



The Clocktower Times

Alumni Newsletter

*Echoes of the chimes of our time.
Spring 2020*

Camp Billings To Close For The 2020 Season Due To COVID 19 Global Pandemic

By Michael Lemme, Board President

By now most of you have read our COVID 19 Update we posted last month on our website that announced the closing of Camp Billings for this summer of 2020. For 114 years Camp Billings has only closed its white gates twice, and now both times it has been due to a pandemic. Although we were able to stay open during both World Wars, the Spanish Flu pandemic forced us to close in 1918 and now we close once more due to the COVID 19 pandemic of 2020.

The decision to close became clear when we realized there would not be a cure in time for camp to open, and only this would have made it safe to do so. Parents have entrusted the Board of Directors of Camp Billings with the health and safety of their children and our staff, and this we would never compromise.

Since the Board made this unanimous decision, many other camps have followed suit. All five of the Aloha Foundation camps on Lake Fairlee and Lake Morey will

close. Just this week, both camps run by the President of the Vermont Camp Association will close, even though they helped draw up the Vermont Resident Camp Reopening Plan. Several states have already banned sleep away camps this summer as well.

Recently the Governor of Vermont along with the Center for Disease Control and the American Camp Association released their Field Guide for Camps on Implementation of CDC Guidance. They acknowledge that these guidelines will make camp “look and feel different”, especially for overnight camps with out of state campers, and that it’s up to each camp to determine if they can safely run their programs. Once you read these guidelines, it is clear this is not possible. The restrictions are so onerous that operating Camp Billings this way is not the experience we want to offer our campers. Not only do they not guarantee the health and safety of campers and staff, but it also states the obvious, that those who do open... *(continued on page 2)*

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Greetings from the Board....

By Michael Lemme, Board President

(continued from page 1)

must evacuate campers and staff immediately upon a COVID 19 outbreak. The Social Distancing guidelines would alter how children are separated into small groups, stagger meal times, and large gatherings are not allowed. So many of our core traditions and evening programs would have to be eliminated. We've all seen the tragic outcomes of those living and working in communal living situations, whether it's a nursing home or a meat packing plant, the threat of a COVID 19 outbreak at camp is real. It is more clear than ever that we can not operate until this pandemic is over and we need to focus our energies and power forward to 2021.

Over 10 years ago your Board made the decision to rent out portions of our campus during the off season in case camp fell on hard times. This

decision has paid off as we have now had three weddings and two Proms on campus. Just prior to the pandemic, we had completed the restoration of the Guest House, which will be available to rent once it is safe and legal to do so. Although we are starting to see this extra revenue, there is still a large financial impact in closing camp. Our Finance Committee has estimated this loss to be approximately \$180,000. Our property taxes alone are close to \$70,000. We applied for and received \$3,000 from the stimulus CARES ACT from the federal government.

Already the generosity of our camp alumni family has stepped up and we have had donations of close to \$40,000, many of which came from families who donated all or a portion of their deposit back to camp. We



cannot thank you enough for this as we know most all of us have taken a large financial hit due to this crisis. If you are in a position to make a donation, we thank you!

So stay tuned as our Directors Sean and Anne Collins, will be running a Summer 2020 Billings Virtual Camp which you can read all about in this issue of the Clock Tower Times. I was just up at camp this week and they're already off to a great start! We wish you all a safe and healthy summer and one thing I know we're all counting on.... that the summer of 2021 will be one of the best!



FROM THE EDITORS

Hello Camp Billings Family!

This edition was particularly heartwarming and fun to publish, as we were able to reminisce while reading all of the wonderful CB stories from across the generations! It is clear, over and over again, that camp is a magical place that transforms lives and leaves memories that last a lifetime. We hope you enjoy, as we did, reading the articles and updates in this edition. Hearing from YOU is what makes the CTT so special. So, if you have memories, stories, updates and especially PICTURES to share, please send them our way for the next edition.

We wish everyone continued good health and safety during this time.

Amy Cone Glidden and Meredith Cone
CTT Co-Editors

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

What do you do in the summer when you're not at camp, because we don't know. Having between the two of us only missed a single year since 1997, this comes as a major shock to our way of life. As far as we know, in the summer, everyone else regularly stands up behind their chairs to say grace before a meal, swims in the ice-cold water of the morning, sweats all day through the brutal heat, then is freezing cold again on those frigid July nights. Is it normal to be hit with a sock full of flour or have to ask an adult to cross the street? Does everyone clean their area at 5:00 pm? What's a beach?

Camp Billings is not just a place we go, it's a lifestyle. While we know that closing camp comes as extremely sad news to the Camp Billings family, we want to find the best way to keep Billings alive this summer. We wish you could be there with us, because it's going to be really weird playing 1v1 capture the flag, doing all 19 camp duties after breakfast, singing Hole in the Bucket at each other, and of course, putting on a two-person musical. Sean is a terrible song leader, and the only reason Anne ever got a flag across the line was because the person chasing her tripped, so we'll see how this goes. Our goal this summer is to share as much of camp with you as we can. Whether we're doing a pizza cookie tutorial, or giving a lesson on the correct way to clean the boys' john, we want you to be a part of it.

We don't want to dwell on the fact that we are all sad camp won't be open this season. Camp will endure this global crisis, and we will be back, better than ever next summer. As we know more about what this summer will entail, we will keep you posted.



**Whatever you do, it's
worth doing well.**

**Love to you all,
Anne & Sean**

Here are some ways you can stay connected:

- Zoom your 2019 cabinmates
- Post videos of you doing camp stuff at home
- Start singing a random camp song in public; make your parents/siblings sing three songs after breakfast & dinner
- Figure out how to cook your favorite camp meal & make it for your family
- Clean your room at 5:00...if there's no slip it's 100!
- Choreograph a Battle of the Bands so you're super prepared for next year
- Sing Disney songs loudly & off key during meals
- "We are the row that is the best..."
- Make your parents pretend you're too loud & yell at you like row would, even if you have your own room & you're alone
- Brainstorm a new evening program & email it to Anne & Sean
- Write a song to the tune of a classic camp song
- Write a message on a plate in ketchup or mustard
- Plan your International Night outfit
- Tell someone new how much you love Camp Billings

Springtime Work at CB

By Jon Cone, Camp Billings Committee Chair

Projects Update

The Camp Billings Committee has been busy since Camp ended last year. We awarded and started construction on two major projects. The construction projects involve the Camp Office and The Guest House. The Camp Office is moving to an open design for better productivity, and is getting a needed facelift. The wood we are using on the inside comes from the trees that were cut and milled from our campus in 2019. We were able to cut some wonderful wide plank pine board for the flooring. The walls will also feature pine from our property. Doc Hurd's desk was also restored and will continue to be used in the Office. The outside of the Office is getting new siding and we are refreshing the deck. The Guest House will look much the same from the outside, but inside a major upgrade has taken place. Two full bathrooms with showers were added, a galley kitchen, a small gas stove, a screened in porch, and a second floor deck. The view of the lake from the deck is just spectacular (see photo to the right)!



The Clocktower lawn needed to be replaced, so last Fall we had an outside company come in and install new sod. The new lawn wintered great, and will be more than ready for the 2021 camp season. We also spent some time working on the Clocktower. The siding was replaced where needed, and a fresh stain was put on the structure. The bench was also sanded and stained.

New wide plank pine floors were added to Boys Senior Row cabins 10, 11 and 12. This is the same wood we are using in the Office.

Due to the pandemic, we were forced to postpone two projects. We had plans to bulldoze the three lower tennis/basketball courts, resurface them, and add new fencing. The second project we canceled was a new high dive float. The current float has served Camp well, but has seen better days.

Many of the repairs and upgrades are possible because of your wonderful donations. Please keep them coming!



Camp Billings Rentals

With all the fond memories of summer camp, getting a taste of Camp Billings *could* still be possible this year. Why not look at renting a cabin or the entire campus during the off-season? Over the last several years, we have been working on getting certain cabins around camp ready for renting. Besides renting cabins to families, we also host weddings, family reunions, and corporate events.

We just finished renovating the *Guest House*, and will have it furnished shortly. The *Guest House* can sleep six people. The cabin offers a king size bed, a bunk bed, and a queen size sleeper couch. If you are staying in the *Guest House* and need a few extra beds, for a small fee, we can offer *Cabin 10* as a bunk house.

We Own It has a king size bed upstairs and a double bed in the downstairs bedroom. We also offer *Cabin 15*, for a small fee, if a bunk room is needed.

To rent Camp Billings, go to the website: campbillings.org and click on rentals. Fill out the rental form with all the needed information. We just ask that you rent for a minimum of three nights.

As we conquer this virus, look for updates on our website as to when camp will be available to rent.

Quarantine Creativity from the Chick Family

How are you passing these long days? We are sure many of our Camp Billings Alumnae are going through old CB photo albums, Zooming with camp friends, and of course day dreaming about spending their days sailing on Lake Fairlee.

One camp family has found a creative way to pass the time during Covid-19. We thought we would share what the Chick family has created.

Camp Billings Clue started as a project for Mia Chick ('17, '18, '19) to creatively pass the time before her remote learning began, but this reimagined board game now entertains Perrin ('80's, 90's and early 00's) and Shane ('80's, 90's and early 00's) too as they all play it together after dinner many evenings.

For those that need a refresher, the traditional game of Clue involves trying to solve the mystery of who did it, where, and with what: Was it Professor Plum, in the living room, using the candlestick? Camp Billings Clue involves 6 suspects well-known to us all, 9 locations that we all love dearly, and 6 weapons that will certainly make CB alumnae of any age smile. The physical board has been repainted, directions rewritten, a score card created, the reimagined weapons molded out of clay, and the playing cards made by hand. Nothing too elaborate, so your family could also take this idea and run with it should you want to reconnect to Camp Billings.



Who would you list as the suspects?

Was it Hatchet Mary, Dudley, Bob, Lochearn's Staff, Willie, or Snappy the Turtle.

Where do you think it occurred?

How about in the Dining Hall, on the High Dive, in the Craft Shop, on the Lower Courts, over on Rainshadow, under Dartt Hall, on the Waterski Dock, on Pinewald's Porch, or perhaps in the Chapel?

And the weapon of choice?

Was it a canoe paddle, the song book, a waterski, a life jacket, the bugle, or done with gimp?

What other board games could be reimagined with a CB lens?





Memories from Inside the White Gates

When I was in fifth grade, my class got a student teacher. Miss Carey came to our class and little did I know how much she would change my life. After she finished teaching us, she became my pen pal. I had gone to a summer camp near my house in upstate NY for a few summers. The winter of 1985-86 my parents got word that the summer camp that I had been going to was not going to open during the summer of 1986. I told Miss Carey how sad I was and she sent a brochure for a little camp in Vermont and suggested that I tell my parents about it. I was not thrilled about heading to Vermont as I really wanted to go to a different camp in upstate NY, but my parents went ahead and worked with Zaela Freitas to get me a spot in 3rd and 4th session. That July, we packed up an old trunk of my mom's and headed off to Vermont. I remember stopping in Rutland overnight on the way to camp. We went to Pico and rode the Alpine Slide down the mountain. I went to Ben and Jerry's and had my first cup of Chocolate Chip Cookie Dough ice cream. When we arrived at Camp Billings, I found out that I was to live in Tent #1 that summer. I remember that there was a reunion celebration (85 years!!) that summer when it used to happen when camp was open. I definitely caught the Camp Billings bug that summer.

I came back for 2 more summers as a camper and then 4 summers as a staff member. I took a few summers off to stay in my hometown. I finished college and then went off to graduate school. Once I finished grad school, I returned to camp for a summer and finally got to be in Cabin 1! After camp finished that summer, I moved to Boston and spent a lot of time at John and Anne Freitas' house and helped with some of the behind the scenes things that happen in the winter and spent the next 3 summers coming and going from camp on weekends. During all those years, I made lifelong friends. I traveled with them. I went to their weddings. I rang in New Years and the millennium with them. I went to major sporting events. I celebrated milestones in their lives.

Life moved forward. I left Boston and moved back to Cleveland first and then moved to Rochester, NY a few years later. I got married. From the moment I knew I was pregnant with my first child, I calculated the date of when that child would enter the same white gates and become a member of the Camp Billings family. We spent some time in the spring of 2016 in Boston visiting with some of my camp friends who also have children that would be at camp at the same time as Mikey. He got to spend some time with Beth, Willie and Anne so he would have a few familiar faces. I was still so nervous for him.

In July 2016, Michael, my son, came to camp. It was exactly 30 years after I went to camp. Driving there, we passed Pico Mountain! He had a knowledge of some of the songs in the song book because they had been his lullabies since he was born! He barely cared about me setting up his things and was off to the tennis court without a 2nd thought.

I was terrified while Mikey was at camp. He was in Cabin 7 and I believe there were 5 boys in the cabin who were the children of people I had been at camp with over the years. I stayed around VT for 2 days after dropping him off in case he needed me. I cried when a little birdie got a message to me that he had passed his Boat Test. I constantly looked at the clock and thought "Oh, it's 4 pm... Free Swim time!!". I frantically checked the mailbox every day hoping and praying for a note from him. I counted the minutes until I could go get him. He caught the Camp Billings bug that summer!!! He has requested John Denver songs to be added to his iTunes accounts. He and I were able to share little inside jokes that we both recognized from camp. His little sister started her countdown to when she could go to camp and join in our fun! She finally went this past summer and will tell everyone she meets how much she loves being there. She had a Zoom meeting with her classmates today and the teacher declared it was hat day. She

loved sporting her Lake Fairlee, VT baseball cap and reminding all her classmates why Lake Fairlee is so important to her!

Camp has become so important to each of my children. Our camp families covered us in love as we journeyed our paths and when a major tragedy occurred in our lives. My kids have begun to create their own camp families sharing texts and actual letters throughout the winters until they are back together again with their camp friends. Technology allows me to have a virtual drink with and keep in touch with such important women in my life as we all navigate our own paths. I know when my phone lights up at 5:30 in the morning, it's probably a sunrise picture from Perrin and I am sure she knows that I groan at it and roll right back over to sleep. Camp became a safe haven for my children allowing them the chance to just be kids, and respite for me. I get my fill on hugs from friends I have known $\frac{2}{3}$ of my life when I drop off the kids and pick them up after their amazing camp stays. No one in life hugs as well as a friend from camp. I love going to the play each summer and this past year, I got to cheer for my own little Who!

We were all so sad when we heard that CB 2020 would not take place, but are more than ready for CB 2021. We know camp will come back stronger and better. I am amazed that next summer will be 35 years since I crossed through the white gates. I can't believe that I am helping to plan the 120th reunion all those years after sitting on the ClockTower lawn listening to guests in camp talk about their undying love for the place. I love that I get to share the best place on earth with 2 of my favorite people and can't wait to have them create more memories there. Little did I know that when Miss Carey came to Mrs. Hoffman's 5th grade class at Hendy Ave Elementary that my life would come to include such a truly magical, amazing place.

-Jennifer Ciarmoli Popovich

Memories from Inside the White Gates

Dear Camp Billings Family,

I hope you are all safe and healthy during this unprecedented and difficult time.

When hearing the news of Camp Billings closing for summer 2020, to put it plainly...I wanted to cry. And I'm not even a camper or staff this year! I attended camp from 1996-2007 and I can't imagine the person I would be today if I hadn't had this extraordinary experience. Each session there were so many firsts - First time being away from home that long (shout out to Jen Parker for being an amazing first counselor for me, she was tough to beat), first time I was dropped in the middle of a lake (Thank you Dudley for the boat test!), first pie in the face (Ryan Burhans- you sly devil!), first overnight hiking trip (All you, Meg Sharkey), first square dance (Larry Drew's finest hours), my first battle of the bands (1st place with Shania Twain's "That Don't Impress me much"), of course my first love and subsequently my first heartbreak (you know who you are), first rendezvous after hours to set up pranks (kudos to the dynamic duo: Meredith Cone & Rita Damico), and first summer as a CIT (God Bless you Sarah Halton for putting up with all our shenanigans). The list goes on and on and the memories are as vivid as the experiences. Do you recall any or all of your firsts? It was the best feeling driving through the white gates, seeing everyone gathering around the Clocktower lawn and knowing another summer of incredible memory making was about to begin! A huge thank you to Bob Green for being the damn finest Emperor, what a reign you had. Having learned from the best, I'm very confident though, that Sean and Anne Collins will be nothing less than fantastic!

So again, back to the sad news of the closing of Camp Billings this season. Instead of being devastated, angry, or any other emotion you may feel, I want to challenge all of you to keep Billings alive this summer. I am now a mother of two amazing kids – Eleanor (2.5 y/o) and William (10 mos.). At this time they are too young for camp but if you visit our home you may catch us singing "Ship Titanic" at the top of our lungs during bath time or our nightly rendition of "Taps". We've also been known to get out our sleeping bags and spend the night on the floor at "camp". My kiddos will grow up hearing all about this magical place on Lake Fairlee and until they are old enough to enter those white gates they'll hear all about the best home away from home...Camp Billings. And so I want to challenge each of you...whether this was to be your first time at camp or you 3rd, 5th, or even 10th year, how will you keep Billings alive this summer? We will be waiting to hear from all of you, and before you know it, you will all be home again for summer 2021!

With Love,
Sarah Balkcom Biello
Washington, D.C.



Sarah, Chris, Eleanor & William

ANNETTE'S DIXIE DELIGHTS

Ingredients

- 1 cup butter
- 1 3/4 cups graham cracker crumbs
- 1 1/4 cups peanut butter
- 3 1/2 cups confectionary sugar *less to taste
- 3/4 cups chocolate chips

Instructions

- Cream butter & peanut butter together until smooth
- Add graham cracker crumbs & confectionary sugar to form stiff dough
- Press in pan...chill
- Melt chocolate chips in double boiler
- Spread chocolate on top
- Cool - Cut - ENJOY**



Memories from Inside the White Gates

Hellman's 101 Things I Love About CB

Originally published in 2001 by Kate Miller (Hellman)

101. It is the only camp that would throw a party for its truck (may she Rust In Peace)
100. The banana dance
99. Quackenbush!
98. Rope burns from tug of war
97. How many different ways can we play grab bag?
96. How every session there is a different song that everyone is obsessed with
95. The Mission
94. Having my camp friend skip a day of school in February using the excuse that her grandfather died so she could come skiing with me
93. Arriving with 4 flashlights, 6 toothbrushes, and two hairbrushes then returning home with one toothbrush
92. When I say SHA you say BAT when I say SHA you say LOM!
91. How the sprinkles at Bakers are in fact, not sprinkles, but jimmies
90. Looking at who signed your bed, and realizing that your counselor had slept in it five years earlier
89. Not caring what I look like when I dance
88. Dudley Rules
87. The trademark smell of septic tank
86. Being able to dress up as a chicken for Chicken Run
85. The green benches, and although all park benches in New York are green, I have yet to find one that has the same aura
84. Mac burping the alphabet after he got hit twice in the face with golf balls
83. The musical
82. Dreaming that camp has started again
81. How the little kids all know the older kids' names
80. Knowing random French words and Australian expressions
79. Getting camp pictures back and spending five minutes examining each one in hope that camp will feel closer
78. The smell of mildew on my towels
76. How my friends and I have decided to change Thoreau's motto from "Cheat to Lose" to "You Never Know at Thoreau" after I was there and got glass in my knee then attacked by their drooling flea infested dog, Simon
75. Never wearing my own clothes, just my cabinmates
74. Hiking up a mountain in the pouring rain and at the summit realizing that the counselors forgot to bring fuel
73. Painting your nails not to be pretty, but to disguise the dirt that lies under them
72. Watching people across the dining hall eat while they have no idea you are looking at them
71. The sign hanging in the dining hall, "Anything worth doing at all is worth doing well," has helped me through many a research report
70. Scowling at the Lochearn girls while water skiing
69. How gargling salt water is always the solution
68. Tales of Sharkey's campers
67. 1...2...3...CLAP!
66. Using "tu es ma mangue" as the pickup line
65. The satisfaction of plunging a toilet
64. Good Nood apparel
63. Eating insane amounts of ice cream
62. The way everyone eats their Dixie delights differently
61. How Sarah Halton fondly refers to her campers as "freak shows"
60. Trying something new every day
59. How people from Summit laugh with their mouths wide open
58. Power showers
57. The "tenement" skit by Peskin, Schneider, and Justin
56. Larry Drew's threatening announcement that, if all extension cords, rolls of duct tape, and Simple Green aren't returned right away, there won't be a musical
55. COUNTRY ROADS!!!!
54. Wondering how the Aussies can even look at Vegemite
53. How, for every essay I have written, I somehow manage to relate the subject to camp
52. We're Peskin!
51. The familiar sight of a chunk of food on my silverware



Memories from Inside the White Gates

50. How most conversations with my parents go like this: "I can't wait until tomorrow." "Why?" "Because camp is one day closer"
49. We won't shut up 'till you skip around the room
48. Getting a "package for ____" slip
47. Chipmunks roaming freely about the cabins
46. Vinny Boombox
45. Dressing up in black and white and sitting in silence for the board meeting
44. Waking up to the sound of a stampede because a cabin forgot that they had morning set
43. Cabin 1 vs. Cabin 15, enough said
42. Looking at Bryce's face while you are tubing before he slingshots you across the lake
41. Power showers
40. Wojo's "That's how I earn my living-killing the baby seals arf arf!"
39. Upon returning home, having the habit of standing up and waiting for the bell to start grace
38. How gargling salt water is always the solution
37. When old counselors come to visit
36. Writing on the walls of cabins
35. Jumping in the lake with all my clothes on
34. The mariachi band. What other camps have one?
33. The mayonnaise/ mustard and ketchup slide
32. That I get excited whenever something has anything to do with Vermont
31. How, for every CB marathon I have been here for, have at least two counselors painted their skin green
30. Getting more hugs in five minutes than I get in one school year
29. All the different colored Nalgene water bottles that lie on Rainshadow during country fair
28. Failing buddy checks
27. Dancing to slide show music
26. The sick feeling of realizing your tent has just finished an entire butter square and the waitress is up for another
25. It is the only place where I can wear futuristic blue pants and run around like a superhero whenever I feel like it
24. Chapel
23. Wheaties and Waldo
22. Waking up at 4:30 in the morning to watch the lake from my tent
21. Camp duties
20. How camp is the place I find myself crying, because it is also the only place where I can completely express myself
19. Being able to say that I learned how to play tennis from the revered Paul Behar
18. Explicit rounds of "Hole in the Bucket"
17. Realizing that you haven't showered since Tuesday and it is Saturday
16. Listening to Jay Lance's CD on a cold, snowy day in January
15. Dancing under the moon to taps
14. BEING FREE
13. How when camp is over and people ask me how my summer was, I cannot find a fitting adjective
12. Nate and Sean's Spam eating contest
11. How my cabinmates and I cannot imagine marrying somebody that doesn't go to our camp
10. That it has taught me to appreciate things that I wouldn't normally think twice about
9. That it is at camp that I find how passionate, spontaneous, caring, and loving I actually can be
8. Remembering the prepubescent boys I once had crushes on, and realizing that they are now senior counselors
7. How, for the NYC reunion, we sang to the cooks at the restaurant we went to
6. Waking up in the morning before reveille to see the lake covered in fog
5. The seemingly millions of stars scattered above you every night
4. That I'm on number four but I could go on forever
3. The counselors because they are by far the most incredible people in the world and if it wasn't for their good influence I wouldn't be half the person I am now
2. The thought of being able to come back as a CIT in '02, hopefully for eight weeks, and looking forward to it everyday
1. That Camp Billings will never end!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

2020 Addendum:

102. Somehow a decade plus has passed since my last summer at CB. Although though the details fade (who or what was Vinny Boombox?!), the memory of feeling the purest happiness as a kid at camp never does and never will. Billings Forever.

Memories from Inside the White Gates

Camp Billings 50th Anniversary Celebration

In 1956 Camp Billings celebrated its 50th Anniversary. It had been in existence since 1906. In the very beginning it was a camp for all boys. For the most part, this was because of Dad Hurd's affiliation with the YMCA. He was the Director at the time and instrumental in getting camp off the ground. By the time my Mom was at camp in the late '20's, they had a boys session and a girls session. When I first attended camp in the early 50's, this still existed. I believe in 1956 it was still that way. Possibly they had also begun a two week session that was coed. I was 11 by then. My Mom was on the Board of Directors along with Helen Wallstrom. The board had been invited to be part of the celebration. At our meal that day Dad Hurd spoke a great deal about camp and the great milestone we were celebrating. It meant a great deal to him, as he was in it from the beginning. He also took time to introduce the board members that had been able to come. We were all a little squirmy by this time as his talks were always quite lengthy. Along that line, he always invited any visitor to camp up to the front and with a great flourish, told us about their involvement in camp.

We were all excited to go to the camp fire that evening, as we were to have fireworks. Back then that was something new at camp. The camp fires were held up at the upper ball field. This was located where the upper tennis court is located opposite what is cabin 9 now. We had long benches, which must have fit 8-10 kids on each. On our bench was my mom, Arlene Wishart Sylvester and I and Anne Freitas and her Mom, Helen Wallstrom. Billings was a much smaller camp at that time and these benches sat us all in somewhat of a circle. Dad Hurd spoke again about the importance of this day and how much it meant to us all. I think we also heard from the head of the board, but I don't remember who that was. It was a lot of sitting for the young ones of us. Finally, it was time for the fireworks and boy did we all have a surprise coming. Before we knew it there was a loud explosion and sparks and things shooting everywhere. At the first loud boom, the bench we were all sitting on went over. Nobody really knew what had happened, but I think we were sent off to bed pretty quickly. I found out the next day that when they went to set off the first firecracker the whole box caught on fire, which let everything go off at once. When I look back on it, it was pretty funny and just one of those good ole Billings experiences. Thank goodness no one hurt. Pretty quickly they began to realize that more campers were attending the coed camp sessions and opened camp up to that exclusively. It was a long time before anyone used fireworks at camp again.

-Carolyn Churchill

A Memory to Help Carry Us Forward

This is something I wrote two summers ago and thought of it when camp was cancelled this year. While I am deeply saddened that my son at 15 won't get to be a camper for his last year and my daughter will miss out on doing the musical for the first time, I know that the camp spirit is alive and well and we will be welcomed through the white gates once more.



For the past five summers, I have been a witness to camp. Living in Washington State, we rent a house just down the road from camp (literally 0.2 miles from the white gates) while our kids go to Billings. I was a camper and staff in the 80's and 90's and Camp Billings was the only place I wanted my kids to go. From the front lawn and the dock of the rental house, I can see the Billings waterfront. While I have been dubbed "stalker mom" and "creeper" as I look for glimpses of my kids, Jacob and Eva, it is less about seeing them, but more about wanting to relish the camp experience. At this point, I wouldn't want to actually be back working at camp. I have reconciled that camp belongs to a new generation and I am just happy my kids get to be there.

Last night, returning to the house at the conclusion of Country Fair, my husband and I witnessed a dance party in the shallow end- music blaring, kids dancing and singing, joyful splashing. It brought me to tears to know that kids get to have that experience in a world of screens, schedules, and expectations. Each day I hear and see the encouragement of campers by staff, the simplicity of moving through the day with each bugle, all the different activities campers can choose from and I am thankful that my kids get to be a part of this each summer.

-Nina Bettinger Tallering

HELLO FROM THE FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE!

For the second time in Camp Billings' history, the white gates will be closed this summer. Although the camp remained open during both World Wars, it did close for the summer during the 1918 Spanish flu pandemic.

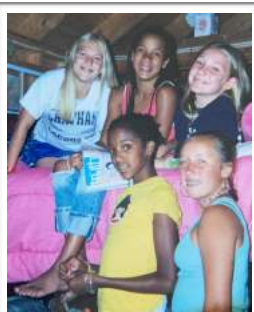
The coronavirus pandemic has had serious economic implications for Billings. Closing camp for the summer will cost us approximately \$180,000. Our taxes alone cost around \$70,000. While the effects of this decision are agonizing on so many levels, we are particularly concerned about this significant financial impact.

Billings has been a non-profit organization for 114 years and we rely upon tuition to cover the costs of operation. Our losses this year, like many of yours, will be significant. We are immediately postponing new projects and improvements to the campus given this strain. We have also created an emergency campaign to raise funds to help manage our costs. To date, we have received several generous donations from alumni and parents to help us manage through this situation.

We recognize that this pandemic has had an unprecedented impact on the economy and all of our lives. While many of you may not be able to contribute at this time, we hope that those of you in a position to donate will consider lending your support. Each and every donation, regardless of amount, makes a difference.

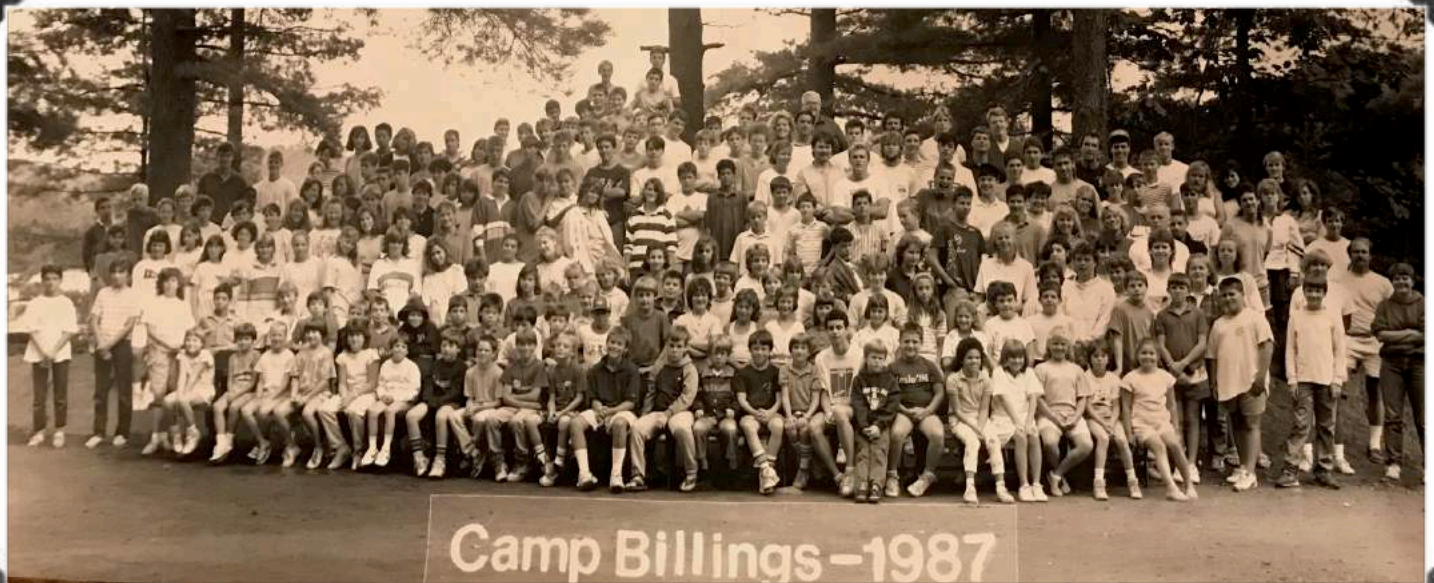
On behalf of our current and future campers, families and staff, thank you for your continued support and love of camp.

Eliza Browning



ALUMNI UPDATES

Marc Engle - It's been a long time since I have updated the CTT on the Engle family. My wife Amy and I are settled in South Carolina with our four adopted children. I am currently working for the United States Air Force on a base creating marketing materials and a magazine to promote on base events. I also manage the social media accounts and help execute the events. A far cry from where I started in teaching! Amy is working as a member of the administrative team at a Bright Horizons child Care center at the University of South Carolina. Katherine, now 14, was at Billings in 2018 and will be returning this summer. She'll be joined by her 9 year old sister Macy who, while still having some reservations, is ready to join the Billings family! As a state champion gymnast she is most looking forward to trying the ropes course! The two youngest Engles, Mason (7) and Ellie (6), are quite annoyed that they have to wait to head to camp. Until they can grace Rainshadow and the courts with their athletic talents, they are somewhat content to learn the camp songbook from their dad singing favorites every night before bed. Overall, we are doing well as a family. Even 5 years after finalizing adoption, we are still navigating the waters. It is rarely smooth sailing. But, at my worst moments, I still close my eyes and think of camp to help me refocus. I think of Ralph, John, and Anne calmly handling thousands that looked to them for guidance, leadership, and support and try to emulate them. I hope the best for all of the camp family amid this tumultuous spring and look forward to hearing how the traditions of Billings are still going strong when Kate and Macy return!

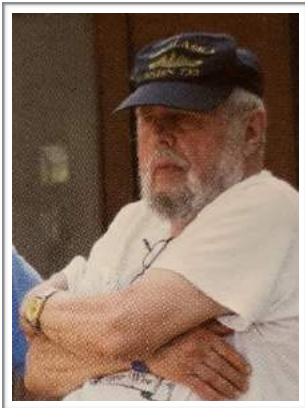


Jonas Cole (1998-2008, 2018-2019) - Jonas recently launched a tour business called Vermont Bike & Brew (vtbikeandbrew.com) and it is located less than 10 miles from camp in Thetford, VT! Vermont Bike & Brew offers electric bike rentals and guided tours to craft breweries, family-run farms, and small cafes around the Upper Valley. The electric bikes mean that just about anyone can tackle steep hills (including Potato Hill!) while singing Ship Titanic, and swapping camp stories with their friends. He'd love it if you followed Vermont Bike & Brew on Facebook and Instagram and invites anyone 18+ to come on a ride. The Billings family gets 10% off tours and rentals this summer! Just send an email to jonas@vtbikeandbrew.com. Cheers!



ALUMNI UPDATES

Sam Krumholz - After my time with Billings, I couldn't get away from the summer camp life, so I now work in Leader Hiring at Overland Summers, a trip-based summer camp! I'm based in beautiful Williamstown, MA, in the heart of the Berkshires, and loving every minute of it. Got to see Billings lifer Jonas Cole this fall while recruiting at Dartmouth. Get a little bit camp-sick every time I drive up 91! **Joseph Picarello** - I would happily like to report that my wife (Josephine Picarello) and I are expecting our first child this June. It's a boy and I hope he will follow my footsteps up to Cabin 8 and share in the world's greatest experience on Earth, Camp Billings! **Lucy Reed Foltyniak** - I worked as a counselor at Camp Billings for three summers, in 1981, 1982, and 1983. That first summer, especially, and all my summers there and visits to Lake Fairlee, will always have a special place in my heart. I still remember my first telephone conversation with Uncle Ralph....his deep, yet very kind voice. I met truly wonderful people in those summers and had beautiful friendships for many more years with many people who were so extremely dear to Camp Billings, especially Ralph Lawrence, Larry Drew, Anne Freitas and her sweet mother, Helen Walstom, and of course my dear friend, Everett Blake. Barb Gifford Hubbard and Carol Müller Reddekopp continue to be dear friends to me. I love Camp Billings. I support this amazing place and its legacy, celebrate and honor it greatly. With gratitude for all that has been, all that is, and all that will be...Here's to Camp Billings!!



*Pete Richards at the 100th
Camp Billings Reunion.*

Peter Richards - In Memoriam - One of my first counselors, and one of the more memorable staff people at Billings during the 1960's was Peter Richards. He was a fairly stereotypical Vermonter of that particular era: He had a rather dry sense of humor and was prone to bad jokes and puns. He was more than capable of making himself laugh. Pete was somewhat skeptical of "outsiders", meaning anyone who lived outside of the Upper Valley, let alone the State of Vermont. He grew up in Bradford and was a lifelong friend of Uncle Ralph's, never venturing too far from home.

Pete had a rather gruff exterior, and until you got to know him came across as a cranky New Englander. But underneath, he was a warm and caring person, fiercely dedicated to his wife Olive, and a friend who you could count on if there was anything you needed. Over the years he was a very supportive advocate for Camp Billings (and me), and his visits to camp were cherished by those of us who spent a lot of summers with him.

While he worked maintenance at Billings for many years, he will go down in our history as the winning captain of the white team during the first Camp Billings Color War during session 4 in 1967. At a time when camp was not in good financial shape, (there were 40 kids in camp during that session in '67), it was this single three day event each summer that helped rebuild enrollment at camp over the ensuing decade. Pete was a great leader during that time, and his enthusiasm for that first all camp competition will always be remembered by those of us who were lucky enough to be a part of it. Pete played the bagpipes, and every Sunday in the 50's and 60's he would pipe us all to the Post Mills Church for Sunday service. He was also famous for the Scottish Sword dance that he would do for us.

Peter Richards passed away peacefully this spring. He will be missed.

-Bob Green & Carolyn Churchill

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Thank You!





The tans fade...
but memories last forever



SAVE THE DATE:

CAMP BILLINGS 115th ALUMNI REUNION



JUNE 18th - 20th, 2021



Members of the 2021 Camp Reunion Planning Committee met over Zoom!

.....

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