

SOUTHEAST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CAMP AND CONFERENCE CENTER NEWSLETTER

volume 1, number 1

July 1, 1979

:NOTE: This is the first of what
: hopefully will be many editions
: of this newsletter as we con-
: tinue down the path toward es-
: tablishing our own year-round
: Camp and Conference Center.
: This is a project of the SUUSI
: Board of Trustees and any Board
: Members will be pleased to talk
: about the venture with you. In
: particular, you might want to
: contact:

SUUSI Board President 404 373-8320
Roger Comstock
979 Springdale Rd.
Atlanta, Georgia 30306

or

Camp and Conference Center
Committee Chairpersons
Mo & Larry Wheeler 404 299-2677
1120 Gunnison Ct.
Clarkston, Georgia 30021



TWO YEAR STUDY COMPLETED

Much has happened since July, 1977, when the Southeast UU Summer Institute (SUUSI) Board initiated a feasibility study to consider the need for a year-round camp and conference center. The study was to look at the building or buying of a facility to provide alternatives to Summer Institute for families and adults, to have a summer camp for all youth, and to have a conference center for society retreats, Board meetings, etc., during the fall, winter, and spring.

This Spring the two-year study was completed, financed from SUUSI reserves at a cost of about \$4,500. Included were marketing studies to both individual UU's and societies, analysis of existing camps and conference centers, and financial and marketing projections. Approximately 15 UU's from all three districts participated in the project.

STUDY CONCLUDES CAMP AND CONFERENCE CENTER IS FEASIBLE

The feasibility study recently submitted to the SUUSI Board concluded that there are sufficient UU's in the Southeast who are interested in a camp and conference center. The survey also concluded that sufficient funds could be raised, totaling at least \$300,000--and that is a conservative estimate! Budgeting and Cash-Flow projections added support to the Committee's contention that a camp and conference center is feasible.

IDEAL SITE LOCATED IN HIGHLANDS

When the Camp and Conference Center Committee defined their target area as an oval corridor running from Brevard, N.C. to Blue Ridge, Georgia, they didn't know about the site in Highlands.

When the marketing survey professional suggested the area around Franklin, N.C., as a compromise between those who preferred Georgia and those who preferred North Carolina mountains, he didn't know about the site in Highlands.

It is "the ideal location" on the map. But it is much more--it is 85 acres of land on a mountain with an elevation of 4200' and a view of three states! It is surrounded by 10,000 acres of National Forest, with many waterfalls, white water rivers, and nature activities nearby. It has 21 cabins, a 6-bedroom lodge, dining hall, recreation room, tennis courts, stables, and 2 small lakes. Most of all, you can't be there without feeling something beyond words. As the President of the Franklin fellowship said, "you just lose your head!!"



LAND VALUES IN HIGHLANDS ON THE MAY UP

It wasn't exactly fair to pose as a business student doing a school project but it helped get us some information--Land within 8 miles of Highlands is worth considerably more than beyond that area--somewhere between \$2,500 and \$5,000 an acre seems appropriate. The camp, by the way, is 4 miles from Highlands.

NEGOTIATING
A CONTRACT
ISN'T ALL
THAT SIMPLE



Three months have passed since our initial offer to purchase the camp. Letters and new contracts have crossed desks, and we are still waiting with pen in hand for an acceptable contract to sign. It appears as if another round will be necessary. The purchase price will probably be around \$500,000 with another \$250,000 necessary for refurbishing, equipment, etc.

PRESENTATION IMPRESSES VEATCH

The Veatch Program said our feasibility study and the presentation at General Assembly were among the best they'd ever seen. We asked the foundation, a UU funding source in the North Shore Society of Plandome, N.Y. for \$200,000.

We impressed them with numbers, if nothing else. We had our two Trustees on the UUA Board, Don Hale and Ted Machler; two of the Tri-District Presidents, Don Hostetler and Beverly Phillippi; SUUSI Board Members Sue Folk, Jake Haun, Dick Lee, Kay Montgomery, and Carol Taylor; plus Mo and Larry Wheeler of the Camp and Conference Center Committee, Robbie Walsh and Jan Knost, Trustees of the UUA Board; and Howard Lambert, a supporter from Boca Raton. The room was packed, and enthusiasm was high.

Their two main questions to us related to (1) our capacity to sustain a camp and conference center over an extended period of time (i.e., after the enthusiasm wears off) and (2) our ability to provide a substantial part of the funding on our own. They want letters indicating our capacity to rent the camp to non-UU sources; they want letters of support, and they want to see pledges from the S.E. These efforts are under way now. We expect to hear more from the Veatch people in September.

HOW WILL IT BE MANAGED?

A new board will be created to operate the Camp and Conference Center as a non-profit corporation. A sub-committee of the SUUSI Board is working on by-laws now. The new board would be constructed in such a way as to represent the membership of the center but also to maintain close ties with our three districts and with the SUUSI Board.

YOU SAY YOU'VE GOT TO SEE IT TO BELIEVE IT ? ! ?

Why not stop on the return trip from Summer Institute. Seeing is believing! Contact Larry or Mo Wheeler at Summer Institute to arrange a visit. (Before SUUSI - 404 299-2677)

UUCA
1911 Cliff Valley Way NE
Atlanta, Georgia 30329

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE IN THE MAKING

Another conclusion of the Feasibility Study was that a separate organization should be established to be responsible for the Camp and Conference Center. SUUSI Board Secretary, Dick Lee, is chairing a Committee to develop an organizational structure and By-Laws. He's being assisted by SUUSI Board Member, Carol Taylor and Bob Karnan, Minister of the Atlanta Northwest Congregation.

WHERE WILL IT COME FROM...? \$\$

...the 3/4 million dollars needed to buy the facility and make it operational, that is. It will come from two major sources: contributions by Southeastern UU's, and the actual operation of the camp itself. We hope to raise between \$300,000 and \$500,000 in a capital fund drive to be run in early 1980, and expect that the camp and conference center will be able to pay for the balance of the cost from its own operations over a period of 5-7 years.

Obviously, both of these sources of revenue take time and money to develop, so we are working on several interim sources to carry us through this period. The present owners of the property appear willing to finance about 80% of the purchase price (approximately \$400,000); indications are very favorable that we will be offered a major loan (\$100,000 to \$200,000) by the Veatch program; we are seeking additional loans; and have already raised over \$20,000 in pledges and contributions from UU sources.

HOW CAN I HELP ?

We need your interest and your skills as well as your contributions. Let us know what you can do, or just tell us you want to help, and we'll put you to work. If the Camp and Conference Center is to be a success, many, many people are needed to make it happen. Contact Mo or Larry Wheeler, Roger Comstock, or any SUUSI Board Member, and let us know you're there!



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IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR UU'S