

The Afterglow

Issue 99, Fall 2021

Follow the Gleam...Corey Basham

By Tina Dudley

At Nature Camp, I had the immense pleasure of meeting Gucci, a 19 week-old falcon, and his owner/handler, Corey Basham (Licensed Falconer). Corey purchased Gucci for use in falconry, which is an ancient method of hunting using a trained bird-of-prey such as a falcon or hawk.

Early evidence of falconry has been found in Mongolia, Iran, and elsewhere in the middle east between 4,000 and 6,000 BC. Some experts claim the practice is even older, but by 2,000 BC it was a well established hunting method. Thousands of people in the United States continue this practice today.

As part of this year's adult session at Nature Camp, Corey offered several demonstrations and educational sessions with Gucci, his current falcon. Gucci is a captive born hybrid mix of Gyr falcon and Saker falcon, mostly Gyr falcon. The Saker falcon hybridization is to give her more tolerance of hot weather, as the Saker falcon comes from the middle east. Gyr falcons can be found in much of Canada and the northern US. She is fertile and able to reproduce.

The Gyr falcons (*Falco rusticolus*) are the largest true falcon in the world. They can fly up to 68 miles per hour! In captivity, Gyr falcons can live over 20 years. Falcons roost on cliffs and make a low-effort nest called a scrape because it is usually just scraping rocks together. They may also use abandoned nests built by other species.

Falcons are primarily bird predators, so Corey will use her to hunt ducks once she is fully trained. She can see a duck from over a mile away and reach speeds of 100 miles per hour when attacking. When she strikes the duck, she will close her feet to make fists that will stun the duck. She may also bind to a duck in flight and bring it down to the ground. Hunts happen in the winter. During the summer, Corey does educational programming with Gucci. He feeds her quail, chicks, and mice. She currently weighs around 1200 grams, which is just over 2.5lbs.

When traveling, she wears a hood which helps her feel calm. During the day, Gucci is tethered to her perch outside, unhooded, and is subject to the elements. It is important that she gets sun and rain to maintain her health and hygiene.

Corey is currently working with Gucci to strike a baited lure on a rope called a creance. After she has good reaction time and consistently returns immediately, she will be trained to fly high up using a drone, so she can gain speed and have an advantage over the ducks when they are flushed.

Once Gucci is fully trained she will be able to fly off-leash. Falconers have to keep a close control of the weight of the falcon to maintain the working



relationship. She will be fitted with a telemetry device that will track her and aid in recovering her if she is lost.

Corey works with additional birds other than Gucci. Right now he has a barn owl that was raised by another falconer after being found when it was too young to care for itself. He plans to release the owl to the wild after it has proven that it is able to hunt on its own. In the past Corey has had red tailed hawks, a harris hawk, and American kestrels. Licensed falconers are permitted to capture up to 2 birds-of-prey per year from the wild, although there are rules about what species are allowed to be captured, and it is rare that falconers take more than 1 bird a year from the wild, if that many. If a wild bird is captured for falconry it must be less than a year old or it is released immediately as required by law. Corey released a red tailed hawk after working with her for 3 years, and has had others for only 1 year.

Gucci is a working animal, not a pet. Corey will keep her and work with her until she is no longer able to work, and then she will go to a propagation center to take part in a breeding program, or she will be donated to an educational organization that can care for her. She is not releasable because she is a captive born falcon.

Falcons can work for over 10 years. Corey takes into account the ethics of keeping a bird-of-prey captive and consistently asks if what he is doing with these birds is sustainable for the species involved, and if it seems enjoyable in the long run for the individual bird as well.

Gyrfalcons are not a social species and generally after Gucci eats she is content to just sit and enjoy the day. She does not display any signs of distress or exhibit any self-destructive behaviors and usually seems quite relaxed and content. When a falcon is comfortable it will display behaviors such as rousing, which is when they fluff up all their feathers and shake them into place.

She is safe from predators, she is fed consistently, she gets regular exercise and once fully trained she will be able to hunt as she would in the wild. It's better than the zoo - it would be like taking a lion to the savannah 3-5 times per week so they could hunt. Falconry has taught Corey that some things cannot be learned from books - you need patience and experience working with an animal like this.

Folks interested in Falconry should contact their state falconry association and research the many texts regarding falconry in general. A recommended book, for more information, is *As The Falcon Her Bells*, by Phillip Glasier, for an enjoyable read that contains some technical details and an overall good description of training and hunting with these birds.

If you are interested in becoming a falconer, by law you need to do a 2-year apprenticeship and get a license before you can own a bird-of-prey. These websites have more information for people interested in becoming a falconer:

https://www.n-a-f-a.com/page/What_is_Falconry

<https://www.pbs.org/wnet/nature/raptor-force-history-of-falconry/>

<http://www.themodernapprentice.com/glossary.htm>



Editor's Note: *Corey Basham is a former Nature Camp counselor, and has been involved with Service Weekends, Adult Session, Fall Hike Day, and retained strong ties to Camp over the years. Corey has been an important player as well on the NCF and NCI boards in recent years. He came first to NCF as Service Weekend Coordinator, then hopped over to NCI where he currently serves as the Facilities Chair. He has served both boards extremely well in both positions and we thank him for his expertise and leadership. However, he is now ready to try something new and will be taking over as President of Nature Camp, Inc. when the magnificent Katie Hoffman concludes her two terms this November. Join us in expressing our gratitude to Katie for the amazing job she has done these past six years, and welcoming Corey to his new role - he will do a great job leading NCI forward!!*

Development Committee Update

By Amy Kasdorf Gonzalez

Another strange yet rewarding season is in the books. Youth sessions were held with increased Covid safety precautions in place. I attended Adult Session (try it some time – it's tons of fun!!). We adults also wore masks indoors and tested before we came. We learned, we laughed, we sang, we ate, we reconnected and bonded with new campers. This is what you helped to make possible.

You, our community, continue to amaze me in your generosity. I am so glad you have decided that the Nature Camp Foundation is a worthwhile place to "put your money where your mouth is". You ensure that the Foundation can continue to support Nature Camp in its Capital Improvement and Maintenance Programs, along with providing scholarships to worthy campers. This year, through September 27th, you have enabled us to reach 54% of our annual operating fundraising goal (\$45k+ of \$85k). Thank you.

We are working on creating new meaningful ways for donors to memorialize and celebrate their loved ones. While Named Scholarships come immediately to mind, we are preparing a menu of other offerings, at varying value levels, for donors to consider as gift opportunities. Please be patient as we flesh this menu out. Please never hesitate to contact me at amykgonzalez@gmail.com when you are considering a loving memorial. I am always interested in having this conversation.

Service Weekend

By Theta Miller

When this issue of the Afterglow arrives in your inbox or mailbox, we will have had four Service Weekends cancelled due to Covid-19. By the Spring of 2021, although we cancelled the Spring Service Weekend, there was optimism that by fall things would be better and we would be able to meet in the new-normal way. Unfortunately, the rise of the delta variant nudged us towards our fourth cancellation and the 2021 Fall Service Weekend was also cancelled. I have heard mingled disappointment for the loss and support of that decision from many of you.

We are now working on full expectation that the 2022 Spring Service Weekend WILL go forward on the third weekend of May with the appropriate health and safety measures and precautions, and there will be an extensive list of tasks to accomplish! All the routine maintenance tasks will just require MORE. In great faith that our Camp community will pull together and respond, there will be a long list when we can reassemble for service and fun.

There will be a Save-the-Date reminder in April with a preview of our most pressing maintenance and special needs, and details of our Covid policies. But do not wait, put us on your calendar now for May 20-22, 2022. When that notice comes, there will be a new feature for online reservations. Please use it to let us know if you will be attending or hoping to attend. We continue to welcome everyone, but it sure helps to plan tasks and meals if we know whom to expect.

Here is looking forward to May!!!

Find us on Facebook!!!

You can connect with the Nature Camp Foundation at:

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Nature-Camp-Foundation/107552817467>

You can stay in touch with Nature Camp, Inc. at:

https://www.facebook.com/pages/Nare-Camp/324806714283350?ref=br_tf

News From Nature Camp

By Philip Coulling, NC Executive Director

It was a summer unlike any other at Nature Camp. We capped enrollment at 50 campers per session to allow for adequate and appropriate physical distancing, especially while sleeping and eating, and we shortened sessions from two weeks to 10 days so that we could add two more sessions to the calendar. The oldest campers were not in the first session of the summer so that we could avoid conflicts with high school graduations for the 18 (!) recent graduates who attended Camp. There were no outside speakers for evening programs or field trips off premises. Campers sat at meals and attended classes and evening programs by cohort: campers living in Shenandoah and Tidewater comprised the Mine cohort, while those in Southwest and Piedmont were in the McClung cohort. We adopted a schedule of chiefly minor classes for each session, in which the campers rotated through every subject in the curriculum before selecting a major for the last two or three class periods of the session. Campers were tested for COVID-19 in advance and upon arrival at Camp, everyone diligently wore masks when entering a building and when singing every night, and we washed hands more fastidiously than ever before. But it was still Camp. And it was so nice to be back in person in the place we all love.

While we were not completely full for every session, a total of 282 youth and 27 staff spent time in the Big Mary's Creek valley this summer, more than 40 percent of them for the first time (including 72 who were slated to come as new campers in 2020). They scooted down the slide at Table Rock, devoured "train wreck" and "dirty vegan" and grilled cheese with tomato soup, participated in "Sunday" hikes (albeit on a Tuesday or Wednesday or Friday), played volleyball and Mafia and lots of tetherball, and sang "The Cat" incessantly (at least in the younger sessions). They caught glimpses of a resident barred owl throughout the summer, awoke to the song of the wood thrush and were lulled to sleep by tree frogs and katydids, and even witnessed a northern water snake eat a brook trout one afternoon. And though we deliberately tried to spend even more time than usual outdoors, they enjoyed the spacious accommodations and revised layout of the newly renovated Education Building (which we can't wait to show off to the wider Nature Camp family once this pandemic is finally behind us). All in all, it was a remarkably successful, satisfying, and important summer.

We were thrilled to be able to end our summer with an Adult Session in August that saw 80 participants, including 31 for the first time, eight members of the summer staff and no fewer than seven former or current head cooks. In addition to learning about the "Language(s) of Nature," attendees used a two-person crosscut saw to make walnut cutting boards; observed numerous nocturnal caterpillars one night before an unexpected thunderstorm forced us all inside; saw a gyrfalcon in flight over the rec field; discussed environmental ethics, communication in plants, and the failure of parasitic wasps to evolve long-range hearing; caught fleeting glimpses of star clusters and nebulae through Terry Richardson's new telescope; and, as always, ate some fantastic food. Adult Session returns to the calendar next June (for the first time since 2018), with exact dates still to be determined.

We fervently hope that circumstances will allow us to resume our usual schedule of four, two-week sessions at full capacity in 2022. Even—or perhaps especially—in the midst of a dreadful and tragic pandemic, Nature Camp continues to provide a balm for the soul, a crucible of learning and growth and acceptance, and an indelible source of hope for the future. Thanks cannot be said often enough to those whose financial and other support continue to sustain it.



Fall Hike Day - October 23, 2021

by Adam Rotche

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.

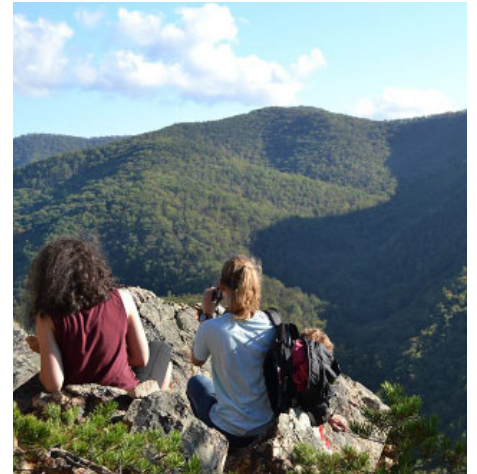
DETAILS: You and your friends and family are invited for a day at Nature Camp. Paul Cabe and Leigh Ann Beavers are once again devoting their time, talent, and tithe to a wonderful fundraiser to benefit the Nature Camp Foundation, which provides generous and invaluable financial and other assistance to 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 great meal 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. All minors must be accompanied by parent or legal guardian.

Hikes will LEAVE CAMP by 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. And a mask just in case!

Please REGISTER online at: <https://app.etapestry.com/onlineforms/NatureCampFoundation/HikeDay.html>

If you have any questions email Adam Rotche at arotche@gmail.com

Because this event will be outdoors and social distancing will be easily accomplished, masks will not be required for the hike or the dinner. However, masks will be required when entering any Camp buildings (LS and T-houses). We ask that anyone experiencing symptoms of Covid-19 or who has been in contact with anyone who has had Covid recently not attend this event. Weather permitting, we plan to eat dinner outside so as to better facilitate safe social distancing while enjoying the company of our Nature Camp community!



Nature Camp Reunion Update

By Adam Rotche

The Nature Camp Foundation misses our whole Nature Camp family and we so want to be able to gather again on the banks of Big Mary's. However, in light of the uncertainty of our ability to hold large gatherings this fall, NCF has once again postponed the 2020 Reunion. We plan to hold this event over Labor Day weekend, 2022.

We cannot wait until we can all get together safely again!

Nancy Pringle “Pring” Davenport 1930 - 2021



Nancy Pringle Davenport, known as “Pring” to friends and family, passed away on April 29, 2021. She was survived by her daughters, Nan Davenport of Oakland, CA, Kit Davenport of Arcata, CA, and Ali Wieboldt of Newport News, VA; her granddaughter, Elsa Fast of Shizuoka, Japan.

Pring and her husband, Bruce, settled near Ivy, outside of Charlottesville, Va., where they raised the three girls (and a number of dogs and cats), renovated an old farmhouse, cultivated flowers and a big vegetable garden, and played chamber music on recorders with friends. They were patrons for decades of Charlottesville’s “Tuesday Evening Concert” series at Cabell Hall. Pring loved reading (especially serial mystery novels!) She was a valued and honored long-time volunteer for Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic (Learning Ally) of Charlottesville.

Love of the natural world, and particularly of birds, led to many years banding birds for Fish and Wildlife Service research. Pring was also known as the host of quite a few lively post-count dinners for a local “circle” of the Audubon Society’s Christmas Bird Count.

Pring’s nature was unassuming and kind, practical and down-to-earth. Some things she loved were cats, petunias, vegetables straight in from the garden, bird-walks with Bruce, telling stories, and family.

Donations in Pring’s memory may be made to The Nature Conservancy Virginia.

Kay Schultz Bain 1940 - 2021

Karen Schultz Bain, of Afton, Virginia died peacefully in her sleep at home on July 18, 2021, after a three-year struggle with dementia. She is survived by her husband, Edward, their children, Matthew, Elizabeth, Andrew, and Margaret, and her sister, Harriett Schultz.

Kay was a graduate of Albemarle High School and Mary Baldwin College. Kay’s lifelong love of books and words fed her innate curiosity about the natural world and her family’s deep roots in the local land. She loved the earth, and everything about it fascinated her. Her many cats and dogs were constant companions and brought her great joy.

Memorial donations may be made to The Nature Camp Foundation via <https://www.naturecampfoundation.org/give/> or The Nature Camp Foundation, P. O. Box 265, Studley, VA.

Virtual “Nature Camp Canteen”

You can now order T-shirts, sweatshirts, onesies, kids wear, mugs, etc. from our new online “canteen.” We now have 20 of the most requested designs available in our shop or you can purchase the designs for use on a huge variety of items.

Please visit our SpreadShirt shop at:

<https://shop.spreadshirt.com/NatureCampFoundation?noCache=true>

The \$2.50 we earn from each sale goes to support our scholarship fund!!!

Calendar of Events 2021-2022

Fall Hike Day	October 23, 2021
NCI Board Meeting	November 13, 2021
NCF Annual Board Meeting	TBD - January 2022
Spring Service Weekend	May 20-22, 2022
Adult Session	TBD - June, 2022
Nature Camp Reunion	September 2-5, 2022
Fall Service Weekend	September 16-18, 2022



Nature Camp Foundation Board of Directors

Nell J. Fredericksen, President
Sarah Hulcher, Vice-President
Louise Bowling Manilla, Secretary
Amy Wingfield Clark, Treasurer
Adam Rotche, At-Large Member
Jason Farr, At-Large Member
Sharon Keith, Communications
Amy Gonzalez, Development
Elizabeth Knapp, Finance
Theta Miller, Service Weekend

nellfredericksen@gmail.com
hulchers@gmail.com
louise.bowling@gmail.com
breezyhillva@verizon.net
arotche@gmail.com
jasonfarr@gmail.com
skeith@bcps.k12.va.us
amykgonzalez@gmail.com
knappe@wlu.edu
theta_miller@hotmail.com



Nature Camp, Inc. Board of Directors

Katie Hoffman, President
Ben Rottenborn, Vice President
Tony Walters, Secretary
Jerry Trammell, Treasurer
Philip Coulling, Executive Director
Alex Haney, Financial Assistance
Nina Chew Anderson, Education
Stacy Luks, Promotion and Publicity
Corey Basham, Facilities

hoffmankatie@rocketmail.com
Ben.Rottenborn@gmail.com
edward.anthony.walters@gmail.com
trammejm@gmail.com
director@naturecamp.net
haneyja314@gmail.com
GFgirl10@hotmail.com
stacyluks@comcast.net
swvahawker@gmail.com

Contact us: The Nature Camp Foundation, P.O. Box 265, Studley, VA 23162

The Nature Camp Foundation will have a new Treasurer beginning January, 2022 and thus, we will have a new mailing address in effect at that same time. We just wanted to give everyone a heads up that our current mailing address will only be good until the end of 2021.

This Newsletter is printed on 100% recycled paper