



THE MOUNTAIN

Retreat & Learning Centers, Inc.

Empowering people to work for positive change

Special Member Letter – Election & Annual Meeting Announcement!

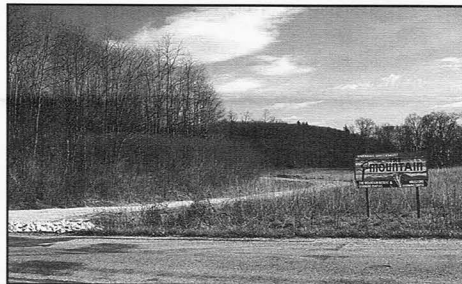
April 2004

Dear Members:

As many of you know, the Parry family from Atlanta ran a girl's camp here beginning in the early 20s. A Parry grandchild, Laird, spent many summers here as a child while his mother worked in the camp. He came back to The Mountain about seven years ago, drove up our winding road with its five switchbacks, to the top and parked at the tower. He jumped out of his car, walked up to the first staff person he could find, with tears in his eyes, introduced himself, said he hadn't been here in 37 years and exclaimed ... "I can't believe how wide and straight the road is."

"How wide and straight the road is." I led with this story during The Mountain's 20th year reunion weekend and I come back to it today, as we are celebrating our 25th year. Whatever it was 40 years ago, or 20 years ago, or 5 years ago, I know "the road" today is wider and straighter because all of us — former and current staff, and trustees — all of us have helped straighten it by clarifying our mission, vision and values, and widened it by embracing diversity and expanding the reach of our programs. Because of all our work, The Mountain's road is wider and straighter than it has ever been. And it continues to be widened and straightened in a physical sense, too, as you can see in this picture. Thanks to anonymous donors we are building the new entrance road to The Mountain — it will be completed and dedicated Memorial Weekend.

And it's not just a new road — lots of good things are happening at The Mountain. Last month an independent bank appraisal estimated the value of the property at \$7,200,000. This is certainly a reflection of property values in the Highlands area, but also speaks to the work we've done and the investment all of us have made in the physical plant. We have ramps to all of our public spaces, a new gathering center (Heritage Hall) and a new chapel on the summit. In addition to the road, we plan to **upgrade the craft barn** including a bathroom and shower room, **build a storage area** behind the stables, **upgrade the stables** (maybe include a guest-managed pet kennel), **repair the dam** at the second lake, **put in new hiking trails**, a **study bog** and a **labyrinth** at the base. Things are happening at The Mountain!



The new entrance road.

In addition, we have new, skilled, friendly staff — **Carole Ann Mackey** (Logistics Coordinator), **Jan Stanfield** (Sales Manager), and **Steve Lewis** (Development Director). All look forward to meeting and working with you.

Most importantly, our programs continue to appeal to a diverse constituency, reinforcing our mission to "embrace the diversity of life, creating an environment to energize people to work for positive change." The Mountain is working!

This is the year for each of you to re-engage with The Mountain. Start by **voting** in the trustee election (ballot included in this letter). Attend Memorial Weekend if at all possible (schedule and registration enclosed — note the low price). And if you can't be here then, come another time, but come to The Mountain this year. We want to see you and we want you to be a part of this dynamic place.

The Mountain is truly transformative. With your involvement, The Mountain will continue to widen and straighten its road achieving its vision of being a "relevant institution, for generations to come, actively engaged with others to create communities committed to justice, civility and compassionate behavior." And this, from a Korean student at The Mountain during January 2004, "I hope you make continuous effort to train people with belief of bright world." Count on it!

Tom



May 28-30 — 25th Anniversary Event

Members' Memorial Reconnections Weekend!

It's The Mountain's 25th Anniversary year, and many of our members haven't come to a program or seen each other in a long time. This is the weekend to reconnect, renew relationships, share memories and explore our plans to assure that The Mountain stays a relevant institution for generations to come.

The weekend will focus on what The Mountain has meant to us in all these rich and memorable 25 years. Here's an overview of our time together:

Friday evening: "Ingathering" – a time for members, trustees and staff to connect and create our community.

Saturday morning: "Sharing our Stories" – a chance for us to share thoughts about why The Mountain matters to us ... why we got involved and why we stay involved. Hear trustee and staff perspectives – and share your own.

Saturday afternoon: "Experiencing The Mountain" – All of us have our favorite activities, and, based on interest in each one, we'll offer several this weekend: a spiritual walk, hike, yoga class, crafts, and, of course, rocking chair time. We'll also begin to work on the new Labyrinth for those who would like to participate in one of the most meaningful aspects of The Mountain's culture – volunteer service.

Saturday evening: "For Generations to Come ..." – Beginning with Community Social Time, and a special candlelight dinner, we'll turn our thoughts to the future opportunities for The Mountain to make a difference in the lives of the many who experience and contribute to this special entity. Of course, the one-of-a-kind Mountain Annual Meeting Celebration will take place at 7:30 p.m.



Don't miss this very special 25th Anniversary event. Please bring Mountain photos you're willing to share with us for our archive albums; and we'd deeply appreciate written stories or poems, drawings or music you'd like to contribute about your experiences in the past 25 years – or your hopes for the future.

We'll extend the usual Early Bird special rate through May 17! And don't forget our new 10% discount for families of 4 or more. This weekend is meant to be Intergenerational – if we have at least 6 youth age 12-17 and/or 4-11, we'll offer a youth program Saturday morning. Parents will be contacted in advance to let you know. If fewer than 6 in each group, we'll help you set up a parent co-op!

FEES - Per Person	Registration Deadline Date	Adult	Youth 4-17*
Early Bird	Before May 18, 2004	\$106	\$53
Regular	On or after May 18, 2004	\$128	\$64
Family Discount Rate**	Before May 18, 2004	\$95	\$48

* Children through 3 years of age attend for FREE.
** Valid for families of 4 or more from the same household.

Meet the Candidates

In support of the MR&LCs objective to have a diverse board of skilled people, the Board of Trustees recommends the election of the following four (4) Trustees:

JOHN J. BLEVINS

Portfolio: Organizational Relationships

John is an active member of All Souls UU Church of Kansas City, Missouri where he has served in numerous volunteer roles, including President of the Board of Trustees. He is currently a member of the UUA Board of Trustees and The Mountain Board of Trustees having been elected to The Mountain's Board in 2001. He has served on the lay staff of the Midwest Leadership school since 1998 and was Dean of the School in 2000. He was a member of the Fulfilling the Promise Task Force and is currently the All Souls liaison to the new Gaia Community Congregation. John is retired from Hallmark cards after 30 years of service; for 15 of those years he was the Data Communications Manager. He has been married for 36 years and has two adult UU daughters.

BETTY V. HOLCOMB

Portfolio: Organizational Relationships

Betty is currently a member of the Mountain Board having been appointed in 2003. She has been an active member of a Unitarian Universalist congregation for over 30 years; she is currently a member of the First Unitarian Society of Chicago where she serves on the Religious Education Council, Membership Committee and as a Sunday school teacher. She has served as a member of the Central Midwest District Nominating Committee, co-chair of the Jubilee Working Group for Anti-racism, and as a member of the Whitney Young Grants Panel. Betty is retired from Abbott Laboratories after over 21 years of service. She spent 12 years as a junior and senior high school science, biology and health teacher. She is currently "quilting a new career" in health education, environmental responsibility and/or antiracism. She has two biological children and two additional daughters from hosting experiences: Icelandic and Swiss.

JANICE MARIE JOHNSON

Portfolio: Mission & Vision

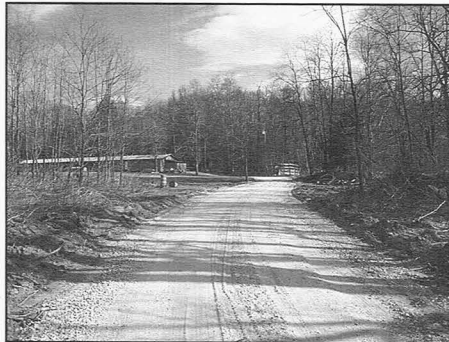
Janice is currently a member of the Mountain Board having been elected in 2001. She participated in The Mountain's Multicultural Community Retreats (Community Church, New York and Chicago's First Church) in the early 90s and has had a strong cross-cultural and interfaith life experience. She is an active member of Community Church where she has served in a number of capacities including Chair of the Board. She is on the Metropolitan New York District Anti-Racism and Nominating Committees and is a UUA Jubilee World Trainer and Commissioner. She has also served on the UUA's Commission on Appraisal. Janice is co-founder of the multicultural and multiethnic singing group "commUnity."

DR. ANTHONY STRINGER

Chair of The Board

Tony has served on The Mountain Board of Trustees as Chair since 2001 and has been active in various capacities with The Mountain for many years. He was faculty coordinator for the "2000-2001 Millennium on The Mountain" event and co-coordinator of Training for Lay Ministers in 1998. Tony will be co-facilitator with The Rev. Marti Keller for our 2004 UU Week in August. Tony is Full

Professor in the Department of Rehabilitation Medicine at Emory University and serves as Department Head. He is a fully certified Lay Minister for the UU Congregation of Atlanta and co-founder of the Thurman Hamer Ellington Percussion Choir. His wife, Sekayi is Director of a Middle School in Atlanta and a frequent Mountain Volunteer. Daughter Ayanna has participated in all the Mountain Youth Camps and as Counselor and PAL



Laird Parry's comment, "I can't believe how wide and straight the road is."

(Peer Advocate Leader).

BALLOT

(All members are eligible to vote.)

The Board of Trustees unanimously recommends election of the following four (4) candidates to The Mountain Board of Trustees, each serving three (3) year terms effective with the Annual Meeting, May 29, 2004. The Board of Trustees asks for your affirmative vote for each candidate.

CANDIDATES FOR TRUSTEES

To serve three-year terms effective May 29, 2004.

- John Blevins
- Betty Holcomb
- Janice Johnson
- Tony Stringer

In case of more than one eligible voter in this membership:

- John Blevins
- Betty Holcomb
- Janice Johnson
- Tony Stringer

Note: You may vote via U.S. mail or e-mail. To vote by e-mail, please send your votes to the Corporate Secretary, R. K. Whitehead, at rkwhitehead@mindspring.com. Please put "Mtn. Vote" in the subject line and specify the names of those voting.

To vote by US mail, please enclose your vote in an envelope and address it to:
R. K. Whitehead, 2600 Atlanta Highway, Gainesville, GA 30504

Please put the names of all voters on the outside of the envelope.

Name of Voter: _____

Name of Second Voter: _____

THE MOUNTAIN RETREAT & LEARNING CENTERS, INC.

P. O. Box 1299
Highlands, NC 28741

PRESORTED
FIRST CLASS
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The Mountain's Annual Meeting and Election!