



The Mountain Matters

THE MOUNTAIN RETREAT & LEARNING CENTER, INC.



June 1999



Tom's Report

In the early 20s, the Parry family from Georgia ran a girls camp here at **The Mountain**. For a number of years, the founder's grandson Laid Parry, spent his summers here while his parents worked in the camp. Laid returned to **The Mountain** a few years ago, drove up our winding road, and when he reached the top, jumped out of the car, approached the first staff person he could find and said, "I can't believe how wide and straight the road is!"

How wide and straight the road is — a matter of perception. But as I experienced our most memorable Memorial weekend this year, our 20th Anniversary year, we honored former leaders, celebrated our history (thanks to Larry for a wonderful 20-year history program) and welcomed new Trustees, Directors, staff

and members. Often I was struck by how **wide** (our commitment to embracing diversity and our far reaching programs) and **straight** (our deep commitment to our values and our clarity around our visions) **The Mountain** road is — made that way by literally hundreds of people who have contributed their time, talents, and money to this undertaking these past 20 years.



Left to right: Jean Findley, Ivan Louis Gotman, Tom Warth, John Lantz, Melanie Sullivan, John Bohstedt, Jeannette Manning, Ed Mangalico, Jeri Moulder, James Fason, Claire Keane, John Rakestraw, Gretchen Bremer-Hosken, Lanie Damon

What a wonderful legacy we have already begun. Let me share some highlights of the weekend:

Board of Trustees: The membership elected new Board Trustees, **Lanie Damon** from Atlanta, Georgia, and re-elected **John Rakestraw** from Nashville, Tennessee. The board

also appointed **Jean Findley** and **Jim Fason**, both from Atlanta,

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Memorial Day Weekend Highlights

With flame azalea, mountain laurel and rhododendron in bloom, clear blue skies and pleasant temperatures, 150 friendly people gathered for Memorial Day Weekend at **The Mountain**. And what a weekend it was — it was great fun! Especially memorable was a 20-year history recreated from the point of view of former Trustees, Treasurers/Financial Advisors, and Directors. The two-hour program was videotaped and will be available for future viewing. Memories of **The Mountain's** founding and early years were presented on behalf of the first Treasurers, **Jim & Wendie Highsmith**, now living in Utah. **Sue Folk** read a recent letter from Jim & Wendie in which they remembered standing on Meditation Rock in 1979 with the SUUSI Board as the group decided to put down \$5,000 in earnest money to buy the Little Sealy property. They said, "It was the proverbial 'leap of faith' to think we could actually raise enough money to buy **The Mountain**, but everyone there shared a vision of the possible." And the vision has continued all these years. **Tom Warth** completed the program by describing his 9 years as Director, bringing us all up to the present time. During

the Annual Meeting, he helped us focus on the work still needing to be done and the exciting possibilities for **The Mountain's** future. The Milestone Learning Center Board of Advisors presented a closing vesper service at the end of the Annual Meeting.

On Sunday morning a touching and memorable service recognizing members, friends and family who died in the past year was presented in the Memorial Garden. With its commemorative plaques and welcoming benches, The Memorial Garden is truly a sacred place to renew the soul. (See "Memorial Garden" article on Page 7.)

The Sunday Worship Service was conducted by Milestone Advisor and former Mountain Trustee, **Tony Springer** and **The Mountain Quartet**. It was a powerful service and one that soon will be printed and available for limited distribution. The sermon, entitled "The Mountain We Have Made," readings and music brought out strong feelings and emotions for many.

Add to all of the above, experiences on the new Challenge Course, a great picnic at the Craft Barn, three chamber music concerts, wonderful food and companionship, and you've got one terrific weekend. Make plans now to join us next year!



the mountain

20 YEARS OF COMMUNITY

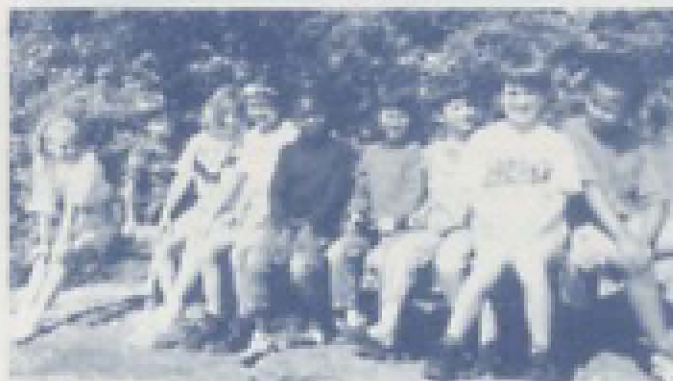
How appropriate that *The Mountain Matters* 1999 summer edition continues 20 years of Youth Communities! This issue will reach you at just about the same time that our Junior High youth arrive for their camp session. Throughout the history of **The Mountain**, founded primarily for the purpose of providing camps for children, youth programs have literally changed lives. Here, children have explored their roots – respect, dignity, compassion, equity, justice, worth, responsibility, interdependence with the earth. And they have tested their wings – identity, community, relationships, service, spirituality. Year after year, we have heard from parents a tender, grateful theme: “S/he came home a different person . . . wiser, kinder, more confident.” From children – many of whom have grown up to be counselors and leaders themselves – “This is where I find out who I am . . . where I remember who I am . . . where I see the world as it can and should be.”

Yes, **The Mountain** Youth Programs have enriched many lives in these 20 years of Community. Consistently, a dynamic approach has allowed the steady evolution of offerings. Finding ways to improve existing quality programs, adding new ones to an already impressive variety – this is the driving philosophy, inspired by the desire to serve youth. The progression is exciting: ASCENDERS, Beginning Camp, Counselors in Training, CONS, PALs (Peer Advocate Leaders), PAL mentors, Senior High Leadership School for Social Justice, Work and Adventure . . . and the list goes on. Elements of community service, conflict management, leadership development, diversity, worship, music, ethics and justice activism all add depth and breadth to the adventures, experiential learning, and just plain knee-slapping fun.

Youth Programs require careful planning and enormous energy to implement. There are “big picture” goals to achieve on

behalf of participants, and also minute details such as how many lunches go in a cooler today. There are tremendous physical safety issues as children ride in our vans, raft in whitewater, and traverse high ropes; and there are the subtle applications of word and deed that assure emotional safety. Working with youth is complex and demanding, and it is with deep gratitude that **The Mountain** acknowledges the hundreds of people who have contributed to the lives of thousands of children throughout the years. Long hours, little pay, constant vigilance, exhausting activities, on-call day and night . . . these are the realities of youth programming for staff. Yet, year after year, countless people of all ages and backgrounds have joyfully contributed their time and energy to create magical, unforgettable experiences for our youth. Each and every person has played a vital role . . . not just directors and leaders, but all the counselors, ministers, outside faculty, year-round staff . . . the list would fill volumes – and would surely be incomplete. So we’re asking for your help in creating a Youth Programs History Wall (unveiling in the Tree House on Labor Day Weekend).

If you or someone you know ever worked in ANY youth program on **The Mountain**, please give us names, program and the year(s) of service – call or e-mail **Jill Allison** (Ext. 262) – and join us for the unveiling of the Wall.



*Mike Streppa's involvement with **The Mountain** spans over 13 years. Today a Clinical Psychologist in Morganton, North Carolina, he and wife, Mel, still come for staff; most recently to serve as advisors for a Youth CON.*

I first came to **The Mountain** in the early 1980s. The opportunity to visit my cousin **Brian Wheeler**, Aunt Mo and Uncle **Larry** notwithstanding, a week in the mountains at an Adventure Camp seemed sufficiently alluring to this high school kid from Upstate New York to make the journey very appealing. I remember the anticipation of a chance to participate in some of the high adventure activities to which my cousin Brian was so quickly becoming expert. Thanks to **Jake Haun III**, **Shane Benedict**, and Brian, I found plenty of excitement in backpacking and swimming in Tallulah Gorge, rafting the Chattooga, hiking Whiteside, and swimming in plenty of waterfalls. But amidst all the adventure came something unexpected, newfound friendships, community, synergy, belonging, acceptance. Little did I know at the time that these were the seeds that would take root to bring me back years later.

After living abroad on and off for approximately three years after graduating from college, I returned to the US with an eye for perspective, purpose, and clarity. I quickly found myself in the

midst of a country of quick fixes; a take-a-pill, drive-through, hurry-up-and-wait, traffic-jammed, push-a-button-to-get-what-you-want-NOW society. Surely life wasn't destined to be this shallow! So prior to starting work on my doctorate in clinical psychology, I returned to **The Mountain** in the summer of 1991, looking for more than just another Adventure Camp. Slow down, step back, refocus . . . then grow in a new direction.

I found in **The Mountain** a place lacking in many of the so-called "modern conveniences" of America in the '90s, but rich in what, to me, had become more important. I found "Unity in Diversity," community, intentional living, purpose, focus, acceptance, spirit. Yes, I found all the cool stuff, too. Thanks to **Paul Allen, Bill Moore, Ken Kortemeier, Jack Slate, Susanne Whitehead (Walker), Andy Harris, Karyn Machler, and Rene Cline**, I learned the ins and outs of white-water rafting, trip planning, Initiative Games, wilderness safety, programming and all the excitement that accompanied my new "I can't believe I'm getting paid for this" feeling. How novel a concept: love what you do, do what you love. And this was only the beginning.

My growing connection to this place and to these people became the kind of life changing experience I had been yearning for. I returned to **The Mountain** the following summer to co-lead the Ascender program with **Lori Westphal**. Working with this special group of people gave me the opportunity to both give back much of what **The Mountain** and its staff had given me the year before, as well as to push the growing edges of my own life's journey. This remarkable group of young adults reaffirmed my belief in the power of the human spirit, of synergy, acceptance, intentional community and the unity of diversity.

I keep coming back to **The Mountain** because, every time I do, I am welcomed to special homecoming – to open arms, the warmth of a heartfelt hug (Gramma was right about hugs), and the familiarity of never having been away. Slow down, step back, refocus, re-charge . . . then grow in a new direction.

To all of **The Mountain** staff – past and present – with whom I have had the honor of sharing such a wonderful and important journey, thank you.

Karen Kleiber served as Youth Programs Director during 1997-98. Today she is a graduate student at American University, working toward a degree of English as a second language. She now visits with her parents for the Christmas holidays.

I first went to Youth Camp when I was nine, which must have been 1982. I remember the cabins, and can trace my cabin mates and counselors across the years. From that first summer, **The Mountain** became a place where I became more myself. Growing up outside of New York City, I remember my wish to be cool: to wear Guess jeans, to have more spending money than I was given, and to act older than my years. Last night during a phone conversation, my parents reminded me that **The Mountain**

always gave a break from my peers at home, an opportunity to be myself, and needed perspective on what it was to be "cool." What a relief it must have been to my parents when I returned home happy, rejuvenated, and with a sense of self that freed me from many of the current trends. It wasn't just that **The Mountain** espoused the "right" values, or that I was explicitly taught that I didn't need designer jeans, it was the community and the love and acceptance that it fostered. For those two to four weeks of camp, I became part of a community, in which I was welcomed, and where I learned to place importance on communication and relationships rather than on designer jeans.

I carry that self-confidence and self-acceptance with me to this day. The skills I learned at **The Mountain** as a camper, counselor, mentor, and camp director, have prepared me well for being a teacher. The love and support that I was given are naturally passed on to the K through 5th graders with whom I currently work. Like **Susanne Walker** (featured in April '99 issue of **Mountain Matters**), I look forward to bringing my own children to **The Mountain** for camp and to having them experience the community which I know is alive and well in Youth Camp.



Former Mountain Board Trustees

All were present at the Memorial Day Weekend Celebration. Back Row, l to r: Jake Haas, Lewis Walker, Randy Whit, Paul Clapp, Roger Comelock

Middle Row, l to r: MaryAnn Ely, Sonya Prestbridge, Carole Light, Margaret Evans, Rene Donelson, Margit Nash, Sue Male, Judy Bonner

Front Row, l to r: Walt Piro, Harry Donelson

Are you going to SUUSI?

Well, **The Mountain** is, too. Larry Wheeler will be there for the week with a Mountain display board, literature and videos – look for him during registration on Sunday and a special Mountain reception on Thursday at 7:00 p.m. Bring your Mountain t-shirt and wear it on Thursday. At the reception, there will be dessert and drinks and a chance to talk with Larry about where **The Mountain** is and where it's going.

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Georgia and **Ivan Louis Gotman** from Detroit, Michigan to new Trustee positions. Based upon strong positive voter support, all four Bylaw changes proposed by the Board of Trustees were adopted. The board, during their meetings, dealt with budget issues, new program initiatives, a revision of the employee personnel handbook and assigned Trustee portfolios for the 1999-2000 operating year.

The weekend was significantly influenced by the simultaneous meetings of the Endowment and Milestone Boards. All three groups took energy from each other and could see how their work impacts and is enhanced by the work of the other boards. I believe that this will become an exciting part of every Memorial weekend in the future – all three boards together doing the work of **The Mountain**. Please read the related articles on Endowment (Page 7) and Milestone (below).

For many, the highlight of the weekend was Sunday's worship service led by former Trustee and current Milestone Advisor, **Tony Stringer**. He weaved words and music together as he talked about "his seven Mountains." As mentioned in another article in this *The Mountain Matters*, Tony's service will be available in limited editions for future reference. I'd like to share some

of his words in my article. From Tony: "Sit on Meditation Rock and you will know with the same certainty that I know that this place *touches the human spirit*. **The Mountain** is home to good people . . . **The Mountain** is *community* . . . Let us not forget the *fragility* of this portion of the earth that we purchased. Such trees are anchored and nourished by a thin wafer of soil. A misplaced step, a mere footfall may start their demise. Let us not forget the *fragility* . . . **Unity and inclusiveness**, two words that characterize **The Mountain** community remarkably well. I have seen us emerge time and again from such challenges with much to be proud of . . . We have the right stuff. We have the *stuff to change the world*. This is less a place to retreat to, than a place to advance from. Less a place to flee to than a place to charge from. **The Mountain** does not harbor, it launches . . . This is the place where *memories* are entrusted . . . And finally, we share a Mountain of *dreams* . . . There are many mountains still to come. Come and dream with me." Thank you, Tony!!

A most inspiring weekend – a weekend of recognition, celebration, hard work and lots of fun, and of dreams and commitment. **The Mountain** is alive and well. Come on up this summer and be a part of it all.

Tom

Milestone Board Highlights

They arrived from all across the United States. Some had been involved with **The Mountain Retreat & Learning Center** for years; others had never set foot on this site. From many backgrounds and experiences, the members of the Milestone Board of Advisors met at **The Mountain** to participate in a series of intense meetings throughout Memorial Weekend. The 20th Anniversary History celebration and MR&LC Annual Meeting further enriched the time that Advisors spent with one another.

Perhaps most remarkable was the willingness of Milestone Advisors and staff to become so quickly immersed in difficult conversations about challenging issues. Old and young (and in between!), black and white, Christian, Jewish, Unitarian Universalist and non-affiliated, educators, labor organizers, clergy, consultants, psychologists . . . all transcended potential barriers of culture, class and creed in order to continue to craft the vision of Milestone into reality. Even the most uncomfortable topics were approached with courage, respect and humor. In a metaphor for the concept of Milestone itself, these individuals took the risk of trusting one another's intentions and became a working, collaborative community drawn by the possibility of positive change. Having arrived Friday from

separate places and traditions, they left Monday with a clear vision of their role, plans for continuing communications with each other and staff, and an understanding of the next steps in the growth and impact of Milestone Learning Center.

The weekend also represented a transition in the lives of two Milestone staff. **Brian Horvitz**, who worked both on grant writing and on the MR&LC web page for the past year, said farewell to Advisors, Trustees and Mountain members. He will begin doctoral studies at Indiana University in the fall, pursuing his abiding interest in education and technology.

And it is with delight that Milestone welcomes **Anne Mayher**, who just completed a Master of International and Intercultural Management at the School for International Training in Vermont. Anne's primary role will be the coordination of LEAP (Leadership Ethical Action Project), and the skill sets needed to develop this complex program seem to have been defined with Anne's resume in



Left to right: Joe Creech, Alex Rodmountain, Shelley Denham, Brian Horvitz, Tony Stringer, Ron Lambé, Kathy Schstedt, Jewel Gosham, Joe Chulak, Alexa Adams, Carl Clements, David Jackson, Sarah Walls, Anne Mayher, Tom Russell, Brittany Boden

hand!

Please look for the Milestone insert in the next *Mountain Matters*. If you have questions about Milestone, please call Sarah Walls (Ext. 241), Anne Mayher (Ext. 238) or Shelley Denham (Ext. 224).

Labor Day Weekend to Mark Official 20th Anniversary

Plan to be a part of the official 20th Anniversary Celebration, Labor Day Weekend, September 3-6. While **The Mountain** property was not officially purchased until October 15, 1979, we're following the tradition established for the 10th Anniversary by celebrating it Labor Day Weekend.

Everyone is invited at our regular rates; however, we particularly want to encourage former staff members of all kinds – year-round, summer, camp, Ascenders – to come back for a reunion. Special rates have been established for you – no charge for housing! You'll pay only for meals and a modest programming charge. For a 3 night/9 meal package, the charge will be \$95, and for a 2 night/6 meal package, it will be \$65. We're also happy to provide scholarship support for those who need it. We want all of you to be here. A formal mailing is being sent to all former staff that we can locate, but please help pass the word. You can

call the Office at (828) 526-5838 or look up Labor Day on our Web Page – <http://themountain.usa.org/mountain/> – or write us. Let's fill the place for this special weekend.

Plans include: **Lee Knight** – his music, stories and memories; former staff member, the **Rev. Dan King** doing the Sunday service; **The Rev. Amy McKenzie Quinn** doing evening vespers Friday, Saturday and Sunday (she's from Tallahassee and that church will be here for a retreat); camp fire singing camp songs; a 20-year **Mountain** history from a staff perspective; Saturday at the bottom of **The Mountain** – Field Day events, Challenge Course, and a BBQ lunch; Saturday night banquet; The Mountain Quartet Sunday evening; 20th Anniversary t-shirts for all who attend the weekend; AND a few surprises . . .

Sign up early and be guaranteed a place for this fun weekend!

Stretch Your Limits

In 1999, The Mountain Challenge Course was expanded; we almost doubled the number of low course elements and built a new high challenge course on telephone poles, 30-40 feet off the ground. The high course is unique in that it consists of tandem elements, which allow two people to work together toward success.

Challenge Course programs are one of the fastest growing and most popular team building tools offered today. These programs present unique adventure experiences in natural settings designed to develop interpersonal skills. Activities utilize a network of ropes, beams, cables, swings, pulleys, and initiative games to enable participants to visualize the strengths and weaknesses of their group. This insight creates a more effective way of getting the job done. It also serves as a constructive forum where friendships are enhanced, and co-workers, family, and friends can learn more about themselves and each other.



If you are part of a group coming to **The Mountain**, consider utilizing the challenge course. It will offer your group a chance to "learn by doing" in a setting and situation different from a classroom, church or work place. People of all ages, shapes and sizes will find the activity a rewarding, growth experience. **The Mountain** staff will specifically design each group's experience to meet the distinct needs of the group. We will provide your group challenging, safe opportunities for building confidence, communication and self-respect.

A new volunteer opportunity to consider is becoming a challenge course facilitator. If you are interested, please contact Jill Allison, Ext. 259.

Mother - Daughter Retreat Weekend

Join us at **The Mountain** for this special weekend retreat September 17 - 19, 1999. It's a time for daughters (ages 11-18) and mothers to experience adventure and create meaning in their relationship. We will explore communication and strengthen cooperation through outdoor adventure. Crafts and journal writing will allow us to share stories and reflect on mother-daughter relationships, getting to know each other even better. You will leave the weekend feeling renewed and stronger in relationship. Contact Jenny Stein at Ext. 263.

MILLENNIUM on The Mountain

— Building Communities for the 21st Century —

People all over the world are looking for unique locations in which to spend the final days of the past thousand years as they flow into the first day of the new Millennium. Although it may be tempting to "tune out" at the mere mention of the word, it is worth remembering that this is an incredible time to be alive — to experience a passage of time that relatively few have witnessed in the entire history of humanity.

The Mountain is honored to offer a program of celebration and reflection that befits the welcoming of a new millennium. In an unusual tapestry, the theme of "Building Communities for the 21st Century" will be woven together by multiple workshops. Integrating body, mind and spirit, this is an opportunity to reconnect to our UU faith and articulate — physically, mentally and emotionally — its potential to transform the world of the future.

The Program

A distinguished faculty of experts, passionate about contributing to positive

change, will lead us through interactive learning events. Dance workshops will tap into ancient rhythms that societal norms tend to anesthetize. Music, with its power to move and inspire — and its relation to that inherent rhythm — will be offered in a variety of contexts to allow creative participatory and listening experiences. Change can only happen through activism, and there will be workshops offering tools and skills that illuminate how each and every one of us can make a difference. We'll also take a guided tour in search of the mysteries of the universe that lurk among the stars — no Millennium program would be complete without a focus on astronomy.

Please accept our invitation to join us for this once in a lifetime — once in a Millennium — event!

The Faculty

The Rev. Tom Chulak — UU Congregation of the Palisades, Englewood, NJ
Robin Becker — renowned dancer/choreographer, formerly with the Martha

Graham Dance Company and now on the faculty of Hofstra University

Mary Elizabeth Knysh — musician and educator who incorporates a broad range of ethnic music traditions

Monroe Gilmore — Community Organizer and founder of Western North Carolina Citizens for an End to Institutional Pigory

Gene Byrd — Professor of Astronomy at the University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa

Shelley Jackson Denham — UU Composer and Director of Milestone Learning Center

Register soon! Cost of the program package (Thursday, Dec. 30, 1999 — Sunday, Jan. 2, 2000) is based upon housing preferences and ranges from \$140-\$280 for Life Members and \$240-\$350 for non-members. Advance registrations only, no package "breakouts." For more information, call **The Mountain** at 828-526-5838 or e-mail mountain@duet.net.

Meet the Program Team



Left to right, Mike and Jenny Stein, Susan Smith, Jill Allison, Gillian Denham and Nancy Heath

The Program Team is YOUR key to a quality guest experience. This team's focus is the design and implementation of intergenerational programs, congregational retreats, conference center groups, Elderhostel, youth programs and adventure programming.

Jill Allison — Team Leader, Mountain design programs (MDP)

Gillian Denham — 1999 MountainCamp Director

Nancy Heath — Congregational retreats, conference center groups, adventure programming, MDP

Susan Smith — Elderhostel, RE Week, MDP

Jenny Stein — Enviro-Scope, conference center groups, MDP

Mike Stein — MountainCamp, CONs, MDP for youth

Jenny and Mike Stein are the newest members of the program team. They come to us from Charlotte, North Carolina and bring a wealth of program experience from the Vermont State Parks, the YMCA organization and various outdoor education programs.

REFUEL Begins Again in August

Do you know of a young person (18 and older) who doesn't have plans for the fall?

Encourage them to consider REFUEL, an alternative education program at **The Mountain Retreat and Learning Center**, where students learn to express their unique voices, find direction and increase their social awareness. Students in past classes have left the program feeling excited and energized about their goals and potential to impact their communities. Many folks do not easily fit into traditional settings and REFUEL is a positive alternative path. Help support young people in your community as they struggle to make their way into adulthood. Applications for the fall class (August 29 — December 18) are currently being accepted and scholarships are available. For more information, call **Sarah Walls** at Ext. 241.

Leadership Training Fund Honors Roger Comstock

At the Thomas Jefferson District Meeting, in Williamsburg, Virginia in early April, the District gathered to recognize District Executive, **Roger Comstock**, on the occasion of his retirement.

As part of the Saturday evening program, Mountain Development Director, **Larry Wheeler**, spoke of his long relationship with Roger, especially as related to SUUSI and the beginning days of **The Mountain**. Roger was the President of the SUUSI Board when **The Mountain** began, and served as **The Mountain's** first Board President, from 1979-1984.

Executive Director, **Tom Warth**, then announced that in honor of Roger's years of service to **The Mountain** and particularly his dedication to leadership training, a **Leadership Training Fund** is being established in his name at **The Mountain**. It will be used to assist in expanding the variety and levels of training and to ensure that scholarship funds are available.

To contribute to this fund, please fill out the form on Page 9 and return to us along with your check.

Endowment Board Conducts Annual Meeting

The Endowment Board met on Sunday, May 30 at 1:30 p.m.

This was a significant meeting for the Endowment Fund. The Directors decided, in order to be more effective, to increase the number of Directors from 6 to a maximum of 12, and the length of terms from 2 to 3 years. The following decisions came out of the meeting:

New Directors were elected: **Harry Donavon**, **Carole Light**, **June Sholin**, and **John Vacher**.

New officers were elected: **Dan Boyce**, President; **Bob Whitney**, Vice-President; **Ann Creech**, Corporate Secretary.

Appointments were made: **Jeanette Manning**, Recording Secretary, **Neal Resch**, Treasurer, and **Robert E. Smith**, Staff Liaison.

Jeri Moulder continues as the Board of Trustees representative for 1999-00.

The need for more than one meeting a year was discussed with agreement reached to meet Monday, November 8, 1999, following the fall meeting of the MRA&C Trustees. Both the Endowment Investment Strategy and Recognition Program were discussed and will be finalized at the next meeting.

Many, many thanks are due to former officers and members:

Bill Pulgram has served as the first President, and we thank

him for his leadership in getting the Endowment Fund off to a great start.

Thanks also to **Dan Boyce**, Vice-President for 1997-99, and **Lewis Walker**, who served a one-year term, 1997-98.

The service of both was instrumental in the first years of the Endowment.

A very special "Thank You" to **Claire Keane**, who served as Recording Secretary for 1997-99.

Finally, the most important thing for each of us to consider is putting **The Mountain** Endowment in our wills and to let **The Mountain** know about it. Join the 28 other members who have included The Endowment Fund in their estate planning. Contact **Robert E. Smith** (Ext. 227) for additional information.

Memorial Garden

Our Memorial Garden is now complete! The 1999 Memorial Service was conducted in the Garden on Sunday morning, May 30. Those assembled honored nine deceased members who had not been previously eulogized in our annual service of remembrance. They are: **Martha Burns**, Tulsa, Oklahoma, January 1998; **Lee Mitchell**, Columbia, South Carolina, March 1998; **Mel Herland**, Asheville, North Carolina, June, 1998; **Wink Lucas**, Richmond, Virginia, June, 1998; **Jim Hooper**, Cocoa, Florida, August 1998; **Jo Rayner**, Black Mountain, North Carolina, August 1998; **Betty Talley**, Blacksburg, Virginia, October 1998; **Webb Howard**, Ormond Beach, Florida, December '98; and **Howard Booser**, Hendersonville, North Carolina, March 1999. Memorial Life Members were also honored with an individual Memorial Tile mounted to the railing.

Thanks to the continuing generosity of **Myrtle Lockwood**, in honor of her late husband, **Art**, and the work of many volunteers, we have completed the main elements of the Garden. It is a truly beautiful location, close to the top, but in a very quiet and secluded area. It will be a place of contemplation and reflection. We have planned for the future by creating a Memorial Garden Fund into which service fees and donations will be placed. Plans for the Garden include adding to the stone steps and walkways, planting more native flowering shrubs, and preserving the wood presentation wall.

Memorial Services can be conducted in the Garden, weather permitting. Memorial Life Memberships are \$1,500, which provides for the Service, a plaque in the Garden and an inscription on the Memorial Life Member Board in the Dining Hall. Ashes may be scattered without a marker. Mountain members and staff wishing to conduct their own service may do so for a nominal fee of \$50.

For additional information about the Memorial Garden, service arrangements or making donations, please contact **Robert E. Smith** via e-mail or at Ext. 227.

gifts
since
last
issue

Our profound thanks to . . .

White Oak Vision Holder (\$35,000 - \$49,999)

Harry & Rene Donovan, McKinney, TX
Margaret Schilling, Greenville, SC

Chinquapin Vision Holder (\$25,000 - \$34,999)

Anonymous Family

Flame Azalea Vision Holders (\$10,000 - \$14,999)

Jack & Mary Ann Lawrence, Whispering Pines, NC
Sonya Prestridge & Arvid Straube, Graham, NC
Henry & Virginia Sayles, Black Mountain, NC
John & Ruth Tori, West Palm Beach, FL
Jim & Joan Wamsley, Alexandria, VA

Patron Members (\$5,000+)

James & Pam Leavy, St. Petersburg, FL
Margrit Nash, Decatur, GA
Alice Noggle, Oak Ridge, TN
Dorothy & Richard Wertzler, Highlands, NC

Life Members (\$1,600 - \$2,000)

Afesa Adams, Jacksonville, FL
Jack & Midge Bronson, Berard, NC
Barbara & Ed Butenhof, Hendersonville, NC
Ivan & Jeanetta Gotman, Detroit, MI
Wayne Duckworth, Winston-Salem, NC
Jim Fason, Atlanta, GA
Daisy & Tom Fowler, Lewisville, NC
Harold & Shirley Goodman, Winston-Salem, NC
Gloria & Ignacy Kuczminski, Charlotte, NC
Kay Ohanneson, Evans, GA
Krissa Palmer & Michael Licht, Charlotte, NC
Lillian Vignieri, Duluth, GA
R. K. & Laura Whitehead, Braselton, GA

In Memoriam

Howard Boozer, Hendersonville, NC
Webb Howard, Ormond Beach, FL
Ray Hyde, Ft. Lauderdale, FL

Mountain Information System (Gifts of \$250+)

Jeanette Manning & Jim Sullivan, Charlotte, NC - \$600
Jeri Moulder, Santa Barbara, CA - \$300
Bob & Sue Whitney, Decatur, GA - \$1,000

Bottom of The Mountain (Gifts of \$250+)

Merrill & Virginia Parker Dillon, Athens, GA - \$500
Alice Noggle, Oak Ridge, TN - \$400
Alice & Charles Schneider, Cincinnati, OH - \$250
Bob & Sue Whitney, Decatur, GA - \$1,000

Scholarship Fund (Gifts of \$250+)

Bill Cherry, Decatur, GA - \$385
Robert & Susan Highfield, Quarryville, PA - \$385
Jack & Mary Ann Lawrence, Whispering Pines, NC - \$1,000
Joan Lorch & Peter Staple, Williamsville, NY - \$385

Barbara & Jeff Walls, Somerville, NJ - \$500

Bob & Trudy Wends, West Brandywine, PA - \$385

Special Gifts / General Fund

Gene & Kathy Byrd, Tuscaloosa, AL - A/V Equipment - \$250
Hildegard Gray & John Vacher, Atlanta, GA - \$1,100
Charles & Sarah Hertwig, Jr., Macon, GA - \$250
Priscilla & Steve Phillips, Six Mile, SC - Multimedia PC
Margaret Schilling, Greenville, SC - \$500
Robert E. & Susan Smith, Highlands, NC - Pentium network computer
Bob & Sue Whitney, Decatur, GA - \$1,000

Thank you for the additional short-term loans to help us maintain the momentum . . .

Connie & Ed Wilde, Gaffney, SC

Merlin Wagner, Gainesville, FL

Peggy Beard, Decatur, GA

Doug & Ouida Hotch, Sky Valley, GA (#3)

Lilo Strauss, Atlanta, GA

These loans have made a huge difference in our ability to manage cash flow, continue construction projects, and to minimize borrowing from the bank. We're starting to pay back or renew (for one year) the first loans. We believe this is the best way to handle borrowing. If you're interested in a loan for one to five years at 5.5% - 6.5% interest, contact Larry Wheeler at Ext. 230.

Life Member Rates to Increase January 1

In 1981, once the Charter Life Member campaign had ended, **The Mountain** increased the Life Member one-time payment rates to \$1,600 or \$2,000 payable over a period of up to five years. Those rates have not changed in almost 19 years. They will be increased effective January 1, 2000 to:

One-time	\$2,000
Up to 5 years	\$2,500
Young Adults (18-35)	\$2,500 (10-year plan)
	\$150/year - 4 years
	\$300/year - 3 years
	\$400/year - 3 years

Additional Life Memberships may be purchased for youths under 18 with a \$1,500 one-time payment or \$2,000 payable over five years.

Why do we tell you this now? We want you to have six months to think about buying Life Memberships at the current rates, saving yourself some money AND helping **The Mountain** by gaining the commitment and cash now. Questions? Contact Larry Wheeler at Ext. 230.

20th Year Commemorative Key Chains go to Life Members

All Life Members who visit **The Mountain** in 1999 will receive special commemorative key chains which show under the logo, "20 years of community - 1979-1999." When you're next at **The Mountain**, see Larry, Robert E. or Bruce to obtain yours.

Heritage Hall Completed

Recent guests raved about the new look to Heritage Hall - carpeting on the walls as a mounting place for pictures and writings about our history and covered with Plexiglas. Soon, spotlights will be added to enhance the viewing of these displays that start with the natural history and go through today. There also are sections for the Endowment Fund, Volunteers, and one where we will rotate stories about people who are either a part of **The Mountain** or who we meet in our travels. Come and see what Heritage Hall looks like!

Bank Drafts Now Available for Membership Pledges

We now are able to offer those members and donors who pledge over a period of time, automatic bank draft withdrawals which will enable us to withdraw from their accounts per a pre-arranged schedule (usually monthly or quarterly). If you want to be a part of this program, contact **Larry Wheeler** at Ext. 230 or via e-mail, attn: Larry. We believe that this program will make it easier for both the donor and **The Mountain**.

New Development Assistant

Pat Gragey has been working with Larry as a volunteer for almost two years. She has not been feeling well the last several months and has decided to step down from that position. She'll still be available to help on projects, but Larry has hired **Bruce Parrish** as a part-time Assistant to replace her. Bruce previously worked in the kitchen at **The Mountain** during the summer of 1997. He is retired from government positions with the State of Georgia, and currently serves on the Board of Young Harris College. Welcome Bruce on your next visit to **The Mountain**.

Life Members Recognized

Laura Baum - At the Florida District Meeting in Miami in mid-April, Life Member Laura Baum, from Lakeland Florida, was honored with the Florida District Recognition award, given to a teen in the YRUU Program.

Milton Rahn - At the Thomas Jefferson District Meeting in Williamsburg, Virginia in early April, Patron Member Milton Rahn, from Savannah, Georgia, was honored as the District's Unsung UU award winner, recognizing his tireless work for Unitarian Universalism in the Savannah area over many years.

*Congratulations to you both from
your friends at **The Mountain**.*

Vision Holders Receive Pins

Mountain Vision Holders (members who have given at least \$10,000 to **The Mountain**) started receiving special lapel pins Memorial Day Weekend. The distinctive pins give recognition to this key group of **Mountain** supporters. The pin is in addition to the framed photographs that go to Vision Holders.



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

Apply my contribution to:

☐ Comstock Fund ☐ Bottom of The Mountain ☐ Scholarship Fund ☐ General Fund
☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$250 ☐ \$500 ☐ \$750 ☐ \$1,000 ☐ \$5,000 ☐ \$_____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: (day) _____ (evening) _____

Send coupon and check to: **The Mountain Retreat & Learning Center, Inc.**
P. O. Box 1299
Highlands, NC 28741

Youth Scholarship Appeal

Recently, many of you received a request to consider a donation to **The Mountain's** Scholarship Fund to help more youth to be able to benefit from the outstanding programming offered here at **The Mountain**. Think about it – a \$55 gift sponsors a youth in MountainCamp for one day, \$110 equals two days, \$220 equals four days, and \$385 equals a whole week.

With an entire nation reeling from the shock of the Columbine shootings, we want to find ways to support our youth as they face the many struggles confronting them.

Our youth programming provides safe and effective rules and boundaries, structure, conflict management and other non-violent coping skills.

This year, we've already awarded more than \$14,000 in scholarship funds – an amount far exceeding the current fund. So, please join us in sponsoring a camper. By doing this, you will make a difference . . . one child at a time.

Mail your check along with the form on Page 9. Thank you!

The Mountain ... A GREAT Place to Renew the Soul

On Friday, April 2, **The Mountain** was featured in *USA Today* as one of "10 great places to renew the soul." It was a half-page article which included pictures of 3 of the 10 sites – including a picture of the lodge taken from Chocoma Mountain by Vision Holder **Anne Hornberger**.

This all came about courtesy of **Jack & Marcia Kelly** who have written a book called *Sanctuaries: A Guide to Lodgings in Monasteries, Abbeys, and Retreats*. (**The Mountain** is listed in the current edition in a regional listing in the back, based on a recommendation the authors had from someone who had been here.) The Kellys visited early this year and were quite impressed with what they saw. When *USA Today* asked them for a list of "10 Great Places to Renew the Soul," we were made a part of the list. Also, when they do a new edition of their book, we'll be featured!

Think about your own visit to **The Mountain** in the next few months to renew your soul!

THE MOUNTAIN RETREAT & LEARNING CENTER, INC.

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