

the afterglow

Issue 88 October 2015

Follow the Gleam....

Remembering Mary Jane Gannaway Layne, One of Camp's Brightest Sparks

(August 1933 to August 2015)



"We were big on characters," laughed Mary Jane Gannaway Layne as she recounted her experiences at Nature Camp during an oral history interview in 2013. She illustrated that fact by describing some of the most colorful characters she encountered during her days as a camper and counselor. There were many stories. One was about Charles Thornton, whom she first met as he was bicycling up the dusty road from Lake Sherando, with everything he owned sticking out of his backpack at crazy angles. He had been in the army and had just graduated from UVA. "He knew everything about everything," she declared. "He could have taught any class there." He was a counselor in 1947, her first year at Sherando. There was Bill Keeton, who attended E.C. Glass High School in Lynchburg with

her, and who read Mary Jane's piece about Nature Camp in the school's literary magazine and decided that he just had to go. Keeton later became a professor of biology at Cornell. He married a fellow Nature Camper, and their children also attended Camp. And there was counselor Doris, "The Snake Girl" about whom Mary Jane shared a story:

Doris caught a blacksnake and put it in a cage. They named it Henry. She kept him up in the cabin. They all came in one night and Henry was not in his cage. Everybody had to stand still and look around and see if they could find Henry. They found him wrapped around a broom handle in the corner, looking at all these people standing still. Doris put him back in the cage and the crisis was over. Then, all of a sudden, there were all these little eggs in the cage. They quickly changed his name to Henrietta. I imagine they took her out in the woods and found a nice, snaky-looking place and let her have her babies out [there].

Of course, though she remained modest about it, Mary Jane herself is quite an important character in the history of Nature Camp. She began her association with Camp in 1947, when she attended first session at Lake Sherando. She was elected Best-All-Around Camper. The following summer, she was invited to stay on as a counselor. Even after marrying her "sailor," Charlie Layne, she continued to support Camp. Mrs. Schilling appointed her to the Nature Camp board, on which she served for a number of years. After that, Mary Jane—a staunch Garden Club member herself—traveled to other clubs, making presentations about Camp and encouraging other members of the Virginia Federation of Garden Clubs to lend their support. Eventually, she became Membership Chair of the newly-formed Nature Camp Foundation.

Perhaps one of Mary Jane's biggest contributions to Camp came as the result of having to work elsewhere during the summer of 1952. Camp was closed because the lease at Sherando was up and the buildings in Vesuvius weren't ready for occupancy. So Mary Jane went to work at Stony Mill Girl Scout Camp for the summer, recruited

by her new friend Nell Hamlin (mother of our own Nell Jefferson Fredericksen). It was there that she first experienced singing "Follow the Gleam" while floating candles down the nearby creek. "I thought that was a nice tradition. They had a couple of counselors down the creek a ways to catch them. We let them float on off into the world. So when I came back to Nature Camp I told my friends there about it." Her friends liked the idea, so they put it into action and this lovely tradition continues during every closing ceremony at Camp.

Mary Jane shared plenty of interesting facts about the early days at Camp. Mrs. Schilling, she noted, thought that counselors should work at Camp just for the love of it. They weren't paid a salary. Though Stony Mill offered counselors \$75 per summer and Nature Camp didn't pay, Mary Jane elected to go back to Nature Camp when it reopened in 1953 on the current site. She remembered that the boys' bunkhouse still wasn't complete that summer, though the T-houses were functional. "They strung blankets across one end of the LS," she noted, "and the male counselors and 8 male campers stayed there." She loved the field trips, reporting that her "group at Sherando liked going in the back of a large dump truck to the fire tower. You got a little card that showed you were a member of the squirrel club because you had climbed the fire tower. We took picnics." Those trips continued after the move to Vesuvius.



Peggy Layne, Mary Jane's daughter and another active member of the Nature Camp community, comments that her mother was "always a nature lover. She used to take us hiking along the Blue Ridge." When I prepared to interview Mary Jane for the history project back in 2013, I was interested to see that Mary Jane's email address included "hpihkr." According to Peggy, this was because Mary Jane's interest in nature and the outdoors extended beyond her work at Camp. She was active for 25 years in the Natural Bridge Appalachian Trail Club, hiking until she was 75 years old. She and her fellow "Happy Hikers," as they called themselves, eventually covered the 88-mile stretch of the Appalachian Trail that runs nearest to Lynchburg, though they did so in 5- and 7-mile stints that were scheduled in between school pickups and all of the other responsibilities that busy mothers and grandmothers juggled.

Asked how her mother might like to be remembered by the community, Peggy noted that her mother was always modest about her work on behalf of Nature Camp. Her contributions were anything but modest, however, and she remains a very bright spot in our history. Mary Jane Gannaway Layne, though we lost her this past August, remains an inspiration. As we look forward to Camp's bright future, it's critical that we honor people like Mary Jane, whose contributions have helped to create the gleam that we follow today, both literally and figuratively.

- Katie Hoffman, VP/Secretary NCI

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Dedication of the Gus Deeds Memorial Pavilion

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VESUVIUS — On what would have been his 26th birthday, May 6, construction began on the Gus Deeds Memorial Pavilion at Nature Camp in Vesuvius. Despite heavy downpours throughout the region, it turned out to be a lovely afternoon in Vesuvius Saturday, June 20, 2015 when the pavilion was officially dedicated in Gus' honor, as "camper, counselor, music man, friend, brother," as the program described him.

The Millboro native, son of Sen. Creigh Deeds and Pam Deeds, died tragically Nov. 19, 2013; he had attended Nature Camp for years while growing up, later becoming one of its beloved counselors. The camp organized a campaign following his death to raise money for the pavilion, and to fund scholarships for campers in need.



Folks gathered in front of the new structure Saturday, welcomed by camp director Philip "Flip" Coulling, while a camper and counselor played a folk song on the banjo, one of Gus' favorite instruments.

The pavilion was built by Lithic Construction of Ruckersville, led by project manager and chief designer Jarrod Hood. Much of the timbers used came from a white oak felled near the camp swimming pool and a red oak donated by long-time former camper Walter Mehring.

Bath County resident Tony Walters, who grew up with Gus and attended William and Mary at the same time Gus was enrolled, was also on hand.

He had worked at the Virginia Historical Society, but this past year went to California to work at the Pali Institute, a place that trains in delivering experiential learning. On break between semesters, Walters is back at Nature Camp this summer as co-assistant director.

Walters talked about what a great place the pavilion is because it has already become the kind of gathering place Gus would enjoy. There are memories of Gus everywhere at camp, he said, and now the pavilion is within sight of many of the camp buildings, reinforcing the great feelings of community that Gus embodied.

Everyone joined in singing the camp song, "Thinking of Tomorrow," written by previous campers, and the ceremony closed with a benediction led by the Rev. John Haney of Millboro.

"We are grateful that so many generous people helped us build this part of Gus's legacy — a beautiful teaching pavilion and two scholarships at this place Gus loved," said his father, Sen. Creigh Deeds. "Nature Camp was a big part of his life and we felt it appropriate to work to remember him there."



News from Nature Camp



Nearly every session was full, and total enrollment exceeded 350 for only the fifth time in Nature Camp's history! Fredericksburg led the way with a whopping 51 campers, and two cousins joined us from Las Vegas, NV, and Moscow, Russia. Campers and staff appreciated the comfortable new mattresses, and the cooks found it much easier to make bread and pizza dough with the refurbished stand mixer. Geology classes had access to a petrographic microscope, thanks to a generous loan from Washington and Lee University, and discovered the hidden world of beauty in thin sections of

rocks. Counselors Tony Walters and Brent Warner introduced several popular and interactive "Repeat After Me" songs, including "The Wishy Washy Washer Woman" and one about David Hasselhoff. A power outage during the Second Session square dance left us dancing and singing in the dark, prompted emergency preparations led by head cook Eleanor Trott, and evoked memories of the 2012 derecho among the senior staff, but to everyone's relief the lights came back on before Reveille the next morning. The Lux Lopez Memorial Boat Race was held for the first time in many a year and attracted more than a dozen entries and numerous spectators along the course below the Lower Bridge. Evening programs included presentations on wildlife rehabilitation, pheromonal communication in snakes, the aquatic life of Big Mary's Creek (which included a demonstration of electroshocking, or e-fishing), and the first Nature Camp Environmental Design Entrepreneurial Challenge. A record number of 50 campers (nearly half of whom were new) and 25 staff learned about the "Subtleties of Nature" during Adult Session in August. The sublime Gus Deeds Memorial Pavilion immediately assumed a central place in the daily life of Nature Camp. Seldom a class or rec period passed in which the pavilion was not occupied, and caretaker Gary Barker spent dozens of hours carefully selecting and moving stones and painstakingly constructing a lovely retaining wall behind the structure. We are exceedingly grateful to all who contributed funds for this permanent tribute to Gus. It was truly a stellar summer, and Nature Camp thanks the members of the Nature Camp Foundation for your gifts of time, labor, and dollars which keep Camp vibrant and enriching for our current generation of campers and staff.



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- Philip Coulling, Director, Nature Camp

Calendar of Events 2015-2016

Fall Hike Day
NCF Board Meeting
Spring Service Weekend
Nature Camp Adult Session
Fall Service Weekend
NCF Annual Open Meeting

October 17, 2015
January 23, 2016
May 20-22, 2016
June 9-13, 2016
September 16-18, 2016
September 17, 2016

Fashion with Flowers XVII

Once more, the members of the **Richmond Council of Garden Clubs** came together for a great fundraising event on February 27, 2015. Fashions with Flowers has been held for 17 years in the Richmond area and for most of those years, Nature Camp has been the sole beneficiary of the proceeds. The theme for this year's event was "Fashionable Florals" and it took place at First Baptist Church on Monument Avenue. Lunch was catered by the ladies of the church. The main event was a floral design program presented by Betty Ann Galway. At the time of the event, she was on staff at the Norfolk Botanical Garden. She has a science/art background and has been designing for over 25 years. Her program was entertaining, informative and educational. Many of the tips and tricks she shared could be put into practice by even a neophyte like me! The fashion show was great fun, with models from amongst the garden club women. They really know how to flaunt their style. A silent auction was held, and all the floral designs, including the table centerpieces, were raffled off. I was invited to the Richmond Council's Annual Meeting & Luncheon in May to receive their generous donation of \$1000. Many thanks to the members of the **Richmond Council of Garden Clubs** for their generosity and hard work. - Amy Gonzalez, President, NCI



Seventh Almost Annual Fall Hike Day at Nature Camp

Coming Up Saturday, 17 October 2015

WHEN: 10:00 AM through the evening, RAIN OR SHINE. If the weather is really unfriendly, call Camp to be sure we're still going hiking: 540-377-2491

WHERE: Nature Camp

WHAT: "Sunday Hikes" (We know they're on Saturday, but like to call them by their traditional name) followed by dinner and relaxation. **BRING YOUR LUNCH!**

WHO: All friends of Nature Camp

COST: \$20 per person over 10 years of age, or \$50 maximum for a family. Those 10 and under free with a parent.

DETAILS: You and your friends and family are invited for a day at Nature Camp. Paul Cabe and Leigh Ann Beavers have come up with a great idea for a fundraiser to benefit the Nature Camp Foundation, which provides generous and invaluable financial and other assistance to Nature Camp. You can help support Nature Camp while enjoying a fall day in the woods, great food, and fun people. Activities will include counselor-led hikes (and possibly in-Camp activities for those who prefer to remain more sedentary). Paul, Leigh Ann, and company will be busily preparing dinner while all the hikes are out, so you can come enjoy a turkey dinner after your hike (vegetarian and vegan options will be available).

We will NOT be able to provide babysitting, so choose your hike accordingly if you have small children. Hikes will **LEAVE CAMP** at 10:30 AM, so please arrive in time to be ready by then. **PLEASE BRING YOUR LUNCH**, trail snacks, and plenty of water bottles with you.

PLEASE RSVP by October 10 to Flip Coulling at director@naturecamp.net or 540-460-7897. Also please note if you are a vegetarian or vegan.

Bring checks, payable to the **Nature Camp Foundation**, with you.

Spring Service Weekend

Service Weekend is an opportunity for the Camp community to come together and donate in a unique and remarkably valuable way to Camp while eating well, enjoying the company of familiar faces, and meeting some new ones as well. Of course, the Spring Service Weekend of 2015 was no exception.

As always, we saved thousands of dollars in labor costs maintaining and repairing the buildings and grounds around Camp but we also had the opportunity to put some final touches on the newest addition to camp, the Gus Deeds Memorial Teaching Pavilion. The ground under the pavilion was reinforced with fresh gravel and drainage around the pavilion was improved through the installation of a French drain. Walter Mehring was generous enough to donate some lumber for the frame of the structure in addition to some beautiful new benches that were hand crafted from black walnut right in front of the garage using traditional carpentry hand tools (also provided by Walter). If you haven't had the chance to see and inhabit this new structure for a few moments you're in for a treat during your next visit.

The grand re-roofing of Camp continues; the Educational Building is now completed. The effort put forth by the team of folks who take on the multi-day task of stripping the old roofing materials and installing fresh, new tar paper and shingles deserves special recognition. Thank you to all those folks who spent so many hours up on the roof!

A remarkable amount of siding was replaced around Camp, damaged due mainly to the chamber boring efforts of the carpenter bees that call camp home. Our siding replacement specialist was Bob Edmonds, his efforts have made a dramatic difference in the integrity of many of the buildings around Camp. This new siding was then coated with carbolineum to match the rest of the boards. Thank you to those helping with that messy job!

As many of you know after attending a Service Weekend, Adult Session, Reunion, or as a camper in recent years, we have a remarkable variety of sizes and conditions when it comes to the mattresses in the bunkhouses. Great news, new mattresses that are the perfect size for our bunks arrived at Camp and were installed as well as new ladders and rails on many of the bunks to improve ease of access and safety. Not all the mattresses were replaced but those in the worst condition were removed and we'll have all new mattresses soon. Thank you to everyone who had a part in upgrading our bunks and finding a home for those mattresses in good enough condition to be put to good use.

Camp will see a decrease in its energy usage due to new LED fixtures that were installed to replace the old fixtures in the bunkhouses and the T-houses. LED bulbs replaced the compact fluorescent bulbs in the LS as well. To round out the electrical work a new outlet was added in the kitchen as well to accommodate the new stand mixer.



A platform to accommodate a small satellite dish that provides high speed Internet to camp was built near the recreation field. Screen replacement and improvement continued around Camp, the kitchen and T-houses were cleaned thoroughly to get ready for the upcoming Reunion and summer camp season, the girl's staff room got some new shelving, invasive plants were removed from Camp, the trail to Table Rock was re-routed slightly to improve sustainability, and a plan for improving the trail to Second Look Out was created.

Service Weekend is not all work and no play. Many enjoyed getting to know the new Camp dog - Oliver (new pup of the Coulling family). Oliver tried to help by stealing as many gloves, goggles, helmets, hats etc. as possible. He must have thought we weren't getting enough exercise!! Evenings were spent in the LS gathered round for music, singing, and much laughter. And meals were a treat, especially gourmet pizza night!! Thanks to a talented kitchen crew headed up by Nell Fredericksen for the good grub!! The kids in attendance, when not put to work, spent time in a pack hiking and playing in the creek and setting the foundation for some of those long and lasting camp friendships.

Thank you to Joanne, Ventry, Mia, Peter, Mack, Paul, Kim, Cassi, Garrett, Carolyn, Scott, Peter, Louise, Mary Frances, Walter, Creigh, Melissa, Simon, Amy, Kate, Art, Mark, Paul G., Katie, Abigail, Cathie, Paul S., Flip, Shannon, Theta, Mike, Powell, Todd, Lewis, Steve, Sandra, Chuck, Adam, Annie, Matthew, Jason, John, Jeff, Maggie, Nell (our wonderful cook!), Sarah, Liam, Mia, Eleanor, Nicholas, Lily, Neil, and Celie for all your efforts, your donation saves camp so much! Look for future announcements regarding upcoming service weekends and a review of our productive Fall Service Weekend.



- Corey Basham, NCF Service Weekend Chair

Update your information!!!

The Foundation wants to have the best information on our supporters as possible so please update your contact information at <http://naturecampfoundation.org/my-profile/>. Updated and concise contact information will help the NCF provide the right information to you in the format you prefer.

Additionally, ask your Camp friends to do the same. There are plenty of folk still not in the "Circle" and we certainly want to inform them of the great things going on at Camp.

<http://naturecampfoundation.org/my-profile/>



News from Nature Camp, Inc.

The Nature Camp Incorporated Board of Directors met at Nature Camp in late May this year. At that meeting, we discussed the need to fill some positions on the board. Our Publicity & Promotions Director, Emily Richardson, resigned in February so we were in need of someone to complete her term. Paul Cabe, Director of Education, will have served 2 terms by this November. We have enacted term limits for the board, so a new Director of Education is necessary. And the combined duties of the Vice President/Secretary, fulfilled by Katie Hoffman, are growing. The by-laws are structured so it would be an easy matter to split the positions apart. We just have to find the right candidate. We were fortunate to find an excellent candidate for the Director of Publicity & Promotions. We are honored and delighted to have appointed Stacy Luks to the position this summer. Her daughter, Anna Homer, has attended Camp for three summers. We thank Emily Richardson for her service and look forward to working with Stacy.

The changes to the financial assistance request process generated a longer, more deliberative activity, but our Financial Aid Director, Kajsa Svarfvar, pronounced the changes successful. A few more tweaks to the process will be put into play for the coming year. Stay tuned to the Nature Camp website and to written communications for more details.

We continue to refine the processes by which we interact with the Nature Camp Foundation. The grant request process went through its first cycle this past year. Thoughtful planning and deliberation to anticipate our capital and equipment expenditures generates more information with which the NCF Development folks can formulate their appeals to you all. We are so very grateful to everyone for the generosity you demonstrate with your time, your talent and your funds that help make us a functional, successful Nature Camp.

- Amy Gonzalez, President, NCI

Nature Camp Foundation Board of Directors Changes and Upcoming Elections

Updates to the board of Nature Camp Foundation have us saying a fond farewell and huge thank you to Chuck Story who stepped down this past year after serving on the NCF board for more than 10 years as Treasurer and then as Finance Chair. Kevin Wheeler joined the NCF board this spring to fill Chuck's position as Finance Chair. Kevin grew up in Lexington and was both a camper ('93-'95) and a counselor ('95-'97). He now lives in Washington, DC with his wife Natsuko and their three year old daughter, Sana. For his day job, Kevin is the Managing Director of Kaizen, an international development consulting firm. Kevin holds a BS in geology from Brown University, a PhD in petrology from Columbia University.

Thank you Chuck for your many years of service to the NCF and welcome Kevin!

As part of our staggered term schedule, we always have at least one position to vote on each election year, and this year is no different. Up for election or re-election this year are the positions of Secretary, Treasurer, and At-Large member. Be on the lookout for an upcoming email that will have a description of the responsibilities for each position and short bios of our slate of candidates.

We are also very excited to announce our pilot electronic voting option this election year! Instructions for those who wish to vote electronically instead of mailing in a paper ballot will be included with this year's ballot. You will also be able to indicate your preference for future voting in our electronic survey. Thank you in advance for your patience as we work out the best possible solution for our many generations of camp supporters.

- Chris Chamberlain, Vice President, NCF and head of the Nominating Committee

Adult Session 2015 - The experiences of camper Mike Tabony

The 2015 Adult Session of Nature Camp was titled "Subtleties of Nature" but there was nothing subtle about the response to Adult Session 2015. My "Roster of Participants" included 74 names, which I believe was a record attendance. And a lot of folks (approximately 40) were still there on Tuesday morning enjoying camp till the last possible moment. Just a few years ago I can remember when everyone at breakfast on Tuesday could eat at one table. Not so now, campers are reluctant to leave the new friends they've made and old friends they've re-connected with over the weekend. Another indication of record attendance was the crowd that enjoyed the field trip on Monday. There were lots of folks out enjoying the Humpback Rocks area and less invigorating hikes through the beautiful Blue Ridge. During the weekend I remarked to Flip Coulling, the camp director, that it looked like Adult Session had hit the big time and I'll stick to that remark. Just the size of the group was exciting and my activities just added to the pleasure.

I camped out for the first time in Adult Session, setting up a two-person tent near Big Mary's Creek behind the chapel. It was nice to have my own little home to go to in the evening after late night music or, in one case, early morning music. I'm told everyone still in the bunkhouse enjoyed my tenting even more than I did (*Editors note - Mike snores!!!*). There were two other small tents along Big Mary's and one over along the path to Buttermilk Springs. Everyone looked cozy. Oh, yes, Theta Miller had a tent she picked up from a sale at Barnum & Bailey's used circus equipment on the athletic field. Quite the tent, Theta!!

My third experience with the camp string band was by far the best. Music has become such a big part of my adult session that I sometimes think of it as a music camp with natural overtones rather than the other way around. This year the band performed "Cripple Creek" (cloggers appeared on the dance floor to the rousing rendition) and "I'll Fly Away". Fun for all including the camp caretaker, Gary Barker, who as a new fiddle player in the band, was inspired seeing the joyful dancing to the music. Thanks to instructors Marc, Michaux, and Molly.



When I wasn't sleeping or strumming, I spent some of my time making a semi-precious stone necklace (Nell Fredericksen) and learning the gemstones of VA, fermenting some sauerkraut and kombucha (Katie Hoffman), and making a pair of Tarahumara running sandals (Walter Mehring). I learned about some of the processes that formed the rocks around camp (Maggie John) and why the asters are such a successful plant group (Julie Moore). Many aster flowers are actually many flowers posing as one, with their familiar rays enticing the pollinators in to walk all over the central disc which is made up of many flowers that are less expensive to plant resources. Learning such things is just part of a wonderful weekend. Camper Stacy Luks educated me about a fig variety called the Hog Island Fig. And there are always those lectures and walks that one cannot enjoy because you're already doing something else. One of the biggest challenges of Adult Session is always choosing what to do and what you'll have to do "next time". A second challenge to this writer is remembering and relating all the inspiring conversations and experiences one has during the weekend.



And, of course, adult session is primarily a wonderful camp family, one that welcomed several new members this year with open arms and hearts. Flip was most pleased by "Not only how many new people we had but how easily they became part of the camp community". Jerry Trammel said, "I especially enjoyed adding new geology and fermenting to my knowledge base." First time camper Liz Halford told me "Great camp! Everyone is intelligent and smart and people come here every year to add to their knowledge." We come for the wonderful hugs and smiles from our fellow campers. Camper and lecturer Gerald Pottern had my favorite quote "The good thing about the August Adult Session is that we only have to wait 10 months before the next one in June."

In the meantime I'll be enjoying Fall Service Weekend, the Fall Hike Day, and Spring Service Weekend with some of my favorite camp family members. Come join us.

Editors note: Thanks to Mike Tabony for sharing his Adult Session experiences with all of us!!!

Reunion Recap!

If there's a perfect time to drive down 608 and up our favorite dirt road to Nature Camp, it's probably late spring. Mountain laurel is thick on the south-facing slopes of Mine and the long vistas from the summit are full green. The nights are sleeping-bag cool and the creeks are colder, but the noon sun is hot enough to make up for both.

So it's fitting that it was on the last weekend in May of this year that scores of members of the camp family rolled in for the 2015 Nature Camp Reunion to spend a few beautiful days strolling, swimming, strumming, singing, feasting, and reliving old times with one another. A total of 88 people joined in the fun over the course of three days, enough that, at peak meal time Saturday, the LS was packed and noisy with former and current campers and counselors and their family and friends—including more than a dozen youngsters, some of whom were making their inaugural visits to camp. The trips they took to get there ranged from a few minutes to more than a day. (Joe Cleary and son Jasper squelched into the LS in the rain late on Saturday night after a long drive from Burlington, VT, mandolins at the ready. And Ann Clausen wins the longest journey award; she flew in from Lander, WY and caravanned down with former fellow counselors from Washington, D.C.)

The arc of a day at Nature Camp has a structure and a rhythm that's familiar to all of us, and it's especially dear when we've been away a long time: early morning bird walks and hikes up Mine and McClung; the satisfying scramble of a delicious breakfast, lunch, and dinner; evenings in the LS in a wide circle of stringed instruments; stargazing and s'mores around a rec field campfire; late night visits to Buttermilk Springs to seek out wiggling salamanders. We enjoyed all that over the course of the weekend, and more. Thanks to Katie Hoffman and a dedicated team of volunteers, we also had the opportunity to share the memories we all came with in a lasting way with the Nature Camp History Project, which aims to document camp's history from its beginning in 1942 to the present. We learned about the collection of documents—correspondence, photos, scrapbooks, old reports—which will be housed in the Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library at UVA, and we got the chance to sign up individually or in small groups to record memories in the quiet of the lab with the help of project volunteers trained in collecting oral histories. You can read more about the project, including how to contribute your own documents, at <http://naturecampfoundation.org/projects/nature-camp-history-project/>



There were, I think, more than enough moments of joy and delight over the course of the weekend to tide us over until the next quinquennial celebration. But the best of them sprang from an impromptu suggestion tossed out before lunch on Saturday by a very thoughtful attendee (if my memory serves me right, it was Caroline Parlett): Why don't we line everybody up out on the rec field for a chronological photo?

The resulting image is one for the record books. Under the shade of the trees lining the road into camp stand eight decades of Nature Camp family, from Robert Ritchie, a camper in 1950, to Liam Carr, who was set to return in a few weeks as a camper this summer. Between them are dozens of people linked by their love for the spot where they stood and for each other.



Such a moment would have been impossible without big helpings of that love in the form of a lot of hard work by a great many people. All of us who were there join in thanking the boards of the Nature Camp

Foundation and Nature Camp Inc., whose support—including the use of camp itself, thanks to NCI—were essential. Annie White, Chris Chamberlin, and Katie Hoffman devoted many hours advising and helping plan the weekend. Eleanor Trott led a team of cooks, including Lindsay Rotche, Adam Rotche, and Brent Warner, who did more than keep us fed—they ordered, planned, prepped, cooked, cleaned, made last minute supply runs, and delighted all of us with wonderful meals. Barak Brashear, Peter Mehring, Terry Richardson, Lars Nelson, Flip Coulling, Megan McDonald Duntzee and others volunteered their time and energy to help things run smoothly and make sure some of our favorite activities and most memorable moments were on offer. And, as always, so many attendees gamely stepped up to set tables, wash dishes, clean toilets, and handle all the less-than-glamorous duties of the weekend. To all of you: Thank you.

I drove out of camp on that final afternoon with the usual ache that comes with leaving my favorite place on Earth, intensified by the knowledge that my pending move to the West Coast meant I probably wouldn't be back for years. But, as always, the sadness lifted and drifted away like dirt road dust when I thought about what really makes late May the best time to be at camp: The knowledge that summer and its four sessions of learning and love in Vesuvius, and the promise those weeks hold for another generation, are never far off.

*Editors Note: The Foundation and all that attended the reunion would like to extend a great round of applause to **Graelyn Brasher** (author of the recap and Reunion Committee Chair) and her committee for a job well done!!!*



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