



The Mountain

RETREAT AND LEARNING CENTER, INC.

PO Box 1299 Highlands, NC 28741

828 526-5838

www.TheMountainRLC.org



An Amazing Moment at Meditation Rock--Photo by Bob Deyle

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Upcoming Events

Dear Nancy,



**Letter From our Executive Director
Ted Wisniewski**



[SEUUMA](#): November 14 - 17, 2016. Southeastern UU ministers travel to The Mountain for a bi-annual gathering of ministers and ministerial candidates. Retired, congregational, and community ministers all encouraged to participate. The retreat will include worship, short lectures, discussion, exercises, and small group work.

[Thanksgiving](#): November 23 - 27, 2016. Join us at The Mountain for a traditional Thanksgiving celebration for family and friends. Enjoy storytelling, games, hiking, learning, and relaxing.

[Fall Youth CONs](#) are right around the corner! Community Connections: A youth conference of traditions that bring communities together. More information [here](#).

[Elementary](#): November 18 - 20, 2016

[Intermediate](#): December 2 - 4, 2016

[Senior High](#): December 9 - 11, 2016

2017 Programs

[Spring CONs](#):

[Elementary](#): March 10 - 12, 2017

[Intermediate](#): March 17 - 19, 2017

[Senior High](#): March 31 - April 2, 2017

[Mountain Work Weekend & Easter Program](#): April 14 - 16, 2017

[Music Week](#): April 16 - 21, 2017
Homecoming Weekend (and Annual Meeting): May 26 - 29, 2017

We are getting down to the end of the year. It is time to look back at our season and forward to make budgeting plans for 2017. This month I am providing you a brief update on several of the major happenings at The Mountain.

Dam / lake update: The state of North Carolina Environmental Quality inspected The Mountain's dam in September. They sent a letter of inspection officially asking us to start the process of fixing the issues with the spillway, riser, and bottom drain. The report also identified a few other issues that can be handled with staff and volunteers. We have contacted the civil engineer who completed the EAP Dam report for the State of NC, who will outline the possible corrective actions and give quotes for his services.

Lodge / windows and deck: I am very happy with the progress in this area. We have received generous donations that will cover the cost of the materials and supplies for the deck and windows. In early October the Board of Trustees gave approval to start the project. Facilities Director Russell Hunnewell will act as the general contractor and has ordered the windows and decking. Russell is currently securing volunteer labor to complete these projects during the next few months.

Ground lights: With the help of our volunteer work force, Thank you!- we have replaced and added ground lights along the main road from the dining hall down past the amphitheater to cabin 1. Although the ring road is incomplete, we have completed lights between cabins 7-12.

Budget: We are in a fight to meet our 2016 budget goals, since 2016 revenue just did not meet our projected expectations. We are working diligently to reduce spending and promote Thanksgiving and Fall Youth Cons to help with the revenue shortfall. On the positive side, our cash flow is healthy. I am working on our 2017 budget striving to make realistic revenue and expense goals that will keep The Mountain moving forward.

Many Hands Peace Farm: The farm is the most complicated situation of the fall season. As you know Bill Hagemann, our Farm manager, is leaving us to move home to Alabama and take the next steps in his life. Mountain staff decided that we want the farm to increase the amount of fresh and healthy products moving from our farm to our kitchen. I believe the key to the success of the farm is finding, hiring & paying the right person(s) to

[Companioning Circles](#): August 14 - 18, 2017

ANNOUNCING: MountainCamp 2017 Dates!

[Beginning Camp](#) - June 18 - 24
[Elementary Camp](#) - June 11 - 24
[Intermediate Camp](#) - June 25 - July 8
[Senior High Camp](#) - July 9 - 22
[Explorers](#) - July 9 - 22
[Outdoors Skills and Adventure](#) - June 25 - July 8
[Counselors in Training](#) - June 11 - July 22
[ASCENDER](#) - June 18 - July 22

[Alex Willocks](#)

Communications and Development
828.526.5838 ext 230

A Farewell From An Amazing Employee of The Mountain



Bill Hagemann, Farm Manager

My time at The Mountain is coming to an end.

I began my position as Farm Manager in April 2013. Since then I have worked with 15 interns, and 2 long term farm volunteers. During my time here we've replaced both ends of the greenhouse and done other repairs, improved garden soil, built 4 hugel kultur beds, built an herb garden behind the dining hall,

work our plan. I have several qualified candidates that we are speaking with.

Mountain Programs: Music Week, Total Solar Eclipse Program and Companioning Circles are the new and exciting 2017 Mountain programs that we hope through increased attendance will introduce new people to our existing Mountain programs, Work Weekend, MountainCamp and Youth CONs will be essential in making our Mountain successful.

Volunteering: Volunteers are the backbone of our success at The Mountain. Our 2016 volunteers have helped us in all departments including the office, kitchen, housekeeping and maintenance. These tasks have often been challenging but with a happy heart and warm smiles you have made the work light and enjoyable. I cannot thank enough any of the 157 people who volunteered over 3500 hours this year.

Thank you for the support and guidance you have given me and my staff this season, please feel free to talk with me about these and other Mountain happenings at any time.

Development News



Laurel Amabile, Development Director

I am thrilled to report that enough funding has been donated for the work to soon begin on several priority projects here at The Mountain. We are so grateful for the generosity of several Mountain supporters who are making these essential repairs possible this year. Be sure to watch our website, [Facebook page](#), and future issues of [Mountain Matters](#) for visual progress reports on these projects.

You will be hearing a lot from us about giving to The Mountain in the coming weeks, as we make the countdown to the end of the year. Our annual funding goal is an ambitious

converted the old herb garden into a flower garden, planted hops and raspberries, replaced our chicken flock, built an isolation coop, and composted all of the food waste from the dining hall. We've also provided produce, eggs, and flowers to The Mountain's guests through the dining hall, and provided educational programming to numerous campers and guests.

This has been the first year we've sold at farmer's market in Highlands. It has been a great learning opportunity for the interns and I. We've told countless people about The Mountain, Many Hands Peace Farm, and the work that we do. We've also made nearly \$3,000 in sales.

I have truly enjoyed my time here, and would like to thank the entire Mountain community for the opportunity I have been provided. This has been a great way for me to develop skills in agriculture and management, and to give back to a place that I love. I hope that the farm will continue to be a place for farm managers, interns, and guests to learn and grow, and to decide what role agriculture will play in their lives.

I will be moving to Birmingham, AL at the end of the year and plan to work for other farmers, and buy and renovate a house which I will sell in 2-3 years for a down payment on permanent land. Then I will spend the rest of my days raising bees and chickens, growing and selling unusual fruits and flowers, and teaching anyone who will listen about what I do and why.

Nesting
A Mountain Phenomena

\$240,000-and with your help, we will reach or exceed our goal.

Double your Generosity by making a gift in November!

Thanks to a generous Mountain supporter, all donations made to The Mountain on or before [Giving Tuesday](#) (Nov. 29th) will be matched, dollar for dollar, up to \$15,000.

[Giving Tuesday](#)

is a growing international movement that promotes charitable giving as a meaningful counter-balance to the commercialized holiday spending frenzy. We are working to make online giving to The Mountain as easy as possible by creating a new "[Giving](#)" section on the website and by adding visible donate buttons throughout. Of course, you are always welcome to give the good old fashioned way by sending a check.



You can also support The Mountain while you shop online, using the [Amazon Smile](#), [Giving Assistant](#), and other like programs that share a portion of your purchases with charities of your choice. Simply designate The Mountain Retreat & Learning Center as your recipient organization. We have been receiving an increasing amount of funding through these programs.



We will be using low cost social media and email to encourage giving to The Mountain this year. In addition to our [website](#) and [Mountain](#) and [MountainCamp](#) Facebook pages, you can also follow and interact with us via [Twitter](#). You will be able to view seasonal video messages, project updates, donor stories, and photos of our programs and people, so stay tuned.



Rachel Kinback

By nature I nest; striving to find comfort and beauty in all that surrounds me. This facet of my own personality has been greatly indulged since returning to work at The Mountain. Here natural beauty is all around. I peer out my office window through the spectrum of fall color. I can hear footsteps over rustling leaves and happy voices as folks make their way down the path to Meditation Rock. I can smell the coffee in my cup, hot from the dining hall, and I think to myself, "life is good y'all"... and that is the power of this place.

Once we open ourselves up to beauty, in all its forms, and tune our own awareness then suddenly our life becomes infused with awesomely beautiful places and people, ideas and occurrences. In an effort to help all guests of The Mountain tap into a state of elevated appreciation for all that is beautiful I have joined the ranks of the many who have donated their money, objects and time to "prettifying up the place".

Last month I was compelled to donate funds toward new dinnerware in the dining hall. I have also begun a campaign to add more cool/fun and interesting mugs to our current collection. Both of these causes are near and dear to me because I strongly believe in the sacred experiences I have with my food (and coffee). Some other items on my wish list include new curtains for the Tree House and Rec Hall and some new artwork for various spaces around campus.

I invite you all to join me in these efforts- to visit The Mountain and

Another way you can add meaning to your gifts to The Mountain is to make them in honor or memory of a special person, group, or congregation. When we receive such tribute gifts, the honoree receives personalized notification of the gift. We love to celebrate all those who are part of our Mountain Community!

If you have any questions about our matching challenge or making year-end gifts to The Mountain, please contact our [Development office](#).

[Laurel Amabile](#), Development Director
Phone: (828) 526-5838 ext. 254

A Mountain Memory



Harry and Rene Donavon

One thing to know about The Mountain and its supporters is just how far they will go to make the most of a donation. You see signs of this as you wander around the buildings of The Mountain Retreat & Learning Center. Literally, you see signs and plaques with the names of people who have generously given money, time, energy, and vision to this place they love.

Here is a decades-old story about one donation that likely goes unrealized by most Mountain guests and visitors today...

Harry and Rene Donavon were the co-Treasurers of The Mountain during its early years, working for over seven years to help the fledgling organization flourish and grow. In the late 1980's, the Donavons relocated to Dallas, to build a home. It was around this

enjoy our spaces, indoors and out. Feel free to bring a cool mug along. Please stop and visit me in my office (recently redecorated). I hope that with each visit to The Mountain you will find it easier to engage with your surroundings and your most beautiful self.

Warmly,

[Rachel Kinback](#)

Guest Services and Event
Coordinator
(Monday - Thursday, 9am - 5pm)
Phone: (828) 526-5838

The Mountain Needs A Camera!



If you would like to make an in-kind donation of a new or gently used camera to capture images of our campers, program activities, and the beauty of our natural surroundings. We are looking for quality 18-55 mm camera with a 3.5 mm input microphone jack. [Please let us know!](#)

Let The Mountain Ring
with Music



Harriet Lawrence
Guest Services volunteer

time that the Mountain Lodge was destroyed by fire and had to be rebuilt.

Harry recounted how there were some damaged tiles found in one of the floors of their new home. Upon this discovery, Rene worked with the contractor to address the problem. This resulted in the contractor arranging for all new floor tiles, many more than were actually needed to replace the damaged ones.

What to do with all the extra new tiles? There were hundreds of them...ahhh, perhaps they could use them at The Mountain in the new Lodge being built!

The contacts were made, offering to donate the floor tiles if someone could come collect them and transport them back to Highlands. And so it went. Someone from The Mountain (we'd love to know who!) drove the 900 miles to Texas, loaded the tiles into a truck or trailer, and made the trek back into the mountains of North Carolina.

There were enough floor tiles to be installed in all the bathrooms of the new Lodge. They are an enduring example of the extent of our donors' generosity and loyalty, as well as The Mountain's resourcefulness and gratitude for gifts of many kinds. Thank you, Harry and Rene!

A Gift in Memory of Peter Raoul

Earlier this fall, we received a donation from Joe Tomczyk made in memory of Peter Raoul. Joe and Peter worked together on The Mountain staff during the 1990's--Joe in the Finance Office and Peter in Guest Services.



The Mountain staff wanted to use Joe's donation to honor Peter in a way that reflected his caring personality and commitment to hospitality. We decided upon a finding a special bowl to be kept filled with candy for all those who come by the office. For those who worked closely with Peter know, there was always an assortment of candies in his office space.

This beautiful hand-crafted wooden bowl pictured here was made specially for The Mountain by Don Marks of Franklin, NC.

I'm all excited about the Music Week here at The Mountain scheduled for next April 16 -21 -- click on it on the April calendar on our website for the flyer and all the details.

I love harmony, but I can play only one instrument at a time, so I need other folks who can read music to join me in exploring duet or trio or small group pieces, and this looks like a great opportunity to meet some.

Although I look forward to the workshops that presenters Joe Jencks and Mindy Simmons have prepared on music history and vocal participation, and the jam sessions they expect to lead, my great hope is that some of this program's participants will be amateur instrumentalists like myself who can read music and who will bring their instruments -- I'll bring my mountain dulcimer and alto recorder -- or who can play The Mountain's piano.

If so, we can also have sessions exploring multi-part arrangements for different kinds of music -- I will bring some scores, from very simple to more challenging, and hope others will bring some as well.

So come join Mindy and Joe and me, and then I'll be able to savor for a week the visual harmonies nature brings us every spring along with musical harmony, harmony, and more harmony!



Legacy Giving & The Mountain

Make The Mountain a part of your legacy!

By including The Mountain in your estate planning, you can make a difference now and enable The Mountain to live on for generations to come.

The Mountain Endowment Fund, Inc., was established in 1996 as a charitable organization, operating independently of The Mountain's governance. The Endowment Fund is invested in the [Unitarian Universalist Common Endowment Fund](#) and managed by the Mountain Endowment Board of Directors.

The [June Cravens Sholin Tower Society](#) has been established to recognize Those who direct an outright gift, or an estate planning bequest to the Endowment Fund.



The [Unitarian Universalist Association](#) offers a range of [planned giving resources](#), including [umbrella gifts](#) that can benefit The Mountain, your congregation, and other organizations.

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