

THE Mountain matters

The Mountain Retreat & Learning Centers, Inc.

December 2001

INSIDE

The Year in Review	2-3
Pat Gnagey	4
Winter is a Great Time to Volunteer	4
Upcoming Programs	5
Giving	6
Planning for End-of-the- Year Giving	6
Estate Planning Brings Peace of Mind	7
Gwinnett Builds Another Ramp	8



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THE MOUNTAIN
RETREAT & LEARNING CENTERS, INC.
P. O. Box 1299
Highlands, NC 28741
(828) 526-5838
fax (828) 526-2511
info@mountaincenters.org
www.mountaincenters.org

Carol Hamilton, Editor
Walita Olson, Production

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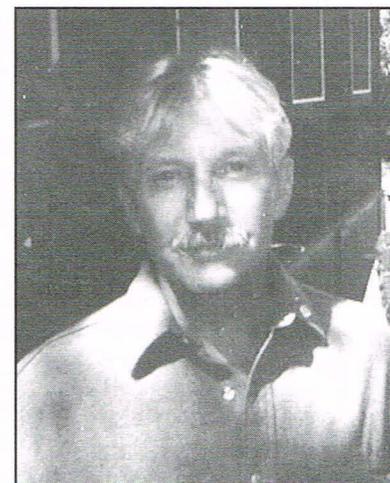
From The President

After conducting a lengthy search and considering many fine candidates, I am delighted to announce that **Tom Tyre** of Daytona Beach, Florida has accepted The Mountain's offer to be the new Retreat Center Director. He will begin his responsibilities January 1, 2002. Tom, a Unitarian Universalist, has had significant work experience supervising students, seasonal and year-round staff in hospitality, food service and retreat center businesses. At various times he has served as an instructor, counselor and manager in these related fields. He also has experience in preparing and managing budgets and is a certified yoga instructor.

When I asked Tom "why this job at this time?" he responded, "It's the mission. I really believe in The Mountain's mission and potential impact on people's lives. In many ways I sense and see The Mountain as holy ground, a place to take care of and a place that takes care of me. I've wanted to be a part of The Mountain in a more meaningful way and this is the right time. I also believe I have the skills and the energy needed to enhance the Retreat Center experience for everyone, employees and guests alike, and to live its mission."

As Retreat Center Director Tom will be responsible for day-to-day operations including the registration office, housekeeping and maintenance, food service and program staff. In addition, he will have the ongoing responsibility for sales and promotion of the Retreat Center and all of its activities. He will report to me.

We are all very excited by his appointment and are looking forward to Tom's arrival on the first of the New Year. When you are here as a guest, please introduce yourself to him, as he will want to meet as many of you as he can. We will hear more from Tom in the first *The Mountain Matters* of 2002.



Tom Tyre

The Year in Review

2001 has been an exciting year at The Mountain. The next few pages gives some highlights. The Learning Center for Leadership launched the first ever Leadership School for Religious Educators. The school was full months before the registration deadline. MountainCamp served more youth than any previous summer at The Mountain. Through our Elderhostel program, over 800 people learned about our mountains, their people, music and cultures. The Unitarian Universalist Musicians Network held their annual continental conference here and are planning their return. Over 100 Unitarian Universalists from across the region came together for the first ever Church Retreat You Don't Have to Plan. Milestone Learning Center served youth from diverse communities who heightened their awareness of social justice issues and made plans to take action in their home communities. We're proud that The Mountain makes a difference in people's lives and energizes them to make positive change in the world.

The YEAR

ELDERHOSTEL



"I am thankful for the underlying spiritualness of the week – emphasis on the importance of knowing another person's or group's culture in order to accept, appreciate and care about them."

"I'm leaving inspired to follow the new (to me) philosophies presented. I am leaving with such a new appreciation and respect for this area and its people and for the beautiful mountain which was our temporary home."

"This has been one of the most up-lifting Elderhostels I have attended. I truly think this is a magic mountain."

"I especially appreciated the talk on Unitarian Universalist ideas and concepts. The closing evening with music, prayer, sharing of experiences and feelings, and especially the dedication to seeking to make positive change in human understanding, family, and other relationships, promoting peace and racial harmony, and caring for our environment, our fragile home, meant a great deal to me. A moment of tranquility in the mad rush of urban time helps you to put everything into perspective. Reorient values!."

"Your vegetarian offerings were delicious and non-repetitive. I really congratulate the chef!"



"This was perhaps the most unusual week (September 9-14) for myself and America. Being at "The Mountain" brought peace – tempering the anger and fright. The staff, speakers, music, Elderhostelers, and the beauty helped me through this time."

"This was our first Elderhostel. We hope to visit other Elderhostel sites; we will measure them against our time at The Mountain. I feel we hit the jackpot on our first try."

MountainCamp

"I was an ASCENDER this summer. ASCENDER stands for All Summer Campers Exploring Nature's Delights and Experiencing Re-Creation, but for me it means the friends I have made, the work I accomplished, and the growth I experienced."

Living together with eleven other people, male and female, was the best part of my ASCENDER summer. I got to know some of the most creative, smart, and enthusiastic people I've ever met and I made lasting friendships. I listened thoughtfully to the ideas of others, and I shared openly about myself. I laughed – I laughed hard. The other ASCENDERS really were, and still are, like my family."



"I am who I am because I come here. The Mountain has opened my eyes to the life I live now – liberal and accepting."

"The Mountain is a place where I can be accepted for who I am and not just what I look like or how I act."

"I've met my most favorite people in the world here, especially the counselors and staff."

LEARNING CENTER

The Mountain School for Congregational Leadership

"It was a week filled with learning, laughter, and natural beauty. It was also a time I am not likely to forget. I left there with a renewed sense of potential and a desire to share that with my congregation. I got good ideas about how to be a more effective board member. Also, I want you all to know that UUs are good people. I have never in my life been among such bright lights! Every person I met showed me a new path to walk that had vital-



in REVIEW

MILESTONE LEARNING CENTER



Advisor Comment:

"I think the program is excellent at building communication skills and fostering growth – for the group and individually. The interaction with Mountain staff is a wonderful aspect and gives youth a variety of perspectives and role models. Thank you for taking the time to ask the youth what they think and how they feel about things, and what is important to them."

Kalpulli Tlalteca Youth Organization

"I get so angry about all of the abuse in our community, now I know how to change that anger into something positive for our community."



Leadership Schools for Social Justice – Communities In Schools/Support Our Students Program

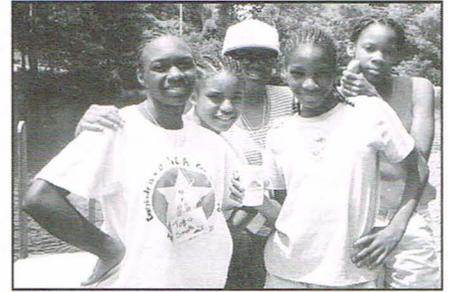
"I appreciate how you helped me do things on something positive for our community." the Challenge Course that I had never been able to do before."

Rutherford, NC

"I gained more knowledge about the truth of racism, heterosexism, classism, and sexism. I also gained more motivation to fix these things in my community."

deBenneville Pines Junior Hi Youth

"This is what democracy looks like!"



2001: A Leadership Odyssey for UU Young Adults (made possible by a grant from the UUA Funding Panel)

"I appreciated the experiential nature of learning, a great way of sparking creative thought and meaningful action, this offered a really neat structure we can take home."

LEAP (Leadership: Ethical Action Project) Raleigh-Durham, NC

"Because of you just listening and understanding our feelings, helped me break segregation in my life."

for LEADERSHIP

ity and validity. It's great that our church encourages members to attend this annual event. I hope that we continue to sponsor participation in it."

Thomas Jefferson District Board

"We received 'conflict management' training from Helen Bishop, part of The Mountain staff and one of the best conflict management trainers in our religious association."



The Church Retreat You Don't Have to Plan

"The Mountain continues to be a source of healing and inspiration to us."

"The staff was very skilled and solicitous."

Gwinnett Work Weekend

"We had a great time at the work weekend. Everybody, staff included, was very friendly and helpful, and made us feel very welcome."

Church Retreats, etc.

WomenSpirit

"Thanks for taking such good care of this awesome place."

Hendersonville/Transylvania County Retreat

"It is always invigorating, both spiritually and mentally, to visit The Mountain. Your future plans seem great! The mountains and surrounding woods are beautiful."



Pat Gnagey — 1938-2001

It is with real sadness that we report the untimely death on October 13 of **Pat Gnagey**. In the weeks leading up to her passing, Pat had been hospitalized to stabilize her system. The decision was made to change her method of dialysis. She came home to what all hoped would be a better life. It apparently wasn't meant to be. After a difficult night, she died. Staff member, **Nancy Heath**, was with her.

Her family came—sister **Judy**, son **Bob**, foster son **Neil**, and brother-in-law **Bill**. A memorial service was held at The Mountain on October 20 and a second one was held here over Thanksgiving weekend when so many Life Member friends were in attendance.

Larry Wheeler, shared the following words about her:

"Pat came into The Mountain's life in the Spring of 1984, to become the Assistant to then Development Director, Jake Haun. More than seventeen years later her influence and imprints are all over this Mountain top, its staff and former staff, Mountain members and guests.

"Over the years she served in various staff and volunteer positions—working in development, the office, housekeeping and the kitchen. She served on the Board of Trustees as the Recording Secretary. But most of all, she became involved in people's lives—staff got to know her because she worked at getting to know them.

"She thrived as a volunteer, wanting to contribute to this place which meant so much to her. I remember her coming up on pancake mornings to help Richard Arends in the kitchen. She made Mountain granola on a regular basis. Often she seemed to anticipate staff needs. She would call and say she was available if they wanted help, and it made a real difference.

"When we remodeled the cabins, Pat immediately went to work weaving rugs. But most significantly was Pat's dream to make Cabin 7 completely accessible. Her caring and concern



for those with accessibility needs was always in the forefront. She made the pledge herself to remodel the cabin and then asked her friends to help offset that pledge which she really couldn't afford on her own. And her friends came through. Cabin 7 is dedicated to Pat Gnagey and her friends. It makes the difference in many people's ability to enjoy The Mountain to its fullest.

"When I came back on the staff in 1997, Pat was the first to call, welcome me back and say she was available to support

me in any way I needed. Incredible in her devotion, we worked together to reorganize the office and to energize The Mountain's constituency with their involvement and generosity. She easily gave me more than 1/2 time support as a volunteer for the first couple of years. When **she decided** her health wasn't allowing her to be reliable enough from her point of view she pushed me to hire a regular assistant. Then with her own self-imposed pressure relieved, she continued to help when the assistant was off or when a special project came along.

"In many ways, Pat became my conscience and memory. It was almost disappointing to arrive at work in the morning and NOT see my phone's red light blinking, indicating I had a message. Often it was Pat with some thoughts from late at night, starting out with the words of 'I've been thinking . . .' or 'Have you thought of . . .' It got to be a game between us—could I think of things faster than she did? She clearly kept me moving forward and usually, with whatever the idea was, would say, 'and if you need my help with it . . .' Other times her message would be informing me of something happening with one of our members—sickness, celebrations, events in their lives, etc., gently suggesting that it would be good for me to call them. I'm already missing those messages.

"Her reach was wide. Pat is a person who will continue to live in the minds and hearts of those of us in The Mountain family."

Winter is a Great Time to Volunteer

Being at The Mountain in winter is very pleasant with vistas in all directions and, often, pleasant weather as well (we get very little snow). The night sky can be very dramatic, and there is a peacefulness all around. It's a great time to be here.

- **Become a Program Host** by attending training January 11-13, 2002.

- **Call us if you want to volunteer**, and let's talk about what you could do at the time you're available. We'll check the project list and match you to one of our off-season tasks.

- **Learn skills** that will allow you to be a regular volunteer in one of our departments.

- **Shuttle Drivers** – We always need folks to help with driving shuttles to and from the Atlanta airport. If you think you can help us with driving shuttles, come up and we'll put you through our short van-driving training program.

Contact **Robert E. Smith** for more information (828-526-5838, ext. 227 or e-mail roberte.smith@mountaincenters.org).

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

Register today by calling the Mountain Office (828) 526-5838 or using the registration form available on our website (www.mountaincenters.org/regform.html). Register soon for Early Bird Discount rates!

The Gifts of the Solstice December 20 – 23, 2001

Celebrate the Winter Solstice at The Mountain. Each day's program will celebrate one of the four elements and the four directions. Separate adult and children's craft times will allow adults to weave in meditation, spirituality and contemplation. Each evening vespers service will celebrate the day's element and direction. Childcare will be provided during portions of the program while other portions will be intergenerational.

Light in the Dark: Christmas 2001 December 23 – 26, 2001

Come to The Mountain for a celebration of Christmas. Christmas Eve will feature a special candlelight service. Christmas day will be spent caroling at a local nursing home, decorating the dining hall for the afternoon feast and culminate with the traditional "silly" gift exchange. Give yourself a gift and enjoy the simplicity of Christmas at The Mountain. This program is intergenerational.

Celebrating Interdependence New Years at The Mountain December 28, 2001 – January 1, 2002

*...respect for the interdependent
web of all existence, of which
we are a part...*

Join us for an inspiring, enlightening and enjoyable New Year's exploring interdependence and sustainability. Interactive games and activities will explore how systems underlie much of our life and our world. Free choice activities will include hikes, other outdoor activities, crafts – or maybe an afternoon nap – it's up to you. Toast the New Year with our traditional candlelight dinner and concert by The Mountain Quartet. Don't forget your favorite CDs for our New Year's dance party. Youth will enjoy their own program during adult activities. Start your New Year right with beauty and inspiration of The Mountain.



Adult CON January 25 – 27, 2002

You've heard about how much fun the youth have when they come to The Mountain for a CON. Now it's your turn! Join the Mountain staff and guest workshop leaders for the first ever Adult CONference. Morning and afternoon workshops will focus on creativity and native arts and music. Enrich your life through fellowship and shared experiences.

Dinner & A Movie *Italian-American - A Convergence of Food & Film* February 1 – 3, 2002

Recently, there has been a great deal of discussion regarding portrayals of Italian Americans in the media due to the hit show, *The Sopranos*. We will view two different films, from different eras, that touch on those views: *Italian-American* by Scorsese and *Big Night* by Stanley Tucci and Campbell Scott. We will further underline our discussion by going beyond spaghetti and meatballs to learn true Italian country cooking with **Andy LaTorre**.

COUPON • COUPON • COUPON

Register for both
The Gifts of the Solstice
and **Christmas** programs and
receive a **15% discount** off
your total program fees.
Include this coupon
with your registration.

MountainCamp Brochure in the Mail

The MountainCamp 2002 brochure is in the mail. It is also on our website at www.mountaincenters.org/mountaincamp.html. If you did not receive one and would like a copy, please call the Office at (828) 526-5838. Please request a copy and ask that you be placed on the camp mailing list for next year!

GIVING

GIFTS SINCE LAST ISSUE

Our profound thanks to . . .

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

Dan & Sue Boyce, Bloomfield Hills, MI

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

Bill & Edith Cherry, Decatur, GA

Hi & Polly Cody, Black Mountain, NC

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

Bill & Harriet Ball, Etowah, NC

Charles & Linda Winn Brown, Tallahassee, FL

Murray Evans & Dee Montie, Brookfield, VT

(In memory of Pat Gnagey)

Darwin & Myra Smith, Dallas, TX

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

Bonnie Arbuckle, Flat Rock, NC

Helena Dailey, Lithonia, GA

Carol & Dick Fencil, Madeira, OH

Ernie & Jan Hoffman, Bloomington, IL

Suzanne Hopkins & S. G. Subramanian, Charlotte, NC

Anne & John Jones, Highlands, NC

Howard & Marjean Jones, Davidson, NC

Barbara & Quentin Smith, Ann Arbor, MI

Darwin & Myra Smith, Dallas, TX

(Correction from last issue:

John & Sharon Blevins, Kansas City, MO)

Memorial Memberships (\$1,500)

Pat Gnagey, Franklin, NC

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

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

Ann & Joe Creech, Roswell, GA

Helena Dailey, Lithonia, GA **

UU Fellowship of Franklin, NC

Arnold & Marge Gelbin, Winston-Salem, NC **

Ernie & Jan Hoffman, Bloomington, IL

Char & David Jackson, Cincinnati, OH **

Claire Keane, Rabun Gap, GA

Makita Corp of America, Duluth, GA

Building Our Vision – Step 1

Dining Hall Remodeling (Gifts of \$250+)

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

Griff & Susan Gilbert, Blowing Rock, NC

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

Charles & Susan Kimball, Boca Raton, FL

Jeannette Manning, Charlotte, NC **

Joan Moore, Nashville, TN

Bruce Parrish, Atlanta, GA **

New or Renewed Short-Term Loans or Promissory Notes

Ian & Shelley Denham, Highlands, NC

Hildegarde Gray & John Vacher, Atlanta, GA

Sarah Hargrove, Macon, GA

Barbara James & Paul Howard, Sanford, NC

Bert Gose & Jim Kelley, Atlanta, GA

Don & Sue Male, Murfreesboro, TN

Elaine & John Miller, Gainesville, FL

Bobbi Stenstrom, Augusta, GA

Tom & Jane Warth, Highlands, NC



In Memoriam

Herb Burt, Matthews, North Carolina

Pat Gnagey, Franklin, North Carolina

Betty Miller, Decatur, Georgia

Ralph Thomas, Soddy Daisy, Tennessee

Planning for End-of-the-Year Giving

Holiday Giving – Feel Good and Help The Mountain

We increasingly hear people say that they have folks on their holiday shopping lists that really don't need anything. We have a suggestion for all who find themselves in such a situation: ***Make a gift to The Mountain in their names and we will send special holiday greetings to the named people announcing that the donor has made a gift in their name.***

The donor will receive an acknowledgment of the gift, a copy of the greeting, a sincere thank you, AND a tax deduction!

If you want to participate, please contact **Larry Wheeler** by mid-December with your list of names with addresses and how you want your name(s) listed as donating the gift, plus the amount of the gift. The recipient will NOT be told the amount of the gift.

If you prefer to have the greetings sent to you so you can mail it directly to the recipient, that's fine, too.

Life Membership Options

Another great holiday gift for an offspring, a friend or

Continued on page 7

Year-End Giving – Continued from page 6

yourself!

- Single payment of \$2,000 (check, credit card or stock/mutual funds)
- Five year payments totaling \$2,500 (Annually at \$500, Quarterly at \$125, Monthly at \$41.67—and, we can do bank drafts for your quarterly or monthly payments)
- And it's tax-deductible!!

If you want, we're happy to do a special holiday certificate and send it to you for inclusion with your other holiday gifts.

End-of-the-Year Giving in General

Please do remember The Mountain as you prepare your end-of-the-year giving lists. There are lots of ways for you to give:

Gifts of cash, gifts of stock, gifts of real estate, Life Income gifts. With any of the above, you can donate directly to The Mountain or to the Mountain Endowment Fund.

Thanks for thinking about The Mountain!

Development Questions?

Contact Larry Wheeler at (828) 526-5838, ext. 230, or e-mail him at larry.wheeler@mountaincenters.org.

Estate Planning Brings Peace of Mind

Peace of mind. We certainly don't have it all of the time. But one of the things we can do to bring us more peace of mind is to get our estate plan in order. It's easy to put off. Estate planning sometimes involves matters we would rather not deal with. Nevertheless, most people feel a great deal of satisfaction and relief once they know their estate will be handled and distributed in a way that is appropriate. Why not make a vow to see a professional and make sure your will and estate plan are in order?

While you're doing that, think about the legacy you may wish to leave to organizations that have played an important role in your life, such as The Mountain. The Mountain has established an endowment fund which is ideal for bequests and other gifts from estate plans, including trusts, life insurance, and retirement plan beneficiary designations. The Mountain's endowment will be a key to the continuing growth and development of its mission and programs. A bequest to The Mountain is an ideal way to "endow" the annual gifts you have made over the years, so that they will continue on a perpetual basis.

The President's Society has been established as a way to thank and recognize those who have made an estate commitment (planned gift) to The Mountain. To become a member, simply notify us that you have established a planned gift of any size to benefit The Mountain; also, lifetime gifts to the Mountain Endowment qualify a donor for the President's Society. All who become members prior to January 1, 2003, will be honored as charter members of the Society and will be recognized at a special inaugural event. Of course, you can let us know about your planned gift, but remain anonymous if you wish.

To include The Mountain in your estate plans, the official name "The Mountain Retreat & Learning Centers, Inc., Highlands, North Carolina" should be used. If you have included The Mountain in your estate plans or want more information about how to do so, please contact Larry Wheeler at the Development Office at (828) 526-5838, ext. 230. We would like to welcome you as a charter member of the President's Society!



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

Apply my contribution to:

Life Member Dining Hall Remodeling Scholarship Fund 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)

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

Gwinnett Builds Another Ramp

Once again, the construction wizards of the UU Congregation of Gwinnett in Lawrenceville, Georgia visited The Mountain on October 5-7, and made a major impact by building a portion of the ramp for the new entrance for the Dining Hall. This was an exceptional group of adults and youth, who also removed the substandard back porch of the Guest Services Office and painted Staff offices 1, 2, and 3. This latter work was the primary contribution of the teens with some young-at-heart adults. The picture captures the spirit of teamwork and hard work that characterizes this wonderful group of Mountain supporters. A couple of folks who would rather work indoors also kept very busy. Over 200 person-hours were counted! Hooray for Gwinnett!!



Save the Dates – 
**Learning Center for
 Leadership
 Summer 2002 Programs**

Leadership School for
 Religious Educators
 July 7-13, 2002
 Mountain School for
 Congregational Leadership
 July 21-27, 2002

THE MOUNTAIN RETREAT & LEARNING CENTERS, INC.

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 Highlands, NC 28741

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