

November 2013

## Gary's Camping Newsletter

### *Continuous Improvement for Great Camp Leaders*

"Fools say that they learn by experience. I prefer to profit by others experience." — *Otto von Bismarck*

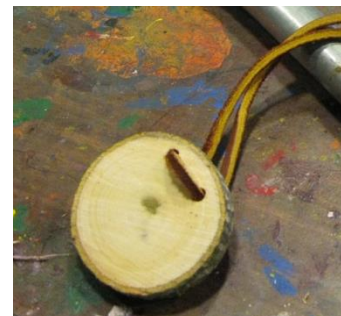
**The 6<sup>th</sup> Scents** (sic) – You've heard that your sense of smell can trigger powerful memories? When I directed Camp Jewell (CT) I used that to my advantage. Our cabins were old and had that "camp smell," not very welcoming. Only during November and December can you get "Glade Plug-Ins" with "Shimmering Spruce" fragrance. Guests would drive a couple hours up from the city on a Friday night, open their cabin doors, and explain "Smell that mountain air!" No joke. So stock up now for the whole year (Home Depot, Walmart, grocery stores) because by Christmas you won't see them again for another 10 months.

**"The Key to Great Feedback? Praise the Process, Not the Person"** – I hear as much bad praise as I hear hurtful criticism when I visit camps. Here's some straight-forward advice that works with staff (as well as your own kids at home!) <http://99u.com/articles/19442/the-key-to-great-feedback-praise-the-process-not-the-person>

**For Bosses and Supervisors Only** – Wish I'd read this 20 years ago. It's titled "My employees reviewed me, and I kind of suck." <https://medium.com/on-management/124f242a0352>

**"Ideas are easy. Implementation is hard.** This book helps you with the hard part." So says Guy Kawasaki, (former Apple Chief Evangelist) about "Making Ideas Happen" by Scott Branson. I've often said that the difference between camps that are full and camps that are not isn't what's on their to-do list, but what they get DONE. Winter is a good time to hone these skills.

**Wood Biscuit Name Tags that Face Forward.** – An age-old problem: you take the time to cut out hundreds of wood discs for campers to use as nametags (and keep forever as a souvenir), but they spin around on the single hole for the lanyard. Duh... drill two holes! (When I saw this I smacked my forehead!) Now they face forward!



**Campy Lighting** – "Hi Gary, I really enjoyed your presentations at the ACA Oregon Trail Fall education conference. I wanted to share one of your photos with our Maintenance Director, of the \$5 jelly jar light fixture that had been gussied up with an old oil lantern. "Well here you go..."

**Details Improve First Impressions** – The classic Dietz oil lamps fit perfectly over \$5 “jelly jar” exterior light fixtures if you remove the oil-lamp’s globe and screw out the wick-holder. The chimney of the oil lamp is spring-loaded to hold the glob in place, and it works fine to hold it on the jelly-jar. Makes it real easy to change bulbs.

Maybe you can get used lanterns locally, but when I need many that match, I get this size from Lehman’s: <https://www.lehmans.com/p-3668-dietz-air-pilot-oil-lantern.aspx>



I suggest using yellow “bug light” spiral bulbs. Not just for the bugs, they are easier on the eyes and look more authentic. I buy them by the dozen on Amazon. [http://www.amazon.com/EarthTronics-CF13BG1B-13-Watt-Compact-Florescent/dp/B004WQP7NS/ref=cm\\_cr\\_pr\\_product\\_top](http://www.amazon.com/EarthTronics-CF13BG1B-13-Watt-Compact-Florescent/dp/B004WQP7NS/ref=cm_cr_pr_product_top)

**New Camp St Croix Building Shows Environmental Leadership** – Here’s an excellent newspaper stories that explains many of the details they used to design, program, and fundraise for a LEED certified building. (Click on the main photo in the story to see a slideshow of the interior, too.)  
<http://www.hudsonstarobserver.com/content/new-camp-st-croix-building-shows-environmental-leadership>

**Mastery Takes Practice** – One thing that Boy Scout camps really get right: for kids to learn new skills, they need not only lessons, but “homework” they can do while they’re waiting their turn, or between classes. Here’s one way to help your campers: this “Knot Station” is at San Francisco Maritime National Park. And here’s one example of diagrams to go along with your own “knot station”:  
<http://www.outdoorlife.com/photos/gallery/hunting/2012/02/essential-knots-how-tie-20-knots-will-keep-you-alive>



**You’ll be glad you read this:**

**“The Gentlemen Games”** – wrote Camp Tecumseh (IN) cabin counselor Brad Hough, “are new this year for my cabin, but they’re rooted in a small bit of history. I had the privilege of being a counselor in the Miami cabin last year, and my partner Hugo and I decided that in order to create an identity for our campers, we’d call ourselves (and our campers) the Miami Gentlemen. In everything we do, we make sure we conduct ourselves as gentlemen. To be honest, at first we weren’t sure whether it would click with our nine- and ten-year-old boys. But every week, they ate it up! They would run to hold the door open and offer to do nice things for others and encourage and complement each other without thinking twice about it by the end of the week. It was awesome!

“This year I'm the counselor for Miami again, and I wanted to stick with the gentlemen theme. It fits well with camp's motto, which is that God is first, others are second, and I am third (gentlemen, you see, always put themselves third). I was inspired by some of my fellow counselors' ideas of creating new and unique games for their cabins, and I wanted to make being a gentlemen even more fun. So I came up with the Gentlemen Games.

“It started out as an idea to post encouraging notes on the doors of all the other cabins while campers and counselors were out doing activities... they would come back and have something nice to read. But the first time we did the games, the boys suggested that we do more. So we started straightening shoes and clotheslines. We would race from cabin to cabin, timing ourselves to see how fast we could do it. The boys loved it, and there was great material to draw from for that night's devotions.

“The following week (which is the one captured by the post Dave forwarded you to) we added a secretive ninja element... since gentlemen don't do anything to get recognition, we decided that we had to make sure no one saw us as we went from cabin to cabin. This made the games even more exciting, as we dove behind benches or acted like trees and rocks if people (especially girls!) walked by. This week one of the guys signed their complement as "the ninja campers". Today at lunch, the cabin who received that complement went around asking who had done it, and my guys were giggling in their seats, trying to act inconspicuous. It was a blast seeing them so fully invested.

“It's a game I'm hoping will continue to develop. God has blessed my efforts so far with boys who think being a gentlemen is the coolest thing ever, so it's been easy! I'm planning on doing it every week (and maybe spicing it up with enough clip-on ties for everyone).

“Let me know if you have any questions! Again, I really appreciate your interest, and I hope others get some kind of benefit from it! Take care, Brad Hough” -- [bjhough825@gmail.com](mailto:bjhough825@gmail.com)

**PEAK (Preparing Educators for Adventures with Kids)** – YMCA Camp Greenville, located one hour from Greenville, SC and Asheville, NC, is hosting their thirteenth annual experiential education conference, February 28 - March 1, 2014. (Plus there are a dozen great camps within a couple hours' drive if you want to do more “idea shopping” while you're there.) [www.campgreenville.org/peak.php](http://www.campgreenville.org/peak.php).

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“We do not learn from experience...we learn from reflecting on experience.” — *John Dewey*

“Those who cannot change their minds cannot change anything” – *George Bernard Shaw*

“If you're not willing to look stupid, nothing great is ever going to happen to you.” – *Dr. Gregory House, MD*

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Best wishes for continued blessings,

Gary

Gary Forster, LLC

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