Amidst a very busy year, we thought we’d bring you up to date on a number of activities around the country.

Harvey Smith, President  
Kathryn Flynn, Executive Director


*** Featuring Dr. William Leuchtenburg on Sept. 19, in Santa Fe ***

REGISTRATION DEADLINE: September 1

What started out as a National New Deal Preservation Assoc. Board Retreat has evolved into a wonderful meeting with a public session since we are most fortunate to have Dr. William Leuchtenburg coming to help us with our planning and agreeing to come to Santa Fe to be our Keynote Speaker on Sat. afternoon at 2 p.m. at the State Capitol, Room 307. The title of his talk is Searching for America’s New Deal Landscape, 2000-2015.

He is one of the remaining original FDR New Dealers working and has become the Senior Advisor on FDR and New Deal subjects. He is a retired history professor from the Univ. of N.C. at Chapel Hill and past president of the American Historical Association, the Organization of American Historians and the Society of American Historians. His professional awards are many and among his more than twelve books on 20th century history are at least ten books focusing on FDR and the New Deal. A newer book focusing on many of our presidents is being wrapped up for his publisher in the immediate future.

If you saw the recent Roosevelts documentary, he and his wisdom were included in it since Ken Burns and staff turn to him for his valuable knowledge on 20th century history. One of Ken Burns’s key associates, Paul Barnes, will be introducing Dr. Leuchtenburg and showing some clips of Dr. Leuchtenburg speaking about the Depression and FDR’s program.

Statewide historians and the public are encouraged to join us for this session. Registration deadline is September 1 so we can arrange for adequate space. We believe many people won’t want to miss this.

The National and New Mexico boards will be meeting jointly with other key leaders on New Deal issues including Jerry Rogers, Richard Moe, Leuchtenburg and Barnes on Friday and Sat. mornings for planning sessions for the rest of this year and 2016. We are also expecting a visit from an FDR portrayer from Colorado to participate in one of the sessions. If this is an area of history that you are interested in, please contact us (information on the left).
A
s of April 15, 2015, U.S. District Judge William Alsup dismissed the City’s and the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s cases against the US Postal Service in order to stop its sale of the historic Berkeley, CA downtown post office. According to statements made by the two lawyers representing the above entities, the judge has ruled “that the cases were moot and therefore USPS can no longer take steps to relocate postal services from this office.” Likewise he further ruled that “he will retain jurisdiction until April 15, 2020 to enforce the courts requirement to provide the City and the National Trust 42 days notice before closing any future sale or issuing any new decision to relocate the Berkeley Main Post Office.”

The attorneys noted that because the cases were dismissed as moot, the Judge did not rule on the merits, so all of the arguments by the involved attorneys about noncompliance with the Nat.’l Environmental Policy Act – NEPA – and the Nat.’l Historic Preservation Act – NHPA remain intact and viable, and can be asserted if and when the USPS tries to see the building again. This is at least a victory since it will now keep the post office open which was the primary goal of both parties.” In the meantime, one can expect that the groups are hopeful that this action could be used elsewhere to save other post offices across the action and leaves them the opportunity to still be able to fight the issue to a final judgment in the future. For more information, CLICK HERE.

Such actions are being taken by the USPS primarily due to financial problems they face nationwide, thanks to legislative mandate imposed on them in 2008 by Congress requiring USPS to pre-fund retiree health benefits 10 years in advance. This action has created a projected annual debt of $18 billion for this organization (no longer a full fledge government entity anymore) and therefore major actions like this causes a reduction in postal services and cutting of postal union jobs to try and cut overhead. Many of these buildings are listed on the National Register of Historic Places which requires the parent agency with jurisdiction to preserve and care for. Many are outstanding pieces of real estate and key sites in communities ever since their early construction. A number of them were built with New Deal funds and/or were enhanced by New Deal funded artists to portray the history of those communities via magnificent murals. NNDPA is against this action taken by both Congress and USPS administration and have been working to reverse the actions when and where possible. We hope other organizations and individuals who will join with us and if so, please contact our National NNDPA President, Harvey Smith at

harveysmithberkeley@yahoo.com

ON TO NAPA!!! Now this Berkeley based group is moving on to save the historic downtown Napa, CA post office that USPS wants to tear down. CLICK HERE. The Postal Service held a public meeting on August 10, 2015 to report that they plan to sell the building instead of demolishing it. However, after hearing from the concerned crowd including NNDPA representatives who want to have it be repaired and remain as their post office, the Postal Service agreed to hold another public meeting on August 26 for more discussion regarding possibilities. Please sign the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s Petition.

www.preservationnation.org

The recent 2015 LaborFest Celebration held in California annually joined in activities to celebrate the victory of the closure/sell of the Berkeley Post Office. NNDPA President Harvey Smith also participated in this activity again as he does each year and led a tour of Coit Tower in which nearly every surface of its interior is covered with New Deal murals.

www.savethebpo.com
Democratic Art: The New Deal’s Influence on American Culture

In her new book, *Democratic Art: The New Deal’s Influence on American Culture* (University of Chicago Press, 2015), Professor Sharon Ann Musher discusses the various programs established by the Roosevelt administration in support of artists and the arts and examines the diverse views of these programs held by government officials, participating artists, the cultural establishment and other supporters and opponents of the New Deal. The topics that she explores include the ongoing controversy as to whether support of the arts is indeed a proper function of government, as well as controversy over the Roosevelt administration’s decision to hire unemployed artists and writers to do useful work as federal employees in the same manner as it did for other unemployed Americans. She explored the differing views of the role of art in society underlying the positions taken by supporters and critics, namely Art as Grandeur, Art as Enrichment, Art as a Weapon, and Art as Subversion.

As Professor Musher points out, the federal government’s investment in the arts during the New Deal was far more robust than anything attempted before or since. At the height of the Federal One, the government, through the WPA, spent $27 million (equivalent to $461 million today), which was 0.75% of GDP, on the arts projects known collectively as Federal One. About one-fortieth of all funds spent by the WPA for unemployed workers on relief were spent to support nearly 40,000 artists. Those who criticized spending public funds to pay artists were told that artists too had to eat, and to have their skills put to productive use. Professor Musher discusses the views held by traditionalists in the art world, by supporters and opponents of New Deal programs, by political and cultural radicals, by people who had not previously been exposed to the arts, and by the artists themselves, and how the clash of these views created controversies that continued, in many cases, long after the end of the WPA, and long after much of the art created its auspices had been lost or destroyed.

The controversies over federal support for the arts continue to this day. Professor Musher describes how, since 2009, the National Endowment for the Arts has reiterated the position taken by the Roosevelt administration that government support for the arts strengthens the economy of the nation and of local communities by providing jobs, while strengthening American culture as a whole. It is not surprising that, in the absence of a massive WPA-type public employment program, the focus would be less on keeping individual artists alive and fed than on the broader economic benefits in terms of tourism, transportation, shopping and restaurant patronage, but the concept of government support for the arts as an engine of growth and prosperity is certainly consistent with activist principles of the New Deal.

Democratic Art: The New Deal’s Influence on American Culture is a welcome addition to the historical record of the New Deal. All of us who seek to uphold the values and principles of the New Deal and have them applied in our own times owe Professor Musher a debt of gratitude for her lucid and thorough contribution to our understanding of the New Deal arts programs.

Brett McKee – A Champion for the New Deal

Brett McKee was born in Baltimore and grew up in the Annapolis area. He has a Master of Public Policy degree from the University of Maryland and currently resides in Arnold, MD. He has worked for the Maryland State Comptroller’s Office and been a member of Americorps. At one time he managed a state program for inmates. He has a very strong interest in history and public policies of the Great Depression. These experiences and his education have helped to develop a strong interest in the history and public policies of the Great Depression. NNDPA discovered this valuable man and immediately ask him to become a member of their National Board where he served for some years but recently moved to our Advisory Board considering all the work he has created for himself with his valuable and popular New Deal related blog and website. He continues to also volunteer with the Living New Deal nationwide mapping project. See blue panel.

*** A Book Review – By Michael Ticktin ***

**Democratic Art: The New Deal’s Influence on American Culture**

by Sharon Ann Musher

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Brett’s website: **WPA Today**

WPA Today’s mission is to help preserve the history of the Works Progress Administration (WPA), and to promote the idea of a new WPA for today’s long-term unemployed population.

Here’s a Link to Brent’s Blog

From a recent posting:

Hi Everyone,

If you happen to have an interest in the wildfire situation out west, you might like my blog post: “California wildfires are burning the state to the ground. A New Deal could have prevented some of this chaos.”

**California Wildfires**

It never ceases to amaze me, the difference in policy responses we see today as compared to the New Deal era, for example, increased federal assistance for Puerto Rico during the New Deal vs. austerity proposals today... and tens of thousands of CCC and WPA workers laboring to prevent wildfires during the New Deal versus congressional efforts to cut funding for wildfire prevention today.

Amazing stuff...

--Brent

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WILL ROGERS SPEAKS

In 1933, radio listeners heard Will Rogers say: “We are the first nation in the history of the world to go to the poorhouse in an automobile.”

“We used to be told that the depression was just a state of mind, but starvation has changed that impression. Depression is a state of health, its moved from the mind to the stomach, and it ain’t really depression either, its just a return to normalcy, we are just getting back to earth it don’t look natural to us anymore, we are back to two bit meals and cotton underwear, and off the $1.50 steaks and silk underrompers.

The trouble with us in America is we are just muscle bound from holding a steering wheel, the only place we are calloused from work is the bottom of our driving toe.”

“Now we will take this fellow Franklin Roosevelt. He was born an outcast. The doctor said: ‘We can save him, but he will be a Democrat.’ His father, being a Republican, was for drowning him then, but his mother, a very charitable woman, even to the extent of saving a Democrat, said: ‘Let’s keep him, it would be cute to have one around the home.’”

“This fellow Franklin D. Roosevelt never gets through surprising us. We just find out now that he speaks French fluently. That’s the second linguistic surprise he has handed us. We knew he could speak English, but he’s the only guy who can talk ‘Turkey’ to the Senate.”

“I just got back from Washington, D.C. (Department of Comedy). I had heard that the Congressional Show was to close on June 7th. I don’t see why they are closing then. They could bring that same show with the original cast they have to New York, and it would run for years...”

Upcoming Activities Related to FDR’s New Deal History

*** Frances Perkins Center to Celebrate 80th anniversary of Social Security Act ***

Aug. 14, 2015 Newcastle, Maine: Frances Perkins Center to celebrate 80th anniversary of Social Security Act with Annual Garden Party and Awards Ceremony. 3-5 p.m. Location: Perkins Homestead National Historic Landmark. President of this group, Chris Breiseth, is also the Secretary of the national NNDPA Board of Directors. The speakers for the day include Portland Press Herald Columnist Bill Nemitz, AARP Maine President Rich Livingston, leading FDR scholar William Leuchtenburg and Social Security Administration’s Special Assistant Elisa Walker. Nemitz will be presented with the 2015 Intelligence and Courage Award and Elisa Walker with the 2015 Open Door Award for their outstanding work in social justice and economic security, two causes to which Frances Perkins dedicated her entire career. Earlier this summer (June 13) the FP Center held a ceremony to celebrate their recent designation as a National Historic Landmark. This is the homestead of “Madam” Frances Perkins, FDR’s Sec. of Labor. Also on July 23 they held one of their Public Policy Forums addressing “The Demise of the Middle Class, Is It Real?” Our hats are off to the forward movement of this fine group since its incorporation in 2009. For more information: (207) 563-3374 or at their website: www.francesperkinscenter.org

*** 2015 CCC Legacy Gathering ***

The CCC Corps Legacy Gathering will be held September 24 –27, 2015 in East Windsor, Connecticut. This CCC alumni organization is quickly decreasing in size due to the formidable ages of those young men who joined up in the 1930’s to serve in Roosevelt’s TREE ARMY which taught them a lot physically, socially, geographically, educationally and vocationally. In addition, their hard work provided conservation of our lands, helped develop our parks and saved many of their own families since 80% or $25 of the boy’s monthly earnings went directly home to feed their families. To date there only a handful of active alumni chapters nationwide. Their headquarters are located in Shenandoah, VA where they have a commemorative wall and small museum. One of our NNDPA national board members, Walter Atwood, will be at the meeting as always since he served for some time as the group’s national president and never misses a meeting wherever they are held. Is or Was anyone in your family a member of the CCC in his late teens or early 20’s? Please let us know if they were. To learn more about this upcoming event, including registration, hotel and travel information. Click Here.

*** CCC Built Park Designated New National Historic Landmark ***

Red Rocks Park and Amphitheater and the former Mount Morrison CCC Camp in Jefferson County, CO (near Denver) was just recently designated a National Historic Landmark. The outstanding architecture and landscape architecture of these two places illustrate the principles and practices of the New Deal-era naturalistic park design and master planning in a metropolitan park as well as the use of the Civilian Conservation Corps labor to develop such a park. The Mount Morrison CCC Camp is one of the few surviving camps in the nation that retain a high concentration of original resources. The amphitheater in the park is one of America’s best known performing arts venues, famous for its natural acoustics, design and setting amongst and with all the volumes of red rocks in the area.

*** Colorado Springs Gives a Party For Their Own FDR ***

Our NNDPA group in Colorado Springs, CO recently surprised their FDR on his recent birthday. This FDR is Richard Marold who does an outstanding Chautauqua presentation of our favorite president. He has given his rendition of FDR and his ideas, plans and goals in various places in CO and NM with much crowd amazement and pleasure. One lady in Santa Fe approached him after his presentation with puzzlement on her face stated, “I thought you died!” What more can any actor want as an accolade. Marold can be reached at (719) 633-0416.
While researching her father, Eugene Kingman (a New Deal artist), NNDPA staff member Elizabeth Kingman, who was born and raised in Omaha, recently came across an amazing virtual exhibit about Nebraska’s active role in the New Deal. There is a great wealth of information worth exploring.  

Click Here.

The New Mexico Chapter of NNDPA has a new photo exhibit up at Back Street Bistro in Santa Fe. This popular restaurant and gallery space is located at 513 Camino De Los Marquez and usually features artwork of local artists. This photo exhibit is a new focus for their gallery and customers can enjoy 40 color photos of our collection of New Deal public art from various locations around the state through August 23. Note that Back Street Bistro is only open for lunch. Orders can be taken for copies of any of the images that you would like to have hanging in your home or office or to give to a friend or family member. For more information, contact NNDPA Exec. Director Kathy Flynn.

The NNDPA's New Mexico Chapter tried something totally new for a fundraiser holding an auction of painted or decorated shovels – that implement that built so many things and places around this nation. PAINT YOUR SHOVEL – The theme of a fundraiser held June 5, 2015 was New Deal shovel art. Almost 100 shovels were decorated by artists and offered in live and silent auctions at the large Scottish Rite Temple Center in Santa Fe. Over 200 people attended. All but 11 of the shovel art sold quickly. The chapter is taking online bids for the remaining shovels that didn’t receive bids at the event. Click Here to see them. To read more about the very successful fundraiser, Click Here. If anyone else would like to try doing a Painted Shovel Auction, contact us.
Excellent Sources of New Deal Information

WPA Today
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www.wpatoday.org

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www.livingnewdealproject.org

New Deal Network
The Roosevelt Institute
4079 Albany Post Road
Hyde Park, NY 12538
(212) 444-9130
www.rooseveltinstitute.org

New Deal 2.0
A Project of the Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute
www.newdeal20.org
contact@newdeal20.org

FDR Presidential Library/Museum
4079 Albany Post Road Hyde Park
NY 12538
1 (800) FDR-VISIT or (845) 486-7770

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www.rooseveltcampusnetwork.org

National Park Conservation Assoc.
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1-800-NAT-PARK

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New Deal Art Registry
Barbara Bernstein, Founder
San Francisco, CA
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admin@newdealartregistry.org

State & Local New Deal Studies Bibliography, by Keith J. Volanto, Ph.D.
in the Social Sciences Division at Collin College in Plano, TX, has written
extensively on the New Deal, particularly in Texas. kvolanto@collin.ed
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www.savethepostoffice.com
For the most complete information about the U.S. Postal Service and the issues that threaten this uniquely American institution.
Headquartered at the Gallatin School at New York University, their email is: admin@savethepostoffice.com