



NEWS FROM ECHO HILL CAMPSHIP FUND

FALL / WINTER 2016

VOLUME XXVIII

LETTER FROM THE BOARD ...

In this year of political tumult, one thing has stayed true to its mission and values - the Echo Hill Campership Fund. EHCF has been sending kids to camp now for almost 30 years and this year marks another record for us. We were able to send 19 kids to Echo Hill!

The Board, all Echo Hill alumni, always marvel at the letters, comments and hugs we receive from the families whose children benefit from EHCF. We all know what it's like to drive down that weeping willow lined road, past the iconic Echo Hill "A Summer Place" sign, to discover your counselors for the next two weeks and smell the smoke of the first night bonfire on the bluff. We simply cannot imagine a world where Echo Hill doesn't provide these experiences for our kids. So, we, the Board, thank you for your continued support.

In this newsletter, we celebrate the lives of two beloved Echo Hill friends, Dolly Harris, a lifetime supporter of Echo Hill and a dear friend of the Rice Family and Endicott Ackerman, a long time camper, brother, and friend to many at Echo Hill. They will both be missed, but their legacy at EHC will remain in our hearts and traditions.

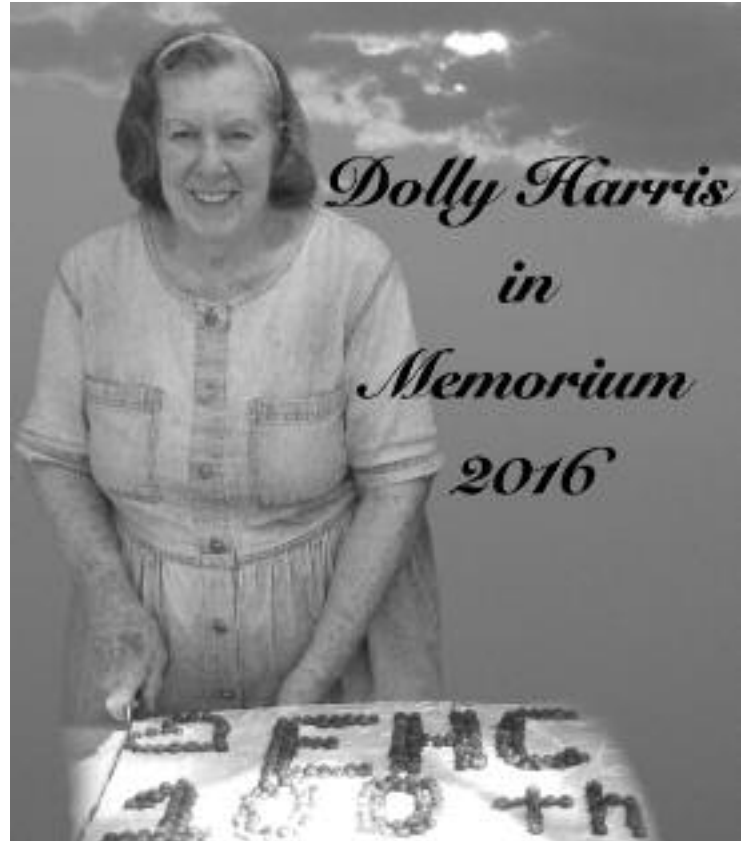
We also would like to thank Mike and Liliya Grossman for opening up their Kent Island home again for our annual crab feast. Over 75 family and friends attended. Liliya's brother barbequed his famous lamb kabobs and Mark Freibaum gave boat rides. It was the perfect treat to cap off a fantastic summer.

And, finally, we would like to thank our esteemed outgoing Board member of 18 years, Nicole Alfandre Halbreiner. Nicole, aka "Bossy Boots" as she dubbed herself, has been our Treasurer and consummate supporter on and off since 1994. To say that she made the trains run on time heavily under-represents all she did for EHCF. Nicole took on our organization's most unglamorous job and did it without complaint. Her stewardship has made a lasting impact on our accounting, not to mention our finances thanks to her and her family's continued support. She will be sorely missed. Her labor of love helped send hundreds of kids to camp and change their lives for the better.

We hope you have a wonderful Thanksgiving and we thank YOU for your support as we head toward another great summer of fun for our campers. If you have not donated yet this year, please head to our website at www.ehcf.org or send a check to the address listed below.

Yours truly,

The Echo Hill Campership Fund Board



IN MEMORIUM - DOLLY HARRIS

It is with great sadness we report that Dolly Harris passed away in September at the age of 89. She was the trustee for the Walter B. Harris Trust which owns the farm on which Echo Hill is located. In 1972 Dolly and Walter partnered with Peter Rice Jr. and many of his friends to found Echo Hill Outdoor School. The program soon became a huge success and Walter and Dolly were two of its greatest supporters, constantly promoting and nurturing the school as well as Echo Hill Camp.

Peter Rice posted this open letter on camp's Facebook page soon after Dolly's passing:

Dolly was actually involved with Echo Hill longer than any of us. In the late 1940's she was head counselor at "the Children's Montessori Camp" in Bucks County, Pennsylvania. The camp eventually became known as Echo Hill and moved to its Chesapeake Bay location in 1952. I am personally heartbroken by her passing. She supported me emotionally and professionally through many tense situations involving the farm. Since I could walk from the campus to her house in minutes, I visited her frequently. We had fascinating discussions about Kent County history, the Montessori camp and generally "the way things used to be." Many of her recollections started by her saying, "back in the

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MISS HONEY'S KITCHEN



After Miss Honey revealed her secret fried chicken recipe she was in a talkative mood, so we prodded her to tell us more ...

L: Now tell us about your famous barbecued chicken.

H: We just put the chicken in the oven with barbecue sauce over it. I pull some of the skin off but not all. A lot of the children like the skin. I pull the breast skin off but leave the wings and such.

L: Ah, the secret's in the sauce then! So what's the sauce?

H: When I have time I make my own, with pineapple juice, ketchup, honey. I like using crushed pineapple in it too. No tomatoes, just ketchup. That was my oldest sister Shirley's recipe.

L: You mentioned a number of family recipes, like your mom's pudding.

H: That puddin' was so good! You know we didn't have a lot of money and Momma always made apple dumplings or something on Sunday. We would pick apples. She would always make a homemade pudding. Just milk, corn starch and egg beat up with a little sugar. And she put in lemon extract. We would only have dessert on Sunday. We would look forward to coming home from church and eating. There would be apple pie. She would call it apple pie, but because there were so many of us she would have a long pan and make her homemade crust then put the apples in there and put that crust over it. She would cut it and give us a piece with the pudding. It was so good. You could put the pudding over the pie or the apple dumplings.

L: How did she make the dumplings?

H: Make your crust, put your apple in it, you bring the dough up and pinch it. They'd be so pretty in the long pan. We'd have one a piece. She cooked them in water, not syrup. It was a pie crust cooked in water. She would let her apples set overnight with the sugar and cinnamon and stuff in it. Then she would cook it in a little water. The juice would come down in the water and make its

own syrup. She peeled the apples. We girls would peel them and cut them in half, dice them in little pieces.

L: So you made a pocket and filled it with apples. Spices?

H: Overnight – sugar, cinnamon and vanilla. Stir it all together and when you cook it put a little piece of butter on top to make it brown.

L: Did you ever make dumplings at camp?

H: No, just apple crisp.

D: I want to know how you made white sheet cake for birthdays.

H: I used to do that home made until camp got bigger and I started using the mix.

D: But when we were at camp you made it from scratch.

H: I used to make a lot from scratch. I had to. Right now I use Gold Medal flour from Pillsbury. I don't remember what it was back then. I would make my flour, use my sugar and my butter. I used to use that lemon extract in it and a touch of vanilla. And I used baking powder and we could get white food coloring back then. It wasn't called food coloring. It was called something else for cakes. I would put that in there and that would make it white. When you're dealing off the truck and the salesman shows you things, you can find more there than you can in a regular store. It's different shopping. And I put everything in it, just like making a cake

L: So you made it like a regular cake, you cream the butter and sugar; and you take the flour and the baking soda and sift it together; and you add the flour to the butter a little at a time ...

H: And the milk. The milk comes last. And I would use Crisco and butter, half and half. It's MUCH better that way.

L: Why do you think that is?

H: I don't know. Maybe cause I grew up using Crisco in cakes.

... to be continued next year ...

CAMPERSHIP UPDATE ...

The Echo Hill Campership Fund sent 19 kids to camp this summer for a total of 50 weeks, all thanks to you, our amazing donors! The sixteen returning campers reported having fantastic experiences bageling and zip-lining, and returned home ready to face the challenges of another school year. Our new campers also loved their time at Echo Hill, with one parent reporting that her son "was not the same young man [she] dropped off at camp. His maturity grew while being a part of your community!... You allowed [him] to spread his wings and soar...He was able to build long lasting friendships, gain a sense of independence, learn team building skills...and acquire a new sense of confidence." We are thrilled this new camper could experience the same joy we all felt at Echo Hill. We look forward to granting this to other newcomers next year. Please continue to help us by donating, and if you know of any deserving children who would benefit from attending Echo Hill, encourage them to email campership@ehcf.org for next summer's application information.



THANK YOU NICOLE

It is with gratitude and awe that we recognize Nicole Halbreiner for her tireless years of service to the Echo Hill Campership Fund. Nicole has been on the board for so long we can't remember when she first joined! Her tenure spans two different time frames, with her second term as Treasurer beginning in 2003. She was convinced to return, after serving in the 1990s, when the board at the time realized they were lost without her.

For over a decade now she has flawlessly handled our deposits, tax returns, thank you notes and data base. If you have contributed or simply joined our mailing list, Nicole knows your name by virtue of her great record keeping. Nicole's contributions and impact were simply unparalleled. While some Board members' efforts may have ebbed and flowed, Nicole was always a remarkable pillar of consistency and a shining example to all of us.

In short, Nicole (a.k.a. "Bossy Boots" as she jokingly called herself) was the glue that held the Board together. She sent out reminder emails, kept us on track during meetings and truly cared about the health of the Echo Hill Campership Fund. If it had been up to Nicole, she probably would have stepped down three or four years ago, but she knew that the organization needed her. While it will be impossible to replace her, the Board has secured new blood over the last few years and has been preparing for this day. So, with a heavy heart, on behalf of the Board and all the children who benefited from your tremendous dedication and service, THANK YOU Nicole!

ENDICOTT (ENDI) ACKERMAN

This year the Echo Hill community is also remembering Endicott Ackerman, a camper from 2004-2012. He loved camp and the friends he made there. He will forever be in our hearts. A scholarship in his memory has been set up at camp by his family.



2009



2011



2012

IN MEMORIUM - DOLLY HARRIS

... continued from page 1.

day." Dolly loved to read and she and I had the same taste in books. We are actually co owners of every James Lee Burke novel ever written. We traded books, often once a week, and looked forward to discussing them together.

Dolly loved to show off her beloved "Bay House." Students and campers alike were lucky when treated to a tour of her home. Most children have never seen a Victrola, so Dolly would always crank hers up and play some scratchy song from the 1920's. The most interesting, and later talked about, part of the visit, however, was when Dolly would take out a tin box containing Civil War memorabilia inherited from a distant relative. First she would show the children a picture of the soldier who was her relative and then the blood stained belt buckle with the bullet embedded in it that had saved his life.

Being so close to the campus made Dolly feel a part of things. She loved hearing the children singing and yelling in the dining hall and hearing the bell ring. Even after all these years, she was still a part of Echo Hill. She was an important and memorable part of the camping experience to the many campers who met her. On one of the last days of camp, ten year old Lyric Mateo from the Bronx came to me and said, "I don't want to go," I jokingly told him to go hide in the woods. That didn't seem like a good idea to him but suddenly his expression changed and he looked towards Bay House and said, "I'll go live with Dolly."

Dolly was a grandmotherly figure to my children. They will always remember the Christmas visits, baking cookies with her in the farmhouse kitchen and being pulled on sleds behind Walter's tractor. Recently she had taken a loving and friendly interest in my five grandchildren.

For several years now, camp has had a special day known as "Dolly Day." Everyone got to sleep late and have a late breakfast. When Miss Dolly arrived, every camper and staff member would give her a flower and a hug. For lunch there would be crabs, chicken and steak cooked outdoors. After lunch there would be entertainment consisting of campers singing, dancing and playing musical instruments. Dolly loved the day. At the end, she would always address the camp and thank everyone. This year she said, "I'll be here next year.....I just might be a little further away."

As many of you know, Echo Hill is inhabited by a multitude of friendly spirits stretching back to when the property was inhabited by Native Americans to the more current souls of former campers and counselors. Dolly was a great believer in these spirits. She was convinced that the eagles flying over the campus are the embodiment of Walter's spirit. She believed that he was watching over her and over Echo Hill. I am sure that soon Dolly's spirit will present itself to us.

Dolly and Walter could have been millionaires had they sold their farm to developers. Instead they chose to preserve it and share its majestic location with tens of thousands of children. Dolly loved Echo Hill and we loved her. We will miss her, but her spirit is here and she has left an incredible legacy.

Sincerely,
Peter

*In honor of Dolly and her love of history
here is the story of Bloomy Neck Farm and the Harrises.*

In 1883 James S. Harris, a well-known horticulturist fresh from the California gold rush, purchased Bloomy Neck Farm, as the Echo Hill property was known back then, from the decedents of William Paca, a signer of the Declaration of Independence. This first Mr. Harris also purchased Howell Point, Drayton Manor and several other area farms, all to raise fruit trees. Their produce, once picked, was time sensitive and the steam ships that stopped at the property's commercial dock were ideal for quick transport to market. At the farm's peak, apples, pears and peaches from more than 200 acres of trees headed across the Bay to Baltimore from Blooming Neck Wharf. Over 80 workers tended the orchards, hired mainly from Coleman's Corner. Eventually, the produce also went by train from Still Pond, once James' son, Walter Sr., a Cornell graduate, built the Harris Packing House to keep the hundreds of bushels awaiting transport cool in the summer heat.

Two generations of Harris' nurtured these orchards. 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, his son, experimented with innovative farming techniques - until the Great Depression hit. In 1928 the field hands were let go, leaving Walter to run the farm with his wife and only child, 9 year old Walter Junior. Walter Senior's wife managed to raise a profitable flock of turkeys and the family bred Chesapeake Bay retrievers. But true disaster struck in the early 1930s when a severe blight decimated the orchards. Yet, ever resourceful, the family switched to raising sheep, and Walter Sr. leased out part of the farm to the Boy Scouts as a retreat. Camp 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 this boyhood experience 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, particularly from large Mid Atlantic corporations. As part of the war effort Walter Sr. leased Camp Howell to Aberdeen Proving Ground, which ferried several hundred soldiers per week across the Bay for training maneuvers. As the battles raged overseas,

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Walter Sr. waged his own battle with declining health. And when he was forced to retire, Walter Jr. came back from college to run the farm. The young man had not been deployed overseas because of a weak heart.

By 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 Farm to purchase a hunting dog. In what sounds like love-at-first-sight and a whirlwind courtship, the two were married shortly after meeting, on New Year's Eve 1950. Dolly was not new to rural settings, however. She had worked as a counselor for five summers beginning in 1945 at one of the United States' first Montessori camps. By then the camp was thriving and its owner, Mrs. Paist, an original student of Maria Montessori, was quite elderly. Dolly has fond memories of her former boss and loved to tell the story of how Mrs. Paist drove all the way from Wycombe, PA, to Kent County in her Packard for her wedding! The year Dolly met Walter, however, 1949, Mrs. Paist transferred her camp to Margaret Waser and Helen Calhoun. Since

the name "Echo Hill" had long been associated with the camp, Mrs. Waser reorganized her new business as "Echo Hill Camp."

Sometime in 1951-1952, Walter and Dolly Harris, now happily married with the first of four children, placed an ad in the American Camping Association's newsletter that beautiful "Bloomingneck Farm" on the Chesapeake Bay, once the home of Boy Scouts and the Army during the war, was currently available for a new camp. Entirely by chance, the Wassers and the Calhouns answered the ad, were convinced by Walter's persuasiveness, and moved their Montessori inspired Echo Hill Camp to the Chesapeake.

Walter Harris Jr. passed away in 2003 at age 84. He was immensely proud of the conservation taught on his farm and the myriad other environmental and historic activities he oversaw 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.



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HAVE YOU HEARD ...?

MARRIAGE

Our most recent Board addition, **Et Halstead** wed Antonia Halstead on October 1, 2016. Many Echo Hill alumni were there, including the entire **Rice/Moulsdale/Blyman** clan, **Dan Fuerst, Hannah Richardson, Andrew Kessner, Dan Blaemire, Tilly Milch, Nika Iona Williams, Megan Heffernan, Preston Hart, Christine Hart, Caleb Balaban, Daniel Eisenberg, Nathan Maycock, Jak Lowenstein, Annabelle Gardner** and of course **Jake Halstead**.

BABY CARRIAGES

Kiva Feldman Zytnick, her husband **Dan**, and their daughter **Mira** announce the arrival of **Hazel Rose Zytnick** on September 16.

Jamie (Garfield) Drew is expecting a baby boy in December.

CC Rocque had a baby boy who will be one in December. Calvin is super easy going and loves being sung *Peaceful Easy Feeling*. CC can't wait to get him to the Bay in future summers!

Michael Boyd and wife **Liza** are expecting a baby girl, due in February.

Natika (Dannenfesler) Stewart and husband **Patrick** welcomed their fourth child, **William**, in June.

Tela Gallagher Mathias and her husband welcomed baby **Sheila Ann** in January.

Christine and **Preston Hart** did not let the arrival of their baby girl in late September keep them from attending Et's wedding (see above) just a few days later. We are impressed at their dedication!

NEWS

Jon Pauley and **Leigh Fox** celebrated their 4-year wedding anniversary by going back to Avon in the Outer Banks, where they got married!

Peter (Petey) Rice III celebrated his 30th birthday at a recent bash in Betterton.

Christine Lusk and husband **David Jones** are living in La Paz, Bolivia with their two daughters.



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Crab Feast 2016

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 Keep in touch with the Echo Hill
 Community! Email info@ehcf.org!

Can you help?

Can you find a friend or three to pitch in? How about your family members? 25 bucks? Sure, we'll take it! How about donating the equivalent of a night on the town? Do you own a company? Hit us with your pre-tax dollars. Maybe the company you work for matches your donations. Join our Facebook page, post your support and ask your friends to do the same. **BETTER YET, JOIN THE EHCF BOARD!** Any way you can help will be returned in karmic currency, which you can't spend, but feels oh-so-good. **Thank you.**