

# Mountain Wisdom Messenger

Summer 2008

## Director's Message

By Hawkeye Jay

The Summer Solstice is upon us. The first day of summer is June 20th. This is when the sun reaches the point farthest north of the celestial equator. This day gives us the most hours of daylight and ensures warm weather. For many ancient societies this was the most important day of the year.

For me this is an important and exciting time because camp is right around the corner; July 13 – 19<sup>th</sup>. What a wonderful gift we give ourselves to spend a week in the North Georgia wilderness. The Appalachian Mountains are more diverse in flora and fauna than anywhere in the country. This environment is perfect for connecting with nature, ourselves, and others. We will listen, learn, and teach each other in this huge, magnificent outdoor classroom.

Whether you are a graduate of the Boys' Rites of Passage Camp or a boy coming to the Boys' Rites of Passage camp for the first time, this unique, adventure wilderness experience will surely give you confidence and clarity about becoming a man in a natural, outdoor setting. Many of you are trying to discover how to be a man in a society that no longer has a clear path. During our camp you will move from boyhood into manhood, and you will know when this is happening and what is now expected of you because your role is more clearly defined. You will have many experiences and gain skills that will propel you on your personal journey.

If you are reading this and are not registered for camp yet, please contact me immediately. Also, introduce this camp to a friend and share what we have. This is not a secret; give it away.

On Sunday, July 13<sup>th</sup> we will come together; old friends, and new, and the fun adventure begins!

See you in the woods!

## It's Time To Go Camping!

Final preparations are being made for 2008. The Boys Rites Of Passage and New Outlook Wilderness Adventure Camp are set to start on Sunday July 13th and complete on Saturday July 19th.

Hawkeye Jay and staff are planning some new places to go, new things to do and new adventures to experience. This years New Outlook Wilderness Adventure Camp looks to be the most exciting camp yet. An over night canoe trip is being planned to go along with hiking and rock climbing. The Boys Rites Of Passage of course will continue to be the starting point for each young man's path on a journey to manhood. Hiking, creek walks, fire-building skills, and interactive competitive games are but a few of the planned activities.

Now is the time to get registered for camp! All the registration forms can be found on the Mountain Wisdom Inc. web site [www.boysritesofpassage.com](http://www.boysritesofpassage.com). The forms you need to fill out include the Application, Health Record and Release form. The Camper Check List will help you prepare your gear. Check out the article 'Preparing For Camp' in this issue for hints and suggestions. Directions to camp are on the web site too. Of course if you have any questions please contact Hawkeye.

All campers should be on site by 10:00 AM on the 13<sup>th</sup>. Graduation ceremonies will be at 12:30 PM on the 19<sup>th</sup>. All parents and families are welcome to the graduation ceremony. A light lunch will be served.

We look forward to seeing you NOWAC-ers again and are excited about meeting the new young men of BROP.

## A Father and Son Rite of Passage

By Matt Zavadil

There are many events and moments that have brought me joy in my 14 years of fatherhood with my son Curtis. From the moment of birth, through the first steps, then into school, sports, in the noticing of girls for the first time, and the many moments in between, I feel blessed.

As Curtis moved through puberty and came out the other side changed (an initiation in its own right), I began to feel the urge to expose him to something that could really support him, beyond what I could do by myself. Because of my background, I knew this exposure needed to be substantial if it was to really help him prepare for what he was about to face – girls and high school, and beyond that – life. As fate would have it, I was presented with the perfect opportunity.

I met Jay Zipperman in North Georgia one Sunday afternoon and it wasn't long before we were talking about rites of passage. Jay is passionate about that sort thing. He offered me a place on staff for the Boys Rite of Passage to be held that summer. I knew it was the perfect place for Curtis to be. While Curtis wasn't too excited about the idea, I encouraged him to go and told him it would be a fun weeklong adventure in the woods with lots of cool stuff to do. I could see his wheels turning as he contemplated what it would be like to be a way from his video games and cell phone that long. After that he told me he would go. I felt his trust in me.

When the day came for the staff to show up at camp deep in the woods of North Georgia, one day before the boys were to arrive, excitement grew inside of me. As I drove miles down a slow, bumpy, dirt and gravel road, images flashed through my memory of my relationship with my father. I felt gratitude for all he gave and provided for me. I want so much for Curtis and, while I knew I was idealizing what he would get out of this adventure, I also knew that what he would walk away from it with was something that not even I would understand completely. Somehow I just knew in my bones this was the right thing to do. Perhaps it was the knowledge that for thousands of years men took boys away from their mother's clutch and journeyed off into the wild so the boy could experience an ordeal where he would encounter, if only for a glimpse, the man within him. Where he would face some fear and overcome it with courage. Where he would be tested and find the strength to stand in his power. And then... then he would finally come home and be welcomed for the young man he is. Yes, perhaps that's how I knew this passage was right for him. (Continued on page 2)

## Publisher's View

By Joel Holtzman

What am I going to do this summer? Find a job, hang out with my friends, go to the pool and a whole host of options come to mind. More often than not many summer vacations are spent sitting in front of the TV or computer playing games. Outdoor activities are relegated to the back seat of options.

A large body of research conducted by many different individuals and teams from around the United States has concluded that outdoor activities in a natural setting have a positive life-long effect on a developing young mind. Larry Seizer, President of The Conservation Fund, says "children of the digital age have become increasingly alienated from the natural world with disturbing implications for their physical fitness, their long term mental and spiritual health, and for the environment." Mountain Wisdom continues to make a difference in the digital era.

The Boys Rites Of Passage and New Outlook Wilderness Adventure Camp is just around the corner. (Continued on page 2)

## Preparing For Camping Or Hiking

By Joel Holtzman

What should I bring? What do I need? Is it going to rain? Will it be hot? What kind of and how much food should I bring? Will I have to carry all the water I need? Did I clean out my tent since the last camping trip? My feet hurt last time I went hiking do I need new boots? These and many more questions come to mind when you begin to think about taking a camping or hiking trip.

First: make a list of the things you think you will need - tent, sleeping bag, hiking boots, first aid kit, water bottles, pots and pans, back pack, tarp, rain gear and so on. If you check out the BROP web site at [www.boysritesofpassage.com](http://www.boysritesofpassage.com) you will find a checklist.

Second: assemble all your gear into a pile and inspect it. Do you have every thing on the list? Make a list of what you don't have.

Third: what is the condition of your equipment? Last year the zipper on my tent flap was broken – can it be fixed or do I need a new tent? It rained a lot last year and my rain gear didn't keep me dry – how can I improve my rain gear? I kept losing my mess kit last year – should I find new a mess kit or can the stuff I have be marked for better identification? My sleeping bag stinks I guess I better have it washed. All my rope got cut up into small sections – should I buy new rope or can I learn to tie sections together and use it again?

Forth: once you have a list of the gear you don't have and evaluate the condition of the gear you do have, look for ways to find more or fix your existing gear. A great place to look for used gear is at second hand shops. I have found canteens, frame packs, mess kits and rain gear real cheap. Your clothes usually take a real beating when camping. Clothes for camping can be bought real cheap at second hand stores too. Be on the look out for sales at sporting goods stores this time of year, especially for boots.

At the BROP and NOWAC camps all your meals will be provided so you don't have to consider food as part of your preparation. All of the gear on the list is stuff you should consider bringing with you. A good camping trip takes advanced planning! Get started now!

## Leave No Trace

By Joel Holtzman

Leave no trace. What does that mean? When camping or hiking "leave no trace" means making sure that you carry out with you what you bring in. If you bring energy bars or trail mix wrapped in plastic or paper, bring the wrapper back out with you. All the plastic and glass containers we brought to camp with us last year were trucked out in garbage bags when we left the site on Saturday!

'Leave no trace' also means when you build temporary shelters that you do not use live trees or ground covers as construction material or bedding when ever possible. When hiking, avoid walking on native plants. Many native plants and fauna are rare and very sensitive to being disturbed.

When building campfires, a circle of rocks placed around a shallow pit dug into the forest floor is the safest way to avoid starting uncontrolled fires. Leave no trace means returning the fire pit to as natural condition as you can – like you found it. Fill in the pit, return the rocks to where you found them and recover the area you cleared around the campfire with dead leaf fall. Remember how we built the campfire circle at the tent site last year?

Leave no trace also applies to your every day life. Throw your everyday trash in a garbage can not on the ground. Go to any stream or river near by and you will find tons of trash - plastic bags, candy wrappers, fast food cups, soda cans, cigarette filters and auto parts dumped or washed in from up stream. When you change the oil in your car don't pour the old oil on the ground but collect it and take to the nearest auto parts store for free and the oil will be recycled.

Recycle! Almost all cities and towns collect paper, cans, glass and plastic as recyclable material. If we all do our small part our natural and urban areas will be cleaner, safer and healthier.

## Publisher's View (continued)

Hawkeye and staff are working hard to create an opportunity for each and every young man to attend this year's camp. The Mountain Wisdom Staff are actively contacting and encouraging past year's campers to participate in the NOWAC program. We continue to look for new young men by talking with friends, neighbors, family and past graduates about BROP.

Hawkeye and staff could use your help in getting our message out. Talk to your friends, neighbors, and families and let them know who and what BROP and NOWAC is all about. You can contact Hawkeye or any of the staff if you are in need of help. Also, don't forget to visit our web site; just look for contact information in the 'How to Reach Us' section.

Hawkeye, staff and especially this publisher extend a special thanks to Anne Huff. Anne jumped at the chance to use her computer skills and help us put the Mountain Wisdom Messenger on paper. Thanks Anne!

## A Father and Son Rite of Passage (continued)

And so the camp got underway. I enjoyed working with all the boys and chose to give Curtis as much space as he needed. I believe it's good for him to have the opportunity to be mentored and guided by other men. (We fathers have a lot to give, but not just to OUR sons, but all sons). It seemed to work for Curtis for him to have this space, and at times perhaps I gave him a little too much, which was great learning for me

I watched as he interacted with other young men and how he would take on a leadership role in a sporting event or stay in the background in discussion. I paid attention to which boys he connected with and which ones he distanced himself from. I noticed situations that he would get in that are similar to what he creates in school, like being drawn to the instigator. I also saw him enjoy himself in activity and just plain have fun.

Perhaps the thing that stood out for me the most, something that I've been talking to him about since that rite of passage, is how he stepped into leadership when he was passionate about something. And when he did, he did so while still listening to what others had to say. I think this is huge for Curtis and I intend on creating spaces for him to nurture that within himself. I really see it in him when he is around kids younger than himself. My judgment is that this character trait will serve him well (if nurtured) as he grows up.

Now, eight months after his first Boys Rite of Passage (BROP), Curtis is unsure of what it all meant to him. He cannot sit down and talk about this learning experience like I would, and I don't expect him to be able to. But what I do believe is that seeds were planted, seeds inside of him that will grow when it is their time to grow. (How do we ever really know as parents when something we do with our kids had effect?). I refer back to his week at camp when it's appropriate and remind him of things he did and the code of honor that he went home with. I use key moments in his life experience to help tie it all together, that is, the process of growing up into a young man.

As Curtis' freshman year in high school is coming up on its end, my hope for him is that he will make smarter choices for himself as he moves deeper into the highly influential atmosphere that these next three grades will bring. As for this summer's BROP, I will offer it to him again and encourage him to go. The choice will be his.

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