

the afterglow

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Follow the Gleam.... Powell Hutton

In mid-August 1992, Joanne and I were driving back to Arlington, Virginia, with our 11-year old daughter, Charlotte, from our second trip to Nature Camp. As we were cruising up I 81 in steady traffic at comfortably above the speed limit, Charlotte called out from the back seat, "Daddy, Daddy, stop." "Honey," I replied, "I can't stop. Is everything all right?" "Daddy, I want to show you something." After learning there was no emergency, I pulled over at the next safe widening. Charlotte jumped out of the car, ran up the bank, came to small purplish flower, and said, "Look, Daddy. It's a Bergamot. You can tell by its square stem that it's a member of the mint family." I was blown away. What had happened during those two weeks at camp? What sparked such interest and energy? That summer proved to be the first of my many happy associations with camp and campers.

I grew up as a Foreign Service brat, traveling every couple of years to a new home abroad, and while I'd gone hunting and fishing with my father in some exotic places, I'd never really learned about ecology and environments as systems. I had watched spiders catch insects, birds catch fish, and even a lion catch an antelope, but I didn't have much wider context for living, let alone inanimate, things. My formal education was in engineering and political science. My career was in the Army. My curiosity, however, was in the natural world.

These interests found expression at Nature Camp. For the first time I could explore nature in an organized way at Adult Sessions, which Joanne and I started attending some years later. We signed up for evening and weekend classes and outings with local DC area naturalist groups on everything from birds and insects to tidal marshes and geology. Joanne's interests and expertise grew, as she became a Master Gardener and a Master Naturalist, including serving for over five years as Arlington County's horticultural technician. One can't be married to someone who has a passion for nature without your own horizons being expanded, and we have shared many happy hours hiking, birding, and doing the "botanist's shuffle," whenever and wherever we can.

So I was never a camper as such, but I did go to Nature Camp as often as I could, both to help out during service weekends and to attend Adult Sessions. It was great fun to be with other like-minded people, doing work to improve camp, learning new facets of our natural world, gathering to sing in the evenings, and even playing bass in a beginner's string band. On one of these visits in 2004, Walter Mehring asked me if I wanted to join the board of the Nature Camp Foundation. I accepted, but guess I didn't do enough due diligence on what might be involved, because the next thing I knew I was the only nominee on the ballot that fall to be NCF president. That opened a new and very fulfilling nine-year chapter in my association with camp.

What started as my being with a relatively quiet alumni organization quickly turned to more active engagement once the Virginia Federation of Garden Clubs dropped its support of Nature Camp in the face of looming, costly, and needed upgrades. You know how the story ends – happily – but one of the most energizing meetings I have ever attended came on 29 October 2006, when 200 people packed into the LS Building and said, "We can do it." And we did, a deeply gratifying effort. That communal backing has always been a source of inspiration for me.

Such energy and commitment has manifested itself in almost every association I've had with camp over the years. Camp has always been led by a broad spectrum of dedicated individuals, young and old, who have taken



an abiding interest in sharing their knowledge and skills with others, also young and old. It has been my joy to have been a part of that activity.

Quite apart from my own personal involvement, Nature Camp has been a greatly enriching factor in the lives of our whole family. Joanne and I first learned of camp through Evelyn Byrd Sargeant, a camper and counselor in the 1960s and 1970s. She had married my older brother, Churchill Hutton, and they also live in Northern Virginia. As a result, not only did their four boys go to camp, as well as our two girls, but also the three children of my younger brother, Peabody, all of whom had grown up in Hong Kong. What made Nature Camp especially important, however, was that many of these nine overlapped at camp during a formative phase in their lives when they could be together without their parents. During one summer, there were five Huttons simultaneously at camp as counselors or campers. Camp survived the onslaught, and it united the cousins in a shared joyful experience.

Yes, Nature Camp and its community have been extraordinarily positive and fulfilling forces in my life, as well as in the lives of our next generation. We look forward to continuing that happy association in the years ahead.

A Celebration Dinner and Dance to honor Powell will be held at Camp the evening of May 17, 2014 during Service Weekend.

Nature Camp Roll of Honor

Nature Camp announces three new inductees into the Roll of Honor: Joe and Cindy Irby and Mike Meads. All three worked diligently to plan and oversee much needed (and long overdue) renovations to the caretaker's quarters this past fall in anticipation of Gary Barker's arrival. Both alumni of the Virginia Military Institute who have resettled in Rockbridge County, Lt. Col. Irby and Capt. Meads have been affiliated with Nature Camp for over three decades and have left their mark in immeasurable ways. They both continue to serve in vital roles: as Development Chair for the NCF, Joe has introduced new and sophisticated means of keeping track of donor information and gifts, and Mike has implemented new accounting practices and improved the efficiency of financial management as Treasurer of NCI. Cindy's ties to Nature Camp go back nearly as far (the Fourth Session 1986 edition of Woodland Echoes reports that she accompanied then Assistant Director Joe on a Sunday hike to December Ridge), and more recently she and Joe have sent their own children as campers. (Cindy, you really need to attend Adult Session one of these years.) Mike, Joe, and Cindy's names will be added to the roster of some three dozen individuals who have been recognized over the past decade for their extraordinary, non-monetary contributions to Nature Camp. Thank you for your gifts of time, creativity, and persistence.

A Technological Step Forward

The NCF recently procured and received training on a new cloud based fundraising and database management system, eTapestry, specifically designed for small nonprofits with limited IT infrastructure. The NCF owes a huge debt of gratitude to Molly Pickral and her group of folks that maintained the NCF database over the past 10 or so years. It was time for our technology to match the growth of our organization.

The NCF is currently in the process of bringing the new system on-line with supporter and alumni data that already existed in the NCF database and expects to have its full capabilities available by the end of September 2014. One of the new capabilities will be the opportunity for supporters to update their information on-line through the NCF website. eTapestry will aid the NCF in engaging Camp's supporters, enhance the security of personal and NCF data, increase our communication abilities, and provide solid supporter/alumni data for planning NCF and NCI activities. If you have experience with eTapestry or other on-line fundraising tools and would like to help implement the new system, please let Joe Irby, NCF Development Chair, know. His contact information is jirby@teradact.com.

News from NCI

Hello everyone, as I write, the snow and sleet are coming down on a chilly, gray St. Paddy's Day. This has been quite the winter! A new year is upon us and we look forward to warmer days and outside activities. Flip Coulling, our Executive Director, is in the process of finalizing enrollment for regular camp sessions, Adult Session, firming up staffing etc. Members of the Nature Camp Foundation board and the Nature Camp, Inc. board have been working together on documenting the process of how the two boards will work together on caring for the Facilities of Nature Camp. It describes roles, responsibilities and time-lines. We now have a draft by which we will work this year, and have agreed to reconvene in 2015 to consider revisions and amendments after a year's experience with the process.

In the Fall Afterglow, I told you that we had hired a new caretaker, Gary Barker. He has great experience and we think he is a true fit with our culture at camp. Rather than write more about Gary, I asked him to introduce himself to you all, which you can read below. I invite you to make yourself directly acquainted with Gary when you come to camp. Camp is in good hands!

"After spending a decade as site manager/caretaker for a YMCA camp in Northern Minnesota, I told myself I could see myself doing that again someday. It was a good fit for me. When I saw the advertisement that Nature Camp had posted in the Caretaker Gazette, I did some exploring to learn what Nature Camp was all about. The mission of Nature Camp was similar to a personal mission I've had for many years. My ways of teaching and inspiring others to care about the environment were through visual arts and writing a nature column. I also had been involved with other environmental organizations such as Defenders of Wildlife, Friends of the BWCA and The International Wolf Center. The possibility of being a caretaker for a camp that taught young people to be good stewards of the environment was exciting to me, so I applied.



Luckily, Nature Camp picked me to fill the role as Sentinel. When I first moved here, I needed to get back into the proper mindset and attitude of an environmentalist, and also needed to learn how things were done at Nature Camp. I'd spent a couple of years on the Northern Plains of ND, and my tree hugger ways had slackened a bit. When I first arrived here, I had the fortune to immediately meet Amy Beard. She helped get me settled into the ways of Nature Camp, showed me much about the area and guided me back into the proper habits of a person that cares for this little planet of ours. For helping me get off to a good start, I'm forever grateful to her.

Before I met many of the Nature Camp family, I saw the movie *Never Cry Wolf* sitting on a shelf in the office. One of my favorite movies, I found out it was also a popular movie at Nature Camp. I knew then I was in good company here.

Never Cry Wolf came out in the 80s when my wilderness was the mountains of Eastern West Virginia. Back then, *Wild America's* Marty Stouffer also inspired me and it wasn't long that, like Charles Martin Smith riding the train north in *Never Cry Wolf*, I headed north listening to Johnnie Horton songs and reading Robert Service poems. My goal was to film wolves and other wildlife, and also be a nature writer. I lived in MN for 17 of those 20 years, and 3 years in ND. I spent a fair amount of time in the Northern Rockies filming wildlife, and also some time in the Black Hills. I have lots of nature stories to tell.

Thanks to my high school history teacher, my interest in history has grown along with my love of nature. For a time I interpreted the Lewis and Clark expedition at Fort Mandan in ND. I learned in my research of the strong Virginia connection. I also work with wood - often times using traditional hand tools. Hardly a day goes by when I'm not sweeping up a pile of wood shavings, wood chips or sawdust. I enjoy

demonstrating the use of these old time tools sharing some survival skills like fire starting. I'm a patient person, so I'm always willing to teach these subjects, and I have taught people of all ages.

The mountains and language of Virginia are like old friends. When I saw the name Coffey here in Rockbridge County, I began feeling at home (my mother's side of the family are Coffeys). I'm originally from Logan, West Virginia. After a trip to West Virginia, visiting relatives I hadn't seen in years, I began feeling like the time had come to return to my family roots. Becoming a part of Nature Camp has allowed that to happen, and I appreciate it.

I've quickly discovered similarities between the Minnesota camp where I held the role of caretaker and here at Nature Camp, though a couple are outstanding. One is the support that I'm getting and another is the feeling of being a part of a family. Thanks for the support and welcoming me in. I look forward to getting to know the Nature Camp family, to exchanging stories and finally to playing a part in the continued success and prosperity of Nature Camp."

Adult Session - June 6-10, 2014

Issue #4 of The Afterglow, from September 1989, included this announcement from Dot Wilbur-Brooks:

Some of you will remember that back in the mid-1970s, Nature Camp had a session for adults the week before First Session. Many of us have wished for years that there were adult sessions. Now is our chance! On June 9, 1990 Nature Camp will open for a three-day camp session for adults only. We'll call it the Nature Camp Ecology Workshop. Don't miss this opportunity to refresh your memory and learn more about our natural environment. There will be classroom instruction in the basic area of natural sciences. But most important, there individual subjects such as ornithology, geology, and forestry will be tied with field trips to nearby unique natural areas where on-site discussions will mesh ecology and conservation.... Once again you can run around with a butterfly net, or look under rocks in the creek for aquatic larvae, or walk to Buttermilk Springs to study ferns.

This year marks the 25th Adult Session since Dot re-initiated this annual event as one of the flagship activities of the then fledgling Nature Camp Foundation. Although the format of the weekend has changed slightly over the past quarter century, the purpose and scope of the session remain the same: to gather with like-minded individuals to reacquaint ourselves with the environment in and around Nature Camp and to learn new ways of experiencing and appreciating the natural world. Each summer's session typically has a focus, but as a way of marking this milestone, this year's theme-without-a-theme will be "Back to Basics," with an emphasis on fundamental natural history and skills of observation and identification. Join us June 6-10 for three full days of investigating the plants, birds, insects, reptiles and amphibians, mushrooms, stream life, ecology, and geology in and around Nature Camp. Other activities will include nature drawing and journaling, making deerskin drums, reflective writing, enameling nature silhouettes on copper disks, stargazing and planet gazing (Jupiter, Saturn, and the moon will all visible—weather permitting), and the always popular Appalachian string band workshop. The weekend will culminate with an all-day field trip to the Apple Orchard Mountain area of Bedford and Botetourt Counties, a landscape with rich botanical, avian, and herpetological delights. More information and a registration form are available on the Nature Camp website (www.naturecamp.net) or by request from Executive Director Flip Coulling (director@naturecamp.net; 540-460-7897). We hope to see you in June!

Calendar of Events 2014

Spring Service Weekend	May 16-18
Dinner and Dance honoring Powell Hutton	May 17
Adult Session	June 6-10
Fall Service Weekend	September 19-21
NCF Annual Meeting	September 20
NCF 25th Anniversary Celebration Dinner	September 20

Gus Deeds Memorial Service - May 3rd, 2014



The loss of Gus Deeds last fall left an indelible hole in the fabric of the Nature Camp family and in the hearts of those who were fortunate enough to know him. In conjunction with his family, Nature Camp will host a celebration of his life on May 3. Please join us for a day of sharing stories, memories, songs, and the beauty of spring in a place that Gus so dearly loved. Plans for the afternoon remain under development, but as they crystallize, updates will be posted on the Nature Camp Foundation (www.naturecampfoundation.org) and Nature Camp (www.naturecamp.net) websites and Facebook pages. To assist us in planning and accommodating the number of attendees, please RSVP to the event listing on the Nature Camp Facebook page or directly to Flip Coulling (director@naturecamp.net; 540-460-7897). If you would like to stay for supper that evening, please bring a dish to share with others; overnight accommodations will be available in the bunkhouses.

Nature Camp is also working with Gus's family to plan a permanent memorial to benefit generations of campers to come. Two initiatives are in the works: one, an endowed fund to support one or more scholarships to campers in need, and two, an open-air teaching pavilion where classes may be held on rainy days and campers and counselors alike gather to play music or converse. Gus was passionately concerned that deserving campers be provided with the means to attend Nature Camp, and he loved nothing more than to gather with a small group of budding musicians to swap licks.

Nature Camp History Committee: Oral History Training Begins

For the last few years, the History Project Committee has tried hard to hold training sessions at the two service weekends at Camp. While that has been somewhat successful, I've come to the realization that the nature of what we're doing—at least in terms of the oral history training—requires a different kind of approach. That's why I am setting up a new system, designed to offer maximum flexibility to those who want to participate. By keeping these sessions limited to only two trainees at a time and scheduling them to suit the trainees' time demands, I hope to begin developing a cadre of folks who can work in pairs or solo to begin interviewing our interesting alumni, friends, and associates. I'm going to try to make this as flexible as possible—perhaps even shifting training locations when needed.

Of course, the History Project will still be carrying out some of our work at service weekends. Soon, there will be plenty of clerical work and scanning and other things that can be done by folks who have the inclination to show up at Nature Camp and help. I've designed a new, more flexible plan for the oral history training—one that allows me to train people at other times during the year. If you choose to be trained, your service will count toward membership in the NCF just as if you attended a service weekend. We'll keep track of your hours and submit them to the Service Weekend Chair, so that Camp can keep track of all in-kind work done on its behalf. Tracking this information is very important, as we may someday want to apply for grants—not to mention showing just how dedicated Camp alumni are!

If you're interested, don't let anything stop you from at least inquiring. Last year, the NCF approved funding for the equipment we need to send some volunteers out to collect oral histories. These will be "checked out" to the trained volunteers who are venturing out in the field to interview. We now have two new Zoom digital recorders and an HD video camera with a tripod, so now we need trainees who are ready to get out there and put them to good use. I'm looking for volunteers who will commit to spending two weekends learning to do proper, archivable interviews. These will be fairly intensive training sessions, but they will be really fun and rewarding for you individually, and they'll also serve Camp in a very important way that we've not yet been able to manage. I hope to hold the first training sessions in fairly close proximity to Richmond, but that part of the equation is TBA: I may move the session elsewhere if I find that I need to do so. For more details on these training sessions please contact Katie Hoffman. More information will also be posted on the NCF website.

New Facilities Director and Service Weekend Chair Positions

If you were at camp this past fall you are aware that Jim Brooks has stepped down from his position as Facilities Chair. Jim served dual positions for Facilities Chair on both the NCF and NCI boards. He oversaw many different and difficult tasks and spent the past 25 years pouring his heart and soul into Nature Camp to assure that the place we all love and cherish will endure for many future generations. Thanks to Jim and his tireless dedication, service weekend is the successful event that it has become today. Moving forward we now will have two people who will do their best to fill Jim's shoes.

To fill the Facilities Director position vacated on the NCI board, we would like to introduce Ventry Smith. For those who have been to recent service weekends, Ventry is a well know entity. By the time most of those who come to service weekend arrive, Ventry has already put in several days of work. Ventry comes to us from the city of Suffolk, VA and has spent the past 27 years working in municipal utilities for the city of Portsmouth. Ventry boasts of some history at camp. He first attended camp on a garden club scholarship in the summers of '78 and '79. Ventry did not make it back to camp for many years. His story is that he "found" camp one summer while hiking in the George Washington National Forest in 2007. It is fortunate for us that he has returned to camp to help guide us through the next however many years of Service Weekends.

To fill Jim's position that was vacated on the NCF board is someone most everyone is already familiar with at Service Weekend. Art Maguire is the new Service Weekend Chair for the NCF. Art has served as the Service Weekend coordinator in recent years. Art came to camp on a garden club scholarship in the summer of '78, missed the next year and returned in '80. The summer of '82 was to be his last as a camper, but upon arrival for that last session, Col. Reeves told him he was now a counselor and to get busy. Art spent that summer and the following two as a counselor. Art's career has encompassed working for many different businesses, acting in a senior management capacity. Art's sister, Catherine, also a camper and counselor, encouraged Art to get involved with camp, which he did the fall of 2009. We are glad that he has returned to a place that holds so many memories.

The NCF and NCI have worked together to define the roles these two gentlemen will have in their new positions. Ventry, as Facilities Chair for the NCI works closely with the Nature Camp Executive Director (Philip Coulling), and Caretaker (Gary Barker) to identify facility needs. He maintains a long range facilities plan and sets priorities for work during service weekends. The Facilities Director coordinates with the Service

Weekend Chair to ensure appropriate tasks are lined up and resourced. He supervises the actual work being done, both by volunteers and by contractors. He ensures the NCI Board is fully informed of ongoing facility progress and needs, and makes sure equipment and materials are ordered for Service Weekend projects.

Art, as Service Weekend Chair for the NCF, works closely with the NCI Facilities Director (Ventry) to ensure key Service Weekend tasks are identified. Once the projects are decided upon, Art organizes and allocates volunteers to perform appropriate tasks during the Service Weekends. Art also collects and maintains skill set and contact information of volunteers to ensure their service is recorded in the NCF database, and that they receive in-kind donation credit giving them voting status with the NCF. Art will be communicating with the Nature Camp volunteer community via eTapestry to alert them to upcoming Service Weekends.

Philip, Gary, Ventry and Art met this March to plan out this year's projects and to determine some of the long range goals for the maintenance of camp. By involving all four of these key players in a cooperative process we hope to more efficiently meet the most urgent needs of camp. There is a need for maintenance to be done outside of normal service weekends and where appropriate, volunteers can be identified to help with these projects. The work identified for Service Weekends results in a long list, yet we never seem to complete all tasks. This is by design, and the expectation is to complete as much as possible without killing ourselves. With this in mind though, we have been able to accomplish an impressive amount of work in just these two weekends each year. Everybody's efforts are greatly appreciated and we hope that, moving forward, we can continue to make Service Weekend a fulfilling and joyous weekend for everyone. Hope you can join us!!!!



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