

May 2014

## Gary's Camping Newsletter

### *Continuous Improvement for Great Camp Leaders*

[\(view as a printable PDF\)](#)

"It's not just our first impression; it's part of our product." –

*Dave Sherry, Y Camp, IA*



**Tour-de-GaGa** – “Just like the Tour de France, we have a daily GaGa championship right before evening flag (except, no drug testing),” writes Peter Christnacht. “Monday’s winner gets the clean, new shirt. On Tuesday, it is passed to the next champ and so forth. The kids will wear the shirt for the full 24 hours with some even sleeping or swimming in it. Friday’s winner has to bring it back the following year. In our second summer of GaGa, two shirts were worn on the Sunday check-in. Those kids have the choice to pass on their shirt or present the new winners a clean shirt. One child said the *same* shirt needed to continue!” – *Contact Peter at [PChristnacht@CopperCannon.org](mailto:PChristnacht@CopperCannon.org)*

*(This design by [Michael Landry](#) for Camp Y-Noah, OH)*

**Camp T-Shirts** – <http://camp-shirts.com/swatch.html> One of my favorites is their “Swatch” collection that you put together to tell the story of your own unique camp. One of the best counselor appreciation gifts I’ve seen is using their “Camp Well” shirts; you can mix and match designs for the lowest price: <http://camp-shirts.com/campwell.html>

**Icebreakers** – Need new ones for staff training?

<http://www.teampedia.net/wiki/index.php?title=Category:Icebreakers/Warmups#.US14CgTSgUI.pinterest>

**Website of the Month** – I’m ready to go myself! <http://camparowhon.com/> Their “Camp Life” page includes this terrific philosophy:

“Counsellors live with their campers. Not in ‘Counsellor Rooms.’ This matters because at Arowhon the counsellors are right there with their campers, day and night. Two or three experienced counsellors live right there in the cabin with eight to 10 campers, for 24/7 supervision and caring attention. A child’s family at camp is their cabin. In the cabin group, with expert counsellors as mentors, children grow their social, team and communication skills.. Every cabin has electricity, a bathroom and comfortable beds. Shower-houses with private stalls are a one-minute walk from every cabin.”

It’s like they know the questions that moms are going to ask! (Don’t *we*?) I’d love for you to read down this entire “Why” page to the descriptions of why they teach camp skills:

<http://camparowhon.com/why-arowhon/> Could be a nice addition to your staff training (and your website.)

**Purple Cow Camp** – Jaonne Kates, the director of the above-mentioned Camp Ahrowhon, writes: “Gary, I forgot to tell you - Seth Godin, whom I know you respect, is an Arowhon alum... He comes to camp pretty well most summers to visit, teach canoeing, and tell a very scary ghost story.” *Contact her at [joanne@camparowhon.com](mailto:joanne@camparowhon.com)*

**Get Those Kids Outside!** – Our OEE correspondent Jim “Sid” Parry sends this message-packed article: [“You Can’t Bounce Off the Walls If There Are No Walls: Outdoor Schools Make Kids Happier—and Smarter.”](#) How much time do your campers spend *indoors* at summer camp? (Too much.) Eat outside! Play outside! – *reach Jim at [jkkparry@gmail.com](mailto:jkkparry@gmail.com)*

**On Prizes and Bribes: Dr. Randall Grayson writes** – “Don’t offer prizes that revolve around food. Food is extremely popular and will sell if offered (sometimes solely based on the food being offered and not the experience); food is an experience the campers can have outside of camp easily enough. Also, food as a reward can verge on rat psychology that is already omnipresent in children’s lives. Indeed, the majority of commercials for children are food-based, and child obesity is a real problem.” Read his full article at [http://www.northstarpubs.com/articles/cb/sold?session\\_key=52810f6d5428a](http://www.northstarpubs.com/articles/cb/sold?session_key=52810f6d5428a) (and if you don’t have a current subscription to *Camp Business* it’s really worth signing up.)

**The Truth About “Sugar Buzz”** – If people are going to trust us when it comes to health advice for their children, we better be able to back it up with more than junk-science we’ve picked up along the way. For instance, a recent camping publication mentioned “sugar buzz;” you know, when kids eat sugar they “bounce off the walls?” But definitive research has disproven that popular myth as far back as 1995: [http://www.active.com/nutrition/Articles/The\\_sugar\\_high\\_fact\\_or\\_fiction.htm](http://www.active.com/nutrition/Articles/The_sugar_high_fact_or_fiction.htm). YES, sugar is a huge problem in this country, but it has to do with replacing foods that have nutritional value with empty calories, and increasing the incidence of obesity and diabetes. (By the way, there *is* a mood effect from eating quantities of highly refined carbohydrates: when insulin production kicks-in to use the sugar as energy there’s often an “overshoot” effect of feeling run-down a couple hours later.) Here’s a good handout to give staff (or parents) if the issue comes up: <http://www.straightdope.com/columns/read/2747/does-giving-sweets-to-kids-produce-a-sugar-rush> And here’s the AMA source data: <http://jama.ama-assn.org/cgi/content/abstract/274/20/1617>

**Beautiful New Cabins** – Congratulations Camp Carson, for setting a new standard! If you’ve got dreams of building new cabins someday, you’ll need to copy [these photos!](#) – *For more info, contact exec Mark Schoular, [scoular@ymca.evansville.net](mailto:scoular@ymca.evansville.net)*



**Singing Graces Sung** – Here’s a place to hear some of the historic dining hall graces sung: <http://www.boyscouttrail.com/graces.asp> ( I think a camper that goes home without learning “Johnny Appleseed” has been cheated out of a cultural touchstone.)

**Making Better Food Choices** –These print-your-own posters of nutrition concepts and action steps might be just what you need to help campers (and us adults) take advantage of the mutual support

available at camp: <http://myplate.gov/healthy-eating-tips/ten-tips.html> (That is, if you offer good choices! And if you don't, some of these could provide targets to aim toward.) – Editor's note: I suggested this once before, but the Government Shutdown prevented anyone from downloading them!

**Keeping Your Posting Appointments** – A common parent complaint I hear: “The camp said to check the Facebook page for daily updates, but their updates weren't even close to daily!” We make promises, and then we get busy. [Hootsuite](#) is a free and easy way to create your posts in advance, but have them automatically posted at the same time every day.

**Just For Fun** – The program director at Camp Abe Lincoln (IA) remembered how much fun it was to dig holes as a kid. “You going to dig to China?” his mom would say. So Nicholas “Papa Smurf” Martinez got some shovels and a sign for camp. What's so cool about this? The back side of the sign (that faces the hole) says “Welcome to America!” – contact him at [nmartinez@scottcountyfamilyy.org](mailto:nmartinez@scottcountyfamilyy.org)



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“It is by acts and not by ideas that people live.” --

*Harry Emerson Fosdick*

“Nothing is impossible; the word itself says ‘I'm possible!’” --

*Audrey Hepburn*

“When somebody tells you nothing is impossible, ask him to dribble a football.” -- *Author Unknown*

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Best wishes for your best summer ever,

**Gary**

Gary Forster, LLC

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