



The Newsletter of Camp Westminster on Higgins Lake

Summer Westwinds Blow: An Alumnae's Reflections from Visitor's Sunday 2007

Nona (Che-Che Williston) Taylor

Y'all! Come back next year when Visitor's Sunday comes around again. Just follow the big road, the smaller road, the gravel road into the beloved forest. Get lost in all the green shades of under-story ferns and overarching trees at Camp; listen to the aspens jitter among silent hemlocks and maples, basking quietly in the summer sun. Turn an ear toward Higgins Lake, sighing endlessly at the shore, its tiny ripples creating ribbons of light on the near-shore sand, where minnows and their shadows dart about. Further out, where the lake deepens, notice the ripples, stirred by a small breeze, change to flashing sparks. Out there, too, watch the chameleon lake change from blue to lavender to black under the blue sky festooned with sailing summer clouds. In the midst of the God-given beauty of a summer Sunday, glory covers Camp like a lovely garment. Your presence makes the joy more complete.

I suspect many visitors- those already familiar with Camp- superimpose their old, unique memories on the same-but-different Camp Westminster they're seeing today. The forest is the same, only older; the lake the same, only higher. Westminster-green wakeyas, white-trimmed, still shelter campers, now with the addition of recent interior decorating in creamy, pale green. Sturdy log cabins, darkened with age, still bear the weight of rock-bedecked fireplace- chimneys, courtesy of Michigan's glaciers. Docks and floats; racks of paddles, canoes and lifejackets decorate the beach; sailboats bobbing at anchor enliven the lakeshore. Many things seem about the same as 'Back When', but do notice the bright yellow flag awarded to Camp by the Higgins Lake Homeowners' Association this summer, in appreciation for Camp's stewardship of the environment.

But that scolding jay- that one, up there in the top of the tallest tree- sees the familiar-old that has been refurbished, and also much that is new. He sees the new paint of recent years: new floors in the Lodge, Nature Cabin and Director's Office, the tidy log cabin at Camp's welcome-center near the lake. There are new lights in the Senior Log; a comfortable deck on Wakeya 11, as well as graceful wooden stairs, plus new wooden decks on Wakeyas 1-8. Most functional of all, perhaps, are the new Greenies, with their modern plumbing and newly-tiled hot showers. One of the Greenies-of-old has been transformed to a tiny guest cottage, the other into a camp store that offers fair trade items and many items bearing the familiar Camp logo.

We have been speaking mostly of things. However, since June 30, 1925, when Camp Westminster began at Lake Narrin, and in all the planning that preceded it, Camp has intentionally addressed the profound human need to nurture healthy spirits. Westminster has always been, and remains, a Christian camp: forest, lake, sky, buildings, staff, program, each day and every night (I think of sunshine and starlight, but even at Camp it sometimes rains)- almost everything at Camp bespeaks a Christian community. So these days, in contemplative silence, campers, staff and visitors alike can tread a serene, ten-station prayer trail that winds through the woods. Each station features a rustic prayer center that is based on the important symbols of the Christian faith from flame to cross to the Bible. At Station 10, the symbols unify to become the seal of the Presbyterian Church, USA. There the trail ends in the large campfire circle that suggests the joy of community, as if around a warming fire of mutual fellowship and compassion that unites God's people, when they return to the everyday world.

Summer Camp 2008 Schedule

Here it is! Check the website for updates and more information. The ages for each camp are in italics.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Gluten Free/ Casein Free Camp (GFCF Camp) 7-11, 12-14 •Day Camp I 7-11 •Westminster Service Corps (Year 3) 16-17 	Mon. June 16-21
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •First Timers 7-11 •MADD 7-11 •South Manitou Island Trip 12-14 •Performing Arts 12-14 	June 22-28
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Leadership Development Training (Year 2) 16-17 •Sailing II 15-16 	June 22- July 5
•Visitor's Sunday	June 29 11am
•You and Me Camp	June 29-July 1
•Family Camp	July 1-5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Just Camp 7-11 •Just Camp Plus 12-14 •Pioneer Heritage (coed) 12-14 •Sailing I 12-15 •Pre-Leadership Development (Year 1) 15 	July 6-19
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Aqua Mania 7-11 •Day Camp II 7-11 •Wet n' Wild 12-14 •UP Expedition 12-14 •Westminster Service Corps (Year 3) 16-17 	July 20-26
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Natural Wonders 7-11 •Awesome Art Adventure 7-11 •Artists @ Work 12-14 •Wet n' Wild II (includes Guard Start) 12-14 •Green Connection 15-17 	August 3-8



Pioneer Heritage Boys demonstrate the sturdiness of the teepee-design picnic table they built during their week this summer.

Planning Update

A Strategic Planning Team has been working with the guidance of a consulting firm over the past year to develop a long-range master plan for the camp. Details of the final master plan will be reported in 2008. Here is a sneak preview: 1) 82 years of influencing literally thousands of lives brought about the inevitable conclusion by the team that Camp Westminster's strength lies in its excellent summer program for children and youth ages 7-17; 2) a Christian community has always been the hallmark of a Camp Westminster experience and should remain so; 3) earthcare or proper stewardship of the environment pervades each summer's curriculum and manifests itself in numerous ways.

To maximize the effectiveness of the program which has grown so dramatically over the past several years, site modifications are necessary including: 1) upgrade O'Dell Dining Lodge kitchen; 2) expansion of Van Dusen Lodge; 3) construction of additional housing for staff and volunteers/ welcome center.

Stay tuned for more details in 2008!

T-shirt Design Contest

Do you have an idea for the 2008 summer camp t-shirt? Submit it and an expert panel will choose a winner. Your reward? Half off the fee for a week at Camp Westminster- wow!

Here's what you do: Visit the website and click on "Handle With Care" on the Summer Camp page. Design a t-shirt based on next summer's theme.

For more information, go to the T-shirt Contest link on the Summer Camp page. Designs due Feb. 1, 2008!

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