

(Annual Fund Letter continued)

impact on the lives of the campers. The waiting list continues to number in the many hundreds, no small feat when one looks at the struggles of other under-enrolled summer camps, and the leadership was as strong as ever.

So how could such a strong and healthy camp still need your support? First, it is no accident that the top notch facility you see when you enter camp shines and impresses year after year. The annual fund is used to fund a regular schedule of projects that maintain and upgrade the buildings and equipment. Second, the annual fund takes pressure off the operational budget so that tuition can be kept low, thus keeping the Belknep experience within reach of more boys from a broader spectrum of families. Third, the annual fund also takes pressure off the operational budget so that scholarships can be maintained enabling boys who otherwise would not be able to attend camp to enjoy a Belknep summer.

In closing, I ask you once again for your support for our annual fund. Your contributions will continue to support the maintenance of a first rate facility, the scholarship program, and keeping tuition lower. With the excitement of the purchase of Farm Island, it would be easy to get ahead of ourselves as we gear up for a capital campaign and overlook the needs of today that are supported by the annual fund. I ask all Belknappers to do both. Celebrate the excitement around Farm Island and do start planning to support the capital campaign that will unfold in the next year or two. At the same time we need to keep up our support of the annual fund so that Belknep continues the tradition of excellence in summer camp experience that we all know and love. I think much of what we all feel about Belknep is wonderfully summed up in a brief note handed to Gene III at the end of this past summer season by a young Belknep camper—"Belknep is boys heaven- please always keep it that way". Please join me in celebrating our "boys heaven" by meeting the challenge of increasing our annual fund again and investing in the future of all Belknappers. If we all do our part, we will "keep it that way".

Sincerely,
Mark Vaughan
Chairman Fundraising/Development Committee



(Directors Message, continued)

made, they would not have been able to attend were it not for the generous scholarship they were granted. Things are difficult at best right now for our family and for my sons to have this chance to enjoy camp was a blessing. After we drove away from Camp Belknep this summer both my sons were unable to speak. I was firing questions left and right and when I turned around I saw they were to choked up to speak. Camp Belknep allowed my boys to be little boys for two glorious weeks. Thank you seems silly but it is all I have for now."

Camp Belknep does "specialize in boys", and all boys who come to Belknep are equal and special. Boys come in all shapes and sizes, all colors, all different ages, quiet and loud, outgoing and shy, athletic and artistic. But once they attend Belknep they all become Belknappers for life and share a bond, a common language, a common tradition that links them for life to the Belknep motto - "God First, The Other Person Second and Myself Last." Wouldn't it be wonderful if this were true for the whole world?

We close as always by thanking our spectacular and kind staff and leaders. They are truly the "Best of the Best" and through their efforts the Belknep tradition and story will continue on for many years to come.

Timi-Hi & God Bless,
Gene & Caryn, Directors



The boy stands at the end of the dock, as far into the landscape as the earth can take him. He feels as if the entire world is on fire, singing with vibrancy, passion and joy. Every detail of the heavens and the earth, every note within the song has been exquisitely crafted into a masterpiece forged of air and water, of light and love. The boy knows that this work of art is not intended for him, that his presence is insignificant compared to the pure elation that the sun, the clouds and the lake are expressing. They sing for the sake of singing, burn for the sake of burning, for no audience but themselves. Standing where the water meets the sky, the boy is a fortunate trespasser, blessed enough to be there at that moment, glimpsing the colors, hearing the joyful tune... The burning clouds above him are reflected in the shimmering lake. In that moment, the boy finds peace. Around him and within him, the Lamp of Beauty lights itself.

Chris Lash, Belknep Leader 2009

YMCA
CAMP BELKNAP
on Lake Winnepesaukee since 1903

Fall 2009

Farm Island to Become Part of Boys Heaven

Camp Belknep has an agreement with the sellers to buy the portion of Farm Island that faces camp! It is so exciting to bring you this news. For decades, Belknappers have dreamed of this, and for years now the Board has been working to make it a reality. Late this summer the purchase and sale agreement that we proposed was signed by the sellers. The agreement stipulates that Belknep will buy approximately one third of the island on the side that would give camp protection of the bay and the waterfront. Due to the nature of this real estate transaction, the time line to closing is probably 12- 18 months. While there are conditions and contingencies in the agreement, the Board is optimistic that in a year or so Camp Belknep will own that side of the island. We will do our best to keep you up to date as the transaction progresses.

In light of the expected purchase of Farm Island, the Development Committee of the Board is now preparing to launch a capital campaign. Remarkably, it will be Belknep's first capital campaign in over 30 years. We are in the process of retaining professional help to organize and run the campaign. While we do not have more detail now, you can expect to hear more about the capital campaign in 2010.

In the meantime, Belknep needs your continued support of the annual fund drive. When I wrote to you last Fall to ask for your support of last year's annual fund, we were in the midst of some of the worst economic news most of us had ever experienced. Despite the economy, you supported camp in record numbers with over 500 gifts received. As we assess where we are a year later, there is still uncertainty but there is reason to be optimistic. While jobs are still lagging, the stock market is up and economists seem to think the worst is behind us. Amidst this environment, Belknep had another stellar summer season. I can attest, as I heard the glowing reports from nephews and cousins as they told stories of their camp stay, that Belknep continues to have a profound and wonderful

(Annual Fund letter continued on back panel)

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DIRECTORS' MESSAGE



On Nov 30th, 2008 my father, Gene Clark, Jr., the retired long time Director (with my mom Peg) of Camp Belknap passed away at 82 years old. I realized that this would be the first summer he would not be visiting camp since Caryn and I came to serve as Directors with them during their last year of camp in 1988. Rather than walk with me around Belknap and have our "Director Talks", he would now be observing Belknap from above. I still had my talks this summer with my father, but in a new way in which I came to understand that rather than an occasional visit we could chat whenever I felt the desire to seek his wisdom. My father now rests permanently at Belknap by the Memorial Rock at Clark Field that honors both my parents. His ashes were placed there in a private family ceremony this past summer. I hope that as my father now looks upon all that Belknap has become that he takes pride in both his efforts and those of many others that have made Belknap one of the premium summer boys camps in America. I know he would take continued pride in the facility, the leadership, the full camp of happy campers and the fact that the motto and mission of YMCA Camp Belknap lives on stronger today than ever before.

My family loves to tell the story of when my father was questioned by a prospective campers parents about what made Belknap different from other camps and why they should send their son to Belknap. They asked my father, "So, what does Camp Belknap specialize in that makes it so special?" My father's response was, "We specialize in boys!" Enough said.

We would therefore like to share with you some of the comments we received via letters, notes, emails or questionnaires filled out by campers and parents from the special "boys" that went to Belknap in 2009. As always, these unsolicited comments tell a far better story of what Camp Belknap is all about than I can as Director.

"As our first experience at any overnight camp, we did not know exactly what to expect. Without a doubt our son has smiled about camp every day, proudly announces where he went, and really enjoyed every day there. He loved his Cabin leader. Your guidelines for what a Belknap leader is hangs above his coat/backpack hook in our mudroom for him to see everyday. Thank you for your striving to make these boys espouse such basic and great qualities."

"Both of my sons talked non-stop for two hours about all of the fun they had, the friends they made etc. One of them even said to the other when he did something - "that's not very Belknappy." They are learning to be better boys as you promise - Thank you!"

"Keep doing what you are doing!! Never allow email, computers etc. There is plenty of that in our every day life! The leaders are wonderful role models. We like that they are carefully selected! Excellent kids that know all the ins and outs of Camp Belknap! Keep up your great work! We love Belknap."

"It is remarkable how profound an experience my sons had in two short weeks, and it is a credit to you, your staff, and the entire Belknap family that they feel so strongly about their time there. While both adore the activities, the games, the sports, etc., as a parent I am most grateful for the "spirit" of your camp. It is a place that embodies and asks for the best of the boys, and it is a welcome change from some of the challenges that they face as they enter and live in the teenage years. Our son came to Belknap for the first time this year after spending several summers at another YMCA camp. We had some concerns that it might be hard to engage and break in with a group that has possibly known one another over the course of many summers. We were thrilled to learn, very early on, that our son felt welcomed, connected and engaged. Again, this is a credit to your staff and your leaders for creating an environment in which all are welcomed. Thank you so much for offering this program, for having such a deep understanding of what boys need to thrive and excel, and for requiring that they behave in a way that reinforces the best of who they can be."

"Keep Belknap no tech despite the pressures to have internet access etc. I feel my son is totally safe at camp and so long as Belknap lives up to its motto, there is no need for child/parent contact or for any high tech."

"We were so impressed by the camp, starting with the extremely polite, enthusiastic and helpful leaders who showed us where to go and helped our son get settled into his Cadet cabin. Since our sons arrival home we have been hearing all about camp, the sports teams, the wonderful traditions, the games, the nicknames, the great food... He glows when he talks about camp and I truly believe this was a life-changing summer for him. Camp Belknap far exceeded our expectations in so many ways, especially the high-quality of the leaders. We could not have asked for better role models. They all seemed so bright, encouraging, sensitive, kind and fun, and our son looked up to all of them. They were the kind of boys I would hope my son to grow up to be like. We feel so fortunate that our son was taught some really valuable life lessons and that he had such an incredible first experience at sleep-away camp. This was a magical summer. My husband only wishes he had been a camper himself."

And finally a note from a mother that touched me very deeply.

"Both of my sons lives have been enriched by Camp Belknap. We have been so fortunate for them to have the experience this past summer. Due to my husband's cancer and after two summers of camp where boyhood reigns and men are

(continued on back panel)