

The Acorn Highlights

October 2004

The quarterly newsletter of the American Camping Association®, Rocky Mountain Section

Rocky Mountain Section Office

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In this edition of the Acorn:

Section Office	2
WonderFall	3
Section Tidbits	4-5
A Camp on the Rebound	6
Camp Spotlight	7
Board of Directors	8

President's Letter

Dear Friends,

It seems that most of us in the Rocky Mountain Section had an excellent summer in 2004. I know that a great many young people had the time of their lives and came away with new confidence, independence, and enhanced skills in many areas. So, congratulations, and I hope you are each getting a bit of downtime to reflect on your contributions.

When the summer season ends, it is always so rewarding to spend time with colleagues and share our experiences, our successes, and our challenges. It sometimes seems that only other camp people really understand... We are especially looking forward to this opportunity for networking at our Fall Conference on November 16 and 17. We hope that each of you will be able to attend.

Education chair Marty Ferguson has put together a truly remarkable program, headed by Bob Ditter. Many of you who have had the opportunity to hear Bob speak at national conventions and other events know how much he has to offer to the camping community. Each of his programs is timely, targeted, and helpful. We are fortunate to have Bob, who will give a keynote address, a closing session, and a break-out session during the workshop.

In addition, there will be more than 20 break-out sessions on topics of interest to everyone in the camping field. Marty has created a track for facilities managers as well as for food service personnel, so bring lots of staff with you. We have worked hard to make the workshop affordable, and I don't think you will find a better value for your educational dollar anywhere.

I look forward to seeing everyone in November!

Jane

From the Section Office

ACA Becomes the American Camp Association

It is official! Our organization has a new name and a new logo! The new look and the new name will help the public better understand who we are and what we do. The icon in the logo shows two people, one smaller than the other, representing relationship, mentoring and community.

The corporate logo is just one in ACA's new family of logos. There are new logos for accredited camps, business affiliates, business partners and each of ACA's 24 sections. The logos all work together and show a common identity and consistency within the organization.

Accredited camps should have received (or will soon be receiving) a CD containing logo information. This information is also available on the web (www.acacamps.org/logos). Accredited camps do not need to dispose of printed materials such as brochures that contain the "old" accredited camp logo. Camps are encouraged to use all such materials and then use the "new" logo when new printed materials are ordered. The national office will send accredited camp signs with the new logo to each accredited camp before next summer.

New Improved ACA, Rocky Mountain Section Web Site Goes "Live"

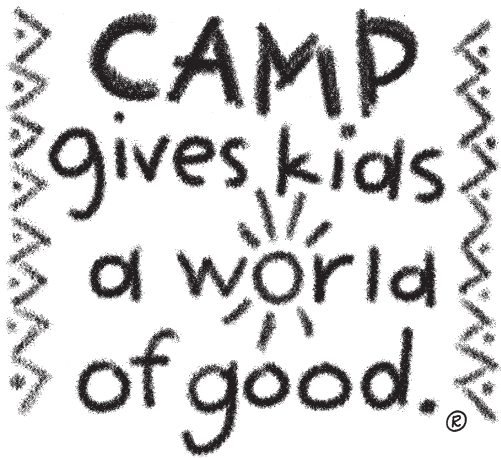
Part of ACA's branding efforts include a new look to both the national as well as section web sites. The new ACA, Rocky Mountain site (www.acarockymountain.org) has just gone "live." Welcome to Mary Marugg from Sonlight Christian Camp who has been working with the national office to create our site. Mary will also serve as our web site manager and will be updating and revising the site on a regular basis. Mary welcomes your ideas and input and would love to have additional camp pictures to use. Mary can be contacted at 970-264-4379 or mary@sonlightcamp.org.

The new site continues to provide information for parents including a searchable data base of accredited camps in Colorado and Wyoming. The site also features a camp professionals section with information on educational events, items for sale, staffing needs etc. Our site also links to the national site and includes information on becoming a member of ACA, information for the media and expanded resources for parents.

Learn more about ACA's branding efforts and our new section web site at the Fall Conference. I look forward to seeing you there!

Betsy





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WonderFall

by Clay Colvig

The other day I watched a leaf turn a magnificent burnt orange. I don't know why or how it turned orange. And now I am curious. I just enjoyed it as it deepened in color and prepared to fall.

The other day I watched the grass grow. I sat in the evening sun in an open field and watched it turn green from an afternoon rain shower, swishing and swaying in the wind as a dog ran through it.

The other day I followed the tracks of a small bug as it made its way down a wet trail. I don't know what kind of bug it was. And now I am curious. But I was content to imagine the decisions of its journey as it twisted this way and turned that way.

The other day I watched a two-year-old discover the joy of taking off his shoes to wade in the mud and water of a small cold creek. Why did it feel so liberating and create such exhilaration? I don't know. But I joined him.

The other day I watched a huge full moon rise over the Eastern Colorado plains so fast I could see it moving and experienced a sense of universal vertigo deep inside me.

The other day I listened to a squirrel collect pinecones for its winter store. It scuttled around a tree outside our window dropping them on our metal roof, making a sound like a muted gunshot. I don't know why this didn't irritate me as it had in previous years. And now I am curious. But the sound made me smile as it signaled the changing of the seasons. The other day I watched the sand come alive as I ran on the beach at the very eastern edge of the continent at midnight and hundreds of translucent crabs ran with me in the moonlight.

The other day I spent hours of pure futility, raggedly, ignorantly, fighting the overwhelming force of the waves as I swam back and forth on a surfboard attempting to do something I had never done before. Why would I do that? I don't know. But I imagine it was the effortless joining that I felt with that force as I stood for the first time and rode with elation towards a new comprehension of the world and myself.

The other day I watched a horse lead its herd through the trees to the upper field. I don't know why they went that way when they could have gone anywhere. And now I am curious. But it was fun to watch them slowly turn and follow.

The other day I watched a red planet, brighter than I had ever seen it, rush through the crisp Colorado night sky as fast as... It didn't even look like it was even moving. But by early morning it was gone.

The other day I watched in very slow motion as the slightest of breezes caught the last leaf on the tree and gently dropped it to the ground. I don't know why that leaf had outlasted all the others. Or why it fell at that moment. And now I am curious. But it did. And I had the privilege of being there to see it.

I wish there were more other days. Every day should be the other day. They are not. But take that chance. Whenever and wherever. And wonder.

Newsletter Contributions

The Acorn Highlights (soon to be renamed -- see page 4 to submit your idea(s)) is the official newsletter of the American Camping Association Rocky Mountain Section. It is YOUR newsletter. Let us know how it can best serve your needs and wants as a camp professional. Also, when you come across articles or information that you think might be useful to others in the camping community, please pass it on to Mike MacDonald at mikemac@sanbornwesterncamps.com. If you want to write an article, or if you have an idea about a possible submission, please contact Mike.

Section Tidbits

The Acorn Highlights New Name Contest

As you know, the Acorn Highlights is in need of a name change, and we are still seeking suggestions to better capture the spirit, history, and uniqueness of our section. Some suggestions have been submitted, but there is still time to share your ideas. The winning name will win its creator a FREE REGISTRATION to the upcoming Fall Conference. Send your suggestions to Mike MacDonald at mikemac@sanbornwesterncamps.com or give your suggestion to him on the opening day of the Fall Conference in November. The new name will be announced at the conference.

ACA Employment Center

Looking for staff? Looking for a job? The ACA Employment Center is just for you! The ACA Employment Center (www.acacamps.org/jobs) is an online resource for both employers and job seekers. ACA membership is not required to post a job on the site nor is it required for those wanting to search the site for camp jobs.

Employers can advertise position openings for both summer and year round jobs at camp with the Employment Center. Employers can also view resumes, learn about recruitment tips, tools and products and can create an employer account to manage job postings and store information on candidates. The site also contains information on camp job fairs such as a listing of camp job fairs around the country and tips and strategies for making the most of recruiting staff at camp job fairs.

Job seekers in the camp community can post an anonymous resume, view available jobs, and can create a job alert so new jobs that match their search will be emailed to them. Job seekers can also create a job seeker account to store job openings, resumes, cover letters and more. All of these tools enable those searching for camp positions to manage their job search with ease.

Visit www.acacamps.org/jobs for additional information about The ACA Employment Center.

Rocky Mountain Base Camp For Rent!

Copper Mountain Resort has a unique opportunity for youth camp operators to host a camp at a destination resort. The Base Camp at Copper Mountain is a 297-room hotel, located in the Village at Copper with easy access to all resort activities and amenities. The Base Camp property is a well maintained, youth oriented, moderate facility, (it is used as employee housing in the winter months). Copper Mountain is a world-class multi-season resort located in the Ten Mile and Gore Mountain Ranges, just 75 miles from downtown Denver.

We would like to hear from operators interested in either renting or leasing this facility. For more information, please contact Chenoa Paccagnan at Copper Mountain Resort. Tel: (970) 968 – 2318 ext. 41821 Email: paccagnanc@coppercolorado.com

Help Wanted / Positions Available

La Foret Conference and Retreat Center, a 28 building, 192 bed, 450 acre nonprofit camp in the Black Forest north of Colorado Springs, is hiring 2 full time, exempt, management positions to begin in late Nov. Great place to work with terrific people. Both positions require dependability, multi-tasking, accuracy, attention to detail, & hospitality. Knowledge testing & background checks required. Fax cover letter & resume to 719/495-9016. EOE

Buildings and Grounds Manager. 3 years experience in maintenance, building trades, utility & water systems, supervision; must use Excel & Word and hold a valid Colorado drivers license with good record. \$33K/year + benefits

Operations Manager. 3 years experience in camp-like setting, accounting/bookkeeping, HR, admin systems & food service; excellent computer skills & hold a valid Colorado drivers license with good record. \$32K/year + benefits

Encourage Your Summer Staff to Join ACA

ACA student membership is affordable and offers a variety of benefits to those working in a camp setting or interested in pursuing a career in camping or any youth development field. Please encourage your summer staff to consider ACA membership. The student member rate is \$35 a year and is available to anyone who is a full or part-time student. Membership applications are available from the National office (765-342-8456), the Section office (888-926-2267) and online (www.acacamps.org/membership/onlineapp2.htm).

“I Support” Shenanigan:

We need your help preparing for the 2004 Fall Conference “I Support” Fundraiser! Our goal this year is to have a select few, really terrific, unusual, exciting items – sports memorabilia, lift tickets, theme baskets, sports tickets, concert tickets, wine, spa packages, and more! We are also adding a raffle/door prize component this year with all kinds of things like restaurant certificates, manicures, facials, grocery certificates, coffee certificates and camp paraphernalia (clothing, travel mugs, caps, crazy creek chairs, etc...).

We are looking for your donations of items (big and small), your suggestions of merchants and/or organizations that might be willing to donate a item and your gift of camp “stuff” from your own camp stores. Please let Molly Robison know about larger items, or you can simply bring your donation to the conference. There will be someone at the check-in table to gather up donations and get them ready for the evening entertainment.

All donations to the Auction are tax-deductible and written verification will be provided to every donor. Funds are used to support Section projects (such as: travel for delegates to National Conferences, speakers for our Annual Conference, speakers for Spring Workshops, Education programs like visitor training and summer training courses, the Acorn publication, Section support for National CAMPaign07, visitors travel to accreditation Shen visits, and more).

If you have any questions, need a donation form or want a corporate donation request letter, please call or email Molly Robison – 303-697-4621 ext. 13 or molly@genevaglen.org. Thanks in advance for your support!

Camp West 2005

Hi Everyone! Molly Robison here, just back from California and Las Vegas where I attended the Camp West 2005 Steering Committee meeting. Camp West is the new name for the former Cal West Conference. The two CA sections (Northern and Southern) have hosted the Cal West Conference for the past 11 years. Beginning in 2005 and expanding for 2006, Cal West is becoming Camp West – a Western Regional Conference. This year, representatives from the Evergreen, Oregon Trail, Coronado and Rocky Mountain Sections have joined the CA Conference Steering Committee to provide ideas and insight into developing a Western Regional Conference. The CA Sections have been very welcoming and I am really looking forward to working with them to create a terrific, useful, effective, relevant Western Conference.

So, what does this mean for us in the Rocky Mountain Section? For 2005, we have an excellent education option and the opportunity to participate in a terrific Conference with a genuine western focus at a great “get to know us” rate of just \$300 for groups of 6 people from our Section (yes, really - \$300 for 6 attendees). For 2006, we have the chance to be in on the ground floor of creating a truly Western Conference with topics, sessions and issues relevant to our needs (water issues, forest service and BLM permit issues, fires, etc...). We have the opportunity to have representatives on the Steering Committee, the Program Committee, Exhibit Hall, etc... The CA Sections are very enthusiastically inviting us into their “territory” by including us in the expansion plans for an established Conference (that has generated a profit for 10 of its 11 years!).

I will have more information about the new Camp West 2005 Conference when we meet in November for our Section Conference. In the mean time, dates and locations for Camp West are: 2005 in Ontario, California from April 6th – 9th, 2005, and 2006 in Las Vegas, Nevada from March 29th - April 2nd, 2006.

I am looking forward to seeing many of you at our Section Conference in just a few weeks!

Public Relations

Do you have a friend or contact in your local news media (print or television)? Zim Zimmerman, our Public Relations Chair, is developing a media contact list to better spread the word about camping in the Rocky Mountain West. We want ACA to be the place to go for writers and producers doing stories about camp. Developing media relations is vital for that to happen. If you know individuals in these positions or people who could help in our efforts, please contact Zim at zim@congregationmanuel.com.

Has your camp been the focus of a newspaper article or news piece? Zim is also working on creating an archive of articles and other pieces about Rocky Mountain Section camps. Please contact Zim if you have something (or think you might have something!) that would be of interest.

Congratulations!

Congratulations to Bo Winslow of Cheley Colorado Camps! He is the newly elected president of the Board of Directors for the Certified Horsemanship Association. Bo is a clinic instructor for CHA and has been on the board for 4 years, most recently as the Vice President. Bo’s new role will run for 6 years - 2 years each as president elect, president and past president.

A Camp on the Rebound

By David Brooks

The most successful institution I've ever been involved with closed down last year, and is now being resurrected. It's the teen summer camp section of the Episcopal Camp and Conference Center in Ivoryton, Conn. It takes mostly New York area kids out of the familiar context of their lives and sticks them in tents in the forest, where they have to cook two meals a day over an open fire and socialize with people nothing like themselves.

I've never been to a place where race and class mattered less. For two years, while I was a counselor, I had Robert Rubin's son in my tent. I know a lot about that kid, but I had no idea who his father was or how much money he was making. On the other hand, we had poorer kids from Brooklyn and the Bronx who had never been out of the city before. One looked up at his first night sky and exclaimed: "Wow! It looks just like the planetarium!"

I went to and worked at the camp for 15 years, which was a not uncommon tenure. Such was our fierce love of the place that we just kept coming back. A friend returned while at law school and used to lead discussions on jurisprudence in a rowboat on the lake. I returned year after year from the University of Chicago to teach classes- absurdly- in machismo.

But over the past decade, the camp withered. Parents and campers lost interest. College kids didn't want to work at a place like that. It fell victim to a series of broad social forces that are still devastating generalist camps across the country.

First there is the liability crisis. Camp was a place where teenagers learned to build courage. There was cliff diving. There were river rapids. There were survival-style camping trips, with kids sleeping alone in the forest.

But society has become more risk-averse, and liability costs have escalated. So in the 1990's, the people running the camp banned most of the activities that scared and thrilled us. Camp became safer, but also more tepid and less meaningful.

The second broad social change is the professionalization of childhood. Parents have become more involved in running their children's lives, even by remote control when the kids are away at camp. So over the past few decades, camps that promise to develop a specific skill –music, basketball, computers, video making – have prospered while generalist camps have suffered.

In fact, the Episcopal Camp and Conference Center, which is the second oldest camp in the country, was self-consciously cultivating leadership and self-confidence. But these are cultivated through spontaneous and, often, kid-run activities. We used to mount elaborate games with bizarre names like Investment Opportunities in Zimbabwe. What's a parent supposed to make of that? If parents choose a camp with a tennis or computer curriculum, they can sit at home and know what their kids are going to be achieving.

Third, society has become more stratified. Ambitious kids are supposed to do summer internships or work on skills. That means they spend their summers doing the sorts of things they do during the year, around the same sorts of people. It's become harder to get upper middle class parents to send their kids to a place where they will be crammed into little tents and showering in outhouses 75 yards away.

In short, over the past few decades, parents have made childhood more to their liking. The side effect is that camp became less exciting, less meaningful and less compatible with resume- building lives.

I'm happy to report, though, that the Episcopal Camp and Conference Center is now on the rebound. After spending a decade trying to adapt to the social forces, a new director, Peter Larom, has been brought in, and one of my former campers, Peter Giles, is running the teen section. They've got the blends of traits required of great camp leaders: they are mature enough to run something, but deep down they're immature enough to get excited by the things that excite kids. It will take years to rebuild the camp, but this first rebound summer was a success. More than a quarter of the teenagers who went to camp in July opted to stay for an extra two weeks.

And it could be that even we boomer parents are finally acknowledging that we've become too obsessive about running our kid's lives. There needs to be at least one place where teenagers can go, at least one month out of the year, that is totally different, where kids can build themselves.

Camp Spotlight

Each edition of the Acorn provides an opportunity to highlight one or more of the camps in our section. There is a wide range of camps out there and the Camp Spotlight will shine some light on our friends and neighbors. If you would like to have your camp spotlighted, please send a write-up to the Communications Chair, Mike MacDonald (pg. 8)

CAMP TO BELONG... GIVE SIBLINGS THEIR RIGHT TO REUNITE

by Lynn Price and Lisa Robertson

Brothers and sisters; they fight, argue and tease. And yet, they run to each other when in need of a friend and celebrate every day events together.

At Camp To Belong, we celebrate sibling rivalry and sibling connection among brothers and sisters whose every day lives are separated through foster care or other out-of-home care.

We hit the ground running for the 2004 session of Camp to Belong Colorado and we felt unstoppable. Camp To Belong is a non-profit organization dedicated to reuniting brothers and sisters placed in separate foster homes and other out-of-home care for events of fun, emotional empowerment and sibling connection. Award winning camp programs are the flagship of the organization.

Graciously hosted by Anderson Camps, Ltd., in Gypsum, Colorado, June, 2004, (for the fifth year) we were provided the resources to give over 100 campers the camp experience that makes Camp to Belong the unique and powerful force that it is in the lives of siblings all over the nation. Brothers and sisters 8 years and older share special time along with other youth in the same situation... all through no fault of their own.

Christopher Porter and the Anderson staff worked side by side with Camp to Belong volunteer counselors to challenge and inspire our campers to reach beyond their perceived limitations to try new things like: whitewater rafting, horseback riding, climbing the wall, hiking, tackling the ropes course, and playaking.

Not only were they trying new things, but they were also forming, strengthening, and re-forming bonds with their siblings from whom they are separated in the system. Brothers and sisters got to know one another as they never had before, or learned something new about each other. It was a camp session full of smiles and tears, cuddles and giggles, and the occasional overzealous wrestling match.

Camp to Belong Signature Programs; Art Therapy, Sibling Enhancement, Birthday Celebration, Life Seminar, and Mentoring were key in the success of Camp to Belong Colorado 2004. Along with the beautiful sibling pillows, our campers learned lessons in trust with the mask project

creatively taught by Juli Kramer of Art for The Whole Child. Roger Washburn and friends from Speedstacks awed all of us with the fantastic skill that is cup stacking and taught the campers how to stack cups, as well as gave them their own stacking cups to take home with them. The low down on the hoedown was that it was the night to get down. Taylor Made Events masterfully planned theme nights as everyone had a blast dancing the night away to the Electric Slide, the Cotton Eye Joe, and yes, the Macarena. Campers and counselors alike enjoyed the attractions of the carnival. The grown-ups suddenly became children again, something that tends to happen around giant, inflatable obstacle courses, face-painting and game booths, popcorn, snow-cones, and cotton candy. The icing on the cake this year, though, had to be the Birthday Celebration. Siblings were escorted to their tables greeted by gifts they chose for one another, personalized birthday cards and a parade of cakes with everyone singing Happy Birthday over and over and over and over again. Not able to share birthdays throughout the year, they celebrated by blowing out each other's candles. Truly, it was a sight to behold.

The final campfire was inspiring and wonderful. Thanks were given by campers and counselors alike. Each recalled their favorite memories and most impacting moments. Like the young teen mother who was thankful for a time when she did not have to take care of her siblings...and her baby...and someone was taking care of her. Like the young man who said his life was worthless without his siblings and how much he enjoyed them at Camp. Like the teen who started Camp not liking his sister, and then learned to love her. And the sibling bond was strengthened between brothers and sisters who might have otherwise spent another year not really knowing one another or the healing power of love.

Camp To Belong Colorado was the training ground for all affiliate Camps across the country and Canada building a unified voice with not only the joys of camping, but furthermore the education of the significance of siblings in every family life. Camp To Belong, We Give Siblings Their Right to Reunite.

For more information; Camp To Belong, 303-791-0915
www.camptobelong.org

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