

ONYAHSA TIMES

The YMCA Camp Onyahsa Newsletter
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Supercentenary Summer!



Waterfront activities circa 1929 (a pre-litigious era!)

Kids deserve a great summer camp experience- a chance to have healthy fun, make great friends, and learn to make decisions for themselves; to develop life-long skills. Onyahsa, one of the oldest camps in the country, has been offering these crucial experiences since 1898!

Our 110th-Supercentenary- summer promises to be great! Each session will take a fun look back at major eras in Camp's own history. For example, we'll "rough it" a bit during Week A (1898 -1914), like they did during Camp's first decades. The following session will remember 1915 -1929, with a huge July 4th lakefront celebration! (All weekly themes are listed online).

New for all sessions will be more adventure programming, as we make full use of our 112-acre "wilderness" preserve on a daily (and nightly) basis for all campers. Traditional activities have also been expanded; videography has been added to Arts and Crafts, and each village will make its own video. Choice will offer more camper choice; allowing them to structure their own activities under staff supervision. A new raft for swimming, GPS for nature hikes, "Activate America" fitness for sports,

and a many more exciting program improvements are planned.

Eight one-week residential sessions (with optional weekenders) will be offered for youth ages 7 – 16 starting June 22, and day camping (Mondays - Fridays, ages 5 –10) will be offered starting June 23. Pre-season Parent-Child overnights; and late season resident Mini Camp (Sunday-Wednesday, ages 5 – 10), Family Camp, Alumni Reunion, and a 110th Birthday Party (August 31) will also be offered. Full program information and registration access is available online, or contact the Camp office to be part of our *Super-Centenary Summer!*



For 110 years, "where you belong"

Gift Certificates A & B

Due to the late dismissal of NYS public schools and our traditional "competition" with July 4th family plans, campers registering for Weeks A (June 22 – June 28) or Week B (June 29 – July 5) will receive \$50 gift certificates to the Onyahsa Outfitters, our awesome merchandise store. (Day campers will receive a \$25 certificate for each week). Moreover, with a small camp community Week A, and great July 4th activities of our own planned, these two weeks promise to be spectacular.

Onyahsa Ambassadors



Camp is a great place to make, and bring friends!

Muster your friends this summer! For each new camper who signs up for Camp, the recruiter will receive huge tuition discounts. In addition, those who recruit five of their friends/siblings will receive recognition on theme night, a patch, and a pizza party for themselves and their "recruits." Consult the brochure, contact the office, or visit us online for Buddy Cheque information.



OK, gang, now you have a challenge!

The 2008 Challenge

As we face a difficult economy, we need the support of our friends and alumni more than ever! Although we try to provide a great program at an affordable price, Camp is still too expensive for many kids. At the same time, we face facility needs. Therefore, we are challenging our supporters to help us fund Scholarships and Development. This year, funds raised for scholarships, Mess Hall restrooms, and Land Acquisition will be matched by local funders. All three projects are crucial and will only be successful with the help of our "rough and ready" friends and alumni. Thanks for your help!

Dear Parents and Alumni

Onyahsa is striving to keep Camp affordable, (as a quick Internet search of other comparable camps' tuitions demonstrates), but we realize the challenge of funding camp tuition. We believe Camp experiences are extremely valuable, especially for kids today; as children's lives seem to be ever more structured by society, and as they often spend less time in nature.

Camps allow youth to gain a sense of autonomy and self-confidence that are vital to future success. As a college professor for ten years, director Jon O'Brian, notes the difference he sees in students who have had opportunities to learn self-regulation, good decision-making, and to make quality friendships compared to those who have not. The opportunity Camp offers to youth to experience nature- unfettered by cell-phones, video games, and other tech-media, speaks for itself. When you register or sponsor kids to attend Camp, you're making a long-term investment in their future.



Unstructured (but supervised) play outside!

A "Fair Trade"

Our annual Camp "Candy" Sale has concluded successfully, with \$2,000 raised for camper fees. This year, campers sold healthy products through Equal Exchange.

These goods included hot cocoa, organic chocolate, coffee, nuts and other products; that not only helped to fund camper tuition, but that also helped families in developing nations to earn a fair wage and to engage in sustainable agriculture. Congratulations and thanks to top seller Natalie Brabson-Gerich, who sold \$650 worth of Fair Trade products!

Camp Memories

Included in this special Super-Centenary edition of the *Onyahsa Times* is a copy of our oldest Onyahsa brochure, which dates to the summer of 1924! Check out the camp fees and the rules. Onyahsa has come a long way, but the spirit of fun and friendships is still with us today. Here Onyahsa alumnus Stan Morse, recalls the fun and friendships he shared at Onyahsa as a camper in the early 1930s:

"I remember how it was in the early 1930s, really camping in those years, not the "refined" camping of today. There were no girls at the camp, strictly a boys camp; and there were tents, real tents, on wooden floors, the sides would roll up for ventilation, with four double decker bunks in them, with one single bunk for the Tent Leader. Everything was a tent, even the Mess Tent, when it rained you got wet, really wet, and the Mess Tent was not the place to be, especially when attempting to eat. But we took pride in our tents, keeping them neat and tidy.

It only cost us \$14 for a two week period, imagine! We would begin signing up early summer, and we watched the huge board in the "lobby" of the "Y" to see who had decided to go. It was really a privilege to go just for one period (two weeks), and it was special, very special, if you could go for more than the one period!

There were 10 tents, later expanded to 13, all with 8 members. The older campers were relegated to the lower tent numbers, and the younger ones, 9 years old and up, to the higher numbers

There were no clocks, all was by bugle call, reveille, eating call, flag raising, assembly, swimming, boating (only for those who demonstrated they could swim), campfire, return to tents, and taps.

There was swimming three or four times a day, (with skinny dipping first thing in the morning before call to breakfast). Each tent had daily PK rotating among the members of the tent, who had to serve the meal and cleanup afterwards

The JW and NW trolley (it was the Jamestown Westfield and North Western RR, and we called it "Jesus Wept and No Wonder" RR) came by

camp every day at regular intervals, the track was very close, and would greet us with a loud whistle every time. We only had old-fashioned canvas-covered latrines, used by everyone at the camp, campers, leaders, everyone.

The camp Leader was "Wag", Roy Wagner, who was loved by everyone. He would climb the huge tree that was used as the base for the Tarzan Swing of the camp, a huge swing that was the most incredible swing ever made. A platform was built high off the ground in another tree, and you would have to climb up to the platform, and with a rope pull up the swing, and then leap off the platform holding onto the rope swing and settle yourself on the cross stick for the ride of your life.

It was about two years before I dared to climb up to the platform and try the Tarzan Swing, in fact it was the summer of 1933 that I first swung on it, and thereafter you couldn't keep me off it till it was taken down. I still think it was taken down because no one but Wag could climb that tree and fasten that rope correctly

We had a Stunt Nite each period, which the parents would attend. Each tent would put on something, any stunt or anything that involve the whole tent, everyone participated and it was a family event and was highly appreciated and attended. We also had a "Ghost Nite", which was hugely participated in, with all the older campers acting out ghostly things while the rest of us walked through the woods bordering the camp, at night. I remember seeing my older brother as he was hung from a tree after being caught by the devils, Oh it was gruesome!

Yep, those were the days! It was a real adventure, the Y camp the camp was known far and wide, and we would get kids from as far away as Cleveland and Erie. It was a remarkable camp, one that is not often available in today's world with all the different things to make life easier but it gave a real life experience to young boys of all ages, 9 and up. It would be wonderful if it could be repeated today.

Well, these are some of my remembrances of 75 years ago. Best wishes for the future, a far cry from what it was years ago."

We thank Stan Morse, and honor this generation of Onyahsans. (Alumni, please send us your recollections, memorabilia, and photos for online posting, publication, and inclusion in our new YMCA history archive).

Yard Sale!

Nope, our yard is not for sale, but come Labor Day weekend it will be full of items that will be. In the meantime, we need your donation of clean household (non-clothing) items for this fundraising event. You may bring them with you to Camp, or drop them off at Onyahsa or the YMCA anytime.



The Yard Sale supports our programming!

Roll Call!

We thank the staff who promote excellence in camping, and in this issue look to our year-round and pre-season staff who assist Jon O'Brian, Bev Lubi, and Rick DelCalzo. Hired in September 2007, and working daily on-site is Assistant Property Manager Kevin Shuler. His hard work has greatly enhanced our buildings and grounds, and kept many rental groups happy. Joining us in May was Meg Pickard, as Office Assistant. Meg, whose son Ben attends Onyahsa, will work part-time through the school year at our YMCA office and full-time in the site office during the summer. Fresh from her junior year at Roberts Wesleyan University, Mary Siragusa has joined us as a Business Intern. She will work to promote the summer program, while assisting in fundraising and general administration, before she begins her role as Village Director in late June.

Help Wanted

Summer staff jobs are still available for Male Assistant Counselors (ages 16-17), Male Senior Counselors (age 18+), and Registered Nurses (for one or two weeks and/or to assist with Sunday check-ins). Please contact the Camp Office for info.

Upcoming Development

Our 110th year will see major capital development, with a focus on enhancing our restrooms, septic systems, and year-round accommodations. Thanks to significant funding from New York State, secured through the efforts of Assemblyman Bill Parment and NYS Senator Cathy Young, restroom/shower facilities, energy-efficient heating, and enhanced lodging will be added to the Hultquist and Johnson Cabins.

These major renovations will allow Onyahsa to better serve the youth and families of the 150th Assembly District, the 57th Senate District, and all residents of New York State through improved summer camp and year-round programming. Construction is scheduled to begin in late 2008.

The renovation of our existing pole barn to become a year-round Youth Wellness Center is slated for September 2008. This project will create a heated recreation facility and a fitness area. It will also include full restrooms and showers, which will serve the Tuscarora and Mohawk Villages.

We also hope to add additional restrooms to the Darrah-Hultquist Hall by converting the Onyahsa Outfitters into two restrooms and a sitting area.

This project, however, is contingent upon successful fundraising and is a focus of our 2008 Alumni and Friends Challenge. In total, these projects will add several more restrooms and showers that will be available to campers and site users year-round.



"Onyahsa" in the early pre-development days!

Day Camp in the Woods



Decades ago, campers from northern Chautauqua County and beyond enjoyed camping along the shores of Bear Lake as members of the Camp in the Woods community. Many fond memories and friendships were created there. John D. O'Brian, father of Onyahsa's director, was a camper and counselor at Camp in the Woods in the 1950s. He recalls the director known as "the Admiral," and living in tents without any electricity in the camp.

Unfortunately, this program closed in the early 1970s, and the Chautauqua County YMCA that operated it ceased to exist a few years later. However, in 2003, Onyahsa began to offer day camping to youth from northern Chautauqua County, and Day Camp in the Woods was born.

This year, Day Camp in the Woods will continue to offer quality day camping, Mondays through Fridays. Campers meet at the JCC NCCC site or at Onyahsa. Campers are transported to Onyahsa, where they all gather to enjoy traditional camp activities. Brian Curry will direct this program in 2008.

Day camp is offered to youth ages 5 - 10, and features a weekly field trip and optional overnighter at Onyahsa. Information on this program is available through the Onyahsa office.

YMCA Camp in the Woods alumni are encouraged to contact Jon O'Brian to share their recollections, photos, and memorabilia for the creation of a YMCA Camp in the Woods Archive.

First of the Mahicans

Onyahsa's major June project will be to replace the last of our two 1960s-era cabins with nice, new, screened wall tents and platforms. The old cabins will be recycled as storage units elsewhere in Camp.

This project has been made possible by a grant from the Darrah Fund for the purchase of two new "permanent" tents and a donation of materials and labor by the Home Depot, Inc. to complete the decked platforms. (Home Depot will also help to fund new Mess Hall restrooms this year). The Community Foundation will fund new bunks and mattresses for these two tents.

We are excited about this project, and are delighted to have volunteer workers from the Home Depot to build these platforms. The new Mahican Village will be one of the most beautiful in Camp, set right on the lakeshore with its own fire circle, and it will be in place for this summer.



The 2007 Dinner Dance Crew

Dinner Dance 2008

Save this date, November Saturday, November 1st for our 7th annual (adults-only) Harvest Dinner Dance Fundraiser. This event will feature live music from the Mess Hall stage by the Ledgens and a delicious meal by Marsha Flowers. Valet parking by the Camp staff is offered too!

Proceeds will help fund ongoing facility and program improvements, plus our youth scholarship program. Please contact the Camp Office for tickets and more information regarding this special event.

110th Birthday Party!

YMCA Camp Onyahsa's 110th Birthday Party is scheduled for Sunday, August 31st! This event will include live music, a barbecue, and activities for family members.

Funds raised will be directed to the Onyahsa endowment, to secure the next 110 years for Onyahsa. If you are interested in serving on the planning committee for this event, please contact the Camp Office.



Come to the party, and we'll do the dishes

Ya Gotta Regatta!

Onyahsa is proud to be a beneficiary of the Chautauqua Lake Regattas, which will feature antique boat shows, sailboat races, plywood boat building, and a cardboard boat race. Onyahsa staff will supervise the plywood and cardboard teams and races. If you are interested in volunteering for this July 24-26 event, or would like to form a team, consult the Regatta website at www.chautauqualakeregattas.com



Our own "regatta," right out of Onyahsa Bay

ACA all the Way!

YMCA Camp Onyahsa has been accredited by the American Camp Association since 1987, and is proud of this mark of distinction. It shows that Onyahsa adheres to the highest standards in organized camping. In June, director Jon O'Brian attended the national ACA conference in Nashville, and Onyahsa alumnus Jeremy Culpepper presented original research. Parents, take advantage of the ACA's resources, available at www.acacamps.org



More adventure and wilderness fun in 2008

Promise Fundraiser

Support our summer raffle fundraiser, the Onyahsa Promise. Tickets will be available at the YMCA or at Camp and will cost \$10 each. Five prizes range from \$100 to \$400, and proceeds help to subsidize camp tuition. Sponsorship opportunities are available, and the drawing will take place at the end of the Camp season.

Tier Pricing

Choose your own rate? The economy has impacted some families more than others, so we are allowing families to choose from three tuition rates. The Camp experience for each rate will be equal. Tier 1 tuition is heavily subsidized by local foundations and donors, and is reserved for residents of our region. Tier 2 is partially subsidized by donors beyond our region, and Tier 3 represents the true cost of camping. Full scholarships are also available to local youth who meet USDA guidelines and who have been recommended by their school districts or other youth professionals.