

# From The Heart

News For The Strong of Heart

Fall/Winter 2020

#### Trees, Trees, Forest

By Ellen M. Flight

When I was a camper at Songadeewin on Lake Willoughby my favorite part of hikes, besides the summit, was walking through the deep hardwood forests of New England. As I was often at the back of the line, I especially enjoyed the times when the bulk of the groups had just made it out of sight and I felt like I had the woods to myself. The canopy level of the trees so high above me with perhaps a whisper of summer breeze in their branches, the birds flitting among the branches of the smaller trees one level down before the underbrush, the dense woody smell of the ground and undergrowth, and an occasional woodland flower were all part of the magic of the woods. Fallen trees could either provide an obstacle on the trail or might have been used as a water bar. The upturned root systems were fascinating collections of rocks and debris from the forest floor.

When I became a middle school student, my family moved from our urban neighborhood in Chicago to western Massachusetts in the town of Amherst. It was a relatively new neighborhood and so "the woods" were close at hand for exploration, play and a shortcut to the one store that sold penny candy. At the risk of sounding older than I am, back in those days, we didn't have the kind



The Enchanted Forest in Willoughby

of homework kids have now and we certainly were not signed up for a lot, if any, after school activities. This meant there was plenty of time to play outdoors in the neighborhood and explore the surrounding woods. Here again I could be transported by being among the trees.

Throughout my childhood, my family made our way to Vermont each August, often after a summer at camp, and there we would be deposited six and half miles from the closest town in a rickety old house without electricity, running water or a phone. The outhouse had three holes with lids. As there were a lot of hayed fields nearby, one of our favorite activities – saved for the end of the day – was "going to High Pond." To get there we would get in the station wagon – more accurately we would get

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### Moving into The Lolly

On July 14, 2020 a group of local Songa volunteers arrived to help move the contents of the old Wangan Room into the brand new Lolly McPhee Burton Trip Building. The entire contents of the old building had

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on the station wagon. Back in those days, there were tailgates on station wagons, similar to those found mostly on pick-up trucks now. Because we were on a private dirt road we were allowed to sit on the open tailgate while my father carefully and slowly drove mostly uphill the mile and half to where we would park. The most magical part of the ride was after we had passed through the meadows and entered the woods. There was almost always a temperature change and certainly the familiar scent of a moist and dense forest. It felt enchanted because we were headed to the most wonderful swimming spot anywhere. Due to the slow speed at which we passed through the area, as long as I was gripping tightly to the tailgate, I could enjoy observing the canopy, understory and forest floor. The trees once again spun their magic and stirred something in me.

These three memories and others created the love and reverence I feel for trees today. As steward of the Songadeewin property for the last 22 years I have always felt responsible for being sure that long after I am gone there would be plenty of trees.

We need them to provide the shade we want at the Circle. Back in 2001 we planted four maples and oaks to ensure future shade at the various times of day when we gather there. At that time several more trees were also planted on the west side of the Manor House. Long before the tents arrived in Willoughby we planted 29 trees after we had removed three decrepit tennis courts. On a drawn map of the campus from 2005 I had that area named "the enchanted forest" due to my faith that one day those trees will provide enough shade that future campers will feel like they are living in a forest. In creating the Arts Village, part of the magic was having spaces outside, in the forest, for creating art. This is why the buildings are designed to have one whole side open to the surrounding woods. As you might imagine, the path through the small section of woods just before one reaches the village is a favorite of mine.

Once the buildings were complete we added landscaping to the road side of the area to ensure a shady, wooded spot in the future. I always feel happy when I drive down Rustic Lane and see the oak tree planted there in memory of my dad.



The path through the woods to the Arts Village

## **Trees, Trees, Forest** continued from page 2

In redesigning the Wangan Room building, one of the great opportunities we took advantage of was turning the building 180 degrees so that trip packing could happen under the trees in what was once "The Outback." A sad part of any building process for me is that trees sometimes must come down, as their root systems might be damaged by the building process. We will need to plant some additional trees around the new building, called The Lolly, so when trips are packing in or out they need not do so in the scorching sun. You can be sure that in the future there will be some tree planting happening nearby!



The lilac hedge that was planted to block the area behind the kitchen from the archery range. The hedge now stands well over 8 feet high.

All of this brings us to this past summer. You might imagine my sadness when I learned that a huge - and I mean HUGE - oak tree had to be removed from behind the Cedar cabin. More than one forester had told us that due to its age, and the fungi growing at its base and on its trunk, the tree was becoming a liability. If it came down in a storm, it would destroy one or more cabins (to say nothing of those inside if it happened in the summer) as well as half a dozen or so trees in the area. We had seen this happen in a winter storm when a similar tree fell on the



New tree planted near The Circle

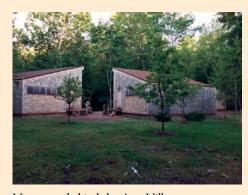
Dandelion cabin. I was not keen to have that happen again.

Once I was resigned to this grand old tree coming down I wanted to honor its legacy for a while longer. My first thought was that if I got rounds of its trunk or larger branches I could make cutting boards to give as gifts. As the men from the tree service company set up their crane and bucket truck I asked if when they got to certain branches they could cut me a dozen or so rounds which I thought I'd sand and oil for use as cutting boards. To cut such a large tree without damaging anything in the area they start at the top and move down – first with the branches that can safely fall to the ground on their own and then the branches that need to be secured with ropes to be gently lowered to the ground. In the second stage I saw a branch I thought would allow the right size for my cutting boards. It's hard to gauge just how large a branch is from the ground, but twelve rounds were cut from the designated limb. When I attempted to carry them away I quickly realized that they were way too large and heavy for regular household use.

Fortunately that day, our camp trip

driver, Mark Raishart, arrived on the scene bringing his young family for a swim. Knowing he was the forestry teacher at an area high school technical center, I enthusiastically told him of my plans and he saw that my tree disks were not going to work in the way I had imagined. He said that since his school had a sawmill he'd be happy to take a log to cut into pieces which would make nice cutting boards. In addition, a project like this was one he could have his students help with as part of their studies. Since the wood will need to dry and cure it will be several months before it will be ready for whatever part I will play in the creation of the cutting boards.

To close this story of my love affair with forests and trees we come to the last days of this summer. While we were not able to safely run camp this summer I did live in my cabin starting in May. Several members of what would have been the Leadership Team were living in the area and came to camp to help with our mailings, move all the trip gear into The Lolly and occasionally swim in Lake Dunmore. At some point when I was feeling sad about the oak tree needing to come down. I said that if ever there were to be a memorial fund created in my name I would want it to be for planting trees on our camp properties. I likely went on to explain my belief



New trees behind the Arts Village

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The oak tree behind the Arts Village planted in memory of Ellen's father, **David S. Flight** 'K41

that planting trees are a gift to future generations and doing so is an act of faith. I'm pretty sure I left it at that and forgot that I'd said it aloud to

them. Now, imagine my delight the morning I thought Jenn Hare was simply coming by to say good-bye and she instead arrived with Lolo



Songa's newest tree planted this summer between the Flight Deck and the cabin called Elm

and Susannah with a maple sapling in the back of a pick-up truck. Soon after, Dorothy arrived (with donuts) and Sally, Lelia, Kempley, Laney and Abby were Face Timing on various people's phones. And then they said the tree was a gift to me to be planted at Songadeewin. I was overcome and honored!

This lovely little maple was planted near the site of the great oak that had been cut down a few weeks earlier. I will nurture and care for this tree with the hope and faith that it will provide shade and comfort to future generations of Songa campers and staff.









### **Grand Old Oak Coming Down**



As described earlier in this newsletter, we had a large oak taken down behind the cabin Cedar this summer. Below is a chronicle of that process.



Giving the mighty oak a last hug to thank it for its years of shade and comfort



The massive tree's canopy

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Two cranes at work as the tree is dismantled limb by limb



What was left at the end of the first day



The length of the saw blade needed to make the final cut of the trunk



Emmett Raishart, five year old son of our driver, Mark Raishart '16, on the stump moments after the tree was completely taken down.



The portion of the tree Mark took to his classroom sawmill



The area where the once great oak stood clear of almost all evidence of its long life



Boards from the mighty oak after the log had been milled

## THE KEEWAYDIN ANNUAL FUND

The Keewaydin community stood by us during fiscal year 2020 and helped to soften the financial blow which resulted from the closure of our camps. Thank you!

A new fiscal year means we start anew with our Annual Fund which provides scholarships, helps us to maintain our facilities and equipment, and contributes to operational costs.



With your support, we can come out of the gates with determination and ensure that we keep

Keewaydin strong in 2021!

Keewaydin.org/give

#### Lolly

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been stored in the East Cottage and in the sick bay of the Health Center. Wangans, tents, tables, bins of food, pots and pans, stoves and tumps all needed to be transferred into the new building which will be called "The Lolly" for short. In addition, food that would expire by 2021 needed to be sorted out for donation to our local food shelf.

The crew, consisting of local campers and staff, some of whom were living in Vermont for the summer and one camper visiting her Vermont camp friend, all arrived in a drizzle to get to work. By noon everything was in The Lolly and the sun had come out just in time for a swim, picnic lunches brought from home and a surprise dessert. It was after all July 14th, when we celebrate Valentine's Day at Songa. There were Valentine cupcakes for one and all! We all appreciate those who came out to "Help the Other Fellow" and get things in place for next summer.



Unloading the Health Center



Shelves full of equipment in the area for trip gear





The Lolly, as the building will be called, as seen from Rustic Lane



Items stacked in the Trip Planning Room

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The main room with shelves ready to hold food



Valentine cupcakes for all!



The stellar crew of volunteers: top row, Ella Mirman '11, Tate Mitchell '07; middle row, Nyla Cole '17, Ashley Rogers '14, Brooke Bertrand '13, Jordan Bertrand '15, Dorothy Mammen '13, Fred Dunnington '13; front row, Nancy Margolin '64, Lolo Cappio '01, Sally Thomas '70 and Jenn Hare '99

### Memories from a Lake Willoughby Songa Camper

My brothers, Robert (Bob) Lesher and Edward (Ned) Foss both went to Keewaydin. Bob was born in 1932 and Ned was born in 1938. I assume they started out as campers but I remember them as trip leaders. My parents and I visited them one summer - my main memory is fishing off a dock and catching a fish which yanked me off the dock into the water. Someone retrieved the fish and got it to the kitchen which served it to me at dinner. I have no idea how we got to eat with the campers! I grew up hearing trip stories and I know their years at Keewaydin were cherished by both my brothers. Bob died several years ago - Ned just died a week ago so it was thinking about his obituary that brought back memories of the camp. I attended Songadeewin one summer somewhere between 1955 and 57. I also had a memorable time, but for the wrong reason - I came down with whooping cough and had to go home. Anyway, I ramble! Just thought you'd like to hear about campers from long ago who each carried Keewaydin in their hearts their whole life. Even I, as well, cherish the memories. So good to see that the camp still exists, has expanded, and is doing such great work with a diversity of campers. Think I'll get a "moose" Keewaydin baseball cap in the camp store so people will ask me about it!



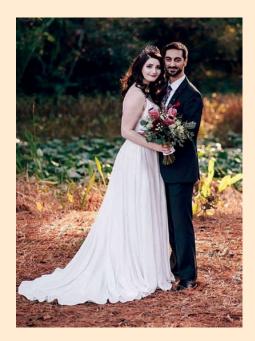
Ann Foss pictured with the trunk she took to Songadeewin back in the late 1950s



Signage from Songa and its train transport to camp seen here



#### **Alumnae News Notes**



Kelsey Barry '02 married Chad Cuomo on November 13, 2020. They were married in South Carolina where they reside.



**Tisbia LaBroi '99** sent this photo of herself on the beach in California with her daughter Naia Kay Wenzler, who was born December 26, 2018. Tish and her husband Scott live in Reseda, CA.







Lindsey Manges Gauderer '01 along with husband, Christian, and son, Fritz Gauderer, welcomed Emilia "Emi" Aline Therese Gauderer on July 22, 2020 in Lander, Wyoming. Aline was chosen as a middle name to honor Lindsey's grandmother, Aline Harter '36, who along with her husband Jack, was the director of Songadeewin on Lake Willoughby. "We hope to have Emi in a green canoe on Lake Dunmore in eight short years!"

Tara MacCallum '10 married Dan Vercruysse in July 13, 2019 in Brandon, Vermont. She is pictured here with Dan and her family which include her mom Theresa '91 who has a 20- year canoe on the Songa canoe racks and her brother Sean '10 who earned his green jacket for ten years on staff in our kitchen. Tara is teaching second grade at Dothan Brook School in Hartford, VT and is also working on her Master's degree.

Lelia Yerxa '03 is pictured here with her daughters Eleanor (4.5) and Francie (2.5) Garner on their ecofriendly electric bicycle. They all really missed being at camp this summer, but enjoyed adventures around Seattle!

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Megan Titchner '01 and Logan Doull '99 are pictured here with their three children: Gabriel, Finn and Elza about a year ago, so 3 of the 5 have grown taller, the other two a little greyer. It's taken on the track heading to the farm where they live in Te Awamutu, New Zealand which is on the north island. Until the pandemic, Megs was running an Airbnb at the farm called Free Range Homestay. Logan continues his work as Operations Manager at The Legendary Black Water Rafting Company in the Ruakuri Cave in Waitomo.

# TIME TO GET SOME SONGA SWAG!

Looking for a Songa T-Shirt? How about a mask, or a sweatshirt, or quarter zip? Maybe a Songa knit cap! It's time to go shopping at the Keewaydin Store! There's so much you can find there! Go to our website (www.keewaydin.org) and look for the "Camp Store."



Songa Mask



Songa Pom Pom Cap



Songa Quarter Zip

Visit our website at www.keewaydin.org and click on Camp Store! Or click here!



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Jocelyn Hughes Elysee '08 wrote to us: "Welcome to the world, Mr. Breaux Marcel Elysee. Born Sunday, November 8 at 8:45AM. So far, he's quite the observer. He only cries when he's hungry or needs a diaper change. We'll take that! Gladimir and I couldn't be happier with God's gift to us. He is every bit of a blessing."







Jen Hill '14 wrote: "It's been a little while since my three summers on staff and in that time there have been countless happy moments and changes - I qualified as a lawyer, travelled, hiked up a fair few mountains, captained my local club netball team and met and moved in with my boyfriend, Nick Semple. The most exciting and joyful thing that has bounded into my life, though, is this hairy little monster, Reuben. He is a border terrier to whom we were able to give a loving foster home during our first UK-wide lockdown - and it went so well we've now adopted him and taken him on a road trip to Scotland (featuring a lot of hiking, of course.) We are in the process of buying a house so Reuben has some more space to play in. Here he is looking windswept, exhausted and proud having conquered Goat Fell, a Corbett (Scottish mountain) on the Isle of Arran on a glorious sunny day in September. I've included a picture of two very tired humans, too, to prove we also made it!"





Abby Newkirk Opar '07 and her family have had an eventful year. They just celebrated the first birthday of their daughter Deirdre at their new home in Massachusetts. In the middle of the COVID pandemic Abby accepted a new teaching job in Newton, MA where her team member is Lolo Cappio '01. This meant a move from Charlotte, NC which also means they are now closer to family who are in Vermont and Massachusetts. Here are pictures of Matt and Deirdre outside their new home and Abby with Deirdre trying on winter hats.

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El McCabe '06 got her Master's degree in education at the University of Buffalo on the way to her PhD in Psychology. She has one and half more years on that one left. In other news, she got a new kitten!





Brooke Jette '12 has spent most of her time over the last six months outdoors doing the things she loves. Swimming in Lake Dunmore, hiking up Moose or biking in the Blueberry Hill management area of Goshen, Brooke has found joy and solace in nature. In the first photo she's with her family and in the next she's at a waterfall in Ripton near Nettle Hollow where she'd biked from her home in East Middlebury.



Jackie Ordemann '14 is now a medical resident at the Family Medicine Residency of Western Montana in Missoula. Here she is at her long white coat ceremony earlier this year. She also adopted a couple of really cute kittens that have been keeping her company and entertained.



Happy news from Kait Mort '17: Since returning home to Australia in November last year, Kait has been busy working as a clinical dietitian in a hospital. She sees lots of different patients there and helps with lots of different things such as tube-feeding after a stroke, puréeing meals for those who cannot swallow, and educating patients who have been newly diagnosed with life changing conditions such as celiac disease or diabetes. Outside of work, she enjoys gelato, reading, cooking, growing herbs in her apartment, playing board games, and going for long hikes in the Blue Mountains as the weather continues to warm up (Australia is currently going into summer.)

#### **Alum News**

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Checking in from Minnesota is Maeve Fischer '05 shared this photo of her family which pictures Imogen (4), Maeve, Clint (1) and her husband Adam. They are hiking in Great River Bluffs State Park in Winona, Minnesota. They have enjoyed the leaves and being outside this fall. Maeve is in her 10th year as a high school English teacher.

Campbell Jones '99 has been living in Fraser, Colorado the last two years and working at the elementary school in town. With the need for smaller class sizes and more teachers, one positive change to come out of the COVID crisis is that she was made the Science teacher for 3rd-5th grades! She found out she would be teaching 2 days before school started, so it was a steep learning curve. Here's a picture of her in her classroom.



After 10 years together and a difficult spring in New York City where Eliza Giles '05 was on the frontlines of COVID-19, George and Eliza got engaged at her grandparents' house on a lake where they often canoe. They also adopted a rescue dog this summer – eight-year old Mya.





This August, Willa Gutfreund '02 began studying to become a physician at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in the Bronx! Here is a picture of Willa in her new white coat.

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Sisters Jenn Hare '99 and Ali Hare '99 visited Lake Willoughby this summer! While missing camp very dearly, they got to go visit Lake Willoughby in Vermont's Northeast Kingdom.

They had a great day trip - swam in the crystal water, took in the gorgeous views and stopped by the original Songa campus. Fox Hall is just visible in the background of the picture. They remarked on what a long journey north this was for all the intrepid Songa Willoughby campers! The beauty of the spot is worth the trip.





Kate Ward '00 did a road trip out west this summer with her boyfriend, Ian, to some National Parks she has always wanted to visit: Badlands, Grand Tetons and Yellowstone. Here is a photo of Kate hiking in Cascade Canyon in the Tetons with her Songa "keep calm and paddle on" t-shirt. Sadly, no paddling but LOTS of hiking and some (chilly) swims in glacial lakes up in the mountains. Her main takeaway is - the United States is full of breathtakingly beautiful places. And it's not just the famous national parks. There are so many places you never hear of that are stunning and fun to visit. So get out and explore your own "backyard". You never know what you're going to find!



Courtney Mulcahy '99 shared this photo of herself with Jess Smith '01 and Julie Matranga '01 biking up in Fairfield, VT where a Julie and Jess live! They have been able to go on several rides this late summer and fall and it's so nice to have Songa sisters close by for adventures!



Katka Bogataj '17 had her long lasting wish fulfilled when she had the chance to hold a piglet in her arms. Many have asked for a photo, so here it is! This was a very proud moment for Katka.

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Betsey Hull '64, Songa on Willoughby and her daughters Sally Klose Gallagher '01 and Leslie Klose '03 took a several day trip to Lake Willoughby this summer. They rented a cottage and hiked, swam and explored the area around Songa's original summer home. Here they are with Lake Willoughby in the background.



Kara MacDonald '04 has a one-year old, Charlie who she is prepping for camp. They have managed to get in some hiking and canoeing in their home state of Washington, even during the pandemic. Charlie is also very familiar with the Songa goodnight song, and a few other camp favorites.





Claire Gentil '99 sent this photo of her Songa chairs in the backyard of the new home that Claire and her new husband, John McMahon, bought in Scottsville, VA this fall. It's about half an hour from Charlottesville, VA. Claire and John were married in a small family celebration after deciding is was safest to postpone their planned wedding in November. Here they are tying the knot on October 3rd in Charlottesville! Claire continues to work as a Nurse Practitioner for an orthopedic practice and commutes to Georgetown University Hospital in Washington, DC.



Grace Hildreth '06 reports that in the all the craziness of 2020, this little guy brought a whole lot of joy to her life. His name is Booker and he is a German Shepard puppy that Grace got in May! Booker loves to swim, sing along to music, and eat ice cubes. She can't wait to take him for a swim in Dunmore and a hike on Moos.

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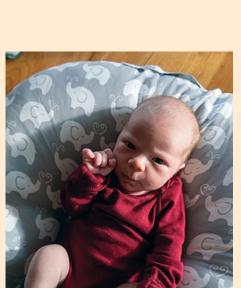
Emily Burton Stuart '01 sent us this picture of her wedding, writing that "Samantha (Sam) and I were married August 8, 2020 in Maryland! Immediate family were there to celebrate with us. Also pictured here is Daisy! We adopted her this summer."



In September, Asya Snejnevski '11, along with her husband Jeff Chandler '01, adopted a rambunctious lab/hus-ky mix rescue puppy. Here they are on Maple's second trip out in their canoe on Puget Sound where they encountered a rookery of seals who were very curious about a different kind of pup in the boat above them!







Ali Hare '99 and her husband Tom Bloch '11 are happy to introduce you to Peter Alfred Bloch-Hare who was born at Dartmouth Hitchcock hospital in New Hampshire on 10/20/2020 at 2:16 pm. He weighed 6 lbs 14oz, and measured 20.5 inches long. Peter is named after both his grandfathers and great grandfathers. Little Peter is excited to be a Keewaydin camper in 2028!

Part way through the summer Nancy Margolin '13 and her husband Peter Superak moved from Burlington, VT to their former hometown of Carrboro, NC. Here they are pictured in front of their new home and a block they share with several of their North Carolina friends. They also became grandparents for the first time this summer. (See photo of Hillary Superak Working '99 on page 18)

**Alum News** continued from page 17



All the way from Croatia, Vanna Vinser '17 sent a picture of her new cat that she got in May. Her name is Kreta and she is 5 years old. Fun fact: she is so similar to Vanna's first cat that they have trouble distinguishing them. They got her to make the first cat (Gamma) more active, but Kreta ends up sleeping more than her.



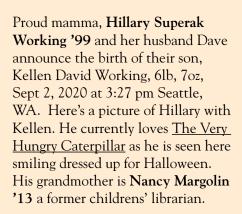




Lolo Cappio '01 and her partner Riordan Frost became engaged this summer during two proposals, one by Riordan on Lake Dunmore and one by Lolo at the Burnt Mountain overlook. Here they are on Burnt Mountain after a sunrise hike and with their rings on their fingers!



After postponing their Labor Day wedding and festivities Melissa Vorenberg '99 married Michael Van Ausdal in Dillon, Colorado on November 7, 2020. They were joined by a few close friends and their dog, Lucy. The couple recently bought a home in Denver, CO where Melissa is a public Defender for the state of Colorado.





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Here is **Dorothy Mammen '13** in Isabela Island, Galapagos, Ecuador where she spent a week before leaving on her 3000 nautical mile passage from the Galapagos to French Polynesia. She started before the pandemic began, racing around the globe. She will have to tell the story of her journey home at a campfire in 2021, but here is what she shared with us about her "23 days offshore on a friend's 42-foot sailboat. Three souls on board, double the length of any prior ocean passage I had done ... now seems like a long-ago dream, hard to believe it was less than a year ago, March 2020. So amazing to be south of the equator, see the Southern Cross in the sky, and yet old friend Orion still there as well. We had good weather, only occasional rain, the only thunderstorms were our last night out. No storm or gale winds; if anything we could have used more wind at times. I love my life all times of year, in all its variety, but there is something about offshore passages that really speaks to me. Surrounded by ocean and sky in every direction ... the constant motion of the water ... the boat moving by virtue of the invisible wind ... the infinite expanse of the night sky with no ambient light ... it is a thing apart."



After 10 glorious years in San Francisco, Margie Burton '99 moved to Fresno, CA (known as "the gateway to Yosemite") to move in with her now husband, Matt Nicoletti. They had planned to get married in September but, of course, due to COVID-19 nothing really went as planned this year. On the bright side, because they were no longer traveling, they adopted a cute little puppy in April! The new pup is over 60 pounds now, has been on all sorts of adventures, and has already earned her first canoeing coup. On the marriage front, Margie and Matt ended up deciding to tie the knot "micro-wedding" style in Santa Barbara this summer with just immediate family. While it was not the big party they had originally planned, it was very special and beautiful. Friends set up a driftwood altar on the beach and Margie's father, Angus Burton 'K69, officiated the intimate ceremony. Her cousin, Emily Burton Stuart, and her wife, Sam Stuart, got married on 8/8/20 as well—'twas a great day for the Burtons on both coasts! They are excited to visit Songa next summer for the dedication of the Lolly building - can't wait to see everyone there!



**Alum News** continued from page 19



During the first week of March 2020, unaware that a world-wide pandemic was ramping up, Ellen Flight '57, Sally Margolin Thomas '70 and Sally Kottnaur Stoll '64 took a trip to Tampa, Florida. While there they visited with some camp friends. They are pictured here having lunch with Martha Wood '08 and visiting the Sarasota Marie Selby Botanical Gardens with Lisa Mirman '11. The Gardens were hosting a special exhibit honoring the artist Salvador Dali, hence the large mustache behind which they stand.





Emily Kinghorn Clark '99 sent news of the latest Songa sister's arrival: Luna Frances Clark arrived as fast as can be at 2:38 am on Monday, November 23<sup>rd</sup>. All are healthy and happy! Emily and her husband, Zack, were looking forward to introducing Luna to her older brother, Fox. The Clarks live in Burlington, Vermont.

## We are keeping the campfire going until we meet again on the shores of Lake Dunmore!









