

November 2010

Gary's Camping Newsletter

Continuous Improvement for Great Camp Leaders

"To do life right, you have to feel like you're growing up until the day you die."

– Jane Fonda (reflecting on her father, Henry Fonda).

Behind the Best Camp Showerhouse – Taylor Fay (now at YMCA Camp Greenville, SC) writes, "My mom almost single-handedly raised the money for the beautiful showerhouse at Camp Ihduhapi (Twin Cities Y, MN) that you use as the example of camper-moms' 'new prerequisite' in all of your slide shows. It makes me so proud! Her fundraising tactic? Bake each prospect a pie!" Reach him at taylorfay@gmail.com See photos of her showerhouse at <http://www.garyforster.com/photo/index.php>

"You Light Up My Lettuce" – I've been pestering camps to put lights over their salad bars (often they're already THERE and just haven't been plugged in.) Now I've got PROOF why it's important. Cornell University just completed a study of school lunch programs and found that *simply putting a full-spectrum light over fruit-bowls and salad bars DOUBLED the number of children that utilized them!*

"Nature's Wrath" – Now *there's* a great activity name if I ever heard one! As an example of the wonderful depth of detail and counselor involvement (which yields CAMPER involvement!). Download it for free at www.natureswrath.net If you like what you see there, I strongly encourage you to invest a piece of your program budget into www.greatcampprograms.com instead of buying some expensive new "toy" for this summer. Friends and Memories, that's your goal.

Camp Marketing Labs – This year's full-day workshops will be held at Camp Tecumseh YMCA (worth a trip in itself) on December 7th (*Resident Camp Marketing* for the fourth year with me, Gary Forster), and December 8th (*Selling Year-Round Camp Programs*, again with the best in the business, Susan Coker). Way beyond the basics, you'll come away with an action plan for your own camp. Only \$149 all-inclusive for *both* workshops, overnight with linens, four meals plus snacks. Bring two people! Second person from the same association only \$99. Look for cheap flights to Indianapolis (90 min) and Chicago Midway (2 hrs) on www.Southwest.com and other airlines. **Register by Nov. 24, 2010** at <https://secure.camptecumseh.org/secure/marketing/> See more of camp: come the night before (Monday Dec. 6th) at no extra charge!

Red Green (the Canadian God of Camp Maintenance Staff) on Duct Tape:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yjnC9Jmo_6o (from Mark Young, *That Camp Guy*.)

Hints for Conference Volunteers – Don't give speakers a gift in front of the whole group. It looks like your fleece is payment for all the time and effort the volunteer put into the presentation. A heartfelt handshake and thank you is much more sincerely felt. One of the nicest gifts I get are thank-you cards with a photo of either the location city, a nearby camp, or a group photo of the planning committee, and then a "Thank You, Gary!" with signatures of all the committee on the inside. Easy to do, nice to post on the wall, and shows you've actually thought about me.

Day Camp Directors & Counselors – Win a Free iPod Touch! Our innovative friend Mark Young writes, "I want to know your number one question about starting and running a Day Camp. No question is too silly or strange. And to say thank you for your question, one randomly drawn person will receive a

band new iPod touch from me. The contest is almost over, so enter today at:
<http://www.daycampinabox.com/>”

“Slips, Trips and Falls – are among the leading types of accidents for many businesses.” (From the Safe-Wise Consulting Newsletter). “They can account for many general liability claims and the majority of workers compensation costs. Slips are primarily caused by a slippery surface and can be compounded by wearing the wrong footwear. While these types of accidents are common, they can be prevented through training, good housekeeping, signage and care. The [Prevention of Slips Falls](#) tip sheet is published in the [Online Resource Library](#).” <http://safe-wise.com/risk-management/newsletters.html>
Ready for winter?

Old Farts and their Work Shops – That’s what a group of “elder” camp volunteers called themselves at Camp Jewell. They loved to work (slowly) with each other at camp. No pressure, lots of talk, but great skill at no cost. (I’m diggin’ this writing in verse!) Dave Sherry at the Des Moines Y Camp just told me how he’s had *hundreds* of benches and picnic tables donated by (mostly retired) guys that built them in their own shops at home, often working together, and then bring them out to camp a batch at a time. Dave gives them plans for “Leopold Benches” and a standard Picnic Table so they all match, and are all safe. The finishing touch on each one is running a round-over router along every edge to prevent splinters.
<http://www.garyforster.com/photo/displayimage.php?album=16&pos=0>

The Future of Parent-Child Programs – Kids, more than ever, need to spend time with their dads. Camping is one of the best experiences they can do together. Seems there’s both an obligation and an opportunity here for camp folks like us. Here’s an example: <http://www.ocregister.com/news/thomas-272881-riders-rough.html>

Recycling Keeps Gaga Going Great – “Your camping newsletter is great, and personally I love Mark Twain,” writes Kevin Levesque. “Here at the Wheeler YMCA (CT), we ran into a problem: our basketballs fell apart. Some good has come out of this, however. We recycled them. Since the “leather” was peeling off the outside, I continued to peel it until the leather was no more. When I get down to the black bladders, they become our new Gaga balls. Since we built a Gaga Pit about six months ago, we tried to play with kickballs, volleyballs, etc. But the bladders work spectacularly. So, if you could share this with other Camp Directors, that would be great. I think many will benefit!!” --
kevin.levesque@ghymca.org (find plans at <http://www.garyforster.com/library.php>, halfway down the page.)

Viki Spain is on a Quest for Bug Juice Memories – “Ah... there’s nothing like food at camp, or *memories* of camp food! Cooks ‘Sweatin-to-the-Oldies,’ water-fights in the dishroom, or mysterious looking food with ‘affectionate’ nicknames. If you have a touching, humorous, unforgettable anecdote featuring camp food service, consider sending it to me!” Author of several camp food service books, Viki is collecting stories and pictures for her upcoming article, “Bug Juice and Other Culinary Delights,” for *ACA Camping Magazine*. Send your short stories to: vkspain@sbcglobal.net .

Environmental Education Think-Tank – OE legend John Haskins writes: “Once every two years Directors of Residential Environmental Learning Centers gather from around the country. We advance the field of residential environmental education through the thoughtful exploration of current issues relevant to our work through an ‘Open Space’ conference format. Several years ago the gathering was held at Frost Valley; this year’s event will be held at IslandWood near Seattle (cheap flights on Southwest.com) January 26 – 30, 2011. Consider joining us. For additional information visit www.islandwood.org/rele” (Look around this incredible site while you’re there). Contact: cathys@islandwood.org.

MACC Makes a Move – “The YMCA Mid America Camping Conference (MACC) is inviting you to Share, Learn and Grow at YMCA Camp Copneconic (MI) this January 18th-21st. A short drive from Detroit, MI we’re the place to be for Day Camp and Resident Camp professionals. Come early for a YMCA Regional Training Event and take classes for your leadership certification. More information at www.ycamacc.com”

A friend is one that knows you as you are, understands where you have been, accepts what you have become, and still, gently allows you to grow. – *William Shakespeare*

“No one is useless in this world who lightens the burdens of another.” – *Charles Dickens*

“After all is said and done, more is said, than done.” – *Aesop, 580 B.C.*

Next year is likely to be much like this year... for you and your camp. Working harder won't make it better. Consider inviting me to help *reset* where you put your time and money. One invigorating day. Take a look at www.garyforster.com and drop me a line.

Warmest Thanksgiving Wishes,

Gary

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