



The Clock Tower Times

Alumni Newsletter

Echoes of the chimes of our time.

Spring 2014

Dear Camp Billings Alumni,

In this issue of the Alumni Clocktower Times, Marianne and I prepared an exposé about our founding directors Mom and Dad Hurd, who lead camp from 1906 to 1957. We find it fascinating to learn about the aspects of camp that are now so different as well as those that continue to make Camp Billings the best camp in the world.

As I was dusting the shelves of Camp's Alumni Room this past summer, I started reading a girl's camp journal from the summer of 1928. She gave me a glimpse into camp life as it began its third decade. She recalls a campfire in the Dining Lodge where Mr. Frasher came to camp to tell "Indian folklore stories," as well as an outdoor campfire with rounds of Jack's Alive. Other evenings were spent serenading Mother Hurd at the Cupola or enjoying a moonlit swim. She also enjoyed watching skits involving imitating counselors.

A highlight of her summer was the Great and Glorious 4th Horribles parade where her best friend and her were disguised as "before and after eating cod liver oil." The evening was crowned with fireworks. *(Our current director Bob has definitely taken the use of pyrotechnics to new heights at Billings during his tenure.)*

I marveled at her description of a visit to Camp Quinnibek where the Billings guests traveled by canoe.

Some of her entries are puzzling to me. She speaks about King Billings and Miss Billings and I wish I knew what she meant. The Initiation of Siam is also something I hope one of you alumni will write us about to explain what was involved.

All in all, her journal was very informative, but the highlight of my pause from dusting the alumni room was her list of "Mistakes I shall Never Repeat," which included: "Eat fifty cents' worth of Toostie Rolls in one night after a trip to Betty Ann's Tea Room," and "Try to hide my unpolished shoes under a blanket on my bunk – Mother Hurd is sure to find them."

Another interesting read was the Camp Billings Handbook from the 1920s which included the lyrics to spirit songs encouraging a rivalry between Camp Billings and Camp Lochearn.

We hope you enjoy this issue. Many thanks to our contributors for this newsletter and we continue to encourage you to write us to share your comments, suggestions and alumni updates!

Best regards,
Jasmine St-Laurent
Camp Billings
Alumni Committee Chairperson



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Greetings from the Board.....

by Michael Lemme, Board President

Shortly after camp was founded in late 1906, it was in the spring of 1907 that the Windsor County YMCA engaged the services of Mr. Archibald C. Hurd to become the 1st Director of Camp Billings, and along with his wife, Cornelia, they became known as "Dad & Mother Hurd." Cornelia passed on in 1946 and Dad Hurd continued to be our Director until his passing in the spring of 1958. In our archives of camp's history we have a quote from Dad Hurd where he describes the beginnings of Camp Billings: "Back in August, 1907 Dr. Gardner Cobb of White River Junction, owning a cottage on Fairlee Lake, invited me to ride up to the lake with him when he offered the Windsor County YMCA the use of his cottage and land. From that small beginning, we only had two tents and a small lawn tent for dining purposes, and a rented boat for about a dozen young men. We now look with pride, at what has become the well known institution of Camp Billings."

All of us who have called Camp Billings home have heard of Dad & Mother Hurd. My mother, Virginia Nelson, knew them when she was a camper during the summers of 1937-1941. She recalls how Dad Hurd loved this old wheelbarrow and he and Chubb Condict would give campers wheelbarrow rides around campus. She also knew how much he loved the "Horribles Parade," which took place every July 4th, and Dad & Mother Hurd would give a prize to the camper with the best costume. My mother and her cabin mate Dotty Woods dressed up as an elephant.

Other alumni who knew Dad Hurd describe him as a very funny man with a great sense of humor, the

ability to be fair but firm, and for his dislike of canoes as he felt they were too unsafe! He also loved giving motorboat rides to juniors. Alumni Kenneth T. Allan wrote a letter to Dad Hurd on the occasion of Camp's 50th Anniversary reminiscing about the days with no dish room and how they used to wash the dishes in the lake. They also made their own mattresses out of straw and hay!

I am sure if Dad Hurd were to see camp today, both he and Cornelia would be quite proud, as Camp Billings is alive and well, and a better camp for young boys and girls than ever before. Your Board is as committed as ever to ensure this. Recently we started a new fundraising campaign for the purchase of a new waterski boat and a complete rebuild of all of our shower and toilet facilities. We still have a ways to go to raise the funds for these projects, but enough funds have come in so far to cover some of the costs of our brand new Glastron ski boat. Thanks go out to Board members John Freitas and Jon Cone who went to several boats shows and secured us a great deal! Our shower/toilet facilities will cost over \$350,000, and in order to keep the tuition at Billings as one of the lowest in New England, we would ask that you contribute any amount large or small and help keep Dad Hurd's dream alive!

Happy spring & Happy Mud Season to one and all!

Members of the Board

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Virginia Nelson being wheeled by
Chubb Condict July 1937

Dad Hurd May Be Rolling Over in His Grave.....

by Bob Green, Director

I didn't know Dad Hurd. I started camp as a young boy under the terrifying Reign of Ralph, who's mere stature and commanding voice terrified me until I reached the lofty perch of Cabin 15, where boys acquire a cloak of invincibility. But certainly the myths and legends of Dad Hurd were very much alive back in the mid to late 1960's. Stories were told by Charlie Crowley, Conrad Hubert, the Freitas and Wallstrom families that painted a picture of a very "different" Camp Billings than the one that existed just a few years after his passing.

During our 100th Anniversary Season, back in 2006, we held an all-day special event to commemorate our founding, "1906 Day." Jay Lance and I did some research on what camp was like when Dad Hurd was hired by the Windsor County YMCA to run a little camp for kids during the summer on the shores of Lake Fairlee. There weren't very many program areas at the time: churning butter, candle making and boating were highlights. Lectures by Dad Hurd were normal fare for evening program. On Sunday night they held vespers, which was something of a cross between a religious sermon and behavioral modification. One got the sense that there was a very strict code of conduct that permeated Camp Billings, and instruction superseded fun, or at the very least, there was a different definition of what constituted having fun.

Make no mistake about it, there would be no Camp Billings without Dad Hurd guiding camp through those first fifty years. He provided a foundation, and gave the camp many of the traditions and values we still hold dearly today. But it was after the days of Dad Hurd that boys and girls started coming to camp at the same time. It was after Dad Hurd that Billings secured a ball field, the lower courts, a wide range of program options, and a camp population greater than 70-80 children at a time.

Which makes one wonder whether Dad Hurd would approve of the Camp Billings that exists today. I certainly hope so. We have more kids, greater diversity, more opportunities to learn AND play, and a spirit that is unmatched anywhere. I think Dad Hurd would love how passionate and dedicated our Billings family is; I think Dad Hurd would love how our community responds to a call for help when needed, how camp remains of paramount importance for so many, no matter how far removed from going to Billings they may be. Instead of lectures we have "All Camp Birthday Day". Instead of vespers we celebrate standing room only non-denominational chapel every other Sunday.

Camp Billings is a very different place from 1906 or 1956. And it will continue to grow and evolve along with the changing times. But the essence and the heart of Camp Billings remains the same. It's a place we love, and a place we call home, just as those before us have done for 108 years. It will be a different place fifty years from now, too. But it will continue to thrive, and to serve a valuable purpose for the campers and staff who follow in the years ahead. So would Dad Hurd approve of Camp Billings, 2014 or would he be rolling over in his grave?

My bet is that somewhere far, far away Dad Hurd is quietly skipping around the room.



Nice hair Bob!

THE FOUNDING PARENTS OF THE CAMP BILLINGS FAMILY

By Don Carmichael, Helen Wallstrom & Arlene Sylvester

Mother and Dad Hurd – what unique people, memorable for a lifetime to all who knew them. Together, by decades of devoted effort, they created the Camp Billings experience – the welcoming "second family" we could all return to for every precious summer of youth.

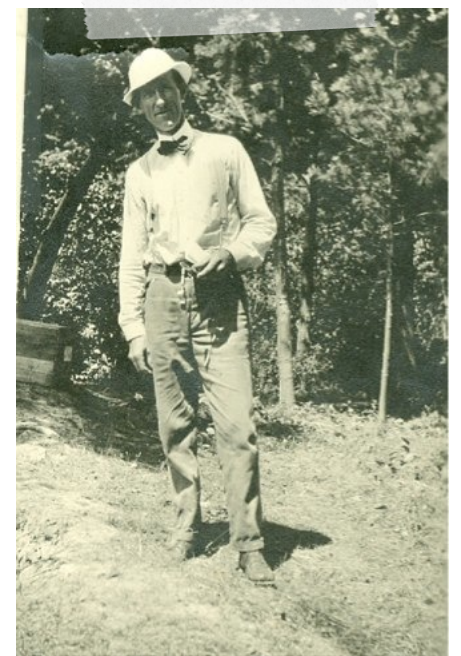
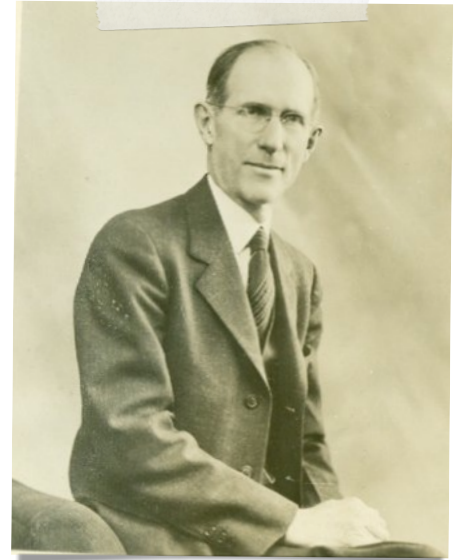
Think about it: starting a summer camp takes what? Get some land, bring in some kids to swim or fish or play ball or whatever. The Hurds wanted more – summer camp as a nurturing family environment, as a permanent part of campers' experience to teach them lifetime lessons. To do this they chose to be known as "Mother" and "Dad" Hurd, not "Mrs." and "Mr." Hurd. And the camp was literally the family they created. So ... who were these two gifted visionaries?

Mother Hurd is remembered with love by all who knew her as a bright, dear, pleasant lady, very comfortable within herself and towards others. The dining hall serenade to her was "Sweetest Lady, Mighty Like a Rose." She was always out around the camp, seeing how things were going, reminding campers to write that letter home, conducting tent inspections during lunch – on and on – always friendly and nurturing towards everyone. She planned the camp menu and was up at sunrise to check on breakfast preparations. Her sunrise chores originally included churning the camp's breakfast butter. She died in 1947, Dad in 1957, after decades of creating and sustaining the Billings "family."

Dad Hurd was 6' tall and so thin as to almost be angular. Being of the old school he always wore a necktie for business, i.e. to direct camp (although those who know say Mother Hurd managed most everything – an interesting division of labor within a "ma & pa" operation). He had a hoarse voice, perhaps from the long talks he delivered in the dining hall after each meal, attendance required. The talks were often ruminations but often inspiring – "Anything worth doing is worth doing well" and other maxims. He sat on the waterfront in his director's chair for every free swim as his presence was mandatory for anyone to swim. He couldn't swim but was determined that every camper would learn to do so.

Dad did much paperwork at night so he could be out and around during the day. He was supportive of everyone's efforts and activities, and often praised individual campers or staff in his dining room talks. He had an active sense of humor but he'd sometimes skip a beat – kid you later about some minor infraction you thought/hoped he hadn't noticed. A friendly reminder to be on good behavior.

It's impossible to account for all the elements that led to the Billings family experience, but you all know what it is – and it all first came from Mother and Dad Hurd's years of devoted attention. Those of us who knew them treasure their memories and miss them. Camp Billings was literally what they lived for. We are all beneficiaries of those two wonderful people.



Visiting the Camp Billings Alumni Room with Grammy



Ellie Thompson, Nora Greely, Britt Rogers, Lauren Jackman and Meg Woodard listening to Grammy's dear old camp stories.

There is a special place on camp where fellow history geeks can handle ancient CB artifacts and see thousands of pictures from the past 108 years. This is the alumni room born through the leadership of Carolyn Churchill, Anne Freitas, and Ralph Lawrence, and it is located in part of the restored Dartt Hall.

This past summer, my infant son Colin and I visited camp to clean and upkeep the alumni room with Carolynn Churchill and we were delighted to have the visit of Grammy aka Helen (Rockwood) Wallstrom. Grammy was at camp from 1928 to 30 and has continued to visit ever since as an alumni, mother, grand-mother and now great-grandmother of campers, staff and directors not to mention Board of Directors Member for many years.

A few campers visited the alumni room while she was there and she reveled us with stories of what camp was like when Mom and Dad Hurd were directors. She remembers that Dad Hurd did not want campers or counselors to be too dressed up. He would say that an outfit was not "campy" or "too resort." Grammy said that Mom Hurd would give lectures about the "Essential qualities of a girl." Her advice was for girls to speak politely, keep their knees together while sitting, not speak too loudly, and dress to be covered.

Grammy says that meals at camp were very different back then. Cow tongue and cold liver were frequent evening fare. (*I think we all prefer Casey's menu nowadays*). There was absolutely no banging on the table – and if anyone did, they were punished by being given no food. Dad Hurd always ceremoniously presented visitors to camp at the beginning of a meal and after

dinner, he often gave long lectures about topics like his trip to Palestine. Water was pumped outside the dining room using a pail and there was a little house that stored ice from the lake which was used to make homemade ice cream. She remembers that it was a camp duty to churn the ice cream and Dad Hurd rewarded the worker bees by allowing them to make a soda float in the ice cream machine after they were done.

Dad Hurd was respected by all and his presence alone usually ensured good behaviour. One night, Chubb Condict who donated the Rainshadow land across street, Arlene Sylvester Harverstrom and Grammy were junior counselors supposed to be in bed one night when they saw Dad Hurd was coming. Afraid, they tried to go hide on the dock. Grammy unfortunately fell into the lake wearing her big heavy wool uniform. In the morning, Dad Hurd simply leaned in at breakfast and without looking at her said, "Hope you've dried out." That was his way of saying he knew they had broken the rule, but that she was forgiven.

We loved hearing these stories and encourage our alumni to share their stories, pictures and any camp memorabilia with us. Contact me, the Alumni Committee Chairperson at jasminestlaurent@yahoo.com or send mail to the Camp Billings office directly during the summer. Please feel free to come visit the alumni room during the camp season. Simply call camp to let us know when to welcome you.



Pumping drinking water.

I SERVED BULL FROGS LEGS TO DAD HURD

by Carolynn Churchill

I was at camp for a few years with Dad Hurd. I got caught at Jack's Alive and had to catch a big bull frog, bring it to the cook, she prepared frogs leg (which were Dad Hurd's favorite) and I had to serve them to him.

He was a happy man who loved Camp Billings. He was much older and not well during some of my time at camp, but he was always around talking to us all and very interested in all that was going on during the day's activities. He felt that good manors, especially in the dinning hall during meals, and to adults were very important for us all to learn. Table manners were of the utmost importance. He demanded quiet and for us to try all the foods that we could. We sang a lot at the end of the meals, which we all loved. He rang his bell and then always got up to speak after meals. Not about the program, but life lessons and stories of how to live the best we could. Unfortunately, the older he got and the less healthy he was. Some of these talks were an hour or more long and we were expected to sit still through it all. I remember being very antsy sitting so long. I was around 9 then.

My Mom said Mother Hurd took care of the dining room and was a mother away from home for all the children at camp. (My mother's sister Barbara took on her duties for a few years after Mother Hurd passed away.) Mother Hurd lived in Pinewold and loved watching the kids. There was a screened in porch on Pinewold's second floor and she loved sitting up there and watching the swim activities. During her final summer of illness she was confined to Pinewold as far as I know.

Mother Hurd had sent a letter to my mom at my birth. She said she loved my name, Carolyn, and hoped that she would be able to meet me some day. She said that Mom had been wonderful with the campers in her tent and that she knew she would be a good mother. She said she was doing well and loved being with the campers every summer. I hope my memory serves me right. Mother Hurd had passed away when I was at camp and I don't believe she ever did meet me.



Horribles Parade: A Tall Impersonation - 1951

Editor's note: Don Carmichael wrote, "I didn't have space to cover the astonishing sequence of building the numerous camp buildings, and of acquiring all of the separately owned properties up the entire easterly shoreline from WeOwnIt up to Sunnyside. In all that, Dad had the unflagging support and financial aid of Dr. Cobb and the early camp directors." We have asked him to prepare a summary of those events for the upcoming newsletter!

Donors: THANK YOU!

William Alrich
Connie Anderson
Anonymous in memory of
Golden Nugget and Little
Nugget
Gordon Bakoulis
Lisa Barland
Ross & Karen Bartfield
Paul Behar
Mark Bird
Nancy Bird and Dale Vogel
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Rick Thompson
Sandra Tittlit
Rizzie Walker
Helen Wallstrom
Kelly Weaver
Susan & Steven Wood
Lee Wyker

Thank you very much to more than 100 of you who made a donation to camp in response to our recent annual appeal letter. We are still in serious need of additional financial support. If you are interested in making a donation, please use the enclosed donation envelope or go to our web site (www.campbillings.org) where you can donate online and see the annual appeal letter. If you work for an organization that matches donations to non-profit organizations, please see whether your donation to Billings can be matched. Thank you again.

Adam Jenkins ('00-'02) and wife Kate were married in Margaret River, Western Australia in 2006. They moved to Bantam, CT in 2007, which is where they now call home. Adam has been working for an amazing landscape garden company in Southbury, CT for the past 6 years. He has three children: Noah (5), Charlie Grace (3) and Caleb 18 months. He hopes to have all three at Billings in the future.

Elizabeth Thompson (90s-'00's) is a middle school English teacher living in West Palm Beach, Florida with her partner, Garrett and two little boys, Owen, 3, and Hunter, 1. She also updated us on what the rest of the Thompson crew is up to: **Shannon Thompson Schlottmann** is an attorney living in Atlanta, GA with her husband, Craig.

Ryan Thompson is enjoying life in South Florida racking up more college credits and teaching fitness boot camp.

Brendan Thompson is finishing up law school at the University of Arkansas and will be moving to Atlanta after he graduates this summer.

Julie Shepherd (Brown) ('90-'97) and Adam moved from Brooklyn, NY to Portland, ME this past summer and welcomed their first baby, Luisa, in November 2013. Julie has been a middle school humanities teacher for the past 7 years.

Michelle Pinter-Petrillo ('98-'11) deserves our congrats on her new job as the Volunteer Outreach Coordinator for the Out of the Darkness Overnight Walk to educate, advocate and fundraise for suicide prevention. She will be recruiting and managing about 200 volunteers for the event in June in Seattle. This past year she was a Team Leader for AmeriCorps NCCC.

Michelle led a group of eight, 18-24 year olds around the northeast doing service projects from disaster relief and invasive species removal to urban development and building homes with Habitat for Humanity. Wow. **Laura Bussey (née Martin)** ('67-'78, '01-'13) is enjoying an empty nest as her youngest child **John Henry Bussey** ('01-'12) headed to college this fall. Laura and husband Mark were delighted to host nuptials for their daughter **Katy Bussey** ('97-'08) to Clark Wert in the fall. Their celebration combined the best of Sonoma County: an outdoor ceremony and fantastic food and wine. CB friend **Kelsi Barry** livened up the wedding party. This spring, Laura and Mark will visit their eldest son **Richard Bussey** ('95-'97) in China. **Elena Kennedy** ('90s-'00s) and husband Brad moved to Denver a couple of years ago after a too-long and very hot stint in Houston. Elena is currently working for The New Teacher Project and spends most of her time working with school districts to develop new compensation and development practices for teachers. Most importantly, Elena and Brad welcomed the arrival of their son Oliver in November 2013. Oliver is looking forward to dipping his toes in Lake Fairlee for the first time this summer! **Sarah Piampiano** ('88-'93; '02) continues to race professionally, living in LA though she is currently in San Francisco for the next two months for a training camp. Her races this year include Texas, New Orleans, Mont-Tremblant, Frankfurt, Chile, Utah, Hawaii. Good luck Piamps! Follow Sarah at www.sarahpiampiano.com **Jonah Rowen** ('97-'05) is living in Los Angeles and teaching at the Southern California Institute of Architecture. He also started and works as an editor for an architectural journal called Project.

Mary Anne Holland writes that she just moved to Bradford, VT in November. She has two grown children, 3 grandchildren ages, 3, 3 1/2 and 5. She is self employed in Real Estate and banking. **Cecilia (Staschhhhhwick) Fleming** was a camper from '90-'92 and staff until '98. Her and her husband had their fourth baby in February 2013. Their oldest will be able to start camp in three more summers! **Kate Kieser Shanahan** was a camper '90-'96 staff '00-'04. She is living in Manhattan with Kevin, and their kids Cecilia and John.



Rob Gilpin, Paul Levine and Chip Henderson had a mini reunion in Natick, MA

If you have any updates write to:
The Clock Tower Times
c/o Marianne St-Laurent
311 route 244
Fairlee, Vt 05045
or email us at:
jasminestlaurent@yahoo.com



Cone family trip to Disney! Clockwise from left: Jake Vollebregt, Adam Saur holding Jack Saur, Jon Cone, Margie Saur (Cone) holding Addison Saur, Nancy Cone holding Marianne Vollebregt, Jessica Vollebregt (Cone) holding Thomas Vollebregt. -March 2014

Anne L. Martin was on staff '76-'80. Her nephews **Ethan and Raphael Kraus** went to camp. She grew up on Lake Fairlee with **Brewster Martin**, her father who was the camp physician from the '60s-'90s. She remembers **Elaine Connors** her mentor, teacher support and **Ralph Lawrence's** friendship and support. She is in her 34th year nursing in pediatrics in Santa Clara, California. She writes "I continue to look back at all my CB years for the lessons learned, support, friendships made and cherish these memories. I am thankful I got my nephews Ethan and Raphael Kraus to enjoy the meaning of CB." **Mark Bird** was on staff '69-'72 and says "**Bob Green** was a CIT for me. Please say hi to him for me. I am the author of 2013 book titled '600 Laws in Sociology'." **Brad Stewart** sent his kids **Connor, Ben and Nate**

to camp and writes that Connor who was a camper from 2008 to 2012 attended the Mountain School of Milton Academy in nearby Vershire, VT for the fall semester of 2013. **Henry Meyer** who was at camp

as camper and staff in 00s is working and living in Boston. **Jay Shortsleeve** who was a camper from 1960-64 and on staff from 1970 to 1974 with his sisters **Lori and Linda** is married to Pilar and his son Patxi graduated from Central Arkansas 2013 and son Andoni is attending University of Utah. **Kacey (Parkinson) Semchenko** welcomed a new son, Brady and lives in Massachussets her husband Timothy and their older daughter Lily. **Marc-André Lafleur** (90s) continues to fundraise amongst French-Canadian alumni whose lives were changed by attending Billings in order to send a deserving camper from the Quebec City region. He also writes that he works for the Intelligence Unit of the Quebec police. His partner Karine has just given birth to Mathis in December who joins his brother William. They have just purchased a time share in Florida to warm up from our long Quebec winters. Congrats to **Johnner Freitas**, (70s-90s) proud papa of baby Harley Emerson. You will be a great dad!

Ali Shapiro says, "I haven't been at Billings since summer of 2002 but I still feel this deep connection to the camp. The stories and updates make me feel like I am right back there reliving those pranks, visiting with old friends, square dancing in the tennis courts. I have the absolute fondest memories of camp and smile every time I read the Clock Tower Times and imagine those campers that are there now having the time of their life. Thank you for making us oldies feel like we are right back there again."

SPONSOR A SONGBOOK OR TWO!

Visit the camp store online if you would like to own your copy of the Camp Billings songbook. Your small donation will go towards reprinting new ones for camp.

The editors of the Alumni CTT would like to thank our faithful informers:

Sean Collins, Sarah Halton, Paul Behar and for all of you who wrote to share alumni news. We want more updates from alumni who attended camp in the 30s, 40s, 50s, 60s and 80s. Please contact us to share your news!

Don Carmichael: Honorary Board Award

The Board of Directors of Camp Billings, Inc., does hereby confer upon Donald Carmichael the title of HONORARY DIRECTOR, in recognition of and appreciation for his life-long friendship and support, which covers 5 decades of Camp Billings existence.

Starting in 1949 as a camper and then in the 1950's and early 1960's as a counselor, Don was an active participant in camp activities. In the 1950's he assisted Albert Fletcher opening camp, from dawn to dusk, non stop for 7 days! His responsibilities were the tennis program, camp maintenance and cabin counselor. His love and energy for camp never wavering over the years,

Don was invited by Ralph Lawrence to be on the Board of Directors, where he served from 1999-2009. Feeling that the camp was in good hands, Don worked effortlessly to upgrade the physical condition of the structures and facilities. He was President of the board for two years where he focused on updating the functioning of the board through better organization. He was responsible for a historical survey, deed and title search of the CB property and completed a fascinating geological history of Lake Fairlee and the Billings property. A lawyer by profession his contributions to Camp Billings over these years have been a major factor in the camp's success today.

*The Board of Directors therefore takes great pleasure in designating
Donald Carmichael as an HONORARY DIRECTOR.*

*Done by unanimous action of the Camp Billings, Inc., Board of Directors
at the April, 2013 meeting.*



From the left: Dick Walter; Don Carmichael; George Condon

Imagine spending a week on Lake Fairlee in a fully equipped two bedroom, one bath cottage at Camp Billings during the fall.....

Starting this September, it can happen for you and your family!

WeOwnIt, the recently refurbished Director's Cottage sitting on a beautiful corner of the lake, will be available for rentals on a weekly basis from late summer through October. The cottage includes a complete kitchen, bathroom, washer/dryer, private dock, sailboat, canoe and paddleboard. The master bedroom includes satellite television and space heater. The second bedroom has a full bed and dresser. Rollaway bed also available. Enjoy the rocking chairs on the porch during a crisp fall evening. Toast marshmallows around the fireplace!

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Complete the attached postcard and mail it immediately.

You will receive more details and instructions on how to reserve your week at post-camp.



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Carolyn Churchill, Grammy Wallstrom Freitas, Dudley
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What is going on here?



