



Mount Desert Island

ECHOES

Newsletter and Calendar Winter/Spring 2007

No child left inside

COMING THIS SUMMER!

At camp, we're always aiming for growing experiences. Kids grow through the challenges offered at camp; camp grows through the challenges of serving kids. Here's a sneak preview of some upcoming summer attractions!

▽ Quasar Camp, a new program for campers going into 7th and 8th grades. Campers in this age group need more variety and choices. This new program will allow them to enjoy all our camp-based activities, plus small group explorations of other parts of MDI and the opportunity to participate in Maine Adventure Trips. More choices, more independence, loads of fun (all supervised).

▽ An enhanced Teen Leadership Program. We've restructured the program so that teens can continuously build their skills over several sessions each summer, for 2-3 years. We've also added an amphibious Acadia Leadership Experience that combines land- and sea-based training.

▽ Transportation at less cost. We've reduced the fee from \$30 to \$25 a week—and the fee for each additional sibling is only \$5. We want to make transportation affordable for all families.

For a complete listing of this summer's programs, take a look at the 2007 Camp Brochure at the back of this newsletter. Then, register early using the handy forms attached in the middle.

NEW HIGH CHALLENGE COURSE

Why would anyone want to go up there?! What's the point of it!?

The high ropes course is about building trust, taking positive risks, going beyond where you think you can go ...

The new course at camp, made possible by the generosity of an anonymous donor, is 40 feet off the ground. Looking up at it with a group for the first time, you'd likely hear "Impossible for me!" and "I'll just belay" and "No way I'm getting on that!" ... but then everyone does get on it, encouraged by teammates. Everyone goes through "ground school" first, learning how to harness up correctly and manage the belay ropes. We discuss risk taking and decision making. We talk about going beyond perceived mental and physical barriers: stop, breathe, recenter, assess, decide. We define success: getting to the spot where you've moved beyond where you thought possible.



40 feet up!

On an unbelievably mild January day, the members of the George Stevens Academy Experiential Education class arrived for the capstone experience for the term. Here is Amy Gellerson's story ...

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

Camp Beech Cliff

Board of Directors

Wells Bacon, *Chair*

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Anne Pomeroy

Sally Kellogg, *Honorary*

Clifford Pulis, *Emeritus*



*Welcome to new
Board member
Jim Murray.*

Full-Time Staff

Debra Deal
Executive Director

Kyle Bissell
Director of Adventure Education

Brenda Fletcher
Office Manager

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MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As a camp director, you get pretty used to being asked in the winter months "So, things pretty slow for you now?" It's a fair inquiry—I used to ask the same question of other camp directors before I actually entered the profession.

It's a lot like the one that I would ask friends with small children before I had any of my own: "Seen any good movies recently?" How little I knew about being a camp director—or being a parent!

So much of preparing for summer camp goes on in the winter and spring months. We never rest on our laurels—we're always looking for ways to make camp even better. Last year we focused on making camp available to more kids and had a banner summer for enrollment.

This year our focus is on adding breadth and depth to our programming. Besides the new Quasar Camp for 7th & 8th graders and our enhanced Teen Leadership Program (see page 1 of this newsletter), there are other exciting additions I hope you'll see this summer, if grants come through. They include:

- An additional dock area to allow for swimming lessons for every camper who needs basic instruction. As many as 20 percent of the campers last year did not know how to swim.
- A guest series for nature, creative arts, and performance arts, so our kids can have a full experience learning about our natural world and the arts from the talented and inspiring people who live here on the island.

We've also made a major change in staffing, turning the Camp Director position into a seasonal position. Unfortunately, that has meant that Mark Hundhammer, our camp director for the past two summers, has moved on. We appreciate all that he has done for camp, and know that campers, staff, and parents will miss him. We plan to hire a new Camp Director in March. An interview committee has been formed (made up of a board member, a parent, a staff member, and a counselor-in-training), which will help the CBC Board select the new director from a strong pool of applicants. Stay tuned.

There's a great summer ahead at camp! For more details, take a look at this summer's brochure at the back of this newsletter - and think about getting your application in early.


Debra Deal



Learn to be an instructor ...

We are offering four instructor training courses this spring: Challenge Course, Leave No Trace, Wilderness Camping, Archery Level I.

For details, see page 6 (the second page of the Spring Calendar).

SUMMER POSITIONS OPEN

for more information, go to 'jobs' on our website
www.campbeechcliff.org

RN OR EMT
CHALLENGE COURSE FACILITATOR
BUS DRIVER
HEAD OF NATURE
HEAD OF OUTDOOR LIVING SKILLS
HEAD OF SPORTS AND GAMES
HEAD OF PERFORMING ARTS
CIT COORDINATOR
ADVENTURE TRIP LEADER

HIGH ROPES - FROM PAGE 1



Just One More Step ... My Camp Beech Cliff X-perience

by Amy Gellerson

The feeling of support is one of the best, and that is what this was about. There were fourteen of us, including two of our teachers. We had already become a fairly close class but had a few maturity issues, which made me question how the day would go. We all geared up, making jokes about the way the harnesses looked and about how high the course was.

As the time came closer, people began to become a little less confident—up until it was time to actually go up there. This was the moment where all of our guards came down and we really became a 'family,' working together in a way that we never had before.

Climbing up to walk along the high pole, I was fairly confident, but as I reached the point where I actually had to stand, I wasn't so sure. The support from my friends below gave me the courage and drive to do it. As I stood up, I could feel the adrenaline flowing throughout my body—it was a completely new and amazing experience. Then, with each step that I took my confidence and comfort went up—I kept telling myself "one more step, let's go!" Before I knew it, I was at the end, ready to be lowered down. I had complete confidence about the people being my anchor—I trusted them.

When I got down, that was the best feeling of my life. It felt great to have people be encouraged and proud. The feeling of accomplishing something like that just set me off for the rest of the day.

Through out the rest of the day, everyone tried and did the best that they could, overcoming fears, and even achieving things that others wouldn't dream of. Through this experience the class grew closer and I know that everyone got a great high from it. It has given me a new outlook on the way things are—if I can do that, what else can I do?



THANK YOU, VOLUNTEERS!

Providing a safe camp environment is an ongoing project. Last year volunteers accomplished an enormous amount of treework around the property. A special thank you to the fabulous volunteer work force—including Boy Scout Troup 96, the MDIHS baseball team, and the participants in our spring and fall work days—who made it all happen.

PETE NELSON - VOLUNTEER



*Pete Nelson and family on
St. Sauveur Mountain.*

It was camp that brought Pete Nelson to Mount Desert Island. As a teenager he came to work at Harbor House's Explorer Camp and fell in love with the island. Years later, when he was looking for a place to settle, Pete came back to the island. Shortly after his return he saw the Camp Beech Cliff sign

and introduced himself to Kyle, who took him for a tour. Pete returned the next day with his resume and has been involved with CBC ever since.

During the summer, Pete works as an employee, last year supervising the kayak program on its new ocean ventures. But his contribution goes far beyond what he is paid to do and he continues to volunteer his time and his resources throughout the rest of the year. He has helped with the climbing program, but his favorite occupation is working on the grounds—clearing, cutting and burning. He looks forward to the time when his sons Leao, 3, and Treyan, 2, will be old enough to be campers themselves. In the meantime he often brings them along to help.

OUR WISH LIST

(OF NEW OR SLIGHTLY USED ITEMS)

- Fishing supplies
- Life Jackets of all sizes
- AED and oxygen kit
- Sports equipment of all types
- Camping gear
- Maintenance truck with plow
- Arts & crafts supplies
- Large set of dishes and silverware
- Canoes, kayaks and sailing boats
- Something else you think we need?

*If you have an item to
donate, please
call us.*



WOMEN ROCK!

Excerpted from Feb 1, 2007 *Bar Harbor Times* article by Laurie Schreiber

MOUNT DESERT — Women age 35 and over are climbing the walls, in a rock-climbing class designed to boost their comfort level and develop their skills.

The class has been taking place Monday evenings from 6-7:30 p.m. at Camp Beech Cliff's indoor climbing wall.

At the moment, instructor Heather Murray is overseeing the group as they buckle harnesses, tie figure eight knots, check the connections between their "grigri"—a self-braking belay device—and carabiners—a gated connecting device used to attach a rope to a fixed anchor. The group pairs off, one partner to belay and the other to venture upward along variously spaced hand- and footholds.



"Say 'Climbing!' or 'Ready to climb!'" Ms. Murray tells Brenda Fletcher, who is new to the sport but gamely grabs a handhold.



"Climb away!" says her partner, Lisa John, who is the human link to an anchor affixed to the floor and the line that will keep Ms. Fletcher safe. Jenn Bridgers is going for some trickier holds with a shallower grip. Her partner, Helen Koch, keeps a close eye on her moves.

"Okay, I could easily fall," Ms. Bridgers announces partway up the wall.

"You're doing a great job," Ms. Koch says.

The wall has built-in outcroppings to simulate the complexities of real cliffs and ledges. Ms. Bridgers decides to try getting around a corner, while Ms. John attempts an overhang. Those below cheer them on as Ms. Murray suggests alternative moves.

"Bring your left foot down," she tells Ms. Bridgers. "Mash it next to your right on the same hold. Pull up your right foot, lock it in, and reach straight above with your left shoulder. Good! Awesome!"

The level of experience here ranges from novice to veteran. For Ms. Fletcher, who is also the camp's office manager, the class is only her third wall-climbing attempt. In fact, the class, with its focus on older women, was her idea.

"As I grow older I find myself to be less daring than I once was," she says. "The class is an opportunity to take risks, to test limits, to accomplish something which seems initially to be impossible, and to develop trust—which is sometimes the biggest risk of all. A women's class seemed as if it would be a safe and supportive environment in which to do this, and this has, indeed, proved to be true."



PHOTO BY ROGIER VAN BAKEL/EAGER EYE PHOTOGRAPHY

Ms. Murray is teaching the course as a special offering through Camp Beech Cliff. She is a skilled rock climber, having climbed extensively throughout the U.S. She works occasionally as a rock climbing guide for her husband's business, Atlantic Climbing School, and is a full-time jeweler.

"I think it provides a challenge that many other sports don't give, because of the element of mental fortitude," she says. "It

combines keeping your cool with building your strength and your skills."

"Heather has an amazing capacity to get you to go just one step more than you thought you could—and one more and one more and one more," says Ms. Fletcher. "And the mutual support and encouragement within the group has been truly wonderful."

