



# *Friends of Camp Santanoni* *Newsletter*

*Camp Santanoni Gate Lodge*  
*P.O. Box 113*  
*Newcomb, NY 12852*  
*(518) 582-5472 or (518) 834-9328*

*Spring 2008*

## **A Year of Great Progress**

Since the last time we published a *Friends of Camp Santanoni* newsletter, there has been some pretty amazing progress at the camp. Despite the devastating loss of the Main Barn to fire in 2004, the Camp Santanoni partners have continued their important work, with even greater commitment and intensity than before.

## **It's a Boathouse Again!**

On September 12, 2007 more than seventy-five people gathered at the Main Camp to celebrate the completion of the restoration of the boathouse. The boathouse was the most deteriorated building at the entire camp, as the roof had collapsed and the floor was completely deteriorated, as was much of the log work. The work was done over a four year period by Michael Frenette, from Tupper Lake, and a crew of talented craftspersons.



*From left to right: Howie Kirschenbaum (AARCH), Tania Werbizky (Preservation League of New York State), George Canon (Town of Newcomb), Susan Pruyn King, Carol Vroman, Tom King, Steven Engelhart (AARCH), Betsy Lowe (DEC), Wint Aldrich (NYSOPRHP), Chuck Vandrei (DEC), David Hislop (AARCH), David Vroman, and Clive Friend (DEC).*

The work included stabilizing the remaining sound portions of the building and lifting it so that new piers, a new floor system, and new lower courses of logs could be installed. The remaining deteriorated logs were replaced, a new roof (rafters, sheathing, wood shingles) was installed, the existing windows restored and reinstalled, new doors fabricated and installed, and the exterior was stained. During the same period, the crew also put on a new roof and conserved the door on the Ash House; restored the exterior of the Generator Building and Pump House; and completely restored the Gazebo by installing a new floor system, repairing and replacing its pole frame, and putting on a new cedar shingle roof.

The total cost of these projects was \$271,500 with funding coming from the New York State Environmental Protection Fund (\$92,000), New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (\$125,000), Town of Newcomb (\$35,000), and *Friends of Camp Santanoni* (\$19,500). The project architect was Carl Stearns of Crawford & Stearns, Architects in Syracuse.

Susan Pruyn King, granddaughter of Robert and Anna Pruyn, was ecstatic, saying it was like being there again as a young child. The boathouse is back!

## Michael Frenette, Builder and Craftsman

The way Tupper Lake native Michael Frenette tells it, he was just back from taking a UNESCO sponsored course in Norway on wood conservation technology and had hardly more than a few dollars in his pocket when AARCH executive director Steven Engelhart called to ask him if he would *volunteer* to do some work at Camp Santanoni. Despite needing to do some *paid* work, he was intrigued, and soon joined a small group of people to begin the restoration of the extensively deteriorated porches at the Main Lodge. This was the beginnings of Michael's long relationship with and commitment to Santanoni. Since 1998, he has spent the better part of every summer there and during this time he has restored porches, missing roof features, and steps; brought the boathouse back from the brink of complete loss; and restored or overseen the restoration of the Ash House, Pump House, Gazebo, and Generator Building.

Michael's talents come from a lifetime learning and doing things well. He builds exquisite log and timber frame cabins and is a furniture and cabinet maker, carver, and wooden boat restorer. Besides years of on the job learning, he went to the North Bennet Street School in Boston and has taken special historic preservation training in Norway and China. He has also taught in the St. Lawrence University Adirondack Semester program and at the Adirondack Museum and Adirondack Center for the Arts.

He's not only an extraordinary builder but he's been a patient teacher and supervisor for our summer staff and volunteers and has been an incredible spokesperson and ambassador for all our ongoing work there. He likes nothing better than to talk about Santanoni and the work going on there over a cup of tea and almost every visit with Michael includes an entertaining story, a good laugh, and a bit of wisdom.

Thank you, Michael, for everything you've done for Camp Santanoni.



## Major Work Done at Gate Lodge and West Cottage

In 2007, we also saw the completion of major exterior conservation and structural work at the Gate Lodge and West Cottage. At the Gate Lodge, the work included installing a new cedar shingle roof, repairs to all exterior wood elements (shingles, trim, trusswork), staining and painting, repointing two stone chimneys, reconstruction of a portion of the building's stone foundation, and the installation of proper site drainage. At the West Cottage, the work included installing a new cedar shingle roof, repairs to most exterior wood elements (shingles, trim), staining and painting, stabilizing and repointing a stone chimney, repairs to the building's stone foundation, and other structural repairs.



The project was developed by Janet Null of Argus Architecture & Preservation in Troy and was done by Mercer Construction in Albany. The total project cost was \$489,080 with funding coming from the federal *Save America's Treasures Program* (\$227,891), NYSDEC (\$120,000), Town of Newcomb (\$120,000), and the *Friends of Camp Santanoni* (\$21,189).



Simultaneous with the work done by Mercer Construction on the Gate Lodge, our summer staff undertook the restoration of the porch on the rear of

the building. The railings and brackets had been removed and the porch had been enclosed with jalousie windows and the wood floor was tiled. Staff removed the windows, tile and plywood and new brackets and railings were fabricated and installed by Saranac Hollow Woodworking. Staff then finished the job by painting the entire porch. It now looks just like it did in 1905 and still commands a great view out over Harris Lake.

## Big Plans for 2008

This winter, Carl Stearns of Crawford & Stearns, Architects developed a project to stabilize and restore the kitchen wing at the Main Lodge. This will involve substantial work to the building's stone and log foundations, site drainage improvements, and extensive exterior restoration work. Concerns about the stability of this wing prompted NYSDEC to install timber cribbing under the structure a few years ago. Funding for the project will come from the federal *Save America's Treasures* program, NYSDEC, the Town of Newcomb, and the *Friends*. We expect this project to go out to bid this spring and be completed by the end of 2008.

Using the remainder of the \$1,000,000 in state funding that was committed to Santanoni in 2006, NYSDEC is planning to do extensive work on the New Farm Manager's Cottage and some interior structural work on the Herdsman's Cottage at the Farm and to restore one of the bridges that carry the Newcomb Lake Road. The architectural planning work at the Farm will be done by Argus Architecture & Preservation and the bridge design work will be done by the DEC staff engineer.



*Santanoni is an official Save America's Treasures site. This program is a project of the National Park Service and the National Trust for Historic Preservation and is dedicated to the preservation and celebration of America's priceless historic legacy.*

## Summer Staff

We will have an excellent staff of four people at Santanoni this summer. They will interpret the site to thousands of visitors, undertake conservation projects, and supervise volunteers. They are: Melissa Leggett (University of Mary Washington), Matt Bowling (University of Maryland), Emily Clark-Watson (SUNY/ESF), and Andrew Athanas (North Bennet Street School). Andrew will lead our staff and volunteer conservation work projects, including the restoration of the Bath House. We'll also have a dozen high school age students from the *Landmark Volunteer* program there this summer for two weeks in July and August.



## Rendering of Gate Lodge Finds a Home at the Adirondack Museum

Several years ago, we got a call from a man who had purchased a small safe at an auction and, in that safe, he'd discovered the architectural rendering shown above. With a little digging around he identified it as the Gate Lodge at Camp Santanoni and, after learning of our work to preserve and interpret the camp to the public, he donated the drawing to AARCH. Since AARCH didn't feel that it could properly care for the rendering and wanted to see it accessible to the public, it was transferred into the collection of the Adirondack Museum.

The rendering was drawn by the architectural firm of Delano & Aldrich, which designed the Gate Lodge, completed in 1905. Williams Adams Delano and Chester Holmes Aldrich were trained at the École des Beaux Arts and, during the first third of the 20th century, became highly regarded designers of country houses, town houses, and institutional buildings. Among their best known work are the Walters Art Gallery in Baltimore and Kykuit, for John D. Rockefeller, Sr.

A limited number of high quality reproductions of the print are available for sale. Call (518) 834-9328 for more information.

**We need all of Santanoni's friends to be generous in their support of our work at the camp this year.**

### Your 2008 donations will go toward:

- Meeting our commitment of \$25,000 in matching funds for the *Save America's Treasures* funded work on the kitchen wing of the Main Lodge.
- Meeting our goal of raising \$50,000 in matching funds for future conservation projects.

## *Friends of Camp Santanoni Advisory Board*

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The *Friends of Camp Santanoni* is a partnership of non-profit organizations, the Town of Newcomb, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, and the thousands of people who love this special place and believe in its preservation and use for public education, recreation, and inspiration.

The *Friends* is a project of Adirondack Architectural Heritage (AARCH), the private, nonprofit, historic preservation organization for the Adirondack Park. For more information about joining the *Friends* or about volunteer opportunities, write to P.O. Box 113, Newcomb, NY 12852 or call either (518) 582-4572 or (518) 834-9328.