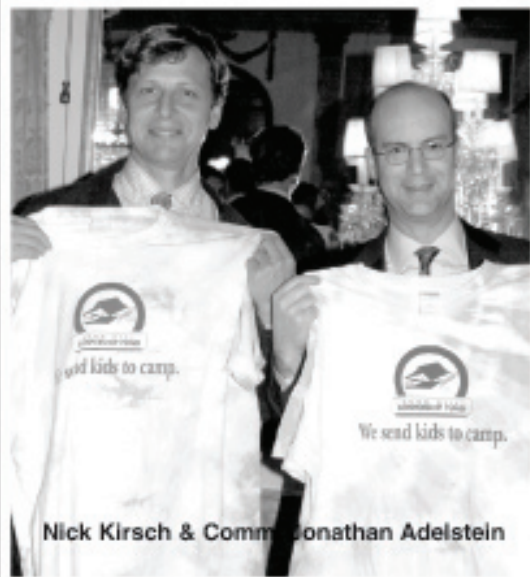




NEWS FROM ECHO HILL CAMPSHIP FUND

FALL / WINTER 2008 VOLUME XX



Nick Kirsch & Commissioner Jonathan Adelstein

ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL EVENT...

"We never imagined The Fund would become what it is today – able to send numerous kids to camp each year," said **Nick Kirsch**, founding member of EHCFF and honoree of our annual "We Send Kids to Camp" event.

FCC Commissioner **Jonathan Adelstein** was humbled to be the other honoree of the evening. Commissioner Adelstein described his days at camp and the experiences that made him who he is today. "It is organizations like the Echo Hill Campership Fund that allow a child who might otherwise not be able to experience the wonders of camp, to create bonds of friendship that last a lifetime."

We could not have said it better ourselves. This has been a trying year for all as the economy has us tightening our belts. However, our donors stepped up and made sure that our ability to send kids to camp did not bear the brunt of the

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WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Where did Echo Hill Camp get its name? There isn't a single hill on the camp's 70 acres. Not much of an echo either. You can shout from the bluff until you're blue in the face, but your voice won't bounce back from Aberdeen across the Bay. I've always wondered about this, so with the Newsletter as my excuse, I decided to find out. What I discovered may surprise you. The name Echo Hill is quite recent. It replaced Camp Howell, which was the original name of the camp on the property. The land itself has only had three names since it was granted to the good Captain Howell in 1672. Yes, that's right, the magical real estate that Echo Hill calls home can be traced back to before the Revolution, and even, if you look carefully, to the 1608 map of the Chesapeake Bay drafted by Jamestown's first Governor, Captain John Smith.

Captain Thomas Howell, the land's first recorded owner, was a Maryland assemblyman appointed by his governor to lead troops against the Dutch, who were camped on the West Shore of Delaware Bay. On his deed, the property was called "Pond" and described as:

"the land between a marked chestnut standing by the (Great) Pond... running down the Bay 108 perches unto a marked Gumm standing at the mouth of Little Pond."

We know these Ponds today as The Swamp (Big Marsh) and Camp Tockwogh's Puddle (just kidding). Three centuries of farming and silt have turned the small lake that Captain John Smith passed into a unique peatland-sphagnum marsh, home to several endangered plant species. On his map, Pocahontas' Englishman christened this land "*Poynt Pesinge*" (Point Passing?) and the river on the property's northern border "*Tockwogh Flu*," (later called the Sassafras) after the Native American tribe that lived along its shores. You could say that the Tockwogh Indians were Echo Hill's first campers. For thousands of years they left piles of shells, or kitchen midden, near Great Pond to prove it. Sadly, their name for the property was not passed down.



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The next owner of Pond was Richard Bennett, the wealthiest American of his time. He acquired the property in 1743 from Howell's heirs. When Bennett died, he left the land to his cousin's son, Lloyd Dulany, describing it in his will as "a parcel of land lying between the mouth of the Sassafras River and Steel Pond Creek." Even though he was a friend of George Washington, he sided with the British. He abandoned the property when he fled to London. Afterwards, the land was appropriated by the fledgling nation and appeared in the Ledger of Confiscated Crown Property under its original name, Pond.

On December 7th 1786, William Paca, signer of the Declaration of Independence and three times Governor of Maryland, bought Pond from the State. He renamed it "Bloomy Neck" and used it mainly for growing corn. It was one of many investments the Governor had on the Eastern Shore. Bloomy Neck remained in the Paca family for almost a century. During that time, the region's inaccessible landscape changed dramatically with the Industrial Revolution. The Chesapeake and Delaware Canal was begun in 1820 and railroad tracks were laid soon after. The most important means of transportation for Bloomy Neck Farm, however, was the regular steam ship

service that passed between Baltimore and Philadelphia. The Paca heirs built a wharf to accommodate these ships, thereby securing easy access to their otherwise isolated property.

In 1883 James S. Harris, a well-known horticulturist fresh from the California gold rush, purchased Bloomy Neck, along with Howell Point, Drayton Manor and several other area farms. He changed its name slightly to Blooming Neck. James wanted to raise fruit trees, but their produce, once picked, was time sensitive. Steam ships were ideal for quick transportation to market, so he enlarged the Paca wharf to accommodate his production. Two horse-and-wagons easily fit side by side on the new pier's oversized timbers. At the farm's peak, apples, pears and peaches from more than 200 acres of trees were shipped from Blooming Neck Wharf. Over 80 workers tended the orchards, hired mainly from Coleman's Corner. Eventually, the fruit was also shipped by train, which stopped at Still Pond. James' son, Walter Sr., a Cornell graduate, later built the Harris Packing House to keep the hundreds of bushels cool while they awaited transport in the summer heat. Its high ceiling and enormous concrete slab floor are considered unique for the period.

Two generations of Harris' nurtured the thriving fruit trees. James became an honored member of his community. He built a church and represented Kent County as a Congressman on the Ways and Means Committee. Walter Senior experimented with innovative farming techniques. Then the Great Depression hit. By 1928, there were no more field hands singing in the orchards. Walter ran the farm by himself, with the help of his wife and only child, 9 year old Walter Junior. Walter's wife raised a profitable flock of turkeys, and the family bred Chesapeake Bay retrievers. Tragedy struck again in the early 1930s when a severe blight decimated the orchards. The family raised sheep instead, and Walter Sr. leased out part of the farm to the Boy Scouts for a retreat. Camp



Dolly and Walter Harris, Jr.

Howell, the fore-runner of Echo Hill, was a relief to boys of all ages during the Depression, and particularly Walter, Jr. Perhaps it was his boyhood experiences at this camp that inspired Blooming Neck's next owner to dedicate his farm to children and outdoor education.

By World War II, the Harris farm was well known for its gourmet free-range turkeys. Orders came from near and far and particularly from large corporations along the Mid Atlantic. Walter Sr. leased Camp Howell to Aberdeen Proving Ground, which ferried several hundred soldiers per week across the Bay for training maneuvers. But as the battles raged overseas, Walter Sr. waged his own battle with declining health. When he was forced to retire, Walter Jr. came back from college to run the farm. The young man was not deployed overseas because of his weak heart.

At the end of the war, Walter Jr. was 26 and head of his family, but had yet to find the love of his life. This he found several years later, completely by chance, when city-bred Dolly showed up with her parents at Blooming Neck to purchase a hunting dog. In what sounds like love-at-first-sight and a whirlwind courtship, the two were married shortly after meeting. The couple had four children, two boys and two girls, all raised on the farm.

In 1952, as his family was growing in leaps and bounds, Walter, Jr. decided to lease Camp Howell to two Montessori teachers from Pennsylvania, Mrs. Waser and Mrs. Calhoun. These ladies brought Echo Hill Camp to Blooming Neck Farm. Peter Rice, Sr., the lower school principal of Washington, D.C.'s Sidwell Friends School, assumed the camp's direction a decade later. His eldest son, Peter Rice, Jr., took over when his father retired.

From the beginning, Peter Rice, Jr. made outdoor education his life's work. In addition to the summer camp, he opened the Echo Hill Outdoor School in 1972, to teach children first hand about the environment, the Chesapeake Bay, its conservation and restoration. Through his dedication and Walter Harris' unwavering support, over fifty thousand Mid-Atlantic children have visited the rustic shoreline of Walter's ancestors. They have learned about the Bay's unique ecology and ways to preserve it. They have played in its water, camped on its shores and hiked in and around the marsh

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...FUNDRAISER

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receipts during this event from last year's event. The Board could not have been more pleased as we all were wringing our hands wondering whether we were going to continue to send even our current kids back next year.

We would like to thank our Sponsors – **RCN Corporation, Mobile Satellite Ventures LP, AFT LLC** and our Co-Sponsors – **Alltel Corporation, Terrestar, Alex and Jill Vogel, and Allen and Judi Weltmann.**



Letter from the Board

The Board of the Echo Hill Campership Fund is honored once again to be reaching out with this newsletter to share a few of our stories. We hope you enjoy what you read. We ask you to submit ideas, articles, photographs, and your talent for future newsletters and for our website (www.EHCF.org). To our readers who have donated this year, we offer our heartfelt thanks. If you have not yet donated, please know EHCF counts on your generous financial support. We recognize we are approaching you during challenging economic conditions. Be assured that your continued compassion will help soften the impact of these tough times on our deserving and appreciative applicants.

While change is coming to DC, our board remains stable and strong.

Nicole Alfandre Halbreiner continues to run the books, pay the bills, file the forms, and crack the much-needed whip. She basically runs the show.

Peter Boyd juggles work, studying to get his MBA in Charlottesville, VA, EHCF meetings, fundraising, and campership process duties - making him, perhaps, the hardest working member of the bunch.

Jordan Chasnoff has spent the year expanding our internet reach, planting an EHCF flag on Facebook, where we are pushing towards 200 members. Please friend us!

Patrick Gorman has discovered a new word — faff — and has been faffing about ever since.

Donna DeMarco Sayada digitally records our events, designs the material we send to you, and sprinkles board meetings with her wisdom as a former camper along with her perspective as a parent to a current camper. (Camp rules are stricter nowadays, but the food's better!)

Mike Grossman is number one on the board in looks, intelligence, athletic build, judgement, charisma, and more. Best of all, he's about to become a father. Congratulations from all of us!

Amy (Marshack) Mehlman manufactures the fuel that makes EHCF run. She has been the driving

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The Kids...

The Echo Hill Campership Fund continued a recent trend by increasing the total number of weeks Campership Fund kids spent at Echo Hill for the eighth summer in a row. In 2008 we sent twenty kids to camp for a total of 62 weeks and for the first time ever provided more than \$50,000 in assistance to eligible applicants. Ten of the kids went to camp for at least four weeks and every returning camper who asked to go for an entire half got the required funding.

As the Campership Fund grows we are always looking for new applicants and this year we got a unique one – an application from a seven year old boy. The Campership Fund does not normally sponsor children that young but this boy had watched his cousin, another Campership Fund child, attend Echo Hill for the last five years. He wanted the opportunity to join her for her last summer before she got too old. The Selection Committee decided to grant his wish and everyone is extremely happy that we did. Hopefully in 2017 we will be writing about a Campership Fund CA who has just finished his tenth summer at Echo Hill.

EHCF's continued success is a tribute to the dedication of our loyal donors. Thankfully we have a large group former campers, counselors, and parents who know first hand how Echo Hill can change someone's life. We are also developing a strong contingent of corporate sponsors. The Campership Fund and the children who attend Echo Hill each summer owe all of our supporters a huge thank you. Without your generous donations twenty deserving children would not have the friendships and memories they developed this summer.

We are excited to sponsor all of our returning campers again next summer and look forward to adding more to the mix. That will require another financial commitment of more than \$50,000. We need your help more now than ever before and hope that you will support us in our endeavors by donating again this year.

We Need YOU!

We are looking for one or two brave, hardy souls to help on the Board. Computer skills would be a definite plus. Web site management abilities would make us kiss your feet. We meet about once a month in Bethesda. If you are interested, please send us an email or write to the address below.

HAVE YOU HEARD ...?

EHCF GOES DIGITAL!

In the event that you are a late adaptor of online social networking, it might be news that EHCF has joined **Facebook!** For everyone else, EHCF has built a huge presence online and is keeping in touch with friends and supporters of the Campership Fund around the world.

We have connected with 360 friends and are using the forum to keep everyone updated on the latest news and gossip. If you haven't joined Facebook or looked us up, here's a little of what you've been missing:

2008 has been the year of engagements! The most recent news-flash is that **Katherine Hope** was engaged to Sebastian Gordon. **Belle Keller** will tie the knot with Bretton Hornblower in Boothbay Harbor Maine in September 2009. Two of Belle's best friends from camp; **Lizzy Brooks** and **Kristen Knutson** will be bridesmaids for Mr. and Mrs. Hornblower.

Do you know which Creamer is engaged?? If you hooked up with EHCF on facebook, you'd know that **Tyler Creamer** popped the question to **Georgie Laidlaw!** They will be married in Baltimore in 2009. No word yet if Georgie's new niece-in-law **Tillamook Azuzu** will be a bridesmaid or the flower girl. **Jack Balaban** is engaged to Roger Pookie Ferguson. We got word from the other side of the pond that **Chris Abdy** is engaged to Leanne Curley.

After completing a graduate degree in Chemical Engineering from Berkley last year, **Val Martin** is engaged to Colin Gilboy. **Michael Fitzpatrick** is keeping track of the countdown to his wedding with fiancée Laura Ghering.

The engaged are not the only ones making big moves this year. **Sean Rapelyea** moved back to Washington DC after a year in Missoula Montana working for the Obama Campaign. **Celeste Gilbert** has also moved back to the Nation's Capital from Baltimore. **Taylor Arnold** is back in

New Jersey after hanging out with Sean in Montana. Taylor is teaching high school biology and is sharing an apartment with her super sweet pit bull, Bella. **Julia King** graduated from George Washington and moved to Chicago where she is working for Teach For America at a school in Gary Indiana. Since Julia's move, **Sam Clark** has continued his work in the office of the Mayor of Baltimore. **Dan Fuerst** and **Jared Feldman** are living in a sweet bachelor pad in Brooklyn. Dan and Jared want everyone to know they have a couch available for any visits to the big apple! EHCF board member **Peter Boyd** has left the shores of the Chesapeake Bay (for now) to return to grad school at UVA – Go Hoos! **Petey Rice** is a junior at Gettysburg College where he is a member of the Phi Sigma Kappa Academic Fraternity. When asked for comment on his life at school, Petey said only “No way, dude.”

Weddings and Babies!

Mike and **Liliya Grossman** are expecting their first baby this winter! We also heard from **Claudia Ghigliotty** who is married to a “wonderful guy” and is living in Brooklyn where she works as an occupational therapist. Claudia's first baby is due late January. **Lucy (Fox) and Jay Sinrod** had their first baby, **Piper**, in February. **Maris Morelli** was married to Chris Leo in October. **Eve Cohen and Sally Garfield**, two of EHC's best-ever sailors, were bridesmaids. **Tara Morgenthal** is married and living in New York City, and is expecting a baby boy in January.

Thanks! Last, but not least, **Chester's** girlfriend, **Myrtle**, celebrated her first birthday in October!



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WHAT'S IN A NAME...

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that many endangered species call home.

Sadly, Walter Harris, Jr. is no longer with us. He passed away in 2003 at the age of 84. He was immensely proud of the conservation taught on his farm and the myriad of other environmental and historic activities he had overseen throughout his life. He considered them his legacy to the region he loved so well. Certainly, his greatest gift will be appreciated for centuries. Before he died, Walter placed a portion of his ancestral farm in a Land Conservancy Trust, so that its pristine beauty would be preserved for generations to come. Personally, I find it comforting to know that my children's children will be able to gaze out over Pond and giggle about how their grandmother went swamp mucking in it. There may not be an echo in that there watering hole, but there certainly is a lot of wild life.

LETTER FROM THE BOARD...

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force behind a series of annual fundraisers, each setting a new record. In terms of achieving our mission, no individual has ever had a bigger impact than Amy.

While we continue to offer our time to EHCF, we are always in need of new energy, ideas, and expertise. If you would like to join the Board to offer your skills and knowledge, please let us know. We are always looking for new Board members to help with this worthy cause.

EHCF wishes you peace and joy for the holiday season and New Year.



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