



The Clocktower Times

Alumni Newsletter

Echoes of the chimes of our time.

Autumn 2019

Hello Camp Billings Family!

By way of this edition of The Clocktower Times, we are embarking on our first journey as Editors...of...anything! We'd be remiss if we didn't first thank and congratulate Jasmine and Marianne St-Laurent for their SEVEN years of keeping us all informed and connected to Camp Billings! We have HUGE shoes to fill here, so bear with us and we'll give it our best shot.

For some background, the two of us have spent a combined 27 summers at Camp Billings. Both as campers, CIT's, Counselors, and one of us a 'soon to be a parent-of-a-camper' (Amy!), we have cherished every minute of our time at Billings (yes, even the chilly morning swim lessons!). Now we are very excited to be a part of producing The Clocktower Times to help us ALL continue to stay connected from afar.

We reflected on what it was about Billings that is most endearing to us, and hopefully you, too! Besides the beauty, the tradition, the activities, and the growing-up that we experienced, we both kept coming back to our friendships. The strength of the friendships formed during our days at Billings is what sits closest to our hearts. So, for our first issue of The Clocktower Times, as editors, we've decided upon the theme of 'camp friendships'. These friendships cross state-lines, country borders, and last a lifetime. The friendships

we've built have enriched our lives and have taught us what it means to belong to a community. Camp is a place for unbridled fun, a place to create memories, and perhaps most importantly a place where everyone is included, accepted, valued, and loved by their friends.

This past summer we once again drove through the white gates of Billings to witness the first in the newest generation of Cone family campers complete her first session at Billings. She emerged from the dining room doors at the end of 2nd session with a smile to which we could ALL relate. That weekend we spent a few days together in Vermont singing camp songs, listening to cabin stories, hearing about evening programs and of course her favorite meals! The excitement and joy that we felt hearing about Camp from the perspective of 9-year-old Addison Saur made us that much more excited to set sail on this journey as editors of The Clocktower Times, ultimately allowing us to reconnect with all of you.

We hope that you enjoy some of the enclosed stories, and spend a few moments recalling some of your favorite friendships and memories from our collective home-away-from-home, on beautiful Lake Fairlee.

With love,

Amy Cone Glidden & Meredith Cone
CTT Co-Editors

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Greetings from the Board....

By Michael Lemme, Board President

It's hard to believe but this was our 50th Anniversary for me and many of my camp friends. My 1st summer was 1968 and this summer 11 of us from the late 60's rented a lakefront home directly across from Sunnyside on the other side of Lake Fairlee. We've been doing this each summer for well over 15 years now and always on the week of the Summer Board meeting and the Race Around The Lake. Many years we rented all 4 cottages right off the grass strip runway at Post Mills "International" Airport, but this being our 50th Reunion we decided we had to be right on the lake.

What a grand cottage it was, one of the few that has the entire view of the lake, right across from the "little rock island". Paul Levine and Raelyn Silva were our Master of Ceremonies and they did an amazing job surprising all of us with incredible decorations and photos of our camp days.

The weather was also perfect the entire stay and we rented one of Fairlee Marine's new pontoon boats. The lake was warmer than I could ever remember and we spent a lot of time jumping in and out of the water from our boat.



**For rental info. at Camp Billings
go to www.campbillings.org
and click on "Rentals"**



We all took turns cooking and had some really awesome homestyle New England meals including fresh Maine Lobster! Each night we had an Evening Program and I have to say my favorite was Billings Jeopardy. Our new and former Directors, Sean and Anne and Emperor Bob stopped over that night with several other staff and it was a really great evening.

I know that my group of friends are just like many other alumni and I love hearing stories of other generations getting together and making their own mini reunions.

You can find several nice cottages to rent on Airbnb or VRBO, but if you want to rent some of the BEST cottages on Lake Fairlee you can come home again and stay right at Camp Billings! During the off season when camp is not in session in May or early June or late August, September and October you can now rent several of our restored cottages right on campus. Wait until you see how amazing the Guest House will look! It will be similar to Weownit complete with a full bath and kitchen and a new second story porch off the Master Bedroom. Already we have had several off season weddings at camp as well as the Thetford Academy Prom. All proceeds go towards improving camps facilities and soon we will be building an outdoor covered pavilion to increase our rainy day activity space.

So Happy 50th to me and my other camp buds, Steve Connors, Jane Funk, Patty Green, Gig Duckett, Beth Gilpin, Raelyn Silva, Jane Funk and Paul Levine. Kudos goes to our spouses too for putting up every summer with all of our antics.

Wishing you all a Happy Holiday season and here's to many more Camp Billings Alumni gatherings throughout the year!



A Note from CB's Directors, Anne and Sean Collins!

As November rolls through, and we settle into the school year with our new students, we have finally been able to reflect on our first summer as directors of camp. We took a deep breath, looked at each other and said, "Wow." While it flew by faster than we could have anticipated, we would like to share some snapshots of this past summer.

Lines at Ropes

For the first time since the ropes course opened, campers were lined up and begging to be crossed to Rainshadow to try all the different elements. Many campers braved the adventure challenge course and earned their "golden" carabiners for conquering every element. (That target dive is one scary jump to take)

Overflowing Ceramics

In its second year, the ceramics studio was booming. Every morning campers were set up with free clay making everything from bowls to monster figurines. In the afternoon, campers were able to get small group instruction on throwing on the wheel. It was so popular we are in the process of getting a second kiln, and already got two new wheels! We capped off our fabulous ceramic summer by incorporating competitive throwing into our Country Fair.

Dining Hall Dance Parties

While we have always sung in the Dining Hall and been privileged with Bob's Barry Manilow nights twice a summer, music was a frequent flyer with our fantastic sound system during meals. We of course kept singing the traditional song book after breakfast and dinner, but throughout the meal you could often hear spontaneous music that inspired full camp dance parties. While we still honor our famous camper Barry, this summer we had Bruno Mars Night as well as Phil Collins Night.

Mixed Up Seating

We all know we are a co-ed camp, but we have always eaten separately. This summer we tried mixing it up and having overflow tables with campers of all genders, while still encouraging a community within our respective rows. This led to a much more cohesive chanting in a "one band, one sound" kind of way.

Fiesta

On the last day of third session we had a surprise celebration before the final performance of the fabulous musical, Seussical. All staff prepared amazing dishes and entertainment for the campers to have a unique experience celebrating Mexican culture. We had authentic street tacos, grilled corn with chili, lime, and cheese, hibiscus water, chili lime popcorn, and much more. We listened to music, danced, enjoyed delicious food, and soaked up the last hours of our penultimate session. We of course had a piñata for each row, broken open by the winners of limbo.



'Camp Friendships'

Since the theme of this Clocktower Times is friendship, we didn't want to pass up the opportunity to acknowledge that we know how lucky we are to be running camp with each other's best friend. It is important to note that we were friends first, before we fell in love, as Billings is a place where true friendships develop quickly and meaningfully. The magic of Billings allows lifelong friends to be made each and every summer. We had such an amazing time directing camp this summer, thanks to our fantastic staff, support of the board, parents, and of course our amazing campers. We can't wait to do it again in 2020!

—Anne and Sean

Camp Friendships

Sadie Jones & Henry Lang

"From playing best friends in 2011, to being best friends in 2018, you are the music in me."

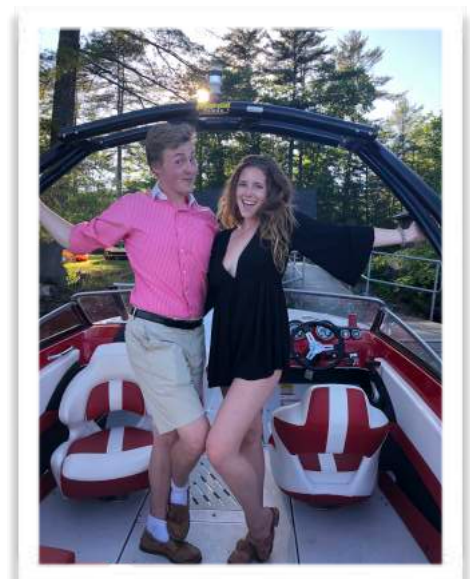


Our names are Sadie Jones and Henry Lang and we've become life-long friends after spending the past twelve summers together. We originally met on Michelle Pinter-Petrillo's Country Fair team: the John Jacob Jingleheimer Schmidts. Who could've predicted that on July 10th, 2019, we'd find ourselves song-leading with the equally infamous Kendall Schmidt (star of Nickelodeon's Big Time Rush) as senior counselors? Our unwavering friendship was catalyzed in 2011 when we were cast as Ariel and Flounder in The Little Mermaid. Kudos to Brian Kaufman and Elise Bragard for truly bringing us together!

We've been very lucky to direct the musical ourselves for the past three summers and we love watching new friendships unfold in the process. Even though we've reduced the commitment so that those involved still get the full Billings experience, the principal characters still seem to grow closer with each other than they do with their own cabins! The musical is easily the most rewarding experience at camp despite the draining rehearsals. And it wouldn't be possible without the thankless extra hours of help from our CITs, crafty international staff, and even senior-senior staff (shout-out to Casey Huling who built us a bathtub on wheels overnight for Seussical!)

Last year, Sadie surprised Henry with a mixtape of songs that map our friendship over the years: "From playing best friends in 2011, to being best friends in 2018, you are the music in me." Henry couldn't resist adding a bonus track for 2019: "The reason I come back to camp is that I love you most of all, and I would give anything for just one more day in Dartt Hall. I know that we'll be back someday cause you're my Solla Sollew, but I don't know who I'd be if I hadn't met you."

Working at Billings definitely influenced our career paths. We're in our 3rd year of college studying to be educators (Sadie's Music, Henry's English & Arts). We love to joke that later in life we'll reunite as tenured teachers who direct the school musicals together. That said, it's scary knowing that 2020 will be our first year away from camp. From leading a Glee team together, to orchestrating prank wars between cabins 1 and 15, to midnight set-painting parties, we can't imagine the summer without each other. But we've heard the adage time and time again from our predecessors, and now it's our turn to relay the message: "No matter where life takes you, Camp Billings will always be there for you." Make every moment count!



Camp Friendships (continued)

Beth (Freitas) Crocker

"Friendships started at camp can be separated by miles and months without losing any of their strength." -Anonymous



There are probably people that find their childhood neighborhood or college friends are the friends that they stay closest to throughout life. However, I have found that my camp friends are those that I have remained close to and are those I turn to during the exciting, hard, happy and sad moments in my life. When my husband (Willie) and I got engaged, Larry Drew was the first person to announce our engagement during a camp meal. When our two sons were born, camp friends were who I wanted to call first. When my mom (Anne Wallstrom Freitas) and grandmother (Helen Wallstrom) passed away, my camp family is who provided the unconditional support, love and strength.

Even though some of my closest camp friends live farther than a car ride, we still find the time to see each other throughout the year. My family and I visit with Amy (Cone) Glidden and her family at Disney typically once a year, and did so just this November. Some of my camp girl friends continue Mom's annual "girls shopping weekend" that was a tradition for her camp friends (Carol Miller Reddekopp, Marie Bernatchez, Charley Bradley, Jeanne Arbuckle). This annual tradition has continued for me and Kate Freitas, Jenn Bradley and new addition Perrin Cothran Chick (and hopefully some new additions this year!).

It must be due to the tight quarters we had growing up at camp that make camp friends become so close that it's a fine line between friend and family. I see this continue with my two sons who love camp as much as I do. They have found their forever friends and pick right up Session 1, Day 1 with the kids they saw the summer before Session 4, Day 14.

I have found that as more years go by and more of my friends are sending their kids to camp, I get the chance to rekindle those wonderful friendships when we cross paths during drop-off and pick-

up. It has made my summers so much fun wondering 'who will I see over this changeover??' It's so wonderful to remember the old camp days and see how people have changed and grown over the years. Even though we have had to grow up and face more of life's challenges, I still remember the innocent (mostly innocent) days at good ole Camp that made me who I am today and who my family is today. And remember, even as we grow older and farther away from our camper days, we still remain young at heart and in our memories. As Thomas Rhett sings:

*And no matter how much time goes by
And no matter how much we grow up
For worse or for better, from now 'til forever
I'll always remember you young*

ALUMNI UPDATES

Cheryl (Mote) Chafos and Family just celebrated her husband retiring from 30 years of active duty in the Army in July and will be moving from Fort Meade to nearby Clarksville into their brand new house in October. Her oldest son, Andrew, a former camper and CIT just finished another internship at Northrop Grumman and returned to Georgia Tech in Atlanta as a sophomore computer science major. Cheryl's other boys are doing well. Zachary is doing amazing in school and gets to stay until age 21, Anthony will be, hopefully, attending Camp Billings next summer and the youngest, Christopher a couple of years after. —**Eleanor "Bob" Rhea** - I'm currently living in Brooklyn, New York under my alias Eleanor. This is my second year in Brooklyn after I graduated from UMass Amherst in May 2018. I'm working at Saturday Night Live as well as working as a Casting Assistant for a small New York agency. I miss camp so much, and am so happy Henry put this notice out. —**Jenn Bradley** bought a nice new condo that she shares with her two girls, Emma, a senior, and Abby, a freshman. She's an RN in a local pediatric office where she has run into some camp friends! They've visited the Glidden's and Lisa Cone in Florida, the Crocker's, Freitas' and Perrin Chick in Massachusetts, as well as running into lots of other camp friends randomly throughout the year! They're all busy with sports, college tours and applications, and visits with Nana aka Charlie Bradley, and Poppy at their houses in Maine and Florida. They wish everyone a happy, healthy winter and holiday season. —**Clio W. Ruiz** (At Billings 2005-2014)- Currently working at a general veterinary practice as a veterinary technician and recently started a new job as a veterinary assistant at a local emergency animal hospital. Currently a junior at Boston University with a major of Biology and a pre-vet focus, and planning on attending veterinary school after graduation. Spending the rest of my time with my wonderful son Rex, who turned three on October 30th. —**Jean Marie Forsythe (Lutz)**- Hey camp billings staff, I was at camp billings for 2 amazing summers in (I think) 2001 and 2002. My husband and I just welcomed our first child Gwendolyn Maeve 2 months ago. We hope she can follow in my footsteps and spend a few summers up on the lake. —**Jen Parker Cypress** - My husband Dan and I welcomed our daughter Parker Rose Cypress into our lives in July of last year. I started my own architectural photography business (Dwelling Photography.com) a few years ago that is now a fully sustainable full time job! We are happily enjoying living in Colchester VERMONT! —**Rita Damico Khalid** is a pediatric hematologist/oncologist living in San Francisco with her husband and new goldendoodle puppy. She and Meredith Cone are still best friends (Meredith was in her wedding!) and are very thankful to be on the same coast as one another for a change! —**Aaron Elon** - I just saw the facebook post seeking alumni updates. Not quite sure what years I was a camper but I'll be 70 this year and I was at Billings from age 8 to 10 or 9 to 11, so that's a while ago! At any rate, I recently launched a podcast called War As My Father's Tank Battalion Knew It. The title is a play on the autobiography of General George S. Patton, which he called "War As I Knew It." My father, Maurice Elson, was a lieutenant in a tank battalion in World War II. For more than 20 years, I went to reunions of the battalion and recorded the stories of its veterans. An Amazon reviewer of my first book wrote "These are the stories of our fathers and grandfathers." Now you can add "our great-grandfathers," too. For more information and a list of podcast episodes, please visit my web site at aaronelson.com. PS: My sisters Arleen, Bonnie and Debbie, and my cousin Julie Elson, were all Billings campers, too! —**Kate Miller (Hellman)** I am loving living in Northampton, MA. We have great coffee and great bread, so it's really a win-win. I still live my summers by sessions and dream of CB- the fog rising on the lake, the sound of feet on docks, the pure delight of being a kid at the best place on earth. My husband Adam and I welcomed our baby boy Judah in February, and he brings us so much joy every day. Cabin 7 2027!



Gwendolyn Maeve

Summer 2019 Highlights

Top 3 Camp Program Areas

1. Ceramics
2. Waterskiing
3. Snorkeling

Most Played Songs in the Cabins

1. Johnny Cash, "Ring of Fire"
2. Lizzo "Juice"
3. Anything from Moana

Accessories: Are the 90s back?!

1. Scrunchies
2. Chokers
3. High-waisted jeans

Evening Programs

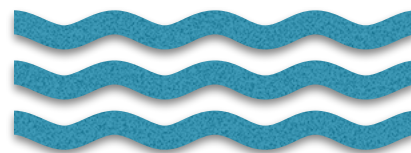
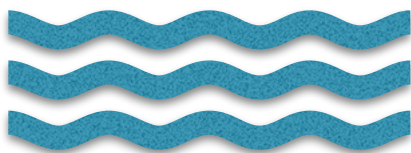
1. The Dance!
2. Ragnarok
3. Voldemort's Wrath

Requested Songs in the Dining Hall

1. One Tin Soldier
2. Harlan Goat
3. This Land is Your Land

Top Items at Camp Store

1. Visors
2. Otter stuffies
3. Classic tees



“Mm-mm, I want to linger here...”



SAVE THE DATE
CAMP BILLINGS 115th ALUMNI REUNION
JUNE 2021

CAMP BILLINGS

Hello from the Fundraising Committee!

"Thank you to everyone who has made a donation to the reGrow campaign- and if you haven't yet, there is still time to give! On the Billings website you can also find a "wishlist" put together by camp's directors. Below are the newest items to be added to the list. As always, thank you for your continued support and generosity."

New Flag Poles

It's a Billings tradition to welcome staff every summer from around the world. This year there were counselors from Scotland, England, and Canada. We need to replace the flag poles around the courts, so we can continue to make our foreign staff feel welcomed, as we raise flags in their honor.

Yolo Yaks

Back when I was a camper, taking out windsurfing boards, without their sails, was a popular activity. Balancing contests and sun bathing would ensue. While windsurfing is still offered at camp, Yolo Yaks, or paddle boards as they are more popularly known beyond the white gates, are now enjoyed by all. Yolo Yaks are one of camps most popular activities these days, and we are in need of some new ones!



Bruno Damico, Gina Noonan (Damico),
Rita Khalid (Damico)

Smokercraft Engines

While sailing was always one of my favorite activities at camp, my skill level didn't necessarily match my enthusiasm for the sport. More times than I can count, a smokercraft was sent out to tow my sunfish back to shore. I am grateful for those trusty vessels. Camp is in need of new engines for their smoker kraits to keep watch over all campers exploring the lake.

Mandatory Trainings

Our new directors have a commitment to developing and investing in our talented staff through youth leadership opportunities. Mandatory trainings, facilitated by professionals in the field, will give Billings staff an opportunity to grow to become even better role models for our campers.



Camp Billings in the Community

THETFORD - At Camp Billings, nearly all of the campers, counselors and staff know where their next meal is coming from.

By DAVID CORRIVEAU

Valley News Staff Writer

The few who didn't before the camp's annual farmers' lunch last week learned from head cook Casey Huling, a former camper and counselor himself. Huling needed to shout over the din in the wood-paneled dining hall overlooking Lake Fairlee to give a shout-out to the suppliers of most of the root vegetables and salad fixings, as well as the meat in the shepherd's pie awaiting them in the adjoining kitchen. "Give me two minutes," Huling said. "I know you're excited and hungry. ... A lot of the food you're about to eat comes from the neighborhood."

Among those neighbors is Phil Mason (another camp alumnus) and his team from Crossroad Farm, just west on Route 244 in Post Mills, and Marc and Lee Robie, who bring beef and pork from Robie Farm in Piermont. "In recent summers, I'd say we've brought over about 500 pounds of lettuce a season, 1,000 pounds of potatoes, 500 pounds of tomatoes," Mason said. "Casey buys whatever we have to offer. If we have a bumper crop of something, I know Casey will put it to good use."

Four-year veteran counselor Elliot Shoemaker gave thumbs-up to the bumper crop of kernels that Huling and his team scraped from cobs fresh from Crossroads to mix with the meat course. "The corn! The corn!" Shoemaker exulted. "I could taste the sweetness in the shepherd's pie." Shoemaker, a 2017 graduate of Woodstock Union High School, grew to appreciate the local ingredients, and Huling's imaginative use of them, while attending the camp for eight summers in a row before becoming a counselor. "The food was definitely part of the reason I kept coming back," he said. "The food's always great."

It almost never was when Huling, who grew up in Thetford and teaches social studies at Thetford Academy, started attending the camp in the mid-1980s. "Terrible!" he recalled during a break between cooking and serving. "And there was never enough, especially when I was a counselor for the older boys, who could eat 4,000 or 5,000 calories in a heartbeat." In those days, Huling continued, fewer campers came each summer, so budgets were tight, limiting menus to processed food and government surplus "just because we had to."

When, after a brief hiatus, Huling returned to Camp Billings as a cook in 2006, he started looking in earnest for nearby suppliers not only because they were local, "but also because the food was less processed. It was more that we wanted to cook from scratch as much as possible." Huling supplements the fresh stuff from Crossroad and Robie Farm with supplies from area distributors such as Black River Produce and Upper Valley Produce, and kitchen staff members as well as campers put half gallons of milk from Thomas Dairy in Rutland on every table at mealtimes.

Counselor-in-training Mia Deraiche noticed and appreciated the difference the first time she came as a camper from Montreal in 2013. "It was so good," Deraiche said while demolishing her share of the shepherd's pie. "Not what you'd expect from camp food. It feels like home." That's pretty much what a family friend who came to Camp Billings "year after year" from Wales told Beau Davis, until she decided to attend herself, as a counselor-in-training.

"One of the things he talked about was the food, and now I see why," Davis said. "Food is such a big part of someone's day." All three meals are big at Camp Billings, where 175 kids at a time — around 550 come over the course of a summer — mingle and sing, as they did through Friday's farmers' lunch. "It's a bonding point for the day," Deraiche said.

David Corriveau can be reached at dcorriveau@vnews.com or 603-727-3304.



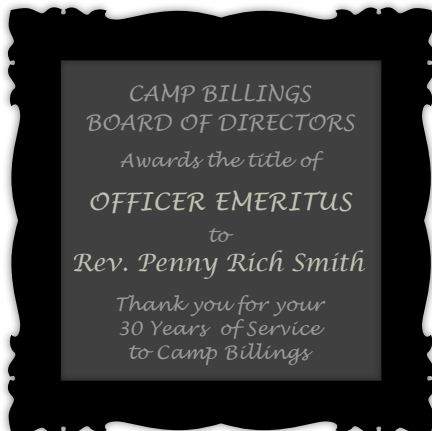
Board of Directors Update

Reverend Penny Rich Smith

With heavy hearts, the board accepts the resignation of Reverend Penny Rich Smith. She has been a board member for 30 years, beginning in 1989. Penny started at Camp at the age of eight, then became a CIT, with Anne Freitas as her counselor, and then a Senior Counselor. "I loved every minute of every phase of Camp life, except when my sister, Diane (4 years older than me), who was a waterfront instructor, pushed me off the high tower as I was about to retreat. I loved all the activities so much, especially sports and mountain trips (don't know how Pete Wallstrom made that old bus shift on the twists and turns), and campfires and Jack's Alive. Times in the dining hall and singing were great. I know that camp enriched my life immensely and helped me develop great respect for "team work" and responsibilities, celebrating others in their unique personalities." Reverend Smith has been a part of Camp Billings for over 42 years!

Camp Billings Board of Directors has granted Reverend Penny Rich Smith the title of Officer Emeritus. This allows her to attend any board meeting in future years. Camp Billings thanks you for all of your years contributing to making Camp such a special place, so that children can continue to learn responsibility, team work, and enjoy sports and mountain trips.

Thank you, Reverend Smith, for all that you have given Camp! There will be a plaque made thanking Reverend Smith for her 30 Years of Service to Camp Billings. It will read:



Penny (far left) peeling potatoes for dinner with her cabin mates which was a Morning Duty! (1958)



Rev. Penny Rich Smith (1958)

Members of the Board

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Clocktower Times

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