



The Clocktower Times

Alumni Newsletter

Echoes of the chimes of our time.

Spring 2018

CAMP FRIENDS ARE REAL FRIENDS

Back in the 90s and maybe longer before, it used to be a thing to have people sign a notebook with a little message at the end of your time at camp. We would also exchange mailing addresses if you can believe it. I would reread those messages over and over throughout the year and exchange epically long letters with camp friends about all of the things happening at school. These are still friends that I love with all my heart.

Now I am in my forties and making friends is not as easy. A New York Times article by Alex Williams explained why it is harder to make friends as an adult. He argued this is because you don't have some of the essential conditions to form friendships that you do have while growing up: "proximity; repeated, unplanned interactions; and a setting that encourages people to let their guard down and confide in each other." I think that both adults AND kids now have less and less of these optimal conditions to make lifelong friendships. We have hundreds of Facebook friends, snapchat stories or Instagram followers, but what about friends you call in a crisis?

The friends who love you just the way you are - regardless of your best angle?

It is amazing that 21st century technology invites us to instantly interact with thousands more people, but actually connect with fewer. Camp Billings remains a wonderful place with no cellular access and no wifi for campers. It may be one of the few places left in the US where a kid can make a real friend! This issue of The Clocktower Times is all about the REAL friendships we make at camp. Enjoy!

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www.campbillings.org/alumni

Greetings from the Board....

By Michael Lemme, Board President



By now the weather should FINALLY be warming up after an unusually cold wet & snowy spring. Before you know it, Sunday June 24th will be here and Camp Billings will be open in full swing! There's a lot that's new at camp, but much of which can't be seen as we just undertook another major renovation that took place all underground. We'll call it the BIG DIG.

It's been 2 years now since we built all new restroom and shower facilities, and now what was needed was a total overhaul of all of camp's underground water and waste systems. From Cabin 1 to Crowley's Corner, all of camp's water lines have been dug up and replaced. We have new septic tanks, kitchen grease traps, grinder pumps, and 6 new water fountains. We know these past projects aren't as "exciting" as let's say our new Ropes Course Zip Line or our fleet of 7 new sailboats, but it's equally as important and your Board is hard at work making sure camp's infrastructure, as well as program areas, are ready for the next 100 years.

Since this issue of the ClockTower Times is all about CAMP FRIENDS....we are coming up with new ideas of how we can all stay in touch throughout the year. Last year we had our 1st "Mini Reunion" in NYC, and by the time you read this we'll have had our 2nd, held just this past Saturday April 28th in Boston. Thanks to our new Alumni Chair Beth Freitas Crocker for putting this reunion together! There's a

rumor going around that our 3rd "Mini Reunion" just might be in Montreal so stay tuned. Another great way of staying touch is our new website that Jasmine St-Laurent has been working on this past year. Go to www.campbillings.org and check it out and send in some of your favorite photos of you and your camp friends at www.campbillings.org/alumni !

I'll always remember every year when school let out and my hometown friends would always ask me why I go to Camp Billings. I told them that it was so much fun that it felt like I actually had 2 homes, one in Cedar Grove NJ and the other in Fairlee, Vermont. I still boast about how to this day, I keep in touch with more of my camp friends than I do from High School or college. It's just something about how we all lived together in our cabins and were responsible for each other and watched out for one another. The bonds friends make at camp are special and we all know that. My group we tend to call ourselves the "70's Gang"...even though some of us started in the '60's. My 1st summer was 1968, and many of us still get together every July and rent a home on Lake Fairlee. What a great 50 years it's been!

Wishing all of our campers and alumni a great summer!

Your Fellow Alumni and Board President,

Mike Lemme
(973) 460-1055
board@campbillings.org



My BFF's.....Billings Friends Forever!

by Emperor Bob

What makes Camp Billings a unique and special place for so many of us is NOT the lake. It's NOT the fishing program or even the ropes course. And it is certainly NOT the Clock Tower.....Camp Billings is all about the people, and the profound impact they have upon our lives. This is our story:

For many of us (like me), Camp Billings served a specific purpose within our childhood. We may not have been the most secure or self-assured kids in our neighborhood. Maybe we were the smallest kid in school, and did not want to be defined by our physical shortcomings. We had friends, sometimes lots of them, but friends at school somehow feel competitive, and one is constantly measuring themselves against the performance of their school friends. We had plenty of acquaintances, too; from our after school activities, from religious school and all the kids who lived in the neighborhood. But those were just kids to play with, hang out or get in trouble with, or people we knew pretty superficially, even if we didn't know that word at the time. Some of us moved around a good deal. Not always at the most opportune times, and being "new" and lacking a high degree of self-esteem is a recipe for loneliness. And then along came Camp Billings.....



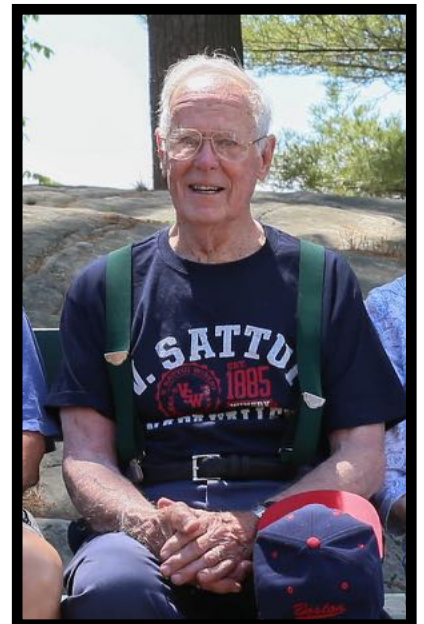
Maybe you went to camp when you were 10, or 12, or 14.....or joined the staff when you went to college. It didn't matter, because no one cared about your life story or how long you had been at camp. You were ACCEPTED. If you were a mediocre athlete, a less than talented artist and couldn't sing a note, here was a place where you weren't judged, measured or expected to realize a certain level of proficiency. It was if you were walking into a place where everyone got right to the essence of what was important: I want to know you for the things that interest you, the experience we will share together, and the kindness in your heart. Nothing else matters. It is that purity, lack of expectation, and sharing of one's life for a couple of weeks or months, that make Billings friends different from any other friends you may have throughout your life.



Billings friends don't care about age. Over the course of my 30+ years at camp, one of my closest friends was Larry Drew. He was a mentor for me and a surrogate parent. He was 20 years older than me, yet I cherish every day I got to work with him and learn from him. When you are fortunate enough to spend a lot of summers at Billings, your friendships move from generation to generation. From the friends I

had as a young boy at camp, (Michael Klein, Bob Harrison, Richie Haft) to the people I loved as a fellow staff person (Mark Powers, Bruce Ostrander, Jay Shortsleeves, Jessica Pepitone) to the people I am so lucky to work with today (Elise, Sean, Anne, Casey, Marianne, Willie, Dudley, Tyler) these are all people I cherish equally. Our ages are different, our backgrounds are diverse, and our life experiences are vast and varied. But when you come through those gates it's like walking through that corn field in Iowa on to a baseball Field of Dreams: everything else is forgotten except what really matters.....your friends. Time stands still and your heart soars.

So if you haven't seen them in 30 years, or look forward to seeing them in a few weeks, never forget your Billings friends. They are unique, they will always be special, and suffice it to say you are probably the person you are today because they were a part of your life. And if you have the chance, let them know how much they will always mean to you.



We need your help to reach out to as many alumni as possible to make sure they get invited to all our alumni events.

Please visit the Alumni home page on our website www.campbillings.org and click on Alumni at the top of the page!



Left to right: Adam Saur Jack Saur Margie Saur Addison Saur Nancy Cone Parker Saur Jon Cone Marianne Vollebregt Jake Vollebregt Thomas Vollebregt Jessica Vollebregt Jonathan Vollebregt

The Big Dig

By Jon Cone - Chair of the Camp Billings Committee

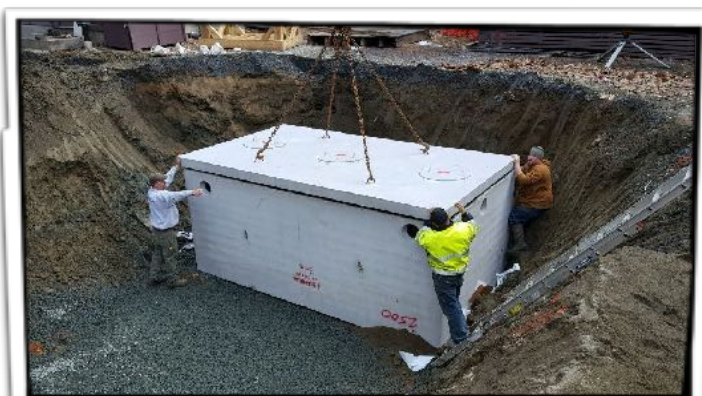
If you were lucky enough to drive by Billings this spring, you saw some major improvements in progress. Not in competition with the infamous “Big Dig” in Boston, but just as important and necessary. Camp Billings is updating/bringing up to current code the water and wastewater systems.

In the past, as in, for the life of camp, we have just been adding water lines as needed as well as making a few upgrades to the wastewater system. It has come to our attention that thoroughly updating our systems was a definite “must do,” and as we dug deep, it became more than evident that the decision to upgrade was the best decision made. As you can imagine, this comes with a pretty hefty price tag. The Board of Directors okayed just under \$250,000 for the completion of this project.

Looking for a tax deduction for 2018? We would love for “one and all” to consider making a donation to help defray the cost of this project. We have a very giving alumni that always rises to the occasion and we surely appreciate your consideration. This improvement to Camp is necessary for the Life of Camp to carry on!

By the time Camp opens this summer 2018, every underground water line and all our wastewater systems will be upgraded. You can be reassured that pretty much every corner of camp will be touched during this project.

Thank you in advance for your help. YOU DO MAKE A DIFFERENCE.



Camp Billings' New Alumni Committee Chair: Beth Freitas Crocker

My name is Beth Freitas Crocker and I've been involved with Camp Billings through various avenues since I was born. Many of you may remember my parents, John & Anne Freitas who started my lifelong journey with camp in 1975. Since then, I have been a camper, counselor, unofficial staff member, visitor, Board of Directors member, parent of current campers and wife of a camp alumni! My newest camp role began this spring as the Board of Directors, Chair of the Alumni Committee.

It is such a tremendous honor to be given this opportunity and oversee the alumni connections and events throughout the coming years. Camp Billings alumni are near and dear to my heart since my closest friends in life are still the people I met through my summers at camp. To me, camp alumni are my extended family. To this day, I still regularly keep in touch with camp friends through Facebook, text, phone calls, vacations, changeover weekends at camp... Even though I don't travel with my family to many other parts of the US or the world, I know if I needed a place to stay or a friendly face, my camp friends would welcome me and my family with open arms. That's just what camp does to people. It creates lifelong friendships & extended family even if we don't see or talk to each other for years.

Camp and the people I have met over the years, have made me the person I am today. With the many generations of Freitas' and Wallstrom's before me, I have stayed involved to ensure that our families remain part of camp and its future as best as I can. Currently, my husband (Willie Crocker) is the Director of Maintenance and learned everything he knows from Larry Drew. Our two boys are campers and already have a close attachment to camp and their camp friends. They have had the opportunity to meet people from all over the world and form those close friendships that myself and all of you did during your years at camp.

It is the alumni of our Dear Old Camp Billings that helps ensure camp remains as it always has been – stone bridge brown buildings, sailing boats, arts and crafts, water skiing, canoes, Colors, Country Fair and the most important, camp friendships. We will have the 115th Alumni Reunion at Camp Billings in June 2021 – mark your calendars now! We are also organizing more mini reunions outside of camp throughout the year. We have hosted a NYC reunion in Fall 2015 and a Boston reunion in Spring 2018.

If you'd like to get more involved with alumni events or would like to share an camp/alumni story, please get in touch with me – alumni@campbillings.org





When I think of CB, one of the first words I think of is friendships. Meaningful friendships. Lasting friendships. Diverse friendships. And global friendships.

I started coming to camp in 1982. Over a 35 year relationship with the place, I've been fortunate to forge life-long friendships that enrich my life. These friendships transcend age and they transcend geography.

I am always reminded of how special these friendships are when, after a long time in between meet-ups, it feels as if no time has elapsed and we jump right in where we left off.

Throughout my global travels, I have seen many camp friends. I love the fact that when I am far from home, I often times have camp friends close by. When I was in London, I spent time with Darren "Maca" McKenzie. In Australia, with James Chisholm, Brad Annakin, Kate Stevens, and "Sugar" Shane Williams. In Switzerland with Jackie Burki. And of course in Canada with great friends including MA, Jeff, Canac, Jazzy, A-I, Paule, Arianne, Annie V and Josh, the Turgeons and a host of others. And I plan to be in Sweden this year and will absolutely be connecting with Tony "Tiger" Hietepakah and Johan Green. And I have no doubt that we will jump back in as if no time has elapsed and we are back in the 1990s.

Age can sometimes be a segregating factor. But somehow, camp minimizes this dynamic through a shared love of the place and

through meaningful, and sometimes life-changing experiences. In 1988, I was a first year CIT and had a kid named Mike Harley in my cabin (cabin 7). We had a special bond even that first year which grew over the years. Despite a 7-8 year age gap, he is one of my closest friends. He has kids around the same age (our oldest boys are buddies) and we are both in the private equity sector. But the biggest tie that binds is our shared connection through CB. We spent 5 great days in Mexico with our families in late 2017 and the CB stories were free flowing with the same degree of gusto that would have accompanied them 20 years ago.

Sometimes friendships are so close that the lines blur between friends and family. It always resonates with me when people use the term "camp family." I think it aptly describes a handful of relationships in my case. And no article I could write on friendships would be complete without me mentioning Luke Gebb and Yutaka Tamura who have been with me through thick and thin since the early 80's. Pretty crazy.

It is hard to thank a place for adding so many meaningful friendships to my life but writing this article is my attempt to do so.

Paul J. Behar

**Thank you
for donating
to Camp
Billings in
2017 !!!!!!!!!**

From the Camp Billings Fundraising Committee

Many of you may not know that all the wonderful program areas, cabins, facilities, field trips, growing farm to table menu, website, and newsletter are all funded by the generous donations from our alumni, parents, friends, and supporting businesses and corporations who match these donations. Without your help Camp Billings wouldn't be able to offer the activities we love which live in the lasting memories we all cherish. We would like invite you to visit www.campbillings.org to check out our new website and to make a secure donation directly through the web. To learn more about donating to Camp Billings or to discuss how a charitable donation from you can help keep Camp Billings the best place on earth please contact giving@campbillings.org.

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Tom Smith
Trey Goggins
Valerie Seigman
Vicki Powers
Vicki Smith
Wayne Parks
William and Diane Rossi
William & Elizabeth Aldrich
Yutaka Tamura

...thank you

A l u m n i U p d a t e s

Trey Goggins wrote in that he got married last June and had a great wedding with good Camp Billings representation! His wife's name is Noël Barlow Goggins and they live in Brookline, MA. He shares two pictures. The first is some of the CB representation at the wedding (clockwise from top left): **Jay Woodard** (camper, CIT), **Rachel Wood Cohen** (camper, counselor), **Rori Anderson** (camper), **Liam Anderson** (camper), **Rob Elliott** (camper, counselor), Tyler Cohen (husband of Rachel Wood Cohen), **Abi Wood** (camper, counselor), **Caroline Goggins** (camper, counselor), some handsome devil but I forget his name, **Meg Woodard** (camper), **Eliza Goggins** (camper and counselor). Not pictured but at the wedding, **Nick Graham** (camper and counselor). The other picture is a shot of Trey and Noël, on the summit of Mount Kilimanjaro during their honeymoon, proudly displaying a Camp Billings tee! **Nick Graham** is working at Audley Travel in Boston, MA, using his knowledge and love of Italy to design custom vacations for people traveling there. Look him up if you're thinking about a trip to Italy and want a custom experience to truly immerse yourself in Italian culture. **Rob Elliott** is a postdoc fellow at the Earth



Institute at Columbia University, working to brighten skylines by bringing sustainable green spaces to urban environments. Rob also recently co-founded Urban Leaf, a crowd-funded start up supported in part by Billings alumni. They make the World's Smallest Garden™, a product that makes it easy for users to grow fresh indoor herbs. **Rachel Wood Cohen** is on a year long Fulbright fellowship in Norway. She is hosting workshops about US history and education across the country for students, teachers and teachers-in-training. Rachel and her husband Tyler continue to pursue their passions for cycling and backcountry skiing against the backdrop of beautiful Norwegian landscapes.

Kevin Clunie is really pleased that this will be the first summer both Skye (11) and Callum (9) will be attending as campers. Skye loved her first year in Cabin 6 last year and had an easy job "persuading" her brother to join her this time around. Kevin says, "For me it was great to see how much camp has evolved since my time (late 80s early 90s staff), but just as importantly how much it has stayed the same!"

Send us your updates! We want to hear from you. Let us know where you're living, what you do for fun or for work and anything else you want to share!

e-mail us at alumni@campbillings.org

or send us mail at :

Camp Billings c/o Marianne St-Laurent
311 VT-RT 244 Fairlee
VT 05045



Max
Overtrom-
Coleman, Ben
Bettinger,
Ariane Delisle
and Josh Novis
met in Montreal
this spring!

The Bulletin Board

Camp Billings Has a New Website!

Have you seen our new website? Check it out and share the address with your friends! www.campbillings.org

Visit the alumni page at www.campbillings.org/alumni

Help us spread the word about Billings online!

Write reviews and rate CB!!

Link www.campbillings.org from your LinkedIn, any business or community online profile, Facebook profile, blog, school bio or any other website that you have access to. Name drop and link our website as often as possible! We need to build links TO our website.

The Clock Tower Times Alumni Newsletter is seeking a new editor (or editors).

Let us know if you're interested!
Email alumni@campbillings.org

Elise is also looking for anyone who would be willing to write a blog entry for our website. This would be a short text describing why you choose to stay involved with camp, how it influenced you, perhaps something related to our camp philosophy (e.g. fun, play, outdoors, no-technology, free-choice, big loving family, accessible), if you have kids/grandkids that go something related to their experience.

Contact Elise Bragard to get involved:

webmaster@campbillings.org



Need some new shwag? Visit the Camp Billings online store! www.campbillings.org/store

Thanks Anna Pond for taking over as volunteer alumni camp store manager!

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It was great to see
camp friends at the
Boston Mini-
reunion!!

