



# Inc Link

October 2008

## From the President

We are all very lucky to be involved in a profession that provides so much joy and satisfaction in watching children benefit from the service we provide. If it didn't provide such gratification, we'd be crazy to do what we do. Furthermore, given today's financial news and uncertainties, we'd be even crazier as we can only guess at our enrollments for next summer and the financial challenges we may face. To say that it is a challenge to be a camp director/owner would be a gross under exaggeration.

It would not be unusual for us to all bear down and become totally immersed in the affairs of our own camp. I am asking for a few moments of your time to explain why it would be in your best interests to get involved in AIC, even when there is a mound of paperwork on your desk that needs attention.

First of all, our organization is only as strong as the volunteers that choose to work hard at providing benefits to you. And right now, we have an excellent board that is committed to making the independent camp community as strong as possible. The board members are working on a variety of projects such as staff insurance, camp director/owner transitions, a library of documents on our Web site that will help you, research projects, PR opportunities, and an exciting conference in Orlando. You can read about these initiatives in this issue of the newsletter. This sharing of information is worth a great deal and networking with other camp professionals is a lot of fun, educational, and I believe well worth the nominal investment to continue membership in AIC.

However, I would like to suggest that you can do so much more and with a little effort have a lasting and dynamic effect on the camp movement and benefit yourself at the same time. I want the AIC membership, including you, to use its collective camp entrepreneurial spirit, wisdom, drive, and network to incubate and initiate multiple public relations campaigns around the country to get the word out that camp is good for kids. We don't need to

### **Mission Statement**

The Association of Independent Camps serves success-oriented camp professionals who together identify emergent issues and develop programs, services, and products to enhance camp business operations.

use that exact wording, and the initiative could take the form of many faces. I'm not smart enough to know which would be the best strategy, but I am positive that each one of us has alumni, camp parents, and staff who might be helpful in spreading the word about the cumulative and long-lasting value of camp.

For example, we have already secured the services of singer Lisa Loeb, actress Emma Roberts and actor Paul Adelstein (Dr. Cooper in *Private Practices*) through the personal connection of a camp director. Please take a moment to think of someone who might be helpful. Perhaps a "celebrity"; an executive of a major company; perhaps a creative marketing person that would be willing to help with ideas, or a really creative staff member that can figure out how to get a blog circulating that can attract millions of campers and staff who loved camp and who are willing to share their message with the world. Our imagination is our only limiting factor. I am sure there are people willing and able to help, if only asked. We can do this if enough of you choose to help. ACA CEO Peg Smith has committed ACA support, staff time, and resources to allow us to dream, create, and given some appropriate monitoring, initiate PR initiatives that look promising.

### **Here's what we are asking:**

Please determine the qualifications and interest of individuals that you think may be helpful in a national PR campaign.

After clearing with the individuals, send us their names and the expertise. AIC will collect your suggestions, and if deemed helpful, we will contact you. We promise that the initial contact representing AIC will be from you.

Send us your PR ideas. One camp director has suggested a "Got Milk" type campaign. Many of you have worked through your regions to initiate successful PR campaigns. Tell us how you did it and let us attempt to duplicate it on a national level.

You can become a member of AIC, and we will continue to provide services and projects that will compel you to remain as a member. However, I'm hoping you choose to join and to think for a moment how you can really help us. Send us your ideas, and you will be helping yourself at the same time. After all, if the message of camp gets lost, where will our future generations of campers come from?

Thanks for listening and best wishes,

**Robert Lebby**  
AIC President

## Association of Independent Camps — National Conference

**February 15-17, 2009**

**Sunday, 6:00 p.m. – Tuesday, 1:00 p.m.**

**Disney's Coronado Springs Resort**

Independent camp owners, directors, and staff are invited to join us for two days of dynamic educational sessions and presenters. Michael Brandwein will introduce brand new teaching techniques you will be able to implement to improve your camps. Chris Thurber will be returning to address positive ways directors can deal with the unique stress of operating an independent summer camp. Enjoy networking with fellow camp professionals and engage in the most current topics affecting camps. Get a

head start on your conference experience by making friends and contacts that you will keep throughout the week and throughout your career. Additional program information will be available in the late fall.

**Registration Fee:** If attending both the AIC Kindred and ACA National: AIC Member — \$250; AIC Non Member — \$300; AIC 3rd person — \$200. If attending the AIC Kindred only – a \$15 processing fee will be added to the registration cost.

**Register today at:**

**[www.AICcamps.org/conference/registration.php](http://www.AICcamps.org/conference/registration.php)**

**For more information, contact Frank Tindall, [tindallf@bellsouth.net](mailto:tindallf@bellsouth.net), or 828-507-8003.**

## Membership Renewal and New Membership Info

The Association of Independent Camps serves success-oriented camp professionals who together identify emergent issues and develop programs, services, and products to enhance camp business operations. More specifically, we are a member-driven kindred group of ACA that is dedicated to people who own, direct, or work at independent camps, either for-profit or nonprofit. Because of our similarity, we are able to assist each other and facilitate dialogue pertaining to the opportunities and challenges of operating an independent camp.

- **Membership renewals**
- **New membership applications**
- **Business affiliate applications**

**Available Online at:**

**[www.AICcamps.org](http://www.AICcamps.org)**

**If you have any questions, please contact  
Melany Irvin: 765-342-8456, ext. 397  
or [info@AICcamps.org](mailto:info@AICcamps.org)**

## AIC Transition Project — *Gabe Chernov*

AIC is putting together a transition project to be used as a knowledge base for all members. One of the challenges we all face are transitions — whether between two generations or between a separate buyer and seller. This project will include a number of different types of transition options/plans for camps. It will also contain numerous examples of what to do and what not to do in terms of transition planning and implementation. If you have any knowledge or experience you feel would be beneficial to the project, please contact Gabe Chernov at [Gabe@birchtrail.com](mailto:Gabe@birchtrail.com). All private information (camp names and prices) will be kept confidential.

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For membership information visit

[www.AICcamps.org](http://www.AICcamps.org)

or contact Melany Irvin, AIC,

5000 State Road 67 North,

Martinsville, IN 46151-7902

[info@AICcamps.org](mailto:info@AICcamps.org),

765-342-8456, ext. 397

## Government Relations — Tina Bruno

Government relations. Seems like something someone in a suit with a comb-over should be doing . . . not a summer camp owner who is responsible for recruiting campers, passing health and safety inspections, making payroll, coordinating staff, and planning new, exciting adventures for children next summer. But, without taking some time out of your busy schedule to visit with your legislators, you may have only four weeks of summertime to execute the fabulous plans floating around in your head.

Government relations is not that daunting a task. It involves making a phone call, sitting across from someone, and telling the story about how valuable camp is in the life of a child. Then explaining what issues are coming up that concern you — legislatively. You don't even need to wear a suit.

I hope one of the concerns you have is the school calendar. Specifically how it continues to take over valuable summer months. If you don't make your thoughts known to your elected officials, your point of view will never be represented, and the folks wanting to have summer vacation equal four short weeks may win.

Or maybe legislation will be passed to push back the school start date — but maybe the start date will push the school year into the weeks you already operate camp and maybe the extended weeks will be offered when your college staff have already returned to college life. Hmmmm . . . then what?

I guess you could visit with the legislators who supported the bill originally and ask them to make a few adjustments. You would lose at least one operating summer — maybe more. Parents may like the later start, and legislators may be excited about the cost savings to school districts, making it all but impossible to undo what was just done.

Wouldn't it be easier to simply visit with your legislators now, before legislation is proposed and the folks taking the time to make that one visit get their request without anyone considering yours?

The Coalition for a Traditional School Calendar is doing its best to propose innovative ideas that will not only push back the school start date, but provide more summer vacation weeks for students between the first and last day of school. We are studying trends, problems, and needs as we draft legislation and talking points.

But, I can't do it without you. I'm only one voice in a sea of many. I'm not the camp owner who taught the representative's child to ride horseback last year, and I'm not the camp owner who prepared the senator's child for a successful first year away from home.

Legislators have to know that they are helping the folks back home. Legislators have to understand how the issue will impact your campers, your staff, and your livelihood — if not, they will listen to the people they know. The people who provide real-life examples.

Don't wait. Pick up the phone, and call your legislator today to make an appointment. Then call or e-mail me and tell me you need talking points and material to bring to your meeting. I'll send you a packet of information, walk you through the meeting, and help you with follow-up.

Government relations may sound like a daunting task. But believe me, if you can survive hundreds of children all summer, you can handle sitting across from the person tasked with representing your views at the state house.

**Tina Bruno**

**Executive Director**

**Coalition for a Traditional School Calendar**

**[www.schoolyear.info](http://www.schoolyear.info)**

### School Start Date Coalitions

[SaveColoradoSummers.com](http://SaveColoradoSummers.com)

[SaveAlabamaSummers.org](http://SaveAlabamaSummers.org)

[SaveIndianaSummers.org](http://SaveIndianaSummers.org)

[SaveOhioSummers.org](http://SaveOhioSummers.org)

[SaveCaliforniaSummers.org](http://SaveCaliforniaSummers.org)

[Texans for a Traditional School Year](http://TexansforaTraditionalSchoolYear.org)  
([traditionalschoolyear.org](http://traditionalschoolyear.org))

[SaveFloridaSummers.org](http://SaveFloridaSummers.org)

[SaveTennesseeSummers.org](http://SaveTennesseeSummers.org)

[SaveKentuckySummers.org](http://SaveKentuckySummers.org)

[SaveGeorgiaSummers.org](http://SaveGeorgiaSummers.org)

[SaveMississippiSummers.org](http://SaveMississippiSummers.org)

### AIC Web Site Library

We are pleased to launch a new addition to our AIC Web site, *The Document Library*. This password protected part of the Web site is a place where members can view and share important documents like "Internet Policies" or "Staff Time off Policies."

You may access the library by going to [www.AICcamps.org](http://www.AICcamps.org) and clicking on the Members Tab — then AIC Doc Library. Members should have the password, but if you need a reminder, then please contact Melany Irvin at [info@AICcamps.org](mailto:info@AICcamps.org).

### Online Alumni Photos

AIC is working on plans to help camps get their alumni photos online. Would you be interested in a way to take your boxes of old camp photos and turn them into an interactive Web site where your alumni can view all the photos from their days as a camper? If so, e-mail us, and we'll help you get started. Gabe@birchtrail.com

## AIC Board Roster

Robert Lebbey,  
President  
P: 520-577-7925  
E: lebb@northstarcamp.com

Emily Ryman,  
Secretary  
P: 800-221-2020/219-842-8206  
E: rymane@culver.org

Chris Strevel,  
Southern Region Representative  
P: 865-690-9208  
E: chris@tatescamp.com

Carol Cheley,  
Past President  
P: 303-377-3616  
E: carolecheley@cheley.com

Brad Schwartz,  
Day Camp Region Representative  
P: 847-295-4900  
E: brad@bannerdaycamp.com

Tommy Ferguson,  
1 year presidential appointment  
P: 936-594-2541  
E: tferguson@campolympia.com

Rachel Bredemus,  
Mid-America Region Representative  
P: 218-335-6706  
E: rachwagman@aol.com

Fritz Seving,  
New England Region Representative  
P: 610-356-7602  
E: fritz@campfernwood.com

John Jorgenson,  
1 year presidential  
P: 705-789-5612  
E: jorgi@tawingo.net

George Coleman,  
Mid-Atlantic Region Representative  
P: 516-620-4300  
E: george@colemanfamilycamps.com

Robin Sprague,  
Western Region Representative  
W: 480-820-1702  
E: wAICoffice@aol.com

Gabe Chernov,  
1 year presidential appoint  
P: 262-240-1271  
E: gabe@birchtrail.com

Allen McBride,  
Treasurer  
P: 256-362-7449  
E: allen@campmac.com

## Summer Camp Staff Medical Coverage

AIC and Schirick & Associates teamed up to offer a Summer Camp Staff Sickness/Accident program. The basics are that you can provide accident and sickness medical coverage for summer camp staff while they are working, traveling to and from camp, and during their free time.

There were three plans available, but as an example for the summer of 2008, the least expensive Silver Plan provided Accident Medical Coverage of \$10,000 and \$2500.00 for sickness. The cost was \$.50 per day per staff. In other words, a sixty-day short insurance program cost \$30.00 per staff person! The Gold and Platinum Plans have greater benefits for a higher premium. Camps may choose one of the three plans, and individual names are not required.

The coverage is provided by Nationwide and is offered exclusively through Schirick and Associates. However, should you prefer, Schirick & Associates can work with your own insurance professional. Details for the 2009 Plan will be available after the first of the year.

This product was developed as the result of an idea of AIC member Mike Cohen. It is an example of how AIC works for you. Have an idea that can benefit the camp community? Share it with us, and we'll try to get it done!

## Business Affiliates

The Association of Independent Camps appreciates the continued support of our business affiliates.

### *Business Affiliates that have renewed their AIC membership for 2009*

*Current as of 10/13/08*

BUNAC USA

Bunkl.com

Bunkline Camp Outfitter

Camp Leaders

Core Consulting Solutions, LLC

Everything Summer Camp — Home of C & N

Footlockers

Hibbs Hallmark & Company

KidsCamps.com/CampJobs.com

Markel Insurance Company

Morrow Insurance Agency, Inc

If your business is not on the list, you can  
renew online at [www.AICcamps.org](http://www.AICcamps.org).

# 8<sup>E</sup> Congrès International Des Camps

The International Camping Congress in Québec, Canada has now concluded. The festive tone established by Québec City's celebration of its 400th anniversary continued throughout the four days of the Congress itself. Gathering with ACA Board members: Peter Surgenor, Peg Smith, Don Cheley, Gwynn Powell and Robert Lebbly were many other ACA camp leaders from across the country but even more significant were the over 500 camp leaders from other countries and camp backgrounds. Amongst the new learning opportunities available:

- Private camp director from Russia operating her own camp in Russia and leading a camping delegation from St. Petersburg.
- Private camp director from Turkey delivering a session on marketing your brand and building strategic partnerships with the likes of Mercedes Benz and Panasonic.
- Private day camp directors from Canada with forty years of experience on day camping, trends and transitions, and succession planning.
- Private camp directors from Canada providing a proven curriculum in environmental literacy, moving your camp away from fossil fuels, and strategies for camper retention.

- Private camp directors from Japan, Greece, Australia, Colombia, Mexico, and Venezuela with interests and insights into camping that are both like . . . and unlike our own in the United States.

Add all of this to beautiful, stimulating General Sessions; delicious and festive foods; warm welcomes by the francophone community in Canada; an international exhibit hall; a portion of the Congress shared with World Leisure; tours of the only walled city in North America; special recognitions of Irene Hooper, Jack Pearse, and Pop Hollandsworth; and this Congress exchange in Québec becomes another important chapter to our collective body of camp knowledge and experience.

We enjoyed plenty of opportunity for fellowship in halls, in sessions, and within events. The interest in AIC is steadily increasing within the international private camp community, and there is much for us all to gain in building bridges of understanding to the private camp community the world over.



Alexia Sideris of Delphi Camp in Greece and Philippe Studer from Camp Montaña in Switzerland.



Jack Murdock and Tom Knowlton share a moment at the final Banquet.



Fahri Gozet, AIC member from Turkey, led a session on Branding your Camp.



John and Barb Jorgenson pose at the final Banquet with friends from Camp Future Stars in Turkey.



Pop Hollandsworth celebrated his 93rd birthday at his 7th International Camping Congress.



Robert Lebbly attends a panel session on staff training techniques around the world.