



# The Afterglow

The Newsletter of the Nature Camp Foundation in  
Support of Nature Camp

Number 73

September 2008

## Upgrade Completed on Time

Despite massive rains during the spring, our contractors plowed ahead with the renovations, and managed to get everything done in time for camp to open with some major, MAJOR help from the Service Committee, who restored things so well that, except for the wider paths, it's hard to believe it was ever changed at all. Here's a summary of work from Jim Brooks:

"There is a new transformer at ground level at the base of the power pole. There are two huge electrical panels next to the new transformer, and five of us built a wooden roof on the metal structure that was designed and built for us by LG. Flint of Lynchburg, VA. There is new wiring in all the buildings except the caretakers' house. There is new plumbing in all the buildings that have plumbing. There are new electrical feeder lines running underground to all the buildings. There are new plumbing feeder lines running underground to all the buildings. There are new sinks in the GTH, BTH, GBH, and BBH, and the BTH has four new shower stalls. There are all new showers, sinks, and toilets in the Staff House and BTM. The new plumbing and electrical work looks great.

"We owe Charlie, the caretaker, a huge debt of gratitude for all he has done to keep the project moving along. We would not be nearly as far along as we are without his constant vigilance. He worked ahead of the electricians to remove sheet rock from the walls so the electricians didn't have to take the time. This was necessary to run new wires in the Infirmary, Education building, and Staffhouse. Charlie was also there on a daily basis to make suggestions about where to relocate trenches and breaker panels for better access to the buildings, and to make certain that no buried cables or pipes were cut by the backhoe operators. Shake Charlie's hand and tell him "thank you" the next time you see him.

"The NCF Service Committee has hosted 41 Service Days or Weekends since the incorporation of the NCF. I have attended 40 of those, and have never been more proud of what we accomplished than this past weekend. Camp was a mess when we arrived, and looked pretty darned good when we left. We rolled many many rocks to line the paths, and hauled many many loads of gravel for the paths and leaves to cover the raw dirt where the trenches had been covered. Of the 66 folks who attended, 16 had never been to a previous Service Weekend, three folks were on Staff this year and another three were First Session campers.

"Amber gets the volunteer hero award for her help in May. She started taping, mudding, and sanding sheet rock on Thursday May 15 and made a number of stops at camp to continue on the project over the subsequent two weeks."

The playfield was leveled and given a provisional seeding in May. It will be reseeded in the fall, and rough spots in the road will be smoothed out.

## Our Deep and Abiding Connection to the World Around Us

On the evening of June 22, 2008, fifty years to the day after the very first service in the Nature Camp chapel, the assembly of First Session campers and staff, as well as a few special guests, congregated to mark the anniversary and to celebrate the place of the chapel in the history and spiritual life of Nature Camp. Now known officially as the Reeves Memorial Chapel, in honor and memory of Col. John H. Reeves Jr. and Mrs. Trudy Reeves, and inspired by a remarkably similar structure at Shrine Mont in Orkney Springs, Virginia, the chapel is the extraordinary and phenomenal handiwork of Ollie Groah, who built nearly every building at Nature Camp.

We were in for a particularly special and unexpected treat that evening when, just after dinner, one of our guests agreed to play the organ for the ceremony. Joanne Hutton, wife of Nature Camp Foundation president Powell Hutton, is an accomplished pianist, but had never played a pump organ before. The organ, which was built in 1900, was once a staple at Nature Camp chapel services, but fell into disuse and disrepair several years ago after spending the entirety of each summer outside in the organ room of the chapel. Painstakingly and lovingly

restored and rebuilt by Jim Brooks some 15 years ago, the organ has permanently resided ever since along the northern wall of the Lillian Schilling Building, but I thought it would be fitting to bring it out of semi-retirement for this one occasion. After Joanne quickly sight-read through “Amazing Grace” in the old *Army-Navy Hymnal*, a group of counselors and campers graciously and carefully carried the organ down to the chapel, where we managed to squeeze it in next to the old chapel bell. Some of the keys and stops no longer function, and the organ has never produced what might be described as dulcet tones, but the sound of reeds and voices joined together was indeed joyful, and we are grateful to Joanne for her contribution to this special event.

Those of us who have spent more than a few sessions at Nature Camp might all too easily have come to take the serene beauty and sublime simplicity of the chapel for granted, to consider it just another spot in Camp, where we gather on Sunday morning and evenings and hold our Closing Ceremony and an occasional class. But as I asserted at the service, I believe that the chapel is indeed a sanctified spot on these grounds and that Nature Camp would be all the poorer in its absence. No doubt the chapel means something different to everyone. To some it remains, as it was originally intended, a holy sanctuary in which to worship God. To others it may constitute a place set aside for special events, an amphitheater in which we may all commune with nature as a community, or simply a quiet retreat from the busier and noisier byways and social hubs of Camp. And to many who have come before us, the chapel serves as a tribute to those who have dedicated their lives to Nature Camp and its eternal spirit. The chapel has even inspired at least one musical composition; my band teacher in high school, some 25 years or more ago, stumbled upon Nature Camp during a desultory drive in the country one day and wrote a piece he entitled, “Little Stone Chapel on Big Mary’s Creek.” I have had the distinct pleasure of attending two weddings in the chapel, and I have no doubt that others have also taken place there over the past half-century. Whatever your beliefs or feelings, I hope that for each of you the chapel holds a special place in your heart and represents our deep and abiding connection to the world around us and to one another.

During the service we also took occasion to recognize ten individuals who have made extraordinary, non-monetary contributions to the life of Nature Camp. These new members of the Nature Camp Roll of Honor have donated their time, talent and creative energy to the betterment of Camp, and their names will appear in perpetuity on the plaque that hangs just inside the outer office of the staff house. Those inducted as the class of 2008 honorees are Nancy Feil Lowry, for years of service as the head chef at Adult Session and for graciously hosting innumerable meetings of the Board of Directors of the NCF; Powell Hutton, for stellar, patient and visionary leadership of the NCF since 2005 and in particular during the transition of ownership of Nature Camp from the Virginia Federation of Garden Clubs; Anna Lowry, for designing brochures for the youth and adult sessions of Nature Camp; Michaux Lowry Hood, for design and maintenance of the web sites for Nature Camp and the Nature Camp Foundation (NCF); Connie Sancetta, for tirelessly serving as editor of the NCF’s almost quarterly newsletter, *The Afterglow*, since 1989 and for organizing the annual Adult Session since 2002; Dot Spates Wilbur-Brooks, for reestablishing Adult Session in 1990 and developing it into a flagship program of the NCF; Chuck Story, for invaluable service without complaint as treasurer of the NCF since 2002 and for cooking at the Foundation’s biannual Service Week-



ends for many years; the late Charles Thornton, for selfless generosity to Nature Camp during the last decade of his life (see separate story in the previous *Afterglow*); our own caretaker Charlie Truxell, whose unfailing commitment and dedication to Nature Camp have been simply invaluable; and Doug Woodworth, for two terms of service on the Board of Directors of the NCF and for generously holding the position of Nature Camp treasurer—without pay—for the past 18 months. Let us all be grateful to these and previous inductees to the Roll of Honor for all they have done to ensure that Nature Camp continues to thrive and provide us with the opportunity to experience the magic of this remarkable place.

-- Flip Coulling, Director

## Field Trips, Classes, Dancin' in the Street

A total of 328 campers attended Nature Camp this summer, the highest enrollment in nine years and an increase of 31 from 2007. More than two-thirds of the campers returned from last year. This summer also marked the first year on record (since 1972) in which attendance in each session exceeded that of the previous year. In addition Second and Third Sessions both had short waiting lists. Nearly one in ten campers hailed from Williamsburg (31 campers); other large concentrations came from Fredericksburg (22), Charlottesville (20) and Richmond (22). Sixty-eight campers received one or more scholarships from a garden club or other sponsoring organization, and an additional 49 benefited from tuition assistance directly from Nature Camp, Inc.

Guiding and nurturing these eager young charges was an exceptionally veteran staff led by co-assistant directors Chris Chamberlin and Louise Bowling. The counselors ranged in age from 18 to 25 (not including the ageless Amy Beaird, EMT, and Shirley Napps, office assistant) and comprised five individuals who never attended Nature Camp as campers. The University of Virginia once again provided the largest contingent, with no fewer than 11 staff members. Wahoos Lucas Gillenwater and Tucker Harris, our talented and inventive (and no longer neophytic) cooks, have greatly appreciated a new front-loading washer and drier set in the shed behind the kitchen. They also made frequent use of the bounty which our four garden beds produced: lettuce, peas, radishes, Swiss chard, tomatoes, cucumbers, beans and carrots.

Classes included all the traditional favorites, as well as Larvotany (a class which Amy Beaird and Chris Chamberlin developed in 2007 and which examined insect larvae and their host plants), Darvolution, and Wild Art. Major classes took field trips to the Rockbridge County Landfill, the Montebello Fish Hatchery, and the site of the March forest fire near Vesuvius. Several noteworthy finds during and outside of class deserve mention. While serving as one of the botany instructors during First Session, I discovered a surprisingly large population of a state-rare plant (*Pyrola elliptica*, or Elliptic Shinleaf, a member of the heath family) along the path to Buttermilk Spring, and more recently counselors and campers found a fresh pile of bear scat and a possible carbonization fossil in Big Mary's Creek.

Thanks to the assistance of Paul Cabe (who himself returned to Camp to discuss neotropical migratory birds and present some of his own research on the Acadian flycatcher), we were able to line up a number of outstanding evening program speakers, including Dr. Chuck Bailey (College of William and Mary; geology of faults and earthquakes in Virginia), Sarah Francisco (Southern Environmental Law Center), and Dr. Robert Humston (Washington and Lee University; biology of smallmouth bass). First Session we enjoyed an evening of dancing in the road to music performed on the Staff House porch by the Rivanna River Chiggers (a Charlottesville-based string band whose members include former Nature Camper Molly Cadieux). During Third Session Katie Hoffman Doman gave a musical evening program and left copies of her CD for sale at the canteen.

-- Flip Coulling, Director





## One-Day Family Session in October.

Remember Sunday hikes? Of course you do. Well, Paul Cabe and Leigh Ann Beavers will be organizing a day of hikes at camp on Saturday October 11, along with activities on the grounds for folks of all ages. Hikes will cover a range of levels of effort, from easy to strenuous. Activities will take place rain or shine, starting at 10:00 a.m. Bring your own picnic lunch and water for the hikes. A turkey dinner will be served at 6:30 p.m. Cost is \$20 per person for those over 10 years, or \$50 per family (children under 10 are free). Babysitting will not be provided. To register for the day, contact Flip Coulling.

## How Nature Conserves and Recycles -- 19th Adult Session

Adult Session continues to attract a devoted group each year, and each year a few new folks join the family. Sixteen staffers and twenty-seven campers arrived on June 6th to a camp that looked almost unchanged, except for the unusual smoothness of the playfield. No need for the fireplace this time -- temperatures were in the 90's and most people spent time in the girls' swimming hole, coming up for the terrific dinners served by Chris Chamberlin with help from Lucas Gillenwater and Tucker Harris. There were so many great experiences that we can't list them all, but here's a sampling:

- ◆ Full-scale roast turkey dinner with all the fixings
- ◆ Two (count them, two!) birthday celebrations, one with champagne
- ◆ Indigo bunting sightings with Peter Mehring
- ◆ Saturn in all its glory on Terry's CCTV
- ◆ A moving tribute to Charles Thornton during Sharon Spangler's chapel service
- ◆ Making art works from natural materials with Ali Wieboldt
- ◆ A spirited description of using charcoal to increase soil production, from Walter Mehring
- ◆ Contrasting plant communities on two soil types, explained by Tom Dierauf with help from Flip and Peter
- ◆ Sketching a topographic transect of camp with Chuck Bailey



Next year will be the 20th anniversary of Adult Session, in August. Join us if you can!

## Vice-Presidential Election and Appointment of Chairpersons

As we reported in November 2007, the NCF Board has amended the by-laws of the organization to allow for staggered terms for the four officers and five appointed chairs and to include a limit of two full successive terms for most offices. This will help to ensure the long-term growth and sustainability of the NCF. This year, the Vice President is up for election and the Communications and Finance Chairs are up for appointment. The incumbents for these positions are eligible for re-election/re-appointment this year. Next year (2009), the Secretary, Treasurer, Development Chair, and Volunteer Coordinator will be up for election/appointment. And in 2010, President, the At-large Board Member, and Facilities Chair will be up for election/appointment.

The Nominating Committee consists of Stephanie Lape, Jill Zimorski, and Cammie Tuskey Hutton, the Vice President, who serves as the chair of the Committee. The Committee is currently developing the slate and all members will receive a mailing announcing the slate chosen with a ballot for voting around the first of November. As a reminder, a member is defined as an individual who supports the goals of the Foundation and who is current in the payment of any amount to the NCF annual fund or who have given in kind by services or labor to support Nature Camp during the most recent completed fiscal year.

If you would like to submit a nomination for Vice President, Communications Chair, or Finance Chair, please send it to Jill Zimorski. Nominations must be received by October 15<sup>th</sup>.

## Scholarship Sponsors for Summer 2008

Many thanks to the following organizations, which provided financial assistance to some of this summer's campers. These generous garden clubs, bird clubs, foundations, and other organizations offered partial and full scholarships to help light the spark for a lifetime of commitment to the environment. Thank you!

Albemarle Garden Club	Middleburg Garden Club
Ashland Garden Club	Midlothian Garden Club
Augusta Bird Club	Mount Jackson Garden Club
BAMA Works Fund of the Charlottesville Area Community Fund	Nelson County Garden Club
Blue Ridge District, VFGC	Petersburg Garden Club
Blue Ridge Garden Club	Piedmont Garden Club
Buck Mountain Garden Club	Portsmouth Area Council of Garden Clubs
Charlottesville Garden Club	Princess Anne Garden Club
Dogwood Garden Club	Rappahannock County Garden Club
Ellen Ford	Richmond Council of Garden Clubs
Fauquier and Loudoun Garden Club	Rivanna Garden Club
Ford's Colony Garden Club	Rockbridge Area Community Foundation
Fredericksburg Area Council of Garden Clubs	Southside Garden Club
Garden Club of Gloucester	Spotswood Garden Club
Garden Club of Mathews County	Sunshine Lady Foundation
Garden Study Club of Loudoun	Tidewater District, VFGC
Glen Burnie Garden Club	Tuckahoe Garden Club of Westhampton
Goochland Garden Club	Virginia Beach Garden Club
Green Hills Garden Club	Virginia Federation of Garden Clubs
Green Meadow Point Garden Club	Virginia Native Plant Society, Fredericksburg Area Chapter
Hampton Roads Garden Club	Virginia Native Plant Society, John Clayton Chapter
Holly Society of America, Colonial Virginia Chapter	Warm Springs Valley Garden Club
Hunting Creek Garden Club	Westmoreland Garden Club
Indian Draft Farm	Williamsburg Bird Club
James River Garden Club	Williamsburg Garden Club
Kingsmill Garden Club	Winchester-Clarke Garden Club
Leesburg Garden Club	

## Donors to the Campaign for Nature Camp

These giving circles reflect the total value of pledges and gifts made to The Campaign for Nature Camp through August 15, 2008. These generous donations, plus the fundraisers held in 2007, have brought the campaign total to more than \$620,000! Names in italics indicate those who have joined this list or who have increased their gift or pledge since the last Afterglow went to press in the spring. Tremendous thanks to all these supporters.

### Big Mary's Creek Guardians (\$20,000 or more):

Anonymous	John Powell
The Chilton Family	Jill Stein Tietjen
Sidney and Mary Coulling	<i>Twentieth Century Merchants Fund</i>

### Buttermilk Springs Benefactors (\$10,000 - \$19,999):

<i>Anonymous</i>	Peggy Layne
Anonymous	Jim Lowry
Robert and Cynthia Brashear	Julie Moore
Bill and Susan Cale	Bill and Linda Pinkham
Rick and Amy Wingfield Clark	Charles Thornton
Amy Kasdorf Gonzalez in memory of Frank and Frances Kasdorf	Lorna Wass
Ken and Ginger Karb	

### Table Rock Patrons (\$5000 - \$9999):

Anonymous	Hunting Creek Garden Club
Abigail Cutter	Mary Jane Layne in honor of Margaret E. Layne
<i>Joyce Bly Fletcher in Memory of Margaret Campbell Bly</i>	<i>Terry Richardson</i>
Brent and Becky Heath	Paul Schwobel in memory of Wilbur P. Schwobel

### Whetstone Ridge Sponsors (\$2500 - \$4999):

Bama Works Fund of the Charlottesville Area Community Fund	Peter and Leslie Mehring
<i>Fords Colony Garden Club</i>	Walter Mehring
Harrison and Terry Fridley	Rivanna Garden Club
Church and Campbell Tuskey Hutton	Mary Schweitzer

Powell & Joanne Hutton  
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Kent and Ann Massie  
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**McClung Mountain Club (\$1000 - \$2499):**

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Clay and Elizabeth Long Adams  
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Paul and Monica Adams  
Augusta Bird Club in memory of Patricia Kluchesky-Larner  
*Chuck Bailey*  
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Hillside Garden Club in memory of Frances Dirom  
Linda Hitt in honor of Jennifer Crosby  
Brian and Tatiana Hudson

**South River Supporters (\$1 - \$999):**

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 George Chip Snead  
*Ellis Squires*  
 Holly Gribble Stein  
 Mr. and Mrs. Bruce Stephen in memory of Gladys Moon  
*Sterling Point Garden Club*  
 Peter and Lynne Still  
 Betsy Stinson  
 Esther Moger Stokes  
*Stonehenge Garden Club*  
 David V. Strider, Jr.  
 Dorothy Sullenberger  
 Randy and Ann Sutliff in honor of the marriage of Sarah McMahon  
 & Forrest Parsons  
*Francis and Sue Terminella*  
 Thomas Jefferson Garden Club  
 Harriet Shackelford Thomas  
 Timothy and Edith Thomas  
 Mary and Wayt Timberlake  
 Bradley and Deana Tipler  
*Toano Garden Club*  
 Wendy Tonker and May Alexander  
*Town & Country Garden Club*  
 Kathy Townsend  
 Alfred Traverse in memory of Charles Thornton  
 Mary Catherine Upton  
 Valley Crane and Rigging

The Valley of Virginia Herb Guild  
 Peter and Susan Van Acker  
 Anne Van Auken  
 John Van Auken  
 Tyson and Dorothy Van Auken  
 Nathan Van Hooser  
*Jacques Van Montfrans and Elizabeth Wilkins*  
 Jane VanDenburgh  
 Virginia Beach Garden Club  
 Virginia Federation of Garden Clubs, Inc.  
 Joan Vogel  
 Lucille Vogel  
 Carol Vonada in memory of Charles Thornton  
 Wachovia Foundation  
 Gary and Jean Wade  
 Ann Wallinger  
 Bruce and Rosemary Wallinger  
 Stewart and Donna Ware  
 Heather Partridge Warley  
 Barry and Susan Wass  
 Gerry Wass  
 Bill Way  
*Evelyn Way*  
 Waynesboro Game and Fish Protection Association  
 Waynesboro Garden Club  
 Don and Polly Weaver  
 Ruth N. Weaver  
 Rick and Judy Webb  
*Katie Weller*  
 Mr. and Mrs. William L. Wellons  
 Susan Werner  
 Kevin Wheeler  
 Sarah and Betsy Wheeler  
 Tom and Ali Wieboldt  
 Spencer and Courtney Wiegard  
 William and Elizabeth Wilkerson  
 Gordon and Tony Willis  
 Jere Willis III  
 Cynthia Wilson  
 William and Langhorne Wilson  
 Alan and Emily Wingfield  
 Philip and Ellen Winter  
*S. Wolen in memory of Charles Thornton*  
 David Wolfe  
 Laurice and Anne Wood  
 Tom & Carol Zimorski

*Every care has been taken to ensure the accuracy of this list, but mistakes are always a possibility. If you feel your name was inadvertently omitted or placed in an incorrect category, please contact campaign director Anne Rottenborn Balto. Thank you!*

## The Process for Acknowledging Gifts to NCF

Each and every contribution to the Nature Camp Foundation is sincerely appreciated, and we do our best to let all donors know within a timely fashion that their gifts have been received. However, the multiple steps and volunteers involved in processing and acknowledging contributions sometimes delay our response. We thought it might be helpful to briefly outline this process so you will better understand why your thank-you letter/tax receipt may be slightly delayed.

Contributions are received by the NCF treasurer, who deposits and records each gift and then notifies the development chair (who keeps records for future honor roll listings), who in turn notifies the communications chair (who generates and sends the acknowledgment letters). Because the NCF is a purely volunteer-driven organization and it's necessary to involve multiple people in the acknowledgment process, it can sometimes take longer than we want before donors' generosity is properly acknowledged. The NCF is working on ways to streamline this process and remains truly grateful for the many gifts that strengthen Nature Camp. Thank you!

**Elizabeth Gardiner Sills**  
1909 - 2007

Elizabeth Sills was born in Norfolk, VA and attended Sweet Briar College. She was co-founder and director of the Little Theater of Virginia Beach, and in 1966 founded the Virginia Beach chapter of the SPCA. She served in a variety of positions in the Virginia Federation of Humane Societies and was active in numerous environmental protection campaigns. She is survived by her daughter Elizabeth Sills Delzell and son John Sills III, who was a camper. A loving tribute can be found in the August 29, 2007 issue of *The Virginian-Pilot*. (From news clippings submitted by Bill Pinkham)

**Sarah Brandt**  
d. October 2007

Sarah loved Nature Camp for 5 summers (1981-1985) while residing in Winchester, VA. She was inspired to major in Environmental Conservation at the University of Colorado at Boulder, from which she graduated in 1994. She lived in an environmentalist's heaven, Crested Butte, Colorado, with her Bernese Mountain dog, Na'Pali. She was a photographer and magazine writer. She enjoyed hiking, mountain biking, "town" biking, running, kayaking, camping, snowshoeing, and all types of skiing – downhill, telemark, cross country, and skate. She knew all the words and verses to those crazy camp songs! The Sunday hikes, limnology, her wonderful counselors, and Col. Reeves were among her favorite memories. She was the Statue of Liberty in the Nature Camp Fourth of July parade one year. She is missed terribly by her family and friends. (Submitted by Elaine Brandt, Sarah's mother.)

**Peter Still**  
1957 - 2008

With shock and sorrow we report the sudden death of Peter Still on July 28, 2008. Peter was the father of Allison, Claire, and Jean Still, all former campers. His wife Lynne is the Chair of the Scholarship Committee for Nature Camp.

## News of Old Friends

**Jonathan Larsen** would love to hear from old friends. He was a camper in the late 1980's and early 1990's. he now runs a small marketing consulting firm in northern Virginia and is the proud father of Peyton Augustine Larsen, who will be a camper in another 10 years or so.



### Contacts



The Nature Camp Foundation and/or Nature Camp, Inc. can be contacted via mail to:  
PO Box 3091, Lynchburg, VA 24503