



Following the Gleam.....

The following is an article written by Nature Camp Director, Philip Coulling, that appeared in the 4th Session Woodland Echos to honor Charlie Truxell, our retiring (and beloved) caretaker as he takes his place in a long history of amazing Caretakers of Nature Camp.

One of my great regrets in life is that I never got to know Sam Lavender very well. Sam was the caretaker here at Nature Camp for my seven summers as a camper and my first two years on staff, but he spent much of the last summer of 1987 at the Veteran's Administration hospital in Salem, receiving treatments for the lung cancer which would claim his life that November. My interactions with Sam were almost nonexistent during my shy youth, and he was generally quieter and kept more to himself than those who have since held the position of caretaker. But I wish that as a counselor, I had taken greater advantage of the opportunity to listen to some of his stories and absorb some of the wisdom of his six decades.

Sam Lavender grew up "on the other side of the mountain," in Amherst County. I know little of his early life, but rumors and inference lead me to believe that his family's means were modest but genuine, that he lacked much if any formal education beyond elementary school, and that he may have done some rather wild things in his formative years, before he arrived at Nature Camp. While separating truth from fiction is not easy, nor is it important, however, for my impression of Sam is colored much less by who he might have been in his youth and much more by who I know he was as an adult and by the influence he exerted on Nature Camp and those with whom he worked here.

When Nature Camp moved to the Big Mary's Creek valley in 1953, the staff did not include a full-time, residential caretaker. The man who built all of the original buildings, Ollie Groah, served largely in the capacity of caretaker during the first decade at this location, but he did not live here and was not able to keep continuous watch over the property when Camp was not in session. Both the Virginia Federation of Garden Clubs, which founded Nature Camp and oversaw its operation through 2006, and the U.S. Forest Service, which leases approximately six acres of the George Washington National Forest for use and occupancy by Nature Camp, expressed concern about the lack of a year-round presence on the site. Both organizations therefore sought to find a permanent caretaker who could not only manage the facilities during the summer, but also maintain the road, deter vandalism and unwanted visitation, promptly discover storm damage, and otherwise keep an eye on the property in the fall, winter, and spring. So Sam Lavender was hired in 1964 as Nature Camp's first caretaker, and he and his family were the first occupants of the newly constructed cottage on the hill above the canteen.

Several other persons have served as caretaker after Sam's death—Bob Goodman, Blair Smith, Brian Falls—and I do not wish to diminish their contributions or understate their value to Nature Camp. But when, in the fall of 2005, we found ourselves again in need of a new caretaker, we were exceedingly fortunate

and blessed to find Charlie Truxell. Like Sam, Charlie grew up not far from here, but in the Valley of Virginia (Greenville, to be specific, a few miles north of Nature Camp, in Augusta County) rather than the Blue Ridge. Charlie has held numerous jobs over the years—in carpentry, electrical repair, and sales, to name but a few—and most recently worked as facilities manager for the Montessori School in Greensboro, North Carolina, before he and his wife, Priscilla, moved back to Virginia.

An exhaustive litany of the contributions which Charlie has made to Nature Camp in his eight years as caretaker is beyond the scope of this article and would overtax my ability to catalog. During that time I have often in my mind compared Sam and Charlie, and while such an exercise is perhaps unfair to both of them, I cannot help but find many similarities in their personality, character, and influence. Allow me to address a few of these.

One, both Sam Lavender and Charlie Truxell were or are men of great honor and unquestionable integrity. Former Nature Camp director Col. John H. Reeves Jr., who worked with Sam for 16 years, stated in the eulogy he delivered at Sam's funeral that he never heard Sam "utter single word of derision against anyone. You could easily tell if he disagreed with something for he had a way of saying 'Aah' and characteristically shaking his head. If you knew him you knew that there wasn't much point in pursuing the conversation further." Like Sam, Charlie has a phenomenal work ethic and almost never complains about the task at hand, regardless of the time of day or night that it beckons him, even when he has to perform the same repair over and over because of someone's negligence, oversight, or forgetfulness. I know that there have been many times when I have let Charlie down, and I have felt more shame and guilt about doing so than if I had disappointed my own parents. His careful eye and diligent oversight during major renovations to the electrical and plumbing infrastructure at Camp a few years ago helped keep the project on schedule—and the contractors in line—and ensured that the work was completed before the summer began. It was chiefly for this reason that Charlie was inducted in 2006 into the Nature Camp Roll of Honor, which recognizes individuals who have made extraordinary, non-monetary contributions to Nature Camp.

Like Charlie, Sam also had remarkable knack and ingenuity for solving problems. Scot Marsh, a VMI cadet whom Colonel recruited to serve as assistant director one summer (and whose son now attends Camp) once remarked, "Sam Lavender can take a piece of chewing gum, a little wire and a pair of pliers and fix almost anything that's broke." Compared to these days, Nature Camp operated on more nearly a shoestring budget during much of Sam's tenure, and his ability to improvise and devise ingenious and inexpensive solutions to problems that arose was essential. Charlie probably has a more extensive toolkit of practical skills such as carpentry and electrical expertise than did Sam, but his inventiveness and ability to think "outside of the box" have proven at least as valuable as his knowledge and experience. For example, using inner tubes he jury rigged a clever means of preventing leaves and rainwater from collecting in the pool over the winter, and he always seems to be able to find the right part to replace a broken piece of equipment, even if it's altogether different from the original component that malfunctioned.

Sam and Charlie both consistently exhibited exceptional generosity of their time. Lars Nelson notes that Sam used to assist counselors and campers in constructing items for classes and that he would willingly make available space in the garage and tools for their use. Colonel recalled the episode of a camper who lost her contact lens in the swimming pool, but "after it made its journey through the pool's circulatory system, Sam saw that she got it back." Similarly, Charlie has freely given of his time and talent, such as when he built a "beetle farm" for a class several summers ago (which the geology class used this year to display the soil profiles



in the lab) or created a disk suspended from the ceiling in the garage and on which last year's astronomy class projected images of the night sky. I don't know how many vehicles belonging to staff members Charlie has worked on free of charge over the years, and he has initiated several projects entirely of his own volition, including making holders for paper and cotton towels in the kitchen and arranging decorative stone around the base of the new flagpole. Charlie has worked countless hours to reestablish grass cover on the playfield and almost single-handedly put the kitchen back together after the floor, ceiling, and dishwasher were replaced two winters ago. And after he noticed that few campers were swimming in the cold pool one of his first summers here, he and Priscilla purchased and donated the thermal covers which we now use to retain heat at night.

With deep roots in this part of western Virginia, Charlie and Sam could both tell colorful stories of the history of this area and its inhabitants that time has, unfortunately, largely forgotten. Colonel noted, "It was a real treat to go along on a field trip in the bus, for as we drove through the back country, [Sam] would recall people and events that had lived or occurred at places where structures no longer existed." Many staff members could share similar memories of excursions with Charlie. Almost immediately upon joining the staff last summer, Peter Shepherd developed a strong bond with Charlie, which he attributes to the shared family heritage in the Valley and congruent ideologies.

Both Sam and Charlie were walking encyclopedias of knowledge and wisdom that don't come from books or formal education, but only from years of experience and careful observation. Sam's knowledge of the natural world, especially the uses and locations of wild plants and mushrooms, could have filled several classes at Camp. He knew how to prepare New Jersey tea and where to look for morels in the spring, but his favorite plant was ginseng, and he cultivated several patches in and around Nature Camp over the years. I'll never forget the time that Sam taught several of us boy campers how to recognize black oak by exposing the characteristically orange inner bark on the tree in front of the Boys's Bunkhouse. Charlie has a similar affinity for nature and loves to tell of his encounters with wildlife in and around Nature Camp. Peter's favorite story is the time Charlie was returning to Camp and stopped to let a bear cub cross the road in front of him. After the bear had reached the other side, it paused, and Charlie and the cub proceeded to carry on a "conversation" for about 15 minutes.

But most notable of all, Charlie, like Sam, is a man in whose company one cannot help but learn something. Looking back on his earlier years as a counselor, Lars fondly recalls days off when he would forgo the DOP and remain here to spend several hours sitting with Sam on the porch of the caretaker's house, sipping instant coffee, and looking quietly down upon Nature Camp. Sometimes they would talk, but often they would not say anything for long stretches. Sam practiced an economy of words, which is to say that he often didn't say much, but even in silence, he could impart wisdom. Lars has come to realize that Sam embodied a serene life, one lived peaceably and contentedly with his fellow human and non-human inhabitants of this earth. Charlie tends to talk more than Sam did, but even a few words from his mouth go a long way and carry considerable weight. If there is one lesson we can gain from Sam and Charlie, it is to take the time to learn from your elders, ask questions of them, and listen to them when they speak; they have a lot more to teach you than you may think.

Sam Lavender and Charlie Truxell are two of only a small handful of persons to hold the title of caretaker of Nature Camp, but in a sense all of us here are called to be caretakers, for what Nature Camp strives to do is to inspire and train us to care for this planet and for God's wonderful creation. We are truly blessed to have had in our midst such extraordinary gentlemen as Charlie and Sam, and I hope that even though virtually none of you knew Sam and most of you barely know Charlie, you may nevertheless find inspiration in their exemplary service to Nature Camp and in the manner in which they have led their lives.

We wish Charlie and Priscilla well as they head into well deserved retirement and south to Florida for the winter. We thank you for everything you have done for Nature Camp, and we shan't forget about you. Godspeed, dear friends, and as Colonel used to say, "Y'all come back now, you hear?"

Notes from Nature Camp, Inc.

- * The final round of voting resulted in a remarkable and unprecedented three-way tie for Best All-Around Girl Camper in Fourth Session.



- * The resident fauna included Eleanor, a captive red-tailed hawk owned by ornithology instructor and licensed falconer, Corey Basham.
- * The abundant summer rain kept Big Mary's Creek running steadily and produced a plethora of chanterelles and other mushrooms.
- * The only significant power outage occurred when a tree fell against the power line and lasted for only a few hours.

- * Cooks (and cousins) Ana and Hannah Osowski (who were joined by Adam Rotche during First Session) continued to expand Nature Camp's procurement of local sources of food. More than 55% of food dollars were spent on items grown, raised, or produced no farther away than Richmond.

- * A new digital camera enhanced photographic documentation of session activities and permitted the posting of video clips to Nature Camp's Facebook page.

- * Adult Session in August attracted perhaps a record number of attendees and culminated in a stimulating field trip exploring the geology, flora, and other natural history along a section of the Blue Ridge Parkway.

- * Evening program presenters discussed production of the new *Flora of Virginia*, provided musical entertainment and led dancing in the L.S., and taught campers how to effect meaningful change and effectively lobby for a cause.



- * The staff featured exceptional musical talent, with instrumentalists playing, at one point or another, guitar, fiddle, banjo, mandolin, upright bass, jaw's harp, violin, harmonica, washboard, and spoons. (And that's to say nothing of the throat singing.)

- * "Rise and Shine" glowingly ascended to the echelon of "most popular song" before evening program (and no doubt produced more than one sore throat).

Facebook users are reminded that they can "like" Nature Camp's page; just follow the link from the Nature Camp website (www.naturecamp.net).

- Philip Coulling, Executive Director

2013 Service Weekend Updates



There were 86 volunteers at Nature Camp during the May 17-19, 2013 Service Weekend. That is the most folks that have ever attended a Service Weekend. The highest number that attended prior to that was 79 during the May 14-16, 2004 Nature Camp CD-release party Service Weekend. There were 77 folks who attended the September 20-22, 2013 Service Weekend. There were 13 folks in May and 9 folks in September who had never been to a previous Service Weekend. We have now had 417 folks who have attended at least one Service Weekend.



We always figure that it will rain whenever we are reshingling a roof at Camp, but in May of 2013, the rain was more of a pain than usual. After stripping the old shingles from the roof on Thursday, the rains started. We pulled tarps over the roof, but of course our tarps have been used for collecting leaves and brush, and shingles and roofing nails that fall from the edges of the roofs. They are no longer waterproof. Before we could haul out the large piece of plastic we already had rain water pooling on the top of the ceiling sheetrock in the outer office of the Staffhouse. We used towels to mop the water from the top of the sheetrock, but the water was already pouring through the holes in the sheetrock where the fluorescent light fixtures were secured.

Should we replace the wet sheetrock, or hope that it dries before it sags and falls from the weight of the water? Tony deserves the hero award for this weekend for making that decision for us. He stepped through the ceiling sheetrock while working in that attic. See if you can find a Tony-sized hole in the ceiling sheetrock in the photos of the weekend. Contractors were hired to remove and reinstall the ceiling sheetrock before Camp resumed in June, because we didn't have enough time to do it ourselves.

The back half of the Staffhouse that parallels the road is the part of the roof we were reshingling in May. Over the years, additions to this building have resulted in some roof changes. We used a lot of





galvanized flashing to slow the rotting of the wood in these areas. The roofing project during the September 20-22, 2013 was much simpler than most of what we have done in the past. We reshingled the front of the Staffhouse. You might have noticed that the front of this building has 3 sections with no valleys or vent pipes. There was step flashing on both sides of the raised roof section that extends over the porch. We expected rain, so as we stripped one of the sections on Thursday, we searched for broken nails, replaced rotten wood, and added drip edge and roofing felt, before moving onto the next section. This technique allowed us to finish that roof by Friday after-

noon. Brett deserves the hero award for the September Service Weekend for leading his crew to finish reshingling this roof so rapidly. That afforded us the opportunity to finish a number of other projects that have been on the projects list for quite some time. It started raining shortly after the shingles were on and rained throughout most of the rest of the weekend. Thank you to Dave, Flip, Lyt, Mack, Matthew, Mike, Paul, and Ventry for arriving on the Thursdays to strip the old shingles from the roof.

We sistered 59 floor joists under the GBH, and sistered 11 more under the sick room of the Infirmary at the 2 Service Weekends. Thank you especially to Mack who hung in there while we figured out what to do under the Infirmary. The situation was different under there from the bunkhouses. There was no center beam in that section of the floor, so both ends of the joists had to be notched over a block wall. That added a great deal of time and grunting to the installation of these 11 joists. Thank you to Barak, Bob, Chuck, Dave, Jarrod, Jason, Jerry, Jesse, Jimmy, Kate, Mack, Mark, Mike, and Sandra for helping under one or both of these building for one or both of the weekends.



In April, Charlie hired a contractor to install the concrete base for the new flagpole. During the May Service Weekend, a group of folks stood and secured the new flagpole. We painted the outside of the Canteen, inside the BTM, and inside the AD quarters. We stained the shed at the Caretakers' house to match the other Camp buildings. We put the first coat of concrete stain on the two T-house floors. These will each need another coat in May 2014. Walter taught several folks the art of hand-hewing benches. We hauled loads of leaves and brush. We removed the ivy from the Chapel to check for mortar deterioration. We started removing the very old Museum samples from preservative and from the display cases. This is the first step in making the Museum a more useful space. We installed 2 ceiling fans in the Coed Counselors' room, and generally got Camp ready for the summer sessions and then for a long winter's nap.

The food was fantastic as always. My favorites were the 16 kinds of pizza on Saturday night, and of course, all the desserts. Nell headed the kitchen crew with much help from Katie, Kim, Amy, and Penny. Some folks played music in the LS on the 2 Fridays, and the Saturday evening in May we said "Thank you" to Anne Rottenborn Balto for her leadership as the first President of the NCI. Saturday evening in September we said "Thank you" to Charlie and Priscilla for their excellent service as

Caretakers for the past 8 years. Charlie and Priscilla are two of the finest people I have ever met. In September we said "Thank you" to Shirley for her time on the NCI Board, and folks said "Thank you" to me for my time on the NCF Board.

Art Maguire has volunteered to direct folks to the various tasks that need to happen during the weekend. This has worked very well, and I appreciate his help. Amy K Gonzalez has invited you to look at her photos from both of these weekends. Amy has the photos posted at the following websites. She spent loads of time gathering names, and for this I am extremely thankful. I spent a good deal of my time under the GBH or Infirmary, so didn't get a chance to see everyone who attended. I could not have compiled the list of attendees without Amy's and Art's diligence.

May photos:

<https://picasaweb.google.com/lh/sredir?uname=105289606409382443960&target=ALBUM&id=5881368345577099009&authkey=Gv1sRgCJnyylfAv5it6wE&invite=COqD2pIE&feat=email>

September photos:

<https://picasaweb.google.com/lh/sredir?uname=105289606409382443960&target=ALBUM&id=5929219173723945841&authkey=Gv1sRgCPK-15uNufW7nQE&invite=CJmCmMwD&feat=email>

Many folks attended both the May and September Service Weekends and I have used a * to indicate those folks. Thank you to Adam, Alex, Alice, Amy, Amy*, Amy*, Andy, Anne, AnneSon1, AnneSon2, Annie, Annie*, Art*, Barak, Ben, Benjamin, Beth, Betsy, Betsy, Bob, Brett*, Cecily*, Celie*, Chris*, Christopher, Chuck, Corey, Corrie, Corrina, Dave, Dave*, Dominic, Ellis*, Emily, Evan, Flip*, Gisela*, Graelyn*, Jack*, Jane*, Jarrod, Jason, Jason, Jeanne, Jeff, Jenny*, Jerry*, Jesse, Jet, Jimmy, Joanne, Joe*, Joe, Joey*, Joseph, John, Kate*, Katie*, Katie, Kim*, Lai, Lars, Laurel, Leah, Legend, Leia, Liam*, Lily*, Lori, Louise*, Lucas*, Lyt*, Mack*, Maggie*, Maggie, Maria, Mark*, Mason, Matthew, Meg, Michaux, Mike*, Mike*, Molly, Monica, Nancy, Neil*, Nell*, Nina, Oliver, Paul, Peggy, Penny*, Peter*, Powell*, Priscilla, Reid*, Rian, Rick, Robert*, Samuel, Sandra*, Sarah, Shirley, Stephanie, Steve*, Taylor, Todd, Theta, Tony*, Valerie, Ventry*, Walter*, William and especially Charlie and Priscilla.

I hope we are all lucky enough to again cross paths with Charlie and Priscilla who retired to Florida after the September 2013 Service Weekend. I would also like to say thank you to all of you for your support over the many years and hope you will support Ventry and Art in the years to come. Ventry Smith will take on the position of the Director of Facilities on the NCI Board and Art will continue in his roll as Service Weekend Coordinator, but will also become a voting member of the NCF Board.

Although I have attended 51 of the 52 Service Weekends, I was not the first NCF Service Committee Chair. That credit goes to Walter Mehring, who coordinated the Service Weekends for 6 years and made it easy for me to continue.

Please share any other digital photos .you may have taken with Amy KG, or Michaux, the Webmaster, at <http://naturecampfoundationorg/>.

The Nature Camp Foundation and Nature Camp, Inc., with heartfelt warmth and fondness, thank Jim Brooks for his immeasurable loyalty, time, energy, expertise, and the shear joy of his presence in our midst.

Adult Session 2013: Nature In Miniature

A record number of attendees came to Camp the weekend of August 16-20 to take a close up look at nature and its workings. Campers learned of the ecology of small seeps, springs and intermittent streams, the biology and natural history of small amphibians, the diversity of soil microbes, took a close look at ferns and their allies, learned of crystalline structures of local gemstones (and made necklaces of those gems), built small ecosystems, solar panels, and a knotted rope swing. The weekend culminated in a field trip tour of the geological history and future as well as the natural history of a section of the Blue Ridge. There was also the requisite morning bird walks, book sharing, music in the evenings (including the ever popular Appalachian String Band) and the sharing and companionship that always makes Camp so special.



Jeff Jefferson, a first time camper this year, was introduced to Adult session by one of our instructors and his sister, former camper/counselor, Nell Fredericksen. He has long heard of Camp but never attended, until now. "Being a first time camper, I couldn't have enjoyed my experience more! Also the fact that I was welcomed to camp the first afternoon, by the calls of a screech owl - I knew right away this was a special place. The location is awesome, in the mountains of western Virginia, which feels like home to me. All the folks there were incredible. Even not knowing many of them before meeting them there, not one was a stranger. Different personalities, yes, but all are kindred spirits! All the class instructors were great as well. It is definitely easy to learn from individuals who are passionate about the natural world and enjoy educating like minded students. I consider myself a "nature geek", so the classes I took all centered around ecology/taxonomy/natural history (except Mike's solar panel class!) and I thoroughly enjoyed each and everyone. Enhanced my salamander finding



skills, learned a lot about field identification of ferns, liverworts, and mosses, and even picked up some interesting geological knowledge of southwestern Virginia. I really like the fact that the natural environment is the classroom! Overall it was an awesome, cool, fun, exciting, insert positive adjective of choice here, experience and I definitely am looking forward to many more in the years to come."

NCI Report

Dear Friends,

The state of Nature Camp, Inc. is strong. We are a young organization, created in the 2007 timeframe to be responsible for the ownership, maintenance and operation of Nature Camp. Our mission is different from that of the Nature Camp Foundation, but we are joined in ensuring the health and success of the mission of Nature Camp: educating a community of interested individuals and inspiring a commitment to conserve and sustain the environment and its natural resources as responsible stewards of the Earth.

Since the last issue of the Afterglow, our dear caretaker, Charlie Truxell, retired effective August 31st. As soon as we learned of Charlie's plans, the effort to document the Caretaker's duties rose higher on the "to-do" list. Phillip Coulling worked with Charlie to get the Caretaker job description firmed up. That served as the foundation for an advertisement in the Caretaker's Gazette (source for our past two caretakers) and a post on the Nature Camp website. A search committee was formed [members: Amy Kasdorf Gonzalez, Paul Cabe (current Director of Extended Education, NCI; past ED of NC), Joe Irby (Development Chair, NCF), and Philip Coulling] to interview and select the new caretaker. Several highly experienced, well qualified candidates were considered. We are pleased to announce that, effective October 15th, we have a new caretaker, Gary Barker. Gary brings a wealth of skills, knowledge and experience. He has been the caretaker for a large 4H camp in Minnesota, renovates log buildings, is quite the naturalist, and also a student of history, especially Lewis & Clark and their expedition.

In the meantime, while it was empty, and now that it is the responsibility of NCI, we had a great opportunity to evaluate the Caretaker's Quarters for appropriate renovation. Mike Meads, NCI treasurer, and Joe Irby, along with Cindy Irby, headed up the team to work on that. The thought was to get the Caretaker's Quarters in move-in condition to permit the new Caretaker (Gary) to concentrate efforts on the rest of camp. Charlie Truxell certainly left the house in much better condition than he found it, so Mike and Joe's job has been easier. Estimated completion date for this project is November 30th.

NCI is now meeting twice a year. At our June 2013 meeting, the board agreed that we would move to fill our vacant Facilities Director position. Our NCI board is populated by the NCF board, and then we elect members to their specific positions in the NCI structure. We were fortunate to have a volunteer – Ventry Smith, a long ago Nature Camper who has returned to the fold in recent years and worked closely with Charlie and with Jim Brooks, the NCF Facilities Chair. When you come to Service Weekend, look for Ventry, and introduce yourself! Also, the position for Promotion & Publicity Director came open after Shirley Napps served 2 three year terms. Thank you Shirley! Emily Richardson has agreed to serve as the next director of Promotion and Publicity. Emily is a former camper and currently works in development for the Maymont Foundation in Richmond. She was instrumental in the Richmond fundraising efforts during the Campaign for Nature Camp of 2007. Shirley and Emily are working together for a smooth transition of efforts.

In other NCI news, the NCI board has resumed a presence at the opening days of each camp session. It allows our board to get a first-hand look at camp during the summer, check in with the caretaker, the summer staff and entertain questions from parents as they entrust their valuable children to our care. This enables us to support the needs of camp in a more directly informed way.

I would like to finish with a sincere thank you to all the Garden Clubs, other organizations and individuals who have been so generous to Nature Camp this year and every year. The donations continue to come in and are applied either to defraying the tuition of specific campers, or to our general operations, according to the intentions of the donor. Our corresponding secretary sends the thank you letter to you, but we ALL appreciate your contribution that makes it possible to educate our campers and encourage them to be the responsible, gifted, earth-loving citizens they truly are.

-Amy Gonzalez

NCF and NCI Boards Hold Long Range Planning Meeting

On June 22nd, the two boards governing Nature Camp, the Nature Camp Foundation and Nature Camp, Inc., held a long range planning meeting. The purpose was to take a strategic look forward and see where Camp should head and whether we were on the right path to get there.

The NCF last had such a meeting in the spring of 2006, before the split from the Virginia Federation of Garden Clubs later that year. The ensuing years have been devoted to consolidating Camp under its new management. The boards felt that the time had come to take another look forward, relatively free from any pressing emergency.

Two major issues emerged from the gathering, with joint groups formed to address them.

The first group was charged to take a hard look at current governance, and specifically, whether the two-board structure continued to be valid. If so, a primary follow-on concern was to determine the best structure to manage the responsibilities of each board for the maintenance and upkeep of Camp's aging facilities.

The second group was charged with looking at how best to extend the reach of Nature Camp's capabilities and experience to a broader audience. Emphatically, this was not a desire to increase the current capacity of Camp nor was it to try to establish another campus. The focus is to look at broadening the population of campers and staff to better reflect the diversity of young people in Virginia and the country as a whole, and to examine new partnerships and methods to capitalize on Nature Camp's expertise and facilities and expand our reach.

Each group had members of both boards on it, and their reports will be forwarded to the two boards for consideration of the recommendations offered.

Nature Camp Foundation Upcoming Elections

The Nature Camp Foundation has staggered terms of office for the four elected officers and five appointed Committee Chairs. Most offices have term limits of two consecutive full terms. According to our By-Laws, members in good standing (those that have contributed either financially or in-kind during the current or previous fiscal year), or members of the Lillian Schilling Founders Circle, are eligible to vote. If you qualified to vote you should already have received your ballot. Officers for election this year are NCF President, and Member-at-Large. Nominees for these positions include Annie White for president. Annie is a former camper and counselor and active in Work weekends. She recently formed Resource Strategies, a consultancy firm that works with market and policy solutions for companies wanting to advance sustainability. You can read more about Annie in the Spring 2012 Afterglow. Annie is running unopposed.

The two candidates for Member-at-Large are both former campers and counselors. Alia Anderson is a Transportation planner specializing in bicycle and pedestrian planning and still active with Camp through Adult Session and Work weekends. Jeff Pool is a computer scientist working with NVIDIA focusing on lowering the energy consumption of their products to make them more energy efficient. Both candidates express a strong desire to help support Camp in any way they can.

So, please return your ballots and the results of the Election will be posted on the NCF website as well as published in the spring 2014 Afterglow.

The Successful *Campaign for Nature Camp* Closes Out

When the Virginia Federation of Garden Clubs withdrew its support for Nature Camp in the fall of 2006, an immediate effort was undertaken by the Nature Camp Foundation to try to raise funds to do the needed renovations that the VFGC hadn't been able to afford. That capital campaign was called *The Campaign for Nature Camp*, headed by Anne Rottenborn Balto (serving simultaneously as the founding President of Nature Camp, Inc.), to seek pledges of financial support over an initial three-year period, later extended to five.

Over the course of the campaign, a total of 542 donors pledged more than \$622,000. Funds came in big amounts and small, eventually totaling over \$619,000, a shortfall of less than one half of one per cent, a truly phenomenal response rate.

The campaign raised enough to fully cover the costs of the capital improvements Nature Camp needed. Over half million dollars went immediately into upgrades for water, sewer and electrical systems to make Camp safer and better. These monies allowed Camp to operate without pause during a trying time of transition. Then, a few years later, the balance allowed Camp to continue major capital improvements with a new well system and kitchen upgrade despite the global economic downturn. These funds also allowed the separate and on-going annual giving program to fund more routine expenses within normal budgets.

A deep and lasting debt of gratitude is owed to the loyalty of our many donors who gave so generously to this campaign. You ensured that Nature Camp could not just survive, but thrive. Because of your strong support, this capital campaign is now officially closed.



The Nature Camp History Project Needs YOU!

The Nature Camp History Committee (NCHC) is pleased to announce that our initial set of historical documents and photographs is now housed in the Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections at UVA. We hope this collection will serve anyone interested in Nature Camp's important role in furthering environmental education. Anyone interested in perusing the Nature Camp History Collection will find it available during regular library hours (Monday through Thursday from 9 AM to 9 PM, and Fridays and Saturdays from 9 AM to 5 PM). If you want to find out more, you can call the special collections library at 434.243.1776 or visit the web page: <http://small.library.virginia.edu/>.

We're pleased that alumni are already asking about the collection and making use of it. Early this year, Elizabeth Thrower Coberly (camper, 1984-1988) contacted us to ask whether we had anything related to the establishment of Nature Camp in the 1940s or anything documenting the "natural advocacy" work of her grandmother, Hazel Thrower. I was thrilled to receive the email, especially since I remembered Mrs. Thrower fondly. She was active in environmental education and issues from the 1950's to the 1980's. She made sure that Elizabeth, her siblings, and her cousins all attended Nature Camp, and I remember meeting her on several of her visits to Camp during the summer sessions when I was on staff. I also remember Colonel Reeves' telling me that Mrs. Thrower was an important advocate of Camp during her tenure as president of the Virginia Federation of Garden Clubs in the early 1980s.

After our email exchange about her project, Elizabeth scheduled a visit with Nancy Lowry. At that point, Nancy was beginning the process of organizing the papers for submission to the archives, but she was able to help Elizabeth find some interesting material for use in her current graduate work. This project, in Elizabeth's own words, includes a chapter in "a book which is a collection of essays, letters, art, music, etc. The focus is the role of nature, interpretation, recreation, and conservation. We [the authors featured in the book] are taking a historic view [of environmentalism] going back to the discovery of the Americas" (email to me, Feb 13, 2013). So these documents have already served a member of the Nature Camp community, not to mention Camp's overall goals of promoting environmental stewardship.

Of course, we hope that Elizabeth's work is only the beginning. Now that we are set up for them, our committee invites submissions of material from the Nature Camp community: letters, journals, artwork, photographs, reports, awards, notebooks, scrapbooks, clippings—anything that helps document the history of Camp or helps people understand the Nature Camp experience and mission. If you have items that you wish to donate, please visit the Nature Camp Foundation web site. There you'll find specific instructions regarding how to submit materials. If the items you wish to give us match up with what we're seeking, please fill out the donation form found in this issue of the *Afterglow* (or on the NCF web site) and send us a hard copy of it with the items. There's one caveat: we have most issues of the *Woodland Echoes*, but we're still missing a few. Please—don't send us your old Camp newspapers unless it's on the list below.

Now that we have our document collection up and running, our next focus will be on developing our oral history collection efforts. The first step is finding people who will commit to the project. We need people who are interested in being trained to interview former campers, staff, and friends of Camp. This is a significant commitment, as it will require time and some training. But it's also one of the greatest joys you can imagine! If you are interested in volunteering for any of the NCHP's tasks, oral history or otherwise, please contact either Nancy or me and we'll talk to you about the possibilities. Our committee is especially suited for those who would like to come to the Service weekends, but whose tastes and talents run more toward the clerical (or conversational) than the "constructional!"

- Katie Hoffman, History Project Director

Issues of the *Woodland Echoes* that we still don't have:

1998: all sessions	1963: all sessions
1992: second session	1962: third session
1972: first session	1960 fourth
1971: first, second, and fourth sessions	1959: fourth
1970: second, fourth	1957: first
1969: first and third	1956: first and third
1966: first and fourth	1954: all sessions
1965: all sessions	1955: all sessions
1964: third and fourth	1953: first and second

We don't have any before 1953, and could really use anything from 1943-1951 (Sherando)

Austin Creigh “Gus” Deeds



Nature Camp mourns the loss of Gus Deeds, a long-time camper and member of the staff. Gus was a fascinatingly entertaining storyteller, an astonishingly talented musician, a brilliant thinker, an inspiration to legions of campers and counselors, and a trusted and respected friend. He loved to share tales of his family and ancestors in Bath County. He taught himself how to play numerous instruments with uncanny ease. He could carry on intelligent conversations on topics ranging from music theory to theology. He had a remarkable knack for comforting homesick campers and making everyone feel welcome and appreciated and valued. And he enriched more lives than he will ever know. May we remember his reassuring smile, his carefree attitude, and his huge heart. Please keep him and his family in your thoughts and prayers. Peace be with you, Gus.

Calendar of Events 2014

NCF Board Meeting
 Spring Service Weekend
 Adult Session
 Fall Service Weekend

February 8, 2014
 May 16-18, 2014
 June 6-9, 2014
 September 19-21, 2014

The Nature Camp Foundation has

a new

Mailing Address:

P.O. Box 265
 Studley, VA 23162

Website: www.naturecampfoundation.org

Find us on Facebook!!!



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 Nature-Camp-Foundation](http://www.facebook.com/pages/Nature-Camp-Foundation)**



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