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Of affinity groups, board meetings and special offers

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OF AFFINITY GROUPS, BOARD MEETINGS AND SPECIAL OFFERS

Another rousing Homecoming has come and gone, and with its passing I realized the need to address a new trend in alumni reunions.

Furman has a history of planning reunions around class years. More recently, however, alumni have approached us about arranging reunions among those with whom they shared not just a class year, but common interests and activities that spanned their entire college career.



Such groups are called affinity groups. The Furman Singers, with their biannual reunions, are a prime example, even though the Singers are a bit of an exception to the rule because they have held reunions for many years. Their longtime success demonstrates how people with a common bond, no matter their class year, enjoy the chance to gather and swap stories.

Others come to mind, among them the Furman radio station alumni. They have recently become very active thanks to the good work of Gary James '78, who has helped locate and involve many former WPLS/WFRN staff members. They held their second drop-in at this year's Homecoming. And there's the Droopers, a group from the outstanding Class of '76 who through the years have gathered all over the country. Their bonds of friendship have only been strengthened with the passage of time.

Fraternities and sororities also hold events for members old and new at most home football games, and many friends whose relationships started on their freshman hall find ways to reconnect as well. We are now working to establish an affinity group for

ROTC/military alumni and to reinvigorate the Undergraduate Evening Studies alumni crowd.

The Alumni Office sees it as our mission to help these kinds of affinity groups stay connected. So let us know how we can help you do so. And we would love to chronicle some of your stories in this column. Please feel free to share your reunion stories with me so that we can share them with others.

ALUMNI BOARD NOTES

The fall meeting of the Alumni Association Board of Directors was held Saturday, August 29. Led by new president Clare Folio Morris '83, we had one of the best meetings I can remember.

We welcomed four new members — Herman Matherson '79, Drew Medlyn '97, Gordon Seay '61 and Leslie Smith '91. We also elected Mike Guynn '91 as vice president.

Kathleen McKinney, chair of the board of trustees, gave the group an update on the presidential search process and asked for input on the search. David Shaner of the philosophy and Asian Studies departments gave us a brief overview of the Place of Peace and how it fits into Furman's strategic plan, then took the group on an informative tour of the former Buddhist temple and the Asia Garden.

Brad Pochard, director of admission, offered a presentation on the challenges of recruiting and selecting future classes of Furman students. Board members wrote personal notes of welcome to enrolled "legacy" freshmen, the new students whose parents or other relatives attended Furman.

One person who was sorely missed was Randy Blackwell '63, who died in May before he could complete his term as president of the board.

To honor Randy's memory and his contributions to Furman, the board voted to name the director's office in the Cherrydale Alumni House for him.

Randy and I spent many good times in that space. It's a highly appropriate way to recognize his years of service to the university.

FURMAN FODDER

Now for a quick but shameless commercial plug. The Alumni Office still has a few Furman cycling jerseys and bib shorts for sale. We also have a limited number of purple and white pearl necklaces with matching earrings available for purchase. They are well made and are a wonderful accent at Furman gatherings. To order, visit <http://alumni.furman.edu> or call (864) 294-3464.

Elsewhere, the Southern Conference has paired with Choice Hotels and Sherwin-Williams to offer league schools discounts on their products. Schools earn rewards when alumni, friends and parents use their products and identify which school they represent.

All of the money Furman earns from this program goes into the Furman United campaign, which provides financial support for students facing hardships caused by the recent economic downturn. By staying at Choice Hotels and using Sherwin-Williams products, you can help students remain at Furman. Visit <http://alumni.furman.edu> for details.

It continues to be an honor and privilege to serve as your alumni director. Please contact me at tom.triplitt@furman.edu or call (864) 294-3464 if you have Furman-related ideas or concerns.

— TOM TRIPLITT '76
Director, Alumni Association