

A PLACE APART

News about Shrine Mont Pentecost 2009

AN EPISCOPAL RETREAT CENTER OF THE DIOCESE OF VIRGINIA

Greetings from Shrine Mont

By Kevin Moomaw, Director

As you get this late summer newsletter Shrine Mont has enjoyed serving over 600 campers and thousands of conference and retreat participants. We appreciate all who have come or plan to come during what has been a difficult economic time for everyone.

The spring season started off very promising with over 150 people participating in our annual volunteer work weekend. Volunteers accomplished a number of chores to get Shrine Mont ready for the season including the creation of a new prayer labyrinth about 100 yards south of the Shrine. Shrine Mont thanks those volunteers for their hard work that weekend.

In addition to the labyrinth Shrine Mont has added new meeting space and renovated sleeping rooms for this season. The Allegheny, Massanutten and Board meeting rooms are on the ballroom level of the Virginia House and can hold between 20 and 60 people. Each room is air conditioned and has state-of-the-art audio visual equipment. The building that was once known as the staff house has been renovated and is now called the Hillside with six double rooms each with a private bathroom and a new living with a fireplace. We are deeply grateful to those who have given to support these improvements.

Shrine Mont has not been immune from the economic struggles. Many groups have brought in smaller numbers than in the past. We have learned that churches and conferences that anticipated a tougher time worked harder and earlier to recruit retreat



photo: Paul Harris

Kevin Moomaw

participants and their efforts yielded higher numbers, sometimes record high numbers. My advice to groups this fall and next spring is to start out early and contact us if we can be of any help. I or my staff will be glad to visit and talk about Shrine Mont. I ask that if you anticipate a drop in your numbers, please let Shrine Mont know as soon as possible so we have the opportunity to fill unused space.

I am very excited by the progress Kirk Gibson has made in starting up our fundraising program. Kirk has been meeting with individuals and groups throughout our Diocese and there is great enthusiasm about giving to Shrine Mont. Please feel free to contact Kirk if you want to learn more about the ways to give to Shrine Mont.

Finally I want to thank Bishop Lee and Kristy Lee for their twenty five years of leadership of Shrine Mont. We have seen many remarkable changes during Bishop Lee's time as the President of Shrine Mont and we appreciate his continued commitment to our work here on the Mountain.

We hosted a guest season in August and are preparing for a special fundraising dinner in the Ballroom of the Virginia House on October 10. Please join us for some good food and good fun. More information on the golf tournament and other upcoming events can be found on our renovated Web site www.shrinemont.com.



photo: Paul Harris

The renovated Massanutten room in the Virginia House.



photo: Paul Harris

The old staff house has been renovated and named "Hillside."

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Shrine Mont Work Weekend a Tremendous Success

by Tom Von Hemert

During the annual Volunteer Work Weekend (March 20-22, 2009) over 150 hard working volunteers from all parts of the Diocese from ages 18 to 81 came to help Shrine Mont prepare and repair the camps and conference campus for another year. From new, huge projects (building the Celtic labyrinth with over 1,000 stone boulders on the site of the old clay tennis courts) to small, old tasks (painting fire hydrants and the shuffle board court) everyone worked hard and gave of their wonderful talents and skills. We celebrated the arrival of new volunteers and parishes (St. Paul's, Ivy) and we gave special grace and tribute to a long time Work Weekend Volunteer, Mike Schmid of Pohick Church, who sadly died earlier this year.

The Shrine Mont staff beautifully coordinated all the work projects and nourished us with delicious meals and snacks (homemade donuts made by Thelma and Hope). With over 75 buildings and 1,100 acres to maintain there was plenty of work to keep everyone busy and occupied over the entire weekend.

On Sunday morning everyone gathered at the Shrine and Bishop Johnston celebrated the Eucharist. We gave thanks for all the incredible blessings God provided us; clear skies, warm weather, keeping everyone safe, meeting new friends, and the opportunity to give of our time and talents back to a beautiful, sacred place we all love and cherish.



photo: Paul Harris



photo: Nancy Kuhn Mills

(Top) The completed labyrinth has over 1,500 stones. (Bottom) Bishop Shannon S. Johnston places the final stone of the labyrinth during the work weekend,

Thank You

by Nancy Kuhn Mills

Dear Shrine Mont friends,

The Lord works in mysterious ways, as my grandmother used to say, and a number of us got to see that first-hand on March 21, when a team of dedicated volunteers built the Shrine Mont labyrinth in just a few hours.

As we had planned the work weekend, we thought that a successful weekend's labyrinth project would be to move most (but not all) of the 1,000 rocks needed for construction from the Moomaw farm to the new labyrinth site near the Shrine. We assumed that groups using the site would move the rest of the rocks later and actually construct the labyrinth over the spring and early summer.

But we had not counted on the strong backs,

hearty temperaments, and sweet souls who hauled rocks, placed stones, ran equipment, cleared land, lined drainage ditches, trimmed back trees, and did the seemingly impossible. With your energy we built the Shrine Mont labyrinth in just one morning!

My heart-felt and heart-filled thanks to all of you who worked on our labyrinth at Shrine Mont's Work Weekend. You have given a gift to many people for years to come. Many blessings to you as you walk the path.

Nancy Kuhn Mills

Emmanuel on High, Alexandria



**Shrine Mont has a revamped Web site. Check it out!
www.shrinemont.com**

Early Parish Retreats at Shrine Mont

By the Rev. Alwin Rieners

It was the spring of 1962. St. Bartholomew's Mission Church in Richmond's west end had been founded the previous year. It was a congregation of largely young families. Although their homes were in the nearby surrounding area, the people were mostly strangers to one another before attending St. Bartholomew's.

It seemed to the Vicar [the Rev. Alwin Rieners, Jr.] that a weekend retreat at Shrine Mont would be a significant aid in creating community in this recent addition to the Church in Virginia.

Being familiar with Shrine Mont and the Moomaws, the Vicar reserved a weekend for early May. The design of the weekend included worship, study, recreation and of course eating! Sunday lunch was always fried chicken, rice and gravy and Shrine Mont's homemade apple butter.

About 30 people including children came. The study portion was a course, the Narrow Ridge supplied by the Educational Center in St. Louis. There was only one other group at Shrine Mont that weekend – a youth group from a church in Arlington. And they asked us please to be less noisy at night.

At the conclusion of the weekend our group said, "This has to be a first annual." So we continued each year in May to have a weekend at Shrine Mont. The attendance grew, virtually doubling in the second year.

Getting a parish weekend at Shrine Mont in those days was easy. But over time the word spread that a weekend at Shrine Mont was a significant aid to parish life and other parishes in the Diocese began to have Shrine Mont weekends. We had started something.

A few years later the Vicar was called to be the Rector of a church in North Carolina. In 1979, he answered a call back to Virginia to St. Paul's in Hanover Court House. And of course he wanted to have a parish weekend for St. Paul's at Shrine Mont. But the word had spread and times had changed. Now it seemed that so many congregations were going to Shrine Mont for a parish weekend that there were hardly any weekends to be had. Finally a weekend was found. However, unlike that first weekend in 1962, St. Paul's was one of several other congregations at Shrine Mont. On balance we thank the Lord for this kind of growth.

Camp Scholarship Fund at St. Paul's, Hanover

By the Rev. Jack Sutor

St. Paul's Church, Hanover Courthouse is a small parish with many big blessings. One of the most exciting is the Garna Blakey Kraft Shrine Mont Scholarship Fund, established to send all parish children to camp. It was established by Ted Kraft, a long-time parishioner, in gratitude for his late wife.

Ted and Garna Kraft spent a lifetime teaching in the public schools, working in Christian education on Sundays at St. Paul's, and supporting summer camps in

several places. Ted chose to honor Garna in a way dear to her heart, by bringing children into a nearer relationship with God.

St. Paul's has many children. They return from summer camp enthused and energized in the



photo: Courtesy St. Paul's Church

St. Paul's, Hanover

faith, and full of stories and good memories that flow into parish life. For many parents, however, the cost of sending one, two or three children to camp is prohibitive. Ted's Scholarship Fund makes it possible for every child to go, and has even sent needy and deserving friends of St. Paul's children.

The parish, which subsidized as many children as possible before the Fund was established, does all it can to contribute to the fund's corpus. Church suppers and other special events pour proceeds into the fund, as well as an increasing number of private gifts from good people who see what miracles occur in the Shrine Mont environment.

A week at a Shrine Mont camp can tip a child in the direction of faith. Campers form relationships and spiritual understandings under the umbrella of the church at critical times in their development. Parishes wishing to make a difference in a child's life, encourage Sunday School attendance, and support youth ministry might consider establishing a similar fund. Call St. Paul's at 804-537-5516. They'll tell you all about it.



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The Youth of St. James the Less present a donation for Shine Mont to Development Director Kirk Gibson during their spring retreat.

In Memoriam

This past spring Shrine Mont lost two dear friends. Barbara Levy served on the Shrine Mont Board since 1997. Her leadership and commitment to Shrine Mont will be missed.

Fred Moring was a long-serving member of the Shrine Mont Development Committee and a leader in the development of the Transfiguration Society, Shrine Mont's planned giving program. Mr. Moring and Ms. Levy were charter members of the Transfiguration Society.



Ms. Levy



Mr. Moring



Shrine Mont Hostess

By Cyndy Seibels

Shrine Mont enjoyed having a hostess the last two weeks of August 2009. What did she do? She showed you to your cottage if you were unfamiliar with Shrine Mont. She found a table in the dining room that is just right for you and your family. She was available to answer any questions you may have about Shrine Mont or the surrounding area. She suggested, planned and facilitated activities. She knew that many individuals and families wanted to be left alone to enjoy Shrine Mont's peace and beauty, but if you wanted to climb North Mountain, for instance, and didn't have a buddy, she found someone to hike with you and arranged for bagged lunches from the kitchen. Would guests like to play volleyball after supper? Softball in the afternoon? Or have a bonfire at night? How about reviving bridge playing in Art Hall? (Does anyone play bridge anymore?) Shrine Mont's hostess could be the point person for these and other activities.

Where will you find Shrine Mont's hostess? In or around Brown Hall.

Who is Shrine Mont's hostess? Cyndy Seibels, who has visited Shrine Mont since the age of five and considers Shrine Mont as much home as the house she grew up in. Cyndy was raised in Richmond and lives in Manhattan with her husband John Kolp and daughter Hattie. She enjoyed a career in the art world and now teaches nursery school.

Why does Shrine Mont have a hostess? Because Shrine Mont and its guests deserve one!

The position of Shrine Mont hostess has a rich history. Frances Woodward, the wife of Shrine Mont's founder, fulfilled hostess duties in the early days. Louise Sapp was Shrine Mont's hostess in the 1950s and 60s. Mizz Sapp—as we children called her, in that southern slur before "Ms." was coined—was a warm, grandmotherly presence in Brown Hall. Not only did she see that those who ordered the Washington Post got it every morning, but she coordinated with dining room hostess Hazel Ranson on who-sits-where, sold postcards from a tiny nook near the kitchen, and also with Mrs. Ranson arranged nightly bridge parties in Art Hall. As if that were not enough, Mrs. Sapp played the organ for all services in the Shrine and crocheted in her down time.

Mrs. Sapp was ably succeeded by Phyllis Burke, a tiny bundle of charm and good humor, who sold



Ms. Sapp (pictured here in the mid 1960's) served as hostess in Brown Hall in the 1950's and 1960's.

bucket loads of apple butter from her post in Brown Hall and continued to host bridge games. Then there was Nellie Moomaw, wife of Shrine Mont's director Wilmer. Nellie's warm, down-to-earth presence made guests feel at home. Nellie was a fantastic listener and in turn told stories of the guests and staff of Shrine Mont with love, pleasure, and a ready laugh that bubbled up from deep inside her. Dick Moomaw took over as Director of Shrine Mont upon

the retirement of his father Wilmer. Dick's wife Thelma, in addition to fulfilling the role of Shrine Mont hostess, managed the kitchen and dining room efficiently and tirelessly, often working shoulder to shoulder with the cooks. Thelma's great pleasure was found in the hours she visited with Shrine Mont's guests. "Now last year you were...and how did that turn out?" was Thelma's typical conversation starter as she sat down at your table at the end of a meal. Thelma's quality of picking-up-with-you-where-she-left-off was aided by her phenomenal memory, but it is Thelma's open hearted generosity, born of her love for people and of Shrine Mont, that made her the beloved presence that she was as hostess and remains in her retirement.

Shrine Mont's hostess knew she had big, fancy shoes to fill. She was honored to serve Shrine Mont's guests this August.



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News about Shrine Mont Pentecost 2009

Upcoming Events at Shrine Mont for the Fall of 2009

Tee with the Bishop Golf Tournament

September 13 and 14, 2009

Diocese of Virginia Parish Youth Ministries

8th grade retreat

October 9 – 11, 2009

Spectacular Wine Tasting Dinner in the ballroom of the

Virginia House (a fundraising event for Shrine Mont)

October 10, 2009

Fall Clergy retreat

October 12 – 14, 2009

Fall Camp sponsored by the Tri-Diocesan Council on Aging

October 26 – 29, 2009

Diocese of Virginia Parish Youth Ministries 6th and 7th grade retreat

November 13 – 15, 2009

Shrine Mont Camps Christmas Reunion at

St. James-the-Less, Ashland, VA

January 2, 2010



Open Dates

If you would like to plan a retreat at Shrine Mont for the spring of 2010, call Donna Trent at 540.856.2141 or email shrine@shentel.net for availability. There are dates available in 2010, plan early:

2010 dates with space available include:

April 9-11

April 16-18

May 9-11

Contact Shrine Mont for more information on calendar events
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