Notes about the upcoming History Book …

Like any monumental task, the history book project at first seemed very daunting. Fred Yates himself thought about writing a sequel to R. Aumon Bass’ History of the Education of the Deaf in Virginia but he was never able to do so. For those not in the know, Bass’ book details the history of educating the deaf in Virginia from when the Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind was founded in 1839, all the way to 1948. The dimensions of Bass’ book are 6” x 9” with dark-blue hard bound covers (and paper jacket) with 359 pages. He started work on the book in 1943 and eventually completed it in 1948. Only 500 copies were printed and sold for $5 apiece. Nowadays, remaining copies of the book are very difficult to obtain.

For this reason, it was decided to include Bass’ book (covering the period 1839-1948) along with our second part (1949-2014) so that the history would be more complete. The second part includes the struggle to consolidate both schools in Hampton and Staunton over 30 years and culminated in 2008 when the State Legislature made consolidation official in Staunton. The legislature appropriated 71.5 million dollars for new construction and renovation at the consolidated Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind campus. The extensive construction was recently completed in 2012. This section alone is 78 pages long.

Another section (19 pages) of the book deals with the struggle of the Virginia School for the Deaf Alumni Association (first called Alumni Association of the Virginia School for the Deaf and renamed Auld Lange Syne Alumni Association and then this current name) to have Superintendent McManaway replaced. McManaway insisted on education being delivered orally to the exclusion of sign language. The alumni association ultimately succeeded (after 12 years) when McManaway resigned on May 7, 1939 (to be effective August 31, 1939) and the Board of Visitors appointed Joseph Healy to succeed McManaway.

There is a chapter devoted to VSDB team sports and another chapter to individual VSDB athletes. One chapter details the Hall of Fame program and yet another one addresses the Deaf History Museum.

There is also a lengthy chapter (23 pages) of interviews with people with ties to VSDB, including administration, faculty, staff and alumni.

However, due to circumstances beyond our control, the book will not be completed in time for the Alumni Reunion, October 2-4, 2014 which coincides with the 175th Anniversary Celebration of the founding of the Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind, much to our disappointment.

We are making arrangements with RR Donnelley based in Harrisonburg to have this book printed (only 250 copies) and books will be sold for $60 each. There will be 219 pages in the first section (Bass’ Book) and 249 pages in the second part (for a total of 468 pages) with 313 photographs liberally interspersed throughout the book, 144 in the first part and 169 in the second part. Most of the book will be printed in color with some black/white photos on 8.5” x 11” pages, with hard covers (see the photo at the right).

If you are interested in buying this book, please contact Race Drake, rfdre63@gmail.com or VP: 540-416-0017.

Donna Wait, Chair
The Project Book Committee

Order form:

Name ____________________________ Address _______________________________ C S Z ____________ 

e-mail address: __________________________ VP: _______________ (in case we need to contact you about your order)

Please enclose a check for $60 per copy, payable to VSDAA/History Book and mail it to:
Race Drake
306 Hudson Ave.
Staunton, VA 24401

Thank you very much!

Note: shipping will be available for $7 per book.