

Camp Quest NorthWest Planning Retreat Notes

**Camp Kirby (4734 Samish Point Road, Bow, WA)
April 13 – 15, 2012**

Board Members in attendance:

President – Chuck Wolber

Vice President – Brennon Church

Secretary – Jami Blackann

Treasurer – Jerry Schiffelbein

Other volunteers in attendance: Chad Cassady, Lou Amadio, Caitlyn Cecchetto, Stephen Peterson, Matt Bristol, Fred James, Eileen Cabalo, Steve Jones, Brian Demong

Approximate Schedule:

* Friday April 13, 2012

1730hrs - Arrive

1930hrs - Dinner #1 (Brennon Church)

* Saturday April 14, 2012

0800hrs - 0900hrs - Breakfast #1 (Lou Amadio)

0900hrs - 1000hrs - Orientation / Icebreakers

1000hrs - 1200hrs - Schedule Matrix activity.

1200hrs - 1330hrs - Lunch (Jami Blackann)

1330hrs - 1830hrs - Camp Activities Planning

1830hrs - 2000hrs - Dinner (Caitlyn Cecchetto)

2000hrs - Whenever - Activities planning, tour the camp, etc.

* Sunday April 15, 2012

0800hrs - 1000hrs - Breakfast #2 (Brennon Church)

1000hrs - Depart

Main Objectives of Retreat:

* Combine our creative talents and abilities to plan the best possible camp experience.

* Create a basic schedule matrix. Specific activity planning will happen later.

* Get to know other volunteers. Practice working together and brainstorming.

* This is our first year of camp. Take our lack of experience and turn it into a strength. Other camps with years of experience refine their schedule matrix every year, throwing out what does not work and trying new stuff. Rarely, if ever, do they get to engage in creative destruction by throwing it all out and starting again from scratch. This is effectively where we find ourselves today.

Big picture things to consider:

* The Camp Quest mission statement: “The purpose of Camp Quest is to provide children of freethinking parents a residential summer camp dedicated to improving the human condition through rational inquiry, critical and creative thinking, scientific method, self-respect, ethics, competency, democracy, free speech, and the separation of religion and government.”

* Do we want an overall theme?

- * Kids love challenges and competition.
- * Camp conspiracies are fun!
- * Traditions are fun, too.
- * So are invisible deities.
- * Kids need *LOTS* of physical activity.
- * Some kids hate physical activity.
- * Kids get bored *VERY* quickly.
- * Kids like a little bit of choice.
- * Breaking social conventions in an age appropriate manner can be a great idea.
- * Kids get tired around midday from all of the mental and physical stimulation. So does staff...
- * Staff will probably like to hang out and bond after the kids go to bed.
- * Kids like to sneak out of their cabins.
- * Camp fires are cool.
- * So are community service projects.

Keep in mind:

- * Camp Quest NorthWest is a nonprofit and expects to run the camp at a loss.
- * Review the big picture items from the last task. They probably still apply.
- * How will you incorporate the Camp Quest mission into as many activities as possible?
- * It is okay to have activities that do not incorporate the Camp Quest mission.
- * Some kids have (or will have) Biology teachers that allow their personal beliefs to interfere with the curriculum.
- * This is Washington. It will probably be raining. A lot.
- * These kids are above average intelligence and get bored quickly.
- * Electricity is complicated and kids love to trip over extension cords.
- * Your carefully designed props will break or fail to function precisely when you need them most.
- * Make sure to have a backup.
- * It is better to plan too much than to plan too little.
- * Did I mention that kids get bored easily?
- * Kids will do things that they would normally regard as boring if you add a competitive aspect to the task.
- * Skits are a *LOT* of fun. Skits with controversial topics are even more fun.

Age Distribution:

- * We currently have 18 kids signed up for camp.
- * Age distribution is as follows:
 - * 11 Female: 1x 8yrs, 1x 9yrs, 3x 10yrs, 4x 12yrs, 1x 13yrs, 1x 15yrs
 - * 7 Male: 2x 9yrs, 1x 10yrs, 1x 13yrs, 1x 14yrs, 1x 15yrs, 1x 17yrs

Brainstorming Activities:

- * Archery (Jami and Lou are certified instructors)
- * Rockwall (Steve and Lou are possible leads)
- * Waterfront. Should have a swimming safety test the first day – get a wristband when you pass.
- * Nature pictures (gather materials in nature, make a picture, take a photo, then put everything back where they found it).
- * Movie night.
- * Skits. Prepare throughout the week.
- * Talent show.
- * Nature hikes

- * Socrates Café.
- * Presentation. Interesting topic that will keep their attention. Things kids might be afraid to ask about/never thought to ask about.
- * Camp fires.
- * Storytelling. We need a find a good storyteller, who could be there for one night or multiple nights.
- * End-of-the-week dance.
- * Card games.
- * “Omegathon” competition at the end of camp that involves sports and mental activities.
- * Background activity during meal time. Trivia?
- * Jeopardy game. Could borrow laminated money tiles from Seattle Atheists.
- * Evolution raffle after every meal. Retrieve from Seattle Atheists.
- * Star gazing. It doesn’t get dark until late, so we could make it a special late night.
- * Taking mechanical things apart. Junkyard wars.
- * Each cabin works on a broad question throughout the week. Chuck’s example from CQ Ohio: What types of marriages will be okay in the future? – slippery slope argument
- * Bird-watching excursion
- * Magician and skeptic lesson. Contact Case and the Seattle Skeptics group?
- * Lego lab – Chad. Broad categories include: sculpting, themed kits, robotics.
- * Chemistry: milk and food dye; food experiments; water experiment that shows that senses are relative.
- * Dramatic magnetizing of needles.
- * Mini hot air balloons.
- * Sports: volleyball, kickball, dodgeball, soccer, capture the flag.
- * Math: Measure the height of a tree using shadows.
- * Water fight – balloons and squirt guns.
- * Making ice cream.
- * Laser pointers at night.
- * Mosquito rockets.
- * Japanese lanterns.
- * Science/evolution board games.
- * Arrow drop. Could use balls instead.

Construction Competition:

- * Everyone starts with the same materials kit.
- * Wooden boats – popsicle sticks.
- * Tower – construction paper and tape.
- * Bridge construction project.
- * Egg fall. Build container to keep egg from breaking.

Possible Musical Guests:

- * Greydon Square, atheist rapper. Will be in Seattle the same week as camp. Lyrics are too strong sometimes, so he’d need to tone it down for a kid audience.
- * They Might Be Giants. Geeky, science-related music.

* John Boswell, creator of Symphony of Science music videos. Caitlyn has met with him personally. She will contact him and gauge interest.

Camp Themes:

* Possible ideas: Nature abhors a vacuum. Science is real.

* All volunteers should be thinking about themes and bring ideas to next meeting.

Technology:

* Volunteers were in agreement that summer camp is a rare opportunity to get away from electronics. Should them how to have fun in nature, without their computers, Internet, smart phones, etc. Ideally, camp should be so engaging that they don't even miss it.

* Biggest problem with many of these devices, including e-readers: Internet connectivity.

* What about cameras? Possible solution: Buy the kids cheap film or digital cameras. Taking pictures with a film camera involves special skills and thought about composition. Remember: Adults will be taking plenty of good-quality pictures of camp, which can be shared with campers' families.

* Policy: Kids bring no electronics.

2012 Tentative Time Schedule

Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday
14Aug2012	15Aug2012	16Aug2012	17Aug2012	18Aug2012	19Aug2012	20Aug2012	21Aug2012
	7:30 am Awake	7:30 am Awake	7:30 am Awake	7:30 am Awake	7:30 am Awake	7:30 am Awake	7:30 am Awake
	8:00 am Staff Breakfast	8:00/9:00 am Breakfast	8:00/9:00 am Breakfast	8:00/9:00 am Breakfast	8:00/9:00 am Breakfast	8:00/9:00 am Breakfast	8:00/9:00 am Breakfast
	9:00 am Staff Prep	9:00/10:00 am Cabin Cleanup	9:00/10:00 am Cabin Cleanup	9:00/10:00 am Cabin Cleanup	9:00/10:00 am Cabin Cleanup	9:00/10:00 am Cabin Cleanup	9:00/12:00 am Campers Depart
		9:30/10:00 am Daily Staff	9:30/10:00 am Daily Staff	9:30/10:00 am Daily Staff	9:30/10:00 am Daily Staff	9:30/10:00 am Daily Staff	
10:00am- 12:00N Staff Arrive		10:00/11:00 am Educational	10:00/11:00 am Educational	10:00/11:00 am Educational	10:00/11:00 am Educational	10:00/11:00 am Educational	
		11:00/12:00 am Physical/Mental Challenges	11:00/12:00 am Physical/Mental Challenges	11:00/12:00 am Physical/Mental Challenges	11:00/12:00 am Physical/Mental Challenges	11:00/12:00 am Physical/Mental Challenges	
12:00 pm Staff Lunch	12:00 pm Lunch	12:00/1:00 pm Lunch	12:00/1:00 pm Lunch	12:00/1:00 pm Lunch	12:00/1:00 pm Lunch	12:00/1:00 pm Lunch	12:00 pm Debrief Lunch
1:00-5:30 Staff orientation and training.	1:00-4:00 pm Registration	1:00/2:00 pm Sports/Free time	1:00/2:00 pm Sports/Free time	1:00/2:00 pm Sports/Free time	1:00/2:00 pm Sports/Free time	1:00/2:00 pm Sports/Free time	1:00 pm Break down the camp.
		2:00/3:00 pm Sports/Free time	2:00/3:00 pm Sports/Free time	2:00/3:00 pm Sports/Free time	2:00/3:00 pm Sports/Free time	2:00/3:00 pm Sports/Free time	
		3:00/4:00 pm Downtime / BOB	3:00/4:00 pm Downtime / BOB	3:00/4:00 pm Downtime / BOB	3:00/4:00 pm Downtime / BOB	3:00/4:00 pm Downtime / BOB	
4:00/5:30 pm Swimming/ Archery/ Climbing							
5:30-6:30 pm Staff Dinner	5:30 pm Dinner	5:30/6:30 pm Dinner	5:30/6:30 pm Dinner	5:30/6:30 pm Dinner	5:30/6:30 pm Dinner	5:30/6:30 pm Dinner	
		6:30/7:30 pm Practice Skits	6:30/7:30 pm Practice Skits	6:30/7:30 pm Practice Skits	6:30/7:30 pm Practice Skits	6:30/7:30 pm Practice Skits	
		7:30/10:00 pm Concert & Campfire			7:30/10:00 pm Dance & Campfire		
	10:00 pm All Campers in their Cabins	10:00 pm All Campers in their Cabins	10:00 pm All Campers in their Cabins				
	10:30 pm Lights Out	10:30 pm Lights Out	10:30 pm Lights Out	10:30 pm Lights Out	10:30 pm Lights Out	10:30 pm Lights Out	
14Aug2012	15Aug2012	16Aug2012	17Aug2012	18Aug2012	19Aug2012	20Aug2012	21Aug2012