

December 2008



## The Current ACA Great Rivers Newsletter

### ACA Great Rivers Cluster Meetings Return—March 3, 2009

The third annual ACA Great Rivers Cluster Meetings will be held on Tuesday, March 3, 2009 in Iowa, Nebraska and Kansas/Missouri. The events are **FREE** and will be held 11 a.m. – 3 p.m., with lunch provided.

The Cluster Meetings are a great opportunity for camp staff to network, discuss topics related to their state or region. Our ACA section delegates, Robyn Ratcliff, Anne Snyder, Becky Godfrey and DD Gass are hosting these events and sharing information from the ACA national conference as well as facilitating the regional discussions. Put this date on your calendar now, and watch for more information at [www.acagreatrivers.org](http://www.acagreatrivers.org)!

- The Kansas/Missouri event will be held at Camp Kateri Tekakwitha near Williamsburg, Kansas, with Anne Snyder as the facilitator.
- The Nebraska event will be held at Girl Scout Camp Catron, near Nebraska City, Nebraska, with DD Gass as facilitator.
- The Iowa event will be held at YMCA Camp Wapsie, Coggon, Iowa with Becky Godfrey as the facilitator.
- A Missouri event will be held at the Gains-Oldham Black Cultural Center, on the University of Missouri campus, 813 Virginia Ave., Columbia, MO 65211. There is parking in the metered Virginia Avenue garage next door. This event is in conjunction with the ACA St. Louis Section, and will be facilitated by Robyn Ratcliff.

### Great Rivers ACA Section Fall Conference Inspiring

The annual Great Rivers Fall Conference was a great success! Thanks to the Great Rivers Education committee, who worked hard to plan and organize this annual event. The Camp Wesley Woods staff were terrific hosts, and participants had a good time! The Pre-Conference event, facilitated by Jim Cain was a source of new ideas, and facilitation skills. During the conference, keynote presenters Jim Cain and Kathy Trotter provided useful experiential education resources and valuable knowledge.

The conference workshop sessions were informative and inspiring. There were 86 people who attended the conference with 46 attending the Pre-Conference event. The White Elephant event was great fun, and raised over \$325 and the Silent Auction \$400; all as a donation to ACA.

One participant commented: "It is always good to have Jim Cain there — he makes everyone feel good about being there and being a part of the group. There were other sessions that were also very good. I think people get something out of each session if they listen carefully and then see how they might apply it. I was impressed with the rain garden session and could see a lot of applications for them at a camp site."

At the Great Rivers Annual Meeting, awards were presented to outstanding volunteers:

**Certificate of Appreciation:** Delores Huitt,

**Distinguished Service Award:** Debby Stork, Tom Neppl, Tiffany Clifton and Kara Kellerman

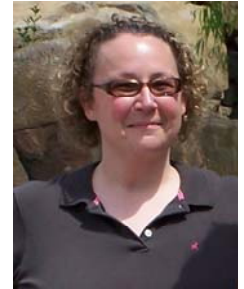
**Meritorious Service Award:** Linda DuBrul and Chris Klingenberg

Plan to attend the annual conference next year—November 9-12, 2009 at Carol Joy Holling Camp and Conference Center, near Ashland, Nebraska. Watch the Web site [www.acagreatrivers.org](http://www.acagreatrivers.org) for more information. If you have ideas or interested in presenting, please contact Robyn Ratcliff or Barb Collins.

### From Robyn Ratcliff, the ACA Great Rivers Section President

This holiday season, I am thankful for all of you and the work you do for kids, families and adults in our four states.

It was absolutely fun to see so many of you in November for our Great Rivers annual conference with Jim Cain. The weather was a little wet, cold, dark, but inside the buildings—happy voices, open minds and caring humans worked together to teach and learn. The conference committee provided great variation and an excellent experience for all.



Quick on the heels of our time together, Jim Cherry and I headed off to Chicago for a meeting of all of the section presidents and executives. Spending time with the national ACA crowd is always a good way to get some perspective and reflect on the achievements and areas for growth in our section. This year, ACA Great Rivers really stands out in the crowd. I am so proud to represent this group—and to share our excellent performance in programs like education, standards, and PR with other presidents.

Few do as much high quality ACA work as Great Rivers with as many invested, talented volunteers. So, thanks to all of you, our section board, our committees, and our standards volunteers especially, for keeping us at the top with your excellent performance. Happy holidays to you and your family! Be safe!

### ACA Annual Statement of Compliance

By now, a legal representative of all ACA accredited camps should have signed and submitted their 2008 Statement of Compliance (SOC). Annual submission of the SOC confirms the camp's compliance with applicable laws and codes and with ACA standards and ethics and is a required part of the accreditation process. Without the current signed Statement of Compliance, ACA has the authority to remove accreditation. To verify that the SOC for your camp has been received, contact ACA at 800-428-2267, ext. 305.

### In Memory of Betty van der Smissen

A good friend to camping, Dr. Betty van der Smissen, passed away in November, after a valiant fight with cancer. For more than fifty years, Dr. van der Smissen dedicated her professional life to excellence in research and programming in the outdoors and to the professional organizations related to the outdoors. She was the first director of the outdoor field campus at the University of Iowa, where she conducted outdoor education programs. Her university leadership with outdoor programs helped shape the development of outdoor research and programming, and she organized two national symposia on outdoor research and evaluation. Her early experiences in outdoor programming were with church camps, and she was an early member of Christian Camping International. Her time with ACA was incredibly influential as evidenced by the fact that she was the first research chair on the American Camp Association (ACA) national board and conducted research on the ACA camp standards that resulted in the first major revision. She made a huge impact upon the American Camp Association as national president from 1980-1982, and was known for her risk management expertise.

### ACA Receives Lilly Endowment Inc. Grant

ACA has announced that Lilly Endowment Inc. has awarded ACA a Nature-Based Leadership Program grant to establish the Camp 2 Grow program. This \$490,000 grant will support the distribution of a leadership program and the development and implementation of a national campership program that will ensure greater numbers of children and youth have the opportunity to experience camp. More information can be found on the ACA Web site, [www.acacamps.org](http://www.acacamps.org).

### ACA Forms a Partnership With Teach for America

The American Camp Association® and Teach For America are excited to announce their partnership to help close the achievement gap and engage more members of the camp community in the movement to eliminate educational inequity. Teach For America is the corps of outstanding individuals from all backgrounds, majors and career interests who teach for two years in urban and rural public schools and become leaders in expanding educational opportunity for all. For more information, go to the ACA Web site, [www.acacamps.org](http://www.acacamps.org).

## From the Eyes of a Seventh Grader

Andrea Johnson, Park Naturalist from the Johnson County Park and Recreation District, shared information about a long time camper at the Ernie Miller Nature Center, near Olathe, Kansas. Madeline Cook, a seventh grader put together a book about the nature center, a public park which holds a summer day camp focused on nature and history. Madeline wrote a story about the nature center which began:

“As the wind blows through Ernie Miller Nature Park, you can see the early morning dew on the long stems of prairie grass. It moves so swiftly and softly, moving like the ocean.”

“The trees are making music, silent music, and they wave at the morning sky. The birds honor the trees with creative music never sung or played as a tune before. A small squirrel climbs up a large tree dancing in a quiet and fast motion, but still keeping beat with the silent music. You can see a rabbit under a cottonwood tree, fast asleep, lightly breathing on his soft gray coat that snuggles onto his small body like a gentle blanket.”



Madeline also had to do a report for school on a career and she decided on a park naturalist. For her report she dressed like Andrea, (the naturalist from Ernie Miller Nature Center). with khaki shorts and hiking boots. She put a glove on and attached a stuffed hawk. She then pretended to do a nature talk, much like Andrea does for camp.

Andrea said that when Madeline’s father told her that story, “Tears came to my eyes a little. Her father has told me on many occasions how thankful for the camp he is, and that this is what children should be doing—playing outside. It is so nice to hear that we make a difference. I may not make a lot of money, but I get so many more paychecks from the heart.”

## Making the Best of an Experience

The Girl Scouts of NE Kansas and NW Missouri Council, was featured in a TIME magazine article in late November. The article can be accessed by following the link:

<http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,1862180,00.html>

The article talked about the struggles of many Girl Scout councils in keeping camps open, and providing relevant programming for girls. Eileen, a Girl Scout and Camp Oakledge staff person this past summer, wrote the following in response to the TIME magazine article.

“As a high school senior, I know that Girl Scouting isn't 'cool' anymore. But that has yet to deter me. My troop dissolved after 8th grade, but I kept going on my own—at first, mostly so I could go to camp. For me, scouting isn't about cookie sales any longer, but about the opportunities that it can bring me. Nearly every other weekend from August to November there has been some activity I could take part in. I help with wilderness experience weekends, camp outs, leadership trainings, archery and traverse climbing wall events and so many other things. **I have made my scouting experience my own.** I volunteer when I can, participate when I get the chance. Girl Scouts is so much more than cookies, the next step is to seize the opportunities we have been handed, before they disappear. That's what the next generation of Girl Scouting needs to be about. Scouting can open doors for you. Strive to be whatever you want to be, it's possible if you just give it a try.”

“I hope that GSUSA sees camps as a place for our society's young girls and women to grow and prosper in our current society that is plagued with stereotypes and expectations. There is a lot in the camp program that can enhance girls' lives, even if it's just a week at a time.”



## Standards Trainings for 2008-2009

The first standards training for 2009 visits will take place at the Great Rivers fall conference on November 10 at Wesley Woods in Indianola, Iowa. There will be three additional sessions:

**Standards Training, Des Moines, IA, January 12, 2009**

Camp Fire USA Service Center, 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

**Standards Training, Lincoln, NE, February 23, 2009**

First Lutheran Church, Lincoln, 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

**Standards Training, Kansas City, MO, March 9, 2009**

Girl Scouts of NE Kansas and NW Missouri office, 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Please register for the standards courses by emailing Linda DuBrul, by e-mail at [n0imy@arri.nt](mailto:n0imy@arri.nt). Be sure to bring your standards book to the training; we only have a limited number of extra books. Also, be sure to printout the updates from the ACA website and bring those with you to the training. These can be found at [www.acacamps.org/accreditation/interpretations\\_may07\\_jan08.pdf](http://www.acacamps.org/accreditation/interpretations_may07_jan08.pdf). If you have questions, you can contact Linda at 417-535-6691 or e-mail address above. .

## Camps to be Visited in 2009

If your camp was last visited in 2006, you are due for a visit next summer, and you should have received a notification e-mail from Linda DuBrul. Your camp also should have received a standards notebook in the mail from the publisher in the fall of 2006. If you are not sure when you were last visited, email Linda Du Brul, Standards Chair at [n0imy@arri.net](mailto:n0imy@arri.net). (The second character is a zero). Your camp will need to do three things in 2009—pay your service fees, sign your annual statement of compliance, and attend a standards training (see the dates above). Be sure your contact information is up to date. You can do this online at [www.ACAcamps.org](http://www.ACAcamps.org). or go to [www.acacamps.org/login/logindetails.php](http://www.acacamps.org/login/logindetails.php). You will need to know your ACA member number and password. Or contact Jim Cherry, section executive at [executive@acagreatrivers.org](mailto:executive@acagreatrivers.org).

## Visitor Training

Are you interested in becoming a volunteer camp visitor? In January of 2008 eight new visitors attended training at YMCA Camp Wood. A ninth volunteers made it to visitor training in another section. All of these volunteers were out and about this summer visiting camps in our four states. If you are interested in becoming a visitor, contact Linda Du Brul, Standards Chair for more information and an associate visitor application. Her contact information is 417-535-6691 or e-mail: [n0imy@arri.net](mailto:n0imy@arri.net). (the second character is a zero.) We will need to have a minimum of six people to hold the training.

## ACA Mid States Conference—Save The Date—March 26-28<sup>H</sup>, 2009

Mid States is a fabulous opportunity to connect with camping professionals, train your staff, shop for deals, and fill your “bag of tricks”. The 2009 theme is *Learn Together, Grow Together: Sowing the Seed of Sustainability*. The conference will provide thought provoking presenters and wonderful opportunities to connect with peers! The 2009 Conference Schedule can be found at [www.acamidstates.org](http://www.acamidstates.org). Call for Presenter forms are available at the **Mid States Camping Conference website**. This unique conference welcomes approximately 1200 attendees and offers more than 170 educational opportunities. Gordie Kaplan and Marci Brower drove all the way from Chicago to present Mid States information to participants at the Great Rivers Annual conference.

## ACA National Conference—February 17-20, 2009

*The Power of the Experience* is the theme for the 2009 ACA Conference in Orlando.

Through powerful keynote addresses and inspiring sessions, participants will learn more about the camp profession. Sessions will include information on youth development and behavior; staff training and leadership; business and operations; emerging issues; tools and strategies; innovative programming and activities. Find out more at [www.acacamps.org](http://www.acacamps.org).



## News of Our Members

### Thanks Traci and Education Committee!

Traci Haselhuhn has been the ACA Great Rivers Education Chair for several years. Traci has a message for the Great Rivers section: "I have had a lot of fun being the Education Chair the last few years, but I am ready to step down and have someone else take a shot at planning this big event. If anyone is interested in being the ACA Great Rivers Education Chair, please contact Barb Collins at [bcollins@ymcalincoln.org](mailto:bcollins@ymcalincoln.org) or Robyn Ratcliff at [RobynRatcliff@girlscoutsKSMO.org](mailto:RobynRatcliff@girlscoutsKSMO.org)."

"I would like to thank our 2008 Education Committee for all of their time, effort, creativity, and energy as they volunteered to help plan and run our Annual Fall Conference:

- Tom Nepl and Buzz Wheeler — especially for their coordination of the Vendor Fair.
- Jason Villalobos — especially for his coordination of the workshop sessions.
- Amanda Sonnier & Delores Huitt — especially for their coordination of the registration information, nametags and packets.
- Carmen Contreras —for help with various tasks at the conference.
- PJ Jamison — for help with pre-planning.
- And Barb Collins for helping take over for me when I needed to leave.

Thank you to everyone!

### Honored for Volunteer Work

Jim Cherry has been named Volunteer of the Year by the National Smokejumpers Association. He will be featured on the cover of the next National Smokejumpers Association magazine. Congratulations Jim!

### New Standards Instructors

Julie Cackler, Camp Fire Day Camps in Central Iowa, and Paul Denowski, YMCA Camp Wapsi were trained as new Standards Instructors. They attended their training in December at the Perleman Conference Center in Wisconsin. It sounds like it was REALLY cold that weekend! Such dedication! Thanks Julie and Paul!

### Training Opportunities

*Venture Out* at the University of Missouri, in Columbia is offering two courses during the college winter break. Contact Jason Coleman for more information: [ventureout@missouri.edu](mailto:ventureout@missouri.edu).

Wilderness First Aid Course, January 12-13, \$130 per person.

Wilderness First Responder Course, January 3-11, \$550 per person.

### Photographs from the ACA Great Rivers Annual Conference



Jim Cain leads team-building sessions at Great Rivers Conference.



Becky Godfrey, Tiffany Clifton, and Lynn Steinkamp are shown during the awards portion of the Annual Meeting.

## Legislative Update—by Brad North

### Pool and Spa Safety Act

The Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Safety Act. (15 USC 8001) goes into affect December 8, 2008, Go to the Web site to get the full bill as it was signed in to law: [www.cpsc.gov/pssa.pdf](http://www.cpsc.gov/pssa.pdf). Scroll down to get to the Title XIV Pool and Safety section. Following are some excerpts:



1. The State requires by statute— The Federal Government has set minimum requirements for each state.
  - The enclosure of all outdoor residential pools and spas by barriers to entry that will effectively prevent small children from gaining unsupervised and unfettered access to the pool or spa;
  - That all pools and spas be equipped with devices and systems designed to prevent entrapment by pool or spa drains;
2. In general—In establishing additional minimum State law requirements for swimming pools and spas under subsection (a)(1), the Commission shall require, at a minimum, one or more of the following (except for pools constructed without a single main drain):
  - SAFETY VACUUM RELEASE SYSTEM.—A safety vacuum release system which ceases operation of the pump, reverses the circulation flow, or otherwise provides a vacuum release at a suction outlet when a blockage is detected, that has been tested by an independent third party and found to conform to ASME/ANSI standard A112.19.17 or ASTM standard F2387, or any successor standard.
  - SUCTION-LIMITING VENT SYSTEM.—A suction-limiting vent system with a tamper-resistant atmospheric opening.
  - GRAVITY DRAINAGE SYSTEM.—A gravity drainage system that utilizes a collector tank.
  - AUTOMATIC PUMP SHUT-OFF SYSTEM.—An automatic pump shut-off system.
  - DRAIN DISABLEMENT.—A device or system that disables the drain.
  - OTHER SYSTEMS.—Any other system determined by the Commission to be equally effective as, or better than, the systems described in subparagraphs (A) through (E) of this paragraph at preventing or eliminating the risk of injury or death associated with pool drainage systems.
3. That pools and spas built more than 1 year after the date of the enactment of such statute have—
  - More than one drain;
  - One or more unblockable drains; or
  - No main drain.
4. Every swimming pool and spa that has a main drain, other than an unblockable drain, be equipped with a drain cover that meets the consumer product safety standard established by section 1404; and
5. That periodic notification is provided to owners of residential swimming pools or spas about compliance with the entrapment protection standards of the ASME/ANSI A112.19.8 performance standard, or any successor standard.

### FBI Criminal Data Base

The next one comes from the ACA website: [www.capwiz.com/acacamps/callalert/index.tt?alertid=11320951](http://www.capwiz.com/acacamps/callalert/index.tt?alertid=11320951). This bill will help all camps by gaining access to the FBI criminal data base. Please go to this link and contact your senators and representatives.

### Missouri Health Providers

The following link is legislation that has been introduced in the Missouri House of Representatives: [www.house.mo.gov/billtracking/bills091/biltxt/intro/HB00371.htm](http://www.house.mo.gov/billtracking/bills091/biltxt/intro/HB00371.htm). House Bill 37 adds medical practitioners, providing services at a summer camp, to the list of health care providers for whom the State Legal Expense Fund is available for payment of certain claims against a provider.

## ACA Great Rivers Section Board

**ACA Great Rivers Section Web Site:**  
[www.acagreatrivers.org](http://www.acagreatrivers.org)

Section Executive: Rev. Jim Cherry:  
E-mail: [executive@acagreatrivers.org](mailto:executive@acagreatrivers.org)  
Telephone: 641-927-4428

President: Robyn Ratcliff, Girl Scouts  
E-mail: [robynratclif@girlscoutsksmo.org](mailto:robynratclif@girlscoutsksmo.org)

Vice President of Development: H. Lee Walz, United Methodist  
E-mail: [lwalz@moumethodist.org](mailto:lwalz@moumethodist.org)

Vice President of Program: Barb Collins, YMCA Camp Kitaki  
E-mail: [bcollins@ymcalincoln.org](mailto:bcollins@ymcalincoln.org)

Secretary: Anne Snyder, YMCA Camp Wood  
E-mail: [aws1155@yahoo.com](mailto:aws1155@yahoo.com)

Treasurer: Tom Neppi  
E-mail: [tom@nepplandscapearchitecture.com](mailto:tom@nepplandscapearchitecture.com)

Standards Chair: Linda DuBrul, retired  
E-mail: [n0imy@arrl.net](mailto:n0imy@arrl.net)

Education Chair: (currently vacant)  
E-mail:

Membership Chair: (currently vacant)

Legislation: Brad North  
E-mail: [director@campgalileemo.org](mailto:director@campgalileemo.org)

Complaint Resolution: David Sherry, YMCA  
E-mail: [david.sherry@dmyymca.org](mailto:david.sherry@dmyymca.org)

Public Relations: DD Gass, Camp Fire USA  
E-mail: [dd.gass@campfireusa.org](mailto:dd.gass@campfireusa.org)

Member At Large: Lynn Steinkamp, Girl Scouts  
E-mail: [lsteinkamp@girlscoutsnebraska.org](mailto:lsteinkamp@girlscoutsnebraska.org)

Nominating: Becky Godfrey  
E-mail: [yerfdogs@yahoo.com](mailto:yerfdogs@yahoo.com)

### Update Your ACA Information!

When was the last time you checked to see if ACA's database has correct information about your contact information or the correct information for your camp? Did you know that you can go into your database and make corrections?

The webpage for doing this is [www.acacamps.org/login/login/details.php](http://www.acacamps.org/login/login/details.php) You will find instructions for how to access your personal information. It is very important that this information is kept up-to-date. More and more communication is dependent upon having an accurate email address.

For your camp it is important to have the correct contact person listed so that critical communications regarding standards and accreditation do not go astray. Take a couple of minutes today to check the accuracy of your database information.

### Share Your Training Dates

If you are planning training events that could be attended by other camp professionals, please send your information to our Section Executive, Jim Cherry. Jim sends out regular communications with members and the information will also appear in future newsletters. E-mail your information to [executive@acagreatrivers.org](mailto:executive@acagreatrivers.org).



# Happy Holidays!