

THE RESTON TRUST: A NEW FORCE

By William Nicoson

Missed opportunities may be inevitable in life. They may even be positive if, when discovered, they point the way to future opportunities. These weighty reflections were prompted by my review of a collection of year-old brochures distributed by the Reston Historic Trust which operates the Store-Front Museum at Lake Anne.

Who could resist an Explorer's Walk with U.S. historian Bob Webb on Ball's Bluff high over the Potomac or with natural historian Nancy Davis on the Twin Branches Nature Trail? What Restonian with an appetite for literary wit would miss an explosive session with satiric poet Dean Blehert? What Restonian who cares about Reston would pass up master planner Pat Kane's track of subtle change as Reston's master plan graduated into asphalt, bricks and mortar? As Halloween approaches, what parent would fail to enrich the life of his or her child with artist Pat Macintyre's drop-in sessions on monster stereology, mask molding, ghost-town modeling, scarecrow costuming and pumpkin carving. And as a joyful, noisy holiday season approaches, who wouldn't rush to hear a concert by the Joyful Noise bell ringers of the United Christian Parish?

These were a few of the Trust's programs last fall. I missed them all, mostly because I failed at the time to read the brochures carefully. But at least, as a member of the Trust, I got the brochures in the mail. So the lesson for me is easy: read the mail. For non-members, the first step is to join the Trust for an annual tax-deductible contribution of \$25 (students and seniors), \$40 (singles) or \$60 (family). Or you could pick up a brochure at the Museum every month. Virtually all the Museum programs are free.

The Reston Trust, since opening the Museum in November 1997, has become an institutional force to be reckoned with. Visitors to date have exceeded 23,600, a figure which makes curators elsewhere envious. The Trust this year received an unsolicited grant of \$20,000 from Fairfax County and was invited to reapply next year. A "Gang of Ten" supporters purchased the condominium rented by the Museum to assure its continued tenancy.

The Trust has collaborated with other Reston institutions to achieve common objectives beneficial to the community. It's assisting the Greater Reston Chamber of Commerce in establishing a permanent Visitors' Center. It sponsored a Community Studies Project at Langston Hughes Middle School last year on local business; this year the subject is transportation and urban planning. In connection with Reston's 35th anniversary celebration it will participate in planning with Terrabrook, Reston's developer, and with Times Community Newspapers in the sale of commemorative bricks benefitting the Trust. It is represented on the Reston 2000 Strategic Planning Task Force and is discussing a partnership with Reston Association to monitor the execution of Task Force recommendations. It will join Reston Community Center at Lake Anne in sponsorship of numerous promising programs on community history and culture.

The Trust will also coordinate and benefit from sales of a volume of nature photography in Reston by Charles Veatch to be published in late October. Based on a review of the proofs, this book is a dazzling work of art. I've already signed up for ten copies to show family members far away why I'm proud both of Reston's natural wonders and of its artistic capacities.

In short, the Trust knows a good thing for the community when it finds it. In less than two years, led by Sarah Larson, it has become a formidable force for community progress through a pattern of close collaboration with other community institutions and talented residents.

William Nicoson is a trustee of The Reston Trust and a former publisher of Connection Newspapers.