



The Mountain Matters

THE MOUNTAIN RETREAT & LEARNING CENTER, INC.



December 1999



The well-known futurist, Joel Barker, observed that "vision without action is merely a dream, that action without vision merely passes the time, but vision with action can change the world." As I write this column for the last *The Mountain Matters* of 1999, I think we can be proud that our 20-year history is one of vision with action that has in many small but meaningful ways, "changed the world."

In the mid to late 1970s people with visions about youth camps and retreats set about finding a place where they could be fulfilled. Those visions led to the action of buying *The Mountain*. Now, 20 years later, ours is a rich history of visions with actions. There is much to that history that needs to be recognized. I'd like to share some of these past vision/action highlights and then look at *The Mountain* in the new Millennium—our visions and the actions that will bring them to light.

Those who founded *The Mountain* in the early 80s had a vision of a **gathering place**—a place for Unitarian Universalists in the southeast, a center for groups needing a special place for retreats and summer youth camps. Soon thereafter, the vision expanded to include an Elderhostel site for our older population. This vision has been realized many times over. According to my numbers, during our first 20 years over 13,500 youth have attended camps and conferences, 14,000 seniors have participated in our Elderhostel program, and more than 80,000 guests have experienced *The Mountain* for retreats, camps and programs. It has truly been a gathering place, a vision realized.

Visioning in the 80s continued, as, in addition to being a gathering place, *The Mountain* became a center that would be of service to Unitarian Universalists. Thus, the creation of lay leadership schools, religious education weeks and a more intentional focus for congregational retreats. Again, visions with actions that created life-changing experiences for over 700 Leadership School and 600+ RE Week participants. Our congregations and our UU movement have been significantly strengthened because of the programs offered by *The Mountain* over our 20 years.

The mid-to-late 80s were a time of instability. *The Mountain's* co-founding directors divorced and left in 1985

and their departure resulted in the loss of a sense of direction and energy. Amid the staff and trustees' struggle to regain momentum, the lodge burned to the ground in 1989 and the State of North Carolina required the installation of a new, \$190,000 waste treatment plant. But belief in *The Mountain* remained strong. Members continued to support it financially, camps and Elderhostel thrived and new people, believing

in *The Mountain's* potential and wanting to make a long-term employment commitment, joined the staff.

In 1988 **Richard Arends** came as Food Service Director. Richard was with *The Mountain* for nine years and made a significant contribution to the overall quality of food, while at the same time managing costs within budget projections year in and year out. In 1989 the **Denham** family began their careers here—this year celebrating their 10th anniversary of service. **Ian** joined the staff as Facilities Director. His first major project was the waste treatment plant installation. In addition to ongoing maintenance, Ian has overseen the building of the Lodge and REC Hall, cabin and tower renovations, a new deck at the end of Heritage Hall, and installation of the water system. **Shelley** has served a variety of roles: office management, Elderhostel coordinator, and Director of Extension and Worship, Program Design/Implementation (including youth camp), Marketing and now Milestone Learning Center. She has played a major role in the articulation of *The Mountain's* mission, values, vision and philosophy; she's overseen the strengthening of youth and senior programs, service to broader and diverse populations and our deep commitment to and acted-upon Unitarian Universalism. And it can't be overlooked that during their 10 years here Ian and Shelley raised three daughters, **Gillian, Megan and Joy**—all of whom played active roles in *The Mountain*—culminating in Gillian's direction of youth camp this past summer. Staff children through the years have served as ambassadors in the Highlands community, but only the Denham girls and **Rachel Arends** (Richard's daughter) lived here for 9+ years.

In the early 90s stability returned to *The Mountain*. Guest attendance and donor support increased as staff,

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Growing Up at The Mountain (Part 2)

By: **Brian A. Wheeler**

(*Brian Wheeler is the son of founding co-directors Mo and Larry Wheeler. The October 1999 issue of **The Mountain Matters** carried the first half of his reminiscences about being a young teenager when **The Mountain** first opened. This completes his story.*)

A great deal of the first year at **The Mountain** was spent cleaning and organizing. I remember many church groups who came and volunteered on "work weekends" to complete various projects. Once we hired **Steve Carter** as the first Maintenance Director, I had another mentor from whom I learned a great deal about everything from carpentry, to plumbing, to Tai Chi and the People's Revolutionary Party (the PRP). The PRP was a fictional and humorous conduit for many of our nontraditional perspectives on life, but mostly I liked the special salute we enjoyed giving each other all summer. Steve was the great master of **The Mountain's** infrastructure, and I was his apprentice, so was my Dad for that matter. I think we both learned a lot working side by side with Steve. I remember I learned a lot about electricity at **The Mountain**. We had fuse boxes everywhere, and I think they all needed new round screw-in fuses. I had great fun running around installing fuses and turning on the electricity in all the buildings. It was here I learned about the importance of having water in the water heater before you turned it on. "BRIAN! Do you smell smoke?" Well yes, Dad, that water heater is leaking something, and IT ISN'T WATER!"

We had similar adventures uncovering the workings of the water system and the camp's 2 wells and spring. Where did all the pipes go? Where were all the valves to turn on various parts of **The Mountain**? Some pipes had long ago frozen and burst, and we had geysers popping up all over when we turned on the system. Thanksgiving in 1979 was a

mad race to get water service into the Dining Hall so the dinner could be prepared. I remember a group of us digging holes and **Ed** and **Anne Heath** using a diving rod to find the valve that serviced the Dining Hall. We got it turned on just before dinner. Only when we woke up the next morning to no water in the reservoir did we discover a broken pipe in the foundation of the Dining Hall.

I also remember a rod handled water pump that sat across from the lodge on the road heading towards Cabins 1-4. Eventually I learned the handle was a simple on-off switch, but at 12 years old, it looked like an old fashioned pump to me, and I pumped the heck out of that thing thinking I could draw water up from deep inside the mountain. It worked much better when that side of **The Mountain** actually had water. I remember another time when three volunteers had the job of cleaning the inside of the reservoir. After they completed the job, they gave a concert from inside the reservoir singing songs while we laid on the top of the tower listening to their performance and watching the stars.

Sleeping on and in the tower was the cool thing to do in 1979-80. After that, it was against the rules, but it was fun while it lasted! **Matt Montgomery** and I slept there during Thanksgiving 1979. On any number of other nights when the weather permitted, groups of us took our sleeping bags to the top and camped out over the trees and under the stars.

I remember **Walt Frie's** Thanksgiving slide show in the old Lodge when he showed us some of the natural beauty in Highlands that we were only just beginning to know and learn the names of—Dry Falls, Glen Falls, Whiteside Mountain, etc. He also had a picture of a rock outcropping silhouette on our new mountain with a distant Blue Valley seemingly thousands of feet below. I remember shouting out, "That looks like a monkey's face!" Maybe other campers from Camp Highlander and Camp Parodydie called the place below the Dining Hall Monkey Face, too. I don't know, but after I saw it up close, that was and still is the most special place for me on **The Mountain**. (Currently

Monkey Face is off limits for environmental reasons. Long term we hope to build a wooden walkway and lookout platform.)

I remember the first winter at **The Mountain** being pretty brutal, particularly for **Steve** and **Evelyn Carter** who lived in a building that was hardly winterized and where the pipes often froze. On many occasions we were deploying electric "heat tape" and using hair dryers to defrost the lines.

During late 1979 and 1980, when I was thirteen years

"Sleeping on and in the tower was the cool thing to do ... groups of us took our sleeping bags to the top and camped out over the trees and under the stars."

old, **The Mountain's** infrastructure was getting close to habitable again, and some of us turned our attention to outdoor explorations. Where did those creeks that ran off **The Mountain** go? Where did all these remnants of Camp Highlander trails lead? Where was the Tiffany's Amethyst mine in Blue Valley? Did we have cliffs suitable for rock climbing and rappelling? **Nancy (Suda) Heath, Jake Haun and Walt Pirie** exposed me then to what would later become a major activity of my high school and college days, rock climbing and whitewater boating. Walt took me rappelling right off the cliff at Cabin 20. I was hooked. Nancy led me on an adventure circumnavigating the base of the cliffs from Cabin 20 to Cabin 1. We took a rope and did body rappels when the path we were taking ended in a 25 to 50 foot drop.

We retraced the Camp Highlander trails we found on their old maps. I remember one trail in particular that I reblazed with round yellow dots because we didn't have any marking tape. For some reason we had a huge roll of these things, and I went out one day following the trail that led from Cabin 1 towards the valley between Little Scaly and Chinquapin Mountains. I'm amazed that it is still known as the Yellow Dot Trail. A couple years later we "discovered" a neat waterfall down that trail in the valley, the faint water sound you can hear from Meditation Rock. I remember **Walt Pirie** also showed us the first pictures of Abe's Creek Water Fall. We worked very hard to blaze the first permanent path to that water fall, and in so doing we found another smaller one below.

As the summer of 1980 approached, it was a mad dash to get the place ready for the first true guests. Everyone else previously had been a volunteer worker! Then CBS approached my parents about the possibility of filming a made for television movie at **The Mountain** during the spring and early summer of 1980. The filming of "The Mating Season" ended up being an amazing bonding experience for **The Mountain's** first summer staff. While I was only there for portions of the filming, since I was still in school in Atlanta, I saw so many funny things happen that I could fill up pages and pages. They spent money like nobody's business. There were some very expensive scenes in that movie involving deer and helicopters that were forever left on the editing room floor. One day, we actually had two helicopters land on the parking lot in front of the office! The first helicopter the crew ordered got lost coming to **The Mountain**, so they requisitioned another one. They got a huge Greyhound sized bus stuck on the biggest curve in our road; they completely transformed Bridal Veil Falls camouflaging the road which

runs under the falls, to make it look like a quaint outdoor scene. They set up an amazing telephone infrastructure in the Lodge to support their administrative offices. Those telephone wires were still there the day the Lodge burned.

For the staff, it was a dry run of sorts as to what it would be like to have guests, granted these were no ordinary guests. **Bob Geller, Julie Paulk and Mark Evans** were the core team in the kitchen, and they catered the movie crew all over Highlands for the off-site filming. We saw the movie crew transform the Rec Hall and Dining Hall to film various scenes. The knots in the wires holding the lights that hung in the Dining Hall were there so the crew could adjust their height for different scenes and conditions. In the end, we got some much-needed improvements to our main public buildings. At this time, I also remember my parents ordering all the things we would need to furnish the

camp: bunk beds, chairs, kitchen equipment, the football table, etc. We ordered much of it from one firm, and I remember the day the eighteen-wheeler arrived. They got the truck to the back of the Craft Building, and then we transferred the materials to pickup trucks to carry it to the top. I got to ride up in the front bucket of a backhoe with the kitchen's brand new tilt-skillet grill. It was a crazy few months.

When summer arrived, things changed. We had real guests, adult workshops, our first youth campers. We were in business! I was excited to be in the first Senior High Camp that year. I think I was too young, but I did have connections after all! I seem to remember **Pam Phelps** telling me I should go to the camp for the 11-13 year olds later in the summer too, but by then I was already a member of the staff ... just like the days at SUUSJ.

That summer I was a regular utility infielder. I worked everywhere I was needed. **Pam Brooks, Evelyn Carter's** daughter, was one of my good friends, and we spent the summer running the camp store, helping in the kitchen, working on the maintenance team, etc. Even though I was only 13, I also spent a lot of time after work with the staff who took me in as one of them. Many evenings were spent listening to music, sitting on the tower, and just enjoying each other's company. **Betsy Arnold, Mark Evans, Julie Paulk** (age 16 first summer), **Janet Link, Ray Ennett, David Caudle, Lee Knight and Sally Gaines** (now Tidyman) treated me like one of the gang. We were all in this together. We were a tight-knit bunch that first summer as we all worked side-by-side to make **Mo and Larry's** dream, now the dream of many more people, a reality.

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Trustees and members committed to an intentional focus on **external constituencies**. In my report to the membership during our 1992 Annual Meeting I said, "we have much to be proud of, much to be thankful for and much more we can do. We have an opportunity to become an institution of relevance, a place not just for upper middle class UU's, but an institution that truly believes in the inherent worth and dignity of everyone by reaching out to peoples of all faiths, cultures and economic conditions. We can make a difference in many ways but we must be intentional about it. Will you join me on revisiting **The Mountain**?" The response was overwhelming. I remember it well as all 90 or so members in attendance spontaneously stood and applauded this "call to service."

The vision was clear—the action followed. During the last 9 years, \$2,000,000 of investments in major facilities improvements has dramatically increased accessibility and comfort for guests and staff alike. This has become a welcoming, safe place for gay and lesbian people who still find themselves on the battlefield of civil rights. Our outreach to underserved inner-city youth increased through the efforts of **Walt and Alicia Hodges**. They helped create a partnership with UUCA of Atlanta and Fowler and Hope Schools, resulting in weeklong environmental education camps at **The Mountain** for elementary children as part of their school curriculum. That initiative lasted 3 years—but it continues to guide and motivate us.

We are now partnering with a non-profit organization called Enviro-scope, bringing 400 to 500 private school youth here every year for 1- to 3-day programs of environmental studies. And just 2 months ago the "Enviro-scope Program at **The Mountain**" received notification from the State of North Carolina that it is considered a "certified environmental studies program." This certification will now allow public schools to also participate in Enviro-scope at **The Mountain**. Our vision is that within the next year or two over 1,000 youth will be participating in this program annually.

During the early 90's, **The Mountain** also sought with intentionality multi-faith and multi-cultural constituencies, encouraging participation in programs, conferences and retreats. In addition, we converted 30 UU leaders from all over the country to help us articulate a vision of **The Mountain** as a continental resource for Unitarian Universalism. Out of this "Visions '97" weekend came a new approach to thematic program development, focusing on spirituality, environmentalism, community building, diversity and leadership training. We now are "home" to more than 25 UU and 15 multi-faith congregations annually in an ever increasing commitment to our own and other faith traditions.

And in 1999 we hosted two African Drum & Dance weekends, an Anglican Catholic weeklong youth camp, and the International Indigenous Peoples Conference. The commitment to diversity, an external focus and traditional pro-

grams runs deep and continues to build upon our original vision as a gathering place.

As we end our first twenty years, our attention to **long-term sustainability** has become increasingly obvious. This began with the arrival of **Ian and Shelley Denham** in 1989, **Tom and Jane Warth** in 1990. In 1994 **Robert E. Smith** joined the staff and is now coordinator for volunteer services. Robert's wife **Susan** came in 1995 taking over the management of our highly successful Elderhostel program. **KJ Frelin** became Food Service Manager that same year, building upon the fine food reputation started by **Richard**. In 1995 **Neal Resch** joined the staff as Finance Director. With Neal in place, the accounting systems at **The Mountain** have advanced significantly positioning us to undertake the new initiatives with confidence. And the return to the staff of **Larry Wheeler** in 1997 and his wife **Nancy Heath** in 1998 bridge the early history with the current times. Nancy is instrumental in developing our adventure programming, and Larry, in large part, is responsible for the tremendous success we have experienced in the growth of development. All of these people are representative of staff making career and emotional commitments to **The Mountain**.

In 1997 we created The Mountain Endowment Fund and in 1998 dedicated the Memorial Scatter Garden. Further, in 1998 we embarked on a three year plan to complete the remodeling of all cabins and in 1999, we completed a total rebuilding of our tower. All of these—career staff, an endowment fund, a memorial garden and facility upgrades—are the actions through which we support our vision of sustainability.

Building upon this solid foundation of values, mission, staff competencies, program focus and facility improvements, we are eager to embrace the **new Millennium**. What lies ahead is exciting and transformative, internally and externally focused, positioning **The Mountain** to increase its capacity to be a major force for change in the world. With the purchase of the additional 12 acres (see related Cabbage Patch article) we envision a new entrance road to **The Mountain**, a welcoming center and centralized parking at the bottom or "base." This will allow us to limit the number of cars at the top or "summit." Our vision also includes two other new buildings at the base, an Intercultural Creative Arts Center and a Learning Center for Leadership. We also "see" the establishment of a residential community at the base, offering unique living units for staff, volunteers and retirees. It will be a diverse community built upon shared values, attracting life-long learners with a deep commitment to service. And the summit—new meeting spaces, an expanded/ upgraded dining room, and, with the removal of most cars, a "crossroads of many footpaths"—footpaths that will allow us to protect the fragile ecology while at the same time creating a sense of the spiritual and expanding the opportunities for us all to be truly "in community" with one another. Exciting

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PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS —

Winter 1999 - Summer 2000

Winter Skiing

Friday – Sunday

January 7 – 9

Monday – Wednesday

January 10 – 12

Bring family and friends for fun on the slopes and quiet evenings at **The Mountain**. Several ski areas are in easy driving distance for skiing and snow tubing. Great food, warm cabins, friendly people ... something for everyone!

Rejuvenation Weekend

Friday - Sunday, January 14 – 16

Join us for a winter rejuvenation retreat focused on developing your own personal vision and expressing your gift in the world. Experience drumming, storytelling, easy hikes, journaling, art, music and movement, and lots of community and relaxation ... **Mountain style**.

Dream Interpretation

Friday - Sunday, February 18 – 20

Explore recalling, recording and controlling dreams: interpretations of nightmares, recurrent dreams, and common dreams of falling and flying. Analyzing dreams can be fascinating and fun, and can expand our awareness.

African Drum and Dance

Wednesday - Sunday, March 15 – 19

Immerse yourself in the sights and sounds of African drumming and dancing. Drummers and dancers of all ages and abilities welcome! Optional arrival dates available.

MountainScape – Expanding Your Horizons

Sunday - Friday, March 26 – 31

This is the first of the new MountainScape programs. During this week, you'll begin on solid footing with natural history workshops, nature walks and field trips. Then, look above the horizon and discover the spectacular night sky. Lastly, stretching the bounds of everyday experiences, travel beyond the horizon into the world of magic.

NEW IN 2000

MountainScape ...

can be a weekend or a weeklong program for adults of all ages with a focus on learning through experiential activities. Programs include field trips, dynamic, expert faculty, workshops, hands-on activities and sense of peace and community.

Great Outdoor Recreation & Pleasure (GORP) ...

brings together young adults (ages 21-35) in a relaxed, mountain atmosphere offering outdoor recreation and community. Sign up for a Mountain-designed weekend or call with your own dates and adventure ideas.

MountainGORP (Great Outdoor Recreation & Pleasure)

Friday - Sunday, April 7 - 9

Young adults ages 21-35 are invited to partake in a new mountain recipe mixing community with our special blend of relaxation and adventure. Round up your friends, co-workers, young adult groups, and anyone else interested in a discounted weekend of fun. Activities include campfire, hiking and challenge by choice activities on the low and high ropes course.

Mother/Daughter Weekend Retreat

Friday - Sunday, April 28 - 30

Moms, spend a quality weekend away with your daughters, ages 11-18. Plans for the retreat include adventure activities that focus on communication and cooperation, sharing successes and challenges, and a workshop giving increased insight into the joys and challenges of mothering and daughtering. You will leave feeling renewed in relationship.

Adult Adventure

Thursday - Sunday, June 22 – 25

Kids away at camp? A long weekend of outdoor fun is planned for adults who wish they could go to camp, too! Campfires, hiking, lake play, and tubing down the river are just a few of the adventures planned. Adults of all ages invited. Two- and three-night options available.

Family Camp

Friday - Thursday, June 30 - July 6

Hike to a favorite swimmin' hole, white water raft, canoe the lake and celebrate the 4th of July with your family here at **The Mountain**. Fun and adventure for families of all ages and sizes.

Grandparents and Grandchildren Adventure Week

Sunday - Friday, July 16 - 21

A week for grandchildren, ages 8-12, and their grandparents to share quality time and create wonderful memories together. Share the sense of community found in a camp atmosphere with activities like crafts, hiking, lake play, campfires and more.

Youth Camp Plaque Update

Names are still being reviewed. The February issue of **The Mountain Matters** will list all former Youth Staff members.

PROGRAM CALENDAR – Winter 1999 / Spring 2000

Note: Programs in **bold print** are open to the public. Call
The Mountain Office for more information and a
detailed brochure – 828/526-5838

December

- 23-26 **Appalachian Christmas**
26-29 **Senior High Winter Break**
30-January 02 **Millennium on The Mountain (Full)**

January

- 07-09 FUGSE: Fall Ungathering Southeast Ed. (MENZA)
07-09 **Mountain Ski Weekend**
10-12 **Mountain Weekday Skiing**
14-16 **Rejuvenation Weekend**
21-23 **Junior High CON**
28-30 Northwest Atlanta UU Men's Retreat
28-30 **Death and Dying: A Spiritual Approach**
28-30 SUUSI Board Meeting

February

- 04-06 LiEAP! Asheville
11-14 UUMAN Retreat
18-20 Mountain Board Meeting
18-20 **Dream Interpretation**
18-21 Atlanta Knitters Retreat
25-27 **Senior High CON**

March

- 10-12 Northwest Atlanta UU Women's Retreat
12-17 **Elderhostel**
15-19 **African Drum and Dance Camp**
19-24 **Elderhostel**
26-31 **MountainScape - Expanding Your Horizons**
31-April 1 **Gay Spirit Vision**

2000 Mountain Calendars Make Great Gifts – NOW just \$10

The Mountain's 2000 Calendars are beautiful – 13 color pictures to remind you of this enchanting spot. The purchase price has been reduced to \$10! We're happy to help you play "Santa." Tell us who you want them sent to and we'll include a special greeting, listing your name and get them delivered by Christmas. Think about it – reasonable price, easy to mail, and a gift that will remind them of you and The Mountain every day of the year.

Order via the form on Page 9,
or call The Mountain's office.

Conference Center Space

The Mountain provides meeting space and program support for retreats, seminars, board meetings, family reunions and more! While some groups provide their own programming, The Mountain also offers a wide variety of workshops and outdoor adventure programming to match the interests and needs of your group. We can accommodate groups as large as 150 to as small as 10; audiovisual equipment is available. Meals (including vegetarian) are provided on-site.

Our new Program Calendar featuring in-depth descriptions of program offerings will be available shortly after the new year. These will be mailed to members with the February issue of *The Mountain Matters*. If you would like a copy mailed to you earlier, please call our office.

Director's Report – Continued from Page 4

visions backed up by realistic plans for action—The Mountain of the new Millennium will be a reality.

There you have it, a summation of 20 years of history and a brief look at the future. As I approach the completion of 10 years as Director, many people have asked me to share my own personal highlights. So I offer a few to you as I end this report, the last one for *The Mountain Matters* for this year and decade.

My first personal highlight would be the music—the opportunity to sing with Shelley, Ian and, of course, Jane, in The Mountain Quartet. We sing every Thursday night during the Elderhostel season; we do some 15 worship services and 20 concerts a year here and in UU congregations all over the southeast and mid-west. We sing for youth camps, leadership schools and ministers. And we have sung for weddings, anniversaries and memorial services. We sing music that Shelley has written or arranged especially for us. We sing music that's important to us and which also allows us the opportunity to share our values and our visions of a world transformed. As we often tell one another, "we are right out there with who we are"—it is risky ... and it feels good. We are reminded constantly of the power of music to move us and to transcend barriers, speaking to people of all ages, cultures, religions. Music is truly a highlight.

Secondly, I value deeply the encouragement I have received in support of the visions and actions I have initiated to grow and change this Mountain. This encouragement manifests itself in many ways: everyone whom I've asked to serve on a board, committee, or a planning group has answered "yes." Trustees and staff also have responded positively to proposed changes—changes that required much thought and deliberation, and sometimes, caused some pain. Members and donors also have contributed—over \$2,900,000 since 1990. All of these serve as positive affirmation of our visions and our actions.

Third, I am proud of the fact that The Mountain has become strong enough to launch the new organization, Milestone Learning Center. Through this remarkable initiative,

Thanksgiving Just Keeps Getting Better

Thanksgiving 1999 was another in our 21-year history of wonderful gatherings at this time of year. We had over 110 Life Patron and Visionholder Members, adults and youth, and **parents**, who made the best of a wet Thanksgiving Day. The entire weekend though was quite nice with a great lineup of activities, programs and making new friendships while renewing our old ones.

We were delighted to have **Dillman Sorrells** as our Minister. She serves the Rochester, Minnesota Church, but her ties to **The Mountain** go way back to her days in Clemson, South Carolina. Having Dillman and husband **Bob** (former Mountain Trustee) here was most meaningful.

We upheld the tradition of working on projects Thanksgiving morning. We gave back over 250 person-hours in a variety of tasks: cleaning out the REC Hall attic and closets, recycling a lot of paper in old files, cataloging and shelving new books in the Library, gifting inventories of office supplies and store merchandise, moving furniture in offices, and painting interior areas of the REC Hall and Emerson. When nicer weather came on Friday and Saturday, some of the postponed outdoor tasks were started and/or completed, including log splitting and construction on the Development Office.

The Auction was a resounding success. We were fortunate to have received some great items, many from Highlands businesses, plus some special gifts from former staff, current staff and a soon-to-be staff spouse. **Eileen Ross**, wife

of Retreat Center Director **Bob MacDicken**, offered the sale of 11 prints of one of her paintings. We also had an original **Nina Benedetto**, a painting from Meditation Rock looking out on Blue Valley. Other popular items included a gift basket of chocolates in Santa's sleigh, a gourmet food basket, gorgeous quilts, throws and blankets, lots of restaurant gift certificates, and even a week in a cabin in the Colorado Rockies, to name but a few. New staff member **Steve McMurray** displayed his carving artistry with "The Spirit of The Mountain," an old but wise man carved beautifully on an oak log. When our auctioneers, **Steve Phillips**, **Gerald Robinson**, and **Melanie Sullivan**, had sold it all, we had raised over \$10,500! Much credit for the auction success also goes to **Terry Beale** of Atlanta who wrote hundreds of letters to celebrities and companies asking for donations.

We also had several programs and activities to choose from, including the program on "The Mountain and the New Millennium," complete with a tour

of the Cabbage Patch. There were also 2 programs conducted by **Sarah Walls** and **Anne Mayher** from the Milestone staff, 2 on Generation X by **Linda Plummer**, and a musical concert by the Choir of our Board of Trustees, **John Rakestraw**.

When you add hikes, crafts, initiatives, a waterfall tour (after all the rain!), then you know we had a great time. However, we missed all of you who weren't with us and hope that you had a great Thanksgiving, too.



Vision Holder, Jack Lawrence, works in the Library.

we are able to respond to youth, young adults and other concerned people of many faiths and cultures who have a vision of a just, compassionate world, and want to work together to act upon that vision.

Perhaps the greatest highlight for me is the opportunity to lead an organization that "embraces the diversity of life, creating an environment to energize people to work for positive change." I feel so fortunate to be able to put my efforts into an institution of relevance that truly values and believes in "possibility." And I have developed meaningful relationships with many people whose perspectives on faith, culture, race, orientation and economic position have enriched my life. I have been privileged to become involved with those who are physically challenged, whose stories have changed my view of the world. I have witnessed the pain of those who have lost loved ones, and celebrated with others who

have accomplished things they never imagined themselves achieving. In my mind, there is no other place or organization that has such opportunities, that inspires true and meaningful relationship with one another. Every day since I started work here in 1990, I have grown personally and professionally and have received far more from this organization than I have given.

Vision with action can change the world—and that embodies **The Mountain**—history, present and future. To all of you who have contributed so much to our first twenty years, **thank you**. And to all of you who want to be a part of **The Mountain's** future, **welcome**.

How lucky we are—we have this **Mountain**, these visions, these actions: together, we will change the world!

Tom

gifts
since
last
issue

Our profound thanks to . . .

Fraser's Magnolia Vision Holders (\$50,000 - \$74,999)
Margaret Schilling, Greenville, SC

Rhododendron Vision Holders (\$20,000 - \$24,999)
Hildegard Gray & John Vacher, Atlanta, GA
Charlyn & David Jackson, Cincinnati, OH
The Parry Family, Seattle, WA

Mountain Laurel Vision Holders (\$15,000 - \$19,999)
Ann & Joe Creech, Roswell, GA

Flame Azalea Vision Holders (\$10,000 - \$14,999)
Emilia Bailes & Gerald Robinson, Dunwoody, GA
John Beck & Marian Kern, Prescott, AZ
Marty Beech, Tallahassee, FL
Jonathan Black, King of Prussia, PA
Marcia Bystrom, Muscle Shoals, AL
Larry & Juana Mae Long, Lawrenceville, GA

Patron Members (\$5,000 +)
Clint Betz & Georgeanne Hoegerman, Asheville, NC
Hi & Polly Cody, Black Mountain, NC
Jim Fason & Roger Weinstein, Atlanta, GA
Nancy Hall, Conway, SC
Avery & Rory Leiberson, Nashville, TN
Sarah Palmore, Tuscaloosa, AL
Bruce Hudson Parrish, Blainsville, GA

Life Members (\$1,600 - \$2,000)
Julia Araujo & Carl Erickson, Naples, FL
Wayne Amason & Kathleen Rolenz, Charlottesville, VA
Allan & Jean Brown, Lambertville, NJ
Harold Cole, Monticello, KY
Nancy & Tom DeLux, Charlotte, NC
Shelley DeLux, Charlotte, NC
Sandy Gaither, Amelia, OH
Mark & Sally Hamilton, Santa Barbara, CA
Julia Jamieson, Franklin, NC
Roberta Jordan, Asheville, NC
Jim Kelley & Bert Gese Kelley, Atlanta, GA
Kerry Keys, Largo, FL
Elizabeth Kloss, Tucker, GA
Bob MacDicken & Eileen Ross, Reston, VA
Bill Mareska & Susan Bloomfield, Augusta, GA
Joe Marshall, Chattanooga, TN
John & Pat McGiverin, Palm Harbor, FL
Sharon McMahan, Augusta, GA
Nancy McMullen-Palmberg, Asheville, NC
Dee Medley, Augusta, GA
Elaine & John Miller, Gainesville, FL
Hans Nirsch, Augusta, GA
Bruce Hudson Parrish, Blainsville, GA
Roy Reynolds & Jean Lamer, Atlanta, GA
Donna & Ernie Schmid, Winston-Salem, NC
Herman Schmid & Cindy Naylor, Winston-Salem, NC
Hilary Smith, Jackson Hole, WY

Joe Speidel & Pippa Purcell, Charlotte, NC
Margaret Tuck, Augusta, GA
Bob & Trudy Wendt, West Brandywine, PA
Sharon Zeno, Largo, FL

Memorial Memberships

Roberta Jordan, Asheville, NC
Juanita Ernst Polk, Brewed, NC

Remodeled Tower Donations (Gifts of \$250+)

Faith & Roger Comstock, Yarmouth, ME — \$500
Mary Ann Ely, Huntsville, AL — \$1,000
Carlton King & Joyce Fleming, Atlanta, GA — \$300
The Parry Family, Seattle, WA — \$20,000
Laura & RK Whitehead, Gainesville, GA — \$500

Parry Family Generosity

Many of you will remember that the original camp on this site was Camp Parrydise, which started in the 1920s. The owners at that time were **Judge and Maud Parry**. They eventually sold the property in 1957 to Ben Wax who established Camp Highlander.

Laird Parry, the grandson of the original owners has visited us in the past and has been on our mailing list. When the request for donations to pay for the remodeled tower was mailed, Laird called and said how pleased he was that we were remodeling "his grandparent's tower." We've always felt a special connection to the Parrys because they started it all. When Laird next asked if we'd allow his family to contribute to the Tower Fund we were more than pleased. The next day when he called back and said that after consultation with his mother and his siblings, they wanted to donate \$20,000, we were overwhelmed. We are honored to place a plaque on the remodeled Tower listing the Parry family members who have made this donation possible in honor of the original Parry family.

With their contribution, total donations for the Tower have exceeded \$32,000 which turns out to be the final cost of the effort. Thank you Laird and family and thank you all!

Don't forget our new Bank Draft Options

Members are starting to sign up for the Bank Draft option for their membership payments. It's painless to do and **The Mountain** will then deduct your monthly or quarterly payment from your designated account. Contact **Larry Wheeler** at Ext. 230 for more information.

End-of-the-Year Giving Planning

December 31, 1999 – Last Chance for Lower Life Member Rates

You have only a few days left to become a Life Member before the increase in rates effective January 1, 2000.

CURRENT (thru 12/31/1999)	NEW (1/1/2000)
One-Time Payment – \$1,600	\$2,000
Up to 5 years – \$2,000	\$2,500
Young Adult (18-35) – \$2,000	\$2,500
\$100/year – 4 years	\$100 – 4 years
\$200/year – 2 years	\$300 – 3 years
\$400/year – 3 years	\$400 – 3 years
Additional Life Membership (under 18)	
One-time payment – \$1,200	\$1,500
Up to 5 years – \$1,500	\$2,000

A Life Membership in **The Mountain** will make a great birthday or holiday gift. Do it NOW! Contact **Larry Wheeler** at Ext. 230.

General Giving

Please remember **The Mountain** as you prepare your end-of-the-year giving lists. You can help us with completing the purchase of the adjacent land, maintain our momentum on remodeling cabins, or just give to the general fund.

There are lots of ways to give:

- **Gifts of Cash** – a check or credit card
- **Gifts of Stock** – assuming the stock has grown in value you normally receive a twofold tax saving – avoid paying capital gains tax and you receive a deduction on the FULL market value of the stock at the time of the gift. Remember, however, you need to donate the stock to us and let us sell it.
- **Gifts of Real Estate** – Another way to avoid capital

gains tax and receive a tax deduction on the full fair market value of the property.

- **Life Income Gifts** – Think about a charitable remainder unitrust or a charitable remainder annuity trust. Both will provide you with an annual income while making a tax deductible contribution to us.

With any of the above you can donate directly to **The Mountain** or to The Mountain Endowment Fund. With the latter think about a codicil to your will to make a bequest and let us know that you have done it.

1999 can be the year that has truly solidified **The Mountain's** financial position with a strong end-of-the-year giving total. Please think about us. Contact **Larry Wheeler** at 828/526-5838, ext. 230 with any questions.

Cabbage Patch Update

All reading this should have received a mailing or personal contact about our opportunity to buy 12 adjacent acres of property, fondly known as the Cabbage Patch, because that is what is grown on this wonderful land. The property will greatly enhance our options for the future and you'll hear more about that soon. Right now, we need to complete the purchase.

Closing date is set for Wednesday, December 22, 1999.

 **We need \$400,000 in cash – to date, we have \$300,000.** 

Have you made your donation? If not, please call **Larry Wheeler** at 828/526-5838, ext. 230 soon and tell him what you can contribute. We are 75% of the way, we need you to put us over the top.

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

Apply my contribution to:

- ☐ 2000 Calendar
 ☐ Cabbage Patch Purchase
 ☐ Scholarship Fund
 ☐ General Fund
- ☐ \$50
 ☐ \$100
 ☐ \$250
 ☐ \$500
 ☐ \$750
 ☐ \$1,000
 ☐ \$5,000
 ☐ \$_____

Pay By: ☐ Check ☐ VISA/Master Card Card #: _____ Exp. Date: _____

Name: _____ Signature on Card: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: (day) _____ (evening) _____

February's *The Mountain Matters*

Look for the next edition of *The Mountain Matters* to learn about our new Retreat Center Director, **Bob MacDicken**. He and his wife **Eileen Ross** will be joining us December 17 and Bob will begin his new responsibilities January 1, 2000. In the next edition we will explain his new role as Retreat Center Director and hear from him about his background, reasons for coming here and his visions for **The Mountain**. It will be an article not to be missed.



Eileen Ross and Bob MacDicken

explain his new role as Retreat Center Director and hear from him about his background, reasons for coming here and his visions for **The Mountain**. It will be an article not to be missed.

Positions Available

Finance Associate – Cashier/Accounts Receivable

This position is responsible for:

- Processing all cash and cash equivalents incoming to The Mountain Retreat & Learning Center; preparing bank deposits and spreadsheets, and inputting and reconciling all guest registrations, and payment information to computer databases.
- Requires attention to detail, basic accounting knowledge, general PC skills and specific computer skills in: MicroSoft-EXCEL spreadsheets.

For more information call **Neal Resch** at 828/536-5838, ext. 204.

Development Associate – Administrative Support

This position is responsible for:

- Updating donor records in a computer database and in physical files; assembling information and display materials as required by the Development Director; and interfacing with guests as appropriate.
- Requires attention to detail and familiarity with basic computer skills.

For more information call **Larry Wheeler** at 828/526-5838, ext. 230.

THE MOUNTAIN RETREAT & LEARNING CENTER, INC.
P.O. Box 1299 • Highlands, NC 28741 • (828) 526-5838 • fax (828) 526-2511
e-mail: mountain@dmv.net • <http://themountain.us.org/mountain/>

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