

April 2012

## Gary's Camping Newsletter

*Continuous Improvement for Great Camp Leaders*

"Sweet April showers

Do spring May flowers."

- Thomas Tusser, *A Hundred Good Points of Husbandry*, 1557

**Web Navigation Bars: Left is Best** – Let's put this to rest: research shows that English-speaking people prefer, and perform best, when the navigation bar (the buttons to find your web pages by content) are located vertically along the left side of the page. Proof:

<http://www.usability.gov/articles/newsletter/pubs/040106news.html>

**Milk-Through-the-Nose-Funny** – This slide show of a Girl Scout volunteer-lead summer sleep-a-way camp in Washington seems to start slow; but if you continue to scroll through the slides you'll be rewarded with the amazing creativity that summer camp staff (all volunteers in this case) are famous for. Worthy of copying at your own camp (and I won't tell anyone where you got the idea)...

<http://www.cedarandsoundcommunitycamp.com/Assests/2011/Flat%20Kip%20and%20Flat%20PJ.pdf>



**A Huge Heap of Ideas** – The Pinterest Summer Camp Ideas page has over 900 colorful ideas already! Many of you have joined to follow it. If you haven't seen it, your staff members are missing out on some exciting stuff: <http://pinterest.com/zoic/great-summer-camp-ideas-pls-add-yours/> (Photo of make-your-own catch game from [http://www.lakeshorelearning.com/general\\_content/free\\_resources/crafts/ed\\_ballcatcher.jsp](http://www.lakeshorelearning.com/general_content/free_resources/crafts/ed_ballcatcher.jsp))

**Water Fun** – George DeTellis writes, "We have a 30' inflatable twin-lane slip-n-slide that we run down the side of a hill. It cost us under \$3000 four years ago, and works hard every day of camp. <http://www.funequipment.com/> We also do a lot of other water stuff. We buy agricultural misting heads from FarmTek and have misting stations, and we have a "People Washer" built out of misting heads." – contact George at



[george@campwoodhaven.com](mailto:george@campwoodhaven.com)

**Really Awful Branding** – If you’ve ever thought *your* organization has made some bone-headed decisions, get a load of THIS one! <http://www.prdaily.com/Main/Articles/11173.aspx>

**A Pretty Powerful Video** – CCCA is supporting their member camps with this new web site and video: <http://thepowerofcamp.com/> --Thanks to Pleasant Hill Outdoor Camp for sharing.

**Archery is Number One** – Nationwide, it’s the most requested camp activity, and that was BEFORE *The Hunger Games*. But most camps do little more than let kids shoot. That misses the point: kids want to learn to hit the target, and get into the romance of the bow and arrow. One easy way to get a good curriculum is simply buy the Boy Scout Merit Badge Book: <http://www.scoutstuff.org/bsa/literature-media/merit-badge-pamphlets/archery.html> There’s also a free workbook and resource guide at <http://meritbadge.org/wiki/images/2/2e/Archery.pdf>

**Laughing Bear’s Seal of Approval:** “Gary! After reading your blurb on summer camp websites, I feel like I have to share this one. <http://www.steveandkatescamp.com/> It is very clean and simple. I am totally blown away. And their approach is one that is brilliant! It states the obvious in a way that makes it seem special and new. How many camps give their children “choice”? But Steve and Kate say it in a way that makes their camp unique.” -- Dave "Chief Laughing Bear" Hennessey, YMCA Camp Thunderbird, VA. [www.facebook.com/YMCAThunderbird](http://www.facebook.com/YMCAThunderbird)

**Prepare First-Time Campers** – One of my favorite tools for helping hesitant first-time parents and campers was a fine little book by Myra Pravda, RN, MSN (one of the founders of the Association of Camp Nurses, [www.acn.org](http://www.acn.org) ). She’s got a new edition that includes a DVD for parents, too. Learn more at [www.offtocamp.com](http://www.offtocamp.com); or order it from the ACA Bookstore.

**Renewal in the Wilderness** – That’s John Lionberger’s company, and he writes: “Gary, I don’t run a camp, but I take a lot of adults to the wilderness to experience spiritual renewal. I’m simply writing to say that your newsletters are terrific for small business owners even if those small businesses are not camps. Wonderful and VERY helpful. Thank you.” – *John’s web site is worth seeing. If you’re interested in spirituality in the outdoors, check out his book.* [renewalstw@gmail.com](mailto:renewalstw@gmail.com)—Gary

**Bee Gone** – Mark Scoular reports, “This was sent to me by a camp board member after seeing our buildings get eaten up by carpenter bees. Our pest control company has no solution!” <http://www.carpenterbeesolutions.com/how-to-get-rid-of-carpenter-bees.html> -- *Bee in touch with Mark at* [scoular@ymca.evansville.net](mailto:scoular@ymca.evansville.net)

**Building Better Decks** – If you hire or supervise carpenters, it’s a good idea to know if they’re doing it right. Even things like decks get built unsafely by guys that just don’t know any better. But YOU could (know better, that is): <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/publications/decks/details.pdf>

**A Little Night Magic** – The rings of Saturn, the moons of Jupiter. Kids have seen pictures, but what if they could aim a telescope and see for themselves? Look at the details of the craters of the moon and peer

deep into the Milky Way? A volunteer astronomer had a big telescope at camp that was so expensive he let kids look through it if they promised not to touch anything. But he had another one that he let the kids aim wherever they wanted. Guess which the kids liked more?

<http://www.scientificsonline.com/astroscan-plus-telescope.html> So bombproof it can be carried in a backpack and set on a picnic table; and reasonably priced, too.

**Rowing or Sculling** – This sport is super-popular in some high schools and most universities, but where can a kid learn the basics? The Boy Scouts worked with an Olympic rower to develop a drop-in clamp-on unit that would turn those indestructible (but now so seldom used) aluminum canoes into one-person rowing shells! I think they'd be worth having just so campers would be exposed to such a clever "re-use" idea. Plus they can also get hooked on human-powered speed, flying over the water.

[http://www.rowalden.com/pubsite11/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=94&Itemid=80](http://www.rowalden.com/pubsite11/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=94&Itemid=80) Don't choke at the price. Add in a pair of oars (or "sculls") and the kit comes to \$995. If you bought a simple 16' rowing shell with sculls it will set you back \$3,600. (But you'd *still* have nobody using those old canoes!)

**Wilderness First Aid** –Our friends at YMCA Camp Wapsie (IA) again offer the WFA course in time for summer trip leaders, May 29 & 30<sup>th</sup>. Details at:

[http://www.crmetroymca.org/Cedar\\_Rapids/YMCA/Welcome/Branches/YMCA\\_Camp\\_Wapsie/Wilderness%20first%20aid%20Flyer.pdf](http://www.crmetroymca.org/Cedar_Rapids/YMCA/Welcome/Branches/YMCA_Camp_Wapsie/Wilderness%20first%20aid%20Flyer.pdf)

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"We know the past but cannot control it.  
We control the future but cannot know it."  
- *Claude Shannon*

"Spring is God's way of saying, 'One more time!'"  
- *Robert Orben*

"Be like a flower and turn your face to the sun."  
- *Kahlil Gibran*

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***What you do with kids and their parents is more important now, than ever.  
Thanks for constantly getting better!***

Gary

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