COMMUNITY

Blue Licks celebrates with state

By Janie R. Duncan
Of The Mercury Staff

Sam Devine, director of Blue Licks State Park and his wife, Brenda, hosted a "luncheon on the green" Thursday, April 9 at the park as a kickoff to Kentucky State Park Week which will be observed statewide April 13 through 17.

Robertson County Judge/Executive G. Wayne Buckler, presented a proclamation to Devine which proclaimed Blue Licks State Park Week in Robertson County, also to be observed next week.

Ed Henson, state director of Historic Sites and Recreational Parks, welcomed about 20 guests from Robertson, Mason, Bracken and Nicholas counties.

Henson announced that Dr. and Mrs. Edmund Utkov of Memphis, Tennessee have recently donated 48 acres of land to the park, which brings the total park acreage to 150.

He also announced that tentative future plans for the park call for the construction of a community building, and the possible development of the riverfront (Licking River that borders the park).

He told guests about a new sign that has been erected near the museum parking lot at the beginning of the Buffalo Trace trail concerning a rare species of Golden Rod which grows in the park.

The plant is on the federally endangered species list of plants. Blue Licks Park is the only park in the United States in which the golden rod grows.

Henson talked about a park museum inventory that Devine is in the process of conducting, and which he started working on this past summer.

Devine explained that there will be an information card composed for each item or group of items in the museum.

Each card will contain a color photograph, a Kentucky property number, a accession number (the number that is already on the item), an appraisal value, description of the item, and the name of the person or organization donating the item, if that information is known.

The boxes in which the cards will be kept are made of acid free paper, a humidifier, as well as proper air conditioning and heating systems will help to preserve the records, as well as the artifacts which are housed in the museum.

Devine said the last inventory of the museum was made in the 1930s by William Curtis, the park's first director and museum curator.

The appraisals on the items were given to Devine by different area people specializing in specific fields of artifacts, such as pottery, guns, clothing, tools, etc. They have visited the museum and decided the monetary value of the items.

Devine emphasized that "People can now feel secure about donating to the museum" because of the care with, which items are displayed and recorded.

The museum can no longer accept items on loan, a decision made by the state department of parks. Donations of authentic period and area artifacts are always welcomed and appreciated, Devine stressed. Some items are purchased by the museum.

Devine attended a workshop last year conducted by the state park service on inventorying museums.

The state recently has allocated money to museums to professionally conserve special items.

Devine has chosen the 1934 map of Kentucky which hangs over one of the fireplaces in the upstairs showroom of the museum.

The other is the oil painting of the Battle of Blue Licks, painted in 1961, and which is flaking badly. It also hangs upstairs.

Devine has worked hard at having the artifacts displayed in a professional manner. There are many comments recorded on the guest registry about how beautifully laid out the museum is.

The park is getting spruced up in anticipation of the tourist season.

The lower shelter house is getting a new roof. New concrete steps with handrails leading to the shelter house are being built.

Sidewalks are being laid around the bathrooms. The museum, lower shelter house, pool and bathrooms are being painted. New overhead wiring is installed. Safety handrails are being installed at the miniature golf course. Also a new front will be constructed on the gift shop. The steps leading to the shop are going to be repaired.

Devine already has plans for the coming spring and summer months, some yet to be finalized.

Two nights of camping for the price of one is being offered during the month of April.

Devine said about 300 letters have been sent to people who frequent the park's camping site informing them of the camping special.

Demonstrations on weaving, candlemaking, quilting, etc. will be held on the weekends through the summer months.

Square dancing will be held on the second Friday of each month starting in May and running through October.

Special exhibits will be featured in the museum throughout the coming months. The one displayed at the present is composed of gifts given to United States dignitaries from heads of state of foreign countries.

Kentucky was one of the states chosen to display these gifts in state museums. After four years of being on display, Kentucky will be allowed to keep them permanently.

The display contains a silver glass holder set with a gold tea pot given to Henry A. Kissinger by France, and a silver cigarette case to Alexander Haig by King Hussein of Jordan.

There is also a gift which was given to Secretary of State George Schultz. There are several exquisite oriental lacquer and mother of pearl boxes in the display.

A display of articles belonging to statesman Henry Clay is planned for display in September and October. Devine said that among the articles is a "simply beautiful" liqueur set.

Also on the agenda for the summer is "An Evening at Blue Licks' dance and dinner which was held last year and which was a tremendous success. The affair is tentatively set for September this year.

A committee is being formed to work on the Blue Licks Celebration August 15 and 15. On that committee are Barbara Hopkins and Doug Garrett (representing the Chamber of Commerce), Joanie Conley, and Margie Montgomery from Robertson County. Devine said that instead of a battle re-enactment, possibly a play will be presented. Activities are still in

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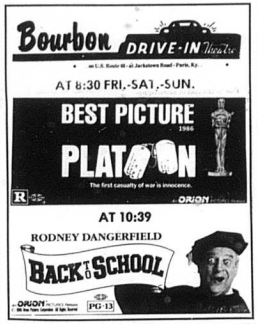
A "luncheon on the, green" was enjoyed by about 20 guests last Thursday at Blue Licks State Park. The occasion was a kickoff to Kentucky State Park Week April 13 through 17. - Janie Duncan Photo.



COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

The long battle is over as center operates

By Marsha Livingood
Of The Mercury Staff

After countless court meetings and board meetings, after cutting endless red tape, and shedding many, many tears, Stephanie Duncan and Beulah Coldiron were finally able to open their day care center September 8, 1986.

Located in the basement of the First Christian Church, 100 Catherine Street, Tender Loving Care Day Care Center is providing just what the name implies.

According to Duncan, the center is averaging an attendance of 18-20 full-time and part-time children each day.

"On opening day, we had 11 children enrolled," Duncan said.

"We now have 30 enrolled, with an average of 10-15 drop-ins."

Duncan and Coldiron were both employed by the Community Action Day Care Center, located at the old hospital on Scrub Grass Road, before it's closing Friday, December 13, 1985.

"It was Friday the 13th when they closed the doors, and we cried and cried," Coldiron said.

According to Duncan, the Community Action Day Care Center was forced to close its doors due to lack of funds.

In November, 1985, the operation faced a $1,300 deficit, with expenses exceeding income.

At that time, Margaret Hunter, Rural Programs Coordinator for Community Action, told The Mercury that a total of $4,500 was being sought to "buy time" for three months to get the program on a self-sustaining basis.

Hunter contacted city and county officials and local businesses and industries in an attempt to raise the money, but only one organization pledged monetary support.

The Carlisle Community Woman's Club offered to donate $500 per month for three months to help keep the center open.

Their efforts were in vain, however, as the operators of the Community Action Day Care Center posted a "closed" sign on their front door that Friday the 13th, marking the end of a five-year operation which had provided child care services for many Carlisle and Nicholas County parents.

According to Duncan, one main reason the center had such a large deficit was due to $600-$700 worth of delinquent fees from parents.

"When some of the parents would get behind in paying their fees, it would hurt the business a lot," she added.

Recognizing the need for a child care facility in Carlisle and Nicholas County after the closing of the Community Action Day Care Center, Coldiron and Duncan didn't sit still for long.

"In January and February, we talked about opening our own day care center," Duncan said.

Coldiron and Duncan contacted Community Action to inquire about renting the two rooms in the old hospital, which Community Action leases from the Nicholas County Fiscal Court, to provide a location for their day care center.

"They were asking $375 per month," Duncan said, "and we tried to figure every way possible to accept this amount, but we just couldn't meet their demands."

On March 17, 1986, Duncan and Coldiron, along with Coldiron's husband, Phillip, went before the Nicholas County Fiscal Court, asking the county to break their lease with Community Action and rent the space in the old hospital to them.

"We felt the county had a need for a day care center, and that the fiscal court might help us," Duncan said.

The trio made another appearance at the fiscal court meeting on April 2, 1986, with Hunter and Jack Birch, both representing Community Action, on hand.

"We didn't get anywhere at all," Duncan said.

"Neither the county nor Community Action could help us."

According to Duncan, the county offered to rent the building where the jail had been located.

However, Duncan and Coldiron felt that if the building wasn't safe enough for a jail, it wouldn't be safe enough for a child care facility.

At that time, the women began looking at churches as a possibility for a suitable location.

Carlisle Christian Church on Locust Street was the first church contacted.

The women were informed that they would have to contact 28 board members and get each one's approval in order to use the church.

The Bible Mission on Walnut Street was willing to help the women, but the building did not meet safety standards.

At that time, friends suggested the First Christian Church.

Coldiron contacted the pastor at that time, Reverend Allen Campbell, and he instructed her to get in touch with Jim Denton, who was chairman of the board for the church.

Denton suggested they attend the next board meeting to make their request.

On July 15, Coldiron, her husband, and Duncan went before the board to discuss the possibilities of locating the day care center in the basement of the church.

"It was the most terrifying thing, having to go in front of the board," Duncan said.

Several members of the board felt the day care center would cause too much disruption, but other members were in favor of the proposal.

The board decided to put the matter up for a vote, promising to let the women know the results by mail.

Coldiron received the letter later that week, giving approval to allow the day care center to be located in the basement of the church, providing that certain restrictions were met.

On August 7, the first fire marshall inspection was held to let Coldiron and Duncan know what had to be done to bring the building up to code.

Fighting tough odds center opened in 1986

A smoke alarm had to be purchased, a fireproof door for the furnace was required, and an emergency lighting system was to be installed.

Tender Loving Care Day Care Center purchased the materials for these projects, and the First Christian Church covered the cost for labor.

"The people from the church have really been good to us," Coldiron said.

However, when everything seemed to finally be running smoothly, Duncan and Coldiron ran into more obstacles.

It was brought to their attention that a petition was being circulated in the neighborhood surrounding the church to protest the location of the day care center in the basement of the church.

It was felt that the center would create too much traffic on the dead end street.

Apparently rumors were spread, but the petition was never taken any further to other residences block for the center.

Coldiron and Duncan also had to go before the Nicholas County Board of Education to ask permission for the school bus that travels through Kennedy Heights to drive down Catherine Street to pick up school-age children from the day care center.

At first, Coldiron and Duncan were told that the children would have to walk to the corner of Catherine Street and Kennedy Heights to catch the bus.

"We felt that if these kids had to walk in the rain and snow to catch the bus, we did not want them at the center," Duncan said.

After considerable debate, the board members granted permission to allow the bus to pick the children up at the church.

Once again, the women faced another problem — an affordable insurance policy for the day care center.

Coldiron contacted two local insurance agencies to inquire about the cost of insuring the center.

According to Coldiron, one agent wanted $1,200 up front, and the other wanted $1,400.

"There was no way we could afford this," Duncan said.

Coldiron travelled to Cynthiana and spoke to several day care center owners there, inquiring about the cost of their insurance.

One center recommended Continental Insurance, a company that insures day care facilities only at a lower cost.

This is the company Coldiron and Duncan chose, which insures each child up to $500,000.

Before the two women met with the First Christian Church board the first time in July, they crossed their fingers and sent $50 and a day care license application to the Department of Human Resources Licensing and Regulation, with the hopes that the board members would rule in their favor.

James Skillman, representative for the Department of Human Resources, met with Coldiron and Duncan on August 11 to discuss requirements needed to obtain a day care center license.

He informed them that they would need toys, cots, a fenced in playground outside, along with meeting fire marshall standards and obtaining insurance, areas they had already covered.

Friends, parents, and organizations rallied together to donate money, toys, slides, a miniature tree house, shelves for books, wooden blocks, and much more to enable the women to get their license.

The Community Action loaned cots that were used at their day care center, saving Coldiron and Duncan $35-$40 per cot.

Phillip Coldiron and Duncan's husband, Steve, worked until midnight two nights in order to get the playground fenced in before Skillman returned on September 2 for final inspection, which the center passed.

The Lions Club donated money for Coldiron and Duncan to use to offset the expense of purchasing playground equipment.

This money has been set aside until remaining funds needed can be raised.

"We didn't want to get into this extra expense until we saw how well we would do," Duncan explained.

"However, we are now looking into the possibility of obtaining a license to care for children under 2."

Duncan and Coldiron plan daily activities, free play and rest periods for the children.

Learning experiences such as playing color and shape, holding show and tell one day a week, learning to write names and tie shoes, learning addresses and phone numbers, reading stories, learning songs, and learning how to share are among the activities that make the Tender Loving Care Day Care Center more than just a place that provides babysitting.

"We are also planning to take the children on picnics and swimming this summer," Coldiron said.

Coldiron, a native of Barterville, and her husband, a native of Paris, have been married 20 years and have two children, Susan and Phillip, Jr.

Susan, a sixth grader at Nicholas County Elementary, is active in sports and cheerleading.

Phillip, Jr., is a 1986 graduate of Nicholas County High School and is employed by Arta Electric in Frankfort.

Phillip, Jr., is a school bus driver, farmer, and also works for the Nicholas County Water District.

The Coldirons have lived at Barterville since moving to Nicholas County in 1967.

Beulah stayed home with her children, until she began working at the Community Action Day Care Center two years before its closing.

Duncan is a 1982 graduate of Nicholas County High School, and is the daughter of Mrs. Charles Watkins and Doug Hamilton, both of Nicholas County.

She and her husband recently celebrated their third anniversary, and are living on Locust Grove Road.

After graduating from high school in May, Duncan began working at the Community Action Day Care Center, where she had volunteered for three years while taking a gainful child development class in high school.

Duncan worked there for an additional three years before its closing.

Duncan feels the main ingredient for the success of the Tender Loving Day Care Center is the support they have received from family and friends.

"Also, Beulah and I are the best of friends, and we work so well together."

"We must be the most loved women in Carlisle, because we get hugs and kisses from each child each time we walk in or out the door," Duncan boasted.

"You see them come, you see them go," Coldiron said, "but you get attached to each one of them and its hard to see them leave."

This kind of love and tender loving care makes it easier for working moms and dads to leave those children behind.

These children from Tender Loving Day Care Center take time out from playing to enjoy a popsicle for their afternoon snack. As usual in this type of situation, everyone wanted the same flavor. - Marsha Livingood Photo.

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