



The Clocktower Times

Alumni Newsletter

Echoes of the chimes of our time.

Winter 2026

Hello CB Family,

A lot has been happening at Billings over the past year. We celebrated Sean and Anne's 7 years as Camp Directors, "found" Camp's first full-time Executive Director, and started an exciting renovation of the Dining Hall. Amid all these changes, the foundation of camp remains the same. Billings continues to be a place where traditions thrive alongside new experiences, where individuality is celebrated, and where creativity, imagination, and fun are at the center of every day. Most importantly, it remains a community where lifelong friendships take root and grow.

We hope you enjoy this edition of the CTT, filled with MANY camp and alumni updates. We look forward to seeing a lot of you this summer as our Camp family comes together again to celebrate at the 120th Camp Billings Reunion.

With love,

Amy Cone Glidden & Meredith Cone
CTT Co-Editors

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Greetings from the Board...

By Andy Schneider, Board President

Dear Camp Billings Family,

After an extensive national search that yielded applications from 43 qualified candidates from around the country, the Board of Directors is thrilled to announce the appointment of Yutaka Tamura as Camp Billings' first full-time Executive Director. Yutaka will begin his transition immediately, serving as Executive Director-Elect and Senior Advisor for Community Engagement through the summer of 2026, before assuming the full-time Executive Director role in late August 2026.



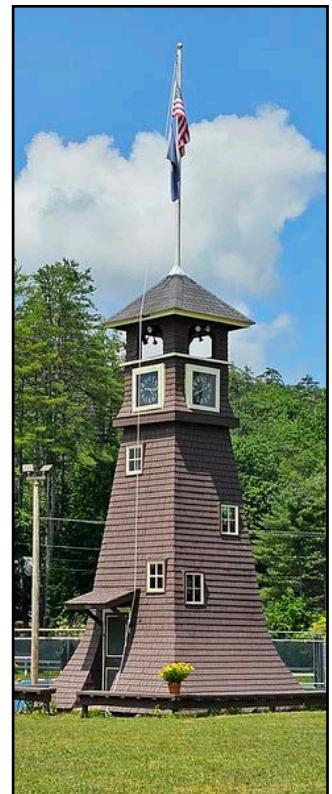
Yutaka's connection to Billings runs deep. He first arrived on the shores of Lake Fairlee at age 13, just a year after moving from Japan to the United States. Over the years—as a camper, counselor, Boys' Senior Row Head, Co-Head of Athletics, and board member—he has embodied the Billings spirit. Camp has long been a second home to him, shaping his values, friendships, and leadership journey.



Yutaka brings over 25 years of leadership experience in education, youth development, and nonprofit management. Most recently, as the Founding Executive Director of the nationally recognized nonprofit nXu, he led the creation of a K-12 purpose, durable-skills, and wellbeing curriculum that earned CASEL's highest endorsement for its research-based impact. Under his leadership, nXu raised over \$8 million in philanthropic support and partnered with schools and youth programs across 20+ states, reaching more than 15,000 students last school year.

Previously, Yutaka founded Excel Academy Charter Schools in Boston—now one of Massachusetts's highest-performing public school networks—where he expanded the organization to four campuses and led a team of more than 70 educators. He also served as Chief Operating Officer at Relay Graduate School of Education, Interim Dean of Students at The Cambridge School of Weston, where he oversaw the student culture and residential program, and Associate Dean of Students at Explo, a residential summer camp program based at Yale University, where he gained valuable experience in youth culture and community building.

Across all these roles, Yutaka has demonstrated an exceptional ability to design transformative learning experiences, lead with empathy, and build strong, mission-driven organizations focused on the personal development of young people. He has also remained deeply committed to staying directly connected to young people and fostering communities of belonging—values that lie at the heart of Camp Billings.



As Executive Director-Elect and Senior Advisor for Community Engagement, Yutaka will partner with the Board this school year to advance key priorities and prepare for his transition into full leadership. He will also play an active role in supporting camper enrollment and strengthening our outreach efforts for Summer 2026. In addition, he will collaborate closely with Anne and Sean Collins, who will continue as Camp Directors through the end of Summer 2026. This thoughtful, intentional transition will allow Yutaka to spend significant time onsite next summer, continuing to collaborate with Anne and Sean and ensuring a smooth and purposeful change in leadership grounded in the traditions and values that have defined Camp Billings for generations.

As Executive Director, Yutaka will build upon the strong foundation laid by those who came before him—Ralph Lawrence, John and Anne Freitas, Bob Green, and, most recently, Anne and Sean Collins. We are deeply grateful to Anne and Sean for their seven years as Directors and their combined 59 summers of dedication, leadership, and love for Billings. As they continue to lead camp through next summer, their steady stewardship and deep care for our community will ensure a seamless transition and leave a lasting legacy that will shape Billings for generations to come.

Yutaka's vision for Billings honors our cherished traditions while embracing the opportunities of the future. He is deeply committed to ensuring that Camp Billings continues to be a place where every camper feels connected, seen, and inspired. As Yutaka shared:

"I am truly humbled by the opportunity to guide the Camp Billings community and to help carry forward its 119-year tradition of fun, friendship, and adventure on the shores of Lake Fairlee. Camp shaped who I am, and I look forward to ensuring that Billings continues to be a place filled with laughter, discovery, and lifelong friendships, where every child can build the confidence and independence to thrive."

Please join me and the Board in welcoming Yutaka Tamura back home to Lake Fairlee. We are deeply excited for the next chapter in Camp Billings' growth and evolution under his leadership.

With gratitude and anticipation,

Andy Schneider

President, Board of Directors

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



Dear Camp Billings Family,

Well, we have wrapped up our penultimate summer at Camp Billings and are now looking ahead to our last in 2026, which feels both impossible and fitting after three decades of calling this place home. Thirty years of directing have taught us that one truth lives at the center of Billings; Camp is never exactly the way you remember it. The heart stays steady across generations, as alumni remind us every year, yet the place itself keeps shifting in ways big and small.

When we arrived in the 1990s, camp felt like a time capsule. Technology meant one office computer and a fax machine that worked only when the wind was just right. Worrying about what you were going to put in your letter home for 'letter night' during Rest Hour was the biggest "social media" issue you had; no one imagined a world where campers might try hiding smartphones in their socks or in suspiciously heavy pillows. Even the food was from another era. Many still recall fondly the fish sticks and canned pineapple chicken with a nostalgic sigh, but hey at least you had Dixie Delights to look forward to (!) Now, we feature grilled chicken with chimichurri sauce, potatoes roasted with fresh rosemary, crisp salads overflowing with local produce from Crossroads Farm, homemade dressings, and rice seasoned with spices that didn't come from a bulk jug in the back of the pantry. Camp food has become fresh, local, and genuinely delicious. Change at Billings tends to sneak up on you until one day you blink and everything is different.

Other parts of camp life changed so quickly that we can hardly believe we lived through them. Registration moved from paper forms and hopeful prayers at the mailbox to a simple online confirmation. Mental health support grew into a full and open part of our community. And during the COVID years we rebuilt camp piece by piece and learned how deeply we value real connection. All of these shifts reshaped Billings, yet none of them touched the core experience of face to face friendship, unplugged play, and days by the lakeshore without screens.

Through all of this we have watched generations grow and return. Campers became counselors, counselors became friends for life, and alumni brought their own children through the gates. Year after year the faces change and the world around us changes, yet the spirit of Billings holds steady. That spirit is familiar, but the camp you knew as a child is not the same camp we direct today, just as this version will not be the one remembered decades from now.

As we approach the handoff to new leadership in 2026, we feel grateful for every moment. The history, the challenges, the laughter, the growth, and above all the community that has carried this place for more than a century and carried us for the last thirty years. We still have one more summer ahead and we hope to make it a memorable one, knowing it too will be another step in the long story of a camp that is always changing and always somehow the same.

With love,

Your Camp Billings Directors



"If I had a hammer..."

TO DO LIST:

DEMO DINING ROOM KITCHEN PREP CAMP CLOSING

Volunteers:

Marcia Glidden, Ryan Glidden &
Steve Cone

Alumni:

Casey Huling, Willie Crocker, Brian
Klaif, Ben Cheney, Justin Barrell,
Nina Bettinger, Beth Crocker, Jen
Ciarmoli-Popovich & Amy Glidden

Staff:

Stan Kundelungu, Tapiwa Chalila,
Arthur Chileshe, Colin Ward &
Hannah Gilbert

Thank you to the staff, alumni and recruited family members that helped close up camp, organize the Billings' Alumni Room, and demo the dining room this past summer, preparing Billings for the next phase. Volunteers helped rescue screen doors, light fixtures, song books, signs and pennants. Keep your eyes out for those sentimental camp items at the next reunion!

Enjoy the behind the scenes photos of the dismantling of the dining room on these pages...



"If I had a hammer..."



THANKS TO OUR DONORS

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Jasmine St- Laurent	Mr. and Mrs. Richard Sawyer	Yutaka Tamura

*Recent donors through 12/14/2025

SEEKING YOUR SUPPORT

Support the Dining Hall Renovation!



For more than a century, this message has shaped Camp Billings. Today, it guides us as we rebuild the Dining Hall - the heart of camp - so it can safely and joyfully serve the next hundred years of campers.

After more than 100 years of use, the Dining Hall needs thoughtful renovation - a safer kitchen, improved ventilation, ADA-compliant bathrooms, more space for cabins to sit together, and structural reinforcement to preserve this historic building.

If you are moved to contribute, please visit campbillings.org/support-camp-billings (or use the QR code).



We need your support! Help spread the word!

During camper registration season, please help us spread the word about Billings (e.g. in your neighborhood, through a community or parent group, or simply by resharing Billings social media posts).



If you'd like to more formally help, join the **Clocktower Crew** – a group of parents, alumni, and staff dedicated to spreading the word—by completing a short interest form

Camp Billings Open House – in Brooklyn!

Show your LOVE for Billings!

Open to all families, alums, staff, current campers and prospective campers!

Join us for a family-friendly **Camp Billings Open House** in the #1 Hotspot- Red Hook, Brooklyn!

Kids can enjoy **ping pong, cornhole, and a scavenger hunt**, while parents learn more about Camp Billings and connect with other families.

Register using the QR code! Everyone is welcome — feel free to spread the word!

Hosted by Diane Howells, Camp Billings alum and current parent.

 **Ottra Showroom**
[\(https://ot-tra.com/\)](https://ot-tra.com/)

185 Van Dyke Street, Suite 110
Red Hook, Brooklyn, NY 11231

 **Saturday, February 14**
 **3:00 PM - 5:00 PM**

RSVP here!



Questions? Interested in hosting an open house in your neighborhood?
Contact yutaka@campbillings.org.

Alumni News

A Very Billings Wedding: Welsh edition

By Gareth Von Smith

On Sunday, August 24th, 2025, I got to marry the love of my life, Christopher - and somehow, it also turned into a bit of a Billings reunion on tour!

More than 30 Billings alumni joined us, representing many different Billings eras.

Our alumni started from the 80's and 90's, all the way through to the 2010's and way into the 2020's, some started their Billings journey as Kiwi Senior

Staff responsible for the Jamon Cup and bringing the Haka to camp. Some got the opportunity to spend their childhood years growing up on camp, and some were 6A campers starring in the musical. And lest we forget, Brian Von Klaif was making groundbreaking discoveries after Taps to further the field of ornithology.

We had so many special moments, from dancing the Gloria to the touching tribute to "Brother Christopher...". Camp's presence was truly felt at the end of the night when Henry closed out the wedding by playing "Taps" on a 200-year-old

Welsh bugle, a beautiful, moment that brought us all back to those summer nights on Lake Fairlee.

...And in true Billings style, the bugle mysteriously went missing after the wedding. I'm not naming names, but let's just say it cost \$150 to rectify and has now been rightfully returned to Plas Dinam Country Estate.

For me, it wasn't just about getting married - it was about celebrating the friendships and community that have shaped who I am. Camp Billings will always be home, and this was the perfect reminder that no matter where we are, that family stays strong.



Wales: Gaz Smith, Abi Smith, Maxwell Smith, Beau Davies

New Zealand: Simon Morrow, Lydia Batham, Dan Eb

USA: Willie Crocker, Beth Crocker, Casey Huling, Cam Myers, Ben Cohen, Brian Klaif, Annie Collins, Sheeny Collins, Eve Sussman, Michelle Pinter-Petrillo, Gaston Gris, Gene Robinson, Hannah Robinson, Anna Pond, Steph Ellicott, Reeves Hart, AJ Hart, Henry Lang, Neal Hepworth, Emma Brandeis, Sarah Hepworth, Finn Higgins, Catherine Harding, Sadie Jones

Partners: Dan (Gene): Laura (Ben): Lisa (Brian)

Philippe Canac-Marquis - Camper and staff '90's - 50th birthday bash was celebrated in October. Canac hired a 1990s rock band at his house in Lac Beauport, QC, and we sang at the top of our lungs, interrupted only by camp memories triggered by the songs as reported by Jasmine St-Laurent. Alumni in attendance: Philippe Canac-Marquis, his brother François, Marc-André Lafleur, Jeff Cantin, Anne-Isabelle Gingras, Sophie Gingras, Antoine Turgeon, Annie Vallieres, Josh Novis, Jasmine St-Laurent, Julie Beaulieu, Philippe's daughter Emma, Paule Dupuis, and Ariane Delisle.





Alumni News

Jasen Boyd - '80 and '90 - I am currently in my second year at the United States Army War College where I am earning my masters in National Strategy and Strategic Leadership through their distance learning program. My graduation falls on the same weekend as this years reunion which marks the third time I have missed reunions due to the Army! As many of you have heard, my mom was diagnosed with liver cancer in the spring of 2025. In her honor, this past July, I participated in an event called The Prouty, raising money for the Dartmouth Cancer Research Center, riding my bike through the area for 50 miles and raising over \$10,000 in the process! Friends from Billings were a big part of this fundraising success! Thank you to everyone who supported me! On an even more positive note, my mom has completed directed radiation therapy and has been declared cancer free! **Paul Couper (Kiwi)** - staff '90's - and his wife Petrina visited Vermont for the second summer running and spent a couple of days exploring all the local beauty. See the picture at Lake Willoughby in the Northeast Kingdom! Rumor has it that Kiwi is organizing a big get together of Southern Hemisphere Alumni at the upcoming reunion!

Paul K. Strode, 1984, 1987-1990, 1993. Since 2004, Paul has been teaching high school and college biology and teaching teachers in Boulder, Colorado. He has been married to native Coloradoan, Sarah Zerwin since 1998. Sarah is an author and a high school Language Arts teacher. Their daughter, Jane Melyn Strode, was a camper at Billings during her elementary and middle school years and is finishing her Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in drawing and painting at the University of Colorado. Last year, Jane won the King Award in Art at the University for her portrait paintings. This October, Rob Duensing, Marie-Claude Dubois, and Jay Lance gathered at Paul's house for a mini Camp Billings reunion. Marie-Claude was in town to give two lectures at the University, Rob came up from Colorado Springs, where he teaches history and coaches cross country and track, and Jay happened to be visiting his daughter Anna Lance in Denver.



Elise Bragard (Staff 2008-2018) and husband Isaac are excited to welcome another Billings baby to the camp family! Their daughter, Mabel, was born in May and she is very excited to meet all the other future campers at the 120th Reunion.



Marie-Claude Dubois, CIT 1986-1987. I want to share that I met again with Robert Duensing, Paul Strode and Jay Lance for the first time in 38 years! We met at Camp Billings in 1987 and all regrouped in Boulder, Colorado recently in October 2025. It was a highly emotional meeting for me personally! None of them had changed (still all good looking) and we spent a fantastic evening at Paul's house (around the camp fire after a delicious dinner) and one morning eating brunch together in a nice place. I now live in Sweden but I am so glad that I met these fantastic guys again. We hope to come visit Camp Billings soon (I heard about a 120 anniversary, is this ongoing?). Editor's Note: The next reunion is June 19 - June 21, 2026.

120th Camp Billings Reunion Notes



120th Camp Billings Reunion

June 19 - June 21, 2026



COMING SOON

Keep an eye on our **social media pages** for registration information!

<https://www.facebook.com/camp.billings.3>

<https://www.instagram.com/officialcampbillings>



CALLING ALL ALUMNI!!

It's hard to believe we're less than six months away from the next Camp Billings Reunion.

What's an event without great volunteers? Does driving a van, helping with registration, or setting up the dining room interest you?

Please send an email here if interested:

alumni@campbillings.org

We appreciate your support! It takes a village to make events like this a success.

-Camp Billings Alumni Committee



CAMP BULLETIN... & BOARD



Cozy up this winter with items from the Camp store.



Scan the QR code or visit:

<https://campbillings.org/store>



STAY CAMP CONNECTED IN 2026

THE CTT IS GOING GREEN!

This is the last PRINTED edition of The Clocktower Times.

Beginning in 2026, editions of The Clocktower Times will only be emailed. Please be sure to submit your email address to alumni@campbillings.org to ensure receipt of future digital versions.

Remember, you can always view The Clocktower Times via our social media pages!

<https://www.facebook.com/camp.billings.3>

<https://www.instagram.com/officialcampbillings>

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Registration for Summer 2026 is open! ☀️🔊



Spots are already filling up fast for the 2026 Summer season.

Don't wait! Bunks are filling up quickly!

To register, go to:
<https://campbillings.org/about/registration-rates-dates/>
(or use the QR code)

SNAP TO REGISTER: