well in this new venture."

But the Disney Institute was in trouble from the outset. By May of 1996, Disney officials were admitting that attendance targets had not been met. The institute had not attracted the "affluent, high-brow customers" the management had hoped for. Discounted packages and promotions soon followed, but nothing worked. According to the *Orlando Sentinel*, by the end of 2001, the Disney Institute "had faded...into a largely deserted area." Continues on p. 5.

CHAUTAUQUA NETWORK 2004 ANNUAL MEETING REGISTRATION

Bay View, Michigan

\$75.00 per person

(Fee includes gate pass, parking, programs and common meals.)

Name: _____
 Organization _____
 Street _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Phone _____ email _____

Wish to stay in the homes of Bay View residents? Yes ___ No ___ If 'No,' The Terrace Inn offers rooms at a special rate for a three-night minimum stay. Call 231-347-2410 or go to their Web site at www.theterraceinn.com Clip or copy this form, write your registration check payable to Bay View Association and mail to the Bay View Association , Attention: Chautauqua Network Conference, P.O. Box 583, Petoskey, MI 49770

Thirty participants from across U.S. attend annual meeting

Network Secretary Betty Nelson writes that 30 attendees of the annual meeting at Chautauqua, N.Y. in 2003 represented nine chautauquas. They were Lakeside, Ohio; Monteagle, Tenn.; New Piasa Chautauqua, Ill.; Ocean Grove, N.J.; Ocean Park, Maine; Pacific Palisades, Calif.; Thousand Island Park, N.Y.; Waxahachie, Texas; and Chautauqua, N.Y.

Network business included passage of a resolution that eliminated the associate membership category. Individual annual memberships remain \$10. Organizational annual memberships stay at \$50. The current officers were reelected. Their names appear on p. 2.

During her presentation on the Harry McClarran Collection, Chautauqua Institution Archives Assistant Marlie Bendiksen distributed a 17-page list of independent chautauqua assemblies, which she identified by state, name, site, location and dates. Networkers may contact Marlie to receive a copy. The Archives phone number is 716-357-6332. Marlie's e-mail address is mathewsben@centurytel.net ||

Mini-profile of a Networker: Carol Craley

A recently retired middle school administrator from suburban Philadelphia, Carol Craley moved to Maine in 2002 to be near her beloved Ocean Park. Carol had vacationed at the eastern New England chautauqua for 21 years, but she was never able to stay the full season. What a treat it was, she said in a telephone interview, to watch the Fourth of July Parade and attend her first State of Maine Writers Conference sponsored by the Ocean Park Association (OPA).

Another "first" for Carol was attending the Chautauqua Network meeting last summer. Because of her fresh outlook, she was asked to write a summary of the conference for the OPA by fellow Ocean Parker, Network President Frank Gwalthney. In her introduction, she observed, "Ocean Park is to Chautauqua, N.Y. what Rhode Island is to Texas." And then she asked, "What could I possibly learn from organizations so different from Ocean Park?"

In the end, Carol Craley wrote that the chautauquas represented at the Network meeting, be they large or small, shared a belief in the chautauqua concept as expressed in the mission statement. For her especially, what seemed central were a sense of community, a humane value system, the traditions, and the peace and stability of chautauquas like Ocean Park. "I will continue as a member of the Network," she said. ||

DeFuniak Springs offers dazzling array of programs in 10 days

Chautauqua Assembly 2004 at DeFuniak Springs, Fla. has grown to 10 days and brackets two weekends. From Feb. 26 to March 7, events at the historic community in the Florida Panhandle target every age group and every cultural and intellectual taste.

Performances by the Pensacola Opera and a vocal group with an Andrews Sisters' Continues on p. 5.

Martha's Vineyard chautauqua is alive and well

The Martha's Vineyard Campmeeting Association (MVCMA) in the Oak Bluffs neighborhood of Edgartown, Mass. is thriving, says General Manager Bill McConnell. The 125th anniversary of the Tabernacle will be celebrated on July 10.

A season that extends from July 1 to Labor Day at Oak Bluffs includes a range of concerts from the Boston Pops to James Taylor and Judy Collins. Illumination Night is so popular that the date is kept secret until the last minute to stem the tide of visitors.

"There are 8 to twelve tours on the campgrounds daily," notes McConnell. "We've become a large tourist attraction." Without an entrance fee and un gated, the campgrounds has 316 cottages, many dating back to the 1860s. The MVCMA has been a non-profit Protestant religious organization since 1835. The MVCMA has a Web site at www.mvcma.org The Association's phone number is 508-693-0525. ■■

Disney continued

Putting their heads together, Disney executives decided to scrap their faux chautauqua, remodel existing buildings and reopen in 2004 as the Saratoga Springs Resort Spa (SSRS). In true Disney style, the SSRS will resemble the eastern New York "retreat for the elite" of the early 1900s, complete with artificial mineral springs. The *Orlando Sentinel* reports that "Saratoga Springs will be the latest addition to Disney's Vacation Club time-share apartments, which are hot sellers." ►

The editor wishes to thank Network Secretary Betty Nelson for digging out materials for this story from the Chautauqua Institution Archives. The editor invites Networkers to speculate on why the Disney Institute failed and whether or not a 21st century residential chautauqua can be founded and operated successfully. Send your comments to her at the addresses given on p. 2.

DeFuniak continued

sound rub shoulders with art lessons, a Civil War living history encampment and quilt shows. Taking advantage of Hollywood's decision to move the Academy Awards ceremony to Feb. 29, DeFuniak Springs President F. Diane Pickett has added a special feature, an Oscar Gala, to which you can come dressed as your favorite star.

A seminar on creating successful communities should interest homebuilders, homebuyers and those seeking retirement communities, writes Pickett. Such a seminar might have been helpful to the folks at Walt Disney Co. See this newsletter's Disney story on p.1.

The new Web site for DeFuniak Springs is www.Florida-Chautauqua-Center.org The toll-free line remains 800-822-6877. ■■

The editor encourages chautauquas to send news. See addresses, p. 2.

New Piasa historical society makes Network membership a perk

The Chautauqua Historical Society of the New Piasa Chautauqua in Elsah, Ill. launched its founding with the first issue of a newsletter in September. Network members Tim and Rose Tomlinson play key roles in the new organization. Rose is a co-chair while Tim edits the newsletter.

Membership at the patron level in the Chautauqua Historical Society includes a membership in the Chautauqua Network. The newsletter reports 49 enrollees at press-time. For more information, contact The Chautauqua Historical Society at P.O. Box 87, Elsah, IL or e-mail Tim at Trt1933@aol.com **||**

Got coffee?

It's a hoot to see the word 'Chautauqua' on a pound-bag of coffee. An enterprising member of the New Piasa Chautauqua has started roasting two coffee blends: Chautauqua Breakfast Blend and Chautauqua Roastmaster's Blend. The shiny blue coffee bags complete with logo and motto, "Coffee good enough to bear the name...Chautauqua," are so attractive they'd be at home in a fancy gourmet market. The coffee man is Jesse Jones, 618-374-2648. **||**

Support this enduring movement. Join the Network today!

Annual Membership Application and Renewal Form

Copy or clip this form and mail to Network Treasurer Betty Nelson, P.O. Box 28, Chautauqua, NY 14722. Write check to Chautauqua Institution, putting 'Network Membership' on the memo line. Full organization donation is \$50. Individual membership is \$10. Name _____
Organization _____ City, State, Zip _____
Telephone _____ e-mail _____ Fax _____

Chautauqua Institution
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