

THE Mountain matters

Energizing people to work for positive change

THE MOUNTAIN RETREAT & LEARNING CENTERS, INC.

August 2003

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The Mountain Matters
published bimonthly by

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Embracing Diversity . . . Creating an Environment

The mission of MR&LC, Inc. begins with "to embrace the diversity of life ..."

Embracing diversity – it seems we do that best in the summer. Our youth camps, stronger than ever, attract diverse populations of youth and counselor staff; they also afford the campers and staff a time and place for one-to-one conversations, structured workshops and worship services that allow exploration and honoring of differences. We will feature our youth programs and camp sessions in the next edition of the Mountain Matters.

Summertime is Religious Education Week and Mountain School for Congregational Leadership – program participants with diverse backgrounds and abilities learn how to be in community with each other and build skills to become leaders in their organizations. Leadership training must be **for** something. That "something" is strengthening communities so they can work for peace and justice on local and global levels by understanding, experiencing and embracing "the diversity of life."

Summertime is Adventure and Grandparent/Grandchildren Elderhostels, spiritual and community retreats and family camps. All of these provide unique opportunities for adults and youth to be in community with each other and with the outdoors, pushing themselves to think and grow in ways they might not otherwise have been able to had they stayed in their "routines."

"Embracing the diversity of life" – at its "peak" during summer at The Mountain.

The mission statement continues with "creating an environment ..."

This month the planning committee of the board met with staff to talk about re-energizing the vision, expanding the reach of The Mountain and exploring ways to become more financially solid in light of the economic realities of today. This work will continue during the August board meeting. The trustees take their roles seriously as they work to "create the environment."

Members helped the trustees create the environment by returning the largest number of votes in my 13 years here – perhaps in The Mountain's history. Thanks to the many of you who voted in May, The Mountain bylaws were changed to allow for an eleven-person board and the election to one of these positions of candidate **Darwin Smith**. The board feels confident that with this size board and with the skills of its members, it can do the work of governance – and its part in fulfilling The Mountain's mission.

This summer youth from the First UU Church of Dallas, Mountain volunteers and staff built a



Dallas YRUU experience service at The Mountain.

Continued on page 2

Mission Statement

“... to embrace the diversity of life, creating an environment to energize people to work for positive change.”

About The Mountain

Located high in the Blue Ridge of the Southern Appalachian Mountains, The Mountain Retreat & Learning Centers is a place to expand your horizons—explore new ideas, meet new people and re-connect with yourself, community and the natural world.

Surrounded by the Nantahala National Forest, our home is Little Scaly Mountain—four miles southwest of Highlands, North Carolina. At 4200' elevation, perched atop striking granite cliffs and nestled in an ancient dwarf white oak wind forest, our site is spectacular.

Open year-round, The Mountain offers excellent programming for all ages. Inspiration mixes with renewal as you challenge yourself to grow and learn.

Board of Trustees: 2003

Tony Stringer	Chair
John Blevins	Relationships
Gini Courter	Finance
Jean Findley	Financial Advisor
Janice Marie Johnson	Mission
Ed Mangiafico	Planning
Bruce Parrish	Recording Secretary
Darwin Smith	Development
R. K. Whitehead	Planning
Tom Warth	President

RESOURCE NETWORK

Rosemary Bray McNatt	New York
Jeanne Shirly	Arizona

Continued from page 1



Dallas youth building the newest accessible ramp.

of their many “apprenticeship activities,” – kitchen, office, program, maintenance and construction duties – helped create the environment of youth empowerment and responsibility that is so central to The Mountain experience.

And one more way in which we “create the environment” is through fund raising. I ask that you give thoughtful consideration to making a new or renewed financial gift to The Mountain this summer. Also, please pay special attention to the position description for a Development Director in this publication. If you know of anyone who might be interested and qualified, including yourself, please get in touch with me.

The second half of the mission statement is, “to energize people to work for positive change.” I will address how The Mountain is so effective in doing this in our next issue of The Mountain Matters. The stories of camp, Elderhostel, retreats and leadership schools are truly inspiring – people making a difference in small and larger ways. The Mountain works.

I believe the world needs The Mountain – and The Mountain needs you. I

invite you to be engaged with The Mountain as it “embraces the diversity of life, creating an environment to energize people to work for positive change.”

Tom

ASCENDERS working on Walden cabin renovation.



Lay Leadership Certificate Program Launched

The Mountain's Learning Center for Leadership and Starr King School for the Ministry are launching a new resource for Unitarian Universalist lay leaders, an enhancement of the already high-quality District Congregational Leadership Schools offered throughout the Association.

For many years, Congregational Leadership Schools and their faculties have been instrumental in helping people acquire skills, knowledge and understanding of roles, history, theology, values, small group dynamics, and congregational structure and governance, as well as providing a place for individuals to explore their own theological beliefs and practices.

That's a lot to expect of programs that last from three to seven days. Time is the most precious resource people have at Leadership School, and it's in short supply. And there is a limited depth and breadth to the traditional Leadership School curricula. Therefore, until now there was no forum for people who wished to build on their Leadership School experience.

The new year-long program offers a tremendous opportunity to reflect more deeply on UU leadership skills and arts such as theologically-based systems thinking, communication, values-based strategic planning, building networks of relationships, delegation, influence, and organizational positioning within the world today.

The program involves two residential and four Internet-based modules, and will lead to a Certificate of Lay Leadership. The two residential components, each of which involves a long weekend, will be held respectively at The Mountain, near Highlands, North Carolina, and at Starr King School in Berkeley, California. The pilot program will begin in early October 2003 and will end in May 2004, with the first

graduates recognized at General Assembly in Long Beach, California.

Because of generous support from the UU Funding Panel, we are able to offer this pilot program for a subsidized cost of \$1,200 per participant, which includes room and board for the two residential modules, as well as personalized attention from experienced and caring faculty. We are limited in the number of people who will be accepted into the pilot project, and are now accepting applications by

mail. You will find an application on The Mountain's website: www.mountaincenters.org/lcl_cert.html.

Applications should be returned by **September 10, 2003** to:

Helen Bishop
118 W. White Oak Street
Etowah, NC 28729
hbishop@aol.com

We look forward to hearing from you!



Helen Bishop (left) and Patti Lawrence (center) address workshop GA 2003 about the certificate program.

* * * Christmas Break * * *

The Mountain will celebrate Holidays of the Season by closing the afternoon of December 21 until December 26, 2003. This is an unprecedented event in recent history, and a well-deserved break for Mountain Staff.

HOWEVER . . . if you were planning on coming to The Mountain for Christmas or during any of those days, and The Mountain's closure will ruin your holidays, **Helen Bishop** and **Shelley Denham** have offered to **COOK for any group of 30-40 people!** This will be a never-to-be-repeated offer, so this might be the year to have a family reunion at The Mountain for the holidays.

Offer expires September 25, so hurry and inquire by calling or emailing **Carol Hamilton - 828-526-5838, ext. 265**; carol.hamilton@mountaincenters.org.

Thank you to all who have begun so generously sharing your stories, letters and poems for our new "MountainSong" series. We are seeking more submissions to help us reflect on the "songs" that The Mountain "sings" in us. The primary purpose of MountainSong is to help articulate The Mountain's culture and meaning, inspiring us to reflect on spirituality, nature, justice, peace and community.

Mountain Song

Sharing our "Songs"

If you have a photo, drawing, poem, letter or story you'd be willing to offer for possible publication in *Mountain Matters'* MountainSong and/or the 25th Anniversary MountainSong Journal, please send them to:

Shelley Jackson Denham
 The Mountain Retreat & Learning Centers, Inc.
 P.O. Box 1299, Highlands, NC 28741
shelley.denham@mountaincenters.org

The two poems in this edition – by **Marjorie Gelbin** and **Myrna Adams West** – seemed almost to be written especially for Tom Warth's cover article, "Embracing diversity ... creating an environment...." In the next *Mountain Matters*, we'll see a reflection by **Daniel Kuehn**, a participant in Dallas Youth Leadership School for Social Justice, and a letter sent by **Katie Clayton** (former camper and counselor) from her Peace Corps home in Malawi.



The Mountain

By Myrna Adams West

There is a peace in nature that settles
 into the soul,
 Stills the busyness,
 Pushes away the hurry,
 Touches the inner corners,
 And fills the cracks and crevices.

It is a calmness,
 a quiet
 That sharpens the senses
 So that bird song
 or squirrel chatter,
 The tang of balsam
 or the sharpness of wood smoke,
 The warmth of the sun
 or the chill of the breeze,
 The red of a maple leaf
 or the green of a mossy carpet,
 The rough bark of an ancient oak
 or the slickness of a wet rock
 Are shocking
 – like new experiences.

(Written October 26, 2002, after Athens UU Congregational Retreat.)

The Mountain

By Marjorie Gelbin

A mountain forged of rock and stone
 A mountain reaching to the sky
 A mountain out of fire born
 Like a Chalice
 'Round the mountain gentle hills
 Undulating through the mist
 Cloaking us with warmth and love
 Overcoming malice
 On the mountain souls unite
 In the oneness of each other
 Together , yet alone within
 Creating nature's solace
 This is ours, this mountain high
 Climb it if you dare!
 Climb together reaching heights
 To light our common Chalice

(Written 1983 for Leadership School Worship Service.)

Volunteers of Note Honored at Memorial Day

Once again during The Mountain's Annual meeting in May, a new "class" of Volunteers of Note was "inducted." These folks have given countless weekends AND weeks, clearly helping us embrace diversity, and create the unique environment of The Mountain.

The 2003 Volunteers of Note – Youth Program Focus

Juliet Araujo – and her husband, **Carl Erickson**, are Patron members of The Mountain. In summer 2002, Juliet served as Spiritual Leader for Junior High and Senior High Camps and the Leadership School for Social Justice; she also moved into several other positions throughout the summer. Once again she has given 5-6 weeks of her time in 2003 as Spiritual Leader for camp and faculty designer for LSSJ.

Bri Atkins – was a CIT (Counselor in Training) in 2000, a frequent PAL (Peer Advocate Leader) and PAL Mentor, plus a Workshop Facilitator for Youth CONS (weekend UU Youth Conferences), and a counselor this summer. Her specialty is in dance and movement.

Jeff Bauer – A graduate of Tennessee Tech and served several years on our summer youth camp staff. He has been a PAL Mentor for more CONS than we can count!

Erin Carmola – Has been a PAL, PAL Mentor, and has facilitated work projects for the CONS. Erin was a Camp Counselor in 2002 and again in 2003.

Susan Carmola – frequently takes time out from her busy schedule as DRE of the Winston-Salem UU Congregation to serve as worship leader for more CONS than all other worship leaders combined!



1999 Volunteer of Note **Brownie French** "back in the saddle" for 7 weeks this summer.

this summer. She is a PAL and has facilitated music workshops for the CONS.

Ashley Gray – was an ASCENDER in 2001, CIT in 2002 and a Cabin Counselor in 2003. As a PAL for CONS, she has led hikes and facilitated service projects.

Daniel Crain – has been a PAL and has facilitated candle making workshops for the CONS.

George Gaines – was an ASCENDER in 2002 and a CIT

Ben Long has been a PAL and PAL Mentor and facilitated CON hikes and often served as the DJ for CON dances. He also was a counselor this summer.

Katie Long – was Wellness Coordinator for 4 weeks of 2002



2003 Volunteers of Note.

MountainCamp. She's been a PAL Mentor for many CONS, helped with a Leadership School for Social Justice, and facilitated origami workshops.

Scott Ross – has been a PAL Mentor and facilitated CON dance/movement workshops with an emphasis on break dancing. He served as a cabin counselor in 2003.

Volunteers of Note in other areas of The Mountain

Elaine Comegys – arrived in late summer of 2002 and stayed for almost 2 months. During that time she worked cheerfully and successfully about everywhere across The Mountain. Elaine is coming for two more months this Fall.

Fran Spicer – found us through her nephew, **Ken Howell**, from the Nantahala Outdoor Center. She arrived in September 2002 and stayed 4 weeks helping in the kitchen, house-



Mountain cooks **Susanne Millroy** (L) and **Glenn Carver** with Volunteer of Note **Fran Spicer** (R).

keeping, and serving as a program host. She came back the whole week of Thanksgiving to help in the kitchen, and has agreed to come back in August and will stay into September.

If you would like to volunteer – over and above the call as the folks in this article, or for just an occasional visit, please call **Larry Wheeler** – 828-526-5838, ext 230. Join The Mountain team!

President's Society Charter Members

Honored During Memorial Day Weekend

Charter members of the President's Society were recognized at The Mountain during the Memorial Day weekend. President **Tom Warth** and his wife **Jane** welcomed more than 30 of the charter members, who received a President's Society pin with a distinctive oak leaf.

The pin will be awarded to all who become members of the President's Society. A framed plaque listing all President's Society members now hangs in Heritage Hall at the Mountain.

The President's Society honors

those who have made a planned gift provision in their estates for The Mountain or The Mountain Endowment Fund, or who have made a direct gift to the fund. Planned gifts include such estate planning vehicles as bequests, trusts, life insurance and retirement plan designations. If you would like more information about how to include the Mountain Endowment Fund in your estate planning and become a member of the President's Society, contact **Larry Wheeler** at **(828) 526-5838, ext. 230**. If you wish to name the Mountain Endowment Fund in your plans, the following designation should be used: **The Mountain Endowment Fund, Inc., Highlands, North Carolina.**



Hal Reed, Chair of The Mountain's Endowment Board, led a workshop on planned giving during Memorial Day weekend.



The President's Society gathered at Memorial Day Weekend.

Charter Members of the President's Society

Sybil & Tom Ackerman
 Emily Adler
 Neal Andreae
 Elinor Artman
 Marty Beech
 Cecil Bennett & Myrtle Staples
 Jonathan Black
 Dan & Sue Boyce
 Ron Brooks
 Virginia Carver & Hank Raichle
 Paul & Sandra Clipp
 Jim Colby
 Beverly Cree & Charlie West
 Ann & Joe Creech
 Ian & Shelley Denham
 Harry & Rene Donavon
 Yvonne Edmonds
 Ed & Jean Findley
 Susan Fraysse
 Arnold & Marjorie Gelbin
 Mike Gilbert
 Bonnie & Mark Gramlich
 Hildegard Gray & John Vacher
 Hilary Hamlin
 Mike Harris
 Jake Haun, Jr.
 Bob Hornberger
 Char & David Jackson
 Steve Jones & Jennifer Sikes
 Maureen Killoran and Peter Hyatt

Marion Leiserson
 Carole Light & Alex Redmountain
 Margaret Ann Link
 Myrtle Lockwood
 Larry & Juana Mae Long
 Elizabeth McMaster
 Margrit Nash
 Don & Jan Osgood
 Bruce Parrish
 Walt Pirie
 Juanita Polk
 Bill & Lucia Pulgram
 Helga Reaves
 Hal Reed
 Agnes Sanborn
 June Cravens Sholin
 Robert E. & Susan Smith
 Anne Staley
 Linda & Phil Sterner
 Sekayi & Tony Stringer
 Melanie Morel Sullivan
 Kathleen Moloney-Tarr & Brian Tarr
 Dan Teslow & Mary Spivey Teslow
 Lewis Walker
 Jane & Tom Warth
 Larry Wheeler & Nancy Heath
 Laura & R.K. Whitehead
 Bob & Sue Whitney
 Jerri & John Wood

If you have made a planned gift commitment or direct gift to the Mountain Endowment Fund and your name does not appear above, please let us know and we will update our records.

Sign up for The Mountain's Email Newsletter

On the front page of The Mountain's website, www.mountaincenters.org, you'll find a spot to plug in your email address. This will sign you up for email announcements from The Mountain including last minute special offers!

GIVING

GIFTS SINCE LAST ISSUE

Our profound thanks to . . .

Rhododendron Vision Holders (\$20,000 - \$24,999)

Pat McGiverin, Palm Harbour, FL
Dan & Mary Spivey Teslow, Franklin, NC

Flame Azalea Vision Holders (\$10,000 - \$14,999)

Marion Leiserson, Black Mountain, NC

Patron Members (\$5,000 - \$9,999)

Mark Evans, Knoxville, TN

Life Members (\$2,000 - \$2,500)

Jennifer Sikes & Steve Jones, Durham, NC
Ed Wilde, Spartanburg, SC

Living Memorial Memberships (\$1,500)

Betty Hostetler, N. Augusta, SC
Don Hostetler, N. Augusta, SC

Special Gifts/Gifts-In-Kind/General Fund (Gifts of \$250+)

(Note: All gifts of \$1,000+ shown with **)

Anonymous
Irving & Millie Kagan, Atlanta, GA **
First Unitarian Church of Dallas - LSSJ participants
Judy Shaklee, Norcross, GA
Savie Underhill, Hendersonville, NC
Glenn Reider, Knoxville, TN

New or Renewed Short-Term Loans or Promissory Notes

Tom Clephane, Ft. Lauderdale, FL
Caryl & Steve Kaplin, Chapel Hill, NC

Endowment

Tony & Sekayi Stringer



In Memoriam

Bob Wall, Stokesdale, NC (April 2003)
Dorothy Wertzler, Highlands, NC (May 2003)
Mary Jo Knobel, Atlanta, GA (May 2003)
Mac McGiverin, Palm Harbour, FL (May 2003)
Jane Hardy, Clearwater, FL (May 2003)

Job Opportunity!

The Mountain is seeking a Director of Development, a key position on our year-round staff.

The Development Director is responsible for:

- Raising \$500,000 in annual gifts
- Assist in raising additional \$300,000 in special gifts
- Supervising part-time Administrative Assistant
- Interacting and relationship building with guests
- Participating on the Executive staff team

Qualifications Desired:

- Mountain and/or Unitarian Universalist background
- Background and experience in Development a plus
- Work full-time at The Mountain and live in the area
- Strong people and organizational skills

The projected start time for this role is late 2003. **Larry Wheeler**, currently serving as Development Director and Volunteer Services Coordinator, will be available to assist in training the new Development Director.

If you are interested in working for a dynamic organization whose vision is to be a relevant institution for generations to come, please send a letter of interest, resume and list of references to:

Tom Warth, President
The Mountain Retreat & Learning Centers
PO Box 1299, Highlands, NC 28741-1299
tom.warth@mountaincenters.org



YES! I want to make a donation to support The Mountain's Vision!

Apply my contribution to:

Life Membership Annual Membership General Fund

\$50 \$100 \$250 \$500 \$1,000 \$2,000 \$5,000 \$_____

Pay By: Check VISA/Master Card Card #: _____ Exp. Date: _____

Name: _____ Signature on Card: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: (day) _____ (evening) _____ (e-mail) _____

The Mountain Retreat & Learning Centers, Inc., P. O. Box 1299, Highlands, NC 28741-1299

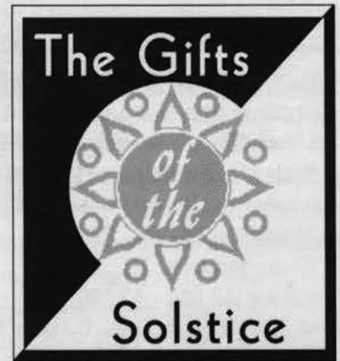
Holiday Programs

Gifts of the Solstice

December 19 – 21, 2003

Celebrate "the birth of the Sun" at The Mountain, December 19-21. All are welcome at this intergenerational circle, a Nature-based cornucopia of Spirit, song, story, creativity, and sacred space.

While we will have many family-oriented activities, we will also have some activities especially created to appeal to either adults or youth. This will give all family members time to be with each other, as well as to be within themselves. Although the activities will vary, the focus for each day is the same no matter what your age! There will be plenty to keep your mind, heart, and spirit engaged in and focused on this wondrous time of year. Please join us.



Let's Pretend it's New Years

December 26 – 28, 2003

Winter Break for Young Adults

December 26 – 28, 2003

New Year's at The Mountain

December 30 – January 1, 2004

Let's Pretend it's New Years with UUMAN

January 1 – 3, 2004

Pricing for all Holiday Programs:

	Early Bird *	Regular
Adults (per person)	\$130	\$160
Winter Break for Young Adults	\$80	\$95
Youth 12-17	\$70	\$85
Youth 4-11	\$60	\$75
Infants 0-3	free	

* Deadline - December 1, 2003

To register or for more information, call **The Mountain** at **828-526-5838, ext. 0**, or visit our website at www.mountaincenters.org

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