



Follow the Gleam....Darrin Duling

- by Katie Keith

Darrin Duling has worked as a botanical horticulturist, landscape architect, and public garden administrator throughout the world. He received an Associate Degree in Horticulture and Landscape Design/Architecture from J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College, in his hometown of Richmond, VA, a Certificate of Horticultural Training from the Royal Horticultural Society of Wisley, England, Diploma of Horticulture from the Royal Botanical Gardens in Kew, England, and a Master of Science in Pure and Applied Plant and Fungal Taxonomy from the University of Reading, Whiteknights, England. Even with all this education, he still attributes much of his love of botany, and plant conservation sciences, to his time at Nature Camp.



Darrin had always been plugged into nature as a child and would spend his time as a youth in the woods often literally hanging out in the tree canopy. "Nature Camp took my love of nature and enhanced it a hundred-fold because it was a formal education set within a wonderful natural environment. The teaching tools were right there all around us." Darrin was a camper at Nature Camp from 1975 – 1977. He found out about Nature Camp through his High School when he received a scholarship from the Rappahannock Garden Club in White Stone, Virginia. After his first year at Camp, he was sponsored by the Virginia Federation of Garden Clubs. "I always had a love of nature and plants, but I think that Nature Camp was sort of an epiphany for me. It showed me what all the possibilities could be, formalized it, and taught me the difference between just growing plants and studying plants, or horticulture vs. botany."

During his senior year of high school, Darrin wanted to pursue a career in Botany or other plant sciences. He said he was told by many friends and adults, "You need to get a real job where you can make a good salary, then you can have your own garden or greenhouse as a hobby." He listened to them and spent a long time trying to find his path. When he entered his 30's, "I stopped listening to other people, and trying to make them happy, and finally started following my own heart. It opened up the career path I always wanted, studying and working with plants." Darrin's message to students is "Sometimes you will meet people in your life that will present you with wonderful opportunities that seem to be outrageous and impossible, and you hesitate. At those moments you need to stop thinking of reasons why you can't do this...just listen to that little voice inside and ask yourself, Why not?!!!"

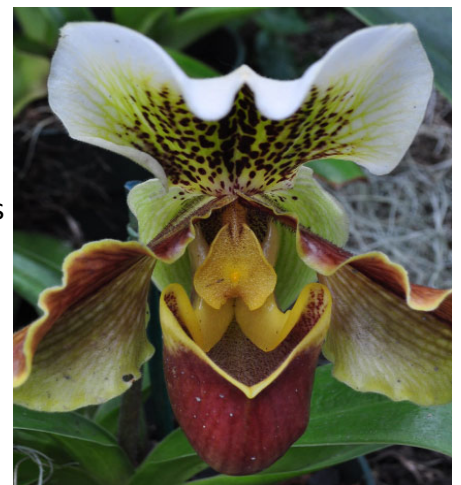
Darrin's "Why not?" moment came in 1995 when he was working on his Diploma of Horticulture at the Royal Botanic Gardens in Kew, England. Just the night before, he had attended a presentation from a co-worker about her expedition to the Atlantic Rainforest in Brazil. The next morning he was sitting with her talking about how much he loved her presentation and would love to see that rainforest. The woman replied, "I am going again in December, why don't you join us?" Darrin said he made all the usual excuses of why he could not go with her such as, "I am a busy student, I don't have the money, I don't know how I would get the time off..."

Her response was “Why not?” Darrin thought about that conversation and said, “This was my ‘Why not?’ moment.” Armed with ‘Why not?’ he went out and found funding, the Principal let him take time off from the school and related work internship. Darrin was in Brazil for two and a half weeks. “It was the most incredible, pristine rainforest habitat, and it totally changed my career focus from Landscape Architecture to Botany and environmental conservation. I just could not imagine any other way forward. It actually tapped into my childhood dreams where all I ever wanted to do was to explore a jungle forest.” Darrin felt Nature Camp helped lead him on this path of discovery. “I think Nature Camp underscored the inter-relationship of everything on the planet: air, water, rocks, all the animals, plants, etc. I never lost that. I always carried that with me, but it was so mind blowing when I hit the Atlantic Rainforest because there was just so much there! It was absolutely spectacular!”

The Rainforest was just one stop on Darrin’s journey. He has also botanized in Crete, the Canary Islands, Borneo, Ecuador, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Peru, Thailand, Sultanate of Oman, and Singapore. “I am definitely going to Asia again because I have not been there in over 15 years.” Darrin says that some of his fondest memories of Asia are from a year spent in Chiang Mai, Thailand, at Queen Sirikit Botanic Garden where he worked for the Thai Government on behalf of the Royal Family. A 1,600 acre biosphere preserve and botanical garden was being built in the Queen’s honor, and Darrin served as facility and program development advisor to the Director of the garden. “I hardly spoke a word of Thai when I first arrived. Fortunately, there were a handful of people that could speak English. With so many others, we mostly communicated with lots of hand gestures and figured things out by kind of playing charades. It was hilarious.” When asked where he would like to visit next, Darrin immediately replied Singapore, again. Darrin already had his trip lined up and his tickets

purchased over two years ago, but everything was put on hold due to COVID. “I will be making that trip. I want to see the Gardens by the Bay in Singapore. Singapore is amazing”.

Darrin is currently the Associate Director of the Arthur and Phyllis Kaplan Orchid Conservatory at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia. Built in 2008, the Conservatory is a \$2.1 million structure that contains a 3,000 sq. ft. display house with five cultivation and research glasshouses holding a curated collection of over 1,500 orchid specimens and tropical plants. The Conservatory also holds an onsite laboratory for research into the cultivation of orchid species from seed for use in studying their development and habitat requirements. The centerpiece of the conservatory is a 20 foot high rock wall and waterfall filling a garden pool which serves as a backdrop for tropical plants and orchids. Darrin enjoys passing on his knowledge of plants to lots of people, particularly young people on campus by serving as faculty advisor for the Old Dominion University Botany Society of America student chapter. Of course, he always tells them about Nature Camp!



*Join us as we celebrate the publication of our
100th Issue of the Afterglow !*

News from Nature Camp

- Phillip Coulling, NCI Executive Director

It is with a mix of excited anticipation, and cautious optimism, that Nature Camp prepares to resume a typical operating schedule (at full capacity) for the first time in three years. We successfully, and safely, managed to run Camp in the midst of a pandemic last summer. While everything may not be back to normal, we know at least we will not need to reinvent the wheel (or the multilayered set of precautionary protocols we implemented in 2021).

For the first time in Nature Camp's 80-year history, we will be offering a gender-inclusive housing option in all four sessions. More than ten percent of campers in 2021 identified as non-binary, a reality that has led us to develop a third housing option for campers who would prefer mixed-gender housing or who do not identify with either of the binary genders of female and male. The majority of campers will continue to reside in the two large, same-gender bunkhouses, but one wing of the Staff House will be reserved for gender-inclusive housing. When applying to Camp, individuals may choose whether they would like same-gender housing or gender-inclusive housing or indicate that they have no preference. Thus far the response from Camp families seems to be overwhelmingly positive and supportive. Our decision to offer a gender-inclusive housing option is the product of extensive research on best practices in the summer camp industry and careful deliberation by the Nature Camp, Inc. Board of Directors. We view it as fundamental to our mission; consistent with a greater commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion; and integral to the mental, emotional, and social health of our campers and staff. Numerous camps across the country have safely, and comfortably, provided gender-inclusive and mixed-gender accommodations for years, and several others are moving in this direction. In our efforts to develop a robust gender-inclusive housing policy, I feel immensely grateful for the guidance, experience, and wisdom of many professionals in the summer camp industry. More information about this new option, details about how the gender-inclusive housing policy will be implemented and camper safety and privacy maintained, and answers to frequently asked questions are available on the Nature Camp website at <https://naturecamp.net/gender-inclusive-housing/>.

Another, not insignificant but timely, change will be coming to Camp in 2022. Over the course of last summer, I came to the conclusion that in the interest of inclusion, we should find a suitable replacement for the Lord's Prayer during the Friendship Circle every night. This was a personally difficult, stressful, and excruciating decision to reach, as I believe in the importance and power of traditions and rituals. This particular one has held a central, and constant, position in my Camp experience for more than four decades. However, whatever purpose the singing of the Lord's Prayer had initially been intended to serve at Camp, I believe its continued centrality to an activity (in which all campers and staff are invited—and indeed expected—to participate) can no longer be justified. I would like to maintain the longstanding practice of concluding the camp day with song, and I have identified several criteria which an alternative to the Lord's Prayer would ideally meet. These include ease of singing and learning (without the need to see printed words), brevity, maintenance of the "Compline" function of this tradition (i.e., promoting contemplation, reflection, and spiritual wellness), suitability for the end of the day (i.e., nothing raucous or loud), singularity within the camp day (i.e., a song such as "Thinking of Tomorrow," which already has a place as the last song before evening program begins, should probably not be repurposed for this ritual), and inclusivity (i.e., welcoming and inviting to all, including those of all faiths and faith traditions and those of none). I welcome and invite suggestions and thoughts from across the Camp community as we seek to establish a new tradition.

Finally, Nature Camp is pleased to announce two new inductees into the Roll of Honor, which recognizes individuals for extraordinary, non-monetary contributions to Camp.



A former camper, counselor, head counselor, and cook, Andy Flint is President of Lynchburg-based L. G. Flint, the general contracting firm which undertook the recently completed refurbishment of the Education Building. Andy worked closely with Nature Camp to keep the cost of this project nearly \$100,000 under budget, and his foresight and creativity helped secure and repurpose laboratory cabinets from the University of Lynchburg. He also served without compensation as the defacto general contractor for the overhaul of the electric and water infrastructure in 2007-2008.

This past fall Katie Hoffman completed a tenure of service on the Board of Directors of Nature Camp, Inc. She has held the positions of Secretary, Vice President, and President throughout the years. She helped to establish the Nature Camp History Project, which has sought to preserve stories, archival photographs and manuscripts, and other Camp memorabilia and to collect oral histories from many venerable and seminal figures in Camp's history. She also initiated and oversaw the Education Building renovation project; helped to assemble stakeholders and provide them with a means by which their voices and opinions could be heard; and guided the multi year process with grace, a gentle but steady hand, and unwavering commitment to openness and transparency. The refreshingly vibrant space that is the "same, same but new" Education Building clearly reflects her vision and dogged determination.



Thank you, Katie and Andy, for your gifts of time, talent, and service to Nature Camp.

Historical Update

- Nancy Lowry

The History Project has recently deposited a fourth box of collected files with University of Virginia Special Collections. I was delighted to hear from Frederick Wilbur (former camper and staff member in the 1960's) who is researching information about Mrs. Lillian Schilling for the Nelson County Historical Society and Nelson County Garden Club. He has been able to access the items we have filed at University. Providing access to others is the whole aim of our storing things at UVA's Special Collections. How great that our dreams of access for the public is working!

If anyone has memorabilia, from any period in NC History, please send it to us to allow it to be archived at University of Virginia Special Collections.

Spring Service Weekend

- Theta Miller

After two years of Covid related decisions to cancel Service Weekends, we anticipate that the 2022 Spring Service Weekend **WILL** be held on the third full weekend of May (20-22), with appropriate health and safety measures and precautions. While we do welcome everyone, in order to now attend Service Weekend you must PRE-REGISTER online. The registration form and other valuable information about facilities, what to bring, and what we will do (along with lots of familiar waiver language) are on the Nature Camp Foundation website: <https://www.naturecampfoundation.org/2022/04/25/information-for-spring-service-weekend-2022/> For this spring we are also requiring proof of a negative Covid test (either rapid or PCR) before you can attend Service weekend.

There will be an extensive list of tasks to accomplish! Not a single routine maintenance task has disappeared from the list, and there are a number of opportunities for construction, plumbing, electrical, and tree work. Cleaning is always needed. Raking, dusting, vacuuming, painting... There is work needed to reinforce a porch, light fixtures to replace, toilets to pull and reset, trees to prune, brush to clear, wood to split, carry, and stack and so much more.

Each spring, and fall, our community comes together and makes a substantial contribution to Camp in the form of labor. Have you hired a cleaning service recently? An electrician to change a fixture? A plumber? If you have, you can not possibly question that your contribution is VALUABLE, and appreciated! In addition to the value you will provide to Camp, you will have a wonderful time! Good food, good friends, good vibes! Bring an instrument or your voice to join music in the evening!

See ya soon!

Adult Session 2022

- Philip Coulling

For the first time since 2018, Adult Session returns to the beginning of the summer operating season, its usual spot in even-numbered years. During the past two, long years of the pandemic, we have all spent more time than perhaps we wanted stuck at home, but with COVID restrictions, and self-imposed isolation, have come new opportunities for a rededication to the natural world and serendipitous discoveries in our own backyard.

Come to Camp the second weekend in June to share what you have learned and to learn more about exploring and celebrating "Nature at Home"! We will understand why "nature lessons are life lessons," take a dive into Deep Ecology, learn how to walk in the woods, and see more animals before they see you, examine the tracks and signs that animals leave behind, explore animal symbolism in Appalachian ballads and consider this genre as a feminine space, and discuss easy native plants to grow at home. As always, there will also be several opportunities for artistic expression: nature writing, art journaling, carving black walnut walking sticks, drying flowers in silica gel, and even a stone tool making workshop. In addition, a half-day excursion will investigate the geology, biology, and ecology of Blue Quartz Hill in Nelson County (but don't try to find that name on any map). In addition, the ever-popular Appalachian stringband workshop will culminate in a concert on Sunday night.

Please join us for five days (or as many days as you are able) of good fun, warm fellowship, educational forays, and delicious food from June 9-13 (Thursday-Monday). The cost is \$350/person, and registration is now open at <https://www.naturecamp.net/adult-session/>.

News from the Development Committee

- Amy Kasdorf Gonzalez

Hello Friends! Your gifts never cease to warm the cockles of my heart. Last year we received 138% of our Annual Fund goal, in addition to generous contributions to our Scholarship Funds. Thank you! So far, (as I write in March) we are at 11% of this year's Annual Fund goal.

We have a fairly major project in the works this year, which I will describe in our Spring/Summer Solicitation letter. In the meantime, allow me to plant an idea. With our online payment processor, you have the ability to easily set up recurring payments: monthly, quarterly, etc. I invite you to consider recurring gifts to smooth your expenses and streamline your life, while regularly supporting an organization you care about, Nature Camp Foundation. Visit the Recurring Gifts section of the Give page on our website: <https://www.naturecampfoundation.org/give/>

So, the thing to remember is: **Set it and forget it!!**

Save the Date!!! Nature Camp Reunion 2022

- Adam Rotche

We have missed you! Come take your place in the circle at Nature Camp this Labor Day weekend at the twice-postponed 2020 Nature Camp Reunion! Mark your calendars for September 2-5 and keep an eye on your inbox for a forthcoming email with all the details.

Over the course of the weekend you can expect hikes to your favorite spots around Camp, organized (and disorganized) games, a team scavenger hunt, music making and storytelling around the campfire and in the LS, and much, much more!

All weekend long there will be delicious, local food cooked up by a rotating cast of talented Nature Camp cooks who will be whipping up your favorite Nature Camp classics and bringing their own fresh recipes to the table! Between the exhilarating activities and the satisfying meals there will also be plenty of time to lounge around and catch up with your old friends - and to meet new ones!

In order to keep this event safe, and fun, for everyone we will need to limit attendance to 100 participants - so sign up as soon as you are able in order to secure a spot!

Register at <https://app.etapestry.com/onlineforms/NatureCampFoundation/reunion.html>

2022 Prospective Camper Day

Mark your 2022 calendar for our annual Prospective Camper Day! Held on the middle Saturday of 3rd session, which will fall on July 23, 2022, Nature Camp will welcome Prospective Campers. As always, we'll anticipate families/campers who are due to attend Nature Camp in 4th session and want to get a look and feel of the place before they arrive. We also welcome anyone who would enjoy a short-afternoon summer dose of Nature Camp!

The Urban Trekkers are Coming to Nature Camp! A Collaboration with Vibe Tribe Adventures

-Katie Hoffman

We've been talking for a long time about taking measures to increase diversity at Nature Camp, and now we're walking the walk—or maybe I should say hiking the hike! Vibe Tribe Adventures, Evan Gill (also known as The Black Sherpa), and NCI are collaborating to bring a group of BIPOC inner-city youth to Camp from Baltimore for a 5-day nature-immersion experience. This session will run in August and will include some of the same kinds of hikes and classes that our regular session campers enjoy. We're exciting about being hosts—and we're making all sorts of plans for the session. Jess Newton, Executive Director of Vibe Tribe, and Evan are designing five days of outdoor fun and experiential learning. Nature Camp will host them and will be providing some volunteers and other types of support for the week. This is going to be a great opportunity for us to team up with another like-minded non-profit and bring 60 inner-city BIPOC kids to Camp. We're hoping that this will become an annual event—and that it may bring us some regular-session campers, too! We'll need support from the greater community, so this is our call for those who are interested to get in touch with Katie Hoffman to see how you can help. Email Katie at hoffmankatie@rocketmail.com.

Learn more about Vibe Tribe Adventures here: <https://vibetribeadventures.org/>.

Learn more about Evan Gill here: <https://kdvr.com/black-history-month/black-sherpa-evan-gill-vibe-tribe/>.

Election Results

- Sarah Hulcher

This year's Nature Camp Foundation election result update must first begin with a tremendous Thank You!!! to both our outgoing treasurer, Amy Wingfield Clark, and our outgoing secretary, Louise Bowling. Both of your many years of service, and dedication of time, are very much appreciated by the entire Nature Camp family!

Three positions were up for election this year. Please join me in welcoming Peggy Lane as our new Treasurer, Emily Montgomery as our new Secretary, and welcome back to Jason Farr who has been re-elected as one of our Members-at-Large.

If you have interest in serving on the Nature Camp Foundation board, or getting more involved in another capacity, please be sure to update your profile on the NCF website (<https://www.naturecampfoundation.org/update-your-profile/>). You can also further explore ways to get involved here: <https://www.naturecampfoundation.org/participate/>. If you have any questions regarding potential service on the NCF board or in another capacity, please do not hesitate to reach out to Sarah Hulcher (hulchers@gmail.com) or our NCF president, Nell Fredericksen (nellfredericksen@gmail.com).

In Memory of Robert Parlett

Robert Wood Parlett of Bena, VA died unexpectedly at the age of 66 on February 16, 2022. He was born November 6, 1955, to Ann Wood (NASA Human-Computer) and Lysle Parlett (NASA Engineer), who preceded him in death. Survivors include his wife of 37 years, Lynn, their two children Robyn Parlett Crossley (David), Jay Parlett (Morgan), grandchildren Lauren Crossley, Rayland Crossley, Beau Parlett, Decland Crossley, and Leeland Crossley who is on the way. Siblings Caroline Parlett, Alec Parlett (Dolores), and nieces Jennifer and Megan. Robert spent his early years in Hampton, moving to Gloucester County in Middle School. His great joys were sailing on the York River and teaching Herpetology at Nature Camp in the mountains of Virginia. Robert graduated with a degree in Ornamental Horticulture from Christopher Newport University. He managed the Landscape Department at Busch Gardens in Williamsburg for 15 years, winning Most Beautiful Park year after year. Robert co-founded Chesapeake Bay Landscape & Design with his longtime friend and business partner Mary Wikswo, where he was still working. Robert was a Master Firefighter and member of Abingdon Volunteer Fire and Rescue for over 40 years. He met his wife Lynn on the rescue squad where they were both EMTs. Robert served as Lieutenant, Captain, Board Member, Vice President, President, and actively as Public Information Officer. Robert was an Active Life Member, participating in many apparatus committees, training, mentorships, and community liaison groups. He was an integral part of merging AVRS and AVFD. Robert was the go-to guy who could work with anyone and had a wealth of experience and knowledge in the world of fire and rescue. He stepped up wherever needed and made sure the fire/rescue service became a Parlett tradition for his children, Robyn and Jay.



Robert was a former camper, counselor, and a parent of campers. Many in our Camp family have fond memories of our time with Robert at Camp. He touched lives deeply and will truly be missed.

In Memory of Dr. Valerie Weiss

Waynesboro - Dr. Valerie Anne Weiss, 51, a resident of Waynesboro, VA, passed away Wednesday, November 17, 2021 at the University of Virginia Hospital.

Valerie was born February 28, 1970 in Staunton, VA, daughter of Robert John Weiss and Mabel Lou Weiss. She attended public schools in Staunton, graduating from Robert E. Lee High School in 1988, and then earned her degree at Carleton College in Northfield, MN. Following her graduation in 1992, she worked at an outdoor education center in Maryland, taught middle school math and science in Ohio, and earned her Masters' degree in biology at the College of William and Mary. Managing a variety of health problems in her beloved cats and dogs sparked her interest in veterinary medicine and led her to apply to veterinary school. She attended the Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine in Blacksburg, VA, graduating in 2003 with a number of awards. Since that time Dr. Weiss had dedicated herself to the community by working at the Animal Hospital of Waynesboro and had been widely known for her love of animals and her compassionate treatment and care, not only of her patients, but to all she met. She will continue this love by being an organ donor, providing life to many others.



In addition to her parents, she is survived by her sons, Joseph and William Childress, and their father, Tom Childress of Waynesboro; sister Cheryl Moffett and husband Lyle of Verona, and their children, Rachel, Andrew, and Sarah.

Valerie was a camper and counselor at Camp in the 1980s and touched so many lives in our Camp family. She began reconnecting in recent years through Adult Session. She rekindled friendships and reminded us all of her deep love of nature, her kindness, and depth of compassion. She will be sorely missed.

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



Calendar of Events 2022 - 2023

Joint Board Retreat	May 13-15, 2022
Spring Service Weekend	May 20-22, 2022
Adult Session	June 9-13, 2022
Prospective Camper Day	July 23, 2022
Nature Camp Reunion	September 2-5, 2022
NCF Open Meeting	September 3, 2022
Fall Service Weekend	September 16-18, 2022
Fall Hike Day	October 22, 2022

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