

# MAIL CALL

SKYLAND'S INK-AND-PAPER ALUMNAE NEWSLETTER

## Tech-Free in the Digital Age

It's a typical Opening Day at Skyland. Beyond the excited screaming, hugging and reuniting with summer friends, campers visit a handful of stations as they check in to camp. They review health forms with the nurse, meet their counselors and, a more recent addition, hand electronics, including cell phones, iPods, tablets and gaming devices, off to their parents.

*(Continued on pg. 4)*



*Skyland camper, Melanee, kisses her phone before letting it go for the five weeks that she will spend at Skyland.*

## Documenting Skyland's History

Efforts are in the works to compile historical information for Skyland's 100<sup>th</sup> reunion in 2017. Alumna Patty Johnson has spent the past year sifting through deeds, interviews, and articles to document Skyland's rich history in a book that will be available for purchase at the reunion.

In addition, we hope to share stories and photos from across Skyland's history to represent our many generations. Do you have photos, stories or memories to add to Skyland's history, or know someone who would?

Please contact [alumnae@skylandcamp.com](mailto:alumnae@skylandcamp.com) to get involved.

## FALL 2015

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Save the date!  
**Skyland's 100<sup>th</sup> Reunion**  
August 4-6, 2017



## Skyland Welcomes Equine Facilitated Learning & Coaching

You may have heard about the benefits of Equine Therapy as part of a comprehensive healing program. Clients have reported that horses have a calming effect and help to build confidence in audiences as wide ranging as children with disabilities to adults with PTSD.

And now, the next body of work in equine-facilitated programs is here and is designed to help *anyone* achieve their personal or professional goals. Equine Facilitated Learning and Coaching (EFLC) is a groundbreaking experiential learning method and is the perfect complement to Skyland's supportive herd of horses, our nurturing and peaceful space, and our mission for inspiration and connection.

Kay Anderson, Skyland's associate director, a life coach, and a leadership development expert, discovered EFLC quite by accident. She audited a class so she could learn enough about the program to hire someone to do the work at Skyland. After three days, she saw the life-changing benefits that these gentle, giving creatures provide.

"I'm not a horse person," said Anderson. "I didn't grow up with them, I'm not a rider and hanging out in a barn cleaning tack and preparing to ride doesn't interest me. My angle is different. Instead of coming in to this work with a horse background, I'm coming from a human development and personal transformation point of view. So for me, this work is about *partnering* with Horse to help individuals find inspiration, unlock their personal power, expand their consciousness, build confidence and learn how to use their own inner wisdom to make decisions and to drive success in all areas of life."



A recent workshop participant said of her experience: "I love that I only have to close my eyes and breathe and I can take myself back to those moments spent in the round pen (with the horse) and feel that peace and love and beauty all over again. I will be in awe of this experience forever." She went on to say: "I think one of the most valuable lessons for me was being able to see my vulnerability and fear turned into strength."

Our flagship Equine workshop, "Discover the Possibilities" helps participants establish a connection between their own inner wisdom and the peaceful Wisdom of Horse in a three-day personal growth workshop. Additional programs will include topics of empowerment, leadership development, mindfulness and teamwork, as well as a three-part series for women in the workplace.

If you'd like to get started on your own journey with Horse, contact us today. Individual coaching (via Skype or phone) can begin as early as January.

For the latest information, please follow us at [Facebook.com/SkylandEquine](https://www.facebook.com/SkylandEquine) or on the web at [SkylandEquine.com](http://SkylandEquine.com).

### Please join us for the Alumnae Volunteer Work Weekend!

Every year, Skyland alumnae and friends roll up their sleeves and dig in to get Skyland Hill up and running for the summer season. The time, skill and love that is contributed transforms Skyland Hill and prepares it for its summer residents. We'd love to see you!

May 27-30, 2016

Registration open soon. More information at [SkylandCamp.com/alumnae](http://SkylandCamp.com/alumnae).

## In Just Three Days: The Beauty of Mother-Daughter Weekend

Sitting cross-legged on the floor, young girls wait and watch for the telling movement of stage curtains. Curtains open, music begins, and, as the dancers start moving to their cues, laughter erupts from the stage and the audience. The young girls watch as their mothers, donned in tutus, hats, and goofy dresses from the costume attic, bust a move along with the beat.

This isn't just some freestyle or impromptu dance, though. The mothers spent a jam-packed 45 minutes rehearsing intently (and with quite a bit of laughter of their own) during their all-moms dance activity earlier in the day. The daughters show their own dance next.

As much as this dance exposé is filled with laughter and silliness, it is an example of Skyland's unique ability to build community. Throughout the weekend, the mother and daughter campers try new things, make their first camp friends, challenge their comfort zones, play freely, and feel pride and confidence in themselves and in one another.

Campers come to Mother-Daughter Weekend to experience Skyland first-hand or to test the waters for future enrollment. They try out all of the activities, meet the counselors and staff, dine on



yummy culinary delights and sleep on Skyland's famous sleeping porch.

"Being outside in this beautiful environment was such a nurturing and empowering experience," one mom shared as she reflected on the weekend. "You feel like you are transported to another world...the camp was ignited with feminine power and positive encouragement in an environment that promoted courage, grit and compassion."

We love to welcome not only moms, but aunts, grandmothers and other women who accompany girls to Skyland's Mother-Daughter Weekends.

**Learn more and register online at**  
[SkylandCamp.com/Mother-Daughter-Camp](http://SkylandCamp.com/Mother-Daughter-Camp)

**DISCOVER SOMETHING MAGICAL NEXT SUMMER**

Starter Camp	Traditional Camp	Mother-Daughter Preview Weekend
Session 1 June 25 – July 3	Session 1 June 25 – July 12	June 10-12
Session 2 July 13 – July 21	Session 2 July 13 – July 30	
	Full Summer June 25 – July 30	

## Tech-Free in the Digital Age (*continued*)



The latter step in this list is one that camps all over are continuously revisiting and refining. Today, point-and-shoot cameras post pictures directly to Instagram and wristwatches send emails through voice command. As technology booms, some question how the traditional model of summer camp will stay relevant in a screen-obsessed world.

What we're finding at Skyland might surprise you. Skyland is relevant *because* it is a tech-free space.

Without devices to find distraction in or hide behind, campers have access to a world that they may not experience anywhere else. Campers in tech-free spaces learn to understand another's perspective, see how their words and actions impact others, gain patience and focus, and actually laugh out loud together.

In a 2014 study by researchers at the University of California, Los Angeles, pre-teens attended a residential summer camp free from television, computers and mobile phones. They were tested before and after the camp in their ability to read nonverbal emotion cues and to identify the emotions of actors in videotaped scenes. After just five days, the campers' improvements in these abilities significantly outperformed improvements by the control group, which did have electronics.

"One of the most harmful consequences of the amount of time kids now spend on screens is a decrease in interactive play in children's lives" reports Kenneth Barish, Ph.D., a professor at Cornell University's Weill Medical College.

"Interactive play...is to children's social development what talking with children is to their vocabulary development and what exercise is to their physical development."

When campers unplug from their electronics, they strengthen their social skills and their connections with one another.

We've even found this tech-free environment to be a desirable component for adult campers at Mother-Daughter Weekends and Skyland Retreat events. One adult camper commented that she hadn't felt such freedom in years. Like many others, the tech-free space helped her to recognize, and let go of, an underlying stress caused by gadgets and constant connectedness.

That said, most people still approach Skyland's tech-free environment with hesitation. Parents, campers, and even our own staff initially struggle with the idea of not being able to call, text or check social media; and that can feel scary. The tech-free environment takes away the electronics safety net that so many of us have come to depend upon.

Being able to set aside gadgets and to let go of the pressure and responsibilities of the outside world allows campers (adult and child) to tune in to the people they're with and their experience right now. Tech-free summer camps remain relevant in our screen-obsessed world because they provide opportunities for an entirely different level of connection.

## Snapshots of Summer: On the Hill in 2015



**Book Club** (left): During free choice activities, counselors introduce campers to special talents and interests not seen on the daily camp schedule, like juggling and slacklining. Here, campers enjoy reading and tea during a free choice favorite, book club.



**Kitchen** (right): A rockstar team of talented chefs fueled Skylanders with boundless nourishment, love and tasty treats. We miss them and their food already!



**Starter Camp** (left): A 9-day mini camp for first-time campers rising 1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> grades, Starter Camp filled up quickly for 2015 and brought plenty of little ones to Skyland's Big House.



**Tennis** (right): These queens of the court spiced things up at tennis with costumes from the attic. Creativity abounds on Skyland Hill!



**Craft Shack** (left): Campers in recycled arts gave the craft shack a face-lift and a bit of flare with this mountain-themed mural.

## What We're Reading: *Last Child in the Woods*

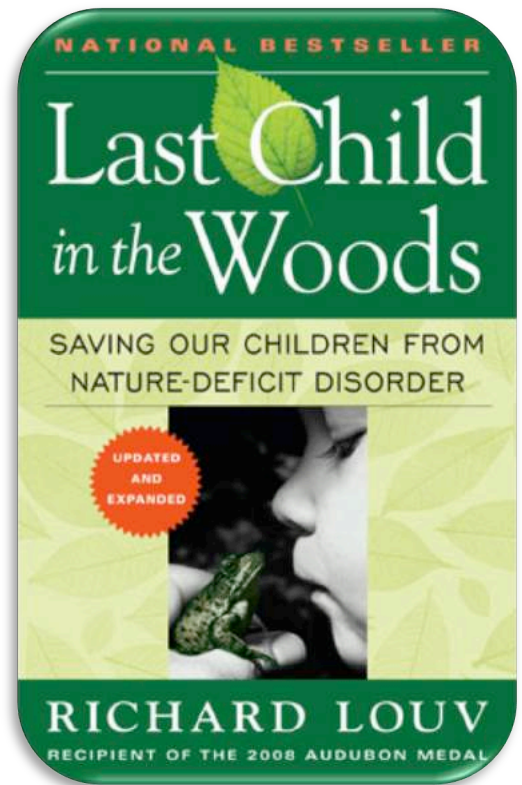
Richard Louv's *Last Child in the Woods* puts solid evidence behind what so many of us have come to know through our own experiences - that time spent in nature is a fundamental component of our physical and emotional health.

Louv explores the increasing gap between nature and youth, directly linking this gap to troubling childhood trends including rising numbers of many mood and attention disorders.

*"In nature, a child finds freedom, fantasy, and privacy; a place distant from the adult world, a separate peace."*  
- Richard Louv, *Last Child in the Woods*

Louv's book looks at why the gap between nature and youth is increasing, from city planning to cultural attitudes to school policies. Then, it mobilizes readers to get kids back outside with inspiring anecdotes and practical solutions on the personal level and beyond.

*Last Child in the Woods* has fueled dialogue nationwide among educators, urban developers, health professionals, conservationists, parents, and, of course, summer camps.



## Director's Corner

There is an important theme in this issue of Mail Call that can be summed up in one word: connection. I hope it resonates with many of you as it does me. My favorite memories of camp all involve strong connections I made - with a favorite counselor, my summertime camp buddies and a horse that could do no wrong (though I was the only one who thought so).



*Skyland Directors Sherry and Mike Brown with their mother, Bunny, at the closing campfire.*

Skyland still is a place where amazing connections are made. As you will read in "Tech-Free," Skyland allows campers the unique opportunity to unplug from electronics. Without the distraction of beeps and tweets from the outside world, friendships develop quickly and are often deeply meaningful. Campers immerse themselves in nature and trade their screens for greens (and whites!), their PlayStations for dance parties and their ear buds for singing with bunkmates.

Camp life is still a wonderful respite from the pressures of the outside world and an oasis where campers can reconnect with their true selves. Luckily, Skyland has opportunities for grown-up girls, too! Come join us for the Volunteer Work Weekend, a Skyland Retreat, or one of our new Equine programs. We look forward to welcoming you back to Skyland Hill soon.

Fondly,  
Sherry

## Alumnae Updates

**Sue (Westbury) Johns ('45-'46, '52)** has three adult children who have given her five grandsons and now two great-grandsons. Her first husband died in 1980 and four years later she married again. Sue's mother, **Louise Westbury**, who was the camp dietician from 1945-1946, passed away in 1980. They often talked about Skyland in her last days.

**Judith Maness ('55-'66)** owns and shows champion shetland sheepdogs with her husband, Ron Willacker. Since 1997, she has lived in Western New York in Lewiston, a small town near the Canadian Border. She has served as the CEO of Mount St. Mary's Hospital and Health Center, a member of Ascension Health, since 2006.

The three Haverty sisters, **Peggy Haverty Glover**, **Jane Haverty ('60-'68)**, and **Liz Haverty** all now live close to each other in Ponte Vedra, Florida!

**Bonnie (Oxford) Catching ('61-'62)** retired in 2012 from working in the Admissions office of Huntingdon College in Montgomery, AL. This year she celebrated 40 years of marriage with her husband, Walter. They have two daughters and seven grandchildren.

**Theresa Waller Zerkle ('80-'84)** celebrated her 25<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary in October and 31 years of working with her boss in November. She recently lost her dad to cancer on April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015. He always drove her to camp and picked her up every

summer. He absolutely loved doing it.

Grace Colleen McClain Bell was born December 31, 2014 to **Elizabeth (Grady) Bell ('84-'91)** Her sister, Finley Laughlin Bell (3) loves being a big sister! **Colleen Grady ('84)** passed away on August 16, 2014 from breast cancer. James Grady, father to Elizabeth and Colleen, passed away August 2, 2014 from pancreatic cancer.

**Sally (Lynch) Zabel ('90-'96)** married Matthew Zabel on June 20, 2015 in Pawleys Island, SC. Sally serves as the Manager of Outreach and Partnerships for the Thomas Jefferson School of Math and Technology Partnership Fund. The couple resides in Chevy Chase, Maryland.

**Cristi Sanchez ('99-'01)** studied architecture and graduated from Barnard College of Columbia University in 2010. She graduated from University of Michigan Law School in 2013. She has since moved back to Miami, Florida and currently works as a real estate attorney at Carlton Fields Jordan Burt, P.A.

**Katie Prusiecki ('01-'09)** will be graduating from The University of Georgia in the spring of 2016 with a degree in communication studies. She is the current UGA Chapter President of Phi Mu Fraternity.

**Emily Rountree ('01-'10)** is currently attending Georgia Southern University.

**Acree Trivett ('04-'09)** graduated from high school in the spring and is currently attending Daytona State College. She plans to get a degree in psychology and to pursue a career in forensic psychology.



**Sid (Mason) Hanson ('72-'76)** and her husband, Ed, with Bunny at camp in the spring of 2015.



**Mary Ashley Stanton ('90s)** poses with Bunny during a visit last summer.

**We'd love to hear  
from you!**

Update your alumnae  
record online at  
**SkylandCamp.com**  
**/alumnae**



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all summer long!*

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and to the world.*