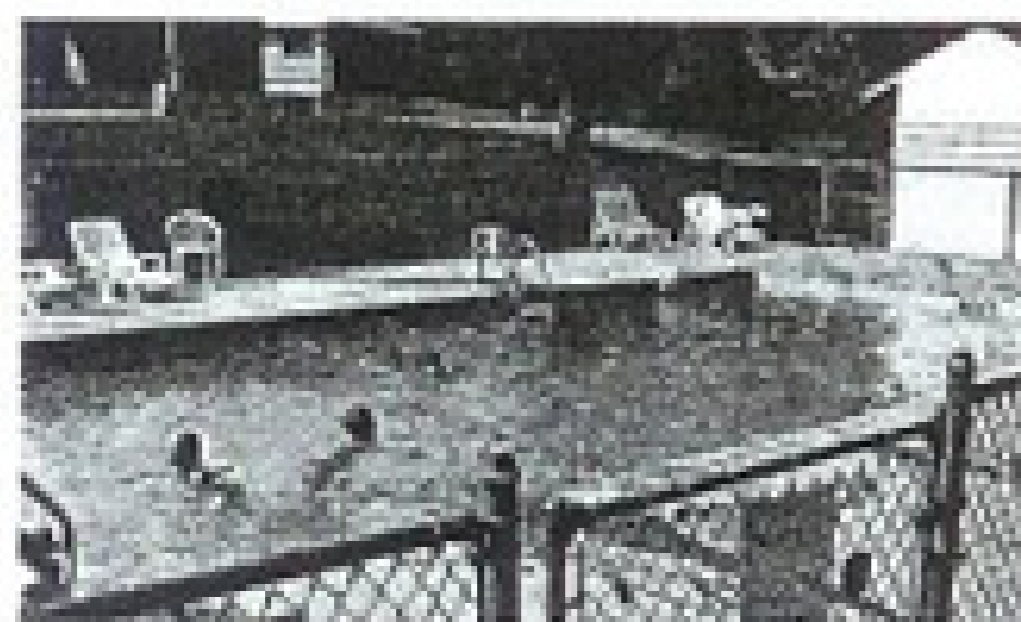


Making the Grade

North Carolina's Peace Valley Campground earns top marks

It was hard work, but Dee and Dale Witting were up to the challenge of turning their rundown park into a pristine destination campground in just four years. But it wasn't until the National Association of RV Parks and Campgrounds announced that the Wittings' Murphy, North Carolina, campground earned an all-around A grade in the nation's first consumer-satisfaction survey of independent parks that they realized their dream had come true.

Nearly 13,000 camping and RV enthusiasts participated in the 2008 online satisfaction survey, which evaluated guest experiences at independent campgrounds and RV resorts around the country that are affiliated with ARVC.

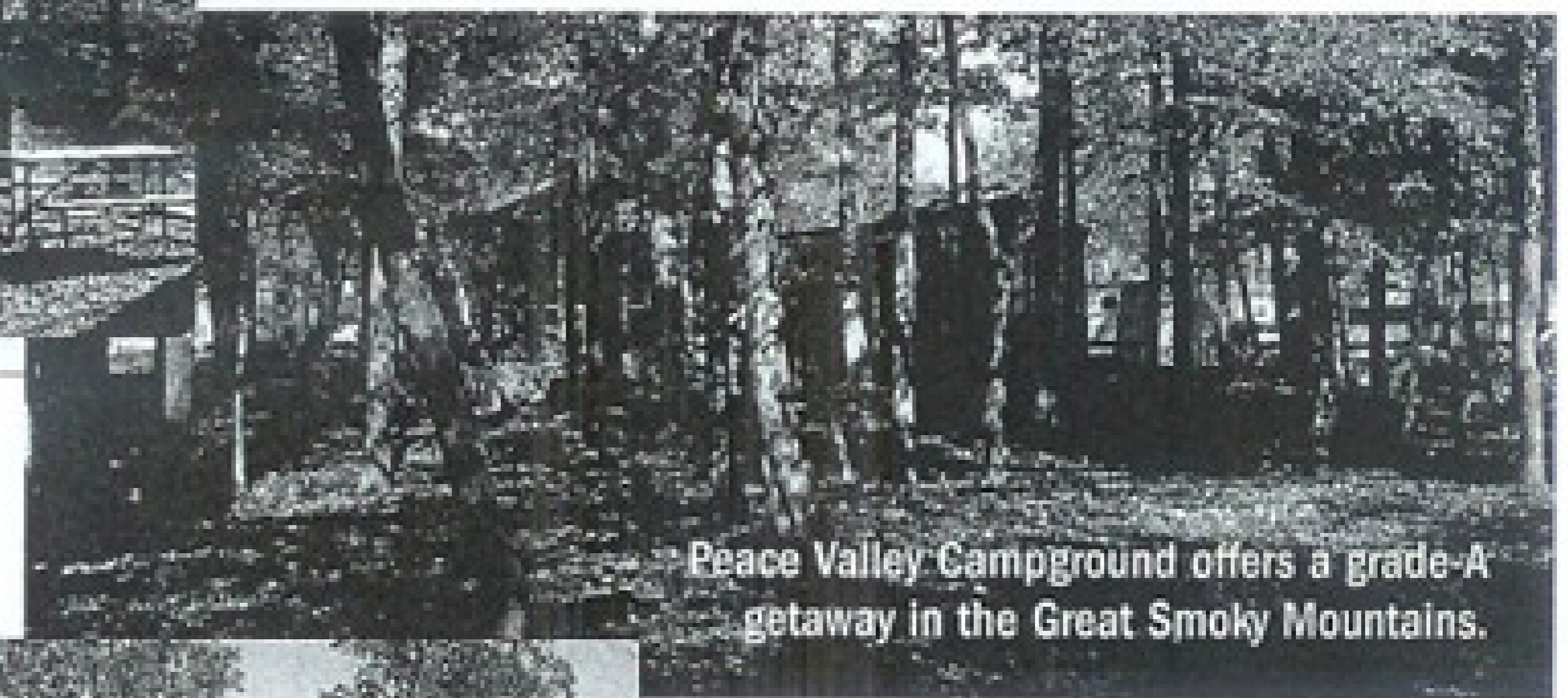
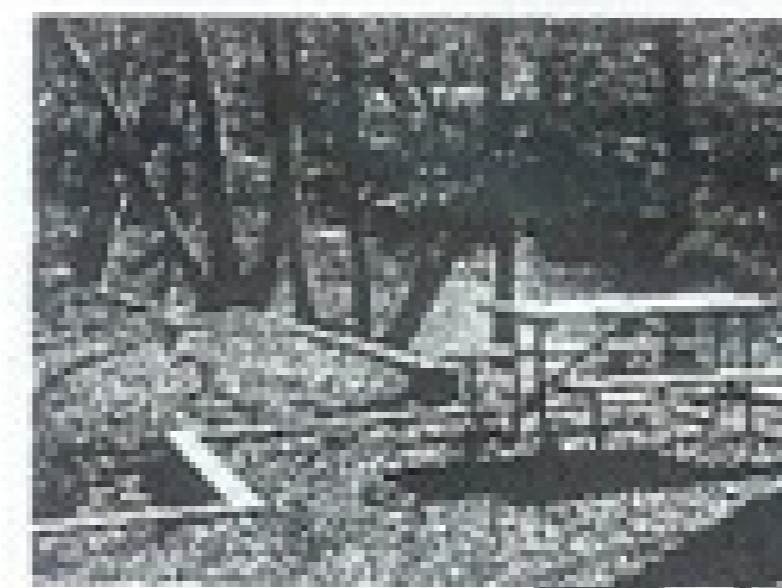


The Wittings may have been shocked at the accolades, but they weren't surprised that their efforts had transformed their campground. They had, after all, made informed decisions from the beginning.

"Networking with other park owners is very, very important," says Dee, a former Florida middle school teacher. "It's nice to pick up the phone and say, 'I've got this situation,' and they come right over."

Dee networks at local, state, regional and national campground shows and meetings, and she was recently appointed secretary of the Carolina Association of RV Parks and Campgrounds. Dee also attends regional and national RV rallies where she encourages RV groups to host their get-togethers at Peace Valley Campground.

Unlike most campground owners, the Wittings didn't have any RV experience when they purchased Peace Valley, but they did



Peace Valley Campground offers a grade-A getaway in the Great Smoky Mountains.



know about the location.

"We'd been coming to Murphy for a number of years," she says. "We'd been looking for a small business venture, and we saw this beautiful piece of property here—almost a mile on the Valley River. We didn't

have a lot of background in the industry, but we sure do now."

The rest is history. With Dee's work ethic and Dale's experience in real estate and golf course development, the couple transformed the campground's 55 sites, adding 16 more full hookups, a septic system, lighted power and water pedestals and Wi-Fi. In addition, the campground has a popular game room with a big-screen TV, the venue of movie nights, NASCAR Sundays and football-game viewing. Add volleyball and basketball courts, horseshoes and badminton, an open-air pavilion, canoe rentals and fishing on the Valley River, and Peace Valley Campground becomes a must-visit destination.

"We couldn't have done this all ourselves," says Dee. "In the campground business, you need good help, and we have that with one full-time employee and our work-campers."

The moderate weather makes the RV park available year-round. Guests without an RV can rent one of the campground's new fully equipped cabins. When they're ready to explore beyond the campground premises, guests will find plenty to see and do in Cherokee County, North Carolina's westernmost county, located in the southern tip of the Great Smoky Mountains.

Peace Valley Campground

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