



Inc Link

March 2008

From the President

I've been reading letters from the Presidents of different organizations for many, many years and always wondered how they always found something interesting to say. Well, this is my first opportunity to find out and I would like to start by saying that I look forward to the challenge of the presidency of AIC. I truly believe that as professional camp directors we offer a service to our campers and provide a learning and growth experience that can be found nowhere else. It is our responsibility to do the very best job we can and to learn as much as possible from other professionals to insure our continued growth. I also believe it is our responsibility to do the best we can to partner with ACA to "shout out" our message to the public that camping is good for kids, and in fact, essential for kids!

I believe that AIC Camps offer an extensive network of camp directors, business affiliates, campers, camper parents, alumni and staff that collectively touch every aspect of society. I believe we can access this network to teach us many things about how to be better camp professionals and how to get our message across to the general public. You should have already received an email asking you to identify individuals that you know who could be helpful in our mission. Please understand from the start that we only want to identify individuals, and we would be asking you to make the initial contact if we thought that individual could be helpful.

AIC is the only camp organization that to this date has contributed to The Coalition for a Traditional School Calendar. We contributed \$5,000 a year ago and this money has been used to support the organization that is involved in helping State Legislatures throughout the country understand that their school calendar must take into consideration an adequate and ample summer vacation. Obviously, without a summer vacation we have no summer camps! Tina Bruno, the Executive Director is quoted as saying, "The reason camps are seeing more camp friendly legislation is simply because of the financial support given to the Coalition for a Traditional School Calendar." Tina has also created a media kit that I believe will be helpful for all camp directors to read. More information about this kit will be found elsewhere in this newsletter. Please contact Allen McBride allen@campmac.com if you would like more information.

You should have received an email several months ago asking to help in collecting data to determine if we should explore an insurance captive. ACA was asked once again to explore this issue and turned the project over to AIC. There are many, many camp professionals interested in this subject and you should be assured that every one who would like to offer input, advice and

services on this prospective service will have the opportunity to do so. Please let us know at info@aiccamps.org if you did not receive the initial letter and we will get you another copy.

AIC is gathering information to help camp directors understand their options at the time of a change in camp ownership. Many individuals have had a recent experience and we know that many are willing to share their expertise and advice they received from their legal and accounting professionals. Please let Gabe Chernov, Gabe@birchtrail.com know if you would like to share your experience. We will be producing a document at the conclusion of this project that will be shared with all AIC Members.

AIC is partnering with the Canadian Camping Association to offer a pre-conference event before the International Camping Fellowship to be held October 4-7, 2008 in Quebec City, Canada. Please check out details of the main event at <http://icquebec2008.com/en/index.html>. We will provide more information about the AIC networking opportunity in the near future. Meanwhile, mark your calendars now.

And of course, Orlando is the site of next years AIC Conference to be held before the ACA National Conference. Elizabeth and Frank Tindall have graciously accepted the responsibility of Conference Chairs and will be working with the creative genius of Michael Brandwein to bring us a conference like none other. The dates are February 15-17 and promises to be a wonderful event. We hope you'll plan on bringing your Valentine with you to share in the magic of Disney next February.

And speaking of Conferences... our sincerest gratitude goes to Chris Strelve and his family and camp staff members who worked endlessly to provide us a fantastic experience in Nashville. Over 90 AIC Members were in attendance and we all benefited from his gracious hospitality.

Over a year ago, Carole Cheley convened a group of current and past AIC Board Members to discuss relevant AIC issues. This group agreed that AIC would offer educational opportunities and services that would compel every Independent Camp Director in the country to feel the need to join AIC. That's our story... and I'm sticking to it. Our board is committed to making you proud of us.

Best wishes and take some time for yourself now, while you have the opportunity,

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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 the ACA that is dedicated to people who own, direct, or work at independent camps, either for-profit or not-for-profit. 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.

To view the 2007-2008 Membership Directory, click here:

[2007-2008 AIC Membership Directory](#)

- Membership renewals
- New membership applications
- Business affiliate applications

Available Online at:

<http://www.AICcamps.org/>

If you have any questions, please contact Melany Irvin. 765-342-8456 Ext. 397 or info@aiccamps.org

Anything is Possible - 2008 AIC Conference Report - Chris Strevel

In the months of planning preceding the AIC conference, I often reflected on the baseball movie, Field of Dreams starring Kevin Costner. I kept thinking about the little voice in the wind that would whisper, "Build it and they will come." So -- we built it and they did!

The results are in and the survey says . . . "huge success; worth the trip; great conference; the best in seven years; glad we came; wonderful times; and I will be at the next one for sure." These are just a few of the many exact quotes appearing from the recent conference survey.

Highlights included a diverse and relevant assortment of educational sessions such as dealing with parents, emerging technology, risk management, marketing, media relations (influencing legislative change), positive psychology, round table discussions, and lots of networking time. AIC was pleased to bring in a brand new keynote speaker named Hallerin Hilton Hill that delivered an amazing address on the power of branding. Not just branding your camp . . . but branding yourself!

At the closing AIC session, we literally knocked down the walls when we welcomed a group of students from the

Fort Loudoun Middle School Trash Can Band. Not only did the children perform, they provided AIC attendees with a DVD on how to implement a trash can band at their camp. The students received a standing ovation from our audience and then later received a second standing ovation following their performance in front of more than 1,000 in the Grand Ballroom at the ACA Opening Session.

Although we had some fantastic speakers and events, one of the greatest benefits of the AIC Conference continues to be the opportunities to meet and network with like-minded independent camp professionals. For those that attended -- thank you for coming. And for those that were unable to be with us, we invite you to start planning now to join us next year in Orlando where we have passed the conference chair torch to Frank and Elizabeth Tindall. Early development has already begun and I'm sure that they will deliver another incredible AIC Conference. Until then . . . this is conference boy signing off. -- Chris Strevel

For a copy of the 2008 AIC Conference Program Booklet including speaker contact info and the AIC Membership Directory, click here:
http://ftp.aiccamps.org/pdf/2008_program_book.pdf

Now is the Time to Invite Your State Representative and Senator to Visit Camp During the Summer - Tina Bruno

When a legislative problem arises, do you know your state representative and state senator well enough to call and ask for help? Do your elected officials understand the benefits of summer camp experiences for children? Do they know how many young adults receive valuable job training working for you during the summer? If not, now is the time to act!

As we are all preparing for summer, now is the perfect time to ask your state representative and state senator and his or her staff to plan a summer visit to camp. Not only is a summer visit the best time to showcase the importance of what you are doing and how beneficial your services are to children, but it is often a less busy time for legislators.

Write a letter and hand deliver it to your elected officials local office. Bring a plate of goodies with you for the staff or something that will remind them of camp. Upon entering the office, introduce yourself and tell the first person you talk to. Then, tell that person why you have

visited; to hand deliver a letter of invitation to the staff and the Senator inviting everyone to visit camp during the summer.

Leave the letter and ask if it will be alright for you to call in a few weeks to schedule a visit time. If there are costs involved, more than driving, to reach your camp, offer to have fairy passes (for example) delivered to the group before the trip.

After leaving the office, be sure to follow up with a handwritten thank you note to the Senator or Representative and Staff. Also express your excitement about the possibility of them visiting during the summer.

For more helpful hints on inviting your legislator to visit your camp, visit the AIC web site and click on:

[View Helpful Media Tips](#)

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