



The Mountain Matters

THE MOUNTAIN RETREAT & LEARNING CENTER, INC.



October 1999



Former Director's Report

In October 15, 1979, Southeastern Unitarian Universalists bought the property we now call

The Mountain. This purchase culminated over two years of efforts designed to establish both a summer youth camp and a year-round conference center. In all of the 1999 issues of **The Mountain Matters**, historical perspectives of those who have been a part of the first twenty years are being highlighted. In lieu of Tom Warth's Director's Report in this issue, former Co-Director (with his then wife, Mo) and current Development Director, **Larry Wheeler**, offers his perspectives on both the beginning years and what he sees today. In the December issue, Executive Director, **Tom Warth**, will review his almost 10 years at **The Mountain** and look to the future.

It is quite amazing to be sitting here writing this piece very much involved with the future of **The Mountain** but recognizing that I've also had an impact on what has led up to this time. Sometimes I wonder what hat I'm wearing, but please know that I'm as excited now as I look to the future as I was 20 years ago as we dreamed about what might be.

In fact, the lead story of the then named "Southeast Unitarian Universalist Camp & Conference Center Newsletter" dated October 1, 1979 (Volume 1, Number 2) was "**A Dream Comes True**".

At that time in 1979 there was not yet a Board of Trustees, no staff, and no formal organization to run the facility we were about to buy. The whole project still belonged to the Southeast Unitarian Universalist Summer Institute Board that had authorized the project some two years before.

What we did have was enthusiasm from a large number of people who believed that this was all possible. Mo and I had been having discussions about applying for the Director's position, and it was a complicated decision. She was finishing a doctoral program in psychology, and I was managing a \$70 million coffee business with General Foods. In our late thirties, were we going to walk away from those situations? We decided YES, and were selected as the first co-directors of **The Mountain** in November 1979.

People often ask if I didn't have some doubts about it all working out. I can honestly say in response, "Not for a minute!"

Can you believe that this site was available at the time

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Mountain Director?

In the August edition of **The Mountain Matters** I listed 5 job opportunities at **The Mountain**. One of these is "Director-Mountain Operations". This position has generated a lot of questions-What is the job? Why do we need it? Where is Tom going? etc. Let me explain.

During its board meeting in May, **The Mountain** Trustees and I agreed that as we consider all of the new, programmatic opportunities possible for **The Mountain** in the future, I need to devote more of my energies to strategic planning and financial development. To allow me to do this while at the same time ensuring that **The Mountain** itself continues to grow and prosper, it was decided that we should begin the search for and ultimately appoint a Mountain Director. This position will report to me and have day-to-day responsibility for **The Mountain's** operations including food service, program, front office, housekeeping, maintenance, sales and promotion.

So, no, I'm not going anywhere, just refocusing my energies and yes, the position is needed as we remain committed to providing the quality programs and experiences our more than 6,000 guests per year have come to expect. Change is necessary AND exciting. I welcome any questions/comments you have, and I look forward to seeing you during your next visit to **The Mountain**.

Tom



Enchanting autumn day on Meditation Rock.



Growing Up at The Mountain

By: Brian A. Wheeler

Sometime in 1977, I remember my parents, **Mo** and **Larry Wheeler**, talking about their idea of starting a new camp and conference center for Unitarian Universalists. For many years (during 1971-1979), they had been very active in SUUSI, the Southeast Unitarian Universalist Summer Institute, the big week each summer when UU's from around the southeastern U.S. get together. As a SUUSI kid, I had friends all over the country that I felt close to, even though I would just see them this one week each year.

I also had a lot of adults at SUUSI whom I felt close to. As an only child after my younger brother, Mark, died when he was 3, I think I was motivated to seek responsibility and opportunities for grown ups to take notice of me, partly because I was an only child and partly because it gave me a way to deal with my grief. Now I have a son of my own, who is just a couple months older than Mark when he died, and I cannot imagine what it must be like to be a parent and lose a child. My children are the most amazing things and the world to me, and the thought of losing one is unimaginable. Somehow my parents held themselves together.

I remember one summer at SUUSI when I was proud to call myself the youngest official staff member. I made great friends with the adults and often left my peers puzzled as to why I would want to do such work when they were there to just be kids and have fun. It was sometimes difficult to be in both worlds, but it was a pattern that I would stick with for many years to follow.

Out of the SUUSI experience, my parents were convinced that Unitarian Universalists needed a year-round home in the southeast. New England had Star Island; the south had nothing. I was about 12 when they got serious with a group of close friends, including **Roger Comstock**, and we started driving around Georgia and North Carolina looking at empty

land and old camps that were for sale. I remember one existing camp that was near Rome, Georgia that was saddled with the heavy odor of the paper mill. That was not for us. I remember another piece of empty land where we could only dream what building a new camp might entail. Then I remember in 1979 when we drove to the Country Mountain resort on Little Scaly Mountain in Highlands, North Carolina. We learned that the property had previously been Camp Highlander, a major boys and girls camp that had moved to bigger quarters near Hendersonville, North Carolina. Camp Highlander had sold the property to a development company named Country Mountain that planned to transform the camp into a resort community, but their efforts failed.

When we arrived it was one of those typical foggy and rainy days at **The Mountain**. You could not see a building more than 50 feet away, let alone the view of Blue Valley. I don't remember being impressed at the bottom of the mountain, but when we got to the top of that winding road, parked at the tower, and saw the unique layout of the quaint dining hall and recreation hall all surrounded by cabins along the top of a cliff, we all **knew** this was going to be our home. Maybe I just picked up on my parent's enthusiasm, but I remember being very excited. I could not stop thinking about all of the places I was going to be able to explore! While we didn't see the view on that trip, we still knew this was the chosen place.

Before **The Mountain**, my family spent much of our free time at our cabin on Lake Hartwell in North Georgia, so I was

already accustomed to long drives from Atlanta for weekend adventures. After we started **The Mountain**, I only remember returning to that cabin a couple more times. After all, now I had 20 cabins and a tower! The adventure had begun and, looking back on things, it could not have been at a better time in my life. Had I been much younger, I would not have appreciated it as much. Had I been older, I would have already been consumed in High School activities and been resentful at having to leave town. Being a twelve year old, the only kid at **The Mountain**,

with lots of grown ups working on an all-consuming project — for this soon-to-be **former** staff member from SUUSI, this was "heady stuff".

I am not sure how to describe that first year at **The Mountain**, except to relate these recollections, which maybe someday I can weave into a better story. Some of these events may have happened as late as 1981, too.

The Program Center/Ascender Home, was the first home

*"... but when
we got to the top
... we all knew
this was going to
be our home."*

Former Director's Report – Continued from Page 1

we were looking? That it met all ten criteria for a site? That the owner in 1957 put bathrooms in summer cabins for boys? That **Steve and Evelyn Carter** phoned us three days before we were prepared to hire someone else as the Maintenance Director? That the movie company came along in the spring of 1980 when we were very much in doubt about our summer business? (The income from the movie made our first year's revenue numbers.) That \$352,000 would be raised in our first fund drive, largely from Charter Life Memberships, much of it from people who had never been here. The list goes on and on through our first 20 years.

As I think back over those early years there are several things which come to mind that have influenced where we find ourselves today.

From the beginning we were clear that **The Mountain** was a Unitarian Universalist facility. What that meant was that we sought out and nurtured a close relationship with the UUA (its staff and committees). We convinced the Southeast UU Ministers to use **The Mountain** as their meeting site twice a year and worked to develop relationships with the ministers and religious educators who attended the meetings. A Religious Education Week was established in 1981. Our Lay Leadership School originated in 1982.

In 1982, then Co-Treasurer (**Leslie**) **Rene Donavon** took on the project to establish us as an Elderhostel site. We knew that this would potentially solve a dilemma that centers like ours have – filling bed space Sunday-Thursday nights, but I don't think that any of us imagined that we would be running such programming 24 weeks of the year. Today, it represents about 22% of operating revenue and is vital to our financial stability.

Another key decision made in 1982 by the 2nd Fund Drive Coordinators, **Jake Haun** and **Nancy (Suda) Heath**, was to create the Patron membership category that encouraged people to increase their giving beyond the Life Membership level to \$5,000 and helped carry the Fund Drive beyond its \$300,000 goal. Shortly thereafter, Jake, was appointed **The Mountain's** first Development Director. He had provided energy and commitment from the first days of **The Mountain**. In the development role, he worked diligently to build long-term financial stability of **The Mountain**. He served as our Board President through the difficult times surrounding Mo's and my divorce and subsequent departures as Co-Directors and stayed very much involved throughout the 1980s. He thus provided much needed continuity and institutional memory at a time when it was greatly needed.

Closely related to Jake's role was the good fortune to have hired **Ed** and **Anne Heath** in the spring of 1985. Both

played key roles in the transition, but Ed's willingness to serve as the Acting Director was vital. The way Ed handled himself with everyone he related to resulted in as much of a calming effect as anyone could ever have accomplished.

When I was away from **The Mountain** staff for 12 years, people would often ask, "What do you miss about **The Mountain**?" My answer was always the same – the people, the sky, and the weather. I have always considered myself fortunate to have been here, and while my heart remained here, I only found small bits of time to come here as a guest or volunteer as my new wife (**Nancy Heath**) and I were involved in our Atlanta life.

After Tom Warth became the Executive Director, he occasionally called me, typically with "institutional memory" questions. Whether he intended it or not, he did an effective job of engaging me in his own vision. Thus, when he called in mid-1997 asking me to return to the staff as the Development Director, I really only had one question. It was, "What are your plans?" Tom's answer was the one I wanted to hear – that he was here for the foreseeable future and that he saw **The Mountain** expanding well beyond what those of us in 1979 had imagined.

It is still easy for me to dream about **The Mountain** of the future. I see more people here; people of greater diversity than have been here before – culture, religion, age, etc. I also see a place that has a national and international reputation in ethics, social justice, and training. While all of this is going on, **The Mountain** that we have all known and loved is only getting better because this is a special place that quickly imparts special meanings to people who come here.

Nancy and I have bought our retirement home in the area and are enjoying our staff roles. Like much of the current staff, we envision being here until retirement when we'll probably then become volunteers. If you're not yet invested in this place, please join us and become a part of it. As a former young Camp Highlander camper once wrote:

*Our world is a simple one,
Shared only with the special treasures that a forest,
a mountain, or a trickling, sun-glazed stream can offer us.
Far away from the world of reality is a mountain.
It holds no magic for you,
but when this mountain is joined with smiling faces,
it becomes our private fortress,
which safely tucks away ... free from unwelcome
intrusions
and troublesome storms;
a place to close out the uncaring coldness of the world ...
a haven to think, to dream, to fantasize.*

Old Friends Visit and Serve The Mountain

Sandra Clipp, Clemson, South Carolina, and Krista Meinersmann, Dunwoody, Georgia, put together a reunion at **The Mountain** and planned this around a half day of volunteering.

"Krista and I met up at **The Mountain** for a two-person reunion and getaway in June, taking advantage of the volunteer program (free lodging for 4 hours of work). We meet at Womenspirit every May, but it is hard to find much one-on-one time in the midst of 130 people, so we decided to escape for a day, just the two of us.

"Setting this up in advance with Robert E. (Volunteer Coordinator), we arrived to do a half-day's work. It was PERFECT! We both enjoy the outdoors and happily took on the assignment of clearing footpaths of overgrown limbs all over the top. And we started our reunion as we worked together.

"Our assignment completed, we retired to the Dining Hall for lunch and then on to our cabin for a pre-hike nap (we've reached that age). We hiked up Chiquapin wondering when and how the trail had become so much steeper than it was when we first hiked the trail together 16 years ago.

"Later we dined and strolled around the bottom taking in all the improvements to the waterfront. Quite tired from an active day, we got a great night's sleep, then awoke and enjoyed a wonderful morning with another hike.

"We left with the promise to each other and to the staff that we would be back to do this again. It was satisfying to

serve **The Mountain** that we love, and it was just wonderful to visit in such a beautiful and tranquil place".

Former staff, who were here for the 20th Anniversary Reunion, were promising to get together more often and wondered why it had taken so long to return. Volunteering to serve **The Mountain** we love, and meeting old friends or making new ones, is a perfect and meaningful combination. Volunteers provide a major source of support to **The Mountain**. A half-day's work provides free housing; a full-day's work provides free housing and food. Volunteers are needed year round—weekdays, weekends, holidays, summer busy season. All programs (office, maintenance, dining hall, housekeeping) have available areas and are grateful for assistance. Robert E. will gladly assist you in this or in any way to facilitate your coming home to volunteer. Telephone **Robert E. Smith** at Ext. 227.

We applaud our
VOLUNTEERS!



Youth Programming Information

The CON mailings have been sent to the UU Religious Educators. If you have not received a copy containing information for registration, please contact your DRE, or **Mike Stein**, (828) 526-5838, Ext. 234. The dates for the CONs are:

- Junior High CON - Nov 5 - 7
- Senior High CON - Dec 3 - 5
- Junior High CON - Jan 21 - 23
- Senior High CON - Feb 25 - 27

Time to gear up for MountainCamp 2000. The Camp Brochure will be sent out soon. If you do not receive a copy by November 1, please contact **Mike Stein**, and one will be sent to you. The dates for camp sessions are:

- Junior High Camp: June 18 - July 1
- Elementary Camp: July 2 - July 15
- Beginning Camp: July 2 - July 8 (note, these are new dates)
- Work and Adventure: July 2 - July 15
- Senior High Camp: July 16 - July 29
- Leadership School for Social Justice: July 29 - August 4
- ASCENDER Program: June 11 - July 15
- CIT Program: June 16 - July 29

Our camp sessions often fill up quickly, so REGISTER EARLY. There is an incentive for registering and paying in full by December 31—a \$50 discount for two-week camps!



Ruth Lawson-Dix and Everett Dix, Franklin, NC UU Fellowship, preparing linen and towel sets for weekend guests.

Milestones Along the Way . . .

By: Shelley Denham, Director of Milestone Learning Center

Ethics and Values in Commercials: Children Are Watching — What Are They Learning?

You've probably seen the TV advertisements:

Good-looking, nice dad driving home, picking up the family dinner at the well-known fast-food restaurant. He can't resist the fries and by the time he gets home, he's eaten them all. The children look into the bag in disbelief and disappointment ... sympathetic dad shrugs ... "guess they forgot to include them in the order", he says. He turns around to go back to get some more, and as he passes his obviously amused wife, she quietly says, "Fry Breath".

Another commercial shows a series of adorable children. Each makes a statement—the kind of "blooper" that tends to pop out of children's mouths at exactly the wrong time. In one of the cutesy zingers, a child says that dad blew his entire paycheck at the racetrack. After a number of these precious bombshells, the sponsoring company offers a solution: want to divert/prevent your kid from revealing family secrets? Stuff his/her mouth full of our candy bar. (Apparently the sponsors credit children for having manners enough not to talk with their mouths full.)

Humor notwithstanding, these commercials promote disturbing models of relationship which become an indictment of our society's family values if we continue to accept their message without comment. What the ads say is that:

- It's acceptable to lie to your children.
- It's acceptable to laugh about dad blowing a paycheck gambling as long as we "don't tell" (remember the jokes about the town drunk or the wife-beater that used to be acceptable?).
- The way to deal with the blunt candor of children (who don't understand that you "don't tell") is to stuff their mouths full of goodies.

There's no doubt about the challenge of convincing a potential customer to become a consumer in a commercial of 15 to 30 seconds in length. But there must be a way to sell products without destructive messages. With the same amount of "adorable", why couldn't dad just be honest, tell the kids he was starving and screwed up, and he'll go get some more? What is remotely funny about a dad gambling away an entire paycheck? Is the image of jamming a candy bar into a child's mouth really appealing?

A letter recently faxed from Milestone Learning Center to the fast food chain that produced the above commercial has to date received no response. The following statement was included in the letter: "... this ad clearly promotes ageism in its archaic "do as I say and not as I do" approach to children. As we chip away at the foundation of family ethics with this type of careless humor, we create logical consequences: our children will imitate this behavior". **Children**

are watching. What are they learning?

Why will children be honest with their parents if these little deceptions are common promotional tools? How do children learn that humor and jokes can cross the line of ethical behavior when

they consistently watch multi-million-dollar corporate commercials that negate positive standards of behavior?

If you are disgusted by the values espoused in ads such as these, perhaps you'll join us in a family project. Together, parents and children, please watch commercials for and **talk about** the implicit messages about relationships. Over a period of time – a week or two – make a few notes: the sponsoring company, the gist of the commercial, and the program that's supported by the ad.

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Kids are watching . . .



What are they learning?

Perspectives

(Note: "Milestones Along the Way" occasionally offers perspectives about events, programs, books, and learning opportunities which staff members and/or constituents have found to be of value. This is a service to our readers: there is no financial compensation from sponsors to Milestone for the publicity. Permission to publish articles such as the following is obtained.)

onReligion.com: A Window on World Religions

Milestone Learning Center is committed to serving multi-faith, multi-cultural constituencies. This requires the development of a broad understanding of religious and cultural traditions that so often provide the foundation for social opinion. With this need for education in mind, Milestone subscribed to an on-line news service, **onReligion.com**, which focuses entirely on religious and cultural news. Taking stories from approximately 45 on-line publications five days a week, **onReligion.com** briefly summarizes articles and provides links to their sources for those who want to read the complete stories.

Through **onReligion.com**, it is possible to view a spectrum of both positive and negative impacts of organized religion on cultural and political structures at local, national, and international levels. This daily concentrated look at news reports tends to provide "new ears and eyes" on world religions, the people and events behind them, and their existing or emerging span of control. It can be disturbing, inspiring, and sometimes humorous as editor **John Rakestraw** occasionally offers his own perspective. If your time to find important news stories about religion runs out before your interest does, then Milestone staff members suggest that you consider subscribing to **onReligion.com**. A free two-week trial subscription is available. The on-line address is

<http://www.onReligion.com/>

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E-mail your observations to us at mountain@dnr.net. Please be sure to put "MILESTONE" in the subject line so the office will know how to route your message. Or you can send the information through the U.S. mail.

We are interested in hearing your opinions about the commercials themselves; what kind of value discussions and clarifications resulted in your family; what, if anything, schools and congregations are doing to generate interest and response, etc. We will collect the data and publish the results; your responses will guide us in creating follow-up and/or plans of action. Whether or not you have the inclination to communicate with Milestone about commercials, we urge you to take a look at our society's family values as depicted in television, radio, and other media. It is a wonderful way to share quality time and energy learning and growing together as a family. We look forward to hearing from you!

Milestone Learning Center Staff

Shelley Denham (Ext. 224) • Anne Mayher (Ext. 238)

Sarah Walls (Ext. 241)

Your comments are welcome!

Let us know what you think about these articles and/or other issues of ethics and justice that concern you. Please write or e-mail Milestone at **The Mountain Retreat & Learning Center's** addresses. Be sure to include "Milestone" in the subject line or on the envelope.

Become our partner!

For information about how to financially support Milestone (an educational not-for-profit program of **The Mountain Retreat and Learning Center, Inc.**), please contact **Shelley Denham**, (828) 526-5838, Ext. 224.

Program Calendar — Fall / Winter 1999-2000

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

October

- 22-24 **Yoga and Meditation Retreat**
- 22-24 Mountain Ambassadors Meeting
- 22-24 UU Men's Fellowship Retreat
- 22-24 Artist's Conference Network Retreat
- 24-29 **Elderhostel**
- 27-29 Enviro-Scope: Pace Academy
- 28-31 Exploring and Expanding Retreat
- 29-31 **Mountain Fall Fest**
- 31-November 05 **Elderhostel**

November

- 05-07 Presbyterian Student Center Retreat
- 05-07 Junior High CON
- 05-07 Mountain Board Meeting
- 07-08 Endowment Board Meeting
- 08-11 Fall SEUUMA Retreat
- 12-14 Atlanta Gay Men's Chorus Retreat
- 19-21 Milestone Board Retreat
- 19-21 **Meditation Retreat**
- 24-28 Life Member's Thanksgiving Celebration

December

- 03-05 **Senior High CON**
- 10-12 Light-Redmountain Retreat
- 10-12 **Archetypes and Symbology Workshop**
- 23-26 **Appalachian Christmas**
- 26-29 **Senior High Winter Break**
- 30-January 02 **Millennium on The Mountain (Full)**

Join us at The Mountain for Fall Fest — October 29 - 31

Trick or Treat! A weekend of fun is planned to celebrate the changing seasons and the Halloween holiday. Everyone is invited to join **The Mountain** staff for a ghostly good time painting pumpkins, hiking through the changing trees, bobbing for apples, and more. Bring your dancing shoes as **Lee Knight** will lead us in an evening of folk songs and dancing **AND** bring a costume to wear in the "Parade of Goblins". Singles, families, young and old ... everyone is invited.

Meditation Retreat — November 19 - 21

Gain practice and explore different kinds of meditation techniques. Through meditation, one can achieve relaxation, thus a reduction of stress, a sense of peace and well being, greater awareness and healing. During this retreat, you will have the opportunity to explore several methods of achieving a meditative state, including candle meditations, guided visualizations, color, music, toning, chanting, mantras, affirmations, and a variety of sounds (drumming, rattling, chimes, bell).

Appalachian Christmas 1999 — December 23 - 26

Join **Lee Knight**, **Larry Wheeler**, and **Nancy Heath** for a low-key, non-commercial holiday. Lee will show us how the people of Appalachia celebrated with simple activities. The Mountain Quartet will lead a Candlelight Christmas Eve Service. Other activities include: wreath making, puzzle building, hiking, conversation with new or old friends around the fire place, making a gingerbread house, reading, and great food. Bring something fun (inexpensive or pre-owned) for the gift exchange. Families of all sizes are welcome.

Skiing in January 2000

Friday - Sunday	January 7 - 9
Monday - Wednesday	January 10 - 12

There are several ski slopes close to **The Mountain**. **Ski Scaly**, **Sky Valley**, **Sapphire Valley**, and **Catahoochee** are all within easy driving distance. Bring family and friends for fun on the slopes and quiet evenings at **The Mountain**. Natural and homemade snow give the slopes a firm base to treat the beginning and adventurous skier. Last year **Ski Scaly** added snow tubing on a special slope beside the ski slope. Low winter rates at **The Mountain** make skiing a desirable activity. Great food, warm cabins, friendly people!

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.

gifts
since
last
issue

Our profound thanks to . . .

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

Wayne Morris, Nashville, TN

Patron Members (\$5,000+)

Ivan & Jeannetta Cotman, Detroit, MI
Albert & Berniece Holt, Clemson, SC
Joe & Joan Moore, Nashville, TN
Wayne Morris, Nashville, TN

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

Bill & Harriet Ball, Etowah, NC
Fran Boyle, Tallahassee, FL
Karen & Ron Bringle, Gastonia, NC
Linda Winn Brown, Tallahassee, FL
Ed & Jean Findley, Avondale Estates, GA
Paul Howard & Barbara James, Sanford, NC
Mary Kiner, Beverly Hills, MI
Pauline Masterton, Tallahassee, FL
Tom Tyre & Jay Matthews, Daytona Beach, FL
Elaine & John Miller, Gainesville, FL
Wayne Morris, Nashville, TN
Joe Love & Laurie Reynolds, Champaign, IL
Wyman Rousseau & Jane Williams, Charlotte, NC
King Thackston, Atlanta, GA

Memorial Memberships

Joe Moore, Nashville, TN

In Memoriam

Joe Moore, Nashville, TN
Jim Percival, Cincinnati, OH

Special Gifts/General Fund (Gifts of \$250+)

UU Fellowship, Franklin, NC — \$300
Pat Gnagay, Franklin, NC — \$400 (4 rocking chairs)

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

Many have already decided that it's a smart investment to become a Life Member NOW before the increase in rates 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.

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.

The Remodeled Tower is a HIT!

Everyone that sees the remodeled Tower is excited with the renovation work. Our "turn of the century" Tower has been rescued from its aging process and now has a new foundation, is fully winterized, has steps and railings that meet building codes, has a solidness to its structure that gives confidence to all, AND the observation deck is 3 feet higher!

We had an unexpected opportunity this summer to have this work done as our contractor suddenly had a 30-day window in his schedule, and we put him to work.

Because of the suddenness, we didn't have time to raise the funds ahead of the work. The total cost of the effort is \$20,000. We hope you agree that this is a worthy project to support. Please respond to the mailing you recently received about the Tower renovation or complete the form on page 9 of this issue and mail it and your check or credit card information to us. Thank you!



Our newly remodeled Tower.

Growing Up at The Mountain - Continued from Page 2

built on **The Mountain** sometime in the 1920s I believe. The Country Mountain resort staff had used it as their office. I remember exploring all the papers they left behind that described their grand vision for a resort community. It was where we found all the keys to different padlocks and doors. **The Mountain** had plenty of them and padlocks galore. I quickly organized the keys, lubricated the padlocks and unlocked as many secrets as I could find. To this day, I still have some of those keys in my desk drawer. Sitting on my workbench (built at **The Mountain** originally as my college bunk bed) I also have a gift from **Jake Haun**. It is a set of "Young's Machine Made, Steel Stamps, 1/16" figures" made in Muscatine, Iowa. They are a numbered die set that lets you impress numbers on metal, like keys. On the wood box Jake wrote, "Highlands Camp & Conference Center, Brian Wheeler, Keeper of the Keys" It is one of my prized possessions.

This article will be completed in the December issue of *The Mountain Matters*.

2000 Mountain Calendars Make Great Holiday Gifts

The Mountain's 2000 Calendars have arrived and are just beautiful - 13 color pictures to remind you of this enchanting spot. The purchase price is \$15—many folks have already indicated that they will be using them for holiday giving. 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 in this issue or call **The Mountain's** office.



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

Apply my contribution to:

☐ 2000 Calendar
 ☐ Remodeled Tower
 ☐ 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) _____

The Mountain Retreat & Learning Center, Inc., P.O. Box 1299, Highlands, NC 28741-1299

Labor Day Weekend 20th Anniversary Celebration

Many former staff members gathered for the 20th Anniversary celebration on Labor Day Weekend. Included were 10 of the 15 staff from the 1980 first year of **The Mountain** summer season: Mo Wheeler, Larry Wheeler, Brian Wheeler, Evelyn Carter, Lee Knight, Nancy (Suda) Heath, Sally (Gaines) Tidyman, Julie Paulk, Betsy Arnold, and Mark Evans.

Other former staff present ranged from year-round people like Anne Heath, Nina Benedetto, Dan King, Martha Fowler, and Jim Ingram to more recent youth camp staffers like Molly Wilcox, Neal Rainey, Claire Miller, and Elizabeth Campanelli. In total, almost 40 were in attendance.

Those who were here are already talking about the 25th reunion of former staff - set the dates aside right now - Labor Day Weekend, 2004. The goal is to fill **The Mountain** with former staff of all ages and times of service.

Between now and then we're going to reconnect with more who have served as staff members, get them on the mailing list, and start building for that weekend. If you know of any former staff members who are not on the mailing list, please e-mail their names and addresses to **Brian Wheeler** in Charlottesville, Virginia at bwheeler@erol.com.



L to R (1980 Staff) Lee Knight, Mo Wheeler, Sally Tidyman, Brian Wheeler, Julie Paulk, Mark Evans, Evelyn Carter, Nancy Heath, Betsy Arnold, and Larry Wheeler.

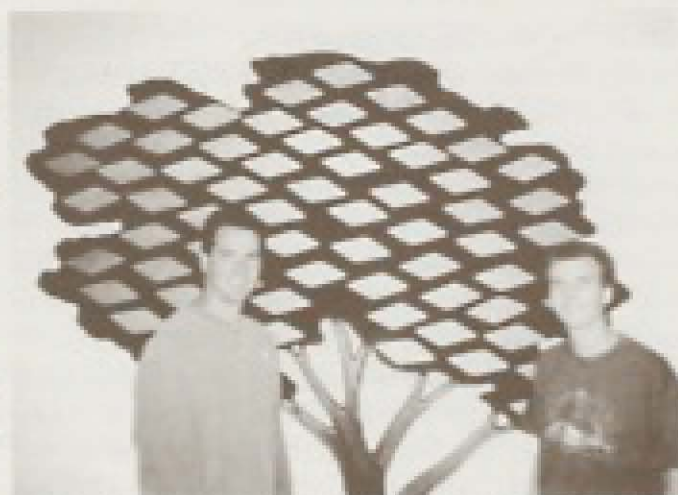
Youth Camp Staff Plaque in Tree House

At the Labor Day Weekend Staff Reunion, a wonderful new plaque greeted guests on entering the Tree House from the ramp. It is a hand crafted oak tree trunk with green carpeted "leaves" which have wooden blocks attached to the "leaves" on which **EVERYONE** who has served on the youth camp staff will be listed.

The first group of people to have their names engraved on the wooden blocks were those who have led or co-led the entire camp or originated the ASCENDER and Work & Adventure programs. They are Pam Phelps, Jan Machler, Bob Kaman, Pam Wasilewski, Dot Jervis, Alicia and Walter Hodges, Mo Wheeler, Ervin and Nancy Hilyer, Karyn Machler, Andy Harris, Rene Cline, Chad Neilson, Jeanne Shirley, Steve Pond, Shelley Denham, Sarah Walls, Karen Kleiber, Michelle Frost, Gillian Denham, Brian Irwin, Mike Stein, and Jill Allison.

The next step is to gather the names of all who have served as a junior or senior counselor, CIT, nurse, adventure staff, mentors for the ASCENDER and Work & Adventure programs, arts and crafts staff, etc. We want to be inclusive. In the December issue we'll publish the names of all we've collected and start engraving the blocks.

As many readers will know, **The Mountain** was started because we wanted a youth camp. For 20 years, we've run successful programs for our youth **BECAUSE** of the dedication of those who have been willing to give their time and talents to our youth. This plaque is a way of honoring them all!



Mike Stein (left) Youth Program Director and Daniel McCormick (right) Housekeeping Staff and Counselor during Summer '99.

THE MOUNTAIN RETREAT & LEARNING CENTER, INC.

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