

Minutes

2014 Annual Banquet and General Membership Meeting

Gatlinburg, Tennessee

July 26, 2014

The Highpointers Club Annual General Membership Meeting was conducted during the Convention Banquet on Saturday evening in the second floor ballroom in the Atrium Tower of the River Terrace Resort.

Pre-Meeting Activities

A pre-banquet social hour began at 5:10 pm, followed by a call to order by Master of Ceremony Don Holmes at 6:56 pm. President Tim Webb welcomed the 153 members in attendance (155 registered, 4 cancelled). Cindy MacLeod, Acting Superintendent of Great Smoky Mountains National Park provided a welcome to Gatlinburg from the National Park Service. This was followed by buffet-style banquet dinner (Nikki Hemphill selected tables at random to visit the buffet) during which Don read ticket numbers for the many door prizes, mostly assembled by Gary Paynter.

General Membership Meeting

At 7:49 pm, the General Membership Meeting began with the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Rudy Vedovell.

Introductions

Don introduced the head table, David Brill (speaker), Belinda Woodiel-Brill (speaker's wife), Brent McDaniels (Marketing Director, Friends of the Smokies), Kent Cave (Supervisory Ranger GRSM NP), Cindy MacLeod (Acting Superintendent GRSM NP), and the TN-14 Convention Team of Tim Webb, Don Holmes, Jan & Ray Nelson, and Kathy & John Mitchler.

Don presented Friends of the Smokies with a honorarium check in recognition of their projects in the national park which has the state highpoint. Brent McDaniels accepted the check and gave a few nice remarks including a welcome to the area.

Don introduced the Convention Crew, led by Nikki Hemphill, and especially noted the Watermelon Team of Wendy & Mark Comstock and Gordie Comstock, who conducted a 15 melon feast in the parking lot of Clingmans Dome (permit obtained) during which the public was invited.

Don asked Wiley Sykes of the River Terrace Resort to bring out the banquet staff for a hearty round of applause and thank you.

Don introduced the Board of Directors attending, Kamell Abdnour, Marion Bauman, Mark Comstock, Kathy Dalsaso, Mick Dunn, Nikki Hemphill, Don Holmes, John Keator, Ray Nelson, Jim Sutton, Gary Szclc, and Tim Webb.

Recognitions

Don recognized those who've attended the most conventions. Penn Watson has been to 26 (of the 28), John Mitchler has 24, and this was the first convention for about 18 attendees.

Don recognized those who have finished the Lower 48 state highpoints, by asking them to assemble for a group photo.

Don recognized the 12 List Completers (50 state highpoints), by asking them to assemble for a group photo, those being Dick Bowers, Dave Covill, Bob Failing, Don Holmes, James Lockhart, Roger Kaul, John Mitchler, Tim Townsend, Glenn Van Vliet, Rudy Vedovell, George Vandersluis, and Charlie Winger. "Ranger Jim" Lockhart was especially noted as being the third person to reach all 50 highpoints, and at age 95 he became the oldest person to reach a state highpoint with his ascent of Clingmans Dome earlier in the day.

Don then quizzed the audience as to how many highpoints they had, first by asking all those with 50 highpoints to stand, then 49, then 48, then more than 40, more than 30, more than 20, more than 10, and finally more than 1. He asked those with only one highpoint to stand, and only one person stood.

Don recognized the farthest to travel to the convention as being Sjaak and Lidy Van Schie of the Netherlands.

Don recognized "Ranger Jim" Lockhart as the oldest in attendance, age 95, and Ryan McKay as the youngest in attendance, age 3.

Don recognized the Howards having the most family members, with 9.

Business

Tim Webb provided a stirring President's report, and announced the new "Highpointing is More Than 50 States" committee to acquire and retain members.

Don then injured the audience by telling two jokes, one new, and the other the old standby Sherlock-and-Watson-stars joke.

Jim Sutton provided a nice update of the Iowa 2015 convention, and pleaded for people to attend by announcing that registration forms were available from Nikki this evening.

Dave Covill gave a brief, to-the-point update of the Highpointers Foundation, explaining that 7 directors provided oversight, that donations were welcome, and that the Foundation voted to evolve from squirrel hunting to elk hunting by investing in grant proposal request software.

Dave also discussed the conditions at the South Carolina highpoint by displaying a photo he took the previous day which showed tree clearing on the summit. The road to the highpoint is closed now during construction.

Jerry Lee Cobleigh announced the sale of his braided key chains. No more were being made and funds will go to the Foundation.

Don conducted the selection of the 2016 convention state. John Mitchler nominated both Alaska and Montana, and displayed a table which compared financial and qualitative statistics for the members to consider. The final vote was 78 for MT and 35 for AK.

Awards

Don announced the Frank Ashley Award for Club members Nena & Bomber Brown (for the Merc), Lizzie Brammer (organized a regional gathering), Valerie Naylor (work at ND), Jim Hawkins (Foundation work), and Rick Hartman (his Safety column). In addition, the Frank Ashley Award was given to Jean Trousdale, Alan Ritter, Tim Webb, Faith & Paul Light, Roger Rowlett, and Olivier Kozlowski for their successful creation of the Jack Longacre Memorial (aka Jakk's Glade) in Missouri.

Don announced the Paul Zumwalt Award for non-members Lorrie Krontz (support for Jack's Memorial), Chris Quoyeser and his Alphagraphics staff (newsletter printer), Shelby Arnold (operates the mountaineering museum in Golden), and Matthew Padilla (USFS employee restoring SD tower and recording its history).

Don presented David Brill with a Certificate of Appreciation for being the speaker tonight.

Don then presented the prestigious Vin Hoeman Award to Alan Ritter for his sustained efforts at the Jack Longacre Memorial and his involvement with convention setup and workshops.

Don also presented the Vin Hoeman Award to Kathy Dalsaso for her behind the scenes support to Officers and Committee Chairs, and her involvement with convention contracts.

The big event of the evening was Don's presentation of the Jack Longacre Award to Club President Tim Webb, who gave an emotional acknowledgement to the audience by referring back to what Jack meant to him personally and to the Club.

Program 8:41 pm – 9:29 pm

David Brill was introduced by Don, and gave a nice overview of the Smoky Mountains and Clingmans Dome, with special emphasis on the elevation dispute between Mitchell and Clingman, the 1993 storm which hit Gatlinburg, and his personal experience hiking the trails.

With the conclusion of a brief question and answer period following David's talk, Don Holmes adjourned the 2014 Tennessee Convention.

A few brave souls hung around for a showing of Tim Townsend's "Into Thin Hair" slide & video show of his Denali climb.

Respectfully prepared for consideration,
John Mitchler