

# YMCA CAMP



# BELKNAP



*The Firelighter Newsletter*

*Spring 2009*

## *Belknap - Now and Forever*

Dear Belknappers,

We are all painfully aware of the dire economic times in which we are all now trying to survive. With all the bad news, the dark clouds hovering above our heads, we tend to highlight the bright spots, the uplifting sources of comfort and hope. At the top of that list for most of us would be our memories of Camp Belknap, and the promise of creating yet more memories in the future. Even in the darkest times, love for Camp never wavers, in fact grows even stronger as a result of the challenges we all must face day in and day out. Camp Belknap has become the Beacon that offers relief, joy, camaraderie, and the inspiration to carry on. If it were not for the knowledge that Camp Belknap is there, and always will be, the burdens that face us would be that much heavier, the challenges that much greater, the toils that much harder.

In the 2008 Annual Fund Drive, despite mounting pressure on everyone's financial reserves, supporters of Camp dug down and gave what they could, not because they had to, but because it was important to preserve the legacy from which we all benefited so greatly. To deprive future generations of the gift of Belknap would be unthinkable.

There were several occasions when I lived in California that I returned to visit my native New England in the off-season, and drove up to Camp to partake of the peaceful solitude that the dead of winter offered. I would walk around the dock and Conlon Lodge, visit the Middler Lodge named for my parents, and reflect on the meaning and importance of my Belknap tenure. There was never a visit during which I escaped without a flood of emotion washing over me, engulfing me in the immensity of the responsibility I shared with every Belknap alum to preserve, protect, and promote the Belknap experience. Many have tried to put that emotion into words, many with noble results, but we who simply just FEEL the effect, know in our hearts that like the emotion of love, the experience defies an exact accounting: it simply is part of you, entwined with your soul, defining you as a person.

Trying times are nothing new to this country, or to the camp that has not only weathered those times because of undying support, but because Belknap represents the best that a summer experience can offer. No better testament to that fact is our storied longevity, being one of the oldest camps in continuous operation, but perhaps more importantly, is the length of our waiting list. Word gets around, passed from generation to generation and friend to friend, that Belknap is not just activities, not just a place to learn to swim or shoot an arrow, but a place to grow and mature and learn to be a well rounded person respected and admired by your peers. God First, the other fellow second, and myself last is not just a motto to recite two months out of the year, but a credo by which alums of Belknap live their lives.

Despite the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression, returns from the Annual Fund Drive provided needed funding for budgeted improvements and to help restock our reserves. Camp will be at over 100% capacity in the summer, with enough on the waiting list to fill the camp for a second complete season if we could accommodate them all. Our beloved Belknap continues to be the shining light, the blue sky and clean air after the storm, the haven of nature against the realities of encroaching civilization. In this coming year we need to be thankful that when all around us is stress and uncertainty, there exists a true Camelot that is our irreplaceable, steeped-in-tradition, venerable, much-loved Camp Belknap.

How lucky we all are.

Timi-Hi

Hon. Leigh A. Webb

Board of Directors

*(continued next page)*

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PO Box 1546  
Wolfeboro NH 03894-1546  
[www.campbelknap.org](http://www.campbelknap.org)

The Development Committee of the Belknap Board of Directors has met several times during the year as we endeavor to become more active as a committee. I want to thank Leigh Webb for writing the feature article for this issue of the Firelighter. I am hopeful you will be able to hear from Leigh and a number of different committee members in future issues. The annual fund drive was a success despite the economic times. While the total raised, \$104,212, was down from the prior year, the number of gifts actually increased from 469 in 2007 to 503 in 2008. On behalf of the Board, the staff, and the campers, my heartfelt thanks to all for your generous support again this year.

On the subject of Farm Island, the Board remains actively engaged in negotiations through the Seller's broker, Maxfield Real Estate.. Progress is being made in these discussions and we want to assure you that we continue to stay focused on this issue of vital importance to Belknap.

Sincerely,

Mark Vaughan  
Chair, Development Committee

Some people call it a summer camp  
But there is something about the scent of  
Crushed pine needles in the air  
Smiling young men and children  
And the crisp, refreshing breeze that made me wonder,  
What is this place?

For me it was and still is a lifestyle  
Each year I became more and more aware  
Of how I change when I enter Belknap.  
It's as if there is a protective bubble around  
Its perimeter preventing all thoughts of  
School, sports teams, or even outside friends  
From entering

Now I realize  
That if the entire world had that  
Bubble  
How different things would be  
Not needing a reason to help  
Not requiring a friend to accompany you  
Not caring why, how, or for whom,  
But because it's the right thing to do.

I cannot imagine my life without  
That special place  
That sanctuary  
That alcove  
It would be different  
I would not be me, but some alien person  
Missing the point of life

I have been changed forever by the  
Ten weeks of my life I have spent there  
Possibly the best ten weeks of my life  
Just me, the earth, and all the wonderful  
People that make up Camp Belknap

~written by a 13 year old camper 2008

# DONORS: 2008 Annual Fund, Mark Bierweiler Fund, Horace & Gene Blood Fund, Colin Brown Fund, Gene Clark Jr. Memorial Fund, Peter French Fund, Edward Howe Fund, Leaders Scholarship Fund

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**2008  
 Total  
 \$104,212**

**Nineteenth Annual  
Belknop Alumni/Family Camp  
September 4-6, 2009**

**Third Biennial  
Belknop Young Alumni Reunion  
September 4-6, 2009**

- Who:** All former Belknop leaders, campers, staff, their family and friends.
- Where:** YMCA Camp Belknop, on Lake Winnepesaukee
- When:** 6 PM Friday Evening, Sept. 4th to Noon on Sunday, Sept. 6th
- Why:** To renew past friendships, enjoy camp with family and friends, rekindle fond memories and make new ones.
- Cost:** \$95 per adult, \$35 per child under 12 (to cover accomodations and meals)

The third biennial reunion is scheduled for Labor Day weekend 2009. This year's event will begin on the afternoon of Friday, Sept. 4th and come to a close at noon on Sunday, September 6. As in the past two successful Young Alumni Reunions, it's the chance to catch up with fellow young alums over the last week-end of summer at camp. Housing ( in the Senior Div) and food will be provided, so all you need to bring is yourself and whatever possessions you think you'll need (bathing suit, towel, etc.) to enjoy the weekend. Note: as in the case for all camp functions, this will be a dry event; no alcohol is to be brought onto or consumed on camp property.

**Facilities and Equipment:**

- \* Nine tennis courts, four with lights, (bring own racquets)
- \* Three basketball courts, one covered and lighted (balls supplied)
- \* Canoes, rowboats, sailboats, splashboats, kayaks (life vests provided) & NYMCAH
- \* Large athletic fields, low ropes course
- \* Lodges with fireplaces, ping pong
- \* Walk in refrigerator, freezer and ice machine

Attendance at this event in 2007 was excellent, and we hope for an even stronger turnout in 2009 as we continue to grow this reunion. We look forward to seeing you all at camp in August!



**Rules for both events: Alcohol, fireworks and pets are prohibited. Children must be under adult supervision at all times.**

**Off -Camp Lodging Available at:**

- Afton Inn, Wolfeboro 569-4262
- Allen "A " Resort, Wolfeboro, 569-1700
- Brook & Bridle Resort, Wolfeboro 569-22707
- King's Pine Lodges, Wolfeboro 569-3556

- The Lake Motel, Wolfeboro 569-3836
- Museum Lodges, Wolfeboro 569-1551
- Pine View Lodge, Melvin Village 544-3800
- Piping Rock Motel, Wolfeboro 569-2198
- Windrifter Resort, Wolfeboro 569-1323
- The Wolfeboro Inn, Wolfeboro 569-3016

\*detach here\*

**Alumni/Family Camp & Young Alumni Reunion Registration Form**

Please return before August 15th, 2009 along with payment of \$95 per adult and \$35 per each child under 12 to: YMCA Camp Belknop, Post Office Box 1546, Wolfeboro, NH 03894. Accomodations are first come, first serve.

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Years Attended Camp \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Guests Names: \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

Accomodations for Young Alumni Reunion will be in the Senior Division  
 Accomodations for Alumni/Family Camp select from below (number choices 1-5)  
 \_\_\_ Pequod \_\_\_ Infirmary \_\_\_ Staff Qtrs 1 \_\_\_ Staff Qtrs 2 \_\_\_ LC Cabin \_\_\_ Reg. Camp Cabin  
 \_\_\_ I (We) plan to stay off grounds

## Fall Weekends for Adults at Camp Belknap

*Autumn in New Hampshire* - the leaves begin to turn, the weather becomes cooler and the children return to school. It is a perfect time to plan a weekend away. Camp Belknap has something for everyone, whether it's a relaxed getaway with family and friends, a fun-filled weekend with girlfriends, or retreat to awaken your creative muse.

### Eleventh Annual Women's Weekend - September 10 – 13, 2009

Enjoy laughter, friendship, fun, and relaxation in this long weekend of women celebrating women. Immerse yourself in activities to replenish the body, soul and spirit – or simply take a quiet walk among the pines or a nap in the warm September sunshine. Try something new like Zumba or NIA, decompress with yoga or soak in the hot tub on the beach overlooking the lake. Join in any or all of the wide variety of fun and informative workshops from pottery to face reading. Indulge yourself with an aromatherapy facial, therapeutic massage, healing Reiki, or spa pedicure. Discover more about yourself with an astrology reading or interactive aura photo. Make it your own personal retreat, or time to connect with friends, old and new. Whether you are in need of a little soul searching, or just a weekend away celebrating life, you are guaranteed to leave feeling refreshed, renewed and inspired.



Unwind



Stretch



Relax



Breathe

### A Weekend Retreat for Writers - October 2 – 4, 2009

This weekend will spark your creative juices and awaken the writer in you. A crackling wood fire in the lodge, lapping waves on the lakeshore, a walk in the crisp fall air and changing colors will inspire you to put your pen to paper this weekend. Quiet time for writing will alternate with creative inspiration and informative workshops. Learn from some experts, share with each other, recharge with some yoga, relax with a therapeutic massage, replenish with delicious meals. You will have the space and time, free of distractions, to allow your ideas to flow, along with support to help get you unstuck if needed. This weekend is open to men and women (must be 21), and all levels of writing experience, from those who love to write, to those who think they might like to give it a try.

Camp Belknap's clean wooden cabins are equipped with bunk beds and have electricity. The toilet and shower facilities are centrally located and easily accessible. A few private accommodations are available on a first-come, first-serve basis. Please bring your own bedding, towels, toiletries, etc. Evenings can be chilly, so pack accordingly. Meals are served family style in the main dining hall with vegetarian options available. There are also walk-in refrigerators, freezer and ice available for your personal food items.

\*detach here\*

**HeArtworks Women's Retreat Weekend, Sept.10-13, 2009 (\$300)**

**A Weekend Retreat for Writers, October 2-4, 2009 (\$200) *Space is Limited***

*Prices include all meals, accommodations and workshops. Private treatments are separate. Please return by September 1 with your \$25 non-refundable deposit to HeArtworks, Box 123, Wolfeboro Falls, NH 03896. Call 603-569-7874.*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Roomate(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Please note any dietary or medical concerns \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_

*Please note: credit cards are accepted through PayPal. To register on line and pay with credit card please visit*

*www.heartworkscampbelknap.org*

**\*Accommodations are first-come, first-serve\***

# The Firelighter

YMCA Camp Belknap  
P.O. Box 1546  
Wolfeboro, NH 03894

PRESORTED  
STANDARD  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
LITTLETON, NH  
PERMIT NO. 45

## *In Memoriam of a Beloved Director*

Born in Waltham, MA on August 20, 1926, Gene Jr., age 82, died peacefully in his sleep on November 30, 2008 in Littleton, NH. Gene graduated from Waltham High School in 1944, having played on the Waltham High School State Championship football team. Immediately following high school, he served two years in the Navy, stationed in the Pacific Theater as a radar operator. After the service, he first attended Brown University and later graduated from Boston University with a Bachelors Degree, playing varsity football at both schools. After graduating from BU in 1950, he married Peg, his wife of 58 years and began a lifelong career in the YMCA. From 1950 – 1953, he served as Assistant Physical Director at the Newton MA YMCA. In 1953 he became the Head Physical Director for the Attleboro MA YMCA, where he coached the undefeated high

*“Some see things as they are and say why? I see things as they might be and say why not?”~favorite quote*



**Eugene (Gene) R. Clark Jr.**

school varsity championship swim team in 1959.

In 1960, Gene and Peg moved their family north to Littleton, NH, to become the Executive Director of the North Country YMCA and Director of YMCA Camp Belknap, where he served for 29 years until his retirement in 1988. During his tenure, Belknap experienced the greatest growth and expansion in its history. Most notably, Gene will be remembered for his vision, his land acquisition, and his leadership development, which is still the cornerstone of Camp Belknap today.

Gene is survived by his adoring wife Peg, his three loving children, Gene III, Debi Clark Valentine, and Pami King, and their families. Gene will be most remembered for his leadership by example and for living the YMCA Camp Belknap motto, “God First, The Other Person Second, Myself Last.” Gifts in Gene’s name are being sent to YMCA Camp Belknap.