

Canyon Camp Staff Alumni and Friends
2009 Fall Newsletter

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Report on the 2009 Camping Season (from Lee Binkley)

Once again Canyon Camp experienced a full summer of busy and exciting times. Camp continues to serve the twelve counties of Blackhawk Area Council as well as several surrounding councils. Blackhawk Area Council currently has nearly 15,000 youth enrolled in Cub Scout Packs, Boy Scout Troops, Explorer Posts, and Venturing Crews. The Learning for Life program has an additional 4,500 youth. We are fortunate to have nearly 5,000 adult leaders and over 450 Scouting units.

As we all know the summer experience of Scouting is a major part of the Scouting year. Individual troops have the option to attend camps of their choosing, either within Blackhawk Area Council or out of council. Additionally troops may attend the National High Adventure Bases and National Jamborees. We are fortunate to have two camps in our council, Canyon Camp and Camp Lowden.

The 2009 season was very successful. Canyon Camp had nearly 850 Boy Scouts, Venturing Scouts, and leaders in attendance. The 37 members of the camp staff worked well together to deliver programming to our participants. Six weeks of traditional Boy Scout programming was offered. The Canyon Ranger Program was again offered for the first year Scouts. Additionally First Class Emphasis, Handicraft, Scoutcraft, Nature, and Shooting Sports were available to all ages. The older Scouts and leaders were offered Operation OWL, Kayaking BSA, and Adult Leader Training. John Weber, staff member from the 60's, 70s, and 80's returned from Honduras the past 2 summers to deliver the adult leader training. John also taught Red Cross Wilderness First Aid to many older Scouts and leaders.

Two new activities were added for the 2009 season. We offered paintball and boat building. Paintball target shooting was offered 3 times each week in the area where Pioneer Potpourri was offered. For the older readers of this newsletter, where the Nature Area was located in the 70's.

Boat building was headed-up by John Weber. Each week a few first year Scouts gathered to construct a small boat on the porch of the Founder's Lodge. The lumber was cut on the sawmill in the back of camp. Upon completion the group launched the boat from a ramp into the pool on Wednesday night during parent's night. The aquatics staff made quite a show of this event. The launching was complete with music and Champaign (actually Mentos candy in Diet Coke...makes quite a fizzy mess, but fun!!) The first week's boat made is to the lifeguard chair.

By the end of the summer the boats were perfected to make a lap around the pool. A drawing was held to see which lucky scout, (and which unlucky leader) won the right to take the boat home on top of his car.

The final week of camp was our Venturing Program, with programming choices chosen by Crews and individuals. This year's Crews took a bike trip from Monroe to New Glarus and spent a night at the New Glarus Woods State Park, traveled to Maquokata Caves, and took the Founder's Hike from Apple River Canyon State Park back to camp. The participants finished their week with a canoe trip from Galena to Blandings Landing north of Hanover and had a morning of pistol shooting back at camp in the Shooting Sports Area.

All in all we had a very good summer. Dick Reynolds and I once again had the privilege to serve Canyon Camp as the Co-Camp Directors. We do our best to carry on the traditions that so many of you started many years ago.

2009 Spirit Scholarships Awarded to 5 Canyon Camp Staff

The Canyon Camp Spirit Scholarship program began in 1992 with staff alumni contributing funds for the first scholarships. In recent years an endowment has been accumulated to generate a portion of the scholarship funding distributed each year. At the 2009 Staff Dinner Lee & Dick presented five scholarships. Recipient of scholarships for this year were:

- Troy Larson Scholarship: Michael Hofmann, Illinois State University
- Dennis Pratt Scholarship: Matthew Galusha, University of Wisconsin Platteville
- Lee Binkley Scholarship: Justin Hanger, University of Wisconsin Stout
- Spirit Scholarship: Jason Buss, Highland Community College
- Spirit Scholarship: Daniel Dick, Highland Community College

Scholarships totaling \$24,300 have been awarded to 82 recipients through 2009. There are now three named scholarships awarded each year for: Troy Larson Spirit Scholarship first awarded in 2005, Dennis Pratt Spirit Scholarship first awarded in 2006 and the Lee Binkley Spirit Scholarship first awarded in 2007.

Scholarship funding comes from staff alumni, Scouters, and Friends of Canyon Camp. Individuals making tax-deductible contributions may select 1 of 8 pen and ink drawings of Canyon Camp scenes. To date, artist Elaine Bethke of Monroe has generated prints that depict:

Canyon Camp Bells
Held Nature Center
Stagecoach Trail Sign
Jamboree Cabin
The Chapel
Vickery Health Lodge
Rawleigh Headquarters Building
Hess Farmstead Barn

If you are interested in supporting the Spirit Scholarship Fund contact Ron Spielman at: 608-325-6490 or spiel335@tds.net

Natural Land Institute acquires Wiley Farm, Camping Program Opportunities Expand!

The Natural Land Institute (NLI) headquartered in Rockford, Illinois has acquired the 148 acre farm along Broadway Road, just east of Canyon Camp, from Marjorie Wiley and her family. The acquisition of the Wiley farm by NLI fits with the Strategic Plan of BSA as we are assured the land, which includes a length of the Apple River, will not be developed and will remain a natural buffer for Canyon Camp.

Discussions with Marjorie Wiley began several years ago, and Jerry Paulson, Executive Director of NLI, was instrumental in securing the funding necessary for the ultimate purchase. Paulson successfully negotiated funding from the Illinois Clean Energy Foundation, the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, the State of Illinois Natural Areas Acquisition Fund, and the Illinois Chapter of The Nature Conservancy.

The Wiley farm has an interesting history as it was purchased by the Wiley family of Rockford in 1936, the same year Canyon Camp was dedicated for use upon lands acquired by the Koenig Family of Freeport. There is a farmhouse on the Wiley property with a thick foundation of stone that was probably constructed in the mid 1800's, perhaps by then owner Christopher Columbus Thompson. C.C. Thompson was an early entrepreneur who first had a sawmill by the Apple River and then used the lumber he cut to construct and operate a three story grist mill utilizing water power from the Apple River. Mrs. Thompson and one of the first schools in the area once sat near what is now the intersection of Townsend Road and Broadway Road operated an early Post Office on the property. Canyon Camp and the Wiley Farm are located in Thompson Township.

There may be additional potential opportunities for future programming for Canyon Camp staff and Scouts on the Wiley property. While most of the Wiley lands will ultimately be transferred to the Illinois DNR with the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission helping to manage the property, the Wiley buildings and access to the Apple River may be available to become a part of Canyon Camp. Negotiations are underway to consider placing a Conservation Easement on a portion of the far Northeast corner of Canyon Camp encompassing lands bordering Coon Creek. For many months camp personnel, Council volunteers, NLI representatives and Illinois DNR representatives have met and walked areas of Canyon Camp and spent many hours discussing potential details for a Conservancy Easement. Essentially, if a Conservation Agreement can be attained, the Council would receive a payment and that payment would then provide funding to permit the acquisition of a portion of the Wiley Farm. If these discussions come together there may be additional camping areas and program areas on the Wiley lands with access from our back gate directly across Broadway Road.

By collaborating with NLI we are optimistic that we can help both organizations preserve the scenic beauty, natural heritage and pristine environment of the region in perpetuity. The Fall 2009 issue of Northwest Quarterly has a lengthy article with color photographs regarding the NLI acquisition of the Wiley Farm. If you have questions or desire more information contact Ron Spielman at spiel335@tds.net as he has been critically involved in these discussions over the past four years.

Rawleigh Building Restoration

Once again this summer the Rawleigh Building was converted into a museum displaying memorabilia and photos of the history of Canyon Camp. Josh Ehlers, Matt Binkley and Lee Binkley, curators of the exhibits, created interesting displays from their own collections as well from the collection of Native American artifacts donated by the family of Bert Strohecker and others friends of Canyon Camp.

After many decades of heavy, year-round use, the Rawleigh Cabin is now the focus of a restoration effort. The families of Irwin Bishop of Elizabeth and Richard J. Freidag of Freeport have already submitted memorial monies in support of this project. Ultimately, when restoration plans are complete and the necessary funding in place, the cabin will be restored and preserved for use as an historical center to display the artifacts from over 70 years of activity at Canyon Camp.

Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of Canyon Camp in 2011

In the summer of 2011 Canyon Camp will celebrate 75 years of service. Co-Directors Lee Binkley and Dick Reynolds will incorporate the 75th Anniversary Celebration into their summer camping schedule. Whether there will be a formal reunion of staff alumni will depend upon the interest expressed in the coming months. Past reunions during a weekend of the summer camp schedule required significant advance planning and the involvement of current staff members to serve as hosts and to staff program areas. If you have ideas and suggestions for a 2011 Reunion please share them with Lee (LeeBinkley@hotmail.com) and Dick (richardjreynolds@juno.com).

100th Anniversary of Scouting in 2010

With BSA celebrating a 100th Anniversary in 2010 and Canyon Camp to soon celebrate 75 years of Scouting in 2010, we are anxious to preserve as much local Scouting history as is possible. If you have photographs, newspaper clippings or written documentation related to Canyon Camp and the scouts who have camped there you are encouraged to share them. All documents will be photocopied and photographs will be digitized for the archives before returning them to the owner. Contact Mike Beeth (beeth@uwosh.edu) if you have items related to Scouting or Canyon Camp.