THE MOUNTAIN RETREAT & LEARNING CENTERS, INC.

March 2003

INSIDE

MountainCorps Goes to the
Mexican Border 3
Organization 2003 3
Position Openings 3
Recreating Community 4
Announcing Grant Prep-
aration Services 4
Learning Center for
Leadership 5
Giving 6
President's Society Charter
Members 7
Plan Now to be a Volunteer
in 20037



The Mountain Matters published bimonthly by

THE MOUNTAIN
RETREAT & LEARNING CENTERS, INC.
P. O. Box 1299
Highlands, NC 28741
(828) 526-5838
fax (781) 846-1295
info@mountaincenters.org
www.mountaincenters.org

Tom Warth, President Carol Hamilton, Editor Walita Olson, Production

> Printed by Cashiers Printing



The Mountain – What Difference Does it Make?

e've all seen the wrenching films of the Columbia's disastrous descent. I am struck by how much attention and emotion this has captured, and am moved to wonder what it is about this particular event that mesmerized the world.

Perhaps it's because the space shuttles are the continuum of the human spirit's need to explore the unknown. We've penetrated the land and seas ... and now we look to the stars to fulfill our dreams of finding and creating a world of peace and prosperity. Or perhaps the shuttle's terrible plunge into history catches our hearts because of the goodness and selflessness of those seven people who gave their lives to the betterment of the human — and ecological — condition. They were dreamers and peacemakers. They were a multi-faith, multicultural group of people who refused to allow potential barriers of race, culture or creed to impede their scientific, and I daresay spiritual, vision. They were Christian, Jewish, Hindu and Unitarian Universalist. They embodied collaboration, cooperation; they worked together to achieve a global community. They WERE a "global community" ... and they went up in flames. Maybe this is why it breaks our hearts - it was only seven people. But it was the hopes and dreams of millions.

Our President prayed for peace and comfort for these heroes and their loved ones and colleagues. And in the same hours, on the same days, he spoke of war and revenge and power. He sincerely mourned the death of seven as he planned for the deaths of thousands. In a world such as this, in times such as these, it is not only my predicament, but also my responsibility to wonder — what difference does The Mountain make?

Obviously, I believe it makes a great deal of difference or I wouldn't continue to invest my time, energy, spirit and significant dollars in this organization. And in these precarious times, I believe that it is vitally important for me, the staff, trustees, members, friends and program participants to do all that we can to all assure that The Mountain reaches its potential to serve as a catalyst for hopes, dreams — and peace. How do we do that?

We accept accountability for the financial stability of the business — this is the foundation upon which everything else depends. We look at the many sobering realities that loom before us, and we shift the organization and assign responsibilities appropriately in order to meet the growing economic challenges (please see "Organization 2003," page 3). You'll see that I've taken on the responsibility of Development. I am grateful to **Larry Wheeler** for all he has contributed in his former role as Development Director, and I have no doubt that, unlike many notfor-profits these days, The Mountain will not only survive but thrive — even through these tough times.

We make The Mountain known so that more and more people can experience it. The Mountain Quartet recently completed a tour of Florida to create awareness about this place — and we listened to the comments of so many who affirmed their hunger for the hope and sustenance

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
John Blevins
Gini Courter
Jean Findley
Hildegarde Gray
Janice Marie Johnson

Relationships
Finance
Financial Advisor
y Secretary/Planning
ohnson Mission

Chair

Ed Mangiafico Planning
Bruce Parrish Recording Secretary
Tom Warth President

RESOURCE BOARD

R. K. Whitehead Planning

Rosemary Bray McNatt Lanie Damon Jeanne Shirly New York Georgia Arizona that The Mountain's mission, vision and programs offer. People want to learn and explore with us new ways to respond to the call for peace and justice. But too many people are unaware that we even exist. Therefore, it's critical to focus on Outreach and Marketing efforts. Larry Wheeler has assumed the role of Director of Outreach and Volunteers; Shelley Denham has become Director of Marketing & New Initiatives. It's time for The Mountain to truly take its place "on the map."

We maintain balance — between The Mountain traditions we all cherish and the innovations and changes necessary to keep the organization vibrant and growing. We are the stewards of an environmental wonder — not just the nature glory, but the palpable spirituality here. We know that when individuals experience the place itself, that alone can be a catalyst for transformation. So we continue to offer the much-loved retreats and conferences that have provided opportunities for recreation and Re-Creation for almost 25 years. And we strive to constantly attract broader, more diverse markets so that the sense of renewal can expand The Mountain's capacity to inspire and motivate people to act upon their beliefs and values. One of the organizational shifts we've made is to combine all of our programs, with the exception of the Learning Center for Leadership's trainings, under one umbrella called Milestone Programs. These include youth, Elderhostel, retreats, conferences and Mountain Designs. We're looking for a Director of this group (see "Position Openings," page 3).

We build relationships — with individuals and organizations. This takes time and effort, but the rewards are enormous. We have institutional Life Memberships with organizations such as WomenSpirit and Gay Spirit Visions — this isn't about money, it's about relationship. We're engaged in conversations and projects with organizations such as Church of The Larger Fellowship (see "Save the Date," page 5), The Interfaith Alliance, Charlotte chapter of National Coalition of Communities & Justice. By working with our allies, we multiply our mutual goals, offer each other support and inspiration, deepen and widen our collective missions.

And we consider each and every member to be a partner in this organization — and many of those members become close friends. The Mountain lost two dear friends in the past few months — Trustee **Dorrie Senghas** of Burlington, Vermont and **Anne Hornberger** of Gainesville, Florida. Both contributed significantly to The Mountain — both will be deeply missed. But the difference they made to The Mountain and the lives of those they touched here will remain with us always.

I think The Mountain makes a difference. It is about hope, about peace, values, responsibility, stability, tradition, relationships and innovation. I hear **Nancy Heath's** MountainCorps experience and am proud that we provide such a unique opportunity for staff. I read **Hannah Prentice-Dunn's** article about her ASCENDER relationships and am thankful for the vision of the founders of The Mountain for creating such a lasting and important program. I look at the growing number of people who volunteer and financially support this entity and believe that this must be because The Mountain *does matter*.

What do YOU think? I invite you to tell us your stories — let us know if The Mountain has made a difference to you. And how we could make more of a difference. Please send a letter or e-mail to **Shelley Denham** here (e-mail: **shelley.denham@mountaincenters.org**).

Continued on page 3

MountainCorps Goes to the Mexican Border

By Nancy Heath

ountainCorps is an opportunity for Mountain staff to take a paid week to do a volunteer work project that is good for the world and enriching for oneself. I'm just back from a Border Immersion Experience at the intersection of Texas, New Mexico, and Juarez (Mexico). What an incredible adventure. I had never been to that area of the world.

I volunteered at The Women's Intercultural Center, supported by the Sisters of Mercy, a Catholic order of nuns. Their motto is "Strong Women = Stronger Communities." Their goals include building community for local women who are isolated and unskilled. They teach English as a Second Language, sewing, nutrition, and carpentry. Having outgrown their small building, they are constructing a 7,000 sq. ft. building. The construction project has also provided the opportunity for women to learn skills they can use in the workforce or in constructing their own homes. The building's walls are constructed with used tires obtained free from salvage yards and filled with 300 lbs. of dirt carried from the desert. The Center is staffed by a nun, two year-long volunteers, several local women, and **Kirstin Maanum** former Mountain Leadership School for Social Justice coordinator.

In my week I visited several organizations that are doing social justice work – from teaching human and civil rights to advocating for unaccompanied children ages 9-14 who are caught crossing the border. These are often children from Central American countries who walk across Mexico seeking a life free of abuse and poverty in the United States. I had a hard time picturing my grandchildren having to go through



The Women's Intercultural Center, El Paso, building in progress.

such a life.

A highlight of my week was a visit to a women's co-op on

Continued on page 8

. . . What Difference Does it Make - Continued from page 2

We live in a world full of sadness and aggression. Perhaps The Mountain's most important role is to inspire us to be pioneers of yet another great exploration — not of space, but of the human spirit. We seem unable to discover how to simply live with one another on this small planet — and we believe that The Mountain serves as a catalyst for peace. But it's going to take all of us to allow it to do so. Please be part of this journey with us.

Organization 2003

Controller

Robin Canady - Finance, Data, Registration Office

Director of Guest Services

Jim Short - Food Service, Housekeeping, Maintenance

Director of Outreach & Volunteers

Larry Wheeler

Director of Marketing & New Initiatives Shelley Denham

> President/CEO/Development Tom Warth

Position Openings

Program Director — A member of The Mountain's Executive staff, the Program Director supervises staff responsible for the successful design and/or implementation of programs offered by The Mountain.

Program Coordinator – Youth leadership and justice programs.

For full job descriptions, see The Mountain's website **www.mountaincenters.org**. Send applications to:

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

jobs@mountaincenters.org - fax (781) 846-1295

Recreating Community 2002 ASCENDERS Reunite for New Year's Reunion

By Hannah Prentice-Dunn

ver New Years, eight of the eleven 2002 ASCEND-ERS gathered at St. George Island, Florida, for a four-day reunion. Hannah Prentice-Dunn, Katie Beggs, Anya Marshall, Ayanna Stringer, Lily Avery, George Gaines, Ethan Deyle, and Parker Jones were all in attendance. We missed Mike Henderson, Galina Blass, Andrew

"For me, the lessons learned from the ASCENDER program were those of service, community, and compromising." Campbell, and our wonderful mentors, Anna Magwood and Nathan Ryan.

Katie Beggs's family generously offered their house and it offered ample opportunity for walking on the beach and playing in the water. We lazed around playing games, knitting, and

watching our favorite movies. Laurie Prentice-Dunn, Hannah's mother, and Debbie Beggs, Katie's mom, helped supervise the event, and the ASCENDERS took care of all the meals themselves, creating a duty roster, cooking, and, of course, cleaning. It was a far cry from baking for 200 hungry Mountaineers, and George Gaines sorely missed The Mountain dish pit.

For us, there was a strong pull to reunite because of the strong bonds we made this summer.

In working, playing, crying, and laughing together, we all came to know each other inside and out, and being away from a family like that all year is difficult! Having this reunion helped filled the holes in our hearts

that missing each other left.

For me, the lessons learned from the ASCENDER program were those of service, community, and compromise. It felt so good to serve The Mountain this summer and to live in this nurturing community. I have gone to MountainCamp for my whole life, starting with Beginning "In working, playing, crying, and laughing together, we all came to know each other inside and out."

Camp ten years ago. This year was the first I could actually give back to such a wonderful place.

Anytime one lives in a small house with a family of 11 kids and two mentors, compromises have to be made. Yet one of the most important things to learn in life is how to compromise. However hard it was sometimes to cope with work, living together, and yes, lack of sleep, the overpowering sense of love inspired us all, and at this reunion we got to share that again with each other. I think all of us would agree that the ASCENDER program has been one of the best, **if not THE best** experiences of our lives, and we want to thank The Mountain for all the opportunities it gave us.

For more information on the ASCENDER program and other camps, see **www.mountaincenters.org**.

ANNOUNCING — Grant Proposal Preparation Services

Does your congregation, district or nonprofit organization have a service project that could benefit from additional funding? Contracting grants management services makes sense in our present economy!

The Mountain is now offering effective resource development tools for the preparation of grant proposals to assist your district, congregation or not-for-profit group involved in work that benefits people and communities. Susan Grider, The Mountain's Director of Grants and Special Gifts, can help you find funders that share your vision, guide you through the maze of grantmakers' guidelines, and work with you to prepare successful proposals. Susan has been a development professional for ten years. She is a member of the Association of Fundraising Professionals and has held the Certified Fund Raising Executive credential since 1999. While specializing in grants management services, The Mountain will also offer relevant capacity-building workshops.

If you are interested in learning more about how you can save money and attract future funding for the work of your nonprofit organization, district or congregation, please contact The Mountain by phone or e-mail info@mountaincenters.org (828) 526-5838.

LEARNING CENTER FOR LEADERSHIP

Leadership Resources on the Web

On-Line Courses Launched

In the last ten years, many of us have gone from relying on the U.S. Post Office for communication to checking our e-mail accounts every day. Today, access to the Internet, provides access to the most revolutionary research and communication methods ever.

Ways of providing resources have changed as well. Ten years ago, if you needed to know how to coordinate a volunteer management program, you'd have gone to a seminar run by the Association of Volunteer Administrators. Today, you can log onto www.mountaincenters.org/lcl, click on "Online Courses," and sign up for "Volunteer Management," a course developed and facilitated by Laurel Amabile, program consultant for the Learning Center for Leadership. Or select "Media and Public Relations" or "How Church Systems Work," programs that are available seven days a week, 24 hours a day. Each course will take an average of 40 hours to complete.

If you've never taken an on-line course before, you might want to start with "How To Take an Online Course." You'll be able to register for these courses on-line, and pay for them using your credit card and our new on-line registration process. You'll receive immediate attention from faculty and state-of-the-art educational resources. The advantage of online courses is the ability to work on them at your own pace. We look forward to meeting you on the web!

Ramon "Luminance" Noya (1940-2002) was a noted light-



The Gay Spirit Vision Elders shown with the recently donated light fixture.

ing designer and helped The Mountain with both improvements to the lighting in the Great Room and our selection of lighting in the renovation of Heritage Hall. Gay Spirit Visions donated the light fixture for the

entrance to Heritage Hall in loving memory of the spiritual light of Ramon.

Learning Center for Leadership On-Line Courses

How to Take an On-Line Course - \$50

Learn the ins and outs of web-based courses, practice new skills, and gain confidence in your abilities to make use of this wonderful learning resource. Faculty support and attention will make this a valuable educational experience for you.

Volunteer Management - \$175 for a limited time only

Volunteer service is essential to the life of a congregation-from day-to-day clerical assistance to Sunday morning tasks! This course will explore the concepts and practices involved in developing and sustaining effective volunteer programs in our faith communities.

Media Relations 101 - \$175 for a limited time only

How can we promote our congregation and our Unitarian Universalist principles and values in our wider community via the media? Participants will learn the basics of media relations and to create a plan for developing a media relations program in their congregation.

How Church Systems Work – \$175 for a limited time only
How do board members interact with committee chairs?
What does "money" mean to members and friends? Look
at congregations from a systems perspective, learning
how to reinforce desired change and balance less desirable outcomes. Learn systems thinking, mental models,
systems diagrams and flowcharts, and how they apply to
congregational models, from the theological perspective
of Unitarian Universalist polity, governance and structure.

SAVE THE DATE! Labor Day August 29-September <u>1, 2003</u>

First time ever Church of The Larger Fellowship Gathering at The Mountain! Watch for details on The Mountain's and CLF's websites

GIVING

GIFTS SINCE LAST ISSUE

Our profound thanks to . . .

Chinquapin Vision Holders (\$25,000 - \$34,999)

Steve Hollingsworth & Daidee Springer, Chattanooga, TN Jerri & John Wood, Hellertown, PA

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

Anonymous Claire Keane, Rabun Gap, GA John Lantz & Jane Royall, Avondale Estates, GA Bruce Parrish, Atlanta, GA

Mountain Laurel Vision Holders (\$15,000 - \$19,999)

lan & Shelley Denham, Highlands, NC Mac & Pat McGiverin, Palm Harbor, FL

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

Robin Canady & Berry Howard, Scaly Mountain, NC Bob & Carolyn Hargrove, Macon, GA Bob & Dorrie Senghas, Burlington, VT Judy & Tom Turnipseed, Columbia, SC Savie Underhill, Hendersonville, NC Joan Willey & Charlie Stehman, Wilmington, NC

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

Juliet Araujo & Carl Erickson, Naples, FL John & Sharon Blevins, Kansas City, MO Libby & Tim Eble, Mt. Pleasant, SC Russell Hunnewell & Jim Urbanski, Atlanta, GA Jean Lamer & Roy Reynolds, Atlanta, GA Krista & Tedd Meinersmann, Dunwoody, GA The Kirchner/Soucaze Family, Silver Point, TN Greg Ward, Alpharetta, GA

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

Rose M. Coon & Nancy S. Hagman, Pensacola, FL Mike Harris, Kensington, MD Russell Hunnewell & Jim Urbanski, Atlanta, GA Darcie Stehman, Wilmington, NC

Memorial Memberships (\$1,500)

Dorothy Caiger Senghas - 1930-2002

Special Gifts/Gifts-In-Kind/General Fund (Gifts of \$250+) (Note: All gifts of \$1,000+ shown with **)

Neal Andreae & Nancy Mitchell, Hendersonville, NC
Bob & Diane Baum, Lakeland, FL
John & Sharon Blevins, Kansas City, MO
UU Fellowship, Clemson, SC
Faith & Roger Comstock, Yarmouth, ME **
Christine & Rob Cowgill, Atlanta, GA
Roger & Shirley Cunningham, Peoria, IL
Nancy & Tom DeLux, Mooresville, NC
Bud & Margaret Evans, St. Petersburg, FL
Mark Evans, Knoxville, TN
Ed & Jean Findley, Baton Rouge, LA
(In memory of Dorrie Senghas)
Martha Fowler & Jim Ingram, Greensboro, NC

Gay Spirit Visions, Decatur, GA **
(In memory of Ramon Noya)
Justin & Kathy Giacoletti, Havertown, PA
Hildegarde Gray & John Vacher, Atlanta, GA
Hilary Hamlin, Bristol, RI (in honor of Ann & Joe Creech)
Paul Howard & Barbara James, Sanford, NC
Harold & Charlotte Johnson, Black Mountain, NC
Howard & Marjean Jones, Davidson, NC **
Jack Lawrence, Whispering Pines, NC
Christine Lucas & Lewis Walker, Richmond, VA**
Ed & Jean Mangiafico, Chatham, MA**

(In memory of Dorrie Senghas)
Krista & Tedd Meinersmann, Dunwoody, GA **
Jeri Moulder & Paul Murray, Santa Barbara, CA
2002 Mountain School for Congregational Leadership
John & Margaret Norris, Nashville, TN **
Sonya Prestridge & Arvid Straube, Durham, NC
(In memory of Pat Gnagey)

Margaret Schilling, Greenville, SC **
John & Ruth Tori, West Palm Beach, FL
Wachovia Foundation, Winston-Salem, NC **
Warth Construction, Highlands, NC **

Mountain Youth Programming (Gifts of \$200+) (Note: All gifts of \$1,000+ shown with **)

Anonymous – in honor of Ray & Mary Elizabeth Taylor Bob & Trudy Deyle, Tallahassee, FL Merrill Dillon, Athens, GA Jim Donaldson, Marietta, GA Bill & Fran Gimby, Roswell, GA Alan Hutchinson, Augusta, GA Laurie & Steven Prentice-Dunn, Northport, AL Anne & Gene Todd, Charlotte, NC

New or Renewed Short-Term Loans or Promissory Notes

Gary & Terry Beale, Atlanta, GA
Paula & Stan Blair, Ft. Myers, FL
Bill Buckley, Atlanta, GA
Nancy & Tom DeLux, Mooresville, NC
Nancy Heath & Larry Wheeler, Sky Valley, GA
Doug & Ouida Hotch, Sky Valley, GA
Jim Parker, Atlanta, GA
Mary Toulmin, Fairhope, AL

Gifts to the Endowment Fund

Neal Andreae, Hendersonville, NC Anonymous Paul & Sandra Clipp, Clemson, SC Bob Hornberger, Gainesville, FL Anne Staley, Marietta, GA June Cravens Sholin, Apache Junction, AZ



In Memoriam

Clifton Hoffman, Athens, GA Anne Hornberger, Gainesville, FL Dorrie Senghas, Burlington, VT

President's Society Charter Members

To Be Recognized Memorial Day Weekend

The Mountain's **President's Society** has been established to thank and acknowledge those who have included the **Mountain Endowment Fund** in their estate plans or who have made a current gift to the fund. The period for charter membership in the society runs through June 30, 2003, and those who are or become charter members will be recognized during special activities at **The Mountain** over Memorial Day Weekend. To date, more than 60 people are charter members of the **President's Society**.

If you have included the **Mountain Endowment Fund** in any aspect of your estate planning (will, trust, life insurance, etc.) please let us know. If you haven't already done so, we will be pleased to include you as a charter member of the society. It is not necessary to disclose the expected amount of your deferred gift unless you so wish. As you work on your estate planning, please consider a gift to the **Mountain Endowment Fund**. We'd love to recognize you at the Memorial Day Weekend festivities.

The purpose of the Mountain Endowment Fund is to provide a perpetual and growing fund to enhance the work of The Mountain Retreat & Learning Centers. Including the Fund in your estate plans is an excellent way to "endow" your annual gifts to The Mountain on a permanent basis. The official designation of the fund for your estate planning is as follows: The Mountain Endowment Fund, Inc., Highlands, North Carolina.

If you have questions or would like assistance with your estate planning that includes the fund, please feel free to contact Larry Wheeler at (828) 526-5838, ext. 230.

March 2003

Plan Now to be a Volunteer in 2003

As a recent volunteer said, "I can't believe that I waited so long to become a volunteer, but now that I have, you've got me forever!" Another expressed gratitude that we'd allow her to come and volunteer. She said, "Yes, I work hard, but I also get to enjoy the company of the staff and guests, experience the beauty of the area, and I find myself very relaxed in doing all of it."

Our volunteer opportunities include working in the kitchen, housekeeping, administration, maintenance, carpentry, plumbing, and programming. You can work part-time or full-time. A four-hour shift covers a night's stay and 8 hours covers both your night's stay and meals. You can come for a day, week, or a few weeks. Come once a year or several times a year.

Apply to be a Mountain Volunteer

To apply to be a volunteer, complete the Volunteer Application Form which you will find on The Mountain's website at:

http://www.mountaincenters.org/volunteer_app_form.html

You can fill it out on-line. Do it now while it's on your mind. This way we can coordinate with you on the right time and the right assignment. If you have additional questions, contact Larry Wheeler at (828) 526-5838, ext. 230, or email him at larry.wheeler@mountaincenters.org.

The Mountain Matters

	Apply my co	ntribution to:	
☐ Life Member	☐ General	Fund	☐ Program Support
\$50 \$100	\$250 \$500 \$1,0	000 🗖 \$2,000	\$5,000 \$
. D. Dioberet Divi			
By: Check VI	SA/Master Card Card #:		Exp. Date:
	SA/Master Card Card #:		
me:	SA/Master Card Card #:		Exp. Date:
		Signature on Card	

MountainCorps — Continued from page 3

the far side of Juarez where a group of nuns have responded to the request of local women to have a place to come together for mutual support. We shared tears and laughter, songs and stories. Their neighborhood is built on a former garbage dump. We could see plumes of smoke rising from the ground from the garbage decaying underneath. Many live without running water or electricity in shacks made of cinder block or other left-over scraps. Illness is common; medical care is hard to get. One woman I met has found three bodies in the field between the co-op and her home, victims of lost homes and communities.

Another treat was spending time with **Sister Betty** and **Father Peter** who live in Juarez as witnesses to life there. They have spent the last 40 years working for social justice in Central America and Mexico. A gentle pair, they open their three-room home to visitors and neighbors. Sister Betty teaches gardening on a 3' x 6' plot that is replicable for



Center Staff and their contractor discuss construction details

many of her neighbors. She has made friends with local women giving them a safe place to share their struggles.

I feel blessed by my MountainCorps experience and honored to be part of one of The Mountain's transformative programs.

Still time to fill out The Mountain Survey! Let us know what you think and help us save paper at www.mountaincenters.org/mmsurvey.html

THE MOUNTAIN RETREAT & LEARNING CENTERS, INC.

P. O. Box 1299 Highlands, NC 28741 Presorted Non-Profit US Postage PAID Highlands, NC Permit No. 46

