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Here's a postcard I bought on E-bay. It's pre-clocktower! I love these historic photographs of Billings. If you have any you'd like to see in the newsletter, let me know. There are many photos and other memorabilia in the Alunmi Room in Dartt Hall. Stop by next summer and check it out!



THE CLOCK TOWER TIMES Alumni Newsletter

Echoes of the Chimes of our Times

Fall 2007/Winter 2008

Dear Billings Alumni,

Our alumni continue to do amazing things for Billings. Jay Lance has been working very hard to get the new Billings website up and full of information for all. Check it out and let us know how you like it. What can we do to make it better for you, or write Jay and tell him how much you appreciate his hard work.

Marti Sylvester Warren is handing over The Clock Tower Times to Elissa Malcolm after ten years of amazing work. Both Elissa and Marti were campers and counselors at Billings.

If you have something you would like to share with Billings just let me know and give us a gift of your time.

Happy Holidays, Carolyn Sylvester Churchill Alumni Co-Chairman

Introducing Elissa Malcolm... Newsletter Editor

Billings is very pleased to be introducing Elissa Malcolm, who many of you already know. She was a camper and/or staff member in the 80's and 90's and in 2003. Elissa is very excited to take over the editor position for our Clock Tower Times Alumni Newsletter, because as she says, "I am so pleased to be able to give back to camp... being involved and giving my time is a great way for me to contribute to a place that has given me so much."

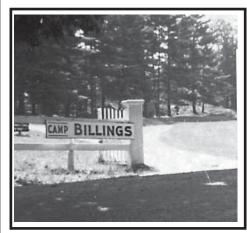
Elissa lives in Lyme, New Hampshire, not very far from camp. She works as a Quality Measurement Analyst at Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center. She has the interest and ability to learn our desktop publishing software called Indesign. Elissa is also interested in working to connect the newsletter to the Billings web site, making it more available to all Billings alumni.

The newsletter will continue to look the same for the time being. There will still be the Alumni Update section. Updates may be emailed to Elissa at campbillings@gmail.com or by snail mail at 6 Isaac Perkins Road, Lyme, NH 03768. There will be reports from the Board of Directors and Camps Director Bob Green as well as input from Ann Freitas and Uncle Ralph.

The Clock Tower Times has been around for many years and serves as a wonderful way to keep connected to all of our alumni. Since 1998 Marti Warren has been producing the newsletter twice a year. She has also kept a database with alumni names and addresses. She will continue with the database for another year and then hand it over to Elissa. Please let us know if you have any address changes. They may be sent to martiwarren@comcast.net.



REPORT * BOARD OF DIRECTORS REPORT * BOARD OF DIRECTORS REPORT



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Camp Billings Board of Directors

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Greetings from the Board ...

By Don Carmichael

When I was a camper and counselor in the 1950's, every summer there would be an influx of geezers into camp about mid-season and the word would go around that a mysterious group called "the Board of Directors" was meeting. In that era, Dad Hurd was the Camp Director and others of the founding leaders of Billings would arrive, such as Doctor Cobb, who worked with Dad Hurd to get the place going in the early 1900's. What I mainly remember about them is that they sure seemed old.

Now I and several of my camp mates are geezers (OK, they aren't, but I sure am) and it's our turn to put in some time on the Board of Directors to preserve Camp Billings for future generations of kids to enjoy as much as we all did. There's always lots of stuff on our plates – managing the camp's money carefully, maintaining the property and buildings, keeping tabs on enrollment patterns and trends, and always trying to support Bob Green in the fine job he's doing as Camp Director.

Just after camp closed in August we had another micro burst – the sort of minitornado that brought down huge old shore front pines to destroy the original Dartt Hall in the 1996. We seem to get one through camp every few years. This one brought down several large trees, including the pine on the west side of the office that reached almost to the clock tower when it fell. What a mess, but thank goodness that camp wasn't in session. Our board member Joe Jones got our insurance adjustor in right away, our claim was processed, and the tangle of limbs and trees was promptly cleaned up.

Our concern about building damage, and especially injury to campers and staff, led several board members to tour the camp this fall with a professional forester. We all love our stately trees – they are part of the beauty of camp. But by the end of our tour the forester had educated us about the weakened trees at camp that will come down naturally before too much longer. He especially focused on potential cabin damage and on the injury those trees could cause if they fell during camping season. With great regret but also a clear sense of a job that must be done, we asked the forester to identify the trees that must come down out of safety concerns. They were removed this fall. We will plant replacement trees for future generations to enjoy, with advice from the forester on the species we should choose.

This fall, the board hired a consulting engineer to analyze the drainage of Rainshadow Field, home of many wildly sloppy games of "mud soccer" over the years. When we get the engineer's analysis we'll budget to convert the camp's least favorite mud pit back into a functioning athletic field.

In keeping with our registration on the Vermont and National Registry of Historic Places, we started a long term program to rehabilitate our several oldest buildings. We now know within a few years when each was built, by whom, and have 1910 + photos of several. This fall we are restoring Sunnyside to its original appearance, and others buildings will follow. In about ten years we will have the Sturbridge Village of summer camps, but with all buildings still in full use by our campers and staff, keeping Billings' traditions alive.

Interested in joining the Billings Board of Directors? Give Ralph Lawrence a call 802-222-4078



Camp Billings Goes "Old School" in 2007

By Emperor Bob (a.k.a. Bob Green, Camp Director)

While much of life at Camp Billings remains constant from year to year, and decade to decade, the summer of 2007 took a deliberate step back in time, and program areas felt a lot like they did in 1967... and did it feel good!

Our new Program Director, Ryan Burhans, a 15 year veteran of life at CB, came in to his new job with a plan. (Note: in 2006 Ryan was our cook, and set a new standard there, too.) His goal was for many program areas to revert to teaching skills, building self-esteem through development of expertise, and then rewarding

individual successes. After all, it's what our swimming program has done successfully for a century of summers, so why not expand the concept?

At first, the staff met this idea during pre-camp orientation with a healthy dose of skepticism. For many summers now, the focus had been primarily on the kids being safe in their activities and having fun. With most of our staff having been campers at Billings they were used to daily program that was big on entertainment and providing just enough teaching to ensure the campers would be secure in their activities, and knowledge enough to enjoy it without worry.

But not in 2007...Program Director Ryan Van Burhans wanted skill development. He wanted levels of proficiency. He wanted reward and recognition. He wanted sailing, boating, canoeing, waterskiing, tennis, windsurfing, and any other program area that wanted to join in, to embrace the concept of "teaching" their campers more that just the basics, and celebrate their successes as they progressed. At the end of each session there would be a closing campfire where program areas would present awards and certificates to all those campers who had climbed the ladder of talent development.

It started slowly with a sailing "Yacht Club" and awards in boating and tennis. But as the summer moved from session to session, the staff bought into the idea that getting better at what you do make it actually more fun, as well. By the end of the summer there were awards and certificates for most every program, from gymnastics to drama, to the advent of fishing awards. The kids loved them, parents saw something tangible from their children's time at Billings, and our staff felt like the truly accomplished something within their program areas.

Sounds pretty "old school" doesn't it? Perhaps all those counselors who gave out music awards in the 1920's and 30's had something we could learn from. They did... and Camp Billings 2007 was a better summer thanks to the lessons they left behind.

www.campbillings.org

Jay Lance has recently given the Billings website a whole new look!

Did you know that Jay's cds are available in Itunes?

If you've been hankering for the Cheerio Song, you should check it out.

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Please send your news! Have you run into an old camp friend lately? Let us know what you're both up to. Contact me (Elissa) at: campbillings@gmail.com

Here's who we've heard from lately:

Sean Collins is in graduate school at UVM getting his masters in History. He is roommates with **Tor Parker** who went to camp too.

Jen (Ciarmoli) Popovich writes, "September 18th, 2007 at 8:18 am Donald and I welcomed our son Michael Anthony into the world. He's a great little guy and loves when his mom sings camp songs to him already!!" Jen lives in Rochester, NY and is an audiologist.

Johnner & Jamie Freitas have completed the building of their dream home in Weathersfield, VT in April. They saw their vision come to life as they were the general contractors of the project for its entirety. Now settled in, they are enjoying it tremendously. They are also in the midst of building other homes in the area for resale & are enjoying this new adventure in their "spare" time. You can see some of the homes they build @

www.akconstructionvt.com. On 4//29/07 Jamie & John celebrated Jamie's 2nd anniversary of being cancer free w/ fellow Billings alum Kacey Parkinson, Kate Rosenbaum, Beth & Willie Crocker, John & Anne Freitas & their extended families, Helen Wallstrom, as well as Perrin, Shane & Mia Chick. They welcome any Billings Alum to stop by, with plenty of space to stay!

Phillipe Lortie and his wife, Frederica, welcomed their son, Albert on October 3, 2007. He was born in Milan and they are currently living in the Netherlands. Phillipe reports that everyone is in good health and doing well. Phillipe is on the board.

Heather Churchill Stirling is with her husband and two girls in Oslo, Norway, where her husband is a goalie for the Oslo hockey team. Also, **Hunter Churchill** and his wife Katelyn are in Ketchum, Idaho just had their first child. Hannah Lynn Churchill was born on Dec 12. Hunter is a Fly-fishing guide.

Jasmine St. Laurent is studying for her Masters in Education in Toronto. She writes, "Ariane Delisle married Maxime Perreault on August 14 in Ste-Anne de Beaupré, QC. In attendance: Philippe Canac Marquis and his wife Maude Desmarrais along with their new baby girl Elsa; Paule Dupuis and her husband Stéphane Desrosiers along with their new baby boy Charles;

Anne-Isabelle Gingras and her husband Olivier Turcot along with their new baby boy Victor; Josh and Annie Novis were there too and Juliette is growing up fast! So there was a real contribution to a future Billings generation this year!! Marc-André LaFleur was there and he is building a new house in the Mont-Ste Anne area. Other CB alumni at the wedding: Malika Delisle and François Mainguy. We all got up during dinner and sang Vive l'amour!! Also, I should mention that the delicious dinner was catered by Philippe Dupuis who was a camper in the 90s, and the Billings tables showed the other guests how to properly thank cooks by singing "Come out"!!!!

Speaking of chefs, my sister **Marianne** accepted **Casey Huling's** marriage proposal last weekend. His family drove up from DC, NYC and VT to party with the St-Laurents. Everyone was truly happy, but Bea, **Kate Huling's** daughter stole the show. **Casey and Marianne** are planning a fall 2008 wedding.

We (the aforementioned gang plus **Anne Hébert**) are all going to get together in November to celebrate **Josh Novis's** 30th birthday!! (they celebrated **Emily Novis's** marriage in Durham on Columbus day weekend)"

Mike Harley and his fiancée, Suzie, were married on the island of Roatan, Honduras, last April. Some Billings alumni in attendance were: Sarah Pampiano, Paul Behar, Yutaka Tamura. The word is that they all had a great time and did jungle explorations on the mainland after the wedding.

Sébastien Laberge and his wife adopted a 10 month old girl from China in October.

Meredith Gaffney writes, "In September of 2006 I moved to Lusaka, Zambia to volunteer for a non-profit called Grassroot Soccer (GRS). Using games and activities, GRS educates youth about HIV/AIDS and how to stay HIV-free by making healthy decisions. After my volunteer contract ended, I decided that I wanted to stay in Zambia, so I'm now working for another non-profit called Conservation Farming Unit (CFU). CFU is working with 120,000 small-scale Zambian farmers to teach them conservation farming and sustainable agriculture techniques that will increase crop yields, food security, drought protection, and the fertility of their soil.

Although I still miss my family and friends back the states, I'm also in love with Africa in general, and Zambia in particular. The people here are incredibly warm, and the work I'm doing is emotionally rewarding. I've also been lucky enough to travel and see small parts of a beautiful continent, though I'm still waiting to run into another ex-camper from Billings!

${f ALUMNI}$. . . We are constantly updating our mailing list.

Please let us know if you <u>change your address</u> or if you would rather be <u>removed from our mailing list!!</u>
Mail changes to: RR #1, Box 283A, Fairlee, VT 05045 or e-mail changes to: martiwarren@comcast.net

Send your alumni news to: campbillings@gmail.com

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If you're curious to find out more, I have a blog with stories and pictures: www.MeredithInZambia.blogspot.com."

Perrin and Shane Chick are living in Newington NH with their new 8 month old baby girl, Amelia Perrin Chick. Shane and Perrin just celebrated their 3rd anniversary while visiting Anne Cothran in Charleston SC. Perrin is still the education Director of the Seacoast Science Center in Rye NH and her latest project included picking the rancid meat off the bones of a 32 foot whale carcass (The skeleton is now on display and free from any of the odors Perrin was subjected to during the cleaning stage)! Shane is currently loving life as a stay at home dad and budding artist. Shane is also working part time for a reduction woodblock printmaker in Portsmouth and recently finished his first commission piece for John Flintosh for the restaurant where he works, The Black Trumpet on Bow St, in Portsmouth. Stop in and see it.

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Paul Behar writes, "Mason Emmett Behar born on 7/26 and tipped the scales at 8 lbs 1 oz. Things are well here. We are living in Wilton, CT and I am working at an investment fund in Greenwich, CT and Robyn is a veterinarian in a practice in our town."

Luke Gebb notes that his baby son, Matteo Gebb and Mason Behar have reserved spots in cabin 8 for the summer of 2017. Luke heard from **Larry Miller** after the 100th reunion, "You could say that I am headlong in the midst of a major post-partum depression right now, gentleman. Totally worth it, and it just signifies how amazing the place, the friends and the experience was/is/will always be. The reunion was amazing and my heart is left in bloody pieces on the dock by the candle floats. I also left 6,457 brain cells and part of my liver there. What can I say? Words are trivial. True friendships are eternal."

Rebecca Wurm is the crew coach at Ithaca College.

Adam Jenkins married to his fiancee, Katie, and they are now living in CT.

Ruth Guest is living in Montana, working on her nursing degree.

Trevor Dodge (known to many as "**Keeb**" when he was a camper) is living in Portsmouth, NH and working as a safety officer in Boston.

Allison Malcolm is getting her Masters in Education at Sage College in Troy, NY. Her brother, **Foster Malcolm**, is in his last year at Northeastern and has had an extremely successful lacross career.

Heather Korman is in Sydney, Australia and writes that she is in university. "I wanted to come here (Australia) because of all the crazy Aussies I met at camp. I tell many of my new Aussie friends about my love for Billings."

Arthur Yando wrote to Ralph from his home in NC, where he lives with his wife. He commented on his great days at Billings

which he thinks of often. He is Vice-President of Business Development of Enersol Technologies. "We are involved in using plasma torches as a heat source for hazard waste destruction and as an alternative environmentally friendly method for generating various forms of energy." When a camper in the 1950's, Art lived in Windsor, VT. He was in Cabin 15 with **Jim Gately, Carl Couture, Jack Chatfield** and their counselor was Uncle Ralph. Art later spent several years as a career army officer.

Mr. and Mrs. **Tony Backstrom** of Stockholm, Sweden visited Billings and Uncle Ralph in Bradford during foliage season.

Kate Willis is now working toward her Masters in Oregon. Her brother, **Ted Willis**, is teaching English in Poland.

Mr. and Mrs. **Thom Thompson**, nee **Berta Maris**, are building a retirement home in Salmon, ID. Thom and Berta met at camp. He is a postal employee and Berta is a teacher in West Palm Beach, FL.

Vicki Powers continues her work with the State of Idaho social services and teaching in Pacatello, ID.

Barbara Gifford Hubbard and her husband Ron live in Litchfield, CT and recently helped their daughter, Mallory, celebrate her 9th birthday.

Larry and JoDee Houle continue to enjoy their retirement in WI and spend a lot of fun times with granddaughters Mackenzie and Makayla, their son Jessy's children with wife Shelly. Larry and JoDee winter in Florida.

Joe Deffner continues his teaching and coaching (cross country) at Thetford Academy in VT. Joe and Sarah's boys now attend school. Joe has performed yoeman work as a Billings board member and chair of the development committee.

Dudley Rice is going to Nepal this fall. He will see **Lora Chatfield**, who is spending a year in India as a medical assistant.

Larry Drew, king of maintenance, along with board member **Joe Jones** have been busy with tree cleanup at camp following a September storm that blew down some beautiful (and large) pine trees.

Babbie (McComb) Lester writes, "with absolute joy and delight that we welcome the birth of our baby daughter, Aspen Lily Lester, into this world. Born December 3, 2007 at 2:40 am, 7 lbs. 2 oz."

Sarah (**Johnston**) **Brady** and her husband Greg welcomed their second son, Nathan (Matthew is their oldest). He was born on May 12, 2006.

Mike Flintosh got married in May to his fiancee, Christie. They live in Raleigh, NC. Mike's brother, **John**, and cousin, **Prez**, were the camp alumni at the wedding.

Uncle Ralph's

Corner



Alumni news is one of the sections of our newsletter that appeals to our readers. We need to hear from you with a bit of information about you for the newsletter. Please help. You can send it by mail or by e-mail. If you have a longer story to share about camp send it along and we will try to feature it in an upcoming newsletter. You can email Elissa at campbillings@gmail.com or contact Ralph.

Ralph Lawrence

PO Box 247, Bradford, Vermont 05033-0247

In early November I drove up to Bradford, VT to visit Ralph. He welcomed me into his home and we spent several hours catching up and talking about his youth and his connection to Billings. Ralph told me about growing up in Bradford (across the street from his current home). He was an only child and was good friends with Leonard Drew, Larry's older brother. After high school, Ralph joined the navy and was stationed in Seattle. He first went to college in VT and transferred to Springfield College and majored in Group Work & Community Organization with a minor in Education. His dream was to follow in the footsteps of an uncle and pursue YMCA work.

It was during college that Ralph began his lifelong connection to Camp Billings. He had gotten to know Dad Hurd during winters, when Dad Hurd was a YMCA Guidance Counselor. After his first year at college, in 1950, Ralph became a counselor at Billings. In the late 50's camp went through a rough spot. Attendance declined and in 1957 there were only 31 campers. Dad Hurd became ill that summer and John Freitas (senior), known as "Uncle John", ran camp for most of the summer. Uncle John suggested to the board of directors that Ralph become director. Ralph joked that his mother was concerned about his taking directorship of the camp at the age of 28, but we know how successful he was. It took about a decade for Ralph rebuild camp and the core programs, and fill all the sessions. It was a lot of work to make camp a place that kids wanted to go - one that was safe and fun. Ralph's training, the support of Uncle John, and their great working relationship were key to this success. Thanks to Ralph and his colleagues for shepherding camp for so many years!

Give Back to Billings!

There are many projects at Camp Billings underway that could use your support. Here is a short list:

- Tree & bush planting or tree removal
- Shoreline preservation
- De-mudification of Rainshadow
- Restoration of Sunnyside & other older buildings
- Ropes course (under development for Summer '09)

You can also donate to the general fund and the board will designate the funds to a worthy cause. There is an envelope enclosed in the newsletter for donations, and you can always send them to:

Ted Rossi P.O. Box 3539 Stowe, VT 05672

Marti Hands Over The Reins

Marti Sylvester Warren has worked very hard over the last ten years putting together a great Newsletter and continually updating our database. Because of her hard work we are able to keep in touch with our alumni and were able to contact so many for our 100th reunion, which made it a huge success. Marti will continue with our database for a year and then hand it over to Elissa Malcolm. THANK YOU Marti for all you have done and continue to do for Billings!!

It is with sadness that we report the loss of the following members of the Billings family...

T. Chubb Condit died November 6, 2007 at his home in Post Mills. He was 90 years old. He spent many summers at Billings and was on the board of directors. His family donated the property for Camp Billings, enabling it to become the special place it is today.

Marion Hobbs passed away on July 4, 2006. She was a longtime resident of Lyme, NH. She and her husband attended Billings in the 1930's. Her daughters also were campers at Billings.

Judy Bender Markle passed away on November 5, 2006 after a long illness. She and her sister were campers in the 1950's. Cabin #5 is named after their grandfather.

Camp Billings Celebrates Centennial: Introduction to a Parallel Universe By Jamie Drysdale

(Editor's note: This originally appeared in The Herald of Randolph, VT on 7/20/06. Reprinted with permission.)

I could feel my heartbeat accelerate, and butterflies the size of pterodactyls were forming in my stomach as the first views of Lake Fairlee began to stretch across my windshield.

But of course, these effects are to be expected of someone being transmitted to a parallel universe.

I attended Camp Billings as both a camper and a counselor for eight consecutive summers starting as a 10-year-old in 1993. It didn't take long before I began referring to my summer haven as the "parallel universe."

For 11 months of the year I didn't give camp a thought. My two lives were completely different; I had different friends and different needs. For 11 months I had parents and school, for one summer month I had counselors and non-stop activities.

At camp the only memories of the past were from past years at camp; the only future plans addressed our goals for life at Billings. At camp there was almost zero contact with the outside world. There were no television broadcasts or newspapers telling us about Israeli and Palestinian battles, or about who the Red Sox had lost to.

The only news we got and the only news we wanted to hear involved information about how a staff member managed to hide under the waterski dock with a snorkel for two hours during the staff hunt. Or who had been chosen this time as "biffers" (people with face paint running wild across camp trying to hit kids with socks full of flour) during the annual "biffers and medics" evening program.

There was and is no other way to describe it, Camp Billings is a parallel universe, and in June I headed back there for the first time in five years to celebrate its centennial. Thus the butterflies.

First Familiar Face

The nervous feeling continued to heighten, as it always does, until I saw one familiar face, and as soon as I did all the tension in my body and all my cares from outside life evaporated. After five long years I was home.

More than 150 alumni of all ages from numerous states and countries (including the usual big French-Canadian contingency) descended on the camp for the anniversary. Friday night the current camp counselors and staff provided us all with a great barbecue, and a night of drinks and reminiscing.

As I talked I watched the trivial but familiar gaps between us, created by generation, culture, and class, become effortlessly closed in the parallel universe.

After a night in Tent Two on boys' senior row (which I had stayed in both as camper and counselor), I followed the call of the bugle to breakfast. Saturday morning was run like a normal day at camp. There were announcements at breakfast informing us of the offerings in all the morning program areas—ultimate Frisbee, street hockey, waterskiing, crafts, orienteering...

It was so much harder to pick when I only had one morning (three

periods) to work with.

As the ultimate Frisbee game began to wind down and we again headed for the dining hall, the camp began to fill up with reportedly more than 400 friends of Billings attending Saturday afternoon's centennial program. Several speakers turned in terrific speeches about the camp's 100 years of life.

Life without Billings?

The current camp director, Bob Green, told a chilling story about a theoretical life in a universe in which Camp Billings had never been founded. He acknowledged many well-known camp faces and speculated with grim humor about how their lives would've ended up without camp. Gov. Jim Douglas then took the podium and was forced to admit that he'd never attended Camp Billings, adding that "I now understand the depth of my deprivation."

He showed appreciation for Camp Billings, which has earned state and national historical site status, by declaring June 17th to be "Camp Billings Day" throughout the state of Vermont.

Though Douglas was termed the "keynote speaker," the man everyone longed to hear was the final speaker, Ralph Lawrence. "Uncle Ralph," is a six and a half foot octogenarian with Santa-like proportions who for many is the true and timeless symbol of Camp Billings. For over half a century Ralph worked at camp, including nearly four decades as the director. With dedication, ability—and a heart even more impressive than his physical presence—Ralph is one of those larger than life figures whom few are lucky enough to meet at any time in any universe.

Stepping up to the microphone Ralph paused and then stated softly, "I'll never know why they chose me, the driest speaker here, to speak two and a half hours into an 'hour-long program.'" He spoke modestly and briefly, spending most of his time thanking people individually for the work they have done through the decades to keep the camp alive.

When Ralph finished, the head of Camp Billings board of directors asked those in attendance to stand up while the decade they were at camp was announced. Here was revealed the full scope of the Billings family. I proudly stood for the "90s" and then sat and watched as the other decades took their turn. I watched in awe as the participants' hair became more and more grey, their faces more weathered. I was humbled by those long-tenured camp servants who remained standing for two, three, four, five, and even six decades in a row. Finally the speaker reached the 1920's, elevating a handful of elderly ladies, their proud smiles greeted by a long standing ovation.

With Sunday came one last breakfast followed by the emotional goodbyes on the clocktower lawn that we all knew so well. Many will be back soon, as Billings, like any high school or college, holds a reunion weekend once every five years.

But this was the big one. Camp Billings has graced the placid shores of Lake Fairlee for 100 years and counting. By scientific standards a century is but a blink of an eye, but during this blink this parallel universe has generated for many of us as much camaraderie, fellowship, meaning, and joy as five billion years of evolution in this "real" universe could provide.