

NIGHT EAGLE NEWS

A Primitive Camp for Boys Ages 10-14
www.nightaglewilderness.com

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From the Director

The following is a wonderful article that was written in 2013 by Dr. Jonathan Zimmerman who teaches education and history at the University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education. He and I see eye-to-eye about summer camps!

I went to three different summer camps when I was a kid, in the late 1960s and early 1970s. I swam, hiked and played sports (badly). And sometimes, I did nothing at all. That's what summer — and camp — were all about.

But times have changed. About 20 years ago, "specialty camps" began to replace the general-interest kind that I attended. So today you can go to camps that stress particular activities, from cooking and computers to robotics and rocketry.

Even at general-interest camps kids are much more likely to receive professional athletic coaching, top-of-the-line art and music instruction, or even SAT-prep classes. Camp isn't just for fun anymore. It's about building a resume, a skill-set, a profile, a future. Like school, camp now prepares young people to win the great Race of Life.

Why?

Summer camps began as an antidote to school rather than an extension of it. According to Ernest Balch, who founded the country's first camp in 1881, formal educational institutions were making young men "soft." Boys needed a rugged outdoor experience to escape the "weakening feminine influences" of modern society.

Around the turn of the century, the YMCA and the Boy Scouts started summer camps. So did groups with names like the Woodcraft Indians and the Sons of Daniel Boone, all devoted to recovering the lost the lost rustic masculinity of the old frontier.

That's why camps borrowed names and activities from the "primitives" who preceded whites on the frontier. Indian-style ritual "gives the boy the much needed opportunity to express his inherent savagery," one camp brochure declared. "Just to be free, to run, to climb, to shout and yell like a wild Indian on a war-path!"

Many camps also began to show Hollywood movies at night, tapping into young people's growing appetite for commercial culture. Others balked at it, holding the line against "the tidal wave of jazz and crowded hall and movie and cabaret," as one director wrote.

All of these new activities add costs, of course, which are passed on to parents. And to justify those prices, the camps advertise skills that will allegedly help kids succeed in the so-called real world. "Campers have a competitive edge when they return to school in the fall.

Why waste a summer playing and relaxing, when you could be gaining "aptitudes" and "opportunities" that will separate you from the pack?

That seems like a great way to deny kids their childhood. There will be plenty of time, later in life, to plot and strategize about moving up in the world. Trust me, I'm an adult. I do that all the time.

But when I was a kid, I didn't. The last camp I attended proclaimed itself "the camp with the pioneer spirit." That meant sleeping outside, running around barefoot and, yes, participating in "Indian" ceremonies.

You developed important life skills — including cooperation and compromise — but you didn't have to stand out from the tribe. It was about getting along, not getting ahead. And I'll always be grateful for that.

The Drum



Feels the Drum leading a drumming activity with ***Snow Deer, Blue Heart Teaches, Fire Otter, and Little Bear***

The Drum, or *cancega* (chan-cheh-gah) is not just a musical instrument. To the Lakota, it represents the heartbeat of the People and calls the spirits and nations together, making the drum the sacred center for their ceremonies.

As a gift for prayer from the Great Spirit, the drum is thought of as a living entity and each drum has a keeper to protect it and ensure that anyone who comes in contact with it treats it with respect. Nothing is ever set on a drum, nor does anyone ever reach across it.

Once a year or so, the drum keeper prepares four foods, including a meat (deer or buffalo), fruit (wild berries), vegetable (corn), and water, and puts on a festival where everyone eats on behalf of the drum. Some food is even ceremonially placed next to the drum.

Drums are filled with dreams and voices that speak of olden things. Yet, in the same breath they seem to speak of youth and future generations. Historically, drums were an essential part of spiritual ceremonies for vision, power, and healing.

Today you would be more likely to see a drum at a Wachipi (Pow Wow), a time of singing and dancing to celebrate the beginning of life, renew friendships, and hold naming and honoring ceremonies. The drummer at a Wachipi is often

the lead singer who begins and controls the dances and songs.

As you know from being at Night Eagle, some Lakota songs have words, but many have “vocables,” words that don’t have meanings but are just sounds, usually a syllable made up of a vowel that is combined mainly with *w*’s or *h*’s (hey, yah, hey, hey, hey, ya, hey, hey). We already know several of these types of songs and will be learning more.

In addition to singing, the drum keeper has to know the four basic rhythms of the drum which represent the four directions: (1) Regular Beat – steady pulse in which every two beats come slightly closer together; (2) Honor Beat – the sound of a heart beating, soft, loud; (3) Round Dance Beat – a steady two beat pulse with heavy syncopation – every two beats are very close together; and (4) Combination Rolling Beat – a fast drum roll, a pause, then a fast steady beat.

These rhythms accompany the seven basic Lakota dances: (1) Traditional—for many tribes; (2) Flag – a national anthem with no dancing; (3) Veteran’s – for any veteran; (4) Sneak Up—a dance of surprising an enemy/animal; (5) Round—for couples; (6) Honor—to honor anyone; and (7) the private, sacred Sun Dance.

In the past, ***Feels the Drum*** has taught us several dances. Maybe this coming summer we can begin learning to dance to the songs we sing in camp.



“The drum is the Great Spirit’s favorite instrument. That is why we were all given a heartbeat.”

- Mano, Navajo Elder

Spring Work and Play Weekend



Building the Crafts Shed during Work and Play

This year's Spring Work and Play Weekend will be on May 1 and 2 (weather permitting). We invite you all to be part of the fun as we prepare camp for the summer. This is an informal cooperative event that allows new and returning campers and their families to get to know one another while together we attack some of the many projects around camp.

Families and friends are invited to come for all or part of either day or to join us for the entire weekend. This is a great time to introduce your friends to Night Eagle. The majority of the work will take place on Saturday beginning around 9:00 a.m. (*Night Eagle* time).

Families that are staying can bring a tent or reserve some space for their sleeping bags in one of the tipis that we'll put up for the weekend. We can also recommend some nearby motels or inns if you're more inclined to a hot shower and a soft bed after a day's work.

Work projects at this year's gathering may include putting up a tipi or two, cutting and hauling in tipi poles, clearing the road of fallen trees, checking the Long Trail Shelter at Little Rock Pond, re-lashing Hocoka, painting the front gate, or any other projects we deem worthy of our attention. There is always plenty to do to prepare camp for the summer and there is always plenty of fun!

NOTE: If the ground is soft, plan to walk into camp from Skunk Junction. Tires will tear up the road into camp, but feet do very little damage!

Do You Know How Long Does It Things Take to Decompose?

Paper Towels	2-4 weeks
Banana Peel	3-4 weeks
Paper Bag	1 month
Newspaper	1.5 months
Apple Core	2 months
Cardboard	2 months
Orange Peel	6 months
Milk Cartons	5 years
Cigarette Butt	10-12 years
Plastic Containers	50-80 years
Aluminum Can	200-500 years
Plastic Bottles	450 years
Plastic Bags	200-1000 years



Pun Corner

If you don't send me any news, then I'll have to fill the space with puns!

Early one morning two birds were sitting at the side of a large puddle of oil. They saw a worm on the other side. One flew over the puddle and the other one swam through it. Which one got to the worm first? The one who swam, Silly, because . . . "Da oily boid gets da woim."

When chemists die, they barium.

I stayed up all night to see where the sun went.
Then it dawned on me.

They told me I had type-A blood, but it was a Type-O.

What do you call a dinosaur with an extensive vocabulary? Athesaurus.

Rainbow Medicine and Night Eagle

“His name is *Meadow Dreamer*, and that’s *Marsh Hawk* over there,” said *Southern Sky*, my counselor, introducing me to my new campmates.

I was utterly confused. What was I doing at this Native American inspired camp in the middle of the Green Mountains of Vermont? How would I stay here for the summer? I was a 12-year-old boy from a suburban town who liked the outdoors, and here I was, ten miles from the nearest small town, with my clothes in a duffle bag and supplies in my backpack ready to live in a tipi.

I was young and insecure, contemplating my camp choice as *Southern Sky* ushered me and my parents toward a twenty foot tipi. He explained to me how everyone at camp has a name based on native culture symbolism that represents his positive qualities. Wondering what my new name would be, I was nervous but captivated as my adventure began.

I have always had an appreciation for the outdoors, fishing almost every weekend with my dad, watching birds in the backyard with my grandma, or traveling to the Adirondacks and attempting to hike its daunting peaks with my family. This summer camp provided much more than living in the outdoors; it offered a community. It was here where I learned to separate myself from the cliques of society, from the social hierarchy that runs rampant in our high schools. I used to want to fit in and feel accepted, but at this camp I could be who I wanted to be.

I had the opportunity to try new experiences and embrace the unfamiliar, such as living with no electricity while relying on each other for cooking food and providing firewood. I lived in the woods with a group of individuals that some may call tree huggers, hippies, or just outcasts. But to me, they became my brothers.

I was thrown into the freedom of the outdoors, and one activity in particular strongly resonated with me: the “Get Lost” hikes. It was these hikes that led us deep into the woods, bush-whacking off trails where I had only my sense of direction to get back to camp. I remember the exhilaration of working together as a team, exploring and taking in the nature around us. Often as team leader, I



would carve out our paths, taking our team up an unexplored mountain with a compass in hand. I was not afraid, and these hikes made me realize that maybe the best path is the one that no one takes.

I ran around barefoot, playing and laughing. I explored the woods and learned how to live off the earth. I was proud of my separation from “society.” I was shirtless and free, and I connected back to nature, which has a powerful ability to bring us together and learn what is really meaningful.

At the end of my first of three weeks at this camp, I was finally given my own American Indian inspired camp name: Rainbow Medicine. The Rainbow represents the “Rainbow Race,” an idea created by the Lakota that all humans should live in harmony. Rainbow was used in my name to represent my friendliness and acceptance of others. Medicine represents the idea of the “Medicine Man,” the spiritual leader of the village. I recognized that my name fits who I truly am, someone who works hard to make others feel included, always strives to learn more, and guides others as best as I can.

At the moment my name was given, I realized what this place means to me. It is a place of meditation and introspection, where there is a community around you that supports and teaches you what it means to be happy, live a full life, and be close with others. All lessons I carry with me wherever I go.

Top 10 Reasons to Remind Your Parents to Send In Your Application

10. Filling out your camp application will let your parents avoid doing their taxes a bit longer.
9. You could take a family trip to the post office to mail your application and buy a Cherry Garcia ice cream cone at Ben & Jerry's.
8. If you stay home, you may have to wear shoes all summer, cut the grass, and keep your room clean.
7. Xboxes, video games, computers, and cell phones are all overrated.
6. Maybe Arctic Arrow will bring home another beaver.
5. You will have another chance to get *Feels the Drum* out in Crack About. **BAM!**
4. This could be the summer that *Summer Bear* cooks his famous macaroni pizza.
3. You could finish that project that you began last summer and promised yourself that you would finish at home (but didn't).
2. Can you even imagine a summer without Night Eagle?

1. *We'd miss you!*



Calling All Campers! If You Have Not Already Enrolled, It's Time!

February generally marks the beginning of the early enrollment season for prospective camp families, and we are already almost half filled! We'd like to remind returning camper families to get their application forms completed and mailed in so that you will have a space in the session of your choice.

Our advertising began this month, and camper inquiries are beginning to come in. So if you haven't already enrolled, we hope it's because you're still on Night Eagle time and have not realized that the summer enrollment season is here or maybe because the extreme temperatures and snow have kept your mind on other things! In either case, Night Eagle won't be the same without YOU, so get your applications in today and join *Summer Bear, Feels the Drum, and me!*

Campers Already Enrolled for 2021

(as of February 20, 2021)

River Shines	Aspen Moon
Spirit Dance	Otter Fox
Drum Spirit	Standing Flame
Southern Star	Foxfire Ash
River Shines	Mountain Friend
Winter Wind Song	Questing Drum
Questing Ash	Cedar Drum
Rising Ember	Sea Otter Stands
Marsh Rabbit	Sun Quest
Chickadee Sings	Western Bear
Axel Fontana	Anton Fontana
Aidan Stone	Abel Grimaldi
Sawyer Tootle	Brady Heins
Johannis Hinman	

Assistant Counselors

Circle Dance Sunrise Oak Glacier Shines
Circle Singer Arrow Shade Sun Bear

Important Dates:

June 1	Health Forms Due in the Office
June 27	Staff Week Begins
July 4	First Session (2, 3, 6 weeks) Opens
July 18	Four-Week Sessions Opens First One-Week Session Opens
July 25	Second Session (2 and 3 weeks) Opens
August 8	Second One-Week Session Opens
August 15	Back to the Blanket Opens

Night Eagle Wilderness Adventures
P.O. Box 479
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Circle Singer and Drum Spirit after the flour game!