



“The Current”

**The American Camp Association
Great Rivers Section Newsletter
April 2008**

From the Section President, Robyn Ratcliff

Early spring is a rough time for camp people. If you're anything like me, you're anxious for the weather to improve so you can get outside—but at the same time, apprehensive because the beginning of spring is the beginning of spring programs...and there are still zip line harnesses to replace, retaining walls to build, dead limbs to remove, and program staff/volunteers to schedule and/or recruit! So, while I'd like to stop and admire the daffodils coming up in my yard—I'm more likely to get home after dark when it's hard to see the flowers!

I'm sure you know what I'm talking about. Thank goodness there are lots of things to keep a busy camp professional inspired this time of year. Here are some of the things that I am excited about as we enter the camp season for 2008:

- Camper parents—especially “helicopter parents”—continue to keep me on my toes. I learn new ways of reassuring and interacting with these individuals each day.
- Today's kids need camp more than ever. This weekend I watched a young girl stare into the woods with total awe while her group scurried down to an activity ahead of her. From the look on her face, I would surmise she had never been that close to a tree stump before!
- As Fred Miller said in a video address to the council of delegates at the ACA national conference in Nashville, the value and impact of camping has the potential to be more important in the first half of this century than it was in the last half of the last century.
- ACA is adopting an innovative, aggressive 20/20 vision—we will impact 20,000,000 campers and 20,000 ACA members by 2020.

It's an exciting time to be at camp...and an exciting time to be an ACA member! Keep doing the great work you do for youth, families and camping...and let those daffodils remind you that every extra effort you make improves the life of a camper! Happy spring!

Great Rivers Cluster Events a Success!

The Second Annual ACA Great Rivers Cluster events, held March 4 were a success! There were 72 camp professionals at three different events, spread geographically over our ACA section. This was a great opportunity to hear updates about national ACA, discuss local issues and network with neighboring camp staff. Our section delegates facilitated the events hosted by area camps. Watch for dates for next year's event and plan to attend!

Kansas/Missouri Cluster Meeting by Anne Snyder

The Kansas and Missouri cluster meeting was held at Tall Oaks Conference Center in Linwood, KS. We had 23 people attend. We had a good time with some icebreakers and figuring out what famous person we were. We went over national and sectional information before lunch. There was great discussion during lunch. We then went on a tour of Tall Oaks and enjoyed the nice weather, which was a change for most of us. The afternoon was spent talking about internet and website information, staff retention, camper recruitment, what was new and exciting at our camps, and much more. It was a great day and I believe everyone took something away from the day.

Nebraska Cluster Event, by Robyn Ratcliff

The Nebraska cluster meeting was a great time! Since I'm from Missouri, I seldom get to hang out with just the Nebraska camps...what a great group of people! We had a total of 27 attendees, a beautiful host site, and a great time getting to know each other. Thanks to Buzz Wheeler for his marketing efforts and for opening beautiful Eastern NE 4-H Center for this event. Participants enjoyed designing their camp tattoos and remembering their vegetable names! We discussed topics from the national conference in Nashville and shared our issues and ideas for summer 2008. A hearty lunch was enjoyed by all! I even saw 2 bald eagles, huge fields of snow geese, and never-ending ribbons of blackbirds on my way into camp. Thanks to all of the willing participants who made this day a success!

Iowa Cluster Meeting by Jim Cherry

We had a great turnout of 22 folks from across Iowa... and that in spite of some icy roads. That's dedication and determination. It sure seemed like everyone was eager for this sort of break from their schedules if the amount of table conversation was any indication. There was copious sharing of challenges, ideas, needs and questions as well as a preview of this year's standards visits and some of the highlights of the ACA National Conference held in Nashville during February. It's amazing how many new faces have come on board in the past couple of years. It means that a lot of people are dealing with steep learning curves as they have stepped into their new positions but they bring huge amounts of new energy to the camp scene. It was important to emphasize how we are all in this together and we can look to one another for support. Girl Scout Camp Sacagawea did a beautiful job of hosting the event and served up a fine lunch. Camps that attended, Iowa 4-H Center, Pilgrim Heights, Camp Hantesa, Camp Wapsie, Wildwood, DSM YCamp, Heart Connection, Sacajawea Camp Fire Day Camps, Camp Tanglefoot, Camp Conestoga, Camp Little Cloud and Camp L Kee Ta.

News from ACA National Office

Introduced Child Protection Bill in U.S. House and Senate

On March 13, the [Child Protection Improvements Act of 2008](#) was introduced by Senators Joseph Biden (D-DE), Orrin Hatch (R-UT), and Arlen Specter (R-PA). The bill will make permanent a child protection pilot program that allows youth-serving organizations to run FBI background checks on prospective volunteers and employees. ACA has been working for the past two years – along with other organizations, primarily MENTOR/The National Mentoring Partnership – to develop the content and specific text of the bill. It is because of ACA's work and the work of its partners in Washington, D.C. – that this bill was supported by Senator Biden and introduced in Congress. The bill was also introduced the same day in the House by Rep Adam Schiff (D-CA). For more information about the legislation, contact Susan Yoder at ACA, 800-428-2267 ext. 302. ACA will be issuing a call to action to members very soon to contact legislators to ask them to support the bill in both houses of Congress.

April Is "Children and Nature Awareness Month"

The Children and Nature Network (C&NN) has designated April as "Children and Nature Awareness Month." As part of this effort, C&NN will be publishing an online guide to regional events for April, with suggestions from regional leaders on how to build public awareness of the issue and create solutions. This is a good opportunity for regional efforts to piggyback on the national movement and leverage media coverage for increased visibility. Many regions already have plans underway. C&NN would like to make the most of this high-profile occasion. Please let them know what activities you might hold during this first annual Children & Nature Awareness Month. Are you planning regional or community events or other actions? Family activities, outdoor adventures, or educational programs? To submit your April programs, camps should visit the C&NN website. C&NN will promote them on the C&NN web site throughout the month of April. www.cnaturenet.org/awareness/submit.

Second Edition: "Last Child in the Woods" Book Tour and Related Events

April also marks the release of the second edition of "Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder", by Richard Louv. This revised edition has been updated and expanded to include a "Field Guide" with 100 practical actions we can take; 35 discussion points for book groups, classrooms, and communities; new and updated research from the U.S. and abroad; and a progress report on the movement. Also in April, independent bookstores will be hosting local events around the release. To learn more about the book, please visit the Algonquin Books website (www.Algonquin.com), and after April 15, visit www.lastchildinthewoods.com.

Standards News: Five Tips for Your ACA Accreditation Visit!

These tips come from the ACA National Standards Department, with Great Rivers additions.

1. Make sure you have the most recent update! Go to the ACA web site to access the file that includes ALL updates as well as file with the most recent updates.
2. *READ your Accreditation Process Guide!* By this we mean, read through all of the applicability boxes, the interpretations, etc. to verify which standards you will need to score! When you have questions, call your section standards chair or e-mail a member of the ACA National Standards team!
3. Make sure someone who will be involved with the preparation of an on-site visit during the day of the visit has attended a Standards Course! If you have not yet attended or registered for a course, check with your local ACA section executive, Jim Cherry!
4. Organize and document! Organize and document! Answer the questions! Organize and document!

5. Divide and conquer— involve key staff members as you prepare for the visit. Include your maintenance and kitchen staff for the site/food service section and your program director to help with the various program areas, etc.!

The accreditation process is meant to be an educational process, NOT an inspection. Keeping your camp and staff well prepared helps the visit run more smoothly. For additional tips and tools, check out www.acacamps.org/accreditation/hyes.php.

Standards News

Standards Books Updates: All member camps in the Great Rivers ACA section were mailed new standards notebooks in the Fall of 2006. There have been updates and revisions to the original standards notebooks. The national ACA website has all the revisions in PDF format to download. You should download the file and place these pages in your standards notebook. The revised standards are what you will be scored on at your visit. Go to www.acacamps.org/accreditation/interpretations.pdf.

Visitor Training: An ACA Associate Visitor Standards course was held earlier this year. The Great Rivers section now has nine new Associate Visitors. From Nebraska: Buzz Wheeler; from Iowa: Pattie Sanderson, Amber Thomas, Sarah Winfrey and Keith Shew; from Kansas: Michael Harter, Sara Shaw, Anne Snyder, Andie Strong. Thank you to each of these camp professionals for volunteering to become a part of the ACA Accreditation process.

Great Rivers Section and Other Staff Training Events

Does your camp offer a training that other camp staff could attend? Are you looking for an Archery course or other trainings? Jim Cherry, ACA Great Rivers Section Executive, collects information about camp staff trainings that are open to other camps. He has placed the information on the ACA web site. Go to www.acagreatrivers.org/training.php to see what has been collected. The following are some of the trainings listed. If you have other trainings to share, please email them to Jim Cherry, executive@acagreatrivers.org.

Low and High Ropes Re-Certification: The Girl Scouts-Great Plains Council has a few openings for low and high ropes re-certification on April 5, 2008 at Camp Maha, near Papillion, Nebraska and April 12, 2008 at Camp Crossed Arrows, near Fremont, Nebraska. The training is being provided by Challenge Options. In order to attend this training you must have completed certification previously. Certification paperwork must be provided for review. Meals and lodging are available as well. For more information, including cost, please contact Luther at 402-558-8189 ext. 219.

Bats, Bugs & Band-Aids: A Nurse Goes to Camp returns in 2008: Submerge yourself in the camp experience May 1 & 2nd at the Wisconsin Lions Camp in Rosholt, WI. Whether you are considering camp nursing or just want one of the most unique, **fun**, continuing nursing education experiences, this program is for you. You will learn to create a safe and healthy camp environment for both campers and staff, following professional nursing practice guidelines. Designed for RNs and LPNs, Linda will cover organization, safety, infection control, communication, documentation, and common pediatric problems. You can earn a certificate in Wilderness First Aid. Join our experienced instructor, Linda Ebner Erceb, RN, MS, PHN, and Executive Director of the American Camp Nurses Association as she takes you from novice to pro while always remembering the spirit of camp — FUN! **Get ready for a great start to the summer. The number of participants is limited, so don't wait to register!**

Complete program information and secure on-line registration is available at:

<http://www.uwec.edu/ce/healthcare/nursecamp/index.htm>

Questions? Please contact UW-Eau Claire Continuing Education at: Phone: 715- 836-3636 Toll free: 866-893-2423. Website: www.uwec.edu/ce/ E-mail: ce@uwec.edu.

Lifeguard Instructor Course: Location: Urbandale, Iowa Senior Center and Urbandale Pool.

Class meets April 11-27 and the weekend of June 7-8. This class will meet Fridays, April 11, 18, and 25 from 5-10 p.m.; and Saturday/Sundays, April 19/20, and 26/27 from 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. Please meet at the Urbandale Pool for the first class. Saturday, June 7 the class will meet at the Clive Aquatic Center from 5-10 PM. Sunday, June 8 the class will meet at the American Red Cross to take part in the Waterfront Lifeguarding course from 10 AM-4 PM; and will reconvene at the Clive Aquatic Center from 5-10 PM to participate in the Waterpark Lifeguarding class. This class has a minimum age of 17 (please be prepared to show proof of age). You must be able to successfully complete all required skills and the final tests for the Lifeguard Training, Standard First Aid, and CPR/AED for the Professional Rescuer courses to participate in this course. The first class session will be a

refresher to help you prepare for the testing, which will begin during the second class session. All class times listed include the pre-course session and lunch breaks. Please pre-register at the American Red Cross: 2116 Grand Avenue, Des Moines, or by calling 515-246-6304. Cost is \$200.

Ropes Course Safety Training: Melissa O'Neil of Iowa State University Extension will be hosting Tom Leahy of Leahy & Associates, Inc. for "Critical Skills for Safety: Advanced Technical and Rescue training". This is a great opportunity to supplement ropes course training for your staff. A more detailed course description can be found at <http://www.leahy-inc.com/facilitator/advanced.html> . Course registration is limited to 20 participants. The course will be offered May 5th-9th at the Adventure Learning Center (located on Living History Farms property) in Des Moines, Iowa. It is a 4 day, 10-hour course (approximately 8 a.m.-6 p.m.). Participants will need to provide their own meals and lodging. This course normally runs at \$495 per participant, but Melissa is asking that any participants "pay what [you] can afford". If you have any questions or would like further details, please contact Melissa O'Neil directly at moneil@iastate.edu .

AAHS Instructor Clinic: Nebraska Lutheran Outdoor Ministries will be hosting an American Association for Horsemanship Safety Instructor Clinic May 13-17, 2008. The clinic will take place at Carol Joy Holling Center in Ashland, NE. It is a 40-hour intensive training program for riding lesson instructors, trail guides, wranglers and other equine staff at camps or stables. Registration is on line at www.nlom.org Click on "Get involved," then "Adult Programs," and then select the AAHS instructor clinic link. Cost of clinic is \$425 for commuters and \$525 including overnight lodging, May 13-16. \$150 deposit is due at time of registration and balance is due at the start of the clinic. Registrations will be taken on a first come, first serve basis and the clinic fills up very quickly. The clinic includes a basic test that demonstrates the riding ability to perform at the walk, trot and lope/canter; changes of lead; halt; and back. For the less experienced certifications, the riding standards are lower. Those who have successfully completed a clinic must show proof of CPR/first-aid training before receiving full certification. Participants that have not been recently riding are strongly encouraged to get in riding time prior to the clinic. For more information, call or email Gretchen at 888-656-6254 ext 605 or gahrens@nlom.org

Wilderness First Aid Class: YMCA Camp Wapsie and the American Red Cross are holding a Wilderness First Aid Course May 27-28, 2008. This course meets ACA Health and Wellness Standards for Trip Leaders. The training will be held May 27, from 9:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. and May 28, from 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. The cost of the training is \$120, which covers: course materials; lunch, dinner, and lodging Tuesday May 27th; Breakfast and lunch Wednesday May 28th. If you have questions, call Donald Enger at 319-435-2577 or e-mail Enger@crmetroymca.org for registration.

AAHS Instructor Clinic: Camp Hantesa in Boone, Iowa will be hosting an American Association for Horsemanship Safety instructor clinic June 2-6th, 2008. This is a 40 hour intensive training program for riding lesson instructors, trail guides, wranglers and other equine staff at camps or stables delivered by Brenda Hendrix. Cost of clinic is \$350 for commuters and \$475 including overnight lodging and meals June 1-13th. \$150 deposit is due at time of registration and balance is due at the start of the clinic. Registration deadline is May 1, 2008 and class size is limited to 12 participants. Registrations will be taken on a first come, first serve basis and the clinic will fill up very quickly. For more information, call or e-mail Sarah at 515-432-1417, sarah@hantesa.com.

If you have other training sessions to share, please email Jim Cherry!

ACA National Conference-*The Strength of Many Voices*

The ACA National Conference was an inspiring week filled with new ideas and information, and great networking. There were many Great Rivers section members in attendance. ACA CEO Peg Smith gave an inspiring message about the future of ACA and the 20/20 Vision that it will take to reach the association's goals. You can view Peg's message on the ACA web site, at www.acacamps.org/member/video/pegkeynote.html.

ACA Mid States Conference- *Learn Together, Grow Together: Our Camper's World*

April 10-12, 2008, St. Charles, Illinois. The 16th Annual Mid States Camping Conference is a great opportunity to connect with camping professionals, train your staff, shop for deals, and fill your "bag of tricks". The 2008 theme, *Learn Together, Grow Together: Our Camper's World*, embodies the conference mission of staff and administrators learning together with emphasis this year on the campers we all serve. The keynote speaker, Dr. Michael Thompson is a psychologist, school consultant, and author. From director to first year counselors, there is something for everyone with over 100 educational sessions. In addition to the conference, Leadership

Institute sessions are held prior to the Mid States Conference, and offer full day workshops and certifications from industry leaders. You can still register at www.acamidstates.org.

ACA Great Rivers Section 2008 Fall Conference

Plans are already underway for the 2008 ACA Great Rivers Fall Conference, November 11-13, 2008 at Wesley Woods Camp and Retreat Center near Indianola, Iowa. The Great Rivers section has decided to offer the Fall Conference at the same location two years in a row. The theme for the conference is "Building Something Great Together". The Tuesday Keynote Speaker will be Dr. Jim Cain, from Teamwork & Teamplay, with a session titled, "The Value of Play". You can read more about Jim Cain at his Web site, www.teamworkandteamplay.com. On Wednesday there will be a variety of sessions including a special focus on food service track with a day-only package including access to the expanded vendor show, lunch, and workshops.

Something new this year, is the opportunity to participate in a Pre-Conference session with Dr. Jim Cain presenting the interactive session, "Exploring Leadership Actively" from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Monday, Nov. 10th. The fee is \$75 per person if registered by 10/13/08. Visit the Great Rivers section Web site at www.acagreatrivers.org for the following conference details: registration form, event schedule, pre-conference information, vendors and workshop session proposals. If you have questions, please contact our section's Education Chair, Traci Haselhuhn, at 515-795-3338 or tracidh@iastate.edu.

NEWS FROM OUR MEMBERS

Art Harrison has announced that he has re-launched his long-time camp planning and development consulting business, Harrison/Associates Inc. He is based out of Ames, Iowa and his contact information is e-mail: ifrat@aol.com or phone 515-468-1015.

Calvin Crest Camp, Conference and Retreat Center is celebrating 50 years of ministry with a Celebration Weekend August 22-24, 2008. Family-friendly events including clowns, recreational events, hiking, tours, cookouts, campfires, 11th Annual Quilt Auction and BBQ, and a worship service are all part of the plans. For more information check out the website at http://www.calvincrest.org/50_Years_Of_Ministry.php

Carol Joy Holling Camp is completing the addition of two new high ropes adventure challenge courses. The crew from Challenge Options has been busy putting lots of telephone poles in the ground.

YMCA Camp Wapsie, in Iowa is celebrating its 90th Anniversary this summer. They are planning many events, including an Anniversary Celebration midsummer. They are also pleased to introduce Don Enger as the new Wapsie Assistant Director. Don had worked at YMCA Camp Abe Lincoln as Program Director. Another interesting fact about Camp Wapsie is that in the Spring of 2005, Camp Wapsie was the first facility in Iowa, and only the 12th in the nation, to construct a Tango Tower. The hexagon shaped structure hosts two 42 foot climbing walls and a half dozen individual and team elements constructed of rope, cables, and logs. The tower was made possible by the Hope bequest. Staff are trained through Experiential Resources Inc. (ERI), the builder, to facilitate climbing and team building programs.

Camp Courageous has doubled in size with the addition of 80 acres to meet a growing need. At a recent strategic planning session of the Board of Directors of Camp Courageous, the #1 focus of the board for the future was to meet the growing needs of campers and their families. The camp has quickly grown from a summer camp to a year-round camp. From no waiting lists to attend camp, to substantial waiting lists for each week-long session. Currently the number of campers wanting to come to camp is far greater than the number of spaces available. Week-long sessions for the next year are booked within 35-minutes of the first hour of registration. The plan will be to expand Camp Courageous without compromising the quality of the camp's program (program meaning everything from dietary, medical, activities, facilities, equipment, etc.). Camp Courageous is currently completing construction of the Beckwith Dormitory to accommodate more year-round staff in a quality facility. With the new land addition, camp is looking for opportunities to grow the number of campers served and activities.

Operation Purple Summer Camps

The National Military Family Association (NMFA) has been sponsoring summer camp opportunities for children of deployed military personnel since 2004. This free summer camp program was developed by NMFA to support military children dealing with the stress of war. This coming summer, NMFA's Operation Purple Camps will host children at 64 locations in 37 states and territories: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia,

Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Texas, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin and the Virgin Islands.

In the Great Rivers Section, Operation Purple will be held in Kansas at YMCA Camp Wood; in Missouri at Camp Fire USA Camp Shawnee, in Nebraska at Easter Seals Camp Eagle/Camp Cedars; and in Iowa at Easter Seals Camp Sunnyside. Operation Purple camps teach kids skills for dealing with their feelings and provide the chance to share in some carefree fun with other military kids. Camps are free to all participants thanks to a partnership with the Sierra Club and the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation. More information about Operation Purple can be found on the Web site, www.operationpurple.com.

Sign Up to be Part of ACA Research in the Healthy Camp Study

Did you know that data collected during the summer of 2007 in year two of the five-year Healthy Camp Study found that....?

- Both campers and staff were more likely to become ill at camp than to become injured.
- Communicable diseases accounted for 42% of camper illness and 41% of staff illness.
- Head injuries accounted for 29% of all injuries to day campers and 20% of injuries to resident campers.
- Injuries were more likely to occur mid-week (Wednesday and Thursday) between noon and 6:00 p.m.
- A significant number of finger injuries were reported among staff caused by knives used during food preparation.
- In resident camps, failure to wear protective equipment was reported in 15% of camper injuries and 16% of staff injuries.

Want a Healthy Camp? - Join this Important Study!

Do you want to know the best intervention strategies to keep your staff on the job and your campers in program and not in the health lodge? Do you want to see your health statistics in comparison to national averages?

Why join?

- Free - No cost to participate; No special affiliation is required
- Confidential - Your camp will not be named in any way
- Report for risk assessment and planning - a camp-specific report of your camp's injuries and illnesses will be provided to you at no charge after each summer of participation.....an excellent addition to your camp's risk management portfolio.
- Marketing - Tell parents that you are committed to camp safety and are participating in a national Healthy Camp Study.

What is Expected of Participating Camps?

Each participating camp will be asked to have a designated reporter collect information about the injuries and illnesses that meet the study's criteria for inclusion. Desired camp reporters are (listed in order of preference): the camp health care director, the camp nurse, other camp health care personnel (i.e., LPN, EMT, etc.), or another adult appointed by the camp administration. The camp's reporter will be asked to log onto the study Web site weekly throughout the summer season to provide exposure information (the number of campers and staff in the program) and incidence information (the number of campers or staff ill or injured and missing some portion of program time as a result). Camps in our Pilot Study (2005) spent approximately fifteen minutes per week completing reports.

Sign up for the Healthy Camp Initiative!

Go to the ACA Web Site, and click on the Research tab to find out more about this study and to find out how to sign up to be part of the study.

Great Rivers Newsletter by E-mail

Communication with Camping Professionals in the Great Rivers Section has changed over the past years. With more people communicating by email, our section executive, Jim Cherry has been passing on information to our section members by e-mail. This helps us all stay informed in a timely manner.

The ACA Great Rivers Section newsletter will be compiled periodically. It will be distributed by email. This newsletter will also be sent by mail to those that request a copy and those not currently ACA members. If you would like to continue to receive this newsletter by mail, instead of email, please contact DD Gass, Camp Fire USA, 816-285-2004 or email: dd.gass@campfireusa.org .

ACA Great Rivers Section Board Roster 2008

If you have questions about the ACA Great Rivers Section, contact Jim Cherry or one of the board members listed below.

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