SUNY CORTLAND’S CAMP HUNTINGTON NAMED NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK

The Chalet as it is today

A Seneca Ray Stoddard print of the Chalet, c. 1880s

Camp Huntington was identified as a National Historic Site on November 7, 1986. The application for becoming a National Historic Landmark was initially submitted to the U.S. National Park Service more than two years ago. On August 18, 2004, Camp Pine Knot, known today as SUNY Cortland’s Camp Huntington at Raquette Lake, was officially named a National Historic Landmark. This designation reflects a significant increase in Pine Knot’s historical importance.

SUNY Cortland’s Pine Knot is the birthplace of what is known today as Adirondack Architecture. It served as William West Durant’s laboratory for nearly 20 years. Many of the construction techniques used at Pine Knot were duplicated and/or refined during the construction of Durant’s other Great Camps, Camp Uncas, owned by J. P. Morgan, and Great Camp Sagamore, owned by Alfred Vanderbilt.

Ownership of Pine Knot was transferred from Durant to Collis P. Huntington in 1895. Unfortunately, he only owned the camp for a period of five years. Huntington died at Pine Knot on August 13, 1900. In his biography, Huntington said Pine Knot was his favorite place in the world. Perhaps it was fitting that he did pass away there. After Huntington’s death, the family never returned to the camp. It lay vacant for nearly 50 years before it was discovered by two faculty members, Harlan "Gold" Metcalf and Walter Thurber, of the then called Cortland State Teachers College.

Continued on Page 2
FIELD BIOLOGY CLASS

The Biological Sciences Department continued its tradition of holding the three-week summer field biology class at Antlers. This year’s class included a combination of 16 graduate and undergraduate students. Steven Broyles, professor of biological sciences, teaches a majority of the class with help from several departments. A collaborative effort with the art, political science, and education departments created a well-rounded course.

I was fortunate enough to join in this year’s scavenger hunt that took place in the woods at Camp Huntington. The hunt takes place as a way to review for the first exam. The group paddled across the lake enduring strong winds. Once at Camp Huntington, the groups were divided into teams and sent out with baskets, insect jars, magnifying glasses and identification books. During the search, I learned about mushrooms and insects, and was able to help identify trees. The winning team members each won an ice cream cone.

ADAPTED PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND WILDWOOD

This past September, Tim Davis, assistant professor of physical education, brought his adapted physical education class and community members to Antlers to join with Wildwood for yet another spectacular weekend. Wildwood Programs Inc. is a recreational program from the Albany area that serves adults with varying disabilities. The weekend provides fun, entertainment and hands-on learning experiences for all involved.

This year, Tim invited SUNY Cortland alumni and canoe racer, Jan Whitaker, with her husband, Don, to join this diverse group. They brought an outrigger canoe from Rochester for everyone to use. An outrigger canoe, which accommodates ten people, is two separate canoes connected with boards. Jan and Don have fashioned many adaptive parts for the canoe and paddles from a specially designed seat for people that need back and upper body support, to paddles with Velcro straps and specifically designed grips.

Each year the groups meld together into a seamless mass. On the last day everybody shares an activity they participated in or something they learned about others or themselves. It is truly a moving experience to be a participant and observer.
FIRST NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK
Continued from page 1

It was Metcalf who pursued the camp for SUNY Cortland. He met with Archer Huntington, Collins’ adopted son, and negotiated the transfer of the camp and 202 acres of land on Long Point to the College. In 1948, the transfer was signed into law by New York State Governor Thomas E. Dewey. Since that time, Cortland has owned and operated this historical facility for the benefit of its faculty, staff and students. Literally thousands of Cortland students have experienced Camp Huntington as part of their educational program.

This is a great achievement for SUNY Cortland. No other institution comprising the 64-campus SUNY System has a National Historic Landmark as part of their holdings. Tremendous credit should be given to Metcalf and Donald Smith, SUNY Cortland’s president during the acquisition period. Credit must also be given to each and every SUNY Cortland president thereafter for their continued support of Camp Huntington and what it represents to SUNY Cortland and its educational community.

IT WAS SUMMER OR WAS IT?

The summer of 2004 left much to be desired in the weather department. It began with great anticipation except for the black flies! The ice left Raquette Lake on April 17. It was nice to be able to boat again rather than walk the long trek through Silver Beach Swamp. Late spring and early summer was delightful with warm days and plenty of sunshine. Unfortunately, from there it was all downhill. We sustained extended periods of wind and rain and the months of June, July and August were complete washouts. Even the black flies weren’t as bad as usual. I think they may have drowned!

As summer progressed into fall, the weather we so look forward to returned to Raquette Lake. We had a true Indian summer. We all enjoyed very pleasant days with temperatures rising into the 70s. In the evening it was sweeter weather. Our first killing frost did not occur until mid-October. It was a beautiful fall. The mountainsides were covered with various shades of reds and yellows against a background of green conifers. The leaves are mostly gone as I sit and write this assessment. I have noticed a few beach leaves holding on for dear life as I walk down the Blue Mountain Road. Then there is the American larch or tamarack, as many of us know them. These trees inhabit Raquette Lake’s wet areas such as South Inlet, Silver Beech, Eldon Lake and Brown’s Track, just to name a few. Their delicate needles have turned to a beautiful yellow and stand out against the grey shore and hillsides.

We encountered snow in October, but nothing stayed on the ground. Blue Mountain was more than half covered a few weeks ago. I noticed its peak was still covered with snow as I crossed the lake to get the mail recently. It won’t be long until winter will be knocking on the door. We are preparing and looking forward to winter programs beginning Tuesday, Jan. 4, 2005.

THE KIRBY CAMP: WHAT A SEASON!

The Kirby Camp experienced another exceptional season. The camp opened in mid-June and closed in mid-September. Renters of the camp found a new addition in 2004. The out-house, which had served as the bathroom facility, was replaced with a modern composting toilet.

This unit was manufactured by Clivis Multrum, Inc., located in Massachusetts. Kirby users referred to it as “Clive”. The environmentally-friendly system has been on the market for more than 30 years. It worked extremely well and all the Kirby users were very impressed with this new convenience.

Reservations for the Kirby Camp will be somewhat different in 2005. The registration form will be in the fall issue of the Columns, as usual. Due to the increased number of requests to rent Kirby, I am asking that individuals identify three possible rental dates on their 2005 application so I will be able to better accommodate the requests. In the event I am not able to meet everyone’s choice, their name will be placed on a waiting list, if they wish. If we have a much greater demand for selected dates, we may need to go to a lottery system. The rental fee for 2005 remains at $500 per week plus an additional $100 for the optional small motor boat. I do expect a modest increase in the 2006 rental season.

TOURS OF CAMP HUNTINGTON

Throughout the summer season, there are a number of groups that tour Camp Pine Knot who have an interest in the origin of Adirondack architecture and the contributions of Thomas and William West Durant. Many of these groups are scheduled through the Raquette Lake Navigation Company and others schedule directly through the center.

Paula Dennis, program director at Adirondack Architectural Heritage (AARCH), coordinates an annual tour group each year at Camp Pine Knot. Other visitors include: Elder Hostel, County Historical Societies and cultural and church organizations. It is necessary to schedule tours due to transportation needs and to avoid potential conflicts with programs operating at the center. If you know of a group (minimum size 15) who might be interested in a tour, please contact the center for information.
GLASS DINING ROOM NAMED FOR LOUISE MOSLEY

The sisters of Theta Phi Sorority are the first to take advantage of the building naming program initiated at Camp Huntington by Erik Bitterbaum, SUNY Cortland’s president and John Mosser, vice president for institutional advancement. A sum of $50,000 was identified as the naming price for the Glass Dining Room. This money, as well as other naming gifts, will be deposited into a separate endowment fund for maintenance and operational needs.

During their annual fall retreat at Camp Huntington, more than 40 Theta Phi sisters came from as far away as California to renew friendships and discuss this opportunity. The formal dedication will be held over Columbus Day weekend in 2005. More on the dedication will be shared in the 2005 winter/spring newsletter.

I am sure many of you remember Louise Mosley and the many contributions she made to SUNY Cortland’s Women’s Physical Education program. She directed the Women’s Physical Education Camps at Raquette Lake for years. She was also instrumental in developing and directing the Easter Seals Camp for children with disabilities located near Greek Peak. Louise made a tremendous contribution to SUNY Cortland and its students. This is a very fitting way to permanently recognize Louise for all her contributions to Raquette Lake and the College.

ARETHUSA SORORITY SISTERS STRIKE AGAIN

The sisters of Arethusa Sorority returned to Camp Huntington this summer for another annual reunion. They came from all over the country and coordinated their visit at Raquette Lake with alumni events on campus. These sisters, like so many that return to Raquette Lake, love and appreciate this wonderful place and always want to help if possible. This year, I took them up on their offer. They were provided mops, brooms, Windex and towels. They went through the camp like a tornado; sweeping and wiping as they went. With limited staff, volunteer projects make a tremendous difference. This fall, students from geography and COR 101 also volunteered and helped us prepare for winter. Thanks to all the volunteers.

COR 101 CLASSES VISIT RAQUETTE LAKE

SUNY Cortland, like many colleges and universities across the nation, developed a freshman core course. The course is designed to assist freshman in adjusting to college both academically and socially. Having taught a similar course in Kentucky before I returned to Cortland, I understood the importance of this type of course. Research has found that these freshman orientation courses play a significant role in retaining students.

Raymond Franco, vice president for student affairs, has been a leader in teaching and advocating this course. Multiple sections are offered each fall and thanks to Ray’s encouragement, many instructors have brought their students to Raquette Lake. Years ago, many students did not experience Raquette Lake until they were juniors or seniors. Over the past four years, I have had numerous requests from alumni who would like to visit Camp Huntington because they were never afforded the opportunity while on campus.

We are all familiar with the impact Raquette Lake had on us as students. For many, it was that experience we remember most about Cortland. The COR 101 freshman have the opportunity to come and learn more about the College, its history, Raquette Lake and themselves. I think one student summed it up best when she said, “I knew the names of the students in my class before coming to Raquette Lake, but now I know them.”

SUNY CORTLAND SWIM TEAM

Coach Brian Tobin and assistant coach, Corey Ryan, again brought members of the SUNY Cortland swim team to Raquette Lake for a weekend of orientation and team building. More than 50 swimmers came during Labor Day weekend. The group utilized the classroom facilities and the challenge course to help promote team unity. The swimmers’ leadership and problem solving skills were taxed on the low ropes course and individual accomplishment was realized on the high course.

It was the first Raquette Lake experience for many of the students. Before the group returned to campus, they had one more challenge. Coach Tobin had scheduled a group ascent on Blue Mountain. Climbing Blue Mountain was definitely a first for most. The weather did not cooperate for the climb. It was overcast, rainy and windy on the top. All in all, they had a great group experience and memories that will last well beyond the swim season.
**RESEARCH FOUNDATION OF SUNY RETURNS TO HUNTINGTON**

The staff from the Research Foundation of SUNY in Albany once again returned to Camp Huntington for their annual retreat. The group capitalized on both the instructional capability of the Carlson Classroom and the outdoor environmental opportunities. As part of their agenda during their stay, the group took advantage of Huntington's challenge course. This provided an opportunity for both personal achievement as well as leadership and problem solving activities for the participants.

The Research Foundation of SUNY serves as the command center for system wide and individual campus development initiatives. Members work closely with Chancellor King and his staff. It is important to note that the staff has such strong feelings about Raquette Lake and what it represents that they have made individual payroll deduction contributions to the Cortland College Foundation Raquette Lake account. I greatly appreciate this initiative. It shows that financial support for Raquette Lake is widespread and increasing. Due to budgets being what they are today, we need all the financial assistance we can muster. I extend my thanks and appreciation to each of you who help support our wonderful facilities.

**ONONDAGA NATION SCHOOL ANNUAL VISIT**

In early June, a workshop was held for the first time at Camp Huntington for teachers and staff from the Lafayette School District and Onondaga Nation School. It was conducted by Jim Clark and Kevin Cochran, trained challenge course facilitators and Bridges program coordinators. Throughout this workshop, the teachers focused on developing better interpersonal skills, problem solving techniques and ways to facilitate student leadership.

In late July, both the students from the Bridges program and teachers arrived for their annual visit. The Bridges program introduces Lafayette School and Onondaga Nation School students to each other and encourages group cohesion. The students were kept busy on the challenge course and during their free time, they were provided kayak and canoe instruction. Opportunities were also offered for the students to further develop their native language skills. This program is funded through a federal grant and also receives support from SUNY Cortland’s President’s Office.

**MULTICULTURAL LIFE AND STUDENT GOVERNMENT LEADERS GET WHISKELED AWAY...**

It was a beautiful, sunny September weekend that felt like summer. Leaders from the Multicultural Life Office teamed up with the Student Government Association (SGA) for a retreat at Antlers. The first night was filled with apprehension that soon melted away with the comfort of friends, both new and old. The weekend conference proved to be a success with students taking advantage of learning opportunities, canoeing and kayaking, appreciating history and relaxing. We heard comments such as, “I am glad that we had the opportunity to come” and “We now have set a strong base for the year.” We look forward to continuing to serve these student groups in the future!

**THE CHANGING FACES OF ALUMNI**

As the season ends for classes and visitors at Antlers, I have started to reflect on various groups. Warm thoughts of the Class of ’59 fill my head first. A small retreat that originally had started as a group of close friends has blossomed into a tight group of friends, colleagues and neighbors. The same type of questions never fail to surface: How are you feeling? Did surgery go okay? Where is so and so? Alumni family camp sessions are filled with the same sentiment and affection for their college years and those who shared it with them.

As time has passed and the classes have swelled to large numbers, the once small college has developed into a minia-ture city, with each department its own section of the city. Reflections of the alumni and the memories they share describe just that: “When I went to Cortland there was only Old Main, which held all of the classes!”; “There were no dorms, we lived with people in town”; “All of the current buildings were there when I went to school, I cannot imagine just one building”; “Brockway Hall was the only dormitory on campus, we lived there”; “The Miller Building was being built when I graduated.”

Visiting with groups as they passed through Antlers has given me the opportunity to hear many stories and events that have taken place throughout SUNY Cortland’s history. I am thankful to be able to see the excitement and enthusiasm in people as they share their memories. Raquette Lake provides alumni and their families and friends a place to gather and reminisce about their lives and the paths they chose.
CAMP HUNTINGTON’S CHALLENGE COURSE

Camp Huntington’s challenge course offers various adventure-based opportunities for its users such as the high and low ropes elements and the climbing tower. User groups are led by trained facilitators. Bill James is our ropes course manager who conducts annual safety training for individuals who wish to serve as a group facilitator. The training introduces skilled facilitators to our course and focuses on course safety and utilization.

As part of operating a safe program, an external inspection of the course and the equipment is conducted annually. Since our first external inspection, numerous adjustments have been made. As a result of this sustained initiative to improve the course, the number of groups using it has expanded greatly. In addition to several SUNY Cortland user groups this year, the course was also utilized by a variety of outside groups such as Hamilton College, Outward Bound, Syracuse University and The Mountain Workshop.

The low ropes course offers groups a variety of team building and leadership activities. User groups assess each of the elements and determine the best way to approach the challenge. The individual group dynamics associated with problem solving has helped to develop a team spirit and sense of unity for participants. The high ropes course represents the opportunity for personal accomplishment. It doesn’t matter if it is the static course or the zip line, the experience is one the participant will never forget!

The number of outside groups using the various elements has increased due in part to Bill’s expertise and leadership. This increased usage has generated additional revenue which is used to improve and upgrade the challenge course. In 2005, the course user fee will increase to $15 per person, per day.

STEAMBOAT REGATTA ON RAQUETTE LAKE

Each summer, St. Williams Church hosts a steamboat regatta. The steamboat captains and their families come from all over the northeast. Some of the boats are originals and have been refurbished while others are replicas with new fiberglass hulls. The boilers, which produce the steam power for the boats, are fueled by both wood and coal. A blast from the steamboat’s whistle casts a cheerful sound across the waters of Raquette Lake.

During the Durant and Huntington era, steamboat was the primary mode of travel. These steam powered vessels traveled down the Marion River bringing both visitors and supplies to Camp Pine Knot. As they traveled past Long Point on Raquette Lake, with black smoke flowing from their stacks and whistle sounds, one can only step back in time and think about how it must have been.

This past summer, the group came to Huntington for a historic tour. In exchange for the tour, I was offered a ride on one of their steamboats. They were delighted with the tour as I was with the ride. The group is considering a possible stay at Camp Huntington.

A FUGE UPDATE

As many of you know, George Fuge was the director of the SUNY Cortland Outdoor Education Center at Raquette Lake for more than 25 years. Mugsy, his wife, was the first lady. I cannot count the number of inquiries I receive each year asking about George and Mugsy and how they are doing. So I thought this might be the best way to bring you all up to speed.

George and Mugsy still reside next to Antlers on Raquette Lake. George just turned 80 and is as fit as a fiddle. Mugsy is also in good health. She swims daily in the lake and golfs with George almost everyday. Who would ever have thought George Fuge would be playing golf? They are still active in the community and volunteer at various events.

George and Mugsy hang up their cross-country skis and leave Raquette Lake in late February and head south to Florida. They spend the next two months golfing and fishing. My wife, Patti, and I usually join them for a few days while we are on vacation. We spend a morning fishing the surf for blues or pompano, have lunch and then play 19 holes of golf. At the end of the day, Patti and I get into our car exhausted and say, “We hope we are in as good shape as George and Mugsy when we are their age.” They are doing great and send their very best to everyone.

2005 WINTER/SUMMER ALUMNI SESSIONS

Registration forms are available
www.cortland.edu/outdoor/raquette/2005dates.html