



The Mountain Matters

THE MOUNTAIN RETREAT & LEARNING CENTER, INC.

August 1998



Marching to a Different Drum

For 15 months, Karen Kleiber has served on The Mountain staff as Youth Programs Director. Now, as of August 15, she will begin marching to a different drum. Karen will be returning to school to pursue a Masters degree in Teaching at American University in Washington, DC. Her focus on English as a Second Language and Social Studies will allow her, as she said, to attend to "my first love, working directly with children."

cont. page two



Karen Kleiber (left) passes on the leadership of youth programs to The Mountain's new Youth Program Director, Jill Allison.

MOUNTAIN VIEWS

Tom Warth, Executive Director

The other day I was talking with a staff member and she asked, "What is The Mountain really all about? What is it that we do?" I found myself caught by her question for, knowing her as I do, I realized she was not wanting a recitation of programs but was truly probing for the "real stuff" of The Mountain. Thinking about her question I remembered author Peter Drucker's words: "Nonprofits do something very different than for-profit businesses and government. Business supplies, either goods or services. Government controls. The nonprofit neither supplies goods or services nor controls. Its 'product' is changed human behavior. The nonprofits are human-change agents." A human-change agent... that's what The Mountain is - changing the human condition and working to improve the lot of everyone.

Robert Latham, retired UU minister from Golden, Colorado, when talking about working for the common good said, "It's all about vision, about the fact that you get there one life at a time. But, you have to keep the prize in mind all of the time and that's what's really important, that you have a clear vision of where you are going and how to get there." I believe the staff and Trustees have "the prize" in mind, have a clear vision of where we are going and how we are getting there. For sure, the facility improvements detailed

on page three are necessary, but the prize is the changed human condition. The Mountain is and must continue to be a place that challenges each and every one of us to see the world as it is and commit our energies to righting the wrongs. Not only is it important that we treat our guests - young and old, of all colors, of different sexual orientation and of all economic backgrounds - with respect and kindness, but that we energize people to make a difference wherever they are. As we often say, we strive, in a loving environment, to make each of us **uncomfortable** with the status quo.

Marian Wright Edelman writes: "America is in urgent need of a band of moral guerrillas who simply decide to do what appears right heedless of the immediate consequences." We, Mountain staff, members, supporters and friends have the opportunity, through our commitment to this place and its work, to be such a band. Together, we can find the energy, passion and skills so necessary to do the work. Together we can become multipliers, touching one life, then another, then another...

As Martin Luther King, Jr. said so eloquently, "Ultimately it's all heart stuff. If you don't change the heart, all social action is finger-in-the-dikes effort. You have to keep doing it and sooner or later you're going to run out of fingers. You can pass a good law but the law will not sustain if the legislators are not in accord with the law. Focus on what's going to change the heart."

"What is The Mountain all about. What is it that we do?" It's the heart stuff!

Marching to a Different Drum

cont. from page one

We say goodbye to Karen with very mixed feelings. One of The Mountain's priorities is to create an environment in which staff can expand their horizons and take what they learn here into the larger community. So we joyfully support Karen's endeavors to fulfill her personal vision. But her contributions have been significant, and colleagues and friends will miss her quiet, steady presence.

Karen's creative approach to program administration is best exemplified by the seemingly minor changes she made in MountainCamp. This year, Karen reversed the elementary and junior high sessions, with junior high starting our camp season and elementary in the first two weeks of July. There have been several positive results. Enrollment in Elementary Camp has increased, because parents have time with their children at the end of the school year before camp begins. The change also allows counselors to "get their feet wet" with the more mature junior high youth, who require less physical energy to keep them safe. Some junior high campers said they appreciated being able to line up jobs after camp - more difficult for them to do with the previous schedule.

As Karen faces her leave-taking, she says she probably won't comprehend the reality of the huge change in her life until she's actually gone. "Right now, I'm so immersed in running MountainCamp that I don't have a minute to think about it!" When asked what she's enjoyed most about her tenure at The Mountain, her response was immediate. "I've loved working with people - campers, staff, youth advisors, Religious Educators and parents. The biggest impact The Mountain has had on me is that it's allowed me time to realize what's important to me: working directly with children. I've learned to be calmer, take things in stride and be more relaxed and flexible." Karen also commented on how much it has meant to her to have been able to take on the critical role of Youth Programs Director. "I'm still amazed at the level of responsibility of this job and how much trust The Mountain put in me. If I didn't follow through with detail, it would affect many people, both staff and guests. One of the hard things about it was that I felt irreplaceable - if I didn't do the job, there'd be no one else who could carry it on. But now Jill's here - and I'm having a good time working with her. It will be strange to leave her with everything that we're working on now together. But I know that the job is being handed off to a person who will carry on!"

...and the Beat Goes On

Jill Allison is a dramatic example of the importance of our Volunteer Program! Having found The Mountain on the Internet in 1997, Jill offered to spend two weeks with us in August as a volunteer. With her humor, dedication and easy-going willingness to do anything and everything, she was a welcome addition to the staff community. We were aware of Jill's Masters in Parks & Recreation Management and ten years of experience in youth programming with Girl Scouts, so it was natural to give her a call when the Youth Programs position became available. Her expertise in high and low ropes, challenge course training, and involvement in the American Camping Association as a site inspector added to her long list of credentials.

Jill told us that Girl Scouts provided her with a strong foundation. Their high standards of safety and quality programs, and the opportunities to work with both rural and inner-city youth, allowed her to expand her skills and discover that she truly loves working with children in an outdoor environment. So why leave that wonderful organization? "From my experience as a volunteer here, I developed an understanding of the feeling of this community. I know The Mountain is a really special place because of all the people who participate here - both staff and guests. Individuals can explore who they are and challenge themselves, their beliefs, and how they fit in the world because diverse beliefs are welcomed and accepted. That's what I love about The Mountain and Unitar-



ian Universalism - it's okay that ten people look at the same elephant and see ten different things."

Jill added, "It's exciting that The Mountain is willing to take a chance on someone who was not raised in MountainCamp. It says a lot about our commitment to youth - it says we're willing to look at what we do and bring in

someone from a completely different setting who will appreciate the strengths of the program and challenge what needs to be challenged. I love working with youth, and I equally love working with young adults - I enjoy all aspects of working with campers and counselors, helping build strong leaders." Jill has already found that no two days are ever the same, and she is excited about working in a dynamic, growing organization. "Camp always challenges me, but it's my comfort zone. The Mountain will put me in situations that are not as comfortable...Milestone, CONs, family programs, helping with other programs beside youth...and it's exciting to risk the unknown. This is a great place and I'm so glad to be a part of it!"

Farewell Karen, welcome Jill! With Youth Programs at the center of The Mountain's work, we celebrate the successful transition of leadership...the (heart) beat goes on.

A Year of Improvements

1998-1999 Facilities Plan

The Mountain Retreat & Learning Center's overarching vision for facilities is that building and land development will demonstrate our commitment to maintaining a sustainable environment. Any improvement to the physical plant or land is done only in response to health, safety and accessibility requirements, identified program needs or quality of life issues. All changes to the facility reflect clear respect for the natural world.

In line with the program and facility initiatives outlined in the Business Plan for The Mountain Retreat & Learning Center, Inc. the following represents our plans for modernization, upgrades and additions to The Mountain's physical plant for the next eighteen months. It is understood that plans may change in response to emergencies or changing program strategies.

Ongoing Improvements

Summer & Fall 1998

Complete installation of the new water system. As required by state health standards, The Mountain's entire water system, including the new well and distribution system, will be completely installed and operational by fall.

Remove all parking from the Lodge to Cabin 1 and replace the roadway with a blacktop path. The smaller path will accommodate golf carts able to carry luggage and transport people with mobility limitations, keep cars away from sensitive areas, and reduce erosion. (see article, page five)

Enlarge the outside deck off the Dining Hall Lounge. Social time has moved to Heritage Hall (formerly the Dining Hall Lounge) to protect the Lodge Great Room from spills and maintain it as a quality meeting and worship space. The new deck also offers expanded outdoor space and allows children to enjoy the nearby play structure during social time.

Remodel the ASCENDER Home to accommodate eight to twelve REFUEL students. The exciting growth of the REFUEL program requires a larger living space than Emerson House. The ASCENDER Home, originally built in the 1920s, must be modernized to provide comfortable, accessible space for both the REFUEL students and ASCENDERS who spend long periods of time at The Mountain.

Develop a permanent Memorial Garden. The Mountain is a special place to so many people. The Memorial Garden provides a peaceful space for memorial services.

Complete the remodeling of Cabins 13 through 20. The safety and comfort of summer campers and the increase of winter business, including the Enviro-Scope program, support the complete renovation of the bunkhouse cabins.

Upgrade Cabins 7 through 12 with skirting, new windows, flooring, ramping, and interior amenities. Many of The Mountain's cabins are aging and require maintenance to keep



Preparing the new pathway from the Lodge to Cabin 1.

them safe, comfortable and accessible. Improvements will provide guests with more comfortable housing and allow the cabins to weather cold mountain winters more efficiently.

Remodel the Development Office to accommodate three staff, a volunteer work space and the Mountain-wide copy, production, and mail room. Moving the copy room out of the Registration office allows office staff to provide uninterrupted guest service. Quality, shared office space enables staff to work together more efficiently.

Goals for 1999

Continue the upgrade of Cabins 7 - 12, bringing them in line with Cabins 13 - 20.

Develop the three lakes at the bottom of The Mountains, including a natural bog site in place of the top lake, accessible walkway and viewing areas, a cascading dam around and between the middle and lower lakes and improved swimming facilities at the lower lake.

Continue to replace the road around the REC Hall and in front of Cabins 7 through 20 with a blacktop pathway to accommodate golf carts and people with mobility limitations. All parking will be removed from in front of these cabins and replaced by a large, general parking area behind the ASCENDER Home.

Develop the former tennis court as a hard-surface play space with a "pole barn" over half of the area for use during inclement weather.

Remodel Emerson house, including construction of a third bedroom and a second bathroom.

Replace the tables and chairs in the dining hall.

Build a Facilities/Maintenance Building

Neal Andreae

Giving More & More

In the Spring of 1991, a relatively new Unitarian Universalist from Roanoke, VA was searching for an interesting Elderhostel program to attend, and thought that one here at The Mountain looked like his cup of tea. At the time, he didn't realize The Mountain was a UU center. He liked the experience so well that, before he left, he signed on to be the Mountain Rep in the Roanoke congregation. Thus began Neal Andreae's relationship with The Mountain - a friendship that remains stronger than ever today.

Soon after his first visit, Neal returned as an Elderhostel host. Now he is a faculty member himself, leading courses with an emphasis on hiking and the outdoors. He has been a frequent guest for holiday celebrations and will be serving as the host this year during Christmas on The Mountain.

In 1992 Neal made the \$2,000 commitment to become a Life Member. His involvement increased even further when he moved to Hendersonville, NC in 1994. In 1995, he invested further in The Mountain, becoming a Patron Member. Just two years later, with a pledge to reach \$10,000 in total giving, he became a Flame Azalea Vision Holder.

This summer, Neal is right here, working full time shifts as a volunteer. You'll find him trimming trees, clearing trails, working with the Work Adventure Camp project to build an accessible walkway to the second lake, working with the ASCENDERS, hosting Social Time, helping Ian and Mark on maintenance, or driving shuttles to the Atlanta airport.

When asked why he gives so much of himself and his resources, he responded, "The Mountain is a good investment! I like the way it reaches out to such a wide spectrum of people, from children to elders. I like the family feeling...it gives back to me the more I give to it!" Well, Neal, The Mountain certainly appreciates all you've done, not only this summer, but through the years!



Neal and Lincoln share a rocking chair on the expanded Heritage Hall deck.

Celebrating Life

Recently, Vision Holder Neal Andreae donated a Rocking Chair to The Mountain inscribed with the words: "A Celebration of Life: Lincoln Brent Walker, 1998". Lincoln, son of staff members Mark and Susanne Walker, was born in March.

Currently, The Mountain dedicates a new rocking chair, with inscription, in memory of Life Members who pass away, but, as Neal pointed out, we don't need to wait until their death to honor a person!

If you'd like to remember someone, consider honoring them with a rocking chair. The cost is only \$80, including the brass plate engraved with your message. Just let Larry know. Our goal is to have plenty of rocking chairs on every deck and cabin porch!

Millennium on The Mountain

December 30 - January 2, 1999 and 2000

These two special programs focus on what the millennium means for each of us, individually and collectively. Consider some of the ethical issues facing our world as we enter the new century, examining philosophical, theological and spiritual perspectives on new beginnings. Study the mystique of the turning cosmos. And there will be plenty of time for exploring the winter face of the Blue Ridge. These programs will be fund-raiser for The Mountain. All nonrefundable deposits will be recognized as a '98 contribution to The Mountain. (Deposit for the '99 or '00 program is \$150; for both is \$250.) For more information on either program, contact The Mountain office.

Twentieth Anniversary Birthday Party

Can you believe it? The Mountain will be 20 years old in 1999! We're already in the planning stages to recognize this hallmark anniversary. No matter how you've been involved in The Mountain - as guest, staff or trustee - your presence is important because you are a part of the amazing evolution of this organization. We'll share memories and stories of the first and second decades, celebrate where The Mountain is now, and share our excitement about the vision for the next twenty years. Set aside Labor Day Weekend 1999 (September 3 - 6).

Staff Guide

Meet the people who make your experiences at The Mountain possible! To contact an individual staff member, dial (828) 526-5838 and, when prompted, press the individual's extension. Staff work rotating days Monday through Sunday; 24 hour voice mail is available.

Facilities



(from left)

Ian Denham, Facilities Director, ext. 229

Carlton Brown, Summer Staff

Mark Walker, Facilities, ext. 229

Finance



(from left)

Doug Hotch, Accounts Payable, ext. 219

Neal Resch, Finance Director, ext. 204

Susanne Walker, Accounts Receivable, ext. 221

Guest Services Registration Office



(from left)

Lori Gillespie, Registration Office, ext. 249

Rebecca Sunshine, Registration Office, ext. 203

Holly Linn, Registration Office, ext. 220

Nancy Heath, Guest Services Director, ext. 217

Program Implementation



(from left)

Jack Loveless, Program Implementation, ext. 231

Maria Loveless, Program Implementation, ext. 231

Housekeeping



(from left)

Eileen McKinney, Housekeeping Supervisor, ext. 223

Ed Wharton, Housekeeping, ext. 223

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Golf Carts

The New Mountain Transportation

When you next come to The Mountain, if you're staying in Cabins 1-4, you and your luggage will be transported to your cabin in one of The Mountain's new golf carts. The result has been much fun, especially for the younger family members, driving to the cabins. The carts are also being used to transport people who need help getting to and from meals or programs and to make Mountain tours more accessible. The carts are electric and quiet and are equipped with a trailer to carry luggage. They are also used by housekeeping for work around The Mountain that previously required a car or truck.

The purchase of the golf carts is the first phase of a long term plan to eliminate automobiles from much of the mountaintop. When the installation of the new water system required the road from the Lodge to Cabin 1 to be completely dug up, we determined it was time to begin implementing that plan. The road will be regraded and finished with access for emergency vehicles and a smaller strip of blacktop wide enough for the carts.

A recommendation from the Rev. Charles Grady, retired UU minister in Hendersonville, NC connected The Mountain with an E-Z Go dealer. We were able to purchase two refurbished carts, a trailer, and construct a storage area for them for just under \$10,000.

The next challenge is paying for these wonderful vehicles. If you'd like to support this effort, please make a donation using the form in this newsletter. With a contribution of \$5,000, we'll place your name on the cart right above The Mountain logo.



One of The Mountain's two new golf carts, ready to transport guests to cabins, meals or programs.

Special Thanksgiving Celebration for Oddy Curtiss

A mailing will soon be in the hands of all Life and Patron Members announcing the annual Thanksgiving celebration, November 25 - 29. This year, longtime Patron Member, Oddy Curtiss, will be celebrating her 90th birthday during the holiday. She is a role model for many of us - we're honored to help her family and Mountain friends celebrate. Oddy has often said that The Mountain is "her heaven" - a perfect place to welcome her next decade. If you're a Life or Patron member, look for the mailing and get your registration in quickly so you'll be guaranteed space.



Oddy (left) will celebrate her 90th birthday during Thanksgiving on The Mountain.

Employment Opportunities

The Mountain currently has positions available in several departments. If you know anyone who might be interested, please let them know about us or post an announcement in your congregation or other appropriate space. Contact Robert E. Smith, Human Resources Director (ext. 227), for further information.

- **Housekeeping**
- **Kitchen: Dishroom**
- **Maintenance** (Electrical, plumbing and carpentry skills necessary; experience preferred)

Member Support

NEW VISION HOLDERS

MOUNTAIN LAUREL \$15,000-\$19,999

Walter & Alicia Hodges Atlanta, GA
(Our apologies — should have been in last issue as part of charter group)

FLAME AZALEA \$10,000-\$14,999

Jay Noe Jacksonville, FL
Bob and Judy Shaklee Norcross, GA
Linda & Michael Plummer Jacksonville, FL
Bob & Diane Baum Lakeland, FL
Nina Benedetto & Dan King Augusta, GA

NEW PATRON MEMBERS \$5,000 +

John Lantz Avondale Estates, GA
Joan Willey & Charlie Stehman Wilmington, NC
Missy James & Jack Nolan Atlantic Beach, FL

NEW LIFE MEMBERS \$1,600-\$2,000

Karl & Olivia Kappus Decatur, GA
Tony James Lithia Springs, GA
Laura & Lance Carter Perry, GA
Bill Moore Asheville, NC
Bob & Trudy Deyle Tallahassee, FL
Laura Baum Lakeland, FL
Jone Johnson Centreville, VA
Frances & Bill West Decatur, GA
Howard & Stephanie Lewis Decatur, GA

SPECIAL GIFTS

Bob & Anne Hornberger \$5000
Underwriting for a Mountain Quartet CD
Ann Creech
Tenth Anniversary T Shirt for Heritage Hall Display
Betsy Ellis & James Lawrence
Computer/computer equipment
Harry & Rene Donavon
Computer & printer
Pat Gnagey
Handwoven rugs, Camera and T shirts for Youth Camp
Tom Ackerman
Amplifiers, Speakers, Wrapping, etc.
Sysco Food Service
Food Products
John Bohstedt
Computers, Computer equipment

CABIN SUPPORT

Support continues to come in for the Cabin renovation projects. Donors who have given \$250 or more to the project (since the last *The Mountain Matters*):

Youth Camp Cabins

Anonymous	\$14,300
Mary Ann Ely, Huntsville, AL	\$250
David Sweat & Kay Griese, Athens, GA	\$250
Bob & Trudy Deyle, Tallahassee, FL	\$250
Margaret & Bud Evans, St Petersburg, FL	\$250
Marjorie & Arnold Gelbin, Winston-Salem, NC	\$500

Cabins 7 - 12

Bob & Diane Baum, Lakeland, FL	\$10,000
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IN MEMORIAM

Lee Mitchell	Columbia, SC
Martha Burns	Tulsa, OK
Mel Hetland	Asheville, NC
Wink Lucas (see below)	Richmond, VA

Passages

The Mountain family was saddened to learn of Wink Lucas' untimely death in late June. Soon to retire, Wink attended General Assembly with his brother-in-law, Lewis Walker. On their way home to Richmond, Wink and Lewis spent the night in Pennsylvania in order to go hiking the next day. Lewis ate an early breakfast and returned to the room to find that Wink had died of what was later determined to be a heart attack.

Patron Members of The Mountain, Wink and wife Dawn Kenny, have contributed much over the years. Wink was originally appointed by SUELI to serve on The Mountain's Board of Trustees. He served for three years, including one year as Vice President. We will all miss him greatly.



Wink and Dawn several years ago during Thanksgiving on The Mountain.

Early Response to Scholarship Mailing

The initial returns from the mailing to raise money for The Mountain's expanded Scholarship Fund are very encouraging. With only two weeks worth of responses as of this writing, over \$3,000 has already come in.

As the mailing indicated, The Mountain has always had a "Campership Fund" to support youth attending MountainCamp, but now we want to expand the fund into one that benefits not only youth campers, but adults and families as well.

The Mountain receives no subsidies and must set prices to break even each year. We know that some people are not able to afford those fees. With a larger scholarship fund we will be able to provide many more people with the opportunity to come to Mountain programs.

If you've already contributed, thank you! If you haven't, please fill out the form in this newsletter or send back the one which came in the scholarship fund mailing. Thanks for helping make The Mountain more accessible!

Patron Pendants on the Way

Thanks to the creative efforts of staff member Adam Laiewski, Patron Pendants are being mailed to the many Patron Members who for too long have been without. The pendants signify their commitment of at least \$5,000 in support of The Mountain.

These beautiful copper enameled pieces with a scene depicting The Mountain, Blue Valley and a flaming chalice were originally designed by former crafts director Evelyn Carter. They have always been proudly worn by Patron members. Thank you to both Adam and Evelyn.

If you haven't responded to Larry about whether you need one or more Pendants, please do so and he'll put them in the mail immediately.



Adam creating Patron Member medallions.

Search Your Files

We are working hard to make sure that The Mountain's written history is accurately documented. And we need your help! If you are willing to donate copies of Mountain printed materials (newsletters, programs, etc.) from 1979 - 1996, please send them to Larry Wheeler at The Mountain or bring them on your next trip. We are also looking for a copy of the original 1979 slide show.

Yes! I want to make a donation to support The Mountain's Vision!

Apply my contribution to: ☐ Golf Cart Fund ☐ Program Scholarship Fund ☐ General Fund

☐ \$ _____ ☐ \$1000 ☐ \$750 ☐ \$500 ☐ \$300 ☐ \$200 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$50

PLEASE SEND ME INFORMATION ON:

☐ The Endowment Fund ☐ Charitable Gift Annuities ☐ Charitable Remainder Trust ☐ Membership

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: (day) _____ (evening) _____



Do you have friends who would be interested in learning about The Mountain? Let us put them on our mailing list!

Name _____

Address _____

Phone # _____ E-mail address _____

Name _____

Address _____

Phone # _____ E-mail address _____

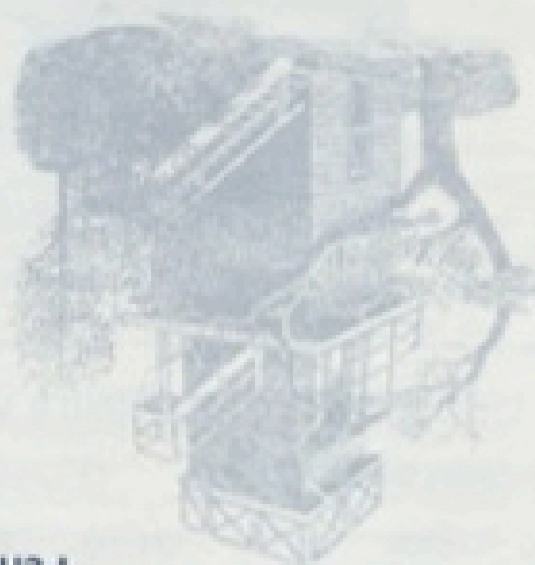
Your name (optional) _____

ou: Mountain Matters 8/98

THE MOUNTAIN RETREAT & LEARNING CENTER, INC.

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