Plans in works for new alumni directory

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PLANS IN WORKS FOR NEW ALUMNI DIRECTORY

GREETINGS FROM CHERYDALE! If you’re reading this, the Mayan calendar was wrong, the world did not end, and presumably the country has not stepped off the fiscal cliff.

And life goes on at Furman, with the Office of Admission working hard to enroll the Class of 2017. Applications are in; now we just have to entice them to come.

Several campus construction projects, among them the football stadium and Trone Student Center, are progressing well. Winter sports are winding down and spring sports are swinging into gear, and students are once again breaking out the shorts and T-Shirts. Of course, some of them wear shorts and T-Shirts all the time. Ah, youth.

LET ME TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY to fill you in on a couple of projects the Alumni Association is pursuing.

The Furman database has more than 35,000 names of alumni, parents and friends. Lots of marketers would love to get their hands on it. I probably get three or four requests a week from companies that tell me how much money we could make if they were allowed to market to the folks in our database. Trust me, we are very protective of your information.

That being said, we recently entered into contracts with two companies that will be contacting you in 2013. We have thoroughly researched these companies and are confident that they can be trusted with your information.

One is Publishing Concepts, also known as PCI. This is a family-owned company that has been publishing alumni directories since 1921.

We published our most recent alumni directory in 2006, and at the time we assumed that it would be our last printed directory, figuring that in the ensuing years technology would be advanced enough that individuals with proper clearance would be able to access our database and find limited information about their fellow alumni. But we’re not quite there yet.

We believe PCI will produce a directory that will be well-organized, serve as a good networking tool, and benefit both alumni and Furman. For the university, it allows us to update our database all at once. We are constantly updating piecemeal as we get individual pieces of information, but large projects like directories bring in a tremendous amount of information in a timely, organized manner. Plus, despite the advent of tablets and Kindles and smart phones and whatever, many people still like to have a hard copy that they can reference at their leisure.

PCI will be contacting you via email and postcard. The easiest thing for you to do will be to visit the company’s secure website and update your information. If you do not use the website, someone from the company will call you. If you have any concerns about the process or the company, please contact me (tom.triplitt@furman.edu, 1-800-787-7533).

You may also be hearing from Liberty Mutual Insurance. Furman works with a group called Collegiate Insurance Resources, and they represent Liberty Mutual to their clients. Because college graduates are good insurance risks, Liberty Mutual can offer you discounts on home and auto insurance. We are not trying to replace your local agent, but we believe Liberty Mutual offers good value, and the products would be especially useful with our very mobile young alumni. I will be happy to answer any questions you may have about our relationship with Liberty Mutual.

TRAVEL OPPORTUNITIES: The Alumni Office is planning a mini-cruise for the fall of 2013. It’s on a small, 130-passenger ship named The Yorktown, which can navigate shallow rivers and harbors.

The trip will leave from Charleston, S.C., November 14 and end in Jacksonville, Fla., November 21. It’s a beautiful cruise along the Intracoastal Waterway and will offer shore opportunities to study the history and architecture of the area and to play golf at some amazing courses. Watch for information in the mail and on our website, http://alumni.furman.edu.

We are also partnering with Beth Crews, the enthusiastic new director of Furman’s Learning for You program, to offer expanded travel opportunities for alumni. Beth and the Learning for You folks already have some exciting plans in the works, so watch for news from them.

HOMECOMING 2013: Even though it’s nine months away, it’s never too early to begin planning for Homecoming 2013. Furman has a late date for Homecoming this year; it won’t happen until November 8–10, so you’ll almost certainly need your warm clothes. Classes ending in 3 and 8 will celebrate milestone reunions, but everyone is encouraged to return and enjoy the festivities. And you’ll get a close-up view of the revamped and renovated Paladin Stadium as Furman takes on Southern Conference foe Samford.

— TOM TRIPLITT

The author, a 1976 graduate, is executive director of constituent relations and alumni programs.