

Camp
Mataponi

Parent's Edition The Mati-Mag

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PARENT'S FALL
NEWSLETTER

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Director's Message

Dear Parents,

It's hard to believe the summer is far behind us already. We hope you and your family had a fun, safe and healthy season. For those of you who have children attending Camp Mataponi for the first time this coming summer we would like to welcome you into our extended family. Mataponi, as the girls tell us, feels like their second home and a place they look forward to coming all year. It is a place where the girls can be themselves for no one else but themselves.

This newsletter will be the first of three you will receive during the winter months. We like to keep you abreast of what is new in the world of Mataponi as well as remind you of important dates and issues. We encourage you to offer suggestions on topics you would like us to discuss in future newsletters or simply pass on positive reading material for our fellow camp families.

SUMMER
2004
RECAP

- Weather wise, it wasn't one of our stellar summers however with so many excellent staff and prepared indoor rainy day activities, most of the children said they didn't even realize it was rainier than previous summers.
- The Montreal trip is here to stay! The campers unanimously said it was "... the best summer, ever!" For those of you unfamiliar with the trip, we took 49 thirteen year olds (the Inter B's) to Montreal. The trip was filled with cultural sights, an exciting jet-boating trip, great meals and incredible memories. We will definitely be hosting another trip in 2005.

MOTHER/DAUGHTER RECAP



For those of you who attended the Mother/Daughter weekend immediately following the closing of camp, we hope you enjoyed yourselves as much as we enjoyed hosting it. From the feedback we received, the weekend was a huge success. The weather cooperated (finally) and many parents shared with us that they were able to spend quality time with their daughter(s) and truly get an insiders view as to why Camp is so special to them.

As we have done in past years, we will be taking next summer off for the Mother/Daughter weekend and will resume again after the summer of 2006. We know it's far off but... it's worth waiting for.

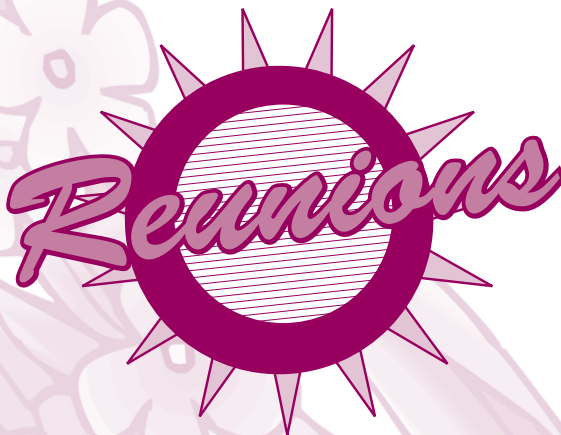
IMPORTANT REUNION UPDATES

A postcard recently went out with the dates of the two 2004 reunions. Please note a correction for the Florida reunion. The date is correct but the day is wrong.

The Florida reunion will be held at the T.G.I. Fridays, Town Center Mall, Boca Raton on TUESDAY (not Sunday) DECEMBER 28th from 11:30 am – 1:00 pm.

The New York City reunion will be held at T.G.I. Fridays , 196 Broadway SUNDAY, JANUARY 9th.

****PLEASE NOTE THE NEW LOCATION IS DOWNTOWN. WE ARE NO LONGER HAVING THE REUNION AT THE MIDTOWN T.G.I.FRIDAY.**



Feature Article

The Boston Globe printed this article back in August. We thought Michael Thompson made some valuable points in his editorial and wanted to share it with you.

A lost world of family time

By Michael Thompson / August 9 2004

I went to Vermont for a week this summer and rediscovered a fantastic lost world of family traditions. A world where people sit down and eat three meals together every day, serving their food from platters and talking with one another throughout the meal. A world where 10-year-old set the table for dinner and clear it, without complaint. A world where 13 year old boys don't play video games every night or watch TV or sit in front of computers.

Instead, they lie in bed and read – comic books, novels sometimes even grown-up novels. In this world 11-year-old girls walk together holding hands as easily as they laugh and talk. No frenzied instant messaging here. Instead, they sing. Every morning, as they make their beds and sweep out their rooms, they sing together. One girl starts a song, and the others join in spontaneously.

Of course, this fantastic world isn't a lost one. It is summer camp.

When I visited a camp for a week last month, some 40 years since I last attended one; I was struck hard by how rarely children engage in these activities anywhere else: not in schools, not in neighborhoods, not in families. Summer camps are one of the last places that kids can learn the so-called "family values" that hard pressed families no longer have the time to teach.

Doubtless, fun and friends are an important part of a camp experience, and the children I saw were having fun. But fun was not at the core of the campers' psychological experience.

From my view point, three valuable elements dominated the campers' days. They were living in a multigenerational community, they were following hallowed rituals that were universally respected, and they had a lot of downtime. Ritual surrounded every aspect of the day, from wake-up reveille and tent inspection to the day's end with taps and lullaby.

Yes, a lullaby. At 9:30 pm, we senior staff members stood together singing a version of the Brahms lullaby with camp lyrics to a circle of tents in the woods. The children were asleep by 9:45, and the slept solidly until 7:30 when the ritual clanging of the bell woke them again.

Is there anywhere else in the United States where children, ages 8-15 hear a lullaby every night? Is there anywhere where 14-year-olds reliably get 10 hours of sleep a night?

Whatever else our children find at camp, the painful truth is that we often send them away to experience aspects of family life they can't find at home anymore.

After all, there can't be too many family dinners when you're driving your children to the 90-game ice hockey schedule required of 13 year olds on the select ice hockey teams of North Andover.

You can't have much of an evening ritual when children watch TV or play computer games right up to bedtime. And there isn't much downtime in a family where the children are immersed in music lessons, tutoring, martial arts, town sports, SAT Prep courses, etc.

The only place a child from a high-pressure family can enjoy some peace and quiet and perhaps a good night's sleep (with a lullaby) is away from home.

Why does it matter? Because children need it. Children don't develop because they are pushed, prodded and pressured to develop for sports teams or "good" colleges. Development is their biological and psychological imperative. It is the job of adults to create environments where children have the time, freedom, and safety to grow up at their own pace.

In Vermont I was struck by the fact that summer camp provides something that is in short supply in our fast paced worlds: respected ritual, time for the generations to get to know one another, and the opportunity to take a nap or read a book after lunch each day. I hope camps like these can maintain their traditions in the face of the frantic, competitive zeitgeist of modern America.

I'm worried they will all become specialized (and driven) learning camps, teaching Division 1 sports skills or computer skills. I hope not. I plan to go back next summer and do some singing. I don't seem to have time for it around my own house.

Michael Thompson is author of "The Pressured Child: Helping Your Child Achieve Success in School and in Life".

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