

July 2011

Gary's Camping Newsletter

Continuous Improvement for Great Camp Leaders

"Pressure is a privilege." -- Billie Jean King (women's sports pioneer)

Rescue Week – That was one of the theme weeks at Camp Combe (NY). Day campers learned first aid and home safety, and got to meet local rescue personnel. They also did some role-playing. Like when their “fire rescue” team responded to “Cats stuck in tree!” Campers held all sides of big beach towels as they caught stuffed-animal cats that “jumped” to safety from the camp’s treehouse. Imagine the excitement!

Baby Sardine – Here’s a super-cute song discovered in the British Isles back in 1994 by my song-collecting friend “Dino” Rice:

“The baby sardine saw her first submarine,
She was scared as she looked through the peep-hole.
‘Come, come, come,’ said the sardine’s mum,
‘It’s only a can full of people!’”

You can listen to the tune and download it at http://www.amazon.com/Baby-Sardine-Round/dp/B001BOVXNW/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=dmusic&qid=1309625949&sr=1-1

Let's Sing Grace – “It’s not getting what you want that creates happiness, it’s wanting what you get.” George Painter reminded me that “being thankful” is one of the priceless spiritual lessons we can *all* teach at camp. I’m sure your staff will find some of these they’d love to make into your camp’s (new!) traditions. <http://www.ultimatecampresource.com/site/camp-activities/camp-songs-for-grace.page-1.html> They make a terrific cabin craft project, too; painting them on boards to be hung in the dining hall. I suggest getting ¼” luan plywood. You can get 3 pieces 48” x 32” from a single 8’ sheet. Best to use a white primer rolled on before you give the boards to the kids. A background design can be painted on the first day; the words the next. A good way that kids can transfer the lettering without a counselor doing it for them: Create a PowerPoint slide and project it on the board! Kids can then trace the lettering and several kids can paint at one time. Your dining hall will look more like camp with several of these hanging on the walls. (See my Photo Gallery for examples, ready to copy: www.garyforster.com).

World's Biggest Marshmallow Roast -- Chris Coker (CO) has registered Thursday, July 21 with the Guinness World Book of Records people for an official attempt at “The most kids making S’mores at the same time.” (My guess is he bought Hershey stock *first*). He’d really like you to sign up to join in the effort, and benefit from the local media attention it will *undoubtedly* draw to your camp. Here are the ooy-gooy-yummy details: https://www.facebook.com/home.php?sk=group_113900705364781&ap=1

Instruction for Instructors -- I frequently hear parents, campers, and directors complain that the teaching that goes on in camp activity areas is often poorly executed. (I’m trying to be more tactful. Is it working?) Just because a counselor can DO an activity doesn’t mean they’ve had any experience

teaching, or even any instruction in HOW to teach. Don't give up on them. Help them improve every week of the summer with ongoing coaching, adding a few new concepts each time you meet. I still suggest Brandwein's "Learning Leadership" for getting the most critical teaching skills across quickly. He shows you how to let novice instructors watch your best – from a distance – while *you* guide their discovery of what they see working.

While I was facilitating a skill-clinic instructors' workshop at Camp Ockanickon (NJ), Rich, their year-round program leader (and former Marine instructor) offered up this "ditty" as an introduction he uses for every class, and a memory aid for how to teach:

"I'll do it fast,
I'll do it slow;
We'll do it together,
And then *you* go!"

-- contact him at rich@ycamp.org

Say It Like You Mean It – Kivi does it again: if you don't get her blog on fundraising, here's an example of why you should. Lots of camps send out "thank you" postcards and note cards to donors in the summer. Most of them are so impersonal they're WORSE than nothing. Here are some great alternatives: <http://www.nonprofitmarketingguide.com/blog/2011/06/29/tips-for-better-nonprofit-thank-you-letters/> And your campers can help you create them (*and... practice being... thankful!*)

Looking for Fall Staff? (or a Fall Job?) – This site gets a lot off action: <http://www.ihiresportsandrecreation.com> Don't need it now? Bookmark it for later.

Preventing "The Slump" – "The late-summer staff slump" is a camping cliché ... because it happens at so many camps. But not *nearly* all. Dave Bell does a better job of describing how to vaccinate your camp than I could (and with fewer words!); so please read and share it: <http://www.northstarpubs.com/articles/cb/overcoming-mid-season-slump>

Nature & OE Staff: Use Campers as Contractors – Want some new activity areas for this fall? Use summer campers to help create them. (Building can be much more engaging than just "playing!") Here's a library that has created a natural "Explorium" playground with a great set of names for each area. This map: <http://www.natureexplorium.org/map/images/map.html> describes each area; this second link shows the construction photos (you could do just as well using "found" materials): <http://www.natureexplorium.org/photos.html>. Lots more ideas for "Natural Playgrounds" at: <https://www.naturalplaygroundstore.com/>; and google "images for natural playgrounds."

THIS Is the Best Month For Fundraising -- "Uncle" Harry Kremer, one of the all-time best camp fundraisers shared this secret. He had each of his top three-dozen prospects come out for a tour of camp – individually, with him, during the summer – so they could be "surrounded by kids doing wonderful things" wherever they went. Not to ask for money, but to simply share what amazing things were happening at camp. Take some time today to invite some people who *you* want to know your camp better. Planting seeds now will pay off when you see them next, and next, and next. Visit <http://www.donorbydesign.com/smore/> It's a fundraising site just for camps. The most important reads

for ANY camp leader are the major gifts and “your top 20” prospect information. Priceless advice from the pros if you read them today. (Much less so if you wait until fall.)

On the June Newsletter – A mentor for many of us in the YMCA, 97-year-old Fred Hoshiyama responded: “Hi Gary. Thanks for sharing your special humor-sprinkled teaching skills. Again, I enjoyed being on your list. You trained well with God given insights how better to use camping to reach kids and make a difference. More power to you, Fred.” -- fredhoshiyama@verizon.net (*I feel like the Karate Kid after the championship bout! Who could YOU be sending an e-mail to right about now, and giving them a shot-in-the-arm right when they need it?—Gary*) And look for Fred on You-tube!

“I wonder what Piglet is doing,” thought Pooh.

“I wish I were there to be doing it, too.” -- *Winnie the Pooh*

“Friendship makes life half as hard and twice as good.” -- *Sara Groves, singer-songwriter*

“If you go looking for a friend, you’re going to find they’re very scarce. If you go out to *be* a friend, you’ll find them everywhere.” -- *Zig Ziglar*

Best wishes and thanks for all you **do and say**,

Gary

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