



# The Clocktower Times

## Alumni Newsletter

*Echoes of the chimes of our time.  
Spring 2021*

### I love to go a wandering...

Camp trips over the years formed lasting memories, created lifelong jokes, and once in a lifetime experiences. Whether canoeing to spend the night on Treasure Island in a cabin with bats, or backpacking to natural waterslides in the mountains of New Hampshire, or eating breakfast at the Fairlee Diner with Dudley and the swim staff, an adventure outside of the White Gates never disappointed.

In a year in which travel was not safe, nor possible, we thought, what better way to escape than into the memories of camp travel....

With love,  
Amy Cone Glidden & Meredith Cone  
CTT Co-Editors



#### To send donations:

Theodore Rossi  
[tedrossi@msn.com](mailto:tedrossi@msn.com)  
or mail:  
Theodore Rossi  
PO Box 3539  
Stowe, VT 05672 USA  
or visit:  
[www.campbillings.org](http://www.campbillings.org)

#### To send alumni updates:

Beth Crocker  
[alumni@campbillings.org](mailto:alumni@campbillings.org)  
or mail:  
Clocktower Times-  
Camp Billings Newsletter  
60 Apple D Or Rd.  
Framingham, MA 01701-3156 USA

#### To send address changes:

Elissa Malcolm  
[alumni@campbillings.org](mailto:alumni@campbillings.org)  
or visit:  
[www.campbillings.org/alumni](http://www.campbillings.org/alumni)

# Greetings from the Board....

**By Michael Lemme, Board President**

Although this summer's camp season will be quite different than any other, it's the uniqueness of this unprecedented event, that we know campers will return home with a lifetime of memories. How cool will it be to say that "I was at Camp Billings the summer the pandemic ended!" Sean and Anne are fully ready for season 2021 and once again we have a FULL camp. We are certain that this summer will be one of the BEST! I'm sure that one day when the Clock Tower Times theme is "What was your most memorable year at camp" someone will write an article that it was the Summer of 2021. That's what this issue is all about, and my most memorable year was back in 1973. I am proud to say that I was one of the lucky campers that went on the Alagash River week long canoe trip, known as the "Alagash Bash". I'll never forget the long 9 hour drive up through northern Maine in the camp "hearse". There were moose and bear everywhere! All our food was in 1 canoe, and sure enough that was the one that capsized, but we still were able to continue living mostly on Bisquick with butter and jam. Times were definitely different! So onto some really good news. We have actually faired this pandemic storm quite well. We have been able to offset our \$180,000 loss from not opening

last summer with the help of your generous contributions and several grants that we were able to obtain from the Federal Government's Covid Relief Fund programs. This will ensure that we will not have to postpone a few much needed projects such as re-surfacing the upper tennis courts, and we are in the planning stages of building an Outdoor Covered Pavilion over the middle tennis court for long overdue extra rainy day activity space. One of the grants we were awarded was specifically designed for camps like ours and is fully covering a complete interior remodel of our infirmary. Special thanks to the hard work of our Finance Committee led by our Treasurer Ted Rossi, Paul Behar and Andrew Schneider, and to our Camp Billings Committee Co-Chairs Jon Cone and Darryl Calkins whole are overseeing these projects. Your entire Board has worked extra hard this year pulling together to make sure our Dear Ole Camp survived this pandemic storm. We actually made the most out of our Zoom meetings but we are looking forward to being able to get together again hopefully this summer or at least at our fall Annual Meeting. That will be my last meeting as your Board President, and it was an enjoyable 10 + year run! I'd like to thank each and every Board member that I've worked



with over this decade, what an incredibly talented group of professionals, some who have been on this Board for over 20 years. We are so fortunate to have such a supportive Alumni base, and together we all share in making sure that Camp Billings will be providing our campers with one of the most cherishable summers of their lives. Final thanks goes out to my late mother, Virginia Oline Nelson, camper 1937 - 1940 who sent me to Billings! Wishing you all a COVID Free World and an amazing Summer.

Your Friend, Fellow Alumni and Board President, Mike





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

After a summer alone at Billings, we could not be more eager to welcome everyone back to camp. We stepped foot on camp only yesterday, and we have good news to report. It still feels the same, looks the same, and smells the same, but this summer promises to be one unlike any other. Although we are operating at 70% capacity, the camper experience will be nothing less than 100%. We are ready to sing, shout, dance, and eat. Hit each other with socks full of flour, lip sync to Barry Manilow, and rub our sleepy eyes at morning colors. We are ready for a surprise food fight, an unexpected breakfast in bed, and the reveal of the musical. We are ready for reveille, 'lunchy lunchy lunch lunch lunchy lunch', taps, and all the bugles in between. Camp will look a little different this year, with only two longer sessions, but we have the unique opportunity to create unforgettable experiences with longer time to bond with our cabin groups.



We have a brand new office that has been anxiously waiting for someone to sort the mail, and field parent phone calls. Its walls are bright green, and the floors are made with beautiful wide-paned pine made from Billings' own trees. When we had to take down several trees due to safety concerns (microburst, anyone?), we were able to use that very wood to upgrade the highly trafficked office. The infirmary is also receiving a much needed and exciting renovation, and we know how the nurses will be able to do an incredible job, as always, in their refreshed station. Their expertise is more important than ever this year, but we are all confident we can keep our campers and staff safe and healthy. This year we will have two "dining halls" to offer a COVID safe alternative to having everybody in one place at once. There will be a tent on the middle tennis courts under which half of camp will eat their meals, while the other half eat in the dining hall; competing song leaders may be on the table.

This year, more than any other, we owe so much to the Board of Directors for their unwavering support, above-and-beyond volunteer work, and commitment to our creed "Anything worth doing is worth doing well." We could not have done it alone. Thank you to every alumni who has reached out to help in any way, every parent who is trusting us with their children, and every message of encouragement from all in the camp family. Last, but not least, thank you to the staff who have committed themselves to the most unique summer in camp history. We love you all!

We have had a long school year of teaching in masks, not seeing the bottom half of our students' faces, and more time on Zoom than off. We're eager to be outside, we're ready to move on, and we're excited to see your faces.

-Sean and Anne



# CAMP TRIPS

## The other day...I met a bear...a great big bear...

I have many great memories of trips from camp and one that stands out was when Sebastien Laberge took a group of senior campers backpacking up Carter Dome in the New Hampshire White Mountains. I got a little adventurous jumping from rock to rock on a descent and the weight of my backpack carried me off the trail. I was fine but my face was pretty scraped up. A ranger happened to be there who helped Seb patch me up and we even found a swimming hole on the way down to cool off in and clean up. My friend Chris Ricco had brought a small boombox with him (small as in...D-batteries) and was blasting a 90's mix tape complete with all the camp songs of the day (Bob

Marley's "No Woman No Cry," Sublime "What I Got," Tracy Chapman). While we were swimming some veteran thru-hikers decided to show their appreciation for his noise pollution by filling his backpack with large rocks! Which of course he discovered later when we unpacked everything at the van. On the drive back Seb convinced me to embellish my injury "you know you need to have a story to tell in the dining hall, about your face." And so as the song goes – "the other day" – I fabricated a bear encounter and harrowing escape in front of the entire dining hall that I insisted was true for several days in front of any junior camper that would listen.

—Justin Barrell



Pictured (L to R): Wendal Scott Reeder, Jenny Rodgers Pickard, Babbie McComb Lester & Jay Lance



Trying to decide upon my favorite camp trip....  
Wow, I can't decide:

- Pre campers 1991 - We went to Laconia, Lake Winnepesaukee (I think) for a day trip. The plan was to find a 'beach' and swim but instead we came upon a massive bike week that stretched for miles.
- Summer 1992 - I went on a 3-day canoeing trip on the Androscoggin River, with rapids and the odd moose coming down to the water for a drink.

If I could go to camp this summer, I'd most dream about taking picnic blankets to Rainshadow and watching the most amazing shooting stars of the Aurora Borealis - a once in a lifetime experience.

Just seeing the staff 1991, 30 years on. Thanks to Facebook I have contact with some of those amazing staff 💕

—Jenny Rodgers Pickard



# A Classic Billings Adventure

## 1982 Alaskan Caravan Camping Trip

by John Lisak "Sak"

The summer of 1981 was my first year as a counselor at Camp Billings. Being from Indiana and new to Camp Billings I had very little knowledge about camp except for the small brochure that Uncle Ralph sent. About a week before camp officially opened some old Vermonter came to camp and started setting up canvas tents in the upper ball field. I asked a veteran staffer who he was and what he was doing. He informed me that he was Bert Snow and he was getting ready for the Billings Caravan Camping trip. What? Caravan Camping? What the heck is that?

Bert was in charge of coordinating two (4 week) cross country trips for 12-14 campers. Each trip would go to California and back. I thought that was the coolest thing...camping out each night at a KOA and seeing National Parks & historical sites along the way. Plus going to Disneyland once you got to California. AWESOME! A traveling Camp Billings.

At the end of the summer of '81 I told Uncle Ralph that I'd be interested in being a counselor on the next Caravan Camping trip. That Fall I was busy with my 3rd year at Manchester College and was excited about going back to CB for the summer.

Ralph called and offered me a counselor position on the Caravan Camping trip...but it would be a different type of trip this summer. WHAT? No going to California and Disneyland!!!

It was 6 weeks driving across Canada up to Alaska via the Alcan (Alaskan/Canadian) Highway. Holy moly I was going to drive to Alaska, camp out every night and get paid. Jackpot!

I always dreamed of going to Alaska some day.

The trip in its simplest format would be drive across Canada to Calgary and then turn north to the start of the Alcan in Dawson Creek, BC at milepost 0. Drive up to Fairbanks Alaska and then turn around and head back down through the Yukon, British Columbia, Alberta and cross into USA at Montana. From Montana head south to Yellowstone and then over to Black Hills of South Dakota and then home to Vermont.

We left the first day of camp, during breakfast in the dining hall, to cheers of B-I-L-L-I-N-G-S and headed straight to the Canadian border. We made it across with no issues. Bert carried all campers documents and their "traveler's cheques" (google it, it's a real thing), under the front seat of his passenger van in a locked safe. Samantha (Sam) Howe and I were the counselors, we had 2 CIT's and 12 campers. Sam was a staff veteran of previous Caravan Camping trips with Bert. Sam and I drove a 8 passenger Chevy Suburban (I'm pretty sure it had wood paneling on the side) with a trailer and Bert had his van with a trailer. Bert hauled all the tents and camping gear and we hauled all the duffel bags.



Bert cooking. Eric Pippin looking back and Tom looking...ummmm stupid (just kidding).



Our camp away from...Camp!

# A Classic Billings Adventure (cont.)



Athabasca, Canada. JP Featherstone in army coat.  
Tom Smith and Eric Pippin getting on bus.



Hiking, that is Tom Smith on the right...really it is!

A typical day would be wake up by 7am and pack up the tents and duffel bags. Bert would organize breakfast which most days was dry cereal, toast over a fire and milk. We were usually on the road by 8:30. We would stop around 11:30am at a historical site or a roadside attraction. We would make cold sandwiches, have chips and soda, (sometimes “bug juice”) from a large 5 gallon thermos. Then it was back on the road till about 4pm when we would pull into a KOA or private campground. Bert was good at finding places that would have a pool or a lake for campers to swim in. We would have dinner (Bert would cook out of the back of his trailer) at about 6pm and then an evening program of sorts. Many times it was Bert telling his stories of working on the Alcan Highway or some other adventure. Other times it was going to the campground Rec hall for games, go swimming or go into the nearest town to get supplies.

Some of the more memorable places along the way (for me at least) were the following:

- Canadian Independence Day (July 1st) in Thunder Bay, Ontario at Fort William and visiting the Terry Fox memorial, (Google it).
- Driving western Saskatchewan where the road would just disappear into the horizon because the prairie was so flat.
- Arriving in Banff, Alberta and staring up at the Canadian Rockies.
- Walking around Lake Louise.
- Taking a modified bus with 4ft high wheels up on the Athabasca Glacier (Columbia Icefield).
- Standing on the Mile 0 signpost in Dawson Creek.
- Watson Lake BC and all the different hometown signs with mileage. Standing on milepost 1522 in Fairbanks at the end of the Alcan Hwy.
- Riverboat cruise on the Chena River and seaport (airport on water) with 40-50 seaplanes docked on the river’s edge.
- Seeing Mt. Denali.
- Walking around Skagway, Alaska with its dirt streets (no paved streets at that time) and boardwalks as sidewalks just like the old western movies.
- 3 day hike with campers on the Chilkoot Trail (Klondike Gold Rush trail) from Dyea Beach a few miles northwest of Skagway to Lake Bennett with no tents, just sheets of plastic to wrap our sleeping bags in. Needless to say the park rangers were not happy that Sam and I had 14 young teenagers camping like this. The 33 mile Chilkoot Trail ends at the Lake Bennett train depot (no town, just a train station out in the middle of nowhere but it did have a soda machine) where we got on a train that went through the narrow mountain pass to Whitehorse, Yukon. While we were hiking Bert put both vehicles and trailers on a train from Skagway and took them up to our campground in Whitehorse, Yukon.

# A Classic Billings Adventure (cont.)

An interesting thing happened on the way back down the Alcan Highway out in the middle of nowhere.

Bert's van dropped its drive-shaft 45 miles north of Fort Nelson, BC. Sam and I drive all the campers into Fort Nelson to our campground and Sam organized camp. I drive back with the Chevy Suburban and pushed Bert's van (with several sleeping bags on the bumper as cushion) the 45 miles into town to get it fixed. The Alcan Highway is nothing but packed dirt. It took almost a week to get the van fixed since they had to fly the part in from Edmonton. During that week, we were treated every night (it was night from 11pm to 2am) to glorious Northern Lights. Toward the end of the week, northern BC was experiencing horrific wild fires. Bert stated that we had to get out of town ASAP since Canadian law was that if a town was declared a state of emergency than any male over the age of 18 would have to fight the fire. As we left town at 5pm, the sun was beginning to be engulfed by red-orange haze. We literally drove 20 hours straight to a campground in Lethbridge, Southern Alberta. In Lethbridge, Bert's van broke down again so he left it there to get fixed and he rented a van to drive back to Vermont.

- Yellowstone NP and old faithful, rodeo in Cody, Wyoming, visit the ghost town of Old Trail and seeing a live scorpion at my feet!
- Mount Rushmore, Crazy Horse Monument and Black Hills of South Dakota, Deadwood and the reenactment of the shooting of Wild Bill Hickok which starts in Saloon #10 and spills out into the streets of Deadwood with gunfire and hoot and hollering.

An interesting thing happened in the Black Hills.

Bert contacts Uncle Ralph to let him know we are many days behind schedule due to mechanical problems and Bert has to return his rented van back to Lethbridge, Alberta. They decide that someone from Camp Billings will drive a rented van out to the Black Hills to drive back with us and Bert will drive back to Lethbridge, Alberta with his rented van. My friend, Jim Ewing, who was counselor, drives from Vermont to the Black Hills with a rented van. We pile the campers and all the gear into the Suburban, with its trailer, and the rented van. We drive 15 plus hours to KOA in Michigan City, Indiana (my hometown). Then the next day, we drive 15 plus hours to Camp Billings. In Rutland, VT I turn right onto Route 4 to head up toward Killington and I hear a screeching sound and look in the side mirror just in time to see the trailer wheel break off and roll straight down main street. We ditch the trailer at a gas station and pile everything into the van and Suburban and do a "lowrider" back to camp.

A couple things that amaze me as I reflect back almost 40 years on Camp Billings Caravan Camping. We had no cell phones. There were no ATM's so we had bring all the money we needed...remember those traveler's cheques? Bert seemed to know everyone at every little town on the Alcan Highway. We would let the campers wander around towns and tell them to meet us back at a certain time and place, we never lost anyone. Many nights we would leave the campground after dinner and go into the nearest town, buy supplies and just walk around. Some campers would stay behind. Usually we would just get ice cream and find a pinball hall, (Google it, pinball halls were common in the early 80's). If it was early, like 7pm, we may even be lucky and see a movie. What an adventure that must have been for these campers.

I'd like to think that for many of the campers this was the first true taste of freedom and independence even though we kept close tabs on them. It is hard for me to image being able to do this type of trip with 13 & 14 year olds nowadays with its freedom and wild adventures. Heck, I called Bert an "old Vermonter" well I am his age now when he did this trip. Sixty years old and taking a bunch of young teenagers to Alaska and back, how did he have the energy. We did have chocolate milk and cheese for lunch most days. I sure wish we could do this type of trip because for some campers it could possibly be the only way for them to see the country without flying over it.



# 2021 CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

## Major Construction Projects 2021

We are working hard to finish four major projects in 2021. Three of the projects will be completed before Camp opens, and the fourth, after the campers leave for the summer.

We have been blessed with Covid money from the State and the Federal Governments. We gutted the infirmary to its studs and are rebuilding the inside. It will now have a dedicated examination room, full ADA bathroom, ADA ramp, camper sleeping area, private bedroom for the nurse with an on-suite bathroom, washer/dryer, and heating and air conditioning. We also converted the rooms above the garage into the NEW "Infirmary Annex". The area will be used by the infirmary for extra bed space and housing extra nurses. We were able to convert this area into three private bedrooms, two full bathrooms, a full kitchen, washer/dryer, heating and air conditioning.

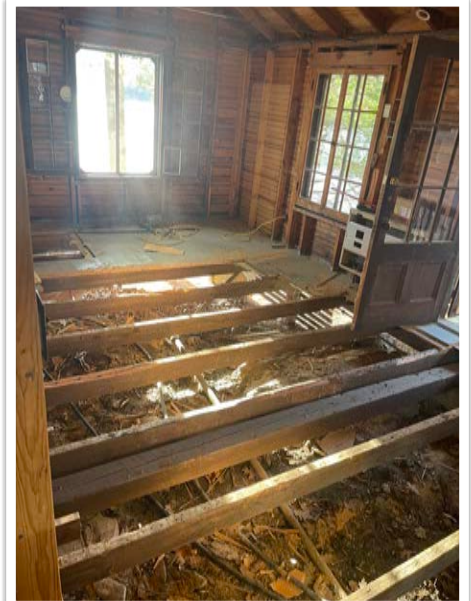
Our third project before Camp opens is the upper tennis courts. We will fill in several low areas, then repave with asphalt, prime the tennis courts, and add two coats of color texture.

The last of the four projects are the lower three sports courts, which take place after the campers leave this summer. The plan calls for removal of the existing asphalt, removal of all fence posts and fencing, regrading the area, paving the new courts, installing fencing, priming the new courts, and adding two coats of color texture. The courts will be ready for the 2022 camping season.

Stay healthy and safe,

Jon Cone- Camp Billings Committee Co/Chair

## Infirmary



## Above the Garage





# HELLO FROM THE FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE!

## COVID- Related Wish List Items

### Propane space heaters!

Meals will take place outside this summer. We're looking for several heaters to make this as comfortable as possible on chilly mornings and cool evenings.

### Heavy-Duty Dollies!

As we will be requiring all deliveries for the kitchen be dropped on the loading dock, we'll need to transport food from the loading dock to the freezer/fridge/pantry.

### Masks/Hand sanitizers and general cleaning supplies!

This need goes without saying, and we'll need a little help to ensure we have enough supplies throughout camp to facilitate safe activities, cabins, and shared spaces.



## Non-COVID-Related Wish List Items

### MATTRESSES!

This is a big need and a priority for Camp as "last summer I found my name on a mattress I signed in cabin 15 when I was a camper in 1999...and it wasn't remotely the oldest one in there." – Sean Collins, Camp Co-Director

### Bed frames!

Most of the bunks are starting to show their age, we'd like to start updating a cabin or two's worth of new bunks each year.

### Basketball stands/hoops!

Last year when we refinished some of the courts, we were supposed to get in-ground poles for the basketball hoops but due to cancellations last summer we suspended the project. Needless to say, the old nets we had were in need of repair then and they are even more so now.

**Donors to Camp Billings**  
**March 1, 2020 - April 15, 2021**

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**March 1, 2020 - April 15, 2021**

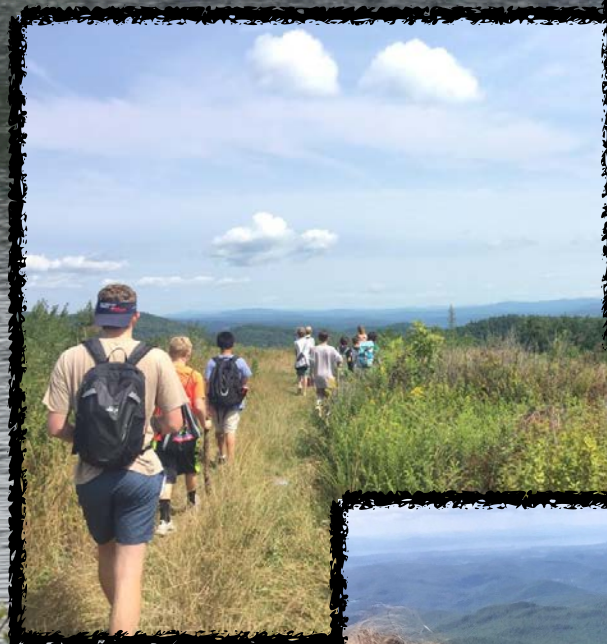
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Wendy Thornton  
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William Harley  
Woods Family - Honor Of Wille/  
Sam/Isaac Woods



**“I’m on the top of the world...”**





# PLANNING YOUR OWN TRIP?

## Try Out a Camp Billings Rental!

With COVID restrictions becoming less stringent in the State of Vermont, the Board of Directors has agreed to rent a few of the cabins this Summer/Fall. I am pleased to say that pre-camp rentals are full. We do, however, have rentals available after camp closes for the balance of the Summer into the Fall. The cabins all have heat and air conditioning to counter whatever the weather brings. There is no better place to enjoy the foliage than Billings.

To rent Camp Billings, go to the website: [campbillings.org](http://campbillings.org) and click on rentals. Fill out the rental form with all the needed information. We are renting cabins for a full week at a time (Sunday-Sunday).

We are also taking reservations for weddings, business retreats,  
and family reunions for the 2022 season.

Stay Healthy and Safe,

Jon Cone  
Camp Billings Committee Co/Chair

## SHOW US YOUR CAMP BILLINGS GEAR

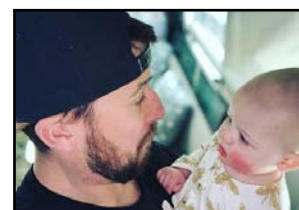
**As you resume your own travels,  
SNAP A PHOTO from your trip  
SHOWING OFF YOUR CB GEAR!  
Then SHARE IT with the CTT to be  
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**Email your trip pictures with  
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# ALUMNI UPDATES

**Michaela Hasler**, just completed registration for her son Farren Stark. Michaela reported, "we are very excited at the prospect of him attending Camp Billings and I wanted to explain why. My boyfriend, Peter Wagner, and his siblings (Lucy & Owen Wagner) all attended Camp Billings as kids in the late 90's. They all grew up in Thetford and tell fond stories of Lake Fairlee; I even had the chance to visit two summers ago and would love for Farren to have those experiences, make friends and memories at Camp Billings." **Tor Parker** (camper, CIT, counselor, and Billings cook) shared, "after about 8 Years living in Silverthorne, Colorado, Pam and I were blessed with our first born, Hadley Austin Parker on April 11th 2020. In early January 2021, we decided to sell our house and buy an Airstream to travel the country in. We spent weeks skiing, weeks beaching, and everything in-between. We are currently en route to our final destination (Vermont), where we will be building a new house and spending time back near family and friends!"



## Donor Updates

**Catherine Cyr Bolduc** was a camper for some years and a CIT in 2007. Catherine say, "I am grateful for every week spent in Billings and hope that my children can one day attend. I owe my great English speaking skills to the amazing friends that I met at Billings. Thank you so much for everything!" **LaMont Noble** worked at Camp Billings the summers of 1969 and 1970. She married, graduated from college, and has 6 children and 1 grandchild. **Bonnie Buquor** was a camper in 1959, then a CIT, then a counselor, and Assistant Nurse with Elaine Connors. Her son, Ryan van Hooser was a a camper at age 7 and passed the BOAT test. **Thomas Smith** was a camper from 1976-1983, and staff from 1985-1986. Thomas' Grandfather was Camp Director, and mother, sister, and twin daughters campers. "It's quite a legacy!" **Ann Brockardt Bonomi** says "great job with all that you guys do for Camp Billings! I was a 2-4 week camper from 1967(8?)-1975 with lots of fond memories, like Jon Cone as the Jolly Green Giant on International Night! I musta been a loud camper, though, because when my mother encountered Uncle Ralph in Bradford after my parents retired to the area in 1980, he immediately remembered me. Gulp." Jackie MacDonald says, "I want to thank Camp Billings for being a constant in my childhood, helping me grow up while never letting me forget the kid inside

me. **Mark Powers** was a Camper 60s, CIT late 60s, Counselor early 70s. Married to Karen Lauterbach (Counselor early 70s). I retired from Duke as an Associate Professor Emeritus in Medicine in 2017 and have been taking classes since, including in writing novels, beekeeping, and a wide range of other topics. I'm publishing my debut novel, A Swarm in May, this month. Please visit my website: [www.markanthonypowers.com](http://www.markanthonypowers.com) or [www.aswarminmay.com](http://www.aswarminmay.com) for details on the book. It's a medical mystery with systemic racism, baseball, and beekeeping woven together.





# **Camp Billings 115th Alumni Reunion**

## **IMPORTANT UPDATE**

**Save the Date:**

# **\* June 17-19, 2022 \***

## **Camp Billings 115th (plus 1 year) Alumni Reunion**

We want to focus all of our energy and attention on this 2021 summer for campers, so we have postponed the 115th Reunion from June 2021 until June 17-19, 2022. We love the camp alumni and want to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to travel and attend, so moving it out one year will better allow that for everyone. We will have some fun virtual reunion activities planned for June 2021 so stay tuned!

Thank you for your understanding and  
we look forward to seeing everyone in 2022!

- The Alumni Committee

## **The tans fade.... but memories last forever**

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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!

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